

FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

Vol. 61 No. 9

6th May 2000

50p

Mr Livingstone presumes

Ken Livingstone came out last week against the anti-capitalists and radical libertarians who propose to protest on 1st May. In his column in *The Independent* he declared that "as Mayor of London I would never back political violence". He makes it clear that he opposes the Mayday actions because "these were planned by the groups previously involved in last year's violent 'stop the city' protests".

Mr Livingstone urged us to support legitimate protests and demonstrations on 1st May. He reminded us that "the Trades Union Congress has taken over the Dome for the day for a Millennial May Day festival". "Protests like that" he added, "and dozens of trade union May Day activities in London and elsewhere in the country are an entirely justified way in which those with little influence in the mainstream media can make their voices heard".

It is an entirely legitimate way in which those in office, like Mr Livingstone, can let the little people let off steam and wear themselves out banging their heads against a wall.

'Millennial anarchism's advantages'

The Livingstone determination to identify himself with the antique trade union movement, rather than the more trendy anarcho-campaigns around anti-capitalism, may have been a response to an article by David Aaronovitch, also in *The Independent*. Mr Aaronovitch wrote in his column on 19th April: "Ken's great strength is precisely that he isn't a Trot or – in any developed sense – a socialist at all. At his best when defying all attempts to pin him down, he's an anarchist, a Mango".

Perhaps Ken Livingstone is trying to distance himself from this definition when he says one of the mayor's jobs "may be to make sure that legitimate protests supported by Londoners are heard". But to win the election he argues that he must "knit together a majority coalition" so as to embrace "the full breadth of the capital's diversity across different communities, different walks of life, business, trade unions, arts, the environmentally concerned, religions and generations, to name just a few".

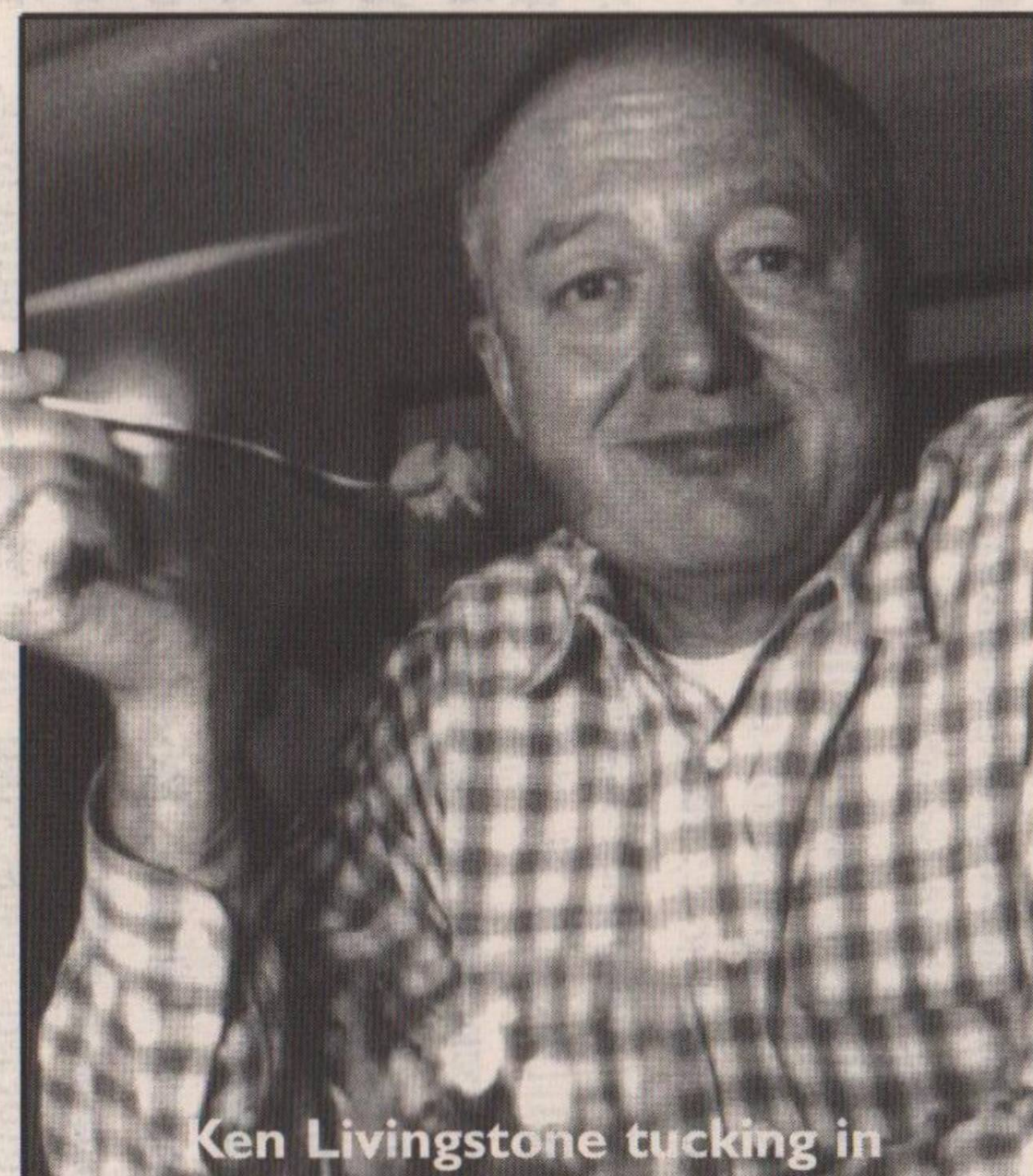
This desire to appeal to Uncle Tom Cobbley

and all has led to Ken Livingstone attacking capitalism and in the next breath praising the City of London; to saying that while the US capitalists are bad, our own investors in the square mile are benign creatures who are not really injurious to the third world.

Yet for some months we have sensed that the Trot left and beyond is all of a tremble over their anticipation of a Livingstone victory in the race for London mayor. The London Socialist Alliance is campaigning under the slogan "Vote Ken, Vote LSA". This LSA is a metropolitan assortment of Trot tendencies – though the public at large are hardly aware of their existence, these groups take themselves very seriously. According to the blurb of one of its member groups: "The London Socialist Alliance is of the greatest significance, bringing together ... the SWP, CPGB, AWL, Workers Power, the rump ILN, sections of SPEW and a range of prominent left-wing individuals".

Where will this lot be on 1st May? Will they, as their hero Ken recommends, be locked in the Dome with the TUC *ancien régime*? Or will they be on the streets in another carnival against capitalism, by what Aaronovitch calls the Mango Affinity Group, and 'millennial anarchism'?

The trouble for the drab and unimaginative Trots is that they have an ugly image in this day and age. No proper English worker would bring himself to vote for them so long as he had a hole in his arse.



Ken Livingstone tucking in

Mr Aaronovitch asks: "But who wants the Cheka au Callinicos? Not least when – if you don't fancy capitalism and can't be arsed to moderate it – you can join the Mango Affinity Group and take enjoyable direct action against the IMF or the WTO ... millennial anarchism has all the advantages of Trotskyism with none of the drawbacks. It's cool, it's individual and you can be as much or as little of one as you like".

Of course the Socialist Workers' Party, which wants to cash in on the success of the libertarian left on the streets, will be joining in on the direct action on May Day with some stunt of their own. The rest are dreary enough to spend May Day canvassing for Ken.

How will we spend May Day?

It's hard to say, at the time of writing, what will happen in London or Manchester or anywhere else this May Day holiday. Natasha Walter, in almost a full-page feature in *The Independent*, suggests there will be a series of stunts against McDonalds, Benetton and the Millennium Dome.

She writes that "the police are taking it all very seriously. They have cancelled all leave and planned one of the biggest operations for thirty years to deal with the possibility of the sort of clashes that happened last June in the City of London when they made over 180 arrests".

This must leave the Trots in a tizzy. How are they to spend May Day? With the troglodyte trade unionists of the TUC inside the Dome? Canvassing for Ken? Or with the Guerrilla Gardeners of Reclaim the Streets and the libertarian left challenging capitalist society?

Asked if big business and the world's rulers will listen to the libertarian activists, a spokesperson from Reclaim the Streets retorted that "revolutions can't be predicted, but they need hope and a sense of possibility. Reclaim the Streets has that hope – I think this is just the beginning".

I don't think that the SWP armed with petitions to 'Nationalise Rover' inspire that kind of hope and expectation.

BB

anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

Vol. 61 No. 9

6th May 2000

50p

Putin and Blair shake hands to give us ...

