

# FREEDOM

## GLC

One good thing about the Conservative government's current attempt to abolish the Greater London Council is that it confirms what anarchists have always said — parliamentary democracy is a fraud. As the saying goes, 'if voting changed anything, it would be illegal,' and this is exactly what has happened. Central government does not like what the local (London) government is doing and so the GLC is to be abolished.

Not that the GLC is to be defended, of course. Just because central government is against something is not an automatic recommendation for it. Look at the wider context.

The record of the Conservative government is astonishing. Unemployment at record heights, the '81 riots the biggest social unrest since who knows when and the miners' strike the biggest industrial unrest since likewise. Heroin addiction soars, everyone earning less than £30,000 a year is paying more in tax than they were when the Conservatives were elected, and business (except for the firms who've gone bust), is booming. (Look at the *Financial Times* share index if you don't believe me.) The simple fact is that the present Conservative government is too greedy and short-sighted, too stupid and vicious, to run a class society. The rich are thriving at the expense of the rest of society and the rest of society is fighting to make their resentment felt. The hatred the Conservative government has for the working class, disguised as belief in monetarist economics, is interfering with the smooth running of the capitalist system and in the interests of that system an alternative government must be found. One that will keep the machine running smoothly.

This is where the Labour Party comes in, both at national and local level, as capitalism's Trojan Horse. Supposedly an alternative to capitalism the Labour Party offer only an alternative form of capitalism. Instead of abolishing capitalism the Labour Party wants to prop it up by alleviating the worst of its effects. A good illustration of this was the



This is not my idea of radio activity!

GLC's unsuccessful attempt to lower London Transport's fares.

Despite the high level of unemployment there are still several million people working in and around London, astonished to relate, many of them need transport to get to work. Private transport for all of them is impossible — there aren't enough roads for that many cars (and only a minority will use bicycles). So the answer is public transport, buses and trains. In which case buses and trains must be as attractive as possible which in present society means fares subsidized by taxation of some kind. This gets everyone to work on time and keeps capitalism ticking over nicely. But when the GLC lowered London Transport fares a section of the ruling class known as the House of Lords promptly put them back up again. Low fares had been reached by increasing local taxation which, in return for keeping capitalism going, is a cheap enough price to pay. But, blinded by its immediate interests, the majority of the ruling class was unwilling to make a

small sacrifice for a big gain.

This is what has happened on the wider scale in Mrs Thatcher's Britain. Society is run in the interests of a minority and some of the majority, the hoi polloi, are making threatening noises. I repeat. The present government is too greedy and short-sighted, too stupid and vicious, to run a class society. So the intelligent Labour Party, wants to cool down a capitalist system that is overheating. By reforms like subsidizing public transport they hope to defuse our resentment of capitalism and thus avoid the class violence provoked by the present government. But we are not interested in choosing between more efficient forms of exploitation (such as the GLC) and less efficient ones (such as the present government). We want an end to exploitation, hence the slogan Smash the GLC. The only real question is how to translate that slogan into practice.

Brian Moseley

## GENERAL STRIKE

As the striking miners drag their inconclusive dispute through the summer, the Brothers of the TUC are faced with a growing dilemma. Obviously the trade union movement cannot see the miners defeated. If this were to happen the strike weapon would be irreparably blunted: what would the unions do then to underline their right to crumbs from the table of property, production and profit?

What will the dinosaurs of the working class interest do? The conference season approaches. The Brothers will be under the full exposure of the media (which they like), with the problem miners (which they don't). The striking miners are tearing right at the heart of their tactical body, and exposing the reality of their situation.

Behind the Brothers' problem are idealists. King Arthur is undeniably that, he believes in that update of feudalism, institutionalised state socialism, where duties and rewards are codified and understood. Anarchists should question the validity of supporting a man whose vision is limited to ensuring that the children and grandchildren of his members are condemned to working down coal mines.

The trouble is the does on all the traditional values of the labour movement, it is an embarrassment to the Brothers. They would much rather get on with managing their pension funds over cosy City lunches with 'good left-wing' stock brokers and investment analysts, and their mortgaged and credit-worthy members could not really give a toss about some clatty mining community.

Munchkin MacGregor is also idealistic; economic viability (whatever that may mean) dominates his threadbare thoughts from cornflakes to cocoa. He also believes in people. The 'People that work in our industry' is one of his favourite clichés. He (and the Thatcher person) would like to see Britain more like America. Strong independent individuals standing alone, to have the shit battered out of them by the institutions they are forced

to confront, is their shared dream.

If the TUC plays by the rules the Brothers should only one serious option. They should call a general strike. Let us all have an end of summer break before getting back to the serious tasks of unemployment and cuts. Thatcher will call in the person essential services? Let her, surely the best thing for the troops to be doing. Crisis and hardship? Who for, comrade, the unemployed, pensioners, little old ladies on fixed incomes in Bournemouth?

The only argument against a general strike is that it will cause a degree of crisis within the capitalist system. But crisis is the very lifeblood of the system. Every time those numbers (share price averages) go up, or down, someone makes and someone loses. True, the Brothers, with all their pension fund assets, could do very nicely from a good shake up in the stock market if they handled it right. But are they ready for such drastic action? A little turmoil is probably nearer their taste than trauma. At the end of the day nobody wants stability, the real enemy of capitalism, it allows people time to perceive the reality of their situation.

What are you waiting for, Brothers? Give it a try! You decided to play this game in the 1920s when the rules were agreed for labour/capital confrontations between both sides. Perhaps the major influence that will restrain you is not the financial problems a general strike would pose, but your continuing bankruptcy of ideals.

Were you to bring down the current system you would have nothing to put in its place except more of the same; you are an integral part of the system and the oppression within our society.

Things have become critical because the government is not playing its part, they have gone on strike first. Never mind, Brothers, perhaps Thatcher will return to work in time and bail you out.

Colin Johnson

## 121

area. The following is the text of a leaflet issued by 121.

Brian Moseley

Anarchism . . . poverty, violence, inequality and decadence exist and flourish today yet parliament isn't able or willing to improve the situation. We therefore seek the abolition of Government and the demolition of its wretched, dogmatic institutions. Law doesn't mean order. Anarchy isn't chaos.

TUESDAY August 14th 1984: 7.00am. The political police were out in force, smashing down the doors of four squatted houses and

the local anarchist bookshop at 121 Railton Road, Brixton . . . The police, over 50 of them, used Firearms Warrants (which need very high-up approval) and covered our homes front and back as the heavies rushed in. BUT THEY FOUND NOTHING. The nearest they came to a firearm was an anti-rape sprayer. The woman who owned it was arrested and later released without any charge, likewise no charge for 'stealing tools' (she is a carpenter and has her own tools). One person was arrested for having two small marijuana plants. Another just because 'his name rang a bell', he was

later found to have skipped bail on a small charge. The cops stole his addressbooks after arresting him. They did not even look for firearms, not a floorboard was lifted. The cops were more interested in finding out identities and anything political they could.

At the bookshop they spent three hours going through everything, at times we were not able to get inside as the bomb squad went through with sniffer dogs. Anything 'bugs', drugs or 'firearms' could have been planted by them as we were not able to follow their search. 'Have you found the Nuclear weapons

yet?' asked one shop worker as the cops stomped in the basement and up to the roof.

Even Ted Knight, Lambeth Council leader and an old enemy of ours, had to admit 'There has never been any suggestion that those people who run the bookshop have been involved in terrorism in any way . . . It is outrageous that their personal lives should have been interfered with in this way.' Lambeth Council are in the process of taking us to Court to evict us after we have been in occupation for 3½ years. The case will probably be in late September or October.

The saga of 121, the squatted anarchist bookshop in South London continues. Lambeth Council continue their attempt to evict 121 and the police have just raided 121 and other squats in the Brixton

Copy for FREEDOM should be typed or on lined paper, triple spaced and in 'conversational English' wherever possible. Closely scrawled Basildon Bond cuts no ice with our typesetter. We have a thing against language that can only be understood by other revolutionaries. INSPEAK is out. OK?

## letters

Your comments about everything under the sun, especially the miners' strike, are simply disgusting.

They are the sort of rubbish which gives anything remotely connected with anarchism a bad name.

I stop my sub, which I have been renewing for twenty years.

Would you stop sending me FREEDOM.

Julius Hogben  
London

Hitler and Stalin would have applauded the courageous action of those people in Camden who, according to Spike in your August issue have 'driven the local sex shop out of town'. Their only regret would have been that it wasn't fire-bombed, as burning the books of groups with whose views they disagreed was one of the favourite activities of these dictators.

John Broom  
Scotland

The front-page article on science (August) ends with the quotation, 'It ain't what people knows that causes all the trouble, it's what they know that ain't so' — and nicely proves the point by attributing it to Archy, the cockroach hero of the American humorist Don Marquis, when it was actually coined by the much earlier American humorist Josh Billings (Henry Wheeler Shaw), the original version being, 'It is better to know nothing than to know what ain't so' (1874).

The article contains several other examples of what ain't so. The story that Hegel was 'hired' by the King of Prussia on the advice of Bismarck (not 'Bismark') is an old chestnut which is quickly exploded by the facts that Hegel was not 'hired' by anyone, but was appointed professor at Berlin University because he was the leading philosopher in Germany; that this was in 1818, when Bismarck was three years old; that A J P Taylor says of Bismarck that 'philosophy never interested him, and he was one of the few Germans to escape the influence of Hegel'; and that when Bismarck was the chief minister of Prussia and then the German Empire from 1862 to 1890 he got his way not by flattery and manipulation but by blood and iron.

Similarly, the Russian biologist Lysenko (not 'Lyckenko') didn't 'swear that genes didn't exist', but questioned whether they were the only vehicle of inheritance.

Above all, it is misleading to say that nuclear power is unacceptable because 'there is no safe level of radiation', without mentioning that there is no safe level of dust or smoke or fumes caused by traditional sources of energy either, and that nuclear energy, whatever its dangers (and I have personally suffered from them very considerably), has probably caused fewer deaths than any other form of energy so far.

Science is based on the rational and impartial use of facts, and criticism of science should have the same basis.

