

## Groups

**ABERDEEN** libertarians group, contact c/o 163 King Street, Aberdeen  
**ABERYSTWYTH:** David Fletcher, 59 Cambrian Street, Aberystwyth.  
**BIRMINGHAM** anarchists/anarcha feminists meet Sundays. Contact Alison at Peace Centre, 18 Moore St., Ringway Birmingham 4 (tel. 021 643 0996)  
**BRISTOL CITY:** 4 British Road, Bristol BS3 3BW  
**BRISTOL Students:** Libertarian Society, Students Union, Queen's Rd, Bristol 8  
**CAMBRIDGE** Anarchists, Box A, 41 Fitzroy Street, Cambridge  
**CANTERBURY** Alternative Research Group, Wally Barnes, Eliot College, University of Kent, Canterbury.  
**CARDIFF** write c/o One-o-Eight Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Road  
**CHELTENHAM** anarchists see street-sellers 11 am - 1.30 Saturday mornings  
**COVENTRY:** John England, Students Union, Univ. of Warwick, Coventry  
**DERBY:** Contact Andrew Huckerby, 49 Westleigh Ave., Derby SE3 3BY tel. 368678  
**EAST ANGLIAN** Libertarians. Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex  
**EDINBURGH** anarchists meet 8 pm on Monday at First of May Bookshop, 45 Niddry St., Edinburgh  
**EXETER** anarchist collective c/o Community Assn., Devonshire House, Stocker Road, Exeter.  
**GLASGOW** anarchist group: John Cooper, 34 Raithburn Avenue, Castlemilk, Glasgow G45  
**GREENWICH & Bexley.** Any trade unionists interested in forming syndicalist group contact John Ryan, 47 Binsey Walk, London SE2 9TU  
**HASTINGS** anarchist group c/o Solstice 127 Bohemia Rd., St. Leonards on Sea Sussex. Tel. 0424 429537  
**HULL** libertarian collective: Pete Jordan, 70 Perth St. Hull.  
**LEAMINGTON & Warwick** c/o 42 Bath St, Leamington Spa.  
**LEEDS** - new address awaited  
**LEICESTER** anarchist group: Lyn Hurst, 41 Briarfield Drive (tel. 0533 21250 (day) 0533 414060 (night)). Bookshop: Blackthorn, 76 Highcross St., (tel. 0533 21896). Libertarian Education 6 Beaconsfield Rd. (tel. 0533 552085)  
**LONDON**  
 Anarchy Collective, 37a Grosvenor Av., (tel. 359 4794 before 7 pm)  
 Freedom Collective, 84B Whitechapel High St, E1 (tel. 247 9249)  
 Hackney anarchists: Dave, tel 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, Box 779, Peace News London office, 5 Caledonian Rd. N.1  
 West London anarchists, 7 Pennard Rd W.12.  
**MALVERN & Worcester** area Jock Spence, Birchwood Hall, Storrridge, Malvern, Worcs.  
**MANCHESTER** - see NW Federation

**MID-SUSSEX & South Coast** anarchists c/o Resources Centre, North Road, Brighton, E. Sussex  
**NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE.** Black Jake c/o 115 Westgate Rd. N/cle NE1 4AG  
**NOTTINGHAM** c/o Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St. (tel. 582506) or 15 Scotholme Av., Hyson Green (tel. 708 302)  
**OLDHAM:** Nigel Broadbent, 14 Westminster Road, Failsforth, Manchester  
**OXFORD** anarchist group c/o Danny Simpson, Exeter College. Anarchist Workers Group ditto. Anarcho-Feminists c/o Teresa Thornhill, 34 Divinity Road. Solidarity c/o 34 Cowley Road  
**PORTSMOUTH:** Caroline Cahm, 25 Albany Road, Southsea, Hants.  
**READING** anarchists c/o Ms. Shevek, Clubs Office, Student Union, Whiteknights, Reading, Berks.  
**SHEFFIELD** anarchists: c/o 4 Have-lock Square, Sheffield S10 2FQ.  
**SHEFFIELD** Libertarian Society: P. O. Box 168, Sheffield S11 8SE  
**SWANSEA:** Don Williams, 24 Derlwyn, Dunvant, Swansea  
**SWINDON** area. Contact Mike, Groundswell Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon.  
**WESTON-SUPER-MARE,** Martyn Redman, Flat 5, 23 Milton Road.

## national

**NORTH WEST** Anarchist Federation c/o Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Road, Manchester M1 7DU. Groups are: Burnley anarchist group, 5 Hollin Hill, Burnley, Lancs.  
 Lancaster anarchist group, 41 Main Road, Galgate, Lancaster.  
 Manchester anarchist Group) both Syndicalist Workers Fed c/o Grass Roots (as above)  
 Contacts in other areas, and newsletter published.

**MIDLANDS** Federation: groups include Birmingham, Coventry, Derby, Leamington/Warwick, Leicester, Nottingham, Sheffield.

**NORTH EAST** Anarchist Federation: Secretariat: HLC, 16 Park Grove, Hull

**THAMES VALLEY** anarchist federation - contact Oxford or Reading groups

**DIRECT ACTION** Movement, 28 Lucknow Drive, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts. Groups in various places including London, Manchester and Leeds.

'**SOLIDARITY**' libertarian communist organisation (publ. 'Solidarity for Social Revolution') c/o 123 Lathom Road London E6. Groups & members in many towns.

**ANARCHIST COMMUNIST** Association organisation of class struggle anarchists (publ. 'Bread and Roses') Box 2, 136 Kingsland High St., London E8.

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## Meetings



**LONDON** Workers Group meet very Tuesday 8pm at Metropolitan pub, 95 Farringdon Rd., EC1 (Farringdon East) All welcome

## Desires

Anyone within reach of Dundee who'd like a GERBIL please get into touch with Doug Whitton, Logos Bookshop, 251 Hawkhill, Dundee.

Has anyone a spare copy of the 'Nottingham' issue of Anarchy (1st series) No. 38). Ross, 8 Elm Avenue, Nottingham

Lady requires furnished room in Leyton, Leytonstone, Walthamstow or Wanstead, Box C, c/o FREEDOM

South-east London. Vegetarian anarchist wants to establish group and organize accommodation with others.

P. Stone, c/o FREEDOM

Anyone in Wandsworth/Battersea/Clapham interested in forming anarchist group contact D. Elder, 28 Swanage Road, Wandsworth, SW18

Anarchists/libertarians in Bushey/Watford area who would like to make contact & perhaps group please get in touch with Roger Little, 23 Lambert Court, Bushey Grove Road, Bushey McGonnagall. Anyone who has a copy of 'More Poetic Gems' and/or 'Last Poetic Gems' for sale please offer to F.E.D., Box B, c/o Freedom.

## WANTED

News Views Articles Photos Typists for the Jan. 80 edition of ANARCHIST STUDENT. write c/o Freedom

## Literature

'Anarchist Student' Oct. 79 available now. 25 copies for £1 p & p included or single copy 5p plus SAE. From Polytechnic of N. London Anarchist Soc., Prince of Wales Rd. London NW5 Pagan 'Christmas' Cards. Have traditional carols restored to their pre-Christian words. Ten different cards for £1.50. From Norman Iles, 381 Marine Road, Morecambe, Lancs.

'Borrowed Time' will be monthly wall newspaper suitable for notice boards, shop windows or fly posting. Among themes in successive issues will be direct action, nuclear power, state repression, prisons, education, housing, work, sexual politics. If you would like to help with the preparation or distribution please write to: Borrowed Time, Box A, Grapevine Bookshop, 41 Fitzroy Street, Cambridge

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BANNER OF IRAN ANARCHIST PAPER

همه قدرت  
بندست توده ها

نا فرمان  
شیر جمعیت آزادی

بحث های درباره قانون اساسی  
— نیمه دوم مهر — آریال

حکومت نظامی تصویب شد!

'NO AUTHORITY'

TRANSLATION

'ALL POWER IN THE  
HANDS OF THE MASS'

It's been a while since I wrote on Iran in FREEDOM. That was in the middle of the revolution. Much has happened since then. The western press has seen fit to report some of it. It's a pity that they did not find this interest before, when there were 100,000 political prisoners and a regime kept in place by torture, repression, American planes and British tanks. Would it be too cynical to ask if this sudden attention is due to the new insecurity of the oil supplies? It's also a pity that the media coverage is becoming increasingly racist. Before I continue let me assure you that Iran is a group are not peculiarly fanatical. Even Khomeini, narrow, bigoted and, yes, fanatical, as he is, is no more "mad" than any other demented, authoritarian politician.

Well, what has happened? Immense turmoil. Ever since Bakhtiar's government collapsed, in the face of massive demonstrations and strikes, dozens of political groups have emerged. Dominant are the various Islamic groups. In the referendum in March 98% of the votes cast were for the establishment of an "Islamic republic". Quite what this was to be was not revealed but it was carried through on the wave of the revolution. It was sold as the only alternative to the monarchy. Since then there have been a number of splits in the mosque. Still way in front is the Islamic Republican Party, headed by god's represent-

It is now the month of Moharram, the Shia moslem month of mourning, the anniversary of the people of Iran going onto the streets in hundreds of thousands, to protest against the brutal regime that had repressed them for decades. Since then, that regime has fallen. A new authoritarianism uneasily tries to establish itself. This weekend there will be voting in a referendum on the new constitution, that will give massive powers to 'gods representative on earth'. Yes, another one. However, this is not yet firmly established, so it engineers a backdrop that holds to ransom one of the most powerful states on earth. There is still hope in Iran. The outcome is poised

SHAHIN

ative on earth, the Imam Khomeini. A significant electoral advantage, I'm sure you will agree. Taleghani, the so-called 'red ayatollah', in fact a vague liberal, stood up for a while, the suddenly reversed his position, shut up and died. The Muslim Peoples Republican Party has a fair amount of support. Its front person, Shariat-Madari is technically superior to Khomeini in Islamic jurisprudence, though his stay in Tehran and consequent compromise with the shah's regime means that he has stayed in second place politically. However, after months of deference, he has now dared to hint at abstention in the current referendum on the proposed constitution. The problem with these proposals

is that they would formally establish a 'faghib' or religious guardian. This person, obviously Khomeini to start with would have absolute power to appoint or dismiss minor irrelevancies such as the president. Combined with a few other sweeping powers this would be a state of affairs to worry anybody.

