

FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

Vol. 61 No. 12

17th June 2000

50p

From primary prayers to A-level prejudice ...

Defining reality

I felt proud when John Fitzgerald Kennedy became US President in 1960. As an eight-year old school-boy at Saint Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary my class and I had prayed hard to get him elected. Miss Flanagan, our teacher explained that, as a fellow Catholic, John was our man, and we all closed our eyes and asked God to give him a bit of help at election time. God didn't let us down. In 1962 our next teacher, Miss McSweeney, directed our prayers in support of JFK's demand to the Russians to remove their missiles from Cuba. By the time we left Saint Patrick's in 1963 we had learnt that God supports America whilst the Devil bats for Russia. Now admittedly this was all a long time ago but forty years on the same prejudicial perceptions of history and politics are enshrined in A-level exam syllabuses.

A-level history

This is not the place for a comprehensive and definitive analysis of every history syllabus. It is enough here to consider part of one modern widely used scheme to give a hint of the way our schools reproduce rather than challenge prejudice. The OCR 'European and World History' A-level syllabus is a

typical example and its 'Cold War' module a popular option. The prescribed content of this module is reproduced below, verbatim (OCR 6726, 1999/2000, page 32): "Wartime tensions between the USSR, Britain and the USA over strategy and post-war plans for reconstruction; knowledge of the issues discussed at the major conferences, particularly at Yalta and Potsdam; different views about the treatment of Germany, economic aid to Europe, different interpretations of agreements over conquered nations in Eastern Europe; motives behind Marshall Aid, the Truman Doctrine, the Comecon, the Cominform and NATO; the coup in Czechoslovakia, the Berlin Blockade, the Korean War; impact of the Communist success in China on US attitudes; barriers to detente in the post-Stalin period; continuing disputes about Germany resulting, in 1961, in the Berlin wall; Western concern about repression in the satellite states, especially Hungary in 1956; the struggle for influence in the Middle East; Cuban missile crisis in 1962; how historians have interpreted the Cold War."

A particular analysis

Any such framing of the history of the Cold War inevitably embodies a

particular analysis. This is not recognised or acknowledged by examination boards who prefer to think of themselves as models of academic integrity and independence rather than semi-commercial organisations competing for customers and government patronage. Like newspapers and television, examination boards prosper by appealing to prejudice rather than truth. This OCR syllabus, typically, embodies a pro-American, anti-Russian view of Cold War history. It implies that the Cold War began in 1941, that it was largely a European phenomenon, that the West alone was uniquely concerned about repression in client states and that the continuing problem was Russian expansionism. All of these aspects are highly questionable but because they are incorporated in A-level exam syllabuses they tend to shape and determine secondary school curricula, history textbooks, television programmes for schools and ultimately the student's own historical thinking.

Cold War assumptions

The implication here is that Britain and America tried to keep the peace by negotiating with Hitler until he got out of hand. After the initial success of Hitler's armies Britain stood alone for freedom whilst Communist Russia cooperated with the Fascists. When Hitler turned on Stalin Uncle Sam rode to the rescue and with Churchill's help managed to save the world. Even before peace was declared Stalin began exploiting and dominating Eastern Europe. Successive American presidents tried valiantly and largely successfully to contain the spread of the evil communist empire and keep alight the torch of freedom.

(continued on page 4)



anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

Vol. 61 No. 12

17th June 2000

50p

Labour's shots at educational privilege and the 'old boy' network. They're ...

Phoney wars

The satirist Tom Lehrer is reported to have declared, upon being informed that Henry Kissinger (having engineered the secret bombing of Cambodia, and approved the Pinochet coup in Chile) was to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, that "political satire has become obsolete". Much the same reaction attaches to New Labour's sudden declaration of war against the 'old boy network' of Oxford and Cambridge on behalf of Harvard-entrant Laura Spence.

It is not simply that the facts are abused in the attack. Spence is a nice middle class girl; two out of five of the students accepted by Magdalen College are state sector, and the interviewers were state educated northerners, one of whom has been battling for two years to get funding for a programme to aid dyslexics. Nor even the fact that in declaring war on 'privilege' the New Labour establishment has to cover over its own roots (Tony Blair is an ex-pupil of the elite Edinburgh public school, Fettes, and a graduate of St Johns College, Oxford; Peter Mandelson went to St Catherine's College, Oxford; Gordon Brown and Robin Cook went to Edinburgh University; even Alastair Campbell, Blair's main adviser and supposed 'bully of the right wing press' is a Medieval and Modern Languages graduate from Cambridge). It is the fact that, in firing the first shots in a phoney war over educational elitism, New Labour has to deceive as to the ends of its own education policies.

Writing in *The Guardian* on 31st May 2000, Jonathan Freedland claimed that "Gordon Brown has lit a fire under the British right, sending them into a fulminating fury on the issue that still strikes deepest in our national psyche: class." The fish edges closer to the hook. "The left critique is that

Brown should spend money on schools, make them better and boost state kids' chances. Or he could strip private schools of charitable status, all but destroying them and thereby wiping out the inequality problem at a stroke. But such radical action is inconceivable unless a majority of Britons first believe there is an inherent injustice to be remedied. That's why the centre left must win this argument: if we cannot persuade our fellow Britons that a case of unfairness this obvious is wrong, then we have little chance of winning them over to bolder ... action." The fish bites, and is snared. Posing as enemies of elitism, Brown and Prescott (and whoever else next enters the fray) defuse the left critique of New Labour by acknowledging it but contending that it is the dead weight of 'privilege' which has prevented the pursuit of radical egalitarian ends. If only the British people could be persuaded to give them the opportunity, New Labour would defeat the Conservative demon. The problem with all this is that a 'majority of Britons' already know that the education system serves the interests of 'the few'. The Sutton Trust has shown that state schools produce two thirds of the pupils qualified for Britain's five best universities, yet get only half the places. Parents of state school children are well aware of this, and yet more so of the fact that the majority of state school children are failed by their schools in the type and quality of education they receive. They don't need to be 'persuaded'. On 1st May 1997 New Labour was put into office by an electorate (or at least those not already so sickened by the Parliamentary charades that they couldn't be bothered to vote) which had had enough of the redistribution of wealth from poor to rich of the Thatcher-Major years. What they

got was a government which had, in 1996, promised to reverse cuts in the income of single mothers, but in office rushed the cuts through. New Labour has set itself the task of restructuring the welfare state such that it achieves its original end – the preservation of poverty as a drag anchor on wages. Thus the introduction of Welfare to Work and a minimum wage which serves to function as a maximum in the sweat shops and fast food stores which are the bedrock of our 'info tech' age. *The Acheson Report on Inequalities in Health*, published in 1998, recommended "uprating of benefits and pensions according to principles which protect and, where possible, improve the standards of living of those who depend on them, and which narrow the gap between their standard of living and average living standards." Gordon Brown's goal, though, was much simpler – the lowest level of corporation tax in Europe – achieved at the expense of the working class. New Labour's war on privilege is a message to the fast-deserting electorate "give us another chance to fail you again". Alastair Campbell believes that one of Labour's problems is a "lack of definition" due to the weakness of the Conservative opposition. "We have to try and get the dividing lines back" (quote from Alastair Campbell, *Peter Osborne*, Aurum Press, 1999). 'Educational privilege' is expected to be safe ground.

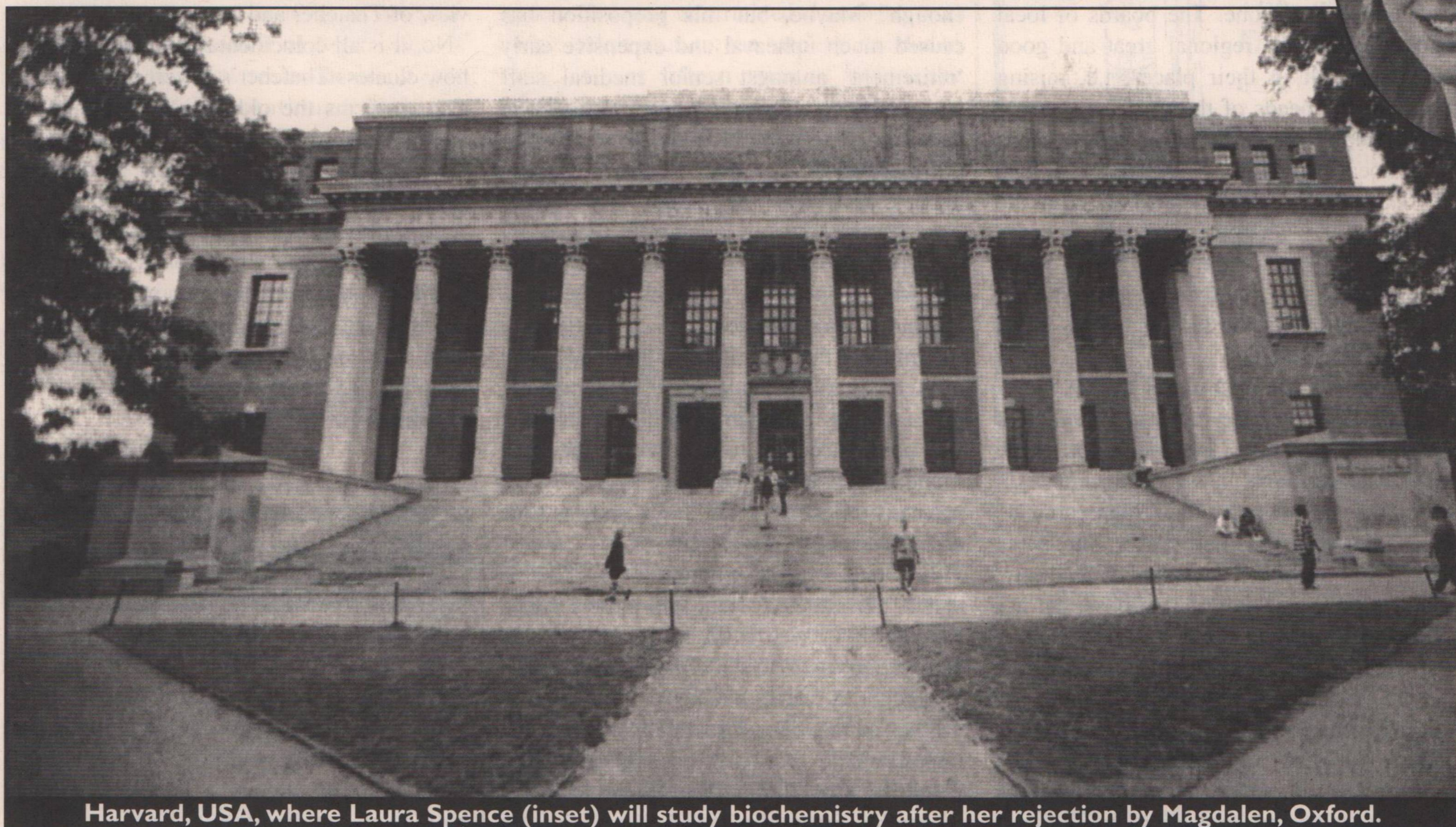
In 1974, Cornelius Castoriadis declared that "for a very long time now I have perceived schooling not as an institution that must be reformed and improved upon but as a prison that must be destroyed" (quote from *Telos 23*, reprinted in *The*

