



THE individualist approach requires real reassessment, required even more as the world grows smaller, and one person's profit becomes another person's pol- luter or results in other people's star- vation. The collective entity has become immersed in political systems that are palpably quite incapable of dealing with the problems descending on humanity with increasing menace, even apart from the expanding atomic stupidity. People can no longer ignore what happens beyond their own front door or car door, or the consequences of what they do for a living.

What the farmer does on his fields may end up as a malevolent constituent of your food and water. How one nation produces its power can and does affect another thousands of miles away. Much of what comes out of our oil wells lands up in our dustbins, leaving people to deal with a substance that is very difficult and expensive to dispose of. Much of anarchist activity in recent years has been narrow and many anarchists have behaved like quarrelling trotskyite and left factions, like people concerned only with deciding how many angels can stand on the tip of the anarchist needle. This was not always so. Kropotkin was probably one of the original holists; *Fields, Factories and Workshops* and *Mutual Aid* are certainly in this category. Indeed many early

thinkers such as Edward Carpenter had a wide and comprehensive view of humanity and society.

The various groups such as Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace who are drawing attention to the damage that humanity is doing to the biosphere may get people to do something about it before irretrievable damage is done. The current Friends of the Earth campaign pointing out how humanity's technical ability is damaging tropical forests in Central America must be supported. Short term profits for a few will lead to long term starvation for many as in Africa. Once the cover is gone there will be a few poor crops and profits for Macdonalds, supplying beef for their Hamburgers, then desertification will set in very rapidly. The consequences are unlikely to be only local; the area is an important one genetically. Central America is the genetic source of many food crops: the humble potato, an out- standing provider of protein per acre; maize, a good crop for animals and people; the tomato, and countless sources of medicine. Above all the forest recycles gases and water, so that hitherto the planet has been able to withstand mis- management of the environment.

Where the anarchist comes in is point- ing out that unthinking exploitation and vested interests, have produced a society in which human and resource exploita- tion are linked. Vast centralised bureau- cracies and corporations that straddle the world are beyond human size and our collective institutions must be brought back to the size in which everybody can comprehend the management of the earth in which we should live to our mutual benefit.

Alan Albon

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**SWANSEA** Black Sheep Collective, Box D, Mandela House, University College, Single- ton Park, Swansea (term time only)

## GUNS AND GOVERNMENT

THE 'Dog Days' of August, traditionally the annual holiday from hot news — because Parliament is in recess and we have no government, so how can anything important happen? — have been all shook up this year.

With impeccable timing, a 'Mummy's Boy' went berserk in Berkshire, crisis flared up anew in the Gulf, the last of Hitler's Old Guard died in Spandau (suicide, or was he pushed?) and the King of rock 'n roll celebrated (posthumously) the tenth anniversary of his death.

It was also announced that aerosols are knocking holes in our planet's ozone layer (it protects us from ultra-violet ir- radiation) because they release chloro- fluorocarbons (CFC to you) which contri- bute to the creation of a 'greenhouse effect' which could melt polar ice caps, raise the level of the seas and lead to the flooding of London, New York, Tokyo — to mention but a few.

The crisis in the Gulf of Iran is a more immediate threat, but here in stiff-upper- lippled Britain we are used to death and destruction in faraway places. Gunboat diplomacy still governs much of White- hall's thinking, and the technical prob- lems of sending a fleet a few thousand miles is as nothing compared with, say, maintaining ambulances in London, Leeds or Sheffield.

The Iran-Iraq war has lasted seven very profitable years for the world's arms industry. A TV commentator recently declared that this particular hiccup in our 40 years of peace has been the 'saviour' of that industry. Including, of course, Britain's share in it, which is well res- pected.

So it is disconcerting to find that in one field we are being outsold in our own home market. It seems that here, in the heartlands of our English shires, one of the most popular guns for those who know about such things is the Russian Kalashnikov AK47, a semi-automatic rifle, now being copied in China and Germany and finding their way into British gun shops.

If you live in, say, Hungerford, a sleepy little town barely 20 miles from Green- ham Common, you will have little diffi- culty in obtaining a licence for a shot-gun



for potting rabbits, protecting your chickens from the fox, etc. If, however, you feel you'd like an AK47, you would have to be accepted by a pukka gun club and be cleared by the police (anarchists with police records may find that diffi- cult!) before you would be granted a fire-arms certificate.

In your gun club you would be super- vised by experts while shooting at legiti- mate targets. These are man-shaped, perhaps even woman-shaped, and are similar to the targets in police shooting- alleys. So you are trained to think of human shapes as, well, targets.

Michael Ryan, 27, was a blameless citizen with no police record. He had no regular job, no regular girl friend, and was kept by his widowed mother (she had two jobs) who doted on him, providing for his every need. These included smart cars and an armoury of perfectly legal and licenced weapons, which he kept carefully in his garden shed. He was polite, quiet, and described by neighbours as a 'loner'. He liked to wear flak-jackets and camouflage caps.

When Michael went berserk, his mother was not the first person he killed. This was a young woman preparing a picnic for her two children in Savernake Forest. He walked her into the wood, shot her 15 times in what the police called 'an aston- ishing neat row' along the spine, and drove back to town, stopping on the way for petrol and taking a pot-shot at the cashier, alone at the petrol station.

Luckily he missed and she was able to raise the alarm. The police car probably passed him on his way home.

There, he shot his mother, then his dog, which he was said to prefer to girl friends, set fire to a neighbour's house (the fire spread to three others), and made for the High Street, where he sprayed at everything that moved. Fellow members of the gun clubs have told the local press he was a poor shot, otherwise he would have killed many more than he did, but anyway sixteen men, women and children died, either on the spot or later. He hid up for several hours in the school- house, while panicky armed police ran about looking for him, then after they had found him shot himself.

The British press, of course, exploded. Not, unhappily, literally. Suddenly they discovered how easy it is to get hold of lethal weapons, and typically, reacted with the usual strident calls for more police control, more legislation, more powers for the few over the many. In a word — more repression and less respon- sibility for ourselves. At the same time, they are *not* demanding a ban on the manufacture or importation of weapons but only that their sale and use should be restricted to the right people.

What is being grudgingly admitted, is that you cannot legislate against some- body flipping his lid. Now that he's dead, we'll probably never know what kind of phobias, fantasies, manias or repressions,

continued on page 2

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triggered Ryan's breakdown. The Yorkshire Ripper (remember him?) was as mad as Michael Ryan, but in a different way. He operated by stealth and had no need for obviously lethal weapons; he just used hammers and screwdrivers to kill women one by one in the dark. Can we ban hammers and screwdrivers? Can we ban darkness?

As in other fields of concern, the cry goes up for censorship. Both the BBC and ITV immediately showed their tasteful concern by withdrawing late night films that contained scenes of violence. Mary Whitehouse of course weighed in and was not alone in pointing the finger at 'Rambo' and 'Death Wish' and other films of rough justice, revenge and vigilante-style violence. They didn't mention 'Starsky and Hutch', 'The Professionals' or such films where it is the forces of law-'n-order which dish out the final, legal, justified, death. Perhaps policemen should be forbidden to watch *them*!

Death has to be the state's monopoly. Even now, the right to decide your own death is a very grey area indeed. It is relatively recently that the law realised what an ass it was to make an unsuccessful suicide a criminal offence, when it could do nothing about the successful one!

In this country, gun magazines do much better than anarchist ones. W H Smith sell them, for one thing: *Guns and Ammo* from the USA, *The Survivalist* from this country, with alleged links with the National Front. And undoubtedly, the readership of this type of journal would be macho, fascist types - the sort who go on 'survival' exercises in Saverlake Forest, as Ryan did. One such, on a recent TV programme declared 'We are preparing to march up Piccadilly the day after the bloody Russians drop the bomb!'

Work that one out!

Justin

## Anarchist Forum

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

25 September, Donald Rooum, opening the session and speaking on **Anarchism and Revolutionary Government**  
 2 October, Open discussion  
 9 October, Alan Albon on **Post-Industrial Agriculture**  
 16 October, Open discussion  
 23 October, John Rowan, humanistic psychologist, on **Men and the Critique of Patriarchy**  
 30 October, Open discussion

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

# FREEDOM

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## Worldwide Day of Action against McDonalds, 16 October 1987

16 October is designated World Food Day by international relief agencies. As a contribution, the anarchist group Greenpeace (London) have initiated a worldwide day of action against the McDonalds Hamburger Corporation, calling on local groups to organise local publicity and events informing people about the McDonalds empire. Last year groups in England, Holland, Italy, Canada, the USA and elsewhere took part.

International charities collect for the relief of Third World hunger, much of which is caused by the activities of McDonalds and their smaller competitors. McDonalds buy millions of acres of land, especially in Central and South American military dictatorships, evict the small farmers who live there, and turn the land over to beef cattle, partly fed on grain imported from other countries where people are hungry.

Workers in McDonalds shops are everywhere badly paid, and the food they serve is unhealthy. Actions on 16 October will include giving away free food outside some shops, as well as leafletting. Greenpeace (London) have produced an informative leaflet, *What's wrong with McDonalds? Everything they don't want you to know*. They have not the funds to circulate this in large quantities but invite others to duplicate it, or use the information as the basis of their own leaflets. No copyright.

Send sae for one copy to:

Greenpeace (London),  
 5 Caledonian Road, London N1.

## DONATIONS

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# FREEDOM AND EDUCATION '87

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PLANS are now underway for the third annual North American anarchist gathering. It will be held in Toronto, on 17-20 June 1988.

The gathering will include many workshops, events, shows, conversations, food, action and tons o' fun. No definite plans have been made as to the exact content of the gathering, since that depends on what people want and what people are prepared to do, so in order to start working on that we're planning a meeting on September 12th here in Toronto for anyone who wants to help organise the gathering.

Let us know in advance if you're planning on coming to the meeting so we can arrange accommodations. Hopefully if we get lots of input now, by the time the gathering rolls around it'll be a great success! So please get in touch for further details, send all your cash and valuables, and keep an eye out for more news. Smash the State and have a nice day!

Toronto Anarchist Circle  
 P.O. Box 435 Stn P  
 Toronto M5S 2S9 Canada

## Broadwater Farm

March from Broadwater Farm to 10 Downing Street Saturday 3 October 1987.

Calling for a public enquiry into the uprising of 6 October 1985, the release of those imprisoned on doubtful evidence, and an end to state racism and oppression.

Leaves Broadwater Farm at 10.00am. Meeting points: Seven Sisters tube 10.30, Manor House 11.00, Finsbury Park 11.10, Camden Town 11.30, Trafalgar Square 12.45 (all times approximate). Rally Hyde Park 3.00pm.