There is a variety of secularist, mainly middle class groups. These are becoming increasingly irrelevant. Even the secular members of the government are being pushed out. Bani-Sadr, who was effectively Prime Minister after Bazargan was removed, has got the chop for being too conciliatory. His replacement is nothing but a mouthpiece for Khomeini. The Fedayin (Marxist guerilla group) are "maintaining a low profile" since their headquarters were sacked but they are still a significant force, several thousand strong and well armed. The Mojahedin (Islamic Marxists) are still dithering around trying to decide on which side of their ideology to come down. While all these formal groups get on with their political games, the dominant force is still the simmering power of the people. Each bloc wants to channel this. At the moment Khomeini's prestige keeps him way in front. However, as time goes by it is becoming increasingly obvious that the revolution is not delivering the expected material benefits. Hence the manipulated diversions.

There's an encouraging note. There is now an anarchist group in Tehran. There has been a few issues of a newspaper "Nafarnam" (No Authority) and a couple of pamphlets.

While all this goes on in the cities the outer regions have their own politics. Only half of the total population (of 36 million) is what the west would call "persian" (Farsi speakers) The rest belong to several ethnic groups and they are taking the chance to assert their independence. There is almost a civil war in the north west. The majority there is Turkish speaking and has always resented Tehran. In the past there have been many insurrections and a couple of autonomous republics have been set up. In both cases these were backed by Russia until it became politically more expedient to pull out and leave the people to the reprisals. Things haven't gone that far yet, but there is widespread discontent and there should be strong abstention in the referendum.

Even more militant are the Kurds. They have reached the stage of open revolt. They are spread across the borders of Iran, Iraq, Turkey and USSR. They have fought a guerilla war for months now. The repression has been heavy, many captives have been shot. There are a number of political organisations trying to reach a settlement, but it is difficult to see what will stick, short of autonomy or military conquest. In a similar position are the Baluchis, in the south east, spread across into Pakistan and Afghanistan. Up until now they have not been as militant as the Kurds but it looks as if their referendum turn out will be minimal. In the south are people of Arab descent. They have been carrying out a campaign of sabotage against oil installations. There are also a number of tribes still semi-nomadic, despite an extensive settlement campaign by the last regime. They have a long record of opposition to the state. It is unlikely that any of these groupings can be quietly fitted into a 'new' Iran. Apart from anything else, they are religious misfits, being mostly Sunni moslems as opposed to the majority Shias.

Ah, yes, we come round to it. Islam. At the moment it's the all purpose rallying cry. What better way to neutralise opponents than to label them "ungodly". The standard charge in the "revolutionary" courts is 'corrupt on earth'. That's worth a firing squad. The upsurge in religious feeling is amazing. At least outwardly. Middle class people who a couple of years ago were ultra chic, westernised are now devout moslems. Counties which previously scorned Iranis as heretic Shia, now hail them as glittering examples. Islam is on the rise in many parts of the world. I'm not really knowledgeable enough to comment on this in detail. However, it seems that, in so far as it is true, and not merely the journalistic fashion of the day, it represents a third world resentment seeking an ideology. As such it should be more worrying to Marxists than to capitalists. The old imperial powers have had their day and were already being squeezed out. The 'liberatory' slogan used to be marxism. That was OK as long as it was an untried alternative.

Anyway, what has been the practical effect in Tehran? Mostly surface show. The situation is still too confused to tell how far it goes. There is a new puritanism about. There are areas where a woman cannot go without a chador. Alcoholic drink

has disappeared. But all this is only a shift of emphasis. Under their flash western images Irani men were always ultra sexist. Alcohol was always regarded as an aberration. I'm not saying that I don't regret the lost personal freedom. Just that most of it was an illusion to start with. No doubt if the islamists succeed in establishing total control, then things will get much worse. After all 'islam' means 'submission'.

So, various forces still have some presence. Other than Islam, there's westernism, liberalism, marxism, regionalism. And underneath it all, downright bloody minded discontent. Hence the present red herring of the farce at the USA embassy. Farce it is, though with potentially vicious consequences. Bread and circuses. What can I say? As an anarchist I disapprove of the taking of hostages and judicial demands for the ex-shah to be 'tried'. On the other hand the USA is a fair target (there's been great emphasis that it is the USA, not the American people that is being attacked. Small consolation for the hostages). They put the shah back in power in 1953 and manipulated the country for decades. Helms, the ambassador, used to be director of the CIA. Documentary evidence of the use of the embassy for spying has been released. Sure, some of it is exaggerated and what do you expect an embassy to be doing? But when the USA was the chief patron of the regime that has been oppressing you for years and then it provides sanctuary for the symbol of that oppression (have you noticed how contradictory the medical reports have been) then it is hardly surprising that there is some 'resentment'. I don't know what

the outcome will be. At the moment the regime is basking in being able to defy the worlds greatest power. They can't back down now. They need this anti-western feeling to divert attention from the faults at home. The USA cannot return the ex-shah, for prestige reasons and for fear of what would emerge at a trial. Similarly they can not allow the embassy staff to be 'tried'. Pushed too far they could retaliate militarily. It would obviously be useless to try to lift the hostages out of Tehran, and any other sort of raid risks involving USSR and would certainly cut off the oil. There is always their macho pride to consider. I suppose that they must be hoping for an international blockade. Having seen the response to the supposed blockade of the former Rhodesia, some cynicism (realism) is justified.

To sum up. Since the revolution began the mosque has maintained its dominant role. However this is nowhere near as monolithic or as established as is sometimes thought. In order to maintain this position significant economic and political progress and redistribution would be necessary. I think that this is unlikely to be delivered, hence the embassy show. The underlying forces of militancy (both economic and regional) will not be appeased. That is the achievement of the Revolution. These forces are now operating openly. The Irani people will go through their religious purgatory. But now they know what they can, themselves achieve. And they will not be endlessly submissive.

## FREEDOM AT HOME



All friends of FREEDOM are invited to attend at the Bookshop at

### SAT 22ND DEC AT NOON!

when the Collective will present the correct ideological line on a variety of topics.

Refreshments will be provided, but all comrades are urged to adopt a seasonal attitude of Mutual Aid and contribute to the supplies

# 'ALL GOOD CLEAN FUN'

## 1. I JUST thought

I'd write to inform 'the movement' about the fun and games a few of us had on the TUC CUTS march on 28 November.

The Oxford Anarchists planted their banner at the back but to one side of the march, which was queueing up in Hyde Park, and they were joined by 20-30 other comrades, including myself. After milling about, we decided to go straight to the front of the march which had just started - and this we did, leaving the rest of the thousands to wait for three hours for their orders.

We slipped into the front, 20 yards behind Tony Benn and other self-confessed MPs, just as it passed the Hilton Hotel (which any self-respecting worker would smash up if they could). All the way we chanted, clapped and shouted 'Smash the State!' 'Autonomy!' 'Anarchy!' 'General Strike!' 'Break Out of the Union Prison!' 'Class War!' etc etc and had quite a laugh. A few Labour Party stewards looked really pissed off. Meanwhile 40,000 working class people behind us were being (likewise) shepherded by police and stewards along a pre-planned, roped off route - no buses delayed, no spontaneity, no demonstration, no potential, no effect. We had plans.

When we got to 'dispersal point' (as the police van ordered) we stuck together and all went to the official Labour Party rally. By the time we got there there were 4000 stalwarts already at the front (rent-a-mob) and loads of stewards, and we took over three rows or so in the centre. Heffer was ranting over the microphone about 'returning a Labour government pledged to socialist policies' etc, and we jeered and heckled, feeling strong and lively. Then Callaghan came to sit on the platform, so we booed and chanted 'out, out, out', which was taken up by the whole audience for two minutes. However, they adored leftie MP Frank Allaun, who insulted our intelligence with crap about 'peace' - to which we shouted 'Abolish the Army!' We kept up a constant barrage of mostly relevant criticism about their hypocrisy, their cuts, and general anti-government stuff.

Then I started shouting "Why can't we hear a worker speak? Let a worker speak!" and after a couple of minutes of this I got up and demanded to speak. The audience was fed up with us lot, and the stewards looked menacing, but I stuck to my guns. "I have a right to speak!" After a great deal of stick, the 1000 or so people quietened down and even the platform was silent and it looked as though I was going to get a chance. Just as I was about to go on about seizing the workplaces etc. a steward hurled himself at me shouting "you bastard!" and pandemonium ensued. For ten minutes we had a mass punch up with stewards. Ten-15 rows of chairs went flying

and we gave as good as we got. I kept shouting "I have a right to speak!" and "This is how the Labour Party treats workers!" One woman LP member tried to protect me, saying "This is a workers' party - let him speak". But all the others just stood on their chairs and gawped. Then some police arrived and so most of us left together. Two or three of us tried to stick it out longer but were gradually slung out. My head was smashed onto a stone pillar before I was ejected.

I spoke briefly to a newspaper reporter, and we all managed to reassemble; no arrests. (Best punch-up in years and no-one nicked!) We were all elated and angry and went off to rejoin the march near the back saying "Labour Party beats up hecklers, la la la la la la!"

We then decided to call it a day, got onto the tube without paying, and tried to find a TV to see reports. True to form, the media (including papers) gave almost as much coverage to the 'anarchist punch-up' as to the march itself. But of course no explanation of why, and the viciousness of the stewards.

Let's face it, normal demos only demonstrate our weakness and passivity and willingness to be led like lambs to the slaughter by unions and parties. They imprison our opposition to the ruling class. Surely thousands, if not millions of working people feel the same way - especially youngsters and those who are facing confrontation in hospitals, shipyards, steelworks and car plants as well as all services. We have to get across to these people with our ideas and our practice. Direct action, industrial or on the streets, against the financiers and the forces of order, is the only relevant response to the brutal attack we are facing (the world over). Punch ups on demos against left or state policies is just one of the many ways to re-assert our self-respect and confidence. But we have to strengthen our revolutionary groups locally and in various fields of struggle (anti-nuclear etc). Also we must create consistent agitational presence in all industries, neighbourhoods and wherever people are angry and with coherent analysis, strategy and alternatives.

Anyway, tailending the Left is guaranteed to render us at best a colourful appendage to be stabbed in the back, at worst a non-existent movement.

In any future demonstrations we go on, let's meet up and stay mobile, split into groups, demand the right to speak at meetings, overturn platforms and encourage the break-up of authority relations (police and stewards) and the emergence of the true expression of people's anger in the streets.

D. (London)

## 2. DESPITE the

effectiveness of Labour and Trade Union stewards in acting as a controlling force against the workers who turned up on the November 28 anti-cuts demo, the police were used in five arrests.

Myself and a friend of mine were walking down Vauxhall Bridge Road when the white tape that directed the march was broken. Next thing a policeman had dragged me out of the crowd calling me a 'communist cunt', and threatening to put his fist in my mouth. My friend and a few others milled around asking what I was charged with but the police didn't answer. They dragged me off and arrested my friend. In the coach they said they'd send us for trial at Barnet magistrates' court (where the Southall show trials take place). I said "You've got them in your pocket haven't you" and they laughed in agreement.

