

SCIENCE NOTE

Fiction?

Star Wars — A Science Fiction (?) Fragment

COMPUTER scientists who have worked on secret projects associated with 'Star Wars', the great American Space Spectacular, are reported as having begun to disappear or end their lives at an unusually good time for them. They are successful technocrats, with good jobs, happy family lives, no history of emotional instability. The circumstances of their untimely demises are shrouded in mystery. Appeals to H.M.G. for an enquiry linking these strange and suspicious events has met with a flat refusal. Is there something to hide about the very nature of their work which ordinary mortals, whose taxes pay for this sort of research, are not permitted to discover lest it create an enormous uproar of protest? Surely the tax payers should at least be told the basic objectives behind this research, if the details are to be kept secret for reasons of 'national security'.

All we can ascertain from newspaper reports is that the work of these scientists

has something to do with Star Wars and/or underwater 'activities'. From a personal source within the American arm of these strange developments I can reveal that the work is intensely interesting and technically challenging, and that it involves the development of modules capable of sustaining human life without external aid for a period of thirty years. Such accommodation would suit a post-nuclear holocaust scenario in which the survivors (the chosen few? Jehova's Witnesses or Newly Born Charismatic Christians of the Jim Backer persuasion, perhaps?) are ensconced for the time it takes for the fallout to clear, and some semblance of natural life to return to planet earth. A mere supposition of course! Pure science fantasy. We know that our leaders really have all our long term interests at heart, and are working towards nuclear disarmament and a safer world. Doubtless in the same spirit of human love and brotherhood they will eventually reveal how their present researches fit into this pattern of benevolence. Until then we can only wonder at the great possibilities these secret activities may have in store for the alleviation of the human condition and the promotion of universal happiness. Perhaps they're all working on a film-set for another E.T. type blockbuster with Ronald Reagan playing the Alec Guinness role. Maybe the late researchers took it all far too seriously. Time will tell. I wonder how much we've got.

A Science Fiction Writer

Anarchist CONTACTS

BANGOR A Collective, c/o UNCW SU, Deiniol Road, Bangor, Gwynedd
BRACKNELL A's, Box 21, 17 Chatham St, Reading RG1 7JF
BRIGHTON Brighton Bomber, c/o Priory House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton
BRISTOL Drowned Rat, Box 010, Full Marks Bookshop, 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol
BURNLEY A's, 2 Quarrybank, Burnley
CAMBRIDGE Box A, c/o Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge
CLASS WAR, PO Box 467, London E5 8BE, and other addresses
COVENTRY Group, PO Box 125, Coventry CV3 5QT (don't mention anarchist on envelope)
DAM National Sec, Box DAM, Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street, Cambridge
EDINBURGH Counter Information, Box 81, c/o 43 Candlemaker Row
ESSEX Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex
GLASGOW Here & Now, Box 2, c/o Changes, 340 West Princes Street, Glasgow G4 9HE
HASTINGS A's, c/o Hastings Free Press, 14 Lower Park Road, Hastings, E. Sussex
HUDDERSFIELD A's, PO Box 20, Huddersfield, W. Yorks
JERSEY Jon Godfrey, Les Frontières, Route de Fief, St Brelades, Jersey
KINGS LYNN Nick, c/o 11 Reffley Lane, Kings Lynn PE30 3EF
LEAMINGTON A Group, 71 Radford Road, Leamington Spa, Warks.
LEEDS A's, Box ASS, 46 The Calls, LS2 7EY
LEICESTER A Group, c/o Blackthorn Books, 70 High Street, Leicester
LOS Libertarian Organisation & Structure, c/o 85a New Elvet, Durham
LIVERPOOL A's, PO Box 110, Liverpool L69
 Liverpool University Anarchist Group, c/o SU, 2 Bedford St North, Liverpool L7 7BD
LONDON
 Freedom Box Number Users: A Distribution, Anarchist Communist Federation, Rebel Press, Spectacular Times, Virus.
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 Leslie's Bookshop, 17 Turners Road, E3
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MANCHESTER
 Sale A's, Room 6, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 2BU
NORTHAMPTON A Collective, PO Box 161, Northampton
NOTTINGHAM A's, Rainbow Centre, 180 Mansfield Road, Nottingham
OXFORD A's, Box A, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford
PORTSMOUTH A's, Box A, 167 Fawcett Road, Southsea, Hants PO1 0DH
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SPANISH Information Network, 37 South Terrace, Esh Winning, Co Durham DH7 9PS
STIRLING A Group, c/o CSA, University of Stirling, Scotland
SWANSEA Black Sheep Collective, Box D, Mandela House, University College, Singleton Park, Swansea (term time only)

FREEDOM

ANTI-NUCLEAR SPECIAL

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ANARCHIST ALTERNATIVES

ANARCHISTS do not vote in elections. But in the UK today, for example, if one wants to get rid of nuclear bombs and nuclear power, what alternative do you have to voting Labour?

Voting Labour is not a good way of getting rid of nuclear bombs. It was tried in the 1960s and failed, although Labour got into power. The then Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (the present CND is descended from it but differently constituted) was a group of Labour Party people, founded to campaign against nuclear arms at the parliamentary level. They took over the organisation of the annual ND marches from the second year onwards, and did it with such aplomb they were accepted as spokespeople for the whole ND movement. In easy stages they moved from 'Ban the Bomb' to 'Labour in Power minus the Bomb' to 'Vote Labour', quarrelling with the anarchist faction of the ND movement who accused them of political chicanery.

When Labour got in and kept the bomb, it became apparent the anarchists had been wrong. CND were not tricksters at all. For all their skill in organisation they were quite astonishingly naive, and really had expected Labour in power to ban the bomb! There were no actual suicides, but plenty of resignations from the Labour Party and from political activity. (The rump of CND fell into the hands of Maoists, who advocated unilateral nuclear disarmament for Britain but defended the Chinese bomb on traditional 'great deterrent' lines.)

A party in power is by no means bound to carry out its election promises. Even a government which genuinely wants to get rid of the bomb may not be able to do so, for being 'in power' is a relative term; elected politicians are only a small part of the ruling group. The decision whether to get rid of nuclear weapons and nuclear power must be decided on the balance of advantages and disadvantages — military, economic and political. One thing we can do, which is a better alternative than voting Labour, is keep working to turn people against nukes, so that whatever the economic and military circumstances, it will always be

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WHY JOIN THE DEMO?

THE demonstration in London on Saturday 25 April, may be seen as marking the latest stage in the anti-nuclear campaign.

Demonstrations have always been important for the left, but they have been essential to the nuclear disarmament movement. In the absence of a powerful political organisation able to exert pressure through votes, strikes, money, influence or sabotage, it has relied for forty years on demonstrating its strength through meetings, marches, sit-downs, sit-ins, break-ins, peace camps and various kinds of imaginative actions.

The old movement began with protests from 1943, meetings from 1948, and sit-downs from 1952; it achieved lift-off with the Aldermaston Marches from 1958; it reached its high point during the 1960s with mass demonstrations of all sorts in all places; and it fell between 1964 and 1968 as its demonstrations declined in size.

The new movement was re-launched by the London march of October 1980, and despite all the actions elsewhere — especially the direct actions against various nuclear bases — its strength has

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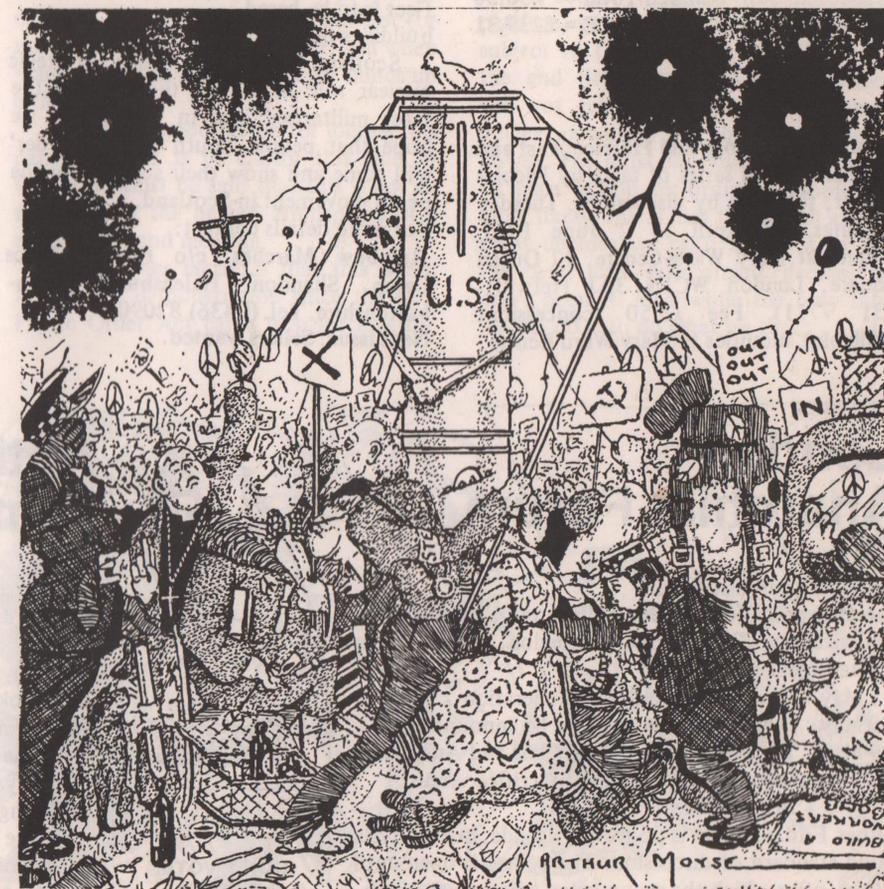
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What terrifies me is that if they ban the bomb, what the Hell will we do during the Easter holidays.

FREEDOM

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Anarchism: Theory and Practice, Past and Present — fifth series of talks by Nicolas Walter, followed by discussions. Tuesday evenings, 28 April to 2 June 1987, 6-8pm, at Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AJ (tel: 01-831 7711). Fee £8.50 (concessions available), inquiries to Mary Ward Centre.

London Anarchist Forum

London Anarchist Forum

meets every Friday during college term time at 8pm. On alternate Fridays the discussion is led by an invited speaker.

1 May : Anarchist Communist Federation
15 May : John Griffin on topic to be announced
29 May : Tony Gibson on Social Class and Anarchism
12 June : Donald Room on Self-sacrifice versus Benevolence

Other Fridays there is no formal agenda, but always a good standard of discussion. The centre is open until 10pm, after which the group often adjourns to a pub. Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square, WC1 (nearest underground station Holborn)



Anti-election campaign

London and SE region planning meeting
Sunday 3 May, 4.30pm to 9pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1
called by London Greenpeace, Haringey Anarchists,
121 Bookshop.

This is a meeting calling together all groups and individuals who are into doing some sort of actions and publicity against this five-yearly circus.

Seeing we will only know one month in advance what the election date is it will not give us much time to organise anything as local groups or on a larger scale.

