

Hereditary legislators to go ...

Why not get rid of the lot?

For most of (written) history, the hereditary principle was the mark of civilisation. With few exceptions (such as the democracy of classical Athens) civilised nations had a hereditary monarch and hereditary nobles. Military usurpers would claim the crown by (spurious) hereditary right, or say they ruled on behalf of the monarch.

These days electoral democracy is in fashion. Military usurpers claim to rule on behalf of the people and like to get themselves elected if they can manage it. But the transition from hereditary rule to democratic rule is not complete. Bits of hereditary rule linger on all over the place.

In Britain we are about to celebrate, or not, the 350th anniversary of the beheading of Charles I. His son Charles II eventually got the throne back, but with depleted power which meant he could not raise taxes without Parliamentary approval (he did rule without Parliament for a few years, but only because his army was paid by a grant from King Louis XIV of France). Parliament chucked his brother out and invited in a new royal family with even less power. Over the years Parliament has taken more and more of the hereditary monarch's powers, until the present Queen is 'monarch' in name only with no real legislative powers whatever.

The Parliament which approved the execution of Charles I, and later the restoration of Charles II, had two houses. One was

the Commons, elected from among themselves by the 'gentry', landowners and merchants. The other was the Lords, who were the hereditary nobility. These hereditary legislators are still legislating.

But not for long. Democracy has become so fashionable that even the hereditary Lords themselves are ready to give up their voting rights. There is a piffling bust-up in the Conservative Party, because Conservative hereditary Lords have agreed a programme for their abolition with the Labour government.

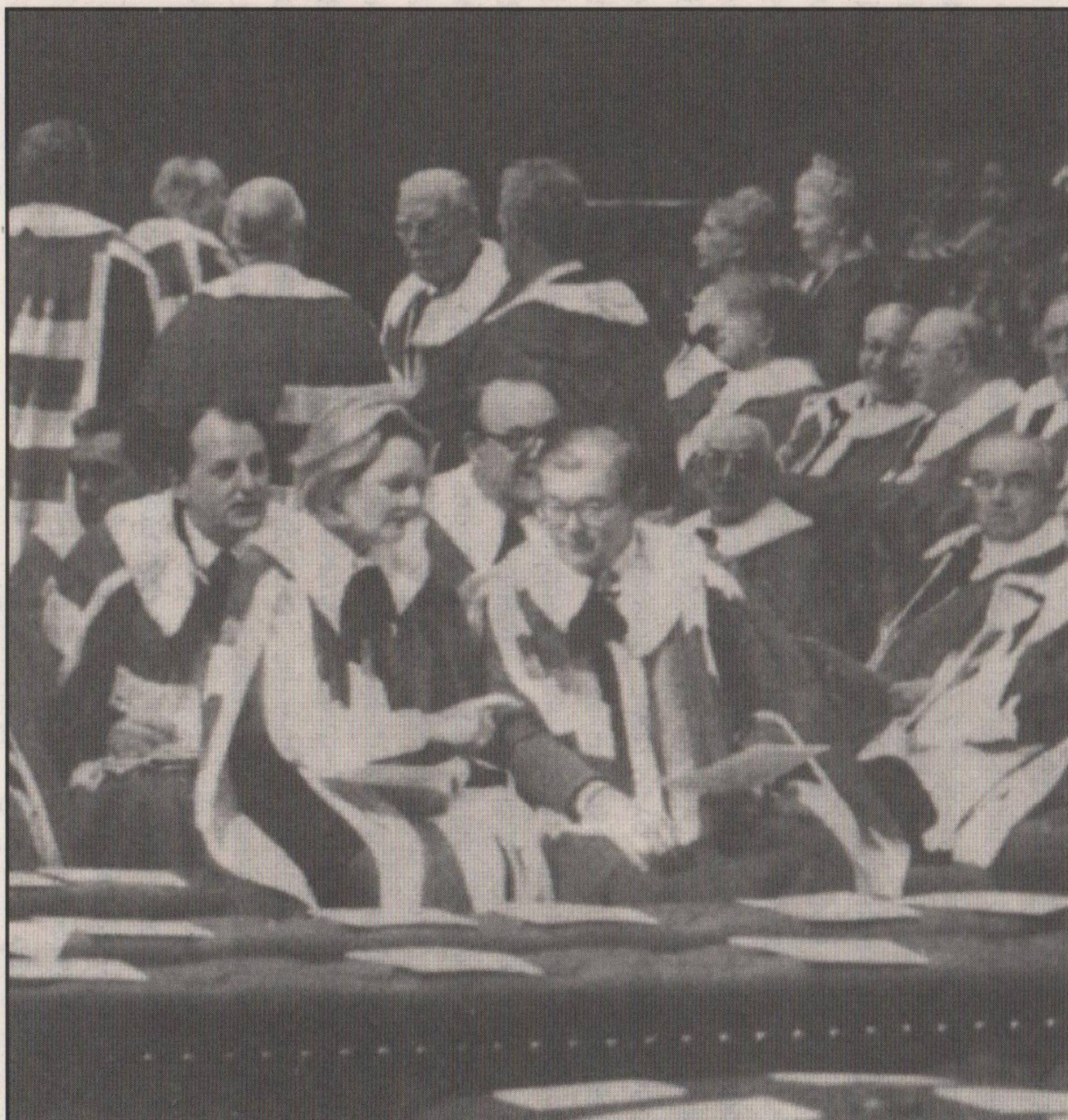
Democracy is fashionable, but it is not what we want. Democratically elected rulers are still rulers, able to levy taxes to pay for wars and war preparations that many people don't want, able to conscript people who do not wish to be conscripted. In a country like this, where

there is enormous competition to get elected, it is mostly control freaks who have the determination to succeed. Almost inevitably at the highest levels, elected government is government by control freaks.

Anarchists are in favour of society. But as a founder of *Freedom* Charlotte Wilson put it a century ago, "the object of associating is to increase the opportunities of the individual". The end point at which anarchists aim is a society in which each individual has complete sovereignty. This is entirely different from electoral democracy, in which each individual has an element of choice about who the bosses will be, but no individual is free from bosses.

Anarchy (i.e. society without bosses elected or otherwise), electoral democracy and absolute monarchy are ideal types. None have ever existed in perfect form because nothing in the real world is perfect. But there are societies recognisable as imperfect electoral democracies, there were for millennia societies pretty close to absolute monarchies, and we reckon a society approximating anarchy is practicable if enough people want it.

The struggle for electoral democracy started with a few people who thought it would be preferable to hereditary rule. The struggle for anarchy started with a few people who thought it would be preferable to government, and they are the people we agree with. DR



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General Pinochet, Judge Garzon and 'Chile Billy'

Some two years ago in the upstairs room of a north of England pub an editor of *Freedom* won the first prize in a raffle – the prize being a native Latin American poncho. The occasion was a farewell party for a couple of Chilean exiles who had come over to this country in the late 1970s. The family were returning to Chile after nearly twenty years away.

It seemed like the end of a story which began in the late 1970s when 'Chile Billy' (the nickname adopted by his fellow foundry workers in the north of England, and the name we use for security reasons because of the potential unstable situation in Chile) and his family arrived in this country. 'Chile Billy' had been in prison in Santiago for trade union activities, when he was given the option of exile in England. What followed was a mad dash to the airport under police guard where he joined his wife and child, and thence to England and a run-down council estate outside Manchester.

'Chile Billy' was politically a Marxist, but because I and other anarchists in the north west knew of the family's circumstances and had a grasp of Castilian Spanish, we were able to help. The family spoke no English and spoke a form of Spanish which, at times, was beyond us and those Spanish friends who lived locally.

And yet despite their many handicaps 'Chile Billy' and his family prospered. Having done some painting and decorating with a Spanish friend of mine, we eventually got him a job in a local foundry where I was a shop steward. There he became a machinist in the milling shop, and quickly integrated into English culture, learning the piecework system as well as the rest of us. His *companera* got a job at Tesco's. They were both active in the Chilean movement and 'Chile Billy' joined the engineering union and was present at meetings organised by northern anarchists.

The case of 'Chile Billy' must be typical of many thousands of exiles who fled Chile in the 1970s.

Operation Condor

What makes the 'Chile Billy' case of interest to anarchists and others on the left now is the activities of a charismatic judge in Madrid

called Balthasar Garzon. Judge Garzon had worked hard to bring the former dictator Augusto Pinochet to trial in Spain. Many Spanish citizens were among the victims of the Pinochet regime. Last October the High Court in London was told "at least four thousand people" were killed on the orders of General Pinochet, and on his authority agents were sent to Spain to "seek out and kill" political opponents.

Now Judge Garzon, who is heading the Pinochet inquiry, is trying to see US government files.

International Herald Tribune claims: "Judge Garzon is said to be particularly interested in US government files relating to events of the 1970s, when the CIA and US Embassy personnel were close to the Pinochet regime and knew of the activities of its powerful secret police".

The *Tribune* continues: "This police force is widely considered to be responsible for the worst excesses of the Pinochet regime, including the kidnapping, torture and summary executions of leftist opponents. Washington has thousands of secret files from that period, and Judge Garzon is expected to ask for hundreds of specific documents from the State and Justice departments relating to Argentina as well as Chile".

It seems that the US authorities are dragging their feet, and the Spaniards are complaining that the United States has so far only supplied documents under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty that are already in the public realm. Judge Garzon is said to be interested in finding out more about Operation Condor, a pact between five intelligence services of

Latin American military regimes made in 1975, which the *Tribune* says was set up "to hunt down leftists and to stamp out what they considered a Communist threat". According to a Spanish court official last month, "Condor

practiced international terrorism, they kidnapped people across borders, exchanged prisoners and tortured and secretly killed them". Condor is of interest because it shows the coordination between the various military regimes.

Under Operation Condor special teams would be sent to "locate and surveil the target" while others would "carry out the actual sanction", according to a declassified cable from the US Embassy in Argentina, dated September 1976. This cable said Chile

was the centre of the operation and that the other nations included Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay, and, says *Tribune*, perhaps Brazil.