NW

*The quote: I bet this lady a pint of guinness you'd write in with the correct attribution to Mark Twain... Hegal did get the Milton Freidman treatment. Lysenko (DP 'corrected' the spelling) did say it!*

*Sorry, I was writing about radiation, not dust.*

Stu.

Why the hell did you publish the article by Stu Stuart next to the Open Letter to Arthur Scargill from *Robotnik* and the Emmanuel Goldstein Group in your August issue? The inaccuracy of the former could only detract from the serious content of the latter. Where were the Notts miners when Polish miners were being killed for resisting the introduction of martial law? Why aren't they picketing the scab coal which is being mined by Polish workers whose unions have been all but destroyed by the Stalinist state? Why have they turned a deaf ear to the support for the strike coming from the Polish underground? Now that Scargill has promised Solidarnosc an apology why haven't they come out? Could it be because they are scabs who care only for their pay packets and don't give a damn for their fellow workers be they Solidarnosc members or Yorks miners whose jobs and committees are threatened by Britain's Tory Jaruzelskid and whose union rights are being trampled on by the British Zomo!?

Terry Liddle  
London

In the June issue of FREEDOM there was a 250 word review by Colin Johnson of *Worker's Councils* by Anton Pannekoek. What follows is an abridgement of a reply from *Echanges et Mouvement*, the publishers of the pamphlet. Their letter was about 1,000 words long and it seems ridiculous to give four times as much space to a reply as was given to the original article.

Brian Moseley

I was left wondering how people could give an opinion (not even a review) on a book they 'could not read much of'. Perhaps someone could enlighten me? I fear it may be those with little experience of industry (or the class struggle).

A pathological fixation may be on marginal (fashionable) and somewhat superficial problems and hope that they may provide the answer

to fundamental problems they do not wish to confront!

All I can say is that it is appalling to read such things in FREEDOM when the present struggles in England are showing that the 'masses' can generate forces and play a political role (ie fulfil their historic role) and through their action begin to do something in the organisation of their own struggle, instead of voting (or relying on any kind of organisation or ideology); trying to decide by and for themselves on questions about their own lives, eg, industry, technology, use of resources, control of the very nature of industrial society, etc.

We can find in CJ's opinions the same old pretensions of ideological superiority over what workers build for the defence of

their own interests and their emancipation. If CJ thinks that this workers' fight, though very recent and still concerning workers' councils (Hungary '56, France '68, Poland '80-81) does not interest him at all, he has simply to say it: he will belong to an old coterie of people, marxists and anarchists, despising workers' action through using it to eventually get their own ideological aim.

Pannekoek's *Workers Councils* is worth reading if we are interested in ending capitalism. We can consider it as a real and capital contribution to the analysis and theorisation of the class struggle in this century. It is a basis for the understanding of present struggles. Even with the out of date words and patterns, half a century old, the book brings together all the

elements of the class struggle for comparison.

Henri S  
Echanges et Mouvement

*Colin Johnson - born working class - has spent 20 years in industry, from shop floor to management. Most of it was in worker co-operatives. He is still convinced that workers and anarchists will find the pamphlet incredibly boring.*

*Is not the point of workers' councils, Hungary 56 etc, that just as with our workers' organisations, they are an integral part of the system they seek to oppose? As such, can they ever succeed?*

The discussion of (illegal) drugs in the pages of FREEDOM is to be welcomed. Particularly welcome to me was the article opposing the use of LSD in the July issue. 'Dr Gonzo' in replying in the August issue does the pro-use case little good by comparing the wrong use of LSD to the wrong use of sex. Leaving aside the name Dr Gonzo (why don't people use real names?) the comparison is a little absurd since, in an instant, LSD can create horror out of pleasure. Solitary masturbation cannot turn instantly into mass rape.

Over the years this writer has

witnessed, and on a couple of occasions in the early 70s had, what is commonly described as a bad trip. If anarchy means self-control and self-management then this drug induced madness is the exact opposite, once in, how do you get out? No, Gonzo — I've seen too many people lose their marbles that way to see any connection between acid and liberation.

LSD was the product of the giant pharmaceutical company Sandoz — and was patented as a potentially profitable drug. In experimentation its inventors tried the effect on apes, chimpanzees,

fish, cats, spiders and so on. Albert Hoffmann, who first synthesised LSD (writing in his book *LSD — my problem child*, published by Houghton Mifflin) will tell you to the nearest hundredth of a gramme how much it took to kill a mouse, a rat and, I kid you not, an elephant. One wonders how many animals were given mental torture for the sake of Sandoz profits then, and our 'pleasure' now.

There is no doubt that LSD is non-addictive and in humans has little known physical effect. That much can be said in its favour. There is also no doubt that it's a

multi-million pound business, with the consumers at street level having no knowledge of the content or potency of what they are buying. There is also no doubt that LSD has been directly responsible for a fair number of people becoming needlessly insane. Gonzo signs off with 'All power to your brain cells!' — I would agree at least with that. Liberation of our mind is rarely chemically induced.

I should make it clear that I see no objection to harmless recreational drugs.

Ross Bradshaw  
Nottingham

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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.

When I first read the letter from the Plymouth Anarchist Group (June FREEDOM) I did not think it worth comment. However, since at least one other anarchist group (Leamington) seems to think that FREEDOM could work under a rotating editorship, I think it is appropriate that a serious attempt is made to apply the 'theory now practice' that the northern comrade Mark Earnshaw talks about in the July FREEDOM.

On a purely practical level, one question I must ask is the criticism contained in the various contributions to this subject levelled at the present or the previous FREEDOM collective? If the Plymouth anarchists (all five of them) are concerned about the new collective, do they really think that one edition is sufficient to judge their editorial style.

Why is it that whenever we have

a debate about 'editorial freedom' that the real issues are obscured by trendy leftist protocol? Rotating chairpersons and permanent secretaries, like voting, change nothing but the appearances. Why is it that the 'Plymouth Brethren' cannot see the inconsistency between complaining about reading a paper over which they feel they have no influence on the one hand, and advocate a rotating editorship whereby another group of anarchists go to the trouble of publishing a paper over which they have no say as to what goes into its pages — on the other.

According to 'the Brethren', printing and distribution should continue to be done in London because the best resources are located there. What these comrades fail to realise is that publishing without control is just as undesirable

as reading without control. They are two sides of the same equation. I have deliberately used the word *control* because I feel it is appropriate to any debate about who is in charge. However, what distinguishes us as anarchists from state socialist bureaucrats is that we desire 'worker control' not control of the workers.

This letter is not intended as a defence of the status quo, whatever that is — far from it. The editorial collective has been accused of unwarranted censorship and surely they must now answer this charge. Personally I would like to see some evidence up front from the accusers, not just a debate about four letter words and such trivia. Perhaps they (the accusers) could circulate unpublished and censored materials via group contacts. If there is a case to answer, I for one will join

the protest for changes, but it is unlikely that this would entail an endorsement of the shopping list suggested by the Plymouth anarchist group. I for one think that the letters' page of FREEDOM is important and should stay. Surely a large letters section is a safeguard of a kind against censorship.

If London groups do have too much say, this in itself is no reason why we should allow any other group to dominate in the same way, even if they do agree to take it in turns. It may be that the editorial collective is not yet sufficiently representative of the country as a whole. As anarchists, surely there is something we could look at rationally. After all, if we cannot share a magazine how are we going to share the world.

David Isiorho  
Warwickshire

## THE CONTINUING STORY OF THE EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE THESE ARE THE REMAINING THREE STATEMENTS FROM FREEDOM EDITORS

I suspect that most of the readers of FREEDOM don't actually read FREEDOM. People subscribe and buy it out of loyalty. At times it is referred to as the 'elder statesman' publication.

I believe FREEDOM should keep the high ideals of anarchism in sight, its writers should interpret, comment and criticise from a position illuminated by the best philosophical position we can develop.

I do not want to see the paper trying to copy the *Times* or *Telegraph* in rigidity of format — we should be able to combine erudition with graphic appeal and flexibility.

I would like to see more outside contributions — put pages together and send them in, some prior negotiation would ensure that your efforts were not wasted.

Local and immediate issues should be covered locally; FREE-

DOM should be developing the future structure of anarchism.

Colin Johnson

I'm sure most of you are familiar with the old army story about how messages become distorted by frequent retelling — 'Send reinforcements, we're going to advance', becoming 'Send 3/4p, we're going to a dance'. Frankly I regard both *Black Flag* and FREEDOM as having provided a similar service to anarchism over recent years.

Bombism and pacifism, as Malatesta observed, are the twin traps for unstable and excitable anarchists. Rather than admit your mistakes, you elevate tactics, which have been proved to be ineffective, into unquestionable 'principles'. The idea that anarchism is anything to do with either CND or the Vancouver Five should at least be an offence against the Trades Description Act

if not against the Social Revolution.

What I particularly objected to in the 'old' FREEDOM was the debate about libertarian economics, sociology, organisation and action, being reduced to a sort of train-spotters paradise of spot-the-mistaken-quotation in reviews that were harder to understand than the original book.

Personally I feel that FREEDOM has no useful future as a 'newspaper'. Fortnightly or monthly is essentially magazine territory. What is really needed is an anarchist/libertarian alternative to *Marxism Today*, *Socialist Review*, etc, etc. Turning FREEDOM into a genuinely thoughtful monthly magazine was the project I was originally asked to join. I feel that the present production group has been afflicted with collective cowardice in the face of tradition in that respect.

Stu Stuart

Let me say immediately that I am very dissatisfied with the way FREEDOM is at present. I would, in general, like to see an intellectually higher level of debate and discussion and more informed comment. It is part of our job to try and provide it. The problem is that we lack the kind of expertise to do the job. So I would like to make a plea to anarchists who have specialised knowledge to come forth and get in touch. FREEDOM ought to be making an impact, especially on those who are still stuck in authoritarian modes of thought. I think it is more fruitful to take responsibility for our failure than to blame it on the stubbornness of the rest of the world.

My own approach to anarchism is eclectic — I take whatever I find useful from anarchist and non-anarchist sources. I am trying to see the various schools of anarchism as a unity where each tries to answer some of the problems that anarchism inevitably raises.

