

# FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

Vol. 60 No. 22

13th November 1999

50p

## Deepening Democracy

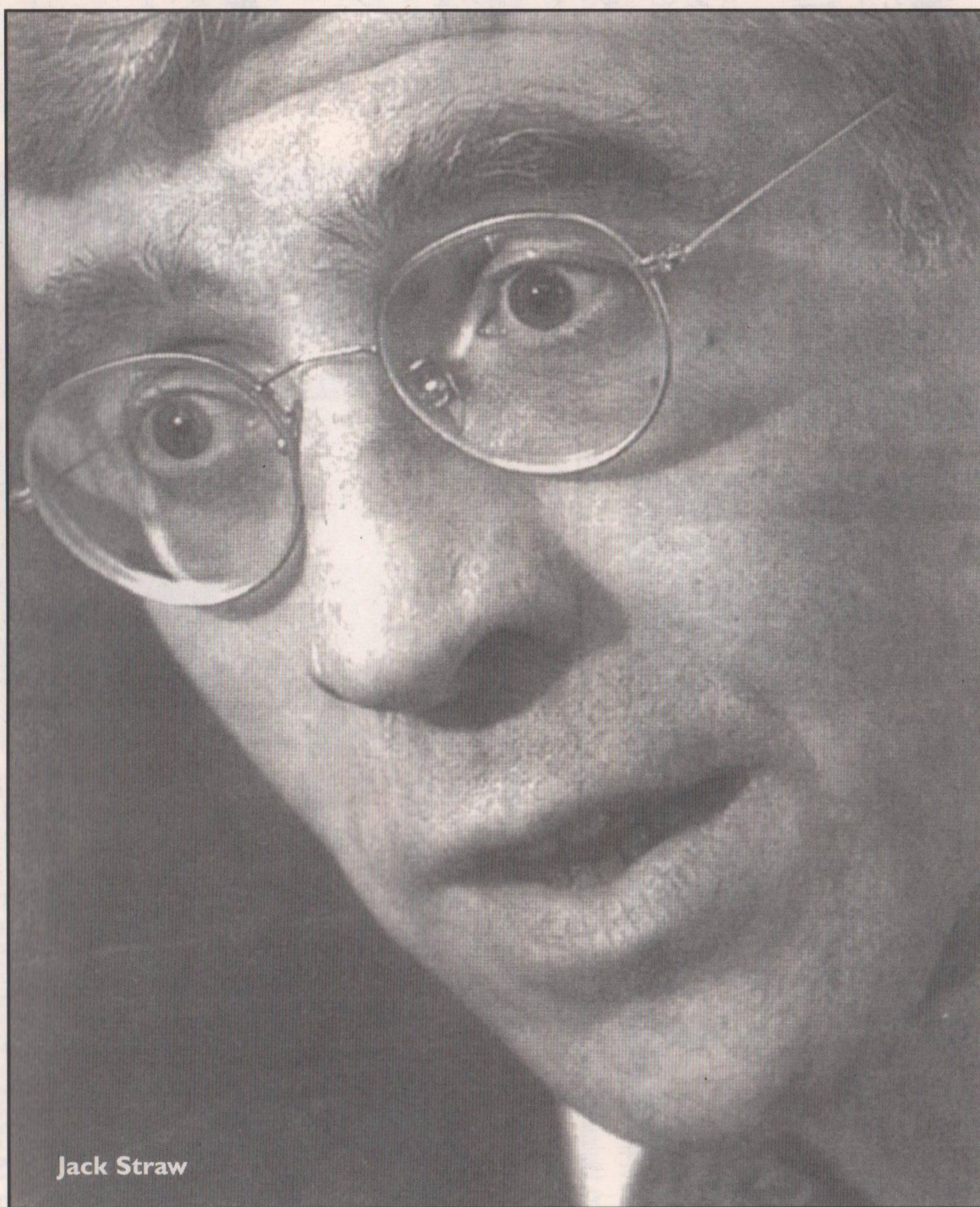
In his 1999 Reith lectures (published as *Runaway World* by Polity Press, 1999) Anthony Giddens observes that: "For increasing numbers across the world, life is no longer lived as fate – as relatively fixed and determined. Authoritarian government becomes out of line with other life experiences, including the flexibility and dynamism necessary to compete in the global electronic economy. Political power

based upon authoritarian command can no longer draw upon reserves of traditional deference, or respect". Giddens is a fascinating writer and his erudite attempts to reformulate a liberal, progressive, social democracy often contain insights of real value. Giddens has tried to outline a philosophical and political Third Way, and has become identified with the Blairite New Labour project. Giddens sees the globalisation

of capital and the increased possibilities of information technology as requiring a new politics: "In a de-traditionalising world, politicians can't rely upon the old forms of pomp and circumstance to justify what they do. Orthodox parliamentary politics becomes remote from the flood of change sweeping through peoples' lives". Politics as the oil that greases the wheels for business cannot continue. "A deepening of democracy is required, because the old mechanisms of government don't work in a society where citizens live in the same information environment as those in power over them."

Giddens's hope that New Labour will heralds of this new politics must now appear to him ill-founded. Blair and co are well aware that they share the same 'information environment' as those over which they govern – unlike Giddens, though, where he sees opportunity, they see threat. Labour's commitment is to a flexible low-wage, high-skill, de-unionised economy, with workfare, in the form of the New Deal, used as a permanent drag anchor on wages. Labour know that the 'new information environment' has coincided with, as Giddens observes, "widespread disillusionment with democratic processes. In most Western countries levels of trust in politicians have dropped over past years. They know that this puts their project at risk. Hence the spin doctoring efforts of Alastair Campbell, and Jack Straw's gutting of the proposed Freedom of Information Bill. As *The Guardian's* Hugo Young commented: "Introducing the Bill in the Commons, Jack Straw duly proposed himself as the agent of pragmatic enlightenment. In truth, he's the instrument of darkness" (*Guardian*, 25th May 1999).

(continued on page 2)



Jack Straw

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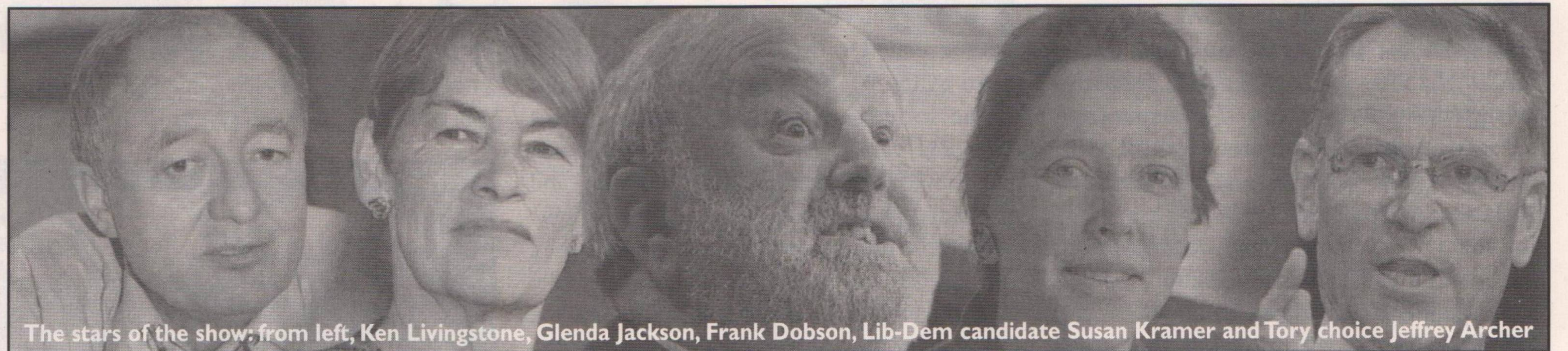
## If voting changed anything ...

The moves to elect a London Mayor purport to be part of Tony Blair's plans for the 'democratisation' of Britain, the creation of a 'new politics' designed to rejuvenate civil society. Like so much else about New Labour, the spin tells us we're moving towards a more open, pluralistic society, while in reality 'democracy' slips that little bit further away.

What's on offer is a neutered Greater London Council, gutted of any real powers. Blair knows that the 1984 GLC abolition was deeply unpopular with Londoners but, like Thatcher, has no desire to see an independent political force in the capital. In consequence, New Labour gives us the semblance of democracy, but a democracy without content.

What the Conservative Party says or does is of little relevance to anyone these days, but they've decided to consolidate their image as a travelling circus full of cannibalistic freaks with little else to do than devour each other, by putting forward that paragon of virtue Lord Archer as their mayoral candidate. A plagiarist and fraudster, Archer might well be the consummate modern politician. Archer knows London, he tells us. Of course he does – just occasionally he deigns to visit, staying in his luxury Thameside penthouse, Alembic House at 93 Embankment. Most of the time he lives in the Old Vicarage in Grantchester, Cambridgeshire – a mansion house with its own sculpture garden.

Archer's London home used to be a film set – used in the original *Sweeney* film and A



The stars of the show: from left, Ken Livingstone, Glenda Jackson, Frank Dobson, Lib-Dem candidate Susan Kramer and Tory choice Jeffrey Archer

*Touch of Class* (oh well, once upon a time). Given that much of Archer's account of his life is a fantasy, the setting couldn't be more appropriate.

New Labour can't even contemplate the exercise of its much-vaunted one member, one vote system when it comes to selecting its candidate. In order to scupper the chances of former GLC leader Ken Livingstone, it's returned to the electoral college system to ensure that Frank Dobson gets the opportunity to manage London as if it were a failing NHS hospital! (Perhaps Dobson will launch a capital-wide Private Finance Initiative and sell us all off to McDonalds as cheap labour, with the proviso that we get to buy back our freedom in ten years time, at five times the price at which we were sold?)

In London, of course, the streets flicker with gold in the Piccadilly starlight and and life is an endless carousel – or should that be a ride on the millennium wheel? In reality London is a city crippled by strategic planning failures and years of infrastructural

neglect. The London Borough of Tower Hamlets has over 20% unemployment, and a constituency ravaged by poverty and poor health. As Sam Everington, a Tower Hamlets GP, puts it: "By whatever measure you use – HIV, mental health problems, alcohol or drug dependency – we're at the bottom of the heap. I've got two families where five in each have had tuberculosis. When I was at medical school I thought that was a disease I would never see. People here look ten years older than they actually are." The de-industrialisation policies of the Thatcher/Major years have scarred the capital. Between 1981 and 1991 ten of the thirty London boroughs lost between 10% and 27% of their jobs. London lost 12.9% of total jobs between 1991 and 1994. Unemployment in London is approximately 12% higher than for the UK as a whole, and in inner London it stands at 16.5%. London has a higher percentage of its population in the 15-44 sector than elsewhere in the UK (23.7% of males, 23.4% of females, compared to 21.6% of males, 20.8% of females elsewhere). With a young population comes high childbirth rates and pressure for new housing.

Housing privatisation, though, has removed over 100,000 units of social housing stock from the public sector and placed it into private hands. In April 1994 about 5% of total housing stock was recorded as 'empty' (143,000 properties) and 8% (229,000) was deemed 'statutorily unfit for human habitation'. In the same year 31,239 households were accepted as homeless by London boroughs (a figure which does not include those not eligible for housing through immigration status, lack of priority need due to being young, single, etc.).