This meeting could be a good opportunity to share ideas, plans, etc. And maybe give some inspiration.

IN BRIEF

Join the Group

Feminist/Socialist/Radical/ Anarchist? Want to have fun without losing your anarchist ideals? Join the London D.I.Y. alternative to the stereotyped social club scene.

The Group, c/o Tony Baker, 4 Park View, Collins Road, Highbury, London N5 2UB Tel. 359 5969.

Anarchist Picnic

Sunday 7 June 1987 on Parliament Hill on Hampstead Heath. Ah, and bring kids and kites. n.b. organised by no-one.

In September 1987 the second **International Anarchist Meeting** will be held in the Netherlands. For more information write to: **I.A.B./S.W.P.**

Postbus 19230

Utrecht

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Rainbow Marches

Faslane Peace Camp is holding a series of marches from the places playing a major part in the Trident programme in Scotland to Faslane where the trident fleet is to be based. buildings on Argyle Street.

Scotland plays a major strategic nuclear role in NATO, the Clyde is the most militarised area in Europe, so we hope that people 'south of the border' will come and show their support for the peace movement in Scotland.

For more details contact:

Rainbow Marches, c/o Faslane Peace Camp, Shandon, Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire. Tel. (0436) 820901. Next issue. Sellers wanted.

Massive breakthroughs for democracy: In local council elections in some districts in the Soviet Union on June 21, voters shall have a choice of candidates. Meanwhile, in Ashburton, Devon, the Official Monster Raving Loony Party has gained its first victory in 26 years. The party's chairperson is now on the local council. Ironically, this was achieved by the traditional Soviet system, there were 12 candidates for 12 seats, so all were returned unopposed.

Startling Surveys, an occasional series.

1. An insurance company has calculated the monetary value of a traditional wife. This is based on the cost of paying somebody else for so many hours cleaning, shopping, cooking, child care, etc. They come up with £370 a week, more than a bishop, an army major or a primary head teacher, and more than twice the average male wage. Their suggestion is not for husbands to do some work themselves, but to buy an insurance policy.

2. A Unicef report states that black and coloured children in South Africa are 14-15 times more likely to die before the age of five than white children.

Fifty thousand electoral registration forms sent out by Bristol city council have still not been returned. The electoral services officer is amazed. 'With all the talk of a general election, I would have thought people would be keen to get their forms back.'

The Bishop of Durham has noticed that 'we (sic) have now stopped being a Christian country'. He sees the disestablishment of the Church of England from the State as inevitable.

WHY JOIN THE DEMO ?

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always been measured by subsequent set-pieces in London, in October 1981, June 1982, October 1983, June 1984 and October 1985. The National Office of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament dislikes these occasions, because of the trouble and expense, but the wider movement demands them, because of the sense of community and identity.

So here we are again, marching through central London on a Saturday between two Bank Holiday weekends. What are we doing this time?

During the past two years, CND — the only national umbrella organisation — has lost about 20 per cent of its membership, and local peace groups have suffered a similar decline in support and activity. The hard fact is that the battle of the early 1980s over the installation of American Cruise missiles in Britain was decisively lost, and nothing comparable has taken its place — not even a new campaign against American bases in Britain following their use in the attack on Libya a year ago.

The next battle will be the coming General Election, in which CND will be forced closer to the Labour Party, as happened during the last General Election in 1983. This will damage both the electoral prospects of the Labour Party, since its official policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament is still very much a minority cause, and the political position of CND, since its official policy of independence from party politics will again be tested.

One new factor is that Neil Kinnock, who is himself a unilateralist (like Michael Foot but unlike previous Labour leaders) and who is fighting a hopeless struggle against both right and left (like Michael Foot and most previous Labour leaders), seems to be planning to betray the unilateralist policy before rather than after

winning office (if he ever does). And meanwhile the new Russian leader, Mikhail Gorbachov, with his double policy of openness in home affairs and flexibility in foreign affairs, is creating havoc in the Western nuclear alliance with one disarmament proposal after another.

So two good reasons for joining the demonstration are to strengthen the libertarian tendencies of the nuclear disarmament movement — both against support for the Labour Party (which was responsible for the initiation of the British nuclear bomb and the American nuclear alliance forty years ago, and for the confirmation of both twenty years ago) and against support for any Communist or other Marxist Party (which would only serve the interests of Russian foreign policy). It is significant that there will be no Labour or Marxist speakers at the rally on 25 April.

Another new factor is that this demonstration is jointly organised by CND and Friends of the Earth and is equally opposed to nuclear weapons and to nuclear power. This obviously makes sense at a time when most people are probably more worried about the Chernobyl nuclear power station disaster a year ago and the recent decision to build another nuclear reactor at Sizewell than about Cruise missiles or Trident submarines. But it also tends to confuse the issue at a time when many people are opposed to nuclear weapons but not (or not so much) to nuclear power, and when many people haven't made their minds up either way.

So another good reason for joining this demonstration is to clarify this issue — though it must be said that this is not an easy task in the heated atmosphere of a mass march and meeting.

Yet another factor is that this is the first major demonstration since the new Public Order Act came into force at the

beginning of April, and the Metropolitan Police have already tried to destroy, or at least cripple, the occasion by confining it to Hyde Park or else keeping the marchers away from main roads. In the end a compromise was reached, allowing the march from Victoria Embankment but preventing it from going through Trafalgar Square or Piccadilly; instead it will go through Northumberland Avenue, Whitehall, Parliament Square, Victoria Street, Grosvenor Place and Hyde Park Corner.

A particularly important factor is the place of direct action in the campaign. Quite unlike the pattern of the old movement, during the new movement CND has officially supported direct action in general and has actually approved and even organised several particular direct action demonstrations. But such activity is still kept very much under control and the big autonomous demonstrations of the 1960s are deliberately not being repeated. (For similar reasons the old Aldermaston Marches have deliberately not been revived.) Direct Action has been co-opted rather than adopted.

The only official speakers for the direct action wing of the movement are to be from the peace camps at Greenham Common and Molesworth, which brings in the issue of feminism, separatism and 'male violence'. So a final good reason for joining the demonstration is to increase the number of people committed to direct action who are not necessarily pacifists or women and who are not subject to the discipline of CND. But in the end demonstrations, like elections, will not get rid of nuclear weapons or nuclear power, or any kind of weapons or power. The most desirable method would be mass action by ordinary people; the most likely one is that the British government decides we can't afford it or that the American government decides we don't need it. Meanwhile the only thing we can do is to do what we can. FC.



Because we put up with them

TOWARDS the end of the Second World War, when the defeat of the Axis powers could confidently be predicted, Churchill and Roosevelt agreed that their policy for accepting the end of hostilities should be 'Unconditional Surrender'.

That this hard-nosed declaration would harden the attitudes of not only the leaders of Japan and Germany — and their peoples — did not seem to strike the Greatest Englishman of All Time and his more gullible transAtlantic partner (let alone Hitler's equivalent in the USSR, Josef Stalin), for they were all after the same thing: revenge!

This led the British and Americans, once they had the capacity, to launch the most ruthless attacks on civilian populations; the sort of attacks which had been denounced when carried out by the Luftwaffe, from Guernica, Warsaw, Coventry and countless towns and cities on their various roads to victory...and defeat.

Long before that defeat was finally chalked up, Churchill had uttered another promise to the people of Europe. 'Germany,' he said, 'would not be allowed to re-arm for fifty years.' This was just before he had sent a telegram to Field Marshal Montgomery to 'stack' the arms surrendered by the defeated German forces — just in case they might be needed (plus the defeated Germans!) to hold back the Russian hordes in the event of their continuing to roll westwards, in contravention of the agreement between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin, when Europe was carved up at the Yalta summit meeting.

All this is down to the cynicism of the wartime alliance — a cynical realism between Churchill and Stalin, with Roosevelt learning new tricks at every step — which left Hitler standing. Liar and cheat that he was, he had met his match.

Back to that quote from Churchill, however: 'Germany will not be allowed to re-arm for fifty years.' Less than six years after the war ended, with Germany rebuilding its cities with their industries aided by the Marshall Plan (American money to ensure that a potential revolutionary situation did not develop in Europe as it had after the end of the First World War), the defeated Reich emerged as a successful trading nation, elbowing its way into the international markets.

So much so that in 1951, after the return of the Conservatives to power, Mr Anthony Eden was to state plaintively in the House of Commons that 'We cannot allow the Germans to continue to compete with us in the markets of the world, without the burden of rearmament' (!). But the rearmament of Germany was a hotter

potato than Eden realised, and though Churchill's explicit words may have been forgotten, the results of German rearmament in the 30's were not.

Much the same thing happened in Japan. The Emperor's grandiose attempt to build a Japanese empire, rather late in the day, ended in disaster. We don't have to spell out the results of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — but, oddly enough, the abrupt ending of the war with the total obliteration of those two cities spared the rest of Japan from the kind of destruction which the Allies had meted out to Germany.

The result was that as soon as hostilities came to an end, Japanese industry was able to switch over to 'peace-time' production — and the same ban on military rearmament as in Germany was applied there.

One hundred per cent of both German and Japanese industrial output was geared to the making of domestic goods for sale in the international market. *None* of their expertise was diverted into the dead end of armaments. So they prospered!

This explains the 'economic miracles' of Germany and Japan, post war. The three magnificent victors of the war — America, Britain and Russia — have had nothing but trouble ever since, but the troubles have come from different directions, though they are all bound up with power, capitalism and nation statism — and their varying approaches to imperialism. Particularly, however, with the burden of armaments.

If we may be forgiven for saying so, the one good thing that came out of the Second World War was the end of the British Empire (which the British did not give up without an ill-tempered struggle) and that has brought many economic disadvantages to the British economy. Unhappily, it has been followed by a new dollar imperialism from the United States and a new set of subject nations grouped around the Soviet Union. Neither would accept the derogatory term 'empire'; in both cases, the groupings of servile nations has been justified as 'defensive'.

But now, all three 'victor' nations of World War Two are in economic difficulties. They are all committed to military 'defence' policies which impoverish their people and which, if implemented, would destroy the world within days. At the same time, they are developing techniques for the production of power — necessary only for their overheated defence needs — which themselves threaten the ecological balance of nature, and will destroy the world slowly but just as surely.

Again, at the same time, millions of people throughout the world are starving

while in the richest countries land is being taken out of cultivation to keep prices high. In Britain, greed reigns supreme. Public money is creamed off to capitalise publicly owned industries so that they can be profitably sold for private gain — but no public money is available for much needed housing, social services, health or education — although we are dazzled with statistics to draw a veil over empty beds in hospitals, schools with no books, homeless families, the crumbling infrastructure of our great cities. But no shortage of nuclear weapons which can never be used without the certainty of national suicide.

