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editorial

With the 'hanging debate' seemingly settled for the near future, the losers (ie, the pro-hangers) have turned their attention to prisons. It has been well catalogued in the media, indeed, by serving members of the Prison Service, that conditions inside British Prisons are at breaking point. Gross overcrowding stretching back several years now, old buildings, inadequate facilities have all contributed to the problems. It has been generally realised and accepted that the prison population should be reduced 'to an acceptable level'. What that 'acceptable level' should be is open to debate, we would say 'nil', but the principle is accepted. So what is the response of the 'law and order' lobby? What else but longer sentences, mandatory life sentences for specified offences, and by life they mean *life*, no remission, in fact, a whole range of 'options' guaranteed not only to fill the current prisons twice over but any new ones to be built.

One would have thought that even these blinkered bigots would be capable of realising the consequences of their proposed action. Prison disturbances are now a regular occurrence, not only among convicted prisoners, but involving remand prisoners too (these are the 'innocent until proved guilty' who can be imprisoned for up to 18 months before their trial). A current cause of prisoners' discontent is the disciplinary system used in the prisons. Offenders against Prison Rules are tried by a 'Visitors Board' (usually local worthies, magistrates etc.) who, without the benefit of legal advice, can sentence a prisoner, who has no recourse to legal advice or aid, to the equivalent of 3 months imprisonment, via 'loss of remission' on each 'offence'. They can stop visits, mail, 'wages', association, in fact, any of the few 'privileges' that make prison life a little bit bearable. And the 'offences'? They include such acts of villainy as 'failing to respond to an officer's order promptly.

All this takes place within the walls, out of public sight and with no right of appeal. The whole process has been roundly condemned by the Court of Human Rights (after seven years of deliberation). The British Government's response is that such measures are necessary to 'secure order in prison'. If the 'law and order' lobby get their way with new tougher sentencing policy what will then be needed to 'secure order'? Summary execution perhaps?

A NATION OF NARKS?

If a week is a long time in politics then it was a very long time ago indeed that all good democrats would raise their hands in horror at the concept of children spying on their parents — as reputedly happened in Nazi Germany and in the totalitarian Soviet Union, where the Christian family had been ruthlessly abolished and the only relative you were supposed to recognise was Big Brother.

Raised, as most of our rulers were — and still are — on the ethics of the public school, where 'snitching' on your schoolmates was decidedly not cricket, there was something distinctly slimy about being prepared to betray members of your family or even your neighbours to the authorities. The reverse of the attitude held true, too. If you were prepared to face personal danger, even torture, rather than give away a comrade, or only a neighbour, then you became something of a hero.

Many a gentile German did his bit to dent the concept of 'the only good German is a dead one' by helping Jews to escape the Nazi net — often by hiding them in cellars or attics until the danger was past. This of course was wartime, where everybody knew where they stood: for democracy, the right and the good, against foul totalitarianism, censorship, the forces of the ruthless state against the people.

The irony of the situation wherein the Soviet Union was already 'our' ally in the battle for democracy before Britain's war aims were drawn up was lost on most people except the anarchists and a few clear-eyed war-resisters. For it was not until August 1941 that Roosevelt and Churchill drew up what became known as the Atlantic Charter and clarified what the war was all about — on the surface and for the masses, that is.

It was for Freedom of Worship and Freedom of Speech, and it was for Freedom from Fear and Freedom from Want. Two positives and two negatives you might say. It also opposed 'territorial changes contrary to the wishes of the people concerned' and support for 'the right of peoples to choose their own form of government'. France and Britain had declared war on Germany in defence of Poland, carved up by both Germany and Russia on the terms of the Hitler-Stalin pact, but once Russia became our ally, the question of Poland's eventual 'liberation' had to be quietly dropped in favour of the above dreamy 'principles'.

It is small wonder that after the

war was over and fifty million people had been killed (by what are now referred to as 'conventional' weapons), the Charter did not amount to a row of beans. Indeed before the war was over, Freedom Press had been attacked by the British democratic state for publishing opinions and calls to action the authorities did not like.

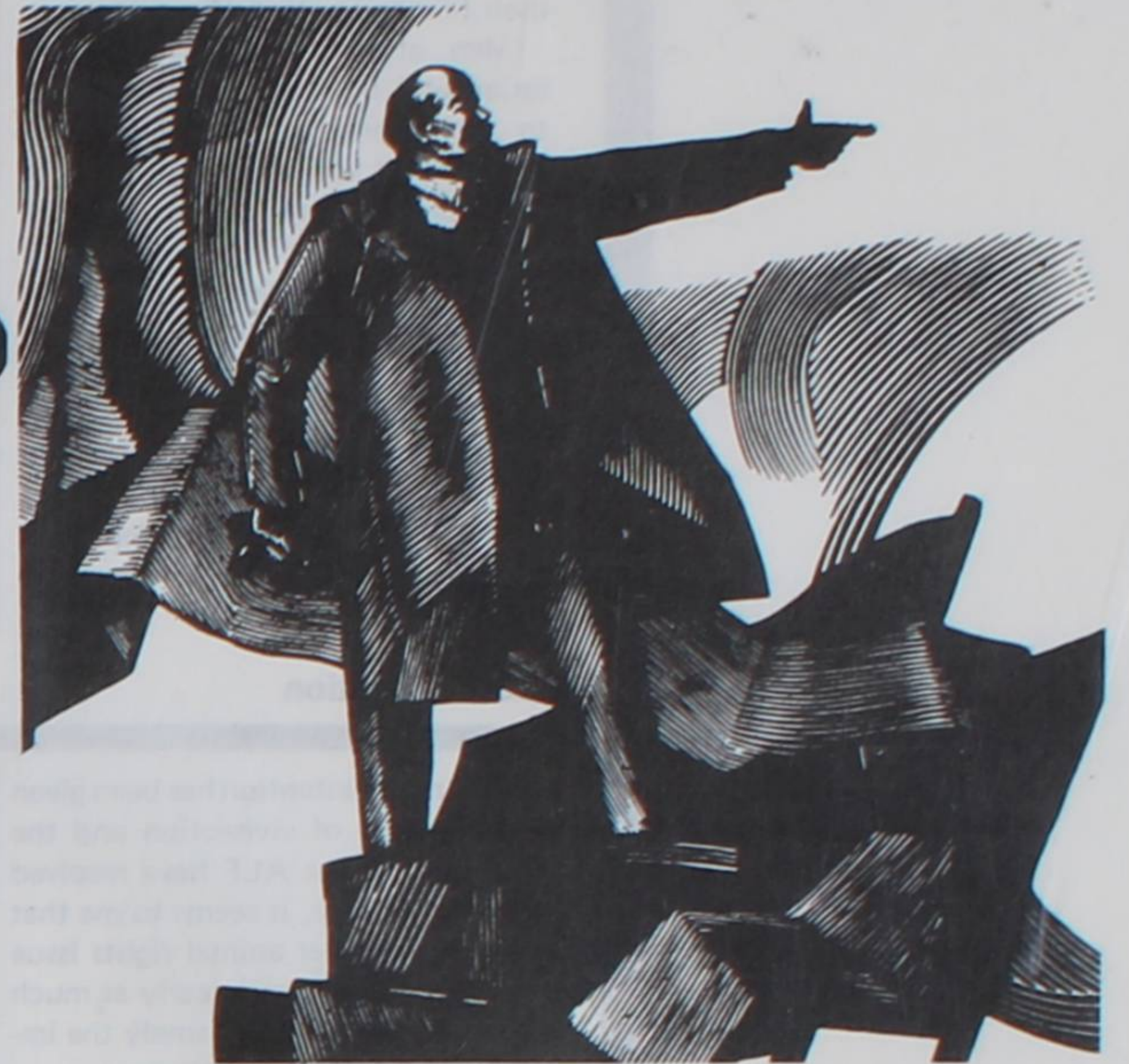
It was another meeting, in 1945, in Yalta, between Churchill and America's leader — by this time Harry Truman — and Stalin, which settled the carve-up of Europe, without the slightest concern for 'territorial changes contrary to the wishes of the people concerned' or 'the right of peoples to choose their own form of government'.

It is not surprising, is it, that when such an example of cynical opportunism is set before ordinary people they will themselves begin to lose sight of ordinary principles of decent behaviour. Opportunism, catch-as-catch-can, dog-eat-dog and generally 'damn you Jack, I'm all right' attitudes have flourished in the break-up of working class communities — eg, miners, dockers — while the mass media have paraded before us the glittering prizes of a consumer society, a glorification of brutality and a trivialisation of reality.

