

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

Vol. 63 No. 1

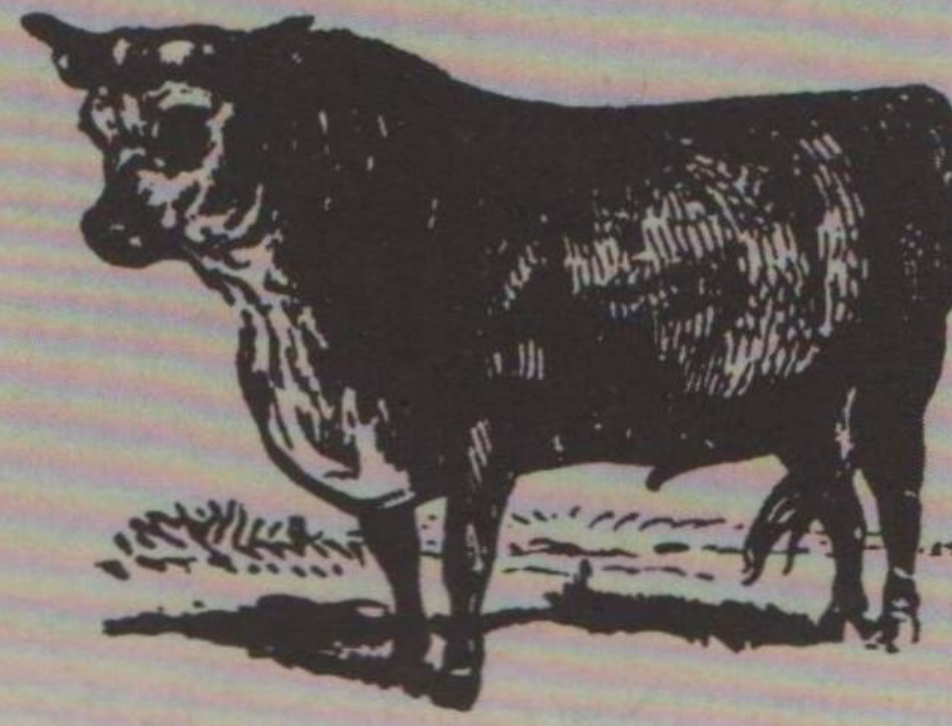
12th January 2002

50p

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HERE IT COMES**
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Recent events in Argentina provide more evidence that violence is ...

The essence of the state

Statement from the Compañeros
of the Biblioteca Popular
José Igenieros, Buenos Aires

One way of presenting the real dimensions of what happened in Argentina last month is to offer some data on the repression that occurred. According to the information provided by the mainstream media, 29 people were killed, although there could well have been more. In the Plaza del Mayo area of central Buenos Aires alone, seven people were murdered by state forces on one day (20th December).

Meanwhile, the wounded number in their hundreds, the detained in their thousands. Some of the detainees were tortured in police stations and by police mobile units. Rumours have also circulated about secret detention centres, and of people who have 'disappeared', but these have not been confirmed.

At some police stations, the police turned down applications of *habeas corpus* which were presented on behalf of detainees, saying that the people concerned were not there. All manner of instruments was used to crush those engaged in the popular struggle against the repression.

Although the official line has been not to recognise the victims, the dead are there as further proof that violence is the essence of the state. Although the government has denied that the forces of repression used guns, the bodies of the dead were pierced with bullets in the back and head.

Men, women and children were run over by the horses of mounted police, heads and bodies were swollen from beatings. Bodies were irritated by teargas and vomit gas. Frostily, and in a manner reminiscent of the army dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s, the government only admitted that "some excesses" were committed.

Another way of presenting what happened, at least in Buenos Aires itself, is to talk about the damage done to the financial district, the sixty or so blocks where financial capital and international companies are concentrated. There, everything was destruction, broken glass, wreckage, fire. What had begun as hundreds of acts of anti-capitalist iconoclasm turned into widespread destruction, where thousands of people who had taken possession of the streets channelled their rage.

How did this all begin? We will not go into
(continued on page 2)



A man carries away food looted from a Buenos Aires store on 19th December

Anarchists 'indifferent' on Euro

British anarchists were unenthusiastic about last week's arrival of the Euro in much of the continent. "We are opposed to the money system in general, so the precise currency units are of no particular relevance. I'm pretty indifferent to it", one Bradford activist told *Freedom*.

Others were more hostile, seeing in the new European currency a tool of political domination.

"The Euro is about political union, not economics. I'm against it, because I'm against political union, and you can't have a single currency without a single state. I'm concerned about a growth in state power, and this will bring it about", explained a London anarchist.

"I'm not a nationalist. The EU has a flag, a currency, an anthem, it wants an army - if that's not a nation-state, I don't know what is. They simply want to replace one state with another - it's not internationalist, it's just one more rival power bloc."

The introduction of Euro coins and notes on 1st January is the culmination of a process which began at the Maastricht Summit in 1991. The Euro is now the official currency in twelve states of the European Union, where older national currencies will cease to be legal tender next month.

The British state has so far refused to join the single currency, however, following campaigns against it by elements of the

mainstream media, much of which is owned by Rupert Murdoch.

The Treasury moved at the start of this week to dampen speculation that a referendum on Euro membership might soon be held, even though such a poll is official policy.

The government has set 'five economic tests', which have to be passed before ministers call a referendum. Many observers have claimed that these 'tests' are fluid, and designed to allow ministers to avoid making a decision.

An opinion poll in last *Sunday's News of the World* (6th January) found only 31% support for a 'yes' vote in any referendum.

Editorial on page 7

Freedom

anarchist fortnightly

“Man makes history, and not history man! It is not enough to possess the idea, the seed of freedom. One must also sow it to reap the harvest”

Vernon Richards, anarchist, 1915-2001

Anarchists work towards a society of mutual aid and voluntary co-operation. We reject all government and economic repression.

Freedom Press is an independent anarchist publisher. Besides the fortnightly newspaper *Freedom*, we also produce *The Raven* quarterly journal and many books on all aspects of anarchism. We also run Britain's biggest anarchist bookshop.

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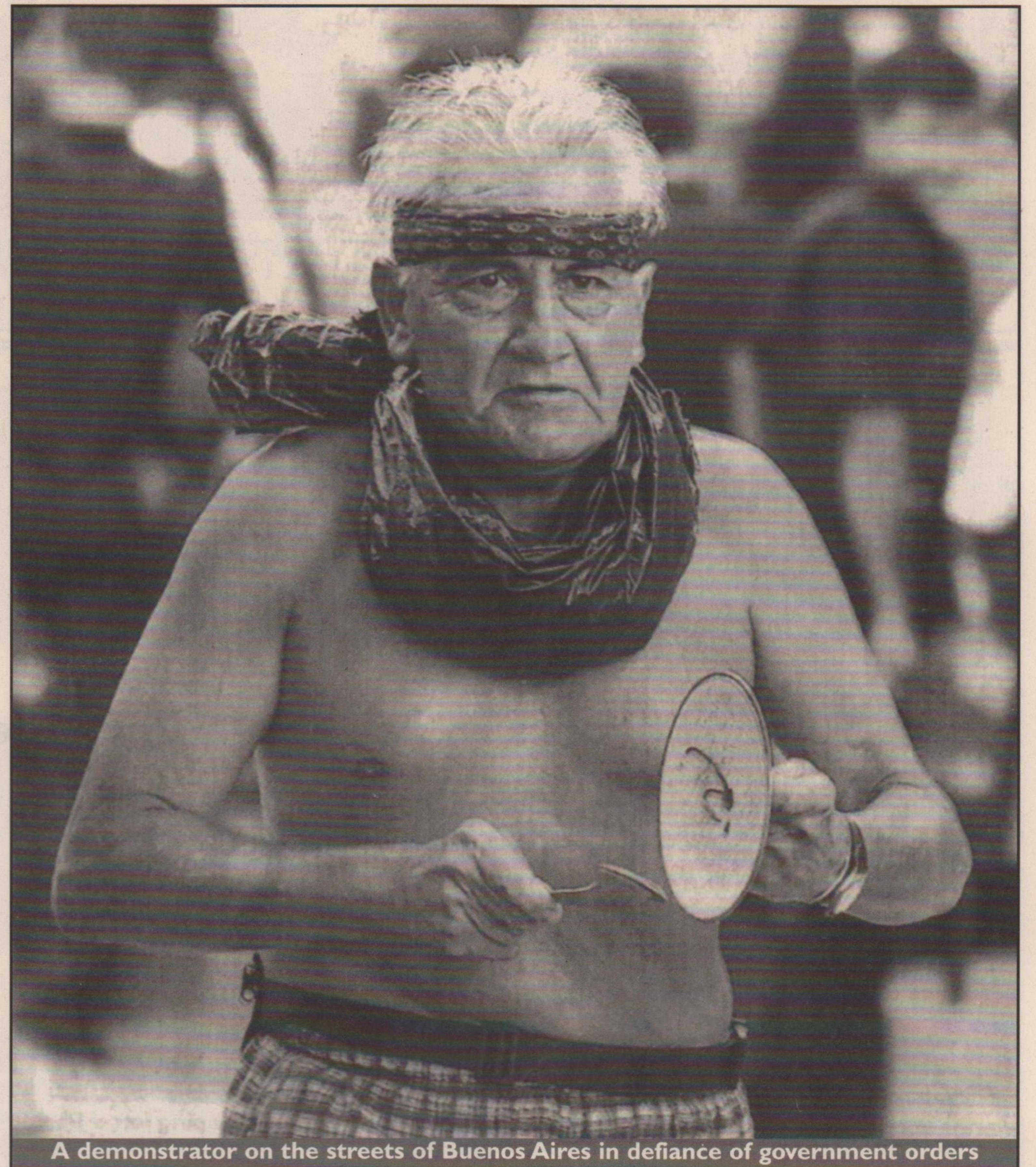
the underlying causes here, as that would take us back several decades – we will restrict ourselves to the immediate facts that lit the fuse. On 3rd December, the national government issued a decree replacing cash transactions with bank account transactions. Fixed term deposits, mostly held by small-scale investors, were withheld in an attempt to comply with the requirements of the zero deficit policy of the International Monetary Fund, and to prevent a continuing capital flight. This paralysed the domestic economy, dealing a death blow to the self-employed and small traders, not to mention the marginalised sectors. Social boiling point was only a matter of days away.

