

Zero

Malville and the European anti-nuclear campaign

French nuclear energy problems

Until quite recently there were hardly any nuclear power stations in France although one or two had been built in the early sixties. After the "oil crisis" the nationalised electricity company (EDF) panicked and proposed an enormous programme of building 50 to 80 conventional stations of about 1000 MW. Given the level of local opposition it now looks as if between 25 and 30 will be operational by 1985. But the key element in the drive to make France self sufficient in energy was the construction of several fast breeder reactors. A prototype, 'Phenix' has been constructed at Mariouville and is always breaking down. There is a reprocessing plant at La Hague which will eventually treat not only their own spent uranium, but fuel from Japan and eventually West Germany, Sweden and Switzerland. The real conflict however has started over the plans to construct the first operational fast breeder, called Super Phenix, to be sited at Malville. At Malville the EDF started building before the public enquiry procedure was completed. As their president, M. Marcel Boiteux, said, 'We believe very strongly that the best way to avoid the controversy which is developing on both a local and a national level is to get the project under way, past the

point of no return, and to publicise this decision.'

Opposition in Europe

Opposition began to build up at Malville. In July 1976 the site was occupied by 10,000 demonstrators who were bodily thrown out by the CRS (riot police) after a week. They had adopted a CND, non-violent style, and this won them considerable sympathy from the local population who until then had been apathetic. In September 1976 the local county council asked for the project to be suspended, followed by several others who would also be affected. Several Comite Malville were created, the largest being in Grenoble. But by now it was clear that the EDF were determined to go ahead whatever the objections and the nature of the opposition began to

change.

At the same time, nuclear power stations were being opposed all over Europe. At Whyll (Germany), the site had been occupied for 18 months and on March 18th this year the Freiburg court ruled that because of the potential risks and possibility of technical failure the reactor could not be built. At Brockdorf in November 1976, 10 000 then 30 000 demonstrators tried to occupy a site and the riot police only eventually dispersed the crowds with batons, tear gas, water cannon and chemical mace, resorting at one stage to attacking with low flying helicopters. In Switzerland, since the site at Kaiser-augst was occupied in 1973, the movement has grown and this summer attention has been concentrated on the station at Gosgen. In Spain, 200 000 people demonstrated at Bilbao against the construction of a station.

Preparations

Those who had come from the 'ecological' tradition wanted to organise a completely 'pacifist' demonstration, some later arrivals claimed they wanted to literally 'take the site by force'. The energy that should have been going into a whole range of possible activities, from legal procedures to sabotage, instead went mostly into an abstract debate about whether the 'assemblies' should be 'violent' or 'non-

violent'. The Coordination Malville finally called for 'peaceful marches converging on the site', suggesting somehow filtering between the police and sabotaging the site.

With public debate going on about how violent the demonstration was going to be, it was unsurprising that the local Prefect would make preparations. However the scale of their operation surprised even seasoned demonstrators: cordoning off an area 7km around the site, continuously controlling the inhabitants of the communes, about 5 000 CRS and internal security troops (gendarmes mobiles), including a squadron of paras and, so the story went, some foreign legion.

This undermined the arguments of both the pacifists and those who advocated military tactics. One can't sensibly sit-in more than 7km from your objective nor can you realistically attack heavily armed troops more or less spontaneously. At the same time the objective adopted by the Coordination became ambiguous, how could one march pacifically onto a site protected by 5 000 police? For nearly all of the people who started out on Friday 29th July these contradictory objectives were still unresolved. Only one thing was certain: the state was ready for a fight.

July 30th morning

'The public demonstration organised by the committees formed against the nuclear station at Creys-Malville... to the east of the RN 75 (about 75 km from the site itself)... is and remains forbidden' (Edict published by Jannin,

continued on page 3



French troops with grenade launchers

LETTERS

Letters marked * have been cut for reasons of space. Anyone not hearing from Zero within 3 weeks of writing should write again.

Dear Comrades

We are sorry that the collective didn't comment on Mike Malet's anti-woman letter in August's Zero.

If Mike had read the article on anarcho-feminism with any degree of 'rationality'—which he seems to prize so highly—he would have understood what it was getting at: not that all males as individuals are bastards, but that all males benefit from a system in which men as a group oppress women as a group. As an anarchist he would surely agree with the right of all oppressed groups in society to organise and struggle against their exploitation as they themselves see fit. Why not women? To be a white male in a racist patriarchal society has undoubted advantages. Could it be that Mike Malet feels these privileges threatened by independent women who are deciding things for themselves? In his reference to Mujeres Libres and the Communist Party Mike seems to be comparing the 'reasonable' women who still cooperate with men with those who prefer to organise on a separatist basis. Doesn't he realise that it is precisely because of attitudes like his that many women find it intolerable to work with male so-called revolutionaries.

