

# FREEDOM

50p

ANARCHIST MAGAZINE

Volume 50 Number 4 April 1989 50p

## LEGALISE IT!

THE Hindu Shivrasti festival took place on Sunday 6 March 1989. By Monday evening, in the town of Baroda, 150 people had died and several hundred had gone blind, poisoned by methyl alcohol.

The state of Gujerat, which includes Baroda, is a 'dry' state. In fact it is rather wet, but it is called 'dry' by the curious euphemism which equates alcohol with water. Like all laws prohibiting recreational drugs, the Gujerat anti-'drink' law is intended to protect people, but does the opposite.

There are no great profits to be made by selling alcohol in Gujerat, such as could be made by selling alcohol in America during the prohibition years. Alcohol is not part of mainstream culture, there are no customs posts to prevent those who can afford it from importing it from neighbouring states, and the poor who drink the locally-made 'country liquor' are too poor to pay exorbitant prices. The harm done by prohibition in Gujerat is not that it produces a class of wealthy, well-organised, trigger-happy gangsters, but simply that it prevents the alcohol trade from being regulated.

Weak 'country liquor' is often strengthened by the addition of a little methyl alcohol, which is not lethal if sufficiently diluted with ethyl alcohol. What seems to have happened in this case is that somebody's hand slipped.

62 victims escaped death or blindness by having what they had drunk diluted with copious doses of whisky. The doctors who treated them have been prosecuted for smuggling.

Alcohol is not to be decriminalised as a result that one incident (in fact there was a similar incident, with twice as many deaths, in Bangalore in 1981); but the Gujerat authorities may have found a way to impose a safety standard on 'country liquor', without legalising it. The police have a duty to prevent the alcohol trade, and rigorously confiscate the stocks of traders who neglect to show their appreciation. Following the accident, the entire police force of Baroda has been



Cocaine factory on fire. Colombian police publicity photograph.

dispersed to other towns, where they will have to manage on their wages until they make new contacts. It is hoped that the financial penalty will encourage the police to look more carefully at what they turn a blind eye to.

Meanwhile in Colombia, the government is deliberately trying to ruin the country's biggest export earner. It is an interesting paradox that if the energetic and ruthless entrepreneur, Pablo Escobar, was making millions out of destroying the forest to grow hamburgers, or poisoning the land with mining, or manufacturing weapons, he would be celebrated as a 'wealth creator'; whereas because he deals in cocaine he is excoriated as a destroyer.

Early this year the Colombian police chief was sacked for accepting tokens of goodwill from Escobar's associates, and the new police chief set about destroying the manufacturing facilities in northern

Colombia, which Mr Escobar controls. The factories were well hidden under the forest canopy, but each was served by an airstrip which is impossible to conceal from the air. 1,800 troops were sent in to destroy 26 factory complexes. Remote as they were, they included some of the best workers' housing in Colombia, with piped water, refrigerators and gas stoves. The volatile chemicals used in processing cocaine were stored in 15,000 gallon tanks, kilometres away from the processing plants and connected by pipelines. Mr Escobar's own jungle hideout included a race-track, a bullring, and a zoo with elephants. He was not at home.

Undoubtedly Mr Escobar and his associates, the Medellin co-operative, have lost heavily; one estimate is that a quarter the world's cocaine processing facility has been destroyed. But there is no prospect

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## Note for Raven readers

A number of *Raven* subscribers have been enquiring about issue no. 7. Editorial problems have delayed publication. We are hoping it will be ready for dispatch some time in April.



## London ACF

### Anarchist Communist Federation

meets regularly at Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont Street, London WC1. Please note that the April meeting will be on 13 April, not on the first Thursday.

13 April at 8.30: **What's Up Gorbachev – the USSR today**

4 May at 7.30: **PUBLIC MEETING** sponsored by ACF London and (provisionally) other class struggle anarchist groups. **Ten Years of Thatcher – the resistance continues (plus the origins of May Day)**

Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont Street, WC1 (nearest station Russell Square, near enough Euston, Euston Square and Holborn).

## LONDON ANARCHIST CONFERENCE

London Anarchist Conference  
organised by NELP anarchists  
North East London Polytechnic  
West Ham Main Hall, Romford Road,  
Stratford, London E15 (nearest under-  
ground station Stratford)  
Saturday 27 May 1989, 11am to 5pm  
In the evening, a benefit gig for Leeds  
Abortion Fund. Information and Feed-  
back: LAC, c/o NELPSU, Maryland  
House, Manbey Park Road, London E15.

## Anarchist Forum

### Programme of the Anarchist Forum 1988/89

Fridays at 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.

- April 14 – Colin Ward: **After Thatcher's Britain**
  - April 21 – Open Discussion
  - April 28 – George Walford: **The two-sided Anarchist**
  - May 5 – Open Discussion
  - May 12 – Peter Neville: **Anarchism as a Yardstick of Balance**
  - May 19 – Open Discussion
  - May 26 – Fred James: **Group Dynamics and Ideology**
  - June 2 – Open Discussion
  - June 9 – Open Discussion
  - June 16 – George Walford: **Anarchism, a Consequence of Ideology**
  - June 23 – Open Discussion
  - June 30 – Open Discussion
- END OF SESSION

## DONATIONS

FEBRUARY – MID-MARCH 1989

### Freedom Magazine Fund

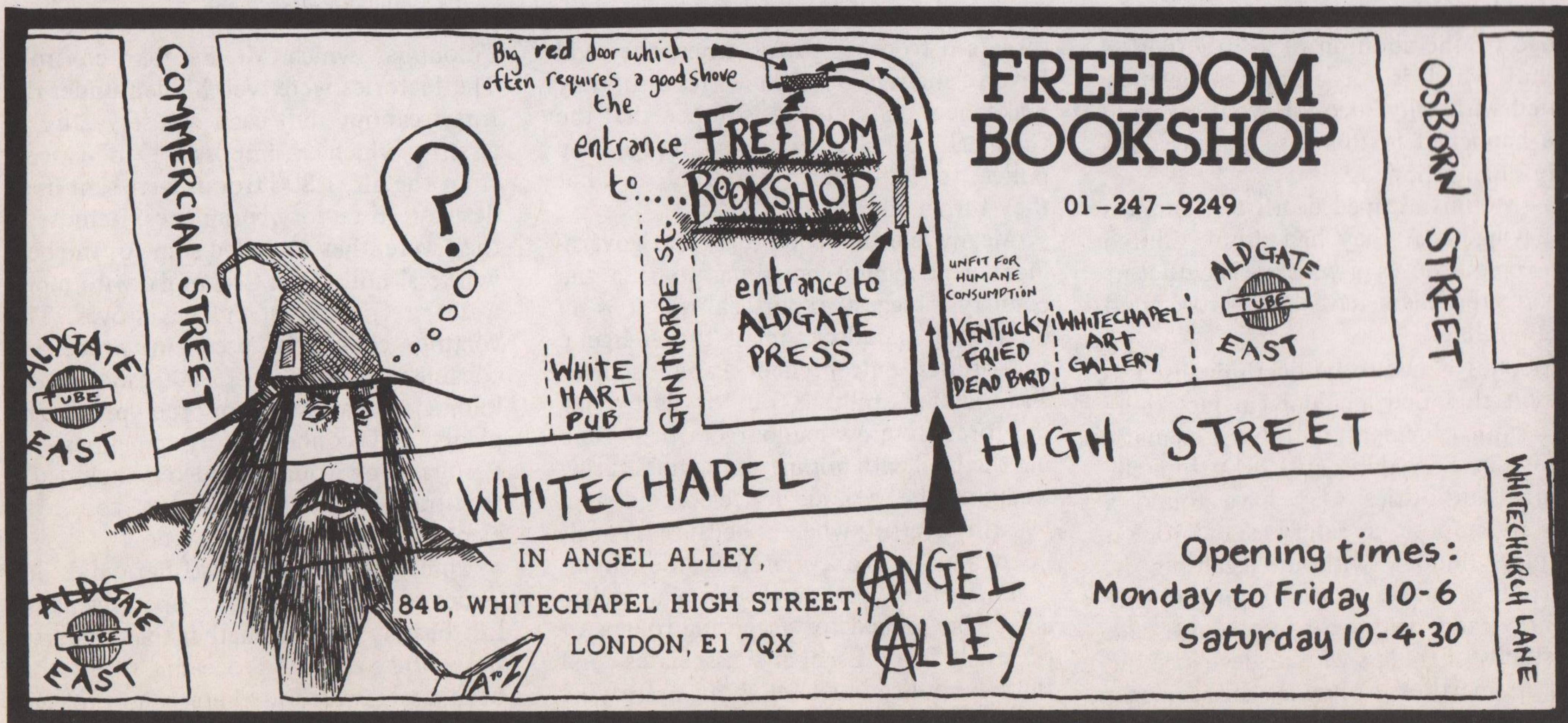
Birmingham TS £4; Upper Gravenhurst PH £5; Macclesfield DCB £1; Oakland RE £2.50; Wolverhampton JL £8; Londonderry IB £4; Valparaiso In. LO £10; London MM £5; Warham Wells MT £4; Brixham FY £3; London E17 KA £4; Cambridge PJO £3; Southend RB £2; Newport NHF £3.65; Telford HGB £5; Reading PA £5; London DL £5; Wolverhampton JL £4; Newport NG £2; London SW11 MG £5; London E1 JKR £3; Wirral TH £3; Nottingham AH £2; Pinner ROM £3; Derry DD £2; London NW5 RLP £2; London NW11 RM £50; Milton Keynes DB £3.

February – Mid-March Total = £153.15  
1989 TOTAL TO DATE = £584.83

### Freedom Press Overheads Fund

Elfera MC £1.20; Upper Gravenhurst PH £5; Sheffield JMC £1; Adelaide PNB £3.50; Oakland RE £2.50; Stockholm LZ £4; Wolverhampton JL £12; London MM £5; Muenster HB £20; Norfolk MT £2; Newport NHF £3.65; Scunthorpe MR £5; Brixham FY £3; Polstead DP £1; Hamburg PB £3.50; Cambridge PJO £3; Telford HGB £5; London DL £5; Wolverhampton JL £6; London SW11 MG £4; London E1 JKR £3; Saffron Walden ME £1; Coventry MP £1; Wirral TH £3; Littlehampton JW £1.45; Nottingham AH £1.25; Pinner ROM £3; New York PH £1.50; London RLP £2; Bradford AR £1; Dublin WSM £1.04; Berkeley California IAB £3.50; Milton Keynes DB £3.

February – Mid-March Total = £121.09  
1989 TOTAL TO DATE = £373.39





# POLL TAX two views

EVERY adult will have to pay a proportion of the poll tax fee. The poorest, even those with no income at all, will still have to pay 20% of the standard charge. A single person will lose the maximum 80% rebate as soon as their income exceeds £33.40 a week.

Peter Neville's contention (*Freedom, March*) that because every person will pay the same amount, the 'community charge' (sneer) will constitute an equalising tax, is ridiculous. It would only be an equalising tax if everybody started from the same resource base, which unfortunately is not the case. For instance, the Duke of Buccleuch, the owner of 270,000 acres of Scottish land, who has an estimated income of £2,500,000 a year, will have to contribute about a ten-thousandth of his income to the poll tax. Whereas an unemployed single person on an income of £31 a week will have to pay at least a fiftieth, and in some places up to a tenth, of their income under the 20% rule. Proportionally, the unemployed person

will be paying at least 200 times as much as the Duke. Apart from having no redistributive effect on the immoral ownership of 270,000 acres by a single individual, the poll tax will reverse the process of equalisation back in favour of the rich, at the expense of not just ordinary citizens but the poorest people in our society.