The first lootings took place on Tuesday 18th December in Cordoba and Entre Rios. On Wednesday morning, they expanded to the urban belt surrounding Buenos Aires and to other cities all over the country. The psychosis spread like a plague across Argentina.

Rumours were increasing that hordes of looters – conveniently identified as *piqueteros* (the name given to protesters who build barricades on roads or bridges to disrupt economic activity) – were devastating neighbourhoods. The rumourmongers' aim seems to have been to destabilise the government, and at the same time to set the poor against each other, to divert the popular struggle to build a new society. In other words, the right and the Peronists opted for psychological warfare to smooth their way to power.

The national government responded to the profound social crisis by declaring a 30-day state of siege. Once again, popular demands were criminalised and quelled with force.

The presidential decree was formally announced on the night of 19th December. Straightaway, thousands of people went out on to the streets, constituting one of the biggest acts of civil disobedience in Argentina since the return to representative democracy a decade ago. The noise of thousands of saucepans being banged and car horns sounded filled Buenos Aires as the people,



A demonstrator on the streets of Buenos Aires in defiance of government orders

many waving the national flag, marched towards the parliament building and the Casa Rosada (the seat of government).

As men and women, children and old people filled the Plaza del Mayo, police fired teargas at the crowds. The general response was restrained, although some groups vented their rage against banks, billboards, public telephones and McDonalds outlets.

In the small hours of 20th December, despite appeals from the political parties and trade unions for them to go home, people continued to resist the state of siege in the streets and the police presence remained small. The news of the resignations, first of the finance minister and then of the rest of the cabinet, only strengthened the popular resolve.

But around 4am, the police attacks began, with teargas, rubber and live bullets. The first fatal victim fell on the steps of the Congress building, fifteen blocks from the Plaza del Mayo. Despite the repression, some groups stayed on the streets.

At midday on 20th December, the police violently charged protesters on the Plaza del Mayo. People were trampled by the horses of the mounted police, gassed, beaten and shot at. The square was cleared, but street fighting broke out all over the city centre. The police advance was prevented for eight hours by barricades, stones and molotov

cocktails. As the hours went by, the news of dead comrades increased the anger.

Around 7pm that night, when official notification was given of President Fernando de la Rúa's resignation, police violently charged the demonstrators who were still in the area round the Obelisk. At the same time, battles were raging in the rest of the country. In Paraná, capital of Entre Rios province, there was an attempt to burn down the government building. The people of Cordoba also tried to reduce the municipal government headquarters to ashes. In La Plata, the capital of Buenos Aires province, demonstrators tried to occupy the provincial legislative building.

While this was happening on the streets, all the political class could manage to do was fill the power vacuum caused by de la Rúa's pathetic helicopter escape from his presidential palace. His resignation was welcomed as a victory at a convention of Peronist governors, which was coincidentally taking place in San Luis province. We must remember that the previous day, they had refused to form a coalition government with him, so speeding up the inevitable draining away of his Radical Party's power. So it was that the government, overthrown by popular struggle, was quickly replaced by the opposition Peronists. Ramon Puerta who, as president of the senate, temporarily took over said, "at no time was there institutional leaderlessness".

There was a deeper aspect to the popular mobilisation. People rejected not only the governing class (politicians and trade unionists) and the economic plan imposed by the international financial institutions, but also politics itself as a means of creating a different society.

As one, the mainstream media presented these historic days as a victory for civil society, delegitimising those engaged in the popular struggle and the excluded who lost their lives on the streets. Yet de la Rúa's victory really was a popular victory, despite the manoeuvres of the right and of the Peronists to foster political destabilisation.

MISUSES OF THE WORD 'ANARCHY'

Number Two in an occasional series

The *Economist* (5th January 2002) carried an article on the suffering in Argentina, under the title "Flirting with anarchy".

"Many Argentines are fed up beyond measure with what they see as a corrupt and self-serving political system. Austerity and corruption make an explosive cocktail. There is a risk that Argentina will slide towards mob rule".

But the *Economist* thinks it has a solution. "The first requirement is a competent and legitimate government". No surprises there, then.

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Editorial on page 7

Activists prepare for abolition conference

Organisers of a conference later this month hope it will kickstart a powerful movement for the abolition of jails. The conference, entitled 'Prison abolition or more prisons', will be held at London's Conway Hall on 26th January.

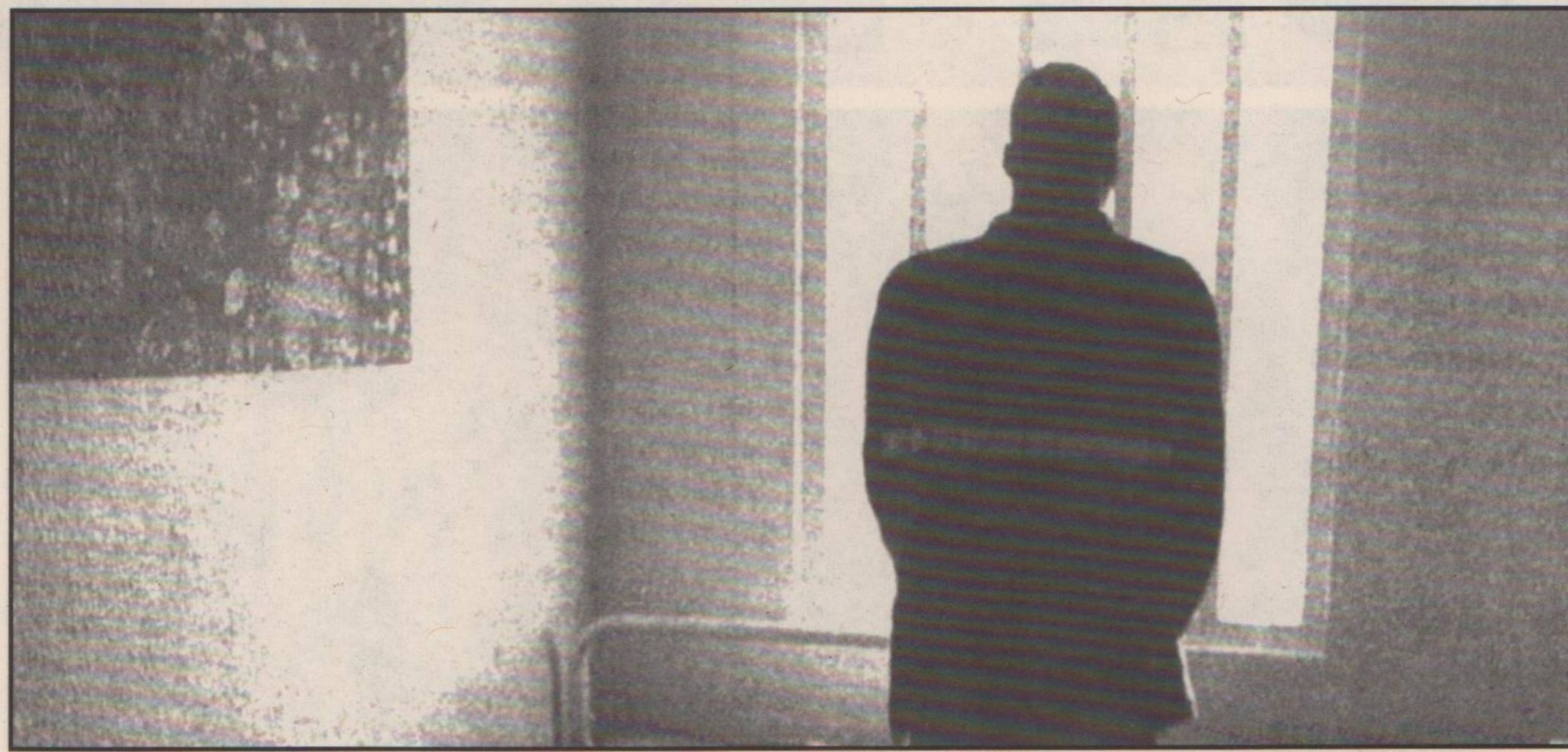
"Prisons and the criminal justice system have been largely used throughout their short history to curb the actions of the lower classes", the organisers say. "If we agree that imprisoning people perpetuates their poverty and criminality, then surely we should be moving towards progressive social change as an alternative to mass incarceration".

