

## GIBRALTAR: OPEN SEASON

ON SUNDAY 6 March the neighbourhood of flats on Laguna Estate, which borders on Winston Churchill Avenue in Gibraltar, had a ringside seat at a curious spectacle: what has since been described as the public execution, without trial, of three IRA members.

Eye witness accounts suggest that no warnings were given before the security personnel began shooting, using low velocity bullets to reduce the risk of ricocheting. Two of the IRA gang fell near the Jubilee Adventure Playground, and the other was shot as he turned back to make for Landport Tunnel. It has been claimed that the gunmen, believed to be SAS members, went to finish off their targets when they were on the ground.

No details have yet been released about the precise position of the wounds on the bodies, but people close by say two of them had their faces disfigured by the shots, which were fired at close range. On Gibraltar TV, an ambulanceman attending to the bodies was heard to remark in Spanish: 'Look what they have done to them!'

Up to 12 members of the SAS are believed to have taken part in the exercise. These wore civilian clothes, carried their weapons in sports bags, and were rapidly removed from the scene after the action in police cars.

Early reports that there had been a car bomb parked near Inces Hall, and that the dead people were armed, proved false. It was also suggested that, when challenged, the IRA members 'made movements which led the security personnel to believe that their lives were in danger.' This clearly conflicts with the eye witness accounts. A more recent official refinement to justify the killings has been to say the terrorists may have tried to detonate the suspected 'car bomb' while they were looking down the barrels of the SAS guns.

Both the international and local press have criticised the way in which the information about the killings was released. Public feeling in Gibraltar is mixed, but there is some concern about the methods used, and the local bar is reportedly pressing for a full enquiry.

### Fantasy and Fascination

Around the Bay of Gibraltar, on the night of the killings, Spanish viewers abandoned their usual prejudices and switched to Gib. TV with all the enthusiasm ordinary people have for the extraordinary.

Both the hunter and the hunted actively encourage this.

The IRA, because international publicity of this kind keeps the funds

coming in (especially from the USA) and help s to support their claim to be at war with the British Government.

As for the SAS, one suspects they experience all the urges of the huntsman, but whereas one shoots only grouse the other is there to protect the state. Mary Holland et al, commenting on the Gibraltar episode for *The Observer* wrote; 'Neither chances nor prisoners were taken. The action was over in seconds. Accounts of witnesses, several of whom did not believe their eyes, are confused . . . The SAS, which thrives on its aura of mystique and myth, will try to keep it that way.'

This is the air of melodrama which spectators and participants promote, and which few can resist.

In my own minor excursion into conspiratorial activity in Franco's Spain in the 1960s, I was aware of this need to keep the tension up. If only to relieve the boredom which accompanies this work. All manner of devious ploys were used to cover up for activities, yet hilarious risks were taken - I, for example, received a briefing from the FIJL representatives (Spanish Libertarian Youth Federation) in the bar at Freedom's Anarchist Ball in 1963. The comical quality of our escapades reached a crazy climax when a young Scot was dispatched for Spain, via Paris, wearing full Scottish regalia, and a war resisters' badge. I know this because I occupied the same 'safe house' in Republique (a district of Paris).

Yet even now the dramatic pretence must be kept up, for years later he was to write in his book *The Christie File* that in Paris, we went in fear of being identified by the Spanish authorities, and consequently only ventured out under cover of darkness. Poor Mr Christie must have forgotten it was he who used to run out for the croissants for breakfast and never missed a chance to parade around the Left Bank in his kilt, as if he was wearing the latest Parisian fashion.

Despite their claims to professionalism, I imagine the weird world of the SAS and the IRA has its fair share of Walter Mitty s as well.

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See 'Cultural Identity', page 6.



# FREEDOM

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## SOLIDARITY READERS' MEETING

*Solidarity* has announced a readers' meeting on Sunday 1 May at 2.30 pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1.

## OBITUARY

### JAMES MATTHEWS

WE ARE sad to report the death of James Matthews on March 1st. James was aged 30 and died of natural causes. He was a founder member and mainstay of the editorial collective of the Reading radical paper *Red Rag*. James also had his own successful and respected publishing projects and shortly before his death he had been working on a new publishing venture.

He will be sadly missed by his family and his many friends and comrades in Reading and beyond.

There will be a memorial event in Reading on April 9th - details from 0734-584425.

RA

## CORRECTIONS

### Apologies for this month's errors

Problems with the typesetting machine have prevented us from correcting the typesetting errors. Sorry.

The computer journal from which we lifter 'Nearly two nasty accidents' in our March issue is not *Database* but *Datalink*.

An unfortunate error in proof reading occurred in one of our 'In Brief' pieces in the December 1987 issue, and we did not even notice it until it was pointed out by an eagle-eyed reader in March. The mention of 'CIA-AIT' on page 9 is of course, well obviously, a misprint for 'CNT-AIT'.

## 1968-1988

THIS year marks the 20th anniversary of the May events in France in 1968. To commemorate this event the Anarchist-Communist Federation are holding a public meeting with a guest speaker from France. This French militant, a member of the Union des Travailleurs Communistes Libertaires, was active in the May events, and is still active as a libertarian militant, participating in the recent railway workers strike.

The ACF is calling this meeting, not out of nostalgia, but to confirm that, despite the turn of the right of many of the '68 generation, there remain many still committed to revolutionary politics. May 1968 came unexpectedly, staggering the right-wing regime of De Gaulle, enthusing young people throughout the world and refreshing the determination of those who were already confirmed revolutionaries. May 1968 put direct action and self-management on the political agenda, and showed that despite the glib pronouncements of the pundits, revolutionary struggle was still possible in Western Europe. In this bleak time of Thatcherism, when the Labour Party and the TUC have shown their toothlessness, their willingness to perform acrobatic feats of obeisance to the 'market', May 1968 shows that spring can still come after winter.

Anarchist-Communist Federation  
London

(Public meeting, 7.30pm 11 May, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.)

## DONATIONS

### FEBRUARY/MARCH 1988

#### Freedom Magazine Fund

Nottingham AH £3; W'hampton JL £3; Wrexham SR £1; Bishopstoke CB £3; Deeside JN £9; Glasgow IMM £1.05; Pinner LOM £3; Tewksbury KL £1.50; W'hampton JL £6; London SW15 JM £1; Clwys JK £2.50; London NW8 DS £3; Londonderry KA £1.50; London EE £1; Cambridge JS £4; Thames Ditton SP £25; Whitby RN £1; Wokingham P £3; W'hampton JL £6; Coventry AG £3; Augsburg BG £3.50; Poole PH £3; London SE7 MP £1; London SW7 DLL £4; Huddersfield KT £1; Stockport DW £3; Cardiff GP £3; Bangor JR £1; Stockton FM £3; London E5 NPW £3; Los Gatos Ca A & MS £110; Tunbridge Wells BL £2; Milton Keynes DV £3; W'hampton JL £4; Bromborough TH £3; Edinburgh AG £1; Walton on Thames DP £3; Sir Tretaldwyn JLC £2; Taplow EC £1.50.

February/March Total = £238.55  
1988 TOTAL TO DATE = £376.05

## Ethiopia exports meat

THE starving millions of people has definite international liabilities. Behind every famine there are always speculators.

Arch-famous Italian multinational, the Star, cares for the exportation of canned meat from starving Ethiopia to our over-fed Europe.

Incredible isn't it? Well, it isn't. Experts in Solidarity led by pop star Bob Geldof, assure that this operation is in fact highly humanitarian and that it brings precious currency into Ethiopia, which is essential, so they say, for the purchase of wheat. They're telling us it is silly to think that the exported meat is taken away from the starving ones, and that we should buy it without delay.

We wonder whether these little shits have even the smallest idea of how harmful can be a system which imposes, with its laws of marketing, such a situation.

Italian film director Marco Ferreri, in a recent film, proposes a big banquet wherein the plates of the starving blacks is served the meat from the best whites. Could this be the solution to the Ethiopian crisis?

Translated from  
Pro Vocazione  
Italian Anarchist monthly

#### Freedom Press Premises Fund

Glasgow WT £1; W'hampton JL £4; Bishopstoke CB £3; Deeside JNR £9; Aylesbury PRA £2.05; Pinner LOM £3; Tewksbury KL 65p; London E1 AG £3.50; Kamakura TS £2; W'hampton JL £9; Saffron Walden ME £1; London N1 GW £1.50; Clwyd JK £2.50; St Cloud MGA £26; Vancouver JD £1.15; W'hampton JL £9; Ontario RS £2.50; Thames Ditton SP £25; Oxford BEH £10; Wokingham P £3; Coventry AG £30; Hamburg PB £3.50; London SW7 DLL £4; Stockport DW £3; Jersey JG £4.35; Stockton FM £3; London E5 NPW £3; Los Gatos Ca A & MS £110; Milton Keynes DB £3; W'hampton JL £6; Bromborough TH £3; Gwyned HD £1; Walton on Thames DP £3; Powys JLC £2.

February/March Total = £275.20  
1988 TOTAL TO DATE = £410.70

#### The Raven Fund

Los Gatos Ca A & MS £110



## GIBRALTAR: OPEN SEASON

continued from front page

### Shoot to Kill

After the killings in Gibraltar the IRA issued a statement accusing the British Government of hypocrisy in claiming that its forces were 'acting within the civil law'.

By now, I should have thought the IRA had sacrificed any claim to the moral argument. Yet terrorists of all shapes and sizes continually trot out the standard justification that the Government (all governments) behave at least as badly as

they do. That may well be, but the argument is flawed; surely any decent alternative ought to set out to be better than the existing status quo.

Do not the IRA always shoot to kill? Hypocrisy is a characteristic of political life.

In 1846, Balzac wrote: 'Rulers must never be hedged round by the principles governing private morality.' And yet, when they are weak or have suffered a defeat, both governments and terrorists make appeals to morality.

Still there are grounds for public anxiety about the three deaths on Winston Churchill Avenue. We need to know if

the spirit of the grouse-moor is going to be allowed to prevail so far as 'suspected terrorists' are concerned in Gibraltar? If so, is Gibraltar a special case, given that the policy of 'shoot to kill', which was in operation in Ulster in the early 1980s, has now been apparently repudiated by the British Government?

It seems we are in the realm of a repugnant relativism, in which the state may do things in the British colony of Gibraltar which would not be quite cricket if carried out in London or Manchester or Belfast.

Brian Bamford  
Gibraltar

### We may question his views but not his sincerity

HOW MANY times have we heard this sentiment trotted out in press articles and 'profiles' about the views and statements of men who have manoeuvred themselves into positions that give them power over our lives? Respect for the other person's point of view is a laudable reaction provided that those views do not threaten the lives of others or contradict other views held by the propounder.

The amount of harm that may result from the voicing of threatening or contradictory views is a function of the power that person holds, either by office or possession of weapons.

