

FREEDOM

50p

ANARCHIST MAGAZINE

Volume 50 Number 3 March 1989 50p

**AUTHOR!
AUTHOR!**

PEOPLE with a sense of humour have a defence against the pain of being insulted. They can joke, for instance, that an insult from a buffoon is a compliment.

A deadly serious person has no such protection, and may find an insult unbearable. A humourless man who normally believes in the principle of equivalent compensation may make an exception if he is insulted: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, but a life for a word. And if there are credulous loonies who think it their duty to carry out the wishes of a humourless man, insulting him is a dangerous act.

For the author Salman Rushdie, the most dangerous passages in *The Satanic Verses* are those concerning a character called the Imam. 'We will make a revolution', says the Imam's muezzin, 'against the greatest of lies — progress, science, rights — against which the Imam has set his face. History is a deviation from the Path, knowledge is a delusion, because the sum of knowledge was complete on the day Allah finished his revelation to Mahound'. Elsewhere the Imam undertakes to show an example of love to an angel, and shows him an army of young people on a suicidal march towards machine guns. 'You see how they love me', says the Imam, 'No tyranny on earth can withstand the power of this slow, walking love'. And lest anyone should mistake the author's meaning, the angel says the obvious.

The real-life Imam, inconsolable at this insulting portrayal of himself, called upon all men of love and good will to murder the author and publishers of the fiction. Two humourless men in Bradford, not a lunatic fringe but the Administrator and one of the Secretaries of the Council of Mosques, supported the call and put fresh heart into Bradford's white racists. A charitable foundation in Iran offered a reward of one million US dollars to any foreigner, or three times that amount in Iranian currency to any Iranian, who killed the author.

Iranian politicians, trying to recover their wealth and their international standing after the disastrous war, put it about that the author would be forgiven if he apologised, so like a sensible chap he issued an apology



from his hiding place. With sigh of relief, the politicians announced that he was pardoned.

No he wasn't, shrieked the Ayatollah (or to be exact he instructed his muezzin to shriek). The insult was absolutely unforgiveable. Even if Rushdie repents, destroys his book, and becomes the most pious Muslim in history, it is still decreed that he must be killed, and then subjected forever to the torment of Hell.

The British have evacuated their embassy in Tehran and told the Iranian diplomats to leave London (though by some nicety of protocol 'diplomatic relations have not been severed'), European ambassadors have been simultaneously withdrawn, and Iranian politicians must be wanting to spit with frustration. These are resourceful men. They cannot sack the Ayatollah, but few will be surprised if he dies soon and suddenly. DR

FREEDOM

anarchist magazine

volume 50 number 3

March 1989

published by Freedom Press (in Angel Alley)
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

typeset by Mum's the Word

printed by Aldgate Press London E1 7QX

distributed to shops by A Distribution

ISSN 00 16-0504

SUBS PLEASE

Subscribers whose renewals fall due in December have not all renewed. Please take this as a reminder. (To find out whether your sub is due look at the number under your address on the address label. '48' indicates that your sub is overdue since December, '49' since January, and so on.) We need your subs comrades.

London

Anarchist Forum

Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square, WC1 (Behind Southampton Row, opposite Russell Square. Meetings start 8.00pm, Forum people usually in ground floor cafe beforehand).

Mar 3 David Dane: **Basic Ideas of Anarchism**

Mar 10 Peter Neville: **What is Anarchism?**

Mar 17 Open discussion

London ACF

Anarchist Communist Federation

First Thursday of every month 8.30pm

Marchmont Community Centre,
Marchmont Street, London WC1.

2 March: **Thatcher – the road to fascism?**

Sundays at 121

Sunday afternoon anarchist discussion meetings at 121 Bookshop, 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London SE24 (phone 01-274 6655). Vegan meals at 1 pm (donation) Discussion starts 2 pm.

12 March: **Welfare state or Mutual Aid?**

26 March: **Anarchism and Town Planning**

If child care is needed, please contact us a couple of days in advance. Access bad.

Organised by Brixton DAM,
BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX.

Donations

JANUARY 1989

Freedom Magazine Fund

Wolverhampton JL £4; Keighley DG £3; London NW1 AA £2; London SE26 JA £6; London W8 PC £4; London E8 SR £20; Hitchin LA £5; Birmingham JP £4; Glasgow JTC £2; South Wirral SC £2; Blackburn DC 50p; Sittingbourne PK £2; Tunbridge Wells BL £2; Tewksbury KL £2; Shrewsbury AJL £2; Colchester TJJ £4; Walton-on-Thames DP £6; Bristol CJP £12; Ilford IP £3; Bolton DP £2; Bangor MS £2; Witham CPS £8; New York CG £5.50; Vancouver JRD £2; London N21 ATT £2; London E16 RV £3; Abingdon PH 20p; Perth ZK £5; London N17 NIB £3; Barking TAS £1; Gloucester TJA £3; London per DR £200; New York FT £23; Pwllheli MJ £4; Morecombe RAD £6; Ilford JH £2; Manchester RSW £10; Coventry DJN £3; Bath D 38p; Gloucester A £3; Vancouver GB £4; Oxford KB £2; Inverness D McI £2; Wolverhampton JL £6; Southampton JFW £2; Gateshead GD £5; Exmouth ABH £1.10; Edmonton Alberta HB £25; Bishopstoke CB £3; Chelmsford EA £1; Workinham P £6; London GAE £1.

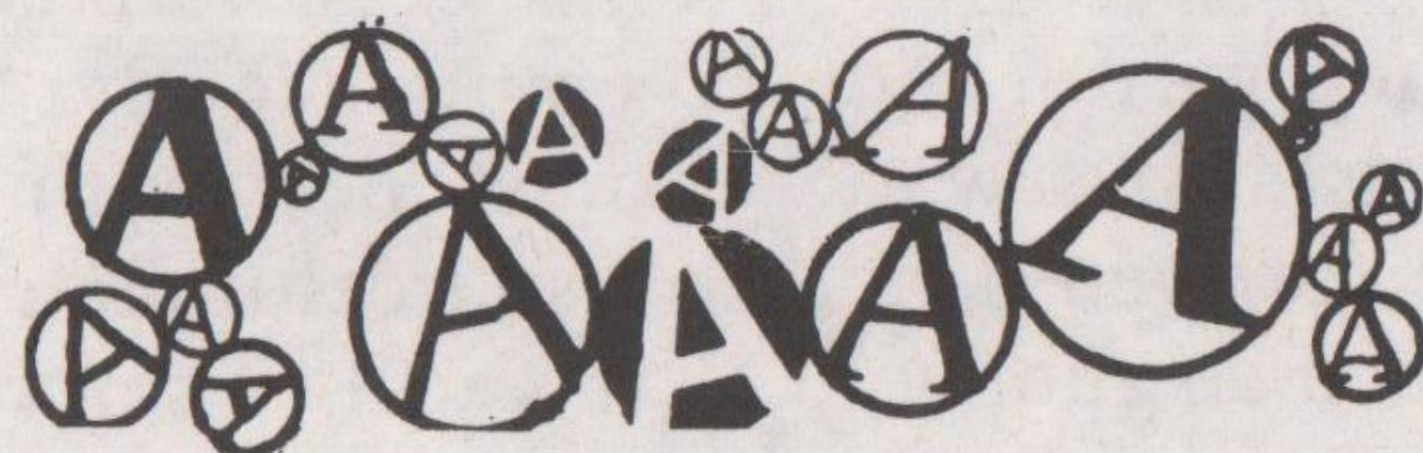
1989 JANUARY TOTAL = £431.68

Freedom Press Overheads Fund*

Wolverhampton JL £6; Keighley DG £3; London E8 SR £4; Bishops Stortford NA £1; Hitchin LA £5; Tunbridge Wells BL £2; Tewkesbury KL £2; Colchester TO £3; Bristol CJP £2; Ilford IP £3; Bangor MS £2; Witham CPS £8; New York CG £3; Retford FO £2.30; Nottingham AH £2; Vancouver JRD £2; Cacombe GH 80p; London ATT £2; Oxford BEH £10; London E16 RV £3; London W3 DW £1; Perth ZK £5; Sheppey RM £2.10; Bristol PT £1.10; London N17 NIB £3; Barking TAS £1; Gloucester TJA £3; London per DR £50; New York FT £20; Ilford JH £2; Troy, New York DW £5.50; Coventry DJN £3; Kamakuri, Japan TS £2; Gloucester A £3; Vancouver GB £3; Oxford KB £2; Wolverhampton JL £9; London N3 DD £2.50; London E1 AG £3; Gateshead GD £5; East Bingham PB £7; Kersey CW £10; Edmonton, Alberta HB £25; Bishopstoke CB £3; Birmingham AJP £6; Liverpool RE £1; Wokingham P £5.

1989 JANUARY TOTAL = £252.30

* We have changed the name from 'Premises Fund' to make it clearer what this fund goes for, i.e. telephone bills, heating, rates, etc.



Lee House

Lee House Community Centre

now has its vegan cafe open, serving hot meals for less than a pound. From Thursday to Sunday (3pm to 8pm) household work in the kitchens of Hackney ceases to be a chore and instead the cafe collective at Lee House is hard pushed to produce enough food for all.

The bookshops stock of radical literature is constantly increasing. Workshops such as photography, shiatsu and printing are functioning. There is a creche facility for the duration of the cafe and other Lee House events opening hours.

Lee House, 6A Rectory Road, Stoke Newington, London N16 E8.

Leslie's

Leslie's

Turner's Road, London E14

Tuesday & Thursday 6pm to 9pm

Saturdays 1pm to 4pm

Whole food co-op (cheap). Whole food snack bar. Squatters advice. Literature. (Mention of a 'bar' in our December notice apparently misled some people into thinking we would be serving alcohol. We are not. Apologies to all would-be boozers. Leslie's)



INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST FESTIVAL / CONFERENCE

SAN FRANCISCO 20-25 JULY 1989

The organisers are circulating a questionnaire asking what potential visitors would like to happen there. They may have funds available to help travelling expenses of foreigners. Contact **Elizabeth Burpee or Robert Perkinson, Bound Together Books, 1369 Haight Street, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA. Tel: (415) 653-2407.**

I AM trying to set up a photographers co-operative working with techniques like photomontage to produce political / propagandist work on a non-profit basis. I would love to hear from anyone interested in joining, or who would like further information, or can offer any help or advice. Of course it need not be limited to photography: there are other forms of visual media like film, video and painting and drawing that could be used. Or perhaps any creative writers, poets, musicians or singers might be interested in making it a more comprehensive arts collective. As I say, it is still in its conception stage, so I would love to hear from anyone.

Howard

c/o Rose Cottage, Milton Clevedon,
nr Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 6NT

The trouble with success

WOULD anarchists find capitalism acceptable if it were more efficient? The article 'Profit and Loss' (*Freedom*, Feb 1989) comes close to implying that they would. It lists the recent British disasters — the Zeebrugge ferry, Piper Alpha, Kings Cross, Clapham, Lockerbie, and the Boeing that crashed on the M1 — and ascribes them to 'a profit system which, as we have seen, is a killer'. If that is the anarchists' reason for objecting to capitalism, then avoidance of the errors, misjudgements, accidents and disputes immediately responsible for these and other horrors would be enough to satisfy them. Surely this is not so.

Under capitalism people die in wars they did not want and in accidents they did not cause; each year millions die from lack of nourishment. But if we control our emotional responses and think about it, it draws us to the question: How many *survive*? Far more survive under capitalism than were able to do so without it. The profit system is a killer but also, and far more, it is a life-bringer. The illustration that appeared with the article showed a figure of death with the caption 'The never changing face of capitalism'. The implied accusation is unjustified. During this capitalist century the number of living people has *grown*, from under two to over five thousand million, an

increase of human life never known before.

The article distinguishes between capitalism, causing disasters, and the 'ordinary' people who risk their own lives to save the victims. The distinction is imaginary. Those who left the bow doors open, misdesigned Piper Alpha, failed to clear the rubbish from Kings Cross, mixed up the wires at Clapham, and, probably, those who planted the Lockerbie bomb, were also 'ordinary' people; it is they who operate capitalism. 'Profit and Loss' speaks approvingly of the rescue teams at the oil rig (two of them died in the effort) and of the fire-fighters, but these are as much a part of capitalism as Boeing, P&O and the owners of Piper Alpha. Capitalism is not something separate from the 'ordinary' people, imposed on them in some incomprehensible way by a mysterious minority, but an effect produced by their actions (plus some small input from a few distinguished by having more money). If capitalism is to be blamed for the failures it must also be credited with the successes, and these far outweigh the failures.

