

FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

Vol. 58 No. 14

19th July 1997

50p

Massive resources go to inspecting rubble, but ...

THE MARS TRIP IS MOSTLY HARMLESS

On 4th July Earth time, a spacecraft landed safely on Mars and was promptly renamed the Carl Sagan Memorial Station after the late astronomer and sceptic. A robotic wheelbarrow named after the anti-slavery campaigner, Sojourner Truth, began to make chemical analyses of rocks in the vicinity.

Massive amounts of the Earth's resources are spent on inspecting a small amount of Martian rubble, at a time when most people on the Earth cannot get enough of the Earth's resources to stay healthy.

Absolute shortage of resources is not, however, the problem. It might become the problem if current farming practices weaken the soil beyond a critical point, or over-fishing kills off all the fish food, or pollution continues, or the human population keeps on rising. But for now, world starvation results from an inefficient system of distributing the resources which exist.

North Korea, for instance, has been hit by two years of bad harvests. At least 50%, probably 80%, of its children are underweight and ill-fed by any standard. Food is available elsewhere, but the 'Dear Leader' Kim Jong-Il, refused to admit there was a problem until it really was too late. Now he is applying for aid through the World Food Programme, but countries with available surpluses are refusing to supply it until North Korea adopts market capitalism.

In the world as a whole, market capitalism is itself the problem, by producing to make profits rather than to supply needs. To put it crudely, the rulers of poor countries are induced to buy armaments with borrowed money, then to impoverish their subjects collecting taxes to pay the interest on the loans. If starvation results, the rich capitalist countries may provide 'aid', which in effect only

reimburses part of the cost of the armaments.

Apart from 'aid', the only way the capitalist system can get resources to poor people is to pay them for working. If the hunting of deer with dogs is stopped, we are told, so-and-so many rural jobs will be lost. In an economy where jobs and needs were separate, there would be less excuse for such cruelty. Many jobs are pointless, the equivalent of throwing bricks over a wall and running around to throw them back again. Some are positively harmful, 'but anyway it's a job'.

The epitome of capitalism is the armaments trade, which provides jobs, and makes profits, without fulfilling any needs at all. Which brings us back to the Mars trip.

The exploration of Mars provides the joy of sheer achievement ("because it's there", as John Hunt said of the ascent of Mount Everest). In time it may provide enormous benefits to

science (for instance the remote but exciting possibility of comparative biology). It may even become a source of material human riches. But its chief benefit is a negative one, that it provides jobs in the same trades as are used in weapons development, *without doing any harm*.

If the Eurofighter can be justified in terms of the jobs it provides (200,000 we are told by its advocates), then the Mars lander can be justified on the same grounds. And the Mars lander is not designed to kill.

Some, including some anarchists, contend that space exploration would be impossible in an anarchist society because the complexity of organisation involved is such as to require a government to run it. We respect this opinion, but we respectfully disagree. In our view, if enough people are sufficiently enthusiastic to get something done, they can organise themselves to do it to whatever level of organisation is necessary, without coercion.

— REFLECTIONS ON THE BUDGET —

ROBBING WHO TO PAY WHOM?

If anybody was expecting the New Labour government to make the revolution for us, then it was obvious, without being economists or such experts, that if they were intent on using the capitalist system to improve the lot of the underprivileged there was only one obvious and worthwhile solution: taxing the middle class and the rich "until the pips squeak" (as one Chancellor, now waving his eyebrows in the Lords, once declared).

They haven't done this and in fact all they are saying is that they rob Peter to pay Paul, but never intend to 'rob' the rich Peters. They even boast of *not having increased the top tax*, so

it is Paul who is the victim as always.

In fact budgets are the subtle ploy of 'divide and rule'. Some get benefits but most of the others lose out. Surely anarchists are the only ones who don't believe in governments – any government, left, right or centre – and we will go on saying it until we are blue in our faces. Don't rely on governments. Progress in all fields depends on us: the ordinary folk who know what they want from life. And don't forget, we only have one life. Anarchists believe we should make the best of that life, not just money but joy in living life to the full, physically, emotionally and lovingly.

anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

Vol. 58 No. 14

19th July 1997

50p

NEW LABOUR – NEW CORRUPTION?

The New Labour government has not wasted much time in setting up its managerial mates into positions of power and influence. Lord Simons, formerly a BP chairman, was found a job as Minister for Competitiveness in Europe, and Sir Peter Davis, former chairman and chief executive of Reed International, is to head the new government scheme 'From Welfare to Work'.

Lord Simon has £2 million worth of shares in BP, but has severed links with a rolling performance tax fiddling scheme which transfers shares to an off-shore trust in Jersey. Some are perturbed that Lord Simon has not got rid of the shares or declared his interest for inclusion in the new Lords Register of Members' Interests. Others are anxious that his ownership of the shares could conflict with his Treasury and DTI obligations.

Matthew Spencer of Greenpeace said last week that subsidies of £17 million were doled out to the fossil fuel industry, and oil companies were being treated to favourable tax treatment. It seems that while the unfortunate are being bounced in and out of the dole queues by the likes of Frank Field and Harriet Harman, Secretary of State for Social Security, the bosses like Lord Simon are roaming round their own 'revolving door' of riches and power as they dip in and out of the oil industry and government office.

The Greenpeace spokesman ponders: "It does raise the spectre of cosy chats between friends who are either in oil or have been in it, about how, for example, the review of North Sea oil taxation, which the Chancellor has just announced, could affect their industry and what would be a suitable outcome".

Lord Hollick has been left off the list of advisers to the DTI (Department of Trade and Industry). Lord Hollick is a media magnet, and is an informal and 'unpaid adviser' and therefore needn't be named in the Parliamentary Companion, according to official sources. Some think he could prove an embarrassment to the government if he gets involved in media mergers.

Sir Peter Davis is another case. *Private Eye* says: "Sir Peter Davis is the obvious man to take charge of the Labour government's plans to propel people from welfare to work – so much of his life has been spent propelling people in the opposite direction". At Reed International Mr Davis, as chairman, got shot of six hundred people in 1986 and went on to sack another three hundred in the years that followed. According to *Private Eye*, he was a but of a union buster in his time, making full use of the Tory government's anti-union laws which he publicly praised.

When the National Union of Journalists balloted a thousand or so journalists at Reed International, some of whom were not union members, with the question 'Do you want to be represented by a trade union?' the result was an overwhelming 96% 'yes' to union representation. Sir Peter Davis replied by removing all union rights.

This led to strikes and demonstrations by the workforce. At one meeting John Smith, then leader of the Labour Party, declared: "It cannot be right that British workers can be treated as less worthy of rights than workers in other parts of Europe, particularly when they work for the same employer". Reed

International had just merged with the Dutch company Elsevier, which was in law compelled to recognise unions where a majority of workers voted for them.

Davis stood firm, refusing to meet the Labour leader or the union or the Labour MEP

Anita Pollack.

When Davis left Reed in 1994 he got a £2 million golden handshake. Once he was established with the Prudential as the 'man from the Pru' he got £600,000 as chief executive. He himself starred in the Pru's £20



The EuroTop Rally in Amsterdam on 14th June
(photo from Guy Cheverton, whose report appears on page 2 inside).

million advertising campaign. As part of the advert Sir Peter asks: "Where is it written that you should slave into your sixties?"

At the age of 55 Sir Peter has pension plans which, for him, will mean a pension for life of at least £200,000 a year if he retires at 60. In the meantime he intends to work off any surplus energy and keep fit kicking the arses of the young unemployed and bunging them onto training schemes, Restart courses, motivation programmes.

The anarcho-syndicalist historian Geoffrey Ostergaard claimed that the Labour Party represented the interests of the managerial classes better than the Tories, so it should come as no surprise to us that this shower from the City are ganging up to join with New Labour. In 1945 Arthur Greenwood, Labour Lord Privy Seal, declared: "I look around my colleagues and I see landlords, capitalists and lawyers". Whatever their backgrounds, these lords and ladies and landlords, they always know their script. They never forget their lines.

Private Eye says of Sir Peter Davis: "Once a die-hard Tory, he now toes the 'new' Labour line". Recently Sir Peter stated: "It has become increasingly clear to me that we were in danger of creating a new underclass".

Like I say, they know how to make the right noises, that's how they come to be managers.

Mack the Knife

— British Airways —

BRUTE FORCE AND BLACKLISTS

British Airways is showing itself to be a mean-minded employer. The British Medical Association condemned its demand that staff produce a sick note for one single day's absence from work owing to illness. This happened when large numbers of BA staff rang in sick during last week's strike.

What seems to be happening is that the persecution of the blue-collar workers in British manufacturing under the Thatcher government in the 1980s has now reached the white-collar workers with a vengeance. Of course it's been happening for some time, but it's not been noticed so much in the media. These are the kind of people who cheered the defeat of the miners and the shackling of trade unions in this country – now they are the ones who are suffering.

During last week's strike a senior stewardess declared: "I am a middle-aged, middle class mother of two with a mortgage. I am no militant. I am on strike, but I do not expect to be treated like this."

Then the lady gives an account which chimes true to my knowledge of the working lives of my friends in the lower middle classes – the clerks and pen-pushers, sorry button pushers, you know the type. She says: "Many of my friends in BA have sought medical help. The stress of dealing with managers has made them ill. I feel sick just thinking about the tactics that I, and others, have had to endure."

Now there is a management style which has grown up here which started off by kicking the arses of coal miners and shop-floor workers in

the last decade, and has ended up trouncing secretaries and the rest of the office staff. Didn't they think that once they had offered the boss the right to give the workers the order of the boot and shackled their unions that the same boss would get a taste for down-sizing secretaries, clerks and even middle managers?

Today, across the land, office staff and cabin crews are stressed out to beggary.

TORMENTING THE STAFF

In *The Independent* Andreas Whittam Smith writes: "By introducing the notion of punishment for striking, British Airways demonstrates that it does not fully accept the right of people to belong to a trade union, a right which is expressly protected in British law and also secured by Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights". He thinks this is shocking, as do other sections of the press. But this is not so strange as they make out – shop-floor workers have suffered this for generations.

Office staff have often had their privileges on a plate because the custom was that the differentials and benefits which were available to the white-collar classes were built traditionally on the battles which were being fought on the shop-floor. The British hierarchy of rewards was constructed from the bottom upwards. Historically, first the workers would strike and perhaps win benefits and rises, then the office staff would draw their higher differential automatically without having to lift a finger. Very often these same

staff would look down on the shop-floor, thinking they were stupid.

The inane snobbery of the British lower middle classes drove them to help to dismantle their principal front-line protectors: the trade unions, the shop stewards movement and shop-floor organisation. Thus the office staff and middle managers have become, partly through their own loftiness and hostility to the shop-floor, the new victims of senior management inhumanity.

Mr Whittam Smith lists the threats to BA staff should they strike:

- they could be sued for damages as a result of losses incurred by the company;
- they could be dismissed for breaching their contract;
- they will have removed any options for early retirement or severance available under various re-structuring schemes;
- they will not be eligible for promotion until March 2000;
- they will lose all their staff travel until March 2000.

Mr Whittam Smith says: "British Airways' list of sanctions means that any stewards or stewardesses going on strike must contemplate being financially ruined by lawsuits and perhaps losing their homes as a result".

In a sense the bosses have been more officious with these white-collar workers in so
(continued on page 2)

INTERNATIONALISM OR THE AIT?



More of the EuroTop Rally in Amsterdam on 14th June

Although family arguments are amongst the most vicious, those conducted inside the libertarian family have never been as bloody as, say, those that rend Trotskyism with its umpteen Fourth Internationals.

For some of us it is almost taboo to mention the organisational rift in anarcho-syndicalism, revolutionary syndicalism, call it what you will, but perhaps it is time for a little more openness about where we are and where we should be going.

