

FREEDOM ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

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ANARCHISTS & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS p9-11

PUBLIC TRANSPORT FULL FARE TO 1984

THE CONSERVATIVE-controlled GLC (Greater London Council) have asked one million London old age pensioners to have their photos taken and apply now for free passes to travel on London buses next year - passes which will be issued by London Transport in the format of a mini passport, containing name, number and signature of the holder.

Millions of other Red Bus Pass, Go As You Please, monthly or annual ticket holders have also been requested by the GLC to apply to London Transport for "photocards" which, from this month onwards, must be shown with a ticket each time they travel by bus.

Non-compliance with this formality, imposed ostensibly to curb abuses in the use of free passes and other season tickets means that objectors to identification cards being issued by government agencies, municipal or transport authorities, employers, trade unions etc. will have to pay the full wack of individual fares for each bus journey.

In a country which prides itself on not having a national identification system, any form of partial identification of the individual could be resisted by those who believe in people's right to anonym-

ity. Already large sectors of the working population are being requested by their employers to carry identification cards (computer personnel, bank messengers, police, army, air force, hospital staff, power plant personnel, journalists and reporters, security guards, etc. Cards for identifying people on the spot are creeping in little by little without their being aware of it. Soon it will no doubt be the turn of Underground season ticket holders, British Rail passengers, ratepayers and car drivers, blood donors or any other section of the community. The problem with identity cards is that they NEVER stop being issued by those who claim to believe in Freedom and Democracy ...

1984 is approaching not only in time but in practice. The issuing of photocards to old age pensioners and working people in general who use buses as their only means of transport is another step towards the consolidation of the corporate state in Britain.

The little freedom we have in this country is being eroded by laws which make it increasingly difficult for us to organise or protest against the injustices of the capitalist system. The government,



employers and trade unions are imposing economic and administrative measures on the working population which, by their capitalist nature, are essentially repressive and unjust.

The introduction by the GLC of photocards for bus travellers and the compliance with such a scheme on the part of trade union mandarins and union members working on the buses is a nasty piece of administrative legislation that is solely intended to repress yet further a large section of the working population of London. How can we oppose these measures? By insisting on and fighting for FREE TRANSPORT FOR ALL! By resisting fare increases and by boycotting the introduction of photocards and such schemes. By using the prepaid envelopes available in the Tube ticket offices and bus depots (meant to apply to London Transport for the identity cards) and posting them with your comments about the new identification system on the buses.

Our comrades in Italy (see Zero no. 4 for more detailed information) have taken action by "hi-jacking" some of Milan's underground ticket offices and allowing people to enter the barriers without tickets, while others sabotaged the machines with bits of metal, plastic and glue. Is such action possible in the London buses and in the Underground? It has not yet been tried in this country and it seems to me that this kind of physical effort on the part of anarchists would be more productive in terms of healthy propaganda than smashing the heads of National Front supporters.

CLAUDE

SOUTH AFRICA etc...

'they would.. ..wouldn't they'

IN THE dear dead days beyond recall when a political scandal was a rare event, a high-class call-girl Miss Mandy Rice-Davies earned for herself a niche in the Dictionary of Quotations by saying, during the Profumo affair (with which she was not unconnected) that the denial of a peer regarding commerce with Miss M.R-D was not unexpected. She said, when told he denied the story, "Well ... he would, wouldn't he."

In the same spirit

anarchists can approach

world affairs - of which there have been a lot

lately. Perhaps the anarchist 'discretion' in analysis of world events (referred to by S. Parane in the current Review) is due to a failure (shared with Miss M.R-D.) to be surprised at government deception, hypocrisy and brutality. Only an idealist-optimist who expected

(Cont p97)

For a NATIONAL ANTI-FASCIST CAMPAIGN

A CONFERENCE to discuss the possibility of forming a 'Libertarian Socialist Alliance' was held in the student's union of the Polytechnic of Central London on Saturday, 3 November. Organised by the Dorking Libertarian Group, West London Libertarian Socialists and PCL Anarchists, the meeting attracted only about 20 people, with very little representation from the Federation of London Anarchist Groups. This was unfortunate, especially in view of the fact that comrades had come from as far afield as Manchester, as well as Cambridge, but the delay of notices in the Christmas post was thought to be partly responsible; it was also possible that the expressed aims of such an alliance had a too familiar ring to them for many anarchists, freshly disillusioned with the late, grandiosely-titled Confederation of British Anarchists. Nevertheless it turned out to be a useful and constructive meeting.

Pointing out the failure of anarchists and libertarians to respond effectively to the erosion of civil liberties, and attacks on the quality of life and individuality, an 'Open Letter to the Libertarian Left' stressed that this resulted from the splintered state of the movement, and advocated the establishment of a national coordinating network of autonomous groups, the election of a secretariat - with no authority - to deal with administration and the calling of a bi-monthly, decision-making national conference, open to all members.

Although the setting up of an alliance with these functions was not - and in view of the rather poor attendance could not - be formally

agreed on at the meeting, the need for a means of exchanging and coordinating information, ideas and action on a national level was agreed by all present. Some participants felt that it was unrealistic to try to set up a proper organisational structure to create the action, rather than vice versa, and it was decided to try to concentrate first on a national anti-fascist campaign open to autonomous groups, but organised along specifically anarchist lines (i.e. not plain, authoritarian fasci-bashing, but placing a distinct emphasis on positive grassroots or rank and file agitation; on the left as well as right wing nature of fascist ideology and methods and on the need to produce a lucid analysis of fascism, absent from the papers and campaigns of the authoritarian left). Terry Liddle of Social Revolution/Solidarity volunteered to take on the work of trying to coordinate a national anti-fascist campaign for next year, and the hope was expressed that volunteers from various other groups would come forward to help.

The idea was also put forward that action campaigns could be initiated best through specialist groups. Such study groups or commissions could emerge from a national coordinating structure, forming around such topics as 'terrorism', sexism, racism, housing, human rights (the real sort, not Carter's), transport, workers' councils, class struggle and how it should be re-defined, and could both throw out ideas for wider distribution and debate in the anarchist press and start action campaigns on such specific questions.

Where the anarchist press was concerned, there was some division as to whether a completely new paper was needed to fulfill the aims of a 'libertarian socialist alliance', with a kind of rotating editorial group (much as the new 'Solidarity for the Social Revolution' paper, to come out in January, intends to have) or whether the existing papers should be used and their potential developed with specialist groups submitting articles and other material to the relevant publications.

Use of the local press was also discussed. Howard Fuller of the Dorking Libertarian Group said that although the press was under right wing control, within their short existence the group had, by using its resources, managed to get a fair amount of publicity for their activities and views, and had begun to receive queries from local people as to what their position was on various issues. Other groups could exploit the local press more than they did. They could also, like the Cambridge anarchists recently, take the opportunity of Punk Rock concerts, etc. to get through to young people by distributing clearly written leaflets on anarchism.

As well as deciding to try to initiate a national anti-fascist campaign for next year, the meeting agreed that it would be worth while to organise a second, two-day conference in the north of England with better advance publicity, after contacting all the regional anarchist/libertarian federations for their views and comments and possibly holding an interim meeting with them.

AGAINST

AUTHORITARIAN UTOPIA



WHAT DID YOU LEARN AT SCHOOL TODAY

APART FROM PRISONS, schools are the most undemocratic institutions in society. As such they are an unhealthy environment for the democratic education of our children.

The Libertarian Education Association says that many politicians and employers - and some teachers - are fighting to turn the clock back in schools, to revive an authoritarian Utopia.

'The cracks in the social system revealed by the economic crisis are all conveniently blamed on progressive educational methods,' say the Association. 'In fact, in most schools the changes have been very minor.'

The Association:

- exists to encourage progressive education methods
- opposes the examination system
- opposes corporal punishment or any form of compulsion in education
- calls for an end to religious 'education' in schools, and
- calls for democracy in schools.

'We need to equip our children with critical minds to understand the world, to see what changes are necessary to make it a better place for everyone, and to be able to bring about the necessary change.'

The Association calls on all parents, teachers, young people and others who share a belief in libertarian education to join it. 'We intend to defend the minor reforms that have been made, and go forward to campaign for a freer, more sympathetic environment in which young people can grow up free from fear and prejudice.'

The obstacles to this movement are the powers of local politicians, education officials and head teachers. 'Schools should be an integral part of the community, and under the democratic control of young people, teachers and parents.'

Education isn't a matter of passing exams and absorbing the ethics of competition, hierarchy and authority. 'Real education is the life-long process in which we are all learners and teachers passing on and acquiring skills and understanding as we go through life.'

Contact: Libertarian Education Association, 7, Creswell Walk, Corby, Northants.

IN ITSELF the claimants' sit-in at the social security offices described may seem like a fairly insignificant skirmish in terms of 'the Revolution' but it means quite a lot to us, because it shows just what can happen - even in the ultimate Tory ghetto: Hastings.

Like most claimants' unions we have a very small active membership; I'm glad to say that the 3-4 anarchists involved are in a majority!

Unless you've ever been in Hastings it's impossible to imagine the atmosphere of apathy that hangs over it, so we feel we're justified in being quite proud of the fact that we could instigate something like this.

Unemployment in Hastings is way above average - a quarter of the unemployed in East Sussex are in Hastings - and of course the DHSS are as shit-faced as everywhere.

Frustration and anger are building up amongst these people on the dole and social security, exposed to the full force of the alienation and dehumanisation of late twentieth century capitalism.

If we can get this together in Hastings (one of the most reactionary towns in Britain) then I don't feel I'm exaggerating if I say that claimants all over the country could rise up tomorrow and give the whole inhuman 'welfare state' a kick in the balls that it wouldn't forget for a long time.

We don't intend to let the impetus drop. We don't see sit-ins as a means of getting concessions, we see this tactic as a continuing revolutionary action which will at least make them think twice about swindling someone out of even the pittance they are 'entitled' to.



(HASTINGS NEWS)
23rd NOV '77

We have another sit-in planned for the near future - this time the reason for the sit-in is that they're trying to send one of our comrades in the claimants' union to a labour camp (work rehabilitation camp) in Birmingham!

STEVE & MIKE

CLAIMANTS' UNION IN SIT-IN PROTEST

ABOUT two dozen supporters of the town's claimants union staged a sit-in protest at the social security offices at Heron House on Friday.

They were demonstrating against the removal by police of a claimants union member while he was trying to help someone with a claim.

The protesters - who included two toddlers - remained in Heron House after the doors closed at 3.30pm.

They told officials they were staying until 5pm unless they received an apology for the earlier incident.

The police were called and the demonstrators were told they were trespassing and would have to leave.

The protesters refused to go and, sitting in a circle of chairs, linked arms.

Police carried, pulled and dragged them outside and the sit-in, which had lasted for an hour, was over. There was no violence and no arrests.

A claimants union spokesman said a valid claim was being pursued when the first incident took place.

A girl was left with

only 25p for the week and after paying her rent and lost wages to return on the Monday for her money, he said.

Nothing had been done to justify the union member's eviction and that was why the sit-in took place, he said.

The claimants union was set up to help people in need to get their full entitlement to benefits.

Its members say social security officers cannot be relied on to volunteer information to claimants about their rights.

BRIGHTON HOSPITAL NEW LEASE OF LIFE

THE past two months have witnessed a highly successful campaign in Brighton and Hove to save the New Sussex Hospital. Public anger has been especially aroused by the underhand tactics of local health administrators.

The District is in the "red" to the tune of £ 435,000 and there is plenty of evidence of administrative incompetence. £ 120,000 had been spent on a new block at Foredown Hospital - still unoccupied. At Brighton General Hospital £ 324,000 went on new facilities for psycho-geriatrics - the Unit has been abandoned! The District as a whole spent more on administrators than on medical staff.

Sensing public concern in a national atmosphere of hospital closures (123 hospitals shut in the last three years) District Administrator David Bowden declared (30/9/77) that "talks now going on will come up with plans to avoid closures." That was a lie, for the district management team, of which Bowden is a member had already drawn up a "confidential" ("for internal discussion only") 60-page document suggesting some 50 changes in local hospitals, including the conversion of the New Sussex, one of the pioneer women's hospitals in the country, into administrative offices.

During the past two years an estimated £ 430,000 had been spent on modernising the New

Sussex Hospital. All wards were rewired and redecorated, new bathrooms installed, pharmacy and out-patients expanded and reorganised and a new automatic generator put in - the most modern and efficient in any Brighton Hospital. Work on the new generator had been completed less than three months ago. And now it was proposed to gut the buildings and convert them into offices!

