

anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

[Answering a question about
being working class]

**"I was once, but by being
a Member of Parliament,
I can tell you, I'm pretty
middle class"**

**John Prescott
on Radio 4, 12th April 1996**

'PERFIDIOUS ALBION'

THE POWER HAS GONE - ONLY THE FOLIE DE GRANDEUR REMAINS!

Apparently it was a Spanish grandee some two hundred years ago who declared "let us attack in her own waters perfidious Albion". And our own dictionary defines perfidious as "guilty, treacherous or faithless, deceitful". Surely when one thinks of Britain's role vis-a-vis Europe, no question about it: 'perfidious' fits to perfection and, but for the invention

of the bombing plane in the last (1939-45) punch-up, all wars were carried out on everybody's else's territory other than Britain's.

When this writer was young the maps of the world were largely pink (either British colonies or Commonwealth countries) or French. Both had, after the First World War,

shared out the German colonies among themselves. Britain's role in Europe was the same as ever: Divide and Rule. Germany was no longer a threat. Italy was allowed to overrun Abyssinia. France, as the only other substantial colonial power, had to be watched. Hitler was the result not simply of the injustices imposed on Germany by the Versailles Treaty but also the encouragement he received from the British, for by then the 'enemy' was Stalin's Russia. Hitler's Germany was encouraged to re-arm. Churchill thought that Mussolini was a great statesman. And when, in July 1936, the Spanish military led by General Franco launched their attack on the Popular Front government, both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy sent troops in their thousands and planes to assist Franco. The Russians sold arms for the Spanish government's gold bullion. But the so-called democracies, Britain and France, declared a policy of non-intervention. The Spanish workers (not the Popular Front government which from the start had been prepared to make a deal with Franco) were defeated and sought refuge in their hundreds of thousands in France. They ended up in French concentration camps and died in their thousands.

Within a year the old historical enemies - France, Britain and Germany - were once more at war. And of course in Britain we were told that it was a war against Nazism (fascism was not included since the Chamberlain government was hoping that Mussolini would be doing a 'perfidious Albion' act against Hitler - but he didn't).

Now fifty years later Britain is a third-class power with an 'empire' consisting of the Falklands and Northern Ireland, while France has to be content with atolls where they occasionally test nuclear weapons to demonstrate to the world that Chirac's France is a world power and Corsica their Northern Ireland. Germany has no colonial pretensions, just a strong Mark - for better or for worse.

Now the British government's behaviour in Europe today is that of the old 'divide and rule' - which was
(continued on page 2)

LABOUR PARTY AGAINST CIVIL LIBERTIES

The current state of British politics is frightening to anybody concerned with civil liberties. Home Secretary Michael Howard has introduced his Bill for minimum sentences for various offenders, adding to last year's Criminal Justice Act intended to criminalise and persecute demonstrators and travellers.

The Job Seeker's Allowance, already passed into law and due to come into force in the autumn, will force down wages by forcing the unemployed to accept any offer. Sympathy strikes, to bring pressure on unfair employers whose staff are too weak to be effective alone, have been outlawed since the 1980s.

The Thatcherites came into power on a promise of 'rolling back the state' and on that account have been described as 'anarchist' by some ignoramuses. State power has in fact increased, not decreased, since they came to power. Their actual programme is to decrease the taxation and regulation which frustrates the rich, while putting the working class under more control for the benefit of the rich.

One of the most disgraceful contradictions was to extol self-help and private enterprise, but then to condemn the enterprising self-helpers who stood at traffic lights washing windscreens. Business is to be encouraged, but not if it is practised by those whose working capital is limited to a bucket and a squeegee.

An independent commission has been set up to distribute money from the National Lottery to charities. But when it exercises its independence by

distributing small amounts to worthy bodies defending political refugees and teaching Sottish prostitutes how to avoid AIDS, the Prime Minister and the Heritage Secretary seek to hinder its independence in Parliament.

Those who complain about the loss of civil liberties are advised to use the democratic process to get them restored. Vote into power someone who is concerned about such things. The difficulty with that is that in order to get anyone into power one has to secure an electoral majority, and it looks as if civil liberty is not among the majority's political priorities.

Indeed, there seems to be a perception that the majority is actually opposed to civil liberties. The Shadow Home Secretary, Jack Straw, tries enthusiastically to outdo Michael Howard in attacking civil liberties, presumably because he (or at least the Shadow Prime Minister who allows him to conduct his campaign) thinks it is a vote-winner.

Straw's attack on 'squeegee merchants' is simply an echo of Margaret Thatcher, but his advocacy of a curfew for children is original in this country, though like most of Michael Howard's attacks on ordinary people's freedom it has been tried (and totally failed to deter crime if that is what was intended) in the United States.

Mr Howard's latest go at civil liberties is the Security Services Bill, a measure which seeks to legalise the bugging and burgling which MI5 has been doing for years illegally. Peter Wright's memoirs, *Spycatcher*, revealed
(continued on page 2)

'PERFIDIOUS ALBION'

(continued from page 1)

possible when the world map was largely painted British 'pink', but Britain is now more dependent on Europe than vice versa. Far from anarchist propagandists offering advice to Mr Major's cabinet, what alarms us is that these kind of confrontations in the European Union arouse among the ordinary people opinions and passions that are completely irrational.

As we write, the problems of the fishing industry have once more surfaced and the basic problem – over-fishing with ever-larger boats – is lost in a cloud of political jingoism. Can you imagine what trawlers are used to drag nets fifty miles long? And what's more, a valuable front-page feature in *The Independent* ("Too many fishers on the Sea", 30th May 1996) draws attention to British perfidy:

"Sharp cuts in the British fishing fleet proposed by Brussels are the product of thirteen years of double-talk by British ministers promising cuts in capacity which never materialised.

Despite the bluster of the government yesterday, the fact is the British fishing fleet has steadily grown for most of the thirteen years of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) – despite pledges of cuts and conservation made by British ministers.

The growth has little to do with foreign fishing

LABOUR PARTY

AGAINST CIVIL LIBERTIES

(continued from page 1)

that MI5 was rife with right-wing loonies who had deployed such tactics not only against foreign spies but also against 'subversives' such as Harold Wilson when he was Prime Minister. The only prosecution suggested was against Wright himself, and publishers and booksellers for letting the scandalous criminal activities become public knowledge. Now the Cold War is over, MI5 seeks a role bugging and burgling criminals, not just spies and subversives, and Howard wants to give them a free licence.

Acts of Parliament have to pass through the House of Lords as well as the Commons. The Lords, being unelected, boast of their function in preserving ancient liberties, and do in fact number some who are very concerned about civil liberties and do not need to worry about whether the electorate approves or not.

One such is Lord McIntosh, deputy leader of the Labour Party in the Lords. He did not oppose the Security Services Bill outright, since he had no chance of defeating it, but put down a collection of amendments designed to curb its worst excesses. However he seems to have been advised by Jack Straw, or one of his minions, that Labour supported the Bill as it stood, so he made a fine speech against the attack on civil liberties then passively withdrew all his amendments.

No one interested in civil liberties should vote either Tory or Labour, and no other party has the least chance of getting in. We advise anyone interested in civil liberties not to waste time on the election but to fight for comparative freedom by more effective means.

vessels sailing under British flags – the so-called 'quota-hoppers' – most of which have existed for many years. It has much to do with government policy, which has restricted British fishermen from claiming generous subsidies from Brussels for paying off old vessels" (our italics).

Yet the fisheries minister, Tony Baldry, at the latest meeting in Luxemburg repeated the British arguments that everybody in the Community was cheating except Britain. And of course the worst culprits were the Spaniards! However, at one stage this minister idiot "admitted that other nations had been sold fishing rights by British fishermen" (*Guardian*, 11th June). And just recently more British fishermen have been fined in British courts for over-fishing – for cheating!

Surely there is no escaping the anarchist argument: that capitalism by definition is corruption. If you only produce for profit then if it is something that people really need – such as services of all kinds for the young and the old, the sick and the disabled – then unless those providing the services see a worthwhile return they won't provide them.

Today in the capitalist world there is only one power: the multinationals and the transnationals. No governments can argue with them; no governments will even attempt to challenge their power. When will the producers of the wealth we all need – even the billionaires need to eat, as well as having all their luxuries – realise that the real power lies with them, and be prepared to do something, and not just to vote for another bunch of politicians who promise a brave new world, but realise that it is the whole socio-economic system that will have to be destroyed if we really are wanting the socialist-anarchist society of equals.

CLASSROOM ROUND-UP

Whilst the confused state of the education debate continues to feel its way through a fog of theories, young children are being robbed of their sweetest years. Increasing demands and constraints on teachers by the National Curriculum and the Ofsted inspections are leaving many with low morale and high stress. Some research projects have concluded that stress caused by the ongoing scrutiny of Ofsted teams impairs teaching performance, leads to increased absenteeism and pre-occupation during the build-up to inspection and de-motivation when it's all over. In one school in Hertfordshire all seven teachers experienced irregular menstrual cycles during the term of the inspection. It is difficult to see what positive effects all this stress and school disruption can have on the well-being of the children involved. Some teachers and pupils are wearing t-shirts with the slogan 'I SURVIVED OFSTED – JUST ...'

It is difficult to trust calls for a return to traditional values, whole class teaching and the introduction of league tables for all, as it smacks of hidden agendas to produce streamlined, conforming children and teachers who are kept so busy they have no time to think for themselves. The increasing constraints of the curriculum leave no time for spontaneity in the classroom. Last week's *Panorama* programme 'Hard Lessons' was based on the findings of the International School Effectiveness Research Project – repeat after me children, ISERP. During the programme we were shown teaching styles in Taiwan where rows of bright-eyed children were taught by one teacher. Their whole day was jam-packed with activity and the old adage 'the devil finds work for idle

hands' was brought to mind. Teachers in Taiwan work from manuals and follow a set syllabus. The children were disciplined, courteous and good achievers, but when were they given the time to develop their own personalities? The needs and desires of children seem to have been left out of the equation.

Chief Schools Inspector Chris Woodhead, who is considering adopting some of Taiwan's educational techniques in Britain's schools, estimates that there are fifteen thousand incompetent teachers in our schools who should be sacked. He does not explain, however, how he proposes to replace them. There is already a shortage of teachers as young people are no longer so readily attracted to a profession which is constantly undervalued. Fewer teachers equals bigger classrooms. This may explain the appeal of disciplined whole-class instruction. As we run up to the general election education issues look set to be an important battleground for all parties, along with health matters and law and order. As they compete for top place, politicians seem to be clutching at straws.

In a newspaper interview Kenneth Baker (former Education Secretary) said that Margaret Thatcher presented views on the school curriculum which "came from her hairdresser, or it may have been her cleaner, who lived in Lambeth and who was worried that her children were going to be educated by a lot of Trots". She apparently wrote down her hairdresser's/cleaner's views on a scrap of paper and incorporated them into her policies.

It appears that little has changed in this scrappy field of education policies. Whoever wins the debate, it is clear that the losers will be the children.