Syndicalism's heyday, unfortunately, was right back in the 1920s. It was Fascism, not Marxism, which broke its organisational back from Italy to Argentina and Spain; with the Allies finishing off any chance of resurgence, with their imposed models of trade unionism in 1945.

From the earliest years of this century, syndicalists have held numerous conferences (they still do!) to try and forge an international organisation or means for closer co-operation. Over the Christmas and New Year of 1922-23 the International Workers' Association was formed, uniting some one and a half million workers from European and South American anarcho-syndicalist organisations in a body capable of giving solidarity and mutual aid. The International Workers' Association (AIT by its Spanish initials) still awaits its historian. Gradually its sections were reduced by war and oppression until, with the exception of a large but bureaucratized Spanish CNT-in-exile, the post-war AIT could count only the small French CNT, the SAC of Sweden and a handful of propaganda groups.

With the resurgence of the Spanish CNT after Franco's death, the AIT also started to come back to life. New propaganda groups affiliated and seemingly international anarcho-syndicalism was given a new chance.

AUXILIARIES OR ANARCHO-SYNDICALISTS?

The numerical importance of the Spanish CNT and the fact that it came so close to achieving its ideal in 1936 has meant that it has always dominated the AIT.

From December 1937 the Paris Congress of the AIT, where the CNT demanded (and got) agreement to cease any criticism of its governmentism from the Sections, through its post-war expulsion of the SAC to the December 1996 Madrid Congress where the CNT ordered the expulsion of the Paris CNT and the Rome Italian Syndicalist Union, the CNT of Spain *always* gets its way.

Partly this is due to the nature of the other Sections. Hero worship of the holy initials CNT and those (few) that remain within them seems the rule – as if the young sectarians of the CNT of 1997 really had any connections with the insurrectionists and militia fighters of 1936.

Recently a member of the Solidarity Federation (British IWA Section) has written that "some of our 'comrades' in Spain regard the AIT as their overseas auxiliaries, not fellow

anarcho-syndicalists working under different conditions".

He paints a picture of an organisation run by and for the Spanish, with a generally craven membership in the other countries, and with an aversion to federalism; the AIT (i.e. CNT) deciding union tactics whether in Norway or Nigeria; the Spanish way being the only way for anarcho-syndicalists no matter how different their situations.

Unreformable, bureaucratic and enforcing an orthodoxy impossible to keep in the real world or the workplace. With the CNT and USI majorities booted out (to their relief) the AIT is made up of 21 sections, all propaganda groups (though the 120-member Bordeaux CNT claims union status) family under the external control of Madrid.

I don't doubt that there are fine organisations and militants in the IWA, I know there are from supporting Chilean AIT members last year – you must be made of strong stuff to be a member of the Nigerian Awareness League or A Las de Xue of Colombia! What I dispute is the ability of the AIT to act in a federalist, or indeed libertarian, manner or its ability to look to the world or radical activity beyond small anarchist groups

THE MAJORITY SECTOR OF ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM

The CGT of Spain has 35,000 members, ARCA in Italy 29,000, the SAC in Sweden 10,000, the CNT in France 3,400 members. This is what I mean by the majority sector of European syndicalism. Real unions that wage real strikes and which all have a workplace base. Not phoney syndicalists, as some AIT sections may insist, but working class organisations imbued with the libertarian philosophy who actually get their hands dirty in the class struggle.

Briefly to explain the initialisms: After Franco's death the Spanish government restored the property which Franco had confiscated from the trade unions. The anarcho-syndicalist CNT (National Confederation of Workers) had split during the Franco oppression, and there were two organisations claiming to be the 'authentic CNT'. Eventually the dispute was settled by the Spanish courts in favour of the CNT-AIT, and the other organisation changed its name to CGT (General Confederation of Workers).

In Dam Square during the EuroTop Rally against the bosses of Europe I was impressed by the sea of red-and-black that these unions fielded.

In terms of the European Union Left they have an important weight. The SAC in particular, and the CGT to a lesser extent, have given real support to the Liverpool dockers and it is these unions, not the AIT, which are showing the wider radical sector of trade unionism that syndicalism is alive and well.

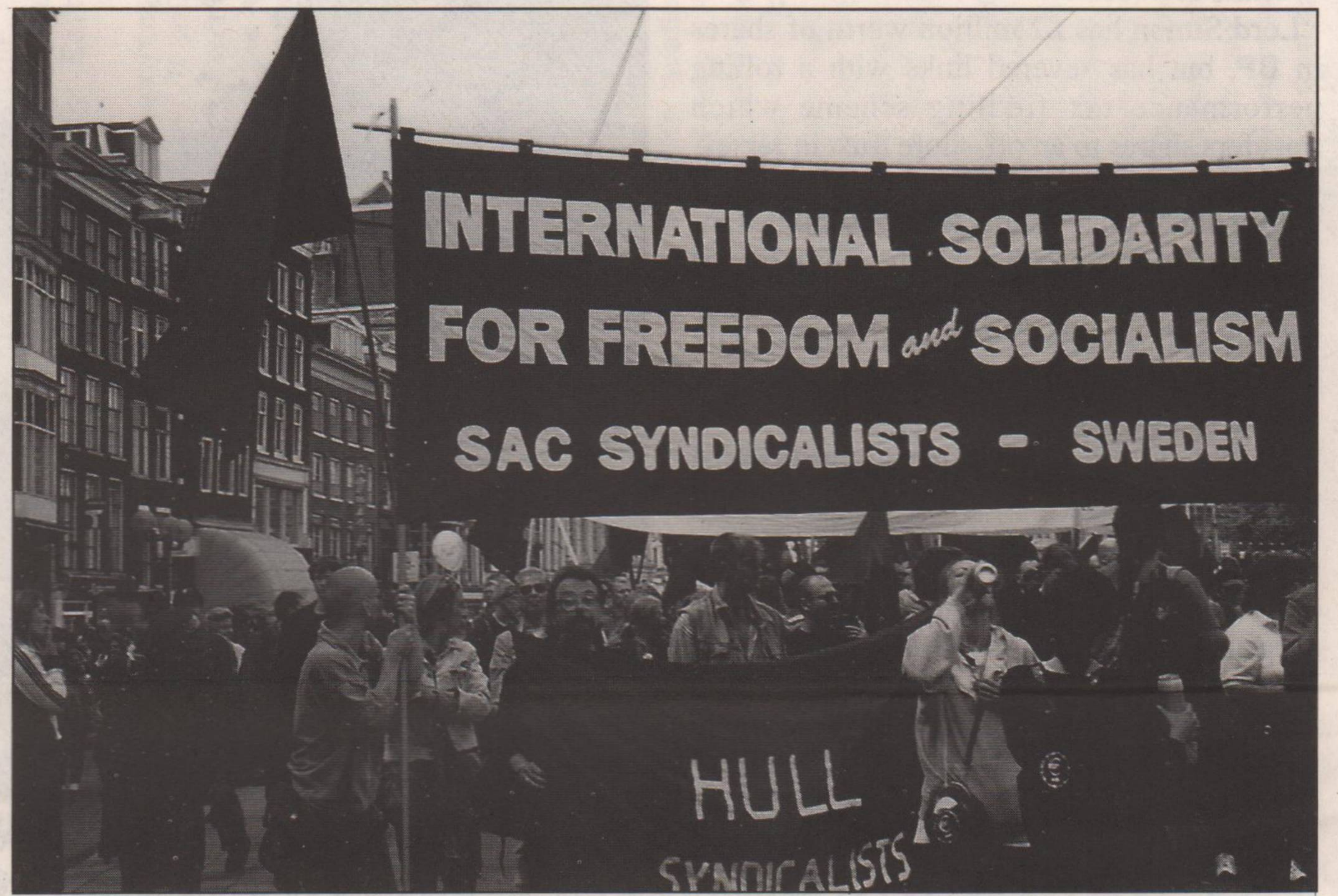
We marched together in Amsterdam and have helped each other out on innumerable occasions (the Juvel bakery dispute, Domeque

sherry strike, Liverpool dockers lock-out, Paris Metro cleaners' strike, just to give a taste). It is now time this majority of explicitly syndicalist organisations formalised their friendship as the hub of a European union co-ordination, not some new International with rules and regulations – we have had enough of these – but a simple mechanism for solidarity and communication which could (as a first step) have a real influence in our continent's industrial struggles, pulling in class struggle unions in a simple, practical alliance against the bosses, and for social change.

We should shed any illusions we have in the possibility of unity with the AIT, or the federalist nature of the body. For anarcho-syndicalism's majority, those that inhabit the everyday world of union struggle, it's time to start talking.

Guy Cheverton

Guy Cheverton is a member of Hull Syndicalists, and International Secretary of Hull Trades Union Council



Syndicalists from Sweden and Hull march in Amsterdam

BRITISH AIRWAYS: BRUTE FORCE AND BLACKLISTS

(continued from page 1)

far as they have harassed them over the telephone at home. If they'd have done that to a factory worker they'd have been risking a fist in their face.

BUTCHERS OF HUMANITY REQUIRED

Despite the threats from managers, as I write the number of cabin staff ringing in sick has increased to 1,700 thereby causing further cancellations at Heathrow and Gatwick. As

Freedom goes to press, there is also the threat that 9,000 ground staff may set dates for strikes. Catering staff have voted by a clear majority for strike action.

It is worth remembering that Bob Ayling, the chairman of British Airways, is a close mate of Tony Blair. He is a big crony of Peter Mandelson too. *Private Eye* claims that Bob Ayling is "just the sort of businessman Blair admires: successful, good at sound-bites and with a hatred of trade unions".

Mr Ayling would have been excellent material to be a government adviser, he so fits the mould of 'new' Labour. Mr Blair tried, but was unsuccessful.

We can't say that Mr Ayling missed his way: he should have been a butcher, because the main requirement of the executive today are the talents of a butcher. Butchers of humanity are required in the executive suites. Cut-throat competition requires nothing less.

What we are getting now is the kind of the cry of the cringers – those who backed big business, but didn't think it would harm them when they jeered at the miners. The senior stewardess mentioned earlier asks: "Is this any way to run an airline? Staff and management disagree about pay and conditions. We have voted overwhelmingly for this action. That is our right. Is it Mr Ayling's right to demoralise and destroy the crew?"

It is in the very nature of business that the boss is forced by the market into brutality in his dealings with his workers.

Transport and General Worker



ISBN 0 900384 91 3

160 pages

£6.95 (post free inland, add 10% p&p overseas)

FREEDOM PRESS

84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

new from Freedom Press

The Tradition of Workers' Control

by Geoffrey Ostergaard

Workers' control of industry, a phrase coined by the Guild Socialists, recalls the libertarian aspirations of the first rebels against the slavery inherent in the capitalist mode of production. As Geoffrey Ostergaard shows, libertarian socialism is not dead. There are workers in Britain who own and control their workplaces, and although this movement of workers' control in industry is not large, it is flourishing.

— ABOVE THE PARAPETS —

FALSE GENEROSITY
TO THE IRA

The conflict over Orange marches is, as many commentators have pointed out, not about marching at all, but about who rules the Northern Ireland statelet, and on what basis. The anger that nationalists are now forcibly expressing – towards the British more than towards the Unionists, perhaps – is based on the clear denial of what is called ‘parity of esteem’ by the government. In other words, the way the parades are forced through is a brutal reminder of their subordinate position in society. The Orangeman and Orangewoman’s right to march to and from church is superior to the Catholic’s right to go to mass, or the nationalist’s right to go to and from her or his house. So says the government.