Poverty and poor housing are not evenly distributed across the borough. Hackney has 30.7% of its population in receipt of income support – twice the London average of 16.6%. Kingston-upon-Thames has the lowest three year average perinatal mortality rate (five per 1,000 live births) and the lowest unemployment rate (6.3%). Lambeth has the highest perinatal mortality rate (10.2) and unemployment of 18.7% (all figures from London Research Centre).

London – its land and its people – exists as a playground for big business, with Londoners fodder for its schemes. The Docklands development project which gave us the Docklands Light Railway and the monument to avarice which is Canary Wharf took place

yards away from a community which once saw its identity as based around docklands industry but which has seen all it believed to be permanent made transient, and is now left with a legacy of overcrowding and unemployment. The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman in his book *Globalization* (Polity Press, 1998) observes that, in an age where information technology and political process combine to allow capital complete mobility, "the mobility acquired by 'people who invest' – those with capital, with money which the investment requires – means the new, indeed unprecedented in its radical unconditionality, disconnection of power from obligations: duties towards employees, but also towards the younger and weaker, towards yet unborn generations and towards the self-reproduction of the living conditions of all; in short, freedom from the duty to contribute to daily life and the perpetuation of the community". Such disconnection is apparent in every aspect of London life.

What matters is the extent to which the pattern of everyday life is determined by the needs of capital or the needs of those of us who live and work in London. The race to be London mayor is irrelevant to that struggle, despite the protestations of the left to the contrary. As Ken Livingstone once acknowledged: "If voting changed anything, they'd abolish it". The emergence of forces prepared to contend with the will of capital, to wrest control of life from the drive for profit – whether it be the coalition of trade unionists, transport users and victims' relatives which has come together to form the Safety on Trains Action Group, the groups of tenants across the borough committed to opposing privatisation of council housing, the Ford workers striking against racism, the relatives of the victims of racial and police violence who form the United Families and Friends Campaign, and the J18 fighters in the heart of the City – these are the forces which contain the hope of the new in the rotting belly of the old. All the Mayoral beauty contest proves is that, as Richard Gott wrote on the abolition of the GLC in 1984, Labour (Old and New) is "the party of the block vote and the fudged manifesto, the party of the tower block and the decayed inner city ... It is a party that has taken a long time to die. Its putrefying corpse still poisons the present and casts its baleful shadow over the future" (*Guardian*, 17th June 1984).

Nick S.

### Philip Sansom

THE MALATESTA CLUB - 1956



Philip Sansom drawn in the Malatesta Club by Rufus Segar in 1956

A celebration of  
Philip Sansom's life

will be held on  
Friday 19th November  
at 7.30pm

in the  
Conway Hall  
(Brockway Room)  
Red Lion Square  
London WC1  
(nearest tube Holborn)

(See also pages 4 and 5 of this issue)

# Anti-McDonald's campaign news

The fifteenth annual Worldwide Anti-McDonald's Day was on Saturday 16th October (UN World Food Day) – a protest against the promotion of junk food, the unethical targeting of children, exploitation of workers, animal cruelty, damage to the environment and the global domination of corporations over our lives. There were hundreds of local protests on or around 16th October all over the world, so far we know of 425 protests in 23 countries.

On Friday 15th October there was also a day of action versus McDonald's all over France, called by the farmers of Confederation Paysanne against economic globalisation. This followed contacts with us in London about the global day of action. As part of the global protests, there were also some events on 12th October – an annual day of solidarity with McDonald's workers. This stems from the death by electrocution at work of crew member Mark Hopkins in Manchester, England, on 12th October 1992.

In the UK London Greenpeace picketed McDonald's in The Strand, Central London. Forty people participated for two hours, including a blockade/sit-down in The Strand itself for 25 minutes. Over four thousand leaflets were handed out. We also heard about protests outside stores across the UK.

Just two weeks previously, on 2nd October, McDonald's were commemorating the 25th anniversary of the opening of their first store in the UK, in Woolwich, South East London. Joining in the spirit of the occasion, and celebrating 25 years of growing opposition to McWorld, activists held up '25 years of McJunk', and 'McDonald's Guilty – Exploiting Workers, Destroying the Environment, Murdering Animals' banners, slap bang in the middle of the proceedings. They also handed out four thousand leaflets to enthusiastic passers-by.

Three million leaflets have now been handed out in the UK alone since 1990 (when the McDonald's Corporation served libel writs on Helen and Dave aiming to suppress the London Greenpeace leafletting campaign) and it is now distributed worldwide – we have copies in 27 languages.

As well as the mass distribution of leaflets by thousands of local activists, the global campaign against McDonald's has continued to grow this year – there have been millions of hits to 'McSpotlight', many determined residents' campaigns against new stores (including currently a 310-day continuous residents' occupation of a site of a planned new store near Kingston in South London), mass anti-McDonald's protests by French farmers, a crew unionisation success in a store in Canada (for the first time in the North American continent) and general bad publicity for the Corporation as a result of the McLibel case.

In March this year in the House of Lords, the McLibel Appeal resulted in further important victories for campaigners. The Defendants have now lodged a petition to the House of Lords, and after that will go to the European Court of Human Rights if necessary to seek to overturn the UK's oppressive libel laws.

Helen and Dave, representing themselves, are seeking to defend the public's right to criticise companies whose business practices affect people's lives, health and environment, arguing that multinational corporations should no longer be able to sue for libel. They will also argue that publishing material about matters of public importance and interest should be protected by 'qualified privilege' – a point related to the matters currently being heard by the House of Lords in the libel case of the former Irish Prime Minister Albert Reynolds versus *The Sunday Times*. Helen and Dave also seek an end to unfair and oppressive defamation laws and procedures.

But most importantly for McDonald's they are seeking leave to argue that, having now won the bulk of the issues in dispute with the fast-food corporation, they should have won the case outright. After a controversial 314 day trial ending in June 1997, in which the defendants had been denied Legal Aid and their right to a jury trial, Mr Justice Bell ruled that: McDonald's marketing has "pretended to a positive nutritional benefit which their food [high in fat and salt, etc.] did not match"; that McDonald's "exploit children" with their advertising strategy; are "culpably responsible for animal cruelty"; and "pay low wages, helping to depress wages in the catering trade." Significantly McDonald's did not appeal over these damning rulings against their core business practices, stating that the Judge was "correct in his conclusions"!

(continued from page 8)

In office Straw has presided over moves to take away the right to elect for trial by jury of approximately 18,000 defendants per year. He's pioneered an asylum bill which makes it almost impossible for asylum seekers to see Britain as a place of refuge from persecution under the terms of the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees. His 'comprehensive' review of the Prevention of Terrorism Act made 'temporary' legislation permanent and extended its operation to cover political organisations and activities throughout the UK.

'Dirty Jack' (as *The Observer* once labelled him) has become a staunch advocate of Guillian-style zero-tolerance policing (a policy designed not to prevent crime but to confine it to the most socially deprived areas – to make certain that crime becomes something the poor do to each other). He's flown to the States to get the low-down on Clinton's penal policies. Since Clinton came to power in 1992 the number of Americans in jail has risen from 1,200,000 to 1,800,000. The state of California now spends more on jails than on higher education. Blair and Straw have already presided over a rise in the prison population to over 65,000 – the highest on record. Straw's grim fascination with LA law (the LA County Jail houses over 20,000 inmates in cells built for 12,000) and his miracle conversion to private prisons (out of office he thought they were "morally repugnant"; in power he welcomes their "lower staff ratios, lower staff costs, fewer staff holidays and ... longer working week") suggests he intends prison numbers to rise yet further. The logic employed is simple enough. As Nick Cohen has noted: "Rather

(McDonald's written submissions 5th January 1999).

The McLibel Two failed to convince the judge on all issues, however, and so appealed.

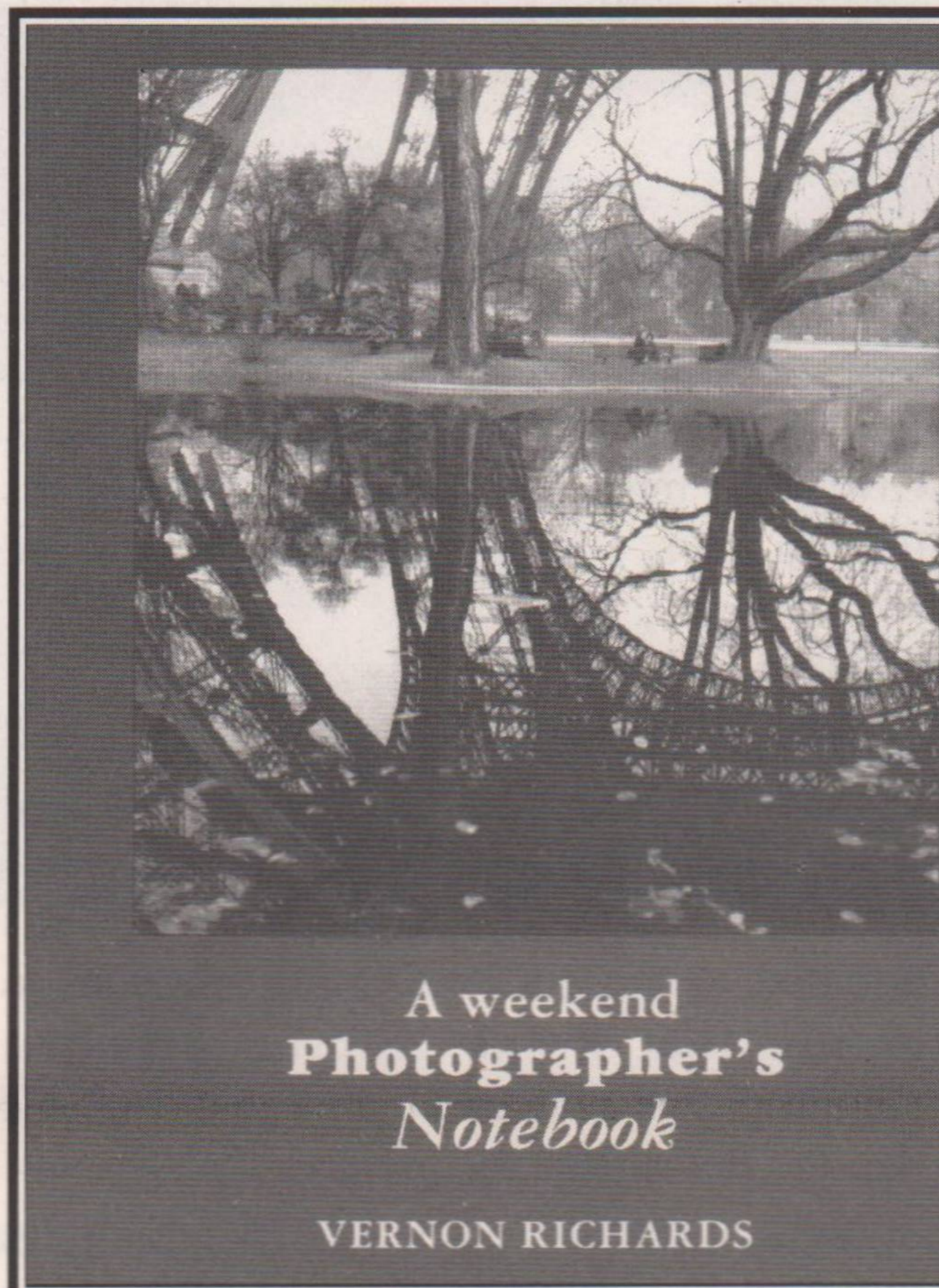
On March 31st the Court of Appeal added to those damning findings, after a 23-day hearing earlier this year. Lord Justices Pill, May and Keane ruled that it was fair comment to say that McDonald's employees worldwide "do badly in terms of pay and conditions", and true that "if one eats enough McDonald's food, one's diet may well become high in fat, etc., with the very real risk of heart disease". Damages against the defendants were reduced from £60,000 to £40,000. The defendants believe that no damages should have been awarded at all, in light of the findings made against McDonalds.