I am a hospital worker and I'm charged with criminal damage and obstruction. We appear along with a Kent miner, a telephonist and another bloke on 18 December at Bow Street Magistrates Court, but it will probably be adjourned.

One thing is worth noting: neither the police nor the stewards wanted anything other than an orderly demonstration so as to combine passivity in the workplace with passivity in the streets. When I shouted for help to the demo, no-one other than my friends and anarchists moved. At the moment both Labour and State forces have complete control over the workers. S.

Anyone on the demo who saw the incident of our comrade's arrest and could testify on his behalf, please contact FREEDOM.

## 3. Meanwhile back

in County Hall around 30 school kids, members of NUSS, had occupied the foyer of the building and were causing officials there deserved headaches

As members of the London College of Printing we were there handing in another 'to be ignored' petition. But it was our presence there that prevented various members of County Hall staff from assaulting the 12-17 year old kids, as some of them attempted to do. After the police were called in the schoolkids left peacefully enough if somewhat vociferously. Once outside, however, the police, no doubt frustrated by the orderliness of the march, over-reacted to the kids' taunts and dragged away a 15 year old black girl and a 16 year old black boy.

They were taken to Kennington police station. Later they refused to tell us anything about why they had been arrested, asked us if we'd like to join them and refused to let us make a complaint against the police, let alone County Hall staff.

All good clean fun? Steve

# BRITISH TRADE UNIONS - AN ARM OF MANAGEMENT

IN COMPARING the cases of Mr Robinson and Mr Blunt The Times leader writer (22.11.79) last week argued that "The communists in the trade unions have ... done far more to destroy the prospect of our maintaining a free and prosperous society than all the Cambridge traitors put together".

In a month in which one free trade unionist, Anatoly Pozdnakov, was sent to a mental hospital in Moscow and another, Vladimir Klebanov, a Ukrainian coalminer and founder of the 'free trade union', was reported to be being held in a psychiatric prison hospital in Ukraine, it is as well to be mindful of the menacing consequences of Communism, and suspicious of Communists. But The Times Moscow correspondent's report on 16 November included a telling comment from the unofficial trade unionists (almost all who are unemployed after conflicts at work) who say "the official unions work as an arm of management in Soviet factories and do not protect the workers' interests".

The British Leyland management argue that Robinson and the other stewards "... are paid, like all of us in BL, to work in the best interests of the Company ...". Both the Soviet view and Sir Michael Edwardes (the BL chairman) seem to embrace a similar autocratic style.

Robinson and the Leyland stewards, as much as Klebanov and his unofficial trade unionists, see the role of the unions as being to present an alternative to centralised management.

Of course there is much in the proposals of the left trade unionists which anarchists should oppose. The idea of state aid and nationalisation to prop up or take over declining companies could never be to our taste.

But Robinson, for all his Communist commitments, represents the shop stewards movement, and the shop stewards movement both protects and advances our industrial freedoms.

Now it may well be that in their jobs many workers feel powerless (except in bargaining for pay) but many workers do have a measure of job control and these controls are often best expressed through the shop stewards organisation and to a lesser extent the trade unions. Also, in this country the trade unions are not yet either an arm of the state or of management.

Indeed, what Sir Michael Edwardes and some of the CBI militants seem to be after is to crush rather than incorporate the unions. Subservience on the shopfloor rather than consensus.

Robert Taylor, writing in *The Observer*, (25 November 1979), suggests that "British Leyland may reflect the shape of things to come ... an aggressive employer, offensive, fighting for survival, facing a defensive shop steward movement, apprehensive about its ability to speak for the confused and divided shop-floor".

**Chocklate Fireguards** Clearly if our limited freedoms are threatened, then it will be the Robinsons of this world who resist. Robinson the shop steward, not Robinson the card carrying Communist.

## PERSONS UNKNOWN

"On the vexed question of politics it has become apparent that I am an anarchist. I believe that no-one has the right to impose their views on anyone else - and that includes judges. I look forward to a society where judges have to look for other jobs". Ronan Bennett.

THE 'Persons Unknown' trial is almost over. At time of writing the defence submission is coming to an end, after which it is expected that the judge will take at least five days to sum up - an extraordinary length of time. By 15 December we might have a verdict.

In the meantime mention must be made of the appearances in the witness box first of Vince Stevenson, then of Ronan Bennett.

Clearly the Worsley/King-Hamilton team were trying to arouse a few slumbering jurors when they took a sudden aggressive interest in a defence witness for Vince.

The incident took place during cross-examination of Stephanie Dickinson. A worker at Rising Free bookshop in Islington, Stephanie testified that during an East End supermarket robbery, in which he was alleged to have been involved, Vince was in fact at a meeting of the bookshop collective.

She said, "I remember it well. There was a discussion on allowing the provisional Sinn Fein to use a box number at the shop. It was the time of letter bombs and attacks on left bookshops and I was worried about security".

Although it was explained that a large number of political groups used Rising Free as a box number neither prosecutor nor judge would let the matter rest at that. There followed a barrage of questions about the Sinn Fein box number,

Now, as Townsend says, "conceptions of inequality at work are ill developed", and most British anarchists, it must be admitted, have been as aloof in their analysis of these topics as Rees Mogg, The Times editor.

If trade unionists are entering a period of conflict and crisis than some attempt should be made to present an anarchist analysis and interpretation of events. Syndicalism in its special national form is central to the traditions of the British labour movement.

However, to date, the card carrying syndicalists and their sects such as the Direct Action Movement (DAM) and the SWF, have been about as practical as chocklate fireguards on the British trade union and industrial scene.

To remedy this situation a group of shopfloor syndicalists have got together to try to produce a regular industrial feature for FREEDOM.

B.B.

\* Peter Townsend, *Inequality at the workplace: how white collar always wins*. *New Society*, 18 October 1979.

and about that of another Irish group, Prisoners Aid, which reached a crescendo when Worsley asked a second Rising Free worker, Fabian Thompson: "Are these prisoners people who murder? ... Are they people who maim, shoot in the back - that sort of thing?" By his very questions he was trying to drag Fabian, and thus by implication Vince, into the maelstrom of Irish politics.

But it was for Ronan that Worsley was conserving the full blast of his viciousness. Ronan opened his case, describing his childhood and adolescence in Belfast, the Catholic, civil rights history of his family, the way in which his politics had developed from a traditional Irish republicanism into anarchism. As soon as he had finished, Worsley gathered up his black skirts and charged.

Every conceivable aspect of the case was thrown at him which could just as well have been thrown at others, and often more suitably. The result was several days of meticulous, repetitious, gruelling, grinding interrogation, designed to destroy. But Ronan stood his ground.

Worsley began by trying to accuse Ronan of helping Dafydd Ladd, his alleged fellow conspirator, to jump bail. "I am suggesting" said this repulsive man, "that the disappearance of Ladd was a put-up job. It was planned so that you could say what you liked behind his back without the jury convicting him".

The next day Worsley was obliged to confess that he had "gone over the top". But this did not deflect his determination to make Ronan into the arch-villain of the piece.

A more detailed report will be given in our next instalment.

# WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT THE ANC?

THE pretentiously named Anti Nuclear Campaign was launched on 24 November at the Polytechnic of Central London. Its aim is to be for the anti nuclear opposition what the Anti Nazi League has been for anti-fascism and what the CND used to be for nuclear disarmament. Under its umbrella huddle uneasily such disparate groupings as the Conservation Society, Ecology Party and Socialist Workers Party - not to mention a few anti-corporativist Tories.

Its most well known supporter, Arthur Scargill of the Yorkshire miners, was questioned about the attitude of anti-nuclear groups dissenting from ANC. "Unfortunately" he said "there are groups who are not ready at this time and who are not prepared to agree that we should have one single anti-nuclear lobby. I think this is very distressing. I hope that in further discussions we can convince them of the validity of our case. Complaints about 'over-centralisation' just don't stand up to examination. If any group feels it is in danger of being swallowed up, it can withdraw".

Arthur Scargill was being careful with his Time Out interviewer. (He added that although his earlier remark about the 'brown bread and sandals brigade' had not been meant offensively, their image - one he has himself perpetuated - was still unfortunate). But when New Scientist's editorial called ANC "the most significant political event since the general election" it was not so diplomatic. Friends of the Earth were castigated for not joining ANC. "In withholding its support" wrote NS, "Friends of the Earth puts itself in the company of a minority of lunatic anarchists and sectarians ...". Well!

The resentment of those who eat brown bread and wear sandals is not hard to appreciate. It's a bit much to have occupied the wastes of Torness, clung to cranes over the Sharpness docks, picketed windswept street corners and harbour quaysides against uranium, sallied forth in tiny peagreen boats against nuclear dumping, debated from dusk to dawn around the camp fires of the Torness Alliance, to have done all this and much more without a miner or an NS hack in sight, only to be told by them that your diet and clothing are inadequate and that, moreover, you are both mad and sectarian.

Suddenly the anarchists find themselves relegated to one of those groups "who are not ready". True, anarchists have not always been so united in opposition to the so-called "peaceful uses of nuclear energy", and even today the self-styled armchair terrorists of Xtra! (or at least their Mad Scientist) can believe that with anarchists in control nuclear power would be OK. But the fact is that anarchists have been, if one will pardon the expression, in the vanguard of the anti-nuke movement - even if the media have continually made out that their involvement (as in the Brokdorf action, where they were said to be sporting the "rainbow colours of the Baader-Meinhof gang!") was naught else but an attempt to subvert well-meaning liberals to their own colourful ends.

An anarchist group with a long history of direct action against nuclear power is London Greenpeace Group, who have written a "contribution to the debate on the ANC within the anti-nuclear movement". One of LGG's main reservations is that - contrary to Scargill's denial - ANC is a centralised body and that there is a "logical incompatibility of centralisation with opposition to nuclear power". Such centralisation, and the hierarchical structure that must inevitably go with it, are "one of the important reasons" why LGG opposes nuclear power.

London Greenpeace also fears that ANC will create the idea among newcomers that their duty is to support what others do, rather than do themselves. Even if the ANC attracts more people than the libertarian movement could, "it's clearly better to have another 1000 nuclear activists than another 10,000 anti-nuclear supporters of a small 'active' elite". They refer to a comment of *Peace News* that "CND ... rode on the backs of an already active movement, diverted energy towards 'more effective' campaigning, and so split the movement". CND did, however, work with the Direct Action Committee, who organised the first Aldermaston march, though ANC has not made so much as a mention of the Torness Alliance. (And nor should it be forgotten that, in the event, CND's thousands of local groups did much to introduce people into radical politics).

