

# FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

WE WELCOME news, reviews, articles, letters.  
Copy deadline for next issue (no.17) is **MON-  
DAY 28 AUGUST**

NEXT DESPATCHING DATE is THURSDAY  
31 AUGUST. Come and help from 5 p.m.  
(Help also welcomed the previous Thursday, 24  
August for folding the review).

## International

### AUSTRALIA

Canberra: Alternative Canberra Group, 10  
Beltana Road, Pialligo, ACT 2809

New South Wales  
Black Ram, PO Box 238, Darlinghurst, NSW  
2010  
Disintegrator! PO Box 291, Bondi Junction,  
Sydney, NSW  
Sydney Anarcho-Syndicalists, Jura Books  
Collective, 417 King Street, Newtown, NSW  
2042  
Sydney Libertarians, PO Box 24, Darlinghurst,  
NSW 2010

Queensland  
Libertarian Socialist Organisation, PO Box 268,  
Mt Gravatt, Central 4122  
Self-Management Organisation, PO Box 332,  
North Quay, Queensland

Victoria  
La Trobe Libertarian Socialists, c/o SRC, La  
Trobe University, Bundoora, Vic. 3083  
Monash Anarchist Society, c/o Monash Univer-  
sity, Clayton, 3168 Melbourne

South Australia  
Adelaide Anarchists, PO Box 67, North  
Adelaide, 5006

Western Australia  
Freedom Collective, PO Box 14, Mount Haw-  
thorn, 6018

### TASMANIA

c/o 34 Kennedy St, Launceston 7250

### NEW ZEALAND

PO Box 2052 Auckland  
PO Box 22-607 Christchurch  
Daybreak Bookshop, PO Box 5424 Dunedin

### CANADA

Open Road, Box 6135, Station G, Vancouver,  
BC. Write for information on activities.

### USA

Minnesota: Soil of Liberty, Box 7056, Powder-  
horn Station, Minneapolis, Minn. 55407  
Missouri: Columbia, MO 65201  
New York: Libertarian Book Club, Box 842,  
GPO, New York, NY 10012  
SRAF/Freespace Alternative U, 339 Lafayette  
St, NYC, NY 10012  
San Francisco: Free Socialist, PO Box 1751,  
San Francisco, CA 94101  
Texas: Houston SRAF, South Post Oak Station,  
PO Box 35253, Houston, TX 77035

### WESTERN EUROPE

### DENMARK

Aarhus: Regnbuen Anarkist Bogcafe, Meiljgade  
48, 8000 Aarhus  
Copenhagen: Anarkist-Synd. Bogcafe, Studies-  
traede 18, 1455 Copenhagen  
Christiania: Write Stot Christiania, Dronning-  
ensgade 14, 1420 Copenhagen  
HUNTLEY ST. SQUAT CONT'D P.3

STOP PRESS: Despite cynically negotiating until Tues Night the authorities sent in several hundred police and bailiffs at 6 am Weds.

### FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Baden: ABF Infoburo, Postfach 161, 761  
Schwabish Hall  
Berlin: Anarkistische Bund, Publishers of  
'Anarkistische Texte', c/o Libertad Verlag,  
Postfach 153, 1000 Berlin 44

'Gewaltfreie Aktion' (non-violent action)  
groups throughout FRG, associated WRI.  
For information write Karl-Heinz Sang,  
Methfesselstr. 69, 2000 Hamburg 19

### FRANCE

Paris: Federation anarchiste francaise, 3 rue  
Ternaux, 75011 Paris

### ITALY

Roma: Gruppo Hem Day, c/o Giovanni Trapani,  
via A. Tittoni, 5-00153 Rome  
(The Hem Day Group originated from the need  
to introduce into the anarchist movement  
elements for discussion and research into the  
theoretical purpose and to clarify the ethical  
role of the libertarian idea. The Group  
propose to develop pedagogical activity based  
on knowledge of the anarchist ethic. It  
suggests that the exact dimension of the  
libertarian ethic has been forgotten over the  
last few years - with grave damage to  
anarchism's anti-authoritarian ends).

### SWEDEN

Frihetlige Forum, Landsvagsgatan 19,  
41304 04 GÖTEBORG.

Frihetligt Forum, Renstiernasgata 51,  
11631 STOCKHOLM.

Revolutionära Anarkisters Organisation,  
Box 11075, S-100 61 STOCKHOLM.

## Meetings

Although the May picnic was a success,  
it poured rain all day - so we, AUM  
(Anarcho Utopian Mystics) and company  
are having another one.  
Details: ANARCHIST PICNIC, 2.00 on.  
Bring FOOD, DRINK, FLAGS,  
YOURSELVES, KIDS.  
There will be FOOTBALL, BOATING,  
SPEAKERS.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 20

-----? SURPRISES? -----

AT FINSBURY PARK, NORTH LONDON

AUM have had to change the day, time  
and place of their meetings.  
Meetings are now held at FLAG centre,  
13 James St, Covent Garden, every  
Thursday at 7.30 pm.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE ARMS TRADE  
National meeting in Oxford 15-17 Sept.  
Early September arms exhibitions, 3-10  
Farnborough International '78. 5-7, Elec-  
tronics displays at Mount Royal Hotel,  
London W.1. Programme details from,  
CAAT, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1  
9DX (tel. 01-278 1976)

## MARY CANIPA

We are sorry to report that our com-  
rade Mary Canipa was involved in a str-  
eet accident two weeks ago and is still  
in hospital recovering from an operation.  
She is in good spirits and sends the foll-  
owing note:

Dear comrades

Thank you to all the people who have visited,  
written to or enquired about me during the fort-  
night of my incarceration in hospital. I'd  
rather not put into print the embarrassing details  
of how I contrived to acquire a couple of  
screwed together bones by collision with the  
ecological bicycle.

I expect to be out of hospital hale and hearty  
before this is being read. But the sentence for  
my stupidity is three months of very restricted  
mobility.

Therefore will any of you who have full use  
of your faculties and some free time, please  
offer them to the Freedom Collective to allev-  
iate the inconvenience caused by my sudden  
and unprovided departure.

LOVE

MARY

**McNee** (from pg 5)

- set up roadblocks to search cars at  
a place which a senior officer believes  
may prove a fruitful source for the dis-  
covery or prevention of crime;

- use 'necessary force' in legal searches.

All this would virtually remove the  
existing protection of suspects under the  
so-called 'Judges' Rules'. The National  
Council for Civil Liberties are naturally  
horrified. They describe the proposals  
as 'wholly unacceptable ... they virtually  
abolish the safeguards of people who  
are arrested, even if they are wrongly  
under suspicion.'

So, in the face of all this, how can I  
maintain this flippant tone. Because it  
ain't news, comrades! Ask anyone who's  
had anything to do with the police.  
Ask Commissioner McNee. They'll all  
tell you the same thing. This list of  
'proposals' is no more than a recognit-  
ion of the status quo. The police do all  
this anyway. McNee says so in his sub-  
mission. They just want it legitimised.

However, without the flippancy: the  
police in this country are changing.  
Over the past few years they have be-  
come increasingly centralised. They use  
more technology (the details are given  
in The Political Police in Britain by Tony  
Bunyan). They are developing more  
specialised political branches, such as  
the Anti Terrorist Squad. They are be-  
coming more militarised. More carry  
guns. In a word, they are getting heavy.

Now, I don't suppose that McNee ex-  
pects to get all his wishes; no doubt he's  
working on a principle of maximum de-  
mands, and then you're bound to get  
something. ("Be realistic, demand the  
impossible!") And if the police act like  
this with the present regulations, just  
think comrades, what will they be like  
with the above official powers!

DP

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# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

August 19/78

Vol 39 No16

20p

## Mother is gaoled for hiding sons

A mother who disobeyed  
court order to send  
child for a holi-



# More Cracks!

THE EVENTS OF the last two weeks as  
reflected in this issue, provide interest-  
ing comment on the way things are mov-  
ing. There is a judicial thread running  
through it - summed up in the demands  
of David McNee, who openly admits that  
the police break all their regulations.  
So what can we do? Legalise the practice!

The practice is illustrated by the  
'Persons Unknown' conspiracy case  
where we see the police in action. Sus-  
pects' rights are ignored; bail is refused  
- unless one is a prominent public figure  
like Jeremy Thorpe.

Inside the prisons the charade contin-

ues, as we commented last issue. Jake  
Prescott is still being harrassed because  
he stands up for himself. Meanwhile, in  
London, the forces of repression are  
poised to shatter the Huntley Street com-  
munity and turn most of its members  
onto the streets!

The tendency towards an ordered,  
rigid society is obvious. We face in-  
creasing centralisation. This produces  
'contradictions' and cracks appear.  
Their only answer is to clamp down and  
tighten the rules, their rules. Our an-  
swer must be - to increase the 'contrad-  
ictions' and produce more cracks!



# GAY ACTIVISTS ALLIANCE

ON Wednesday, 5 July a workshop on the gay media was held in the Action Space Drill Hall, Cheneys St, as part of the Gay Pride Week activities. After the meeting a number of gay people went to the Marlborough pub in Huntley St.

At 10.30 pm a gay man went to the bar for drinks. Two men at the bar started to make derisive comments: "Hello sweetie" and "Leave my friend alone - he's with me tonight." When the gay man objected the barman intervened, saying that he was not going to serve him. After further protests one of the other two men grabbed him by the throat and made various threats. This prompted the barman to decide to throw out the gay man. He broke away and went over to his friends. The bar staff came over and tried to force him to leave. He refused to go. Ten minutes later police came into the

pub. They told him to leave. He did so reluctantly.

After he had left the police proceeded to eject all the other identifiably gay people in the bar, going for the women first. They resisted and a fight developed. The police called reinforcements. Two women were arrested. A crowd of about 30 people gathered outside Tottenham Court Rd police station demanding their release. The women were kept until 2 am and charged with 'wilful obstruction of the police and using threatening words likely to cause a breach of the peace.' (Note that the barman had earlier told the people that they were behaving like 'cunts'.)

This is not an isolated incident; gay people are daily being insulted and harassed in pubs and elsewhere. In Earls Court the police are constantly using agents provocateurs to arrest gay men for importuning. In Manchester earlier this year the police resurrected an 1882 by-law to try and stop close dancing in gay clubs. We are asking for your support in putting pressure on Courage Breweries by writing to them. We suggest that you include the following points:

- (i) that Courage Breweries investigate this incident at the Marlborough and any similar incidents in their other pubs.
- (ii) that they take action to ensure that the managers and staff do not tolerate insulting and abusive behaviour towards any

customer, regardless of race, sex or sexual orientation.

- (iii) that pending this enquiry they give a public assurance that they do not countenance discriminatory treatment of gay people and other minority groups.

Please write as soon as possible to: Courage Breweries, Anchor Brewhouse, Horsleydown Lane, London SE1.

The defence campaign is being organised and supported by London Gay Activists Alliance, Gay Pride Week Committee, Lesbian Left, S.E. London Socialist Feminist Group and others who were involved in or witnessed the incident, eg. staff and students from the University of London Institute of Education, Huntley St squatters, Action Space. The case against the two women will be heard at Wells St Magistrates' Court W1 on September 4 at 10 am. We are expecting an acquittal but will need £ 200 for legal costs and fines plus money for the appeal if they are found guilty. We already have some guarantees towards this but need more so please ask groups you are in to send guarantees of money to: GAA/Linda Edwards Defence Fund, c/o Gay Switchboard, 5 Caledonian Rd, NL. If you would like to give further support to this campaign the next meeting is on September 5, 7.30 pm at the Cafe, Action Space Drill Hall, Cheneys St, London W1.

# BLASPHEMY

THE latest episode in the long saga of the Gay News blasphemy case is for once pure farce rather than mere tragi-comedy.

At the beginning of this month, Charles Oxley, a Christian extremist who owns two private schools in Liverpool and who is a leading activist in the pro-censorship movement, issued a statement in favour of the blasphemy law signed by 182 people.

Most of the signatories are clergymen, but several of them are members of both Houses of Parliament, lawyers and journalists, businessmen and teachers, and so on. Some of them are well-known figures in the entertainment business - Arthur Askey, Isobel Barnett, Cicely Courtneidge, Robert Dougall, Joyce Grenfell, Irene Handel, Dickie Henderson, Flora Robson, Jimmy Saville, Norman St John-Stevas, Terry Scott, Kenneth Williams and Barbara Windsor. A few of them seem to belong to the entertainment business - "Masood Archad, Student, Pakistani nationality", for example, and "Chin Yun Choy, Chinese student" - but it is possible that the inclusion of their names is not in fact meant to be funny.

There is certainly no humour elsewhere in the statement. It begins with a long personal introduction by Charles Oxley himself, complaining not so much about the original publication of James Kirkup's poem in *Gay News* as about the re-publication of it. There are several minor errors in this introduction, beginning with the wrong date for the conviction of *Gay News* in the first line. But there is also a major error in the following paragraph, which is printed in bold type:

One cannot escape the conclusion that Denis Lemon and his friends, operating under several different names and posing as a body of intellectuals, have deliberately re-published the article, knowing it to be a blasphemous libel, as a challenge to the whole judicial system, in the hope that by defying the law, they will succeed in destroying it.

That is a fair summary of the aims of the many individuals, organisations and periodicals (including *FREEDOM*) which have been responsible for the distribution of tens of thousands of copies of the poem since Mary Whitehouse began her private prosecution of *Gay News* and its editor Denis Lemon in December 1976. But everyone involved in this activity knows that *Gay News* and Denis Lemon in particular have of course had nothing to do with it. So, of all the people to name, Denis Lemon is last one to choose.

The solicitors for *Gay News* and Denis Lemon, whose attention was drawn to the statement immediately after Charles Oxley's press conference on August 1, have demanded the withdrawal of the statement, the circulation of an apology to their client of all the signatories and to everyone else who has received a copy of the statement, and the payment of damages and costs.