In September 1998 Helen and Dave launched proceedings against the Metropolitan Police

Commissioner. Their claim results from the fact that, during the McLibel trial, it was brought to light that police officers had passed private (and false) information about the defendants to private investigators hired by McDonalds. During the trial, McDonald's head of security (and former Met superintendent) Sid Nicholson told the court that McDonalds' security were all ex-policemen, and if he ever wanted information on protesters he would go to his contacts in the police.

The McLibel trial, and support actions, have been a real DIY victory – echoing and drawing on the recent battles over the poll tax, Criminal Justice Act, and over control of our homes, environment and workplace. We hope the campaign has shown how ordinary people can take control over our lives and reclaim our world.

McLibel Support Campaign / London Greenpeace  
5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX  
e-mail: mclibel @ globalnet.co.uk  
info: www.mcsplight.org



## A Weekend Photographer's Notebook Vernon Richards

Vernon Richards makes no claim to break new ground, but his humane eye allows important qualities to shine through his photographs. Their straightforward honesty and compassion vividly reveal the great interest in, and friendship towards, his fellow men and the world about us. This weekend 'button-presser' shows us just how much can be achieved by an energetic enthusiast whose simple equipment would be considered laughable by today's gadget-laden photographers, both amateur and professional.

This book containing 170 photographs is available from Freedom Press at £6.95 (post free in UK, add 15% for p&p overseas).

**Freedom Press**  
84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

than be tough on the causes of crime, a policy that would necessarily involve the redistribution of wealth, New Labour is jailing more citizens than any government in modern history" (in *Cruel Britannia*, Verso, 1999). In his detailed and illuminating indictment of US penal policy, *Lockdown America* (Verso, 1999), Christian Parenti comments that in the Reagan-Bush-Clinton drive to restore profitability through the disciplining of labour, "all alternative avenues of sustenance had to be closed. Thus we had the ... near total evisceration of all New Deal and Great Society forms of downward redistribution and working class protections. The great business counter-offensive of the '80s and '90s has helped restore profits, but it has also re-created the perennial problem of how to manage the surplus, excluded, and cast-off classes. This then is the mission of the emerging anti-crime police state. As the class structure polarises in the interests of profitability, the state must step in to deploy and justify police terror, increased surveillance and over-use of incarceration. But the politics of punishment works in two ways: it contains and controls those who violate the class-based laws of our society, but prison also produces a predator class that, when returned to the street, frightens and disorganises communities, effectively driving poor and working people into the arms of the state, seeking protection".

Straw's penal policies to date, and Blair's clear intention to pursue the Thatcherite goal of a low-wage casualised economy at the working class's expense, suggest that what has been carried out to such terrible effect in the USA is what New Labour intends here.

Welcome, then, to the real Third Way.

Where Anthony Giddens talks of the "deepening", "democratising" of democracy, the Blairites pursue its denial. Where Giddens enthuses over the potential for real freedom, and "more active, reflexive citizenries" offered by the "active communication" of the information revolution, New Labour concern themselves with the suppression of information, the preservation of 'information monopoly'.

Nick S.

### — COPY DEADLINE —

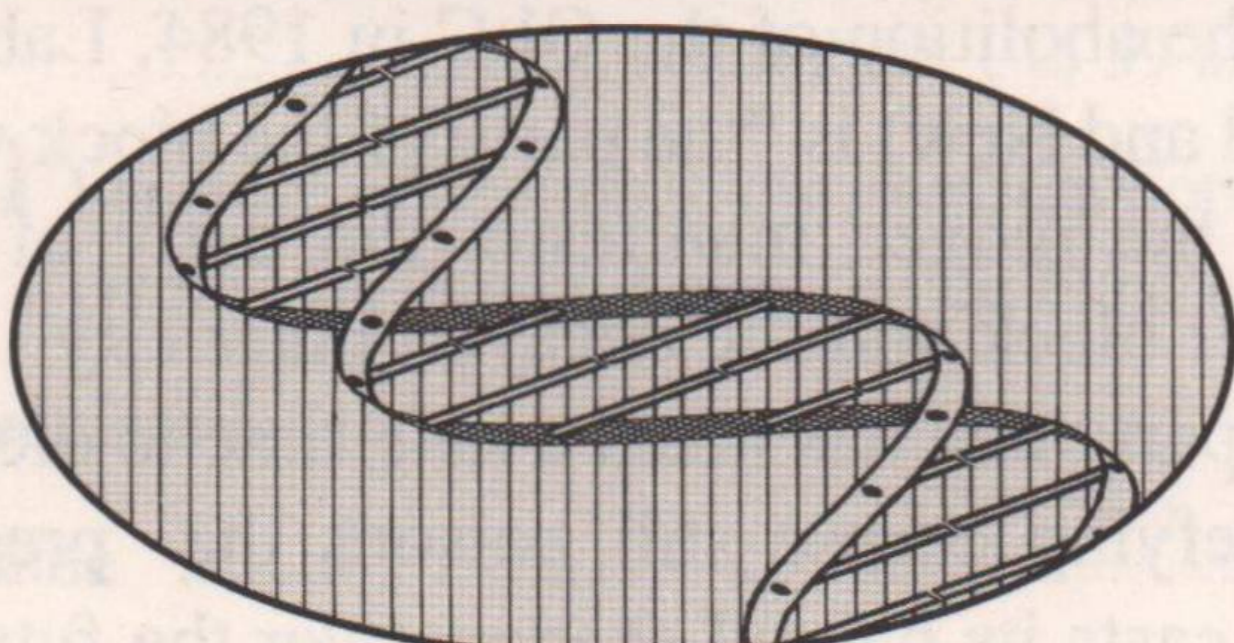
**The next issue of Freedom will be dated 27th November, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 18th November.**



**If possible contributions should be typed using double-spacing between lines, or can be sent as text files on disc (with a print-out please).**

Number 40 of the anarchist quarterly

## The Raven on Genetic Modification



96 pages for £3.00 post free worldwide

# Alliance & Leicester coup: bully boy boss booted

On the eve of Halloween tyrannical taskmaster Peter White, A&L bank chief's executive, was shown the door. He went amid calls for a more 'consensual style of leadership' from other members of the bank's management boards. Andrew Garfield, the *Independent's* financial editor, writes that Mr White "was renowned for his abrasive style".

A spokesman for the A&L management board said that "the board, for some time, had become increasingly uncomfortable with Mr White's style". City Comment in *The Daily Telegraph* suggests Mr White's relationship with his board "was a classic example of an abusive relationship". Allegedly he once said his board were only fit to visit the Chelsea Flower Show, and he recently told his board to rubber-stamp an A&L merger with the Bank of Ireland. It was when this merger fell through that Mr White's abrasive attitude was blamed.

When last month the A&L board held a meeting to hear "presentations about defence strategies" from their investment bankers, Peter White was shocked to find his fellow management of Chelsea Flower Show fans didn't much like him. According to the *Telegraph's* City Comment his last reported words were: "This is my company. How can you do this?"

Since the sacking Mr White does not seem to have been available for comment. Rumours inside the company suggest he has left the country. He will not be exactly penniless, however - he was paid £878,000 in salary and bonus last year, and has a two-year notice period. He also holds options on shares in A&L worth £1.7 million. Though so bitter was the bust-up at A&L that there is now some doubt if he will get all his option entitlements.

## 'It's like 1984!'

Ought we to worry about boardroom rows in the British banking sector? After all, as the banking editor of *The Financial Times*, George Graham, wrote: "Mr White's falling out with the A&L board reflects the increasing pressure on managements in the rapidly changing UK banking industry". The A&L is the third bank in a year, after Barclays and Nat West, whose chairman has had to take on the additional role of chief executive. The only thing is that A&L hasn't tried to hide the obvious animosity at the top.

Mr White took over the Alliance & Leicester in 1991, changing it from a building society to a bank. He had a particular talent for cost cutting, and stripping out middle management. Meanwhile many of the staff have either been corralled in call centres or shunted around into 'branches of the future' and told what insurance policies to push. Some time ago they had been told to go full blast to sell endowment mortgages - now we know how many house buyers are liable to finish up owing money when their mortgage period comes to an end.

In some respects Mr White seems to have been conservative and has not gone in for internet banking. But he's been so parsimonious, even mean, when it comes to getting rid of some staff. Rather than pay people full redundancy some branch managers have been driven off their rocker with work-related stress accompanied by harassment from regional managers. Elsewhere there have been reports of attempts at 'constructive dismissal' of some staff by trying to set them up for charges of 'incompetence'.

The change from a mutual building society to a bank has left the staff with a feeble trade union set-up called ALGUS. Management seems to have been given a virtual free rein to re-write job contacts to suit itself. The call centres staff are monitored to the nth degree. One employee told me "It's like 1984 - records are kept of our visits to the toilet and for how long".

## Modern times

It reminds me of that Fritz Lang film *Metropolis*. Indeed, Peter White looks like an overfed version of John Frederson, the 'super-efficient industrialist' in that film (last week *The Daily Mirror* caricatured him as 'Mr Blobby'). The staff are pressed to pursue ever increasingly impossible targets, sweating in call centres with headphones squeezing their skulls like lemons and chasing leads to customers.

This is interesting because the first job I had in a factory the blue-collar workers were timed while visiting the toilet - their clock numbers were taken and a clerk checked on them to make sure they had no longer than a seven-minute shit. The office staff were spared this indignity. Now it seems that, at least at the Alliance & Leicester, white-collar workers will gain a kind of equality suffered by blue-collar workers.

I suspect there is growing evidence of crude use of power on the shopfloor and in offices. New technology will help bosses in this respect. This contradicts the claims of Noam Chomsky, the noted anarchist theorist, who said of George Orwell's book *1984*: "I think it's a really tenth-rate novel". Chomsky continues: "... in England and the United States we do not use or control the devices he [Orwell] described, crude vicious use of highly visible power". In *1984* Chomsky says that Orwell "was talking about what he expected to happen in the industrial democracies, and as a prediction that was very bad, and hasn't happened".

Well, it's true that we haven't reached a level of crudity in which people are being shot in the back of the head for failing to

believe in Big Brother, or Peter White, or Corporate America. But in the corporate offices and on the shopfloors of both England and the United States a level of crudity in the abuse of power is reached, which is good enough (or bad enough) to be going on with, even if it doesn't come up to the *1984* Orwellian ideal of brute power.

Chomsky is probably right to argue that elites in industrial democracies like the United States and the UK are more subtle in their thought control of the general public and in the manufacture of citizen consent. But in the workplace, inside the big corporations, brute force is more commonplace. The intellectual can become so entranced with the big picture that he can overlook the details of his own society, which have more immediate impact on everyday life for most of us.

