

# anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

**"Since a politician never believes what he says, he is surprised when others believe him."  
General de Gaulle**

## **GREENPEACE BACK IN THE NEWS! BUT HOW CAN FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTS BE HALTED?**

**I**t may be pure coincidence that the French have decided to carry out nuclear bomb tests on the Tahitian atoll of Mururea and to clear the way have launched a vicious attack on Greenpeace's *Rainbow Warrior II* - ten years to the day of their commando attack on *Rainbow Warrior I* in Auckland harbour, sinking her and killing photographer Raimundo Pereira in the process - in preparation for nuclear tests.

It may also be pure coincidence that just fifty years after the genocide of the civilian population of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the 'Allies' Britain, according to *The Observer* (2nd July) is now "insisting to be allowed to join France and China in a new round of weapons testing", adding that growing intransigence threatens to wreck negotiations for a global test ban treaty:

"Four of the five acknowledged nuclear weapons states - Britain, France, the United States and Russia - have observed

a temporary moratorium on testing since 1992, and the US has now drawn up proposals for a permanent ban on full-scale nuclear testing in 1996.

But senior Pentagon officials believe that neither France nor Britain will sign up unless they are first allowed to carry out more tests on their ageing weapons stockpiles."

Needless to say, the French may argue that in seeking to make the weapons even more destructive they have a potential enemy in mind. During the Cold War it was the Soviets. Now their successors are virtually having car-boot sales of all their weaponry (not even the new masters are using nuclear weapons on the recalcitrant republics). Surely the only big question for the ailing western capitalisms is China. If China were the threat to justify France and Britain wanting to start tests then would not countries in the Pacific zone such as Australia, New Zealand and Japan in fact welcome

France's initiative? On the contrary they are protesting as vigorously as politicians are able to. That will be the day when those governments are prepared to send support for Greenpeace's *Rainbow Warrior II*.

**T**o our minds the armaments industry in the G7 prosperous industrial nations of the world comes in between the drugs international and the lotteries, and its prosperity depends on producing bigger and better (that is more killing power per kilo) weaponry. And this not only keeps factories turning out weapons which carry out their tests as far away from *La Patrie* as did the British who rely on the Nevada Desert (hence their dependence on the goodwill of their American cousins!). Also the USA, compared with its H-bomb allies, can well afford to dispense with testing, having carried out no less than 940  
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## **THE FREEDOM TO SAY 'NO' WHY NOT MORE STRIKES?**

**W**e ask the question. But Paul Routledge in an *Independent* feature actually argues for "Why more people should go on strike". He writes as a journalist with thirty years in the trade. He has twice been on strike, both times at *The Times* - in 1980 over a management refusal to honour an arbitration award, which lasted five days, and they won, the second in 1986 in the Wapping dispute which lasted five months, and they lost.

So Paul Routledge is not one of the anti-strike brigade. In our opinion the most important conclusions come to are that most strikes are not about percentages. As we keep in repeating in *Freedom*, when will workers refuse to discuss percentages? 3% for a boffin earning £100,000 a year is £3,000. For a farm worker earning, say, £7,000 a year basic, 3% is £212! Why should the privileged members of society get an increase which when based on percentages is the same but in actual purchasing power is increased by more than ten

times that of the chap who, incidentally, produces the food for the privileged members going up to London first-class-Inter-City - what do they produce for that farm worker?

This is the con trick which never gets questioned. Only the sensational increases to the big bosses of industry and the privatised social services chiefs get the headlines.

**W**e are not surprised that strikes are at an all-time low. And it's not because Tory governments over the last sixteen years have introduced anti-union legislation which virtually paralyses the unions so far as industrial action is concerned. If the union membership were solid and determined to win then no legislation could prevent them from striking and winning.

We have the perfect example provided by the World War Two years and the immediate years that followed. The union bosses were hand-in-glove with the coalition government during

the war. After all, Ernie Bevin, who was one of the leaders of the General Strike of 1926 and the big boss of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), in 1940 became Minister of Labour and National Service in Churchill's coalition government!

In spite of that, and all the war-time legislation, there were more strikes - all unofficial: after all, the union bosses were now 'responsible' for the war effort and in the process ensuring handsome profits for the war industry.

Why were the unofficial strikes so effective. They were not only *illegal* but the unofficial aspect was that they defied the union leaders. And the obvious reason was that there was no possibility of unemployed workers acting as scabs, because there was *full employment*: whether you were dragooned into the forces to fight for capitalism or, if you objected to that, you could be 'directed' either onto the land or into the mines or into the  
*(continued on page 2)*



# THE FOURTH ESTATE NEVER LOSES!

We don't propose even to attempt to analyse the recent political circus sparked off by Mr Major's challenge to fellow Tory MPs 'to put up or shut up'. Surely that summed up the challenge? We expressed our opinion in the last issue (*Freedom*, 8th July) in which we were confident that he would win because the Europe issue only affects a few backwoods MPs whereas Europe provides a large part of the bread-and-butter of capitalist commerce and profits for this country.

What *Freedom* most enjoyed was to observe the media – or the Fourth Estate as the press hacks like to call themselves – carry out a campaign fit for a general election, let alone the votes of some 300 Members of Parliament. And almost unanimously (with, yes, the exception of *The Daily Express*) they all said that would be the end of John Major. Perish the thought that *Freedom* has a soft spot for Major, in view of our repulsion for Redwood, Portillo, Lilley, Howard and last but not least millionaire Heseltine. We are equally repelled by an army of political hacks and their employers, and this is the point that the mass public seem not to realise, which is that the media, both tabloid and broadsheet, think and want to be the determining influence in our

society. They never admit defeat. Having tried to dispatch Major and failed, what did they say? 'A third of the Tory MPs are opposed' and not that 'two thirds voted for him'!

In this writer's opinion the millionaire media are the greatest obstacle to political and social progress. They are now running-down Major and implying that Heseltine has been given *carte blanche* to do what he likes and it will all emerge at the annual Tory conference. All this crap has no influence on the MPs who are after all concerned with *their* self interest: the job as MP (and all the perks for secretaries, driving your car to Ascot and Epsom on business) and all the consultancies and other enquiries that being an MP generates!

We are delighted that the Tory election resulted in an overwhelming defeat of the political experts, hacks and proprietors of the mass and so-called quality media.

And we were also delighted to see that not one of the hacks made apologies for being so wrong in their 'considered' opinions. They never do. But nor do the public in telling them that they were wrong. Of course the correspondence columns are also controlled (edited) by the media mafia.

# THE FREEDOM TO SAY 'NO' WHY NOT MORE STRIKES?

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hospitals. In a word, the worker/soldier was in demand.

Today job insecurity – especially for the white-collar salary slaves: the blue-collar victims were axed years ago – surely explains why strikes are at their lowest historically. There are too many potential scabs – we use the word but realise how desperate the situation is for all the millions of workers who responded to the Thatcher invitation to become 'property owning' Tories and are now feeling that the jobs they thought they had for life are just as insecure as for all those miners (700,000 now down, 10,000 in a few years), ship workers, car workers – you name them. Smug 'Middle England' took no notice of the ruthlessness of capitalism when it affected the blue-collar workers when they were being displaced by new technology – robots, etc. – and now the same capitalist technology is making its way into the banks, the insurance companies and pensions funds and all the professions.

Far from falling for the kinds of headlines "Suddenly it's a summer of discontent" (*Independent*, 6th July), or "Nurses vote by 9-1 to end no-strike rule" (*Guardian*, 30th June) we have no faith as things are at present that the 'discontent' is about the capitalist system. It's no use some readers sighing and saying we go on repeating ourselves about the capitalist

system. Anarchists will go on demanding and exposing it until enough 'blue-collar' and 'white-collar' wage-salary slaves realise that there is much more to living and enjoying our lives to the full than being sure of having a nine-to-five secure job for life – however boring and unpleasant – so long as it provides the wherewithal to pay the mortgage and all the 'essentials' of a middle class 'success story'.

That society will only change when enough people will refuse to be wage slaves at any price and start demanding 'whose land is it?'

We have not done justice to Paul Routledge's article in wanting to have our say. We will return to it, but to conclude, his final remarks must surely have an echo among anarchists. Referring to his two involvements in strike action he writes that he did not regret taking part in them and "I have never yet found a miner who regrets taking part in the Great Strike of 1984-85". And he goes on:

"This is not a fake stoicism, still less an alibi for doing something silly that later you are rather ashamed about. It is more the shaving-mirror argument: if you don't do it, what will you think of yourself?"

So I understand why people are still willing to take that risk. The freedom to say 'no' is still a fundamental human right."

To which we can only say: 'hear, hear!'

# POSTSCRIPT ON GREENPEACE BRENT SPAR SAGA

Two interesting news items since the last issue went to press ('Greenpeace versus Shell and Major' in *Freedom*, 8th July).

According to a Reuter Bonn report (28th June):

"The German subsidiary of oil group Shell apologised yesterday to Germans for paying more attention to scientists and authorities than to customers' wishes over the aborted sinking of the obsolete Brent Spar oil storage buoy. Despite studies which indicated deep-sea dumping was the safest option, Shell faced a wave of public outrage in Germany marshalled by the environmental group Greenpeace.

After a petrol pump boycott began to damage sales in Germany and elsewhere, Shell abandoned the proposed dumping last week. In full-page advertisements in several German national newspapers, the German subsidiary of the Royal Dutch / Shell Group tried to patch up its battered image by promising to mend its ways. 'We are going to change', it told its customers. 'We have learned that for certain decisions, your agreement is just as important as the opinion of experts or the approval of the authorities'."

Shell's last comment, far from giving us a feeling of triumph for 'people's-power', is

a confession that money for them is even more important than "the opinion of experts". Do you get our meaning? On this occasion they have ignored the 'experts'. But what about when the experts warn them of disaster and they ignore them?

The second news item comes from *The Independent* (8th July). Their environment correspondent Nicholas Schoon reports that Michael Heseltine, when still President of the DTI:

"... first suggested that armed forces should end Greenpeace's occupation of the Brent Spar, according to a Royal Navy source.

The Navy was initially reluctant to intervene, telling the Department of Trade and Industry that it could only get involved if the chief constable of a police force followed the correct constitutional procedure and asked for military help."

So if Mr Major's new right-hand man had had his way, Greenpeace would have been faced with a commando invasion *à la Chirac!*

Conclusion? Don't trust any government. When it suits their interests they are all the same.

# HOW CAN FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTS BE HALTED?

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such tests compared with Britain's 44 and France's 198!

But what is the point of these tests in view of the fact that after the initial two A-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki fifty years ago during World War Two,\* there have been cold wars and some 150 hot wars and not an A-bomb or H-bomb dropped either in sorrow or anger. Other lethal inventions for human destruction have been used and are being perfected all the time, so why no H-bombs? And surely the answer is that no one can be sure what the aftermath – the drift, as the scientists can't determine which way the wind will blow (yet!) – of such explosions. And politicians and the top brass are much concerned with their own lives.

