

Our first centenary

Freedom and Freedom Press celebrate their first centenary, looking forward with a few backward glances.

Short histories of *Freedom* have been published elsewhere (for instance in *Freedom* January 1986 and *Peace Diary* 1986). Rather than merely repeat or revise this material, we have thought it useful to include some fresh historical items. There are articles by Heiner Becker, Nicolas Walter and Vernon Richards, largely based on unpublished material preserved in the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, and on personal recollection, about the places and people of Freedom Press, including short biographies of some of the less well-remembered people who were important to the paper.

Other contributions were invited by the editors of *Freedom*, who sought to embrace the widest range of contemporary anarchist opinions, styles, and subjects. Not all who were invited responded, but we hope the compilation is fairly representative, at least of British anarchism in 1986.



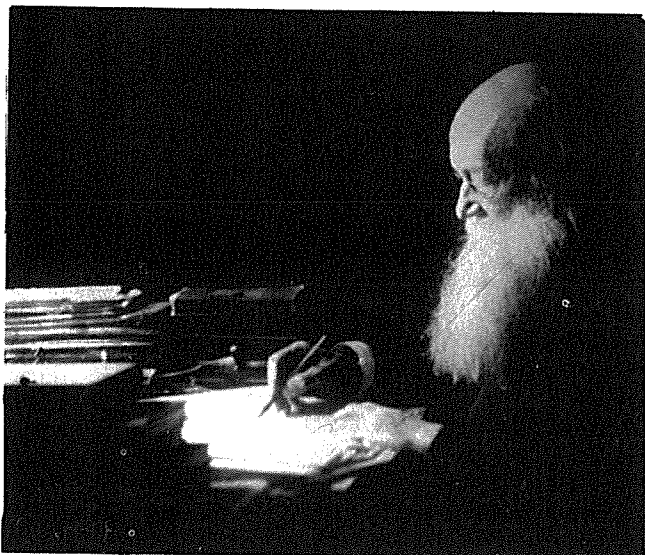
Charlotte Wilson talking to G B Shaw
Fabian Summer School, Penlee 1908

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Freedom: people and places

Historians of anarchism — as of everything else — generally concentrate on the easy things: the big names and the great events, the organisations and periodicals which last for a long time, the pamphlets and books which can be found in libraries. Only rarely do they attempt the more difficult — and often more revealing — task of studying the day-by-day down-to-earth activity of our movement. Elsewhere we have described some of our own big names from the past century; here we have decided to do something else — to tell the story of some of the places we have worked in and some of the people who have worked for us. First is a historical account of our first half-century; then there are personal accounts of our printers and premises during our second half-century.



Peter Kropotkin

Freedom of course began in 1886; but the story really begins with *The Anarchist* and the 'English Anarchist Circle', from which *Freedom* and the Freedom Group derived. Henry Seymour, who had been first a secularist and then an anarchist in Tunbridge Wells, 'came to London in the early part of 1885, opened a printing office, called it the International Publishing Company, and learnt "comping" from a boy I engaged who had previously worked in a printing office, and between us (I hadn't much spare cash) he and I managed to set up and machine... *The Anarchist*'. The premises were at 35 Newington Green Road, Stoke Newington, a place which — as its owner Tom Shore later recalled — 'was for years a centre for reformers and conspirators, where plots and schemes could be discussed in the open under a 200-year-old mulberry tree'. (He didn't mention that he had himself been involved for a time, producing two issues of a soon forgotten and now untraceable paper called *Dynamiter*.)

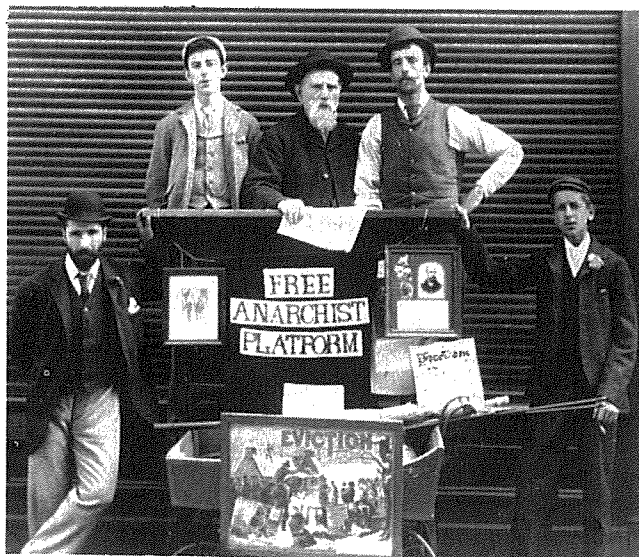
Here *The Anarchist* was produced from March 1885, and here met the little group around it which became the English Anarchist Circle. But during the summer of 1886 they separated from Seymour and his paper and decided to produce *Freedom* instead. When *Freedom* started in October 1886 (the first issue actually appearing in mid-September), they had no premises or printer of their own. They were able to use a room in the premises of the Freethought Publishing Company in Bouverie Street, off Fleet Street, 'through the kindness of Mrs Besant' (Annie Besant, a colleague of Charlotte

Wilson in the Fabian Society and of Charles Bradlaugh in the freethought movement). It was printed (with *The Commonweal*, until June 1888) at the Socialist League printing office in Farringdon Road 'by the permission of William Morris' (the leading figure in the League).

However, after 17 months *Freedom* had to leave Bouverie Street, mainly because, after the Chicago hangings and the very 'lively' indignation meetings in London which the Freedom Group had organised with the Socialist League and the Social Democratic Federation, Bradlaugh refused to have anarchists on his premises any longer, and partly also because the space now was needed for Annie Besant's own paper *The Link*. So from February 1888 it took up quarters with Thomas Bolas, 'the good-hearted editor' of *The Socialist* (previously *The Leaflet Newspaper*), at the Leaflet Press in Cursitor Street, also off Fleet Street. (Tom Bolas had been for years the editor of the *Photographic News*, until he was regarded as too critical of the commercial interests of some of the most extensive advertisers, and in 1889-1890 he edited and published *The Photographic Review*; 'a slender, tall, bearded man, serious, obliging, unobtrusive, he went his own way, and was regarded as a crank of a milder nature', as Max Nettlau described him 50 years later. For a while *Freedom* was also printed on the Leaflet Press.

In July 1888 Thomas Binning (who had run the Socialist League printing office) took over the production of *Freedom*, at his Labour Union Printery in Pentonville Road, which in April 1889 moved to Grays Inn Road and became the Labour Press Agency, and then in May the Labour Press Ltd Co-operative Society, and in January 1890 moved again to Chancery Lane. (Incidentally, the building in Grays Inn Road also housed the Central Democratic Club, where members of the Freedom Group occasionally lectured.) *Freedom* stayed with Binning until January 1891, and had its editorial offices on his premises from April 1889 until January 1891.

In August 1889, some type was bought and the single-sheet supplement, which from then on was occasionally issued with the paper, was set up by the 'voluntary labour' of members of the Freedom Group (mainly by William Wess). From October 1890 on the supplement was 'institutionalised', and the size

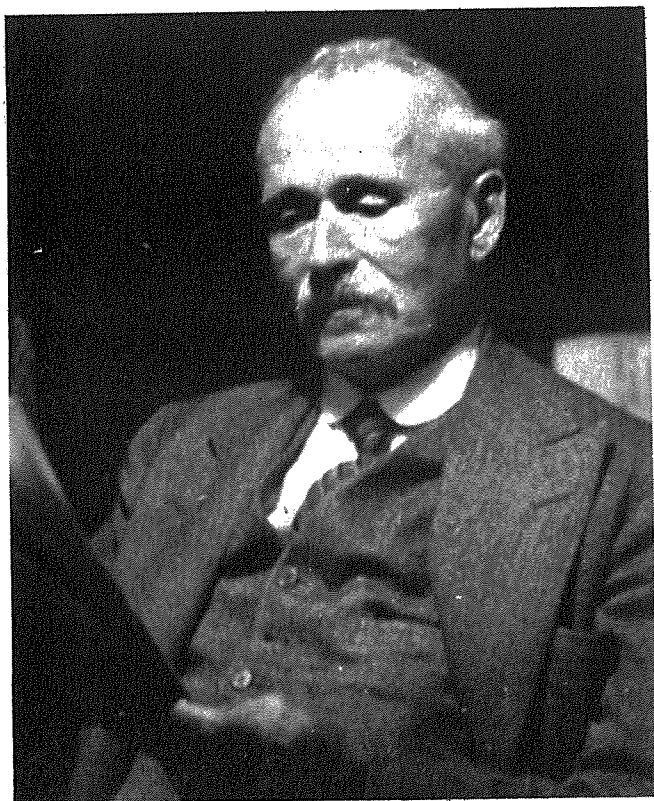


Street platform about 1907

Ted Leggatt (right), Sam Mainwairing (centre)

permanently doubled from February 1891. Some of the type was seized by brokers in January 1891, when Binning went bankrupt.

In January 1891 the office and type were moved to the premises of the New Fellowship Press in Newington Green Road, Stoke Newington, close to Seymour's old address; the manager of the *Freedom* office became William Wess. The landlord of the place, however, evidently not 'a fellow', in August 1892 seized the assets of the New Fellowship Press. To avoid losing all of *Freedom's* own type and materials, Wess made good use of his often lamented habit of working only at night, and secretly transported everything to the house of an old friend of Johann Most, Hermann Stenzleit. (Stenzleit had been active as a Social Democrat in Berlin in the 1870s, had like Most come to London in 1878, and had been among the most active members of the Communist Working Men's Club in Rose Street which had played such an important role in reviving the Socialist movement around 1880.) In Stenzleit's house, in Grafton Street, Fitzroy Square, 'under the roof', *Freedom* then was published for a time, while Charlotte Wilson used as editorial office and publisher's address Frank and Lena Hyde's house in Kentish Town Road. The Hydies had taken an active part in the production and particularly distribution of *Freedom* from the beginning, and they were to continue until sometime after 1905.



William Wess

In February 1893 *Freedom* took up its quarters with Agnes Henry at her house in St Augustine's Road, Camden Town, where Wess also moved with the type. *Freedom* had a room in the basement, which was very damp, impairing Wess' health. The composing there was therefore given up in March 1894, the type stored at Charlotte Wilson's house on Hampstead Heath, and henceforth the publication done first in St John Street and then in Old Street, both in Clerkenwell. The editorial offices remained in St Augustine's Road until January 1895, when Charlotte Wilson withdrew and *Freedom* was stopped for three months.

When printing was restarted in April it was taken over by Tom Cantwell in Judd Street, St Pancras (premises taken over in 1896 by Will Banham and the Associated Anarchists for the production of *The Alarm*); it was a very small building, described as a 'glass house', half of which *Freedom* rented for 3s 6d a week. Thomas Cantwell (1864-1906), a basket-maker, had already been active in the Socialist League where he learnt to set type and eventually became a printer. In 1893 he produced the last issues of the original series of *The Commonweal*, and he also produced the new series during 1893-94 (except when he was imprisoned for six months for seditious libel in 1893). In Spring 1895, at the invitation of Alfred Marsh, he joined the Freedom Group, together with John Turner and Joseph Presburg, to reinforce the 'weakened ranks', and mainly to relieve William Wess, who by then wanted to start a more 'professional' career and no longer work only for the movement. Cantwell was with occasional interruptions, when other people were available, in charge of the *Freedom* printing office from 1895 to 1902.



Varlaam Cherkov

The editorial and publishing address was provided by John Turner at his Socialist Co-operative Federation shop, 7 Lambs Conduit Street from 1895 to 1898 — officially at least, for in practice things changed considerably in the course of 1896, when events took place that were eventually to provide *Freedom* with a stable home for thirty years. In Spring 1896 Olivia Rossetti (a niece of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti), decided to withdraw from active work in the movement and to sell all the printing equipment of *The Torch*, which she had started in 1891 with her younger sister Helen and her brother Arthur. The first issues were handwritten in three copies, then a number of issues were hectographed from Summer 1891 to the end of 1892. Mr Belcher, the husband of the housekeeper of their father, William Michael Rossetti, taught them printing, and from January to September 1893 they published nine issues of a printed series, which still had a very limited distribution. So far they had produced the paper in their father's house in St Edmund's Terrace, Regent's Park. Now he ordered the removal of a press

that produced such outrageous material, and from June 1894 they published a new printed series of *The Torch* in various premises. In December 1894 they finally found a landlord willing to accept anarchists for longer than a couple of months, and they moved in January 1895 to 127 Ossulston Street, Somers Town, already described in 1896 as 'the well-known building in Ossulston Street'.

In *A Girl Among the Anarchists*, the novel she produced in 1903 under the name Isabel Meredith, Helen Rossetti left a description of the place and the 'guardian angel', Mrs Upchurch ('Mrs Wattles'), the owner of the adjacent shop, that contemporaries found very fitting:

Kosinski at last came to the rescue... 'If you like we might go and look at a workshop I have heard of and which might suit. Some German comrades rented it for some time; I believe they used it as a club-room, but I dare say it would answer your purpose.'... We stopped in front of a little green-grocer's shop in a side street.... 'The place I mean is behind here,' explained Kosinski; 'the woman in the shop lets it; we will go in and speak with her.'... She turned out to be as loquacious as she was bulky, a fair specimen of the good-natured cockney gossip, evidently fond of the convivial glass, not over-choice in her language, the creature of her surroundings, which were not of the sweetest, but withal warm-hearted and sympathetic, with that inner hatred of the police common to all who belong to the coster class, and able to stand up for her rights, if necessary, both with her tongue and her fists. She showed us over a damp, ill-lighted basement shop, in a corner of which was a ladder leading to a large, light shop, which seemed well suited to our purpose....

'Kosinski' was a combination of Max Nettlau and F S Paul. (The actual landlord was Mr Quantrell.) Here *The*



Street doors to 125, 127 and 129 Ossulston Street

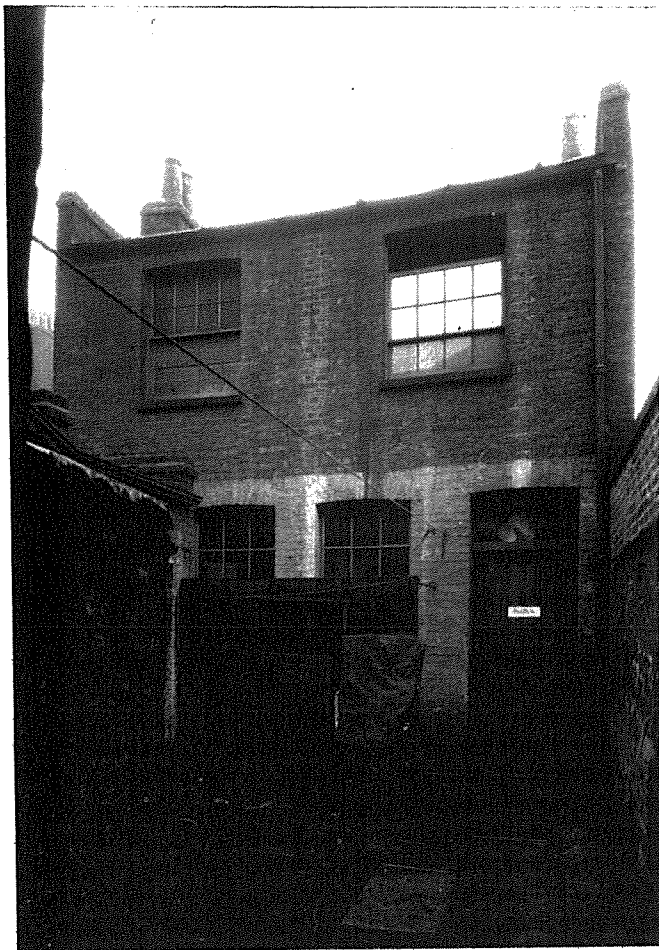
Torch (from October 1895 on *The Torch of Anarchy*) was produced, as were a number of other publications, like four pamphlets forming the Torch Library (the first three of which later were reproduced as the Freedom Library), a number of Italian pamphlets and papers (for example Malatesta's *L'anarchia* and *Fra contadini* and most of Pietro Gori's poems), and some French publications of Emile Pouget.

All this was well known to Nettlau, and when early in March 1896 he heard that Olivia Rossetti intended to dispose of the building and the equipment, he immediately approached her with the proposal to buy everything 'for the benefit of the movement'. She eventually agreed, and so he provided half of the required £20 and, as he did not want to be the sole owner, a close friend of his and Kropotkin, Bernhard Kampffmeyer, the other half, and both also guaranteed a substantial part of the rent. In April 1896 Cantwell moved with all the original *Freedom* type from Judd Street to Ossulston Street, which, since all other papers and people involved gave up in the course of the next year, soon became *Freedom's* headquarters alone. The equipment that came from *The Torch* included the surviving printing equipment of the Socialist League and *Commonweal* printing office — among which was an already legendary handpress, which had served on Johann Most's *Freiheit*, had eventually been acquired by Joseph Lane's Revolutionary Committee for their leaflet propaganda, then served *Freedom* for the next 30 years, and in 1928 was bought by Lilian Wolfe for Whiteway Colony, to provide printing lessons for the Whiteway children.

The whole-set-up was described several times by Harry Kelly, an American member of the Freedom Group between 1898 and 1904:

Notwithstanding that *Freedom* advocates the most modern of social theories, there is an old world atmosphere about the office and an artistic charm to the people who conduct the paper. A small two-storey building situated in a back yard, in one of the poorest neighborhoods of London, houses it.... The building had two rooms, one upstairs for the composing room, and one downstairs, the press room. The old press was of what we call here the 'Oscillator' type, and its vintage at that time was some 75 or 80 years. Here each month gathered Marsh, the musician; Turner, the Trade Union organiser; Tcherkesoff, the literary man; Nettlau, the philologist; Tchaikovsky, Miss Davies, Mary Krimont, and myself.... (Cantwell and I were the only simon-pure workingmen in the group).... The press had neither power nor automatic sheet delivery, so it required three of us to operate it. Two or three of the men alternated in turning the crank, I fed the press, and Miss Davies, wearing always black gloves, hat and veil, took the sheets off as they were printed.... With her face with its fresh color and her grey hair she looked the picture of an old master.... We often regaled ourselves with kippers and tea after getting off a forme of four pages, and the others had at least two hours' rest while the writer made the second forme ready.... Sometimes when the men grew tired or short of wind, a navvy was stopped in the street and hired to turn the crank, and we soothed our consciences by paying him ninepence an hour instead of the dockers' 'tanner' (sixpence). Mary's job was to prepare tea for us. It was under such

conditions as these that the paper was printed, and it was there that many of Kropotkin's best theoretical articles on Anarchism appeared...



127 Ossulston Street inner court 1927
(the street door of 127 gave entrance only to a short passage between 125 and 129)

Freedom was printed in Ossulston Street from April 1896 onwards, but the address appeared only in December 1897 for matters concerning the management of the paper, and from September 1898 also as editorial address. By this time the group had found, at least for a while, also a substitute or 'supplement' for Cantwell (who had proved very unreliable and rarely produced anything on time, apart from the fact that he had a record of quarrelling with everybody), a young Belgian named F Henneghien, who now for some two years ran the printing business also on a commercial base, as the Cosmopolitan Printery. The editor, Marsh, had been relieved from some of his duties between June 1896 and March 1897 by a 'Secretary' in the person of Joseph Presburg, a young insurance agent who had already as a youth been active in the Socialist League and then in the Commonweal Group, and who with Max Nettlau organised the anarchist protest meetings around the International Socialist Congress in London in 1896, and again with Nettlau also all the activities of the Spanish Atrocities Committee in 1897. (In 1899 he wanted to go to South Africa to fight on the side of the Boers, but failed to obtain a visa; he died in a road accident early in 1901.)

When Henneghien left Ossulston Street in 1900, Cantwell was again solely responsible, only occasionally helped by an old compositor named Mr Boyd (who was not an anarchist). Cantwell himself had a heart complaint at least since 1894, and on Christmas Day

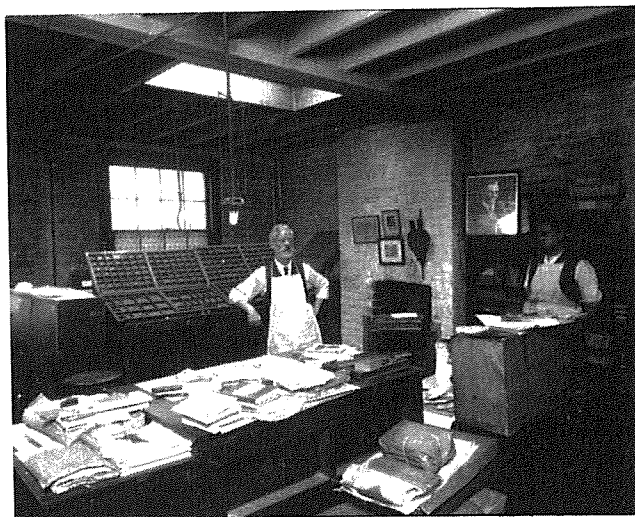
1902 'when Tcherkesoff visited the office he found him lying with his head in the ashes of the fireplace, all but dead. He recovered and lived several years afterwards, but was never able to work and was never again the same man'. Harry Kelly and many others 'supposed at the time it would be impossible to find another man in the whole of London to fill Cantwell's place, and yet, strange to say, when the occasion demanded it the man was there in Thomas Keell'. Keell soon became responsible for the whole office, his name replaced that of John Turner as responsible publisher in October 1907, and he managed *Freedom* for another 20 years.

Keell printed *Freedom* at Ossulston Street until 29 July 1916, when 'the authorities made another gallant attack on our offices', the second of four raids during the First World War.

This time *Freedom* was already in process of printing, nearly whole of this issue having been taken off the machine when the State burglars walked in. They took possession of the issues just printed, also posters; the total booty carted away to Scotland Yard included the forme, one case of type... They then dismantled the machine, taking with them the vital parts.

But *Freedom* was not suppressed, as several other anarchist papers were. It was printed for 3½ years by the Independent Labour Party at the Blackfriars Press. From April 1920 it was again printed in London, for two months by the Utopia Press in Worship Street, Finsbury, then by Keell again from June 1920 until December 1926. At the end of 1926 Keell officially retired to draw his pension, and the printing was then again done by the Utopia Press. The *Freedom* office remained in Ossulston Street until in 1927 the London County Council acquired the whole area with the intention of redeveloping it, and *Freedom* finally had to leave in September 1928. The *Freedom* Press moved with Keell to Whiteway Colony near Stroud, where Lilian Wolfe had offered a shed to store literature and other materials of *Freedom* Press. Whiteway Colony was the publishing address from October 1928 first for the *Freedom Bulletin*, and then from December 1936 for *Spain and the World* and even after Keell's death for the first issue of *War Commentary* in November 1939. The printing of all fifteen issues of the *Bulletin* was done by the Workers' Friend printing set-up, Emmanuel Michaels and B Derzanski being responsible, though from issue 4 the Stepney Press is given in the imprint. But in 1936, of course, a new phase had begun.

HB & NW



Tom Keell and Percy Meachem
inside 127 Ossulston Street 1927

The Year 1886

The year *Freedom* was born, Augustus John was eight years old, Picasso was five, Bertie Russell and Willie Maugham were twelve years old and the hero of Sidney Street, Tonypandy and the Dardanelles was eleven years old. Viewed from this perspective it would seem history is a process of growth, but viewed from 1886 it seems that history repeats itself or rather 'things change only to remain the same'.

The year 1886 was a stormy year by many standards. England had just gone through a General election. The Irish were still very troublesome. There was a slump on, the Americans had two million unemployed in 1885. Technologically the world was on the march. The internal combustion engine was invented in 1885, the Canadian Pacific railway was completed.

The election of 1885 was marked by the scandal of the SDF's acceptance of 'Tory gold' to put candidates in the field to defeat the Liberals. This, in addition to the damage to their reputation did them no electoral good, for even in Kennington, London (then a working-class suburb) the SDF only secured thirty-two votes.

The new parliament introduced the first Lib-Lab members with a proportion of coal-miners. Bradlaugh, the free-thinker was finally allowed to take his seat in the new Parliament, he had been elected for Northampton in 1880, 1881, 1882 and 1884 but on each occasion the House of Commons refused to admit him since he would not take an oath. Finally at his election in 1885 he was allowed to take his seat in 1886 without taking an oath.

The year was marked by frequent riots and bomb outrages. Much of this was the work of the Irish Nationalists and Sinn Feiners who were very active at this time. The ingenious Captain Schaack of the Chicago police (or more likely his ghost writer) attributes lists of Fenian bomb plots to the anarchists.

It is true that some of the anarchists were in the midst of their violent phase (c. 1878-1901) but no government was ever out of a violent phase, certainly not in 1886.

On January 14th 'a foreign socialist plot against capitalism' was discovered in Chicago. This was an ominous sign.

On that day W T Stead, the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* was released from prison. He had been sentenced for the 'direct action' of proving that it was possible to procure a girl for prostitution.

On the 8th February, the SDF arranged a meeting in Trafalgar Square. At the same time the Fair Trade Movement (a Tory organisation) arranged a meeting same time same place. The police objected, as police will, but had then no power to ban the meetings as Trafalgar Square was then a public place, and not the province of the Ministry of Works.

Hyndman, Burns and Champion spoke for the SDF and the meeting passed off quietly enough until the SDF contingent broke up and marched down Pall Mall to Hyde Park. On the way, club windows were smashed, shop windows were broken and shops looted. (The three speakers were arrested for sedition and were later acquitted.)

On March 5th an Anarchist threw a stink bomb into the Paris Bourse.

About this time Benjamin Tucker, the editor of *Liberty*, attacked Johann Most the New York editor of *Freiheit*, the German-language anarchist paper, for his support (or at least), his non-repudiation of the New York anarchists' alleged complicity in a series of

arsonical fires (some fatal) which had been engineered in order to defraud insurance companies. Ironically enough, Tucker commended Justus Schwab (whose brother Michael Schwab, was sentenced in the Haymarket case) for his breakaway from Most. It was Most's inflammatory *The Art of Revolutionary Warfare* (1885) that helped the Chicago prosecution.

On April 2nd there were riots in Milan. On April 8th events in the USA took a more violent turn; strikers, members of the Knights of Labour, blockaded the railroad at Fort Worth, Texas.

The wide unrest due to unemployment led the unions to desperate revolutionary measures. A gigantic campaign was launched for...the eight-hour day. This was the utopian dream for which (indirectly) the Chicago tragedy was acted out.

May 1st was the day on which labour meetings have habitually been held. August Spies, a German-speaking journalist on the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, a Chicago anarchist paper, was speaking at a strike-meeting when firing broke out at the McCormick reaper works. When Spies arrived at the factory he discovered that in a battle between Pinkerton strike-breakers aided by police against strikers, five strikers had been killed (and four policemen). Witnessing the police violence incited Spies to write an inflammatory editorial and leaflet pleading for 'Revenge' in the melodramatic high-flown prose style affected by anarchist journalists at that time — and probably called for. A meeting was organised for May 4th in the Haymarket.

On May 4th the meeting was held. It passed off quietly. It seems to have been a rather dull meeting and Carter Harrison the Mayor popped in, saw it was quiet and trotted off on his horse to tell Captain Bonfield who was waiting, with police in readiness, that he could go home. Fielden, who was speaking, was coming to the same conclusion, for it looked like rain. To his surprise and horror he saw Captain Bonfield who for some unexplained reason had marched with his squad of police up to the meeting. Fielden turned to the menacing ranks of police. The police captain said:

'In the name of the people of the State of Illinois I command this meeting immediately and peaceably to disperse...'

'Why, captain?' Fielden said, 'this is a peaceable meeting.'

At this point a whizzing object hurtled from the crowd into the police, a blinding explosion shook the street and sixty-seven policemen were killed and wounded. The remaining police fired, into the crowd and one was killed and several wounded.

The police of Chicago organised raids, and within days ten men, Spies, Schwab, Fischer, Fielden, Engel, Lingg, Neebe, Parsons, Schaubelt and Seliger were indicted for the 'conspiracy'. Parsons and Schaubelt escaped arrest and Seliger turned State's evidence.

With some vague symbolic undertones the House of Commons was closed on May 27th; 'owing to defective sanitary arrangements', the stench in the House of Commons was too bad even for politicians.

At the Hague on June 9th, a meeting was held to protest against the prosecution of Domela Nieuwenhuis (later to become an anarchist) for high treason. The police cleared the hall.

The right of eel-snatching was withdrawn from fishermen at Amsterdam and on July 26th rioting broke out and twenty-five people were shot, and forty police

were wounded. The military were called in.

A Coney Island pleasure steamer was discovered on July 27th to have a bomb (planted by Social Revolutionaries) on board.

On August 20th, after a brief, corrupt, biased trial, Spies, Schwab, Fischer, Fielden, Engel, Lingg and Parsons were sentenced to death for the Haymarket 'plot'. (Parsons gave himself up to the court during the hearing). Neebe was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment, Schaubelt had escaped arrest and Seliger, having turned State's evidence, was released.

In Madrid, September 20th, there was a Republican rising.

With masterly timing and the Chicago anarchists safely in jail, the Statue of Liberty was finished on October 28th.

The year was coming to a close but, as now, evidence was not lacking that enlightenment was only a veneer. At Blois in France, two peasants were on trial on November 22nd for the murder of a woman they believed to be a witch.

On December 18th, a ray of hope came from Ireland. Due to boycotts and the activities of Sinn Feiners and Land Leaguers, the process servers and bailiffs in King's County refused to serve writs.

This year of gloom lightened only by the birth of *Freedom*, closed on the same note. A publican at Clapham shot dead a carol singer on December 25th.

Jack Robinson

Contributed by Mary Canipa. From *Freedom* 18 November 1961. Jack died 20 March 1983.

Charlotte Wilson 1854-1944

Charlotte Wilson was the main founder and the first editor and publisher of *Freedom*, and the leading figure in the Freedom Group from 1886 to 1895.

Charlotte Mary Martin was born on 6 May 1854 at Kemerton, a village near Tewkesbury on the Gloucestershire-Worcestershire border. She was the only child of Robert Spencer Martin, a doctor and surgeon from a prominent local family, and of Clementina Susannah Davies, from a prosperous commercial and clerical family. She received the best education then available to girls, going to Cheltenham Ladies College and then to Cambridge University, where from 1873 to 1874 she attended the new institution at Merton Hall which later became Newnham College (not, as has often been said, Girton College). She took the Higher Local Examination (roughly equivalent to the later GCE Advanced Level) at a time when women couldn't take university examinations or degrees at Cambridge.

In 1876 she married Arthur Wilson (a distant cousin who was born in 1847, went to Wadham College, Oxford, and became a stockbroker in 1872), and they lived at first in Hampstead. After a process of political development which remains obscure, she became a socialist and then an anarchist, and at the end of 1885 they adopted the fashionable simple life by moving to a cottage in what was then open country at North End on the edge of Hampstead Heath.

Charlotte Wilson's first known publication was a letter about women workers which appeared in March 1884 in *Justice*, the paper of the Democratic Federation (later the Social Democratic Federation). It isn't known whether she was ever a member of the SDF, but in November-December 1884 *Justice* published a series of articles on anarchism written by her and signed 'An English Anarchist'. This was one of the first English-language expositions of anarchist communism at a time when virtually none of Kropotkin's writings had appeared in English. (Kropotkin himself was then in prison in France, and she had been much impressed by his trial at Lyon in January 1883.)

In October 1884 she joined the Fabian Society, which had been formed in January 1884 as a group of progressive intellectuals with ambitious ideas but no particular line, and she was the only woman elected to its first executive in December 1884. Her fellow-members included such people as Annie Besant, Hubert Bland, Sydney Olivier, Bernard Shaw, Graham Wallas, and Sidney Webb, and she had no difficulty in holding

her own with them. In the later memoirs of early Fabians she is remembered as a hostess, like Edith Nesbit, but she was in fact a leading member of the society for a couple of years.



Charlotte Martin in 1874

Also in October 1884 she formed a study group which met at her house to read and discuss the work of Continental socialists such as Marx and Proudhon (which was not then available in English) and the history of the international labour movement, and which provided much of the early philosophical and factual background for the lectures and pamphlets which became the main Fabian contribution to socialist propaganda. But her particular contribution was to become the leader of an anarchist fraction within the Fabian Society. As Shaw put it with his customary exaggeration in the first of his unreliable histories of the society, when she joined 'a sort of influenza of Anarchism soon spread through the Society' (*The Fabian Society: What It Has Done and How It Has Done It*, 1892). In fact the fraction didn't have much influence, and it didn't last long, but for a time it was significant. Her own part was summarised in three essays published during 1886 — 'Social Democracy and Anarchism', a paper given to the Fabian Society during 1885 and

published in the first issue of *Practical Socialist*, the short-lived paper of the Fabian Society, in January 1886; 'The Principles and Aims of Anarchists', a paper given to the London Dialectical Society in June 1886 and published in one of the last issues of *Present Day*, a short-lived secularist paper, in July 1886; and 'Anarchism', the second part of a pamphlet called *What Socialism Is*, the fourth Fabian tract, published in 1886.

On 17 September 1886 the Fabian Society organised a meeting at Anderton's Hotel in Fleet Street, where the representatives of the various socialist organisations in London debated the question of forming an orthodox political party on the Continental model. A motion to this effect was proposed by Annie Besant and seconded by Hubert Bland. William Morris proposed and Charlotte Wilson seconded the following amendment:

But whereas the first duty of Socialists is to educate people to understand what their present position is and what the future might be, and to keep the principles of socialism steadily before them; and whereas no Parliamentary party can exist without compromise and concession, which would hinder that education and obscure those principles: it would be a false step for Socialists to attempt to take part in the Parliamentary contest.

The parliamentarians defeated the anti-parliamentarians by a two-to-one majority, and the Fabian Society — and the bulk of the British socialist movement — was set on the course which it has followed ever since. Charlotte Wilson resigned from the Fabian executive in April 1887, and took no active part in the society for twenty years, though she maintained her membership.

By that time she had anyway committed herself entirely to the anarchist movement. She was closely involved in the first English-language anarchist paper, Henry Seymour's *The Anarchist*, which appeared from March 1885. She helped to start it, got Bernard Shaw to write for it, contributed money and material to it for more than a year, and became a leading member of the group which was established around it. In January 1886 Kropotkin was released from prison in France, and in March he settled in England, partly as the result of an invitation from Charlotte Wilson's group. For a time the group continued to work with Seymour, and the April and May issues of *The Anarchist* were produced jointly as a journal of anarchist communism. But the experiment failed, *The Anarchist* reverted to individualism in June, and the group decided to start a new anarchist paper on the model of Kropotkin's own paper *Le Révolté* (which started in Geneva in 1879, moved to Paris in 1885, and as *La Révolte* and *Les Temps Nouveaux* remained the leading French anarchist paper until the First World War).

The first issue of *Freedom* appeared in October 1886, just after the Anderton's meeting, and the group eventually became the Freedom Press, which for a century has remained the main publisher of anarchist literature in Britain. The most prominent member of the group was Kropotkin, but Charlotte Wilson was the organiser of the group, the editor and publisher of *Freedom*, and its main supporter and contributor. She was normally responsible for the editorial article in each issue and most of the political and international notes, but she contributed few signed articles, signing herself austere as 'C.M.W.' or 'C.M. Wilson'. The most important of these was a series on 'The Revolt of the English Workers in the XIX Century' (June–September 1889). For a few years she was also active as a lecturer and speaker at various kinds of meetings all over the country.

In January 1889 *Freedom* was temporarily suspended because of her illness, and when it was resumed in March 1889 it was edited by James Blackwell with the help of 'a committee of workmen'. She took over again in February 1891 when Blackwell left, but in January 1895 the paper was temporarily suspended again because of illness in her family. This time she resigned permanently as both editor and publisher of *Freedom*, and she ceased to take an active part in the group, though she kept in touch and continued to contribute money and material until 1901. As well as *Freedom* itself, she helped to produce a series of Freedom Pamphlets from 1889 onwards, editing and translating some and also writing *Anarchism and Outrage* (a reprint of the *Freedom* editorial of December 1893).

Charlotte Wilson was not involved in left-wing politics during the next decade, during which both her parents died (her father in 1896 and her mother in 1903), and when she did resume political activity she returned not to the anarchists but to the Fabians. In 1906 she became involved in the society again, and in 1908, at the time of the rise of the militant campaign for women's suffrage, she was the main founder of the Fabian Women's Group, which met at her home in St John's Wood, and she was its first secretary and most active member until she resigned because of illness in 1916. She was again a member of the Fabian executive from 1911 until 1914. She also joined the Independent Labour Party and several other parliamentary organisations.

Charlotte Wilson took no further part on politics after the First World War. Arthur Wilson died in 1932, and she was looked after until her death by Gerald Hankin, a distant cousin of theirs. They went to the United States, and she died in an old people's home at Irvington-on-Hudson on 28 April 1944, a few days before her ninetieth birthday.

For a decade Charlotte Wilson was the best-known native anarchist in Britain. Her work as a writer and speaker was distinguished by reticence, reliability and respectability; she always remained very much an intellectual, and very much in the background. She steered her way between the militants and the moderates in the anarchist movement, but she was definitely a communist rather than an individualist, and she later moved towards parliamentary socialism. Her particular contribution to the work of the Freedom Press was to set it up and to set it on its way as a serious publishing organisation with a solid basis, providing a model which it has followed ever since.

Anarchism and Outrage was reprinted in 1909, at the time of the judicial murder of Francisco Ferrer in Spain. Fabian Tract 4 was never reprinted by the Fabian Society, but Charlotte Wilson's contribution was reprinted as the first Free Commune pamphlet in 1900 and has occasionally been reprinted by the anarchist press since then. All three 1886 essays were reprinted as *Three Essays on Anarchism* (Cienfuegos Press 1979, Drowned Rat 1985) with an introduction by Nicolas Walter.

References to Charlotte Wilson appear in letters, memoirs or biographies of Peter Kropotkin, William Morris, Edith Nesbit, Sydney Olivier, Henry Seymour, Bernard Shaw, and Sidney Webb; in accounts of the Fabian Society by Edward Pease, Anne Fremantle, Margaret Cole, A M McBriar, Willard Wolfe, and Norman and Jean MacKenzie; and in accounts of British anarchism by Max Nettlau, George Woodcock, John Quail, and Hermia Oliver. There is an unpublished biography by Hermia Oliver. NW

Alfred Marsh 1858-1914

After Charlotte Wilson resigned the editorship in January, 1895, *Freedom* ceased publication for three months and was revived in May mainly through the efforts of Alfred Marsh, who for the next nearly 20 years ensured the survival of the paper.

Alfred Marsh was born in Clerkenwell on 3 November 1858; his mother died early, and his father, a close personal friend of George Jacob Holyoake, married Holyoake's daughter. Thereby young Alfred had, as he was to put it later, 'the good fortune to enter life with a secularist education,' and had 'the advantage to read and hear discussed the principles of Free Thought from early childhood on.' 'It is great luck to start one's life with a mind free of theological dogmas and the fogs of superstition.' Not surprising in a secularist household of the time, he was much influenced by the writings of Robert Owen and even more by those of Dr. Henry Travis.

In about 1883 he came across a copy of Bakunin's *God and the State*, which 'enormously impressed me by the clear, intrepid and convincing logic with which he dissected our political and social institutions.' Around this time he broke with his father who, convinced freethinker as he was, would not forgive his son marrying one of the girls from his brush factory. From then on till his father's death more than twenty years later Alfred Marsh had to live (and sometimes supported *Freedom* to a considerable extent) from his meagre earnings as a violinist (the fiddle has a long tradition in the Freedom Group...). As John Turner (who certainly did not suffer the same deficiency) deplored later: 'He was just as modest about his musical talents as everything else. It was a pity he had not more confidence, for many with less ability secured popular favour and financial success where he remained obscure.'

He joined the Social Democratic Federation in 1886, but soon left again appalled by the intrigues of the different cliques and the personal ambitions of certain individuals in the SDF. Much impressed by the Haymarket affair and the speeches of the Haymarket defendants, he became a convinced Anarchist-Communist. When in February 1888, the first series of Freedom Discussion Meetings started, he was among the regular attendants, and in September read a paper on 'Work and Social Utility', subsequently his first (identifiable) article in *Freedom* (October 1888). He very soon became identified with the Freedom Group, and from now on contributed regularly to the paper, mostly anonymously (e.g. 'Anarchism and Organisation', March 1889), pseudonymously (e.g. as DIABOL., 'Anarchy, Communism, and Competition', July 1891), or signed M. (Individual or Common Property', October 1890). When *Freedom* ceased publication in January 1895, he took the initiative to get it re-started in May and on advice of *Freedom's* compositor, William Wess, asked the former members of the Commonweal Group, John Turner, Tom Cantwell, and Joseph Presburg to join the Freedom Group. It was mainly he who was responsible for the paper's survival in the following very difficult years for anarchism in Britain, especially during the Jingo reaction of 1899-1902, the time of the Boer Wars.

In 1907 he edited the first eight numbers of the syndicalist paper published by Freedom Press, the *Voice of Labour*. He believed strongly in the efficiency of cheap literature, and when after the death of his father he

inherited some money, he ensured the publication of the first complete edition of Bakunin's *God and the State*, and provided the means for reprinting the whole range of Freedom Pamphlets, not to mention a whole series of propaganda leaflets, in 1909. Early in 1910, already in very poor health, he made with his wife his only journey abroad, to Paris and the South of France and to visit Kropotkin in Rapallo, finding him surrounded by rich sycophants and melancholically squeezing out a few minutes to see anarchist friends from England. In 1912 he resigned the task of acting editor to Thomas Keell, though he retained the final decision in matters of controversy.

His health now gave way rapidly and he rarely could be in London, living most of the time in Hastings. In September 1914 he was operated upon, only to confirm that he had an inoperable cancer, and he died on 13 October 1914, in his fifty-sixth year. All tributes paid to him mention his extreme modesty and absolute sincerity, while stressing how much the movement was indebted to him. As Thomas Keell summarised it, *Freedom's* existence to 1914 'is almost solely due to his courage and his faith in Anarchism. His pen and his purse were always at its service, and on several occasions his last half-sovereign ensured the publication of the paper...As a writer he was simple and clear...To him, the Social Revolution meant a revolution in ideas and a clean sweep of the mass of superstition — economic, religious, and sexual — which clogs the minds of the people.'



Alfred Marsh

Alfred Marsh wrote no books or pamphlets; most of his articles were published anonymously or signed only with his initials, and nearly only in *Freedom*. The concisest summary of his ideas is his article 'Anarchist Communism: Its Aims and Principles' (signed Freedom Group, London) in *The Reformers' Year Book: 1902* (London & New York, 1902), also published as a Freedom leaflet.

Obituaries by Kropotkin and John Turner were published in *Freedom* (November 1914), and by Harry Kelly in *Mother Earth* (December 1914). **HB**

John Turner 1864-1934

John Turner, who from May 1895 to September 1907 lent his name as printer and publisher to *Freedom*, was for a long time one of the best-known members of the Freedom Group.

He was born on 24 August 1864 in a little village near Braintree in Essex, his father being a small farmer. At the age of 14 he came to Woolwich to be apprenticed to a grocer. He attended the 'early closing' meetings of the Early Closing Association of 1878-1880, and joined the Shop Hours League at its inception in 1882; but the Shop Hours League was still a very amateurish and ineffective movement and soon failed (as did a similar effort of Tom Mann and others in 1886 to form a Shop Assistants', Porters' and Packers' Union). So young John Turner was very dissatisfied with the situation, and being 'a Socialist before I had a chance of applying my Trade Union ideas', he joined the Socialist League early in 1885, where he received his education as a political agitator and organiser. He could always speak fluently, his difficulty being less in beginning than in coming to an end, and he was soon well known, even popular, among workers. In 1886 he became the League's Financial Secretary, and in 1889 served on its Council.

On 25 August 1889 he debated against Herbert Burrows (SDF) at the Patriotic Club, Clerkenwell Green, on 'Anarchy versus Social Democracy' with unexpected and thorough success. Following the Great Dockers' Strike that same autumn, which stimulated trade union activity everywhere in Britain, Turner, A George Maher and 15 others tried their luck again and in October 1889 formed the United Shop Assistants Union, the first permanent trade union for shop assistants in Britain. Turner acted as President, until in autumn 1898 it amalgamated with the National Union (founded in 1891) to form the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks. In these years Turner was also running the Socialist Co-operative Society, and this was the high tide of his anarchist activities, in the Socialist League, the Commonweal Group of 1893-94, and then the Freedom Group. He was later to write that Kropotkin's 'personal magnetism exerted an influence upon myself and a group of young fellows who for some time had been "feeling their way" towards the Anarchist view of social and political questions. Much as we were attracted by the *Commonweal* we soon came to look upon *Freedom*...as our monthly journal' a statement which conflicts with contemporary evidence, for the relationship between the Commonweal Group and the Freedom Group at the time was rather cool. It was not until the spring of 1895, several months after the end of *The Commonweal* and the dissolution of the Commonweal Group in October 1894, that he joined the Freedom editorial group on the invitation of the new editor Alfred Marsh. For the next twelve years he was the official publisher of *Freedom*.

Max Nettlau, who knew the people and the milieu intimately from 1885 onwards, was later to write that English anarchism took root between 1889 and 1891, profiting from the pioneer work done by Joseph Lane, through the efforts of agitators like Sam Mainwaring, George Cores, Fred Charles and John Turner, who were disciples of William Morris and Joseph Lane and distinguished themselves so favourably from the early Freedom Group whose exponents mainly came from

the SDF and the Fabian Society. 'The difference was like that between a plant on dry ground and one on fertile soil.' The merging of the two groups in 1895 changed the status and reception of *Freedom* in the movement.

In March 1896 Turner left England for a first lecture tour to the United States, which seems to have been rather successful. When in 1898 the National Amalgamated Union was formed, Turner became soon a paid official as its first National Organiser: now 'the United Kingdom was Mr Turner's Parish — his organising area. From Land's End to the Highland Capital, from Yarmouth in the East to Limerick in the West of Ireland, he proclaimed the Gospel, preached salvation by organisation...He established branches by the score. His recruits were legion.' Anarchism and the anarchist movement, however, from now on saw much less if anything of him — except for occasional articles.