I therefore feel that FREEDOM should be open-minded and tolerant, providing space for the whole range of anarchist thought and activity.

In doing this, it is inevitable that we are forced to try and define anarchism and there will always be borderline cases as well as new developments of thought which will challenge old definitions. How far, for example, can we consider situationism or anarcho-capitalism to be forms of anarchism? For myself, I prefer a wider, rather than a narrower, view of anarchism for we can only reach a sharper view of anarchism by comparison and contrast. There is a lot of thinking to be done and I hope it will get done in the pages of FREEDOM.

Finally, to activists I would say — let's think about what we're doing and make sure it is effective or else we will merely add another chapter to the failure of anarchism.

John Anderson

## Nanny Get Your Gun!

*The following is a copy of a leaflet distributed amongst nursery workers in Islington during their fifteen week strike.*

**Our enemy's enemy is not our ally.  
Some lessons from the Nursery Workers strike**

Attention all persons who maintain faith in our wonderful democratic society!

Being on strike against the most self-styled radical socialist administration in the country one is confronted with arguments which sound rather uncannily akin to those of our beloved government. There is no more money available, they say, and in such hard times of economic adversity one must accept unacceptable staffing levels. The right wing government or the left wing Islington Council, the response is the same.

If the council cared for its caring image, it could easily afford this paltry claim from the nursery workers. But it is just another employer, disguised as a benevolent campaigner for local democracy.

The council seems to contradict itself over its attitude to rate-capping. On the one hand they seem scared to risk their own personal bourgeois assets if taken to court, by furthermore stating they could fund our claim this year but not subsequently. Their announced intent to set up a budget higher than the government recommendation implies taking a confrontational stand, but make no sense as far as their excuses for not funding our

claim are concerned.

Thus any suggestion of challenging the government must be seen as hollow optimism, lest they would feel that subsequent fundings were out of their hands, and they would be free from blame if this money were axed by central government.

So, what's all the fuss about defending local government when we already have no say in how our affairs are run. Local democracy is a mere euphemism for government puppets pretending to afford us a degree of participation and control.

And hence to decentralisation. Who can trust a council advocating community control over its services, when it treats its low paid workers and users of CDB's with such disregard and contempt.

Harbour no illusions, this council in ignoring the demands of its employees (and thousands of members of the community) and still advancing the myth of local democracy through its pet project, decentralisation can only be realistically described as hypocritical and opportunistic.

The government is so overtly blatant in ignoring in all its manifestations as to leaving no

room for doubt as to its evil nature, the local councils, however, are more subtle, and one has to dispel utopian myths of the possibilities of progress within the system before realising the essence of do-gooding, well-meaning socialism.

Nursery workers have had to learn the hard way that conservative, SDP and labour are just different varieties of the same antagonistic state apparatus.

The absurdity of naively clinging to the myth of the labour party despite its history of betrayals against the community, is failure to recognise the essence of parliamentary and party politics. If the labour party could change anything it would be proscribed.

This is not just another party political broadcast from some splinter Marxist-Leninist-Trotskyite-Maoist sect preaching a brand of more - revolutionary - than - all - the - others vanguardism. Leftist dogma accuses everybody else of reformist and recuperative practices, whilst insisting the unique validity of their true path to socialism. Such dogmas are shields behind which they hide, preventing the erstwhile radical from realising the redundancy of

their predicament.

Nursery workers have had sufficient experience of shunning RCP and SWP opportunists away from our picket lines, resenting their patronising expert advice on how to run our show and fight our struggle. We're quite capable of working out the 'Next Step' without having to buy one to find out.

In sum, there seems to be a lot of tomfoolery going around.

Labour councils masquerading as benevolent philanthropists, spouting the government's line, and the 57 different brands of Leninist leadership offering no real alternative in terms of radically changing our way of life.

Meaningful change can only come spontaneously from the community, not imposed from above. We can only liberate ourselves, to rely on somebody doing it for us changes nothing. The point is for the community to take control of decisions which affect it rather than leaving it to bureaucratic experts.

Only once we've rejected all these barriers to real community control can we begin to organise the running of our affairs.

## Trusting The Miners

Your last issue contained a number of comments on the miners' strike by people whose hearts are in the right place but their brains someplace else. We were told that a miners' ballot would be wrong because: a) the press would make it a farce; b) miners shouldn't have the right to vote away the jobs of other miners; c) it would be a diversion from the fight for direct elections in the workplace; d) we would end up balloting on everything from Greenham Common to Stop the City; e) ballots are liberal crap; f) the Notts miners are natural scabs anyway so there's no point in balloting them.

Since some of these arguments sound sensible they need answering. The first point is that all your correspondents show a willingness to sacrifice workers' democracy in order to achieve a victory in the strike and given the unquestioned importance of a victory this seems reasonable. However, the whole issue of the ballot has been raised in the libertarian press precisely because some of us feel that the absence of a ballot has severely restricted the chance of victory. Let us assume that a couple of weeks after the strike got going a national ballot has been held. What

would have been the result? A defeat? If anyone seriously believes that the majority of the miners would have voted against the strike then there is no question that it would have been much better if no strike was held. You cannot win a strike without very determined backing from the majority of those taking the action. If the majority don't back you, then you won't win even if the others are voting away your jobs (unless of course you are in a position where an occupation can force a victory without help from anyone). If you are going to win a 20 week plus strike in an industry where you need a lot of help from other workers then you must have the majority with you. A minority strike would have collapsed totally and given the government the victory it wants. If the people voting in the ballot were so gullible that they were going to be influenced by what the *Sun* writes and what the TV news tells them then it would be better to get it over with quickly. Personally I have far more faith in the resistance of ordinary people to this kind of crap. What else are we to assume? That Scargill is special and that he alone has the wisdom to see through the

media and to decide on behalf of thousands of others whether they should go through six months of hardship. The great thing about real democracy is that it is so much more reliable than correct leadership from above. If they won't vote for it, they won't win it and it's best to fight on another occasion. What people vote for under conditions of real choice they act upon.

Assume that a strike ballot was won early on in the strike. Would the Notts miners still be working? I would argue that the evidence of 72 and 74 is not that the Notts miners are natural scabs but that they were solid in action behind the decision of the majority despite voting against the strike. At the moment they have been given an easy get out clause: 'Why strike just because Scargill says so?' is the logic which has taken thousands of men over the picket line. I believe a ballot would have been won and I have enough faith in the miners in Nottinghamshire to believe that reluctantly the majority of them would have obeyed a majority decision to strike which made it a clear and unequivocal case of 'am I selfish enough to cross a picket line?' Such a ballot would not have been a diversion from any campaign for workplace democracy, it would have been a powerful expression of it which would have assisted victory. It would also have flung in the face of the press their own myth that the miners didn't want to

strike. It should be obvious to most of us by now that the majority of miners do favour a strike, that they are not being kept out on strike by violent pickets but by free choice and that (though nobody bothered to ask them their opinion either) the majority of miners wives back the strike. The success of that strike has been put at risk by the Leninist mentality of Scargill and his mistrust of democracy. The problem for us now is that his reluctance to call a ballot has made the calling of one now virtually impossible since it would be seen as a weakening of resolve and might well produce a defeat. As the weeks go by and the press latches onto this weakness more tightly we could well pay dearly for the initial failure to trust the workers involved.

The question therefore becomes what tactics can be adopted which will win in spite of the handicaps which Scargill has placed upon the strikers. Obviously the miners need maximum backing from other workers especially in terms of cash donations since this will make the biggest single difference to the ability of people to hold out. As to what picketing tactics should be adopted the situation is much less clear. I would say that Grunwick showed that mass set piece pickets by workers tend to be beaten by police action since you cannot mount 24 hour mass pickets and because they are known about in advance. If the NUM announces a mass picket at a particular place a

squad of police can be there in force to meet them. Result — a ritual battle. If the actions are left far more to the choice of the individual pits then they become unpredictable and it is difficult for the police to know where people will turn up. Of course in such situations there is no need to hold a ballot on every action undertaken but people do need to take care that the actions they carry out have the backing of the communities they are supposed to help, otherwise they are counterproductive (this is why most acts of individual anarchist violence fail — they take no account of what people want and are prepared to support). I would say that the actions which have most disturbed the government so far have been the blocking of motorways and bridges by slow moving miners' cars (think for instance of what a miners' support group could do in the London hour) and the burning of lorries and buses by unknown individuals taking matters into their own hands and doing what most of the other strikers had been longing to do for weeks. Placing faith in the ability of people to organise their own actions and take their own decisions is the way to win this strike and not liberal crap.

Andy Brown  
London

# FROM ANGEL ALLEY

The old Freedom Collective were very fond of saying that there was no point in having explanations of anarchism in Freedom because their readers had already read the books. In view of the fact that we've got wankers like Graham Short writing in with bloodcurdling threats, ordering us to hand over editorial control to him and god only knows who else, we feel there is an absolutely desperate need for constant re-statements of basic libertarian ideals and modes of action. Hence these extracts from Malatesta's *Life and Ideas* (available from Freedom bookshop, price £3). An enthusiasm for Malatesta is one of the things the members of the new collective have in common.

Concerning the 'rotating editorship'. Both *Solidarity* and *Black Flag* have tried this in the past. The result was that each group waited its turn impatiently and ruthlessly excluded everybody else's stuff when it came. There was wild inconsistency and much less openness. Freedom has never claimed to be THE national anarchist paper, nor is it the paper of some national federation. It is and always has been the paper produced by its editors as their contribution to anarchist propaganda. We note that groups like Glasgow and Southampton don't make this 'hand over the paper' demand, presumably because they're too busy producing their own.....as the rest of you should be. Besides, when did reading a paper confer editorial rights in anarchist theory? We believe in workers' control of production, not consumer control.

Well over fifty percent of every recent issue of Freedom has been written by outside contributors, which is fine by us. So keep the copy rolling in, folks - especially those UK group reports which are more helpful than you might think.

Subscribers note: We have still (after four issues) NOT YET received the bureaucratic info from the old collective. Yes, steps are being taken and justice will be done eventually. Meanwhile can you keep the donations flooding in, especially those of you who are currently getting Freedom for nothing. If you've paid and are not getting it, let us know now and everything will be alright, soonest.