So in our modest opinion (after all, we are not experts!) to go on testing and obviously producing weapons that are obsolete by the time they are on the market, to succeed in this enterprise billions of pounds are spent employing scientists on R&D (Research and Development they call it). So, after all, just as workers in the naval shipyards or in Marconi's military section (a thousand workers have just been made redundant) cry their eyes out when they lose their jobs making instruments for their own possible destruction, similarly the

scientists and the technologists with all their Oxbridge education are just as keen to go on producing the blueprints for more sophisticated ways of destroying the lives of the victims of capitalism: the philosophy that it doesn't matter what you produce so long as it makes money, which means you don't produce what most of us need in services and healthy food or an unpolluted environment because they are not profitable in money terms.

As we write the correspondence columns of the broadsheets are full of suggestions for boycotting French wines, holidays, etc., in the same vein as proved successful in the case of Shell International (see *Freedom*, 8th July and also the postscript elsewhere in this issue). However, unlike Shell, which has above all its shareholders and dividends in mind, President Chirac is relying on French chauvinism to see him through and he couldn't care less whether wine sales or holiday resorts feel the draught. In saying this, with a sense of defeat, we only hope that more of our fellow citizens will realise that there can be no solutions to these kinds of problems within the capitalist system. Anarchism is not utopia. It is the only practical assessment of existing society. Yes, *practical* because it observes the economic and social question not from the point of view of the privileged minority but from the rest of humanity: that is, the other 90%! And if you don't agree that 90% should be the determining factor, then why are you reading *Freedom*?

\* The 100-page issue of *The Raven* No. 29 is entirely devoted to World War Two and includes a section on the 'Horrors of War', among which not only Hiroshima and Nagasaki figure but also the equally 'efficient' destruction of Dresden and central Tokyo.





Hackney Hospital will close its gates for the last time in August. Like Friern and Claybury before it, this rambling Victorian mental hospital is decanting its psychiatric patients into the care of the community with all its cosy connotations. But unlike Friern and Claybury, Hackney is leaving with a bang.

A large art exhibition has been set up to commemorate the experience of the thousands of people who have passed through the hospital and the majority of the work has been produced in the last fourteen months since Rear Window, a group which sets up shows in workplaces rather than galleries, presented the idea of 'Care and Control' to the Hackney Arts Initiative.

The first part presents work by people who are currently on an admission ward or use the daycare services at Hackney Hospital, the second shows the work of artists and the third surveys the hospital in the form of an archive.

The exhibits are spread throughout these 140-year-old semi-derelect buildings, built as a workhouse and today housing only 'hard to place' patients – the ones from the secure wards. It was a strange journey through past and present, strolling from ward to ward, some deserted and crumbling, some brightly painted exhibits – shiny blue paint, camouflage paint, brilliant garden fencing, and one covered with two tons of turf turning

## The Long Goodbye

a one-time psycho-geriatric ward into a marked-out race-track. Occasionally it was difficult to tell art from reality. The Oasis Café, for example, at first seemed like a reconstruction of a 1950s sweetshop complete with shopkeeper, but this is in fact a functioning shop now sparsely stocked because of the dwindling number of customers.

It was in this shop that I met the woman who has furnished the gate-style lift to resemble a padded cell – complete with hallucinations. She told me regretfully that this was done from memory rather than from imagination. She was, however, proud of the media coverage that the exhibition has attracted, especially as her work has had special mention in all reviews.

It is difficult to assess how much impact these exhibits would have if they were displayed in a gallery rather than among the ghosts of Hackney Hospital. Around every corner of the hospital and in unexpected places there are statements, comments, troubling images, and, for me at least, the paradoxical thought that the very fabric of these old mental hospitals evoke. It is almost as though emptied of patients these buildings

convey the philanthropic, almost utopian vision of care these places were built to provide. For all its initial laudable intentions, community care has become a penny-pinching programme where many vulnerable institutionalised people have been thrust out into the 'real' world, leaving behind the familiarity and comfort of a crumbling family home. There was a certain privacy in these large institutions provided by the very nature and layout of the buildings – so many nooks and crannies to hide in. The transition to 'normal' living in group homes where seven residents share a small 'family' living room must be hard.

In the catalogue which accompanies this exhibition there is the following quote from *What Asylums Were, Are and Ought to Be*, written in 1837 by W.A.F. Browne:

"Conceive a spacious building resembling the palace of a peer, airy and elevated and elegant, surrounded by extensive swelling grounds and gardens. The interior is fitted with galleries and workshops. The sun and air are allowed to enter at every window. The view of the shrubberies and fields and groups of labourers is unobstructed by shutters or bars; all is clean, quiet and attractive. The inmates all seem to be actuated by the common impulse of enjoyment, all are busy and delighted by being so ..."

Before I have time to regret some aspects of the demise of the large psychiatric hospitals I read the following extract from *A Dissertation*

on the Poor Laws by a Well Wisher to Mankind by Joseph Townsend, published in London in 1786:

"The Poor Laws appear beautiful on paper and will be the admiration of succeeding ages when, in the revolutions of empires, the whole fabric of our government shall be dissolved and our nation as a separate kingdom shall exist no more. These laws, so beautiful in theory, promote the evils they mean to remedy and aggravate the distress they were intended to relieve."

This could be a critique of present day community care philosophy.

Some readers will have seen the television programmes about mental health some months ago. The one where comedienne Jo Brand jangled her drinks-trolley through the deserted corridors of Friern Hospital came to mind as I walked through the wards and grounds of Hackney Hospital. Admittedly it was not midnight and I wasn't, as she was, completely alone in the building, but fear of mad ghosts was not the emotion I experienced but rather a sense of disappointment. Disappointment that we still haven't perfected the care of the mentally ill despite new medications, varying therapies and a century and a half of good intentions. Are some of the mentally ill lying in doorways and alleyways throughout Britain's cities longing for a return to the asylum of places like Hackney Hospital? Has anyone asked them?

Silvia Edwards

Rear Window is open from 12 noon daily until 5th August at Hackney Hospital, Homerton, London E9, admission free.

## MOTORWAY PROTESTS

There had been a continuous protest against the north-east London M11 link motorway scheme ever since the first inquiry (1989), but things only really took off with the first march (August 1995) and when the travelling protesters moved in from Twyford Down (in September). Now, after most of the 350 houses have been demolished, some of the campaigns have moved on to Newbury and elsewhere, though a substantial core remain in Leytonstone.

Anti-road campaigns may not have achieved the same kinds of success that, say, Greenpeace recently has. But the significance of their campaigning has become clearer. Inevitably the day will come when major new road-building is no longer conceivable. The anti-M11's "direct actions without violence and full of fantasy" (a somewhat poeticised rendering of a report in the German press) together with Twyford Down, Bath and Glasgow Pollock, have done most to raise public awareness.

Colin Bex has been involved in anti-motorway campaigning for twenty years, starting with the successful Archway battle. An alliance against the M11 link motorway grew out of the local campaign. One of his major contributions has been the production of four issues of *East Ender*,\* a voice for the alliance in newspaper format. The most recent 20-page broadsheet souvenir edition records images, events, arguments and sentiments of those taking part. Some of these stories really

did capture the public imagination when they made national news – when rooftop protesting moved to the Houses of Parliament, the children who tried to stop the destruction of the chestnut tree, the 93 year old lady who suddenly found herself at the centre of a battle against the establishment.

Anarchists will note how single issues soon evolve into a whole ecology of inter-related issues, and ultimately a way of life. Apart from roads and housing, the major themes were the conservation of parkland and public spaces, the Criminal Justice Bill and the illegal use of force to protect government crime. The declaration of the free states – first Wanstonia, then Leytonstonia, Leytonstonehenge (with its henge of curbstones) and the Free States of Euphoria and Claremonté – was specifically intended to raise questions with the UN. This gave the protest worldwide coverage through the BBC World Service. But it also reflected the sense of independence of the campaigning groups and their desire to dissociate from a corrupt government's aggression. The anti-road campaigns have an exceptionally strong anarchist flavour. They are the potential breeding grounds for an anarchist revival.

Tim Francis

\* *East Ender: A Journal for Regeneration by Conservation, not Redevelopment*, contains a broad cross-section of significant and well informed contributions to the whole debate, priced at 30p (plus 36p postage).

## Yorkshire Anarchists

Yorkshire Anarchists is a newly formed affinity group, east of the Pennines, involving comrades mainly from the north and west of the county.

The group came together as a result of discussions that took place at the meeting to re-establish the Northern Anarchist Network at Manchester Town Hall back in February. We are fortunate to have that subtle blend of youth and experience! Those who are relatively new to the movement and those who've been around for many years.

The group has no manifesto or list of objectives other than to promote libertarian ideas and actions as widely as possible. Initially, this has taken the form of producing a newsheet in which we aim to cover topics that will not only be of interest to those already in the movement but will be of relevance to those who may be coming into contact with

anarchist ideas for the first time.

The first issue of *The Yorkshire Anarchist* was produced back in May and covered subjects as diverse as the VE Day 'celebrations', land access and the changes that are taking place in the world of rugby league. Our second issue, which has increased in size from A4 to A3, is out this month.

Whilst the newsheet is our main area of activity at the moment, we will, as the group develops, be seeking to involve ourselves in more innovative forms of communication and looking for new ways to propagate our ideas. If you would like to receive *The Yorkshire Anarchist*, free, or you would just like to get in touch we can (until such time as we sort out our own address) be contacted at the address below.

Yorkshire Anarchists  
c/o Box EMAB, 88 Abbey Street, Derby

## McLibel defendants to be denied court transcripts?

The McDonalds Corporation, the international fast food chain, has a turnover bigger than the gross national product of several nation-states, and an advertising and promotions budget of \$1.4 billion a year. Yet they appear to be panicking at the small amount of publicity the defendants' case is getting in the current libel trial.

On Tuesday 4th July the leader of their legal team, Richard Rampton QC, presumably acting on instructions, said they would withhold copies of transcripts of court proceedings from the defendants unless they gave a written undertaking not to copy or read out over the telephone any part of the transcripts.

Of course, not having the transcripts would put the defendants (our comrades Helen Steel and Dave Morris) at a disadvantage in court, but Mr Rampton stressed that it was not his intention to prevent the defendants arguing their case. "What it would prevent, and this is what it is all about, is their disseminating it to journalists and the McLibel Support Campaign and similar like-minded [people]."

The trial is in open court (Court 35, Royal Courts of Justice, The Strand, nearest tube Charing Cross) so theoretically the journalists and whoever else could collect the evidence for themselves. But it does help to have someone pick out the interesting bits. McDonald's, when they started the case, agreed to pay all the court costs win or lose. The supply of transcripts to both parties is generally considered part of court costs, but more than a year after the case started McDonalds is challenging this.

Naturally the defendants are indignant. They asked the judge to rule either that McDonalds continue supplying them with transcripts or that they be supplied with transcripts at public expense. It was agreed that they should advance their arguments on Friday 14th July, when McDonalds' lawyers would reply. But come the day McDonalds needed more time to prepare (you'd think such an expensive legal team would have worked out what to say in ten days) and the argument was put back to Tuesday 18th July, after this issue of *Freedom* goes to press (though we do not suggest that

the case was put back just to foil us).

