

anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

**"The strongest
bulwark of the
capitalist system is
the ignorance of its
victims"**

Adolf Fischer
Courtroom speech at the
Haymarket Trial

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE 'SILLY SEASON'? A VICIOUS MEDIA IN A SICK SOCIETY

THE POWER OF THE PRESS



The cover, by Will Dyson, of a pamphlet issued by the Labour Party in 1936, attacking the capitalist press and extolling the virtues of their *Daily Herald*, which had probably the largest circulation among the dailies (more than two million). *The Daily Herald* became *The Sun*, still owned by the Labour Party and the TUC before it sold out to the Murdoch empire. The Australian Will Dyson was a forceful political cartoonist working in this country from about 1910 to 1940 – a regular contributor to the *Herald*. Recently some hundreds of his original drawings and cartoons, many never published, have been discovered and are now on view at the Exhibition Hall, Australia House, London WC2 until 4th October. Admission is free. For further details call 0171-887 5223.

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The capitalist media moguls look upon August, the holiday month, as the traditional 'silly season' for serious news (whatever that even means in their hands). In fact it has been a 'vicious season' starting with the publicity and artificial 'horror' expressed by the anti-abortionist lobby when some three thousand embryos, after having been kept in the deep-freeze for five years (at the taxpayers' expense) and not claimed by their owners, were destroyed. This was followed by the *News of the World* 'exclusive' interview with the gynaecologist in the case of a woman due to have twins who felt she could only afford and cope with one. Once again the LIFE-savers were horrified and offered her thousands of pounds to have both! Needless to say the 'exclusive' misfired, firstly because the abortion had been performed a month before the interview, and secondly that far from being a hard-up single mother both she and her husband are successful professionals!

The media were not worried. There were more embryos on the way – no less a lady nurturing octuplets and already negotiating with the vulgar press for an 'exclusive' said to be worth a million pounds if she managed to produce them all 'live', or on a pro-rata basis on the number of live-births! Meanwhile her lover, who was shown stroking that potentially profitable super-bulge, has in the meantime ratted on her and has sold his story to another tabloid. After all, are we not being told daily that no business is worth continuing if it is not profitable. And the octuplets lady has been warned by the medical experts that not only does she risk losing the eight but also of losing her life in the process.

The latest *cri de coeur* is who is going to pay the £500,000 which it is going to cost if the lady in question goes on being treated by the specialist in the London hospital and not at her local hospital. As we write, that has all been resolved thanks to pressure from the tabloids who feel that no expense should be spared on this monster (only in numbers, that is) birth. And the NHS has succumbed!

With that out of the news for the time being (last week it was Charles and Camilla in bed) there has been no shortage of 'vicious' news. Rape is very much on the 'silly season' agenda, and it is important to emphasise that so-called serious broadsheets such as *The Guardian* and *The Independent* reported in great detail the trial of Ralston Edwards, for rape, in which he undertook his own defence and cross-examined his victim for six days at the Old Bailey. A field day for the media. A second field day for the media when the victim decided to go public – and *The Guardian* obliged with a whole page including a photograph in colour of the victim. And needless to say, they joined the chorus of those who said that court procedure should be changed to prevent the victims of rape being made to re-live their torture by their aggressor in the court-room. And the main suggestion was that the victim should not have to face her (or his – after all, males have also been raped) aggressor and that the jury would be presented with a video film. What hypocrisy! Surely at rape trials it is the media that should be excluded, not the jury, from the accuser and the accused!

Last, but certainly not least, in this 'vicious' silly season have been the various outbreaks of organised child
(continued on page 2)

IN THIS ISSUE

**Report from the
Groundswell Conference**

— — —

**Liverpool Dockers'
Dispute**

— — —

**Interview with Zapatistas'
Sub-Commander Marcos**

— — —

FP's latest book reviewed

— — —

and much more ...

A VICIOUS MEDIA IN A SICK SOCIETY

(continued from page 1)

abuse. Again the broadsheets go to town. *The Guardian* published two feature articles, both with photographs of the young Birmingham 16-year-old who enjoyed the company of prostitutes and joined them, but within three months she had been murdered. We are even told that she had just passed her eight GCSEs. *The Guardian* joins the whodunit brigade, but never pause to ask themselves and their readers why this 'well-liked' and obviously bright girl found her company among prostitutes, apart from the question of money and its importance to her.

But the headlines were, and still are as we write, dominated by the Belgian paedophile victims, two young girls who had starved to death in a dungeon because their persecutor was being held in prison. Again the point we wish to make is that the media here have given enormous publicity, and details of the day-to-day development and arrests. *The Guardian*, again, has a four-column feature on the burial, with colour photographs of the children and the unending flower-covered motorised cortege. Just as the magazine section (20th August) is

dominated by the pictures of 24 children, *Enfants Disparus*, with the main heading 'Horror in Belgium'.

The Independent exploits child prostitution in Bradford with a full-page feature in its supplement with the banner headline "Abused, beaten, raped. Sold for sex, aged 15" with the sub-head "At 6pm she was unlocked from her room, ready for the men who stop off on their way home for tea to buy sex". And there is a colour picture of a 15-year-old's legs.

In this writer's opinion the media – and we include television – are partly responsible for the brutal, anti-social behaviour of some of us. As we only too well know, human beings cannot be 'perfectly produced' like tins of Heinz beans! The media do a dis-service to all of us when they report in such detail, in many cases with relish, the actions of people who are either completely deranged or at least temporarily mentally disturbed.

It is to be deplored and regretted that there are so-called 'normal' people who obviously enjoy reading the gory details of murders and sexual abuse, for if they didn't then such newspapers would lose their high circulations and their ill-gotten profits.

Will Dyson's cartoon in the '30s of the Power of the Press to spread poison is more true today than at any time this century.

THE POLICE AND CS GAS

The National Schizophrenia Fellowship (NSF) has added its voice to the growing protest against the use of CS sprays by the police force. Carson and Staughton (CS) first discovered the compound in 1928 after it was found that its forerunner CN gas (tear-gas) could be resisted in combat by closing the eyes. It was first tested on rioters in Cyprus in 1958 and was used extensively against the Vietcong.

What was evolved for military purposes is now being used in domestic settings. The six month trial of the spray by sixteen police forces country-wide has attracted controversy and the NSF is alarmed by reported cases where the sprays have been used to disable people with acute mental illness who resist attempts to take them to hospital. The effects of CS gas include breathing difficulties, vomiting, streaming eyes and noses and blistering of the skin. A spokesperson from the NSF said that advice has been given to the police on how to approach mentally ill people who need to be escorted to hospital. The very nature of the illness schizophrenia requires as little confrontation as possible. Symptoms such as hallucinations and delusions can be terrifying to sufferers and will be aggravated unless attempts are made to create as calm an atmosphere as possible. Simple guidelines given to police by the NSF on how to diffuse potentially hostile situations are not always followed – just by turning off police radios and removing helmets could help. Several cases have been reported where the CS sprays have missed the persons they were aimed at and have affected passers-by, family members and, in one case, a baby whom police action was supposed to be protecting.

There is a dispute at present as to who is in fact responsible for returning patients to hospital who have gone 'absent without leave' whilst under the constraints of a mental health Section order. At present the usual practice is for the police to return them, but due to cutbacks in the police force the 'goodwill' is wearing thin and nurses may soon be expected to do this with no police back-up. This will involve a nurse going to a magistrate to apply for a court order which gives permission to remove patients against their will.

Psychiatric nurses are claiming that this will have disastrous consequences when trying to build up trust and confidence with these patients in what should be a therapeutic situation.

Another consideration is that present shortages of experienced staff on the wards will make it almost impossible to release nurses to search for patients, apply for court orders and escort patients without leaving the wards dangerously under-staffed.

The National Missing Persons Helpline estimates that 20% of missing people have mental health problems and are no longer able to locate their families. Nurses claim that they are not always sure of their patients' true identity. Some have changed their names as they want no contact with their former lives, but others are too ill and confused to recall their own details. Reluctance on the part of nurses to breach patient confidentiality, though understandable, could be hindering the work of the helpline to re-unite people. New guidelines are needed to assist nurses who are caring for unidentified patients and many more resources are required to provide a more humane mental health service.

MICHAEL HOWARD RELEASES 537 CONVICTS EARLY

There was no official announcement or ministerial 'leak' until after the gist of the story had been learned from poorly informed individuals. Confusion remains even after the belated announcement, but as far as we can discern the facts are as follows.

On 22nd August Michael Howard, the 'prison works and don't confuse me with evidence' Home Secretary, ordered the precipitate freedom from prison of 900-odd people serving multiple sentences for multiple crimes. That evening, the media learned of it from some of those released. Editorial fury from those papers which tend to be against freedom. On 27th August Mr Howard ordered the release programme stopped, denying responsibility on the usual ground that he is responsible only for 'policy', and anything which goes wrong is an 'operational matter'.

It seems to have started in April this year when a burglar, Gillian Mooney, sued the Governor of HMP Styal for not deducting from her sentence the time she had spent in prison awaiting trial, as required by the Criminal Justice Act of 1967. As they studied the Act in preparation for this case, Home Office lawyers noticed the possibility of a legal fiddle for relieving congestion in the desperately overcrowded prisons.

The Act specifies that time spent in custody on remand is counted as part of any prison sentence. That would be simple, were it not that many prisoners are serving two or more sentences at the same time. A clause was added, specifying that in such cases time remanded in custody should be deducted from each of the concurrent sentences. What some smart lawyer noticed was that the Act said nothing about those cases, rare in 1967, where someone was sentenced to two or more terms to be served consecutively.

Common sense said that time on remand should be deducted from only the first consecutive term, and common sense had been applied without complaint for 29 years. But the wording of the Act could be interpreted to mean that if one was serving three consecutive prison terms, three times the amount spent on remand should be deducted from the total.

The matter was discussed internally and, according to 'a Home Office minister', name withheld, Michael Howard participated in some of the discussions. His prisons minister Anne Widdecombe must surely have taken part as well. The Home Secretary has a more varied brief than any other minister, and no doubt lets some of his briefings pass without really listening, but imprisonment appears to be Mr Howard's favourite part of the job so it is difficult to believe he let this one pass.

The Home Office instructed the Prison Services Director to put the new interpretation on the old Act, and a circular to this effect, HMP 50/96, was sent to all prison governors on 22nd August. They began immediately to call up prisoners' details and release those to whom the new instruction applied. Prisoners expecting to serve another few months thought they were subject to practical jokes when they were told 'Get your kit together,

you're going to be released'.