Smaller wars, engaging our patriotic support but not endangering our lives in the '39-'45 sense, and only killing 20 million people, have filled our headlines and emptied our heads and hearts. It is not true to say that nuclear weapons have kept the peace for thirty years — they have just sent the wars further and further away, but kept the ever-present fear right here. So we keep our heads down, averting our gaze and dulling our senses, using the news programmes on the telly to make our cups of tea between Yakkity-Yak and Blanketty-Blank, tit-tutting when we are told to, cheering on the signal and generally falling into the totalitarian trap.

Which brings us back to our neighbourhood narks. Yes, folks, the good old freedom-loving British people are now being encouraged to take the first steps towards setting up 'Neighbourhood Watch and Property Marking Schemes' to help the police out of this embarrassing situation where they find themselves, in spite of all their modern computers and radio communications, solving a smaller and smaller proportion of 'crimes'.

In London we have the great advantage now of being looked after by a Knight of the Realm, one Sir Kenneth Newman, who came to



'It was 'im wot done it, officer'

take control of us here in this peaceful metropolis straight from war-torn Belfast, where 'grasses' and 'super grasses' proliferate, but, we would have thought, the idea of 'Neighbourhood Watches' would be laughed out of court. Sir Ken (not to be confused with that other Ken) is hoping to establish 75 schemes in the metropolis, involving local people in their streets or council estates to form groups who will 'look out for, and report crimes and suspicious activities (our italics) and keep a neighbourly watch on homes in the area'. Local people will be drummed up for this pleasure and when '40 per cent of people in the area have joined, a street sign could be put up to say that the watch is in force'.

You must admit that the figure of 40 per cent is a significant one; it is significantly more than the percentage of the population which voted for our present government and gave it a mandate for...well, anything. Including officially organised neighbourhood narks — something which could be officially condemned in a dictatorship, as part of the overall denial of freedom by a handful of politically motivated men. But here, dominated as we are by a politically motivated woman — who could possibly complain?

Well, for starters, we complain. As we see it, this development is sinister for two reasons. Firstly, it is the beginning of an organisation whose function will be to inform the police of *anything* they tell the groups they want to know. Once set up, this bunch of official vigilantes — for that's virtually what they are (except for the lynch law!) — will act as copper's narks for any kind of surveillance of militant activities. Once these creeps get used to working with the police, they can become political spies — all the more valuable because they will be neighbours, drinking companions in pubs, playing sports with the very people they will be asked to spy upon. And how can they refuse?

Secondly, they will be a 'buffer

zone', an amateur group that the police can blame for any failure in solving an offence. And most offences of the type the amateurs will be used for are 'opportunistic' crimes which the police very rarely solve on their own. This is the justification for the new schemes — and will provide the excuse for failure!

Thirdly, the 'Property Marking' scheme, whereby marks of ownership are die-stamped or engraved, or written with pens whose marks show up only under ultra-violet light, are only of use once the thief has been caught — or at least the property recovered by the police. It will do little to deter stealing goods for one's own use or resale through reliable contacts and will do nothing to stop 'mugging' where immediate cash is the target.

Ah, Ha! But Sir Kenneth Newman has an answer to that too. Direct from Belfast comes the technique operated by his new 'Number Four Area Intelligence and Surveillance Unit': 'to identify criminals who are then placed under surveillance in the hope that this will produce evidence that will convict them'. In other words, there is a secret squad of plain clothes narks whose job it is to follow 'suspects' around until they commit a crime. And if they don't? Well, this is recognised as an expensive technique, (but then we all pay for it don't we?) and no doubt there will be cash available for the odd fit-up here and there, to justify the whole creepy business. It would seem that Britain is now not so much a nation of shop-keepers as a nation of narks.

And where is the place privileged to be the first to get this new unit for perpetual surveillance? You've guessed it: Brixton, of course.

The reason for the increase in crimes against property over the past few years is obvious. You cannot have an increasing number of people in your society deprived of the ability to buy the goods you dangle before them without having

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'STOP THE CITY!'

FINAL DETAILS ON PAGE 6

■ The Ideology of Male Domination

Norman Joje (10th September) joins the growing number of people complaining of a disintegration amongst us (sic). He complains of 'a fruitless process that can only dissipate our (sic) energies'. So, who are the culprits, Norman? Who are those responsible for 'Intolerance and prejudice of a most virulent kind'?

Women, of course. Norman Joyce is someone who sees women as the threat to their movement. In that, Norman, you are no different from 99% of men. What unites men of all political beliefs and all classes is their fear and hatred of women.

Men of right and left, authoritarian and libertarian, jump as one to the defence of pornography in the name of 'free speech'. Of course, Norman, free speech for whom?! Pornography is men's freedom of speech and is achieved through the silence of women. Pornography is the ideology of male domination. In pornography we can see most clearly what it means to be a woman in the world of men. Pornography means (from the Greek) 'depiction of vile values'. Andrea Dworkin writes:

'The word whore is incomprehensible unless one is immersed in the lexicon of male domination. Men have created the group, the type, the concept, the epithet, the insult, the industry, the trade, the commodity, the reality of woman as whore. Woman as whore exists within the objectives and real system of male sexual domination. The pornography itself is objective and real and central to the male sexual system. The valuation of women's sexuality in pornography is objective and real because women are so regarded and valued. The force depicted in pornography is objective and real because women are so used.'

And to be used, one must be objectified. Women are men's objects. The definition of women articulated systematically and consistently in pornography is objective and real in that women exist within and must live with constant reference to the boundaries of this definition. The fact that pornography is widely believed to be 'sexual representations' or 'depictions of sex' emphasise only that the valuation of women as low

whores is widespread and that the sexuality of women as low and whorish in and of itself. The fact that pornography is widely believed to be 'depictions of the erotic' means only that the debasing of women is held to be the real pleasure of sex.'

Pornography is the ideology of male domination; it embodies and represents the reality of male violence against women; of men violating women. Pornography violates women; pornography is violence against women. All women are fucked in pornography and all women are fucked by pornography.

So, Norman Joje and Arthur Moyses and Joe Peacock and the other 99%, you can have your 'freedom of speech' along with your 'freedom' to acquire property and your 'freedom' to exploit the labour of others. I don't want it.

'Leftist sensibility promotes and protects pornography because pornography is freedom....freedom is the man-marketing of woman as whore. Free sexuality for the woman is in being massively consumed, denied an individual value, denied any sexual sensibility other than

that which serves the male. Capitalism is not wicked or cruel when the commodity is the whore; profit is not wicked or cruel when the alienated worker is a female piece of meat; corporate bloodsucking is not wicked or cruel when the corporation in question, organised crime syndicates, sell cunt; racism is not wicked or cruel when the black cunt or yellow cunt or red cunt or Hispanic cunt or Jewish cunt has her legs splayed for any man's pleasure; poverty is not wicked or cruel when it is the poverty of dispossessed women who have only themselves to sell; violence by the powerful against the powerless is not wicked or cruel when it is called sex; slavery is not wicked or cruel when it is sexual slavery; torture is not wicked or cruel when the tormented are women, whores, cunts. The new pornography is left-wing, and the new pornography is a vast graveyard where the left has gone to die. The left cannot have its whores and its politics too.'

Pete Caerdydd
Quotes from PORNOGRAPHY, Andrea Dworkin (Women's Press).

■ Zoo Liberation

While much attention has been given to the issue of vivisection and the activities of the ALF have received much publicity, it seems to me that there is another animal rights issue that has not aroused nearly as much protest as it should, namely the imprisonment of animals in zoos.

I am quite sure that if anyone were to keep a dog or cat in a cage it would lead to an outcry by even the most conservative of the animal welfare (as opposed to animal rights) groups, yet the RSPCA and the mis-named World Wildlife Fund actively support the maintenance of zoos as a means of 'conservation' and 'education'.

But if *Conservation* means anything it is surely that animals should not simply be *preserved* in zoos for the pleasure of the morons who come to gawp at them, but that they should be allowed to live in their own environment free from human interference. There is quite simply no point in preserving animals in zoos — a lion in a zoo is in reality a parody of a lion, and since visitors see the animal unable to live as it should then it is really quite ridiculous to argue that zoos have any educational value.

But even if it could be proven that a particular animal would become extinct unless preserved in zoos it would still be right morally to close down zoos — after all providing an animal becomes extinct through nature taking its natural

course, there is no reason why it should distress us, I hardly think it makes any difference to the animal.

The time has come for a campaign against zoos to make its voice heard. As far as I know there is no such campaign, though I stand corrected if wrong (and would like to hear from any such group).

The good news is that attendances at zoos have been falling — a recent report cited the fact that more people were watching Wildlife films on television instead as one of the main reasons, naturally London Zoo called for more state money, without which they fear they could not survive. I do not know if they have received any grants since the report was published, but they have certainly been spending large sums of money on advertising of late.