Registration and collection of the poll tax will require the entry of the name, age and address of every adult onto a central computer list, to deal with those cases where people move from one local authority to another during a single financial year.

A poll tax is not a tax on wealth like all other modern taxes, but a tax on being a person. The criterion for liability is to be eighteen years or older, and within the geographic piece of the earth known as Britain.

No apologies for capitalism please. Opposition to a tax that penalises us for simply being born should be fundamental to anarchists of all persuasions.

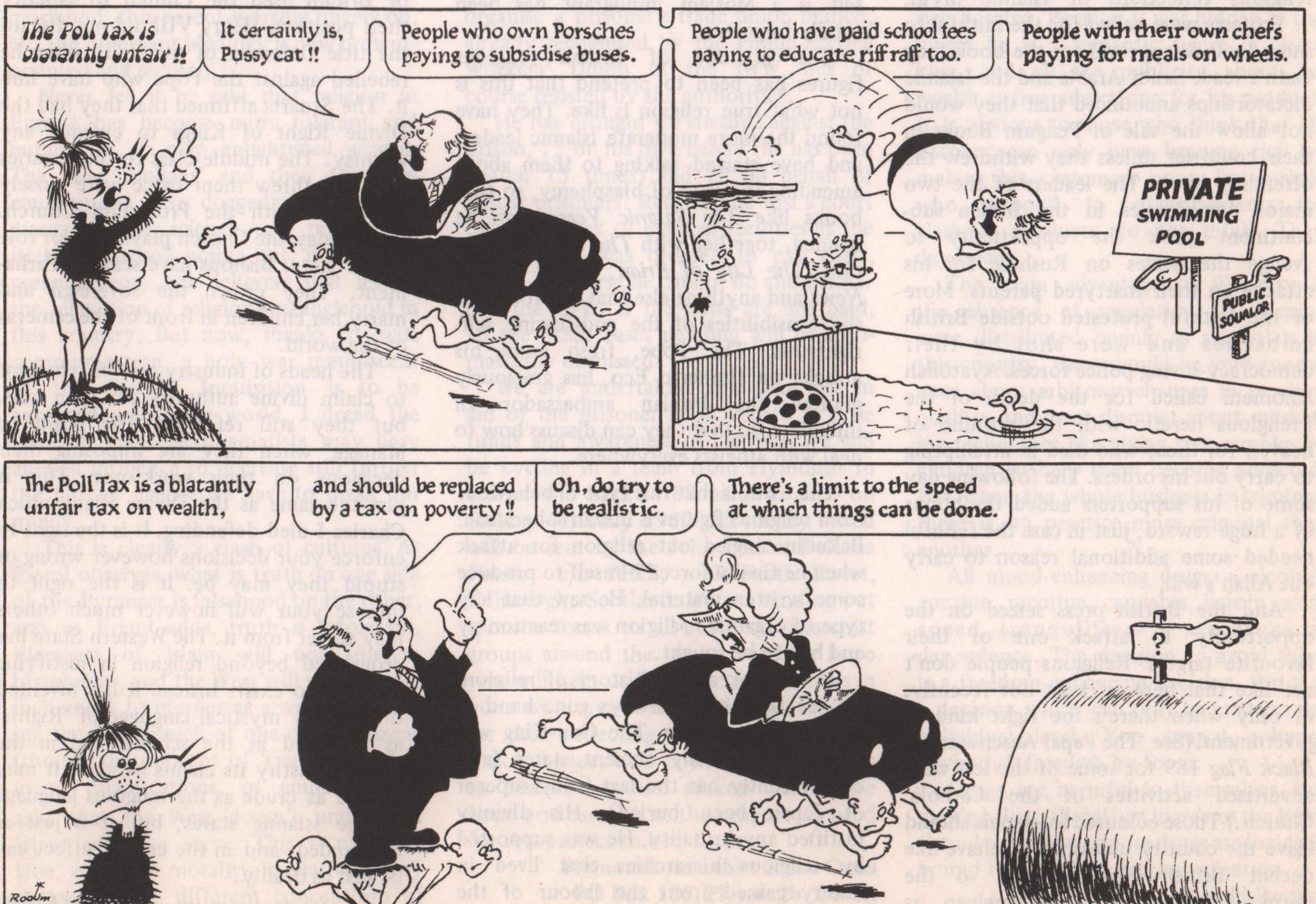
Clive Allsop

Eighteen people died after more than 50 were crammed into a cell 3ft by 9ft in a prison in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Some suffocated while others were trampled to death.

IN REPLY to Peter Neville's article 'Questions on Poll Tax' it is probable that the point of view he takes stems from a single reasonably paid middle class standpoint. The old rating system of course had many anomalies, as any tax enforced by bureaucratically controlled authorities will. It seems that the new tax will be more expensive to collect than the old one. The on-costs of capitalism are already enormous and this tax will add to those costs. The big anomaly that the tax does not correct is the private ownership of land, which has not of course ever been taxed. The exploitation of land for individual private gain has resulted in bad treatment all round the globe. The community are going to have to bear the consequences and the costs of putting these matters right without removing from private individuals the right to exploit land and other resources. The Community Charge in fact makes sure that the anomaly is reinforced by making certain the landowner with thousands of exploited acres will pay no more towards correction of this misuse than the underpaid farm worker. The national value of a large house will no longer be reflected in its rateable value.

The peasants of a past age were more aware of the realities than the urbanised gobbledygook that Peter Neville is serving us up with.

Alan Albon





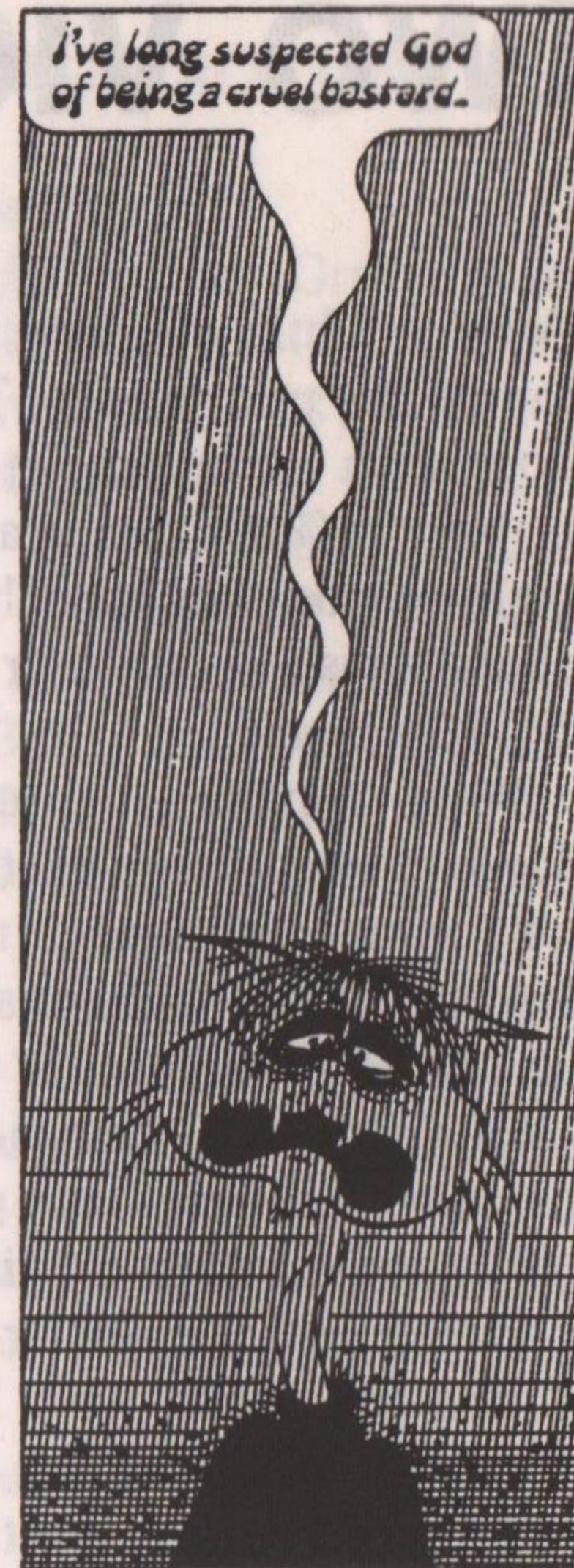
# Fiction, Religion and Authority

THE PRESS has been giving an unusually large amount of coverage recently to one of Britain's leading literary figures. Salman Rushdie is an Indian immigrant and the author of four novels: the pretentious and over-intellectual fantasy *Grimus*; the Booker Prize-winning *Midnight's Children*, a novel narrated by one of a number of children granted magical powers because they were born in India's hour of independence, and set against a background of that nation's fate under a succession of corrupt and incompetent governments; *Shame*, which does for Pakistan what *Midnight's Children* did for India; and *The Satanic Verses*, the cause of recent events.

Rushdie is a friend of the poet rulers of Nicaragua and a signatory to Charter 88. So we would normally expect his latest novel to attract favourable attention from the liberal press and to be ignored or derided by the large-circulation Tory papers. This indeed was what was happening to *The Satanic Verses* until the Islamic hierarchy noticed its existence. They skimmed through it, skipping past the attacks on Thatcher and British racism, and noting the references to Khomeini, and then seized upon the anti-religious reflections of Islamic myth.

Protests were called for the faithful to show their disapproval for the book they hadn't read. Saudi Arabia and the Islamic dictatorships announced that they would not allow the sale of Penguin Books in their countries unless they withdrew the offending book. The leaders of the two major democracies in the Indian sub-continent took the opportunity to avenge themselves on Rushdie for his attacks on their martyred parents. More of the faithful protested outside British embassies and were shot by their democracy-loving police forces. Ayatollah Khomeini called for the death of the irreligious heretic with the promise of heaven for those who died in attempting to carry out his orders. The following day some of his supporters added the bonus of a huge reward, just in case the faithful needed some additional reason to carry out Allah's will.

And the British press seized on the opportunity to attack one of their favourite targets. Religious people don't act like that here, at least not recently, or only when there's the right kind of government. (See 'The Papal Auschwitz' in *Black Flag* 189 for some of the less well-advertised activities of the Catholic Church.) Those coloured foreigners should leave the country unless they behave like decent British citizens. And so the murderous threat is soon forgiven, as



the whole racist circus starts characterising the typical Moslem immigrant as a bloodthirsty invader from a culture that has not progressed since the Middle Ages. In the process, the fact that Rushdie himself is a Moslem immigrant has been totally forgotten.

The attitude of British religious figures has been to pretend that this is not what true religion is like. They have found the more moderate Islamic leaders and have started talking to them about amending the laws of blasphemy, so that books like *The Satanic Verses* can be banned, together with *The Last Temptation*, *The Life of Brian*, stories in *Gay News* and anything else that might offend the sensibilities of the god-fearing self-righteous. The Pope, fresh from his attacks on Umberto Eco, has graciously granted the Iranian ambassador an interview, so that they can discuss how to deal with atheists everywhere.

The truth is that this type of behaviour from religious figures is not an aberration. Bakunin singled out religion for attack when he finally forced himself to produce some written material. He saw that any type of organised religion was reactionary and had to be fought.