Home Office and prisons staff were apparently ordered to keep quiet about the releases, presumably in the hope that they could be effected without the public noticing. The difficulty was that the people unexpectedly released were all criminals, and criminals cannot be relied upon to keep their mouths shut.

33 men from HMP Haverigg were taken in the prison bus to Kendall coach station, and there given the money for the coach fare to their various home addresses. The coaches were all fully booked because the local railway was on strike that day, so 33 multiple burglars, drug dealers and sex offenders were left hanging about Kendall all night. Fortunately the inhabitants of Kendall did not know, so there was no panic.

One of the 33 men, Kevin Edwards, phoned Duncan Campbell, crime correspondent of *The Guardian*, to say "Christmas has come early".

Shrieks from the media, especially those newspapers catering to Michael Howard's supporters, and Mr Howard ordered a sudden stop to the releases he had so suddenly started. When the belated official announcement came, on 27th August, everyone was surprised to learn that the total number released was 537.

The official announcement included something to the effect that the Director of the Prison Service, Richard Tilt, had apologised for his error and Mr Howard had administered a reprimand but decided not to sack him.

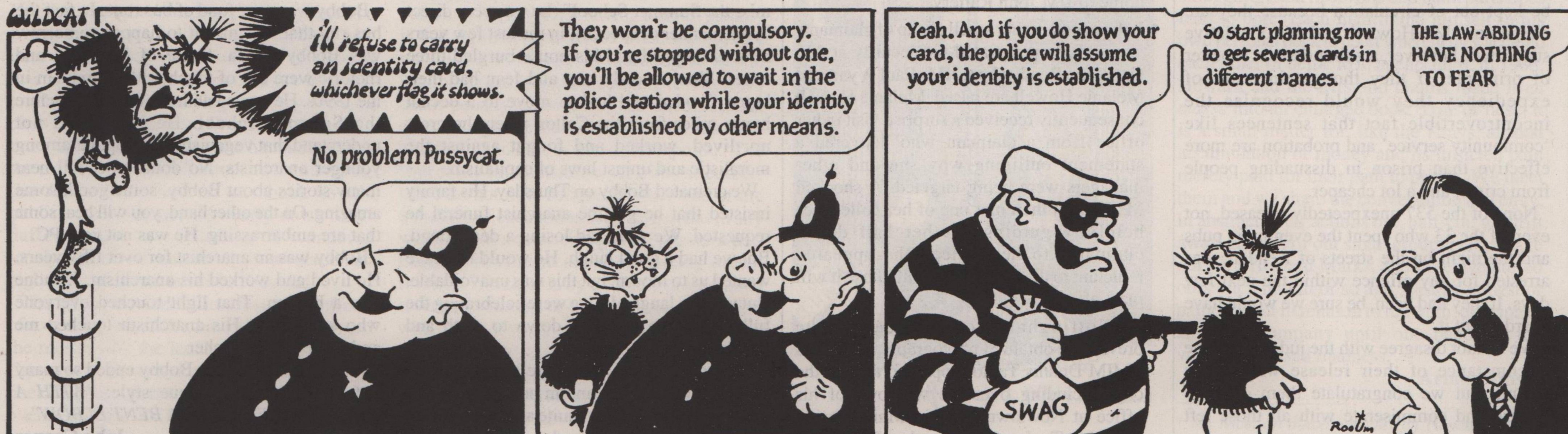
Readers will remember that when Mr Howard sacked the last Director Richard Lewis, Mr Lewis went public about the stream of directives to the Prison Service from the Home Office, and Mr Howard's constant involvement in 'operational matters'. Mr Lewis, a prosperous capitalist with no previous experience of prisons, was brought in by the Tory doctrine that successful businessmen can manage matters of which they are completely ignorant. Mr Tilt, a career prison officer, was Mr Lewis's deputy and became Acting Director, later to be appointed Director because no successful businessmen would take the job.

Mr Tilt confirmed Mr Howard's story that he, Mr Tilt, was entirely responsible for the releases and had apologised to Mr Howard for his error. Mr Tilt's reward is not yet known. We must wait for the next Honours List to find out whether he has been recommended for a knighthood.

In addition to the 537 prisoners released, about 400 others would have been released if all prisons had acted immediately. One of the 400 sued the governor of HMP Lindholme for false imprisonment, and on 29th August Lord Justice Simon Brown and Mr Justice Popplewell, at the High Court, dismissed the case as "totally absurd". As we go to press, a week before our nominal publication date, their full judgement has not been published. They may, or may not, agree with us that Mr Howard is 'totally absurd'.

Anarchists are opposed to prisons in principle, because the function of society is to

(continued on page 3)



— CONFERENCE REPORT —

GROUNDSWELL GEARS-UP FOR OCTOBER DEADLINE

Groundswell is a curious concoction. It describes itself as a national independent network of activists and unemployed workers resisting the Job Seekers Allowance, etc. It is developing a regional structure based on the ten regions of the Employment Service: Scotland, Northern, Yorkshire and Humber-side, North West, East Midlands, West Midlands, London and the South East, Wales, South West.

The political complexion of the organisation is loosely of the libertarian left, though some members are marxists and last month's conference in Nottingham was attended by a group of observers from the Revolutionary Communist Group from Lincoln. I'm old enough to have belonged to the anarcho-syndicalist/libertarian National Rank and File Movement, but Groundswell belongs to a new era — an era which could only come about in this country after 1989.

It all makes for a quirky cocktail of late twentieth century politics. Groundswell is of the libertarian left, but much more than that. Groundswell is organising around a single issue but, as *The Guardian* recently observed, it amounts to much more than a campaign over the Job Seekers Act.

PROGRAMME FOR ACTION

As 7th October looms, and with it the implementation of the Job Seekers Act, the minds of conference delegates were concentrated on the approaching deadline.

Fifteen Groundswell groups and observers were present: Haringey, Oxford, Sheffield, Leeds, Huddersfield, Manchester, Edinburgh, Nottingham, Newham, Exeter, Brighton, Lincoln, Hackney and Hounslow, Reading, Bury. Reports were received from Tameside, Bristol, Plymouth, Merseyside, Norwich, Newcastle, Lancaster, West London and groups in Wales.

There is the build-up of events that the conference had to consider. There will be more action at Cheetham Hill in August. A march is planned in West London on Saturday 7th September. The People's March for Jobs starts off from Hull on 24th September, ending up in Blackpool on 1st October. The birth of the Job Seekers Allowance on 7th October is unlikely to pass without some response.

Groundswell decided to support the Shepherd's Bush demonstration by London

Against the JSA on 7th September, though some delegates were dubious about sharing a platform with the CPSA London Benefits Agency and Employment Service branches. Other sponsors of the rally include Greater London Association of Trades Councils, Socialist Labour Party, Ealing UNISON, Hammersmith GMB, National Unemployed Workers Union, Hammersmith Unemployed Centre, Ealing Green Party, Colin Roach Centre, Hillingdon Socialist Alliance, West London Against the JSA, Hounslow Claimants Action, and Groundswell's Oxford Unemployed Workers and Claimants Union.

BENEFIT AGENCY STRIKES

There was some discussion of the introduction of the Benefit Fraud Hotline. It was seen as a government propaganda stunt in the run-up to the JSA. It was thought that the scheme would not be hard to disrupt or sabotage as it was claimed that no extra funding had been provided to mount the hotline.

Some argued that the Benefit Agency strikes of recent weeks are aimed against the JSA. The benefit unions had decided to fight the issue on health and safety grounds because of the increasing number of attacks against staff, especially in North London. This was used to explain, if not excuse, the benefit union demands for more 'Bandit Screens'.

Oxford complained that strike leaflets didn't say anything about the JSA. It was claimed that staff were frightened for their jobs, and didn't want to appear too militant.

JSA SECURITY BREACHED

A statement was issued to the conference on the outcome of the nation-wide regional campaign against JIMs (JSA Implementation Managers).

It was pointed out that this year under the JSA the Employment Service is aiming to disqualify 215,000 unemployed people from benefits for refusing to take part in compulsory training schemes or accept low-paid work.

Groundswell says: "Although front-line Job Centre and Benefit Agency staff will be forced to implement the JSA regime from October, we pin the blame firmly on management and policy makers".

Groundswell aims to hold the ten regional JIMs to blame and opened its campaign against them on 31st July. Groundswell gave a report on that action:

- In Edinburgh fifty claimants demonstrated at High Riggs benefit office before marching to Argyll House, home to JIM Gerry McClosky, briefly occupying the staff entrance hall and delivering a letter denouncing his key role in implementing this legislation.
- In Manchester a small group occupied the reception of Ontario House, the Employment Service building in Salford, home to JIM John Raftery.
- In London another small group of claimants successfully penetrated the security at 236 Grays Inn Road, where JIMs Paul Wyatt and Melanie Howell are based. Melanie Howell consequently received a surprise visit in her office from a claimant who delivered a statement outlining why she and other managers were being targeted. A shocked Ms Howell then met one of her colleagues helpfully guiding another half dozen claimants to her office. She appeared reluctant to discuss her job with those it will most affect.
- In Nottingham posters bearing the previously obtained photograph and details of JIM Dennis Taylor appeared around the city, including over the windows of his office at Newtownhouse in Maid Marion Way. Mr Taylor, like the other JIMs, does

not seem to appreciate the publicity associated with his role.

- In other areas, like Leeds, groups leafleted outside the regional offices or, as in Norwich, their nearest Employment Service office.

Further action is planned against the JSA Implementation Managers.

THREE STRIKES STRATEGY UPHELD

The conference clarified the position regarding the 'Three Strikes and You're Out' rule.

'Three Strikes' is not a national policy but a working practice to be applied as local circumstances require it. The conference cannot compel member groups to enforce the procedure, but as a practice it is now up and running nationally.

Edinburgh has already processed warnings against two managers who have been accused of bullying claimants. In Manchester a deputy manager at Cheetham Hill Job Centre has had her first warning. The Nottingham organisation has exposed their JSA Implementation Manager.

In Scotland the 'Three Strikes' campaign is provoking a vigorous media response. *The Sunday Post* on 18th August declared that "staff in benefit offices and job centres are under threat from a group of unemployed militants. Behind the plan is a shadowy group called Groundswell ... Its members include anarchists, New Age travellers and anti-roads campaigners". The report added that "a spokesman for Edinburgh Claimants said 'We won't tolerate staff who persecute or enforce attacks on claimants. If we get two verified reports of offences against claimants we will send the individual a written warning ... Should we get a third verified report we will

demonstrate inside the office. We will also take photos of the individual and blow them up into posters, with an explanation of the offences, and put them up in the surrounding area'."