Human rights activists believe the Washington files offer a treasure trove implicating Pinochet's Chile in crimes of international terrorism, because of the

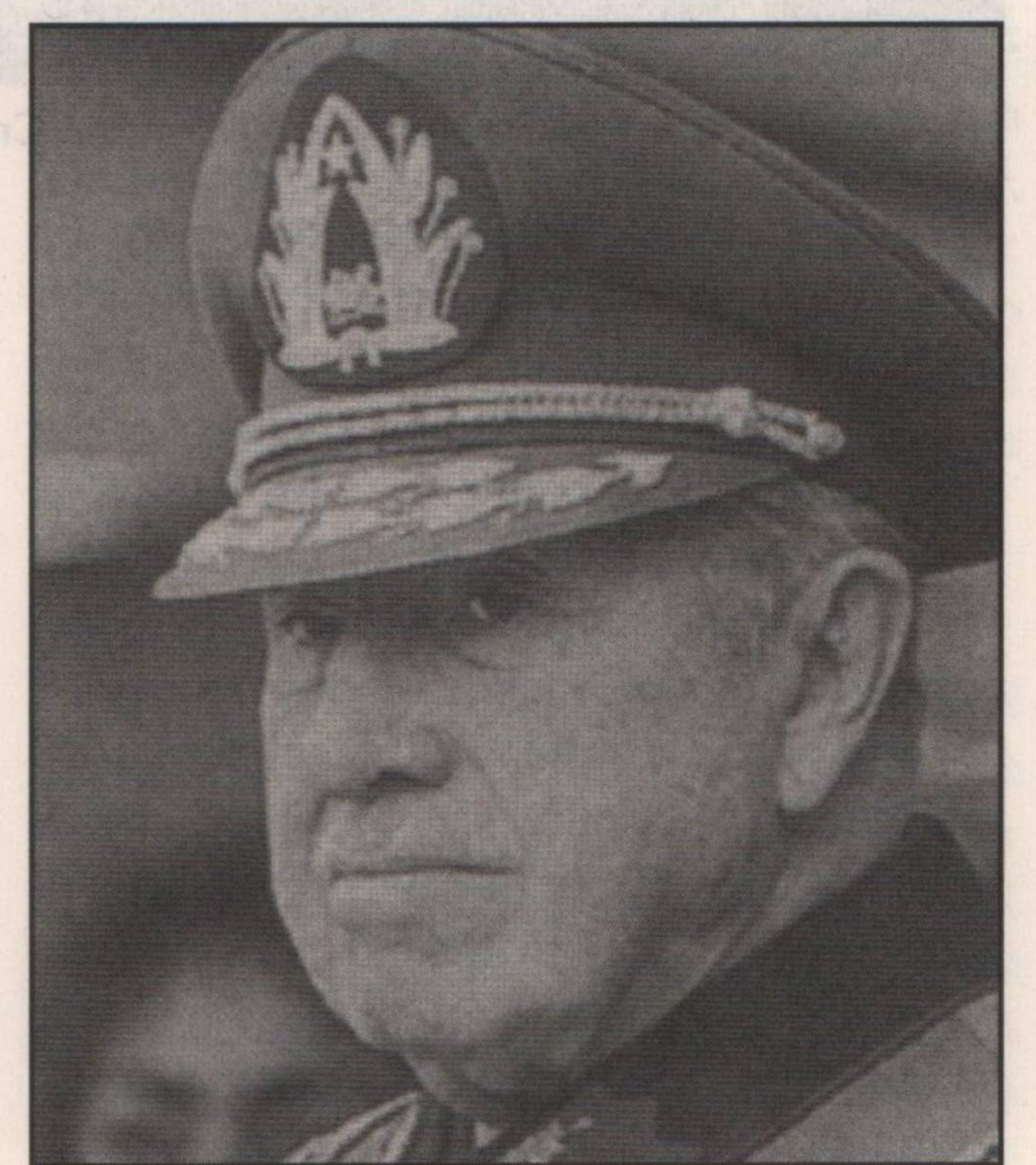
US involvement there before the coup by the military in 1973 in which General Pinochet seized power. The *International Herald Tribune* says: "The administration of President Richard Nixon openly favoured the coup, and helped prepare the climate for the military intervention against the socialist government of Salvador Allende, blocking loans, financing strikes and supporting the opposition press".

The US may have more information linking Pinochet's Operation Condor, the killing of Spanish citizens, Uruguayan lawmakers, students, political activists and the murder by car bomb in Washington in 1976 of the former foreign minister of Chile, Orlando Letelier, but the *Tribune* reports that "Washington's own role ... may inhibit its cooperation with the Spanish investigation, some human rights workers said".

Reed Brody, a lawyer with Human Rights Watch in New York, said "the US has been less than interested in cooperating with Spain. If this were a case the US would like to see prosecuted, the response would be more energetic and cooperative".

More than Pinochet!

On hearing the decision of the House of Lords that General Pinochet was not immune from prosecution as a former head of state,



General Pinochet

the former dictator's son Señor Pinochet Hiriart said: "Those we killed during that epoch [after the coup of 1973] were not killed because they were saints, but because they were extremists". He thought the decision of the Lords was an attack on Chilean sovereignty.

On the other side Isabel Allende, daughter of President Allende whose government was overthrown in 1973, declared: "Today is an historic day. Justice is 25 years late, but it's here at last". She added that "it is more than a Pinochet case". In reality "it's a message to all the dictators of the world and those that come in future ..."

That may be the case, but on Friday 27th November, the day after the Lords ruling, *El Pais* reported that two thousand officers of the Chilean military executive had assembled to show their support for their old commander, Augusto Pinochet. The paper claims a climate of tension exists between the military and civil authorities in Chile, with the military demanding that the Chilean government break diplomatic relations with Spain and the UK.

Last month an editorial in *El Pais* declared after the Pinochet ruling: "For many democrats over the world, yesterday was a day of fiesta". But what about 'Chile Billy', will he be better off?

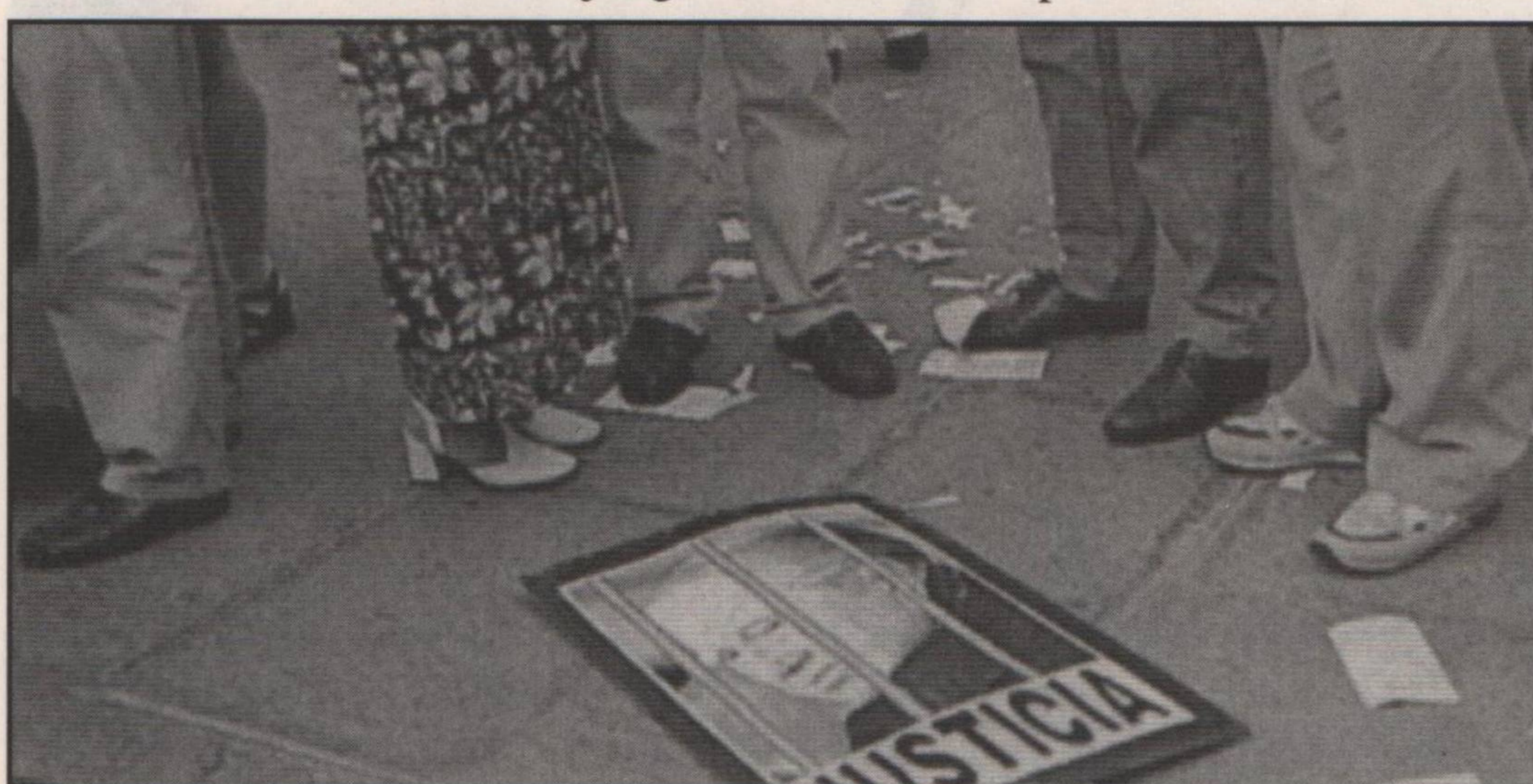
The *El Pais* editorial is hopeful: "The vast jubilation in Chile demonstrates that the Chileans have lost their fear in the debates of the last few weeks, and are ceasing to regard Pinochet as a national icon". We hope *El Pais* is right!

Revenge imbibed neat may be sour, but we have tried to show that the Pinochet case is a curious cocktail with many consequences for Chile and elsewhere. If the case helps to reveal more about the mysterious politics of Latin America and the US involvement there in the 1970s, it will serve us well. B

See also 'Despatch from Chile' by Larry Gambone on page 6



How Plantu sees the General's plight in *Le Monde*



After a march in Montevideo, Uruguay, to celebrate Pinochet's arrest

Bookshop Readers' Round-up



Greenham Common women dance on the Cruise missile silos at dawn on 1st January 1983

So impressed was the Royal Navy with the live demonstration of conventionally-armed Tomahawk Cruise missiles during the 1991 Middle East Arms Exhibition (chief sales rep M. Thatcher), otherwise known as the Gulf War, that it has decided to buy 56 of the submarine-launched version (SLCMs) costing billions of pounds of your money. At the end of last month a British submarine off the coast of California test-fired three SLCMs at a Pacific island target hundreds of miles away, watched by the military top brass of the UK and USA. The weapons hit their targets and the test were declared a success. Although the Royal Navy's missiles will be conventionally armed, the whole world has seen the terror and destruction that these weapons rained down on Iraq, Sudan and Afghanistan in maverick US attacks.