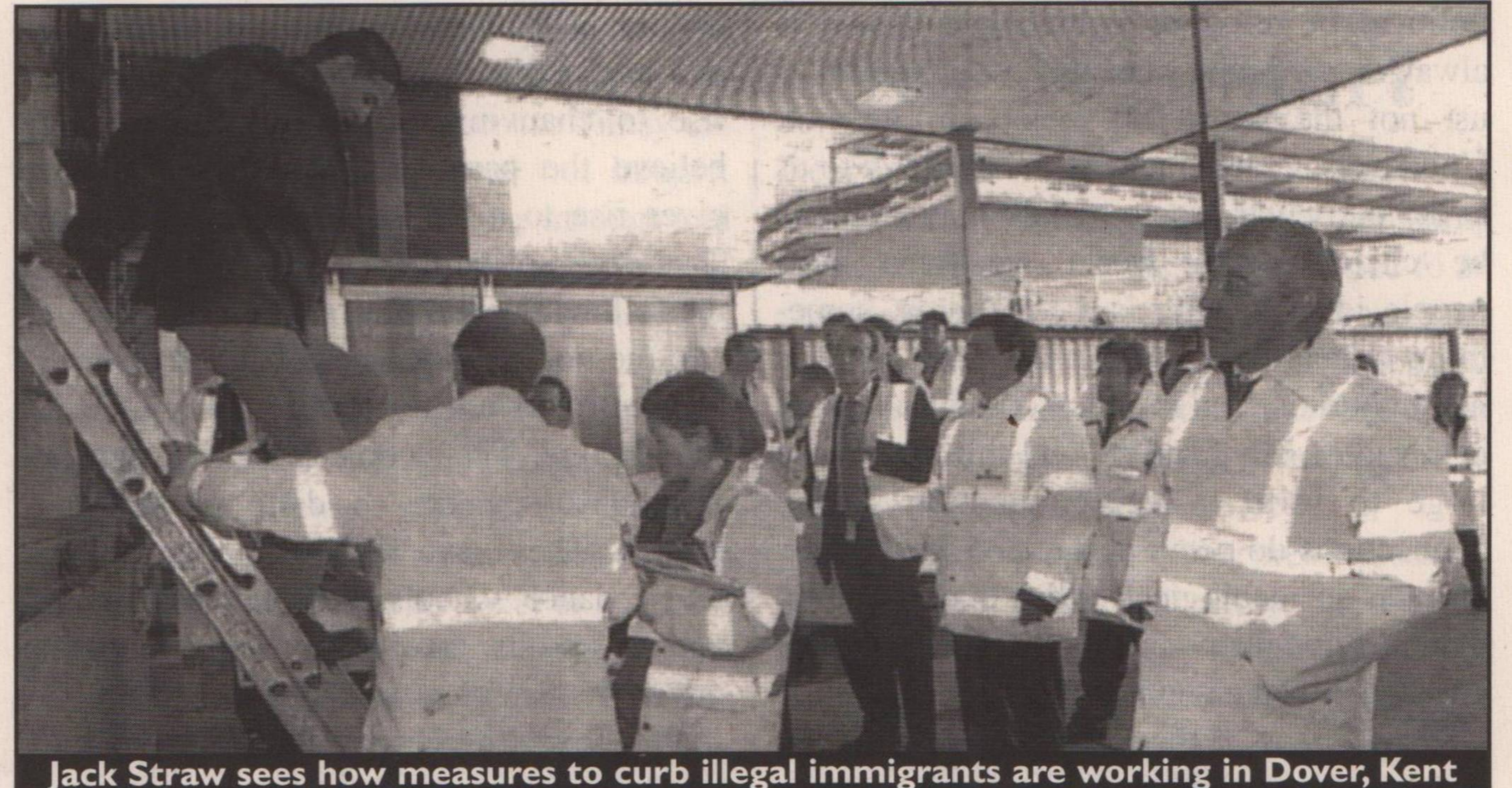
A dictatorship of the law

The flawed logic employed to justify the various entrust projects of the left over the years has always held that the Labour Party could be turned into an instrument of anti-capitalist struggle, or, failing that, that social democracy represented a breathing space for the working class, a 'dented shield' behind which militant regroupment could take place. Both the racist posturing of Jack Straw in his bid to outflank William Hague's Tories from the right, and Tony Blair's ongoing courtship with Vladimir Putin ought to demonstrate both the extent to which New Labour's practices reveal the futility of any such belief in social democratic 'progressivism' today, and provide an opportunity to consider whether such was ever the case.

William Hague clearly believes there is political capital to be gained from playing the race card in the run up to the May 2000 local elections. Calling for the incarceration of all asylum applicants and their families, Hague hopes to cut with the grain of popular prejudice. That there might be a groundswell of anti-immigrant feeling to exploit though, is, in the main, due to the efforts of New Labour to conquer the space of populist racism for itself. Immigration minister Barbara Roche has learnt quickly the techniques deployed by her boss Jack Straw, the Joseph Goebbels of New Labour's racist propagandising. According to Roche, social provision for asylum seekers imposes a 'dreadful burden' on the British taxpayer. No-one seems to have bothered to mention that this 'dreadful burden' amounts to 19p per week. Asylum seekers are already being dispersed around the UK away from their centres of support, in the run-up to the implementation of the provisions of the 1999 Asylum and Immigration Act. At present they receive benefits paid at a rate of 90% of Income Support per adult. Under the new Act, cash benefits will be replaced by a voucher system operated by Sodexo Pass, who have openly advertised for trading partners on the basis that there is profit to be made from the poorest of the poor, participating shops being able to retain change owed to voucher holders who present vouchers of a value more than the goods bought. The benefits-equivalent asylum seekers receive amounts to £35 per week for a single man, £104 for a family of four. Those who the tabloids tell us are here to fleece our goodwill are in fact expected to survive on amounts 30% below the official poverty line. Clause 9(4)(b) of the Asylum Support Regulations empowers the Home Secretary to "take into account any other support which is available to the principal or any dependent" when deciding benefit. Any act of basic charity, therefore, will be costed and deducted from benefits due.

Whatever Hague thinks of, Straw gets there first in the battle to charm the electorate by winning the award for Racist Scum of the

Year. Detention centres – New Labour have just opened one, thank you: Oakington Detention Centre, run by Group 4, who already manage Campsfield House. During the Parliamentary debates which preceded the Immigration and Asylum Bill, New Labour Home Office minister Mike O'Brien wrote to Shadow Home Secretary Norman Fowler to complain about the conduct of Fowler's deputy, James Clappison, in forcing a debate over clause 18 of the Act (which makes it a criminal offence to carry refugees – even unknowingly – in a plane, train, car, lorry or boat). Such debate, according to O'Brien, was "clear evidence that the Conservative Party is trying to wreck the government's attempts to clamp down on illegal immigration". As Nick Cohen noted at the time, "it shows that the Tories, who brought us Enoch Powell, Margaret Thatcher and Michael Howard, are a bunch of pussy



Jack Straw sees how measures to curb illegal immigrants are working in Dover, Kent

liberals when put alongside New Labour" (quote from *The Observer*, 9th May 1999). The notion that there's much 'New' about Labour's engineering of prejudice won't

withstand examination either. It was a Labour government which introduced the Commonwealth Immigration Act in 1968, (continued on page 3)

In the American gulag

Readers of the early editions of Alexander Berkman's *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* will remember that he provided several pages of reproductions of 'Prison Labels', showing the various trade names of consumer goods that were actually produced by prison labour in the United States. Many decades later prisons have a quite different significance in the US economy.



The prison industry has become, after General Motors, the country's largest employer, with 523,000 people on the payroll.

This was one of the extraordinary statistics cited by Laurie Taylor in his radio programme *Thinking Allowed* on 22nd March. He explained that it was reported in February that prisons in the US had just admitted their two millionth current inmate, and that this meant that with 5% of the world's population, the US was responsible for 25% of the world's prisoners. An African-American male born today has a one in four chance of spending time as a prisoner, while 60% of the people held in prison are drug offenders with no history of violence.

A fortnight after the US prison population passed two million, New York University School of Law held a conference to discuss the implications of the phenomenal growth of the prison population, and one of the speakers was David Downes from the LSE, whose paper at the conference had the title

The Macho Penal Policy. For, as he put it, "it is also the case that a macho economy produces a macho society. When economic strength and cut-throat profitability are the drivers of conduct, when job stability and decent wages are a folk memory, when skilled professionals can be told to clear their desks within the hour; when you are only as good as your last deal; and when secrecy in takeovers, asset stripping and head-hunting are conducted with sublime disregard for ethics, then the basis for some sort of Kantian respect for persons in social relationships can hardly be said to exist. The machismo of the street, in drug dealing, hustling and physical intimidation, with its lack of eye contact demand for 'respect' and contempt for weakness, is – as William Julius Wilson has said – a poor basis for primary labour market employment. It is, however, a good preparation for street crime and survival in prison. The machismo of the powerless is a symmetrical parody of that of the powerful in a winner/loser culture."

In an earlier programme, Laurie Taylor had interviewed a celebrated Norwegian criminologist Nils Christie who, like Berkman eighty years ago, stresses that plenty of people do very well out of the prison industry. In 1993 Christie wrote a book *Crime Control as Industry: Towards Gulags Western-Style?* demonstrating the big vested interests in incarceration. David Cayley points out in his book *The Expanding Prison* (Toronto, 1998) that "the political influence of this lobby can be measured by a study of campaign contributions in California in 1991-92, which found that the California Correctional Peace Officers' Association was the state's second-largest political donor, spending 'around one million dollars on political contributions for

the governorship and the legislature in each electoral cycle'."

David Downes sorted out for Taylor several factors in the evolution of the current American faith in the prison. One was the loss of faith in rehabilitation, dating from a famous article in 1974 called 'Nothing Works', ending a century and a half of American belief that criminal behaviour could be cured, and that also in the 1970s in the United States belief in the possibility of radical social reform was also on the way out. So America locked itself into a 'prison works' mode of thought, and when the crime rate did eventually begin to go down, prison was credited with the fall in the statistics. Mass imprisonment actually contributed to the fall in unemployment statistics, though economic commentators never seem to notice this.

Is Britain going down the American road? David Downes told his New York audience that in this country, "both major parties have engaged in raising the punitive stakes, and the prison population in England and Wales rose from 42,000 to 65,000 in six years". He added the topical point that "the concern with crime and fear of victimisation has grown out of all proportion to the actual increases in criminality; fear which typically is most focused on traditional 'street crimes' and crimes allegedly committed by powerless minority groups ... Across Europe and in the US, increasing proportions of the prison population consist of 'minorities' and foreigners."

Meanwhile the United States has achieved the distinction, equalled by no other country in history including Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia, of jailing the highest-ever proportion of its own citizens.

CW

In defence of the particular

There is a large map of Vancouver Island on my wall. Sometimes I gaze wistfully at the place where my first twenty years were spent. This is not empty sentimentality. Most everyone was raised in some particular place, lives or has lived somewhere and has been affected by the history, language and culture of that area. Our particular 'place' is in large measure what forms us. Having a place means having a sense of belonging, even long after we have moved away. This feeling of belonging gives us a certain emotional depth and stability. We need this for our mental health. When this sense is lacking, we try to create it by forming pseudo-communities such as gangs and political or religious cults. Note that it is always a particular place that is important to us, not the world or society in general. Universals are abstractions, what is real to us is the particular. Some people may claim to be 'citizens of the world', yet, what most people identify with is a local area, something human scale, such as a small town, a neighbourhood, an island, a county, a region, or a valley. Anything beyond this size is too large to form a real connection. When connections do occur at the large scale, they take on an ideological rather than a natural form. Nationalism and Marxist-Leninism are the most noted examples of this.

