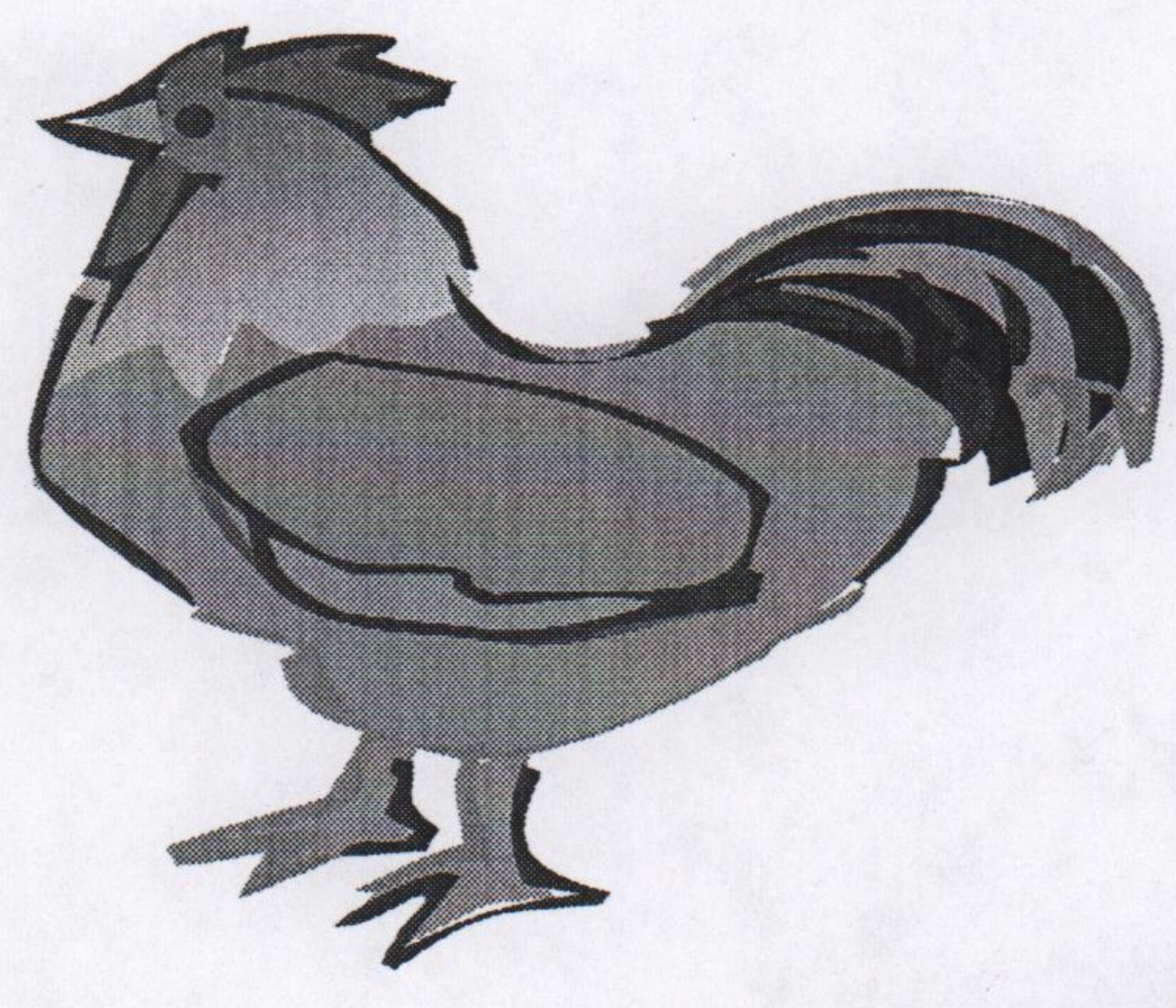


SHROZESH NO KOO

No. 5

Conference Issue:



northern anarchists

Barry on the Spanish Civil War; Peter Good and Martin Gilbert on spirituality; the Iron Column on NAN's northern preoccupations and an editorial on Freedom's foolish reopening of the Chomsky wound and more on the wayward Cuckoo.

August 2003.

Donation to NAN.