Unlike the 1990 occasion of the 'British' nuclear tests in the Nevada desert, no Greenham women were on hand to force a postponement of the Pacific tests. Their record as top Awkward Squad of the 1980s, however, is far more successful, as documented by Jill Liddington in *The Road to Greenham Common: feminism and anti-militarism in Britain since 1820**, when they were perhaps the most potent symbol anywhere of popular resistance to nuclear weapons. Her book is a history based on little-known autobiographies, personal diaries, records of meetings, and interviews with peace activists. It covers organisations and events as diverse as the Women's International League, the Suffragettes, the Olive Leaf Circles, the Women's Co-operative Guild, the Aldermaston marches, CND, Women for Life on Earth (as opposed to Pluto, perhaps?) and Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. Whether your interest is social history, feminism or anti-militarism, there's a wealth of useful detail in the book's 350 pages, backed up with notes, sources, illustrations and a good index.

Surprisingly this American edition wins out over the British edition in two respects: it contains an afterword on subsequent events in central and eastern Europe and reactions to the Gulf War, and it is reduced to half price from £11 to £5.50. What's more, Syracuse University Press have sensibly not bothered to change the text from British to American English, and finally, perhaps because it's nearly Christmas or perhaps because we just feel like it, the first thirty customers may also request, free of charge, a copy of Lynchcombe's *At Least Cruise is Clean** (originally £1.20), a highly entertaining pamphlet recounting the story of the reaction in the town of Newbury in 1980-81 to the arrival of both the apparently clean nuclear missiles and the supposedly dirty

women's peace campers at USAF Greenham Common. Well, I know which I'd prefer. Pamphlet alone is 60p.

In the world of current anarchist periodicals there is lengthy coverage of 'The Good Friday Agreement and the Left' in the annual *Black & Red Revolution* No. 4 (WSM, 36 A4 pages, £1.50), complemented by a major article on the 1798 Irish Rebellion by the United Irishmen against British rule. A South African anarchist organisation contributes a valuable article on 'Racism and Class Struggle in South Africa', and an interview with a comrade from the Czech anarchist group Solidarita explains the situation for anarchists in the Czech Republic. Other pieces examine the relevance of Platformism to modern anarchism, and the life and times of Victor Serg. 'The Bolsheviks' Pet Anarchist'.

Workers' Solidarity, the WSM's quarterly (No. 55, 12 A3 pages, 75p), carries an analysis of the Anglo-Irish Peace Process, encompassing the Omagh bombing and its aftermath; the problems of asylum-seekers, racism and deportations; profiteering landlords and the Irish housing crisis; the 'direct democracy' of the Zapatistas; and Louise Michel's life and times. Other articles include the plight of America's 2,600 death row prisoners by one beneficiary, and a brief history of anarchist 'Propaganda by the Deed'.

Among the offerings in *Black Flag* No. 215 (36 A4 pages, £1.50) are asylum-seekers, racism and immigration in Dover, Germany and Belgium; a timely critique of *Green Anarchist's* 'primitivism' and irrationalism; economics; the Omagh bombing; and how the police are dealing cocaine on Britain's streets. The folks at *Class War* seem to have missed this last topic, however: issue 76 (14 A3 pages, 80p, note price increase) has a report on the police entitled 'If they had brains they'd be dangerous'. It also covers the Smokey Bears Picnic in Portsmouth; the Reclaim the Streets actions in London; the use of the English language (eh?) and advises on 'How to be one of Tony's cronies'. Lastly, a short but amusing piece on radical Muslims criticises the Nation of Islam gooks who tactlessly invaded the Stephen Lawrence enquiry while the five murder suspects were testifying for being overweight, a condition they put down to eating too many pies!

Someone else who could be accused not of eating but throwing too many pies is Noel Godin, the *entarteur* who specialises in whacking cream tarts in the faces of celebrities, politicians, news-readers and others who he feels are arrogant, boring, who occupy too much space in the media or are otherwise stupid or unpleasant. One of the best bits in *Anarchy* No 45 is an interview with this heroic iconoclast who is in fact one

of a team of 'comical terrorists', 'pie pirates' or 'gloupinesque guerrillas', and who is careful to point out that they never throw the pies but splodge them point-blank into the faces of their victims.

One of their most famous recipients recently was Bill Gates, billionaire owner of computer software monopoly Microsoft, who made the mistake of visiting Godin's birthplace, Belgium, unaware that a disgruntled employee had leaked his precise whereabouts to the pie pranksters. For his pains he received four cream pies full in the face – 'before' and 'after' photos show the satisfying effect – from a total arsenal of 25! All pies are bought locally, so any international cream pie trade barriers are circumvented, and Godin's gang refuse all offers of money-for-targets, saying "We are not pie mercenaries". Your £3.50 will get you a good laugh, plus an excellent interview with a participant on everyday life for anarchists during the Spanish revolution, and a lot more in its 84 pages.

This coming New Year's Day sees the fifth anniversary of the Zapatista uprising in the Chiapas region of Mexico, where the government is still refusing to grant regional autonomy and is still playing dirty tricks, pretending to negotiate whilst at the same

time trying to provoke further military confrontations. A new book from Pluto Press, *Zapatista!: reinventing revolution in Mexico*, is a collection of articles by Mexican, American and British writers on the uniqueness of the struggle by the EZLN (Zapatista Army of National Liberation), in particular addressing what it means to have a revolution that does not aim to take power.

Other central issues examined are the role of women and the questions of race and class in such a revolution, plus the widespread and indispensable use of electronic media for the first time in an indigenous uprising, including computers, faxes and the internet. It is almost certain that had the EZLN and their sympathisers not had access to such tools, their insurrection would have been suppressed in short order by the Mexican state. The fact that the electronic news of the events was used by supporters worldwide to inform and encourage mass protests everywhere, despite the total censorship of the Mexican press and media, made the state's obvious desire for brutal revenge largely impossible. The editors, John Holloway and Eloína Peláez, also warn of the government's increasing counter-measures. At £13.99 this is a detailed, well-informed, thoughtful work of 202 pages including an index and notes, plus a preface.

Whatever you celebrate around the mid-winter solstice, have a happy one. **KM**

**GIVE ME
YOUR
YOUR
YOUR
POOR.
RETARDED.
BLACK.**

Your Young and Your Innocent.

More than 2600 prisoners languish on death row in the USA.

The poor convicted of killing are hanged for want of a good lawyer.

The mentally retarded are electrocuted, ignorant of their own actions.

The young are sent to the gas chamber for crimes committed while as young as 15.

And blacks convicted of killing whites are far more likely to be sentenced to death than any other category of offenders.

The death penalty in the USA is a horrifying lottery in which political, financial, community and racial pressures play a more decisive role in sending a person to the death chamber than the actual crime itself.

It's not a deterrent, it's irreversible and, even with the most stringent safeguards, has been inflicted on the innocent.

**THE DEATH PENALTY.
IT'S NOT A PUNISHMENT.
IT'S A CRIME.**

Genetic Engineering

Dear Comrades,
I was intrigued by Donald Room's letter on Genetic Engineering. I gather that he supports unreservedly the biblical statement that all creation, and indeed all that exists in the world, was created for men's use and command (Genesis 1:26, 1:28-30, etc). Living entities other than men – and perhaps men too, especially if they are of inferior races – may therefore be used for experiments, may be used for, to use his expression, biological innovation. Fuddy-duddies like me (and Prince Charles, poor man – even when he is on the right side he gets it in the neck) who opposed experiments in Belsen, and eugenics in the early part of the century, are standing in the way of progress. Other cultures, not so factual as ours, regard the very earth as sacred, or would call GE scientists' tinkering 'hubris'. But Room, and other 'reasonable people', will base his ethics on 'factual information'. Killing people, for instance, cannot be objected to on the basis of facts any more than can torture. Killing people keeps down the population – very laudable and scientific – and torture is the quickest way of getting even more facts out of one's enemies (and they can be proved to be enemies by the use of factual information, gathered with great care by people whose job this is). But perhaps ethics are based on something other than science or factual information, even for reasonable people that scorn 'mystical' arguments.

As for splitting up GE into the good bits (i.e. the bits Room approves) and the bad bits (the bits we found out about before the companies experimenting with them could make them *faits accomplis*): in the real world this means that no mass-opposition (the only kind that has any effect against governments and transnational companies) can be mobilised – as Room by implication concedes. So one gets a rainbow alliance, where one is forced to rub shoulders with lunatics who think that life is sacred. As a matter of fact, the only good bit Room cites (blood-clotting Factor 8 from GE sheep to avoid HIV in haemophiliacs) begs the obvious question whether avoiding HIV in haemophiliacs could not be managed in some less dramatic way, if the vast investment poured into GE were used elsewhere. Room's apologia is the same as that which praises rocket and missile research because it led to CDs, or which finds nuclear power in part good without considering that no funds have been made available for wind, wave and solar power since these did not offer either immediate fat profits or greater centralised power for states.

By the way, Monsanto has a hidden agenda: it is to make it impossible for anyone to grow crops that are not controlled by them.

Jonn Roe

[Donald Room writes: Yes, ethics is based on something other than science or factual information. What I wrote (Freedom, 31st October) is that reasonable people need factual information before making up their minds on ethical questions. Splitting up GE into good bits and bad bits, I used the expression "in my opinion" to indicate that I did not expect everyone who knew the facts would agree with my ethical judgements. People who make up their minds without bothering about the facts, on the basis of blind prejudice, are unreasonable in the dictionary sense of not able to be reasoned with. I am interested to learn that Monsanto has a hidden agenda to eliminate what they do not control, and I would ask Jonn Roe to supply the evidence if I thought he had any interest in facts.]

