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Bulletin of Anarchist Research

**November
1987 no. 12**

Announcing
HW 21

HISTORY WORKSHOP
*21 Newcastle Upon Tyne,
20/22 November 1987*

*The programme, so far confirmed, for
the Anarchism stream is:*

*Andrew Whitehead -- Dan Chatterton
and His Atheistic, Communistic
Scorcher*

*Phil Ruff -- The Social-Democratic
Outrages in London, 1909-1911*

*Nigel Todd -- The Clousden Hill Free
Communist and Co-operative Colony*

*Paul Salvesson -- The Daisy Colony
(Blackpool)*

*Richard Bircumshaw -- Libertarian
Communism in Pedralba, 1936*

*John Shotton -- Children Against the
State*

*Gareth Bellaby -- Bakunin on
Revolutionary Organizations*

*Malcolm Hornsby -- Friendly
Societies, Co-ops, Trade Unions and
Direct Democracy*

Andy Pratt -- The Control of Space

*Ros Gill -- The Media, Ideology and
Anarchism*

*John Clark -- "Bakunin and the
Problem of Power"*

*John Clark has taken some extra
trouble to come to Newcastle.
Support and a welcome would be
appreciated.*

*Registration fees: £8 waged, £1.50
unwaged.*

*All registrations and enquiries
should be sent to:*

HW21
Tyneside History Workshop Centre
Newcastle Trades Council
4 The Cloth Market
Newcastle Upon Tyne

Anarchist Research Group

Our most recent meeting was a delightful excursion into the details of Malatesta's life in London during the 1890s. Virtually nothing has been published in English about or by him, so most of us were extremely grateful for Carl Levy's contribution. It would be impossible to summarise the talk, and several of us urged Carl to get some of this intriguing information into print as soon as possible. I shall not attempt to trace the changes and development of Malatesta's ideas and practice, nor trace the intricacies of his social connections, but my favourite pieces of trivia were the names of the two agents who followed Malatesta around for years, reporting directly to the Italian Prime Minister, Dante and Virgil. I also learned that an anarchist, Silvio Corio was the partner of Sylvia Pankhurst, and father of Richard P...not everyone knows that. There were ten of us at the meeting, including four people who had never come before. Although the attendance is never awesome, we seemed reasonably certain that the meetings are well worth attending. Afterwards we adjourned to the Italian (appropriate?) cafe near Goodge St. tube for more conversation. Anyone who knows another good cafe (in the immediate area) we can use after the porter boots us out is urged to pass on this information.

The next meeting will take place on 17 January in the same place at 2.00. The location can be found by going to Senate House, University of London, the tall white building on Malet St. The porter in the Institute for Historical Research, on the ground floor, will direct you through the building if you ask where the "anarchist group" meets. In the next issue of BAR, which should be published just before 23 December, or just after 3 January will have details of topics and meetings for the next few months. ARG will, of course, have an informal meeting during the two days of the History Workshop in Newcastle, details of which are elsewhere in this issue.

REVIEWS

by Winnie the Pooh
Murray Bookchin, The Modern Crisis (1986, New Society Publishers and, in Canada, Black Rose Books, ISBN 0-86571-084-8, \$7.95).

This collection of essays constitutes both an extended footnote to Bookchin's Ecology of Freedom and a prolegomena to his latest opus, The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship. Bookchin attempts to flesh out an ecological ethic, to clarify the basic tenets of social ecology, and to develop a personalistic conception of moral economy which he opposes to the market economy that he sees as an all-devouring cancer destroying both the Earth and human community. Despite his turgid prose he does put forward some new ideas forming a useful addition to his earlier work.