Stu Stuart  
pp the collective.

## DEBATE

The plan is that the space made available by axing the long boring reviews is to be filled with an exciting, or at least interesting, debate about how to overthrow the state and live happily ever after. Libertarian economics, sociology, organisation, education, personal relationships, and defending the revolution - that sort of stuff. Whether you're polishing old concepts, being brilliantly original, or making a few down to earth comments about how it all comes across to the folks, keep your contributions as succinct as possible and certainly less than 2,000 words. This is not an excuse to be glib, superficial, pretentious or fantasy prone, or indulge incomprehensible personal obsessions (there's quite enough of that in our letters section). Don't pontificate about how to run the world economy if you have neither a degree in economics nor a down-to-earth practical sense of how humans do things. If (and only if) you include a stamped self-addressed envelope, we'll write back and tell you why it didn't go in...

We're kicking off the debate in this issue with extracts from Malatesta's *Life and Ideas* (Freedom Press) because they were originally written as newspaper articles to be read by ordinary folks, and there really hasn't been much progress in anarchist ideas since.

I am an anarchist because it seems to me that anarchy would correspond better than any other way of social life, to my desire for the good of all, to my aspirations towards a society which reconciles the liberty of everyone with co-operation and love among men, and not because anarchism is a scientific truth and a natural law. It is enough for me that it should not contradict any known law of nature and consider it possible and to struggle to win the support needed to achieve it.

### Anarchist Schools of Thought

Among the anarchists there are the revolutionists, who believe that the force which maintains the existing order must be overthrown by force in order to create a political climate in which the free development of individuals and of the community will be possible; and there are the educationalists who think that social transformation can be achieved only by first changing people by means of education and propaganda. There are, too, the partisans of non-resistance, or of passive resistance who repudiate violence even when it serves to repel violence; and there are those who recognise the necessity for violence who, in their turn, are divided as to the nature, the extent and the limits of such violence. There are disagreements as to the anarchist attitude to the Trades Unions; disagreements on the need or otherwise of a specific anarchist organisation; permanent or temporary disagreement as to the relationship between anarchists and opposition parties.

And on these and other similar questions one must seek ways of reaching agreement; or if, as seems to be the case, agreement is not possible, we must know how to tolerate each other; by working together when in agreement and, leaving each one to do as he thinks

fit without hampering each other when not. For, come to think about it, nobody can be absolutely certain of being in the right, and nobody is always right.

In the anarchist milieu, communism, individualism, collectivism, mutualism and all the intermediate and eclectic programmes are simply the ways considered best for achieving freedom and solidarity in economic life; the ways believed to correspond most closely with justice and freedom for the distribution of the means of production and the products of labour among men.

Bakunin was an anarchist, and he was a collectivist, an outspoken enemy of communism because he saw in it the negation of freedom and, therefore, of human dignity. And with Bakunin, and for a long time after him, almost all the Spanish anarchists were collectivists, and yet were among the most conscious and consistent anarchists.

Others for the same reason of defence and guarantee of liberty declare themselves to be individualists and they want each person to have as individual property the part that is due to him of the means of production and therefore the free disposal of the products of his labour.

Others invent more or less complicated systems of mutuality. But in the long run it is always the searching for a more secure guarantee of freedom which is the common factor among anarchists, and which divides them into different schools.

In conclusion it seems to me, that no system can be vital and really serve to free mankind from the slavery of the remote past if it is not the result of free development.

Human societies, if they are to be communities of free men working together for the greatest good of all, and no longer convents or despotisms held together by religious superstition or brute force, cannot be the artificial creation of an individual or of a sect. They must be the resultant of the needs and the competitive or divergent wills of all their members who by trial and error find the institutions which at any given time are the best possible, and who develop and change them as circumstances and wills change.

One may, therefore, prefer communism or individualism or collectivism, or any other system, and work by example and propaganda for the achievement of one's personal preferences; but one must beware, at the risk of certain disaster, of supposing that one's own system is the only, and infallible one, good for all men, everywhere and for all times, and that its success must be ensured at all costs, by means other than those which depend on persuasion, which spring from the evidence of facts.

What is important and indispensable, the point of departure, is to ensure for everybody the means to be free.

### Violence

We are on principle opposed to violence and for this reason wish that the social struggle should be conducted as humanely as possible. But this does not mean that we would wish it to be less determined, less thoroughgoing; indeed we are of the opinion that in the long run half measures only indefinitely prolong the struggle, neutralising it as well as encouraging more of the kind of violence which one wishes to avoid. Neither does it mean that we limit the right of self defence to resistance against actual

or imminent attack. For us the oppressed are always in a state of legitimate defence and are fully justified in rising without waiting to be actually fired on; and we are fully aware of the fact that attack is often the best means of defence...

We do not say that violence is good when we use it and harmful when others use it against us. We say that violence is justifiable, good and 'moral', as well as a duty when it is used in one's own defence and that of others, against the demands of those who believe in violence; it is evil and 'immoral' if it serves to violate the freedom of others.

We are not 'pacifists' because peace is not possible unless it is desired by both sides.

We consider violence a necessity and a duty for defence, but only for defence against direct, sudden, physical attack, but against all those institutions which use force to keep the people in a state of servitude.

To my mind if violence is justifiable even beyond the needs of self defence, then it is justified when it is used against us, and we would have no grounds for protest.

### Organisation

If it is true that [organisation creates leaders]; if it is true that anarchists are unable to come together and arrive at agreement without submitting themselves to an authority, this means that they are not yet very good anarchists, and before thinking of establishing anarchy in the world they must think of making themselves able to live anarchistically.

An anarchist organisation must, in my opinion [allow for] complete autonomy, and independence, and therefore full responsibility, to individuals and groups; free agreement between those who think it useful to come together for co-operative action, for common aims; a moral duty to fulfil one's pledges and to take no action which is contrary to the accepted programme. On such bases one then introduces practical forms and the suitable instruments to give real life to the organisations. Thus the groups, the federation of groups, the federation of federations, meetings, congresses, correspondence committees and so on. But this also must be done freely, in such a way as not to restrict the thought and initiative of individual members, but only to give greater scope to the efforts which in isolation would be impossible or ineffective. Thus for an anarchist organisation congresses, in spite of all the disadvantages from which they suffer as representative bodies... are free from authoritarianism in any shape or form because they do not legislate and do not impose their deliberations on others.

### Production

There have been many anarchists, and among them some of the most eminent, who have propagated the idea that the quantity of goods produced and stored in the warehouses and granaries is so overabundant that it would only be necessary to draw on these stores to fully satisfy the needs and wishes of all without having to worry ourselves about the problems of work and production for a long time to come. And, of course, they found people who were willing to believe them. Human beings are only too liable to succumb to a tendency to avoid toil and dangers. Just as the social democrats found a considerable measure of support among the masses when they tried

to make out that it was sufficient to put a piece of paper in the ballot box in order to emancipate oneself, so some anarchists attracted other masses by assuring them all that was needed was a one-day epic struggle in order to enjoy, without effort, or with a minimum of effort, the paradise of abundance in a state of freedom.

Now, this is precisely the contrary to the truth. Capitalists make others produce to sell for profit, and therefore stop production as soon as they see that profits would diminish or disappear. They generally find it more advantageous to keep markets in a situation of relative shortage; and this is shown by the fact that one bad harvest can result in goods being in short supply or even not available at all.

### Money

It is customary in [anarchist] circles to offer a simplistic solution to the problem [of money] by saying that it must be abolished. And this would be the solution if it were a question of an anarchist society, or of a hypothetical revolution to take place in the next hundred years, always assuming that the masses could become anarchist and communist before the conditions under which we live had been radically changed by a revolution.

But today the problem is complicated in quite a different way. Money is a powerful means of exploitation and oppression; but it is the only means (apart from the most tyrannical dictatorship or the most idyllic accord) so far devised by human intelligence to regulate production and distribution automatically.

For the moment, rather than concerning oneself with the abolition of money one should seek a way to ensure that money truly represents the useful work performed by its possessors...

Let us assume that a successful insurrection takes place tomorrow. Anarchy or no anarchy, the people must go on eating and providing for all their basic needs. The large cities must be supplied with necessities more or less as usual.

If the peasants and carriers, etc refuse to supply goods and services for nothing, and demand payment in money which they are accustomed to considering as real wealth, what does one do? Oblige them by force? In which case we might as well wave goodbye to anarchism and to any possible change for the better. Let the Russian experience serve as a lesson.

And so?

The comrades generally reply: But the peasants will understand the advantages of communism or at least of the direct exchange of food for goods.

This is all very well; but certainly not in a day, and the people cannot stay without eating for even a day. I did not mean to propose solutions [at the Bienne meeting]. What I do want to do is to draw the comrades' attention to the most important questions which we shall be faced with in the reality of a revolutionary morrow.

### Property

Our opponents, interested defenders of the existing system are in the habit of saying, to justify the right to private property, that it is the condition and guarantee of freedom.

And we agree with them. Are we not always repeating that he who is poor is a slave? Then why are they our opponents?

The reason is clear and that is that in fact the property they defend is capitalist property, that is, property which allows some to live by the work of others and which therefore presupposes a class of dispossessed, propertyless people, obliged to sell their labour power to the property-owners for less than its value...

Will property [in the revolutionary period] have to be individual or collective? And will the collective holding the undivided goods be the local group, the functional group, the group based on political affinity, the family group — will it comprise all the inhabitants of a nation *en bloc* and eventually all humanity?

What forms will production and exchange assume? Will it be the triumph of *communism* (production in association with free consumption for all) or *collectivism* (production in common and the distribution of goods on the basis of the work done by each individual), or *individualism* (to each the individual ownership of the means of production and the enjoyment of the full product of his labour), or other composite forms that individual interest and social instinct, illuminated by experience, will suggest?

In the meantime . . . the need for not interrupting production, and the impossibility of suspending consumption of the necessities of life, will make it necessary to take decisions for the continuation of daily life at the same time as expropriation proceeds. One will have to do the best one can, and so long as one prevents the constitution and consolidation of new privilege, there will be time to find the best solutions.