DREAMS OF AVARICE

This is the first in a series of occasional articles which will deal in turn with each of the seven deadly sins as they affect those in the public eye, i.e. those with a superabundance of wealth, status and power. Information on this will come not from some 'deep throat' but from major items in the quality newspapers over a two or three day period.

This week we look at Avarice – "inordinate desire of getting and hoarding wealth" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). On 7th June the business section of *The Times* headlined that "BT [was] paying ex-chief £700,000 to do nothing". Apparently Michael Hopher (52) left BT by mutual agreement last December after 'a boardroom shake-up' but is to remain on the payroll until August 1997. According to *The Times*, he will be paid £686,000 in 'salary' plus benefits of up to £57,000 and in addition will be allowed to organise options over one and a half million BT shares. This man, already rich beyond the wildest imaginings of ordinary people, will receive a million pounds without even again having to lift a finger on behalf of his erstwhile employers. The very idea of what a sum of money like this represents is over the financial horizons of

most of us, but it is in fact £20,000 per week (for a year), or more than the average annual salary for those in work. Looked at another way, such a sum in a building society account would bring in about £50,000 each year, and of course the capital sum would remain untouched.

Businessmen are in the business of making money and perhaps we should not be too surprised if having got their snouts firmly in the trough they will do almost anything to keep them there. But even today there is some residual idea that royalty is above such things. Anyone who thinks that would be rudely disabused by a front-page item in *The Times* (6th June) saying "Duchess signs \$1.3 million autobiography deal". Apparently the egregious Fergie, recently stripped of her HRH-ship (which means that protocol dictates that on formal occasions she must curtsy to her own children) and deep in debt as a result of all those holidays, has signed a contract with Simon & Schuster, whereby she will provide them with her autobiography. This is despite a promise made to her mother-in-law Betty Windsor that she would not do so. Thus this woman, who is only well-known for being well-known, will

receive the equivalent of £838,000 for this piece of 'literature', the equivalent of what the state would pay to fifteen pensioners over a twenty-year period.

Finally we look at politicians and money, and interestingly on the reverse of the cutting on the Clintons and the Whitewater imbroglio there is an item on Mrs Ciller, ex-prime minister of Turkey, who is accused of setting up a 'slush fund' for her own use during her time in office. The Whitewater scandal involves hundreds of thousands of dollars and we can be pretty sure that the Ciller business will involve a like amount of Turkish lira, sums of money that the man or woman in the street could not hope to earn in a lifetime of unremitting toil. We did try to find evidence of recent financial meanderings by British politicians but came up empty-handed. They seem to run more to sexual misdemeanour, so watch this space.

What is wrong with so-called leaders – already rich beyond the dream of the Medicis – that they are consumed with the desire for more? Perhaps that's what avarice is: a disease that recognises no boundaries, physical, political or moral.



RENATO DEREK GUSTAV

To fail with the best intentions is no crime unless one is a doctor, lawyer, hired labourer or racing tipster, and Renato Guttuso, Derek Jarman and Gustav Metzger each in his own fashion can stake their claim to an award of the solidified clanger. But though lesser men may dismiss their claim to the Gold Key to the Hall of Fame's loo, no one dare deny their sincerity and the pleasure their works gave to the passing crowd.

It is fitting that the Whitechapel Art Gallery should house a major exhibition of some of the paintings of Guttuso, for it was in this gallery in 1938 that Picasso's 'Guernica' was placed on exhibition.

It is held that Picasso was a brilliant painter who drifted along with the intellectual left-wing tide and illustrated the fashionable emotions of the hour without any deep feelings for the different causes, but out of all the amusing dross he produced major works of art that will outlast Guttuso's reputation as an artist. Yet it is Guttuso's paintings that draw the Town and his committed frau to

Guttuso's canvases, for in spite of the banality of his paintings it is the work of a man, as with William Blake, short on talent but long on dedicated conviction. It was in 1940 that Guttuso joined the Italian Communist Party while Picasso joined the French Communist Party when intellectual café society were toasting the postcard-buying American liberating troops. One can dismiss their political beliefs with eyebrow-raising contempt but for good or ill, according to who writes history, he gave his art and his life to the service of that blood-stained cul-de-sac, and dare lesser men who pulled the blankets over their heads until their wives told them that the All Clear was sounding, dare complain. Guttuso's offence, if offence it be my masters, as a third-rate painter was that he scavenged the memorabilia of more famous or more fashionable artists to form a crowded collage for his own emotive work, and this is demonstrated within the posters outside the Whitechapel Art Gallery as no more than a simple example. Painted in 1942, one can work through this painting of the Crucifixion by playing to the crowd as pavement art expert, but then is it any greater fault than that of recently-late Francis Bacon's rehashings of Velazquez's portrait of the long late Pope Innocent X. On the left within the poster is a horseman straight out of late Chirico, a dash of Cezanne for a small background, Germanic emaciated Christ and associates RSVP each nailed to a cross-beam in the shape of a 'T', in a direct confrontation of the Catholic Church's central logo of a cross, plus a naked Mary Magdalene, etc., etc. But central to this painting is the screaming dying horse from Picasso's 'Guernica' and the flaw for Guttuso is that, like a revisionist manifesto, none of these re-used sell-by-date figures have the emotional pull of the originals.

But over the years Guttuso has given much pleasure and sadly it is of the moment for, like the 'great' wall paintings of Rivera and all the good ol' Victoriana 'every picture tells a story', they will become the official dead weight of bored state art gallery custodians 'We close at four'.

Yet from among this trinity of innocence Derek Jarman's ghost now struts the stage of the Barbican Art Gallery as our tragic



... and G and J and M

anti-hero. A sad and simple man of infinitely small talents, he died of AIDS, and his small creative gifts and the mundane material facts of his daily living now form this small homage to a man worthy of our respect.

You and I are tolerant and understanding in the matter of those dying of AIDS but, like supermarket beef, we hesitate to partake of the cause when the effect is a matter for pity and a washing of the hands. Like others with AIDS, Jarman knew he had to die, but to the credit and the courage of the man he used his small creative gifts to write and to produce films. As a theatrical designer he was employed by Ken Russell and Gielgud, and of course who else but Frederick Ashton for one of the master's ballet productions, but sadly, all too sadly, Jarman will be remembered by his photograph of himself in the 1975 'Alternative Miss World' competition dressed and posing as Miss Crepe Suzette. "Do not go gentle into that dark night I pray but rage, rage

against the dying of the light" and Jarman raged against the foolish stupidity of it all and the Barbican gives the world's slight homage to a sad and gentle creature with a small talent.

And there as the man who never was is Gustav Metzger still performing his one-man act to audiences full of pretensions but little understanding. Gustav has now hit the streets with his book *damaged nature, auto-destructive art* (published by Coracle, £8.95) and his art act, as I have known it over the years, belongs to the Beuys school of draping sheets of nylon over public buildings to the dunking of dead cattle in formaldehyde to standing and pissing over a painting on the wall of an art gallery, and Gustav's main act on the pseudo-intellectual comedy circuit was to hang up a bed-size sheet of nylon and spray it with a weak acid so that the audience could watch in nail-biting awe as the sheet of nylon disintegrated. Artist destruction.

In those good ol' Ban the Bomb days when the Institute of Contemporary Arts mounted a huge forum of 'Violence in Art', I stood up within that large crowded room and publicly protested at the killing of a live chicken to prove a point, to amuse the children of the laughing middle class, and it was Gustav who rose up from the front VIP row of the audience and, pointing his finger at me across that audience, denounced me with "That man is an anarchist" - small, bald and bearded, good ol' Gustav reduced me to gibbering terror.

It was Gustav within Victor Musgrave's Gallery in Soho, that tall man garbed in black enjoying his bizarre pleasures, and it was Gustav in 1967 sitting, worried, with John Sharkey in the dock within the Old Bailey for presenting an indecent exhibition that incorporated the unfortunate dead chicken and a laughing middle class audience and sadly, when most of the top-billing 'artists' had taken to the hills, alone in that friendless dock. For John Sharkey a conditional discharge ... and Gustav? A £100 fine. They were days of easy-on-the-feet marching protests, Violence in Art, Destruction in Art, Violence in Comics and Roy Jenkins as the liberal Home Secretary and the *Times*, for the first time, printed the word 'fuck'. Fun days, happy days and full employment and the clowns urged us on and we were willing followers, and there was Gustav Metzger leading with his one-man act. It was all empty, but it was fun, Gustav, it was fun. Except for Derek.

Arthur Moyses

The Raven

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THOMAS SPENCE AND AGRARIANISM

Thomas Spence (1750-1814) was a self-taught schoolmaster from Tyneside who spent his entire life promoting the idea that land should be owned communally. Government was to be radically decentralised, with each land-holding community virtually autonomous. In Saxon times, according to Spence, land had been owned by the people, but was stolen by the Normans who introduced feudal tenure. Workers had to take back what was rightfully theirs. His ideas came from three sources: the Bible (his family were Calvinist dissenters), John Locke and Thomas Harrington.

From the Bible came his language and metaphors, his morality and sense of justice. Following Locke, he believed in "the inalienable right of property in one's life" and that in a natural economy the worker would receive all the value he produced. From Harrington came the people's right to bear arms within a citizen's militia and the necessity of engaging in armed resistance to tyranny.

He thought joint-stock companies good examples to follow for his projected agricultural communities. Each villager would become a voting member and shareholder. In spite of his rural emphasis, Spence was not anti-industrial. Large-scale non-agricultural production was to be carried out by cooperatives. His agrarianism was not reactionary but was a means to fight capitalism. He, and all his followers including the Chartists, believed workers' communal ownership of land would guarantee full employment and independence, thus alleviating the competition which caused low wages.

The Spenceans could not simply be dismissed as utopians. Remnants of communal lands still existed in the eighteenth century and there was a long history of opposition to the Enclosure Acts.

Agrarian communalism was based upon this background of continuity and tradition. Nor were people far removed from rural life. In all cities but the metropolis, workers were a short walk from the countryside. And they went there in droves - to picnic, to poach and to glean - much to the landowners' displeasure.

Spence was a member of the London Corresponding Society until its dissolution, and he had his own followers as well. These gathered in taverns and the meetings were known as 'Free and Easy's', which gives an idea of the sort of man he was. His movement was as decentralised as his concept of government. Spence also engaged in propaganda - pamphlets, broadsheets, songs and graffiti. He issued a newspaper called *A Pennyworth of Pig's Meat*. He engraved radical slogans on coin of the realm and issued thousands of pieces of his own token money. One of these showed a pig dancing on a crown and crosier - a satiric attack on both the state and established church.

After his death, the movement split in two. One group was composed of the 'physical force' men who earlier supported the United Irishmen and the United Englishmen. Several rifle companies were organised. Spenceans were involved in both the Cato Street Conspiracy and the Cold Bath Fields affair. For the first two decades of the nineteenth century, they were the most militant of all the radical movements.