Bookchin, The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship. (1987, Sierra Club Books, ISBN 0-87156-706-7, \$22.95, cloth only.) This is Bookchin's most substantial book since The Ecology of Freedom, an extended historical narrative tracing the development of civic freedoms and democracy which Bookchin opposes to "republicanism" (i.e. parliamentarianism) and the nation-state. The preliterate organic commune of The Ecology of Freedom has been replaced by the Athenian polis as Bookchin moves away from the generous utopianism of Fourier to a celebration of artisan traditions of self-sufficiency very reminiscent of Proudhon. In his concluding chapter, where he sketches out a programme for a new libertarian municipalism, he actually cites Proudhon's People's Bank as a possible model for civic reform, leaving the impression that he is nothing more than a latter day Paul Brousse as he attempts to create a political practice out of his abstract theoretics. Nevertheless, it's provocative reading.

Thom Holterman & Henc van Maarseveen, eds., Law and Anarchism (1984, Black Rose Books, ISBN 0-919619-08-8, \$12.95). This is a very uneven collection of essays ranging from the analytic to the bizarre. The most preposterous, badly written and argued piece is Holterman's, in which he attempts the impossible, an anarchist theory of law and the state as positive institutions. Michael

Taylor's essay on social order in stateless societies is positively elegant in comparison, and one of the few essays, along with those by Carter on direct action, Cahm on Kropotkin, and Reichert on Proudhon, worth reading. The remainder is jurisprudential sophistry.

David Hall, Eros and Irony: A Prelude to Philosophical Anarchism (1982, State University of New York Press, ISBN 0-87395-586-2). The subtitle of this book is very misleading, for by "philosophical anarchism" Hall means nothing more than a metaphysical position that denies that there are any inherent ordering principles in the universe, an anarchism even more abstract and intellectual than Paul Feyerabend's. Hall's main preoccupation is to rehabilitate mysticism and aestheticism as part of our "cultural sensorium." The appeal of this book will largely be limited to professional philosophers familiar with Whitehead, Dewey and Taoism.

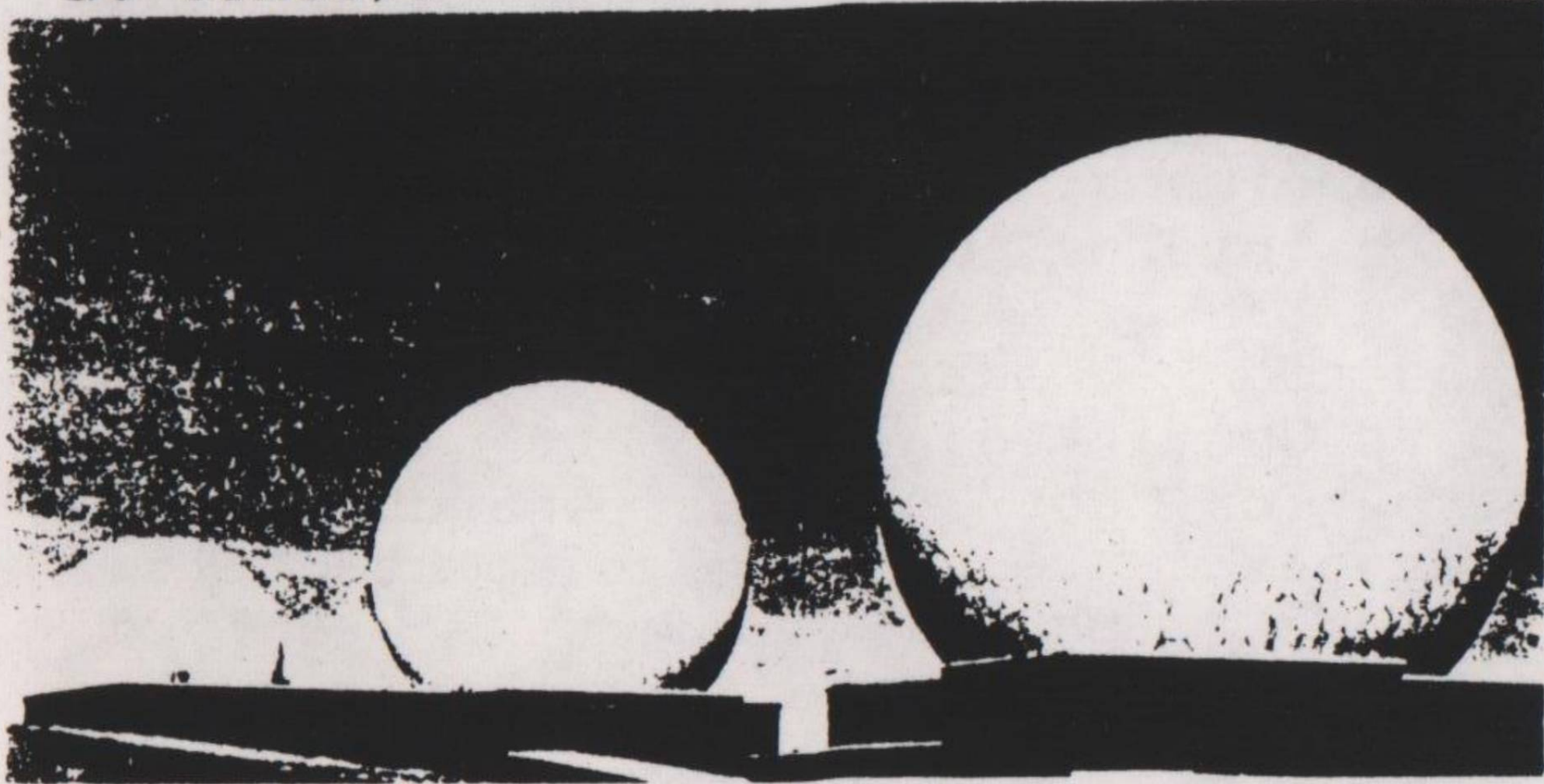
John Clark, The Anarchist Moment: Reflections on Culture, Nature and Power (1984, Black Rose Books, ISBN 0-920057-07-1, \$12.95).