Editorial:

Foolish Freedom Reopens Chomsky Wound

In the Summer issue of The Match from the USA Donald Rooum on behalf of Freedom Press launched a defence of Freedom Press's embarrassing involvement in the affair of the so-called alternative 'Chomsky Raven'. Mr Rooum writes:

'In your "Around and about" column, you say 'a 73-page journal which was planned to be an issue of The Raven, published by certain anarchists in England, was quashed after the parent magazine, Freedom, decided the issue was too critical of Noam Chomsky.'

'The reason Freedom Press....refused to publish the manuscript, later printed privately under the title *Language, Mind and Society*, was not because we were worried about upsetting Chomsky. As you say, he is big enough to take care of himself.

'We refused to publish it because we were unimpressed by the quality of some of the work it contained, not to mention the political orientation behind it. In particular, the main article denounces Chomsky's linguistic theory as unscientific on the grounds that it does not conform to the Stalin-Lysenko doctrine that everything in biology is decided solely by environment.

'Whether you would agree or disagree with our opinion of the manuscript's quality, surely you accept our right as publishers to form this opinion and to make publishing decisions on the basis of it?'

The editor of The Match responded to Mr Rooum:

'Now wait a second. You mean to tell me someone actually sent an anarchist outfit an essay citing Stalinism, by NAME? Or did the article only argue for environmental determinism (or influence)? I believe in the latter myself, but that doesn't make me a Stalinist. Chomsky's a state-lover; he loves the federal government and IRS. Besides that, from what I've read of his linguistic theories, they sound like bunk. If anybody deserves criticism, he does.'

Why Freedom Press, having successfully kept this unsavoury business under wraps for almost two years, should now react to a short review in The Match is not clear. Recent news that yet another member of Freedom Press and former editor of Freedom, Charles Crute, has gone absent without leave must give us more cause for concern. Last Autumn, in Cock O' the North No.2 we warned of the 'Cuckolding of Freedom'. Our affinity group got a lot of flack for those disclosures. Fair enough! But increasingly it is looking like we we're right to signal our anxieties about the troubled relationships down at Freedom Press.

Is the wayward Cuckoo to blame for dispatching yet another anarchist, Charles Crute, from Freedom Press this Spring?

Mack the Knife Affinity group.

Spanish Revolution Revisited.³

A recently published 'revisionist' history of the Spanish Civil War entitled 'The myths of the Civil war' by Pio Moa a former communist who founded an armed revolutionary communists group in 1976 has stirred up a huge political controversy in Spain.

Moa's central theme is that Franco believed he was rebelling not against a democratic republic but against 'an extreme danger of revolution'. Moa is dismissive of the critics of Franco's 'barbarianism' and alleges that 'Franco's victory saved Spain from a traumatic revolution'. This attempt to rehabilitate the memory of a discredited dictator is quite frankly risible. Leaving aside Moa's contention that the minuscule Communist Party in Spain posed a 'revolutionary' threat, the subsequent Francoist dictatorship was the complete anti-thesis of the stable democracy that Moa claims.

A necessary corrective to the specious arguments of Moa is furnished by the anarchist historian, Jose Peirats in 'Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution', where the latter has accurately described the nature of the Fascist military uprising in Spain in 1936: led by Generals Franco, Yague, Quiapo de Llano, Mola and the heroic resistance of the anarcho-syndicalist movement to this attempted usurpation of power by the military and their Falangist supporters.

According to Peirats: 'the people were the real government.' In Barcelona, 'the CNT and the FAI were the incontestable heroes of the day'. Anarchist militants, such as Buenaventura Durruti and Francisco Ascaso participated in the metal workers' siege of the Atarazanas barracks held by the Fascists.

This summers' NAN Conference takes place on the 19th, July, the 67th anniversary of the Spanish revolution in which the role of the CNT-FAI militants was pivotal in defeating the initial fascist coup in many cities. Although the Fascists eventually triumphed in 1939 with the ensuing slaughter of many thousands of anti-fascists, it was a triumph due in no small part to the calumnies of the Spanish Communist Party and their Stalinist masters in the Soviet Union. We should not underestimate the enormous strength and vitality of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement in the 1930s, as shown by the creation of industrial and rural collectives that pointed the way forward to innovative forms of social organisation.

As we meet in Hebden Bridge, the heroism and self-sacrifice of those anarchist militants should serve as an inspiration to us all.

Barry Woodling.