The brutal treatment of labour at Alliance & Leicester is one aspect of modern developments. The change of policy last week by Marks & Spencer to stop using local companies as suppliers and to start importing from abroad - that probably means third world cheap labour suppliers - is another aspect, probably more in line with Chomsky's arguments about globalisation.

Albert Shore

## Please renew your subs early

More than half of subscriptions to *Freedom* expire at the end of the year. Your subscription is one of these if the number 6024 appears on the address label (the current issue is 6022, i.e. volume 60 number 22).

Our one-person volunteer subscriptions department would like subscribers to spread the load of year-end renewals by renewing early, and will reward those who do so by writing a thank you note on the acknowledgement slip.

Thanks from all of us to those who have already renewed early.

## — REVIEW — Peace News

*Peace News* (often known as *PN*) is an 'anarcho-pacifist' periodical, which has tended to be pacifist first and anarchist second. It was founded in 1936 as a weekly newspaper, and remained as such into the 1970s. Originally the journal of the Peace Pledge Union, it became more independent (and more anarchist) in the '60s. In the 1970s it became a fortnightly, then a monthly, and for a year or two ceased publication altogether.

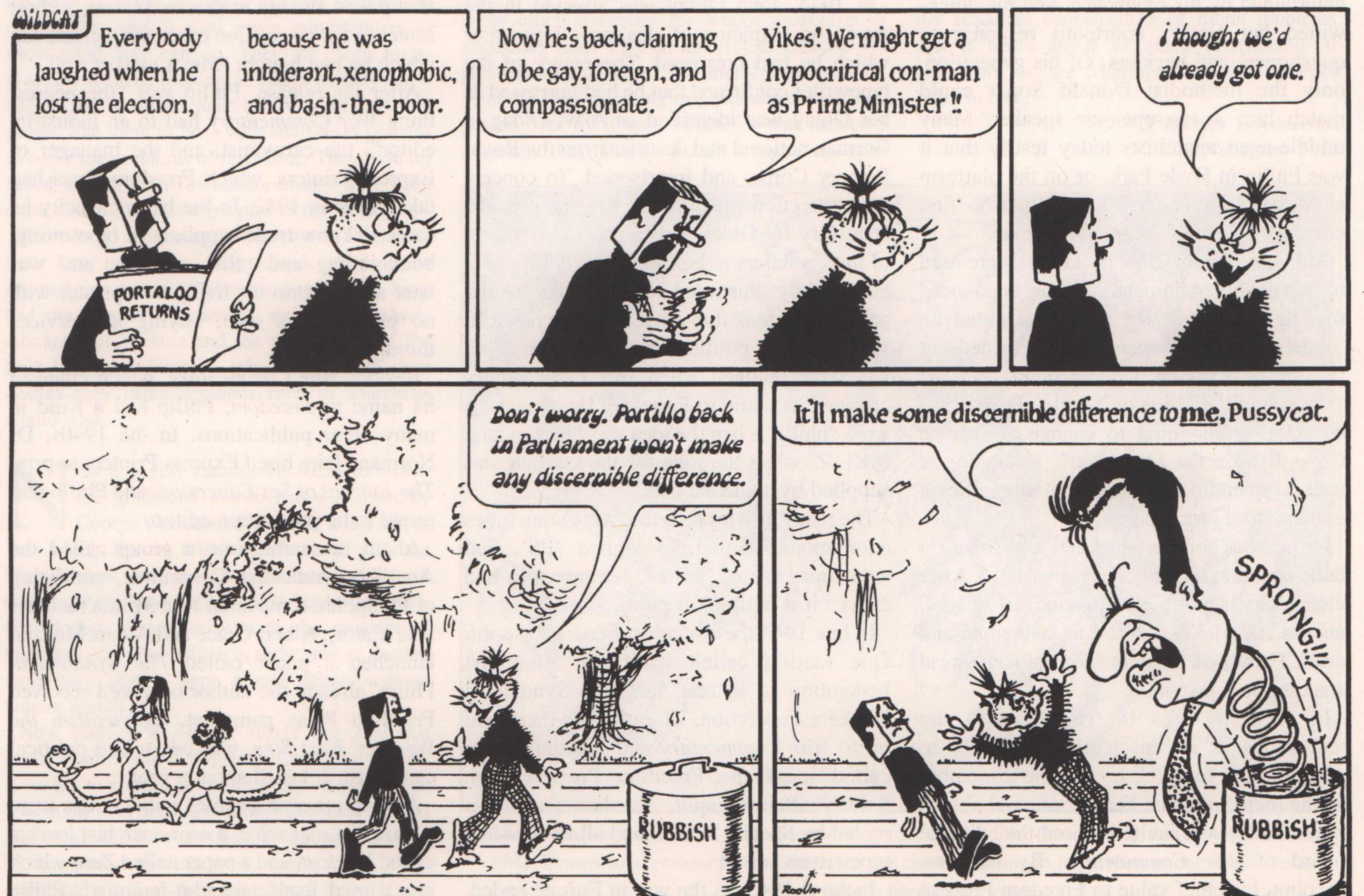
Early this year it was re-launched as a 52-page quarterly (with the first issue out in May, and the second in September. (Why is it that magazines claiming to be weekly or fortnightly manage to appear as regularly as clockwork, but a quarterly has the utmost difficulty in 'keeping regular'?). The War Resisters International is involved in *Peace News* Ltd, which publishes the magazine.

In order to keep readers in touch with anti-militarist and other news and events in Britain, part of the group which produces *Peace News* are also issuing an eight-page monthly, called *Non-Violent Action*.

The quarterly *Peace News* devotes each issue, in part, to a particular theme, in the manner of *The Raven*, or *Anarchy* in the '60s. The first was on 'Law, War and Disobedience', the second on 'Ecology and Non-Violent Revolution'. As well as long theoretical articles, they contain practical pieces; in the May issue 'Tools' section is a long piece - 'Fences: The Definitive Illustrated Guide' - on various methods of getting over or through different sorts of security fences, and in the September issue there are items on building a tree house and making a bicycle-trailer. This sort of thing will not only be of interest to pacifists. The magazine also contains news from around the world, and fierce controversies in its letters pages. All in all, an interesting and well-produced publication.

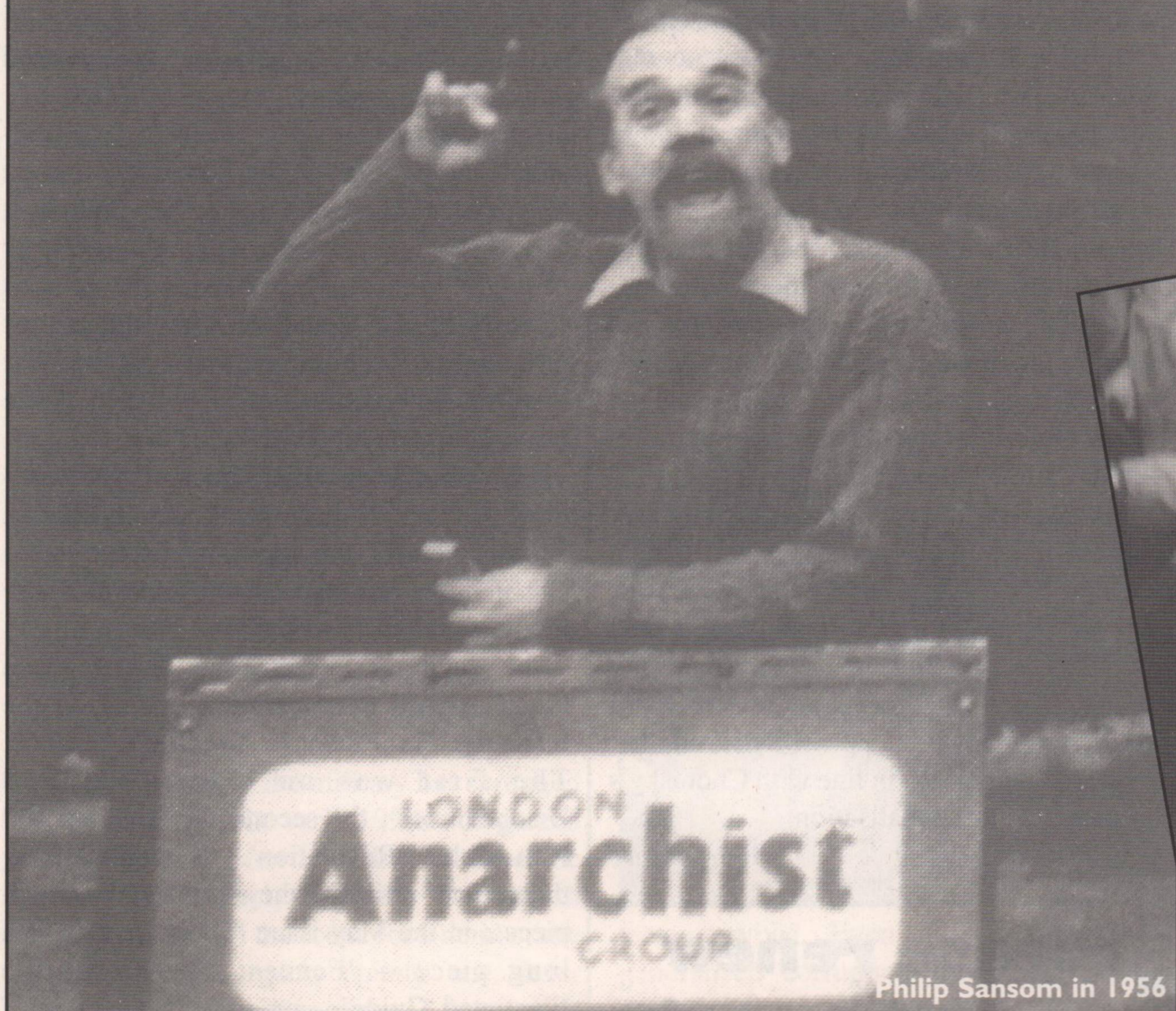
BRM

The quarterly *Peace News* costs £2.50 and is available in the Freedom Press Bookshop (if ordering by post please add 10% for p&p in the UK, 20% elsewhere).