This is a superb collection of essays by one of the few contemporary anarchist theorists writing in the English language. Although strongly influenced by Bookchin, to whom Clark devotes one of the essays, he has gone on to develop his own original brand of ecological anarchism, a melding of Bookchin and Taoism informed by contemporary radical social theory (Foucault, Baudrillard, Sahlins, et al). A better writer than Bookchin (although this is somewhat obscured by some serious typographical errors - for example, in one passage "anti-authoritarian" comes out as "authoritarian", making nonsense out of what Clark really wrote - and sloppy editing typical of Black Rose Books), Clark's arguments are also clearer and less rhetorical. Essays on Marx, Bakunin, social transformation, technology, nature ethics, anarchism and world crisis make this a must read for anyone who enjoys more theoretical pieces.

Mikhail Bakunin, From Out of the Dustbin: Bakunin's Basic Writings, 1869-1871, trans. and ed. by Robert M. Cutler (1985, Ardis Publishers, ISBN 0-88233-646-0, \$9.95).

This is a scholarly edition of some of Bakunin's speeches and writings from the 1869-1871 period. Cutler's introduction is informed and sympathetic; his annotated bibliography is, quite simply,

excellent. Bakunin's writings themselves range from the insightful (his analysis of contemporary revolutionary currents) to the ridiculous (his arguments for the abolition of the right of inheritance). However, Dolgoff's Bakunin on Anarchism is more comprehensive and better edited (not over edited, as Cutler claims; Bakunin could be a bit of a windbag at times).



Bob Black, The Abolition of Work and Other Essays (Port Townsend, WA: Loompanics Unlimited, n.d.--1986?). Pp. 159. ISBN 0 915179 41 5. £5.45.

This text, a collection of "rants, diatribes, jeremiads, and harangues" from 1977-1985, is essential reading for anyone interested in the trajectory of contemporary anarchism, and American anarchism in particular. Black is one of the so-called New Ranters--a term originally applied to a radical anti-authoritarian sect that flourished during the English Civil War--who compose and distribute anarchic flyers and pamphlets. And from all the available evidence, he is one of the better, if not the best, of the diverse group of polemical writers who have been agglomerated under this heading. His rants are far more sophisticated and trenchant than the aggressively juvenile (or at least adolescent) ravings found in all too many British anarchist journals and newspapers.