The CPSA and other benefit unions are known to be against the 'Three Strikes' practice. *The Sunday Post* report says: "The Civil and Public Service Association (CPSA) will be meeting Employment Service officials next week to 'urgently pursue their safety concerns'." One civil servant in the east of Scotland says: "We feel as if certain claimants groups are putting unfair pressure on us to resist the JSA. It's emotional blackmail."

All the signs are that the 'Three Strikes' idea has legs, and the conference had to recognise the success of the strategy despite its, as yet, limited application throughout the country. The reaction to it has been tremendous: guidelines have been written by the Employment Service on how to deal with it; helplines have been set up for staff; the staff unions and the Employment Service are holding panic meetings; the press are claiming civil servants are being threatened.

It represents an inverted degradation ceremony in which, for a change, the poor and lowly hold their persecutors to account. It's anarchistic in so far as it inflicts an invisible moral force upon the mind of each individual employee in the Employment Service.

'Three Strikes' is as English as a Dickens' novel — it tells the clerk, the claimants adviser, the benefit adviser and all the inmates of the Employment and Benefit Service to behave decently and to treat the claimants with respect. And in so doing it becomes a threat, a moral threat, to the whole bureaucratic machine.

Unemployed Activist

March Against the JSA on Saturday

7th September. Assemble 12 noon at

Shepherds Bush Green, London.

Rally 2.30pm Labour & Trades

Council Hall, 16 Church Street, off Acton High Street.

OBITUARY: ROBERT LYNN

[An address to the Glasgow Anarchist Summer School, 24th August 1996]

Iwould like to say a few words about our Comrade Robert Lynn. Robert had been the main instigator of this event and the highly successful Summer School the Glasgow Anarchist Group held in this venue back in 1993.

Bobby had been in ill health for some time, with frequent visits to hospital. It was obvious to anyone who knew Bobby that his health had declined badly and that he was obviously dying. Most of us assumed that he still had a couple of years left in him. It came as a great shock to us all when he died eight days before this event. I spoke to Bobby a couple of weeks before this event and he told me that he intended to retire from political activity after the event. Bobby was rushed into hospital a week and a half ago. He was told that he would be in for a week for tests. When he heard this he told his wife Jean "Oh fuck, I'm going to miss the Summer School" (he was very direct in his manner of speech). In the last few years he was mugged and his house burgled three times. Most recently him and Jean had their home flooded and had to move to a decant house miles from the Calton where he grew up, lived, worked and fought against the moralistic and unjust laws of capitalism.

We cremated Bobby on Thursday. His family insisted that he got the anarchist funeral he requested. We were sad losing a dear friend. But we had a good laugh. He would not have wanted us to mourn, but this was unavoidable. But we also laughed — we were celebrating the full and active life of a down to earth and deeply committed man.

The stories about Bobby are legion. He led strikes in workplaces and in prison. He was a guest of Her Majesty on quite a few occasions. People that had the good fortune to know

Bobby had their favourite story about him. My own personal favourite is back in the 1950s Bobby used to organise bus runs in the Calton. He would fill the bus with local miscreants and they would descend upon one of the Scottish seaside towns like the Mongol hordes. They would help themselves to the contents of some of the local shops and then return home to Glasgow. Many years later Bobby tried to get me to come on a bus run. He explained that most of the other people going were not anarchists but, to use his own terminology, of a "class conscious disposition". Not the term I would have used I must admit!

Back in the 1950s Bobby also ran a Shebeen (an illegal drinking establishment). I asked what happened when the police finally raided it. He told me that they were more worried about the anarchist literature he had left out for his clientele than the drinking itself.

Bobby was very fond of bus runs. In fact the bus run that was meant to happen tomorrow was Bobby's idea. Some of his ideas and rhetoric were out of touch with anarchism in the 1990s. He argued with me for weeks before the Summer School. He just could not understand that veganism was popular among younger anarchists. No doubt you will hear many stories about Bobby, some good, some amazing. On the other hand, you will hear some that are embarrassing. He was not very PC.

Bobby was an anarchist for over fifty years. He lived and worked his anarchism. It shone like a beacon. That light touched everyone who knew him. His anarchism touched me and made my life richer.

I would like to end as Bobby ended so many letters in his own unique style: "WITH A CLENCHED FIST AND A BENT ELBOW".

John Cooper

HOWARD RELEASES 537 CONVICTS EARLY

(continued from page 2)

increase the opportunities of individuals and prison decreases individual opportunities.

On the grounds of expediency as distinct from principle, we acknowledge that in present-day society some individuals have to be kept out of circulation because they are dangerous. Mr Howard and his vindictive supporters, however, are for prison as a matter of principle. If they thought in terms of expediency they would recognise the incontrovertible fact that sentences like 'community service' and probation are more effective than prison in dissuading people from crime, and a lot cheaper.

None of the 537 unexpectedly released, not even of the 33 who spent the evening in pubs and the night on the streets of Kendall, was arrested for any offence within the next few days. If they had been, be sure we would have heard about it.

We cannot disagree with the judges, that the circumstance of their release was totally absurd, but we congratulate them on their release and commiserate with all those left behind.

ON THE WATERFRONT

On 28th September 1995 the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) sacked five hundred Liverpool dockers for refusing to cross a picket line. The abolition of the National Dock Labour Scheme and subsequent strike defeat in 1989 left Liverpool as the only port in Britain where unions were still recognised by employers. The sackings were an attempt to break union organisation and introduce casual labour across the board. As the MDHC's Chief Executive Trevor Furlong put it: "I suppose in hindsight we were too soft in 1989. We should have got rid of the lot" (*International Freight Weekly*, July 1996).

Anyone relying on the national press and television for news could be forgiven for thinking that was the end of the matter. In reality the repercussions of the dispute are still being felt in ports around the world. Ships carrying cargo to and from Liverpool have been targeted for what an Australian shipping company in Lloyd's List called "exceedingly long-range secondary picketing". Pickets sent out from Liverpool have stopped work as far as Sydney and Montréal. Two Liverpool dockers who picketed the world's largest port in Los Angeles got the support of non-unionised Mexican and Puerto Rican truck drivers who stopped and set up a joint picket line, as well as LA dockers.

In June action by Swedish and US dockers forced Atlantic Container Line (ACL), one of the largest companies using the port, to withdraw from Liverpool. ACL have since returned, but are still coming under pressure. By the time this issue of *Freedom* goes to press the dockworkers' second international conference will have taken place in Liverpool. One immediate aim is to step up international action before negotiations with the MDHC in September. The dockers are hopeful about action against Cast Line, operating out of Zeebrugge, after a delegation to Belgium in August.

The sacked dockers' demands are as follows:

1. No return to casual labour.
2. Real jobs in a profitable and expanding port for the unemployed of Merseyside.
3. No victimisation. All sacked workers to be reinstated.
4. Reinstate trade union recognition, and recognise elected shop stewards.

In June the MDHC made an offer which would have included jobs for only sixty of the sacked dockers and redundancy payments for many, but not all, of the rest. When the ACL withdrew from the port the MDHC withdrew the offer.

The MDHC have consistently refused to negotiate with the sacked dockers themselves and will only talk to Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) officials. This is despite the fact that the dispute has had no official union (or Labour) support. The sacked dockers do have the use of Transport House in Liverpool and have received irregular payments from the TGWU towards a hardship fund.

Jack Adams, TGWU deputy general secretary, is representing the dockers in new talks with the MDHC and has said he will put forward their demand for full reinstatement.

However, a *Liverpool Echo* report quoted his boss Bill Morris as saying: "It is time to make a fresh start in negotiations without any preconditions on either side". Full reinstatement is a non-negotiable precondition for the dockers but the fear is that the union will try and force another postal ballot. An earlier ballot resulted in 85% of the sacked dockers rejecting a settlement. But as time passes families come under more financial pressure and it gets harder to hold out for a settlement that is fair to everyone.

The dockers have got results by side-stepping official union structures and sending their own delegates to talk to other workers, at home and abroad. Initially the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) stated that "coordination requires the ITF's affiliates to wait for a request from the ITF before supportive actions are organised. Do not start any action against any vessel known to be loading/discharging cargoes to and from the port of Liverpool without contacting the ITF secretariat!" (*Industrial Worker*, March 1996). This bureaucratic kiss of death was widely ignored. More recent ITF statements have been far better, a reaction to the level of international support achieved by the sacked dockers themselves.

Many TGWU members and some officials have done their best to support the sacked dockers, but the response from the TGWU as a whole has been minimal. Lorry drivers and working dockers have continued to cross the picket lines and every other port in Britain has kept working. Early in the dispute the ACL backed out

of a promise to move its cargo operations if workers were not reinstated, claiming that TGWU officials had asked it to stick with the port while negotiations continued.

The TGWU is restricted by British trade union laws – as is the London-based ITF – but this can only justify so much. Consider the new unions in many Asian countries which manage to operate effectively despite government repression and desperate poverty. Turkish workers have been active in the London dockers support group and the Liverpool dockers sent a delegation to Turkey in July. In the last issue of *Dockers Charter* Billy Jenkins gave a harrowing account of a visit to textile workers in Gaziantep: "I managed to say 'I have come to bring greetings from five hundred sacked Liverpool dockers'. When this was translated the crowd cheered, and then it happened. I have never seen anything like it. There was a massive police action, breaking up the crowd of workers, using batons. I thought I had seen violence the day before, but this was violence on a massive scale... Then the police went into the union hall and I could see the batons being used and the screams of the workers. I was terribly scared and shocked to witness such violence and brutality against workers who were only exercising their union rights." If Turkish unions can keep going in the face of this kind of day-to-day brutality, couldn't the TGWU stand up a little better to threats of being taken to court?

Support groups have played a vital role in the dispute, not least the 'Women of the Waterfront' which developed out of a meeting of the wives and partners of the

sacked dockers. "Looking back, a lot of the women are sorry they never formed some form of group while their husbands were in work, because we were all disgusted at the way our husbands and partners have been treated, particularly over the last two years with working practices that destroyed family life... One of the first things we did was to join the men on the picket line. There have been days when the women and children have closed a dock gate, which helps cause a lot of disruption. At first a lot of us were a bit apprehensive going down on the picket line, in actual fact we needn't have been because we were welcomed with open arms... Our solidarity group has gone from strength to strength and gained a lot of support and sympathy along the way... Wives and children have also made peaceful protests outside the homes of the directors of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company" (Joan Bennett, *Trade Union News*, May/June 1996).