Our leaders are now claiming that it is the existence of nuclear weapons that has 'kept the peace' for forty years. Forget Korea, forget Vietnam, Suez, the Falklands, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Iran-Iraq. Forget Ethiopia and Nicaragua and the Congo and Mozambique and Oman, and all those little out-of-the-way places where capitalist interests may have to be defended. And while you're into forgetting, forget Three Mile Island and Chernobyl.

There is this much to be said for nuclear weapons: that for the first time, the leaders, the kings and the captains, might well be the first to go. No longer can they send the masses to the slaughter without any risk of being slaughtered themselves. For us, the masses, this is some insurance.

Sure, *some* insurance! But the premium is high. We have to pay, for a lifetime, with our subservience. We have to accept the lies and the indignities. We all know we are being conned and we are asked to accept it for the sake of 'national security', which in fact robs us of our personal security. And in economic terms we are being robbed day and night to pay for the prancing of the 'powerful'!

And why are they powerful? Only because we put up with them!

PS

A teacher in Estonia was sentenced to fifteen days in jail because he had long hair, which the judge said insulted human dignity and social morality'. The Supreme Court later overturned the decision and disciplined the judge.

The well documented link between joblessness and disease now has physiological evidence. Tests show that unemployed people have fewer white blood cells to combat infection and more of a hormone which suppresses the immune system. The stress of starting a new job has similar effects.

ANARCHIST ALTERNATIVES

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politically advantageous to get rid of them.

The mistake of CND in the 1960s was to make it clear they would vote Labour in any case. This meant the Labour Party had nothing to lose politically by keeping the bomb.

One of the main points in anarchist ideology is abstention from voting. But in an anarchist society decisions are supposed to be taken at local level or in workers syndicates. How? Surely if it were only through discussion and debate it would take hours, and the final decision would rarely satisfy all. What is wrong with having a vote on suggestions put forward?

You are mistaken. Anarchists are not ideologically opposed to voting as such, but only to voting for a government.

Every vote in a government election is a vote to be governed. The primary purpose of voting is to express acquiescence in the system. In the Soviet Union where there is only one candidate, the *only* purpose of voting is to express acquiescence in the system. Here there is the secondary purpose of choosing among candidates, but if you are in doubt about the primary purpose, just ask any mainstream politician whether they would rather you voted for the opposition, or did not vote at all.

They are all keen for you to 'use your vote', whether they win or lose.

The contest element of the vote gets more attention than the more important acquiescence element, because it is more exciting. The counting of votes on election night is as compelling a television show as a snooker championship — and means little more than a snooker championship to the state of society. Shepherds compete for sheep votes; the shearing pen and the slaughter house remain in business.

Apart from coercive institutions, anarchists are happy to make collective decisions by whatever method works best. In the *Freedom* editorial collective, publishing decisions are unanimous, which means in practice if one editor objects to something it is vetoed. The alternative was tried for a time (more by laxity than by planning) of leaving the decision to whoever was doing the production work on the particular day; but this led to editors having to take responsibility for stuff they did not approve, so the veto rule was restored. For other enterprises, leaving the decision to whoever happens to be there may be most effective. For still others, majority voting may be best.

During the Spanish Revolution the anarchists needed to make collective decisions in very large groups, and did so by means of delegate conferences to which delegates were elected. Three of the present editors of *Freedom* have been trade union branch officers, having stood for election by their fellow workers. It is still true that every vote expresses acquiescence in the system, but when one actually approves of the system this is not an objection.

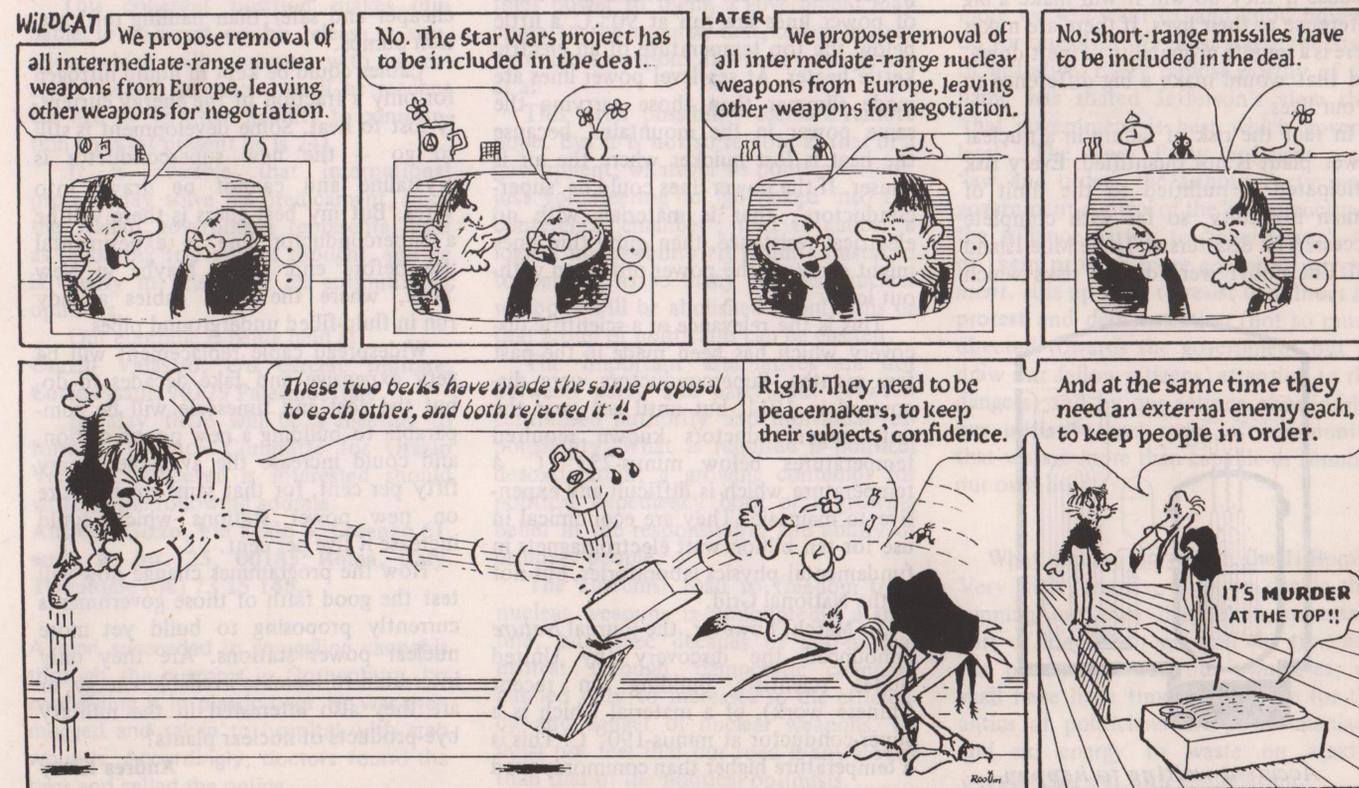
I am pretty pessimistic about the possibility of anarchy in the near future, because so many people believe in the necessity of politicians, laws, money, armies, religion . . . Sadly, I conclude that a democratic phase is needed first: getting rid of nuclear weapons and installations, emphasising conservation, workers taking over factories with consent, more communal power, fairer distribution of wealth, less militarisation, and such like piecemeal measures. Can you prove me wrong?

No. Very few anarchists expect anarchy in the near future. Anarchy is the goal, but all we realistically hope to achieve, now, is progress towards the goal. People tend to believe the coercive institutions they suffer under are necessary, and at times their conservatism seems insuperable. But taking a long view of history, we see that popular attitudes change over time, in the direction of greater freedom.

Few people these days believe in absolute monarchy, the Divine Right of Kings, chattel slavery, or the need to kill people of different religions. Two or three centuries ago, such ideas were very general and you would be a weirdo and menace to society not to believe in them. Anarchists, and their precursors and allies, have made some little progress in changing attitudes and so institutions. The struggle is worth it if we can make a little more progress.

The anarchist revolution is not a sudden massive change, in the near future or in the far future. The anarchist revolution is now.

Pascal Bertand and F.R. Egghead



Nukes and superconductors

LIKE someone said in the April *Freedom*, it is counter-productive and unnecessary for the opponents of nuclear energy to use doubtful statistics. The supporters of nuclear power use doubtful arguments the whole time, but they have no alternative. If they looked at the dangers honestly, they would have to leave their jobs in the nuclear power industry.

One hundred per cent safety does not exist. When I walk down the street I do not suppose it absolutely safe. Trucks sometimes mount the sidewalk and hit people. Robbers leap out of stores and shoot innocent bystanders. But these are unusual occurrences so I accept the risk.

In engineering the risk is often quantified. In the Humber Estuary in England, the statistical expectation is that a wind strong enough to blow down the Humber Bridge will occur once every 240 years. This does not mean we have to wait 240 years for it to blow down. It may blow down tomorrow. But the risk is acceptable in relation to the cost.

What risk is acceptable of a nuclear power station having a meltdown? Did someone say once in a million years? The chance of a gambler getting rich on the football pools is about once in a million years, and there are two or three big wins a year. People do the pools despite the remote probability of winning, because if they do win it will make a big difference to their lives. If there are nukes there is a remote probability of melt-down, and that would make a big difference to all our lives.

In fact the risk of failure in a nuclear power plant is not quantified. Every risk anticipated is nullified to the limit of human ingenuity, so far with complete success. The disasters at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl were due to risks which

no-one had anticipated. Steps have now been taken to nullify the risk of Three Mile Island and Chernobyl-type accidents happening again. The next disaster will be due to something else that no-one has thought of.

A new prospect for energy conservation

All the alternative sources of power have disadvantages of their own. Coal pollutes the atmosphere and causes acid rain. Oil is a valuable raw material and should not be simply burned. Use of renewable resources mostly involves much higher capital and maintenance costs than burning or fission. Fusion power is no more than a hope.

We could use less power. We in the rich nations could certainly manage on much less, but the world population is growing and the availability of more power could bring many out of misery. (I assume for the sake of argument the probability of resources being diverted from armaments to welfare is negligible.)

We could waste less power. Large power stations — nuclear, fired and hydro-electric — are some distance from population centres. Most of the power produced is wasted on heating up the transmission cables. Electrical resistance converts electrical energy to heat energy, which is useful in electric heaters but wasteful in power lines. In fact the thousands of miles of power lines are run at 90°C, a little below the top temperature of an electric kettle heater. At sea level power lines are made slimmer than those carrying the same power in the mountains, because the heat is lost quicker where the air is denser. If the power lines could be 'superconductors', that is materials with no electrical resistance, then quite thin lines might carry all the power produced without loss.

This is the relevance of a scientific discovery which has been made in the past few months. Superconductors were discovered in 1911, but until last year the only superconductors known required temperatures below minus-253°C, a temperature which is difficult and expensive to maintain. They are economical in use for ten billion watt electromagnets in fundamental physics laboratories, but not in the National Grid.

In March, however, the journal *Nature* announced the discovery (by United States scientists building on recent Chinese work), of a material which is a super-conductor at minus-190°C. This is a temperature higher than commonly used

Conscientious

ON FEBRUARY 5th 1986, I was called up and I had to join the army forces based in Douai, as a conscript. I did not go there because I am an anarchist and a pacifist. I fight against conscription because it is the institution that stands for the submission and the destruction of men.

