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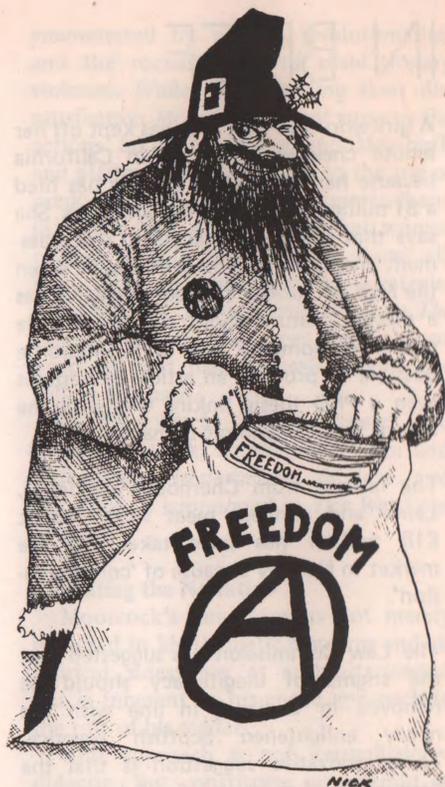
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FREEDOM

1886 : CENTENARY YEAR : 1986

ANARCHIST MONTHLY

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CONTACTS COLUMN UPDATED TO 1 DECEMBER 1986

BANGOR Anarchist Collective, c/o UNCW Students Union, Deiniol Road, Bangor, Gwynedd
BRIGHTON Brighton Bomber, c/o Priory House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton
BRISTOL Drowned Rat, Box 010, Full Marks Bookshop, 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol
BURNLEY A's, 2 Quarrybank, Burnley
CAMBRIDGE Box A, c/o Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge
DAM National Secretary, Box DAM, Cambridge Free Press
COVENTRY Anarchist Group, PO Box 125, Coventry CV3 5QT
DURHAM Libertarian Organisation & Structure, c/o 85a New Elvet, Durham
EDINBURGH Counter Information, Box 81, c/o 43 Candlemaker Row
ESSEX Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex
GLASGOW Here & Now, Box 2, c/o Changes, 340 West Princes Street, Glasgow G4 9HE
HASTINGS A's, c/o Hastings Free Press, 14 Lower Park Road, Hastings, E. Sussex

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 121 Books, 121 Railton Road, London SE24
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 DAM, c/o Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 2BU

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ULVERSTON South Cumbria DAM, 3 Little Union Street, Ulverston LA12 7HP



SEASONAL GREETINGS

FREEDOM

1886 : CENTENARY YEAR : 1986

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NEWS FROM ANGEL ALLEY

LATE again. It took longer than we anticipated to get our centenary edition into print, which messed up our schedule for November, so we decided to combine the November and December issues into one, and start afresh in January.

The cover price of *Freedom* in 1987 will come down to 50p, and the inland subscription rate to only £6 for 12 issues, which we hope will help to increase the circulation. Readers are invited to help by paying the same rate as this year (inland £10), for which they will receive two copies of each issue, the second of which may be used to try and introduce new readers (if you can collect the new sub and send it on to us, that would be even better than leaving your contact to do so). If we can add a mere 500 to our subscription list, we will be financially solvent and able to put donations to better use.

Freedom Press will be publishing a new theoretical quarterly, *The Raven*, and we hope to make *Freedom* rather more of a news magazine, so please send in your news items.

Your subscription

In our April issue we noted 'Stu Stuart has retired from editing, but has generously stayed with the collective to deal with this month's subs'. In the event nobody was eager to take the job on, and our generous comrade was stuck with the subs until September, when to our delight our publishers Freedom Press volunteered to take over the subscription lists.

The theft of our files in the summer of 1985 had left us in some confusion about who had paid and when. Fortunately our comrades in the Freedom Press office keep a record of letters and monies received, and could use this as a starting point for attempting to establish the currency of subscriptions. Some 400 circular letters were sent to subscribers who appeared overdue, with details, or in some cases a declaration that there was no information. The result has not been spectacular but

certainly worthwhile. Many brickbats were received, some deserved, others reflecting badly on those who hurled them; but there were also a number of warm *mea culpas* which in sordid money terms amounted to over £1,000.

Apparently late subscribers who have not yet responded were not sent the centenary special, but you are getting this issue of *Freedom* with a subscription form for 1987, because we are quite prepared to write off past debts and enter you up for a year's *Freedom* starting now. If you want the centenary issue please add another £2.50 to your remittance.

Renewal forms are included with this issue to those readers whose subs renewals are now due (according to our records). This year's 'regular income' and 'low income' rates are combined in the new rate which means 'low income' subscribers get less of a reduction (but a substantial reduction all the same). The 'claimants' or 'starvation' rate is also reduced, to £4, as we think a subsidy from donations is worthwhile, to avoid losing contact through simple poverty. The 'institutional' rate, for libraries and similar, is maintained at more or less the same as this year, to cover the extra paper-work and postage.

Money back if not delighted

Freedom's new companion is about to be launched, a magazine of 96 pages including eight pages of illustrations, called *The Raven*. And just as we successfully launched *Anarchy* in 1961 with the offer of a joint subscription with *Freedom*, we are making a similar offer for *The Raven*. We do not expect the first issue to be the best, since we feel it will take a year for such a journal to create its style and attract its contributors. But we are confident it will be a good issue.

So much so that everyone who takes out a joint subscription to *Freedom* and *The Raven* for 1987, and is not satisfied with *The Raven*, can claim back the pertinent portion of the subscription without returning the magazine.



A letter from Chris Hartwell elsewhere in this issue points to a shortcoming of the centenary number of which we were well aware, the shortage of women among the contributors. Only one of the women we individually invited actually sent in an article, and one article apparently from a woman came in response to the general invitations we published. Ah well, better luck next centenary.

The centenary number was not intended to be in *Freedom's* own style, but to encompass all the styles of contemporary anarchist writing. This meant we included poetry, which we never publish in *Freedom* magazine. We have neither the time nor the talent to judge the literary merit of contributions; our small skill is exhausted in assessing the content of prose articles and making their meaning clear. Several poems have been sent to us since the centenary number and we have taken the liberty of passing them on to our friends and comrades Riff Raff Poets (address c/o Freedom Bookshop), who publish an occasional magazine.



Freedom Bookshop Party

Saturday 20 December 10am - 4pm
Bring a bottle if you can afford one; if not, come anyway.

Bookshop Holiday

Between 22 December 1986 and 6 January 1987, the bookshop will only open spasmodically. Please telephone 01-247 9249 before your visit.

Iran TERRORISM ON BOTH SIDES

IN TEHRAN, the turmoil from recent disclosures is as great as in America, for all that it has to be in the form of muttering. It has even brought the Imam onto television (which is not so common these days) to be severe and stamp down on rumours. The only unifying thread is glee at bringing down a second American president. (Please don't spoil this with reality, I know he's still there.)

It is not that anybody is shocked by anything. It has been open gossip for years that arms come from Israel, and everybody knows that that can't happen without American agreement. It has also been open gossip that the regime is a jumble of factions and conspiracies, (what Iranian enterprise isn't?) around the central divide of who gets to be next Supreme Guide on Earth. Add to this stew, the tendency to label any politician 'American' (ie a sleeping agent) and the scope for conspiriologology is immense. After all, there's not much else to do.

The subtlety of this theorising can be illustrated by its two extremes. It is well known that any male with a heavy moustache is 'communist'. No distinction is drawn here between Tudeh (Moscow line CP, stamped down on these days), Fedaiin (Marxist-Leninist, splintered over attitudes to the war) and Mojehedin (radical moslems, convinced that they are ready to step in). There is then a spectrum of opinion, covering various plots, like the return of the Young Shah (he had a radio broadcast recently, heavily jammed). Finally, there is the opinion that Khomeini is a British agent, the intricacies of that are too much here.

What seems to have been happening is that the faction fronted by Rafsanjani, speaker of the Majdis, tried to strengthen its hand by swinging a big arms deal (or two, it's not certain how much the American and Israeli overtures were separate). In return, apart from the profits, there would be some influence brought to bear on Shias in Lebanon to release American hostages. Unfortunately, those with most influence were in the other camp so they didn't co-operate much. There were some arrests, to show them their place and in retaliation, the Lebanese allies blew the whole thing to the press.

Speculation about the split was so intense that Montazeri, Imam Designate, some of whose relatives were arrested, was summoned to Tehran from Qom and told to cool it. Khomeini then stepped in in public. After gloating about the 'great explosion in Washington's Black House' he laid into officials who sought contacts with foreign agents, they should be 'screaming at America'. When asked who had made such contacts, 'Why should you be influenced by foreign propaganda or by your own egotism' and gentle hints that any further questioners would have their hearts broken.

So it's been an interesting couple of weeks. Even more interesting, in the absence of any noticeable progress towards anarchism in Iranian politics is, will they get this sorted out before the old bastard dies/the war finishes/the Twelfth Imam returns to corporeal existence. Watch this space.

Ali



Police BROAD WATER FARM

SO FAR, six of those who pleaded not guilty to the charge of causing an affray at Broadwater Farm Estate in 6 October 1985 have been brought to trial. Four have been acquitted. Two have been found guilty: Clifton Donaldson sentenced to five years on 27 October, and Nicholas Jacobs sentenced to eight years on 3 November 1986.

Broadwater Farm is the place where Police Constable Keith Blakelock was stabbed to death in the course of a

battle between residents and the police. There is some disagreement about how the battle started.

The police say miscreants at Broadwater Farm had been stockpiling weapons and were waiting for an excuse to attack the police, which they found in the accidental death of Mrs Cynthia Jarrett. (An early police press release alleged that maintenance pits in the Broadwater Farm garages had been filled with petrol ready to make petrol bombs, but the garages at Broadwater Farm do not have maintenance pits.)

The residents say they had been subject to heavy and hostile policing, and that a few rude gestures and catcalls were used as an excuse for a full-scale invasion to show the residents who was boss.

All six defendants in the subsequent trials have told similar stories. They were told when first arrested that they were to be charged with the murder of PC Blake-lock. They were refused access to a solicitor. They were segregated and treated roughly. After some time they were told, if they confessed to rioting they would be released, and the murder charge dropped.

Police witnesses did not deny refusal of a solicitor; they said solicitors would interfere with the course of justice. And there is some oblique support for the allegations of rough treatment; one of the detectives involved in the interrogations, with the confusing name of Constable Sargent, had damages of £3,500 awarded against him earlier this year, for beating up a young black man in custody.

Juries have sensibly rejected uncorroborated confessions, but in the case of Clifton Donaldson there was also a photograph of him throwing a stone. He says a policeman threw it at him and he was throwing it back. It is not known whether the jury disbelieved his story or whether they thought it a poor excuse for stone-throwing, that the other fellow started it.

In the case of Nicky Jacobs there were photographs and two witnesses. The photographs were blurred and unconvincing. One of the witnesses said she had seen him carrying bricks but not throwing them. The other witness was one of those who pleaded guilty, who was appealing against sentence; his original statement had not mentioned Nicky and defence questions implied he had made some kind of bargain, evidence against Nicky for a word in support of his appeal, perhaps.

Anarchists are against wars, but that is not to say we saw no difference between the Nazis and those who made war on them. We do not like riots either, but that is not to say we see no difference between the angry young men of Broadwater Farm and the highly paid young men who came in to 'teach them a lesson'.

DR

22 months for CO

A COURT in Bad Kreuznach (Federal Republic of Germany) sentenced Kai Kanz to 14 months in gaol on 11 September for refusing military service. Officially, he was indicted for 'desertion' and 'refusal of obedience'. Since he had just served a sentence of 8 months for his resistance to military service this adds up to a total of 22 months.

The court says the punishment was necessary for the sake of 'general prevention' and to have a 'deterrent effect' to preserve military discipline. The judges ruled that the constitutional provision prohibiting multiple punishment for one crime did not apply in Kai's case on the ground that the defendant is not an officially recognized conscientious objector, so there is no proof that he refused twice on the basis of one and the same conscientious conviction.

Kai was first called up in January 1985 but did not show up in the military barracks. He was accused of 'desertion'. The first trial in April 1985 resulted in a sensational and unusual acquittal; the court decided that he had explained his motives with 'high moral seriousness' so a criminalisation was inappropriate.

Kai had not applied for C.O. status because officially recognized C.O.s are forced to work within the 'civilian service'. Since this is part of civilian defence, military planning and the compulsory service system Kai characterises it as 'war service without weapons' and 'complicity in murder', and refuses to participate.

Of course, the state appealed against the acquittal and in August 1985 a more obedient court meted out a sentence of 8 months in gaol. Having completed this sentence he was arrested by the military. He had changed his mind and had to remain 63 days in military confinement. This abduction gives the legal pretext to construct a second indictment against Kai arguing that he had refused military service twice, thus committing two crimes.

In June 1986 a court in Idar-Oberstein trying the second indictment acquitted him, rejecting the argument that there was a second crime. In West Germany, however, military interests generally override legal and constitutional obstacles and human and constitutional rights. The court of second instance (appeal court) in Bad Kreuznach pronounced the aforesaid sentence of 14 additional months' imprisonment.

It is the length of the prison term that makes this verdict the most brutal among recent years' judgements against total resisters. Kai is appealing.

Alan Albon

For further information contact: Kai Kanz, Azenbergstr. 23, 7000 Stuttgart, West Germany. Donations (for legal and publicity costs), to: Kai Kanz, Postgirokonto No. 1080 94-703, Postgiroamt Stuttgart.

The savage verdict against Kai reflects the current tendency of political development. The already rather limited right of conscientious objection becomes more and more restricted by a series of new laws passed by the ruling conservative coalition in 1983, 1985 and 1986 (198?... Some consequences:

— Prolongation of 'civilian service' from 16 months to 19 or 20 months (depending on time of application for C.O. status and date of call up), rising to 24 months in 1989.

— Civilian service is now one third longer than military service (now 15 months, from 1989 on 18 months); the constitution demands equal length.

— Extension of the age of call up from 28 to 32 years. That means that C.O.s who were or will be driven into exile (several 10 000s in West Berlin alone) will have to wait four years more before being able to return.

— A new procedure of the infamous conscience examination. A majority of C.O.s are now recognized on the basis of written statements but a minority (those who were not recognized on the basis of their written statements, soldiers, reserve soldiers, those whose applications date back to the first half of 1983 and before, second applications etc.) still have to undergo an aggravated oral conscience inquisition in front of usually sadistic military tribunals (consisting of one military bureaucrat and two more or less militaristic jurors) and administrative courts (courts of the third instance). Since these oral conscience examinations now only apply to a minority, the government is successful in creating the impression that they have been abolished.

The onslaught on the right to refuse to kill is still going on and will probably intensify during the coming years.

One recent example: several C.O.s who have already done civilian service are in danger of losing their C.O. status and of being drafted to reserve exercises. The reason: it became known that they had carried arms for self-defence during their stay in Contra-ridden areas in Nicaragua.

It must be kept in mind that the conservative coalition's first laws against the human right of conscientious objection were discussed during the early 1980s — at a time when West Germany witnessed the largest peace movement in its history. But the new legislation was passed virtually unnoticed by this peace movement. Several attempts to put conscientious objection on the peace movement's agenda met with indifference and even hidden and open hostility.