The sacked dockers' concerns extend beyond basic trade union issues. According to a recent statement: "The port of Liverpool is a scab port using casual/contract labour to increase its import of toxic waste, scrap metals, uranium and coal. All these commodities damage out local community and environment. Victory for the Liverpool dockers will reclaim rank and file organisation on the docks. It will also enable communities to reclaim our environment, reclaim their future."

On 20th August five people, including two shop stewards, were arrested during a peaceful picket. Dockers described these as 'spurious arrests'. The condition of bail for the two stewards was that they don't go back on the picket line – the first time this tactic has been used in the dispute. A legal challenge is planned. The change in police tactics may well be timed to put pressure on in advance of negotiations. The dockers have so far kept police under some kind of control at pickets by videoing proceedings themselves.

The sacked dockers are planning a lobby of the TUC in Blackpool on 9th September, demanding the right to address the delegates. At the last mass meeting it was suggested that the lobby become a picket line if they are not allowed to speak: "Princess Anne has been invited to the TUC. What union is she in? Why hasn't a docker been invited?"

- On Saturday 28th September the dockers are holding a march and rally in Liverpool to mark the end of the first year of the dispute, assembling at 1.30pm at Myrtle Parade (near the Philharmonic Hall). The march to Pier Head starts at 2pm. Contact Jimmy Davis on 0151-207 3388 for further details.

- The dockers need financial help and practical support. All invitations to speak to groups or union branches, etc., are welcome. Contact Jimmy Davis, Secretary, Liverpool Port Shop Stewards Committee, 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 4AS. Tel: 0151-207 3388. Cheques made to Merseyside Dockers' Shop Stewards Appeal Fund please. Women of the Waterfront can be contacted at the same address.

- Manchester Dockers Support Group meets fortnightly in the Hare and Hounds, Shudehill, Manchester at 7.30pm. Next meetings are on Tuesday 17th September and Tuesday 1st October. Write to: Dept 61, 1 Newton Street, Manchester M1 1HW. Tel: Chris on 0161-226 6950.

JH

GLASGOW ANARCHIST SUMMER SCHOOL

An Anarchist Summer School took place in Glasgow on Saturday 24th August 1996. The event was initiated by Robert Lynn ("Bobby if you prefer") who also initiated the Glasgow Summer School of 1993. Robert died on 19th August, so the 1996 Summer School, long advertised as a celebration of anarchism, went ahead as a celebration of his life and work.

Robert, an enthusiast of bus trips, had taken entire responsibility for a trip to Loch Lomond on the 25th. The bus trip as cancelled, but all other events went ahead. They included the arrangement of two nights accommodation and lunch for more than eighty visitors, and it is a tribute to the enthusiasm and organising ability of the Glasgow anarchists that everything happened smoothly with no glitches.

Apart from the plenary sessions for the welcome address and the report back, all the meetings were 'workshops' or discussions run in parallel. There were ten of these, all on topics which looked interesting, but no-one could attend more than four.

I had the honour of introducing the workshop on conscious egoism, an idea considered right-wing by the ill-informed, but regarded in Glasgow as an intrinsic underlying attitude of working-class anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism.

Alan, of the Workers' Solidarity Movement in Dublin, introduced a discussion on anti-imperialism, which he carefully distinguished from nationalism, in Northern Ireland. Protestant workers are led to believe that they enjoy a privileged position, although in fact they are less well paid than workers in other parts of the United Kingdom. Protestant marches are not mere commemorations of historic events, but celebrations of current superiority, as for instance when the Apprentice Boys society marching around the old city walls of

Derry symbolically throw coins down into the Catholic-inhabited bogside. Church power in the Republic is undeniable, but cannot be blamed for Protestant domination in the north, which pre-dates it.

A session on 'Anarchism and Marxism' was rather scrappy, largely taken up by a Glasgow ex-anarchist explaining why we should all join Militant.

One on 'Community and Education Struggles' turned out to be a description of how Glasgow anarchists had initiated the occupation of primary schools in a campaign against their closure by the Education Department. One on 'Workplace Struggles' dealt mostly, I am told, with struggles on the Glasgow docks. And I hear from those who attended that the two workshops on 'Organisation: Local/National/Global' were nearly all about organisation in Glasgow. This is not a complaint. Everyone attending was interested to know what was going on in Glasgow, and delighted to hear how much actually was going on.

The workshop on the Job Seekers Allowance, introduced by someone from Edinburgh Claimants, was attended (and chaired) by anarchists who join the anti-JSA activity in Manchester, often reported in *Freedom*. There was also a session on 'Anti-election Strategies' introduced by Tyneside anarchist group, and an excellent exhibition about the Zapatistas of Chiapas.

As with every formal gathering of people with a common interest, the real importance of this Summer School was not in the formal sessions but in the informal contacts of people from various places getting to know each other and renewing old acquaintance. In this, it was highly successful.

Donald Room

An obituary of Robert Lynn appears on page 3 of this issue.



— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK — MAKING PLANNING WORK FOR PEOPLE



photograph from Eye Magazine (Toronto)

If we didn't have a planning system with all its arbitrary regulations, the spirit of entrepreneurialism and enterprise would have laid waste to every exploitable patch of rural Britain. Indeed plenty of people would say that this is exactly what has been achieved by half a century of government subsidies for farming and will cite a litany of lost woodlands, wetlands, hedges and wildlife and the effects of pesticides and fertilisers. Others blame restrictive planning policies for squeezing the poor out of rural areas, since only the affluent can afford to buy that lowly cottage, barn or former council house.

I have a foot in all these camps and continually draw attention to the fact that when you reach page 3 of Peter Hall's magisterial book *Cities of Tomorrow* (Blackwell, 1988) you encounter a section on 'The Anarchist Roots of the Planning Movement'. The planning ideology was originally conceived as a popular movement, not a branch of bureaucracy. Peter Hall was back in the news in August because of the report he and Michael Breheny have written about the future of settlement patterns in England in the next twenty years. Called *The People – where will they go?*, it is obtainable for £13.95 plus £1 p&p from the Town and Country Planning Association.

But for me the key planning text for this year was a quite different book that chanced to appear at the same time. This was Simon Fairlie's *Low Impact Development: Planning and People in a Sustainable Countryside* (£10 post free from Low Impact, 20 St Michael's Road, Yeovil, BA21). If you know his name it is because of his involvement with the site known as Tinker's Bubble. He tells his own story in the introduction:

"When, with friends, I rented a house with a sizeable garden on a country estate, we were thrown out after three years to make way for a golf course. I lived in a van for two years, and eventually, with some other people, bought a bare-land smallholding. To accommodate ourselves we pitched tents on our land. In the two years since we moved onto our land, we have been through almost the entire gamut of planning procedure: committee decision, enforcement order, stop notice, Article 4 application, Section 106 agreement, appeal, call in by the Secretary of State and statutory review in the High Court. All this for seven tents!"

And he goes on:

"If one is faced with eviction, on environmental grounds, from a small tent on one's own smallholding a stone's throw away from a new and empty thirty-foot high concrete block barn erected with the blessing of the planning system, and from a cottage occupied by a man who commutes to the nearby town, one's initial reaction may, like mine, be that the regulations are daft. However, as one learns how the rural planning system operates, one

appreciates that there is a logic to it; and that if the logic is twisted, it is more by history than by the planners."

Now since the British government is committed to Agenda 21, agreed at the inter-governmental Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, and since the phrase 'sustainable development' is frequently invoked in the discussion of planning issues at both national and local levels, Fairlie's explorations of these concepts as an associate editor of *The Ecologist* are immensely well-informed, as is his great variety of case histories, and his fascinating series of illustrations, ranging from the experience of 'plotland' settlements to the Lightmoor project in Shropshire or the work of the Walter Segal Self-Build Trust. Yurt, tipi and bender-dwellers are discussed, as well as travelling people and the Lowland Crofting policy adopted by West Lothian District Council.

To me he makes a persuasive and unanswerable case, all the more attractive because he isn't waiting for radical changes to

the planning system, believing that it is simply mis-applied. He argues that:

"If permission to build or live in the countryside were to be allocated, not just to those who can afford artificially inflated land prices, but to anyone who could demonstrate a willingness and an ability to contribute to a thriving local environment and economy, then a very different kind of rural society would emerge. Low impact development is a social contract whereby people are given the opportunity to live in the country in return for providing environmental benefits. Planners will recognise this as a form of what they call 'planning gain'. The mechanisms to strike such a bargain are for the most part already written into the English planning system and there is thus no need for any major structural changes."

If this sounds like oppressive social engineering, I need to remind you that, as I have shown many times in this column, the combination of property speculation and planning policy have for years preserved rural England for the affluent. Where I live in rural Suffolk the adult children of local families

have to rent rooms in the nearest towns as they have been priced out of the housing market.

Fairlie claims that he barely touches the question of how to create 'sustainable settlements', and there is a sharp contrast between his approach and that of the Hall-Breheny report and its discussion of "the mismatch between housing demand and land supply". They believe that "long-term economic trends, rising incomes and expectations mean that small households may demand relatively large houses". Fairlie speaks for those with low incomes and humble expectations.

The campaigning group This Land is Ours declares that his book gives a voice to a new perspective on three topical questions (and they are most certainly topical for me). They are:

1. How can there be sustainable development in the countryside under a planning system which explicitly discourages development in the countryside?
2. How can planners prevent low-income country-dwellers being 'gazumped' by wealthy incomers?
3. How can we stop the countryside becoming a cross between a factory and a museum?

This is a very remarkable book, written with great good humour and considerable knowledge of the complexities involved. Let the author's concluding paragraph sink in. He explains that:

"The object of this book has not been to bury the present planning system, but to praise it. It has attempted to show that the system introduced in 1947 is flexible enough to accommodate the radical new forms of development that the quest for sustainability demands; and to outline some of the ways in which local authorities can foster experiments in low impact rural development – some of them carried out at the margins of society, others designed to cater for more conventional people. These experiments – the failures and the successes – will be necessary to provide the groundwork which will enable planners, environmentalists and country dwellers of the next millennium to co-operate in the creation of a genuinely sustainable rural economy and environment."

Almost a century ago two books were published, deliberately aiming at a wide rather than a sectarian readership. One was Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops*. The other was Ebenezer Howard's *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. Here's another book which, in a completely different climate, gives voice to the next century's hidden aspirations and similarly seeks to win over the very people who stand in the way.