Then it happened! The "secret" document was leaked. Public reaction was immediate. As the Evening News commented in its editorial (20/10/77) "It is hardly surprising that the administrators wanted to keep this from the people of Brighton. Public opinion will be against any move which threatens this remarkable hospital."

Workers in the hospital set up an action committee and launched a petition. By the time it went to the Area Health Authority a month later they had over 12,000 signatures. On 9 November the Brighton Health Council was packed with irate nurses, ex-patients and disgusted members of the public. Speaker after speaker expressed not only opposition to the threatened closure but resentment at the underhand way the DMT was handling the whole affair. The meeting learned of "internal" meetings called by the DMT, where staff

were instructed not to make public what was discussed; indeed they were asked not even to mention the meeting had been held.

As the Evening Argus summed it up (25/11/77) "The debate over the much-loved hospital's future was supposed to be conducted in the private committee rooms of the National Health Service."

The mounting public campaign and the unanimous condemnation of the DMT by the Community Health Council meeting proved too much for the bureaucrats and on 16 November they issued a press statement withdrawing the proposal. This document was a classic insight into the bureaucratic mentality - concerned essentially that their New Sussex proposals had been "prematurely subject to public comment."

The danger is that everyone will sit back and celebrate their victory. Brighton bureaucrats make no secret of their contempt for the electorate. A few weeks ago senior councillor Stanley Theobald, replying to public criticism on local "road improvement" schemes, went on record saying that he and his colleagues found the best way to deal with controversial issues was to "get them done quickly - and public outcry dies away after a couple of weeks."

The only "lesson" the DMT has learned is that the next time they must make sure there are no information leaks!

BOB POTTER

INTERNATIONAL

china

NOTES

philippines

MORE THAN five years have passed since Ferdinand Marcos declared a 'temporary' state of martial law in the Philippines. More than five years have passed without any of the basic civil liberties: freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly - the freedom to live. More than five years have passed of detention in camps, prisons and torture. More than five years have passed since the government - in a process that still continues - started to round up everyone thought to be a threat to the regime - workers, peasants, 70-year old tenant farmers, militant priests and nuns, students, professors, union leaders, political figures. Many of those arrested five years ago have yet to be formally charged with any crime.

At every strike, strikers are arrested and the ringleaders detained. The State, showing its love of family, has often arrested the husbands and wives of those already imprisoned; other families slowly starve on the outside. The tortures reported in the daily newspapers, by Amnesty International and others - give the lie to the so-called 'smiling martial law.'

Since the declaration of martial law, the dictatorship has tried, without success, to gain international prestige for a regime that rests on terror - the old 'bread and circuses' routine. Only this time the circuses are not to fool the masses, who are already too well acquainted with the Iron Heel to be deceived further - but to fool world opinion. A few examples: the Miss Universe Beautiful Meat Market Contest, the Ali-Frazier fight, the International Monetary Fund conference, and the latest performance - the World Peace Through Law Conference. In addition, the regime has sought respect for its crimes through the likes of such 'intellectuals' as Nobel Prize winner Carlos P. Romulo - the 'P' stands for 'Political Prostitute'. Nazi Germany had its own stable of 'artists' who sang for the jackboot - people like operatic star Kirsten Flagstad and philosopher Martin Heidegger. Soviet Russia too has nurtured a flock of 'artists' to pay homage to the butchers, a list too long and nauseating to give examples. In the Philippines they have had to import outsiders for the same filthy job - 'people' like pianist Van Cliburn and chess master Bobby Fischer.

Behind the glitter, behind the Culture, behind the exhibition, lurks the barbed wire reality of the detention camps - and the thousands of our imprisoned fellow workers.

For them there are no circuses, no conferences, no culture. For their families, only privation and fear. We are appealing for donations for the General Defence Committee fund for our fellow workers imprisoned in the Philippines. All contributions will be gratefully accepted, no matter how small.

Cheques or money orders payable to "GDC,"

Local 4", and add a note that it is for the PI Fund. If possible, try to send something each month on a regular basis.

- General Defense Committee,
Local 4, P.O. Box 864,
Agana, Guam 96910

cuba

THE CUBAN LIBERTARIAN MOVEMENT in Exile appeals to all lovers of freedom all over the world and to anarchists in particular to consistently campaign for the release of political prisoners in Cuba. Letters should be addressed to Cuban embassies abroad and directly to Cuba (e.g. GRAMMA - organ of the Communist Party of Cuba, - address, Apartado 6280, Havana, Cuba) protesting against the imprisonment of Cuban anarchists and left revolutionaries whose only crime has been to defend the Cuban Revolution against Castro's personal dictatorship in that country.

The Communist regime now acknowledges the existence of about 6000 political prisoners in Cuba, but we believe the number of people in Castro's gaols is vastly superior to the official figures released by the regime. The military involvement of the Cuban army in Africa must be criticised by many young Cuban soldiers (there is conscription in Cuba) and serious economic crisis and shortages of essentials must have their effect on the hard pressed population. Those who oppose the regime are denounced to the political police by the so-called Popular Committees for the Defence of the Revolution and we anarchists know by experience how the Bolshevik regimes deal with vocal and direct dissent - SCIENTIFICALLY.

As we have entered the political season of fighting for human rights all over the world, we should not forget our comrades rotting in Castro's gaols. For more information about the condition and figures of political prisoners in Cuba, contact the Latin American section of Amnesty International in London, address 10 Southampton Street, London WC1, tel: (01) 836 7788.

(For an up to date libertarian critique and political information on the Cuban regime, read Sam Dolgoff's book The Cuban Revolution A Critical Perspective, Black Rose Books, Montreal, £ 3.30).

greece

We have the address of one of the anarchist editors imprisoned in Greece following the Stammheim deaths (See FREEDOM No. 22, Nov. 12). As he is remanded awaiting trial he is entitled to receive papers and books - and we assume postcards/letters. Write to: Nikos Balis,
Aegina Criminal Jail,
Ward B, Cell 16,
AEGINA, Greece.

THE VETERAN ANARCHIST Li Pei-kan, whom we knew from his novels as Pa Chin and whom we now have to learn to call Ba Jin or Ba Kin (from the first two Chinese characters of the names of Bakunin and Kropotkin), after many years of silence is now being heard again in China.

The BBC's Peking correspondent, Philip Short, reported an interview with him, and proudly, as the only foreign journalist who has yet been able to talk with him.

Short described Pa Chin as China's greatest living novelist. He described him as a short, stooped man of 73 with a brush of grey hair and an unconquerable spirit and, despite his long years of living in Shanghai, still speaking in the native accents.

Short related how in the 1920s Pa Chin went to Paris and there wrote his first novel, followed four years later by The Family, which has been in print in USA (and available here) in the past couple of years and is now to be republished in China. (Pa Chin did not know it was translated and published in the West until Short told him. Doubleday Anchor, how about those royalties?).

Short explained that The Family, with its portrayal of the stifling, repressive bonds of the old traditional Chinese family shook a whole generation of young people into breaking out of the family and breaking the bonds of the exterior society as well.

"At that time he was an anarchist," said the BBC man. He implied later that something of Pa Chin's anarchism was still evident in his insistence that the writer must have the courage of his convictions rather than follow the party line.

With a wry smile Pa Chin explained how he survived and others did not. He spoke about a close friend who, when the Red Guards rebelled, "did not understand and could not accept" and committed suicide. Pa Chin was paraded before dozens of criticism committees. "There were so many committees; I had written so many books..."

While that was going on he was made to work cleaning out the Writers' Association drains, despite the protection of Chou En Lai who in fact had shared Pa Chin's Paris exile. Now, he said, he knows what to do when his kitchen sink gets blocked.

Then, in 1969, he was given an opportunity he had not had before the Cultural Revolution, to do agricultural work. In 1972 he was permitted to return to Shanghai where his wife was dying. He was then allowed to do translations, though not to publish them, and his friends were afraid to associate with him because he was still "an enemy of the people"

Now The Family is being reissued, along with other works suppressed until now. The Guardian reported on 17 November that Pa Chin was working on a translation of Sholokov's Virgin Soil Upturned; the BBC man said Turgenev's Virgin Soil and I'd put my money on that.

Pa Chin said that the task for the future was to eradicate all traces of the "Radicals'" influence on literature, in particular their
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LAND NOTES

IT IS noteworthy, though not surprising, that neither the Times nor the Guardian, which however devoted much space to the mass lobby by 7,000 university lecturers, had a word about the acceptance by the farmworkers' union (the NUAAW) of the new wage offer which for most of the 250,000 full-time, part-time and casual workers means a minimum of £ 43 for a 40 hour week. Craftsmen will receive £ 47.30, appointment grade II £ 51.60 and appointment grade I £ 55.90. The top grades are farm managers and there are only 7,000 of them and no more than 33,000 of the work force are classified as craftsmen.

Percentage-wise, the 'unskilled' will receive 10.2 per cent while the top grade gets 1.5 per cent. But percentages hide the realities which are that the ordinary farm worker is going to get £ 4 and the top grade men £ 7.75, almost double. And though no industrial worker can accuse even the farm managers (most of whom are working managers anyway) of making a fortune, the fact remains that within the industry the differential between the top and bottom farm workers gets progressively greater for so long as the farce of percentage wage increases continues to be the norm.

Feeding inflation...

The farmers' union (NFU) have opposed the awards which they say will add a further £ 56m to their wages bill. Their representative on the Agricultural Wages Board opposed any increase over 10 per cent saying they had gone as far as 'they could under Government policy' adding for good measure 'we can't believe that this breach of the guidelines coming so soon after the Prime Minister's appeal to the nation, is in the best interests of the country, of agriculture or of the agricultural workers. This is bound to feed the inflation of food prices and I think farmers will be more reluctant to take extra workers on'.

Whilst it is true that horticulture is labour intensive and therefore wage increases do visibly affect prices (though even in horticulture the ever increasing use of chemical herbicides, automation in the greenhouse industry, and with mechanical harvesting replacing skilled hands) farming is today the most capital intensive industry in the country.

insistence that novels must be cast in the heroic mould from beginning to end. But he was uncertain how much freedom writers would be allowed to have. There were, he said, questions still to be clarified.

Pa Chin kept his mind bright and supple during his exile in hard labour by teaching himself Italian. Before he is 80 - which he judges is about as long as a writer can go on being good - he wants to write his last novel, set against the Radicals' upheavals. It will be his first since Cold Nights, written 30 years ago.

As their interview was drawing to a close, a waiter came in to clear the restaurant tables and his eyes fell on the book Pa Chin had signed for Philip Short. "It was the first time I had ever seen anybody literally speechless." The waiter staggered out after him and then choked out, "Pa Chin, was that really him?"

M.C.

higher even than the car industry.

The last published Government statistics for 1974 showed that there were in England and Wales 437,560 tractors, ranging from a cosy 25hp to an elite 2,720hp plus 4-wheel drive giants, as well as 56,000 combine harvesters. In that same year there were only 92,941 full-time and 67,500 part-time farm workers. Since then the mechanical Horse Power has grown while Manpower moves to the towns. The countryside is now occupied by retired civil servants and military has-beens still bandying about their titles in the local pubs and on the parish councils; by second-home weekenders, and that army of commuters, career zombies ever on the move to more profitable fields.

With such neighbours it is not surprising that farmers are easy game for every new gimmick on the market in this technological age which promises increased yields, increased productivity (that is, a smaller wages bill), increased profits and, of course, less work! And this is reflected in the farmers' ever greater indebtedness to the moneylenders. Figures recently released by the clearing banks show that in October farm borrowings had reached an all time record of £ 1,068m, which is nearly £ 300m more than October last year. So in one year farmers will be paying at least an additional £ 30m to the moneylenders and even the most reactionary blimpy will surely not deny that the 250,000 farm workers who, with the aid of machines and equipment, actually produce more than half the food we consume in this country, are more deserving of their £ 56m wage increase than are the moneylenders their extra £ 30m? Or do they? But there is another increase of costs in the farming industry which contributes nothing to our well-being or prosperity but inevitably adds to the basic price of food. Land 'values' are rising all the time. According to figures published in the Farmers Weekly (18.11.77) the average price of agricultural land with vacant possession in the three months up to September was £ 974 an acre and this is £ 346 an acre more than in the same period last year and £ 35 an acre more than the quarter ended in August of this year.

Who are the Greedy?

Ten years ago you could buy good arable land in the Eastern Counties for £ 200 an acre. It now fetches £ 1,000. Yet yields over the past ten years have only increased marginally. However, whereas corn sold at £ 25 a ton then, it was fetching £ 90 last year. And even this season's large, but poor quality, harvest fetches £ 75 in the open market.