Castoriadis Reader, Blackwell, 1997). The function of education under capitalism is to provide a workforce disciplined, compliant and sufficiently skilled to function efficiently in the workplace. The majority of working class children don't get to university because the education system is designed to ensure they don't. The restructuring of the workplace – the move from Fordist to post-Fordist employment practices – a contingent workforce, high levels of part-time, 'flexible' work – forced through on the basis of the defeats inflicted on organised labour since 1979 – require also a transformation in educational curricula to ensure that 'flexibility' is bred in the bone. In 1976, James Callaghan, in a speech at Ruskin College, declared that teachers were responsible for the 'English disease' of indiscipline and labour militancy which was undermining capital's profits. The 'English disease' finished off Callaghan. Subsequent governments sought to treat the disease in the classroom and on the factory floor. The Education Reform Act of 1988 and the 1993 Education Act; the introduction of the National Curriculum; the formation of the Teacher Training Agency; all were designed to reassert government control over education, with a view to replace the "discourtesy, disorder and disruption" the 1985 White Paper on Better Schools identified, with "good behaviour and self-discipline".

Significantly, the White Paper declared its intent to introduce "high standards of conduct within the school and beyond".

The co-ordination of education and work was further achieved through the introduction of the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ), based on the Further Education Unit's recognition of the need "to provide a flexible and adaptable workforce able to cope with change" and a consequent emphasis on the "development of initiative, motivation, enterprise, problem-solving skills and other personal qualities". The focus in schools on profiling (a Schools Council research programme in 1982 found that teachers felt that profiling created learning situations where "students who were involved in their own assessment would feel that their behaviour would affect their future") and skills and competencies has resulted in a pedagogic practice determined entirely by the need for a workforce which is conditioned to be 'flexible', 'self-motivated'; the Occupational Research Unit of the University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology in 1982 premised "an urgent and growing need for people at work to be far more adaptable than at present" and in consequence contended that education and

(continued on page 2)



Harvard, USA, where Laura Spence (inset) will study biochemistry after her rejection by Magdalen, Oxford.

(continued from page 1)

training needed to focus on skill transfer, skill ownership and "learning to learn" (quote from *Times of the Technoculture* by Kevin Robins and Frank Webster, Routledge, 1999). New Labour's main focus since taking office has been to increase the policing role of OFSTED to ensure the pedagogy of flexibility is sufficiently ingrained in the classroom.

It is not therefore that the academic establishment is elitist (although it is – and yet more so with the abolition of grants and the introduction of tuition fees) that blocks working class children off from academic achievement. Capital, simply, requires a compliant, adaptable workforce and the education system functions as part of a social factory designed to facilitate this end. New Labour – committed both to the use of education as a means of social control and the increased integration of universities and business – has no more interest in challenging 'privilege' than any other government, of



whatever hue. As Emma Goldman once observed: "The State and the political and economic institutions it supports can exist only by fashioning the individual to their particular purposes; training him to respect 'law and order'; teaching him obedience, submission and unquestioning faith in the wisdom and justice of government". In 1989, in his book *Where There is Greed*, Gordon Brown wrote of a government whose social policy was based around "the grudging disposition of a politically acceptable minimum of social welfare" while "for the rich, there is the rationalisation and sanctification of greed; the few, in the absence of any moral

justification or empirical economic evidence, will continue to increase their advantages over the many" (quote from *Where There is Greed* by Gordon Brown, Mainstream, 1989).

A decade or so on, he's the 'Iron' Chancellor in a government which uses the same means, and to the same ends.

Nick S.

COPY DEADLINE

The next issue of *Freedom* will be dated 1st August, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 22nd June.

Peaceful demonstrators arrested

Despite a hair-raising *Daily Mail* feature predicting a violent anarchist demonstration on Saturday 6th June, the demonstration organised by the Movement Against the Monarchy (MAM) was perfectly peaceful, as was intended. Several people non-violently showed their bare bottoms to Buckingham Palace.

Peaceful and good-humoured as they were, however, there were three arrests.

If you were 'Mooning at the Monarchy' and are aged 16-30 then BBC documentaries are interested in filming your story as part of a new programme on young people in Britain today. Contact Amanda.Rose@bbc.co.uk or on 020 8752 5449.

More Thatcher Fallout

Earlier this year in *Freedom* (29th January) I wrote of Thatcher's legacy and the closed minds and general fear of freedom it engendered. It has been pointed out to me that Thatcher also left paradoxes which are still affecting us today, and will continue to affect us for some time.

The question anarchists have to address is this: how have values which we would regard as leftist, if not pure anarchist, come to be found creeping into some of our most conservative institutions? If we could answer that, could we not encourage these values elsewhere?

There are two strands to consider. First, why did her government sign the Maastricht Treaty? We shall probably never know. The best I can conclude is that, with the arrogance of our ruling class, they signed to keep Johnny Foreigner happy, believing it didn't really apply to them. But it did, and does. The strangest oversight brought the most profound change in the status of the British people. They became citizens with rights instead of subjects with duties – for the first time in our history. Most paradoxical for a conservative government.

Then there was what she did to the NHS. Underneath all the 'purchaser' and 'provider' nonsense of the internal market were a lot of people fresh to the NHS with diverse management skills. This, and the systems they were supposed to operate, upset the cosy closed culture of the clinicians and consultants. (They also upset those of the myopic left who supported the *status quo* by calling for management money to be spent on doctors [bad] and nurses [good]).

Anything which threatened the power of these entrenched medical professionals was bound to upset them. They put up the strongest resistance to the NHS before it was launched because they thought it would end their lucrative private practice as well as diminishing their personal power and status. How come it didn't? More to the point, how

come it did the opposite, giving them more power and even more income?

It all goes back to the naiveté of Bevan in 1947. He finally managed to solve the last problem of opposition to the NHS – most of the medical establishment was against it – by 'buying off' the consultants. On a train back to South Wales, he is said to have boasted of the good job he had made of it – they had only taken a third of the money he was prepared to go to. He assumed, as many still do today, that if one is an accomplished clinician, one will naturally be able to manage/run a department or even a hospital. Bevan thus handed all the power over the NHS to the consultants and clinicians who had so vehemently opposed it. Oh dear.

Consultants were thus given *carte blanche*. They each had their own empire, and were accountable to no one. The boards of local dignitaries and the regional great and good were soon put in their places, i.e. raising funds for the needs of the clinicians, rather than directing the organisation to the needs of the local population – they probably had no idea what these were anyway. But the clinicians knew what the richer people could pay for, and that is the way things went. Traditionally, with a little conscience-salving charitable work on the side – with as much publicity as possible.

Inevitably such a mish-mash has led to the postcode lottery of the range and quality of treatments available. In this chaos some hospitals/consultants have death rates six times those of others for the same treatments (case mix adjusted, naturally). The same discrepancies apply to costs and expenditure. Thatcher realised this was nonsense, but her solution was equally nonsensical – except it introduced a wedge of management which had the advantage of medical ignorance.

These managers had the power to remove financial control from clinicians and their lackeys. They started asking questions which turned out to be awkward. Some built up cost

comparisons and compiled statistics of treatment outcomes; what exactly were they getting for our money? Worst was the fact that they were not satisfied with the traditional answer given by consultants, 'because we have always done things this way'. The paradox of Thatcher fallout in this context is that as managers have sought to rationalise health service performance they have not saved the money the competitive market was supposed to, but have demanded more to work co-operatively to remove the lottery from treatment.