It is unfortunate that the opportunity presented by the report was not seized on to forcefully publicise the anti zoo cause, instead we had people from the pro zoo lobby explaining just how bad the situation was and what 'vital work' zoos do.

I believe that a campaign to persuade the public to boycott zoos could well prove very successful, coupled with organised opposition to state and local authority grants to zoos and an education campaign making use of the many excellent wildlife films, it could well lead to the closure of zoos in a relatively short time.

Ed McArthur

■ Communications

It is by encouraging coincidence that FREEDOM printed an article by Mark Shipley on the revolutionary communist tendency prevalent in Glasgow some years ago, the letter from FM of Hastings which touched on the same subject, and the announcement by ourselves proclaiming the rebirth of our paper *Black Star*.

The second volume of *Black Star* aims to rediscover the spirit of the Glasgow communists, the Anti-Parliamentarian Communist Federation, and the proletarian aspirations of that era. We echo the sentiments of FM when referring to Guy Aldred: 'It is a great pity that his writings have been neglected'. FM may be pleased to know that we intend reproducing Aldred texts in *Black Star*.

We are by no means a handful of nostalgic individuals harking back to a more dynamic agitational and politically motivated age. We are in contact with comrades throughout the country who express similar feelings.

Anyone wishing to contact us should write to: BSC, c/o 205 Arncliffe Drive, Milton Keynes, Bucks., MK13 7LG. (please note that this is purely a temporary address).

A.N. Dimmick
Blackstar Collective.

I want you to help me in my struggle. We both know how difficult it is to

spread the message of anarchism because those in authority have made sure that most people find words of peace, freedom and mutual trust completely incomprehensible. When we try to sell our papers in the streets, we are confronted by people to whom oppression has become invisible through over-exposure. It is only through such ignorance that authority is allowed to survive. The instrument which the State uses to propagate this ignorance is the compulsory education system. It is at school that children are exposed over the years to the injustice, oppression and misery which they would never accept unless indoctrinated in this manner. To destroy this instrument of authority would mean one of the greatest social advances since the discovery of agriculture. Please help me on the road to this goal.

What I need is to communicate with as many anarchists who are still at school as possible and in this I hope you can help me. I also need to draw upon the experience of anyone who has tried to confront the school authorities in the past. My immediate aim is to leaflet the school which I attend, and I am particularly interested to hear from anyone with experience in this field of propagandism. My ultimate aim is to achieve a pupil's general strike at this school.

William Gaskill
Leeds

■ Callous and Nasty

After some considerable thought, I feel I must reply to MH's criticisms of my "very bad poem" in his very bad review of the new libertarian journal *Commonweal*. The poem, "Time bomb", was an attempt to describe, in terms other than those of a dry political analysis, my feelings over working for eighteen months in an Asbestos factory, where even the governments pitiful safety measures were blatantly flaunted, and over then seeing the suffering of fellow workers (a suffering I could so easily share, sooner or later) used as part of a grotesque fear-spectacle on our 'free' media.

I decided to write my feelings down as a poem and not as a piece of political writing after reading an intensely reactionary article in FREEDOM (28/8/82) entitled "It's a Lie", which actually suggested that what was wrong was not capit-

alism, which forced people to work in life-destroying conditions, but the fact that the capitalist boffins had not yet provided "economical alternatives" to asbestos. (To say this is to fall for the bosses propaganda, asbestos is far from unique, and far more widely used than most people realise — most 'alternatives' to asbestos can cause pneumoniosis, due to their fibrous structure, and as for cancer, no-one knows, because little research has been done into these 'economic alternatives', with regards to cancer). The author then has the temerity to state that the TV show "Alice a fight for life" was "worth your TV licence on its own" (actually 'Alice' was shown on ITV — funded by advertising) — what crap, presumably, the author of this article thinks that a 'documentary' showing video film of, say a hanging, was, "well worth his TV licence fee",

that a programme was pure exploitation, total vicarious voyeurism, it contained no new information, no ray of hope — its message was "worked with asbestos — better choose your headstone mate" it made me physically sick, I was in a state of severe depression for months after that programme, after writing "Time bomb" I couldn't even bear to re-read what I had written, I haven't read it yet, such is the scar on my mind (and body) left by capitalism and its accompanying fear-spectacle.

After seeing the death and suffering of workers used as a party political broadcast on behalf of the self-run capitalism party, in the pages of FREEDOM, I thought, as a libertarian, it would be more fruitful to put my experiences to paper in the form of a poem, to share my experience in human terms, away from the bullring of sterile ideology,

I thought that libertarians would understand this, I seem to have been wrong, at least as far as FREEDOM goes.

Of course, I realise I am not a great poet, but I thought, considering what I was trying to say, that that was hardly important, besides, since when has FREEDOM set standards of literary excellence? 'Time bomb' may not be up to the standards set by *The Times Literary Supplement* for poetry, but I wouldn't want it to be — or are workers considered too ignorant to try to write poetry?

Just as the spectacle only makes itself more and more grotesque as it tries to beautify itself, so FREEDOM simply becomes callous and nasty when it tries to represent itself as something it is not — a revolutionary journal.

Michael V. Diboll

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We reserve the right to cut letters unless otherwise specified by the author.

All signed articles reflect the opinion of the authors, not necessarily those of the editorial collective.

Our libertarian comrades in Poland issued an 'Appeal to the Libertarian Movement in the West' in December 1982 (see FREEDOM, 11 February 1983). It was widely published in the international anarchist press. One practical result was that about £2,000 was collected and transmitted to our comrades in June 1983. At the same time, despite considerable and continuing difficulties, a new independent 'Emmanuel Goldstein Group' has been formed. (Its name represents a homage to George Orwell, whose *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is an underground bestseller in Poland, especially among young people.) Its first communique was issued and has also been widely published in the international anarchist press. It begins by distinguishing the new group from the previous group, 'Sigma', which now exists as a legal student organisation dominated by a Trotskyist faction under the close observation of the security police. What follows is a translation of the rest of the communique.



Communique from Poland

To our comrades in the West:

....Let us say something about the situation of the radical left-wing opposition in Poland. During the past few months the situation has become worse. Contacts with other groups have been broken, especially those with well-equipped underground publishers and printers. They have wanted to be paid twice as much for producing left-wing literature, and Solidarity leaders have ordered that publications of this kind should not be distributed. For example, the Solidarity leaders several times stopped the distribution of the left-wing paper called *Mis* (Teddy-bear) because of its revolutionary and anticlerical position. So even if you publish something, you can't be sure that it will be distributed through the Solidarity network. Another example is the treatment of the paper called *Rowność* (Equality); the underground printers were paid by *Rowność* and agreed to produce 2,000 copies, but actually produced only 500.

Right-wing elements in Solidarity — and indeed all its top leadership — began a campaign against these publications, accusing them of national betrayal and political provocation. In this campaign the most active elements were connected with the underground Catholic paper called *Victoria*, which has the Holy Mother on its masthead. Another paper called *Niepodległość* (Independence) published an article last year accusing *Rowność* of being a paper

of the security police.

Nevertheless, libertarian publications have been very popular among the Polish workers, even those who are Roman Catholics. They are genuinely interested in anarchist ideas, especially because official propaganda uses the word *anarchy* in a negative context as meaning something anti-Communist.

Now let us say something about the underground Solidarity movement. It is not a homogenous organisation. Only a fraction of its former membership (of about 100,000) is still active — for in the field of distribution of underground literature, especially periodicals. We can probably say that the total number of copies produced by them each month ranges from about three to eight million. The dissident Centre of Social Research in the Masurian region has information about more than 1,200 different underground papers published all over the country, even in small villages.

The most active members of the underground Solidarity are workers — especially workers in large factories in the main industrial centres — university students and intellectuals. In general the workers are no longer interested in short, small strikes. Of course such strikes do happen from time to time, but they are chiefly economic in origin. The feeling now is to prepare for a general strike in the future when circumstances have improved.

There are two views on the aim

of the general strike among the top leaders of the underground Solidarity. The first is the view that there should be a national agreement with the Government, including the restoration of Solidarity as a legal trade union, without any significant changes being made to the Polish political system. This view doesn't have much support among the people, but it is supported by some leaders — such as W. Hardek from Krakow. It is essentially a reformist policy whose results are very dubious.



The second view, which is more popular, and which is held by Solidarity leaders in Wroclaw, the Masurian region and Nowa Huta, is that the political system should be overthrown by revolutionary methods. However, this view has not yet been worked out in detail as regards the practical means or theoretical implications. At present the advantage is probably held by people following the Social Revolutionary tradition of Russian history, proposing to use revolutionary methods now to gain political power later. Nationalist-clerical elements may also have wide influ-

ence in future.