Black's style is allusive, erudite, and most importantly, extremely witty, not to say hilarious. Humour remains the key weapon in his arsenal, as becomes apparent in an example which illustrates the most admirable qualities in his writing. A piece entitled "Declasse(fieds)" comprises a series of parodic classified ads, including one which reads: "SPACE COLONIZATION? Better start with the vacuum between your ears. The Enterprise is a garbage scow. Instead of lower gravity, why not higher levity? Futurism is reactionary. Why not science friction? The Empire strikes out . . . may the farce be with you! Phrases on stun! Artaud D2." In a way, this passage encapsulates Black's entire method. The plea for increased levity recurs throughout the volume,

and his phrases are always designed to stun. Yet the epigrammatic style, the endless punning and wordplay, the irony, sarcasm and facetiousness are not mere intellectual pyrotechnics, nor merely an elaborately crafted icing devised to disguise a rather mundane cake. Rather, they remain central to the kind of anarchic "politics" Black proposes and practices.

If one were foolish enough to attempt to discern an ideological core amongst the enormously diverse texts collected in this volume, it might be wise to plump for the "Theses on Groucho Marxism." Of course, the Groucho/Karl comparison is nothing new, but Black develops it to such absurd lengths in his parody of the "Theses on Feuerbach" that it acquires a whole new dimension. The piece asserts that "Groucho Marxism, the theory of comedic revolution is much more than a blueprint for crass struggle: like a red light in a window, it illuminates humanity's inevitable destiny, the declassé society. G-Marxism is the theory of permanent revelry. (Down boy! There, that's a good dogma.)" Even while developing important ideas, Black never ceases to be amusing, here employing self-parody to ensure that his proposals do not ossify into stultifying dogmas. Nevertheless, the notion of a comedic revolution designed to implement a condition of permanent revelry remains at the centre of his "politics." Once this is understood, the purpose of the items collected in this volume becomes immediately apparent. Anything which impedes this revolution becomes a target for Black's mordant wit. And this is particularly true of po-faced "progressive" ideologies--such as socialism, feminism, the anti-nuclear and New Age movements--which he savages with some virulence. Even anarchism, in a text entitled "Anarchism and Other Impediments to Anarchy," which should become prescribed reading, receives the full treatment. But for Black the greatest obstacle remains labour, which he attacks in the title piece, easily the longest text in the volume, suggesting: "No one should ever work . . . That doesn't mean we have to stop doing things. It does mean creating a new way of life based on play; in other words, a ludic revolution. By 'play' I mean also festivity, creativity, conviviality, commensality, and maybe even art." Work remains a common component in the visions of the future offered by all ideologies, hence their shared coercive nature, and the need to expose and shatter them through ridicule. However, humour is not merely a methodological

or epistemological instrument in Black's texts. It also possesses an ontological, exemplary or demonstrative function. The satirical laughter it provokes not only subverts the shibboleths of authority, but temporarily and microcosmically initiates the type of society its author desires. It opens a vista of possibilities, as well as ridiculing its opponents out of court.

Black's incisive wit acts like a scattergun. It hits an enormous range of targets. Everyone is likely to be offended by something in this collection. The author, a highly opinionated individual, is not afraid of stamping on anyone's sensibility. Consequently, he remains far from popular in the States, and admits that some fellow libertarians have tried to beat him up. It is probably impossible to agree with everything he says, but the vast majority of his points are valid. And if you find yourself acknowledging the truth of most of his assertions, I think you are on the right track. This book can be bought at Housmans, 5 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

John Moore

SUBS

Please look at your address label. If the number is 12 or less, you owe money. If it's 13, the next issue is the last you have paid for. Please send the sub as soon as possible. Overseas subs, please note that I must have payments in sterling. Cheques payable to Bulletin of Anarchist Research.