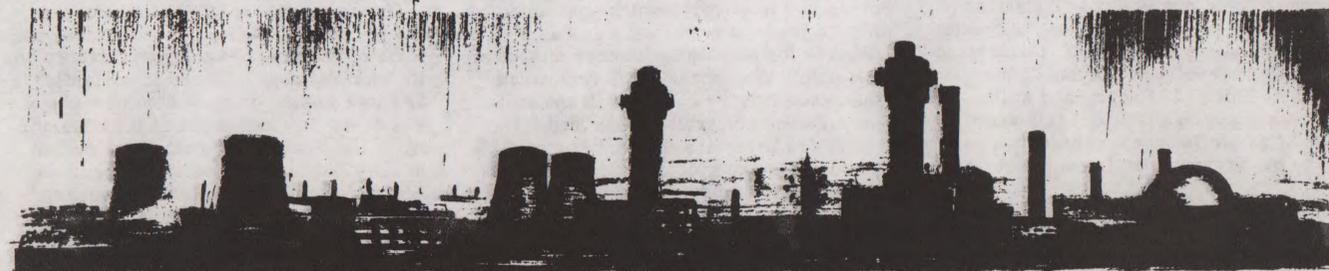
A newer group, the Ecology and Anarchism Collective, have made similar points. In a recent statement it calls for improvements in coordination and quality of discussion among the autonomous groups, but is more bellicose than London Greenpeace in straightly charging ANC with having been set up "to eliminate by persuasion, 'representation' and manipulation, the independence and militancy of the anti-nuclear movement". Because of what they see as its 'repressive function' they call for opposition to ANC, though do not specify what form such opposition should take.

The Ecology and Anarchism Collective argues that "it's not a question of who's on which committee, or whether the ANC has formal membership or respects our autonomy, or what sort of image it sells, or whatever. It's a question of understanding the FUNCTION of ANC - to try to take over and control the anti-nuclear movement and divert it away from effective resistance and into safe protect/pressure politics".

Yet, one could be forgiven for wondering what the fuss is about. If, as the Collective claim, "springing from the grass roots is an expanding network of thousands of individuals, groups and alliances of all sorts, directly controlled by those involved", why should ANC be such a threat? If ANC is going to respect the autonomy of other groups, and if these groups are as tough as their language, how will it recuperate them?

The Collective says the function of ANC must be understood. But has it been? Apart from the fact that, with its ill-assorted supporters, ANC stands no chance whatever of being the monolithic block its organisers might like, where is the evidence that ANC was set up deliberately to undermine "a growing, autonomous and angry movement such as ours"? Because it makes no claim to be anti-State, is it therefore the State's avenging angel?

The truth is probably more prosaic than a conspiracy. More likely is it that a combination of different and more innocent factors prompted Scargill's proposition of the campaign at the Energy 2000 conference. Among other things there has been the near catastrophe of the near meltdown on Three Mile Island, combined with much publicity around the likely US moratorium on new nuclear power stations.



# SMASH THE POLITICAL LEVY!

IT'S amazing what short memories people have, especially Labour politicians. It wasn't so long ago that Jim Callaghan and his motley crew were attempting to keep our wage rises below that magical 5 per cent and were prepared to jump on anyone who disagreed. Unfortunately for them it was they who got jumped on by the lorry drivers and the public service workers. Now, like some Jekyll and Hyde the Labour Party has put on its left face and sheds crocodile tears over the effects of Thatcher's monetarist policies upon us poor workers.

Still, I won't labour the point about what a worthless set of bastards the Labour Party are. Sadly, though the joke's on us, we're paying. Approximately 90 per cent of Labour Party finance comes from payments from 58 unions. In fact, if it wasn't for this massive financial leg-up Labour would be unable to run its central party organisation or any election campaign. As it is they're deficit so far this year is £377,000 (Guardian, 4.11.79). Anyhow, these 56 unions include the TGWU, AUEW, GMWU, NUPE, USDAW, EETPU, NUM, UPW, NUR, UCATT, ASTMS, COSHE, PUEU, AS Boilermakers, TSSA, ISTC, ASLEF, FTAT, NAT-SOPA, NGA, NAAAW, NU Blastfurnacemen, NUFLAT, NU Seamen, NUSMW.

How is this money paid to Labour? Firstly, all 58 unions are affiliated to the Labour Party, which means that a proportion of the political levy which their members pay goes directly to the Labour Party in the form of affiliation fees. The amount paid depends upon how

many members the union chooses to affiliate which is not necessarily the same as the number of members who actually pay the political levy. For example, 97 per cent of TGWU members pay the levy - that is, 2,013,000 out of 2,073,000; yet only 1,162,000 are affiliated. In total about 7,915,000 trade unionists pay the levy, that is about 80 per cent.

However, only 6,061,000 of these are affiliated to Labour, but even so, with the individual membership fee going up from 32p. to £1.25 next year, this means that by this method alone the Labour party will be getting £7,576,250 from the unions.

Secondly, money is transferred via trade union sponsorship of MPs and the payment of grants for the 'upkeep' of sponsored MPs' constituencies, thus saving Labour the expense of doing this themselves. At present there are 132 trade union sponsored MPs. TGWU and AUEW have the most at 20 each, followed closely by NUM with 16 and the GMWU with 14. The TGWU in 1978 spent £2,257 in grants to its sponsored MPs for the upkeep of their constituencies.

Thirdly, every time there's an election the unions donate generously to Labour's election fund. For example, for the 1979 election the GMWU gave £100,000, TGWU £150,000, NUM £100,000, AUEW Engineering £102,400, APEX £50,000 and ASTMS £50,000. Many other unions gave generously. There are of course various other ways in which the unions transfer funds to the Labour Party. For example, in total during 1978 the TGWU gave £408,973 as well as being part of a union consort-

ium to build the Labour Party's new headquarters.

All this money comes from a common source - the political levy which many trade unionists pay without realising. As anarchists we should go further in our moral stand against voting for Labour (or anyone else) and hit the Labour scabs where it hurts - in their pockets. The Labour Party is going through a cash crisis, according to Norman Atkinson, Labour's treasurer. "The party is fast overspending its income - disastrously so" (Guardian, 4.10.79).

Let's make things worse for the bastards. We should make a start by withdrawing from the political levy as individuals and campaigning to get our workmates and our union branches, regions etc. to withdraw.

The Labour Party is collapsing. Its membership is falling and it's running out of cash. By campaigning against the political levy, we shall be driving a nail into its coffin, at the same time as weakening its hold on the unions. The first step has been made in this direction by DAM who have been handing out anti-political levy leaflets at their workplaces, union meetings, union demonstrations, etc. The response has varied from shock/horror expressed by Labour, CP and SWP hacks to agreement and surprise at the fact that they were paying it from ordinary rank and file trade unionists.

DAVE THOMSON

\* A leaflet on this subject has been produced by the Direct Action Movement and is available from 28 Lucknow Drive, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts.

unionists embraced the libertarian anti-nuke movement without further ado, instead of the more traditionally organised structures to which they are accustomed.

We should not wring our hands at this. As London Greenpeace has pointed out, "Perhaps the most positive side of the ANC is that it seems likely to draw in money and support from trade unions - resources which wouldn't otherwise be so easily available for anti-nuclear work - and use this to provide resources for the movement as a whole".

In addition, why should ANC not prove to be as much of an advantage as an obstacle? However unwittingly, why should it not serve newcomers as a preface for something blacker and more beautiful? Why should ANC recuperate the revolutionary elements of the anti-nuke movement, rather than find its members being drawn progressively, through the example of propaganda by deed, toward more militant attitudes?

Of course the Ecology and Anarchism Collective is right to say, improve organisation and coordination, extend local,

regional and single-issue alliances, hold more general conferences, improve the quality as well as quantity of leaflets, act throughout with an insistence on the need for autonomy, direct action and the other anarchist principles.

But our opposition to ANC must be a responsible one. It could all too easily take the form of sabotage for sabotage's sake, blanket boycott or criticism that puts anarchists in a negative light while it leaves their positive qualities in shadow. Have we not already brought to a fine art the ability to swear in detail at the state while remaining all too vaguely flattering about ourselves?

Our opposition to ANC should not be simply one of spitting. It should take the form of analysis of each ANC activity on its own (de)merits. More importantly, and less easily, it must also provide a positive demonstration of the superiority of the libertarian method. If we fail in this, but at the same time wreck the ANC, we shall find the consequences appalling. And it will have been our fault.

GAIA

## Agricultural NOTES

# THE REAL STORY OF THE LAMB WAR



MUCH coverage was given to the recent discovery of Ooth - a planet which the conventional wisdom supposed had committed suicide by supernova 600 years ago.

Since the discovery argument has raged in specialist circles over the origins of the 'ashen light' which can often be seen on Ooth with the aid of a Callifragic telescope. This controversy resembles the more long-standing arguments over a similar light on Venus.

Of course the old Explorer multiprobe and Veneral landings confirmed that the ashen light on Venus was the result of continuous lightning and not of the fire-drive hunting methods advanced by Fooz von Pool Groothoosen some years before. What I can now reveal, though at the risk of prosecution under the Interstellar Protection of Information Act, is that the opposite is true of Ooth, and that if old Groothoosen had his geography slightly wrong, he has in essence been proved right.

The latest mission has returned from the margins of the solar system with detailed information of the origins of the ashen light. Most spectacularly, it confirms the neo-Groothoosian, quasi-Suganesque, exo-biological theory that intelligent life forms do exist there and are responsible for the light!

I mention the phrase 'intelligent life forms' in the plural. This is however a bone of some contention. On Ooth itself the Dominant Double Tailed (or Legged) life form claims it is the only intelligent life form. This dominant race is the creator of the ashen light which is the result of their agricultural methods. What seems to happen is this.

The dominant double-tailed form (generally known as DDT) does not engage in fire drive hunting but in intensive farming, all over the planet's surface. These farms, or nurseries, are of palatial size and store thousands of lower beings, which are fattened quickly on a diet of milk and sugar, frequently mixed with milk chocolate and cake and other carbohydrates. Optimum size is gained in minimum time by keeping the sub-species in tiny crates so that they cannot move about and expend valuable calories in so doing. They are kept in the dark and given sedatives, and are perfectly contented during their brief lifetime.

When they have reached optimum size they are taken, tottering from overweight and loss of tail muscle into a special neutralisation chamber, where the appropriate electric shocks are administered. It is the frequency and intensity of the electric shocks from these billions of neutralisation chambers that give off the ashen light.

An interesting feature of the farms is that there seems, at least from an extra-

terrestrial viewpoint, to be little difference between the farmers and the farmed. The latter are also double-tailed, with similar features, except that they seem more stupid. Which, of course, they may well be.