Now let us say something about our own present situation. First it must be recognised that the whole left-wing and libertarian tradition has been destroyed by the Communists. We therefore have to support the libertarian tendencies existing in Solidarity — today the Social Revolutionary tendency, and tomorrow (after a probable split) the tendencies closer to anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism. The key policies are support of workers' self-management, workers' control, and the popular one of a self-governing society. The reactionaries want to take complete control of these tendencies, so we want to support the libertarian elements and attack the clerical-nationalists. In the case of a wider conflict, such as a general strike, we would of course be with Solidarity.

We intend to spread libertarian ideas through publications, and to win a wider following for anarchism among students, workers, and intellectuals. During this year we shall try to solve the technical and distribution problems of publishing. First we shall acquire a printing press to make us independent of Solidarity and private printers, contacts with whom are a source of great danger. We still have problems with paper, ink and other equipment, but we hope to solve them all. The other problem is distribution. We shall try to develop new networks, working through Solidarity but hoping to build up our own.

Our plans include a series of pamphlets in the first stage, including translations of basic Western and Russian texts and also our own interpretations. For instance, we are preparing translations of Nicolas Walter's *About Anarchism*, Murray Bookchin's *Listen, Marxist!*, some short texts by Peter Kropotkin, an anthology of Polish anarchist texts by Edward Abramowski and Josef Zielinski, and of course some satirical pieces on the present situation. We shall also produce leaflets on specific occasions, for instance May Day. In the longer term we shall try to produce a paper, possibly a monthly or quarterly, as a platform for libertarian ideas.

Last, but not least, we want to express our very great gratitude to all our comrades in the libertarian movement in the West — especially in Italy, the Netherlands, and the United States, as well as other places. Thank you very much! Your help and practical solidarity are very important to us. We shall never forget it. To pursue our libertarian aims we have come together to understand each other, and to exchange information about the situation on both sides. Your help is one of the first blows against the wall of the State system which divides us. Together we can smash it!

Emmanuel Goldstein Group
Warsaw, June 1983.

A NATION OF NARKS?

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an increase in the number of those who will try to get those goods anyway. Our present government is a brutally single-minded apparatus of exploitation, using crude methods of financial pressure to encourage on the one hand capitalistic adventurism and on the other servile acceptance of what is. The first must, in the nature of things, benefit a small minority, and the second, deprive a large majority — who are not all prepared to accept the degradation this system lays upon them.

Thatcher's Britain is set to become, more and more, a battlefield for class war as we have not known in this country since 1926. She has thrown down the gauntlet; she can make no complaint if the working class take it up.

The sad thing is, that there are no fighting organs of the working

class in any kind of shape to stand up to the Tory assault. The recent pathetic conference of the Trades Union Congress showed that in the one area where the productive workers still matter — the industrial field — the reformist unions are sapped by a leadership which is more concerned with saving its own skin than mounting any kind of real defence. Let alone an *offence*!

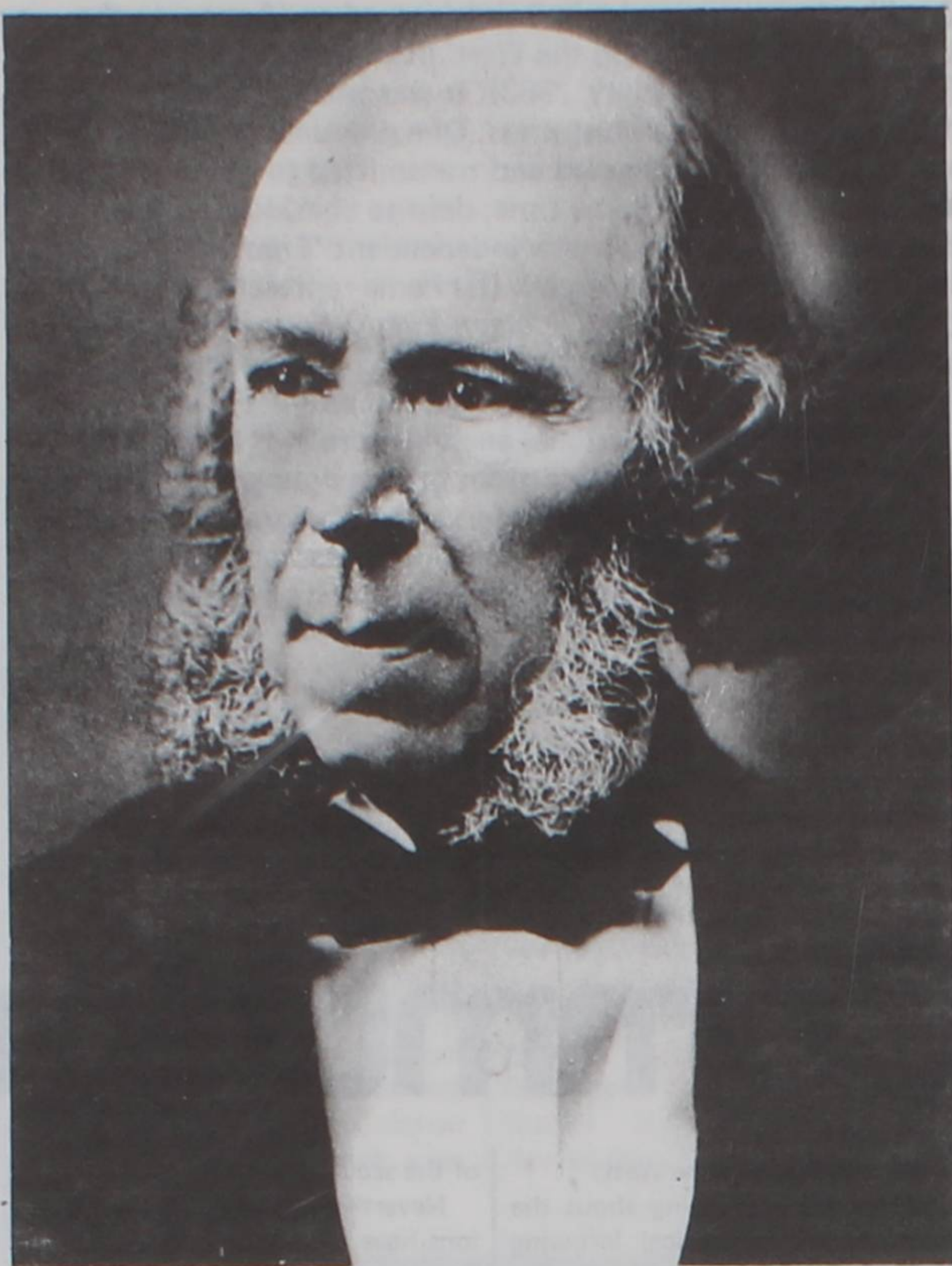
The issue is not that of survival under a capitalist system. It is that of finding ways and means of taking over the wealth-producing industrial capital and putting it to use in the service of the whole of society. And that, incidentally, is the way to solve 'crime' — by removing its causes. It's the one thing capitalism cannot do.

Philip Sansom



A rare picture of Italian Riot Police in action at the Comiso occupation last August, where cameras as well as heads were taken and smashed. This picture is one of the few that survived.

Man versus The State



Herbert Spencer

The Man versus the State: with Six Essays on Government, Society and Freedom by Herbert Spencer (Liberty Classics paperback £6 plus £2 postage)

During the second half of the nineteenth century, Herbert Spencer was one of the most influential thinkers in the English-speaking world. He was the best known exponent of several parallel ideologies — naturalism (that all phenomena follow natural laws and are not affected by any force outside or above nature), scientism (that these natural laws can be discovered only by scientific methods), agnosticism (that we do not and cannot know anything beyond nature and science), evolutionism (that all systems, organisms and institutions follow laws of development from simple to complex forms), and liberalism (that the evolution of human institutions is — or should be — from the statism of militant society to the individualism of industrial society).

Spencer's position in Victorian England was both marginal and typical. He came from a Nonconformist family, he had a scientific and technical education, and he began his working life as a railway engineer; but in his twenties he became a journalist, and in his thirties he began work on what he called 'the Synthetic Philosophy' which made him famous. This ambitious attempt to unite biology, sociology, psychology, politics and ethics in a single scientific framework filled dozens of books and reached thousands of readers, but it is now almost totally forgotten. His shorter political writings, on the other hand, which appeared in liberal magazines, have survived much better, as may be seen in this American collection of the best of them.