The enemies of the particular are the state and corporate capitalism. The latter seeks to homogenise us, to create a worldwide suburban consumer utopia of Coca Cola,

Nintendo and Hollywood. The state and the World State a-building (also known as the New World Order) crushes autonomy with its sweeping regulations, taxation and social engineering. The state destroys mutual aid and responsibility, the underpinnings of community. By destroying the particular, corporate capitalism and the state give rise to ever greater levels of social anomie. A vicious circle develops, the more anomie, the more people turn to consumerism to fill the void. The more anomie, the more people clamour for the state to do something about the attendant social problems.

The crushing of the particular has given rise to a revolt of the local and the regional. Some people, in good faith, fear that the particular, and especially its present revival, will give rise to chauvinism and xenophobia. They believe the particular, by its very nature, gives rise to a feeling of 'them versus us'. This need not be the case as you will see in the following examples.

In the north east corner of the Province of New Brunswick lies an area called La Republique. The people who live here are Acadians, speaking a distinct dialect of French. They have their own flag, anthem, music, dance, schools, radio, television, newspapers, co-ops, credit unions and municipal governments. The Acadians get along fine with their English-speaking neighbours, don't hate anyone and have no desire to break away and form a separate state. La Republique is a nation without a state and the

people want to keep it that way. Given the history of persecution by the English, if any group in the world should harbour resentment and be full of 'them versus us' xenophobia, it should be the Acadians. Yet, they don't feel that way.

A few hundred miles away in the neighbouring Province of Nova Scotia lies Cape Breton Island. It was settled early in the 19th Century by Highland Scots, victims of the Clearances and the cruel aftermath of Coloden. A distinct Cape Breton culture, based upon its Celtic roots has arisen here. There is more Gaelic spoken in Cape Breton than in Scotland and the language is taught in school. There is a 'Buy Made In Cape Breton' movement and a desire for more autonomy from the Nova Scotia government, yet no hostility. I could give a score or more other examples taken from Canada alone. Canadian society is flexible and tolerant enough to allow this level of the particular. Where people see their region undermined, they recognise that the state and capitalism are behind it and don't blame other people. This is not to say that problems don't exist, that people don't have to fight to maintain their autonomy and that unresolved situations like Native land claims are not conflict-inducing.

Them versus us is not innate to the particular, but in part occurs when the particular is suppressed. The answer lies not in the unfettered dominion of the universal, but allowing the particular to be, of allowing sufficient autonomy for natural communities

to thrive. Another root of the problem is authoritarianism, most especially in the form of intolerance. Once again, the suppression of the particular comes to play, for intolerance is exacerbated by this condition. Support for the particular has been an essential part of anarchism as found in Proudhon's concept of federalism, Kropotkin's autonomous communes, Landauer's Folk Cultures, and Woodcock's concept of regionalism. We must not forget this, and get swept up in some kind of corporate-liberal, quasi-marxist 'internationalism' cloaking a future world government. If we wish to speak of universals, let's consider universal autonomy and mutual tolerance instead.

That the contemporary revolt of the particular against homogenising state capitalism sometimes takes a conservative or even xenophobic form, is in no small measure the fault of the left. Localism and regionalism have almost always been written off as reactionary by leftists. Several generations of left-wing or centre-left governments have done little or nothing to decentralise political power. The left has almost always favoured statism, centralisation and the large scale. Left-decentralists have been too few in number, or have been too divided among themselves, to make a difference. However, few as we are, we should not make the mistake of following the authoritarian left in their rejection of the particular. We should understand that this revolt is rooted in something real and necessary and work to overcome the negative traits, rather than throwing the proverbial baby out with the bathwater.

Larry Gambone

April 23rd saw an interesting coincidence of anniversaries – not only was it Easter Sunday, a day sacred for its chocolate eggs and fluffy white rabbits, but also the fourth day of the Jewish Passover, Shakespeare's birthday and St George's Day (an old pagan relic no doubt, though personally I always preferred the dragon). John Constable, the libertarian playwright (and former *Freedom* subscriber) reviewed last year, chose this millennial conjunction to bring the run of his *Southwark Mysteries* play to its thunderous climax. Thunderous being the operative word as the heavy storm before hand made me initially wish he had chosen somewhere other than the (open air) Globe theatre to perform it. But the skies cleared and I changed my mind. It was an evocative venue, Constable's cast used it well transporting us back in time to an

The Southwark Mysteries at the Globe / Southwark Cathedral

older and bawdier London. For those not familiar with the play, it recreates the anarchic spirit of Southwark, an outlaw borough since Roman times, particularly focusing on twelfth century Bankside, complete with its Church licensed brothel's and 'Liberty of the Clink'. Using this material and more Constable ingeniously weaves what is basically a Simonian Gnostic Mystery Play, incorporating a timeless mix of Tantric whores, Romano-Egyptian paganism and plebeian rebellion. But what emerges is greater than its surface mysticism of crypto-paganism and residual Christianity.

It is a testimony of liberty and love. While I sometimes felt alienated by the play's Christian sentiment and its promotion of the plausible Nazarene, it's clear the author deploys these mythical archetypes (as well as pagan and oriental ones) in a highly libertarian way, as weapons against religious dogma and intolerance. And there can be no doubt that such images permeate modern western culture for both good and ill, with manipulation of a language being more powerful than a refusal to use it.

The performance culminated in nearby Southwark Cathedral, with proceedings initially dominated by an extremely sexy, female Satan, and her giant red dildo (who accused historical churchmen of paedophilic buggery), after which we heard Judas Iscariot declare the death of God from the pulpit. Later both were cast out by a Gnostic Christ denouncing them all alike as alienated products of patriarchal religion, while declaring the supremacy of the Earth Goddess and calling for the free reconciliation of flesh and spirit! Hardly a typical event at the Cathedral, though I have never seen a church more packed (and probably neither has the Church).

The play was not merely about abstract idealism however, it also raised awareness of important contemporary issues of libertarian and egalitarian concern: environmental damage, social injustice, racism, sexual repression, drug prohibition and the oppression of individual freedom.

The splitting of the performance between the Globe and Southwark Cathedral was an inspired move, with the consequent passage through Bankside bringing to mind the material connections between the play and its location, with all its history, thus helping to

transcend the alienated spectacle of performance (even if the area is fast degenerating into a theme park). Something also helped by the now traditional breaking of audience-performer boundaries with off-stage interaction (which fortunately weren't too embarrassing).

My only disappointment came at the end when it was revealed that the event would have been impossible without business sponsorship. I'm sure John chose his sponsors carefully, but there really are no good capitalists, and it's a shame that such a worthy production has to be supported by what is ultimately blood money. But better it went here than somewhere else and I guess we are all whores under capitalism.

The performance was certainly a success with a fine and talented cast. Moreover the audience was surprisingly large for such a rainy, holiday Sunday (with a fair share of local politicians and 'blokes off the telly' noticed amongst them). So let's hope John got his message across.

I feel it is a message that has a great resonance with anarchism, indeed the kind of spirituality the play portrayed is the historical foundation of our modern secular creed. And while I would reject a return to religion and its pre-scientific superstitions, if the millennial hype and the failure of materialism bring about an increased ethical and spiritual aesthetic so much the better.

For those who missed the performance, the complete play, poem cycle and background notes are available in text from Oberon Books, entitled *The Southwark Mysteries* (ISBN 1 84002 099 7) and transcripts are available via Constable's website at <http://sites.netscape.net/johncrowmysteries>.

Steve Ash

Now available from Freedom Press

The Raven

No. 39

on 'Culture and Ideology'

96 pages for £3 (post free worldwide) from:
Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

(continued from page 1)

setting forth the explicitly racist provision that UK entry was permitted only if an immigrant could demonstrate a 'substantial connection' in Britain, and placing East African Asians, formerly passport holders, under the same system of controls as other Commonwealth citizens. Labour followed this up with the 1969 Immigration Appeals Act which shifted the vetting of dependants from port of entry to country of departure and in practice removed the right of



Home Secretary Jack Straw at the docks in Dover when a Kosovan asylum seeker is discovered hiding in a Spanish lorry

admission to the UK from immigrant partners and families. The 1971 Immigration Act, which introduced a work permit system, effectively ended secondary immigration and introduced virginity testing, was opposed by Labour in opposition, but implemented vigorously by the 1974-79 Labour government, which then went further in introducing a twelve month probation period on the marriages of immigrant husbands to tackle purported 'marriages of convenience'. In 1974-75, Cypriot refugees were denied entry, along with Rhodesian draft dodgers in 1976-77 (unlike settler farmers today).

Putin's visit, meanwhile, gave the lie to all the rhetoric about 'human rights' and 'internationalism' which preceded the 'humanitarian' bombing of Serbia. The Russian military, it seems, can rape and torture the Chechen people with impunity, because, as Blair's handshake demonstrates, the strategic interests of Western capital coincide with those of Putin, Berezovsky and the Russian oligarchs. Putin, has, after all, promised an overhaul of the Russian tax system to attract foreign investment, and, in his address to British businessmen at the National Liberal Club, said he would ensure that the ownership of property was sacrosanct.

As to the Chechens? "Britain - which has had its own bad experiences in Ulster - understands possibly better than any other Western country all the difficulties connected with separatism and terrorism" (Kremlin spokesperson in *The Observer*, 16th April 2000). Here again, Labour is on familiar territory. Peter Mandelson's colonial manners have been put to use in suspending home rule in the Six Counties, but Labour's involvement in the denial of democracy in the north of Ireland runs much deeper. It was, after all, a Labour government which sent in the British army in 1969 to suppress the nationalist community's defiance of the gerrymandered Orange state. It was a Labour government which introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and which governed during the period of intensified repression which saw the framing of Judith Ward and the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six. It was Labour which began the process of criminalisation which ended in the hunger

strikes and oversaw the use of non-jury Diplock Courts to replace a system of internment-without-trial with one of internment-through-trial. Between 1975 and 1979, between 93% and 96% of cases appearing before a Diplock judge resulted in conviction. Of these, between 70-90% depended entirely or mainly on uncorroborated confession evidence. In May 1978 Amnesty International produced a report condemning the maltreatment of suspects in custody in the Six Counties. Between 1977-78 Labour Home Secretary Roy Mason was directly responsible for the deployment of SAS shoot to kill tactics which resulted in the deaths of eleven people. Out of office, business continued as usual. Not one Labour MP openly supported the hunger strikers' demands in the 1981 hunger strikes. That great liberal Michael Foot sent his shadow spokesperson Don Concannon to the death bed of hunger striker Bobby Sands to tell him that Labour would not support him. Neil Kinnock moved to congratulate the Tories on the 1988 murder of the Gibraltar Three.

