

# LAND NOTES

## Real Education

THE city farm movement has certainly grown, and having managed one of the pioneer farms in Kentish Town I am pleased to see that the movement has spread over Europe. Not only does it give city children some inkling as to where their food comes from, how it is produced; it also interests quite a number of adults. Depending on location and site, they vary enormously, and in many cases organise visits to shows and farms outside their area. Many children also get to ride horses, usually an activity confined to the children of yuppydom. On one occasion we held a week long under-five festival, and apart from other things going on I sheared half a sheep in the morning for one lot of children and the other half in the afternoon for the next lot. The wool was then carded and spun and put on a loom to weave. Children were able to feel the texture of the wool.

It seems that this is what real education should be about, as well as nutrition, and the development of a keen observation of the living world, for how agriculture is carried on impinges more and more on urban society. The school I went to had a biology teacher who had been a seaman; the teaching was not confined to the classroom and we visited many habitats of various living communities now largely destroyed by the increasing growth of industrialised farming. In fact even in the towns many wild areas have been destroyed by building and the growth in the

population of cats and dogs that tend to destroy any small animal that moves, so you do not see tadpoles, frogs, newts, toads in the town environment. Apart from city farms there has been some attempt to reconstruct such areas, however as such activities do not generate the phoney money profit, they are not unduly encouraged. The fact that agricultural workers are paid less than anybody else indicates how undervalued such activities are, yet their proper organisation and the living world as a whole needs every person's understanding, as things are happening that can be as threatening as nuclear war, though the threat of nuclear war is more obvious.

Agricultural activity has been responsible for much desertification. Arable farming disturbs the soil cover allowing oxidation of organic content. Pastoral agriculture, unless controlled, can be just as destructive, like the goat in the Mediterranean basin.

It appears that hunting and gathering civilisations have lived in a stable relationship with their environment for a very long time, in fact having a much more sympathetic knowledge of the environment on which they depended. How do we get an urban dominated population to acquire the sympathetic knowledge, and approach to the living environment, on which global humanity depends?

Alan Albon

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# FREEDOM

RUSSIAN COUNTER-REVOLUTION 70 YEARS ON see centre pages

ANARCHIST MAGAZINE

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## VOTES OR SOCIALISM

ON the first day of the Labour Party Conference at Brighton, Mr Neil Kinnock was given the go-ahead for a policy review which will 'exclude nothing' and in which every policy is to be tested against the criterion of *what the voters want*. The chairman, Mr Sid Tierney, told the Conference, 'I am confident this will be the beginning of a great fight back to power'.

Yet the Labour Party is deeply divided, with its Left accusing it of *abandoning socialism*, and Mr Roy Hattersley warned that Labour could disintegrate if it becomes a party that stands for 'nothing except providing power for its leaders'. We have looked in vain for any of the Labour Party leadership to say what they believe socialism is. Hattersley has talked of 'the real philosophy of socialism' and 'the real principles of socialism' which he tells us have 'immense popular appeal' without telling us what this philosophy or set of principles are.

As the conference opened, *The Times* in its leading article (September 28) commented as follows: 'Mr Roy Hattersley, Labour's Deputy Leader, said in Brighton yesterday that the party must "rehabilitate socialism as Margaret Thatcher has rehabilitated conservatism" and "proclaim with pride and confidence the virtues of the ideas in which we believe". What ideas?'

*The Times* went on to comment on an article by Eric Hobsbawm in *Marxism Today* (October 1987) which was reprinted in *The Guardian* on the same day (September 28). In this article Hobsbawm defines the Tory objectives as 'the dismantling of state interference in the economy and the affairs of the private citizen... If Labour wants to modernise Britain it will have to be as ready to disrupt old habits and practices as Gorbachev is in his efforts to modernise the Soviet economy.' But isn't Gorbachev moving away from socialism and towards a free-market economy? Hobsbawm's answer is that the free market must be tempered by 'deliberate and conscious state policy, state control and planning'. Like the Labour Party he calls for *more government, more state control and less socialism*.

*The Times* leader-writer cynically but truly comments: 'Anyone following the "debate" about how to revive the Labour



Party... must be struck by how little most of the proposed remedies have to do with socialism as the term has been commonly understood... Thus Professor Hobsbawm, accustomed to being considered a strategic Marxist thinker, ponders how best to achieve the Lib-Lab pact. Little wonder that Mr Hattersley, so used to being suspected by the Hobsbawm's of Lib-Lab tendencies, is irritated. Britain is seeing the apostasy of its intellectual left. Only those on the far left, who will follow Mr Benn to his personal labour conference in his constituency next month proclaim anything with what Mr Hattersley calls "pride and confidence"...

And what has Tony Benn to say? Interviewed in the *Independent* (September 28) he talks of the Labour Party trying to do 'what Hugh Gaitskell did in 1959, that is to say abandon socialism, to weaken the links with trade unions, and to create a party fit for the Liberals to live with'. Some of our younger readers may not remember the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool in November 1959 after the party had suffered three successive election defeats (in 1951, 1955 and 1959), when the same issues were debated and when Hugh Gaitskell believed that it was Clause IV of the Party Constitution which had led to defeat. Less than five years later Harold Wilson was Prime Minister, putting forward an image of Labour as the modern, progressive party, yet winning on a basis of marginal seats with less votes being cast for Labour than in 1959. So perhaps by 1992 we shall see Neil Kinnock in Downing Street, talking about 'the white heat of the technological revolution', blaming the state of the nation on 'thirteen years of Tory misrule' and having beer and sandwiches sent into Downing Street as he discusses with union leaders

how to make the capitalist system work.

To us socialism can have nothing in common with capitalism. Socialism means cooperation instead of competition; production carried out by voluntary association for need and not for profit; equality not privilege; and no government can bring this about since any government has to operate the capitalist system. For those to whom socialism is represented by the Labour Party, the choice is between a move to the right, in which case the voters will assume that socialism is a lost cause, or a move to the left which will mean the Labour Party as a socialist party but continuing in opposition.

We cannot do better than end by repeating what we printed in *Freedom*\* on the occasion of the Labour Party Conference in 1959: 'Socialism — any more than anarchism — hasn't a chance of winning an election. For when socialists will be in a majority the electoral system will have long since been dispensed with. That is surely obvious. Socialism is individual responsibility, is social and political awareness, is class consciousness. (Yes, but not in the sense of wanting to perpetuate classes, but the consciousness of their existence, an understanding of why they exist, and a determination, informed by knowledge and militancy, to abolish them.) Government, however benevolent, is the denial of individual responsibility, the opium of social and political awareness and the perpetuator, and creator — *vide* Russia — of classes and class distinction. The Labour movement (by which we mean the rank and file — the leaders don't interest us) must choose between winning elections and furthering the cause of socialism.'

\*Vernon Richards. *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy*, Freedom Press, £1.50

# FREEDOM

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### SEND NO MORE MAIL TO:

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Our comrade Patrick Henry is in custody. We do not know the precise charges but we know how they are brought by the FBI, and that he is denied bail as an alleged threat to society. We have been asked to warn comrades not to write to the Post Office Box above (used by Patrick Henry, Circle A Publishers and a couple of other names) as letters there are now received by the FBI. Patrick's private address should also be avoided.

Messages of support may be sent to Patrick Henry Defense Committee, c/o SRAF, POB 1751, San Francisco, CA 94101 or c/o POB 1313, Lawrence, KA 66044 or to Toronto ABC, POB 6326, Spua, Toronto M5W 1P7.

## Contacts wanted

Plymouth anarchists (PO Box 105, Plymouth) would like to increase communication with other groups and receive info. Cambridge anarchists are starting again and eager to contact *Freedom* subscribers in Cambridge; Write Nick, Box A, Cambridge Free Press, 25 Gwydir Street.

## Anarchist Book Fair

Conway Hall, London WC1, Saturday 21 November 1987. The largest annual anarchist gathering in this country. To arrange a space, contact:

New Anarchist Review  
c/o 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1

## London ACF

London group of the Anarchist Communist Federation holds fortnightly discussion meetings on Thursdays at 8pm.

8 October : Feminism  
22 October : Workers' autonomy  
5 November : Ecology

Marchmont Street Community Centre  
Marchmont Street, London WC1  
(nearest tube station Russell Square)  
Thursdays (fortnightly) at 8 pm

## Anarchist Forum

The London Anarchist Forum is a discussion group meeting every Friday during term time (it meets in a college) at 8pm. A speaker is invited to open the discussion on alternate Fridays. All are welcome.

- 9 October, Alan Albon on **Post-Industrial Agriculture**
- 16 October, Open discussion
- 23 October, John Rowan, humanistic psychologist, on **Men and the Critique of Patriarchy**
- 30 October, Open discussion
- 6 November, Ken Weller, **Hungary 1956 and all that**
- 13 November, Open discussion
- 20 November, Andy Brown, **Whatever happened to communism?**
- 27 November, Open discussion
- 4 December, Colin Ward, **Anarchy - Picking and Choosing**
- 11 December, Open Discussion
- 18 December, nothing arranged. Centre probably closed for Xmas
- 25 December, no meeting
- 1 January, nothing arranged. Centre probably closed for New Year
- 8 January, George Walford, **The Source of Anarchism**
- 15 January, Open discussion
- 22 January, S E Parker, **Is There Life after Anarchism?**
- 29 January, Open discussion
- 5 February, Richard Hunt, **A Historical and Economic Analysis for Anarchists**

Mary Ward Centre  
42 Queen Square, London WC1  
Fridays at 8pm

# Peace Protestor Maimed

BRIAN Willson, a 45-year-old American peace campaigner, was horribly mutilated on 1 September during a protest at a Naval Weapons Station in Concord, California. Willson, a Vietnamese veteran, has been active in the peace movement in America for some years and last autumn participated in a month-long veterans' fast for life for peace in Central America. The Nuremburg Actions Committee, to which he belonged, has been holding vigils at Concord since June in protest at the shipment of about 120,000 lbs. of munitions from the weapons station to the Nicaraguan Contras, including bombs, ammunition and white phosphorus rockets.