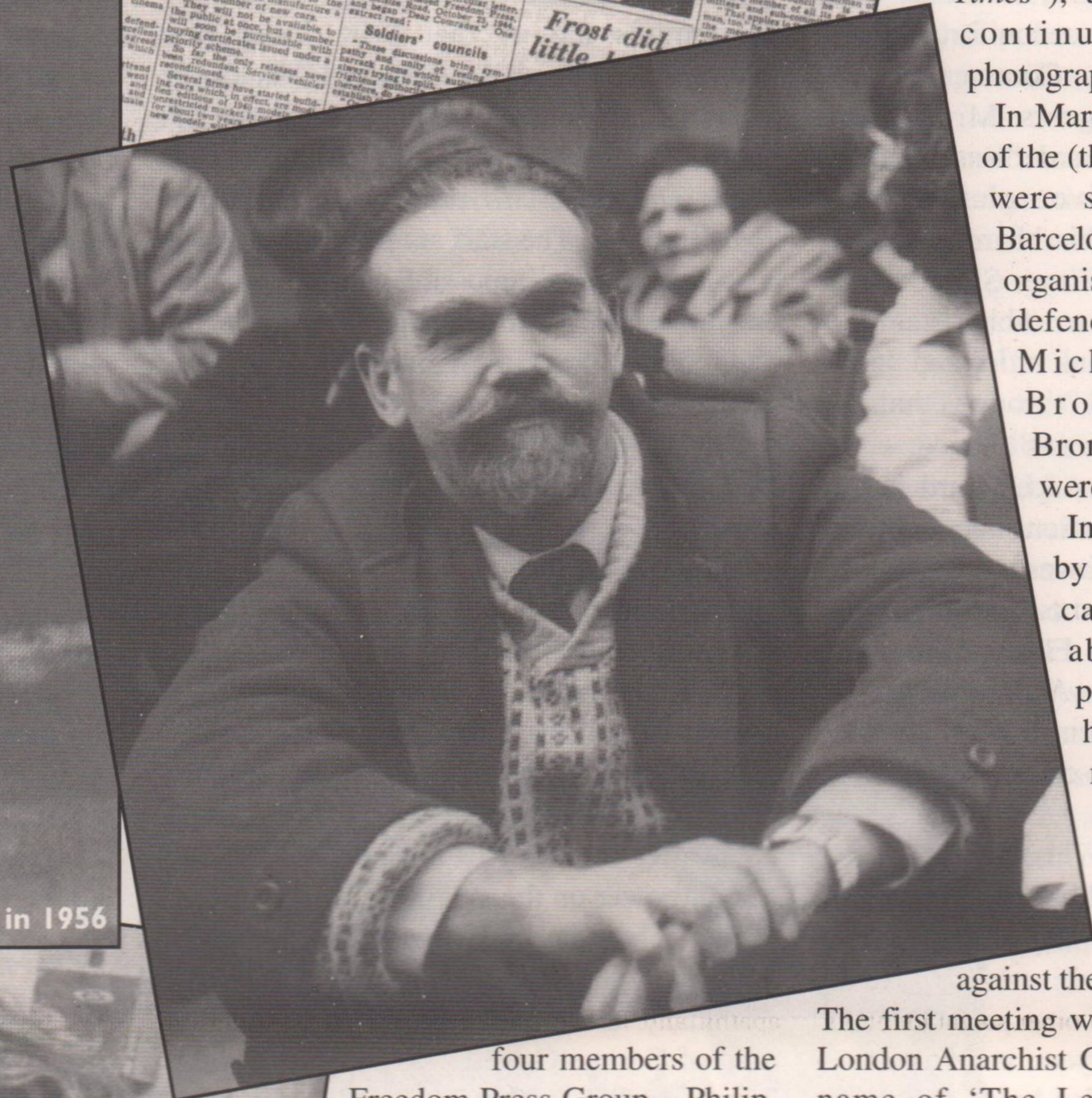
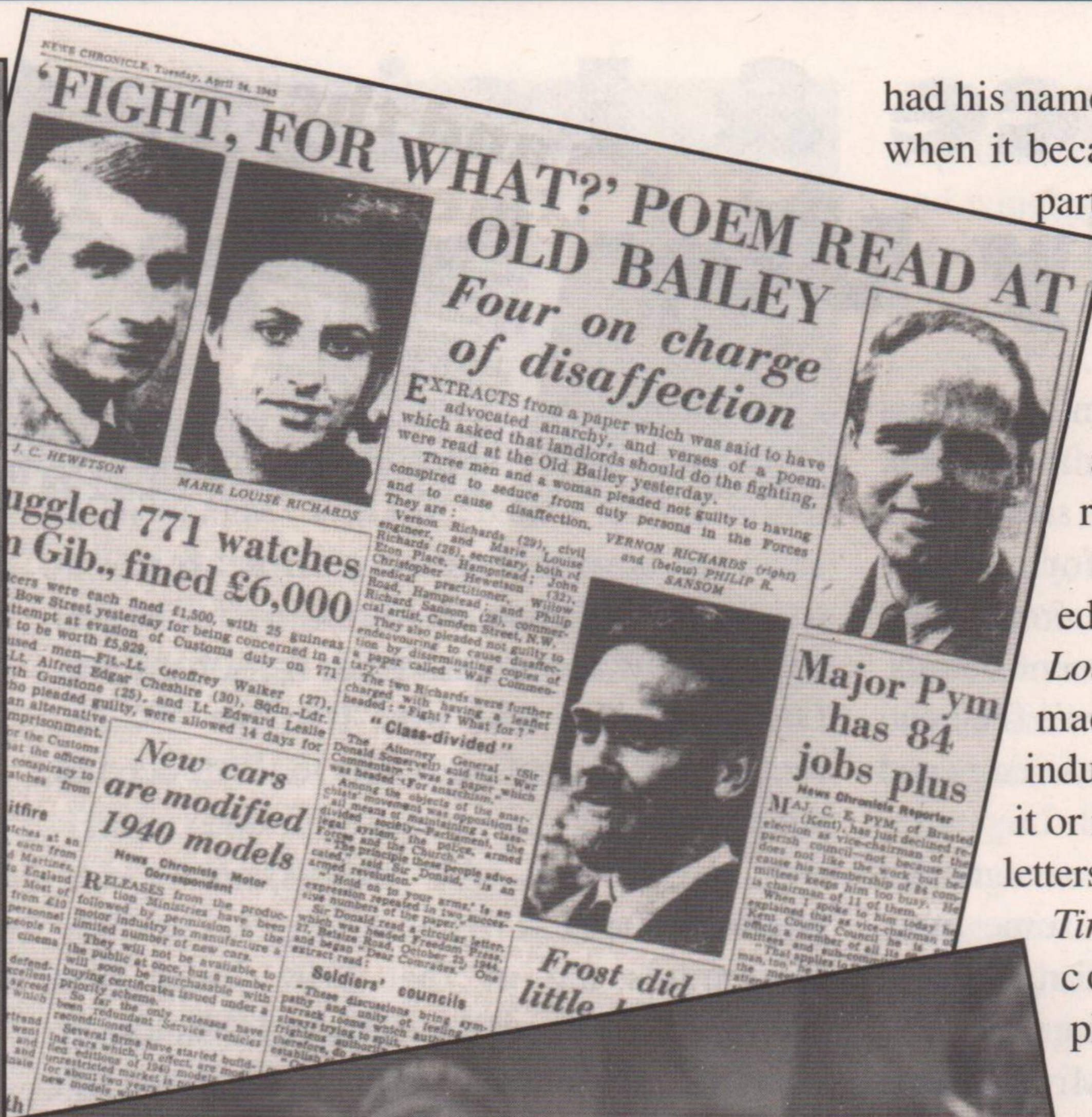


# Philip Sansom

## 1916-1999



Philip Sansom in 1956



Philip Sansom at Aldgate Press

Our comrade Philip Sansom died on the 24th October, at the age of 83. No obituary can convey the likeability of the man, his creativity, his energy, his enthusiasm for anarchism, his joy in life or his generosity.

During the 1950s and 1960s, on sunny Sundays, people would gather on the grass near Hyde Park Speakers' Corner, sunbathing, picnicking, keeping a vague eye on the successive speakers for the London Anarchist Group, until Philip got up to speak. Then they would swarm towards the platform, sometimes adding three or four hundred to the audience. They came to be entertained by his eloquence, and his quick-witted but always courteous response to questioners and hecklers. Of his generation, only the methodist Donald Soper could match him as an open-air speaker. Many middle-aged anarchists today testify that it was Philip in Hyde Park, or on the platform at Manette Street or Tower Hill, who first convinced them of the anarchist case.

At the Malatesta Club, his talents were used for simple entertainment. He once announced that he had composed a calypso about an 'underground movement', which turned out to be the London Underground railway: "Cosmopolitan, Vicious Circle, Daffodilly-doo, We're all going to change at Double Cross to ride the Shakerloo". At home, he was a splendid cook, with a magnificent collection of jazz records.

Philip was born in Hackney, the son of a lathe operator, on 19th September 1916. After elementary school, he attended art school, and in the 1930s worked as a commercial artist. He was an amateur boxer of some local standing in the sport.

In 1939 he was in trouble with the authorities as a conscientious objector to conscription. In 1943, he became a member of the then Anarchist Federation, and almost immediately was invited to join the editorial board of *War Commentary*. By his own account, his chief value to Freedom Press at

the time was that he had a flat, and could accommodate the *War Commentary* cartoonist John Olday.

In 1944, John Olday was arrested in the street, on suspicion of stealing a typewriter which he had borrowed. The owner of the typewriter confirmed that he had borrowed it, but Olday was identified as A.W. Olday, a German national and deserter from the Royal Pioneer Corps, and imprisoned. To conceal the connection with *War Commentary*, it was necessary for Olday's unsigned strip cartoon of three soldiers to be 'ghosted'. Philip, who had already illustrated some articles for the paper, undertook this work, and later replaced John Olday as political cartoonist, a function which he retained when *War Commentary* changed its name to *Freedom*. He signed his work 'philip' when the idea was his own, and 'SKITZ' when the idea for the cartoon was supplied by someone else.

The many articles he wrote were sometimes anonymous, sometimes signed 'PS', and sometimes signed 'Justin', because they had arrived just in time for publication.

In late 1944 the Anarchist Federation split. One faction called itself the Anarchist Federation of Britain, later the Syndicalist Workers Federation. The group which held on to *War Commentary* and Freedom Press called itself the Freedom Press Group. Shortly after the split, Freedom Press was raided by Special Branch and all its files and typewriters seized.

In April 1945, as the war in Europe ended,

four members of the Freedom Press Group – Philip, Vernon Richards, John Hewetson and Marie Louise Berneri – were charged with Conspiracy to Contravene Defence Regulation 39A, which was about inciting members of His Majesty's Forces to disaffection. This was the only prosecution under that particular Regulation. The three men were each sentenced to twelve months in prison (Berneri was acquitted on a technicality). Philip was already in prison, serving a short sentence for possession of an army greatcoat, which he had bought from a market stall.

After his release, Philip was "the nearest thing *War Commentary* had to an industrial editor", the cartoonist, and the manager of Express Printers, which Freedom Press had taken over in 1942. In the latter capacity he came to know trade suppliers of typesetting, bookbinding and other services, and was later able to earn his living as a printer with no plant of his own, buying all services through the trade.

Besides *War Commentary*, which changed its name to *Freedom*, Philip had a hand in many other publications. In the 1940s, Dr Norman Haire hired Express Printers to print *The Journal of Sex Education*, and Philip was proud to be production editor.

About the same time a group called the Anarcho-Syndicalist Committee, consisting of Philip, his companion Rita Milton (another able orator), Albert Grace and Albert Meltzer, launched a paper called *The Syndicalist*. Philip, already the author of a well-received Freedom Press pamphlet, *Syndicalism the Workers' Next Step*, was editor and political cartoonist. It lasted about a year.

Among other short-lived publications were a surrealist magazine, a near-anarchist journal called *Wildcat*, and a paper called *Zero* which proclaimed itself 'anarcho-feminist'. Philip

had his name taken off the list of *Zero* editors when it became apparent that the 'anarcho-' part did not apply to the others; without telling him, they ran a front-page article demanding the re-imprisonment of a soldier, convicted of indecent assault, whose sentence had been reduced by the Appeal Court.

Philip was also employed as editor of *Sewing Machine Times* and *Loading Machine Times* (a loading machine is a device for loading industrial sewing machines; "Believe it or not", Philip said, "we get genuine letters to the editor of *Loading Machine Times*"), and after his retirement continued as a freelance photographer for these papers.