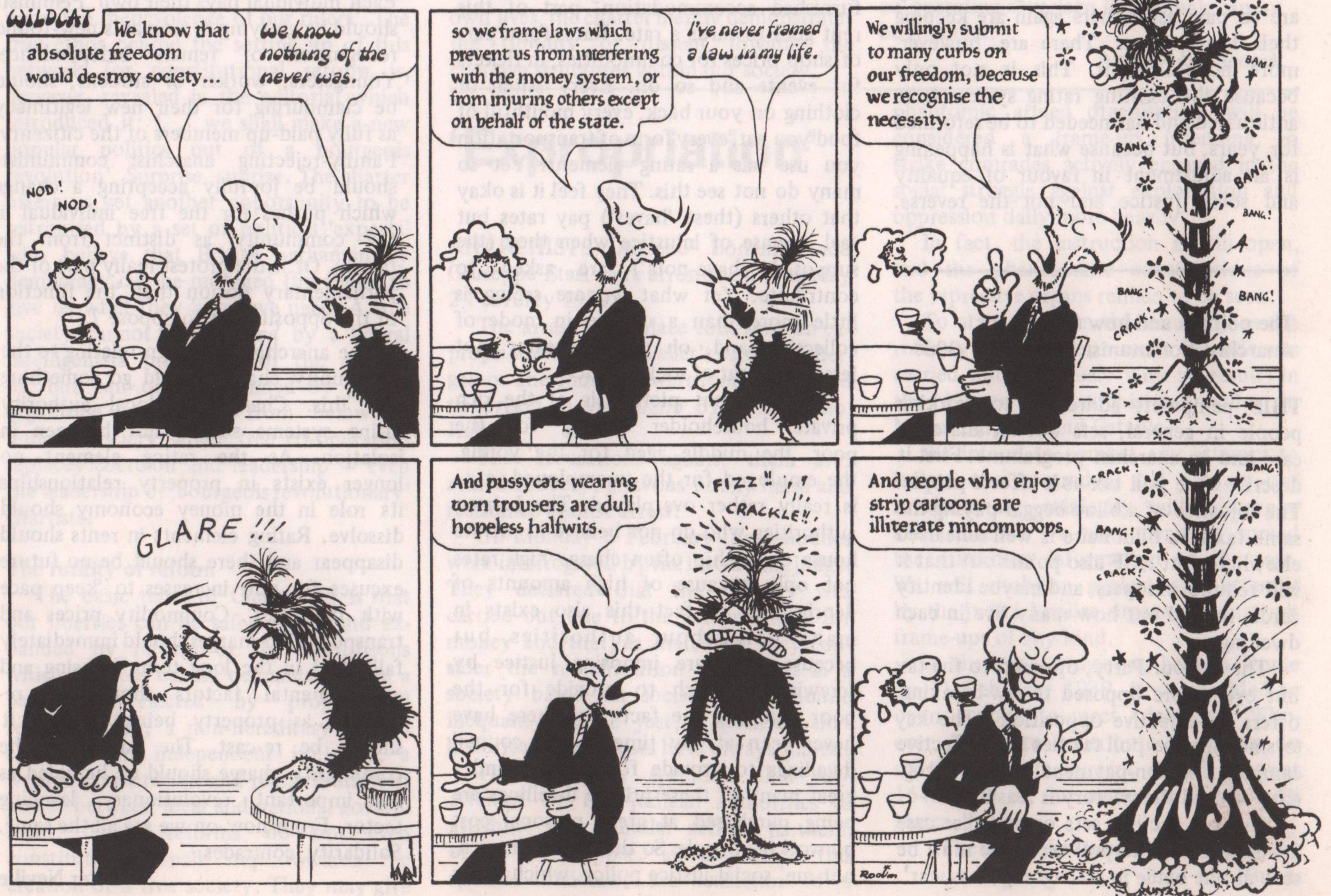
Here we reach the crux, because it is exactly this that is wrong with capitalism. The worst disasters it has caused, and the frightening prospects it opens now, come

from its *achievements*. The threat of sudden extinction comes from developing nuclear power, the destruction of the environment from growing technology, the insupportable growth of population from improvements in public health and production of food, the increasingly smooth integration of people into the hierarchy and the state system from growing skill in education and mass communication. The trouble with capitalism, already, is its astonishing, unbounded, unbalanced, uncontrolled success. No increase in its efficiency can ever render it acceptable to anarchists.

George Walford

The Japanese Education Ministry continues its rehabilitation of the past. Raising the national flag and singing the national anthem will become compulsory. The Minister thinks that if children don't respect their flag and their anthem, it is 'offensive' to other countries. Teachers who are unenthusiastic will have problems with their careers. References to alleged atrocities in the war are to be further diluted or removed entirely.

The British government is applying pressure for a return to a traditional approach to history education.



Questions on Poll Tax

THE Government is legislating to change the system of local government finance by abolishing the existing rating system on property and introducing a community charge on individual consumers (a poll or head tax). This is unpopular in many quarters as it will mean that although the new individual charges will be much less than the rates, many who do not pay the existing rates will suddenly have this new tax to cope with. As a consequence a great hubbub has developed. I am puzzled at two things. Firstly why are anarchists against the new community charge and secondly, as it is quite certain it will be introduced, why have anarchists not thought the thing through and started a campaign to cope with its operation?

It is of course understandable that people who see themselves notionally paying more are standing up and volubly protesting. Those on the left, and some anarchists, keep talking about social justice and the effects on the poor ignoring the fact that the government will cushion the poor against the tax simply because it is administratively meaningless trying to collect a tax from those that have nothing to give. The left are demonstrating a new use of the term 'the silent majority'. Others are either more gleeful with the thought that they are to pay less; others again are keeping their heads down. There are, however, more hopeful signs. This is not only because the existing rating system is so antiquated and has needed to be reformed for years, but because what is happening is an adjustment in favour of equality and social justice and not the reverse.

The poll tax and how to fight it

Anarchist Communist Federation 30p

THIS pamphlet, addressed to working people in general, sets out an anarchist case and an anarchist programme. First it describes the poll tax as it affects people. The injustice of a blind beggar paying the same tax as a billionaire is well rehearsed elsewhere, but ACF also points out that it will require snoopers, and maybe identity cards, to find out how many live in each dwelling.

The Labour Party, opposed to the tax but even more opposed to law-breaking, offers no effective opposition. 'The key to smashing the poll tax lies in an effective campaign of non-payment', and it is cogently argued that victory is feasible.

The last section sets out a fuller case for anarchism; 'the poll tax battle must be seen as one battle in an ongoing class war.'

Those opposing the community charge have simply not thought their opposition through.

When the rating system was introduced it was essentially property related. It commenced with the Tudor Poor Law, developed with public health legislation and towards the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries acquired new relevance with the development of education, policing, housing, social services and the like. As there was no civil service or local government, in the bureaucratic sense, it was easier to collect from the identifiable property owners. Nowadays the state and local government have quite sophisticated administrative and accounting systems it is quite meaningless to continue the old system.

One of the problems of the rating system is that people still see it in property-related input and community-related output terms. It looks as though the rates are paid by the 'haves' and consumed by the 'have-nots'. The reality is much more complex. There is both a visible and an invisible agenda. Rates are paid visibly to local authorities in lump sums either by property owners or those renting unfurnished accommodation, but in fact everyone pays rates invisibly.

For instance if you pay rent for furnished accommodation, part of this rent goes towards a rate. Rates form part of shop prices for commodities, in tickets for events and so on. Every stitch of clothing on your back, every mouthful of food you eat, every form of transportation you use has a rating element. Yet so many do not see this. They feel it is okay that others (these 'haves') pay rates but feel a sense of injustice when they (the supposed 'have-nots') are asked to contribute. Yet what we are seeing is little more than a change in mode of collection and, oh yes, a greater, not lesser, amount of social justice.

The apparent picture is of the rich private householder paying for the poor, the middle aged for the young, the employed for the unemployed, etc., is really rather overplayed. The Labour authorities who do not believe in private house ownership often charge high rates not only because of high amounts of deprivation, in fact this also exists in many non-Labour authorities, but because they are imposing justice by screwing the rich to provide for the poor, ignoring the fact that there have never been at any time enough council dwellings to provide for demand and a great many of these private dwellings are being purchased at great personal cost by working people. So the 'screw the rich, not me' social justice policy, which many

who oppose the change want to continue, really means 'pass the buck on to someone else' who might have just the same income and commitments as those subsidised. This might have a relationship to the strong Tory working class vote.

The existing rating system's operation is grossly unfair in its mechanics of operation. For instance, one's rating is increased if one's property is double, rather than single, fronted. This means that single people, the young, first time buyers, often those on lower incomes, occupying flats pay more than those occupying houses. This has had a major effect on building styles over the past two centuries. Those L-shaped terrace houses were built not for architectural reasons but in response to the rating system. That frontage is more important than depth is a major characteristic of modern British society at many levels, philosophically as well as architecturally.

The new system will move the agenda away from property (the payer) to the individual (the consumer) which in social justice terms appears much fairer. Is this not a better system? Why the opposition from so many anarchists? Or are we addressing the change from the viewpoint of a typically male chauvinist patriarchal male who thinks in terms of a family rate bill to be paid by him and him alone? Surely the changing in proposed rating system must lead to a change in attitude. Each individual pays their own. Feminists should be glorying in woman's new-found recognition of female independence. Youngsters, worker or student, should be clamouring for their new legitimacy as fully paid-up members of the citizenry. Family-rejecting anarchist communists should be joyfully accepting a change which pushes for the free individual in the community as distinct from the family. Or is the protest really part of the parliamentary notion that 'the function of the opposition is to oppose'?

The anarchist campaign relating to the community charge should go something like this. Changes in local authority rating systems should not be seen in isolation. As the rating element no longer exists in property relationships its role in the money economy should dissolve. Rating elements in rents should disappear and there should be no future excuses for rent increases to 'keep pace with the rates'. Commodity prices and transportation charges should immediately fall. And in the long term, housing and environmental factors should be re-thought as property being unrated, it should be re-cast. The advent of the community charge should be heralded as an important revolutionary levelling factor. From now on we are all the same. Solidarity, comrades.

Peter Neville

A Charter for Freedom???

'... we will never recognise the institutions; we will take or win all possible reforms in the spirit that one tears occupied territory from the enemy's grasp in order to go on advancing, and we will always remain enemies of every government...' - Errico Malatesta

NEW STATESMAN AND SOCIETY announced Charter 88 with a fanfare on 2nd December. The Charter, consisting of a set of demands for the safeguarding of our civil rights, was accompanied by articles cataloguing recent abuses of state power and a list of celebrity signatories (representing a variety of professions and a number of disparate 'left-of-centre' political positions).

A managerial approach

The poster-style front cover of *New Statesman and Society* may have misled readers into drawing the conclusion that it had become an anarchist weekly, since it proclaimed: 'To make our freedoms REAL, we must for the first time TAKE them by RIGHT' (their emphasis). At first glance Charter 88 seems to be an encouraging development. It is acknowledged that we are less free than the media would have us believe, and it is pointed out that our liberty depends upon the 'benevolence of our rulers'. The true ethos behind the setting up of this network for constitutional reform is, however, revealed in the editorial which introduced it: '... we shall make a new popular politics out of a bourgeois revolution'. Surprise, surprise. The charter offers us yet another opportunity to be patronised by a set of political 'experts' who believe that British parliamentary democracy can be managed (by them) to give us what they know we need. A free society cannot be imposed by a liberal intelligentsia on behalf of the rest of us, but can only be gained by people organising themselves from below to build a society where free co-operation replaces coercion and leadership - even the leadership of 'bourgeois revolutionary' chartists!

The futility of reform

The basic tenet of Charter 88 is that our liberties can be safeguarded and expanded by reform of the institutions which oppress us. Its demands include a parliament elected by proportional representation, a non-hereditary second chamber, an independent judiciary, a written constitution and redistribution of power between local and national government. These reforms do not even constitute a small step towards the creation of a free society. They may give

us a new oligarchy, or merely force the present ruling class to use these new mechanisms of the state apparatus to retain control over us. The chartists also make the error of assuming that the totality of state power resides with the elected governing bodies. If implemented, the charter would do nothing to limit the abuses of our liberty by the hidden power elites in industry, the armed forces and the civil service.

Anthony Lester QC, writing in support of Charter 88 in *The Guardian*, points out that '... a group of citizens temporarily in office can use their legislative majority to deprive another group of fellow citizens of their most basic rights and freedoms...' Lester believes that, by meeting the charter's demand for legal remedies for abuse of state power by government officials, the state can safeguard our liberties. I am reminded of my first job: new employees were informed that they need not join a union, since the management-controlled staff association would present their grievances to management! This is no more paradoxical than the assumption, fundamental to Charter 88, that state agencies will limit the extent of state power. Instead of suggesting ways in which we can gain more control over our own lives, the charter merely demonstrates the timidity of dissent towards the coercive structures within our society.

'Expropriation'

ANARCHISTS Alfredo Bonanno and Giuseppe Stasi were arrested on Thursday 2 February 1989.

The arrest took place following an expropriation in a jeweller's shop in Bergamo. The comrades were then transferred to prison in via Gleno 61 - Bergamo, Italy.

The accusations against them are: armed robbery, grievous bodily harm and resistance against arrest.

On Monday 6 February the comrades were interrogated by the instructing judge. They declared that the robbery was carried out due to the personal need for money and that, as anarchists, they consider the redistribution of wealth in a society based on social and economic inequality to be just, a position that historically anarchists have always shared.

The comrades specified that any attempt by the judicial authorities to attribute other similar actions to them, or to presuppose, starting from this specific incident, the existence of a

The tyranny of institutions

The debate initiated by Charter 88 has demonstrated that there are many people, with vastly different political perspectives, who are alarmed at the erosion of civil liberties in the UK. It is regrettable that the charter's proposed solutions to state abuses merely involve making minor adjustments to the machinery of government. The 'bourgeois revolutionaries' backing the charter share an alarming complacency about the nature of our governing structures. They seem to believe that if the state's institutions are made a little more accountable, abuses of power will be prevented. Their proposed Bill of Rights, enshrining basic civil liberties, could easily be suspended by a dictatorial government (perhaps with the excuse of a 'national crisis').