John Turner

In 1900 he was instrumental in setting up the International Federation of Commercial Employees, and in 1903 'he obtained leave of absence' from his employer, the National Amalgamated Union, to do some lecturing in the United States. While he was addressing a meeting in New York he was arrested on 23 October and imprisoned, being the first prisoner held under the new Act of Congress which provided for the deportation of 'persons who disbelieve in organised government'. Friends wanting to make a test case of it persuaded him not to return immediately, so he was detained on Ellis Island until the end of April 1904. In contrast to the experience of many others, this did little damage to John Turner, for as a friend later recalled, 'when he came here eventually he was as fat as butter, had an American hat and an American accent'.

In 1907 he took part in publishing the *Voice of Labour*, though he seems to have done no more than lend his name for the letterhead, and apart from that graciously left all the work to Alfred Marsh and especially Tom Keell. In October 1907 his name was removed from *Freedom*, taking account of the more and more

'strenuous' relationship in the Freedom Group between those who year in and year out did all the donkey work and those who contented themselves by just being venerable 'members'. As one of Turner's trade union friends was to recall, of a meeting in 1904 where Turner was giving an account of his experiences in the United States, 'the hero of the evening, though he was as entertaining and instructive as he invariably is on the platform, turned out to be as mild and harmless a man as Keir Hardie! So perished one more of my illusions!' Another official of the same Union, though admitting that 'the Executive of that day did not like him being an Anarchist', relates that 'he never at any time to my knowledge allowed it to show itself during his work for the Union.'

In 1909 at the Trades Union Congress he seconded a resolution in favour of a Bill for the compulsory closing of shops; when challenged by Tom Keell and asked 'if that was consistent with his various articles condemning the Labour and Socialist Parties for their "middle-class politics"', he said he did not make a fetish of Anarchism and was not going to be dictated to by pedants!

The same Tom Keell later had the cheek to remind him that as long as he (Keell) had been in the Freedom Office (since 1903) he 'had never known him to help except with an occasional article. Even his 1/6d subscription had to be written for.' Turner, who in 1912 became President of his Union and later modestly employed the pen-name of 'Excelsus', never rose high enough to forget such mean attacks on his anarchist integrity by a humble compositor. He remained 'President' until 1924, when he retired, then went as a member of the British Trades Union Delegation to Russia (November-December 1924) and did not hesitate

to sign its Official Report which openly applauded the Bolshevik government.

In 1929 he re-appeared on the anarchist scene, joining a new 'Freedom Group' formed by old opponents of Tom Keell who in May 1930 started a new *Freedom*. But Turner could not take part long, due to ill-health. He died in Brighton on 9 August 1934.

John Turner published no books or pamphlets; but he was a prolific journalist and contributed innumerable articles to numerous labour papers, including *Freedom* and the *Voice of Labour* (1907) and especially *The Shop Assistant*; there he published his 'Parting Memoirs' of forty years in the Shop Assistants' Movement (30 August — 27 September 1924), and shortly before his death a long series of articles on 'A Changing World' (signed 'Excelsus', 27 May-28 October 1933).

His 'Personal Impressions of the United States' were published from notes taken during several lectures by Turner by Max Nettlau in *Freedom* (March, May 1897). Turner himself published reminiscences on every possible occasion and in articles on the most diverse subjects — for example, 'Labour and Socialism and "Labour Institutions"' in *The Shop Assistant* (11 April 1908); or on Kropotkin in *Justice* (24 February 1921).

Articles on and obituaries of him were published in *The Shop Assistant* (19 October, 1912, when he became General Secretary; 19 January, 30 August, and 13 September 1924, when he retired as General Secretary; 18 and 25 August 1934); in *Freedom* (New Series September 1934). Further information may be found in the books by E P Thompson on William Morris and by John Quail and Hermia Oliver on English anarchism.

HB

W C Owen 1854-1929

W C Owen played an important part in Freedom after the First World War. He was also one of the very few English anarchists who played an important part in politics outside Britain: the first 32 years of his life in radical movements were nearly all spent in the United States.

William Charles Owen was born on 16 February 1854 at Dinapore in Bengal Province (now Danapur in Bihar State), India (one of the centres of the Indian Mutiny of 1857). Born into a military and medical family, he was the posthumous son of Dr William Charles Owen, an Assistant Surgeon in the Medical Department of the Bengal Army; his mother was Adelaide Anne Owen.

The child was soon brought to England; little is known of his childhood and youth because, though he was often asked to write his memoirs and even eventually agreed to do so, he apparently never wrote them. Occasionally in an article or letter he said that his 'memory goes back to boyish days when we collected money desperately for the Lancashire cotton spinners who were starving by the tens of thousands owing to the American civil war which had brought the production of cotton to a standstill'. He was educated at Wellington College, and studied law, but never qualified. He married against the wishes of his family, and left with his wife for the United States in 1882; there he stayed for a while in New York, until in 1884 he moved westwards to San Francisco, working as a teacher and journalist.

On the West Coast of America he became a socialist: not from books, or any reading about economic

determinism, the class struggle, or all that exceedingly dubious philosophy with which we fret our brains, but from the poverty of a great city that stank beneath my nose. When I had money I found myself exceedingly unhappy and melancholy at the constant thought that I was living, a useless parasite, by levying tribute. When I ceased to have money I was, at least, equally unhappy over the perpetual tribute levied on me. It did not take any profound reasoning or erudite scholarship to convince me that, fix the thing which way I would, there was no genuine happiness under existing conditions.

He came to know Burnette G Haskell, the Californian radical, and joined the International Workingmen's Association (the 'Red International', as opposed to the 'Black International', the International Working People's Association of John Most and other anarchists and social revolutionaries); in 1885 he was secretary of its central committee. He contributed to Haskell's paper *Truth*, and eventually became the editor of the *Nationalist*, a socialist paper published in Los Angeles and then San Francisco. So far he had been influenced in his 'socialism' mainly by the writings of Herbert Spencer and especially Henry George; now he began to read Kropotkin, and 'his writings revolutionised my own life and convinced me of the necessity of universal revolution; he...showed me the sternness of the economic struggle and the power of the allied privileges that mass themselves under the shelter of the State...He made me, in a word, a rebel, inspired me with those

prodigious hopes which, as he himself so clearly shows, are the mothers of revolutions.' He translated and published, 'as best I could, everything by Kropotkin on which I could lay my hands'. Thus he produced the first English translation of Kropotkin's *Words of a Rebel* in various American labour papers (especially the *Avant-Courier* of Portland, Oregon).

Regarding himself now as an anarchist, he got in touch with the socialist movement in England and soon wrote articles mainly about labour subjects in the United States for *The Commonweal*, the paper of the Socialist League. In 1890 he moved back to New York and was instrumental in setting up a New York Socialist League; he got acquainted with Saverio Merlino, a member of the original Freedom Group, who had just moved to the United States and in 1892 started to publish in New York *Solidarity*, to which Owen contributed. In November 1892 he returned for a while to England and in December of that year he was expelled from the NY Socialist League for 'deserting his young wife who will soon become a mother'. At the beginning of 1893 he lectured at a number of occasions in London, mainly to the Autonomic Club in Windmill Street; one talk was on 'The New American Revolution', which then formed his first contribution to *Freedom* (June 1893).

After a few months he returned to the United States. In 1894 he proposed to produce a regular American page in *Freedom*, but nothing came of the idea. Then his anarchism underwent a substantial change: he became influenced by Benjamin Tucker, and 'his cold logic saved me from what threatened to become chronic Kropotkin hysteria'. Owen found himself 'steadily drifting away from Communism, just as I had been compelled to drift away from State Socialism'.

Following the discovery of gold at Klondike in 1896 he tried his luck there for two winters, 'but gained nothing but experience'. He eventually returned to California, worked again as journalist and especially as court-police reporter (which eventually led to a book on crime and criminals), and contributed regularly to the anarchist press (for example *Free Society* and Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth*).

From now on he concentrated with particular energy on the land question; and he soon felt himself vindicated when he got drawn into the agitation around the Mexican Revolution: 'My own experience is that if you attempt to discuss politics with the Mexican proletariat he shows no interest, but that the moment you mention the word "land" he becomes alert.' His involvement in the Mexican struggle between 1910 and 1916 was his most active time in the working-class movement. 'Of all the heart-breaking experiences that propaganda work has brought me, none begins to equal that through which I find myself passing in connection with the Mexican revolution...The Mexican Revolution...is literally a Titanic struggle, for it is against the money power of the world.' From the beginning he regarded the Mexican Revolution not 'as a subject on which the various camps of the international revolutionary movement should take sides, and never have I felt myself called on to endorse the particular creed of the Magons or other Mexican agitators. From the first I have regarded it as a struggle by many millions of the disinherited to win back their heritage; as a battle for the right to live...A second French Revolution is being fought out in Mexico: a stand-up fight between the proletariat and the money power...this may prove more important in its ultimate results than did the great French Revolution, precisely because it comes at a much

more delicately critical moment in history.' From 1911 to 1916 he was editor of the English section of *Regeneración*, the organ of the Mexican revolutionists published in Los Angeles; at the same time he provided a great number of labour papers with a Free Press Service issued in connection with the Mexican Revolution, and in addition a weekly syndicated letter on general political matters.



W C Owen

He also resumed his collaboration with *Freedom*, and between 1911 and 1914 contributed a number of articles and translations, mainly on the Mexican Revolution. From May 1914 until June 1915 he also edited and published his own paper, *Land and Liberty*, the title aptly reflecting not only the standard slogan of the Mexican revolutionaries but also what from the 1890s had been his own driving motives. During the First World War he sided almost immediately with the Allies (and Kropotkin) 'against Prussian militarism and chauvinism', thereby alienating himself from virtually the whole English-speaking anarchist movement. On 18 February 1916 the Magón brothers, as editors of *Regeneración*, were arrested on the little co-operative ranch near Los Angeles that had served for some time as their headquarters and editorial office and imprisoned. Owen, whom the authorities shortly afterwards wanted to add to their impressive collection of imprisoned radicals, was warned in time and went into hiding for about six months, until he finally left the United States for ever and returned to England in late 1916.

He lived for a while in Plymouth, earning his living as a professional writer and journalist, writing for example for the *Commercial Review* and the *Middleton Guardian* (whose founder and editor, John Bagot, incidentally had been a correspondent and occasional contributor to *Freedom* for years before the War). When Thomas Keell found out that Owen was in England, he wrote to him asking to write for *Freedom*. 'Owen replied saying that he was an Individualist and he did not think his writings would please the readers of an Anarchist Communist paper; but on being told we were Anarchists first and foremost, he consented.' So from 1919 on Owen wrote more and more for *Freedom*, and in later years sometimes provided two-thirds of the material printed. 'His knowledge of languages was a great help to an editor who knew hardly any, and he translated many

letters and articles received from foreign correspondents.'

But the land question remained his pet subject, and to support the agitation against land monopoly he joined the Commonwealth League (later the Commonwealth Land Party) and wrote regularly for its organ, the *Commonweal* (as W.C.O., or as X., or anonymously). At least twice a week he addressed open-air meetings, most discussions centring on the land question, expropriation, or the role played by Labour politicians. He never ceased to regard himself as an anarchist, and he had often to challenge the interference of editors who has 'a little difficulty over the seeming approval of "force"'; in anarchist papers and private letters his opinion on this was unwaveringly clear: 'I hold that unjust institutions upheld by force can only be overthrown by force.' He summarised his line of thinking over many years in a comment on the editor's tampering with an article of his, headed 'Imperialism on Trial' (published in *Commonweal*, 12 March 1927):

The passages objected to stated simply, & in moderate language, that the stage has been set for a long, & probably bitter & bloody struggle, & that in opposition to Imperialism we shall find the opportunity of establishing a world-wide 'solidarity' of thought & thereby presenting a 'united front', hitherto impossible...I...want to drag the C.L.P. (Commonwealth Land Party) in the general revolutionary movement.

Around 1920 he had lived for a couple of years with Tom Keell and Lilian Wolfe and their little son in their house in Willesden: 'Many were the long talks we had at midnight, and sometimes long after, over innumerable cups of tea and cigarettes.' From 1926 on he lived at 'The Sanctuary' near Storrington, on the Sussex Downs, a little community started by a Miss Vera Pragnell, who invested part of her inheritance in buying land and giving it away in plots to anyone who cared to live there; after several operations which he had to undergo in the winter of 1928-29, he died of cancer in a nursing home at Worthing on 9 July 1929.

In an obituary, Tom Keell summarised his own experience with Owen:

To know him was a liberal education. His knowledge of books and men was tremendous and his memory wonderful. As a writer for *Freedom* and the *Bulletin* he was always willing, and there was never anything slipshod about his work.

Apart from two books, *The Economics of Herbert Spencer* (New York, 1891) and *Crime and Criminals* (Los Angeles, 1910; published by the Prison Reform League without mention of the author), Owen wrote a great number of pamphlets and leaflets, under his name, pseudonymously or anonymously — *Anarchism versus Socialism* (London, Freedom Pamphlet, 1922; the revised version of a pamphlet originally published in New York); *The Mexican Revolution: Its Progress, Causes, Purpose and Probable Results* (Los Angeles 1912); *Set My People Free!* (London, Commonwealth Land Party, n.d.=1926); *England Monopolised or England Free?* by SENEX (London, Freedom Pamphlet, 1920); *The Chancellor's Dream* by X. (London, Commonwealth Land Party, n.d.=1924); *What is the Commonwealth Land Party?* by X. (London, Commonwealth Land Party, n.d.=1926).

His articles appeared in numerous periodicals, a few of which have been mentioned above; for *Freedom* he wrote a few articles in the early 1890s, then quite a number mainly on Mexico between 1911 and 1913, and from 1919 until his death he wrote with Tom Keell the major part of the paper.

Obituaries were published in *Freedom Bulletin* (September 1929; by T H Keell and Victor B Neuburg), *The Commonweal* (20 July 1929; by J W Graham Peace and Victor B Neuburg), *Middleton Guardian* (29 July 1929; by T H Keell and Victor B Neuburg). Further information is to be found in an article in the *New York Times*, 2 December 1892 ('Too Bad for Socialists'); and in histories of American anarchism and the labour movement in California — for example Ira B Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California* (Berkeley, California, 1935); and in memoirs like Emma Goldman's *Living My Life*, or Frank Roney's *An Autobiography* edited by Ira B Cross (Berkeley, California, 1911).

HB



Anarchist holiday camp in Harlech 1915. L to R: Lilian Wolfe, George Wilkinson, Bert Wells, Ciss Wilkinson, Fred Dunn, Mary Darley, Joan (surname not remembered).

Max Nettlau 1865-1944

Max Nettlau is best known as the 'Herodotus of Anarchy' — that is, as its first and greatest historian — and less as an anarchist militant. Yet he was one of the most assiduous contributors to *Freedom*, if not the most assiduous, for over 40 years.

Max Nettlau was born on 30 April 1865 in Neuwaldegg near Vienna (and all his life regretted missing the First of May so narrowly). His father — a Prussian — was Court Gardener to Prince Schwarzenberg. His parents (and especially his father, as he always stressed) gave him a liberal and secularist education, and he spent most of his childhood playing on his own in and exploring the great garden, an experience that influenced him deeply and had some bearing on his understanding of Anarchism as the most natural form of life. He came to Socialism when still a student, between 1878 and 1880, and while a number of his schoolmates were Social Democrats (and were later to play leading roles in Austrian and German Social Democracy), Nettlau soon regarded himself as an Anarchist-Communist (and a very 'revolutionary' one — more than 45 years later he was quite embarrassed to be reminded that around 1883 he had even drawn up a kind of 'murder list': who and in what order was to be eliminated during a revolution).

From Autumn 1882 on he studied philology, soon specialising in the Celtic languages, and he received his doctorate for a thesis 'Contributions to the Cymric Grammar' (Spring 1887). While working on his thesis, he came to London in October 1885 and immediately joined the Socialist League (the only organisation he was ever to join, and to him always the 'ideal' political organisation with its concentration on education and the building up of political consciousness). Living just off Tottenham Court Road at the time, he joined the Bloomsbury branch, the centre of Marxist intrigues against the anti-parliamentarian policy of the League, and he claimed later that this 'workshop in practical Marxism' facilitated his understanding of the Marxist intrigues in the First International. *The Commonweal* (the paper of the Socialist League) published also his first political articles, the very first one actually being one on Marx on the fifth anniversary of his death (10 March 1888, signed Y Y). In July 1889 he attended the International Socialist Congress in Paris (the Founding Congress of the Second International) as delegate of the Norwich branch of the Socialist League; and from May to September 1890 he served on the Council of the League. Between May and August 1890 he edited and financed *The Anarchist Labour Leaf*, 4 numbers of which were published and distributed gratis and which consisted entirely of articles by Nettlau and Henry Davis, who had been one of the most active anarchist-communists in the Socialist League — mostly in the East End. Davis was shortly later to change colours and declared himself an Individualist, which prompted Nettlau's first contribution to *Freedom* ('Communism and Anarchy', May 1891; signed N). In these years he wrote also his first longer and more substantial historical articles — 'Joseph Déjacque — a predecessor of communist Anarchism' (published in John Most's *Freiheit*, 25 January — 25 February 1890), and 'The Historical Development of Anarchism' (*Freiheit*, 19 April-17 May 1890, reprinted as a pamphlet), the nucleus of his later historical works, and the first results of his studies of Bakunin, 'Notes for a

Biography of Bakunin' (*Freiheit*, January — April 1891).

In March 1892 his father died and left him a small fortune, enabling him from now on to devote all his time 'to study, to travel and to collect' material for the biography of Bakunin and on the history of Anarchism and Socialism in general. In 1893/94 he was active in the Commonweal Group (the continuation of the London Socialist League) and wrote for the group 'Why we are Anarchists' (published anonymously in 1893 as a series in *The Commonweal*, and reprinted as a pamphlet in 1894). At the request of a number of comrades, he wrote *An Anarchist Manifesto issued by the London Anarchist Communist Alliance* (London, May 1895), approved of and slightly 'corrected' by Kropotkin. After the merging of the Commonweal and Freedom Groups in April/May 1895, he eventually joined the Freedom Group, and after the closing down of *The Torch* provided (with another German, Bernhard Kampffmeyer) the means to acquire the press and printing equipment of the *Torch* and to rent its premises at 127 Ossulston Street, for *Freedom* and 'the movement' (Spring 1896).

With Joseph Presburg ('Perry') he did the work to prepare the anarchist meetings in connection with the International Socialist Congress in London, July 1896. He and Presburg actually were also the 'Spanish Atrocity Committee' in 1897, Nettlau doing all necessary translations and writing nearly all articles on the subject for *Freedom*, the *Labour Leader*, and other papers. (He was also the author of the Committee's pamphlet *The Revival of the Inquisition*, 1897.)

Between 1896 and 1900 he wrote and 'autocopied' in 50 copies his huge biography of Bakunin, and in 1897 also published his *Bibliographie de l'Anarchie*, still the standard work on the subject up to that date.

After the mid-1890s Nettlau's own anarchism changed, and from being a rather dogmatic Anarchist-Communist he developed his own variety of Anarchism without labels, stressing more and more the need for mutual toleration especially among anarchists — this being a fruit both of his historical studies and of his personal experiences with all sorts of religious wars in the movement. One of the earliest published results of this development was a lecture (one of only four lectures he gave in his life) which he gave to the Freedom Discussion Group on 5 December 1899, and which always remained one of his pet productions — 'Responsibility and Solidarity in the Labour Struggle', published in *Freedom* (January — April 1900) and reprinted as a Freedom Pamphlet. (The Freedom Group also sent it as a report to the International Anarchist Congress in Paris, Summer 1900.)

He continued his work on Bakunin in these years, summarising his findings in four unpublished volumes of supplements to the Biography; and from around 1900 he started collecting more books as a form of sport, spending most of the year on the Quais in Paris and around Farringdon Road and Charing Cross Road in London, usually getting very nervous when in October/November he still had not reached the magic figure of 1,000 for the yearly additions to his collection. He nevertheless continued some research (mainly on Buonarroti and the Secret Societies) and of course his regular contributions to *Freedom*, most of which are either unsigned, or published with initials (N, MN, or X, XX — in *Spain and the World* XXX — XYZ, **).

Between 1896 and 1913 he contributed to *Freedom* most of the International Notes, all the 'Reviews of the Year' (usually published in the January number), historical and general articles, obituaries, and many reviews. He always enjoyed being provocative, opposing 'Esperanto from an Anarchist Point of View' (December 1906, and debate in following numbers), on the small nationalities and their movements for 'independence' (the Balkans), being here the most fervent opponent of Kropotkin (January 1909; January 1913), or on 'Anarchism: Communist or Individualist? Both' (March, May 1914).

He prepared for Freedom Press the revised and augmented edition of Bakunin's *God and the State* (1909-10), thus fulfilling what he had proposed in his Postscript to Tom Cantwell's 1894 edition.

He spent the First World War in Vienna, and in letters and discussions with friends supported Austria-Hungary, thereby continuing his opposition to Kropotkin in the question of national politics (though his own stand was much more ambiguous than Kropotkin's support of the Allies). In the post-war inflation he lost all his money, and for some years thereafter lived on the edge of starvation, until Tom Keell and other friends started to send regular food parcels, to the joy not only of the post office employees and their families, but eventually also of Nettlau. From now on he had to live as 'a slave of his pen', first thanking the American Society of Friends not only for their food parcels but also for 'the pleasant experience of contact with people who try — despite all religious narrow-mindedness — to uphold their human dignity'.

For a while he wrote regularly for the *Christian Science Monitor* (though that must have caused him, a life-long freethinker, some problems), then subsequently he made a very meagre living by writing for a number of anarchist publications who could afford to pay occasionally for contributions, especially the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* of New York, *La Protesta* of Buenos Aires, *La Revista Blanca* of Barcelona, and the Anarcho-Syndicalists in Germany and Sweden.

From 1919 on he also resumed writing for *Freedom* (unpaid, as *Freedom* itself had to fight for survival). His last contribution in 1914 had been on 'The Literature of Anarchism' (September). The first one after the war was 'The Tragedy of German-Austria: An Appeal from Vienna' (September 1919), 'from an Austrian comrade, well known in the Anarchist movement both here and on the Continent, but who does not desire his name to be published'. All his further articles in 1919-1920 then concern 'The present situation in Austria', until in September 1920, at the suggestion of Tom Keell, he published in *Freedom* the first of a series of biographies of Malatesta (each one enlarged and corrected). This was the first of the major historical works which were to occupy him for the next 15 years. The most important ones are: several articles on Kropotkin; a biography of Bakunin (4 volumes, unpublished except the first few chapters); two biographies of Reclus (1928 in German; revised and enlarged edition in Spanish 1929-30, 2 volumes); three volumes on *the International, Bakunin and the Alliance in Spain* (published 1929, 1930 and 1969); a study of Bakunin and the International in Italy (1928); and most important of all his huge *History of Anarchist Ideas*, of which only three volumes were published in his lifetime (two more have been published in 1981 and 1984, the others are to follow).

All these (and innumerable articles as well) had to be written under difficult circumstances, since although Nettlau had the most comprehensive collection on Anarchism in existence, and had collected before the

war all sorts of information from and about people in the movement, most of this was stored away in depositories in France and England which were inaccessible to him.



Max Nettlau

In all these years he continued to write first for *Freedom*, then the *Freedom Bulletin*. In 1936 he wrote the major part of the pamphlet *The struggle for Liberty in Spain 1840-1936* at the request of Vernon Richards, and also the first leading article for *Spain and the World*, July — November 1936 in Spain, signed XXX. He continued to write for *Spain and the World*, including many other articles on Spain, a long and very critical review of E H Carr's biography of Bakunin, and a series on the early history of Anarchist ideas in England.

He eventually broke with *Spain and the World* over the attitude its editors took towards the CNT involvement in the government and the criticism of Federica Montseny in particular, whom Nettlau, very untypically, supported absolutely uncritically.

In 1935 he sold his collection to the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, and here in 1938, for the first time in his life, he saw all parts of his collection 'united'. He lived in Amsterdam from that year on, writing a version of his memoirs, classifying materials from his collection, and then seeing a major part of his (and other) collections seized by the Germans in 1940. Between 1940 and 1944 he wrote the last version of his memoirs, some 6,000 pages of 'Reminiscences and Impressions' of a 'libertarian socialist without a public sphere of activity, known to small circles as student of historical socialist materials, collector of such documents and printed matter...and also as an exponent of some from-the-routine-departing opinions...'

Max Nettlau died in Amsterdam on 23 July 1944. His work and his collection, the most important source for the history of Anarchism and anti-authoritarian thought in general, are not forgotten; many of his writings are reprinted again and again. Nevertheless they are rarely properly used by those who write about anarchist history. Is this just to avoid the depressing experience that, whatever field one might enter, one would have to acknowledge that somebody else has been there several decades before?

H B

INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST MANIFESTO ON THE WAR.

Europe in a blaze, twelve million men engaged in the most frightful butchery that history has ever recorded; millions of women and children in tears; the economic, intellectual, and moral life of seven great peoples brutally suspended, and the menace becoming every day more pregnant with new military complications—such is, for seven months, the painful, agonising, and hateful spectacle presented by the civilised world.

But a spectacle not unexpected—at least, by the Anarchists, since for them there never has been nor is there any doubt—the terrible events of to-day strengthen this conviction—that war is permanently fostered by the present social system. Armed conflict, restricted or widespread, colonial or European, is the natural consequence and the inevitable and fatal outcome of a society that is founded on the exploitation of the workers, rests on the savage struggle of the classes, and compels Labour to submit to the domination of a minority of parasites who hold both political and economic power.

The war was inevitable. Wherever it originated, it had to come. It is not in vain that for half a century there has been a feverish preparation of the most formidable armaments, and a ceaseless increase in the budgets of death. It is not by constantly improving the weapons of war, and by concentrating the mind and the will of all upon the better organisation of the military machine that people work for peace.

Therefore, it is foolish and childish, after having multiplied the causes and occasions of conflict, to seek to fix the responsibility on this or that Government. No possible distinction can be drawn between offensive and defensive wars. In the present conflict, the Governments of Berlin and Vienna have sought to justify themselves by documents not less authentic than those of the Governments of Paris, London, and Petrograd. Each does its very best to produce the most indisputable and the most decisive documents in order to establish its good faith and to present itself as the immaculate defender of right and liberty, and the champion of civilisation.

Civilisation? Who, then, represents it just now? Is it the German State, with its formidable militarism, and so powerful that it has stifled every disposition to revolt? Is it the Russian State, to whom the knout, the gibbet, and Siberia are the sole means of persuasion? Is it the French State, with its *Biribi*, its bloody conquests in Tonkin, Madagascar, Morocco, and its compulsory enlistment of black troops? France, that detains in its prisons, for years, comrades guilty only of having written and spoken against war? Is it the English State, which exploits, divides, and oppresses the populations of its immense colonial Empire?

No; none of the belligerents is entitled to invoke the name of civilisation, or to declare itself in a state of legitimate defence.

The truth is, that the cause of wars, of that which at present stains with blood the plains of Europe, as of all wars that have preceded it, rests solely in the existence of the State, which is the political form of privilege.

The State has arisen out of military force, it has developed through the use of military force, and it is still on military force that it must logically rest in order to maintain its omnipotence. Whatever the form it may assume, the State is nothing but

organised oppression for the advantage of a privileged minority. The present conflict illustrates this in the most striking manner. All forms of the State are engaged in the present war: absolutism with Russia, absolutism softened by Parliamentary institutions with Germany, the State ruling over peoples of quite different races with Austria, a democratic Constitutional régime with England, and a democratic Republican régime with France.

The misfortune of the peoples, who were deeply attached to peace, is that, in order to avoid war, they placed their confidence in the State with its intriguing diplomatists, in democracy, and in political parties (not excluding those in opposition, like Parliamentary Socialism). This confidence has been deliberately betrayed, and continues to be so, when Governments, with the aid of the whole of their press, persuade their respective peoples that this war is a war of liberation.

We are resolutely against all wars between peoples, and in neutral countries, like Italy, where the Governments seek to throw fresh peoples into the fiery furnace of war, our comrades have been, are, and ever will be most energetically opposed to war.

The rôle of the Anarchists in the present tragedy, whatever may be the place or the situation in which they find themselves, is to continue to proclaim that there is but one war of liberation: that which in all countries is waged by the oppressed against the oppressors, by the exploited against the exploiters. Our part is to summon the slaves to revolt against their masters.

Anarchist action and propaganda should assiduously and perseveringly aim at weakening and dissolving the various States, at cultivating the spirit of revolt, and arousing discontent in peoples and armies.

To all the soldiers of all countries, who believe they are fighting for justice and liberty, we have to declare that their heroism and their valour will but serve to perpetuate hatred, tyranny, and misery.

To the workers in factory and mine it is necessary to recall that the rifles they now have in their hands have been used against them in the days of strike and of revolt, and that later on they will be again used against them in order to compel them to undergo and endure capitalist exploitation.

To the workers on farm and field it is necessary to show that after the war they will be obliged once more to bend beneath the yoke and to continue to cultivate the lands of their lords and to feed the rich.

To all the outcasts, that they should not part with their arms until they have settled accounts with their oppressors, until they have taken land and factory and workshop for themselves.

To mothers, wives, and daughters, the victims of increased misery and privation, let us show who are the ones really responsible for their sorrows and for the massacre of their fathers, sons, and husbands.

We must take advantage of all the movements of revolt, of all the discontent, in order to foment insurrection, and to organise the revolution to which we look to put an end to all social wrongs.

No despondency, even before a calamity like the present war. It is in periods thus troubled, in which many thousands of men heroically give their lives for an idea, that we must show these men the generosity, greatness, and beauty of the Anarchist ideal: Social justice realised through the free organisation of producers; war and militarism done away with for ever; and complete freedom won, by the abolition of the State and its organs of destruction.

Signed by—Leonard D. Abbott, Alexander Berkman, L. Bertoni, L. Bersani, G. Bernard, G. Barrett, Á. Bernardo, E. Boudot, A. Calzitta, Joseph J. Cohen, Henry Combes, Nestor Ciele van Diepen, F. W. Dunn, Ch. Frigerio, Emma Goldman, V. Garcia, Hippolyte Havel, T. H. Keell, Harry Kelly, J. Lemaire, E. Malatesta, H. Marques, F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, Noel Panavich, E. Recchioni, G. Rijnders, I. Rochtchine, A. Savioli, A. Schapiro, William Shatoff, V. J. C. Schermerhorn, C. Trombetti, P. Vallina, G. Vignati, Lilian G. Woolf, S. Yanowsky.

London, 1915.

This Manifesto is published by the International Anarchist movement, and will be printed in several languages and issued in leaflet form.

Voice of Labour

A PAPER FOR ALL WHO WORK AND THINK.

VOL. III.—No. 38.

APRIL 15, 1916.

MID-MONTHLY, ONE PENNY.

DEFYING THE ACT.

[Information has reached us that a number of comrades from all parts of Great Britain have banded themselves together in the Highlands, the better to resist the working of the Military Service Act. In making a direct challenge to the Government they hope to appeal more forcibly to the British public to break the back of this Act. The following article is from one of those outlawed on the Scottish hills. In view of the likely gross misrepresentation by the patriotic press, we have no hesitation in publishing it.]

Resolute determination is the finest weapon of the oppressed against recurring efforts of repression, and is the only sure method of finally overthrowing despotism. The situation, as we find it to-day, is one which calls for such resolute determination and sterling grit. These qualities will not, we believe, be found wanting in those called upon to face the growing military despotism in Great Britain and Ireland. It is to such we make an appeal to unite resolutely to crush once and for all this despotism before it crushes us.

In carrying into effect the Military Service Act, despite the farcical attempts of the Tribunals to respect consciences, the Government have scored a triumph for despotism which is unparalleled in modern history, and which cuts away the last vestige of freedom we could imagine we possessed.

What is the objective of this mad Act? Is it to assist in carrying on the war? No one in his senses and who thinks without the aid of our patriotic Press, imagines it for a moment. Can the forcing into the Army of a few hundreds of unwilling young men make the difference between victory and defeat? Does not the very fact that *force* has to be used to make the people fight, convince us that the people are sick and tired of this war? And will the difficulties which have accompanied the introduction of this lunatic Act and the organisation necessary to put it into effect be justified by the resultant number of "captives," if only for the duration of the war?

We are convinced they will not. There is a deeper and more sinister design behind this move. The Government have played upon popular passions to institute a system which means to them a method of crushing the spirit of revolt so rapidly spreading, by sapping the young life of the nation and instilling into its mind the poison of militarism.

They are also faced with the problem of an Army when the war is over. For no Government can exist without an

Army, and they have given a pledge that the men who joined "Kitchener's Army" shall be discharged "the minute the war is over." Who will be left to protect property and quell industrial disturbances if the main portion of the Army is discharged when the war ceases? Is this the real need for conscription? No one knows for how long these conscripts are to serve, and here we can see the reason for their feverish desire to establish compulsion, and it gives greater urgency to the necessity of crushing it.

The Government are nothing if not astute, and their methods of making the recalcitrants submit are worthy of their diabolical ingenuity. They say no one must employ men who are liable for service. No one must shelter them, and, being left the alternatives of starving or submission, they are waiting the result of the starving process. This is economic pressure with a vengeance, the most powerful weapon the master class can wield. But it must fail where men are determined to die rather than submit.

The logic of the matter is this: the Government have said to the young men of Great Britain, "If you do not join, we will drive you out of your homes and starve you." They have made outlaws of us and we cheerfully accept the situation: let us be outlaws, then. We are determined that nothing short of death will break our resistance. The fiery cross of revolt has been carried throughout the country, setting on foot a strong movement, and by the time this appears the scheme will be an accomplished fact. The real fighters against conscription are now banded together, determined to stand shoulder to shoulder to show that militarism cannot override principle.

The Government have outlawed us, and out upon the Scottish hills we are living the free life of the outlaw. This is the only logical course to pursue to fight such a Government. We challenge them to fetch us and we defy them to make us soldiers. Bold and resolute determination has broken and rendered inoperative Acts of Parliament before, and will do so again.

The object of our stand is not so much to evade arrest, as to give heart to those who stand alone. To await the closing in of the net around you in your own home is to court disaster and to defeat the object of resistance. This resistance demands

publicity. We have no desire to make martyrs of ourselves, but we mean to show that we possess the spirit of revolt. Our resistance must be made public in order to instil into our fellow-workers the desire to revolt against the conditions we are compelled to tolerate.

These conditions have got to be altered, and only open revolt can alter them. Our rulers are intoxicated with the blood they have wallowed in, and ere it be too late we must check their mad career. Europe is being made a vast mourning house and graveyard, and it lies in our power to end it if we wish.

Lovers of freedom, your opportunity is here: leave it till too late, and freedom in these islands will be a myth, and our chances of bringing our ideals nearer realisation will dwindle away.

To follow the example of these outlaws, either in the Scottish hills or in other remote parts of these islands, is the best way to defeat the despots. If we are ready to do it, then let us do it here and now.

REVOLT.

Freedom is come among us. Winged from hell
She rises, with the serpents in her locks.
Kings, priests, republics, with her fiery shocks
She breaks and scatters daily. This is well.

On, on, ye brave! The battle thickens fast,
The dense battalions wait. By wall and moat
They hold their rows of steel against our throat,
And shower their hate upon us. The fire-blast
Full in our face in sheets of flame is cast,
And on our running blood the hell-hounds gloat.
'Tis well. Look up and o'er our head see float
The banner of the future. Their's is the past.

Look up, calm eyes and brows, a moment's gaze
On that, and laugh the whistling bullets by,
Comrades, and with a jest bé it unfurled.
Then with shut lips we plunge into the blaze,
Then with a roar as of the crashing sky
We sweep the liar and coward from the world.

J. H. CLARKE.

Thomas Keell 1866-1938

Thomas Keell was certainly one of the little-known and often misrepresented people who helped to keep *Freedom* going through its most eventful years. As Mat Kavanagh, also one of the lesser-known indefatigable militants, after some 50 years' activity in the movement wrote: 'I know of few men who did more quiet hard work, or were so completely indifferent to praise or blame, or yet so free of personal feeling.' Between 1903 and 1932 and then again from 1936 to 1938 it was his name or at least his neat handwriting that most of those who relied upon Freedom Press to supply them with Anarchist literature identified with the Press, and *Freedom*.

Thomas Henry Keell was born at Blackheath, London, on 24 September 1866, 'of good rural English stock'. Little is known of his early life. On 8 November 1881 he was apprenticed to letterpress printing for seven years, and in October 1887 was admitted to the London Society of Compositors, which became his early school of trade unionism. Apart from that his earliest political interests concerned the Land Reform movement, having seen 'at close quarters the evils of landlordism' during his favourite activity: long-distance walks (later on bicycle) mainly across the country on old footpaths, taking an active interest in their defence and preservation. But he soon became attracted by the broader aims of Socialism, and in the mid-1890s he became a member of the Independent Labour Party and then the secretary of its Peckham branch.

At about this time, in 1896, he also came into contact with the Anarchist movement.

'My first introduction was as a compositor on *Alarm* in Judd Street. I was out of work at the time, & a fellow member of the I.L.P. asked me if I would work on an Anarchist paper. So I was

introduced to Will Banham. I think it was No. 3 of *Alarm* that I set. When I presented my bill (about 35/-) Banham took me along to 127 Ossulston Street to get my money. He gave me £1 on account. *The rest is still owing*. I little thought that 127 O.S. would be my home for so many years when I entered it on that occasion.'

He soon found regular work again, as compositor on the weekly paper *The Spectator*; from now on, however, he regularly attended anarchist meetings. 'On all such occasions,' as Max Nettlau later recalled, 'one could see the tall bearded frame and face of the silent Keell from South London who would scarcely say a word, but if he did, very modestly, it was to the point, usually a useful suggestion. Thus we got used to him as a helpful element and he himself came to understand that the *commonsense socialism* which he advocated was identical with the opinions of all *commonsense anarchists*.'

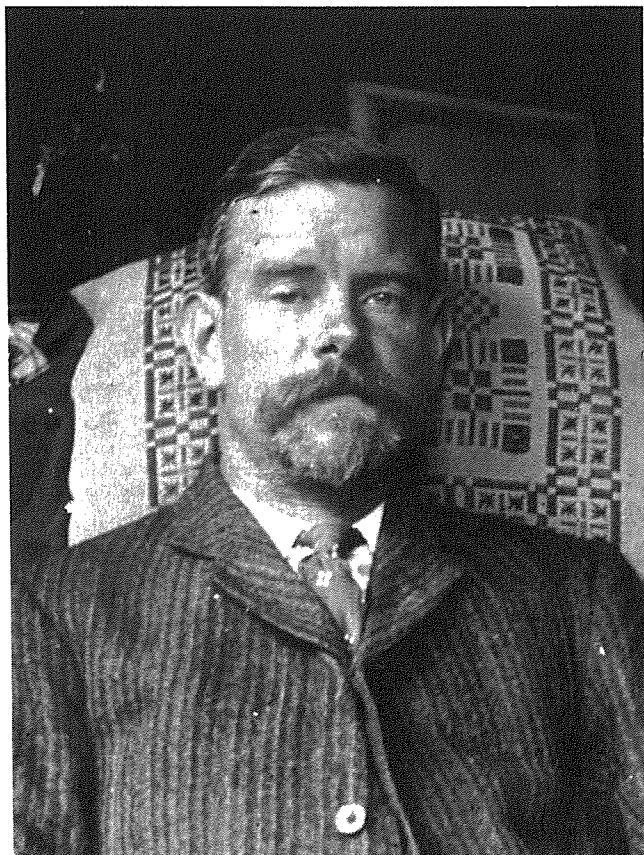
His first contact with the Freedom Group was in June 1898, when Walter Needs and W F Rean (at this time still an Anarchist and editor of a little-known libertarian magazine, *The Harbinger*, where Louise Michel published the beginning of her *Memoirs*) took him to the 'private' gathering to bid farewell to Lillian Harman, the American Anarchist and birth control activist. During a meeting in Trafalgar Square he got acquainted with Harry Kelly, the American Anarchist who had just come to England and soon joined the Freedom Group, and invited him to talk to the ILP Peckham branch on conditions in America.

'In that talk I spoke of Thoreau, who had thrilled me as he has countless others; later Keell told me that it was his reading of that most original of all American minds that changed his line of thinking and eventually brought him to our movement.'

When Tom Cantwell had a stroke on Christmas Day, 1902, and became incapacitated, and the other compositor on *Freedom*, Mr Boyd, also proved inefficient for managing work, Alfred Marsh approached Keell (who had helped Cantwell on several occasions with the paper during the previous year) to ask if he would be interested in becoming the compositor and manager. Keell agreed and so in January 1903 became a regular feature of the Freedom office.

One of his first activities was to clear up the already legendary mess in the Ossulston Street Office, and from then on comrades came to meet there and it gained some sort of social value to the movement. For the first time in more than a decade orders were executed promptly, and the sale of literature (and the reprinting of pamphlets) speeded up considerably. Having proved his reliability, he was asked in September 1903 to take over the business side also. From 1904 (and until the building was pulled down in 1928) he was the responsible tenant of the office. That year he also moved from Camberwell to Leyton to set up there a household with his wife (whose first name incidentally was also Lillian) and William Wess, which however lasted only some 18 months. Then Lillian Keell left with Wess; they were both instrumental in setting up, in February 1906, the new Workers' Friend club in Jubilee Street, and she tried to initiate an Anarchist Sunday School. (Some years later, as Lillian Evelyn, she ran one of the two Modern Schools in London, the Ferrer School in Charlotte Street.)

In the aftermath of the abortive Russian Revolution of



Thomas Keell

1905, the discussions soon centered on the value of direct action as an important means to bring about a social revolution, and the Freedom Group decided to publish a paper more or less entirely concentrating on industrial activities and especially agitation for all forms of direct action. A draft for a programme was prepared by Kropotkin, all practical preparations done by Alfred Marsh and Tom Keell, and a name soon found: *Voice of Labour*. A dummy of a first number was produced (and distributed in a few copies) in November 1906, but the paper started only on 18 January 1907. Since 1903 he had done all work on *Freedom* in his spare time; but now with two papers to set, to print and to manage he had to give up his job at the *Spectator*. The first eight numbers were edited by Alfred Marsh:

'he then withdrew & it was decided to stop the paper. Two days after some of the V. of L. group approached me & asked me to accept the editorship, if they would find the money to carry on. Reluctantly I agreed.'

The principal contributors were John Turner, Guy Aldred (in his own name and also as 'Ajax junior'), Karl Walter, Harry Kelly, S Carlyle Potter and Jimmy Dick. Keell himself wrote only one article;

'I had never written but one article in my life before. Perhaps that accounted for the death of the *Voice!*'

The keynote of the paper was the futility of parliamentary action and the value of direct action. Altogether 36 issues were published.

In August 1907 Keell was, with Karl Walter, one of the English delegates to the International Anarchist Congress in Amsterdam. The following years saw a boom in publishing activities by the Freedom Press, and it was Keell who did most of the donkey-work, day in day out. But his role at *Freedom* was more than that of a mere compositor and manager paid wages. As Nettlau later recorded, 'he was also a thoroughly efficient member of the Group and if very many facts and impressions can be recalled in a few words, I should say that Keell's sober judgement greatly helped Marsh to preserve *Freedom* for years from well-meant, but one-sided influences of others, even of Marsh himself who might, alone, have given way to others. Keell was also a most useful member by reason of his real observation of economic life. We were sometimes very good at general conclusions and sweeping hypotheses or rather affirmations. Then we needed just a few hard facts which none of us could have produced. But Keell had read these things up and not a few very plausible theories had to take on a more modest aspect.'

When after 1910 Marsh, due to growing health problems, withdrew more and more from the actual practical work involved in producing the paper, Keell had also to take over more and more editorial tasks. George Cores, later one of Keell's bitterest enemies, returned at this time to London and appeared regularly in the office, presumably to help, but Keell saw things just a little differently:

'There was always a coolness between us. He also...had many meals at my expense at the office when he turned up again in 1912. He was a fearful bore...usually turned up at teatime & talked incessantly on elementary Anarchism. I had to tell him that the office was not a discussion forum & as I had to set type he must not hinder by talking. He evidently has never forgiven me.'

In 1913 Keell became 'acting editor' of *Freedom*, George Ballard ('Barrett') having refused to take part in that work as he felt the strong tradition of *Freedom* to be

too much of a burden, and preferred to eventually start another paper (the Glasgow *Anarchist*). In controversial matters, however, Marsh retained the final decision.

From around 1911 a group of young anarchists developed independently from *Freedom* and the Freedom Group, calling themselves in 1913-1914 the Anarchist Education League. From mid-1913 they were loosely linked to the Freedom Press and especially to Tom Keell, and from November Freedom Press published for them *The Torch*, which after five issues from 1 May 1914 on became the *Voice of Labour*. The editor was in the beginning 'officially' George Barrett, who being very ill could however write only a few articles, while other editorial work was done mainly by Fred W Dunn. It was this group — Dunn, Mabel Hope (who having been for years a contributor to *Freedom* actually had brought about the initial contact), Elizabeth Archer, Tom Sweetlove, W Fanner, and Lilian Wolfe — who supported Keell in his difficult stand against the supporters of the First World War in the Freedom Group, and who soon were to constitute the new one, after Kropotkin, Cherkezov and wife and their friends no longer took part in the production of *Freedom*. The story of this rupture has been told elsewhere, and need not to be repeated; but it would be wrong not to stress how much courage Keell showed to oppose 'secular saints' like Kropotkin, whom he himself had admired so much: 'To work with them was indeed a pleasure and an inspiration, and my greatest regret was when the War...split our group asunder. One doubted the judgement of those members who supported the War, but one never doubted their sincerity.' But 'the other side' (with the exception of Kropotkin!) was never so generous, and from now on called the same Keell, who up till now had always been regarded by some as the paid servant, a ruthless dictator who had seized all the valuable Freedom assets.