Obviously production costs have also increased especially as a result of the oil crisis of 1973 but so have all the rents on tenanted farms and those that have been bought at inflated prices by institutions and pension funds and these are inevitably a charge on the cost of produce from the land which ultimately is paid for by the consumer. Meanwhile the land speculators, land agents, auctioneers, solicitors, bank managers etc. are all doing very nicely thank you, and everything would be even better if those greedy workers did not always ask for more. How can the industry and nation afford to pay them £ 43 for a 40 hour week?

LANDWORKER.

NECROPHILIA

JAMES KIRKUP'S poem 'The Love That Dares To Speak Its Name', which was found to be a blasphemous libel at the trial of Gay News last July, is still causing trouble.

It was reported here on 1 October that Nicolas Walter, managing editor of the Rationalist Press Association and editor of the New Humanist, was being pestered by the police following a complaint from militant Christians that he had sent copies through the post, contrary to the Post Office Act of 1953. Following his refusal to make a statement to the Obscene Publications Squad either admitting or denying the offence he heard at the end of November that the Director of Public Prosecutions had instructed the Metropolitan Police Commissioner not to proceed with the case.

He assures us that he couldn't afford the normal bribe, so the reason must have been lack of evidence that would stand up in court - together with official unwillingness to get mixed up in the whole ridiculous business.

We understand that a further edition of the poem has been produced to keep up with the continuous demand, and that a copy will be sent to anyone who sends a stamped addressed envelope to the Free Speech Movement, 134, Northumberland Road, Harrow, Middlesex.

FURTHER APPEARANCES

Meanwhile, the latest paper to reprint the poem was Javelin, the fortnightly organ of the Bradford University Students Union. The editor co-opted for the third issue of the autumn term was Roland Rance, a third-year undergraduate in the School of Peace Studies who happens to be an anarchist as well as a pacifist.

He decided to reprint the poem from the facsimile version published in FREEDOM on 23 July, but first the printers refused to print it, and then the union staff refused to duplicate it, so in the end it was privately duplicated and inserted as a leaflet into copies of the issue of Javelin dated 1 November.

There was the predictable controversy among the Bradford students, polarised between the political right and the Christian Union at one extreme and the political left and gay movement at the other. On 8 November a meeting of the Students Union dissociated itself from the reprinting of the poem. On the following day Roland Rance and David Pope, president of the union, were interviewed by a reporter from a news agency, and garbled reports subsequently appeared in the Daily Telegraph and the Daily Express. Copies of Javelin with the poem were still distributed, and were also destroyed by militant Christians. On 21 November another meeting of the Students Union reversed the previous decision, and associated itself with the reprinting of the poem.

POPE QUESTIONED BY POLICE

At this point the Bradford police began to take an interest, following a complaint from an unknown member or members of the public.

(Cont next pg)

UNIONS

Dear Editors,

In answer to D.G.H. (FREEDOM, 26.11.77), I would say that harsh employers, oppressive states, and divisive trade unions with their tyrannical closed shops, are all in the same game - the struggle for wealth and power. A free and equitable society is out of the question as long as that struggle goes on, and you will never end it by wading into it and 'defending' this or that group: defending means being aggressive. Your group may be on the losing side now, but it is no less corrupt than the others, and if it wins it will become the new oppressor. Who is to protect the 'solitary worker' from the ravages of trade unionism? I am not threatening the livelihood of my workfellows by not joining a union, the union and my workfellows are taking away my livelihood by enforcing a closed shop.

Who are my workfellows, anyway? Are they just those engaged in the same kind of employment? Or is not the dustman, the doctor, the fireman, and everybody I rely on my workfellow? In reality every suffering, struggling, confused human being on this earth is in a sense my fellow, for whom I have a responsibility - even the George Wards, the politicians, and the tyrants of the TUC. But if I am a member of the boilermakers' union and distinguish between boilermakers as 'my workfellows' and all other human beings as 'not my workfellows', my action is divisive and irresponsible. All this is so obvious!

Anarchism to D.G.H. is apparently some kind of socialism, and involves prosecuting a class war. But war will never bring peace. To me, the true anarchist keeps out of all wars. He stands alone, a total outsider, not identifying with any group, class, nation or race. He is against none (non-unionist, not anti-unionist), but therefore on no particular side. If the workers all adopted that stance, the capitalists (and TUC bureaucrats) would get the shock of their lives! It would be - the revolution! Could it be fear of that revolution that motivates those 'defensive' bullies who condemn the non-unionist and hound him out of his job?

Best wishes,
Francis Ellingham.

READERS MEETING

I suppose if nothing else FREEDOM provides an illusory anarchist establishment on which Anarchists can vent their frustrations and such meetings produce plenty of criticism if very little help. With a bad chair (myself) and no structure, we tended to think that it was possible for an Anarchist meeting to develop its own structure. Many came to grind their own 'political' axes and to advertise their own activities so it was inevitable that the only constructive criticism came by post.

There is one glaring inconsistency in Anarchist thinking - or perhaps lack of thinking in depth - which struck me forcibly at the meeting. If you are an Anarchist you cannot

blame an organisation or a political party or a Central Committee for the deficiencies of your own movement. The size of the movement and its influence is proportional to the commitment of those who claim to be Anarchists.

Anarchists must have sufficient understanding of the history of the movement, the wide significance of its philosophy, to understand why they make so little impact and are indistinguishable from other groups whose objectives are quite different.



In this respect FREEDOM has a distinguished history. Militancy is not necessarily synonymous with good Anarchist thinking - where have all those militants of my youth gone? Many in 1939 would have had us fighting in the crusade against fascism which resulted in half of Europe being dominated by the other brand of totalitarianism. The only shield against authoritarianism is the spread of anarchist ideas and feelings. This has been done, if inadequately, by FREEDOM over the years. There have been times when FREEDOM has done, within its capacity, a great job but this has always been the result of extra commitment and external climate.

There has always been an element of personal antagonisms, power struggles and jealousies which, although Anarchists should try to avoid, they are human like everybody else. Some debate on our genuine differences does take place mostly, it may be said, in the pages of FREEDOM which does not have a line - only an anarchist line.

I do not see any other journal emerging that does the three things that FREEDOM tries to do:

1. Provide regular news of the anarchist movement.
2. Relate anarchist thought to present events.
3. Provide a sounding board with all the historical background to enable us to assess what we are at.

This is a lot to demand of any group, particularly one as small as the editorial collective and its efficiency depends on the increased commitment of Anarchists.

ALAN ALBON.

NECROPHILIA (cont)

On 30 November two CID officers interviewed Rance and Pope at the union offices, but the two refused to answer any questions, apart from denying quotations attributed to them in press reports.

So far as we know, despite several complaints, there has been no police action against any

of the political papers which had previously reprinted the poem - Young Liberal Liberator (January), pacifist Peace News (28 January), Anarchist Worker (February/March), Trotskyist Socialist Challenge (14 July), and FREEDOM - so it seems unlikely that there will be any prosecution of Javelin, but it is always possible that the authorities will finally lose patience with the persistent defiance of the Gay News verdict.

The Gay News appeal is expected to be heard in January or February 1978, by which time the circulation of the poem must have more than doubled since its original publication in June 1976 and the ridiculous prosecution by Mary Whitehouse. Whatever the result of the appeal, it is clear that this attempt at censorship under the old blasphemy law had had the only proper effect.

M.H.

N.B.

WEST GERMANY

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

The newly-formed Black Aid group who can presently be contacted through Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N.1. are organising a demonstration and march to the West German Embassy **TODAY, SATURDAY, 10 DECEMBER**

to hand in a letter with three demands:

- (1) The release of Irmgard Moeller, survivor of the massacre on 18/10/77 at Stammheim;
- (2) The concentration of all political prisoners in West Germany in groups of at least 15 people, as recommended by independent medical experts;
- (3) The establishment of an independent international committee to investigate the circumstances of the deaths and those politically responsible.

ASSEMBLE AT VICTORIA EMBANKMENT, CHARING CROSS at 13.00 hrs MARCH 14.00 hrs.

This is late notice, comrades, but please support this day of solidarity. Katherina Hammerschmidt, Holger Meins, Siegfried Hausner, Ulrike Meinhof, Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Jan-Carl Raspe, and Ingrid Schubert are dead. The murders and manipulated 'suicides' must stop!

IN BRIEF..

In a speech in the National Assembly the French Justice Minister Alain Peyrefitte accused Communist lawyers of pressuring judges over the extradition of RAF lawyer Klaus Croissant, now safely (safely?) back in Stammheim. M. Peyrefitte warned, "We find ourselves facing a menace comparable to that of anarchism at the end of the nineteenth century. The Third Republic knew the answer to that menace. The Fifth knows it as well."

anything else would be surprised by the actions of governments to each other or to their own citizens. Yet, surprisingly, governments often take the high-minded view and are most censorious of other governments' actions, and are correspondingly fatuous in their proffered solutions to other governments' problems.

Politically, other groupings take refuge in a sustained barrage of criticism of the actions of governments regardless of the fact that their political philosophies commit them to a standpoint that given x, y and z governments can do no other. At its worst such criticism, for example "Hands off Andorra" or "No Arms for Lichtenstein" is a mere masturbatory exercise. At its best it is a desire to be with it. A me-tooism enlisting party ranks in the stage-army of the good.

Unfortunately, governments and often highly undesirable comrades of the picket line sometimes support worthy causes. The war of 1939-45, by being ostensibly an anti-fascist war (it was not really) secured the support of anti-war groups by promotion of the Communist T-gan "Fascism means war."

§

All that can be done - or should be done? - by anarchists is a tour of the horizon to witness the patterns of perfidy where governments, having very little option, are acting out charades of prosperity-promoting, liberating-humanity, loving-their-neighbours and generally putting on a poor act.

First, as being freshest in the memory, and citizens, exposed as they are to instant-news television, have poor memories, is South Africa. This totalitarian-democracy with its segregation has been looked on askance for many decades. It has never been fully boycotted by those whose pretensions to democracy are more convincing than those of the South Africans. Indeed, it is the very brazenness of apartheid which wrings an elaborate apologia from South Africa friends abroad. Indeed as a barrier against imagined Communism it has many friends and weapon-suppliers, regardless of the fact that South Africa's repression of her racial majority is just the thing to bring on Communism - or some equivalent after a black rising. The blacks have not spoken yet. The recent cynical Catch 22 of substituting a single pass for a batch of passes is no reform, although acclaimed as such. The recent reluctant technological acceptance of the necessity of some relaxation of apartheid is more a sign of the built-in destructive factors of the system.

But democratic hands were raised in holy horror when an enquiry into the death by police brutality and neglect of Steve Biko did a white-wash job. Well, it would wouldn't it. A totalitarian state, however democratic, has no need to repudiate the actions of its servants. Indeed it would be unwise for them to do so, for it would undermine the fabric so carefully built up. There were the simple souls outside South Africa who produced the mere existence of the open inquest as being evidence of the democratic tendencies of South Africa. But nevertheless such simpletons accept the death of Liddle Towers at police hands in England as meeting the coroner's verdict of justifiable homicide, and those too who believe the incredible myth of the 'Baader-Meinhof' chain of suicides - followed by the corroborative evidence introduced fortuitously into a maximum security prison.

Hard on the heels of the Biko case the unctuous

Dr Owen gave us the platitudinous benefit in a religious programme of his philosophy; the following day he was given a chance to live up to it and failed. Two black power zealots had been sentenced to death for murders in Bermuda - to Dr Owen was a chance given of exercising his Christian principles by reprieving the men. This he did not do. The black majority revolted on the night of the executions. Dr Owen sent in the soldiers to keep law and order. Well, he would wouldn't he.

Contrast this hard line in Bermuda with the Pilyanna-like wishful thinking on behalf of Rhodesia. Acting as if Rhodesia's quitting the Commonwealth had not happened, and that acceptance of UDI was the only aberration of Mr Smith, a series of dream scenarios for the future of Rhodesia have been drawn up by Britain and a series of stooge Uncle Toms have been nominated to put these into effect. That Ian Smith takes no notice (why should he?) of these daydreams except to make a derisory gesture in regard to black votes, is ignored by Dr Owen and President Carter, who live by a philosophy of "as if". Meanwhile Ian Smith gets down to the business of fighting a war against guerrillas - carrying the war into his neighbour's territory, which happens to be the none too popular Angola. Well he would, wouldn't he.