Indirectly this has helped to accelerate the trend towards evidence based medicine. This is nothing short of the application of common sense. It requires that treatments are based on the best available (scientific) evidence of their effectiveness. Reasonable enough? Maybe, but this proposition has caused much upheaval and expensive early 'retirement' amongst senior medical staff who would not change. Change to what? The treatment regimes laid down in a growing number of National Guidelines. These documents increasingly require that medical treatment is delivered by co-operative (if not totally egalitarian) teams of all the professions involved. The consultant is no longer an autocratic deity.

Eventually the guidelines will be backed up by Accreditation Standards. Without meeting the standards a doctor or a whole hospital will not be accepted to treat within the NHS – and therefore will not be allowed to treat privately. Got 'em by the balls! as one enthusiastic civil servant put it.

As if that were not enough, a new regime called clinical governance is slowly being slipped into place. At the heart of what may at first appear to be a typical bureaucratic mountain of work-making pointless detail can be found a gem. This finally changes the untouchable position conferred upon Consultants by Bevan's naiveté. (And this is where that apparently out-of-place paragraph

about becoming citizens with rights becomes relevant.) As citizens with rights there is a mass of EU legislation that benefits us. For instance, strict product liability, whereby someone must be responsible for goods and services supplied to you. This applies to medical care as much as to kitchen appliances.

So who is responsible if they amputate the wrong leg? Not the surgeon who actually cut it off. Through a complex maze of corporate law it turns out to be the Executive Director of the relevant Trust or other organisation. Not fair, is it? In an attempt to balance things out they had to give the executives power over the consultants – for the first time in over fifty years they can be sacked.

Citizens with rights, co-operation instead of competition in medical care, teamwork instead of authoritarian hierarchies delivering that care, and definable responsibility in national institutions. Does this change one's view of Thatcher and her regime?

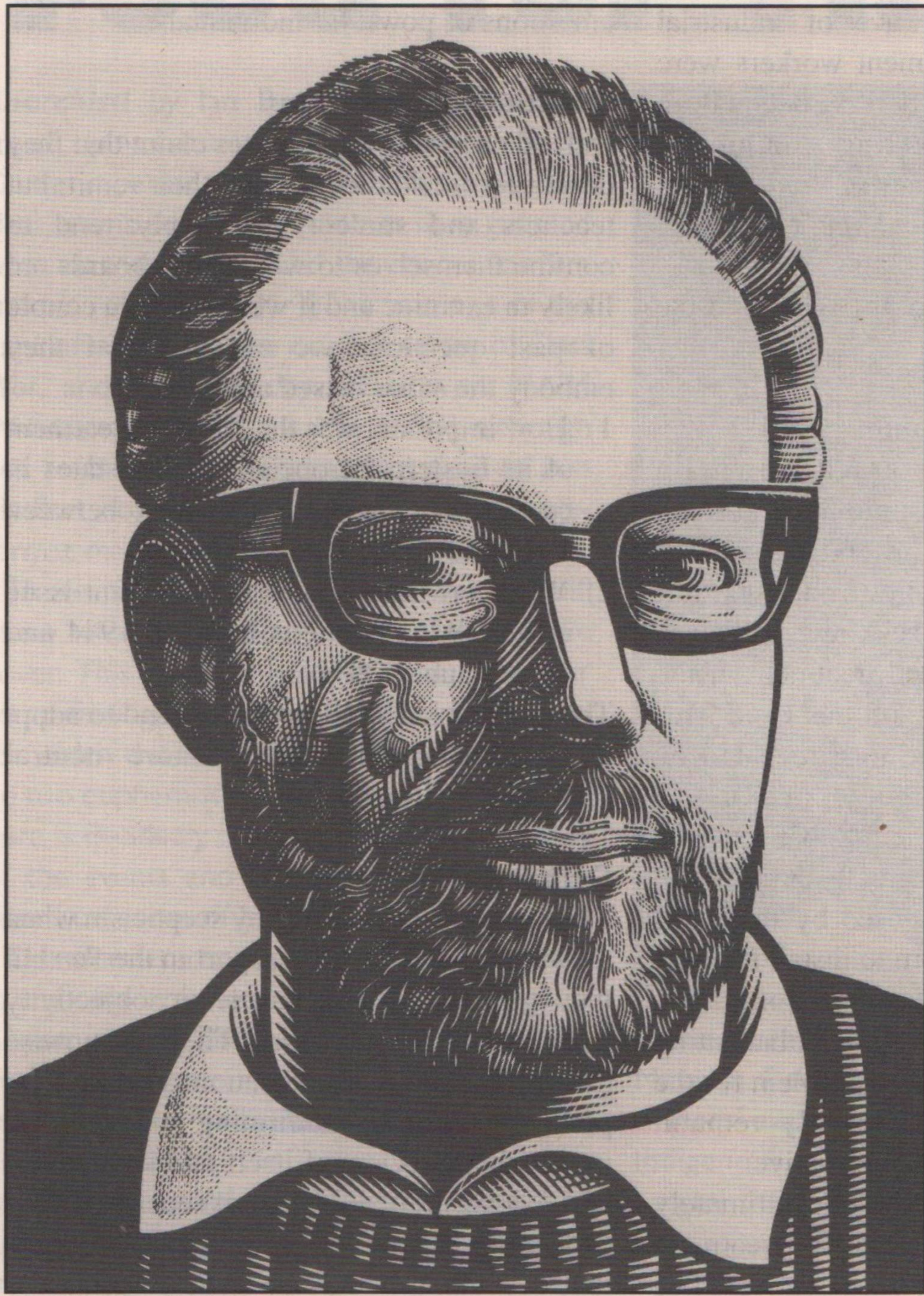
No, it is all coincidental, and demonstrates how clueless Thatcher's government were. It also confirms the old anarchist saying that anyone who thinks they are fit to govern others should be automatically disqualified from doing so. This fall out was borne by a European wind which she thought she could ignore. That only confirms our view of her in particular and politicians in general – they are fools put into positions (by idiots). If they have a necessary role it should be fulfilled by people functioning at the direction of the community.

Colin Johnson

Freedom's Wildcat wins comics award

Twenty Year Millennium Wildcat is included as 'Best One-Off' in the Comics Creators Guild Awards 1999, announced at the end of May 2000. The Comics Creators Guild is a professional society, and the annual Awards are decided by the votes of members.

Nicolas Walter: a tribute



Nicolas's driving force, like Beckett's in Eliot's portrayal, was honesty and integrity no matter what the cost to himself, or sometimes to others. Scrupulously polite in many ways, if accuracy or truth was at issue then politeness went out of the window. Geoffrey Wheatcroft wrote of how Nicolas had sent a copy of his book on blasphemy to him, following a request for information. Wheatcroft returned a copy of the eventual article "with which" he stated "I was quietly pleased". Nicolas's terse reply read: "It was kind of you to send me your *Atlantic* article ... Unfortunately it was badly informed and badly argued. Yours, Nicolas."

"Walter's honesty"

Wheatcroft went on, "excluded any kind of emollient hypocrisy".

Many contributions from the floor made similar points. Peter Cadogan, who had been effectively demolished by Nicolas in public debate in that same building, paid a handsome tribute. Jim Radford described how his feelings had gradually changed from intense dislike to something approaching admiration. Donald Room talked of his work for Freedom Press and his passion for accuracy. He hoped, as do many others, that Freedom Press will bring back into print an updated version of Walter's unassuming but influential *About Anarchism*. Barbara Smoker talked of his work for nuclear disarmament and his central role in the Spies for Peace disclosures. Speakers from the Rationalist Press Association and the National Secular Society all made their high

regard for his work and their affection for his idiosyncrasies apparent.

"Strange man Nicolas" mused one speaker, "didn't like Delius you know".

And that seemed to be the worst that anyone could say of him. He did not always realise that most people did not have his photographic memory. Perhaps on occasion he mistook that lack for sloppiness. His contempt for dissimulation made him appear rude at times. Indeed he sometimes was – but most of us didn't care for long. We appreciated the clarity of thought that lay behind his sometimes abrupt manner, the concern for truth which motivated his actions. "The truth shall make you few" was a working rule for him. He always took the view that the anarchist cause was not best served by creating myths and this sometimes made him a source of attacks from myth makers and those who thought that propaganda was more important than accuracy. Occasionally these attacks hurt

more than he let anybody believe. After a couple of spectacularly silly attacks in *Freedom* and *Black Flag* he wrote to me, rather sadly I thought: "I try to ignore all this, and believe that people can actually behave quite decently without authority – just as they can without religion".

Which brings me back to another passage from *Murder in the Cathedral*:

*I see nothing quite conclusive in the art of
temporal government
But violence, duplicity and frequent
malversation ...
They have but one rule, to seize the power
and keep it.*

Compared to this, Nicolas seemed to be saying that the shortcomings of individual anarchists or groups at various times and in various places don't matter.

Nicolas was always the point of reference for those of us who needed to verify fact on anything. He will not be easily replaced either in our affections or as an essential aid to us all as radical activists.

John Pilgrim

"If Nicolas Walter was a crank" said Tony Smythe, "he gave crankiness a good name".

That quote from an obituary in *Prospect* more or less set the tone for Sunday 4th June. Around two hundred people crowded into the Conway Hall to say, in different ways, their farewells to the late Nicolas Walter, and to hear, on tape, his own attitude to imminent death after a prolonged and stoic battle with cancer.