This anaemic and timorous document, purporting to represent a radical panacea for the ills of society, is merely a desperate reaction to the excesses of the Thatcher administration. Only when it is recognised that the seeds of tyranny are sown in all governing bodies will a small step towards a free society be taken. While decisions which affect our lives are entrusted to political institutions and small groups of professional politicians, a society of co-operating sovereign individuals cannot be founded.

Andrew Hedgecock

phantomic armed organisation, will be considered a frame-up intending to strike comrades actively engaged in the social struggle against exploitation and oppression daily more heavily.

In fact, the instruction is still open, and the phantomatic constructions of the repressive organs remain to be seen.

To start with, on the same day as the robbery took place, a series of raids was carried out (obviously with no result) in the homes of anarchist comrades in Milan, Bergamo and Catania.

We intend to combat any attempt to isolate the comrades, and express our revolutionary solidarity with Giuseppe and Alfredo. We also mean to spread the maximum information on the case. We will mobilise against any attempt by the judicial-police organs to construct frame-ups of any kind.

In the general meeting held in Rome on 11 February 1989, it was decided to open a fund to meet trial costs. Whoever desires to contribute to it can do so through the current postal account 16464950 in the name of Carmela Di Marca, Catania.

The anarchists present at the meeting in Rome.

Revolution and Free Will

I DON'T believe complete revolution is inevitable. Marx's emiseration thesis states that the polarisation between rich and poor in capitalist Europe will lead to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Marx was a positivist; that is, he believed that society must be studied scientifically, in the same way that natural scientists study amoeba, chemicals, atoms etc. The same laws of cause and effect that control the behaviour of matter are applied to society; a given stimulus produces a given response; the proletariat would be made so poor by the logic of capitalism (the pursuit of profit) that they would realise their common cause and rebel, creating a socialist system and the end of history (history being the various conflicts between differential power groups). The replacement of the aristocracy by the bourgeoisie as the main holders of political power is a historical parallel.

It would be too simplistic to say that Marx denied free will altogether; he believed that the success of the revolution depended to a large degree on the actions of a small number of activists, engines of the revolution. But he greatly ignored the possibility of other responses being elicited by the experience of poverty. There are a number of conceivable reactions other than insurgence to increased poverty: apathy, defeatism, self-destruction (anger turned inwards and acts of spite that don't achieve, or even hope to achieve change. Government policies of divide and rule encourage identifiable and vulnerable groups to be scapegoated as a channel for frustration-induced aggression.

Bloody revolutions are characterised by revenge, as the victims of exploitation repay their oppressors in kind (violence). Murder is the most authoritarian of acts and so we see the repressive, totalitarian Tsarist state in Russia replaced by another such regime, this time under the banner of 'socialism'. Deviant intellectuals were killed and persecuted both before and after. The same paranoia that distinguished the old administration infests the new one.

This persecution complex is something that seems to be associated with great power, and leads often to the amassing of even greater power in the form of an arms race, which in turn leads to further paranoia. It is analagous to the development of a baby; imagining itself to be omnipotent (the distinction between self and mother is not yet clear) it projects its own destructive wishes onto the 'bad breast' (ie the mother who is late to feed it) and then feels paranoid; the bad breast wants to destroy the baby, so the baby is afraid for its safety.

Developments in the twentieth century have rendered Marx's class analysis

rather obsolete. The expansion of the service sector has led to a growing middle class (including large numbers of well-paid managers and administrators) and an ever shrinking proletariat, something he did not foresee. The class situation has now become slightly more complex than the simple division between those that own property (wealth that produces wealth) and those that do not. Many working class people own their own homes — a source of wealth. There are a growing number of people in a higher socio-economic class (on the Registrar General's scale) than their parents were. Even the 'traditional working class' (manual labour) are much better off than two or three generations ago. Further, the advent of the Labour Party has demonstrated that it is possible to achieve power without individual wealth, fostering the illusion of



a democratic meritocracy.

But the expansion of the service sector in the form of clerical, professional and managerial posts etc., cannot continue indefinitely. The 'booming' economy can be seen to be precarious from the number of city jobs lost in the last few months (most are not as well publicised as those at Morgan Grenfell). 50,000 more are predicted to go in 1989. The October crash has made people nervous. Large investments mean a greater distance to fall, so finance companies are now rationalising staff rather than expanding.

There is certainly an element of polarisation or emiseration going on, but not in the way Marx predicted. While a lot of working class people who have jobs enjoy a relatively high standard of living (much of which is due to easy credit terms on homes, cars, TVs and other consumer durables) the poor are becoming increasingly marginalised: low-paid jobs are on the increase; social security payments, already low and hard to obtain in order to discourage 'laziness' (a universal minimum allowance scheme would actually be cheaper than the present targetted benefit system), are being made more discretionary (social fund grants have not been paid to some people because they're too poor to pay them back!); the increasing number of elderly and mentally ill at large (due to mental hospitals being replaced by 'care'

in the community) means that more people are giving up their jobs to become carers. The young are among the worst affected. Sixteen and seventeen year olds who refuse YTS are no longer entitled to independent benefit (its probably no coincidence that they're too young to vote); students are no longer entitled to benefit in the summer holiday (and surely there aren't enough jobs for *all* of them from June to October). In some areas, teenage girls are getting pregnant and becoming one-parent families simply to get away from their parents and the dole and to get council housing. In the south, the development of much rented accommodation into expensive flats has led to a squat boom as the numbers of homeless soars.

Under Thatcher, the top 5% have become richer, the bottom 50% poorer, and the bottom 10% poorer still. As usual, the least powerful have suffered most. Yet there is a mood of fatalism among the poor and many of the opponents of Thatcher, engendered by her sophistry and her projected image of stubborn, machine-like invincibility. The emiseration thesis didn't pay enough attention to 'false consciousness' (though many modern Marxists do), whereby the oppressed fail to see the nature of their own oppression.

There are more important elements of revolution than polarisation, which Marx only touched upon with his idea of the vanguard of individuals dedicated to an idea. As a statist, he saw such phenomena as being limited to a powerful few. As grass-roots revolutionaries, anarchists can modify the implication of indispensibility to usefulness and apply this concept to propagandists, support groups and others around the world advocating not obedience to their particular dogma, but responsibility and power to all.

The important difference between the subject matter of the natural sciences and that of the social sciences is that, unlike matter, human beings have a choice. The great mass of people may well be gratefully marching towards their own annihilation, deluded by notions of 'free enterprise' (freedom for those with enough money to pay for it) and 'individual responsibility' (individuals are responsible for exploitation as much as the State); but there remains the possibility that they *can* turn around and demand real freedom.

There are too many variables to take into account to make accurate scientific predictions like Marx attempted to. The nature of 'human nature' means that anything is possible and nothing inevitable. Economic forces may push and pull us, but ultimately we determine economic forces. The ball is in our court.

Johnny Yen

Nationalisation. Privatisation.

Exploitation.

RECENTLY the Tory press has again been introducing the idea of privatising prisons by pointing to the so-called success of American private prisons, and in particular the scheme deployed there that puts the prisoner to work using a market wage structure and allowing the prisoners to save up wages for discharge. On face value the notion that prisoners should have the chance of employment and the chance to save appears to be very good. However, let's not be fooled by a plank in the eye: What this politicking of prisoner's rights (lack of them) is really about is to do more with the question of control of conditions. The idea that the prisoner should contribute to his/her upkeep by paying board and lodgings fees which should be deducted from a commercial rate of pay they might receive reveals a little more of the real underlying intention of opening up this debate. The motivation is not to improve the prisoners' lot but to soften the public up ready for a furtherance of Tory ill-thought-out rhetoric by the privatisation of prisons.

In reality British prisoners have always contributed to their board and lodgings, but in an indirect fashion. For instance young prisoners in the Midlands being employed to work a 40-hour week on light electronic component construction work sent into the prison by outside firms unable to recruit outside employees because of low rates of pay. The young prisoners were paid only an average of £1.20 per week whilst the Home Office no doubt received a contribution from the said firm for fulfilling their contract. Other indirect contributions would be prisoners employed for 40-hour weeks and paid only an average £2 per week for building construction work on prison extensions, alterations, and the building of new prisons. In addition to this all prison clothing, furniture and shoes are made by prisoners under the same employment conditions. All cooking and butchering of food is also done by prisoners for the same rates of pay and similar bad conditions. Also Post Office mail bags are still hand-sewn by prisoners for the same rates of pay and bad conditions. It is without doubt that the prisoner has historically and in modern times contributed consistently towards his/her upkeep.

The notion that it is a new idea that the prisoner should contribute towards his/her board and lodgings is flim flam that disguises the truth. However, the proposal that prisoners should receive

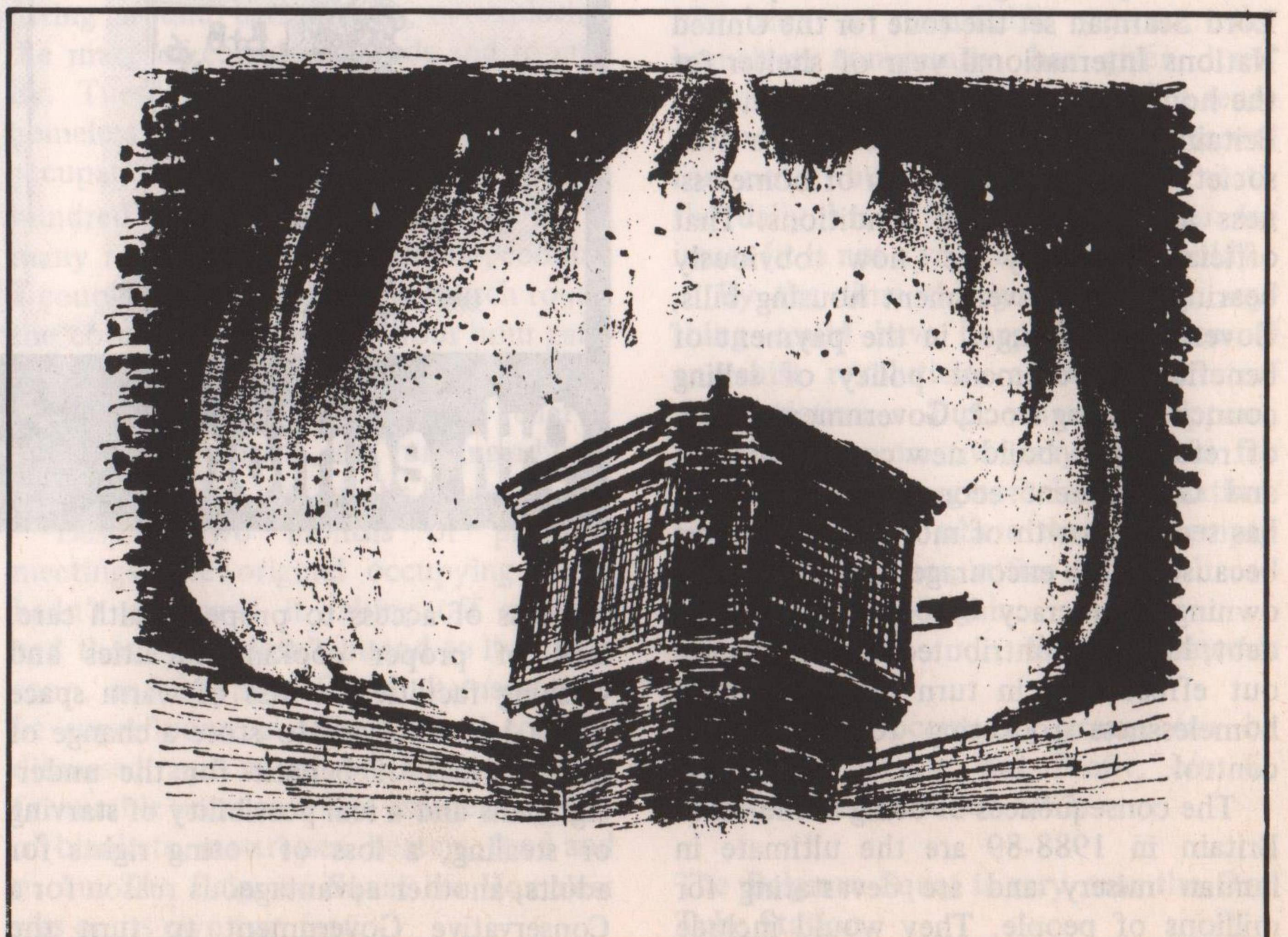
commercial rates for their labour resulting in a saved lump sum for discharge could go some way to solving accommodation and immediate clothing problems at the crucial time to re-entry into society. A lump sum would also help to bridge the social gulf normally experienced at discharge time. For many long-term prisoners it can be quite a shocking adjustment to realise that the price of a modern pint of beer is equal to a London to Glasgow train fare at the time of their admission. The problem remains that the notion of commercial rates of pay and allowing the prisoner to save is basically an empty and hollow concept whilst present constraining prison rules exist or, if as suggested, compulsory board and lodging deductions are subtracted.

Present prison rules stipulate that all convicted prisoners must work when ordered by an officer. The type of work prisoners are forced to do would include all tasks already mentioned plus floor scrubbing and cleaning jobs at the same low rates of pay and bad working conditions. If the prisoner refuses to work then he/she can be charged with an internal offence and thus appear before the Governor at an internal tribunal behind closed doors. The prisoner will not be entitled to any legal representation. These tribunals wield tremendous power and can force the prisoner to serve up to an extra six months for each offence on top of the ordinary sentence already

being served. The refusing to work charge in many cases can be repeatedly used on the same prisoner, allowing the authorities the unchallengeable opportunity to ensure unco-operative prisoners serve out every day of their sentence. The lack of legal representation, already condemned by the law society, and the lack of trade union representation in prisons have been the two most outright reasons why the exploitation of the prisoner in the workplace has gone uncontested for decades.