On 1 September a widely-advertised peaceful demonstration was held at Concord. A letter had been sent to the military base commander assuring him that the protest would be peaceful and informed the naval authorities that they intended to block the railway tracks along which the arms shipment would be despatched. Navy personnel with radio-sets observed the demonstration, as the munitions train left the depot and waited 10 to 15 minutes while the protesters sat and knelt on the tracks 200 yards away. The engine gathered speed as it began to move - according to eye-witnesses the driver continued to increase speed as the train approached the protesters. The crowd blocking the track attempted to move out of the way, but the train hit Willson, amputating his lower leg and dragging him 25 feet in full view of his friends and family, including his wife and teenage stepson. His skull was fractured so badly that his brain could be seen through the hole in his head. His other leg was dangling by a thread and was later amputated. Navy paramedics were called from the base, but could do nothing. His wife tried to

staunch the bleeding with her skirt while an ambulance was called. It was over half an hour later that he arrived at hospital in Walnut Creek, a naval ambulance having refused to take him to the medical clinic at Concord base.

The Navy, absurdly, claimed that its personnel (presumably this means the train driver?) did not see the protesters and that the train was only going at 5 mph. The local NBC-TV affiliate filmed the whole thing, and estimated from its video film that the train was travelling at 17 mph. Film footage was shown in US television and produced some sense of shock. An ROTC building in Berkeley was attacked and a section of railway near the Concord Naval Station was ripped up. Some Democratic Party congressmen have called for an investigation. Ronald Dellums of the House of Representatives said that regardless of

whether the action was pre-planned or not, the military authorities had shown a glaring disregard for the protesters' safety.

Until now, the government has simply arrested pacifist protesters, and then 'cited them out' (i.e. released them without charge). Incidents like this show that States are not content with the peaceful intentions of those who would protest against their own actions and support of wars and violence. Genrikh Borovik, the Chairman of the Soviet Peace Committee in Moscow, said (according to *Soviet Weekly*): 'The train seemed to be an incarnation of a military machine rolling down on people, on humanity, without noticing them and caring nothing about life and justice, just smashing everything in its way.' Very true, but is the Russian military machine so much different?

KA

photograph by John Skerce from Workers Vanguard



# An Assault on the Truth

THE current issue of the American journal *International Labor and Working Class History* (No. 31, Spring 1987) contains a three-page account of the 'Chicago Haymarket Centennial'. The authors of the article contrast the celebrations to commemorate the centenary of the unveiling of the Statue of Liberty in 1886, with the comparatively low-key remembrance of the Chicago martyrs, who were arrested in 1886, and executed in 1887. They correctly state:

In 1886 the Haymarket affair was vastly more important than the dedication of the Statue of Liberty. Yet today advertisers and conservative ideologues have been able to rivet national attention to the patriotic symbolism surrounding the statue while Haymarket is all but forgotten. This underscores just how seriously our history has been distorted and heightens the significance of the efforts made by a few organizations and individuals to commemorate the Haymarket centennial.

The charge of historical distortion, while absolutely correct, comes strangely from the authors, who themselves fail to mention that the eight Chicago activists were anarchists. Indeed, at one point they report that the Haymarket Revisited Conference organised at the University of Illinois on May 3rd was poorly attended. The Conference organisers, the Illinois Labor History Society and the Chicago Federation of Labor had distributed tickets for the Conference on a selective basis – to deliberately exclude anarchists. Consequently more than half the seats remained empty, while people without tickets (many of whom had travelled long distances to attend) were denied entrance. Although criticising this exclusionary policy on the grounds of diminished attendance, the authors do not comment on the vicious irony of deliberately excluding anarchists from an event commemorating anarchists.

The article also fails to report that there was a parallel, explicitly anarchist commemoration, in the form of a demonstration, which was marred by several arrests, as reported in the Detroit based *Fifth Estate*.

The distortion of history by omission is one of the commonest techniques used to squeeze anarchism out of the history of the world's labour movements, and deny its existence.

A second example of this technique can be found closer to home. London's Pentonville Gallery recently hosted a small, but interesting exhibition, 'Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht: revolu-

tion, remembrance, representation'. The exhibition catalogue usefully brings together a series of artistic responses to the savage murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the two German revolutionary marxists who were killed for their involvement in the German revolution of 1918-1919. Illustrations in the catalogue include works by George Grosz, May Stevens, R. B. Kitaj and several other artists. It was, however, the cover illustration that caught my eye in the bookshop. It featured two powerful woodcuts of Luxemburg and Liebknecht by A. Raderscheidt and F. Seiwert. Although the other artists in the catalogue are described in biographical notes, the artists whose work appears on the catalogue cover, and is used again inside the catalogue, are described only as 'Rhenish artists' – no other details are given.

In fact, Anton Rederscheidt and Frans Seiwert were both members of the loose grouping of artists around the magazine *A-Z*, a group sometimes called the 'Cologne Progressives', which included artists such as Hoerle, Freundlich and Jankel Adler. Both were important and original artists; detailed biographical entries can be found in standard Continental art dictionaries, such as *Benezit*, and Seiwert in particular has been the subject of several books and exhibitions in Germany.

Raderscheidt collaborated with Hoerle, Seiwert and others on the review *Stupid*, and with Max Ernst and Johannes Baargeld on *Bulletin D*. He was a prominent member of the 'Neue Sachlichkeit' movement, and his work was banned by the Nazis. In 1933 he fled Germany, living first in Paris, and then Switzerland before returning to Cologne, where he died in 1970.

Seiwert's art was openly political. Some of his first published graphics appeared in *Die Zeigelbrenner*, the fiery clandestine anarchist magazine published by Ret Marut (better known as the novelist B. Traven). (Indeed for a short time, Seiwert and Heinrich Hoerle appear to have helped Marut with editing and publishing the magazine, and Seiwert would seem to be one of the few people that Marut/Traven kept in touch with after his disappearance.) Seiwert produced several drawings and paintings of Marut, and also contributed to the influential, anarchist orientated Expressionist journal *Die Aktion*.

As a member of the Council Communist AAUE, Seiwert recognised a distinction between authoritarian and anti-authoritarian communism, and wrote several articles on this theme, and a pamphlet about his friend Erich Muhsam.

Many of his linocuts and woodcuts had anarchist subjects, such as a poster to commemorate the Chicago martyrs, and a woodcut of the murdered Gustav Landauer (one of a series from which his Liebknecht illustration is taken). He also contributed cover designs for books published by the anarcho-syndicalist FAU. In 1933 Seiwert died as a result of an injury caused by a childhood accident involving x-rays.

That the Pentonville Gallery catalogue fails to include details about Seiwert is difficult to understand, as one of the sources cited at the rear of the catalogue is Uwe Schneede's *George Grosz* (1979) which devotes several pages to Seiwert in an appendix at the back, quoting his writings extensively, with the comment:

At all times, Seiwert's position, apart from adopting the ideas of the *Proletcult*, was characterized by his continued belief in anarchist notions (c.f. Bakunin) of Communism as the realization of the rulerless society. Thus for Seiwert it was indisputable that the new society would have to be preceded by 'the destruction of all traditional forms of bourgeoisie' and that the forms of the struggle for this idea would already have to be rulerless.

Sometimes the falsification of history is not by omission, but by deliberate distortion. Artist R. B. Kitaj, doyen of the galleries, has incorporated anarchist and socialist subjects into his paintings, and indeed his painting/collage, 'The Murder of Rosa Luxemburg', is included in the Pentonville catalogue. Some of his paintings, like the 'Red Banquet', incorporate portrayals of anarchists such as Bakunin. In 1985, Phaidon published a book of Kitaj's work, in which many of these 'anarchist' paintings are reproduced, including one entitled 'Junta'. In the text Kitaj acknowledges the use of anarchist themes, and characters, referring explicitly to Durruti: 'the fifth, last panel in my painting was modelled after Durruti, the anarchist leader who fell, and the others are composite inventions... My characters should have names maybe, to make them more real and memorable... so I may give them names some day... Well, in fact, he could give the character in panel two, the name of Malatesta, as he copies Malatesta from the same photograph as the one used on the cover of Vernon Richard's *Malatesta* – the photo taken outside the court, right down to the newspaper in the pocket.

A further example of the way anarchism is written out of history can be found in Diana Souhami's book: *A Woman's Place – the changing picture of women in*

*Britain* (Penguin, 1986), who writes:

The pioneers of modern birth control, Stella Browne, Marie Stopes, Dora Russell, risked prosecution for their work. In 1922 the police seized all copies of a pamphlet called *Family Limitation* and brought obscenity charges against those concerned with its publication and distribution. (p.77)

This is followed by a quotation from Dora Russell, and gives the clear impression that it was Browne, Stopes and Russell who risked imprisonment, when in fact the case mentioned was the 1922 prosecution of anarchists Rose Witcop and Guy Aldred (see article on Aldred in *The Raven* no. 1). In spite of the prosecution, Rose went on to publish more editions of the pamphlet, and run her own clinic.

Diana Souhami may perhaps be excused for the misimpression given, but there can be no excuse for Germaine Greer, who writes about the same Rose Witcop in *Sex and Destiny* (Picador, 1984):

Sanger soon discovered that her natural allies were not the idealist socialists like Rose Witcop, with whom she visited Germany in 1920. (Witcop was prosecuted in 1922 for keeping copies of *Family Limitation* in the house she shared with Guy Aldred; she went on to publish and distribute more than 100 editions of it and to run her own clinic in Shepherds Bush). She conveniently forgot what she owed to communists and syndicalists and preferred to stress her connections with the Malthusian League (p305).