If we look at the history of religion, we see that it has always gone hand in hand with the state. The God-King was the ruler of many ancient states (and only recently has the last God-Emperor of Japan been buried). His divinity justified any brutality. He was supported by religious hierarchies that lived in luxury gained from the labour of the

oppressed. For a millenium, the Catholic Church was the most powerful institution in Europe. The Pope could command Kings to carry out his will. Even after the Reformation, the Kings and Queens of Britain used the Church to sanctify their position. Henry VIII did not discard the title Defender of the Faith when he rebelled against the Pope who gave him it. The Stuarts affirmed that they had the Divine Right of Kings to enforce any whimsy. The middle-class revolutionaries who overthrew them twice were closely associated with the Protestant Church. Even today the Church plays a major role in the state. Bishops have seats in Parliament. They crown the sovereign and marry her children in front of the cameras of the world.

The heads of industry may be reluctant to claim divine authority for their acts, but they still refer to 'The Right to Manage' when they are imposing their decisions on their workforce. This is just the same as the Divine Right which Charles I died defending. It is the right to enforce your decisions however wrong or stupid they may be. It is the right to impose your will however much others may suffer from it. The Western State has progressed beyond religion in justifying its right to exist. Instead it has invented the equally mystical language of 'Rights' as preached in the schools and in the press to justify its claims over us. It may not be as crude as the religious language of the Islamic states, but it is just as unfounded, and in the end its effect can be just as deadly.

Peter Cohen



# Religion and Responsibility

ONCE AGAIN religion is manifesting itself as the implacable enemy of freedom. A wave of hysteria that began with the burning of Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* in Bradford culminated in the call for the author's murder by Ayatollah Khomeini. In between, the Labour MP for Bradford West, in a mealy-mouthed attempt to appease both sides, called for the blasphemy laws to be extended to cover Islam as well as Christianity.

I'm sure I'm not the only one who is angered as well as alarmed by this fundamentalist backlash. I see the decline in influence of religion in the West as basically a good thing, a coming to terms with our true insignificance in the face of the universe. Before there was religion there was magic, when people thought they could control the elements with their symbolic actions. When this stage of 'infantile impotence' subsided it gave way to the worship of the 'father' or 'mother', the idealised creator, an entity with human-like aspirations (e.g. the desire to be loved and praised) and a haphazard sense of justice. Vestiges of the old impotence remained, though — prayer, for example, is an attempt to influence the deity with thought. Though almost moribund, this parent-worship lingers on, but the dominant ideology is now present-oriented and secular.

Never let it be said that religion in Europe has become more tolerant and humble of its own enlightened accord. The 'mad mullahs' and their Christian counterparts have doggedly resisted the discoveries of science and reason. As Bertrand Russell points out, it was only pressure from non-believers that led to the relaxation of religion's stranglehold in this country. But now, thanks to mass communication, a holy war reminiscent of the Spanish Inquisition is to be exported across the world. I dread the thought that the dogmatists may have enough influence to decrease still further the limited licence we have to speak our minds.

This is clearly a clash of cultures. As Pascal observes, what is truth on one side of the Pyrenees is falsehood on the other, and as Freud adds, truth is intolerant. Elements of Islam will not tolerate blasphemy, and the West will not tolerate incitement to murder as a way of curtailing the free speech of one of its citizens (though the concept of 'free speech' has many qualifications, of course). It is said that the West doesn't understand Islam and vice versa. This is probably true, and since morality is relative (every society having different conceptions of

right and wrong — even the sanctity of life is not a matter of consensus) as long as there are governments with rival ideologies, culture-conflict is inevitable.

'Liberal' excusers of Islam miss a crucial point, and this is my most basic criticism of religion: submission to the authority of another entails the abdication of responsibility. The will of the individual, the social group and the culture is secondary to the 'will of god' as defined by interpreters of an ancient tradition. Religion, by limiting choice to that delineated by the dogma, is almost an easy way out.

'Rushdie must take responsibility for his action!' cry those who stubbornly refuse to do so themselves. Salman Rushdie's book is said to have 'caused' a breach of diplomatic relations, 'caused'

## for John Perotti

### Sponsored bike ride for John Perotti

JOHN PEROTTI is a top security prisoner in the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility. Prison labour is paid ten cents an hour by a private firm, Ohio Prison Industries, and Perotti is trying to organise a prisoner's trade union branch, already recognised by the Public Service Workers' Union of the IWW, but of course resisted by the authorities.

He has brought 40 lawsuits against the prison, 15 on his own behalf (he has been beaten 15 times) and 25 on behalf of fellow prisoners. Recently he lost a court case over lack of medical facilities at the prison, and was ordered to pay costs, which of course he cannot do and neither can the IWW. If the costs are not paid, all the other cases pending will be automatically dismissed.

We are undertaking this bike ride in aid of the prisoner John Perotti to raise funds and awareness of his case. We will be cycling in a team from Plymouth to Exeter and back — 88 miles in all — on Sunday 7th May 1989. All money raised will be sent to the John Perotti Defense Fund, c/o PHCI, 11 Forth Street, Edinburgh, Scotland. We are sending out sponsor forms to all ABC and anarchist groups around the country and we hope you will help us by collecting sponsors in your own area and taking responsibility for then collecting in any money. Please make cheques and postal orders payable to **Molotov** to the address below. We hope you can give us the support we need for this project to be a success.

**Plymouth Anarchist Black Cross  
PO Box 105, Plymouth, Devon**

demonstrations in Bradford, 'caused' outrage in the Islamic world. But people are not passive respondents to external stimuli. Their emotional response is ultimately down to them — no one book or message can directly cause any emotion, it is the respondent's interpretation that causes reaction. People may well be influenced and constrained by religious and societal norms, but ultimately they are their own cause.

It is the same with anything 'offensive' written or spoken. Few like being insulted, but if the same remark can result in different degrees of offence being taken by different individuals, and by the same person on different occasions, how can it be said to be causing anything in itself? To a large extent, people choose their reactions.

Voltaire said, 'I don't agree with what you say, but I will defend . . . your right to say it'. Anything else is a return to the Dark Ages.

**Johnny Yen**

## LEGALISE IT!

continued from front page

of any cocaine billionaire advocating the decriminalisation of cocaine. Endangered as they are, they are much better off as criminals.

If Mr Escobar's fabulous estate were out in the open, he would be just another rich bastard. Because it was hidden in the jungle he is a romantic figure, a pirate king, and all the publicity about his wealth is free advertising for his product. It is obvious to those who think that Mr Escobar can only have become rich by making his customers poor. But people who respond to advertisements for glamour products do not think. They daydream.

The main advantage of illegality is the absence of regulation. If cocaine were distributed openly as alcohol is in this country, there would be loud annoyance about arbitrary changes in product quality, and great disquiet about marketing techniques like giving free samples to children to help them become addicted. But when the whole business is criminal, there is no practice more criminal than another.

All mood-enhancing drugs — alcohol, cocaine, nicotine, cannabis, heroin, acid, speed, tranquilisers — are drugs of dependence. The decision to avoid them is a freedom-enhancing decision. But it is a decision which can only be made at the individual level. You cannot enhance anybody's freedom by force.

Drugs are harmful in themselves, but making them illegal just increases the harm they do. We who oppose drugs are logically bound to urge their decriminalisation.

**Donald Room**



# Training is good for you (joke)

AFTER personally experiencing something like three government-inspired changes in the Youth Training Schemes which involved re-naming it, I can see that there is a new and desperate Westminster wishing to persuade young people that training is good for you, just like a dish of bran for breakfast. With the current wave of TV goblets the message is pumped out every night at public expense. The TV commercials show a giant earth-coloured plug being plunged into a hole in the ground watched by a crowd of midget workers. The dust which spirals upwards is enough to blind any onlookers, including the TV viewer, who is then confronted by the mysterious letters ET (for Employment Training) and a phone number.

Training is the new icon word. If you are untrained, you are fit only to shovel shit. That is the inference. The top-drawer advertising agencies, which net large sums of money for thinking up this sort of psychological warfare on behalf of the government, are clever enough to recognise that belittling a person while still holding out hopes of advancement is the best way of edging people towards spurious beliefs.

The patterns which the Youth Training Scheme and offshoots have woven for the last four or five years were all devised not only by advertising agencies but also by Civil Service policy makers. As workshop supervisors we fell into the trap of telling trainees that if they were unable to conform to the discipline of the workshops and a clock which had to be punched every day, they would lose not only some of their £26.50 a week but also the chance of State 'benefits' later on. Although they attended the training centre on a voluntary basis, they were left in no doubt that conformity was everything, while any show of independence and isolationism would destroy them in our eyes.

There is no single answer to the problem of youth training on the State scale except to completely scrap it and instead provide libertarian-based advice and counselling for school leavers. But this should not be provided at school level before they quit the constrictions of the classroom. It should come a little later, after they have had a taste of the world. The present Careers Service is nothing more than a process of fitting pegs in holes which are often stereotyped.

Youth Training Scheme supervisors and instructors are usually middle-aged people who have in many cases been made redundant by industry and spent time on the dole. Their attitude is that they are glad to have any sort of a job. The future of the training workshops —

and their jobs — depends on numbers being kept up, because the scheme operates on a per capita basis. In many cases supervisors become the unwitting tools of a punitive government. Now, less than a year after my retirement, I can see that the threats have become reality. Young people who refuse to undertake training at a registered establishment or are not in full-time education, automatically lose their entitlement to benefits.

The erosion of liberty now occurs at a much earlier stage of growth than ever before in the Welfare State. In the Britain of 1989 the government has sold practically every public facility and service in order to prop up a tissue-paper economy. In the remaining years of Toryism all that remains is the systematic conditioning of young people and ensure that they will develop into a blinkered, harnessed and conditioned mass capable of hauling the State machine. The latest move of financial deprivation, by refusing to provide benefits for those who wish to develop in their own way, is an act of bloodless violence in a society which exists on the fable of the £. Despite Thatcher's constant declaration that people must have a choice, there is no choice left for school leavers. They are in a position in which they cannot arrange to pursue their own lives or explore their own initiatives. Those who undergo approved training become nothing more than economic units, time servers in the discomfort of the State squirrel cage. Coercion rather than mutual agreement, promises which cannot be kept, these are the ingredients of Britain in 1989.

If the Training Commission, which cranks the wheels of the system, were to disappear because it became too uneconomic to operate, then it is more than likely that the government would increase the financial incentives now paid to industry to provide youth training. But the withdrawal of benefits for young people who do not wish to be mauled by the industrial machine would still remain in force. Once coercion is in place and running, it cannot be removed except by the most forceful action. It is the traditional role of youth to resist threats. Exactly how youth can be educated to do so is another problem which calls for the emergence of libertarian thinkers and speakers who are willing to explain how to translate theory into action, perhaps by forms of civil disobedience. Tell young people what is happening to them, show them the shape of the mould. Urge at least some of them to break that mould. Or at least create some cracks which the rest of us will widen.

Fred Oughton

## 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)

## Child Poverty

POVERTY among children in Britain is becoming more widespread and severe, according to a report published recently.

The gap between rich and poor families is also increasing says *Children in Danger*, the annual review of child welfare commissioned by the National Children's Home.

It says that poverty and bad health are linked with bad housing and homelessness, stress after parental relationships break down, and recent benefit system changes.

'The health of the nation's children shows itself to be stubbornly attached to class and income', it says.

