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## editorial

Dear Adult,

You have been selected for FREE ENTRY to the 1983 State Lottery. Your personalised Voting Card is enclosed. No-one else has this number, it is *exclusive* to you. We have a record of it.

Take this number down to your local branch, conveniently situated near your home and you have the chance to win a share in the Government of your choice. When the new model Government is launched, more than one person in four will be able to enjoy the thrill of it being *their* choice.

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With the aid of the most modern sampling methods, you will be allotted a special role, suited just to you, the salt-of-the-earth Worker, the backbone-of-the-country Clerk, the superior Manager, the warmhearted Housewife. (The Management reserve the right to allot an alternative prize as Unwelcome Ethnic or Social Security Scrounger). Won't the neighbours be jealous! Just imagine their faces! But don't worry about their envy getting the better of them no effort will be spared to regulate this Glorious New Society. On your behalf, we will take your money and invest it in pageants for your entertainment, superior life styles which you can dream of emulating and those Technological Miracles, examples of superb craftsmanship and good old British know-how, the latest model Weapons Systems.

This prize is available in several exciting new colourways:

Victorian Virtue, Nationalised Soup-kitchen, Centralist Jelly, Any Other.

What's more, you've already drawn the right to claim a free Mystery Gift.

Waiting, ready for you to claim it, is the exciting game of Intrigue and Speculation, 'Manifesto', thrill as you and your friends try to guess which is the winning promise, the one which will actually be kept! Hours of fun for all! (All entries are accepted subject to strict adherence to the Rules and Regulations [Published & Unpublished]. No cash alternative is available. The Management's decision is final. Any quibbling will lead to disqualification.)

# VOTE FOR FEAR?

Surprisingly enough, as we go to press the Falklands factor has played practically no part at all in the argy-bargy of the last couple of weeks (pun intended). No doubt the Tory think-tank, if that is not a contradiction in terms, has decided to leave the sweet smell of success wafting on the anniversary air to seep into the tribal subconscious of the masses and not draw too much attention to what has transpired since our glorious mini-victory and close shave.

The embarrassment that could be generated if the subject came up for intensive argument was just hinted at last week when Mrs Thatcher was appearing on the TV programme 'On the Spot', in which members of the public were screened in from different areas to ask questions. An 'ordinary woman' — ie, just a voter — successfully pinned Maggie down on the question of the sinking of the 'Belgrano', the Argentine warship whose loss gave General Galtieri the first martyrs of the war, and which has since been found to have been some fifty miles *outside*, the British-imposed exclusion zone, on the mainland side and sailing *westward* — that is, *away* from where the British fleet was waiting for it.

All this took place at a time when the Peruvian Government was trying to come between the Argentine and British governments in order to establish some kind of formula for heading off the coming armed conflict. Having sent the task force all that way, however, Thatcher was determined to get as much political kudos as possible out of this little God-send for Glory. On the telly last week she didn't deny the facts — she just gave her own interpretation of them, which was that as head of the British state, it was her bounden duty to 'protect the lives of our British sailors', threatened by this ship sailing off in the opposite direction.

We are sorry not to have caught the name of the lady asking the question (or even to note where she came from) — but she really had Maggie rattled, for she bravely pressed on with the issue and had the Prime Minister stammering and repeating herself, eyes flashing with anger, but trying hard to keep the soulful, concerned look of the Leader worried only about her followers. The fact that some hundreds of British sailors and soldiers and airmen were, burned, maimed or killed as a result of the decision to sink the Belgrano — which apparently emanated from London — has got to wait some time for confirmation, for Maggie's trump card was to tell her persistent questioner that the whole truth

would be made known — in 30 years' time, when the official documents could be published.

By which time, you might think, Maggie will have ensured that the great British public will have had a rather larger conflagration of its own to worry about. Such is Thatcher's anger about the current rash of Cabinet leaks that a clamp-down is forecast. She probably won't even tell us about the holocaust until after we're safely dead.

You may also be asking yourself now why the opposition hasn't seized upon the Falkland disaster to hammer the Tories with. Well, nobody lucky enough to have had their radio switched on on April 2nd last year and to have heard Michael Foot's speech in the House of Commons, would need to ask themselves that question.

It was absolutely in line with Labour's traditional stance as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, every single member of which has bent his or her knee to take the Loyal Oath of Allegiance to Her Britannic Majesty before taking his seat in the House of Commons to represent the interests of the slum-dwellers, the halt, the sick and the lame, the homeless and the hopeless and the helpless.

Oddly enough, none of the gentlemen of the Press thought on that brave day that Michael was himself a candidate for the geriatric ward. We might have almost believed that there were moist eyes in the Press Gallery as one crabbed old backbench Tory came forward and pumped Michael's hand, grunting 'God Bless You for speaking for England!' and certainly the rest of the House, Liberals, Social Demo-

crats, Ulster Unionists, Methodists, Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, Masons, Closet Deviants, ex-Fascists, ex-Communists and ex-honest individuals, all rose to their feet to cheer Foot. . . and condemn the squalid fascist leader of a militarist junta, to whom they were selling weapons only the week before.

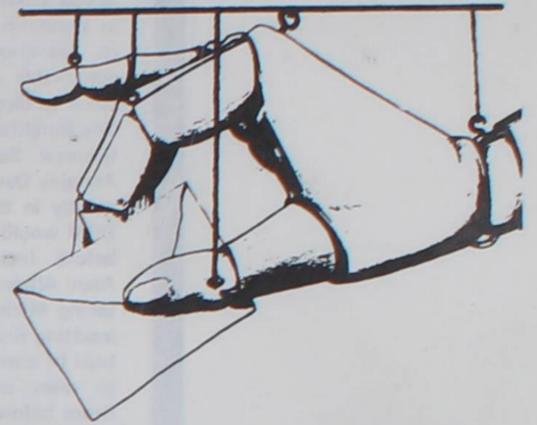
No wonder the poor sod can't make any political capital out of the Falklands factor now!

It's a dead issue — like all the other poor sods who didn't come back.

And before we pass on to other things — have you noticed how Northern Ireland doesn't get a mention in this election? Could that be because it was a Labour Government that sent in the troops in the first place? Could that be because it was Woy Jenkins (as a Labour Minister) who extended the (Labour) anti-terrorist legislation for holding suspects? Could it be that every state's man or woman and every potential state's man or woman knows that the British state needs Northern Ireland as a training ground for 'low intensity operations' — ie, suppression of the civilian population?

For come what may, the depression has some time to go yet. Thatcher did not call this election after only four years for nothing. She knows full well that there is worse to come, that the present lull in the steady increase in the inflation rate is — just a lull. Unemployment is still steadily creeping up, if for no other reason, because the technical changes that are taking place in industry demand far fewer workers. You and you and you are just not going to be wanted. But you could be a problem.

anarchist fortnightly



It is extremely lucky for the Tories that it is Michael Foot who happens to be leader of the Labour Party at this particular time, for, say what you like about Mike, he has been a sincere nuclear disarmer for a long, long time. Which is more than you can say for other leaders of the party. It so happens that (seeing many popular votes) the Labour Party at its conference decided to throw in its lot with the re-born CND of the 80's, so the Conservatives have been able to switch the main argument in this election — so far at least — on to the issue of what they laughingly call defence, rather than the domestic economy. In this, they are helped by Labour leaders Healey and Shore, both against unilateralism, leaving Foot himself to try to explain the deliberately ambivalent Manifesto.

And in this 'defence' field, we are on to the shifting grounds of fears and consequences. The unknown territories of hypothetical questions, of assertions needing no proof, of the inbuilt xenophobia of an imperial power that has lost its empire and whose slavish people identified — and still do identify — too strongly with their masters.

This election is going to be won on fear. Not only the fear of unemployment — for millions already know the truth about that and those not yet unemployed know that, somehow, you can still survive. And, anyhow, what's so marvellous about work when all it means is being used for someone else's benefit?

The fear is of a future that nobody can foretell, or, perhaps, of no future at all. Of all being blown to hell — or a hell on earth. For make no mistake about it — if the Tories win this election, they will usher in the most reactionary regime this country has seen this century. And no other party is likely to win.

All the evidence shows that when fear strikes, everybody runs to Big Daddy — or, in this case, Big Mummy. The terrible thing is, that nobody believes in themselves. Our education, our conditioning, our religions, all, all are geared to make us believe that we need someone outside of ourselves. And above all: that's what our politics is all about.

Listen to your militants; to your reactionaries and your scientific revolutionaries; to the avant garde and the rearguard and the vanguard and the Coldstream Guards and the prison guards. Listen to those who say 'You must use your vote! You must choose someone to represent you! You cannot do anything yourself! You cannot take the law into your own hands! Anything else is Anarchy!

Then you'll know.



Strategy and tactics – CND

I've been encouraged recently by some of FREEDOM's renewed, and major coverage of CND activities (and to a lesser extent that of the wider peace movement). 2,000 or so risking arrest at Burghfield and Greenham at Easter, with 70,000 standing the next day in their support, is reason enough for this – let alone the more sustained and regular civil disobedience at the peace camps.

It's quite remarkable that such a 'broad church' organisation, albeit in symbolic fashion, is committed to law-breaking, and especially remarkable in view of CND's resistance to direct action in the 1960s. The Burghfield sight of Bruce Kent (General Secretary of CND) and Annajoy David (Youth CND) sitting quietly in the mud reading FREEDOM would not have been possible before. Incidentally, I agree with Alan Albon (letters 7th May) in taking Michel Prigent to task for insulting Bruce Kent. It would perhaps be constructive if Michel were to meet and discuss CND with Bruce before jumping to conclusion and insult.