With the defeat of the militants after Cato Street, the non-violent Spenceans prevailed. They favoured education and creating land and industrial cooperatives. The term 'Owenite' has been used too loosely to describe the cooperative experiments which flourished in the 1830s and '40s. Many, if

not most, of these were Spencean, or at least a synthesis of Spence and Owen (the difference being the emphasis Spence put on agrarian communalism). The Agrarians propagandised for 'spade husbandry', an early form of intensive horticulture. Like Kropotkin sixty years later, they knew a small amount of well-tilled land could be highly productive and that such productivity allowed for individual and communal autonomy.

The British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge, a Spencean group, was formed in 1829 and more than five hundred societies were under its umbrella by 1832. Some of these succeeded in buying land and others developed cooperative industries. George Petrie of the Grand National Trade Union was a Spencean and promoted agrarian ideas among the trade unionists. These ideas were well received by workers. Nor was Spence's influence limited to the British Isles. Contemporary journalists saw American agrarianism (the Free Soilers) as merely a transplanted form of British agrarianism and Chartism.

Spence's thought permeated the Chartist Movement. Bronterre O'Brien called for land for workers in his *National Reformer*. Fergus O'Connor and George Harney both supported agrarianism. A Chartist Land Plan developed in 1843 had seventy thousand members subscribing to its land-purchasing fund. The lasting outcome of the Spencean agrarians was the Freehold Land Movement of the late 1850s, from which developed many building societies.

The countryside of Great Britain is still largely the preserve of titled parasites, as it was sixty years ago. Isn't it time for a Thomas Spence revival?

Larry Gambone

ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

EXPLOITING THE POOR – AS USUAL Britain is the only nation in the EU which has opted out of the Social Chapter and from the decision to limit the working week to a maximum of 48 hours. The obvious reason for the latter is that you only pay one lot of National Insurance, holiday money, etc. The alternative, much used here, is of course part-time workers who are not entitled to any of these extras.

But surely the last – and topical, with privatisation of the railways – insult to workers is, according to *The Guardian* (20th April) that the:

“Privatised catering staff working on British Rail trains are to be put on ‘commission only’ pay, meaning that some staff will get only £10 a day for a nine-hour shift and making it one of the ten worst paid jobs in Britain ...

The scheme, which staff have been told is ‘an opportunity to write your own pay cheque’, pays 20p in the pound commission on daily sales over £50. But staff say takings on some services are only about £50, and the quality and price of the food and drink makes it hard to persuade passengers to buy more.”

On my way home from Freedom Press, not having had anything at midday, I take away at Liverpool Street station a croissant (69p) and a cappuccino (86p) served in a plastic cup. Obviously I can’t adjust to having paid *seventeen shillings* for a cup of coffee!

SOME PROFIT FROM MINING PRIVATISATION Apart from the fact that the coal mining industry has virtually been destroyed and Britain will probably be importing more coal than they export, there’s always somebody who makes money out of the misfortunes of others. And you can be sure that it’s always the ‘advisers’ who never lose out. Sure enough, the National Audit Office study reveals that:

“The controversial sale of British Coal’s pits to RJB Mining, the company controlled by entrepreneur

Richard Budge, in 1994, cost the taxpayer £34 million in advisers’ fees.”

And it was of course three City firms that lapped up the fees:

“Rothschilds, the merchant bank, was paid £9.1 million; Clifford Chance, the law firm, picked up £12.7 million and Touche Ross, the accountants, received £4.3 million. Dewe Rogerson, the City public relations agency, was paid £320,000.”

And as *The Guardian* points out:

“The sale provoked an outcry for two main reasons. At the same time as the deal was being struck, Mr Budge was being investigated by another branch of government to see if he should be disqualified as a director over his involvement in another business venture.”

But Mr Budge goes on; the Rothschilds *et alia* go on making more money and you and I are the suckers who pay for them!

EXPLORING SPACE IS ALSO PROFITABLE

When all the governments of prosperous Europe are cutting back on the ‘welfare state’ one is amazed that they can afford – to quote an *Independent* headline – “Bang! went a \$7 billion of research, £500 million in kit, dozens of British scientists’ careers and, probably, Europe’s future in space”. When their brainstorm had to be destroyed minutes after take-off. Far from it being a financial and technological disaster, the whole business is too profitable, in the long term, to give up. I quote *The Guardian*:

“The investment will go on: the world now needs instruments in space just to keep itself in business. Even Britain had made a tiny promise of investment in Ariane 5. Yesterday’s explosion will be seen as a hiccup. The experiment on board – ironically conceived in the year of the Challenger disaster which took seven astronaut lives – is probably lost forever. But research won’t stop. Keep watching that space.”

I confess to not understanding what the ‘business’ interest in space is. I could understand God-lovers imagining that the space probes might come across ‘Him’ and either bring the Almighty back or at least a message to mankind. But, please, somebody tell me what is the profit in space probes apart from the salaries of scientists and the manufacturers who produce the rockets which they blow up seconds after they have taken off!

MONEY SPEAKS Readers may remember that a group of Guinness directors were jailed for inside trading. Among them was Ernest Saunders who got five years. On the grounds that he had Alzheimer’s disease, he was released after a year or so. No doubt about it, freedom has given Saunders a new lease of life. He has engaged in all kinds of business deals. The latest is that he is making a bid to buy Queens Park Rangers London football club which is up for sale at about £10 million. What a recovery for an Alzheimer’s disease victim released on compassionate grounds.

AND A BANKRUPT TO TAKE OVER FACIA?

Wonders will never cease in the capitalist jungle. The Facia “troubled retail company” is probably going to be taken over by William Grosvenor “the entrepreneur and well-connected cousin of the Duke of Westminster” (according to *The Guardian*, 1st June) though he admits that “he is bankrupt”. But of course he mixes in the right circles. After all, was he not “a page-boy at the Queen’s 1953 coronation”? And that surely excuses the fact that “he pleaded guilty to plotting to defraud the Inland Revenue by attempting to pass off the £8,500 costs of a grouse shoot as a tax deductible expense”. They almost make you feel sorry for such naiveté. The cunning bastards.

Libertarian

unaware of, functioning in a similar way to shop stewards in a factory but situated in the community.

Whilst recognising that the law is biased in favour of the employer, we believe that where a worker is able to show that conditions of contract, health and safety legislation have been flouted, action can be taken and the workforce united.

This is a pilot scheme which, if successful, we hope will be copied and set up in other areas.

Aberystwyth IWW

GAINFULLY EMPLOYED

[The Queen was forced to cancel an engagement for the first time in her reign on Friday 30th May when some two hundred demonstrators, including students and members of the Welsh Language Society, broke a police cordon at Aberystwyth.

The Queen had opened an extension to the National Library of Wales and was to have opened the new Centre for Glaciology at the University of Wales. The demonstration combined hostility to university budget cuts with anti-monarchist sentiments, but one reason for the protest was that the library, which many Welsh-language students need to use, was closed just before the students’ exams in preparation for the Queen’s visit – Editors]



A demonstrator holds up a banner

Just on the off-chance, and unaware of the time, I turned on the radio the other day only to get one of the *Any Questions* panellists arguing that the Welsh Language Society demo in Aberystwyth was “just bad manners to a guest”. Well certainly guests are due courtesy, but perhaps guests who have overstayed their welcome and insisted on living here unwanted for so long might have forfeited the right to such courteous treatment.

Of course anarchists are opposed to immigration controls and if the Elector of Hanover had wanted political asylum here we would not have been amongst those wanting to intern him at Campfield. Nor are we given to the Tory media habit of moaning about unemployed scroungers – people living off the state – though we might think the state has been somewhat unduly lavish with social security for this particular bunch. No other family, after all, has gone three centuries without having anyone usefully employed (albeit they have been gainfully unemployed).

Prior to the change of dynasty, Britain was evolving a sensible compromise: every fifty or sixty years the head of a reigning Stuart (Mary or Charles) was chopped off. No doubt given time this would have been formalised and performed without the regrettable necessity of previous civil war or religious strife. True, fifty or sixty years is rather a long time to wait – in the seventeenth century the pace of life was slower so perhaps if we cut off the zero it would be more suited to our day.

Then this pleasing folk custom was discontinued to suit our German ‘guests’. Just think how much pleasure has been denied the peaceful people of this land by this regrettable hiatus, what damage has been done to the tourist industry by discontinuing a public ceremony far more interesting than changing the guard. All to accommodate a grasping and unpleasant family which seems to think it has a right to be forever kept at the British people’s expense. Mind you, next year would be the 350th anniversary!

John St Lawrence

WOBBLIES SET UP ‘WORKERS HELPLINE’ IN ABERYSTWYTH

For most workers today, work has become a stressful torment, a situation where they are daily subjected to conditions of bullying, blackmail, sexual harassment, fear of being laid off, etc. Job security has become a thing of the past and constitutes a constant threat hanging over the heads of workers. Pressure of work has for many increased whilst the number employed has been drastically reduced. What defence was afforded by the trade unions in most cases no longer exists, and in many cases unions have made no-strike agreements with employers, collaborating in the exploitation of their own workforce.