Unless the prisoner is protected by both access to legal representation and union representation plus a substantial change and monitoring of internal prison rules, then it remains the case that all proposed work schemes will be viewed as a continuation of the exploitation of the prisoner. Exploitation that would include paying 15 year olds an average £1.50 for a 40-hour week consisting of scrubbing floors. The question of privatisation or nationalisation is one of improvement or deterioration in the conditions of prisons. The fundamental question of 'why imprison non-violent offenders' remains unanswered or unjustified. The morality of enforcing a person to pay a board and lodging fee to either the Government or a private company when imprisoning them against their own free will should be most concerning for anarchists. The right to refuse work (or strike) should be enshrined in the system to protect prisoners against exploitation in the workplace. The present internal rules ensure that a 'vegan' prisoner can be made to do butchering work if ordered to, or lose time for refusing to work.

CA



Homelessness increasing

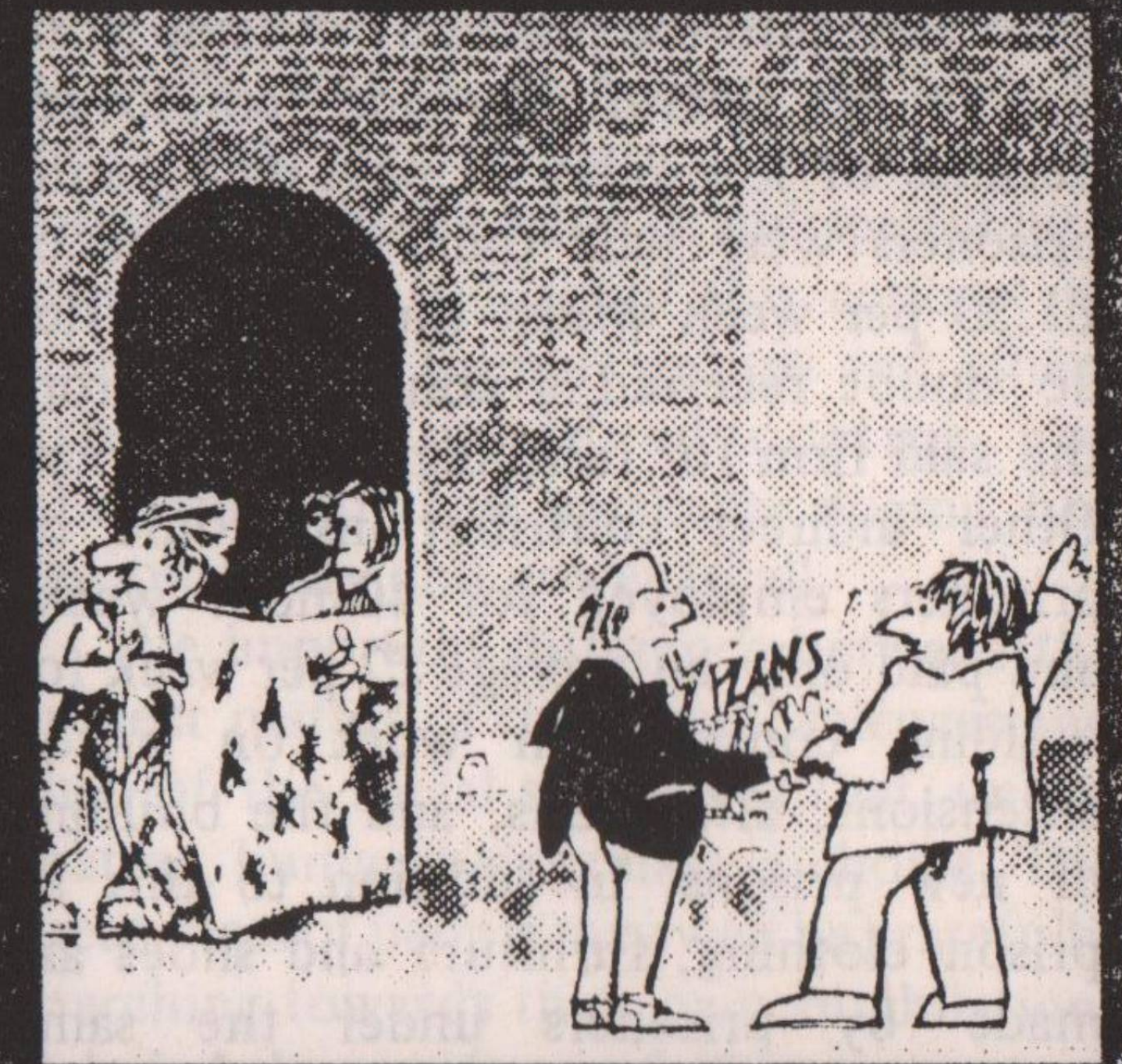
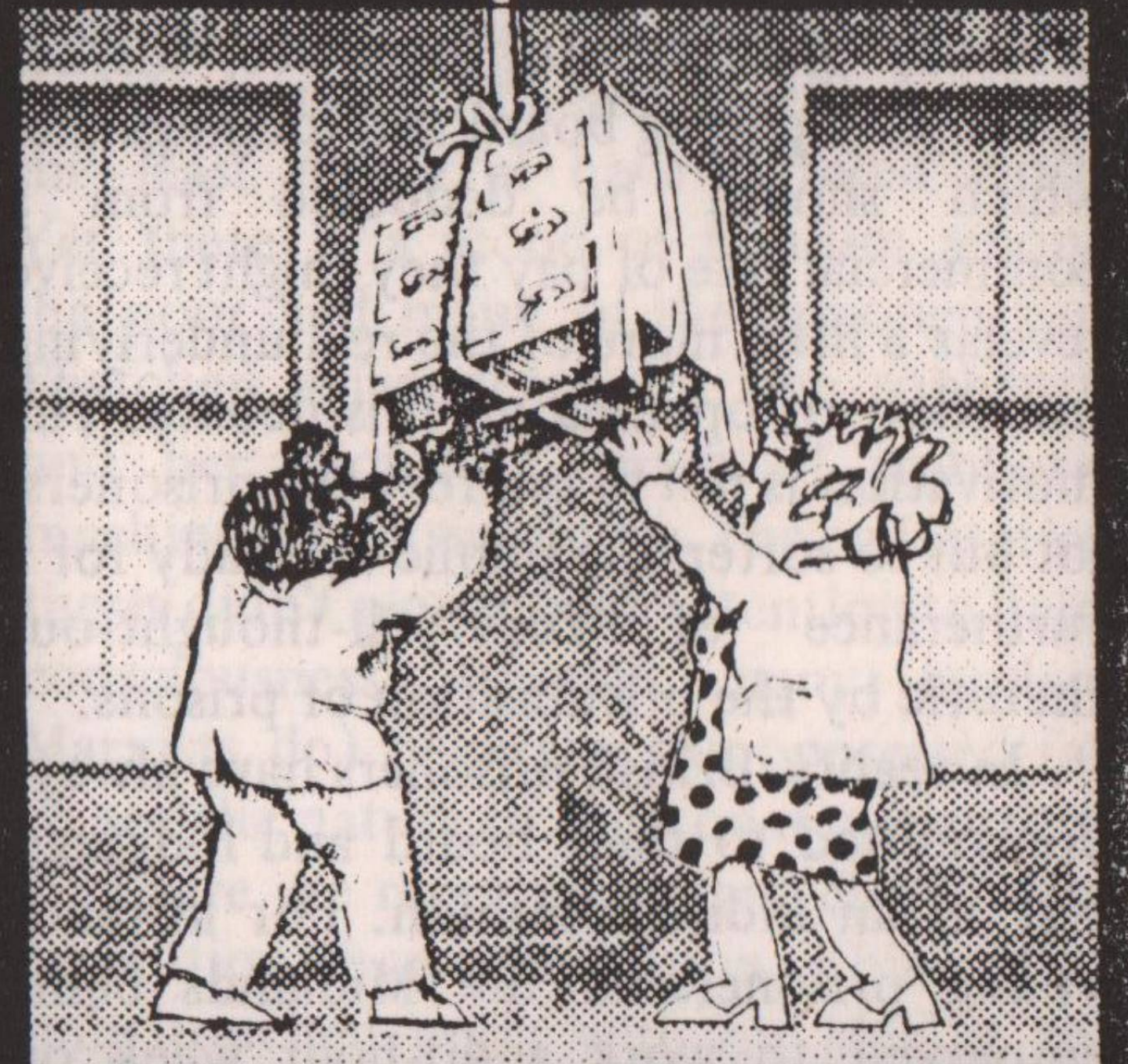
WHEN Shelter announced on 28th December 1988 that the official figure for that year revealed that some 128,345 families had been accepted by local authorities under the 1979 homeless persons legislation for priority housing, then the depth of the problem of homelessness was touched upon. Shelter estimated those families represented some 370,000 people. However, it should also be remembered that the vast majority of homeless people are actually single individuals and therefore would not even be considered by local authorities under the homeless persons legislation. Given that fact alone, a simple extrapolation would suggest that there are now millions of homeless people in Britain through the course of a year.

However, Western homelessness is not only confined to free market Britain, as the 2,000 strong march on Capitol Hill, Washington, in November suggested, which culminated in 377 police arrests that included the 85 year old Dr Spock. Homelessness, like unemployment, is obviously an essential factor for the regulation of the free market. Like unemployment it undermines people's ability to demand more and acts as a continuous threat or reminder to poor people how well off they really are. Homelessness is a problem that arises essentially out of the existence of property rights, albeit either individually or state held. The existence of property is the existence of Government.

In Britain homelessness is set to continue its rise in accordance with the so-called economic prosperity that we are continually hearing of. In January 1987 Lord Scarman set the tone for the United Nations International year of shelter for the homeless by voicing the opinion that Britain was in danger of becoming a slum society through the growth of homelessness and bad housing conditions. That official prophecy is now obviously bearing fruit. Government housing bills, Government changes in the payment of benefits, Government policy of selling council housing stock, Government policy of refusing to build new council houses, and Government economic policy that has seen a growth of mortgage defaulters because of the encouragement of a home-owning democracy based on going into debt, have all contributed to the squeeze out effect that in turn has resulted in homelessness rocketing totally out of control.

The consequences of being homeless in Britain in 1988-89 are the ultimate in human misery and are devastating for millions of people. They would include

SQUATTERS HANDBOOK



9th edition

60p

the loss of access to proper health care, lack of proper cooking facilities and washing facilities, a loss of warm space and a loss of space to store a change of clothes, loss of benefit for the under-eighteens and a real possibility of starving or stealing, a loss of voting rights for adults, another advantageous reason for a Conservative Government to turn the

other cheek. Nowhere can the tale of a divided nation be more starkly apparent than around the viaducts of the London Royal Festival Hall where theatre-goers stroll past cardboard city seemingly oblivious to their fellow people without a roof and all in an evening's entertainment. Bodies of single people huddle around candles and wrapped in blankets

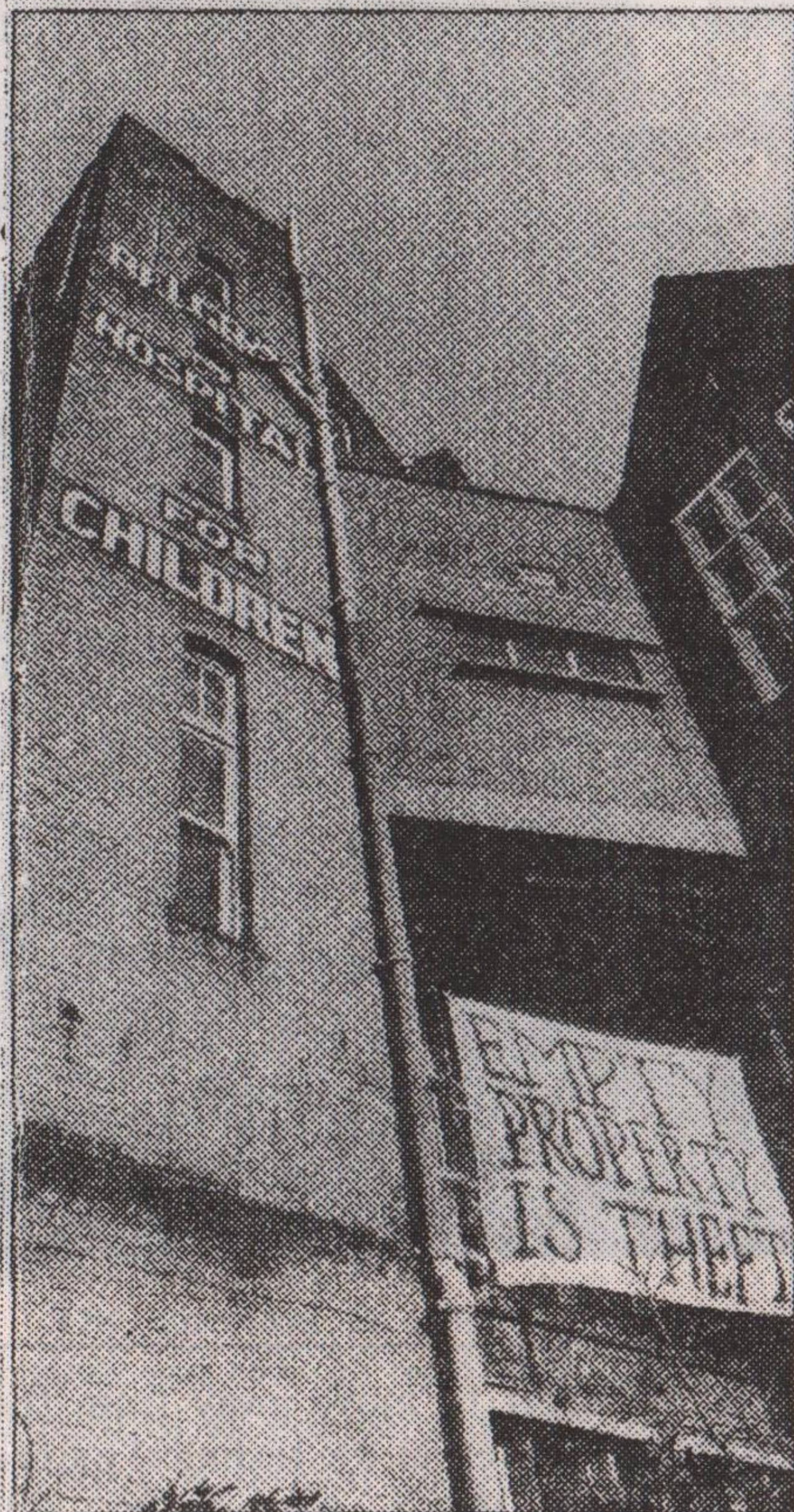
and cardboard boxes in a vain attempt to keep out the winter's frost, sleeping behind shelters of blackened curtains put there to damp out the electric lights of the Festival Hall, while yuppies sit inside sipping wine and talking of making more dosh.