Meanwhile the statement was almost totally ignored in the press. The two reporters from national newspapers who attended the press conference asked many questions but wrote no stories. The main topic of interest was not so much the statement supporting the blasphemy law but the identity and activity of the United Order of Blasphemers which is the latest organisation to re-publish

the poem (see *FREEDOM*, July 8).

The few reporters from religious newspapers didn't write many stories either. The only one of any importance appeared on the front page of the weekly *Catholic Herald* on August 4. Unfortunately a misprint led to the publication of the following statement:

A "United Order of Blasphemers" has recently been formed and this group is now reprinting and distributing homosexual poem. Mr Oxley is now reprinting and distributing the homosexual poem. Mr Oxley ...

So not only has Oxley's venture into controversy blown up in his face, but he has been hoist with his own petard. It is interesting that, when he is so much concerned to prevent blasphemous libel, he is so little concerned to avoid defamatory libel; and it is amusing that he has become the victim of his own weapons.

Nor has Mary Whitehouse had everything her own way recently. A couple of years ago she complained about the appearance on BBC television of Gotcha, Barry Keefe's brilliant play about a schoolboy who takes two teachers hostage and pours out all his resentment against the hypocrisy of the education system, because it contained 'bad language'. The BBC apologised, but decided to repeat the play this week. She complained again, before it was broadcast this time. The BBC apologised again, and cancelled it. But instead they broadcast a repeat of *Oy Vay Maria*, Mary O'Malley's brilliant play about a marriage between a Jew and a Catholic which makes fun of the Judaeo-Christian religion just as strongly as Gotcha makes hay of the state schools. It doesn't contain 'bad language', but it contains plenty of 'bad thoughts' from the point of view of the Whitehouse. *Oy Vay, Mary!* People in Whitehouses shouldn't throw dirt.

MH

# The rise and fall of Jeremy Thorpe

PEOPLE who know Jeremy Thorpe say he is an amusing fellow. A good teller of stories, an easy raconteur, he is said to have a special talent as a mimic - especially of some of the more ridiculous of his parliamentary colleagues.

Well, that of course may be where his future lies, for it is now glaringly obvious that he has no future as a political leader, even of a party as peripheral to British politics as the Liberals. The sad fact about him, however - from his own point of view, that is - is that he has no past as a political leader either.

For in the short time that he apparently filled the position of leader of the Liberals he was simply not leader material, in spite of the fact that it was while he was titular head of the party that the Liberals had their brief glimpse of glory in clocking up 5 million votes in the February election of 1974.

But it was quite coincidental that Jeremy happened to be in that position at the time. The previous Liberal leader, Jo Grimond, had just retired and Thorpe had inherited the job and the charisma that Grimond had created - with the help of thousands of young idealists who had done the groundwork in building the local organisations on the theme of 'community politics'.

The Young Liberals were clearly not at all popular with the respectable old Liberals who had smugly sat at the top table during the years of Labour/Tory swings and roundabouts and spouted about the necessity of having a centre party to hold the balance. But under the vigorous leadership of Peter Hain (now there's leader material if you like!), they had launched campaigns which had captured the imaginations of the young middle-class ex-revolutionaries of the sixties, by linking militancy, direct action and involvement at local levels (where they could be successful) with respectability.

Although, dammit, they went a bit too far in interfering with cricket, nevertheless, the Stop the 70s Tour campaign was successful in stopping the South African cricket team coming here in 1970. Hundreds of Young Liberals sat down in Trafalgar Square in April 1971 and publicly burnt their census papers in protest against racist questions it contained. They showed the anarchists a thing or two about the publicity value of such exercises in direct action. What they were doing was to offer adventurous outlets for idealism which was not linked to revolutionary ideologies like Trotskyism or anarchism - all part of the good old English radical tradition. In fact the word 'radicalism' took wings again and was still fluttering bravely in 1974.

Like many success stories in politics, the electoral success of February '74 took the party leaders completely by surprise and Jeremy Thorpe flipped his lid.

Instead of realising that his influence still lay in the grassroots organisation that the vigorous Young Liberals had built up; instead of stumping the country and stoking up the fires at local levels; instead of insisting on the importance of people and the necessity of breaking down the institutions of centralised power - which was the argument of the 'community politics' activists among the Liberals, he aimed straight at the centre of power and tried to do a deal with either the Tories or the Labour Party for a coalition which would recognise him as a leader of a party with 5 million votes in the country, and give him some kind of office.

Not since the inglorious days of Ramsay MacDonald had a party leader managed to put out the fire in his own party members so effectively. By the time Harold Wilson called the October '74 election to try to consolidate his lead, Liberal activists were disillusioned with Jeremy Thorpe and although his publicity stunts and whistle-stop tours by helicopter (well, these are modern times) dragged in a few votes from people impressed by that sort of thing, the enthusiasm in the party had died. He was recognised for what he was: a politician on the make.

This, fundamentally, is the trouble with Jeremy. He is a politician on the make without the necessary toughness or ruthlessness to know how to manipulate the power scene properly - but more, he doesn't have the courage of his own convictions.

Politically he boomed when he allowed the megalomania which lurks in every politician's heart to get the better of him in 1974. Morally he boomed when he couldn't find the courage to justify his own behaviour when Norman Scott's allegations of having had a homosexual affair with Thorpe some years previously were first dug up by the press.

Homosexual acts between consenting adults in private are legal. Liberals, of all the political parties, surely have supported the changes in the laws which have made them so. Whether Scott's story was true or not, why could not Jeremy Thorpe have simply found the courage to say 'So what?' From the standpoint of a Liberal he could have argued that as long as he had done nothing illegal, nor anything which had hurt anybody else, then his private life was his own business and damn all to do with anyone else.

It would have been a brave and honest stand. But he wasn't up to it. Instead he was caught in the trap - and the trappings - of the 'public figure', and they have brought him down.

Mind you, these trappings have brought him some slight advantage in his present plight. We cannot of course comment upon the charge at present laid against him - of conspiracy to murder Norman Scott - but, being a respected (?) public

figure, with recognised important commitments, means that the terms of his remand have been extremely light for such a serious charge.

While our comrades Iris Mills, Ronan Bennett and the others, charged at last with offences much less serious than conspiracy to murder, have been remanded in custody for months, for much of the time incommunicado, Jeremy Thorpe and his alleged fellow-conspirators have been granted bail, with no shortage of guarantors with £5000 apiece, and with the right to ask for their passports when needed for the important business trips to which they are committed!

The class nature of our judicial system was never better illustrated. Nor have we had a better illustration of the opportunistic nature of our political system than in the rise and fall of Jeremy Thorpe.

PHILIP SANSOM

# Crisis looming

AFTER a lull events at the Huntley Street squat (see *FREEDOM* vol. 39 no.15) are moving to a crisis. In the face of widespread publicity the story was given sympathetic coverage in alternative, left and 'straight' press and the threatened eviction did not materialise. Camden council and the Area Health Authority continued to be 'unyielding', so the Greater London Council tried to act as an intermediary. It needed an occupation of Camden town hall last Friday (11th) to get talks. However, the council still maintained that it would give no help in rehousing single people (about three quarters of the Huntley Street inhabitants are single). The basis for this refusal was that it would be contrary to Camden's 'rational and progressive' housing policy.

Now the council is continuing with its policy of trying to split the squatters. Families were summoned to the Families Housing Aid Centre today (Monday) where they were interviewed. The council insisted that this could not be as a group, so each had to go individually and be told the same thing. Which was that they were to represent themselves during Tuesday and Wednesday when transport would be provided to go back to Huntley Street to collect their belongings (so why couldn't the transport just arrive there to start with?) They would be taken to unspecified accommodation where they are assured, gas and electricity would be connected. This 'offer' applies to families only, pregnant women count as single. This will be a once and for all offer, if refused (for whatever reason, e.g. squalor) the unfortunate involved will be on the streets. Presumably the heavies will then move on the buildings on Thursday or Friday.

There is a meeting in the street tonight to decide strategy. SEE STOP PRESS p.8

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NEW RATES**

One year	£ 6.00 (\$12.00)
Six months	£ 3.00 (\$ 3.00)
Five issues	£ 1.25 (\$ 2.50)



# PRISON NOTES

## VROOM UNIT

A reader currently imprisoned in New Jersey has written to us in answer to a query about the 'Vroom Readjustment Unit' where he is being kept:

"The Vroom R.U. is a relatively austere lock-up unit comprised of the following categories of prisoners:

1. Administrative segregation - prisoners who supposedly committed a serious disciplinary infraction and were sanctioned with segregation from the general prison population. These prisoners have been sentenced by an Adjustment Committee to a specific length of Ad Seg time, subject to periodic review, which is not to exceed one year barring any further institutional charges.

2. Protective Custody - prisoners who have reason to fear for their lives or well being if they were in general population. Some of these prisoners were subjected to unprovoked attacks by other prisoners. Admission into Protective Custody is on a voluntary basis and likewise prisoners may sign out of P.C. if they no longer feel endangered.

3. Administrative Protective Custody - this is a rather catchall classification including prisoners who were in Protective Custody voluntarily, but whom the prison administration does not want in general population, not wishing to be responsible for their safety; prisoners who have either testified for the State or are notorious informants, who would face almost certain reprisals from other prisoners; prisoners whose well being the Administration feels would be in jeopardy for any of a variety of reasons, such as being gay (or labelled as gay), effeminate, very young, physically or mentally handicapped, or due to the nature of the person's charges for which he (all males in the Vroom R.U.) was sent to prison; and lastly, those persons, including myself, who are not in any of the above categories, but who represent a threat to the Administration because they are/were active in some form of struggle either prior to being incarcerated or within the prison itself.

This last group of prisoners know how to avoid disciplinary charges and therefore cannot be placed in Ad Seg but are instead placed in Administrative Protective Custody and by reason of same i.e. being confined to the Vroom R.U. they are effectively isolated from the rest of the prison population (whom they might influence) and are denied access to the law library and various resources which might be of benefit. Additionally, unlike Ad Seg and voluntary Protective Custody, prisoners may be kept in Administrative Protective Custody indefinitely, at the discretion of the prison officials, who may simply maintain that a given prisoner's life is in danger.

In New Jersey prisoners are afforded numerous privileges, programmes and amenities, which are often not available in other prisons throughout the world, but it is inaccurate to think that New

Jersey prisoners are necessarily better off for it. Unfortunately, my fellow prisoners are quite complacent in prison with all their little comforts and rather than engage in struggle to obtain their freedom, either through the courts or otherwise, they 'struggle' for even more comforts! Mind you, I am not speaking of necessities. The prison officials are well aware of this as they play a game of give and take with these privileges in order to divert prisoners' attention from truly meaningful struggle.

Believe me when I say there would be utter pandemonium if these prisoners had their televisions taken away from them. (Yes, every prisoner in N.J. state prison is permitted to own a television, up to 15" screen size). No other single object, activity or force can mollify and subdue prisoners as efficiently as can a television. Every minute spent viewing television by a prisoner is a minute in which that prisoner is diverted from the reality of her or his incarceration. A prisoner is not forced to watch television but it is not unusual, to say the least, for prisoners to spend hour upon hour glued to that damn idiot-box. Considering also the content of television programming, virtually all of which is supportive of the state and its institutions, what better means of pacification could exist in a prison?

I do not believe in 'improving' prisons except as it affects basic needs, communications and the potential to gain one's liberty. To that effect, I regard a typewriter as an absolute necessity. It would indeed have been most laborious, if not impossible, to have handwritten all of the thousands of pages I have typewritten since coming to prison, particularly in my dealings with the courts, which I must carry on though I realise it reinforces same.

Permit me a brief digression concerning typewriters. Upon being transferred from State Prison

at Rahway, N.J. to the Vroom R.U. last May, most of my personal possessions were taken from me, including my typewriter, which I had been permitted to retain while at Rahway Prison. The reason for being deprived of one's typewriter in the Vroom R.U. was the claim by the hired help that weapons could be made from parts of a typewriter. In truth, however, the hired help feared prisoners' proper use of a typewriter intact (for legal work, letters, etc.) which is certainly a more formidable weapon than any part thereof.

There was a State typewriter provided for each tier to use, but they often could not be located - according to the hired help - or they were in disrepair. I subsequently took the matter to the Appellate Division of the Superior Court of N.J., claiming among other things that it was arbitrary and capricious to deprive Vroom R.U. prisoners from retaining a personal typewriter if the privilege is granted to all prisoners in every other N.J. prison. The Appellate Court dismissed my appeal, stating it was frivolous, therefore I filed my appeal with the Supreme Court of N.J. Several days after filing the latter action, the director of the Vroom R.U. approached me and said I could have my typewriter if I dropped the legal action. I declined his offer as I wanted all prisoners in the Vroom R.U. to be permitted to possess a personal typewriter. A week thenceforth the director issued a notice to all prisoners in the Vroom R.U. which stated that we could now have our own typewriters. I did not withdraw my appeal, however, as I sought to remove certain restrictions concerning the typewriters which were not in effect at other N.J. prisons, but I was not successful in that respect.

Yours in struggle  
Robert Gerson

## U.S. VICTORY

PRISON movement activists Gay Hoon and Betsy Wood won an important victory on 22 June when all charges against them in connection with a recent breakout attempt at the B.C. Penitentiary were thrown out for lack of evidence (see story in FREEDOM, 15 April, no. 7).

Provincial court judge Lorne Clare ruled at the conclusion of a two-week long preliminary hearing that the prosecution had failed to make a credible case in alleging that Wood and Hoon had assisted the five prisoners in the breakout attempt. Clare's cataloguing of the points not proven gave a clear indication of the attempted railroading of Wood and Hoon by the prosecution and the Canadian Penitentiary Service. Both Hoon and Wood had long been active in the campaign against solitary confinement at the British Columbia Penitentiary.