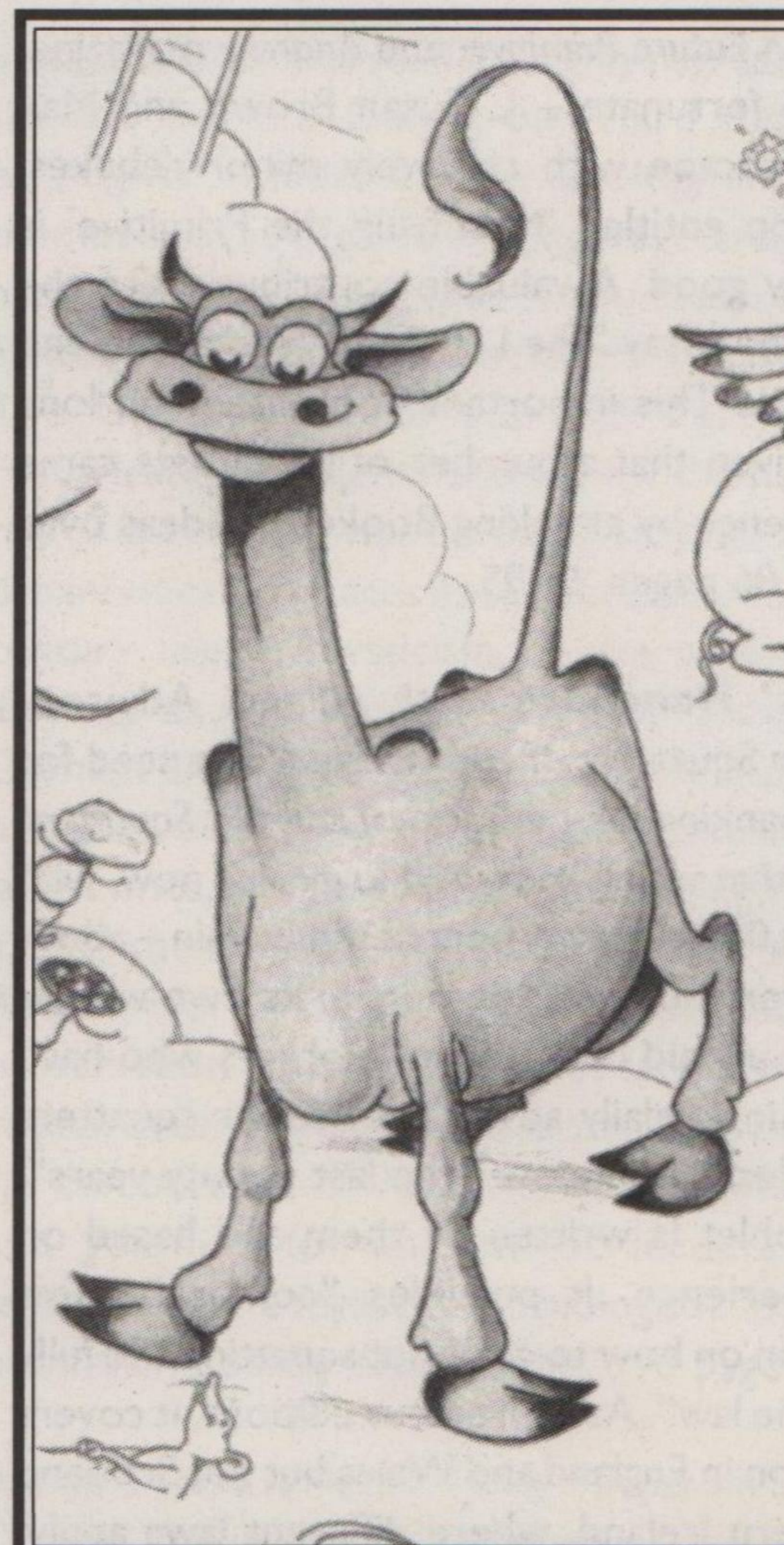
However, amongst the rank-and-file there is still a spark of resistance and militancy. On 10th June a group of Wobblies, trade unionists and concerned workers met to set up a Workers Helpline Organisation Aberystwyth (WHOA).

Recognising that in most cases workers are not organised – or even if they are organised in a trade union their officials may be unwilling to ‘rock the boat’ – there was a need for an organisation that could give information, help and support to workers faced with industrial problems.

In many cases employers are taking advantage of the ignorance of the worker as to his or her entitlements, safeguards and agencies which are able to help. In setting up this helpline we are acting in the role of community based shop stewards.

The worker who has a problem can phone in and he or she will be informed as to what the

legal position is with regard to their employment situation, any European legislation overriding British law, the precedents set by various similar cases at industrial tribunals, courts, etc., names and addresses of agencies which can help (e.g. National Council for Civil Liberties), and clarifying the various options open to them that they may be



The Blue Cow and her fantastic exploits by John Olday

This unusual Freedom Press title is a work of genius. Produced fifty years ago, it remained forgotten in a filing cabinet until recently found by mistake. Although intended for the young, it is, both by the brilliance of the drawings and the surrealism of the text, surely even more fascinating to adults than to their offspring!

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

GONDOLAS OF THE PEOPLE



Sheffield: a Supertram cityscape

There are anarchists around who can tell you all about Bakunin's daughters and about what happened when, in 1936, the seven thousand workers of the Barcelona General Tramways Company, 6,500 of whom were CNT members, took control of the enterprise. Similarly there are tramway enthusiasts around whose ideal holiday would be spent at the National Tramway Museum at Crich in Derbyshire or the Beamish Museum in County Durham.

There is a man somewhere who can imitate the sounds made by a dozen of the trams that were closed down in British towns and cities 45 years ago, and another who, with his hacksaw, has collected samples of a variety of tramrails from the scrap-iron industry of those days.

I usually fail to interest any of these antiquarian interest groups in the revival of the tram. Those noisy, hard-seated old crates were sent to the scrapyard in the '40s and '50s because the current ideology was to get the out-of-town motorist around town at any cost. Plenty of British cities like Birmingham or Glasgow were carved up for the sake of the car in the 1960s and then pedestrianisation, hitherto seen as impossible, was an attempt to reclaim the streets. Nobody liked the buses, but the ideology of privatisation just made things worse. My local bus drivers have just had an 11% pay cut imposed and know that if they get out there are plenty of unemployed people with PSV licences to take over.

But there are people around who look beyond privatisation and want a community-controlled transport system. One is Dr Paul Salvesson of the Transport Research and Information Network (6 School Lane, Berry Brow, Huddersfield HD4 7LT). He doesn't want a return to the centralised monolith of British Rail. He aims at community railways, bus-ways and tramways. So I happily accepted his invitation to the conference in Sheffield 'Trams are Good for Towns', since everywhere else in Europe the tram is seen as the frequent, fast, reliable, comfortable, accessible and environmentally friendly way of getting around town.

Four years ago I took my first trip on Metrolink, Manchester's brand new tramway system which shares the streets in the heart of the city with other road users to provide the link that had been lacking for 150 years between Piccadilly and Victoria stations and then runs north to Bury and south to Altrincham on former BR track. I gladly attended the meeting of tramway specialists firstly to hear a provisional report on Metrolink's early years and to ride on and

learn about Sheffield's own new Supertram system.

Metrolink was planned by the GMPTE (Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive) over many years as a solution to the shortcomings of the city's rail network, but was at the mercy of endless shifts in central government transport policy. Government first abolished the Greater Manchester Council and then took away responsibility for buses from GMPTE and added to the conditions for a grant under Section 56 of the Transport Act the requirement that private industry must design, build, operate and maintain the system.

But for this, it would have cost infinitely less and would have opened years earlier. The imposition of free market ideology also eliminated the possibility of nurturing a tramway industry in Britain. The rails were made in Luxembourg with German insulation against electric leakage, noise and vibration, using a Dutch system. The passenger shelters are French, the bowstring bridge over Great Bridgewater Street is from Belgium, and the staff were trained there too. The vehicles themselves were built in Italy in five different

factories in the small workshop economy around Bologna.

A consortium of private companies, Greater Manchester Metro Ltd., was formed to run the system which remains in the ownership of GMPTE, and a new contract comes up for grabs this year including the first of several extensions – the one to Eccles by way of Salford Quays.

The good news brought to us in Sheffield by Bill Tyson of GMPTE was that despite the inability to re-plan bus routes as feeders to the tramway system, Metrolink, with well over 12.5 million passengers a year, has succeeded marvellously well. Its safety record is immaculate, and it uses only 30% of the energy per passenger-kilometre as that of the car. Its services, at a frequency of six-minute intervals for most of the day, belong to the 'no need for a timetable' category, and it has actually managed to win people out of their cars. It is quicker, cheaper and safer to use the tram, and the change in people's habits is remarkable.

Bill Tyson's comment was especially significant. He explained that "one of the more disturbing but not surprising findings of the monitoring studies was that car users who had free or subsidised parking or other contributions towards their motoring costs were significantly less likely to use Metrolink than those who had to meet their own costs. These subsidies, which are supported by the tax system, are distorting the market for transport and can only be ended by a change in government policy."

It is similarly central government which has prevented the elementary need for through-ticketing with trains and buses and a properly integrated transport network.

The first thing that strike you about Sheffield's Supertram is the change it has made to the streetscape of the city centre. When I was last there, Castle Square was a vast round hole with pedestrians scurrying through sinister rat-runs down below. Today it is transformed. Supertram was conceived in the 1970s, planned in the 1980s but not given government approval until 1990. The first phase began running in 1994 and the extension to Hillsborough was completed in October 1995. South Yorkshire Supertram was set up by the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive and the government insists that it must be privatised by March 1997.

The former South Yorkshire County Council had a famous low-fares policy and, as Martin

Mayer of the TGWU explained to me, "privatisation wreaked havoc on the city's bus network" losing 40% of passengers between 1986 and 1994. The transport executive has no power to re-route bus services to serve as feeders to the trams. Instead of coordination there is competition, and bus fares are cheaper than tram fares, even though Supertram fares are on average half that of Manchester's Metrolink.

This chaotic situation, imposed by government, means that Supertram has not yet lured drivers out of their cars. There is speculation on the likelihood of the valuation of the company being artificially depressed for privatisation and on the likelihood of the biggest bus operator, Mainline, winning the franchise and thus having an incentive to introduce useful coordination instead of senseless competition. In the city centre it is very evident that intrusive noise comes from the buses and not from the quiet and smooth-running trams.

Sheffield is a hilly place and the tramway route, by way of viaducts and a bowstring bridge, sometimes winds through the road network and sometimes takes its own way on what tram-buffs call 'dedicated' track. I went to the end of the line out in the country on the trip for conference-goers of the Transport Research and Information Network, and next day took a few rides around the city to watch other users.

The vehicles are superb (made in Düsseldorf, of course) and their large low-floor areas enabled me to see, on one journey, an unaccompanied wheelchair user as well as three parents with babies in pushchairs. I concluded that whatever idiocies and financial write-offs happen at privatisation next year, the city has won a priceless asset that will increase in value all through the next century.

There is actually a queue outside the Department of Transport for funding, and the next in line, I learned, is Croydon in south London for a 28km light rail system linking Wimbledon, New Addington, Beckenham and Elmers End with central Croydon, called Tramlink. Strenuous efforts are being made to ensure that it will accept London concessionary travel permits and the multi-modal London Travelcard.

After that comes the West Midlands, providing tram links between Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Walsall. In the least useful of economic climates the logic of moving people around in cities with the least possible environmental damage has finally got around to the tramway. Forty years ago Richard Hoggart coined a nice phrase for describing the importance of trams. He called them 'Gondolas of the People'.

Colin Ward

FOOD FOR THOUGHT ...