Mother Theresa's visit to the London homeless was coupled with a visit to the British Prime Minister, who was only too eager to display an act of diplomacy for the television cameras. Meanwhile the consensus in this country has been so easily replaced by an elected dictatorship that Thatcher was again simply let off the hook by her friends in the Tory media. If this would have been a Labour government this issue alone would have seen a crucifixion and booting out of office. But instead a historical total of seventeen and a half years of Labour rule is blamed for all present problems of Capitalism. Set against hundreds of years of Tory and Whig rule the myth of democracy and the free market is, or should be, put to rest. Instead less than two hundred yards from the House of Commons young pregnant teenagers take their place alongside old age pensioners underneath the warmth of cardboard for yet another night fighting off the cold.

At the same time the Government, now obsessed with controlling figures, are reported to be reviewing the 1979 homeless people's legislation. Proposing to replace the word 'homeless' with the word 'roofless' in order to make it harder for people to be housed under the legislation, which coincidentally would slash the embarrassing figure of 128,354 families, some 370,000 people presently being housed under the legislation. We have seen the policy of 'cynical manipulation of statistics' applied to the unemployment figures, which have seen a total of twenty two changes to the way the figures are calculated since this Tory Government came to office. Officially hiding people by changing statistics is a hallmark of secrecy now commonly associated with this particular Government. Finally let us remind ourselves that the *Sunday Observer* was able to report on 9th October that a housing report commissioned by the Government was duly suppressed by the environment secretary when it revealed that the Government's policy of selling off council housing stock had been co-ordinated on a totally untrue and incorrect basis. Just one more illustration along the road of disappearing consensus and one more step in the growth of dictatorship. It has to be a shame that the homeless, like the unemployed, are now going to be unofficially increased at the same time as they are being officially decreased.

Clive Allsop

Empty Hospital Occupied by Homeless



IN THE early hours of Monday 23 January, a group of nonviolent activists occupied the Belgrave Children's hospital in south London. Immediately leafleters went around the bridges and parks where London's homeless sleep out. By lunchtime there were a handful of people sitting around eating soup, or exploring the maze of corridors, wards and rooms. By Tuesday evening there were ten homeless people prepared to continue the occupation. Within a week there were a hundred homeless people living in as many rooms as were inhabitable, cooking a couple of meals a day at a church round the corner, with a twenty-four hour gate-watch, a large communal room scattered with parafin heaters, and a basic relief at being off the streets, and running a home for the homeless and by the homeless.

Despite two months of planning meetings, the original occupying group hadn't envisaged it taking off so well, and those who didn't intend to live there soon, and happily, found themselves to be superfluous: a daily 'general council' discussed and voted on all issues, and favourable press coverage ensured supplies of blankets, mattresses, heaters, food and so on. The Belgrave Squat for Homeless was on its own two feet.

The hospital itself had been empty for four years and had recently been sold by Camberwell Health Authority to a private property developer. The police expressed little interest. After one close shave with seven fire engines, some fire inspectors OK'd the place once all the fire escapes were opened up. Day to day living and organisation soon became the priority.

Three basic rules were agreed on: No violence, no drugs, no booze. On top of that, any one being aggressive would not be let in, and any one committing acts of aggression or sexual harassment inside would be expelled for good. Grievances were voiced at the general council, and several people were expelled during the first week.

Unfortunately, another basic ground-rule should have been added: No rulers. The homeless community, in contrast to the squatting community, is not particularly politicised, indeed anti-political. Dissent to internal power-politicking has been slow and unconfident, feminist awareness has been slight, though the few, and young women have been vocal and prominent. A 'committee' soon usurped the basic, lively, sometimes frustrating, sense and practice of democracy, and continues to make decisions with sometimes little consideration or dialogue with the defunct 'general council' (which was open to everyone living there). One or two charismatic leaders can go a long way.

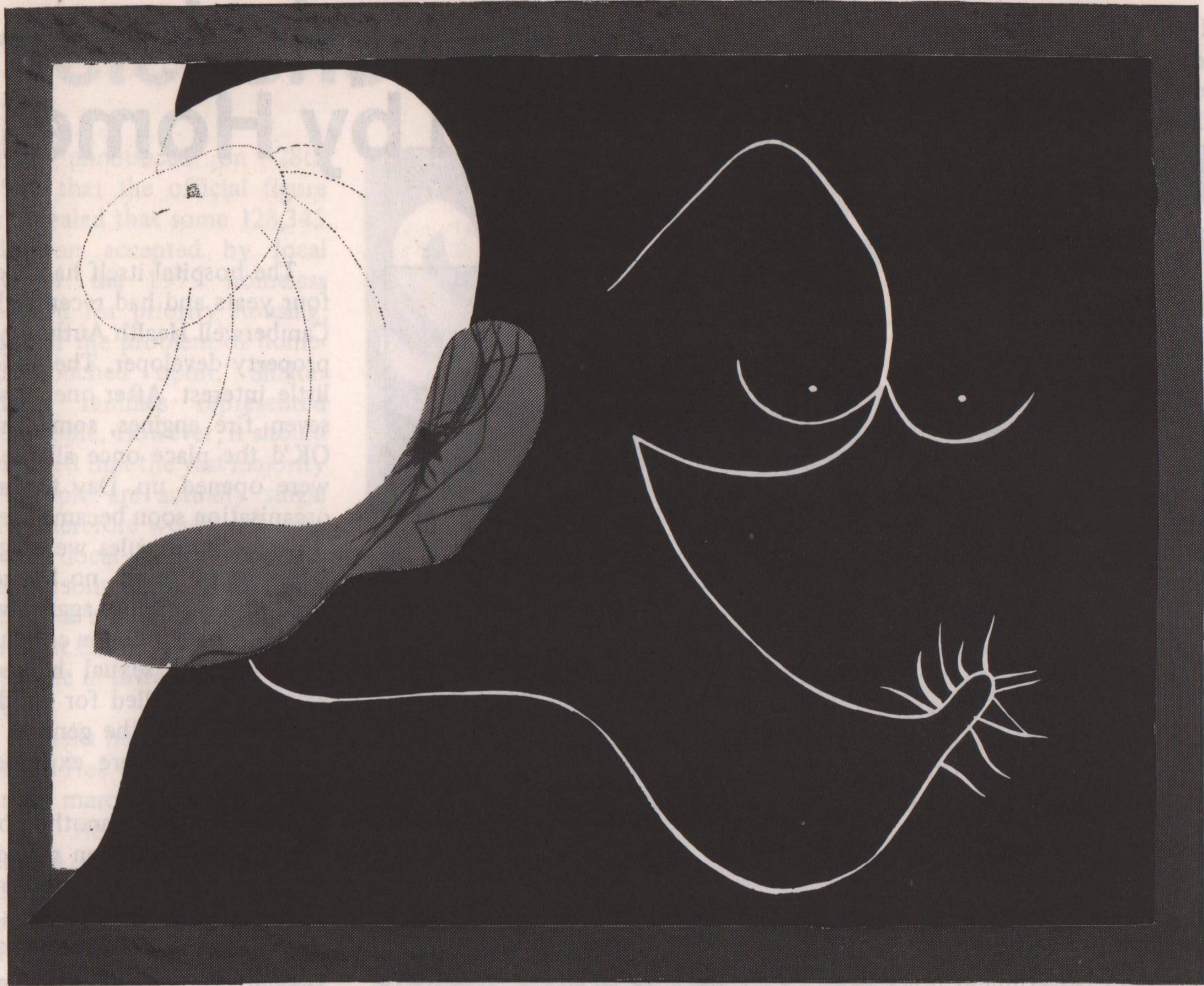
Yet, as a nonviolent direct action, it's been a remarkable venture: the homeless community has given itself a good boost, and, at best, there's a sense of making history, if only an obscure foot-note, buzzing around underneath the daily bread, butter and chicken leg issues (it is not a vegetarian strong-hold).

By the time this goes to press, anything could have happened — internal anarchist revolution, absolute dictatorship, eviction ... But, whatever happens, it's shown a creative way forward for London's increasing homeless population. Everyone knows where there are empty hospitals, churches, office blocks. It can be done again and again.

Stephen Hancock

The original occupying group can be contacted: People not Profit, c/o 66 Saltoun Road, London SW2.

The Belgrave Squat is very near the Oval Tube Station.



**Joan Miro: Paintings and Drawings
1929 - 41**
Whitechapel Art Gallery
3 February - 23 April 1989
Admission £2.50/£1.00,
Free Tuesday 2 - 5pm.

THIS is the first major exhibition of Miro's paintings and drawings to be shown in London since 1964, and also the first to focus on the most critical period in his career. It is from this experimental period that the symbols and dream-like images, which were later to become the hallmark of his work, emerged. Andre Breton had earlier said of Miro that 'he is the most surrealist of us all' in that his method of working and painting appeared to be the most natural.

However, Miro was too much of a free spirit to be labelled anything; although he joined in the political debates that were engulfing the Surrealist movement at the time (1929), he refused to join any political party on the grounds that adherence to the disciplines it would involve, would mean a loss of liberty.

'The only thing that's clear to me is that I intend to destroy, destroy everything that exists in painting. The only thing that interests me is the spirit itself, I only use the customary artists tools in order to get the best effects.'

In an effort to move away from the restrictions he felt at the technical nature of painting, Miro's attempt to 'kill painting' led to experimentation with all kinds of materials. Rope, shells, stone, metal, objets trouves, all gathered together in a series called *Constructions*, three-dimensional work neither paintings, sculptures or objects. An early work *Head of Georges Avric 1929* consists of tarboard, chalk and Indian ink on card, another *Painting/Collage 1934* consists of oil and paper stuck on sandpaper. As a move towards greater expression and freedom Miro began to experiment with collage and drawing.

'When I stand in front of a canvas, I never know what I am going to do - and nobody is more surprised than I at what comes out.' (1931)

Miro's collage work differed from previous work by say the Cubists or other Surrealists like Max Ernst, whose work and shapes were designed to blend in with the other elements in a composition, disconcerting as that image may be; his collages were used either as preparation for paintings or small imprecise shapes were used randomly and later connected with bold lines or familiar Miro symbols eg *Drawing/Collage 1933* or *Collage 1934*.

By the middle of the decade Miro's work was encompassing pencil and gouache on asbestos, *Composition 1936* and Indian ink on metal, also *Composition*

1936.

It is difficult for me to talk about my work, since it is always born in a state of hallucination, brought on by some jolt or other - whether objective or subjective - which I am not in the least responsible for.' (1933).

As with other Spanish artists at the time Miro's work took on a darker tone with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. *Still life with an old shoe (1937)* a key work of Miro's although done in a fairly 'realistic' style remains disconcerting. Its lack of human presence, only suggested at through the objects on the table, and use of vivid colours in a dark landscape, give it an edge no ordinary still life can obtain.

Miro remains one of the most interesting of Twentieth Century artists because he remains one of the most challenging. To have produced work simply to please the public and made money would have been inconceivable to him. His whole career was one of a process of evolution which left no room for concessions. It meant exploring new methods and techniques as well as extending the boundaries of painting.

This is a marvellous exhibition which is essential viewing for anyone who is interested in Miro, Surrealism and his place within Twentieth Century art.

F Wright

Reviews



After the Crash

Guy Dauncey

Green Print £6.99

HERE we have yet another book on environmental matters well researched, although much of what is in it is not news to anarchists or the readers of this journal.

However, one of the requirements to generate a society that is regulated by the people (all the people) who live in it is the demystification of the processes by which the present sorry state of affairs has been reached. Finance is a big con, as it has nothing to do with real economics; it places unreasonable demands on real resources, both human and material. In his chapter on 'The Coming Storm' the author says: 'Amid the constant changes of trade and commerce, the world has always needed some source of stability. For centuries gold was seen as the one thing that was permanent and stable. When Britain established her Empire, the pound sterling became regarded as the world's reserve currency.'