In March 1952, some members of the (then illegal) Spanish CNT were sentenced to death in Barcelona, and Freedom Press organised a big meeting in their defence, of celebrities like Michael Foot, Fenner Brockway and Jacob Bronowski. The sentences were commuted.

In 1953, Philip was asked by two comrades for help in campaigning for the abolition of the death penalty. Using the contacts he had made in the meetings defending the Spanish CNT members, Philip organised two big meetings addressed by famous people, against the death penalty in Britain.

The first meeting was called in the name of London Anarchist Group, the second in the name of 'The League Against Capital Punishment'. This was the foundation of the National Campaign for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, which went on to success.

In 1964, Philip organised a series of meetings in support of Stuart Christie, a young anarchist arrested in Spain and accused of importing explosives. Out of these meetings arose the Christie-Carballo Defence Committee, in which Philip and others continued campaigning, lobbying Parliament and so on, until Christie's release. Christie was a member of the Syndicalist Workers Federation. After his release he seems to have been persuaded that the campaign had been organised, not by Philip and friends, but by a group including the late Albert Meltzer who had in fact refused to join the campaign, on the ground that it had no chance of success.

Philip was 'prime mover' in the foundation of the Malatesta Club, an anarchist club with its own premises, open almost every evening from May 1954 until sometime in 1958.

In his sixties, he entertained as the bingo-caller at the local old people's club in Camden Town. About this time, he quietly married at least one refugee, to give her a British passport. Towards the end of his life he retired somewhat, while remaining the genial, delightful entertainer in private. He leaves two children now in their thirties, from his time with Frances Sokolov, and a lot of anarchists who took him as a role model.

He was once described in a letter to an East End local newspaper as "the anarchist leader", a description which he was quick to deny. But if 'leader' is taken to mean, not a boss of any sort, but an originator of activities in which others enthusiastically join, anarchist leader is a good description of Philip Sansom.

Donald Room

# Academic Nurturing?

In this feature reprinted from *Freedom*, Philip Sansom was replying to an earlier one by George Woodcock written on the seventieth anniversary of Freedom Press in October 1956. We reprint it not as any kind of statement of Philip's final beliefs, but simply as a thought-provoking article written when he was at the height of his powers.

Anarchists, in my opinion, are far too modest in their attitude towards their ideas and their movement. Too often are they prepared to admit rather sheepishly that after all these years we haven't got anywhere, because we cannot point to any corner of the world where an anarchist society has been established; because in countries where there have been sizeable and relatively influential anarchist movements they have been crushed; because in the twentieth century the tide of political trends has been in the direction of statism ... and so on.

To yield to this kind of argument is to fall into the trap into which our opponents have fallen – to accept to some extent the dangerous philosophy that if a practice has been established it must be right (fifty million Frenchmen can't be wrong) and that if a body of ideas have not won the struggle for men's allegiance they must be wrong.

Now seventy years seems a long time for a tiny little enterprise like Freedom Press to have survived. And even longer for it to have existed without any noticeable effect upon world society. It might be said to have failed, because after all this time we still haven't got anarchism – or rather an anarchist society, because we have got anarchism. But in terms of social development seventy years is no time at all, and to throw up our hands in despair, to point to the mistakes made during those seventy years and to compare ideas which have barely been tested during that time with species of animals which took millions of years to evolve and die out seems to this very amateur student of history very unscientific indeed.

The main point that is overlooked by the realistic people who tell us that anarchism has failed, that it is a dead end, is that every other social ideology has also failed – and they have been tried, while anarchism, hasn't. Is there anyone who will argue that any of the social or economic systems that have been established with great show of strength, purpose and permanency, have succeeded? Has capitalism? Has communism, fascism or social democracy?

They haven't succeeded even on their own terms, let alone on anarchist terms. They have all had to retreat, or go forward to destruction, or reform – as capitalism has done during this century by adopting some of the characteristics of the others.

True, capitalism has by this means survived – but Freedom Press has not had to adjust its principles in order to survive for seventy years as capitalism has had to do in that time. The mighty Nazi Party made rapid and obvious progress and

stamped the anarchists in Germany into their graves; it built a Third Reich that was going to last for a thousand years. It went down in flames after twelve. The Communists built an empire that a year ago looked as solid as a rock. Look at it now.

There is one tremendous advantage which we of today have over our ideological ancestors of seventy years ago. Our experience. When Kropotkin launched *Freedom* in 1886 his theory was scientifically watertight – but his listeners and readers had not experienced the failure of all the alternatives as we have today.

It is natural that people should try the easy way of doing things first. And when Labour politicians emerged promising to do things for the working class in return for no more effort than it took to walk round the corner to the polling booth, it was understandable that the majority of patient, easy-going, trusting folk should agree to let them have a go. When the terrible anger of the Russian people against the Tsar simmered down it was not all that difficult for the Bolsheviks to persuade them that it was best for them to place their affairs in the capable hands of the Party – because no one knew better from experience.

It is the easy way out to shuffle responsibility off on to someone else's shoulders. Anarchism, in demanding that the individual be responsible for his own affairs, makes the acceptance of it that much more difficult for people conditioned to irresponsibility – which is what servitude really is. But since Kropotkin's time the peoples of most countries have followed the path of irresponsibility only to suffer bitter disillusionment as a result.

Clever people look now at the workers and see apathy and lack of concern in what is going on around them and then proceed to climb upon a plinth of superiority, declaring the 'proles' to be stupid and hopeless. But what it really amounts to is that people today have been so deceived and let-down that they are becoming chary and cynical; they are wiser than before, but since there is not in this country nor in North America any situation which seems to demand anything more than dumb, personal resistance, there appears to be no need for social forms of struggle.

But when circumstances do arise in which such forms become necessary – then, and not until then – shall we see how much people have learned from their experiences. In one country or another we have seen the various parties of democracy, communists and fascists given opportunities to show what they can do. They all claim to be practical realists, looking at things as they are – not in the idealistic anarchist way of how we should like them to be – with short-term policies to solve the problems of their time. They have all failed, and in terms of human misery have been quite disastrous for the peoples of the world.

There is no longer any alternative to anarchism that has not been discredited. And it is encouraging to note that those people who have had the deepest experiences, such as the slave-labourers of Vorkuta and the populations of the East European States – when they voice their desires they make demands such as anarchists would wish.

Now it is very fashionable today to follow the 'gradualist' line such as was drawn by George Woodcock last week. It is a sort of line which fits in fairly comfortably with the Marxist view, but it is a bit disconcerting to hear it coming from anarchists – even 'agnostic' ones. For it flirts dangerously with the concept of historical processes which in some way or another work their pattern upon human affairs without human agency.

Now putting it simply, surely the anarchist position must hold that history is made by people. If we are to nurture positive trends – trends which lead in the libertarian direction – this surely means that we should do everything to encourage people to become responsible in their work, their community and in themselves, and through that

responsibility to make their own history. But making history is a tough business. Nobody can do it alone, for in spite of all the wonderful examples of outstanding individuals who have flown in the face of society to create changes, their fiercest struggles have all been to gain the support of their fellows so that their ideas may become effective. This has been the case in the world of science and of the arts. The struggle of Pasteur in science, Ibsen in the theatre, Cezanne in paint, achieved social significance only when championed and developed by others. How much more is that true of social ideologies themselves.

Indeed, after outlining tendencies which he considers worthy of support, George Woodcock says: "Given direction and consciousness, these manifestations might well play their part in the weakening of the idea of coercive government ... and in the overall expansion of freedom". Given direction and consciousness by whom? He can only mean by people who see the whole picture and who try to draw together all positive trends and aspirations into a coherent general philosophy. Which in fact is what anarchists have been doing for donkey's years.

Woodcock knows as well as anybody the encouragement that Freedom Press has given to the educational work of such people as A.S. Neill; the work in psychology of the early Wilhelm Reich; in sociology and anthropology, Margaret Mead and Malinovsky; in biology, the Peckham Experiment, and indeed to all field workers whose aim is liberation even in a limited field. What the gradualists are now doing however is to assert that this encouragement is more important than the general propaganda for the general philosophy itself – or the creation of a movement to put it into practice on as wide a scale as possible!

There is too a basic dishonesty in the gradualist case. It points to trends and ignores how those trends were initiated. It stresses improvements which have taken place without demonstrating what kind of struggles were involved by what kind of forces in order to achieve those improvements. I can imagine in ten years time some pacifist gradualist will point to the trend towards industrial democracy in Hungary and say that that is a positive tendency which we should nurture. And he may not even know that the conditions for that trend to commence had to be won by a bloody revolution complete with barricades, workers' militia, and a lot of out-of-date romantic nineteenth century heroic workers who woke up one morning to find their chiliastic dreams coming true.

Suppose that having said that I am now to be firmly relegated to the museum alongside the dinosaur. Well, if Bakunin and Kropotkin are already there too I shan't be in such bad company after all. Nor shall I object to being beside all those other comrades for whom anarchism is something more than an intellectual exercise – a position from which to utter moral judgements.

For far from agreeing that anarchism has been passed over by history (whatever that means) I maintain that history hasn't caught up with

anarchism yet. The groups and movements which have sprung up and died down since Godwin developed anarchism as a system of thought have been in the nature of exploratory, probing experiments. Inasmuch as they have found little response in the world in general so far we can only say that we must wait until a lot more clearing away and cultivation has been done before the ground is really receptive to the application of our ideas. It doesn't mean that we have missed the boat at all, unless we take a very narrow view of the nature and function of the revolutionary movements of the past.

Nor is it helpful in my opinion to make purely negative criticisms of our movement – especially if we don't apply the same objective criticism to those 'trends' of which we think so highly. There is not a single tendency which is listed by gradualists to which anarchists could not raise pointed objections. But I always feel that such purist objections are rather sour and negative. By all means let us encourage everybody doing anything which is similar to what we should do in the circumstances – in spite of the limitations always imposed on such endeavours by the authoritarian environment and a non-anarchist approach.

But to point to the mistakes of anarchists in the past and gloss over the achievements seems to me to be unnecessarily leaning in the other direction. To cast aside all that was done by the CNT-FAI in Spain for example because of the failure of 'leaders' is to be very doubtfully objective. One begins to listen for the grinding of the axe. After all the mass-based movement in Spain did more to demonstrate a true industrial democracy in practice than all the social commentators who go to weekend conferences and pat themselves on the back for their acumen in discerning and nurturing trends will do in a hundred years. And to refer to the present movement in Spain as a 'pathetic rump' appears to me to be simply unjustifiable impudence.

It is always amusing to notice that when someone adopts what is fundamentally a dogmatic attitude he always first accuses others of dogmatism and rigidity. In casting aside all the 'traditional' concepts of anarchism, it is as dogmatic to classify them as all wrong as for any adherent of one school of thought to maintain his as the only right one. Indeed, in taking the line he has done, George Woodcock has quite dogmatically stated that all other interpretations of anarchism are wrong save that one which would reduce it to a sort of cheerleader for other people's activities.

Well that is certainly the safe way. You can hardly go wrong if you carefully select those adjustments of capitalism which are not in the totalitarian direction, as are most, and give a limited approval to them. It requires nothing more from you than the academic consideration of moral problems. But it bears about as much relationship to anarchism as the Marriage Guidance Council bears to love.