Germaine Greer must know that Rose Witcop was not a socialist or a communist, because she cites Guy Aldred's autobiography *No Traitor's Gait* as her source. Just two pages earlier she writes: 'Margaret Sanger came to birth-control... via American revolutionary socialism, but it suited her in later years to conceal the connection. She never acknowledged her indebtedness to Emma Goldman...' (p. 303). Emma Goldman was a revolutionary, and was indeed a socialist, although characterised by a healthy individualism, but she wasn't just a revolutionary socialist, she was an anarchist, and should be acknowledged as such.

Taken separately, these omissions and distortions (deliberate and otherwise) seem trivial, and hardly worth pursuing, but taken together they form a consistent pattern – an attempt to deny anarchist involvement in history, in art, in literature, and in the struggle for social revolution. The Haymarket Martyrs, Frans Seiwert, Malatesta, Rose Witcop, are not important because they were anarchists. They were all important for the part they played in the struggle for social emancipation – but remember it was anarchism which motivated them, and it is anarchism which is feared by the ruling class and the new mandarins who safeguard their culture: and it is why the anarchists are written out of the history books.

Martyn Everett



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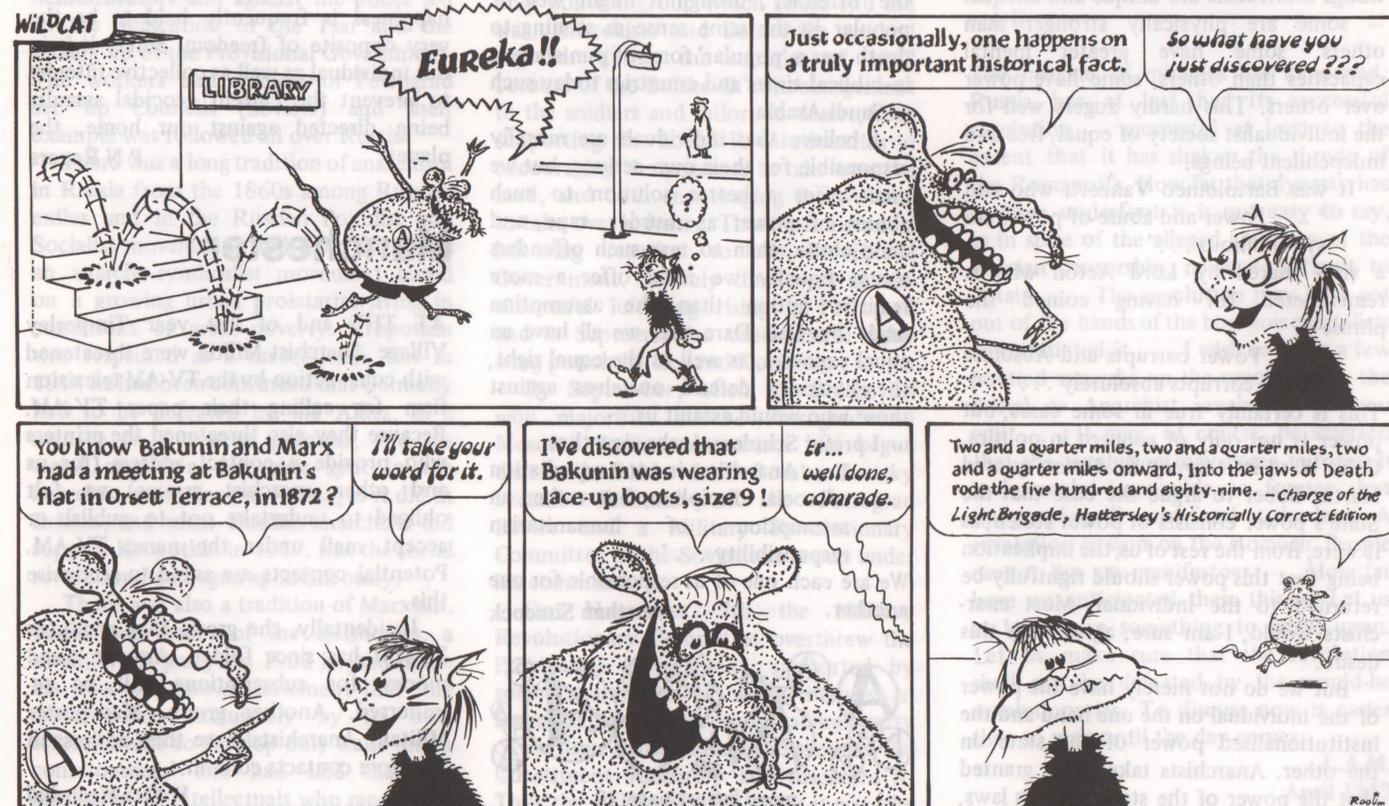
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# Anarchism kills Communism

YET MORE  
RESPONSES  
TO THE  
AUGUST  
ARTICLE

'DAN Dare' in his article 'Anarchism kills Communism' (*Freedom*, August 1987) states:

'... We are anarchists because we understand that there is no authority but ourselves ...'

and certainly the question of authority and power is central in anarchist thought. However, in his enthusiasm to defend absolute freedom

'... You have the right to produce, sell or enjoy pornography, sell or shoot smack, rape, murder — whatever takes your fancy ... and everyone else has an equal right to defend themselves from you ...'

he ignores the fact that we live within society, and the consequences that this has for human behaviour and relationships. The Lockian individualist social contract he promulgates is a myth. Each person's freedom is limited by the freedom of others. Your right to walk down my street playing ear-shattering music on your ghetto-blaster removes my right to peace and quiet.

Now in Dan Dare's individualist utopia — one might be able to act in whatsoever manner one wished confident that other members of this individualist society would not permit you to encroach upon their freedom. But we are faced with life as it is, and in the nature of things individuals are unique and unequal — some are physically stronger than others, some have greater mental capacities than others. This hardly augers well for the individualist society of equal, free and independent beings.

It was Bartolomeo Vanzetti who said  
'... Power and abuse of power are synonymous ...'

a view shared by Lord Acton who is remembered for having coined the phrase

'... Power corrupts and Absolute Power corrupts absolutely ...'

This is certainly true in some cases, but power is not only of concern in politics. Colin Ward in *Anarchy in Action* quoted Martin Buber to argue the case that the State's power consists of power stolen, as it were, from the rest of us, the implication being that this power should rightfully be returned to the individual. Most anarchists would, I am sure, agree with this desire.

But we do not merely have the power of the individual on the one hand and the institutionalised power of the state on the other. Anarchists take it for granted that the power of the state with its laws,

courts, police, prisons and armed forces is illegitimate. But we cannot be uncritical of power as it is used in the functioning of everyday life. Much of its usage is legitimate. Freedom is essentially having the power to maintain life, shelter, comforts and pleasures, in controlling one's own life. However some individuals use the power which their strength, or somebody's trust in them has given to them, to indulge in acts, in which our tabloid press exhibit a ghoulish obsession. These acts — murder, rape, baby battering, child abuse, muggings, etc. — are certainly an invasion of the personal sovereignty of the individual which we anarchists hold so dear.

What defence can be afforded against such acts in a libertarian society? Granted some of the 'offenders' may be mentally ill, or under great stress, but many are not. The victims themselves are often victims because they lack the physical strength to avoid the situation or to defend themselves when in it. I refer to women, old persons, babies, children, prisoners, the physically and mentally handicapped. They are, to quote social services jargon, 'vulnerable'. I recall talking to one anarchist who considered that such persons as child molesters would be torn apart or castrated, but this is hardly a libertarian treatment of the 'offender', though it might well be popular in the same sense as stoning to death was a 'popular' form of punishment in biblical times and countries today such as Saudi Arabia.

I believe that individuals are morally responsible for their own actions, but we must offer a better solution to such abuses of power as murder, rape, and child abuse, than to tear such offenders apart. Equally we must offer a more realistic option than the assumption made by Dan Dare that we all have an equal capacity, as well as the equal right, to physically defend ourselves against those who would assault us.

I prefer Scholem Aschs view that

'... Anarchism is not a repudiation of social discipline, but rather an assumption of humanitarian responsibility ...'

We are each one of us responsible for one another.

Jonathan Simcock



more letters page 12



DAN Dare's *Anarchism kills Communism* was a most energetic affirmation of Stirnerite individualism but I would draw his attention to Stirner's own words in *The Ego and Its Own*:

One becomes free from much, but not from everything. Inwardly one may be free despite the condition of slavery, although, too, it is only from some things, not from everything: but from the whip, the domineering temper, etc., of the master one does not as a slave become free.

Thus Dan does not become free simply by advocating 'private enterprise' of one description or another. The 'pacifist-anarchist-hippy-punk-vegan ghetto' is distinctly inadequate in providing a sense of intrinsic identity (as opposed to a parading of image...) but Dan really offers an alternative no more adequate, and with even less ability to change society positively as a whole. The keynote of Stirner's philosophy — 'ownness' — finds no place in Dan's scheme of things; it is merely a question of whether an individual should decide to be 'carnivorous' or bovine, irrespective of their own personality.

Assuming that we can somehow come in contact with our individual 'human nature', this serves only as a mystical rather than an anarchist solution to the problems of self and society. The narcotised are happy in themselves, but happiness is frequently held to be the very opposite of freedom. Surely it is in our individual as well as collective interest to prevent the current ecocidal assaults being directed against our home, the planet?