Quote from the Defendants: "Why should McDonalds be the only ones with the official record of this public trial – the public have the right to know what's going on in court. Also our lack of transcripts will make it virtually impossible for us to continue our defence effectively. There should be an outcry to prevent this scandal. McDonalds obviously feel the case is going so badly for them that they need to give themselves an even greater advantage in court, and also stop the public hearing what has been said in evidence."

Meanwhile a McDonalds spokesman has confirmed to the *Independent* that McDonalds and the defendants have been in "secret negotiations" with Helen and Dave to bring the trial to an end. But the spokesman stressed that the company is "not seeking a way out of the case ... We are confident of the strength of our case ..." etc., etc.

Helen and Dave are not particularly interested in money and it is difficult to think what other inducement they could be offered in 'secret negotiations'. For McDonalds to withdraw now would be for them to admit the allegations. Nothing would please the defendants more than threats of violence. It does not look as if the judge, a defendant or a McDonalds' lawyer is going to fall ill, so our prediction is that the case will go on to the end.

Of all the limits to freedom of speech – obscenity, indecency, blasphemy, sedition, incitement, giving away secrets or whatever – the laws of libel seem most justified. People need some way of correcting lies which are told about them, and obtaining compensation if the lies damage them. But the trouble with libel laws is that they can be abused by the rich. They can threaten someone who tells an unwanted truth that they will sue for libel and lose the case, but bankrupt the defender in the process. Such a threat was made explicitly by the psychic Uri Geller against the fake-exposer James Randi, and implicitly by McDonalds against the original list of defendants.

The difficulty with the threat is that it won't work with people who have nothing to lose. As we have observed before, the penury of Helen and Dave is their strength.



— PART TWO —

# Focus on ... Brazil

The moves towards modernisation have not gone without resistance in Brazil. Indeed the whole concept of modernisation, as we described it in part one, in so far as it is part of a wider theory of development has failed to deal with the one question that seemingly dogs Latin American politics: land.

The State is fully and wholly married to a system which, as we have seen in Brazil is geared towards social and economic stratification of the most extreme kind. In part one we gave some indication of the unfair way that wealth was spread in Brazil. The problem is even more acute when we come to the question of land where 43.7% of the land is owned by 1% of the population. More drastic or direct action must be called upon in such a situation rather than governmental reform.

Freedom reported on the Movement of the Landless (MST) and other related groups a couple of years ago (6th February 1993). The developmental path Brazil has chosen to follow has led it firmly up the GATT/WTO path of exchange-value economics geared towards the international market. She is the fourth largest food exporting country in the world and home to 40,000,000 who are starving. The MST and others are reacting and

are committed to a use-value economics reminiscent of Proudhon and direct action à la Bakunin. We publish alongside the comments of our correspondent in Brazil in which he speaks of how efficient they are as farmers. Since we reported in '93 the movement has grown and spread. A broad range of groups are dedicated to such aims as the demarcation

## The MST: A View from Brazil

Recently Freedom asked a Brazilian agricultural student, Ricardo, for some news of the landless movement in Brazil. Here is his reply. We had begun by asking him if he believed in the electoral process ...

You make a good question concerning if I believe in the electoral process, the fact is that I sort of believe that it easier to build land reform, strong social movements, and alternative forms of democracy (bad word this alternative but it means not just the traditional voting system)... anyway, it's easier to make this evolution when you have a president and a congress from the parties of the democratic (left, socialist, worker...whatever) field. At least our experience is that in the towns under the administration of this sort of group you build better relations of citizenship and respect upon the people non directly involved in the power (formal) structure but active in some kind of social movement (unions, landless movements, indians). The point is that today besides not believing that the real changes will come from the elections now there is a new doubt: If it is even possible of honestly winning an election for president in a country like Brazil, where 1 man owns 90% of the communication (newspaper, television, radio), whatever new proposal you have will be smashed by the legal system and in the last

of autonomous Indian areas, credit expansion for small independent farmers and the redistribution of state owned land. A national umbrella organisation, the National Campaign for Agrarian Reform (CNRA), has grown from 6 to 91 member groups not all of which are as fluffy as the name suggests.

The MST is one such member. Its stated aim is to acquire land by means of direct action - occupations - and force the government to relinquish control of it. Over the last ten years it has organised 1,200 settlements on nearly 6,000,000 hectares. Last May they linked up with the National Department of Rural Workers (CUT), the National Confederation

of Workers in Agriculture (CONTAG) and the Confederation of Rubbertappers. But more about the MST elsewhere on this page.

Apart from such developments relating specifically to land are other campaigns such as the Hunger Campaign. This has groups in some 3,500 neighbourhoods in Brazil - millions are involved. In December 1993 a poll found that 32% of Brazilians had participated in the campaign in some way. More establishment certainly and more reformist minded but betraying the latent sense of mutual-aid and solidarity that the elections - not surprisingly - failed to reveal.

minimum wage in Brazil (US\$100) much more than many people on the cities and in some cases on the south of Brazil, this is even 12.15 times the minimum wage. That means that even a very conservative group like FAO admits that people can survive decently working the land and that there is still much land that is not being used. The MST says that there is about 12 million landless people in Brazil. But this number can be over estimated because it considers also the unemployed people in the city (not even all of them know that they are landless) but for sure much more than that amount will have the benefits of a real land reform. I believe everyone knows about the existence of the MST, as much as they know of the existence of the workers party (PT) but that doesn't mean people know what they are talking about. It's very often that when a new occupation is done, you see on television only the land owner saying that a bunch of bandits invaded their land, that they had weapons (what is not true) and other things worse like that the MST is buying weapons from the Mafia and planning to kill farmers and take their land. Then what happens is that even when the MST occupy lands that belong to the government, some professional killers or just employees of the farms come over to try to 'solve' the problem.

That's why I say that information is power and also crime, in the cities, universities ... most of the people don't know what's going on.

## BALI SOAKED IN BLOOD WHO REMEMBERS? WHO CARES?

As increasing numbers of Australian tourists soak up the atmosphere, lie on the beach and haggle over 'bargains' the 30th anniversary of the Balinese holocaust is about to come and go. Who remembers, who cares, who sheds a tear, not the butchers that make up the Indonesian military dictatorship. From November 1965 to January 1966 the emerging Indonesian dictatorship organized the slaughter of over 100,000 men, women and children on Bali and over 500,000 Indonesians across the rest of the archipelago.

In November 1965 the military arrived on Bali with lists of people to be executed. Irregulars dressed in black pyjamas and red scarves went about their gruesome business. Local Balinese were encouraged and assisted to pick people off the streets from their homes, fields and work and taken to execution centres all across Bali. Whole villages were razed, pregnant women were butchered and children were left to starve. The Balinese holocaust was not some disorganised orgy of killing, raping and looting. It was part and parcel of the new Indonesian dictatorship's strategy to eliminate all opposition. The carnage was initiated and encouraged by the military. They could have halted the wholesale slaughter of life at any time.

Interestingly while Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Stalin and Hitler are all seen as social outcasts, Suharto, the architect of this mass slaughter, is seen as some type of hero. Almost thirty years after his ascension to power, Suharto is courted and supported by Australian politicians and is now head of the world's non-aligned movement. Few people remember that the current military dictatorship is built on a pile of bones almost as high as the pile of bones that Pol Pot created.

There will be no official ceremonies. The Australian government won't mention it. Few, if any, people (apart from those who survived the slaughter) will remember or shed a tear for those butchered by Mr Ten Percent and his cronies in the Indonesian military dictatorship. Hopefully a few people will remember those who were butchered in Bali and other parts of Indonesia nearly thirty years ago.

From *Anarchist Age Weekly Review*  
(No. 154), Victoria, Australia

## NEWS FROM CANADA

Forced by the vast potential needs of the 'boomer generation' pension funds are becoming increasingly aggressive. They are taking over large corporations and demanding a hand in their management. These funds are taking more of a long-term view of the economy and favour local investment, will perhaps play an important role in offsetting any negative effects of globalization.

Quebec now has 170 worker co-operatives with 7,260 worker owners. Almost half of these are in the forestry industry.

Newfoundland fishermen are preparing for the largest seal hunt in years as there are now an estimated three million of the animals. European-based animal rights enthusiasts are using pictures of baby seals in their campaign and threaten to stop the hunt. This is propaganda, say the fishermen, since only adult seals will be killed. Newfoundlanders suffer 25% unemployment and hence promise a stiff fight over this issue.

March 31st: The Quebec Federation of Labour's investment fund, *Fonds de Solidarité* now stands at \$1.2 billion and accounts for half of the venture capital in Canada. This way unions have been able to keep wealth at home and maintain high-wage jobs.

April 5th: The Party Quebecois bid for independence has stalled. While all Quebecois are in favour of more autonomy, the majority fear the results of a power grab by the politicians and bureaucrats of the PQ. Even after months of propaganda the support for independence remains stalled at 40%. As a consequence, the government has decided to put off the independence referendum for an

unspecified future date. Showing their true colours, they have decided not to enact the decentralisation demanded by the regions - until after independence - i.e. never.

April 10th: The villagers of St Esprit Quebec went on a general strike and blocked the highways. They were protesting the closure of the slaughter house, the town's only industry, as a result of the government's decision to revise the hog quotas for the region. This resulted in a loss of 400 jobs. The villagers insist they do not want government hand-outs, but just want their slaughter-house back.

April 19th: Human Life International, an organisation of Catholic anti-abortionists, were met by 3,000 demonstrators in Montréal. They were showered with eggs, bottles and tomatoes as they marched in a procession protected by the police. Twelve people were arrested. The demonstration seems to have been counter-productive. The anti-abortionists revelled in their 'martyrdom' and the demonstrators came off looking as intolerant as the people they opposed.

April 30th: As a response to public outcry, the Algerian film maker Hafsia Koudil will be allowed to visit Canada after all. In a truly bizarre decision, Immigration had refused her a visa on the grounds that she might seek political asylum as she is under a death threat from Islamic fundamentalists. Ms Koudil produced a film *Demon au Féminin*, on Islamic misogyny, shown at a film festival in Montréal.

May 1st: Some 2,500 people marched for Mayday in Montréal in a demonstration sponsored by the three major trade union federations. There were a lot fewer participants than in recent years and the Marxist Leninist sects

had a more obvious presence.

May 11th: The Caisse Populaire Desjardins, the Quebec-based credit union federation announced that it has a membership of 5.4 million based in 1,469 autonomous branches and total assets of \$77 billion.

May 26th: 1,000 women began 200 kilometre march from Montréal to Quebec City in protest against the "feminisation of poverty". Unfortunately, their demands do not go beyond the usual calls for state intervention.

May 28th: 6,000 people demonstrated in Fredricton, New Brunswick, against the federal government's proposed gun control legislation. Opposition to this measure is growing rapidly, especially in rural areas.

June 1st: After several weeks of protest in Montréal over the provincial government's plans to shut nine hospitals, 10,000 people demonstrated against the closure of a hospital in Quebec City.