Stability for whom, one may ask? The children in the dark satanic mills at home, or those in the cotton fields abroad? You cannot eat it; it would make everlasting lavatory pans and excellent fillings for teeth. So-called economic stability has only been a reality for those in control whose comprehension of the world is a very sectional interest, i.e. those in power. The simple fact of the matter is that the only way to create wealth is to apply labour power and energy to materials, and the only renewable way of creating an increase in resources is through a properly ordered agriculture.

Personally I do not understand what the author means by a Rainbow Economy, the rainbow is of course the component parts of white light and adds further to the mystics that people are drowned in. Anarchists have always pointed out that people are capable of running their own affairs to mutual benefit (indeed notably the hunter-gatherer communities for thousands of years) without harm to their environment (*Anarchy in Action*, Colin Ward, Freedom Press) and even now, as

Ward points out, there are many activities without the system.

The writer, in one chapter, writes of an alternative money system in Canada and it is interesting to recall that before the war in Canada a party called the Social Credit Party was formed; they had branches here and were called the Green Shirts. Their solution to the problem of the slump before the war was to issue money to stimulate the economy. They even achieved power in Alberta, Canada. It was a form of neo-Keynesism of course, and it is what governments do all the time, especially when financing the instruments of control.

The question is whether the money system can ever be used logically for the benefit of all people, as it is tied so much to what is termed commerce and trade and not necessarily to the productive process. As my contemporary Ken Smith (*Free is Cheaper*) points out the on-costs of the financial system are enormous, which is why the actual producers starve and the pressure on resources is unnecessarily large. Like many of the books written on ecology, the unjustness of the system is not dwelt upon, nor the danger of acting through political parties that this sort of activity attracts, particularly when the parties approach the ability of exercising power and attract individuals who love to manage other peoples lives. As witness the dissensions of the German Green Party.

However, after this critical review there is a lot of information in the book about people exercising more control over their own environment.

Alan Albon

Sex, Race and the Law: Legislating for Equality

Jeanne Gregory

Sage (1987) £7.50

One of the major problems in dealing both with equal opportunities and racial discrimination is the lack of good, hard objective evidence to back up subjective assertions, especially those, however well

written, by writers involved in this field. They are all pain and anger, real or imaginary. This book is different. It is the basis from which we start. In a dry, factual, unhysterical way the writer gives us the big guns and the ammunition to tackle the problem on the state's own terms.

The book was originally written as a well-researched PhD thesis by a lecturer at Middlesex Polytechnic, its aim being to cover equal opportunities. This was expanded into book form and accepted by Pluto Press. When Pluto Press was taken over by Sage, which caters for the American market, Ms Gregory re-wrote the book to cover racial discrimination and brought in additional American work. This gives the book a useful comparative approach.

Nevertheless, it is still a short book with only 166 pages of written text. Its detailed appendices cover British and American legislation, EEC law and TUC documents. Its superb biography also lists cases, official publications, plus Commission for Racial Equality and Equal Opportunities Commission publications as well.

In essence it is a detailed and critical account of sexual and racial legislation from its origins. It looks closely both at legislation and cases in a critical manner, taking within its scope a more detailed analysis of the Equal Pay, Sex Discrimination and Race Relations Acts, including appeals procedures.

It is sociological in that it examines who controls the quangos who have responsibility for implementing the legislation; their apparent wish for conciliation rather than conflict and their consequent slowness in bringing about really effective change. As things are there is no all-powerful 'Inspector General' who can put everything right. If one stands up to be counted it means the danger of full exposure, not necessarily the satisfaction of victory; of possibly, and only possibly, eventually making small enough long-term improvements rather than winning individual battles, although some individual cases are won.

Perhaps the book's main strength is that it puts over the message that the fight for inequality is not over but it has just begun. In her concluding chapter the author situates the problem of equality within the present break-up of the welfare state where would-be social reformers find themselves not fighting for more rights but fighting to hold the line, simply a rearguard action. This, the reviewer feels, indicates the failure of Fabian social reformism so central to liberal and socialist mixed economy thinking.

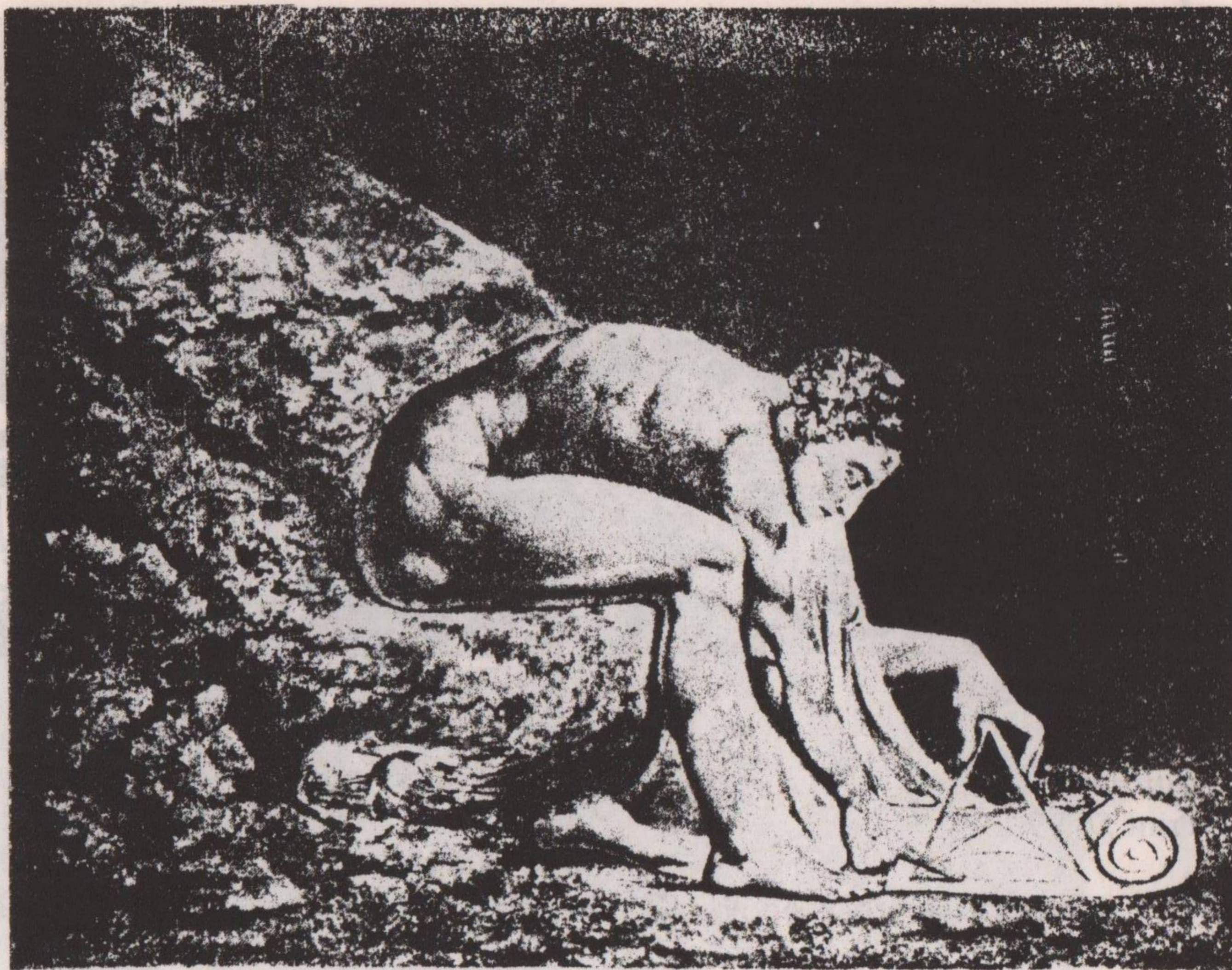
The present Government, she points out, has no real commitment to equal opportunities policies, it only responds to

external pressure. This is a despondant note. Perhaps we should be more militant. We must not simper or apologise, but expose, publish and attack.

I feel the book may give heavy artillery to the cause of equality and should be available in every library, workplace, union branch, school, college or centre of political activity. I hope the author will bear in mind that this book deserves future editions. It should be standard text on the legal aspects of freedom and equality.

So anarchists are anti-authoritarian and do not support the state and the capitalist system. This must leave the authoritarians, the statists and capitalists lying shivering in their beds. The reality is different. It is up to anarchists to libertarianise the process, to make legislation on equal opportunities and racial discrimination a thing of the past. Until then we need to know what weapons are available and how to fight the state and capitalise on its own terms — a dualism.

Peter Neville



I Newton measuring the Ratio (1795)
(By permission of the Tate Gallery, London)

William Blake: Visionary Anarchist

Peter Marshall

Freedom Press £2.00

WILLIAM Blake was a controversial and complex figure. The fact that he did not belong to any literary or artistic 'schools' makes him difficult to categorise, and so does the range of his abilities: he was a talented artist, poet and philosopher. Many writers have portrayed Blake as a radical visionary, but this is the first attempt that I have come across to fit his life and work into a specifically anarchist framework. Peter Marshall's short book provides an accessible but scholarly introduction to a seminal figure in the history of British anarchism.

A brief life history is followed by a series of short chapters on the themes which exercised Blake's imagination: 'Nature', 'Politics', 'The Church', 'The State', 'Free Society', and so on. Marshall's commentary, supported by an abundance of extracts from Blake's poetry and prose, paints a portrait of the artist as a feminist, an advocate of free love, an anti-racist, a socio-ecologist, and the prophet of a society 'combining voluntary co-operation with personal autonomy'.

Some critics have seen Blake's work as a private mythology and the product of a mind which had withdrawn into an ethereal fantasy world. Marshall's view is that Blake had a revolutionary fervour deeply rooted in the real world, but that he 'disguised his revolutionary and libertarian message in prophetic allegories to escape the censor and hangman'. Pitt's

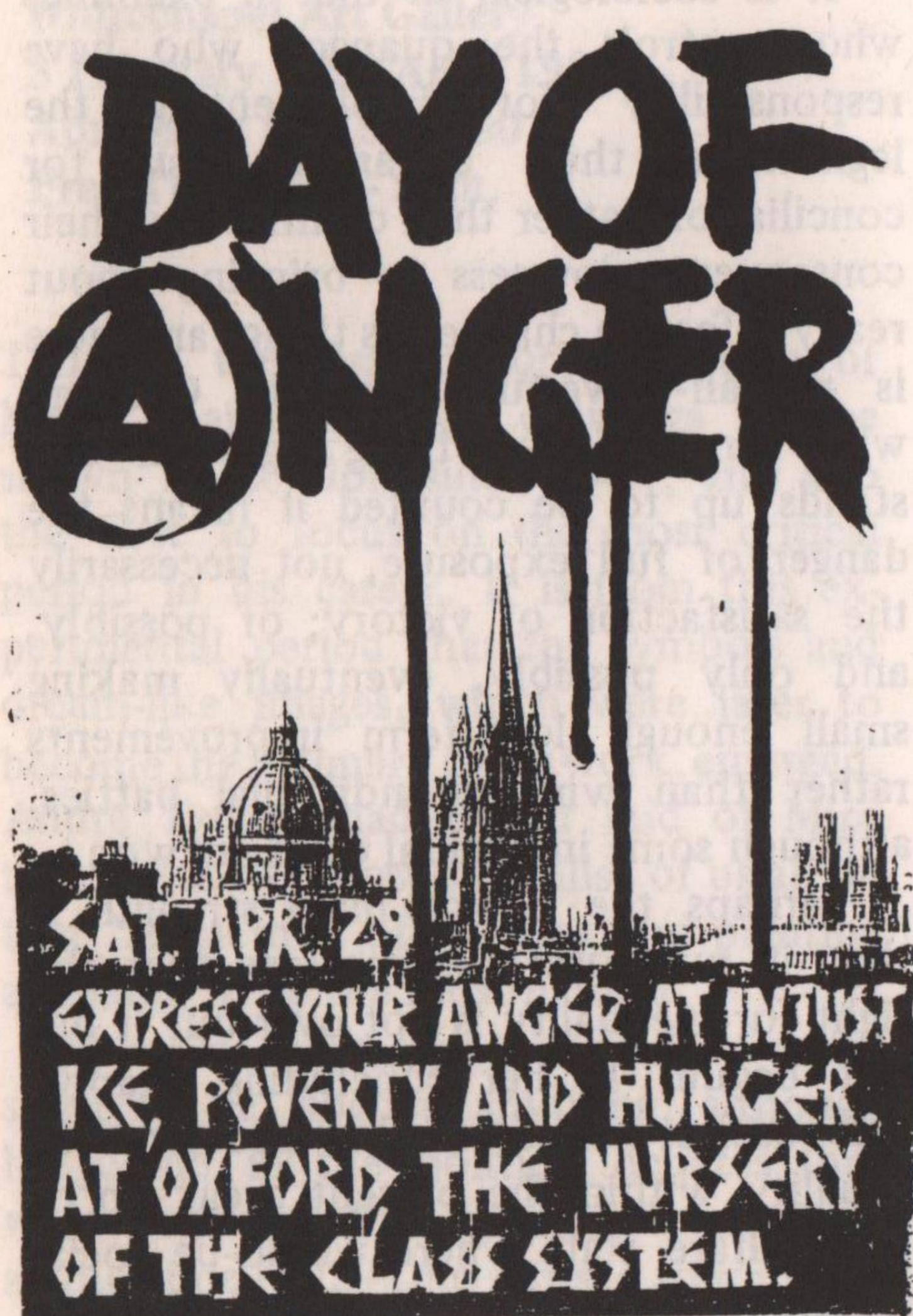
Gagging Acts and the anti-radical feeling in the wake of the French Wars would have made it too dangerous for Blake to express his anarchism in a more overt way.