#### Working Class Movements

Since economic slavery is the product of political servitude, to eliminate one it is necessary to eliminate the other, even if Marx said otherwise.

Why does the peasant bring the corn to the boss?

Because the gendarme is there to oblige him to do so.

Thus, Trade Unionism cannot be an end in itself, since the struggle must also be waged at a political level to distinguish the role of the State.

We prefer intelligent workers, even if they are our opponents, to anarchists who are such only in order to follow us like sheep. We want freedom for everybody; we want the masses to make the revolution for the masses.

The person who thinks with his own brain is to be preferred to the one who blindly approves everything. For this reason, as anarchists, we support the USI because this organisation does develop the consciences of the masses. Better an error consciously committed and in good faith, than a good action performed in a servile manner.

Now, if there are a limited number of people who through long tenure of office are considered trade union leaders; if there are permanent secretaries and official organisers, it will be they who will automatically find themselves charged with organising the revolution, and they will tend to consider as intruders and irresponsible elements, those who want to take independent action, and will want to impose their will, even with the best of intentions — even by the use of force.

And then the 'syndicalist regime' would soon become the same lie, the same tyranny which the so-called 'dictatorship of the proletariat' has become.

General strikes of protest no longer upset anybody; neither those who take part nor those against whom

they are directed. If only the police had the intelligence to avoid being provocative, they would pass off as any public holiday.

One must seek something else. We put forward an idea; the take-over of factories. For the first attempt probably only a few will take part and the effect will be slight; but the method certainly has a future, because it corresponds to the ultimate ends of the workers' movement and constitutes an exercise preparing one for the ultimate general act of expropriation.

#### Anarchism, Socialism and Communism

When F Engels, perhaps to counter anarchist criticisms, said that once classes disappear the State as such has no *raison d'être* and transforms itself from a government over men into an administration of things, he was merely playing with words. Whoever has power over things has power over men; whoever governs production also governs the producers; who determines consumption is master over the consumer.

This is the question; either things are administered on the basis of free agreement among the interested parties, and this is anarchy; or they are administered according to laws made by administrators and this is government, it is the State, and inevitably it turns out to be tyrannical.

It is not a question of the good intentions or the good will of this or that man, but the inevitability of the situation, and of the tendencies which man generally develops in given circumstances.

#### Political Co-existence

We can have relations of co-operation with non-anarchist parties so long as we share a need to fight a common enemy and are unable to destroy him unaided; but as soon as a party takes power and becomes the government, the only relations we can have with it are those between enemies.

Of course it is within our interest that so long as government exists it should be as unoppressive as possible, the less it is a government the better.

But freedom, even a relative freedom, is not won by helping government but by making it feel the danger of squeezing the people too far.

I say that in order to abolish the 'gendarme' and all the harmful institutions we must know what to put in their place, not in a more or less distant future but immediately, the very day we start demolishing. One only destroys, effectively and permanently, that which one replaces by something else; and to put off to a later date the solution of problems which present themselves with the urgency of necessity, would be to give time to the institutions one is intending to abolish to recover from the shock and reassert themselves, perhaps under other names, but certainly with the same structure.

Our solutions may be accepted by a sufficiently large section of the population and we shall have achieved anarchy, or taken a step towards anarchy; or they may not be understood or accepted and then our efforts will serve as propaganda and place before the public at large the programme for a not distant future. But in any case we must have our solutions: provisional, subject to correction and revision in the light of experience, but we must have our solutions if we do not wish to submit passively to those of others, and limit ourselves to the unprofitable role of useless and impotent grumblers.

Errico Malatesta

## GAY LAW

On April 10, customs officials raided 'Gays the Word', London's lesbian and gay community bookshop, and 'detained' all of its imported stock. This raid was widely regarded as an attack on the fundamental right of lesbians and gay men to choose what they read. It is seen in the context of a wide-ranging escalation of discriminatory action.

There have been customs raids on other bookshops, for example Lavender Menace in Edinburgh. There is continuing harassment of individuals. A Queen's Counsel was recently quoted as advising members of the public, gay or straight, on the basis of his experience at the bar, never to enter a West End public convenience except in the direst emergency. The prevailing attitude in the present government towards the rights of gay and

lesbian people may be judged by a little publicised letter sent this year by David Waddington, a Minister of State at the Home Office, to one of his constituents. He wrote that it would be 'crankish' to think it 'wrong to discriminate against people on grounds of homosexuality.'

Since the initial raid on 'Gays the Word' a formal notice of seizure by Customs has been issued against 22 of the bookshop's titles. Although some of the other books initially 'detained' have now been returned, Customs are still holding onto the shop's records and some personal possessions of the directors. On top of this about £9,000 worth of books ordered earlier from the United States are being refused customs clearance and detained at the ports.

The charge against these books is that they are 'indecent'. This term more or less covers any material which the average person in the street would find disagreeable or in

poor taste. The implications of this are devastating - virtually every book 'Gays the Word' stocks could be considered 'indecent'. (As could, for that matter, the interests of FREEDOM or 121 or whoever.)

When the case comes to court, 'Gays the Word' faces a tough battle. It will have to prove to three lay magistrates that the books are not indecent without any consideration of the books' context or significance. 'Gays the Word' faces fines and legal costs approaching £10,000! On top of this, the directors face personal criminal charges and costs of over double this amount.

The latest news is that the customs have returned about one third of the detained stock. They have confirmed that new seizure notices will be issued.

'Gays the Word' are at 66 Marchmont Street, London WC1 (tel 01-278 7654).

Defend Gays the Word Campaign: 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1.

## LEGAL BRIEFS

*The gathering of the 'In Briefs' produces a small crop of stories concerned with the regulation of society, what might be called 'law and order'. It might be said that these are just the sorts of things that we expect, this is the way that States operate and that it is a waste of time, little more than liberal reformism, to monitor them. However, it does seem useful to give them a specialised slot of their own.*

The long running story these days is the progress of the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill. This is the official response to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure which reported in 1981. It made

various recommendations about tightening of procedures. These were to be offset, in a civil libertarian sense, by various safeguards. The proposed legislation generally happily accepts the recommendations but seems to overlook the safeguards.

This month's aspect concerns the admission of evidence in court. The general assumption was that judges had some discretion to exclude evidence obtained by the police by 'dubious' means. This direction was virtually abolished in 1979, when the House of Lords ruled that it applied only in a narrow range of cases where the value of the evidence was greatly outweighed by its prejudicial effect. In other words, in most cases, if the evidence is useful, it doesn't matter where and how it is come by.

The proposed Bill originally left things like this. However, at the last

minute the government, via Lord Hailsham, put down an amendment which would allow some discretion, but only with respect to evidence obtained from the accused and only in extreme cases. This amendment was upstaged by another, via Lord Scarman, which widens the power to exclude evidence. This was passed and is seen as a great embarrassment to the government, which must spend time over the summer attempting to avoid the implications. Before Lord Scarman's reputation as a champion of the people is too much enhanced, it should be noted that his amendment still allows this evidence to be used, as long as the prosecution can show that it was obtained lawfully, if unfairly, that the 'impropriety' was 'trivial' or, that it is required in the 'fair administration of the criminal law'. In other words, that it is useful.

## SIN and the CNT

I'm glad you published the letter from two members of DAM (our national and international secretaries) about the CNT congress of unification, perhaps you would be interested in these comments.

It's a shame they see fit to ignore my statements, given that they are based on first hand experience and that I used to take the same view as they before I looked into things more deeply instead of taking everything the CNT-AIT says as gospel. I would like to respond to their main points, though there is more detail in the second issue of *Sinews*, which contains a report from someone who was at the congress as well as a summary of the CNT-AIT statement they sent you.

They start their letter by trying to dismiss as nationalists the CNT which will result from this unification. (They intend to call themselves just 'The CNT', but I'll refer to them as the CNT-U to avoid confusion). This gives a very misleading impression which I assume is due to misunderstanding rather than intentional.

The CNT-PPCC is indeed a Catalan nationalist group, but as they only have about 50 members they are hardly representative of the CNT-U. They then mention the CCT-CNT, which is the Catalan section of the CNT-V, or 'Renovados'. (Do they presume your readers already know this?) As it happens, the CNT-V has different sections for each region in Spain (eg, CGT-CNT in Galicia) which are federated to

form the national body. Personally, I would have thought this is how an anarchists union should be structured — it's very similar to the DAM's present use of regional conferences.

The next main criticism is that the CNT-V talks to the government. Surely there's nothing wrong with that in itself, as one of the aims of a trade union is to negotiate with those in power, preferably from a position of strength, backed up by direct action where necessary and possible etc. The important question is what gets said. If they have evidence to suggest collaboration (which is not the same as recognising your limitations and bending a bit for tactical reasons) it would be a lot more useful to send you that than these vague allegations. It's worth noting here that the CNT-V has always rejected the various 'social contracts' which have been signed by the reformist trade unions since Franco's death.

Their attitude to the CNT-AIT seems to be that it can do no wrong, whereas I am happy to receive *reasoned* criticism of the CNT-V etc — there was even some in my last letter to you.

One example of their naive attitude in this respect is that they try and tell us that the state is paying for the congress and luxury meals just because the CNT-AIT is saying so. Surely a bit of investigative journalism is called for here?

As for the CNT-U being protected by the police, the details of what happened paint a different picture. Basically the cops were called in by management when members of the CNT-AIT got into the building and smashed a window etc. Thus they almost managed to get the congress cancelled, but the CNT-U organised its own security squads and it was able to continue, despite violent attacks on people entering and

leaving, who responded in like manner.

As regards Jose Bondia's wrangles with the AIT, he (not surprisingly) tells it differently. I think it's worth bearing in mind that he was the third national secretary of the CNT-AIT in a row to be dismissed and covered in slander. Is it really plausible that he, like so many of yesterdays 'respected militants' in CNT-AIT, has become a traitor and government agent since the formation of the CNT-O?

A central question here is whether the decisions taken at the CNT-AIT's sixth congress in '83 and which were largely responsible for the formation of CNT-O, were taken properly. At present I am still waiting for a written statement from someone who was there and believes they were not.