According to the NG-QS-EB theory, which is gaining rapidly over others, there were at some time on Ooth various sizes of exotic four-tailed, and also tiny double-tailed, winged species. These creatures bore such names as 'huses', 'chookin', 'white-mice', 'betelbroxen', 'pugs' and 'lambos'. But these have all died out. The biggest single reason would seem to be that they were unsuccessfully competing for land against the DDTs and that as the latter multiplied and brought forth, the former were reduced, and did not. The problem was compounded by the domestication of the pugs and lambos, for they then needed vast quantities of cereals to be grown on their behalf before they could be fattened for the cull. Things came to a head with the so-called Oonglo-French lamb wars. These were the result of an elaborate series of agreements between several dominant, traditionally enemy tribes, whereby food products could be bought and sold almost exclusively, and more cheaply, among each other than elsewhere. At the same time the arrangements kept their producers safe from the whims of the 'market economy' and the odd Oothian seasons.

These ingenious arrangements (otherwise known as 'politics' or 'internationalism') did not, however, seem to function as well as they should have done. The tribes involved began to fear one another's competitiveness and over-productivity, and their own consequent loss of livelihood. Thus, despite the rulings of an international court, they refused to accept each other's food and - though it is not yet proven beyond doubt - the land they inhabited correspondingly changed. It was flooded with the wine that no-one would buy, while the remaining dry parts were covered in a thick dust of skimmed milk that no-one could dispose of, and frozen with vast icebergs of butter. It then, of course, became unsuitable for the growing of crops.

The lamb wars were the last straw. The French refused the flesh of these woolly exotics only finally to buy a small amount to sell cheaply to a far flung, reportedly rather hostile tribe in the north, whom nobody liked. Bad feelings grew and eventually, after a hundred years of lamb, wine, pug and skimmed milk battles, the intricate political arrangements fell apart. In bitter rage the farmers descended on the inter-tribal capital of Brussels and took hostage some of the most eminent of their representatives, including members of the legendary

Giscud and Thootcher dynasties, and threatened to cut them up for some important ceremony called 'Sunday Dinner'.

Laughable as this may seem, the fact is that the general environmental crisis, of which the lamb wars were but a symptom, got worse and worse. Despite the intensive farming of sub-species, massive famines had struck the planet, and millions of the dominant race were dying of starvation - although their numbers were already so vast that there was no direct threat of extinction.

It then came to the attention of a small but influential group that there had once been an economist called J. Swift, who had modestly proposed the fattening and eating of starving offspring in Ireland, who would otherwise in any case have died.

What was once an irony gradually became a full-blooded espousal of the cause of cannibalism for indisputably sound economic reasons. Not only starving, but criminal and dissident double-tails were farmed, and also politicians who had fallen into disgrace and who normally did not need much fattening up before neutralisation. No inter-tribal agreements were necessary because food was so plentiful and so similar in basic quality. As for famine it was completely abolished. Naturally these considerations prevailed over any sentimental, moralistic objections.

The theory goes that nevertheless the exponents of this new and eminently sensible form of diet felt they must justify their actions on moral grounds as well. They did not like the word 'cannibalism' so they developed the 'ultra-Cartoosian' principle that only some of the two-tailed race had 'souls' because only these had sufficient intellectual prowess and the skills needed to save the planet from destruction. This was demonstrated by a number of experiments, which continue, whereby the 'lower life forms' are hung on crossed sticks, poked with tongs and dissected with knives, the result being that in almost all cases their intellectual performances are extremely poor.

I should add that this theory is not altogether foolproof. Scientific argument still continues over the exact differences between the farmers and the farmed, and the above could be too crude an explanation of the Oothian phenomenon. Hopefully, however, no-one but the romantics will be disappointed by it. This planet remains by far the most fascinating of the decaying stars on the outer edges of the solar system. And remember, even if we do not take up such methods of nutrition ourselves, we should not denigrate the ethnic cultures of our cosmic neighbours.

Patricia Moore

## BOOKS FROM ANGEL ALLEY (OR NOT!)

### BOOKSHOP NOTES

Periodically, we do an update of titles from our main book-list (October 1978)-still available on receipt of a 9"x 6" SAE (0.13 $\frac{1}{2}$ p)-that have since gone out of print.

So-the following titles are now totally unavailable, we can not supply them until/unless a new edition appears-at which time it will be noted in our fortnightly list in FREEDOM

Elton E. Smith:William Godwin  
Peter Kropotkin:The Great French Revolution  
Gerrard Winstanley:The Law of Freedom and other writings  
Domenico Tarizzo:L'Anarchia  
RAF;Background and Information  
Albert Camus:Neither Victims nor Executioners  
Charles Fourier:Harmonian Man  
B. Traven:The Death Ship  
Peter Kropotkin:Ethics  
" " :Anarchism (from Encyclopaedia Britannica)  
Errico Malatesta:Anarchy  
Proudhon:The General Idea of Revolution in the 19th Century  
Gerrard Winstanley:The Complete Works (ed, Sabue)  
Eleanor Flexnor;Mary Wollstonecraft  
Giovanni Baldelli:Social Anarchism  
Gonzales Prida:Anarchy  
Benjamin R. Tucker:Instead of a Book  
Oscar Wilde:The Soul of Man Under Socialism & other writings  
(The Soul of Man is still available on its own)  
Ronald Sampson:The Anarchist Basis of Pacifism  
John Hyatt;Pacifism, A Selected Bibliography  
Nicholas Walter:About Anarchism  
Pa Chin:The Family  
Montenar & Alfonso:Zapata, His Life Was La Revolucion  
Open Road:Anarchist Trade Unions in Spain Today  
Sacco and Vanzetti:The 50th. anniversary edition of "Freedom"  
Walters et al:Punishment  
Charles Rycroft:Reich  
Leila Berg:Risinghill  
White Lion St. Free School:How To Set Up a Free School  
Colin Ward :Utopia  
Clem Gosman:People Together  
Bob Dickins:The Parts Are All Around  
" " :Synthesis Is The Only Possibility  
Charles Reich:The Greening of America  
Roger Lewis;Outlaws of America  
Stansill & Marowitz:BAMN  
Paul Goodman:The Black Flag of Anarchy  
Nicolai Cherneshevsky;What Is To Be Done  
B. Traven:The Bridge in the Jungle  
Martin Spence:National Liberation and State Power

# Freedom

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## CENTAURISM:-

### AN ANARCHIST APPROACH TO COMMUNITY WORK

CENTAUR is a self-help community project set up in 1971 by people who were dissatisfied with all aspects of conventional and alternative community work. We are determined to remain independent and to serve and respond to the needs of a community in whatever directions they flow. Our previous open-door community centre and our new base is set in the Caledonian Road area of North London. Our specific intention is to bring our community together. We work with all kinds of people - all ages, all colours: the area's young people form the largest social group of the centre and will run it as much as possible themselves. They treated the previous centre as their real home - no-one ordered them about. They were their own sovereign and so was Centaur. The authorities would conventionally define our work, pigeon-hole and demarcate it - as working in the spheres of free education, community education, community arts, recreation, counselling, help and youth work. They try and insist on this demarcation as a condition of funding. Our whole emphasis is a natural spontaneity, totally contrary to this linear thinking.

#### OUR PHILOSOPHY IN PRACTICE . . . .

The poverty of opportunity, the under-employment and under-stimulation of talents, the resulting sense of frustration, alienation and isolation of which we and our kids are victims is political. The majority of kids who go to youth clubs are the problem kids and/or the under-achievers. The 'stable' grammar school sixth formers have supposedly already found themselves, their place and position and their type of friends in life so that the majority don't feel the need to go to youth clubs. The kids we are dealing with are at the very bottom of the shit-heap of our meritocracy. Many of them are vandals, delinquents, drug addicts and truants. It is the vicious pressure of modern life which has caused them to be alienated.

Just like the 'rogue chickens', who refuse to lay eggs under battery farm conditions, these kids are refusing to cooperate with the ridiculous and absurd education system, and quite rightly so.

At Centaur we tried, and will try, to provide four basic qualities for the kids to explore:

#### 1. Freedom to act with the guidance of their own authority

After all, many of us are used to having important decisions made for us. We try and encourage the kids to run things as much as possible, and in our future plans for development, the emphasis is on self-management by the kids instead of growing into one of the professional charities which provide employment for the alternative professionals.

#### 2. Courage and ability to face the consequences of their own actions

Since the redundancy of the church in social affairs (brought about by lack of confidence in so called Christian behaviour), schools and parents have failed to provide coherent and relevant moral values for their children. Which is why

3. We seek to provide the kids with a common wisdom to re-educate themselves, re-discover the joys of learning and develop their own moral language.

4. We would dearly love to provide them with the strength to challenge the hypocrisy of the establishment in a practical, constructive and humane way.

Our new premises are two former supermarket shops, with large basements; they will also be the base for several income producing schemes which, we hope, can in time provide work for some of the kids. These include a record exchange shop, community cafe, practising rooms, selling bric-a-brac and a teenager work agency. Although we'd have a couple of pool tables, we haven't and won't try to have the usual physical traditional youth club activities, but you can't describe logistically what we would do instead without a long string of abstract words.



Centaur can try and give the means for expression to flow and explode into numerous directions from common needs and interest already there. As the kids are into music, natural extensions are practising rooms, a rock band, a steel band, a musicians' co-op, a record label... In fact, freedom from the poverty of opportunity with which most people living in our area have been faced with. Centaur isn't just for kids, but for all people feeling that way. Pensioners and the handicapped have also particularly featured in Centaur's work. The emphasis is everybody coming together in a spirit of direct mutual self-help in the direct opposite of a hostile environment: a warm, colourful, friendly and personalised home-from-home of their own. With the atmosphere of an old raw local - but without meeding the beer to make the brewers rich. Dormant or subdued aspirations which have hitherto been suppressed are given a chance to reach fruition.

We'd try and publish a grassroots magazine from the place, written by the kids and other users of the centre. And film-making - making together cinema verite and Super 8 and 16mm dramas expressing the kids' own attitude to life and their environment and the Fourth World, in particular with those of immigrant descent. Ours is an inner city area of massive redevelopment, and there's a large Cypriot and black population. We'd use video for filming political and social education debates on club evenings to make them more interesting and exciting, and giving individuals a natural, not an actor's confidence and dispel the diffidence based upon fear of being put on the intellectual spotlight or speaking out in public (meetings)

It's quite a real challenge. All of this can only come about by getting the right people together to come and assist the two very beleaguered full-timers working at present on subsistence level. We can help with accommodation and there might be some part-time sessions available. At present we're campaigning to get the necessary capital (at the moment we have £5,000) to prime the pump for next year and get our new centre off the ground and working. At present, with limited resources, we're trying to finish the renovation work there. It's very much a case of more hands make light work. A project's greatest strength and asset is its manpower: if it has enough of them, of the right calibre, any mountain can be moved.

