

# FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

WE WELCOME news, reviews, letters, articles. Latest date for copy for No. 11 (of 10 June) is MONDAY 5 JUNE (Please note for Contact Column that notices of events &c. occurring between 12 and 24 June cannot be publicised if they are not received by 5 June).

NEXT DESPATCHING DATE is THURSDAY 8 June. Come and help from 5 pm onwards. Folding session the following Thursday for next Review section.

## International

### AUSTRALIA

Canberra: Alternative Canberra Group, 10 Belfara Road, Pialligo, ACT 2809  
New South Wales: Black Ram, P.O. Box 238, Darlinghurst, NSW 2010.  
Sydney Anarcho-Syndicalists, Jura Books Collective, 417 King St., Newtown, NSW 2042.  
Sydney Libertarians, P.O. Box 24, Darlinghurst, NSW 2010.  
Victoria: La Trobe Libertarian Socialists, c/o SRC, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Vic 3083  
Libertarian Socialist Federation of Australia c/o 4 Roosevelt St., Reservoir, Vic.3073.

### NEW ZEALAND

The anarchist movement can be contacted at P.O. Box 2052, Auckland  
P.O.Box 22-607 Christchurch  
International Books, 123 Willis Street, Wellington  
Daybrook Bookshop, P.O. Box 5424 Dunedin

### CANADA

Open Road, Box 6135, Station G, Vancouver B.C.. Write for information of the group's activities (besides the paper).

### U. S. A.

Minnesota: Soil of Liberty, Box 7056, Powderhorn Station, Minneapolis, Minn.55407.  
Missouri: Columbia Anarchist League, P.O. Box 380, Columbia, MO 65201.  
New York: Libertarian Book Club, Box 842, GPO, New York 10012. (Fortnightly mtgs.)  
SRAF/Freespace Alternate U, 339 Lafayette St., NYC 10012.  
San Francisco:Free Socialist, PO Box 1751, San Francisco, CA 94101.  
Texas: Houston S.R.A.F.. South Post Oak Station, P.O. Box 35253, Houston,TX 77035

### WESTERN EUROPE

#### DENMARK

Aarhus: Regnbuen' Anarkist Bogcafe, Mejlgaade 48, 8000 Aarhus.  
Copenhagen: Anarkist-Synd. Bogcafe, Studiestraede 18, 1455 Copenhagen.  
Christiana: write Stot Christiana, Dronningensgade 14, 1420 Copenhagen.

SWEDEN: Frihetligt Forum, Landsvagsgatan 1 19, 41304 04 GÖTEBORG.

#### FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Anarchist Federation of Baden: ABF Infoburo, Postfach 161, 761 Schwabisch Hall.  
Berlin: Anarkistische Bund. Publishers of Anarkistische Texte, c/o Libertad Verlag, Postfach 153, 1000 Berlin 44.  
'Gewaltfreie Aktion (Non-violent action), groups, associated with WRI; libertarian. For further information write Karl-Heinz Sang, Methfesselstr.69, 2000 Hamburg 19.

### UK GROUPS & FEDERATIONS NEXT ISSUE

## Meetings

MANCHESTER. Wed. 28 June: An Anarchist Approach to Housing and Planning, 8 pm in back room of the Castle Pub, Oldham Street. Organised by Manchester Anarchist Organisation & Syndicalist Workers Federation.  
MANCHESTER May 31st (Wednesday) 12.30 mid-day. Picket outside Town Hall, Albert Square, to protest against implementation of the Criminal Trespass Act by Manchester Council.

### REGULAR MEETINGS

London  
Anarchists Women's groups. Tel. 555 5248.  
Anarchy group meets every Thursday 8 pm at 29 Grosvenor Ave., N.5. All welcome.  
Brixton Anarchist-Situationists every Sunday 2 pm. Details from 675 6402.  
Centro Iberico. Saturdays & Sundays 3-11 pm at 425 Harrow Road, W.9.  
London Workers' group. Tel. 249 7042 for meeting details.  
Birmingham: Libertarian Socialists meet Suns. 8 pm in The Fox & Grapes, Freeman St. (nr. Moor St. Station).  
Edinburgh: Sit, chat, read or buy anarchist, socialist, feminist literature at First of May bookshop, 45 Niddry St. (off high St.), Edinburgh 1. Open 12-6 pm (tel.557 1344).  
Huddersfield anarchist group meets fortnightly in the 'Zetland', Queensgate at 8 pm. For further details tel. Polytechnic Students Union 0484 41288.

## Desires

TWO Australian comrades seek living situations in commune(s) between Sept. and Dec. 1978. If you can offer us space and community for (1art of) this time in return for work and/or other contributions, please write Dianne and Richard, c/o Reading University Anarchists, Clubs Office, Students' Union, Whiteknights, Reading, Berks.

Anyone interested in producing 'Every Boy's & Girl's Own Annual of Anarchism'? Ideas, copy, drawings &c. to Nick, Box 1A, 341 Glossop Rd. Sheffield, S10 2HP

COMMUNITY seeks replacement members with capital. 35 adults (wide age range), 18 children, Very large house with private accommodation and communal facilities. Mixed organic farming on 57 acres, crafts, AT. Please write with personal details and SAE to Old Hall, East Bergholt, Colchester, Essex.  
(Editors note: this is not being advertised as an anarchist commune and would probably be of interest only to those thinking of buying a house anyway, but its reputation as a stable & successful community is known to us.)

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## Press Fund

4 - 16 May 1978

WOLVERHAMPTON: J.L. £2 ; J.K.W. 20p;  
NOTTINGHAM: M.C. 50p; ILFORD: P.A. 75p; VANCOUVER: H.J. 25p; WOLVERHAMPTON: B.B. 85p; GLASGOW: A.J. 28p; NEATH: S.H. 30p.

TOTAL: £ 8.96  
Previously acknowledged £ 464 .06

TOTAL to date £ 473.02

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## Literature

Number 1 ECOLOGY & ANARCHISM . Issue largely devoted to opposition to nuclear power; ecological/anarchist approach distinguished from political left; opposition in Europe; biological weapons etc. 10p (post 7p) from B.A.N.G. c/o Rising Free, 182 Upper St., Islington, London N.1.

TO RIGMA, contact/information magazine for Greek anarchists & libertarians, No. 2 now out. To Rigmam c/o Black and Red, Students Union, The University, Leeds LS2 9JT.

PEACE NEWS. Current issue contains thoughtful examination of anti-NF propaganda; an open letter to the anti-rape movement, news, etc. 15p (post 7p from PN, 8 Elm Avenue, Nottingham. (Trial sub £ 1 for 5 issues.)

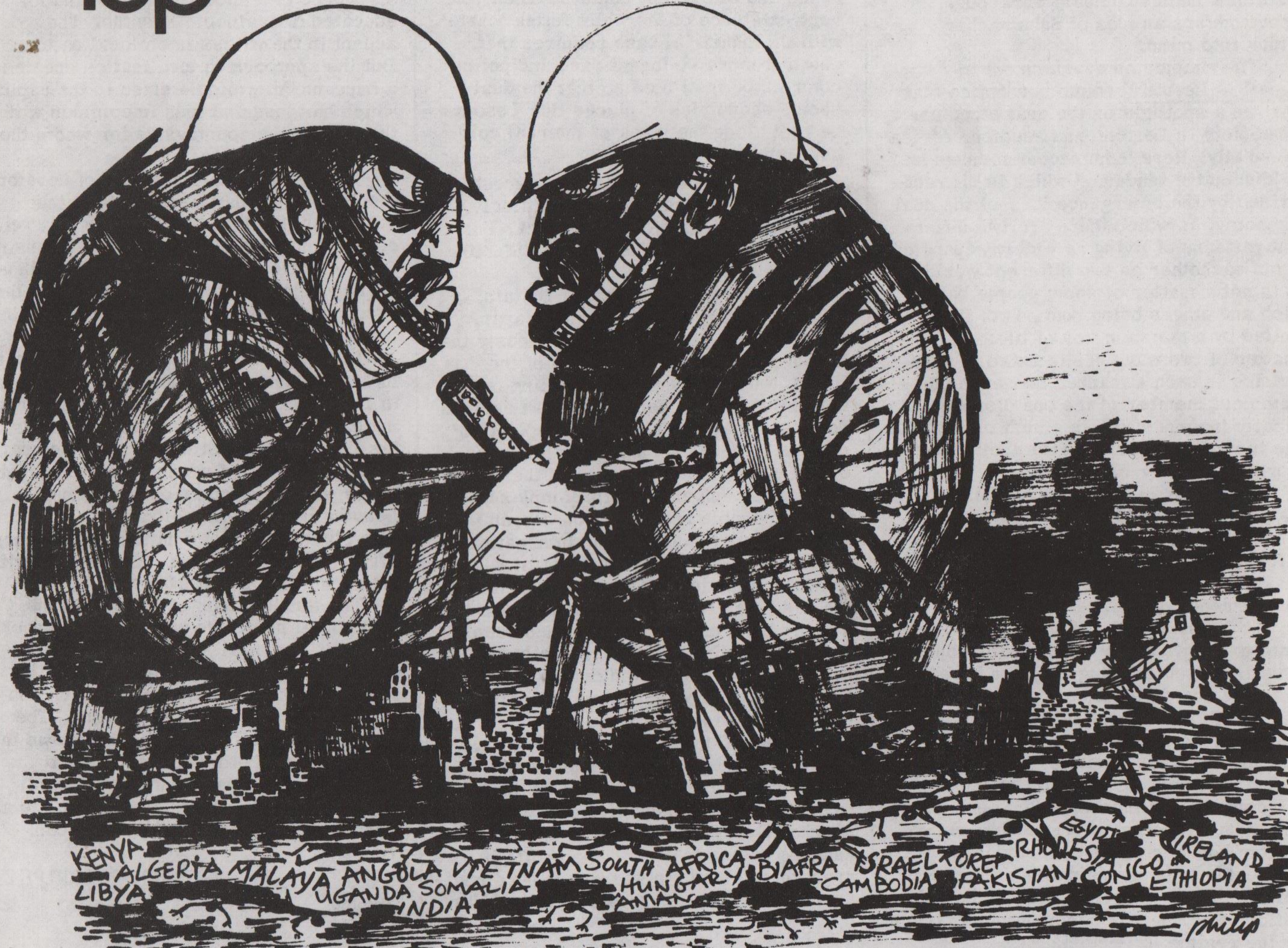
Sensible leaflet for mothers, about masturbation in infants, produced for handing out in childcare clinics. Write to Sue, Jill,Roz, .... c/o Hornsey Women Centre, 147 Archway Rd. London N.6.

Gone with the  
WINDSCALE?  
who knows??  
ABERYSTWYTH ANARCHIST GROUP

# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

VOL 39 NO 10 MAY 27

15p



# LEGACY OF EMPIRE

THIS time it's Zaire. Crushed in the nutcrackers of competing imperialisms, blacks and whites alike are massacred by one side or another. Our news services give us precise numbers of whites killed - but an 'unknown number' of blacks. The rebels are supposed to be acting with appalling ferocity and atrocity stories pour out - but 'leaks' are slipping out about the murders of whites by the forces of the established government, led by President Mobutu, whom nobody denies is the leader of a corrupt and cruel regime.

Gallant French paratroopers fly in to protect the Europeans - mostly technicians and their families, useful in the rich copper belt around the centre of the rebellion, Kolwezi. Could it really be the copper that the French are mainly interested in protecting, rather than people, even Europeans? After all, the

French acted rapidly and unilaterally, without consulting the Belgians, ex-governors of the whole Congo area, who think they ought to have been called upon to swoop in and 'keep the peace.'

But it's not the peace anybody is interested in - it's that copper, and what's more, the rich deposits of cobalt in Zaire - a more than useful element in nuclear technology and ... bombs.

The African torment is a legacy of imperialism - Belgian, French, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, British. OUR roots too lie dark in the dark continent and new forms of slavery, under black dictators, replace the old - complicated by 'liberators' financed and armed by cynical 'communists' playing the same old game.

Spare your tears for the Europeans, hanging on to enjoy the good life, complete with black servants. Shed them for those who die for European greed.



# SCHUMACHER IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

ALMOST from the moment I proceeded out of Lesotho's tiny Chief Leabua Jonathon National Airport past 'location' huts surrounding Maseru and onto the capitol's main wholesale warehouse thoroughfare an idea of Schumacher's stuck into mind.

The chapter on development in Small is Beautiful contains a notice that throws a spotlight on the dual structure of society in Lesotho and southern Africa generally. Here Schumacher focuses on a 'disruptive tendency' which is characterised by the emergence "... of the dual economy, in which there are two different patterns of living as widely separated from each other as two different worlds. It is not a matter of some people being rich and others being poor, both living united by a common way of life: it is a matter of two ways of life existing side by side in such a manner that even the humblest member of the one disposes of a daily income which is a high multiple of the income accruing to even the hardest working member of the other."

Ninety per cent of the 1.5 million Basotho live outside the only large town - Maseru. These people are born into a feudal village society where the Chief makes all land decisions with cattle being the currency of life.

At the same time two major pressures unite to create another social environment. This is a cash exchange culture based on industry and development.

The first, longest running, and most generally applicable to all peoples of southern Africa is simply the Republic of South Africa. In other areas of the third world Schumacher's 'dual economy' would be a function of pressures, no matter how comparable, singularly applicable to separate nations. Southern Africa, however, contains a number of nations who share a common manipulation by the regime in Pretoria.

The system is palpably more intense in Lesotho because this country exports more migrant labour per head of population than any other nation. In its simplest sense South African subversion occurs when work, mainly in the mines, is offered on a contract basis. Young men from the rural areas are signed on for specific periods. They are brought to the workplace, put through a gruelling gauntlet of manual exercise, humiliated by constant racial abuse, and finally dumped back into Lesotho with a disposable cash settlement.

Lesotho is then an industrial fife of the South African regime. The migrant labourers return as consumers joining a social economy quite different from the feudal subsistence lifestyle of the mountains. As a consumer the returned labourer is still totally dominated by trade policies decided in the republic. This is not news. It is simply the effect

of a concerted attempt to maintain a cheap labour resource in the 'homelands' since the British originated the idea with cash taxes on barter society as it existed at the end of the last century. Today the very existence of the white fetish 'caste' with its industrial base requires that new and more stringent race and police controls be instituted so that the dual social-economics of places like Lesotho be kept along the track of internal colonialism.

In addition the Republic's interest is assisted, to a large extent unwittingly, by another international pressure. Put crudely Lesotho has become the 'darling of the developers.'

From Denmark, Canada, Britain, Holland, Switzerland, Ireland, Japan, even Taiwan, and most conspicuously the United States and the agencies of the United Nations, donors are falling over themselves to 'do something' in Lesotho. Some say that the 'neat little population' appeals to developers looking for an easily quantifiable test area. Others point to the universal guilt complex about the 'immovable reality' of the Republic which circulates among the international development agencies resulting in a 'smother the victims' approach. Whatever the case may be the increase in funds coming from outside Lesotho has been enough to double the government's budget in the last two years and create a fast growing cash economy social structure centred on Maseru.

'Projects' are cropping up weekly. They seek to treat every facet of life from soil erosion control and the building of bridges to the marketing of local handicrafts. Every one of these plans and procedures seems to dictate the preliminary erection of an administrative superstructure. After offices have been set up, plans

worked out and local assistants to the international experts hired and housed in the overcrowded capital, aid is transmitted to local communities.