However, at the next anarchist national conference at Hazel Grove (Stockport), in April 1915, all the accusations which George Cores ('the man selected by Tcherkesoff & Turner and others to denounce me as a thief') brought forward against Keell were repudiated and his 'only crime' approved of unanimously: to have prevented 'the paper joining the patriotic & pro-war crowd'. The same group then started, in March 1915, Marsh House at 1 Mecklenburgh Street, which functioned until September 1916 as anarchist commune and meeting-place for the London anarchists and the Anti-Conscription League formed in May 1915. After the passing of the Military Service Act in January 1916



Freedom office 1911
Thomas Keell, George Cores, Alfred Marsh

both *Freedom* and the *Voice of Labour* soon ran into trouble, first for an article 'Defying the Act' by 'one of those outlawed on the Scottish Hills' (Fred Dunn), which was published in the April issue of the *Voice* and subsequently as a leaflet. This was enclosed with a letter from Lilian Wolfe to Malatesta which was intercepted by the police. The consequent raid on the Freedom office then brought to light another article just set up for *Freedom*, headed 'The Irish Rebellion' and worthy of a second charge.

On 24 June 1916 Tom Keell and Lilian Wolfe were tried at Clerkenwell Police Court under the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA). The charge arising from the second article was dismissed, but for the first article Keell was sentenced to a fine of £100 or three months imprisonment, and Wolfe to £25 or two months. Both refused to pay and were imprisoned.

The whole affair at least proved Freedom office to be quite a tempting place for the police, for it was raided three more times in the course of the next year. Despite all harassment Keell managed to keep *Freedom* going. The group so far responsible for the publication soon dissolved, the men hiding or going to the United States, and Mabel Hope and Elisabeth Archer also soon leaving for the States. From 1918 it was mainly Keell alone who did all the work, occasionally helped by Percy Meachem on the practical side, and then more and more by William Charles Owen, who eventually came to live with Tom and Lilian (and their son Tom junior) in their house in Willesden.

In the decade after the war *Freedom's* existence was a long struggle for survival, one appeal for help following the other. Except for a few comrades abroad, and W C Owen and Lilian Wolfe, nobody actually came to help. The price of *Freedom* was increased in May 1918 from 1d to 2d; but the income in the mid-1920s was not more than that in 1914, when the printing costs were only about a third of those in 1925.

In December 1926 Keell officially retired as compositor to live off the superannuation income provided for by the Society of Compositors, and when in 1927 the London County Council gave notice to quit 127 Ossulston Street, as the whole quarter was to be pulled down, he issued a last desperate appeal, again to no avail. Finally, with the agreement of Lilian Wolfe and Owen, he decided to close down *Freedom*.

'I must be very sentimental as I do not mind telling you that a tear was hard to suppress when passing the final page proofs for the last time. *Freedom* has been a dear friend all these years & I could not part from it without feeling a wrench.'

For others however the 'death' of (this series of) *Freedom* proved to be quite a re-animating event, for though they had overlooked for years all statements of the desperate situation and all appeals for help, the fact that *Freedom* no longer turned up regularly in their letter-boxes eventually had more effect. At a meeting arranged by Keell in February 1928, many faces that had been familiar before the war showed up again for the first time, and Keell

'was told that the enthusiasm of the movement would revive & *Freedom* could start again. The collapse of *Freedom*, I told them, was due to the collapse of the Anarchist movement in this country & they should concentrate on a revival in London at least.'

But still in August 1928 they had 'done nothing — absolutely nothing. Not one meeting have they held & not one pamphlet have they sold'. They wrote a lot of letters, though, mainly to old comrades abroad, complaining about the dictatorship of a former servant.

'By what right do these people criticise Lilian & I & say we regard Freedom Office as our private property? For many years these people have never come near us to help & lift a finger — let alone their voice — in Anarchist propaganda. Lilian and I have stuck to our job here through thick & thin, and Owen has been a hard worker also, ever ready with his pen, &...he has lent us money when we were in difficulties. Lilian has given at least £50 since 1914, & when my father died during the War and left me £160, at least £100 of it was swallowed up by *Freedom*.'

Keell moved with the Freedom Press literature to Whiteway Colony (near Stroud), and published at irregular intervals a *Freedom Bulletin*. His old opponents from 1914 saw in this removal of the Freedom Press away from London only new fodder for their accusation of 'a dictatorship', and as a result of this altogether utterly unpleasant quarrel published from May 1930 on a paper called '*Freedom* (New Series)', which however Keell (and other former members and friends of the Freedom Group, like Nettlau, Mabel Hope, Elizabeth Archer, Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and others) did not recognise as a continuation of 'the old *Freedom*'. (The group itself it seems was soon dissatisfied with the poor standards of the new paper, and eventually Keell's old opponents dropped out, to be replaced by people sympathetic to him, like Victor Neuburg who became editor for a while in 1934, or even by his friends, like Oscar Swede and Harry Jones who became editors in November 1934.)

Keell himself published 15 issues of the *Freedom Bulletin* between 1928 and 1932, and was from autumn 1928 secretary of the Whiteway Colony, but otherwise felt quite disillusioned.

The event of 1930 had such a disheartening effect on me that I cannot get up any enthusiasm for anything that would mean co-operation with others. I do the work connected with Freedom Press because it is work I understand & does not call for any great effort, writing for the *Bulletin* is only an occasional effort & I also get some pleasure in knowing that I can help to spread our ideas.'

With the labour movement as a whole he felt not happy either:

'They have concentrated on the economic side of the movement and never gave a thought to the libertarian side. Many years ago I heard a lecture by an old Fabian — I think his name was Leakey — on "The Morality of Socialism" in which he spoke of freedom & tolerance, & said that unless Socialists gave more attention to the economic changes for which they were working would be of little value. But his voice was raised in vain. Everything has been put aside as Utopia. The "Scientific" Marxian philosophy, with its idea of an all-powerful State in which the individual would be No. 232,855 B., has carried the day. "Freedom is a bourgeois idea," said Lenin, & all the Communists repeat it *ad nauseam*. We have been sliding down the slippery slope for years.'

He found a consolation in working on the land, and most letters to friends contain references to sowing and the encouraging effect that seeing seeds grow has on the mind. In 1936 however he was again brought back to a more active role in the production and distribution of anarchist literature and papers, when he was approached by the son of an old Italian comrade to help with the distribution and eventually editing of *Italia Libera* — *Free Italy*; and he then helped with the production of the

pamphlet *The Struggle for Liberty in Spain*, and, of course, with the new paper *Spain and the World*, which he eventually came to regard as the proper successor to the old *Freedom*. The success of *Spain and the World* cheered him up again a little at a time when

'we are even threatened with visits from officials who will measure us for gas masks. The gas mask seems to me the supreme symbol of the degradation of mankind. It is the lowest level I can imagine...When I think of the dreams of Socialists and Anarchists thirty or forty years ago & the realities of the present day, it seems to me that those who died then cherishing their dreams are the last of that happy race. To-day dreams are no longer possible. The world is faced with the herd instinct of fear...'

He did not have to face this world much longer. He

died some three weeks later, on 26 June 1938, at Whiteway, of heart failure.

Tom Keell wrote no books or pamphlets, and only very few of his articles were signed; but he wrote most of the 'Notes' on the front page and the major part of the leaders of *Freedom* between 1914 and 1927.

Obituaries were published by Max Nettlau in *Spain and the World* (15 July 1938; a corrected and expanded version was published shortly afterwards in the Yiddish *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* and the English manuscript of which survives in the Rocker collection in the IISH, Amsterdam); by Harry Kelly and 'A Correspondent' (Dr Oscar Swede) in *MAN!* (September-October 1939; reprinted in *MAN! An Anthology...*, London 1974). And Mat Kavanagh published a recollection in his series on British Anarchists in *Freedom* (18 January 1947). **H B**

Lilian Wolfe 1875-1974

Lilian Wolfe was one of the least public but most important figures in the Freedom Press for more than half a century.

Lilian Gertrude Woolf (as her surname was originally spelt) was born at her father's shop in Edgware Road, London, on 22 December 1875. Her father was Albert Lewis Woolf, a jeweller from Liverpool of Jewish origin and conservative views; her mother was Lucy Helen Jones, an actress from Birmingham whom she later described as 'a very frustrated woman'. Lilian and her three brothers and two sisters were brought up in a conventional, comfortable middle-class way until she was thirteen years old, when their mother deserted the family to join an operatic company touring the world.

Lilian had virtually no formal education, being taught by governesses and briefly attending the Regent Street Polytechnic before she began to make her own living as a telegraphist. For twenty years she worked at the Central Telegraph Office in London, where she 'hated every minute of it', but where she nevertheless made many friends who 'had a good influence over my choice of literature and culture generally'. Eventually she became a socialist and a suffragist, joining the Civil Service Socialist Society and also the Women's Freedom League (a small body which broke away from the large Women's Social and Political Union in 1907 because of the autocracy of the Pankhursts, and which was led by the equally militant but more democratic Mrs Despard). Her experience in these two organisations gradually brought about her disillusionment with both orthodox socialism and orthodox suffragism, and convinced her of the futility of conventional political action. At the same time she became a vegetarian and joined the health food movement.

By 1913 Lilian Wolfe had evolved into anarcho-syndicalism, and with some friends began looking for a way to spread libertarian ideas more widely among working people. This was how she began a libertarian career which continued for the next sixty years, falling roughly into three phases.

The first and most intense phase lasted for less than three years. The Freedom Press had previously published an anarcho-syndicalist paper, the *Voice of Labour*, in 1907 and now Mabel Hope, an anarchist feminist who was a frequent contributor to *Freedom*, introduced the new group to Thomas Keell, who ran the Freedom Press, and they all decided that it was

worth repeating the experiment. The Freedom Press



Lilian Wolfe street selling 1945 (and Marie Louise Berneri)

published *The Torch* in 1913 and a new *Voice of Labour* from 1914; most of the donkey-work was done by Lilian Wolfe.

Unlike *Freedom*, which Keell tried to keep neutral for a few months, the *Voice of Labour* was uncompromisingly opposed to the First World War from the start, and Lilian was one of the most active people in the anti-war majority in the anarchist movement. She became one of the members of the new Freedom Group, which was formed at the beginning of 1915 to run both papers; she was one of the founders of Marsh House in March 1915; she was one of the signatories of the International Anarchist Manifesto on the War in February 1915; she was one of the delegates at the national conference held at Stockport in April 1915; and she was one of the founders of the Anti-Conscription League in May 1915. After the passing of the Military Service Act in January 1916 both *Freedom* and the *Voice of Labour* began to publish appeals for more than conscientious objection, and also to publish reports of the experiences of anarchists who got into trouble with the authorities. These soon included those responsible for producing the two papers.

In April 1916 the *Voice of Labour* published Fred Dunn's front-page article 'Defying the Act', and 10,000 copies of a leaflet reprinting it were produced by Keell

and distributed by Lilian. The Freedom Press office was raided on 5 May, and they were both arrested and tried under the Defence of the Realm Act for conduct 'prejudicial to recruiting and discipline'. Keell pleaded not guilty and made a vigorous defence; Lilian pleaded guilty, remarking that 'there seemed little to say, as her whole crime appeared to be that of telling the truth'. He was fined £100 or three months in prison, she was fined £25 or two months; both refused to pay and were imprisoned.

By that time they had become companions and Lilian was pregnant (at the age of forty), so she was kept in the hospital at Holloway Prison; she was treated well enough, but she became worried about the possible effects on the child, and paid her fine two weeks before she was due for release. Most of the militant men were in prison or hiding, and she felt that she could take no further active part in the struggle; she therefore moved into a more peaceful phase of her career.

Lilian had resigned from the Post Office before going into prison, and on her release she was cared for for a time by rich comrades (especially George Davison of Kodak). When her child was old enough to be looked after, however, she began to make her living again. For more than twenty-five years she managed health food shops, first in London and then in Gloucestershire. From the proceeds she and Keell were able to live and bring up their son — and also to keep *Freedom* going for several years during the decline of the anarchist movement after the First World War and the Russian Revolution.

During the 1920s she spent most of the time living at the long-established Whiteway Colony in Gloucestershire and keeping a shop in the neighbouring town of Stroud, while Keell still spent some time in London, struggling to keep *Freedom* alive. In 1927 the paper was finally forced to cease publication, and in 1928 he moved permanently to Whiteway. Whiteway was important to them both, as a model of the society of the future as well as a happy refuge from the unhappy society of the present.

When Vernon Richards began *Spain and the World* to continue the tradition of the old *Freedom*, in 1936, Lilian and Keell gave it their full support. It was published by Keell until his death in June 1938, and after that Lilian continued to help, coming to London to work in the office at weekends. The Spanish Civil War ended and the Second World War began, the paper changed its name to *Revolt!* and then to *War Commentary*, and entered a new struggle against war. In 1943, at the age of sixty-seven, Lilian gave up her shop in Stroud — but, far from retiring, she now began the third and possibly the most important phase of her career.

For more than twenty-five years Lilian Wolfe was the centre of the administration of the Freedom Press at its various premises in London. She was the person on whom every organisation depends — the completely reliable worker who runs the office, opening and closing the shop, answering the telephone and the post, doing the accounts and keeping people in touch, and generally keeping things going. She maintained personal contact with the thousands of people who read the paper — which changed its name back to *Freedom* at the end of the Second World War in 1945 — and with many other old anarchists and new ones all over the world.

Lilian's name hardly ever appeared in print — 'I am no writer', she said — but she played a more important part than many comrades whose names were seen in the paper or heard at meetings. And although she remained



Marie Louise Berneri

above all the quiet administrator of the movement, she was no cipher. She signed one of the many protests against Herbert Read's acceptance of a knighthood in 1953, and when the nuclear disarmament movement emerged she became an enthusiastic supporter — being seen at every Aldermaston March from 1958 onwards and on the Committee of 100 sit-downs from 1961 to 1964; she was once more arrested and fined, and her only concession to advancing age was that this time she paid up.

She was well known for her almost incredibly spartan way of life, and she not only managed to live on her meagre pension and frugal savings but actually contrived to put money aside for distribution to libertarian papers, political prisoners and other deserving causes. In 1962 she had to move to Cheltenham for family reasons, but she was soon back in the office, working and living in London during the week and returning to Cheltenham at the weekends for another twelve years.

In 1966 hundreds of members of the anarchist movement subscribed to give her a ninetieth-birthday holiday in the United States. In 1969 personal differences at the Freedom Press led to her departure from the office where she had served for so long, but she expressed no bitterness and continued to work for the libertarian movement, doing clerical jobs for the War Resisters International and the National Council for Civil Liberties until only a month before her death. At the very end of her life she took pleasure in personally distributing items from the collection of books and other material accumulated by Keell and herself to various libertarian libraries and individuals. She died at her son's house in Cheltenham on 28 April 1974, at the age of ninety-eight.

A ninetieth-birthday tribute by Vernon Richards was published in *Freedom* on 25 December 1965, and an interview in the women's libertarian paper *Shrew* in August 1972. Obituary articles appeared in *Freedom* and other anarchist papers and also in some feminist papers after her death; later an interview with her appeared in *Z-Revue* 1 (1974) and a profile of her appeared in *Wildcat* 6 (1975), the latter being reprinted in Sheila Rowbotham's book *Dreams and Dilemmas* (1983). **NW**

Marie Louise Berneri

1918-1949

Marie Louise Berneri was a leading member of the Freedom Group during the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, and until her early death. British anarchism in the 1930s was far from being an active or even lively movement, despite the appearance of the *Freedom Bulletin* and *Freedom* (New Series). This changed only in the second half of the decade after, as Albert Meltzer once quite rightly pointed out, 'Vernon Richards...started *Spain and the World* on his own, and with only very meagre support in the following years, made it the focal point for the revival of Freedom Press and the propagandist activity well known to...readers of *Freedom*'. Of that meagre support the most important contribution came from Marie Louise Berneri.

Maria Luisa Berneri was born on 1 March 1918 in Arezzo near Florence, the elder daughter of Camillo and Giovanna Berneri. Her father, originally a socialist, became an anarchist in the early 1920s, and was soon one of the best-known (and at times most controversial) intellectuals in the Italian anarchist movement. He was a teacher who after Mussolini's seizure of power in 1922 refused to accept the demands laid upon the teaching profession by the Fascists, and in 1926 he went into exile in France. In Paris his — and his family's — home soon became a centre of anti-Fascist activities, and his two daughters grew up in a highly politicised environment.

Adopting the French version of her name, Marie Louise obtained her baccalauréat and in the mid-1930s started to study psychology at the Sorbonne. She soon became involved in the anarchist movement and participated in the production of the short-lived paper *Révision* (with Luis Mercier Vega, alias S Parane, alias Ridel). At the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War her father went to Spain and, after a short period of active fighting on the Aragon front, eventually took up residence in Barcelona in order to edit the Italian-language paper *Guerra di Classe*, perhaps the most clear-sighted revolutionary anarchist paper to come out of the Spanish Revolution. Marie Louise went twice to Barcelona, the second time after her father's assassination by Communists in May 1937; subsequently she came to England, where she joined her companion Vernon Richards and spent the rest of her life. (They married to give her the protection of British nationality.) Her sister Giliane remained in France where she studied psychology and in the years after the War also became active in the anarchist movement. Their mother Giovanna, who during the 1920s and 1930s had become more and more involved in anti-Fascist activities and eventually the anarchist movement, was during the War arrested in France, interned for a while in the South of France, and then eventually handed over to the Italian authorities; she was imprisoned in Italy till the end of the War, and then after the Liberation became one of the most prominent and active anarchists in Italy.

From 1936 until her death twelve years later, every activity undertaken by Freedom Press was infused by Marie Louise Berneri's personality. Already in Paris she had been closely involved (with her father and Tom Keell) in the preparatory discussions and collecting of funds for *Spain and the World*, which Vernon Richards started in December 1936. After coming to England in

1937 she took an active part in the production of the paper; and between February and June 1939 she took part in the attempt to provide some formal link for the anarchist movement by the production of *Revolt!*, the successor of *Spain and the World* (with Vernon Richards, Albert Meltzer, Tom Brown, Mr and Mrs Leach, and Sturgess). She also was one of the small group which started *War Commentary* in November 1939. Already knowing Italian, French and Spanish, she quickly mastered English and became one of the main editorial writers, specialising in international affairs. She was an effective public speaker, paper-seller, and meeting organiser. But above all she was the emotional and intellectual centre of the group.

At the end of the Spanish Civil War she was active in organising relief for Spanish orphans and refugees. Her wide contacts in and knowledge of the international movement gave her great authority among anarchists, but her libertarian principles and personal modesty prevented her from misusing it. In April 1945 she was one of the four editors of *War Commentary* who were tried for incitement to disaffection, but she was acquitted on a legal technicality (a wife cannot conspire with her husband), and when her three comrades were imprisoned she took the main responsibility for continuing the paper into the postwar period. She maintained her interest in psychology, and she was one of the first people in Britain who discussed the work of Wilhelm Reich, in an article 'Sexuality and Freedom' in George Woodcock's *Now* 5 (August 1945).

At the end of 1948 she gave birth to a still-born child, and on 13 April 1949 she herself unexpectedly died from a virus infection. She was a highly intelligent and deeply committed revolutionary anarchist; she was also a remarkably beautiful woman and a widely loved personality. Her sudden death at the age of only 31 was a tragedy not only for her friends and comrades but for the whole anarchist movement.

Apart from her many contributions to the Freedom Press periodicals, she added an interesting postscript to *Vote — What For?* (1942), a new version of Malatesta's anti-election pamphlet of 1890, and she wrote a substantial part of the Freedom pamphlet *The Russian Myth* (1941), partly reproduced in her *Workers in Stalin's Russia* (1944), a detailed and influential booklet describing the real situation in the Soviet Union. After her death the Marie Louise Berneri Memorial Committee produced *Neither East Nor West* (1952), an anthology of her editorial articles from 1939 to 1948. Another posthumous publication was *Journey Through Utopia* (1950), a survey of utopian ideas which was originally published by Routledge and is still available from the Freedom Press (and which, with Vernon Richards' *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*, is the most widely translated publication of Freedom Press after the War).

Much valuable material about her appeared in *Freedom* and other anarchist periodicals after her death, and the Marie Louise Berneri Memorial Committee produced *Marie Louise Berneri, 1918-1949: A Tribute* (1949). An article about her by Philip Sansom was published (in a mutilated form) in *Zero* 1 (June 1977), and a recollection by George Woodcock in *Open Road* 6 (Spring 1978).

N W & H B

Premises we have had : 1936-1986

Unlike the situation during the first half of our existence, when we were in Ossulston Street for more than thirty years, it is only since the last move to Angel Alley in 1968 that we have had a really permanent address.

When *Spain and the World* was launched at the end of 1936, we used the printer's London office in Goswell Road, Clerkenwell, for our mail, Tom Keell's home at Whiteway Colony for literature orders, and the editor's mother's place in Soho for dispatching the paper as well as for supplying those comrades who engaged in street-selling and who attended public meetings.

By issue 13 we had changed printers and therefore could no longer have mail sent to Clerkenwell. So our mailing address was changed to Whiteway Colony, and this arrangement was to continue until January 1938 when we finally secured a London office. Emma Goldman, who was the representative of the CNT-FAI in Britain and who had until then operated from her flat in West Kensington which she shared with a very rumbustious lady we all knew only by the name of 'Auntie' (Mrs Gordon Crotch), was about to set up the English section of SIA (International Antifascist Solidarity) and needed offices which would include a room large enough to hold exhibitions of photos from Spain, pictures and posters.

We found just the place in Frith Street, Soho. The building was owned by the well-known Italian Socialist anti-Fascist Dr Galasso. The basement was a very mysterious Indian club; the front ground floor was rented by a French watch-repairer; the back part was Dr Galasso's very tatty surgery, where he received more political friends than patients; the first floor consisted of one large room — excellent for exhibitions and lectures; the second floor consisted of Emma's office, *Spain and the World's* office, and a smaller one occupied by Ralph Barr, Emma's secretary; on the third floor was an Italian refugee in one room, and the remaining space was used for storing our books and pamphlets. This blissful existence for *Spain and the World* at a rent of 30s (£1.50) a week paid to the CNT-FAI Bureau continued until the end of the struggle in Spain and Emma's departure for Canada. But with the arrival of our comrades from Central Spain after the defeat (in April 1939) we kept on the premises which not only provided some accommodation but enabled us to make good use of the first floor to serve meals for 30 or 40 of them daily and also as the meeting-place for the 'leading militants' from the Madrid sector to hold almost daily post-mortems on the defeat as well as to lay plans for the future.

When *War Commentary* was launched, at the end of 1939, we were again without premises. The first issue used the Whiteway Colony address, but by issue 2 we had found a room in Newbury Street, Clerkenwell, which served at least as a postal address for the next eighteen months while the physical work of editing and dispatching was carried on from comrades' homes, as well as from a house in Chalcot Square, Camden Town, which we were renting to house those of the Spanish comrades who had not yet found accommodation in private houses.

In July 1941 we found a first-floor flat in Belsize Road, Swiss Cottage, which provided us with a meeting-room and 'bookshop', an office, and a large

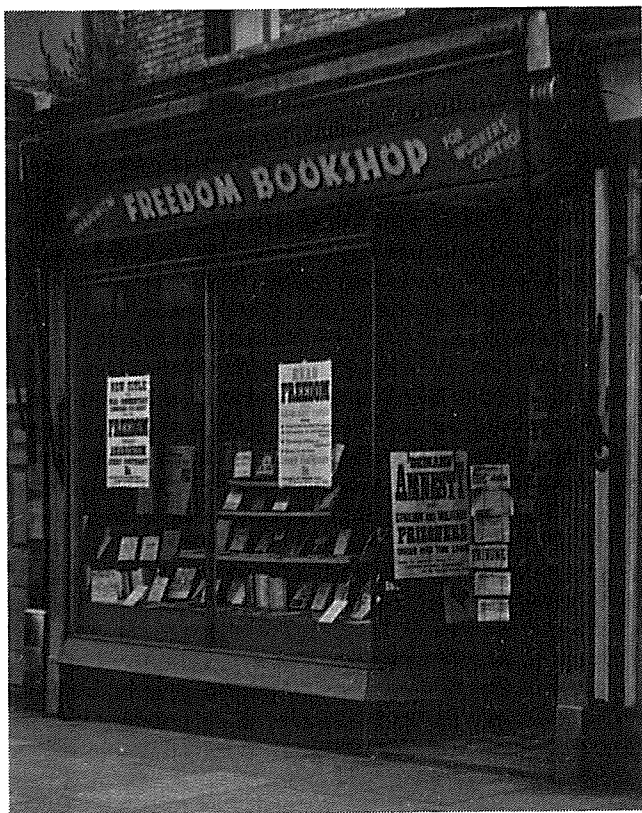
store-room plus kitchen and bathroom at a very low rent. The German air-raids on London saw to it that tenants and not accommodation were at a premium at the time.

For a short time before Belsize Road we ran a pocket-size bookshop in Red Lion Passage, Holborn, which had a useful basement to store stock as well as the first items for a projected Freedom Press Library. All of it went up in flames during a fire bomb raid in May 1941.

Belsize Road was a busy office, for by then Freedom Press publications were appearing in large numbers and the booksellers — including W H Smith and Boots, to mention the largest — were desperately short of goods to sell (paper rationing) and their business interests came first when deciding whether to stock anarchist and anti-war literature! When in December 1944 the office was raided by the Special Branch, our literature was on sale at no fewer than 300 bookshops all over the country. The police intruders were most impressed by the piles of packets waiting to be dispatched the next day and were in a quandary whether they should 'search' the contents of the packets as well as of the premises. The thought of getting home late was the determining factor in their decision not to open all those packets — much to our relief. The publicity given to the raid had immediate repercussions so far as the landlord's agents were concerned. We were given one month's notice to quit.

Finding new premises was not easy, because on at least one occasion when we succeeded the deal was suddenly broken off with no reasons given. We were convinced that it was the doing of the Special Branch: our phones were tapped, and members of Freedom Press were constantly tailed by Special Branch officers. However, we were able to make alternative arrangements, for in 1942 we had taken over the Express Printers in Angel Alley, in Whitechapel High Street, and in 1944 had opened a bookshop at 132 Cheltenham Road, Bristol. The mail orders for literature were diverted to Bristol and the trade orders dealt with from Whitechapel until premises in Red Lion Street, Holborn, were found at the beginning of 1945. Though the editors of *War Commentary* were by then appearing at the Magistrates Court about once a week — and receiving much press publicity (not all unfavourable — and it certainly boosted sales of *War Commentary* at Hyde Park dramatically), we had no difficulty in securing the Red Lion Street premises, the landlord of which was a Lord Vernon (no connection with any member of Freedom Press), but the solicitor dealing with the lease was a well-known eccentric called Ambrose Appelbe (an active member of the Fabian Society and the Progressive League and leading campaigner for health food and divorce law reform). He obviously considered us as fellow eccentrics, and so we were 'in'.

Apart from the fact that it was a slum property with its quota of rats and damp (which played havoc with anything stored in the basement), it remained our base until 1960. The property was sold and our lease had expired, and proposed new terms were well beyond our means. A friend in the estate agency business who was on business terms with the new agents didn't manage to



Freedom Bookshop Bristol 1944

get the proposed rent reduced but, at least squeezed a £500 handshake for us to get out in return for not making a fuss; which we did. Just at that time a builder whose carpenter's shop and offices were situated in Maxwell Road, Fulham, went bankrupt and through friends of comrades these premises were made available while more permanent accommodation was being sought.

Purely as an office and stock room, Maxwell Road was an ideal place. (There was even a 200-foot garden cultivated by a member of the Freedom Press which provided flowers, fruit and vegetables in season.) But it was even more off the main road than where we are now in Angel Alley.

By then problems were facing us at the Whitechapel premises. When we took over the Express Printers in 1942, we paid a rent of £2 a week and about 10s (50p) a week for rates for the whole building (basement and three floors). The new problem arose when the second of our landlords at 84A (not 84B), who had not increased our rent excessively, died. His son obviously had cash-flow problems (but lots of property!) and felt that since he could not easily chuck us out — by then we had been there for more than 25 years — he offered us a choice between a lease at a comparatively high rent and the opportunity to purchase at a relatively low price. The main snag (apart from the fact that we had no money) was that he could only sell the two buildings 84A and 84B and a bombed-out site 84C as one lot. This is where 'Friends of Freedom Press' comes in, but that part of the story will be recounted elsewhere. Suffice it to say the deal was done and the *Freedom Press* moved out of Fulham to join Express Printers at 84A in Angel Alley in 1968. The move was remarkable with volunteers galore, and assisted by an impressive low-loader loaned to us with driver by our good friend the late Hew Warburg.

This was, however, only a temporary move, since we were proposing to make our permanent quarters in 84B which was still occupied by another printer who took

more time than expected to move out. And when he did, a considerable amount of work had to be done on the building especially to strengthen the floors to take the physical and philosophical weight of anarchist publications, as well as to move the printing machines from the basement of 84A. Since the printing plant was at least as old as our dear comrade Lilian Wolfe, it was surely a compliment both to the makers and to the engineers who carried out the move that our then machine-minder (and dear friend, Ben Chandler, now approaching his 80th year) was able to turn out the first issue of *Freedom* at the new premises without problems.

Nearly 20 years since that move we are still there, and the building is bustling with activity. On the ground floor is the Aldgate Press which was launched by funds from the 'Friends of Freedom Press' but which operates most successfully as an autonomous, commercial printing partnership. All the old machines have gone and new technology introduced which, like everything in this field today, is obsolete before one gets accustomed to its possible qualities. On the first floor the large room is the Freedom Press Bookshop with a comprehensive stock of anarchist literature as well as a selection of relevant non-anarchist titles. The Bookshop is at present open daily from Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am to 6 pm. On the same floor is the *Freedom* and Freedom Press office.

On the second floor is the Freedom Press stock-room with some 25,000 books and pamphlets and Aldgate Press office and typesetting department. On the third floor A Distribution have their stock room and Freedom Press have the accumulated materials, books, journals, files, etc., for the Freedom Library that has still not materialised. In the meantime some so-called comrades as well as unfriendly 'real revolutionaries' (as opposed to the so-called 'quietists' of the Freedom Press) have been helping themselves to valuable material from this collection — including two sets of the first series of *Freedom* (1886 - 1927), so that we no longer have a complete file of the paper. If in this Centenary Year they feel like making friendly gestures, perhaps a good start would be to return the material they have purloined over the years.

Today in Angel Alley in the single building we have the kind of infrastructure — offices, printing works, stock room, bookshop, wholesale distribution, a potential library-research set-up, no rent to pay and can even pay more than £2,000 a year in rates, apart from all the other overheads — £700 a year for heating, £400 for the telephone, etc. — which we could not even dream of 50 years ago. We have also in the past few years attracted three generous friends who have made it possible for the Freedom Press to undertake a considerable publishing programme which will continue into 1987.

But making anarchist propaganda does not depend only on infrastructure. Thanks to 'Friends of Freedom Press' there could always be a home for the Freedom Press and even the funds to finance a few publications. Publishing groups are mushrooming and many are like the mushrooms appearing one day and disappearing the next. Some like the Independent Labour Party inherited the assets when the split took place, and have gone on ever since producing literature though the party no longer exists as such. The means have become the ends.

But, as we had the occasion to tell a buyer for W H Smith at their headquarters in Swindon when she sought to instruct our representative about the kind of books they could sell: Freedom Press are not publishers but propagandists.

VR

Printers We Have Known : 1936-1986

Perhaps one needs to have a centenary to think of casting an eye over the various printers' imprints that have graced our publications over the years. Unlike the present practice in *Freedom* (which gives a prominent place on page 2 not only to the printer but to the mysterious, charming typesetters, whose modesty prevents them from being known other than as 'Mum's the Word'), the usual tradition is to relegate the names of publisher and printer to the bottom of the last column on the back page in the smallest possible type; and since the same type is used over the years, in due course it becomes virtually illegible. One wonders why this should be so. The fact that there is a legal obligation to provide this information may explain part of the reluctance to display too prominently who is the publisher and printer of radical publications. If you are out to get them for libel or official secrets you will have more difficulty if there is no imprint. And maybe there is no love lost between publisher and printer, and why unless you love them should you give printers free advertisements — which, apart from anything else, if they bring in more work probably means that you will get worse service than before. And as for the publishers, they want a quiet life, and if it is almost impossible to find their address to direct your protests and complaints, they hope you will be put off doing so. See how long it takes you to find the address of those worthy journals like the *Guardian* or, if you have more time at the weekend, *The Observer* unless you look right at the bottom of the back page with the assistance of a magnifying glass.

Be that as it may: we have been looking at our imprints and remembering some of our printers during the past fifty years. We have had a variety, good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant. Most of them have been interesting, none have fully shared our ideas, though in some cases there was common ground.

We had contact with two printers in the East End of London — and in fact the first 32-page pamphlet on Spain which was the forerunner of *Spain and the World* was published by Narod Press — but the first twelve fortnightly issues of that journal were printed by a set-up called V W H Printers Ltd in Faringdon, Berkshire. There was an East End connection with a man called Judah Shenfield, whose brother ran the London office of V W H Printers in Goswell Road, which was our mailing address (prominently displayed at the top of column 1, page 2, followed by the editorial) for that period. Judah Shenfield was also a printer, in Angel Alley, at 84A Whitechapel High Street, where he traded under the name of Express Printers. (More about that later.)

The boss at V W H Ltd was a professional soldier (of course an officer; how could a private manage both?). For the first issue he came with Shenfield No 2 and the galley proofs to the editor's home, and since the latter had never in his young life edited a paper, let alone made up a dummy for the compositor, he was delighted that the Boss in person undertook to paste up that first issue. The fact that it looks just as a provincial weekly looked in those days is because V W H were the printers of a number of provincial weeklies. By issue 2 the editor felt that for better or worse he should do the paste-up. But a

word about the Boss. He was obviously a leader of men; Shenfield was always two paces behind. And he had charm, striking well-groomed features, and was well-groomed; smoked from a cigarette holder, and looked larger than life-size because of his heavy black astrakhan-like overcoat. Our first printer was Colonel R D Q Henriques who was to become a very well-known novelist.

For reasons that now escape us, issue 13 was printed at the Narod Press in Whitechapel. It is said that Rudolf Rocker the German anarcho-syndicalist goy learned his Yiddish from Papa Naroditsky. When we started printing with Narod in 1937, the stocky Papa was always in control; in shirt-sleeves with a waistcoat, chain-smoking Karem Turkish cigarettes, also from a holder, he had everybody under his thumb, starting with his three by comparison gigantic sons, and the rest of the staff consisting almost entirely of apprentices. They were all Jewish, keen as mustard and, though badly paid, they were taught every trick of their trade. The three brothers were brilliant typesetters. One of them was the serious member of the firm; the other two — well, they may still be alive! To produce each issue of *Spain and the World* meant supervising the work of the apprentices in the composing department (where the type was made up into the pages). Apart from the boys themselves, who were so much more mature than goys of their age, one had the opportunity to meet other editors supervising their journals — the punchy Isidore Green of the *Sporting Weekly*, and the gentle-speaking West Indian Marxist C L R James who was producing his *Fight!* No punch-ups, political or otherwise.

Again for some forgotten reason, issue 42 was printed by Wyndham Printers in Hackney (which included Shenfield No 2), which was disastrous because they just didn't know how to make up a newspaper. We left them with issue 47, and started 1939 with a change of title to *Revolt! Incorporating Spain and the World* and a change of printer — back to Narod Press. *Revolt!* ended its publication after six issues, in June, as the war-clouds gathered over Europe.

In December we were back in print with the second issue of *War Commentary*, and back with Narod Press, but it was not a happy relationship. Apart from the Narods being pro-war, by issue 4 they were insisting on acting as censors or else. It was therefore fortunate that by July 1940 we made contact with the pacifist brothers Hugh and Ashley Brock, who were running a printing press off the Harrow Road in West London (and had just rescued *Peace News* when it lost its printers). We had two good years with them; we dealt mainly with Ashley, Hugh being much more active politically, and going to jail for his objection to conscription more than once at that time. The only thing which made us look elsewhere was the progressive increase in printing charges.

A chance meeting with the wildest of the Narod brothers (who spent more time in the West End than the East End) led to the idea of running our own printing press. We learnt that Judah Shenfield had joined the army and had been killed in action and that the landlord had taken over the plant at Express Printers and was looking for somebody else to take it on. Only anarchists

could be so unpractical as to see possibilities in the dump at 84A Whitechapel High Street. The large machines were in the basement and covered by plaster from the ceiling which had collapsed on to them during an air-raid. The ground floor had an office, benches, a small printing machine, and a huge 42-inch guillotine of 1892 vintage operated by a massive electric motor. When the guillotine descended on a ream of double-demy book paper, the building trembled, but survived. On the first floor was the composing room, with hundreds of cases of metal type of all sizes, wooden type for posters, and a complete range of Russian and German gothic type as well (imagine if the Special Branch when they raided us in 1944 had done their job properly and found all that Russian and German type!). Express Printers had been for years the recognised foreign language printers in the East End. The *Jewish Weekly* occupied the second floor, where they set up their paper on two linotype machines and made up the pages into formes which were then dispatched to the basement by a hand-operated lift to be printed by us. On that second floor there was also a linotype machine belonging to Express Printers which by the time we arrived had been cannibalised for spare parts for the other machines.

All the plant described, and more, was ours for £500. We raised the money in no time, and within four weeks the press was operating, thanks to a few volunteers who cleared up the mess and to Dick Pugh Senior — a quality printer who ran a small print shop in the Fulham area, and who undertook to get the new Express Printers going. Old Dick was a man of few words, who had been a conscientious objector in the First World War, which is saying something. His pipe seemed to be his constant companion and left his mouth only when he wanted to emphasise a point and then it was used as a conductor's baton. All worthwhile people have some eccentricity which comes as a surprise. Old Dick was no exception. He belonged to the Serpentine swimming club, whose members never missed a plunge in Hyde Park's lake, winter or summer, even if it meant breaking the ice. One cannot help but feel that such spartan sports shortened Dick's life. When he got the press operational in 1942 he brought with him Ben Chandler, a Thames waterman, who liked his beer and did not go swimming in the river, and who managed to master the idiosyncrasies of an 80-year-old printing machine, into which he would hand-feed sheets of paper 35 inches by 22½ inches with the kind of skill completely unknown in printing today. Ben was to remain as machine-minder and good friend to all at Freedom Press for more than 30 years.

After Old Dick's departure, the composing room was in the hands of Bill Anderson, an octogenarian who, although he hated everything we stood for, never once let us down, nor sabotaged the paper (no exclamations or protests inserted into the text by the typesetters and printers in those days!). He was in his 90s when he finally retired, and 'young' Dick Pugh (quite middle-aged by then) took over the general management of the Express Printers as well as running his own print business there. Although Dick was a first-class craftsman, he was not a good organiser even of his own time.

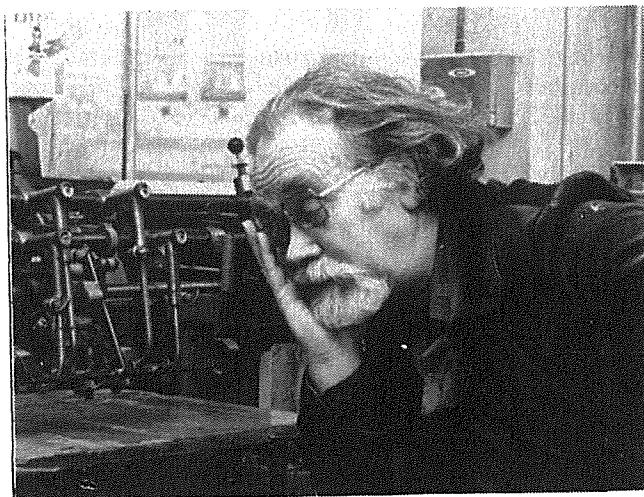
From 1942 when we started doing our own printing until 1964, all our typesetting was done by Prompt-Comps, a one-man set-up in the Drury Lane area. Again an unsympathetic but very competent linotype operator who invariably had to put up with the problems arising from trying to produce a paper

entirely with voluntary writers, editors, etc. After 1964 (and the beginning of the collective editorship of *Freedom*), the typesetting was transferred to Morris Typesetters in the East End. But in due course the collective abandoned letterpress and opted for the new offset litho techniques, on the grounds that the old system was getting too expensive. So *Freedom* was actually set on a typewriter and the pages pasted up and printed in Colchester by the Vineyard Press, which was then run by Charles Hall, another sympathetic printer. Unfortunately, at a certain stage the National Graphical Association representatives, acting on instructions from above, declared that Vineyard could not print *Freedom* from pages that had not been pasted up by NGA members. Charles, while recognising that commercial firms should not get their camera-ready material done on the cheap, defended non-profit set-ups like us doing their own thing, and told us that he would get another printer to produce the paper. However the NGA managed to block that arrangement as well.

On to the stage came Ian King — 'Ian the Printer' of Magic Ink — who had no union axe to grind, and for five years printed *Freedom* in Margate, for a time with help from Women in Print in South London. But once again costs escalated. Apart from the fact that *Freedom* Press books were being printed in Aberdeen and Nottingham, getting the copy to Margate and the proofs back, and the same procedure with the artwork and the printed copies of the paper, all made it clear that the time was ripe to think again of setting up our own printing press with the new technology on the premises. In 1969 we moved across Angel Alley from 84A to 84B Whitechapel High Street, machines (1892 guillotine and all!), stock, library and bookshop. One of the most generous Friends of Freedom Press was impressed by the proposal to set up a new print shop in 84B and replace all the old plant, and provided the means to do so. A number of volunteers (they shall be nameless now for their own sakes) got the ground floor at 84B ready, and Aldgate Press has now been operating for five years as we had hoped it would when the name was adopted more than 20 years ago.

It is true that there have been difficulties — both personal and political — between the Freedom collective and the Aldgate Press partnership, and once more costs have tended to rise; but at least there are now in one place a headquarters for the Freedom Press, an independent bookshop collective, and independent periodical, and an independent printing press which does our work and also outside work — political and commercial. What happens next will have to be told in our next centenary issue.

VR



Philip Sansom at Aldgate Press

Our addresses

Publishing (and generally printing) addresses

October 1886 — January 1888	34 Bouverie Street, London EC
February 1888 — March 1889	19 Cursitor Street, London EC
April 1889 — December 1889	28 Gray's Inn Road, London WC
January 1890 — January 1891	57 Chancery Lane, London WC
February 1891 — August 1892	26 Newington Green Road, London N
September 1892 — January/February 1893	72 Kentish Town Road, London NW
March 1893 — November/December 1894	61 St Augustine's Road, London NW
January 1895 — August 1898	7 Lamb's Conduit Street, London WC
September 1898 — September 1928	127 Ossulston Street, London NW
September 1928 — December 1932	Whiteway Colony, Stroud, Gloucestershire

Different printing addresses

August 1916 — March 1920	Blackfriars Press, Manchester
April 1920 — May 1920 and January 1927 — December 1927	Utopia Press, 44 Worship Street, London EC2
April 1925 — December 1932	Workers' Friend, London E1

Publishing addresses

December 1936 — June 1937	207 Goswell Road, London EC1
June 1937 — January 1938	Whiteway Colony, Stroud, Gloucestershire
January 1938 — June 1939	21 Frith Street, London W1
November 1939	Whiteway Colony, Stroud, Gloucestershire
December 1939 — July 1941	9 Newbury Street, London EC1
July 1941 — December 1944	27 Belsize Road, London NW6
December 1944 — February 1945	c/o Express Printers, 84A Whitechapel High Street, London E1
March 1945 — September 1960	27 Red Lion Street, London WC1
September 1960 — May 1968	17A Maxwell Road, London SW6
May 1968 — April 1969	84A Whitechapel High Street, London E1
May 1969	84B Whitechapel High Street, London E1

Printers

October 1936 — December 1936	Narod Press, 129/131 Bedford Street, London E1
December 1936 — May 1937	V W H Press, Faringdon, Berkshire
May 1937	West Midlands Newspapers, Faringdon, Berkshire
June 1937 — September 1938	Narod Press, 129/131 Bedford/Cavell Street, London E1
September 1938 — December 1938	Wyndham Printers, 1A Gransden Avenue, London E8
February 1939 — May 1940	Narod Press, 129/131 Cavell Street, London E1
June 1940 — May 1942	C A Brock, 463 Harrow Road/79 Southern Row, Kensal Road, London W10
June 1942 — December 1972	Express Printers, 84A/84B Whitechapel High Street, London E1
January 1973 — August 1976	Vineyard Press, Colchester, Essex
September 1976 — April 1977	Magic Ink/Ian the Printer, Margate, Kent
May 1977 — June 1977	Vineyard Press, Colchester, Essex
June 1977 — April 1978	Women in Print, 16A Iliffe Yard, London SE17
June 1977 — July 1981	Magic Ink/Ian the Printer, Margate, Kent
August 1981	Aldgate Press, 84B Whitechapel High Street, London E1

Freedom Press and the anarchist movement in the '50s and '60s

Anarchist journals, especially if they are successful, tend to gather individuals around them which form the basis of, first, propaganda groups, then embryonic 'movements'. In Britain the wider anarchist movement has never really got beyond the embryonic stage, but there has been some interesting group activity.

When I joined the London anarchists in 1943 there was a grandiosely-named Anarchist Federation. I am not sure when that was officially founded, but what was evident was that it had grown up out of the group which gathered around *Spain and the World* in celebration of the Spanish Revolution, during the Spanish Civil War. The AF here in Britain consisted of groups in London, Kingston and Glasgow. There was no separate Freedom Press group, the editors of *War Commentary* being the founder-members (who had produced *Spain and the World*) plus valuable newcomers who had come out of the various anti-war groupings; they called themselves an Editorial Board, but individually they were all simply members of the AF.