Anarchists in Trade Unions

Dear Freedom,
Initially I thought Richard Griffin's letter (Freedom, 28th November) an excellent suggestion. Yes, anarchists in trade unions should get together and share notes and experiences instead of the usual pseudo-syndicalist trade-off of cliches. I have been active in trade unionism for most of my life. Then I had a few doubts.

I used to be employed as a Lecturer in Sociology in an FE college and was very active in my trade union NATFHE (The National Association of Teachers in Further & Higher Education).

One of my most interesting experiences was being a member of the Trades Council. Here I found its members, two for every trade union branch in the borough, were all long-serving politicians of varying hue, mostly CP members. Older comrades may note the demand from syndicalists and others that we should try and get ourselves elected as shop stewards in order to carry the flag, totally ignoring the fact that shop stewards are representatives of workers in particular workshops, there to put up the views of their fellow workers, not just to push one's own private political isms.

The function of a trade union is to protect the interests of its members in relation to working conditions and wages and much of my time in my union, especially whilst being branch secretary, was case work with my

colleagues' many problems, including a lot of face-to-face counselling work.

The question as to whether trade unions are bourgeois in a capitalist society is a rather silly remark. Of course they are, in a sense, bourgeois. They are not revolutionary organisations or political parties, beating the drum for minority political beliefs as many who have no trade union experience want them to be. We live in a capitalist society and to effectively combat it we have to operate within its systems, not ineffectively knock ourselves against brick walls.

I remember at a trades council AGM sorting out the representatives to which the trades council sent delegates where they come to two posts they could not fill: trades council representatives on the local Labour Party General Management Committee, and this tells you something about the composition of trades councils, practically all of whom were members of Labour Party proscribed organisations. So out of devilment I let my name go forward. I later found out one also had to be a member of the Labour Party.

I had never been a member of a political party but it seemed amusing to infiltrate. I thought I'd spy on the Labour Party. And what a gang of pillocks. I realised if I'd been ten years younger and that way inclined I might well have ended up as an anarchist MP, there was so little competition, but it was not to be. They found me out. I had been denounced as an anarchist. A dangerous man.

But it was not the Labour Party that had found me out, nor the trades council. What was it that Sicilian bandit said: "God save me

— COPY DEADLINE —
The next issue of Freedom will be dated 9th January, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 31st December

from my friends". To my amazement I was publicly denounced by an anarchist comrade, as an anarchist turncoat.

I wasn't a turncoat, I was a spy, and I never thought I had to clear all my actions with anarchist comrades. Suppose I'd infiltrated the IRA, Combat 18 or the Mafia, I could have been killed.

But what happened was that through an article in an anarchist paper my trade union comrades found out about my beliefs and affiliations and I was quietly and subtly moved out of all decision-making positions into figure-head situations, like vice-chairman, or moved off all negotiations and, realising I would never get anywhere, introduce more libertarian thinking into decision-taking to make my union branch more democratic and people-centred as I had been trying for many years, my position became impossible so I gradually dropped out.

So I have to say to Richard Griffin, the problem for anarchist trade unionists, especially in relation to other union members, is unless he is talking about creating a secretive freemason-like society with a closed membership list, the way anarchism is seen by the general populace, to declare yourself as an anarchist might put you in a position where another anarchist will publicly 'out' you, so to be open one might be shooting oneself in the foot. It might be better to be seen as a good trade union member by your colleagues and influence them privately and act as a complete iconoclast in relation to other anarchist trade unionists. I do not say don't do it, but be cautious and understand the consequences. You may well be a lot more effective in your trade union by avoiding joining an anarchist trade union group and keeping your affiliations under your hat.

Peter Neville

News from Angel Alley

Many subscriptions to Freedom fall due this issue. There would have been more, but many have renewed early after our recent appeals and we thank all those who have done so, often adding donations, large and small, to our various funds which are essential to keep the non-profit Freedom Press functioning. Once again we have decided to keep the subscription rates and cover price at the same level for one more year, although an increase in postal charges seems likely soon, and we also continue our claimant's rate, by which we mean pensioners, students, unemployed –

we don't ask for documentary evidence, but trust to the consciences of our subscribers. Those who can afford to make donations are subsidising the less well off.

This is the last issue of Freedom to be published this year. The first issue of 1999 will be dated 9th January and there will be 24 issues in the year, with a four-week break in August.

The Bookshop will close at 4pm on Christmas Eve and re-open on Tuesday 5th January 1999. And to all our readers, the season's greetings and best wishes for a happy new year.



*Not my invention. Henry Kissinger actually said it.

It is impossible

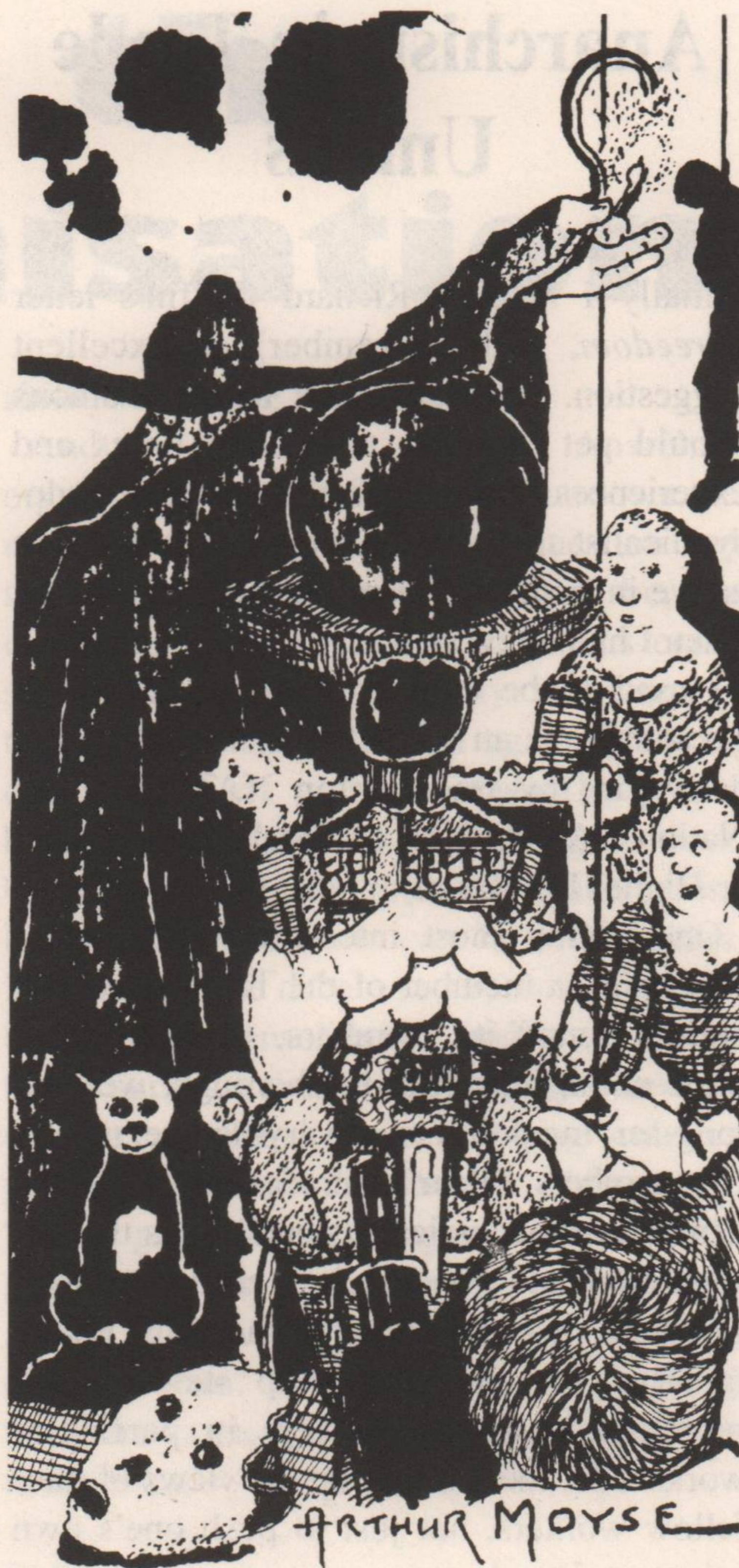
There is a fear within every literate association of individuals that come one day some bastard will write their lying memoirs and when that book hits the browsing shelf trembling little pinkies will thumb the index to see if they have been slagged off or, God more awful, never given a mention. Yet in the end it is a futile worry for, as the late Albert Meltzer demonstrated in his scissors-and-paste cry from the heart, few read the gossip and no one but no one remembers the printed whimpers and tapped out cries of pain from one who suffered so noisily in this Vale of alleged Tears. The late forgettable Woodrow Wyatt, who clung to the Top Brass like unto poison ivy living off a dying oak, had his loo-style graffito memoirs front-paged on the fun section of a national high-forehead *Sun* and we who love our printed filth found boredom on reading and re-reading how many tables Wyatt sat below the salt and how Woodrow loved the ancient Queen Mum and the ancient Queen Mum loved Woodrow, and within weeks it is all forgotten even unto the nasty smears against acquaintances that he tarnished as friends. Wyatt crawled up through the Labour Party onto the Tote Board and into the *News of the World* and repaid everyone he trod on ever upwards, and paid the debt by breaking their bread and secretly spitting in their faces. But out of all that slime not even a dead rat floats to the stinking surface, so be it. Even poor old Ossie Clark's diaries make poor reading for one who was king of the Kings Road Chelsea in the swinging sixties, for though he had that slight talent to amuse the monde the sadly sad truth is that the monde stayed young and seeking new amusing trivia while Ossie grew old and broke and died drug-taking and in poverty.

Yet I will remember Ossie Clark not through his diaries edited by my Lady Henrietta Rous but by Hockney's portrait of him when both were gay blades in Chelsea's Kings Road for, comrade, if you want eternal fame don't write a diary but get a good

portrait artist to use you as a subject for a decent social message painting. But as Dickens used to continually tell me while squeezing my elbow at the White Hart bar, "It was the worst of times, it was the best of times" and "I'll get the next round" and he was not referring to 1905.