The Israeli-Arab farce has gone into another side-splitting act. Egypt, tired of carrying the can for the Arab side, took advantage of a new man in the Knesset - albeit an ex-terrorist - to approach Israel direct. Israel, equally fed up with the cost of defence, saw an opportunity - if such were necessary - to split the Arab ranks. Now Sadat is seemingly cast out into the darkness but the Arabs have not been able to unite even against Egypt. If Arab unity were ever possible Israel would have been wiped out long ago. Naively Britain and the US welcome this "peace" move regardless of the fact that Mr Begin is a smart politician and, like Sadat, took advantage of the need of both of them for a breathing space. Well they would, wouldn't they.

§

On economic matters our rulers are equally precipient. They have warned the Japanese and the Germans that they can't go on monopolising trade; they must restrict their exports and increase their imports in order that the other nations of the world have a slice of the cake. The Japanese and the Germans, seeing the theoretical economic sense of this have promised to try and redress the balance. But try as they might they just keep on exporting and the other countries are quite put out - well, they would be, wouldn't they. Tied in with this comes the problem of the 'developing' (ex 'under-developed', nee 'backward') countries which, according to the lofty ideals expressed at international conferences, deserve their share of the world's good things - like television, motor cars and skateboards - not to mention food, clothing and shelter. But the economic problem still remains - how are they to get these things without money? Giving them away would absolutely wreck the economic system which is the chief care and concern of the international conferences. So meanwhile people starve, become ill and are prey to ambitious politicians.

After one big scandal in the United States a Mr Clean took over twice-born and baptised in the principles of sound business practices and good government. His optimistic assess-

ments that he would conserve energy in the US and stress the question of human rights throughout the world (especially in Russia) have drawn approval for item 2 (as far away as Moscow is) and a cool reception for item 1. Like a fellow Baptist exhorted by a preacher to give up fornication, adultery and dope-taking who responded with a loud "Hallelujah!" but who, when the preacher exhorted him to give up playing dice - the Baptist's private pleasure - said "He's finished preaching and gone on to meddling". Conservation, particularly of motor fuel, is Jimmy Carter's meddling.

The issue of human rights strikes a particularly sour chord with the Soviet Union which believes that exploitation under capitalism is the only crime and what a State does with its own citizens is its own affair - a policy with which the United States would feel no disagreement. However, for the purpose of diplomatic deals at Helsinki and elsewhere where 'human rights' are done up in a basket as part of a package deal, 'human rights' are a good stigma to beat the USSR dogma.

Nevertheless the USA and the USSR go on flaunting human rights - including with their armaments programme, a denial of the human right to exist.

All this sounds like - and much of 'foreign affairs' is - a schoolboy 'Yah sucks boo' session of yelling "You're another!" The perennial question "What about the negroes in the salt mines?" illustrates that there is little difference between one regime and another - if one is a victim. But we must work and protest on whatever comes nearest to hand. We must not be pawns in the diplomatic games of governments.

There is danger in being steered into regrettable postures - and one uses the word precisely - by following stock responses. Students corralled into an anti-Semitic lobby by a campaign against Zionist expansionism; trade-unionists conned into preserving differentials and ultimately into sponsoring protectionism as a reply to foreign competition; anti-racists battling up the blind alley of punch ups. Worst of all the deliberate cultivation of cynicism in the face of world affairs. A discarding of all values and a frank avowal of every State for itself to the neglect of the cultivation of values of freedom and of respect for differences.

World problems are not caused by bad men doing wrong. But often by good men doing the wrong things.

JACK ROBINSON

IN BRIEF..

... According to a book edited by the director of the Child Poverty Action Group, unemployment is highly inefficient in combatting inflation, due to the high costs of benefits, administration etc. However one in six of the unemployed are found to be drawing no more benefit at all, and at least 120,000 of them are living below the poverty line.

FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

NEXT DESPATCHING date is THURSDAY 22 December. Come and help from 2 pm. Folding session for Supplement Thursday 15 December from 6.00 p.m.

WE WELCOME news, reviews, articles, letters. Latest date for receipt of copy for next issue (no. 25) is Monday 19 December. No charge is made for use of the Contact Column. All items for insertion must however arrive by the above date—and if possible earlier. Frequently valuable publicity for events is lost by comrades not taking into account our fortnightly schedule.

Groups

ABERYSTWYTH. Mike Sheehan, Newadd Caerlaan, Victoria Terrace, Aberystwyth.

BELFAST. For a Belfast anarchist contact B.A.C. c/o 52 Broadway, Belfast 12 (correspondence only).

BRISTOL. Anyone interested in forming group contact Bob, Flat 4, 14 Westfield Park, Redland, Bristol

BOLTON, contact 6 Stockley Avenue, Harwood, Bolton (tel. 387516)

CAMBRIDGE. Raphael Salkie, Queens' College, Cambridge.

CORBY. Terry Phillips, 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants.

COVENTRY, write John England, 48 Earlsdon, Coventry.

EAST ANGLIAN libertarians, Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex.

EXETER Anarchist Society, Devonshire House, Stocker Road, University of Exeter.

LEAMINGTON & Warwick, c/o 42 Bath St., Leamington Spa.

LEEDS, Tony Kearney, 4 Ingle Row, Leeds 7

LEICESTER, c/o Blackthorn Books, 74 Highcross cross St., Leicester.

NEWCASTLE: Black Jake, c/o Tyneside Social Centre, 235 Jesmond Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2

NOTTINGHAM, c/o Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St., (tel. 582506) for activities, or 15 Scotholme Ave., Hyson Green (708302).

OXFORD, Martin Harper, Keble College

MANCHESTER contact Al on 061-224 3028.

PORTSMOUTH, Carolyne Cahm, 2 Chadderton Gardens, Pembroke Park, Old Portsmouth.

READING. University Anarchists c/o Students Union, University of Reading.

SHEFFIELD. Box 1A, 341 Glossop Road, Sheffield 10 (tel. 667029 or 731780). Mtgs, Tuesdays, at 10 Hanover Square (tel. 731780). Students Box 159, 341 Glossop Rd.

THAMES VALLEY, Adele Dawson, Maymeade, 6 Congress Rd, Maidenhead, tel. 062 2974.

WESTON-super-Mare. Anyone interested in forming group contact Martyn Redman, Flat 5, 23 Milton Rd., Weston-s.-Mare, Somerset.

LONDON FEDERATION of Anarchist Groups

Anarchist Black Cross, 123 Upper Tollington, Park, N.4. (tel. 691 6533)

Anarchy Collective, 29 Grosvenor Ave., N5 (tel. 359 4794—before 7 pm)

Brixton Anarcho-Situationists, 8 Heywood House, Tulse Hill, SW2 (tel. 674 6402)

Clapham, 3 Belmont Rd. SW4 (tel. 622 8961)

DORKING Libertarian Group, Howard Fuller, 6 Oak Ridge, Goodway, Dorking, Surrey (tel. 87814)

East London, Libertarians, 123 Lathom Rd., E.6. 552 3985).

Freedom, 84B Whitechapel High St., Angel Alley, E.1. (tel. 247 9249)

Hackney Anarchists contact Dave 249 7042.

Kingston Anarchists, 13 Denmark Rd., Kingston-upon-Thames (tel. 549 2564)

London Workers' Group, Box W, 182 Upper St., N.1. (tel. 249 7042)

Love V Power (write only) Desmond Hunter, 4 Swinton Street, WC1

S.E. London Anarchist Feminist Group, 54A, Westbourne Drive, Forest Hill, SE23 2UN (tel. 699 0268).

South London College, Knights Hill, West Norwood (tel. 678 7886).

KENT ANARCHIST FEDERATION:

CANTERBURY - temporarily no group.

But Kent Federation welcome visitors who let them know in advance.

Ramsgate, Peter Ford, 22 Royal Road.

Sevenoaks, Jim Endesby, 70 Bradbourne Rd.

MIDLANDS ANARCHIST FEDERATION, Sec. Louise Crane, 13 Arden Terrace, Braunstone, Leicester (tel. c/o Sid & Pat 864511 Leicester

NORTH WEST ANARCHIST FEDERATION, 6 Stockley Ave., Harwood, Bolton (tel. 387516) Mthly mtg., newsletter.

ANARCHIST STUDENTS Network Secretariat Rading University Anarchists, c/o Students Union, Univ. of Reading

SCOTTISH LIBERTARIAN FEDERATION:

Aberdeen: Mike c/o A.P.P. 167 King St.

(tel. 29669). Also for Dundee, Fife, Edinburgh Glasgow: C. Baird, 122 Benneray St. Glasgow G22 (tel. 336-7895), also for Port Glasgow and Stirling.

BECAUSE OF PRESSURE ON SPACE, International groups and U.K. will be inserted in alternate issues.

Desires

LANDAUER. Anyone interested in corresponding (in French or English) about Landauer's socialism please write to Ozeki Hiroshi, c/o Libero Int'l, CPO Box 1065, KOBE, Japan

Pacifist anarchist seeks flat, bed-sit/place in shared house in Central, or outer areas of Central London. Please contact Steve at 24/26 Bisley Old Road, Stroud, Gloucester. Polish-speaking anarchists & others interested in creating some form of information exchange concerning the past, present & future situation in Poland please contact Jan at Freedom.

PRISONERS AID. New group within Cambridge group is collecting books (anarchist and non-anarchist) and publications to send to prisoners. Send lit. to RAF SALKIE, W.14

QUEENS' COLLEGE Cambridge, and information if you know of a prisoner who wants literature.

CHILDREN. The A S Neill Trust is compiling a list of Free Schools, Communes, Home Education projects or any activities or any activities designed to secure more freedom and more respect for children. Please send information to Michael Duane, 10 Wavertree Road, London SW2 or phone 01-674 4368.

Meetings

CARDIFF. Women's Liberation Conference for Wales 14-15 January 1978 at Splott Youth Centre, Sanquhar St., Splott, Cardiff. Food & Creche. Write Maggie or Linda c/o 182 Broadway, Adamsdown, Cardiff (tel. 0222-499759) especially if wanting accommodation.

LONDON Friday Dec. 9. AUM (anarcho utopian mystics) mtg. 7.30 in Room 5075, Basement, St. Clement's Building, LSE, Houghton St. WC2.

LONDON WORKERS' group Tuesday 20 Dec., 8pm at Rising Free, 182 Upper St. N.

NEW YORK. Libertarian Book Club lectures at Workmen's Circle Center, 369 8th Avenue, 29th Street, New York City. 7.30 p.m. Thurs. 12 Jan 1978: Wanda Swieda on Soviet Emigres in Israel; USA. Adm. free, refreshments. All welcome.

Literature

Peace News for nonviolent revolution, Reports, analysis, news of nonviolent action for social change. Antimilitarism, sexual politics, ecology etc. 15p fortnightly (post 10p) from 8 Elm Avenue, Nottingham.

'First of May' bookshop & meeting place: anarchist, feminist, socialist books & mags. Coffee & coal fire. Edinburgh Books Collective, 45 Niddry St., Edinburgh, 031-557 1348

Press Fund

17 - 30 November 1977

HARTFIELD: O.M. £ 50; **SACRAMENTO:** Proceeds from Fund Raising Dinner held on 12.11.77 by Italian Comrades, per J.W. £ 44; **WOLVERHAMPTON:** J.L. £ 2; J.K.W. 10p; **RYHOPE:** D.H. 50p; **RENSSELAER, N.Y.:** Friends of L'Adunata per G.T. £ 6.78; **LONDON SE18:** R.A.S. £ 1.40; **LONDON SE11:** J.B. £ 13.10; **CANTERBURY:** R.G. 50; **LONDON NW1 T.** £ 1; **VIBORG:** H.P. 50p; **LA SPEZIA:** M.S. £ 1.

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INTERNATIONAL GAME THE OUTSIDERS

THE ANARCHIST movement is uncommonly discreet in its analyses of international relations and conflicts. Its periodicals and books deal rarely or very circumstantially with problems of foreign politics. There are some ritually repeated general principles - anti-all imperialisms, anti-nationalism, anti-war, anti-armaments - which glide over events, tensions or distant wars. This repetition skimps on the study and analysis of events, rather than inviting them.

This silence and these generalisations present a serious danger: that of seeing the reactions of militants progressively moulded by the daily newspapers, full of misinformation and propaganda, to the point where their practical attitudes in the face of actual situations will differ from their stated convictions, or even contradict them.

The prime trap, identical to that which operates so often in social questions, consists in the exploitation of pacifist and internationalist sentiments for warlike or imperialist ends. There is no question of calling upon libertarians to engage in struggle between exploitative regimes or between States aiming at regional or world hegemony. It is, more intelligently and to more avail, an appeal to anti-authoritarian sentiments, to anti-totalitarian convictions, to the necessity of defending workers' gains and liberties won. Just as, in the name of the values adopted by the 'left', what is asked for is not participation in the rules of the parliamentary game but prevention by the ballot of the success of a candidate of the 'right.' Or to make common cause with those who defend 'progress' against those who cling to the privileges of the past.