Everyone in the AF was implacably anti-war; some had already served terms of imprisonment as conscientious objectors — one, Elizabeth Earley, for refusing to be conscripted into war industry. Outside the AF were a number of Spanish CNT refugees, who had managed to get to London in 1939 and who believed the war was a war against Fascism, and that after defeating Hitler, the Allies would march on to Madrid and demolish Franco. These were members of their own group of CNT-in-exile who produced their own little duplicated newsletter, but, while being friends and comrades, could not be members of the AF because of their support for the Churchill-led British government. As a new boy, I was awed by these experienced revolutionaries, but thought them rather arrogant and slightly contemptuous of our little movement, compared to the massive CNT/FAI.

Present readers can see for themselves that *War Commentary* was genuinely anarchist, anarcho-syndicalist and worker-orientated. Yet the Spanish comrades were able to persuade enough members of the AF to think that it was otherwise and in 1944 there was a damaging split dividing comrades in all three groups. The attempt had been to get control of *War Commentary* and the publishing title, Freedom Press. It failed.

The events of 1944 were responsible for the creation of the first explicit Freedom Press Group. The take-away group took with them the title of Anarchist Federation, changing it to Anarchist Federation of Britain (presumably to be nearer to Anarchist Federation of Iberia, or FAI?). The Freedom Press Group was joined by a newly-formed London Anarchist Group, and was the foundation of the Union of Anarchist Groups, including a fine group in Glasgow (the best speakers in which had stayed with FP) and a small group in Bristol, where another Freedom Bookshop had been opened. (The Kingston group disintegrated, one of its members going back to being a local councillor!)

The London Anarchist Group was what would now,

I suppose, be called the 'street-wise' group. Its job was to hold meetings — outdoor meetings at Marble Arch, Tower Hill and elsewhere, and the indoor meetings that had been a regular feature for several years during the war.

Membership of the LAG and FP overlapped. Over the years any number from two to six members of the Freedom Group would also be involved in LAG activities. The main activity of the UAG was the annual Summer School, started in 1947 and held as far as possible in different cities each year — London, Glasgow, Liverpool — and usually followed by a camping holiday. These gave great opportunities for comrades from all over the country to get together.

It is not, I believe, purely by coincidence that almost immediately after the 1944 split, and to the embarrassment of the comrades responsible, the Special Branch raided Freedom Press office and the homes of several individual members.

During the subsequent (1945) trial the prosecution lost its initiative when we were able to turn the issue into one of an attack on free speech — one of the freedoms the war was supposed to be fought for!

In doing this we were helped enormously by many writers and social thinkers who were not necessarily anarchists but saw clearly the danger to civil liberties posed by wartime restrictions. One who was a declared anarchist was Herbert Read, whose book *Poetry and Anarchism*, first published by Faber & Faber in 1938, had been reprinted by Freedom in 1941. Read has since been dismissed by anarchists because later he accepted a knighthood 'for services to literature'. Personally, I like to think of him as the man who, having won the DSO and the MC as a captain in the First World War, became bitterly anti-militarist and then anarchist, and as a well-known authority on art and literature was prepared to stick his neck out to defend my comrades and me when we were attacked by the state. Herbert Read persuaded pro-war socialists like George Orwell to support our defence committee and, although he hated speaking in public, got on to platforms *twice* to speak out in our defence, alongside politicians that he might well have privately despised.

I should point out that the Freedom Press Defence Committee did not cease to function after our imprisonments were over, but changed its name to the Freedom Defence Committee and was guardian of civil liberties for some time afterwards.

Herbert Read was to be of great use to us again when, in March 1952, Freedom Press organised a very special meeting in defence of Spanish anarchists. News was coming from Spain about a wave of repression directed against leading members of the (then underground) CNT. In Barcelona, men and women were being condemned by Military Tribunals to death by firing squad or to terms of imprisonment of 20 to 30 years.

We decided quite consciously to pull rank in choosing our speakers. They were to be internationally known writers and artists whose standing not even Franco could ignore. Once again Herbert Read used his

influence and we had a platform consisting of Jacob Bronowski, Augustus John, Henry Moore, MPs Fenner Brockway and Michael Foot, veteran socialist H N Brailsford, Kingsley Martin the editor of the *New Statesman* (and no great friend of anarchists, but still...) and Herbert himself, with myself as Chairman. Telegrams of support were received from Bertrand Russell, Lewis Mumford, Aldous Huxley, E M Forster, Benjamin Britten, and others. A couple of weeks later we heard that the wave of shooting had been halted. It's wonderful what you can do with a few big names!

Before the meeting, Herbert Read had written a long leading article for *Freedom* in which he referred to Franco as 'The Ape of Hitler'. At the meeting, Bronowski coined a memorable phrase: 'Ought you to appear on this or that platform? The grey thumbprint of expediency blurs our conscience.' He *had* appeared on our platform.

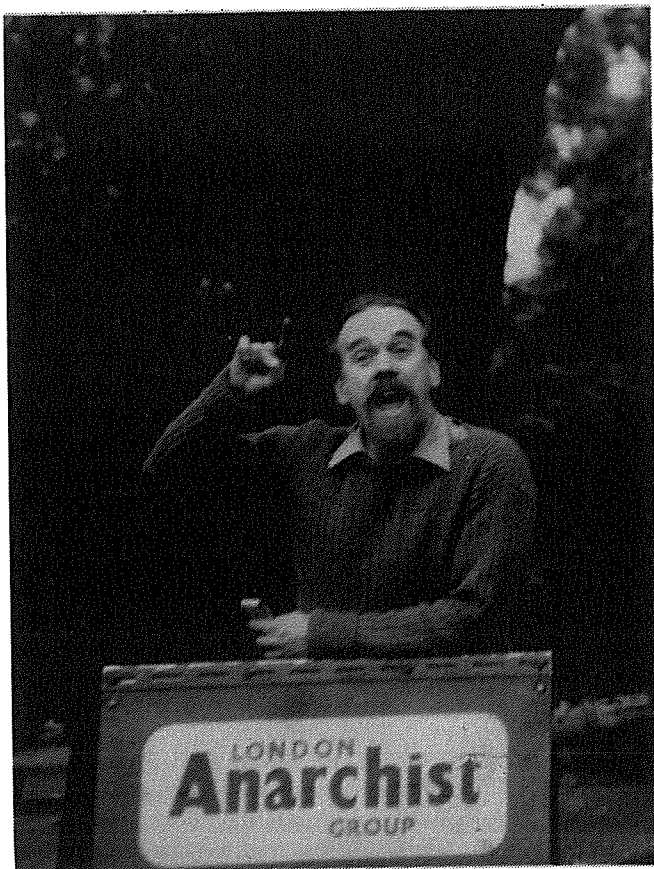
Lest you think I was being carried away from the class struggle on a wave of intellectual elitism, I must mention that I was at the time the nearest thing that *Freedom* had to an industrial editor. Within a few weeks of that meeting The Anarcho-Syndicalist Committee, consisting of myself, Albert Meltzer, Rita Milton and Albert Grace, launched *The Syndicalist*, a small but brightly produced little paper with contributors from various industries — the docks, mining, engineering — and it lasted for all of a year. It was not a Freedom Press publication, but appeared with its blessing, backing up the regular anarcho-syndicalist articles which the senior paper consistently printed.

(It should perhaps be mentioned here that, through Albert Grace, we had established friendly relations with dockers in the East End of London during a massive strike in 1948. The Labour Government had prosecuted four dockers under a wartime regulation (1305) for leading a minor strike on a pay issue, and this prosecution brought out the whole of dockland — and Liverpool as well. While three of the accused were well-known Stalinists, one, Harry Constable, was described as an anarchist. We made contact, only to find he was a kind of maverick Trotskyist, but we got on well and found that the Government's stupid action had made the dockers very receptive to anarcho-syndicalist ideas. Comrade Grace was treated with amused affection by the strike leaders, for he was a good trade-unionist who was always battling with trade union leaderships, and I put that in the plural because Albert was a member of *two* unions — the dockers and the electricians — and he would switch from one industry to the other depending on where the action was.)

I was surprised, not so long ago, to see an anarchist writer declaring that not much was going on in the movement during the fifties, and another, more recently, that 'the 1950s were a period of somnolence for anarchism in Britain' when in fact the anarchists had a much higher profile in London than any comparable group.

In London's great stamping ground for open-air speakers, Hyde Park, we had a nucleus of able speakers in 1950, which by the end of the decade had grown in numbers and experience so that we were always able to answer requests for someone to talk on anarchism, take part in debates or participate in campaigns.

It is not generally appreciated that the campaign against capital punishment, which so agitated the public mind in the 1950s, began with London anarchists. It might be said anarchists have a special interest since in the past so many of our comrades have suffered from it,



Philip Sansom speaking at Marble Arch 1954

but I am prepared to argue that our standpoint was principled.

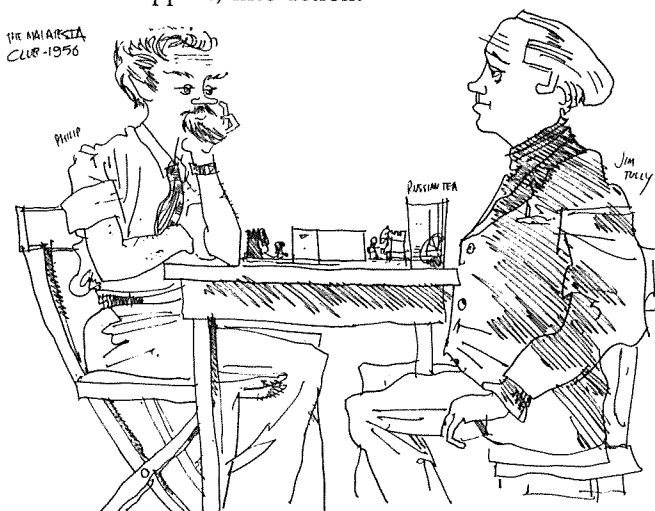
The initiative in this instance came not from within Freedom Press or LAG, but from two individual anarchists, Kitty Lamb and Gerald Kingshott, who asked us to help in starting a campaign. There had been a very disturbing case in which two youths had been caught in a burglary. One was captured, then the other produced a gun and killed a policeman. The killer, being only sixteen, could not be hanged and was sentenced to Borstal. The other, who had been in custody when the policeman was shot, was eighteen; he was sentenced to death and hanged. The general feeling was, if a copper is killed, *someone* has to die...

London Anarchist Group organised *two* large meetings that were held at the St Pancras Town Hall. The first was on 18 February 1953, with Kitty Lamb in the chair, and a varied bag of speakers — Donald Soper (Methodist), F A Ridley (ILP), C H Norman (lawyer), Frank Dawtry (Prison Reform), Sybil Morrison (PPU), myself (LAG) and Sidney Silverman, the Labour MP who was eventually to steer the abolition Bill through the House of Commons.

The second meeting followed quickly with Canon Carpenter, Victor Yates MP, Jean Henderson, Robert Copping, Sidney Silverman, F A Ridley, and myself, a speaker from Norway (which had managed without the death penalty since 1902!) and Gerald Kingshott in the chair. At both meetings the chairpersons read out many telegrams of support from sympathetic writers, politicians, actresses, etc.

By the time of the second meeting, we had given ourselves the name of 'The League Against Capital Punishment'. This was the foundation of the National Campaign for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, launched by Victor Gollancz, backed by Gerald Gardiner QC, Arthur Koestler and many others, and eventually to see the diminutive Sidney Silverman

triumphant. In all the self-congratulation of the influential who had joined the campaign after it got going, few, I suspect, raised their champagne glasses to Kitty Lamb and the late Gerald Kingshott, who had sparked the whole thing off by nudging the LAG, with *Freedom's* support, into action.



Drawn in the Malatesta Club by Rufus Segar 1956

No doubt some of our readers are now looking with horror on all this hob-nobbing with MPs, intellectuals and other reformists, and wondering what it has to do with anarchism. Well, this much: if we can reduce even by a little the right (?) of the state to exercise powers of life and death, we are reversing the 20th century trend of absolute state power. I, for one, was not always comfortable in the company I shared on anti-hanging platforms but after all, what we were seeking *was* a reform in the law which could only be carried out by Parliament. Would it have been better for the gruesome practice of state murder to have carried on?

(There have been other campaigns in which *Freedom* has been so far ahead that it has not been seen to have any part in the popular clamour. Abortion, for instance. The earliest article I ever read on the subject had appeared in *War Commentary* in October 1942, written by our doctor comrade John Hewetson. It did not actually use the phrase 'The womans right to choose', but that was the gist of the argument. It took a long time for the women's movement to catch up, and even longer for the male politicians. But then, I remember how, just after *War Commentary* had published an article on sexual freedom in 1944, a red-faced seller of *Socialist Standard* stormed up to me at Hyde Park and cried 'What the hell has all this sex stuff to do with the working class revolution?')

In 1953 we began to publish in *Freedom* proposals for the creation of an anarchist club in London. The number of people we were contacting at our meetings made it clear that the time had come when we should have a place of our own, instead of relying on meeting rooms in pubs. During the six months of preparation and the raising of funds — ridiculously small by today's inflated standards — we found a cellar in Holborn, bought the tables and chairs (with the help of a friendly furniture dealer in the SPGB!), installed a cooker, plumbed in a sink, slapped on gallons of paint, and were ready to open on 1st May 1954.

A committee of self-appointed foundation members grabbed the privilege of doing all the work. Every evening a different team of three comrades were in charge of refreshments and whatever activity was going on: lectures, discussions, entertainments, sweeping up, whatever. The voluntary workers came from the

Freedom Press Group and the London Anarchist Group, with one or two who would not consider themselves from either.

The Malatesta Club (as we called it) ran for four years, moving from Holborn after two years to Percy Street, off Tottenham Court Road. Activities included hosting an international conference, generating anarchist satirical theatre (ahead of 'the Establishment' or even the BBCs 'That Was the Week That Was') and creating our own trad jazz band. The lectures, debates and discussions were of a high quality, and there seemed a never-ending list of speakers anxious to say their say at the Malatesta. We also lent our space to such as the great old speaker Bonar Thompson, and to an African group representing the independence movements in Nigeria, Kenya and what was to become Tanzania (with visitors like Doris Lessing and Tom Driberg!)

What some might think a more down to earth activity was to establish a street-corner pitch for our platform in Manette Street, on Charing Cross Road, where we held meetings every Saturday night when the West End was thronged with visitors, providing audiences very different from the regulars in Hyde Park.

One evening in October 1956 there was a crowd waiting for us when we arrived. It was the weekend of the Suez Crisis, when British troops were invading Egypt and British planes bombing Cairo — while Russian tanks were invading Hungary. The old imperialism and the new — how could the anarchists lose?

We had a splendid meeting — having to despatch someone back to the Malatesta to bring more *Freedom's* — and ended up blocking the traffic in Charing Cross Road with the police standing helplessly by, knowing they would bring more trouble by trying to break it up. (In all modesty, it has to be admitted that this was before the days of the SPG and today's riot squads.)

The satirical shows at the Malatesta had some more lasting spin-offs at the turn of the decade when we produced, first an 'Election Guyed' for the October '59 General Election, then a 'Bombmakers Guyed' for the CND march of Easter '61 and, later, another 'Election Guyed' for the 1964 election. These are little gems of satire and surrealistic send-up. I cherish the memory of Colin (*Absolute Beginners*) McInnes rushing into the Freedom Bookshop to buy 25 copies of the '64 'Election Guyed' to give to his friends.

In 1962 and 1963, Freedom Press and the London Anarchist Group attracted a lot of attention by holding two Anarchist Balls in Fulham Town Hall. These featured Mick Mulligan and his Magnolia Jazz Band with the young George Melly, and individuals loosely called 'folk singers', from Wally Whyton, Bob Davenport and Redd Sullivan to Sidney Carter. They were both great successes socially, but since we didn't have the franchise for the bar, not financially. There are circles in London where these events are still talked about.

The middle sixties brought us two remarkable stories. The first, discussed in the Foreword to Donald Rooum's *Wildcat* book of cartoons (Freedom Press) is the tale of a mad policeman who made the mistake of picking on Donald and planting a brick on him.

The second big story of the mid-sixties is somewhat different. It is the Stuart Christie story — the tale of an 18 year old Scottish lad who in August 1964 hitch-hiked all the way to Madrid with a rucksack full of dynamite to blow up Generalissimo Franco. He was arrested in Madrid by Spanish police, who had followed him all the way from Paris (if not London!).

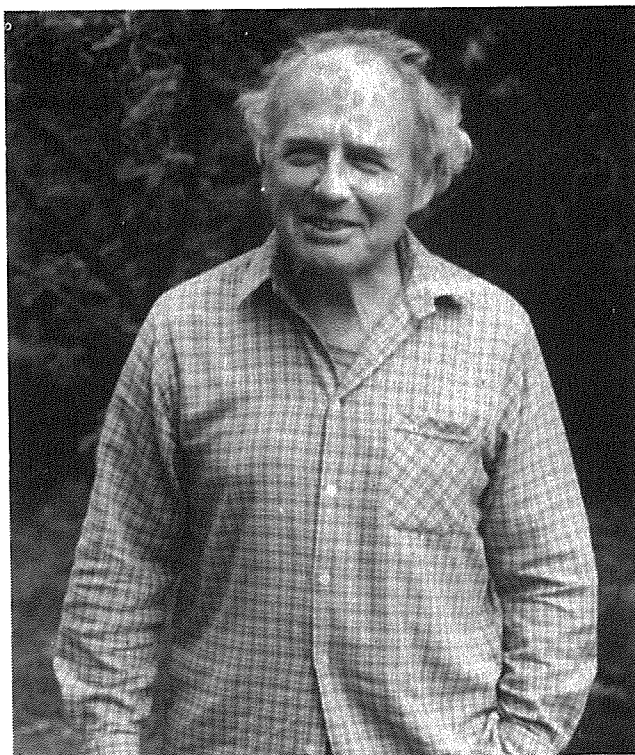
Immediately the story broke, the comrades of the Freedom Press group swung into action. Four members formed the nucleus of a Defence Committee, which organised meetings in Conway Hall and at Trafalgar Square addressed by representatives of Freedom Press (myself), LAG, the Syndicalist Workers Federation, CND and others. One member of LAG, John Pilgrim, appointed himself press relations officer and manned the telephone in the Committee's office day and night, to ensure that any news we had from Spain was immediately available to the British press, and everything published about Christie was as true as we could make it. (John Pilgrim had also acted as press officer for the well-publicised Freedom Press/LAG occupation of the Cuban Embassy, following the execution of some Cuban anarchists.)

Establishing what was true was the difficulty in the Christie case. In the light of a telegram, 'Please believe in my innocence', *Freedom* at first took the line that the whole thing was a frame-up by the Spanish police. But when the trial came on, it was found that Christie had confessed 'freely' — having been caught red-handed. The sad thing was that a Spanish comrade, Fernando Carballo Blanco, had been caught with Christie (and it could have been a dozen others!) and ended up with 30 years against Christie's 20 — of which he served three.

What is even sadder is that the effort *Freedom* put into supporting the Christie-Carballo Defence Committee has been denigrated by techniques of sneer and smear, and reduced, in the minds of some who do not take the trouble to check what actually appeared in print, to the dread 'liberalism'. What *Freedom* actually printed on 29 August 1964, when we were asked to believe in the 'frame-up' line, was:

If Stuart Christie is, as we suggest, innocent of the charges made against him, there is no question but that a campaign on as wide a scale as possible on his behalf must be organised. But if he is guilty? Then, in our opinion, the efforts of all men of goodwill must be redoubled, irrespective of whether they approve or disapprove of his methods. For what will count, what will remain in people's minds, is the noble intention.

Some liberalism!



Vernon Richards

The then editor of *Freedom* who wrote those lines was Vernon Richards. When he wrote that, he had been nearly thirty years an editor, of first *Spain and the World*, then *War Commentary*, then *Freedom*, writing hundreds of editorials, and translating writings by Malatesta and Gaston Leval from, respectively, Italian and French, in between handling the administrative affairs of Freedom Press.

If Richards had not started *Spain and the World*, the whole history of modern British anarchism might have been not just different but non-existent, for that is where it stems from. And the British anarchist movement today, with all its various branches, has largely grown from the groups inspired by Freedom Press, its weekly *Freedom* and its monthly *Anarchy*, in the period I have been discussing.

Philip Sansom

Ten Years Before the Masthead

It seems megalomaniac to be writing memoirs, but as the longest surviving inhabitant, sitting here with my half of bitter and my stick, watching the young folk come and go, I am under pressure to provide the wisdom of my years.

I grew through the nineteen sixties, although I wasn't specifically involved in politics. A few years later, as another ageing ex-hippie, I started to put my brain in order and eventually ended up with anarchism. The '72 miners' strike had something to do with it. I came into contact with aspects of the anarchist movement, including, inevitably *Freedom*, then a weekly. I lived in a succession of small towns and so tended to be isolated. (During 1974, and another miners' strike, I was in Huddersfield, street-selling an assortment of journals. Soon after I moved away this became an active centre, including the home of Anarchist Black Cross. Later, when I complained to Albert Meltzer, his only comment was, 'Somebody has to be John the Baptist!') On occasional visits to London, I eventually located

Angel Alley and met Mary Canipa and some of the then collective. A couple of pieces I posted in were published, a dizzy experience for a young lad. From outside, *Freedom* seemed a solid establishment.

I moved to London in 1976 and went along to help fold and despatch. The weekly routine helped outsiders to make contact, something which has since been lost. I was encouraged to contribute, and I had some inside information on a topical event (the attempt to nationalise the ship-building industry). I produced an over-extended, rambling piece (a habit which was to become repetitive). The next week I was amazed to find it on the front page. Emboldened, I submitted something for the next issue, turned up for the Thursday folding session and walked into what was then called a heavy atmosphere.

Most of the collective had walked out in a dispute over responsibilities, decision-making and established power. (A lesson which we were to repeat. They went on to launch *Zero*, which fell prey, among other things,

to similar mistakes.) I was enticed into the inner sanctum to help the rump with the next issue and I haven't escaped since. Thus are innocent young people ensnared.

The next period was frantic. The production collective was down to three. We were producing a section weekly (eight pages A4, perhaps 8,000 words), setting it ourselves on battered IBM typewriters whose only concessions to modernity were electric power and proportional spacing. We then relied on the State, BR Red Star parcels, to get the completed artwork to our old friend Ian the printer (RIP) in Margate and bring back the paper. Gillian Fleming did most of the typing, Francis Wright most of the paste-up and I scurried between, doing a bit of each, writing last-minute fillers and acting as intermediary. Mary Canipa still worked in the bookshop and helped with the typing. There was too much pressure to bother with too many ideological disputes, and enough to give a few personal ones.

I was also a member of the South London group set up to organise a May Day picnic, and later secretariat for the Federation of London Anarchist Groups. Alan Albon and I managed to fit in an educational and enjoyable trip to a festival of the re-expanded CNT in Barcelona. There were a couple of anti-fascist riots that summer.

Pressure lessened as more people joined, including Steve Sorba, now with Aldgate Press, and Philip Sansom, rejoining what he has called 'his first love'. *Freedom* still gave an impression of impenetrable solidarity. The Hastings Group, producers of one of the first of the welcome wave of local publishing, turned up to a readers' meeting to slag us all off and show us the error of our ways, and were astonished to find that the monolith, the 'establishment' of British anarchism, was half-a-dozen people struggling along as best as possible, much like them.

By the late 1970s we were a group of over a dozen. The big issue of the time was the 'Persons Unknown' case and a couple of us worked with the support group. Our own problem was lack of clear structure. We had grown haphazardly, coping as we could, and things were still so conducted. There was enough work power for production to proceed but this was sometimes more by default than by intention. Several people who had just turned up were good-naturedly included, leaving no clear distinction as to who was an 'editor'. There was enough surplus energy to form factions.

By 1982, with the change in format and with the launch of Aldgate Press absorbing energy, things had already gone too far. Nobody quite knew what was happening. Some would feel that they were being left to do the necessary work and then criticised for any shortcomings, whilst others thought that things were done behind their backs. These contradictory emotions circulated through the group. In early 1984 we had two polarised groups (broadly Aldgate and Freedom traditionalists), together with some ineffectual centrists, including me. Both wings were exasperated and built up their mutual suspicions to a point they found intolerable.

So, there I was at a historic moment. I brought out an issue. This image of heroic splendour is not actually quite so stark; Veronica still produced the subscription labels and Mo, who had just taken over the bookshop, helped with some paste-up, but allow me my moment.

Meanwhile, sympathisers set up a new group to exclude all remnants of previous tensions. As I hadn't been part of them (which I called tolerance, and somebody else fence-sitting), I was included.

The nominal list soon reduced to a couple, which is frankly not enough, especially as a disproportionate amount of work falls on the one who can spend time in the office (not me). So we reach the centenary, dazed and limping a little, but still very much alive.

There are obvious lessons in this. I joined in the aftermath of a split and we are still reeling from the next. The obvious dispiriting point is that it happens too often. So many initiatives, projects and groups splinter in comparable fashion. It's not only anarchists, it is apparent in all voluntarist activity whether Marxist, Nazi, Labour Party or stamp-collecting societies. It is also apparent in non-voluntarist activities, such as formal jobs, but these hold together simply because there are not the same opportunities for walking away. The difference should be that we base a philosophy on mutual aid.

An essential is mutual goodwill or, at least, toleration. This can rapidly become strained, for example in a self-contained group within a self-marginalised sub-culture. What should be resources of strong-minded individualism can resemble petty-minded egotism. It is trite to point to the theory; we all know about open decision-making and consensus. It is easy to find those with special skills, or simply more time, getting on with the work. They start to resent it whilst others resent what they increasingly see as exclusion. It doesn't take long for such a polarisation to become established.

So, you can see that *Freedom* was never the monolith of its image. Far from being a centre of establishment power it is a few people juggling resources of time, energy and money. You can help. For a start, please let us know about your activities before, during and after the events. You are the movement, not us alone.

And dispiriting though such events can be, they are the exception (only every ten years or so!). In the meantime we're still here.

David Peers



Freedom Press publications 1945

WILDCAT Anarchists agree about nothing, except opposing bosses. We can't produce a manifesto to include the whole movement.

Right. But we can produce a collection of manifestos, showing all the strands of anarchist opinion.

You mean such a collection could be produced, in theory. We can't produce it. We don't have time.

Yes! We can do it!!! I have time enough! I can do all the time-consuming bits. You just circulate all you know who'd like their manifestos in !!

Good for you.

Mine is written in Ostrogothic. Please to translate.

Mine is written in riddles. Please treat it as a parasol.

I'm the only real anarchist. I refuse to negotiate.

This adumbration of my learned research into 'Proximity as proof of scholarship' is maximally ex-prunified and in consequence is now a multiple of the requested longitude by a factor of rather less than seventeen nevertheless I may be prepared to tolerate even additional foreshortening should you consider such drastic excision absolutely necessary.

MINE IS NOT PUNCTUATED BECAUSE I AM NOT A LITERARY PERSON. PLEASE PUNCTUATE IT.

MINE IS NOT PUNCTUATED BECAUSE I AM A LITERARY PERSON. PLEASE LEAVE IT ALONE.

I'm too important to worry about deadlines.

Here comes what you volunteered for. I'll help of course.

PRASS

Thank you, and Good luck, comrade! I am fully occupied with, er, mumblemumble.

Thirty Years' War

My first acquaintance with anarchists began exactly thirty years ago, during the double crisis of Suez and Hungary in October and November 1956. (At the age of twenty-one, I had just left home and begun my last year at university.) The simultaneous attacks by Britain and France on Egypt and by Soviet Russia on Hungary, which started the general process known as the New Left, also started my personal journey from conventional politics towards anarchism. I took part in some of the demonstrations against the Suez War, and when a letter I wrote about them was published in the *Manchester Guardian* (on Guy Fawkes Day), I was sent a friendly note from *Freedom* with some recent issues of the paper — an easy and effective way of making new contacts. This was my first introduction to the anarchist movement as a living phenomenon.

I was a fairly typical middle-class recruit to the movement during the late 1950s. I had been brought up (by my mother) as a rather orthodox liberal socialist with strong anti-religious, anti-militarist and anti-statist tendencies, but no systematic ideology or practical experience. In spite of — or because of — an excellent education in history and politics, I knew virtually nothing about anarchism, and virtually everything I did know about it was wrong. I had a grandfather who had once been an active anarchist (Karl Walter, who wrote in *Freedom* and many other papers and was a British delegate to the International Anarchist Congress in Amsterdam in 1907) and a father who often called himself an anarchist (Grey Walter, the neurologist), but I was no more influenced by them than by having a grandmother who had become a Quaker and was an active pacifist or a stepfather who had been an active Communist and was still a Marxist. It took me a couple

of years' absorption of libertarian literature, involvement in left-wing politics, and resumption of family relationships to make the necessary connections and work out my own position.

I found (and find) most current libertarian writing rather unconvincing; but I remember being impressed by Alan Lovell in *New Left Review*, Chris Farley in *Peace News*, and Colin Ward in *Freedom*. I felt (and feel) much more strongly pushed in a libertarian direction by my personal experience; I was active in the old New Left and the old Nuclear Disarmament movement, reading papers and books, going to meetings (especially in the Partisan) and on demonstrations (from the Aldermaston March onwards), and discussing politics with everyone I knew. At the end of 1958 I was finally brought into direct contact with anarchists through my father and grandfather, the latter introducing me to Lilian Wolfe. At last the pieces fell into place, and I began to think of myself as an anarchist.

During 1959 I began to visit the Freedom Bookshop regularly and attend London Anarchist Group meetings, to make friends (and enemies) among the anarchists, and to write in anarchist papers — starting with Victor Mayes' *University Libertarian* (whose last two issues I helped my grandfather to produce during 1960), but concentrating on the publications of the Freedom Press — using my own name or initials and also an expanding series of pseudonyms. I have now written in *Freedom* for more than twenty-seven years, working first with Vero Richards and the old editorial group, and then with the protean editorial collective, and becoming more closely involved since 1980. I wrote in *Anarchy* for more than thirteen years, working first with Colin Ward and then with that even more protean editorial collective until 1974. I have also written in many other anarchist papers, producing hundreds of articles altogether, as well as various leaflets, pamphlets

Demonstrating against the Bomb 1961



and books (which is what I am concentrating on now). All this time I have earned my living in demanding editorial jobs, so I have been reluctant to spend too much time on extra editorial work, but I have now been drawn into several editorial collectives from time to time (*Freedom and Anarchy*, *Resistance and Solidarity*, *Inside Story* and *Wildcat*).

At the same time I have written hundreds of articles in other papers — liberal and socialist, pacifist and libertarian — and I must have sent several thousand letters to the press over a period of more than thirty years. I have remained active in left-wing politics — especially in the Nuclear Disarmament movement (being a founding member of the Committee of 100 in 1960 and the London Committee of 100 in 1962, of the Spies for Peace in 1963, and of Peace Anonymous in 1983 and Summit 84 in 1984) and in the wider anti-war movement (involvement with the Vietnam Action Group got me two months' in prison for my part in the Brighton Church Demonstration of 1966). I have taken part in socialist activity (even working briefly for the Labour Party during the unilateralist phase of 1960-1961) and in liberal campaigns (freethought and civil liberties, capital punishment and prison reform, abortion and euthanasia, obscenity and blasphemy, official secrets and homelessness). I have joined all sorts of demonstrations, and been arrested and imprisoned. I have spoken at all sorts of meetings, and on radio and television. Somehow I have managed to enjoy a busy private life (both my children are strong libertarians), to grow ill and old, then to get better and feel young again.

The Freedom Press has been one of the few fixed points in the revolving world of politics during my adult life, and indeed during my whole life. In fact I even feel that I can divide the past half-century into five periods which apply equally to my own experience, to the work of the Freedom Press, and to the wider left — a decade of war and despair, a decade of austerity and struggle, a decade of affluence and hope, a decade of confusion and contradiction, and a decade of disillusion and decay. During my own activity in the last three of these decades, I have found that the Freedom Press, with its periodicals and other publications, and the Freedom Bookshop have represented a rare example of persistence and consistency.

Of course the Freedom Press has frequently been criticised during its second fifty years, just as it was during its first fifty years — but generally for the wrong reasons. Militant anarchists have accused it of being quietist, philosophical anarchists of being adventurist, dogmatic anarchists of being opportunist, pragmatic anarchists of being sectarian, and so on. I have been critical myself, but for different reasons. At times when I have been involved in particular activities, I have found it badly informed, out of touch, and too willing to rely on other papers; and at all times I have found much of the material badly thought out and badly written up. But the quick answer to such criticisms is the old anarchist imperative — if you think something should be done, do it yourself — and this is what I have tried to do.

Anyway, against all such criticisms must be put the facts that for nearly all the past hundred years and for all the past fifty years there has always been at least one regular forum in this country for expressing libertarian opinions and reporting libertarian activities, and that the people producing it have always tried both to give a clear voice to a broad central interpretation of anarchism and to give a fair hearing to all other varieties of anarchism. At most times at least some members of the



Demonstrating against the Falklands War 1982

group have been personally involved in the events they describe and discuss; this has been healthy. At some times the whole group — or at any rate its dominant members — have been particularly committed to various activities or attitudes; this has not been healthy. Contrary to repeated criticisms that it stands too far outside events, its strength is precisely its independence from any single group or aspect of the anarchist movement. This is one reason why it is so irritating but at the same time so important, and also why it has survived when other papers and publishers have not done so.

I wrote for other anarchist papers and publishers before the Freedom Press, I have done so on and off for nearly thirty years, and I shall go on doing so. But I have written far more here than anywhere else, and I shall go on doing so. The reason is not sectarianism or traditionalism, or even personal or political loyalty, but the old virtues of persistence and consistency. The Freedom Press has been working for anarchism longer and better than anyone or anything else, and is still doing the same job after a century. It deserves its success and survival, and therefore gets my support and cooperation.

So where do I stand after what seems like a thirty years' war? I have become increasingly committed to mainstream anarchism, because it combines my original liberalism and socialism and reconciles the contradiction between individuality and solidarity. But I still consider that, while anarchism may be the truth, it is not the whole truth, and no particular variety of it can claim to be nothing but the truth. We must recognise the value of different roads to freedom and also of differing paths in our own road. We must remember that the end does not justify the means, but that means are ends. We must learn to get on with each other, or we shall never get on at all. What matters in the end is not the anarchist movement, but anarchist movement. This is the direction I have been taking all my life, and I hope to go on doing so for the rest of it. It has been hard work, but also good fun, and even if it hasn't done much for the world, it has done a lot for me. So I thank Freedom Press for everything it has given to and taken from me. On to the second century.

Nicolas Walter

Way Back in the Nineteen-Sixties

I was a child of the sixties, days of flower-power and doing your own thing. For those of us who launched on to a voyage of personal liberation which we could achieve through the higher education system life could never have been brighter or more full of promise, so that in later years we could look back like Wordsworth and exclaim:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive
But to be young was very Heaven!

It was the time so the media told us of full employment and social reforms, with dizzying prospects for the youth of the day, and if everything was not exactly as it should be it would be so tomorrow if we had anything to do with it. And if we were not ourselves in Paris in the May of sixty-eight, or on the latest metropolitan demo, we could vicariously participate through the media of hip culture with *Oz* magazine as its vanguard.

But I was already a subscriber to a little-known paper called *Freedom* and looking back through its yellowing files I am grateful to you, the editors of those days, for your message for you wrote more sense than all the rest of them put together.

But if the majority of our fellow-students were, despite the public image, a conformist mass, this only exhilarated us the more, for the lone anarchist amongst them could see himself as Promethean and soar in the flights of fancy above mundane realities.

But let it be recorded that the battles we fought in the student movement were real ones, and on matters which concerned our own lives, and if some of us were more interested in the sexual than the social revolution, in that revolution there was plenty of stepping over bodies. Whatever you say of us, our philosophy was not one of sullen despair but of rebellion against the life-denying forces, and our enemies were near to us and easy to identify.

Travelling to that Northern city to work, one unwittingly found oneself in the ranks of junior management, ('You're one of us now'), and with trepidation became a union organiser in a white-collar union. But if one did not believe in the need for management, if one had retained one's utopian vision, what sense did it make to take a job which involved supervising others? The alternatives seemed to be to stay on the ground floor ('What's a fellow with his qualifications doing in a job like that?'; 'We want the young men to aim for promotion, if they don't they get bolshie') or to 'drop out' in some way, and if one did that how could one any longer be a part of things or able to influence what was going on?

I was lucky enough to come into contact with a group of organised anarchists in Leeds and started to attend their regular meetings in a room over a public house. These people took it for granted that anarchism was part of the labour movement. They showed me that in the face of power one did not have to have a sense of powerlessness; one could analyse and quantify a power structure and start to understand and influence it. I seem

to remember that among our somewhat riotous meetings we were often able to offer a platform to labour militants in the many industrial disputes of the early seventies, and if they learnt anything from us, we learnt more from them. I started to see that struggles in the workplace are fundamental.

I remember the Liberal councillor (now a Member of Parliament) who lectured us in 1970 on 'Anarchy Within the System' (those were the days of the 'Young Liberals') — he didn't like 'violence' — and the arrests when we demonstrated on election night that same year, and the Liberal candidate who expressed such concern for the victims, and then did nothing. I remember the May Day march of the local Trades Council with the anarchists taking the lead with our black-and-red banner; and most of all the action for which we could take no credit, the Leeds clothing workers' strike of February 1970: the armies of workers besieging factories calling other workers out, the massive marches and rallies on the town moor, with unofficial leaders ignoring the union officials, and the way in which those union officials betrayed the workers. It was among the crumbling brick and dusty trees of that shabby Bohemia of inner Leeds that my revolutionary consciousness took shape.

Today the office-blocks of the sixties building boom are obsolete, and the 850-foot banking towers with rooms twenty-five foot high for the high-tech are on the drawing boards. Here is the key to the future of anarchism for we are seeing the dawn of a new industrial revolution, world-wide not Europe-wide, for production has moved to the low-wage countries, and the Northern cities have been de-industrialised, and the grass grows green on the clearance sites.

And for you, Green comrades, let me tell you of the battle of Little Moor. In September 1971 our local paper reported one worthy local lady, indefatigable founder of neighbourhood amenity societies, opposing a plan to cut down some trees, but it was not reported that, before she muscled in, some fifty local working people had sat down on that sooty, useless piece of waste land to save those trees — and why? Because the Council wanted to build on an acre of what was thought of as common land, no matter that it had been Council-owned for more than a century. And you would have to go to the local anarchist paper to learn that in 1875 five hundred people rioted to prevent the enclosure of that piece of land for building, and in 1971 one could see the graffiti on the walls:

They hangs the man or woman
Who steals the goose from the common
But they lets the greater thief go loose
The one who steals the common from the goose

Those people who defended the rights of the common people to the common land were defending a right their ancestors had fought for; and when people have fought for a right and won it they will not easily let it go. And that, comrades, is the only sort of anarchism that matters.

Charles Crute

One Hundred Years Later

Six years ago, following the initial electoral triumph of Thatcherism, and perhaps even more after the election of Reagan in the United States and the re-election of Thatcher, many hailed this as a return to an old-fashioned Toryism. The proof that *laissez-faire*, old-style Toryism was still alive, that the Butler-Macmillan-Heath style was merely a temporary aberration. This was held to disprove the thesis that we now face a form of class society materially different from that observed and analysed by Bakunin and Marx.

That thesis, or the foretelling of it, was found as far back as William Morris (who in *News from Nowhere* foresaw the emergence, under Bellamyist influence — that is what we'd call Fabian influence — of a new bureaucratically exploitative society, against which libertarian social revolution would occur.) Whether the 'New Class' was called 'State Capitalist', 'Bureaucratic Collectivist', or what, it posited that the evils of the 'Soviet Union' are not merely Stalinist aberrations, that the fact that no Western Social Democratic party has ever looked likely to abolish capitalism is not merely due to cowardice, but that both Stalinism and reformism are routes to power for this new bureaucratic class.

It is not of course purely an academic exercise. Every class society has its own roots of power; every class society finds new means of exploiting its subjects (though in places it may rely still on old forms); every class society provokes new areas of unrest and discontent; and if only because each such society rests on new levels of technology, ills that are peripheral in one society become major in another and vice versa. Those, therefore, who are serious in trying to change society need to understand it.

However, the thesis infuriated some more conservative-minded anarchists, for whom nothing significant had changed since the days of Bakunin, and for whom the fact that neither he nor Kropotkin nor Malatesta had ever mentioned the horrors of nuclear weapons, proved conclusively that the working class had nothing to fear from these. For them any campaigning for disarmament, on ecological issues, etc, was an obvious abandonment of class struggle, a lapse into reformism.

Certainly some theorists of the new class — *Freedom* readers will probably think of Cardan — were premature and dogmatic, in their assumption that 'dirigiste' controls of the economy in the West had advanced so far that the capitalist state not only could *but would* act always to limit the boom/slump cycle, preventing a recurrence of mass unemployment. A transition in progress being assumed to be already complete.

Thus when the time came, when people who did not accept the Keynesian economic ideas came to control the state, when dirigiste controls were not exercised, when the bulk of the capitalist class appeared to panic, dumping the wisdom it had appeared to learn after the war, and when more people became unemployed than in the 1930s — the received wisdom was that this was the proof that old-style capitalism remained unchanged, that the ruling class had not learnt this new subtlety, had not adopted new methods of exploitation, and that the Tory leopard had certainly not sought new spots.

But where is this to-be-expected growth of production? No doubt old-style capitalism produced for

profit, not use; but nevertheless old-style capitalism was wedded to boundless expansion of production. Of course this fell off in times slump, but always there was the quest for new productive areas. Now, though some parts of the economy are said to be thriving, there is a constant shutting down of industries (outweighing the growth areas), of selling off any profitable assets in order to make a quick killing. This doesn't make sense even in capitalist terms; and one is reminded that in the boom-times of the late 1950s it was widely said that 90% of production was for scrap, one had built-in-obsolence, enormous (frequently subliminal) advertising, all because the drive of profit had made production lose sight both of its roots in need; and of its early desire to amass *production* capital.

Thatcherism exists economically by asset stripping on a national scale. This then is its explanation. Many writers in radical papers noted in the 1950s that the money labour had paid in compensation (generally far more than the industries were worth) was used by financiers and created the take-over boom. As all industries guard against a change in the economic climate by having some assets or liquid holdings that are not accounted for against their share capital, such take-overs were convenient forms of financial piracy. So a new kind of capitalist was born. Like the traditional robber-baron capitalist in that s/he was individualist, a proponent of *laissez-faire* and of devil-take-the-hindmost, an entrepreneur of finance risking money for quick gain; but quite unlike the nineteenth century in that no productive purpose was served. Moreover, the asset-stripper does not directly exploit workers, asset-stripping is parasitic on other capitalists, robbing them of their capital, and only when this forces the other capitalists to extract more from workers did the workers (in the conditions of the 1950s) suffer.

Having started at this level, as a parasitic growth, not on the working class but on the new bureaucratized capitalism, the asset-stripping caste steadily increased its power. First to challenge Keynesian thought so that Labour failed to prop up the bureaucratic capitalism it had created and then to take power. It was a worldwide movement, for asset stripping was worldwide; what Attlee had done for British capitalism Roosevelt and Mollet had done elsewhere.

Nor was it an entirely novel and unprecedented process. When, after the Great Reform Bill, industrial capitalism displaced mercantilism from power, seeing a massive extension of transport routes in England, and with the increased production a similarly massive increase in sea-borne trade, the very landowners, the colonial service bureaucrats, and the wealthier city merchants who had produced the backbone of the resistance to industrialisation found themselves far wealthier. The need to build canals and railways put up the price of land, and made it more profitable to sell the agricultural product; and so on. This led, even after the repeal of the the Corn Laws, to an unforeseen restoration of power for the landowning and mercantilist class, but at a time when production had reached a point where the old ruling class no longer had an obvious purpose. So the power restoration was short-lived, and gave way again to the real struggle between capitalists and workers.

Laurens Otter

What the anarchist movement has taught me

Recently, at a party of very old friends, we all acknowledged that we had learned a lot from the anarchist movement. In our different ways our lives had been shaped by the anarchist movement.

Half a year ago I received an invitation to give a lecture to an anarchist forum that meets every week in London. The leaflet advertising the series of lectures was illustrated by an amusing drawing showing a number of men and women all saying substantially the same thing: 'It seems that I am the only anarchist here'. The meeting I attended amply justified this drawing. Most vociferous at the meeting were those who gave mini-lectures after I had given my spiel, mini-lectures in the guise of questions from the floor and raising points for discussion. It was obvious that they suffered from the pique of not being invited to give a lecture in the series, and came ready-primed with what they intended to say. It has always been thus.

But should I not say, reviewing nearly 50 years, 'What I have taught the anarchist movement' — would not this be a better title for this centenary issue of *Freedom*? For over the years I must have written hundreds of articles for anarchist journals both long-running and ephemeral, and spoken at umpteen meetings. Sometimes I come across some of my old pamphlets in way-out bookshops, and I wonder. But what is more important is what the experience of the movement has taught me.

When fumbling my way towards anarchism in the 1930s it was largely in reaction to the growing threat of war. I never had any time for the Commies; they were such twits. The worst of them spoke with public school accents as I did, but wore cloth caps, which were then the hallmark of the working class. Fate threw me into working class company when working with ex-taxi drivers and other commercial drivers made redundant by the war, when employed at the ambulance station in London during the air raids. I even caught myself modifying my all too correct speech and trying to say 'fuck' every other word to camouflage my middle class background. For was I not from the exploiting class who were the exploiters and usurpers of the workers' freedom?