The preliminary was held to determine whether Wood and Hoon should be committed for trial on the charges, which included murder (a guard was stabbed by one of the prisoners). But they're not out of the woods yet: the prosecutor, obviously shocked by the unexpected turn of events, is now hinting that he may proceed by direct indictment against the two - bypassing the judge's decision and asking the attorney general to sign the papers committing them to trial.

Money can be sent to: Wood-Hoon Defence Fund, c/o CCEC Credit Union, #10-246 E. Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. Canada.

More information about conditions in solitary confinement generally can be had from: Solitary Confinement Abolition Project, Box 758, Stn A, Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

## Persons Unknown

FIRST, to recompense for our layout error in the last issue, here is the list of charges again:

Iris Mills and Ronan Bennett - three counts of dishonestly handling air guns.

Dafydd Ladd - dishonest possession of a firearm (air rifle)

Vince Stevenson and Trevor Dawton - possession of various firearms (the ones 'discovered' in the raid of Thursday, 6 July)

Stewart Carr - four armed robberies of money (total £3,800) and two armed robberies of firearms

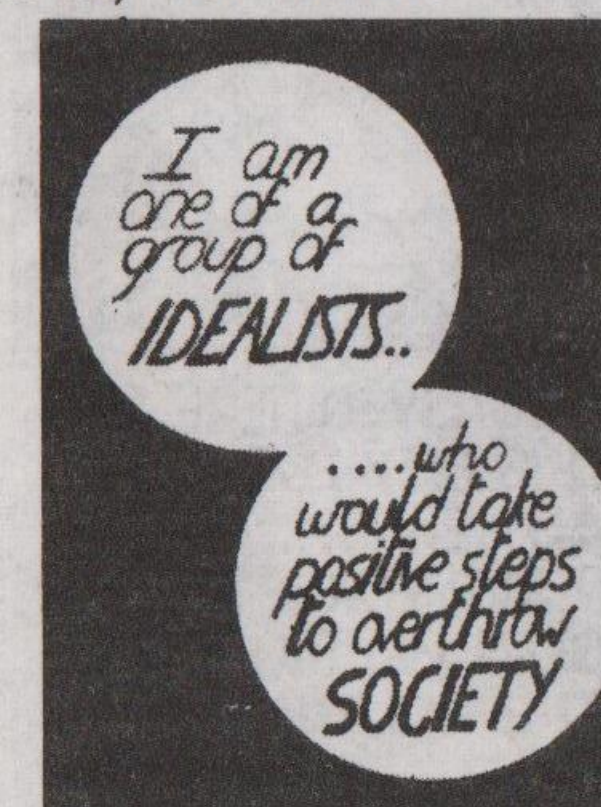
The progress of the case itself still stands at this: the *Guardian* printed a photo of the security around the remand hearing last Thursday (10.8.) and didn't mention our comrades! They said it was all for the various Iraqis, who were also appearing. In fact these theatrical displays have gone on for weeks. However, the arrest of the Iraqis has had one effect - among them is a woman (Khloud al Mugrabi), so now Iris is no longer entirely alone.

The pettiness of the authorities continues. The criteria for admission of books appear arbitrary. Iris and Ronan are allowed one 15-minute visit with each other a week, but this counts as their allowance for that day (category A prisoners are allowed one visit per day) so no-one can then visit from outside; while the Thursday court appearances also rule out a visit on that day. Prisoners are allowed to send two letters a week 'free', after that they must pay for the stamps. So Iris and Ronan have to buy stamps to write to each other in the same prison! (I presume that a warder then nips out and posts them in a letter box outside).

The support campaign continues (see also the piece from Bolton in this issue). On Friday, 4 August a public meeting was held at Conway Hall. About 80 people attended and great interest was shown. Speakers included members of the support group, Albert Meltzer, Crispin Aubrey (from the ABC case, which has obvious similarities) and Irish people who have had direct experience of similar matters - one who had been held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and a delegate from the Prisoners' Aid Committee.

The support group have produced a series of badges and stickers. Available from Persons Unknown, Box 123, 182 Upper St, London N1.

DP



HOME SECRETARY Merlyn Rees was surprised on Saturday, 5 August when he arrived at Brightmet Labour Club in Bolton to open the annual summer fair. As soon as he arrived he was handed a leaflet protesting at the detention of six anarchists in London and the widespread raids there and elsewhere in the country. Apparently he agreed to read it!

Labour stewards were less easy-going on the 15-20 people who formed a picket line outside the club and leafleted extensively. Several comrades were physically ejected and one steward made it clear that had it been a less prestigious occasion he - his 'heavy mob' (he was distinctly overweight himself) - would have beaten them up. To be fair many local party members were embarrassed by our treatment and I think it might be possible to return and speak to a CLP meeting about the case.

After Rees had spoken and been questioned further by someone (at which point he appeared to be losing his temper also) the picket moved on to Bolton Town Hall. When Rees arrived to speak on race relations he was faced with the bizarre sight of a dozen anarchists on one side of the door exchanging insults with 30-40 members of the National Front on the other side. This eventually developed into a long furious argument between individual anarchists and fascists against a deafening barrage of chanting and bellowing from the remaining NF members and the Trots (who eventually turned up and stood a long way off). Eventually the gangster-like NF organisers (visibly upset by this 'exchange of views') called a halt and the NF exited en masse to much jeering.

Anyway:

LIVERPOOL BENEFIT FOR THE 6, September 15. Stanley House, Upper Parliament Street, L8. Charges Disco plus some readings, singers and perhaps theatre.  
MANCHESTER BENEFIT, August 28  
- Liverpool Support Group.  
(100 Whitechapel, Liverpool L1 6EN)



## Jake

JAKE PRESCOTT, the last of the 'Angry Brigade' prisoners still in prison, has been receiving yet more harassment. He has already lost remission after the Hull prison riot. Now he is accused of assaulting two prison officers, in Dartmoor. The prison doctor agrees that Jake himself had been badly bruised during the incident. He should have been released last November, but as stated above, lost his remission. A number of Hull warders have since been charged with conspiracy to assault prisoners, but the loss of remission stands. Since this time Jake has been moved seven times, and says that he has been in every maximum security wing in the country, except Parkhurst.

## Commi - ssar M.

I REALLY am developing a prophetic gift. A couple of months ago I suggested that, as *Peace News* and *The Leveller* were found guilty of 'flouting the procedures' of a court, soon all the normal practices of the law enforcement agencies would be legitimised. This was evidently thought to be a good idea by those in authority (I'm sorry, I shouldn't put ideas in their heads). Metropolitan Police Commissioner David McNee has been mentioned in these columns before. He's the one who thinks that insistence on civil liberties causes muggings. Commissioner McNee has presented his new ideas in a 168 page written submission to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure. He demands the power to:-

- hold suspects for 72 hours before charging them or bringing them into court;

- oblige suspects to answer police questions by permitting courts to draw inferences from a suspect's silence;

- compulsorily take the fingerprints of everybody in the area in which a crime has been committed;

- extend the rights of police to search suspects, including people who may be suspect simply because of their presence at a particular place;

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)



# LETTERS

## SEPARATISM

Regarding KW's letter in the last issue of FREEDOM, it seems that in discussing separatism everybody has (as usual) taken one of two opposite positions, whereas there is a third alternative. Why can't we have separate and mixed meetings?

His letter gave a good explanation of the values of separate meetings, but I think mixed meetings have a definite part to play in improving understanding/communication and maintaining a certain realism. Basically it's very unhealthy to only discuss a subject with people who hold the same opinions as you, in a situation in which you can slant off another group of people who aren't there to reply.

Any anarchist who 'insists' on women joining mixed groups is obviously a joke, but the best that can be said about pure separatism is that it's a necessary cop-out given the fact that women are more oppressed than men. In fact I have several female friends who feel oppressed by the separatist element in the women's movement, who consider them second rate feminists because they are heterosexual.

Eric

Sheffield

PS. Why is it 'obviously defensive' to say that 'separatism is next to fascism'? This kind of patronising, cheap psychology which 'male feminists' so often direct against any man who dares to challenge ideas which originate in the sacred sanctuary of the female mind, must stop. If you have to idolise a group to which you don't belong, what's wrong with the good old working classes?

## SEX

Dear Comrades,

Your reviewer and correspondent, N.W., says I imply sexual problems are a middle class invention. Let me state that I have never intended to do so; I have never held the middle class to be anything other than the proxy, the agent, of the capitalist class.

In the original book review, I said that "the central fact of everyday life for the working class is exploitation and this denies the workers any right to the satisfaction of their needs", and in the context it is clear that this includes sexual needs. The middle class did not invent this exploitation, neither did it invent the problems that accompany it. I hope that is clear!

Perhaps it will make it plainer still if I say that every exploited class has sexual problems not only because of its general and economically underprivileged position but also because the exploiting class attempts to destroy the identity and rebelliousness of its slaves by frustrating and crippling them sexually. The middle class today zealously staffs the institutions entrusted with the performance of this task. The sexual energies of the slaves, denied their natural

outlet, may be appropriated in other forms that further class harmony, for example organised religion, or nationalism, or may be perverted into sadistic, destructive activities on behalf of the masters, that is, organised warfare, or, if no other outlet can be found, are dissipated



in more or less acceptable forms of self destruction, for example drunkenness or madness. The middle class is assiduous in keeping these activities within the bounds of civilisation. As well as all this the master class may also attempt to appropriate the slaves for its own sexual purposes as prostitutes, concubines, gigolos, homosexual partners, wet nurses, etc.

Thus the working class is deprived and exploited sexually just as it is deprived and exploited economically. It is not a 'sentimental fantasy', as N.W. would have it, but an historical fact, that the clearer sighted elements among the working class have always understood this just as they were slaves not to one master but to all.

(It is also a fact that the better elements of other classes have broken with their own kind and identified with the working class, not to consummate "some sort of mystical union", as N.W. puts it, but simply in pursuit of justice.)

"Sexual politics" solves none of the sexual problems of the working class. It is barely aware of them. The answer of "sexual politics" to sexual deprivation is not more sex but less: not sexual integration but sexual disintegration, that is, sexual fragmentation or even no sex at all. This does little other than make a virtue of present day reality! Thus we have female separatism in varying degrees, male separatism ditto, celibacy, creching, all advanced as the solutions to sexual problems. They aren't the solutions - they are the problems! The more desperate equivalents, including hard drugs and anorexia and baby bashing, may be more immediately distressing, but are they socially so very much more disastrous?

If my ideas are "rigidly mechanistic" (N.W.) it may be due partly to my desire to be brief: what term is more rigidly mechanistic than "revolution", yet what other single word sums up the process that is, ultimately, the only solution to society's problems - including sexual ones? If my ideas are "bizarre" (N.W. again), well, cranks make revolutions!

Good luck,

Fraternally yours,  
Mark Hendy.

## SOCIAL FASCISM

Dear comrades

At the risk of being boring and pedantic I feel I must take up comrade GF's theme of 'social fascism'.

She admits to not knowing where the expression comes from, but what then is it supposed to mean? Is she seriously suggesting that we live under a fascist regime or that the ruling party of this country is dragging us into 'corporate fascism'? If this is the case then this is surely a matter for some concern. Yet your correspondent is not prepared to say what this drift to fascism is, what has caused it and what can be done to stop it.

May I suggest that it would be worth re-reading Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* and his other writings on politics and language to see the damage that can be done by the use of mindless epithets to describe a complex reality.

In fact since the socialist revival of the 1880s, if not before, there has been a conflict of ideas within the labour movement between those who believe in centralisation, state ownership and planning and those who believe in decentralisation, workers' control and cooperative principles.

If all libertarians and radicals such as myself were to quit politics it would leave the field open to the centralists. Then there might be a drift to the corporate state which would not be too healthy, unless you believe in the 'worse it gets the better it gets' theory of history!

If the anarchist movement is to gain influence it will need to have a sympathetic dialogue with those who share the ideal that 'no person is good enough to be another person's master' (to update William Morris) but have different ideas as to how to reach such a society.

Again may I say why do you not have more stress on the cooperation, self help and free association that already is happening?

Sincerely

John Bradbrook

Burnley, Lancs.



"I'VE LIVED HERE IN THIS CITY FOR OVER 40 YEARS!...AND NEVER ONCE HAVE I BEEN BRUTALIZED BY THE POLICE!!"

# VEGETARIANISM

It is not out of delight in defending vegetarians that I am responding to Brian Morris' "Ecology and Mysticism" (FREEDOM, 13 May) but a number of patches need to be reviewed with skepticism.

Although "agribusiness or vegetarianism" are one of the false dichotomies, what is not false about the dichotomy he gives us is of Kshatriya and Brahman-Sannyasi, meat eating (himsa) and vegetarianism (ahimsa). If I am reading correctly, "the concept of ahimsa dissolves the opposition (of exploitation of life forms), but maintains the hierarchy" and also dissolves ("ideally severed") wo/man and nature, retaining "unity only in spirit", and this detachment from the world is "profoundly anti-ecological." I don't see how this follows. How could Morris have an overview of the transcendence of this dichotomy by an ecological perspective if he did not meditate (a word that should be in the discussion of mysticism) and thereby detach himself from "the notion of mere existence" (Whitehead) and wordly necessity? How can ahimsa and Jainism express "an essentially negative attitude towards the natural world"? Jain mysticism recognises a hierarchy of life and energy - it does not "invoke hierarchy" - and respects living forms by not smashing down on them, even atoms are not smashed, and by not harming animals in their territory. This is ordered conceptually by abstinence from all animal products; so ahimsa is environmental in influence. Whether menhaden or weak-fish are killed in fishermen's nets or by the screen in front of the water intake of a nuclear power plant is part of the same consideration. Jainists could well disapprove of busi-agriculture that rips up the soil, killing some soil-enriching earthworms and then spreading poisons on the soil to kill other plant and insect pests, all to feed the livestock slaughter machinery of the meat industry.