If the World Service broadcast tape, spoken in Nicolas's typically cool detached manner, brought many to the point of tears, this was offset by contributions from the floor which celebrated his perspicacity as an editor, his integrity as a thinker, his honesty as an historian, his courage as an activist, and his kindness as an individual.

How far he would have approved of the gathering is difficult to say. At a similar meeting for the late Philip Sansom he had said that, while pleased that Philip – who was important – should be so honoured, he had no wish for a similar event, as he was not. Someone replied, with a touch of his own abrasiveness, that it was nothing to do with him, that such occasions were for the survivors. He laughed and admitted the point. He seemed so alert and lively that evening that most of us were unaware that his time was now numbered in months.

*However certain our expectation
The moment foreseen may be unexpected
When it arrives. It comes when we are
Engrossed in matters of other urgency.*

The words of Thomas Beckett, particularly T.S. Eliot's Beckett, are rather more applicable to the death of a noted secularist than we might expect. Only his immediate family could have been aware how close the end was and it must be hoped that they found a degree of comfort in the number of people who made the journey to pay their respects. For the rest of us Nicolas was the same as he had always been: considerate yet forthright, demonstrating his own brand of pernickety thoroughness with a fidelity to truth that seemed obsessive only because we live in a mealy-mouthed age that prefers polite evasions.

Mass civil disobedience on tenth anniversary of sanctions on Iraq

August 6th will mark the tenth anniversary of UN sanctions on Iraq. Sanctions have led to a humanitarian crisis in Iraq, with huge increases in child malnutrition and mortality rates. Last year, UNICEF reported that there had been half a million excess deaths of children under five during the period 1991-98. Most of these deaths were primarily associated with sanctions.

To mark the tenth anniversary, and to highlight our government's complicity in the ongoing suffering, voices in the wilderness and other groups are organising mass non-violent civil disobedience in central London on Monday August 7th (see also back page of this issue of *Freedom*). This will take the form of a procession from Trafalgar Square, culminating in a die-in to represent the hundreds of thousands of people who have died in Iraq as a result of sanctions. The demonstration will be calling for an immediate lifting of economic sanctions on

Iraq. Actions will take place on the same day in Washington DC, and at Faslane, Scotland.

We are asking you to spread the word about this event. If you produce a newsletter, we would be very grateful if you could put in a listing about the day, or tell your members at meetings. We are able to supply leaflets for inclusion in mailings, or could offer a speaker to talk about the issues around sanctions as well as the event on August 7th. In addition to the civil disobedience on Monday 7th, there will be a vigil in central London (venue yet to be decided) from 1pm to 4pm on Sunday 6th August followed by an evening of non-violence training, action planning and a legal briefing (accommodation will be provided). We would also welcome your input at organising meetings: the next one is on Tuesday 20th June at 7.30pm, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square in London (nearest tube Holborn).

Andrea Needham and Gabriel Carlyle
voices in the wilderness



(continued from page 8)

This analysis is helped along by OCR's identification of 1941 as the start of the Cold War as it conveniently omits the fact that the capitalist west had invaded Russia only twenty years earlier. It also ignores the consistent appeasement of fascism practised by the west throughout the 1930's when they regarded fascism as a welcome bulwark against the spread of socialism and a possible ally against Stalin. By concentrating Cold War studies on European developments examina-

Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, the April 1948 parliamentary elections became a battleground between the People's Block of Communists, supported by Nenni Socialists, and de Gasperi's Christian Democrats." During the election campaign, "the United States warned that a Communist-Socialist Government would not receive any economic aid, and the CIA actively supported the Christian Democrats". Eric Hobsbawm tells us that "the USA planned military intervention if they (the Communist-Socialist alliance)

in the region, nevertheless the home-grown communist party still managed to attract three million electoral votes and was able to co-ordinate a massive wave of industrial strikes. "In 1948 government workers were forbidden to strike and US occupation authorities started arresting communist sympathisers in the Japanese trade union movement" (*The USA and the Cold War*, Oliver Edwards, 1998).

There is no reference to any of this in the OCR syllabus.

Repression begins at home

American didn't just crack down on communists and trade unionists abroad. McCarthyism was a cornerstone of US domestic Cold War policy, but again it warrants no mention on the A-level syllabus. Similarly, any even-handed treatment of the East versus West issues of the Cold War would surely mention the missiles sited by the US in Turkey, targeted at Russia, alongside mention of the 'Cuban missile crisis'. After all it was actually Khrushchev's realisation of the threat posed by these US missiles that prompted him to install his own in Cuba. The only explanation for giving such written prominence to the Cuban siting is that it was perceived as a problem for the West who were, and apparently remain, uninterested in the Soviet perspective.

A thorough search for truth ultimately demands more than even-handed treatment of Eastern and Western perspectives for this concentrates on the rival claims of governments. What lies beneath the deadly competition of the Cold War was a jockeying for power and wealth by groups and individuals within each of the blocs who were keen to engage the dispossessed in doing their dirty work for them. The generals and corporations in America ended World War Two in possession of a military-industrial economy that depended on war for its profit-making existence. Many would benefit from world peace but an elite would lose power, influence and money unless another vital threat could be identified. Cold War rhetoric suited Stalin too for nothing tends to rally the masses behind a leader like the threat of a powerful external enemy. A thorough analysis of the Cold War would ultimately focus less on pinning guilt on

either East or West than on identifying the mechanisms by which state-power was used by both sides as a chimera to cloak the ambitions of powerful individuals.

Questionable questions

Defenders of these syllabuses claim that they do not forbid studies beyond their remit, but teachers and students inevitably tend to confine themselves to what exam boards are likely to examine and if we consider a couple of past questions we can see that they embody the same biased analysis.

- 1) How important was the USSR's treatment of its Eastern European satellite states in causing tension with the West between 1944 and 1956? (June 1998)
- 2) Why was Berlin such an important issue in East-West relations between 1944 and 1962? (June 1997)

The questions, like the syllabus tend to adopt a western rather than a more neutral viewpoint.

Defining reality

Most people exercise healthy scepticism when they come across a news report in the *Sun* but they generally expect academic objectivity from examination courses. They are unwise to be so credulous. Examination syllabuses are powerful tools for confirming and reinforcing the State's view of itself and its enemies and A-levels remain the gatekeeper to higher education. Despite the commonly held view that educational study necessarily promotes healthy scepticism and independent inquiry it is clear that it also tends to reward conformity and canalise debate.

Nihilism would be an unhealthy reaction, it is better to contest these biased analyses of history at every turn. As Gramsci pointed out "The truth is revolutionary"; this cruel and exploitative system only prevails because most people believe in it. Challenging official definitions of the past is a vital political task as Winston Smith realised, "if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed – if all records told the same tale – then the lie passed into history and became truth. "Who controls the past," ran the Party slogan, "controls the future: who controls the present controls the past" (*Nineteen Eighty-Four*, George Orwell, page 37, 1950).

Christopher Draper



tion boards also conveniently disregard US colonial adventures in South America. Similarly, drawing attention to "Western concern about repression in the satellite states, especially Hungary..." conveniently directs attention away from repression in the USA's South America 'satellites'. A-level students learn much about how freedom was destroyed in Hungary, but nothing of the US backed invasion of Guatemala, in 1954, on behalf of the United Fruit Company, or the 1948 US backed coup in Venezuela, which ended land-redistribution and reinstated a ruthless military dictatorship supplying cheap iron and oil to the US.

Study Czechoslovakia, ignore Italy

The OCR syllabus explicitly identifies episodes that either Western capitalist governments were concerned about, or feigned to be concerned about, yet ignores aspects with similar resonance for the Soviet side. The syllabus rightly identifies the coup in Czechoslovakia as a relevant topic of study. The Russians did indeed destroy all remnants of democracy in Czechoslovakia in a coup (1948) which included the murderous de-fenestration of Jan Masaryk. Yet before the war the Western allies had happily colluded with Hitler's destruction of Czech democracy, but of course the exam board aren't interested in pre 1941 events! Western interference in the Italian political system was however well within the prescribed time frame and might well have been mentioned for as the war drew to an end America and Britain occupied Italy and systematically undermined the popular, radical, anti-fascist left wing movement. "As the left attempted to gain Allied acceptance by adopting a moderate reformist position, its basis of strength was systematically destroyed by the Allies. Leftist resistance groups were disbanded; factory managers were urged to reassert their authority; and local committees of liberation, inevitably leftist were replaced by military governments" (*Europe Since 1945*, Wegs and Ladrech, 1996). After the war the CIA covertly spent millions of dollars founding, funding and promoting the Christian Democrat Party in order to keep Italy and ultimately Europe safe for capitalism. As Wegs and Ladrech (*ibid*, page 56) point out "Coming one month after the

won the 1948 elections in Italy" (*Age of Extremes*, page 238). Just one month after Russia got its way in Czechoslovakia, America got its way in Italy. The reactionaries in Italy even paralleled the murder of Masaryk with an attempted assassination of communist leader Togliatti yet the OCR syllabus fails to even mention the Italian elections as a significant part of the Cold War.