There is a sudden high demand for educated or trainable Basotho. The accent in the offices is on localisation. But the approach to localisation creates a bureaucratic middle class in the capital which has less and less in common with the 90% in the countryside for whom they administer projects.

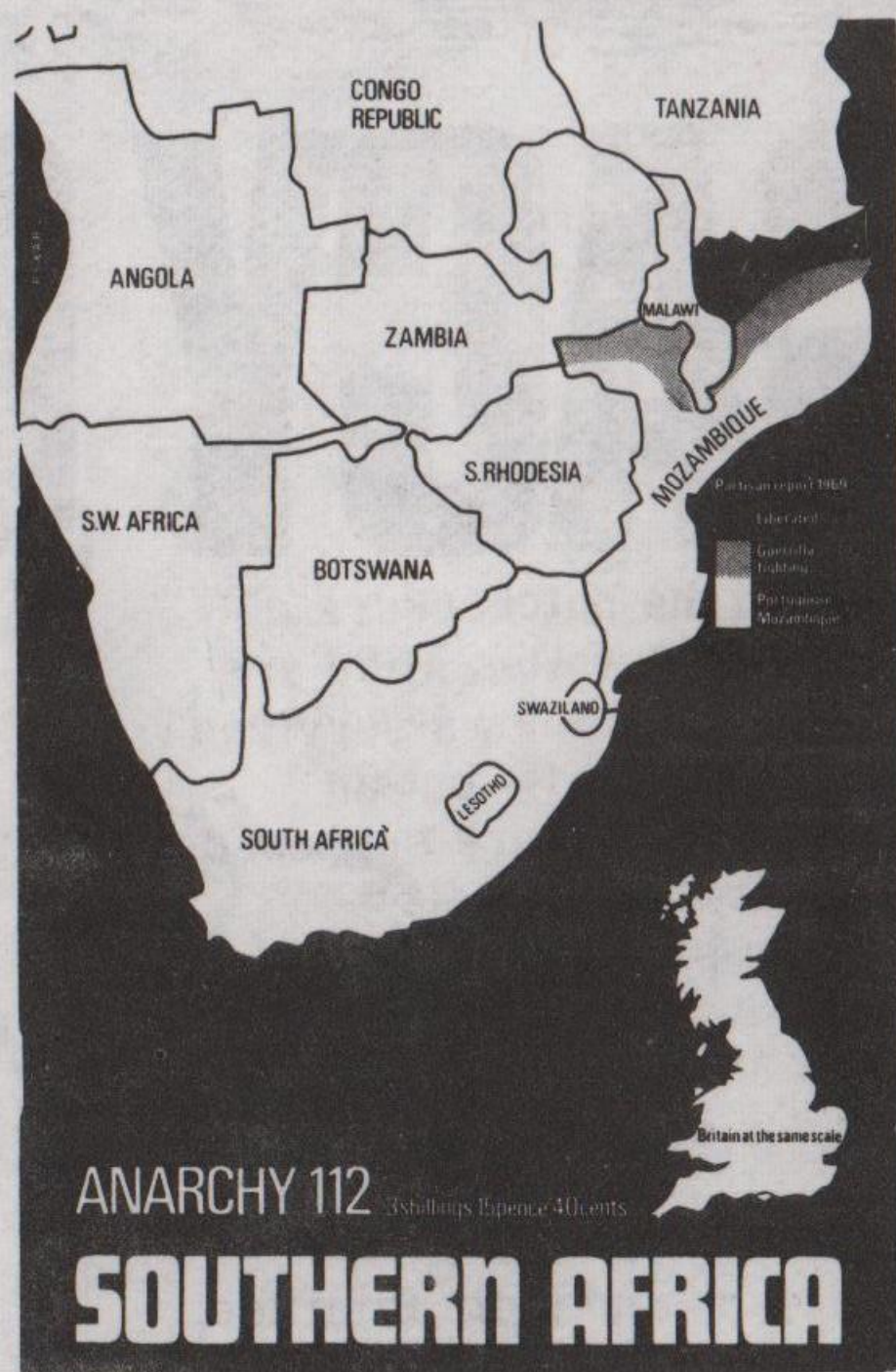
Debatable as this analysis of development strategy may be it does not take away from the fact that there is a growing cash economy social structure dispensing incomes that are 'high multiples' of those earned by most everyone else in Lesotho except those migrant labourers returning fresh from work in the Republic.

In terms of what Schumacher has said there is a dual social economy functioning in Lesotho and this situation is accelerating dangerously. It would be dangerous for Lesotho if the situation were comparable to other third world countries caught in the warp of western development. Lesotho is not in this situation. Together with other submerged nations of southern Africa it is in a colonial relationship with the republic of South Africa.

The terrible danger is not that the dual social structure will continue uncorrected. It is that all the best efforts of western developers will only add to that separation in Lesotho society which contributes to South Africa's designs. The result seems to be that Maseru grows in the tradition of other dramatic third world urban explosions while the rural pastoral sector is maintained inviolate as a cheap labour pool for South African industry.

BRIAN MURPHY

Lesotho



# WHOSE CONTEMPT?

THE three papers which were prosecuted by the Government for contempt of court because they published the name of Colonel H.A. Johnstone were found guilty by the High Court last week. The Lord Chief Justice and two other judges heard the case against Peace News, the Leveller and the Journalist on 2-5 May and gave judgement on 19 May. They agreed against all the evidence that the papers had committed contempt of court, and fined Peace News and the Leveller £500 each and the Journalist £200. The individual members of the papers' staff were not fined, and no order was made about costs. Peace News and the Leveller, which have no funds, will probably raise the fines by appealing to sympathisers for support; the National Union of Journalists, which publishes the Journalist, is more likely to take the case further by appealing to the House of Lords.

The hearing concentrated on the circumstances in which Colonel Johnstone gave evidence as 'Colonel B' in the committal proceedings against Aubrey, Berry and Campbell last November, and on the question whether the Tottenham magistrates' agreement that his name should not be given in the court implied a direction that it should not be revealed outside the court. Despite the universal assumption of the authorities and the media, the defendants were able to show without difficulty that the magistrates had given no explicit direction, for the simple reason that the Clerk of the Court told them they had no power to do so. The prosecution then applied to alter its case, accusing the defendants of breaking a 'procedure' rather than a 'direction.' The defence objected, and the judges rejected the application. But they still accepted the prosecution case, deciding that it is contempt of court to frustrate the intention of the magistrates even if they have no power to make an actual direction, and that when a witness's name is withheld

the court is in effect sitting in camera.

Even in strictly legal terms this is a ridiculous case. What makes it ridiculous in any terms is of course that Colonel Johnstone's name was given in Parliament on 20 April, and then circulated throughout the country on radio and television and in the national press. Even in strictly political terms it will not deter Peace News and the Leveller from continuing to attack the issue of official secrecy in general and the Aubrey/Berry/Campbell case in particular; moreover it has now involved the National Union of Journalists in a rare intervention into the basic issues of the freedom of the press.

This was the theme of a public meeting held by the Leveller/Peace News Defence Committee at Conway Hall on 18 May. An audience of about a hundred heard several speakers under the chairmanship of Dave Clark (of the Leveller) discuss various aspects of the case. Jo Richardson (a left-wing Labour MP) gave a straight social democratic speech against official secrecy and for freedom of information. John Berry (one of the defendants in the Aubrey/Berry/Campbell case) gave a brief account of his involvement in and alienation from Signals Intelligence. Albert Beale (of Peace News) described the contempt case. Ron Knowles (editor of the Journalist) made a funny but fighting attack on all the political interests which threaten the free press. Leon Rosselson sang some songs. Denis MacShane (vice-president of the NUJ) rather hysterically compared the situation in Britain with that in various dictatorships, and made the appeal for money - raising about a hundred pounds. Phil Kelly (of the Leveller) described the system of Signals Intelligence, for investigating which Mark Hosenball was deported last year and Aubrey/Berry/Campbell are being prosecuted this year. And Paul Foot (editor of the Socialist Worker) made a rhetorical



speech calling for continuing defiance of all attempts to prevent press freedom.

Unfortunately there was no time for discussion, since the audience included several people who had themselves been involved in Signals Intelligence or in publishing official secrets, or who could have challenged some of the simplistic assumptions being made. But fortunately, at least for the time being, there is a general coalition of liberals, social democrats, revolutionary socialists and libertarians of various kinds which will continue to name Colonel B, investigate Signals Intelligence, publish official secrets, maintain the freedom of the press, and do whatever else is necessary to ensure that Britain does not become a dictatorship. The next stage will presumably be the Aubrey/Berry/Campbell trial next autumn.

MH

## LANCASTER MEETING

AS THE Conference/Meeting is only six weeks away we invite all comrades who intend to come to let us know the following as soon as possible:

How many will attend?  
How many children? (A crèche is being organised).  
Will you be coming in your own transport\* and if so can you provide a lift for other comrades either from Lancaster to Clapdale Farm or, if convenient, from their home to Clapdale? Should the event be well attended there may be the need for some of us to sleep outdoors. A tent would be useful.

Food. We hope to raise some money to provide food, which will be vegetarian. As we cannot yet estimate numbers (this is what this letter hopes to achieve) it will be difficult to know just how much food is required. In case

we underestimate, it would be useful to bring some food along. There is a large kitchen in the farm.

The Conference/Meeting will be on the weekend of Friday June 16th to Sunday the 18th Friday evening is planned as a general meeting in which people can meet others of similar interests and thereby structure their own workshops for the weekend. This group's interests are: Patriarchy; direct action in the forthcoming general election; the need/desirability of a definite anarchist presence at demos, pickets, etc.

Please let us know your desires so we can circulate interests before the Conference/Meeting.

LANCASTER ANARCHISTS,  
91 Main Road,  
Galgate, Lancaster.

\*Approaching Lancaster from North, turn off the M6 at Junction 36 onto the A65 straight through to Ingletton and then on to Clapdale.

From the South, follow M6 to Junction 34 then turn right onto A683 (via Caton, Clay-

ton, Hornby, Melling) until it meets the A687. Take A687 via Cantsfield, Burton, Ingletton to Clapdale.  
CLAPDALE FARM where the conference is to take place is 1 1/2 miles from Clapdale village. So turn off A687 into village and look for 'Clapdale Farm' signs which will be put up.

## CHELTENHAM MAY 27 'B' THERE!

DAY OF ACTION

CHELTENHAM IS THE BASE FOR GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS HEADQUARTERS (G.C.H.Q.) THE HUB OF THE SECRET & ILLEGAL SIGINT ELECTRONIC EAVESDROPPING NETWORK. 'COLONEL B' IS A FORMER SIGINT OFFICER AND AUBREY, BERRY & CAMPBELL FACE UP TO 14 YEARS IN PRISON FOR INVESTIGATING SIGINT ACTIVITIES.

ABC DEFENCE CAMPAIGN, 15, James Street, WCL



# GERMANY: THE AGIT CASE

WHILE at home we have been preoccupied, where trials go, with the bizarre consequences of Official Secrecy, censorship in the Federal Republic of Germany is being directed against left-wing and anarchist publications in an open attempt to prevent discussion or analysis of political violence.

As FREEDOM readers may remember from last year Trikont of Munich, publishers of 'Bommi' Baumann's book *Wie alles anfang* about the origins of the 2nd June Movement, were charged with advocacy of violence for publishing the book. (The proceedings recently ended in the strange verdict that while actual publication should not be punishable, this did not apply to advertisement of the book -1- and the publishers were fined). Since then the new 'muzzle' law article 88a has been introduced. This makes it easier for the state prosecution to bring and prove charges by criminalising those in any way involved in distribution of written material hostile to the Constitution. The first conviction under this new law took place in Cologne on 16 May when Friedhelm Becker, former director of Der andere Buchladen (The Other Bookshop, which sells a wide range of left-wing and anarchist literature) was given a 3 month suspended sentence for stocking the paper *Revolutionärer Zorn* (Revolutionary Rage), while being acquitted of criminal association. Organ of the Revolutionary Cells, guerrilla groups which have sprung up in the vacuum left by the RAF and 2nd June and which, through acts of sabotage, have applied themselves to a wider social spectrum, including attacks against nuclear power stations, the issue of RZ in question was dated May 1976 (no. 2), the month of Ulrike Meinhof's death, and contained a practical guide to acts of resistance against state repression.

Only a short time ago a Maoist student Hans Heinrich Sautmann had been imprisoned pending trial for 'defamation of the State' - putting up a placard at an information stand in Munich attacking the equivalent of Britain's SAS, GSG-9 and their role at Mogadishu, and referring to the liquidation of revolutionaries in German prisons - and two students from Göttingen were found guilty of 'defamation of the State' and 'defamation of the memory of a deceased person' by publishing the now famous 'Buback-obituary' (see FREEDOM, 1 September 1977). This article, written by an anonymous anarchist signing him/herself 'Mescalero' actually criticised the assassination of Buback but was deliberately cited out of context by the establishment press (which had no qualms about publicising it) to distort its contents.

More seriously still, three printers have now spent 8 months in Berlin prisons awaiting trial for allegedly supporting organisations such as the RAF through publication of their material. JUTTA WERTH, HENNING WEYER and GERDI FOSS are members of the Berlin-based Agit-Druck collective, founded in 1969 and which prints the weekly *Bug-Info*, paper of the Berlin Undogmatic Groups. *Bug-Info* publishes liberal, left-wing and anarchist material without applying editorial control.



In the words of the Solidarity Committee for the Release of the Agit Printers, the collective helps "groups that would otherwise suffer great financial difficulties getting their materials printed by charging low prices, offering fast service and working on holidays and on weekends. Agit prints for the GEW (teachers' union), postal union, Humanistische Union (civil liberties group), tenants' groups, community action groups, groups within the Evangelist church, university groups, women's groups, anti-nuke groups and organisations for foreigners." The paper *Bug-Info*, a weekly since 1973, has no fixed editorial staff and works as a medium for discussion and information exchange. Part of its role lies in assuring a forum for the discussion of political violence by printing texts from guerrilla groups like the RAF, 2nd June and Revolutionary Cells; in consequence it has suffered a number of police raids. Again, to quote from the Solidarity Committee:

"The Agit Printers' Collective had printed *Info-Bug*, along with other material, on a regular basis and without censoring it. The prosecutors now see a parallel between the beginning of Jutta's, Gerdi's and Henning's work at Agit (from the start of 1977) and the accusation that *Info-Bug* had become the main publishers of communiques from the Red Army Faction and other guerrilla organisations... Thereby Agit is supposedly the headquarters for the printing and distributing of guerrilla groups' propaganda.

"This argument is further based on the fact that Jutta, Gerdi and Henning had been active in prisoners' aid groups (Rote Hilfe and Prozessbüro). These prisoners' aid groups, according to the liberal magazine *Der Spiegel*, are full of terrorist 'sympathisers'... Their having identified with the printed arguments is seen by their failure to censor the articles, which are illegal under article 88a." The printers' statement that "We want to make it clear that an act of censorship would mean the demoralisation of the left - we cannot fight censorship laws by censoring ourselves!" is being turned against them by the prosecution. A further piece of evidence is the supposed close personal relationships of the Agit printers with people from the editorial group of *Info-Bug*, not known by name.

As mentioned above, the three printers have now been in gaol for 8 months. Release pending trial was refused, partly on the grounds that they could expect a long prison sentence (18 months or longer) and there was therefore considerable

risk that they would try to abscond!

The printers are faced with a number of charges, including support of a criminal association (the classical political charge 129a), the muzzle law 88a, open invitation to commit crime (111) and advocacy and approval of violence (140). The trial is finally due to begin this month.