But at last I learned some real sense from the roughest section of the working class, the Clydeside anarchists. They drew huge crowds around their open air platform in Glasgow, the like of which we never saw in London, and their demotic Glaswegian speech was rather hard for me to follow at times. But the message was clear enough. The first step towards anarchism was for the individual to seek to emancipate himself or herself from the tyranny of the social class of their origin. Although they had all the outer hallmarks of the working class — their speech, clothes and habits — they were *on the way* to achieving such emancipation. Their aim was to become class-less; in fact to achieve a major revolution in their own lives. They pointed out to me that the Pantheon of anarchist figures that were much talked and written about — Malatesta, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Voltairine de Cleyre, Alexander Berkman, and many others — were people of wide education and whatever their class origins had been, had no class bias. For the proverbial dustman to regard himself as better than the duke because he was of the

working class, was mere silly snobbery. Which was the better man depended on factors other than occupational status. These Glasgow anarchists were horny-handed workers — to begin with — but they aimed to emancipate themselves from being exploited work-horses in any way they could. Just a few took to various forms of crime, but very few, for crime does not pay unless you are very lucky, but most of them turned to whatever self-employed skills they could turn their hands to, and some took a way of life that used to be called 'spivving'.

The seminal text of these anarchists was Max Stirner's *The Ego and His Own*, a book difficult to read and ambiguous to interpret, yet I have known it to have an explosive effect on many people. One lad, a devoted anarchist-communist and a follower of Voltairine de Cleyre, at first inveighed against this book and pompously condemned the Clydeside anarchists, but he experienced a conversion similar to that of Saul on the road to Tarsus, and later founded a Stirnerite journal. Stirner's book certainly made sense to these anarchists, and they were certainly the most revolutionary crowd I have ever met. Some anarchists I have known have always condemned the Stirnerite position rather loftily, but I have noted over the years they have worked out their own lives in the work they have done, the alliances they have formed and the human satisfactions they have appeared to aim at, on lines very similar to those advocated by Stirner. One strong-arm anarcho-syndicalist group, some of them affecting cloth caps, that used to be known as the Tom Brown mob, mostly emancipated themselves from the horny-handed working class, one by one, by becoming university lecturers.

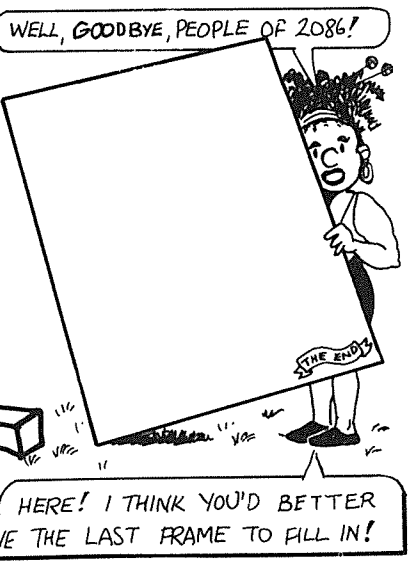
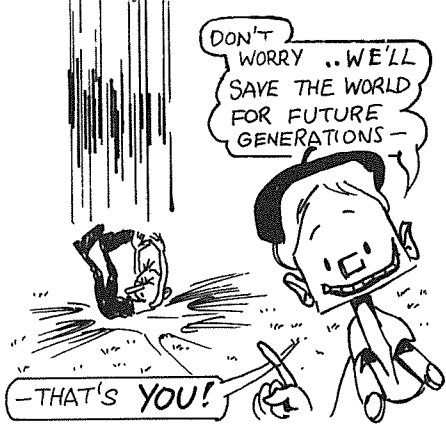
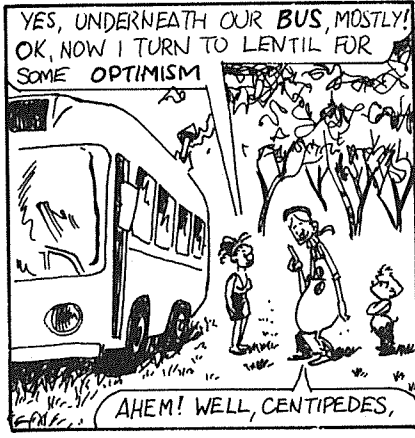
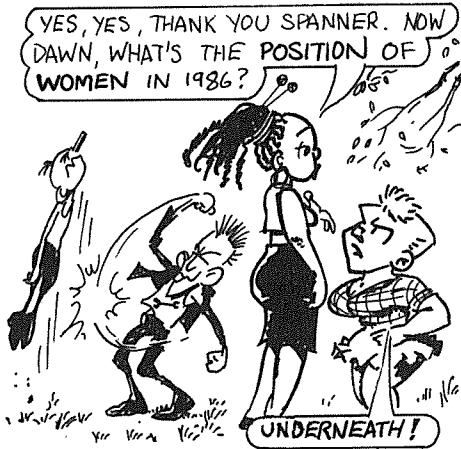
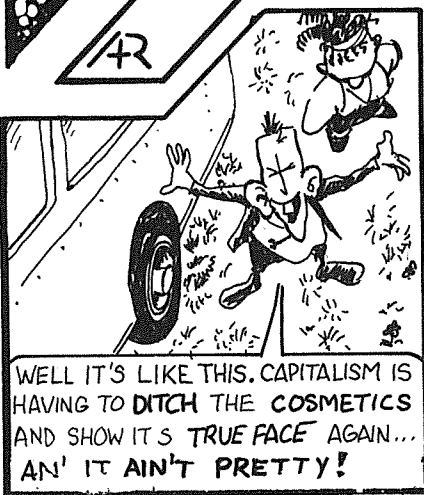
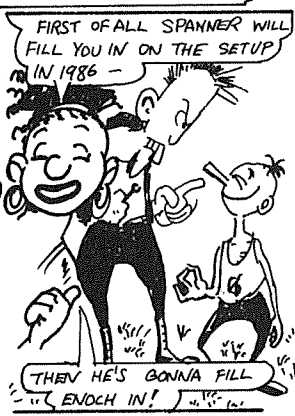
Of course 'the revolution' has not been achieved. In the heady days of the 1940s when many of us expected the prophesy of Bakunin to be fulfilled — that the warring nation states of Europe would go down in chaos in a war and some form of international anarchism would emerge Phoenix-like from the ashes — many things seemed possible. Instead we had the tragic tragi-comedies of Hitler leading the German youth to their doom, and later, Arthur Scargill leading a bunch of extra-thick thickies to a humiliating defeat. Alas, alas, this is not the way to revolution. The way to revolution lies within your grasp, but it may not be the revolution that you first dreamed of.

So this is what one of those whose lives have been influenced, at least to some extent, by the journal *Freedom* and the movement that has been connected with it, has found anarchism to be. *Freedom* has survived while many other anarchist journals have failed, because among its many virtues it has been flexible, intelligent and able to withstand periods when this or that bunch of bone-headed zealots have striven to turn it to the service of their own narrow creed. If a journal has an ego, then this one has a very tough ego, stronger than that of any one group of editors, many of whom in the past have been sadly disappointed that they could not shape the journal nearer to their heart's desire. This is what anarchism is all about. So let us wish *Freedom* a joyful centenary, and look forward to another hundred years of attempting — nay achieving — a sort of anarchism.

Tony Gibson

the Xronstadt Kids

HOW WOULD IT BE IF THE 1ST ISSUE OF FREEDOM HAD A CARTOON STRIP ADDRESSED TO US HERE IN 1986? WELL, THIS STRIP IS ONLY FOR READERS IN TWENTY EIGHTY-SIX!
HELLO PEOPLE OF 2086! I'M CONNIE; THIS IS DAWN, LENTIL, SPANNER, AND ENOCH!



Art and the anarchist movement in Britain

In spite of the impact of Godwin's anarchism on the literary and artistic milieu of his time, notably through his influence on the Romantic poets (who included his son-in-law, Shelley) and his friendship with both Fuseli and William Blake, it was not until the late 19th century, with the emergence of an organised anarchist movement that British artists began to identify with anarchism. During this period one of the focal points for anarchist activity was within the Socialist League, where the anarchists worked alongside socialists such as William Morris and Walter Crane.

In Europe, the catalyst for the continuing alliance between art and anarchism has frequently been provided by the anarchist press, such as *Les Temps Nouveaux*, *Pere Peinard*, *Die Aktion*, *ilO* and *MA*. In Britain the London-based magazines *Liberty*, edited by the tailor, James Tochatti, and its contemporary, *The Torch*, edited by the young Rossetti sisters, Olivia and Helen, briefly forged a working relationship with some of the most socially aware artists of late Victorian England. Walter Crane designed the cover for the first issue of *Liberty* (using the pseudonym W M Rowe), the Liberty Press logo, and an illustration depicting the Haymarket martyrs. Kropotkin's friend, G F Watts also contributed to *Liberty*, while Lucien Pissarro provided a series of graphics to *The Torch*, including 'An outcast of society' and 'Misery'.

Walter Crane's connections with the anarchist movement are usually ignored by his biographers, but were in fact central to his concept of socialism. Not only did he contribute to *Liberty*, but also to the anarchist influenced *Commonweal*, the newspaper of the Socialist League, and in 1896 he joined Morris in an unsuccessful attempt to have the anarchists accepted by the Second

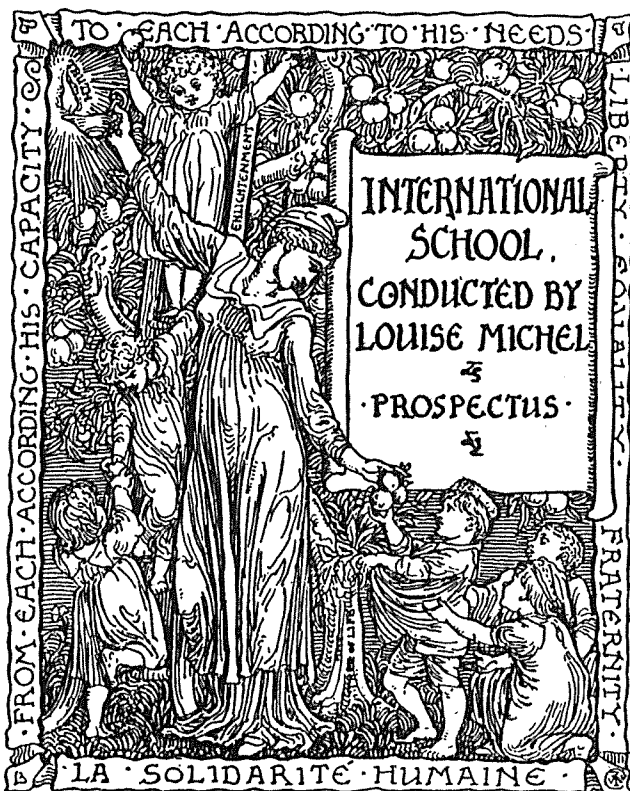
International. Immediately after the Haymarket incident he wrote a poem on 'the suppression of Free Speech at Chicago', expressing his disgust at the travesty of justice in the trial of the anarchists. Crane wrote a second poem 'Freedom in America', expressing his disgust at the travesty of justice in the Haymarket Trial, and attended the protest demonstration in London, on Bloody Sunday, which was attacked by the police. He narrowly escaped injury and arrest. On a subsequent trip to America Crane was a speaker at a commemoration meeting in honour of the Chicago anarchists, appearing on the platform with Benjamin Tucker. Attacked by the press for his stand he wrote in his own defence to the *Boston Herald*:

'Anarchism simply means a plea for a life of voluntary association, of free individual development — the freedom only bounded by respect for the freedom of others.'

Artistically, his most interesting contribution to the anarchist cause was the cover he produced for the prospectus of the International Socialist School run by Louise Michel while she was in London. The guiding committee for this school included Kropotkin, William Morris, and Malatesta.

Another artist who produced a series of drawings about the London anarchist movement was one-time mural painter, Frenchman, Charles Renouard, who began working as an illustrator for *The Graphic* in 1884. For more than a decade this forgotten artist was one of the most powerful social commentators working for the British press depicting the poor and the marginal inhabitants of the city and documenting their lives in a realist way. In 1892 he made a series of drawings at the Berner Street anarchist club in London's East End, some of which were reproduced in *The Graphic* in 1892 and again in 1894, in the wake of the explosion near the Greenwich Observatory. Unfortunately the anarchist union organiser Ted Leggatt was recognised from one of these illustrations, and was sacked.

As the editor of the *Burlington Magazine*, Roger Fry was instrumental in securing editorship of the Magazine for Herbert Read, and Read like Fry inclined towards anarchism, and indeed wrote many books and articles on it. Read originally saw a need for an artistic elite, but soon dropped that idea in favour of the concept of 'every person a special kind of artist'. Developing a theory of art as an agent for social change, he elaborated his views in *Education through art*, arguing that everyone's artistic abilities should be encouraged to contribute to the richness of collective life. Attacking the systematically repressive nature of contemporary education, Read advocated that art be placed at the centre of education to promote creativity, independence and strength of character. A tireless proponent of all forms of modern art, especially surrealism, he once wrote that 'Anarchists should welcome modern art as an art of social protest'. At the end of World War II when the anarchist editors of *War Commentary* (subsequently *Freedom*) were prosecuted for advocating mass civil disobedience and disaffection, Read enthusiastically came to their defence, helping to form the Freedom Defence Committee, along with George Orwell, Augustus John and others.



Cover by Walter Crane 1892

Augustus John's introduction to anarchism came from sketching exhibitions with his sister, Gwen. Together they would attend anarchist meetings with Kropotkin and Louise Michel, in the streets near Tottenham Court Road. John also recalled attending a benefit party for David Nicoll, former editor of *Commonweal*, who had been persecuted for his robust defence of the Walsall anarchists and his exposure of police spies, and had subsequently fallen on hard times. John became the archetype bohemian artist and the leader of the rebellious tendencies within English art, although never avant-garde in his own style. He was to campaign tirelessly on behalf of gypsies, but didn't become involved with the anarchist movement until later life, contributing to *Freedom* and to the *Delphic Review*. When the editors of *Freedom* were arrested Augustus John played an active role in the Defence Committee, and personally attended court during the trial. In old age, and in spite of serious illness, he became an active supporter of the Committee of 100, taking part in the great 1961 sit-down protest only a month before his death.

One of the people arrested during the raids on *Freedom* was Philip Sansom, who had joined the anarchist movement during the war, and had contributed cartoons to *War Commentary*, beginning an association that lasted more than 40 years, designing book covers and writing and drawing for the paper. He also helped start two other short lived papers, *The Syndicalist* and *Wildcat*, and was involved in the organisation of the Malatesta club. For some time Philip Sansom shared a flat with John Olday, the German refugee artist who was also active in the anti-nazi resistance. During the war he lived a clandestine life in London, cartooning and writing for *War Commentary*, and circulating a newsletter among British troops. He produced two powerful books, *Kingdom of Rags* (1939) and *The March of Death* (1945) attacking fascism and militarism. After the war Olday emigrated to Australia, but returned to Britain in the 1970s, where he provided cartoons for *Black Flag*, and produced *Mit Teilung*, a bulletin which promoted international support for revolutionaries engaged in armed struggle. When he died in London, aged 72, *Freedom* published an 8 page illustrated tribute to his life and work.

In Britain, as elsewhere, there have been links between the surrealists and the anarchists. Herbert Read and Belgian surrealist E L T Mesens were instrumental in promoting surrealism in Britain, and Mesens helped George Woodcock secure illustrations by Picasso and Andre Masson for the anarchist literary review *NOW*. In 1946 British surrealists published the only issue of



Philip Sansom, *Freedom* 12 January 1946

Free Unions/Union libres, which was produced in co-operation with *Freedom* and printed on their press. The editor of *Free Unions* was Simon Watson Taylor, who the previous year had stood bail for *Freedom's* editorial collective when they were arrested. A gap in the magazine was filled with an illustration by Philip Sansom.

Freedom's tradition of collaboration with the surrealists extends to the present day. A couple of years ago, Francis Wright, surrealist and then a member of the editorial collective at *Freedom*, co-ordinated a supplement on surrealism 'The hinge of history'. Soon afterwards another supplement released an issue of *Melmoth* on an unsuspecting world. Melmoth is an international group of surrealists, who combine their surrealism with anarchism and situationism, and includes Conroy Maddox and Tony Pusey among its members. (Anarchist sympathiser Conroy Maddox, had provided the cover for *Free Unions* way back in 1946.) Melmoth's manifesto *Trajectory of Passion* calls for 'a revolutionary art, which is at once sabotage and sharing, a gesture of popular complicity which undermines authority. The graffiti in particular represents a marvellous symbol of anarchist art...'

Today the comic format has been widely identified with social change by many artists, including several anarchists. Cliff Harper, whose work has been appearing in alternative and anarchist publications for more than 12 years began illustrating with *Class War Comix*, and has recently returned to the comic strip, using its visual impact to stress the power and humour of Siegfried Sassoon's poem 'Fight to a finish', and to provide emphasis to Proudhon's 'What is government?'. Cheekily (and subversively) he relocates borrowed expressionist images in a cartoon strip version of Brecht's 'Black Freighter'. Cliff has also produced posters and other illustrations supporting striking firemen, and striking coal miners. Other innovative anarchists who've utilised the comic format are Donald Rooum, whose regular *Wildcat* cartoon for *Freedom* has just been published in a collected edition; Richard Warren, a secondary school art teacher who has produced situationist-tinged cartoon strips for *Sheffield Anarchist* and the sorely missed *Cienfuegos Anarchist Review*, and who has achieved the remarkable feat of drawing a cartoon version of Bakunin's *Critique of State Socialism*. Sadly, since he took over the editorship of *Anarchy* Phil Ruff's cartoons no longer appear in *Black Flag*, although Pete Mastin's frequent savage portrayals of the absurdities and dangers of statism have been a welcome addition.



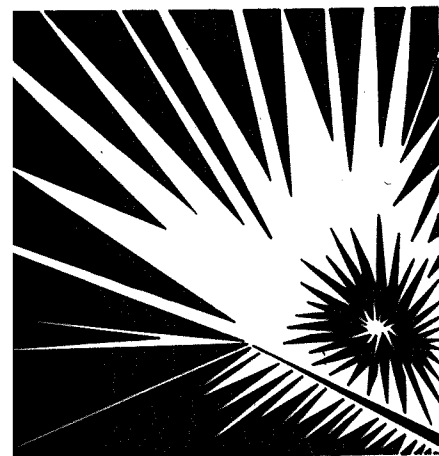
John Olday, *War Commentary* January 1944

Martyn Everett

ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 3 1982 TEENAGER JIMMY HEATHER-HAYES HURLED TWO PETROL BOMBS INTO THE LOCAL POLICE STATION IN THE WEST LONDON SUBURB OF TEDDINGTON. THE BLAST AND FLAMES CAUSED MINIMAL DAMAGE AND INJURED NO ONE.

Clifford Harper





ALTHOUGH HE ESCAPED INTO THE DARKNESS THE COPS HAD NO TROUBLE TRACKING HIM DOWN AND CHARGING HIM WITH 'ARSON AND INTENT TO ENDANGER LIFE'. THE YOUNG ANARCHIST POET SPENT THE NEXT FOUR MONTHS IN A SOLITARY CELL WAITING TO GO FOR TRIAL.

" I'M LOCKED UP IN HERE WITH TWO HUNDRED OF MY KIND REJECTS OF THE SYSTEM, REJECTS OF THE MIND. A RESTRICTION OF THE FREEDOM IT CUTS LIKE A KNIFE CRUSHING ME SLOWLY EATING UP MY LIFE THE CELL'S WALLS ENCLOSE CUTTING OUT THE LIGHT I FEEL MYSELF CRACKING I KNOW THIS ISN'T RIGHT. BUT I DECLARED WAR ON A SYSTEM WITH NO

HEART AND NOW IT HAS DECIDED I NO LONGER PLAY A PART ALL YOU LOT OUT THERE DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE THAT REVOLUTION GLORY IT'S ALL A BLOODY FAKE. KNOW THE SYSTEM BEFORE YOU FIGHT IT, SUSS OUT WHAT IT'S LIKE 'TILL THEN JUST BIDE YOUR TIME WAIT BEFORE YOU STRIKE."

ON JULY 6 A JUDGE AT LONDON'S OLD BAILEY FOUND JIMMY GUILTY, SENDING HIM BACK TO JAIL TO WAIT FOR THE SENTENCE. THE NEXT DAY, LOCKED IN HIS CELL, JIMMY COMMITTED SUICIDE.

" HANGING FROM THE RAFTERS ON A GREASY ROPE WHEN THEY READ YOUR NOTE THEY SAY 'HE COULDN'T COPE' 'LIFE AIN'T A GAME', THEY RECKON, 'FOR THE WEAK, CORPSE ON A ROPE, WAS JUST ANOTHER FREAK.'"

JIMMY HEATHER-HAYES,
ASHFORD PRISON 1982

Letter After America

I have just come home after eleven years in America. It is distinctly strange to find oneself living in a colonial country, with armed police, lathi-charges and trumped-up charges as appropriate responses to trade unions, and the promise of rubber bullets to come. Mrs Thatcher, the archetypal memsahib, and her congeners have run out of natives and are applying themselves to governing Englishmen and women by the methods which led to the independence of India.

It is not that which is new: we may have slithered back to the mid-nineteenth century, but Mrs Thatcher will not last, and government by goon-squad brings its own reward in public militancy. What is new to British history is the shadow of the Marcos pattern: a country full of foreign troops and foreign nuclear bases, with a client government drawing its support and its guidelines from Washington. The Liverpool City Council and the Greater London Council threaten only the Queen of Clubs: the anti-nuclear and neutralist movements threaten the Pax Americana. Alone among the NATO countries, successive British governments have conceded extra-territorial rights to the Americans — the *New Statesman* recently quoted the terms of a secret agreement whereby, in any American-declared or Reagan-provoked 'emergency', public order, internment without trial, and conscription of labour would be taken over by the occupying power.

At the same time, the Labour Party, whose right wing from Ernie Bevin on have been the chief culprits in the sell-out, is adopting at its annual conference the policies it should have adopted in the 1950s, the policies against which Hugh Gaitskill promised to fight and fight and fight again. Neil Kinnock pledged himself to eject the American bases: he was eloquent about it, and the conference cheered him. Nobody asked whether the Americans would go quietly. Nobody pointed out that the only militarily credible interpretation of the secret contingency agreement is that it has a second leg which has not been published — the destabilisation and removal of any elected government which threatens the American gameplan. It could be done electorally: the magical popping-up of the egregious David Owen and the Wine and Cheese Party followed closely on Labour's first move away from satellitism. It could be done, as in the past, by a fudge: like the Spanish Socialists who were returned on a pledge to get out of NATO, Labour might simply renege. Mr Kinnock has already been entrapped by the same right-wing colleagues who deliberately sabotaged the last Labour election campaign into a self-destructive feud with the Trots, and Denis Healey is busily undermining him in the foreign press — on precisely the nuclear issue.

When I was in America, the CIA's records were briefly opened to the public. We began to learn who was on the pay-roll. When the list reached King Hussein of Jordan, Admiral Turner closed the hatch: further disclosures would damage the public interest. A pity — the next two pages might have named names among European politicians: it would have been instructive historically to know whether all of those listed were Germans or Italians. But even if they were, and Labour's past blindness to the danger came from natural fatuity alone, if it is now elected and sticks to its guns, it runs the real risk of a Chilean-type operation. It made the fatal mistake of conniving at policies which make

USS Britain indispensable to the security interests of the Pentagon, which is code for anything which the New Right in America will use military force to maintain. This is a possibility which nobody at the party conference seems to have appreciated: Dubcek and Nagy at least realised that they might have to reckon with the fraternal Red Army. If Neil Kinnock realises it he hasn't said so. Will he be able in a crunch to rely on MI5 and MI6, who have close American ties and have long been schooled to look left not right? If Rt Hon Mr Pinochet, PC, MP, has already been selected, would he be able, as Prime Minister, to find out? It was only when he got into office that Churchill found out which of his former colleagues had been in cahoots with Hitler.

Eleven years in America gives one a new perspective on the impending election. It may not, of course, come to the crunch. The enormous task of post-Thatcher reconstruction will occupy any new government: the pressure not to rock the boat by challenging our colonial status, but to get on with damage control, will be immense, and will be exploited.

I am not vastly interested in elections. I wish to be consulted, not represented. But one cannot ignore their effects, and having lived eleven years in California and seen at close quarters just how dangerous the Reagan administration is, I wish I thought that Labour saw it too. The sight of the President glad-handing military dictators and pushing Star Wars with Caspar Weinberger looking like a newly exhumed corpse at his shoulder, should give nightmares to any future Labour administration. A nice guy like Neil Kinnock might expect to be metaphorically stabbed in the back by colleagues (that is par for the course) but not literally bumped off by paternalistic allies, as Allende was.

Should we, then, be anti-American? Anti-Weinberger, anti-Reagan, yes, but remember that America includes not only Jesse Helms and Jerry Falwell but Daniel Berrigan and the people who have been running an underground railroad for Salvadorian refugees. When I applied for a visa and declared myself an anarchist, I had an interesting conversation with a highly intelligent Black official about the influence of Godwin on Thomas Jefferson, and I explained to him that anarchists in the modern world are about the only people who do not believe in terrorism and throwing large spherical bombs — simply in taking responsibility for our own actions. Liberty is by no means dead in America, though in some areas it always has been on life support. There is quite possibly more direct action there than here. In many states, referenda are as important as the election of 'representatives'. There is no Official Secrets Act: the Press expose clandestine and treasonable actions with very little fear of the consequences, and with no Old Boy network to get the stories dropped. There is the First Amendment. True, the universal enemies of Humanity can fool too many of the people too much of the time, and people are too often fatuously vulnerable to any demagogue who wraps himself in the Flag — but one can also advocate libertarian causes and wrap oneself in the Flag with equal justification. It is only in foreign policy that the United States and the Soviet Union are equally dangerous bedfellows. Since Gorbachev's attempts to inject some rational self-interest into superpower relations has run head-on into

Reagan's frank paranoia, the United States is possibly the more dangerous and certainly the more accident-prone of the two Tar Babies. Not anti-American, then, any more than one should be anti-semitic because of Begin and Ariel Sharon. Those are the warts of Government as a system — Jefferson realised that as well as anyone.

Oddly enough, however, it might turn out to be the xenophobia of Alf Garnett, unlovable as that is, which breaks us loose, and enables Labour, if it has the guts, to eject the bases. Faced with a Chilean situation, some Conservatives will kiss the American posterior as they did Hitler's, but not all. Even people like Michael Heseltine, who accused CND of being foreign-inspired while clowning it up in a combat jacket outside a foreign nuclear base, might end up quite accidentally and to his own amazement on the side of national self-interest. He and the miners owe one to the Queen of Spades and her attendant knaves, though for widely

differing reasons. One day somebody, not necessarily on the so-called Left, will realise that those interests involve neutrality, and the neutralisation of Europe — which a besieged Soviet government, sick of basket-case allies, constant nationalist opposition, large Catholic minorities, and a recruiting ground for American agents, might eventually be prepared to swap for European reunification. Reagan will not be for ever, and the American Right could salutarily be tipped into isolationism — ie getting its finger and its weapons out, and leaving Europe to safeguard itself by diplomacy. Accidents apart, this will eventually happen, and all of us will sleep more soundly at nights. If this is what Neil Kinnock is counting on, he is smarter than I have given him credit. Meanwhile, all of us who care both for Britain and for liberty must tighten our seatbelts and hold course.

Alex Comfort

Anarchism in the Future

To influence the future we must first escape from the past. We spend too much time there for our own good. History and the political traditions rooted in it take up too much of our time.

It may or may not be important that another version of the truth of a particular series of past events be known. The reality is that such battles over the mythology of our culture are irrelevant to the future. Our version should be recorded, in as many ways as we wish, and then left to mature.

We will not modify the present or redirect the future by changing the colour of the past. For anarchy to spread we must escape the constraints of our culture and the momentum of its past, and use the present for the future.

We have been misled by the nature of politics. By entering its arena and opposing its results, we only reinforce its mechanisms. Our opposition refines and our struggles strengthen it. Politics is the means our culture uses to focus power and direct authority; it cannot serve our desires.

Power and authority cannot be dissolved with changing our culture; it holds a mirror before us reflecting our efforts to its own ends. We make war on war, and keep war alive; we kill the president, and keep the presidency alive. In our present culture we have no choice; power counters power, authority denies authority; all our alternatives help the originals thrive.

Freedom lies beyond the symbiosis of culture and our minds. Until we can refute the reflection of perception our culture offers our minds we remain trapped in our current cultural illusion.

The illusion is a product of our philosophy, that mash of beliefs from Christianity via Cartesian/Newtonian determinism to Marx and existentialism, which hovers outworn on the brink of rejection at the turn of the last century, not yet blown away by the products of quantum mechanics or the birth of synthesis.

The socio-economic strata we confront are layered upon these old beliefs. We cannot destroy them, for they thrive on crisis, it is the life blood both of

capitalism and the totalitarian state. The only way forward is to create a new philosophy, one that will engender different attitudes and understanding, and lead to different ways of acting and living. Tinkering on a small scale will not do because we will be contained in the paradox of our belief; if we believe in freedom, we must accept the freedom of others to hold opinions and lifestyles with which we may totally disagree, otherwise freedom is meaningless.

Anarchism as an isolated segment of this culture cannot overcome this paradox without allies. And allies come at a price. To be viable anarchism in the future must face the cost of becoming part of a wider new philosophy.

The cost will be the effort of breaking out of our cultural containment, of exposing ourselves to the dangers of developing a perspective beyond that of the narrow political/economic questions which anarchists have traditionally addressed.

The seeds of the new philosophy have germinated. It is Holism, a system of belief which is capable of containing all the perceptions of the human mind and giving them context and perspective without losing grip of rationality. Holism can absorb the forces which threaten to overwhelm us, and render harmless the aberrations which we cannot control.

In holism science is ecology, its mechanics are cosmology, its spirituality a biophilic buddhism, and its politics anarchism. Its objective a sustainable way of life which fulfils the needs and potential of all life. In this context anarchist beliefs may flower and grow, on their own they will wither and die as the future rolls dissent and diversity into the same grey debris behind its advance.

Unless we broaden our mental view beyond the reflections of current culture we will remain as a strand of that culture, confined in an alley, where only the most dedicated will come. Anarchism in the future must be found as part of everyday life, without the need of a map.

Colin Johnson

A City of Myths Washington DC February 1986

A city bleaker than usual. Massive, greyfronted government buildings reflect grey snowy skies. Frozen sleet and snow snarls traffic, causing people to walk hunched over and step deliberately, as if the city underfoot was a bed of eggshells.

In the National Gallery, the show of early Impressionist paintings fills the atmosphere with the light and warmth of 19th century French visions. The eternal springtime of Renoir, Monet, Sisley and Pissarro dispels the cold; one can almost smell the scent of flowering fields, and the intimation of summer brings promise of autumnal harvests. That other Washington, just behind the facades of stone faced bureaucracies and cheek by jowl with the White House, the Washington of roaches and rats gnawing black poverty, could use some of this 19th century light and warmth.

Relaxing into the liquid world of Monet and the verdant countrysides of Pissarro, I'm surrounded by a proper 'Christian' crowd, just come from a prayer breakfast with *that* man in the White House. I wonder if their oohs and ahhs of approbation would turn to boos and bahs of condemnation if they knew of the radical opinions and actions of some of these painters they so admire. Surely, that black and white anarchist, Pissarro, would be barred from entering this country today. Like the anarchist George Woodcock, or the Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes, or the Brazilian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, or Woodcock's fellow Canadian writer Farley Mowat; all of whom are barred from entry into this land of 'liberty' because their opinions diverge from those of the bureaucratic morons who make such decisions. Remember, it was these self same idiots who forced so mild a social critic as Charles Chaplin out of this country into exile.

A young German comrade with a penchant for puns might quip: 'Don't complain, for into every life a little "Reagan" must fall'; but couldn't comprehend the torrent of idiocy, prejudice and ignorance that drowns our hopes and dreams. Each week that Cinematic Shadow in the White House ventures forth to express patriotic visions, ambitions and aspirations for a mesmerised American public. His plasticised face creased in reassuring smiles, in unctuous voice he repeats the patriotic lies and banalities about how great this country is, how fortunate our citizens are and how bright and sunny the future will be. All a mask for the death-dealing avarice of the power brokers who brought and support him in his place of power. When he leaves the White House he and his lackeys must cover their eyes in order to avoid seeing the horror of the slums that surround them. His ilk blame the poor for being poor and visionless, while planning military adventures that will grind even more people of this land into poverty.

When 'He' speaks about his vision of America — America the land of opportunity, the land of inventive, self sufficient people — I'd like to drag him by the scruff of his neck down to the Corchran Gallery to look into the faces of some American people as photographed by Richard Avedon in his powerful show, 'In the American West'. For here was a reality of the American Dream

that Reagan couldn't admit to. His eyes would glaze over (as they do if he's given a briefing paper of more than three paragraphs) and shield his vision from the pain, despair and death in the eyes of these 'real' Americans. In the faces of these miners, housewives, drifters, ranch workers, oil riggers and atomic workers, yea, even in the eyes of their children, is mirrored the 'American Dream' ground down by the pain of their reality.

The men, covered with the dirt of their work or of the road, would only be perceived by Reagan as tough, honest, macho and hard working, the backbone of America. He could never see them as caught in a social and economic trap in which they pay with their lives and their families' lives for the wealth and power of the corporate owners far removed from the filth and pain of the oil fields, coal and uranium mines and mills. Sadly, most of these men wouldn't see it either. For most of these men would defend Reagan's view of America and thus hide from themselves the bareness and hopelessness of their lives.

And the worn out, tight lipped women, the waitresses, housewives, checkout clerks and factory workers with their preternaturally old children; these women, even more than the men who protect themselves with their macho armouring, bought the 'American Dream'. How cruelly the few short years have treated them, from the time of their high school days, with their dream of marrying their hero boyfriends and rising from the poverty and drudgery of their parents. They placed all their hopes in finding the right man who would love them, protect them and provide for them, for this is how they were programmed. They gave up their own power and personalities in exchange for this dream. They gave up far more than did their macho men, who were protected by the masculine myth. Even more powerfully than the men, the women in the photographs, worn and old before their time, mirror the disappointments and defeats that are the lot of most of us in this fantasy world, America: America the rip-off society. These women did everything they were expected to and all they got in return for their efforts was poverty, too many sad-eyed children, and, for too many of them, husbands and lovers who drank too much, abused them and the children too much, and who too often died too young.

It is now mid-March. As always, the human spirit responds to the promise of another spring. But all the springs in the world can't ameliorate the condition of hopelessness that grips so many people in this American society. In Washington, perhaps less grim on the surface now that the sun has returned, there is a bleaker grimness in the minds and hearts of the politicians. Reagan and his henchmen are preparing another attack on the simple peasant peoples of Central America. An attack that will inevitably take many of the American people, the men and women of the small towns, to the jungles of Central America to die...If a change in direction will take place, it must begin in the minds and sensibilities of a people freed from their patriotic myths.

David Koven

Anarchists in Women's Groups

When anarchists a generation back said they aimed for 'the domination of men over things', they included women in the 'men' category, not in the 'things' category. When Emma Goldman made a lousy speech, no anarchist said it was wonderful anyway, because a woman making a speech is as wonderful as a dog walking on two legs. When lawmakers thought women unfit to own property or partake in elections or get the same pay as men for the same work, anarchists welcomed women no less than men. Anarchists always believed in sex equality — in theory.

Go to an anarchist summer camp, and you will likely find the men in one big tent planning the revolution, and the women in another big tent doing the dishes. At an anarchist discussion meeting, a woman may read the initial paper but men probably do most of the extemporising. In an anarchist publishing collective, men are more likely to write the polemics and women to update the subscription files. Okay, the women's contributions are as valuable as the men's, maybe more so. All the work needs doing, so let's help the revolution the best way we know how. Just so happens, the men know how to do exciting things, and the women know how to do drudgery.

Anarchist men are not to blame for this injustice. As I know from personal experience, if a woman refuses to take on boring jobs anarchist men will accept it for all they are surprised by it. The root of the injustice is that men and women are conditioned to behave as if women are the servants of men. If we are not thinking about it, this is the behaviour we lapse into.

Only in women-only groups can women plan, discuss, write and quarrel on equal terms, without insisting or surprising anyone or consciously thinking about every last move. Well-intentioned men have to be excluded because social conditioning — of males and females — is more potent than good intentions. Okay, women-only groups are theoretically sexist, but they are needed at this time for women's education. (They probably help men's education too, by taking women away from mixed groups and leaving men to look after themselves.)

This does not mean an anarchist in a women-only group can afford to let her guard drop. Most women's groups claim to be feminist, which means they aim for sex equality and sexual justice. No problem for an anarchist there, but women's groups are also assailed and infiltrated by people who are not feminists, but trying to enlist the women's movement in some other cause. Being conditioned to think as they are told, even feminist women are in danger of succumbing to these pests if they don't watch out. There are many types (I suppose some would count the anarchists among them), but I discuss only the anti-rational, the censorious, and the heterophobic.

The anti-rational pest

Rational thought is a skill which needs time to learn and perform. Slaves and women traditionally have no time to spare, which is why comparatively few slaves or women have been great intellectual innovators. They have had to rely on intuition, the art of good guesses.

Let us not dismiss intuition. Scientific, mathematical and philosophical discoveries often start from intuitive insights, which are confirmed by rational testing. Let us not rely on intuition either. Intuitive insights prove at least as often wrong as right.

Women can reason as cogently as men, given the opportunity, and reason is their best hope of attaining justice. Yet I have heard it argued, or rather reiterated in women's meetings, that reasoning is a male way of thinking, and women should stick with mentally lazy 'women's intuition'.

The censorious pest

That women can reason as well as men does not mean there are no mental differences. There is an interesting difference between male and female erotic fantasy — I do not say a universal or inherent difference, but one which exists. In real life both men and women experience the joy and pain of being in love, and enjoy nooky whether they are in love or not. In fantasy, however, women like to imagine being in love, while men's fantasies go straight to sex play.

Immediate responses to the printed trash which sustains the fantasies of the opposite sex, commonly indicate male confidence and female subservience. Men just laugh at romantic fiction, while women feel put down by girlie magazines. Feminism would raise women's confidence to the point where they can just laugh at girlie magazines, realising that idealised photographs no more humiliate real women than the bronzed heroes of pulp romance humiliate real men.

There are people, however, of both sexes, who get their kicks by interfering with other people's sexual pleasure. Some such people are found in women's groups, where instead of trying to help overcome the irrational fear of girlie magazines, they try to enlist those who suffer from it in irrational censorship campaigns.

The heterophobic pest

Lesbians are often militant feminists, I suppose because they experience all the disadvantages of being women without the principal compensation. Mostly they are an asset. The problem is with some who are personally nauseated by the thought of heterosexual intercourse, and vociferate at length about how women are debased by it. This causes some straight sisters to wonder whether by enjoying sex, or flirting, or dressing up, they are surrendering their integrity.

Anarchists in women's groups need to keep explaining that freedom is choice, and women's liberation means the right of women to do their own thing. Freedom includes the right to think things through, and not proceed on hasty judgements. Freedom includes the right of everyone to read what they like. Freedom includes the right to enjoy sex.

Only remember screwing a guy, or living with him, or even being crazy in love with each other, does not make it your duty to wash his socks.

Andrea Kinty

Anarchism is about individuals

There is no such thing as human society.

A lot of muddled thinking rests on the error that because 'society' is a useful noun, it must refer to a thing. It is one of those nouns like 'journey' and 'tennis', which refers not to a thing but to a relationship between things. The statement 'human society exists' is simply a less cumbersome way of saying 'human individuals relate to each other in certain complicated ways'. The question, 'what is the purpose of human society?' means the same as, 'why do human individuals associate in the way they do?'.

Human craving for society is irrational.

The old social contract philosophers listed what they took to be the advantages of society, and wrote as if individuals deliberately adopted society for the sake of these advantages, as if society in general were an invention, like a trade union or a cycling club. We know from experience it is not like that at all. Human individuals who go for long without company experience a particular emotional distress called loneliness. Frustrated in more complex social needs they feel such distresses as humiliation and lack of job-satisfaction. Human eagerness for society is no more rational than the eagerness of a sheep to be in a flock, although it is less simple.

Human society did not start for any discernible purpose.

The emotional depth of the human need for society suggests that it is genetically inherited, and probably provides some selective advantage to individuals, or provided selective advantage to an ancestor.

There is nothing planned about genetic inheritance. Biologists sometimes make statements like 'the giraffe evolved a long neck so that it could browse higher up the trees', but they are not intended to be taken literally. There is no such animal as the giraffe; there are only individual giraffes. And there is no 'so that' about evolution; what happened in the case of giraffe's necks, according to the natural selection theory, is that those individuals which just happened to have longer necks just happened to be alive at a time when the available food just happened to be high, and so just happened to survive and breed as their relatives starved. The idea is gaining ground that natural selection alone cannot account for the whole of evolutionary change, but the other mechanisms proposed are equally unplanned.

Indiscernible extramundane purpose cannot be excluded. Perhaps the Creator had human society or giraffe's necks in mind when the laws of physics were created at the beginning of time. For all we can discern, however, human society began by accident.

Opinions about the purpose of human society abound, but they are not factual opinions. They are ethical opinions. They cannot be confirmed or refuted by reference to facts, and they do not even need to be internally consistent. They can be argued, but for argument to succeed there must probably be a measure of assent to start with.

The purpose of human society

Anarchism is founded on the opinion that the purpose of human society is to extend the range of individual choices.

It seems indisputable that human society does in fact extend the range of individual choices. To take a simple example: an isolated individual cannot choose to shift a weight that takes two people to shift it; whereas an

individual in society can make that choice, if only there is another individual who wants the same weight shifted. By being in society, each individual can use the strength of the other. This is called co-operation.

Not all human relationships, however, are co-operative. Some are coercive; that is to say, individuals are compelled by threats from other people to do what they would rather not do. This may extend the range of choices of whoever is doing the threatening, but it restricts the choices of the individual being threatened, and so runs counter to what anarchists see as the purpose of human society.

For historical reasons, anarchist writers have often tended to concentrate on the threat of penury held over the poor by the rich, but this never made other types of coercion more acceptable. The threats may be of death, torture, spanking, imprisonment, ostracism, impoverishment, bad weather, bad luck, or punishment after death. Anarchists oppose the lot.

It follows from the total opposition to coercion that the final end of anarchism is a society totally without coercion. Such a free society may be seen, however, rather as a logical extension of anarchism than as a policy objective. What anarchists are after here and now is as little coercion as possible. The important aim is to make *progress towards* the free society (or when times are bad, to slow down progress in the opposite direction).

There are those who claim that they share the desire of the anarchists for a society where all relationships are voluntary, but have a different strategy for getting there. Their programme begins by concentrating all the instruments of coercion in the hands of persons of goodwill (ie themselves), who can then exercise their power to prevent others from behaving coercively, and educate the populace to have no relationships except co-operative ones. When this stage is reached, wrote one advocate of this programme, 'the state is not abolished, it withers away'. The programme was predicted by anarchists, and seems since to have been shown by experience, to result in more coercion, not less. Opposition to the ruling men of goodwill is ruthlessly stamped on, no less than unauthorised coercion. The persons of goodwill get into the habit of commanding, everyone gets into the habit of reluctant obedience, and a narrower range of individual choice comes to be accepted as normal.

Simple opposition, on the other hand, can produce discernible progress towards a less coercive society. In times of social upheaval, opponents of coercion can set up relatively less coercive organisations, such as the worker-controlled workshops which flourished (until they were overrun by conquerors) in revolutionary Spain. In more stable times, simple opposition and argument can produce small changes, which in turn change the perception of what is normal, providing a base for further changes.

Of course there are many opinions about the purpose of human society, and not all social pressures are in the direction of widening choice. Social upheaval in revolutionary Iran led to religious tyranny, and the thirty years in Britain which saw the widening of choice for some categories of individuals also saw a vast increase in the number of people in prison. The first stage in any anarchist programme is to convince as many people as possible, as much as they will be convinced, that individuals ought to work for their individual purposes, and nobody should be forced.

'Without compulsion, how would the necessary work get done?' (in the 1950s the usual form of this question was 'Who will clean the sewers?', but people have become less nervous of shit during the last thirty years.)

Much work is done without compulsion anyway, such as digging gardens and organizing clubs. Much of the work which people would be punished for not doing also offers positive rewards, like 'job satisfaction' or a sense of achievement. Nobody works for nothing, but it may reasonably be contended that individuals who are not coerced will work for positive rewards. Some long for public acclaim; in a coercive society, they climb as high as they can in the hierarchy; in a free society, they might choose to clean the sewers.

'Would a coercion-free society allow people to invade the freedom of other people? If so it would not be coercion-free for long; if not it would not be quite coercion-free, because to stop someone from coercing others is to coerce them.'

For a coercive relationship to be widespread and

lasting, there must be a measure of acceptance on the part of those who are coerced. A man pointing a gun at me cannot watch me for ever; if I continue to obey him when he is asleep, it must be because I think the relationship inevitable or normal, or because I acknowledge a duty to obey. Given a climate of opinion in which selfishness is praiseworthy, where it is always right and proper to say 'I won't', it would be more difficult than it is now to set up a coercive institution. Casual, momentary coercion would admittedly be less easy to prevent.

'Is it possible to have a human society with no coercion whatever? Surely, in the most voluntary society imaginable, it would be necessary to restrain the occasional maniac?'

I do not know and it is not important. We do not have to deal with the problems of an ideal society. We live here and now, and it is quite obvious that society here and now is a lot more restrictive of individual choices than society should be.

Donald Rorum

The never changing
face of capitalism.

CAM:86

Foreign Aid: the Small Group Solution

One way to celebrate the centenary of *Freedom* is to consider the bearing which the ideas of people who founded the magazine may have upon our problems today. I am not proposing to embark on a historical article, but rather to show how the insights of people like Kropotkin can still be of use to us in a different world where problems have changed their external forms if not their essential natures and where I no longer have the kind of revolutionary expectations, the millenarian euphoria, that Kropotkin sustained, at least in his earlier years.

For me, reading *Mutual Aid* again in 1986, the most useful, as distinct from the most historically interesting, part of the book is the second of the two chapters entitled 'Mutual Aid Among Ourselves', in which he described the ways in which, without any idea of anarchist theory, ordinary people in England were in fact practising mutual aid, in Colin Ward's phrase, 'anarchy in action'.