**"I may lose
some of my
enthusiasm in
50 more years.
But I doubt it,"**

new ways for old!

At our last meeting Carl Levy provided us with a brilliantly documented account of Malatesta's involvement with the British socialist and anarchist movement in London in the 1890s culminating with his part in the extraordinary 2nd Congress of the Second International in Queens Hall, London 1896. For three days there was a battle, centred on the Standing Orders Committee, over the issue of whether or not to admit anarchists as delegates. Despite the support of Tom Mann, Keir Hardie, Robert Blatchford and Bernard Shaw the anarchists were eventually excluded - but not until the issue had dominated the proceedings and provoked fringe meetings that spelt out all the issues.

Was this the last time that anarchists in Britain featured in the mainstream of opposition politics? It seems so. From that time to this the pace has been made by statist socialists and trade unionists - liberal, Fabian and Marxist.

I asked Carl Levy what Malatesta had had to say by way of new political theory and his answer was "virtually nothing". Greatly impressed by the Dock Strike of 1889 he was sold on the idea of selling existing anarchist ideas to the existing Labour Movement and so got trapped, albeit unintentionally, in a statist movement. He had no alternative political theory to offer.



Errico Malatesta (about 1880)



In the 1980s we remain stuck where we were nearly 100 years ago. For a century we have survived on chronic nostalgia (for Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta et al), a scrappy running fight with the Marxists echoing the Marx-Bakunin relationship, occasional Stirnerism, devote publishing and transient flashes of brilliance as in the Spanish saga and the short-lived co-existence with the Committee of 100 in 1961/63. Now it appears to be punks! There is nothing more to be found down that road.

Anarchists have no prescriptive right to anarchism. It is perfectly possible for others to come in and steal the show. And this the social ecologists, with Murray Bookchin in the van, now promise to do. We have had talk for a hundred years of 'free association' and 'mutual aid' but what, constitutionally



and politically, have we made of them? Answer: next to nothing.

If we cannot undertake to solve the problem of government why should anyone listen to us? So can I stick my neck out? The problem is to find workable alternatives to all forms of statism. The basic principle is that of social symbiosis i.e. discovering and inventing systems of communication and decision-making that render hierarchical forms of government redundant. This calls for an infinite number of pilot-schemes through which we experiment and find the answers.

The basic unit is the small group of 4/12 people - my own experience would put the maximum at seven constant attenders. There are some who would go as high as 21. The support-group might be of the 50/100 order. This scale meets the first requirement of facilitating dynamic and creative interaction, spontaneity and diversity. It admits of a constantly changing pecking order turning on the work-in-hand and the talents of the people involved.

There appears to be no end to the character of groups - they can be functional, problem-solving, ad hoc, standing, professional, local, community, regional, national or international. They will deal with politics, economics, finance, the arts, the sciences, sports, religion, philosophy, all the humanities and education.

They can, will and do create their own feed-back systems. God help us from 'co-ordinators'! Those that can, do - those that can't, co-ordinate.

Then we have to identify our literature and have the roots that provides. This means all the greats who have been concerned with freedom and justice, regardless of their other labels or lack of them. My own list, off the top of my head, includes the Levellers and Diggers, the Quakers and Bunyan, Swift, Spinoza, Paine, Godwin, Blake, Owen, Mill, Proudhon, Nietzsche, Durkheim, Mumford, D H Lawrence and Rawls.

Do you think we might (this time!) not just nod and say "Interesting" but get off our intellectual bums and do something about it? If we don't all that will happen is that the times will move past us and libertarian thinking for the past 100 years will be a footnote-without-a-future in some text book yet to be written. Only when we produce a flaming argument about the real world will people take any notice of us - and quite right too.

Peter Cadogan



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2-3/87 ●

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Tamaro

RADICAL HISTORY

CATALOGUE FOUR.