These are only some of the cases involved in the current state campaign against press freedom in the Federal Republic and against the possibility for informed discussion on questions of vital importance to all comrades. Other examples are given below. It is a matter that requires no commentary other, perhaps, than a passing reminder of what Prussian judge Massow said in 1906...: "To establish libraries for the people is dangerous. Then the State no longer has the freedom to restrict what is read outside school boundaries."

**IMPRISONED:** Gerd Schepel of Politladen Erlangen. 2 years' gaol for printing *Struggle* against Liquidation in Prison and for distributing the *Anarchist Cookbook* (offence against the weapons law).

**ACQUITTED:** Thomas Kram, bookseller from Bochum, tried under 88a for selling *Revolutionärer Zorn*.

**CONFISCATED:** The book *Haymarket 1886* on the German anarchists in Chicago; the Munich paper *Blatt; Roten Kalenders 75* which stated that Georg von Rauch had been murdered by the police; the book *Stadtguerilla und soziale Revolution* which contains essays by the Frenchman Emile Marensin and Peter-Paul Zahl, serving a 15-year sentence in Werl; *Holger, der Kampf geht weiter* (Holger, the struggle goes on) and *Terrorurteil gegen Lothar Gend* (Terror sentence against Lothar Gend). As well, of course, as the above-mentioned titles.

And most recently a story in the liberal daily *Frankfurter Rundschau* revealed that state security officials had distributed among border guards at airports for purposes of checking the political identity of passengers, a list of as many as 287 'suspect' publications and 239 associations ranging from 'extreme' to 'respectable' liberal. The revelation has caused the Federal Interior Minister to retire in at least temporary confusion.

## MORO KIDNAPPING:

# THE ENDLESS TERROR

THE death of a politician often transforms him into a statesman, but the brutal death of Aldo Moro at the hands of his Red Brigade captors has transformed him into a saint. Indeed one of the 'miracles' encompassed by his death is the victory of the Christian Democrats in the local and municipal elections.

Aldo Moro was a reactionary, inefficient and devious politician (even by Italian standards), but his ability to pull off deals and fix up electoral pacts made him useful, though doubtless, when the time came, expendable. Kidnappers, whether guided by motives of monetary gain or, what is even more deadly, political power, gamble on the humanitarian emotions and instincts of the family, the company or the state to exert sufficient pressure to make their non-human, unemotional ambitions fulfillable. Aldo Moro lost.

It is a common habit of left wingers, pseudo-anarchists, or indeed all political groupings to say that their morality is no worse than that of their opponents. Indeed, justification of many sorry acts rests entirely upon that shaky foundation. The easy acceptance of the necessity of violence and the denial of liberty of expression to opponents is justified to some by the doubtless true assertion that their opponents would, did and do carry out the same doubtful tactics.

The acceptance of kidnapping by so-called revolutionary groups is yet another example of the taking over of methods of terror from the state. Caring, as the state does, little for human life, it imprisons individuals often for indeterminate periods, subjects families to separation from those they cherish, all in the name of an abstraction called 'justice' but more rightly called 'vengeance.' The Red Brigades describe their kidnap and murder as a 'legitimate act of revolutionary justice'; the same claptrap used by the state to justify capital punishment with the difference that only some states use the 'revolutionary' excuse.

This seemingly mindless act has the same hopeless scenario of justification as the similar acts of other groupings. It is the expectation that a culmination of such acts will precipitate a confrontation between the groups and the governments and will spur the governments to such heights (or depths) of repression that the true nature of government will be made obvious and the workers will rise in revolt. That such groups are usually composed of middle class political adventurers is beside the point. Suffice it that such groups even, if not the pawn of some great power's ambition, are isolated from the working class and indeed alienate the working class,

Address of Solidarity Committee for the Release of the Agit Printers: Mehringdamm 99, 1 Berlin 61. Contributions payable to: D. Krauss/"Agit"/Postcheckkonto 3723 87-105

whatever they may be, by their amorality.

That the state will become even more repressive given certain situations is a simple fact and needs no revolutionary violence to escalate it. Cushioned by middle class upbringing the spectacle of the naked State in prison cell, barrack or battlefield has been denied to these prosperous citizens of the first world. The humblest Asian or African peasant has more revolutionary awareness of the real function of the state (to get him down and keep him down) than all the Marxist theorists.

That the more prosperous parts of Europe are ready, willing and able to rise in revolutionary wrath at the click of a Red Brigade trigger is a myth to which the Brigade is wedded as firmly as many were to the myth of Trotsky's virginity, Stalin's infallibility and Lenin's divinity.

Certainly a social revolution to

achieve freedom will not arise from apeing the methods and manners of those who have up to now led us into this moral quagmire in which we live.

Theoretically there is something to be said for the quick clean attentat for the elimination of an irreplaceable tyrant: but how often does that happen? Blanco? What about Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Amin to name but a few?... Where were the Red Brigades when we needed them?

Certainly an ill-prepared revolution needs violence, but principally to coax those not won over to its ethics and ideals. There is much truth in Bart de Ligt's dictum "the more violence, the less revolution."

No, it will not do. Our morality must be superior to that of those with whom we clash. Means determine ends, and the bloody means of murder and kidnapping lead but to a bloody end of repression, even when power is gained.

JACK ROBINSON

## ... AN OTHER VIEW

THE death of Aldo Moro signals the end of the first Italian Republic. Since the first elections after the war (18.4.48) the Christian Democrats have controlled the Italian State and since that time Aldo Moro has been that party's most significant politician. His was the directing hand behind the first centre-left government and of the recent Catholic-Communist pact.

His kidnap (16.3.78) by the Brigade Rosse was a major achievement for the armed response to state terror in Italy and in Europe. From its inception, announced in *Sinistra Proletaria* of July 1970, the BR has attacked the DC:

"The Democrazia cristiana is the principal enemy of the moment... it is the political and organisational centre of reaction... the motor of counter-revolution and the strength of modern fascism: imperialist fascism."

The Moro kidnap took the BR's struggle directly to the heart of the state.

But what has his death achieved for the BR, for the large and potent extra-parliamentary left movement in Italy and for the masses of working people they hoped to lead towards self-organisation? It is clear that they have, through increasingly violent actions, alienated themselves from the disillusioned, angry stratum of the working class from which they first evolved.

Their early actions - burning cars of factory managers, police and fascists; destroying offices of the DC and MSI

(neo-fascist party); kidnapping, interrogating and releasing prominent managers, politicians and functionaries (as in the case of Sossi) - earned them the respect of those fed up with union capitulation, managerial repression and state corruption.

But their struggle, which attracted many militants, has now moved from its base amongst the people - which gave it strength and direction - to an increasingly specialised and professional battle with the Italian security forces.

There is a place for the militancy of the BR, as shown in their earlier actions, as long as it is a part of the struggle for self-management and for the right of people to control their own lives.

As Marxist-Leninists the BR are not averse to vanguardism. But the historical lessons of this are clear: proletarian avant-gardism leads only to repression in another guise.

We have to work now the way we would like to work in the future.

We have to exemplify our ideals. We cannot afford to ignore the analysis that illegal actions are possible and necessary right now, but it is not enough to let just our anger and our discontent lead us into activity.

We must also put our ideals, our ideology and our love into practice.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY	AUTONOMOUS ANARCHIST GROUP (Stirling)
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# LETTERS

## Differences on the work of William Blake

See Review Section Vol. 39 no. 8 29.4.78

—And Fie to You, Arthur Moyses! How saddened I was to read Arthur Moyses's review of the William Blake Exhibition: to see one whom I have long held to be the best day-to-day art critic in this country so sully his reputation. Dear Arthur, let us say the subject of William Blake, his life and work, is one of your blind spots, and forgive you.

However, one or two things must be said; since the exhibition was devoted to Blake as an artist, rather than his thought and writings, this is not the place to take issue with Arthur over Blake's ideas, but I beg him to look again at Blake's writings and I commend them to all your readers. Can I suggest you start with the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*? (Not least because of the excellent and readily available OUP paperback facsimile)—and also with *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*.

These may answer your quibbles about sexuality in Blake's work, Arthur: nowhere else to my knowledge, in European art, at least of the 18th century, is the process of birth actually depicted for example, and by an artist who defined the genitals as beauty. Nevertheless you are right in a sense about the 'hermaphroditism' of many of Blake's figures, but this is not asexual. Most of Blake's work portrays actions in *Eternity*—for him a state more complex and superior to this world—in which the male and female parts of our real selves are no longer divided but united (this 100 years before Freud), and incidentally in *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* he says that this state will be approached through an intensification of sensual pleasure. Hardly Mary Whitehouse.

Blake was not only one of the greatest of English artists and writers but the one above all who pursued personal, social, political and ideological freedom; it breathes through his paintings and writings. Look again at that work at the entrance to the Tate Gallery Exhibition: 'Great Day', with its subscription 'Albion rose from where he Laboured at the Mill with slaves...'

—what radiance and joy, what delight in freedom, what unconscious sexuality, and what nexus of thought was behind it! A consummate and eternal work of art.

Yours faithfully,  
Birkenhead, LIONEL BURMAN

See LETTERS vol.39 no. 9 13.5.78

Dear Comrades,

I hope that I will always have the courage to admit that I am in the right.

William Blake with his 'Songs of Innocence' produced poems of a beautiful simplistic imagery and style and the artless innocence engraves them on our collective hear but as Anne Malcolmson writes in her *William Blake* (Constable, 1976): "The verses which express these ideas are simple, musical, and tender.

Metres are borrowed from ballads, from singing games, and from Mother Goose rhymes."

Of Blake's 'Jerusalem', and I have sung it a hundred times in company and in solitude, Anne Malcolmson makes the point that the "dark Satanic mills?" that Blake was attacking were not the scars and scum of the Industrial Revolution but Newtonian science and mathematics. Which pedant is correct I do not know. I quote Anne again when she writes of Blake that "In politics he was an anarchist and a revolutionary. Although his own conduct was that of a law-abiding citizen, in theory he deplored law and government." He attacked the church "for its insistence upon repressive



sexual morality... he was a faithful husband, but in his verse he preached free love. He did not, however, condone promiscuity." (my underlining.—AM)

Blake's age was a time of Noble Sentiments, an age that fathered/mothered Harriet Beecher Stowe's 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' and the radical liberalism of Dickens and ended with Patience Strong but in the end it was no more than beautiful noble high-minded platitudes, for remember the age that produced Blake also produced Thomas Paine and his 'Age of Reason' and in this year of grace 1978 the Tory burghers of his English birthplace still refuse to allow a monument to be erected to Tom. Check and correct me if I am wrong. Blake was a primitive bible bashing fundamentalist hepped on the horrors of the Old Testament, as the Tate exhibition demonstrates, and the majority of his work was given over to everlasting damnation, hell's eternal fires and the baleful wrath of the 'Ancients'.

I did not write 'of Blake's vision as leading to a drab...world' for hell has many faults but no one can complain that it is drab. What I did write was that "For Blake it was a mystical pessimism by a man seeking a social revolution based on narrow puritanic ethics" and again I would choose Rowlandson's humane world, tolerant of human frailties. In our era one has only to mention blue skies and green fields and D-I-Y romantics of the left fight to fill vans to the nearest empty meadow to milk a collective chicken and to grow their own wrapped bread while the saloon bar right dream of light armour, chastity belts, quaffing ale out of Holy Grails and charging Soviet tanks. And the black humour of it is that as each group passes the other on the M1 they are all bawling out Blake's 'Jerusalem'.

I chose quotes from Anne Malcolmson's

book for until an hour ago I had never seen or read the book so I could not be accused of backtracking behind someone else's authority.

Sincerely,  
ARTHUR MOYSE.  
3 pm Wednesday 17.5.1978

Dear comrades

There might be some confusion over the reference in my last letter to the poem *Jerusalem*. I am not referring to the hymn that everyone knows so well, but to the much longer poem of the same name.

G. Fleming

## MURRAYS

COMRADES recently visited Noel and Marie Murray in their prisons in the Curragh and Limerick. Marie is in great spirits, though she is a bit isolated. She has been expecting her appeal to come up for some months now, but as yet no sign of it. She also intends starting something up about seeing Noel more often - she would like to fight a case for conjugal rights. (Because the church-dominated constitution of the southern state forbids any interference with the family unit, Marie works it out that it's illegal to put anyone in prison!) She's also busy doing exams and knitting big red and black jumpers.

Noel is stuck in the Curragh, a huge military base with the prison a very small part of it. All the other anarchist comrades have either been released or moved. He's also trying to work out a few legal moves, and is busy reading up on law. He would appreciate some books good historical books which reflect people's struggles. (Marie isn't allowed any books in, but she can order some through the library).

Both comrades would appreciate letters with plenty of news.

Marie is at Limerick Women's Prison, Limerick; Noel is at Curragh Military Detention Camp, Curragh, Co. Kildare.

## In Brief

Rates per hour for men and women manual workers, according to Department of Employment figures, stand at £ 1.77 and £ 1.20, respectively. This is the Labour conception of equal pay.

Once again, an oil tanker is shedding its load into the sea around Britain, afflicting the coastline, which the press mention, and the sea bed, which the press don't. When plutonium is being shipped from country to country and moved about within this country, can we expect a similar level of 'safety precautions'?

# News in Brief..

## SPAIN

THE CNT in Spain now has about 300,000 paid up members. This phenomenal growth, from about 130,000 last September, is being met by the state and its Communist and Socialist party allies with a concerted attack. The two main features of this action are national union elections imposed by royal decree, intended to force workers into communist, socialist or conservative unions, and a campaign against the CNT by the media, accusing it of every conceivable anti-social activity. The Trotskyists come under similar attacks and it appears that an identity of interest may create a working alliance between the CNT and Trotskyist groups in time. However, a correspondent in Barcelona says that the CNT tends to exclude Trotskyist groups from their meetings and marches.

This correspondent has also provided us with a few mildly disturbing pieces of information. The Basque anarchist group Askatasuna, which produces a paper of the same name, has it seems been expelled from the CNT for its 'incorrect position' on internationalism and nationalism. CNT Ford workers in Valencia have been expelled for participating in the union election charade. Given the nature of the unions in Spain, CNT's action here may be seen as reasonable. However other expulsions are also reported. Apparently the teaching section of the CNT in Valencia has also been expelled, for what reason our correspondent has been unable to ascertain.

One real division in the CNT is between Spanish Civil War veterans and the new members. Since the veterans often occupy important positions within the CNT structure, divisions of age, experience and attitude may well be manifest in heated internal debate. As 90 per cent of the CNT membership are under the age of 30 this will provide a powerful driving force for the struggles the CNT will face as it continues to expand.

## SWEDEN

We have received a communique about three members of the "International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement" who have been convicted in Sweden, for planting a fake bomb, outside the travel agents "Spain Tours" in Stockholm. They planted the device in Sept. 1975, deliberately wrongly wired, as a protest against the planned execution of 11 members of ETA & FRAP in Spain. They were arrested in April 1977, along with about 70 others, & kept in total isolation for seven months. At the moment they have to register on three days a week, while waiting for the appeal, which will probably be in midsummer.

## IRAN

Iran continues to ferment. Last week saw another wave of rioting, with hundreds of injuries and arrests. American companies have told their employees to restrict travel as far as possible and Tehran's business community have urged the government to crush the dissidents. Riots in Iran look quite uplifting, with masses of black flags, but they're not on our side... They represent heavy religious reaction. These Iranians want to dent the Shah's oppression, but only to replace it with a different rigidity. They consider the present regime to

be too liberal! Many of the rioters are suspicious of the orthodox clergy but join in as this represents one of the few opportunities to protest. However street rioting in isolation can do little to shake such a well-entrenched regime (France 1968, notwithstanding). No doubt the Shah's friends in Europe and America are ready to step in if any serious quivers are noted. After all they have done before. Whether they will be so obliging in 20 years when the oil has run out and it's revenues dissipated in inefficiency and corruption, remains to be seen.