Edgar Wallace was born in 1875 and farmed out to a fish porter's family, and in 1893 he did his stint with the Colours, ending up as the *Daily Mail*'s military correspondent during the Boer War. But in 1905 Wallace struck publishing gold with the publication of his first novel *The Four Just Men*, and from then on he was king of the typewriter for he churned out 'thriller' after 'thriller'. Orwell as ever patronised this type of writing as having a "native grace" that cannot be said about George's writings. The novels belong to the school of 'the creaking door' and Wallace's cliché was that every chapter a gasp of horror as the ghastly figure stood revealed.

Wallace was weak on character but strong on plot and that is what held the readers, to the disgust of Q.D. Leavis's snarl that 'good' literature was ignored. She stated that if two hundred more copies of Edgar Wallace detectives stories were put on a library shelf "they would all be gone the same day" so heave ho for Hamlet. Wallace worked himself into his own social background in that in his novel *Private Selby*, a British private soldier, saves a visiting foreign princess who has come to Britain to sign an international agreement and because that simple private soldier (Wallace?) saved her life she will only sign the agreement if he signs with her, and God how many American dog soldiers in World War Two dreamed that fantasy that by some freak of chance they might marry Princess Elizabeth and stand on the balcony as the Royal Consort, "Hi guys", for under every GI republican flak-jacket beats a monarchist-loving heart. But in his book Wallace was making his case for political or social murder for his four men



saw themselves as accusers, judges and executioners of whoever they chose. It is a belief that too many hold in that if you murder someone in authority then all will be well when all that happens is that the next in line for promotion takes over with official murder versus freelance killing.

The plot of Wallace's book revolves around the murder of a British Foreign Secretary who dominates the House and is forcing his right-wing Aliens Extradition Bill into final acceptance by the House. The four decide that the only way the Bill can be defeated is by murdering the Foreign Secretary, and this is the fun of the book of how it would be accomplished. The flaw in Wallace's morality is that because one of the four believe they have been recognised by a small-time thief they kill the small-time thief

to protect themselves and, as always happens, murder becomes domino-style killing with any heroic fool dropping explosives into a street litter-bin to kill or maim the innocent.

The danger of Wallace's book was that in 1905 A.J. Balfour's Conservative Alien Act was ready for its final acceptance by the House and it was held that the Act was aimed at European and Russian Jews who had settled around Whitechapel where they had long been a target for right-wing militants with such groupings as the British Brothers League, and Balfour's Bill was to be the cleansing act for them. The 1904 Bill had been withdrawn after protests that it penalised those victims of religious persecution and though the 1905 Bill contained clauses seeking to protect victims of religious and political oppression it was held to be a weaker Bill and, like it or nay, it is held that Balfour's Tory Bill was deemed to be the forerunner of Britain's present alien and immigration laws. But Wallace learned to bite his tongue and in 1908, in the August of that year, Wallace published a nouvelle *The Council of Justice* in which they became Disney's four little pigs admired and protected by the law and the enemy in the main became the dissident anarchists of the period, for Wallace had witnessed an attempt to murder the King of Spain and his bride and, with Wallace moving two steps to the right liberal-wise, the right-wing cheered while crying ya, ya, ya, we told you so.

The major battle for Wallace's four unjust men came when they pitted themselves against an alleged international anarchist movement called the Red Hundred composed of Russian and East European Jews centred around Whitechapel and led by the Woman of Gratz, and the famous four fought the lady from Gratz and her friends with their own weapons, terror with terror, murder with murder.

Wallace is an interesting man in that he is that common type, a liberal who got frightened when he saw blood upon the stones. For myself I will seek asylum on freedom's crowded shelf.

Arthur Moyses

13th International Week of Science and Peace, 9th to 15th November 1998

Report on the UK Programme

Once again the UK had a varied programme, in terms of the topics covered and the type of event.

There were five public meetings or lectures. These were on:

- SGR (The Work of Scientists for Global Responsibility, presented at the University of Edinburgh by Alistair Armitage, organised by Third World First)
- Nuclear Legacy (The Nuclear Legacy – the Environmental Impact, presented by Eddy Taylor, organised by Wimbledon Disarmament Coalition/CND)
- Genetic Engineering (Letting the Genie Out of the Bottle: the Environmental Crisis for the New Millennium, presented in

Edinburgh by Sue Mayer, organised by the Centre for Human Ecology)

- Demining (The Dervish Project for Clearing Antipersonnel Landmines, presented by Henry Disney, organised by Norwich Landmines Action Group)
- Development (From Mechanism to Bricolage: Why only 'Europeans' Could Fall for the Idea of 'Development', presented by Tony Barnett, organised by School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia).

There was a conference, on 'Colonising Space: Peaceful Exploration or Military Adventure?' organised by Leicester Peace Action Group.

There were two Peace Camps:

- Camp opposing Menwith Hill US Spy Base, organised by Menwith Hill Women's Peace Camp
- Camp at Faslane to Decommission Trident Nuclear Weapon System, organised by Trident Ploughshares 2000.

As in so many earlier years, there was a vigil in support of Mordechai Vanunu in London (East end of Kensington Court, off High Street Kensington, near the Israeli Embassy). This vigil indeed takes place every Saturday, from 12 noon to 2pm, so supporters of Mordechai are encouraged to attend whenever they are able.

Finally, as a follow-up to an IWOSP97 event, the *Climate Train Report* has recently been published by Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR). This is a comprehensive report on the journey, by a group of environmentalists and scientists from Europe and Asia, by land and sea to attend the Kyoto Climate Convention. The Report may be obtained from SGR for GBP14.95, including post and package to places in the UK. Write to SGR, Freepost (SW 5294), SW18 4YY. Detailed information about the report may be found on [http://www.gn.apc.org/sgr/](http://www.gn.apc.org/sg/)

Anyone who has ideas for UK contributions to IWOSP99 (8th to 14th November 1999) is invited to contact me on 01508-492464 or a.cotley@uea.ac.uk

Alan Cotley

UK IWOSP Coordinator

Information Liberation: challenging the corruptions of information power by Brian Martin

Information can be a source of power and, as a consequence, be corrupting. This has ramifications through a number of areas. There is a need for a radical critique that is accessible and oriented to action. Several topical areas are addressed, including mass media, intellectual property, surveillance and defamation. For each topic, a critique of problems is given, examples provided and options for action canvassed. Not every topic relevant to information power is addressed – that would be an enormous task – but rather a range of significant and representative topics. This book will fill a major gap in a very popular field.

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Lessons from a derelict quarry

All through the 1970s I was employed by a voluntary body, hired to start and produce a resource for teachers called *BEE* (Bulletin of Environmental Education). This was before the imposition of a National Curriculum. One of its most stimulating mentors was a witty and inventive man called Peter Harper who, in 1975, went off to Llwyngwern Quarry at Machynlleth in Powys to become one of the pioneers of the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT).

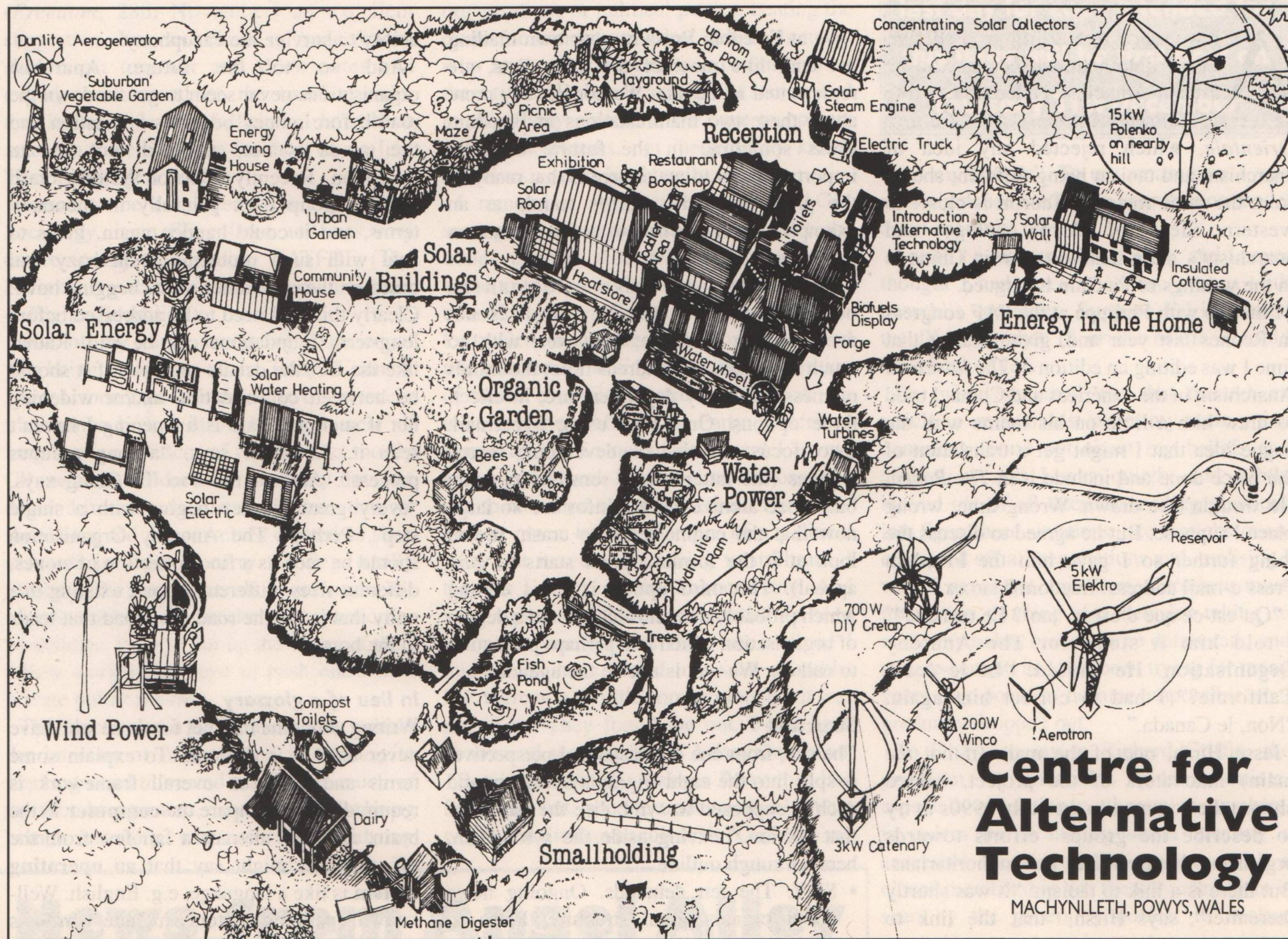
The place now has about 80,000 visitors a year, including 20,000 schoolchildren, and is world famous as a demonstration site for environmentally friendly power generation and sewage disposal. What it really demonstrates is a different way of thinking about issues that face us every day. Courses there have for years included weekend instruction in the method of house construction devised by Walter Segal.