The procedure gets results. It has to be recognised that there is often no need to impose it from outside; it springs spontaneously even from within anarchist milieux - as witness the 'Manifesto of the 16' in 1914.

The position taken by a Kropotkin, Grave, Malato, Mella or Moineau is neither exceptional nor conditioned by a unique situation. It is found again in other connections, in 1939 in Spain as it can be detected even today. Throughout the Spanish civil war, in fact, the idea of a 'democratic camp' partial to the Republic was defended and propagated by the enemies of the social revolution - bourgeois republicans and Stalinists - but it had penetrated as far as our own ranks. And there it held on. Without discussion.

Thus, from the beginning of the Second World War, a man of the stature of Rudolf Rocker could speak of the British Commonwealth as a 'community of free peoples' ... But note that between the affirmation of pacifism - a cry uttered without regard for the given situation or any perspective of visible reality (of which the pamphlet issued by Louis Lecoin, 'For an Immediate Peace' provides an example) - and the pleas in justification of those who ally themselves to one camp, there is above all an immense 'no man's land' of ignorance and mental sclerosis.

In spite of numerous experiences, the sum of knowledge acquired and admitted to our collective memory is meagre. During the 1914-18 war there were demonstrations of anarchist thought and action which bore witness to the lucidity and courage of comrades. There was Zimmerwald and a hundred other examples of the libertarian presence. From 1939 to 1945 there was little resembling that audacious and promising tenacity. With a few exceptions. One, collective: the team of War Commentary in London. Others, individual or coming from very small groups, that of L'Adunata dei Refrattari (New York) being the most consistent. The rest basked in bloody illusion, in silence or compromise.

In the middle of a war, under the bombs, the publishers of War Commentary never ceased in their exertions to know. Above all else, it was a matter of not allowing themselves to be swept along by the torrents of lies, the natural accompaniment to hatred and combat. An effort, however, which they could never have imagined would be triumphant. Everything was difficult, slow, uncertain, precarious. Marie-Louise Berneri who, with Vernon Richards and the team of Freedom Press, animated the journal, put it explicitly:

* A conference there in 1917 of Social Democrats who wanted to end the war

We cannot build until the working class gets rid of its illusions, its acceptance of bosses and faith in leaders. Our policy consists in educating it, in stimulating its class instinct, and teaching methods of struggle. It is a hard and long task, but to the people who prefer such expedient solutions as war, we would point out that the great world war which was to end war and safeguard democracy, only produced fascism and another war; that this war will doubtless produce other wars, while leaving untouched the underlying problems of the workers. Our way of refusing to attempt the futile task of patching up a rotten world, but of striving to build a new one, is not only constructive but is also the only way out.

(War Commentary, December 1940
reprinted in *Neither East Nor West*)

WAR COMMENTARY

Vol. 2 No. 2 Twopence
DECEMBER, 1940

A Constructive Policy?

We are often accused of lacking a constructive policy. People grant that we have made a valuable analysis of the present situation, and that "our paper has a real value in pricking complacency and stimulating thought." But we are asked to put forward "practical" solutions for the struggle against fascism and capitalism.

Needless to say we do not accept the charges made against us. We admit that our readers will not find in our pages prescriptions for curing humanity from all the ills that beset it. What some of our readers obviously would like are slogans, manifestos, and programmes which offer to the working-class in a few lines the means of achieving not only the end of fascism but also of bringing about the era of workers' happiness.

We refuse to adopt such recipe-programmes because we are convinced that the present weakness of the working-class is due to the fact that every party, in order to gain popularity and power, has simplified its programmes, reducing to ridiculous proportions the nature of the struggle that will bring freedom to the exploited.

Political slogans have become like patent medi-

cine advertisements promising health, beauty, and happiness in exchange for a tablet of soap, or a cup of cocoa. Vote Labour, and everything will be all right! Pay your trade union dues and security will be assured! A workers' government will achieve the revolution! Write to your M.P. or to such-and-such a Minister, march through the streets in a disciplined manner, with a powerful band and shout till you lose your voice, and all your wishes (demands) will come true!

That is what parties supposed to have a "realist" policy and holding in the greatest contempt the "anarchist Utopians," have been advocating for a quarter of a century

whenever a difficulty arose. These remedies have proved useless against unemployment and fascism, Italian aggression in Abyssinia, Anglo-French boycott of the Spanish revolutionaries, rearmament and war. And yet the same methods are again advanced to meet the problems created by the present situation.

The left-motiv of left parties is that the workers should take as much control as they can of the government. This appears constructive enough. But it only means that Labour

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This will go on seeing clearly, to think with their own heads, was to manifest itself in the exposition, the propagation of the plain truth; in their publications, but also through leaflets distributed to soldiers (which were to lead to prosecution); through correspondence which had to insinuate its way through the dense mass of controls and censorship, with the isolated, with deserters, with the tenacious of the four corners of the world, who make up the International.

Without doubt the British tradition still provided, in the remains of a constantly eroded freedom of expression, a ground more favourable to this affirmation and this anarchist research than there was in countries entirely militarised or under an all-powerful police regime. But these possibilities were exploited to the full, and not pushed aside while awaiting a time without problems. As elsewhere, illegality and clandestinity responded to the law and repression. The argument does not stand that these liberties must be defended by placing oneself at the disposition of a power which uses all its wits to reduce them. What must be noted, is that in the countries under dictatorship, some components of the resistance acted in liaison with the services of the 'enemy' state, with the aim of taking part in the war effort of the other side, and not for their own objectives.

It was not a question of incantations to peace, but of keeping track of reality and extracting the lessons from it each day, of denouncing brain washing, of reminding by immediate and obvious examples that Great Britain was an empire which reigned over enslaved peoples, that the United States was going to profit from its entry into the war to extend its area of influence, that Soviet Russia was a totalitarian state which crushed proletariat, peasantry and peoples; that words lose all meaning when a Chiang Kai Chek, yesterday's tyrant, becomes tomorrow's great democrat... that ideologies cover indefensible interests. 'Let it not be said that... American opinion, and perhaps Roosevelt himself, do not experience a genuine sympathy for the democracies. The opinion of the masses (or rather, what the press makes them believe) has nothing in common with the combined capitalist and imperialist interests which determine the policy of the country. But it must be recognised that these interests have everything to gain by a European war¹.

This is where, for anarchists, the fundamental difference is established between action which benefits the triumph of one coalition against the other, and that which corresponds to the ends of social liberation. A difference which was palpable in Italy, in France, as well as in the so-called neutral countries like Latin America, where strikes were supported, triggered off, or condemned not with regard to the interests of the working class but following the criterion of the 'good' or 'bad' beneficiary on the international plane. In spite of sometimes very complex local conditions, there is a guiding thread: it is the social war that we wage, and not the war between nations or between blocs. The 'forces of liberation' were not mistaken when in Italy in 1944 the North American military authorities permitted the appearance of publications of all anti-fascist tendencies with the exception of anarchist journals. Just as in the port of Buenos Aires, the Stalinists opposed workers' claims from the moment the products of the enterprises concerned were assigned as supplies to the ally - yesterday's enemy - the USSR.

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Let us recognise that we do not possess a tried and proven doctrine; we get little help from our ancestors.

In Marxist logic, as far as international politics are concerned there is the same belief in the 'progressive' character of world-wide capitalist expansion ('inevitable stage in the bringing together of the conditions necessary to the victory of the proletariat') as in the economic development of nations. Miklos Molnár gives a good summary of this theory:

If the progress achieved by the victorious bourgeoisie thanks to the development of its productive forces is the universal standard for measuring peoples, their place in the sun and the legitimacy of their national claims, it is as impossible to place oneself on the side of the 'asiatic' peoples as on the side of the 'under-developed' of the Old Continent. To put it another way, if Marx and Engels had wanted to adopt an anticolonialist concept... they would

have had to elaborate equally on the subject of the oppressed peoples of Europe and vice versa. For want of taking up a position on the ground of self-determination without discrimination, they enclosed themselves in the iron collar of their materialist vision - today called 'productivist.' In an ideological position, therefore? Not at all, since it concerns an ideology founded on an analysis of reality and which claimed to be scientific. It was not a pledge, a programme, an ideal that Marx and Engels claimed to express in their theses, but rather the general tendency of historical development.²

It would be a little cruel to remind our own simili-Marxists who rush to the support of colonial and neo-colonial peoples (save where Soviet colonies are concerned) of the position of the masters of their thought (they still have masters but no thought). Molnár recalls it: '... the moral content of colonialism, its infamy and its stupidity, did not in Marx's eyes weaken its necessity in the global, historic process. However detestable the motives and methods of British colonialism might be, they are accomplishing an historic task that was on the whole progressive.'³

Bakunin's reasoning was the reverse: 'Civilised nations having conquered barbaric peoples, the principle runs: it is the application of Darwin's law to international politics. Following that natural law, the civilised nations, being usually the strongest, must or do exterminate the barbaric populations, or else suppress them to exploit them, that is to say, civilise them. Thus it is permissible for the North Americans to exterminate the Indians little by little, for the English to exploit the East Indies, for the French to conquer Algeria, and finally for Germany to civilise the Slavs, nolens volens, in the way that we know.'⁴

But if examination of the relations between Russia, Germany and Poland gives Bakunin occasion to draw conclusions altogether opposed to the opinions of Marx (the former considering Germany as the state most prone to expansion and the latter estimating that Tsarist Russia was destined to extend its borders by the very nature of its backward and absolutist regime), it remains nonetheless that for the Russian it is the problem of the State that is the essential: 'The modern State does not more than fulfil the old concept of domination... which aspires necessarily, by reason of its own nature, to conquer, enslave, stifle everything around it that exists, lives, moves, breathes; that State... has served its time.'⁵

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One could not better summarise a certain mentality which reigns in the ranks of the émigré CNTists in France than in citing the response made in November 1944 to the Union Nationale Espagnole—creature of the Spanish Communist Party—who at a congress in Toulouse had decided to avoid a new spilling of blood in Spain: 'Magnificent declaration with which we are totally in agreement. But why should one say one thing to the British and another, entirely different, to the French and to the Spanish refugees in France? Why do the spokesmen of the UNE describe as cowardly the Spanish exiles who refuse to enter the ranks of their guerillas who aspire to reconquer Spain by force of arms? It is we who carry the flag of unity of all Spanish lovers of liberty and of the Republic. It is we who, in a Popular Front, defended the Republic, a Republic that the UNE considers dead. And we say to the British, to the Americans, to the Russians and all the democratic peoples of the world—and most particularly to the Spaniards exiled in France—that we must try to liberate Spain while avoiding a renewed and cruel killing of Spaniards by Spaniards.'⁶

What an illusion, what vain and glorious hopes, what lack of understanding of the motivations which determine the policies of 'democratic' states. José Borrás' book from which this extract is taken, abounds in puerilities of this kind and in purple passages instead of making the difficult but indispensable analysis of international political connections. The guard is lowered before the cold determination of States, which are egoist by nature. After the inevitable delusion will come the adventures, launched with blows of the young, the deaths, the arrests—a price as miscalculated as was the belief in bourgeois governments being activated by the best of intentions... .

For the Spanish libertarian movement, at least in its official declarations, has learned nothing of what 'anti-fascism', national or international, is worth. A constant factor which has clearly marked the political attitudes of the exiled parties and organisations has been to believe—and to cause to be believed—that if the Spanish anti-fascists lost the civil war and if they have not yet been able to defeat the Franco dictatorship, the fault lies with foreign powers.⁷

Is this a matter of a particular interpretation, marked by circumstances peculiar to the Iberian conflict? It seems not, for we find this reasoning re-hashed as the natural expression of a current of thought among many militants and in regard to other wars. Thus, from the pen of that excellent Asturian militant, Ramon Alvarez, when he speaks of Eleuterio Quintanilla, anarchist organiser and propagandist in the first third of the 20th Century.: 'So long as war did not show itself in the brutal shock of armies on battlefields transformed into gigantic tombs of young people who had dreamed of a *belle époque* of long duration, Quintanilla was passionately against war. He was not unaware that collective slaughter has always assured the salvation of capitalism, coinciding chronologically with the cycles of economic crises, results of the inevitable contradictions of a social system based on exploitation and profit.'