While it is claimed that Blake never totally rejected reason, it could be argued that works such as *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* celebrate mysticism and intuition at the expense of rationality. The mystical element in Blake's work presents a flaw in the thesis that his libertarian visions are of contemporary relevance, since (as Chaz Bufe argues in *Listen, Anarchist!*) the development of an anarchist society would require people to engage in clear and rational thought.

It was Blake's refusal to accept the prevailing standards of his artistic peers, his literary peers and his society that makes him an inspiration to modern anarchists. Marshall suggests that Blake's critique of his society remains applicable to our own. A poem like *London*, which denounces acquisitiveness, hypocrisy and repressive institutions, has strong resonances for we who live in Thatcher's Britain.

Blake's work and personality are so complex and open to so many interpretations that there cannot really be a definitive view of him. For this reason, this book should be read along with a variety of other appraisals. Most writers have treated Blake's spirituality and his social and political commitment as separate issues. Peter Marshall's achievement is to discuss the fusion of these interacting elements without allowing the book to become a 'difficult' academic text.

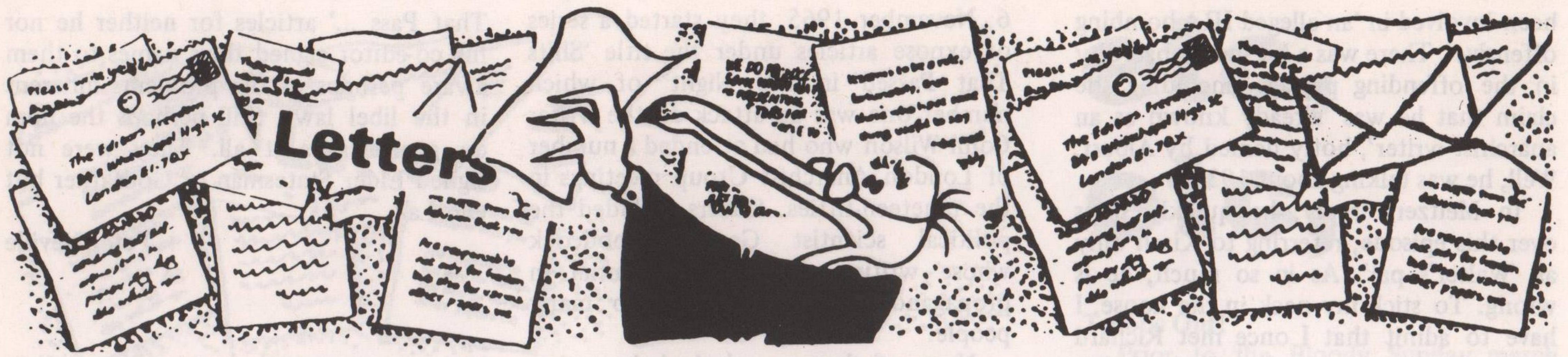
Andrew Hedgecock



Oxford Day of Anger
Saturday 29 April 1989

Express your anger at injustice, poverty and hunger. At Oxford, the nursery of the class system.

Contact Oxford Anarchists, Box A, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford before the day please.



Anarchists in Glass Houses

IT IS of course traditional for *Freedom* to publish letters attacking its contributors from people who would never allow such letters about themselves to be published in their own papers, but you have perhaps gone too far in publishing Albert Meltzer's latest letter and then commenting that you 'welcome' it as 'comradely' when you actually knew that most of its allegations and implications were false (February 1989).

I am not sure whether it is worth writing in *Freedom* at all, and I am sure that it isn't worth answering all Albert Meltzer's lies and libels, but I do want to make a few points clear. My article 'Anarchists in Glass Houses' was not a personal attack on other anarchists, but a criticism of personal attacks among anarchists. I didn't attack any of the people I mentioned for doing what they do, but only wondered about the way some anarchists seem to have double standards about what anarchists should do and about what they do themselves. We are all in glass houses, but we don't all throw stones. I didn't say anything about anyone that hadn't already been said in publications with far larger circulations than *Freedom*, and I didn't say anything that was untrue. I won't argue with Albert Meltzer's disingenuous evasions and insinuations, but I must point out that Richard Kisch is not a 'pal' of mine and that I have never even met him.

My marginal involvement in the George Blake case has nothing to do with *Freedom*, but is easily explained. I once met H. Montgomery Hyde, who is a distinguished writer (and not a 'security chief'), through our common involvement in the humanist movement, 27 years after he ceased to be a Unionist MP because of his radical principles. He mentioned that he was writing a biography of George Blake and had learnt from Kenneth de Courcy (who had been in prison with Blake) that his escape in 1966 had been organised by CND. I mentioned that it was actually well known on the radical left at the time that the escape didn't involve CND (or any other organisation) but was organised by independent individuals, some of whom had been

involved in the nuclear disarmament movement. I naturally gave no names, but some of their identities had been obvious ever since the appearance of Sean Bourke's book *The Springing of George Blake* (1970). Montgomery Hyde's book *George Blake: Superspy* (1987) didn't give any names either, but Barrie Penrose soon did in the *Sunday Times*, where he has written several articles on the case. Two of these articles contained false references to my involvement, and both were corrected by letters from me (11 & 18 October 1987 and 8 & 22 January 1989). All Albert Meltzer's sly speculations, on this and other subjects, are quite wrong.

Nicolas Walter

IT WAS with a mixture of relief and dismay that I read Nicolas Walter's 'Anarchists in Glass Houses' (January issue). Relief because he brought into the open facts about activity by several people whose general 'More Anarchist than Thou' posturing has been a pain in the bum for many a long year.

I was dismayed because I foresaw, correctly, that it would bring the inevitable response from Albert Meltzer, whose level of debate places him somewhere between Khomeini and Lord ('Economical with the truth') Armstrong.

So I am just going to stick to a few facts, amplifying one or two of Nicolas's points:

Nicolas admitted we all have to make *some* compromises to scratch a living in a capitalist society — but surely there are limits?

Meltzer says that '(Stuart) Christie does not work for the organ of the Russian Communist Party but for a British commercial firm giving a digest of Russian news keeping out propaganda ...'

Fact: Stuart Christie is *The Editor of Pravda International*, which is, yes, a digest of articles from *Pravda*, the Russian Communist Party's propaganda journal in Moscow. The articles reprinted are those thought suitable for a middle class Marxist readership in the West in these days of Glaznost. We can see the targeted readership from an insert in an issue at

the end of 1988 (Vol 3, No 1) which is a pull-out Readership Survey aimed at discovering the professional, commercial, political and financial interests of a middle-class readership. It is a glossy mag, costing £1.25 per copy, and the questionnaire wants to know what Credit Cards you hold, etc. It is clearly not aimed at the proletariat.

The pull-out four-page Survey includes a letter signed Stuart Christie, Editor. Is there someone else of the same name?

Now to more interesting matters:

In a fascinating *Black Flag Supplement* (No 3) called 'Liars and Liberals', (many copies of which I have circulated around the world) published, I think, early in 1987 (it's a psychopathic knee-jerk response to *Freedom's* Centenary issue of October '86), Meltzer first describes me as 'disgraceful', for which I thank him (I've always wanted to be disgraceful, but never quite made it). More importantly, in view of more recent events, he attacked someone whom I had imprudently praised for his work on the Christie Defence Committee in 1964 — one, John Pilgrim. We can't waste space going into detail, but suffice it to say that dear old Albert has apparently picked up a bit of hearsay in which Pilgrim threatened to sue somebody.

To which Albert's comment was: 'Some anarchism!'

Fair enough. But imagine my surprise (oh, I don't know, though), when, in March '87 I heard that Meltzer had himself hired a lawyer to start an action for alleged libel! 'Some anarchist', I thought to myself.

What had happened was that a certain veteran Communist had written a book about the role of Communists in the army during the Second World War, and in the course of his research was innocent enough to seek an interview with Albert Meltzer, who at the time (early '80s) was threatening to tell the story of his part in the Cairo Soldiers' Parliaments. To cut a long story short, the Author, Richard Kisch, mixed up two sets of badly written notes (including a conversation about Brian Behan) and wrote of Albert that he had, just at the time the war broke out,

been involved in 'an alleged IRA bombing offensive'. There was a lot more absurdity in the offending passage, including the claim that he was 'already known as an anarchist writer', hotly denied by Albert. Well, he was talking about 1939.

In Meltzer's reply, he quickly skips over this episode, referring to Kisch only as 'Walter's pal'. As in so much, he is wrong. To stick my neck in the noose, I have to admit that I once met Richard Kisch socially — he is after all the father and father-in-law of a couple of anarchist comrades — and I soon found we had nothing in common. Meltzer is right for once when he said Kisch is a Stalinist, which was why I was very surprised Kisch phoned me up in March '87 and wanted to come and see me. It transpired that he had had this heavy letter from B M Birnberg, the left-wing lawyer, who was writing on behalf of Mr Albert Meltzer with regard to a passage in Kisch's book *The Days of the Good Soldiers* (Journeyman Press, 1985) and alleging untrue and malicious libel. (Christ, Meltzer's one to talk!)

The heavy letter from Birnberg is three pages long and I have a copy of it — and have circulated a few more! Two paragraphs are especially illuminating: 'Finally, our client instructs us that he never considered reactivating the Soldiers' Parliament or emulating the Soldiers' Committees set up in Catalonia; this appears to portray a complete ignorance of the events of the Spanish war.'

and

'That a suitable sum is paid to our client by way of damages having regard in particular to the seriousness of the false allegation made against our client of involvement with the IRA.'

All of that for something that didn't even happen fifty years ago!

Finally, it is ironic that *Logo* should come up again, just at the time when, thanks to the real Ayatollah, book-burning is in the air. Almost as bad as the Satanic Verses was a throw-away comment at the end of one paragraph of that now famous document, in which, after slagging off everybody else, the two young satirists found nothing to say about Meltzer except: 'And Albert, you can't write!'

That, I suspect, was the real cause of Meltzer's high moral indignation.

Philip Sansom

ALBERT MELTZER did exactly the same thing to a great many other people. In the nineteen-sixties Albert Meltzer and Ted Kavanagh edited a magazine called *Cuddons Cosmopolitan Review*, a sixties version of an older magazine. In Volume

6, November 1965, they started a series of expose articles under the title 'Shits That Passed in the Night' of which number one was an attack on the writer Colin Wilson who had attended a number of London Anarchist Group meetings in the nineteen-fifties. Others included the political scientist George Woodcock whose writings were so influential in propagandising anarchism to so many people.

None of these people had done anything wrong. They had merely participated in a London Anarchist Group which ceased to exist long ago and had gone elsewhere and after hard work had become considerably more successful than Albert and Ted. They had also left London anyway, George to Canada, Colin to Cornwall, so were not participating in sixties activity. I sent a copy to Colin who replied in *Freedom*. If I remember correctly he said he still considered himself an anarchist but disliked labels.

Of course one cannot accuse Albert Meltzer of having written the 'Shits

That Pass ...' articles for neither he nor his co-editor signed their names to them aware perhaps of the problems inherent in the libel laws. Still perhaps the *nom de guerre* says it all. They were not signed Elder Statesman or Godfather but Old Lag.

Peter Neville

[This correspondence is now closed.

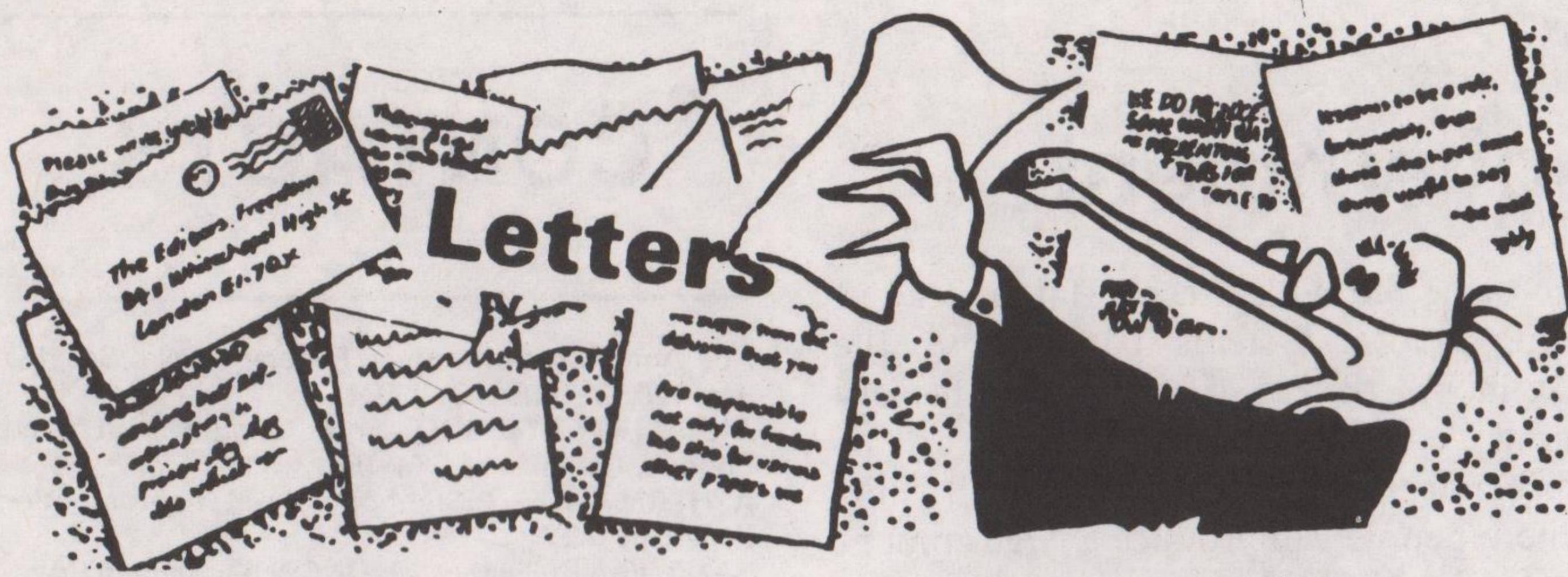
It is of great interest to veterans of the anarchist movement, but not to the wider audience we hope to address.