I agree that there is no real dichotomy between vegetarianism and agribusiness, though there are antithetical modes of production of organic vegetarian forms and over-scale cropping. Whether a plantation of slaves or automata on tractors produce soybeans, or whether they are produced by small-scale or even subsistence farming, is not a question of dietary selection, but a question of economic and political enterprise (as has been well argued by Lappe and Collins in *Food First* (Inst. for Food Development Policy) and premised Ms Lappe's earlier book *Diet for a Small Planet*. Georg Borgstrom presents the same thrust in *The Hungry Planet*, *Focal Points* and *Harvesting the Earth*. Capitalist farming is particularly attached to meat in the US and hamburgers here are not yet "made of processed soy" but are beginning to be extended with textured vegetable protein (spun soy), but it is not profitable. Nevertheless, Morris gets himself off on a tangential field of means of production instead of what commodities are produced - from the individual dietary standard of well being and maintenance of life support systems. This is where we part, since he ultimately must argue that meat sustains life better, or has extra-nutritional values. So we are saying that feeding cattle "human food" is not "what life is all about." What cattle feed on is an environmental concern about using so-called marginal grazing land, overgrazing, deforestation for grazing space, disappearance of wood for fuel (see Erik

Eckhom - *Vanishing Firewood*, *Human Nature*, May 78), and desertification. The best example is the defoliation of Spain by sheep, a land abuse now carried out elsewhere. Therefore, the eradication of livestock is not only ecologically sound, but an actuality in the US.

It may be "status" or not, but the idea that meat is needed to "provide a relish to make a basic staple more palatable" is rubbish. If anything, it is to add protein to carbohydrates that do not supply "essential" amino acid combinations supplied by animal proteins (possibly a myth). Taste is mutable. Vegetarians avoid taste modalities of meat stimulants.

Again, the means of producing meat alternatives are entirely apart from the economics and politics of agricultural systems producing them, and it would be better if NO "questionable cash-cropping" were employed.

The comment that "vegetable products are also eaten in a dead and decomposing condition" is captious. In the area of food quality, I suppose one can entertain examples of foods using fermentation, say soybean products (sauce, miso, tempeh etc) as well as preserves and tinned fruits and vegetables - but such devitalized, unwholesome and possibly toxic commestibles are condemned by hygienicists (another concept necessary for full exposition), who recommend raw and living plant items. Shaw remarked that if you plant a corpse, it rots; if you plant an acorn, it grows into a mighty oak. This has to do with the natural democracy of vegetables, whereby one finds it difficult to peck at their liver. As Whitehead stated (*Modes of Thought*, p. 34) "in the case of the vegetable, the democracy can be subdivided into minor democracies which easily survive without much apparent loss of functional expression." Consider the eyes of a potato, the seeds of a raspberry.

As a Bookchin protege, Joel Whitbrook states, "How do we reconceptualize the world in a new way with a new validity where it wouldn't be right to dominate nature?" Why should vegetarians care what happens to animals in the crunch of quality of life - the main trend toward abolition of herding? Concern comes with an ethical dietary basis that individuals can relate to. What areas of the world could not make a comeback with wild species if domesticated animals vacated the land? Livestock are the acknowledged stain on the so-called climax grasslands of the earth. So in reply to arguments used by Morris against land use for ruminants applying with equal force to "producing animals for other purposes" (uncertain as to what they may be), we conclude that the application is grossly unequal. Wo/man is not merely a wolf to cull the numbers of cattle that decimate the grasslands (created by wild ruminants) but has expanded their domain, their "niche" to space once occupied by a less domesticable wild species.

There would be few acres of the world (Erik Eckhom, *Losing Ground*) where it would be more sane to replace planting with grazing. Animals don't seem to have gotten the hang of agriculture, tree nurseries. Few ruminants "care" for trees.

Morris' idea that schizoid vegetarian views towards animals that "deem it unethical to engage in acts that are in themselves supportive of life" is somehow exemplified by meat-eating! Beyond my reasoning, The only life it supports

is the meat-eater, a vicarious hunter-butcher with a barbarian, predatory lifestyle - using the word LIFE advisedly. The life of a wolf, hawk, lion supports no other life and is without culture. They live to eat.

Whether we want or need to rescue anarchism from the mystics will not be taken up here. If the writer feels buddhism has always had a symbiotic relationship with political ideals, it can be pointed out that zen buddhism had a catalytic effect on the cultural revolution of the same period that Roszak and Gary Snyder write about, the 50s and 60s.

The argument that mystical religions were co-opted by the state does not allow that the mysticism was spiritual power on an individual level.

The vicissitudes of cultural and linguistic transportation tend to carry a spiritual movement into the establishment of morality and law. What imperialist power receives the patronage of jainism, and what did it do with it? Jainism is to buddhism what anarchy is to socialism. Jainism is then exactly what Morris says ecology is! "Accepting that there is a need to avoid unnecessary suffering", and it is only being realistic to consider that mysticism is NOT life-negating, if human life contains conceptual processes, or which ecology is one.

So why do we need to "disentangle ecology from the ... ethical ethos that surrounds vegetarianism" even if the mystical element is objected to? Burden of proof is on the meat-eater to reify history - it rests on meat-eaters that blood was spattered on history's pages, wars generated from appropriation of land to drive cattle over, which cultural anthropology shows.

Wynne-Tyson is largely correct in his assessment and his claim of longevity of vegetarians is too well documented to enlarge on here. Meat-time is shorter than vegetarian-time, and of course the lapsing back into meat by a writer who must have explored the literature (shocked to find Wagner and Hitler at the end of the rainbow) as a vegetarian may account for the reaction. He must have had many of his insights into biohistory through this escapade, and then uses the benefits of a meat diet bias, legitimized by those benefits, to urge legitimacy of the benefits obtained from future agricultural solutions.

Old herding ideology and ethos, however, gave legitimacy to the domination of animals (as it once did to cannibalism - another relevant concept here), in meat as an honorific commodity and class value, in belief in beef as the apex of protein nutrition, the egg as basis for net protein utilization, in exploitation of material resources, in control of the harvest, to access to position of political-religious power, the rise of the state - the state of predatory capitalist society today. The state welcomes anything an anarchist contributes by communicating its legitimacy, manipulating reactionary opinion. One way, Clav Mueller notes, is to secularize technocratic legitimization! Agribusiness, which Morris supposes to have no particular interest in profits from meat. Watch them eat it!

Sincerely

T.Y. BRINK

Freespace/AU  
New York City



## 2. fantasy (from p.14)

The above information is hard and real, the skeleton of the man, hooked onto time and the work pinned down in hard type. Treasure it, preserve it, copy it, blow it up into a photomural. Regard it, remember to remember it, tear it out and put it in your wallet. Act on it, subvert your way into the nearest film society and rig the ballot and run a programme of Bunuel, not for the others but just for yourself. Spend all your money on hiring projectors and what copies you can get your hands on.

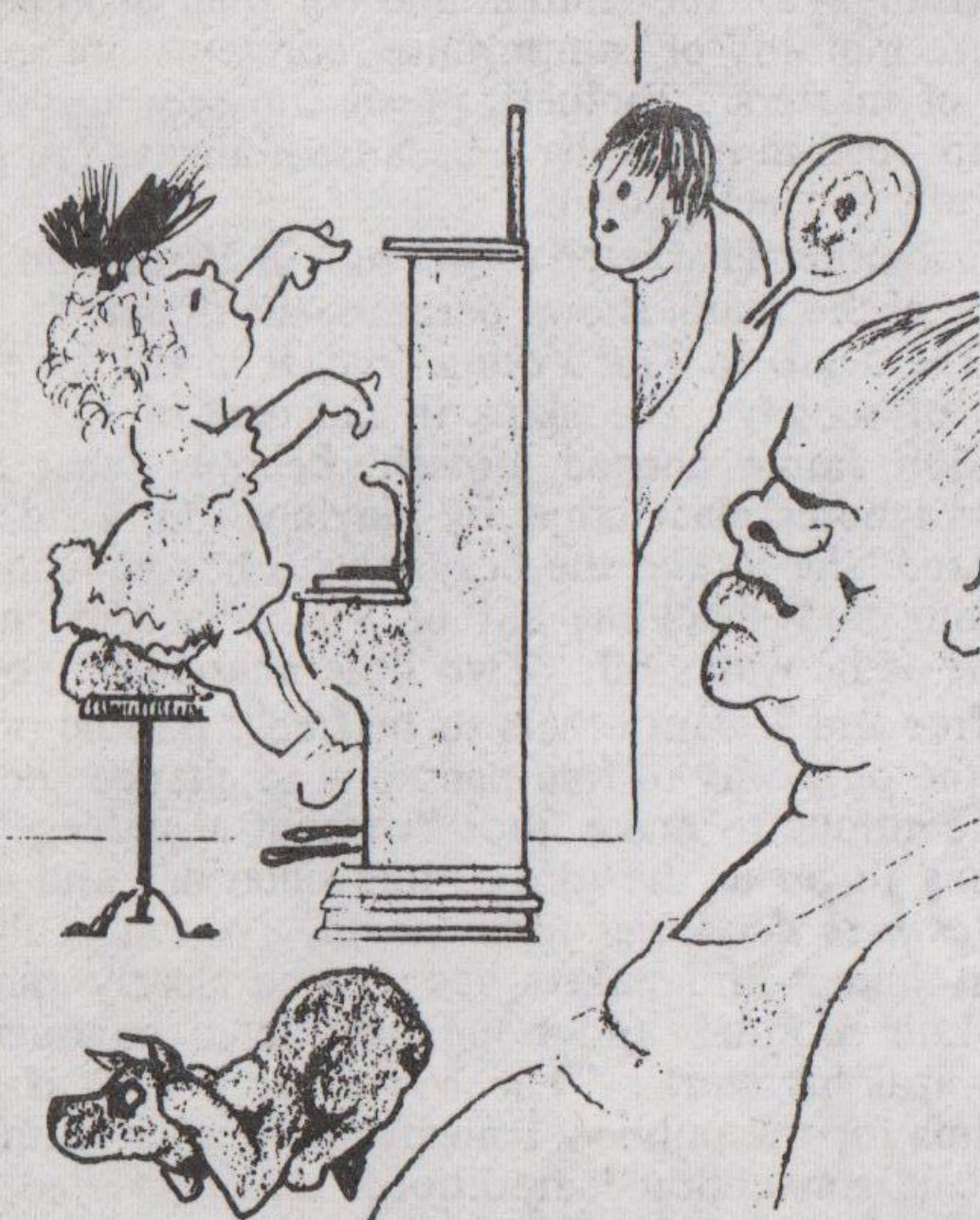
The list is designed to prod the sluggish memories of the lazy consumers of anarchist literature, to stir their murky minds, to throw up half digested reviews in all the posh Sundays they've read in the past fifteen years, to trigger their minds with misgivings over the films they missed and the ones they heard about and the ones they were glad they didn't see. Do you dimly remember that season of Bunuels at the National Film Theatre in the summer of '55? I am rather reluctant to advocate further passive consumption of entertainment and art, but in Bunuel's case I offer active participation, the scouring of What's On to find the odd fleapit or Classic or Odeon at Harlesden that might be showing a Bunuel on Sunday. An arduous three change trip by public transport into strange wastelands to see a film. As my mother used to say, only the things you have to fight for are the things you really enjoy.

As far as time goes, Bunuel has a thirty two year lead on me, and I have very little qualification to be writing about him, except that I was a pre-television child, and therefore a cinema kid, a particularly bad/good one, an avid consumer in fact. It all started when I left the Wolf Cubs owing 4s 9d subs and I was precipitated into the ninepennies and averaged one hundred and eighty visits a year, and all double features too. The addiction reached its height in the summer of 1948 when in one delirious week I saw nineteen films. I put myself on a cure and tapered off my shots, but even in my twenty-fifth year, if I didn't get to a cinema every ten days I suffered withdrawal symptoms. Bunuel, Welles, Vigo, Chaplin and the Marx Brothers can bring on another jag right away (Ingmar Bergman was the monkey on my back the year before last).

I have laboured you with my personal history in order that you might respect and act on my recommendation. I have refrained from the usual journalistic use of quoting some juicy passage from any one or all of the films to whet your flagging jaded palate. I have suffered and enjoyed countless (about 4,000 in fact) films, mostly Bones, and offer this saving in time. Approaches I haven't tried are those which take a psychological or national view of the mob, you can see how easy it would be to caricature Bunuel as a Spanish Hero of his Time. Another is the fate of art cinema versus Hollywood and the hard world of hard cash. Dwight Macdonald is well worth pursuing in this connection and Orson Welles has gone through it and is highly articulate about it.

Even for the sake of anarchy I cannot claim Bunuel for our side, but to raise my consumers flag again, here is the only man of the cinema that I would be a one man procession for, a man that can make films that kick my guts, humble me, excite me, wet me, wet my eyes for me and fill me with compassion. There they all are, in CAPITALS above, the failures and triumphs. See them.

RUFUS SEGAR



ARTHUR MOYSE

"EVERY MAN HIS OWN FOOTBALL... or

"EVERY MAN HIS OWN FOOTBALL"

DADA was at its most political in Berlin, where the catchphrase above became the title of a one-off magazine: to my mind this splendid anarchist-individualist slogan defines the social message of dada, i.e. if we must be kicked around, at least let's do the kicking ourselves. While some Berlin dadaists were mistakenly to see bolshevism as the way to liberation, others (for example, Jung and Serner) were avowed anarchists. Stirner's influence on German dada was considerable, and there is rightly a copy of *The Ego and His Own* displayed in one of the 'found object' sections at the Hayward exhibition. Outside Germany dadaist individualism probably owed more to D.A.F. de Sade than to Stirner; indeed for the surrealists Sade was to attain the stature of a prophet. (It seems to me, incidentally, that Stirner himself owes much to Sade - has anyone researched this?)