However I regret that FREEDOM reporters found the registration and preparation for the blockade 'bureaucratic'. With three gates and 24 hours to cover, planning is essen-

tial. The 'bureaucratic' procedures also included a legal briefing, a briefing on the geography of the site, details on how decisions were to be made over the day, provision of emergency phone numbers and the chance to ask the practical questions we all had.

I hope groups will try to prepare *in advance* for future actions – as we have been asked to do for Upper Heyford. Such organisation prevents chaos and lightens the work-load of the local activists.

There are a number of good reasons for this. At Burghfield each group – through the spokespersons meeting – could feed in their ideas and feelings on continuing the blockade without calling the whole thing off for a meeting or leaving the decision making in the hands of pre-selected leaders. Demonstrations can also be very lonely occasions and isolated demonstrators who haven't a clue what's going on can get into difficulties. At Torness a few years ago, the police dumped people miles from anywhere in the early hours. Such hassles are more easily overcome by adequate preparation, information and support. Local activists have the right to insist on organisation and preparation as it is they who have to carry on the campaign when everyone

else has gone home. (If the organisation is too-rigid for some, there are lots of other ways to make individual protest – there's certainly no shortage of military sites.)

The FREEDOM reporters were not the only group to be turned away from the Burghfield blockade. The Socialist Workers Party were chucked off one gate – not by CND officials, but by the rest of the blockaders. They then proceeded to get up most people's noses by rejecting the agreed non-violent nature of the blockade. With some other ego-trippers and macho types they took advantage of the difficult position where 23 civilian houses (mostly rented by non-Ministry of Defence staff) lay behind the blockade. Much of the pushing and shoving referred to in FREEDOM was caused by the SWP and their friends. It did not win many people to a favourable view of their Party.

Conflict will of course continue within our ranks but I think it's futile to criticise CND for having some committees – especially since CND is a federal organisation with all sorts of autonomous local groups – though I appreciate that at Burghfield there were some difficulties between local and national activists. Whether *Sanity* encourages

debate or not, there will be plenty of debate in hundreds of local CND papers whose combined circulation is well above that of *Sanity*.

Finally, though the numbers taking part at Easter were impressive, the total is still only just a bit up on a good gate at a Manchester United football match. The turn-out at the Dawes Hill peace chain was thousands short of what was expected and the recent Lakenheath blockade had to be trimmed to a 'walk-on' and picnic on the base. If we, and local groups, get too enthused by the odd big-time event and discover the hard way that people won't – or can't – trek all over the place getting arrested, we've got problems. I'm concerned therefore at the calls for 'major confrontation'.

The Animal Liberation Front has shown the effectiveness of regular, well-prepared, small-scale actions. I think this type of action can be more useful, is more easily sustained and is more in keeping with anarchist politics.

However successful we are at Upper Heyford – please – let's not have calls for constantly bigger and bigger blockades.

Ross Bradshaw  
Nottingham

Voice of an anarchist

I fear that in writing this I'm going to bring forth sighs from readers and charges of 'We've heard it all before'. But as I'm only 19 and have only been active in the struggle for about six months I can plead ignorance.

The fact is that I simply cannot see how anarchists can justify using violence on other people as part of their campaign. My reason is that if we did manage to overthrow the state by violent methods, it follows that our power would rest on the ability to keep those who oppose us under control. This sounds uncannily like the present system of repression.

Another reason is one which I have got from Ronald Sampson's pamphlet *Society without the State*. In it he rightly states that anarchists, to be true to their aims, must not strive to obtain power over others because it would be hypocrisy. So the first requirement

of anarchists is to renounce any desire for power over others. Likewise, does it not follow that, in order to be true to their aims of disarmament and peace, anarchists must first throw away their own guns?

With this in mind I find many of the sentiments expressed in certain 'anarchist' papers hypocritical. I quote here from an article in *Workers Playtime* (February 1983): Our aims are not pacific, but revolutionary and warlike: We do not call for disarmament but seek the arming of the proletariat...The Ruling Class will only be disarmed through the organised violence of an insurrectionary working class. Personally this sounds too much like SWP rhetoric for my liking. Is this the voice of an anarchist?

I'd be pleased to hear what other readers think.

John

LAF congratulated

Congratulations on the beginning of another London Anarchist Federation: it is surely well needed. It will permit the continuity of knowledge of anarchist activities that have occurred and do occur.

In London over the last ten years more than one hundred libertarian groups have come and gone. New groups start without the benefit of the people around who have tried, or know of, tactics similar to those which they now plan. The same errors are repeated, services are duplicated, and resources go unused, as there is a lack of co-operation between various groups and individuals. There is much more that can be done with the existing situation to promote and build anarchist possibilities if we attempt coordination. The Federation can and will facilitate solving some of these problems and more if we give it a chance and a bit of our

energies.

In the report (7 May) you mention that it took a 'Canadian Comrade' to initiate the LAF. It should be realised that it is always through the energy and ideas of many people that any one individual's action takes place. I am sure that both directly and indirectly other comrades have helped organize or inspire the formation of LAF; let us not forget them. Secondly, an anarchist comrade would not be a 'Canadian'. The state artificially claims humans as its citizens for its purposes of manipulation; let us not follow its errors. The comrade in question would hopefully be an internationalist or a non-nationalist, as I would hope all anarchists would be.

J.Martin

Strategy and tactics – Anarcho-syndicalism

F A Woodbine's disagreements with anarcho-syndicalism is not over revolutionary strategy, as stated in her/his letter (FREEDOM 21.5.83). Strategically we agree on the importance of militant class struggle of an organised nature. What we disagree on is the tactical nature of that organisation.

The point is that workers councils are no less free from the dangers of bureaucratic degeneration and are considerably more at risk to being incorporated into the existing system than anarcho-syndicalist unions. An example, the Polish workers councils of 1956 were soon absorbed by the Gromulka regime, whilst Solidarity though not inspired directly by anarchism, posed such a threat to the state that it had to be met with brute force by the police and army under Jaruzelski. Moreover workers councils are also advocated by various authoritarians in the Marxist camp, not as a means to a liberation of society and workers self management, but as a mere appendage to the dictatorship of a vanguard party. An anarcho-syndicalist trade union does not share this ambiguity, the nationalists and marxists have attempted to enter the CNT in Spain, but have failed miserably.

The statement that anarcho-

syndicalism is 'utopian' and an 'outdated platitude' is based on the supposed evidence of events in Europe in the last 15 years. If you take a limited enough area and timespan you can prove any political trend, but to make any rigorous examination of workers organisation at least 150 years is needed, the time since the industrial revolution. Likewise since the development of a global economy of multinational corporations and state monopolies, with increasing convergence of the two in the form of 'Vodka-Cola' trade and production deals, western Europe is too small an area to make any generalisations about the relevance of militant unions. However it may be convenient if you wish to avoid looking at recent developments in other industrialised regions, such as the rise of fighting unions and re-emergence of anarchism in Poland in the eastern bloc and Brazil in the developing states of the 'South'. Nor should the fight against super exploitation by the Black Trade Unions of South Africa be ignored. Even looking at western Europe over the past 15 years outright dismissal of syndicalist forms does not hold water.

Taking the examples:

1. France May 68. If you look at

the description of the most advanced part of the revolt, the Nantes Commune, in Fisera's anthology (Writing on the Wall, Extract 176, Nantes: A Whole Town Discovers the Power of the People, from, *Cahiers de Mai* 15 June) the militants of the CGT FO Loire Atlantique took a great part in the quasi-self management at the Sud Aviation factory and in the mutual aid that took place in the town. Unlike the other unions they followed a revolutionary syndicalist line.

2. Portugal 1974-5. Although the Anarcho-Syndicalist CGT was important in the 30's it emerged after decades of severe repression and with Spain still under Franco's regime. Despite general good-will it was unfortunately unable to have much influence. However they are still fighting and publish the paper 'A Bahtala'. As for the Workers Committees, they were wrecked by the rival Marxist sects.

3. Spain 1976-7. When F A Woodbine says of events in Spain at this time 'And none (of the revolts) resulted in the formation of syndicalist unions to act as the permanent organs of proletarian resistance', it is she/he that has more in common with the Flat Earth Society, rather than the DAM. Comrades know the extent of the

growth of the CNT in this period. That, despite the lying claims of some people, the CNT, unlike the UGT and CC.00, continue to reject reformism. It was the only union to give support to the Roca strike, to reject the Momoloa pact, and to refuse to take part in the elections to the state registered factory councils.

4. Italy 1969 & 1977. The tradition of the Italian autonomia is a very diverse movement which includes Marxist-leninists such as Autonomia Operaia, as well as libertarians who fight the 'Historic Compromise' between the Christian Democrats and the 'Communist' Party. Anarcho-Syndicalists also are part of this movement. Besides the USI and Direct Action Committees they are to be found in other autonomous grass roots structures, in the groups of the Federations such as the FAI, and in the official unions (EGCGIL) fighting the bureaucracy.

If anarcho-syndicalism is so irrelevant then why, in recent years, has there developed groups such as DAM in Britain NSF in Norway ASO in Denmark FAR in Germany and support in unions such as the SAC in Sweden and the OVB in the Netherlands.

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# DON'T VOTE

Those not enamoured of Parliament might feel some doubts about refusing to vote in the forthcoming General Election on June 9. Loathing the Conservative Government of Margaret Thatcher, whose only worthwhile stance is its dislike of Communism (whilst no doubt studying the methods of dealing with Solidarity used in Poland), we might be tempted to consider voting Labour. The SDP/Liberal Alliance is empty and does not warrant a passing thought.