Gernot

News and Events

Anarchist Research

The *Bulletin of Anarchist Research* (BAR) is currently an eight-page bi-monthly newsletter published on behalf of the Anarchist Research Group. Most of the material is sent in by subscribers, so as the list of subscribers grows we hope that the length and depth of the newsletter will increase. BAR contains such items as new books announced by publishers, short reviews of pamphlets, books and other published material, announcements of events, bibliographies of various anarchist related material, tables of contents of foreign anarchist publications, and pretty much anything readers wish to have published. Our next issue will contain an extensive bibliography of material on British anarchism.

Although there are numerous foreign subscribers, the newsletter is, at the moment, aimed towards British persons who are doing research into anarchist matters. It is *not* an 'activist' publication as there are numerous efforts at this already. Thus far, there have been six issues, and it looks like there will be several more.

The normal rate for subscribers is £3.00 per year, but anyone who wishes a lower rate can subscribe at £2.00 per year. Although there is no 'requirement', BAR will not improve if the subscribers do not send in material for publication.

Send all material for publication, and any subscription money, to TV Cahill, Department of Politics, University of Lancaster, Lancaster LA1 4YF. Make cheques payable to Bulletin of Anarchist Research.

Italy

After one year with a double name, the Italian anarchist communist organisation called ORA/UCAT has got a new name: Federazione dei Comunisti Anarchici (FdCA). The international address is always the same (without any name before): Donato Romito, cp 144, 61100 Pesaro, Italy.

Donato Romito, for FdCA

CIA sued

NINE Canadians are suing the CIA because they were used in CIA funded brainwashing experiments when they went for psychiatric treatment at McGill University in Montreal. 'Treatment' included '... combining intensive shocks with LSD, PCP, nitrous oxide, insulin, barbiturates, amphetamines and other experimental drugs...' upon first hospitalisation. The research 'concerned the desirability of basic research on the means which might be employed by totalitarian governments for effecting fundamental changes in the attitudes of persons from free nations who temporarily fall within their control.'

(Source: *New Scientist* 6th November 1986.)

Anarchist Short Stories

Following their successful publication of an anarchist novel, *The Free* by M. Gilliland, Hooligan Press intends to publish a collection of anarchist short stories by different authors. Please send stories to **Hooligan Press, BM Refract, London WC1N 3XX.**

Invitation

Open letter to the Class War Federation and the Direct Action Movement

AT THE moment in Britain, reformism and Leninism still dominate the working class movement. Action from libertarian groups and organisations has been on a fragmented and unco-ordinated basis. There has been little sharing of experiences among libertarians in various campaigns and struggles. Even on something as basic as a demonstration, libertarians have marched separately and in different parts of the demonstration.

The Anarchist-Communist Federation realises that while there are differences of approach between the class struggle libertarian organisations in Britain, the possibility exists for co-operation on a practical level. Through co-operation, we could become a more effective force, with the possibility of spreading our ideas more widely throughout society. Co-operation could be in terms of joint contingents on demonstrations, notifying each other of meetings, pickets, etc., and possibly co-operation in campaigns or particular industries.

If the ACF receives positive responses from the CWF and the DAM, it is prepared to arrange a venue for an initial co-ordination meeting.

**Anarchist Communist Federation
Box ACF, Freedom Bookshop**

Prisoners

People in prison appreciate greetings cards at this time of year. We are reminded of

Dean Hancock A99410
HM Prison Gartree
Market Risborough, Leics LE16 7RP

Russell Shankland
also at Gartree

Jimmy Oakes L61864
HM Prison Perry Road
Sherwood, Nottingham

Daryl Poxon L62735
also at Perry Road

Daffydd Ladd
House 3
HMP Featherstone New Road
Wolverhampton WV10 7PU

Iron Hawk Strouth 85450
Station A Unit 6-13/1
Nashville
Tennessee 37219 5255, USA

Kai Kanz
Azenburgstrasse 23
7000 Stuttgart, W Germany

GAY ANARCHIST NETWORK

If anyone, anywhere, is interested in establishing a network of lesbian and gay anarchists, to make contacts and keep in touch, exchange ideas, propagandise (maybe produce a paper), and meet when possible, then write to: **Moj, Box BLAG, 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol, BS2 3PY or Paul, Box 19, 17 Chatham Street, Reading, Berks.**

Demonstration in Parliament Square

The announcement of the 'Stop the Westminster Gasworks Show' on 23 Oct arrived too late to be published in the September *Freedom*. But it was advertised elsewhere and 43 comrades turned up in Trafalgar Square at 11am.

The plan was 'to proceed' to Parliament Square and there hold an illegal meeting (political demonstrations are illegal in the Square while Parliament is in session). The demonstration began with leafletting in Trafalgar Square, which was stopped by the police with one arrest. Comrades then walked to Covent Garden, where they had a meeting and took a collection which raised £60! The money was spent on hiring a tourist bus, in which 40 demonstrators proceeded to Parliament Square (they had not said they would walk). The other three went to Parliament Square separately and distributed some leaflets there, while the tourist bus was escorted by police onto Westminster Bridge, where the passengers alighted and dispersed. Not a gigantic demonstration, but an effective one which (in its own fashion) fulfilled its stated objectives. (Information from Oskar Rossin).

More News and Events

Direct Democracy

THE Anarchists for Direct Democracy (ADD) is a coalition of anarchist groups and individuals who believe that the next Federal elections creates the situation whereby a politically alienated public will be questioning the ritual of voting, and in search of an alternative. ADD will be presenting anarchism as the only viable alternative.

- In more concrete terms, our aims are:
1. To challenge the illusion that we live in a 'democratic' society.
 2. To present Direct Democracy as the alternative to parliamentary rule.
 3. To encourage similar non-authoritarian, anti-electoral campaigns Australia wide.

We will be embracing Direct Democracy as a central theme, and presenting it as an integral mechanism of anarchist strategies. In doing so, we will attempt to foster an environment where the concept of 'democracy' will be questioned and debated, and contrasted with what anarchists mean by the term Direct Democracy — and hence why we will not be voting.

We have the vision of a federative organisation of anarchists mounting a nationwide anti-electoral campaign; whose first objective will be the organisation of an anti-electoral conference, which will bring all of us together in the same location in order to trade and discuss strategies, tactics, etc. Hence this letter is also an open invitation to anarchist groups and individuals to initiate the organisation and hosting of an anti-electoral conference.

We in Melbourne have decided that it is already time to 'go public' and are proceeding with the printing of anti-electoral stickers.

ADD meets on the second Tuesday of every month, mostly at the YWCA, 489 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne (Floor 3, Room 10, at 7:30pm).

If you decide to contact us, please address the letter to ADD, as we don't want to alarm our friends at the Post Office just yet. Forward to Anarchy.

Brian
ADD, PO Box 330,
Port Melbourne,
Victoria 3207, Australia.

Upper Heyford

U.S.A.F. Upper Heyford is the home of 70 F1-11 nuclear bombers and several EF1-11 radar jamming planes. It is also the base that took part in the bombing of Libya last April. Like many people, we were horrified by this appalling act which killed many innocent people. In order that this act may not be forgotten there will be a large demonstration at Upper Heyford in April of next year, organised by a wide range of people including the peace camp.

In between time we wish also to have a New Years Eve/New Years day action at the base. The action will be based on the theme of making the new years resolution: 'Actions speak Louder than Words'. We wish it to be the first step towards other NVDA type events, in particular the April demonstration.

We hope the New Years Eve/New Years Day Action will be a preliminary build up of contacts and ideas for the future, as well as re-introducing large NVDA type events to Heyford. We wish the event to last over New Year's eve and New Year's day, with daytime demonstrations, vigils, marches etc. for those who do not wish to do NVDA. We will also be handing in written New Year's resolutions.

NVDA will be the main event of the evening of New Years eve, lasting through the night, carrying our resolution 'Actions Speak Louder Than Words' through to the New Year. The action may take the form of a reclamation, similar to the one we had here in March 1984, though this is open for ideas and suggestions. We would like people to organise into Affinity groups for the action, though hopefully the action will be wide enough for smaller groups to take part, perhaps as individuals. Trainers for NVDA training can be found through CND, or contact us and we will find a trainer for your group. We can also offer to come and speak to your group about the action, or you can call in to the peace camp and talk to us.

We need to have a response from you as soon as possible so that we know where we stand on numbers, give or take a few hundred. We can keep you informed of any possible planning meetings and send you more detailed information as we approach the event.

Ideas, suggestions, and donations towards the cost of leaflet printing, etc, would be greatly appreciated.

Upper Heyford Peace Camp
Portway
Camp Road
Upper Heyford
Oxfordshire OX5 3LP

Note: NDVA stands for Non Violent Direct Action



Hinder Binaries

JULIAN Perry Robinson's *NATO Chemical Weapons Policy and Posture* notes 'a British-owned firm, a subsidiary of John Brown plc, is among the firms which have been bidding for the QL factory contract'. QL, in case they didn't tell you, is a chemical as deadly as the methyl isocyanate that killed 2,000 people when it leaked from the Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal, and the vital component of US binary nerve gas bombs which will be deployed at RAF Welford, USAF Lakenheath and USAF Upper Heyford in October 1988.

As money and jobs have not yet been invested in the contract, we can still stop it and hinder the deployment of binaries. Write letters of complaint to John Brown Engineers & Constructions Ltd at 20 Eastbourne Terrace, Paddington, London W2 6LE (Tel: 01-262 8080) reminding them that the contract is likely to be cancelled if the political climate changes, and that if they do take the contract, they will suffer office occupation, disruption of advertising, a rotten press, etc, just like Union Carbide.

Paul Rogers

Riff Raff FREEDOM CENTENARY PARTY

THE account below of the Freedom Celebration Party, held in the Covent Garden Community Centre on 21st October, is written by Jeff Cloves, who modestly omits to record his own contribution to the event. He was in fact the compere for the whole evening, introducing every performer and also reading one of his own longer poems, *The Italian Cafe* — the one with a plaque about Shelley on the wall. He had also co-operated with Dennis Gould in the planning of the occasion.

The Sound of Freedom

NOW a hundred years of Freedom is something to write home about, so here goes. I mean the birthday celebration not its history — the centenary issue covers that but here's what went on on the night.

First off, it turned out to be both a show and a celebration and the poets and musicians who did their stuff that night did the old paper proud. Actually, that the event took place at all was nothing to do with Freedom or the Freedom Press, but was due to the dedication and energy of that poet, printer, pamphleteer, postcard and poster maker and frequent Freedom contributor, *Dennis Gould*.

He it was who snaffled the only-too-willing Adrian Mitchell and his daughter Beattie, *Poison Girls* chanteuse Vi Subversa and guitarist Richard Famous, Riff-raff Poets, Street Accord, The Anvil Quartet and a number of surprise guests and somehow persuaded them all to be at the right place at the right time. The whole event was the usual triumph of anarchist organisation, efficiency and precision with good food by Peacemeal, a bar and bookstall. Interestingly, the publishers of Adrian Mitchell's collected poems failed to get copies to the event on time whereas the, admittedly somewhat hastily photocopied and assembled souvenir programme was on sale.

The accordion band *Street Accord* was playing as the audience began to arrive and did another joyous set later on. Eleanor, Debbie and Chris in their green suits have become a familiar presence at demos, peace camps and particularly on the Digger's Walk. Later, when *Corby Women* sang Winstanley's Digger's Song

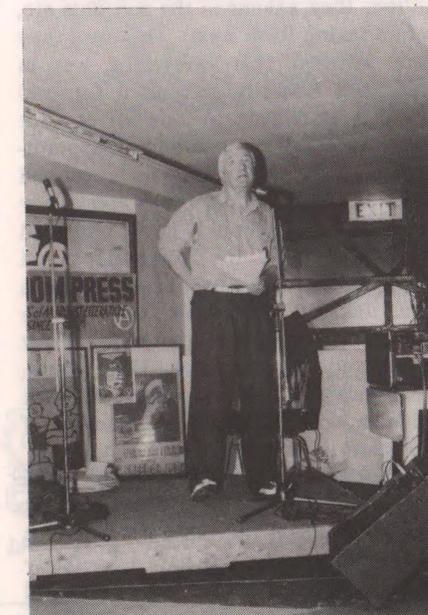
they nearly brought the place down with so many who took part in that walk now in the audience.

Riffraff poet, *Pat Van Twest*, travelled up specially from Bristol and her dramatic presence and fierce poems made a great impact. *Dennis Gould* himself was remarkably self-effacing but his excellent 'Election address on behalf of the fancy dress party' was among the few poems he did read and now has an enormous circulation via his postcard edition of it.

Surprise guest *Janet Ahmed* played a Mozart piano sonata. *The Anvil Quartet* (including ex-manager of Freedom Bookshop, Jim Huggon, on violin) played two movements from a Mozart Quartet and current Freedom editor and cartoonist Donald Room read a fine poem by A.E. Housman, which opened the ears of many.

For anarchists who loathe poetry *Adrian Mitchell* is the perfect antidote — passionate, witty, rude and committed, he completely lives up to his own claim...

My brain socialist
My heart anarchist
My eyes pacifist
My blood revolutionary



Adrian Mitchell reading at the Freedom Centenary party, and part of the audience



He had the audience rolling with laughter at his celebration of Chubby Checker's birthday and moved and angered by his magnificent poem of nuclear catastrophe 'On the beach at Cambridge'. It was *Beattie Mitchell's* first ever gig and she sang and played piano and guitar with utter confidence and style. Her duets with her dad were high points of their set and we all loved them because they love us. Marvellous.

The night was triumphantly closed by *Famous Subversa* with their extraordinary and powerful songs and Vi's expressionist glitter. Her anti-romantic love songs and the unsentimental miner's strike song 'Coal Hole' were outstanding but, like Adrian Mitchell's poems, what sticks in the mind above all is their double celebration of self and community — one and all. They richly deserved their encore and the whole show was worthy of the event it celebrated.

Now before all you readers outside London start muttering about London elitism, it only took place here because Dennis has been working in Freedom Bookshop and it was convenient to organise it here. Any group of comrades anywhere could equally well put on a Freedom Centenary Party using local talents. Barney Unwin from Suffolk played his accordion and a number of poets and musicians we'd never met before and whose names I'm sorry I can't remember, also performed admirably and passionately on the night and all the other artists might well perform elsewhere if asked. They'll need travelling expenses though and you can contact them via Dennis Gould c/o Freedom Press.

For readers who would like to have come to the party but, for various reasons couldn't you can hear and read some of the artists by ordering their work from Freedom Bookshop. Others, like Janet Ahmed, Jim Huggon, The Anvil Quartet, Street Accord and Corby Women you'll just have to hear live, as we did on this memorable and happy night. There are not many more events where Mozart happily holds hands with the muses of poetry, cabaret and rock but it was fitting that at least he did so on Freedom's birthday.