Philip Sansom  
3rd November 1956



One of the very earliest of Philip Sansom's cartoons, from *War Commentary*, dated mid-October 1943. Drawn to accompany an editorial on the current famine in India, then under British rule, Philip's style is here fully formed.

Philip Sansom wrote for the moment and produced no books, but looking through our list we were surprised to find how much of his work, often with an autobiographical slant, is in print.

His account of the trial for which he was jailed in 1945 can be read in *The Raven* no. 29 (£3), his connections to the Surrealist Movement in England in *The Raven* no. 3 (£3), and his memoir of anarchism in the '50s and '60s in *Freedom: A Hundred Years* (£10).

A good selection of his earlier articles and cartoons appear in *Neither Nationalisation nor Privatisation: selections from Freedom 1945-1950* (£1.95) and from a later period in *The State is Your Enemy: selections from Freedom 1965-1986* (£5).

All of the above are available (post free in UK, elsewhere add 15%) from:

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# No end to the war in Algeria

The civil war which has raged in Algeria since the 1991 elections were declared null and void following the resounding victory of the FIS is not over; on the contrary it looks set to become ever more prolonged. The referendum on the 'national concord' which took place on 16th September is no more than a smokescreen for the political-military regime which aims at making western opinion believe that it has won the war against Islam and that a 'democratic process' has been launched.

Anaesthetised by its fear of Islam and having invested heavily in the Algerian regime since 1994 (the aid total which has come from the IMF, World Bank, G7 and the EU totals some £4,000 million which does not include massive purchases of gas and oil) the west is happy to accept this myth and close its eyes to the daily violence which is set to continue making no more than an irritating background noise to the capitalist melody.

## The Algerian army pulls the strings

In fact the power of the military has shrugged off the threats of the early 1990s and gained the upper hand even if it doesn't have the means (nor probably the will) to establish full control and set the scene for a democratic future – even a bourgeois capitalist one. Never mind. Oil and gas will continue to flow across the Mediterranean, the media will forget the situation as they have forgotten Afghanistan and Iraq and the specialist will be able to categorise Algeria as a 'low intensity conflict zone', that is to say subject to daily violence. Since independence, and even a little earlier, it is the army which has been in control. One could even date with some precision the take over by pointing back to the assassination in Morocco in 1957 of Abbane Ramdane, a veritable ideologue of the FLN, who paid with his life for wishing to 'give priority to the political over the military'. His assassination by people in the intelligence service of the Algerian revolutionaries symbolises the effective seizure of power by the 'warlords'. The situation has changed but little. In 1962 it was thanks to the tanks of the ALN (National Liberation Army) and against the wishes of the Moudjahadin that Ben Bella came to power. Three years later on the 19th June 1965 it was the very same army which overthrew him in favour of Colonel Boumedienne. Doing away with the post of head of state Boumedienne took the position of head of defence thus blurring the lines between the head of the state and the military. His successors were to change nothing in the model. Thus, over the period of 37 years of independence, Algeria has had 33 years of absolute military rule. But beyond these basic considerations it is hard to understand the mechanics of decision making obscured as they are by the regime's need to safeguard appearances. One can simply agree that power lies in the hands of a fistful of high ranking officers in the intelligence services and the army. For thirty years they have pulled the strings which controlled the only political party, the FLN, until it lit the fuse for the riots of 1988 when faced with a wave of Islam. Today they pull the strings of a multi-party system. A civil government has only to move slightly from the path laid down and it will be replaced (Hamrouche in 1991) or even better assassinated (Boudiaf in 1992).

The struggle for a share in the profits from

oil and gas is the driving force behind the military. Behind the old rhetoric of nationalism the preoccupations are purely material.

## Despite the war it's business as usual

The clans which dominate the army are, above all, special interest groups. Internal conflicts, often dealt with by intervening civilian parties, are struggles for influence linked to the sharing out of financial assets. There is but one limit to such feuds but it is a definitive red line beyond which nobody goes: never put into question the fundamental bases which allow for the regime to survive. The outcome of all this is a capacity for long



term survival. Even in a world of generalised corruption there are few countries which have seen their riches so systematically looted. The generals control the oil and gas markets but they also invest in all strategic sectors and share out amongst themselves the various commercial activities which are of greater economic significance. A law of silence reigns supreme. Lower grade officers participate in this system at a secondary level. The Algerian army is also a Mafia type organisation in the true sense of the word, comprising some 140 generals (as opposed to about twenty generals ten years ago) outside the reach of civilian law, who move around in dark glass limousines and live in separate residences. This parallel world has but one policy: survive at whatever price. Within the constraints of this logic, victory over the Islamics is not desirable. The army seeks above all to stabilise the situation at a level of violence which justifies its activities and over which it has enough control so as to permit business to prosper. The very war effort of the state testifies to this logic. There are only 120,000 men in the armed forces out of a population of thirty million and the Algerian army, although rich, has not invested significantly in the kind of equipment which is appropriate for fighting a civil war. The geography underlying the military strategy reveals the true logic of the war: protect 'useful' Algeria. This in turn means the business world which, indeed, has suffered little apart from some spectacular attacks, in the cities and in the oil zones. During the war, Algeria has managed to double its gas production, and the oil zones have been unaffected. There are many attacks on the civilian population but there have been no attacks on those economic interests which are so assiduously protected. But this is not enough for a military which is so concerned with Algeria's international reputation. They do all they can to keep up appearances and try their best to give an appearance of legitimacy as is shown, for example, by the periodic rigged elections and also the well reported referendum which has just taken

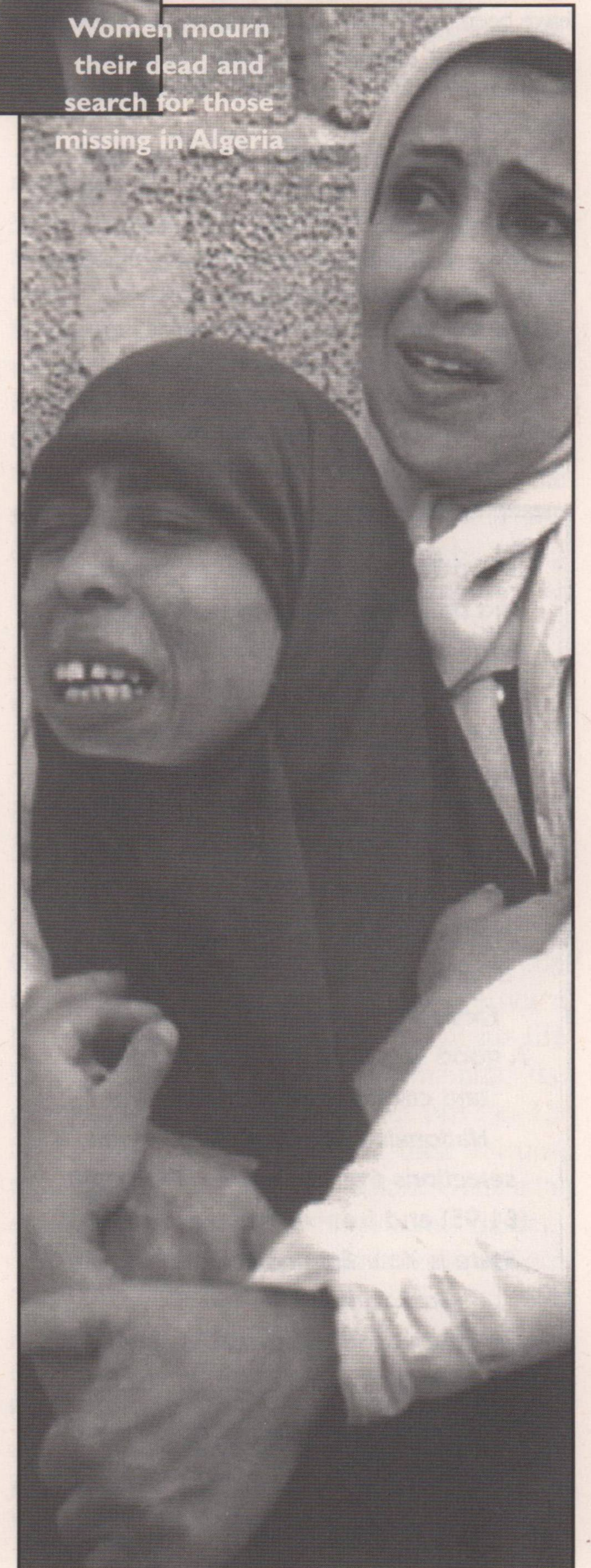
place on national reconciliation. The west asks for no more than these false pretences to leave business alone to prosper in the shadow of the regime's supposed struggle against Islam. Official Algeria has, for some time, been a centre for undercover diplomacy using it as an intermediary with regard to terrorism and the taking of western hostages.

## Islam: FIS or GIA?

In the short term the power of the Algerian state has managed to gain control of the overall situation. Islam no longer represents a credible alternative, neither in its 'moderate' version – the FIS – or the more militant version, the GIA. Those analyses which seek to put the blame for all the killings at the feet of the Algerian military and simply mention the existence of the GIA in passing (referring to it as a small group manipulated by the authority's security services) are guilty of pure fabrication. The birth of the GIA from the ruins of the FIS in 1991 reveals two



Women mourn their dead and search for those missing in Algeria



for its participants despite all the human tragedies. The benefits which are considerable and which arise from the conflict explain the refusal of the participants to look for a political solution. And again, none of the adversaries, apart from the FIS, considers itself to be beaten and is ready to submit itself to the consequences of defeat. But above all, the war, as Luis Martinez has so eloquently explained, has allowed for the imposition on society of a life style which never ceases to reinforce the supremacy of the warrior class. The latter he writes, "are recognised by a certain 'look' which has emerged from the conflict: the 'look' structures the representations of the antagonists and identifies them. On the Islamics' side the style is that of the Afghan the GIA guerrillas whereas the FIS puts on the garb of the Cuban revolutionary – military uniform with cap and beard. The same diversity exists among the military and between the classic look of the gendarme or soldier and goes through to the plain clothes cop with sneakers, jeans and dark glasses". Away from the anecdotal nature of such observations we find a social consciousness of war which has penetrated deep into Algerian society and which, especially for young people, makes violence the main route to social promotion. The political realignments which are now taking place, the referendum which is supposed to mark the end of the war itself, correspond more to a process of consolidation of power than reconciliation. In effect the generalisation of militarism in both camps has pushed Algeria into a logic, already widespread in the South of Africa, that of the privatisation of violence.

**Franck Gombaud**  
(from *Le Monde Libertaire*,  
22nd September 1999)

patterns of logic. Firstly, the existence of a feeling of Islamic radicalism which operates autonomously and pushes as far as it can those schisms which have existed within the world Islamic movement since the 1980s. The second is the revelation of splits which exist between the different social groups and which had managed to make a federation of the FIS for a while: pious bourgeois, intellectual Islam, disinherited youth. Where the FIS was forced to put into operation a strategy of bringing people together around the notion of an Islamic state founded upon the principle of chari'a the GIA rapidly built up an opposite strategy by aiming to exacerbate social contradictions. There was doctrinal exclusion and social fragmentation which led the GIA in 1995 to logically concentrate its activities against its rivals in the Islamic movement. In this period, which corresponds to the rule of Djamel Zitouni and Antar Zouabri, the GIA was suspected of being infiltrated by the Algerian intelligence services. Even in this case this could only be an acceleration of a process already underway and whose result was to keep the Islamics from power. In contrast to the military this group was unable to ensure that their internal divisions would not degenerate into a fratricidal confrontation.