Recent arrivals at the Freedom Press Bookshop

Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: an unbridgeable chasm* by Murray Bookchin, AK Press. Bookchin's concern in this work is to address what he sees as the threat to the anarchist movement from within: the increasing tendency of those he describes as lifestyle anarchists to dilute the anarchist message by playing down its collectivist or communist revolutionary elements and exaggerating its personal and individual aspects. These New Age and Yuppie anarchists, as he calls them, even go so far as to deny the importance of the state, capitalism and rationalism as components shaping the modern revolutionary consciousness, subtitled instead 'industrial society', 'technology' and 'mysticism'. In the same way they substitute personal autonomy for universal freedom, individual 'insurrections' for social revolution, primitivism for civilisation, individual realisation in the personal arena for social action in the public arena, and chaos for anarchy. The principle targets of Bookchin's pen are people and publications like Hakim Bey (aka Peter Lamborn Wilson) and his book *TAZ*; George Bradford and *Fifth Estate*; John

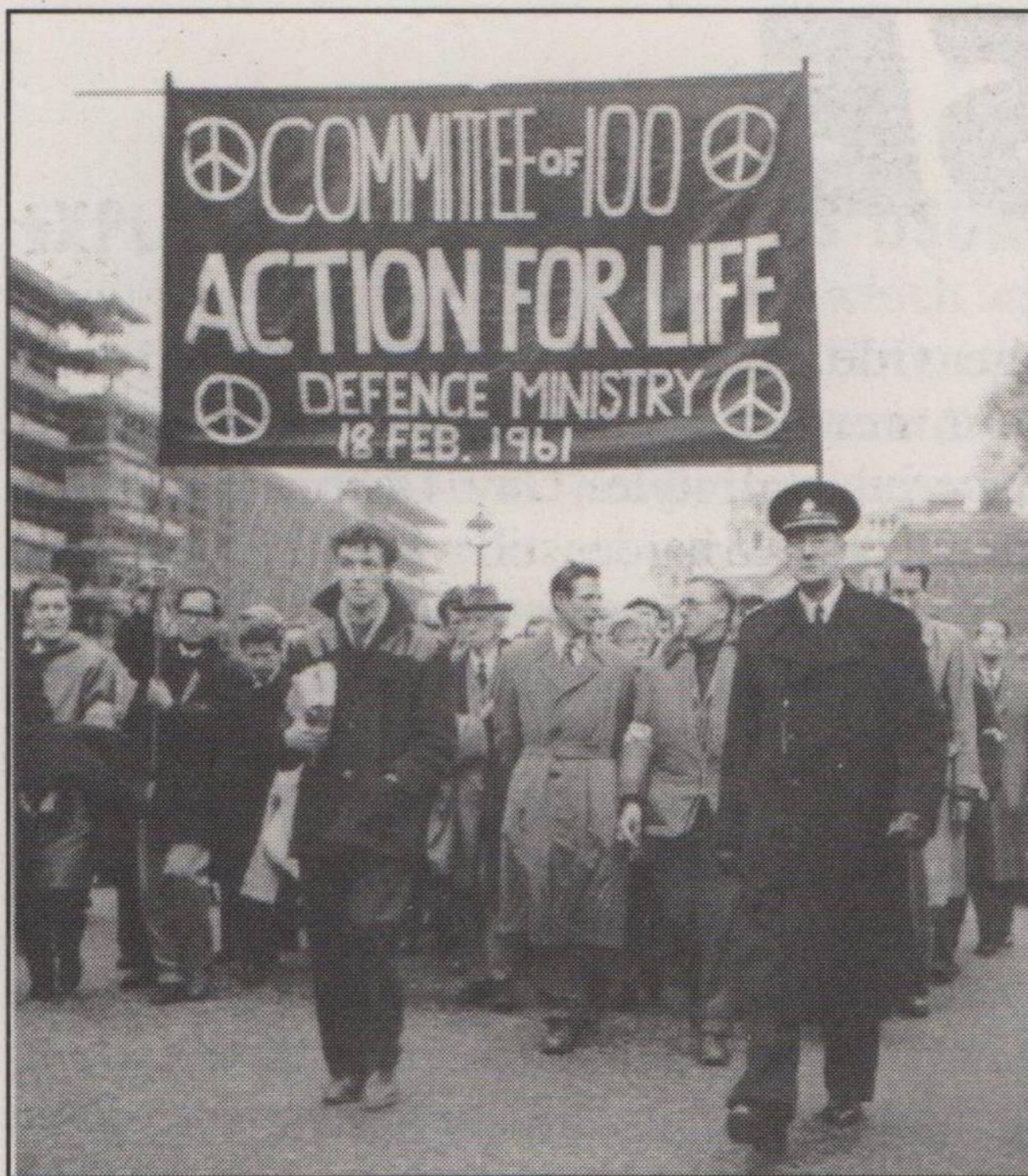
Zerzan and *Future Primitive*; and *Anarchy* magazine. The more fortunate – L. Susan Brown and Max Stirner – escape with relatively minor rebukes. The section entitled 'Mystifying the Primitive' is particularly good. A valuable contribution to the debate is the essay 'The Left That Was' at the end of the book. This important book has been long awaited, given that a number of his targets came to prominence by attacking Bookchin's ideas over the years. 86 pages, £5.95.

Squatters' Handbook 10th edition, Advisory Service for Squatters. If ever there was a need for a brand spanking new edition of the old *Squatters' Handbook* that we all knew and loved, it's now, with nearly 900,000 empty properties in Britain – about one for every homeless person. In its own words: "ASS is an unpaid collective of workers who have been running a daily advice service for squatters and homeless people over the last twenty years". This pamphlet is written by them and based on their experience. It provides "comprehensive information on how to go about squatting and fully explains the law". As in previous editions, it covers the situation in England and Wales but not Scotland or Northern Ireland, where different laws apply,

but it gives addresses in those countries for further information. The various chapters cover the rights of homeless people, finding a place, moving in and getting it together, organising, and eviction. This handbook is packed with useful information, some of it very detailed. It also contains plenty of photographs and illustrations, is well designed and nicely printed. 60 A5 pages, £1.00.

Anarchist Studies Vol. 4, No. 1, Spring '96, The White Horse Press, biannual. *Anarchist Studies* describes itself as "a refereed international journal concerned with all aspects of contemporary anarchist research and theory ... [It] primarily focuses upon contemporary developments in anarchism and provides a forum for original academic papers and book reviews". Both the cover and the content seem to be improving, and we learn some astonishing things from a lengthy article entitled 'Free Love in Imperial Germany: Anarchism and Patriarchy 1870-1918'. This is followed by two only slightly shorter pieces, the first being 'The European Road to Nowhere: Anarchism and Direct Action against the UK Roads Programme', which comprises an activist's account of the resistance to the building of the M11 link road

PHOTOGRAPHER ON DISPLAY



A Weekend Photographer's Notebook

by Vernon Richards

170 photographs, 103 pages, A4, Freedom Press, £6.95

Vernon Richards, who started *Spain and the World* in 1936 and but for whom anarchism in Britain would be certainly different and perhaps even non-existent, refuses to write his memoirs and generally declines even to be interviewed about his life as an anarchist. But this collection of black and white photographs may tell us more about what motivates the man than any political biography, since it vividly displays his warm interest in his fellow human beings and the world about us.

All Freedom Press publications, except for this book and John Olday's fantasy for children *The Blue Cow*, are directly concerned with anarchism. Production costs for the two exceptions have been paid for by donors and their entire sales receipts will go to the support of voluntary workers at Freedom Press.

Apart from the fact that one gets paid and the other does not, what are the differences between a professional and a weekend photographer? Richards, in a short introduction, writes of the difference in equipment: professionals "laden with all the gadgets from spare cameras, long-focus lenses and light-meters on tripods and assistants" while the weekend photographer "recorded simply by pressing the button (mainly on a very early Rolleicord camera)".

A difference he does not emphasise is that a professional photographer allows for cropping and shaping by picture editors, while

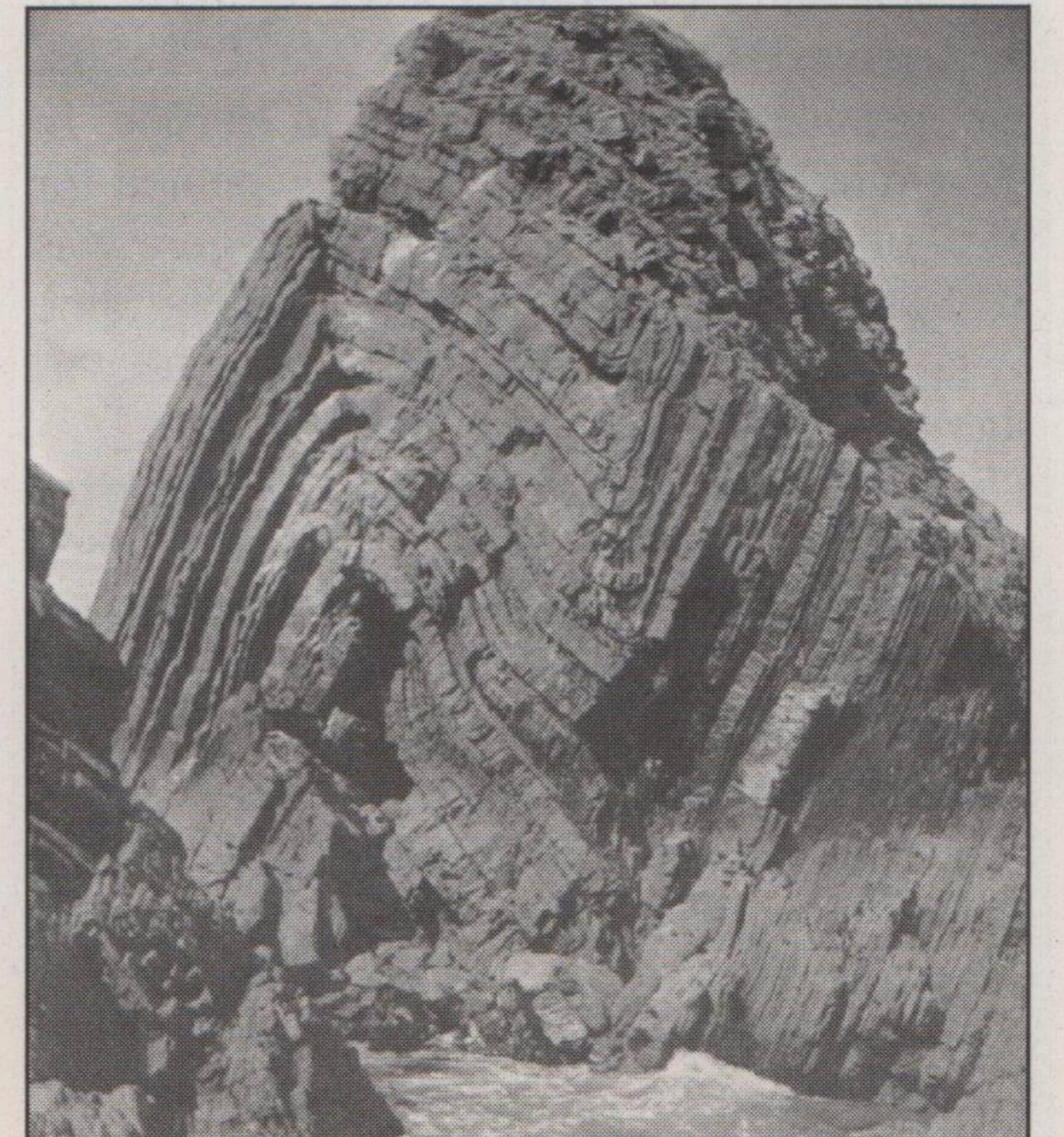
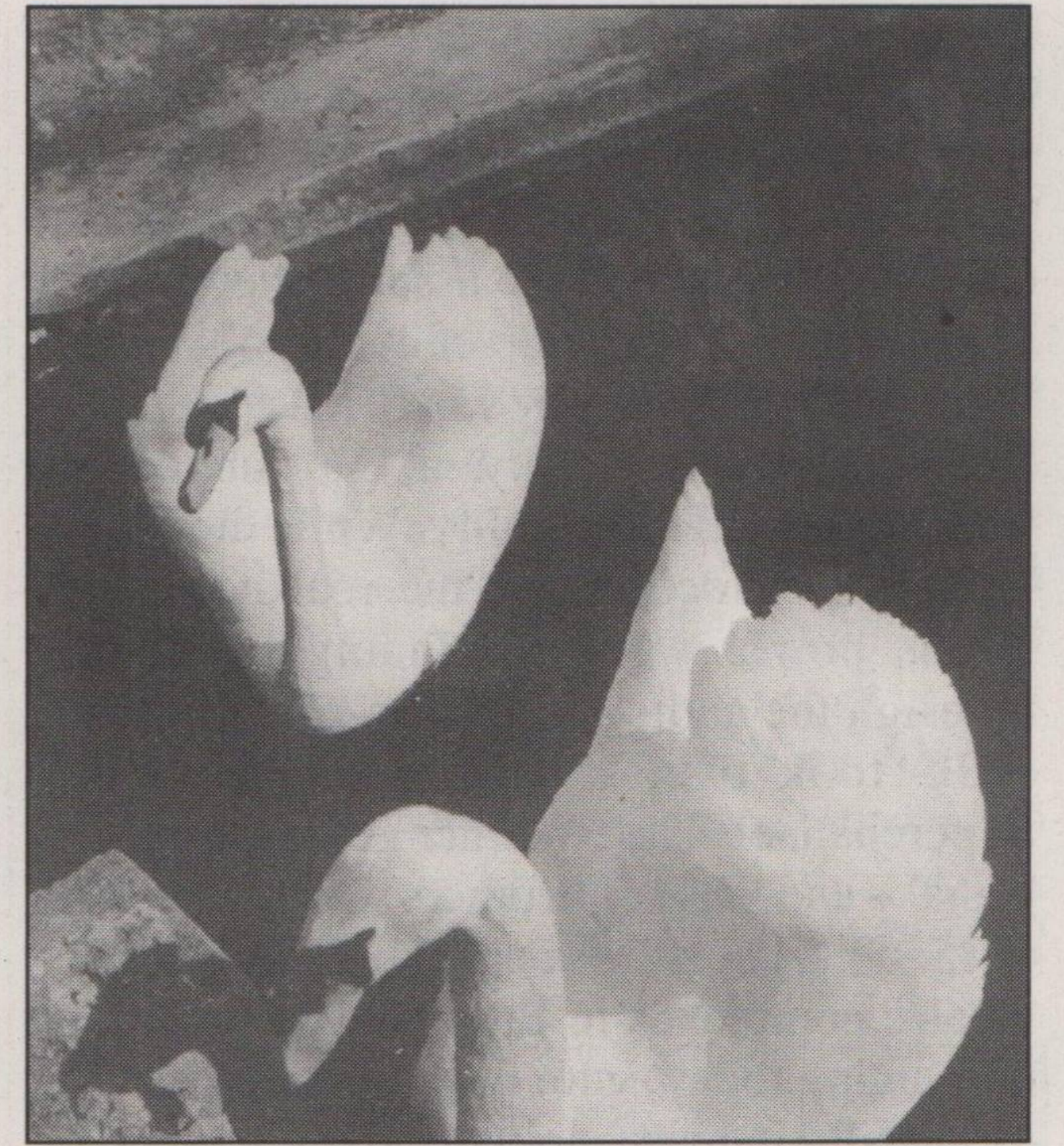
the weekend photographer decides the limits of the picture in the viewfinder and the darkroom. Richards's photograph number 66, of two little girls on a staircase, is used on the front of Stephen Cullen's *Children in Society*. The top of the upper child's head is cut off. This looks fine, but if the picture had been used as supplied, the print finisher's guillotine would have cut off the child's eyes. We had to extend the photograph upwards using several shades of grey paint to allow for trim.