# Police Powers Advancing

IT'S mid-1987 and the dangers of a police state are upon us with a vengeance. The question is, how to slow its advance.

In 1985 there was a *Times* article by Bernard Levin: 'Who will defend us against the bullies in blue?' It cited several cases of killing and maiming innocent people by the police. It described the indignities imposed on a crippled man in a wheelchair and his girlfriend. They were both strip-searched. Strip-searching came in with the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

Also in 1985, there was the *Guardian* headline: 'The jackboot way with protestors.' It was concerned with the night attack and dispersion of Molesworth's ecological Rainbow Village. The combined police-army attack was led by Defence Minister Heseltine himself, dressed for the part in a combat jacket.

Then there was a silence in the press. Something happened to the media generally, but particularly the press, while Thatcher got her act further together. In 1986, the dawn raid and destruction of the stone chapel at Molesworth went unreported.

Also in 1986 came the revamping of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. It gave still more power to the police: in effect, carte blanche to arbitrarily stop and search anyone looking suspicious. Increasingly, that category has become youth wandering in the streets, youth with no workplace to go, youth forced into their aimless existence. The young who have been intimidated and gone-over by police don't hit back with the judicial process. The wheelchair character did, and was successful in terms of damages awarded by the court.

When the police act there's nothing much to be done at the time. Police reinforcements arrive from nowhere in

the shape of the police van. I interfered once. I happened to be walking behind a perfectly harmless looking pair of young men going from Leicester Square to Trafalgar Square. They stood out in their post-punk way, but certainly didn't look as if they had anything to hide. But they were stopped by two policemen. The hapless look on their faces caused a natural response: What is going on? That did it. It was insulting a policeman to ask politely why he'd stopped them. 'I've got trouble here', he radioed.

I walk all over London and whenever now I see people, singly or in pairs, being bundled into a police van, I groan inwardly without saying a thing. But the other evening in the rain, near to where I live, I noticed a police van. The driver was leaning out, fumbling in a youth's clothing. I walked past and waited. There was a moment of involuntary pleasure when the van and its accompanying red saloon moved off. But the two youths didn't seem to know which way to go. They were dazed. One said that the same thing had happened the week before. He'd been stopped in Oxford Street and been given the choice between being strip-searched at a police station, or taking his pants down in the street. Each time he was found to be innocent. I was speechless. To be set upon twice and set free twice would be more than enough for anyone; certainly it would cause contradictory emotions. It can be imagined what fantasies might be triggered off and incubated later in certain policemen's minds after fumbling with boys, as they drive round the streets looking for trouble.

The traumatic effect of such an experience on yourself, innocent of any crime, can be imagined. The fury and fear may fuse into frustration, while humilia-

tion provides a bitter edge. The degree of frustration/resentment will depend on the individual's circumstances. But what happens to these people if life goes on treating them badly? They'd be saints not to want to react.

Experiences of the sort would explain why a mugger mugs. They have police examples to follow, but not the power of prosecution of police uniforms and appended handcuffs. If it were different, as with police, their violence of frustration and resentment would not so readily be meted out to innocent victims. (The hero Robin Hood springs to mind!)

If one is stopped by police and is innocent, what do you do? If you are innocent, it would amount to an infringement of your rights as a human being. As the law stands now there is nothing you can do, but keep your head and your temper. When free again be sure to

1. report the incident to your MP in writing;  
 2. if you've the nerve, go to a newspaper office and ask to see someone at the newsdesk.

The Tory system of policing has not surprisingly created an unheard of increase in crime. Yet there was no talk of repealing that noxious 1984 Act by any of the parties in the run-up to the election. Their only solution was to put more policemen on the beat.

Rodney Aitchley

The United States Supreme Court has upheld a decision of a California court, that evidence of spotting a field of cannabis from a police helicopter was inadmissible, because it violated the defendant's right to privacy under the Fourth Amendment. Two judges dissented.





# The Van'unu Affair



IN CONTRAST to the trial of John Demjanjuk (see *Freedom July*), the trial of Mordechai Van'unu, which opened in Jerusalem on 30 August, gets little media attention in Israel despite the seriousness of the charges. The authorities show every sign of wishing everyone except themselves would forget it is taking place. The extraordinary and inhuman security measures — tunnels, space-helmets, warblers and a sealed courthouse — have ensured that as little as possible is reported. The world's media people, seeing nothing of the trial or the defendant, have been scratching about for something to say, even paying attention to an anarchist demonstration.

A poster saying 'Thank You Van'unu!' in English was glimpsed on the BBC 6 o'clock News on 30 August, and the 'three shy girls' who were holding it — in fact three not-very-shy anarchists — had their point of view well represented on the Radio 4 'From our own correspondent' programme on 2 September.

This week a member of the Jerusalem anarchist group, currently visiting London, came to the Freedom office to talk to us about the Van'unu case and the group's response. We have been asked not to name the individuals involved.

The protests have been continuing since September 1986 when Van'unu disappeared from London, having made his revelations about Israel's nuclear weapons programme. The issues are many, including nuclear weapons, the state's demand for secrecy against individual conscience, kidnapping by state secret agents, the suppression of debate on im-

portant issues, and censorship.

It has been suspected for years that Israel has the bomb. She has the technical potential but has always boasted she would never be the first to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East. The news that Israel was probably the world's sixth largest nuclear power arrived in Israel on 29 September, after the London *Daily Mirror* published a short, sensational account of the story in the *Sunday Times* on 5 October. The *Mirror* labelled it a hoax. The immediate reaction in Israel was to suspect a plant by Mossad, the Israeli External Security Institute, designed to frighten the Syrians who were reported to have developed a new nerve gas. There seemed nothing to counter this suspicion except perhaps that Van'unu had been baptised a Christian in Australia, two months earlier. The 'hard left' Communist Party, with whom Van'unu is thought to have had links at one time, stuck to the 'Mossad agent' theory long after other leftists had changed their minds.

At 11 am on 30 September, Van'unu telephoned the *Sunday Times* to say he was going to the countryside for a few days and would collect payment for his story — reputedly a six-figure sum — on 2 October. He did not turn up on 2 October and the British police started a 'missing person' inquiry.

Shortly afterwards the American journal *Newsweek* reported that Van'unu was in an Israeli jail. Israeli journalists said they had the same information but could not publish it because of censorship. Van'unu's name appeared on a list for hearing at Jerusalem District Court on 20 October, but there was no further information.

There was no official admission that Van'unu was in Israel when the first report appeared in the Israeli media, a leak from Shabak (General Security Services), which portrayed Van'unu as an unstable character with PLO sympathies. This makes no sense in view of the fact that he worked for ten years at the secret nuclear weapons store in Dimona, where he must have been vetted by Shabak several times, and does not accord with the descriptions of those who know him.

There was still no official admission on 7 November when Amnon Zichroni, a civil rights lawyer, announced he had been asked by Van'unu's family to issue a writ of habeas-corpus. On 8 November the London *Financial Times* reported that Mrs Thatcher had agreed to Van'unu's abduction, which caused uproar in the British Parliament. Next day Shamir admitted that Van'unu was in Israel, 'in lawful detention', and denied that there

had been British government involvement. Israel TV News interviewed people in the street in London, and broadcast selected extracts all of which were anti-Israel or pro-Arab, doubtless to prepare the audience for the possibility of a rift.

In Israel there was now some public discussion, not of the nuclear weapons debate but of how to ensure that Van'unu would go down for the death penalty. His father was beaten up in the street. One newspaper appeared with a blank leader column in protest at the deletion of 80% of a leading article about Van'unu by the military censor; it is illegal in Israel to draw attention to the military censorship by leaving spaces. Van'unu's lawyer Zichroni told the press his client had not been ill-treated physically.

On 27 November Van'unu was formally charged with 'Aggravated Espionage' and 'Treason against the State', and on 30 November he was brought before a judge to be remanded; the hearing was in camera, and listed in court records as 'Attorney General versus X'. The fun began at the next remand hearing, on 21 December.

Van'unu was not allowed to communicate. He was said to exercise alone in a prison yard hung with hessian, so the other prisoners could not see him. But by an amazing oversight he was brought to the courthouse in a van with clear windows, which was delayed in the street as the gates were unlocked. He pressed his hand to the window. International press photographs show that there was written across the palm 'I VANUNU WAS HIJACKED IN ROME ITL 30.9. 86 21.00 CAME IN ROME BY BA RY 504'.

To the best of present knowledge, the *Sunday Times* first heard of the Van'unu story during August 1986. A *Sunday Times* reporter went to Israel to check his story on 2 September, and Mossad was alerted. Peres (then Prime Minister) ordered the return of Van'unu to Israel, alive, stipulating that nothing should be done to embarrass the pro-Israel British government. When Van'unu told the *Sunday Times* he was going 'to the countryside' he had already bought himself a return ticket to Rome, probably to keep a date with a blonde American called Cindy. He was seen with a blonde woman in the cafeteria at Rome airport, and they left about 9 pm in what looked like a taxi. Four days later an Israeli cargo ship, the Tapouz, called briefly at La Spezia in Italy to take on a small consignment. On 7 October an injured seaman, unrecognisably bandaged and bound to a stretcher, was taken ashore at Ashod.

The instruction not to embarrass the British had been heeded by Mossad, but Van'unu's hand-written communication started a row with the Italians. Van'unu was deprived of privileges, such as reading matter in his cell. For a separate offence, obscuring the TV monitor in his cell with shaving cream, he was denied visits. He refused exercise because of the security conditions under which it was taken. Since 9 November, except for legal business, he has been in solitary confinement in a permanently lit cell with a TV monitor. On 2 January 1987 his application to the Supreme Court for restoration of privileges was rejected, and on 4 March he dismissed his lawyer accusing him of collaboration. Between those dates he was on hunger strike.

## Anarchist involvement

As it became clear that Van'unu was indeed in Israel, a protest group began to crystallise. Various people concerned about the nuclear issue and the misuse of State powers got together, hoping to bring wider issues into public notice. The core of this group was two anarchist students at Hebrew University. A petition was begun opposing Israel's nuclear weapons programme.

Outside the courthouse on 21 December were three female anarchist students, covering each other's eyes, ears, and mouth in a variant of the 'three wise monkeys', in protest at the press censorship and lack of discussion about the case.

Thereafter at every demonstration in Jerusalem, no matter what the cause, the anarchist group has turned up with posters about Van'unu, and also posters reading 'Nuclear weapons no thanks' in Hebrew. They held up their hands, which have written across the palms 'Kulanu Van'unu' ('we are all Van'unu'). The campaign failed to make the case a mainstream cause, but the left wing became increasingly interested.