The hard experience of Centaur over the years has begged several important questions...

#### 1. COMMUNITY WORK v. BUREAUCRACY?

##### (or CENTAUR-ISM v. CENTRALISM)

One of the most disgusting tricks any such independent project must learn is the ability to grovel for money by kowtowing to Council officialdom. This means that the project must have a respectable, hierarchical structure if it is to get anywhere. In other words, the State says, we applaud this organisation's attempt to help the underdog but, if it wants money, it must prove itself worthy of State aid by showing that it is 'organised' with a committee structure and willing to be totally subservient. Meanwhile public money is being squandered, as the administration necessary to enforce these standards of efficiency proliferate and more and more qualifications are introduced to screen and grade those ever increasing numbers of dilettantes who profess to have a social conscience. Those who are genuinely concerned with radical change through action are effectively gagged and pushed aside by the new stampede of semi-professional careerists looking for a cushy number in social work, who are clamouring to be graded according to their non-existent, paper qualifications.

Isn't it about time something like Centaur challenged these ridiculous parameters?

Show me a 'fully qualified' social worker, community worker, youth worker or probation officer and, nine times out of ten, I'll show you a comfortable, ineffectual bureaucrat hiding behind a certificate of proficiency but doing sweet f.a. for the common good. If public expenditure must be cut then it must start by removing all the over-paid over-qualified administration who are purely concerned with self-justification.

#### CAN AN INDEPENDENT PROJECT REALLY EXIST AND BE ALLOWED TO SURVIVE?

Our aim at Centaur is simply to help people with real compassion without having to 'come to terms' with the authorities and compromise our aims and ideology. This is almost impossible with the bureaucracy of making loads of detailed applications each year for money. (Our success so far from this is the security of an independent 10-year lease on our centre and £9000 of grants to date). There is the pressure and temptation involved in just trying to 'keep going', and making sure that you aren't trading away any of the principle of your sovereignty or birthright when you accept money. Money is like plutonium: you handle it only with great care. Most money has strings, and the old age "Whoever pays the piper calls the tune" has never held more true. Also through the shortage of cash, your work and its standards are prone to more economics and self-exploitation and working/pushing yourself beyond the limit in order to make up.

The road to Hell is paved with good intentions, the saying goes. Thus many well-intentioned people running 'alternative' projects are so keen to keep their projects going that they lose sight of their original goal and intentions and they find themselves bending over backwards to convince the authorities that they are not a threat to those authorities; that they cease, in effect, to be any meaningful challenge or 'alternative'.

Although Centaur's approach to its work has given its workers a real sense of immediate returns and purpose for their efforts, like any true alternative in a mixed economy (eg. the Meriden cooperative), its work has been hampered and vulnerable to all the external forces of that economy's system. During our eight years of existence we have had a running battle with the authorities - not only with their bureaucracy but, two years ago, a sordid fight and sit-in over our previous premises with the local Council who have continued since then to be manifestly obstructive.

Most alternative projects try and play a double act: keep a straight front for the authorities and do what they like in their own back garden. In our case our true colours have been seen by the authorities: this became apparent to them once they saw we meant independence - i.e. responding to the people in the community, not conforming to the Council's rules.

Radicals talk about taking action. Revolutionaries go ahead and do it. If a project is really an alternative one, it will automatically challenge the authorities. It is the duty and job of all community activists to challenge that status quo. If they are really doing their job, the response of the authorities will automatically be to put round all the rumours to discredit them both on the official and alternative grapevines to isolate and make people wary of having contact with them. The professional community workers will be self-policing anyway: they're so keen to be protectionist about their profession that they won't have wanted much contact anyway, and it would be bad for their career if their superiors saw them openly abetting you. In effect, as in Russia today, fear of catching the plague effectively dictates the social quarantine of the disturbed miscreant/disturbing dissident.

#### 3. HOW TO AVOID ALTERNATIVE PROFESSIONALISM - THE PLAGUE OF 'PROFESSIONAL SCHIZOPHRENIA'

Immediately your project has money you have a honeypot to which myriads of young alternative professionals swarm and home into like a plague of locusts and put any project severely at risk: most turn out to be 'professional schizophrenics'; indeed many bohemian and leftist aspirations and dress, but, when it comes to the crunch, they revert to their bourgeois origins. For who would risk their qualification, professional status and pursuit security which took them several years to obtain for being blacklisted and thrown on to the dole heap? (That's what happened to the Tyndale teachers). The contradiction is that the kids we are working with are the very victims of the qualifications system, yet the youthworkers (and their unions) who too have made the grade and become qualified, want to keep their profession exclusive, and use qualifications, and the training for them as the process to screen and grade hopeful fresh applicants. An alternative professional (eg. a radical lawyer) is a walking contradiction. An alternative professional is an impossibility.

University, that denizen of this meritocracy, and the conclusion of a 16-year intensive education process, takes a large part of the blame for causing this malady. There, these aspiring human beings and adults have the stuffing - a pristine sense of creative individualism, ingenuity and spark - finally knocked out of them, and instead they are equipped with projected secondhand views of the working class, the working people, the community, the political solution, and can rhetorise and write it up in essays in a language quoting Pelican course books. The meritocracy has delivered yet more over-educated under-achievers off its production lines. This identikit of the new professional, the new 'alternative manager', is now ready to carry on administering our society, as his parents had done. Throughout this century - the 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s - there's always been the young radical Guardian readership: an intellectual liberal leftist tendency who theorised and dabbled about changing society. They will unknowingly and inherently sell their souls and become managers, as they are well able to talk the same language to traditional professionals and officers in the establishment. They end up handling the people they're there to represent. In effect they are the alternative establishment.

These two sides of professionalism in this mutually benefiting harmony consolidate and settle their control over the poor unwitting people they're supposed to be representing under the whole cloak of 'democracy'. This provides a superb justification to carry on operating and furthering their self-interest. All they have to do is to occasionally issue annual reports or hold AGMs and stage public meetings to keep the public 'informed'. What a franchise!

These people bring all these trappings and innuendoes to any project and spell its living death.

Centaur is not a democracy but a crusade against hypocritical, democratic values. It is also determined to bring freedom to every individual in the true sense by activating their potential through direct action. Individuality has been suffocated by consensus for too long: Centaur believes that it's possible to bring back that elusive, creative spark of being alive, in terms which all of us understand. There will be little room for polemics, therapy or parasitism. The emphasis is on making waves, not an introspective analysis of how one is blown about by them. Empty, intellectual argument is fine for recreation but useless when things have to be done. Therapy may be the trendy, catch-word answer for dealing with social casualties but it only succeeds in treating the symptoms, not the disease or cause. We know that parasites exist all around

us - these persons who deliberately use the kindness, generosity or strengths of others in a 'spoil cuckoo' syndrome to lean on without bothering to try to solve their own problems by themselves. Surely that must be discouraged?

#### 4. WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

The strength of any project is its people: the team running it will be as strong as its lowest denominator - its weakest, most uncertain member. When the project is under external pressure and attack (as will be inevitable if it is an alternative) any chink will widen into a self-destructive rift that will tear the project apart.

The only solution, to ensure individualism, is to have very strong people - and enough of them - as your foundation, committed to guard and protect the project and its foundations. They must be like the three musketeers - must be and act as one. The empathy and same, common, deep interest, commitment and motivation must already be there, as that commitment and perseverance will be sorely tried in the struggle of their work to come. They should be able to work by empathy; you have to when you're under fire. It must be there, as in all other relationships, in the beginning or not at all. You can't and shouldn't rely on calling meetings to coerce people round.

In real community work you are, in effect, commando guerrillas, operating beyond the front lines without sufficient back-up or resources. You have to be self-sufficient and self-stimulating. For the project and you the rewards are total: liberty or death. The reward for your work is freedom, seeing a community really come alive and flex itself in every direction. Where, or how else can a real anarchist live and implement his or her beliefs in the society s/he is living in, and have some effect on the community in which s/he's living?

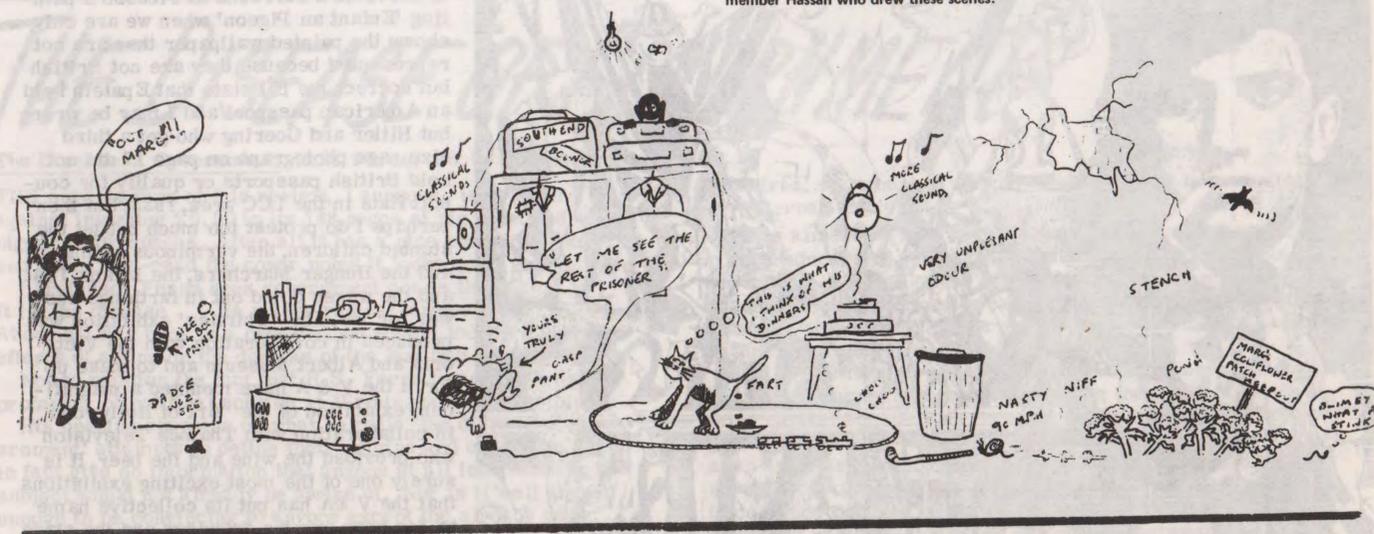
Centaur is not for the paper, closet anarchists who aimlessly do a job during the day for money, so that they can air their anarchism in the evenings. It is for those who have made a positive choice that their ideals are a lot more than that.

Marg Mcneil & Auriol Ashby

#### Contact

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The Turks arrive, as Marg and Vicky engage in their daily exercise, the cat does his, and the whole of the 'very' cheap 9 tons of cauliflower moulder to classical sounds. "Most Educational!" thinks Centaur member Hassan who drew these scenes.