Bakunin, too, influenced dada: Hugo Ball, for one, founder of the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich, actually worked on a biography of him, though whether this was ever finished or published I don't know.

I think Tzara's first Dada Manifesto of 1918 shows the influence of both Bakunin and Stirner. For instance this passage:

"Let each man proclaim: There is a great negative work of destruction to be accomplished. We must sweep and clean. Affirm the cleanliness of the individual after the state of madness, aggressive complete madness of a world abandoned to the hands of bandits, who read one another and destroy the centuries."

Hans Richter has pointed out that anyone who picks up a fragment of the broken mirror of dada finds his own image reflected in it; so one must be wary of finding too much congruence between dada and anarchism. On the other hand Richter himself wrote:

"We would have nothing more to do with the sort of human or inhuman being who used reason as a juggernaut, crushing acres of corpses - as well as ourselves - beneath its wheels. We wanted to bring forward a new kind of human being, one whose contemporaries we could wish to be, free from the tyranny of rationality, of banality, of generals, fatherlands, nations, art-dealers, microbes, residence permits and the past."

Ambitious, but certainly anarchistic.

During the war, too, we see Jacques Vaché wearing a split uniform, half French, half German; and Georg Grosz and Johnny Heartfield, in anarchistic protest against the false polarities of nation-states at war. (Dada, of course, rejected all polarities - Tzara defined it, indeed, as "The point where the yes and the no meet.")

Anyway, my point is that dada was emphatically not just an art movement, as the Hayward exhibition might lead us to believe; nor was it in general merely nihilistically 'anarchic', as it has often been described, but something rather more positive.

\* \* \*

Vaneigen has said that the only modern phenomenon comparable with dada is juvenile delinquency; even more to the point in the late 70s, as Arthur Moyse suggested in *FREEDOM* vol. 39 no. 3, is/was the punk phenomenon (Kurt Schwitters beat them to it anyway, Arthur - 'Everything the artist spits is art'.) But already punk, like dada, has been recuperated and disarmed.

One step forwards, two steps back - or is it the other way round?

BSB

"THOUSANDS MAKING FORTUNES IN THE PORN BUSINESS AND ALL SHE WANTS TO DO IS PLAY THE BLOODY PIANO"  
"I DON'T THINK THE COMRADES WILL LIKE THIS, ARTHUR"  
"I'M SORRY, ARTHUR, I JUST DON'T SEE THE POINT OF IT"  
"TAKE NO NOTICE, IT'S JUST ONE OF ARTHUR'S BAD TASTE JOKES"

"I WONDER IF HE MEANS IT TO HAVE SOCIAL CONNOTATIONS"

"SEE WHAT PHILIP THINKS"  
"I SEE HE'S STILL PUT VICKI IN IT"

# Freedom



## THE DISCREET CHARM OF AN ANARCHIST



# Buñuel on Property

BUNUEL'S movies are made with the craft of an old hand. He was born in 1900, and 50 films are to his credit. We rarely notice his techniques, which are skilfully subordinated to the story and to his characters and situations. Whatever we notice, we are usually meant by a good film-maker to notice. If the producer knows he has a hot property and trusts his director, the composition of every shot may be determined by the director. There is little room for significant chance in a budgeted shooting schedule. At the start of this film, you might not notice that passers-by peer at the camera. Buñuel couldn't care less. It is incidental to the making of his sort of illusion. This is not the BBC. The script, on the other hand, he cares about. Like the other French or Spanish surrealists of the twenties, for all his iconoclasm about literature, Buñuel has always been keenly interested in the written word. An astonishing amount, down to tiny surrealistic details, of Buñuel's parable of the Spanish Civil War, *El Angel Exterminador*, is present in the original story.

## PUNS AND GAGS

The script of *That Obscure Object of Desire* was written by Buñuel and his French collaborator Jean-Claude Carrière. Some of the jokes in it are as verbal as those in *The Beano*, like the lawyer called Vincent d'Olargues = vingt cent dollars = \$2000. Always the puns cast additional light on the motivations of the characters, without disturbing the flow of the movie. Sometimes a pun is turned into film in a way that is incomprehensible without esoteric knowledge, but nonetheless amusing. This process accounts for many an otherwise almost inexplicable 'surrealist' quirk in Buñuel's movies.

When the hero is buttering up the heroine's poor mother by giving her money in exchange for her daughter's hand, the manservant enters the room and takes out a mousetrap with a dead mouse caught in it. At the risk of appearing elitist to English-speaking readers (I don't speak Spanish, by the way, so I miss out there) I must say that un souris is a mouse, and also French slang for a whore. The mother is prostituting her daughter.

A constantly recurring object in this movie is a sack, first carried across the scene, then borne by the hero himself. This is more than a running music hall gag. When the hero suddenly decides to fraternise with his manservant, he asks him for his views on life. The servant replies that he has a friend who describes women as sacks of shit. That remark resounds in our minds every time we see the sack. This cannot seem far-fetched to anyone who reflects on the Freudian link between faeces and money, and on our culture's male infantile eroticism of bum and tit.

## SURREALISM AND VIOLENCE

As usual, Buñuel sets out to make a film about property, about possession. The hero Mathieu looks to be in his fifties or sixties, successful businessman, money no object, town hse, country hse avible gd cond, manservant/chauffeur. (See *Time Out Lonelyhearts* pages for other examples. No cheap gibe intended. This is pure sociology). Always we are made aware of

A Serge Silberman Production  
An Artificial Eye Release

## Luis Bunuel's



## THAT OBSCURE OBJECT OF DESIRE<sub>x</sub>

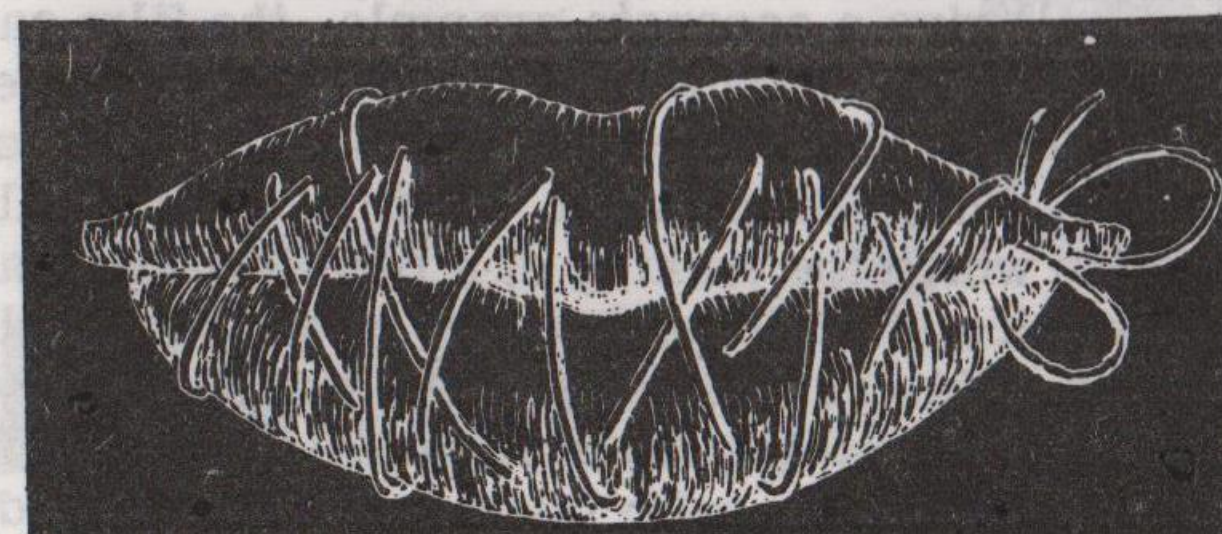
subtitles

his status by the nagging way he chances on and tries to ignore urban guerrillas. Obliging his car to stop and take another route, a car in front with a banker or politician in it, explodes with a bang that cannot fail to remind us of the fate of Carrero Blanco, blasted to hell. Reference is made in the dialogue - though not in the subtitles - to the Bande à Bonnot. The hero's brother comments: "They terrorised Paris for days, but at least they had ideals." Buñuel's own comment on present day urban guerrillas is to situate the 'story' of his film in the context of business as usual - just as he later situates the thwarted hero's assault on Conchita (Mathieu beats her up horribly) in the same context of property and possession.

## SURREALISM AND SHOCK

Such violence occurs in *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*. It is represented as the bad dreams of the hero, again played by Fernando Rey, as the nightmare side of authority. In *That Obscure Object of Desire*, when Conchita locks Mathieu outside the bars of the house she has seduced him into giving her, she has him watch her strip naked and make love to her young man in front of him. This is every man's nightmare, as well as the inversion of every man's voyeuristic desires. The psychological function of these shocks is further explained by Andre Breton in his definition of the aims of surrealism: "to free the knots which bind and suppress any violent explosions of the Unconscious." *That Obscure Object of Desire* ends with the beatific vision in a shop window of a woman darning from a wedding trousseau, ancient symbol of the wifely state. As the hero gazes on lovingly, not apparently seeing that she is darning bloodstained lace, it goes up in smoke with yet another explosion. Run end credits.

When the hero shuts his eyes and has his manservant spin him around with the intention of going wherever on the map his outstretched finger lands - Singapore, as it happens - it is understood that a person with money possesses the entire world. (His servant-possession is of course expected to uproot himself and go anywhere with him). Mathieu's lust for possession of the heroine, however, takes him to Seville.



## VIRGINITY

This is the theme of the film: a wealthy middle-aged man accustomed to being able to buy anything, to possess anything and anyone, is infatuated with a young woman. At any cost he must possess her. But she knows very well that the instant he's stuck it up her, i.e. achieved that obscure object of desire, he will toss her aside. The heroine holds back from him precisely this submission that he requires. "You only want what I refuse", she tells him, "that's not all of me." His frustration prolongs his desire - never to be satisfied - throughout the film. "Soy moctta" she says: "I'm a virgin." To capture a young woman's virginity is the ultimate in male possession. Mathieu wants to deflower her, but not to marry her. Marriage he withholds from her, just as she withholds her virginity from him. They are not real equals, only equal pawns in the game of power set out by Buñuel.

Mathieu's self-deception is total: "I respect love too much to go shopping for it" he declares. That is just what he is doing. He lacks all delicacy of feeling: he wants to deflower her in a room with his wife's picture on the mantelpiece.

## BUNUEL'S GAME OF LOVE

Mathieu gives the young woman's mother wads of banknotes, turns her into a Madam. Charity is always intended to buy submission. This mother is surely of the same generation as the hero. Yet how sexless she is made out to be! Here is this 'dirty old man' trying to screw her daughter. "Will you still love me when I'm old?" the daughter asks him, echoing the question put by thousands of girls and women to men every day. But he IS old! He'll obviously be six foot under by the time she has white hair. He appears more and more physically repul-

sive to me, somehow, as his efforts go on. Why does this attractive independent young woman endure this boring old fart? She doesn't need money, she says she doesn't. She endures him because Buñuel makes her do so. Her endurance, her being trapped in this game of love, is part of his scheme of things. Men's sexuality is forever, women's stops at 30.

Buñuel is conscious of this hateful convention, but not of the way to change it. There is a shocking moment in *The Milky Way* when a youth goes to bed with a much older woman, his aunt or great aunt. When she lies on the bed naked, her body is revealed as that of a young girl-woman. Not so much is this the body the young man dreams of. This is the body that all men dream of, Picasso in his late drawings and Buñuel too, I suspect.

## THE SPLIT PERSONALITY OF BUNUEL'S HEROINE

My doubts about Buñuel's conception of woman are compounded by the fact that his heroine is split into two, is played by two actresses. One of these is earthily sensual working class, the other polished middle class. The difference is pointed: the middle class half does nothing, is effortlessly superior, and carries her clothes with a debutante's grace. The working class half is a Spanish dancer and involved with a working class Spanish boy; she has a magnetic form of self-expression that the hero does not want her to have. (The dancing scene is lovely). He wants to possess her, that is, to deprive her of all independent means of self-expression. The middle class type is smooth, articulate, cosmetic, Jackie Kennedy. The working class type is all animal spirits and irrationality, silliness and cunning. When Buñuel puts her in a scene where cunning and glee are called for (when she has persuaded the infatuated hero not only to buy her the house but also to give her the keys), we could not expect such reactions from Miss Bourgeoise-Poise. The split character is inescapable. Buñuel has created - or rather perpetuated - two stereotypes of femininity.

## BUNUEL'S IDEA OF WOMAN

In this respect Buñuel is not liberating at all, though surrealist he remains. Whether the trick of casting two actresses as the same woman was originally accidental or not, does not matter - it is built into the script and into the film. Behind this duality is another. Buñuel is deep in a European Catholic mythology of woman as either aloof/animal unattainable virgin, or degraded whore. This is what the power struggle between Conchita and Mathieu is about. He has the power to buy, she has only the power to refuse and to humiliate (as when the nightclub owner whose employment she has quit subsequently offers her, now a guest in his club, some champagne: "No!" she dismisses him).