June 4th: 15,000 demonstrate in Quebec City at the end of the Women's March Against Poverty.

June 8th: Ontario's highly unpopular NDP (social democrat) government was thrown out of office in the general election. Betrayal of unionised supporters, political correctness, economic mismanagement, a love of centralisation and regulation all played a part in their defeat. The Conservative Party, opportunistically adopting populist anti-government rhetoric, won a land-slide victory.

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## — ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

## Stewart Brand's anarchist testament

Readers from the '60s and '70s will probably recall the name Stewart Brand. No? Well, what you will remember – and probably keep in a cupboard or under the bed as it was always too bulky for a bookshelf – is *The Whole Earth Catalog*.

This compendium of alternative and do-it-yourself technology and counter-cultural ideologies was begun by Brand in 1968, with a lot of help from his friends in a garage in California. From there it went into sixteen continually growing editions, culminating with *The Last Whole Earth Catalog* in 1971, which, apart from winning literary prizes, had such enormous print runs that straight publishers like Random House in the US and Penguin Books here were happy to take on distribution. As well they might be: it sold 1,600,000 copies.

The catalogue was subtitled "access to tools", and the opening rhetoric explained that:

"we are as Gods and might as well get good at it. So far remotely done power and glory – as via government, big business, formal education, church – has succeeded to the point where gross defects obscure actual gains. In response to this dilemma and to these gains a realm of intimate personal power is developing – the power of individuals to conduct their own education, find their own inspiration, shape their own environment and share the adventure with whoever is interested."

All good anarchist talk, and *The Whole Earth Catalog* urged its hundreds of thousands of readers to be choosy and critical of the consumer cornucopia of the '60s. Brand wrote, for example, that "one way to force Detroit to stop producing tinny chromed-up pieces of shit is to stop buying what they produce, spend a little time operating on old terminal cases and through the miracle of transplant give the old '57 Ford retractable another ten years of life. Old cars run just as well as new ones, if the driver knows enough about his machine to keep it running".

The catalogue gave a new readership and a new market for ideas which had been lying around for decades, unheeded. People like Scott Nearing and Ralph Borsodi had been preaching ever since the Great Depression struck America that you could live better for less if you grew and canned your own beans, and Ken Kern had been peddling his philosophy of the home-made home ever since the last war (his books were sold by Freedom Bookshop from 1948 onward). Suddenly their status shifted from that of folksy cranks to that of gurus.

Brand had genuinely intended the *Last Catalog* to be the last. He wanted to move on to other things, in particular the magazine he co-edited called *Co-Evolution Quarterly*. He provided detailed advice and costings to urge readers to make their own local catalogues, which plenty did. But he had become such a compulsive compiler that he couldn't leave it alone. His retirement from the industry was regarded as a betrayal, and in 1974 he had to bring out the *Whole Earth Epilog* (Penguin) and in 1980 he succumbed again and edited the fattest version ever, *The Next Whole Earth Catalog*, with over 600 huge pages, of which a quarter of a million copies had been sold before I laid a hand on it.

He was, and is, one of those people with a sharp nose for shifts in people's and society's interests and preoccupations, and in that very last catalogue set out for us the changes of emphasis and content. Less interest in wood-burning stoves, more in solar energy, Buckminster Fuller's geodesic domes disappeared. They all leaked and were replaced by more attention to traditional building methods. China had disappeared too. "Six years ago", he wrote, "China was the model for radical America; now America is the model for technical and economic China".

It was hard to place him on the American continuum of right-wing and left-wing libertarianism. He praises Milton Friedman's *Free to Choose* with the words "The exquisite balance of nature, the complex economy we admire, is based largely on competition expressed in constant individual deaths and the survival of optimal genes. Centrally planned economies by contrast have all the elegance and self-regulating capabilities of cornfields". But another commended text is Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*, advancing an opposite thesis: that evolutionary survival is guaranteed by cooperation rather than by competition. His book is listed because it proves that "decency just happens to be an elegant way of achieving homeostasis".

The biological language is a reminder that there are other ways of measuring ideas and realities than the ordinary political spectrum we are used to. It made no sense to ask what was the political stance of the authors of those catalogues. It would be wrong to suppose that they had, since the '60s, shifted over to become part of the New American Right. Their final version was proud of giving the how-to-do-it details of amateur human insemination, "the rapidly growing practice among lesbians to make themselves pregnant without benefit of intercourse or MDs", as well as providing helpful hints on "liberating

masturbation". These, and many another attempt to tell people what they always wanted to know but didn't know who to ask, indicate an editorial stance which is what Brand and his team always claimed it was: a wish to help people find the know-how to achieve their own liberation.

I've often wondered what Stewart Brand has been up to since he gave up being a signpost to the alternative society, and it was a pleasure to catch up with him through his new book *How Buildings Learn* (Viking Penguin, £18.00). It is in a 'landscape' format, which means it will only fit your bookshelf endways on, and its subtitle *What happens after they're built* describes its theme. Nearly fifty years ago the architect Giancarlo De Carlo declared in *Freedom* his view that building users have to *attack* the building to make it their own, and Brand provides a gallery of photographs, carefully taken from the same viewpoint, together with plans showing the endless changes that happen to every kind of structure.

From one point of view his book is a sustained attack on the ludicrous pretensions of the architectural profession and its British idols like the late Sir James Stirling or the current allegedly left-wing Sir Richard Rogers. Their buildings, he argues, just don't work. Here he is reflecting the kind of opinions expressed for years in the anarchist press by people like Brian Richardson and myself. (Richardson will be delighted that Brand endorses his admiration for the manuals by Christopher Alexander, *A Pattern Language* and *The Timeless Way of Building*.)

He divides buildings into two categories, 'High Road' and 'Low Road'. Low Road

buildings include sheds, converted garages and everything cheap and adaptable. High Road buildings are places like George Washington's Mount Vernon or Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in the US, or the Duchess of Devonshire's Chatsworth House in Britain. These too are subject to continual change and adaptation, despite the absurd historicism of the conservation lobby, but Brand's heart is with the Low Road structures that the rest of us live and work in.

I must quote a passage to indicate the essentially anarchist character of his book:

"One way to institutionalise wholesome chaos is to disperse significant design power to the individual users of a building while they're using the place. Notice the difference between kitchens designed to be used by powerless servants – they are usually dark, cramped pits – and kitchens used by the heads of a family – bright, spacious, centrally located, crammed with conveniences. A building 'learns' much faster than whole organisations. This suggests a 'bottom-up' rather than 'top-down' approach in the building's human hierarchy ... What would a building look like and act like if it was designed for easy servicing by the users themselves? Once people are comfortable doing their own maintenance and repair, reshaping comes naturally because they have a hands-on relationship with their space, and they know how to improve it."

Every one of us is a building-user, whether we are talking about houses, flats, workshops, offices, schools, libraries, barns or cowsheds. Brand's book is a kind of thoughtful footnote to the *Whole Earth* extravaganza of his earlier work about access to the tools of human fulfilment. If you don't have a coffee table to keep it on, put your name down for it at your local library.

Colin Ward

## Raven 29: World War Two

The Raven Vol. 8, No. 1, Spring 1995, on 'World War Two'

This is a very timely publication, coming as it does during the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the end of World War Two. The editor, Vernon Richards, is to be congratulated on having assembled such an appropriate collection of pieces which pin-point the main issues arising from this particular six-year incident in the long-continuing history of warfare.

This publication is divided into four sections: 'Documents', 'Recollections', 'The Horrors of War' and a final section of 'Conclusions' – 'The Myth of Benevolence' by Milan Rai. I would advise readers to read the 'Conclusions' first, for it sets the scene by a masterly analysis, well documented by quotations from authoritative sources, of the myth that Britain fought the war as an ideological crusade against fascism. Now in 1995 we are, as it were, blinded by hindsight, for a lot of the population have grown up believing in the myth for the whole of their lives. As someone who was a young man and potential cannon-fodder in 1939, I can remember that in the immediate pre-war years during which the Nazi regime in Germany was being bolstered by Britain and France as a "bulwark against bolshevism" (Churchill's words) it seemed a toss-up whether or not this country would have been the enthusiastic ally of Germany in the coming war for which all Europe was preparing.

The British and French governments had cleverly ensured the victory of fascism in Spain by selling war material to help Hitler and Mussolini assist Franco – but claiming to practice 'non-intervention'. The future seemed very uncertain. What actually happened in 1939 was that Hitler (trying to be very clever) turned traitor to his Western backers and signed a pact of friendship with Stalin, and the swastika flew over Moscow airport as the Nazi representatives received a warm welcome! But then Hitler turned traitor once again, and having shared Poland with the Stalinist empire, launched a military attack against it.

From 1941 onwards a horrible poster

## Raven 29

on

## World War Two

Section 1: includes selections from anarchist publications of the time

Section 2: contains some personal war recollections from Colin Ward, Philip Sansom, Arthur Moyses, Peter Cadogan, John Hewetson, Derrick A. Pike & Vernon Richards

Section 3: the horrors of war including Ravensburg, Auschwitz, Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Section 4: some conclusions

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defaced the hoardings of Britain – the huge faces of Churchill and Stalin grinning at one another over the caption "Comrades in Arms". Had things turned out differently and the Nazis had been loyal to their Western friends, the posters might have shown Churchill and Hitler grinning at one another over the caption of Comrades in Arms in a crusade against 'bolshevism'. It is difficult for most people to realise this now, nearly half a century after the event. It would have been easy to get the British public to support a war against Stalin's empire. In 1918 the public were divided over the issue of revolutionary Russia, and British intervention on the side of the Tsarist armies was not popular, but after more than twenty years of Communist rule, there was enough evidence of widespread genocide, massive use of slave labour and denial of human rights in the Stalinist empire which, if efficiently propagandised even without any distortion of facts, would have sickened the average man-in-the-street in Britain and he would have supported an anti-Soviet war of

liberation, just as he supported the war against Germany. The terrible atrocities of Nazi Germany would have been hushed up here, just as the terrible Stalinist atrocities were hushed up when Stalin was Churchill's comrade in arms. Had such a war been successful then the leaders in the Kremlin would have been tried and hanged at Nuremberg for their atrocious crimes, just as the Nazi leaders were as things turned out. Men who had participated in this crusade, donning their uniform and becoming willing servants of the military machine as allies of Nazi Germany, would now be looking back in their old age and saying "This was a war that had to be fought!"