Underlying all this conflict is the much deeper and more important issue of a negotiated settlement. The *Daily Telegraph* accurately summed up the Blair approach: “to make an offer to Sinn Fein/IRA apparently so generous that if they refuse, they will be seen as the spoilers”. On 25th June, Blair revealed that he had dropped the demand for prior decommissioning, he had fixed a firm, tight timetable for negotiations (September to May 1998), and he would allow Sinn Fein into talks within six weeks of a ceasefire being announced (in contrast to the three month ‘decontamination’ period imposed by Major). What was interesting about this revelation was that it was clearly a direct response to republican demands.

Precise republican conditions for a ceasefire had been spelled out by Gerry Adams, in public, on 20th May. The *Daily Telegraph* reported, “Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein president, said republicans should be allowed into negotiations ‘immediately’ after a fresh truce, that a settlement had to be achieved within six to nine months and that the issue of the decommissioning of terrorist weapons had to be set aside”. No newspaper and no politician, so far as I know, pointed out that the ‘aide memoire’ Blair sent to Sinn Fein, and published on 25th June, conceded ground on all of these points, and was therefore a positive response to Sinn Fein, not an independent initiative aimed at Sinn Fein. The talks timetable, for example, is exactly nine months, as specified by Adams.

No newspaper (apart from the *Daily Telegraph*, very fleetingly) mentioned either that Blair demanded only an ‘unequivocal’ ceasefire – not the ‘permanent’ ceasefire which blocked the peace process for weeks in 1994. The fact that no one cares about this at all any more demonstrates the meaninglessness and irrelevance of the demand.

The problem is that while Blair has moved a long way on the pre-conditions for talks, and has carried Unionists with him, he has at the same time been establishing, very firmly, a

predetermined outcome of the talks, and this outcome is very definitely Unionist. In an important speech on 16th May 1997 at the Royal Ulster Agricultural Show, Blair was strongly pro-Union: “My agenda is not a united Ireland – and I wonder just how many see it as a realistic possibility in the foreseeable future. Northern Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom as long as a majority here wish ... I believe in the United Kingdom. I value the Union ... none of us in this hall today, even the youngest, is likely to see Northern Ireland as anything but a part of the United Kingdom ... Unionists have nothing to fear from a new Labour government. A political settlement is not a slippery slope to a united Ireland. The government will not be persuaders for unity”. No such reassurance was extended to nationalists, no ‘parity of esteem’ was granted their fears and hopes.

Blair said, “I want to see a Union which reflects and accommodates diversity ... The proposals this government are making for Scotland and Wales, and for the English regions, are designed to bring Government closer to the people ... I support this approach for Northern Ireland too, with some form of devolution and cross-border arrangements which acknowledge the importance of relationships in the island of Ireland. *This is what the negotiations are about*” (emphasis added). Blair is saying to the republicans: come in to talks, we are removing the formal obstacles to your participation, but when you get to the table, you will be sitting down to destroy your dreams and to cement in place the Union of Britain and Northern Ireland.

The media are effectively cloaking Blair’s approach. He appears generous but what he is really offering is doomed to failure. Unless he alters direction, we are set for another generation of violence. Even if the present republican leadership agree to the talks outlined by Blair, and even if they accept the Unionist outcome he demands, a new wave of republicanism will arise, as every informed observer knows full well.

Milan Rai

— OBITUARIES —

Farewell to
Peta And Tom

At the beginning of this month I had a telephone call from Tom Keell Wolfe’s son Richard giving me the sad news of his death from cancer. A few days later, and a few hours after I had seen her sedated and peaceful in the St Elizabeth Hospice in Ipswich where she had been taken the day before, I received a telephone call from a sweet and warm nurse telling me that Peta (Dorothy) Hewetson had died. Both Tom and Peta were real ‘Friends of Freedom Press’ and I would not have been writing about them in *Freedom* otherwise.

Peta was my companion for the past 35 years and before that John Hewetson’s companion for some twenty years – the war years when both of them were active in the anti-war anarchist movement. It was in the

early ‘40s that we met and worked together in making anti-war propaganda. Every Sunday we were all either on the platform at Speakers’ Corner at the Marble Arch end of Hyde Park or selling *War Commentary* outside the gates. Young readers of *Freedom* may be surprised to learn that on many Sundays we would sell a thousand copies of *War Commentary* at the gates.

Peta, also in that period, went frequently to our Freedom Press office in Belsize Road, Swiss Cottage, to help deal with the office chores, as did my companion at that time Marie Louise Berneri (1918-1949). In later years she was much less active because John Hewetson’s GP practice was in Vauxhall and after the war, with the Labour ‘victory’, political ‘enthusiasm’ on the left petered out as they assumed that all the old – the Attlee – Labour lot would usher in the new society, just as I imagine some are expecting the New Labour lot will change the economic menu in favour of the underprivileged.

Peta was not an activist. She was an anarchist in that she was a gentle, tolerant, materially undemanding person, who nevertheless was shocked by cruelty and violence and above all injustice. I think she managed to live an anarchist kind of life – I hope she felt this with me.

I cannot remember how many years it is since I first met Tom who, like Peta, has just recently died of cancer. He was the son of Tom Keell and Lilian Wolfe, two stalwarts of Freedom Press in the First World War (both were arrested and imprisoned for sedition, as we were in the second holocaust). Tom Keell kept *Freedom* alive into the ‘30s. Lilian, who missed being a centenarian by a year or two, was a wonderful office worker and only ‘retired’ from her unpaid ‘job’ in her nineties. ‘Young’ Tom (the one I am writing about, and I think he must have been in his late seventies when he died just recently) was never as active as his parents, but once again was somebody who sought to live an anarchist life. Some time ago he wrote to me that he had regretted not being a propagandist, but he was in spirit and in his daily contacts one of us.

Farewell to my dear Peta and to Doolie’s, and our, dear Tom.

Vernon Richards

Red Rambles

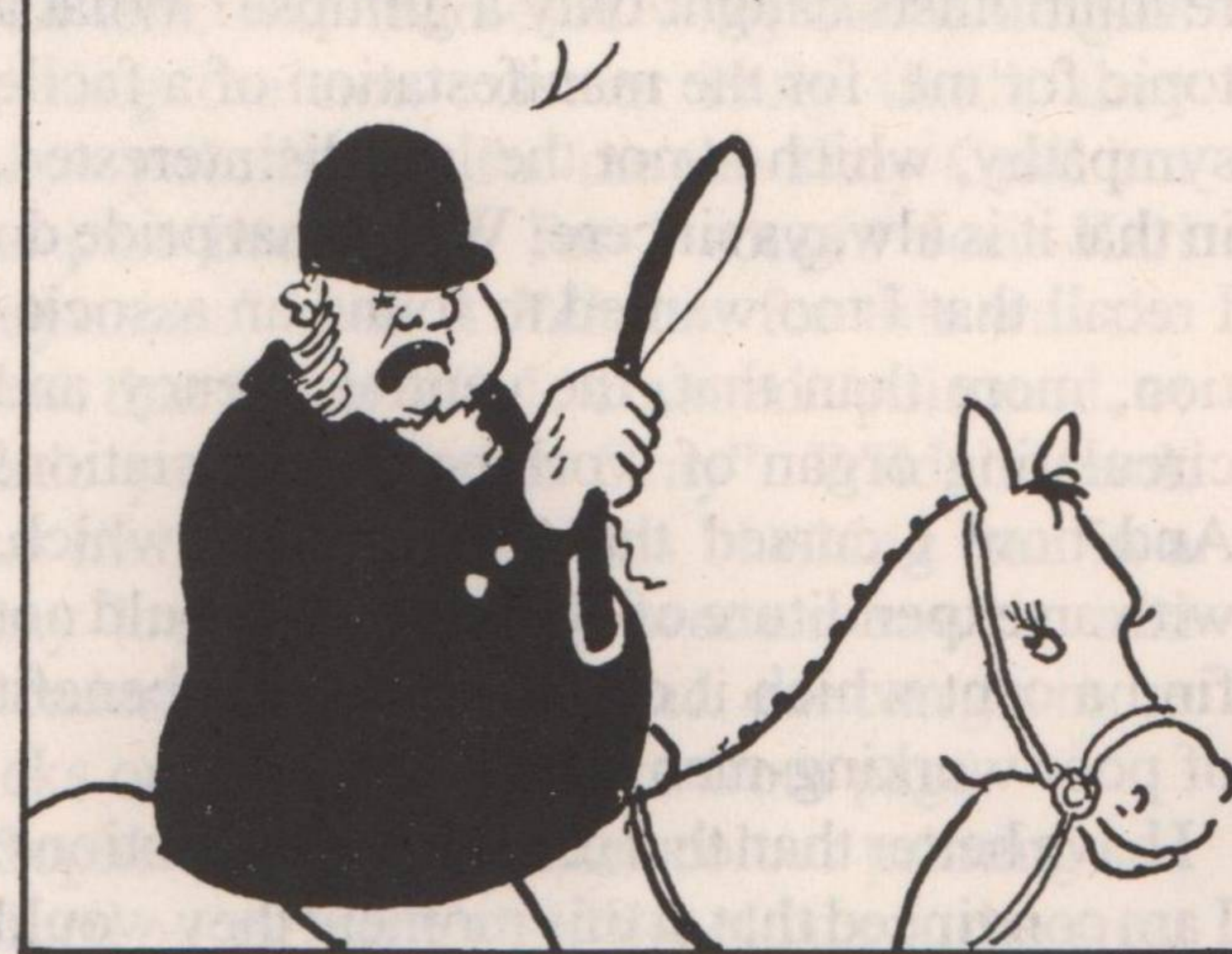
Most readers of *Freedom* are well aware of our existence, but for the benefit of new readers Red Rambles is an anarchist walking group which is open to others on the libertarian left. Red Rambles is celebrating our fifth birthday this August. We meet monthly on a Sunday for a ramble in either the Derbyshire Peak District or the Midlands. There is a second Red Rambles group who meet in the Yorkshire Dales.

For us, as for the walkers and rambles of the 1930s, the issues of access, land ownership and land use remain vital areas of concern, and we join other rambler’s organisations from time to time to support particular campaigns. Members of the Midlands Red Rambles have attended protest rallies at locations such as Alport Dale in the Peak District where there is a proposed forestry development which threatens the dale, and Blackbrook reservoir in Leicestershire where a local landowner restricts access to an area of beautiful countryside. Access rights in Britain are still far from adequate.

Our walks provide an informal opportunity for anarchists to meet and talk in a setting different from more traditional meetings and conferences. The numbers in attendance are usually 7-10 but can sometimes be higher. All are welcome, but do remember that some of the walks are fairly ‘mountainous’ and need suitable footwear, clothing and food and drink. A basic level of physical fitness is also desirable.

Jonathan Simcock

Think how many rural jobs would be lost if we stopped setting dogs on deer and foxes.