I am convinced that peace will only be made possible when all the armies throughout the world and all their death machinery are abolished and when all the justifications for war are no longer available.

Authority, the basis of the present social order, must be destroyed. The building up of a libertarian society will put an end to war and to the other diseases of today's society.

I know that insubordination is not an easy thing to do. I may be sentenced to a two year imprisonment but I do believe it means hope for a new world where nobody will have to obey. **Eric Hebert**

At the moment, French justice hasn't examined Eric's case but it's a matter of days or months. That's why we are asking you to support him when he needs it, in order to stop the prosecution against him and also to ask for his release once he is arrested.

**Comite de Soutien a Eric Hebert
BP 58 76160 Darnetal
France**

in industrial processes — higher than liquid nitrogen, which is routinely used in refrigerated ships and trucks because it is cheaper and safer than hauling refrigeration pumps.

Cables could be kept in liquid nitrogen for only a fraction of the energy currently lost to heat. Some development is still to go — the new superconductor is crystalline and cannot be drawn into wires. But my best guess is there will be a superconductor line in experimental use before end 1988. Maybe in New York, where the main cables already run in fluid-filled underground pipes.

Widespread cable replacement will be very expensive and take decades to do, but the cost and timescale will be comparable to building a new power station, and could increase the available energy fifty per cent, for that same expenditure on new power stations which could increase it five per cent.

How the programmes change now will test the good faith of those governments currently proposing to build yet more nuclear power stations. Are they only interested to increase available energy, or are they also interested in the military by-products of nuclear plants?

Andrea Kinty

objectors

ORAZIO Valastro was arrested on 22 January by Italian political police, the DIGOS, during an antimilitarist demonstration in Catania, Sicily, organised by the Catania Anarchist Group of which he is part.

Orazio first deserted from the army in December 1981, while doing national service. He was arrested in March 1982 and sentenced to five months imprisonment.

On his release after completing five months in Palermo military prison, he did not report to the barracks again as ordered, but continued his anarchist and antimilitarist activity in Italy and elsewhere.

During the period in which he lived and carried on his political involvement in France, he came to the attention of the French police. A number of plainclothes agents turned up at his place of work and took him to a deserted area in the country, where the beat him up and ordered him to collaborate with them, or have his residence permit revoked. Orazio's and the other comrades' response was immediate and firm, and the police retracted in the face of public denunciation.

Now Orazio is again in prison. On 26 February he was sentenced to eight months. On his release he will again be required to present himself at the barracks and complete the military service he interrupted in 1981. In this trial as in his first, Orazio declared that he has absolutely no intention of rejoining the army, because it is an instrument of death and oppression.

This coherent position makes him liable to re-arrest on his release, a situation which will continue, with increasingly heavy sentences, until he reaches the age of 45 when liability to conscription ends (at present he is 24).

It is possible that international protest may solve his predicament, since the Italian government represents itself as favouring freedom of thought, and he is clearly in prison for his antimilitarist opinions.

Our comrade is being held at:

**Orazio Valastro, c/o carcere militare,
Corso Pisani, 90129 Palermo, Italy.**

In May there will be a meeting to form a Defence Committee for Orazio Valastro. Whoever is interested should write to the following address:

**Antonio Gizzo, Via Scalo S. Lorenzo 61,
scala B, int. 25, 00185 Roma, Italy.
Telephone (06) 73 15 148.**

A man succeeded in smuggling cannabis through the customs in Gothenburg, by swallowing it in plastic bags. He was then mugged and taken to hospital with stab wounds. Accordingly, doctors found the bags and called the police.

How not to stop the arms race

ONLY two nuclear bombs have so far been used against people: the ones dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The holocaust was ordered by a Democrat President of the USA, after he had consulted a Labour Prime Minister of Britain. Now we hear people saying that if only we had a Democrat in the White House, and a Labourite in Number Ten, we could reverse the trend of the last 42 years, and cut down the stockpiles of nuclear destruction instead of increasing them still more. Come off it.

It is utterly naive, and astonishingly naive in anyone of mature years, to suppose that any government can be persuaded to surrender a portion of power. People who become governments devote their lives to achieving power, and promises to diminish the power of the state, once the particular aspirant has acquired it, are a priori and on the evidence of history, unbelievable. Governments do become less powerful, but always by pressure of outside circumstances and against their will. If any government rids itself of nuclear weapons, it will be for some external reason. The economy may collapse to the extent that even weaponry (the prior expenditure of every nation state) can no longer be afforded. Or, since even the most despotic and militaristic of governments depend ultimately on individuals surrendering their power to them, a government may come to the opinion that, unless it gives up nuclear weapons, it will have no power at all.

This latter possibility seems a remote hope. But it is not so remote as that of a government, whatever its political colour, just volunteering to 'go naked into the conference chamber'; that is almost a logical impossibility. It is quite mistaken to believe, as so many do, that nuclear weapons will be abolished if only this or that group of politicians can be elected.

The important alternatives are not between party and party, but between centralised authority and individual responsibility. What is required is political detoxification; a growing contempt for political expediency born of a growing belief in the responsibility and ability of ordinary people.

The anarchist road to freedom from nuclear weapons is undoubtedly a slow one, but since decades of anti-nuclear protest through 'democratic channels' has led only to increases in the efficiency and danger of nuclear weapons, we must not feel that our road is any slower than that of the political optimists.

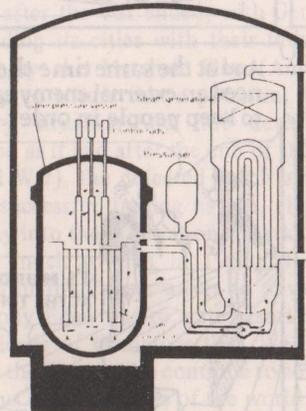
We think there are two kinds of necessary activity. On the one hand any kind of protest is salutary, if only for ourselves. As Marie Louise Berneri put it, at about the time that the first nuclear weapons were used against people:

It may be true that our protests will not change the course of events, but we must voice them nevertheless. Workers all over the world who rallied to the defence of Sacco and Vanzetti were not able to save them from the electric chair, yet who can say their protests were useless?

On the other hand if the enemy of human emancipation is the State and the government, and we are agreed we cannot easily destroy them by direct assault, then the only alternative left is to eventually destroy them by attrition, by withdrawing power from them as a result of taking over direct responsibility for more and more activities which concern our daily lives. That governments are more aware of the dangers herein involved to their power and indispensability, than are people of the possibilities of real freedom if only they took the plunge, is shown by the massive programmes of the parties and the apathy of the people.

The 'more we do for ourselves the more we will want to, and know how to, do for ourselves. We must starve the State of initiative. Every radical worthy of the name has shared Jefferson's view that 'that government is best which governs least'. The Tory Party promises more 'law and order', the Labour Party more government control of the 'infrastructure', the Alliance parties to 'take power'. All of them promise *more and more government*. It is up to us to resist this threat by protest and demonstration (not so much directed towards the government but to draw our fellow citizens' attention to the dangers) and by our actions, showing by our initiative and sense of community that we are more than capable of running our own lives.

What can we do to ban the H-Bomb? Very little, friends, until we decide that running our own lives is an important part of life. When we find the time and the patience to run our own lives, we shall have little time or patience for the antics of politicians and power-maniacs, and no energy to waste on making weapons for our own annihilation.



Accident waiting to happen.

From the Factory Gate

WHAT never fails to hit home is the ugliness of these places — never has design and function fused so perfectly. This is what annihilation factories look like. The fence, the moat, the inner fence, the necklaces of barbed wire, the mechanical barriers, the motor patrols, the foot patrols, the dogs, the huge bunkers, the snouts of ventilating systems, the flood-light pylons, the video cameras seeking us out by remote control, the helicopters — all hard apparatus designed, not to keep the Russians out, but the British out. Such factories are a declaration of war by the State on its own people.

Inside it is all men, all uniforms, all control. From the ceaseless patrol of land-rover and blue mini-bus the guards gaze at us seemingly incurious. Bored? Apprehensive? Who knows? Their faces are emotionless. I try to imagine their wives and families and find I can't. On our side of the fence the local police do take on personality. The only policewoman is black — her colleagues seem friendly enough towards her but I can never bury my suspicion of the police. Is their unaggressive behaviour real or simply good public relations? I wonder if women work in the factory. Of course they do! Who else could they get to do the cleaning, run the can-

teen, type the top secret invoices and security chits? Perhaps they marry the security guards — can people who work within such places relate to 'outsiders'? By its nature it *must* be a closed society.

Occasionally the police shift changes as does ours. A van brings down tea for them, some of the blockaders join in the queue of coppers — some laugh some don't. The blockaders cheer and barrack — it's a relief from the cold and (in my case at least) depression. A surveillance helicopter spins overhead, from time to time a huge camouflaged helicopter takes off or lands deep in the fastness of the factory. I remember the hideous newsreel of USA gunship helicopters over the forests of Vietnam — the tiny flaming figures — the battle for hearts and minds.

My *affinity group* comes from Shaftesbury and we spend a four hour shift together before they leave for home. We shared a briefing but I am conscious of being on my own — attached to them, not by affinity, but by convenience. We chat and share tea and now their friendliness raises my spirits. One of their blokes speculates with me on scaling the fence and making a dash for it — could we do it? And would the other blockaders be put at risk — support us — object? Is it right to

take unilateral action? Unilateral! How ironic. We don't know the answers and admit to fear, of dread of attack by dogs, of being isolated from the comfort of numbers, the terror of prison. But I *hate* that fence — our pathetic banners and a solitary web threaded into the mesh seem not to soften but emphasize its strength. Perhaps twenty years ago I would have had a bash, secretly keen to be heroic and a star of the movement. Now I can't shake off thoughts of sharing a cell with two men I don't know for 23 hours out of every 24 and I am gripped by claustrophobia even at the *thought* of it.

The Shaftesburyites leave and the new shift engages in a lively debate with some lads under a Communist Youth banner. The shift wants it down — it implies that *all* at the gate are Communist Youth or sympathisers — there's no room for sectarian propaganda they claim. Since the CY's are leaving anyway the debate is never resolved. I stay on for another couple of hours and the new shift with its guitars, song and sense of London community revives my spirits once more and speeds the time. At ten o'clock I've had enough and knock off.

I return the following morning — this time with two anarchist friends. We

arrive just before dawn laden with candles which we string out across the entrance to the gate. They look marvellous. The night shifters have lit a fire and somebody produces a guitar. Breakfast TV arrives and the blockaders do a rather self-conscious turn for the cameras. The cameraman spends a lot of time setting up a shot of the candles. 'They'll never use it — too arty' he says, and we'll never know.