Among those who became involved was the Alternative Information Centre, founded in 1984 to provide a forum and printing services for a variety of political opinions. Alternative Information Centre and Jerusalem Anarchist Group collaborated in collecting signatures on a petition to Amnesty International, asking them to adopt Van'unu as an International Prisoner of Conscience. They have not yet done so, but are taking an interest; two AI observers are now in Jerusalem and hoping to be admitted to the trial (though Israel is anti-AI following reports on the treatment of Arab political prisoners).

The Alternative Information Centre was in no way an underground enterprise. It was licensed in accordance with the Emergency Regulations, it submitted

everything to the military censor before distribution, and its name and address appeared on all publications. Its licence was subject to withdrawal. Nevertheless it was closed immediately on 16 February by an Administrative Order under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the first time since Israel was founded that such an Order was used to close a Jewish press in Israel proper. Computers were unplugged destroying files, written records were seized, the personnel were arrested, and the door was padlocked. More than 20 police were involved.

After 48 hours the printworkers were released, but the director Michael 'Mikado' Warschawsky, a member of a vaguely Trotskyist group, was remanded in custody. There were daily protests outside the remand prison, joined by the anarchists demonstrating as usual about Van'unu. Some non-anarchists objected to what they saw as an intrusion, though it is obvious his support for Van'unu is at least one reason why Warschawsky was taken out of circulation.

When Van'unu arrived at court on 8 March there was a demonstration organised by the anarchists and the Alternative Information Centre, attended by less than 50 people, but this was far bigger than on 21 December. Van'unu arrived in a car with blacked-out windows and was led into court through a specially constructed tunnel, so the press had little to see except the demo — very colourful with masks and placards — which was well reported. Some anarchist women sat by the tunnel and were approached by police-women. In Israel women police do not take part in crowd control but are called in when women may be arrested. The anarchists were not arrested. They were told the tunnel was a fake, as Van'unu had been in the courthouse since 5am. This information would have been significant to anyone attempting a rescue.

There was a further postponement of the trial at the request of Van'unu's new defence lawyer Viktor Feldman (who is also representing Warschawsky). Student fees were increased causing a series of demonstrations, at each of which the anarchists turned up with their message about Van'unu. In July Van'unu was formally nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. In early August Me'ir Van'unu, Mordechai's brother, came to London and told the press all he knew about the details of Mordechai's abduction, an offence against Israeli law which renders him liable to 15 years imprisonment. He does not intend to return to Israel to face charges — but neither did his brother.

The trial began on 30 August. The dark-windowed van in which Van'unu arrived in March has been replaced by

one with no windows at all. From this he is led into court through a wood and canvas tunnel, handcuffed to two guards who carry warbling machines to drown out any noise he might make. His mouth is taped and he wears a motorcycle helmet. All the courtroom windows are boarded up, making the room unbearably stuffy (on the second day there was a legal dispute about opening a window). The press are not admitted and forbidden to report anything, even rumours, apart from what is officially given out. An application to revert to ordinary court arrangements was turned down by another court on 9 September. This is not a show trial.

After five days the trial was adjourned for a month because a judge had a mild heart attack brought on by the stifling atmosphere (the Demjanjuk trial is also adjourned, for the same reason). So far only prosecution evidence has been heard, except that Van'unu gave evidence on 2 September about his abduction. He is said to have broken down with emotion when asked about his treatment. The defence when it starts will be largely technical, about the admissibility of evidence. The *Sunday Times* report that Van'unu gave them the facts is agreed to be hearsay, and the prosecution is relying on statements made by Van'unu which the defence will say were made under pressure.

Apart from the disgusting barbarity of Israel's behaviour, it is scandalously illegal. They conspired to abduct someone in London, contrary to British law. They abducted someone in Rome, contrary to Italian law. They had a secret stockpile of nuclear arms, contrary to International law.

At the trial of Eichmann, the Nazi abducted by Mossad in Argentina, Israeli judges applied principles established at the Nuremberg Trials. One such principle is that all individuals have a duty to expose what they see if they believe it to be morally wrong. Another is that all individuals have a duty to disobey a manifestly illegal order. Whether these principles will be applied in the case of Van'unu, we must wait and see.

Katy Andrews







LIFESPAN COMMUNITY, TOWNHEAD, NR. SHEFFIELD, S. YOKS.

A COMMUNE I visited recently, called Lifespan, may be of interest to other anarchists.

Lifespan is in the middle of the moors, in between Sheffield and Huddersfield. It was isolated and very hard to find, especially as someone had turned around all the signposts! So it took us six hours to find the place by car from Middlesborough!

The commune consists of twelve adults and a few children, all of whom were very friendly to the four of us who went to the visitor weekend. They live in 19 terraced houses with a back and front garden where they grow vegetables and they also keep ducks for their eggs, but they are not self sufficient.

The commune members do not claim Supplementary Benefit or dole money — just family allowance. They live on the proceeds from their printing business, which works out at about £21 each every week. They don't have a fixed amount of money each week, as they just take what they need and leave the rest for other people. Everyone co-operates in this, and if money is short some weeks, then people don't ask for much as it means others going without.

Our weekend was spent in helping around the commune. I spent most of my time decorating the dining room, although we weren't forced to help and could have spent our time however we wanted.

One of the most interesting (and good) things about the commune was their attitude towards work. It was very relaxed — none of the usual 9-to-5 work! Some tasks were done on a rota basis, e.g. kitchen work (which involved cleaning up and cooking the communal meals). The bulk of the work though was done whenever people wanted to do it. It was a very anarchic approach to work, and one of the good things about it was that the distinction between work and leisure was

extremely blurred, instead of being artificially separated by the capitalists.

The methods of decision making were also quite anarchic. The members all meet once a week to discuss issues and all have an equal say. Some issues are decided by sub-groups, made up of those people who have a special interest in that area, for example gardeners will decide what to grow in a certain plot of land. These decisions are brought to the main meeting of course.

The main disadvantage of the commune is that, like so many others, they are isolated and inward looking. This despite the fact that there is a vehicle available for anyone to use (as long as other people get their turns as well!). Ideally anarchists should get involved with outside groups and the community generally, to get their ideas across to the people who otherwise wouldn't hear of them.

The commune is run on anarchist lines (though I didn't have time to find out how many of them called themselves anarchists). They were of course non-sexist, non-racist and non-authoritarian with no leadership. Unlike most communes there isn't a fee to join so it is non-elitist!

I enjoyed my stay very much and recommend it to other anarchists.

Marie  
Middlesborough

Lifespan adds: If you write to us with an s.a.e. we'd be pleased to arrange a visit, but **never turn up without asking**. We hold visitor weekends every four weeks or so, and normally ask first-time visitors to come then. We send an introductory booklet to people wanting to know more about us.

Lifespan Collective  
Townhead, Dunford Bridge,  
Sheffield S30 6TG

## Interview with a CNT militant

WHAT follows is the product of some informal chats with Pepe Gomez, a CNT-AIT (anarcho-syndicalist union) militant involved in the struggle against unemployment resulting from the Spanish Socialist Government's underhanded plans to close the shipbuilding yard at Puerto Real.

The actions at Puerto Real initiated by the CNT-AIT branch at the beginning of the year has led to serious social conflicts in the streets with telephone, rail and road links cut on several occasions. The Socialist Civil Governor of Cadiz called up special anti-disturbance police to quell the civil resistance. At one point the shipyard and factory, which was occupied by workers, was invaded by this semi-military force who set fire to the joiner's workshop before being beaten back by the workers.

As I write (17 August) the situation is quiet. The yard has been awarded a contract for a French vessel and the communist trade union (CCOO) which at first backed the CNT action has now pulled back. CNT doubts that the social peace at Puerto Real will be lasting.

**BB:** How do you feel about the general effectiveness of the CNT-FAI in Spanish society today?

Pepe Gomez: In Catalonia, Madrid and Bilbao, the organisation is holding its own and exerting a social and political presence. Also, particularly in the North of Spain, there are many anarchist social groupings, ateneos or affinity groups which operate at a social and cultural level and which often collaborate with the CNT.

**What about Andalusia?**

In this region of Spain we are much more disorganised and weak. While we have developed a strong branch here in Puerto Real, elsewhere in this region we generally lack strength and co-ordination. In the provincial capital Granada, where the Andalucian Regional committee is based, there is an effective organisation, but this is not reflected throughout Andalusia (Spain's largest and poorest region). The main problem is we lack a significant influence among the rural peasants in this region. Sad, when one considers that before the Civil War the peasants were our most traditional supporters.

**Do we not have relations with the Sindicato de Obreros del Campo (Agricultural Workers' Union)?**

continued from opposite page

Yes, up to a point, but it is not very easy to co-operate with them. Though they describe themselves as anarcho-syndicalists many of their leaders seek municipal office in the villages where they have influence. Some of their leaders are mayors and others are priests. No organisation with anarcho-syndicalist pretensions ought to encourage its members to pursue political office or become involved with the clergy.

**How do you organise in Puerto Real?**

In Puerto Real we have forty members of the CNT. But a few weeks ago we called a mass meeting in a public square and got a turn-out of 2,000. The thing is we have many supporters and sympathisers who do not affiliate. We have a well organised office and branch centre. In the shipyard we have good contacts with many of the workers, together with the social organisations on the housing estates. Particularly we work closely with the women's movement set up in Puerto Real to support the interests of the workers of Matagorda (Puerto Real's shipbuilding yard). In addition, we have links with the apprentices at the training school, who have taken independent action on their own behalf by occupying their school and blocking roads: many apprentices were not being placed in the yard after serving their time to a trade.

**Your attitude to the other CNT, which split away in 1979, is not so hostile as others in your organisation. Why?**

No, we are not so hostile. Indeed, we collaborate with the other CNT in the Cadiz dockyard, where that organisation

has three delegates (shop stewards) on the work's committee.

**How do you see the conflict between the two CNTs?**

The basic issue is one of participation or non-participation on the factory committees. The CNT-FAI boycotts the elections to these committees. But what is now sustaining the split is a conflict of personalities, mainly in Madrid and Barcelona.

When the initial breakaway took place in 1979 it was small and not serious, as the groups who split had little industrial influence. More grave was the 1982 walk-out of several important unions over the issue of the CNT's participation on the factory committees. Without these splits the industrial map of Spain would have been different now; with the CNT playing a significant role rather than reduced to a marginal force. From Puerto Real we are continually pressing the Madrid secretariat to open negotiations with the unions of the other CNT. Either with a view to developing a working relationship or resolving the issues which divide us. Personally, I would prefer it if the national organisation was based in Bilbao, rather than Madrid. Madrid and Barcelona have long been centres where all the internal conflicts bite deepest.