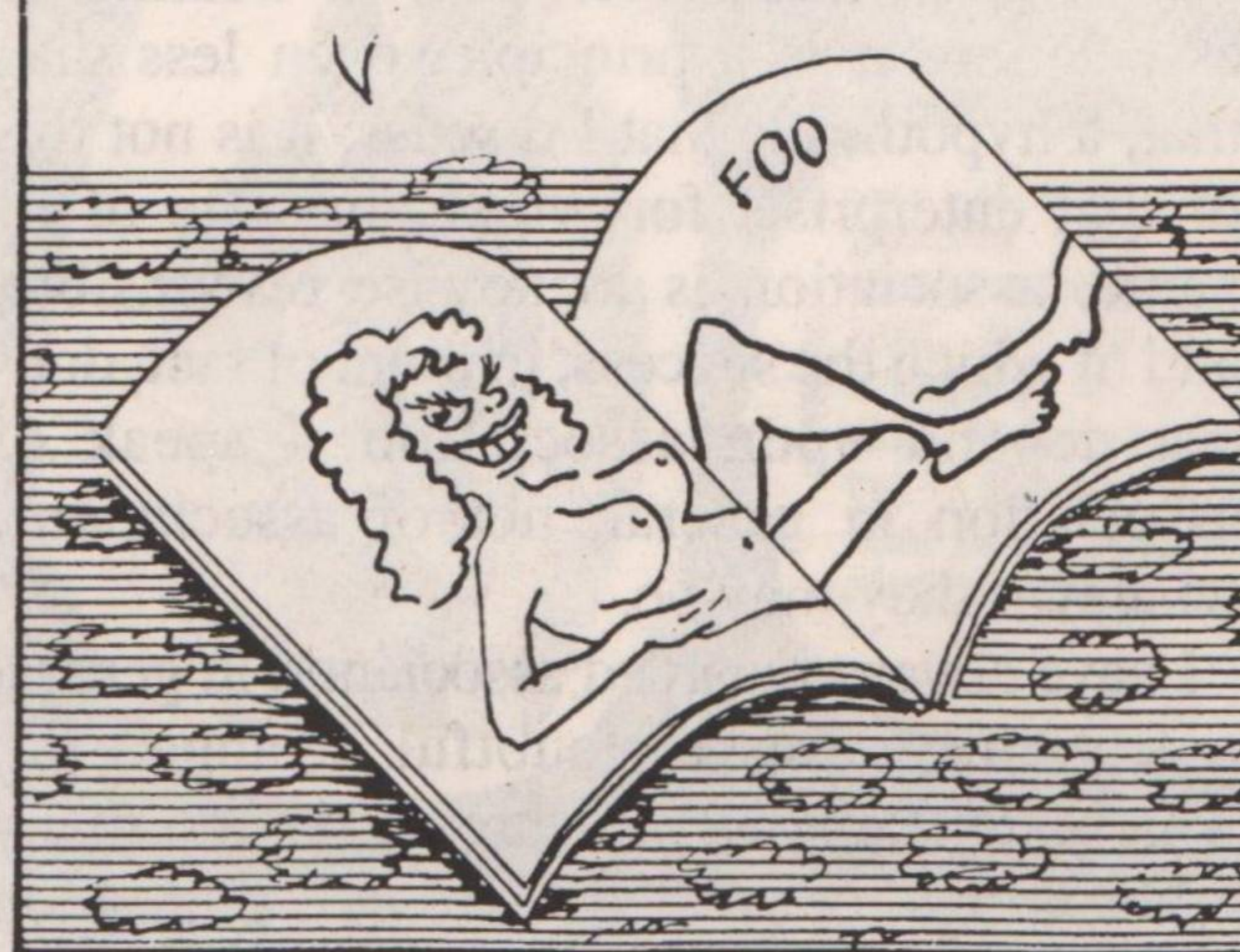
Think how many manufacturing jobs would be lost if we stopped selling Tornado jets to Indonesia.



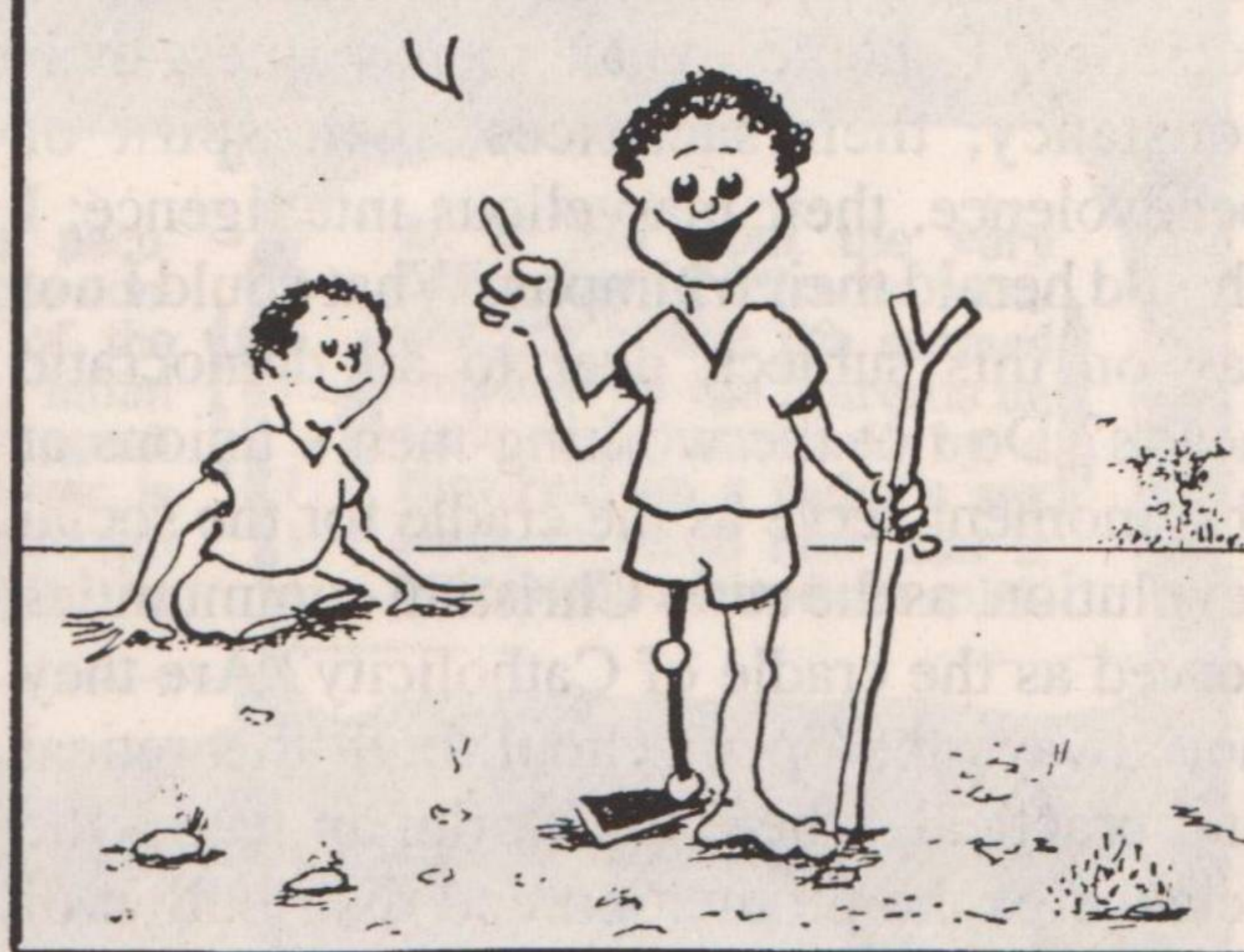
Think how Mother Theresa’s job would be lost if we stopped producing unwanted babies.



Think how many customs officers’ jobs would be lost if we decriminalised victimless pornography.



Think how many jobs for artificial limb makers would be lost if we stopped planting land mines.



Think how much pleasanter life would be if the wages system was abolished.



New from Freedom Press

CULTURE AND
ANARCHISM

by

Harold Barclay

The question, which type of culture gives more freedom to its inhabitants, causes thought about what we mean by freedom.

This book provokes thought throughout, citing actual examples from the author’s encyclopaedic knowledge of different cultures.

ISBN 0 900384 84 0 168 pages £6.95*

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

**FAILING TO
READ PROUDHON**

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and his children, by Gustave Courbet
(painting in the Petit Palais, Paris)

In Grenoble last year a French anarchist remarked to me that the older he got the more respect he had for Proudhon, and a fortnight ago a German anarchist said exactly the same thing. I find this interesting, and I know about the influence of Proudhon in the anarchist movements of several countries. And I cherish a dozen bits of wisdom from Proudhon quoted by other writers, especially his two English-language biographers George Woodcock and Edward Hyams. People have struggled to translate several of his works into English and several times in my life I have bought them, intending to master the master of paradox.

During the Second World War Freedom Press re-issued its 1923 edition of John Beverley Robinson's translation of *The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, binding up the sheets which must have been lovingly preserved for decades by Tom Keell and Lilian Wolfe. Any owner of this re-issue will confirm that the publishers themselves were so unfamiliar with Proudhon that his first name is printed on the cover as Pierre-Jean. But I could never get absorbed in the text to find out what it was all about.

I also acquired a copy of Benjamin Tucker's translation of *What is Property?* but my eyes glazed over when I tried to read it, even though I have often quoted some key sentences. My current copy is the 1970 Dover reprint but I still don't read it. After that I got in a second-hand shop a copy of Benjamin Tucker's very rare translation of the first part of *The System of Economic Contradictions: or, the Philosophy of Misery*. I couldn't begin to understand it, and in the late 1940s lent it to George Woodcock. He never returned it and I have never missed it. Unlike me, he was able to use it creatively in what I see as his excellent book *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: A Biography* (Routledge, 1956). It was this biography that made clear to me why other people are so intrigued by Proudhon.

There have been other translations or selections over the years, and the one that is important to me is *The Principle of Federation*, Proudhon's celebrated text from 1863, published by the University of Toronto Press in 1979. It was translated and edited by a worthy man from the University of Western Ontario, Richard Vernon, so Peter Marshall can be forgiven in his massive book on

anarchism, *Demanding the Impossible*, for attributing this edition to Vernon Richards. He is guiltless of translating Proudhon, and, having known him for fifty years, I think that he too finds Proudhon unreadable.

But this brings me to yet another Proudhonian paradox. I found Richard Vernon's translation of, and introduction to, Proudhon's federal thought absorbingly interesting in the light of the political arguments about European federation. I would draw your attention to the items by Thom Holterman (of Erasmus University, Rotterdam) and by me, reprinted in *The Raven* (No. 31, Autumn 1995).

Why had the unreadable Proudhon become

suddenly relevant and important? The answer must be that this was simply because in pondering a particular issue from an anarchist standpoint, his opinions were useful to me, so that I actually took the trouble to find out what they were. Maybe this ought to teach me that the classical anarchist thinkers become relevant to us only when they discuss whatever happens to be our current preoccupations.

Obviously, as with any other political philosopher, we select and reject. For people like me, with a low threshold of tolerance for difficult writers, is the compilation edited by Stewart Edwards, *Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon* (Macmillan Papermac, 1970).

But when I get rid of my books to pay my

fuel bills, the one book about Proudhon I will hold on to is another biography. It is the one by Edward Hyams, a prolific writer and forerunner of contemporary Green thinking. (His most important book was his history of agriculture, *Soil and Civilisation*.) Hyams died in 1975 and his book *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: His Revolutionary Life, Mind and Works* was not published until 1979, by John Murray. It was eventually remaindered and the remaining stocks were bought and sold by Freedom Bookshop.

Edward Hyams actually died at Besançon, Proudhon's birthplace, while doing some final research for his book, and the publishers explained that, had he lived, Hyams would probably have added an epilogue about "Proudhon's posthumous influence on the First International, on Bakunin, on the Commune, on the anarchist movement as a whole and the French and Spanish working class militants in particular". Happily these topics are amply covered in the newly-published English translation of Max Nettlau's *Short History of Anarchism* from Freedom Press.

There's a pleasing story I like to tell in connection with the biography by Edward Hyams. At the end of his life Proudhon, dogmatic about everything, wrote his theory of art, *Les Principes de l'Art et la Destination Sociale*. One aspect of this was his defence of the work of his lifelong friend and fellow radical, the painter Gustave Courbet. Courbet did not altogether agree with the ideology of the book but, since the book was unfinished when Proudhon died in 1865, he helped to complete it, so that his long-suffering wife and daughters might benefit a little from the publication. One hundred and ten years later, the art historian Edwin Mullins was working on his life of Courbet, when his friend Edward Hyams died. So he set about sorting out the Hyams material with what the publisher called "his skilful and unobtrusive help" so that it could eventually get published.