Salutations a los companeros y companeras del Norte de Inglaterra:

'Sentimos no poder estar con nosotros, durante la celebracion de estos debates del Norte de Inglaterra. Pero no hemos podido conseguir dias libres en el trabajo, para trasladarnos a Manchester, aun que nos habiera gustado mucho...'

Esteemed Companeros and Companeras,

'Sorry we couldn't make it to be with you today during the celebration of these debates in the North of England. But we haven't been able to fix free days at work to travel to Manchester which we would have dearly loved to do.'

Salud y Libertad Melina y Carlos.

The NAN & the 'Movement':

Co-operation - the way forward.

Even before the Iraq war there had been a number of significant changes in the 'Movement'. However, since then the process has speeded up, and is visible even to the inattentive of observers. There has been, for a small movement, a massive return to Class Struggle Anarchism.

The forces of individualism seem to have melted away, or have realised that their true home is with one of the so-called libertarian Thatcherite 'free market' sects.

Now, I see the main problem for the Anarchist/Anarcho-syndicalist as being the dual problem of reformism/accountability. The temptation to rush into areas vacated by Stalinists and social democrats has been irresistible to some with unfortunate consequences for various foreign movements.

Here, in Britain, the problem has been masked by the conflict between *Freedom*, NAN and the national federations. While not going along fully with NAN's '**Northern Anarchism**', one can sympathise with their struggle against '**Metropolitan Elitism**', where ever it is found.

The 19th Century idea we should naturally follow the ideas, policies and priorities of those born in the capital, or those who seeing the light have turned their backs on 'backward provincialism' and now live in that 'cultural paradise'.

Already, there are in existence a number of national class struggle federations {not to forget regional groups}, without setting up yet another national federation. The way forward lies through co-operation with those in our area/region or those who have a particular interest in common. We do not need a centralised 'anarchist' party-type organisation, but we do need, however, a lively, pluralistic, co-operative movement.

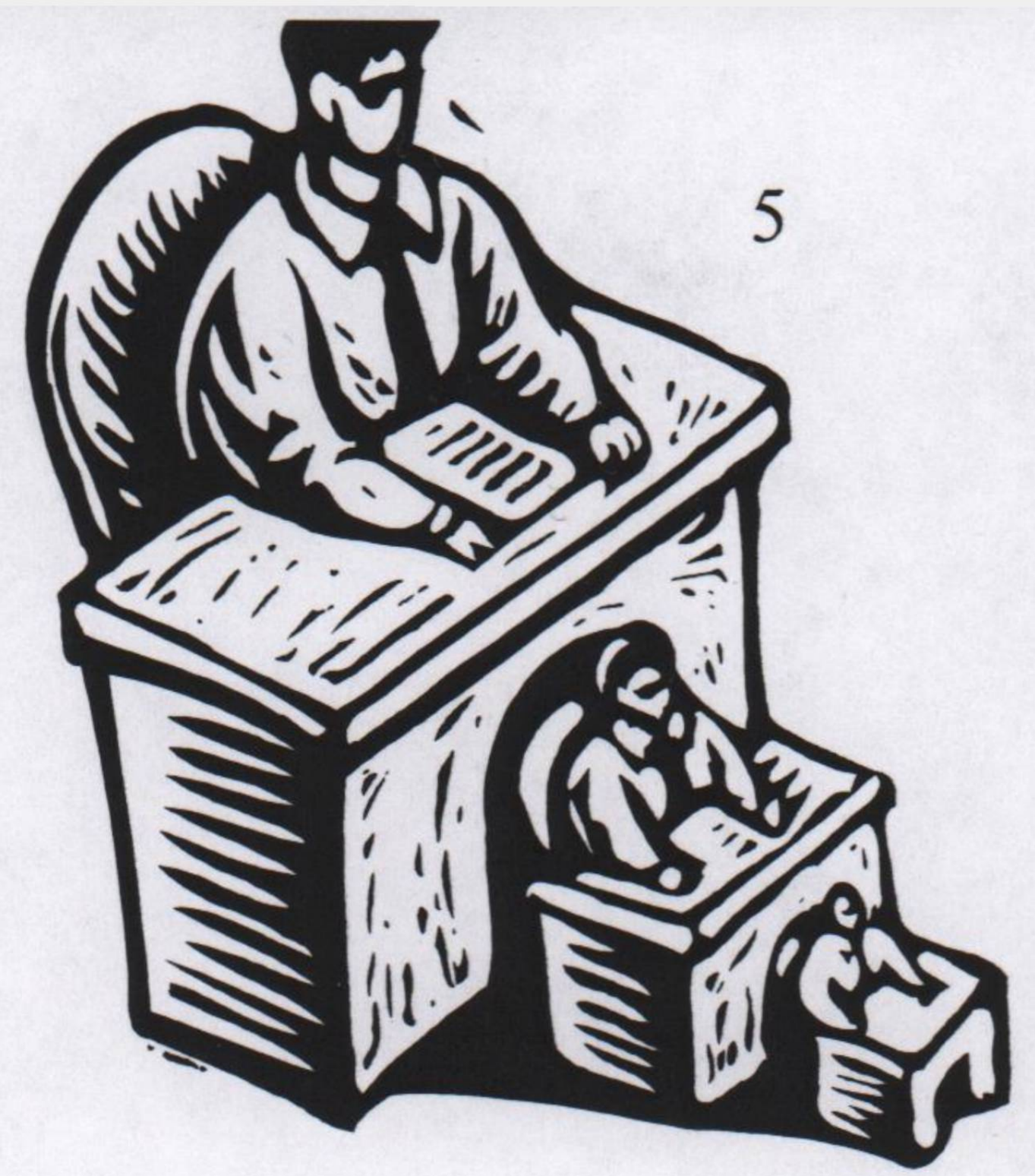
Iron Column.