Colin Ward

DONATIONS June to August 1996

Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund
Dublin, JCI, £10; London, AC, £10; London, DR, £10; Wolverhampton, JL, £6; London, CJC, £5; Birmingham, AJB, £10; London, DPE, £2; Brandon, JG, £3; Belper, JS, £2; Loughborough, PM, £1; Portsmouth, GJC, £3; Dunedin, DPF, £10; Chester, GSG, £6; London, DR, £100; Beckenham, DP, £30; Isle of Wight, HJW, £4; Colchester, AG, £15.

Total = £217.00
1996 total to date = £641.00

Freedom Press Overheads Fund

Shepperton, PEV, £4.50; West Derby, RE, £8.50; Legacy from Mrs Styman, £250; London, DR, £24; Sheffield, BF, £2; London, AC, £10; Beckenham, DP, £30; Wolverhampton, JL, £6; Trun (Fr), RS, £3; Saltburn, TE (for JF), £6; Hove, HC, £2; Liverpool, SDC, £7; Farnham, LT, £3; Wolverhampton, AM, £3.25; Edinburgh, SC, £10; Newport, NHF, £9; London, TL, £2; Mexico, JWB, £10.

Total = £390.25
1996 total to date = £679.25

Raven Deficit Fund

London, CJC, £5; London, DR, £24; Brandon, JG, £3; Japan, TS, £12; Newport, NHF, £10; Beckenham, DP, £30; Macclesfield, LF, £1; London, DR, £100; Colchester, AG, £11.

Total = £196.00
1996 total to date = £473.00

Mário Castelhana

Mário Castelhana was born in Lisbon on 31st May 1896. He was admitted on the Portuguese railways company at the age of fourteen and joined the railway workingmen's union. He was dismissed for his participation in the 1920 railway strike, but went on working for his union and for the Railways Federation. He was elected to the confederal executive committee in August 1926 and appointed director of the daily CGT newspaper *A Batalha*. The country had been under a military dictatorship since May 1926, and in February 1927 an armed attempt to restore the parliamentary democracy was defeated, the CGT made illegal and *A Batalha* suspended. Mário Castelhana was its last director as a daily newspaper. He was imprisoned that year and deported to Angola.

In 1930 he was sent to Açores and in 1931 to Madeira, participating there in another armed attempt to restore democracy. The insurrection was defeated and he came back to Lisbon hiding in a ship's coal bunker. He lived under a false identity and was re-appointed to the clandestine confederal executive committee.

In 1933 free unions were forbidden. The CGT prepared a protest general strike for 18th

January 1934. This was followed by mass arrests of militants. Mário Castelhana was tortured, condemned to sixteen years deportation, sent to a fortress on Açores and two years later to the concentration camp of Tarrafal (Cabo Verde). The conditions were appalling. He was put on forced labour and punished by long periods in a small, sun-exposed bunker. Prisoners were affected by malaria and other diseases, and got no treatment (the fascist camp doctor used to say that he was there only to pass death certificates).

In 1940 Mário Castelhana became acutely ill and died on 12th October with no medical attention. He was a kind, tolerant but extremely firm man, loved by his comrades and respected by militants of other ideologies. After the 1974 revolution his body was brought to a Lisbon cemetery. In 1980 he was bestowed the highest degree of the Order of Liberty.

At the Lisbon Centre of Libertarian Studies (Centro de Estudos Libertários) an illustrated exhibition of the main stages of his life, including photographs, documents, letters, books and papers he wrote, books offered to him, old editions of *A Batalha* when he was in charge, etc., can be seen until the end of October.

Luís Garcia e Silva
Centro de Estudos Libertários,
Rua Marquês de Ponte de Lima, 37-2º-D,
PT-1100 Lisboa, Portugal

TWO NEW FREEDOM PRESS TITLES

TALKING TO ARCHITECTS ten lectures by Colin Ward

This book gathers together addresses to mainly architectural audiences over twenty years. They seek to persuade the observers of the built environment that beyond the adulation of architectural celebrities from Le Corbusier onward, there has been a quieter, less visible stream in the world of building, ranging from the Arts and Crafts Movement at the turn of the century, to Hassan Fathy in Egypt or Giancarlo de Carlo in Italy to Walter Segal in Britain, quietly pushing aside the assumptions of the professionals. These wide-ranging lectures, delivered in several countries, explore this alternative tradition.

112 pages ISBN 0 900384 88 3 £5.00

THE LAST CAPITALIST a dream of a new utopia by Steve Cullen

Steve Cullen's narrator is Anne Riorden. If such things as fixed occupations or crime existed in her society, she would call herself a private detective, as her particular fancy from the bad old days is not the Wild West, nor the British Empire, but the crime fiction of the twentieth century. She loves those cool resourceful investigators, even though they never happened in real life, either in our day or hers. But she has other interests too ...

96 pages ISBN 0 900384 82 4 £3.50

THE LAST CAPITALIST

The Last Capitalist: a Dream of a New Utopia

by Steve Cullen

Freedom Press, ISBN 0 900384 82 4, £3.50

Oscar Wilde said something to the effect that a map of the world that does not show Utopia is not worth having. It is one of those wistful rubrics to which anarchists are defensively prone when accused of being unrealistic. Yet the trouble with utopias as a fictional *genre* is the tendency to make the societies they advocate either repellantly authoritarian or unacceptably wet (I mean wet in the old sense of limp and boring rather than the Thatcherite sense of showing care and concern for others). Which is why dystopian fiction usually makes better reading and why books with the hero fighting a corrupt and malevolent government end with the hero's victory – and a future only implied. If the baddies triumph – of course we know what their world is like – we have seen it in action in the course of the story.

On the whole utopias tend to be better read about, as in Marie Louise Berneri's still compulsive survey *Journey Through Utopia** (amazingly in print ever since 1950) than read in the usually wearisome original. This is usually because such books grind to a halt while an author's character waxes didactic on the virtues of the chosen social system or the defects of the one it replaced. Science fiction tends to do this sort of thing rather better, showing a particular system in action at another place or time, and hiding some of the mechanics in the process of expounding the plot. Even here though the difficulties of the form are often painfully apparent and Pilgrim's Precautionary Principle – 'Read the Utopian Commentary Not the Utopian Novel' – is still often the best way of accessing the ideas while avoiding a deal of turgid textual scrutiny.

Yet there are exceptions to the above rule. William Morris, bundle of contradictions that he was, did get it right in this area. *A Dream of John Ball* and *News from Nowhere* work

because of the manner in which they create a tension between the reality and the vision. The device of the narrator/dreamer contrasting appalling reality with a dream of the good society, in Morris's hands at least, moves these tales beyond escapism or fantasy to the grittier terrain of social criticism and political commitment. Only those who studiously avoid thinking about implications would use the trivialising word 'charming' about them (there are always such people of course – in my day they used to fill the theatres for shows like Brendan Behan's *The Hostage* or Littlewood's *Oh What a Lovely War*, attacks on chauvinism both, and then stand rigidly to attention for the National Anthem at the end).

In theory I am the least fitted person anywhere to review Steve Cullen's new book. No doubt the kindly editor was feeling whimsical when he sent it to me. Yet in spite of my general antipathy to the utopian novel (and I started this one with resentful hostility) it was close enough to the Morrisian model to keep me reading. And as I finished it I realised with surprise that it had won me over.

Part of this was the pleasure of recognition. There is always a certain amount of satisfaction in contemplating a picture that includes oneself, and Steve Cullen has caught happily, if somewhat obviously, the various left wing groups who seize on every sign that The Day, the final bust-up with capitalism, is coming at last. We all know people like this – some of them featured in the broadsheets recently. In this book they are designated The Angries and are regarded as harmless nuts indulging in a form of political masturbation, until rumours of a capitalist revival starts talk of guns and a violent revolution. This is just as alarming as the prospect of a nascent capitalism to a society that evolved its utopia Gustav Landauer's way, "by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently". So the oddball would-be shamus, Anne Riorden, is asked to find out what is behind these rumours.

The book has its weaknesses. Like other utopian novels there is a tendency to didactic soliloquy, but I suppose that is inherent in the

genre. The narrator never clearly emerges as a character in her own right. A private eye by aspiration, she is not convincing as a wannabe Philip Marlowe/Sam Spade. Nor is the author at home with the sharp laconic dialogue such characterisation requires. These two heroes grew out of the turmoil of a brutal America. They distance themselves from the society in which they operate. They wouldn't have fitted into the general Morrisian/Wardist landscape of this book. Better detective models for Anne Riorden would have been Alan Plater's couple, Trevor Chaplin and Jill Swinburne, from his Beiderbecke series who distance themselves in a gentler way from their own dreadful reality.

The private eye *genre* depends on conflict – on distance between the detective and the surrounding society. Anne Riorden is not a critic of her society but an enthusiast who spices life with a safe nostalgia for a fictional past. She is mildly alienated from the quietly oppressive reasonableness of her surroundings (living alone on a barge rather than communally in Malatesta Towers) but sensibly she doesn't want to change the comfortably functioning anarchist present. The eponymous anti-hero is much the same, indulging in a bit of action history, working at the theory of capitalism out of intellectual curiosity and ending up in bed with the heroine after realising the error of his ways.

No I haven't given the story away because this is not really a story. It is a sermon. It is the gospel according to Colin Ward (people building houses actually belong to the Colin Ward Self Build Association, honest). There is an irony here as Ward has always maintained that anarchism is a theory of organisation rather than a theory of utopia, but of course the whole point is that the utopia should develop from the former – if it works. The utopia Cullen evokes is a rewrite of William Morris with inputs from Ward and Landauer. Never in real life could human affairs run so smoothly, with so little clanking of machinery – although there is a bit more machinery to clank than Morris perhaps



One of seven original linocuts by Steve Cullen included in *The Last Capitalist*.

would have liked. Like *News From Nowhere*, Steve Cullen's utopia is an expression of a personal preference. It is a picture of something that a desirable society would try to include and foster. It is Max Weber's ideal type.

In *Raven 22* I ended an article on crime with the words "These are times when a sense of utopia is most needed. Because no roads lead there doesn't mean we shouldn't head in that direction". Steve Cullen has given us his vision of what that direction could be. In his own words, it is a personal and occasionally question-begging vision. It also seems slight at first, but like salted peanuts it is compulsively more-ish. Once the taste is on you you can't leave it alone. Read it quickly and you will find yourself drawn back to it a second and third time to savour the references and the quotations.

At £3.50 this is the bargain of the week and the best summer afternoon or train journey book that has come my way for a long time.

John Pilgrim

* *Journey Through Utopia* by Marie Louise Berneri, Freedom Press, ISBN 0 900384 21 2, £4.50.