But the difference between the professional and the weekender does not correspond to a difference in the quality of the work. Every one of the 170 photographs in this collection (selected from about 1,500) is a potential prize winner.

Almost every kind of subject is represented. Photographs of young people in the 1960s could be used to illustrate a book on the history of fashion. Photographs of rock formations in north Devon might be used for a geology textbook. There are people, buildings and places, reflections in water and exploding fireworks, swans, gulls, pelicans, cats, goats, caterpillars walking in line and strangely-shaped trees. All presented without captions (just numbers referring to the subject headings in the front and the notes in the back) so that we look at them and enjoy them simply as pictures.

One category not included is that of posed portraits. We are informed in the introduction that Richards intends to produce a separate collection of those, with the title *Instead of an Autobiography* – otherwise I would have used 'Instead of an Autobiography' as the heading for this review.

Donald Room



... AND ACTION

through East London in 1994 and its relevance to key debates for anarchists; and the second, 'Anarchism and Nationalism in East Asia' wherein John Crump reveals the nationalist-anarchists of Korea, some of whom became MPs and even Cabinet Ministers, and the Japanese and Chinese anarchists who actively supported the idea of the state and joined nationalist parties. More bizarre still are the arguments used to justify these decisions. There follow five shorter review articles, and several book reviews, on a wide variety of topics. Apart from the inherent value of the work in this journal, an incidental bonus is the large amount of informative material in the bibliographies. 94 A5-ish pages, £6.00

Ecofascism: lessons from the German experience* by Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier, AK Press. The worrying rise of fascism in many Western countries lately is accompanied by an equally disconcerting attempt by some groups to use ecology in the service of social reaction. Although most ecological activists think of themselves as socially progressive, i.e. they also support the demands of the oppressed for social justice, this has not always been so. In fact ecological ideas have a history of

being distorted and used for highly regressive ends, say the authors. During the Third Reich, Nazi 'ecologists' included in their ideology and policies themes such as organic farming, vegetarianism and nature worship. In the first of two essays linked by a short introduction, Staudenmaier's 'Fascist Ecology: The Green Wing of the Nazi Party and its Historical Antecedents' shows how this helped the rise of fascism and was used to justify the slaughter of minorities, and traces its origins back to nineteenth century nature mysticism. In the second essay, 'Ecology and the Modernisation of Fascism in the German Ultra-Right', Biehl explores the current hijacking of ecology for racist, nationalistic and fascist ends, as we see history beginning to repeat itself – hence Rudolf Bahro's call for a 'Green Adolf'. Here the National Front said 'racial preservation is Green!' and declared support for vegetarianism and anti-blood sports. Biehl concludes: "A combination of nationalism, authoritarianism and yearning for charismatic leaders that is legitimated by a mystical and biologicistic 'ecology' is potentially socially catastrophic". 73 pages, £5.00.

Jewish Socialist No. 35, Spring '96, Jewish Socialists' Group. In this issue a number of good articles

compete for space. 'Children of the Ghetto' questions the value, and values, of Jewish schools in Britain today; 'A Rotten Act' reprints one contribution to a Jewish Socialist Group dayschool on the struggles of immigrants and refugees, in the context of the new Immigration and Asylum Bill, and the editorial on Howard's racist legislation nicely ties in with it, asking what Emma Goldman would say if she were alive today; 'The Temptation of Tribalism' reflects on the threat of Jewish fundamentalism since the assassination of Rabin; and there is an analysis of the real nature of Louis Farrakhan, the black Muslim leader and his Nation of Islam movement. There are also pieces on Bosnia, the fate of Gypsies under the Nazis and more, including letters and reviews. 32 A4 pages, £1.50.

Festival Eye 10th Anniversary Issue, Summer '96, annual. The definitive guide to all manner of events, festivals, gatherings, celebrations, campaigns and occupations, from May right through to December. It's also full of news articles, reviews and comment on everything from McLibel to Stonehenge latest via the three battles of Newbury and other anti-roads campaigns, and travellers' victories in the High Court against the Criminal Justice Act. Now on all-glossy paper and evidently with the help of a desktop publishing buff, much better production values. 48 A4 pages, lots of photos and illustrations, £2.00

LIMITED AVAILABILITY SPECIALS

• **An American Anarchist: the life of Voltairine de Cleyre** by Paul Avrich. A 266-page hardback with 29 illustrations. Publishers price £33, but we have 20 copies at £5.99 each plus £1.40 postage.

• **Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution** by Arif Dirlik. A 326-page paperback. Publishers' price £12.00, but we have four copies available at £5.99 each plus £1.20 postage and packing. This makes good reading with the article in *Anarchist Studies* mentioned earlier in this article.

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'OLLYWOOD À LA FRANÇAISE

The audio-visual is part of the services sector and of course this was the main focus of interest in the recently concluded Uruguay round of the GATT which brought into being the new World Trade Organisation. For those in Europe who had worries that the GATT talks, and indeed the issue of 'free' trade in general, might sound the death knell for culture, Leon Brittan had soothing words. EU countries, would, he assured them, "keep their freedom to develop cultural policies".

But is the GATT really where it's at? On 20th December 1993 *Variety*, a US publication, pointed to a different reality. While the GATT talks were proceeding, "the real holders of media power were continuing to happily redesign the audio-visual map of the world". NBC took over the European company Superchannel, Time Warner got into bed with Canal + and Warner Brothers were teaming up with Chargeurs to begin building multi-theatre complexes in Europe. The process is continuing today, with the commercialisation of the film industry going into top gear.

A year later the figures kind of spoke for themselves. Hollywood controlled 80% of the European audio-visual market in Europe. In the United Kingdom US films accounted for 95% of receipts, in Germany the figure was 80% and it was the same for Spain. Italy came in at 70% and up until recently France was fighting a rearguard battle at 60%.

So is it to the French that we must look for resistance? The two big boys of the French film industry are Gaumont, headed by Nicolas Seydoux and Chargeurs – recently de-merged as we will see – headed by Jérôme Seydoux and between them they control 40% of the home market. Stop. Wait. Read that sentence again: The two big boys of the French film industry are Gaumont, headed by Nicolas Seydoux and Chargeurs – recently demerged as we will see – headed by Jérôme Seydoux and between them they control 40% of the home market.

And that's right: two brothers; two companies; 40%. And if we add in the US groups Warner, Universal and Columbia we can account for 70% of the home market.

Of course healthy competition might go down a treat but, unsurprisingly, it is not the name of the game. Gaumont and Chargeurs, back home in France, operate a 'non-competitive agreement' (we wonder why?) according to Carlos Pardo in *Le Monde Diplomatique* (May 1996) and cross Atlantic inter breeding also goes deep. 1985 saw Gaumont join up with Columbia Tristar and the new concern, Gaumont Columbia Tristar Home Video, is number two for video distribution in France. Seven years later Gaumont signed up with

Disney to produce Gaumont Buena Vista International which has hit position numero uno for cinema distribution.

Will this be a healthy shot of French culture in the Hollywood arm for an industry where the French can boast a history of Truffaut, Renoir, Vigo and a fair few more, or simply 'Oollywood à la française'? This is the big non-question more than partially answered by Nicolas Seydoux in an interview with *Le Figaro* (23rd December 1995): "French directors must make films for the public. Cinema must address the biggest audiences. He who thinks you can address a thousand ideas to one person via the cinema should look for another job".