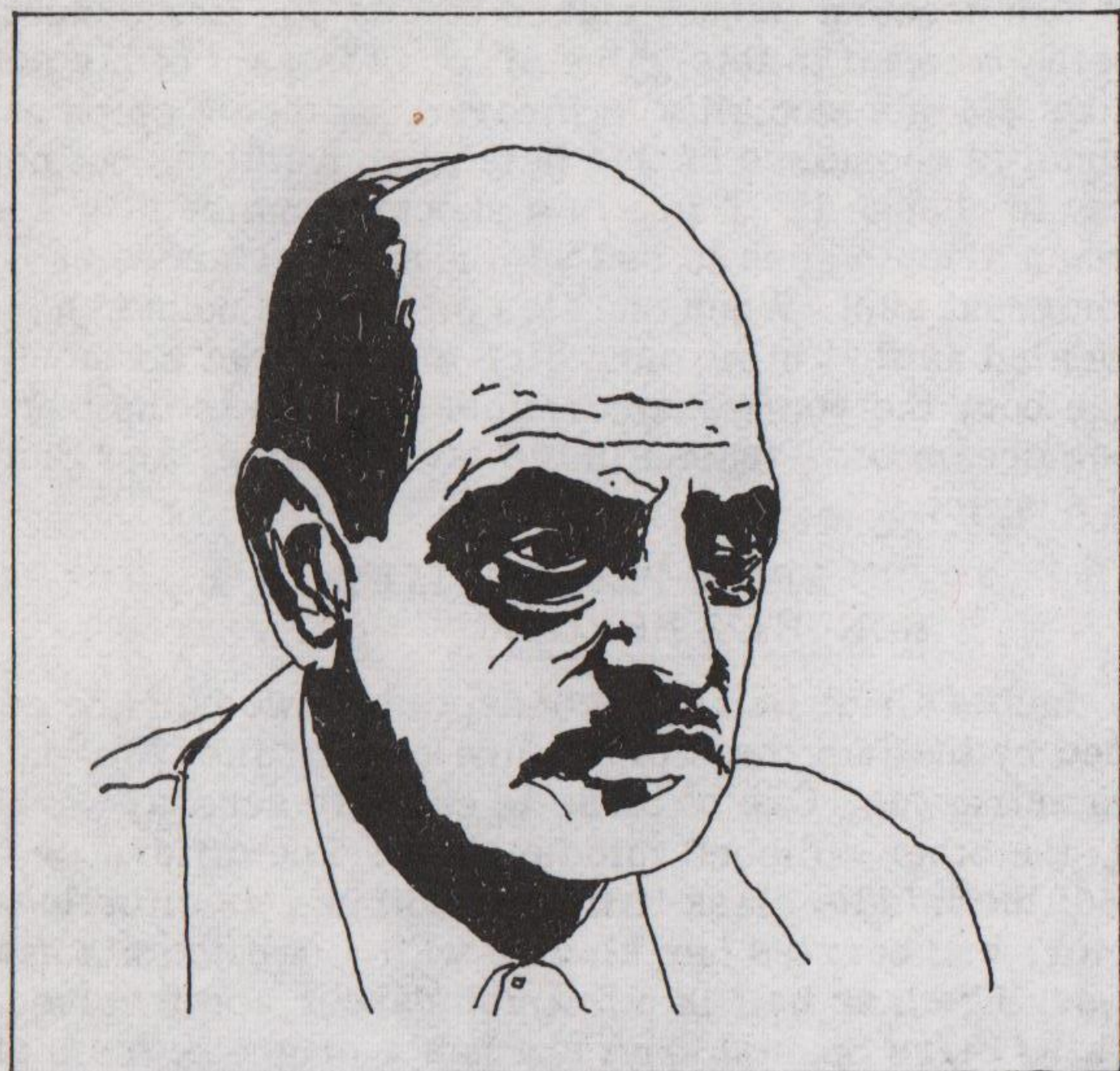
## BUNUEL AND FEMINISM

There is no place for feminism in Buñuel's thinking any more than there was in Jean Vigo's beautiful films. This is why his movies have a slightly 19th century feel about them. Women are going places nowadays. They are not stuck in the rut where Buñuel sticks them. Male fantasies are more immobile. I can see clearly where this young heroine can go; but not where the old capitalist can go, except to the grave. When Conchita gives back to him the keys of the house he has given her and tearfully claims that she did not really have her young lover in front of him, it was only make-believe, I think: what masochism! What expiation for her guilty independence! She is crawling back to this man, she is submitting. At this point Buñuel closes the circle where we know women are opening it. This limitation does not prevent his films from being terribly suggestive and subversive. Men and to a lesser extent women are revealed not only as we are, but as our fantasies confirm us to be. We have to recognise these images of ourselves as we are, but not as we want to be.

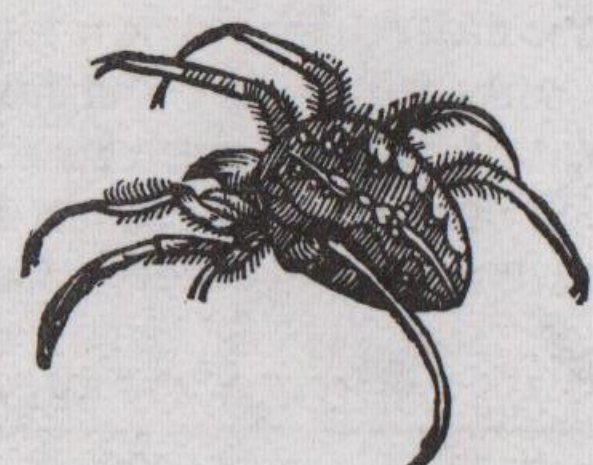
JULIUS

(Any insights there may be in this article are due to talks with Stephanie Smolinsky, who could, not be bothered to write the article.)





# LUIS BUÑUEL : Cinema, Instrument Of Poetry



THE group of young people who form the Direction de Difusion Cultural approached me to ask me to give a lecture. Although duly grateful for the attention, my reply was negative: I have none of the qualities which a lecturer requires and have a special bashfulness about speaking in public. Fatally, the speaker attracts the collective attention of his listeners, only to feel intimidated by their gaze. In my case I cannot avoid a certain embarrassment in face of the dread of what can make me somewhat, let us say, exhibitionist. Although this idea of mine about the lecturer may be exaggerated or false, the fact of feeling it as true obliges me to ask that my period of exhibition will be as brief as possible, and I propose the constitution of a Round Table, in which as a number of friends belonging to distinct artistic and intellectual activities, we can discuss en famille the problems pertaining to the so-called seventh art: hence it is agreed that the theme shall be 'The Cinema as Artistic Expression', or more concretely, as an instrument of poetry, with all that that word can imply of the sense of liberation, of subversion of reality, of the threshold of the marvellous world of the subconscious, of non-conformity with the limited society that surrounds us.

Octavio Paz has said: 'An imprisoned man has only to close his eyes to be able to blow up the world.' I would add, in paraphrase: it would suffice for the white pupil of the cinema screen to reflect the light which is proper to it, to blow up the universe. But for the moment we can sleep in peace, because the cinematographic light is carefully drugged and imprisoned. None of the traditional arts reveals so massive a disproportion between the possibilities it offers and its achievements. Because it acts in a direct manner upon the spectator in presenting to him concrete people and objects, because it isolates him by virtue of the silence and darkness from what might be called his 'psychic habitat', the cinema is capable of brutalising him. And unhappily the great part of present-day cinema production seems to have no other mission: the screens rejoice in the moral and intellectual emptiness in which the cinema prospers; in effect it limits itself to imitating the novel or the theatre with the difference that its means are less rich to express psychology: it repeats to satiety the same stories which the nineteenth century was already tired of telling and which still continue in contemporary fiction.

A moderately cultivated individual would reject with scorn any book with one of the arguments that serve the film. However, sitting comfortably in a dark room, dazzled by the light and the movement which exert a quasi-hypnotic power over him, fascinated by the interest of human faces and the rapid changes of place, this same almost cultivated individual placidly accepts the most appalling themes.

The cinema spectator, through this kind of hypnotic inhibition, loses an important percentage of his intellectual capacity. I will give a concrete example, the film called *Detective Story*. The structure of its subject is perfect, the director excellent, the actors extraordinary, the realisation brilliant, etc. But all this talent, all this ability, all the complications which the making of a film involve, have been put at the service of an idiotic story, of a remarkable moral wretchedness. This reminds me of the extraordinary machine of *Opus II*, a vast machine made of the best steel, with a thousand complex gears, with tubes, manometres, dials, precise as a watch, as big as a liner, whose sole use was to gum postage stamps.

Mystery, the essential element of every work of art, is in general lacking in films. Authors, directors and producers are at pains not to disturb our peace, by leaving the window on to the liberating world of poetry tightly closed. They prefer to make the screen reflect subjects which could compose the normal continuation of our daily life, to repeat a thousand times the same drama or to make us forget the painful hours of daily work. And all this naturally sanctioned by habitual morality, government and international censorship, religion, dominated by good taste and enlivened by white humour and other prosaic imperatives of reality.



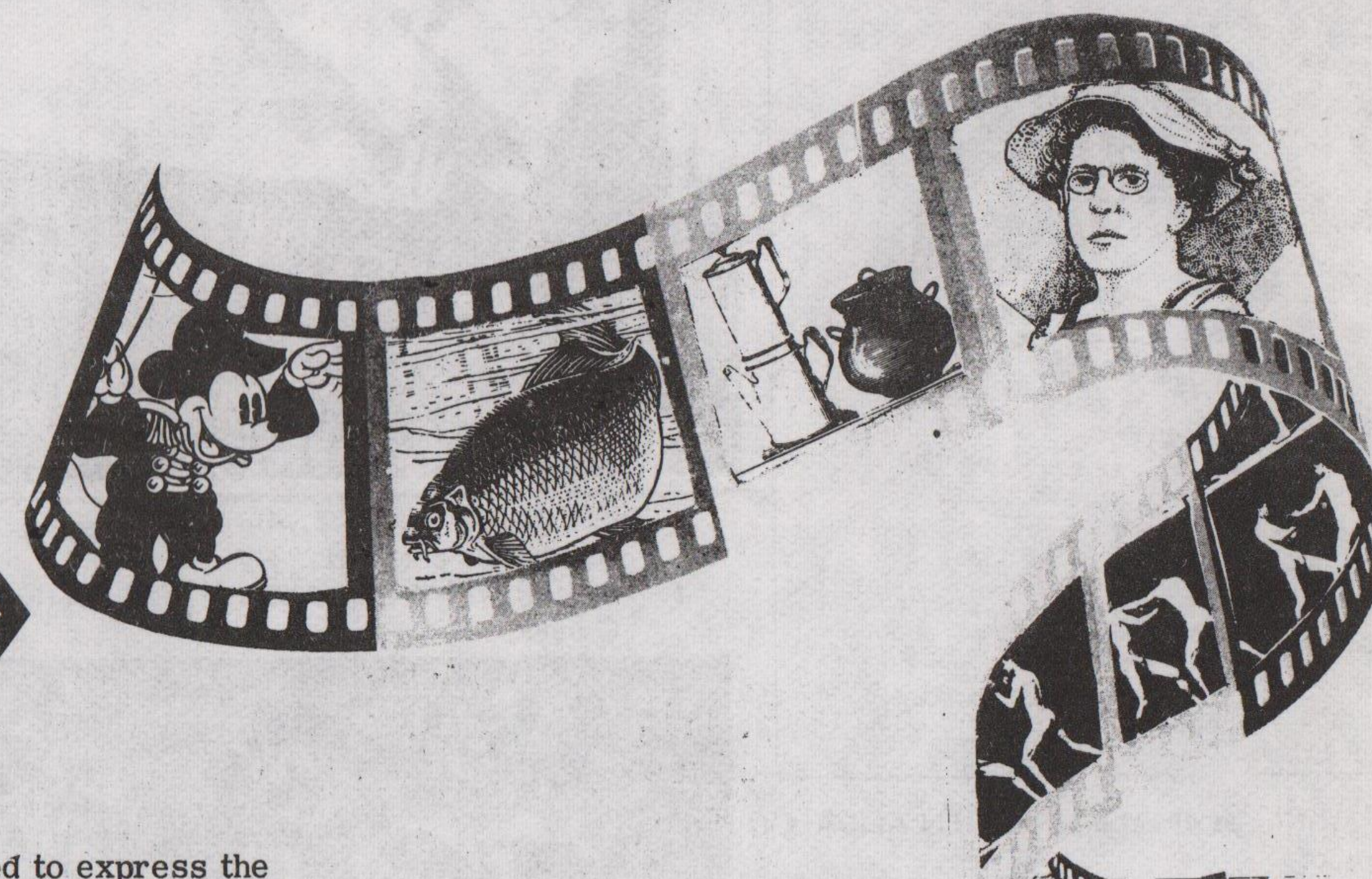
If we hope to see good cinema, we shall rarely achieve it through big productions and those which are accompanied by the sanction of the critics and the approval of the public. The private story, the individual drama cannot, in my view, interest anyone worthy of living in his times; if the spectator shares the joys, the sorrows, the anxieties of a personage on the screen, this can be only because he sees reflected in it the joys, sorrows, anxieties of a whole society, and therefore his own. Strikes, social insecurity, fear of war etc, are the things which affect everyone today, and also affect the spectator; but that Mr X is unhappy at home and seeks a girlfriend to console him, and finally abandons her to return

to his wife all penitent, is no doubt very moral and edifying, but leaves us completely indifferent.

Sometimes the essence of cinema spurts unexpectedly from an anodyne film, from a farce or a crude novelette. Man Ray said something very significant: 'The worst films which I have seen, those which send me into a deep sleep, have scarcely more than five worthwhile minutes.' This is to say that in all films, good or bad, beyond and despite the intentions of the makers, cinema poetry struggles to come to the surface and manifest itself.

The cinema is a magnificent and perilous weapon when wielded by a free spirit. It is the best instrument to express the world of dreams, of emotions, of instinct. The creative mechanism of cinema images, through its manner of functioning, is among all the means of human expression the one which comes nearest to the mind of man, or, even more, which best imitates the functioning of the mind in the state of dreaming. Jacques B. Brunius has pointed out that the light which bit by bit invades the cinema is equivalent to closing the eyes. Then begins, on the screen and within the man, the incursion into the night of the unconscious; the images, as in dream, appear and disappear through 'dissolves' and fade-outs; time and space become flexible, retrace or extend at will; chronological order and relative values of duration no longer reality; cyclic action is accomplished in a few minutes or in several centuries; movements accelerate their speed.