Respect for the other person's views could be seen to be embodied in the rules

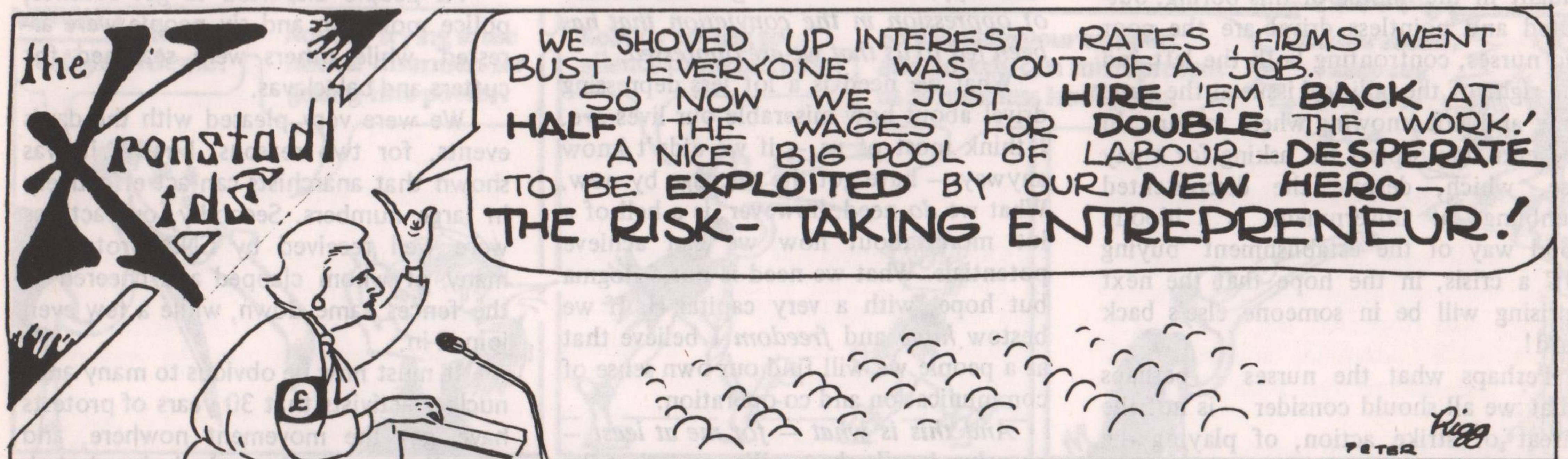
of Parliament for the express purpose of protecting the powerful from being exposed as liars and hypocrites. 'Order! Order!' is heard should a plain speaking Skinner or Nellist dare to challenge the sincerity or integrity of a fellow MP.

MP's, with few exceptions, have been through the education system from primary school to university or more likely from prep school via private school to Oxbridge, where one could reasonably expect them to have dealt with the discipline of logic — so that they might be expected not to hold contradictory opinions.

Yet we have hundreds of MP's who will, shortly, vote for the return of capital punishment whilst simultaneously holding the view that life is too sacred to countenance the aborting of an imperfect

foetus. Most of them, in spite of telling us that nuclear warfare can in some circumstances be justified, throw up their hands in horror and righteous (or lefteous) indignation at the mention of abortion — oh no! It's got a relationship with its mother! Didn't those kids in Hiroshima have relationships with their parents and families which were far more tangible than that of an embryo? So are we not to challenge their integrity? If we cannot question the integrity and sincerity of these well-trained dealers in devious discussion, we have no alternative but to question their intelligence. In the language of the street, which is infinitely preferable to the verbose sophistry of most parliamentarians and newspaper hacks, they are either liars or bloody idiots.

EFC





# Ego, Bloody Ego

HAS anyone noticed this new vogue of *expunging the ego*? This trend of persuading us to wander the streets, weighed down by our sense of oppression, of *worthlessness*, of how we are imprisoned, without hope of escape, in our miserable circumstances.

Okay, fine, so we are all prisoners of *something*. But why do we always seem to look around for someone else to call the oppressor? *I'm oppressed because of you!* Bullshit! *I'm oppressed because of me!!* We are our own prisoners. Prisoners of conditioning, of guilt, of indoctrination. The only real and lasting freedom is *self freedom*. Politicians and leaders have been feeding the old lies too long. And while we are so busy listening to them, and fighting with each other, the politicians and leaders are sitting laughing at us. *Are we oppressed?* No, we are all merely victims of political power seeking.

Take for instance the recent nurses' dispute. Now the Tories are obliged to say what they are obliged to say, and the Labour Party say what they have to say — and all we are left with at the end of the day is this age-old struggle of capitalist power against socialist idealism. And caught in the middle of this boring, outdated and pointless drivel are the poor old nurses, confronting both the left and the right of the political issue at the same time and not knowing where to turn. In the end they opted for asking for a pay rise, which, despite the discontented rumblings of Government, is a bloody good way of the establishment 'buying off' a crisis, in the hope that the next uprising will be in someone else's back yard!

Perhaps what the nurses — perhaps what we all should consider — is not the threat of strike action, of playing the employment game according to their rules, but the *individual, spontaneous responses*. For instance every time you go into the washroom, turn all the hot taps on, or every time you walk a corridor, flick all the lights on. This kind of 'invisible' response has the effect of sending fuel bills rocketing, wrecking budgets, and multiplied on a national level, could create within days a catastrophic cash crisis in government.

When all the shouting's done, strikes are *part* of the democratic process itself, and can be therefore easily controlled by legislation. Individual spontaneous actions

cannot be anticipated and hit where they hurt the capitalist most — *in the pocket!*

The hypocrisy is that Labour — and indeed socialism — is *not* — as Kinnock and his cronies claim — an alternative to capitalism. Socialists don't want workers' *freedom*, freedom from the slavery of employment. They don't want to save men and women the indignity of going down the mines, or working in the factory, they merely want the mines and the factories to work more fairly, more efficiently. In fact if Scargill, Kinnock, and all these super duper socialists had their way we'd *all* be down the *bloody mines tomorrow — all except them, that is*. They talk about saving nurses' jobs, miners' jobs, dockers' jobs. *For God's sake, maybe we don't want bloody jobs!*

Oh great, so one day we get rid of Maggie. And what will happen? Good Ole Neil, babe — the workers' protector and saviour — gives us a few more quid in our pockets, knocks 30 minutes off our daily slavery, and says now run along to your factories and get on with the job of making money. *Well stuff that!*

Anyway, this is where *ego* comes in. The *'that's just your ego'* ploy is one of the *great lies* of the age. It makes you feel worthless, insignificant. *Who rattled your cage, comrade?* Suddenly, how you feel, respond, react, is a *thing to be avoided*. How much longer are we going to allow power seekers to tell us how to think and feel? We're never going to be rid of these oppressors until we reject — as a whole, united people — 'leaders' who deny us our natural social interactions.

*I happen to think the greatest creator of oppression in the conviction that has been fed to us that we are oppressed.*

What we need is a lot less depressing drivel about how miserable our lives are. I think most of us — if we didn't know anyway — have got the message by now. What we *do* need, however, is a hell of a lot more about how we can achieve potentials. What we need is not a dogma but hope, with a very capital H. If we bestow *hope* and *freedom* I believe that as a people we will find our own sense of communication and co-operation.

*And this is what — for me at least — anarchy is all about.* We go on strike because we have been ruled by division — led into believing the old lie that *together we are strong*. What *anarchy* is about is saying that *together as individuals* we are strong. It is about reasserting the importance of *self*, of convincing you that *you, yes you, and I, are not powerless, but can affect change. Anarchy is to say that I am going to do my thing, and you must do your thing, but if both are for the mutual good of our fellows, then we are also doing our thing — and therein lies our hope for tomorrow.*

Joe Kelly

# ALDERMASTON Black Block

IN THE weeks running up to CND's Easter demonstration at least two different types of leaflets had been circulating among anarchist and direct action groups suggesting that our opposition to the nuclear state should be shown in stronger terms than CND's intended protest.

On the day about 150 anarchists gathered at Aldermaston's south-west corner and the results were, to say the least, encouraging.

By early afternoon people felt confident enough to have a go at the base and large sections of fence were cut and pulled down. The anarchist 'block' displayed a good degree of organisation and co-ordination; bolt-cutters and balaclavas appeared, people pulled down sections of fence and moved on quickly, swapping coats to alter their appearances. The group stuck together and police were unable to identify or snatch individuals. When police began arriving in large numbers, people dispersed quickly and at this stage there were no arrests.

For a while CND's passive protest went on undisturbed until word went round that an action was planned at 3.30pm at the far side of the base. Once again anarchists gathered quickly and the fence was repeatedly damaged by large numbers of people whom the police inside the base were powerless to stop.

As people dispersed to get coaches, police moved in and six people were arrested, while others were searched for cutters and balaclavas.

We were very pleased with the day's events, for two reasons. Firstly, it was shown that anarchists can act effectively in large numbers. Secondly, our actions were well received by CND protesters, many of whom clapped and cheered as the fences came down, while a few even joined in.

It must now be obvious to many anti-nuclear activists that 30 years of protests have got the movement nowhere, and that direct action is the logical and obvious next step. We would like to see anti-nuclear demos develop in the same way as they have in West Germany, where thousands of militants ('the Autonomen') organise themselves to cause maximum damage to the nuclear power/war industry. German 'black blocks' have shown what can be done, and it is now up to all of us to break the anti-nuclear movement out of its depression.

We hope that by building on the success of the Aldermaston demo, we will witness the birth of our own 'black block'.

Autonomous Peace Action



# ALDERMASTON Pleasant Stroll

'STOP Trident' was the aim of this year's Aldermaston March, as stated on some of the banners. It did not succeed in this aim but nobody was disappointed, because by contrast with 1958, nobody expected it to succeed. Nobody collected signatures on a petition to the Queen, or passed solemn resolutions for forwarding to the UN, or carried a banner saying 'Write to your MP today'. Nobody thought the militarists would take a 'moral lead' from a civilian route march. The anarchist message seems to be getting through, that if we want a world without nuclear arms we must change society, because whining to the government will get us nowhere.

*Freedom* was constantly on sale by three anarchists from Barton upon Humber, intermittently assisted by one from Glasgow and one from London. We kept going ahead of the march to stand at the roadside and sell to the marchers as they passed. Sales exceeded predictions. By lunchtime on the first day we had sold all we had with us, but fortunately there was a lively Freedom Press/Riff-Raff Poets bookstall at the resting place (on all four days), and we were able to replenish supplies from there.

Our persistence eventually provoked good-natured amusement among the regular marchers, but it was worthwhile because new customers kept joining the march for shorter distances, and also

because it got us recognised as the *Freedom* sellers. At Aldermaston, marchers who had been conserving their funds in case of emergency kept coming up to buy the paper, even when we did not have it on display.

Some newspaper reports quoted CND as saying there were one thousand marchers, but this was only the number who had booked accommodation with CND. The number marching rarely fell below two thousand, and on the first day in London it was more than four thousand; far smaller than the great marches of the 1960s, which were themselves a spit in the ocean of the population, but all the same an impressive sight.