Anarchists, many of whom have long been involved in prisoners' resistance, welcomed the conference. But some questioned the willingness of the anarchist movement as a whole to engage with the prison struggle.

"At the recent Home Office picket in support of fitted-up anarchist militant Mark Barnsley, there were only six people in attendance, and the only ones from any organised tendency were members of Class War", says regular *Freedom* contributor Nick S.

"There were ads in *Schnews* and *Freedom*, and every one of the anarchist groups was mailed. None of them attended. We are a 'movement' which is incapable of even defending its own from the state. You can call that a real movement, with ambition to bring about concrete change if you want. I'd sooner call it a disgrace".

'Prison abolition or more prisons?' will be held on Saturday 26th January 2002 from



10.30am to 5pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London (nearest tube: Holborn). Admission free.

• Concerns were voiced last month over the state's attitude to vulnerable prisoners, after three inmates committed suicide over Christmas. Activists from the Inquest group, which campaigns against deaths in custody, were particularly alarmed at reports that two of the three had already been placed on suicide watch by screws. Deborah Coles, the group's co-director, said "we are deeply disturbed by the number of these cases which, when they come to an inquiry or inquest, show poor levels of care".

Steven Keeling was found hanging in Nottingham jail on 22nd December. He was a known suicide risk, as was Anthony Rowan. Anthony killed himself in Norwich jail on

Christmas Day. David Berriman, who was not being monitored, was found in Hull jail on Christmas Eve. The deaths brought the total number of suicides in British jails last year to seventy.

A representative of the state's self-styled 'Prison Service' said that Christmas suicides were common. "It's reflected in society as a whole", she said. "Christmas is a very stressful time of year both in and out of prison".

• Jimmy Wright, a miscarriage of justice victim who's fought the prison system every step of the way, is coming to the end of his sentence. He is currently being held in HMP Parkhurst, where staff are determined to make the last month of his stretch as difficult as possible. He has now been segregated on 'good order and discipline' grounds for a month.

He has been given no proper reason for his segregation, and HMP Parkhurst seem determined that he will remain in such conditions for the duration of his sentence, despite Prison Service HQ having agreed to his being given a transfer to a local prison near his home.

Jimmy and his friends and supporters ask you to write to the governor to demand an end to his continued segregation, and that he be transferred to a local prison immediately. Write to David Kennedy, Governor, HMP Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5NX. Contact Jimmy himself at the jail, number VE2080.

John O.

• Following a threatened legal challenge by prisoner John Shelley and the Prisoners' Advice Service, North Yorkshire's HMP Full Sutton was forced to withdraw its blanket ban on prisoners receiving publications from Haven Distribution.

Haven is a free service, which provides educational publications to prisoners. Senior screws at the jail were forced to concede that banning it from operating would infringe prisoners' rights to freedom of expression, protected by Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights.

For a Haven catalogue, write to 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3XX.

Lee

Editorial on page 7

News in Brief

• **Sellafield** Around 100 anti-nuclear activists obstructed the main gate on 20th December, to mark the opening of the new MOX (mixed plutonium and uranium oxide) reprocessing plant. Many had travelled from Ireland, which would suffer widespread contamination in the event of an accident at the Cumbrian installation.

Ten protesters carried out a lockdown, linking hands through lengths of pipe. Other activists then stood inside. There was a heavy cop presence, but no arrests. "The police looked on and did nothing", said one Irish protester. "It was a lesson in the advantages of non-violence".

The new plant handles waste from the UK's own nuclear power stations, as well as from others in countries as far away as Australia and Japan. It opened just two weeks after the failure of a last legal bid to halt it, launched in the Court of Appeal by Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace International.

• **Norfolk** Free speech campaigners last month hailed a court victory for peace activist Lindis Percy, who had been convicted of disorderly behaviour by Thetford magistrates after an incident in which she painted 'stop star wars' over an American flag.

The magistrates fined her £200, after concluding that the action outside RAF Feltwell had caused offence to US service personnel stationed at the base.

But judges decided on 21st December that the conviction was incompatible with her right to free expression under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and her conviction was quashed.

• **Sarf London** Activists from the South London Action Group (SLAG) are holding a meeting at 4.30pm today (12th January) at the Infoshop, 56a Crampton Street, Elephant & Castle. SLAG was set up last year to

provide networking opportunities for anyone involved in anti-capitalist, non-hierarchical actions south of the river. Call 07950 818296 for info, or go to www.slagfest.org.uk

• **London** A new group for young anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist activists will meet in Holborn today (12th January), under threat of action by the National Front. News of the meeting appeared on the NF website within hours of it being announced. But Jimmer, one of the organisers, remained

unfazed. "Bring ideas and steel toecaps", he said. Meet 12 noon sharp at Holborn tube.

• **Cornwall** A demonstration will be held outside Truro Crown Court next week, on the day that Iranian dissident Farrokh Shiri is due to be sentenced for firearms offences. This follows a police siege in Penzance last March, which occurred when he was in a very distressed state, following the rejection of his application for political asylum. Assemble at the court 9.30am on 21st January.

Corrections: In our 15th December issue, the small front page editorial referred to "the state's education workforce". This should of course have read "the state's 'education' workforce". We never intended to suggest that teachers in British state schools are anything other than trainers of a compliant workforce, and we apologise for any misunderstanding. In Donald Room's article on page 6 we mangled the quotation from Charlotte Wilson. What she actually said was that, in the anarchist's eyes, "the true purpose of every ... natural society ... is to give every member of it the largest possible opportunities in life". Again, apologies.



Vernon Richards

Vero Benvenuto Costantino Recchioni was born, a British citizen of Italian descent, on 19th July 1915. He anglicised his name to Vernon Richards in 1935, but was always called Vero at Freedom Press. His parents owned the King Bomba delicatessen in Soho, and he managed the shop for a short time after his father's death. When Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister, he liked to say "Thatcher was born over a corner grocer's shop, and I was born over a posh grocer's shop".

His father, Emidio Recchioni, was an anarchist, or – as Vero put it – he "called himself an anarchist" but he was an authoritarian where his family was concerned. In the 1920s he took young Vero to see the sights of Paris, and left him in the hotel room all day while he went out on his own. The sightseeing trip was a cover for meetings with other Italians to plan the assassination of Mussolini.

At the time of the 'Angry Brigade' trial in London, Vero spoke scornfully of the conspirators who gave themselves away by boasting of their exploits to casual girlfriends. "My father was a good conspirator, not even his close family knew what was going on". The *Daily Telegraph* named Recchioni as the financier of the attentat on Mussolini, and he sued the publishers for libel. The defence was that they had meant another shopkeeper called Recchioni, but they could not identify anyone else of that name and description, or even find another Recchioni in the telephone directory. He won a large sum in damages, which according to legend was used to finance another attentat on Mussolini.

In 1935 at the age of 20, Vero was expelled from France under the terms of the Hoare/Laval pact, and returned to London to edit an anti-Mussolini paper, *Free Italy/Italia Libre*, in collaboration with the Italian anarchist Camillo Berneri. Berneri went to Spain when the Spanish Revolution broke out, where he was shot dead by a firing squad of men wearing Communist Party armbands. Vero, who had just joined University College London to study civil engineering, was advised by Berneri and others to stay and make propaganda in Britain on behalf of the anarchists in Spain.

He started a newspaper, *Spain and the World*, and was immediately joined by the surviving members of the old Freedom Group, who had suspended publication of *Freedom* in 1932. One of these, Lilian Wolfe, continued working as the office administrator for Freedom Press until 1969, when she was 94 years old. Emma Goldman, Max Nettlau and others gave their support and contributed to the paper. In 1937, Vero sent to Paris for his girlfriend Marie-Louise Berneri, the daughter of Camillo, and provided her with a British passport by marrying her.

After the defeat of the Spanish Revolution the paper changed its name to *Revolt!*, then when World War Two started, to *War Commentary for Anarchism*. Vero's application to be registered as a conscientious objector was rejected, but as a civil engineer working for the railways he was in a reserved occupation, and there was no attempt to call him up. *War Commentary* was implacably anti-war, and Freedom Press also published anti-war pamphlets (which had a bigger circulation than might have been expected because the shelves of bookshops were emptied by the paper shortage). But anarchists who supported the war were not rejected as comrades. A journal



Vernon Richards, a self portrait, from the early 1960s

published by exile Spanish anarchists, *Solidaridad Obrera*, very much in favour of the war against fascism, was printed on a Gestetner duplicating machine owned by Freedom Press, and kept in the Freedom Press office. According to Vero, the Spanish anarchists would say "may we come and print *Solidaridad Churchilliana*".