« it  
would  
suffice.. »



MONTAGE BY FRANCIS A. BRIGHT.

The cinema seems to have been invented to express the subconscious life, whose roots penetrate so deeply into poetry; but it is almost never used for that end. Among modern tendencies of cinema, the best known is what is called 'neo-realism.' Its films present to the eyes of the spectator slices of real life, with people taken from the street, and with real buildings and exteriors. With a few exceptions, among which I would especially instance *Bicycle Thieves*, neo-realism has done nothing to produce in its films what is proper to the cinema, that is to say, the mysterious and fantastic. What use is all this visual drapery if the situations, the motives which animate the people, their reactions, the very subjects are taken from the most sentimental and conformist literature? The one interesting innovation, not of neo-realism but of Zavattini personally, is to have elevated the anodyne action to the status of dramatic action. In *Umberto D*, one of the most interesting products of neo-realism, an entire reel of ten minutes shows a little maid performing actions which, a little while before, would have appeared unworthy of the screen. We see the servant enter the kitchen, light the stove, put a pan on the gas, throw water on a line of ants who advance on the wall in indian file, give the thermometer to an old man who feels feverish and so on. Despite the trivial nature of the situation, these activities are followed with interest and there is even a certain 'suspense.'

Neo-realism has introduced into cinematographic expression certain elements which enrich its language, but nothing more. The reality of neo-realism is incomplete, official and above all rational; but poetry, mystery, all that completes and enlarges tangible reality, is completely lacking in its working. It confuses ironic fantasy with the fantastic and black humour.

REPORTER : WHO ARE YOUR FAVOURITE CHARACTERS IN THE MOVIE ?

BUÑUEL : THE COCKROACHES !

(TALKING ABOUT 'THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE')

'What is most admirable in the fantastic', Andre Breton has said, 'is that the fantastic doesn't exist; all is real.' In a conversation with Zavattini, I explained to him a few months ago my disagreement with neo-realism. As we dined together the first example which offered itself to me was that of the glass of wine. For a neo-realist, I said to him, a glass is a glass and nothing more; you see it taken from the sideboard, filled with drink, taken to the kitchen where the maid washes it and perhaps breaks it, which will result in its return or otherwise, etc. But this same glass, contemplated by different beings, can be a thousand different things, because each one charges what he sees with *affectivity*; no one sees things as they are, but as his desires and his state of soul make him see. I fight for the cinema which will show me this kind

of glass, because this cinema will give me an integral vision of reality, will broaden my knowledge of things and people, will open up to me the marvellous world of the unknown, of all that which I find neither in the newspaper nor in the street.

Don't think from what I have just said that I am for a cinema consecrated solely to the fantastic and to mystery, for a cinema which, fleeing or scorning daily reality, would aim to plunge us into the unconscious world of the dream. Although I have just now indicated very briefly the capital importance which I attach to the film which treats the fundamental problems of a modern man, I do not consider man in isolation, as a particular case, but in his relationship to other men. I take for mine the words of Engels, who defined the function of the novelist (understood in this case as that of film maker): 'The novelist will have accomplished his task honourably when, through a faithful depiction of authentic social relations, he will have destroyed the conventional representation of the nature of these relations, shaken the optimism of the bourgeois world and obliged the reader to question the permanence of the existing order, even if he does not directly propose a conclusion to us, even if he does not openly take sides.'

The above article by Luis Buñuel, dating from 1953, is taken from *The Shadow and Its Shadow, Surrealist Writings on Cinema*, Ed. Paul Hammond (B.F.I. price £1 - excellent value!)

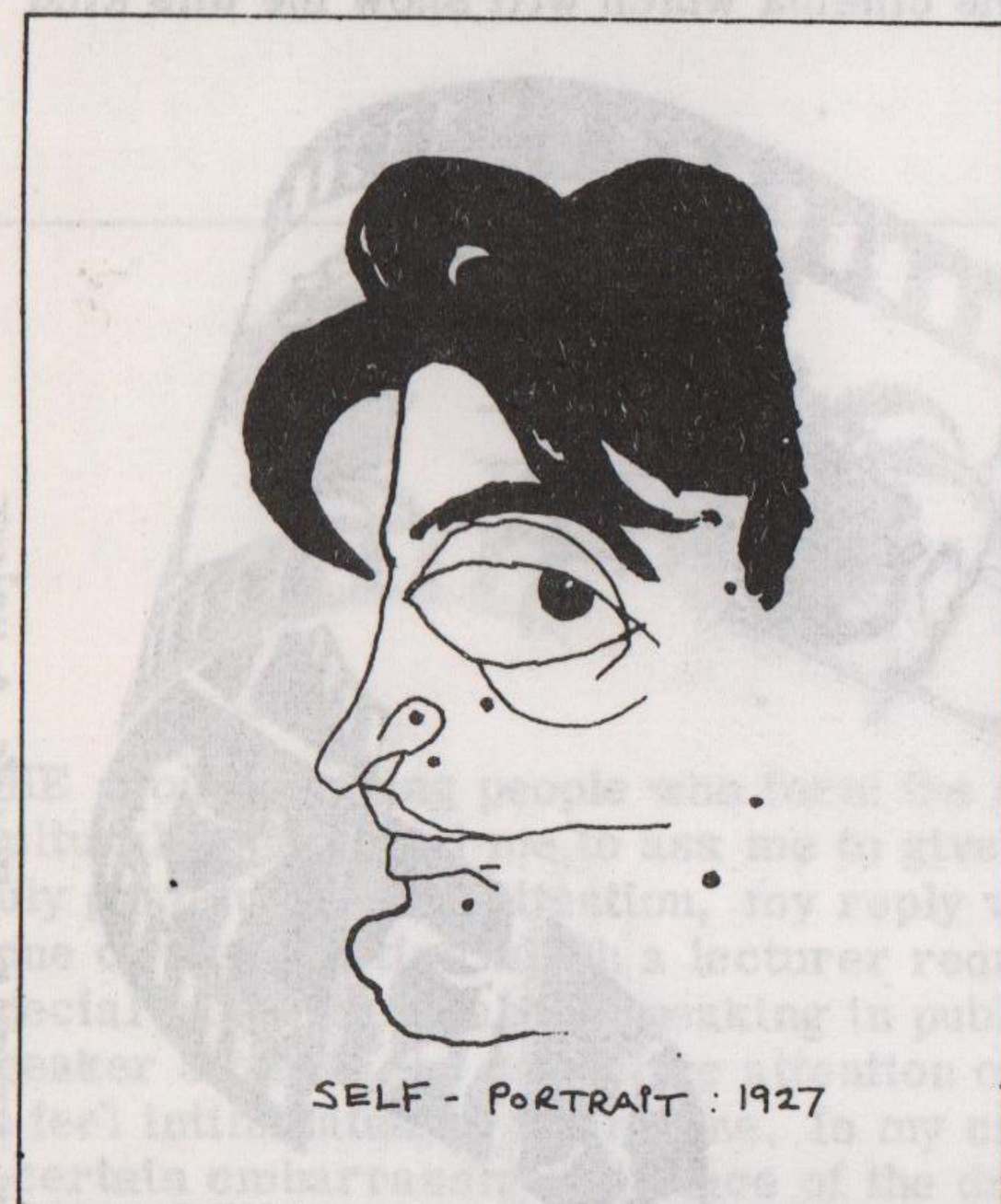


# Reality and illusion

## 1. fact

Buñuel is a man as old as this century. Thus the numbers below show both his age and the year.

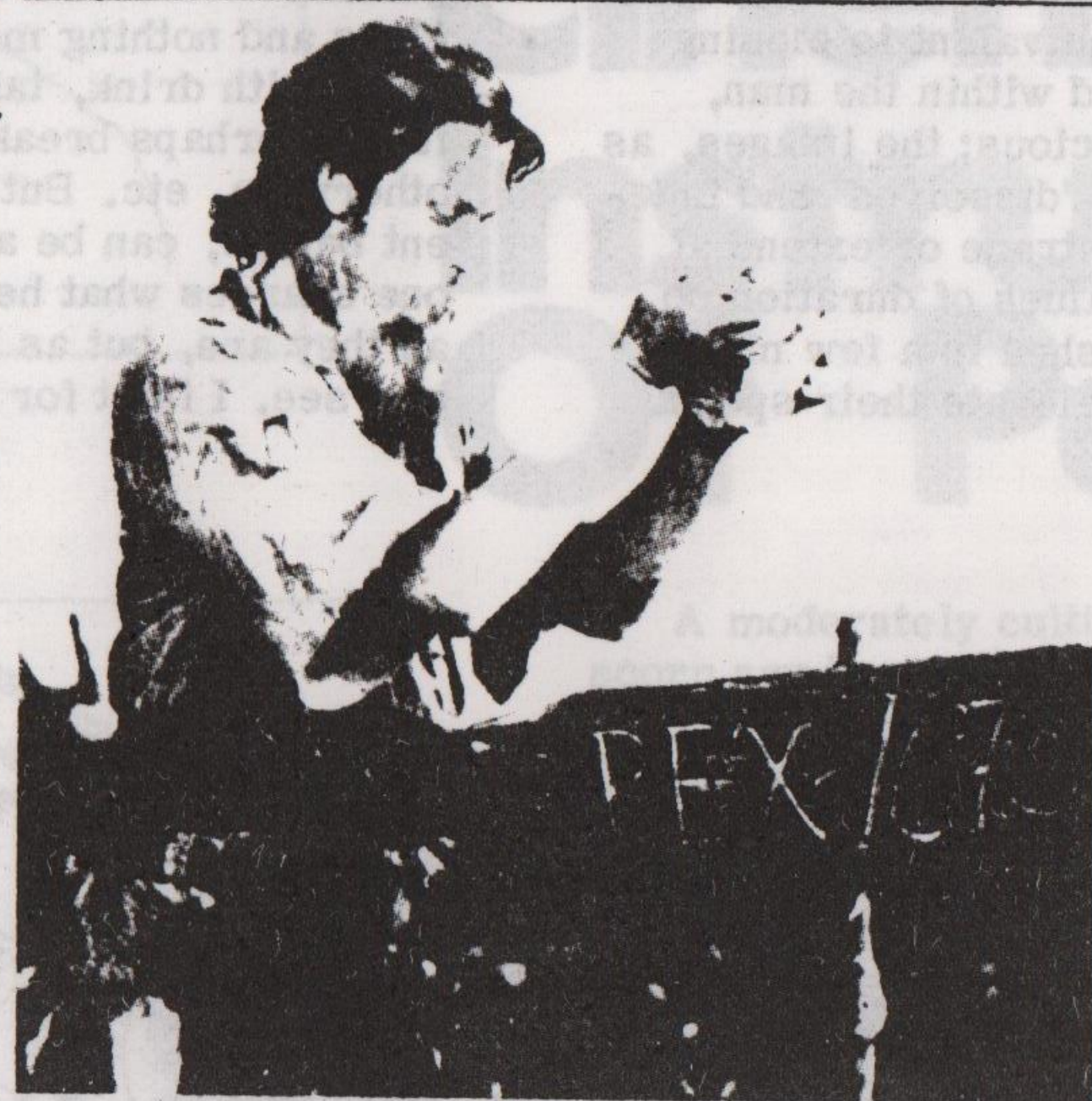
- 00 February 22, born at Calanda, Zaragoza, Aragon.
- 12 "Bachillerato" Jesuit school, Zaragoza.
- 17 Madrid, Student Residence.
- 18 Agronomic Engineering School.
- 20 Literature and philosophy at Central Univ.
- 23 Degree and Paris.
- 24 Assistant editor in French film laboratories.
- 26 With Jean Epstein, assistant director, *Mauprat* (George Sand), *La Sirene des Tropiques*, with Josephine Baker.
- 27 First assistant on *La Chute de la Maison Usher* (Fall of the House of Usher)



SELF - PORTRAIT : 1927

- 28 First film as director *UN CHIEN ANDALOU* Paris
- 30 *L'AGE D'OR*, also written with Salvador Dalí. Contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Hollywood, 1,000 pesos per annum. Incinerates the contract after three months, and back to France.
- 32 Spain, *LAS HURDES/TERRE SANS PAIN* (Land Without Bread), a documentary on poverty.
- 33 Paris, with Pierre Unik, a script for a surreal *Le Haute de Hurlevent* (Wuthering Heights). Fire at studios, produced:
- 35 Don Quintin El Amargao (The Bitter Man) and *La Hija de Juan Simon* (Juan Simon's Daughter).
- 36 *Quien Me Quiere a Mi* (Who Loves Me) and *Centinela Alerta* (Alert Sentinel)
- 37 Civil War. Edited newsreels including *ESPAÑA LEAL EN ARMAS*. A sound version of *LAS HURDES* in Paris.
- 38-41 Collaborated on documentaries at Museum of Modern Art, New York, including *TEJIDOS CANCEROSOS* (Cancerous Tissues) and *AVES EMIGRATORIAS* (Migrating Birds)
- 41 Six year contract with Warner Brothers, laboratory work.
- 42 a) Director of documentaries on the American army (according to Ado Kyrrou)  
b) Commentator for U.S. Army intelligence films (according to F. Aranda).
- 47 Mexico, prepared *La Casa de Bernarda Alba* (The House of Bernarda Alba).