Jeff Cloves

For Beauty Douglas. The collected poems of Adrian Mitchell £4.95
On the Beach at Cambridge. New poems by Adrian Mitchell £3.50
Birthday Party programme including work by Pat Van Twest, Dennis Gould, Mary Woodward, Adrian Mitchell, Gary Snyder, Alex Comfort and Colin Ward. £0.30
Poison Girls Albums various low prices
Riffraff No 3 including work by Riffraff Poets, Henry Miller, Ferlinghetti £1.00

DAM LETTER FROM HULL AND REPLY

FEW people will know, or care, about the political reasons why the Hull group of the DAM collectively resigned from the organisation this summer, and this is not the place to comment on them. (Those curious to know may send an sae to PO Box 102, Hull for free copies of our resignation letters.) But it's recently come to our notice that certain DAM members have since been conducting a campaign to smear our reputation with the false accusation of dishonesty.

Other people in other circumstances would take legal action against these libels; as anarchists we would not resort to the law even if we could afford to. But it would be in everyone's interest if the facts of the matter were made clear so that people can judge for themselves. Hence this letter.

The DAM accuse us of stealing a typewriter belonging to the DAM's paper *Direct Action* (which we edited and produced), either for our own gain or in order to damage DAM. We have gained nothing however, and have no wish to inflict damage on the DAM, which is quite capable of doing that for itself.

The story of the typewriter is as follows: In early 1985 we took over the running of DA. As no accounts existed, we incurred a debt for printing with Aldgate Press of £136 which we later learnt we could not immediately pay.

Subsequently we found the DAM already owed several hundred pounds to Aldgate Press. What was most worrying was that amongst the rest of the DAM the general attitude was that the debts need never be paid, as a libertarian press was unlikely to sue. The official version of this was 'We'll pay later when we have more money' - an unlikely prospect.

In December 1985 *Direct Action* received a donation of £1,000. The person handing it over on behalf of the donor said it was to be used at the discretion of Hull DAM. After discussion with DAM delegates it was decided to spend some of the money on a typewriter, as the one then in use was hired. (Suggestions that some of the money should be used to clear debts were never responded to clearly. In the event it was used to cover losses as the paper never broke even.)

But later, in March 1986, we were advised by many DAM members that the typewriter was not a sensible buy, especially in view of the fact that the Manchester DAM, who would succeed us on the paper, already had one.

When, for political reasons, we resigned from *Direct Action*, we were concerned about the debt to Aldgate Press. We felt that as anarchists we should pay our debts without compulsion from the law, and that a libertarian press did not deserve to be ripped off. We felt obliged to repay what we had incurred, even though we could not be responsible for what DAM had owed previous to 1985.

We raised the money by selling the typewriter because Manchester DAM already had one; because it would have been unfair to use up the remaining cash which would pay for the printing of their first issue, and because the loss on its sale was less than the cost of hire over six months, so we got good value for money.

It was sold for £136 cash and a cheque for this amount was sent to Aldgate Press.

When delegates from Manchester visited Hull to collect the property of *Direct Action*, they examined the accounts etc, before taking them away. They said they were satisfied that everything was in order and honestly accounted for, and signed a statement to this effect. But they expressed surprise and disappointment on learning that they no longer had either the debt or the typewriter. They said the debt should have remained outstanding, and the typewriter used by their group to be exchanged for items to be used by Manchester DAM. As the typewriter belonged to the paper *Direct Action* and not to any one DAM group, this struck us as somewhat irregular. Yet they are now the ones to accuse us of dishonesty.

When differences develop into splits there is bound to be ill-feeling. That feeling dominates the DAM to the extent that the leaders appear to have deliberately misled their members about the real facts. It's hard to avoid the conclusion that DAM has achieved a pretty low level of maturity and integrity.

The former members of Hull DAM

IT IS not the DAM's usual practice to use other publications to answer our critics, but we feel that we have to respond to Hull Syndicalists' letter, to clear up any misunderstandings people may have about the whole affair.

What our 'comrades' from Hull fail to mention in their letter is that having decided to resign from the DAM, they then went on to produce an issue of *Direct Action*. In fact they sent out their resignations with that issue, which also advertised that Hull Syndicalists had already been formed. If that wasn't bad enough also included were a number of

articles supporting the CNT-U or 'Renovados'. Having been members of DAM for several years they were well aware of our policy, and that of the I.W.A., in recognising only one anarcho-syndicalist union in Spain, the CNT-AIT. This not only left us with a paper we were unable to sell but also caused anger, upset and confusion. I find it quite amusing that Hull Syndicalists are now trying to portray themselves, in their letter, as the injured party.

With regard to the typewriter, again there are a number of omissions. On the same night that the two comrades from Manchester DAM informed me that Hull Syndicalists were refusing to hand over the typewriter, as national secretary I

rang up one of their members. I informed him that we wanted the typewriter back. He said he would raise the issue at their next meeting. The following week I rang again to be told that Hull Syndicalists had voted to dispose of the DAM's collective property (i.e. the typewriter).

Again I'd like to pause to clear up one or two items that they've used to cloud the issue. Manchester DAM had no intention of selling the typewriter - in fact we wanted access to it for back-up in the event of failure with our own equipment. In the meantime it would have been used by the DAM for other purposes. But this of course is beside the point - the typewriter belonged to the organisation as a whole, as does our paper *Direct Action*, and we couldn't have sold it even if we'd wanted to. Besides this, the person who donated the £1000 was pretty upset by the antics of Hull Syndicalists, and stated that he wanted anything purchased with the donation to be handed back to the DAM.

At no time have we claimed that the money from the sale was not paid to Aldgate Press, nor have we ever claimed that there was anything wrong with their accounts (though the £375.49 we lost by not being able to sell the paper they produced would have come in handy).

To round off what will be the last official statement by us on the matter, it must be said that to decide to leave an organisation and then to go on to produce a paper on behalf of that organisation is hardly the action of anarchists. To then sell equipment belonging to that organisation against its expressed wishes is the action of thieves. The pitiful running around by Hull Syndicalists handing out leaflets and writing to libertarian papers will not change these facts.

Tony Crowther

(In November we received another letter from Hull, saying the former DAM members there had been called on, at 11 p.m., by current DAM members demanding money. We are told this was unofficial.)

DAM initials

DAM's reply to the letter from Hull was obtained for us by a member of Aldgate Press who is also a member of DAM.

For those unfamiliar with the initials, DAM is the Direct Action Movement, an anarcho-syndicalist organisation active in this country; IWA is the International Workers' Association to which DAM is affiliated; CNT is the Confederacion Nacional dos Trabajos (National Workers' Federation), an old Spanish anarcho-syndicalist union made illegal (of course) by the Franco fascist government.

Following the restoration of democracy in Spain, half a dozen rival 'CNT' groups emerged, each claiming to be the authentic continuation of the pre-Franco CNT, distinguished from each other by the addition of further initials after a hyphen. The CNT-AIT (Asociacion Internacional dos Trabajos - Spanish for IWA) is so-called because it is recognised as the authentic CNT by IWA.

Some time ago, CNT-AIT applied to a civil court in Spain for a judicial declaration that they, and only they, are the authentic CNT (this is important as the government has promised to restore funds confiscated by the fascists, and CNT is thought to be due for some twelve million pounds). In June this year, after long deliberation, the court found that there is indeed only one authentic CNT; however this is not the applicant, CNT-AIT, but an objector to the application, CNT-V (for Valencia), the 'Renovados'. CNT-AIT has lodged an appeal.

Editors

Germany MASS ARREST IN MAINZ

Sixty-two anti-NATO demonstrators were encircled without warning and arrested by police in Mainz on 16 September. They had participated in a demonstration on the occasion of a conference of the ATA (Atlantic Treaty Alliance) at the Hilton Hotel in Mainz. The ATA is a private international organisation devoted to propaganda in favour of NATO with national sections in all NATO countries. Five hundred people defied the huge police presence and came to the demonstration against NATO and ATA. Some people were molested, searched, robbed or arrested by police on their way to the demonstration. The protest march was so heavily surrounded by police it resembled a convoy of prisoners.

After the official end of the demonstration a group of approximately 100 people, on their way to the railway station, were stopped and surrounded. 62 persons were put one by one in vehicles for the transport of prisoners. This procedure

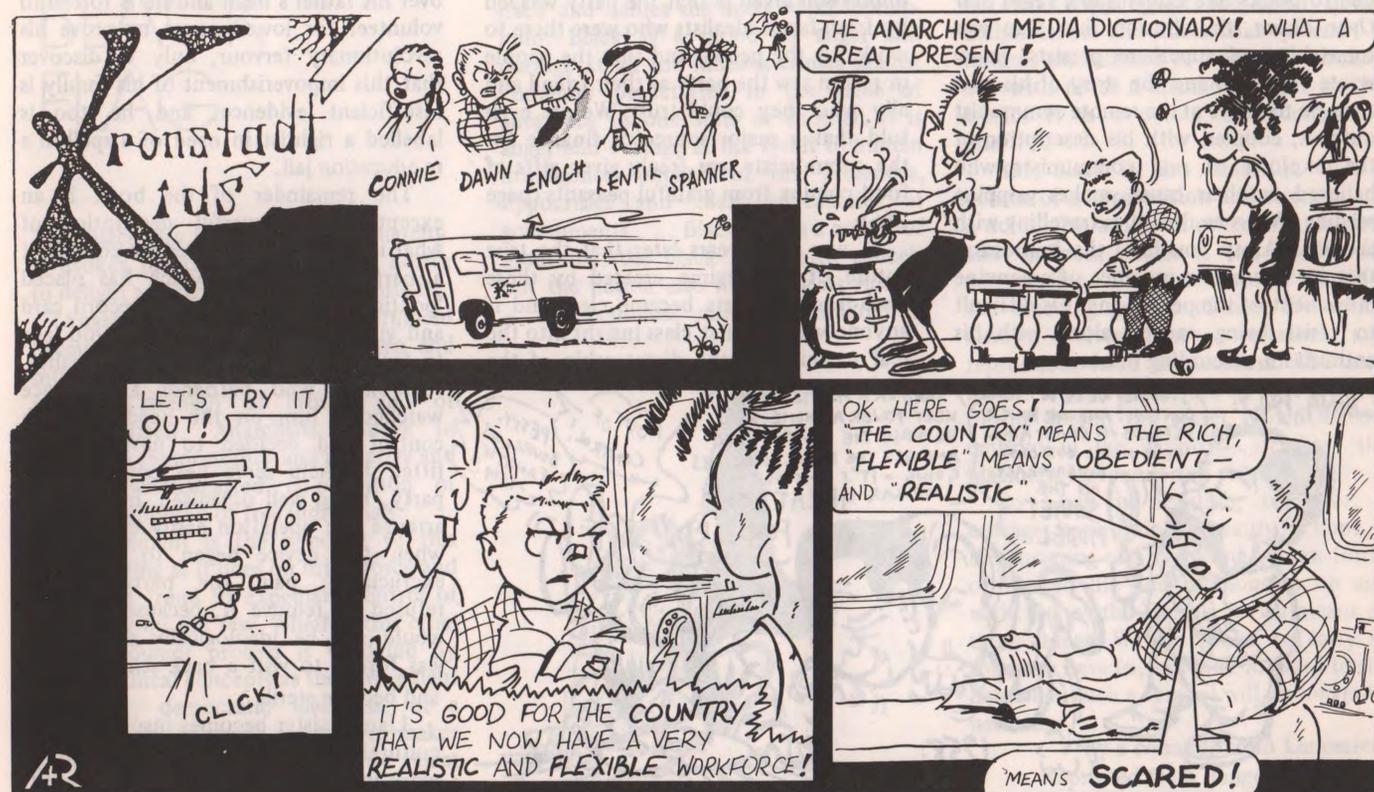
lasted two hours during heavy rain. Most of those arrested had to wait several hours in the prison buses (without any possibility of going to the toilet). They were released during the night, some in the neighbouring city of Wiesbaden, some in remote suburbs, most of them at the Mainz police HQ. The police took fingerprints, made photographs, etc, sometimes very brutally.

The police have difficulties explaining this terrorism, because there was no damage caused by the demonstrators, or any other legally convincing pretext for such an action. The demonstrators had not even been ordered to disperse before the arrests were made. It is obvious that the mass arrest was carefully planned in advance, apparently with the object of intimidating and to identifying radical opponents of NATO and the West German State. The police claim to have caught mainly RAF (Red Army Faction) sympathisers and similar radicals but their catch embarrassingly included many school-children, down to 13 years old, who are unlikely RAF sympathisers.

Encirclement and mass arrests of non-violent demonstrators seem to have become a standard police tactic in West Germany, since the infamous encirclement in Hamburg on 8 June, when 800 anti-nuclear demonstrators were encircled and held captive up to 15 hours under degrading circumstances before being arrested.

The affair is to be investigated by the Mainz city council and the Diet of Rhineland-Palatinate.

G



Conformity

CHAIRMAN

MAO'S GOOD

LITTLE BOY

THERE is something of the romantic hidden away deep in the heart of all socialists. The idea of heading off to a remote country area to merge your life with that of the poor and to help make the revolution has a definite appeal for those who find reality just a little too dull for their tastes. The image of Che and Fidel landing at the Bay of Pigs with a handful of men contrasts nicely with the image of their triumphant arrival in Havana and leads to warm illusions about leading the masses to victory. It has all the right ingredients for a perfect adventure story — danger, an exotic location, heroic struggle against impossible odds and a happy ending. No wonder people still cling to the idea that Cuba is a socialist paradise long after the evidence about jail sentences for homosexuality and expulsions for journalists who dare to write about human rights. The story is too good to allow a little bit of reality to intrude.

Much the same could be said about Mao and China. The legend of the long march makes good reading and, largely due to books like Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*, the illusion that Mao was some kind of superhero persists. Snow wrote very well and the story of his own struggle to arrive at the remote communist outpost, coupled with his description of the exploits of real communists who believed in their cause, makes gripping reading. When he describes travelling with the Red Army you have the impression that he was in the presence of a genuine movement of the people and it is difficult to resist being carried along with his enthusiasm. According to him:

'What discipline they had seemed almost self-imposed. When we passed wild apricot trees on the hills there was an abrupt dispersal until everyone had filled his pockets, and somebody always brought me back a handful. Then, leaving the trees looking as if a great wind had struck them, they moved back into order and quick-timed to make up for the loss. But when we passed private orchards, nobody touched the fruit in them, and the grain and the vegetables we ate in the fields were paid for in full.

'As far as I could see, the peasants bore no resentment towards my Red companions. Some seemed on close terms of friendship, and very loyal — a fact possibly not unconnected with a recent reversion of land and the abolition of taxes.' (page 100, Penguin Books 1972 edition.)

It would be easy to conclude from this that what Snow was witnessing was the creation of some form of anarchist people and, in an interview with Snow, Mao confessed that he was 'much influenced by anarchism' (page 177). The impression given is that the party was led by fresh-faced idealists who were there to work for the people and that the people in return saw the party as their friend and ally who they could trust. We are even told that a major source of finance for the communists was freely given gifts of food coming from grateful peasants (page 266).

It was only years later that the true nature of the regime created by these fresh-faced idealists became clear and if anyone wants a first class insight into the real meaning of the dictatorship of the

proletariat in practice then they should get hold of Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro's book *Son of the Revolution* (Fontana, 1984).