The Man versus the State began as four essays published in the

Contemporary Review in 1884 and was reprinted as a book many times (the publishers of this new collection mention only some of the editions). In 1940 an American edition reprinted it with two other essays; in 1969 a British edition reprinted it with four other essays; this new American edition, which was first published in 1981, reprints it with six other essays, together with Albert Jay Nock's introduction to the 1940 edition and a new foreword by Eric Mack.

The Man versus the State attacks the growing power of the State in late nineteenth-century Britain, Spencer argued that the new Liberals had abandoned the liberalism of the old Whigs, while the new Conservatives had retained the illiberalism of the old Tories, and the newer Socialists had adopted the same illiberalism, so that all the political parties which seemed to be rivals were equally responsible for what he called 'the Coming Slavery'. In insisting that 'all socialism involves slavery', Spencer attacked the Welfare State on the eve of its creation; in puncturing the new superstition of 'the divine right of parliaments', he attacked the dictatorship of the majority. Throughout he called for liberals to revert to their traditional position of opposition to all institutionalised authority. A century later only the details need to be changed; the general situation remains the same.

The other essays in the collection follow similar lines. 'The Proper Sphere of Government', first published in 1843 and not reprinted before this edition, is an astonishingly mature work by a man in his early twenties, arguing for what is now called the 'minimal state'. Spencer argued that 'the natural, the original, office of a government' is 'simply to defend the natural rights of man — to protect person and property — to prevent the agree-

sions of the powerful upon the weak — in a word, to administer justice'.

'Over-Legislation', first published in 1853 (and first reprinted as a pamphlet in 1854, which the publishers of this edition don't mention), reinforces his persistent opposition to the fallacy of passing laws for all purposes and developing bureaucracies to enforce them. 'Representative Government — What Is It Good For?', first published in 1857, reinforces his persistent opposition to the prevailing system of election, representation and majority decision — though he preferred it to other methods of government, provided it is limited to its 'proper sphere'.

'The Social Organism', first published in 1860, presents the analogies between biological and sociological naturalism and evolutionism, and argues that human society, economics and politics all follow natural laws of evolution. 'Specialised Administration', first published in 1871, supports this argument by opposing governmental and bureaucratic methods and favouring professional expertise and commercial enterprise to satisfy the needs of society. 'From Freedom to Bondage', first published in 1891, laments that the tendency from compulsory to voluntary cooperation — from 'status' to 'contract' — which marked previous centuries of Western history, was being reversed as all political parties supported increasing State interference in society — in education, health, welfare and so on — without realising that this tendency would end by making the situation worse rather than better.

By the time Spencer died in 1903, in his eighties, he felt that all his work had been a failure. Not only had the power of the State increased in every Western country, despite his repeated warnings and

with the support of every party, but the worst evils of the State, which are scarcely mentioned in these essays but were frequently discussed elsewhere, were becoming disastrous — militarism and imperialism were beginning to dominate even the most 'liberal' nations, and the Warfare State was taking over the Welfare State. If he could have lived another eighty years, he could only have felt that his lessons, if they have been universally ignored, have been universally proved true.

So there is much to be learnt from these essays today, even by libertarians who think they know it all; and British and American libertarians a century ago indeed learnt much from Spencer. But there is for anarchists, both then and now, a glaring gap in his thought — he uncritically accepts the property system and he unwittingly ignores the class system. His extreme liberalism is thus a sort of right-wing libertarianism or bourgeois anarchism, of the kind which has become popular in recent years especially in North America. In 'Specialised Administration', indeed, he specifically repudiates the 'anarchism' of Proudhon and insists that 'within its proper limits governmental action is not simply legitimate but all-important'. Spencer thus occupies a position equal but opposite to that of Marx, in showing with great strength and skill what is wrong with Western society yet failing to see what is wrong with his diagnosis and remedy. What is needed, as it were, is a dialectic between Marx and Spencer — which is, is it not?, precisely what has been offered by anarchism from Proudhon onwards.

Meanwhile this collection of Spencer's essays is by current standards very well produced and very reasonably priced, and very well worth reading or re-reading.

NW

Pilate's Question by Alfred Reynolds (Cambridge International Publishers, 7 Moor Street, London W1V 5LJ. Paperback £4.95).

Alfred Reynolds is a Hungarian who was prominent in Budapest cultural life during the 1930's, but came to Britain before the Second World War. At the end of the War he was involved in the political re-education of German prisoners-of-

war, and from this work emerged a small group called the Bridge Circle, which discussed and developed libertarian and humanistic ideas, and which included several people who later became well known (Colin Wilson has often written about it) and some who became anarchists.

For 20 years the Bridge Circle produced a little magazine called the *London Letter*, and one of its main attractions was a series of essays by Reynolds. In 1964 he

produced a short book called *Pilate's Question* containing 26 of them, and now he has produced an expanded edition containing 46 of them, dating from 1951 to 1970.

They are mainly meditations on philosophical and political topics from an extreme individualist and sceptical position. Reynolds describes his 'roots' as Lao Tzu, Heraclitus, Nietzsche, Jouvanel, and others from Buddha and Zoroaster to Dostoyevski and his friends. He is interested in thinking and talking

through the problems of the world with extreme care and thoroughness, and is often stimulating and sometimes convincing as he does so; but he isn't interested in actually *doing* anything about them — indeed he is strongly opposed to trying to do anything beyond thinking and talking. This can make him irritating and even infuriating, but if you want to read a really serious writer on libertarian subjects, here you are.

MH



David Koven has been a committed anarchist since the days of the Spanish Civil War, an anti-war militant during the Second World War and, with his then companion Audrey Goodfriend, he helped to establish 'Walden', a free school in San Francisco, which is still running after more than 20 years. We will welcome serious contributions taking up his challenge.

Rethinking Anarchism

Human philosophy — and by philosophy I mean those concepts and ideas that influence our daily actions and responses — reflects those actions and ideas most pertinent and popular at the time. Even the ideas of visionary thinkers are rooted in their growing up experiences and the concepts to which they had been exposed.

Sadly, I think that for about 100 years now anarchists have not been able to produce ideas of beauty; of a visionary quality able to inflame the human imagination and passion. Now, close to the end of the twentieth century, anarchist thinking and action seem to be still rooted in the ideas of the nineteenth century. Too often have anarchist writings during this last half of the twentieth century reflected either too great an involvement with tactics; polemical infighting; or an overweening veneration of the past. Or, reactive criticism of events and institutions.

Not that there isn't a need for such writings and criticism; obviously there is. But what I'm trying to call attention to is the dearth of *creative* thinking among ourselves. For with the exception of a short period during the Spanish Civil War, when the workers and peasants of revolutionary Spain addressed themselves to creating and writing about alternative forms of production and distribution, and the idiosyncratic writings of men like Paul Goodman, Armand, Wilhelm Reich, Colin Ward, etc. (idiosyncratic only in the sense of their being out of the mainstream of traditional thought), some of whom were anarchist only in their ideas rather than by self-identity, there has been an absence of experiment, inventive,

writing in our press.

Much of the energy that was derived from the actions and writings of Kropotkin, Bakunin, Malatesta and those others who breathed such vitality into the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century movement, was derived from the thought that the end of capitalism was nigh and that it (capitalism) must crumble of its own weight and inconsistencies. This belief, grounded as it was in the concept of the inevitability of progress, the purity of science, and the correctness of the scientific method, prevented them, as it also prevented Marx, from seeing that capitalism wasn't static and was capable of making the necessary changes to ensure the negation of the revolutionary thrust being generated in Europe.

The capitalists stole a note from Kropotkin's book and practised international cooperation while advocating individualism and competition for the masses. I think that the growth of consumerism and materialism in the West, and the role these would play in subverting the revolutionary energies of the working class were unforeseen, with the exception perhaps of a minority of thinkers like Veblen. And certainly they couldn't foretell the growth of the electronic media and the role they would play in thought control. Even Orwell, visionary though he was, couldn't see the use of mind control outside of the format of a rigid authoritarian state. It seems quite evident that it works even better in more loosely constructed authoritarian societies such as we know in the United States and Britain. It will be difficult to create a revolutionary spirit in a

people tied to their TVs, unable to pass up the latest segment of *Dallas*.

I'm certainly not faulting our thinkers of the past or denigrating their great achievements and contributions to human thought and growth. As men of their own times, they couldn't foresee the twists and turns of change. But I feel sad that anarchist growth seems to have stopped with them. Perhaps, if blame must be laid, it should be laid at the doors of those anarchists who have permitted anarchism to become a dogma — the very concept of which is antithetical to the concept of anarchism. Nowhere is this more evident than in the blind dogmatism that has elevated 'violence as revolutionary action' to the level of anarchist theory. Violence or non-violence are after all debatable tactics, and nothing more. If anything terrorism and street violence, separated from a revolutionary situation, are more a 'politics of despair' than a politics of creative growth and change. And, as we have seen in the past, lead too often to just another authoritarian society.