There's plenty of room for analysis and criticism of the various groups making up the CNT-U and they are (hopefully) intending to do some themselves between now and the congress arranged for January '85 which will officially launch the new organisation.

In this vein, I intend to carry on 'interfering' in the situation in Spain, especially if the alternative is a conception of anarchism which has got more to do with the theory of papal infallibility than intelligent debate, coupled with a sling-enough-mud type attitude to anyone who steps out of line.

Mick Larkin  
PS *Sinews* no 2 is available for 40p in stamps or cheque/PO made payable to S/I/N/ from the Spanish Information Network, 49a South Terrace, Esh Winning, County Durham, DH7 9PS.

*This collective favours the CNT-AIT. Would DAM make sure that they keep Freedom readers informed of their side of it.*

# REVIEWS

The Freedom Bookshop address is 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1. It is hidden away at the end of Angel Alley, which leads off the High Street down by the Kentucky Fried Chicken close to Aldgate East tube. The bookshop is open 10 till 6, Tuesday to Saturday, and for those who are unable to visit there's a mail order service. Add 10% for postage (minimum 20p), but orders of over £10 are post free.

*The Experience of the Factory Committees in the Russian Revolution* Council Communist Pamphlet no 2, 28pp, 50p.

*Hungarian Workers Revolution* Kulak Press, 18pp, 45p.

These two short pamphlets have related themes, the experience of self-management and its suppression by Bolshevism. The first is a straightforward historical account from the February Revolution in 1917 until the early 1920s with the Bolsheviks in complete control. It emphasises factory committees but there is also discussion of peasants, soldiers and sailors. The February Revolution was a grassroots affair which took professional revolutionaries by surprise. The workers, through their committees, continued to provide the fire. There's a famous quote by Lenin about how far to the left of the Bolsheviks they were. The pamphlet discusses how they had to contend with various organisations trying to establish control, the Constituent Assembly (various politicians), the Trades Unions (mainly Menshevik) and the Soviets (Bolshevik). The Bolsheviks consistently outmanoeuvred the others, appearing more radical. Lenin even wrote *State and Revolution* and got himself accused of anarchist tendencies. 'If October was 'easy', it was because all the work had been done beforehand'. Once in power, the Bolsheviks set about applying their theory. The pamphlet is clear, with plenty of quotations allowing self-damnation.

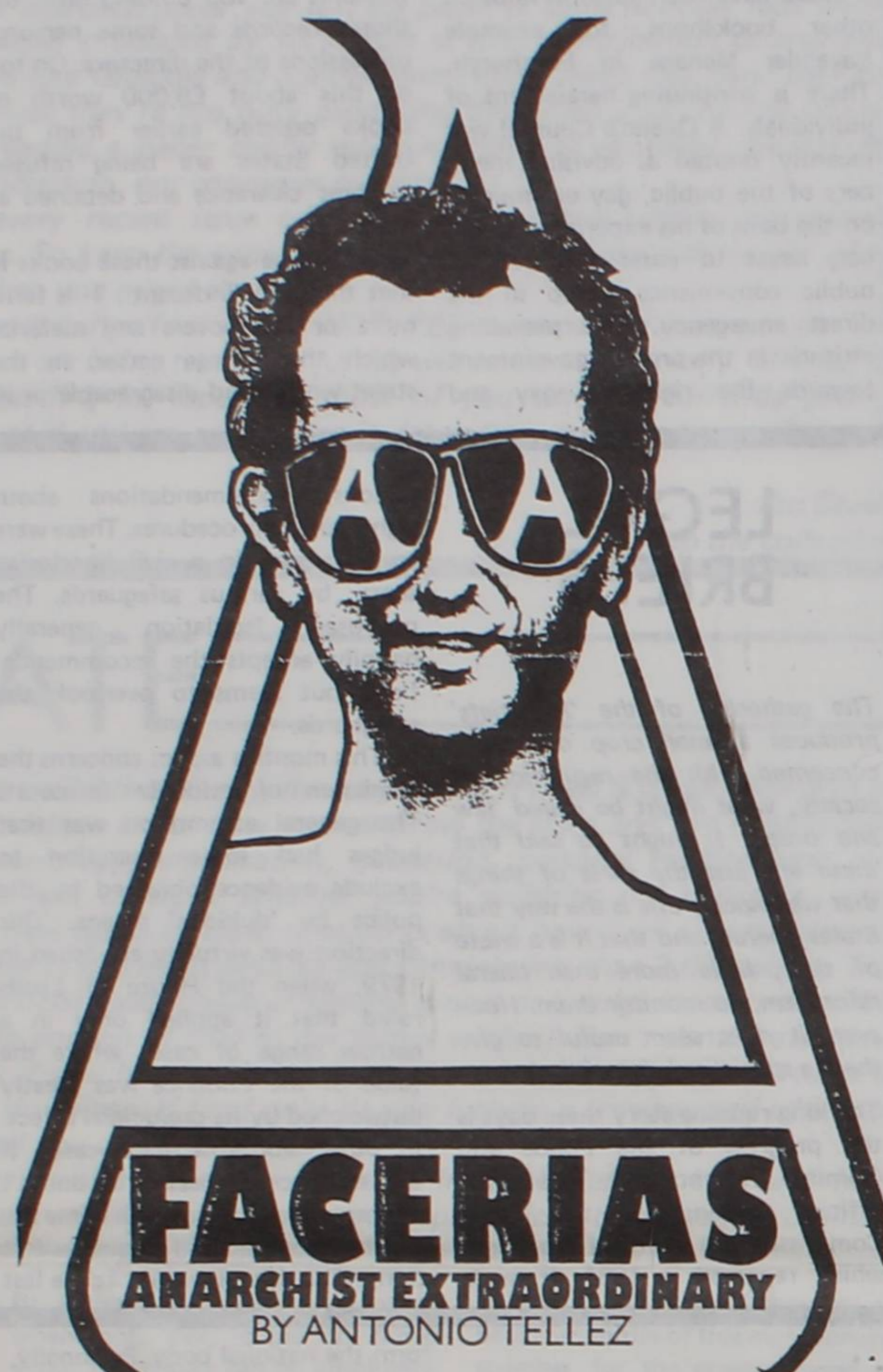
The *Hungarian Workers Revolution* is a reprint of a pamphlet first published in 1957 (by the Syndicalist Workers Federation). This gives it a feeling of topicality and passion. Again Workers Councils were developed only to be crushed by Bolshevism. It lacks the detail of *Factory Committees* but makes up for it with involvement. It provides a clear, straightforward account of the 1956 rising and its suppression. It also points to other hopeful cracks in the Soviet system, in several satellite states and in the USSR itself. Unfortunately we still have to wait for the fruition, there as well as here. Both of these pamphlets can be recommended. (Council Communist Pamphlet no 1 was also on Hungary).

DP

*The Iron Fist* by Martin Walker and Susan Miller, £2.

This is the second part of the authors' investigation into policing activities during the coal strike and covers the second six weeks. As before, the facts are good but not, in the last analysis, the understanding of the facts. Police illegality and brutality are documented, as is Spencerism in Nottingham and the activities of the radical right who have been pushing for the present conflict for a long time. But as before, the conservative government is solely blamed for industrial conflict. Is there never industrial conflict when there's a labour government? I must admit that labour governments don't rely so heavily on police when workers fight back. No labour government used troops. And talking of the labour party, is it really only five years since we were living in a socialist paradise? What happened to the land of milk and honey?

Brian Moseley



## FACERIAS ANARCHIST EXTRAORDINARY BY ANTONIO TELLEZ

FACERIAS - ANARCHIST  
EXTRAORDINARY  
Antonio Tellez, 400pp.

Their own battle against fascism lost, the exiled Spanish anarchists fought on virtually every front in the Second World War. They played a prominent role in the French resistance and fought with the British at Narvik in North Africa and even as guerilla units behind German lines in the Ukraine. After the fall of Mussolini and Hitler, many of the survivors returned to take up the struggle against Franco. This book is a small contribution to the anonymous men and women who maintained a rearguard action against the Franco regime until the

shattered working class movements were able to reform in the late fifties. The story of Facerias demonstrates that 'the individual is never helpless, the possibility of rebelling and defending an idea which one considers to be just is always present, even in the most unfavourable and adverse conditions - which were those he found and those in which he fought.'

Refract Publications will need substantial assistance to help cover the printing and binding costs of this fascinating book. Those who wish to help get this title into print should make donations payable to Refract Publications, c/o Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir St., Cambridge.

*No Statist Solution - anarchism and 'the troubles' in Northern Ireland* by Michael Ziesing.

The title suggests a ponderous political essay, but this pamphlet is a lively diary of personal impressions, by an American anarchist on a short visit to Northern Ireland. Like a bright child writing up the school trip, he mentions whatever seems interesting, whether directly connected with anarchism or 'the troubles', or not.

'We weren't sure that the building was the prison until later because about five miles out of town there's another place that looks like a prison. Turns out it's a factory'. 'Why hell, the Protestant-controlled government in Northern Ireland has actually insisted that swings in playgrounds be hung up on Sundays...

So I guess Catholics don't have a monopoly on ridiculous laws'.

Michael and his friend Doug drank in pubs in both the Catholic and Protestant enclaves of Belfast and Derry, watched British soldiers on patrol in Armagh, took coffee in the waiting room of the Maze prison, went over the border for a day in Donegal. The simple record of their observations says a great deal about the country, and will no doubt be useful to future social historians. There are some interesting photographs of official notices and elaborate political graffiti.

Of course they visited the anarchists. As a prologue and an appendix the pamphlet includes a recorded interview with P Checkoff of the anarchist band Hit Parade (who complains that FREEDOM

neglects Northern Ireland), and extracts from the anarchist periodical *Outta Control*.