## FINLAND

Under a new law, expected to be passed soon in Finland, women will have the right to retain their maiden names after marriage and men may take their wives surname. Children will automatically take their mothers name, except by mutual consent of the parents.

## GARNERS

The Garners Steak House demonstration on Sat. May 20th, was rather small, around 500 people. This is poor considering that the union involved is the immense Transport and General Workers Union, which, for a change, is giving the strike official backing. Its support could consist of a levy of a small sum per member per week to help support the Garners workers. It has yet to do this. It has been said that unions in this country are conservative concerning their rights and privileges, that they will hang on to them tenaciously. However, the lengthy Grunwicks dispute and the 16 week old Garners strike make the official recognition of strikes by the union concerned seem to be just a token gesture. The Trades Union bureaucracy, particularly in its upper levels, has often been as much as 15 or 20 years away from the factories, offices, hospitals, schools etc. of their members. It is hardly surprising that this privileged group is among the most staunch defenders of capitalism in Britain.

## GRUNWICK

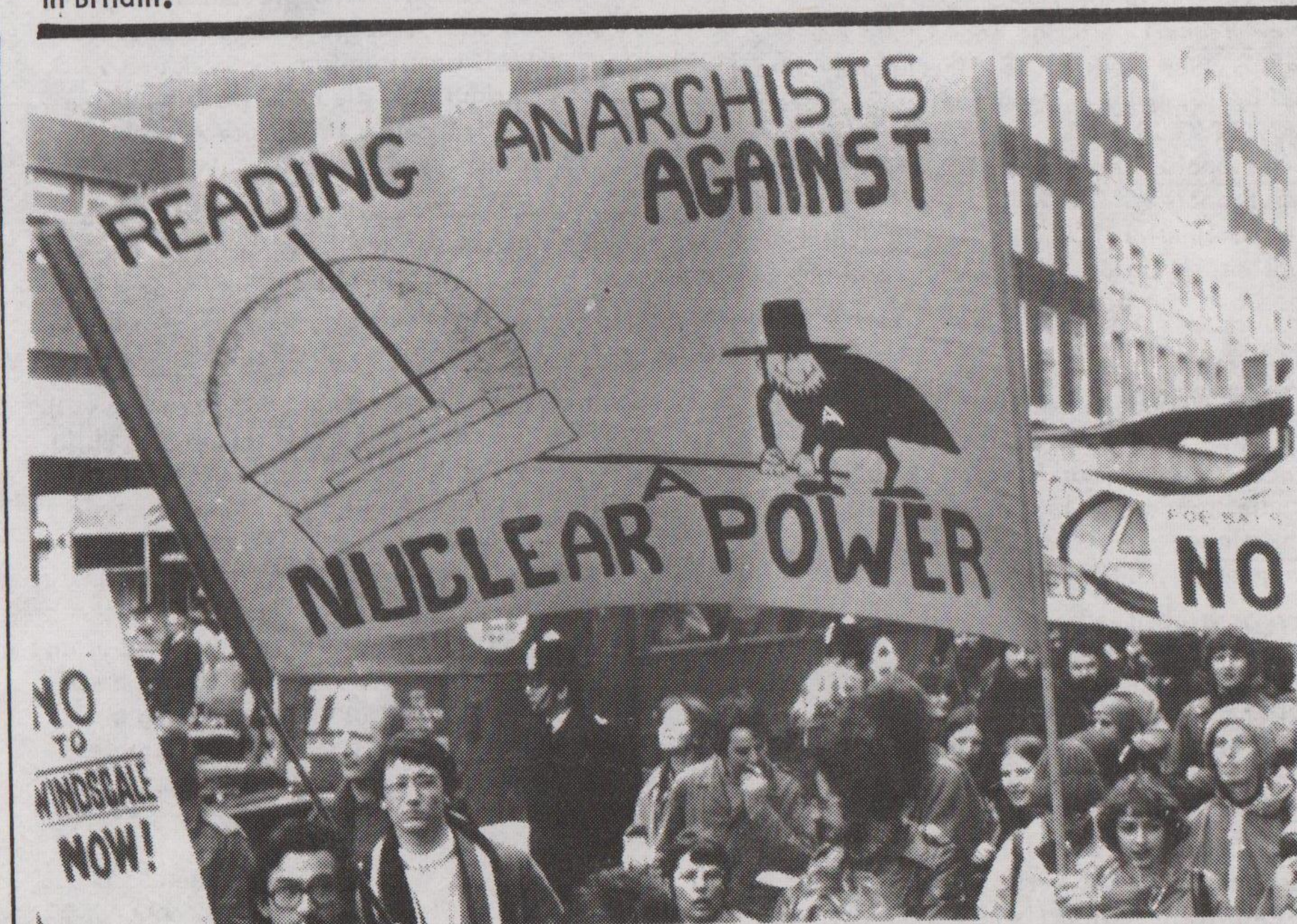
George Ward, managing director of Grunwicks, continues to be obstinate. He has again refused to allow ACAS (Arbitration, Conciliation & Advisory Service) to hold a ballot of workers at his factory. This is despite the fact that ACAS has a statutory duty to hold such a ballot. All this demonstrates once again the uselessness of governments. They set up a token body like ACAS and then leave huge loopholes that allow those such as Ward to ignore them. However, to be fair, (although why we should bother would be difficult to rationalise) the establishment is severely embarrassed by the whole thing. They would like a nice cozy system, involving themselves, industry and trade unions. Rank and file union members might be expected to be awkward, after all they are ill-educated proletarians, easily led astray by small, tightly knit, politically motivated groups. But maverick employers are a reminder of the bad old days when the State was openly manipulated by financial interests. Perhaps Ward should be commended for showing that the bureaucracy & administration still cannot tie everything up as neatly as they would like. Which must be great consolation for those still on the pickets.

## DEMO'S (OR LACK OF)

One aspect of this tidying up process is currently upsetting those MPs who have liberal consciences. At the moment you are more or less able to hold a demonstration on the spur of the moment, allowing for odd points like 3 month blanket bans. Some local authorities have by-laws requiring notice of demos & in practice most give it anyway. However part of the consolidation of local government changes includes a clause requiring such co-operation. This has been slipped in in the middle of a mass of petty measures. Failure to comply will carry a fine of up to £ 200.

## 1984 EARLY ?

The Ministry of Defence's Microbiological Research Unit at Porton Down is to engage in "genetic manipulation" experiments. Doubtless, we will enjoy Brave New World a little while after experiencing 1984.



FROM THE ANTI-NUCLEAR EVENTS IN LONDON (APRIL 29)  
PHOTO BY CLAUDE.



## Freedom Press

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THE BOOKSHOP IS OPEN :-

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LYSANDER SPOONER is an important pioneering libertarian thinker, unjustly neglected at least until recently when one or two of his important works were made available again.

Firstly, probably his best known essay, *No Treason : The Constitution of No Authority* (1870), published together with his *Letter to Thomas F. Bayard* (1882) in one of Ralph Myles' attractively produced booklets (£ 0.60 plus 15p post). Next, just received from the United States, is his *Vices are not crimes : A Vindication of Moral Liberty* (£ 1.75 + 15p) together with three essays on Spooner by Carl Watner, Murray Rothbard and Benjamin R. Tucker. Considering Spooner's times (1808-1887) and that few of the now well known anarchist individualists had written much till then (Josiah Warren, and Max Stirner with whom he was an almost exact contemporary, are virtually his only equally important antecedents—one ought also to include William Godwin) his work is the more important.

Also by Spooner is *Let's Abolish Government* (£ 9.50 + 66p), a collection of his writings including 'No Treason'. This comes in the (American) badly named but important series, 'The Right Wing Individualist Tradition in America'.

In the same series is *Sprading's Liberty and the Great Libertarians* (£ 11.95 + 86p). First published at the beginning of this century, it is a history of libertarian thinking up to that time, with particular emphasis on American libertarianism.

A newly-reprinted title by Jack London prompts me to do a resume of the available works by that fascinating, idiosyncratic but powerful writer. The new title is *The Assassination Bureau Ltd.* (£ 0.84 + 15p), published, excusably, in Penguin's Crime Thriller series, and just as a thriller it is a far better work than most of the genre (which I'll allow says little), but it is more than that. As London left the work unfinished, his notes for the completion of the book have been included and it has been completed by Robert L. Fish.

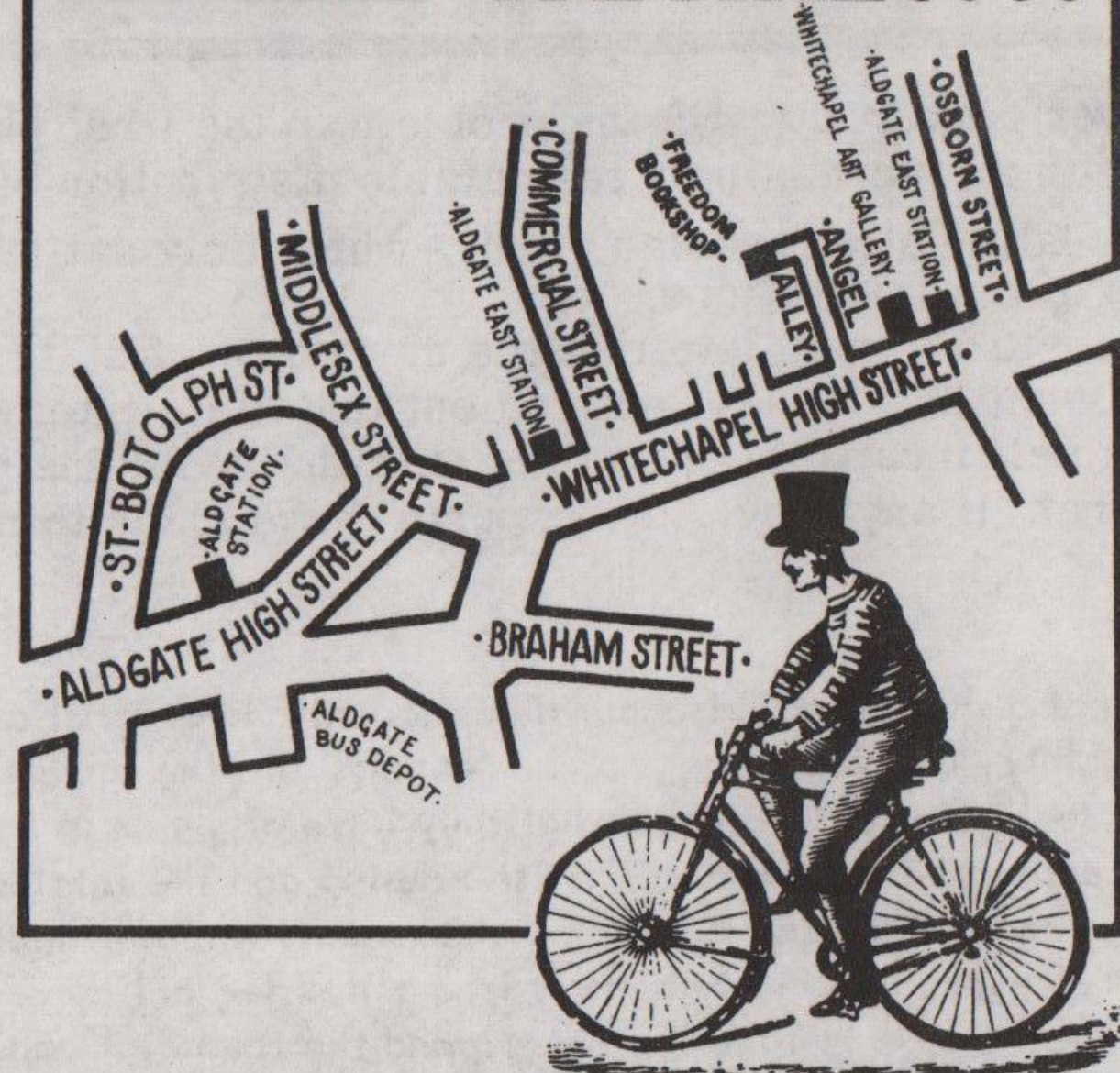
The two works by Jack London already, and still, available are *The Iron Heel* (£ 1.20 + 15p) and *The People of the Abyss* (£ 1.20 + 15p).

Next, one of my favourite authors in two beautifully produced volumes *Henry D. Thoreau's Illustrated Walden* (£ 3.50 + 54p) and also his *Illustrated Maine Woods* (£ 4.95 + 54p), both marvellously illustrated with photographs from the Gleason Collection—early photographs, capturing the beautiful landscape of Thoreau's country and times; countryside, let it be added, much of which just no longer exists in the same unspoilt and natural state.

Few writers since Kropotkin have made a study of anthropology from a libertarian perspective, which is a pity because not only is that particular vein a very rich and provocative one, but its neglect by libertarians has let more authoritarian writers in through the gap, to a position of dominance to the point of imbalance and distortion. All the more welcome, then, is *Society against the State* by Pierre Clastres (£ 8.75 + 54p), a study of The Leader as Servant, and the humane uses of Power among the Indians of the Americas.