## An impossible victory

The civil war has reached a level of horror and complexity which prevents it coming to an end in the near future, despite the feelings of the majority of the population. Many elements feel that all is in place for it to continue for some considerable time. First it constitutes a source of wealth and prestige

# Food for Thought ... and action!

Recent arrivals at the Freedom Press Bookshop



interpretation of Winstanley's work, and observes that he is emerging as a much more complex figure than previously thought. The book is rounded off by a conclusion, two appendices and a thorough updated bibliography. 262 pages, hardback, £7.99.

**The Anarchist Calendar 2000**,\* Big Combo Productions. Judging by the way these took off at the Anarchist Bookfair you'll have to get your order in fairly quickly if you don't want to be disappointed. In the usual A4 landscape format, this calendar can also hang on your wall and each month comes with a full-page comic strip and a suitable political quote. There's some seriously funny stuff here and the quality improves every year. Get stuck into 'Preacher Hod (He's High on God)', 'The Triumph of Capitalism', 'A-Man', 'Mr Tony's Gonna Get You' and more. You also get the bonus of a three-page cartoon at the back for your £3.95.

**White Poppies**, Peace Pledge Union. As every year at this time, those objecting to war *per se* (as opposed to simply bemoaning the numbers killed in this or that war) can make their point by wearing a white Peace Poppy. A useful device for getting people to think and talk about just what is being commemorated by all those red poppy wearers and media articles on Armistice Day and Remembrance Day. 60p each, plus 19p p&p (10 or more post free).

**Notes**

- The price of the Richard Porton book **Film and the Anarchist Imagination**, reviewed in our last issue, was wrongly listed as £13.00. It is in fact £14.00.
- The spoof Tintin book **Breaking Free** is back in print and will be available from us very soon.

KM

**ASR (Anarcho-Syndicalist Review) no. 26.** The second part of the Noam Chomsky interview on anarchism continues the debate on reform and revolution. This is accompanied by corrections and additions which should have been part of the first installment, but apparently got lost in cyberspace, and is followed by critical responses from two readers. More responses are promised for the next issue. Supporting acts in this issue are 'The Anarchist Movement in Mexico', 'The Global Threat of the WTO', 'The German Free Workers Union', 'Recovering the Spanish [Anarcho-]Syndicalist Tradition', plus reviews and lots of US and international news reports.

Incidentally, one of the reasons for the magazine's recent name change (from *Libertarian Labor Review*) was the number of people looking for material by the right-wing *Libertarian Party*. 34 pages, £2.95.

**Left-Wing Democracy in the English Civil War: Gerrard Winstanley and the Digger Movement** by David Petegorsky, Sandpiper. This is by common consent one of the best books available on its subject. The original publication date is given as 1940 – although a comrade we spoke to at the Anarchist Bookfair maintains it was earlier – but this second edition did not appear until 1995, now reprinted by the present publisher with impeccable timing 350 years after the English Revolution.

It comes at an unusually low price for a large hardback with a very attractive dust-jacket and cover. The first two chapters analyse the English Revolution, discussing the background to it and the development of radical political thought around it. The other four chapters examine Winstanley and his writings and the various aspects of the Diggers movement and philosophy.

Ivan Roots, in his new introduction, remarks: "No serious student of Winstanley who has emerged over more than three centuries can profitably neglect Petegorsky's work – a pioneer that has become a classic". And Christopher Hill's new foreword states: "It is now perceived primarily as a pioneering study of Gerrard Winstanley, and it still offers the best analysis of his ideas, establishing him as a serious and highly significant figure in the history of political thought". This fulsome praise acquires a certain poignancy when one reads that this was Petegorsky's only book, and the suggestion that the even more substantial works which he was planning on the English Revolution were scuppered by his apparently early death. Root's warm introduction sets the book in the context of the subsequent and continuing argument about, and research into the 'materialist' versus 'religious'

## Dictionary of Modern Thought

**The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought**  
edited by Alan Bullock and Stephen Trombley  
HarperCollins, £24

**The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought** is the third edition of a reference book, whose first edition appeared in 1977 and second edition in 1988. It now consists of nearly a thousand pages containing more than three thousand short entries by more than three hundred mainly academic contributors, covering natural and physical science, social and political science, systems and communication theory, philosophy and mathematics, history and economics, language and literature, culture and criticism, the arts, and almost all other kinds of 'thought' which may be thought 'modern'.

The result is a useful but unreliable guide to further inquiry in all directions. Although there has been a high turnover of entries, hundreds subtracted from or added to successive editions, although most of the

surviving entries have been revised or rewritten, and although most of the editors and contributors are professional experts, too much of the information in the book is inaccurate or incomplete.

Left-wing politics suffers particularly badly. The treatment of *socialism* and *communism* and such terms is biased towards orthodox Labourist and Marxist versions. The treatment of *terrorism* and *guerrilla* is inconsistent and variable. The treatment of *feminism* and related topics is parochial and unhistorical. The treatment of *pacifism* and the *peace movement* is even more parochial and unhistorical, and damaged by confusion with anti-militarism and unilateralism.

The treatment of *anarchism* and associated terms is worst of all. The entries on *situationism* and *syndicalism* manage the remarkable feat of missing their essential points, and the former omits the main writers and the latter mentions only Sorel. The entries on *anarchism* and *anarcho-syndicalism* are so bad that the only explanations are that they

were written and checked by people who either knew nothing about the subject, which is disgraceful in a reputable book, or were perpetrating a deliberate joke, which is at least funny. After more than twenty years, they still name Auguste Blanqui as an anarchist, still can't spell Emma Goldman, still mention an anarchist called 'Johann Moser' and now add that the most interesting recent anarchists are the Individualists and Libertarians, and that the anarcho-syndicalist movement vanished after the First World War.

What has gone wrong? Didn't the editors and publishers know how to find knowledgeable contributors or commentators? Did they lose interest in their work or just become complacent? Whatever the case, *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* is no better than its predecessors and as bad as most other reference books on anarchism, and if it isn't properly revised and corrected before the fourth edition it deserves to be jeered out of print.

NW

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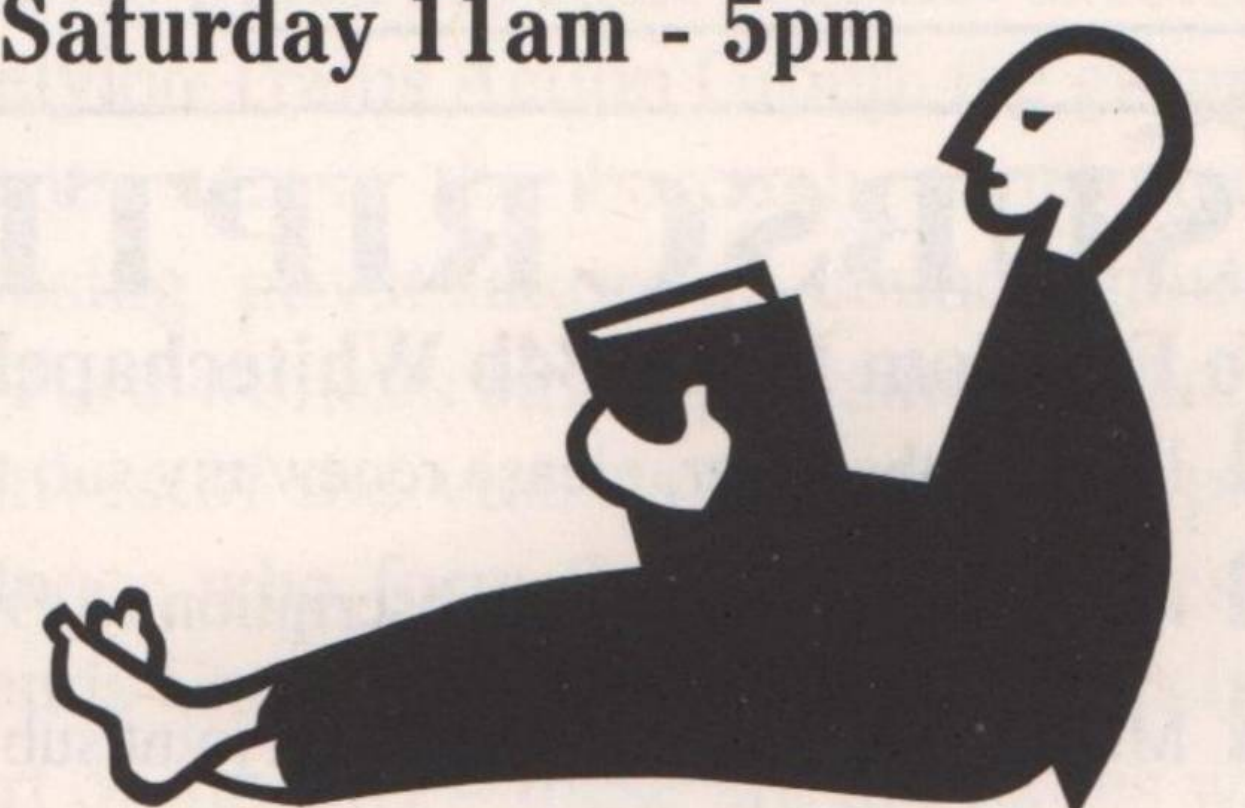
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**The London  
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25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL  
(nearest tube Holborn). Admission is free  
but a collection is made to cover the cost of  
the room.

**— PROGRAMME 1999 —**

**12th November** Symposium on 'Stop the  
City'

**19th November** Philip Sansom: celebration  
of his life

**26th November** The Charity Organisation  
Society and the secret origins of 'The  
Welfare State' (speaker Peter Neville)

**3rd December** General discussion

**10th December** Discussion on the  
programme for the year 2000.

**17th December** Christmas social

**24th and 31st December** no meetings

**7th January** General discussion

Anyone interested in giving a talk or  
leading a discussion, please contact Peter  
Neville at the meetings giving your subject  
and prospective dates and we will do our  
best to accommodate.

Amendments to the above programme can  
and will be made as changing circumstances  
allow, especially within the general  
discussion slots. However, bear in mind that  
many regular attenders find general  
discussion slots a useful way of introducing  
matters of some urgency, raising smaller  
items which may not merit a symposium  
(which is a general discussion on one  
particular topic), or in continuing and  
amplifying a subject raised in a previous  
meeting. Consequently, although we may be  
willing to lose a few general discussion  
slots, we consider that these do provide an  
important vehicle within the context of the  
forum.

**Peter Neville**  
for London Anarchist Forum

**Red Rambles**

A programme of guided walks for Libertarians,  
Socialists, Greens, Anarchists and others. Bring  
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**Sunday 28th November**

Derbyshire walk to Alport Heights. Meet at  
Wirksworth Market Place at 11am. Walk  
leader John.

**Sunday 19th December**

Woodthorpe, Beacon Hill, Windmill Hill: Meet  
at the Crematorium car park at 10am. Walk  
leader Mike.

**Telephone Vivienne for more info:**  
**01509 230131 or 01509 236028**

**I understand that the Cambridge  
Anarchist Group is no longer active.**

**If anybody in the area wishes to  
make a connection, please contact me  
(A. Stone) on Cambridge 328906.**

**What on earth is  
humanism?**



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