Checkoff and *Outta Control* are given to careful anarchist analysis, but when Ziesing himself turns from description to comment, he turns remarkably sloppy. *Outta Control* supports a campaign for the release of one Nicky Kelly, imprisoned in the Republic, on the grounds that the evidence of his complicity in a robbery is very doubtful; Ziesing comments that Kelly's incarceration 'points to a simple fact: Northern Ireland will remain a third world country until they get help from their neighbours in the Republic'. (*sic, sic and sic*). And the Maze hunger strikers, he informs us, were 'slowly murdered by Margaret Thatcher and her cronies' (presumably during the dirty protest, it was Margaret Thatcher who smeared shit on the walls).

This pamphlet is not available from Freedom Press. Instead send \$3 to either:-

Lysander Spooner Society, PO Box 806, Willimantic, CT 06226, USA, or Michael Coughlin, 1985 Selby Avenue, St Paul, MN 55104, USA.

*Housing is Theft Housing is Freedom* by Colin Ward, £1.

This pamphlet is a talk given by Colin Ward to Nottingham Anarchists last year, and some of it has appeared in *Housing: an anarchist approach* (Freedom Press).

Ward sees anarchism as a self-organised society, a network of 'autonomous free associations'. Housing is obviously of primary importance here. It's a basic freedom to have the means of control over where you live, and practically all other activity stems from a secure housing base; there's not much scope for taking control of your life if your housing is not in your own hands.

So what's wrong with owning your own home, then? In Britain in 1918, 90% of houses were rented from private landlords, but now this is down to around 10%, with over 60% of houses in owner occupation (a built in Tory majority?). Private landlords have diminished, but the growth of Local Authority owned houses has largely been the growth of a less flexible system of control, getting away with policies and bureaucratic obstruction that the old landlords could only dream about.

The pamphlet's title comes from Proudhon, who not only said 'Property is theft', but also that 'property is freedom'. Ward's work on housing helps to show the truth in this: So many of the present problems of our state-administered 'services' can be traced back to well-meaning middle class liberals of the left and right failing to understand the lives and desires of people not like them.

Successive governments have been terrified of allowing people to have any say at all in the most basic aspects of their lives, and this attitude goes right through the party political spectrum and even into the trade union movement.

Ward is interested in self-organised alternatives to this, in particular the recent rapid growth of housing co-operatives, an example of people getting together to organise their housing according to what they (not the local council) want. As he says, this is an extremely important departure from bureaucrat controlled policy, and so an important area for anarchists to start building those self-organised networks. Co-ops, after all, really grew from the squatting movements of the '60s and '70s. If the need for peoples' control of housing needs to be underlined, Colin Ward cites the

example of Liverpool's 'militant council', who dismissed housing co-ops as a middle class phenomenon and proceeded to take away their funding. As Ward makes clear, their desperate attempts to impose their own criteria on to tenants whether they liked it or not reveals their paternalistic attitude to the working class they claim to fight for. It shows they've learned nothing from the disasters of 20th century housing policy.

Geoff Ingarfield

*Anarchy* by Malatesta, 75p

It was a pleasure to once more read Malatesta's *Anarchy* in Vernon Richard's uncompromising translation.

The flow of conviction remains as rich and direct as ever, even if the style - more akin structurally to spoken than written words - is at times a little circumnutory.

In 43 pages Malatesta manages to cover, quite brilliantly, the foundations of the anarchist argument against the concept of government. Written in the very different world of 1891, when the printing press was the means of mass communication, one would expect to find some faults. In my opinion these are few; a tendency to over-reach in relying on 'the nature of government' (as opposed to its effects) and 'the natural law of human solidarity' as established and defined facts. There are also in his arguments echoes that robust Victorian belief in the power and purity of science as a harbinger of transcending reason in human affairs. Today this seems a trifle naive and certainly unecological.

The enduring strength of this publication is in two areas. First in its unshakeable emphasis on the basics in countering any argument for government; the establishment of elites, the use of property to stabilise oppression; the fallacy of freedom under democracy, as well as many peripheral issues such as 'jobs', where many comrades still step on to that sticky slope to pinko socialism. Second, and perhaps more important, is the correctness of his anticipation. Not only does *Anarchy* predict the going nowhere merry-go-round side tracking of the workers' party and government in combination with trades unions, but it contains many clues to the nature of the problem now confronting anarchists - and for that matter humanity at large.

Malatesta, I think, believed that anarchy, both as a way of thinking and living, immeasurably out-distanced the limitations of politics. He remains a valuable source of inspiration in the directions our thought must take if we are not to become eternally bogged down in moronic scenarios of 1930s class/party struggle, ultimately pertified and impotent while the system we oppose develops beyond our understanding.

In conjunction with quotations from Michael Bakunin, Malatesta indicates that he had some intuitive understanding of the correctness of humanity, of the morphology of our species. He also understood that it was at this level that we must develop our understanding if we are to effect positive change in ourselves and our society. The task still remains.

As you may guess, I would almost go as far as forcing people to read this publication. Instead I would recommend that you give a copy to everyone you know. I hope the setting of the publication will not irritate too many people, the use of 'man' and 'mankind', etc, for although the setting may be tarnished and showing its age, the gems within are as bright and vital as ever.

Colin Johnson

This is a Freedom Press title and is therefore available post free.

## Bradford Portsmouth Tyneside

Some months back a national federation of Anarchist Students was proposed by the Bradford group. We received an impressive amount of feedback from students in Polytechnics and Universities from all over England and Scotland. This summer vacation has meant, however, that plans for such a federation have come slightly unstuck. However, we know that the organisation we envisage is desperately needed and are calling for a conference to set such an anarchist student federation on a firm footing. This will take place towards the end of October. The news bulletin that the Bradford

group promised has not appeared — mainly because events and other commitments overtook the group. The issue of a student anarchist paper will be on the agenda in October. We would like to apologise to all the contacts who are no doubt wondering what has happened to us and the Federation. We still have the contact address of these comrades and will use these and the anarchist press to advertise the conference in due course. The venue will probably be Bradford University.

Keith Campbell  
for Bradford Libertarian Students

### The Portsmouth Anarchist Group

We held our first public meeting on July 11th with fifteen people attending. Keith Campbell, who grew up in Northern Ireland, spoke on 'Everyday life in occupied Northern Ireland'. The Group is planning another public meeting in August, and will be discussing among itself putting out a news sheet that will include discussion of local Portsmouth issues from an anarchist point of view.

### Tyneside Libertarian Group

I would be grateful if you could include our new group's address in your contact list. We are made up of ex-members of NAG, who, due to personality clashes, felt it better to start a new group. NAG, as you know, still exists, and we shall, of course, still be working with them.

Contacts, views, etc would be appreciated.

## Nuneaton

The Nuneaton Anarchist Tendency (NAT), known affectionately by its supporters as the Lubianka Vanguard (LV), has no intention of formally organising itself into a group congress or federation. There are about half a dozen of us and we take our name from the Russian Prison Lubianka where anarchists were kept as a result of the Bolshevik revolution. We are anarcho syndicalist, anarcho pacifist and anarcho christian in outlook. We are opposed to the state and all it stands for. We recognise capitalism and iron curtain socialism as different sides of the same state machinery.

We are surrounded in Nuneaton by Stalinist hacks and trendy leftists who believe that SS 20 missiles are a deterrent to imperialism, consequently in Nuneaton the

letters CND are synonymous with the Great CPGB (Communist Party of Great Britain).

In opposition to the phoney left, the Nuneaton Anarchist Tendency set up the Nuneaton Peace Action Group. In addition to party political neutrality this group was formed to oppose all nuclear weapons, not just the NATO ones. In the run up to the local elections, NPA began a recruitment drive with 20,000 leaflet campaign. The leaflet in the best anarchist tradition designed to bring it home to people that we cannot vote nuclear bombs away by putting our trust in political parties. Neither before, during or after the general election last June did we ask candidates their opinions on nuclear weapons or give the people of Nuneaton advice on how

to vote. The Peace Action Group has organised vigils, film shows, exhibitions, parade, stalls at many festivals, visits from American peace campaigners, support for peace camps demonstrations, non violent direct action and even public meetings and conferences where appropriate.

The NAT were also responsible for setting up the Nuneaton Collective of All Faiths against racism and fascism. This has proved to be a very important alternative to the various trotskyite committees of middle class white liberals deciding what is best for black people. In the All Faiths group we publicly exposed the Trade Council for refusing to put on coaches to take people to the London demos in support of NALGO member

Muhammad Idrish who faced deportation. We distributed about 18,000 leaflets on the issue. We also opposed efforts of local tradesmen who objected to the building of a Hindu Temple. We held a vigil for peace and racial harmony at the parish church. We accepted an invitation to the Mayors Parlour and we asked embarrassing questions about how many black people are employed by the local authority. We have consistently used the local media to raise important issues of freedom. Yoga was banned by one clergyman in the town in his church hall. We capitalised on this in the local press and now we run Yoga classes in a neighbouring Church Hall.

Nuneaton Anarchist Tendency

## Sweden

On July 15 I arrived at Dover, on my way to London. As all non-EEC foreigners I was asked for my reason for visiting Britain. I answered this question honestly, although I knew there might be trouble. But I wanted to test the limits. I was to attend the council meeting of the War Resisters International on behalf of the Swedish pacifist organisation SPAAS. After having been asked all types of questions, eg the reasons for my wearing a black and red star, I was told to wait until everyone else had left the boat, which took about half an hour.

The same official then started questioning me again, about the meeting I was going to, about SPAAS' policy etc etc. After this second interrogation he told me

to read the instructions for the customs thoroughly, to choose right between the red and the green ways. It was obvious I was going to be searched, but I was completely 'innocent' I chose the green way. The official told one of the customers [sic] to search me, which was done very thoroughly. Surprisingly enough I was not strip-searched. During this time the officer and some other persons (who obviously were either police or belonging to the special branches) checked every single page of all the written material I had: WRI publications, a book, my diary etc.

I was then, allowed to pack all my stuff *except* the written material. Two officials took me to another room and interrogated me a third

time. This time about my personal background (which is partly East European), about the exclusively East European stamps in my passport and the Swedish Syndicalist trade union I belong to: which Marxist tradition we follow and in what way we want to overthrow the state.