From my essentially non-violent viewpoint, I'm convinced that a major shift towards an anarchist society will take place when the majority of people reject the fleshpots of capitalism and start a lively practice of anarchism in their daily lives. We must begin a living anarchism that will be evinced by our becoming increasingly anarchic in our relationships with each other, our friends, lovers, children, co-workers and families. When we no longer will allow our good human energy to be used for harmful or destructive work and opt only for satisfaction in our working life.

And, most of all when we learn to accept each other's differences and vagaries.

In a recent discussion with my friend and comrade Philip Sansom, he expressed distress over what seemed to him a too cavalier dismissal on my part of the street action of young comrades who were moved to fight the cops during demos. He felt that my non-violent beliefs prejudiced me against understanding their actions. 'For, after all, the cops are the very symbol of the authoritarian domination of their lives and the frustration of their ambitions and hopes.'

But, long before I became an anarchist-pacifist, during the time of the depression of the 1930s, I fought the cops during strikes and demos. That was a time when there was still a sense of hope for revolutionary change; a belief that still hadn't been affected by the knowledge of what had happened to the Russian Revolution under Stalinism — or the failures of the revolutions in China and Cuba. Or the effects of atomisation of our society and all that it forebodes, or the growth of nazism and fascism with their assaults on human sensibilities; or the so-clever suborning of the labour movement by its own leadership in exchange for a piece of the action in the State. My main contention is that, while fighting the cops may relieve some of the tensions brought about by the frustrations of growing up in this society, it is a waste of good human energy which could be better used in some more constructive manner.

There are cooperative workplaces to be built; there are anarchist

schools to be started; living communes to be founded. There is a world of ideas to be explored and experimented with.

My last word on violence: holding the views I do, I found myself most sympathetic to the views that Pat Murtagh expresses in the recent review in *FREEDOM* of *The International Blacklist*. The kind of nihilistic nonsense that leads young anarchists to advocate a slogan like 'Learn to Burn', is not only self-destructive, but is also destructive of the humanistic content to anarchist thought. A content that has been one of our most convincing arguments.

Believing as I do in the necessity of an engaged discussion among anarchists about the content of present day anarchist thought, and directions for anarchist action, I would like to make a proposal. I propose that for the next few years, anarchists submit their anarchist visions in the form of short essays to be published as regularly as possible by *FREEDOM* in the review section. In the alternative months space would be given to discussions of the ideas presented. I think that out of this effort, after a while, there may emerge — or perhaps I should say re-emerge — a vital, coherent, passionate view of anarchism, grounded in our mutual experiences, and hopefully, a view that will give credence to our ideas, and bring about a more positive set of alternatives for action.

David Koven
July '83

Corrections

I am grateful to Chris Milburn (27 August) for pointing out my confusion between AG and HA Barker on pages 55 and 62 of *The International Anarchist Movement in Late Victorian London*. I should like to point out a few other factual errors and omissions in the book, other than obvious misprints. Contents, Acknowledgements, Ab-

brevisions: 'Johan' Most should be Johann; Mrs C 'Cahn' should be Cahm; 'Socialist' Democratic Federation should be Social; the first volume of Max Natlau's manuscript continuation of his huge history of anarchism was published in 1981 by Topos Verlag, Liechtenstein, as *Die erste Blutezeit der Anarchie: 1886-1894*.

Page 4: Stirner's *Der Einzige und seine Eigentum* should be *sein*.

Page 11: Nikolai 'Vasilevich' Chaikovskv should be Vasilievich; Peter 'Alexandrovich' Kropotkin should be 'Alexeievich'.

Page 15: 'Francisco' Merlino should be Francesco.

Page 26: New Anarchist 'Press' should be Library; 'Charlotte Mary' should be Charlotte Mary Martin; the second paragraph should end '... said she did not get to Cheltenham via Mrs Wilson but through two other women', and note 9 (page 39) should refer to Add MS 50,547 fo 43.

Page 42: *Le Revolte* did not become *La Revolte* until September 1887.

Page 43: The reference to Kropotkin's articles in *FREEDOM* should

read 'any major article signed by him'.

Page 60: Kitz's name on his birth certificate was not Francis Kitz Platt but Francis Platt.

Page 145: 'Lilian' Harman should be Lillian.

Hermia Oliver

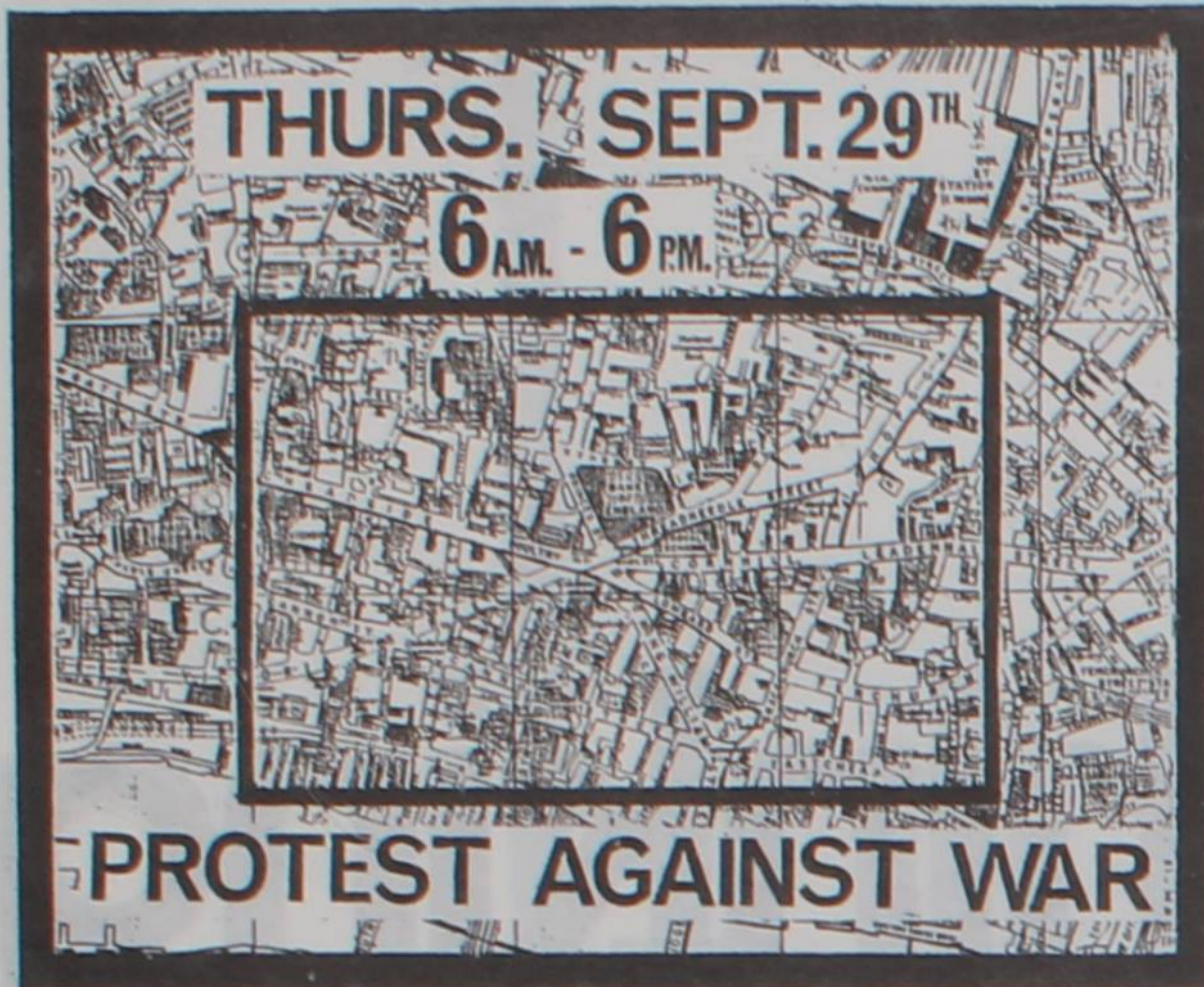
Chris Milburn's correction of the confusion between A G and H A Barker in Hermia Oliver's book *The International Anarchist Movement in Late Victorian London* itself needs correction on one minor point. He says that 'in the early

1890s' Ambrose Barker 'joined the Freedom group, becoming editor of *FREEDOM* in 1930'; in fact Barker left the Freedom group in the 1890s, was later a leading opponent of *FREEDOM* in the anarchist movement, and became the editor of a rival paper with the same name when the original *FREEDOM* ceased publication.