P N Rogers

## Manchester

AT THE end of last year Timperley Village Anarchist Militia were threatened with court action by the TV-AM television firm for calling their paper *TV-AM*. Because they also threatened the printers who provide a contact address (for us and other anarchist groups) we felt obliged to undertake not to publish or accept mail under the name TV-AM. Potential contacts are asked to recognise this.

Incidentally, the group that produces *TV-AM* has since folded. Anyone owed money for subscriptions will be reimbursed. Another group, Manchester Militant Anarchists, have their address in *Freedom* contacts column.

Walter Westphal

# October Counter-Revolution

ORTHODOX Marxism claimed that a society had to go through two revolutions, a liberal bourgeois one leading to the development of capitalism, and, much later, a socialist revolution led by 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'. To the Marxist-Leninists, both happened in Russia in one year, the two 1917 revolutions — the February Revolution which replaced the Tsarist regime with the Provisional Government, and the October Revolution which replaced the Provisional Government with the Bolshevik regime. To anarchists the political revolutions which transferred power from one regime to another are distinguished from the social revolution, which Voline called 'the Unknown Revolution', in which factories were seized by the workers and land was seized by the peasants, the army mutinied or deserted, and production, distribution and exchange was in the hands of co-operatives. On November 7 (October 25 in the old Julian calendar still used in Russia) the Bolsheviks began the counter-revolution by seizing power in Petrograd (then the capital, now Leningrad).

The February Revolution (March 15 on the modern calendar) followed a week of strikes, bread riots and mass demonstrations in Petrograd. The Russian army had suffered terrible casualties. Food distribution had broken down and city dwellers were hungry. A general strike and the fraternisation of the army with the demonstrators and against the police led to the abdication of the Tsar and the setting up of the Provisional Government. The workers and soldiers of Petrograd set up Councils (Soviets) and their example was followed all over Russia.

There was a long tradition of anarchism in Russia from the 1860s among Russian exiles and in the Russian Populist and Socialist movements, and from the 1890s an anarcho-syndicalist movement based on a growing urban proletariat living in conditions of great poverty. Kropotkin was respected as a theoretician, but in 1914 he had been convinced that Germany had to be defeated by the Allies, as a menace to European progress, and his stand caused a damaging split in the anarchist movement in Russia, as it did in Britain, and some Russian anarchists did support Kropotkin in 1917. But the social revolution had begun spontaneously.

There was also a tradition of Marxism. Lenin was leader of the Bolsheviks, a small, weak party. In 1902 he had made his now well-known statement that 'the working-class exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness' and had said that the leadership of intellectuals who recognised

the working-class as the progressive class was necessary to a socialist revolution. In Russia there was only a small liberal middle-class and no true western capitalist economic structure, but there was still a large peasantry, and Lenin's idea was that Russia might go straight from feudalism to socialism. In recognising the need for the support of the peasants he may have been influenced by the Russian Populists (whom he called 'stinking carrion'), and in his advocacy of a dictatorship of the proletariat he may well have been influenced by Louis-Auguste Blanqui who advocated armed insurrection by small groups and interim dictatorship in a post-revolutionary period, and this may have come to him through the ideas of Tkachev who combined 'Russian Jacobinism' with Nechaev's ideas of a ruthless band of conspirators.

In 1917 Lenin was in exile in Switzerland. When revolution broke out in Petrograd the Germans, guessing he would disrupt the war effort, gave him a safe passage to Russia in a 'sealed train' and he arrived in Petrograd on 16th April, where Trotsky was organising Soviets on behalf of the Bolsheviks. His programme was: end the war, land to the peasants, power to the Soviets. The growing popularity of the Bolsheviks was partly because they supported for the time being the actions of the social revolution, and partly because they were seen as the only political group which could end the war. Anarchists and Bolsheviks worked together during the summer of 1917 because of the Bolshevik's encouragement to the soldiers and sailors to desert, both supporting the Social Revolutionaries in encouraging the peasants to take over the land, and both encouraging the workers to take over industry. There was a gradual left-wing reaction to the Provisional Government. In July there was an unsuccessful left-wing rising in Petrograd and in September an unsuccessful right-wing putsch by General Kornilov.

By September, when the Bolsheviks won majorities in the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets, anarchists had begun distrust the Bolsheviks. In October Trotsky became chairman of the Petrograd Soviet and a Military Revolutionary Committee of the Soviet was set up under his command.

On November 7th the Military Revolutionary Committee overthrew the Provisional Government, supported by some anarchists. It seems it was an anarchist called Zhelezuhov leading a party of partisan Baltic sailors who stormed the Constituent Assembly and dispersed it. Thus the Bolsheviks could say it was 'the

anarchists' who did this. The next day a new government, the Council of People's Commissions, was set up, entirely composed of Bolsheviks. It became clear that Lenin had returned to Marxism and established a dictatorship.

When Kropotkin said 'This buries the Revolution' what did he mean? Certainly negotiations for peace would take place, but Kropotkin supported the offensive against the Germans, and wanted a military victory. Did he perhaps suppose that the Germans would invade Russia?

Leonard Motler was a socialist who had come to the British anarchist movement in 1914. A deaf-mute, he edited a little monthly paper called *Satire* which was published by Freedom Press from December 1916 to April 1918. In *Satire*, December 1917, he wrote:

'The Russian Revolution is running a-gley. These little things happen when people permit new rulers to pose as their saviours, instead of saving themselves by running the country on their own.' Nicolas Walter has written that 'Motler's real claim to fame was that he seems to have been responsible for the first anarchist condemnation of the Bolshevik regime in Russia almost as soon as it was established.' Oddly enough, Motler later became a Communist.

CC

## The Russian Revolution — how Freedom saw it

The miracle of miracles has happened: Russia has at last had its successful revolution — successful at least to the extent that it has shaken the throne of the Romanoffs. How far that dynasty has trodden underfoot it is not easy to say, as in spite of the alleged abolition of the Russian censorship, news is difficult to obtain ... The revolution may have got out of the hands of the bourgeois capitalists who initiated it ... I wish to make a few pointed remarks on the revolution — the Social or Anarchist revolution, as you will ... It may, of course, be asserted that the revolution may come in forms it is humanly impossible to foresee, but the people will want food at the least. A revolution is won on the stomach. People cannot live on manifestoes ... How far have we anticipated these things? Let us at least have something to work upon. Let us make sure that the revolution shall not be defeated by the would-be revolutionaries. To discuss now is easier than to wait until the day comes.

L.A.M.

April 1917

# Russian Revolution 1917

## HOW FREEDOM SAW IT

The news from Russia is evidently heavily censored at each end, but sufficient comes through to show that there is mutual suspicion and distrust between the Provisional Government and the Committee of Delegates of Workmen and Soldiers, on which the Government is dependent for support. The Committee, which represents the more revolutionary section, wants reforms now, with an early peace; while the Government, a number of whom are landowners, say that reforms must wait until after the war, and peace cannot be concluded without agreement between the Allies. Although at present the revolutionary leaders are not pressing their demands, their followers are not in the mood to wait, the workmen in the factories having little spirit to continue under the old conditions, while the peasants are already taking matters into their own hands. In many districts they have seized the land and are cutting down the forests belonging to the landowners, who have in some cases signed documents giving up their land to the peasants. If they do not take it now, it is certain they will not get it after the war, when the Government will be in a stronger position to deal with the internal situation. Besides, the peasants might learn a lesson from the French Revolution. All the land seizures which took place during the Revolution were subsequently legalised by the Government. Governments always legalise what they cannot prevent... Of course, the Allies are very nervous about the new situation, which may have a great influence on the course of the war.

The members of the commercial and industrial classes now in power will do all they can to check the demands of the workers, whose assistance was welcomed in getting rid of the Tsar and his gang of courtiers, but whose urgent requests for reforms are looked upon as exorbitant now that the Revolution has been accomplished... it is quite evident that the workers have nothing to hope for from the Provisional Government, and that unless they seize the land and organise communes to work it and share the produce their new masters will simply turn Russia into an up-to-date industrial Republic, where huge fortunes for the landlords and capitalists will be wrung out of the wage slaves. Many so-called Socialists outside Russia have appointed themselves teachers of the Russian workers, and are deprecating extreme action as being likely to endanger the Revolution. Why do these people poke their noses in where they are not wanted?

Their only idea of a Social Revolution is a nice soft seat in Parliament.

May 1917

It is still very difficult to find out what is happening in Russia. Nearly all of the telegrams speak of events in Petrograd, but leave us in the dark as to the rest of the country. It seems certain, however, that the peasants are continuing to seize the land and cultivate it for themselves, an action much resented by the landlords in the Provisional Government. It is also certain that this internal trouble is the principal reason why the commercial classes are anxious for peace, as whilst they were glad of the assistance of the workers in sweeping away the rotten and incompetent autocracy, they are in no humour for great social changes which would endanger their profits... The decision of the Committee of Workmen and Soldiers Delegates to take part in the Government is quite logical. As they insisted on formulating a policy for the Government they could not decline the responsibility of helping to carry it out. Their positions will help to moderate their revolutionary fervour, as they will now sit side by side with Conservative and Liberal politicians, and must compromise if they are to work harmoniously together. While we have every confidence that the Russian people will emerge successfully from the ordeal, we know that they have a long and bitter struggle in front of them.

June 1917

### Telling the Tale

The recent visit to Petrograd of Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Albert Thomas, and the redoubtable Mr. Vandervelde, ostensibly with the object of bringing the recalcitrant Russian Socialists to a reasonable frame of mind, has led to some historic utterings on their part. In a letter sent to the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates they express surprise at the desire for an International Socialist Conference, and declare: 'We are in complete agreement with the Council in affirming the necessity of a rupture between Socialism and the Governments or classes whose war aims are tainted with Imperialism, but we have not ceased and we shall not cease to consider that a national union against aggressive Imperialism is a duty incumbent upon all classes, and one from which the Socialist proletariat could not hold aloof without abdicating and compromising the vital interests of democracy and Socialism.'