- 48 Mexico, *GRAN CASINO*.
- 49 *EL GRAN CALAVERA* (The Great Merry maker)
- 50 *LOS OLVIDADOS* (The Forgotten Ones)/*THE YOUNG AND THE DAMNED*, Directors Prize, Cannes Film Festival. "The only film I am responsible for since *TERRE SANS PAIN*"
- 51 *SUSANA, LA HIJA DEL ENGADO, UNA MUJER SIN AMOR* (Woman Without Love), *SUBIDA AL CIELO*.
- 52 *EL BRUTO* (The Brute), with Pedro Armendariz and Katy Jurado.



ROBINSON CRUSOE, with Dan O'Herlihy and James Fernandez.  
EL (He), with Arturo de Cordova and Delia Garcés.



- 53 *ABISMOS DE PASION* (Wuthering Heights) (not the version of 33)
- 54 *LA ILLUSION VIAJA EN TRANVIA* (Illusion Travels By Streetcar), *EL RIO Y LA MUERTA* (The River and Death)
- 55 *THE CRIMINAL LIFE OF ARCHIBALDO DE LA CRUZ, CELA S'APPELE L'AURORA*.
- 56 *LA MORT EN CE JARDIN*, with Simone Signoret, Georges Marchese and Charles Vanel, made in France and Mexico.
- 58 NAZARIN
- 59 *LA FIEVRE MONTE A EL PAO*, with Gerard Philipe (Philippe's last film)
- 60 *THE YOUNG ONE*, with Zachary Scott.
- 61 Asked by Cuban Institute of Film Art and Industry to prepare two films *The Failures*

of Providence Street and *The Young Hero* and plans twenty films using scripts by such writers as Jean-Paul Sartre and Françoise Sagan.



alberto Isaac: VINI, VIDI, VINCI.

- Returns to Spain and makes *VIRIDIANA*. Awarded Golden Palm at Cannes Film Fest.
- 62 *EXTERMINATING ANGEL*, with Silvia Pinal
- 63 *DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID*, with Jeanne Moreau and Michel Piccoli.
- 64 *CALANDA*, Project for a three reel film on the Semana Santa in Calanda (Mixture of documentary and child hood memories. Film eventually made in 1965, by Buñuel's son Jean Luis.
- 65 *SIMON OF THE DESERT*, with Francisco Rabal. Script by Buñuel based on a theme from Garcia Lorca
- 66 *BELLE DE JOUR* (French)
- 67 Buñuel on French radio and television by Georges Sadoul. Film of reportage and homage to the film maker.
- 69 *THE MILKY WAY* (French)
- 70 *TRISTANA*, with Catherine Deneuve, Franco Nero and Fernando Ray.
- 72 *DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE*
- 74 *FANTOME DE LIBERTIE*
- 78 *THAT OBSCURE OBJECT OF DESIRE*.

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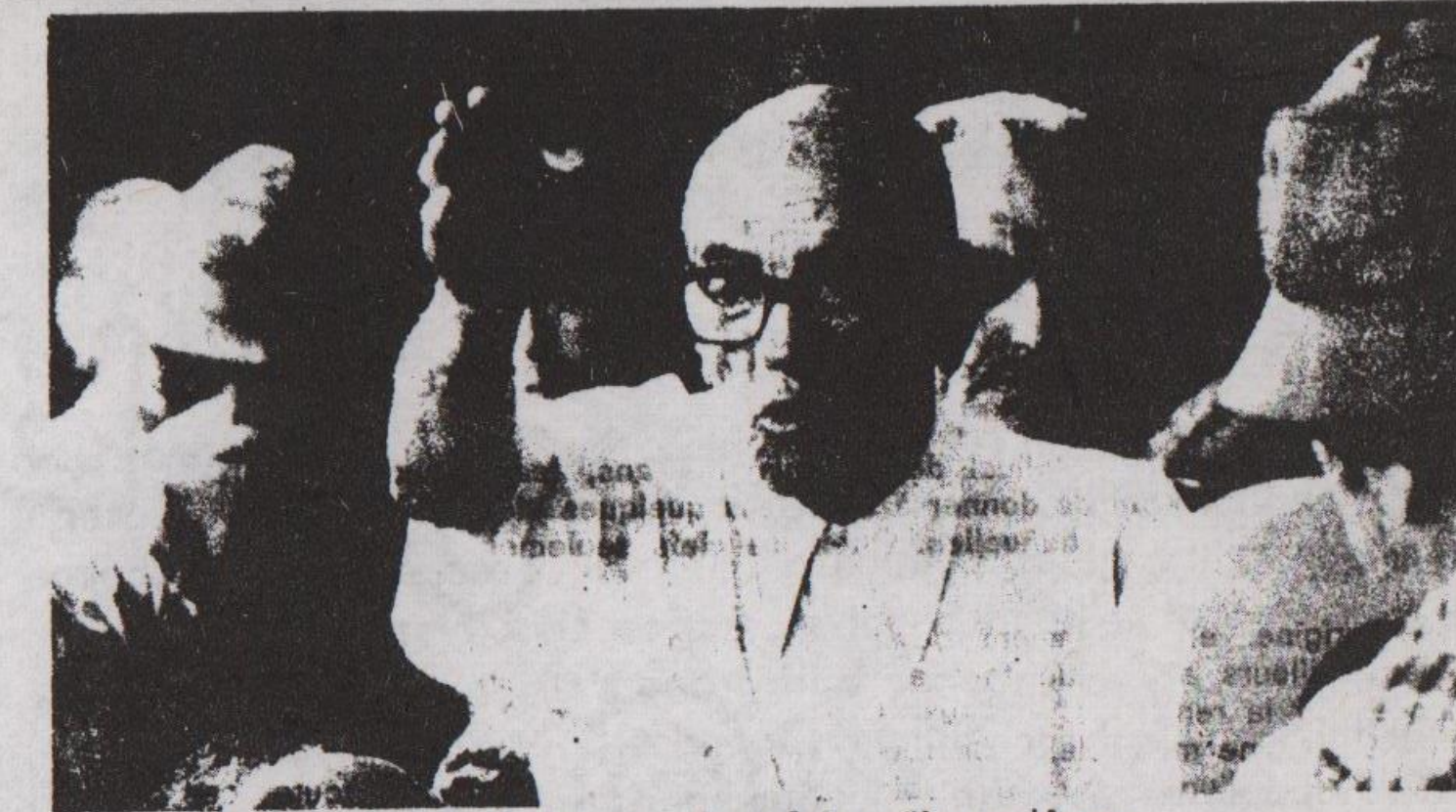
REVISED AND UPDATED BY

FRANCIS A. WRIGHT.

(see p. 16)



Buñuel shares a joke with Fernando Rey....



.... and points the way for his direction.

## Forgetting the message

"*Viridiana* follows my personal tradition since *L'Age d'Or*, and with a thirty-year interval these are the two films I have directed most freely."

OVER THE COCKTAILS AND COFFEE CUPS, *Viridiana* has already replaced *Marienbad*; the political and philosophical partisans are eagerly buzzing round the film, dissecting, extracting, or inventing Buñuel's supposed message to support their particular theories. A little honesty and a modicum of attention to what the director has said himself about his beliefs and his films may help to dispel the fog of inaccuracy. I think they also confirm Buñuel as a profound spiritual anarchist and thus contradict Rufus Segar's pessimism as to the director's alignment in ANARCHY 6. But I don't want to fall into the same trap as the partisans, so let him speak for himself:

I appropriate the words of Emers: "The novelist has faithfully achieved his object when, by means of a precise depiction of authentic social relations, he destroys the conventional representation of the nature of these relations, shatters the optimism of the bourgeois world and forces the reader to doubt the permanence of the existing order, even if he doesn't directly propose a solution, even if he doesn't overtly commit himself." And Buñuel certainly does not commit himself: apropos of *Viridiana* he reiterated that "I have not tried to prove anything... I do not use the cinema as a pulpit." His object is to reflect total reality, which includes the surreal experience of our lives—an extension separating him irrevocably from the neo-realists. It is because of this attitude and a constant refusal to betray it ("I have never yet sold myself... since *L'Age d'Or* my moral direction has never changed... I say, always and only, the things I feel deeply") that his work expresses a very personal and very consistent commentary on this *âge de boue*.

It is no coincidence that two quotations above seem to look upon *L'Age d'Or* and not *Un Chien Andalou* as Buñuel's debut. In his first film, described as "a desperate and passionate call to murder."

Dalí and I chose the gags, the objects which came to mind, and ruthlessly suppressed anything which could have meaning. This taste for the irrational has stayed with me.

*L'Age d'Or*, on the other hand, represented a direct break with Surrealism, the nihilistic element ceding to an explicitly iconoclastic onslaught on conformity, which at once alienated Dalí as being an attack on Catholicism "de façon primaire et sans aucune poésie." It is the first Buñuel, in point of fact. I want to glance at this and his other freely directed film—*Viridiana*—to illustrate the consistence he claims in his world view. The abstract horror and calculated obscenity of *Chien* had actually been appropriated and made fashionable (shades of *Fringe*) by polite bourgeois society. This has infuriated Buñuel, but he got his revenge with *L'Age d'Or*:

The producer of the film, the vicomte de Noailles, so proud to have a film of his very own (though completely unaware of the subject, for Buñuel had always refused him details), invited *le tout-Paris* to the première. At the entrance a valet announced the guests and the Noailles acknowledged smiles, salaams, advance congratulations. It was a different story after the screening, which was greeted with a glacial silence. Everybody made for the door, heads lowered, and the Noailles tried to hide their embarrassment. As for Buñuel, he had never been so pleased.

The film is a parable about two lovers who, in attempting to assert the reality of their passion, reject every manifestation of social authority from the law to the bourgeois conventions, from religious morality to the demands of patriotism. Buñuel has said:

Bourgeois morality is for me the anti-morality against which we must struggle. The morality founded on our extremely unjust social institutions like religion, fatherland, family, culture: in short what are called the pillars of society. There is no alternative to rebellion in so badly made a world, and this exactly summarises the principal theme of *L'Age d'Or*.

But the film goes further: the couple, even when they find solitude in the garden, are hampered as much now by interior obstacles as they were previously by exterior forces. Society has its hooks irretrievably in their subconscious, and atavistic inhibitions—represented by their reluctance to get off their awkward chairs and copulate in comfort on the ground, and then by their clothes—cripple their expression: frustrated in their attempt to destroy hypocrisy and affirm their individuality, the girl sucks a statue's toe and her partner, after the

famous sequence in which he defenestrates the symbols of his religious and cultural heritage, retires into masturbatory solitude. Of course this is not the only theme of the film, but it is unquestionably the main one, and these are certainly the ideas we recognise in the latest of his films to be released here.

It is as pointless to look for a message in Buñuel as it is to ignore his artistic anarchy (in the popular sense), that constant "taste for the irrational":

(In "*Viridiana*") I wanted basically to make a *film d'humour*—corrosive, granted, but spontaneous—and in which I express erotic and religious childhood obsessions. For me religious education and surrealism have left a lifelong mark.

All the same *Viridiana* reveals exactly the same view of the individual-in-society as *L'Age d'Or*. And it is an anarchist view: look at the principal characters, who present an expanded spectrum of individuals variously conditioned by the pillars of society against personal liberty. There is don Jaime, who commits suicide because his repressed love for his wife, dead on the wedding night, becomes a neurosis (he tries on his wife's clothes before a mirror) which abortively identifies his niece with the dead woman: he is the slave of society's rules about sex which prevent him from taking advantage of the novice when he has the opportunity, and about class, which keep from his mind the obvious release from his obsession offered by the maidservant Ramona, herself sex-starved and ready to sleep with him; the root of his trouble moreover, is the Christian fetishism surrounding marriage. There is Jorge, the illegitimate son recognised by don Jaime in his will, a man of the world who compromises consciously with morality and creates a falsely secure world: he lives practically, considers *Viridiana's* efforts to aid a few beggars as pointless in the face of the world's poverty, and buys a maltreated dog with complacent kindness without noticing another, even worse treated, which goes past when he turns round; bourgeois hypocrisy and self-deception blinker him to the possibility of change—and withdraws his individuality. There is *Viridiana*, whose fanatical asceticism and Christian certainty are put in question when she feels a certain responsibility for her uncle's suicide. In her groping efforts to expunge this by Christ-like action, she fails to throw off the absolutism of her conditioning and idealises the down-and-outs instead of facing the fact that society has already killed them as human beings. If Jorge is blinded by convention, she is blinded by the lying mythology of the church, and her final disillusioned subjection to her cousin's morality of compromise represents not so much a decline as a change of masters. Buñuel's pessimism sees society as the only—albeit protean—evil in men's lives, because it always cripples their liberty to see the truth and act upon it.

There is another character of interest in *Viridiana*, though: a little girl, daughter of the maid, shows perhaps, the director's idea of freedom. Rather like the negro in *The Young One*, Rita is (as yet) free of all the dominations of society: she skips in defiance of her father under the tree where don Jaime hanged himself, believes what her imagination tells her, and ignores class tabus by playing with *Viridiana*. On a less conscious plane, she is like the beggar who has enough pride to refuse the patronising and shackling aid of *Viridiana* and enough liberty to demand alms as he walks off. Two little anarchists, you might say.

"I am free and I want others to be free", Buñuel once said, and he knows that the only way to free people is to change society—or abolish it. He will continue to make films "without a message" while pointing an unwavering finger at the root of our sufferings and obeying his own categoric "*Je mets dans mes films ce que j'ai envie d'y mettre*." For only Chaplin among film makers has seen so clearly and condemned so frankly as Luis Buñuel, and none has stated so openly his lack of illusions towards his work: "The world being what it is today I don't make my films for the public—I mean the 'public' in inverted commas. If the public is conventional, traditional and perverted, that is not my fault but society's."

NOTE—Some of the quotations in this article have been translated from Luis Buñuel by Ado Kyrrou (Paris: Seghers, 1962).

By Donald Nicholson-Smith, *Anarchy*, July 62