The book is an autobiography and it begins with a personal tragedy which pervades the whole account. Liang's mother makes the mistake of taking Mao at his word. The great helmsman has urged good communists to criticise the party so that it can learn from its mistakes. 'Mother didn't know what to do. She really loved the Party and didn't have any criticisms to make; the Party had given her a job and saved her from the most abject poverty. Still her leaders said that everyone should participate actively in the movement. So regarding it as her duty she finally came up with something. She said that her Section Head sometimes used crude language and liked to criticise people, that he should give his housekeeper a bed to sleep on instead of making her sleep on the floor, and that sometimes when it came time to give raises, the leaders didn't listen to the masses' opinions.' (page 8)

It was a bad error. The official took offence. She was denounced as a rightist, lost her job and was sent for re-education. Rather than suffer the same fate, Liang's father is forced to divorce her but the association with a rightist is held against the children. Liang, aged only five and trying hard to be Chairman Mao's good little boy, is labelled politically suspect, deliberately maltreated by teachers and refused entry to the Young Pioneers. He is from a 'family with questions' and the other children avoid him for fear of being labelled themselves. The questions hang over his father's head and he is forced to volunteer for lower wages to prove his revolutionary fervour, only to discover that this impoverishment of his family is insufficient evidence, and he too is labelled a rightist in need of a spell in a re-education jail.

The remainder of the book is an exceptionally powerful description of what it is like to live under the control of a party bureaucracy which has placed 'politically suspect' on your record card and virtually every page brings you face to face with a starkly unpleasant reality. A woman who befriends Liang once watched a film on the need for birth control and decided to have an IUD fitted to help serve her country. The party, being well organised, managed to arrange the operation easily enough but when the device began to cause her excruciating pain the party doctors refused to remove it, because to do so would not be ideologically sound. She was forced to visit a back street woman and became sterile.

Liang's sister becomes inspired by the cultural revolution and volunteers to work in the country for a while. Twenty

years later, long after she's decided she'd like to return, she is still being refused permission to return home and is cut off from all her relatives in a remote corner.

The leading cadres who had so impressed Edgar Snow with their spartan lifestyle and commitment to the cause appear again in Liang's autobiography. This time they are seen accepting watermelons and cartons of cigarettes whenever a correct decision is wanted. The whole atmosphere has changed. What once appeared heroic and worthwhile now appears sordid and unnecessarily cruel. The party in opposition outlined a programme which inspired millions, but in power it slowly turned into a clumsy interference whose rigid rules ruin lives.

This contrast between romantic beginnings and sordid endings has now been repeated in so many countries that it is a well worn pattern and it could easily lead us to the conclusion that all political struggle is worthless vanity. It seems as if, no matter how pure the motives of those who originate a revolution, the results are an ugly mess and the replacement of one elite by another. Looked at from this point of view an examination of any of the revolutions which have taken place this century would lead to depressing conclusions and you might very well end up agreeing with

the conservatives that nothing fundamental ever changes and the current elite is as good as any other.

Such a conclusion would, however, be a serious underestimation of the potential for change which exists in human beings. Before the Chinese Revolution it was virtually taken for granted in the West that the Chinese people were naturally filthy, indolent traditionalists with a taste for opium and an inclination towards prostitution and crime. The idea that the criminal societies could have been destroyed, prostitution eradicated, the birth rate controlled, the population fed, the river levies strengthened and opium addiction eliminated would have been treated as an impossible fantasy put forward by a collection of crazy hotheads. The extent of the changes implemented in China should leave no one in any doubt that even in the most difficult circumstances, fundamental revolutionary change can be achieved as a result of the conscious actions of human beings, and that such change is worth achieving. The extent of the price which the Maoists made the Chinese people pay for these reforms should leave us in no doubt that there has to be a better way to achieve revolutionary change, than by placing ourselves at the mercy of party bureaucracies which hand out changes in line

with all the force of imperial edicts.

If the anarchist movement is to have any worth, then it would seem to me to have one real task to achieve. We need to find a means of helping people to organise themselves efficiently enough for their energies to produce meaningful changes, whilst finding means of ensuring that any organisations we are active in are controlling them. Put another way, it seems that it has proved easy enough to start revolutions which have brought political parties of the left to power: the problem has been how to control those same left wingers once they have got their hands on that power. No matter how dedicated or how carefully they have studied their socialism, leaders turn from allies into enemies as they acquire power.

The only way to ensure that the seductions of power don't turn yet another bunch of inspired revolutionaries into tired officials is to place decision making power directly in the hands of ordinary people. Ordinary people can make mistakes just as officials can, but if direct democracy is consistently applied to all organisations, then at least the mistakes can be rectified. When romantics with party cards make mistakes they have a way of forcing them down our throats and telling us it's socialism.

Andy Brown

Tradition

THE

BLACK

FLAG

postulate a radical reliance on the problem-solving capacity of free human beings.

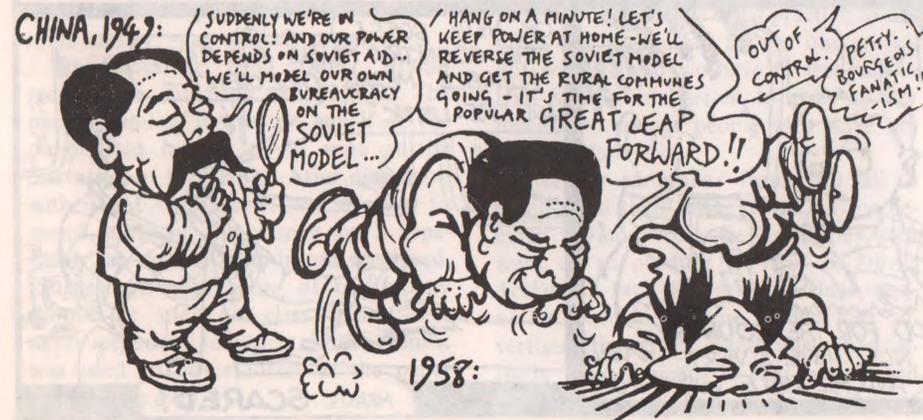
Why is our flag black? Black is a shade of negation. The black flag is the negation of all flags. It is the negation of nationhood which turns the human race against itself and denies the unity of all humankind. Black is a mood of anger and outrage at all the hideous crimes against humanity perpetrated in the name of allegiance to one state or another. It is anger and outrage at the insult to human intelligence implied in the pretences, hypocrisies and cheap chicaneries of governments . . . Black is also a colour of mourning; the black flag which cancels out the nation also mourning its victims — the countless millions murdered in

wars, external and internal, to the greater glory and stability of some bloody state. It mourns for those whose labour is robbed (taxed) to pay for the slaughter and oppression of other human beings. It mourns not only the death of the body but the crippling of the spirit under authoritarian and hierarchic systems; it mourns the millions of brain cells blacked out with never a chance to light up the world. It is a colour of inconsolable grief . . .

But, black is also beautiful. It is a colour of determination and strength . . . a colour by which all others are clarified and defined. Black is the mysterious surrounding of germination, of fertility, the breeding ground of new life which always evolves, renews, refreshes, and reproduces itself in darkness. The seed hidden in the earth, the strange journey of the sperm, the secret growth of the embryo in the womb — all these the blackness surrounds and protects . . .

So black is negation, is anger, is outrage, is mourning, is beauty, is hope, is the fostering and sheltering of new forms of human life and relationship on and with this earth. The black flag means all these things. We are proud to carry it, sorry we have to, and look forward to the day when such a symbol will no longer be necessary.

'by a comrade from Lancaster'
Reprinted from Bangor Free News



Anarchy

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

THIS anonymous piece first appeared in *Freedom* in the 1950s and has since been reprinted once or twice. We make no apology for publishing it yet again.

Why are you anarchists?

Because we want to be free to run our own lives.

Then multi-millionaires are also anarchists?

Not quite. The difference is that anarchists want a society in which all are free to run their own lives. Multi-millionaires, and many others besides, believe in freedom for a privileged minority only. And in our opinion one cannot be free in a society based on privilege.

So you believe in equality; but isn't it obvious that human beings just aren't equal?

We believe that everyone should have equal rights — material and social — to develop their personalities and to satisfy their desires. Only in this way can each person be him or herself, an equal among unequals if you like.

But supposing I desire power and great wealth, who would prevent me from acquiring these in an anarchist society?

In an anarchist society no individual could own the means of production or be in a position to exploit the labour of others. In such a society even if money remained as a means of exchange no one would be in a position to accumulate or corner large amounts and even assuming they could, would not be able either to acquire property with it or exploit the labour of fellow men and women.

Would you then have a law making it an offence for someone to employ the labour of others?

Obviously not. The moment you create a system of laws such as you suggest, you also have to create legal machinery to implement the laws and then you are back to the old system again. Your question presupposes that people sell their labour to others by choice and not of necessity.

I agree that most people hate their jobs and having to work for others.

So if we are agreed that by creating an economic system whereby nobody lacks the necessities of life and accepts as normal the need to contribute an agreed amount of labour towards the production of those common needs, then surely there is no possibility of exploitation of one individual by another. Similarly, nobody wants to pay rent to a landlord but they do, because under the capitalist system they have no alternative.

But there is an alternative. If they had the intelligence, the initiative and the 'guts' they would be able to become their own bosses and own houses, wouldn't they?

Some do, that's true. But assume for a moment that we are all equally intelligent, that we all have an equal share of initiative and 'guts': we should all get to the top. But in a capitalist system this is not possible. You cannot have 'top people' without there being many more at the 'bottom'; you cannot have everybody living off the fat of the land, for who would be left to work the land. So a privileged society irrespective of the mental capacities, the cunning and the ruthlessness of its members, can only permit a limited number of people to enjoy the privileged status. Would you agree?

I suppose so, but is there anything wrong with such a system? After all, it's just part of the natural order, the survival of the fittest. Why shouldn't brains, genius, hard work, perseverance and all those kind of things be recognised and rewarded accordingly? Or do you anarchists always want to drag everybody down, to the lowest common denominator?

The trouble with all these 'scientific'

arguments is that they are about as scientific as all the stories of the bees and the birds are relevant to sex education for the young! It is surely quite obvious that whatever truth there may be in the argument as applied to nature it has no application to the man-made society we live in. All other things being equal, the law of the society we live in is not 'survival of the fittest' but of the 'richest'.

But that is just a play on words: the richest are the fittest. They have the means to provide the necessities in times of shortage. Only the other day in Soho Market I saw a woman buying French beans at £1 a pound. Suppose French beans were a matter of life and death. That woman could outbid me every time and survive. We who could not afford them would go under.

But don't you see that in such a life and death situation as you describe the stallholder would himself have eaten the beans assuming that the wholesaler hadn't done so before him, and assuming that the grower, seeing how things were going, had sold them to him rather than literally salt them away for his own survival! In other words, if it is a question of survival it is the producer who is best situated to survive. What more and more reasonable people are asking these days is how comes it that the producers of the necessities of life and the services we need to make our lives more comfortable and satisfying are the underprivileged members of society?

But somebody has to give the orders!

If by this you mean that where many people are engaged on a job there must be organisation, we would agree. But supposing an individual is what they call a 'born organiser', why should they by reason of particular 'gifts' enjoy privileged status or better conditions? That person can only use such gifts as long as there are people to carry out the work: without them where would the 'born organiser' be? They, on the other hand, could manage — less efficiently perhaps — but they could manage without that person. But let us return to our main argument.

We maintain that in a sensible society — that is, one geared to satisfying the material needs and encouraging the spiritual development of every human being — the criterion for doing a job would be that it satisfies an expressed need of our fellows. As such, all jobs would be equally worth doing and there could therefore be no rational argument for giving special rewards for certain jobs: and we see no reason for assuming that people would want it otherwise. There is nothing absolute about values. Obviously in a society divided into privileged and underprivileged the worth of an individual is expressed in terms of differentials. In a society in which all have free access to the means of production and enjoy equal

rights this would seem ridiculous as well as being impossible to apply.

I agree with you up to a point. But my point is that there are a lot of people who can do the unskilled donkey work. Only a few have the intelligence to become scientists, doctors, engineers, technicians, production managers and architects. Face up to it. The quality Dailies and Sundays have pages of advertisements for specialists whereas in the unskilled jobs there is massive unemployment.

There is no proof that most mentally normal people could not be educated or trained to do more skilled work than, say, emptying dustbins or ploughing fields or driving trains or hewing coals, given a social environment no less favourable than it is for the section of the community who virtually monopolise certain useful and lucrative professions generation after generation.

But the point is that we need more nursing staff than doctors, more land-workers than plant breeders, more miners than mining engineers, more building workers than architects, more engineering workers than mechanical engineers and managers and so on. We could have a situation where most of the population has had a higher education and therefore short of 'importing' slave labour and 'exporting' our qualified natives, we must learn to divorce education from the kind of work which individuals do as their contribution to the commonweal.

You are now being fanciful. In practice such a situation cannot arise.

On the contrary. In countries such as Israel you had a situation where there were more qualified people than unskilled, and because of the pioneering spirit of the early days of the new State there were doctors, engineers, working on the land and in building works, etc, and proud of it. In most of the advanced industrial countries there is a surfeit of highly qualified people. The student troubles in France in 1968 were sparked off by very largely unrevolutionary motives: namely that the university courses were unsatisfactory in that they did not give the students the kind of training that would ensure that they eventually received the top jobs.

So you are in favour of a reduction and not an extension of higher education?

We are in favour of higher education for everybody. The 'quality' of life about which the pundits prattle while instilling in mass fed minds the longings for a society of ever expanding consciousness, hinges on the quality of education. But I repeat that education has really nothing to do with passing exams, though it is obvious that we shall go on needing people to train as doctors, engineers, etc. However, it could well be that we should have better doctors if they were to be trained from among nurses and better

engineers if they first had workshop or public works experience. And in an anarchist society they would become doctors and engineers not because of the higher remuneration, because in fact they wouldn't get more.

Do you honestly mean to say that you think people will give up time and money to study if at the end they are no better off than the person who had not bothered?

In an anarchist society the pursuit of higher technical qualifications would not involve the kind of 'sacrifice' you suggest. And there would no longer be the kind of mentality which puts a material premium on excellence. If one must talk in terms of reward this would be the satisfaction of the achievement. After all, even today some of the most satisfying things people do in their lives have no material reward as their inspiration.

I get your point. But the trouble is that we are not living in your ideal anarchist society, and people today want to see a material reward for initiative and intelligence. So what can one do in a practical way except support the Labour Party's programme which advocates equality for everybody to get to the top?

Well, as I have already pointed out, if everybody gets to the top there is no top and so the top will become the bottom and a new elite will rise to a new 'top'. In other words, a new ruling, owning hierarchy would emerge. Anyway, events have now caught up with this 'equality of opportunity' socialism which only differs from that of the Conservatives in that it would not limit the 'equality of opportunity' to the class that has so far enjoyed the monopoly of top jobs. I am of course referring to the emergence of powerful Unions whose power resides not simply in their militancy but in their economic and social role in society...

Another factor is that workers themselves insist on the maintenance of a scale of payments which differentiates between the skilled and the unskilled, between the different categories of employment. Surely these are healthy incentives for 'getting on'?