Much has been made of Putin's comment that he intends to introduce a 'dictatorship of the law' in Russia. That capitalism operates a 'dictatorship of the law' as a norm, and that the severity of its implementation is determined solely by the extent of popular resistance to its rule, has been lost. As Peter Kropotkin put it: "The law has no claim to human respect. It has no civilising mission; its only purpose is to protect exploitation". What passed for 'parliamentary socialism' was only ever an attempt to sidetrack a newly enfranchised working class into an electoral road to piecemeal reformism, financed by the post-war boom. The Keynesian settlement was abandoned by capital as soon as the price of pacification of labour became too high. As to the Labour Party itself, whatever the illusions of its members, it has been all too willing to play its role as one part of the twin headed eagle which oversaw the needs of British capital. The Labour Party which deployed the race card whenever it wanted to out flank its opponents was the same Labour Party which moved to rationalise the benefits system as a means of disciplining organised labour when unemployment stood at 20% of the workforce in 1930, which used troops to break the April 1950 dockers dispute,

imposed wage freezes at the behest of the IMF in 1966, and again throughout the duration of the 1974-79 government, and which, with its announcement of public spending cuts of £2 billion in February 1976 began the programme of dismantling of welfare provision continued by the Thatcher government post-1979.

The duplicity of New Labour in whipping up anti-immigrant feeling is twofold. The race card works for Labour primarily because it serves to distract people from the corporate tax hand outs which have seen the rich get ever richer under New Labour, while the standard of living of the poorest has continued to fall - getting us to take our eyes off the multi-million pound pay packages of the likes of Barclays chief executive Mike Barrett by distracting us with lies about those who live on £35 per week. What's disguised also is the extent to which a de-skilling, de-territorialising, casualised capitalism depends on cheap immigrant labour to survive. The post-war boom sucked up immigrant labour to sustain itself. Between 1945 and 1957 there was a net influx of 35,000 European nationals to the UK, and a similar number of Irish workers. As other European economies expanded, British capital moved to exploit the reserves of labour in the colonies of Asia, Africa and the West Indies. Black workers were absorbed to maintain the viability of the welfare state through the maintenance of public sector work as low-paid labour, along with clothing sweat shops, hotels and catering. Immigration controls were slackened or tightened to meet the demands of capital. Today, it is workers from outside Fortress Europe who assume the role of cheap labour. As A. Sivanandan puts it: "The problem for an open Europe, in other words, is how to close it against immigrants and refugees from the Third World. But not so that their labour is entirely lost. For it is they who do the low-skilled, menial, dangerous and dirty jobs in silicon-age capitalism - as their counterparts did a generation ago in the reconstruction of post-war Europe. Except that now, such work - temporary, flexible and casual - is the very basis on which post-industrial society is run. With no rights of settlement, rarely the right to work, no right to housing or to medical care, and under the constant threat of deportation, the new migrants are forced to accept wages and

COPY DEADLINE

The next issue of Freedom will be dated 20th May, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 11th May.

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).

conditions which no indigenous worker, black or white, would accept" (quote from *Communities of Resistance*, Verso, 1990). The denial of citizenship facilitates the exploitation of labour. This is the second gain for capital from playing the race card. It disguises what is fundamental to capitalism - the universality of the exploitation of labour and hence the commonality of interests of those exploited. It is essential to the derailment of effective opposition to its rule, that capital be able to confine the resentments of the working class to the terrain of a narrow nationalism, while it conducts its pursuit of profit across the world. The globalisation of capital is, as Gordon Brown has stated, irreversible, but the rule of capital (the dictatorship, if you will, of the law) is not. Essential to any effective opposition, however, must be the globalisation of working class resistance in response. As the Italian militant Toni Negri has suggested, the minimum basis for the effective mobilisation of the "constituent power of labour" today must be "the equal right of citizenship for all over the entire sphere of the world market" (quote from A. Negri and M. Hardt, *Empire*, Harvard Press, 2000). The extent to which New Labour resorts to racism as a political weapon should be seen as an indicator of the extent to which capital fears the internationalisation of working class revolt.

Nick S.



Manchester's Spanish Film Festival

Spain through the modern mangle



1936: the 'people in arms' won the revolution in Spain

When I worked delivering 'gas butano' to the villages of Cabo San Antonio in the province of Alicante, we often took canisters of industrial gas to the sombrero factory in one of the villages. We didn't clock-on or clock-off at the small shop where I worked, but the driver, my boss Juan, told me that the factory workers were anxious to get a clocking-on system introduced so that they could feel modern like all those North European wage earners.

The advantage of the clock, as I was to learn to my cost, was that one could prove to the boss how much overtime one had in at the end of the week. The disadvantage, as every North European worker knows, is that the clock creates its own special form of tyranny.

What we have at this Spanish Film festival (shown at the Cornerhouse in Manchester in March this year) is a picture of a people, the Spanish people, being pulled through a mangle into the modern world. Most of the films feature aspects of this social trauma which Spaniards went through in the twentieth century. For them it must have been something like we in England suffered during the rural depopulation after 1815, and the Enclosure Acts.

Magical solutions

Many of the films showing at the Manchester Cornerhouse Festival have yet to be formally released, most were made in the 1990s and only one – *Bienvenido, Mister Marshall!* ('Welcome, Mister Marshall!') – was made in the Franco period of 1952. At that time Spain, as a fascist state, was not benefiting

from American assistance under the Marshall Plan. The film is about the inhabitants of a Castilian village, Villar del Rio, who, on being told that an American delegation will arrive to satisfy their needs, start to smarten themselves up a bit. This involves transforming the village into a stereotypical Andalusian pueblo, which fits the image of Spain best recognised abroad.

What follows is an example of what some sociologists would call a kind of 'cargo cult' in which the villagers dream of receiving gifts from wealthy Americans. Or, as in a more down to earth way my boss Juan used to argue, on hearing that the USA was setting up military bases in Spain, that as the Americans are richer some of it would rub off or be squeezed out of them by 'us Spaniards'.

These kinds of exploitative relationships between rich and poor, between the foreign visitors and the natives, between consumerism and scarcity, came to have a curious effect on the Spanish imagination. In the event, at the end of the film, the US convoy speeds past the village without stopping. An off-screen voice urges us to give up our beliefs in magical solutions.

Slums, pueblos and vaginas

Flores de Otro Mundo ('flowers from another world') is about another kind of magical enterprise – what one sociologist called 'the vaginal repopulation of the Pyrenees'. It is inspired by the true story of 142 bachelors from Plan in Huesca who, in desperation, advertised in *Heraldo de Aragon* for young eligible women to visit their valley. It seems that the area is sadly short of women: some 70% of families are hit by bachelorhood.

The director Iciar Bollain, who had a role in *Land and Freedom*, stated in the press book: "In Guadalajara, as well as in Segovia, Soria, Teruel and many other places in Spain, the population is ageing and the number of bachelors is becoming shockingly high". The film is shot in Cantalojas, a small village. The problems it deals with are those of immigrant women far from home needing to marry out of economic necessity, lonely bachelors and a rural life and culture thereby shrivelling up.

Las huellas borradas ('fading memories') is about another kind of attack on village life. Another true story about villagers tackling their imminent displacement to make way for a reservoir. A journalist comes back to his native village after years in Argentina. A story of disappointed dreams, land conflicts and village rivalries. In recent events in both India and the Pyrenees we have seen protests against dams by libertarians and environmentalists.

The films *Barrio* ('neighbourhood') and *Solas* ('alone') are set against an urban environment. They are about Spaniards who live in slums amid downbeat public housing. People who have migrated into the towns and cities from the pueblos. *Barrio* is focused on three lads growing up on a council estate in the outskirts of Madrid, and *Solas* renders the relationship of a mother and daughter in a poor part of an Andalusian city.

I've lived in both briefly. In Denia, a town in the province of Alicante, I lodged with my young family in some council flats built for migrants mostly from the then poor rural region of Albacete. In La Linea, in Andalusia, I stayed in a poor barrio for years. The barrio in Spanish cities can become a kind of urban pueblo, but it can also become a ghetto.

Spaniards create some of the best cities in the world with the vibrancy of their barrios, but sometimes the architecture defeats them. As the director of *Barrio*, Fernando Leon de Aranoa, declares: "In their neighbourhoods, the windows don't have views, they have bars". In those kinds of places, he writes, "the early bird doesn't catch anything, he's just the first in the unemployment line".

Militia volunteer David Carr (Ian Hart) and his comrade Bianca (Rosana Pastor) in Ken Loach's film *Land and Freedom*

In *Solas* we have a thirty-something woman who gets away from her pueblo only to end up in a derelict apartment in an Andalusian city. Her mother comes to live with her while her father is having surgery in a city hospital. Its young director, Benito Zambrano, says that "*Solas* is a protest against the vindictive world of men" but it is much more than that. It reveals the tortuous relationship between mothers and daughters and sheds light on the toughness of life in both the pueblos and cities.

Manolito Gafotas ('Manolito four-eyes') presents council flat life in a more sympathetic light. It is a comedy set in Carabachel Alto, near the Madrid prison which once housed the Scottish anarchist Stuart Christie. It is about the adventures of a bespectacled working-class boy. It is delightfully anti-feminist, based on the male virtues of comradeship and not telling tales on your mates. It has an earthy humour which appeals to the Spaniards, but which would probably offend your average English or US left-wing intellectual whose idea of a good time is rather different.