The atomic bomb

The atom bomb cast a long shadow over the Cold War, yet it warrants no specific mention in the OCR syllabus. Although it is discussed in school lessons its pivotal role is seldom recognised. When the US bombed Hiroshima it had two over-arching effects that shaped the development of the Cold War; it pre-empted Russia from playing any part in the post-war reconstruction of Japan and it cowed all nations with its awesome demonstration of American power. US cynicism towards Russia is revealed by a careful study of the timetable of events. At Yalta, in February 1945, the US got Stalin to agree to join the war against Japan. This meant that Russia would expect to eventually jointly occupy Japan and share the spoils with the US. In the summer of 1945 Japanese peace feelers indicated that they would surrender if given guarantees that the position of the Emperor would be respected. On 16th July the Americans successfully exploded the first atomic bomb in New Mexico and Truman realised this now provided him with three possible options; accept Japan's terms of surrender, co-operate with Stalin and go for unconditional surrender or go it alone and unilaterally defeat Japan before Russia became formally involved. Only the third would be likely to enable the US to deny Russia any eventual influence in Japan and as Stalin's declaration of war was scheduled for 8th August there wasn't too long to decide. On 6th August America dropped the atomic bomb on Japan and so pre-empted both hopes of an amicable surrender and co-operation with Stalin.

Truman thus denied Russia a role in Japan's future whilst America's own post-war occupation forces systematically recast Japan's economic and political system as a model of reactionary capitalism. Japan became an instrument of US foreign policy

Alex Comfort Writings against Power and Death

From the early 1940s Alex Comfort was a prolific, combative and innovative writer on pacifism and anarchism. This volume collects all the articles Alex Comfort published in *War Commentary* and *Freedom*, most of his other social and political essays, as well as the most important of his *Peace News* pamphlets. The latter include *Peace and Disobedience*, the finest single statement of his highly individual and original anarchism.

Freedom Press

168 pages

£5.00

More new arrivals at the Freedom Press Bookshop

Food for Thought ... and Action

Anarchist! by Ian Bone. When Tony Blair stood up at last autumn's Labour (sic) Party Conference and pronounced "My friends, the class war is over" he could not have guessed what was waiting around the corner for him and his ruling class. Mr Bone was one of the luminaries behind the original series of *Class War*, and is these days busy with MA'M (Movement Against the Monarchy), although not so busy that he hasn't had time to pen his first novel in the shape of a thick, large-format magazine.

Those familiar with Bone's writing will know what to expect. Everyone else – take cover. This is a no-holds-barred class war romp through the author's fertile imagination, for which the term 'darkly humorous' would be too euphemistic an adjective. The humour here is decidedly black and satirical, and many of the events and characters are no doubt based on some of his own experiences.

The characterisation is minimal, but this is in any case irrelevant in such a strongly plot-driven story. Conspiracies, riots, murder, mayhem and personal angst – plus a dose of insults against individuals both living and dead – drive the narrative along, weaving between fact and fantasy. The disinterment of Diana's body, the revenge of the Beanfield travellers, and the plot to drag Thatcher out of No. 10 and beat her to death all contribute to what the press would undoubtedly slam as 'vile', 'repugnant' and 'dangerous'. In reality it's all just a bit of fun, although not for the squeamish, the PC or those with undue sensitivities to the liberal use of good old Anglo-Saxon expletives. 52 pages for £3.00.

The Rebellion of the Hanged* by B. Traven, Allison & Busby. Mexico figures prominently in the books of B. Traven, the mysterious German journalist, explorer, actor, sailor and anarchist who died there in 1969. During his many years there he fell in love with the jungle, and was both deeply angered by the brutal treatment of the Indian peasants and immensely confident of their capacity to resist and overcome their tormentors.

Current events in Chiapas have proved him correct. This book is one of the famous 'jungle' novels (which far surpass his earlier *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* in social

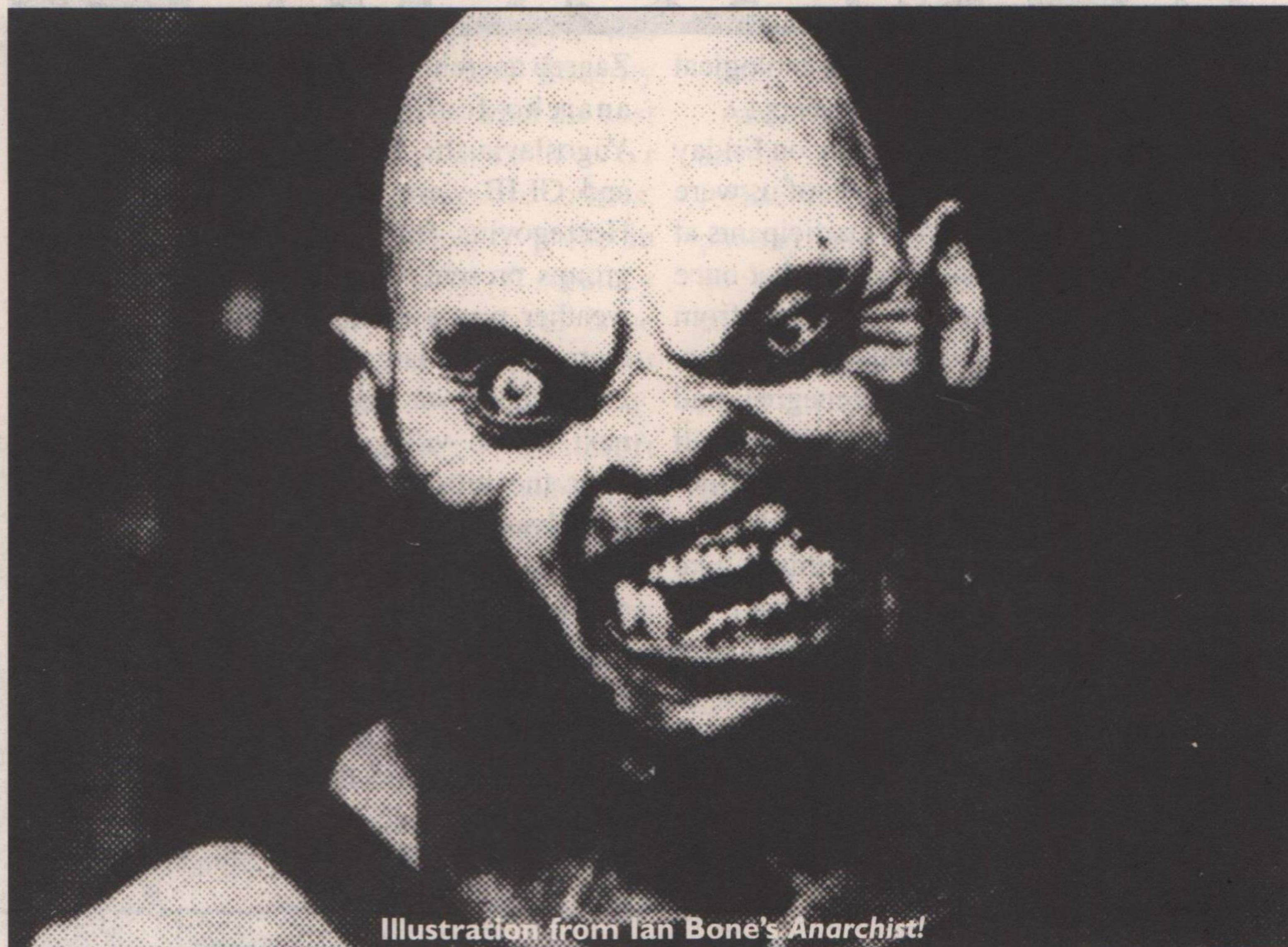


Illustration from Ian Bone's *Anarchist!*

commitment). It treats the birth of the Mexican Revolution by depicting the landowners' exploitation, by forced labour, of the indigenous population in the mahogany jungles and logging camps of southern Mexico – the very region which today is in rebellion against the government and has been occupied and controlled by the Zapatistas since 1994.

His biographer, Karl Guthke, writes: "In spite of all the local colour and authentic detail, Traven surmounts the limits of a purely historical narrative. His picture of social injustice, capitalist greed and the personal caprice of those in power and their henchmen ... makes it applicable to analogous situations at other times and places, in particular to Europe at the time of the National Socialist take-over ... Nor was its message lost on the nazi censors, who put the novel on their first list of forbidden books ... The mahogany novels were hailed in 1937 as antifascist 'literature of struggle' by *Das Wort*, a magazine published in Moscow for German émigrés: 'they not only depict repression and exploitation, they also show a way out'.

The mahogany series gains such extended significance, not least because the Indians of

Latin America, in Traven's view, stood for victims of repression in general. He saw an analogy between the Indians and the European proletariat and viewed his series as an epic about the liberation of this underclass, exploited and deprived of its rights, in every society." Recommended. 248 pages. Publisher's price £8.99, but our price is only £3.95.

Sane Anarchy* by Larry Gambone, Red Lion Press. This short pamphlet addresses the problem of those people who like to go around calling themselves anarchists, but who are in reality authoritarian intolerant, uncooperative and irresponsible – the very opposite of what an anarchist society needs for it to work. This comes about, says the author, because

they are still tied to the theories and practices of the authoritarian left, which has done nothing but harm to the ideals of anarchism and leads, ultimately, to a rejection of society and the creation of dysfunctional individuals such as the Unabomber.