I tried to mix facts with as much propaganda as possible. At the very end of this tiring procedure the written stuff was taken away for about 20 minutes, most probably for photocopying. I was given a visa for one month, containing a handwritten code, the meaning of which probably is to make sure that I'll be interrogated again the next time I get to the British border. (The usual time limit for visas issued

to West Europeans is six months, without handwritten letters and figures.)

I did *not* believe that Britain is a democracy before I went through this utterly ridiculous control of my passport and opinions, but I did believe that East European border officials outclassed their Western colleagues in their capacity for fear — which turned out to be an illusion. The only difference is probably the more advanced computer equipment at West European borders.

Katrin Elborgh  
Goteborg  
Sweden

## Spooner, USA

This coming Sept 8 the anarchists of the Spooner collective here in Willimantic are sponsoring what we're calling an Anarchist UNconvention. Thanks to a friend and comrade in W Willington CT we have a beautiful spot for a picnic, music festival and camp out. We'd especially like to emphasize the latter because we hope to get together with friends from far and

wide.

You will need to provide your own food, drink and tent and sleeping bag.

Also if you have anything that you would like to do in the way of entertainment or enlightenment, that'd be great too. We are especially looking for musicians/bands to perform.

Please get back to us if you want

more info, a map on how to get to the spot, whether you're coming, if you can provide something you think might be useful and/or fun.

We look forward to a gathering of anarchists of all stripes. Anti-authoritarians and anarchist sympathisers are also welcome.

The Rain date for the event is the next weekend — Sept 15. Please keep both dates open.

Send a self addressed stamped envelope for more info.

Spooner Collective  
P O Box 433  
Willimantic, CT  
06226

Phone the Bookshop (203) 423-5836 for info.

## In Brief

A teenager from South London has been fined £50 for contempt of court because he giggled in the public gallery when a police officer fell off his chair.

General Zia ul-Haq, president of Pakistan, has announced a new campaign to ensure that everybody says prayers five times a day. A 'nazim' or prayer warden will be appointed in each village. They will popularise praying by 'persuasion and suggestion'. Another aspect of the islamisation drive has been delayed. The first public flogging of a convicted adultress has been postponed because of 'excessive advance publicity'. Meanwhile, the first ever women's rights demonstration has been held in Islamabad to protest about a draft law on compensation for murder and other bodily crimes which gives women only half the rights of men. Women

are literally to be only half persons, it needs the evidence from two to equal that from one man.

One third of all fresh fruit and vegetables on sale in Britain is contaminated by chemical residues, according to a survey by the Association of Public Analysts. These include pesticides which are banned under a voluntary agreement. For example, DDT was found in 119 out of 132 samples of apples, mushrooms and lettuce on the same day. Meanwhile, French authorities have announced stricter controls on British mutton after tests found excessive insecticide levels in the fat.

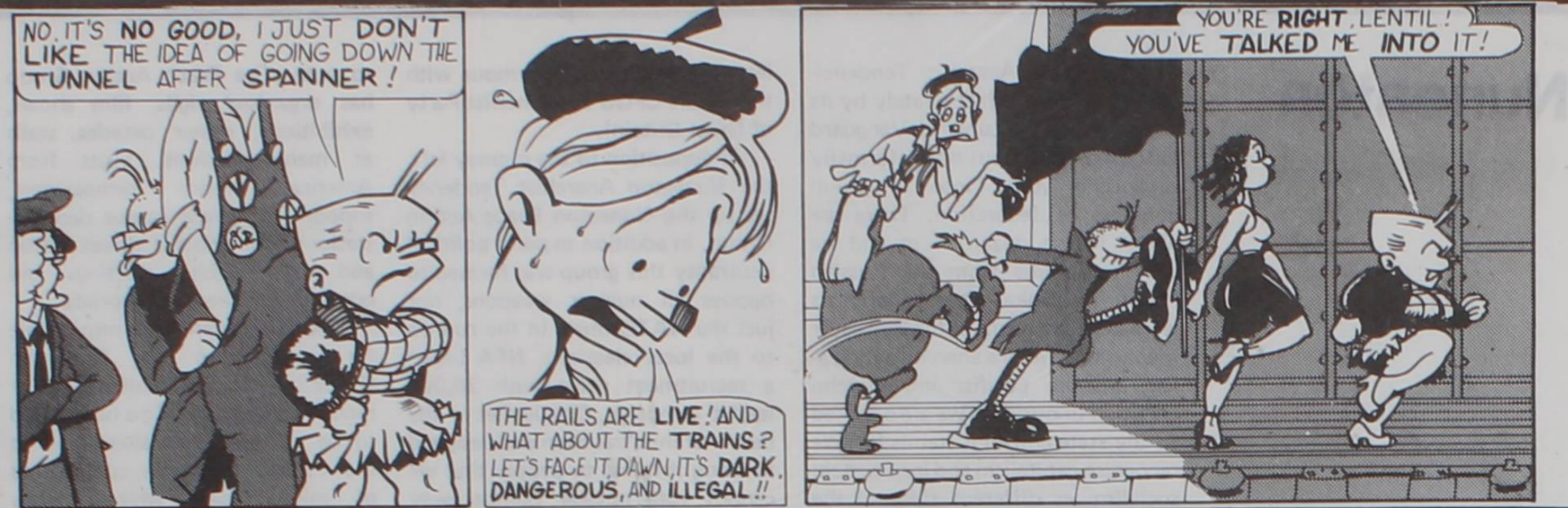
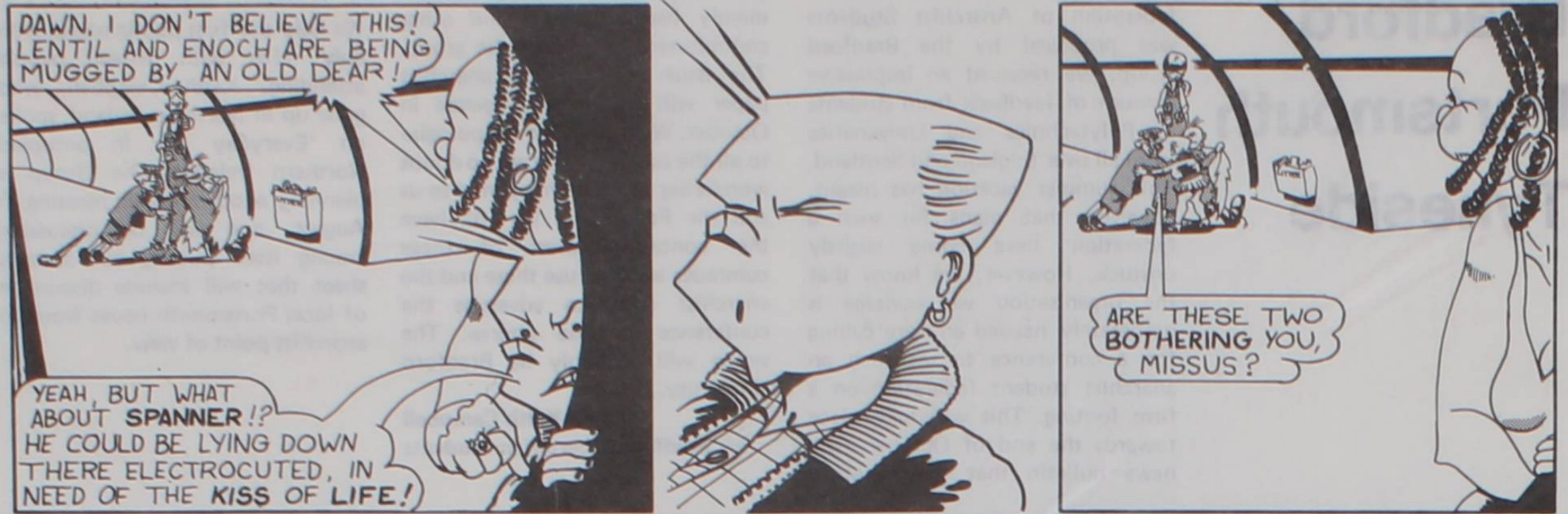
The US Army has admitted that it rushed into the purchase of 13.4 million new battledress uniforms, costing \$422 million. They were of a new, untested, type which was

supposed to reduce infra-red radiation, which is detected by many modern devices. Unfortunately, responses from the field, last years invasion of Grenada, were 'universally unfavourable'. The uniforms do not breathe and they retain heat. It will cost another \$248 million to produce a warm weather version and to make alterations to the originals. Where is the money to come from? The beneficiaries, of course. Troops will have to pay \$74 each.

The Church of Scientology is consulting its US headquarters and planning legal action to counteract two recent attacks by judges. Mr Justice Lately, in a custody suit, called Scientology 'corrupt, immoral, sinister and dangerous', and its founder, L Ron Hubbard, 'obnoxious, a charlatan, like Hitler'.

Lord Denning is again calling for every religious organisation, including established churches, to have a licence. 'Bogus' religions (we make no comment) could then be refused and outlawed. Scientology is high on his list. Meanwhile in the USA, another judge has described Hubbard as 'pathological liar', and the cult as 'pathetic and outrageous, schizophrenic and paranoid'.

Chinese art schools are to start using nude models despite moralist outcries. An instructor points out the 'pure and beautiful' aspects and commends it as a profession, 'Do not look on such work with contempt. Those comrades who can work as models are artists. It is not something that everyone is able to do well'.



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Notices

Activist, a magazine of reports and news of direct action is available from Box A, 82 Lark Lane, Liverpool 17. Send SAE + 15p.

History Workshop 18 will be held in Leicester on 16 - 18 November. Anyone interested in contributing to the 'Anarchism in British Labour History' should contact HW18 Collective, Co-operative College, Stanford Hall, Stanford, Loughborough.

Ripple Press, please contact Mark Earnshaw (and this time give him your address).

Russian governess gives lessons in socialism. Very strict. Ask for Miss Lenin.

Transport wanted for Venice Gathering by Bill Sinclair, 35 South Road, Lancaster. Phone (weekdays only, 0930-1630) 0524-32467.

Got any good ideas for getting to Venice? Phone 01-806-1630 after September 16 and ask for Wolfgang.

Anarchist male seeks accomodation and work. Contact J P Simcock, 1 Albany Road, Bedford.