PHILIP D. WALDEN
 P.O. BOX 120
 LONDON
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 Tel. 01-241-0949

SUMMER 1987

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Le Monde Libertaire
 145, Rue Amelot
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 France

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 ITALY

agosto-settembre 1987

ottobre 1987

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german @n@rchizm

BAR has received a number of items relating to the anarchist movement in Germany: publishers' lists, journals and a novel.

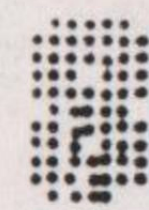
Perhaps the most relevant material for anarchist researchers is the publishers' lists. There is one from Flugasche Verlag, who publish radical literary material (see below); one from Weber, Zucht and Co., which is both a publishing house and a mail-order firm for radical books, including books on anarchism; and one from ANARES -- Federation of anarchist publishers and distributors which includes Swiss and Austrian publishers. It is interesting to compare the ANARES catalogue with what is available from English language publishers. Historical figures in the anarchist movement who are likely to be no more than names to most English readers are here represented by several publications; Johann Most, for example, by seven, John Henry Mackay by some twelve titles. Mackay's works all appear to be fiction or poetry apart from his 'Life and Work of Max Stirner'. There is a Mackay Society, re-established in 1974, which publishes his works, as well as those of other individualist anarchists. Other historical figures who are well represented are Gustav Landauer and Erich Mühsam. Writers who are more likely to be directly known to English readers, such as Rudolf Rocker and Max Nettlau are also more in evidence than in British lists. Rocker has seven titles represented, Nettlau three. This greater coverage of German language writers is of course understandable and to be expected, but ANARES also appears to cover foreign anarchists rather better as well. Malatesta, for example is represented by six titles, including two volumes of collected writings.

In an editorial at the beginning of the catalogue ANARES complains that whilst there are plenty of books available by and about the classic authors, as well as on the Spanish and Russian revolutions, there is very little dealing with issues of current concern. Certainly for ecology, feminism, militarism and so forth, one apparently needs to turn to publishers outside the anarchist movement.

One publisher, Flugasche Verlag, sent a copy of Stan Dahl's 'Das Brot der Träumer' (The Bread of the Dreamers). This is a short novel, 86 pages, concerning the thoughts and activities of angry young men in the Federal Republic. The chief protagonist, Thomas, is the twenty-year-old son of a leading politician and former policeman. Franklin, his friend, has a mother who is a millionairess, who has given him a Mercedes and a lakeside cottage for passing his school certificate. The two young men react against their parents and the pressure to take up settled jobs in business. After Franklin has been pressed to enter the family firm, the two destroy the cottage and run the Mercedes into the lake. They also protest in other ways. They have previously produced leaflets and written to the newspapers against the build-up of atomic weapons in the country. The visit of the Federal Chancellor to their home town provides an opportunity for direct action on this issue. While Thomas gets beaten up in a demonstration, Franklin, who has stolen a plane, showers the town with leaflets (anticipations of Matthias Rust?).

The story is an entertaining one, written for the most part in straight-forward German, with a pleasantly acid sense of humour. It gives a plausible account of the state of mind of some young Germans, while making it clear that the majority of both young and old are 'Jasager', yes men, passively acquiescing with the status quo. There is no definite indication that the protagonists are anarchists in any developed ideological sense, and from the propaganda standpoint it is perhaps disconcerting that the book gives the impression that their rebellion is motivated more by family/generational differences than by more obviously political issues. Of course one can argue that the political is indivisible and that the revolution begins with everyday life. All in all a good read.