The relationship between poor health and low income is underlined, the report says, by statistics on infant mortality and stillbirths.

Yorkshire has the highest incidence of infant mortality, with 10.1 deaths per 1,000 live births, followed by North-East Thames with 9.9 deaths. East Anglia has the lowest number, 7.8 per 1,000.

His Grace the Bishop of Newcastle says the AIDS epidemic is less serious than the epidemic of divorce.



# Spain's Big Day

THE importance of the Spanish one day General Strike last December, is clear from the size of the walk out, amounting as it did to a close down of the country for 24 hours. Possibly it was the only general strike in the history of Spain which has had such a widespread response. Eight million workers struck, and about one million occupied the streets.

To explain the strength of this, the first truly national general strike since July 1936, one must look at the extent of the sacrifices of the least privileged members of Spanish society over the last twelve years. The unemployed, the young and the pensioners have all seen how the economic readjustments fall on their backs, while profits in banking, government funds and reserves, and property investments have all grown to a great degree.

Welfare cover has declined in Spain under the Socialist Government, and the status of medical assistance has been degraded. Only 25% of the three million unemployed draw dole, a large number of the young and other workers draw the minimum pay of £220 a month (when in a city like Madrid a family of three needs £500 a month to live). Most pensions are about £132 a month. House ownership is beyond the reach of the majority of workers because of property speculation encouraged by government policies, and the growth of military demand for land.

In all there is a river of money flowing to some, while the workers have been hard put to get a 2% or 3% pay rise.

There is great disenchantment with the Socialist government's projects, especially its lack of help to the poor. The politics of the governing PSOE (Socialist Party) is the politics of the Right pretending to be of the Left, and now it is ceasing to deceive the Spanish people.

The main importance of this process, which culminated in the national strike of 14 December, has been the shift of direction of many of the leaders of the Spanish trade unions. The trade union bosses have lost confidence in the politicians and their parties. In breaking away from the POSE for the first time in its history, the UGT (Socialist trade union federation) has created the possibility of unified action by the Spanish labour movement. December's general strike would not have taken place without the call from the main trade union federations — the communist CCOO and the UGT. But the success for the strike in being able to channel the public belief that all is not well in Socialist Spain, and mount a widespread popular stoppage, was influenced by the backing given to

the strike by the anarcho-syndicalist CNT, the Nationalist trade unions and certain popular organisations. Moreover, the UGT and CCOO have had to wash their own faces — faces dirtied by past pacts signed with various governments, besmirched by the acceptance of company closures, bespattered with the mud of all those agreements unfavourable to labour which these big unions have over the last twelve years approved. For years these unions have shown a lack of confidence in social struggle, and have often ignored the decisions of their own members expressed in referendums; in Banking, at SEAT, and at Renault, to mention a few cases.

The coming collective bargaining over the strike demands represents a test for the CCOO and the UGT. If these unions are to uphold the strike claims it would seem to rule out a pact with the government. The communist CCOO is interested in harassing the Socialist government as part of the strategy of the PCE (Communist Party) to provoke a General Election. The UGT cannot allow itself to be outflanked by the CCOO or the CNT because of the trade union elections in 1990.

For the CNT it is a favourable time — we put our faith in the workers as the true champions of the December strike. We have backed the strikes without reserve, and we have seen the important presence of the CNT coming to fruit during the last few years. The CNT represents the authentic alternative trade union in several important sectors and companies — in Banking, at SEAT, at Renault, in CASA etc — where the UGT and CCOO have failed to keep their bargaining in line with the workers' demands.

But most of the claims of the December strikers can't be won inside the private sector. Demands for a better minimum wage, more welfare cover, more rights to dole payments, and increased pensions can only be gained by big mobilisations like the strikes and demos of 14 and 16 December. In this respect the CNT has a convincing record: encouraging solidarity; raising consciousness; pushing direct action and syndicalist practices; and defusing our social project among the workers and citizens. Our aim is to build a trade union movement involving all sectors of production, and not to establish a party of luminaries far from the factory floor. If the CNT is to play its full part in the Spanish labour movement the divisions which exist between the two CNTs need resolving rapidly.

Carlos Beltran  
(CNT-Madrid)

# Landlords choose Lamprey

WASHINGTON DC — The National Association of Landlords announced at a press conference earlier this month that it has chosen a mascot — the lamprey, an eel-like parasite which attaches itself to its victim and sucks its blood until the victim dies.

E L Chupa-Sangre, spokesman for the group, admitted that the lamprey was not the landlords' first choice, 'but the Bar Association has already adopted the vampire bat, the leech is virtually synonymous with the insurance companies, and the IRS has a lock on Count Dracula.'

He added, 'Many people already identify landlords with other animals, such as the hyena and the vulture, but we felt that these animals would be inappropriate choices inasmuch as they perform useful environmental functions, and landlords ... Well, let's not belabor the obvious.'

Asked why the NAL chose to publicly announce its choice of the lamprey, Chupa-Sangre responded, 'We landlords have a long-time commitment to truth in advertising, and what better place to demonstrate that commitment than in the symbol of our Association? Given that the symbols we would have preferred were already taken, the lamprey was the only logical choice.'

Chaz Bufe

(With apologies to *Smurfs in Hell*)

[They recently ran an article titled 'Republicans Choose Lamprey'; the only resemblance between this piece and theirs is the idea of a lamprey as a mascot.]

## IN BRIEF

A Kenyan newspaper has apologised to Iran for using a picture of the old, Shahist, flag in an advertising feature marking the tenth anniversary of the anti-Shahist revolution. The publishers must expect condemnation for blasphemy and the arrival of hit squads momentarily.

The Soviet government has announced national crime figures for the first time since 1933. There were over 16,000 murders last year, approaching the American rate and about five times the British rate. Violent robberies and break-ins increased by over 40%.



# REMEMBERING MLB

IT IS just forty years this month of April since Marie Louise Berneri died in 1949, at the age of 31. She had been down with pneumonia for a couple of weeks and seemed to be progressing, though slowly, and then suddenly she was gone.

To this day, I cannot summon calmly the words to express what we all felt at this disaster. And when the news hit the Continent and America, the Far East and Australia, shocked messages came flooding into our bookshop in Red Lion Street to tell us how much she had been loved and admired around the world.

Marie Louise had been born at the end of the First World War in Arezzo, near Florence, the daughter of well-known and respected Italian anarchists Camillo Berneri and Giovanna Berneri. Camillo could not remain silent under Mussolini, and by 1926 it became necessary to get out. The family moved to Paris, where Marie Louise ended up at the Sorbonne studying psychology. Her sister studied medicine.

But this was no merely academic family. At the outbreak of the Spanish revolution in 1936, Camillo went to Barcelona, and (after fighting on the Aragon front) worked on uncompromising anarchist journals, (editing *Guerra di Classe*) critical of the co-operation with the Republican government and the apparent necessity to work with the authoritarian left.

His suspicions were well founded, for in the May days of 1937, Camillo was murdered by the Communists during their attempted take-over of Barcelona, and thus, they hoped, of the entire anti-fascist struggle, to say nothing of crushing the anarchists.

The bolsheviks failed, but there can be no doubt that the events of May 1937 seriously affected the morale of the anti-Franco fighters, even without taking into account the fact that, while only Russia was prepared to send arms to Spain, supplies were despatched only for payment in gold *in advance* — and then reached only the Communists, who used them for internal policing rather than in the struggle against the fascists.

But I digress. While her father was working in Barcelona, Marie Louise made several 'journeys of confidence' to Spain on behalf of the comrades of Paris. She was able there to see many of the achievements of the workers and peasants in establishing their collectives and practising workers' control — an inspiration she never forgot.

Towards the end of 1937 she came to London to live with her companion, Vernon Richards, whom she married, presumably to give her protection against

internment as an 'undesirable alien' once the obviously coming struggle for world power between the fascist and so-called 'democratic' powers was joined.

Vero (to give him his Italian name, since he was the son of an Italian anarchist who had come to England many years previously and who, in fact, had been involved in an attempt on Mussolini's life) had started an anarchist paper in 1936, precisely for the purpose of publicising the Spanish struggle from the anarchist standpoint. Few papers in this country (I mean Britain) were sympathetic even to the Republican cause, let alone the revolutionary dimension. Papers such as the *Daily Mail*, for example, referred to Franco as 'that gallant Christian gentleman', and the whole Republican side as 'reds'. It was enough! So Vero's paper, *Spain and the World*, which was well produced, illustrated, laid-out and printed, became very important and attracted a lot of attention from many quarters, including Tom Keell and Lilian Wolfe who passed on the title of Freedom Press. It had, of course, the great advantage of having an anarchist revolution to support. This was something none of us have had the luxury to report since! It would be easy to say that the entire Left was bound up with the Spanish struggle — but since it was riven by sectional interests, it certainly was not bound up with the anarchist struggle.

Into this atmosphere, Marie Louise fitted very well. Already speaking three languages — her native Italian, French and Spanish — she quickly mastered English. When the Spanish struggle finally collapsed she faced up to the problems of helping Spanish comrades who had managed to escape at the very end and get to Britain, and to organise food, clothing and accommodation for them.

The end of the Spanish Civil War meant the end of the immediate relevance of *Spain and the World*, but the group that had grown up around it produced two issues of another anarchist paper called *Revolt* before the start of World War Two. In November 1939 *War Commentary* was launched, first as a duplicated paper and then quickly in printed format. Now Marie Louise was in from the first in an editorial capacity, together with Vero, and very soon the clarity and strength of the anarchist analysis began to make itself felt in the many strands of the anti-war movement.

Many individuals began to realise there was no point in opposing war without opposing the economic system which engendered it — capitalism — and the institution which organised it — the state. Thus the more honest and clear thinking war resisters began to move



towards anarchism.

In 1940 Marie Louise organised a series of lecture-discussions on Spain which strengthened this trend by emphasising the constructive aspects of anarchism demonstrated by the Spanish collectives and the anarcho-syndicalist alternative to reactionary trades unionism.

So it was that when, after three years of working as a tractor driver on the land, I came back to London in 1943, I found my way to Freedom Press and discovered a group of clear-thinking and capable anarchists, with a wealth of knowledge and experience. More importantly I found an intellectual certainty which I had been lacking.

My first stumbling attempts at writing for the paper were turned down and I still remember Marie Louise's gentle rejections. But I put my graphic skills to work in cartoons and posters. Partly because of this, I found myself in touch with the man who was the main cartoonist for *War Commentary*, the great John Olday, a veteran by my standards, who had escaped from Nazi Germany after being involved in the Munich bomb plot against Hitler, had come to England, been conscripted into the army and deserted — to end up sharing a ramshackle studio with me in Camden Town and producing inflammatory propaganda for the armed forces which landed four of us in the dock of the Old Bailey in April 1945. John Olday was dealt with separately. The four were Marie Louise, Vero Richards, John Hewetson and myself. The charge was Conspiracy to Disaffect the Armed Forces and the possible penalty in wartime was 14 years!

Marie Louise was absolutely furious when, on the second day, she was dismissed from the case because her clever barrister had spotted a chink in the law that the Prosecution had overlooked. It was that 'A wife may not be accused of conspiring with her husband'! Because



they are as one, silly! I've never understood why charges of conspiring with John and me could not have been pursued — but we weren't arguing!