They are modest endeavours of which Kropotkin speaks, 'the friendly societies, the unities of oddfellows, the village and town clubs organised for meeting the doctors' bills, the dress and burial clubs, the small clubs very common among factory girls, to which they contribute a few pence every week, and afterwards draw out the sum of one pound,' (though he continued with the upbeat passage in which he describes the heroic endeavours of the volunteer lifeboat crews), but they demonstrate a natural movement in society towards self-help and mutual aid which the Welfare State has largely choked off through its assumption of the tasks which ordinary people working freely together could carry out for themselves with more efficiency and less waste if they had control of the means to do so.

What one misses nowadays in *Mutual Aid* and similar writings of the time is an application of such insights to the vast imperialized hinterlands of the world — India, China, the African and Asian colonies — where many millions of people lived in conditions of servitude and poverty worse than those endured by even the most exploited workers of Europe or the United States. And this is understandable since the problem then and down into the 1930s seemed — to all but a few unusually perceptive opponents of colonialism — to get the imperialists off the backs of their subjects. Then, it was thought, freed from foreign masters, no longer exploited for the benefit of the imperial countries, the peoples of the former territories would control their own destinies and economies, and their miseries would progressively vanish as education and enlightenment filtered down to the millions.

One of the people who realised that things would not be so easy was Gandhi. Gandhi was an odd mixture of personalities that simpler folk, like Orwell for example, found it difficult to understand. He was a shrewd and often ruthless political operator who sometimes called himself an anarchist and meant it; he was a religious fanatic and a kinky puritan who was also a super orchestrator of civil disobedience and a master of symbolic direct actions like the Salt March; beneath all the masks, he had a clear sense of social realities.

When India approached independence Gandhi and Nehru discussed the future of the Congress movement. Nehru wanted to transform it into a political party, and

this is what he did, creating the obscene political monolith that has weighed down on India almost the whole period of 39 years since the British left. Declaring that he smelt corruption in the air, in which events have proved him amply right, Gandhi wanted Congress to be disbanded as a political entity and replaced by a kind of socially-oriented association aimed at creating the kind of village-based commonwealth he envisaged. He also wanted the army to be disbanded. 'Militarisation of India would mean self-destruction,' he warned.

The India Gandhi contemplated would have been a great deal different from the militaristic, centralised, industrialised India which Nehru anticipated and which has in fact come into being, and in 1947 his proposals made a good deal of sense. India was still — as it has remained — a country of rural people; eighty per cent of its population lived in the villages, mostly in poverty and often in the grip of landlords and moneylenders who remained after the British had gone for the simple reason that they themselves were Indians, exploiting peasants of their own races as ruthlessly as the Raj had ever done. Mere political independence meant little to Gandhi and his immediate associates. They wanted to see a social regeneration of India, an end to internal exploitation, and they rightly thought it could only begin in the villages. The villagers must be liberated from all kinds of political and economic tyranny and discrimination and must be taught how to use their own resources properly for their own benefit. Out of the regeneration of the villages Gandhi envisaged a kind of federalism emerging rather like that proposed by Proudhon. It was not an anarchist vision, but it was a decentralist vision evolving a great diffusion of power, and it at least recognised the realities of Indian life.

Under Nehru India went the other way, and now it is virtually a single-party state, ruled by a Congress Party that is rotting with its own corruption. An army of a million soldiers, in addition to various para-military forces and numerous police, support its rule, and do so by ruthless methods, including torture and beating deaths, which were recently exposed by Amnesty International. It is true that India has developed an industrial superstructure so sophisticated that now it is beginning to make its own computers, and the profits of industrialisation have created a growing and callous middle class who spend freely and conspicuously. But the bottom of the pyramid is larger than ever; 300,000,000 people remain without land, without proper shelter, without work or at best with casual jobs like chipping stones for roadmaking that earn perhaps £3 a week.

This situation has come about because of the general official neglect of the villages in favour of armaments and industry, except in a few favoured areas like the rich wheatlands of the Punjab that largely feed the country. In many regions villagers are considerably worse off than they were before the British left. This is particularly so in tribal areas, where people formerly lived largely by hunting and gathering forest products, which is now no longer possible owing to widespread deforestation. Deforestation has also impoverished much of the farm land, and, in Rajasthan and the Deccan, it has caused a drought that has lasted two monsoon seasons and looks like going into a third.

Elsewhere there are potentially rich regions which are largely given up to growing export crops, like Kerala with its spices, tea, coffee and rubber, and here the people, with not enough land to feed themselves properly, are the poorest in a poor country owing to exploitation by the planters, who are now fellow Indians. The bosses change; the fact of economic exploitation remains the same.

75% of Indians still live in villages, and the proportion is lower than it was in 1947 mainly because so many people have left in desperation, unable to survive by farming or deprived of their lands by the moneylenders, and have joined the millions who sleep every night on the pavements of Bombay and Calcutta or live in the disease-ridden bustees or shacktowns on the edges of the cities. 75% of the medical facilities in India are situated in the urban areas where 25% of the people live. There have of course been government schemes aimed at rural regeneration because, like all statisticians, the Congress-wallahs believe all problems can be solved by government. But local politicians and equally corrupt local officials have milked the funds set aside for such schemes, and whatever has been done is carried out unimaginatively, from above, without involving the people except as recipients. That is in the areas where something has been attempted; there are vast areas where nothing would have been done if it had not been for voluntary groups, which are now operating in many parts of India.

Some of these groups, like Sava Seva and the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, are avowedly Gandhian, run by Gandhi's own surviving disciples or a second generation of his followers. Others are groups that have emerged locally and they are staffed either by volunteers or often by young university graduates in agriculture or engineering who are ready to work for £30 a month or less. I have been in contact with a number of these groups over the past five years through a small group in Canada (Canada India Village Aid) that collects funds for Indian villages and works with parallel non-governmental organisations in India. Though I doubt if many of the people involved, in either India or Canada, have imitated Gandhi by reading *Fields, Factories and Workshops* or *Mutual Aid*, a great deal they are doing would fit in with Kropotkin's ideas or those of most late twentieth century environmentally oriented anarchists.

Some examples. Members of a group in Bangalore called Myrada went into an area of backward villages on the borders of Tamilnad and Karnataka, inhabited mostly by tribal peoples and so-called Scheduled Castes (formerly called untouchables). These people — 100 villages with about 150,000 inhabitants — had been ignored by government agencies, and had neither educational nor health facilities; their farming was low grade subsistence on small plots, so that they barely fed themselves and never had the surplus cash that in the money economy is the necessary springboard to a better standard of living. After long discussions, the people through their panchayats asked for a revitalisation programme, which would provide education and health facilities, co-operatives and a kind of credit union, but would also upgrade farming by introducing saturation cropping (growing several crops together which in some cases increased the yield by 300%), interbreeding scrub cattle with Holsteins, which increased the milk output eight to ten times, and introducing chickens. The contribution of the Canadian group has been a mobile clinic and a scheme to train villagers as paramedics so that eventually strangers can withdraw and the villagers can continue their own regeneration.

In Rajasthan, we have been in touch with a group, Seva Mandir, that works in the 300 odd villages of Bhil tribespeople around Udaipur, helping them with health and agriculture problems, supporting women in freeing themselves from ancient restrictions, starting basic education, encouraging community centres where the villages can meet and formulate their needs. We have already helped Seva Mandir by funding a scheme by which a man or a woman from each village can be trained as a paramedic and sent back to his or her community; the emphasis is on helping the villagers achieve maximum self-reliance. Recently a severe problem has arisen in these villages because the monsoon rains have failed two seasons running. The solution is more water storage to conserve unused water and trap unseasonal rainfalls like those which occurred last autumn after the normal season had ended. In co-operation with the village panchayats, we have worked out a scheme by which they will provide the labour to build stone-faced dams, for which they will be paid with wheat that Seva Mandir has persuaded the Indian government to disgorge from its granaries. Seva Mandir's engineers and field workers supervise the construction free of charge and Canada India Village Aid pays for materials and transport; a small dam serving an average of 800 to 1,000 people can be built in this way for about £2,500, as against the many thousands a government-built dam would cost.

I have gone into this detail because it seems to me that co-operation between small groups in the giving country and small groups in the receiving country is the best way to solve the foreign aid problem. Government-to-government aid is notoriously wasteful, large proportions going to pay bureaucrats or leaching away through corruption; usually it is allocated in any case to the politically loyal rather than the genuinely needy. The large international relief agencies — I need not name them — spend great sums on administration, become bureaucratically ossified so that they are insensitive to real local needs, and are also vulnerable to corruption.

Small groups, on the other hand, are efficient and responsive and evade the perils attached to involvement with governments. Canada India Village Aid, for example, is an affinity group of a dozen people with broad experience, including two medical doctors, two immigrants of Indian birth, four other people with a direct knowledge of India and contacts there; we have an outer group of perhaps 30 people on whom we can call for help when we put on fund drives or events. Nobody receives a penny in salaries, so that the overheads amount to about 1% of what we raise; on principle we work by consensus and in five years have not taken a vote. The groups we work with in India vary in their philosophies, but they tend to be anti-elitist, concerned to get the people they help involved in carrying out schemes planned jointly with the recipient villages. Their stress is on developing intensive forms of agriculture to make districts self-sufficient, village industries that can be carried on in the idle time between monsoons, vocational training, inexpensive health services run largely by paramedics and traditional healers trained in modern methods; the overall aim is to develop a self-reliance that will provide a continuing impulse once immediate needs have been met, so that the villages will again be places in which to stay and live a good life. And that, whether the people involved call themselves anarchists or not, is, I suggest, not far off what anarchists have always been recommending.

George Woodcock

Anarchism against bombs, 1986

Forty-one years after the democrat Truman and the socialist Attlee ordered the slaughter of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and several decades after the failure of the Aldermaston marches, there are still those whose professed hope for ridding the world of nuclear weapons is 'to change public opinion and the policies of the political parties through the usual democratic channels'. We have enough experience not to be astounded by such naive optimism, nor yet to be discouraged by it.

Free elections, the so-called 'usual democratic channels' dear to the hearts of our political reformists, are a Hobson's choice. One is free to choose among a number of aspirants to positions of power, but never to question the machinery of government which they operate; one is free not to vote but not to ignore the decisions made by governments which apply to every man, woman and child whether they voted for or against or not at all.

It is not without significance that *anarchy*, 'complete absence of government' is also defined as 'chaos, complete disorder', not only by *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary* but by many 'progressively-minded' people as well. Well-ordered anarchy, they argue, is possible only in sparsely populated rural communities, in an age of hunter-gatherer economy, or perhaps in an age of the handloom and the individual craftsman, where time and science stand still and individual ambition is dormant. Modern society, with its dense agglomeration of urban population, its mass production and its mass needs, cannot afford the luxury of anarchy. (If one could detect a little anarchy in their small family groups, one might be convinced of their objectivity.)

We anarchists remain unconvinced by this argument because we see that while mass production can lead to the creation of mass humanity, it is also the key to a society of leisure in which people can be themselves because freed from a preoccupation with sheer physical survival. We are anarchists because we believe that life is bread not as an end, but as a means to an end. And we believe in the possible achievement of anarchy because we perceive that more than at any other time before in history we have a choice, between using our knowledge for our own destruction or for our emergence as human beings, between Mass Humanity and Individual Persons.

Perhaps a majority of the old Aldermaston marchers were politically bound and party-leader saturated. Their sneers and jeers, their compassionate smiles as we offered them *Freedom*, 'the anarchist weekly', betrayed their mistaken belief that the bomb would be banned if only the 'right' politicians could be elected to power. This made us the more convinced that the important alternatives are not between party and party, but between centralised authority and individual responsibility. In other words what is required is political detoxification; a growing contempt for political expediency born of a growing belief in the responsibility and ability of ordinary people.

Nuclear weapons and — what is more important — war itself, will not be banned by attempts at persuading governments or taking over governments. Repeated failure of such attempts does not, in itself, prove they are bound to fail for ever; but let those who persist in this failed endeavour ask themselves whether they are trying for the logically impossible. Can any government, whatever its political colouring, reconcile such white-blackbirds as authority, privilege, and mass humanity, with freedom, justice, and the individual?

The anarchist road to freedom from nuclear weapons is undoubtedly a slow one, but since decades of anti-nuclear protest through 'democratic channels' have led only to increases in the efficiency and danger of nuclear weapons, we must not feel that our road is any slower than that of the political optimists.

We think there are two kinds of necessary activity. On the one hand any kind of protest is salutary, if only for ourselves. As Marie Louise Berneri put it so simply

'It may be true that our protests will not change the course of events, but we must voice them nevertheless. Workers all over the world who rallied to the defence of Sacco and Vanzetti were not able to save them from the electric chair, yet who can say their protests were useless?

On the other hand if the enemy of human emancipation is the State and the government, and we are agreed we cannot easily destroy them by direct assault, then the only alternative left is to eventually destroy them by attrition, by withdrawing power from them as a result of taking over direct responsibility for more and more activities which concern our daily lives. That governments are more aware of the danger herein involved to their power and indispensability than are people of the possibilities of real freedom is only they took the plunge, is shown by the massive programmes of the parties and the apathy of the people.

The more we do for ourselves the more we will want to, and know how to, do for ourselves. We must starve the State of initiative. Every radical worthy of the name has shared Jefferson's view that 'that government is best which governs least'. The Tory Party promises more 'law and order', the Labour Party more government control of the 'infrastructure', the Alliance parties to 'take power'. All of them promise *more and more government*. It is up to us to resist this threat by protest and demonstration (not so much directed towards the government but to draw our fellow citizens' attention to the dangers) and by our actions, showing by our initiative and sense of community that we are more than capable of running our own lives.

What can we do to ban the H-Bomb? Very little friends, until we decide that running our own lives is an important part of life. When we find the time and the patience to run our own lives, we shall have little time or patience for the antics of politicians and power-maniacs, and no energy to waste on making weapons for our own annihilation.

Vernon Richards

Why Anarchists should also be Pacifists and vice versa

If all anarchists became pacifists and all pacifists became anarchists, their organisations could combine and their influence on the unconverted would increase enormously. And so I am writing this short essay in the hope that it will produce more nonviolent anarchists.

First it must be understood what is meant by an 'anarchist' and by a 'pacifist'.

An anarchist rejects the state pattern of society. He works for a truly free society where people live and work together by cooperation instead of using violence upon one another. An anarchist does not want chaos; on the contrary, s/he wants a degree of order which far exceeds anything known today. And this order will be achieved when no person exploits another and when the people 'govern' themselves.

A pacifist is a person who refuses to do violence. But when is the refusal made? When that person or his family is attacked? When that person is asked to fight in a war or support it in some way? Or when that person is asked to fight in a demonstration or revolution?

Now, I am not suggesting that we should refuse to do violence on a personal level — although we should certainly not instigate it. Our world is full of characters made evil by the state environment, and I see no moral or practical reason why we should not protect ourselves from them. But that does not mean that we should join any state group in the belief that to be organised is to be better protected, because if we do that we shall find that our violent organisation is used for a purpose which is very different from the one we expect. So whether or not you fight to protect your family is your own affair, but whether or not you fight in revolution or war is a very different kettle of fish. Refusing to fight in a revolution, I call revolutionary-pacifism; refusing to fight in war, I call war-pacifism.

To become an anarchist or a pacifist, a person must recognise some of the social truths I list below; to become both an anarchist and a pacifist, a person must recognise all of them. (Obviously, in a short space I can give only a bare outline of the facts. Those interested should study the present conditions in the world and all history.) The facts, then, are:

- 1 The world is covered by units we call 'states'. Each state contains a few rulers who force the rest of the population in it — the ruled — to obey them. All the rulers behave in the same way and therefore, except for the variations produced by the size of the states, climate, and natural resources, all states are identical.
- 2 The rulers govern in the interests of themselves, a few privileged individuals, and some large power organisations within their country. As a result there is, all over the world, a great inequality of wealth. Some people have an abundance of everything, and others have nothing, so that they starve.
- 3 The great inequality of wealth and power means that no state is a unity in the sense that everyone has identical interests.

4 The rulers force the ruled to obey them by controlling their minds, using propaganda and censorship, by reward, and by violence. Violence is the keystone of power. The people would not support their unjust state and wars were they not forced to do so by the violence of the police and their back-up force which is the army. (The main purpose of the police and the army is not to defend the people against criminals and foreigners but to defend the rulers against their people.)

5 Besides creating inequality, poverty and violence within a country, rulers also create wars. They need wars to serve the interests of certain power groups who profit from them and they need wars because the ruled can be controlled when they rally behind their government in fear of the 'enemy'. The state needs war as a man needs air.

6 Just as the state needs organised violence, so does organised violence need the state to direct it and to force men and women to fight and obey.

7 The amount of violence practised by individuals and groups on their own behalf is infinitesimal compared with that perpetrated by governments.

8 Wars and revolutions enable some rulers to retain or attain power but they do not produce the ideals of equality, freedom and peace.

9 Without the waste of governments — particularly war — all men could live full and happy lives in extreme comfort.

So anarchists must be war-pacifists because there is no point in working to abolish the state if they take part in the very activity it needs for its existence. When nobody fights in war, the state will collapse. Also, since all states are basically the same, and since no state is unity, it is never a good state versus a bad. Further, the nationality of one's rulers is immaterial. It is their existence which is the trouble.

And anarchists should also become revolutionary-pacifists because means shape ends. To fight successfully, anarchists would have to create the same power-structure as the pattern of society they want to abolish — the state (hence the failure of the French and Russian revolutions). This besides the fact that governmental forces have more chance of being the stronger, and even if a violent revolution were successful it would soon be overturned by some of the other governments in the world (hence the failure of the Spanish revolution).

Pacifists must become anarchists because there is no point in working to abolish the social evils of injustice, poverty and war if they support the state system which causes all these evils.

People who become pacifists or anarchists do so because they care for their fellow human beings. Anarchists and pacifists want a society which is free, egalitarian and peaceful. And because they want it they must unify their beliefs and work together to produce it.

Derrick A Pike

'I think that's a terrible thing to say!' Elderly anarchist hack tells all...

A couple of years ago *Freedom* published a transcribed impromptu interview with me and introduced it with a kindly-meant sentence saying that I was 'one of the few contemporary anarchists known outside the anarchist movement through his articles and reviews in *New Society* and elsewhere...' Well, of course, I blushed at the implied flattery, but whether or not that remark is true, I think it's a terrible thing to say!

Not because *New Society* is itself having a hard struggle to survive, but because I would take it for granted that we anarchist propagandists *should* so far as we are able, use our efforts to address that vast world outside the anarchist movement.

How on earth is it that I find myself to be one of the 'few' token anarchists who, no doubt unworthily, represent anarchism in the non-anarchist press? How have we managed to get ourselves bottled up in the situation that we only address each other, and *not* the outside world?

It's an interesting question, and one which stereotyped answers tend to obscure. For example, the journal whose centenary we are celebrating was founded by Charlotte Wilson, the independent wife of a Hampstead stockbroker, aided by a Russian prince. Does this ordinary historical fact affect our approach to *Freedom's* centenary, and if so, why and how? In those days Europe was littered with exiled aristocratic Russian revolutionaries. Many of them used the services of international bankers like Baron Rothschild, to retrieve the income from their Russian estates (all those serfs and moujiks). One of these was Alexander Herzen, who used the cash to finance, not only various publishing ventures of Proudhon's, but his own very effective journals, *The Polar Star* and *The Bell*. Bakunin, the well-known *rentier*, as he is described on the Swiss burial records, lived off Herzen's Russian income. Even our homegrown pre-anarchist author, William Godwin, lived in his final (at last debt-free) years as holder of a parliamentary sinecure.

A whole phalanx of historians will correct me if I have mistated any of these facts about those who were once the 'few contemporary anarchists known outside the anarchist movement'. I just want to establish the fact that it isn't easy to make a living if you are an anarchist author.

Kropotkin tried very hard. He belonged to a different generation with a different set of moral values. When he made his escape from a Russian prison hospital the very last thing in his mind was getting back his share of the lost family fortunes. He earned his living from his contributions to the non-anarchist press. Most of his books were compiled from his contributions to *The Nineteenth Century* or *Contemporary Review*, as well as to the geographical journals.

The first time I ever met his name was as the author of a turn-of-the-century article on the building of the Trans-Siberian Railway in a bound volume of *Tit-bits*

which my grandfather happened to own. I like the *Tit-bits* side of Kropotkin, because I know that while he was busy writing for a variety of British and French specialist papers and for the press in general, he was also contributing to a variety of anarchist papers, in his own handwriting, in at least three languages.

For sheer polyglot competence and lucidity of simple exposition, Kropotkin was unbeatable, especially as he was 'known outside the anarchist movement'. But in fact, on the outbreak of the First World War (again, if I've got the history right) when Tom Keell, the long-suffering and long-lasting editor of *Freedom* was printing anti-war articles, Kropotkin and Cherkezov told Keell that he was simply their paid servant and should close down the paper for the duration of the war. Keell, fortunately, failed to comply with these instructions, but the whole nasty episode in *Freedom's* history has left us with the notion that it's only OK to write about anarchism if you don't earn any money in the process.

Thus I read on the back cover of a recent *Freedom* Press publication that 'as well as being one of the oldest of the alternative publishing groups, FP is probably unique in that neither editors, writers nor authors have ever been paid for their work.'

In other words paper bills have to be paid, printers are of course paid, even people who distribute newspapers are paid, but anarchist editors, writers and authors are too holy to have to buy food or pay electricity bills. This is an interesting point of view, even though it can lead to theological arguments on the degree to which preparing copy for print can be considered editing (unpaid and holy) or printing (paid and unholy). As the technology of printing changes, it becomes even harder to draw the line.

Fine. Let's not live in the past. I'm concerned with the attitude that takes it for granted that anarchist writers do it from conviction, and consequently have another source of income, while other writers are just hacks, doing it for cash. This leads to the unfortunate assumption that those anarchist writers who contribute to the non-anarchist press are unprincipled lick-spittles of capitalism, etc. (Unfortunately the Marxist lingo lives on, while all the Marxists I know have become professors, and write their books at their employers' expense.)

I do actually worry about the contemporary anarchist exclusiveness that makes me, of all people, 'one of the few contemporary anarchists...etc'. Being an anarchist writer is, by the *Freedom* Press definition, a spare-time activity: what the outside world would call a hobby. I, in fact, during the 13 years that I was a member of *Freedom's* editorial group, and the 10 years when I edited *Anarchy*, had six different jobs in several occupations. But I would see it as slightly absurd to regard anarchist propaganda as a *leisure* occupation. My own admiration is actually for those of my fellow writers and editors

who found their own niche in what we would now call the informal economy for generations, just in order to dedicate their *real* time to the task of propagating anarchism. Their 'work' in the usual sense, was Freedom Press and its activities, while their 'leisure' was the business of scraping a living. Personally I regard *them* as exemplars of the way we should arrange our lives. In this respect the most impressive of all the celebrated anarchists of the past was undoubtedly Malatesta, who knew what he wanted to do in life, and consequently acquired a useful trade (electrical engineering) which he could follow, on his own, anywhere in the world, and need never be without relatively well-paid work.

Now I'm not like that. Partly because I was too unadaptable, but partly because, no doubt, naively, I actually *believed* in most of my jobs. When I ceased to, I changed my occupation. Incredibly, I was what the DHSS regards as an 'employed person' from the age of 15 to that of 55. Then I moved to the country and became dependent on writing for a living. Predictably, I have never been poorer. The majority of members of my trade union, the Society of Authors, live below what the government regards as the poverty line. But so do almost all the anarchists I know.

The moment I ceased to be an anarchist editor, I started writing books. The events are not connected except in the sense that previously, whenever a book was suggested, I used to reply 'Sorry, I haven't the time.' Since then I have been the author, co-author or editor of sixteen books. They have all been well-received. Often the reviewers have perceived that, whatever the subject, they were anarchist books. Most of them went out of print. Some were 'remaindered' which means that you can buy them cheap but that they make nothing for the author.

The one book of mine which was directly and specifically about anarchism was *Anarchy in Action*, the fruit of my years as an anarchist editor. This may not represent your conception of anarchism, but it is the way I would argue for anarchism to the outside world. It earned me a few hundred pounds from the British and American editions and then went out of print. The Dutch and Japanese editions brought me under a hundred pounds, the Italian edition was published, with my agreement, for no earnings. A Spanish publisher paid me a small advance, but failed to bring out the book. A different Spanish publisher did so but I have never seen the result. Just the other day a friend brought me a German edition that I knew nothing about, and was certainly never paid for.

Now I'm not complaining. I just want to dispel any idea that writers, of the ordinary kind, get rich. My sympathies are with those translators I have never met, struggling to put my insular and local ideas into a world context. It was Freedom Press which rescued that book of mine from being out of print in English, and I'm pleased. I am *not* suggesting that Freedom Press (even if it had the cash) should start paying authors. But I do think that there is something rather short-sighted about our automatic anarchist sneer at anarchist authors who write for the non-anarchist press as 'academics',

'intellectuals' or 'literary gents'. It's one explanation of why there are so few of them.

But as books, at least the kind I write, fail to make money, I spend much too much of my time writing articles or reviews for a variety of journals, and sometimes getting an anarchist message across. Like every other author, I find that books of mine have been turned down by all the best-known publishers, but I have never written a *bad* book, nor one which *didn't* contribute to an anarchist interpretation of the subject under discussion. And I have had some amazing strokes of luck. Thanks to his initiative rather than mine, I had for a couple of years a research fellowship from the Social Science Research Council (a government-funded body) for the book Dennis Hardy and I wrote called *Arcadia for All* about dweller-built settlements in the south of England. The quality of the research (commented on by reviewers in the same breath as their description of this as an anarchist book) was the direct result of the knowledge that I could lash out on train fares. In the following year the government closed down the SSRC! People often find my books to be 'original' (when in fact that is not what I would claim for them) simply because of the stifling dominance of Marxism in the literature of the left. It's just that they haven't come across an anarchist standpoint before.

I know that people have a variety of different priorities, but my books, whether I write them myself or in collaboration with other people, tend to be about personal, popular or unofficial uses of the environment. Hence my book about *Work* (1972), which I used to maintain was the only honest book for teen-agers on that subject, or my book *Utopia* (1974) which was the only school book ever to introduce Kropotkin to 12-year-olds. Hence my book on *Vandalism* (1973), my three or four books which tried to set out the idea that dweller control is the first principle of housing, and my book about *The Child in the City* (1978). I have a book coming out, also written with Dennis Hardy, about the rise and decline of the holiday camp. A trivial topic for an anarchist? Not at all, for it shows, as nobody else has shown, that holiday camps were an example of popular mutual aid and self-help, long before Butlin muscled in on the act.

Pursuing the theme of the human environment seen from below, I have started on another study of the use of the environment by children, called *The Child in the Country*, and another (with David Crouch) on the culture of the allotment.

There are in fact a dozen topics I would like to write about, which like the articles I used to write for *Freedom*, use ordinary facts from the real world to illustrate anarchist arguments. Maybe it all sounds irrelevant for many readers. But I don't write for readers of the anarchist press, but for whoever happens to pick up a book in that huge crowd out there. I know perfectly well that there are a variety of more urgent topics that anarchists should be writing about, outside the anarchist movement. As, by ordinary standards, a completely unsuccessful anarchist author, I think we should all encourage them.

Colin Ward

Let 1,000 words, or less, bloom

It is said that generals always fight their next war by first fighting their last war and of my simplicity, may I state that many professed libertarians of the left and right imbibe and proclaim thinking that was outdated almost a century ago? The Old Masters gracing the bookshelves gaze down from the covers of the sacred writings, as the official rubber stamps of an era when the grass was green, and bosses wore top hats as a recognisable part of the uniform of the master class, and jigsaw wars were fought between identifiable countries because of the Machiavellian intrigues of cigar smoking politicians and international arms dealers. It was the golden days.

There was a time, half a life span away, when the anarchist movement within Britain was the thinking perk of the soulful middle class intelligentsia who used it as an escape clause in their social contract, in that having lectured the human race on the evils of authority and he unthinking behaviour of the masses they could then turn, with a shy smile, and disclaim any responsibility for any committed action 'as anarchists', before moving on to the latest formulated Government committee and accepting a Royal Honour.

Always it was the talk of the coming dawn of an 'anarchist society' as pie in the sky, not for the labouring masses, and always it was a literary plaything, strictly for the government art or educational committees or the publishing negotiations for the next illustrated book. Of their wining and dining associates none took them seriously, for like the Pope or Stalin it was accepted that in the living of their lives ideology is strictly for the birds, for in the living of their lives they would always have the need for an external authority to coax we, the Platonic sub mass into clocking in on time at 4:30am. Those who profess to love liberty and their fellow men and women may bleed a little at the heart but inevitably in the need for the greater good...

I type this without rancour or bitterness for over the long years I have sat in so many rooms above pubs, so many meeting places in forgotten, dark streets listening and listening to the voices, and I have heard the discussions on 'how will we run the banks in an anarchist society, the prisons and the police force (and this I swear I have listened to) clean the sewers, buy and sell houses', and in effect operate a political take over on a large Liberal managerial society. To talk or write of an 'anarchist society' is a contradiction in terms for it is the frailty and the saving grace of human nature that it will refuse to conform, nay not even in the name of organised liberty.

In 3rd December 1938 (*Vision on Fire*) Emma Goldman wrote to Rüdiger that 'The London *Freedom* group has been sleeping and quarrelling for years', and on 3rd August 1986 is it any different? Multiply that by 50,000,000 within these small islands with various con people and organised groups working their own political patches, and the individual will still be desperately struggling for his or her individual liberties, and 'anarchism', like 'communism' and 'religion', will become another dirty word after the fat cats have fouled it. The editorial collectives, the communes and the 'groups' have always been the product of good intentions but always become the creatures of a single

strong personality backed by a sad caste of weak yes men and women, until the inevitable revolt of the mice and a reformation under another drifting strong character. Multiply that by 50,000,000 people within these small islands and one thanks God for human frailty and human irresponsibility in the conduct of human affairs.

The human race has already drifted into a global society that is becoming moneyless, for the rich and the wealthy middle class long ago abandoned coinage for the plastic single card, and the common practice is now for employers to demand that the labourer's wage shall be paid into a bank. The future for the distribution of the material produce of society is now being forged, and it does not lie within the paraffin stove or chemical free cabbages, for it must be a world of over-abundance of the basic needs and in a moneyless society available to all. Our society has already drifted into the prophesied international managerial bureaucracy and therein lies the battle path of the individual anarchist.

There is no 'anarchist society', comrades, for they are carrot chewing words. There is only an individual who holds his or her individual liberty of paramount importance. We are the metropolitan people who seek and desire to live within a society of our fellow comrades and in doing that we daily compromise for we render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God or our conscience those personal liberties that we claim to defend. We compromise for we pay our television licence, our rent, our rates, and all the other demands that the State or Caesar makes upon us, and each day we clock on at our place of work and in doing so shred whatever democratic liberties we may claim outside the factory.

I say, no state, that it is the millions of people within every crowded geographical area who shall create the society most suited to them. If it pleases me then I shall support them, and if it does not please me then I shall protest, but I will never force my way of life onto a minority or majority as the greater good. Whatever society we live in or compromise with, be it Stalin's, Hitler's, Reagan's or happytime Dutch democratic, I would hope that, according to the length of the State's chain and according to my personal courage, I would seek to protect, defend and widen my own individual liberties.

The communist, the catholic, the soldier, the fascist believes and demonstrates that the party, the church, the army, the party rises above all considerations of moral teachings and human lives, but I state that the sacrifice of human lives or human liberties is not worthy of any of these dark playthings. I hearken to Max Stirner, so mocked and derided, in accepting that whatever actions we take we are unavoidably a thing of pure self-interest. In resisting any collective authority, whether State or fancy free, in my conditioned, Stirner-styled, individual choice from a confused life-long social background, personal liberty shall be paramount. For like any primitive fundamentalist I state that anarchism is purely a personal thing, that like a divine revelation cannot be transmitted by heavy breathers. My personal liberty is to me a thing I hold dear. Threaten it not for I am an anarchist.

Arthur Moyse



GREENHAM

RECOGNISE NO GOVERNMENTS

CLOSED

ZERO ONE ART GALLERY

OFFICIAL SYMPOSIUM ON ANARCHISM IN
ART :- TRANSPORT :- SPORT :- WINE
ELECTRONICS :- HOUSING :- FOOD
MEDICINE :- SPACE EXPLORATION
POLICING :- EDUCATION :- DRINKING
CHAIRPSE :-
LORD D. K. L.

AV BOOK

STRIKE PICKET

LOVE

ARTUR MOYSE

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U

Anarchism implies Atheism

Anyone who claims to be an anarchist yet professes faith in a transcendent god is a living contradiction.

It is possible, arguably, to be counted an anarchist and yet accept constitutional monarchy or local government or fair landlords or small-scale industrial bosses. After all, there is a wide spectrum of anarchism. But to stretch the definition so wide as to include acceptance of a supreme ruler of the whole universe is to make nonsense of the whole concept of anarchism.

In every monotheistic religion, god is absolute, with absolute power and authority over his creation — scarcely a framework for liberalism, let alone anarchism. Political freedoms presuppose freedom of inquiry without coercion.

Gods have always been the chief allies of tyrants; and the one true god of the Jews, Christians and Muslims has been the pinnacle of their hierarchies and the lynchpin of their authority. In his holy name the dispossessed can be cheaply bribed with promises of eternal bliss and kept in subjection with threats of eternal torment. Occasionally there is a clash between church and state, but normally they are hand in glove, to their mutual benefit.

The 20th century atheist regimes of the Soviet bloc may be seen as an exception — but even there we find in ‘the historical imperative’ the certitude that is the chief hallmark of religion. There is the same insistence on ‘jam tomorrow’ — except that the communist heaven is a future heaven on earth, rather than another world. And Lenin has been all but deified when Russian peasants explain that their medals, depicting a baby suspiciously like the Christ-child, are really of Lenin as a baby! Only hell is missing; hence the need for deterrent labour camps and prisons.

In the USA, where the founding fathers carefully built into the constitution ‘a wall of separation’ between church and state, their 20th century successors have been tearing it down. Nixon introduced media evangelists into the White House, especially for ‘prayer breakfasts’, since when they have been frequent guests during one administration after another; and it is a perpetual fight to keep religion out of the state schools there.

Ironically enough, in this country, where the church-state partnership is official, the proportion of churchgoers is about a tenth of that in the USA; and more and more schools are ignoring the religious clauses of the Education Acts, though Parliament steadfastly keeps them on the statute book.

It is significant that West Indian immigrants comprise the most ardent and numerous of the evangelical congregations and a disproportionate section of Catholic congregations in Britain — apparently unaware that from the 16th to the 19th centuries not only were the Christian churches the main sponsors of the black slave trade (the bench of bishops in the upper house consistently opposing all attempts to abolish it), but that fundamentalist Christian doctrines were cynically foisted on the slaves themselves so as to enable the slave-masters more easily to keep them in subjection. It is these same doctrines that many of their descendants now proclaim with such fervour.

In the 1950s, the Caribbean immigrants were amazed to find the Church of England so thinly supported in its eponymous homeland. Some of them gleefully joined this unexpected mass apostasy, but all too often merely

to transfer their religious fervour and allegiance to the black racist Rastafarian cult, in which a 20th century African emperor is cast as the God of the Bible, and the English Queen as ‘the whore of Babylon’. Many others have not only upheld the Christian religion as slaves, but have devoted themselves to street-corner evangelism and door-step missionary work in a misguided endeavour to re-convert the indigenous population to it.

While freedom of religion is proudly proclaimed in the west, it is not seen to include freedom *from* religion. Though unbelievers are no longer at risk of being burnt alive for their opinions, they certainly do not enjoy equality with believers in freedom of speech or fiscal privilege.

The hundreds of hours of radio and television time that are set aside each week for religious propaganda at public expense are increasingly shared out more fairly among Britain’s different brands of religion, but unbelief is not included. Religious broadcasting departments, with a sizeable budget to be spent and yawning many hours of air time to fill, do occasionally invite atheists to participate in their more controversial programmes — but always on *their* terms. No attempt is made to disguise the fact that the role of the atheist guest is to act as a foil to the main performers and liven the thing up. Some leading atheists will no longer play this game. I do sometimes go along with it myself, as being better than nothing — as well as (admittedly) for the ego-trip and the fee. On one such occasion, the producer warned me just before we went on the air that, since the purpose of the programmes put out by the religious department is to boost faith, not undermine it, I could not expect to have equal time with my opponent, nor the last word. (Since the programme went out live, however, I did have the last word!)

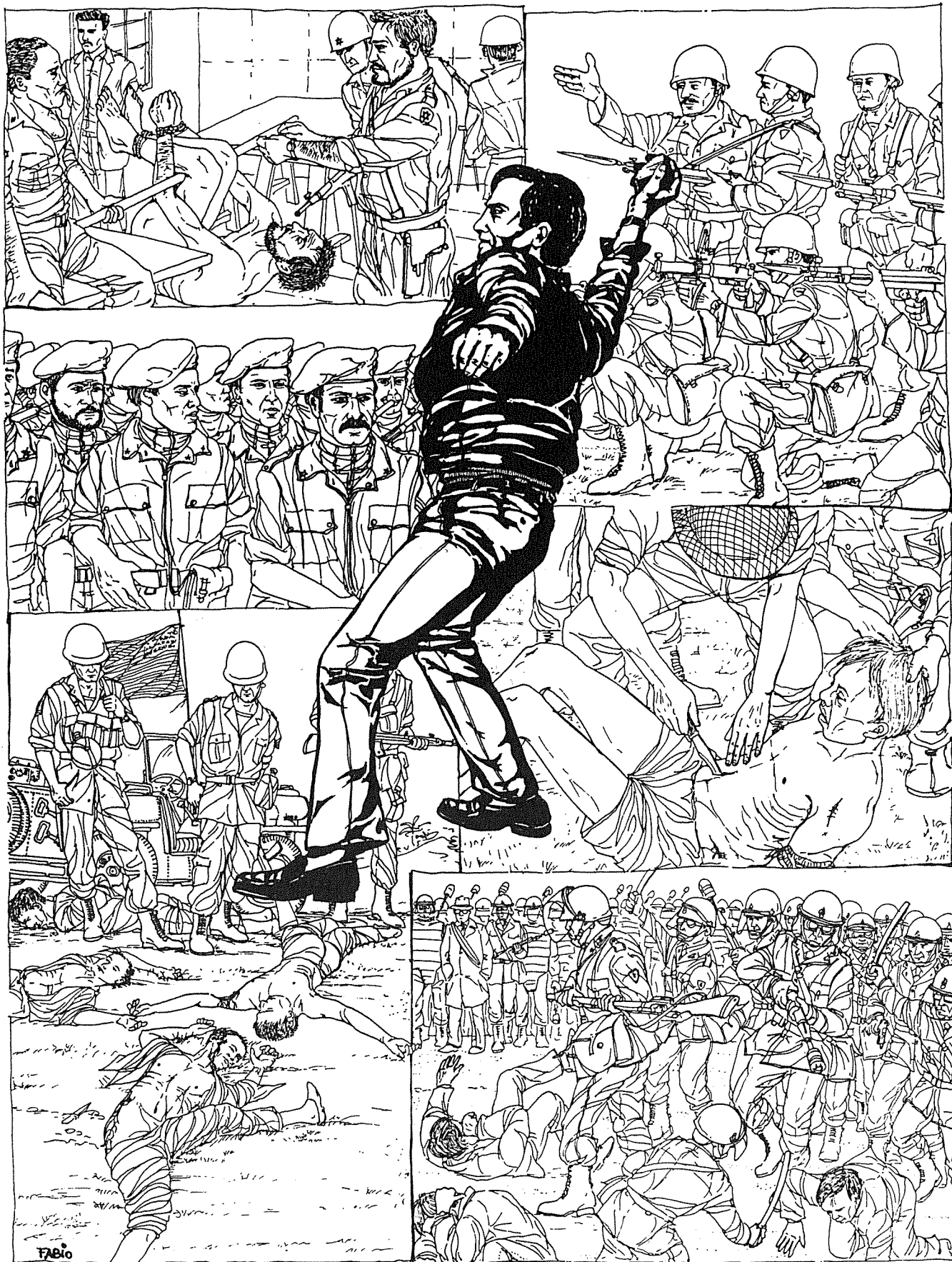
This blatant unfairness in religious propaganda broadcasting would not matter if the inherent bias were made clear, as it is for party political programmes, and if non-believers had equivalent programmes of their own — but most TV channels and radio stations do not have a single atheist programme from one year’s end to another. Last year the BBC World Service did produce a series of three different fifteen-minute programmes entitled ‘Why I am an Atheist’, and repeated them this year — but, though hailed as a breakthrough, this is a drop in the ocean of religious programmes each year.

The common-law offence of blasphemy, which was used for a successful prosecution at the Old Bailey less than ten years ago, denies anyone the right to use rumbustious style of debate against religion, while believers can be as insulting as they please about atheism.

There are also the foundations and sanctions of morality to be considered. How can an anarchist accept a hard-and-fast religious moral code, derived from the authority of sacred books interpreted by priests? The anarchist and the atheist are one in their insistence on consequentialism and the autonomy of morals. Human welfare is the criterion — not obedience to an alleged deity.

Every thinking anarchist must surely be a freethinker, and freethinking cannot lead to the acceptance of received doctrines unsupported by evidence. So — on the understanding that atheism is simply freedom from theism — anarchism implies atheism.

Barbara Smoker



The Green Monster

Industrial capitalism has created many technological monsters. One of the most dangerous now raising its ugly head is the agricultural one. After huge profits are made out of this monster by private individuals the community has to pick up the bill for putting things right.

The industrialisation of farming did not proceed so rapidly as the industrialisation of other capitalist activities, mainly owing to the nature of the activity itself and to the fact that peasants have a conservatism which is suspicious of change. Perhaps this sort of conservatism, which has nothing to do with the political kind, may prevent miscalculations of the social consequences of new methods. Of course, agricultural miscalculations in some parts of the world have had a more dramatic effect than here, where a more moderate climate has delayed the worst effects.

In Lewis Mumford's *The Future of Technics and Civilisation*, (recently published by Freedom Press), the analysis of what has gone wrong with technical developments applies particularly to agriculture. A study of past civilisations buried in the dust of their once adequate agricultural bases should have been instructive. The social, environmental and economic consequences of modern agricultural practices are beginning to alarm even some of the practitioners, even those steeped in the education of agricultural colleges supported by multinationals.

Those of us who have worked in agriculture would not return to the time when, unaided by various mechanical tools, life was hard for those working the land. However, as Mumford points out, technical advances are implemented only in the light of narrow and crude financial profit-and-loss calculations. The social and environmental consequences of this are now becoming apparent.

The crude chemical approach to a complicated biological process is showing serious effects. Early additives to the soil were bi-products of industrial activity — basic slag, wool waste etc. — having a measure of different items in their chemical make up. Later the importance of the nitrogen in the biological cycle of plant growth led to the introduction of nitrogen, phosphate, and potash artificial fertilisers, and the simplification of organic, microorganism-based activity in the soil. Because immediate results were evident for the farmer and the chemical companies in terms of profits, no serious consideration was given to the long term results of this by-passing of the natural processes of plant growth.

When such additives were added to the mixed farm set up the results were not too serious, although artificially boosted crops were found to be more prone to disease. But, when it was found easier to spread fertilisers than dung and monocropping was introduced, the pest and weed problems became serious; so highly toxic substances were developed, and the chemical companies began to dominate the agricultural scene. The inputs into modern agriculture, in terms of energy, labour, and materials, far exceed the output, while the costs of dealing with the nitrate and other

pollution of water, and toxic residues in food, are likely to fall on the community and not on those who have profited.

Just as the land has been abused so that crops can only be got with artificial fertilisers and toxic sprays, so cattle have been bred so their stomachs are smaller and less efficient at turning grass (cellulose) into human food, and so they produce excessive amounts of milk from enriched food, some of which comes from the third world, supplied by the multinationals. The more dramatic effects of modern farming, both social and environmental, were seen in the mid west of America graphically recorded in the novels of John Steinbeck.

What happens when the organic content of the soil is drastically reduced? First it is more liable to erosion. Second, it does not hold water, which is often why irrigation has to be used, adding its own problems. Third, more fertiliser has to be used, and being highly soluble, it gets washed into the subsoil, polluting the ground water and the water courses.

As the farms grow in size, owing to the financial nature of society, they use heavier machinery to cover more ground, and compact the subsoil so even heavier machinery has to be used to break the subsoil. The destruction of hedges and tree cover affects climatic conditions as winds sweep over the barren landscape. Monocropping in the third world, imposed by commerce carried on by multinationals to service the west, has, together with political interference, produced the result that in spite of these so-called technical advances, a large proportion of world inhabitants suffer from malnutrition or worse.

What is to be done? There are many organisations now concerned with what is happening to our world. There is research studying a less damaging form of agricultural activity. Even in Reading (the premier agricultural centre) doubts are rising as to whether big is beautiful or efficient.

Change requires the predominantly urban population to take an interest in what lies beyond the supermarket. Much of what is sold is old and deficient. Poorer sections of the population have been induced to eat fast foods adulterated by various agents, and signs of malnutrition are appearing in some quarters, as well as various allergies.

To start with there should be demands for space for those who want to grow their own, for an allotment holder is more efficient in terms of land use than the largest farmer. Then there should be a demand that resources which go into the pockets of rich farmers should be transferred into subsidising small farms, willing to farm without the use of destructive methods. Realistic research now carried on by small groups should be extended, with finance which is not from beneficiaries of the present system.