# PAGING MR. MENDLESON

JACOB Mendleson is dead and in a world too much amused with Showbiz death my brief recorded fact could be of little import. He prowled around within the darkness of his overcrowded junk shop squatting at the decaying tag end of the Berwick Market and the material artifacts of unremembered lives spilled out and onto the State's pavement and I after a few vain efforts to buy a single picture frame of some one else's past failure for instant immortality to imprison my own diffident genius shrugged a lordly shoulder but in my holy pilgrimages from Ward's Irish pub, through the backstreet stews of Soho to leer at the friendly prostitutes in their ground floor offices and tip toeing lightly above the decaying vegetation of the Berwick market would peer into the darkness of Jacob Mendleson's homage to human failure for he was of the Soho world with its villains and its vice, its corrupt Lawmen and its Cox's apples and its multi national newspapers.

And Jacob Mendleson left £147,503 - £19,390 to the State, £1,000 for Jewish Incurables in London and £100,000 to the Arts bureaucracy and one can only cry why why why Mr Mendleson did you in your death choose to reward the State and the kultural bureaucrats when you should have sold me a cheap frame, bought the good, the bad or the indifferent work of living artists or better by far squandered the world's wealth in your keeping by leaning on your neighbourhood friendly bar buying free drinks for the undeserving poor. A bus ride away for the rich who can afford the fare is the Hayward Art Gallery, a huge concrete crate based and built on a rejected design for a World War 3 gun emplacement and there within wall upon wall is the current exhibition 'THIRTIES British art and design before the war'. I can think of nothing to commend the inter war years. Millions of men, women and children doomed to a lifetime of accepted unemployment, starvation and semi-starvation the order of the day. Nazi and fascist political parties gaining power all over Europe.

Vulgarity and bad taste in the commercial arts and in aesthetics and the visual arts a banality and a second rateness that can now only survive as museum pieces.

Unofficially all this rubbish is offered as nostalgia and I do not doubt that any society no matter how stupid, vulgar or evil will produce ancients who will look back with pleasure on how well they did out of their own particular social cess pit but a society based on human misery that failed to raise itself above its own slime should not be remembered with affection. These were no Athenians, no Renaissance men and women, there was no Lorenzo de' Medici to hire a Michelangelo but American criminal ponces and murderers as the folk heroes and First World War profiteers ordering the worst at the highest price. A.J.P. Taylor lays out the great social indictment in a 151 line introduction to the 320 page catalogue but from then on it is all systems go for those happy time years when grandmummy lived off her profit making shares in the privately owned railways, granddaddy scabbed for free by driving a bus during the 1926 General Strike and a servant girl could be imported from Wales for a handful of coins in weekly payment and would eat the family food leavings. I sound bitter because I am bitter for the memory of the millions of lives that were wasted for a minority's private greed. Of my simplicity I asked "someone who appeared to be in authority" why there was no painting by Picasso or Dali but was told that "they were not British" but Epstein is represented by his marvellous sculpture 'Genesis' and 'Night' and remember this, comrade, it was Epstein's work that was laughed out of court in those 'glorious' '30s and it was the rightwing critics who daubed his Rima sculpture that still holds its place in Hyde Park. Seek it out for yourselves comrades. But how can you have the 1930s without Picasso's 'Guernica', painted in 1937, that became a banner for the embattled men and women of the left or Dali's 1936 surrealist

painting 'Premonition of Civil War'. But though Picasso is represented by omission "in the manner of Chinese wallpaper to serve as a surround to Picasso's painting 'Enfant au Pigeon' when we are only shown the painted wallpaper they are not represented because they are not British but correct me if I state that Epstein held an American passport and I may be wrong but Hitler and Goering who get a third size page photograph on page 17 did not hold British passports or qualify for council flats in the LCC area, 1933. But then perhaps I do protest too much but let the stunted children, the verminous slums, and the Hunger Marchers, the Means Test and the wages doled out in farthings answer for me. The "Thirties" exhibition was produced in collaboration with the Victoria and Albert Museum and to make up for it the V & A have mounted a magnificent exhibition of the "Art of Hollywood" in collaboration with Thames Television who provided the wine and the beer. It is surely one of the most exciting exhibitions that the V & A has put its collective name to, for here are the drawings and the stage sets of that world of film fantasy that made the Thirties bearable for so many millions.



Here was the dream world wherein we could rape and pillage on the Main, die in the Flanders mud, shoot our way to glory on the steps of St Pat's, crawl through the Teutonic shadows or drift in full evening dress among the silken drapes and willing women and all for the price of 9 pence which was one hour's pay in some ghastly 8 till 5.30 factory should you hark back to the old nostalgia of the Hayward 'Thirties'. A truly worthwhile exhibition with so much talent in the making of second rate dreams but the Hollywood factories churned out much pleasure for the masses, and my place was among them, for me to stand in judgement wine glass in hand on the failures of the late night TV film. In the dark womb of the '30s cinema we hid for a brief three hours from awful reality. But collaboration is the order of the day and the Archiv der Akademie der Kuenste in Berlin through its tag team partner the Goethe Institute in the Royal Borough of Kensington have in conjunction with the Riverside Studios mounted the ERWIN PISCATOR exhibition and the East German script of MAYA-KOVSKY in the old theatre in London's Aldgate.

Mayakovsky was a poet of the revolution as long as the scarlet flame burned but when the bureaucrats blew out the dying flames of idealism for the boredom of the status quo Mayakovsky, in 1930, killed himself. Schuetz will not be coming to London's Half Moon theatre for the production of his play and the East German authorities do not intend to mount the play, no matter who pays, in East Berlin so somewhere in this there must be a moral for poets revolutionary or Poetry Workshop.

But it is down to the sweet flowing Thames for the 'political theatre' of Erwin Piscator. Again a magnificent exhibition as one wandered among the wine and the cheese dip to touch the hem of history by asking and listening to Erwin Piscator's widow. Piscator was born in 1893, fought in France from 1915 on and in 1918 was on the Soldiers' Council with George Grosz, Heartfield, Herzfelde, Schlichter and others, participated in the Berlin Dada movement and from 1919 through 1920 with the founding of the Das Tribunal and Das Proletarische Theater mounted great political declamations within his iron O. In 1938 it was New York and Tennessee Williams, Miller, Marlon Brando and Tony Curtis and others with the "you're a tree go stand in a park but watch out for Arthur's dog" style of acting and then in 1966, death. It was the Walter Mitty dream life of every suburban revolutionary sweating out his/her A levels. Piscator, as with others, channelled the creative revolutionary idealism of others into what I would hold was a good and noble cause and like Picasso's 'Guernica' or the black and scarlet flags of the demonstrations it gave those whose contribution could only be their hearts and minds a knowledge that they were part of the unending struggle that must always be fought. Here they are within the Riverside Studios, the brilliant stage sets of an age when political murder was the order of the hour and revolution was not an academic debating point but, as in the tragedy of Northern

Ireland, a thing that was feared and fought. Yet I know that I part company with the talents of men and women such as Piscator for the play is the thing and the mummer on the bare boards is my communication with the absent playwright's questing mind. In the end, I would hold, the spectator is paying to see a pantomime no matter how noble the principle and these great overpowering stage sets as with Piscator in Berlin or Brooks or Hall in London with their Shakespearian circuses or the top billing of the 'great actor' of the fashionable hour kill the only thing that will last, that single lone voice of the playwright. But it is an exhibition worthy of your attention, comrades, and if you would seek comparisons then look upon Piscator's 1925 'Despite All', 1914 to 1919 historical review mounted for the German Communist Party's Congress with Joan Littlewood's "Oh oh oh what a lovely war". Piscator played it for bitter tears and Joan played it for bitter laughter. The same theme and the same approach to the staging but the political machine gun in the streets dictates the mood of the spectator.

## MOCKING THE DEAD PAST?

And of the Royal Academy's monster mighty 'POST-IMPRESSIONISM' exhibition what can one say beyond the fact that it is always a pleasure to view the work of any artists. I accept that I am naive, simplistic and honestly affirm that I still believe in the physical manifestation of Father Christmas each snowless December, but I cannot accept the opinion of one national art expert that there are "over four hundred masterpieces in this R.A. exhibition". Eighty per cent of the paintings in this Cross-Currents in European Painting Post-Impressionism are dealers' junk. Isolate any one of these paintings and they will have a value as a minor historical document but in the mass they deaden the mind and destroy the few good paintings by association. It is inevitable that within your lifetime, comrade, there will be a great re-evaluation of painting reputation made during the last 100 years for the Seurats, the Matissees, the Gauguins and the Van Gohs and all those sunflower, chair and postmaster prints are beginning to pall and bore by over exposure and when that happens then one begins to question the value or the validity of the work in question as a timeless work of art or as no more than a fashionable period piece. But I walk among the knee bending fraternity wine glass in hand seeking and finding pleasure in the lovely smile of Griselda Hamilton-Baillie and through the great halls of the State Galleries among the drinking chattering throng I choose to believe that I see the ghost of the 93 year old Jacob Mendleson, the dead present mocking the dead past.

ARTHUR MOYSE

## THE DISEASE OF GOVERNMENT

The Disease of Government, H.S. Ferns, £6.50 Temple Smith

THE only function of this review, I suppose, is to warn against investing £6.50 in its 148 pages of big print and even bigger white spaces. After all it has a nice sounding title, and if you mis-read the cover notes it looks quite promising.

"Professor Ferns sees government not as the doctor. It is the disease ... He makes radical suggestions! ... Above all this book is a plea that we should look at the real effects of acting on the dogmas of the last half century ..."

Not to mention the fact that H.S. Ferns is an illustrious professor of political science at Birmingham University.

His opening chapters on what he calls 'the disease of government' attempts to define their origins and evolution, but in fact give no information that anyone at all interested in the subject would not already be aware of. Nor is it well argued enough to be convincing to anyone except the already converted. So he fills them up instead with nice sounding phrases, pretty analogies and trite one liners. Each one a complete

'cast iron' statement to which he neither sees nor mentions any alternative view.

"It is almost an iron law of nature that governments are poor producers of goods and services, and workers poor governors. Specialisation of activity ... is the most powerful reason why the community cannot get rid of government and likewise why it must have a government ... this is a fact of nature from which we cannot escape".

Meanwhile back in chapter 4 he begins his campaign for saving the human race by resurrecting the ghost of laissez-faire capitalism, defines freedom as having the choice of who your master is or being allowed to choose who your slaves are, and starts to sound like the demented Victorian time-traveller he probably is. His arguments after all lead him to conclude that his ideal system of economic organisation was most nearly met by the USA and GB between 1840-1914, going on to claim that:

There was a degree of social peace and solidarity which contradicts the mass generalisation about class antagonism and revolutionary struggle ... It is state intervention in the economics of these communities and the growth of myths about abstract social justice that have produced and are producing class struggle, and not the system based on free exchanges".