Vero, John and I went down for an easy nine months (and that's another story!), but the fact that Marie Louise was on the outside was of enormous importance. Together with George Woodcock and other comrades who rallied around, *War Commentary* was kept going with increasing vigour. At the same time, pamphlets were printed and distributed, meetings were organised, the work of the Defence Committee was maintained — and in all of this Marie Louise was an inspiration in keeping up pressure on a British government supposedly fighting for freedom of speech and of the press. It was heartening for us on the inside to know how much support was coming from a wide swathe of political and literary opinion. I cannot help wondering how much would come today?

By the time we came out, in the autumn of 1945, the war was over, but the atom bombs had fallen in Japan and the world was in a state of dazed and uneasy shock. At least, the thinking fraction of the world was. Had the scenario for World War Three already been drawn up?

Nevertheless, the *Freedom* editorial group (yes, the paper had changed its name from *War Commentary* to *Freedom* when the war ended) had been enlarged. Colin Ward had joined us on his demob (he had been promoted to counting sheep in the Orkneys after giving useless evidence for the prosecution at the Old Bailey) and with Gerald Vaughan, a farmer, writing Land Notes, we covered home and international news, industry and agriculture, book reviews and controversy as well, if not better, than ever.

Marie Louise was a tower of strength in corresponding around the world. Her mother and sister had emerged from the war not unscathed, but tougher and more determined. Giovanna was to see the inside of jail again as a result of her struggle for birth control in Catholic Italy.

Marie Louise had written a booklet, *Workers in Stalin's Russia*, during the war while Stalin was our noble ally in the struggle for freedom and democracy — in which she had picked up the particular plight of women in the USSR, long before the terms 'Womens Lib' or 'Feminism' had been coined. She showed how the women's 'rights' which had been 'granted' soon after the revolution had been rescinded by Stalin when the need for increased population became apparent to the great dictator (to replace the millions he killed), to say nothing of discrimination at work.



At the end of the war, in George Woodcock's magazine *Now*, he published an article by Marie Louise on Wilhelm Reich, who had started his public life as a Marxist with the German Communist Party, but had been expelled when his sexual politics demonstrated the connection between sexual repression and totalitarianism — indeed, authoritarianism in any form. In it she writes: 'Human nature is a whole. The worker is not merely the producer in the factory or the field; he is also the lover, the father. The problems which he faces in his home are no less important than those at his place of work. By trying to separate biological and psychological problems from the sociological ones, we not only mutilate our theories, but are bound to reach false conclusions'.

In this, we have only a hint of what was to come from Marie Louise. Undoubtedly, she would have taken into account the emergence of women into the work force — as more than a wartime expediency — but would have seen true independence and emancipation as going beyond mere wage slavery! She would certainly have ceased to refer to workers only as male — but her arguments would have remained.

Similarly, while opposing colonialism and racism, she always saw liberation as rather more than just changing the nationality or colour of the ruling class!

### **JOURNEY THROUGH UTOPIA**

by Marie-Louise Berneri

The best critical study of utopian literature: More, Winstanley, Sade, Fourier, Owen, Cabet, Morris & many more. 340 pp. £4.50

### **NEITHER EAST NOR WEST**

by Marie-Louise Berneri

Selected writings from 1939 to 1948 by one of the most insightful anarchist writers of modern times. With 16 anti-war cartoons by John Olday. 192 pp. £4.50

Marie Louise had no illusions about the difficulties that lay in the path of achieving a free anarchist society. In December 1940 she wrote: 'We cannot build until the working class gets rid of its illusions, its acceptance of bosses and faith in leaders. Our policy consists in educating it, in stimulating its class instinct and teaching methods of struggle. It is a hard and long task, but . . . our way of refusing to attempt the futile task of patching up a rotten world, but of striving to build a new one, is not only constructive, but it is also the *only* way out.'

Some years later, shortly before she died, MLB (as she signed letters and articles) launched into a fairly ambitious project. With the help of George Woodcock, she assembled an anthology of writings through the ages consisting of visions of Utopia, the ideal society. These ranged over the centuries from Plato's *Republic* to the IWW's vision of the American hobo's *Big Rock Candy Mountains*, with lemonade fountains and bulldogs with rubber teeth!

It was not completely finished when she suddenly died in 1949, but a great effort by Vero (with a little help from his friends) brought it out in 1950 under the title of *Journey Through Utopia*. I was privileged to design the original dust jacket for this (since lost), and also to design the little logo (a half opened rose) for the Marie Louise Memorial Committee which published a tribute consisting of contributions from around the world, together with many photographs, and which has since ensured that her writings are kept in print.

There is much more to be said, but we are running out of space. So let's end with another quote, from *Journey Through Utopia*:

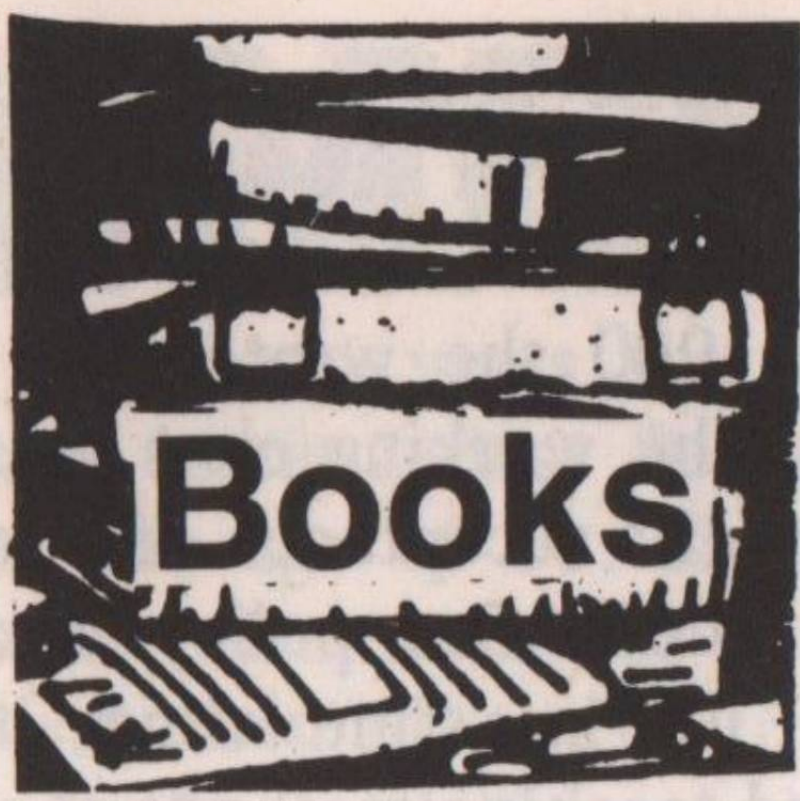
'Our age is an age of compromises, of half-measures, of the lesser evil. Visionaries are derided or despised, and 'practical men' rule our lives. We no longer seek radical solutions to the evils of society, but reforms; we no longer try to abolish war, but to avoid it for a period of a few years; we do not try to abolish crime, but are content with criminal reforms; we do not try to abolish starvation, but to set up worldwide charitable organisations.'

At a time when man is so concerned with what is practicable and capable of immediate realisation, it might be a salutary exercise to turn to men who have dreamt of Utopias, who have rejected everything that did not comply with their idea of perfection.'

When John Hewetson wrote the original, brief announcement of Marie Louise's death in *Freedom* (30 April 1949), someone said to me 'It sounds as though he loved her'. To which I replied simply 'We all did'.

Philip Sansom





## Bookshop Sale

Spring is sprung, the grass is ris',  
this is where the bargains is!

IN KEEPING with book trade traditions we are pleased to announce a (late) spring sale. The following titles, many slightly damaged or shop-soiled but otherwise in good condition, are offered at half normal price. First come, first served.

Uprooting War	£2.50
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Vol. I: The Break up of our Camp	£3.00
Vol. II: A Ceremonial	£3.00
Vol. III: The Galley to Mytilene	£3.00

The following are reduced by varying amounts (original price in brackets)

Journey Through Utopia	£2.95 (£4.50)
The Modern State	£4.95 (£6.95)
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A Decade of Anarchy	£4.00 (£5.00)
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In addition, copies of the *Selections from Freedom* series are still available at bargain prices, 250 pages average, and packed with meaty articles. Now only £1 per volume (50p to callers in the bookshop).

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Vol. 4	Living on a Volcano	1954
Vol. 6	Oil and Troubled Waters	1956
Vol. 7	Year One — Sputnik Era	1957
Vol. 8	Socialism in a Wheelchair	1958
Vol. 9	Print, Press and Public	1959
Vol. 10	The Tragedy of Africa	1960
Vol. 11	The People in the Street	1961
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Vol. 13	Forces of Law and Order	1963
Vol. 14	Elections Year	1964

Please add 20% part post and packing to all orders by post, up to a maximum of £3.00 postage and packing.

## DECLARATION on the formation of the independent political group AUTONOMIA

AUTONOMY in our interpretation is not only the final social aim, but also the free, responsible, morally guided behaviour of self-conscious people.

The aim is a society without rulers, without hierarchy, without authoritarianism; a society based on autonomy, self-governing communities functioning in a decentralised federation. Mutual aid, non-violence, tolerance and rejection of hierarchy should be the principles of the self-organising society. All economic entities (factories, companies, etc.) should be the common property of those working there, and all these should be run according to the principles of workers' self governing. Economy should be submitted to humanitarian and ecological goals.

Direct democracy should work in policy. The groups of people or communities should form their councils working on the principles of direct democracy and imperative mandate, that is the members should only represent the decision made by the voters.

No more oppression, no more exploitation!

No more discrimination for political, national, racist, religious, sexual or any other reasons!