Labour has policies of some interest to most libertarians on the issue of nuclear disarmament. Although most would recognise the remote likelihood of a Labour Government carrying through their policies on unilateralism, anarchists could feel that at least the Labour Party policy on nuclear weapons is moving in the right direction.

Personally I consider unilateralism mistaken, preferring the status quo with a coordinated world-wide move towards total disarmament as an objective — something only realistically possible in a libertarian world — but Labour could pull at many over this issue as regards going to the ballot box.

Another area where policies between Labour and Tory do show some difference is over the 'Welfare State'. There can be little doubt that a re-elected Conservative Government could destroy what remains of the edifice of 'welfare', and libertarians may feel this demands a visit to the polling booth.

On unemployment also there may seem to be a case for voting Labour. Especially if you're out of work and need a steady income for the rent or mortgage. The Thatcher Government back in power would certainly increase the hardship of unemployment.

Again, it could be argued that the best chance for revolutionary change in Britain rests with a returned Conservative Government and a crippled Labour Party, and people turning to direct action in desperation. A tactical vote for the Conservatives might seem attractive.

The likelihood of any uprising being on the cards with a Tory-controlled state is slight, but has some plausibility. Whether any such uprising would be of a libertarian nature is a wider and more difficult matter. It seems doubtful.

Against these thoughts are the basic arguments of anarchism. If you want a society which is stateless, there is no consistency in voting in an election. You give a personal endorsement to state power. You vote for your own servility, obedience and repression. A very unhealthy approach. Our basic ills remain hierarchy and capitalism. A vote for Labour will do nothing to alter that situation — in fact, Labour would probably strengthen capitalism although very few capitalists realise this.

So, don't vote on election day. Turn your back on organised violence, and keep a personal integrity which refuses to acquiesce in being ruled. Resilience in the future we will need, but it must come from acting according to our ethics, not theirs.

JW



## When the Revolution?

It would do no good to shoot Mrs Thatcher.

Nor to commiserate with Michael Foot. (Not a non sequitur, a new paragraph!)

It would be shortsighted to attach any part of one's sentiment to the Ecology Party, however well intentioned, or the SDP with its rather unfortunate grouping of initials. (It was the German SDP who so barbarically did to death Rosa Luxemburg.) I almost forgot the Liberal Party.

It's nothing new to say that the present government has held iron sway over the country with only 33.4 per cent of the British people's will.

Nobody in their right mind could believe that this is what parliamentary democracy is about. Yet 76 per cent of British people still do. In fact parliamentary democracy has departed from its very definition, which is: A state practising government by the people. It's been on the march, unchecked, for far too long.

When people begin publicly to point out inconsistencies, events have a habit of being precipitated into a state of national emergency. History shows that death on a large scale proves a very dislocating distraction.

The unforgivable Falklands foray with its attendant sycophantic championing by the right-wing tabloids, and anti-pacific drum-banging to accompany the triumphal march through London, pointed glaringly to that nasty nationalistic impulse so close to the surface of the unthinking part of people's minds. But more than that, it was a show of force by this government to impress the British people that it will not do to meddle in its intentions. (I don't think Members of Parliament knew about Britain's latest underground nuclear test before it happened, for example.)

Boundary changes implemented for the next General Election suggest another consolidating aspect of power politics. There are fifteen more constituencies and correspondingly more MPs. One example

will suffice. One safe Conservative seat in Sussex is made into two! For the people living in the new constituency it will mean having to travel 30 miles instead of three or four to see their MP. A trial for those without cars.

Then there is the disquieting fact that voting people are persuaded not to set much store by what they've found to be true in life, but instead to believe what they're told in the run-up to the election. Of course this amounts to delegating their responsibilities, and even their consciences, to people who have given them the impression they know better.

What is also alarming in this present climate of disillusion is that people who hold honest to good sound views are letting them be changed by the media assault on their values and susceptibilities. The resulting standardisation of opinion is best illustrated by the MORI (sic) poll findings. Which in themselves are said to sway public opinion even further.

Another example of parliamentary democracy in action is exhibited on posters and in advertisements. The richer the party, the more space it gets. The preoccupation with promoting themselves only suggests an unhealthy determination to cling on to power. Once in power the incumbents can't wait to amplify Lord Acton's aphorism: Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. It is as though they imagine they can wash away those non-secret aspects of their office that we've been amply apprised of. Again they're to be re-packaged and sold to the British people as bright new products! And again, unhappily, people will be taken in.

A bad time it's been for concerned British people. There is time to stand back and assess the damage. The fewer the words the better.

Trinity of horrors.

1. Not content with chaining as many people to the mortgage as could be persuaded to 'buy' property, now it's to be the Cable. There must be a reason for the hastiness

in getting the legislation through Parliament. The Government would have people 'voluntarily' tied to their soft armchairs getting fat on TV snacks, oblivious entirely of the activities going on in their name behind their backs. £2.6 billion is a lot of tax-payers' money to boost a highly risky private 'enterprise'.

2. The Government would like to have prospective candidates for election to Parliament coming up with £1,000 deposit. Now that's an effective way to silence minority voices. 'Truth', as Zola said, 'is on the march, nothing will stop it now.' Very soon, if people let it, truth won't be able to afford a look in.

3. The Government intends, if it can, to compel conscience-raised Nuclear-Free Zone councils to comply with a Home Office directive for a gigantic 'civil defence' operation in July. 'The biggest ever.' Government would increase the proffered grant to 100 per cent. The question is: Will the new House of Commons stand for this latest fragrant disabuse of democratic power? And if they do, will those more than 150 councils be bought? The money would be put into building nuclear shelters for the bureaucrats. (Now to kid myself that I have the key to understanding the purpose of those ageless monolithic tombs scattered over the planet.) In the event of war, tombs they would most likely be. Certainly otherwise it bears no thinking about the composition of the new society for the survivors of the holocaust.

The Government, of course, whatever its political colour, has been feathering its nuclear survival nests since the late 1950s and rising of CND.

We have been brought to a moral quicksand, and unless we stand back now so as to see everything more clearly the opportunity may be lost. Possibly this time for ever. Harking back to the pre-war 1930s, voices of sanity will remain in the wilderness; either that, or certainly be given short shrift if the present

government is returned, wielding military might.

So what can be done?

A necessary step towards finding a way out of the political blind-alley the country's in, before we're all blown to bits, is to encourage anyone we meet to acknowledge the bankruptcy of every political party. Never mind which one, the road to corrupting power is the same for all.

Everyone has a conscience: it needs to be pricked and listened to. When that happens the empty vote will be shown up for what it is. It will put an end as well to those last-minute conjectures people are prone to, and the dilly-dallying over which or whom to vote for. Once the spirit is awakened in people, there's no knowing its power.

But before it's too late we should face up to the fact that circumstances have overtaken the usefulness of abstention from voting. A disaffected 24 per cent of British people did not go to the polls at the last 'General Election'. Abstention, or apathy? No one knows. Certainly all those people did not feature in any 'official' accounting of people's sympathies, and 24 per cent is too many people giving up their rights for them to be ignored.

One thing can be done now towards abolishing government in the framework of peaceful revolution. A decision needs to be taken in readiness for the coming General Election. Whether to demonstrate your withdrawal of Government support by going to the poll and scrawling on the ballot card a great big cross over the lot.

There is no more positive way of declaring opposition to Government. Non-violent. Non-cooperative. The Non-Vote.

It is the way to ensure that every conscientious Non-Vote gets included in the official count. Indeed, the collective voice of the disaffected would at last be heard.

With an awakening of conscience on a national scale the result of the Non-Vote would be finally to abolish Government in Britain.

Rodney Aitchety

**Cruise on Your Doorstep** by Bob Overy, *Peace News* Broadsheet, 10p.

This new broadsheet, which has been reprinted from *Peace News* and has also been incorporated into current CND campaigning material, is essentially concerned with drawing a distinction between direct and indirect campaign strategies in opposing nuclear weapons in general and Cruise missiles in particular. In his support of indirect action — what he calls 'direct action from your own home' — as being the most appropriate means of reaching the overall goal through the recognition of the need for limited and achievable objectives, Bob Overy

disregards direct action and blames it for the decline of the peace movement in the 1960s.