The only time I visited the CAT chanced to be on a day when Peter wasn't around but his conclusions after a very long experience of propaganda and experiment are reported in the course of a new book of 386 pages about alternative lifestyles. This is *Living Lightly: travels in post-consumer society* by Walter and Dorothy Schwartz, published at £15 by Jon Carpenter (2 The Spendlove Centre, Charlbury, OX7 3PQ).

Their account of alternative ways of approaching everyday issues is global in its scope, and includes a variety of experiments that have been described in this journal: local exchange trading systems, food production for local markets, cooperative housing, schools which operate as alternatives to the official system, and so on. I am not personally sympathetic to their advocacy of 'down-shifting', meaning that clever and adaptable people like them should voluntarily restrict their income and live more simply, because I am aware of the big proportion of people in the rich world, quite apart from the overwhelming majority in the poor world, for whom such advice is superfluous, not to say insulting.

But the book is, all the same, immensely stimulating because they take the trouble to describe failures as well as successes. They obviously believe in the first rule taught to professional journalists, which is that people want to read about people.

So CAT is seen in terms of the experience of Peter Harper, correctly described by the



Centre for Alternative Technology
MACHYNLLETH, POWYS, WALES

Schwartz duo as "one of the wittiest and most ironical" of environmentalists, listed the place's shortcomings, like the fact that the place had not much integration into the local community and that "we always seem to be broke". The place is run as a workers' cooperative of 28 members, of whom ten live on the site. To the visitors its success was evident: "It generates 90% of its own energy in renewable form from sun, wind and water, and recovers 80% of its sewage nutrients in its two reed beds ... with its £1 turnover, CAT has become a major resource ... the Centre's influence owes much to consultancy work which also brings it nearer to the cultural and economic mainstream".

They also stress a wider point, commenting that "the students who stay for ten days in the eco-cabins of CAT learn skills as valuable in cities as in hill farms. In both rich and poor countries, education must persuade students that to live cooperatively rather than competitively will increase, not diminish, their personal autonomy".

Now there's a point they explore elsewhere in the book, but still at the Centre, they stress that "the whole site, once degraded and abandoned, has become a mass of trees, plants and flowers" and they put into a box yet another of the thoughtful remarks that Peter Harper made to them: "The craze for self-sufficiency and small-is-beautiful has

passed. Don't try and do it all yourself. Start where you are strong, not where you are weak. In a modern society you sell your marketable skills and purchase the rest: there are loads of other specialists. Don't try to make your energy: try to save your energy. Most of the action is going to be in cities, where the majority of humans will soon be living and where, contrary to our old arcadian assumptions, sustainable modern lifestyles are more easily achieved".

This opinion is the result of many years of hard work at alternatives and strengthens the case of those who argue for a different kind of settlement pattern in the next century.

Colin Ward

The academic paper *Anarchist Studies* has now completed six years of publication.

The twelfth issue, which has just appeared, provides a convenient moment to consider its present situation. It seemed a good idea at the time, but too much material in too many issues seems to have little to do with anarchism as understood by most people who call themselves anarchists, let alone to the daily lives of ordinary people, and more to do with the professional careers of what the late Albert Meltzer described with his customary combination of sense and nonsense as "failed mandarins". The prevailing theoretical tendency is towards what may be described as 'postism' – post-structuralism, post-deconstructionism, post-modernism, post-humanism, post every ism, even post-anarchism in some cases – and the prevailing practical tendency is towards a mixture of inaccuracy and irrelevance.

In this particular issue a witless editorial is followed by a pointless article on anarchism and morality, a meaningless article on anarchism and aesthetics, and a worthless article on anarchism and Daoism. There are several book reviews, which are distinguished in this company by being both understandable and useful (including excellent ones by David Goodway and Colin Ward).

Anarchist Studies

There is also a so-called 'Booknote' which deserves special attention. This is a short review by John Moore of Bob Black's book *Anarchy after Leftism* (1997), which consists of an attack on Murray Bookchin. (Moore is an associate editor and Bookchin is a member of the editorial board of *Anarchist Studies*, which adds spice to what follows.) Moore says that Black's book is "not merely a critique of Bookchin's thought" and "a searing indictment of Bookchin and the stranglehold he has attempted to exert over contemporary anarchism", but that, "more importantly in the long-term", it "performs the last rites over anarcho-leftism" and "proclaims the obsolescence of classical anarchism, the anarchism of the left (that is, loyal opposition)".

Moore adds that "Black provocatively demonstrates that Bookchin is not an anarchist by any standard (or even non-standard) definition of the term", and that "Black establishes beyond reasonable doubt that Bookchin is a statist and, further, that key elements of his ideology, far from being progressive, let alone revolutionary, are thoroughly compatible with the repressive project". He also adds that Black "correctly identifies the bankruptcy of Bookchin's ideas with

the bankruptcy of the anarcho-leftism with which he is falsely associated", explores "the paradigm shift taking place within contemporary anarchism, with the emergence of post-leftist anarchy or various New Anarchisms", and "firmly establishes the rupture between the anarchism of the past and the anarchisms of the future".

Of course Moore has the right to write what he wants, just as Bookchin and Black do. But does he know what he is writing about? Many anarchists disagree with many things said by Bookchin, and have said so in many places (including *Freedom*); but has he really attempted to exert a stranglehold over contemporary anarchism, is he a statist, is his ideology compatible with a repressive project? Many anarchists disagree about anarchism itself, and have said so in many places (including *Freedom*). But is 'classical anarchism', "the anarchism of the left", the anarchism expounded by *Freedom* for more than a century, really obsolete and bankrupt, and only "the anarchism of the past"? Anyway, if Bookchin isn't actually an anarchist at all, what do his ideas have to do with anarchism, old or new? And if Moore actually rejects anarchism as it is known by most anarchists, why does he bother to take part in an

anarchist paper?

On a lower level, does Moore know the company he is keeping? If he doesn't, he is a fool; if he does, he is a crook. Bob Black has had a terrible reputation among American anarchists for several decades, for all sorts of political and personal reasons. Without going into detail, among his characteristics are making crude advances to women, starting violent confrontations with anarchists he happens to disagree with, and even acting as a police informer against them, with serious consequences for his victims; documentary evidence, including photocopies of his letters denouncing comrades to the authorities in 1984 and 1996, appears in *The Match 91* (Winter/Spring 1996/1997).

If the choice is between Bookchin and the leftist anarchism of the past and Black and Moore and the postist anarchism of the future, which shall we choose? And if this sort of thing is the stance of *Anarchist Studies*, which sort of anarchists will continue to write for or subscribe to it?

NW

Anarchist Studies, Volume 6, Number 2, October 1998 (White Horse Press, £6) is stocked by Freedom Press Bookshop, but this issue has not yet been received.

Introducing the Anarchy Organisation

A few years ago Philippe Pelletier, former international secretary of the French Anarchist Federation, wrote an essay, *Culture Anarchiste et Culture Orientale*, which rejected any idea of anarchism and taoism being different shoots from the same rhizome. Taoism is closer to western ideas of deep ecology and anarchism's main manifestation in China is in the writings of Pa Chin he argued.

I met up with Philippe at the FAF congress in Rennes last year and, given that at that time I was editing an edition of *The Raven* on Anarchism in the Americas and China, I tried to draw him a little on his theme with the vague idea that I might get a translation of the piece done and include it in *The Raven*. He wouldn't be drawn. Wrong time, wrong place I suppose. But he agreed to discuss the thing further so I gave him the Freedom Press e-mail address: freedom@tao.ca.

"Qu'est-ce que c'est le 'tao'? Le taoisme?" I told him it stood for The Anarchy Organisation. He smiled. "Et le 'ca'? Californie?" I had to correct him again. "Non, le Canada."

Jesse Hirsh, one of the main (if not the main) innovators of the project, helped choose the acronym in the early 1990s to try to describe the groups' efforts towards organising themselves as anti-authoritarians. But there is a link to taoism. "It was shortly thereafter", says Hirsh, "that the link to taoism was made, as an effort to broaden our own world outlook past the confines of western culture". This is not to say all the members of the TAO look to taoism for inspiration. Rather, all the disparate members are drawn together by a ten-point programme. Hirsh explains: "As far as this web site is concerned, we are in the long arduous process of creating multiple perspectives, or entry points, into the content and people who operate throughout our networks. Currently we have a taoist perspective, an anarchist perspective, and we hope to develop a socialist, multi-lingual and multi-faith entry points. We're also open to other perspectives that contribute towards the attainment of our demands."

The web site

It is here on the tao.ca web site that this network comes together. A first visit will probably leave the visitor somewhat bewildered and the only positive promise is that future visits will be just as bewildering. It is only very slowly that a sense of anarchy emerges from the disorder.

Much of the structure is best understood by considering the e-mail list structure which underpins it. The tao server is running on a Linux platform with applications such as majordomo doing much of the automation. There are perhaps about two hundred mailing lists ranging from Finnish anarchist discussion through more ambitious projects like the, now tiring, a-infos news service to the Tao Book Collective (whatever that is).

We at Freedom Press run our own mailing list and, like most of the other lists, are represented at the site. We hope to say more about these two manifestations of Freedom Press sometime in the future, but one important point to make here is that many of the projects, again a-infos stands as an example, use hypermail to archive posts on the server.

The result, as I have said, can be bewildering and that in itself is not necessarily a criticism. However, with so much information (hundreds if not thousands of messages every day) there are, in effect, three options. One: stop using hypermail. Two: focus attention on developing search engines (the latter seems sensible to many but, since archives like a-infos are so large now that the engine tends to crash, if you look at it the former option starts to gain appeal). The third option is mass editing which probably demands labour and a degree of organisation which it is perhaps premature to call on. Wu-wei is not on the agenda.