They have been forgotten indeed. The public. You and me. And what we want is Hollywood. The whole thing is shrouded in an aura of international respectability. One of the big hits in Europe last year was *Le Facteur* (the postman) which received five Oscar nominations and, according to Gaumont, "enjoyed immense public success in every country where it was released before its arrival in France" (my italics). *Le Facteur* is one of those paid for in France, shot in Italy, directed by an Englishman. Jobs? Indeed in a recent interview the director, Michael Radford, when asked about this very question answered, "Some days the language question was very delicate on the set! French, English, Italian it was a real melting-pot! But it wasn't a problem". No such joy for another French cinematic adventure last year. *Le Hussard sur les Toits* was inspired by Hollywood, according to its director René Cleitman, who felt that in this way he would open "the doors of hope for French cinema". It was not to be. The film failed to find its necessary audience of 5,000,000. In an attempt to limit the loss the US distributor called for radical changes in the film. Jean-Paul Rappeneau – who worked with Cleitman on the film – was unperturbed: "The French version is my version. So do I have to make a show of it all and risk the prospects for the film in the US? Anyway making the changes was fun. I repeat, I don't consider it to be a diktat". Apparently he managed to keep a straight face.

In the global climate those industries which

used to be concerned for the home audience are forced by the dictates of capital to seek an international common denominator, and apart from any other consideration that common denominator will be Anglo-American from a linguistic viewpoint. Europeans for years have had to live with subtitles or the worse vulgarities of dubbing. The practices of US audio-visual dumping in the European market are pretty legendary. According to the Bulgarian director Peter Popzlatev, "the problem is that the Americans adopt a 'package' approach. This means that if you want *Silence of the Lambs* you have to buy nine other films which in France you wouldn't even show because they are so bad". The Georgian director Djordjadze – speaking of the situation in Russia – recounted how "two American series and two Mexican series of between 200 and 300 half-hour episodes were given away, or at least sold for some symbolic price, on condition only that they be shown at peak viewing times". Away from Europe entirely, in Ouagadougou, fifty US films can be bought for the price of one Franco-Burkina Faso collaboration.

The question of independence is one that we shall turn to soon, but it certainly is not a market for the faint hearted. US film exports have seen growth rates into double figures during the 1990s. After aeronautics the audio-visual market is the second biggest with a turnover of \$4 billion per annum and 75% of this comes to Europe. The reasons are pretty straightforward: privatisation and multiplicity of channels. The television channels are showing hostility to quotas. This is understandable when a US film costs \$600,000 against the cost of a French film at \$6,000,000. Even if the audience is considerably smaller the profit margin will still be tempting.

As we say, the answer of capital is: if you can't beat them join them. While Gaumont still keep a tentative stiff cultural upper lip Nicolas' brother Jérôme, over at Chargeurs, is aware that he heads a company with more than mere audio-visual interests. Here we are dealing with a company that, until recently, was also active in textiles, automobile transportation and protective surfacing. It makes claims to internationalism of a different kind with 170 companies world-wide, 75% of sales generated outside France and more than 50% of its workforce employed outside France; for instance a new private/public company in China in which it has a 75% stake holding which is building a wool scouring and combing unit in one of China's Free Enterprise Zones whose ancestors may have included Auchwitz.

It is the profits generated by this side of its operations – hardly 'cultural' – which really account for Chargeurs' success. Recently (6th March 1996) it released its figures for 1995 showing sales riding at 9,913,000,000 French francs of which only 1,093,651,000 were generated by 'entertainment'. Chargeurs seemingly has made a decision to separate out its interests and try to make a go of the audio-visual market with its US partners. A few days before it released its figures (26th February 1996) it announced that a de-merger would take place with television, motion picture and print media being handed over to a revitalised Panthé. This latter company is set to become an important actor in many fields, already having acquired a 17% holding in BskyB and a 12% holding in *Libération* – a French daily founded by Jean Paul Sartre in better days.

THE INDEPENDENTS

France has always had a healthy quota of producers who were willing to swim against

the tide. Jean-Luc Goddard achieved commercial success with his highly experimental style. Guy Debord threw the gauntlet down harder still when he savaged the very notion of cinema as bourgeois art with his *Hurllements en faveur de Sade*. The reason for the survival of the French film industry has been a quota system and the availability of an annual subsidy of three billion French francs. This figure represents nearly half the European total budget. However, with the newly formed Chirac administration seeking to impose austerity measures in order to come up to integrationist scratch within the EU, clearly this is part of the soft under belly of cuts in public spending.

The economics of the French position until recently allowed it to play a pivotal role in the overall film industry in Europe. The works of Kieslowki (Poland), Kaurismaki (Finland) and Hezog and Schlöndorff (Germany) – well known directors in Europe – were made with French funding in many instances and according to the German newspaper *Die Zeit*, they "could not have existed without public funding".

As we say, the winds of change have arrived with 70% of the market controlled by some half a dozen big international players. The first independent producer comes in eighth position. But MKL's independence seems under threat from the powerful communications group Havas. A buy-out is on the cards, and indeed it may prove a necessary move. Last year fourteen independent groups disappeared.

There is little room in the cinema halls for the independent producer, and in many ways for independent read French. Big Hollywood blockbusters like *Copycat*, *Toy Story*, *Get Shorty* and *Nixon* are able to feed 300 to 350 theatres, whereas smaller companies with different distribution systems (remember who calls the shots here) do well if they reach a few dozen. Again according to Carlos Pardo: "The method is identical throughout the old continent, so much so that the only cinematographic links between the citizens of Europe are Hollywood films". In such a climate how can one fail to understand those young independent French producers who declare themselves to be "in a state of resistance faced with American cultural imperialism"? The trade deficit in this area has grown from 2 to 32 billion francs in the ten years to 1995 and has cost Europe some 250,000 jobs.

Some have not given in. There is an alternative in France. One such producer is Jean-Michel Carré. Recently interviewed in the French anarchist journal *Le Monde Libertaire*, he set out his view of the cinema. It is radically different to the prevailing climate. He points out that in the case of cinema "money comes first" in an area which is seen as 'entertainment' rather than culture. "We no longer make films; we produce consumer goods. We sell our product on TV, in the cinemas and we make products supposedly for a mass audience, for the supermarkets and the super complexes. And we do it more and more quickly. In a few weeks the film must be successful at the box office and so we go for the most facile, the most violent". Cinema should be more than this: "In a film as in life we must address every issue". The notion of the cinema for the independent alternative producer is more dynamic and challenging than soporific 'olollywood.

In our next issue: an interview with the French cinematographer Jean-Michel Carré

Federation Anarchiste Française

On 27th June 1996 leaders of the seven most industrialised countries of the world (G7) will get together in Lyon, mainly in order to discuss unemployment. Against that meeting – a strong symbol of the worldwide organisation of capitalist exploitation – several initiatives are planned in Lyon.

On 22nd June, an important demonstration is being organised with the involvement of a large number of French and European political or unionist organisations. The French-speaking Anarchist Federation will take part in that demonstration with some other anarchist and anarcho-sindicalist organisations: Italian

Anarchist Federation, Iberian Anarchist Federation, French CNT, USI, Spanish CGT, SAC, some Belgian and Dutch groups, and so on.

On Sunday 23rd June, the FAF will take the initiative for an international meeting. All anarchist organisations are invited. The main points of debate will be:

1. our different realities of struggles;
 2. capitalism worldwide application and consecutive re-organisation of the states;
 3. perspectives for the anarchist movement.
- The meeting will begin at 9am in L'Espace St Georges Communication, 44 rue St Georges, 6th arrondissement in Lyon.

If you can send a delegation to Lyon – and we hope that it will be possible, in spite of our unfortunately late information – please warn us. Our fax number is 79 05 04 61 (just add the dialling code for France and province, I don't know what it can be). If you want further details, call Gilles on 33 43 29 17 (idem). It will be possible to stay with comrades in Lyon.

Federation Anarchiste Française

Sport and politics, it is said, don't mix – but the Olympic Games (to be held in Atlanta, USA, this year) have always been political. Should we oppose them? Your views are invited.

PACIFIST MISUNDERSTANDING OF ANARCHIST VIOLENCE

Dear *Freedom*,
VR's reply (letters, 8th June) to my letter about violence and anarchism made me realise that I had been wrong to talk about 'Eastern Europe', and to forget about Russia (although many Russians disagree very strongly about how far Russia is part of Europe, as Bruce Clark in his fascinating book *An Empire's New Clothes* shows). I fully take VR's point that the upshot of the changes in Russia haven't been what many might have wished. However, I specifically wrote about East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia in my original letter, and my quote from Ivan Klima recommended the Prague revolution, so I was surprised that VR didn't see fit to address any of that, but to talk instead as if Russia is Eastern Europe. Nonetheless, that was not the main thrust of his reply, and I must address his question regarding an anarchist response to government violence.

He asks whether, in some happy future, having convinced millions of our fellows to become anarchists, we should expect the government to meekly go into exile and the army abandon its weapons. No, we should not. However, and this was the point that VR missed in his sole focus on Russia, the lessons of the velvet revolutions in Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and the Baltic states is that, given the right conditions, mass non-violent protest succeeded in changing things in a very dramatic fashion. And the communist governments in those countries did resort to violence. From the use of special interior ministry forces with tanks in the Baltic to a full-blown military coup in Poland, and the brutality of police assaults in Prague (Misha Glenny's eye-witness account of the latter in his *The Rebirth of History* is worth remembering), those governments responded, as is

the wont of governments, with violence. Yet there was no violent counter-response from the huge crowds of hundreds of thousands of protesters, and, in that sense, they did 'turn the other cheek'. Furthermore, I would suggest that had they not done so, and had they not stood by the principle of non-violent direct action, then things would have been very bloody indeed and the ultimate outcome might well have been a reinforcement of those government's positions. None of this is to say that the result is anarchy, but that is not the question here. Rather, the lessons of those revolutions is that governments can be defeated by non-violence, even when governments reach for the club, the gun and the tank. So we might ourselves hope that on the road to our utopia we could be in the position to defeat violence with non-violence and, in the process, improve our chances of making a better world.

One last thing: VR assumes that I'm a pacifist, so perhaps I'd better say that I don't think that I am, but then I'm not too sure about which planet I'm on half the time. Oh, and thanks to John de Courcy for his excellent letter about the Portuguese Carnation Revolution - I'd forgotten about that!

Steve Cullen

NEWSPAPERS?

Dear *Freedom*,
'Libertarian's' remarks about *The Sunday Times* (8th June, 1996) has made me think that you should conduct a readers' survey on newspaper preferences. I have long wanted to know, for example, if I am the only subscriber to *Freedom* who reads *The Daily Telegraph*.