In thus urging the delinquents back to the path of patriotism, these Ministers of

their respective Governments attempt to differentiate between the Imperialism of one European power as against that of another, and thereby show themselves mere timeservers of the Capitalist Governments they represent...

### But no-one believed them

That the Russian people are actually capable of judging facts for themselves is realised in the trenchant articles in the Labour and Socialist papers. They suffer from no delusion as to Imperialist Governments. The *Labour Gazette* (Petrograd) says the British and French bourgeoisies are ready to change their flag, 'but under the new flag they want to carry the old cargo'. It is understood quite fully what the modern cry of 'democracy' means, and again: 'We want peace on an international scale. Military danger does not yet threaten the Russian Revolution from Allied Imperialists, but such a danger is threatened by German and Austrian Imperialists. For German Imperialism is essential to defeat the Imperialism of England and France.' The Russians have shown a better understanding of the meaning of the word 'International' than any other nation. It is they who have taken the initiative in endeavouring to secure a permanent peace by means of the solidarity of the workers in all countries. Unmoved by the oratorical displays of those that stand for the exploiting classes, they have declared that it 'is most important for humanity that of all questions that of war and peace shall not be drowned in the waters of diplomatic eloquence.' The clearness of vision thus displayed might well shame the abject British wage-slaves into action. Russia today is the vanguard, while we are still dreaming that we are fighting for freedom. When will the awakening come?

July 1917

There is one side of the Revolution of which we hear practically nothing - that is, the action of the peasants. We know that when the Revolution broke out they seized the land in many parts of the country, being assisted in this expropriation by the many thousands of soldiers who left the Front in order to obtain their share. To us, the question is much more important than the political squabbles in Petrograd or Moscow. If the Russian Anarchists were to concentrate their propaganda among the peasantry, they might make great headway with Anarchist and Communist ideas, as the primitive communal life the peasants have lived for centuries provides a splendid

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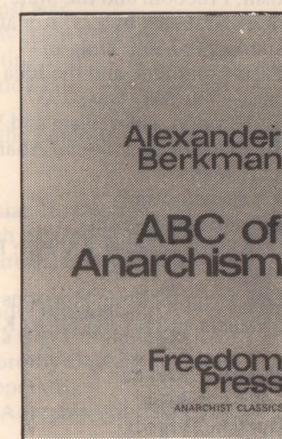
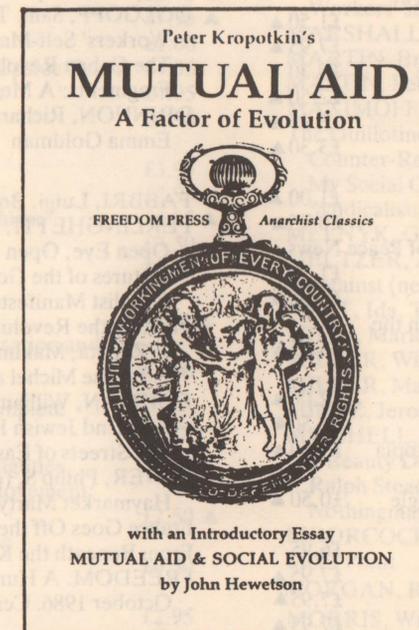
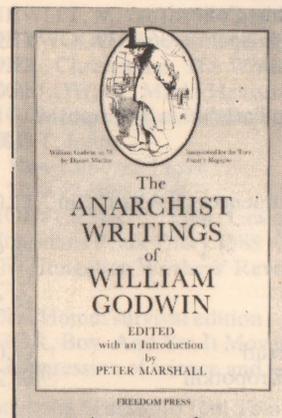
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basis. Aided by the great Co-operative Societies, they could defy any Government in such a vast country. The economic question is much more vital than the political and would appeal strongly to the peasant soldiers.

September 1917

#### Russia's struggle for freedom

The events in Russia go far to prove the real meaning of the phrase 'revolutionary government'. It has been demonstrated quite clearly that government always means reaction, and the term 'revolutionary' can have no place beside it. The present Russian Government has only succeeded in holding office by compromising and invoking all the military and civil forces at its disposal. To Anarchists it need awaken no surprise that some members of the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates, including 'revolutionary' Socialists, have issued a proclamation on the present Russian situation, in which they appeal to Russians to show a spirit of complete unity, 'so as to save Russia from civil war, and at the same time to check Anarchic elements on the one hand and the forces of reaction on the other.' We are reminded of the description given to civic affairs in Russia after the upheaval of the revolution. The *Daily News* Petrograd correspondent coined the phrases, 'Stable Chaos' and 'Orderly Anarchy', and showed plainly that Anarchy was quite compatible with an orderly condition of society. To us it seems natural that the revolution should leave its aftermath, for many vicious conditions have been inherited from the old regime; but the point which the so-called revolutionary Socialists will not grasp that government is a disease left by the old regime, that it is fatal to the welfare of a free society of human beings, that social and economic affairs can be managed infinitely better without it, all the needs of the people being supplied by means of co-operation. No Government can possibly do well those things which the individual should do for himself. When the Russian people can firmly lay hold of these facts, it is true they will have to try conclusions with the financiers and place-hunters, for those who would seek and win freedom will always first have to slay these monsters of the capitalist era.

October 1917

Although it is difficult to piece together the scattered shreds of information concerning Russia that manage to filter through the censorship, it becomes increasingly clear that the enemies of the Revolution, in conjunction with the Allies, are deliberately trying to keep down the growing Anarchist and Communist tendencies of the masses. The new Coalition Government was only formed after very skilful manoeuvring. The fact



Kropotkin (grandfather of the Revolution): "You know, that grandson of ours is quite in the wrong style."

Breshkovskaya (grandmother of the Revolution): "Yes, he is too German in his style."

Cartoon from *Novy Satirikon* (Petrograd) reprinted in *Manchester Guardian* 11 Sept 1917

that property had to be protected and the Allied financiers placated made a bourgeois Government a necessity. The Democratic Conference held on October 4, to consider the formation of a new Coalition Government, decided in favour of a Coalition only after the Bolsheviks had marched out of the conference hall and the delegates of Zemstvo and the Co-operative Societies had combined with the Minimalist Socialists for this purpose. The *Nation* of October 13 says: 'There is no doubt that the new Government will be pursued by the implacable hostility of the Bolsheviks... If the Allied Governments meet the Russian needs in an honest and liberal spirit the situation in Russia may yet be restored. If they do not, they will arm the Bolsheviks with new weapons, and hasten complete anarchy.'

November 1917

A vindication of the Anarchist contention that government is unnecessary, reaches us from an unexpected quarter. The special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, writing from Petrograd and commenting on the fact that no central organisation or government existed, remarks that: 'It is no matter of continual astonishment that anything or anyone works at all, that shops and banks do open, that we can send and receive telegrams, that draymen rise in the morning early and go about their daily work. The Russians are certainly at bottom a most extraordinarily law-abiding people, considering the continual opportunity for and provocation to excess.' All of which goes to prove what a useless sort of institution a government is after all. In fact, there is no service a government claims to do for us that could not be better performed by ourselves.

December 1917

# Sex, power and the candy-coloured clown

ANARCHISM is a way of arranging life so that we do not have power over each other – whether economically, militarily or sexually. Anarchism's appeal is that it accepts these forms of domination are inextricably linked, but as the recent debate in *Freedom* about pornography has revealed, I am confused and divided in my response. A couple of films I've seen recently – *Personal Services* and *Blue Velvet* – treat sexual domination and glamour and should be of interest and concern to all anarchists. Both films attempt to place sexual domination in a wider political context and enlarge our debate.

*Blue Velvet*, directed and written by David Lynch, is the only American surrealist film – apart from Clint Eastwood's *High Plains Drifter* – I've ever seen and is extraordinary, very disturbing and full of magnificent performances. To say it is a thriller is to say that Patricia Highsmith and Raymond Chandler are crime writers – it is, they are, but there's *more* to them all than that. The film is so stuffed with references and allusions to the films, music and books which have influenced me that I found it irresistible even though I could not follow the plot and still don't understand the significance of some of the scenes.

It is set in an unspecified period which suggests the fifties but makes no attempt to be consistent. The locale is an all-white Middle-American town of picket fence and trim villas and the protagonists are two couples – a pair of High School preppies and a nightclub singer and a violent gangster. The crime element is a drugs racket, police corruption and the real (or imaginary) torture and murder of the singer's husband and the abduction of her child. The preppy boy, Jeffrey, becomes a voyeur of the sado-masochistic affairs between the singer (Isabella Rossellini) and the raging gangster (Dennis Hopper) and, at the same time as Jeffrey falls in love with his High School Queen, he is drawn into a violent sexual bout with the singer / victim (?).

Hopper's performance as the sexually violent yet pathetically jealous gangster is literally terrifying and in one scene he forces preppy Jeffrey into a frightening car journey which is a kind of grotesque parody of *On the Road*. At the end of the journey he paints his mouth with lipstick and kisses Jeffrey before he beats him senseless.

This is one of the scenes of blinding force and power which reveals that all

four protagonists are in the grip of potent and highly charged emotions which they can't understand themselves. It is not without significance that the singer is played by the daughter of a liaison between Ingrid Bergman and director Roberto Rossellini which led to Bergman's expulsion from a scandalised and hypocritical Hollywood in 1948.