Despite Courbet's devotion I am never likely to want to read Proudhon's opinions on art, but on the other hand I agree that for English readers Hyams, thanks to Mullins, provides what the publishers rightly called "a voice of freshness and astringency" from the mountain of words that Proudhon left behind.

Colin Ward

PROUDHON ON THE PRINCIPLE OF ASSOCIATION

Systems abound; schemes fall like rain. One would organise workshops, another the government, in which he has more confidence ... But no one that I know of has said that the question for both politics and economy was of *tendancies*, rather than of constitutions; that before all else, it was for us to find out whither we are going, not to dogmatise; in a word, that the solution lay in drawing society back out of the dangerous path into which it is hastening, and to set it on the high road of common sense and well-being, which is its law.

Not one of the socialistic or governmental theories which has been proposed has seized this capital point of the question. Far from that, they are all the formal denial of it. The spirit of exclusion, of absolutism, of reaction, is the common characteristic of their authors. With them society does not live: it is on the dis-

secting table. Not mentioning that the ideas of these gentlemen remedy nothing, guarantee nothing at all, open no prospect, leave the intelligence more empty, the soul more weary than before.

Instead, therefore, of examining systems, which would be an endless labour, and, what is worse, a labour without the possibility of a conclusion, we are about to examine their fundamental principle, with the aid of our criterion. We are to seek, from the point of view of the present revolution, what these principles contain, what they can give; for it is evident that if the principles contain nothing, and can yield nothing, it is useless to consider the systems. The worth of these will have been settled: the most beautiful will have been found the most absurd.

I begin with the principle of association.

If I wanted merely to flatter the lower classes, the recipe would not be difficult. Instead of a criticism of the social principle, I should deliver a panegyric of working-men's societies, I should exalt their virtues, their constancy, their sacrifices, their spirit of benevolence, their marvellous intelligence; I should herald their triumphs. What could I not say on this subject, dear to all democratic hearts? Do not the working-men's unions at this moment serve as the cradle for the social revolution, as the early Christian communities served as the cradle of Catholicity? Are they not always the open school, both theoretical and practical, where the workman learns the science of the production and distribution of

wealth, where he studies without masters and without books, by his own experience solely, the laws of that industrial organisation, which was the ultimate aim of the revolution of 1789, but which our greatest and most famous revolutionists caught only a glimpse? What a topic for me, for the manifestation of a facile sympathy, which is not the less disinterested, in that it is always sincere! With what pride do I recall that I too wanted to found an association, more than that, the central agency and circulating organ of workmen's association! And how I cursed that government which, with an expenditure of 300 millions, could not find a cent which it could use for the benefit of poor working-men.

I have better than that to offer to associations. I am convinced that at this moment they would give much for an idea, and it is ideas that I am bringing them. I should decline their approval, if I could obtain it only by flattery. If those of their members who may read these pages will but deign to remember that, in treating of association, it is a principle, even less than that, a hypothesis, that I discuss: it is not this or that enterprise, for which, in spite of its name, association is in nowise responsible, and of which the success, in point of fact, does not depend upon association. I speak of association in general, not of associations, whatever they may be.

I have always regarded association in general — fraternity — as a doubtful arrangement, which, the same as pleasure, love, and many other things, concealed more evil than good

under a most seductive aspect. It is perhaps the effect of the temperament which nature has given me, that I distrust fraternity as much as I do passion. I have seen few men who were proud of either. Especially when association is presented as a universal institution, the principle, means and end of the revolution, does it appear to me to hide a secret intention of robbery and despotism ...

No, association is not a directing principle, any more than an industrial force. Association, by itself, has no organic nor productive power, nothing which, like the division of labour, competition, etc., makes the worker stronger and quicker, diminishes the cost of production, draws a greater value from materials, or which, like the administrative hierarchy, shows a desire for harmony and order.

Extract from *General Idea of the Revolution*, pages 77-80.

Books on or about Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, £3.95*

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *What is Property?* (Cambridge University Press), £13.95

Max Nettlau, *Short History of Anarchism*, £9.95*

George Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, a biography*, £11.99

Titles distributed by Freedom Press Distributors (marked*) are post-free inland (please add 15% postage and packing to overseas orders). For other titles add 10% towards p&p inland, 20% overseas. Cheques in sterling to 'FREEDOM PRESS' please.

**FREEDOM PRESS
BOOKSHOP**

(in Angel Alley)
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

— opening hours —

Monday to Friday 10.30am-6pm
Saturday 11am-5pm

Rich and Poor



Anarchists may say that whereas the poor create the rich, the rich in return create the poor. Or as the poet wrote: *The poor create the rich / nruer ni nda / The rich create the poor.* Rudolph Svarz, as early as 1898, advocated a school of anarchist 'philosophers', a scheme based on the above and the setting up of which would be of interest today. This is a concept in the sense of a Joycean concept or the Van Gogh concept or, if you like, the Arthur Moysse concept.

Politics and commerce having not changed, and being what they are, the salutary Bela Bartok concept benefited everybody except poor Bartok, who died of cold and poverty in the richest conglomeration of the new world in New York.

His look out, you might say. But have we not all benefited by Bartok's, Van Gogh's and Joyce's constraint of poverty (which provides riches). Surely their anarchism in what amounted to having endured the greatest of hardships and of giving away all their work for next to nothing is as admirable in anarchist terms as princes renouncing their titles, such as that great anarchist (Prince) Peter Kropotkin and that compassionate being Tolstoy, or even stupid old Wedgie-Benn.

On the other hand, to take James Joyce's *The Dubliners* (certainly the most moving insight into family life and a star-fish among literary achievements) should the virtuoso polyglot have considered writing it in Gaelic? Perhaps there is no word in Gaelic for star-fish. It is very awkward. Especially for the people who cannot read the lingo in which they are described (I'm relying on my reader's indulgence for I'm attending to important concepts in a limited space).

Regard the whole issue with pity, comrade savant. For in anarchist terms all confusion is semantic confusion. Misunderstand just one word and the joke is over. *Bombum facere*. Not so much the buzzing of the bees in this sorry epoch of collapsing capitalism and come back oligarchy.

Imagine the scene in a country which lives in newspapers only. Further imagine that from a neighbouring village the elders and the youngsters march with their drums and fifes and dextrously twirling batons flying in the air. My anarchist readers could easily imagine the flowers, the garlands, the roses, the cheering crowds lining the picturesque lanes admiring a bit of free circus.

Some such hope, comrades. The reality in the newspaper and other media country is a succession of representations of medieval scenes of Black Knights and Black Mass on the roadside with the population merrily destroying their own homes while the rest of the pub-going world watches intricately moving images on the big wide screen.

More than anything else anarchist philosophers must fight to create and must insist in the possibility of creating somewhere on this exquisite planet a semantic confusion-free zone.

John Rety

S + M + ART

Nothing ruins good, decent honest-to-god pornography better than burying it beneath a well-crafted veneer of your actual art. Many a goodly youth's life has been ruined by digging through the pages of the Old Testament, with emphasis on the Song of Solomon, seeking the mention of the female breast, finding "he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts" and ending up with Joshua's exhortation, and it is for this that I attribute my ruined life and my writings for *Freedom*. Dirty, dirty. Sophisticated pornography always has an intellectual defence and it is always that it is not the usual lower-class filth but high art moving in to another area of human experience and, as Lawrence's Lady Chat of open legs, one would not allow the servants to read it but tucked in the four-poster, if you can't get the maid then get the book.

We who in the old pioneering days ploughed through Joyce's *Ulysses* to pick out the dirty bits of Molly Bloom's soliloquy, by the flickering light of the guard-room fire, may have been defying censorship but Molly, lass, thou wert an awful disappointment. There are those who bravely protested and used the novel as their form of protest, such as Radclyffe Hall with her personal lesbian novel *Well of Loneliness*, and all honour to her publisher and printer but it was her protest that was valid not her use of a particular subject matter.

Dali's painting *The Giant Masturbator* survives, rightly, as a worthwhile imaginative painting, but it no longer needs to shock, while Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* must take its place as a minor classic with his examination of the sexual problems of the young and the guilt that society inflicts onto them as they seek to solve that problem - "I don't care if I do die, I don't care if I do die". One read and watched and listened without understanding. One watched the actors in *The Green Bay Tree* and read Oscar's trial and puzzled over good and evil, and in the fullness of time smuggled in Henry Miller's books full of effing and blinding to be able to read the four banned words that government censorship made it a crime to speak in public or to possess on the printed page, and all that one is left with now of Henry's Parisian spawned use of the four naughty words in some pretty worthless books, but good luck to Henry for we can now hear the words spoken nightly on television 'mit actions'.

There are books, people, objects that have or did become a cult in the belief that it or they hold the answer to an agony that long grips the human mind, such as Mosely's solution to Britain's unemployment or the Irish Peace Plan and, like medieval whey-faced knights seeking the non-existent Holy Grail, they journey forth. Not for me the Holy Grail but the pint beer mug, for I sought Joris-Karl Huysmans' book *A Rebours* for this was the book that Oscar Wilde claimed "poisoned, or made perfect, Dorian Gray". Wilde's book that had the Town and his blushing frau in a tizzy lest that cleaning woman saw it, and decadent Joris-Karl, nay, lad, one can get more kicks out of a 1997 tabloid front page.

Sophistication and laser colour printing has ruined pornography and the old days, the great



days, of the over-thumbed sepia filthy postcard to be viewed in the factory lavatory wherein the women kept their stockings on and the men their socks, are now gone forever for it is now snuff videos of actual murders taking place or for the aesthetic 'showers' wherein the male urinates over the hired female. Oscar and the boys probably thought and talked of these things, but printing and circulation denied them an audience for it. In the end it is no more than the desire of an audience to be shocked and then to go home to the vegetarian fried kippers or, sadly, sadly, as with drugs to shock oneself.

But the Town has its moment and it is within the hallowed halls of the Whitechapel Art Gallery and the major exhibition of the machinations of Ms Cathy de Monchaux, and I found pleasure within this exhibition.