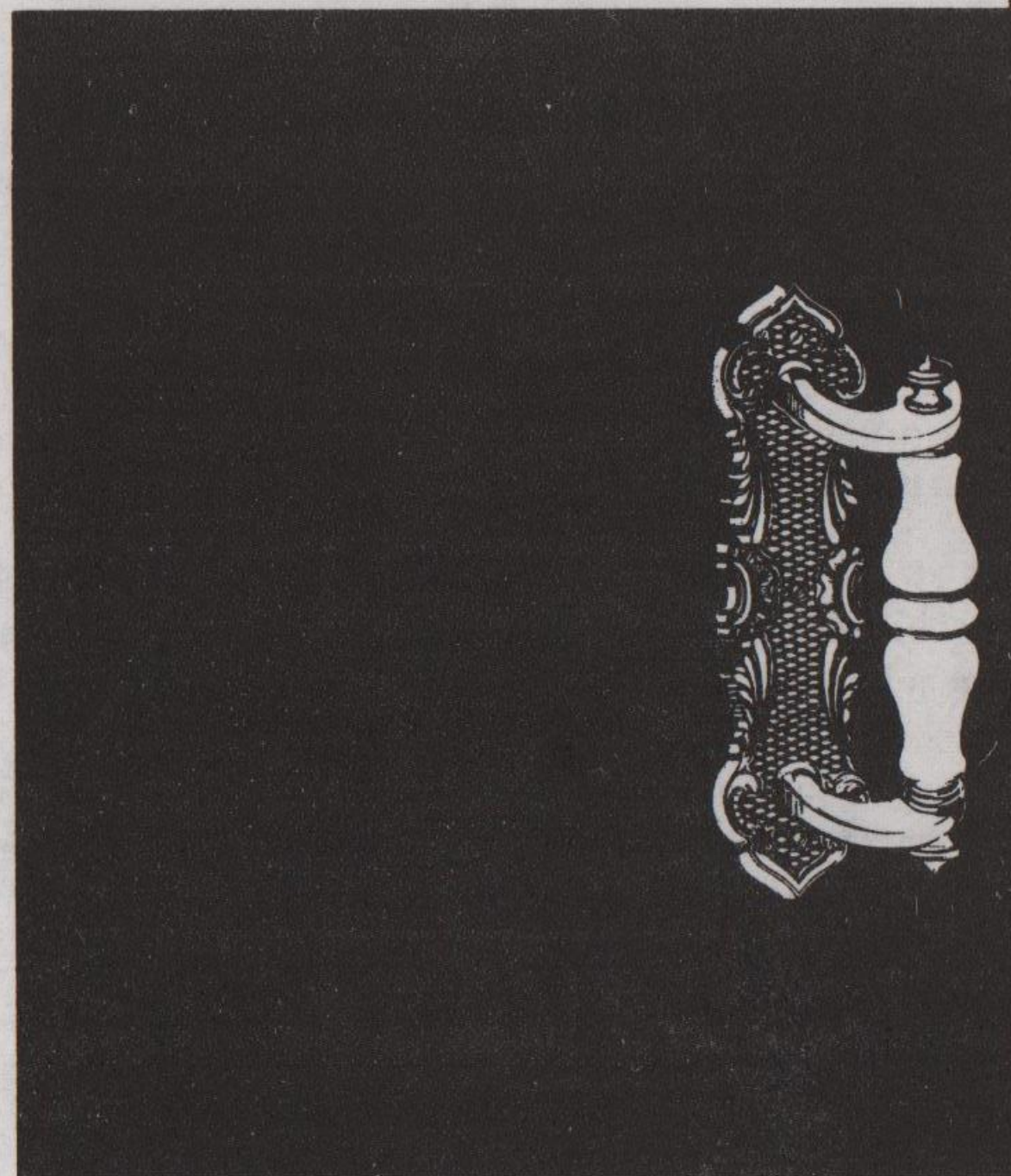
Two more recent titles: *Land and Liberty : Anarchist Influences in the Mexican Revolution*, Ricardo Flores Magon, edited David Poole and published by Cienfuegos Press at £ 2.35 (26p post). This is a timely and possibly (in terms of current availability) unique opportunity to become acquainted with an important, and again (compared with, say, Zapata) neglected figure. Secondly, *Andrew Ant the Anarchist* (£ 2.50 + 19p), a fable for all ants and those humans concerned with justice. Especially written with younger readers in mind, this is also a pioneering work in its field—that of providing younger readers with less authoritarian models of life and relationships; feminists are way ahead of us in this regard (which is not to imply any contradiction or incompatibility between anarchism and feminism !!!). I wish Anarchos Press (publishers of *Andrew Ant*, and anyone else who attempts a similar venture, all success in a much needed and long overdue task.

## WHERE WE ARE....



Next, just a reminder that *Surrealism : The Hinge of History* (10p 7p post) which appeared as the supplement to FREEDOM vol. 39 no. 6 is available separately, especially to those who would like to distribute it in bulk (student bookstalls, etc.).

## SURREALISM



### the Hinge of History

An old faithful is available again (at an increased price, needless to say) after a period of temporary unavailability: Emma Goldman's autobiography *Living My Life* (2 vols., £ 6.00 plus 86p post the set). So if you haven't already got it, or have been unable to get it recently, now's your chance.

Lastly some postcards and some stickers. Black Eye Press in the U.S. have produced some beautiful Proudhon Postcards (50p for 10 plus 10p post); the *Sacco and Vanzetti* postcards that Kropotkin's Lighthouse Publications produced to mark the fiftieth anniversary of their murder by the state are still available (45p for 10 + 10p post), and Anarchy Group have produced a series of stickers, 8 different kinds with slogans such as 'Vote with your feet'; 'If voting could change the system it would be illegal'; 'Vote for Guy Fawkes', etc. Send 50p plus 10p postage for a sample pack of 100 per sticker.

J.H.

'Ian the Printer' has included the following review because we feel it is an important contribution to the continuing debate on male sexism: "CUSTER'S LAST STAND - or How to Overcome Male Domination in The Movement" and "More Power Than We Want: Masculine Sexuality and Violence". A pamphlet which should be of interest to all anti-sexists, it is one of a series of reprints published by the Alternative Press Syndicate/Europe (this one is reprinted from WIN). It contains two articles written by members of the American Movement for a New Society, the first dealing with sexism in group discussions etc. (the dominant male can easily identify himself here) and calls for a strong male anti-sexist movement. The second deals with sex roles in relation to violence and in this the male does not come out the best - the authors conclude that men should discard the characteristics of power, oppression etc that society is conditioned to expect of them and adopt some, but by no means all, of the feminine qualities, as the female role has undesirable characteristics too. A well written pamphlet and though it does

# Anarchist Review Freedom

27 MAY '78

# PROPERTY WAS THEFT

THE FOLLOWING article, one of the papers at the Venice conference, on the New Bosses last March, looks at aspects of and techno-bureaucratic development in British housing, and challenges, in so doing, the old assumptions about property that still exist. (Another article by the author, 'Technobureaucracy and City Life', is due to appear in *Interrogations* 15.)

### PROPERTY WAS THEFT

At one time, the people who controlled and determined the shape and size of towns and cities were the big property owners. Proudhon told us that "Property is theft" which is exactly how these landowners acquired their 'property'. The institutions which now control the access to housing accommodation wish to make us all 'property owners' but the expansion in 'owner-occupation' during the 20th century was not brought about through 'mass stealing'. By making it possible for increasingly large numbers of people to purchase their own home under strict conditions dictated to them by these institutions it became possible for bodies such as building societies to monopolise the access to housing for private ownership without, in fact, owning these homes in the first place. In this way, not only the purchaser but also the vendor has been placed at the mercy of the building societies, estate agents, solicitors and others.

Proudhon also said that "Property is freedom", but private home ownership has become yet another method by which the 'private' and 'public' institutions have increased their domination over our lives. Profits (if any) resulting from the sale of privately-owned housing are, in fact, unimportant to these institutions since what matters to them is either the fee from the sale (and/or purchase) or the interest from the loans they provide out of money deposited with them by the general public. Obviously, the more sales there are and the higher the price of the properties sold or purchased the faster will these institutions expand. 'Supply' and 'demand' and so-called 'market conditions' are strictly controlled and often created by these bodies.

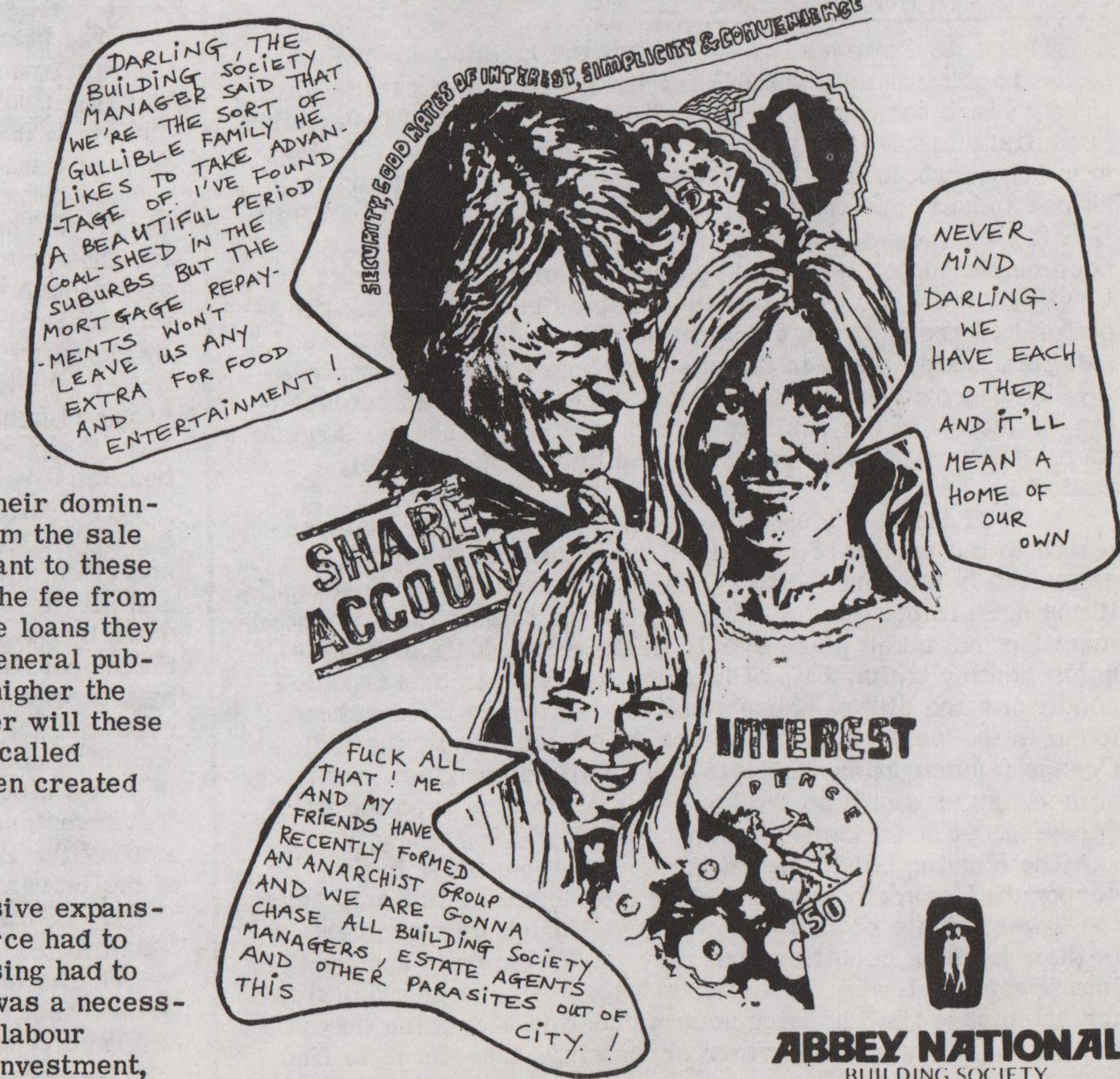
### THE RISE OF THE CORPORATE ECONOMY

The industrial revolution brought about a massive expansion of the towns and cities of Britain. A labour force had to be created where none had existed before and housing had to be provided. Since the provision of such housing was a necessity to ensure that there was an adequate supply of labour available locally rather than a profitable form of investment,

the quality of the housing built for workers during the 19th century was, consequently, of a low standard. Indeed, conditions in the towns and cities were so bad that revolution seemed an inevitability.

During the present century, however, British industry has undergone a transformation from a disaggregated structure consisting mainly of small firms competing with each other to a concentrated structure dominated by large, often monopolistic corporations. The significance of the economic and social changes resulting from the rise of the corporate economy in Britain was commented on by Leslie Hannah (1):

### THE SAVER'S GUIDE TO ABBEY NATIONAL



ABBEY NATIONAL  
BUILDING SOCIETY



Many of their products are also very different from those of Victorian firms, for the development of large corporations is closely bound up with the 'second industrial revolution,' with 20th century economic growth based on electricity, the motor car, and chemicals, rather than steam, railways and textiles .... The significance of this organisational transformation extends beyond the economic sphere; there are profound political and sociological implications also. It has facilitated, and perhaps induced, substantial changes in the relationship between government and industry. It has brought an increasing number of workers into the employment of large organisations. It has extended to the wealthier middle class what the industrial revolution accomplished for the working class, by breaking the links between family and work, which survived in the Victorian family business but are increasingly rare today.

Whereas the construction of cheap working class housing was the main form of 19th century urban expansion, in the 20th century Britain's towns and cities have gone through the construction of middle class housing in vast suburban developments. Skilled working class people adapted to the changing circumstances, which meant that steady work was no longer available in the traditional industrial areas, by either moving to other parts of the country or emigrating (Canada, Australia, New Zealand etc). The unskilled workers and their families remained in these areas. As the traditional industries left or closed down a series of new industries came along which used the buildings and plant the traditional industries had left behind and exploited the unskilled labour force to produce a wider range of consumer goods (which did not depend on that particular location for production and hence of limited duration as a source of employment) for very low wages. As the demand for cheap unskilled labour in these areas increased the native population was joined by immigrants.

As the middle classes expanded in size, and then expanded outwards during this century, the ex-middle class residences of the 19th century and the traditional working class areas (those that remained after the massive clearance programmes of the post-war era) became the refuge for that part of the population which could not (either temporarily or permanently), or would not, conform to the middle class ideal of owner occupation, nor qualify for council housing. Therefore, many of these older parts of Britain's cities either became or remained areas of predominantly privately rented dwellings with many families, students, single people (both young and old) of permanently or temporarily restricted income, sharing or lacking amenities.

#### CHANGES IN HOUSING CONDITIONS

There is, however, no doubt that the housing conditions of the population as a whole have improved significantly. In the 20 years between 1951 and 1971 the proportion of households "unsatisfactorily housed" (i.e. either overcrowded, sharing amenities, whole families living with relatives or living in homes in bad condition) decreased from 69% in 1951 to 24% in 1971 (2). Owner-occupation of houses, furthermore, has become the major form of household tenure. In 1914 only 10.6% of dwellings were owner-occupied but by 1974 the proportion had grown to 52.4% with most of the growth in this category taking place in the post-war era from 1950 onwards (3). This growth in the owner-occupied sector was accompanied by growth in the publicly-owned sector (the second largest form of tenure) and an enormous decline in the privately-rented sector.

Most of the bad housing conditions remaining are concentrated in the privately-rented sector which is, in turn, concentrated in the inner-city areas. Whilst overall housing conditions have improved considerably during this century improvement has not taken place evenly in all areas. 64% of households lacking baths, 61% of households living in overcrowded conditions and 61% of households lacking inside WCs were found in the worst 15% of Enumeration Districts by the 1971 Census (enumeration districts are small geographical units - sometimes as small as ten houses in a street - used for the carrying out of the census count).

The housing conditions of those who count least in the corporate hierarchy have steadily deteriorated. Not only have the lowest strata of society not enjoyed much improvement in their housing conditions but they have also been crowded into fewer and fewer "undesirable" areas where they can find (or attempt to find) housing accommodation at a price they can afford. It is not altogether surprising, therefore, to find

that in England in 1976 there were 52,570 known homeless households compared to 50,950 the previous year (4).

#### BUREAUCRATISATION AND CONTROL

The continuous growth of owner-occupation and the increasingly absurd distribution of housing resources and subsidies prevalent in Britain today, whereby the better-off receive "progressively" more aid than the people with limited incomes (irrespective of tenancy, 5), has been made possible by the growth of a complicated web of institutions which collaborate together to expand the owner-occupied sector and to allow access to that sector only to certain types of people. This 'web' involves the state, the building societies, the insurance companies, the banks, the estate agents, property developers, the more peripheral 'finance houses' and so-called 'charitable' housing trusts. The various insects to be found in this 'web' are a mixture of state employees, managers of large financial corporations, directors of companies, small capitalists, professionals of various types and usurers. Their ideologies range from professional/managerial corporatism to vaguely conceived notions of 18th century liberal concepts. Racism, chauvinism and prejudice against certain types of blue collar workers, play an important part in their decisions concerning who should or should not be allowed access to housing.

The growth in power of these institutions (especially the building societies) was due mainly to the 'problem' of the relatively high cost of housing. The cost of housing in relation to income is very high, so that prior saving to accumulate the purchase money would be impossible for most people, and would definitely be an impossibility for anyone at an early stage in their working career. The capital cost of housing has therefore had to be financed in other ways. One way in which this was done was for someone with the capital available (a landlord - or 'thief' according to Proudhon) to buy the property and then rent the accommodation to somebody without the capital. However, the decline of the private rented sector has shown that other methods have been found which have proved much more successful. A highly developed financial system was required to loan money out to would-be purchasers. The institutions which developed to provide this finance increased their domination over the 'housing market' by making the relatively high cost of housing even higher and by making very stringent assessments of the creditworthiness of individuals.