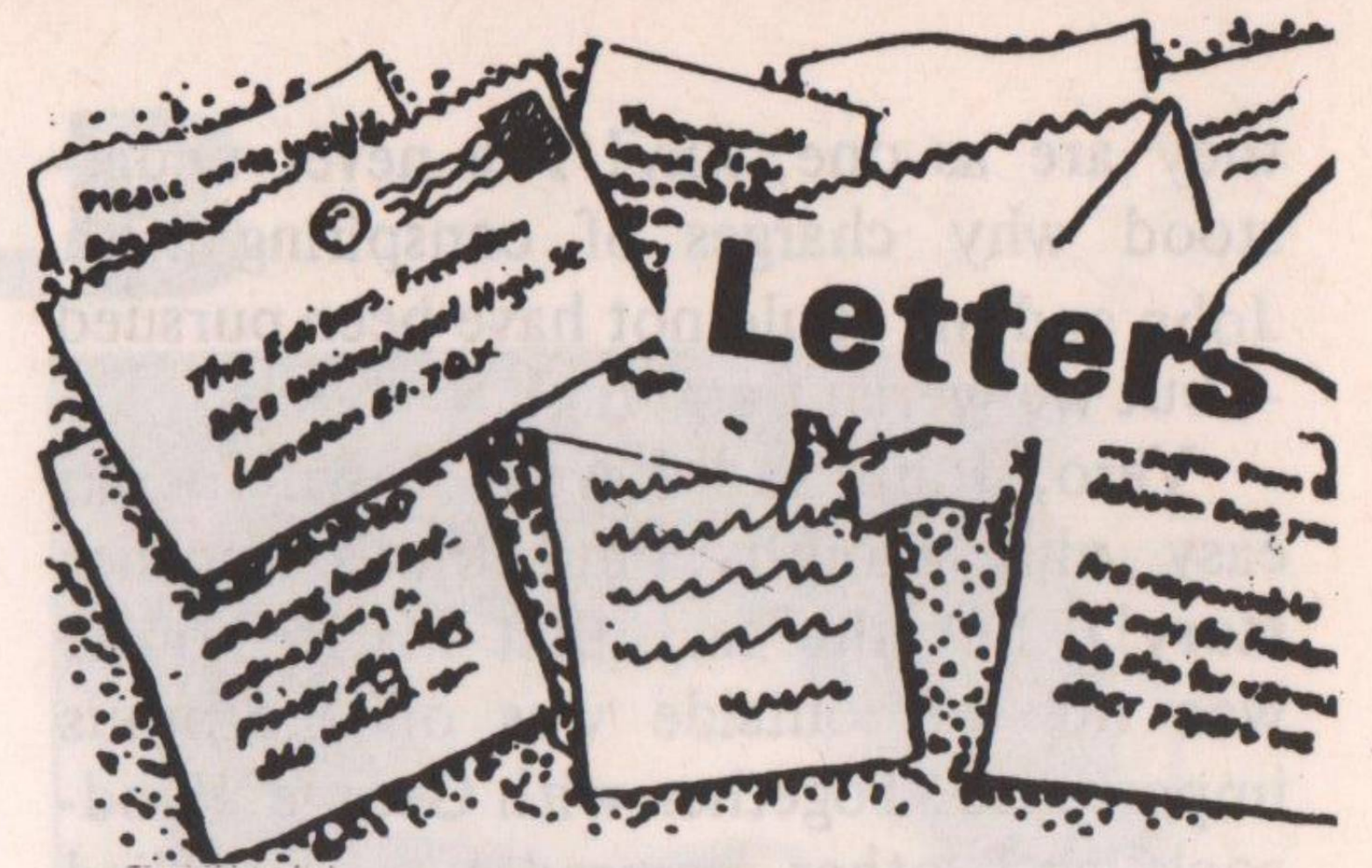
No more patriarchal men's rule! All women, children and elderly people should enjoy total emancipation!

Autonomia is an independent Hungarian political group without any leadership, which will not work either as an association or as a political organisation (like a party, etc.). The group will not join the struggle for political power, but will support the other independent grassroots communities, movements and groups, and will help them become active in the recent political situation. The group will not have its representatives but will be active politically in a direct way by spreading its ideas and creating new alternative ways of life. Though the final aim is the society without parties or state, in the recent political situation in Hungary we support all independent initiatives which want to break the power of this totalitarian one-party system and fight for pluralism.

None of the existing models for democracy in the world are attractive enough for us, we reject all state-power systems.

Everyone who agrees with our principle is welcome to our group.

**Autonomia**  
**Bartók Gyula, Budapest,**  
**Gács L. u. 17. 11/12, 1041, Hungary**



## Big theories

GEORGE WALFORD is not one to let ugly little facts stand in the way of beautiful big theories (*March Freedom*).

'The profit system is a killer but also, and far more, it is a life bringer. Far more survive under capitalism than were able to do so without it.'

Really! The hundred million or so killed in the wars of this century; the many millions more killed by the externalities of the system: pollution, famine, soil erosion and deforestation, the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, not to mention stress and insecurity? The kindest thing one can say is that there are efforts to deal with some of the effects of which it is the main cause, but they don't amount to more than pissing against the wind.

'The insupportable growth of population from improvements in public health and production of food.' But the growth is in the Third World! Growth in the developed world is static. This merely repeats a canard of bourgeois historians that the whole human race had difficulty keeping body and soul together during the last five million years until the market economy turned up to save us. Don't tell me. Tell the people who built Stonehenge and Silbury Hill and painted the caves of Lascaux and Altamira.

The threat of sudden extinction comes not from technology itself — ask Archimedes — but from technology geared to the market economy and in the hands of its bureaucracy.

**Ken Smith**

SINCE the *March Freedom* came, I've been trying to get into words my response to what Donald Room has put to us in the two right-hand panels of *Wildcat*, so far without success. At first it looked like surrealism, and perhaps it is that. But it's also more. It cuts beneath our assumptions about space and time and freedom and restriction, it raises the whole question of reality and illusion. Donald has no right to introduce anything so disturbing into a cartoon. I try to push it out of my mind and get on with more important things, but is there anything more important than the issues those two panels raise? The only certainty now remaining is that I am indeed an illiterate nincompoop.

**George Walford**



# Capitalism

HOW CAN George Walford seriously describe capitalism as a 'lifebringer' in his article 'The Trouble with Success?' (*Freedom*, March 1989).

The improvements in social issues to which he refers occurred not because of, but despite the influence of capitalism, and were due to the general rise in wealth and labour power effectively increasing the bargaining strength of trade unions, environmental groups and other left-wing non-governmental organisations who successfully exerted pressure upon governments to reform domestic policy.

The increase in wealth in the West can be seen as a direct result of neo-colonialist economic expansion and the ensuing exploitation of raw materials and labour resources in Third World states, such as occurred in the early fifties when capitalist states were forced to turn their attention southwards after profits at home began to decline.

The activities of Western-based multinational corporations have caused mass disruption to Third World local economies and been the instigator of many bloody civil wars. Walford's comment that 'far more are able to survive under capitalism than were able to do so without it' is difficult to understand in the light of the many starving in Third World African states or the thousands who have 'disappeared' under Western capitalist satellite states such as Chile or El Salvador.

As resources now begin to run dry as more socialist governments attempt to break away from Western economic domination, so capitalist powers turn their sights back home, where we are seeing the destruction of benefit systems, the health services, civil liberties and trade union power.

Indeed capitalism is not 'something separate from the ordinary person' in the sense that capitalist values have been embraced to the extent that accumulation of material wealth has generally become the accepted measurement of success in Western society. Equally important, however, is the increased support by the ordinary person for environmental issues, womens, blacks and gays rights, etc., all of which fly in the face of the capitalist system.

Surely the Kings Cross, Zeebrugge ferry and other disasters were not caused by the 'capitalist attitudes' of the workers involved but an inability to perform their jobs responsibly because of the minimum in provision of staff and safety measures as always occurs when profit is the motivating force.

While it may be difficult today to distinguish the 'enemy' precisely, it is surely a little extreme to blame workers for the ills of a capitalist society.

Is it not Walford himself who is suggesting that had capitalism used its wealth not to create nuclear weapons, CFC's, etc., but a more 'green' environment, it would be an acceptable system?

Abby James

## Schumacher

I THINK Rodney Aitchey's support of Schumacher is justified. Fritz Schumacher was critical, passionately critical, of many aspects of the contemporary world — nuclear power, the increasing poverty, the depletion of the world's resources, and 'the enormities perpetrated by central government'. The emphasis he placed on decentralisation, on the economics of permanence, on the need for more humane technology, on the need for organisations to be more responsive to the human need for creativity, and on knowledge being used for emancipatory purposes — all of these are salutary. The problem is that Schumacher felt that one could achieve all this by the propagation of religious values, and without dismantling the private enterprise system. He looked for a balance between labour and capital, between nationalisation for the public good and private enterprise — a 'truly mixed economy' as he put it — which is why he was so fond of quoting Galbraith and Tawney. He seemed to think — like many contemporary greens — that one could have capitalism, but without the economic growth, without the social inequalities, without the continual pressure on the environment. It was all a pipe dream. And even though he pleaded for profit-sharing and for a more democratic system of industrial management, it was always clear where his sympathies lay — with entrepreneurs and management. For example, he wrote: 'I am convinced that . . . nothing would be gained and a great deal lost if a "public hand" were to interfere with or restrict the freedom of action and the fullness of responsibility of the existing business managements. The private managers of the enterprises should therefore remain fully in charge.'

Sure I criticise Schumacher, but this does not imply that I think everything he wrote is rubbish. On the contrary, I criticise him because I think he has something important and useful to say, and the same goes for Capra and the pedagogic Porritt.

The implications of P. N. Rogers' note is that one should not review the likes of Capra, Schumacher and Porritt in the pages of *Freedom* as they do not offer us a truly radical perspective. I disagree, given their important influence within the green movement. Surely you don't need me to introduce to the readers of *Freedom* a perspective that is both radical and ecological? The writings of

Murray Bookchin have long provided us with such a perspective (including thoughts on the German greens) and the Land Notes and reviews of Alan Albon are of perennial interest and always pertinent to the issues surrounding 'green politics'.

Brian Morris

## Profit and Loss

HAVING praised Philip Sansom's December article, I take exception to his February article 'Profit and Loss'.

Firstly the statement 'if the rich get richer and the poor get poorer that is the way capitalism is meant to be'. Although Philip ascribes the remark to Marxists he seems to half believe it himself.

The fact is that in material terms the highly developed capitalist societies are immensely more productive than any tribal, feudal or socialist society. Moreover most working people in these societies are much wealthier than their forebears and much wealthier than people elsewhere.

When it comes to mass production of material things capitalism has no equal. Marx was wrong. Nowadays the rulers of 'socialist' China and Hungary are moving towards re-establishing capitalism and Gorbachev seems to be tentatively starting out in the same direction.

The real case against capitalism is:

- a) that by its very success it is destroying the natural world,
- b) that it is turning hundreds of millions of Western people into frenzied consumer statistics whose thoughts rarely get beyond new car, new electronic gadgets, etc., and
- c) it causes dire poverty in parts of the Third World — although this may be alleviated as the wealth capitalism creates is spread around more.

Instead of attacking capitalism for its baleful ecological, social and psychological effects, Philip complains about its safety record. It is of course true that, as in the case of the Zeebrugge ferry, disasters can occur due to corners being cut in the desire to maximise profits. However, the Clapham and Boeing disasters were due to faulty wiring — this was the fault of the workmen concerned, not of capitalism. Incidentally both Clapham and the M1 Boeing were *very small* disasters compared with say Harrow & Wealdstone station 1952 or the Boeing crash in Japan a few years ago. The tabloid press and the media in general sensationalise them for obvious reasons. I would have thought than an anarchist main article writer would have more important things to write about — such as the baleful ecological, social and psychological effects of the monstrosity that is capitalism.

H. I. Jones



# Reviews



## Granta 25: Murder

(article) 'Gibraltar': Ian Jack  
Penguin £4.99

## Rock Bottom

a Private Eye report  
Pressdram 50p

HYPOCRISY is not just a British disease. When the 'Rainbow Warrior' was sunk by French secret agents, their government overlooked the crime and flushed with patriotic pride protested against their arrest to New Zealand.

In Spain, with its tradition of the pistolero, an investigation continues into how government funds may have been used to finance a group of mercenaries called the GAL, who specialised in killing Basques residents in France. Two senior Spanish police officers — apparently the GAL's paymasters — have been in prison for many months during the Inquiry.

In the twentieth century it is common knowledge that governments incite crime. But commenting on the invasion of Russia in 1812 Tolstoy was to write: 'Millions of men perpetrated against one another such innumerable crimes, deceptions, treacheries, robberies, forgeries, issues of false monies, depredations, incendiaryisms, and murders as the annals of all the courts of justice in the world could not muster in the course of whole centuries, but which those who committed them did not at the time regard as crimes.'

Compared to what governments are capable of getting up to, the Gibraltar episode last March with its killings and lies must be seen for what it is — a minor impropriety. Yet questions of propriety and impropriety are particularly English obsessions. John Profumo couched his famous lie to the House of Commons thus 'There was no impropriety whatsoever, in my relationship with Miss Keeler'.