During the war, Vero and John Hewetson were registered as proprietors of Freedom Press. The police came to the office one day looking for an anarchist fugitive from the law. Of course the Freedom Press people denied all knowledge, and the police pointed out that Freedom Press was liable to immediate closure, as it was not on the Register of Business Names. That same day the business was registered, and as an unforeseen consequence of this emergency action, Freedom Press was saved from takeover by people who did not share its aims.

In late 1944, Freedom Press was raided by Special Branch, who seized the files – and the typewriter – for investigation. Two anarcho-syndicalists, regular contributors to *War Commentary*, had long objected to articles which they thought "irrelevant to the working class struggle" (for instance those calling for sexual freedom). In the disruption caused by the police raids, they saw an opportunity to make the paper more to their liking. They recruited Spanish anarchists, a few Trotskyists and others to the Anarchist Federation, and held a meeting which voted by a majority to replace the editorial board. Vero pointed out that he and John were registered proprietors, and refused to relinquish control, though the anarcho-syndicalist pair were offered one page of the four-page paper, to use as they wished. They were furious. In those days, decent book and newspaper printing was letterpress, much more costly than the offset litho printing of today.

Freedom Press had acquired Express Printers in 1942, and the anarcho-syndicalist

whole nine months, having been found guilty by the Visiting Magistrates of trying to smuggle a letter out of prison.

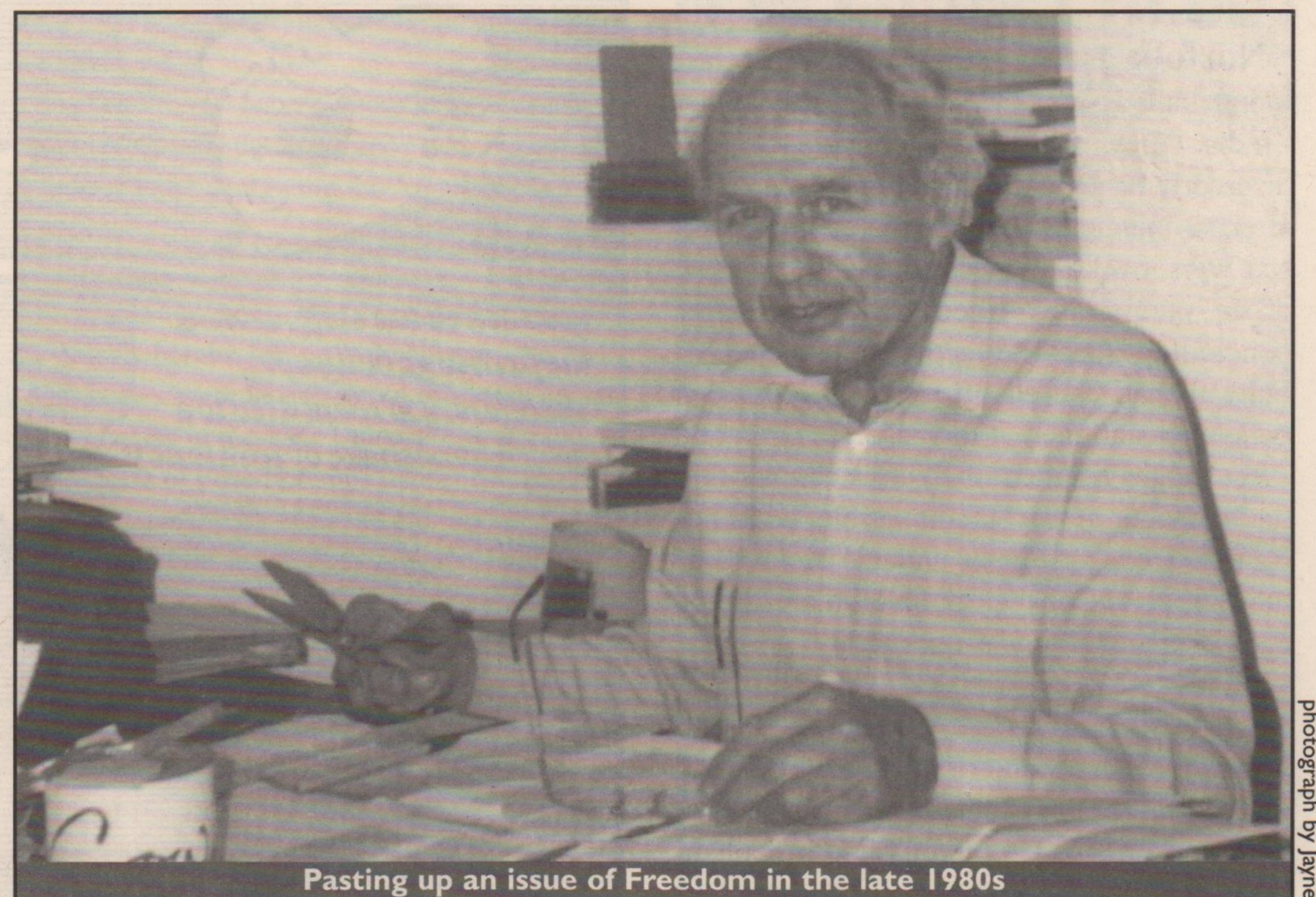
After their release, the same team of four resumed control of the paper, now renamed *Freedom*. Marie-Louise sadly died of viral pneumonia in 1949, at the age of 31. John and Philip retired as editors and administrators (while continuing as contributors) in the 1960s. Vero did not retire.

He was effectively the proprietor, always ready to listen to other opinions, but using his prestige and charisma, and control of the funds, to make decisions for Freedom Press on his own, when he thought it appropriate. He had after all started *Spain and the World* on his own. There are two ways of making collective decisions. One is for a group to meet and decide by consensus or majority voting. The other is for an individual to say "I propose to do such-and-such, and I invite others to join me". Vero preferred consensus, but refused decisions he could not accept. However, he was not the boss. All who worked with him were unpaid volunteers, over whom he had no control.

In 1968, changes in printing technology meant that Express Printers was no longer viable as a business. At the same time, the lease expired on Freedom Press's temporary premises in Fulham. Vero borrowed the money to purchase 84b Whitechapel High Street (across Angel Alley from Express Printers at 84a), in his own name because no-one would lend to Freedom Press. He personally owned 84b until 1982. Then 84a was sold to the Whitechapel Art Gallery, some loans paid off, and others, including the loan from Vero himself, converted to outright gifts. Vero then transferred ownership of the premises to Friends of Freedom Press Limited, registered at Companies House as a company which does not trade.

Vero was editor of *Freedom* until 1965, when he handed over to the first of a succession of editorial collectives. In 1987 he was dissatisfied with the way *Freedom* was going, and resumed editorship in 1988, until he handed over again in 1996.

Anarchy, the Freedom Press monthly edited by Colin Ward from 1961, was (I think) Colin's own idea, but the initiative for the current Freedom Press quarterly was Vero's. Early in 1986 he invited a couple of anarchist academics to edit it. A year later, he learned that they had not yet begun collecting copy for the first issue, and invited two other anarchist academics, Nicolas Walter and Heiner Becker, to take over. The name *The Raven* was proposed by Becker.



Pasting up an issue of Freedom in the late 1980s

1915-2001

In prison in 1945 Vero, an accomplished violinist, organised a band of fellow inmate musicians. After his release he took up photography, and on one day in 1947 took the only known portrait photographs of his friend George Orwell. In the late 1960s he took over a small-holding near Colchester and made his living for thirty years as an organic market gardener, supplying 'health food' shops.

Following the death of his companion Peta Hewetson in 1997, Vero retired to Hadleigh and became something of a recluse, but he continued to work for Freedom Press, as accountant and treasurer, until the day before his death. He was found collapsed, and taken to hospital where he died, on 10th December 2001. As Philip Sansom once said, "if Richards had not started *Spain and the World*, the whole history of modern British anarchism might have been not just different but non-existent".