The police, after their silly error last year, when reporters heard them telling each other on their walkie-talkies of crowds four times as large as they later said in their press releases, seem to have abandoned the custom of belittling demonstrations. Or perhaps the Aldermaston police have a different custom from the London police. Anyway, CND and police estimates agreed for a change, that the number of demonstrators at Aldermaston was about ten thousand.

The weather was excellent (another contrast with 1958), and the atmosphere friendly and festive, with musicians, jugglers, and a fire-eater, as well as people making speeches. Some pillock, wearing

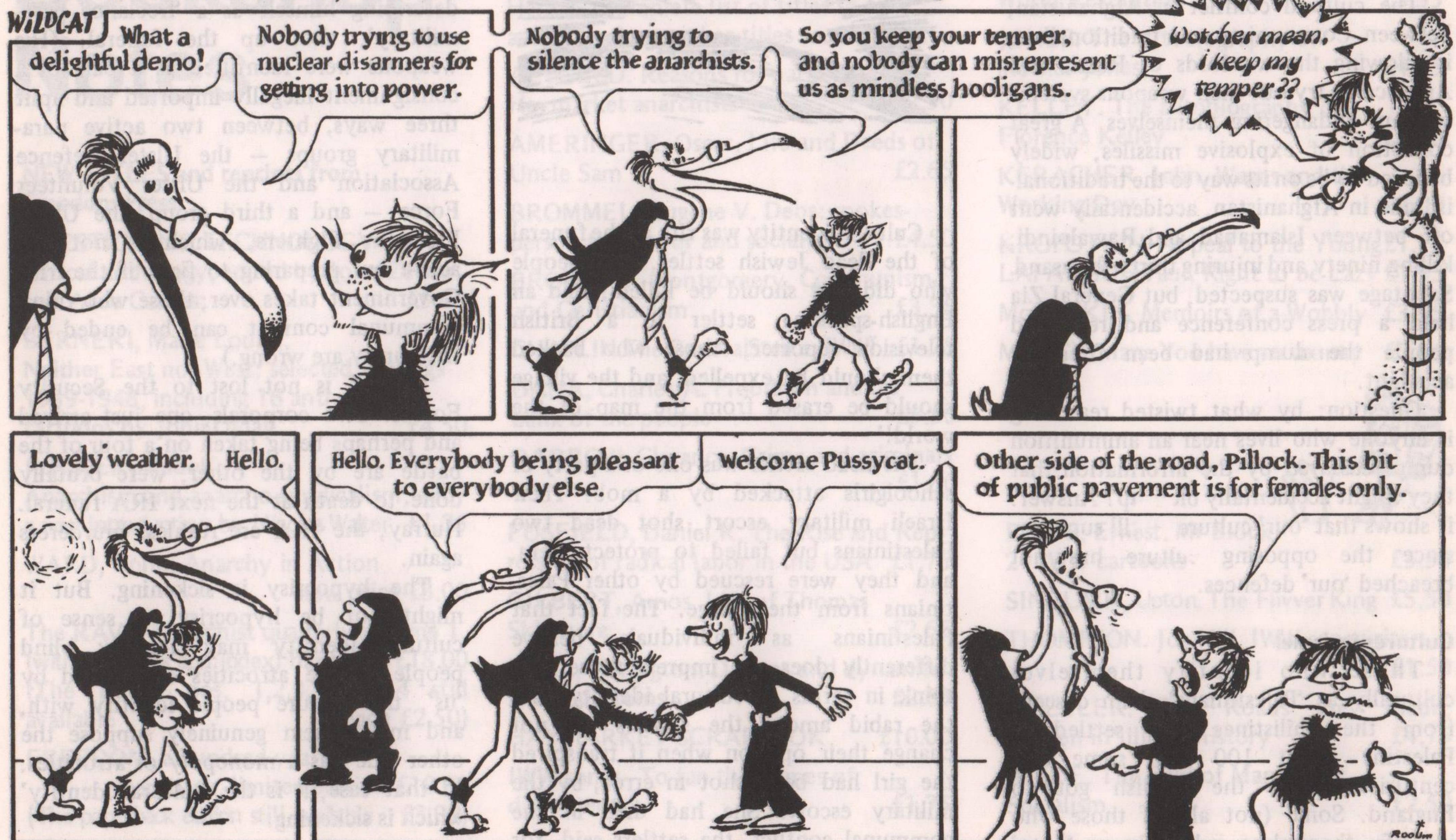
a baseball cap with YUPPY lettered across the front, read out a feeble spoof letter from Gorbachev through a loud-hailer. Even the five police assigned to protect him thought he was a pillock. According to press reports he was with a group called Women and Families for Defence, and thinks the people who want to rid the world of atom bombs are a small but noisy minority. He appeared to be alone.

The most heartwarming entertainment, lasting only a few seconds, was put on by a group of perhaps forty people wearing Balaclavas, who made a concerted attack on the fence and managed to demolish a fair length of it. It appears there were three such attacks at different places, and at one of them a group of people succeeded in invading the MoD land. Police told the media they had made six arrests. CND denied responsibility.

The real aim of the demonstration, to promote goodwill all round and exchange ideas, was abundantly achieved. Part of that achievement was that a lot of interested people learned about anarchism. D

## IN BRIEF

A man who threw a dead body out of a window in Hamburg was arrested on suspicion of murder. It turned out that the victim had died of cancer. 'Throwing a dead body out of the window is not a criminal offence', according to a police spokesman. How about littering?





# The Horrors of Cultural Identity

IT IS fashionable to speak of 'cultural identity' as desirable. One identifies oneself as a unique individual, a member of various family and friendship groups, a specimen of the human race, and still it seems one is not sufficiently identified. One must have a 'culture' as well.

No doubt it is beneficial for some people to be able to think, 'rubbish as I am personally, I am nevertheless part of a splendid category of people'. But along with this benefit, 'cultural identity' produces a lot of harm. People who are into 'cultural identity' think their own culture superior and others inferior, or even worthless. They are willing to oppress or eradicate people of other cultures, and the concept of belonging to a splendid category leads people to acquiesce in their own oppression. 'Tribalism', 'communalism', 'racism', 'patriotism', are all words signifying the conflict and oppression which arises from feelings of cultural identity.

The cultural conflict in Afghanistan, between Communists and traditionalists, is allowing the war-lords of Russia and America to try out their weapons systems without endangering themselves. A great collection of explosive missiles, widely believed to be on its way to the traditionalist side in Afghanistan, accidentally went off between Islamabad and Rawalpindi, killing ninety and injuring thirty thousand. Sabotage was suspected, but General Zia held a press conference and reassured people the dump had been fired by accident.

Question: by what twisted reasoning is anyone who lives near an ammunition dump *reassured* by the information that they might accidentally blow up? Answer: it shows that 'our' culture is still superior, since the opposing culture has not breached 'our' defences.

## Cultures in Israel

Those who identify themselves culturally as 'Palestinians' claim descent from the Philistines who settled in Palestine about 100 AD, some two centuries before the English got to England. Some (not all) of those who identify themselves culturally as 'Jews'

refuse to accept the Palestinians as a distinct culture and lump them with the Arabs. 'We Jews', they contend, 'have only this bit of land, which is rightfully ours because it was conquered by people culturally identical with us who came from Ur in the Chaldees, and later reconquered by the same people coming from Egypt, and recently promised to us by a Lord Balfour. Whereas the Arabs have a lot of land, so the Palestinians should go there and let us have our bit.'

As a result of all this cultural identity, many Palestinians fled to the two bits of territory claimed by Israel but seized by neighbouring states, namely a chunk to the west of the River Jordan annexed by Jordan, and a coastal strip including the city of Gaza annexed by Egypt. There they were stuck in rudimentary refugee camps, and there they have remained for forty years, including twenty years under Israeli occupation.

A few months ago the denizens of these awful places began throwing stones at the Israeli army in occupation. So far some 150 camp dwellers have been killed by Israeli troops and Jewish settlers, and one Israeli soldier and one Jewish settler have been killed.



Cultural identity was rife at the funeral of the dead Jewish settler. 'The people who did this should be killed', said an English-speaking settler to a British television reporter, 'those who backed them should be expelled, and the village should be erased from the map of the world!'

The dead settler was one of a party of schoolgirls attacked by a mob. Their Israeli military escort shot dead two Palestinians but failed to protect them, and they were rescued by other Palestinians from the village. The fact that Palestinians as individuals behave differently does not impress those who think in terms of cultural identity, and the rabid among the settlers did not change their opinion when it transpired the girl had been shot in error, by the military escort. She had died in the communal conflict, the settlers said, for

which the Palestinians were solely responsible.

## Cultures in Ireland

The conflict of cultural identities nearest to us is taking place in Northern Ireland, where both sides perpetrate atrocious violence and the competition is to denounce the atrocious violence of the other side. Last November, when an IRA bomb blew up some spectators at a military parade, the anti-IRA forces were cock-a-hoop at the propaganda victory.

They looked like having another propaganda victory in March, when three IRA activists took a car load of explosives to Gibraltar, to blow up a military band, together with some spectators. The British secret service knew of the trip. There is no reason to suppose they have yet penetrated the IRA high command, so it seems the information must have come from a personal acquaintance of the activists themselves. If they had been arrested, they might have worked out the identity of the informant. It appears to have been decided to let them get the car bomb into Gibraltar, kill them, and show the press what they intended.

Unfortunately they came to Gibraltar on a reconnaissance first, and were shot while standing unarmed near an innocent car, their explosive still thirty miles away. So what was intended as a propaganda coup for the security forces became a propaganda coup for the IRA (a propaganda coup consists of being able to show the other lot are ruthless murderers). There was another IRA coup when a nut, describing himself as a 'freelance paramilitary', shot up the funeral. (His weapons were identified as a part of a consignment illegally imported and split three ways, between two active paramilitary groups — the Ulster Defence Association and the Ulster Volunteer Force — and a third group, the Ulster Freedom Fighters, which is not yet active but preparing to fight if the Irish Government takes over; those who think communal conflict can be ended by Irish unity are wrong.)

But all is not lost to the Security Forces. Two corporals, one just arrived and perhaps being taken on a tour of the battle area by the other, were brutally done to death at the next IRA funeral. Hurray, the IRA are ruthless murderers again.

The hypocrisy is sickening. But it might not be hypocrisy. A sense of cultural identity may actually blind people to the atrocities committed by 'us', the culture people identify with, and make them genuinely suppose the other side has a monopoly of atrocities. In that case, it is the 'cultural identity' which is sickening.

DR



# The Litmus Party

LITMUS, as most of us will remember from schooldays, is an acid/alkali indicator which changes colour from red (acid) to blue (alkali). This property of changing from red to blue, and vice versa, is a feature of the Labour Party.

The Labour Party, when out of power, is red (Socialist) but by the time it wins a General Election it has turned blue (Conservative). It is the Litmus Party.

The reason for this irritating behaviour is that the establishment will never allow Socialism of that shade to threaten its existence. It had a bit of fright immediately after the Second World War, when Labour 'nationalised' many large industries and even the Bank of England, but there were fat compensations and the Stock Exchange was allowed to carry on policing itself as usual.