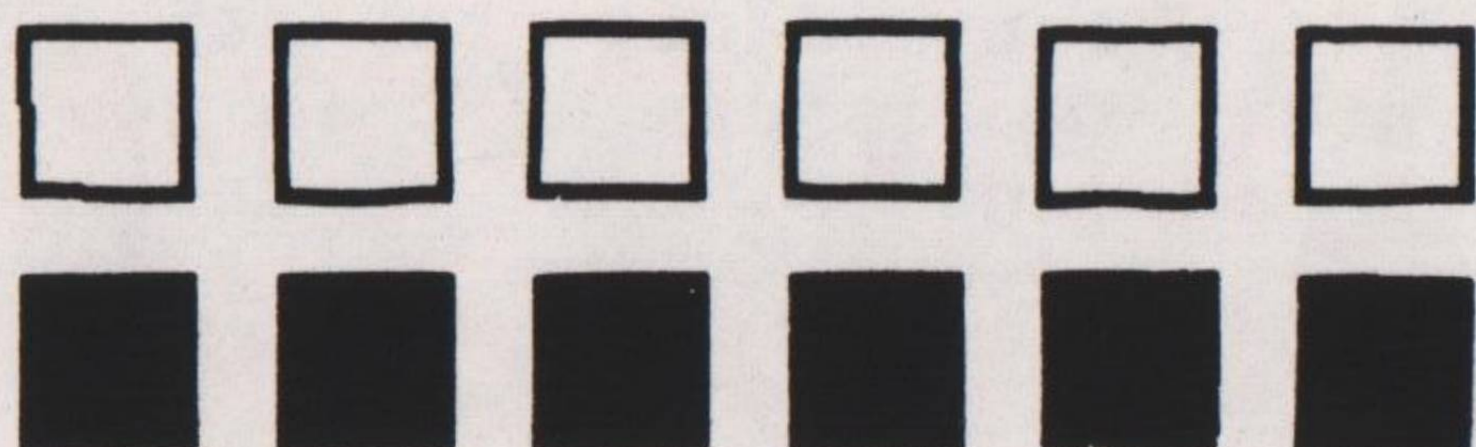
Further insight into the Federal Republic's young anarchists is provided by PULVERFASS (Powder Keg). FASS also stands for the Federation of Anarchist Schoolchildren and Students. Two issues of this journal have been sent to BAR. Issue 4,



February 1987 contains articles and features on Guatemala and El Salvador; the student demonstrations in France against the high school law, and the subsequent demonstrations in support of them at Berlin; against voting; on anarcho-feminism; a critique of Baader-Meinhof; and a statement of principles by GJA/R (Group of young anarchists and council communists based in Hamburg). Issue 5 begins with a general report on the FASS meeting at Mesum, near MUnster, at the end of May, attended by some seventy people. This is followed by reports from some of the working groups at the meeting, e.g. the women's plenum, a group on 'resistance in the provinces', the organisational group, the group on genetic technology. There is more about police brutalities in Berlin, then a statement of principles and activities by the ALIBI (Anarchist Libertarian Initiative) group of MUnster. One activity in which this group took part and which they helped to organise was the first MUnster anti-clerical week, the programme for which is reproduced. This number also contains a list of contact addresses for local anarchist groups, which might be useful for visitors to Germany.

BAR has also received an issue of FREIRAUM (Free space), which has been having problems with the authorities. Issues of the previous number were seized, and post sent to their Munich address has disappeared. FREIRAUM anticipates seizures of the present number also. This is not altogether surprising as the journal has a good deal on armed resistance to the state. It gives figures of acts of sabotage for the period 1 January to 15 November 1986, and reckons 57 damaged pylons, 186 arson attacks, 10 bomb attacks and 58 incidents involving explosives. It has a long article on the history and strategy of the RZ (Revolutionary cells). It also has articles on the Palestinians, Syria, Guatemala, on Nazism, on opposition to atomic power stations, and on prison conditions for members of the 'Resistance'. PULVERFASS No 5 also has an article explaining the background to the seizures of oppositional journals and the arrest of these involved with their distribution, with particular reference to the journal 'radikal'.

Stan Clark



LETTER

Dear BAR

I am writing in reply to two letters in BAR 10.