Manchester People's Assembly.

The Manchester People's Assembly is having planning meetings each Tuesday at 7pm at 272, Dickenson Road. There are many left groups and trade unionists in attendance and some residents. A bulletin the **Mancunian** is being distributed: this covers issues such as the Piccadilly electricians dispute and a Bolton hospital porters dispute, as well as some coverage of the war and the Marks & Spencer Picket.

The libertarians on the People's Assembly and most of the other groups want to build local 'Social Forums' and to establish local community based politics. The Socialist workers party (SWP) wants to create a centralised façade around the Stop the war coalition with minor celebrities such as George Galloway. This kind operation will issue directives from London to Manchester and elsewhere. The SWP say a Social Forum is not necessary in the UK because we've already got 'Globalised Resistance', and everybody should join GR. But Global Resistance is yet another front of the SWP that should perhaps be labelled Grasshopper Regime given their agile ability to jump from one political bandwagon to another with seemingly little loyalty to any cause of which they land.

Dear Cocky:



Dear Cock O'North,

I'm intrigued by the (Manchester libertarian) discussion group's decision that *Anarchism, Spirituality and the oppression of external structures* was judged to be an 'unsuitable' topic for the NAN to consider.

Is this yet further evidence of NAN's drift towards becoming a grim-faced nest of crypto-socialists? Did we learn nothing from those God-less, Humour-less and Art-less 20th Century regimes where the inner lives of millions were considered insignificant?

Whether NAN chooses to recognise it or not there are Anarchists at large whose spirituality plays a prominent role in their ideas.

But if the (Manchester libertarian) discussion group is so certain that the subject of Spirituality carries no merit could they please provide us with a complete list of subjects we are to exclude from dialogue?

Peter Good.

Dear Cocky,

Peter Good is right to be critical of the Manchester discussion group's reluctance to have the topic of '*Anarchism and Spirituality*' on a NAN agenda.

The proposed discussion (which has nothing to do with religion) could be a refreshing change from our usual material. Given the

inflexible of those who fix NAN agendas, which is such a deterrent to newcomers, much patience was needed to get the Manchester comrades to consider these ideas. But they were having second thoughts about their reluctance, even as Peter was drafting his letter to 'C. of the N'.

It seems that one-day we will discuss the roots of our beliefs to find the energy that sometimes holds us together. Is our solidarity, when it exists, only created by the immediacy of workplace and community struggles? Or does the potential energy of being together raise our spirits? What is the range of our beliefs that can motivate us to action? Patience and tolerance are needed from people like Mark Newns who encouraged me to work on the ideas of '*Anarchism and Spirituality*', but who has now, with many others lost all patience with the NAN.

Such qualities are also needed from NAN comrades who are so shy of looking at new ways of getting our message across. Also I included people like Peter, who criticise us from the outside, never come to our meetings, or help NAN with serious problems mentioned above.

Regards Martin S. Gilbert.