The above is not a *post hoc* anarchist fantasy. In the 'Documents' section there are extracts from *Spain and the World*, *Revolt* and *War Commentary* in the period *before the war* (when we were uncertain which way the cat would jump) which set out the anarchist view of any coming war perfectly clearly. Whatever the final line-up was going to be the anarchists who were represented in these journals were perfectly clear that in no circumstances should ordinary people surrender themselves as tools of the military machine, or be bamboozled by whatever propaganda was cooked up in the future. Six months before the war *Revolt* published the following:

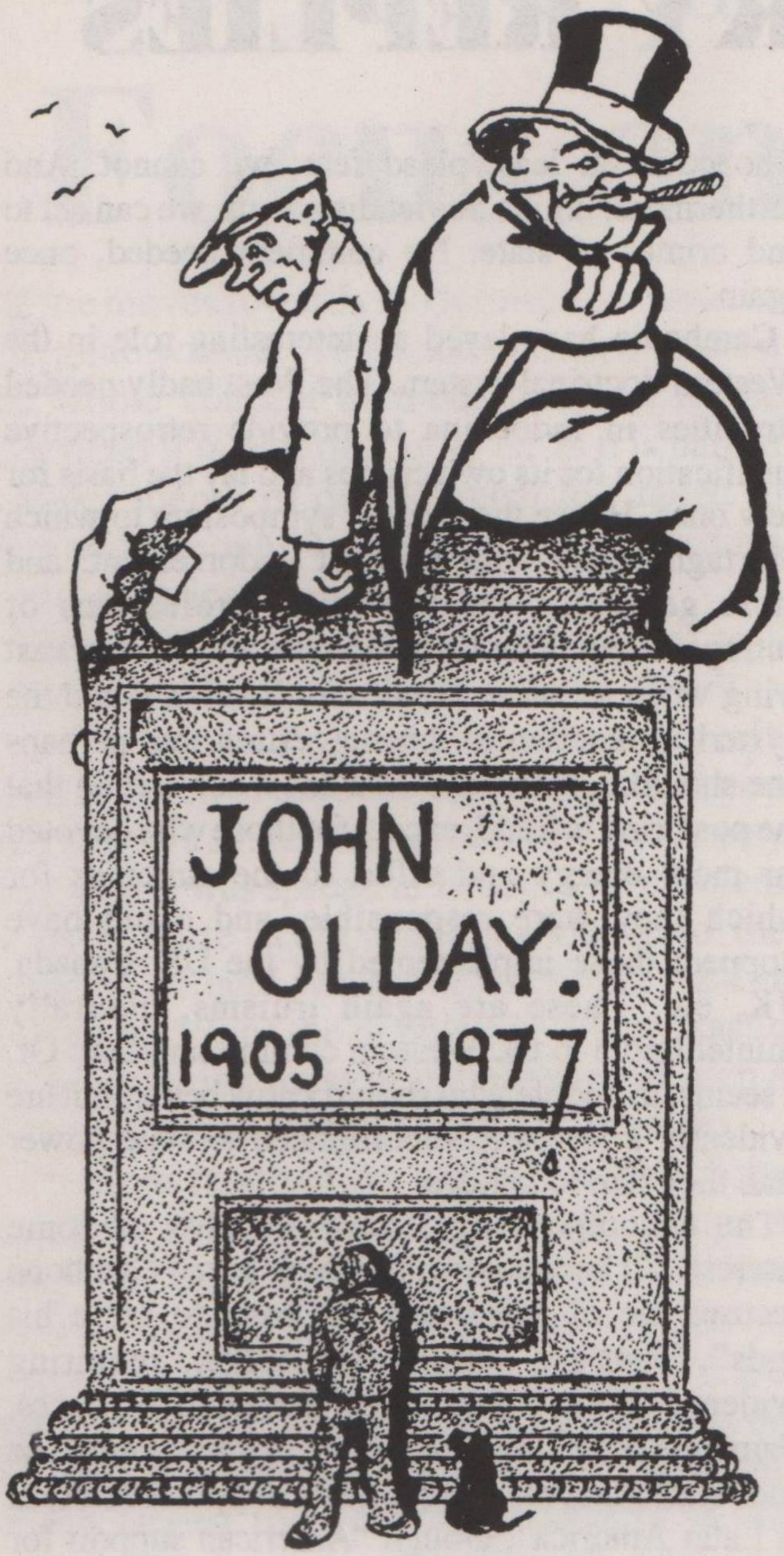
"The only way to defeat fascism is to defeat the system that breeds fascism, the system that is just as rampant here as abroad. The workers must resist war, must resist the steps that lead to war ... The advice of anarchists and revolutionaries generally given during the last war was: 'the enemy is in your own country!' That still holds good. The enemy of the workers is not only the foreign dictators, but the oppressors at home."

In his 'Introduction' Richards mentions the Holocaust and makes the point that it was one of the *results* of the war. It is generally estimated that some six million helpless people were killed in the Holocaust. I would say that this is a gross underestimate: if one is to be realistic the estimate should be more like fifty million (the matter of numbers is dealt with by Yves Hugonnet in the third section of this *Raven*). It is quite artificial to view the Holocaust as a separate incident: the Holocaust, the deliberate killing of masses of

(continued on page 6)



# O, Johnny, O



ARTHUR MOYSES

**The March to Death**  
drawings by John Olday  
Freedom Press, £3.00

A single figure on the platform, a penned article or a visual image gives cohesion to the isolated wash of discontent as they find someone to rationalise their frustration and know they are one of many. But the next generation too soon forgets and the lions of the hour, with luck, may survive as honourable but toothless bunnies for new stars of discontent stride the morning's media. Each generation creates its own icons and when past speeches, writings or drawings no longer arouse an emotion one must ask why, and the answer is that art outlives history. And the *cri de coeur* of the hour must become meat for the academics if it ain't art.

No one in his pre-war years could have been more influential than the Australian cartoonist David Low, who weekly filled a whole page

of the London *Evening Standard* taunting the heads of governments as he showed them as psychopathic clowns, but now David Low, for all his brilliance, is forgotten for no one laughed on their way into the gas chamber or before a firing squad and, apart from the ashes of the forgotten dead, all we are left with is some amusing drawings.

There was Scarfe in the Swinging Sixties to abuse and amuse, with Steadman of *Private Eye*, low on the One to Ten, but Scarfe, while still decorating the *Sunday Times*, is now slotted into the honoured past while Steadman has gone from a small-time cartoonist to a brilliant watercolourist for the wine trade and beyond. But the idol of the night was Robert Crumb, whose underground comics helped a young generation to thumb its nose at the state by buying the comics. Crumb's work was in the style of the pre-war American newspaper comics: cheerful grotesques whose offence to the state was that in its subject matter, in relation to the sexual acts, they went beyond the accepted permitted. In January 1973 four young people stood in the dock at the Old Bailey accused of making this lewd comic available to children, and Germaine Greer was the outraged voice of innocence for the defence as they introduced Aristophanes, Juvenal and Pope's *Dunciad* with Rabelais and (art ain't for the workers?) Breughel bringing up the rear. The four young people were acquitted but had to find their own costs, but Crumb's work no longer offends.

On a flat landscape there must be a mountain no matter how small and Chris Riddell's work in the *Sunday Observer* is the mountain of the hour. Loose lines and brilliant grotesques in the Victorian fashion, they fill the void, but their flaw is that unlike Gilray and Rowlandson, Riddell does not attack the human condition but worthless people easily forgettable. Riddell's triumph is that his exhibition of his work at the Jack Duncan Cartoon Gallery in Museum Street, WC1, has been invaded by a 'Serbian' mit threats plus silent and or threatening telephone calls – John Redwood eat your heart out.

Freedom Press was fortunate in that they had the work of two extremely good cartoonists, Philip Sansom and John Olday (Arthur William Oldag), but while Sansom is the

better draftsman he is more the artist than the cartoonist, while Olday is the cartoonist in that the visual image is there to illustrate the anger or hatred of the subject. Of Olday himself: He had already made his reputation in the Weimar Republic and had acted as an ammunition carrier during the Spartakist uprising. He fled to Britain in 1938 and at the outbreak of World War Two joined the Royal Pioneer Corps, but in 1943 he decided, on his own advice, to take early retirement from HM armed forces. Imprisoned for 'stealing by finding' and later for 'desertion', he served his age well. I was impressed by him, this tall thin man, and as one sat in his rooms he produced the books and the gramophone records bearing his name and he talked of the days when the Nazi German government came to power. I listened as he said that he ran the cabaret Christopher Isherwood wrote about in *I Am a Camera* and *Goodbye to Berlin*, and was crudely filmed in 1972 with Liza Minnelli as *Cabaret* from Isherwood's *I Am a Camera*. How in the early days of the Nazi takeover young Nazi-uniformed officers would find their amusement among the crowded audience within the cabaret and of how a young poet of Olday's acquaintance came into the cabaret after being released from a concentration camp almost too badly beaten to be recognised. And I sat in John Olday's flat then in the restaurant and in the pub and listened as he talked.

Of Olday's book *The March to Death* there has been much second thinking in this 1995 edition, and I can do no more than quote. On the back cover it reads "Of the thousands who bought this book, probably not many agree that all governments are equally bad. For one thing, the British government permitted the publication and sale of this book, which would not have been possible in Germany" ... etc. In the Introduction: "The drawing on page 19 must be seen in the context of its time" ... etc.

In that Introduction Donald Room records that "Gilbert Murry, who had edited *Peace News* throughout the war, decided in the light of Belsen that his opposition to the war had been mistaken, and resigned". Any human situation can be part of the dialectic and in the legalised slaughter of millions there are probably those who can, nay do, arrive at a consensus. In the inglorious days of my working youth I would walk two miles or more to look into the window of a small left-wing bookshop and at the black and white postcards of fat top-hatted capitalists in frock coats being chased by lean and hungry workers. Capitalists are not pot-bellied men in top hats and frock coats but slim smiling men like Sir Jeffrey Archer, slim men in grey Saville Row tailor made suiting, but David Low and the unknown artist in that small long-lost left-wing bookshop (and many many thanks) created stereotypes that like Low's, for and against war leaders, were saints and clowns. And with too many wars for us to read about, *The March to Death* becomes dated, for John Olday made the same cardinal error. Olday is in the tradition of the 1920 German Expressionists, men such as Dix, Grosz and Ernst who saw no amusement in the evils of their age. Spewed into the First World War and its carnage, and then into the murderous politics, they refused to come to terms with a society that had become absolutely hedonistic in its corruption and its values that of a moral sewer. But John became trapped by the English flaw in that somewhere there can be a touch of light laughter in the matter of the opposition. Never a one for royal rage in heaven, John is no Grosz, Dix, Ernst, Hogarth, Gilray or Rowlandson, but maybe somehow he was right and within *The March to Death* someone laughed at the stupidity of it all. All honour to John Olday and Marie Louise Berneri's brilliant and witty eyebrow-raising media babblings of the time that give a fair comment to John's drawings. Buy this book and read and view it, comrade, and keep it, for they were most worthy of their hour.

Arthur Moyses

## Through the Anarchist Press

The previous article quoted a statement by John Cage, the composer who regarded intervals of silence between sounds as music, which said: "I'm an anarchist, same as you are when you're telephoning, turning on/off lights, drinking water". Even though Cage's idea is intellectually appealing, the situation is that today you are entirely in the hands of the suppliers of the service. Whereas the local supplier BT is claiming to cut the telephone bill by 5%, what they don't say is that you don't just pay for the calls but you also pay for the rental of both the equipment and the line. On top of that you also pay for a *tax on communication* – VAT at 17.5%, a government tax – so all in all there are a lot of things to attend to before you can call yourself a 'telephoning anarchist'. Let that go, for Cage's idea could come true overnight. For the time being, however, there is no such thing as a free service. Or more importantly a free access on demand to all its parts. There are, on the contrary, a list of services offered which intend to reduce free access.