**Did you know the CNT's internal conflicts have caused friction inside the British Direct Action Movement?**

Pepe Gomez grimaced — I find it odd that a movement such as the DAM should develop internal problems over matters which are internal issues of policy in the Spanish movement.

Brian Bamford



**Lovemarch** — cassette tape

*Piano di Lavoro*

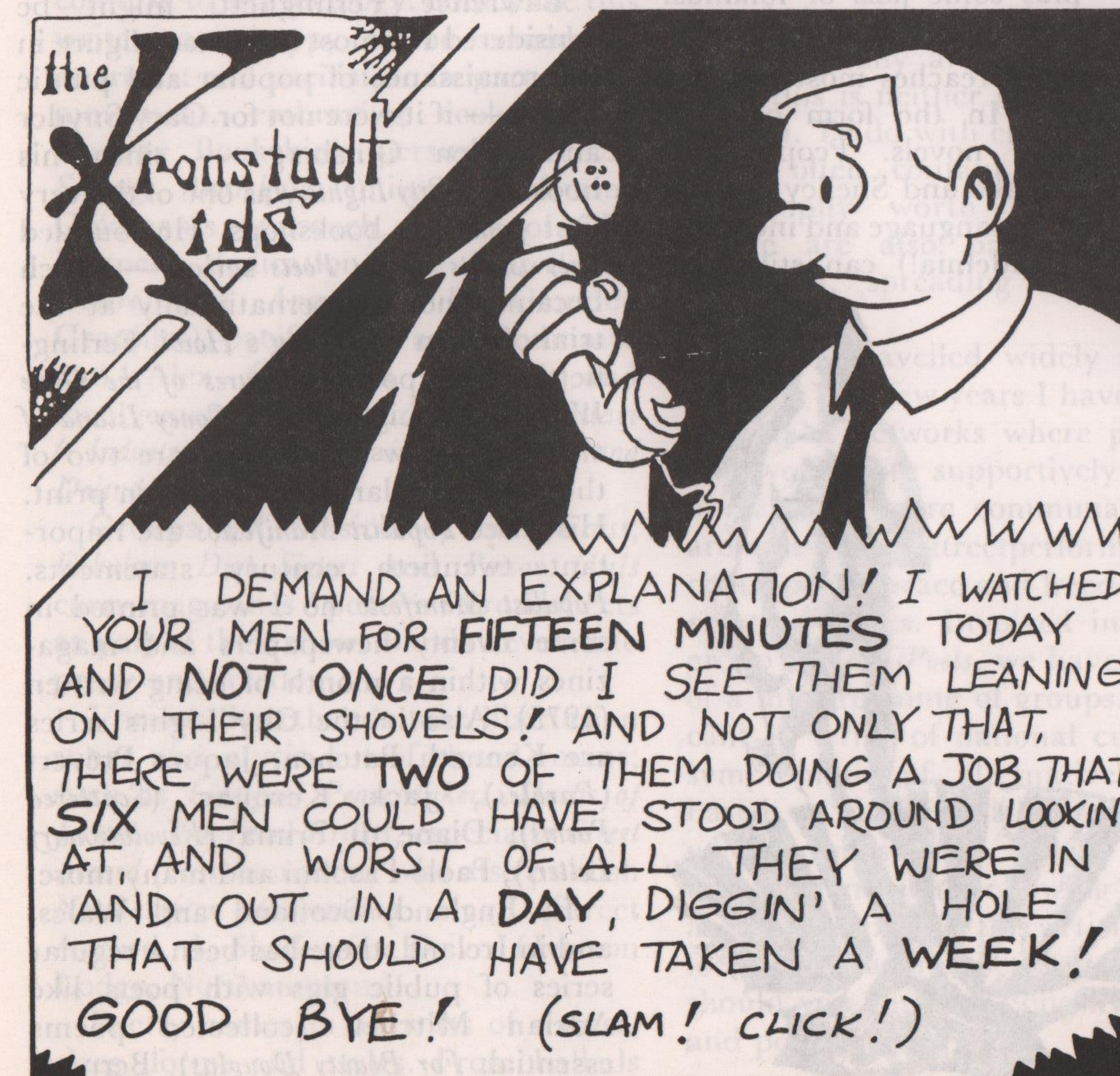
£3 (profits in aid of the Greenham Common Peace Camp), 34 mins.

RECORDED at the exotic-sounding 'La Starza Palace' (actually a studio on the Finchley Road), this is a low-budget tape of inoffensive and quite pleasant jazz/funk. It's easy to listen to, a bit reminiscent of early Doobie Brothers with occasional forays into highlife and salsa and some avant-garde breaks. It's unfortunately marred by the 'garage band' quality of production, although this may be deliberate, which leaves the lyrics on some numbers all but indecipherable. The engineering is desperate, the raw guitar gels badly with an otherwise smooth rhythm section and saxophone, and the use of echo on the vocals is atrocious.

I've never heard of the band, but would like to hear them live if they do gigs. It's a nice album and not bad at the price if this is your taste in music.

Freedom Bookshop doesn't stock cassettes, but can order it for you, or ring 01-358 9357. Any profits will go to the Peace Camp at Greenham Common, so if you think it's a good way to help the camp you could buy it. If you don't, well there are other ways to protest against war and nuclear missiles.

Katy Andrews





# Poetry and Anarchism

"Poetry isn't All Hey Nonny, Nonny and Bloody Daffodils." — James Reeves.

"Anything I can sing, I call a song. Anything I can't sing, I call a poem. Anything I can't sing or anything too long to be a poem, I call a novel." — Bob Dylan (Zimmerman).

"To make life, to insure progress, to create interest and vividness, it is necessary to break form, to distort pattern, to change the nature of our civilization. In order to create it is necessary to destroy; and the agent of destruction in society is the poet. I believe that the poet is necessarily an anarchist, and that he/she must oppose all organized conceptions of the State, not only those which we inherit from the past but equally those which are imposed on people in the name of the future. In this case I make no distinction between fascism and marxism." — Herbert Read. *Poetry and Anarchism*. 1938. (Faber & Faber)

"God help us, what is my definition of poetry? I, myself, do not read poetry for anything but pleasure. I read only the poems I like. This means of course that I have to read a lot of poems I don't like before I find the ones I do, but when I do find them, all I can say is: 'Here they are' and I read them to myself for pleasure. Read the poems you like reading. Don't bother whether they're 'important' or if they'll live. What does it matter what poetry is after all? If you want a definition of poetry say: 'Poetry is what makes me laugh or cry or yawn, what makes my toenails twinkle, what makes me want to do this, that, or nothing.' and let it go at that. All that matters is the eternal movement behind it, the vast undercurrent of human grief, folly, pretension, exaltation, or ignorance, however unlofty the intention of the poem." — Dylan Thomas

Poets are subversive like anarchists. There are as many kinds of poet as there are anarchists. To ignore the poetry of anarchy, and the anarchy of poetry, is to ignore an area where anarchist ideas are popular. Songs and Poems have inspired men and women throughout history. Only the academic and pedantic separate and categorize poems from songs. Perhaps the greatest ballad, certainly one of the finest, in the English language is *Tom O'Bedlam* and what is this but an extraordinary poem... or song! The Concise Oxford Dictionary describes *ballad* as 'simple song... poem in short stanzas'. The conflict or confusion over what is a ballad or poem only arises between pedants.

Whether we write ballads or doggerel, haiku's or gibberish, we write because we are compelled to. Some are compelled by money, others by a mixture of ideas and ideology. Some are completely taken over by the art. Some write only in private notebooks; others in newspapers and magazines; yet others in books and pamphlets. Some write on postcards and posters. Many give public readings and performances. Over the past twenty five years a popular movement of "gigs" for poets has emerged. Whenever an event is well-publicised and has a mixture of poets — plus some jazz or folk musicians — there is usually an audience.

Most poetry reaches most people in other guises. In the form of songs: comic strips: novels. People uninterested in Blake and Shelley (because of their distant language and incorporation into Academia!) can still become



interested in radical ideas and truly subversive poems.

Poets like Herbert Read (*Poetry and Anarchism* and *Annals of Innocence and Experience*) and Alex Comfort (*Signal to Engage* and *Authority and Delinquency in the Modern State*) have created a body of work specifically anarchist and poetic. Their poems are subversive and spontaneous; disturbing and disruptive; difficult yet accessible... However their counterparts in the USA, Kenneth Rexroth and Paul Goodman, have had an even greater influence. Kenneth Rexroth, longtime painter and poet, anarchist and translator of Chinese and Japanese poems, has been a major influence on radical poets, especially through books like *Assays*, *Bird in the Bush*, *In Defence of the Earth* and the gatherings of poets in his house in San Francisco in the 1950s. Poets like Gary Snyder, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg, Philip Lamantia, Gregory Corso, Robert Duncan, went on to become catalysts for the peace and ecology movement, and the freeing from academic-police of poems and poetry. (See Kenneth Rexroth's volume *In Defence of the Earth* and Paul Goodman's *Hawkeweed*, *Growing Up Absurd*, *Communitas* — co-author Percival Goodman — *Compulsory Miseducation*.)

Lawrence Ferlinghetti might be considered the most important figure in the renaissance of popular and public poetry — if it were not for Gary Snyder and Allen Ginsberg — since his bookshop *City Lights* was one of the very first paperback bookshops. He founded *City Lights Pocket Poets* series — which became known internationally at the trial of Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*. Ferlinghetti's own poems *Pictures of the Gone World* (*City Lights*) and *Coney Island of the Mind* (New Directions) are two of the most popular poets' books in print. His three *Populist Manifestos* are important twentieth century statements. *Populist Manifesto* no 1 was printed in some twenty newspapers and magazines within a month of being written (1975). Also in the *City Lights* series are Kenneth Patchen, Jacques Prévert (*Paroles*), Jack Kerouac (*Scattered Poems*), Diane di Prima (*Revolutionary Letters*), Paolo Pasolini and many more.

In England, Scotland and Wales, and in Ireland, there has been a regular series of public gigs with poets like Adrian Mitchell (collected poems essential: *For Beauty Douglas*), Bernard

Kops, Mike Horovitz (*New Departures* jazz and poems), Christopher Logue (*Odes to a Dodo* plus posterpoems), Dave Cunliffe (*Poetsmeat* and *Global Tapestry*), Jeff Cloves (*PoetsDoos* and *Big Bang*), Pat van Twest (*Isambard*) and many many more. These poets have visited schools, colleges, clubs, pubs, festivals; supported peace demonstrations; created a social and political poetry in traditions of Shelley and Blake — who, of course, were also social and political poets!