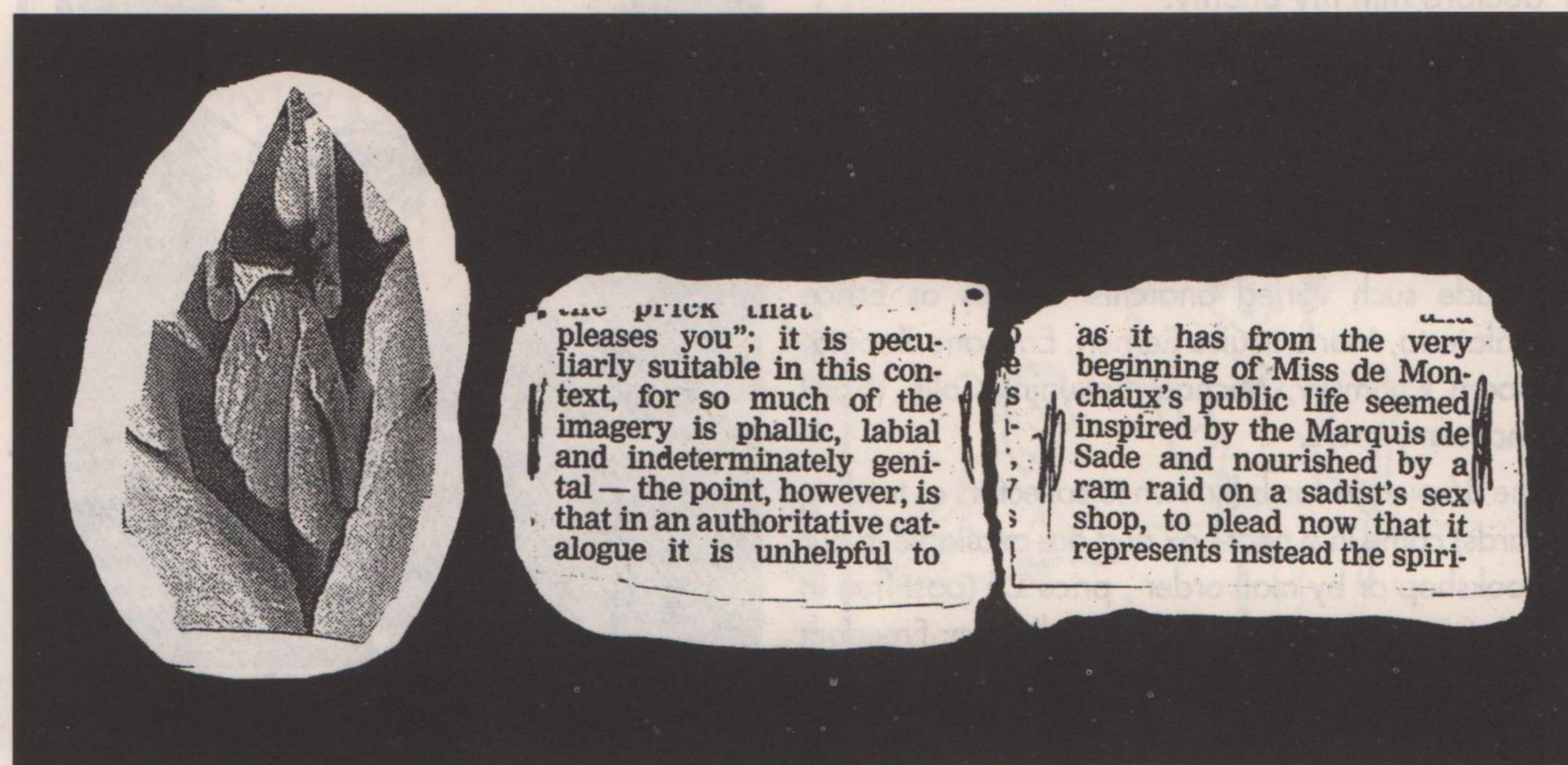
True many a major/minor critic came away biting his thumbnail in shockable despair, for Cathy de Monchaux has decided that sado-masochistic sex shall be the order of the day. Like the ancient surrealists, she has assembled metals, glass, clothes, etc., and created a number of collages that grace the gallery walls. Microwave oven size, one's first impression of them is of small religious icons that the early lunatic Puritan vandals overlooked, then brainwashed by years at the

V&A one thinks of them as the heavy jewellery that Edwardian grande dames wore chest high, and then shy-making one thinks of them, with nostalgia, as Victorian Valentine offerings.

But I wrong Cathy de Monchaux for hidden within these collages peep, like pale pink roses, tiny vaginas while like a crown of thorns pincers add the sadistic male touch. Like Schwitter's collages of used bus tickets, etc., etc., after one has accepted the junk material one is left with the minor pleasure of an abstract pattern. Cathy de Monchaux's *Evidently Not* has the rhythmic charm of a coloured fishbone and it is easy to play 'Spot the Ball' in the visual portrayal of sex and sadism. Her *Confessional* commissioned work is literally the size of a Catholic confessional box, but with the seating as a 'lovers seat' divided by a metallic grille. Church, lovers or prison, you make your choice. It is an exhibition that gives a small pleasure to all of us escaping tennis via Wimbledon, and what can one suggest other than get one's paperback book on Freud, take the children and eat a beefburger.

Within the upper gallery are on display 120 works by Indian artists of the sixteenth century onwards of Krishna the Divine Lover. While I did not see one Asian in the lower Cathy de Monchaux sex gallery, the 'Krishna the Divine Lover' was playing to a full house of young and elderly Asians. By all means climb the stairs, past the restaurant, to the Krishna gallery, but for myself I have never seen much worth in this style of Eastern paintings. It is not the work of artists but of trained craftsmen, and whatever the Eastern culture or the geography, stylised be it Egyptian tomb paintings or Chinese watercolours. If I wrong anyone I turned to the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, 'The weighing of the heart of a scribe' (nineteenth dynasty), Heironymus Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights* sixteenth century, and the European medieval miniatures, yea, even to Hogarth, and I will defend to your death my claim to be right for the *Book of the Dead* is the work of talented craftsmen and Bosch, the European miniatures and Hogarth on art the work of artists. This could not be made more clearer than the exhibition within the British Museum of Roman mummy portraits AD100 or so, the artists captured the human face in its peace or its problems. Judge the paintings how you will, but they are the work of artists. As one leaves the Cathy de Monchaux exhibition, by the door there is a 1964 work *and some mornings I didn't want to get up at all*. A hand dangling a long depressing curled, on the floor, tubing. Donald McGill, seaside artists extraordinaire, salute ...

Arthur Moysse



The latest issue of our anarchist quarterly is now available

The Raven

No. 35

'Anarchism and the Urban Environment'

and

'Anarchism and Psychoanalysis'

96 pages

£3 (post free)

FREEDOM PRESS

84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN POLICE AND SOCIAL CENTRES IN MESTRE, ITALY

Tuesday 3rd June 1997. A confrontation for two hours between police and about 100 people: members of the North East Melting dei Centri Sociali, students and militants from the Rifondazione Comunista. They were in attendance at the first day of the trial of eight secessionists who had occupied the San Marco bell-tower in Venice on 9th May in order to declare independence and the creation of the new state of 'Serenissima Veneta'.

There were many reasons for these people to attend the trial. If, in France and elsewhere, the occupation of the bell-tower was presented as an operation organised by eight fanatical, isolated secessionists with no political awareness then it should be remembered that the situation in the North East has become more than worrying recently. Instead it can be seen as the wish of various groups from the right and the far right to develop a 'Croatisation of the North East'.

Who are these groups? The presence of the Liga Nord (LN) gives credibility to the view that desire for independence enjoys popular support. This desire is founded on a refusal to pay taxes to the central state of Rome, a hatred of the 'meridional' which profits from the wealth produced in the North, the declaration of the existence of Padua (region around the river Po) and her people and finally an economic programme which is neo-liberal. It goes without saying that the LN is not only racist with regard to the 'meridional' but also towards immigrants from Southern and Eastern European countries. The basis of this policy is a selfish economics, racial hatred and the notion of one nation, one people. Throughout the month of May the LN organised a popular referendum on the question of independence and on 14th September Bossi will declare UDI for Padua. The reaction of the league to the seizure of the bell-tower as voiced by Bossi was to disassociate itself from the Armata della Serenissima claim; the LN want to gain independence by democratic means. At the same time Bossi denounces the Italian state, accusing them of setting up the event to discredit the Paduan people and its just desire for independence. Today the LN, whilst still proclaiming a democratic voice in order to gain independence, has demanded that the eight be tried for their actions and not their politics and that if this were not to happen it would be taken for a sign of the kind of hatred the Romans feel for the Paduan people.

The Armata della Serenissima after some investigation goes further than simply these

eight activists. It is a network throughout the region. A van converted into an armoured car was found along with arms and large sums of money. Apart from declaring independence on 9th May they have proposed a new constitution which proclaims the Paduan race and its purity, has forbidden non-Paduan participation in government and mixed marriages and has announced draconian immigration controls.

LIFE – a socio-professional organisation of self-employed, traders and employers which has been indulging in fiscal fraud for some years, in order to struggle against Rome – opposes the right to work and unionism. LIFE was set up to fill the socio-political vacuum left by the institutionalisation of the LN with its choice of the ballot box. Thus it is seen as the more radical wing of the league and the Unione del Popolo Veneto both because of its neo-liberalism and its activities (blocking tax checks in companies). In addition it opposed and fought against refugee camps during the war in the former Yugoslavia rejecting the notion of solidarity and arguing that public funds should be directed to those who are wealth creators.

After the taking of the bell-tower LIFE publicly supported the members of Armata della Serenissima, calling them 'true patriots', organising support groups and procuring the funds for their defence. They are now calling for their unconditional release. Finally neo-Nazi and neo-fascist groups like Azione Giovani adopted a line, almost heretical, of supporting the secessionists. In reality this contradiction is only apparent insofar as the notion of a strong centralised state is common to both ideologies. It is only the size of the state which is different! These groups also see the eight as patriots in so far as they are fighting the status quo whilst proclaiming their race and anti-cosmopolitanism.

This notion of political realignment which occurred round the bell-tower events expressed itself by demanding the release of the eight and repeating the ultra-liberal, secessionist and racist position. It should be stressed that the LN did not call on its

members to be present but many green-shirts (members of Bossi's Guardia Padua) joined in the gathering. Also many neo-Nazis stayed at home saying in the media that they did not want to fall into an 'autonomist' trap, i.e. street fighting. Such folk prefer to beat up isolated immigrants or young people going to the social centres rather than confront anti-fascists.

These were the main reasons why a hundred or so people came to the trial to denounce the 'Croatisation of the territory'. In addition their presence was designed to proclaim that there exists in the North East a movement which opposes independence whilst at the same time not defending the central state. In effect the current political game is to polarise the two camps. In fact even if the Roman parliament is currently coming up with a federal plan, their idea of federalism is no more than concentrating power in the hands of macro-regions which are still controlled by a central power.

Thus it was clear for those participating in this initiative (apart from Rifondazione which is committed to Italian Unity) that the demands they were expressing was for a 'federation of communes' based on self-management and solidarity. 'Municipalism from below' seems to be the desired model which has nothing to do with localism. In fact the notion of solidarity really allows for the link between the local and the global and justifies the existence for one and all of fundamental rights (housing, health, education, etc.)

WHAT HAPPENED

So, at 8 o'clock, the militants of the North East Melting dei Centri Sociali came together in front of the courts. The police, forcefully, insisted they clear the doors insisting this was their position between the two opposing groups. Wishing to avoid confrontation from the start the Social Centres accepted this decision. At 8.40 Padovan – the president of LIFE – accompanied by Taradesh, an MP from Berlusconi's party, arrived on foot and, strangely, not among their supporters but rather in the middle of the social groups. Faced

with this provocation, planned by the police or not, the reaction was immediate. Padovan got kicked around a bit and Taradesh was covered in spittle. The CRS came to their assistance. After a few seconds of calm the first charge of the day – there were to be five – was launched. Truncheons were flying all over the place. These were followed by tear gas canisters one of which hit a local who was working in her garden. This house became the refuge for many demonstrators either for protection or for medical assistance. After this first charge the demonstrators regrouped and headed towards the CRS. The police chiefs said they wanted no further confrontation and pulled back. Others came to the support of the social centre militants.

A second provocation brought more confrontation. Rocchetta, ex president of the Liga Veneta and ex leader of the LN arrived with his wife again on the wrong side. An action replay followed. In total eleven injuries including six police, one with a fractured jaw. The five demonstrators were those who went to hospital; there will have been others.

So how come given how well the risks were known were the secessionists supporters ushered in so badly? A cock-up or an excuse to attack those opposed to independence, racism etc?

It should be noted that for once news reporting was honest. Television showed the treatment given to demonstrators lying on the ground, systematic truncheoning. All the papers note these facts whilst at the same time, of course, noting that the 'autonomists' are violent folk.

It has been a while since such a show of opposition to the secessionists and racists had occurred and this allows for a new phase of fighting the notion of 'croatisation'. Now this movement must expand. This is a political space where peoples' differences can be respected whilst emphasising those things which unite them. Clearly the social centres will represent the more radical wing of this movement.