We have in stock very cheap hardback copies of Brian Winston's *Misunderstanding Media*, originally £20, now £2.95. Winston is the journalist and academic who co-authored those critiques of the British media *Bad News* and *More Bad News*, etc., with the Glasgow University Media Group of which he is a former Research Director. He challenges the view that we are seeing an information technology revolution, accusing the IT propagandists of purveying misunderstanding and of disseminating misinformation. In a historical analysis of the four main IT branches – telephones, television, computers and satellites – he shows how, far from revolution, we just have 'business as usual'. There are nuggets of information on almost every page and in a style reminiscent of Chomsky he exposes how the mainly US technology monopolies have managed to control developments through what he calls the 'law' of suppression of radical potential, which states that new technologies are introduced into society only insofar as their disruptive or subversive potential is contained. It would be useful when reading this to have some knowledge of the history of science, though not necessary. Likewise, it would be useful, but not necessary, to have some knowledge of physics for the technical explanations. The generous 419 pages include an introduction, notes and index. An excellent companion to *The Raven* No. 12 on 'Communication' and *The Raven* No. 32 on 'Communication (2) – The Net'.

Following on from the technological developments in communications, *Behind the Silicon Curtain: the seductions of work in a lonely era** by Dennis Hayes catalogues the true price in human misery and environmental pollution imposed by the massive expansion in microchip production, based in California's Silicon Valley. The status of IT as a mere spin-off of military and corporate needs is confirmed, and the highly alienating, dangerous and degrading working conditions are investigated.

FREEDOM PRESS BOOKSHOP READERS' ROUND-UP

Hayes shows how those who work there either conform and become virtual automatons, or rebel only to channel their frustration into computer hacking activities. There are thorough footnotes and an index in the 215 pages, plus an excellent introduction by David Noble. Published at £8.95, but yours for only 99p.

As reviewed in a recent *Freedom* by our comrade MH, we now have stocks of Howard Ehrlich's *Reinventing Anarchy, Again** which brings together the major currents of the theory of Social Anarchism from the English-speaking world. This is a large book of nearly 400 pages, good value for £13.95. Two important sections are on Work and Anarchafeminism.

In 1975, at the peak of the Portuguese Revolution, farmworkers seized control of millions of acres of farmland in southern Portugal and rapidly established the largest network of worker-controlled production units in Western Europe. Nancy Bermeo's book *The Revolution Within the Revolution: workers' control in rural Portugal** is a lucid and meticulous, if academic, study of a little-known but important aspect of the 'Revolution of the Carnations' (fortunately quite a large number of people equipped themselves with weapons as well as carnations). A highly-detailed account which includes graphs, tables and maps. This Princeton University Press hardback has an attractive cover and is now priced at £4.99 instead of £29.00, and the 263 pages also contain an index, footnotes, appendices and bibliography. The perfect accompaniment would be Phil Mailer's

Portugal: the impossible revolution?* not just because he includes a chapter on 'Agrarian Struggles' – it gives an eye-witness account of the overall struggle from a sympathetic libertarian angle – but because he describes events with feeling, with no pretences to 'objectivity', while at the same time not shrinking from criticisms of the revolutionaries. It is carefully researched and well written, and your 400 pages include a chronology of events, photographs and illustrations, a glossary and no fewer than 26 appendices containing documents, manifestos, tables, etc. Published by Solidarity with an excellent introduction by Maurice Brinton. As shown in our booklist, the original paperback was £7.95, which we've reduced to a mere £3.00. But since we've sold out of that edition we're now offering the *hardback* at the same price (full price £15.00).

Periodicals worth a brief mention include the summer issues of *Class War* (Olympic Special, 50p, with Bob Hoskins' face superimposed on a photo of a blazing police car saying "It's good to torch"); *Green Anarchist*, 75p; *Organisel*, 60p; and putting in a biannual appearance, *Wildcat* (£2.50 for 60 A4 pages), with three interesting articles on ex-Yugoslavia, one on the Oklahoma City bomb, a critique of the Zapatistas, and more. Cambridge University Press has issued another in its History of Political Thought series. Edited by Sylvana Tomaselli, this one is *A Vindication of the Rights of Men and A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, written as a social and political critique of her times by Mary Wollstonecraft. Although

remembered chiefly for the second (1792), and as the first major feminist, her thoughts on this grew mainly from the first, written two years earlier as a reply to Edmund Burke's book on the French Revolution, and which is an important text in its own right as well as being indispensable for a true understanding of her work on women's rights. A meaty book of 349 pages at the reasonable price of £8.95, it contains a useful introduction, index, a chronology of events in Wollstonecraft's life, a bibliographical note and biographical notes on some of the cast of thousands who populated the author's life or works. *Hints*, the notes which she made towards a second, never completed, volume of *Rights of Woman* is also included.

Additions and alterations to Freedom Press's Booklist: inexplicably, Chomsky's *World Order, Old and New* (£12.95) has again been omitted (the amputation squad is on its way to our compiler's home as I write); Debord's *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* is now £1.50; *Bypass* magazine is now £1.80; *The Squatter's Handbook* is now available post-free, so treat it was if it were in 'Section 1' rather than 'Section 2', since we can now also supply it to the trade at discount; *Anarchism and Geography* is out of stock, and we've no indication of when, if ever, we'll be getting more in. Apologies to those still waiting, but all attempts by letter and telephone to contact the publishers have been met with silence, so we can only assume they've been abducted by aliens, so until further notice this title is unavailable.

Note: As usual, where postage and packing is applicable, either for titles on our booklist or in these pages, please calculate it on the *original* price and not on the reduced price. Thanks.

And don't forget the **Anarchist Bookfair** on 19th October.

'Four Eyes'

"OUR WAR IS TO BE ABLE TO TALK AND MAKE OURSELVES HEARD"

Interview with sub-commander Marcos, by Françoise Escarpit, correspondent for *L'Humanité*, translated by Liz Light from the Spanish in February/March edition of *Nueva Tierra Nuestra*.

"The Mexican army's course is a legal one, but it is very difficult to accuse the EZLN (Zapatista army of national liberation) of being illegal when there are all the scandals of Salinas De Gortari's family" stated sub-commander Marcos in his first interview since the serious events of 9th February 1995 when Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo ordered the capture of the Zapatista leadership and the federal army drove the indigenous population into the Lacandona forest. Marcos spent almost a year there at the mercy of nature.

This interview with Marcos was made on the eve of the resumption of negotiations between the Mexican government and the EZLN, who had recently founded a Zapatista national liberation front (FZLN) as a non-partisan political movement.

Françoise Escarpit: Was it difficult to resume the dialogue with a government that betrayed you?

Sub-commander Marcos: Yes, because now it's the background of the betrayal. Every moment we are talking to them, we're waiting for another betrayal. The previous experience made us realise that the government has two faces: the negotiating face and the repressive face. We can't have any confidence to go and talk with the negotiating face, only to meet with the repressive one.

The government assumes the position of a parent talking to its child, scolding them, giving them sweets and getting angry if they don't obey. The *compañeros*,¹ our bosses, already have experience of the big traders and merchants of the repressive governments that have held the state of Chiapas.

The lack of confidence that the government's attitude provokes deepens the wound that provokes racism. The *compañeros* that are delegates at the San Andrés round table said it was as if they were having to face the conquerors from five hundred years ago all over again.

Françoise Escarpit: How can the dialogue continue under these conditions?

Sub-commander Marcos: To briefly outline the situation, in February 1995 something happened that we thought was going to happen in January 1994. I'm referring to the military manoeuvres. In January '94 we expected the Mexican army to launch a large military offensive as an immediate response to our actions. We had spent a long time preparing for this. We knew our retreat would be successful and orderly.

It is clear to us that our war is not a military war but a war to talk and make ourselves heard. Therefore the military question doesn't shock or worry us, because we know that in military terms we are inferior to the enemy's forces – but we think that our cause is superior to the enemy's cause.

The Mexican government has to confront the problem that it can't accuse our army of serving a foreign power. They have to realise that it isn't all down to a world communist conspiracy. They have to realise that the poverty situation that instigated the uprising is real and they have to recognise that they are dealing with a movement whose majority is native Mexicans.

In realistic terms, the federal army doesn't have a reason to fight against us and an army without a cause is an army that cannot fight well.

The only argument they have to attack us is to protect the law. But in the present government's situation it is difficult for them to accuse the EZLN of being illegal precisely because it is the government that is breaking more laws. And then there are all the scandals and corruption inside the family of Salinas de Gortari – in other words, the biggest threats of

instability to the country are inside the power structures, not inside the EZLN.

Françoise Escarpit: If a peace treaty is signed, how much can you confide in the army? When would Marcos be able to safely leave the mountain passes?

Sub-commander Marcos: The thing is, for the EZLN the problem of the solution of the conflict is not so as the leaders can lead a normal civilian life, but that the problems of the indigenous communities are resolved and that there will be a profound change in the political life of Mexico.

The leadership of the EZLN died in January 1994. The EZLN can't make plans or negotiate on the basis of the future of its leadership, instead it has to think about who is its social support – the indigenous communities. This means that the question of leadership moves on to a second phase.

There's a problem in that the Mexican government doesn't understand what it should be negotiating. It wants to negotiate the existence of the EZLN as an opposition force, or, in other words, they want to absorb and co-opt us by means of surrender and destruction.

We say that the fact that the EZLN could be an opposition force isn't under negotiation or discussion. What can be discussed is the way in which it became that opposition. The government has to offer other forms of opposition that aren't armed. They have to open channels so that the EZLN can be an opposition force by pacific and civil means, not armed ones.

But the EZLN didn't take up arms to become the government. We didn't rise up to be municipal presidents or governors or presidents of the republic. We took up arms because there was no other way to make demands. If the government understands this, it therefore has to make political reforms that would have oppository political spaces. In that way the conflict could be solved.

The government position states that it wants to put an end to the problems that made us into an opposition force and that we should become part of the government. We say this is more lies; they won't be able to resolve the problems; they won't be able to resolve the demands of health, land, work, housing, nutrition of the communities because they don't have any money. They are in crisis.

They are not willing to invest either, because the indigenous population isn't productive. The government only puts money in when it can take more out than it put in. This is the mentality of a businessman. Advantages of the free trade agreement! The governments stop governing to become business administrators.

Mexico ceases to be a country and becomes a business, parts of which make a profit while other parts are unproductive. The indigenous population don't provide earnings and the government's attitude is the same as that of a businessman.