To our minds, so long as workers insist on maintaining social and economic differentials they will never be able to unite effectively to rid themselves of the common yoke of dependence. And unfortunately the capitalist class will make no attempt to dispense with differentials: on the contrary, it is they who have created them in order to weaken the resistance of the working class. How else can a ruling minority retain its power. 'Divide and rule' is not a tactic limited to Imperial power in the bad old days of colonialism. It manifests itself in all unequal societies, whatever their state of general 'affluence'. Indeed it is the basis of authoritarian rule in the smallest of

groups, not least the authoritarian family!

To believe, as you seem to, that a sort of tooth-and-claw competition is an incentive, can be disposed of by just a moment's reflection. Suppose you are working on a job with someone who you know is being paid more than you, but who could not carry out their job if you were not doing yours. Would you dismiss any resentment you might feel by saying to yourself that each of you was being paid the 'rate for the job'? Would you work as efficiently as if you had been treated as an equal with the other person? And don't you see that the moment you start thinking this way you not only question the differentials between you and your workmate, but between you and everybody else also earning more than you in the firm. Co-operation and not competition is the most efficient form of work. And free co-operation is only possible among equals.

Would it change things very much if money were distributed equally among the 50 million or so adults? Everyone would receive ten thousand pounds or the equivalent in property or commodities. And I bet you that within five years some would have squandered theirs and others instead would have used theirs to make another £40,000.

Not that old chestnut again! Look, so long as money is power, so long will it be used in exploiting the labour of fellow beings. We maintain that no individual or group has the moral right to control the wealth and the means of production of a nation for their own ends. That is why we are opposed to the capitalist system, to the nationalisation programme of the socialists, and we are anarchists and believer in revolution because we think that mankind will not be free until the ruling class are expropriated without compensation. This no government will think of doing. Where 'revolutionary governments' have done this they have at the same time sown the seeds for a new ruling class, new privileges and incentives which inevitably lead to inequalities and injustice and to the same denial of freedom which the revolution was meant to destroy.

So in the end, after all the bloodshed and misery of a revolution the people are back where they were.

If they make the revolution to destroy State institutions and the system of privilege and then replace them by another government, of course in the end they will be back to where they were (apart from a change of masters). But for that very reason we are anarchists and not believers in 'good governments' or 'revolutionary governments'. As Byron put it:

'I'd have mankind be free!

As much from mobs as kings —
from you as me.'



Police THE GOOD POLICEMAN

ON SATURDAY 16th August, an open air party was held at Giant's Caves, a picnic area just outside Banbury, Oxfordshire. Two to three hundred people attended, and two bands played. When the second band had finished, the local police unexpectedly arrived on the scene. The organisers of the party were told to dismantle the stage, remove the pa and switch off the disco at once, as there had been complaints about the noise from residents (the nearest house was at least a mile away). It was dark, so it was difficult to tell how many policemen there were; twenty or more, perhaps. They surrounded us, and watched things being put away. Many people were extremely drunk, of course, and shouted abuse at the police, who chose to ignore them. Everyone was advised to go home. But when we informed them that we had come from Brighton, and that we could not leave yet because our van driver had been drinking, a couple of the policemen said it was okay for us to stay, though one policewoman told us that we must 'walk home' at once.

They departed then, leaving the remaining revellers to leave of their own accord. Those of us from Brighton settled down round a campfire in our sleeping bags for the night. The few locals still left were dancing to the music from an (admittedly loud) car stereo.

Suddenly the police reappeared, and this time they were extremely angry. They were swearing and pushing people about. They told us that if we didn't all move at once we'd be arrested. We could not reason with them; they were totally uncompromising and extremely aggressive.

One of our number, Dan, finally lost his temper with them. He was thrown out of a tent. He turned to them and told them that he was fucking fed up with them hassling him. Unfortunately, most of the cops present were looking in his direction as he spoke. By chance, their attention was focused on this one person.

This time they did not turn a blind eye to the swearing, but charged after him. It is clear by the obvious arbitrariness of their actions that they were after a scalp or scapegoat on this occasion. Four of them got hold of him and attempted to drag him to a police van. They would not

tell us what they were arresting him for, and they would not allow us to go near, sending us in opposite directions.

Dan struggled furiously, so a fifth copper joined in the fracas. He was held over a van, and the policemen appeared to be torturing him. They stamped hard on his bare feet, and punched him in the stomach and kidneys. We clearly saw them hold his arms behind his back and punch him in the nose. His face was covered in blood. Other cops stood around pretending not to notice. When we tried to protest they referred us to their commanding officer, or dragged us off and pushed us down the road. Dan was handcuffed so tightly that his wrists almost bled. They put him into the van (where they continued to taunt and poke him) and took him to the police station.

There, the psychological cruelty continued. Dan was given coffee that had so much sugar in it that it was undrinkable. The police made various threats they knew they couldn't carry out, like keeping the rest of us in Banbury until Dan gave his address. They made him wash the blood off his face himself so that his injuries didn't look so bad. Eventually, they charged him only with being drunk and disorderly.



All coppers are bastards

To the people that tell me that it is a generalisation to say that all coppers are bastards, I say all coppers are or would be a party to this kind of barbarism every single day. Any reasonable and humane person would not join the police force except by mistake. If anyone enters the force with 'good intentions' he or she will be corrupted by the nature of the job, or he or she will rebel and get out.

The 'good policeman' is like Jack London's 'good soldier': 'The good soldier never tries to distinguish right from wrong. He never thinks, never reasons, he only obeys . . . his mind, his conscience, aye, his very soul, are in the keeping of his officer.' (*The Masses* by Jack London)

The same policewoman who spends all night consoling the recently bereaved widow and making her cups of tea will use physical pain on a fellow human being if necessary to carry out her orders. We all sympathise with the bereaved. Only certain people are hard and sadistic enough for the police force, though.

The same constable who one day rescues a drowning child will, if ordered to, shoot to kill in the line of his duty.

The same jolly sergeant who will chat about his wife and children with touching fondness and affection was, the previous day, forcing a confession out of a suspect using psychological and physical violence. He might have been on picket line duty the previous year, kicking a miner's head in, too; smashing someone's face in in accordance with his duty.

Coppers follow orders. The only initiatives they seem to take are ones where they use even more violence than they have been advised to. A good policeman will commit any act of violence in order to do his duty. If he rebels against this inhumanity, he is not a good policeman, and will be thrown out of the force.

The 'good policeman' is an insensitive, unsympathetic and impractical robot. It is not his job to listen to reason. He has his orders, his 'duty', and that is that. No concern must stand in the way of this pedantic, slavish, single-minded adherence to red-tape and those 'superior' to him. Like the 'good soldier', he must endeavour to erase all traces of empathy, squeamishness, humanity, morality and common sense from his brain. He must, like a schizophrenic, divorce his emotional and intellectual functions. Like a psychotic, he must be cold, callous, cynical and thick-skinned. This is his duty, his job. There is no hope in 'improving relations' between the people and the police. The nature of the job will not allow it.

The 'good policeman' must anaesthetise the moral part of his mind by a process of transference of responsibility. He realises that no one is infallible, but if mistakes are made it is the superior officer who takes the blame or the credit. Hence, the 'good policeman' can do everything with moral impunity, knowing that he is only 'doing a job' and so above personal guilt.

Yet behind that phantom which they call 'law and order' they are extremely arbitrary. Depending on the weather, on how much energy they have, on whether they rowed with their spouse the night before or on whether they are bored, they might give a friendly warning, make an arrest, or they might suddenly steam in, swearing, kicking and punching. It is often a matter of their discretion. 'Justice' therefore is a matter of luck.

Policemen always remind me of football hooligans, Hell's Angels and National

Front skinheads. They all act in a rather similar manner — only the police have the blessing of the state. It is licensed thuggery. Like the worst examples of the other three, they know of no way to channel their aggression except through authoritarianism and its partner violence. 'Law and Order' is a rationalisation. It is merely an unconscious pretext, an excuse for their sadism. Policemen tend to dislike certain kinds of people: hippies, punks, anarchists, blacks, radical protesters, etcetera. They regard violence as a solution to this 'problem'. Yet experience ought to tell them that their aggression never solves anything. Policemen often enter situations in a deliberately provocative manner (eg with police dogs, in large numbers, surrounding people). They tend to be intimidatory — they deliberately cause friction, they look for and start fights.

Experiences should tell them that hate and violence only breed more hate and violence. Yet, again and again, this is the direction they take, irrespective of common sense. They seem utterly oblivious of many people's opinion of them now.

And we will never beat them through violence. Violence is their weapon; they are trained at it; they are experts at it. They use it all the time, yet there is more crime than ever. It is no solution. We must use a language the police cannot understand. The essential character of their job will not allow us to build bridges; we must ignore the police and work around them as much as we can.

Being a policeman is a form of mental illness. Like other neuroses and psychoses — drug addiction, alcoholism, schizophrenia and obsessive greed — it is a symptom of our sick society. The apparent 'need' for a police force indicates a lack of faith or confidence in ourselves. The police cause more problems than they seem to cure. They are the naked manifestation of the true nature of the system: violence, ignorance, short-sightedness, blind obedience, cruelty, red tape, and power worship.

NB Most people I know who have been assaulted by the police take it no further. But there is a possible course of action which, if you are subsequently prosecuted, should more than cover the cost of your fine and help to expose the police for what they are. If the bruises and cuts you receive are visible (and the police are careful to hit their victims most often in the stomach and kidneys where less marking will occur) go at once to a doctor who will confirm your injuries. Take his report to a sympathetic solicitor (if you can find one). He will stand a reasonable chance of winning a case against the police for using excessive force during an arrest.

Johnny Yen

ANARCHISM WRONGLY UNDER- STOOD

ONE of the curiosities of anarchism is that so few people accept such an attractive philosophy. This is in a large part related to people's ignorance of what anarchism is, and we should therefore look at what non-anarchists have said about anarchism to see what misconceptions they have. At the least informed level are those who confuse anarchy, the absence of government, with disorder and violence. This, as Malatesta pointed out, stems from the false belief that social order is only possible through government and if people can be persuaded to see the truth about government, then their prejudice against anarchy will evaporate. At a more advanced level of misunderstanding are people like James Peter Warbasse, whose views on anarchism are reprinted here. Warbasse was an advocate of co-operative societies, both retail and wholesale, and the article appeared in his book *What is Co-operation?* Several criticisms can be made of his views, particularly his preposterous view of the state (if we start building an alternative, the state will vanish) and his misconception of the nature of freedom. He appears not to realise that freedom of each must be limited by the freedom of all and thinks that anarchists believe in 'absolute liberty' which, as he correctly points out, is impossible. However, I leave a proper critique of Warbasse's views to any *Freedom* reader who feels so inclined.

Mo

ANARCHISM is the philosophy of personal liberty. All forms of government rest upon violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, is the doctrine of anarchism. It is the philosophy of a society regulated by voluntary agreement among its members instead of by political government. It maintains that man should recognise no authorities greater than man, that the programme of authorities can be carried out only by subordinating man, that when centralised powers get control of man they enslave his mind, and that the individual man is more important than society. It would abolish all authorities, such as governments, which create classes, and which make men hostile to men.

Anarchism would protect minorities from control by majorities. It would protect the individual from the state. It

takes the ground that bondage to the state is not different from bondage to the king or to the rule of a majority. It is opposed to the doctrine of the state that 'law and order' are preserved by means of force — police, jails, soldiers, etc. It takes the ground that the natural good-heartedness, the natural sense of justice, the fairness and the goodwill of individuals will preserve public peace and harmony better than the force of the state. The punishments and forcible restraints of government, anarchists believe, are largely called for because of the existence of an unjust distribution of the good things. The force of law and government is necessary in order to keep alive this state of injustice. So long as there is one class in society which is attempting to hold more good things than it should have and which must protect itself from another class that has not got enough good things, law and government are called for. But if they were abolished, people would equalise their affairs in a natural way. Thomas Jefferson said that public opinion in the place of law will govern conduct as powerfully as the law ever did anyway. People naturally get along well if the state or some other authority does not come between them. Richard Cobden said, 'The peace of the world is best promoted by the most possible intercourse betwixt peoples and the least possible intercourse betwixt states.'

Anarchism offers no plan of social or economic organisation. It positively asserts its concern for the individual and its opposition to centralised governing authority, but it has no plan to give the individual his freedom or to abolish the state. To make itself real it needs to connect itself to some practical movement that is doing these things. Anarchism is mostly negative. It needs to be given life and made positive. The old grudge against the state needs to be forgotten. People need to get busy building something better than the state. When they have succeeded in building something better than the state, the state will cease to be a bother to them. The best way to get rid of the state and its centralised authority is to do a constructive piece of work that will make the state unnecessary.

As to freedom and liberty, which are so dear to the anarchist, there can be no such things in a society in which people are in such close contact and depend so much on one another as is the case in the world today. Freedom may be sought by the individual who runs away from society and lives utterly independent and alone. His conflicts will then be with nature, which, he will find, will deprive him of liberties just as do his fellow men. There is no absolute liberty.

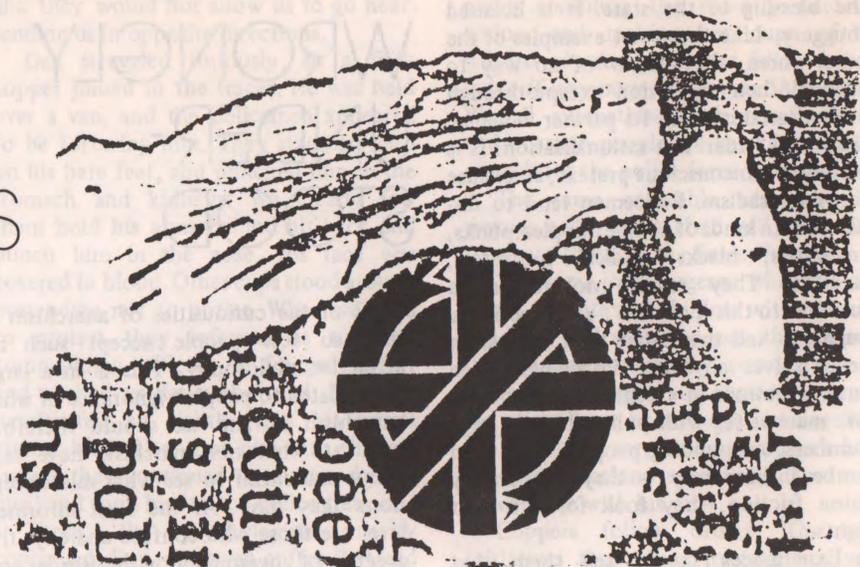
James Peter Warbasse
from 'What is Cooperation' 1936

Music CRASS AT THE CROSSROADS

WITH a new 12-inch single, the anarchist punk band Crass have decided to pack it in after nine years. Recently they invited the press to their commune in the Essex countryside to explain why.