Within the movement, Gambone sees 'hyphenated' anarchism (anarcho-sindicalism, green-anarchism, anarchist-communism, etc.) as fostering divisions and sectarianism, and says that it should be abandoned because when people 'inevitably' compromise their beliefs over time, it is always the libertarian side of the hyphen that gets dropped: "The only way to avoid these unfortunate compromises is to cut out the hyphen and emphasise the anarchism". He cites various examples to back up his claims and calls for outmoded leftist ideas to be shed and replaced by an anarchist ethics based on mutual aid, reciprocity, individualism, decentralism, autonomy, self-management and federalism. This short essay is not without its flaws, both in identifying the problems and in the solutions proposed, but it's not a bad starting place for further discussion – something which it is certain to stimulate. 17 pages, £1.10.

Class War no. 79. The business exercising the class warriors most in this issue is just what the renegade MI5 officer David Shaylor, currently in exile in France, was doing in F Branch before he went on the run. The answer is, spying on "assorted anarchists like *Class War*" and others on the left and the far right. The paper identifies one alleged informant, but does not know what information, if any, was passed on. 16 pages, £1.00.

KM

Black Flag: a clarification

Our contemporary *Black Flag*, issue 219, carries a review of Donald Room's *Twenty Year Millennium Wildcat* which gravely misinterprets one of the cartoons, wrongly supposing it to be an insult to the late Albert Meltzer. Donald has of course sent a clarification to the editors of *Black Flag*, but as the next issue of *Black Flag* will not appear for some months, he has also requested publication of his letter in *Freedom*, in the hope that some readers of *Black Flag* may see it early.

To the editors of *Black Flag*

Dear comrades,
Thank you for the review of *Twenty Year Millennium Wildcat*. This is just to correct an apparent misunderstanding.

The rodent depicted on page 22 is not a caricature of Albert Meltzer. He is copied from a drawing by Ronald Searle in *The King of Beasts* (Allen Lane 1980), "Imbecile rodent confident that it has a foolproof claim against the Disney Organisation", and I use him to symbolise anarchists who turn aside from the struggle, to rubbish the efforts of fellow strugglers.

Albert was occasionally one of those (I treasure my copy of his *Black Flag Supplement No. 3: Liars and Liberals*, 1986). But he was never the only one. The rodent cartoon in *Twenty Year Millennium Wildcat* originally appeared in *Freedom*, in response to a series of leaflets attacking the organisers of the Anarchist Bookfair.

Best wishes,
Donald Room

Black Flag no. 219 costs £1.50 (if ordering by post from Freedom Press, please add 50p p&p, or 10% if ordering with other books). *Twenty Year Millennium Wildcat* costs £1.95 (post free in UK, p&p 30p elsewhere).

Theoretical history

The Socialist Party of Great Britain: Politics, Economics and Britain's Oldest Socialist Party by David A. Perrin (Bridge Books, 2000, £13.95)

When the Marxists of the Social Democratic Federation left in 1904 to found the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB) they could not have foreseen that almost a century later the new party would still be putting its case.

Anarchists who do not know the SPGB will ask why they should be interested in what the party says. It is because the party has, for the last 96 years, put many of the same arguments that anarchists have been putting.

It has always vehemently opposed capitalism. Its members refused to fight in two world wars. It early on identified the Soviet Union as another form of capitalism, and a particularly repressive form at that. (It never took its Marxism from the vanguardist, Leninist tradition).

It has always stood openly for a moneyless, stateless world society ('socialism' in the party's terms), to be achieved by the conscious

majority of human beings acting without leaders.

Where anarchists would disagree is on how we get there, and particularly on the SPGB's view of the necessity for state action to achieve its goal. The party is an electoralist organisation (it first stood for parliament in 1945), and seeks to use the state to bring radical social change about. To his credit, David Perrin has some interesting criticisms of this idea, at least as it has traditionally been expressed by the party.

His book is an examination of the party's contributions to political thinking. Unfortunately, its appeal outside the ranks of the SPGB and labour historians is probably limited. It is a book about theory. It suffers by comparison with Robert Barltrop's lively history, *The Monument*, which was largely a collection of (often impossibly tall) anecdotes.

The SPGB is an organisation which deserves to be more widely known. But this book, fascinating in its own way, is not the book to make that happen.

Toby Crowe

Freedom Press Bookshop

(in Angel Alley)

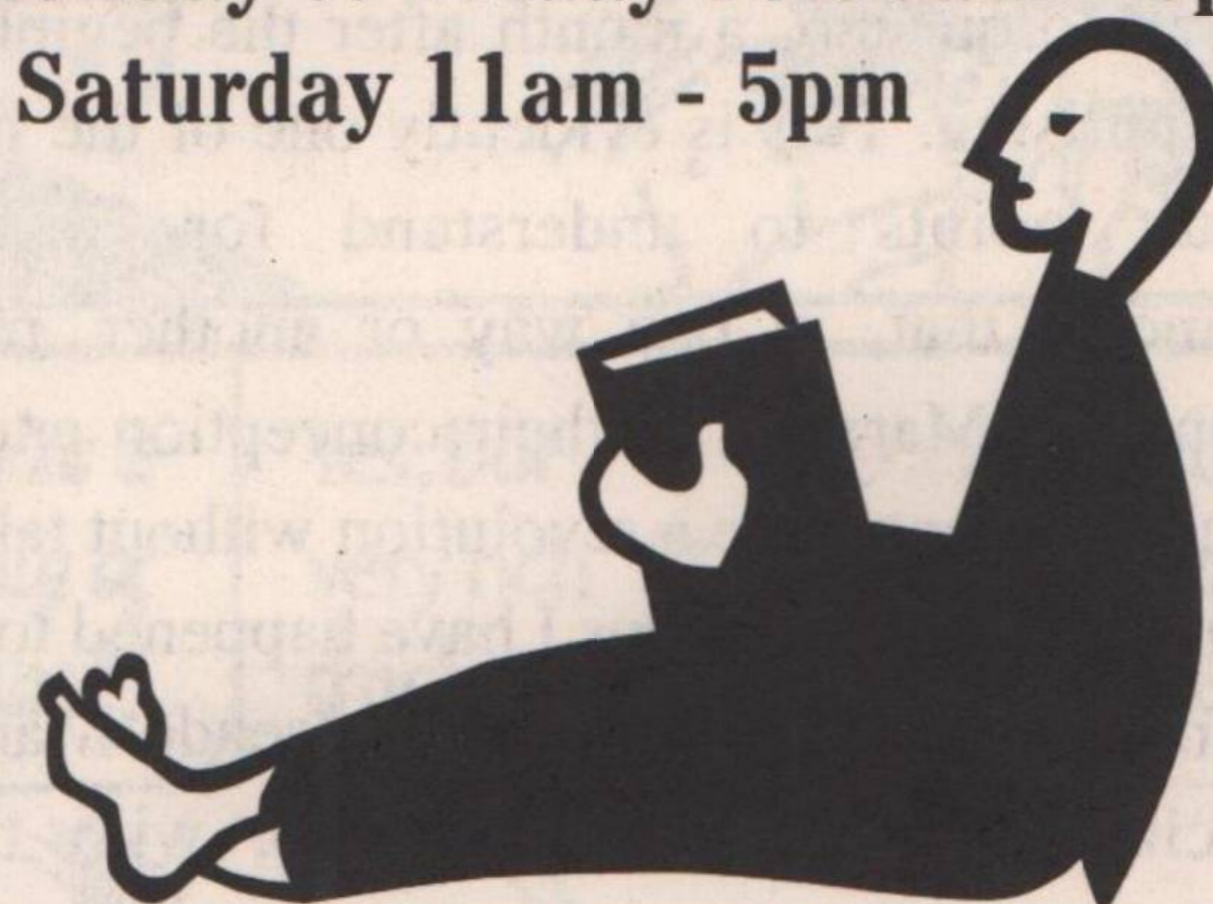
84b Whitechapel High Street

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'

Meeting of anarchists from ex-Yugoslavia

This was the first meeting of anarchists from ex-Yugoslavia after the meeting in 1990, before the wars in the Balkans had begun. That meeting was greatly dominated by nationalism and it didn't bring anything constructive. After that the war in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia started and most of the ties between anarchists were broken. Except for two anarcho-punks meeting earlier, there was no live contact between anarchists from ex-Yugoslavia, so in some way this was an historic meeting. We agreed (using e-mail) that this first meeting should be organised by all of us together, and that next meetings will be organised by local groups. We chose the ecological village of Zelenkovac in Bosnia for several reasons: first of all Bosnia is half-way for all of us, secondly citizens of ex-Yugoslavia don't need a visa for Bosnia so there would be no problems

with that, and of course it is an ecological village which fits our anarchist concept.

We started arriving at Zelenkovac on Friday 19th May and by the evening most of us were there. There were about ninety participants at the meeting coming from all states that once made Yugoslavia. So there were people from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Macedonia. It was really great meeting all these people and for most of us this was not only a great political event but also an emotional one. Organisation of things like sleeping-places and food wasn't great, but since this was the first meeting that we have organised everybody agreed that it was okay. The meeting started on Saturday 20th May with the introduction of the groups present. From Slovenia there was KUD Anarhiv from Ljubljana; from Croatia there was ZAP (the

Zagreb anarchist movement) and Anfema (an anarcho-feminist organisation); from Yugoslavia the Belgrade Libertarian Group and GLIB were present; from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia there were no groups present, only active individuals. The weather was a really big problem. Because there was no large indoor space where we could meet, we held our meeting in a field next to the village, but heavy rain started after the introduction so we had to divide ourselves into smaller groups to meet and discuss in the cottages. It is a collective opinion that so much more could have been done if the weather had been good. As someone said: "God is obviously not on our side, but never mind – we are not on his side either ..." Some of the discussions that were planned had to be delayed and eventually cancelled, but still many things were done

and arranged. Much was done on an individual contact basis.