The indirect strategy that he seems to be recommending as appropriate to the peace movement represents in my opinion an equivalent to a community development approach to social and political change. Community development is a method of social work and is a process implying growth which aims to achieve change — whether personal, group, or collective — through consensus. The indirect strategy put forward by community developers is distinguished by its efforts to avoid confrontation and polarisation by placing moral pressure on the state

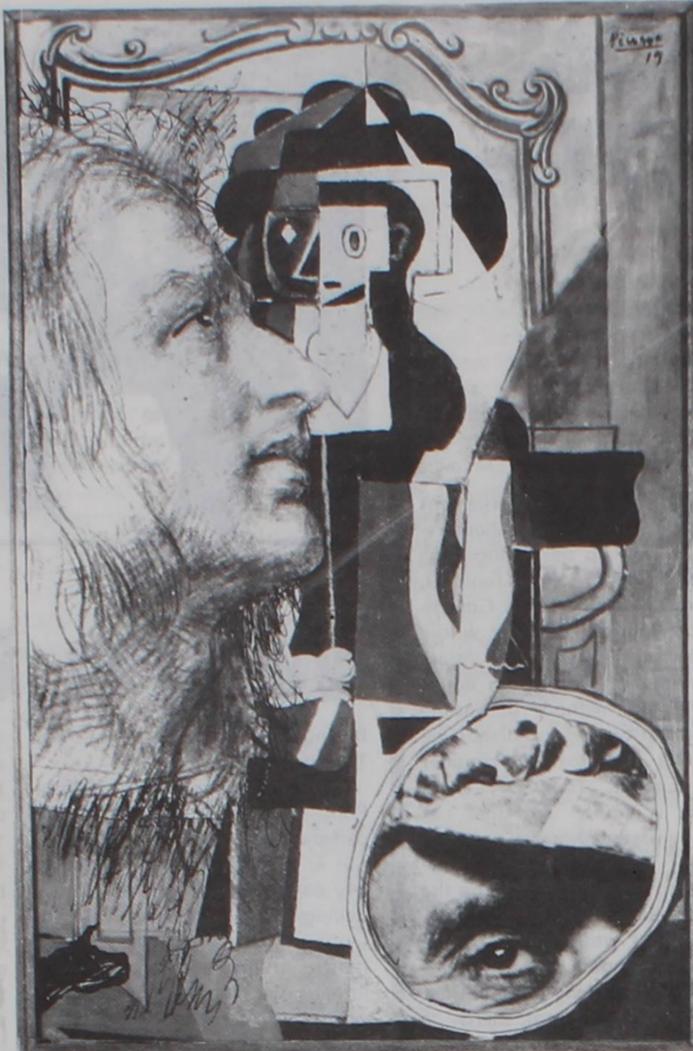
through symbolic actions. The descriptive terminology includes official action by resolutions; electoral activity, symbolic persuasion and defensive, rather than offensive, civil disobedience. The broadsheet fails to realise that the abolition of nuclear weapons is not like campaigning for a pedestrian crossing or a new community centre, and being different it requires a different approach.

Perhaps a better sub-title for this broadsheet would have been 'Indirect action from your armchair', since it includes a list of companies involved in Cruise missiles and base construction whose goods shoppers are advised to avoid. If this broadsheet is seriously used as a cam-

paign tool in opposing nuclear weapons it can only result in the peace movement articulating its grievances against the state within a safely defined arena of discontent. Except as a last resort, it is opposed to using conflict to effect social change. So this broadsheet should not be taken too seriously as a tool for action. However, it may be recommended without reservation to all those who want to abolish nuclear weapons on the quiet — social workers, community workers, symbolic interactionists, members of political parties, and peers of the realm, not to mention crossroads watchers and muesli eaters.

D J Isiorho

# Feetwiping Artwise



There is one small facet of the world's economy that even I do not understand, and that is the paranoiac obsession that men and women have, beyond recorded time, to buy and sell carpets. The foyers of the world's great hotels are hired for the 'amazing sale', and one must assume that the populace is panicked by the full-page advertisements in the various freest newspapers in the free world to break open their grandmother's piggy bank and to dash off to buy square yards by the foot of machine-woven patterns wall-to-wall and wipe-your-feet carpets.

It is said, and probably truly so, that before the commercialisation of the carpet cottage industry, the weaving of carpets incorporated the cultural history of a particular society; but after 1870, when the commercial workshops moved into the act, carpets rolled off the machine in the same manner as wall-paper and curtains, and in doing so destroyed what was held to be, in effect, the documentation of small nomadic societies. Yet I weep no tears that the machine should have taken over this mind-destroying function, for while I will join in singing sad songs for the death of beauty or the visual aids to past societies, this I do know, that women and girls — as with the civilised women of the awful sewing bees — spent their lives gazing hour after hour at the creations of repetitive patterns worthy of an admiring glance in an idle hour.

At the Barbican Art Gallery, if one learns to work the lifts to the eighth floor, there is the beginning of what is claimed to be the first major exhibition of Oriental carpets to be held in London for over ten years. And they ain't kidding the Town and his wall-to-wall Frau, for through the long hot summer there will be exhibits of carpets at the Hayward Gallery, the National Gallery, again the Barbican, with conferences at £150 a head, and the whole of Bond Street and the St James's area from Christie's to Ron in Petticoat Lane E1 (est 1982), flogging carpets until their wallets go limp from the absorbed perspiration.

Doctor Thompson from the Barbican writes that there is a cottage industry in which women, working from home, sell their work. They work mostly from memory, but with a more cosmopolitan style.

(Carpet-weaving is one of the few art forms in which women dominate: 90 per cent of these powerful designs are made by women.) The exhibition of these carpets gives pleasure and the pleasure lies in viewing these repetitious patterns for, like wall-paper, it is aesthetics without intellectual or emotional content. In 1929, when I was 15 years of age, I was employed for a few shillings a week by a major firm with a major arms contract, and each day for eight-and-a-half hours I would sit facing a blank brick wall operating a hand operated press; and now in 1983 I stand, wine in hand, viewing the pretty patterns woven by long-dead, long-forgotten women and girls whose eyes meant for far horizons were locked on to the moving shuttle of the crude loom, and Oh the wasted lives, Oh the wasted lives!

But this cannot be said of Friedensreich Hundertwasser, the 'fascinating Austrian artist' whose work fills all the wall space within the Barbican gallery that does not contain a carpet. With almost no talent, but with a childish pleasure in bright colours, he has done everything that can be painted and reproduced from State stamps to tapestry, and I find them crude, naive and brash. The names of Klimt, Klee and Schiele are freely used in relation to his work, but I would hold that he does not possess a fraction of their talent; and I think of Wolfgang Wols and his delicate pretty little wash Surrealist paintings, all down the drain of history, for, as the buyer for one of London's major (and how that word keeps coming up) State galleries stated, 'water colours are rather a sideline', but Friedensreich has taken refuge in the tranquillity and naturalness of New Zealand, where he loves the good life via the birds and the bees and the floyvers, and nurses his love-hate relationship with Austria.

Yet all is not lost at the Barbican, apart from the lift-locked majority, for there is on display an icon by the Master of Chora. It is a fourteenth century Byzantine work and is of St Peter and, give or take a carpet, is worth about £200,000; but apart from the gelt, its value to us dilettantes of the quivering wine glass must lie in its discovery by Mr Mihalarias, a pleasant and gentle man, and the photographs of its restoration from a tiny speck of

gold showing on the back of a seventeenth century icon, boosting the price up from £10,000 to £200,000; so we are now left with visions of all the Bond Street dealers scrubbing like hell with their Brillo pads on every icon they have stored under their beds. That works of art have completely artificial economic values, and that it is the job of the good dealer to keep that price high, is no secret; for dealers are no more than shop-keepers, and they know that most of the daubs in their basements are rubbish. Every State gallery in London has its backlog of junk art, and it stays because bureaucratically it is non-destructible or give-awayable.

The Tate has a major exhibition of 'The Essential Cubism 1907 — 1920: Braque, Picasso and their friends'. It is a major exhibition with an extraordinarily good catalogue by Douglas Cooper and Gary Tinterow, and what they claim is that this exhibition will include only works of historical importance and of the highest quality. One question that haunted my mind after I had left this exhibition was, What is a major work of art? For one accepts that there are works of historical importance, in politics and in art, but, all too often, minor works of art are on permanent display as major works of art simply because they were the work of men or women who climbed on the bandwagon of a valid historical moment. Oh to be the man who ran up the steps of the Winter Palace!

Surrealism was a necessary movement in that it freed, not the artist, but the spectator, from the discipline of only being able to accept fantasy through the eyes of children; and as with Dada, it gave the spectator much pleasure and the writer and painter of small talent a shield to justify their small gifts. Yet who would argue that Miro, Dali, Ernst, Man Ray, Magritte, Tanguy or Masson painted a major work of art? They found a new trick for an old dog, and that old dog was and always must be the Establishment, and now the Surrealists sleep on the carpet shuddering and whining as they chase dream rabbits.

It is to be regretted that Picasso's 'Les Femmes d'Alger' is not on view within this exhibition, nor is it reproduced within the catalogue, for I would hold that that painting and the 1937 painting

'Guernica' were the beginning and the end of an art movement that added some slight contribution to the visual arts. Homage is paid to Cezanne, in the 'Master's' fusing of different aspects of the subject, and Picasso's 1909 painting of a 'Nude Woman in an Armchair' makes the message, in that he placed the woman outside a house and merged house and woman into geometrical patterns; for what the Cubists sought to do — and whether they succeeded is historically debatable — was within a two-dimensional surface to create the illusions of a three-dimensional whole by a fragmentation of the subject, thereby forcing the spectator to view from different angles, as with a broken mirror. Collage and Freudian fantasy is part of every commercial artist's tool-kit, and of Cubism one would hold that it has run its limited course and offered a minor contribution and a major pleasure to the painter and the viewer.

Lorenzo Ghiberti these 500 years ago wrote what is held to be the first artist's autobiography, *Commentarii*, and he was a man who employed Michelozzo, Donatello and Uccello in his workshop. But Ghiberti's other claim to mini fame is that he was influenced by the mysterious German Master Gusmin, and in that period he became a master of the newly artistic delight, perspective. Uccello has always picked up the Oscar for his 1456 painting 'The Battle of San Romano', with its correct use of perspective, but in the discovery and use of perspective these men produced great works of art, and their technical contribution is now incorporated into the creation of the visual two-plane painting, not as a major theme but as a logical contribution to the work.

I would hold, with the wine glass, that there is much, nay too much, third-rate work by third-rate artists on display within the Tate's exhibition, for much of their work can be rated as historical documents of their period because they added a minor contribution that has failed to find acceptance into the body politic of the visual art. But they gave much much pleasure, and I can envy, admire and respect them. Admire and respect? Envy, yes, and applaud their exhibition at the Tate Gallery for Picasso, Braque and their friends give pleasure.