#### THE BUILDING SOCIETIES

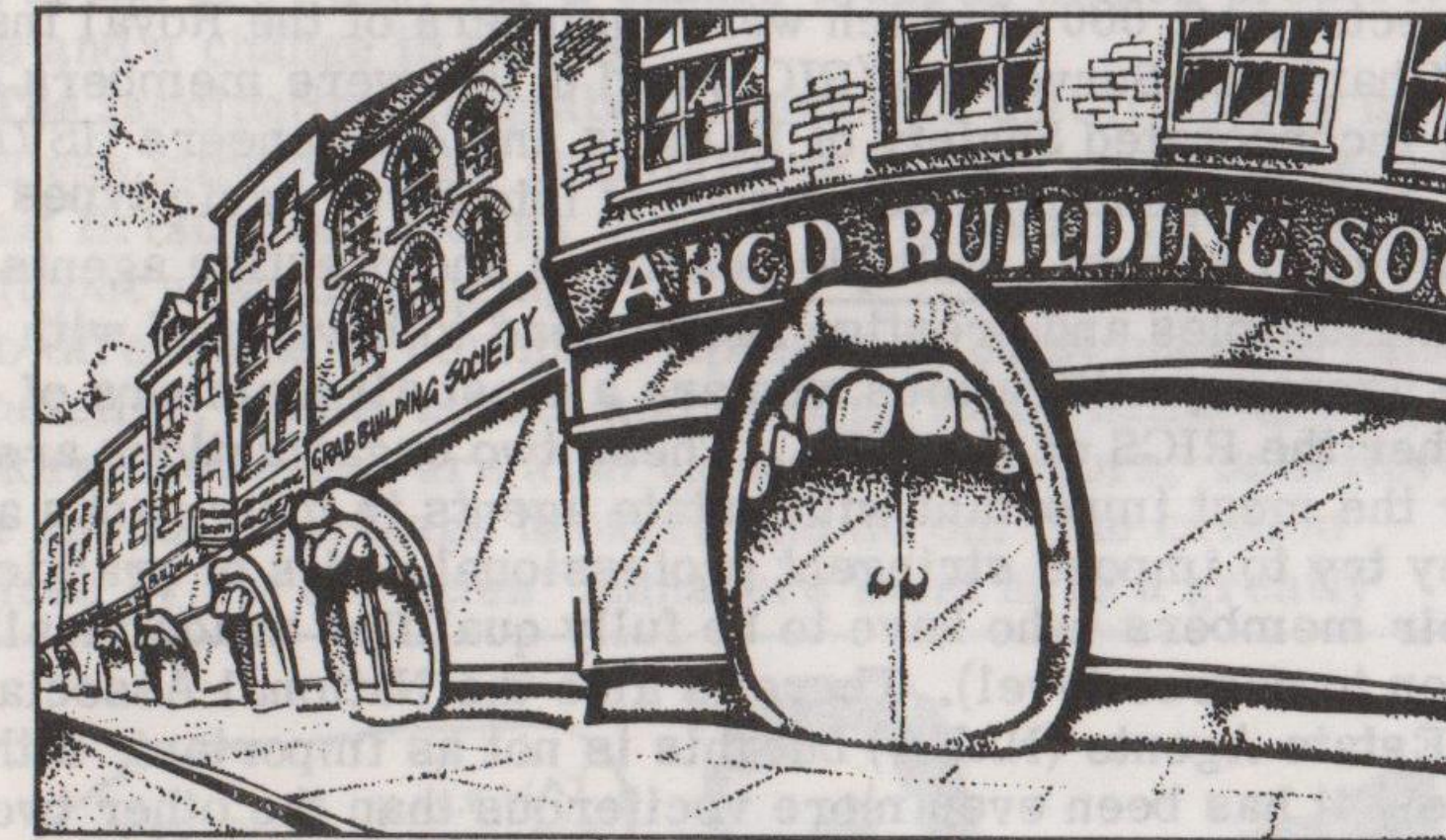
The predominant source of finance for house purchase in Britain are the building societies. Their domination of the housing finance market is almost monopolistic. In the period 1967 to 1976 the building societies provided between 79% and 93% of total advances for house purchase (6).

Building societies originated as savings clubs in the 18th century. These 'clubs' used their funds to construct houses for their members. This activity started as a response to the atrocious housing conditions at the time, both in terms of physical repair and insecurity, and thus became a mechanism by which the middle class and upper working class could gain better housing. By creating the means by which individual families could take on responsibility for their own housing (sic) the phenomenon of the debt-encumbered house owner became a reality.

The Building Societies Association (BSA) is the 'trade body' for the building societies and in 1973 it had a membership of 288 societies. The BSA has stringent conditions for membership and all its members tend to follow the general guidelines laid down by the Association. However, individual societies vary their operations in detail. Recently, the biggest societies (led by the Abbey National Building Society) refused to follow the recommendation by the BSA that interest paid to depositors should be dropped. However, given the fact that the main object of the building societies movement is to attract and protect investors' money this cannot be interpreted as a revolt against the BSA but is a move totally in keeping with the 'spirit' of the movement. The only societies which are not members of the BSA are small societies which do not qualify for membership.

The building societies were first brought under strict government control with the Building Societies Act 1894, which had been preceded by an earlier Act in 1874 placing the societies under the supervision of the Chief Registrar of Friendly

Societies. The Building Societies Act of 1962 extended the form of this control ranging from the form of investments that building societies may make to the composition of the Board of Directors. The Chief Registrar is a government appointee who exercises his power by persuasion and discussion with societies that 'err'. In the last resort 'he can express his disapproval of a society's management or other arrangements by withholding 'trustee status'. This he does in the case of societies that do not own their own premises or which appear to be in too close an arrangement with estate agents and property companies. He can also exercise power and stop societies from accepting investments, advertising and performing other functions." (7) Obviously the Chief Registrar works in close liaison with the BSA.



**Bulwark Against Bolshevism**

THE ABILITY OF BUILDING SOCIETIES TO GIVE A LARGE SECTION OF THE POPULATION A SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT (PSYCHOLOGICALLY) STAKE IN PRIVATE PROPERTY WAS FIRST REALISED AFTER THE 1ST WORLD WAR, WHEN ONE M.P. DESCRIBED BUILDING SOCIETIES AS A "BULWARK AGAINST BOLSHIEVISM AND ALL BOLSHIEVISM STANDS FOR"

from "TIME OUT" 20/1/78

All these 'legal' restrictions (in reality self-imposed) are the 'price' they pay for certain privileges which give them great advantages over other financial institutions. They pay a lower rate of tax on deposits and they are exempt from all direct credit restriction measures.

As 'mutual organisations' the societies have 'trustee status' and so they are technically 'non-profit making bodies' whose share investors are not 'creditors' (the legal status of bank depositors) but 'members'. Although they are 'non-profit making bodies' they still have to cover their costs by charges to borrowers and so they make what they regard as a 'business-like assessment of the credit-worthiness of a potential borrower.'

Owing to the legal requirements for the societies to maintain given 'liquidity' and 'reserve' ratios in their balance sheets it is not surprising to find that the building societies have primarily become 'investor oriented' so that investment has become their primary concern and lending on mortgages merely a necessary outcome of the need to maintain these 'ratios' and hence their advantageous 'trustee status.' Indeed the emphasis on 'security of investment' is so strong that the Registry of Friendly Societies actually promotes mergers on the grounds that the bigger the society the more secure investments will be.

Building society organisation tends to reflect the ideals of thrift, home ownership and their version of 'personal freedom'. Since building society staff tend to remain with one society throughout their career, change and adjustment to new circumstances takes place at a very slow rate. The principle factor on which managers are assessed is their ability to attract investment.

The type of applicant the societies prefer to lend money to for house purchase is a young man, married (or about to be married), a white-collar worker with good career prospects, who has saved money with the building society, has a respectable appearance and is white (usually allowing up to three times the income of the applicant). Legislation exists in Britain to punish people who practice racial and sexual discrimination and it is obvious that building society managers offend against these laws all the time. However, prosecution is impossible for the reasons that it is impossible to prove that the manager's motivation was not a 'business-like assessment of an individual's credit-worthiness' and because the building

societies lobby is extremely powerful. The type of property that building societies prefer to lend money on is a post-1945 three or four bedroomed house in the suburbs. All other properties are measured against this ideal.

#### SIZE, GROWTH AND PERSONALITIES

In 1975 there were 385 building societies in the United Kingdom and the number has been declining steadily during this century mainly as a result of mergers. The assets held by the societies are massive and 18 societies are dominant. Indeed, these 18 societies accounted for over 80% of all building society mortgages granted in 1974. The five largest societies (believed to be the Halifax, the Abbey National, Nationwide, Leeds Permanent and Woolwich Equitable) between them have assets of over £15,000 million. The five societies alone are bigger than the rest put together (8).

Professor Harold Rose estimates that at the end of the war building societies were only one-sixth of the size of the banks in terms of deposits. "Now building society shares and deposits are some 15 per cent larger than the sterling deposits

of the clearing banks and by 1986 might be 30 or even 40 per cent larger than the latter" (9).

Given the huge number of building societies the power and influence of individuals involved varies greatly. The directors of the large societies and the individuals involved in running organisations such as the BSA are involved in a wider range of organisations and activities. Many building society directors are also valuers, surveyors, solicitors, estate agents, mortgage brokers, etc ...

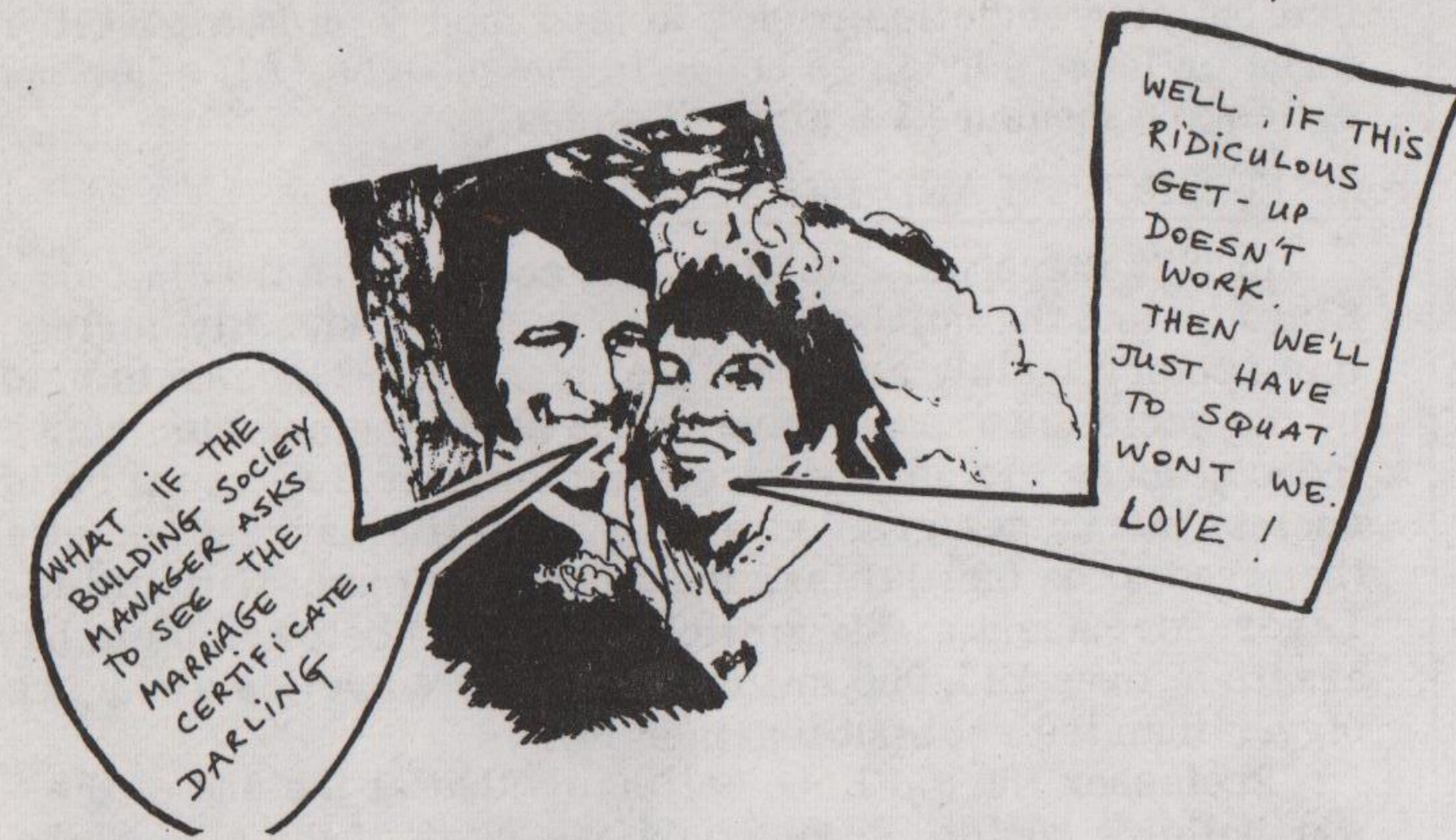
#### BUILDING SOCIETIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Local authorities also provide housing finance and have had the legal power to do so since 1899. It was never intended, however, for the local authorities to provide an 'alternative' to the 'private' housing finance market but merely to supplement the activities of the main mortgage institutions. Local authorities were to provide mortgages for people who would normally experience difficulty in obtaining one from a building society (i.e. people who did not fall into the above-mentioned categories favoured by the average building society manager) but in practice most local authorities tend to emulate the lending policies of the building societies insofar as deciding on people who constitute a 'reasonable risk'.

Up until 1975 local authority mortgage schemes were becoming important sources of housing finance but restrictions in government spending forced many authorities to drastically cut back on their schemes. This provided an opportunity for the building societies to extend their activities into areas of the market where they would not normally become involved and at the same time not take any risks. They achieved this by replying to pressure from the government and local authorities to become involved with slightly less 'creditworthy' individuals buying in areas of older property, that they are accountable to their investors. At first they were very unwilling to take part in schemes suggested to them by the Department of the Environment and the local authorities. They proved particularly uncooperative when in the early '70s the director of housing for the London borough of Lambeth proposed a scheme to executives from five societies together with the secretary general of the BSA, urging the building societies to start savings schemes for young couples which would guarantee them a mortgage at a later date and to lend on the cost of improving older houses (10). Other detailed schemes have been agreed whereby the Department of the Environment and the local authorities take virtually all the risk involved (11) but it was still difficult to obtain cooperation.

Now, however, the deputy chairman of the BSA is suggesting that "it would clearly be desirable for local authorities to bring building societies into consultation at an early stage in the development of local housing strategies" (12). The deputy chairman, Leonard Williams, goes on to suggest that such agreed schemes are sabotaged by the local authorities who keep sending forward "impossible cases" (i.e. people actually in need of access to housing finance). Furthermore, he suggests that charges relating to the fact that building societies have been boycotting (or "redlining") areas of bad housing in cities are false, and again accuses the local authorities of not ensuring a long enough life for these properties. By using such 'hard-to-get' techniques they have increased their power considerably and risked nothing in the process.