The establishment, which is like a mafia which has made the law and therefore is always on the right side of it, justifies itself by the 'British Constitution' which, in fact is a myth: The best the *Manchester Guardian* could say for it,

some years ago, was '... its unwritten mysteries and its practical resilience are the despair of theorists ... and (it) seems to be defined only by the fact that it lives and works.' (The author of this description failed to say who it worked for.) Professor Norman Lewis and Ian Harden, in their recently published book *The Noble Lie*, tell us: 'The British Constitution is in a sorry state, unable to deliver either democratic accountability or effective planning. In theory the Rule of Law should be the cement of the constitution. In fact, a Heath Robinson machinery of secrecy is needed to hold the ramshackle apparatus together.'

This so-called British Constitution allows us to vote for any candidates we never choose (provided that candidate is prepared to act constitutionally) as our representatives in a legislative institution called Parliament whose power to legislate on, or rights to involve itself in, matters of great importance are at the discretion of a Cabinet which has sworn its allegiance to the constitution. In other words, the establishment, which decides how the constitution 'lives and works' allows us a brick wall to bang our heads on.

Now when a Labour government takes over and turns blue, so do a lot of its supporters, the difference being that they go blue in the face with sheer anger and gradually start to defect in large numbers so that when the next General Election comes around the Tories get

back into the driving seat.

Freshly out of power, needing to win back its old disillusioned supporters and to attract new, young idealists, starts the swing back to red.

So here we are in 1988 with a Tory government in its third term of office, elated with its successes and confident that it can get away with a budget, poll tax and NHS schemes that injure and insult the disadvantaged. And the remarkable thing is that the Labour Party is still a fairly solid shade of blue. What on earth is going on?

Perhaps the explanation is that the Tory Party has moved so far to the right that it is vulnerable to a moderately conservative Labour Party — a situation which would obviously bring much comfort to the establishment. The Labour Party, which has already adopted the pink rose as a sign to the establishment that it will grovel, can, perhaps with the aid of the SDL (if that is still alive), defeat Thatcherites, recover half the losses and everybody will be happy except the down and outs. The Bennheffers can retire to their memoirs and regrets or form a new Party and the establishment can pat itself on the back, create a few Labour Peers and hit the champagne.

They don't mind a quota of Skinners in Parliament to give the miserable masses something to believe in.

EC

## Bookshop Notes

### NEW TITLES and reprints from Freedom Press

QUESTIONING TECHNOLOGY: a critical anthology, edited by John Zerzan and Alice Carnes £5.00

BERNERI, Marie Louise. Neither East nor West: selected writings 1939-1948, including 16 anti-war cartoons by John Olday £4.50

ROCKER, Rudolf. Anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism, with a new introduction by Nicolas Walter £1.25

WARD, Colin. Anarchy in Action new price £3.00

The RAVEN anarchist quarterly volume 1 (with contents and index) hardback £18.00 (The Raven nos. 1,2,3, and 4 still available each £2.50)

FREEDOM, a hundred years hardback, limited edition £10.00 (The paperback edition still available £3.00)

CHARLES H. KERR publishing company Here is a complete list of titles so far available. Some other titles are awaited.

ALTGELD. Reasons for pardoning the Haymarket anarchists £2.50

AMERINGER, Oscar. Life and Deeds of Uncle Sam £2.65

BROMMEL. Eugene V. Debs: spokesperson for labour and socialism £4.50

BROWN, W. Montgomery. Communism and Christianity £3.35

CHAPLIN. The General Strike (IWW) £1.75

DANA, Charles A. Proudhon and his bank of the people £3.50

DARROW, Clarence. Crime and criminals £1.50

FUSFIELD, Daniel R. The Rise and Repression of radical labor in the USA £1.75

GILBERT, Amos. Life of Thomas Skidmore £2.65

HALL, Covington. Dreams and dynamite selected poems £2.65

HAYMARKET SCRAPBOOK £10.00

IWW songs—To fan the flames of discontent £1.75

JAMES, C.L.R. State Capitalism and World Revolution £5.35

JONES. The autobiography of Mother Jones £4.75

KELLEY. The autobiography of Florence Kelley £5.50

KERACHER, John. Wages and the Working Day £1.00

KROPOTKIN. Appeal to the Young £1.75

LAFARGUE, Paul. Right to be Lazy £1.95

McGUCKIN. Memoirs of a Wobbly £3.95

MARCY, Mary. You have no country £2.95



RIEBE, Ernest. Mr Block 24 IWW cartoons £3.50

SINCLAIR, Upton. The Flivver King £5.50

THOMPSON. Joe Hill, IWW songwriter £1.50

WHEELER. The Roads they made: women in Illinois history £4.75

WILDE. The Soul of Man under Socialism £2.50



# Class and Education

ONE of the currently fashionable views is that class isn't really that important any more and that freedom is all about an attitude of mind. To me this represents a serious misunderstanding. In the society in which we live freedom is a privilege which is acquired far more easily by the rich than by the poor. Equally significantly in a society based on privilege it is possible for the government to pass a whole series of reforms under the name of freedom which have completely different effects on the poor and on the rich.

If you live on social security the choices you can make about how you wish to live your life are highly restricted and it is not much consolation to you to be informed that the state has just passed measures intended to free people from the burden of paying income tax. Obviously there are a lot of choices about the way you wish to live your life which you can make when you are poor but the necessities and the restrictions are that much more real than they would be for an upper class person.

If you were one of the 200 richest people in the country that *Money Magazine* uncovered earlier this year then you could choose, if you wished to, to eat what you liked, to live where you liked, to travel where you pleased, and to work when you chose to. These are the real freedoms which are the hallmark of privilege and the power which this unequal distribution of wealth gives to the rich should never be underestimated.

For instance, according to the *Money Magazine* research, the richest person in Britain has £3,340,000,000 invested in various forms of wealth (buildings, land, paintings, etc.). It would be a rank bad investment advisor who failed to earn at least 10% a year on this wealth and this would give an income of £340,000,000 per year. This works out at £915,068 per day. By contrast outside London the best paid State Registered Nurse earns under £8,000 per year and on this money it would take one hundred and fourteen years to earn what the richest person notches up in a day.

It is important to be clear about this type of imbalance because at the moment we have a government which uses the language of freedom to justify reforms which will make life worse for working class people. It is very easy, for example, to be taken in by the conservative plans for reforming education. Increasing the say of parents as opposed to teachers and officials, creating choice, allowing schools to opt out of the state bureaucracy, and allowing schools more freedom over how they spend their money all sound like quite promising reforms. It is only when you look closely at the schemes being

put forward and consider their relative impact on the rich and poor that the government's real purpose becomes clear.

In theory we now have a comprehensive school system where children are not separated off into different schools on the basis of privilege. In practice what happens in all big cities is that middle class parents with children move to 'good' areas where there are reliable schools. The schools which are in the poorer areas are the ones with problems like low achievement, poor teacher morale, bad reputation, and a negative attitude among fellow pupils towards anyone who tries to succeed. The schools in the richer areas have more comfortable surroundings (people living in bigger houses pay higher rates and need fewer social workers so there's more money to spare) and an expectation amongst both staff and students that success is both possible and probable. The result is a massive imbalance in exam results.

In such a set-up if the government allows parents freedom of choice over schools then the main result is a strengthening of this pattern. Middle class parents will now be able to ensure that their child goes to the 'right' school and so will have no great reason to be concerned about the fate of children in the sink schools. If the school is then allowed to opt out of the state system and to receive a grant for each child it attracts it will become financially very sound. In addition to the money paid by the government the school will be able to attract funds from the well-off parents and it will also be in a strong position to persuade industry to invest since industry will be interested in recruiting the highly trained students leaving such a school. The quality of schooling this would make possible would enable all sorts of Conservative voters to save on the cost of private school fees and to send their child free of charge to the local independent school. Down the road a few miles the state school will be struggling to get by with deteriorating buildings, poor equipment, a large number of 'problem' children and nothing except the grant of money from the government. It doesn't take long to figure out which school will find it easier to attract good teachers or to work out what the governments propagandists will say about the state sector when the kids fight back by playing truant, arguing with the constantly changing teachers, and developing their own value system which doesn't rate studying for exams.

In other words we are in the strange position of having a government which doesn't support the state sector and so many on the left have seen their main objective as being to defend the state

rather than to oppose it. Nine years after the Conservatives first came back to power the best that the vast bulk of the left has so far come up with is the empty repetition of the slogan fight the cuts.

This defensive reaction starts from the false premise that everyone likes and admires the way the state sector runs at present. The truth is that the reason why the Conservatives have been getting away with their con tricks like the latest tax cut for the rich that there is a massive amount wrong with the way the bureaucratic state runs services like education and health care and the left seems not to have noticed. Anyone who has been put through the mind-numbing tedium of many parts of the British education system doesn't need the editor of the *Sun* to tell him/her that something is wrong. Many working class voters quite correctly see the Labour Party as the party for social workers, teachers, housing managers, and tax inspectors. They are far more prepared to give their support to a politician who threatens to give such people a good shake up than they are to march in defence of the old way of organising things. Consequently the rearguard action of fighting cuts has produced an endless succession of demoralising defeats.

What needs to be done is to recognise that there are two vital elements in any left wing campaign. One is to promote equality; the other is to promote greater freedom. For a campaign to achieve anything it needs to be seen as a campaign for something better not a defence of the small privileges enjoyed by the state sector workers. The rhetoric of freedom which the Conservatives are so keen to use should have been taken on board and transformed into a campaign for genuinely free education or genuinely progressive health care.

To give an example, many of us have been arguing for years that there was a need for more freedom of choice in education. What we had in mind was not calling in management consultants and turning education into a sub-branch of industry. What we had in mind was that the thousands of students who walk through the doors of schools and colleges every day should actually be asked what they do and do not wish to learn and given the chance to decide which lessons would be worthwhile for themselves and for next years students. The campaign for such simple ideas and the momentum behind free schools seems to have been crushed by the clamour of voices calling for us to defend the educational status quo as if it were somehow sacred.