Aidan Rankin

BOOT CAMP SYNDROME

Dear Comrades,
I was fascinated by Colin Ward's article 'The Boot Camp Syndrome' (*Freedom*, 8th June 1996). Clearly Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, seeks to send an urgent message. Not only does he want to coerce what used to be termed 'the dangerous classes', threatening them with the dire consequences of getting uppity, but he also wants to reassure the top echelons of society - Britain's rulers have lost none of their ability to inflict pain and suffering on the poor.

In the Second World War, as Colin Ward rightly states, army detention centres were known as 'boot camps'. Their aim was to administer a short, sharp shock. Subjected to hell on earth, soldiers would hopefully be cowed into submission, unquestionably accepting army discipline. Men reluctant to fight for king and country would quickly overcome that reluctance.

The authorities resorted to fiendish methods of persuasion. Physical violence remained commonplace, but likewise was a practice Colin Ward fails to mention: consigning hapless inmate to 'the ice box'. Men were locked naked in small rooms at night, without bedclothes, windows or lights. Then, to heighten their discomfort, they shivered there until dawn, as blasts of cold air came into the cell.

Naturally many prisoners died of hypothermia. Others had their health permanently impaired. Widespread anxiety grew in the community.

In an endeavour to assuage misgivings, the Churchill government appointed a three-man committee of inquiry, chaired by a tame high court judge, to investigate conditions in the army detention centres. As one might expect, Judge Oliver found everything was conducted in a correct and proper

manner. His lordship thought the re-introduction of whipping might be considered. His only misgiving was that the staff of detention centres, after conscientiously performing their duties, might find themselves attacked by aggrieved former inmates and their supporters on their way home.

Nevertheless, the government could gain satisfaction from Judge Oliver's central conclusion. Having interviewed almost a hundred individuals, His Lordship concluded their complaints, coming as they did from malcontents and malingerers, were often lies and without foundation.

This conclusion aroused angry reactions. One of the most vehement critics, who had himself suffered imprisonment, wrote a fiery article for *Socialist Appeal*. So, as I am researching opposition to the Second World War, I decided to write to Jasper Ridley to discover whether in the forty years or since his incarceration his opinions had changed. The answer was 'No'. Though Judge Oliver could regard him at the time as a person of no consequence whose testimony could be just set aside, Jasper Ridley had subsequently qualified as a barrister and become a distinguished historian.

An intriguing fact emerged from our correspondence. Jasper Ridley tells me that during the First World War British and German army detention centres were run along similar principles. Once Hitler came to power, he modelled the first concentration camps on the same lines. These were places like Dachau, meant for the detention of political opponents, not the extermination camps such as Buchenwald which came much later.

Even so, it is interesting that Führer Michael Howard, supported by

gauliteer Jack Straw, are striding in Hitler's footsteps. Their plans for boot camps has more than a whiff of totalitarianism about it.

In resisting this threat, those who value human rights need to create the widest possible organisation. The work of the Freedom Defence Committee, which Colin Ward refers to, provides an inspiring example. Just like in 1945 one could not rely on the National Council for Civil Liberties, an organisation suffering from the syphilis of Stalinism, so its successor today - Liberty - remains shackled to notions of political respectability.

What is required is mass mobilisation. Repressive governments, repressive police, repressive laws - all must be fought until they are overcome.

Raymond Challinor

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VIVA ZAPATA!

THE INTERGALACTIC MEETING, 27TH JULY 1996
AT LE REALIDAD, CHIAPAS, MEXICO

At the end of May over a thousand activists from almost every European country, including Eastern Europe, representing the widest spectrum of oppositional revolutionary perspectives, dragged themselves to Berlin following the proposal of a small band of rebel Indian guerrillas in the mountains of Southern Mexico in order to talk about Neoliberalism and global resistance. Wait a minute ... am I dreaming? No. I was there, and it happened and guess what ... it worked!

In January the Zapatist rebels of Chiapas made the proposal. The start of the third year of their uprising, often named a post-modern revolution, should see a new dimension entering into the traditional concept of international solidarity with oppressed peoples in revolt. Drawing on the massive wave of support that they have received from all over the world, they proposed to turn the tables. Instead of us in our fortified metropolis declaring our support for their struggle, we should try to think about how we can see their struggle as part of our struggle and, vice versa, we should think about the ways that what they are fighting has a similarity with what we are fighting. They proposed a meeting for every continent in preparation for a great 'intergalactic meeting' in Chiapas in July. For Europe they proposed Berlin, with its symbolic value as the place where the so-called end of history happened, the apparently final victory of capitalism over other forms of social and economic organisation.

WHAT IS NEOLIBERALISM?

I don't think too many of us were sure about this as we packed our bags to go, and in particular there was scepticism about whether the situation in

southern Mexico could be compared in the slightest with that in the European metropolis. Neoliberalism is an economic term that seems difficult to explain. We see it in action, for example in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) whereby trade restrictions are loosened up allowing companies to transfer their workforces to economically under-developed countries. The workers in these countries get paid wages well below the subsistence level and are dispossessed of their land by large-scale landowners working as contractors to companies in the metropolis. Thus the two basic demands of the Zapatist rebels: land and freedom. In the metropolis, on the other hand, we see a dramatic rise in unemployment and the disintegration of social structures into the opposing blocks: rich and poor, oppressors and oppressed.

This we can see today in Europe. Rich countries like Germany import a labour force from poorer countries in Eastern Europe, not to mention from Great Britain, pay them considerably less than German workers and employ them under precarious conditions. Meanwhile, conditions for native workers become ever worse, unemployment rises and the welfare state gets steadily dismantled. This goes hand-in-hand with an increase in racism, fortress Europe tightens its controls, and the construction or reinforcing of moral codes. In general we can say that society becomes divided into a myriad of minority groups, exposed to random oppression mechanisms applied according to the dictates of traditional oppression structures, for instance the categories white/black, national/immigrant/ man/woman, etc.

Anyway, let's not get carried away here. What happened in Berlin? The event opened with music,

greetings from the Zapatistas and a podium discussion. It was emphasised that this was not supposed to be some sort of intellectual congress, rather a 'meeting' in the true sense of the word, where people can get to know each other, listen to music and conduct their exchanges on a personal level. After that there were a total of 47 workshops discussing every imaginable facet of analysis and resistance. These went on for a day and a half, and on the final day the results of the workshops were presented before the full assembly and various resolutions were passed. What seems to have been thematised in practically every workshop was the question of networking. It seems obvious that as capital and power achieves an increasing level of globalisation, the resistance should also be globalised. This is, of course, in the spirit of the Zapatist proposal for the meetings.

It was decided not to send delegates to the meeting in Chiapas in July, rather that whoever could organise to go would have just as authentic a voice to report from Europe as someone who had been delegated. People organised in structures should, however, make attempts to lighten the financial burden for those of their members who are going. It was also resolved that the intergalactic meeting would still take place, despite the threatened military repression in Mexico which a recent wave of arrests and the massing of the army around the area occupied by the rebels would seem to indicate. This, even if it means as an absolute last resort, having it in the USA.

We didn't just write this to inform people in England, of whom there were painfully few, of what happened in Berlin, but also to attempt to encourage contact. Therefore here are a couple of addresses of groups who are working to build a networking structure for the translation and dissemination of information from different European countries in their areas, whether it concerns Chiapas solidarity or not. There are vague plans to hold a European networking meeting in France in the near future. Contact:

Chaos-média, 21 ter rue Voltaire, 75011 Paris, France. E-mail SYLVBARB @ worldnet, fr ART-B @ WL.BERLIN.comlink.de.

L'Europe des luttes, c/o Schwarzmarkt, Kl.Schäferkamp 46a, 20357 Hamburg, Germany. Fax: 40 4108122.

One particular project should be mentioned before signing off. A French group is co-ordinating a Europe-wide organised project to send a ship to Chiapas! The idea is to mobilise as imaginatively and as publicly as possible, to break the silence with which the Zapatistas are surrounded. They are also co-ordinating a European magazine for the intergalactic meeting, written in English and Spanish. The closing date for contributions is 20th June. Get in touch with them.

Terres-à-Terres
147 Rue d'Étretat, 76000 Le Havre, France
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Anarchist Communist Federation

The Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists. For contacts:

Across Britain, London and surrounding region: ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Scotland (for contacts in Aberdeen, Elgin and Glasgow): PO Box 5754 (no other mention), Elgin, Scotland IV30 2ZD

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ACF DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Discussion meetings open to the public are convened by the London group of the Anarchist Communist Federation on the first Thursday of every month at 8pm, Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, London WC1 (nearest tube Russell Square). Entry free. Disabled access.

Thursday 4th July 1996 Roads – Highway to Revolution? Religion?

We discuss the direct actions campaigns of the last few years, like the M11 campaign, Glasgow and Newbury. We expect to have several contributions from activists in past and present road actions. Are the road actions a 'diversion from the class struggle' or are they a new and important component of it? Should revolutionaries shun such actions and leave them to the liberals and fluffies? Or should they take part in actions in order to strengthen the libertarian content already there, showing how the road-building programme is an important part of the capitalist agenda, and how we should show the links between it and the attacks on public transport and those who work in it. We show how the only long-term solution is a society where public transport is free and readily available to all.

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.

– 1996 PROGRAMME –

21st June Utopia (symposium)

28th June General discussion

5th July Anarchy and Psychology (speaker Steve Ash)

12th July General discussion

19th July The Future of Anarchism and Libertarianism (speaker Peter Cadogan)

Anyone interested in giving a talk or leading a discussion, please contact Peter Neville at the meetings, or at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (tel: 0181-847 0203, not too early in the day please) giving subject and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate.

Peter Neville
London Anarchist Forum

Red Rambles

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July 7th: Walk leader Jon. Hollinsclough and Chrome Hill. Meet at 11am by phone kiosk in Hollinsclough (map reference SK667065, Outdoor Leisure Map 24) for a 5 mile circular walk in Upper Dove Valley.

August 4th: Walk leader Ray. Lost Villages of Leicestershire. Meet 11.15am at centre of Peatling Magna village, Leicestershire (leave M1 at junction 21) for 6-7 mile circular walk.

September 1st: Walk leader Mike. Loughborough Countryside. Meet 11am at Forest Gate pub car park, Forest Road, Loughborough, for 5-6 mile circular walk.

October 6th: Walk leader George. Gorse Covert, Loughborough. Meet 11am at Gorse Covert Community Centre, Loughborough, for a 5-6 mile circular walk.

3rd November: Walk leader Malcolm. Whatstandwell Canal, Quarry and Woodland. Meet 11am at Whatstandwell railway station car park, Derbyshire, for 4-5 mile circular walk.

Telephone for further details
01773-827513

ANARCHIST RESEARCH GROUP

Saturday 13th July at 2pm
Anarchism in Contemporary American Fiction
speaker Leone Hankey

Saturday 19th October at 2pm
Anarchism and Anthropology
speaker Brian Morris

To be held at the Institute for Historical Research, Senate House, Malet Street, University of London, WC1

The newsletter of the Anarchist Research Group can be obtained from Karen Goaman, Department of Communications, London Guildhall University, Jewry Street, London EC3N 2EY. Please send an sae.

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