When one isn't productive, you're sacked. But as they can't sack a country, there remains annihilation. If they can't annihilate them with a bullet, they annihilate them by forgetting. They simply start to make decisions as if they don't exist. This is the fundamental origin of the Zapatista movement – a war against forgetfulness.

Françoise Escarpit: Is the mobilisation of the civil society sufficient to protect you from another betrayal?

Sub-commander Marcos: Yes, we think it's sufficient to deter a betrayal. It's still not enough to provide a political alternative for the country. There's sufficient strength to prevent the situation from getting any worse, but not enough to improve it. There's no organisation or alternative, and that's not only Mexico's inheritance.

With the falling of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the socialist bloc, the idea was sold that the world was unipolar, only one alternative, that there wasn't an option other than brute capitalism – neo-liberalism in other words.

This lack of alternatives really affected the world's left. On one side a sector dedicated itself to beating its chest, repenting its past and trying to wash away its sins by moving to the right, adopting a cynical attitude saying 'confronted by power there is no possible alternative, therefore one has to be part of the power'. On the other side of the left, political cannibalism emerged that considered the principle enemy to be the other left. In the middle of these three movement – the right and these lefts (cynical left and self-destructive left) – there exists a large social sector who are sick of the formulas and theoretical prescriptions. It doesn't matter what their political background is, they want change but don't have a new alternative.

That's the problem. There is no new alternative that offers a new change – new not only in name, but in the way of doing politics. We say that at a global level the left has served as a mirror to the right. That is to say it presents

the same image only inverted. Where the right were, the left now are; where the rich were, will be the poor; the bourgeoisie will be replaced by the proletariat. But it's all the same, it won't make any difference.

This allows the political models to be the same as the right: the demagogue, the secret deals and agreements between leaders, of the elite.

Françoise Escarpit: Supposedly the Zapatista movement emerged unilaterally. Is it for this reason that you have gained so much sympathy and support in Mexico and the rest of the world?

Sub-commander Marcos: We think that the Zapatista ideology is broad-based enough that the anarchists, the gay movement, the orthodox left, all the movements against (not necessarily of the orthodox left) can find a place. Against power an identity is formed.

Therefore we think that the role of the Zapatistas in Mexico was to block the escape routes of Mexican neo-liberalism and show it to the world in all its injustice. On a global level the Zapatista role is to remind the world that the story hasn't finished, that it's possible to fight, it's necessary to fight and it's worth it to fight.

We think that *¡Ya basta!*² will be repeated in Mexico and the world, in sectors of society as marginalised, forgotten, persecuted and slighted as the indigenous population of Mexico. The *¡Ya basta!* of the women, the youth, the gays and lesbians, the immigrants and of all those who think of themselves as minorities who don't have a place in the world that isn't marginalised. In this sense *¡Ya basta!* is a global shout – not only armed, it can follow other paths too.

1. *Compañeros* literally means 'companions', but in this context it is a term used for fellow Zapatistas, companions in struggle.

2. *¡Ya basta!* means 'That's enough!'

SURVIVAL PRESS RELEASE

OIL BOOM IN AMAZONIA: 'UNCONTACTED' INDIANS FACE DEATH

The western Amazon is experiencing an unprecedented oil boom, as oil companies scramble to explore every corner of the rainforest. The boom is spearheaded by Mobil, which is poised to invade the territory of uncontacted Indians in Peru. Similar operations by Shell nearby in the 1980s led to the deaths of 50-100 Indians.

Mobil is about to start prospecting for oil among three million hectares of the Peruvian Amazon. Mobil is the key member of a consortium which includes Elf and Exxon. All three companies, along with Shell have been implicated in the recent wave of repression in Nigeria affecting the Ogoni and other Niger Delta peoples.

Blocks 77 and 78, as the two Mobil sites are known, cover a vast swathe of Indian territory in the south-eastern Peruvian Amazon, an area inhabited by nineteen different indigenous peoples. The area has also been called "the most biologically diverse region of the planet". Indians have reason to be fearful of this new invasion – during the nineteenth century rubber boom 95% of the region's Indian population was wiped out through disease, slavery, starvation and armed conflict.

Worst of all, Block 77 is home to at least three uncontacted Indian groups: the Yaminahua, the Mashco-Piro and the Amahuaca. 'Uncontacted' means that they have had no direct dealings with the outside world and its notions of 'development' and 'progress'. This makes them especially vulnerable to land theft and, above all, disease.

Shell prospected for oil in the territory of the Yaminahua's relatives in the mid-1980s. The contact with Shell workers, and the loggers who followed them, introduced whooping

cough and pneumonia, killing 50-100 Indians.

Block 77's uncontacted Indians probably live mostly by hunting and gathering wild fruits, with farming and fishing playing a smaller role. They are used to travelling long distances and are dependent on their region's fragile ecosystem – which Mobil's activities are bound to disrupt. In Block 78, further south, Mobil's contractors will work inside the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve, an area set aside for the Harakmbut Indians – final government approval for the reserve has been withheld because of Mobil's operations.

Mobil's planned operation is the latest phase in the Amazon oil rush – a scramble by oil companies and sympathetic governments to open the Amazon fringes to commercial exploitation. Peru, Ecuador and Colombia are all encouraging oil companies to prospect. Recent experience shows that this has devastating consequences for indigenous peoples, who are denied the basic human right of consultation about their future. In Colombia, the U'Wa people are so opposed to the entry of Occidental into their reserve that they have threatened to commit mass suicide if this occurs.

Survival believes that some at least of the uncontacted Indians face the prospect of death if Mobil's workers enter their territory. It therefore calls on Mobil to stay out of their territory and demands that the Peruvian government take urgent steps to protect their land. Mobil should not operate on any Indian land without obtaining Indian consent.

For more information, please contact Aidan Rankin on 0171-242 1441.

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Land and Freedom

Dear *Freedom*,

One cannot think of the Spanish Civil War without paying tribute to the International Brigaders, who probably believed the battle in Spain was a straightforward one between Franco and the Republican forces. After the war, the truth was revealed by non-aligned writers such as Burnett Bolloten and many communists who left the movement after they had seen what had been going on. I have the greatest admiration for Jack Jones but, having studied many books on the subject, I strongly disagree with his criticism (*Freedom*, 3rd August) of Ken Loach's film *Land and Freedom*. In my view Loach produced an accurate and easily understood account of the Spanish events. One perhaps would have liked to have seen more about the anarchist collectives, but Loach probably believed, and rightly so, that the average socialist interested in Spanish history does not have the time or inclination to view a long film. Above all, it is a film to make us think and wish to explore more about the civil war.

Jack Jones's view is the Russian communist version of events, which was discredited long ago after having shown to be falsified. What so few of us outside Spain knew was that a sweeping social revolution involving millions of peasants and workers had taken place, who were concerned not to rescue a treacherous republican regime but to construct a libertarian socialist economy. Collectivisation of land and industry took place in all republican-held areas. 75% of industry was taken over, with Catalonia completely collectivised. Many of the collectives lasted for three and a half years until destroyed by the counter-revolution and Franco. This counter-revolution was spearheaded by the Soviet Union who took control of the fighting away from the republican government. This was easy as the government was very weak and utterly

discredited. In fact the government on a few occasions sought a settlement with Franco.

Many anarchist peasants and workers were shot or imprisoned by the communists and, after they broke up the collectives, the land and farm machinery handed back to the former owners. Such was the fate of the collectives over much of Spain. The Soviet Union sent about two thousand military advisers and political police (OGPU) to Spain and we have long since known what their main work was.

The complex nature of the Spanish conflict with its struggles between different groups cannot be understood in isolation from international Leninism (Bolshevism). Trotsky and Lenin openly declared their intentions to smash anarchism, which is really libertarian socialism, wherever it arose.

Starting with Kronstadt and the Ukraine right up to the invasion of Eastern Europe, the counter-revolutionary nature of Leninism should be obvious to everyone except those still wearing their blinkers. The Soviet Union even sabotaged the miners' strike of 1984-85 by exporting to us large amounts of oil. Other so-called communist countries supplied us with coal.

Finally, with many authentic histories now available for those interested in Spanish history, it should be much clearer that a social revolution and counter-revolution was taking place at the same time as the battle against Franco.

Neil Fisher

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ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR

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JÖRG CHRISTIAN FAUSER

Dear *Freedom*,

I am writing an article about the German author Jörg Christian Fauser (1944-1987) who was a prolific contributor to newspapers and magazines in West Germany and Switzerland, and the author of books such as *Der Schneemann* (the snowman) and *Rohstoff* (raw matter). In his partly autobiographical *Rohstoff* he mentions his connections with *Freedom*.

In 1980 he joined the German Social Democrats, and he died in a road accident in 1987.

In my article I want to cover both his literary and his political development. It will be published in the German anarchist quarterly *Schwarzer Faden* (black thread).

In 1963 Jörg met Stella, an English girl, at a party in Frankfurt and they fell in love. He was studying for his higher school examinations; she had a baby daughter by another man. Jörg dropped out of school and came to London where he worked in a fish market, his first experience of a proletarian environment. He returned to Frankfurt with Stella, but his parents sent her back home.

In Amsterdam, at the International Institute for Social History, I went through all the copies of *Freedom* from 1963 to 1968, and found seven letters written by Jörg Christian Fauser, all in 1964 and 1965.

In 1965 he was working in Watford, and later that year *Freedom* carried an appeal for accommodation for a "couple wishing to 'legalise' quite soon ... for selves and 2½ year old daughter", the contact being 'Stella A. Fauser' at an address in Streatham, London.

In his letters to his family at this time he mentions attending meetings of the London Anarchist Federation. Perhaps there's someone who remembers him or Stella.

Mark Mence

Rosenthaler Strasse 06, 13127 Berlin, Germany

EMMA GOLDMAN AND ANARCHISM IN WALES

Dear *Freedom*,

Here is the latest issue of *Y Faner Goch* (the Welsh Socialist). I'm doing some research on the anarchist tradition in Wales to try to discover our hidden history, and am particularly interested in the White House group of anarchists and marxists that developed in Ammanford before the First World War.

I also understand that one of these anarchists, a miner, married Emma Goldman in a marriage of convenience to enable her to stay in the UK before she went to Canada.

If you can point me in the right direction regarding this and the more general history of anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism in Wales, I'd be grateful. There's not much point in approaching the historians because they're either Plaid Cymru nationalists, Labourites or Stalinists - none of whom have any time for the revolutionary libertarian socialist tradition.