'With the death of illusions resting on an internationalism too young to be rooted in the civic consciousness—although it must constitute the first aspiration of a sincere idealism—Quintanilla rapidly decided to defend the Western camp, for it represented a greater degree of liberty, in which the sowing of the seeds of revolution was possible; whilst the victory of Kaiserism would have signified a marked backward step, of which the consequences would have fallen for preference upon the poorest strata of each nation.'⁸

In most cases, the choice of camp is determined by the militant's sense of impotence. To remain outside the major public confrontation seems to exclude him from all action, from all existence.

Now, it is not a question of being neutral, but of rejecting the rules of a game which is not his. It is the choosing of a camp which obliterates his own personality. His commitment signifies his suicide as a militant anarchist. That circumstances force him, in or out of uniform, into the apparatus of one of the belligerent parties does not commit him. It is his justification of that which he has not the power to evade that would put him out of the social struggle. It is from the point of this—of his—factual, unchosen situation that he can commence, or continue, to act. To act, he must work to study and understand events; not an easy task, but possible. Just as he must know the milieu wherein he is placed, in order to grasp its diversity and contradictions. All elements of information which will serve him, immediately or in time to come. The social aspects of a conflict, of a tension, of a war are never absent for long, any more than are personal reactions. There is his terrain.

As for the eternal consideration that every act, every sentiment expressed, every attitude taken up plays the game of one or other antagonist: this is no doubt true. The main thing is to know whether it is necessary to disappear, to silence oneself, to become an object, for the sole reason that our existence can favour the triumph of the one over the other. Then one sole glaring truth bursts forth: no one will play our game if we do not lead it ourselves.

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Not to want to participate in the operations of international politics, in one of the embattled camps, does not signify that one must be uninterested in the reality of these operations, of these strategies, of these forms of permanent war which take on the most varied of aspects: commercial, political, military. To forget that the United States, by inclination and will to power is present everywhere in the world, wants to ensure the defence and security of its home state which depends on international supplies and markets; to forget the tendencies to world hegemony of the Soviet Union; to forget China's expansionist capacity; to forget that the drives towards independence which are shaking Africa, Asia, Latin America

are at one and the same time expressions of the popular will, upsurges of new ruling classes and pawns in the rivalries between great powers, is to condemn oneself to fall into every trap. It is on the other hand through the continual sorting out of the determining features, into manoeuvres of a nationalistic or imperialist type and into currents of authentic liberation that libertarian criticism can and must be exercised if it is to be a tool of understanding and struggle.

Each time that the militant takes up a position with the hope of occupying a place in 'the march of history', or that he declines to show his support of a social drive for fear of not being favoured by a governmental authority, he strays or loses all existence. One must recall in this connection the attitude of libertarian Italian intellectuals deeming the liquidation of Tibetan feudalism by the Chinese Red Army 'progressive' (to which it is possible—equally absurdly—to draw a parallel of the modernising role of Mussolini's conquest of Abyssinia). Or again, the reticence in French anarchist circles at the time of the Hungarian insurrection of 1956, in which they saw the hand of American propaganda. Later, criticism of the dictatorial Castroist methods was likened to a defence of Yankee imperialism. And more recently, we have read in a Norwegian syndicalist journal an unconditional defence of the MPLA in Angola.

interrogations

revue internationale de recherche anarchiste / rivista internazionale di ricerche anarchiche / international review of anarchist research / revista internacional de investigacion anarquista

These are examples not of clear-sightedness, but of submission to the artifices of propaganda, the absence of direct information or of analytical work. Examples of the futility of principles if these are not constantly nourished and verified by the effort to know.

By contrast, there where we find natural allies, where we find the upsurge of forces on the social plane which break the false dilemma of blocs good and bad, we are neither vigilant enough or sufficiently in solidarity. At least not as a movement, whereas fortunately individual people, small groups and active initiatives have never been lacking. It goes without saying that our natural allies are not, in the Eastern bloc countries the North American forces, nor in America are they the men of the KGB. But to reduce the understanding of national situations and the complexity of international relations to these circuses—as it is easy and fashionable to do—would be lamentable for militants, resistant on principle to the manipulated charms of the mass media.

TOWARDS AN ANARCHIST

1. When I speak about the anarchist alternative to friends who have some experience of revolutionary politics, or who attempt to apply a libertating perspective to their own existence, one of the points that they cannot easily imagine is the concept/reality of the anarchist-libertarian socialist movement. Their stereotype of a libertarian is of an individual struggling primarily in isolation who, in attempting to release human potential, may go as far as to question the concept of society as a totality. Loose bonds of affinity among libertarians are conceived as failing to extend to group identity and structure. The communality (sense of togetherness) present in Left circles is not seen as being a libertarian characteristic. This divergence has both positive and negative dimensions. Positively, the form in which we contrast ourselves with these Left groups is grasped (libertarian vs- authoritarian). Negatively, the contrasting content is extended in a direction which effectively transforms our theory from anarchist-libertarian socialist to nihilist, or at best a contradictory existentialism.

2. Contrary to a viewpoint which sees a dichotomy between 'the individual' and the totality of society, our grasp of man as a social being means that a truly free society cannot stand in coercive contradiction to a truly free individual. The negation of the self is equated with conditions of domination/subordination which are inseparable from State controlled Organisation. The centre of power theory which all statist invoke is conceived in the form of a human body (presumably Male!) This ideological construct is but an expression of a continuing pattern of social relations of production which increasingly stand in contradiction to the (technological) forces of production that are scientifically possible. So - when we speak of social revolution, we mean that we equate the negation of the self with a social environment in which the great mass of human beings is separated by hierarchy from power. Society as a totality appears to stand in hostility to the individual only because any society which is based on domination/mystification makes revolt against the reality of its existence appear as revolt against the fact of society as such. Hence it is no surprise that libertarians are presented in nihilist terms or as fetishists of 'the individual.' Lacking a decisive break with the standards of State controlled society, even people who sympathise with us (and some of us ourselves!) invert the atomisation fostered by capitalism (anti-social) into a situation whereby revolt is individualised. The ideology of existentialism is itself an expression of the pessimism of this present system. It hence fails to evolve a philosophy of praxis which allows for an ongoing relation of conflict/harmony between collective and individual struggles. The possibility of a free society based on free association of equal human beings and the end of all directing agencies is thus unable to be conceived of realistically. Our 'castles' are only mind-blowing fantasies.

3. The views of others help us to (objectively) view ourselves and our actions. Our image, however, appears an obstacle to the development of our praxis. To a large extent, it is only by first-hand experience through praxis (propaganda is a step removed, second-hand) that we can demystify our image and progress from ideal visions to the materialisation of the libertarian alternative. The philosophy of anarchist praxis means basically a reflective abstraction from the everyday way in which a continual relation is created between our capacity to theorise and our capacity to be active. The concern is with a method of discerning how we go about achieving this relation in an effective way (make an impact on the mass of working people and contribute to the erosion of

state power). Our ability to transcend the 'opposites' of mindless activism which lacks strategical direction and staying power and the empty theorising of ivory tower intellectualism cannot be separated from the environmental context which helps determine this ability of ours to be effective.

With a group context of free association this method is determined collectively insofar as activities draw comrades together, and individually through self-activity. Free of a directing elite who assume central control, a collective philosophy of praxis for libertarians means a complex interplay of perceptions from all active comrades with (hopefully!) a dynamic synthesis resulting. However, it must be admitted that this is rarely the result, a) because anti-intellectualism inhibits clarity of aim and b) because of the isolated and ineffective position as regards the working class. There is a dialectic between voluntarism and determinism. No context is sufficient to completely stifle our ability to make an effective impact. No context is sufficient in itself to stimulate a revolutionary movement and capacity for struggle which is libertarian in a true sense. At the same time, you cannot realise an ideal without reference to the reality in which you are. The given material situation can only be developed in ways which foster anarchy by a rigorous yet imaginative practice never removed from the everyday reality of the mass of working people. As Bakunin has said, to proceed from the ideal 'begets despotism' while a materialistic approach strives by transcending compromise 'at the real idealisation - that is, the humanisation, at the full and complete emancipation - of society' (1867). As Marx has written, 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past' (1852).

4. To look inward for a moment, within our self-assigned labels we divide into categories according to whether we:

- a) subscribe to the necessity of violence in the struggle against State power;
- b) emphasise ecological and alternative technological projects;
- c) attach primary importance to industrial struggle at the point of production and/or the creation of industrial unions. Workers councils, revolutionary syndicates etc;
- d) stress propaganda/agitprop almost to the exclusion of direct action;
- e) concentrate on the politics of sexuality and the family, 'liberating' kids, gays, women (even men);
- f) stress international solidarity work on behalf of victims of state oppression. In a metropolis like London these boundaries within our praxis come to be expressed structurally, that is by associations of structured linkage which are based on a) to f) type distinctions. Historically there are many cases of such groups nationally organised on an inclusion/exclusion basis (AWA, SR, SWF and Solidarity being current examples). Although more usually geographically concentrated, paper collectives (eg. Anarchy, Wildcat, and Freedom) have existed on a similar basis. The usual common denominators which combine to constitute a movement of sorts tend in libertarian circles to evolve from 'what we are not' rather than from 'what we are.' This leads to the contrast with 'revolutionary' organisations which show Leninist tendencies - executive committees, tension between centre and periphery, the Paper as the vehicle of the majority faction, the determination of

PHILOSOPHY OF PRAXIS

the Line by experienced militants, extension of action from trade union channels outwards, hierarchical differentiation of functions and tasks, the group as the Vanguard encapsulating the most 'advanced' sections of The Class, the 'Holy Family' of correct and sanctioned Texts and divine commandments of authorities etc.

Too often libertarians succumb to a fetishism of form which stresses the ideal over the material. Councils are not libertarian in themselves. Their absence in France in 1968 did not in itself account for the demise of the general struggle against the social relations of capitalism. Learn from history (including instances where no libertarian presence is evident - not just from the Makhnovishchina or Spain in 1936) but don't vulgarise theory by explaining the future as a re-enactment of the past. It is more crucial to be able to see in context social trends of the present era. To reach the point of effective impact our method has to emerge in relation with these social trends, being the attempt to strengthen libertarian as opposed to authoritarian tendencies. The recuperation of revolt through reactionary, reformist or 'revolutionary' channels has to be understood both in reflection on praxis and through an active re-working of it. Ways and means of communicating with working people have to be developed and cannot remain at a level that is detached from their everyday life. To some extent we cannot avoid being an avant-garde in that we have a perception of an alternative and articulate it.

In Scotland, as in several other cultural regions libertarian federations have recently re-emerged - North-West, London, (until recently) England as a whole (CBA). The Scottish Libertarian Federation is an expression of the affinity between autonomous groups in a certain context, namely Scotland. Our lack of effective impact stems from our present inability to clarify our method, be flexible in our adaptation

of method to context, elaborate form of association so that mutual aid and reflection are strengthened. This means we are not immune from embarking on Utopian projects, from temptation to indulge in activity which tends to become isolated, 'adventurist', from drifting back to the 'practical' world where recuperation and 'embourgeoisement' and demoralisation win the day. To get ourselves together we must therefore evolve a philosophy of praxis which, through successes and setbacks can bring about a cumulative, effective impact of a persistent quality. Our propaganda, campaigns of action, outlets for dialogue must be related to a coherent method. Propaganda papers which comment and invite comment on everyday struggles relevant to working people, application of our concept of the libertarian alternative to ever-changing reality; discarding of jargon but not the coherence of what we communicate, campaigns and propaganda as mutually supportive, with an emphasis on expanding contacts. FAIR FARES for the Glasgow group has been our most relevant campaign to date, with future activity reflecting awareness of the need to avoid a general diffusion by spreading the location too far from the bases we can say we have. "Takeover the City" was more the import of an Italian slogan, instead of being an attempt to frame the FARES campaign and projects of a similar nature in a wider concern with philosophy of praxis. To elaborate such a 'philosophy' is not to contemplate reality in a detached or scholastic manner but to attempt to reflect on activity - not an SLF of insipid debating circles!

K. M. Glasgow

The above article, available in pamphlet form under the title "Towards a Philosophy of Anarchist Praxis" has been slightly shortened and edited for inclusion in the FREEDOM Review.

oil, power, politics

POLITICS IS about power: that is true whether one is talking about the Socialist Workers' Party, the Libs-Labs-Cons, the Scottish and Welsh Nationalists or the National Front. To attain power one must acquire a large amount of popular support and there are of course various ways of doing this. The most important way in the West is the distribution of goods and services to the population at large. In this matter, it is expedient, in dealing with the major sources of wealth, to use them in the short-term interests of power politics. People are led by the whole spectrum of political power-seekers, to believe that it is necessary to have a sophisticated political power structure to deal with the complexities of resources, production and distribution. The truth is the opposite; for in the interests of political expediency within a generation or two the whole earth has been despoiled one way or another.