Many different joint actions were arranged. Joint publishing projects were talked about and mutual aid was discussed and supported. We were something of a local attraction for the local people so there were a lot of people coming around talking and making contact with us. Also the secret police came asking questions about the meeting, but nothing else was done that would harm the meeting.

At the end of the meeting we agreed that the next meeting will be held either in Zagreb (Croatia) or in Belgrade (Yugoslavia), but we left that question to be discussed. I can say that the meeting was a great success. Not only in that it showed that we, anarchists from ex-Yugoslavia, can organise something that big, but also it showed that most of us have the same ideas about problems, not only in the world, but also in countries where we live.

Most of us are disgusted by nationalism and are fighting it as much as we can, and I think that in these hard days for the Balkans it is the most important thing to do.

Ratibor T. Trivunac

As an anarchist living in Mexico and supporting the Zapatista movement, I am often asked this question by many comrades from different places.

Not wishing to label (or to be labelled), I believe that it is important to see what the most important characteristics of this movement are. Analysing their words (that is, documents and communiqués), I believe these can be summarised in the following points:

1) **Anti-militarism:** an army yes, but only for self-defence, the end of which is its own extinction. The EZLN is a poorly equipped army, which is supported thanks to the logistical collaboration of the communities. It is not a guerrilla force, but an army, and by this I wish to emphasise the direct participation of the communities in the war, which gives the conflict a mass character: there is participation at various levels in the war effort, which all have decided upon.

Marcos said during the National Democratic Convention: "Fight. Fight without rest. Fight and defeat the government. Fight and defeat us. A defeat will never be so sweet as one that results in the peaceful transition to democracy, dignity and justice". Then, underlining how weapons aspire to be useless, "military logic is the most anti-democratic and anti-human logic that exists. In this sense, the EZLN has a suicide wish ... a wish to disappear as an army".

2) **Non-power:** the EZLN radically changes the logic of the most recent (and current) Latin-American guerrilla wars: the struggle is not for power, the very meaning of which is often attacked and derided, but precisely to achieve justice, freedom and democracy.

"Take power? No, something more difficult: a new world", wrote Marcos in a letter to the writer Gaspar Morquecho, a month after the beginning of the uprising. This is evidently one of the most difficult points to understand for all the movements that, in one way or another, make reference to Marxism in their conception and so are unable to conceive a revolution without taking power. On many occasions I have happened to see the embarrassment of Marxist or pseudo-Marxist politicians and intellectuals, who, with their closed minds, made up of slogans learned by heart, could find no response to the fact that the Zapatistas can think of a revolutionary process without taking power. Most of these managed to answer the question without answering (we already know that politicians the world over are masters at this). Those who have not learned the modern art of politics so well reach the point of denying what has consistently been repeated by the Zapatistas and, with an ironic smile, mutter

Is Zapatism a libertarian movement?

"but no, they are just saying that for propaganda's sake, you'll see later".

The anarchists alone have always insisted on this point; indeed, it was precisely on the subject of taking power through the formation of political parties, to then establish socialism, that the incurable fracture came about within the First International between Marxists and anarchists.

"If the causes of the evil continue to exist, even if Native Americans come to power, they too will be corrupted and sell out", says Marcos, explaining that their condition as revolutionaries did not come about in order to win power, but to struggle for dignity for everybody and this can only be achieved by changing the dominant social values and through a profound transformation of social relationships.

"Dignity?", replied Comandante Isaac to some journalists who asked what this word means for them. "You see, we believe we have the ability to control our destiny. We do not need to be led by the hand. We do not need someone to oppress us or manipulate us. As Native Americans we want our autonomy, we need this identity, this dignity. Dignity to live and to respect".

3) **By not wanting power,** the Zapatistas automatically rule out the idea of being a future party and distance themselves from these organisations (and their electoral logics). They refuse to impose their own pre-established model,



Emiliano Zapata (1879-1919), the great agrarian leader in the Mexican revolution

instead stimulating the active participation of all (translated in practice into the concepts of autonomy and self-organisation) in the construction of a different world. The EZLN rejects the Maoist strategy of fencing off the cities from the fields; the armed struggle is conceived as part of a broader process, into which the EZLN can integrate. From what has happened between January '94 and today, the EZLN have clearly shown their interest in subordinating the war to the rhythm of the social movements (the so-called 'civil society'). Indeed, the Zapatistas themselves tell us that they are not the only true path, the one almighty truth. Raúl Zibecchi writes about them: "The EZLN recognises that it only represents one flag, but that an even bigger flag can be raised. This bigger flag can be a national revolutionary movement to bring together the most diverse tendencies, the most diverse thoughts and the most diverse forms of struggle. A direct message both to the social movements and to individuals, but which excludes the political parties, since – as the Zapatistas say – they are the ones who least understand the people's need to participate".

4) **A struggle against the neo-liberal economic model and its cultural model.** In a period in which the world's major parties and movements of the left seem to accept the diktats of the IMF and the World Bank (some even justify them as positive), for the first time a small but clear and resolute voice was heard from Chiapas: 'Ya Basta!', followed by another phrase, sounding like a terrible blasphemy to the powerful of the earth 'Nothing for us, everything for everyone' ['Nada para nosotros, todo para todos'].

If, on the other hand, we wish to analyse their concrete organisation, we can see that all the most important decisions are taken exclusively after consulting the communities. Contact with the communities is maintained by the members of the CCRI, a body made up exclusively of indigenous representatives elected by their communities (and to which Marcos cannot belong, being a 'mestizo').

As Tacho says: "All the comandantes were democratically elected at the meetings of the communities or by the local representatives who elect the regional ones. The meetings elect the delegates of the CCRI because the compañeros at grass roots level have to know who they elect, and if delegates behave badly, the people remove them. Because it is not the work of an organisation

that is at stake here, but the work of a population".

An armed organisation, then, that submits all the important decisions to the base communities, who also have the possibility of exercising continuous control over the people that implement the decisions taken.

There are also clear similarities here with what Malatesta wrote: "But if you anarchists have many social relationships, will you need to delegate functions, to make appointments, to name representatives?"

"Of course, but do not believe that this is equivalent to naming a government. Government makes laws and imposes them, whereas in a free society delegations are no more than certain temporary appointments, to perform certain tasks, and do not give the right to any authority or to any special remuneration. And the resolutions of the delegates are always subject to the approval of those who have appointed them".

From what has been said so far, it seems clear to me that the Zapatistas' political project is a project of a libertarian type and that its internal organisation attempts – within the limits imposed by the war and so the fact of being an army – to maintain its spirit. As anarchists, I believe it is important for us to recognise these characteristics, just as I believe we need to be careful not to idealise them and know how to recognise the defects, which any individual or movement has, and which can only be overcome through constructive criticism.

Of course, for example, and despite the Women's Law applied within the EZLN, the situation of women in the communities is still not quite what libertarians and Zapatistas themselves have proposed; but where in the world is it?

To give another example, words too often repeated by the Zapatistas, such as flag or country, immediately make me feel a little uneasy, because of my political culture. Certainly, one could say that the sense is that of the demand to be treated like Mexicans (since, after all, they are more Mexican than anyone else) and refusing the imposition of a Western colonialist culture.

I believe, therefore, that the best way for anarchists to support the Zapatista movement is to organise, each of us where and with whom we think best, to have an impact on the construction of a new society with our libertarian ideas.

Pietro Vermentini
(translated from *Revista A*, no. 262)

And after Mayday ...

Dear *Freedom*,

The various pieces in the last issue of *Freedom* about Mayday raised some important issues the anarchist milieu needs, with other anti-capitalists in whatever guise they take, to think seriously about. First and foremost there is currently a real danger of division and isolation. A number of groups and organisations are distancing themselves from the anti-capitalist movement centred around the Mayday events. Examples include George Monbiot's piece in the *Guardian* which frankly could have been written by Jack Straw, the current *The Land Is Ours* newsletter and the Green Party's magazine *Greenworld*. All in different ways attack the sort of direct action that took place on MD2K and previously on N30 and J18. The temptation is to react, as Nick S. did in *Freedom*, and simply slag such individuals off as 'middle class'. Undoubtedly there are privileged people in radical politics and these people do not like to face the reality of what challenging capitalism will ultimately mean,

but do we really just want to be a minority clique or do we want to reach out further and create a broader-based movement (as seen in Seattle)? If we do then we must resist divisions. 'Unity is strength' is an old trade union slogan but it is true. The state first tried to marginalise the anti-capitalist movement and even incorporate it (remember all those features in the press about Swampy, and Spider on *Coronation Street*?) They failed and now they are trying to criminalise and divide us. We shouldn't play their game.

Secondly the issue of violence. I have been at J18, N30 and MD2K. At each of these I thought the violence was pointless and counter-productive. Take N30 at Euston. The idea of that was to show solidarity with tube and rail workers and rail users. The end result was closing Euston station for three hours and managing to piss off any one trying to use the train that night. I started MD2K protesting outside McDonalds in the Strand. This included showing solidarity with its workers. The day ended with McDonalds workers being penned into the toilets of their Whitehall branch scared shitless. Not much solidarity there ... MD2K has about a third of the size of J18. If a similar event is organised again this year I would safely predict it will be smaller still. Violence is weakening the movement.