There are two replies to Rosanna Gill's complaint that some people on your subscribers' list haven't replied to letters. One is that not all the people on it asked for their names and addresses to be circulated in this way (I certainly didn't); and the other is that people have a perfect right not to reply to requests (I occasionally don't). It is one thing to ask for anarchist dialogue between comrades; it is another to expect busy people to answer all the letters they get.

Your description of the Black Flag supplement "Liars and Liberals" as a "scurrilous critique of other anarchists" (BAR 9) was entirely accurate, despite the unsigned protest from Black Flag. Albert Meltzer's unsigned attack on George Woodcock's book Anarchism and the centenary issue of Freedom was indeed "grossly abusive" and "expressed with low buffoonery". It was concerned not so much with serious and legitimate differences of opinion about alleged "revisionism" in anarchist history or politics, as with personal insults of the most inaccurate and irresponsible kind. The references to various past and present members of the Freedom circle were part of a bitter vendetta which Albert Meltzer has been pursuing for several decades and were based on the crudest distortions and inventions.

To take the example mentioned in the letter, Philip Sansom's article in Freedom didn't make any "allegations against Christie"; it simply described the events of Stuart Christie's arrest and imprisonment in Spain in 1964 as they were perceived in Britain at the time, with no criticism of him at all. To take another small example, all the overt and covert references to myself were either purely imaginary or the reversal of the truth. Albert Meltzer's essay was 7,000 words long, and there is neither the time nor the space to refute it - and probably little point. However, your readers should know that it was not just "hard-hitting, no-holds-barred sort of writing" but was scurrilous in the strict meaning of the word -- as is his subsequent attack on The Raven in Black Flag 174 (11 August 1987).

Fraternally, Nicolas Walter

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editorial

A short editorial again. Please note the announcement elsewhere in this issue about the address list which I am proposing to circulate, and respond to it if you wish your address deleted. I have also noted that a very large number of subscriptions are due for renewal after this issue. Please indicate your desire to have your sub extended by sending me the paltry sum mentioned. You will notice that some of the contributions to this issue are longer than usual. I hope this is a trend that continues. It is also my fond hope that a few more people will take the time and trouble to share insights, reviews, complaints and provocations with other members of ARG. As I have no time to do a proper editing job, most anything will be printed. My (our?) gratitude to those who have sent material. There are now almost 90 individuals who get the Bulletin. Please remember that you can get copies of any article mentioned in the periodicals whose contents are reprinted in this issue or any other. If anyone found it impossible to read the bibliographic material in libraries and archives inserted in the last issue, I shall be happy to send them a copy twice the size. Please drop me a note.



Weekend gathering



The glowing report on the fellowship and comaraderie of the weekend meeting will be shorter than it might have been. The meeting never happened. There were six of us who signified our intentions from the first announcement of the proposed meeting. No more signed up after that first burst. Without at least a dozen participants, the individual cost would have been too great, and the point was less obvious. After the appeal in the last BAR produced no response, I cancelled the booking. This cost "us" £80.00 in a lost deposit. This sum came from the subscription money, which in fact is the only income that the Anarchist Research Group actually has. However, the wasted money is not the prime reason I am disappointed. I had thought it was time we gathered together for more than a few hours, with the explicit aim of having more complex, serious and non-serious interactions than we do with our present "structure". It would appear that the time was not "ripe". Should anyone else wish to make the next attempt to organise such an event, I will offer all the support I can.

ADDRESS LIST !!

I have been asked by several people to circulate the address list of ARG, which is the same as the subscription list of BAR. Therefore, you are almost certainly on it if you are reading this. There are obviously arguments for and against circulating the list. I have heard them all and have come down on the side of publication rather than my own exclusive possession. Therefore...IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO HAVE YOUR ADDRESS SENT TO EVERYONE WHO HAS PAID A SUBSCRIPTION LATELY, THEN WRITE ME WITHIN SIX WEEKS, BEFORE THE NEXT ISSUE IS PRINTED. In fact, do it now, before you forget. If more than two people write me protesting against this decision in principle, I shall reconsider it, and mention it at the next ARG meeting in January.