The next issue of Freedom will be dated 2nd August, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be Thursday 24th July 1997

CONSCRIPTION IN SPAIN

The *Insumision in the quarters* is a new civil disobedience campaign against the army, undertaken throughout the whole Spanish state to show the conflict that exists between society and the army, and to open the debate about what tactics we should adopt.

The difference with the previous *Insumision* campaign is that, whereas we were not answering the call to military service before, we now do so as, once we are 'soldiers' (which takes about two or three days), we leave the quarters and do a public presentation of our disobedient condition.

This disobedience is punished with jail (from two years, four months and one day to six years). Once in the army, all the process follows the military course: detention by the military police, council of war and military jail at the end (there is just one in Alcalá de Henares, Madrid).

This step forward has been taken for several reasons. The main one is to re-state the debate about our objective: 'the military'. They are the ones who call us and when we disobey their rules they are the ones who arrest us, who judge us and who imprison us. With this new campaign there is no place for confusion, and it shows much more clearly (no matter how much they attempt to disguise it) what the 'military' is, and what our alternative is to it.

The army is undergoing several changes in its functions. We can see that internal control and guarantees of peace are tasks that have been completely assumed by the police. On the other hand we also see that the country and national territorial defence argument is not valid any more,

most of all since the Soviet bloc has fallen – those who were supposed to be the West's main enemy.

Now 'the power' (the authorities) try to legitimise the army with references to concepts like world

order, international commitments or humanitarian help ... and of course always in order to defend poor people and peace. But since when has the army been a peace keeping force? When hasn't the army

been controlled by politic or economic power? What kind of humanity can a group of fanatics with weapons defend? Fanatics who are always ready to kill if they are told to do it. In fact, what is hidden behind the world order and what is the function of the army in it.

The army is going to keep on defending political and, most of all, economic power. The trend of Western professional military structures is obvious. Not even the authorities deny that with a professional army we get more troops available to send anywhere in the world to solve any conflict, and with the speed and efficiency that they are required to have. This is the way we could also avoid the social rejection that would cause sending soldiers to a distant war that nobody feels their own.

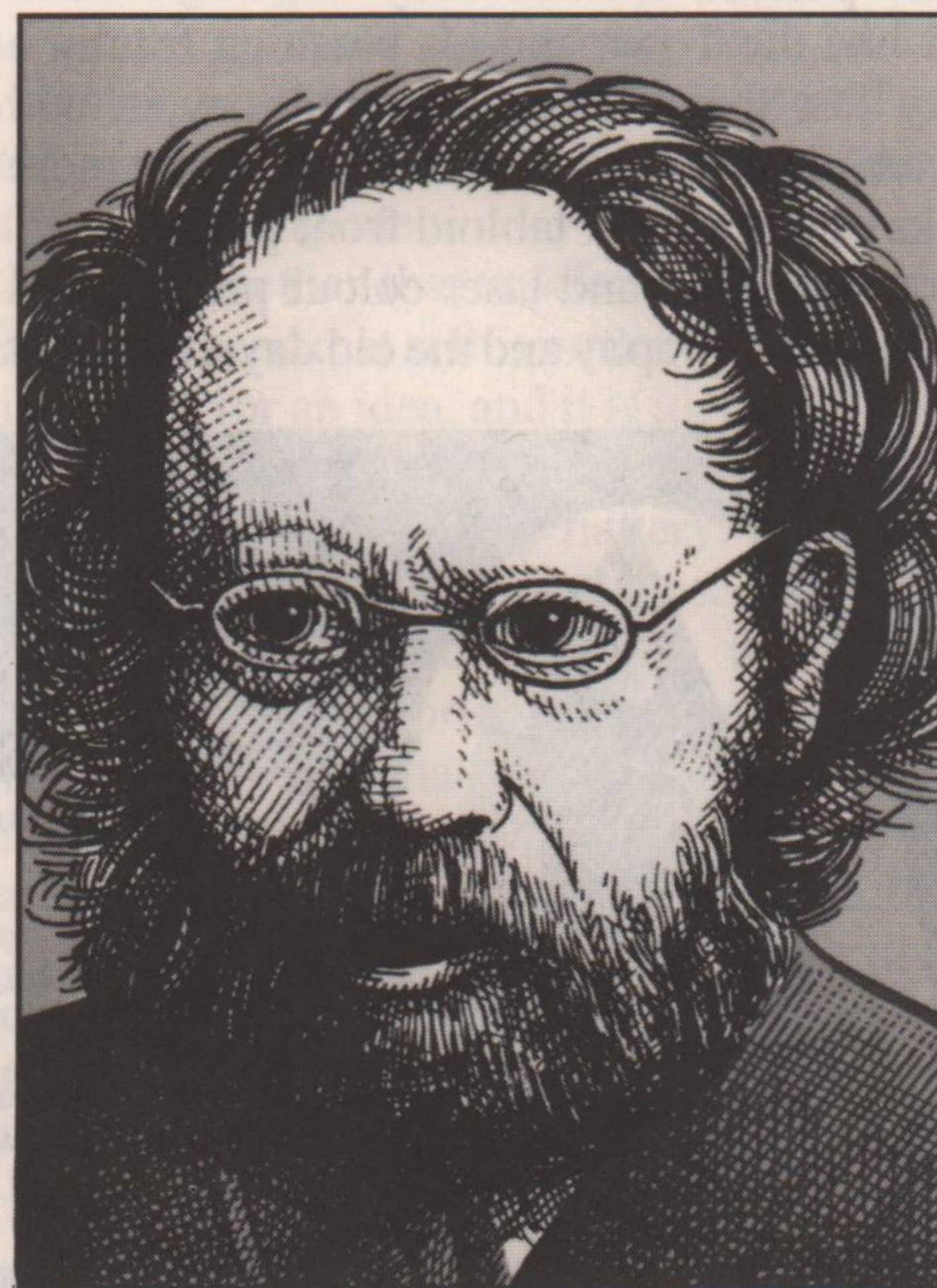
However, the purpose of this change is not so clear. The authorities talk to us about the unavoidable need of an international force to defend weak people against possible aggression or abuse. Words that sound very good but 'smell' very bad. The truth is that they are just looking for economic or prestige benefits. There are many unpleasant examples of the 'care' the pacifying and humanitarian soldiers take of the people they are presumably defending.

Peace is not the absence of conflict, but daily practice of social justice. Therefore we believe that a change towards a demilitarised society involves a social transformation in all areas of life – from personal life to international relationships. We believe in social justice and equality. We deny everything that has anything to do with militarism, states, any kind of hierarchies, dominance, control, inequality, etc. The list could be long, but we are sure you have already understood us.

PIERRE-JOSEPH PROUDHON Born 15th January 1809 in Besançon, France. Died 19th January 1865 in Passy, France. A learned printer and proofreader, Proudhon became the first to call himself 'anarchist' in a positive sense in 1840, and, in Bakunin's words, "The master of us all". His first masterpiece, *What is Property?* (1840), influenced all progressive writers of his age, including Marx. He became one of the most prolific authors of anarchism. His concept was an anarchical society based on 'mutualism' and held together by 'federalism'. "All men are equal and free; society, by nature and destination, is therefore autonomous and ungovernable ... Whoever puts his hand on me to govern me is an usurper and a tyrant; I declare him my enemy."

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

The 36 picture cards (known to collectors as trading cards) come in a neat box and are available in our bookshop or by mail order, price £5 (post free in UK, £5.45 including p&p abroad) from: Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX



PIERRE-JOSEPH PROUDHON

For more information contact: Izar Beltza (Talde Anarkista), ap. 1188 Iruñea, Spain.

Planning: making our own mistakes

Having worked for years as an architect I have been puzzled by our behaviour and our relationship to the environment. It seems to me that we are not all innate, as leant towards by those who argue for Chomsky's universal biology. Neither are we all nurture, as leant towards by those who argue for Skinner's cultural vessels. As individuals we select a large proportion of our behaviour, however we do not select entirely co-operatively, as Kropotkin's evolutionary leaning, nor competitively, as Spencer's evolutionary bent. Our actions are mostly a mixture of these.

We exist in a seemingly physical domain which we understand only through our ability to make use of an equally physical nervous system which is capable of maintaining a unique synthetic reality. We have synthetic buildings in our heads although it is quite clear that we do not have *real* buildings in our heads. When there is a discussion, as with Duncan Hunt (*Freedom*, 5th July 1997), we display this ability to dip into the real world with examples of fences and trees and in the same sequences dip into synthetic worlds of symmetry, order and diversity. None of this is at all new.

I believe the supreme evidence of balance between the real world and the individual, and simultaneously between all individuals, is individual freedom. If we can all be free then we have achieved balance, but this *balance* is not a goal but a constant interactive balance. The interaction is *between* the real world in constant movement and each individual synthetic understanding. The real world has physical states which have a balance of their own kind, often much longer than our own lives, often completely coincidental to our own actions.

Balance achieved by an extension of the consciousness of all those individuals impacted by others' actions, whether tolerated or encouraged, is a balance selected by all and thus sustainable for as long as the synthetic and the physical world remain still, which in a universe of movement is never, thus balance remains full of movement and interaction. The only form of balance which is constantly capable of selection by living consciousness is the balance resulting from the conscious interaction of all, a living consciousness.

When we select action we impose upon a physical world. The imposition has an effect for longer or shorter periods, thus rather than pretend our actions are good or bad we can understand that our actions have long or short term effects on many or few people. Thus brick walls, roads, these are long-term high-impact effects of action. Colours and fences are less demanding of labour, materials and resources in general terms. Certain locations may be specific to individuals coincidentally located, whilst others are central to the lives of multitudes. Planning law at present impacts upon long-term, short-term, community areas and public areas with almost equal intent allowing that there are some variations of intent between towns/districts, some enlightenment. But the controls of planning law are over use and appearance as material to its remit, its action on our behalf.

Towns and cities are an extended consciousness of both living and dead individuals; they would clearly not represent the living consciousness exactly unless they are constantly changed or tolerated by the living. There would clearly be a diversity of uses and appearances, some recognition of resources

past and present according to physical location and synthetic realities of the living. The present inhabitants may be transient or fixed for generations or a mixture of these.

Planning law at present imposes upon physical reality by means of appearance and use when the real effect of such power is the long-term environmental impact, distribution of people and resources, ease of exchange (density), manufacture of goods, individual freedom to extend consciousness individually and as groups. None of these real effects are taken into account solely on the basis of appearance, and yet appearance is almost universally taken to be the major usefulness of planning law.

Architects, planners and critics pretend that they know what is good and bad because they are selected for work as a result of such claims. Inevitably many point to the existing as good because it can be pointed to or because it was useful to others. Others may point to their own synthesis as good. The skill of any expert is gained as a result of past interactions, it can be used to alter physical reality by any group offering the opportunity and able to extend their own particular consciousness in a way that can be shared, ultimately in terms of construction, this is the built product. Skill, although residing as a resource within an individual or group of like individuals, is hardly a danger. It is the appropriation of this skill by institutions and its use to impose physicality upon others which is unsustainable and removes balance.

Planners and institutions which show a lack of *respect* for diversity are a danger to freedom. They prefer to impose upon others than continually interact with individual consciousness which will always be unique to the individual. They claim that they have obtained the consent of the public but that consent is not fully conscious, it goes by default being deemed consent if proposals are not opposed or is purchased after a process of appropriation of the very wealth made possible by those imposed upon. Consent is not the same as consciousness.

Appearance and use are clearly important and physical manifestations of consciousness, they are however appropriate in differing measure to differing groups, locations and impact. This lesson has not yet been learned. Unless we learn to respect the measure of the individual and are prepared to see that measure consciously and appropriately incorporated into action, freedom will be out of our hands.