We need to think much more about what it is we are trying to achieve and the best ways

of doing it. Being penned in by the police for hours, smashing up a bit of property and having hundreds arrested I would suggest is not really going to achieve too much. It does not threaten the state but actually strengthens it by encouraging tougher laws and the recruitment of more police. I have immense respect for RTS and all the things it has organised. The guerrilla gardening in Parliament Square was great, the atmosphere friendly and festival like. Those of us that left Parliament Square and started to move up Whitehall wanted to join the London trade union Mayday march. Interestingly the Mayday march was stopped from entering Trafalgar Square before any violence started. The organisers of the march have publicly stated that they would have welcomed us. This act of solidarity was prevented because a few people outside McDonalds fell into a trap.

I agreed with much that Nick S. wrote last issue. I believe that class politics are important, but frankly, Nick, I don't think we are going to bring about change waiting for the working class to rise up (anarchists have already been waiting two hundred years). We need to rethink strategies. We need to build the broadest alliances possible by identifying common ground rather than concentrating on differences. So let's not be exclusive. The sad fact is, Nick, you and I probably have a lot more in common politically with someone like George Monbiot than with those working class people who voted in such large numbers for the BNP candidate for London mayor.

To me anarchism is not just about class but power and I am happy to work with any one who opposes the concentration and abuse of power, whether it is the ruling class against the working class, global capitalism against almost everyone, humans against non-human animals, white people against black, men against women, straight against gay or 'able' against so-called disabled.

I feel we are probably at a turning point.

The worst we could do is turn in on ourselves. The best we could do is look outwards and face up to some difficult issues like what do we do about violence. The excellent MD2K conference started doing this - let's keep going.

Richard Griffin

Dear *Freedom*,

In your editorial of 20th May Nick S. wrote: "Any serious anti-capitalist movement has to set about reversing such fears, ensuring that the 'spectre' of working class militancy makes fear as much a part of the life of capital as labour".

How is this to be achieved? And what will capital do when it is?

Amorey Gethin

Please keep sending in your letters and donations

An anarchist meeting?

Dear *Freedom*,

At the Mayday 2000 Conference, there was to be a workshop on 'Red, Green and Black: Beyond dogma, towards diversity'.

Those are fine words, but whoever wrote them did not turn up to chair or facilitate the meeting. After half those interested had gone away, someone read out from the timetable: "The separation and presentation of the ecological crisis as unconnected to other forms of exploitation only serves the interests of business and state, and needs to be overcome if society is to survive ..."

People talked about their reaction to that opening statement and a loose unstructured discussion developed as people were moved to speak.

It was agreed that Marx said that Communism was only achieved when the state withered away. A contributor said that made Marx an Anarchist at heart, who, if alive today, would now realise he was wrong about method. He continued with the suggestion that Dialectical opposites would resolve their conflict by the opposing forces uniting in a new entity ... That Keynes had used a Marxist platform because what he had done was to demonstrate how to avoid the internal contradiction in Capitalism described

by Marx. (But Keynes Theory as misused by politicians causes inflation) So if you go along with Marx's description of the working of Capitalism and of dialectical materialism, a new synthesis should come into existence.

There was talk of Revolution - suggested as only being possible when the state had virtually collapsed, and with a horrid undesirable history of executing its own creators.

One of the more militant direct activists present put things into a better perspective talking of the need for a social revolution. He wondered whether the wonderful social spirit he had experienced at the last free festival at Stonehenge (before the Government ban) could last more than the two or three weeks of that celebration.

Everyone who had wanted to speak having spoken, it being ascertained that those who hadn't didn't want to, the meeting decided to close. It was fifteen minutes before the advertised closing time.

On the next day, an Eton school pupil was arrested from the would-be revolutionists demonstrating Mayday. Perhaps the Dialectical synthesis is further along than we realise?

Illyan

Nicolas Walter

Dear *Freedom*,

I was very sorry to hear about the death of Nicolas Walter. I think he was a brilliant writer, and would love to go to the memorial meeting at Conway Hall on Sunday 4th June - but obviously living 300 miles away makes it impossible.

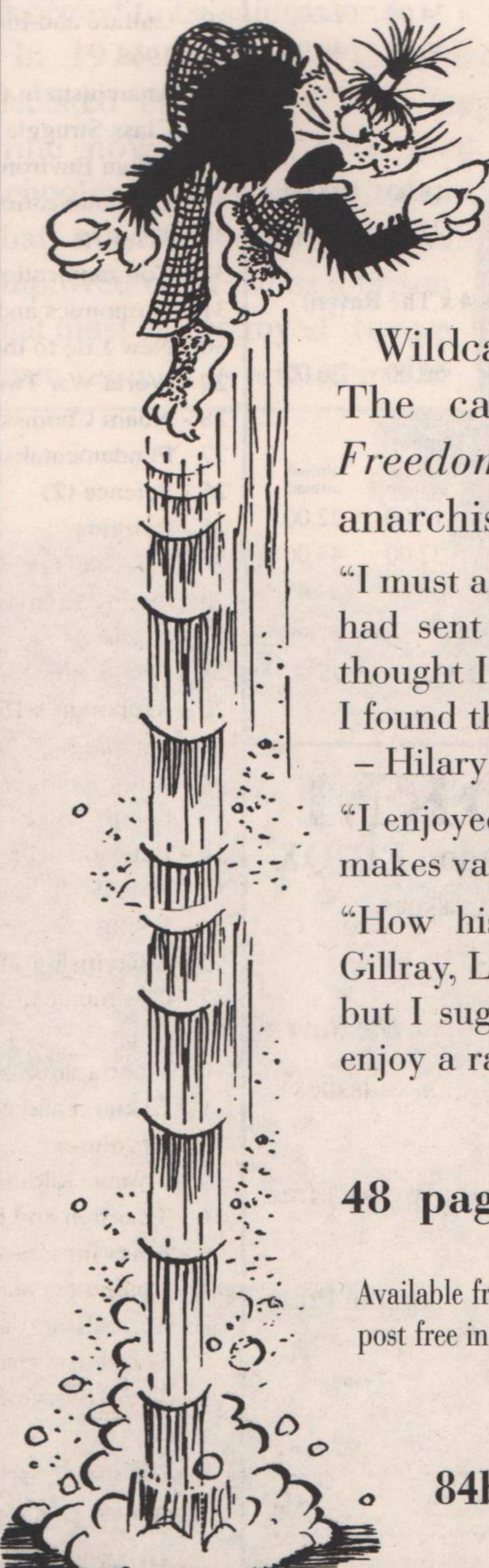
Is Freedom Press planning an anthology or collection of his writings to celebrate his life and work? A reprint of *About Anarchism* would also be splendid.

Chris

[Both a reprint of *About Anarchism* and a collection of Nicolas Walter's writings for *Freedom* are indeed planned, although due to Nicolas's process of continual revision we expect the editorial work will take some time. At the time of his death Nicolas had just completed his edition of *Anarchist Essays* by Charlotte Wilson (one of *Freedom's* founders) and this is scheduled to appear later this year.

A report of the memorial meeting appears on page 3 of this issue - Editors]

Donald Rooum Twenty Year Millennium Wildcat



The cartoonist Donald Rooum 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

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 —

16th June The Millennium Dome (speaker
Donald Room)

23rd June General discussion

30th June Chomsky's Anarchism: part two
(an illustrated discussion)

7th July General discussion

14th July The London Anarchist Forum in
Retrospect: suggestions for the future (open
meeting)

21st July 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

Cardiff action/ discussion group

Any readers in the Cardiff area who are
interested in forming an action/discussion
group please write *clo Freedom Press, 84b
Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX*
quoting 'Cardiff Group'.

10 heads of state, 800 chief executive officers, 1,000 foreign media and YOU at the Asia-Pacific Economic Summit at Melbourne's Crown Casino 11th-13th September 2000

Join the people's pre-Olympic festival outside Crown Casino and make sure
the corporate fascists hear your voice as they plan your future ...

SEATTLE - DAVOS - MELBOURNE

for more info contact:

Anarchist Media Institute, PO Box 20, Parkville, Vic. 3052, Australia
tel: (03) 9828 2856

<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3879>

<http://www.vicnet.net.au/~anarchist>

e-mail: anarchiststage@geocities.com

Renewing the Anarchist Tradition

A conference in Plainfield, Vermont,
from 24th to 27th August 2000

for more info contact either of the co-organisers:

Cindy Milstein, 5641 S. Blackstone Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60637-1898, USA
e-mail: cbmilstein@aol.com

John Petrovato, PO Box 715, Conway,
MA 01341, USA

e-mail: ssimon@shaysnet.com

A die-in for the people of Iraq

Confronting the Foreign Office to mark the tenth anniversary
of the imposition of economic sanctions on Iraq

Meet at 12 noon, Trafalgar Square
on Monday 7th August

for more info contact voices in the wilderness uk,
16b Cherwell Street, Oxford OX1 1BG
tel: 01865 243 232

e-mail die-in@viwuk.freemove.co.uk

July 14th: Bastille Day

A long weekend of events against the
prison industry. Bring camping gear,
inspiration and people.

Meet at Golders Green station, London,
on 14th July at 9am

For more info contact CAGE, PO Box 68,
Oxford OX3 1RH. tel: 079931 401962

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@jpbberlin.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