For those who wish to pursue the discussion, our contemporary the *Bulletin of Anarchist Research* is currently running a lively correspondence, between Albert Meltzer and Nicolas Walter, on this very topic. The address is c/o T.V. Cahill, Department of Politics, University of Lancaster, LA1 4YF. Subs UK £3 (£2 if exceedingly poor), foreign £5, sterling only, cheques payable to Bulletin of anarchist Research.]

TONY EARNSHAW'S VIEW FROM THE BACK OF TOWN



With claws four-square and true



etc,
etc,

Profit and Loss

IN THE February issue Philip Sansom notes that no-one has claimed responsibility for planting the bomb on the Pan Am plane which crashed on Lockerbie.

Maybe there was no bomb. Oh yes, experts have established that explosives were used, but then they would, wouldn't they?

Of course it's far more acceptable to the general public that some bunch of terrorists were responsible, rather than to think that large aeroplanes can spontaneously ignite due to lack of maintenance to enhance profits.

The point is, perhaps we should be more sceptical about experts' findings, because the whole truth is unlikely ever to be known.

Zeb Korycinska

CNT Christening

THE SPANISH Supreme Court will make its final ruling over the right to the title of the CNT on 29 March. This decision will be in answer to an appeal to the Court by the CNT-AIT trade union federation that it alone should have sole right to the title.

It is curious that a State Tribunal should be invited by anarcho-syndicalists to preside over this right to title, rather than allowing the workers to vote with their feet on the best type of union tactics to be pursued. Evidently the applicants (the CNT-AIT) have more confidence in the Supreme Court Judges, than in a dialogue or in the practice of syndicalism today.

Ought not the workers to be the true judges of syndicalism, for without them the trade union is not possible.

Carlos Beltran

A Radical Lesbian and Gay Network

Since Clause 28 became law it seems there has been a decline in political lesbian and gay activity. I would like to make contact with lesbians and gay men who want to continue radical political activity and fight for lesbian and gay liberation.

I know that there are many lesbians and gay men fed up with boring, respectable middle class campaigns, who don't like party politics, rhetoric or endless meetings, and who see racism, sexism and class oppression and disability as central issues to changing society. Despite the many faults with Stop The Clause, I heard of and met lots of lesbians and gays into creative ideas and actions. I would like to hear from lesbians and gay men (especially anarchists, greens and non-party socialists and communists) who are interested in working together and building a network, newsletter and education / campaigns. Please write if you're interested.

Nik

c/o 24 South Road, Birmingham B18

Books about Greens

BRIAN MORRIS says in his 'Books about Greens' (February) of Fritz Schumacher ... 'Nowhere does he ever suggest that we should put an end to the system that fosters the nuclear weaponry, that creates the pollution, that "ravishes nature" and "mutilates man" (his phrase).'

The title of the book itself, *Small is Beautiful*, suggests that he would not have agreed with the enormities perpetrated by central government today, or in fact the growth in the very size of central government.

More specifically, in the chapter 'Nuclear Energy - Salvation or Damnation?' he says of the Bomb: 'Large-scale nuclear fission is undoubtedly the most dangerous and profound. As a result, ionising radiation has become the most serious agent of pollution of the environment and the greatest threat to man's survival on earth'. And of nuclear power: 'The danger to humanity created by the so-called peaceful uses of atomic energy may be much greater'. Then: 'There could indeed be no clearer example of the prevailing dictatorship of economics'.

He was writing that in 1972. The chapter leaves one in no doubt of his stand against nuclear power and those who were pushing for it.

Rodney Aitchey

Troops Out!

Prior to the Bloody Sunday march, I went to a Socialist Workers public meeting on Northern Ireland. It was one of the more disgusting experiences of my life. The speaker, apparently one of their more prominent Party figures, refused to discuss such important issues as the need to disarm the UDR and even said 'We don't care if there's a bloodbath'. In fact he only seemed interested in demagogically trying to recruit us to the SWP like some cut-price little Lenin, knowing some 70% of the British public support the withdrawal of troops from Ireland.

Unlike Barrie, I do not think a simple call for 'Troops Out Now' or joining TOM just to stop the Trots using it as (yet another) recruiting ground is good enough: unless we go into the Movement with a considered anarchist perspective on Ireland that is both anti-sectarian and anti-imperialist, we will be no better than those we seek to confute.

Deregulating drug use

I know Donald Rooum is a non-smoking advocate (presumably including the smoking of cannabis, judging from his letter in the last issue), but surely freedom includes freedom to fuck up too. The most destructive aspect of censorious government 'Just Say No' campaigns is that they mystify drug use and ensure people remain unfamiliar about their effects for good or ill. Criminalisation is a factor in this and a denial of our right to do as we wish with our own bodies.

Books about Greens

Brian Morris is quite right to feel short-tempered about the reformism and navel-contemplation of the Green Party, but a simple look at the activities of the Autonomen in West Germany will demonstrate that green politics can dictate more radical agendas.

After all, a socialist perspective is inevitably going to be forced into a position of compromise over the issue of production (Marx saw industry as integral to social change and his utopia centred on 'Man (sic) as Lord over Nature'), whereas decentralisation is a central tenet of green politics.

Can't Brian review something by green theorists a little more radical than the pedagogic Porritt if he is to present the movement to an anarchist readership?

P. N. Rogers

LAND NOTES

The chaos that is government

WHEN government ministers get the sack for revealing the truth and the government is passing an Act to impose secrecy on revealers of the truth, one wonders why intelligent people tolerate a way of organising society that seems to be heading for disaster.

There is no doubt that the capitalist system is run by governments in the interest of capitalists. The egg scramble exposes this clearly. For the way that agriculture is presently organised creates not only bacterial problems but pollution problems also. Animal residues have to be properly processed and returned to the land and this can be done more effectively in small scale mixed agricultural units.

The haphazard way in which the problems of agriculture are dealt with in the interests of the money makers in the business will be illustrated when the surpluses become deficits far more important than fiscal deficits. We have already the spectacle of Italy, with problems of drought in the south and water in the north, asking for help from the EEC and finding limitations.

Having turned the herbivores into carnivores, problems are beginning to raise their head above the stink of government secrecy. Now the egg and poultry has surfaced, another little secret may hit the headlines to worry the animal husbandry barons as we learn that cattle

are being fed with sheep offal. Instead of using quota systems to increase the likelihood of bigger and more factory farms, a look into the gentle art of husbandry and a return to small units where people can produce a large amount of food without the hazards of the prairie where there is not an animal to be seen, or the sanitised bacterial breeding pens where lots of animals are confined in the search for profits where care is dispensed from the bottle and the drug house. In a world where surpluses are relative, to turn agricultural land into theme parks smacks of the usual political shortsightedness that ends generally in some sort of disaster. Our political masters and their more ingenious hyperbole image and policy makers talk about the real world, never having been in it.

People say we must have a govern- be clearly seen that what is managed, if that is the right word, is a situation in which people become more and more unable to control their environmental situation. The Prime Minister appears to have joined the Stirnerites in saying there is only the individual. One has only to study the realities of life to see that society and the individual are inter-dependent and it is up to individuals to see that society is benign and controlled by the individuals.

Alan Albon

CONTACTS

- ACF** Anarchist Communist Federation Nat Sec, PO Box 125, Coventry CV3 5QT
ANARCHIST STUDENT, c/o E. Grigg, Christchurch College, Canterbury CT1 1QU
ASHTON A's, c/o 3 Stanhope Street, Ashton under Lyne OL6 9QY
BANGOR A Collective, c/o UNCW SU, Deiniol Road, Bangor, Gwynedd
BAR Bulletin of Anarchist Research, c/o T.V. Cahill, Dept of Politics, Univ of Lancaster LA1 4YF
BRACKNELL A's, Box 21, 17 Chatham St, Reading RG1 7JF
BRISTOL Drowned Rat, Box 010, Full Marks Bookshop, 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol
BURNLEY A's, 2 Quarrybank, Burnley
CAMBRIDGE Box A, c/o Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge
CHRISTIAN A's, Pinch of Salt, c/o Peter Lumsden, 23d South Villas, London NW1
CLASS WAR, PO Box 467, London E5 8BE
COVENTRY Group, PO Box 125, CV3 5QT (don't mention anarchist on envelope)
DAM Direct Action Movement, PO Box 19, Wythenshaw PDO, Manchester M22 7JJ.
DERBYSHIRE A's, Jon (0773) 827513
DURHAM A's, c/o DSU, Dunelm House, New Elvet, Durham
EDINBURGH Counter-Information, 11 Forth St
ESSEX Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex
FAP Federation of Anarcho-Pacifists, c/o John Hill 28b Clifton Road, Ilford, Essex
GLASGOW A's, Box PH30, c/o Changes, 340 West Princes Street, Glasgow G4 9HE
HASTINGS A's, c/o Hastings Free Press, 14 Lower Park Road, Hastings, E. Sussex
JEWISH A's, Box JAG, 52 Call Lane, Leeds 1
KEELE Resist Group, Students Union, University of Keele, ST5 5BG
LEAMINGTON A Group, 21 Tachbrook Road, Leamington Spa, Warks.
LEEDS A's, Box JAG, 52 Call Lane, Leeds 1
LEICESTER A Group, c/o Blackthorn Books, 70 High Street, Leicester
LIB ED Libertarian Education Collective, The Cottage, The Green, Leire LE17 5HL
LIVERPOOL A's, PO Box 110, Liverpool L69
 Liverpool University Anarchist Group, c/o SU, 2 Bedford St North, Liverpool L7 7BD
LONDON
 Freedom Box Number Users: A Distribution, ACF, Rebel Press, Spectacular Times, Virus.
 121 Centre, 121 Railton Road, London SE24
 Greenpeace (London), 5 Caledonian Rd, N1
 Solidarity, c/o 123 Lathom Road, London E6
 Polytechnic of North London Anarchists, c/o PNL SU, Prince of Wales Road, London NW5
 N E London Poly A's and G's, c/o NELPSU, Maryland House, Manbey Park Road, E15
MANCHESTER Anarchists, c/o Raven, Room 6, 75 Piccadilly, M1 2BU
NORTHAMPTON A's, Blackcurrent, 50 Guildhall Rd
NOTTINGHAM A's, Rainbow Centre, 180 Mansfield Road, Nottingham
 Anarchist Socialist Group, Box 1, Hiziki, 15 Goosegate, Nottingham.
OXFORD A's, Box A, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford
PLYMOUTH A's, PO Box 105, Plymouth
PORTSMOUTH A's, Box A, 167 Fawcett Road, Southsea, Hants PO1 0DH
READING A's, Box 19, Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham Street, Reading RG1 7JF
SALISBURY James Walsh, 14 Churchfield Rd
SOUTHAMPTON University A's, c/o SU, Southampton SO9 5NH
SPANISH (TU) Information Network, (mail only) 6a The Drive, Leeds LS8 1JF.
STIRLING A Group, c/o CSA, University of Stirling, Scotland
SWANSEA Black Sheep, c/o Box A, Emma's Community Book Shop, 19 Bryn-y-Mor Rd, Brynmill SA1 4JH
TONBRIDGE Black Adder, c/o WKAR, PO Box 75, Tonbridge, Kent
WORCESTER College of HE Anarchists, c/o SU, WCHE, Henwick Grove, Worcester

NO CHANGE IN SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 1989 !

(Giro account: Freedom Press 58 294 6905)

I am a subscriber.

Please renew my Freedom subscription
 Renew my joint sub Freedom & Raven
 Make my Freedom sub into a joint sub starting with Raven number: _____

I am not yet a subscriber. Please start:

Freedom (single copy)
 Freedom (_____ copies per issue)
 The Raven, starting with number: _____
 Joint sub

I enclose £ _____ payment plus £ _____ donation
 Total £ _____

Name _____

Address _____

	Inland	Abroad Surface	Air. mail*
Freedom (12 issues)			
(Claimants 4.00)	—	—	—
Regular 6.00	6.00	7.50	11.00
Institutional 10.00	10.00	11.50	15.00
The Raven (4 issues)			
(Claimants 8.00)	—	—	—
Regular 10.00	10.00	11.00	15.00
Institutional 12.00	12.00	13.00	17.00
Joint sub (12xFreedom, 4xThe Raven)			
(Claimants 11.00)	—	—	—
Regular 14.00	14.00	16.50	23.00
Institutional 20.00	20.00	22.50	30.00
Bundle subscription for Freedom			
2 copies x 12	10.00	11.50	15.00
5 copies x 12	20.00	22.50	30.00
10 copies x 12	40.00	45.00	60.00
other bundle sizes on application			

*European subs paid at Air Mail rate will be sent by Letter Post.