Sobreviviré ('I will survive'), by contrast, is a comedy which your average middle-class modern anglo-saxon intellectual will find acceptable. *Sobreviviré* is a camp comedy of urban Madrid life, centering on an impossible romantic relationship between a

young widow and a homosexual man. There is a delightful scene on a sofa when the gay man tries to learn how to have sex with a woman. The directors say that "it's a romantic story with realistic touches, but above all it's a positive look at the everyday".

Modern developments and anarchism

Earlier Luis Bunuel dealt with pueblo poverty in *Los Hurdes* filmed in western Spain in the 1930s, and the question of urban poverty in the shanty towns around Mexico City in *Los Olvidados* later. In the twentieth century Spaniards had to confront the problems of both. When I went to Barcelona and Madrid for the first time in the 1960s, both had their share of shanty towns.

Some have argued that this shifting of population from the rural pueblos to the towns and cities has kept urban anarchism alive. The peasant values of justice sustained the anarcho-syndicalist unions. Others claim that the spirit of the anarchist movement changed during this process, and that it led to decisions made in Cadiz and Madrid being imposed upon the internal affairs of the pueblo. According to Julian Pitt-Rivers, the

anthropologist, in the end it resulted in "the state, having destroyed the anarcho-syndicalist syndicate... [imposing] the reign of syndicalism" under the fascist General Franco.

There have been recent films which deal with class struggle and themes of special interest to anarchists. Antoni Verdager's *La*

Number 33 of the anarchist quarterly

The Raven

on
Anarchism and
the Arts



96 pages for £3.00 post free worldwide

LESSONS OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION



VERNON
RICHARDS

THIRD EDITION

Freedom Press ISBN 0 900384 239 £4.00

teranyina / La telarana (1990) was a prize-winning and expensive production (600 million pesetas) concerned with Catalonia's Setmana Tragica ('tragic week'). Based on the novel by Jaume Cabré, set in 1909 on the eve of the general strike, the film recreates the conflicting relations between the bosses and the workers in the textile town of Terrassa. Jaime Camino's *El Llarg Hivern* (1991) covers the winter of 1939 with the fall of Barcelona. Barry Jordan, in his book *Contemporary Spanish Cinema*, claims it is "another ambitious historical reconstruction and a convincingly accurate evocation of the end of the civil war".

Paco Betriu's recent film *La duquesa roja* (1995), about the communist Duchess of Medina Sidonia who was responsible for foiling land speculators, and Aranda's highly successful, though seemingly controversial, *Libertarias* (1995) would also probably be vital viewing for anarchists. None of these films were shown at the Manchester Cornerhouse Film Festival, but Ken Loach's *Land and Freedom* got another showing.

Perhaps because of the Loach film, the Cornerhouse Bookshop sold some £40 worth of Freedom Press books relating to Spain and the civil war, including *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*. Most of the criticisms of these films seems to be that they portray the issues in too schematic and simplified a fashion, contrasting the fascists and bourgeoisie as bad and the poor and

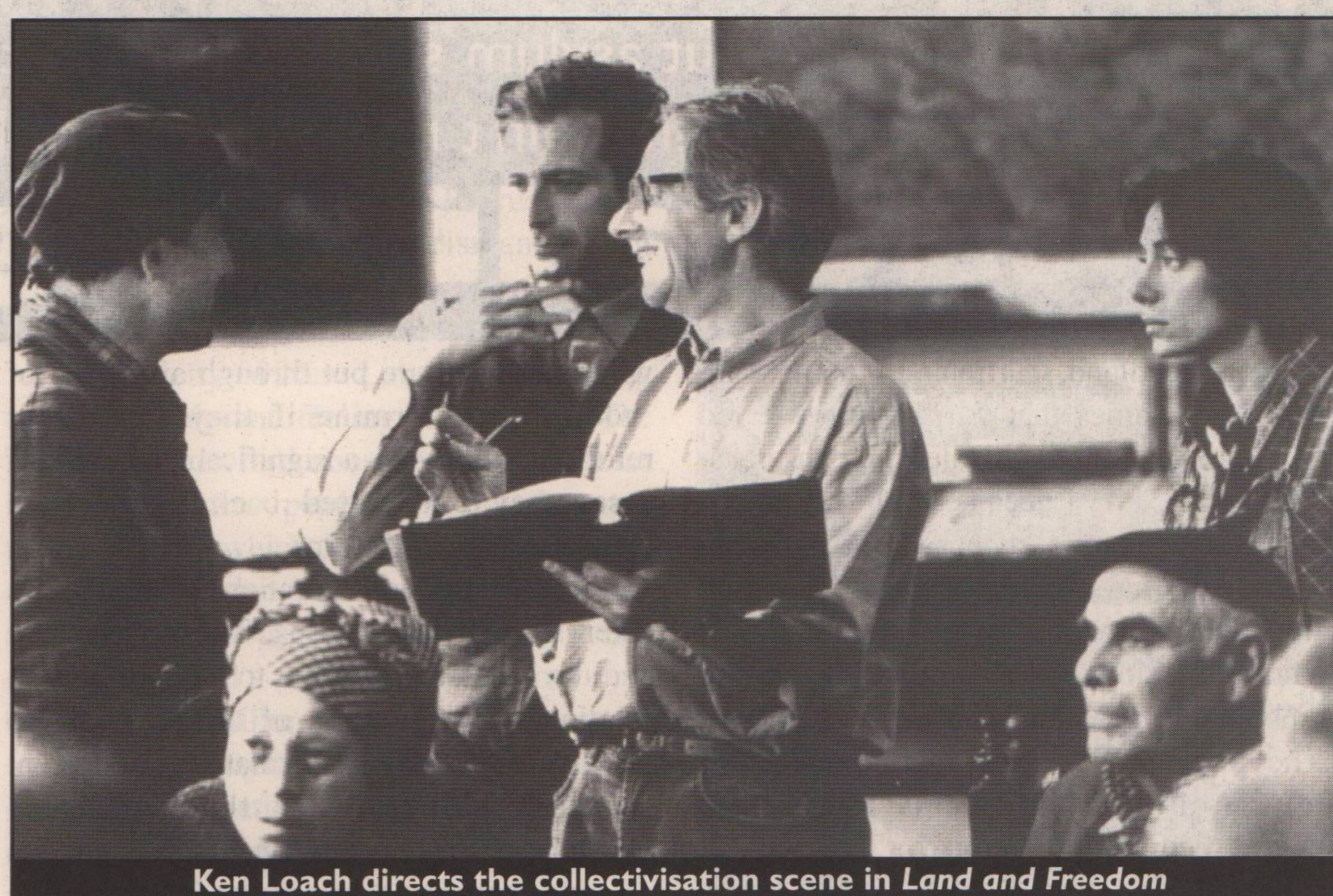
republicans and noble working classes as good. Luis Bunuel criticised some of the Italian marxist film directors for doing this kind of thing in the past.

Libertarias is particularly criticised. Set, like *Land and Freedom* (1995), around the Aragon front in the early part of the civil war, the film deals with a group of women (including nuns and ex-prostitutes) who decide to join the anarchist Mujeres Libres ('free women') so as to take an active part in the war. Barry Jordan writes that "there is ... the difficulty that Aranda's celebration of his women's indomitable spirit, his defence of their utopianism and his blind commitment, become an emotional glorification of the losing side in the civil war, a clichéd, sentimental expression of solidarity with noble heroic defeat". Yet he does admit that *Libertarias* has contributed to a "fresh filmic re-examination of the war" which may lead to other such films.

Utopian models and the workers

La lengua de las mariposas ('butterfly's tongue') would probably fall into this category. This film, made in 1999, is set in Galicia in the spring of 1936 just before the civil war. It is an account of the relationship between an ageing teacher with republican sympathies, and a young boy about to come of age at the time of the arrival of Franco's fascists in his town.

Another film at the festival, *Goya en Burdeos*



Ken Loach directs the collectivisation scene in *Land and Freedom*

(*'Goya in Bordeaux'*), worried me a bit. Sometimes with European films one has the impression that they try too hard to be pretentious and meaningful. Here mesmerising lighting and innovative cinematographic techniques are used to show the maestro's work as he recalls his life's experiences from exile in France.

The irony for these Spanish liberals with French sympathies was that many of them ended up resisting Napoleon's invading army. As Goya says in the film, 'France was our model', which under Napoleon turned

into a monster for them, rather like Mother Russia became for many an anglo-saxon intellectual in our generation.

In these matters the English working classes have always had a better instinct than the intellectuals. Since the 1960s most of the English workers have been dimly aware that Spain offered them a better model than anything touted by the eastern bloc countries. Places like Benidorm, Toremolinas and the Costas have all been plumped for as almost second homes by English workers. Those of us who, in the early 1960s, campaigned with the anarchist FIJL against the development of tourism in Spain, may not find all this in the best of taste, but it does go to show how much more perceptive are the native working classes than their so-called betters who for decades slavishly followed the marxist muck put out on the left.

Brian Bamford

Marxism as a blockage to freethinking

I have written millions of words and am regularly in print. Occasionally I come up with something that might be by way of being a pace-maker. But it elicits a nil response! I had that experience over my article 'What comes after capitalism?' after it appeared in *Freedom* on the 15th January this year.

My impression is that countless people left of centre suffer from a diffuse marxist hangover. They may not even be aware of it. Its pervasiveness has got through to them somehow. Marxist ideas, in default of others, have been part of the political air we have breathed all our adult lives. They get into the bones.

I was a very active marxist from 1943 to 1956/60. In 1960 I didn't just depart from the ranks, like so many others, I asked myself the questions (very rarely asked): 'Could Marx himself have been fundamentally mistaken? Was that the real reason why everything came apart in 1989?'

When I was a student - 1946 to 1951 - reading Hons History at Newcastle, I was one day browsing in the College Library and came across Volume 2 of *Das Capital*. Intrigued, I made time to read it carefully from cover to cover. I was then in the Communist Party and a very devoted party member.