In their time Crass became the unwilling focus for a mythology rarely accorded rock groups. They consistently rejected the corruption of the music 'business', yet sold thousands of records all over the world. Their politics, a mix of anarchism and pacifism, were emblazoned across innovative black-and-white gatefold sleeves to great effect, and once led to 'Questions in the House' for their response to the Falklands War in 1982. They were a punk band in 1977, but always that bit more extreme than the rest: they adopted wearing all-black as a protest at the 'peacockery of narcissistic punk' and used horrifying slides at gigs to complement songs about nuclear destruction and police oppression. Later, the music changed, but did not mellow, and '10 Notes' is an almost jazzy epitaph. In 1986 they still wear black.

But Crass were more than just a band, and were one of the most influential anarchist groups this country has seen in ten years. At the commune, a beautiful old farmhouse near the World War Two aerodrome at North Weald, I asked them whether their demise was the result of 'anarchy and peace' not being flavour of the month anymore. Penny Rimbaud, drummer and obviously much of the fire behind the band, took up the point: 'Obviously there has been a shift in the last two years towards more direct violent action – "bash the rich" and so on. There is the immediate satisfaction of throwing a brick through a window, whereas our way is slower and based on demonstrating to the oppressor the error of his ways. But I don't think the two are mutually exclusive.' It transpires that Crass consider themselves anarchists in the tradition of Tolstoy and Gandhi, but with some important modifications, as Pete Wright, bassist, explains: 'If there is a revolutionary situation we will seek to exploit it. We are situationists in that sense.' Rimbaud: 'Even Gandhi drew the line at self-defence, and similarly we have never been blanket-pacifists. We were very involved with the Stop the City



campaign, for example, and not averse to helping friends escape police clutches at demos, and so on.' Unexpectedly, then, there is no hostility between the Crass camp and the more recent 'Class War' group. Indeed, they find Ian Bone, organiser of the latter, a 'very humorous man', and have attended several of Class War's meetings. Reasons for the end of Crass, therefore, have to be sought elsewhere than the changing face of British anarchism.

In fact, it was the not-so-changing face of punk as a means for getting the message across that became the major reason for not continuing. Rimbaud: 'It had become a "style". In the end it was like a school, with us teaching at the front and the audience in a uniform of leather-and-studs. The music was evolving, but the audience weren't keeping up.' The band admit that the encouragement of like-minded groups on their own label in the early '80s was a nail in their coffin in this respect. 'It was flattering to be copied at first, but it soon got out of control. Some of them just didn't have the commitment . . . others were into vegetarianism and animal liberation, things like that, which are okay as single issues, but not really what Crass's conception of anarchism was all about.'

But there are also personal reasons for stopping. Wright: 'Dealing with the darker side of life 24-hours a day can take its toll.' We discuss one episode in particular – the Falklands and the free flexi-disc that was rushed out in protest before the war had even begun. Rimbaud: 'It hit the shops the same day as the Belgrano went down. There it was – a real war, what we'd been talking about for five years.' Their finest hour? 'No – our lowest. We were the only people to say anything

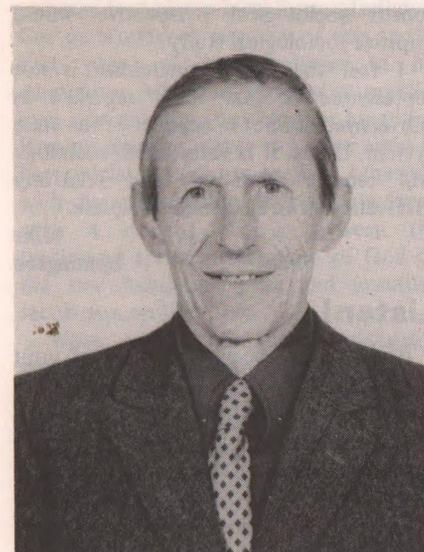
against it' – the bands you'd have expected to say something stayed quiet. It was not an easy thing for us to do – we lost about 50% of our following, and there was a real chance of being kneecapped by some loony rightist group for it . . . it was a very frightening time.' The government itself was only marginally less annoyed, and Margaret Thatcher was asked in Parliament if she had heard Crass's records. Police harassment has hardly stopped since, and Rimbaud admits that strain such as this has totally exhausted him: 'It's also why we haven't had the strength to say anything about Chernobyl or Libya, and why we haven't played a gig for two years.'

Crass are bruised, but not broken. Their answer is not to 'split' as such, but to jettison the limiting format of 'the band'. Individually and occasionally as a group they intend to continue to make statements – Rimbaud for example hopes to publish some of the more obscure works of Tolstoy, and to experiment with 'indigenous rock-and-roll' – ('how can we play anti-US songs in a form that derives from there?'). Most importantly, the commune will stay together.

Crass have given all they could in the past, and have learnt from their mistakes. As it says in the lyrics of their final record: 'If you ask "what now?", is it not simply your own conscience from which you seek a reply?', a comment on the way they had become 'leaders' of a movement that was about anything but leadership. Now they are seeking new ways to approach their anarchism, and are at last in a position to go forward again. This is not the end for Crass, but a new beginning.

Roger Sabin

OBITUARY



Giovanni Baldelli

MANY readers of *Freedom* in the 1950s and early sixties will be sad to learn of the death of Giovanni Baldelli at the age of 72. He had been ill for a number of years and for those of us who were in touch with him the news was not unexpected, and though he courageously continued to correspond with some of his friends and to contribute regular articles to the Italian anarchist journal *l'Internazionale*, death must have some as a release.

His first encounter with anarchist ideas came when he went to France at the age of 15. He recounts somewhere that he was already at the age of 13 interested in Mazzini (and since the former revolutionary Mussolini had accepted the monarchy this had determined the young Giovanni's views so far as the fascists were concerned). But by the age of 15 he was interested in mysticism and in a book by one Molacorda he came across a quotation from Malatesta which he approved of; so he made contact with some anarchists as well as other anti-fascists in exile. He returned to Italy in 1932 but had been back only a few months when he was arrested for anti-fascist propaganda and sentenced to five months in prison. His next problem was his military service which he had no intention of doing. Thanks to his father's contacts (he was a fascist for purely business reasons!) he managed to get a passport and in September 1937 he was back in France. He wanted to join the

Spanish struggle, but by then – it was after the May Days in Barcelona – more comrades were coming away from Spain than going there and he was advised not to. He came to London at the end of 1937 and secured work as a French teacher at Frensham Heights in Farnham, Surrey, and later in Southampton. The Spanish struggle had now come to an end and several hundred refugees from the Central zone were landed in Britain by a British cruiser. In 1939 Baldelli was staying in London with some Spanish comrades, but was arrested and shipped off to Canada on the ill-starred *Arandora Star* which was torpedoed in mid Atlantic. He was one of the few survivors. Taken to a Scottish port on a Canadian warship, within ten days he and other survivors were put onto another vessel, the *Dunera*, and taken to Australia, where he was interned for four years. Such was the fate of a proven anti-fascist in the so-called War-Against-Fascism!

On his return to England he re-established his contacts with the Spanish refugees and with comrades of Freedom Press. He was also active in the Anarchist Commission for International Relations from 1968.

As far as I can remember he obtained a degree in science and earned his living as a teacher, though: it was as a writer, a poet and a playwright that he would have wished to devote all his energies. Thanks to the encouragement of our American comrade David Wieck, a volume of Baldelli's writings on *Social Anarchism* was published here and in the USA (still available from Freedom Press), a small volume of poems (in French) was published some years ago, and one of his plays was given two or more performances at the Garrick Theatre. But he did not manage to establish himself in the literary field, and I feel it was one of the great disappointments in his life. In *Freedom* in the '50s and early '60s (when *Freedom* was a weekly) he was a regular contributor. His articles were for many of our readers too philosophical, too theoretical, too difficult. By 1968 when the barricades were erected at the Sorbonne, and student sit-ins took over the LSE, and down in Angel Alley the squatters in 84b and the Freedom Collective in 84a were making the revolution in their own ways, there was no longer a public for Baldelli's moral and philosophical essays. It was so-called Action versus Theory. The Militants versus the Quietists.

The whole language changed. Just as in the commercialised sports we no longer talked of teams or crews but of squads, so in politics those who were devoted to and active in a cause became activists or militants. This violent language does not fit Giovanni; yet there he was at the age of fifteen having to leave his country, for a very minor political indiscretion,

and take a job in Paris; spending five months in prison at the age of nineteen for his anti-fascist propaganda; rounded up as a fascist by the British in 1940 and being one of the few survivors of the torpedoed *Arandora Star* who was then transported in another ship to Australia and kept in detention for four years. Giovanni Baldelli, who had learned and experienced in the first thirty years of his life more disappointments, more class struggle, more political jingoism than the budding Bakunins of 1968 had even talked about, matured into the anarchist philosopher, while most of the Angry generation disappeared into well-paid executives jobs. And that is why I am sure the anarchist philosopher took the prospect of death in his stride.

VR

SITTING in the train, moving fast back to London, after attending Giovanni Baldelli's funeral. Giovanni Baldelli was only a name two years ago. I knew of him as an anarchist, who had survived the *Arandora Star* tragedy during the Second World War. I came to meet him in Woolston after having been looking for him for a long time. From the very first moment I met him I was struck by his internal energy and sharp sense of humour. I cannot claim to have known him well, but at each meeting I felt more and more drawn towards him, fascinated by his mind and his spirit.

His physical illness was affecting and inhibiting his movements, his eyes carried the vitality. I sat next to him listening to the fragments of his life. A life of political commitment from an early age.

A life where poetry, nature and harmony played a part.

I met Giovanni during the course of a research on Italian anti-fascists. When I left his house after our first meeting, I felt charged by the strong, yet ethereal, form of his beliefs and philosophical thoughts. I grew to appreciate him during the following meetings.

Today he went 'back to nature' as he called death. The memory of him and what he has left me will be for ever. As one of his nieces said: 'To whom ever he came close to, he left something, so he is really not dead'.

Olivella Foresta

Editors' Note:

Giovanni Baldelli's daughter and son – Giovanna and Benvenuto – are proposing to edit a volume of their father's writings and finance its publication by Freedom Press. We feel sure that there are many comrades who will want to make a contribution to this project as a mark of their esteem for our comrade. Contributions should be made payable to Freedom Press. We will forward letters and details of the contributions to Giovanna and Benvenuto.

Letters



Ireland

WITH regard to Sean MacGowan's article in the September issue of *Freedom*, 'Ireland - The Rigid Republic', I differ from his conclusion that anarchists should oppose the expulsion of Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom, even if such a prospect were remotely likely, which it is not. In fact, there is at present no political dispute about this and even UDI remains a marginally more possible option.

More to the point, I disagree with Sean's reasons for holding this view - ie that British society (whatever he has in mind by that phrase) 'is substantially liberal', which I do not believe empirically to be the case, and that it can be nudged in the direction of libertarianism whereas presumably the Republic of Ireland (or Irish society?) can not. There may be a good case to be made for this, although Sean neglects to make it, but I fail to understand why a gradual nudge towards libertarianism should be preferable to or more likely than a thoroughgoing change, however quickly accomplished.

Ireland's industrial revolution, small-scale and incomplete as it is, has failed to make Ireland 'ugly' - in fact Ireland is one of the most beautiful, peaceful and unspoilt regions of Europe. Nowhere has a capitalist industrial revolution produced great wealth for the workers or power for the working class, unless you happen to believe in the state-capitalist bullshit emanating from Moscow. On paper the Republic's economy is certainly a mess, but what does this prove other than the continuing retardation of the Irish economy resulting from British and American neo-colonialist economic relationships which the political division of the island helps to perpetuate?

Anarchists should neither oppose nor support the actions of the British state with regard to the constitutional position of the Northern Irish statelet - it's irrelevant in practical terms, all we can do is adopt an ideological position towards the state however it chooses to constitute itself. We should be opposing the British state's continuing military presence, direct rule and repressive measures in Ireland, opposing the neocolonialism of Britain and the US, and supporting the efforts of groups in Ireland, whether anarchist, socialist, libertarian, nationalist or whatever, in working for a better way of life for all the inhabitants of the island, free from British and American domination whether economic, political or cultural, and from the stultifying domination of

the Roman Catholic Church and all the other churches too.

Revolutionary politics is incompatible with the sort of gradualism which so appeals to Sean MacGowan. Revolutionary politics may not be about ego-tripping, but it certainly isn't about nudging British society in the hopes of some sort of spin-off for 'wee Ulster' either.

Katy Andrews

Education

ANTHONY SMITH made a very interesting broadcast recently on home education. As a home educating parent I could agree with just about everything he said. I am a supporter of AS Neill's ideology and would be quite happy to see an increase in literacy rather than the continuation of barbarian authority. However I accept for those who want them all the existing forms. All we can try is give the libertarian what they want!

Friere discovered that people who have not learned to read can pick up the basics in three months. People of average intelligence who just happened not to have been provided with education in South America, that is. So why all the fuss about compulsory education. Obviously it's a control system and that is why any alternatives of any real significance are always resisted. Everything that is done must be done only with the approval of the state. We live in a dictatorship, of that education is the proof.

AA
Edinburgh

Sociology

AS A student of sociology and a believer in anarchism, I find a gap in sociology as it is taught.

There are three schools of thought, alike in their dissimilarity from anarchism.

Functionalism, the traditional school, believes that society controls us all. Anarchism would say society controls some of us, but not all. Functionalism does not take account of persons who are truly self-aware and realise their potentials.

The Marxist perspective believes that class exists, that revolution is historically inevitable, and that the state is a necessary institution. Anarchists, I hope, accept the existence of class, but not the inevitability of revolution (or even the possibility of bloody revolution abolishing class), and certainly not the necessity of the state.

The third school of thought is symbolic interaction, which assumes we have complete control over our thoughts and actions. Anarchism believes we all have the potential to be independent thinkers and doers, but not all of us use that potential.

These are oversimplifications, but a thorough examination of the three views would show that they are equally incompatible with anarchism, and that the introduction of anarchist thought as a fourth sociological perspective would improve sociological study.

I feel the reason anarchism is not represented is that it is regarded as subversive, and not in support of the state system. Unless it is considered, sociology will remain restricted, and relatively ineffective as an academic discipline.

Mike
Lymington

Listen!

I RECENTLY received a copy of your June issue. I found E B Maple's letter on behalf of the Fifth Estate, which attacked my pamphlet, *Listen Anarchist!*, to be quite revealing.

Perhaps most noticeable is Maple's misuse of language. He states that you were 'suckered into a nasty argument' by me. To 'sucker' someone implies deliberate deception. There was absolutely no deception involved here. I simply sent you a copy of my pamphlet and you reviewed it. Period. But Maple evidently felt that he had to abuse you, for daring to print a favourable review to *Listen Anarchist!*, and me, so he inaccurately used the derogatory term, 'sucker'.

Secondly, Maple attacks my pamphlet as 'authoritarian'. As anyone who would bother to read my pamphlet would notice, it is completely anti-authoritarian; in it, and in everything else I've ever written, I reject all forms of coercion. In *Listen Anarchist!* I criticise and make suggestions, but I do not suggest that anarchists should ever be forced to do anything. To Maple, that approach is 'authoritarian'. Whether he's so confused that he doesn't know the difference between criticism and authoritarianism, or whether he's deliberately and dishonestly using the abusive term 'authoritarian', I don't know. In neither case does Maple's use of language reflect well upon him or upon the Fifth Estate.