But how far is the singer a willing participant in her trussed and brutal sexual passages with the gangster and how far is she simply a victim intent – as concentration camp inmates must have been – on survival? What is certain is that both are emotionally damaged and lost. She refers to him as 'Daddy' and in sexual passion he regresses to childish tears and she becomes his 'Mummy'. The singer responds to Jeffrey's gentleness but nonetheless in sexual extremis demands that he hits her too – later, found wandering the streets naked and beaten by the gangster she tells the High School Queen that Jeffrey 'put his disease in me'. The HSQ, who I take it represents decent American family values, is then confronted with her own uncontrollable sense of rage, betrayal, sexual loathing, fear and jealousy. Jeffrey is tortured by dreams about his own ambiguous feelings toward sexual violence and emotions which he was either unaware of or had never acknowledged before.

The singer is a figure of sexual glamour – provocative yet unattainable by her devoted night club audience. The blonde HSQ (who looks remarkably like the young Carolyn Cassady) is equally remote and sexually unattainable outside the safe confines of marriage. Yet she too has dangerous sexual power over men and her jilted boyfriend launches an attack on Jeffrey as murderous as anything the gangster manages. As Jeffrey plans to spy on the singer / gangster affair she asks, 'Are you some kind of pervert or what?'. 'That's for me to know and for you to find out', he replies and when he discovers that he is a voyeur and capable of sexual violence his curious bond with the gangster is confirmed.

Where *Blue Velvet* shows itself to be a surrealist film is in its concern with dreams and desires and Roy Orbison's magnificent song *In Dreams* is both a symbol of the meaning of the film and a private obsession of the gangster. There is an oddly moving scene in a brothel where its painted and powdered boss – Dean Stockwell who played one of the kill-for-kicks boys in Hitchcock's *Compulsion* – mimes to a tape of Orbison's anthem while the

fevered gangster mouths the lyrics too: 'A candy coloured clown they call the sandman tiptoes in to my room each night . . .' In his attempts to give his darkest dreams reality by massive drug and (I think) ether dependence and as a drug dealer, the song is doubly apt as well as being beautiful in its own right – Orbison's tortured cries of 'I can't help it – I can't help it' echo down the film.

*Blue Velvet* has angered and upset feminists who see it as crude exploitation of victimised women but maybe it's a metaphor for the repressed desires of (particularly) Eisenhower's America. Said the poet Allen Ginsberg in 1956, 'America, I'm addressing you. / Are you going to let your emotional life be run by Time magazine?' I saw a trailer for *Platoon* with *Blue Velvet* – it showed the cruellest and darkest desires of man being given legitimacy by the Vietnam war and I wondered again what the Falklands war was *really* about. For *Blue Velvet* is, above all, about power and jealousy – motive enough for any war.

In *Personal Services* jealousy and violence barely raises its head and we are in the world of comic English sex – a sort of Carry on Screwing, or more accurately Carry on Wanking and Dressing-Up. The film is loosely based on the life of the suburban brothel keeper Madame Cyn and entirely supports my friend's ideas about English repression. Directed by ex-Python Terry Jones it is actually a sentimental and optimistic presentation of prostitution as part of Social Services for the Elderly. There's a client who 'hasn't had sex with my wife for 23 years', and who – in the face of derision – points out with great dignity that his wife is wheelchair bound. The retired 'Squadron Leader' who invests in the brothel and acts as a sort of concierge volunteers 'I'm a pervert – yes, a pervert'. He, like many of the elderly customers, enjoys dressing-up in women's underwear. One celebratory evening in Madame C's kitchen, in the company of a number of ancient 'perverts' he cheerfully roars 'What's the use of being old if you can't be dirty?' I sensed an inaudible cheer from the audience and the film could well be sub-titled – with due deference to Alex Comfort – *The Joy of Sex*.

But its real debt is to decades of Carry On films. As a life-long fan I kept imagining an 'alternative' *Personal Services* with Hattie Jaques as Madame C, Sid James as the Squadron Leader, and the massed perverts played by Kenneth Williams, Charles Hawtrey, Kenneth Connor, etc. Jim Dale would be an innocent who wanders in by mistake and the marvellous Joan Sims and the bulbous Barbara Windsor would, of course, be on the game. As it is Julie Walters as Madame C is superb. She seems to me an actress at

the top of her form and, despite the sentimental writing, makes a credible, rather touching figure. The 'family tyranny' from which she escapes is lightly touched-in, her jealousy does explode at her sister's wedding, but *her* dreams are of happy endings not fear and violence.

Madame C's customers are, literally, under-the-heel and under-the-lash, but it's all a sort of charade – no one gets really hurt and no one gets exploited. In *Personal Services* it's women who are in charge, confident, chummy and, in an offhand way, amused and even kindly. The police raid on one of her sex parties – which lands her in dock in front of a judge who is one of her clients – is farce not force and the film's target, unlike *Blue Velvet*, tends to sexual hypocrisy rather than sexual power. It has a joyous anarchic quality, though, and the nude gold-sprayed angel with cardboard wings, fluttering around the garden pursued by lumbering coppers is a moment to treasure.

It's a world away from the tragic victim of prostitution, Ruth Ellis, from the sexual rituals of Hindley and Brady, from the rule by terror of the Kray Twins and from that avenging devil the Yorkshire Ripper. The judge who dresses as a schoolboy and wants to be caned, the carpenter in the black PVC mask who is shut in a box and the tax-inspector in a gymslip who is interested in lesbian school girls all seek some form of humiliation, but this is accepted within the brothel as, if not quite ordinary, at least natural. In his diary for 6 March 1967 the writer of sexual (and potentially violent) farce Joe

Orton recorded, 'Had my hair cut at a new hairdresser's in Knightsbridge. Cost a guinea for a style. But it looks pretty good. It appears to be quite natural whilst in actual fact being incredibly artificial. Which is a philosophy I approve of.'

Orton had sexual power over his long-time lover Kenneth Halliwell and, with success and celebrity he assumed economic power too. Halliwell ceased to be his creative collaborator and became his 'secretary' – or more precisely, his drudge. Orton flaunted his sexual successes and 'sought to test and confirm his strength in the anonymous dangers of the public lavatories'. Eventually the goaded Halliwell beat Orton's brains out with a hammer and swallowed 22 nembutals. His suicide note read, 'If you read his diary all will be explained. KH. PS, especially the latter part.'

Neither *Blue Velvet* nor *Personal Services* had any erotic charge for me. One was frightening, the other funny. At the close of *Personal Services* Julie Walters surveys the court room in knowing triumph as all the officials, lawyers and police are transformed into clients – authority conceals sexual hypocrisy and inadequacy is the film's verdict.

The HSQ in *Blue Velvet* has a dream that all the robins leave the earth and darkness descends – then they return filling the world with song and light. Her dream is a simple belief in the triumph of goodness and she and Jeffrey are finally seen on the threshold of Middle-American marriage and the trim villa and picket fence. But there is a worm in the rose, a

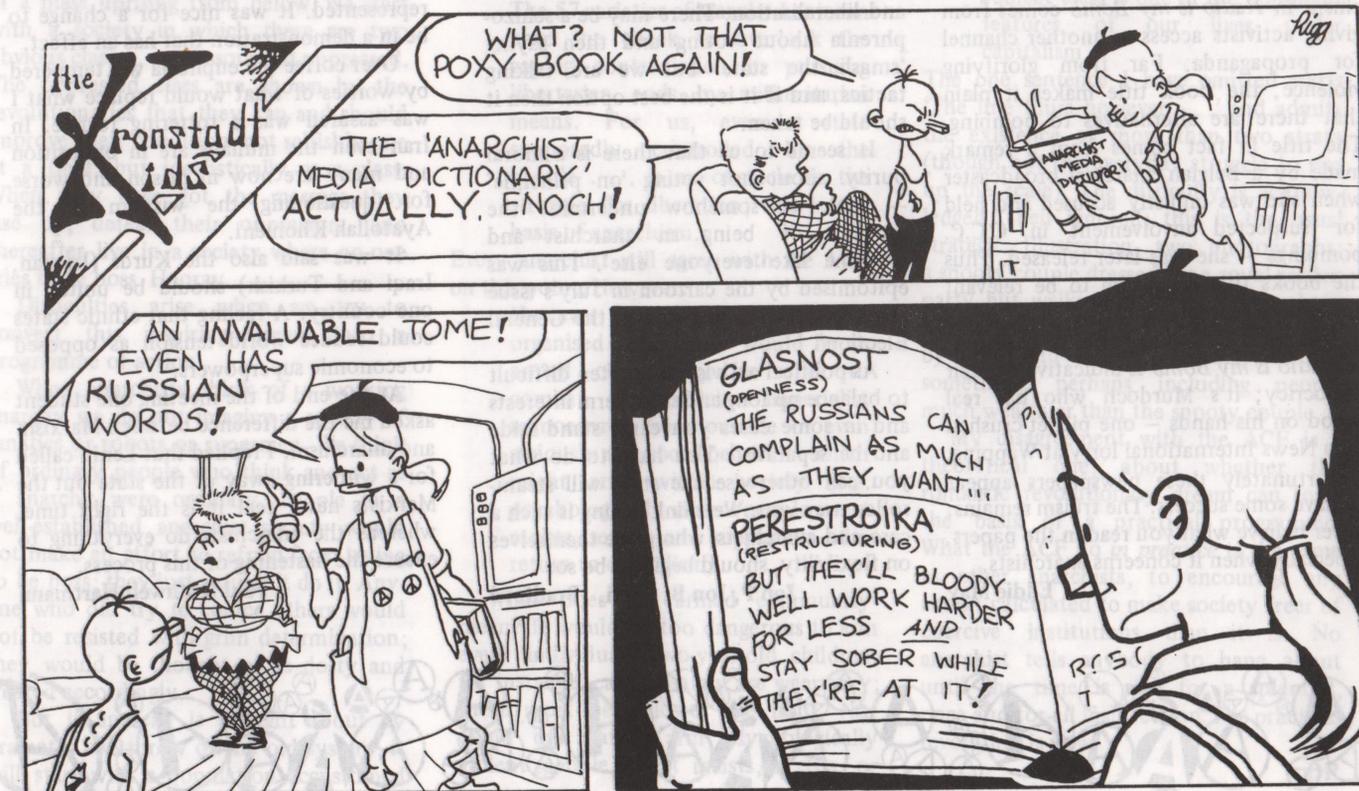
slimy black grub in the robin's beak and they know things about themselves and each other that can never be unknown. A brief shot, shows the nightclub singer reunited with her child – but is that the grounds of an asylum where they sit in the pale sun?