OIL FOR THE POLITICAL MACHINE

In a Guardian Special (Nov. 19) an article with the headline 'Oil cash could lead to tax cuts' ends with the following:

Two of the main objectives are to restore

falling living standards and to provide employment by reinvesting in industry. Senior union leaders and Labour Party members who received the document ('How Shall We Take Advantage of the Benefits of North Sea Oil') yesterday looked on it as an attempt by the Government to get over the first hurdle of winning the election with the promise of more tax cuts.

There we have it in a nutshell, for although the document suggests that some of the money be spent on the inner cities and the under-fives, it is obvious that the probability is that it will usher in a new period of 'never had it so good' with its attendant drain on resources.

WASTED OIL

"Mr. Benn and Mr. Healey" says the Guardian article, "begin by saying that North Sea oil will put Britain into a balance of payments surplus again 'and a new source of Government revenue'." What will happen is that the oil will be consumed as rapidly as only a modern industrial state knows how, like the farmer who uses everything and does not save enough for seed. The We in the document, of course, is supposed to mean all of us but it is

quite obvious from the statements of our ruling politicians that they know who they mean by 'we'. When the monster has gobbled up the oil then it will have to be sustained by large amounts of nuclear-based fuel, of which the dangers are becoming well known.

WHAT DO ANARCHISTS SAY?

In the words of Murray Bookchin, 'Pollution is the destruction of life by an out-moded system based on individual survival', and Messrs. Healey, Benn and Callaghan have no intention of changing such a system. Anarchists say that resources must be shared and carefully conserved, which presupposes a revolution in the production of industrial and agricultural goods, in the development of services. It means a reversal of the idea of continual industrial growth and larger and larger social units with their waste and inefficiency. The movements all over the world for the regions to have more say is an indication of some appreciation of the necessity of this is gaining ground. Anarchists believe that organisation is possible without authority and that it is the authoritarian part of the organisation that causes the problems that face the modern world. If we husband our resources we must be close to them to understand them, and this is only possible if social organisation is small and everybody is directly concerned. AA

Off The Back of a Lorry, Mate

ANY *laissez-faire* society presupposes an affluent middle class and an affluent middle class is no more than free flowing money and what do you do with free flowing money when you have purchased the best of your particular society's material things?

All that you can do is play God to some particular charity, finance a group of nihilistic gun-toting political mavericks of the left or the right, buy a diamond collar for your dog and, or go in for Art. If you are loaded comrade with the greasy loot of our corrupt society and if your mind is tuned into a desire to make one with the Life Beautiful then forget the eastern mystics for they were played out when the Beatles began to develop bald patches and an interest in the economics of stocks and shares. Art is the happytime gimick of the hour and to prove it the hard money and the smooth sell is moving into Bond Street and St James. No longer the old Max Ernst or the dim and pretty little French impressionist paintings filling wall space in the discreet Bond Street galleries but a new type of gallery and a new breed of art dealer flogging trivia to the highest bidder. And so new galleries are opening up and old galleries are being tarted up and the springs on the fills are being oiled. Heaven forefend that I should name, nay mix, with any gallery or dealer doing the dirty on the Town and his picture buying frau for every gallery and every dealer that I honour with my presence is above the salt. The old Roland, Browse and Delbanco Gallery that seemed to me to aspire to be the Harvey Smith of the art world in their treatment of the unfortunate third raters have dunked Roland and Delbanco and in place of the old Pop group we have Browse and Darby, a newly painted gallery and the work of Euan Uglow, good solid work that makes it point to those who love to see the sketched in lines beneath and around the painted nude. And but a walk away in developing Cork Street where the hard money of the art world is now gravitating is the newly opened Fox Gallery at 5 Cork St, W.I. Walls loaded with the good old stand bys of the Ecole de Paris and British painters now dying the death as time rejects their pre-war work and the feeling within the gallery that one is in the pressurised atmosphere of a second hand car dealer's showroom; but maybe the fault is mine for I am shy in the presence of obvious wealth, so with no more than a glance through down cast eyes at the Muses within the Piccadilly Gallery - which one will I marry? - one can do no more than study the class enemy in fashionable St James but a spear's throw from Buck House wherein lives Brenda my Queen.

Here in Duke Street is the Roy Miles Gallery hawking a magnificent collection of Victorian paintings. There were, maybe, ten people within the gallery yet within seconds I was taken personally by the hand by the marvellously tailored Roy Miles and within a minute I was holding a large whisky and a glossy catalogue of Victorian rhubarb, in oils, that but a hundred years ago hung on exhibition walls from the R.A. to the Royal Institute. Again the atmosphere was so god loving and overwhelming that I would have bought a Slater Walker share in good faith if one had been offered me but not no never Victoriana. This rubbish sold to the nouveaux riches for the best of reasons that every painting told a story. It is now High Camp and one wishes the buyer well. This gallery is in Duke Street and again all the subterranean world of art wheeler dealing comes into its own within this fashionable street.

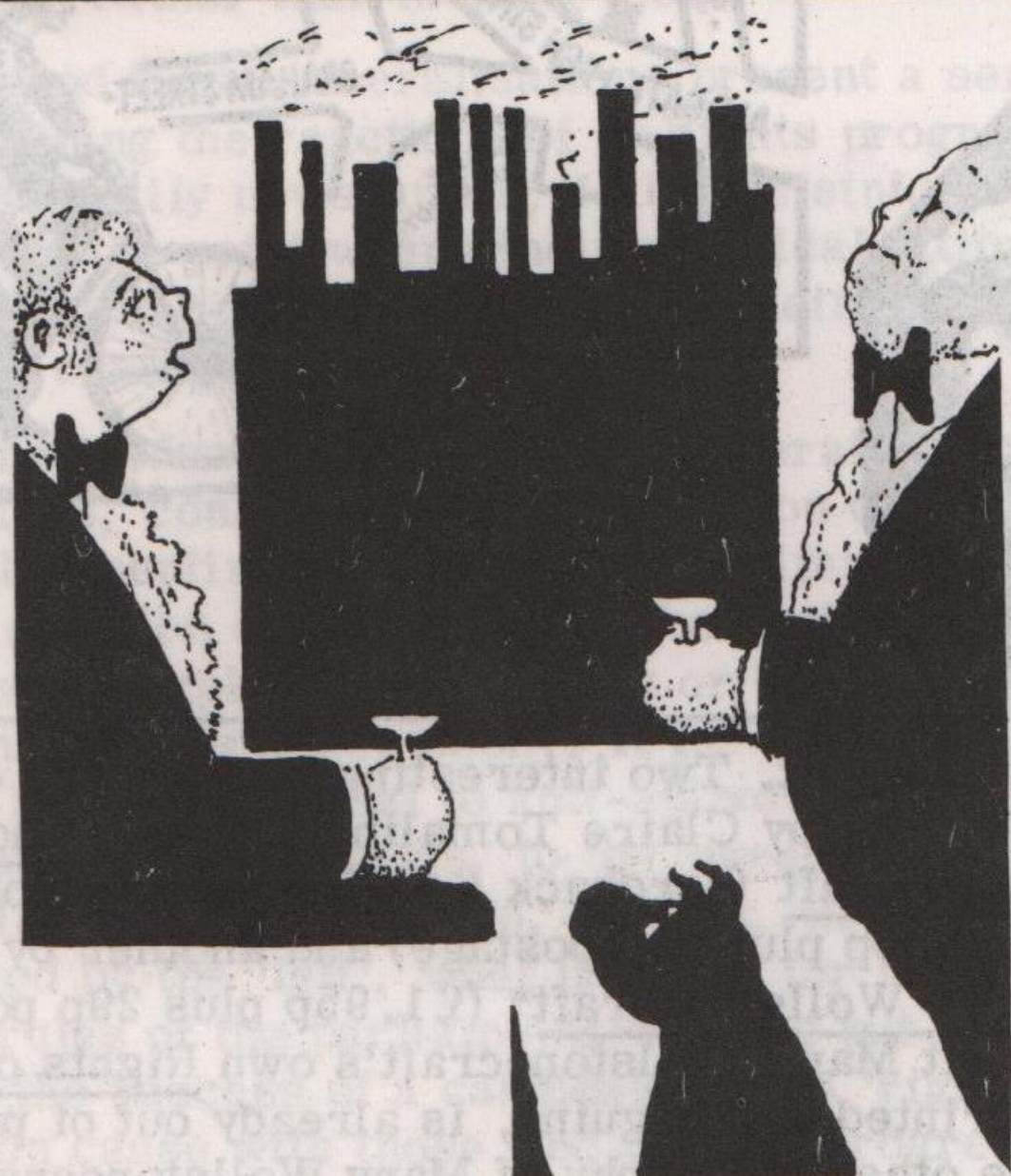
The Greek and Italian governments are wishing to know how and why a fourth century BC bronze by Lysippos was stored in the basement of a Duke Street gallery and why certain rich collectors such as the late late Paul Getty were taken down the steps to view it when there is not even a known photograph of this life size bronze figure of a young athlete crowned with an olive wreath. For six years this life size figure was moved through Europe until now Carritt the London art dealer can flog it to an American museum for five million dollars, but again no names no names but this I do know, that in 1975 officials of the British Museum were shown this life size statue, but being signatories of the Unesco charter that forbids the buying of the national patronymy of other nations the boys from the BM gave a thumbs down; yet secret deals were still done. In this 'situation' (Private Eye please note) Sam Spade's

Maltese Falcon is small beer, but that's St James comrades. There is money for the third rate and wealth beyond the dreams of Leyland craftsmen for the first rate so one can understand why the Redfern Gallery ended up ankle deep, to permit a tiny exaggeration, in forged Sammy Palmer painting and neither the Lysippos bronze nor the Palmers fell off the back of a lorry. So we who are pure in heart can do no more than seek the ultimate truth, even if it means leaving Wards Irish pub to tramp to Annely Juda's gallery in the old anarchist stamping ground off the Tottenham Road.

The Annely Juda gallery has a well earned reputation for its off beat exhibitions and the current one is given over to the fantasies of Christo and his plan to literally wrap the entire Berlin Reichstag in white sheeting. Christo has a thing about wrappings and his last success was a 20 mile cross country fence in California and before that, if I remember correctly, a walled off valley that ended up like washing day at the Murphys. Christo's plan is literally to cover the entire Reichstag in sheeting and within the Tottenham Mews gallery we have the plans, drawings and models for this 'happening'. Heads of governments are now involved and Willy Brandt has given his approval but an opposition (sic) out of office can promise anything, even pay rises for firemen. Part of the Reichstag juts into the Russian zone and the Russians are leary about the whole project believing no doubt that the Free World is simply taking the piss out of them should the wrapping take place, but committees are in action, and Christo is having a ball of a time consulting heads of States and sundry intellectuals and even I was awed when news was brought to the gallery that a large drawing had not arrived because of terrorists slowing down the Berlin air flights. By all means Christo lad wrap the Reichstag in Mrs Murphy's laundry from roof to basement and we can go all philosophical and political, but you know and I know that the Reichstag is but an empty unused shell and too many good men and women died as a result of that building being deliberately set ablaze in 1933. The joke, and it is no more than a pretentious joke, is the fact that too many people in high and useless office are taking the thing seriously, including Christo, for you cannot repeat the same joke to the same audience. The art of the 'happening' is as with Action Painting - in the preparation and the finished work is but an anticlimax. Christo's art is conning all those IMPOR-TANT PEOPLE to take part in his gags and I love it man I love it.