Mike Davies

Y Faner Goch, PO Box 661, Wrexham, LL11 1QU

'SWING HIGH, SWING LOW'

It is given to few people to follow a paid career that they find morally repugnant, for from Samuel Smiles via all employers to the solemn declaration of every political party in and out of office have been informed by every individual employee, in the presence of top management, that next to their country they love their work no matter how mindless and that the weekly wage is but a small consideration in relation to stacking beans on the supermarket shelves.

We are indeed fortunate in this year of our Lord 1996 in that, with the aid of the Tory Party and the national administration, we are finally doing a 'slow, slow, quick, quick, slow' towards that utopia that generations of dreamers have worked and sacrificed to achieve. The mental wards have had their doors thrown open and the unfortunate sick have found a freedom roaming the streets in search of a place to rest their sad heads, and the steel doors of the prison cells have been thrown wide open so that the prisoners may walk out free once more in the clear Bank Holiday sunlight. Wordsworth thou should be living at this hour, for there was a dreamer who gave up dreaming when the French Revolution was taken over by the politicians and that touch of vulgarity that plagues every working class revolution decided Wordsworth that the time was past for waving the handkerchief to the marching pipe and drum and harmonising the *Marseillaise* and it was back to the publisher's office and the 'daffy down dilly' daffodils and to continuing "I wandered lonely as a cloud" and don't get involved and high principles can never be betrayed.

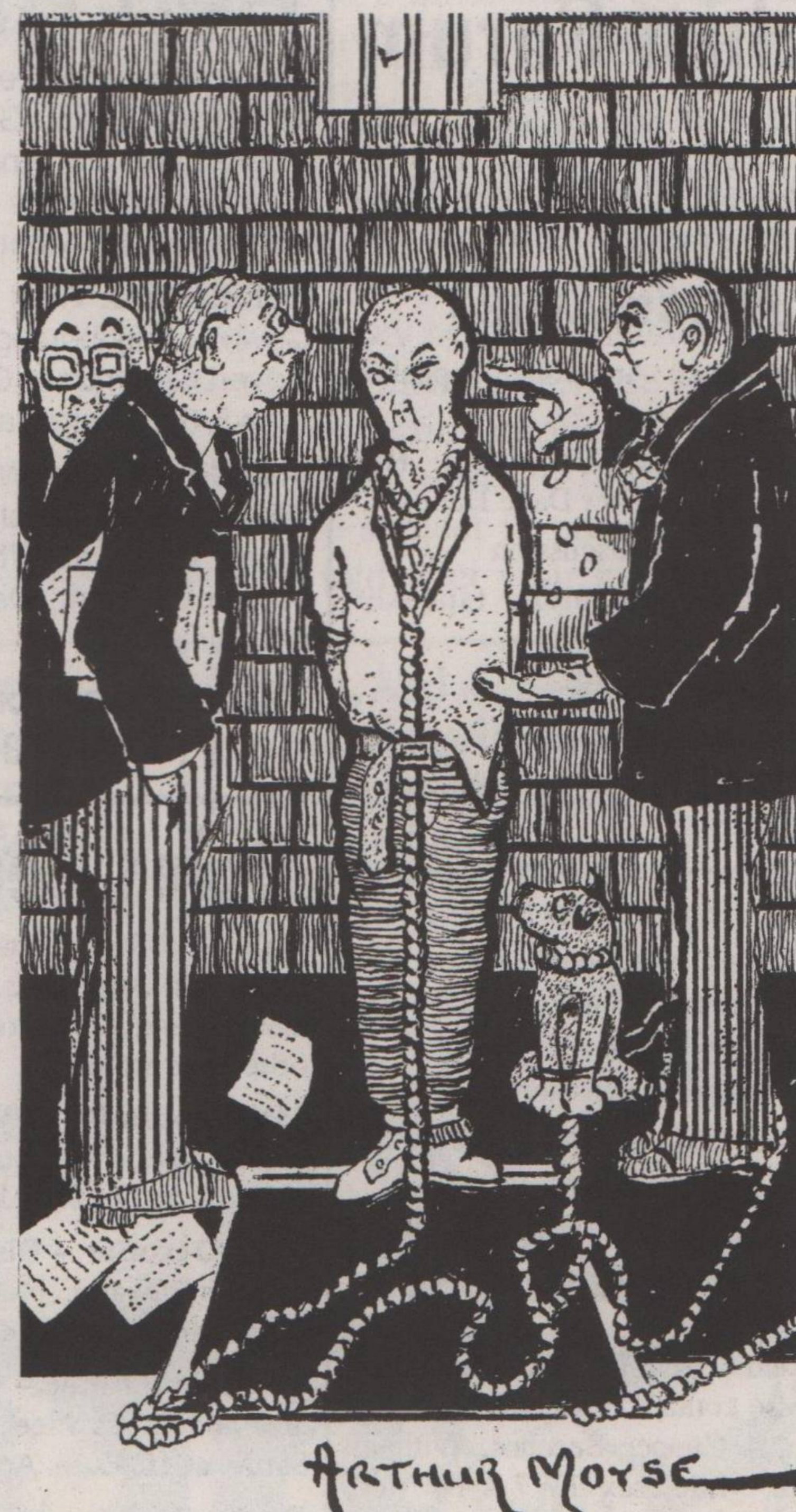
The Public Record Office, due to the efforts of a working journalist, have finally disgorged the reason why the landlord of the Rose and Crown near Preston, Lancashire, resigned his pocket money part-time job over a squabble over a payment of £15 (1956 money) when all he was offered was £1 or £4 to close the

matter. The landlord of the Rose and Crown was Albert Pierrepont, Britain's official hangman, 'slow, slow, quick, quick, slow', and in 1956 Thomas Bancroft let Albert down in that, as a convicted murderer, he was due to be hung but just over an hour after Albert arrived in snowy Manchester Thomas's reprieve came through and the under-sheriff offered Albert £1, pointing out that he had not strung anyone up. It was a typical act of capitalist treachery in relation to the working class, with Thomas blacklegging and Albert, who had in good faith hung 433 men and 17 women in 25 years of craftsmanlike work, stood his dignity, telling ye under-sheriff to stuff his £1 and the job.

Those of us seated in solemn colclave within the White Hart may deplore Albert's moonlighting, but one cannot fault his principle in relation to the capitalist work ethic. I have watched the dawn rise over the neighbour's washing and eaten watercress sandwiches, and this I share with Albert in that the death penalty is a worthless exercise. For me the valid argument for not having a death penalty is that it protects ourselves when we who are not involved in the act of murder give way to irrational rage demanding raging revenge. No death penalty protects us, the uncommitted, even though we have to live with the sour afterthoughts. For, to quote Pierrepont, "The fruit of my experience has this bitter aftertaste: that I do not now believe that any one of the hundreds of executions I carried out has in any way acted as a deterrent against future murder. Capital punishment achieved nothing except revenge." Execution by a society is emotional revenge, a luxury or a grim necessity in that with Henry V you have 600 prisoners and your small force is in imminent danger of being overwhelmed and being exterminated, so what do you do? Don't tell me, tell Henry V.

We are in a year when the identification cards that Churchill tore up are to be

introduced as pseudo-voluntary police dockets complete with the national flag for fools to cheer. In a year when a senior Tory politician can feed his small child a beef-filled beefburger for party purposes in an imitation of Job sacrificing his son to the voice of God, or Christ feeding the five thousand via a politically authorised beef burger, and Albert Pierrepont was right, apart from hanging 433 men and 17 women. In his moonlighting he met, though not in the best of circumstances, many of the media headliners, and of the 433 I remember with distaste the tougher elements of their potatoes in which



they had pressed safety razor blades and there in that small circle of black was William Joyce, thrown out of Mosley's middle class fascist movement, and Joyce stood there and mocked we, the 'red scum', and that middle class took its revenge and hung him.

But for those among us who prefer their criminality and violence as a vicarious exercise in prose, and this is why they are among us, Howard Marks' autobiography *Mr Nice** would be the ideal Christmas present. Easy on the eye and the mind, and I write as one who had to browse through it on the open bookshelves at Smith's, Marks's life makes him that associate that one boasts of knowing but walks alone down a side-street to avoid. A product of Balliol College claims to be a produce of 'Swinging London' and over a period of twenty years has been in and out of the docks. He claims to be an associate of brothel-keepers and a collaborator with a 'knocking shop' run by Lord Moynihan and, down the social scale and for knee-capping kicks, to have worked with Jim McCann who it is claimed had an arms dump in a nun's lunatic asylum. But friends fell out and smuggling hash in coffins and band parts does tend to bore. Each man found himself in his own personal dock in court wherein they accused each other of being MI6 agents until, in 1988, Howard and the Mrs and chums made it *en masse* into an enlarged dock. True or false, it is a small matter for, like the Krays, all that accumulation of money and its inflicted pain merely paid for their path to prison. We meet them and we share the conversation and envy, in abstract, their actions but, half-cut, we drift away. In each of our small groupings we have our own Howard Marks, and I feel we buried ours but a month or so ago. Deadly honest or pathological in relation to the truth, they make amusing company until one becomes the victim of the sad madness.

Arthur Moyse

* *Mr Nice*: an autobiography by Howard Marks, published by Secker, £16.99.

MARCH AGAINST THE JSA

Saturday 7th September

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ANARCHIST RESEARCH GROUP

Saturday 19th October at 2.30pm
ANARCHISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY
speaker Brian Morris

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— 1996 PROGRAMME —

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13th September Peter Kropotkin: His Relevance for Today (speaker Dave Dane)

20th September General discussion

27th September Cyberanarchy (speaker Martin Peacock)

4th October General discussion

11th October General discussion

18th October Emily Bronte and Anarchism (speaker Jean Pollard)

25th October Literary Anarchy: A Reading of Anarchist Short Fiction (by John Moore)

1st November Food Not Bombs (illustrated talk by Keith McHenry of San Francisco Food Not Bombs Group including a video)

8th November General discussion

Therafter vacant slots are available, except on:

20th December Christmas Party

31st January Speakers from Green Anarchist talking about their court action and showing the video *Exit Stage Right*.

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

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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

Dales Red Rambles

A series of free guided walks in the Yorkshire Dales for Anarchists, Greens, Socialists and Libertarians. All walks are on a Sunday unless otherwise stated.

15th September – Ribblesdale: Long Preston to Hellifield. Meet outside Maypole Inn, Long Preston, at 11.00am. Length approx 6 miles.

13th October – Bishoptdale: West Burton to Swinithwaite. Meet West Burton village school at 11.00am. Length approx 6 miles.

17th November – Ribblesdale: Attermire Scar and Caves. Meet car park before Viaduct, Settle, at 10.45am. Approx 6 miles.

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