Jeff Cloves

After three and a half years of war, in which directly and indirectly millions of them have met their death, the Russians and Germans have ceased fighting each other. Can any person state one thing that has been gained on either side that was worth the death of one soldier . . . The Russians are fighting Capitalism and have almost abolished Landlordism. Let us go a step further and abolish the State also. As long as government of man by man exists, wars will rage and oppression exist. By making war on our enemies at home we will abolish international war, thereby achieving what Governments can never achieve – a durable peace between peoples.

Freedom, January 1918

A Derry Orangeman, prosecuted for shouting 'Up the IRA' at a police check-point, was said by his solicitor to have been 'keeping his options open'. The magistrate at Magherafelt Court told him his behaviour was bizarre. The case was adjourned for three months so that the defendant could continue with treatment to 'rehabilitate himself'.





Some letters are cut to save space or bring out points. If you object to your letter being edited, please write a note to the effect on the same sheet as the letter.

## Why not vote?

AS REGARDS our opposition to *Freedom's* 'don't vote' stance, we were glad that our letter provoked some response. However, we feel that the 'cutting' of our first letter diluted the case we were presenting, and we would like to come back on a few points (particularly those made by Eddie May last issue).

We know that political parties wouldn't thank us for voting for them (nor do we expect it) and we are aware that contrary to SWP policy, tactical voting is important. Those anarchists who do vote do so to try and create the best circumstances for building an alternative; therefore at election time we should do more than sloganising, and show that there can be an alternative. But, a few minutes spent voting hardly detracts from the revolutionary project let's face it.

Voting is not necessarily reformism. A cross on a paper does not put you in the same league as those advocating gradual change via lobbying Parliament and liberalisation. There may be a schizophrenia about voting and then saying 'smash the state' but we are talking tactics, and if it is the best option then it should be taken.

It seems to us that there is a moral purity about not voting 'on principle' — that we somehow undermine the sanctity of being an anarchist and 'become like everyone else'. This was epitomised by the cartoon in July's issue 'The Anarchist who voted in the General Election'.

As political activists it is often difficult to balance up long and short term interests and in some cases you can't stand aside and be separatist. You have to do what you can otherwise the state will steamroller over you. We think voting is such a case and anarchists, who pride themselves on flexibility, should begin to be so.

Eddie May

Jon P, Jon B, Sheri, Bradford

## Homophobia

IN REPLY to Dave (*Freedom*, September), had I known that the horrid neologism homophobia means 'dislike of homosexuality', I would never have attempted to defend A. S. Neill against that charge. In fairness to Neill, however, it should be pointed out that his antipathy was towards homosexuality in general, and not towards homosexuals as individuals. This is borne out, not only by the quotations from *Summerhill* which Dave himself gives, but also by the fact that Neill's greatest hero was none other than Oscar Wilde. In his autobiography, *Neill, Neill, Orange Peel!* (paperback ed, page 243), he states: 'Of all the writers in the past, the one I would have loved to meet would have been Oscar Wilde. To listen to his conversation in the Cafe Royal must have been a marvellous treat.'

On another subject, in the letter which you kindly published from me in the same issue, criticising Dan Dare's article, 'Anarchism kills Communism', the phrase appearing as 'Dan's well-thought out philosophy of absolute freedom for all', should, of course, have been, 'Dan's ill-thought out philosophy', etc.

John L. Broom

## Tottering Regime

I WAS selling *Freedom* outside the Iranian Oil Company which also acted as the weapons procurement office. Press, television, plus our boys in blue were well represented. It was nice for a change to be in a demonstration that has an effect.

Over coffee the euphoria was tempered by worries of what would replace what I was assured was a tottering regime. In Iran even the mullahs are in opposition and many are now in prison and worse for questioning the wisdom of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

It was said also the Kurds (Iranian, Iraqi and Turkish) should be united in one country. A feeling that ethnic states could reduce world tension as opposed to economic superpowers.

At the end of the meeting one student asked me the difference between Marxism and anarchism. I replied that Lenin called for a withering away of the state but the Marxists never feel it is the right time, whereas the anarchists do everything to ensure the hastening of this process.

Paul Rothwell-Hartmann

# Romantic Revolution

## REVIEWS



Anarchism — as we see it . . .  
Anarchist Communist Federation, 30p

ANARCHISTS who see it as the ACF sees it, and anarchists who think as I do, are working towards the same goal in more or less the same way. A note inside the front cover of this lucid little pamphlet emphasises that it does not claim to be the last word on anarchism. My reservations are intended as a contribution to discussion among comrades, not as a contribution to factional bickering.

I am going to use this review to question the validity of 'the romantic revolutionary dream', an idea which is by no means exclusive to the ACF, but is neatly set out in this pamphlet.

The romantic revolutionary dream is to overthrow unequal society by means of a mass uprising from below. We start with a society in which there are two obvious classes, oppressors and oppressed. The oppressed class are shown by the revolutionaries that they can and should improve their condition, not selfishly one at a time, but idealistically as a class. When they have got the message they rise up, defeat their oppressors, and thereafter live in a society where no-one tries to be boss, Hooray.

Difficulties arise when we try to convert this inspiring dream into a programme of action.

When anarchists think of a working anarchy we do not imagine a society of fanatics or robots or supermen. We think of ordinary people who think and act as if anarchy were ordinary. People in a well-established anarchist society would not make an effort to refrain from trying to be boss; they just wouldn't do it. Any-one who did try to coerce others would not be resisted with grim determination; they would be thought of as dotty and treated accordingly.

But if anarchy is brought about by dramatic overthrow of the old system, it will start with a population accustomed

to the old system. Remnants of the old oppressor class, and ambitious individuals among the formerly oppressed class, will try to establish or re-establish dominance, while the majority will tend to drift back into the habit of subservience. Also, if the overthrow of capitalism was not simultaneous world-wide, we must anticipate attack from outside.

The Marxist solution is to set up a revolutionary government, consisting of highly-motivated, responsible idealists (themselves), not to form a new oppressor class (of course not), but simply to protect the new society for as long as necessary, until harmonious relationships become so ordinary that a return to coercive society is out of the question. The ACF make it utterly clear that they oppose 'revolutionary' government as much as they oppose traditional government:

The 57 varieties of Marxist-Leninism have the cheek to overlook the gaping contradiction in pursuing libertarian ends by authoritarian means. For us, even a state supposedly controlled by the people . . . is an obstacle in the struggle for liberation; this is the basis of anarchism.

Every anarchist will agree with the ACF on this point. However:

However, in an anarchist society, an organised community would be an armed community in order to combat potential imperialist manoeuvres from outside or even seriously anti-social behaviour which might arise within society (e.g. psychologically violent people, overt racists, sexists and supporters of a return to capitalism).

What does 'an armed community' mean? It would be too dangerous to arm every individual. Two-year-old children, for instance, cannot safely use weaponry; there must be a lower age limit. Nor could one safely arm psychologically violent people, overt racists, sexists, or

supporters of a return to capitalism. There would only be some individuals (perhaps most adults) armed on behalf of the community.

I will not waste space expanding the argument. If we remember a community is not a thing in itself but a collection of individuals, the 'armed community' begins to look something like the 'revolutionary government' under a different name.

A lesser difficulty with the romantic revolutionary dream is that it has to start from a two-class society. I cannot start from a many-layered society in which ambitious people can move to the next layer up (though this is just as oppressive for those at the bottom). The first paragraph of this pamphlet says:

The world is divided into social classes: the ruling class made up of owners and controllers of the world's wealth and resources, politicians, bureaucrats and state functionaries, high-ranking military, controllers of the media, police chiefs and others; and the subject class comprising the vast majority of the world's population — workers of the city, in the home and in the countryside, technicians, housewives, unemployed. On a simple level, there is a distinction between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', the rulers and the governed. [One sentence omitted] The nature of society as we know it is one of conflict. The everyday struggle between the ruling class and the subject class is one of the dominant features of our lives under capitalism.

The one sentence I have omitted starts 'The line blurs however . . .' and admits the existence of more than two strata (though not the everyday struggle to rise up the scale). The difficulty is acknowledged, then ignored; this is the usual strategy. Illustration, two photographs: a snooty couple dressed for a royal garden party but walking in the street, perhaps having travelled to the royal garden party by tube; and a mass of faces watching something, perhaps including people much wealthier than the snooty couple.

My disagreement with the ACF is a theoretical one, about whether the romantic revolutionary dream can form the basis of a practical programme. What the ACF do in practice is the same as other anarchists, to encourage any action calculated to make society freer of coercive institutions than it is. No anarchist tells anybody to hang about until the time is ripe for a splendid, once-and-for-all insurrection. The practical revolution is now.