The blockade is due to end at twelve and most of us decide to see it through to the end. Around eleven, aware that we have survived without arrests and confrontation, and in anticipation of the great chain event at Greenham, music, dance and celebration breaks out in the perimeter road. A girl gives a little drum to a policeman. He accepts it sheepishly — he is a little older than the others and I can imagine him as somebody's dad. To the sound of a tin whistle the blockaders dance and sing while PC Buddy Rich beats out 'dat rhythm on a drum'.

At twelve — and in some confusion as to whether to continue or not — we drift away not sure what we've achieved. Marvellous 'organisation', tolerance, willingness to co-operate, affinity forged — if only temporarily — old friendships renewed, sexism and elitism combated — oh yes *something* has been achieved but did production at the factory even falter? All these people, all this commitment and enthusiasm, all this desperate urgency and *all* we did was to sit politely in front of the gates in small numbers. I find myself resenting the virtually compulsory briefing, and the lack of spontaneity and trust

in the blockaders that this implies. I imagine all the demonstrators, due to link hands in the afternoon, instead sitting on the perimeter road stretching as far as the eye can see. The police having to arrest thousands in order to get their *tea* van through, never mind an *armed* missile convoy.

Walking back to the campsite, happier than before I arrived, the feeling persists that we should have done more. But what? Go back to the tactics of the mass sit-downs of twenty years ago or invent some new strategy less easily contained than the events of the last forty-eight hours?

Afterword

The preceding piece was written immediately after the Burghfield Nuclear Weapons Factory blockade which had preceded the great encirclement of Greenham Base, over five years ago. It was intended for an anthology of reports, songs, poems, personal diaries and reminiscence etc about the event. The anthology never appeared but perhaps this piece is worth resurrecting because it reminds one that the nuclear disarmament campaign once had enough energy and numbers to link hands round Greenham. The fifth anniversary of the event was attended by 100's rather than 1000's and the enthusiasm, optimism and invention of those times is now just a memory.

Just as in the sixties, the whiff of an election, the gesture politics of the labour leadership and the party loyalty of labour supporters within CND had dissipated the popular appeal of the campaign. The sound

of the Labour Party stampeding in retreat from its own defence policy is now deafening and despair and despondency is all around. The local CND group here in St Albans, for example, has virtually collapsed and its paper membership is less than half its strength five years ago.

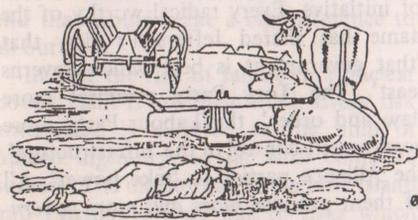
Since labour is not going to get elected it's of academic interest only, but it's clear that it's already abandoned its unilateralist approach and that the proposal to remove US bases — which most of us never believed anyway — is a dead duck. I've always held that the nuclear disarmament campaign has been at its most effective when it has been at its most extra-parliamentary. Seeing an identity of interest between CND and the Labour Party has been disastrous but its important to remember that a great deal of opposition to nuclear weapons came from people who were not members of CND and certainly not members of the Labour Party.

I've met anarchists who've refused to be involved, in any way, with the nuclear disarmament campaign and this seems a shame — to say the very least. At its best, the campaign has had strong elements of spontaneity, anti-authoritarianism and anti-statism. Because it is often dominated by unsympathetic people — personally and politically — is no reason to be uninvolved. Anarchists, above all, should be in there struggling to build upon those libertarian elements and exposing the lie that party-political interest is ever going to rid Britain of nuclear weapons, nuclear bases and a nuclear army of occupation.

Jeff Cloves

Green Grab and Greed

LAND NOTES



THINKING through is one of the most important requirements for those who would change the way things are done in human society, and the more powerful the tools developed by people, whether weapons or working tools, the more necessary this process is.

When one uses wood as a fuel it is possible to cut up and burn a 30 year old tree in a few days. This was OK when humans were less numerous and forests were vast. This applies to all fuel and it is all being used as if there is no tomorrow in our transport system, agriculture and industry. The reasons for this state of affairs is the system of ownership and a financial system which obscures the

realities of human society and its relationship with resources. It is no use the green or nuclear disarmers not realising that the crass use of resources and expenditure of vast resources on armaments of all sorts results from this relationship in society.

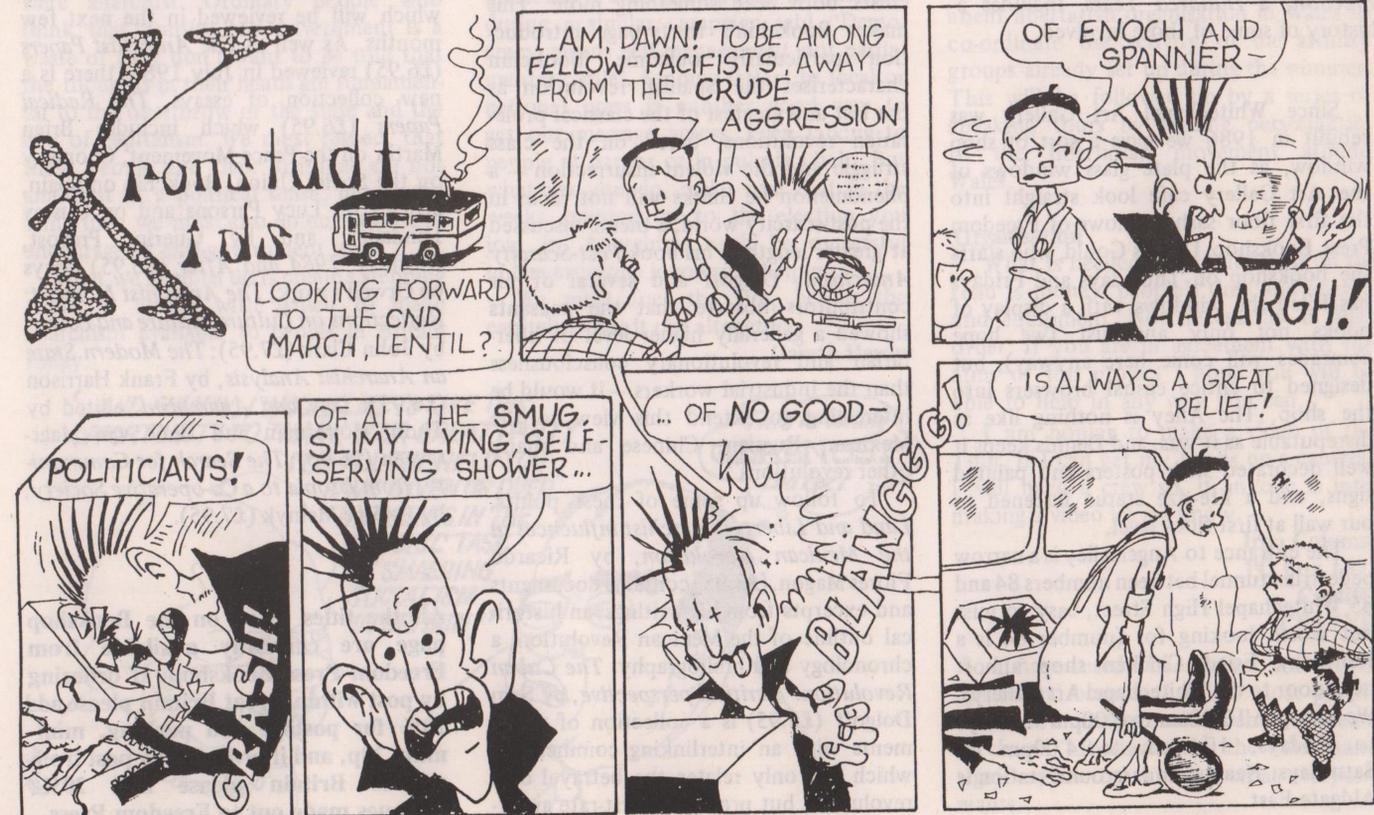
The attitudes to work and property and the subversion of the purposes of human activities shows the primacy of commercial considerations. In milk production the use of antibiotics and its pollution of the milk supply became so pronounced that penalties had to be placed on the introduction of contaminated milk into the supply. In order to continue to sell contaminated milk (ie to maximise profits) drug companies produced a product that concealed the presence of antibiotics in the milk. This sort of thing in fact occurs throughout the food industry. In fact people who are really interested in the quality of life are sometimes prevented from producing quality. Often EEC rules are slanted in favour of the large companies and people who are producing something people want are prevented from doing so. Ownership of property confers on individuals and companies rights over resources that

should be dealt with by the community as a whole. Not only that, every group of people needs to share the use of those resources and to make sure that their common environment is not damaged by individual ownership. The current wave of privatisation is meaningless in terms of control; it merely adds to the unbridled demand on resources.

The tendency towards larger and larger units is no way to control misuse of resources. For instance, Denmark, a relatively small unit, is being pressurised by the EEC to allow non returnable containers because the large producers of crap foods and poisonous drinks find it more profitable to market their products this way. They do not pay for disposal out of their profits, so that not only does the consumer pay for the container the product comes in, they also pay in pollution and disposal.

The biggest issue that greens have to deal with is the private ownership of land and its control by bodies of individuals, which includes governments whose stewardship of it to say the least has been disastrous.

Alan Albon



The Bookshop

Freedom Press Bookshop in Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

ANGEL Alley has been here for about 300 years. In 1725 a resident named Elisabeth Frances returned here from a debtors' prison where her debts (£4) were paid by the last will of Thomas Guy, publisher and bookseller. In 1888 the body of Jack the Ripper's first victim, Martha Turner, was found on the stone steps of a tenement building in the Alley. She had been stabbed 39 times but not dissected like the subsequent victims, and a writer of the time stated that the Ripper had been interrupted by the arrival of a Jewish anarchist group. There is no evidence that this was true.

Anarchists certainly arrived in 1942, when the Freedom Press Group acquired Express Printers. The publishing office and bookshop came here in 1968. A photograph in Bill Fishman's *The Street of East London*, taken about 1970, shows the Alley as a rubbish tip, with the Freedom signboard as the only clean object.

Freedom Press, founded in 1886, is not only the publisher of *Freedom* (and now a new anarchist quarterly, *The Raven*), but also Britain's largest publisher of anarchist books and pamphlets, currently with over 20 titles in print, and proposing to have 40 titles by the end of 1987. Send for free list. One of the titles, *Freedom a Hundred Years*, includes a history of some of those involved.

Since Whitechapel Art Gallery was rebuilt in 1986 we have a sort of shop window, as the plate glass windows of the Art Gallery cafe look straight into the first floor sash windows of Freedom Press Bookshop. Dennis Gould, who staffs the bookshop on Thursdays and Fridays has filled the windows with a display of books not only anarchist (we hope comrades will come here anyway), but designed to entice casual browsers into the shop. The Alley is nothing like as disreputable as it was, and Dennis keeps it well decorated with posters and painted signs, and a life-size statue fastened to our wall at first floor level.