Finally, in his letter, Maple refers to alleged 'lies and smears' in my pamphlet. Naturally, he doesn't mention any specifics. Due to the controversial character of *Listen Anarchist!*, I was careful to document every charge of misconduct against individuals and publications it contains. Anyone caring to contact me with questions about *Listen Anarchist!* can write to me at Box 6118, San Francisco, CA94101, ISA. (And as your review did not mention price or distributor, I'll add that the pamphlet is available for \$1 ppd. from that address, or, for the same price, from Black Duck Press, PO Box 40400, San Francisco, CA 94140.)

Chaz Bufe

Metaphysics

ANARCHISTS often tend to throw out the whole metaphysical baby with the stale old bathwater of patriarchal-transcendent-hierarchical forms of religion. George Woodcock is guilty of this on the first page of the prologue to his *Anarchism*, when he states that mystics seek not anarchy, but another kingdom. Barbara Smoker makes the same error in her article 'Anarchism implies Atheism', with her assumption that one is faced with a straight choice between the traditional transcendent type of God on the one hand and pure and unsullied secularism on the other.

What about all those spiritually-minded people down through the ages who have suffered and died for a more imminent faith, often referring to the 'Kingdom of God/Heaven within'?

The inner metaphysical liberation experienced by these courageous women and men represented a direct challenge to the spiritual power monopoly of the priesthood and the whole hierarchical structure of the church. If that inner freedom and the willingness to die for it does not represent a form of metaphysical anarchism I don't know what does.

Today, while no doubt most anarchists would approve of the apparent secularisation of society, the empirical fact remains that a surprisingly large number of people (surveys suggest at least a third of the population) would claim experiences variously described as 'mystical', 'religious', 'spiritual', 'timeless', etc. Such moments of perceptual clarity often involve experiencing a form of peace that passes understanding, a sense of liberation beyond words. Is this empirical fact to be written off as superstitious mumbo-jumbo simply because religious language is often used, for want of any other vocabulary? If anarchists continue to make the old error of equating this natural, normal, beautiful human experience with outworn forms of religion they will find themselves fighting for a very soulless kind of world.

John-Francis Phipps

Where were you?

ONE interesting thing about the centenary issue of *Freedom* is that, despite all the references to various women who have played an important part in the group - Charlotte Wilson, the Rossetti sisters (in *The Torch*), Lilian Wolfe, Marie Louise Berneri, Rita Milton, Mary Canpia, Gillian Fleming, and so on - out of the nearly 50 contributors there is only one woman - since Andrea Kinty doesn't sound or write like a woman - and Barbara Smoker has little to do with *Freedom* or the anarchist movement in the normal course of events.

Chris Hartwell

Community police

LAST month the Thames Valley Police Consultative Committee (E Division) decided to hold a public meeting in Reading. It was announced that the committee would be happy to face questions from the public and also to hear what the local community expected from its police force.

The committee, made up of senior police officers and selected representatives from the local community, sat on the platform and waited... and waited... and waited... and then packed up and went home. Not one person turned up to the meeting.

Zed

Sorry

JUST a short, but important note. On page 16 (*Freedom* no 47, September 1986) our comrade Nicolas Walter corrects reference in my new book, *Fragments: A Memoir*, that he called Dorothy Day of *The Catholic Worker*, 'The saintly Dorothy Day'. I do indeed regret this error and will appreciate publication of this note in your next issue. I will also thank you for sending my personal regards and best wishes to our comrade Nicolas Walter.

Sam Dolgoff

Squatters

JUST after the Second World War a large group of homeless civilians, demobbed service men and women and ex-prisoners squatted the Ranikhet Army Camp at Tilehurst in Reading, Berkshire. We squatted block A13. We'd like to hear from any other squatters from Ranikhet with the idea of putting our memories and photographs into book form. If you were there, or know someone who was there, please get in touch. All letters will be answered promptly.

Moya and John Much
Ranikhet Villa, Denmark,
Western Australia, WA 6333.

Correction

I suppose it's a bit late now, but I would like to correct the jumbling up of pieces of an article in the Centenary issue, so that the current development of our argument might be followed.

On page 86, the two sections entitled 'Organisations for all time' and 'Untarnished rebellion' should follow the section in the next column entitled 'History and organisation'.

On page 87, the heading 'Thought and practice' should be in bold type - '4. Thought and practice'.

Finally, on page 88, line 2, 'infantile' should read 'informal'.

Thanks

Tom Jennings

Free Speech

IT IS with mounting shame and disquiet that we learn of the increasing campaign of violence which the left, and anarchists in particular, are directing against free speech. Two recent events stand out: the disruption of Enoch Powell's visit to Bristol University by a group called Effective Action, and a fracas at the Societies Mart, Leeds University, in which a Federation of Conservative Students stand was attacked. Effective Action were described in *The Guardian* as anarchists, and the events in Leeds were claimed by anarchists in a letter to *Leeds Other Paper*.

Violence against words is patently the action of those who have already lost the argument - the 'politics' of desperation. If an ideology is to be defeated, it is an absolute precondition that it be defeated ideologically. Anyone can get together a gang to go and smash up someone else's platform, but this will rightly be interpreted by most people as the foot-stamping tantrum of infants who cannot get their own way. Such action carried out in the name of 'anarchism' will inevitably discredit anarchist ideas. The issue of whether the perpetrators 'really are' anarchist is one to which there is no final solution, as anyone who subscribes to certain minimum ideas can give themselves the name.

Anarchism has always been a haven of good sense and decent values, amongst which is the primacy of hearts and minds and with it a libertarian respect for the capability of the individual to distinguish good from bad ideas. Force is a poor substitute for consent. It does not go well with claims to oppose coercion.

The crucial point about free speech is that once it is qualified it no longer exists. It is no good saying that you believe in free speech except where you believe real harm would come of it, because everyone believes that harm results from the expression of views other than their own. Once you have denied someone else a platform for the sake of what you believe is harmful, you have no grounds for complaint when they deny your right to speak. The right of free speech is absolute, or it is nothing. The anarchists in Leeds and Bristol have destroyed not only their opponent's right to speak but their own with it. No doubt they will be delighted with such iconoclasm, but to what principle will they appeal if they are given the same treatment?

For libertarian ideas to stand any chance of gaining wider acceptance, reasoned argument and a respect for the ability of others to make up their own minds freely must be in the forefront of our approach.

Graham Cockburn
pp The Pleasure Tendency
Leeds

Reviews



Investing in People The Labour Party

'HISTORY', as Marx said, 'Repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce', and the Labour Party's latest offering in the run up to the next general election does just that. Titled *Investing in People* with Big Brother Neil Kinnock's serious face looking you straight in the eye, it reads like an updated version of the 1958 *Personal Guide to the Future Labour Offers YOU* as demolished by Vernon Richards in his *Impossibilities of Social Democracy*. Like that '50s document, it is the product of a Labour Party having suffered defeat in two elections running, turning in its desperate quest for power to smooth adman-type packaging and hype in an effort to out Saatchi and Saatchi the Tories. In the process they have buried still further any Socialist policies they once possessed in order to buy votes.

Like the '50s document it is smoothly produced with glossy photos on every page, of the brave new inhabitants of this brave new world on offer for Spring '87. The authors, shy souls who don't mention their names, are almost consciously selling Labour as the 'nice' capitalist party. *Investment* is the constant theme of the pamphlet; investment in order that the Labour Government can pay for its considerable promised building, welfare, social, health and environmental programmes, not by anything so nasty or tasteless as real distribution of wealth, but by transforming Britain '... into a country that is efficient and competitive ...' which, surprise, surprise, is what the Tories also say!

Labour, we are told, is going to put the country back to work, building houses, roads, hospitals and schools. This is an improvement on that other Keynesian idea of paying men to dig holes and then to fill them in again so as to help create a 'demand-led' recovery by increasing people's spending power. However, nowhere in this pamphlet do they question the meaning and purpose of work as understood by millions who daily face boring and mind-numbing jobs. None of the persons whose pictures feature in the pamphlet appear to be factory workers or members of the unemployed. Nowhere do they question the true meaning of efficiency relating to *needs* not *profits*.

On every page they talk about investment. They proclaim their desire to invest in people because this will create 'a country where individual liberty and social justice are based on a solid foundation of economic prosperity'. This is, they assure us, 'the democratic socialist vision of the Labour Party'. Labour wants to invest in everything and anything which might restore the capitalist economy. They intend to invest in industry so that Britain can 'pay its own way when North Sea oil runs out'. Their chief criticism of the Tories is that they are less efficient capitalists than Labour. 'Investment in manufacturing industry is far lower than in 1979 and output has fallen.' They intend to improve education, training and skills so that we can all dutifully work and produce for them more efficiently, and they intend to improve investment and health services presumably so that we have less excuse for not turning up for work! They claim an interest in seeking to protect the environment, mentioning acid rain, contaminated water supplies, the spread of pollution, the perils of nuclear power - but these problems, like all those they seek to address, are merely symptoms of the malaise of capitalism.

Seeking to provide solutions, funded out of taxation of the profits of a 'growing economy' cannot work. It cannot work because the demands of the state for more armaments, more police, more prisons, etc, continually increase, eating up the revenues derived from their growing economy, leaving less for welfare, health, housing, environment. It cannot work because there are ultimately limited resources, limited energy, which will put a stop to 'growth'. It cannot work because people will not for ever consent to produce useless goods in boring jobs, to go home and endure 'leisure time', which mainly consists of watching televised mind-numbing crap! It cannot work because an economy and society based on production for profit can never meet real needs, nor solve its real long term problems.

Until we say otherwise by our actions, the state and capitalism will do precisely what it wants to do. There is nothing mentioned in Kinnock's latest pamphlet that can change that. It is yet another politician's confidence trick, and it will change nothing - they have learnt nothing. **J Simcock**

MONOCLED MUTINEER

THE television series *The Monocled Mutineer*, which was mentioned in the last ordinary issue of *Freedom* (September) and was broadcast on BBC1 from 31 August to 21 September, became the occasion for interesting and important contro-

versy involving two issues - the position of the BBC, and the truth about the First World War.

The book of *The Monocled Mutineer* by William Allison and John Fairley (first published in 1978) combined a sketchy biography of Percy Toplis, a petty crook in civilian life and then a frequent deserter from the army, with an oral history of the Etaples mutiny of 1917. This journalistic work was claimed to be both original and accurate - a claim which was repeated when Alan Bleasdale's script of *The Monocled Mutineer* was made into a skilfully directed and acted television series. The BBC publicity machine then inflated both the quality and significance of the programmes and also the accuracy and originality of the events they described, producing advertisements and articles emphasising the 'true' story of Toplis and the 'suppressed' story of the mutiny.

The reaction began even before the series began. Byron Rogers questioned the myth of Toplis in *The Times* (23 August), and I questioned the myth of the mutiny in a letter to *The Listener* (5 September). Julian Putkowski, the historical advisor to the series, publicly dissociated himself from it because of its reckless errors of fact and distortions of interpretation, and his press statement of 12 September stimulated a furious quarrel in the media about the whole subject.

Unfortunately most of the protagonists took sides along the usual left-right lines, and unfortunately this quarrel coincided with a much wider right-wing campaign against the BBC, involving hysterical allegations of left-wing bias both in news and current affairs programmes and in fictional and semi-fictional drama programmes. Some Conservative newspapers (especially the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail*) and Conservative politicians took *The Monocled Mutineer* as an example of such bias - with rather more justification than the news coverage of the American attack on Libya last April (in which bias is interpreted as an excessive concern for people killed in air-raids).

The BBC quietly withdrew from what it recognised was indefensible ground, leaving the authors of the book and the script to defend their treatment of Toplis and the mutiny. Thus Bleasdale claimed in the *New Statesman* (5 September) that he had 'written about the truth, not necessarily the facts'. Allison and Fairley repeated their claims respectively in the *Guardian* (22 September) and the *Listener* (25 September), and Putkowski replied in the *Guardian* (26 September) and the *Listener* (2 October). The arguments have rumbled on in the specialist papers, and Putkowski discussed the subject at the History Workshop in Leeds (November).

In one way, of course, this is an unreal controversy. We can never know the real

truth about either Toplis or the mutiny, and *The Monocled Mutineer* should have been seen as journalism or drama rather than history or documentary. Moreover most coverage of individual lives or collective events during the First World War has always been mythical or false, depending on whether you approve or disapprove of it. But there is a real problem, which I tried to solve in an article in the *New Statesman* (26 September).

Although we can never know the truth, we should try to get as close to it as we can. The truth about Toplis or the mutiny, so far as it can be known, may be derived only from the facts, so far as they can be found. Any addition to or subtraction from the facts may make the story more interesting or exciting or a lot of other things, but cannot make it more true. One of the few certain facts about Toplis and the mutiny is that there are few certain facts about them, and it is important to distinguish between plausible reconstruction of real events and complete invention of non-events. What happened in the television series was that people who had been victims of their world of crime and war became victims of our world of media and myth.

Even if we prefer the left-wing myths of the First World War to the right-wing myths, we should recognise them as myths. And anarchists anyway should refuse to accept the thesis that a mutiny needs to be led by a crook to become effective - not that there is any direct evidence that Toplis was at Etaples at the time. *The Monocled Mutineer* may be good journalism or good television, but it is bad history and bad politics and bad morality. What we want is the truth about crooks and mutinies and about the way such things are treated by the BBC and all the media. Give us the facts, to coin a slogan, and we shall finish the job. **NW**

Moot Point

Phoenix Press (£1)

THIS 32-page pamphlet, anonymously edited, contains 27 items reprinted (with misprints and some without permission of the writer) from eleven issues of *Freedom* published during 1983, illustrating various arguments about controversial issues in the anarchist movement, together with editorial comments at the beginning and the end.

The moot points covered include such things as violence, class struggle, and the suppression of pornography (all three supported by the pamphlet's editor). The arguments are inevitably confused, since the items vary widely in type and quality and are torn out of their context, and what may make sense in a fortnightly paper looks very much out of place in a pamphlet. **MH**

A Year of Our Lives: Hatfield Main, a colliery community in the great coal strike of 1984/5

Hooligan Press £3.50

Ideal Home: survival edition

Suspect/Hooligan Press £2.40

ANOTHER book about the miners' strike? Another book about housing? In both cases you should reach for your wallet, since both books are, each in its own way, unique documents.

A Year of our Lives is a collection of articles, photographs, statements and personal experiences of the NUM strike in the pit villages of Stainforth and Dunscroft, near Doncaster in Yorkshire. There is a brief history of the area's involvement with coal mining, showing the migrations of people into the area. Then the Strike Speech of the NUM Branch delegate David Douglass sets the scene. Bob Hume writes about welfare organisation. Elaine Robe and Kitty Holding describe the work of the Hatfield Main and Thorne womens' support groups.

I found 'The Log Project' a marvellous chapter. ASLEF and NUR members in the Grimsby area showed their support and solidarity by giving their allocations of old wooden railway sleepers to the miners (they were being replaced by concrete sleepers, and the old wood was allocated to the railwaymen as fuel). They were carried by the lorry load to a retired miner's woodyard, there to be sawn up and distributed.