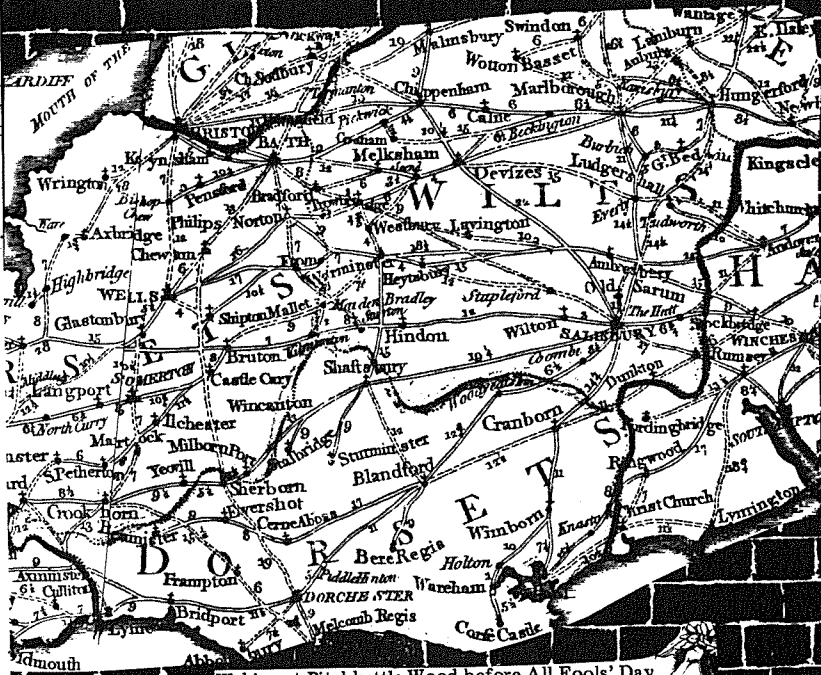
These limited aims would generate a lot of agreement, and perhaps induce people to consider the larger aim of a cooperative society, where all can consider and control the necessary parts of our common environment.

Alan Albon

"Look into the depths of your own beings", said Peter Arshinov, the friend of Makhno. "Seek out the truth and realize it yourselves. You will find it nowhere else."

POET'S MANIFESTO

- Take back the land for our descendants
- Take back the earth for our poor souls
- Take back the Commons for our ancestors
- Take back the soil for our wholeselves
- Take back the empty property
- Take back the empty officeblocks
- Take back the empty factory floors
- Take back the empty homes & shops
- Take back the military training-grounds
- Take back the army camps and barracks
- Take back the airfields and shipyards
- Take back the food & ordnance depots
- Take back your roads and footpaths
- Take back your roots and birthplace
- Take back your time
- Take back your space



Waking at Pitchkettle Wood before All Fools' Day
 Giant Marquees looming up out of the dark
 Howling of Alsatian Dogs at Burghfield
 Thoughts of daughters in a distant place.
 Three lifetimes ago it seems, well, 1955, I
 Travelled down from Norton Barracks
 To Hermitage: School of Military Survey
 Playing football for Newbury Town
 Qualifying as FA Coach and growing up
 Among young, thoughtless, ignorant Royal Engineers
 "Just doing our job" the industrial curse
 Never dreaming of Suez, Cyprus, or "ideas"
 Unaware of Nonviolent Resistance: Civil Disobedience
 But, fortunately, I found out about
 Tolstoy and Thoreau: as well as Puskas and De Stefano
 I joined that army of vagrants and wanderers
 Pacifists and Clowns; anarchists and poets
 On the Road to Somewhere: The Devil's Highway.



To sing you must first open your mouth. You must have a pair of lungs, and a little knowledge of music. It is not necessary to have an accordion, or a guitar. The essential thing is to want to sing. This then is a song. I am singing.

HENRY MILLER



dennis gould

Riff Raff Poets publish postcards and magazines and give performances

I SHALL VOTE WHEN

I Shall Vote When...
 Poets words are taken seriously
 Clowns are made love to by fourteen year olds.
 Whales become sacred creatures to mankind
 SAS assassins become Hereford cidergrowers
 Torture is no longer used in our interrogation centres
 Assaults by the police are no longer tolerated...

CS Gas and plastic bullets are prohibited by Rubber Soldiers and Laughing Gas...
 Psychiatrists become insane pacifists and poets!
 Powerseekers become Anarchists like Kropotkin
 Slum Goddesses become Priests of Love and Orgy...
 Nuclear Power is a distant memory
 Trees become sacred...
 Postcard Poems become Passports...

**Riff Raff Poets c/o Freedom Bookshop
 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1**



Jeff Cloves 67, Chiswell Green Lane, St Albans, Herts.
 Pat Van Twest 69, Lower Redland Road, Bristol 6.
 Dennis Gould c/o FREEDOM Press 84B Whitechapel High Street, London E1

Class War: Anarchism in Britain, 1986

There is no point in looking at Anarchism today and ignoring the primary divisions. We live in a class based society. There are differences from a hundred years ago but anyone without class interests to protect can see that the rich are still at the top of the pile, still bosses, still using their state. The middle classes are aiding the ruling class in controlling the working class. The working class isn't just workers but all those who are a part of that labour pool and all those who have no interest in maintaining the present class system. Housewives in the home, the unemployed, can all be part of the working class. What of the unemployed middle classes? The middle class have greater privileges, greater opportunities and access to the skills that give power. The divisions are not fixed and are hard to define but they are there. Class is not the only inequality but the ruling class uses the others, eg racism, sexism, to divide the working class. Without victory in the class struggle we can't win the fight against the other divisions.

Anarchism, in Britain, has in recent years been centred around other struggles. Anarchists in many cases have ignored the class struggle and joined campaigns that are not revolutionary in practice. Issues such as animal rights have achieved little but isolation from the mass of people. In desperation they have fallen back on tactics similar to European terrorist groups to achieve aims that are increasingly reformist.

We recognize that in Britain, unlike other areas of the world, Anarchism has rarely been a major part of the struggles of the working class. The class alone who can win the revolution has not found it useful. While many people recognize the fight and know their enemies they do not see that theirs is a coherent view. They do not give themselves credit. The machinery of the state (the press, politicians) to protect the ruling class lead people to think of themselves as ignorant, as unpolitical. The working class can hardly help being aware of the inequalities of this society. It is they who suffer daily because of them. What they lack is confidence in their own ability to organize and fight without leaders, a party or an ideological vanguard. They need to recognize their interests and collective skills.

Anarchists in Britain could have done something about that. Yet there has been little communication between us and the working class. Anarchism is not a part of the working class, it remains isolated.

Why, when the capitalist system is clearly in a slump, with bitter results for the working class; unemployment, increased hardship, poor housing, and when industrial struggles like the momentous miners strike and the printers strike have been fought, why now hasn't Anarchism flourished?

It has, in the main, been restricted to the same middle class dropouts that carried the black flag in the late sixties and seventies. It has been populated by hippy ideals mixed up with religious nonsense. Around it all has grown a sickening lifestyle. A strict exclusive lifestyle restricting struggle to veganism and animal rights and holding onto the cancer of punk. It's an alternative lifestyle we're told. Who for? As always for those with the privilege to have alternatives.

What of Anarchism? What of the destruction of capitalism and the state? What of class? More often than

not middle class Anarchists would rather deny this is a class society. 'It's all changed now in Britain, we're all ruling class.' Bullshit! Tell that to the people of Liverpool or any northern city, tell that to the rioters, tell that to the unemployed, tell that to the miners, tell that to the printers, tell that to the strikers at Silentnight. They have everything in common with the young comrades in South Africa and nothing in common with the green survivalists (as they now appear to be called!) Anarchist lifestylers play their part in sowing the seeds of reaction. They confuse and above all alienate the working class, the only group which can achieve what we struggle for, a social revolution. All lifestylers do is help the state and the rich maintain power, in these difficult times.

Anarchists have to fight but fighting in isolation from the working class is as pointless as not fighting at all. Anarchism will not be taken back into the working class unless it is there to be seen, unless the ideas of class struggle, without marxist dogma, are expressed and unless there is dialogue within the class.

The Class War Federation was not organised to lead, start or make the revolution. It can't achieve it and if it tried it would be counter revolutionary. It was organised because as everyone knows solidarity gives greater punch to our actions. It has given Anarchism a more public face. It has brought Anarchism onto street corners, into football matches and into areas that accept no parties and therefore accept no politics. It has allowed us to make contact with other groups; groups of rioters, football fans etc.

That contact allows both sides to co-ordinate and find a common direction to their anger. It's a small beginning but it's a start. Others in Britain have recognized the need to organise and shake off the dropouts and their selfish self interest. We welcome the arrival of the Anarchist Communist Federation.

More important than that is the increase of Anarchism within the class. The pages of Picket, produced by sacked printworkers during the Wapping dispute, are filled with ideas and comments that we as Anarchists often mumble for fear of alienating people. The state of the Anarchist movement can only be judged ultimately by looking at the state of the working class. While the fight back continues the class remains deeply divided, unable to build unity. If it does find a common direction and that leads to the counter revolution of the lefties then the Anarchist movement will deserve much of the blame. As Arshinov noted of the Russian Anarchists prior to 1917, 'disorganisation is the twin sister/brother of irresponsibility and together they lead to impoverished ideas and futile practice.'

Class war is a federation of independent groups and individuals around Britain. Its aims are clearly stated in the paper *Class War*. The federation is a tool to increase contact between Anarchists around the country and contact with and within the working class. Between twice yearly national conferences it is run on a delegate system.

It is a small start but we are only sowing the seeds, playing our part in the struggle as effectively as possible. Our actions at present are limited to within this country. We lack links internationally and as a result our

views on the Anarchist movement apply only to that we know. We hope in the future such international contacts will be made.

Increasingly the working class is fighting back effectively and violently against the state and the bosses. They recognise that pacifism is not an answer. We support and engage in all forms of violent action that show people that they, now, have the collective power and the means to fight back. We are not interested in the

egotistic actions of underground groups acting, in isolation, on behalf of the working class. The riots around the country and the necessity of violent picketing has taught us all much about the means we have at our hands. The Anarchist movement and the working class must not be held back by the religious moralism of pacifists. Let's say a big fuck off to liberal shit, let's start moving.

A comrade of the Class War Federation

Freedom, that unknown goal

'...Freedom, that unknown goal of human pilgrimage...' I read these words in the first sentence of the very first article of *Freedom*, a journal of anarchist socialism, October 1886. Not only these seven words, the whole article is still interesting. It gives a fine idea of anarchist socialism and the anarchist as such. And it is optimistic about the future of society and about 'the conscious social feeling of the free human being.' A hundred years have since passed. A hundred years with all kinds of very un-anarchistic developments, exploitation, wars, new forms of enslavement and of very unsocial human behaviour. A hundred years of anarchism have passed too, with great expectations, illusions, disillusionments and disasters. Sometimes it seemed that anarchists survived only because, like the famous old soldiers, they never die but just fade away.

Anarchism, however, has a strange capacity 'to come back in town', to return. Sure, today we are less optimistic than a hundred years ago, and our times are indeed depressive enough. It is however only 25 years ago that Pete Seeger, with his 'I see a new man, soon to come' reached and moved the same kind of people that Kropotkin addressed in his *Appeal to the Young*. And this new man was no other than that free human being, with his conscious social feeling, that was evoked in the first article of *Freedom*. 'Ups and Downs' certainly are basic words in any history of anarchism.

Our world is, of course, different enough from the world of 1886. The differences concern not only society but anarchism and anarchist perspectives as well. I may mention only one difference. The article of 1886 speaks of 'human pilgrimage'. Words that sound today very old fashioned indeed. But why?

'Pilgrimage' suggests a lot of difficulties; but these are difficulties *outside*, and they do not return once they have been overcome. The goal, the end of the journey is a fixed and stable point. Today we are more aware of two things: the goal, that fixed point, is moving and changing too, and so are people during their 'human pilgrimage'. People have certainly obtained more freedom, more possibilities and liberties, at any rate in Britain and the West. But how have they used — and how could they use — these new possibilities? Conscious social feeling is still far away and real social responsibility has not developed very much among the majority of the people (or the working class, or the poor); certainly not in the sense anarchists (and others) expected in the nineteenth century. It is of course somewhat unfair to blame the people that they did not become 'free human beings' and 'more anarchist' than they actually did since that article appeared in print; but we have to accept the fact that the expectations have not been fulfilled.

In 1984 I had to write a paper for the International Anarchist Gathering in Venice, and I started with the

famous quotation from William Morris:

Men fight and lose the battle, and the thing they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out to be not what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name.

However, my paper developed its own internal logic and I had in the end to drop William Morris ... Then I received a paper of Murray Bookchin written for the same session of the Venice Conference. And when I read through it, there they were, the same words of Morris.

So Morris perhaps tells us where we are today, after a hundred years of anarchism. At first sight his words sound pessimistic, but I do not believe that is correct (and in any case: pessimism is a mood, never an answer). One thing is certain: Morris does not suggest the struggle is in vain; a lost struggle has its influence. And as far as anarchism is concerned, it has indeed lost many battles, but it has never come about; therefore we don't need 'another name'. The phrases and expressions in that first *Freedom* article are often of a wonderful actuality. I am sure that marxist articles of a hundred years ago, written for the same purpose — a general introduction to their socialist ideas — are completely out-dated, compared with our article in *Freedom*.

The importance of Morris for anarchism today is — as I see it — the idea that we have to continue our struggle without the prospect of winning the battle, without the prospect of 'anarchist victories'. On the contrary. The whole conception of 'victory', of 'success', is in contradiction with the anarchist spirit, and belongs to authoritarianism. If there is a 'victory', there are losers and 'victims' too, and anarchism has to be with the victims. (Perhaps anarcha-feminism has put this fundamental truth for the first time in the centre of anarchist reflection.) Ever since the October revolution in Russia anarchists have felt frustrated about victorious revolutions, but they have also been aware that these frustrations are a fundamental aspect of the anarchist heritage. We have to accept that the anarchist position will be — for the time being — the position of the bound Prometheus and of Sysiphus.

Struggle without victory: that seems an odd prospect. But it has two important aspects. In the first place, anarchist struggle can have its influence on the development of society towards a more human and more libertarian community. And in the second place, victors always vanish from the earth, victims and losers remain and have a future. So perhaps the day will arrive when there are no longer victors and victims. I don't think that this 'new day' is 'soon to come'. Perhaps mankind will never reach it completely. But it gives an anarchist perspective, making it worthwhile to continue the struggle for freedom.

Rudolf de Jong

Towards Anarchy: Goal, Strategy and Tactics

The goal is a society without government. Implicit in this area are certain inevitable economic changes. Without government there will be technological regression; towns and cities will disappear; people will live in self-sufficient, autonomous villages. This is not a judgement for or against cities of technology. However useful or desirable they won't be available. Cities and technology only exist because of that state which we want to get rid of. Towns and cities are the result of the expropriation of the peasants' crops, which are then used to feed urban workers, servicing and making baubles for the rulers. Workers depend for their subsistence on a strong ruling class. Without the expropriation the towns and cities will die.

It is always assumed that towns and cities are part of man's natural progress. They are not. They are only the result of the theft of the surplus from the peasants. Present economic theory, socialist and capitalist and both derived from Adam Smith and Ricardo, has been selected to justify this expropriation, saying that the increase in cash-cropping increases wealth more than just the increase in the crops. It does not. Economics is a zero sum game. The rich are rich because they have taken from the poor, not because they have 'created' wealth. Britain is now rich because it is taking from the Third World.

Without government there will be a regression of technology (as there was in France when Rome left). Technology does not save labour for the labourer. It only saves labour in the product. The labourer still has to work his eight hour day. The reasons for technology are high labour costs. Without government, labour costs will decrease. Labour-intensive technology will gain more benefit than lower labour technology which will be undercut and go out of business. This process is already visible at the festivals.

The disappearance of cities will solve many problems. Since we have to build anarchy with people as they are now and not some virtuous utopian race, born without greed, aggression or competition, any sort of peaceful society is only possible when our natural competitive urges are moderated by the *need* for co-operation. This can only happen in small face-to-face groups of about 500 people where everyone knows everyone else. The anonymity of cities means that individuals can behave unacceptably and get away with it. If no one knows, they are not constrained by village sanctions of shame or ridicule.

In villages where there is no private ownership of land and everyone has the use of their own small plots, they depend on each other to defend their land. They *need* to co-operate. When land is privatised, the owner is self-sufficient, depending not on his family and friends but on the army and police to defend his land. His natural greed is no longer moderated by the need for mutual aid. Our greedy society is caused, not by humans' inherent evil or conditioning, but by the laws of the private ownership of land. So we do not need some great change in human nature. Humans are fine. It's the laws which are the problem. In a cash economy a person with money doesn't need to rely on the good nature of his friends when he is in need; he can buy help. He doesn't need to be co-operative in case he needs help

later. With money he is fireproof. His natural greed is no longer moderated by the need for co-operation.

So in an anarchist society there will be no high technology, not even electricity. The only technological effort will be in agriculture which will be very intensive. Although, in Britain, we could each get about $\frac{3}{8}$ of an arable acre, most of that would have to be put down to woodland for fuel and building timber, and to sheep grazing for woollen clothes.

Humans, like every other organism in nature, obey the laws of Least Effort. They are not going to spend their days in factories or building roads or working in voluntary restaurants. They'll work on their own plots and then go fishing or play hockey. Except for the driving need to grow food, it's going to be a very laid-back society, lazy, parochial and relatively happy. But growing food is cold, dirty, wet, boring and exhausting, and they're not going to grow it for anyone else. So if you want to eat, you're going to have to grow it yourself.

Strategy

Overnight revolution is a fairly discredited concept. If, on a wet Wednesday afternoon, we had a revolution and all the police were swinging from the lamp posts, within three hours every food shop would be empty. How would we feed the old peoples homes the next day?

So it's got to be some form of gradualism. There are two possibilities. First: a government's power is derived totally from its taxation. With less income it has less power. Cut taxes altogether, you can have no government. So a progressive programme of tax-cutting (and thus government expenditure) could lead to an anarchy. But this idea has received no support whatsoever. So, however practical, it's a political non-starter.

The alternative 'revolution in the hills' has received a very positive response. (Any revolution in the cities would, like Barcelona 1936, be taken over by the socialists to protect the landless workers' interests, i.e. to continue the exploitation of the peasants.) 'Revolution in the hills' is a geographical gradualism starting in the hills wherever the repression is least, when groups like hippies, bikers, pagans coalesce and are able to establish a small no go area. The difference between this and classical guerrilla warfare strategy is that, having established that no-go area, that group stays put. It tills its soil. It does not form the nucleus of a growing guerrilla army. The no-go area will grow because a new group from the towns establishes a new adjacent no-go area. By this means it would be possible to avoid a guerrilla army forming a new power structure.

This strategy will be successful, first, in the Third World. As Third World governments lose control of their peripheries, the profits back to the First World will diminish, weakening First World governments who will then be unable to suppress their own no-go areas.

Tactics

We have to concentrate our actions in the countryside, at Stonehenge for example, at the festivals, at the military bases. We have to offer our analysis and ideas to

groups like hippies, the pagans, the bikers, the ALF, the young unemployed, the travellers, radical greens and even the less extreme survivalists. We have to be unrespectable. Some greens planned a green gathering hoping to attract people like Petra Kelly from Die Grünen and Murray Bookchin. They knew that middle class intellectuals would be put off by people like the convoy who also wanted to come. They knew they could not have both groups, the respectable and the unrespectable. They chose the respectable. They were wrong. You cannot start a political movement rejecting the unrespectable 'undeserving poor'. We have to be, to start with, unrespectable, thus getting up the noses of

the middle classes.

We should support any tax cuts, particularly indirect taxes on the poor, which would weaken central government. We should support the urban 'class struggle', for this, though it will be unsuccessful, will pin down large numbers of police and soldiers, making the revolution in the hills easier.

The process has started. For ten years the festival culture has been growing. Recently there has been a marked increase in references to anarchists in the media. Local anarchist mags are sprouting everywhere. Confidence is growing. We're on our way.

Richard Hunt

Towards an Anarchist Economics

The word anarchism has been given so many different meanings that it is necessary to say what I mean when I use it. By anarchism I mean the rejection of government, class society, in favour of classless society, society without government. Further, I mean that parliamentary democracy is a confidence trick perpetrated by the ruling class and its dupes. Finally, I mean that if the ruling class ever feels threatened then the consequent violence displayed by that class and its hired thugs can only be defeated by violence. I recently heard someone say that 'anarchism has nothing to do with class struggle'. I beg to differ.

The anarchist movement started life in the mid nineteenth century and must be regarded as a historical failure. (Not that anyone has succeeded in establishing a classless society — our failure is also that of all those who have aimed at such a society.) The historical failure of anarchism is partly (and only partly) due to the inadequacy of anarchist ideas and it is with that inadequacy that I am concerned here.

The most serious flaw in anarchist theory was and is its reliance on the economic fallacies of Karl Marx. At first this seems odd. It is well known that there was an instant split between anarchism and Marxism when they met one another at the First International last century. It is equally well known that Bakunin correctly predicted, fifty years before there ever was a Marxist government, that the Marxist programme of complete state control of industry would lead not to a classless utopia but only to a new type of class society. But this is a criticism not of Marx's economics but of his politics. Anarchist acceptance of Marxist economics actually began with Bakunin and continues to this day. It can be seen in the writings of, for example, Berkman, Bookchin and even Kropotkin who did so much to develop new economic ideas. Anarchism's most successful attempt to gain mass support, anarcho-syndicalism, has a theoretical underpinning of Marxist economics. Unfortunately, Marx's economic system is as defective as his political one.

The details of what is wrong with Marx's economic system are beyond the scope of this article but a few words won't come amiss. Marx's economic ideas are basically a version of those developed by Adam Smith who is often thought of as the founder of free market economics. The falsity of either system is simply demonstrated by the fact that the labour theory of value states that price is determined without reference to the consumers who pay it. An economy without consumers

is a self-evident absurdity and what I am looking at here is not the falsity of Marxist economics but the principal errors consequent on the acceptance of Marxist economics.

Marxist economics exaggerate the intensity of the class antagonisms that exist between employer and employee, thus creating unrealistic ideas about the imminence and strength of anti-capitalist action. The strength of the opposing sides in the conflict is also misjudged, vastly underestimating the power of capitalism. The myth of proletarian unity is fostered. Finally, the false belief that victory for our side is inevitable, scientifically predicted, is encouraged. The net effect of all this is to substitute dangerous illusions for a correct understanding of society. It is essential that we reject Marxist economics and this poses the question of what to put in its place.

As with the details of what is wrong with Marxist economics, an exposition of an anarchist economics is outside the scope of this article, here is an outline of some of the goals to be reached by such an economics, together with a suggestion as to what the starting point for such an economics should be.

It must recognise the existence of consumers and reject the myth of proletarian unity. It must acknowledge that much of the work performed in society results not in the creation of wealth, as Adam Smith and Karl Marx would have it, but in the destruction of potential wealth. It must state why socially harmful work, such as the production of motor cars, gets done while millions of people are inadequately housed. In short, the new economics must state why the promise of technology has not been fulfilled.

I am suggesting an economics that is ecologically aware and that takes as its starting point not production but consumption. Since production is carried on, ostensibly at least, to make consumption possible, starting from the point of consumption is certainly promising. For example, we work in order to be able to pay for what we consume...

I said before that the historical failure of anarchism was partly due to the inadequacy of our ideas. But even if our ideas had been perfectly correct, that is not to say that an anarchist society would have been achieved. Whatever else a new economic analysis does, it is unlikely to provide us with a repeat of the old spurious guarantee of success given by Karl Marx's economic fallacies.

Brian Moseley

The Next 100 Years

One of the things we have always known about business corporations is that they don't employ people out of sentimentality; they employ them to make money. In this context the technology which is coming into use at the moment is making a lot of people very worried about the prospects for the next 100 years. They see every prospect that, as the power of computers to provide a lot of information to a few people increases, so will the need for a lot of a comfortable middle rank jobs decrease. There is no need for the rich to employ a large bureaucracy if they can keep track of things by using some well designed software, and there is no need for them to employ a large body of labourers if they can solve the servant/union problem by using obedient robots for a lot of work.

Looked at from this point of view the future looks bleak. A high technology future could simply make the power of organised 'workers' irrelevant, as we experience a series of ever more demoralising rearguard actions of the kind we are witnessing at Wapping. The future might consist of a steady growth of unemployment, with the working class getting by on subsistence money and being blamed for being poor, whilst the middle class makes a living out of trying to keep them in order. A nation of high rise flat occupants being advised how to cope by social workers, being sent on endless pre-vocational courses to keep them occupied and being beaten into submission by riot police whenever they let their frustrations out on the street.

Though there is some truth in this perspective there is another possibility which sounds equally plausible. Just as employers want cheap production so they also want expensive sales. You can't sell to a dirt poor population. You can only sell to those who can afford to buy and one of the most consistent trends over the last 100 years has been for people to get richer. Over 60% of the population of the UK live in a home which someone in their family is struggling to buy. The whole market structure rests on products like cars, washing machines, fridge freezers and colour TVs which an impoverished community simply couldn't buy. Hence we have a dilemma. No firm wants to pay out good money to workers it doesn't need but no firm of any size can survive unless someone else is paying out pretty good wages. It is always possible to conceive of a concentration of money in fewer and fewer hands and the shift from mass consumerism to a market based on a privileged elite but it is much more likely that the state will step in, as it has done in most countries since the war, to try to resolve the dilemma. Welfare economics, Keynesianism or state capitalism, whatever you care to call it, the trick is much the same. Use the state to regulate matters so that individual firms don't cut their own throats and make good consumers out of your own workers. A happy worker is one who is struggling to save up enough money to buy the product s/he has just made and if the margin creamed off by the boss leaves that worker always a little long on desire and short on cash then so much the better. A nation struggling to pay off the mortgage, up to its neck in Access debts and still hankering after that new car seems a more likely prospect than one being driven into poverty.

There is, however, a problem. A cosy deal of high wages, high profits and state regulation can easily be shattered. The children of mortgaged up consumers have a tendency to see through the shallowness of the deal and to ask for more meaningful lifestyles which the system can't provide. Environmental pressures build up under the momentum of all that consumption and production. Most importantly of all, just at the moment, other countries which are poorer and more desperate don't share the same system. When corporations can escape from state regulation and produce far cheaper in South East Asia they will do so. It may be collective suicide to employ people on subsistence wages but it is the best possible policy for each individual firm to pay Third World wages to women workers who have no tradition of trade unionism, no state insurance schemes or safety legislation and a cultural tradition of obedient servitude to their men. In other words, in any trade which does not require a high technology labour force the next 100 years will almost inevitably see a shift of production to the Third World to exploit cheap labour.

This puts us right back into the first scenario I outlined. All but the highly skilled workers in the West could be under severe pressure from workers abroad. It is quite possible, any time they want it, for the world governments to modify existing bodies like the IMF, GATT and the World Bank so that they assume the same kind of planning the regulating functions which the nation state used to assume and it is the growth of this kind of inter-state capitalism which I expect to be the most significant development over the next 100 years.

But of course simply because something is possible doesn't make it a certainty. Giving up national control over your economy has always been ideologically upsetting to conservatives. Powell's reaction to the EEC is typical of this school of thought. There is also a strong faction which seems to be consciously calculating that a bit of Third World competition and a worry over unemployment does the working class a lot of good and concentrates the mind wonderfully. Thatcherism has had a lot of success and merely because an economist can demonstrate how the economy could provide full employment doesn't mean that the ruling class is going to dictate that it would be a good idea to provide it.

This means that if the job of creating an inter-state capitalism is going to be done it will be the reformist socialist parties who will do it. Socialism in the late twentieth century is doomed to become the ideology for that faction of the industrialists who wish it to expand. It will become the ideology of the technocrats, just as it did in Russia and China, and will be devoted to the service of getting capitalism moving again if it can gain the power to do so on a world scale. Put another way, I have the feeling that the Thatcherites have done their job and served their purpose of disciplining people into their place. If the economy was a logical machine they would be ditched tomorrow to make way for soft socialist planners who can think on a world scale and can therefore lead us out of the recession. It remains to be seen whether ideology will follow this mechanical logic or not.

What is certain is that these kinds of developments give new relevance to libertarian socialist and anarchist ideas. If all the state socialists have in store for us is more and bigger controlling agencies and a worldwide manipulative system then it is up to us to reassert human values and to find ways of planning things on a human scale. Freedom, variety, creativity and cooperation are likely to be in short supply on a planet whose

products are supplied by world wide corporations and whose social planning is done by a world state. Ordinary people everywhere will no doubt continue to display precisely these characteristics. Let's hope we can do our bit to persuade them that, if they follow these lines, they can make a better job of organising their own lives than any well educated Marxist planner ever could!

Andy Brown

Anarchism: No State, No Market

What do anarchists want? It's a difficult one. Perhaps an easier one along the same lines would be 'What do anarchists have in common?' And for me the answer to this one was summed up by Donald Rooum in the May 1986 *Freedom* through the words of his cartoon creation Wildcat: 'You get rid of governments by convincing people to withdraw support'. Yes, that's it, getting rid of governments, and of course getting rid of the thing they govern — the state. The next question, however, has got to be 'What *kind* of a stateless society do we want?' Even if we can't be expected to give a blueprint, we can at least be expected to give some kind of idea of how things will be organised and the kind of life that will be possible in a society that doesn't have the state to change it.

Let me say right away that, as I see it, there are two possible choices of the kind of stateless society. And the choices are simple ones. We either have a stateless society *with* a market or a stateless society *without* a market. If you're an anarchist who doesn't envisage getting rid of the market, then automatically, whether you realise it or not, you're talking about keeping buying and selling, trade, money, banks, financial institutions, and so on — in other words all the paraphernalia of capitalism, even if it's capitalism without the state. And there are people, anarcho-capitalists they call themselves, who argue precisely for this kind of arrangement. They want an entirely free-market world, without national frontiers, with a single world currency and where private ownership extends to everything imaginable and the ethos, even more than now, is unbridled competition. *Freedom* dealt with them (not very well, in my opinion) in October 1984 (Vol 45 No 10) and later referred to them as a 'squalid bunch'. I doubt whether many readers of *Freedom* would want to be associated with them either. But the rub is that, unless as an anarchist you advocate not just the abolition of the state but also the abolition of the market system, then logically you can't escape being an 'anarcho-capitalist'. Because as long as you've still got the market or an exchange society of any kind, then you've still got some form of capitalism, or at any rate some form of property society.

Now I know most anarchists would say, if it were put to them, that they don't want the market system or the

exchange economy that goes with it. But how often do they *explicitly* express this point of view? And how often is it explicitly expressed in anarchist literature? In my experience, very rarely. And this is a pity, because one of the greatest difficulties in putting anarchist views across is reaction from people along the lines 'You've got nothing practical to replace the present system with?' or 'An anarchist society would be chaos'. Yet if we stressed not just the stateless but also the marketless nature of anarchism, we'd be making anarchist views that much easier for people to grasp and not react to like that, because we'd be putting across the idea that it's the market that's chaos in the way it arbitrarily dictates how much we shall or shall not have, what work we shall or shall not do, the kind of lives we shall or shall not live. And as a logical converse to that, we'd be offering a society in which, instead of competing among one another in a system of privately owned wealth, we could all work together to provide for our needs using the commonly owned resources of the earth. If we did this, we'd not only be putting across the idea that human needs and human worth shouldn't be measured by money and profit but also advocating a practical alternative in which that wouldn't happen.

I'll raise a few hackles now by saying that, having reached this point, we're pretty close to what some people would understand by 'socialism'. Not the 'socialism' of the Labour Party, or Russia, or China, or the left-wing groups, but the socialism of 'from each according to ability to each according to need' and 'the abolition of the wages system'. These of course are things Marx said (though he did not originate the sayings) and we've got to reject a hell of a lot of other things Marx said, but should we have to throw the baby out with the bathwater? Why shouldn't we accept that those ideas provide a sound basis (as I see it, the *only* basis) for a truly free society?

It may or may not come as a surprise now if I say that I consider myself a socialist, but when people say to me (as they often do) 'Isn't what you're talking about anarchism?', I say 'Yes, as long as by anarchism you mean not just a society organised without a state but also one organised without a market'. That is after all the only road to freedom — isn't it?

Howard Moss

Syndicalism: the Promiscuous Plant

The British Labour Movement is both conservative and syndicalist (using this word in its broadest sense of combinations to promote producer self-interest): like workers almost everywhere it judges everything by results in the short term, and this often makes it appear a dim sighted creature.

Even the miners' strike was rooted in conservatism as Huw Benyon¹, the Marxist industrial sociologist, has shown the 'central demand of the union was for the preservation of the status quo'. basically it was a defence of things as they are, and for the continuation of the mining communities, with State assistance.

We already know from hard experience that the workers' movement can be used for anti-social ends. Fascism in both Italy and Germany dealt a hard blow to progressives by showing that the workers can become the champions of reaction. Indeed, the Italian writer Silone² has said '...a reorganisation of the working class along totalitarian lines is an inescapable necessity for the totalitarian state.'

Some writers³ on the Left are already suggesting unions like the EETPU are determined to create a reactionary block of 'company' or 'collaborative' unions. Such unions are said to have links with curious right wing organisations, of which one, TRUMID, has argued that the employers have a right to be involved in shaping the unions. Business unionism could succeed if the climate is right.

Origins of the Trade Union Decline

Selfish syndicalism, which is effectively working class conservatism or self interest shorn of any ideals beyond the next wage packet, is not restricted to Britain, but it is not here where it reaches its zenith. British trade unions are in the main strong autonomous bodies with little spirit of solidarity or unity binding them to any clear central belief. Thus the TUC is a kind of castrated entity unable to enforce policies or mobilise support. It is an institution in much the same way the Church of England is. Ted Willis has a voice just as Archbishop Runcie has his say: yet though people hear their utterances the effect is lost amid the babble of other pundits and mouthpieces. Neither body is central to either political life or the everyday lives of the people.

This is not to imply the trade unions are weak headed; on the contrary they have rather too many heads, too many interests diverging and conflicting to serve any unifying purpose. The present Government, aware of this inability by the unions to mount a general campaign on any issue, went into a 'knockout' competition taking on union after union. At the top, syndicalism or trade unionism was deprived of all pretence to invincibility when Thatcher applied the lawnmower.

We should, I think, be grateful to Thatcher for showing up some of the flaws in our own syndicalist critique of capitalist society.

Why was our once considered all powerful labour movement routed by this daughter of a shopkeeper?

The answer, I believe, lies in the Labour Governments, which preceded Thatcher. Labour and socialist

parties want to help the poor — this is their inescapable motive behind the constant stream of subsidies and protective laws for the workers and the poorer end of society. It is the dream of the Fairy-Godmother-All-Providing State, which after the War was blown-up magically under the relative affluence and the logic of Keynesian economics. It is all part of the internal contradiction of State Socialism and the Labour Party. The Labour Governments gradually, and most especially under Callaghan, took the unions inside the administration of the State; at the same time protective labour laws, redundancy pay, rights at work, and all the other palliatives were brought in. Bit by bit more of the responsibilities of the trade unions were being taken on by the State. True the material and numerical strength of the unions was growing. Yet all the time this was preparing the way for the Tory onslaught by stifling local initiative and autonomy at the union grassroots.

So it was, built on this union membership growth, and some successful actions in the 1970s, that many of us got an over-inflated idea of trade union power. Our analysis was flawed then, and I believe the TUC's proposed campaign for a statutory minimum wage now is part of the same faulty logic, which will lead to further incorporation of the unions in the State under a future Labour Government.

An independent and autonomous labour movement is a prerequisite of a free society, and outside of the bureaucratic head offices, on the shopfloor, unions are still one of the remaining forces for good in society. And yet, since 1980, when the TUC had 12 million members, there are now only 9.5 million. Only 40% of Britain's workers are in a union, lower than at any time since the war. Many fewer shopfloor workers now fee their union executives look after their interests than 10 years ago.

The decline of British trade unions is rooted in the logic of the authoritarian left, and their irresponsible tendency to lean toward the Labour Party for solutions. In the end the unions get entangled in the poisonous inconsistencies of statism.

Labours Live Root

It is still too soon to write off the unions. Thatcher has damaged their foliage, not their roots. In the pits one colliery trade union official described a kind of syndicalism thus: 'It's pathetic to watch the deputies (supervisors), they're wandering around with nothing to do — it's the chargehand (the elected official) and the men that run things underground'.⁴

In the midst of mass unemployment wages have shown a tendency to rise, and the less reported results of strike ballots show a clear majority for industrial action. Now the Confederation of British Industries has declared war on wage rises, but as yet both they and the Government have been impotent in this area. Shop stewards often promote real advances for ordinary workers.

Anthony Harris in the *Financial Times* argues that although the real wages of workers in jobs have

increased, 'management salaries have been rising faster than wages.' Furthermore, he says, 'profits have been leading the way since 1980, with other incomes lagging in their wake.' Mr Harris diagnoses the 'chronic British disease' as being not wages but the British business fetish of charging what the market will not bear.

Stretching the meaning of syndicalism slightly mischievously to mean the 'products of self-interest', we may say that Britain is a syndicalist society with the syndicates of the managers and profiteers doing rather better than the workers, but at the bottom the unemployed are getting worse off all the time. On June 4th a *Guardian* editorial declared the jobless have '...no lobby and no bargaining power to protect them'. If the libertarian left can't articulate their needs others may do it.

It seems to me that syndicalism is a promiscuous plant capable of hybridising with many political varieties: with fascism, business, statism, marxism, or corporat-

ism, just as easily as with anarchism. Yet syndicalism cannot be consigned to the compost heap of politics; with all its faults it is part of our industrial tradition — it is in our nature — and we must work with nature not against it. In the same way that farmers must test horticultural theories by trying to grow things, so anarchists must test their ideas in the soil of our industrial society. If not, then the workers' movement will forever be the domain of the authoritarians.

Brian Bamford

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Bloody Revolution

You talk about your revolution, well, that's fine
But what are you going to be doing come the time?
Are you going to be the big man with the tommy-gun?
Will you talk of freedom when the blood begins to run?
Well, freedom has no value if violence is the price
Don't want your revolution, I want anarchy and peace

You talk of overthrowing power with violence as your tool

You speak of liberation and when the people rule
Well ain't it people rule right now, what difference
would there be?

Just another set of bigots with their rifle-sights on me

But what about these people who don't want your new
restrictions?

Those that disagree with you and have their own
convictions?

You say they've got it wrong because they don't agree
with you

So when the revolution comes you'll have to run them
through

Yet you say that revolution will bring freedom for us all
Well freedom just ain't freedom when your back's
against the wall

You talk of overthrowing power with violence as your tool

You speak of liberation and when the people rule
Well ain't it people rule right now, what difference
would there be?

Just another set of bigots with their rifle-sights on me

Will you indoctrinate the masses to serve your new
regime?

And simply do away with those whose views are too
extreme?

Transportation details could be left to British Rail
Where Zyklon B succeeded, North Sea Gas will fail
It's just the same old story of man destroying man
We've got to look for other answers to the problems of
this land

You talk of overthrowing power with violence as your tool

You speak of liberation and when the people rule

Well ain't it people rule right now, what difference
would there be?

Just another set of bigots with their rifle-sights on me

Vive la revolution, people of the world unite
Stand up men of courage, it's your job to fight

It all seems very easy, this revolution game
But when you start to really play things won't be quite
the same

Your intellectual theories on how it's going to be
Don't seem to take into account the true reality
'Cos the truth of what you're saying, as you sit there
sipping beer

Is pain and death and suffering, but of course you
wouldn't care

You're far too much of a man for that, if Mao did it so
can you

What's the freedom for us all against the suffering of the
few?

That's the kind of self-deception that killed ten million
Jews

Just the same false logic that all power-mongers use
So don't think you can fool me with your political tricks
Political right, political left, you can keep your politics

Government is government and all government is force
Left or right, right or left, it takes the same old course

Oppression and restriction, regulation, rule and law
The seizure of that power is all your revolution's for

You romanticise your heroes, quote from Marx and
Mao

Well their ideas of freedom are just oppression now

Nothing's changed for all the death that their ideas
created

It's just the same fascistic games, but the rules aren't
clearly stated

Nothing's really different 'cos all government's the
same

They can call it freedom, but slavery is the game

There's nothing that you offer but a dream of last year's
hero

The truth of revolution, brother.....is year zero

Crass

Anarchy is Order

Before going on to suggest what those changes might be which could create a better society, i.e. one that has been organised along sound anarchist principles, one or two comments need first to be made about the word 'Anarchy' itself for it is obvious from the way most people react when this noble concept is being put forward to them as a possible alternative way of organising our lives that this is a term which is not fully understood. Just mention the word to most people from 'conventional' backgrounds and either they will look disturbed and afraid, as visions of chaos and disorder maybe accompanied by violence are conjured up in their minds or they will nervously laugh, a well-known but annoying response to anything which is unknown.

But perhaps such reactions to the mention of the word 'Anarchy', even in serious discussion, are not really so surprising. After all most people (especially those from the present older generation amongst whom must be counted many of today's leaders), while being made to learn lists of Kings and Queens at school, have only been fed the sensational and outrageous concerning its past, a small and insignificant part of its history by comparison with the death and destruction wreaked by imposed government. And then, after school, they have probably only ever heard the word used in its negative or mocking sense, eg. in newspaper headlines such as 'Fear of Anarchy in Lebanon' or on TV 'comedy' shows such as 'The Young Ones'. Nowhere in their formal education have they been given access to a full and objective account of the anarchist movement and ideas. Nowhere in every-day language and conversation have they heard the constructive side of its meaning emphasised.

And the main reason why there is this almost deliberate lack of proper information about the anarchist ideal is not hard to find. The ideas of people such as Godwin, Kropotkin and Goodman (to name but a few) are not promoted because those who do the telling and holding-in-place — the politicians, bosses and priests, the 'leaders' of this world — know that, if they were, they would be in danger of losing their own positions of power and control. Hence this prejudice concerning 'Anarchy' is allowed to continue, hence this conspiracy of silence is actively maintained by those 'in authority'.

For too long 'Anarchy' has been receiving a bad Press. For too long has only the destructive side of its meaning been given prominence while its positive aspects have been virtually neglected. But this misinformation, this lack of understanding, this ignorance must be removed before it is too late, before the authoritarian (and liberal) dictators who at present rule our world, at their very least, reduce the quality of life still further or, at their very worst, consign us all to a barren wasteland, the inevitable aftermath of a nuclear holocaust.

Then what does 'Anarchy' really mean? In order to gain a clearer picture we must first look at the derivation of the word itself. 'Anarchy' is a combination of two Greek words — a or an (the alpha preivative) meaning no, without or lack of and archos meaning a ruler, some person or body who rules or governs. The literal meaning of 'Anarchy', therefore, is 'without a ruler'. But even this does not tell us much because what we are really interested in is that state of affairs which would exist if there are no rulers, i.e. Anarchism.

Now there is no doubt in my mind, such is the

present state of human nature, the product of living for too long in an hierarchically organised society in which most people are constantly being told what to say, what to do, what to think, that, if all the people who rule were suddenly removed from our midst, the immediate result would be chaos and disorder perhaps accompanied by violence and destruction. A kind of chaotic free-for-all would reign for a while but eventually order would have to be re-imposed from above. Order would have to be re-imposed because the majority of 'ordinary' people would not know how to behave under such circumstances. They do not know because they have never been educated for such freedom, i.e. freedom *from* always being told what to say, what to do, what to think; freedom *to* make decisions for themselves, organise their own lives, control their own destinies. But even if they had, this freedom would not last long because nowhere in society has there ever existed a framework by which it could be sustained — a fact which has been borne out by history. For, even though under the 'right' conditions it has been shown that people are quite capable of organising themselves, if only for a short while and in order to meet basic needs, eg. during the Paris Commune 1871, the Makhnovista in the Ukraine 1918-21 and the Spanish Civil war 1936-69, the danger has always been and still is that without the appropriate and far-ranging social structures built into their environment, sooner or later some interfering busybody of one race, creed, religion or another will come along to impose their own kind of order instead of letting it emerge naturally. And, of course, they do.

The social revolution never has and never will be secured by this method alone, i.e. the removal usually by force of those who govern, those who rule. For when this is done all that is left is a vacuum, a space which in the absence of suitable previous experience on the part of everyone everywhere and an appropriate arrangement of their surroundings locally, regionally and globally, can only be filled by yet more people who govern and rule — because they are still necessary.

True Anarchism — that ideal state of affairs where no rulers exist because they are not necessary — will only be achieved when not only have those who govern and rule been removed, preferably by persuasion, but also adequate preparations have been made to fill the gap they have left behind. Such preparations, therefore, must include the wholesale re-organisation of our education system and the provision of a framework within which a society organised along sound anarchist principles can be maintained and flourish. In particular society must be 're-schooled' and 'the community' re-established. For the way to introduce Anarchy such as this throughout the land is not by 'waiting for the moment' — the creation of a healthier, more desirable society will not happen spontaneously — but by making deliberate and radical changes to the fabric of present-day society now.

Such changes to the way we are educated, such changes to the way our lives are organised are possible. All they require are imagination, courage and the will. Once accepted, they have only to be put into universal practice. Then we shall see the transformation of society from one which is perverted by the rules of imposed government to one which prospers through the use of sound anarchist principles, i.e. from one which

represses, fragments and destroys personal growth to one which liberates, encourages and integrates all-round human development; from one which reveres the maximisation of profit and economic growth to one which respects the needs of all people and the planet; from one in which everything has a price to one in which everything is 'free'; from one which is alien, impersonal and uniform to one which is warm, human and varied; from one which is based on unhealthy competition, forced organisation and dependency to

one which is arranged around the methods of mutual aid, voluntary association and self-management; from one which is dominated by centralised bureaucracies, pyramidal hierarchies and the State to one which is organised around de-centralised federations, flexible networks and the community.

Then we shall see the Old World Order of imposed government by the few replaced gradually, peacefully and successfully by the New World Order of Anarchy for Everyone.

Colin Millen

Elementary Watsonianism

It was at work that I was driven into gridlock on the Damascus Road. Researching nuisance law (as if there was any other kind) I discovered *People v Amdur*, 123 Cal. App. 2d, Supp. 951, 267 P. 2d 445 (1954). In this 1954 decision, the court held that an anarchist who sets up a literature table near Sather Gate on the Berkeley campus is guilty of creating a public nuisance. Although over thirty years have since elapsed, as I contemplate anarchists like Jeff Strahl and Kevin Keating doing the same thing on the same spot today, I cannot gainsay the essential justice of this ruling. This insight, though, does not begin to exhaust the riches of the decision. When lawyers get their hands on a historic case they are wont to say that it is 'one for the casebooks'. *People v Amdur* is one of the mental-casebooks, for it asks the burning question: 'What is a Watsonian anarchist?' Is he a follower of the Watson who invented misbehaviourism, such as B F Skinhead? Or of the Dr Watson who came under the influence of his good friend Morlock Holmes? First, the facts.