If 'theoretical' anarchists were a bit more positive about truly anarchistic struggles—and the feminist movement is one of the most important as the Zero article pointed out—anarchism would provide a much stronger alternative to the authoritarian left in this country than it does at present. In solidarity,
North London Anarchist Workers Association (Provisional)

Dear Comrades*

I have received Zero 1 & 2 through enemy lines and I found them both timely and excellent! Keep firing away with more rape articles please, and more on women anarchists and all women. I got out of the hole after 14 months and 3 days of intense struggle that involved one of the longest prison strikes in penal history here in America, and cost the warden and his funky associate their jobs! Many changes have come here and we intend to get more. United with the progressive community and underground support from the George Jackson Brigade brought the pigs to their knees here. It brought control back to the community's hands where it belongs and established prisoners as a political force to be heard. We anarchists have ripe ground here in the prisons, it is a main front, right up next to the women's movement, the men's, black's, Indian's and gay's. It's the front where we meet the pigs eye to eye. People want to fight. Pick your speciality and go at it. Women comrades to stop rape must get our men comrades and themselves into the prison movement, we must all get into the prisons with programs and classes and personal relationships and deal with sexism and racism, to deal with rape. Our women and ourselves cannot depend on the courts and we must rally and defend ourselves from the system and its products. Women must rally together to deal with their own oppression, which is us brothers; and we must do the same to deal with ourselves which would help them more and free ourselves.

My love and rage
Remember who the enemy is...
Carl Harp
Walla Walla, Wisconsin

Dear Zero*

How, as anarchists, do you defend a stance such as 'We demand that... Holdsworth's original sentence be allowed to stand'? How, as anarchists do you defend generalisations like 'Rape is a means by which all men keep all women in a state of fear and powerlessness'? How as students of revolution do you arrive at such self-evident nonsense as 'Feminism practices what anarchism preaches', 'the revolutionary feminist perspective is essentially anarchist... feminism is anarchist is both its theory and its practice' and 'feminism transcends anarchism because feminism shows authority, hierarchy and leadership for what they really are, structures of male power'?

T T Hurt
Kings Heath, Birmingham

Dear Zero*

I was very sorry to read in the August Zero that 'all men are potential rapists' and that you reprinted without comment 'rape is a means by which all men keep all women in a state of fear and powerlessness'. I don't use rape to keep anybody in fear or powerlessness. Presumably amongst the other male readers there are other men, straight and gay, who will not rape and see such an act as the worst kind of oppression. If that is true, why does a libertarian paper so crudely write off half the population? To accuse all men because of the acts of some is bloody silly—are we all capitalists too? Lastly I was sorry also to read 'We demand that Holdsworth's original sentence of three years be allowed to stand'. Just as hanging didn't stop murder, no prison sentence has stopped rape. To be honest, I can't immediately think up a better solution but it is up to us to work one out.

Ross Bradshaw
Ellon, Aberdeenshire

Dear Comrades*

Sending men to prison for rape (Zero 2) seems to me a stupid thing to recommend. In prison a rapist is likely to become a more serious threat to women on release, his problems exacerbated by confinement. Are anarchists so devoid of imagination as to be left with urging judges to be harsher with those who come before them? Could I suggest ways in which disapproval could be made clear to a rapist and to society as a whole: 1. By sending him 'to Coventry' 2. By removing 10% of his income for five years to be paid to women's groups fighting the crime of rape. 3. If the rapist's victim wished perhaps she would like to express her feelings to the man for as long a period of time as she felt the need. 3. By encouraging the rapist to consider more fruitful forms of sexual behaviour. Just how rapists could be dealt with by a libertarian collective could be assessed over a period of time to find the most effective means of achieving results.

Fraternally,
Jerry Westall
London E6

Zero replies

Just as the legal system functions to serve class interests, so it functions to serve patriarchy. Rape is the physical interface of men's oppression of women, rapists are the militia of patriarchy. The more free a woman's behaviour (hitching, going unaccompanied, being out late) and the more independent she is of the sexual institutions of present day society, the more she runs the 'risk of rape'. This violence, and indeed all violence against women, is sanctioned and condoned by the whole legal system right down to male class complicity between judges and rape defendants.