The entrance to Angel Alley is a narrow pedestrian tunnel between numbers 84 and 85 Whitechapel High Street, easy to miss but worth looking for (number 84 is a Kentucky Fried Chicken shop almost next door to the Whitechapel Art Gallery). We are open 10.00am to 6.00pm Mondays to Fridays, 10.00am to 4.00pm on Saturdays. Nearest underground station is Aldgate East.

WE CAN now offer a number of titles from Black Rose of Canada which have been in short supply. *Anarchist Organisation: the History of the FAI*, by Juan Gomez Casas (£8.95) is the first English-language history, and we expect it will be soon reviewed at length in either *Freedom* or *The Raven*. *Bakunin on Anarchism*, edited by Sam Dolgoff (£7.95) is the standard source of Bakunin in English. All his major writings are represented here, and this volume should be on the bookshelf of every anarchist. For 450 pages it is exceptional value for money, as is *The Unknown Revolution 1917-1921* by Voline (£7.95), the most important anarchist history of the Russian Revolution, written by an eyewitness and activist (Trotsky tried to have him executed), friend of Makhno and Arshinov. (We might note that Arshinov's *History of the Makhnovist Movement* will be reprinted by Freedom Press later this year). By 'unknown revolution' Voline means the social revolution by unknown men and women as opposed to the seizure of political power by the Bolsheviks.

The Anarchist Collectives: workers' self-management in Spain 1936, edited by Sam Dolgoff (£7.95) is an anthology of writings by Leval, Santillan, Souchy, Peirats and others, and documents of the period. Reviewing it in *Freedom* in 1974, NW wrote 'It is very good propaganda, but anarchists who are not revolutionaries and revolutionaries who are not anarchists both need something more. This makes Bookchin's thirty-page introduction particularly welcome. Bookchin characterises the Spanish revolution as the last and greatest of the classical proletarian revolutions, based on the class struggle and the violent insurrection - a phenomenon he thinks will not recur in the post-scarcity world, a theme discussed at greater length in his book *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*. Dolgoff and several of his contributors observe that the peasants showed a generally higher level of libertarian and revolutionary consciousness than the industrial workers - it would be interesting to extend this view to the Mexican, Russian, Chinese and many other revolutions.'

To follow up some of these points, *Land and Liberty: anarchist influences in the Mexican Revolution*, by Ricardo Flores Magon, (£3.95) contains documents and excerpts from his writings, an historical outline of the Mexican Revolution, a chronology and bibliography. *The Cuban Revolution: a critical perspective*, by Sam Dolgoff (£5.95) is a collection of documents with an interlinking commentary which not only relates the betrayal of a revolution, but provides a first-rate analy-

sis of the nature and causes of that betrayal. Dolgoff's themes are the nature of Castro's dictatorship, contrasted with the record of anarchists under that dictatorship, and the illusions and inconsistencies of Liberal and Marxist-Leninist writers about Cuba.

Post-Scarcity Anarchism, by Murray Bookchin (£7.95) includes the article of the title, Listen Marxist!, Ecology and Revolutionary Thought, Towards a Liberatory Technology, and other pieces. Bookchin argues that scarcity is the cause of authoritarian society and that modern technology can provide an abundance of goods without toil. He was writing before the energy crisis and the arguments over nuclear power which are still going on. In a further collection of essays, *Towards an Ecological Society* (£7.95) he extends his thought to these issues. To quote Bookchin: 'If we are to find the roots of the present ecological crisis, we must turn not to technics, demographics, growth, and a diseased affluence alone; we must turn to the underlying institutional, moral and spiritual changes in human society that produced hierarchy and domination.' Bookchin's *The Limits of the City* (£7.95) is a history of city life which, once progressive, has reached its 'ultimate negation in the modern metropolis'.

Black Rose has a number of other titles of interest to anarchists, which we can do no more than mention here, but which will be reviewed in the next few months. As well as *The Anarchist Papers* (£6.95) reviewed in July 1986, there is a new collection of essays, *The Radical Papers* (£6.95) which includes Brian Martin on the Peace Movement, Chomsky on the Soviet Union, Bookchin on Spain, articles on Lucy Parsons and on Gustav Landauer; and by Guerin, Prevost, Reichert. *1984 and After* (£6.95) essays on Orwell's work; *The Anarchist Moment: Reflections on Culture, Nature and Power*, by John Clark (£7.95); *The Modern State an Anarchist Analysis*, by Frank Harrison (£6.95); *Law and Anarchism*, edited by Thom Holterman and Henc van Maarseven (£6.95); *The Search for Community, from Utopia to a Co-operative Society*, by George Melnyk (£7.95).

All the titles listed on the Bookshop page are currently available from Freedom Press Bookshop. If ordering by post within Great Britain please add 10% for postage and packing, minimum 20p, and if ordering by post from outside Britain please add 20%. Cheques made out to Freedom Press.

Don't vote campaign

SO MANY times I have heard it said that after a few hundred more years our society will have developed from capitalism to anarchism.

Considering what is happening in Britain today one couldn't be blamed for feeling that there are some very defeatist and pessimistic people about.

In the 1974 election more people voted than at the following election in 1979. And in 1979 more people voted than at the last election in 1983. It is clear that an increasingly large number of people are losing interest in government and parliamentary power.

Politicians (along with certain members of the police force, I will add) are fast becoming victims of humorous advertising and popular jokes.

But there is no need for evidence of the anti-government leanings of the British public, leanings which anarchists have surprisingly not exploited. Such a trend probably had more provocation from advertisements for the *Today* newspaper suggesting a hung parliament and 'Spitting Image'. But at the point where they leave off we must carry on, and this is where a 'don't vote' campaign comes in.

However, we must not go over the top at the beginning.

Because in the eyes of the unconverted the word 'anarchy' depicts a scene of violence, crime and chaos, it would scare people if we suggested that their attitudes were anarchist. Ordinary people who think that politics and government is a waste of time don't want to be told that the thoughts in their heads are fundamental to the overthrow of the state and the end of capitalism. We must respect that these people and their attitudes are not anarchist in a political sense, but at the same time we must also do our utmost to encourage an anti-government trend.

What we need to do is create a stepping stone, a bridge with which to make anarchism available to people in Britain today.

Now that we are being presented with a situation where the different parties are asking people to vote for them and a lot of people are turning a blind eye (a third of the electorate last time), we have the ideal opportunity to build that bridge. An opportunity that we must not neglect.

A 'don't vote' campaign won't be important for its effect on the government (which probably wouldn't amount to much anyway) but more for its effect on the public, who after all are the people who make up an anarchist society. It is also important, however, as a test for anarchists. When we are all working together in a revolutionary situation, important points will be brought up which otherwise may have been unnoticed. We can best learn from our mistakes and if we are not doing anything, we can't make mistakes.

For the campaign to have any effect we must all take part. People must be willing to put forward new, updated ideas that are relevant to society today rather than society a hundred years ago. It is up to you to make this campaign work.

Contact friends, contact your local or nearest group, organise meetings. Fly-posting is something that can be very effective but do it at night as then you are less likely to get caught. Posters can be obtained from *Freedom*, *Class War* or from many other groups. You could photocopy them or make your own to photocopy. One good poster in Australia during a similar campaign said, 'Democracy means self-management not parliamentary rule'. Sending letters to local or national press is another good way to get our message across. Even talking to people at parties or in pubs is a help. But whatever you do, make sure that in the weeks running up to the election you join in. Anarchism can't be successful unless everyone involved is helping.

We must fuel the fire, before the capitalists put it out altogether.

Gareth Hardy

Welsh campaign

I AM writing to appeal for your support to begin to make the ideals of anarchism a reality in Wales.

Culture and action

The project I am initiating is to organise a Tour of the Libertarian* Movement in Wales from the beginning of June to the end of September 1987. This Tour will take the form of a column of vehicles which will contain an exposition of the libertarian movement consisting of a photographic exhibition on anarchism and the showing of a number of anarchist videos. And a small selection of pamphlets and magazines. This will be housed in a coach. The second part of the Tour will be of a more cultural aspect. Consisting of artists and musicians to be housed in a marquee. Not on wheels though.

Aims

The aim of the Tour is to spread the libertarian message to the far flung corners of the principality, and to aid in setting up of affinity groups of like-minded individuals all over Wales.

A Broadsheet will be especially produced for the Tour containing information on the libertarian movement and putting forward concrete and specific ideas and proposals for the future. This will be in English and Welsh and will be free.

At the end of the Tour it is planned to hold a Libertarian Festival at which a conference will be held to set up a permanent libertarian organisation in Wales to co-ordinate the activity of the affinity groups already set up during the summer. This will be followed up by a series of speaking tours by leading personalities in the libertarian movement around Wales.

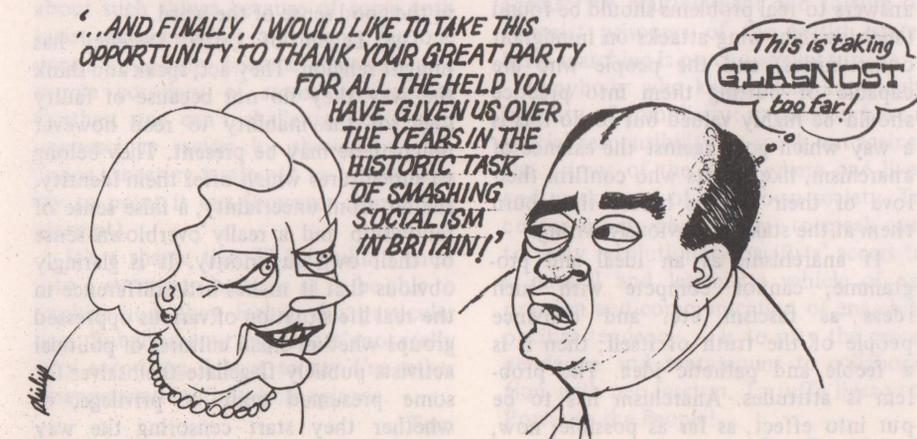
Organisation

What is needed to get the Tour on the road is money, people's time and energy and equipment. Not necessarily in that order. If you are in agreement with the aims of this project I hope you will be able to help in any way you can.

I am hoping to make a video of the Tour, if I can get my hands on a camera. I will need a crew so, if anyone is into making a video let me know.

Iron Column,
PO Box 157,
Cardiff,
CF5 1YE

* I have used 'libertarian' instead of 'anarchist' because I think most people think of anarchism or anarchist as mean-in chaos. 'Libertarian' on the other hand signifies 'liberty' which is what everyone wants.





Free Speech

IN REPLY to Midge of Huddersfield, Free Speech letter, *Freedom* March 1987.

In considering the proposed British National Party march through Bradford (Yorkshire) under the slogan 'Stop Immigration - Stop Aids'. Firstly, I recognise that this was no doubt provocative to the local community. However, I must also ask how can two wrongs make a right? Assuming that the proposed counter-demonstrators intentions were to stop the original march then presumably this would entail the use of violence (kicking NF/BNP off our streets).