### MORTGAGE BROKERS AND FINANCE HOUSES

'Mortgage brokers' and 'finance houses' are just two species of parasite who descend on people in need to make them pay for the crime of not conforming with the building societies' managers' view of the ideal borrower. The 'ideal borrower', incidentally, is almost invariably an employee of either a 'public' or 'private' corporation, since no other type of employment provides the necessary income, job security and promotion prospects required.

Basically 'mortgage brokers' perform the service (for a fee) of finding a building society which will accept his clients as a borrower, taking advantage of the slight variations in the many societies' lending policies and individual managers' subjective assessments.

For those who find it impossible to obtain finance for the purchase of property they must turn to the finance houses. Although 'finance houses' exist as independent units many are linked directly to the major clearing banks but since their business is plain and simple usury the links are not displayed publicly. After all, such goings on would be inappropriate for respectable (sic) organisations like the clearing banks. These finance houses lend money to all-comers but they charge even more-extortionate rates of interest than the building societies and impose very stringent conditions of repayment. Their clientele, unfortunately, consists of people who have no other choice.

### BANKS AND INSURANCE COMPANIES

The banks and insurance companies usually become involved in financing loans for the wealthy who are purchasing properties of such a high price (although estate agents would normally classify them under the 'middle price range') that the building societies are not allowed (legally) to loan money for such amounts (i.e. at present anything over £20,000). The insurance companies and banks provide 'topping-up loans'. The insurance companies, through the British Insurance Association (BIA) also involve themselves with the provision of home loans to some people with limited incomes in conjunction with the Department of the Environment and the BSA (up to a limit of £14,000).

One recent development is that the relationship between the banks and the building societies is becoming strained. The banks have started to get envious of the privileges enjoyed by the societies and have started to demand that this form of 'unfair competition' as regards attracting deposits be rectified (13).

### HOME PURCHASE AND EXTORTION

If you are a good corporate employee, or the nearest equivalent, then the building society manager may condescend to grant you permission to mortgage your soul to the building society enabling you to "buy your own home". You will then have to contend with a whole series of gangsters and racketeers who, whilst in actual fact irrelevant to the whose purchasing process, still extort a fee from both the prospective purchaser and prospective vendor. As many as nine parties could be involved in each house sale (14).

These parasites rely on the building societies for their work and so must follow the societies' policies in order to obtain their extorted fees. Estate agents advertise most of the properties that are sold. Valuers (often part of an estate agency firm) value the property both for the building society

and prospective buyers and purchasers. They insist on duplication of effort so as to "maintain impartiality" (what they actually mean is getting their greedy hands on all the extra fees generated in this way). Solicitors waste enormous amounts of time (for which they receive huge payments) over the legalities of 'conveyancing'... In the financial year of 1975/6 a total of £338 million was paid in 'transaction costs'.

### THE ESTATE AGENTS

The activities covered by the term 'estate agent' include house sales, surveying, valuing, auctioneering, property management, and frequently they also act as insurance and mortgage brokers. It is difficult to determine the exact number of estate agents in Britain because there is, as yet, no compulsory registration system. Nevertheless, in 1974/75 there were 24,000 estate agents listed in the Estate Agents Directory, 6,000 of which were members of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and 8,000 were members of the Incorporated Society of Valuers and Auctioneers (ISVA).

Estate agents can be classified into three basic types - individual agents, multiple practices and prestige agents. The multiples and prestige agents tend to have staff with estate agency qualifications who are almost all members of either the RICS or the ISVA. These two organisations are by far the most important with estate agents in their ranks and they try to impose stringent professional codes of practice on their members (who have to be fully qualified academically - often to degree level). There is also the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA) but this is not as important, although lately it has been even more vociferous than the other two in demanding legal enforcement of professional codes of practice (15).

The individual agents are usually unqualified, unregistered and active in the poor areas of cities, often mercilessly exploiting those people who have no other choice. Their activities are so blatantly scandalous that they act as convenient scapegoats for the multiples and prestige agents who practice extortion and exclusion on a wider scale. Hence, when Bryan Davies MP put forward a 'private member's bill' for the control of estate agents it was not surprising to find the government immediately supporting it and likewise all the other parties. The RICS, ISVA and NAEA also gave the bill their wholehearted support (16). All three organisations kept repeating that 'reputable' agents have nothing to fear. An editorial in the September 10th 1977 issue of the *Estate Gazette* (virtually the mouthpiece of the RICS) explained why the bill was so acceptable:

The direction of the Government's thinking is essentially sound, with the emphasis firmly on maximum protection for the public consistent with the minimum of interference with existing business methods.

Basically, the bill proposes to protect the public from the practices of estate agents whereby the deposits put down for a home purchase are lost when another buyer comes along with a higher offer, but it still leaves the whole relationship between estate agent and public (essentially a dictatorial one) totally untouched. Another side effect will be the greatly enhanced power of organisations like the RICS, the ISVA and NAEA. Coloured buyers, incidentally, will be virtually excluded from the market since it was only the "disreputable" elements who would even contemplate extorting money from coloured immigrants to give them access to the opportunity to buy.

### ESTATE AGENTS' 'EXISTING BUSINESS METHODS'

Estate agents occupy a key position in the whole process of obtaining housing without, in most cases, even having an interest in the property being sold. An estate agent has the ability to stimulate or reduce interest in a property and all the actions that may follow.

Several factors influence the estate agents' activities. These include - the building societies' lending policies, racialism, chauvinism and the fact that the higher the price of the house the higher the fee they can extort. The annual reviews of the property market published in the *Estate Gazette* (compiled by 'reputable agents' sending in reports of what the year's trading has been like) are overflowing with remarks such as, "Although the market picked up well in April, the autumn was quieter than the agents had expected." They also express disappointment when prices do not rise

fast enough for their liking. "... but it seems that price levels were either static or showed only marginal increases" (17).

The fanaticism with which estate agents apply their "professional expertise" to "placing people in the community socially" ensures that only certain types of people will even have the opportunity to purchase.

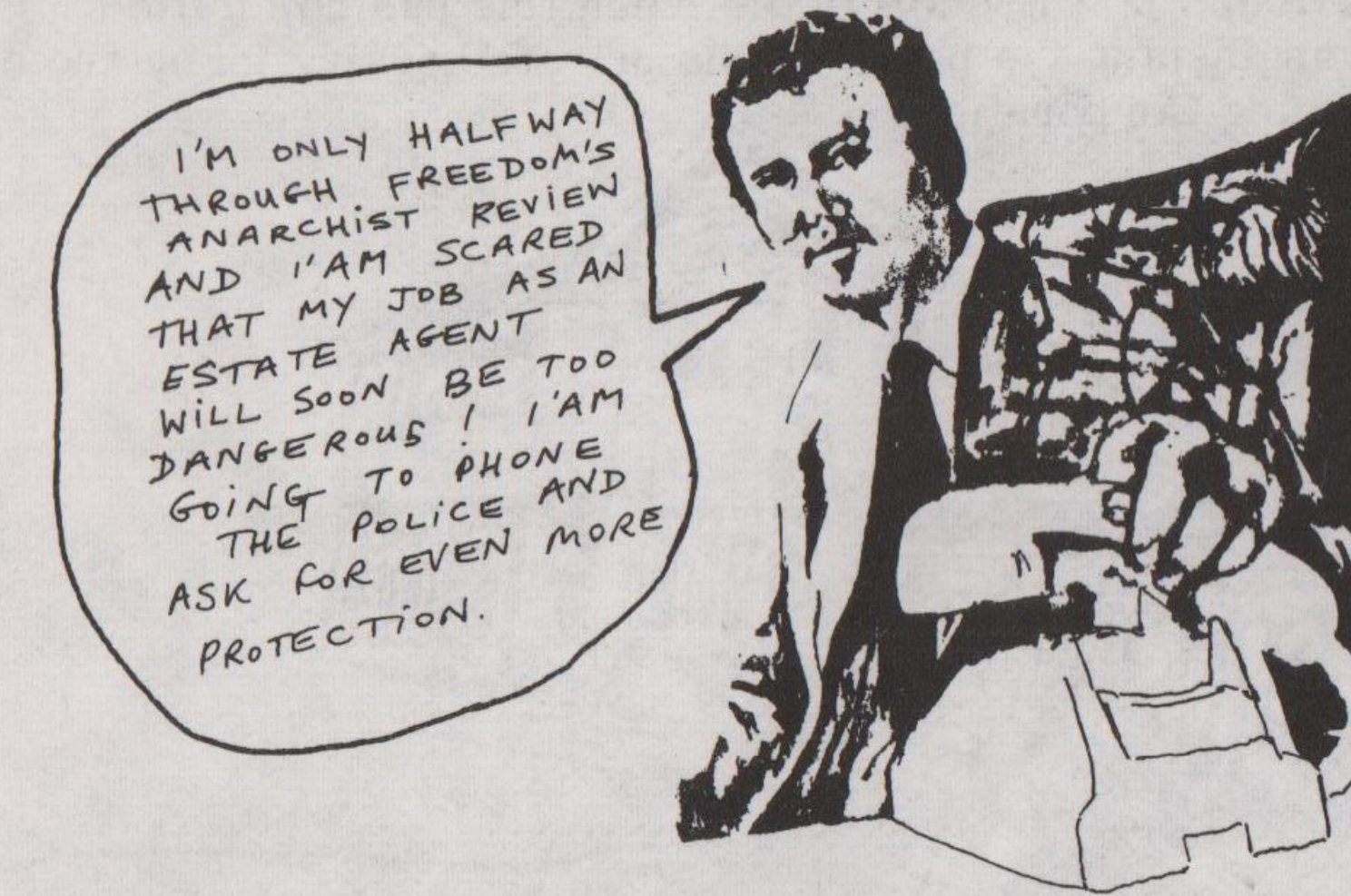
"People often try to get into higher class areas than they'll be accepted in. We just don't show them any houses in those areas."

"I would do my best to head off coloured buyers from a good suburban area or a new estate. In fact it would be my duty to do so in the interests of the community and for the sake of people who have bought houses in good faith." (18)

In some of their journals they exchange information on which areas are ready for a change towards higher property prices and a change in status.

"The fascinating thing about London is that it throws up an endless supply of new possibilities for the property pioneer and Brixton is about as near to the Klondike as you can get without actually digging."

No direct line of command appears to exist between building societies, estate agents and others. Many building society directors, however, are also valuers, surveyors, solicitors, estate agents, mortgage brokers and so on. The caution practiced by the societies' managers must have a greatly



moderating effect on the adventurous spirit of estate agents eager to alter the social geography of cities like London. Whilst the many roles of estate agents place them in an important position with regard to the generation and manipulation of change they are still the intermediaries of a wider institutional framework for housing allocation (resulting from the development of a corporate society) whose principle trend setter is, at present, the building societies movement.

### SOLICITORS

Undisputed masters of the art of 'extortion with menaces' are the solicitors. Solicitors have a monopoly over 'conveyancing' which they enforce through their direct access to the courts and through the protection of their 'godfather', known as the Law Society. 'Conveyancing' is the main source of income for many solicitors' firms and the work involved is usually handed onto young inexperienced clerks and involves about half an hour's work actually done in the solicitor's office. Nevertheless, the Law Society manages to successfully prosecute anybody carrying out conveyancing work who is not a solicitor.

The next major feat achieved by the Law Society is the recommendation from the Monopolies Commission to abolish many Fee Scales which have been used as a guide by the other institutions (eg. the RICS) for the upper limit (and effectively the lowest limit) of the fee charged for various 'services.' This recommendation has met with hostility from the RICS, the ISVA and the IQS (Institute of Quantity Surveyors) who pointed out that "only a very small minority of the clients consulted by the commission favoured abolition" (19). The Monopolies Commission argued that this would enable clients to 'shop around' for the cheapest fees (all very well in a situation in which people are actually given a choice - not the situation in the housing jungle in Britain).

It was *Private Eye* (sadly the only wide circulation magazine which dares to criticise the establishment) that pointed out the real reason for the abolition of the scale fees. The Fee

Scales were proving a hindrance to solicitors constantly in search of more lucrative business with monopolistic prices being charged for no work at all. The Law Society is, of course, supposed to arbitrate in cases where absurdly high fees are charged (despite the fact that even the fee scales are extortionate), but as *Private Eye* points out:

"Although the Law Society has gone in for mass advertising, it is careful never to tell the public what to do if presented with an outrageous solicitor's bill" (20).

The other institutions saw the fee scales as a means of establishing the respectability and impartiality of their members. It is interesting to note, however, where the power lies in the 'transaction costs' racket.

### LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING

The size and importance of local authority housing both in terms of the actual number of units and the amount of resources directed towards it has grown tremendously during this century. The 'public' housing sector (which has now become the second most important form of tenure) first grew and developed as a response to drastic housing shortages in the interwar period immediately after the First World War. After the Second another severe housing shortage presented itself which, in turn, boosted the size of the 'public' sector. Attempts by the Conservatives to boost private house building in the 50s resulted in further growth of the 'public' sector owing to the unwillingness of private developers to build homes. In the 60s the 'housing cost yardstick' was introduced for the building of local authority housing which, in addition to the appalling designs of the schemes, also guaranteed a very low quality product.

By the 70s Conservative pressure had succeeded in reducing the status of 'public' housing to that of merely performing a 'charitable' function. The Conservatives have always been dogmatically opposed to 'public' housing as a form of tenure and no doubt the lobbying power of the 'private' market (building societies, RICS, ISVA, Federation of Master Builders, Confederation of British Industry etc, etc) helped to turn even the Labour Party against its own creation.

From being virtually non-existent before 1914, by 1975 as many as 5.2 million houses were owned by local authorities (compared to 9.9 million which were owner-occupied and 2.9 million which were privately rented). More than 80% of council tenants are working class (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers) whereas over 80% of the owner-occupiers were professionals, employers, managers, and non-professional white collar employees. It would therefore seem that local authority housing provides accommodation for that section of the population which cannot be catered for by the private market. Unfortunately this is only partly true, since those who experience the greatest difficulties in obtaining housing are either not catered for by local authorities, or if they are, they are put in the lowest standard of accommodation available.

Given the highly restrictive access system that operates in all areas of housing, the demand for council housing is never matched by the supply, and so, most local authorities operate a 'waiting list' system. Subjective assessments are made by 'housing managers' of who is, or isn't, a desirable tenant and they also award the 'points' which determine the position of families, and sometimes individuals, on the waiting list. The application of a 'residential qualification rule' before someone can get on the waiting list (sometimes as long as five years) also helps to ensure that only a minority of the population are even considered for allocation of a council house or flat.

Housing managers, however, are usually relatively lowly paid employees of a local authority with very little power in either the local authority or in society as a whole. This is partly why council housing has been such an easy target for the Conservatives and the 'private property' lobby as being wasteful, claiming that it would be better in 'private' hands. The institutionalised power blocs (BSA, RICS etc) are eager to get their hands on the valuable assets which the local authority housing stock represents. You can just imagine the fees generated by the sale of up to 5.2 million housing units!

### HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS AND THE HOUSING CORPORATION

A few years ago the Conservative Party presented the development of the role of the 'housing associations' as a preferable alternative to council housing (which should all be sold off anyway!) Although housing associations have been in exist-



ence for at least 150 years (their activities ranging from self-build schemes and equity sharing to rehabilitation schemes for old houses) it is only recently that one organisation has been given power over the various associations. The ominously titled 'Housing Corporation' seems to be the prototype for a powerful, technobureaucratic housing allocation system. All grants and subsidies for the housing associations come from the Department of the Environment via the Housing Corporation.