Arthur Moyse

*Anarchism and the Mexican Working Class 1860-1931* by John M Hart, University of Texas Press, £20 + p & p, (available from FREEDOM Bookshop).

Mexican anarchism is generally associated only with the Revolution of 1910-1919 — especially with the peasant guerrilla leader, Emiliano Zapata, and with the extreme 'Liberal' leaders, the Flores Magon brothers — and it is scarcely even mentioned in standard histories of either Mexico or anarchism as existing before 1900. Yet in 1970 John Hart produced an American doctoral thesis called *Anarchist thought in Nineteenth Century Mexico*, which was published in Mexico in 1974 as *Los Anarquistas Mexicanos 1860-1900*; after being rewritten with the present title, it was published in the United States in 1978 and is now available in Great Britain.



# Mexican Anarchism

Hart, who is an associate professor of history at Houston University, Texas, gives 50 pages to the revolutionary period and 20 pages to the post-revolutionary period, but 100 pages to the pre-revolutionary period. Most of the story he tells will be new to almost all English-speaking readers — though his work was used by David Poole in the Cienfuegos Press edition of Ricardo Flores Magon's *Land and Liberty* (1977). It is a remarkable story, for although the Mexican anarchist movement may be little known, it is one of the oldest in the world and was for a time one of the most important.

The first significant points are that the movement began half a century before the Revolution, and that it showed from the start a fertile combination of intellectual theory and popular practice. Hart mentions but doesn't describe the traditions of peasant rebellion, social banditry, and urban riot, directed not only against the Spanish regime but also against the Aztec empire it replaced in the sixteenth century; and this 'long history of pre-ideological pre-industrial protest', reinforced during the early nineteenth century from Spain and the spread of the industrial revolution, prepared the ground for the coming of modern socialism and anarchism in the 1860's, when the seeds of European ideas were sown among rural and urban workers who already had long and bitter experience in the class struggle.

The first identifiable anarchist in Mexico was a cosmopolitan intellectual called Plotino Rhodakanaty. His father was Greek and his mother Austrian; he was born in Athens in 1828, and brought up in Vienna and Berlin. After living in Paris (where he met Proudhon) and Barcelona, he went to Mexico in 1861 and stayed for 25 years. He worked as a teacher and journalist, published pamphlets and periodicals and formed several small organisations. His politics combined Fourierist and Proudhonist ideas, and he persistently publicised collectivism

and mutualism in the social struggle.

In 1863 a group of his students formed an organisation which in 1865 became 'La Social', a semi-secret society like those in the emerging anarchist movement in Europe, through which they played a significant part in the labour movement for many years. In 1864 they began to revive old organisations for mutual aid (*socorros mutuos*), developing them from friendly societies into anarchist fronts, and they later formed resistance societies, consumer cooperatives, and neighbourhood councils. They pioneered the recruitment of women into the labour movement, and one of these — Carmen Huerta — later became a prominent working-class leader. Several members of La Social were important figures in the subsequent anarchist movement — Francisco Zalacosta and Julio Chavez Lopez in the countryside, and Santiago Villanueva and Hermengildo Villavicencio in the towns. Hart frequently describes these people and their organisations and activities as 'Bakuninist', but they seem to have anticipated Bakunin by several years and in several ways, both in the countryside and in the towns. Major peasant risings were organised by Chavez Lopez in 1867-1869 and by Zalacosta in 1878. In April 1869 Chavez Lopez, who called himself 'the enemy of all governments', issued a 'Manifesto to all the oppressed and poor of Mexico and the world', which affirmed not only the liberalism against tyranny and socialism against property but also anarchism against government, and which set the pattern for agrarian revolutionism for half a century before Zapata. The theoretical line was followed by people like Jose Maria Gonzalez, an active writer in the working-class press, and by Alberto Santa Fe, whose 'Law of the People' was the most elaborate agrarian programme before the Plan of Ayala; the practical line was followed by people like Tiburcio Montiel, who formed an Agrarian League, and Miguel Negrete, who led agrarian risings into the 1880s. As in Spain

and Russia, the agrarian struggle dominated the anarchist movement; but the urban struggle was also important.

Indeed anarchists seem to have entered the labour movement in Mexico earlier and more effectively than almost anywhere else. Back in 1865 they were already involved in major strikes, and by 1868 they had led a successful textile workers' strike in Mexico City. In 1870, following news of the International Working Men's Association (the First International) in Europe, a national organisation called the Workers' Great Circle was formed. From the start anarchists were involved in it and then its various successors, establishing the pattern later familiar in Spain of a broad non-party workers' organisation with small anarchist groups alongside. According to Hart, they establish in Spain, 'for in the early 1870s, the historic red-and-black flag of anarchism, and the *roji-negra*, became the official symbol of the Mexican labor movement'; it would be interesting to have an authoritative version of the history of our flag, which perhaps really did originate in Mexico more than a century ago.

Anarchist influence in the rural and urban struggles reached a peak at the end of the 1870s, but the anarchist movement declined during the 1880s as the pseudo-Liberal regime of Porfirio Diaz became entrenched. The growing central government established bourgeois capitalism throughout the economy and made Mexico a crypto-colony of the United States; it gradually subverted the labour organisations, and crushed peasant rebellions and workers' strikes by brute force, hundreds of people being murdered on several occasions. Social resistance continued, and small anarchist groups survived underground, but for 20 years the movement was in total eclipse. The change began in 1900, with the work of Ricardo, Enrique, and Jesus Flores Magon in forming a series of 'Liberal' organisations and producing the paper *Regeneracion*.

At this point we reach the

revolutionary period of Mexican history. The career of the Flores Magon brothers is described and documented in the Cienfuegos Press edition of *Land and Liberty* (available from the FREEDOM Bookshop at £2.50 plus 40p postage); the atmosphere of the struggle is depicted in B Traven's *Jungle Novels*. The Flores Magon brothers and their associates were forced into exile in the United States in 1905. The 'Liberal' organisations and publications became the main vehicle for revolutionary socialist and indeed anarchist agitation and propaganda. The Liberal Party initiated rural guerrilla groups and urban workers' groups, and in 1906 there were serious strikes and risings which began the process culminating in the successful Revolution of 1910. But this only replaced Porfirio Diaz by the moderate Liberal Francisco Madero, and the Revolution soon became a civil war in which libertarian elements played an important part.

The Flores Magon brothers and their associates followed the line of public propaganda in which their anarchism gradually emerged; they suffered bitter persecution not only in Mexico but in the United States, where they were continually harassed, raided, arrested, and torured, and where Ricardo was murdered in prison in 1922. They maintained the purest form of anarchism, being to some extent isolated from the desperate struggles on the ground in Mexico, and the Magonist movement represents the main expression of traditional anarchism during the revolutionary period. (Incidentally, Hart mentions some of the Americans who worked with them, but not the Englishman William C. Owen, who was also associated with FREEDOM both before and after that period.) Back in Mexico there were two other expressions of libertarianism, in the anarcho-syndicalist movement and in the peasant movement.

Anarcho-syndicalism was brought



Strike meeting at the Star Saloon shortly before the crowd was attacked, July 31, 1916.

to Mexico by Amadeo Ferrer, a Catalan exile from Spain, who worked much like Rhodakanaty 50 years before, and his associates initiated many important developments. In 1912 Juan Francisco Moncaleano formed a semi-secret society first called *Luz* (Light) and then *Lucha* (Struggle), and later that year his associates founded a Ferrist Rationalist School and

Workers' House which became a focus for anarcho-syndicalist activity. After bitter struggles against various regimes, in 1915 the anarcho-syndicalists anticipated later events in Spain by supporting the regime of Venustiano Carranza, the so-called 'Constitutionalist' (i.e. moderate Socialist); they soon learnt their mistake and turned against it, but were then soon crushed by it after a disastrous general strike in 1916. The anarcho-syndicalist movement continued, a General Confederation of Labour

being formed in 1921, but this was gradually absorbed into the Mexican establishment, and collapsed in 1931.

The peasant movement was of course led by Emiliano Zapata, but Hart almost ignores him, mentioning that he was condemned and actually fought by the anarcho-syndicalists. Fortunately there are plenty of books on Zapata, especially John Womeck's scholarly biography, *Zapata and the Mexican Revolution* (1969), and Peter Newell's Cienfuegos Press study *Zapata of Mexico*

(available from the FREEDOM Bookshop at £2.95 plus 40p postage).

Hart ends his story in 1931, saying virtually 'nothing about the subsequent half-century except to mention the continuing Mexican Anarchist Federation and a couple of groups. His book is very valuable, especially on the pre-revolutionary period, but also for its emphasis on the anarcho-syndicalists during the revolutionary and post-revolutionary periods. But it is badly arranged and written, being hard to follow

and read, and having too many bewildering facts and too few relevant quotations; it is well produced and it has some very rare illustrations. Its main achievement is to make sure that English-speaking readers now have no excuse for ignoring the Mexican anarchist movement and its contribution to the Mexican Revolution, the whole story being one of the great tragedies of our history.

NW

## Peasants of Aragon

With the *Peasants of Aragon* by Augustin Souchy Bauer, and *Libertarian Communism in the Liberated Areas* by Victor Blanco, Cienfuegos Press, £2.50. (Available from Freedom Bookshop, plus 45p postage.)

This book is a translation of two essays written by participants in the Spanish revolution of 1936-1939. The larger of the two essays, *With the Peasants of Aragon*, forms the bulk of the book.