The other week I also welcomed a suggestion for the publishing of 'Freedom International'. This is the context where some thought should be given to the telephone and radio systems which bring in the news internationally. How else would Reuters exist? To gather news for 'Freedom International' through the existing system based on profit would, even if the work was done entirely voluntarily, result in a colossal bill from the telephone company. Some instances of present prices: say, for example, the paper's reporters would spend ten minutes

telephoning foreign parts, they would incur vastly different bills from their ever-loving Sid. You can tell by looking at the price list as to which are the poorest countries. They pay more. It is not a question of distance. To telephone the US or Canada costs £3.36 for ten minutes; to telephone Mexico will cost you £11.50; to telephone Northern Ireland is 84p; to telephone Southern Ireland is £2.43 for each ten minute conversation. These hefty sums are justified by BT simply as a reflection of foreign conditions, accessibility to satellites and safety of installations. The high price for a telephone call to Southern Ireland is justified by BT in that until recently telephone and other installations have been frequently blown up. Nevertheless you may telephone Northern Ireland for 84p, where presumably the telephone lines don't get blown up.

Here then is a great opportunity to start an internationally distributed paper, but you can imagine what an enormous undertaking it would be if done properly. Nevertheless, there is already a vigorous international section regularly printed in *Freedom*.

The word distribution is also a stumbling block. This paper alone ought to be better distributed, but 'International Freedom' will have to deal with the wholesalers of each of the 223 countries answerable by a telephone exchange, the likes of W.H. Smith and John Menzies. Perhaps times are changing again, for *Freedom* and *War Commentary* had occasionally – when enough readers demanded it – a country-wide circulation 'available at all good newsagents'.

Part and parcel of publishing is the news-gathering system. No doubt we can overcome the difficulties, however crippling the bill may be for telephone, postage and distribution.

Next week we shall compose our thoughts on turning on/off lights and drinking water.

John Rety

(continued from page 5)

humanity for a political purpose, took place all over the world. Admission of this fact sticks in the throat of many people, for it implies that the terrible psychopaths who managed the German concentration camps, and who were specially picked for their brutality, are to be compared with the ordinary young men in the armed services who justified the wholesale slaughter they committed on idealistic grounds. They did it 'for their country'.

The section on 'Recollections' includes pieces by two people who are now old men looking back to the time when they put themselves at the disposal of the warring state, and now justify their servitude by saying in effect 'this war had to be fought'. The editor makes no comment on these apologies, but he re-prints a satirical piece of verse by Charles Sandwick which begins:

"Excuse me, Comrade:  
I am about to disembowel you –  
It's for Democracy, you know.  
I have to hate you, Comrade:  
I could not do this frightful thing  
If I had not learned to hate you.  
You see, Comrade,  
Your boss is a fascist:  
But mine, Comrade,  
Mine is a Democrat.  
That is why, Comrade –  
That is why I am about  
To plunge my bayonet into your belly  
And scatter your guts upon the earth."

In the 'Recollections' section I found the piece by Philip Sansom most useful. He deals with

a question that puzzled us all at the time, and will continue to puzzle historians: the anti-war agitation of the anarchists, which included the publication of *War Commentary* and many anti-war pamphlets, was permitted by the government throughout the war. Then, when Germany was defeated, the British authorities began to pounce on the anarchists, arresting the four editors of Freedom Press and charging them with sedition. They even sent poor T.W. Brown of Kingston to prison for eighteen months for distributing the sort of leaflets that we had been dishing out throughout the war unhindered. Why was this so? As is well known, the pounce came too late and many influential people fearing some sort of post-war fascist censorship on the expression of opinion in print (they were mostly writers) rallied to the defence of the prosecuted editors of Freedom Press, and although three of them got comparatively mild sentences, the press continued to publish unhindered. The issues involved in this puzzle are very complex and I leave it to readers to study Sansom's highly intelligent analysis. Incidentally, his piece was first published in *Wildcat* in September 1974, although this is not mentioned in *The Raven*.

I note with satisfaction that all the bound volumes of *The Raven* are on the shelves of Cambridge University library, and are apparently well used. Anarchism is now recognised as a proper element in courses of political and social studies, and this issue will certainly give them something to think about!

Tony Gibson



# KHMER ROUGE ATROCITIES: NOAM CHOMSKY REPLIES

On 25th February we reprinted from the *Australian Anarchist Age Weekly Review*: 'Chomsky - the vision anarchism, the reality permanent protest', relating to Chomsky's talk in Sydney on East Timor. This provoked a letter from Pat Murtagh on 25th March in which he alleged that Chomsky had attempted to "deny Khmer Rouge atrocities". On 8th April Milan Rai defended Chomsky and called for Murtagh "to apologise publicly". Chomsky replied on 13th May, but on 27th May we carried a 1,000-word letter from Murtagh with references to Chomsky's published works. Now Chomsky has replied at length and we hope this controversy can now rest.

Dear Editors,

I read with some surprise Pat Murtagh's impassioned response to Milan Rai's letter (*Freedom*, 27th May), commenting on his earlier charges about my attitude toward Khmer Rouge atrocities - namely, that they were comparable to Indonesian atrocities in East Timor in the same years. Murtagh's charges would be of slight interest even if they had any merit, but the fact that they are pursued (and with such furious intensity) raises issues of broader significance, so perhaps comment is in order.

Murtagh begins with an outraged denial of Rai's (accurate) statement that I had two "pieces of writing" about Khmer Rouge atrocities, triumphantly displaying others - all but three dating from after the Khmer Rouge period, to which Rai referred, transparently.

Of those from the Khmer Rouge period, two make no mention of the Khmer Rouge, apart from an uncontroversial comment (which is why Murtagh cites nothing), but the choices are revealing. The first is a contribution to a symposium in *Dissent* on a question posed by the editors: Do Khmer Rouge atrocities "warrant a reconsideration of our opposition to the Vietnam war" (which they did not seriously oppose, but put that aside)? It is what I would have written had there been a symposium in *Pravda* after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan asking whether their "opposition to the Afghan war" should be "reconsidered" in the light of the post-war atrocities of the Afghan resistance. Comment superfluous.

Murtagh's Exhibit 2 is a letter to the *New York Times*, which says nothing about the Khmer Rouge. It is a response to an article by their cultural commissar charging that my reaction to the question posed by *Dissent* "recalls" elements of the peace movement that marched "for a Communist victory", and other lies - of about the kind one would have found in *Pravda* in the good old days. Again, no comment.

Exhibit 3 is more interesting. It is an article about Timor (actually, testimony at the UN). It ends with a "comparison with press coverage of Cambodia", another country "where major atrocities have been alleged in exactly the same time frame as East Timor", roughly comparable on the basis of available evidence. Then come remarks about the radically different reaction to our atrocities, which we could easily stop, and their atrocities, about which we could do nothing. Murtagh sees this article as apologetics for Pol Pot.

Murtagh then states that I "believed (and defended this belief)" (his emphasis) that "the number of Cambodian victims" was 100,000. His source is the article just cited, which states: "the harshest critics claim that perhaps 100,000 have been slaughtered since April 1975". In the work referred to there, the "harshest critic" is identified as Francois Ponchaud, who indeed said exactly that - accurately it appears, for the time frame in

question (virtually all evidence was from 1975-76). Note Murtagh's switch from 'slaughtered' to 'victims'; those 'slaughtered' were of course a small fraction of the victims.

As every serious commentator knows, the best informed analysts by far were the State Department 'Cambodia watchers', who were not, at the time, inclined to downplay Khmer Rouge atrocities. Their estimate was tens to hundreds of thousands of total deaths, mainly by starvation and disease from "brutal rapid change", not "mass genocide". A year after my article on Timor that Murtagh cites, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* - also not inclined to downplay Khmer Rouge atrocities - estimated that the population had risen by about a million under Pol Pot. There is much more.

In brief, the statement of mine that Murtagh grossly distorts is not only accurate but rather tempered.

State Department intelligence will be dismissed only by those who care nothing about Khmer Rouge atrocities, but are exploiting them for other ends and therefore prefer fabrication to fact. Murtagh ridicules my reference to these sources. Comment unnecessary.

Murtagh next refers to my book *Necessary Illusions*, where, he claims that I "admit" (Murtagh's emphasis) that the estimate Edward Herman and I gave in 1978 (published a year later) was based on "incomplete evidence", but nevertheless, I "adamantly refused 'significant revision'". The deceit mounts. Of course that estimate was based on 'incomplete evidence', exactly as we wrote at the time, 'admitting' nothing, any more than one 'admits' that the sun rises in the morning. That 1978 estimate was based on very fragmentary evidence is understood by everyone, apart from those pursuing some other agenda, who choose not to 'see' what they understand. As for my "adamant refusal", the passage to which Murtagh refers states that the only Cambodia scholar to have done a careful demographic study, Michael Vickery, mentions in his 1983 work that the massive evidence that came in after we wrote requires "no significant revision" of what we published, which is correct. Despite extraordinary efforts, no one has found a phrase that should be altered.

Next Murtagh refers to my "glee in establishing that Jean Lacouture's estimate of two million victims cannot be rigorously proven". Turning to the source, we find a sober recounting of the facts, with not a hint of glee. The facts recounted are that when Lacouture published a review of Ponchaud attributing to him the assertion that the Khmer Rouge had "boasted" of having killed two million people, I wrote him a personal letter suggesting that he correct this fabrication, which was being widely cited as authoritative fact (and still is, despite his public recantation in the US - never in France, where it first appeared). Lacouture invented the figure by adding 800,000 to 1.2 million, the former

being Ponchaud's estimate of the number killed in the American war. So much for the inability to "rigorously prove" the two million estimate (forgetting the 'boast' about murders). For Murtagh, it is an outrage to politely suggest correction of lies produced in the service of the Holy State.

No less impressive is Murtagh's reference to our 1978 statement that "when the facts are in, it may turn out that the more extreme condemnations were in fact correct". This is a "rhetorical trick", Murtagh thunders, as shown by the statement that follows: that even if so, it will not affect our conclusion about how the facts available were interpreted by the doctrinal system, our prime concern throughout this two-volume study (*Political Economy of Human Rights*). "In other words, 'even if you're right and I'm wrong I'm still right'." Murtagh adds.

Our statement is a truism that would not strain the capacities of a ten year old. Murtagh cannot fail to understand it, suggesting again that there is a different agenda.

It gets worse. In *Political Economy of Human Rights*, Herman and I clearly, explicitly, and emphatically compared Khmer Rouge atrocities to those in Timor. Thus anyone who regards what we wrote as apologetics for the Khmer Rouge is - unequivocally - denying the Western-backed Indonesian atrocities. They are, in short, extreme apologists for the violence of their own states. That's plainly the case with regard to someone writing from Canada, a prime supporter of Indonesia. Again, the merest truism.