Most poetry in the twentieth century has reached most people through Blues, Jazz, Rhythm & Blues and Rock & Roll; the continuing traditions of folksong; and the very best of songwriters, like Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan. This poetry of song has exploded into every area of society. However there is a difference, in approach and attitude, of poets and songwriters as they become successful and professional. One must look constantly at the unknown poets and songwriters, those who are not 'on the circuit'. For although a few professionals keep their visions intact, many succumb to publicity and adulation.

However the work of Adrian Mitchell and Leon Rosselson (singer/songwriter) deserves the most serious attention; as does that of Gary Snyder and Laurence Ferlinghetti.

Of course all creative ideas are subversive! All poets and songwriters can be disturbing. Some refuse to conform to any ideology. Some, like this writer, are happy to be considered anarchist and pacifist; to be part of that movement, embracing ecologists of Murray Bookchin's persuasion (*Post-Scarcity Anarchy*), feminists of Emma Goldman's approach, artists of Cliff Harper's dedication (*The Education of Desire* and *Anarchy* pub. Camden Graphics), pacifists of Paul Goodman's and Alex Comfort's intellect and involvement (read *Message to the Military / Industrial Complex* and *Authority and Delinquency*).

Groups (of musicians) like *Crass*, *Fabulous Dirt Sisters* and *Poison Girls* carry magazines / posters / broadsheets as part of their show. Bands devoted to peace and freedom.

Various Streetbands take libertarian songs and music out of closed rooms; such as *Liverpool PeaceMakers*, *Horns of Jericho*, *The Peace Artists*, especially *Street Accord* (Northampton) who also publish *Northampton Libertarian* mag. (Street Accord, 4, Shadowfax Drive, Overton Lodge, Northampton.)

Poetry comes in all sorts of shapes, sizes, forms and styles. From ballads

and rhythms in rhyme, to prose and novels whose language is pure poetry. It is precisely anarchic, uncontainable; contrary to academic and literary myth-makers, who always wish to constrain, contain and define! It is easy to forget the power of novels such as *The Good Soldier Schweik* (Hasek), *The Powerhouse* (Alex Comfort), *Catch-22*. *The Glastonbury Romance* (Cowper-Powys) has, as one of its main characters, an anarchist organiser of factory-workers, striking and demonstrating. Kurt Vonnegut's *Jailbird* has a complete chapter dedicated to the murder of Sacco and Vanzetti. Whilst Upton Sinclair's *Boston* is a novel wholly dedicated to their martyrdom — in reality a documentary of their police and prison life after their arrest. Henry Miller's *Colossus of Maroussi* and *Stand Still Like The Humming Bird* are two books of inspired poetry, the former with Greek landscape and people; the latter a series of celebratory essays. Both, however, are full of anarchic and subversive ideas and observations. He always wrote about 'self-liberation for men and women'. Kenneth Patchen's *Journal of Albion Moonlight* is a 'word-of-mouth' classic — ignored by critics and the literary world — but an inspiration to fellow-writers and libertarians everywhere. Charles Mingus' *Beneath The Underdog* is an autobiography of an influential jazz musician and composer.

However there are a host of little magazines and pamphlets bringing diverse anarchist and subversive ideas to their own local communities. Perhaps many are ephemeral, but in itself this is neither good nor bad, but human. To do with energy and money. They often contain an energy and philosophy worth careful reading. There are also pamphlets, posters, postcards, spreading ideas and entertainment.

Having travelled widely in Britain over the past few years I have noticed a growth of networks where people live and work more supportively, more co-operatively, more communally. There are many more streetperformers, musicians, poets, peace and freedom groups creating waves. Involved in one such group *RiffRaffPoets*, we have been part of a mushrooming of groups. Insignificant in terms of national culture, but symptomatic of alternative (culture) based on sharing ideas and beliefs of which songs and poems are not unimportant. The following books are an integral part of this article — not a footnote. Read and perform with zest — should you wish to. Long live anarchy and poetry!

Dennis Gould

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Kenneth Rexroth: *Natural Numbers*; *In Defence of the Earth*; *An Autobiographical Novel*.  
Allen Ginsberg: *Plutonium Ode*; *Planet News*; *Fall of America Kaddish*; *Howl*; *Wichita Vortex Sutra*.  
Lawrence Ferlinghetti: *Pictures of the Gone World*; *Coney Island of the Mind* (New Direction); *Open Eye Open Heart*; *Endless Life*; *Populist Manifestos*; *Who Are We Now?*  
Gary Snyder: *Earth Household*; *The Old Ways*; *Good, Wild and Sacred*.  
Jack Kerouac: *Scattered Poems*; *Desolation Angels*.  
Diana di Prima: *Revolutionary Letters*.  
Jacques Prévert: *Paroles* (trans. Ferlinghetti).  
Dennis Levitt: *Selected Poems* (Bloodaxe).  
Kenneth Patchen: *Love and War Poems\** (1968 2nd Ed. needs reprint!); *Poems of Humour and Protest*; *Love Poems of Kenneth Patchen* (*City Lights*); *Doubleheader*; *Journal of Albion Moonlight*.  
Adrian Mitchell: *For Beauty Douglas* Collected Poems; *On the Beach at Cambridge*; *Worlds: Seven Modern Poets*.

## Pamphlets

McClay, J. Cloves: *Voices of Dissent*.  
D. Gould: *Alphabet Poems*.  
D. Gould: *PosterPoems and Postcardpoems*.

## Magazines

*City Lights Journal*  
*City Lights Review*  
*Global Tapestry* (Ed. Dave Cunliffe)  
*Big Bang* (Ed. Jeff Cloves)  
*RiffRaffPoets* (Ed. D. Gould)

\*published by 1. *Whisper and Shout* 2. then *Peace News* 3. Needs publisher?

## Notes

1. Most of the above American poets are published by *City Lights* (i.e. by Lawrence Ferlinghetti).
2. There are of course many poets unknown who are expressing their ideas and experiences in a libertarian spirit and language. Come on out!?

**Attention anarchist poets** and anyone else it may concern. Dennis Gould is compiling a pamphlet of poems for publication by Freedom Press.



# Alphabetic introduction

**Anarchy** means a society without bosses or governments (monarchy: rule of one, oligarchy: rule of a few, polyarchy: rule of many, anarchy: rule of none).

**Bosses and Bondmen** are what anarchists oppose. Not people as such, but the relationship in which one person is boss over another.

**Coercion** is the essence of the boss relationship. If there is no threat, explicit or tacit, of the sack, the whip, prison, deprivation, divine retribution, or anything, then the relationship is voluntary.

**Deceit** is necessary for a coercive relationship to be an institution. Nobody continues to obey a mugger who collapses in the middle of a robbery, but people continue to obey governments whose threats become ineffective, as they are deceived into thinking rulers are not robbers.

**Elections** are a lovely con. People are given some choice of bosses, and thereby deceived that they are their own bosses.

**Freedom** just means not having something you do not want. Anarchists want freedom from every kind of coercive institution. Never trust people who go on about freedom without saying freedom from what.

**God** is said by some anarchists to be against earthly rulers. Others say the best excuse for a tyrant on earth is a tyrant in heaven. One of the many points on which anarchists disagree.

**Human nature** is reasonable but not saintly. Every person is capable of managing their own life, but no-one is fit to be boss over anyone else.

**Individuals** without society would have little choice of what to do. The whole point of society is to improve the scope of individual choice. A society which restricts individual choice is a society gone wrong.

**Joining a group** widens individual choice if all members want the same thing, and each is using the strength of the others.

**Kings and Queens** are rulers who con their subjects they are magic beings who bring good luck. These days they are largely replaced by elected rulers, who use a different con.

**Leaders** are not bosses. They are people whose ideas are taken up by other people, voluntarily. When bosses call themselves leaders, this is another con.

**Military dictators** were the earliest kind of government and have been the most common kind ever since. They have ample means of coercion but are short on deceit, so they get themselves elected or proclaimed king whenever they can.

**Nuclear weapons** deter wars to some extent. Governments are always ready to fight to the last drop of somebody else's blood, but nuclear weapons put the bosses themselves at risk. However they are not guaranteed deterrents, because some rulers are suicidally dotty.

**Organisation** does not need bosses. If professional organisers are useful, they should be fellow workers without coercive power.

**Property**, meaning ownership of things which the owner does not use but someone else needs, is a legal device for robbing the needy.

**Quarrels** between individuals may cause them to fight. Quarrels between governments cause them to send suckers and conscripts to fight, which is a lot more dangerous for the bystanders.

**Revolution**, in the anarchist sense, means working towards anarchy by resisting, subverting, or escaping from every kind of coercive institution. This includes 'revolutionary' governments, who pretend to use coercion for revolutionary ends.

**Selfishness** does not mean being inconsiderate. It means acting on your own behalf, regardless of your 'duty'. The wickedness of selfishness is a main theme in all government education.

**Technology** could make the world safer and put an end to scarcity. Under governments it is mostly used for developing weapons and making the rich richer.

**Uprising** is the movement of a population against a particular set of bosses. This is not always the same as revolution. The population may object to coercion, or they may object to breaks with equally coercive traditions.

**Violence** is opposed by some anarchists on principle, because it is characteristic of governments. Other anarchists oppose violence as a revolutionary tactic, because governments are likely to win. Still others think it unavoidable.

**War**, or the threat of war, is necessary for stable government. It allows the bosses to present themselves as the lesser evil.

**Xenophobia**, or wariness of strangers, is natural because it is easier to predict the behaviour of those we know. But natural xenophobia may be worked up into willingness to kill on behalf of bosses.

**Young people** are likelier targets for anarchism than older people, because they are generally less stuck in their thinking. But not always.

**Zeal** may cause anarchists to minimise the difficulties in what they are saying, but please do not dismiss anarchism on that account alone. Ask yourself, how good are the arguments in favour of government.



## Uniforms

I READ Katy Andrews article 'The Demjanjuk "trial" and the limits of responsibility' with great interest as the tactics of war criminals on trial (be they Nazis, American personnel during the Vietnam war or the minions of Sharon) mirrors the effect of centralised and bureaucratic social organisation on society as a whole. Each individual shifts the responsibility to an abstract 'the all' and thus blame is dissolved.