*Private Eye* is a publication dedicated to the discovery of impropriety in British society. In its recent pamphlet *Rock Bottom* an attempt is made to analyse the Gibraltar killings, and the subsequent

campaign of disinformation by the British government and its supporters in the press. *Private Eye* insist they are not making an apology for terrorism, but producing 'a piece of investigative journalism, a distinction increasingly lost on a government obsessed with secrecy and censorship.'

The crucial question, explored in *Rock Bottom*, is when were the authorities on Gibraltar informed of the arrival of one of the terrorists Savage, driving the white Renault? Initially everything pointed to brilliant team work between Spanish, Gibraltarian and British intelligence. Mrs Thatcher even sent a telegram of congratulation to the Spanish police for their surveillance co-operation in apprehending the terrorists. Why did she do this if, as it was claimed much later at the Inquest, the Spaniards had lost the terrorists?

Had not the Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe told the House of Commons the day after the killings that: 'Shortly before 1pm yesterday afternoon, one of those subsequently shot brought a white Renault car into Gibraltar.' How did he know the exact time of entry if Savage is now supposed to have slipped into Gibraltar unnoticed past the surveillance team who were looking for him at the frontier?

The explanation according to *Rock Bottom* is that the British authorities had to change their tale in time for the Coroners' Inquest. With stories circulating that the British authorities set a death trap with SAS executioners, the failure to arrest a known terrorist driving a possible car bomb through the narrow streets of Gibraltar gave credibility to the execution squad theory. And if knowingly they let Savage drive in freely, were they not putting the public at risk. The explanation of the authorities in Gibraltar, that despite months of careful preparation, all three terrorists somehow spirited themselves into Gibraltar is vital to their tragedy of errors tale told at the Inquest, in which they all claimed to have been caught slightly wrongfooted.

Since the publication of *Rock Bottom*, claims that this account by the British authorities has been exploded has been

published in *The Observer*. Details of how the terrorists had been trailed by the Spaniards using cars, and helicopters, had been given to journalists by the Spanish Interior Ministry spokesman Sr Valladolid. *The Observer* says 'The evidence appears overwhelming that there was Spanish surveillance that day (March 6th)'.

None of the Spanish evidence was put to the Gibraltar Coroners' Inquest, because the Spaniards refused to recognise the Gibraltar Court.

An arrest according to Lord Justice Gibson, a Northern Ireland judge, may be accomplished by reducing the suspect to a corpse if that is the only practical method. His decision ran as follows: 'In law you may effect an arrest in the vast extreme by shooting him (the suspect) dead. That's still an arrest. If you watch Wild West films, the posse go ready to shoot their men if need be. Shooting may be justified as a method of arrest'.

The above Northern Ireland case is referred to in Ian Jack's penetrating study of the Gibraltar killings and their background in *Granta 25*.

At the inquest the Gibraltar Police Commissioner Canepa insisted that there was no predetermined point at which the arrests were to be made. *Rock Bottom* disputes this, arguing: 'The military precision with which the operation was mounted at the petrol station had all the hallmarks not of a sudden, rash reaction resulting from the fear of a bomb going off, but of a carefully planned military operation for which everyone concerned had been briefed.'

My belief is that the petrol station was not the ideal spot to make the arrests for the authorities. Paddy McGrory, the solicitor for the families of the deceased, described the area with its expanse of flats as resembling a 'giant amphitheatre'. The airport landing strip which the terrorists would have had to cross near the frontier would have been less risky to members of the public, and would have avoided the risk of troublesome independent witnesses.

As it was Savage, who had been joined earlier by Farrell, and McCann split up on Winston Churchill Avenue shortly after 3.30 pm. Savage turned towards the Gibraltar City centre, while Farrell and McCann wandered off towards the frontier with Spain. About this time Commissioner Canepa was signing over control of the operation to the SAS.

As Farrell and McCann approached the petrol station Inspector Joseph Revagiatte, a senior police officer in charge of a police car nearby told his driver to switch on the siren. Some suspect that this was some kind of signal to the SAS and the police watchers present. But in his evidence to the Inquest he denied all knowledge of the security operation that day. This has since been strongly disputed



in Ian Jack's comprehensive account for *Granta*. Mr Jack says a secret operational order assigned to Revagliatte the vital role in charge of the Gibraltar firearms unit which was at the scene of the shootings to back up the SAS.

Did Revagliatte lie about the true nature of his role at the Inquest? The police siren some suggest seemed to spark off the shootings causing McCann to glance back giving him eye-contact with one of the SAS soldiers. Had the terrorist trio split up because they'd noticed all the company, and had decided to abort their mission?

Whatever was going on in the minds of the terrorists, within two minutes of separating, and control being signed over to the SAS, all three were dead. Ian Jack asks: 'Was there anything Savage, Farrell and McCann could have done to prevent themselves being killed that day ...?'

Yet killing the terrorist was not supposed to be the objective. All the SAS officers told the Coroners' Court that their aim was to arrest the suspects and 'put them down'. Once so detained control would pass back to the Gibraltar police who would handcuff the prisoners. Handcuffs were not necessary, according to Mr Watson, the Crown pathologist, the 29 wounds in Savage suggested 'a frenzied attack'. McCann and Farrell both had multiple wounds, and the pathologist said they had been shot on or close to the ground.

*Rock Bottom* asks 'Were there never to be any warnings, let alone arrests?' Or as Prince Andrei argued in *War and Peace*: 'What sense is there in taking prisoners? It's playing knights of old. We play at being magnanimous and all the rest of it.'

One suspects the magnanimity of the SAS for the IRA is rather like the magnanimity of the matador for the fighting bull. The imagery conjured up by Mr McGrory in his address to the Coroner, was that of 'Death in the Afternoon'. According to McGrory the IRA terrorists on March 6th were like bulls in the arena — condemned to die the moment they entered the arena.

Both *Rock Bottom* and Ian Jack's *Granta* account are useful tools of insight into the Gibraltar events of 6 March. *Rock Bottom* at 50p, is particularly good value for money. But for a detailed analysis, with a glimpse of Gibraltarian history, Mr Jack's study is superior.

**Brian Bamford**

Oftel, the government agency appointed to deal with complaints about the telephone service, is investigating the 'sexy message' firms. The complaint from customers is that some of them 'offer a pornographic service which is not in fact supplied'.

### Gone to Soldiers

Marge Piercy

Penguin Books £3.95

A REAL sense of history from the point of view of people caught up in a web of prejudice and violence that did not end with the ash and radioactive particles rising in the sky over Japan. Camus's experience as a member of the resistance and the editor of *Combat* ended up by writing the piece called *Neither Executioners or Victims* as many of the resistance became the executioners.

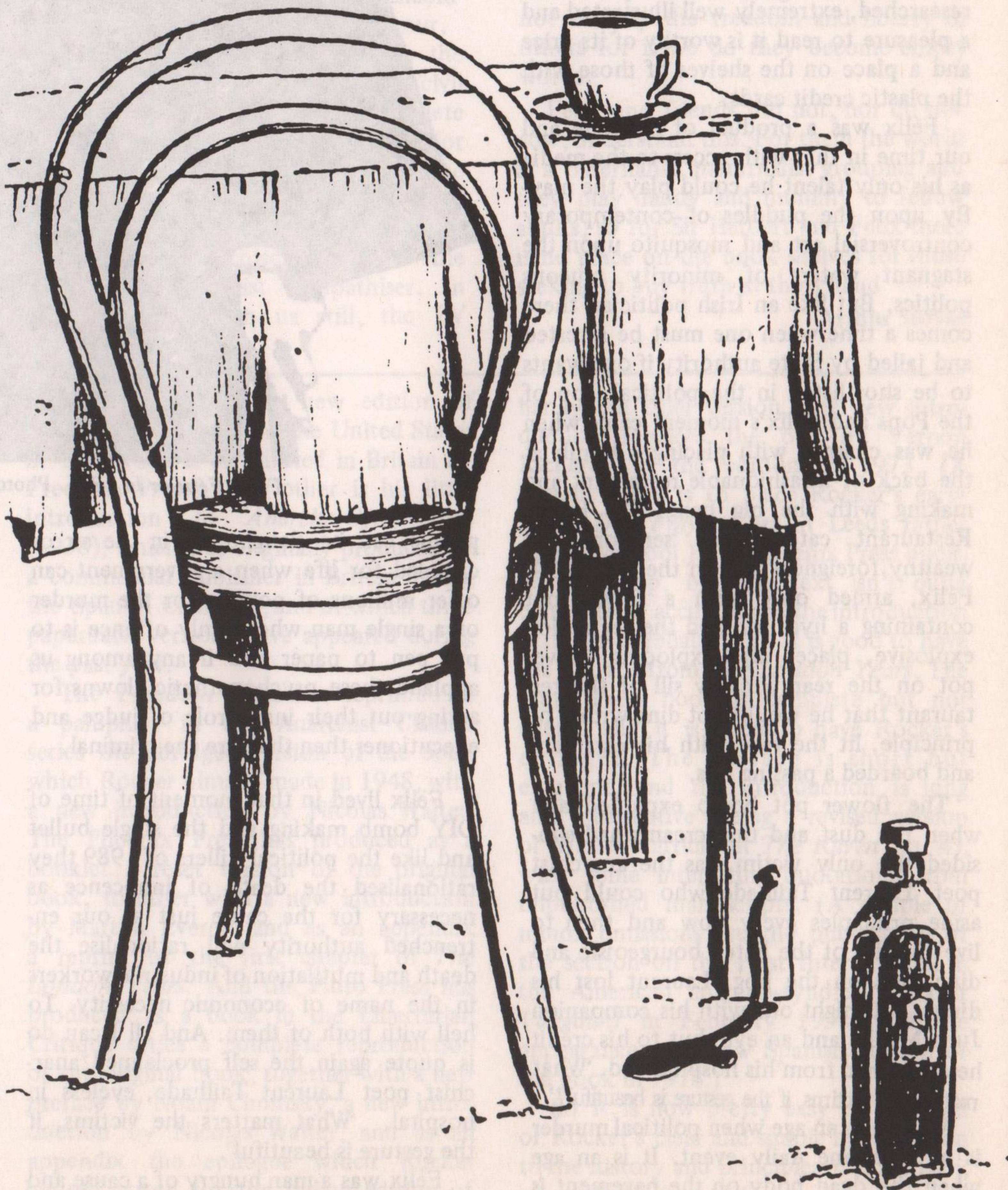
What is happening in Israel is an illustration of this and as the Europeans expunged their guilt at somebody else's expense prejudices are still manufactured by the media which feeds upon it. Those of us who lived through the pre-war history of Europe and were aware of what was going on in Germany and Russia, and the cynicism of the Stalinists

in Spain, may well have become the victims so graphically described in this book. We were very much aware that governments were not interested in the victims, particularly if they were poor. I well remember a gay guy who married a Jewish woman to prevent her being deported, and after the war played a great part in the campaign to abolish the death penalty.

It is our job to increase awareness of the world in which we live so that more and more people cease to be an amorphous mass wallowing in their own prejudices and victim to all the hypocrisy and self-seeking that characterises the political world. This book helps to create that awareness and should be read as a cautionary and historic tale that is truer than many of the histories of our official historians.