This brings us to the interesting topic. To depersonalize the issue, suppose that some North American dissident underestimated Khmer Rouge atrocities. That would be as interesting as the fact that some Soviet dissident, say Ivan, underestimated US atrocities in Indochina or Latin America (as many did). That would of course have outraged the commissars, who would have poured venom on the miscreants, demanding that propaganda fabrications remain unchallenged, etc., in the manner just reviewed. Any decent person would have dismissed their reaction with contempt: what matters is what Ivan had to say about Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan - and defense of lies "in a good cause" is shameful. The same logic applies here. What Murtagh has to say about the Khmer Rouge would be of scant interest even if it were serious, but it would be of great interest to know how he has reacted to the decision of the Canadian government to renew military exports to Indonesia (comparable to sending arms to Pol Pot), extending the substantial support of earlier years.

The analogy is not quite fair - to the commissars,

who could at least plead fear; we cannot. And furthermore, unlike Soviet dissidents, we can act to end crimes of state. No comment needed, once again.

Cambodia has played an interesting role in the Western doctrinal system. The West badly needed atrocities in Indochina to provide retrospective justification for its own crimes and lay the basis for new ones. Hence the *Dissent* symposium to which Murtagh refers with implicit endorsement, and more generally, the fraudulent professions of outrage about Khmer Rouge atrocities, the vast lying when actual evidence didn't suffice, and the hysterical reaction to the suggestion that perhaps one should tell the truth. We know for certain that the posturing is fraud, except for those who devoted far more energy and effort to the atrocities for which they were responsible, and could have stopped: those implemented by the US, Canada, UK, etc. These are again truisms, naturally unintelligible to the Western commissar class. Or, it seems, to people who should know better, but are evidently a lot more subordinated to state power than they like to believe.

The accompanying letters are also of some interest. I'll keep to one, in which Larry Gambone accuses me of "distorting the truth to serve his ends". That's a serious accusation, requiring evidence. From a sample of thousands of pages, Gambone offers this 'evidence', in toto: "I recall he once stated that the US has never supported reform in Latin America", though "American support for social democracy and populism during the 1950s and '60s is a documented fact". No source is given, for obvious reasons: Stalin and Hitler supported reform in their domains, on occasion, and the US certainly did, for exactly the officially-stated reasons: to undercut popular movements. No less interesting is the 'documented fact'. What is 'documented fact' is that in this period the US acted to overthrow reformist parliamentary regimes in Guatemala, Brazil, etc., moving from toleration "of the rapacity and cruelty of the Latin American military" to "direct complicity" in "the methods of Heinrich Himmler's extermination squads", in the words of the man who was in charge of counterinsurgency planning for the Kennedy and Johnson administrations (Charles Maechling).

But even putting aside the actions that so impress this anarchist, the fact that he could offer something he thinks he "recalls" as evidence for charges of such severity tells us quite a lot.

These are far from the only such examples, and they should, I think, concern us. One expects this sort of thing in the *Times Literary Supplement* and *Daily Telegraph*. But *Freedom*?

Noam Chomsky

## Governments are the Terrorists

During April 1995 a terrorist's bomb destroyed a government building in Oklahoma, killing more than two hundred people and injuring many more. This was the first time the Americans had experienced the effect of a massive explosion and newspapers reported that they were devastated at the suffering and distressed to hear the crying children trapped in the rubble. It seems the Americans were so naive that they had no idea what their government was doing when it sent thousands of planes to bomb the towns of other countries. The reality had to be brought home to them by a bomb on their doorstep.

Now the Americans know what happens when people are blown apart with bombs, it would be wonderful if they stopped their government from doing it. But, of course, they will not. They will not because, like people everywhere, they believe that it is acceptable for people to be violent for their government and that it is only unacceptable when people are violent for themselves or a revolutionary group. Governments want people to be violent when the violence serves them; they do not want people to be violent in their own behalf. They make the distinction by calling the violence either lawful or unlawful. If a man kills for himself, for example, it is called murder and named unlawful, but when a prison official executes a man the behaviour is the same but it is named lawful. The terrorist's behaviour is unlawful, that is why people think it is wrong; the government's

behaviour is lawful, that is why people think it is right. The result of both lawful and unlawful behaviour is always the same: people die.

All that matters is whether human beings have suffered and died. People must not fall into the trap of thinking there is something different between lawful and unlawful behaviour.

So who are the terrorists of the world? Some individuals and terrorists kill perhaps hundreds of people, but governments kill millions and millions. In World War Two the American government bombed Germany and wiped out nearly every city in Japan before using the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki - both non-military targets. They destroyed North Korea in the '50s and vast sections of Vietnam and Cambodia in the '60s and '70s.

Governments bomb and kill all the time, not only in war. The Americans sent bombers into Tripoli to kill Muammar Gaddafi, but killed his daughter instead. They supported the Contras in Guatemala and El Salvador.

Governments are even responsible for terrorists who kill for their own ends. Most learn to kill in the regular armies and all use explosives and arms made in factories approved or sanctioned by governments.

Without doubt governments are the real terrorists whom we must eliminate if we are to be safe.

Derrick A. Pike

**NOAM CHOMSKY** Born 7th December 1928 in Philadelphia, USA. The son of an eminent Hebrew scholar, he learned as his father's proofreader much "about the structure and history of the Semitic languages". Political sympathies with a professor of linguistics brought him to work in that field - he developed a theory on how to predict the sentence combinations in a language and to describe their structure, the 'Chomskyan Revolution' which to many remains the foundation of modern linguistics. He has become one of the leading libertarian critics of modern world politics.

"The essential attributes of human nature give man the opportunity to create social conditions and social forms to maximise the possibilities for freedom and diversity, and individual self-realisation."

The portrait, right, is a black and white copy of one of 36 portraits of anarchists drawn in three-colour line by Clifford Harper, included in a set of picture cards each with a potted biography on the reverse and published by Freedom Press. Other portraits include such varied anarchist figures as Errico Malatesta, Marie Louise Berneri, Emiliano Zapata, Colin Ward, Michael Bakunin, and many more.

The 36 picture cards (known to collectors as trading cards) come in a neat box and are available in our bookshop or by mail order, price £5.00 (post free in UK, £5.45 including p&p abroad) from: **Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX**



NOAM CHOMSKY



## Anarcho-Syndicalism

Dear Friends,  
It was interesting to read the comment by Laurens Otter (*Freedom*, 8th July 1995) on my letter about anarcho-syndicalism (*Freedom*, 29th April 1995). To reply to this it is necessary to consider what anarcho-syndicalism is. I would consider anarcho-syndicalists to be anarchists who believe that they can use syndicalist methods to create an anarchist society. What are syndicalist methods? Let me give you a quote. "For the syndicalist the fundamentals of revolution lie in the social general strike – a stay-in strike or factory occupation not just in one factory nor just because an industry is closing down and laying off workers, but in all factories particularly the successful ones."

"In order to achieve this syndicalists put their emphasis on creating councils of all workers in a particular industry, business or office irrespective of trade or other divisions which are united in industrial federations, although in interest of real face-to-face democracy, broken down into manageable units. All committees representing more workers than can actually meet, being federations, are made up of mandated delegates from the constituent sections. All such delegates are subject to instant recall by the electors." (Quoted from *Serious Politics Begins with the Bomb* by Laurens Otter.)  
To me this does seem to indicate that the syndicalist movement is largely concerned with industrial organisations – it uses terms such as 'industrial federations'. I stick to the charge that much anarcho-syndicalist literature is concerned with activities in the factory.

A big weakness, I feel, is this neglect of other aspects of human life such as the community/environment. Often where anarcho-syndicalists do attempt to deal

with other issues they are seen as a by-product of their workplace activities.

Another point is that there might not be identity of interests between workplaces and the community, particularly if many people in the workplace did not live in the same community. This would create the need for much more community involvement with workplace activity than anarcho-syndicalism seems to allow for.

To conclude, for reasons shown here and in my earlier letter, unless I can be convinced otherwise, I think anarcho-syndicalism is an obsolete ideology.

D. Dane

## 'Open Letter' to Laurens Otter COME OFF IT, LAURENS!

Irrespective of Dave Dane's reply to your 'Open Letter' addressed to him (*Freedom*, 8th July) we would suggest that instead of belly-aching about a kind of Freedom Press censorship as to what Monatte "amply demonstrated" to expose "the fallacies of Malatesta's anti-syndicalist arguments", may we suggest that you provide us with his response, which we assume refers to the Amsterdam Anarchist Congress of 1907. After all, you have always been *persona grata* in the columns of *Freedom*, even when we thought your imagination got the better of your argument.

And when you do present Monatte's exposure of poor old Malatesta's arguments, we hope you won't forget to mention that your hero Monatte, when the revolution came in Russia in 1917, joined the Communist Party! In due course he found them not to his liking. How did he end up?

Freedom Editors

## Hampshire Special Branch on tour

Dear *Freedom*,  
If Hampshire Special Branch's raids on us since March were a "practical joke" ('Hampshire Police on a False Trail' in *Freedom*, 8th July 1995, page 3), it's not one we find funny.

To quell rumour, the truth is that to date there have been 21 raids on green anarchists and animal liberationists, resulting in six alleged *Green Anarchist* (GA) editors being on police bail for conspiracy to incite criminal damage by fire. No date to report to custody has been set and GA is carrying on much as usual, although subscribers and exchangees would do well to re-introduce themselves via BCM 1715, London WC1N 3XX, and we could do with a new projects editor too. If anyone's told you GA's 'closed down', note them as bullshit artists in future.

The raids aren't about ARM arson on the Isle of Wight last August, as Hampshire Special Branch tell gullible journos off the record, they're about silencing all voices of opposition to the Branch's new role. From the start of this year, the Animal Rights National Index (ARNI) has become a task force, not just a database, and since 1993 ARNI's brief was extended to include eco as well as animal lib activists. The Branch need to hype such activists now the Cold War's over and there's a ceasefire in the Six Counties or they'll face deep cuts.

Robin Webb was someone that dared contradict ARNI's lies and hype about the ALF, their attempt to smear a non-violent organisation as an arms and explosives movement. They wanted him to 'shut up or be locked up'. When a gun planted in his car didn't get him remanded, Hampshire Special Branch revived an old warrant so the ALF press officer was banged up for the 'crime' of passing on a press release to the press. Hampshire are now panicking as Robin's 'co-conspirator' Gillian Peachey has been acquitted and 'conspiracies of one' aren't taken too seriously by the average jury, especially where 'criminal' press releases are concerned!

We also carried animal lib news and from GA No. 37 argued Robin was being framed to silence him. No wonder ARNI tried to silence us too.

When the *Guardian's* David Ward reported their Stasi-style raid on Frontline Books in Manchester, on 30th June 1995, the Branch commissioned the *Observer's* Mike Durham as the mouthpiece for their damage limitation exercise. His 9th July 1995 "Crackdown of green extremists" was wildly biased and inaccurate – treating a *Sunday Sport* article written over five years ago as an important source, and misquoting that! – but basically tried to build GA's former editor Paul Rogers up for a fall in typically spectacular media fashion. Durham is a close associate of notorious *Searchlight* mouthpiece David Rose, his previous articles on live exports have shown Branch sourcing and he's made a taped admission of his involvement with them, so we'd hope readers won't touch him with a barge-pole in future.