Perhaps I am a 'white-liberal' (because of proportional representation) but I do happen to believe in the logic behind the theoretical idea 'you cannot defeat an idea by beating up those who believe it'. The logic being if you beat an idea down it will ultimately manifest itself somewhere else; perhaps in the dark of the night in the shape of a molotov cocktail.

It appears that the basic principle of 'Freedom of Speech' is to tolerate even those we think of as crass. Let them have their say in public where we can both identify them and counter-attack their lies, bigotry and racial intimidation with our 'superior' ideas, truths, tolerance and harmony.

We don't need their 'free' press, T.V., we don't need to be Martyrs. Our network is less visible, word of mouth, melting-pot, are just two descriptive slogans that characterise it.

Give the masses some credit. We are not just meat and fodder for any tin-pot protagonist that comes calling; we've all seen the old 'March of Time' newsreels and the majority of us know the score.

Let's keep our armchairs safe (and our Front windows) by letting these fascists exercise this devil through public speech and argument. After all perhaps we can decrease their numbers, rather than increase, by persuasion and educating these people (fascists) that they are wrong. Then again perhaps somebody has a theory that these people are some sort of sub-species and are biologically incapable of learning?

I am advocating freedom of speech, freedom to listen and choose, freedom to

be a liberal, sitting in a well-worn armchair, spouting on, and theorising about the finer points of anarchism and fascist political philosophy. Those who see non-participation (30% of the electorate and increasing) as a valid option are increasingly recognising the 'struggle' but instead of embracing it some of us are questioning it (the struggle).

Finally to quote, not Hitler, but Errico Malatesta, 'The anarchist revolution that we want transcends the interest of a single class; it envisages the liberation of all humanity which is at present enslaved, either economically, politically, or morally.'

THE views of Midge (Letters, March 1987): that not only has he a duty (which we all agree with) to prevent groups such as the NF and BNP from putting their aims into practice, but he has also a more sacred duty to extinguish repulsive ideas of this kind from the face of the earth by some mysterious process. It is, he writes, a 'positive duty to ourselves and others' to do so and to say otherwise is 'irresponsible'. Here is a person who has easily justified to himself the truth of his own position and can act upon it with an attitude which I find disturbing. Surely anarchism is a tolerance of other peoples views so long as they don't try to coerce other people with them? What can be done, if anything should be done, if the man next door believes the moon is made of cheese or he thinks he's superior to coloured people?

Of course worthwhile practical answers to real problems should be found (such as right-wing attacks on immigrant communities) and the people who are capable of putting them into practice should be highly valued but to do this is a way which goes against the essence of anarchism, like priests who confirm their love of their victims before they burn them at the stake, is obviously wrong.

If anarchism, as an ideal and programme, cannot compete with such ideas as fascism etc. and convince people of the truth of itself, then it is a feeble and pathetic idea. The problem is attitudes. Anarchism has to be put into effect, as far as possible, now,

not in some distant utopian society. I, for one, am sure of my own anarchist position and can confront authoritarianism without resorting to authoritarianism. Obviously action has to be taken by activists but there is a thin line between that and becoming thugs like those we fight against. What will people like this do when I disagree with them? Chase me back to where I 'crawled' from?

John Malton

Don't let Raf, Micky and Anna Quay (ho! ho!) know that *Freedom* is now printing the words of Adolf Hitler (I refer of course to the letter from Huddersfield in your last issue, dubiously entitled 'Free Speech') - surely Midge should be violently deleted for giving a platform to such an infamous racist??

Paul

Abuse and threats

IN REGARD to the seemingly never ending abuse of your magazine's editorial policy which you see fit to allow space for in your letter columns (for instance in March), two old chestnuts which I have heard over the years are quite appropriate. 'The most common things in the universe are hydrogen and stupidity' and 'Anarchists are the ultimate liberals. You can prove that they will tolerate anything by the fact that they can even tolerate each other.' Your patient explanations of the quite obvious intent of certain articles to the space cadets who are offended by them are words wasted on the deaf.

The bottom line is that you are trying to sell an entirely different product than the one certain individuals have bought. If I read your intentions right I think you are trying to present a political philosophy, anarchism, in what you hope is a rational form that is attractive to a goodly number of people from various communities. You are trying to suggest, and Lord it's hard given what anarchism is, practical means whereby certain moral goals can be brought closer to reality by collective action. You are selling politics in the good sense of the word.

The Legion of Leftist Decency has bought religion. They act, speak and think the way they do not because of faulty logic or the inability to read however much these may be present. They belong to subcultures which offer them identity, shelter from uncertainty, a false sense of fellowship and a really overblown sense of their own superiority. It is glaringly obvious that it makes little difference in the real life situation of various oppressed groups whether small cultures of political activists publicly flagellate themselves for some presumed guilt of privilege, or whether they start censoring the way

they speak down to the level of absurdity and incoherence.

The real world, however, is totally irrelevant to subculturists. Their goal is not to be effective in the sense of having large numbers of people accept their ideas. They need their presumed separation from mainstream society in order that their subcultures may serve the function they wish them to. It is as useless to argue with these people as it is to argue with a convinced fundamentalist. There is no weak point where logic or facts can penetrate their closed little world views. The only way they will leave their cults is when they become too emotionally unsatisfying. For some this will never happen. The continued existence, even if in atrophied form, of leftist or counter (sic) cultural subcultures is as potent a demonstration of the human desire for self mutilation as is the ongoing saga of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

These people are basically a historical ball and chain that anarchists will likely have attached to their legs for decades. Give them a certain amount of attention perhaps, in the realization that you can never convert them by logic, but understand that they and their goals are the precise opposite of the creation of anarchism as an effective movement of action.

Pat Murtagh
Winnipeg

I AM not one of the group of people involved in TLB (who sent you angry letters concerning Tony Gibson's article on ageism), and I'm not going to presume to speak for them. But statements of Gibson's such as 'if your skin is black it is unlikely that you will often be called a "coon" to your face in modern Britain...' are pretty astonishing. That this kind of unconscious racism (I don't know what else can explain it) provoked no more readers' remarks perhaps reflects the lack of black people among the readership. Black people the length and breadth of Britain get called 'nigger', 'coon' and worse very frequently, and often with menaces. Gibson obviously doesn't know this, but assumes that he does know about such things because of some anti-racist sentiments. Or so it seems. But one doesn't magically become non-racist as a simple corollary of stated anti-racism. Further, one can't challenge one's own unconscious racism by showing a ridiculing, sneering contempt to people who try to point it out (however clumsy the attempt).

It's a shame that TLB wouldn't enter into a correspondence so as to be able to explain how they feel in this particular case. But given your response it's not really very surprising. I have to say I'm rather disappointed by the whole episode.

Tom

Electoral aids

AS A large number of society will shortly be seeking satisfaction in the arms of a general election, don't you think we should embark on an extensive government health warning campaign with the aim to reduce such undesirable behaviour, especially among the young, who are more prepared to experiment with their vote, which could leave them open to the passages of a Parliamentary democracy?

John Malton

Peace News

THE *Peace News* collective (see letters, February) cannot so easily and jokingly be allowed off the hook.

Moral condemnation of terrorism usually shows symptoms of self-interested rationalisation, no less than justification of violence on the part of the terrorists. The language of morality is also a means of domination. Moralistic critique of terrorism becomes pure hypocrisy when it is accompanied by tacit or open support for the forms of terror organised by the modern state, or for the forms of technological violence planned at everyday level against human life...If it were possible to redirect the moral force that is today mobilised against terrorism towards the goal of a general humanisation of society, and hence a liberation from the repressive and ideological functions of today's morality, then the problem of terrorism would resolve itself. The illusion of the terrorists is that this...can be achieved by their armed struggle.

- Albrecht Wellmer
cited by Luigi Manconi, 'The Language of Terrorism', *Emergency Number 4*.

For many years now *Peace News* has systematically engaged in censorship of the Ulster problem. Particularly it has censored pleas to pacifists and pacifist opinion to engage actively in struggle against the maltreatment and torture of terrorist prisoners of the British state. Strip searching is psycho/sexual torture.

Anybody who keeps silent knowingly is guilty of complicity: so pacifists have a special responsibility to speak out against the crimes of the State where one lives and works, and of one's own society. To censor others who attempt to speak out, to deny revolutionary pacifists' access to a natural and legitimate vehicle of expression and communication of anarchist pacifist tendency - is to play the moral gendarme and tantamount to collaboration with neo-fascism. Tartuffe lives yet! Power to the People!

Jay Greenham II

Sheffield

IN THE March issue of *Freedom*, there was mention of some cassette recordings of talks given at a History Workshop. One of these talks was apparently called 'The Sheffield Anarchists' by 'The Sheffield Anarchists'. Not having heard this talk we cannot comment on its contents. However, we can say it has nothing to do with us. Whoever gave this talk, supposedly on behalf of Sheffield Anarchists, is a fraud.

Sheffield Anarchists

POBox 217, Sheffield S1 1FD

We have checked with the organisers. The talk was a historical survey of anarchism in Sheffield by two Sheffield anarchists.

Bard replies

LIKE A.F. (letters, March) I have 'been involved with many magazines over many years', and I think readers should be left to decide whether they like a poem or article, rather than accepting AF's decision. What is doggerel and gibberish to one person may be ballads and surrealist to another. I would just like to answer AF that if the work of Jeff Cloves and myself in the *Centenary Freedom* is doggerel and gibberish, then it is doggerel and gibberish developed over the past twenty-five years!

Songs and poems - and performances and readings - are one area where anarchist ideas are reaching out to new audiences, and are popular. The fact that *Freedom* rarely publishes poems is a measure of how out of touch anarchists can be. The depth and tradition of anarchist poetry deserves to be revealed.

Dennis Gould

Riff Raff Poets and Street Accord Band will be performing on Friday 24 April at the Cross Keys pub, Endell Street London WC2 (upstairs room) from 8pm onwards - should AF or any other reader like to criticise or even enjoy such an event.

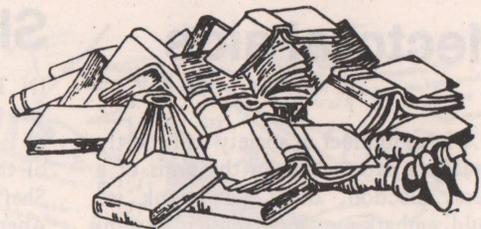
Gobbledegook

FREEDOM used to have a policy which stated that all articles and letters be written in plain, jargon-free language. Has this policy been dropped? There have been an awful lot of jargon-ridden articles of late, and last issues contribution by P.N. Rogers was the worst; I couldn't understand a word of it, and I doubt if I was alone.

Anarchism is for - and by - ordinary people: it is *not* the preserve of academics and intellectuals. Please cut the crap and talk in ordinary, understandable language.

Fred Riley

BOOK REVIEWS



Anarchism

George Woodcock

Pelican, 2nd edition, 1986, pb, 445pp, £5.95.