Dear Comrades—
Zero is a huge success. Editorially and graphically. There is something very disturbing to me about some of the "anarchists" I've met (men mostly) who are ambiguous or even hostile to gay perspectives. A proper of which, I'm enclosing a song I recently wrote that any melody can be put to. If you know anyone who sings, or if you can get it on the radio, by all means go ahead.

The Ballad Of Anita Bryant

Oh, brother-loving brothers, come listen to my song,
Oh, sister-loving sisters, why don't you come along,
There's hatred in the country, there's fear across the land,
'Cause you and I we choose to go a-walking hand in hand.

Now down in old Dade County, the liberals passed a law,
Our civil rights were guaranteed, at least that's what we thought.
But freedom only lasted a hundred and forty days,
Anita Bryant came along and launched a war on gays.

Now Bryant reads the Bible, and the Good Book says it's bad
For you and me to go to bed, it makes God God-damned mad.
But David was a hero and Jonathan his mate,
Are not the Fundamentalists a little out of date?

They say we kidnap children and recruit them to our side,
We're sick, abnormal perverts, godless communists besides,
But look at us and you will see a mirror of yourselves,
So put those ancient myths and lies back up there on the shelves.

Oh, people of this country who value liberty,
Will you sit back and watch the voters vote for tyranny?
Or will you join our struggle, and marching hand in hand,
Together with all people fight for justice in our land?

Oh, sister-loving brothers, you've listened to my song,
Oh, brother-loving sisters, you too must come along,
There's hatred in the country, there's fear across the land,
'Cause you and I we choose to go a-walking hand in hand.

Best regards—
Eric Gordon
Connecticut, USA

Rape is seen as a crime against male property rights (i.e. as a crime against men.) Rape trials are conducted so as to protect the defendant and humiliate the woman, in fact women are symbolically re-raped. Women that take their rape to court are fighting a fight to force rape to be recognised as a crime against women. In the case in point, Carol Maggs was violently assaulted, her breasts and thighs bitten, her ankles and neck heavily bruised and her vagina mutilated by Holdsworth twisting his ringed fist round inside her. To repeat the judge's comment at the time: 'It is probable that this girl would not have been as severely injured if in fact she had submitted to rape by the mere threat of force rather than force being applied in the manner that it was'. Carol Maggs was in hospital longer than Holdsworth was remanded, and since being discharged from the army has had dozens of jobs offered to him by male 'well-wishers'. What woman will feel the courage and confidence to report her rape when even the violent and widely publicised assault of Carol Maggs leads to acquittal and release.

Rape is not an act of men who are 'sick' or 'have problems' but the extension of this society's normative patriarchal ideology and sexual practice into physical expression. Therefore you don't have to rape someone to benefit

from male power anymore than you have to be raped to be kept in a state of powerlessness. The struggle is against rape in the sense of dealing with rape rather than dealing with rapists, and it would be only slightly less absurd to suppose that as anarchists Zero believed that rape can be confronted through the courts as it would be to suppose that women do. Never the less, anarchist theory has always been inconclusive when it comes to solutions to violent crime and the letters above show it to be even more inadequate in coming to terms with violence against women. The fact that there was no anarchist outcry when, for example Poulson or Stonehouse were sent down gives the lie to the argument, and suggests that the real motive behind the hysteria of the response is the same protection of male interests that judges share with rape defendants.

Hanging didn't stop murder, prison won't stop rape. Right. And Yes, it is up to all of us to work something out. But until that happens rape must be fought in every available way. This includes, in fact necessitates, rape being brought out into the open and seen for what it is, violence against women. Even in the courts.
Sharon, Richard.

ZERO NEWS

the local prefect).

The overnight coach from Paris was packed; few people slept yet there was little discussion taking place. The coach arrived at about six in the morning at Monteliu, one of the four villages (the others were Courtenay, Morestel and Polyrioux) just outside the forbidden area where the demonstrators were to assemble.

There were many rumours, for example about the police blocking off roads even outside the forbidden area; about the presence of the army and even the foreign legion in the area; and about the intentions of various groups of demonstrators to infiltrate the site at night or apart from the main marches. But the atmosphere was also set by some well substantiated statements by the authorities: 'I have been ordered to protect the site at any price' (Jannin); 'There are 3 000 to 4 000 Germans with aggressive intentions. Morestel is occupied for the second time in its history. But we will kick them out... as we did before' (The mayor of Morestel, the village where the foreign demonstrators—as well as a larger number of French—were assembling).