Clearly this situation suits a lot of people, so if it is to change, we as anarchists must examine the costs of such a tactic. I am struck by the fact that both oppressor and oppressed in the concentra-

tion camps both wore uniforms — the advantages of this anonymity we have seen above, but the experience of the victims demonstrates its cost, the cost of individual human identity. In the camps, which uniform you wore was a mark of power, but this status accrued because of the uniform rather than who wore it. Effectively the uniform wore the man, rather than visa versa.

In this society, status is less clearly stratified, but again superficial marks of status account for too much, as John Graham points out in his article 'Truly Beautiful'. The invulnerability of uniformity, however, seems unsatisfactory for the majority of people. They opt either for an attempt to rise to the top — believing this will bring a uniqueness

through their position in society but ultimately learning that like Kafka's *Parable of the Gatekeeper* one can never rise far enough to escape peer-pressure — or else opt out into subcultures that generally have their own status-games and superficialities in miniature.

If anarchists are to pose a realistic alternative to this alienation of self from 'soul to superficiality', I feel that totalising trends that judge people as members of abstract groups from which they derive status in comparison to other abstract groups (i.e. issues of class, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) are less helpful than people self-consciously demanding and asserting their individuality.

P. N. Rogers

# Anarchism kills Communism

## SOME RESPONSES TO LAST MONTH'S ARTICLE

I WAS interested in Dan Dare's article 'anarchism kills communism' in the August edition of *Freedom* and felt that it needed an extra dimension, because essentially the idea of anarchism and Thatcherism being somehow connected at their basest level was abhorrent to me. That link might be easily labelled 'instinct' and slipped neatly into the article before the crescendo, perhaps to stylise his rhythm, or to strengthen his argument but in my case the word — 'instinct' — hit a base chord. I've been delving into sociology recently and also psychology as a part of my Open University course in sociology. Coupled to this is the probability that I come from the same generation anarchist stable. You know the characteristic example, punk dressed in black, spouted ideals of Crass, Vegan, Animal libber, sat down in the snow at Molesworth, etc etc and to a degree I felt the same 'misunderstanding of human nature'.

In my case it left an emptiness of the death of an age. Ground down by eight years of supplementary benefit and Thatcher's regime it was more a despondency, a despair at the mammoth hopelessness of it all. I too felt this irradiating laser light of human nature, self-interest, individual sovereignty, Thatcherism, it wounded me too...

Or did it? Hold on, let's not get carried away by it, to do so would be letting

structures influence us, through a central value system, more deadly than a central heating system. No, steady on there, Dan Dare, there is an authority other than ourselves, it's simply, finite, cosmic, and mother to all children, it begins with an E but is not spelt Ego — just Earth! Clive

I WAS disappointed by the rhetoric of Dan Dare's flight into megalomania in the August *Freedom*. His version of anarchy came across as an ego-centric 'might is right' philosophy, which seemed motivated by an overwhelming envy of the rich and powerful. Although he writes of being 'fully self-realised' and 'changing our own lives', I detect no hint of him having questioned let alone rejected the indoctrinated values of contemporary capitalist society e.g. consumerism, exploitation, de-humanisation and myopic thinking.

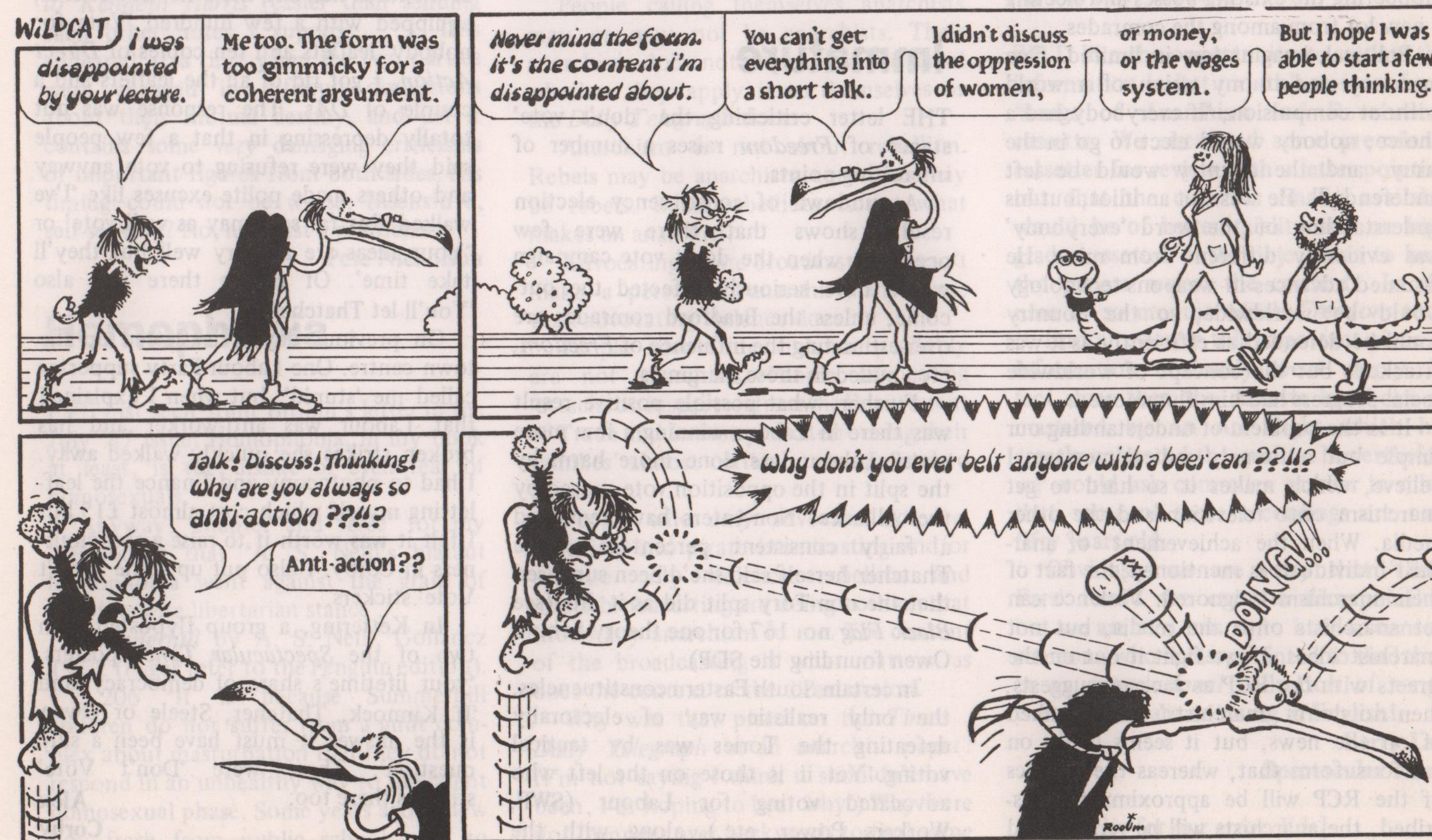
In order to communicate the credibility of the anarchist cause, we need to be both perceptive in our understanding of human nature and society, as well as committed to personal and social change. Emotional outbursts which go no deeper than self-justification tend to sustain only fanatics and switch off everyone else.

I would suggest that Dan Dare should admit that he is really the Mekon and take some time off to read and reflect on anarchist ideas. Bob Schulz

DAN Dare's article, 'Anarchism kills Communism' (*Freedom*, August), is full of contradictions. He first informs us that 'everyone has the right to do anything', but then goes on to assert that people do *not* have the right to 'glory in being working class', to 'rot in a factory or office', to 'slave down a pit', or to 'live in a pacifist-punk-hippy-vegan ghetto'. Moreover, in attaching any form of morality, he does not seem to realise that he is himself thereby adopting a moral stance, since he is saying, in effect, 'it is wrong to be moral!'. And as the exploiters, torturers and murderers are so much more powerful than their victims, the inevitable result of Dan's well-thought-out philosophy of absolute freedom for all, would be the establishment of a Fascist dictatorship. John L. Broom

No less an organ than the *Police Review* has suggested that cannabis should be decriminalised. This is less a surge of libertarianism than a pragmatic assessment. The paper notes that use of the drug is widespread and that many Chief Constables are prepared to let their officers turn a blind eye to personal use. It concludes that the renewed campaign against hard drug abuse will be discredited if cannabis is included.

Meanwhile in France, where smoking in schools was legalised as one of the concessions to the 1968 rebellion, there has been a 20% increase in tobacco smoking since the anti-smoking campaign started ten years ago, and associated deaths are some 55,000 a year.







## Whither?

THE article by Grahame Jackson in the August *Freedom* makes a great deal of sense (except about an anarcho-syndicalist trade union). We must make our presence felt on the streets at all times through leafletting, fly-posting and paper-selling. Otherwise, how do you expect anarchism to be accepted by the workers and so lead to a better world? If we do not, the Marxists will run rings round us in the present and in the future. See what happened in Russia 1917. The Glasgow anarchists have tried a little of this, but our numbers are limited.

Iain McKay  
Glasgow

I AGREE with Grahame Jackson's formulation of the essential message of anarchism, 'Comrades, unite, smash your bosses, we can work together without them'. But go round with your clipboard asking ordinary people what it means, and most will think it refers to clobbering the existing bosses and electing a new lot from among the comrades.

Political imagination is limited. One man objected to my vision of a world without compulsion, 'If everybody had a choice, nobody would elect to go in the army, and the country would be left undefended'. He was not an idiot, but his understanding of the word 'everybody' was evidently different from mine. He assumed advances in weapons technology would be worldwide, so the country could be defended as efficiently as it was attacked, but the concept of worldwide social progress had him flummoxed.

It is the problem of understanding our simple but extremely radical message, I believe, which makes it so hard to get anarchism onto television and the other media. When the achievement of anarchist individuals is mentioned, the fact of their anarchism is ignored. Violence can get anarchists onto the media, but not anarchist ideas. If we fight it out on the streets with the RCP as Jackson suggests, then no doubt 'anarchists' will be talked of on the news, but it seems likely on previous form that, whereas the politics of the RCP will be approximately described, the anarchists will be represented

as having no more political ideology than football hooligans.

All sorts of groups go in for political assassination, but a short campaign of assassinating notorious tyrants, a century ago, has given the anarchists a reputation for mindless violence from which we still suffer. 'Anarchist' and 'bombthrower' are words that go well together in the public mind, but not 'Roman Catholic' and 'bombthrower', although in fact Roman Catholics have set off more bombs than anarchists; many people think that Guy Fawkes was an anarchist.