Incidentally, despite the 'long serious illness' which caused his resignation in 1933, at the age of 75, he lived for another 20 years; and, although he dropped out of the anarchist movement, he remained active until his death in the free-thought movement, where he had begun his public career back in 1878.

NW

TOGETHER WE CAN STOP 'THE CITY'



IN THE CAPITALS OF THE WORLD, WAR IS BEING PLANNED AND FINANCED. IN LONDON, THE BUSINESSES WHICH PROFIT FROM THIS ARE CONCENTRATED - IN 'THE CITY'. THE ARMS RACE STARTS HERE.....

WHY? The idea to stop the City of London (where wars are planned and financed, and profits amassed) developed amongst people involved in the actions at military bases last winter. Many felt that if we were in the short term to be able to stop the arrival of the new missiles, and in the long run begin to challenge the whole war machine, then there needed to develop opposition within the towns as well. For it is in towns that decisions are made and also where people live and work who will all need to be involved if we are to be successful.

We face a situation in the world where people need to gather their confidence and together take the responsibility for the future out of the hands of the rulers.

This particular action can be understood as part of such a process, in which we discover just how much potential strength we do have. We also gradually increase our awareness of the causes of war, and ways of resisting. Hence the four main aims of *Stop 'the City'*, all in some ways a development on past actions, are:

- to oppose all wars, nuclear and conventional;
- to make the link between militarism and the whole arms trade which the financial institutions promote and profit from;
- to contact the workers involved directly and encourage them to consider and challenge the nature of their employment;
- to peacefully reclaim the streets for a time, to show that human community and creativity could replace the grey commercialism and death-dealing of the area.

Another, not so obvious aim, is for everyone involved to learn from each other and grow in initiative and confidence. So we have at all times encouraged open and decentralised organisation and discussion, and respect for diverse ideas.

Stopping 'the City' is an ambitious and necessary challenge for all of us who wish to effectively oppose the horror of war. We can do the same in other cities too, and again in London. *Stop 'the City'* is being organised by a network of groups and individuals from the liberation, peace and ecological movements throughout Britain.

HOW? The idea is to occupy, from 6am to 6pm, the area around the Stock Exchange and Bank of England, and depending on how many people come along, to spread out and protest outside other places connected with the finance for war (the area is covered with banks from all over the world). We aim to create a peaceful and festive atmosphere, and yet effectively slow up business and communicate with those employed there.

Assembly points. Three points are planned - the steps of St. Paul's, Finsbury Square and Tower Hill - throughout the day. At each point it is planned to have an initial briefing, basic first aid and legal advice, general information, plus the opportunity for people not in groups to form them if they wish.

Young People. People with children are recommended to go to the Finsbury Square point, as we plan that the northern area of the 'City' will have a suitably secure atmosphere. Music and theatre people hoping to perform for and involve children are asked to go to that area too.

How to organise. As at Upper Heyford military base in June, all groups and individuals coming need to be as self-sufficient as possible - in resources, ideas, plans, leaflets and decision-making etc.... Each group should have observers and first-aiders and maybe people to scout or liaise etc. Everyone is encouraged to talk, decide and link up with everyone else all the time. On the spot evaluation meetings every three hours are planned.

Response to police. If the police try to disrupt the protest (making assembly and coordination difficult) then people can concentrate on moving round 'the City', leafletting, picketing etc. If they try to ban it at the last minute, it will go ahead as planned anyway.

Carnival. There will be a loose, proposed agenda of events and suggestions for creative people arriving, to include stationary and mobile performances, and processions - all of which everyone can organise/join.

What to do. Everyone is encouraged to think and prepare in advance what they wish to concentrate on - occupying streets, leafletting, festive events, talking to people, helping with coordination, picketing, just observing or whatever. Flexibility, diversity and cooperation will be our strengths.

What to bring. Everything you need! Your own leaflets, light musical instruments, dragons, bicycles (highly recommended), food, first-aid, suitable clothes (theatrical or discreet for mingling)....

Legal back-up. Briefing available on day. People should be aware of the possibility of arrests for minor offences (eg, obstruction). Assembly points will coordinate details of arrests with a legal office out of the area.

Accommodation. Limited accommodation will be available for those who need it. People coming from the north, contact in advance *Stop 'the City'*, 1 Tollington Place, N4 (01-272 4973), and from the south, *Stop 'the City'*, c/o 121 Bookshop, 121 Raiton Road, SE 24 (01-274 6655).

Finally we urge people to get involved with all coordinating activity before and after the 29th:

- General planning meeting, Saturday 24th September, 10am-6pm at the Tonbridge Club, Cromer St., London WC 1.
- Regional evaluation meetings in early October to discuss the 29th, support for any arrested people, and future actions.

For further details, contact: Dave, 01-809 1346; Andrew, 01-609 1852; Mike, 01-348 2288. Write with your intentions, donations (urgently needed!) or suggestions to: *Stop 'the City'*, c/o London Greenpeace, 6 Endsleigh Street, London WC 1.

NB. People unable to attend can take part in the blockade of City companies especially involved in militarism.



US Drought

One has heard a lot about farmers in the United States being paid for not producing pigs. There is now a variation of this system called 'payment in kind' (PIK).

This is how it works. If farmers do not cultivate their land, they get their equivalent crop return from the government stores of wheat, which they could then sell to get their income.

They did rather well this year, a lot better than most of their neighbours who cultivated their land, because in many parts of the United States there has been a devastating drought. However, drought in parts of the United States does not mean that many will starve there, although there are many who are hungry. America is a large and varied land both in climate and soil, so is in a position to use the sometimes embarrassing surplus of grain for political ends to bribe or to menace.

In spite of the fact that modern technology can place a missile with

unerring accuracy in somebody else's backgarden, the same sort of accuracy has not been achieved in either controlling crops or predicting the weather. In fact, modern agricultural techniques have tended to make drought, floods and soil exhaustion more, rather than less, likely. There is the technology to modify all these factors in the human environment, but they do not appeal to those who favour the market economy.

It appears that the growth of the power of governments has coincided with the urbanisation of society and greater dependence of people on outside sources for the necessities of life. In fact as Harold Barclay points out in his book *People without Government* (available from Freedom Bookshop, £3.75 plus postage) the absence of government is very much associated with the self-reliance that goes with some form of self-sufficiency. Dependence and obedience go hand in

hand, and modern agriculture is dependent on the inputs of very big business.

An important input for agriculture is nitrates which, together with water, is very scarce in the poorer countries of the world, and which costs very large amounts of fuel to produce artificially. The technology of biologically produced nitrogen is very well known, but this is not the type of farming that appeals to big business. There is also the phenomenal waste of fuel while people are forced to burn timber and dung, with disastrous results to the environment.

The financial and economic systems and their stranglehold, backed by the coercive forces of the state, have mesmerised people into believing that such systems are necessary, when in fact they are not only unnecessary but prevent the rational management of resources for the common good.

Alan Albon

The Fire Raisers

In the prairie lands of England the fireraisers have left the fields blackened, and the air thick with soot, the hedges singed, that is those that have been left standing, one local hospital found everything inside covered with soot, fire brigades had to answer hundreds of calls with fires out of control. Our heavily subsidised corn producers say they cannot afford to plough the straw in. In the spring the air is thick with wind wafted poisonous substances, the hedgerows with discarded containers of those substances, in the high summer the flames reach into the sky discharging the byproducts of burning straw into the air.

The city air is a little cleaner; the smog we used to cough our way through has been replaced by the lead laden byproduct of petrol burning. The sulphurous fumes have been banished to the upper atmosphere where they depart and descend on somebody else. The electricity generating board find it cheaper to build higher chimneys than to use well known methods of removing the sulphur. The Generating Board hopes to replace acid rain with radioactive pollution with the same disregard for the planet in which we live.

In one case we have a large centralised nationalised industry behaving with irresponsibility, and the other large arable farmers because they own the land, and in the interests of maximising their profits, disregarding everybody around.

There is no doubt that the use of electrical power in the cities has banished the sulphurous fogs one remembers, but apart from the fact that electrical power generation has been very inefficient, the sulphurous effluent has merely transferred to somebody else's doorstep. The same amount of research and effort that is now spent on the military establishment, could be spent on making our industrial processes less lethal.

Agricultural questions and answers.

As I have often stated, 'If you ask the wrong questions you will get the wrong answers'. We have been doing this in the agricultural field for a long time now, and the straw burning business is but a symptom of this. The interests of maximising profit and minimising ownership has made agricultural production take a very dangerous path. High capitalisation has led to specialisation. The servicing of agri-

cultural production is a vast industry comprising the largest companies in the international capitalist world.