On February 6, 1953, a police officer accosted Reuel S Amdur as he manfully manned his table, stocked with literature decrying the Smith Act and the trial of the Rosenbergs. As Amdur had no permit, he was told to move along or face arrest. Whereupon Amdur uttered the words which would make him a criminal and forever a part of the law of the land: 'Go ahead and arrest me. I am a Watsonian anarchist and will stand on my constitutional rights.'

A *Watsonian anarchist!* Right then and there as I dawdled in the library of the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California I knew that I, too, was a Watsonian anarchist, whatever that was, come what may. (I always felt a bit out of place among the earnest activists of the ACLU. No member of a minority group or deviant subculture feels any more alienated than I did the day I joined the only other occupants of the library, a transvestite, a lesbian and a dwarf.) But if I was the first to follow the Bigfoot tracks laid down by Amdur (since lapsed into the obscurity from which the police briefly raised him) I now know that I am not alone. Before Amdur was, I am.

A Watsonian anarchist spurns all the other hyphenated anarchists, mutualist-, syndicalist-, capitalist-, etc. A Watsonian anarchist is her own man. He is outside of and arrayed against the anarchist milieu in every form. And she thinks punk anarchists are, to paraphrase Celine, 'much better firewood than a violin.' (Even a little better than an electric guitar.) Genetically he sports the signature 'Z' chromosome. She is a pathological truth-teller and so he is viewed with suspicion and hatred by anti-authoritarians. He declines whatever role the Invisible Government assigns her in the ideological

divisions of labour, even the production of 'biting flyers' for the amusement of anarchist jades. Indeed, Watsonians don't play roles, they enact schiz. They regard Little Hans as a political prisoner, they delight that Dora survived the rapist Freud's joyless ministrations and grew up just in time for her *attentat* against Lenin. Sometimes a pipe is just a pipe, but this is not a pipe.

On a scale from left to right, the Watsonian is off on a tangent. She is almost as anathema to the authorities as he is to the anti-authoritarians. Neither an individualist, capitalist, right-wing 'type 1' anarchist nor a collectivist, socialist, left-wing 'type 2' anarchist, he is a *type 3* anarchist and nobody's fool. She wrote *The Anarchist Cookbookchin*, he promises a chicken in every Kropotkin, if you prefer Ravachol with cheese, Spooner in, it's the Most! God damn, I De Cleyre, that's a Comfort if I Read you alright. A dead dogma makes her Thoreau up. A Watsonian is a loose cannon, he is over the edge. Any other anarchist can be trimmed to fit, the Watsonian throws one. The Watsonians are an aristocracy of egalitarians, they are Taoist overachievers, when yuppies tout workers' councils they smell a *Rat*.

The small minded might quibble that Watsonianism is nothing but an error in transcription. The opinion of the Superior Court (it had to be, to handle a Watsonian) admittedly does not recite Amdur's testimony, only the cop's. A pedant might piddle that the officer, who was perhaps ideologically unsophisticated, misunderstood Amdur who really said: 'I am a Jeffersonian anarchist, and...' — echoing Benjamin Tucker's definition of an anarchist as an unterrified Jeffersonian democrat. (Watsonians are the only remaining unterrified anarchists.) Or perhaps the officer unconsciously imputed to Amdur his own puzzled blurt: 'A *what*-sonian anarchist?' Not every Watsonian has the gift of the gab, but she always makes every syllable count. It matters not. So majestic and evocative an expression surely has some objective referent with which I, for one, am proud to be associated. If Watsonians did not exist they would have had to invent themselves. And they do, over and over again. A Watsonian is a moving target.

A Watsonian doesn't have to be a leftist, a feminist, a modernist, a humanist or anything else but himself. She stands by his friends, unlike other anarchists, and he knows her ideas have practical implications no matter how often they have to be changed, hers is the purism of mutability. He treats everyone equally, hence egalitarians denounce her elitism. Because she is always consistent, no one ever knows what he'll do next. She's not a quitter, but he knows when to quit. She is a *Watsonian anarchist*. Beep beep!

Bob Black

Attitudes toward Children and Anarchy

To me, anarchy isn't about a better means of production, it isn't materialist, it isn't about producing material wealth; it is about people, about valuing PEOPLE...sharing, giving and loving people. Anarchy is a people oriented idea, to make anarchy happen means a revolution in values. For example, to work and live in systems of collectives or co-operatives means spending a lot more time with people. Spending time in discussions in order to arrive at a consensus; to avoid hierarchies developing means spending time 'hearing' each member of a collective, valuing each member, communicating closely with each other. Spending time developing relationships based on understanding each other.

Changing how people relate to each other will change the way people work and live together. There is no long term advantage to eliminating the state, the powerful, the rich and authoritarian systems, if the remaining people only relate to each other in terms of power, authority and hierarchies, because people will just re-create the systems they have learned. Anarchy isn't just overthrowing existing authorities, but anarchy is establishing non-authoritarian attitudes.

A way to begin is to examine our own attitudes toward children; the way we relate and live with children; the way we value children. The society in which we live values affluence and materialism, a materialism that puts a premium on being selfish and possessing objects. It is a society which is not based on the values of sharing, giving or loving — it is fundamentally anti-child!

Being 'childish' is nearly always used in a negative way. 'Don't be childish', 'act your age', 'grow up', 'you're too young to know that', 'wait till you're older' and other such common phrases about children express anti-child attitudes. Parenthood, particularly motherhood, has a low status in this society. Both women and men have learned to value themselves or to base their self-esteem in terms of money earned or in their job status rather than enjoying the companionship of children.

Children still suffer the same status that blacks and women have been assigned — that of possessions. As possessions children are victims of physical abuse and they are denied liberty. Attitudes such as: they are lazy, irresponsible, not capable of governing themselves, etc. are applied to children as they have been to blacks and women; and like blacks and women, children's sexuality is feared and suppressed. As possessions children are subjected to 'legal' beatings not only by parents in the home, but also by teachers in schools. (Britain is now the only European country which permits corporal punishment in schools.) In this society children form an unrepresented political minority with few rights. In the eyes of the law 'children should not be seen, nor heard'. Attainment of a certain age is no more a valid excuse for the automatic acquisition of legal rights and power than is possession of a penis or having a white skin.

The view that children must have an inferior position in society because of their dependency on adults needs debunking. In fact, children are the same as adults in needing other people to survive and thrive — we all

need mutual aid. We all need help and are dependent on other people for food and housing when working; we are all especially dependent when ill or injured. But too much dependency can become a trap, especially for children; dependency can become debilitating for both doers and receivers. 'Caring' can become over-protection, which becomes smothering, debilitating and falls into being authoritarian and then fascist. Parents who do everything for their children do so in order to validate their own self-worth. Protecting children can be used to retain authority over them. 'Doing' things for children that they are capable of doing for themselves, robs them of their independence, makes them dependent and subject to, and a victim of, authority. There is a false kindness in a lot of what we call caring for children. Don't take responsibility away from children! Adults reinforce their own authority/superiority by making children dependent.

This debilitating form of dependency is prolonged so long that people pass from dependency on parents directly on to school and then on to the state. People stop thinking in terms of doing things for themselves, or for their neighbours, or for their communities, and instead wait for the state to do it for them.

The institution of school is an instrument of the state to promote dependency. The prevailing attitude is that children must be controlled and manipulated into acceptable social behaviour and trained as a workforce to fit the needs of the state. The things schools are really about are contained in the 'hidden curriculum': obedience to authority, conformity, passive acceptance of information from hierarchies of so-called experts, and the suppression of feelings and emotions.

The fact is that so long as schools are compulsory they are prisons! Many school buildings look and smell like prisons; and like prisons, schools are institutions of sensory deprivation. Children's sexuality is certainly suppressed, and so is their sensuality. Children sit in confining spaces most of the day and the only physical contact, during sports, is based on physical aggression. Children's social interaction at school is based on competition, conformity, on cruelty from bullies and of hierarchies of age groupings.

This is a very important point: alienation from one's own body is one of the hallmarks of this culture. Physical contact is vital to children and adults; and it is the lack of it which leads to much of the neurosis in society.

So then...what is to be done? Start by examining your own attitudes toward children and how you relate to your own and to other children. Do you value being with children? Can you change your lifestyle to start valuing children? Next...don't send your children to state schools! Don't as anarchists let the state do it for you or to you. Organise alternatives yourselves, with your family, your friends and your community. There are alternative possibilities. Setting up a free school is possible...but also loaded with difficulties (funding is a major problem). Another alternative open to anarchists is 'otherwise', which is a phrase in the Education Act which allows parents to educate their children in school or otherwise. There is an organisation called 'Education Otherwise' which provides information to people

wanting alternatives to schools. At the moment this is largely a middle class movement, with parents who are able to use the legal system. Those few working class parents who have taken their children out of school, suffer from constant harassment from social workers and the rest of that lot, with threats of taking their children into care if they don't send their children to school. As usual the working class needs to be fully organised to use the system in the same way the middle class does. But it is possible.

Part of this movement has to be the de-professionalisation and de-mystification of education; the idea that teachers are the professionals that know what is best. George Bernard Shaw said 'He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches'. Added to that is, he who cannot teach, teaches teachers. The idea of teachers as professionals devalues people; most parents only lack

the confidence to teach, not the skills. Children learn best by observing people *doing* things and by *doing* things themselves.

Parents who take their children out of school can set up networks to share skills with different people and to bring different children together. That is very important because there are dangers of parents and children becoming isolated. So working within collectives and co-operatives is vital.

As long as children are taught in one way or the other that ultimately they must fit or slot into existing patterns of work and society and to accept the values of this society, then nothing will change. Anarchists must get off their arses and stop waiting for the revolution — the state is not going to organise the revolution for us — it begins with ourselves and changing our own attitudes.

Will Langworthy

Requiem: The Other Shuttle

ON 28th JANUARY 1986, BENEATH A BLUE SKY AND THE SCATTERING OF SNOWFLAKES, SEVEN PEOPLE DIED IN THE MOST TRAGIC OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

Seven people — who lived and worked in this town, and who may or may not have been known to you; whom you perhaps saw pass as hurrying shadows on an impatient street.

They died in the darkened, lonely wards of our hospitals, whilst their families could only watch and helplessly weep.

UNLIKE THEIR AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS HOWEVER they did not die voluntarily — but as the result of incurable, malignant diseases which descended upon them without reason, without consideration.

They received no exorbitant salaries, no special training or privileges, and were heaped with no fame. Their only foolishness was to toil day after day, year after year, over the very machines that were to be the objects of their eventual, agonising destruction.

Had they lived there would have been no presidential banquet for them, no ticker-tape parades or millionaire status, only the endless toil of yet another tomorrow, the sweat and tears of their unrelenting oppression.

They struggled their entire lives to earn an honest day's pay, while their masters exploited them, deprived them, and chained them in slavery until they were crushed into submission, and their battered bodies, tired of unending abuse and hardship, began the inexorable process of self destruction.

They did not willingly sanction a frivolous technology of national self interest and egotism while their less fortunate fellows starved to death on hungry, unforgiving streets.

They did not participate joyously in the construction of a technological straightjacket about the earth capable of annihilating at the throw of a switch our entire species, and whatever future might be left to us.

As they lay dying in resigned agony in their beds they had not the strength to ask if the £860 million worth of flame, smoke and scrap metal cascading out of the

Florida sky might somehow have financed the medical technology that could have saved their lives, and that of a million other silent martyrs to the cause of Capitalism.

And when their disease ridden bodies were taken to some overgrown corner of a forgotten municipal graveyard, no one asked why the flags were not lowered, or why there was no guard of honour, no civil dignitaries, no commemorative monument with its eternal hypocritical flame.

For those who loved them there were no million dollar insurance policies to protect them from the poverty that is the inevitable fate imposed by society upon the unrecognised, uncompensated bereaved — the generosity of the system that crushed them providing a paltry £30 Death Grant that would see us all consigned to the earth in nothing more affordable than refuse sacks.

NO ONE KNOWS THE NAMES OF THOSE SEVEN MEN AND WOMEN WHO DIED SO TRAGICALLY ON 28th JANUARY 1986. NAMES THAT WILL NEVER BE RECITED BY MOURNFUL, WORSHIPPING SCHOOLCHILDREN AND DULL FACED ANTISEPTIC NEWSREADERS. THEIR BLACK-EDGED PHOTOGRAPHS WILL ADORN NO MORNING PAPERS, NOR LIE BETWEEN THE COVERS OF ETERNAL UNRELENTING SCHOOLBOOKS. IF THEY ARE PARTICULARLY FORTUNATE THE SUM TOTAL OF THEIR REMEMBRANCE MAY BE A MEDICAL JOURNAL STATISTIC — A NUMBER AMONG NUMBERS UPON SOME THESIS PAPER.

BUT THEIR LOVED ONES WILL REMEMBER THEM, AND WE TOO WILL EVER REMEMBER THEM — FOR THEIR INDESCRIBABLE AND INFINITE SACRIFICE AT THE VERY FRONTIERS OF HUMAN DIGNITY.

TO THE SEVEN UNKNOWN VICTIMS WHO DIED, WE OFFER THE EPITAPH OF OUR ETERNAL, UNRELENTING DISCONTENT!
REQUIESCAT IN PACE

Joe Kelly

thinking about Camus — 6th August 1986

Billie Holiday and Lester Young are duetting from the speakers —
the sound of vanished America with white gardenia hair and porkpie hat
jukeboxing the nights away as the lights went out all over Europe
and we lay in our Cotswold baby beds crooning *You are my sunshine* just like Dinah Shore
while the GI's strolled by below snapping sticks of gum and lighting Lucky Strikes —
rolling shadows thrown by shrouded headlamps making maps on our ceiling
voices far away trains pulling out of St James' for blitzed London the music of the rails
shadowy toys strewn across the sleeping floor dreaming without fear without knowledge
without premonition undisturbed by jazz bombs politics race love sex
mouths open snuffling into feather pillows the cotton bedspreads spread like wings

thinking about Camus out in Algeria perhaps listening to jazz on AFN keeping goal in the stadium
combing his hair like Humphrey Bogart smoking Lucky Strikes *living* 'Casablanca'
coming to Paris getting that tuxedo trenchcoat style off to a T *being* that wiseguy journalist
writing poetry and novels already spoiled by too much education the literary life
marked by the dark glamour of the occupation — time standing still love sex success
the field grey soldiers in the boulevards singing in triumph the city their's forever
Paris sour and divided jazz banished jews trembling in the cellars
café treachery Maurice Chevalier at the cabaret the Channel between us

Billie Holiday is singing *Your happiness lies right under your eyes back in your own backyard*
perhaps for him Lester Young — the President — Prez she called him he called her Lady Day
American music sweetening the wet afternoon forty years after Hiroshima
and *Back in Nagasaki where the boys all chew tobaccy and the girls all whicky whacky whoo*
the plague was visited on them and us and our dreams were never the same again —
waiting for the next war *Growing up absurd* as Paul Goodman said to the sound of American music
jazz bombs politics race love sex crashing and sneaking into our lives
and films football France — going to Paris the poetry of the cafés
reading Camus hearing Greco so chic so radical so existential so Left Bank — *so Rive Gauche*

listening to the radio today Billie Holiday and Lester Young bringing it all back home
the smashed car his suitable death at age the same as Elvis Presley's
all those sweet tormented American voices and the saxophone breathing gently
to the rhythm of the falling rain in St Albans on Hiroshima Day

Jeff Cloves

half time scores

ALBERT CAMUS — that difficult friend of anarchism
— was a goalkeeper until TB made him give up football
at 18. When asked, but for TB would he have chosen
writing or football? he replied, 'Soccer, without
hesitation'. *The Outsider* and *The Plague* are Penguin
paperbacks.

BILLIE HOLIDAY — the greatest jazz singer — said of
her dear friend Lester Young, 'Yes he was President and
I was Vice-President. I used to be crazy about his tenor
playing, wouldn't make a record unless he was on it.'
Billie Holiday had no discernable influence on music
other than jazz and certainly none on the sweet white
crooner DINAH SHORE. Her autobiography, *Lady
sings the Blues*, is a Penguin paperback. 'I hate straight
singing. I have to change a tune to my own way of
doing it.' Her records of the late '30s and early '40s with

Lester Young are recognised as her best work and
include 'Back in your own backyard'.

LESTER YOUNG — 'You have a model, or a teacher,
and you learn all he can show you. But then you start
playing for yourself. Show them that you're an
individual.'

PAUL GOODMAN — the American anarchist writer
— has a poem 'Flags, 1967' in his collection *Hawkweed*,
Vintage Books paperback. 'At our rally / I see a small
black rag of little worth / and touch it wistfully. / Chaos
is order.'

JULIETTE GRÉCO — a French café singer of the '40s
and '50s — went to Hollywood to be a film star.

LATE SCORE — just discovered that Lester Young's
home in the '50s was St Albans, Long Island.

Therefore Break Free!

This is to bite the bullet.

What if we are our own worst enemies? What if we, as individualists, are as dangerous to the cause of freedom as are the *laissez faire* exemplars of it whose self-seeking politics and economics we condemn? What if, for all our lives, we have been in the grip of traditions we have never understood so that they have been in charge of us rather than the other way round?

Every individualistic libertarian is against dictators and is, himself or herself, an incipient dictator. This follows from the nature of individualism itself. If I am the bounds of my own perspective then everything outside that perspective must serve me. If and when it ceases to do so I shall do my best to destroy it in order to protect myself. No authentic movement can be created on this basis, only an everlasting series of mutually embattled mini-empires all related to egos.

The unbroken story of individualism dates from the sixteenth century. There are plenty of classical and medieval precedents but they appear to be discontinuous. The High Renaissance produced a string of geniuses in literature, the arts, philosophy and politics; Luther taught 'the priesthood of all believers' only to renounce it when it let loose a revolution; Calvin and Knox mandated non-hierarchical local elects divinely pre-ordained to know the truth and attain salvation; the Spirituals of the Radical Reformation from the Anabaptists to the Quakers prescribed the Inner Light; countless sects built gathered churches round charismatic leaders; Bentham up-dated it all in purely secular terms for the nineteenth century providing the Hidden Hand of the market within which in the name of liberty the individual could do as he pleased; came Stirner; Marx and Freud provided the final touches when the interpretation of 'the historic role of the working class' turned out to be as arbitrary and individualistic as the interpretation of dreams.

After 400 years Lenin was the backlash. In *What is to be Done?* (1902), the book that more than any other defined the terms of twentieth century politics, Lenin declared for a 'centralised, militant organisation' and practised what he preached with universal consequences still operative today. Individualism was put to death in the name of 'the leading role of the party'. Mussolini and Hitler admired and studied Lenin. Bakunin, Kropotkin and others put their fingers on parts of the trouble but what they did was too little and too late to change the courses of empire, world war, totalitarianism and the re-emergence of the military as the ultimate arbiters of politics. If Leninism, Fascism and Nazism were sick revulsions against individualism was there, is there, a healthy one? That is the question.

If there is an answer it has to be one that we can demonstrate, in practice, as workable. And not workable by someone else, but by ourselves. How else might our case be taken seriously?

We are against centralised government and all forms of authoritarian organisation; we reject hierarchy. We are for 'free association'. So far so good. But what does 'free association' mean? The fact is that we have fudged it. There is nothing in our literature and work to match and defeat Lenin's centralism.

The search is for the profoundest transformation, how to both transcend individualism and enhance

individuality at the same time. It has to be possible for, if not, we are in a blind alley. Individualism is the belief that the individual is the ultimate unit. What is the alternative? It cannot be the pair because an individual ego can always be extended to cover a second person. The trio is a marginal possibility but a quartet is decisively different if its members are of roughly comparable ability. The answer to one 'strong personality' is three others equally strong. If they remain individualists the thing will explode. If they make it work they will have created a new political chemistry, introduced a new element.

The fact is that four people, in substantial agreement as to ends and means, can produce something together that they could not produce separately. The whole is once again greater than the sum of the parts.

In the last five years we have had any number of experiments with affinity groups and networks. Some are still working very well especially in the feminist movement where 'connectedness' is the first principle. Women are the pioneers of the new politics. The most obvious failure has been in the peace movement (including the women's peace movement). The fact is that changing the label changes little else. Egos, empires, shallow single-issue goals, acceptance of 'protest' rather than alternatives, operation within a failed party-political system, therapy-seeking and the rest will destroy any system of affinity groups and networks. the breakout from individualism has to be decisive.

Only the good ship DIY is sound enough to take us to where we need to go. and at the end of the day DIY means insurrection. Can we lift that word out of the vocabulary of the unspeakable? Internationally it has been commonplace enough in Portugal, Spain, Zimbabwe, Haiti, the Phillipines and the rest. What no one has yet found out is what it might mean in one of the homes of constitutional government as in Britain, Western Europe and North America. It is time that discussion began.

The insurrection, one hopes, will be non-violent, not on moral or pacifist grounds (although that is not to impugn them) but because violence will only make insurrection conform to past patterns and enthrone yet another dispensation of the military and police. We shall then have to do it all over again. The *political* importance of non-violence lies in its incipient power to invent authentic popular decentralised government *sans* the military. Needless to say this will not be possible unless something comparable is taking place from the Atlantic to the Urals and across North America. Free association, regionalism and internationalism constitute an irreducible triplet.

Governments, East and West alike, are slowly and inexorably alienating their peoples in the cause of the protection of their military-industrial complexes. At a certain point, not too far ahead, the old ways will cease to work and there will be no remedy within the system. Alternatives, hitherto only desirable, will suddenly become imperative as non-cooperation appears on the agenda. It will cut across all class and party lines.

That preparations for that day are not yet in hand is a timely indication that we are still victims. It is time to stand up.

Peter Cadogan

Anarchisation of Capitalism

The proletariat has always been a problem for capitalism. The proletariat makes inconvenient demands, it strikes, it riots, it has aspirations. It can usually be kept in check with varying degrees of seduction and repression, but it's a tricky balance to achieve and requires constant attention. Workplace automation can overcome some of these problems, but it can never be the solution. The robots in the new Fiat factory do not get sick, take holidays or go on strike; but they don't buy motor cars either. Capitalism has to continue to try to control the proletariat because it needs its members in their dual role as workers/consumers. If it didn't need us it could destroy us outright.

Because capitalist production is production for profit and not for need, one of the most basic revolutionary demands has always been collective ownership of the means of production. Before the end of the century we may find capitalism giving us just that, and gladly. The miners who fought for 'their' pits and 'their' communities may find that their whole workplace and community is handed over to them to be run as an autonomous workers collective. The set piece battles of the miners strike will be a thing of the past, as will go-slows, overtime bans and sabotage. There will be no tangible enemy to fight against. In fact the McGregors will be as obsolete as the Scargills.

'We are on the verge of a new era of popular capitalism.'

John Redwood, former head of Conservative government policy unit.

For the modern capitalist actually organising production has become a time consuming nuisance. It means dealing with workers, unions, distributors, buyers, safety regulations, pollution and environmental problems, politicians, insurance, taxes, investment, forward planning, raw materials suppliers, advertising, strikes, breakdowns, etc. etc. — not to mention the constant search for new markets. How much better to leave the workers themselves to sort out the messy end of the business and, Mafia like, just cream off your percentage.

Capitalism intends solving its problems not by repressing the proletariat, but by abolishing it.

Ideas which once belonged to the world of science fiction are now being discussed in the boardrooms of multinationals. The theorists of the new capitalism are not popular philosophers or radical economists, but hard headed business writers giving advice, as they have always done, on the way to stay one step ahead. One example is the book *Corporate Cultures* by Deal and Kennedy, a book aimed at a readership of senior business executives. In its logical and matter-of-fact way it speaks of the future:

'We see a revolution on the horizon that holds far-reaching implications for the American corporation. A combination of forces — from the rapidly changing business environment to the new work force to astonishing advances in technology — is forging a breakdown of the large traditional, hierarchical organisations that have dominated in the past. We think that this dismantling will result in highly decentralised organisations in which the work of the corporation will be done in small, autonomous units linked to the mega-corporation by new telecommunications and computer technologies... We see it as a no-boss business. We call it the atomised organisation.'

The first task of the managers if the new capitalism

will be to 'structure and negotiate economic arrangements with workers banded into semi-autonomous units'. When it comes to setting up these new 'semi-autonomous units' one can see any opposition trampled underfoot in the stampede of union officials, co-operators, decentralisers, liberals, community workers, the various 'hyphen'-anarchists, Bennites and Bolo'boloists as they try to get a slice of the action. The means of production will at last be in the hands of the workers, theirs to run autonomously and democratically subject only to market forces; collective competing against collective, co-operative against co-operative. The employed will become the self-employed, the new petit bourgeoisie.

'In the old days the boss stood over you with a whip and beat you if you didn't work hard enough. Then they invented piecework; the boss gives you the whip, he goes home and you beat yourself to death.'

But in the long term the proletariat is not so easily bought off. The bosses still need the proletariat, and the proletariat still don't need the bosses. Consequently the bosses have to make themselves indispensable.

Forward thinking anarchists have seized upon the new information and communications technology as the answer to the problem of organising a sophisticated and complex industrial society along libertarian lines. The new technology allows for global organisation of decentralised, autonomous units without half the workforce travelling the world representing this or that factory or collective at this or that meeting. The new capitalists realise this too. Their new role will be that of brokers. Their job will be to mediate and organise and to provide the information and communication system that will make the whole network operate efficiently and responsively.

The current fear of the new technology is that it will be at the service of the forces of repression; a nightmare world like Orwell's *1984*. In the new age of capitalism the new technology will appear benign. It will be the communicator, the information resource, the global fixer. As the banks now offer support to the small business so they will offer support to the small (or large) collective. The new capitalists will finally wash their hands of the grease and grime of production and enter the world of pure information — of pure control.

To put this system on a stable basis the new capitalists intend turning to culture, the really big commodity because it is the one that sells all the others. Deal and Kennedy again:

'In the dispersed, helter-skelter world of the radically decentralised atomised organisation, some glue is absolutely essential to hold the independent work units together. The role that culture plays will be even more critical than it is in today's corporate world. Without strong cultural bonds, atomised work units would fly off in a centrifugal plane. The winners in the business world of tomorrow will be the heroes who can forge the values and beliefs, the rituals and ceremonies, and a cultural network of storytellers and priests who can keep people working productively in semi-autonomous units that identify with a corporate whole.'

The new capitalists have learnt from the state capitalists the value of solidarity.

'It well recalls the triumphs past,
It gives the hope of peace at last.
The banner bright, the symbol plain,
Of human rights and human gain.
Then raise the scarlet banner high,
Beneath its folds we'll live and die,
Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer,
We'll keep the red flag flying here.'
The Red Flag

'Ever onward! Ever onward!
That's the spirit that brought us fame,
We're big, but bigger we will be,
We can't fail for all to see,
That to serve humanity has been our aim,
Our products are known in every zone,
Our reputation sparkles like a gem,
We've fought our way through and new —
fields we're sure to conquer too.
Forever onward IBM.'
IBM Company Song

We are already being culturally prepared for life after the communications revolution. One example is the credit card. For the simple act of holding a set of figures in a computer for a few weeks the banks and credit card companies take a percentage on every deal concluded with one of their bits of plastic. Many people already claim that they 'wouldn't know what to do' without their credit cards. Far from resenting this usury, people are queuing to join in.

Opposition to capitalism's next reincarnation cannot restrict itself to a critique of the means of power such as 'the state' or 'capitalism'. It must return to its basic critique of power itself. It must expose myths such as 'semi-autonomous' by reaffirming that autonomy is not quantifiable — one can no more be semi-autonomous than one can be semi-pregnant. All the new capitalism

offers the workers is a chance to democratically construct the world of their own alienation. Capitalism's opposition must loudly echo St Just's warning that those who make revolution by halves dig their own graves — even if the gravediggers are organised in a semi-autonomous collective.

Anarchists may feel little cheer that their theories about autonomy and workers control have found approval among the hard headed executives and administrators of capitalism, but the phenomenon is not new. Italy's dictator Mussolini was very taken with the idea of syndicalism, as were Mosley's fascists in Britain. The important difference then and now is that the new information and communications technology has made the dream of pure power a concrete reality.

In this new world there will be few conspicuous agencies of oppression such as the police because, in the interests of our own economic survival, we will police ourselves. Oppression will not have an easily identifiable source such as the boss or the state, because oppression will be everywhere.

Now, as 'money' becomes less and less tangible, it is more necessary than ever before for anarchists to reaffirm their dedication to its abolition. It is the anarchist's opposition to money that identifies them as the only authentic opposition to capitalism. They can expect no support from the state capitalists of the Soviet Union, China or Cuba with their wages, consumerism and 'peoples' banks. If we hope to have any chance of opposing capitalism in its new era we need to return to a stance that is uncompromisingly anti-authoritarian and anti-money. If we continue to rush around applauding projects and causes because they contain some libertarian or autonomous elements — because they are a 'step in the right direction' — we run the risk of not just saddling ourselves with the new capitalism, but of positively helping to usher it in.

Larry Law

And the Power Flows: Politics without Illusions

Anarchism is sensitive to power. This usually means power as the State and the ways that this is reflected throughout society. But where this tendency has been attacked through the use of unstructured groups, other forms of power have arisen, such as structureless tyranny. In the former case, power has its source in some outside agency and is openly expressed. In the latter, power is internal, informal subgroups forming covert bases of control. The solutions suggested in both cases are familiar libertarian remedies: recallable delegates, rotating chairs, equal access to resources and so on. Both presuppose that an illegitimate power is imposing itself.

Anarchism in the Real World

This article will attempt to undermine the simple view of power as something possessed and imposed. By seeing it instead as something *structured into* relationships, we are aiming at a less complacent anarchism which can confront its own problems and contradictions. Making more headway in the real world, or at least undoing some of the suicidal and self-marginalising tendencies of modern anarchism, might then be more likely.

1. Identity and Community

Power seen as two-way sheds a different light: people yield their power to others. This is not necessarily done 'willingly' — rather it is more automatic, being complexly generated by capitalism, authority and patriarchy. What is produced are identities, practices and ideologies which shape individuals. People 'need' this shaping or fixing — it gives meaning to their lives. In pre-modern societies individuals were located within strong social structures which could provide them with secure positions. Under capitalism there has been a fragmentation of community that has resulted in a more unstable personality. Institutions have arisen to re-compose the individual: the nuclear family, school, the police in their various guises. The person that emerges from this is someone who looks to these institutions for self-stability, and who will seek to reconstruct them in other spheres of life. This is not to deny the material oppression that people have and continue to resist; it simply suggests one reason why resistance dwindles faster than it might otherwise. Institutions provide *certainty*.

The Desire to Find a Place

This 'desire' expresses itself in various ways. In fascism

and authoritarian communism extreme discipline negates the possibility of autonomy; it generates certainty in the follower. But this certainty has to be given form and content — the job of an elite. The advantage of phrasing the problem this way is that it gets us beyond the individualistic notion of members of elites as being personally evil: they are placed in positions in which evil is demanded.

Organisations For All Time

Permanents see the revolutionary organisation as capable of transcending history, remaining relevant and useful, however developments in society alter its members' lives. It can not only keep step with a changing capitalist environment, but is also seen as the kernel of social and economic re-organisation after revolution. The universal prescriptions of assemblies, delegates and federation are in stark contrast to the imperatives of Capital and State, and continually focus members' attentions on what is being opposed and what could be a solution. It is no good, to Permanents, to keep the *ideas* of libertarian practice alive unless they are being *used*. This does imply that group structures can be isolated and detached from what they are being used *for*. Such an artificial position can mean that structures might become *fetishes*, diverting time and energy from what might need doing at any moment. They might stand in the way of preparing for and carrying through revolution. Given the events of the Spanish Revolution, when CNT leaders relinquished their anarchism and joined the government, this Spontaneist critique can be pertinent.

Untarnished Rebellion

Mass revolt with revolutionary potential tends to break out suddenly and unexpectedly, any pre-existing organisations being completely by-passed. Spontaneists see the power and potential of such movements as due to their being totally untainted with the relics of past struggles, having instead an intense connection to present needs. Looking at Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia and Paris 1968 and Poland 1980 we can see the attraction of the Spontaneist thesis. Its main weakness is that just as it is dangerous to ignore history and postulate eternal solutions, it is perilous to exaggerate the opposite — that conditions, peoples and their inter-relationships are ever *really* unique. The near-revolutionary situations mentioned have similarities, and the organisations involved suffered from parallel shortcomings. These were also visible in permanent mass organisations (eg in Spain in the 1930's). Once formed and matured (taking far longer in the Spanish example) the organisations festered, lost direction and backslid or were recuperated by what their driving forces should have resisted. Governments were negotiated with, compromises sought, and revolutions betrayed.

Self-Confessed Anarchists

Libertarian groups are embedded within the system and manifest some of its characteristics. These are hidden because we have at our disposal a rhetoric of autonomy and rationality with which to deny, side-step or assimilate the issue of covert power. We are faced with a tension of which anarchist groups must become aware. The breakdown of community engenders the 'desire' for secure identity but also creates the rhetoric of autonomy. This in turn demands constraints to be imposed on a suffocating collectivity. But because of the emptiness of the resulting individuality, the 'need' for community is produced. The anarchist concern with power is too individualistic: it attempts to set up structures which cancel power, yet, in so doing, it shifts

attention away from community-oriented aspects of organisation. New underground power-networks are created which cater for these 'desires'.

2. Spontaneity and Permanence

We turn now to some trends in modern anarchism which we suspect are *expressions* of this tension.

Recent libertarian groups can be classified by their stress on the spontaneity of the mass during social and political crises. On one side lies the 'Permanent' tradition, including syndicalists and libertarian communists. This sees a lasting revolutionary organisation being necessary to sustain and incubate the revolutionary and equalitarian aspirations of the working-class and of the poor and oppressed. This organisation defends the interests of the people, and then goes onto the offensive to facilitate revolution.

Against this tradition stands 'Spontaneism', including council communists, autonomists, situationists and many more ephemeral groupings. Their essence is the belief that organisations which persist after the period which spawned them inevitably come to place more constraints on workers and their revolutionary movements than any advantages justify.

History and Organisation

Setting up this kind of distinction can be a clumsy enterprise, but it can be used as a tool to analyse situations of rebellion; and can simultaneously be applied to the political input of libertarians (either at the time or in retrospect). We shall also be arguing that Spontaneity and Permanence map onto the distinction between community — and institutional — fixing of identity, a correspondence that allows us to draw together aspects of history, politics and anarchism which would normally appear unrelated. It also allows us to conclude on a vaguely positive note.

3. The Sources of Power

We need now to look at the contrasting attitudes to power which are implicit in these views of history and organisation. On one side, power is seen as primarily structural and must be combatted structurally. The organisational constraints of assembly control and delegation are enough to impede domination by private power interests. On the other side, power is thought of as historical, arising from the vicissitudes of past and present social and economic relations; therefore they way must be open for it to be dealt with that relates specifically to the current context. The tension between these kinds of solution recalls the small-group alternatives of structurelessness and formal structure mentioned earlier. Both Spontaneism and structurelessness can be interpreted to see the main threat of power to come from *outside* the group/organisation, in the sense that wider society is external. the proponents of overt structure wish to guard against illegitimate power exerted from *within*, as a precondition for attacking the evils of society.

This sets up a variant of the individual/community dichotomy, which seeks to detach the group from its environment, development and history. Those favouring formal structure may have achieved an important insight into the complexity of power — that it operates at all levels. But power has been interpreted too narrowly and in isolation from its deeper penetration into culture and personality. The proposed solution may be more apparent than real, since although power is situated in the right places, it is a simplistic and superficial version of power.

A Different Faith

Spontaneists approach the problem differently. The power relations of society are acknowledged to have filtered into all levels. But instead of seeking concrete remedies, they believe in the ability of workers spontaneously to generate powerful and sufficient organisations for revolution. Unfortunately this faith has similar disadvantages to a trust in structurelessness — the self-generated patterns are just as likely as formally-developed structures to be infected with deeper-level power-systems. Furthermore the instantaneous growth of such organisations could mean that none of these problems would stand a chance of being seen until it was too late, given the timescale of events. From the point of view of power, as in other areas, the tension between planning and spontaneity may not easily be resolved by seeking ideal solutions.

Thought and Practice

What we have presented so far is only a partial analysis. But we may be in a position to suggest ways of combining Permanent and Spontaneist viewpoints. If power is always two-way then *in practice* they might be complementary, rather than in opposition.

First we must ask *how* the ideologies, with their implicit theories of power, relate to practice.

Intervention and Class Relations

Both Spontaneists and Permanents are politically marginal in Britain, although not so much so elsewhere. Spontaneists make no attempt to keep a coherent and consistent active presence with particular groups of workers. They tend to praise and encourage, from the sidelines, demonstrations of what they seek, but only maintain a semblance of continuity in their journals and publications. Permanents, conversely, aim at a sustained and visible presence *in* struggles, either as propaganda groups, political factions or in syndicalist unions. To justify this they may make rather grandiose claims about their organisations, whereas Spontaneists may sometimes be complacent, humble and cynical, in not getting their hands dirty.

Infantile Disorders

The logical next step is to question the attitudes of both to each other. Again there are exceptions, but an arrogance and disinterest interspersed with sectarianism and backstabbing has driven many activists, militants and libertarians away from both camps. Often when rivalry is apparent it does not address political differences (except superficially), but revolves around personalities and the real and imagined evils of others, distorting what has been said and done to fit a prejudicial story. But simply to diagnose ultra-left infantile disorders would overlook the real differences between attitudes to power, and the way libertarians use and manipulate it to erect and sustain disagreements.

Certainty and Exclusion

Uncertainty over one's own political beliefs is inevitable when we are so marginal as to doubt that our beliefs situate us in the real world at all. There is a consequent pressure to generate a certainty and sense of purpose that have little function other than to provide us with a secure identity. Such certainty has as its corollary a need to identify others into whom to project our own uncertainty, stupidity, dishonesty, etc. (qualities which, if acknowledged, would sabotage the certainty). The prime candidates as receptacles for these projections are likely to be the nearest 'neighbours'. Power systems within groups operate between the most forthright and self-confident members and the rest, to keep that facade of certainty going. A sense of togetherness results, but only when there exist others for comparison.

Permanent Paranoia

These processes are rationalised in terms of ideology. Permanents cannot comprehend doubts as to the potential omnipotence of the mass revolutionary organisation. This reflects a denial of their own doubts, but sets the scene for further attitudes. The doubts of other libertarians are next seen as sinister, and various spectres such as the Labour Party, undercover Leninists and even 'platformists' are brought in to bolster the paranoia. The criticism Spontaneists have of lasting organisations has an ironic relevance. The methods Permanents use to keep their faith turn out to be just those kinds of conventional patterns that Spontaneists assert ruins the organisation. This happens at a covert level that Permanents need to deny exists at all.

Pedagogic Inaction

Spontaneists also bring a need for certainty to their interactions. But they can't visualise a single, real *object* (such as an organisation) in which to trust. Instead a more diffuse idealisation of the working class reveals itself, for example, in the way they synchronise their self-identities with their image of workers. Their political arguments and self-certainty form a circular edifice, with the lack of predictability of revolution tying in with their inability to work towards it. Periods of personal doubt or depression coincide with perceived prospects for the class, so problems of covert power and its translation into ideology seem to have been resolved by abdicating from activity.

But, as we have seen, power is a two-way process. Relinquishing responsibility is also an act of power, especially when it has to be sustained in groups feeling the need to face and affect their environments. The trick is often completed by assuming an educational stance, keeping the image of power neutrality at the expense of political vitality. Power is focussed within groups avoiding breaking out of the circle of Spontaneist logic — if any do find themselves propelled from the group.

5. Analysis and Synthesis

We should stress here that these interpretations are variations to be found among groups and individuals on the libertarian scene. They may be atypical, although we doubt this. It is worth noting such an analysis can be applied to anything from great historical events to small groups and individuals.

Straining the analysis further we wonder if the patterns of behaviour described make Permanents and Spontaneists. The distortions of power and interaction seem to fit one another, each enabling an illusory self-justification to be held. If this apparent relationship is not simply fortuitous, a synthesis may be possible.

Fragmenting Anarchy

We suspect that recent political history in a fragmenting culture has been unknowingly mirrored in libertarian circles, by exaggerated illusions of autonomy and rationality and in polarised ideological certainty. Practice has become sectarian and factional, even when protagonists 'know' and 'wish' otherwise.

The Identity Fix

We are arguing that as part of society, anarchist groups can constitute both communities and institutions. Individuals do not join them simply for political reasons — they also seek a shaping or fixing of identity. Since this is denied, they have already sacrificed a major part of their critical faculty.

Spontaneist groups tend to lack explicit, action-oriented organisation, and can be equivalent to communities — providing a social place for identity-fixing. Power and certainty circulate and harden within the group, constructing personal roles (theorist,

agitator, typist, follower, dogsbody, etc.) which lead to infantile stagnation.

The overt structures of Permanent groups lead them to shape identity in the manner of institutions. Fixing occurs by differentiating oneself and one's groups from others, leading to paranoia, sectarianism and an illusory relationship to political struggles.

Organisations for People and Politics

Some recent underdeveloped organisational tendencies may signal a way out.

In the early years of the current revival of feminism, one role of the affinity group was to give individuals the opportunity to relate their place in the group with the group's place in the world. This whole outlook was recuperated soon enough by middle class 'lifestyle' fetishism, and continues to dog sections of the libertarian movement. Used in isolation it can become a form of structureless tyranny, or can allow paroxysms of agonising over personal faults, anger and petulance surrounded by indulgent others. But this may *not* be inevitable with some forms of affinity groups (after all,

the Spanish FAI was composed of affinity groups). I the small-group ethic could be integrated with wide organisational structures, events and issues prominent in each might stand a chance of continually having to refer to the other level. This dual-systems organisation could mean that beliefs and feelings could be confronted at the appropriate level rather than become exaggerated and polarised to give a spurious certainty.

The beauty of this structural shift is that it gives critical and self-critical reflection space, without directly threatening or weakening any larger organisation. Without this space fear, insecurity and uncertainty are driven underground, into unconsciousness in individuals and into covert powerplay in groups. The error of Permanents has been to pretend that these problems only exist in structureless and spontaneous groups, and that of Spontaneists to perceive them only as undercurrents in lasting organisations. The reality is of course that they exist inevitably in both, and can only be tackled meaningfully both levels at once.

Tom Jennings and Mike Michael

Stand up for Culture

There is almost no field of human activity so carefully avoided by present-day anarchists, as cultural creativity in nearly all its forms, whether as consumers or as producers.

The free spaces in society, within which social and economic experiments might be tried, including anarchist ones, are gradually shrinking. Increasing direction by the state causes multifarious grievances, but at the same time puts nearly unsurmountable difficulties in the way of self-directed initiative. Hemmed in as we are by legal restrictions, we have little scope for communal or co-operative projects beyond the family and the neighbourhood. Little remains beyond the modest possibility of living by more-or-less anarchist principles in family-like groups — play-like establishments in no way suitable for demonstrating the relevance of anarchism for society at large. Such trifles seem more likely to strengthen the widespread prejudice against anarchists, as weird sectarians.

Since the economic and social fields of action are largely unavailable to us anarchists we must seek other fields, which keep material requirements to a minimum, and do not provide too many occasions for state interference. The first such field we find is a tradition used by all shades of activists when anarchism was in its prime, when they wished to obtain publicity for their social ideas; namely CULTURE. No other sphere of individual and collective expression offers such inexhaustible possibilities for giving shape to our ideas, and that not only in words and pictures, but also in joint public performance.

However, to accept culture as an effective part of our propaganda, we must liberate ourselves, in part, from our quite outmoded cultural values. In comparison with other revolutionary movements anarchists have always been open-minded towards new developments in art; but it would be an exaggeration to say we were inclined towards cultural experiment. Perhaps this is because of our common urge to be understood at once.

Furthermore it seems incumbent upon us to let our anarchist ideals inform our occasional cultural criticisms. In most contexts we try to elevate tolerance almost into an absolute principle, but in matters of

culture our tolerance is sometimes frighteningly absent. Of course the frivolous use of terms like 'anarchy' and 'anarchist', not only in political but also in cultural journalism, may drive one almost to despair. Although it must be conceded that some critics are extremely careful to use terms correctly, it has recently been shown in the bourgeois media that behind the apparent carelessness hides an actual intention to slander anarchism. But even if it takes an effort, we should not allow justified suspicion to drive us into persecution mania. Of course it is true that the anarchist movement has been slandered and misrepresented like no other; but it is also true that a whole crowd of brilliant minds, in various disciplines of art and science, far from concealing their sympathies for anarchism, explained anarchist principles more convincingly than did many anarchist theoreticians and activists. We seem to have enormous difficulty accepting people into our ranks, who do not run around wearing a libertarian halo. There never has been and never will be a 'perfect' anarchist, but legions of enlightened minds are known, whose sometimes obscure commentaries on anarchist principles should be given much more consideration in our discussions. It may be this narrow-mindedness which causes the reluctance of many of these personalities to identify with our movement.

But a more progressive understanding of culture, and a more tolerant attitude in cultural criticism, are not in themselves sufficient to make art a leading element in our propaganda. Only if we finally decide to make use of culture ourselves can we make our exposition of life in an anarchist society 'part of the world'. Even if state regulation of art were to become even more noticeable, art would still offer us the most opportunities to present ourselves. Besides, it is one of the few media which largely corresponds, both in form and in content, to the experimental spirit of anarchism. Where, except in art, can we indulge in social experiment with such small risk, or so convincingly put forward the many facets of anarchist principles in theory and practice? And in view of the constant growth of leisure in society, we can be certain of increasing attention.

Peter Peterson