Bill Thompson

*please keep sending in
your letters and
donations ...*

Blair has no idea ...

Dear *Freedom*,
Blair, by his behaviour since he won his party the power, has demonstrated that he has no idea of what it's like down here at the bottom of the pile.

His first action when he took office should have been to change the hours of the House to nine-to-five which would have been much fairer for everyone, especially women with children at school. After all, on £43,000 a year you don't need another job unless you're greedy.

He might have allowed us the same privilege as the rest of Europe to travel without a passport - most of us can't afford to buy one.

He could also allow us to use the same currency as them rather than pay banks to change our money.

And why do we ferry juggernauts backwards and forwards across and under the Channel, when they can be separated from the goods they carry? Is it just to make the goods dearer?

Jim Tidy

Workers' Choice

Dear *Freedom*,

If, after a hundred years, our paper is going to become an appendage of the rag trade like so many of the Sunday supplements, then I fear that I shall not be the only one to cancel my subscription. 'Decadent Action' (21st June 1997) is probably a person rather than a group, as he or she says "a £100 skirt and jacket sound like pretty cheap garments to me". Really? Many people on income support don't spend £100 per month on food, never mind the rubbish endlessly publicised by the media as 'fashion'.

As an "average working class person" myself, until I lost my last job, I wouldn't wear any of the labels that 'Decadent Action' - obviously with an inside knowledge of this so-called industry - names, even if they were given away. I don't believe in giving free publicity to inconsequential little people whose only contribution to the betterment of humanity is to have their name (if indeed it is the one they were born with) emblazoned on a piece of cheap and nasty cloth, stitched by slave labour and then grandiosely called a T-shirt or a pair of jeans. T-shirts are basically coloured vests, and jeans are cowboy or gold-miners' trousers - overalls really, made desirable by pseudo-romantic advertising. I can buy a good pair of real trousers for half or a third of the cost of 'designer' jeans, and yes, I would choose army surplus trousers if I had to. Agreed, I would rather not have to wear second-hand shoes, but even these would probably not smell as bad as the average pair of trainers whether worn by a bricklayer or a stockbroker out 'slumming'. 'Decadent Action' sounds like the child of over-indulgent parents and an art college drop-out too, but anarchism (or any other ism) always did attract such types.

Bill Brewer

Anarchist Fed?

Dear *Freedom*,

We the undersigned would like to enquire of the wider anarchist movement whether there are any individuals or groups who would like to establish a nationwide anarchist federation.

We are interested in establishing an organisation, probably a 'network' or 'federation', for anarchists who wish to work with other 'non-aligned' anarchists interested in a non-sectarian, non-violent, evolutionary, educational, non-class struggle based version of anarchism. From conversations between ourselves and other contacts, we believe there is enough support to make such an organisation possible.

Class struggle anarchists and syndicalists have long had their organisations. We feel it is now time for non-aligned anarchists to have our own organisation.

We will be having an inaugural meeting in London during September. If you are interested in attending please contact us care of the address below and we will forward details in early August.

Jonathan Simcock, Peter Neville, Neil Birrell, Steve Booth, Andrew Lainton, Peter Le Mare, Peter Lumsden, Jean Pollard
contact at: Box EMAB, 88 Abbey Street,
Derby DE22 3SQ

Kropotkin and Population

Dear Editors,

I am presently engaged in research into Peter Kropotkin and the 'population question'. Can any of your readers suggest material completed by Kropotkin in this area? I am also interested in reading secondary source material on the subject.

Richard A. Powell
Postgraduate Medical School, Department
of Mental Health, University of Exeter,
Wonford House Hospital, Dryden Road,
Exeter EX2 5AF.

Material privileges don't go with a just society

Dear *Freedom*,

Larry Gambone (5th July) is wrong to think that I 'hate' better paid workers. I just don't share the rose-tinted expectations of them that both 'traditional' social revolutionaries and people like Larry seem to have.

The fact is that by *world* standards most people in the 'developed' world (i.e. North America, Western Europe, Japan and a few other countries) are a materially privileged class. There is no way that their high consumption lifestyles based on mass car ownership, meat-based diets, foreign holidays, etc., could be extended to the whole human race under *any* political or economic system. For instance, if the average world level of car ownership were raised to that of the UK the total car 'population' would be roughly quadrupled (not to speak of roads and all the other infrastructure - there aren't too many motorways in Africa or India). Even if the resources were available the result would be ecological catastrophe.

So from the point of view of social change the 'well-paid' working class in the rich world would have a vested interest in preserving capitalism because it is the only system that can give them these privileges. Not that it guarantees them. In recent years the global market and automation have undercut wages in many sectors of 'advanced' economies and these trends seem likely to continue. Even so the material privileges of what I call the middle class in the advanced countries seem likely to endure for some decades if only because the real owners of capital dare not risk a *sudden* imposition of third world wages and conditions which would almost certainly provoke massive rebellion and even revolution.

I am not seeking scapegoats or indulging in moralistic nagging. I'm trying to draw attention to what I think is the biggest single obstacle to the achievement of an anarchist society. Anarchists of various tendencies,

socialists and greens all seem to share a blind spot about this. I think many of them don't want to face the fact that it is impossible to build a socially just and ecologically benign society and at the same time retain their material privileges. This may explain, for example, why many in the 'green' movement have lately turned to irrationalities like New Age mysticism and/or primitivism. When reality is depressing people try to console themselves with myths.

'Workers' capitalism', i.e. the middle class buying more and more shares, seems to me to be irrelevant from the point of view of real social change or protecting the environment. As I said before, there is no reason to think that a capitalist corporation with many shareholders is any less exploitative or destructive than one with a few. If it happens it will be to the extent that the middle class succeeds in maintaining their present privileges. In any case, there doesn't seem to be much that anarchists can or should do to accelerate it. Larry's enthusiasm for it strikes me as another example of the 'new anarchism' that Libertarian (5th July) referred to.

It may seem that I am saying that any opposition to capitalism is futile, at least in the 'developed' world. But just because we can see no way of replacing or overthrowing the system at present does not mean that it cannot be resisted. As I've said before, for many of us in the 'underclass' resistance is not so much an option as a necessity. Environmental issues such as the anti-roads movement have achieved some limited success in curbing if not curing capitalism's destructiveness. These and other issues at least give us some scope for having a practical effect on society and may make the difference between survival and disaster over the next few decades, after which the prospects of a real revolutionary change may become more favourable.

John Wood

PORT IN A STORM

75-minute video about the Liverpool Docks dispute

includes moving scenes of:

- the Women of the Waterfront
 - international dockers solidarity on and off the picket line
 - unity with Reclaim the Streets movement
- Produced by Video News on behalf of the Merseyside Port Shop Stewards Committee*

All proceeds to the dockers dispute fund

Copies: Individuals £10, Organisations £20

from Video News, PO Box 10395,
London N7 9DN

Tel: 0171-700 7660

Freedom on the World Wide Web

<http://www.tao.ca/~freedom>

e-mail Freedom Press at
freedom@tao.ca

a-infos

daily multi-lingual, international anarchist news service

To: majordomo@lglobal.com

Subject:

subscribe a-infos

FREEDOM fortnightly

ISSN 0016 0504

Published by Freedom Press
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

Printed in Great Britain by Aldgate Press, London E1 7RQ

OLDHAM ANTI-JSA

meet every Wednesday fortnight at Hark to Topper, Oldham, at 8.15pm
Tel: 0161-628 6182 for further details

MANCHESTER ANTI-JSA GROUP

meet every Wednesday fortnight at The Vine, Kennedy Street, Manchester
contact: Dept 99, 1 Newton Street,
Manchester M1 1HW

North West Anti-JSA Dole Bully Hotline: 0161-338 8465

PLYMOUTH, SOUTH DEVON, EAST CORNWALL

Is there anybody around here interested in forming a Freedom Readers' Group?
Phone Andy on 01752-776532

— ANARCHIST PARK FEST —

The London Anarchist Forum's summer social event

Picnic and socialise in one of London's parks. A celebration of green space — bring food and drink.

27th July at 2.30pm in Holland Park (meet Westside car park)

ACF DISCUSSION MEETINGS

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

Further information from
ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

LIBERTARIANS OF SOUTHAMPTON: UNITE

Looking for fellow anarchists to set up a group in the Southampton area. Please contact Tom on 01703-337050

sixteenth annual ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR

Saturday 18th October from 10am

Conway Hall
Red Lion Square, London WC1
(nearest tube Holborn)

Contact: New Anarchist Review,
c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street,
London E1 7QX

London Anarchist Forum

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

— 1997 PROGRAMME —

18th July The Enlightenment (speaker Peter Lumsden)

25th July General discussion

1st August Social Class: Description of Reality or Ideology? (speaker Peter Neville)

8th August General discussion

15th August Anarchism and Nietzsche (speaker Steve Ash)

22nd August General discussion

29th August Anarchism and Science (symposium)

5th September General discussion

12th September What Now for Class War? (speakers from Class War)

19th September General discussion

Anyone interested in giving a talk or leading a discussion, please contact Carol Saunders or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (telephone number 0181-847 0203 subject to caller display and an answerphone — which means if you withhold your telephone number you will be ignored or disconnected), giving subject and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate.

Peter Neville / Carol Saunders

Red Rambles

A programme of free guided walks in Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire for Socialists, Libertarians, Greens and Anarchists. All walks are on a Sunday unless otherwise stated. All walkers are reminded to wear boots and suitable clothing and to bring food and drink. Walks are 5 to 8 miles in length.

August 3rd: Lead Mines and Common Pastures. Meet 1pm at The Miners Arms Pub, Carsington, Derbyshire. Red Rambles Fifth Anniversary. Circular walk around Carsington and Brassington.

September 7th: Loughborough countryside. Meet 1pm at the Forest Gate Pub, Forest Road, Loughborough. Circular walk in fields and woodland.

Telephone for further details
01773-827513

Manchester Solidarity Federation

public meetings first Tuesday of the month at 8pm

at The Brow House, 1 Mabfield Road,
Manchester M14

(off Wilmslow Road, opposite Owens Park)

For further details contact:

PO Box 29 SWPDO, Manchester M15 5HW

FREEDOM AND THE RAVEN SUBSCRIPTION RATES 1997

	inland	outside Europe surface	outside Europe airmail	Europe (airmail only)
Freedom (24 issues) half price for 12 issues				
Claimants	10.00	—	—	—
Regular	14.00	22.00	34.00	24.00
Institutions	22.00	30.00	40.00	40.00

The Raven (4 issues)

Claimants	10.00	—	—	—
Regular	12.00	14.00	18.00	16.00
Institutions	18.00	22.00	27.00	27.00

Joint sub (24 x Freedom & 4 x The Raven)

Claimants	18.00	—	—	—
Regular	24.00	34.00	50.00	36.00

Bundle subs for Freedom (12 issues)

	inland	abroad surface	abroad airmail
2 copies x 12	12.00	13.00	22.00
5 copies x 12	26.00	32.00	44.00
10 copies x 12	50.00	60.00	84.00
Other bundle sizes on application			

Giro account number 58 294 6905

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

To Freedom Press in Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street,
London E1 7QX

- I am a subscriber, please renew my sub to *Freedom* for issues
- Please renew my joint subscription to *Freedom* and *The Raven*
- Make my sub to *Freedom* into a joint sub starting with number 35 of *The Raven*
- I am not yet a subscriber, please enter my sub to *Freedom* for issues and *The Raven* for issues starting with number 35
- I would like the following back numbers of *The Raven* at £3 per copy post free (numbers 1 to 34 are available)
- I enclose a donation to Freedom Fortnightly Fighting / Freedom Press Overheads / Raven Deficit Fund (delete as applicable)

I enclose £..... payment

Name.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....