Donald Room

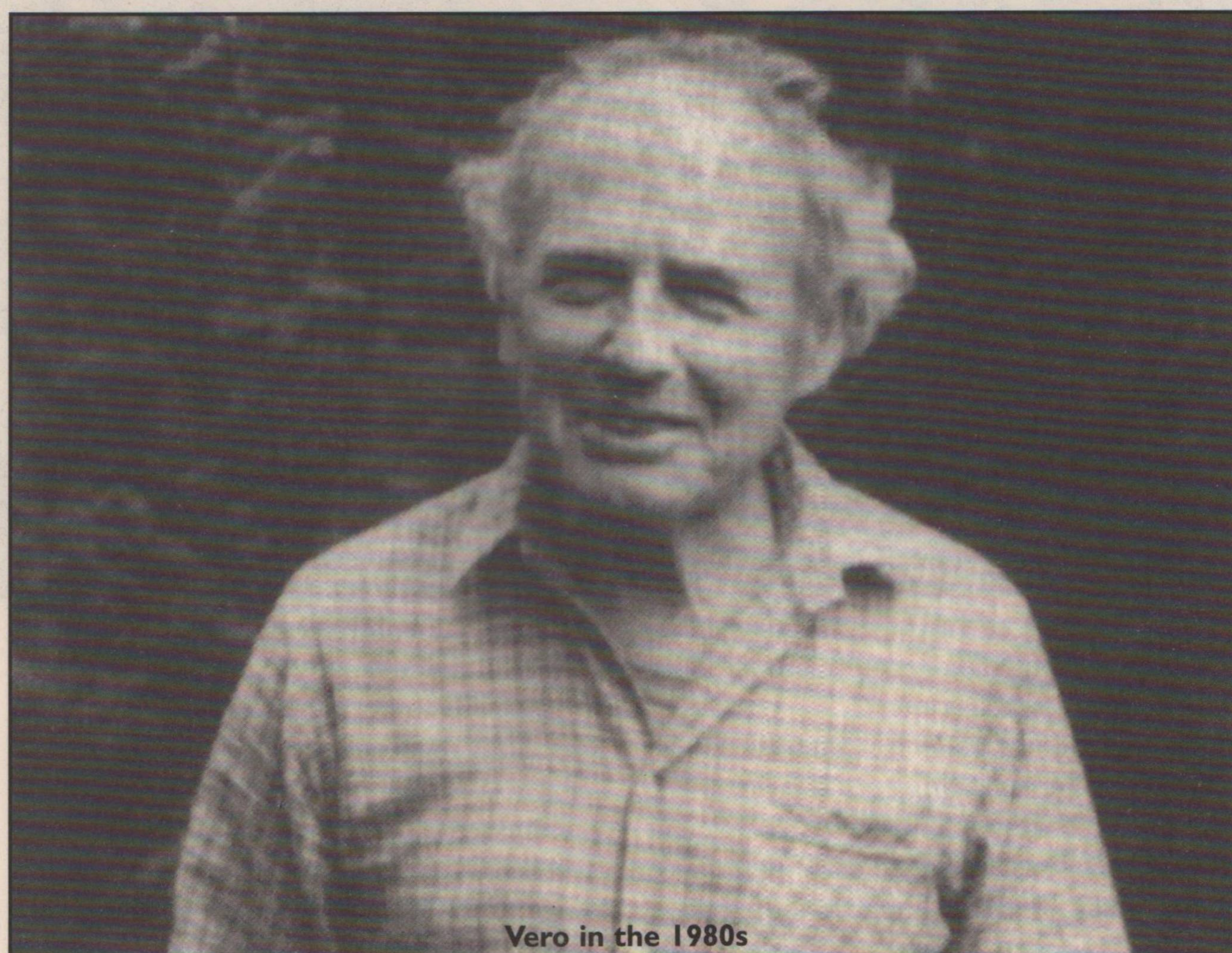
● One of the happiest aspects of the time that Vero spent in prison, following the Freedom trial of 1945, was the chance it gave him to resume playing the violin, and indeed, to form a scratch band with other incarcerated musicians. In his Soho childhood, where he had the freedom of the streets from infancy, he had been taught by John Barbirolli's uncle, had performed in the orchestral repertoire as a boy, and had attended Toscanini's great Beethoven concerts at the Queen's Hall in the late 1930s, persuading the maestro to sign his programme. Friends regretted that he never played again after his release.

And although he had his degree in civil engineering, he never returned to that field either, saying that the one thing he learned in prison was the folly of pursuing a 'career'. He picked up a livelihood running his mother's business until it could be sold in the changed Soho climate of the 1950s, as a freelance photographer and gardener, and as a travel courier to both Franco's Spain and Brezhnev's USSR, convinced that the links formed by tourism were a liberatory influence, opening closed frontiers. From 1968, he and Peta Hewetson produced vegetables for the organic market from their smallholding in Suffolk.

He continued to edit *Freedom* as a weekly publication until 1964, and it was not until the 1990s that he finally stopped writing for it. By this time, Freedom Press had an incredible range of books in print. This was his achievement, and during the 1950s he wrote in weekly instalments (the product of solitary Sunday nights with a bottle of Valpolicella handy), his continually reprinted and translated *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*.

Looking for the source of his single-minded life's work of maintaining an anarchist presence in British publishing, friends assumed that he had been set in motion by his father. But I once heard him dismissing his father contemptuously as a "bourgeois terrorist". The anarchist who influenced him most was Malatesta.

In his single-minded devotion to anarchist publishing, he was a ruthless exploiter of others. Of the exceptional group he had inspired in the 1940s, George Woodcock, Philip Sansom and John Hewetson, none were on speaking terms with him at the time of their deaths, while he, unable to recognise himself as a manipulator, saw their withdrawal from his circle as proof that they had been seduced by capitalist values.



Vero in the 1980s

When Freedom Press published his four books of photographs at the end of the 1990s, an unexpected addition to the celebration came from the Catalan village of L'Escala. Vero began taking holidaymakers to this (then poverty-stricken) village in 1957, and started photographing its inhabitants and their lives. In 1999, the Centre for Catalan Studies produced an album of his pictures, which for the local families had become a precious record of their grandparents, their dignity and hard times.

Colin Ward

● My lasting memories of Vernon Richards are as a visitor who was always welcomed with enthusiasm into his living room, and of a man who had lived and to whom mere existence was a poor substitute for really living. As he recounted his experiences and expounded his philosophy of 'doing' rather than 'observing', it was clear he was proud of his achievements, and he implored others not to waste their time, to enjoy worthwhile and varied experiences and to share them with others.

He had positive things to say about the people he knew in his Suffolk community, some of whom he encountered through doing a Sunday morning paper round throughout the 1980s and 1990s. This made him, along with Arthur Holmes, his colleague in the venture, possibly the oldest paperboy in the county. This weekly activity became more arduous as the years went on. The so-called quality newspapers expanded into huge, multi-sectioned parcels which took forever to put together (this was done in Arthur's garage around 5.30am in the morning), and which couldn't fit through a letterbox in one go. Doing the round may also have helped Vernon stay aware of events and the way the media described them.

As the principles of Thatcherism, neglecting public services and encouraging profit-making in every social exchange, became deeply entrenched in British society, Vernon never failed to point out how insane the pursuit of wealth can become. Quite sensibly, he saw through the seductive appeal of modern technology and recognised its tendency to make people less happy, as well as poorer. Equally, the notion of a career, in the sense of doing one thing all one's working life, was a modern pressure which did not merit any thinking person's attention.

Perhaps what most colours the legacy of this practical – as well as ideological – man

is the verve and lucidity with which he put his ideas and feelings across, whether on aesthetics, social wrongs or the people around him. Many can testify to his cantankerous steamrolling over anyone else's opinion, but surely none can contest that, in print, in photographs and in person, Vernon Richards was a great communicator.

Ben Ward

● Freedom Press is unique among radical publishers, not only in the sheer length of its publishing history or in that there is a continuous line traceable all the way back to 1886, but that there are so few principal links in that line. Peter Kropotkin and Charlotte Wilson, Alfred Marsh and Tom Keell, Lilian Wolfe and Vero Richards – these six people link 1886 and 2001. There are many others of course, vital unsung heroes and heroines without whom Freedom Press and the anarchist movement could not have survived in Britain, but these six stand out.

Vero rebuilt Freedom Press as a young man (it had survived only fitfully since the death of Tom Keell in 1927), beginning with *Spain and the World* in 1936 (which became the current *Freedom* on his release from prison in 1945). He remained as editor until the 1960s, after which he was the main fundraiser for the whole organisation. This was a

role he remained in until his death. Without his contacts among anarchists and sympathisers at home and abroad, the press would not have survived. Many of these friends felt as great a loyalty to Vero himself as they did to *Freedom* the newspaper or to Freedom Press the publishers.

I am sure that Vero would not have countenanced any memoir of him that did not include at least a passing reference to Lilian Wolfe. She had been Tom Keell's companion, and was the one figure linking *Freedom* in its activities against the First World War with the activities of *War Commentary* against the Second. She rejoined Freedom Press in the 1940s, after her retirement from paid employment, and stayed until the late 1960s when she left to take up other voluntary jobs at War Resisters International and the National Council for Civil Liberties. By then she was in her 90s!

My own memories of Vero date back to 1965. I came to Freedom Press, first as a volunteer, then took over the running of the bookshop part-time for 11 years, then finally as a full-time worker in the shop. All the while, Vero was there to ensure that the books were balanced and the pamphlets and books published.

I did not agree with every publishing decision he made, nor with all the things he did behind the scenes. But during my years at the press until I left in 1983, he was often under such irrational and ill-informed criticism from others within the anarchist movement that I always felt compelled to remain silent. In truth this silence was not so difficult, as I recognised then (as I do to this day) the overwhelming contribution Vero made to anarchist propaganda. He never, by the way, felt the word 'propaganda' to be in the least tainted, so perhaps nor should we.

It is ironic that I finally left *Freedom* as the result of a disagreement with him. I would happily take flak from anyone else, but I could not take it from him, for whom I had (and have) more respect than for anyone else in the movement. It was one of the satisfactions of my own life that the 1990s saw a reconciliation between us, and my companion and I visited him occasionally at his new home in Hadleigh to share a drink and to talk over old times and old friends.