This essay is a first-hand account of life on the agrarian collectives in the Aragon region, in the spring of 1937. Souchy Bauer's account is a kind of anarchist version of *Rural Rides*; he describes each village in turn, and seizes upon particular points — the size of the collective, the political tendencies of the collective members and of the other members of the village, the everyday life of the collective — in order to develop an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses. The information he gives directly contradicts the common Marxist/liberal

thesis that rural anarchists were 'primitive rebels' who should be seen as backward-looking utopians. He repeatedly emphasises the collectives' commitments to agricultural innovation, their efforts to improve communications within the region through the establishment of telephone lines, and the importance they attached to education. Some collectives created 'Modern Schools' that put into practice the libertarian educational theory of Francisco Ferrer; others reached compromises with Socialist or Republican teachers. The great strength of his text is its simplicity and clarity. The reader is left with a lasting image of the arid landscape of Aragon, and of the libertarian spirit that briefly flowered in it.

Unfortunately, Souchy Bauer's strengths as a descriptive writer cannot compensate for the theoretical weaknesses of this book. Frequently it is a good libertarian principle to let the text speak for itself, and not to weigh down each page with lengthy footnotes, nor sandwich an essay between hefty forewords and afterwords. However, in this case I felt that more explanation was needed to set the context of the essay. For example, what is the average reader, new to the history of the Spanish revolution, going to think when confronted with passages as these?

*It is eleven o' clock. The gong sounds. Mass? It is to remind the women to prepare the midday meal.*

*At night the collectives gather at the union hall to read the press. They have left the old cafe: the collectivists, puritanical, see it as a frivolous institution.*

The problem is not in the description. Although Souchy Bauer writes as a propagandist, and so does sometimes take an over-optimistic view, he is honest enough to record the tensions and the contradictions within the collectives. The problem is that first-hand descriptions of life on these collectives cannot be understood forty-five years later without some knowledge of their social context. To understand the first of the passages quoted above, one needs to know something about the misogynist role of the Catholic Church in Spanish society in order to realise that the mere ending of the practice of calling the faithful to prayer constituted at least a step towards the liberation of women. (On this point, it is disturbing that Souchy Bauer never mentions the anarchist women's organisation *Mujeres Libres*.) Similarly, some explanation of cafe life and the problem of working class alcoholism is needed to understand why the 'puritanical' collectivists should have chosen to reject cafes.

The fact is that the publishers have missed an opportunity. Many accounts of the Spanish revolution are unintentionally confusing because of the sheer complexity of the issues involved, particularly when one tries to analyse developments across the whole of Spain. By properly presenting a single account that is limited to a specific geographic area, the Cienfuegos Press could have produced the first short, coherent libertarian analysis of the revolution. Instead, this book is rather confusing, and leaves many questions unanswered. There is no glossary of abbreviations, and so it could be easy to confuse the meaning of CNT, FAI, UGT, POUM, etc. There is no proper map of the region: the illustration on the cover fails to explain that about half the province, including its two largest towns, was actually under Fascist rule in Spring 1937, when Souchy Bauer wrote his essay. (This may well explain why the Socialists of the UGT and the anarchists of the CNT found it so easy to cooperate; 'anti-fascist unity' was a simple necessity when the front-line was only miles away.) There is no clear explanation of anarcho-syndicalism, and how it differs from other forms of anarchism. This is particularly annoying, for Souchy Bauer makes several interesting observations on the strength of rural anarcho-

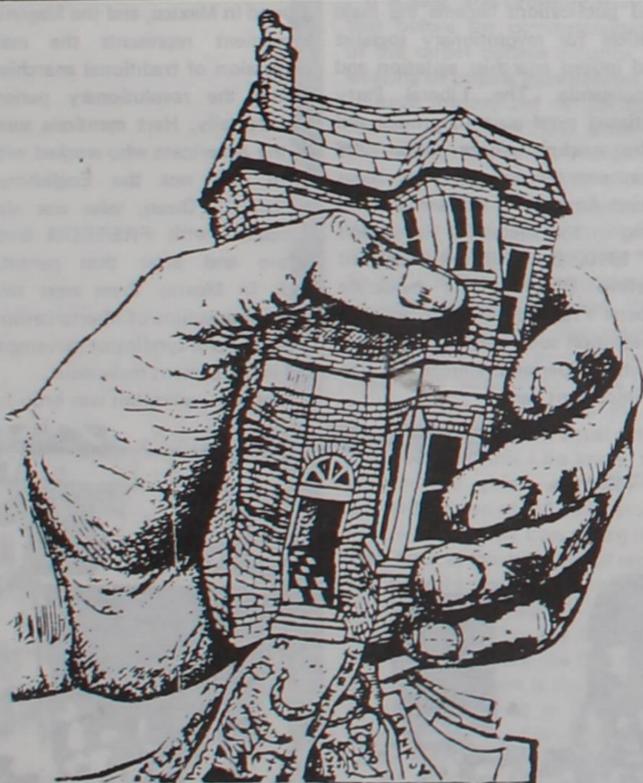
communism:

*The larger the town the less collectivisation. The smaller the village the deeper the communist spirit, the stronger the new economic forms take root . . . The Aragon peasants have demonstrated by example that industrialisation is not a prior condition for libertarian communism.*

There is no account of the history of the region immediately prior to the revolution. The northern half of Aragon was already solidly anarchist in the 1930s; while the southern half was actually Catholic and monarchist. Obviously one's attitude to the collectives would be different if one knew whether they were the fruit of many years of anarchist agitational work, or whether they were the spontaneous work of previously a-political or even right-wing peasantry.

It is important that anarchists do not treat the Spanish Revolution as a kind of utopian Golden Age. Souchy Bauer's account is honest enough to reduce high ideals to a human dimension. His account would also serve as a good introduction for anyone who wants to know what an anarchist society could be like in practice; but it is likely to provoke more questions than it provides answers on the nature of the Spanish Revolution.

John Cobbett



## Housing shambles

Next to food, shelter is a prime human need — particularly in the more temperate part of the world. In this country there was a cry after the First World War for a land fit for heroes to live in. But those who returned came back to the same old slums that they went to war from. However the second time around the powers that be perceived that the returning soldiery might not be

so willing to return to the conditions they had departed from; so the Labour Government which was elected proceeded to construct the Welfare State, including a massive housing programme. At the same time it strengthened the Welfare State by secretly building the Atom Bomb, and did nothing to alter the basis of society.

The destruction of houses by

German bombing had largely taken place in working-class areas, to the returning soldiers (whose pressure for early demobilisation the authorities were reluctant to concede) came back to serious housing problems, which gave rise to the first Squatters' movement, often in ex-military buildings scattered over the country.

The first response to the housing crisis was to build for industrially built 'prefabs', which were designed to last until more permanent housing could be built; there are still a few around. There were concrete houses made with shuttering moulds, and various other types of buildings which were hastily constructed and are now proving a constant expense to the authorities managing them.

Without reference to the people who had to live in their schemes, and with speculators driving up the price of land and interest rates soaring, the planners and architects of public housing proceeded to create the slums of the 1970s and 1980s, the ill-conceived and ill-constructed tower-blocks whose inhabitants have to be protected from falling cladding outside and suffer damp and mould inside. Cheap rented housing where the majority of people were able to live has all but dried up, because of commercial speculation and fiscal policies and rent legislation, and that which is left is either outrageously expensive or badly substandard.

In the age of computer technology, there is an estimated shortage of 800,000 dwellings; there are also 1.2 million houses unfit for human habitation, and many more in a bad state of repair. Homeless people have increased in numbers, single people and childless couples have no rights under the Homeless

Persons Act, and people who are accepted as homeless are dumped in bed-and-breakfast at great cost and in hostels and then given substandard accommodation.

Housing has ceased to be an election issue because all the political parties have heavily subsidised owner-occupiers, while many local councils are actually making a profit out of their tenants; so in effect the poorer part of the community is subsidising the richer part which can afford to buy. More and more people are unable to afford the houses they are living in, so the rise in rent arrears and mortgage arrears have grown rapidly. To add to housing difficulties, there are a few people who own two houses and who can afford an enormous amount of space. Thus there are 200,000 second homes in Wales, which have become the target of militant action.

Of the many people who are looking for cheap housing, many young people have solved the problem by squatting empty houses. They suffer constant harassment in some areas, yet the local authorities who own many of them and the private owners who own many more of them are content to let these houses rot away. In England alone there are 617,000 empty houses, most of them privately owned. There have been some attempts by some councils to license them to short-life user groups, but this has barely touched the surface of the problem.

The growing sale of council houses has made the problem worse for poorer people, since only the best houses have been sold, at a probable cost according to (Shelter) of between £20 and 50 billion to the tax payers, so again the already better housed have benefited at the

expense of those who have spent years on council waiting lists.

At a symposium recently held by Shelter on empty housing, with representatives of all political parties present, all agreed that the empty house was a scandal and an affront to those who were homeless. The Conservative and the Alliance representatives were not in agreement with their parties over the matter; the Labour representative made all sorts of promises. The Labour Party have failed to solve the problem under more favourable economic circumstances, because they have failed to grasp the nettle of the private ownership of land, and accept the solution of direct control of living space by the people who live in it. It may be said that the owner-occupier system secures this, but it is grossly inequitable, and it leaves people in hock to those who can lend money at vast interest rates and it also encourages speculation.

The Anarchist solution is to build more houses. Nearly all the resources for this are within this country; the only one likely to be short is timber; and much more reforestation should be considered. Building should be organised not through large local authorities with their bureaucracies and inefficiencies, but small cooperatives that can arrange their own maintenance and can administer what they want in their living space. This can be and has been done to a small extent within the present system, and it has been shown to be more economical. As in so many fields of human activity, people need to learn that the solutions to all problems lie in no one's hands but their own.