The Corporation was set up in 1964, and was given very extensive powers of control over housing associations (taken out of local authority hands) after the 1974 Housing Act. Controlled by government appointees, it is an enormous national housing authority with an initial 1974-75 budget of £ 750 million, equivalent to 30,000 new and improved units. Housing associations grants are planned to increase as those for council housing fall. The Corporation is answerable only to the Secretary of State, and certainly not to either housing associations or their tenants. The Co-operative Housing Agency, a subsidiary of the Corporation, is to be the promotional and financing agency for tenants cooperatives. (22)

Incidentally, from 1973 to 1977 the chairman of the Housing Corporation was none other than Lord Goodman who was made a baron in 1965 by the then Labour prime minister Harold Wilson (Goodman is/was Wilson's solicitor) and is also well known for his involvement with the 'arts', sitting on a variety of boards and committees which allocate finances to theatres, cinemas, artists, orchestras, etc. He is also chairman of the National Building Agency (since 1973) and was chairman of the Newspaper Publishers Association from 1970-75. His involvement in the Housing Corporation meant that he was "able to enlist onto the staff of the corporation some key men who shared his zeal" (23) to make the corporation "a success."

#### THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

The decline of the private rented sector during this century has been phenomenal. In 1914 over 7 million housing units were privately rented, and only 0.8 units were owner-occupied. By 1975, however, the number of privately-rented units had fallen to 2.9 million. In the meantime the total housing stock had risen from 7.9 million (1914) to over 18 million. The decrease in private rented accommodation is mainly attributable to its relative lack of attraction as a form of investment. The often-voiced accusation that it is rent controls which have caused the decline of this sector is mythology!

The problems caused by the decline of the private rented sector are most acutely felt in the inner city areas. Shelter's evidence to the review of the Rent Acts pointed out that the worst housing in the nation is concentrated in the private rented sector, which in turn is concentrated in the inner city (24).

The authorities are concerned, therefore, to assist in the orderly decline of the private rented sector. However, since the people who are tied to private renting would not be acceptable to the building societies as clients and local authority housing development is under attack (likely also to experience considerable decline by the end of the century) the opportunity is provided for the expansion of the Housing Corporation. Not only does the Housing Corporation face no competition but it is encouraged and heavily subsidised by the State and, as a reward, will eventually command huge areas of the inner city.

#### GOVERNMENT POLICIES

When the Labour Party regained power in 1974, Anthony Crosland was appointed secretary of state for the environment and set up a 'Housing Finance Review' which was intended to study and then recommend remedies for the adverse effects of the jumble of uncoordinated legislation that had been generated by successive governments. Crosland had noticed that the housing finance system was inequitable and highly regressive (ie. the largest amount of subsidy went to those who needed it least).

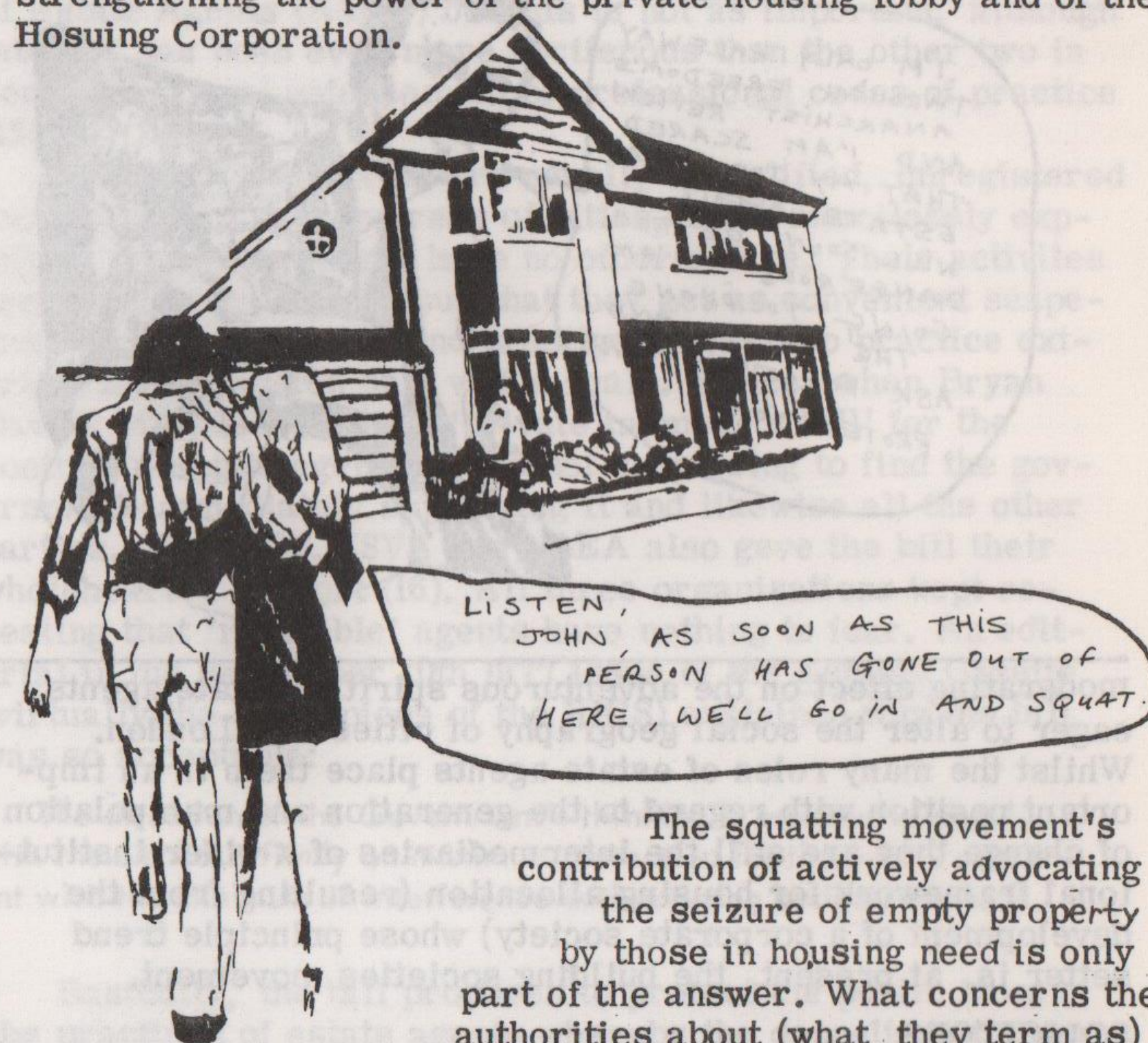
As a 'self-confessed' social democrat he was seeking an efficient technobureaucratic solution to the absurdities which were manifest in the area of housing. He wanted to know how much housing was needed, how much people would be prepared to pay for housing, and what were the wider social implications of the way housing is organised. These potentially explosive questions must have seriously worried the Tories, the BSA, the RICS, ISVA, the Master Builders Federation, the top ranks of the civil service and so on.

His successor Peter Shore eventually produced the latest Green Paper on Housing which neatly avoids all these questions, will greatly increase the size of the owner-occupied sector

(and hence the power of the 'private' housing lobby), is designed to bring about the decline of the 'public' housing sector (even Peter Walker, ex secretary of state for the environment in the 70-74 Tory government has expressed concern about the Labour government's proposals for the 'public sector') and introduced a new technical management weapon. This latter device (the Housing Investment Programme - HIP) will enable central government to control local authority activities speedily and without the intervention of the democratic decision-making facade. The HIPs will be drawn up by the local authorities themselves but the approval or otherwise is entirely in the Treasury's hands. The latest HIPs approved for the London Borough of Hammersmith allocated an equal amount of money to the council for rehabilitation as it did for the housing associations operating in the borough.

#### DISMANTLE THE INSTITUTIONS!

Those who argue that the problems of the city are caused by a system whose sole concern is the seeking of profit through the accumulation of private property in fewer and fewer hands and that the only solution to these problems is to set up a system in which the private ownership of property no longer exists have a very blinkered view of the way cities function. The building societies and estate agents seek profit through ensuring the widest possible distribution of private home ownership. The Housing Corporation does not seek profit but it does seek the power over housing allocation (in the inner city areas in particular). The state in the meantime has committed itself to strengthening the power of the private housing lobby and of the Housing Corporation.



The squatting movement's contribution of actively advocating the seizure of empty property by those in housing need is only part of the answer. What concerns the authorities about (what they term as) "the squatting problem" is not the fact that people are taking property which "belongs" to someone else but that

it interferes with the allocation system (in fact openly defying that system).

In the London borough of Hammersmith in 1976 there was a crude shortfall of dwellings over households of 2,500 dwellings. In 1977 as many as 7,7% of all privately owned dwellings stood empty (roughly 7% of the total housing stock of the borough) and 1% of the housing stock consisted of empty council owned dwellings. The result of the way in which the institutions operate their control over access is shown by the rising homelessness figures, the absurdly high prices of even properties in bad repair and the increasing number of empty properties (in anticipation of even higher price rises).

To achieve the kind of cities we would wish to live in we must seek ways of dismantling the allocation system (either through rendering that type of profession dangerous or archaic or precarious or all three) and developing libertarian forms of organisation to distribute existing resources (which includes extension of the squatting movement), and build more and better housing meeting actual needs and not the needs of the powerful.

British cities now have an increasing number of homeless people and a decreasing number of areas providing accommodation to those with limited incomes. This "conspiracy of parasites" calling itself the 'free' market is obviously incapable

(if it was ever concerned with the problem in the first place) of dealing with an increasingly inequitable distribution of of accommodation of a type and quality which only satisfies the desires of the institutions.

In Colin Ward's open letter to the secretary of state for the environment (25) he also pointed out that state intervention has shown itself incapable of dealing with the problems of cities and that, if anything, the 'experts' have made things worse:

..... this is not a short-term crisis but a permanent characteristic of our kind of society, and secondly ... The 'experts' are the last people from whom to seek solutions: look at what they have given us in the past. Wasn't it the experts who gave us high-rise housing and the intolerable problems it has bequeathed us? Wasn't it the experts who bulldozed the humble homes of every inner-city district in a blitzkrieg policy of raze-and-rise, where the urge to raze has outstripped the financial capacity to rise? ..... You and he (Lord Goodman) see the homeless, the ill-housed and overcrowded and the newly-weds just coming up for membership of the Housing Shortage Club, as the inert objects, the raw material of policy waiting to be processed by the Housing Problems Industry. But suppose we turn the whole subject upside down and assume that ordinary people are the makers, rather than the victims of policy. We can then see a totally new spectrum of opportunities and possibilities, some of which the experts dismiss as irrelevant, some of which they regard as subversive and some of which they know nothing at all about.

Dismantling the allocation system is, unfortunately, easier said than done, but the consequences of not doing so will be more homeless, more empty homes, more expensive, boring suburban homes, and dead cities. To render "that type of profession dangerous" is theoretically simple, and there is no need for me to spell it out in this article. However, the difficult part is rendering the institutions "archaic" and "precarious". This entails working out our own alternative methods of distribution, production of housing and life styles. Some of the answers are to be found in anarchist and libertarian writings on the city which we, regrettably, tend to ignore. Colin Ward points out that:

Anarchism - the political philosophy of a non-governmental society of autonomous communities - does not at first sight seem to address itself to the problems of the city at all. But there is, in fact, a stream of anarchist contributions to urban thought that stretches from Kropotkin

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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- (2) *Housing Policy*, Technical Volume Part I, HMSO, London, 1937, p.36
- (3) See Table A in 'The Housing Policy Review and the Role of the Building Societies', published by the Building Societies Association (January 1978)
- (4) 'More Homeless', in *Roof*, SHELTER's Housing Magazine, Sept. 1977
- (5) An article by C. Boyd entitled 'A Fair Share?' which appeared in *Roof* (Sept. 1977) sets out financial and statistical evidence to show that, irrespective of whether a household owns its own home or is a tenant in a Council home, more resources are directed to the better-off households than to the households with lower incomes.
- (6) *Housing Policy* Technical Volume Part II, p.86
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- (8) *Housing Policy* Technical Volume Part II, p. 96
- (9) Prof. H. B. Rose: 'The Housing Policy Review and the Finance of Owner-Occupation'. A paper presented at the Building Societies Association Conference on the Housing Policy Review, 16th December 1977. See 'The Housing Policy Review and the Role of the Building Societies'.
- (10) M. Harloe, R. Issacharoff, R. Minns: *The Organisation of Housing* Centre for Environmental Studies, 1974, Heinemann, p. 94
- (11) For further details of such schemes see Part II of my article 'Technobureaucracy and City Life' due to appear in *Interrogations* 15.
- (12) Leonard E. H. Williams, 'Relations Between Local Authorities and Building Societies'. A paper presented at the 16th Dec. 1977 Conference of the BSA (see references 3 and 9)

to Murray Bookchin historically, and from John Turner to the International Situationists ideologically. A lot of people who might help us evolve an anarchist philosophy of the city would never think of trying because in spirit, though less often in practice, they have abandoned the city. (26)



Given the complexity of cities it would be absurd for one group to get together and decide what should or should not be done about them and city life. Various steps have to be taken to encourage direct action in different areas and regarding different issues. At least, initially, those who like arranging and attending conferences could do worse than arrange an anarchist/libertarian conference dealing with housing and other aspects of the city. Others may feel the desire to conspire so as to engage in other forms of direct action and they do not need to be told to "conspire" only with those they can trust. Others, no doubt, can suggest other kinds of activity. Let's hear about them, discuss them and transform our desires into reality!

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ILLUSTRATIONS THROUGHOUT, COURTESY OF THE RECRUITING PROPAGANDA OF THE 'ABBEY NATIONAL' BUILDING SOCIETY

- (13) Michael Blanden, 'Big banks object to building society rivalry' in *Financial Times*, 6th March 1978, p. 1
- (14) Jeremy Graham, 'Home Buyer's Who's Who' in *Homefinder*, Jan. 1978. This is a magazine which is dedicated to persuading corporate employees to buy corporate houses and to place all their trust in the professional agencies.
- (15) 'Estate Agency Control: NAEA Seeks Co-operation of MP's', in *Estates Gazette*, Nov. 5th 1977. A whole series of articles, editorials, etc. have been appearing in the *Estates Gazette* about the Bill now before Parliament to control Estate Agents. The NAEA's support has been virtually unconditional whilst the RICS and ISVA have expressed minor reservations.
- (16) 'The Estate Agents Bill: Unopposed Second Reading', *Estates Gazette*, 11th Feb. 1978 and 'New Proposals for Estate Agents Regulations', *Estates Gazette* 3rd Sept. 1977
- (17) 'The Residential Market 1977 - I', *Estates Gazette*, 11th Feb. 1978
- (18) Both quotes are taken from interviews cited in P. Williams' paper on 'The Role of the Financial Institutions'
- (19) 'Monopolies Commission Recommends Abolition of Many Fee Scales', *Estates Gazette*, 12th Nov. 1977
- (20) 'The Conveyancers', *Private Eye* 3rd March 1978
- (21) For detailed examples of arbitrariness and blatant discrimination see E. Burney's article 'Immigrants to Cities and Council Housing Allocation' in *Cities in Modern Britain*, edited by C. Lambert and D. Weir.
- (22) M. Phillips: 'Housing Associations', *Architectural Design*, August 1976
- (23) 'Housing Association Progress', *Estates Gazette*, 13th August 1977
- (24) SHELTER: 'The Future of Private Rented Housing', Evidence to the review of the Rent Acts.
- (25) Colin Ward, 'Housing: an anarchist approach', *Freedom Press*, London, 1976, p. 94
- (26) Colin Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 87