**Alan Albon**

### TONY EARNSHAW'S VIEW FROM THE BACK OF TOWN



*This bottle of sauce is a dog.*



## Félix Fénéon

Aesthete and Anarchist in Fin-de-Siècle Paris

by Joan Ungersma Halperin

Published by Yale University Press

Price £19.95

HISTORY is pockmarked with the vanishing scars of those who in their lifetime, for good or ill, won the roar of the crowd and then in life or in death joined the ranks of the great forgotten. Such a man was Félix Fénéon, self proclaimed anarchist and card carrying aesthete. Born in June 1861 he passed on to join in the Great Debate in February 1944 pausing only long enough to have the requisite death mask portrait pencilled by Henry D'Amfreville. We are all stereotypes comrades and somewhere in the world in some noisy cafe our doppelganger echoes our appearance and our emotional handling of simple or complex situations. So too with Félix, for I knew him well in a later age and with another name. Yale Press and the authoress have done the late Félix well. Extremely well researched, extremely well illustrated and a pleasure to read it is worthy of its price and a place on the shelves of those with the plastic credit cards.

Félix was a product of his time and our time in that with access to the media as his only talent he could play the mayfly upon the puddles of contemporary controversial art and mosquito upon the stagnant waters of minority raucous politics. But like an Irish politician there comes a time when one must be arrested and jailed by State authority if one wants to be shortlisted in the political Top of the Pops and Félix's moment came when he was charged with placing a bomb at the back of a fashionable restaurant and making with the big bang. The Foyot Restaurant catered to 'senators and wealthy foreigners' and in the year 1894, Félix, armed only with a flower pot containing a hyacinth and the regulation explosive, placed the exploding flower pot on the rear window sill of the restaurant that he would not dine within on principle, lit the fuse with his cigar end and boarded a passing bus.

The flower pot bomb exploded and when the dust and the screams had subsided the only victim was the anarchist poet Laurent Tailhade who could put aside principles every now and then to live the life of the hated bourgeoisie and dine high on the hog. Laurent lost his dinner, his night out with his companion Julia Mialhe and an eye, but to his credit he declaimed from his hospital bed, 'What matters the victims, if the gesture is beautiful?'

We live in an age when political murder is a three line daily event. It is an age when the dead body on the pavement is only worth a half dozen news lines, when hundreds of innocent and uninvolved

people can be slaughtered in the air or crippled for life when a government can offer millions of pounds for the murder of a single man whose only offence is to put pen to paper and if any among us applaud these psychopathic clowns for acting out their inane role of judge and executioner then they are the criminal.

Félix lived in that moment of time of DIY bomb making and the single bullet and like the political killers of 1989 they rationalised the death of innocence as necessary for the cause just as our entrenched authority will rationalise the death and mutilation of industrial workers in the name of economic necessity. To hell with both of them. And all I can do is quote again the self proclaimed anarchist poet Laurent Tailhade, eyeless in hospital, 'What matters the victims, if the gesture is beautiful?'

Félix was a man hungry of a cause and he moved from anarchist-communism to the flower pot bomb and in old age back

to being a communist sympathiser raising the red flag to honour Leon Blum's formation of the French Popular Front. It is written of him that 'He was content to be a conduit for others' thoughts, a mediator, an interpreter. The interpretive writing eventually bored or fatigued him'. Top hatted, frock coated, he served his seat within the French War office as a disciplined minor official and like so many he penned his diatribes against a society of which he was part and a way of life that one doubts he ever wished to see change. He was the shadow image of Oscar Wilde without the wit and without the smile and just as Oscar wrote *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* between toe touching with Lord Alfred under the liners of the Cafe Royal, so Félix went in for art and anarchism via the printed word.

It was a period when the French labouring class were making their slow approach to syndicalism and the French intellectuals were reading Bakunin, Kro-



Félix Fénéon in 1886. Photograph, Paulhan archives, Paris.



potkin, Blanqui and Proudhon. One could be, nay will be, cynical and say that the French labourer was daily fighting for his and her daily bread but for the café intellectual it was good conversation. Of Félix it can be said in Bonar Thompson's words of the late late Dean Inge 'He was always deep in someone else's thought' for he took his authoritarian attitude into and out of the anarchist movement of the time.

After the First World War Félix's brief moment of glory had dimmed and died, though he still lived on with the story of the flower pot bomb. In his reign he had acted as the spokesman for the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painters and the Symbolists. Astute dealers made these minor art movements good art gallery fodder for the loose money and the Impressionists with their shallow shimmering colours and blurring of detail, the Post-Impressionists as flat coloured artistic ego trips vied with the Symbolists precursor road to surrealism as platforms for such people as our Félix.

But after the First War the Dadists and the Cubists and the Surrealists took over the print and the café tables and became spokesmen and women for their own art to shock and to horrify and to reap the applause. Sir Herbert Read and Sir Roland Penrose and others learned this lesson and they joined in the act.

Sir Herbert wrote and lectured in the name of anarchism in poetry and in art but he stood in front of the painting, he recited the poems and in that world of

artistic trivia Sir Herbert and Sir Roland became the circus masters. But the artists learned as well and they demanded to share the public billing for as trivial art and the dealers demanded quicker results for the galleries so the artist now invites the press and the television to watch them throw the brightly coloured pots of paint over the sheet of hard board or watch the thick brushes paint the while you wait portrait of the college prof. Félix thou should be living at this hour.

Sir Herbert was the intellectual anarchist of the day and at the old ICA one applauded him and his sincerity and browsed through his books on art and anarchism but within this London based anarchist bookshop I can see no book of Sir Herbert's on the shelves or printed within the booklist, for, like Felix, Sir Herbert became the Whiplash Willie for trivial art styles that did no more than amuse and I attended and I was amused. Like Félix, Sir Herbert's conception of anarchist ran counter to his own life style and they used the label to have positive opinions yet remain uncommitted to the brute realities of the hour.

We are all types and Félix is the schizophrenic, the staid law abiding civil servant, the fantasy terrorist complete with flower pot bomb, the spokesman for trivial art at it's lowest point and the authoritarian moving from communist authority into his weird version of authoritarian anarchism back to the womb as communist sympathiser. In 1989 they are with us still, the TV

spokesperson for the arts program, the natural bureaucrat who suggests an anarchist society shepherded by a commune arranged, one feels, around themselves, the fool who uses it to justify any act of senseless violence, the neurotic who believes that it begins and ends with a ban on smoking and meat eating. We are the metropolitan people and of our necessity we daily compromise in the living of our lives.

The days of leisure, blue skies and grass went with the First World War and our society changes not in years but in months and within this anonymous managerial society our fellow men and women, with all their faults, struggle to control it in the universal interest.

We have the right to choose who we would support for, of our compromised selves, we have to live with the changing results, but as anarchists our paramount obligation is the defence of our own personal freedom and liberty within whatever society we agree to work and live within. And our personal freedom and liberty must be judged in that we do not destroy the freedom and liberty of others for if we do they become empty words.

Felix and friends did not, nor do not now, understand this. For them the world is a paternalist, maternalist grouping and they play daddy and mummy to fellow adults, so for Sir Herbert and Felix there is no place on the book shelves for those seeking to buy truth at third hand

Arthur Moyses

### Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism

Rudolf Rocker

Freedom Press £1.25

### Anarcho-Syndicalism

Rudolf Rocker

Phoenix Press £2.50

### Anarcho-Syndicalism

Rudolf Rocker

Pluto Press £7.95

RUDOLF ROCKER was the only anarchist with a worldwide reputation who survived the Second World War, but he died more than thirty years ago, and he is now remembered by few people — except those with special interests in the Jewish movement in Britain before the First World War, the German movement in the Weimar Republic, and the American movement half a century ago.

Only a section of his autobiography has been published in English — *The London Years* (1956) — and this has long been out of print; and only two of his many other books are still available. One is his magnum opus, *Nationalism*

and *Culture* (1937), a new edition of which was produced in the United States in 1978 (and is distributed in Britain by Freedom Press). The other is his little introduction to *Anarcho-Syndicalism* (1938), which was originally produced by a commercial publisher in Britain during the Spanish Civil War, and of which three paperback versions have appeared during the past year.

The Freedom Press has reprinted as a pamphlet in the Anarchist Classics series the abridged version of the book which Rocker himself made in 1948, with a new introduction by Nicolas Walter. The Phoenix Press has produced as a booklet a reset version of the original book, together with a new introduction by Martyn Everett and as an appendix a reprint of the first chapter of *The London Years*. And the Pluto Press has produced as a book in the Libertarian Critique series a complete reproduction of the original book, together with a new preface by Noam Chomsky, a new introduction by Nicolas Walter, and as an appendix the epilogue which Rocker himself wrote for the Indian edition of 1947.

The Freedom Press pamphlet is a

handy but brief version. The new introduction replaces the one by Vernon Richards in the edition of 1973. (A curious error is to place Rocker's early paper *Dos Fraye Vort* in Leeds rather than Liverpool.) The Phoenix Press booklet is cheap, but the text isn't quite complete or accurate and the introduction is rather unreliable, but it is good to have the extract from *The London Years*. The Pluto Press book is complete but not cheap, and it is good to have Rocker's epilogue. The preface is short but eloquent, and the introduction is long and informative (being a revised version of Walter's article in *The Raven* no. 4), with some interesting quotations from unpublished manuscripts. (A couple of minor omissions are the publication of the section on the First International in the American anarcho-syndicalist paper *Vanguard* in February 1938, and the appearance of a new Spanish edition of the book in 1978.)

So it is now pretty easy to get hold of Rocker's clear and simple introduction to the history and principles of anarchism, especially in its syndicalist variety, and all you need to do is decide which version suits you best.

MH



# Land notes from New Zealand

THE first thing that struck me was how familiar the weeds were in New Zealand. The second, the cows with their docked tails. I expected to see plenty of Jersey cattle, although now there is a good number of Friesians.

The dairy industry is different here. They have always had to produce milk economically so the dairy herds are grass fed, as grass is available all the year round. It probably slows down in the winter so some silage is made. The farms are quite small and divided into paddocks. A group of neighbouring farmers (all working and doing their own milking) meet once a month on one of their farms to discuss problems, walk over the farm, talk about weed control. There is a marked reluctance to use chemicals.

They do not appear to use much nitrogen and the pastures have a lot of clover in them. In this area there is a lack of phosphate and other trace elements. The soil structure varies a lot over New Zealand.

It must be remembered that before the arrival of the Europeans there was only one mammal – the seal. All the rest have been introduced. The weeds probably came with the earlier grass seed which is why the weeds are so familiar, and they do well here without the hard winters. There are many European trees, poplars and willows not native to the country. The fact that dairy farming needs a

permanent sward makes it a better option than arable farming, which owing to the nature of the soil and terrain would certainly cause erosion problems.

Generally there are Thatcherite policies instituted by the Labour government, difficulties with the health services and squeezing the nurses, while they want to buy three more frigates at enormous cost.

New Zealand is quite a conservative place, but one tends to get among the radicals so one's view of the place can get distorted. I got to see The Topp Twins, two radical female cabaret artistes, in a crowded hall. They were great fun and would go down very well in London, very versatile, very funny and political. They tell me that they can be more political but probably tone it down a bit for some audiences. One of the jokes was 'Why is the French government banning kiwi fruits? Because they have a green piece in the centre.' The Australians were the butt of some jokes, like 'How do you know when an Australian is on the level? When the dribble on each side of his mouth is the same', alluding to Australian drinking habits. New Zealand also has a drink problem, as well as unemployment and all the other artificial problems of the industrialised world. There is no doubt that these islands, with their relatively small population, could be a relative paradise.

Alan Albon

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