'A Bridge Too Far' by John Greenhall, about the support given by railway workers at Immingham, shows how effective trade union action *could* be; only two trains left the terminal in *eight months!* (The Immingham dockers seem to have been less supportive.)

Adrian Simpson's affidavit shows one man caught up in the daily assaults, physical and psychological, by police and media (his case was one of those dealt with in the Channel 4 film of the strike.) He hovered close to death in hospital following a vicious assault by police seeking villagers to attack. To his shame he had never been on a picket line, and was on his way to find wasp grubs for fishing when he was nearly killed. Subsequently he was charged with assaulting the police! (not as unusual as you may think), and eventually served three months in prison.

There are contributions from children, showing how involvement in community struggle provides a useful contribution to education. In experiencing the strike, they probably developed a very fine family solidarity and understanding.

Clearly laid out and easy to read, this is a book of written accounts and transcribed oral accounts *by the people*

involved. No honest historian of the present or the future, researching the Great Strike of 1984/5, can ignore this rich source of primary evidence. *A Year of our Lives* should be bought for your nearest and dearest.

Ideal Home, by contrast, is a confusing mishmash of articles interspersed with confusing collages. If everyone who contributed a chapter had been allowed to have *what they wrote*, this could have been as instructive and useful as *A Year of our Lives*, an essential pocket book for squatters, travellers, bus and truck dwellers, would-be 'peace convoy' creators (of new branches of the 'peace convoy'), and new age gypsies of every sort. As it is, it is certainly a survival guide, but a botched up one.

I say this with feeling, since I contributed a section about the ways people were living at Molesworth peace camp, in tents, teepees, buses, trucks, tarps (tarpaulins), and the benders of every shape, size and sort. However, the only bit of the chapter (I was asked for) which is published is the first paragraph, and the thing finishes up with a diatribe against peace camps, which has little to do with my article and a lot to do with fatheaded prejudice against people who have stopped ranting and started living in an altogether different way from city squatters. I suspect the author of this diatribe has heavily sub-edited the whole book. The section on squatting is excellent, but its length is at the expense of other sections. There is a good complete guide to teepee living and building, but most other sections are curtailed.

Ideal Home is nevertheless a worthwhile book and I recommend you to buy it. But if you buy both books, or otherwise have the opportunity to compare them, notice how the clear layout of one book allows the miners' talk and writing through, whereas the jumble of the other book obstructs the contributors.

Hooligan Press has done a service by publishing both these books, as they did by the publication of an anarchist novel, *The Free*.

Dennis Gould

Further reading on the miners' strike: Coulter, Miller and Walker *State of Siege* Canary Press 1984 £3.50.

Lynn Beaton *Shifting Horizons* Canary Press 1985 £5.65.

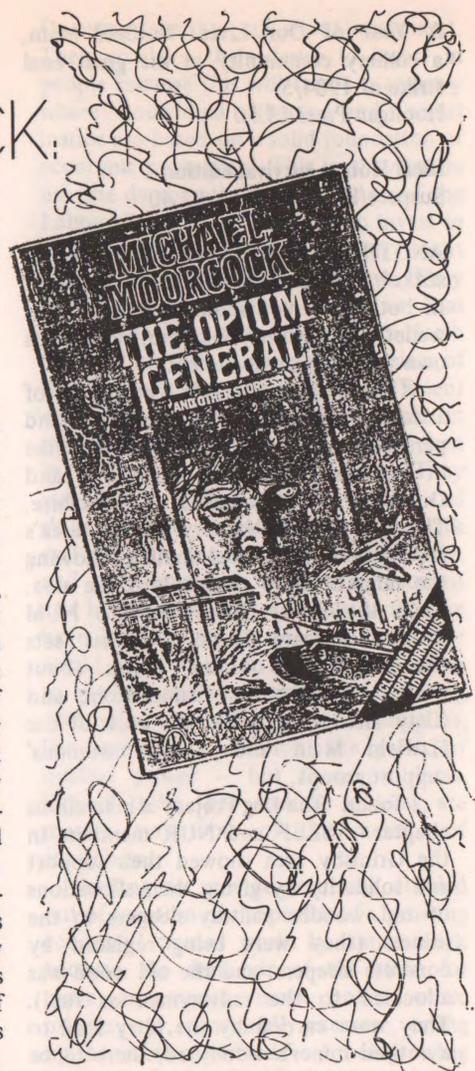
Sutcliffe and Hill *Let Them Eat Coal* Canary Press 1985 £1.95.

Jackson and Wardle *The Battle for Orgreave* Vanson/Wardle 1986 £3.95.

Salt and Layzell *Here We Go! womens' memories of the 1984/85 miners' strike* London Pol. Committee, Co-op Retail Services £3.50.

Literature

MOORCOCK: ANARCHIST IRONIST



'Who are we, any of us, to make a decision for the world?'

— Michael Moorcock in *The Jerry Cornelius Tetralogy*

WHILE there are many works on Anarchism, from many different perspectives, the canon of fictional material pertinent to libertarian critiques and issues is comparatively small. Freedom Bookshop's 1985 booklist included only a handful of classic fictional works (by Orwell, Huxley and Traven) with central anarchist themes. It is difficult to think of any fiction, written from an anarchist perspective, by writers who have experienced the events of the last 20 years.

The fact that one of the most significant novelists with anarchist sympathies and an anarchist perspective is not only still living, but at the height of his powers as a novelist, makes the landscape of libertarian fiction look a great deal less bleak.

Michael Moorcock is best known for his baroque 'Sword and Sorcery' stories and for his role as the editor of *New Worlds*, the iconoclastic fiction magazine which gave general currency to the term 'New Wave' in Science Fiction. It is Moorcock's more recent work, which does not belong to any fictional genre, which I feel may be of interest to the readers of *Freedom*.

Thatcher's Britain

The Alchemist's Question (Moorcock's most overtly political story) is a mordant satire on Thatcherism, the new right and the resurgence of nationalism in post-Falklands Britain. The country is taken into a new ice age by the authoritarian Miss Brunner (a dictator needing the reassurance of the 'support' of 'her people' and thus a Thatcher surrogate if ever there was!). The Brunner government moves to Glastonbury, with the aim of setting up an absolute monarchy and effecting a return to Arthurian values! At the first hint of the possibility of defeat, in an act typical of charismatic leaders, Brunner transfers the blame: 'I was betrayed. England betrayed me. My English were unworthy of me'. This novella is one of the most observant pieces of satire I have come across,

cutting deep into the follies of placing trust in 'firm leadership', and has the advantage of a very amusing and readable plot.

Moorcock's Targets

There are a number of concerns which recur throughout Moorcock's work.

He sees one of the major contemporary problems for radicals to be the striking of a balance between conforming to the demands of society (not the state) and becoming alienated from it. This 'search for an individual morality not at odds with the demands of society' is characterised by Moorcock as finding a middle path between the conformity of Kipling and the estrangement from society of Byron. This theme is dealt with in the *Jerry Cornelius* series and in *Moorcock's Book of Martyrs*.

In the *Jerry Cornelius* stories the hero frequently undergoes metamorphoses, changing age, sex and race. Cornelius is a template for Moorcock's ironic attacks on authoritarianism, racism and traditional rigidly defined gender roles. Moorcock is a keen supporter of feminist critiques of society. *The Adventures of Una Persson* and *Catherine Cornelius in the Twentieth Century* is concerned with the problems

encountered by women revolutionaries, and the romanticising of revolutionary violence. While understanding their dissatisfaction Moorcock cannot support the actions taken by Hearst and Meinhoff, and attributes these actions to the use of predominantly male modus operandi and dialectics. His suggestion is that women radicals should be feminists above all, and apply genuine feminist strategies and critiques. In his introduction to *The Opium General* he goes further and proposes that male radicals should also follow this path.

In *The Black Corridor* there is a trenchant attack on racism, sexism and nationalism. Imperialism, modern and historical, is lampooned in *The War Lord of the Air*.

Liberating the Narrative

Moorcock's anarchism is not merely reflected in his thematic concerns and his satirical sideswipes at authoritarianism, but is inherent in his entire approach to the role of his reader.

This approach is not journalistic or didactic, but constitutes an attempt to allow the reader maximal opportunity to apply his/her own interpretation to the narrative. Thus, facile allegorical satire (with its simple 'keys') is replaced by irony (with many possible interpretations).

This ambitious aim is best exemplified in the seminal *Jerry Cornelius Tetralogy*, where Moorcock developed a narrative technique to suit the atmosphere of the late twentieth century (lives in fugue, the fragmentation and fictionalisation of experience, the overflow of information, etc.). These novels contain strictly controlled sets of puns, internal references and fragmented scenes, all set against a very rigorous structure. It is this discipline on the part of the author which allows the reader scope to bring his/her own perceptions into play. The reading experience is thus mediated by the imagination of the reader in a complex interaction with that of the author.

Through the author's self restraint (he resists the temptation to make editorial points or impose his world-view upon us) the reader's freedom to participate in the imaginative process is increased. This narrative is consonant with the central libertarian notion that self discipline is a necessary condition for freedom.

Moorcock's Trademark

Moorcock's trademark is a mixture of social realism and the imaginative elements usually found in 'fantastic' and 'heroic' literature. He should provide readers of *Freedom* with a stimulating literary excursion since, while he writes from an anarchist perspective, he is a storyteller in the same class as Dumas and a black humourist as funny as Joseph Heller.

Andrew Hedgecock

IN BRIEF

A girl who says that she was kept off her school cheerleading squad in California because her breasts are too big has filed a \$1 million suit against the governors. She says that she was subjected to embarrassment and ridicule. This is in a week when the *Mail on Sunday's* colour magazine has a picture feature about the fashionable return to 'womanly' figures. It should be possible to produce an article or perhaps even a PhD thesis linking this with the change in the economic climate.

The fall-out from Chernobyl continues. Lamb and reindeer meat worth about £18 million has been taken off the market in Norway because of 'contamination'.

The Law Commission has suggested that the stigma of illegitimacy should be removed in England, in line with the newly enlightened Scottish practice. Their innovative suggestion is that the description of children in legal documents as 'illegitimate' and 'legitimate' should be replaced with 'non-marital' and 'marital'.

A third of women forced into prostitution in India are sold by their relatives, according to a new study. Parents even sell their unborn female children, presumably on the lines of the 'options' market. A young woman in Bombay can fetch £4,000, whilst in southern Tamil Nadu state the price can be as little as £22. The supposedly obsolete caste system affects the price. Male children are also sold.

Money is the leading cause of household arguments among Americans and one person in three believes it could enhance his or her sex life, according to a survey by *Money* magazine.

West Germany has finally dropped legal proceedings against judges and state prosecutors belonging to Hitler's 'People's Courts'. None of the original 577 suspects have been sentenced, after 20 years of investigations.

The British Medical Association is preparing a report on who would be allowed to live and who should be left to die after a nuclear war. Those picked to survive would include market gardeners, mechanics and nurses. Doctors would probably be excluded because they know little about first aid and are helpless without their equipment. Politicians are not singled out. A similar report last year embarrassed the Home Office by suggesting that a full scale attack would kill 26 million people, half the population of the UK, rather than 16 million as government sources had estimated.

Christian churches in Britain have lost half a million members in the past five years, being now down to 7 million, or about 15% of the population. Moslems have increased to 852,000, outnumbering the combined strength of Methodists and Baptists. Active Jews have declined slightly (to 109,000), whilst Satanists have doubled in the last five years to 15,000.

No executions were carried out in any European country last year, for the first time since Amnesty International began keeping records 25 years ago. The organisation is optimistic that governments are responding more and more to pressures to respect human rights. However, many still try to sabotage or to evade systems that have been set up to protect these rights. 'Some countries claim that the protection of civil and political rights would be a luxury; economic and social needs must be given priority, as if the need for such reforms gave that government authority to torture and kill its citizens.' Specifically noted are Chile, Kampuchea, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and South Africa.

Examining magistrates in Madrid have called for the parliament to investigate the operations of the security forces. They say that Spain is on the way to becoming a police state again. They point to a nationwide network of corruption, including police involvement in bank robbery and trafficking in stolen goods.

Police use of stop and search powers dropped dramatically in the first six months after the introduction of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, according to the Home Office. The number of stops almost halved, from 14,000 recorded in January, when the Bill was introduced, to 7,800 in June. They say that the reason for the drop in numbers is uncertain but suggest that it may be partly due to initial uncertainty about new procedures about the method of recording stops and searches. In fact, no such record is required. We shall watch for the next half-yearly figures, when officers shall have come to terms with this complexity.

A Chinese woman died at her wedding because a kiss from her new husband was of such passion, intensity and duration as to cause heart palpitations.

A council official in Merton, convicted of corruption, avoided a prison sentence because, according to the Judge, 'You have a wonderful war record and in this court that always counts for a lot.'

Donations

AUGUST

Freedom Magazine Fund

Ilkley HRS £2.25; W'hampton JL £2; Muenster HB £5; W'hampton JL £2; JL £2; Gwent CIJ £1.50; Oakland, USA DK £8; W'hampton JL £2

August Total = £24.75

Previously acknowledged = £605.82

1986 Total to date = £630.57

Freedom Press Premises Fund

Ilkley HRS £2.25; W'hampton JL £3; Muenster HB £5; W'hampton JL £5; Gwent CIJ £2; W'hampton JL £3; Oakland, USA DK £8; W'hampton JL £3

August Total = £31.25

Previously acknowledged = £297.89

1986 Total to date = £329.14

SEPTEMBER

Freedom Magazine Fund

W'hampton JL £2; New Zealand PI £1; Bristol MS £1; Dunstable PP £1.50; Kettering ST £1; Reading DEH £1; London DS £3; London PP £2; Muenster HB £5; Gwynedd JR £1; Sheerness KDN £1; W'hampton JL £3; Winchester PMC £5; Surbiton RF £5; W'hampton JL £4; London LF £5; Looe AA £5.

September Total = £41.50

Previously acknowledged = £630.57

1986 Total to date = £672.07

Freedom Press Premises Fund

W'hampton JL £3; New Zealand PI £1; Bristol MS £1; Dunstable PP £1; Portsmouth 'Bud' £1; Reading DEH £1; London DS £3; Muenster HB £5; Gwynedd JR £1; W'hampton JL £4; Surbiton RF £5; W'hampton JL £6.

September total = £32.00

Previously acknowledged = £329.14

1986 Total to date = £351.14

OCTOBER

Freedom Magazine Fund

W'hampton JL £2; Anon £2; London LR £1.05; Witham CPS £15; W'hampton JL £2; Sheffield JC £5; W'hampton JL £2; London RiffRaff Freedom Centenary Party £75; Muenster HB £5; Stoke-on-Trent AB £2.

October Total = £111.05

Previously acknowledged = £672.07

1986 Total to date = £783.12

Freedom Press Premises Fund

W'hampton JL £3; Sheppey RTM £1; Witham CPS £15; W'hampton JL £3; Lancs PA £2.50; Nottingham AH £2; Stoke-on-Trent AB £2; W'hampton JL £3; Cheltenham TKW £30; Muenster HB £5; Bristol JL £3; Anon £3.

October Total = £72.50

Previously acknowledged = £351.14

1986 Total to date = £423.64