In his *Freedom* obituary of Lilian Wolfe, Vero wrote that her "long life was all of a piece". The same could be said with equal truth of his. Nobody remained so staunchly committed to anarchism, to freedom, and to *Freedom* from the very earliest years to the very end.

Jim Huggon

Vero was proud of his achievements. The best memorial we can give him is to continue the work of Freedom Press and expand the circulation of its products. Books by Vero himself, currently in print, include the influential *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* (£4.00), *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy* (£2.00), and *Protest Without Illusions* (£3.00). He compiled and edited the popular collection *Why Work?* (£4.95), *Violence and Anarchism*, which consisted of letters responding to his *Freedom* editorial 'Too bad he missed', about the attempted assassination of Dr Verwoerd, prime minister of South Africa, in 1960 (£2.50), two collections of the work of Malatesta, *Life and Ideas* (£5.00) and *The Anarchist Revolution* (£3.50), a collection of articles by Marie-Louise Berneri entitled *Neither East Nor West* (£4.50), and collections of articles from the paper under its various names, *Spain 1936-1939* (£5.00), *British Imperialism and the Palestine Crisis* (£1.95), *The Left and World War II* (£1.95), *Neither Nationalisation nor Privatisation* (£1.95). Anonymously, he edited many other collections, including *The May Days Barcelona 1937* (£5.95), *Deep Ecology and Anarchism* (£2.95), and *What is Anarchism? an introduction* (£2.95). He provided a new translation of Malatesta's *Anarchy* (£2.95).

One of the anti-war books published by Freedom Press during the war has been reprinted: *The March to Death*, cartoons by John Olday with quotations selected (anonymously) by Marie Louise Berneri (£3.00).

After Vero's partial retirement, Freedom Press relented its rule to publish only explicitly anarchist work, and issued four books (at Vero's personal cost) of his magnificent photographs: *George Orwell at Home*, with essays on Orwell by Nicolas Walter and Colin Ward (£6.95), *A Weekend Photographer's Notebook* (£6.95), *A Part-time Photographer's Portrait Gallery* (£6.95), and *Beauty is More Than In the Eye of the Beholder* (£6.95).

Donald Room

All the books listed are available from bookshops or direct from Freedom Press (post free in the UK, elsewhere add 15% payment with order in pounds sterling only please.

Bullshit: an introduction



Obsessive fussiness and meaningless ritual – British army spit and polish

Australian soldiers in the First World War were so amused by British Army spit and polish that they dubbed it Bullshit. Since then, the word has entered the language to indicate an obsessive fussiness with appearance or the emptiness of meaningless speech.

Bullshit represents the ritual observance of dominant/submissive relationships. It is the natural product of hierarchical organisation. Bullshit is occupied with outward appearance. Obsessed with surface cleanliness, it has scant regard for the inner and deeper aspects of life. Bullshit is hostile to diversity and difference. Its efficiency destroys variety and it imposes a rigid conformity of life. Reasoned thought is displaced by the imposition of a compulsive behaviour on to its subjects. And since bullshit aims to govern behaviour by sets of rules, it is ill-prepared to take on the unexpected. Bullshit asks nothing of initiative and imagination. Continual practice breeds a malicious

conservative-driven virus. Highly resistant to change, the virus rapidly locks the user into rigid patterns of behaviour.

The attraction of bullshit is that it is active in allaying personal anxiety. The values of tidiness and punctuality make for an efficient use of one's time. Better to dress with pride than go out looking as though you dressed in front of a propeller. Yet once these values step into the orbit of conformity, the orderliness becomes the anxiety itself.

The big fashion houses, with their outward display of logo, are geared to sustain the need for symbols. Logos give to the wearer an instant structure of outward meaning. With its corporate presentation for all to see, the logo sells an illusionary spirit of individualism. But the logo is deceiving the wearer. By reducing personal creativity, the fashion house increases the consumer's dependence on itself. The logo controls the wearer. Fashionable logos are merely the commercial tradition of the old institutional

dominant/submissive axis.

Bullshit manufactures constraint. The clues, as ever, are to be found in language. Many linguistic registers are confined to certain subjects. Listen in to conversations in the hairdressers, the canteens or on the chat shows. Over and over, the same narrow range of topics is repeated. Anxiety is being allayed by predictable topics that have clear boundaries of meaning. Such talk is essentially outward. Empty noise with no room for reflection. Speech that won't open dialogues with meanings other than its own.

All official languages carry around dollops of bullshit. Some more than others. Riddled with authoritative words and phrases, official languages are designed to induce conformity. They are there to pull you into their own orbit of influence. But do not make the error of presuming official languages to exist only in the law courts and parliaments. They don't by any means. Listen in to the earnest genre of hardline feminism or the drone of class

analysis. These languages are as equally hostile to registers other than their own.

Be particularly suspect of the bullshit pervading the bone-crunching bureaucracy we are all forced to live under. We are at the mercy of officials who believe that the quality of every activity can be policed through the language of computerised tick-forms. Any voice relying on hard unemotional measurement is a voice destructive of dialogue.

As soon as a speaker takes on a single-voiced language, then the conformity kicks in. The virus is seeded. Initiative is destroyed. Personal responsibility deflected. Creativity diminished. The off-chance of a dialogue rich in meaning and diversity is snuffed out.

Bruce Semen

This article is taken from the current issue of *The Cunningham Amendment, Journal of the East Pennine Anarcrisps*, available for stamps/donation from 1005, Huddersfield Road, Bradford BD12 8LP

Marking time

*Now the New Year reviving old desires,
The thoughtful soul to solitude retires.*

So the Persian poet Omar Khayyam had it, and it has been true for this thoughtful spirit. And I wonder, why do we as anarchists go along with counting the years in numbers which are based on some dubious dating of mythological events we do not believe in, and whose effects on humanity and history we abhor?

The newness of the millenium gives us a chance to get real, and to spread some realisation at the same time. Instead of the Christian count of 2002AD, we should adopt and spread 0002AGE – year 0002 of the American Global Empire. With its global

policing, as in Afghanistan, America has spread its forces into the territory of the old USSR for the first time. They are conquering China by capitalism and trade, a soft shoe shuffle. Where is there in the world that American influence is not dominant?

And, in similar vein, why don't we celebrate the births or deaths of our significant precursors? What about a Proudhon Day, or Kropotkin, or Malatesta, or Bakunin, or ... well, whoever we think is or was notable. And we could have April as the first All Fools' Day, when anarchists dress up and pretend to be ordinary people. Hey, perhaps Freedom Press should do its own calendar next year?

Colin Johnson

2002: Happy Jubilee, Ma'am Prince Charles, take note

Enraged that he could not marry the woman he loved, in June 2001 Crown Prince Dipendra of Nepal murdered eleven members of the Nepalese royal family – including his parents King Birendra and Queen Aiswarya – before turning the gun on himself. Prince Charles, please take note.



The 2002 Class War Anti-Jubilee Calendar is available from the Freedom Press Bookshop for £6.60 (if ordering by post please include 10% inland, 20% overseas for p&p)

Viewpoints

NO GOOD LAWS?

The European Commission is proposing new measures against racism and xenophobia throughout the European Union. The new offences, carrying a two-year prison sentence, are defined according to the German legal code (the strictest in the EU) and, once adopted by the Council of Ministers, would not require primary legislation in the UK.

My question is, are there some laws which anarchists should support? Can we endorse the EU criminalising "aversion to individuals or groups" on the basis of a "race, colour, descent, religion or belief, national or ethnic origin"?

I have no sympathy with racism or other forms of prejudice. But nor, usually, would I have any sympathy for legislation enacted over our heads by politicians and bureaucrats in Brussels or London.

So, should we oppose these new moves? Or should we just let the state get on with its business, as it seems to be targeting the 'right' people?

R

HOMELESSNESS FIX

As Blair's bombs fell on Afghanistan, the PM's spin-doctors were launching an offensive against the homeless in the UK. Under the leadership of the Princess of Poverty Pimps (Homelessness Tsar) Louise Casey, the government had set March 2002 as the date when it would announce the homelessness problem had been solved. On 15th November, the official Rough Sleepers Unit held a national headcount of the homeless. Early last month, they announced that there were only 264 people sleeping rough in Greater London, and a total of 532 in the whole of England. This included just one person in Sheffield and two in Birmingham.

But stories came in thick and fast from the

streets and from institutions about how the count was fixed. There were reports of concerted police harassment on that night, all-night parties at some hostels and no-eviction policies being introduced at others. Confirmations soon flowed in from governmental workers and shelters, unable to go public for fear of losing jobs or funding.