This sidelining of the argument for libertarian education has enabled the rightwingers to cover up the hypocritical way that they speak out against state



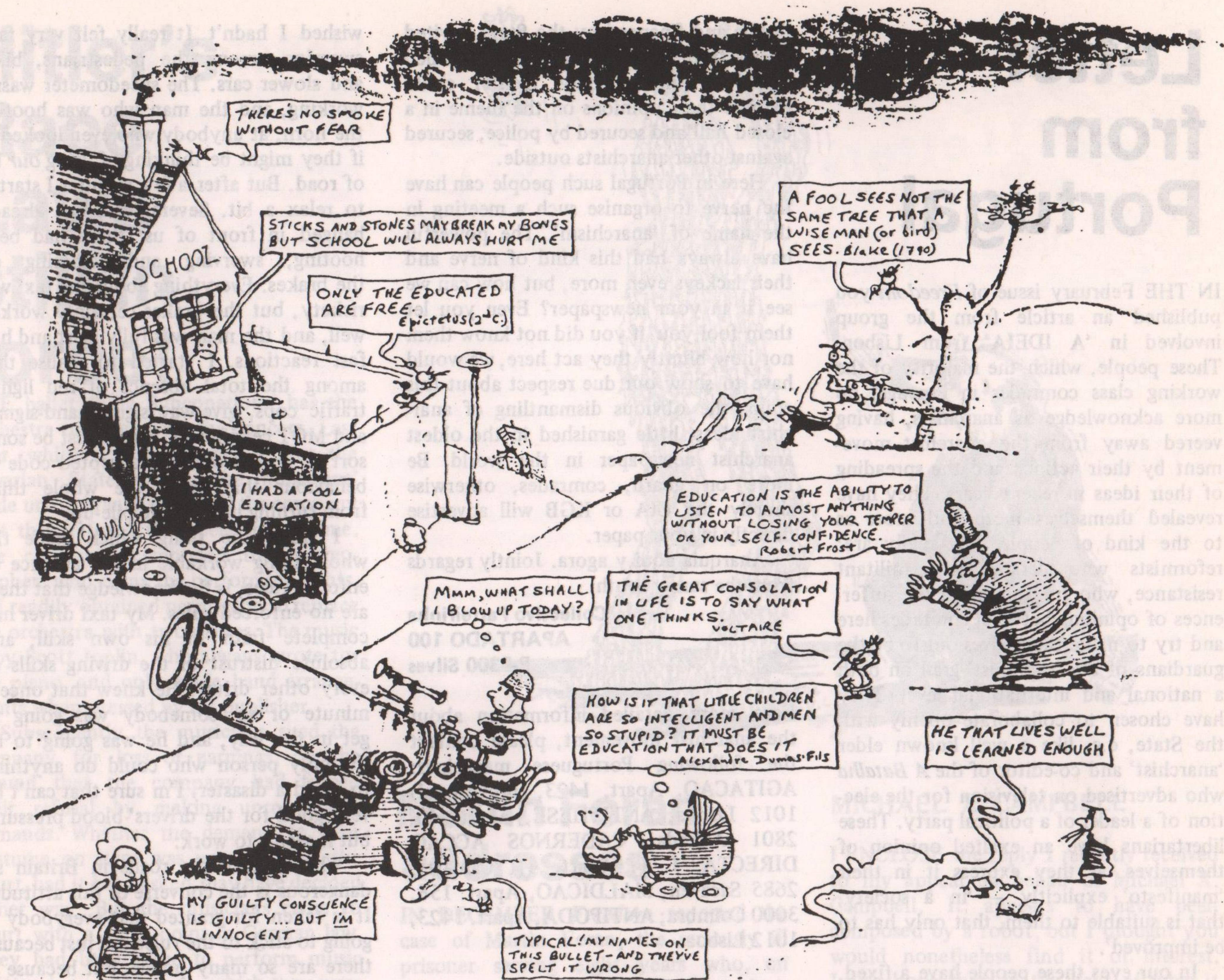


Illustration from 'Think Aloud', a regular cartoon in *Libertarian Education*, quarterly 50p.

control in theory whilst in practice they are busily engaged in greatly enhancing the power of the central state to control education. The original right wing campaigners who argued for reform of education put forward the idea of a variety of styles of education funded on the basis of one child one state payment. There were many elements in this scheme which could have been easily modified into a semi-anarchist reform which would have allowed a whole series of free schools to come into existence alongside more traditional ones (the government would have paid for your child to go to a free school!). However, the current proposal for reform is much more cautious and actually has the effect of putting most of the real control over education in the hands of central government. The state schools thereby ensuring that no state money will be paid over to promote parental choice that the government disapproves of. The state will set down what subjects will be taught and for how long by creating a compulsory national curriculum (for part of the recent Restart scheme the state actually issued teaching material telling each teacher exactly what was to be taught in each lesson and exactly

how many minutes were to be spent on such activities as writing a letter of application – variation or deviation from the set method was actively discouraged). The state has taken control of large parts of education out of the hands of local government and has put it in the hands of state run bodies like the MSC. The state is also firmly engaged in the process of using control of cash funds and the threat of abolition to ensure that each local authority tows the line of the central state over education policies.

If the Labour Party seems reluctant to mount a serious challenge to this massive shift to central control then the reason should not be too difficult to spot. In power the Labour Party would love to have the central control which the Conservatives are now creating. I believe that instead of simply tail-ending the traditional left's campaign to defend education as it is now we should be campaigning to force the Conservatives to be true to their word. If they promised variety of provision then the campaigns should be asking that they deliver it. If they promised parental choice then the campaigns should be asking for real choice (e.g. that children are taught skills

which they really value and need). If they promised less state control then they should provide it.

I believe that there is a genuine desire to see an element of freedom from central control and from bureaucracy to enter into the provision of such services as education, housing, and health care and that the failure to recognise this desire is the single most significant cause of the steady weakening of the left over the last twenty years. It is not difficult to persuade people that it is wrong for the rich to be able to buy knowledge whilst the poor are forced to put up with compulsory boredom. It is difficult to persuade people that monolithic state run enterprises are the route to a future paradise. The one thing which the anarchists have always had right is that the desire to be a free individual is every bit as important to ordinary working class people as the desire to be treated equally and fairly. It is way past time that the left's campaigns took this on board and became a positive assertion of people's rights instead of a negative defence of the establishment in the state sector.

A. K. Brown



# Letter from Portugal

IN THE February issue of *Freedom* you published an article from the group involved in 'A IDEIA' from Lisbon. These people, which the majority of the working class comrades in Portugal no more acknowledge as anarchists, having veered away from the anarchist movement by their actions and the spreading of their ideas in recent years. They have revealed themselves more and more as to the kind of people they really are: reformists who defame any militant resistance, who try to exploit the differences of opinions between comrades here and try to make themselves out to be the guardians of the 'anarchist' grail on both a national and international level. They have chosen to collaborate openly with the State, e.g. like a well known elder 'anarchist' and co-editor of the *A Batalha* who advertised on television for the election of a leader of a political party. These libertarians have an exalted opinion of themselves, as they express it in their 'manifesto' explicitly — 'in a society, that is suitable to them, that only has to be improved'.

In our eyes these people have a fixed, defined viewpoint: they try to make 'anarchy' already fit present society, hold up and canalize as much action as possible. They try to identify every revolutionary current and try to separate it from the rest. Their actions are the best for the security services; they try to recognise every possible unrest in its beginnings and to oppose it when it approaches — 'counterinsurgency' you name it! We were astonished that you published such trash at all, that these people sell as 'manifesto'. You write indeed at the outset that the meaning of the circular is sometimes obscure, but claim possible translation difficulties are responsible. We as a rural collective (called 'primitivists' by them) and part of the revolutionary Portuguese anarchist movement want to take your doubts away. *They* should have taken it away from you, with this sentence at the end of their screed: 'We are not interested in any kind of anarchist society' ('of' not 'if' as you published). This is the correct translation of the original Portuguese text.

They unmask themselves in our eyes. They unmask themselves further by organising an international symposium on the theme 'technology and freedom'! It happened last spring in front of a selected

public and financed by the State. Invited guests from all over the world, so-called 'experts' (indeed only men!!) could express their opinions on the theme in a closed hall and secured by police, secured against other anarchists outside.

Here in Portugal such people can have the nerve to organise such a meeting in the name of 'anarchism'. The powerful have always had this kind of nerve and their lackeys even more, but how can we see it in your newspaper? Even you let them fool you, if you did not know them nor how bluntly they act here, we would have to show our due respect about this coup, the obvious dismantling of anarchist ideas, little garnished in the oldest anarchist newspaper in the world. Be more on guard, comrades, otherwise shortly the CIA or KGB will advertise directly in your paper.

Anarquía aqui y agora. Jointly regards from the sunny south.

**Collectivo Parreirinha  
APARTADO 100  
P-8300 Silves**

For more detailed information about the anarchist movement, please contact the following Portuguese magazines: AGITACAO, Apart. 1423, (provisional) 1012 Lisboa; ANTITHESE, Apart. 40, 2801 Almada; CADERNOS ACCAO DIRECTA, J. P. Apart. 41, Camarte, 2685 Sacaven; MALDICA0, Apart. 158, 3000 Coimbra; ANTIPODA, Apart. 1423, 1012 Lisboa.

# Letter from India

I HAVE a job in Bombay as general chief dogsbody for an oil company. One of my first impressions was the craziness of the traffic: there doesn't seem to be much of a speed limit — the cars are doing 40 to 50 miles per hour, only a foot or two away from the throngs of pedestrians who overflow from the pavements on to the side of the road. If somebody is driving out from a side street, they can't wait for a gap in the traffic — there aren't any gaps. They just have to make a determined effort to assert their right to a bit of road space. The cars on the main road either brake or swerve, and sound their hooters furiously.

The first time I had a trip in a taxi I

wished I hadn't. It really felt very fast, swerving among the pedestrians, bikes and slower cars. The speedometer wasn't working, and the man who was hooting the horn, at anybody who even looked as if they might be thinking of using *our* bit of road. But after a few minutes I started to relax a bit. Several cars had already banged in front of us: there had been hooting, swerving and jamming on the brakes. Everything about the taxi was rickety, but the brakes certainly worked well, and the man was fully alert and had fast reactions. I started to realise that among the total absence of red lights, traffic cops, give-way signs, hand-signals and MOT certificates, there must be some sort of understood and accepted code of behaviour that stops the whole thing from turning into a huge pile-up.

I think the thing which made the whole thing workable in the absence of enforced rules, is the knowledge that there are no enforced rules. My taxi driver had complete faith in his own skill, and absolute distrust of the driving skills of every other driver. He knew that once a minute or so, somebody was going to get in the way, and he was going to be the only person who could do anything to avoid a disaster. I'm sure that can't be very good for the drivers' blood pressure, but it seems to work.

What makes the roads in Britain so dangerous is the converse of this attitude. It is taken for granted that everybody is going to stick to the rules, not just because there are so many police, but because it seems to be in the British character to stick to the rules. So when somebody *does* change lanes without warning — either because of carelessness, lack of concentration, puncture, or whatever — then the driver behind is taken completely by surprise. The momentary hesitation is enough to make the difference between a hit and a near-miss. The driver behind that is surprised, too, and in a few seconds there's a pile-up.

I wonder too if there is just too much on the British roads for one human mind to take in. The enormous variety of signs, and rules to be obeyed.

I think it's possible that the slaughter on Britain's roads could be eased by the gradual abolition of a lot of the rules, to be replaced by the kind of necessary self-preservation instinct that the Bombay taxi drivers have. It *isn't* just selfishness when the hooters blare. It is a genuine warning that works in both directions. It says: 'look out, I'm going fast and you're in the way'. But it is also some sort of acknowledgement of a duty: 'I have noticed that you're there, and if you don't get out of the way in time, then my foot is poised over the brake, and I will almost certainly be able to stop or swerve.'