Alan Albon

**Anti-Porn March**

On Saturday last (28th ) a group of women set off from 121 @ Centre to join the march through Soho which was to be the culmination of the 'Women's Week of Action against Pornography'.

By far the most 'exciting' part of the afternoon came when we visited the Paperback Centre in Brixton to make a fairly mild protest against their stocking 'soft porn' magazines. The response to one copy of *Playboy* being mutilated was violent and hysterical. We had to struggle quite hard to release the three women who had gone into the shop. One woman was punched in the face, and we were also called 'fucking cunts' - by the woman who worked in the shop.

When we arrived in Soho, we spent some time wandering round

looking for other women - found a few - and by standing on the pavement outside a sex shop managed to close it for a few minutes. We were told (by a man) that what we needed was a good fuck, and by a group of prostitutes hanging out of an upstairs window that it's a lovely live, but we were ruining business and would we please go away.

Eventually, the main body of women, who had marched from County Hall, arrived, and we paraded through a few streets singing and dancing and uttering piercing war whoops outside shops and cinemas. And then, incredibly, someone said it's all over now, time to go home (or words to that effect) and most people *did*. Some women carried on singing and dancing and startling the Saturday evening tourists, but

after about ten minutes we were back, more or less, to our original group. The hundreds of women, and the dozens of police, had simply melted away.

The whole thing was something of a damp squib. Instead of women taking over the streets of Soho and showing the power of sisterhood, they (most of them) walked meekly on the pavements most of the time, and went home like good little girls when they were told to.

If 'we are women, we are strong' as the song says, we need to do much more as women to show our strength than following a few leaders through Soho on a cold and damp Saturday afternoon.

S.O.B.

**We'll meet again**

The London Anarchist Federation (LAF) held another well attended meeting, some eighty people, last Saturday 21st May.

An eight-thirty pm. start was followed by two hours of energetic if somewhat inconclusive discussion. This being the second such meeting we are still at the stage of trying to decide what the LAF should or should not be attempting to achieve, and this was one of the main topics of discussion. There were no firm

decisions taken by the meeting as a whole, but many ideas and tentative proposals were put forward. The meeting was also informed of actions taken by other groups recently (most dramatic of which was the pressure put on the Greek authorities by the 'Anarchist Black Cross' which in some small measure helped secure the release of two Greek comrades who were on hunger strike) and of forthcoming events that LAF members could or

should support, such as the anticipated eviction of 121 Bookshop. A fuller account of the meeting is provided in the 'minutes' which are being mailed out to those who asked for them and will be available to anyone who comes to the next meeting.

All groups and individuals in the London area are invited to attend: 8.00pm Saturday June 11th, 'The Prince Albert' pub, Wharfedale Rd, London N1. (Kings Cross Tube)

**Street crime**

It seems that not even politicians can walk safely down the street without being attacked these days.

David Owen of the SDP was on a walkabout on May 17 in Reading, saying why everyone should vote for him and make him powerful so he can rank with the rest of the world's tyrants and super criminals, when a person unknown, of anar-

chist persuasion, plastered him with a custard pie. It was discovered that this kind of device spreads out like a cluster bomb, hitting not just the central target but party hacks and crawlers as well.

The culprit dashed across the road and went to hide in British Home Stores, but was chased in by one of Owen's henchmen who

grabbed him. However, another comrade came to the rescue, so the pie thrower could make his getaway. The incident wasn't mentioned in the national press, but received local attention. Custard pies won't change the world, but they can dampen a politician's image!

D

**Organised NVDA**

A situation in which we shall find the working class as a whole in a position to effect change won't evolve without mass support, unity and self-organisation. Our first aim, therefore, is to destroy the ignorance that surrounds anarchy; and so, the use of explosives etc, is counter-productive.

We all, perhaps, want to give the bastards what they deserve, to hand back just a small measure of the repression they inflict upon us (and

other animals) every day, but will this do anything to encourage the growth of our movement? In short, we have to strike a balance - protect ourselves/one another from state thuggery, and at the same time avoid alienating ourselves from the average working man/woman. It is here where non-violent direct action can bridge the gap.

This form of resistance (gluing locks, sabotage, graffiti, arson, etc) is quite within the capabilities of

each and every one of us.

For the most part (ALF excluded) NVDA activities are carried out by isolated groups and individuals, without any particular aim in common. The questions we should all ask ourselves are: First, are we active enough? Secondly, are we effective enough? and thirdly, how do we combine the two?

Would anybody like to add to this?

Dave

**Judicial Sympathy**

A few comments from the administrators of justice. A policeman in Birmingham has been gaoled from six months after having some 'drunken fun' by beating up a stranded motorist. As his defence lawyer commented, 'something must have happened to make him lose his temper.' PC Smallwood has had to resign. However, perhaps he can derive some consolation from the sympathy of the judge, 'I recognise that this case is a personal tragedy for you and your family.'

Judicial sympathy is also available for soldiers convicted for indecently assaulting a 19 year old girl in Aldershot. Sentencing two of

them to nine months youth custody, 'I would have thought the appropriate sentence would be 12 months, but in view of your Falklands service, which you carried out nobly in the traditions of the army, I have decided it would be right to make a reduction in your sentence.' After all, indecent assaults on women are also in the traditions of the army.

Meanwhile, Lord Chief Justice Lane continues the campaign to improve the efficiency of justice by removing old fashioned concepts like juries. He is concerned that after a long trial, 'The jury may be reluctant to acquit, as they would

feel it was a complete waste of everybody's time.' Another point in the campaign is reaffirmed, 'Also the type of people who are able to sit for that length of time are not likely to be the type of person, businessmen for example, who will be able to understand the complexities of the case.' Lord Justice Lane is aware that there may be some protest by sentimental traditionalists. However, he is heartened by what has already been achieved 'the jury system is not sacrosanct. In the 1930's nearly all civil cases were heard by a jury. And do you remember the outcry on the introduction of majority verdicts?'

**In brief**

Staff representatives from the Government Communications Headquarters at Cheltenham (apparently you are allowed to mention it these days) have decided to campaign against the introduction of lie detectors in the Civil Service. They think they have problems. In South Korea, civil servants are to face compulsory venereal disease checks. The idea is to eradicate sexually transmitted diseases before the influx of foreign visitors for big sporting events in 1986 and 1988.

The British Ambassador in Honduras is wooing the government with hints that requests for arms sales would be received sympathetically. They count as 'bilateral economic cooperation'.

Almost half the American women who responded to a survey said that they had committed adultery. However, civilisation as we know it still has a chance. Most said that they feel guilty about it.

President Marcos of the Philippines is, as we know, firm in his approach to law and order. This concern keeps him busy, so that sometimes he doesn't have the time to let the citizenry know what measures he is taking on their behalf. It emerges that he produced a decree on capital punishment in 1981 and then kept it to himself. So, for the last two years publishers who take part in 'sustained propaganda assaults' against the government, have gone about their dirty work not knowing

that they were liable for the death penalty. Similarly covered are the uttering of seditious words, writing a scurrilous lie against the government and organising rallies aimed at destabilising the government or 'eroding public loyalty'.

The relatively minor census disobedience here last year has been greatly outclassed in West Germany. There, 52% objected to the form of the questions and 1 person in 4 favoured boycotting it entirely. The project has been dropped pending an enquiry into whether it is unconstitutional.

A student alleged to have stepped in front of a car carrying Princess Diana, causing it to swerve, has been arrested and sent to hospital for psychiatric tests.

**INTERNATIONAL**

**AUSTRALASIA**

**AUSTRALIA**  
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY  
Research and Resources Centre for Lib-  
ertarian Politics and Alternative Life-  
styles, 7/355 Northmore Ave, Lyneham,  
ACT 2602.

**NEW SOUTH WALES**  
Freedom, K153 Haymarket, Sydney  
2000.

Redfern Black Rose Anarchist Book-  
shop, 36 Botany Rd, Redfern NSW 2015.

Jura Books — an anarchist bookshop,  
417 King St, Newtown, NSW 2042.  
Everything Collective — put out an  
anarcho-feminist magazine, Box 131,  
Holme Building, Sydney University,  
Sydney, NSW.

**QUEENSLAND**  
Black and Red Bookshop, 5A Browning  
St, West End, Queensland 4000, tel: 07  
(447984).

Libertarian Socialist Organisation, PO  
Box 268, Mount Gravatt, Central 4122.

Self-management Organisation, PO Box  
332, North Quay.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**  
PO Box 126 Norwood, SA 5067.

**TASMANIA**  
Bill Graham, PO Box 70, Mowbray  
Heights, Launceston 7250, Tasmania.

**VICTORIA**  
Journal of Libertarian Politics and Alter-  
native Life-styles, 51 Ormond Road,  
Moonee Ponds, Victoria, Australia 3039.

La Trobe Libertarian Socialists, c/o  
La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria  
3083.

Libertarian Workers for a Self-managed  
Society, PO Box 20, Parkville 3052.

Monash Anarchist Society, c/o Monash  
University, Clayton, 3168, Melbourne.

Resource Centre, 215 Victoria Parade,  
Collingwood, Victoria.

Treason, Box 37, Brunswick East, Victo-  
ria 3057.

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**  
Freedom Collective and Libertarian Resour-  
ce Centre can be reached through PO  
Box 203, Fremantle 6160.