July 30th afternoon

We divided the afternoon, when forums were held at each of the assembly points, between Courtenay and Morestel. At Courtenay the debate was about violence and non-violence, as it had been in the Malville Committees for weeks previously. The aim of the Coordination was the 'maximum amount of harm to the installations' without 'a drop of blood being shed'. Even then it seemed unlikely that it would be the demonstrators who would decide whether the march was peaceful, and a few realists raised the problem of how the marchers were to go peacefully through the large numbers of CRS who would be waiting for them. The answer was that they would somehow get around them, splitting up into groups of 10 to 20 people. But there was little attempt to organise into such groups; no account was taken of the complete lack of knowledge of marchers and police, and the sheer cunning of the former, a handful actually arrived at the site, it wasn't clear how they would cut through the several electric fences and overwhelm the security forces guarding the site itself, or what damage they would inflict on the two or three cranes that they would find there.

But most seriously of all, little account was taken of what was happening at the other assembly points, and this lack of communication was to prove disastrous both in the preparation of the march on Saturday and in the development of the march on Sunday away from the elections, which may bring us into the government, and thus responsible for security, we are not going to attack the police.'

At Morestel a completely different scene awaited us. We were confronted by the might of the organised French Left, who appeared to be dominating the proceedings. Various people were making blistering speeches, demanding votes on particular issues, and receiving rapturous applause from their supporters. But one decision which turned out to be important was taken (or imposed); to engage in a unified march on the Malville site rather than the four marches from different sites.

In the course of this meeting events took place which were later to be blown up by the press and used by the authorities as an excuse for their xenophobic provocations and harassment of foreigners. In the heat of the debate a couple of people (who may have been German) either broke into the town hall of Morestel, from the steps of which the speeches were being made, or were pushed into it by the pressure of the crowd. The Parisien Libere was to improve on the events as follows: 'An individual claiming to belong to

the Baader Meinhof gang, among a group of German demonstrators, made threats and broke tables and chairs inside the 'Communal House'. A police officer was later seriously injured in the neck by a club'.

Throughout Saturday a steady stream of people arrived at the four assembly points. The atmosphere was that of a very large and spread out political fete. The organisation of the march was based on libertarian principles: the regional Malville committees were autonomous and open to everyone. But the call for a 'non-violent march on the site', with all the contradictions that this entailed, carried considerable responsibility. And self-management by individuals of their part in the march depended not only on a non-authoritarian organisation of the march but on more positive initiatives on the part of the Coordination, such as ensuring efficient communication among the four villages, and along the march the next day.

By late Saturday night the atmosphere was changing. In spite of music and dancing at the camp sites, which were only just surviving continuous pouring rain, people seemed to be quite tense about the situation. Very largely the tension was created by the authorities. At about three in the morning the people from Morestel moved to Courtenay; a unified march had been 'decided' on.

July 31st: the march itself

We started at about 6am from Courtenay. The numbers had swelled enormously and were to continue doing so throughout the day, including an enormous influx of young people from the surrounding region. The average age of the marchers was low (early twenties); we were probably just about in the first third of the march. Most of it took place along narrow country roads, and at one stage it was relatively easy to calculate roughly the numbers from the length of the march. We made it about 50 000, the figure given by the Coordination. Estimates in the bourgeois press were to vary from 20 000 (the day after) to 80 000 (2 or 3 weeks later, when an official 'nuclear debate' was in full swing).

The marches from each camp site converged at a village at the beginning of the forbidden zone. The timing was not perfect and the marchers from Monteliu were at the back of the unified march. It seems that while a march within 7 km of the site had been declared illegal, the authorities had intended to withdraw to 3 km from the site. This would enable them to claim they had made concessions in the interests of non-violence. But it gave the marchers an immense feeling of triumph when they crossed into the forbidden zone. It was easy for rumours to circulate; there was little organised communication along the march, and ironically, most of the information we got about what was going on more than 100 yards away from us was obtained from the radio, which gave extensive reports of the march throughout the day. Another, less precise but more powerful, way in which communication took place was via the ambulances (organised by the Coordination) that made their way up and down the march, squeezing through marchers closely packed in narrow country lanes. As the march proceeded, the ambulances were more frequent and drove much faster. Around the time that we crossed into the forbidden area we began to hear the sound of grenades. It rained heavily throughout the march and this reduced the effectiveness of tear gas; nevertheless an enormous number of grenades were fired and the fighting took place in a cloud of gas. Further on we heard that in addition percussion grenades were being used; it was these that were responsible for the death and the loss of limbs. Meanwhile, helicopters were almost constantly flying up and



Near to Malville a demonstrator is removed from farm buildings by police using batons

down the march; this was quite threatening, not least because at Brockdorf tear gas grenades had been dropped from helicopters, causing numerous injuries.