But let's all be serious and pay attention to the Leonardo da Vinci anatomical drawings on exhibition within the Royal Academy. What can one say about the old master that has not already been said by lesser typewriters than mine, but any opportunity to drink free wine and catch a glimpse of the lovely Griselda Hamilton-Baillie makes Leonardo worthy of the hour. And the Town and his skirt lifting frau are making their way with lute and drum to the National Gallery to view the coffee table exhibition of the life and times of Sir Thomas More, a man who literally blew his skull for his principles on a bleak morning in 1535. It is a good exhibition of paintings, prayer-book, wooden drinking cup, books and documents and if it blows a little life into the ashes of a man who made every member of his family and every friend miserable by his public nobility than it will have succeeded. More was the office seeking intellectual forced to choose between two masters and he chose the martyr's death and left others to suffer. Let us not think that I speak harshly for More forced the same choice on other men in his terms of office and if he believed in the glory of God and eternal salvation through and only through the Pope and the Catholic Church then his death as with that of so many boring martyrs was a small price to pay and it was the living who had to pay. But it is midday and the Whitechapel Gallery is offering an exhibition of Fairground Art and the critics collected their free toffee apples and ate the beefburgers, worked the ancient one arm bandits and had

(cont next page)



"Tell me, Brother, how do you keep your Union Members in order?"
 "Simple, Brother, I use the Mushroom Method"
 "What is the Mushroom Method, Brother?"
 "Simple, Brother, keep the bastards in the dark and every once in a while shovel a load of shit at them"

ANARCHISM

— Interpretations

"The revolution, as the power of things to-day necessarily presents it before us, will not be national, but international, —that it, universal. In view of the threatened league of all privileged interests and all reactionary powers in Europe, in view of the terrible instrumentalities that a shrewd organization puts at their disposal, in view of the deep chasm that to-day yawns between the bourgeoisie and the workers everywhere, no revolution can

count on success if it does not speedily extend itself beyond the individual nation to all other nations. But the revolution can never cross the frontiers and become general unless it has in it the foundations for this generality; that is, unless it is pronouncedly socialistic, and, by equality and justice, destroys the State and establishes liberty. For nothing can better inspire and uplift the sole true power of the century, the workers, than the complete liberation of labour and the shattering of all institutions for the protection of hereditary property and of capital."

BAKUNIN.

ART EXHIBITIONS

a rave of a time and admired the commercial paintings of Edwin Hall and Fred Powle for they were the men who today and in the past painted the huge garish living art that decorates the swings and roundabouts. The horses and the lions and the flaming rockets of the walls of death came and still come from their brushes. Like the magnificent exhibition of trade union banners held within this same gallery it is art for pure pleasure in a world wherein a handful of pennies buy happiness for an hour.

ARTHUR MOYSE

outsiders

If our natural allies are to be found among those from the lowest strata who, in an infinite variety of forms, struggle or defend themselves in the factories or in the populous districts of towns or villages, whether Bulgarian, Cuban or South African, Russian or Chinese, Argentinian or North American, whether at Hong Kong or Japan, our no less natural enemies are the systems and regimes which rule over them, exploit and repress them. Just as our preoccupations bear on the evaluation of the results of a thousand different forms of resistance to conflicts — not theoretical but real ones — in other words on the manner of knowing, for example, if the scores of thousands of deserters or North American war resisters accelerated the liquidation of the war in Vietnam. Which places us in no way either in the tow or at the orders of the Hanoi government.

To look nearer home, we are not absent from the struggle if we wage our own while being aware of and unmasking that of the others. We would go so far as to say, in fact, that our struggle closely depends on the knowledge of the struggle of the others. Obviously the traps are well prepared in advance. Our normal generalisations are not sufficient not to fall into them. From now on we must learn to detail: antagonism-collaboration between the USA and the USSR, Eurocommunism, liberations of the Angolan, Ethiopian or Cambodian type, democracy of the Japanese variety, etc ... This will strengthen us in our role as outsiders of the international game and in our possible internationalist action.

S. PARANE

Paris, June 1977

Santiago Parane is a Chilean militant who has contributed over many years to the international anarchist press.

NOTES

- 1 War Commentary, December 1939
- 2 Marx, Engels and International Politics, Gallimard, Paris 1975
- 3 Ibid. p. 199
- 4 "Aux Compagnons ..." Archives Bakounine II
- 5 "State and Anarchy" Archives Bakounine III
- 6 Jose Borrás. "Políticas de los exiliados españoles 1944-1950" Ruedo Iberico, Paris 1976
- 7 Ibid. p. 23
- 8 Eleuterio Quintanilla - Vida y Obra del Maestro Editores Mexicanos Reunidos, Mexico 1973

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Freedom Press

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feminism



(All the titles listed in this article are available from FREEDOM bookshop, in Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High St. London E 1. at the prices plus postage stated. Starred items are published in the USA)

MATERIAL for those interested in studying books on a specifically anarchist approach to feminism would seem to be very sparse, particularly when restricted - as these notes obviously have to be - to items currently in print. Indeed, up until very recently the position was even worse, while Marxists and neo-Marxists pour out titles by the score on their "analysis" of feminism, anarchists, sadly, have not yet got it together to quite the same degree.

One notable exception to this view is the work recently being done by Black Bear pamphlets whose first three titles have all been on anarcho-feminism, and most interesting (and inexpensive) they are too. Firstly there is "Anarcho-Feminism: Two Statements from 'Siren' and 'Black Rose'" (£0.09p plus .07p post) - and, incidentally, whatever happened to 'Siren', an excellent U.S. anarcho-feminist journal of which we saw but a few issues a considerable while ago; secondly there is "Feminism as Anarchism" by Lynne Farrow £0.20p plus .07p post) reprinted from Aurora, a New York Feminist Magazine (U.S.) and lastly, Peggy Kornegger's "Anarchism: The Feminist Connection" (£0.25p plus .07p post), reprinted from Second Wave (U.S.) spring 1975.

Sadly, now when considering anarcho-feminism one has to go back to the classics - excellent they most certainly are, yet it is a pity that more recent work does not seem to have been done. Anyone wishing to prove me wrong is more than welcome to send angry letters (with details of material omitted from here) to me at Freedom Bookshop.

One almost inevitably and rightly starts with Emma Goldman - the most important anarcho-feminist activist and writer. Her two-volume autobiography Living My Life* is happily available, though it now costs £6.40p (plus 86p postage) for the set. Also available by Emma is her Anarchism and Other Essays* with an introduction by Richard Drinnon (whose fine biography of Emma Rebel in Paradise is sadly out of print), which includes a dozen essays including "Minorities versus Majorities", "The Psychology of Political Violence", "The Traffic in Women" and much more. (£2.15p plus 26p. postage).

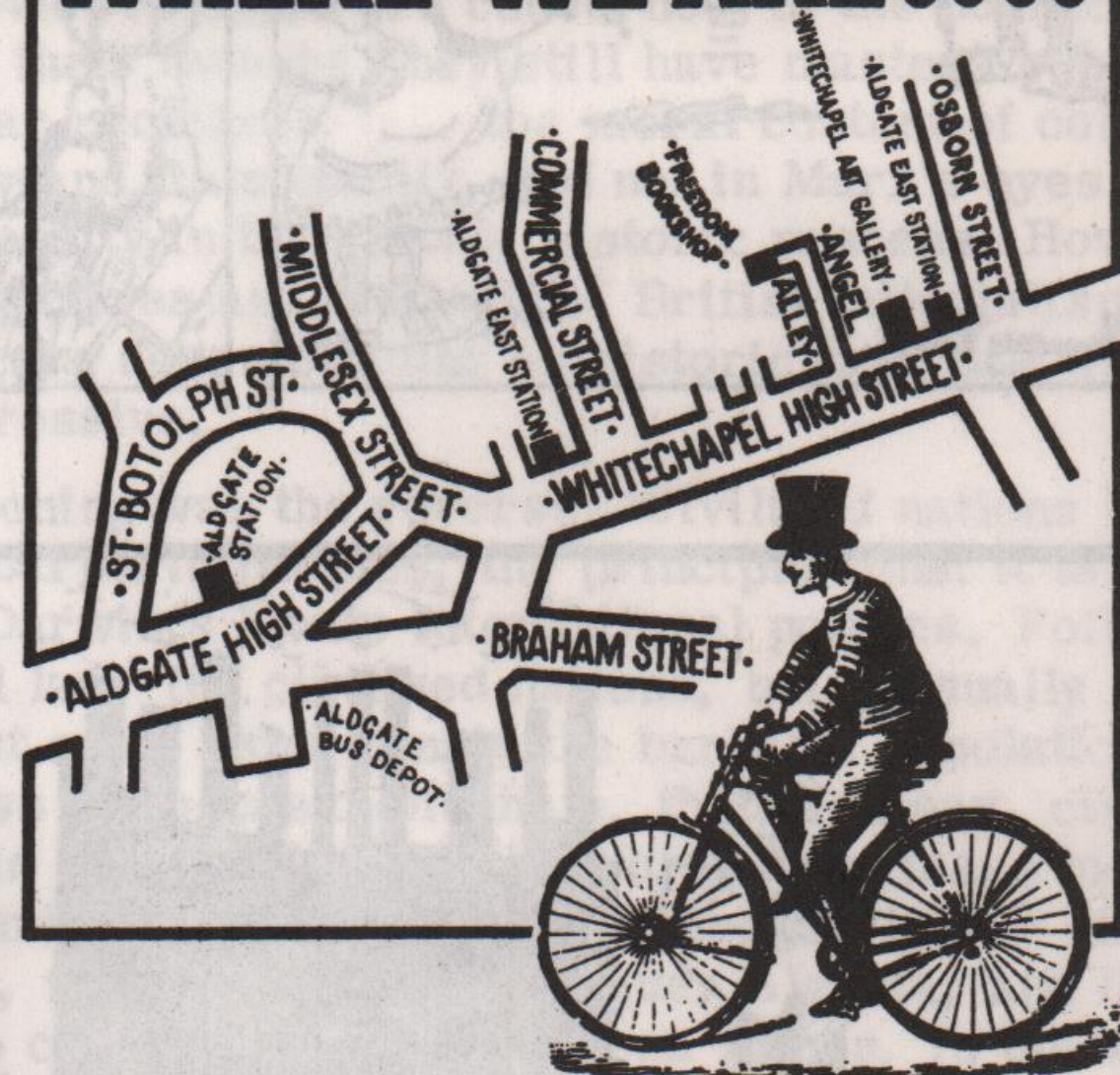
The Traffic in Women* is the title essay in a small collection of essays on feminism by Emma Goldman, edited with an introduction by Alix Kates Schulman (also the author of a fine biography of Emma, written interestingly, particularly for younger readers, called To the Barricades - sadly another out of print title). In addition to the title essay, this booklet includes "Marriage and Love" and "Women Suffrage" £1.00 plus 12p post).

Richard and Ana Maria Drinnon have edited a fine collection of the Letters from Exile of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, Nowhere at Home* (£7.95p. plus 66p post). Alix Shulman has also edited Red Emma Speaks* (£1.50p. plus 22p. postage), another anthology of Emma's writings. Going even further back into history one must not forget

BOOKSHOP NOTES

THE BOOKSHOP IS OPEN :
Tuesday - Friday 2pm - 6 pm
(Thursdays until 8 pm)
Saturday 10 am - 4 pm)

WHERE WE ARE....



Mary Wollstonecraft. Two interesting biographies of her are available, one by Claire Tomalin, The Life and Death of Mary Wollstonecraft (hardback £4.75 plus 54p postage, paperback £1.50p plus 22p postage) and another by Eleanor Flexnor, Mary Wollstonecraft* (£1.95p plus 29p postage). It is a pity that Mary Wollstonecraft's own Rights of Women, recently reprinted by Penguins, is already out of print. There is one other biography of Mary Wollstonecraft available, Mary Wollstonecraft: A Critical Biography* by Ralph M. Wardle £2.05p plus 54p postage), as well as his edition of the letters of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin and Mary (£1.75p plus 29p postage).

Another writer and activist who was hardly an anarchist but who is nevertheless important from a feminist viewpoint is Alexandra Kollontai. Her classic novel Love of Worker Bees has just been published by Virago and is available in paperback at £2.95p plus 29p postage. Also available by Kollontai are her Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle and Love and the New Morality in our pamphlet translated and introduced by Alix Holt, who also translated the Love of Worker Bees, listed above. Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle is £0.35p plus 10p postage. Also Kollontai's Women Workers Struggle for their Rights is available at £0.35p plus £0.10p postage, translated by Celia Britton, with an introduction and notes by Sheila Rowbotham and Suzie Fleming.

Staying with history for a bit longer, three more important works, two about pioneers in America's feminists' and workers' struggle--both autobiographical--Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's Alderson Story: My Life as a Political Prisoner* (£1.95 plus post 29p); and the third, Michael Confino's edition of Natalie Herzen's letters and diary: Daughter of a Revolutionary (£4.50 plus 66p post)--this volume also includes letters of Bakunin, Nechaev, Alexander Herzen, and the text of Nechaev's notorious "Catechism", and much more besides.

Lastly, two more items, to end on a more contemporary note; firstly Eva Forest's From a Spanish Jail; only recently released from the prisons of Franco's successors, this is Eva Forest's own story of her incarceration, her diary and letters (£0.60 plus 15p post); Zerq an Anarchist and Anarcho-Feminist Monthly is the latest addition to the anarchist press in the U.K. No. 4 is currently available at £0.20 plus 10p postage