**NEW ZEALAND**  
Blackmail, Box 13165, Christchurch.

Daybreak Bookshop, PO Box 5425,  
Dunedin.

Dunedin Anarchists, Box 6227, Dunedin,  
New Zealand

PO Box 876, Auckland.

PO Box 13165, Christchurch.

**EUROPE**

**AUSTRIA**  
Liberte, Postfach 86, 1033 Wien.

Monte Verita, Neustiftgasse 33, 1070  
Wien.

**BELGIUM**  
Revolutionalr anarchisties kollektif, c/o  
Zwart & Rood, PO Box 546, B-9000  
Gent, Belgium.

**DENMARK**  
Aarhus: Regnbuen Anarkist Bogcafe,  
Meljigade 48, 8000 Aarhus.

**FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY**  
Graswurzel (Grass Roots), c/o W Hertle,  
Grozerschippsee 28, 21 Hamburg 90.

Libertad Verlag Berlin, Jochen Schmuck,  
Postfach 440 227, D-1000 Berlin 44.

Schwarzer Faden (Black Thread), Obere  
Weibermarktstr 3, 7410 Reutlingen, tel:  
07121/370494.

Schwarzer Gockler (Black Cockerel), c/o  
A Muller, Postfach 4528, 7500 Karlsruhe.

**FRANCE**

Federation Anarchiste Francaise, 145 Rue  
Amelot, 75011, Paris.

Union Anarchiste, 9 Rue de l'Ange,  
63000 Clermont Feraand.

**GREECE**

'A Gallery' (Documents Centre), PO Box  
1937, Thision, Athens.

**HOLLAND**  
De Vrije, Postbus 486, 2000AL Haarlem,  
Holland, tel: 023 273892.

**NORWAY**  
Anorg, Hoxtvedt, 31B, 1431 As. (Pub-  
lish Folkeblad 4 times a year.)

**POLAND**

Piotrek Betlejewski, age 22, Ulpianana  
30/37, 09 402, Plock, Poland.

**SPITSBERGEN**

Stephen W Holland, age 27, 2 Glygar-  
dynza Creke, The Mining Community  
Huts, NY Alesund, Spitsbergen, Svalbard  
A Arctic Ocean Isle.

**SWEDEN**  
Magazine 'April', Box 15015, 104 65  
Stockholm, Sweden.

Nya Bokcafeet, Box 15015, 104 65  
Stockholm.

Syndikalist Forum, Tenstlernas Gata 51,  
11631 Stockholm.

Syndikalistiskt Forum (anarcho-syndical-  
ist bookshop), Husargatan 5, 43302 Goth-  
enborg, tel: 031-13 25 04.

**FRANCE**

Union des Travailleurs Communistes  
Libertaires, Write to Editions 'L' (with  
no other mention) BP 333, 75525 Paris.

**NORTH AMERICA**

**CANADA**  
Black Cat Press, PO Box 11261, Edmont-  
on, Alberta.

Open Road, Box 6135, Station G. Van-  
couver BC.

Wintergreen/AR, PO Box 1294, Kitchen-  
er, Ontario, N2G 4G8.

**MONTREAL**  
Chaos, c/o R Yves Breton, CP 95 5/N  
Place d'Armes, Montreal, Quebec, H2Y  
3E9.

**USA**

**ARIZONA**  
Mallicious Hooligans (anti-nuclear), 1110  
W 2nd St, Tempe, AZ 85281.

**CALIFORNIA**  
Autonomia, PO Box 1751, San Francisco,  
CA 94101.

Bound Together Book Collective, 1901  
Hayes St, San Francisco, CA 94117, tel:  
(415) 668-2785.

Libertarian Anarchist Coffeehouse, meets  
last Sunday each month at Cafe Comm-  
ons, 3161 Mission St, San Francisco.

**CONNECTICUT**  
Wesleyan University Eco-Anarchists, Her-  
mes, Box HH, Wesleyan University, Mid-  
dletown CT 08457.

**MINNESOTA**  
Soil of Liberty, Box 7056 Powderhorn  
Station, Minneapolis, Minn 55407.

**MISSOURI**  
Columbia Anarchist League, PO Box 380,  
Columbia, Missouri 65201.

**NEW YORK**  
Libertarian Book Club, Box 842, GPO  
New York, NY 10012.

**OREGON**  
Portland Anarchist Center, 313 East  
Burnside, Portland, Oregon 97205,  
USA.

**WASHINGTON**  
Left Bank Publishing Project, Box B, 92  
Pike Street, Seattle, WA 96101.

Social Revolutionary Anarchist Feder-  
ation, PO Box 21071, Washington DC  
20009.

Non-violent Anarchist Network, P O Box  
1385, Austin, Texas 78767.

**DESIRES**

We inform you that there will be an anti-  
militarist camping from Monday the 4th  
July to the 8th July at Saint Sebastien  
(20 Kms west of Castres, south-west of  
France).

The last day, the 8th: international  
meeting. International contacts have  
been taken by several groups which par-  
ticipate at the journal 'Objections' and  
so, we expect for the presence of people  
of different European countries.

After this meeting, there'll be two  
days of Fiesta (OK?)

Information for the camping:  
COT  
BP 229  
81002 Albi Cedex  
France

**Information to translate:**

CHAR  
c/o Cobrespall  
BP 561  
35007 Rennes Cedex  
France

Back copies of FREEDOM from 1973 to  
present available to anyone who can col-  
lect or pay the postage. Call C Korycinski  
057-73345

**LITERATURE**

'Flesh and Blood' magazine requires  
extra outlets and bookshops. S-O-R can  
be arranged. For further details, including  
trade terms, please write to Circulation  
Dpt, Caroline Productions, PO Box 32,  
Stevenage, Herts. Tel (0438) 728630.  
'Flesh and Blood'—The voice of exploited  
animals.

**WILDCAT**



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J L £3.00; Wakefield D E F £0.20;

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Previously acknowledged = £381.30  
TOTAL TO DATE = £400.50  
TARGET FOR 1983 = £1,500!

**MEETINGS**

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Comrades are invited to support events  
at this venue, organised on the initiative  
of John Rety (erstwhile editor of FREE-  
DOM), which provides space for small  
groups, like 'Soft Options' and their  
improvisational theatre, and Neil Titley  
as Oscar Wilde in 'Work is the Curse of  
the Drinking Classes'.

Events to come include:  
ELECTION NUCLEAR MARATHON,  
Friday June 3, 5.50-11pm  
Saturday June 4, Noon-11pm  
Sunday June 5, Noon-11pm

SCUPPER THE BOMB!  
Stars of Alternative Cabaret, with Keith  
Armstrong, Jim Barclay, Arnold Brown,  
Steve Dixon, Bernard Kops, Andy de la  
Tour, Riff-RaffPoets (Sunday only, with  
Jeff Cloves & possibly Dennis Gould)

AND — SUBCULTURE 1984 SHOW,  
by Taggart Deike, and many others —  
including yourself if you can perform!  
Admission Free, but Donations Welcome  
all profits (?) to recognised peace groups.

TORRIANO MEETING HOUSE, 99  
Torriano Avenue, Kentish Town, London  
NW5: 01-482 0044.

London Anarchist Youth Group meet  
every Friday at 7.30pm at 121 Railton  
Rd, London SE24.

**BOOKS FROM FREEDOM BOOKSHOP**

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Feminism & Nonviolence Study  
Group: Piecing it Together: Femin-  
ism & Nonviolence (58pp ppr)  
£1.50 (27p)

\*Wendy McElroy (Ed): Freedom,  
Feminism & the State: An Over-  
view of Individualist Feminism  
(357pp ppr) £7.50 (95p)  
[we can give full trade terms — plus  
postage — on this title].

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Things as they Are (351pp ppr)  
£2.50 (45p)

Mordecai Rushward: Level 7 (139pp  
ppr) £1.95 (39p)  
[perhaps the finest novel yet to  
appear on the subject of Nuclear  
Holocaust].

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Cathy Porter: Alexandra Kollentai:  
A Biography, (537pp ppr)  
£5.50 (95p)

Alexandra Kollentai: Love of Warfer  
Bees (232pp ppr) £2.95 (45p)

**FREEDOM PRESS PUBLICATIONS**

Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High  
Street, London E1 7AX. (Postage  
in brackets.)

Lessons of the Spanish Revolution  
by Vernon Richards. Third edition  
of standard work, with new extra  
postscript. Paperback £2.95 (50p).

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Vernon Richards. Standard work.  
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Journey through Utopia by Marie  
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thology of anarchist writer and  
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Bakunin and Nechaev by Paul  
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Anarchy by Errico Malatesta. New  
translation of classic text. Pamphlet  
75p (21p).

ABC of Anarchism by Alexander  
Berkman. Classic text. Pamphlet  
£1.50 (33p).

Fighting the Revolution Three stu-  
dies of revolutionary leaders —  
Nestor Makhno, Buenaventura Dur-  
ruti, Emiliano Zapata. Pamphlet  
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Printed and Typeset by  
Aldgate Press  
84b Whitechapel High St,  
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Distributed to Bookshops by  
A Distribution  
c/o 84b Whitechapel High St,  
London E1

**DEADLINES**

FREEDOM Collective would wel-  
come any readers who wish to help  
fold and despatch the paper. The  
next issue will be sent out on Thurs-  
day 16th June starting at around  
6pm. This is also a good time to  
come and meet the editors.

FREEDOM also needs your written  
contributions and any graphics or  
photographs readers feel would be  
useful to us. Copy deadline for  
short items for the next issue is  
first post, Monday 13th longer  
articles in by first post, Thursday  
9th.