From time to time our message, or some of it, gets across to largish groups of people. In some ways society gets more coercive but in other ways it seems to judder in the direction of freedom, and no doubt the anarchists have something to do with it. Say not the struggle naught availeth. But if you think it is easy, be prepared for disappointment.

Donald Room



## Immature

THE letter criticising the 'don't vote' stance of *Freedom* raises a number of interesting points.

A rundown of constituency election results shows that there were few occasions when the don't vote campaign would have seriously affected the outcome, unless the Bradford comrades are over-estimating the influence of *Freedom*, etc., pulled in those marginals.

Further, what possible positive result was there in Labour winning a few more seats? Labour was done more harm by the split in the opposition vote caused by the Alliance. Non-voters have remained a fairly consistent percentage, while Thatcher herself said she'd been surprised that the non-Tory split did as it did, (see *Black Flag* no. 167 for one theory behind Owen founding the SDP).

In certain South Eastern constituencies, the only realistic way of electorally defeating the Tories was by tactical voting. Yet it is those on the left who advocated voting for Labour (SWP, Workers Power, etc.), along with the

Labour Party, who were so against tactical voting, whatever the circumstances. Incidentally, for the SWP, etc., to call for a Labour vote is to ask their members to in fact vote tactically; since they rightly say Labour would end up shitting on the workers. And the SWP, etc., then criticise Hobsbawm, etc., for calling for tactical voting. So much for political maturity.

Voting, tactically or otherwise, calls into play the question of reformism. Is it really sensible, considering limited resources, etc., telling the working class to vote Labour once every five years and spend the time inbetween telling them that Parliament will give them nothing, that we have tried to by-pass it, etc? The act of voting is a form of collaboration — like it or not. Where does it end — in ministerial posts?

Lastly, I thought the anarchist movement stood as an alternative. What kind of alternative is it that bleats 'Vote Labour, but prepare to smash the state'? For certain, the Labour Party wouldn't thank us if it ever got back into power and then where would we stand? In the shit no doubt.

As a minority our influence on events is limited and to join the 'Vote Labour' brigade would certainly mean our distinctive voice being lost and the cause of anarchism suffering a setback.

Eddie May

THE anti-election campaign in Corby, where I campaign on my own. On 11 June I picketed two polling booths, one at a church hall and the other at a school, equipped with a few hundred 'Vote for nobody' leaflets and ten copies of *Direct Action*. I got rid of all the leaflets and a couple of DAs. The response was not totally depressing in that a few people said they were refusing to vote anyway and others made polite excuses like 'I've walked this far so I may as well vote' or 'Your ideas are all very well but they'll take time'. Of course there was also 'You'll let Thatcher in'.

On previous days I leafletted up the town centre. One Labour Party supporter called me 'stupid', but when I explained that Labour was anti-worker and has broken strikes she quickly walked away. I had to photocopy and finance the leafletting myself which cost almost £15 but I felt it was worth it to raise a consciousness in Corby. I also put up some 'Don't Vote' stickers.

In Kettering, a group flyposted with two of the *Spectacular Times* posters, 'your lifetime's share of democracy' and 'If Kinnock, Thatcher, Steele or Owen is the answer it must have been a silly question'. There were 'Don't Vote' stickers there too.

Alex  
Corby

## LETTERS

A WEEK may well be a long time in politics, but a few short days at the beginning of August saw the political career of Dr David Owen take a nose-dive. His own SDP voted against his advice and is now moving, albeit falteringly, towards a full merger with the Liberals. The man who claimed to have broken the mould of British politics finds his own future in pieces, and the cosy, firm but fair image of the Alliance now seems extremely brittle indeed. The post-poll slanging match between some leading Alliance figures makes some Labour Party bickering — which Owen is always fond of criticising — seem like a playground squabble. Underneath it all, they are politicians just like the others.

So where now for Dr Death, as *Private Eye* affectionately calls him? The man who, at 38, was the youngest Foreign Secretary since Anthony Eden and seemed assured of the highest honours, must now be saddened by his Party's present image. The Alliance were at great pains to point out how very united they all were during their general election campaign, so how come the idea of a full merger is so abhorrent to some of their members, only a few months later? And if the differences between the 'partners' really are so fundamental, how would they have behaved as part of a coalition government?

We eagerly awaited his book, published on 1 September, enigmatically entitled *David Owen Personally Speaking to Kenneth Harris* (easier than sending each other notes I suppose ...). This appeared at a time when the two parties were engaged in difficult discussions about their mutual destiny, and yet it contains some very damaging criticisms of important figures from both sides. His timing could not be worse. Insensitive, self-seeking? No, he's just a politician.

Pete Nicholson

## Homophobia

I'VE just seen John Broom's letter in the July '87 issue. Homophobia, in my book at least, is the dislike or even fear of homosexuals.

Anyway, 'chapter and verse' for my mentioning that 'A. S. Neill's blatant homophobia went against the grain of his otherwise libertarian stance'.

*Summerhill* by A. S. Neill, Gollancz 1962. (Pages refer to the Penguin edition).

p.206 'It is because Summerhill children do not suffer from a guilt complex about masturbation that they do not respond in an unhealthy way to the latent homosexual phase. Some years ago, a new boy fresh from public school tried to

introduce sodomy. He was unsuccessful.'

p.206 'There is no homosexuality at Summerhill.'

p.207 'Homosexuality is linked in some way to masturbation.'

p.207 'Over a period of forty years, the school has not turned out a single homosexual. The reason is that freedom breeds healthy children.'

p.151 'In a law court, a judge with unconscious homosexual leanings would likely be very severe in sentencing a prisoner charged with homosexual practices.'

p.186 'I wonder how much homosexuality dates from the tolerance of homosexual play and the forbidding of heterosexual play.'

p.195 (Questioning a ten year child about sex.) 'I asked her what more she knew and she told me about homosexuality and perversions.'

p.197 'Masturbation, Don Juanism, homosexuality, are all unproductive because they are asocial.'

Dave  
Stratford upon Avon

## Pirates

CONSIDER this as just another boring re-run of a certain debate if you like. In response to the piece in August *Freedom* on pirate radio, I need to draw my line for what it's worth, and say this is where I stand. So:

Calling myself the world's greatest mountain climber doesn't make me a mountain climber, good or bad.

People calling themselves anarchists may or may not be anarchists. Their anarchism does not depend on the label whether they apply it to themselves or the *Daily Telegraph* does.

Anarchism is not about rebellion. Rebels may be anarchists, anarchists may be rebels. Being rebellious is not what makes an anarchist.

Advocating pirate broadcasting doesn't make a person an anarchist, any more than advocating violence does.

People advocating violence probably are not anarchists. People advocating 'attacks on Inspectors from the Department of Trade and Industry and terrorising their families' almost certainly are opposed to anarchism.

People who *only* advocate violence, rebellion and pirate broadcasting and/or practise only violence, rebellion and pirate broadcasting are doing nothing that shows any anarchism to me. The content of the broadcasting is what matters, as does the context of the direct action.

Why was that piece on the *Times Daily Telegraph* in an anarchist paper? (I'm not saying I think it shouldn't have been, I'm hoping to hear why.) Why were you bending over backwards to find some

way to defend *Radio Is My Bomb* from the attacks? Where is the anarchism? In the pirate broadcasting? In the reference to a bomb? In the threats to DTI inspectors? Or in something else, not stated? If so, what? Why wasn't it stated?

Just from the material in the item, I'd conclude both the headlines in *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* were justified. They were probably both plants, and certainly designed to spread fear and confusion, not information, and to justify repression. But nevertheless the links they were making were clear and clearly present. What were the links that *Freedom* was making?

Bob James  
Erskineville, Australia

[The DTI 'leak' was reported, mostly in short notes, in all the national newspapers and on radio. Since it mentioned 'an anarchist group' we thought *Freedom's* readers might be curious to know which anarchist group, and what was the context. We do not think we bent over backwards to 'defend *Radio Is My Bomb*, though we agree we did not attack it. Hooligan Press appears to think anarchists and villains are allies, in that every act against the establishment or its minions is a contribution to the revolution. We do not agree. We think terrorising DTI inspectors do not tend towards anarchy, but on towards replacing the present government with another at least as bad. But the disagreement seems to be one of tactics, not of principle. We have no reason to suppose Hooligan Press are not anarchists.]

## Cloth ears

WE'D like the opportunity to update the information in last month's review of our 'Songs of Anarchism and Revolution' cassette. We circulated some pre-release cassettes for review with a letter pointing out that the cassettes finally available would be of better quality and on high grade cassettes — the object was to have the papers review the contents. In the nine or so months which *Freedom* took to find a reviewer this important piece of information obviously went astray. In fact since then the cassette has been remastered by An Arc Light which has greatly enhanced the quality. Nevertheless we would ask comrades to bear in mind that some of these recordings are over fifty years old.

Obviously we are sorry that 'Cloth Ears' found the cassette disappointing, but we are at a loss as to how to console someone who is disappointed to find that, in an *international* collection of songs, the majority are not sung in English!

Larry Law  
Spectacular Times

[Apologies for our error. Eds]



# REVIEWS

## The Anarchist Moment

by John Clark

Black Rose (paperback, £7.95)

## Law and Anarchism

Edited by Thom Holterman and Henc van Maarseveen

Black Rose (paperback, £6.95)

THESE two books, which were published by Black Rose Books in Canada in 1984 and are now more easily available in Britain, concern abstract anarchology rather than actual anarchism, but they both contain interesting and important material.

*The Anarchist Moment* is a collection of essays by John Clark, an American academic who teaches political science in New Orleans and is best known here as the author of rather ponderous books on *Max Stirner's Egoism* (1976) and *The Philosophical Anarchism of William Godwin* (1977). This book consists of ten talks and articles given or published at various meetings and in various publications (including *Freedom*) during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The publishers rashly claim that he 'tried for the first time to place contemporary philosophical criticism within the broader perspective of ecological concerns and the philosophies of nature'; Clark himself more modestly and accurately acknowledges the influence of Murray Bookchin, which has strongly affected his work for the worse as well as the better.

The title is symbolic of the book. At first it may look like 'The Anarchist Movement', but it really is 'The Anarchist Moment', which is defined in the preface as 'not a point in history, but rather a theoretical moment, a necessary movement of negation constituting an essential element of the theory of liberation'. Nevertheless, it does 'find expression in history, or, to speak more accurately, in the interstices of history'; it also concerns 'prehistory' and 'the primitive'; and finally, the anarchist moment has a post-historical aspect in its utopian dimension'. If you can read stuff like this, the ten items in the book are as follows: an exposition of Bookchin's libertarian ecology; two other vindications of libertarian ecology; three libertarian critiques of various aspects of Marxism; an unconvincing attempt to demonstrate that the *Tao te ching* (The Way and Its Power, attributed to Lao tse, one of the main classics of Chinese philosophy and the basic scripture of Taoism) is 'one of the great anarchist classics'; two explanations of the need for anarchism to be both

revived and revised; and a general answer to the question 'What Is Anarchism?', replying both to critics and to other defenders of anarchism.