**Jake Williams**



# Hitler's Race Laws still in force!

THE ballet 'Elite Syncopations' has the orchestra on stage with the dancers. Last year, whilst it was in rehearsal for the Bavarian State Opera, the musicians' trade union branch informed the company that they refused to appear in costume. The company telephoned the choreographer, who owns the performing rights, and readily obtained permission to replace the orchestra with two pianos. The music is by Scott Joplin, who always wrote for the piano, and only made band arrangements when pressed by his publisher.

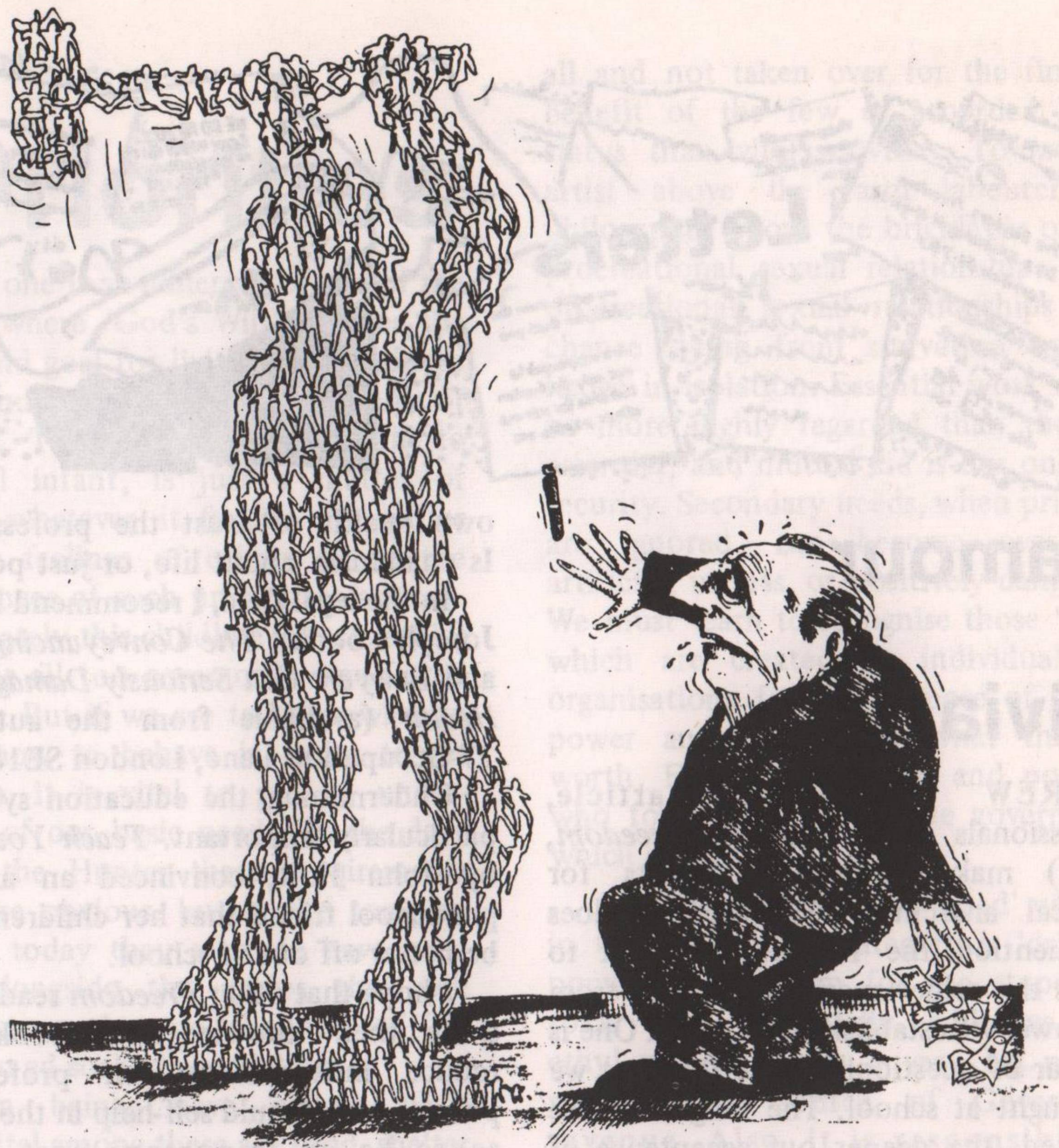
Subsequently the musicians sued the company for loss of earnings, on the ground that the company had forced their refusal by making unreasonable demands. Whether the demand to wear costume on stage was unreasonable, the court, had it been asked, may have decided either way. But the musicians came to court with a surer point in German law. They had been asked to perform music written by a black man, which they were expressly entitled to refuse by a Chancery Statute of 1937.

Everyone knows from history books about the Enabling Act of 1934, by which the German Parliament suspended itself, and delegated the right to pass laws to the Chancellor in person. But I, for one, had not realised that Hitler's statutes are still on the German statute book, and still respected by the German courts even when they are simply and straightforwardly racist. The musicians' case was upheld and the company paid 'huge' compensation.

There was no public outcry, because the public were not informed. We hear from trade unionists, performing artists, and lawyers that within their several professions there is less racism than in the public at large. But none of the trade unionists, performing artists, or lawyers involved in this case saw fit to make a public expression of disgust. The facts came to light in March this year, when the choreographer, Kenneth MacMillan of the Royal Ballet, heard about them in casual conversation with the director of the Bavarian State Opera Ballet Company.

MacMillan has stated that he will not allow that company to perform any of his work ever again.

DR



## Martin Foran addresses

IN DECEMBER *Freedom* reported the case of Martin Foran, the seriously ill prisoner serving eight years who, on 26 November, was 'awarded' (the judge's word) an additional six years for holding a prison nursing officer hostage, in a successful attempt to get medical treatment. Letters of support would be welcomed by 051796 Foran, Michael, Parkhurst Prison, Isle of Wight. The fellow prisoner who informed the outside about his condition is F78958 Childs, Bruce, currently at Wandsworth Prison, London.

A defence fund was opened to pay various legal costs that could not be covered by Legal Aid (Martin is appealing against more than one conviction), but there is some uncertainty about this at present.

The Martin Foran Support Fund is not for legal costs, but to support Martin's family and pay for propaganda on his behalf. This fund is operating healthily [in the hands of a comrade known by *Freedom* editors to be trustworthy] though short of money. Cheques and POs should be made payable to Martin Foran Support Fund. Donors who request it will be sent the monthly newsletter, but to save costs receipts will not be sent unless requested.

Martin Foran Support Fund  
c/o Box JAG  
52 Call Lane, Leeds 1

MICHAEL X CAMPBELL

I ENCLOSE the reply I recently received to my appeal on behalf of Michael X. Campbell. It appears to have been composed by a robot, but I thought you would nonetheless find it of interest. I also hope that, in the light of what it says, you will publish a follow-up story with further information on Campbell's position.

A. Janes

Dear Mr Janes:

This is in response to your letter of February 23, 1988, about an inmate Michael X. Campbell.

Be advised that this institution does not have 'solitary confinement'. If an inmate so *requests*, he may receive Protective Custody, in which he has no contact with general population inmates.

Inmates' personal letters are not stopped, and inmates' personal documents are not seized.

It appears that your concept of inmate life at the Farmington Correctional Center is based solely on the allegations of inmate Campbell. It appears, also, that those allegations are not correct.

Sincerely,  
Denis Dowd,  
Superintendent,  
Farmington Correctional Center  
Department of Corrections  
and Human Resources.

An equal opportunities employer.  
Services provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.





## Clamour of Trivia

ANDREW Hedgecock's article, 'Professionals and the State' (*Freedom*, March) makes important points for practical anarchism. However, it does not mention the forces which act to inhibit the achievement of freedom from the power of established 'experts'. One is the fear of questioning expertise that we are taught at school. The longer we are educated, the deeper our acceptance of the established way of seeing is likely to become.

The spread of non-establishment views is hindered by the general media insistence on academic qualifications. This tends to fix the current network of power ever more firmly in place. Those who dare to raise questions are usually ignored unless they show the required evidence of brain-damaging 'higher education'. And the few who get over this hurdle will always be 'balanced' by an establishment spokesperson. Predictably, this 'balance' is not considered necessary when establishment views are being put forward.

Usually, the media ignore attempts to share knowledge outside professional networks, and many such attempts sink among the clamour of trivia that swamps the bookshops. Publishers may refuse to print material that undermines professional assumptions. The first question asked in judgement of a new work is not 'What does it say?' but 'What are the author's qualifications?' (A variant of 'Who are your parents?') If you are not from the appropriate professional group, your views are not likely to get published.

In view of these pressures, it is essential that anarchists should actively spread information about anti-professional literature. Illich's books are classics of the genre, of little practical use. Colin Johnson and I write books designed to reduce the power of the medical profession; we began with *Cured to Death* (Secker & Warburg) and our most recent works are *Alternatives to Drugs* (Fontana) and *Immunity Plus* (Penguin). (But, comrades, do you have the courage of your convictions, do you act for your

own health or trust the professionals? Is anarchism about life, or just politics?)

In the legal field, I recommend Michael Joseph's books, *The Conveyancing Fraud* and *Lawyers Can Seriously Damage Your Health* (available from the author at 27 Occupation Lane, London SE18).

Undermining the education system is particularly important. *Teach Your Own* by John Holt, convinced an ardently pro-school friend that her children might be better off out of school.

I hope that other *Freedom* readers will share their knowledge of books that reduce independence on professional power. And should self-help in the widest sense be an important part of the bookshop's role?

Arabella Melville

## Jews and Zionists

I WAS disappointed to see that Katy Andrews (February 1988) has fallen into the trap of blurring distinction between Jews and Zionists in her article on the uprisings in the occupied territories.

She commented that Jews who have themselves been oppressed have now also become oppressors. This equation reveals her ignorance that the vast majority of Jews do not live in Israel and it is therefore false to blame diaspora Jews for Israel's actions.

I reiterate: it is anti-Jewish to collectively blame all Jews for the actions of Israel.

We are Jewish anarchists because we identify with Jewish history and culture (whilst rejecting the religion). Jewish culture, unlike Christian culture, is not institutionalised by the State. Instead it is usually ignored, marginalised or stigmatised.

These comments in February and March editions of *Freedom* serve to exclude identifying Jewish anarchists from reading your magazine and thus preserves it as a domain dominated by white, middle-class, heterosexual men from a Christian culture.