THIS is a new edition of the book which has been around since the early 1960s. Additional material, added in the '70s, has been incorporated. The earlier chapters, dealing with the general ideas of anarchism and the classic writers, are substantially the same. The later chapters, dealing with the anarchist movement country by country, have been updated. The first edition tended to assume that the old movement was dead. This one still does, and that the resurgence is something quite different — a series of new manifestations of the idea!

This book has had wide distribution, largely because it is published by Penguin. For many people it must have been their first literary introduction to anarchism. As such it has a certain responsibility. If my experience is typical, it doesn't live up to it. One problem is that it is scholarly and historical. How many others found their developing sympathy strained by this approach, and bewildered by detail. The accuracy of this detail is something the new sympathiser is not qualified to judge.

The new edition, as basically the old one with a few pages at the end of some chapters, obviously does not meet this criticism. Its difference is that it covers events within the experience of many of us. Woodcock was himself an editor of *Freedom* in the 1940s. The book's accuracy can be weighed against personal reminiscences. Discrepancies appear.

This edition contains a fascinating statement. 'The 1950s were a period of somnolence for anarchism in Britain. The movement lost two of its leading figures in 1949 when Marie Louise Berneri died and George Woodcock departed to start a new kind of life in Canada.'

The book, supported by the weight of its publishers, shall continue to have wide distribution. We can presume that their commercial judgement justifies the new edition. As a useful summary of the classical writers and a broad account of the historical movement it has no rivals. In its place, it is useful. It is just a pity that the quirks of the marketplace elevate it into its prominent position. Many who stumble across it would benefit more from a different approach.

DP

Anarchy: a graphic guide

Clifford Harper

to be published by Camden Press on 30 April. £5.95

'DESPITE seemingly contradictory ideas — socialism and individualism, terrorism and pacifism, philosophy and agitation — two things unite all anarchists: the absolute rejection of state authority and an unshakeable belief in the creative potential of free human beings.'

Thus the blurb of this joyful book, and what interests the author is the unity. Where possible the seeming contradictions are reconciled: 'Individualism relates closely to the conduct of our private lives; mutualism, to our general relations with others'. Where they cannot be reconciled, as between pacifism and 'propaganda of the deed', both sides are described with approval. Every anarchist tendency, from egoism to council communism, from syndicalism to punk, is positively and unreservedly welcomed.

The structure of the book is approximately chronological, starting with the Free Spirit society in 1200 AD, and ending with mutual aid in Mexico City after the earthquake of 1985. But it is not a history in the sense of an investigation; its factual inaccuracies do not invalidate its argument. Chronological order is merely a convenient arrangement of ideas regarded



as equally valid. The final section, 'freely adapted from Tristan Tzara's 1918 *Dada Manifesto*', is out of time order and may represent Harper's own approach: 'People who join us keep their freedom. We don't accept any theories'.

If I have counted right there are 193 illustrations, all in Harper's lively 'woodcut' style. The writing is concise and readable, with many quotations from anarchists and their enemies, chosen to show the similarity of different anarchist approaches, rather than the differences. The curious enquirer who reads this book will end up in no doubt about what anarchists believe in common. Those who sympathise will be able to identify the tendency which suits them best, and yet feel able to co-operate fully with other tendencies. There is no hint of factional bickering.

I welcome this book as wholeheartedly as it welcomes the entire movement.

DR

Anarcho-Pacifism: questions and answers

Derrick A. Pike

Published by Derrick A Pike,
1 Market Place, Glastonbury. £1.40.

'THE beliefs expressed here', writes Pike in his preface, 'are my own and they certainly do not represent the beliefs of all pacifists and anarchists'. This does not mean, however, that his beliefs are a long way from mainstream anarchism. Anyone who has read such venerable classics as Malatesta's *Anarchy* and Berkman's *ABC of Anarchism* (and a few recent *Freedom*s to update on attitudes to recent events like nuclear weapons), will find most of Pike's opinions quite familiar.

The 'pacifism' consists of two venerable anarchist commonplaces: that states cannot exist without war, and that the anarchist revolution can only be achieved by withdrawing support, since no state can be overwhelmed except by another state. I guess Pike hopes to attract pacifists towards anarchism, and thinks the simple word 'anarchism' might frighten them off.

This book is not addressed to those in search of entertainment. It is physically repellent, 40,000 words set on one of those typewriters which put enormous wide spaces between the words to make the lines come to the same length, so the crammed pages look like knitting with dropped stitches. The chapter heads, set in underlined capitals, are in the form of questions, one of which reads 'ARE NOT PEOPLE TOO NONCOOPERATIVE AND AGGRESSIVE TO LIVE AT PEACE WITH ONE ANOTHER IN AN IDEAL SOCIETY, AND SO DO WE NOT NEED A GOVERNMENT TO KEEP LAW AND ORDER AT HOME AND TO FIGHT OUR ENEMIES ABROAD?' Once one has gathered the energy to start

reading, however, the setting is not as completely illegible as it looks, and the pedantic language is quite lucid.

The most controversial chapter, to my mind, is the longest one, headed 'HOW CAN WE MAKE THE IDEAL REVOLUTION AND SO OBTAIN THE IDEAL SOCIETY AND PEACE?' Generally, Pike is in favour of propaganda, especially by conversation, but against any use of force, including 'mass non-violence'. 'Hence no cutting of wire fences around military installations, no lying down in front of army vehicles, no ambushing of cruise convoys, and no active interference with any state activity. ...I admire the people who do these things and I realise that such behaviour gives a sense of doing something for peace. But, in fact, more would be achieved by those who make the mass protests if each person in them contacted an unconverted individual and explained to him or her the essential social truths.'

This is not a plea against activity. Pike says people should be conscientious objectors against military conscription, and refuse to take part in any exploitative occupation. And he approves of co-operation within revolutionary groups, not only for propaganda purposes but to relieve the hardship caused by refusal to collaborate with the state. He does not advocate knuckling under to anybody. It is only his idea that attempts to interfere with the state have little or no propaganda value, which is unusual.

Also unusual is the idea that, to avoid the state denigrating us as abnormal and so preventing our propaganda being heard, 'our appearance (haircut and clothes) must always be the same as our contemporaries and our behaviour must be exemplary; no drug-taking, no loose sexual behaviour and no misconduct of any kind.'

This is a respectable view, but open to doubt. Pike tells us, in keeping with most anarchist works, that 'the people we should talk to first are those who have... most to gain when the ideal society is created. These are the young rather than the old, the poor rather than the rich...' But there is also an argument for talking first to those who are readiest to listen. These are often dissatisfied with our society and express their dissatisfaction by taking up unconventional forms of dress and behaviour. It may be that the people most receptive to anarchist ideas will distrust people who dress and behave conventionally, and expect weirdos to make more sense.

We learn that Pike was worried, at the beginning of WW2, about what might happen to him as a conscientious objector. That puts him in his sixties at the youngest. There is a drawing on the cover, probably traced from a photograph, of a bespectacled man with his finger across

his chin in the conventional gesture of earnest thought. This is indeed an earnest, thoughtful work, addressed to those who would be put off by attention-getting antics, but might agree with anarchism presented in suitably careful tones.

A pity about the awful design. I am told Freedom Press offered to consider Pike's work for publication, but were not shown it. His contribution to the *Freedom Centenary Edition* is useful, and I hope he will offer more articles to us. DR

Rediscoveries: Some Neglected Modern European Thinkers

Edited by John A Hall

Oxford University Press: Clarendon Press (£22.50 & £8.95)

THIS oddly titled book is a symposium of academic essays on eleven writers who were active from the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century but have fallen into relative neglect during the late twentieth century, based on a series of articles in the academic magazine *Government and Opposition*. Apart from Carlyle at the beginning, all the subjects come from Continental Europe, and they range from people who are fairly well known at least by name (Gobineau, Burckhardt, Sorel, Péguy, Kautsky) to people who are almost unknown at least in this country (Masqueray, Ostrogorski, Halevy, Ferrero). There is much valuable material in the book, but the reason for reviewing it here is that one of the essays is David Miller's twenty-page article 'Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921): Mutual Aid and Anarcho-Communism' (first published in *Government and Opposition*, Summer 1983).

Miller teaches political theory at Nuffield College, Oxford, has written uneven books on *Social Justice* (1976) and *Anarchism* (1984), and is a leading exponent of the revisionist, ideology known as 'market socialism'. He has obviously read most of the books by and about Kropotkin, though apparently few of the more elusive pamphlets and articles. His account of Kropotkin's anarchist theory and scientific basis is generally fair and accurate, but it is inevitably incomplete, it suffers from one pervasive defect, and several details are questionable.

The pervasive defect is that Miller describes Kropotkin's political ideas in almost total isolation both from other anarchists and socialists and also from contemporary and subsequent events. There is virtually no reference to Kropotkin's relations with the movement he worked in for half a century or to the relevance of Kropotkin's ideas either to what was happening around him or to what happened later in the Russian and Spanish revolutions. As usual in academic work, Kropotkin is treated as an almost

solitary thinker rather than as a member of various groups and a wider movement.

The questionable details indicate a puzzling unfamiliarity with the history of anarchism and the biography of Kropotkin. Miller suggests that anarchist communism 'remains the position with the widest support in contemporary anarchist circles'; he gives no evidence, just mentioning Murray Bookchin, yet in the *Freedom* readership survey of 1960 — conveniently summarised in *Anarchy* 12 (February 1962) — 'anarchist communist' won less support than 'individualist', 'philosophical anarchist', or 'pacifist anarchist', though more than 'anarcho-syndicalist'. He says that 'syndicalism immediately presented the anarchists with a new form of organisation'; the truth is surely the reverse — that syndicalism presented the labour movement with an anarchist form of organisation.

He says that when Kropotkin discussed social revolution 'the example of the French Revolution was always before his mind'; much more present to his mind was the more recent example of the Paris Commune. He distinguishes between Kropotkin's work before his imprisonment in 1883 and after his release in 1886, postulating 'a new era in which he was less concerned to make anarchist propaganda of the most straightforward kind'; but from 1886 to 1914 Kropotkin regularly contributed straightforward anarchist propaganda to the press in English, French and Russian. He says that Kropotkin 'approved wholeheartedly of Comte's and Spencer's attempts to construct synthetic philosophies'; but Kropotkin was very critical of both Comte's Positive Philosophy and Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy. He says that Kropotkin 'had little sympathy with the British working class'; the evidence he gives is some criticism of cooperatives and trade unions, yet Kropotkin was following the usual revolutionary socialist line in distinguishing between the class and some of its institutions. He suggests that Kropotkin's ideas about economic decentralisation are not appropriate in an advanced industrial society; the examples he gives are cars and electronic equipment, yet both are manufactured on a decentralised basis. (He refers to *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, but not to Colin Ward's recent editions of *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow*.) He modifies the criticisms of Kropotkin's biological theories made in his previous books; but he still misses some of the most important points made by Kropotkin.

So this is an interesting but irritating essay, which doesn't reach the level that should be expected in an academic magazine or book. Unfortunately the same is true of most of the other essays in the book, which is also full of misprints.

NW