The 'big picture' is that this is all just one vast 'fishing expedition'. Hampshire are just fronting for a national operation and, if you believe Durham, "the first joint operation between police and MI5 under a new agreement on co-operation between the two agencies". The 17th May 1995 raid on Greenpeace HQ was part of the same database process as the raids on GA, the manufacture of Greens as a convenient post-Cold War 'enemy within'.

We expect them to raid GA co-ordinators and contacts next. We take this opportunity to warn them to arrange public addresses that don't lead back to their home addresses; to clear their homes of all compromising data and duplicate all they can't clear; to have a lawyer insist they make 'no comment' in custody to by-pass the CJA's 'abolition' of the right to silence; and after the raid to report stuff taken and questions asked to BCM 1715, London WC1N 3XX so we have an idea where they'll strike next.

Green Anarchist

## Responses to Wayne John

[*Christianarchy: a Primer in Christian Anarchism*, Wayne John's pamphlet (£1.00), was reviewed by Brian Morris in *Freedom* on 13th May 1995. Wayne John replied on 8th July 1995.]

Dear Editors,

Forgive me! So many people these days disguise themselves under pseudonyms that I thought he was connected as a symbolic inversion of that heroic American.

1. Atheism, of course, has a different meaning in different contexts. I take it to mean a denial of the existence of a being or power that is independent of the material world – whether or not this power is conceived as transcendental or immanent (as with animists, Quakers or mystics), or identified with nature (pantheism). The suggestion that atheism acknowledges the existence – 'presence' – of god, and that what is needed is the transcendence of both theism (the transcendental version of god) and the 'false rebellion of atheism' (its anti-thesis), accepting that one is, like Jesus, god, is pure mysticism. This kind of vision has led to awful authoritarian consequences – very different to what Quakers themselves envisage.

2. It is very easy, when you quote someone by way of illustration, to take their words out of context. But I ask anyone who is interested to read Berdyaev's *Slavery and Freedom* for themselves. As I read him the book reeks of cultural elitism, has a highly negative, even gnostic, view of the human person as a natural being, and actually advocates the necessity of the state – and is thus quite different from Tolstoy's Christian anarchism.

3. So monastic life is a kind of anarchism, and historically was a 'subversive force' against state power. This is, to some extent, true. Although religion and the state have always had a kind of symbiotic relationship, mutually supporting each other, there have always been those who denied the legitimacy of state power – but it was always in terms

of some higher authority, god, usually represented of course by the pope, the abbot, the leader of some religious sect or movement, or by a guru.

People should cultivate sympathy and respect, but should be reluctant to deify anything or anybody – whether in terms of some transcendental being or creator, an immanent spirit (or spirits), nature (whether or not in the form of a mother goddess or in a more pantheistic guise), or humanity itself, and should certainly not deify themselves as in the case of Jesus and David Icke (and Wayne John?).

Brian Morris

Dear Editors,

As to the pamphlet *Christianarchy*, may I put forward some points for consideration.

1. There may have been a Jesus; but even if there was, nobody knows what he taught. He left no writings; his followers may well have misunderstood him; and the authors of the Christian gospels, writing between roughly thirty and sixty years after the events, were free to put in anything they liked. The gospels, in point of fact, often differ, often contradict each other, and have been interpreted in many different ways.

2. A personal god might conceivably exist; but nobody knows whether one does, let alone whether it is male, female, bisexual or anything else. There might, for all we know, be countless gods of every imaginable kind, but we have not the slightest reason to think so. Any idea of a personal god is pretty obviously a product of wishful thinking, a psychological escape from insecurity, loneliness and the fear of death.

3. How about an impersonal god? Many people throughout the ages have tried to express an awareness of something – not a person – that they have called sacred, timeless, immeasurable, etc. This thing, they have said, is really beyond all words, all thought and

of culture is now shaped and formed, even dominated, by literacy. Hardly surprising is it that the abstract, expert, diabolical (either/or) way of ordering reality also drives the *relational*, experience, practical skills, husbandry, wisdom and the like into corners where many people, even anarchists, can now question with confidence their relevance to living.

The virtual monopoly rational and artificial informing devices have over the rites of schooling is, of course, just what the agencies of the state want for our central social ritual, employment. Whether we are willing or unwilling prisoners of employment (and unemployment) in so far as its activities are distasteful, meaningless, debilitating and add to social dislocation, the big E is a bad ritual.

Edward Said's 'critical intellectual' (the good guy) with whose views Morris sympathises will need to do more than 'speak (write) the truth to power' from the dubious comfort of his state-funded employment. He will need to be self-employed, a local rather than a cosmopolitan and more like Socrates than Plato or Aristotle. More likely to be a woman than a man?

Denis Pym

## Dreaming

Dear Comrades,

When Portillo was Minister for Employment, there was no employment, so now they've abolished the ministry.

Is it too much to hope, now that he is Minister of Defence ...?

Yes? Well I suppose it is, but it's nice to dream sometimes.

Laurens

knowledge. Now, if it is beyond all knowledge we cannot, obviously, know whether it exists. But here we must be careful not to jump to conclusions. Knowledge and awareness are two different things; therefore, while we can never know whether the unknowable exists, that is no reason for ruling out an awareness of it.

4. But even if such awareness is possible, what is the use of it? It may be blissful, ecstatic; but, if that is all, it evidently has no more value for human beings than some kind of drug. Here again we must be careful: how do we know that that is all? Perhaps a human being who has once been in that state of awareness, even for a moment, will never be the same again. Perhaps the brain cells are affected by it. And perhaps, unconsciously, without effort, there is a psychological change; so that in place of immature self-centred activity there is love. Well, perhaps; but how can we ever be sure? Only if it takes place in our own lives, obviously.

5. If that is the way human beings reach maturity, one thing is clear: authority plays no part in it. Nobody can tell us how to become mature. That must happen naturally, as a plant develops and flowers. And, if that fails to happen, nobody can blame us. Failure to mature is our tragedy, not our sin. The implications for society are revolutionary, and anarchistic. If the true object of society is to enable human beings to reach maturity, society should foster natural human development and not, as it does now, stamp on it. That means no intimidation, no punishment, no rewards (which are really the same as punishment), no moralistic bullying. Power, of any intimidatory kind, is the absolute denial of love. Love has its own totally different kind of power. Love is god – or the sacred, or whatever you like to call it.

Francis Ellingham

please keep sending in your letters and donations ...

## The Role of Intellectuals

Dear *Freedom*,

I always enjoy reading Brian Morris's contributions to *Freedom* and *The Raven* and his article on 'The Role of Intellectuals' (*Freedom*, 24th June and 8th July) is no exception, but I wish he would go beyond his sound 'surveys of the literature' more often to make explicit rather than leave implicit his own experiences and opinions.

Maybe even the best sort of academics need to be reminded of their enslavement in thought and action by those informing techniques (writing, the print and the computer) of which they consider themselves to be master. They certainly need constant reminding that these same devices and the assumptions about the meaning of information on which they are displayed also underwrite the authority of state and corporate capitalism. Bureaucracy is not only a rational form of organisation, its special feature, according to Weber, is its *written* charter, regulations, contracts, procedures, etc. In our time western states and corporate capitalism seldom act violently towards intellectuals who write against them. On the same principle that all publicity is good publicity, all writing serves the centralist cause, perhaps? If recent issues of *Freedom* are anything to go by, Noam Chomsky is more likely to be done in by a fellow anarchist than the US government.

The uncritical authority academics and intellectuals accord their tools of the trade contributes also to the marginalising of drama, art, music and song in education. Indeed every element

## The Anarchist and the Soldier

Dear Comrades,

The poem 'I do not think I obey' (*Freedom* Letters, 8th July) featured in the repertoire of Bonar Thompson the Hyde Park orator. Many thought he was the author but when somebody asked for it at one of his indoor meetings in the Malatesta Club in the 1950s he said "Oh no, it's not by me, it's anonymous".

He collected his repertoire in the early 1930s but the bits not of his own authorship were often much older. The style of the poem suggests the 1890s.

Donald Room

## DONATIONS

1st - 30th June 1995

**Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund**  
Osaka, PB, £6; Wolverhampton, JL, £2; Hadleigh, AH, £5; Dover, MNF, £4; Swansea, CPH, £6; London, MQ, £1; Cockermonth, DW, £5; Swansea, LR, £30.

Total = £59.00  
1995 total to date = £404.50

**Freedom Press Overheads Fund**  
Skipton, JP, £6; Wolverhampton, JL, £2; London, DR, £11; Glasgow, JMcG, £2; Swansea, LR, £26.

Total = £47.00  
1995 total to date = £362.50

**Raven Deficit Fund**  
Whitley Bay, AP, £8; Swansea, LR, £20; London, DF, £4.

Total = £32.00  
1995 total to date = £254.50



## London Anarchist Forum

Meets Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. Admission is free but a collection is made to cover the cost of the room.

### - 1995 PROGRAMME -

**21st July** General discussion

**28th July** Anarcho-Syndicalism: an outdated myth? (speaker Dave Dane)

It has been suggested we continue meetings over August, a time we know many international comrades come to London and want to meet 'the British anarchists'. Anyone interested in coming, especially those interested in giving a talk or leading a discussion, please contact either Dave Dane or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (telephone number 0181-847 0203, not too early in the day please) giving subject and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate.

## ACF

### OPEN DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Held on first Thursday of every month at 8pm, Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, London WC1 (nearest tube Russell Square). Entry free.

**Thursday 3rd August**

**'Criminal Justice Act: What's Next?'**

## FREEDOM fortnightly

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## Dales Red Rambles

A new series of free guided walks in the Yorkshire Dales for Anarchists, Greens, Socialists and Libertarians.

**Sunday 23rd July:** Wensleydale. Middleham to Caldbergh. Meet outside Middleham Castle at 11.00am. Length 8 miles.

*On all walks bring walking boots, waterproofs, food and drink.*

Telephone for further details  
**01756-799002**

## Red Rambles

A programme of free guided walks in the White Peak for Greens, Socialists, Libertarians and Anarchists.

**Sunday 12th August:** Wirksworth to Alport Heights. Meet 11.00am at Wirksworth Market Place, Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Length 7-8 miles.

Telephone for further details  
**01773-827513**

## BEACH PARTY CORNWALL

Every year, on 6th August, for the past ten years a group of anarchists and other interested parties have held a beach party at Sennen, which is one mile from Lands End in West Cornwall, Britain.

This is to both remember the appalling nuclear bombing of Hiroshima on 6th August 1945, and to celebrate the fact that we are still alive — in spite of the race towards armageddon.

So, don't forget — commemorate Hiroshima day on Sunday 6th August on Sennen Beach, West Cornwall, Britain.

If you need any further information or have any ideas you want to contribute, telephone Pete le Mare on 01736 787056.

# The Raven

## Anarchist Quarterly number 29

on

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