A Jewish Anarchist

## Hallelujah!

WHERE on earth did Roderic Vassie get the idea that the critique of religion was something derived from orthodox marxism, and that it implied a slavish attachment to its doctrine? Marx accepted Feuerbach's notion that religion was an illusion and a form of alienation, and that it was an ideology that cloaked inequalities — and he left it at that. He wrote little on religion. It was left to the *anarchists* from Bakunin onwards to stress that religious conceptions were 'chimeras' that bolstered hierarchies, masked exploitation and were intrinsically connected with the maintenance of authoritarian structures — and still are. Throughout history religions have been detrimental to human well being, and since the days of Lao Tzu more than two thousand years ago people have spoken out against religion — its shams, its hypocrisy and its use by those in power to befuddle our minds. Among anarchists Flores Magon wrote, 'religions are fading away, the Koran, the Vedas and the Bible no longer dazzle us . . . we are moving towards life'. Let us keep it that way. It is rather ironic that while *Freedom* is putting 'Jesus is a myth' on its envelopes Roderic is telling us that he (Jesus, that is) 'lives'. Hallelujah!

Brian Morris

## Very mediocre

I CAN understand that on occasions you may be short of copy, but how any emergency could have persuaded you to publish Richard Hunt's article in the February issue of *Freedom* entitled 'A Historical and Economic Analysis for Anarchists' (no less!) is quite beyond me.

In one sense it was like one of those very mediocre schoolboy's essays which draws from the teacher comments like 'bitty', 'disjointed', 'lacks clarity', 'has no central point', 'never seems to finish explaining any of the points it tries to make'. But, at the same time, it manages to be unutterably presumptuous and self-indulgent in its approach and its expression.

You want some detail? Right. It namedropped Adam Smith and Karl Marx while showing every sign of knowing virtually nothing about them. It blamed the working class — in league with the ruling class — for causing the peasants to starve at various different points in history (e.g. 17th century France, contemporary Ethiopia). It began by saying 'the object of economics is to determine the causes of poverty' and then at different points



in the article revealed three quite different and disparate 'causes': firstly 'religion', then 'trade', and finally 'technological advance'. It ended by praising itself with the words: 'This analysis is useful. If anarchists could accept it, we would be in a very strong intellectual position to attack both the marxists and the capitalists.'

Enough said. But if it goes without saying that the writer should take a long, hard look at himself, so then perhaps should the editors who allowed his article to be published.

Howard Moss

## Insurgent flag

SOME time ago there was a discussion of anarchist flags and symbols in your columns. Now that time has passed and the exclusive attention to conscious anarchism is no longer the point (almost by definition, a libertarian rank-and-file revolution would not be universally conscious of its own anarchism), may I remind readers of one other flag.

At Vorkuta and East Berlin in 1953, and in Hungary in 1956, the insurgent flag (of a movement wanting socialism free of Stalinist dictatorship, and instinctively resorting to the methods of direct action and councillist organisation), was a red flag with a black border.

There is evidence that there were anarcho-syndicalists amongst the rebels in Vorkuta, and it is possible that some of the Berliners (in fact the revolt spread more widely in East Germany) may have been influenced by John Olday's group.\* So while it would be presumptuous to claim that this was an anarchist movement using an anarchist flag, it would be reasonable for anarchists to include this amongst flags that we could reasonably fly.

Laurens Otter

\* In 1949, Olday's group used to ferry people both ways across the frontier between the two German states. (I was in charge of an army ambulance, both my German drivers were contacts of Olday's, so we were able to play a role in this.) So his movement was not confined to West Germany.



OPINION

## Priorities

UNLESS one is an adherent of one of the religions where 'God's Will' dictates the pattern and goal for living, one's purpose in life must surely be the pursuit of happiness. This praiseworthy pursuit, to the small infant, is just a matter of grabbing whatever it fancies no matter what the feelings of others or of the consequences of such precipitate actions. Unfortunately this childlike (psychopathic) attitude is all too commonly manifested by adults. But if we are to know what to do and how to behave in order to get happiness, it is vital to get an understanding of our basic needs. In the days of Man the Hunter these requirements were more obvious, but in the complex world of today they seem to have been buried alongside the cables that will bring more and more channels of TV viewing to ad-soaked populations.

Human beings have certain basic needs. Vital among these are food, shelter and procreational activity, the latter being necessary for continuation of the species. In so far as food, shelter and the result of procreation (children) require effort, work may be seen as a fourth vital basic need. Barely less vital is mutual aid — which makes five vital, basic needs for guaranteeing the future of the human race. But 'man cannot live by bread alone' so we come to the secondary needs which, provided they are not put before the vital needs, can make life enjoyable. For, despite Holy Writ, if life is not to be enjoyed it is worthless.

It is the purpose of this dissertation to show that the elevation of secondary needs above those needs which are vital is at the root of so much of the misery that is the lot of mankind worldwide.

It is outrageous that most people learn and repeat old truths such as 'what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world yet lose his own soul', and the saying previously quoted, from the great religions which use, and are used by, governments who by their very nature deny every word of them. And it is tragic that the vital need for mutual aid is thwarted by them as in the case of the recent Ethiopian famines. The real purpose of governments and their religions is power and wealth — and it is folly to appeal to them for our basic needs. The lesson from history is that mutual destruction is the more likely outcome of their policies.

So, what are our secondary needs? They are activities which can make life enjoyable. They are leisure activities, such as arts, crafts, sport, learning, etc. — all very laudable pursuits indeed provided they are used for the benefit of

all and not taken over for the financial benefit of the few or accorded higher status than vital activities. To rate the artist above the farm labourer, the philosopher above the bricklayer or non-procreational sexual relationships above procreational sexual relationships is to chance dying from starvation under a hedge in isolation. Essential work should be more highly regarded than the non-essential, and mutual aid is our only real security. Secondary needs, when priorities are ignored, can become over-rated, artificial, useless, or positively dangerous. We must learn to recognise those 'needs' which are created by individuals and organisations for the purpose of gaining power and wealth for what they are worth. For it is the rich and powerful who form and support the governments which oppress us.

A prime example of a 'need' which is in the 'dangerous' category is 'drink', a popular euphemism for the stupefying, toxic and potentially addictive drug ethyl alcohol. It is a very big-money-spinner and source of Government revenue. Also, it is responsible for incalculable harm to the user and, most unfortunately, others who have the good sense to avoid it. As a social parasite it is disastrous.

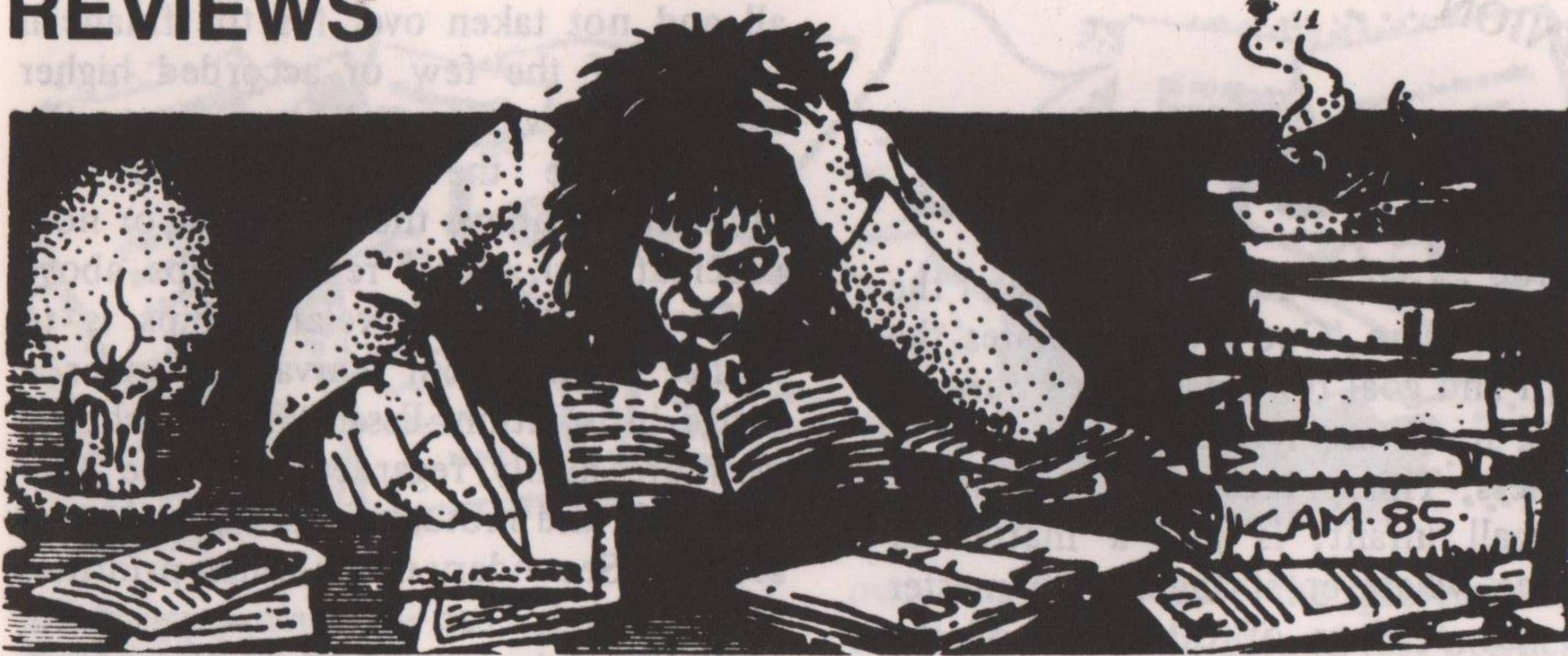
In the over-rated category we have the Rembrandts and the Dalis; the former, by general consent, excellent facsimiles capable to a degree of qualitative judgement but, in the latter case, subjective interpretations which defy assessment. Nor is it society alone that is the poorer for the deification of these artists and their works; the artists themselves, corrupted by adulation and wealth, can only pay dearly for the severely unbalanced lifestyle that is likely to ensue. Far better to devote the greater part of our lives to basic needs. When the arts become something more than a hobby, real enjoyment is at risk. 'All work and no play makes . . .' is a truth, but so is the other extreme, where 'the devil makes work for idle hands'.

Finally, it needs stressing that the most dangerous 'need', which for most people is 'basic', is the need for strong government. Like the fathers who assert that 'children must be seen but not heard', governments oppress their peoples. It is no wonder that governments, who give certain freedoms of belief to adults, allow those adults the right to press their beliefs upon their children. Children are a vital, basic need but of course, to governments, they are expendable. In truth the sovereignty of every child is paramount. And their mothers come a good second. And men will continue to fail until this is realised. When will we get our priorities right?

EC



## REVIEWS



### Bigger Cages, Longer Chains

Larry Law

Spectacular Times, 90p

*'The world is full of ideologies that claim to offer freedom, but in reality simply offer us bigger cages and longer chains. The demand for an end to cages and chains may seem idealistic to some people, but the real idealists are those who think we can carry on as we are.'*

THIS quote admirably sums up the latest pamphlet from the Spectacular Times stable. Although containing much that is interesting and relevant to anarchists, it is perhaps even more appropriate to the left, comprising as it does of well-written and coherent critique of 'single issue' politics, from the peace movement and CND, to religion, 'alternative' investment companies, trade unions, charities, rock music, even workers' co-operatives.