DR



# Contents Boring

## Spycatcher

Peter Wright

New York: Viking \$19.95

THIS is not so much a book as a case or affair. It couldn't have happened in the old days. Politicians and generals always wrote memoirs, civil servants and policemen sometimes wrote memoirs, but intelligence and counter-intelligence agents either wrote novels or at most leaked discreetly to the press. Peter Wright — as everyone must know by now — was for more than 20 years a senior officer in the Security Service (MI5). He was mainly involved in working against Russian intelligence in this country, but he was also concerned with the United States and Australia, Cyprus and Northern Ireland. He was mainly responsible first for technical developments in surveillance and counter-surveillance, and then for investigating Russian penetration of British intelligence and counter-intelligence.

Everything about him seems conventional until he retired in 1976, permanently embittered against his former employers because he considered they had cheated him over his pension and because he considered they had ignored his conviction that Russian penetration had been much longer and deeper than was generally believed. For a time he followed the old tradition by leaking stories secretly to the press — especially to the right-wing journalist Chapman Pincher. (His main story was that the series of Russian agents included Roger Hollis, the Director-General of the Security Service from 1956 to 1965, and this was the basis of Pincher's book *Their Trade in Treachery*.) But after a time he began to leak stories openly to the press, and in 1984 he made his allegations on a Granada television programme. Finally he produced a 400-page book, *Spycatcher*, ghost-written by the television journalist Paul Greenglass.

Under the Official Secrets Act, of course, it is a serious criminal offence to write, publish, sell, buy, lend, borrow, possess or read any of this book. The British authorities will no doubt try to prevent its publication in Britain under this law, and would no doubt prosecute Wright if they could; but he is out of their reach in Tasmania, and they have been finding it difficult and indeed impossible to suppress outside Britain. Civil proceedings under the laws of contract and confidentiality have delayed the Australian edition, and a series of injunctions have muffled press reports and television programmes here and in other parts of the Commonwealth. But the American edition has quickly sold more than half a

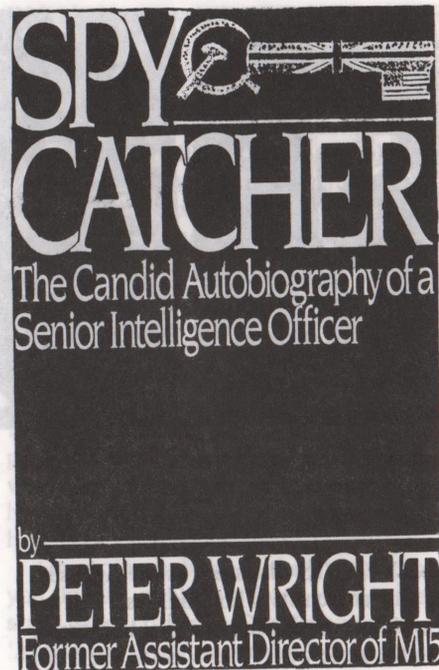
million copies, thousands of which have been imported into Britain, and one of which has reached us at *Freedom*.

The contents of the book are much less interesting than the controversies about it. It is badly written in mechanical journalese. (At one point we are told that a Russian defector 'was literally bled for everything that could be got', which suggests rather more drastic methods of interrogation than are intended!) On the one hand, it gives an enormous amount of often trivial details — including verbatim accounts of conversations — in describing events over more than half a century. On the other hand, it fails to give proper explanations of the context of these highly complex events — or even of the circumstances of the production of the book itself. The author is very frank about some of the people he dislikes or distrusts, but very coy about himself and some of the people he has worked with, such as Chapman Pincher or Victor Rothschild.

The message of the book is that British intelligence and counter-intelligence — especially the latter — is (or should be) the best in the world, that the Security Service is (or could be) the best part of it, and that Peter Wright was the best person in it. He sees his work as part of a war, but shows little hatred of the enemy — and little love of his own side. He is obsessed to the point of paranoia by the suspicions of Russian penetration, and draws up a bitter indictment of Hollis and his defenders, but he has little understanding of the reasons why so many people did give support and even secrets to the Russian regime, and he gives no weight to the more likely story that the unidentified mole was Rothschild.

People who are interested in the self-contradictory world of intelligence and security — which is so unintelligent and so insecure — will find the book fascinating but infuriating, because it says so much and yet so little and because it is so well-informed and yet so ill-informed. Even on a small scale, it is quite unreliable. The names of Russian agents and defectors, which are confidently dropped, are frequently misspelt. The physical descriptions reach a curiously low level of accuracy for a former intelligence officer. On the first page, Wright gets out at 'Euston Road tube station' and claims to 'hear the rumble of tube trains' from the sixth floor of his office in Gower Street, which any Londoner knows is nonsense.

In fact the book can't really be read on its own, but needs to be studied alongside other more objective books on MI5 (by 'Nigel West', the Conservative MP Rupert Allason) or on intelligence in



general or on some of the particular characters in this looking-glass world. Perhaps it will be followed by a sequel. Wright says strangely little about MI5 work in Cyprus or Northern Ireland, or about the attempt by a group of MI5 officers to help a secret campaign by politicians and businessman (none of whom are named) to destroy Harold Wilson's government in 1974; and even his account of the 'Fluency' operation — the attempt from 1964 onwards to re-investigate Russian penetration, involving the interrogation of hundreds of British people once associated with left-wing activities or acquaintances — is curiously incomplete. (For example, there is a long description of the pursuit of Alister Watson, a naval physicist suspected of being a spy who has since died, but no mention of his many relevant friends and contacts who are still alive.)

Wright says remarkably little about the British left, apart from the Communist Party and its connections with Soviet Russia. There is nothing about George Blake's escape from prison and Britain in 1966, nothing about the Committee of 100, nothing about the Spies for Peace, nothing about the Angry Brigade — and nothing about the anarchists. There is a brief account of the reaction of MI5 to the growth of domestic political subversion during the early 1970s, with passing reference to 'a host of left-wing splinter groups, like the Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP) and the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP), and to 'groups like the WRP, SWP, and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)', but they are described as

continued opposite →

## REVIEWS



### Chernobyl, Bequerels and British Agriculture

Farmers for a Nuclear Free Future

Brendan Butler, Lower Westcott Farm, Moretonhampstead, Devon. 70p.

DURING the Committee of 100 campaign of civil disobedience against the nuclear powers' testing in the atmosphere, I was running a dairy farm. On one such demonstration I was arrested and at the subsequent hearing before a London magistrate I produced a label of the kind used to put on milk churns, guaranteeing the purity of the milk. I said that the government in effect was preventing me from carrying out my legal requirements. As is usual, legal niceties which affect government activities were ignored by a so-called independent judiciary.

'ANARCHY is due to spread over the earth as an example of the second law of thermodynamics: all energy patterns must seek equilibrium in a micro-pattern.' — from *Sayings of Obol*. Hugh Sacker Knockandarragh, Eire

→ continued from opposite

'largely irrelevant pieces of the jigsaw'. In the light of later events, involving first-hand information about MI5 surveillance of such groups, *Spycatcher* may be seen as being already out of date before it is published.

The only thing that really makes the book at all significant is the increasingly desperate and ludicrous attempt by the British authorities to suppress it, which suggests that at least some of Wright's stories are true. In the circumstances libertarian papers and organisations might find it worth reprinting some passages or else supplying photocopies of them to interested inquirers, depending on the demand. Otherwise the *Spycatcher* case or Wright affair seems to have little to do with serious politics, except as part of the good cause of cheering us up. N W

A very clear and effective pamphlet called *Chernobyl, Bequerels and British Agriculture* is published by Farmers for a Nuclear Free Future with the Lansbury House Trust Fund (50p plus p&p from Brendan Butler, Lower Westcott Farm, Moretonhampstead, Devon. They also have produced a video called 'The Nuclear Harvest' which could be hired by groups for meetings, which would spread knowledge of this most dangerous technology).

The pamphlet points out that although the Chernobyl accident was 1,400 miles away it had a serious effect on agriculture here. If the British Authorities inept reaction to the effects of the accident here is anything to go by, they are a totally irresponsible organisation to be running and developing such a technology. It has been left to a small group of concerned farmers to produce a considered synopsis of the consequences of this accident and the effects it had on crops and livestock.

The technology was developed in secret as a way to kill people, and has since developed into an enormous vested interest. It has destroyed two cities and now continues to kill people and pollute the environment at a lower level, and would do so even given the absence of such accidents as at Chernobyl.

Some friends who run a school in Southern Scotland had the milk tested

privately for radioactive contamination, and poured it away until the level had fallen. The responsible (sic) government did not act so quickly and indeed I gather that so-called responsible governments are selling or permitting to be sold radioactive milk powder to the Third World.

Owing to weather conditions the cloud of radioactive material passed twice over parts of Great Britain. Heavy rain then made sure that much of it was brought to the ground, and the relatively dry weather that followed it kept it on the surface to be consumed by animals, and stored as hay and silage to remain a hazard in the future. The most dangerous item bequeathed by the disaster is Caesium 137 which will and could remain in the soil for 300 years and be taken up by the plants at slowly reduced levels during that time.

Away from our own problems the accident has probably resulted in a threat to Lap culture, since the lichens on which their reindeer feed suffered such heavy contamination that the entire herd of reindeer may have to be destroyed. Many areas of Scandinavia and Germany suffered even more contamination. And the vicinity of Chernobyl itself which is an important agricultural area, will be uninhabited probably for hundreds rather than decades of years.

Alan Albon



Nuclear weapons : the last great debate? Peter Griffiths Edward Arnold £5.95

EDWARD Arnold is an educational publisher, and this book is intended for schools. It purports to 'take an objective look at the facts behind the propaganda, both for and against'. The facts about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the fact that bombs of that size are now designated 'battlefield nuclear weapons' and considered moderate in comparison with the bombs now actually primed and ready which have a total destruct radius of forty miles, should surely convince anyone that the 'for' side of the debate has no merit. But the Great Deterrent argument is also put. NN