As so often, what is worth publishing in a periodical isn't always worth republishing in a book, and this particular example tends to suffer from repetition, triviality, and the ordinary passage of time, but above all from a pompous and sometimes opaque style — which is a pity, because Clark is intelligent and well-informed and has plenty to say if only he could say it more clearly.

*Law and Anarchism* is a collection of seven of the 35 papers given at a conference on anarchism and law held by the Constitutional Law Department at Erasmus University in Rotterdam in 1979. After a short preface by Clayton Ruby, a Canadian lawyer who suggests that the book will be good for lawyers, and a short editorial introduction, there are two general articles by the editors (who both teach in the host Department) which say not much at great length; accounts by W. O. Reichert and Caroline Cahm of Proudhon's and Kropotkin's ideas about law; a discussion by April Carter of the relationship of direct action, the law and anarchism; a summary by M. J. Taylor of his theory based on the social sciences that communal rules may be a better guarantee of social order than state laws; and a summary by R. Descallar of the anarchist idea of natural law.

Anarchists who are interested in the problem of formal and informal law will find some useful points here, but the book really is more likely to be good for lawyers — not that this should be ignored, for law students often study anarchism nowadays, and there is no telling where seed may bear fruit.

MH

(Black Rose Books are distributed by Freedom Press)

## The Thomas Paine Reader

Edited by Michael Foot and Isaac Kramnick

Penguin Books (paperback £5.95)

THOMAS PAINE, who was one of the greatest activists and theorists of revolution two centuries ago and also one of the founders of the anarchist ideology, has been as badly treated by posterity as might be expected. When I wrote a long article about him five years ago (*Freedom*, 2 October 1982), I mentioned how he has generally been abused or misused, and in particular how he has been neglected or distorted by academics and publishers in recent years. Now there is a new book called *The Thomas Paine Reader* which apparently redresses the balance but actually repeats the pattern yet again.

The main problem is that Paine's writings are easy to read but hard to get

hold of, at least in this country. His best-known book, *Rights of Man* (1791-1792), has indeed been published many times, and a good edition appeared in the Pelican Classics back in 1969 with an introduction by the British Marxist scholar Henry Collins. But for some reason this has been replaced by a new edition with a bad introduction by the American Marxist scholar Eric Foner, first in the Penguin American Library in 1984 and then in the Penguin Classics in 1985. His first important book, *Common Sense* (1776), appeared in the Pelican Classics in 1976 with a bad introduction by the American liberal scholar Isaac Kramnick (who also wrote a bad introduction to the edition in the same series of William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*). His main religious book, *The Age of Reason* (1794-1795), has been out of print in Britain for 30 years (though American editions are available), as have virtually all his other works.

Instead of adding further works to existing series, Penguin Books have produced *The Thomas Paine Reader*. They claim that 'all of Paine's supreme masterpieces are included here', which is quite inaccurate and is indeed impossible within only 500 pages. Nearly half the space is taken by the already available *Common Sense* and *Rights of Man* (mistitled *The Rights of Man*). The rest contains a few early items, one of the sixteen *Crisis* papers (1776-1783), the first part of *The Age of Reason* (but not the equally important second part, or the less important later items known as the third part), the *Dissertation on the First Principles of Government and Agrarian Justice* (1795), and various later articles and pamphlets and letters, often more or less severely abridged.

There is a great deal of valuable material here, but as well as the objections to the basic principles of selection in the circumstances, the detailed editing is clumsy (with too many cuts and changes), and the added editorial material is far from reliable. The introduction by Isaac Kramnick and Michael Foot (yes, the former Labour leader, who is a great admirer of Paine) contains far too many silly remarks and factual errors. The old one-volume selections published in Britain (by Watts) and in the United States (by the Modern Library) were rather better, and the two-volume collection by Philip Foner (published in the United States in 1945) was far better. It is really a great pity that the one publisher in this country which could have easily produced a decent edition of Paine's works has made such a mess of the job. As a result, one of the greatest political writers this country has ever produced is still not read as he deserves. And we are the losers.

NW

## First Know Your Enemy: The Emancipation of the Working Class is the Task of the Working Class Themselves Alone

A. Revan

SPLAT Collective, Birmingham  
£1 ('£25 to middle class'), 44pp.

I'M AMAZED at the effort and dedication that has gone into putting out what is obviously a one-person effort, but wonder is this really worthwhile. After all, yer average 'worker' won't even see let alone buy this pamphlet, even at £1, and even if s/he did would probably not understand much of it. It's not a simple explanation of the exploitative and oppressive system of world capitalism, nor a plan for its overthrow. Some parts of the booklet are good and even worth propagating, such as on education and third-world aid, but other parts are pretty crappy. The tone is very strident, with lots of words like 'fucking' added for emphasis and a lot of underlining. A workmate who borrowed it to read said it was a bit extreme and she didn't like to be seen reading it on the bus.

Revan's argument is that the enemy of the workers is the 'dominant' (not ruling) class, by which the author means the 'middle class', who think they have a stake in the system because they administer it even if they are not the owning class. In some ways Revan is trying to revise Marxist theory of evolution of classes in terms of itself, identifying the 'bourgeoisie' (those between nobility and serfs) with executives, who s/he says are now the dominant class because of the decline of the nobility.

To me, and probably most people who accept Marxist historical analysis, this makes no sense. 'Bourgeoisie' is a definite term: the burghers, or free townsmen — artisans, merchants, guildsmen — whose social position in late feudalism gave them a specific economic role in turning labour into a saleable commodity and developing a market economy based on cash relationships. 'Middle class' is not the same thing, it's just a social distinction to define workers further up the hierarchy, not an economic class which has taken over from the old bourgeoisie.

Revan explains that the true division in society is between those who have power and those who don't, but ignores that ultimately power means control of resources (including our own labour-power), i.e. is economic power and as such is the prerogative of the owning class, which is still the ruling class whether they're the landowners of the House of Lords or the company directors of the Tory Party. The State ultimately exists to protect their property rights, not the muesli supply of TV personalities. The affluent 'middle classes' may boss the blue-collar workers about, but they do not own resources or the means of pro-

duction, even if they run them they do not control them. By focussing on these lackeys of the system, *First Know Your Enemy* deviates from the essential point of control of resources in favour of a new and, in my opinion, erroneous enemy.

Although this booklet is badly printed in parts and not very well laid-out, I would say it was worth a quid. At least it provokes thought, if only (unfortunately) the kind that leads to Class War style 'Bash the Rich' strolls through leafy Hampstead lanes.

Bjarne

## Listen, Anarchist!

Chaz Bufe

The Match! (75p Freedom Bookshop)

## Retort, 1942-1951

edited by Fred Woodworth

The Match! (£2 Freedom Bookshop)

*LISTEN, Anarchist!*, a short pamphlet by Chaz Bufe, first published in San Francisco in 1985 (and reviewed in *Freedom* in March 1986), has now been published in a new edition by *The Match!* in Tucson with a short afterword by the author.

Taking its title from Murray Bookchin's well-known polemic *Listen, Marxist!*, it consists of a powerful critique of various dangerous tendencies in the North American anarchist movement — marginalisation, hostility to work and workers, bias against organisation, romanticisation of violence, employment of lies and abuse in controversy, misuse of words and use of jargon, rejection of science, rationality and technology, and reversion to mysticism and superstition. The afterword comments on the reaction to this critique and emphasises the necessity of ethics in anarchist theory and practice. The detailed discussion relates to events in the United States and Canada, but although the situation in Britain is rather different and not too serious, it is easy to think of analogous examples of similar or equally dangerous tendencies here.

*Retort* was an excellent anarchist pacifist magazine published in the United States during and after the Second World War. Fifteen issues appeared from 1942 to 1951, all personally printed and distributed by the editor Holley Cantine and his companion Dachine Rainer. A two-volume academic reprint appeared in the United States during the revival of anarchist publishing 20 years ago (and is still available from the Greenwood Press at about £36). Now Fred Woodworth, editor of *The Match!*, has included in his Historic Reprint Series a 64-page 'special anthology issue' of *Retort*, together with two supplements — a four-page introduction by Woodworth, and 'An Epilogue in Fiction' in the form of a fantasy story by Cantine.

The anthology itself contains half-a-dozen items — an article on prison by Clif Bennet, a story by S G Bellow (Saul Bellow, no less), a London Letter by George Woodcock, a poem by Kenneth Rexroth, and various articles, reviews, editorials and notes by Cantine. Woodworth explains that he has reset the text because the original copies look rather faded, but he has recaptured the home-made look of *Retort* as well as could be hoped. The quality of thinking and writing is very high — though let down by Woodcock's tired letter dated Spring 1945 forecasting that the Labour Party would be 'eclipsed by a triumphant Toryism... for at least a decade' a few months before it won the largest majority it has known — and it is rather painful to consider how little progress has been made by anarchist journalism since the war.

MH

## Bonnot gang

I AM sorry that Richard Parry (Letters, August) has misinterpreted my review of his book *The Bonnot Gang* (July).

My praise wasn't 'occasional' or 'rather grudging', but fundamental and quite sincere; and my criticisms weren't 'many', but few and mostly minor. I didn't suggest that the book should have been an academic study, but stated with clear approval that it is a straightforward narrative. I mentioned the poor quality of the illustrations and the bibliography because they don't fulfil their function. I mentioned the defective editing not because a book should be 'edited to cut out the quiriness and idiosyncracies of a new author's developing style' but because it wasn't as good as usual and because a valuable book shouldn't be marred by unnecessary obscurities or inaccuracies (like misspelling 'idiosyncrasy').

Of course I agree that anarchist publishers 'should speak out of the ghetto of the converted to a wider audience' and that anarchist publications should be 'readable, reliable and discursive on the one hand, and cheap and well-produced on the other'; this is precisely why I praised the book and the publisher in this case. However, I am not sure that what both he and I want is true of all the publications of all the publishers he mentions, or that they are actually the 'most influential and best-selling publishers at present' — surely the Freedom Press also belongs in this class. But my review was not any kind of sectarian attack on either a publisher or a book. I hope that we may all appreciate the various contributions of various publishers to the common cause of anarchism without being too critical, or not critical enough, of any particular item.

NW

PS I am not Nicholas.