This specialisation is reflected visually in straw burning and hedge destruction. The pollution of waterways by excess nitrate use and by animal effluents that are no longer absorbed by the straw and returned in a non-toxic way to the soil. There is the steady destruction of the humus content of soils, which has the effect of reducing water retention and making artificial drainage necessary and can cause erosion in wet weather and causes drought in dry conditions. From the point of view of production per acre, intensive small units are more productive. Modern agricultural technique is expensive (hidden by subsidies), polluting, creating deficient products, and high in water content. It is also dangerously geared to finite resources and is connected to a market economy which requires food which is artificially preserved and requires expensive packaging.

Most dangerous of all, the ownership of land is out of community control.

Alan Albon

Islington Centre

On Tuesday 6th September, a group of 50 people, mainly anarchists, squatted a large empty office block in Rosebery Avenue, Islington, with the intention of using it as a meeting place and resource centre for people with similar views.

The GLC own the building which has been empty for four years, and have told us that they intend evicting us in order to sell the building to subsidise their new fares policy!

We are putting the building to much better use. We have already opened a vegetarian cafe and an anarchist/pacifist bookshop (open-

ing hours noon-6pm). There is room for bands to play in the basement (capacity is about 200) and we have already held one gig.

We intend to use other rooms for animal liberation, feminist and print workshops and hope to set up a squatters action group. There is a large room available for meetings free of charge, so any interested groups contact us. We still need a great deal of furniture, paint, kitchen equipment etc. — any donations would be gratefully received.

So come along and visit us and

contribute something, even if it's only your interest or energy. If we get enough public support, hopefully the GLC will be too embarrassed to evict us. After all, it is the GLC peace year!

The address of the building is:

St. Ives House,
99-119 Rosebery Avenue,
London EC1. (nearest tubes Angel, Farringdon) — please use the door on the corner of Amwell Street and Rosebery Avenue.
St. Ives Collective,
London EC1.

Spain Argentina

The Centro de Investigacion Libertaria 'Estudios' in Valencia, Spain, has now started operating. Since April the centre has been busy classifying documentation and organizing working groups on various themes relating to libertarian thought and philosophy. It is also planning public meetings, exhibitions, conferences and publications.

The Centro de Investigacion is anxious to receive magazines, books, newspapers and all kinds of historic material as well as donations towards its work. It requests groups who edit papers or books to send copies of their publications to Val-

encia in exchange for which it will send them all its own published material.

The address is: Centro de Investigacion Libertaria 'Estudios', apartado 787, Valencia, Spain.

▲ The Federacion Libertaria Argentina (FLA) is a libertarian organisation, or an anarchist one if you prefer this term, which has been in existence since 1935. It has a place in Buenos Aires, puts out books and

pamphlets and organises public meetings. Its official organ is *Accion Libertaria* (Libertarian Action) which has been going since 1970.

Members of the Federation also took part in the editorial group of the magazine *Reconstruir* (Reconstructing) which ceased publication in 1976.

The FLA is hoping for a greater exchange of information with anarchists in other countries. The general secretary is Carlos Beaufays and the address is: Brasil 1551, (1154) Buenos Aires, Republica Argentina.

Manchester Centre

This is the name of the shop opened this June by the Aware Multimedia collective, it's only a small one room affair just now but it's one room more than we've ever had before. We will be distributing books, records, tapes and magazines on such subjects as anarchism, natural health, pacifism, vegetarianism, squatting and civil rights among other things.

We want the shop to be a place for people of (not necessarily) similar ideas to come and talk in the hope that we can break down some of the isolation and frustration that we sometimes feel. Hopefully the place will become somewhere through which people trying to organise

things like nonviolence groups, anti sexist groups, alternative education for their children, etc. could contact other people with the same ideas.

Another think we'll be running from the centre is the Alternative News Service, which is an information sharing scheme for everyone and anyone. The idea of it is that people send us articles they think interesting from newspapers, perhaps you'll see an article in your local paper saying that the council is going to spend a load of money on pro-nuclear propaganda in schools. You'd send us the article and we'd put it into our filing system. Then say a peace group in Cheshire wants to write a pamphlet on how our

children are taught to accept war as being right, then they'd write and ask us if we had any cuttings on the subject (sending us an SAE) and we'd send them a photocopy of your cutting.

Such a project needs all our energies if we want to make it work.

To keep the shop going we need people, ideas and money, if you can help with any of these, please get in touch — it's your shop as well as ours. . . .

The Autonomy Centre
2nd Floor, 8-10 Ancoats St.,
Manchester

Segui 'defaced'

Earlier this year (9 April), we reported and analysed the significance of the 'social democratisation' of the Catalan anarcho-syndicalist militant and trade union leader Salvador Segui. The occasion was the unveiling of a plaque, sponsored and supported by the CNT, various local authorities and 'socialist' parties, to mark the 60th anniversary of the murder by right-wing *pistoleros* of this 'defender of the working class'. A couple of days after we wrote, there appeared an 'alternative' plaque in opposition to the 'official' one, appropriating Segui's revolutionary legacy by one of the leading militant Catalan nationalist groups. So far so good: just what our analysis might lead one to expect — each group trying to exploit Segui's famous name and ambiguous legacy for its own ideological ends.

Last month, in the early hours of 31 August, both plaques were badly damaged by an unidentified 'anarchist' group, the latest chapter in the story of the battle for Segui's legacy in post-Franco social demo-

cratic Spain. Green anarchist signs covered what little was left of the Catalan nationalist plaque. On the half-destroyed 'official' plaque endorsed by the reformist CNT-AIT, the successor of the revolutionary CNT-FAI, appear the words: 'Segui was an anarchist, but no CNT-AIT nationalist'; underneath is the signature 'FAI'. In short, whichever real or apparent 'anarchist' group performed these acts of symbolic terrorism claims to have done so in the tradition of the Durruti, Ascaso, Oliver and other exponents of the 'pure anarchism' of the Federacion Anarquista Iberica, the revolutionary heart or Leninist demon of Spanish anarchism, depending on one's point of view. (Of course, the destruction could, as always, have been a right-wing provocation.)

We have neither time nor inclination here to enter into the ideological world of internecine 'left' politics in today's Catalunya. Instead, we limit ourselves to two comments. First, whether or not the reader shares our view of Segui as *dominantly* a social democratic

reformist, the events reported above can only confirm what we wrote about the desire among left groups here to exploit Segui's legacy for their own ends. Second, if an anarchist group acting in the tradition of the FAI was indeed responsible for this deed, then there could be no better symbolic demonstration of the political impotence and counter-productive irrelevance of such 'anarchism' for the achieving of genuine revolutionary libertarian socialist change, in the counter-revolutionary conditions of social democratic Spain. Even before the First World War, Victor Serge had recognised the failure of the 'pure' anarchist ideology of Kropotkin, Reclus, Libertad, and so on: in the conditions of capitalist Europe, 'the collapse of anarchism in the bourgeois jungle was now obvious' (*Memoirs of a Revolutionary*). So too, we believe, is the 'revolutionary anarchism' responsible for the smashing of the Segui plaques in the social democratic nightmare conditions of post-Franco Spain.

Pat and Julie Flanagan

In Brief

On the third anniversary of the military takeover in Turkey, President Evren has had some commemorative comments. Turks have 'the mildest military regime in the world', which always tries 'not to be harsh or arbitrary'. 'We get a lot of letters from ordinary citizens asking us not to return to the democratic system'. Turkey has lived through the past three years with 'gusto and enthusiasm'.

The Sultan of Brunei has banned British textbooks used to teach English because they contain references to bars, alcohol, parties, kissing and women in skirts.

There are 40,000 millionaires or multi-millionaires among the 3.2 million tax payers in Switzerland, according to statistics published this week. 1% of the tax payers own more than a third of the country's taxable wealth and the top 3% have 48.5%.

Countries such as Britain, which devote a high proportion of public spending to defence, tend to have a poor overall economic performance, according to a report published by the Society of Civil and Public Servants. Between 1960 and 1979, Britain spent more than any other Western nation except the USA.

The country came bottom of the growth league and next to bottom for Capital investment and productivity.

According to Ken Oxford, Chief Constable of Merseyside, 'Militancy in the pursuit of trade union activity is obviously not necessarily subversive.' 'In discharging my role as an officer of the law I must make sure that I am impartial in the exercising of that duty.' Mr. Oxford was replying to allegations that his Special Branch was investigating union activists. He is reluctant to give details of operations as this would not be 'in the public interest.'