In Volume 2, Marx is concerned to examine the nature of capitalism before the industrial revolution, in both its medieval and mercantilist forms. He came to the conclusion the medieval economic system was based on 'small scale production'. This worried me immediately because I was also reading Eileen Power and others on the medieval wool trade and the Wool Staple and the origins of the woollen industry in the very large scale pioneering farms of the new Cistercian Order in the twelfth century. Citeaux was founded in 1098. Marx was simply mistaken; and that further meant that his subsequent characterisation of capitalism itself was mistaken. He had missed the very origins of money and the market in large scale production on the land, not in towns. I put this uncomfortable conclusion away. It hardly befitted a loyal party member! But the truth will out! Marx was very much an urban man and when it came to identifying the origins of

capitalism he looked to urban society, to the merchants. He was just wrong. It wasn't like that. They lay in the golden fleece.

I spent much of the years 1956 to 1960 going over this and other ground in my forlorn endeavour to identify a democratic marxism. I found that it did not exist, worse, that Marx was comparably wrong in all his other 'original' conclusions, i.e. concerning the class struggle, historical materialism, the labour theory of value, the dictatorship of the proletariat and his inversion of Hegel. Then why his extraordinary impact? His scholarship was massive - on English economics, French politics and German philosophy; and he put it at the disposal of the underdog. This was unprecedented. It was an instrument of hope to the deprived the world over. More, it gave to the privileged, conscience-ridden intelligentsia a God-substitute and a new part to play (like that of Marx and Engels) as leaders of 'the working class'. Lenin formed his vanguard party in its name, thus making everything that much worse. The Party became a cross between a church and a centrally directed conspiracy. Thus the mass suffering in today's Russia.

Why bring this up now? It is over ten years since the people of Berlin took their Wall apart - but we have remaining walls in the mind. They are more difficult to dispose of. They inhibit, block, new thinking. And we are all naturally conservative in that we like what we know and fear what we don't know. So circumstances conspire against new ideas, until we begin to lose confidence in what we know. Such a moment is now nearly upon us. There is a torrent of literature on how the old ways are failing us. At the time of writing there is retrospective agonising over what we did or failed to do over Kosovo and as we learn of the demise of those two bastions of industry - Fords, Dagenham and Rover, Longbridge. There will come a day when 'muddling through' is not enough and it could now be close at hand.

We still suffer the Norman Yoke, a class system that British-Americans disposed of in 1776! We have two nations that really speak two languages, albeit nominally both English. They do not

communicate with each other. Our culture has sunk to a new level of the contemptible - the worship of celebrity for its own sake. Magazines like *Hello* and *OK* have to be seen to be believed! Even the broadsheets are infected! Money, power, glamour! Ideas, values? Forget them! They belong to the 'chattering classes'!

Against that appalling backcloth it may seem at least disproportionate to focus attention on a post-Marxist malaise! The reason why it is important concerned the critical place of the pace-makers, always a tiny minority, always indispensable. If they don't move, nothing moves, at least in any sustainable way. If they are inhibited by factors deep within themselves, there is unnecessary trouble ahead. There will be big trouble anyway, we can do without the 'unnecessary'.

We still live under residual Thatcherism - with the market close to God. But, *mirabile dictu*, that market is itself in trouble. Deflation has set in - last year, in the US, there was a price fall of 8-10%. Here it was 2%, enough to worry the City. And car sales fell by 15%. Surplus is leaning on scarcity. The market arrived here in the twelfth century - now it is in trouble. Money and the market are the essential features of capitalism - this Marx missed. Socialists have been looking at the wrong enemy!

What does all this mean politically? Back in 1930 John Maynard Keynes foresaw the collapse of the market as a workable mechanism, when surplus overtakes scarcity and the price factor, as supply and demand are unhinged. We shall have to invent some other form of accounting. Only a government has the powers to make that possible. For some years now we have been familiar with social accounting, social audits - so the first steps have been taken.

No one can tell, at the moment, how urgent this problem is, when it is likely to break. What we do know is that there is no stopping the hi-tech revolution and the historic increases in productivity that it promises. That can only mean that the crisis is likely to be sooner rather than later. So the sooner the imaginative mind gets to work on it the better. Peter Cadogan

Brian Bamford is the author of 'Rendering Reality on Film: art and the emotion racket' in *The Raven* no. 33 on Anarchism and the Arts which also includes an interview with Jim Allen, writer of the film *Land and Freedom*, and Richard Porton's interview with Ken Loach, the director of *Land and Freedom*.

Freedom Press Bookshop

(in Angel Alley)

84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

— opening hours —

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



Books can be ordered from the above address.
A booklist is available on request.

— ORDERING DETAILS —

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

Cheques/PO in sterling made out to 'FREEDOM PRESS'

With all the news about asylum seekers here in the UK, it's interesting to see that things ain't much different elsewhere ...

Australia's gulags

Port Headland, Curtin and Woomera are three names that will soon be seared into the country's collective consciousness. Over the past decade, on behalf of the Australian people, successive Australian governments have set up a string of detention camps in South and Western Australia to act as holding camps for Australia's increasing number of illegal immigrants.

The plight of the few hundred Kosovar refugees that remain in this country has focused people's attention on how illegal immigrants are treated in Australia. Both Labour and Liberal/National party governments have conspired to remove what few if any legal rights these people enjoyed. They are herded into camps in the Australian

wilderness and are put through a number of 'hoops' to determine if they fit current refugee criteria. In a significant number of cases they're deported back to the very countries they fled from.

Little if any consideration seems to be taken of individual cases. The government and the bureaucracy seem to be hell-bent on sending back as many of these people as possible. The cold, calculated, indifferent attitude taken towards these refugees reminds me of the cold, indifferent, callous attitude that was taken towards indigenous children as they were removed from their parents care in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Unfortunately the treatment meted out to illegal immigrants in this country is

supported by a significant number of Australians.

The idea that the 'yellow hordes' will invade from the North is still an important part of the Australian psyche. This wall of indifference about the fate of illegal immigrants in Australia seems to have been breached by the shabby way the Howard government is treating those few Kosovar refugees who want to remain in this country. Pictures and sounds of desperate people doing desperate things to protest against forced deportation orders has finally woken up some Australians to the inhuman way illegal immigrants are treated in Australia.

Yamaguchi Kenji

Anarchist Age Weekly Review, Australia

From Washington DC in America

Report from the field ...

what the revolution is gonna look like

In my experience, the more dedicated the revolutionaries the longer their meetings last. This seems to be no longer the case. Tonight's meeting, despite representing a few thousand protesters, represented by maybe one hundred 'spokespersons', with four hundred watchful observers, lasted only three hours or so. And in that time quite a lot was accomplished: We finished the battle plan for Sunday. For those of you who don't quite realise the magnitude of that accomplishment - just wait until Sunday.

Over the past week, dozens of teach-ins have been going on, with thousands of mostly young activists coming from across the United States (and Kenya, Germany, Romania, India, Israel ...) to learn about the crimes committed by the World Bank and the IMF. In a parallel process, these activists were learning about non-violent direct action, how to block an intersection, provide medical treatment for pepper gas victims, and do jail solidarity. For sure, a few days ago some people were still fuzzy on the details. But no longer. Miraculously, everything came together. Without leaders. Without an organisation being in charge. Without even a coalition of organisations being in charge.

It works like this: everyone has to join an affinity group. Five to twenty people get together, give themselves a funky name and promise to reach decisions by consensus. They build up their loyalty to each other, and talk about what seems right for them. Some of the affinity groups have been together before, in other actions in other places. Some came together only yesterday.

My affinity group numbers eight people. Our ages range from 18 to 32. A black kid from north DC, a middle class hippie student from nearby, a nice couple from Chicago (he's gay, she's lesbian), a Canadian student, two students studying in DC, and me - an employee of a mainstream environmental organisation from the Middle East. Actually, this sounds like a normal group in this crowd. In many ways we are representative of the huge cross section of people participating in this movement: people of colour, Jews, white professionals, students, faith based people, anarchists, union folk and everything in between.

We met yesterday and decided we fit into the high risk category. This meant that we were willing to get arrested in our attempt to stop the World Bank from holding their meetings. Two of our team are willing, but prefer not to. They will be in charge of legal and medical support. One of us was elected to represent the group as a spokesperson. He will be able to speak and vote as needed. Another important decision was how we wanted to participate. During the big meeting, this was addressed. Affinity groups without 'pie slice clusters' are invited to join available clusters, or to serve as 'flying squads able to be called out during the day on a moment's notice.

In the end we joined the 'H' pie cluster, more or less covering the section between Dupont Circle and the World Bank. Together with the other affinity groups, a plan and a theme will be hammered out in the hours that remain. It looks like we will simply meet at a certain spot with large puppets, and walk towards the intersections we wish to blockade. Once there, some will get arrested, while others act as 'action elves,' making sure that cameras are trained on the police, media are contacted if there's anything interesting, and a record of which affinity groups are arrested is kept and passed on to the Midnight Special Legal Collective.

Saturday

Early this morning, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms raided the convergence centre with a large police presence and fire marshals. Under the pretext that we were violating the fire code, they evicted everyone, confiscated our materials, and accused us of making a bomb. We are speaking of course, about the propane gas tank used for all the cooking. What this proves is that the police are interested in fanning the flames of hysteria. A few days ago they arrested some people who had lots of chicken wire and pipes in their cars, and accused them of gathering supplies for 'molotov cocktails.' Everyone knows that these are the materials for lock-down devices, used non-violently to block the roads. For a week now the protesters have been shadowed by police and harassed repeatedly.

The police are playing on our weaknesses. Many of us look marginal, and plan on doing things that upright citizens are likely to avoid. By accusing us of violent intentions, they hope to keep the public safely between Thomas Freidman's economic theories and the DC Police Chiefs warnings of anarchist violence. Luckily, it won't work. Our efforts have been endorsed by most of the major unions, dozens of church and other religious groups, almost all the progressive think tank policy institutes in DC, and even the mainstream environmentalists like Friends of the Earth. Come to speak of it, the President of FoE in the United States, Dr Blackwelder, kicked off the mobilisation week by getting arrested outside the IMF building. His staff rented a big truck, and parked it in the middle of the street. Then, he got on top of it and told the Bank officials what he thought of them, with a megaphone.