Structure

The site, from one organisational perspective, is split into the eight trigrams of taoism and each is supposed to symbolise the nature of that section. Leaving aside the symbolism, here's a rough outline:

- SKY: The ten demands. Ongoing news about organisational structure. Plans to publish accounts and fundraising efforts.
- EARTH: The struggle for human liberation via international popular revolution (no less) starting with Toronto.
- FIRE: Theory, theatre and theology with the network culture as a backdrop.
- WIND: News about various struggles and movements for social change with information about how to participate.
- WATER: Keeping an eye on the corporate world to find out what Mr Gates and Mr Murdoch have planned for us all.
- THUNDER: Writing and publishing (this was the early home for Freedom Press).
- LAKE: Individualism edging into the spiritual.
- MOUNTAIN: The paradox at rest is the paradox at play. Ancient, modern and post-modern texts for aspiring sages (clearly your granny will want to know about this one).

I believe the original plan was to see all this develop into 64 (i.e. 8x8) sub-divisions. Fortunately it never happened. Instead as some of the projects, like ourselves, became more independent news domains have been set up. Sometimes on the net it seems that the world and his wife want to set up an international news service and there are currently at least three groups on the server dedicated to reinventing this particular wheel. But many are those who are content to ferret away in their own communities happily disseminating information to the passing traveller about their local struggles and grievances in whatever language you like. Spain's social centres figure here and seem very popular. Some Torontonian activist lurks around every virtual corner (most recently involved in a squatting campaign against homelessness) while A Batalha keep those who read Portuguese up to date about their part of the world. Food Not Bombs, radio, alternative punk, veganism and student activism aplenty all come together into a Tao of Babel. Whether it is your cup of tea or not depends on your

ability to survive the cacophony.

And so to the future. Anarchist organisations never seem to get far down the road before money becomes a question and the tao.ca is not, and will not be, an exception. Recently a major systems crash set the group back painfully in monetary terms, and it could happen again. Plans to deal with such problems seem hazy and based on the economics of the begging bowl. Clearly this will need to be addressed before long-term foundations can be laid. Rather like the EC, the debate seems as if it should be between consolidation and/or widening but if such a debate is happening I haven't seen it. As Hirsh says, "a long arduous process". And as the Tao Te Ching says, "every great journey begins with a single step". Perhaps The Anarchy Organisation should be seen as a fine collection of stones, different sizes, different shapes, existing in a unity that is the the road. The road that leads to the home.

In lieu of a glossary

Writing about the internet for those who have never used it is difficult. To explain some terms and ideas an overall framework is required. If we compare the **computer** to the brain, and thus alienate a fair few from the off, then we might say that an **operating system** is like a language, e.g. English. Well-known operating systems include **windows** and **Linux**.

Applications or **software** are the different

things you can do within that language, e.g. write a poem or an article about bullfinches.

A **web site** is a collection of digital files all linked together on the same computer by an indexing system called **hypertext** which allows you to <click> on a word, phrase or picture to move to another relevant document. In turn one computer can link to another and the result is the **World Wide Web**.

Search engines or **searchers** are special places on the WWW where you can find out if something is on the web that you want to look at.

For many people the WWW is the same as the net. This is wrong because the net also includes e-mail and with them **mailing lists** which are just like the subscription list for this journal: if something is sent to the list everyone gets a copy. But this means that *only* those people get a copy. If the list 'uses' **hypermail** the message is automatically published on the web where anyone with net access can read it.

A **crash** is what we don't want and probably the fault of Bill Gates, the CIA or both.

Got all that?

Lingvoj

The top ten accessed documents at the tao (19th November 1998).

#reqs	%bytes	file	
8468	1.99%	/	The tao home page
1171	0.20%	/~freedom/	FPs home page
1056	0.43%	/ainfos/	a-infos home page
1053	0.09%	/~cas/	French Canadian news
1032	0.31%	/yin.html	The anarchist perspective
1017	0.03%	/~g-7/main.htm	Punk music
962	0.85%	/yang.html	The taoist perspective
893	0.28%	/~csl/	Centro Social Libertario
724	0.26%	/sky/	(see article)
676	0.09%	/~g-7/whatsnew.htm	New Punk Music

Dispatch from Chile

The English are not popular here these days. I attended a reading by Niconor Parra at the International Bookfair in Santiago yesterday (7th November). Of all the poems Parra read, none in the SRO crowd got such intense applause as the one entitled *For a World Without the English* – and this from an overwhelmingly student audience. Now Parra is hardly a rightist – his other poems included an elegy for his friend the late Octavio Paz, a criticism of God, religion, a ridicule of all of Chile's political factions. He is more of an anarchist than anything else. It seems that Chileans feel that dealing with Pinochet is their business and no one else's. Furthermore, aside from your die-hard stalinist, everyone is well aware of the hypocrisy of it all. Governments that cheerfully embraced Castro, Suharto, the butchers of Tiananmen Square, have all of a sudden gotten religion over Pinochet. And don't talk too loudly about the Spanish

socialists. Franco slaughtered 500,000 people and who was ever punished for these crimes which were a hundred times worse than the Chilean military?

Chileans feel interfered with, and that uncomprehending outsiders are inadvertently damaging the democratisation process.

It has to be pointed out that 30% of the population are solidly pro-Pinochet and another 15-20% will, if push comes to shove, waver in that direction. While justice calls for the military to answer for the five thousand victims, the social reality is that it is not possible without re-starting the civil war which caused these deaths in the first place.

The lessons that Chile's terrible experience has for the world in its failed revolution, the coup of 1973 and the present situation, is that social change must come from a more or less consensual approach. Beating down those who disagree with you will never result in a society that is peaceful and free.

A Revival of Chilean Syndicalism?

The Chilean Workers' Control (the CUT) is holding elections on 25th November. The 470,000 member federation is divided into six factions vying for control. Four of these are the major political parties: the Christian Democrats, Radicals, Socialists and Progressive Democrats. The Stalinists have a slate running under the unintentionally ironic slogan of "A CUT for the workers". Most interesting is the group around the expelled socialist Arturo Martinez calling for "autonomy and trade union democracy". The Martinez faction is fighting for a CUT free from the influence of *all* political factions and a strengthening of internal union democracy. These are, of course, classical

syndicalist demands and, while one should always be aware of the demagoguery that arises in these situations, the fact that such a call is made is indicative of the pressure from the rank and file.

The Socialist Party leadership is quite worried, in fact. Party president Ricardo Nuñez has intervened and denied the possibility that Autonomists might do well in the election (they could gain as many as six of the thirteen top positions).

Larry Gambone

The Raven no. 37 on the Americas and China includes 'The Anarchist Movement in Chile' by Larry Gambone, a 20-page article with bibliography.

The Raven
Number 37



Anarchism in the Americas and China

96 pages £3 post free worldwide

In recent years a number of left-libertarian theorists and activists in different parts of the world have come to the conclusion that libertarian municipalism – a politics of direct democracy developed by the American social ecologist Murray Bookchin – offers an important approach to creating a free, decentralised society.

In much of the industrialised world, the public civic sphere is in a state of decline. This decline stems from the fact that in a society permeated by hierarchical domination and class exploitation, most people do not have the political power to make decisions about their own lives but instead are subordinated to elites who make decisions for them. Libertarian municipalism proposes, as an alternative, to create the institutional and cultural conditions through which citizens have real power to actively manage their communal affairs in a face-to-face democracy.

Ideas of communal self-management have long been embedded in the anarchist tradition, whose social (rather than individualistic) strain calls for the creation of a free, cooperative, communal society. Unfortunately anarchism today is plagued by a variety of difficulties that too often prevent it from constructively working toward its goal. We believe that libertarian municipalism offers the possibility for a renewal of anarchism by providing it with the politics to work toward a democratic, communal, ecological society free of both the institutions and the mentalities of domination and exploitation.

On 1st May 1997, to discuss and advance these prospects, we issued an international call for two conferences on 'The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism'. The first conference was to be held in

International Call

Lisbon, Portugal, the second, in Plainfield, Vermont, in the United States.

The Lisbon Conference

The Lisbon conference (26th to 28th August 1998) was highly successful in bringing together libertarian municipalists/social ecologists from around the world. For three days these thinkers and activists discussed the possibilities for the renewal of social anarchism through a revival of face-to-face democratic politics. As the first international conference on libertarian municipalism, it marked a milestone in the advance of these ideas.

A total of 125 people attended the conference, converging from fifteen countries in Europe, North America, South America, and Southwest Asia. The conference initially established a theoretical framework; then, in a series of intensive plenaries and workshops, it examined how these ideas could be applied practically in a variety of different cultures and circumstances.

Much discussion at Lisbon focused on the particular relevance of these ideas to conditions on the Iberian Peninsula, where municipalism has a long-standing tradition and history. The presence or representation of several strong social ecology groups from various parts of the world demonstrated the significance, crucial to movement-building, of forming study groups for education and hence for organising. Individual participants from other countries addressed both the possibilities for and the problems in creating local libertarian municipalist movements in their home areas.

The Plainfield (Vermont) Conference

To follow up on the Lisbon conference, we are now preparing the second conference, to be held 27th to 29th August 1999, at the Institute for Social Ecology in Plainfield, Vermont, USA.

In this conference we hope to discuss a more concrete praxis, with a particular focus on electoral and organising activity. In addition, we will explore the relationship between libertarian municipalism and social movements of the oppressed, as well as the role of regions in libertarian municipalist politics. We will examine the nature of global capitalism and the nation-state today. Like the Lisbon conference, the format of the Vermont conference will include a broad spectrum of lectures, plenaries, round tables, and thematic workshops, as well as discussions of local experiences. We are pleased to confirm that Murray Bookchin will deliver the keynote address and will participate in the remaining proceedings as his health permits.

Participation in the Plainfield conference is open to those who subscribe to the principles of libertarian municipalism, as stated above. We emphasise that the conference focus will be neither on educating the general public nor on assessing libertarian municipalism as a political philosophy. Rather, it will be a working conference. Many participants will be travelling to Plainfield over long distances at great expense, with the expectation of building a movement with others who share their commitment. We

therefore ask that participants share a common principled support for libertarian municipalism.

Those unfamiliar with libertarian municipalism are asked to read Janet Biehl's *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism* in advance of the conference. This book, which summarises libertarian municipalist ideas, has been translated into several languages, including French, German, and Spanish. Translations into other languages are either under way (Portuguese) or planned (Dutch, Norwegian, Turkish). For information on obtaining this book in English or translation, please contact us at the above addresses.