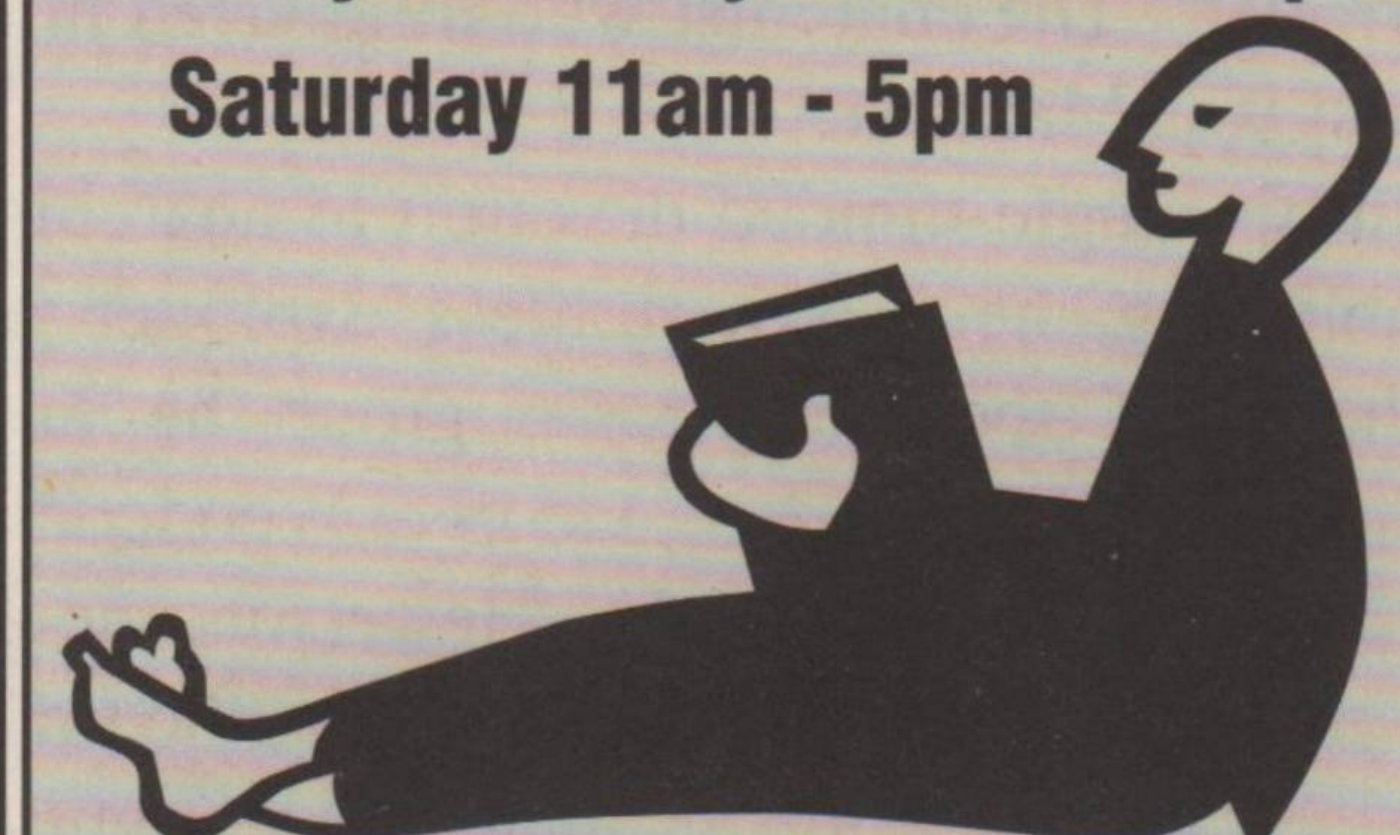
As the exposé continues, it is clear that the Blair spin, which has already been employed to cover the slow death of children under sanctions in Iraq and the indiscriminate death of non-combatants, UN and Red Cross staff and POWs in Afghanistan, knows no boundaries.

Ciaran O'Reilly

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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.

What we say ...

Remembering Vero

If today we fall without compromising, we can be sure of victory tomorrow.

The big Euro yawn

Will any anarchist be more than apathetic about the arrival of the Euro? It'll make life easier for travellers and traders between Euro-zone countries, no doubt. But on a deeper political level, we can't get excited by what is essentially a cosmetic change to the most obvious reminder of our slave status – the amount of money we have in our pockets.

Money in capitalism is the symbol of power relationships. If you're rich, you have a lot of power. If you're poor, you don't. Anyone who tells you different is wrong. That's why apathy towards the Euro is the anarchist response.

Of course, the new currency is also a concerted effort by some bosses to increase their power and prestige at the expense of other ones. The single currency is a political project, designed to drive onwards to the goal of a new European state.

Some anarchists get very upset at this. We don't. Whether the state that rules us is British or European is, to us, immaterial (since either would be equally repressive).

Anarchists are not nationalists, as most opponents of 'closer integration' are. It's just that the affairs of states are not (necessarily) our affairs. The Euro is a private arrangement for Europe's bosses. It is none of our concern.

Tears in Argentina

The Argentinian government of the moment (the fifth in two weeks, at the last count) is mired in a problem which seems intractable. Unpeg the peso from the dollar and risk the hyperinflation of the 1980s. Stay with it, and stagnate. Caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, neither's looking good. The problem has a name. It's called capitalism.

The economy, once one of the biggest in the world, is suffering the effects of massive borrowing from international banks as far back as the 1970s. Then the banks were after what they will always be after, profit. The Argentinian bosses were after what they will always be after, power. The Argentinian people are reaping the whirlwind of the bosses' greed all those years ago. They are victims of circumstances not of their making.

Maybe the strong new government, which bourgeois commentators are praying for, will be found. But we doubt it would do the trick.

If the people of Argentina are prepared, even now, to put up with a system that leaves them destitute through no fault of their own, there will be nothing for them but blood, toil, tears and sweat.

But if they show, as they have begun to, a real resistance to capitalism and its politicians, then maybe they'll do what people in Spain did in the 1930s. They might prove that freedom isn't an abstract idea, buried in the pages of a book. They might bring it alive, for all the world to see.

No more prisons

The struggle against the institution of imprisonment is an indissoluble part of our fight for human freedom. Where should anarchists direct their efforts, if not there? Nick S. (in this paper) and others (in groups such as Haven Distribution, CAGE, APLAN and Brighton ABC) have worked tirelessly to put the fight against imprisonment at the centre of our activities. There is a chance now to build on their work. Go to the prisons conference, if you can. Support it, if you can. Above all, get involved.

Readers' letters

Editorial policy

Dear *Freedom*,

Freedom is to be commended for opposing the (authoritarian feminist-inspired) anti-sexuality of the 1980s, and its irrational opposition to pornography. Commendably, it also supported the free availability and informed use or non-use of recreational and psycho-experimental substances. But it has always dodged debating many other unpopular or taboo issues in any sort of depth.

In the last issue, you said that you aim to be "a paper for the whole movement" (editorial, 15th December), but that editorially you will "try not to say things that other anarchists might object to". If you start to reflect wider opinion, that will hardly be possible. There probably isn't a single thing that one anarchist might say that another anarchist won't object to. The editorial comment quoted above also says, "anarchists reject capitalism for many reasons". Does a numerically substantial body of anarcho-capitalists not figure in "the whole movement" you aim to reflect?

I'm uneasy myself about the ongoing evils of capitalism and the way it is presently practised – but I am equally disturbed about how socialism and communism have been historically manifested. Neither anarcho-capitalism nor anarcho-communism have ever really been put to any substantial long-term experimental test.

Dave Cunliffe

Go with the flow?

Dear *Freedom*,

I would like to thank Donald Room for his steady hand and cool head on the matter of anarchist principles ('Tactics or Principles',

15th December). I agree totally that anarchism is based on positive ideas. I think I may have been a little confused because we see so little discussion of these positive ideas in *Freedom*.

As for Francis Ellingham's confusing response to me (letters, 1st December), I can only leave it for others to unravel. Perhaps it would help if he could define 'personhood'. And I think we will not be misled by his attempt to create a god from something which is 'not a thing' but is not 'no thing'. Energy is a thing, it exists in waveforms and (at boundary conditions) it changes into matter and vice versa. So no god there then, Francis.

As for 'going with the flow', oh dear. The general nature of anarchism and anarchists is that they go against the flow, or stand against it. We don't follow the flow of authorities, or wars, or many other things. Has Francis tried *Hindu Weekly*?

Colin Johnson

Saint Max

Dear *Freedom*,

I bow to nobody in claiming a Stirnerite individualist anarchist position, and in as far as you can argue for it, everything must be tactical. However, I have been unable to envisage an anarchist state, so I feel perfectly safe in advocating a probably syndicalist solution for everyday life, realising I might have to move around a bit to find a hole I might fit in – somewhere with as little rule by as many people as we can get.

Donald Room and Clifford Harper ('Tactics or Principles', 15th December) both fall into a trap of wish-fulfilment which Stirner himself couldn't avoid. There is no reason to be confident an individualist, anarchist or

otherwise, will safeguard or recognise other individualisms.

Paul Campbell

Fact, not fiction

Dear *Freedom*,

I thought about *Health Service Wildcat** the other day, when the news was describing how some NHS Trusts had reduced their waiting lists. When I collaborated with Donald Room on that book in 1994, I had thought of one thing that was later done – taking everybody off the list who didn't respond by return of post. But even I never thought of deliberately sending the appointment when the patients were on holiday! If we'd done that, nobody would have believed it. Now, while it's still incredible, it's also true. Best wishes for 2002.