It's interesting to compare the nervous dialectics between the 'centre' and the 'radicals' in Israel's environmental movement. Over here, the mainstream groups are joining, if not applauding loudly, as their youngish staff members purchase soak bandannas in vinegar for the anticipated tear gas. Many average US citizens don't feel the elation of the stock market, they are not 'optimistic,' and the critique of alphabet soup capitalism (WTO, IMF, WB) is starting to hit home. In any fight between the ATF (remember Waco?) and the non-violent protest organisers, it is clear whom the American public support. (Us!)

To sum up, a mere eighteen hours before the shit hits the fan (they are the shit, we are the fan!) let me state that this has been a wonderful experience in grassroots democracy. Everyone has the sense that what we have here is not a demonstration, or an organisation, but a movement that is global. It is our answer to globalisation for the rich: globalisation for the people. It doesn't raise the value of someone's stocks; but it reminds us of our true worth, our real power, and the underlying meaning of our presence on the barricades. We are all brothers and sisters on this god given earth, and we had better start treating our family better.

via a-infos news service

<http://www.ainfos.ca/>

OBITUARIES

Antonio Zapata

Antonio Zapata Cordoba was born in San Javier in Murcia in 1908, dying in January this year. The youngest of four brothers of a family of day labourers, he attended a rationalist school set up by miners from the age of 5, and which had a profound effect on him. At the age of 9, he had to start work in the fields. At the age of 12 he went to Barcelona where his brothers were working. Working first as a market gardener, he then got a job in a belt buckle factory, before working in the building trade. He became involved in the CNT, taking part in activities during the years of repression under the Primo de Rivera dictatorship. He was imprisoned for his activities for the first time at the age of 22. Here, he came in contact with the flower of militants of the Spanish anarchist movement, which was a school for his own anarchism.

With the declaration of the Republic, he was freed and militated in the CNT in the shanty town of Gracia. He was a member of the groups of Confederal Defense, which physically defended the CNT from the attacks of the bosses and the State. He took part in the building workers' strike. He took part in the fighting against the Franco coup, and was part of the Control and Administration Commission of Urban Property in Barcelona. He fought on the front. Like so many others, he had to flee to France, settling in Toulouse. He remained a supporter of the CNT until his death.

Francisco Munoz

As a member of the Libertarian Youth of Asturias, Francisco Munoz fought as a volunteer in the confederal columns of the Confederacion Nacional de Trabajo, the mass anarcho-syndicalist union, during the civil war. He was seriously wounded during one of the battles on the front in Northern Spain. This affected his arms and legs for most of his life. He ended up in exile in France, in Dreux. He was an activist in the League of War-wounded, intensely involved in gaining rights for the warwounded of both the Civil war and World War Two. He was also intensely involved in giving support to the underground work that the Spanish libertarian movement carried out in Spain under the Franco dictatorship. After the death of Franco, he moved back to Spain, settling in Gijon with his companera, and giving great support in Asturias to the reorganisation of the CNT. He died on 24th December 1999 in Skien, Norway, where he had gone to live with his companera. He maintained his anarchist convictions throughout his life.

Francisco Garcia

From a peasant background, Francisco Garcia Aguilar was born in Montejaque, Malaga in 1906. He worked on the land, and at the age of twenty got a job as an electrician. During the Civil War he joined the anarchist unit, the Pedro Lopez Column, continuing to combat until the end of the war, which found him recovering from his wounds in a hospital. Escaping from there, on crutches, he planted himself in the middle of the road, until a lorry took him over the border to France.

He worked first as a miner in Decazeville then on the docks in Marseilles, reintegrating into the CNT there and never ceasing to be an activist in it. He died in Marseilles on 3rd January 2000.

Nick Heath

Modern society and useful knowledge

Dear *Freedom*,

I write to thank Jonn Roe (*Freedom*, 8th April) for helping me to make my point about the fragmentation and mechanisation in modern society through his magnificent parody of so much of modern criticism which ignores and tries to destroy the powerful and not wholly conscious insights of the creative imagination in great novels by attempting to assassinate the character of the novelist in life. In its brevity and almost unerring touch of distortion, confusion, and contradiction, it is an act of minor genius itself. His first sentence illustrates all these qualities: "I find it difficult to erect D.H. Lawrence as my guru of healthy sex, since he ran away all his life from his own homosexuality". The only completely inappropriate word in the sentence – 'erect' – tips us off that Roe is up to parody since it doesn't make sense and carries all the innuendo of sexual problems – the difficulty, reportedly widespread in the new age of free sex, of getting it up and for which Alex Comfort, among many, suggests not trying too hard, let the anxiety subside, and nature can do its work. 'Guru' carries on the parody since its new ageness is wholly unimaginable in this situation. However much Lawrence preached, it is embarrassing to think of bowing down to him as a guru.

The second half of the sentence first appears to be a cheap trick so widely used by demagogues of all stripes and too low for such magnificent parody. It assumes that Lawrence's homosexuality is established by general agreement, no evidence being, therefore, necessary, and seems to attack him for running away from it. However, even that is not clear since it isn't possible in the parody to know for certain if the sin is homosexuality itself or merely the act of trying to deny it or run away from it. It is

saved from being a cheap trick by serving as a mate for or a contradiction of the last sentence of the parody about Lawrence's attachment to his mother both alive and dead until Frieda led him to maturity. It has been argued that sons of powerful mothers are often homosexual, but all the Lawrence argument leans toward an incestuous, heterosexual attachment which, obviously, could not be fulfilled but also led to his troubled relationships with the girls in his young life.

The reference to 'Bavarian Gentians', which "must reluctantly be considered purely unconscious in its porno homosexual imagery", is another bit of the hoodwinking parody since hardly anyone already in full cry against Lawrence will go back to read any of the two or three versions of the poem to check out the assertion and will not wonder why it must be seen so 'reluctantly' in the moral values of the present context.

Furthermore, while it sounds like it means something, there is no indication of the meaning of 'healthy sex' anywhere here. Does it refer to a heterosexual loving relationship or an energetic physical work out or something else. The reader is, therefore, urged to 'erect' his own bias into the term in order to make it criticism.

If there is anything that Lawrence never was, it is a 'closet' anything; he was never a fascist in or out of the closet and since Jonn Roe practices the high art of parody, he follows the tactics of those modern critics by asserting its factuality with a vague reference to Forster and Russell: no need to quote them or to ask when they said it and to what period of Lawrence's life they refer; just the misuse of the term will do.

There is also great humour in the actual vision of the 'grotesquely authoritarian' Lawrence scrubbing the floor, cleaning the

living quarters, baking the bread and preparing the meals, while the much larger and healthier Frieda lay on the bed smoking cigarettes in her aristocratic magnificence or the 'grotesquely authoritarian' Lawrence complaining that his friends tell him he has 'genius' while, at the same time, refusing to take anything he says seriously. And the dog? Lawrence never owned a dog, either by his choice or the dog's, but he did worry about the well being of the dog which belonged to the ranch (Kiowa) when he was away. He did spend a large part of a day trying to remove the porcupine quills from the snout of a dog not attached to him or the ranch and not smart enough to avoid the porcupines, and finally, in exasperation, had to chase him off with a stick because it was impossible to hold him still enough to remove the last few from his chin. And he did some time later kill the porcupine. I wonder if something could be made of Lawrence's attachment to Timsy the cat who, even when she was not hungry, could not suppress her hunting instinct and captured and toyed with chipmunks as well as attacking Lawrence's big toe as he slept and moved it involuntarily.

In keeping with the parodic tactic of offering no evidence, I assert that Lawrence never was a homosexual (though he was curious about it and found some men attractive), he never was a fascist or a nazi in 1915 or at any other time (though he did argue for rule by the intellectual elite in 1915 against Russell's support for elected governments because he believed the English masses were infected with blood lust), and he is one of the greatest novelists England ever produced. I also want to thank Jonn Roe for refraining from attacking me and for pretending to sacrifice his own good sense in the interest of the art of parody.

John R. Doheny

Nicolas Walter

Dear Editors,

I'm deeply sorry to read of the passing of Nicolas Walter, whose obituary also appeared in *The Telegraph*. Many years ago I purchased his booklet on anarchism at a miners' gala which was held in Cardiff. From thereon I became a convinced anarchist. I shall miss reading his very informative articles as much as everyone else will. Sadly enough we don't have as many Nicolas Walters around as we would wish.

Yesterday *The Telegraph* published the obituary of Alex Comfort, and so once again we have lost another fine anarchist. I shall not say any more as it is too depressing.

Neil Fisher

Alex Comfort

Dear Editors,

First I must protest against your publishing an extract from a private letter of mine to an associate of Freedom Press without first seeking my permission. In this particular case no harm is done, but it makes me chary of expressing myself freely when writing to anyone connected with *Freedom*.

But the main purpose of my present letter is to make the point that while the various obituaries of Alex Comfort have been fair and unexceptional, the main point has been avoided: that he is a very important and uncomfortable figure for the anarchist movement as it is expressed in *Freedom* and other anarchist organs. The uncomfortable aspect of Comfort is expressed at some length in David Goodway's excellent 22-page introduction to the collection of Comfort's writing published as *Writings Against Power and Death* (Freedom Press, 1994). His recent obituary does not mention it. Goodway has a section in his introduction headed 'The New Anarchism' which deals with Comfort's break with traditional anarchism which tends to repeat the traditional line expressed by such writers as Malatesta which have been endlessly republished. Indeed one well-known anarchist, in stating his objection to Freedom Press publishing the collection of my interviews with old anarchists, went so far as to declare "Comfort is not an anarchist".

Goodway quotes the statement: "his scientific conclusion drove him to anarchism ... and if scientific investigation led him elsewhere he would abandon anarchism" (*op. cit.*, page 16). He goes on to quote Colin Ward's comment: "I think he was wrong, I do not think the case for anarchism rests on 'science', I think it is ultimately based on the aspirations of the heart rather than the deductions of the mind" (*op. cit.*, page 17).