Generously laced with black humour (let's face it, if you didn't laugh you'd have to cry), the pamphlet takes the piss out of assorted (mainly left-wing) personalities and organisations, using the familiar, neat device of press cuttings, whereby the system and its apologists stand condemned by their own words. The whole is tied together by the author's analysis of society as a spectacle, which offers us only the image of opposition and not the reality.

One concession the author makes to single issue campaigns is on the animal rights movement, whose critique of 'speciesism' he equates with a critique of hierarchical power itself: 'Its commitment to direct action, and a refusal to compromise or negotiate, has enabled it to cause more damage and grief to its enemies than the entire British revolutionary left put together'.

Although the author states that it was neither possible nor the intention to produce an encyclopaedia of spurious opposition, the pamphlet does a pretty good job of it in its 70-odd pages. But those two perennial issues among opposition groups of all persuasions — anti-racism and anti-sexism — are not covered, precisely because they 'have been largely recuperated as single issue campaigns,

with the attendant absurdities and contradictions'. But again, the author thinks that 'It is because these critiques carry at their heart a critique of power itself that they have attracted so much attention from those in power — and made the recuperation of these critiques (in particular as "multiculturalism" and "equal opportunities") a matter of urgency'.

There is more thought-provoking stuff for anarchists in a very effective attack on terrorism, for so long the excuse for smear campaigns and crackdowns against the anarchist movement. The author recognises terrorism for the state monopoly that it is, and identifies those organisations who use it against the status quo as merely would-be governments, whose bombs 'come in cars and bags because they don't yet have an airforce.' Terrorists aim to create a situation where they can usurp the role of the existing ruling class: 'Like all governments they claim to act in the interests of the people, at the same time as they murder them'. The author makes a distinction, though, between terrorism and guerrilla action, such as the attacks on property carried out by the animal rights movement or those that occurred during the miners' strike. These groups, he says, arise from popular resistance movements and do not seek to become elite or vanguard.

The last section contains a critique of the anarchist movement and calls for a theory of how to start building the world we really want without relying solely on seizing control of the workplace. After all, says the author, organising workers only as workers in their existing workplaces simply ensures the continuation of work, and who wants to collectivise Thorpe Theme Park?!

Not everyone will agree with all the arguments in this pamphlet, but it should work wonders for those on the left who come across it. So seek out all your Marxist and Labour Party friends and if you can't persuade them to shell out for a copy, make them a present of it. And don't forget to read it yourself. This excellent little publication is well produced, and a snip at 90p.

The Autodidact

### SCUM Manifesto

Valerie Solanas

AIM and Phoenix Press, 75p

THIS version uses the same text as the 1983 edition published by the Matriarchy Study Group.

Valerie Solanas' SCUM Manifesto was written in 1967 and published in 1968, the year she shot and wounded Andy Warhol. Twenty years on the urgency of the Manifesto remains cool, precise.

No genuine social revolution can be accomplished by the male, as the male on top wants the status quo, and all the male on the bottom wants is to be the male on top. The male 'rebel' is a farce; this is the male's 'society', made by him to satisfy his needs. He's never satisfied, because he's not capable of being satisfied. Ultimately, what the male 'rebel' is rebelling against is being male. The male changes only when forced to do so by technology, when he has no choice, when 'society' reaches the stage where he must change or die. We're at that stage now; if women don't get their asses in gear fast, we may very well all die.

In order to avoid such a catastrophe Valerie Solanas puts forward a case for the elimination of all human males together with the abolition of government and the money system, and for instituting complete automation. The how and why succinctly reveals a complex yet decisive highway with only one exit for those with complete genes. Try stepping to one side into a space or moment not dominated, subverted or conditioned, then if you are male, the Manifesto will fill it for you with gender. Male being an inept, corrupt, cowardly and deceitful corner of the gender triad. Crucially a hindrance to and negation of the evolving social revolutionary drive. Reading the text may at times cause you to laugh out loud (as I did) but not because it is comical. The release of pleasure comes when barely cognised occurrences are realised and confirmed, occurrences easily passed over in the chaos of everyday living. There is no let up, no respite, as she makes conscious and transparent insights into socio-sexual politics that otherwise have continued to lack meaning or context. An everyday meaning, contextually at the level of human discourse and interaction; love, music, grooviness. The accuracy of the document is confirmed by looking at examples of daily life from a SCUM perspective. For instance, the pop song Chain Reaction features repulsive lyrics written by a male production process and sung by a Daddy's Girl. DJs at the BBC have records banned for their sexually suggestive lyrics, e.g. Relax,



and yet blissfully ignore such explicit and gross aberrations like Chain Reaction. Relax insipidly undermines and is detrimental to male sexuality. A male DJ first suggesting the ban. Whilst Chain Reaction equates loving with nuclear explosions. The biggest gun yet for getting off.

If it hasn't happened already SCUM is the kind of 'controversial' text ripped off, vivisected, re-presented (film, theatre, TV, academic research) by the spectacle to be comfortably absorbed, passively consumed together with all the other consumerabilia. However, some of us are not so easily conned and can recognise ourselves in each other. For those the reality of the message is merely consolidated after SCUM Manifesto.

Andrew Jackson

### The Arrogance of Uncontested Power

Laurens Otter

Wrekin Libertarians 30p

At first glance this appears to be a critique of power in general and the title reinforces this view. The 28-page pamphlet begins with the unexplained case of the three men arrested in London last year for offences including impersonating police officers; possession of classified government papers; conspiracy to kidnap political refugees — you know the sort of thing. They were thought to have been South African agents. Strangely enough, however, the DPP ruled that the vast amount of evidence gathered by the police was not enough to justify prosecution, and they were swiftly deported. No attempt was made to justify this blatant evasion of the legal system. Next, the author discusses *Spycatcher* and Wright's allegations that MI5 subverted both the Heath and Wilson governments. But the pamphlet is mainly concerned with one particular episode in the recent history of power relations: the murder in 1984 — by persons unknown — of Ms Hilda Murrell, internationally recognised rose-grower, opponent of nuclear power, and aunt of Lt Commander Rob Green, RN, an intelligence officer at Fleet HQ, Northwood, during the Falklands War, since resigned.

Laurens Otter's interest stems from his personal involvement in aspects of the case. He recounts events during his brief acquaintance with Hilda Murrell; events which now seem far more significant than he thought at the time. Ms Murrell was due to hand over to him officially secret documents relating to, amongst other things, the Sizewell B proposed PWR, for publication in *Peace News*, but she never reached the rendezvous. She was abducted, and found stabbed to death in a wood three days later. No-one has ever been arrested in connection with her murder, and the documents have never

been found. An apparently amateurish attempt was made to make it look like a burglary gone wrong, but Otter does not believe this or the other various police stories, nor do most people. In a bizarre final twist to the story, Hilda was seen by many people being driven by her abductor(s), in broad daylight, through the centre of Shrewsbury, where she was well-known, before being dumped in the wood. Otter believes this was a deliberate flaunting of the victim in public, such as he says the 'security' forces do in Northern Ireland — hence his use of the word 'arrogance' in the title.

It is thought by some, though this is not clear, that Ms Murrell's documents included secret information on the circumstances surrounding the sinking of the *Belgrano*. What is known is that much sensitive information sent from Downing Street to the Task Force (including the *Belgrano* affair) went through her nephew at Northwood. But the author is inconclusive on this. He cannot believe that the State would have made such a bungled job of getting rid of an elderly woman living alone and threatening to reveal embarrassing secrets. (Why not? — are State employees less fallible than the rest of us?) He comes close to blaming 'big business' for her death but does not pursue this. If by big business he means the nuclear industry, the State is still implicated, being through one agency or another, the

founder, banker, developer and monopoly customer of the industry, to name but a few roles. But even in the USA where the nuclear industry is, at least nominally, private, the ghost of Karen Silkwood testifies to its ruthlessness in disposing of its enemies. As it happens, it is known that private detectives have been investigating Sizewell B opponents since 1983.

What emerges from this pamphlet is a picture of a brave, elderly woman in possession of important information which the State is trying to hide. She knew she was being followed, but despite her fears she was still determined to make known what she had discovered. Unfortunately, someone in a position of power, in their arrogance, decided that secrecy was more important than Hilda Murrell's life.

The only complaints I would have about this pamphlet — and they are minor — are the rather idiosyncratic use of semi-colons, and a number of spelling mistakes. But at such good value, and with an attractive drawing on the front cover, they are hardly noticeable. Otter sheds some useful light on the Hilda Murrell case, updating and correcting previously published material, and his work would make excellent complementary reading to Graham Smith's *Death of a Rose Grower* (£2.50), both available from Freedom Bookshop.

KM



Illustration by Tristan Hill from *The Arrogance of Uncontested Power*



## LAND NOTES

# Those Yellow and Unpleasant Fields

TRAVELLING by bus through Southern England early this year I could not help noticing that this green and pleasant land had turned distinctly yellow. To the practised agricultural eye this meant that the nitrogen level was very low. The very heavy rainfall had no doubt washed the soluble chemically provided nitrogen into the water-ways and water table. As soon as the farmers can get on the land with their super-horsepower tractors they will no doubt put more of the stuff on, adding to ICI profits and the food mountains.

What has this to do with anarchism? If anarchism has anything to do with people controlling their own environment, a great deal.

The land is the most important of our common resources. It is potentially renewable but easily destroyed. Once the natural cover is removed the soil is open to erosion and damage, and in this year of heavy rainfall this has been starkly demonstrated. A neighbouring farmer opened a hedge from a vast field, previously created, onto a track, and the runoff through the opening deposited large amounts of top soil on the track. This was repeated many times over this year. The enormous tonnage of top soil eroded by modern farming practice is part of the personal capital of all of us.

Agriculture is the means by which many more of us can live on this planet, and if properly organised it could enable everyone to enjoy the fruits of the earth. However, if it becomes a means of exercising political and economic control (which it has), then considerations other than those of providing universal nourishment come into it. People all over the world are affected in several ways.

Good soil in the third world is taken over to supply the developed market and the soil left to supply the indigenous population is poorer and subject to more environmental pressure. The revenue derived from this trade only marginally gets to the people in those countries.

Another effect on the third world is that the subsidised agriculture of the developed countries competes unfairly with the peasant farmers of the third world. The failure of the green revolution, connected as it was with world multinational giants who produced seeds that would only respond to their expensive products, is a case in point.

Back to this country where the consequences of the agro-industry are likely to find themselves in water charges and other problems of cleansing the environment, paid by the consumer. To reverse the type of agriculture presently practised is going to take time and effort because of the failure to build on sound knowledge, with steady progress unaffected by political and financial considerations.

An agricultural book of 1822 shows how developed agriculture was in those days with the biological maintenance of soil nitrogen, careful planning of water-courses, of hedges, of ditches, and the construction of carts so that they could be more efficiently pulled. Short term gain at the expense of land was not considered by the author.

Now agriculture is all about short term gain for the few, and the consequences are pressing hard upon us.

Alan Albon

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