The working language for the conference will be English. If funding allows, we will provide translation into Spanish.

Conference Organisational Structure

The International Organising Committee (IOC) for the Vermont conference is based in Burlington, Vermont, and Montreal, Quebec. On crucial matters the IOC is guided by the International Advisory Committee, made up of twenty-seven social ecologists/libertarian municipalists living in different parts of the globe.

To Register

To register for the conference, please download the registration form from the conference website <<http://www.web.net/~anarchos>> or write to P.O. Box 111, Burlington, VT 05402 U.S.A. to receive a copy by regular mail. You will be asked to state your general agreement with the Statement of Principles. More information will be forthcoming as the conference date nears.

To Present a Paper

We invite, indeed solicit individuals who agree with the Statement of Principles to present papers that are compatible with or supportive of those principles.

It is our desire to expand our international network of libertarian municipalist theorists and organisers and thereby impart to work toward a free, democratic, decentralised ecological society. To meet this challenge and bring this goal to fruition, we rely on your support and principled participation in this conference.

The International Organising and Advisory Committees

— OBITUARIES —

Roland Biard

Roland Biard, active militant in the French anarchist movement and then historian of the movement, has died at the age of 56, three weeks after being diagnosed with cancer. He co-founded the Groupe d'Etudes et Action Anarchiste with Alexandre Skirda (who is also a noted historian of anarchism) when they were both 19. The son of high-up officials in the Stalinist apparatus of the French Communist Party, he broke with his parents' ideas at a very young age.

His placid and benign appearance belied his great physical courage. He was at all the anarchist demonstrations against the Algerian war in 1961-62, including the Charonne demo, which ended in the mass lynching of Algerians by the police. He was also present at the famous night of the barricades on 10th May 1968 in Paris. A partisan of a specifically anarchist communist organisation, he served as secretary of the Union des Groupes Anarchistes Communistes (UGAC) from 1964 to 1966, was co-founder of the Kronstadt group (which included Daniel Guerin in its ranks) of the Mouvement Communiste Liberaire (MCL), and then joined the Organisation Revolutionnaire Anarchiste (ORA) in 1971. He left ORA in 1974, devoting himself to writing a series of books including *Histoire du Mouvement anarchiste en France 1945-1975* (a history of the anarchist movement), *La Commune de Budapest* and his monumental and exhaustive *Dictionnaire de l'extreme gauche*

(a dictionary of the extreme left). He published numerous articles, under the pseudonym Julien Stern or anonymously, in the libertarian press. Teacher, then history professor, he returned to his native and beloved Charente region in 1975. A *bon viveur*, he welcomed visiting comrades with great fraternity. Faithful to his ideas, he was cremated wrapped in the Black Flag of Anarchy.

Roland Biard, anarchist and historian, born 1942, died 4th October 1998.

Nick Heath

Fidel Miro

Fidel Miro Solanas has died in late June 1998 in Mexico, where he has lived since 1944. Born in Catalonia in 1910, he emigrated to Cuba at a very young age to escape poverty. His participation in the mass revolts in Cuba in 1930 obliged him to leave for another Caribbean island, from where he returned to Catalonia in 1933. In a short time, in a casual way, he made contact with the anarchist movement and joined an affinity group whose members included Abad de Santillan, Pedro Herrera and Manuel Villar. He successively joined the Federacion Anarquista Iberica, the FIJL (Libertarian Youth) and the anarcho-sindicalist union CNT. His dedication and capacity for work meant that he assumed important organisational responsibilities on the National Secretariat of the FIJL, the Executive Committee of the Libertarian Movement of Catalonia (joint CNT-FAI-FIJL), and the National Council for Child Evacuees (the last two during the civil war period).

With the victory of Franco, he went into exile in France, Switzerland and the Dominican Republic before ending up in Mexico.

In exile he continued his activities. He dedicated himself to editorial work, including working with the publishing house Editores Mejicanos Unidos (set up in 1953) which produced a number of works on anarchism.

He addressed himself to contemporary problems, in particular the future of Spain and of anarchist ideals in a rapidly changing world, contributing articles to magazines like *Comunidad Iberica*, *Hora de Manana* and *Polemica*.

He did not limit himself to agitation of the pen. From the first he was an untiring activist of exile, promoting initiatives designed to reach a wider audience, and to rise above the quarrels of the different tendencies. As soon as political circumstances would allow, and using his Mexican citizenship, he made many visits to Spain in the '60s, informing himself on the state of the underground anarchist movement. He financed and activated many initiatives whose intention was the reconstruction of the libertarian workers' movement. The blindness which had been with him for a greater part of his life was no limitation to his ceaseless activity.

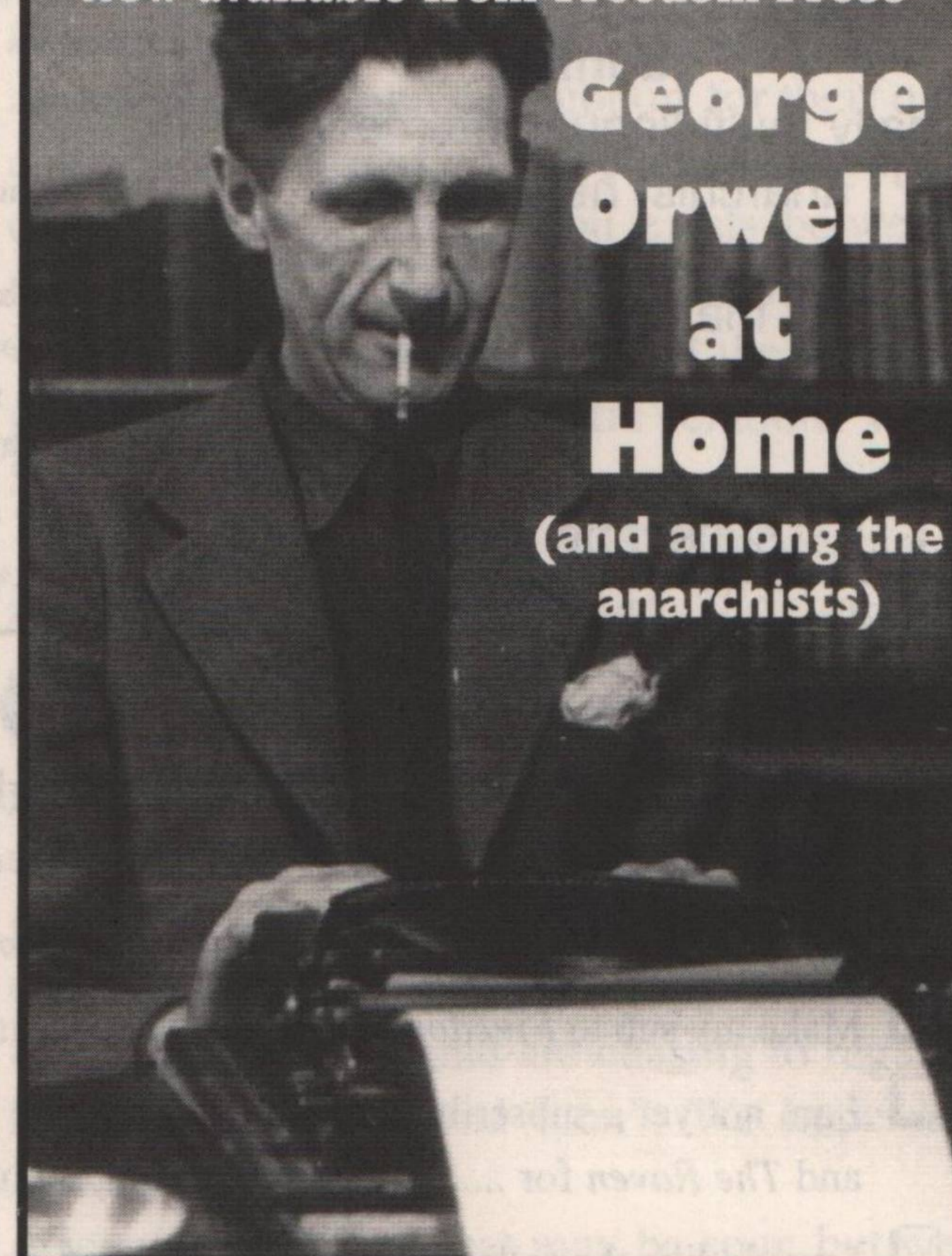
He wrote a number of books: *Y Espana Cuando?* (1959), *Cataluna los Trabajadores y el Problema de las Nacionalidades* (1963), *Anarquismo y Anarquistas* (1979), *Vida Intensa y Revolucionaria* (an intense and revolutionary life, his autobiography, in 1989), *La Trapecista* (short stories, 1991).

He remained convinced of the ideals of anarchism up to his last moment.

Fidel Miro Solanas, Spanish anarchist writer, born 1910, died June 1998.

Nick Heath

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(nearest tube Holborn). Admission is free
but a collection is made to cover the cost of
the room.

— PROGRAMME 1998-99 —

- 11th December** Housing (speakers Ian
Dixon, Pete Freer and Mike Nolan)
- 18th December** Christmas social
- 8th January** General discussion
- 15th January** What is an Anarchist
Movement? The *Problem* for Newcomers
(symposium)
- 22nd January** General discussion
- 29th January** Symposium on Behaviour in
Anarchist Meetings
- 5th February** General discussion
- 12th February** The Free Individual and
Sovereignty in a Just Society (speaker
Malcolm Hill)
- 19th February** General discussion

Anyone interested in giving a talk or
leading a discussion, please contact Peter
Neville at the meetings (or telephone 0181-
847 0203, subject to called display and
answer phone so people who withhold their
numbers or fail to leave a message will be
ignored) giving your subject and prospective
dates and we will do our best to
accommodate. **Peter Neville**

Red Rambles

A programme of monthly guided walks in
Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire for
Socialists, Libertarians, Greens, Anarchists and
others. All walkers are reminded to wear boots
and suitable clothing and to bring food and
drink. Walks are 5 to 8 miles in length.

Sunday 27th December

Meet at 11am at Strutt Arms pub car park,
Milford, Derbyshire (A6 Derby to Belper road)
for 4 mile walk via the Chevin.


Telephone for further details
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Preparatory speaker/workshop meeting on:
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