Victoria N. Furmurry

* *Health Service Wildcat*, drawn by Donald Room, scripts by Victoria N. Furmurry, Freedom Press, £1.95 post free in the UK, 30p p&p elsewhere.

Christmas trip

Dear *Freedom*,

I was interested to read Mark's account of his mistletoe trip (back page, 15th December). I seem to remember that the plant is becoming increasingly rare in the wild, so I hope *Freedom* readers were sparing in their use of it. I hope nobody tried the plastic version!

Richard

Correspondents are asked to keep their letters short. Letters may be cut for reasons of space.

Donations

9th Dec 2001 to 4th Jan 2002

Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund

Oban, BW, £6; Barrow-in-Furness, HG, £1; Abingdon, MB, £18; Tewkesbury, PS, £11; Archaracle, GS, £18; Hadleigh, VR, £8; Dalry, FG, £1; Stockport, DW, £9; Aldershot, GB, £3; Poole, JAP, £4; Washington, DF, £17; Belper, JS, £1; Dudley, AM, £3; Clacton, PC, £5; Ashworth, MD, £95; Lewes, BM, £9; Liverpool, PH, £54; Pinner, RO-M, £2; London SW6, NC, £7; Manchester, MV, £4; Castle Douglas, MA, £10; Keighley, RG, £4; Thames Ditton, JJP, £1; Pwllheli, MJ, £13; Bury, TS, £6; London E10, MB, £3; Plymouth, Massachusetts, JB, £8; Luton, AL, £10; Farnham, L&ST, £3; Romford, SG, £3; Chester, SC, £3; Upminster, IP, £9.

Total to 4th January = £349.00

Grand total for 2001 = £1,378.00

Freedom Press Overheads Fund

Cambridge, AG, £6; Oban, BW, £5; Dover, MF, £2; Abingdon, MB, £18; Tewkesbury, PS, £11; Acharacle, GS, £18; Hadleigh, VR, £10; Stockport, DW, £9; Aldershot, GB, £3; Washington, DF, £16; Dudley, AM, £3; Clacton, PC, £5; Lewes, BM, £8; Crawcrook, PR, £6; Pinner, RO-M, £2; London SW6, NC, £6; Manchester, MV, £4; Newport, RA, £6; Rochester, RB, £6; Keighley, RG, £4; Pwllheli, MJ, £13; Queenborough, RM, £6; Bury, TS, £5; London E10, MB, £3; Luton, AL, £10; Romford, SG, £3; Chester, SC, £3; Upminster, IP, £8; Manchester, MV, £5.

Total to 4th January = £204.00

Grand total for 2001 = £2,590.00

Raven Deficit Fund

Abingdon, MB, £18; Hadleigh, VR, £8; Stockport,

DW, £8; Alicante, JH, £4; Lewes, BM, £9; Pinner, RO-M, £2; London SW6, NC, £7; Keighley, RG, £4; Plymouth, Massachusetts, JB, £8; Farnham, L&ST, £3; Upminster, IP, £9.

Total to 4th January = £80.00

Grand total for 2001 = £771.00

COPY DEADLINE

The next issue of *Freedom* will be dated 26th January, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be Thursday 17th January.

Contributions can be sent to us at FreedomCopy@aol.com

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SUPPORT BAYO OMOYIOLA DEMO

Monday 21st January at 9.30am in Salford
 Bayo Omoiola has an unresolved immigration case and will appear before an adjudicator at the Immigration Court, Aldine House, New Bailey Street, Salford M3. We object to his deportation on the grounds of Bayo's length of residence, contribution and deep roots in Liverpool.
 Bayo Omoiola Campaign, c/o UNISON, 8 Victoria Street, Liverpool L2 6QJ • tel 0151 236 1944
 email Bayo.Omoiola.Campaign@ncadc.org

NORTH LONDON MAYDAY FESTIVAL

Planning meeting on Tuesday 22nd January 7.30pm at Marchmont Community Centre
 We want to make the week of Mayday 2002 a festival of local activities in North London with parties, bike rides, public meetings, films, gigs, actions and activities, fun and festivities. Come along and discuss how we are going to make the week around Mayday a real festival in our streets and communities. If you have ideas, want to help or share inspiration and support, link up with others involved.
 The Marchmont Community Centre is at Marchmont Street, London WC1.
 email londonmayday@yahoo.co.uk

NETWORK FOR SUCCESS!

26th January at 2pm • Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS
 The Networking Newsletter Project is holding a major networking event funded by the Acorn Trust to bring together groups and individuals working on every area of social justice, from neighbours working for cleaner streets to animal rights protesters, from asylum seeker support groups to the Ramblers, from NGOs to the smallest, poorest groups.
<http://www.networkingnewsletter.org.uk>

PRISON ABOLITION CONFERENCE

Saturday 26th January from 10.30am to 5pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1
 This conference is being organised to put prison abolition back on the agenda. Some speakers have been arranged, but emphasis on the day will be on discussion.
 contact: Prison Abolition Conference, c/o BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX
prisonabolition@hotmail.com

FASLANE: THE BIG BLOCKADE

11th to 13th February at Faslane Peace Camp
 Join us for three days of protest and nonviolent action at the Trident base on the Clyde, just thirty miles north of Glasgow. On Monday 11th February we will begin with a mass blockade of the base from 7am. On Tuesday 12th, join the jericho rumpus with din and mayhem from 10am. Bring drums, whistles, etc. On Wednesday 13th the invitation to a valentine's ball at noon goes to all those who love this planet and are willing to dress up to prove it. Plus nonviolent direct action every day. Come to all or any of the times during the three-day period.
 There will be overnight accommodation close to Faslane from Saturday 9th to Thursday 14th February.
 action line: 0845 4588361 • big_blockade@hotmail.com

INTERNATIONAL ALTERNATIVE BOOKFAIR IN BELGIUM

Saturday 9th March • 10am to 8pm
 Intercultureel Centrum 'De Centrale', Kraankinderstraat 2, 9000 Gent, Belgium
 After the enthusiastic reactions of both stallholders and visitors to our first bookfair, we're pleased to announce our second International Alternative Bookfair in Belgium.
 Stalls from Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland. Also meetings, art happenings, videos, exhibitions, etc.
 Followed by a gig from 9pm onwards
 contact: aboekenbeurs@yahoo.com
 website: <http://www.Xs4all.be/~verdan/aboek>

RED RAMBLES 2002

Red Rambles is a group who meet in Derbyshire and the Peak District. Anyone from a left libertarian background is welcome.
Sunday 7th April at 11am
 Meet outside the Hurt Arms Public House, Ambergate, Derbyshire, for a five mile circular walk through Shining Cliff Woods in springtime. Walk leader Mike.
 for more information call 07775 977136
 or email ain@ziplip.com

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YOUNG ANARCHISTS MEETING

Saturday 12th January at 12 noon, Holborn
 Meeting to form a new group for all young anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist activists. Meet at 12 noon sharp outside Holborn tube station (on the Kingsway), moving off shortly after. We are interested in campaigning against the so-called war on terrorism and would like to organise our own events for Mayday and participate in the actions against the Queen's Jubilee in June.
 for more information email saggymail@hushmail.com

SOUTH LONDON ACTION GROUP

Saturday 12th January at 4.30pm
56a Crampton Street • Elephant & Castle
 SLAG has been set up to provide networking opportunities for people who are, or want to be, involved in supporting anti-capitalist, non-hierarchical actions in South London.
 for more information call 07950 818296
 see www.slagfest.org.uk

NEWBURY ANNIVERSARY MEETING

Sunday 13th January at 11am
Northcroft Lane (by the leisure centre), Newbury
 'Local Voices' in Newbury will be commemorating the sixth anniversary of the beginning of the 'Battle of the Trees' to prevent construction of the Newbury Bypass.
 for more information call 01635 47437

ASYLUM FOR ANWAR DHOLAN CAMPAIGN

Monday 14th January at 9.30am
203 Dukes Green, Hatton Cross, Feltham, Middx
 We are asking for your support in the case of Mohammed Anwar Dholan, a well-known Pakistani high court lawyer, socialist and human rights campaigner, who sought asylum here in the UK in 1999.
<http://www.ncadc.org.uk/anwar.dholan.campaign.html>
 for more information Anwar.Dholan.Campaign@ncadc.org.uk

AFGHAN PLIGHT NIGHT BENEFIT

Saturday 19th January at Cardiff Coal Exchange
 Cardiff Bothered, a collective of people in South Wales, have organised this 12-hour benefit gig for the Red Cross Aghanistan Appeal. The line-up features a host of local and national bands, DJs and performers from all over the country from 2pm to 2am. Confirmed acts include: Blue Horses, Zion Train Sound System, Alabama Three's D. Wayne Love and Larry Love, Nik Turner's All Stars, Doofer, Agent J, Captain Paranoid and the Delusions, Gringoska, Quattro, Nation Record's Charged and Fun-da-mental (DJ set), plus many more.
 for more information contact Nasia Sarwar at 07973 478 967
 email Nasia at afghan_plight_night@hotmail.com
www.afghanplightnight.com