He goes on to misrepresent the history of the British army in yet another of his watertight, no-questions-asked statements of 'fact':

"... a century of alleged corruption and purchase in the British Army saw Trafalgar and Waterloo ... against the meritocratic system which saw Gallipoli and the Somme".

I only mention this to show how badly researched and thought out his arguments are. At this point one can't really take the author seriously anymore which is just as well as he gets worse.

You're going to be told that Argentina is a free capitalist society, that government has turned into an agency, not of peace but of anarchy. And finally in one of the few paragraphs he generously donates to other theories about government and its alternatives comes his crowning achievement as a professional imbecile:

"The anarchists ... have no case. Their indictment of government deserves attention; their prescription none. For this reason; (wait for it!) "They refuse to accept the natural inescapable fact that men and women must work in order to live, and that under this stern necessity they are always vulnerable to the inevitability of robbery or government or both ... the solution is to use government to abolish robbery".

This last statement is interesting as earlier on he puts out a nice line on government having evolved from robbery. But as he was saying:-

"The anarchist conceives of government as the consequence of someone else's evil. The anarchists make the same mist-

ake as other revolutionaries do. They seek change, salvation, what you will, by blaming and thence removing other people. Hence the euphoria; hence the commotion, hence the slaughter and finally the tyranny".

His final conclusions and unconvincing solutions are a slightly re-vamped form of 19th century laissez-faire capitalism. His promised 'radical suggestions' include: not allowing governments the right to control credit and currency. This will be done by giving us all the constitutional right to hold assets in any currency we like. Whoopee! We'll all be able to draw the dole in Swiss francs. The government will also not be allowed to contract a debt in excess of ten times the average annual government revenue! Makes you wonder what they're doing now. These and one or two other waffled and pointless constitutional amendments will be forced upon our poor little unsuspecting government by a series of referenda, which, would you believe it, is where the monarchy get in:

"... in this way (referenda) the monarch will know more precisely than is possible at present what kind of society she governs and what are the rules of the political process it is her duty to monitor. No longer will the monarch be obliged to approve of every act of her ministers and parliament but will have some very general rules approved by her people by which she will be able, as the final expression of public authority, to scrutinise the activities and decisions of the politicians. She will then be a real sovereign and not at present a means of clothing with the prestige of her name and dignity the decisions of politicians the cumulative consequences of which are too often disastrous or revolutionary or both".

And so it ends, one of the most ill-researched, simplistic, badly-argued books it has ever been my displeasure to read.

STEVE SORBA

# MALE CHAUVINIST AS VICTIM

Time to go. Brian Behan; Martin Brian and O'Keeffe, £4.95

\* \* \*

OLDER readers will recognise the name of Brian Behan. About 1960, when fortunes were being made by investment in building, there were famous strikes to improve the lot of building workers. Brian Behan, an anarcho-syndicalist bricklayer, was chairman of the strike committee at one of the more famous sites. After the strikes were over he wrote some hilarious articles in *The Spectator*, about how his site had attracted militants from all over the country and days had been lost to disputes about the minutiae of Marxist theory, and about the worker who shovelled sand and cement down lavatory pans, not for grievances or political views, but simply to exercise the power he had of stopping drains.

Brian's first novel is very funny in places and compulsively readable all the way through. A man who was reading it over my shoulder, on a bus, asked me the name of the book so he could buy a copy.

O'Brien, the central character, is as unlovely a character as anyone could hope to avoid, murderously violent, a liar, a whiner, a bully and a fool. In chapter four, coming home from indecently assaulting the salesgirl in a sex shop and failing to seduce a woman he meets in a pub, he finds his wife, a mature student, reading a book. "After a hard day's work", he says, "the least I expect is to have a poxy dinner waiting".

Such characters often appear as villains. But this story is told largely as O'Brien himself sees it. In his own eyes he is a peaceable man, too often provoked beyond endurance. He

tells lies to spare people's feelings. He loves his wife and children, and pities himself. The relationship is not ideal. His remorse is genuine.

He spent his youth in oppressive all-male establishments: a school run by malevolent Christian Brothers, a reform school, the army. Then he entered the adult society he thought normal, a world where the worth of a man is measured by his capacity for hard physical labour, where men divide their time between work and the pub, where women are left to look after the homes, the children, the men, and all the responsibilities.

Now O'Brien is devoid of work. We are not told why in detail, but it involves violence with a policeman and a term in prison. He has time to think, and for the first time in his life he feels the need to decide for himself. But he still needs his home, where as a matter of habit and common sense his wife makes all the decisions. This conflict is his trouble. The tantrums, the secretiveness, the self pity are those of an adolescent, torn between the need for security and the need for independence. This is the story of a robust Irish bricklayer, struggling in middle age to grow up.

Piggish male chauvinism as the product of disguised matriarchy where the women stay in control by preventing the maturation of men, is convincingly argued in this witty work of fiction. As a factual notion it is probably untrue, but at least it is an interesting half truth, to set against the half truths of lumpenfeminism.

Even in fiction, however, keep me clear of O'Brien. He may grow up, but he will still be appalling.

DONALD ROOUM

# GROWING UP AND OUT

George Woodcock was founder editor of *Now* (pace Jimmy Goldsmith) in the forties when he was also an editor of *FREE-DOM*, later writing important biographies of Godwin, Proudhon, Read, Kropotkin as well as the *Pelican Anarchism* which has done sterling service. (The latter of these five books is still available.) He has now had published a volume of poems *The Kestrel*, published by Ceolfrith Press in Sunderland. The poems of this little volume span the years 1935-1978, so as Woodcock was born in 1912 this volume could also be entitled 'Growing' - but perhaps 'onwards' rather than 'up'. Like the other volumes reviewed here, it is beautifully produced; and wide ranging in subject matter. A snatch from the title poem:

Kestrel, bird of the middle sky  
I hesitate to address you.  
The English poets turned you  
into a cliché. Hopkins using you  
with intellectual splendour,  
Day Lewis misusing you  
with polite dullness.

Woodcock's anarchism is more explicit in other poems in the collection, such as 'The Agitator', one of the earlier poems:

The Little Hills that lay along his path  
Shed their long shadows as the evening fell.  
Behind their wall, west by the setting sun,  
The paper gunmen waited for their kill.

Lastly, *No Illusions*, a collection of poems by Anthony McVeigh, again interspersed with illustrations, one assumes by the author. Seventeen poems inspired by such as Brecht and Breton, some of the poems are implicit statements of rebellion rather than the more explicit stance of others, and are the stronger for that, it's difficult to extract a short isolated stanza - one of the shorter poems:

The Thought

The New Day is dawning it's whispered in the alley:  
Society will crumble from within its thick barricades  
Walls will collapse and slaves will be free  
It's been a long time since the summer of love  
but the children have never lost sight of the ultimate goal  
the cause only corroded - it's living and pure,  
the new day is dawning  
the new day is dawning  
Society will crumble from within.

Nicolai Gogol: *The Overcoat*. Journeyman Press, £1.20 (15p post)

Michael Horovitz: *Growing Up: Selected Poems and Pictures 1951-1979*. Allison & Busby, £2.50 (25p post)

George Woodcock: *The Kestrel* and other poems of past and present 1935-1978. Ceolfrith Press, 17 Grange Terrace, Stockton Road, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear SR2 70F, £1.50 (25p post)

Anthony McVeigh: *No Illusions*. La Guerre Company, 43 Stewart Ave., Blantyre, Glasgow. No price given.

All these titles are available to order from Freedom Bookshop.

J. H.

\* BUYING BOOKS FROM  
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"Gogol was in no sense a cultivated man of letters. He appeared on the literacy scene like an utterly unexpected and rude guest after whose departure life at home could never again be the same. It does not matter that the rude guest's performance was not quite understood for what it was, that a critic like Belinsky, for instance, could cite his performance as an overriding example of the writer's assumption of responsibility to society, of his civic consciousness and fidelity to the factually real. What was then chiefly overlooked in Gogol was the fantastic gratuity of his humour and his transcendence of the limited social motive through the unearthly and well-nigh metaphysical pathos of a supreme creation like 'The Overcoat'. For in truth, Bashmachkin, the little copying clerk who is the hero of this story, attains a stature far greater than that of any mere victim of an unjust social system. He is a timeless apparition of humanity in extremis, of man homeless not only in his society, but in the universe. There is one story in American literature, Melville's 'Bartleby the Scrivener' which has a spiritual affinity with 'The Overcoat'. But it is no more than affinity - Melville's story, for all its profound overtones, lacks the inner coherence, the reasonance, and marvellous stylization of Gogol's masterpiece."

This was Philip Ratu, longtime editor of 'Partisan Review' talking at a public meeting at Columbia University in 1952 commemorating the One Hundredth anniversary of Gogol's death. Its recollection is prompted by the re-appearance of a beautifully produced edition of 'The Overcoat' from Journeyman Press, translated by David Magarshack with illustrations by John Edward Craig. Originally published by Merlin Press in 1956 - this reprint is most welcome.

Michael Horovitz is in the very forefront of the poets currently working in this country. His magazine, 'New Departures' which also appears all-too-rarely, is a veritable encyclopaedia of all that is best on the literacy scene. He has previously published a number of books and pamphlets of poetry, mostly under the imprints of various small and smallish presses, of which 'The Wolverhampton Wanderer' (Latimer Press) was outstanding. Now, Allison and Busby, one of our 'larger' presses, has issued 'Growing Up: Selected Poems and Pictures 1951-79', as Michael was born in 1935, it can be seen that some of the work is very early indeed. It is all pleasantly interspersed with drawings by the author, and collages photographed from many sources, forming together a kind of literary and pictorial autobiography.

The overall impression - as with 'New Departures' is of a book ordered in an anarchic kind of way, with a definitely rebel spirit behind it, also, as with 'New Departures', crammed to overflowing with wit and vision.

Some of the poems have a positively Stoppardian feel, and delight in words :-

Song of the Egoist  
I devour

What is before me  
I sometimes ache for  
What is beyond me -  
Tho - it might be said  
Since nothing is before me  
I have - nothing  
Yet - since nothing is beyond me,  
I want for nothing  
So, if I look back  
at what I wanted,  
I can be well satisfied  
with what I have got.

—Others are more mersonal and introspective:

For Chagall and my bride  
When our two bodies

are lain to rest  
Our spirits fly straight  
up to the sky  
We gave to the world  
one another's best  
And gave up wonder  
gaw the wind  
forces  
the candles  
to pray.