This is followed by a quotation from John Doheny which supports Comfort's position, and Goodway's objections to it – objections which I really do not understand. Ward's 'aspirations of the heart' may lead some individuals to embrace fascism or any other ideology.

This letter of mine is merely a prompt to continue the *relevant* debate which some younger comrades may care to take up. Personally I agree entirely with Comfort, although the 'aspirations' of my heart happen to agree with the results of my scientific thinking so I remain a convinced anarchist – but of the 'new' variety in Goodway's terms and fully agreeing with such important writers as Peter Marshall.

Tony Gibson

[Donald Room apologises for submitting the extract to Freedom without prior consent]

Out with the old

Dear *Freedom*,

Albert Shore's article 'Out with the old' (22nd April) only tells half the story. As he says, persons who wish to live are sometimes left to die. Conversely some patients, in agony and despair, who wish only to die are kept alive by ingenious means.

It is a lottery. I once saw the results of a survey that said that over 50% of old folk would prefer euthanasia to long, meaningless pain. But they might get a doctor who is a creeping Jesus and believes in life at any price. And in the next ward a Mengele-like doctor is bumping off old folk because it is administratively convenient.

Where is the choice, where is the dignity, where is the freedom?

Erica and Martin Wardon

Preserve us from democracy

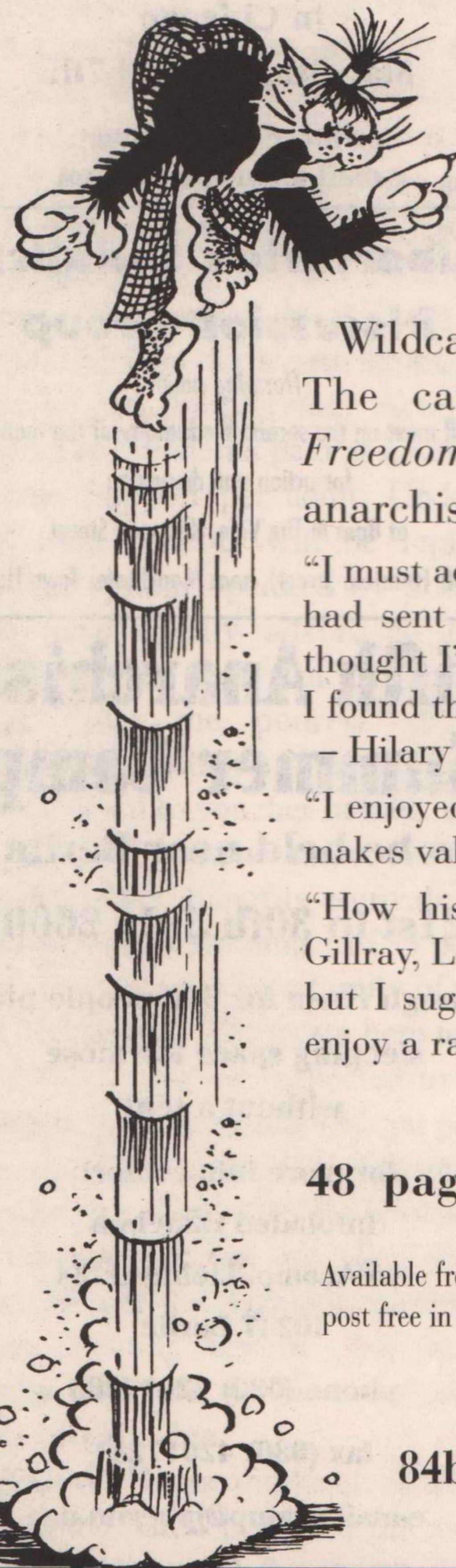
Dear *Freedom*,

'Preserve us from Democracy' pleads Amorey Gethin once again in *Freedom* (11th March 2000) and he poses the question for a voluntary association of "what happens, for instance, if the majority decides that chemicals are to be added to the local drinking water?" Instead of 'democracy' Gethin offers us 'solidarity'. Would Gethin please explain how solidarity rather than democracy would allow a free egalitarian community, given all the available and relevant medical information, to decide whether or not, for instance, to chlorinate the community's single-source drinking water.

Norman Epstein

Donald Room

Twenty Year Millennium Wildcat



The cartoonist Donald Room is perhaps best known as the political cartoonist of *Peace News* during its heyday in the 1960s. An anarchist since 1944, since January 1980 he has been contributing the

Wildcat strip to the anarchist fortnightly *Freedom*. The cartoons are copied and translated from *Freedom* (and the Wildcat books) by various anarchist publications in other countries.

"I must admit that my heart sank when I discovered that Matt had sent me a collection of anarchist cartoons to review. I thought I'd find them unfunny, obscure and pedantic. In fact, I found them humorous to the point of laughing out loud."

– Hilary Robinson in *Society for Strip Illustration Newsletter*

"I enjoyed this book; it's original, different and funny. And it makes valid points."

– Alex Noel Watson in *The Jester*

"How his work will stand alongside that of Rowlandson, Gillray, Low and others cannot be assessed in this present age, but I suggest that it is outstanding and that Freedom Press enjoy a rare privilege in being allowed to publish it."

– Tony Gibson in *Freedom*

48 pages ISBN 0 900384 97 2 £1.95

Available from your bookseller, or direct from the publishers (payment with order) post free in the UK. When ordering from abroad please add 15% towards postage.

Freedom Press

84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

(Girobank account 58 294 6905)

FREEDOM fortnightly
ISSN 0016 0504

Published by Freedom Press
84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX
Printed in Great Britain by Aldgate Press,
London E1 7RQ

Freedom on the World Wide Web

<http://www.tao.ca/~freedom>
e-mail Freedom Press at
freedom@tao.ca

a-infos

daily multi-lingual international
anarchist news service

To: majordomo@tao.ca
Subject:

.....
subscribe a-infos

Freedom and The Raven SUBSCRIPTION RATES 2000

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

The Raven (4 issues)				
	inland	outside Europe surface	outside Europe airmail	Europe (airmail only)
Claimants	10.00	-	-	-
Regular	12.00	14.00	18.00	16.00
Institutions	18.00	22.00	27.00	27.00

Join sub (24 x Freedom plus 4 x The Raven)				
	inland	outside Europe surface	outside Europe airmail	Europe (airmail only)
Claimants	18.00	-	-	-
Regular	24.00	34.00	50.00	36.00

Bundle subs for Freedom (12 issues)				
	inland	abroad surface	abroad airmail	
2 copies x 12	12.00	13.00	22.00	
5 copies x 12	26.00	32.00	44.00	
10 copies x 12	50.00	60.00	84.00	

Other bundle sizes on application

Giro account number 58 294 6905

All prices are in £ sterling

The Raven

anarchist quarterly

Number 40

Genetic Modification

Back issues still available:

- 39 - Culture and Ideology
- 38 - 1968
- 37 - Anarchism in the Americas and China
- 36 - Class Struggle and Social Protest
- 35 - Urban Environment / Psychoanalysis
- 34 - Communication (3) : Language
- 33 - The Arts
- 32 - Communication (2) : 'The Net'
- 31 - Economics and Federalism
- 30 - New Life to the Land?
- 29 - World War Two
- 28 - Noam Chomsky on Haiti
- 27 - Fundamentalism
- 26 - Science (2)
- 25 - Religion
- 24 - Science (1)
- 23 - Spain / Emma Goldman
- 22 - Crime
- 21 - Feminism
- 20 - Kropotkin's 150th Anniversary
- 19 - Sociology
- 18 - Anthropology
- 17 - Use of Land
- 16 - Education (2)
- 15 - Health
- 14 - Voting
- 13 - Anarchism in Eastern Europe
- 12 - Communication (1)
- 11 - Class
- 10 - Libertarian Education
- 9 - Bakunin and Nationalism
- 8 - Revolution
- 7 - Emma Goldman
- 6 - Tradition and Revolution
- 5 - Spies for Peace
- 4 - Computers and Anarchism
- 3 - Surrealism (part 2)
- 2 - Surrealism (part 1)
- 1 - The History of Freedom Press

£3.00 each (post free worldwide)

FREEDOM PRESS
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

Meetings & Events

The London Anarchist Forum

Meet Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall,
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 2000 —

5th May The Lessons of Mayday
(discussion)

12th May General discussion

19th May Some Thoughts on Political
Correctness (speaker Peter Neville)

26th May General discussion

2nd June Can Anarchism Transform Your
Life? (symposium)

9th June General discussion

16th June The Millennium Dome (speaker
Donald Room)

21st June General discussion

28th June Should Women be Honest?
(discussion)

4th August General discussion

11th August The London Anarchist Forum
in Retrospect: suggestions for the future
(open meeting)

18th August 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.

Peter Neville for London Anarchist Forum

Matches 'N Mayhem

festival including bookfair,
film festival, art gallery, etc.

in Chicago

May 5th, 6th and 7th

for more info contact:
e-mail azone@wwa.com

Libertarian Socialist Discussion Group

(forming now)

will meet on the second Wednesday of the month
for action and discussion
at 8pm in The Vine, Kennedy Street
(off Fountain Street), near Manchester Town Hall

Fifth Anarchist Summer Camp

to be held near Berlin

21st to 30th July 2000

enough room for 300 people plus

sleeping space for those

without a tent

for more info contact:

Infoladen Daneben

c/o Acamp, Liebigstr. 34

10247 Berlin

phone (030) 42017286

fax (030) 42017281

e-mail acamp@jpberlin.de

net <http://travel.to/acamp>

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

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

- I am a subscriber, please renew my sub to *Freedom* for issues
- Please renew my joint subscription to *Freedom* and *The Raven*
- Make my sub to *Freedom* into a joint sub starting with number 40 of *The Raven*
- I am not yet a subscriber, please enter my sub to *Freedom* for issues ..
and *The Raven* for issues starting with number 40
- I would like the following back numbers of *The Raven* at £3 per copy post free
..... (numbers 1 to 39 are available)
- I enclose a donation to the Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund / Freedom Press
Overheads Fund / Raven Deficit Fund (delete as applicable)

I enclose £ payment

Name

Address

..... Postcode