After several hours through the rain and mud we arrived at the top of the hill overlooking Faverge, where nearly all the violent confrontation took place. We only had time to walk through a certain amount of tear gas and have the unpleasant experience of a percussion grenade exploding overhead before the retreat began. The grenades started coming closer and the march reassembled a couple of fields away. When we got back to the limit of the forbidden area, where a meeting was to be held, we heard that one marcher Vital Machalon had been killed. Vital Machalon was typically non-violent and

Morestel (according to the local priest) and came up with 19 hostages to law and order. Over half were Germans and a quarter Swiss, with only five or six French held for 24 hours and beaten up; seven were then released, leaving twelve to be arraigned the next Saturday.

Meanwhile, the press reacted; apart from the alternative and extreme left press, *Le Matin* and *Le Monde* came out clearly against the police tactics and even the right wing press realised that Jannin had perhaps gone too far. The recriminations continued, especially when the autopsy showed that Michalon had died from the effects of an explosive grenade. Jannin continued unabated, 'I regret nothing that happened'. In this he was supported by the Minister of the Interior, who



Polyrioux marchers converge towards Malville

uninvolved with any organisation. The authorities were to make repeated attempts to blame his death first on ill health then on the demonstrators' own (unspecified) projectiles. But the autopsy showed clearly that he had been killed by a percussion grenade exploding close to his chest. According to the Prefect, 'everything happened as planned'.

The aftermath

That evening two of the companies of riot police who had been doing 'the work' at Faverge went mad. Apart from smashing up cars with German registration numbers, and dragging people out of their homes, they ransacked

happily 'assumed complete responsibility for what happened...'

Later that week the twelve were charged in an atmosphere of complete hysteria; eight were convicted and given prison sentences. The main phenomenon was the recriminations which started to multiply within the ranks of the demonstrators. The same positions vaunting either violence or non-violence in the abstract began to appear again.

Obviously the whole movement can easily be recuperated by either the electoral debate on the run up to the 1978 election or by 'organised' extreme left groups. There are still some hopeful signs however: a fortnight after Malville there was another big demonstration at Larzac, against the extension of the military camp where (among other tasks) British troops train troops from other NATO countries in the latest methods of counter-insurgency learnt on the streets of Belfast. A similar number came undiscouraged by Malville. The organisers at Larzac joined with those at Malville in calling for the building of an extra-parliamentary opposition outside the democratic centralist organisations.

Several actions are planned for the autumn, culminating in a national day of action on the 2nd December. More immediately there is a European wide mobilisation for an international anti-nuclear demonstration at Kalkar (near Aachen in Germany) where a prototype fast breeder reactor of 290 MW is under construction and due to start in 1979. Be there (see Agitprop) □ John Lintott and Roy Carr-Hill.



Mobile Leaflet Printshop

Prince Phillip held at gunpoint

To coincide with her recent visit to Northern Ireland, the libertarian Black August Street Theatre presented a mock Trial of Queen Lizzie in those areas most incensed by the timing of her visit: the anniversary of internment. Beginning on Saturday 6th August in Derry's Guildhall Square, the street theatre performed throughout Belfast during the next weeks: New Lodge, Ardoyne, Lenadoon, Twinbrook, Andersonstown, the Divis, Broadway, Ballymurphy and the Turf-lodge. 'The general atmosphere was very tense', explains a member of Black August, 'with troops not only flooding them but effectively sealing them off. Many people were unable to 'sign on' in town, and next day no questions were asked at the dole offices. The burning of vehicles and rioting after a march or rally were common. The frequent searches and detours to get out of sealed-off areas made it difficult to travel. At one point a Military Police jeep screamed to a halt beside us while on our way to a performance. MPs surrounded our van and a cocked pistol was held to our driver's (the Duke of Edinburgh) head with the order 'get out with your hands on your head'. A bit heavy handed we thought. Then they realised that we were not about to 'rob a bank' and that it was clown-like red and white makeup we had on, and not nylons over our heads. We were taken to Short Strand Military Police Barracks and then to Mountpottinger Police Station, being held for a total of five hours without being charged.'

'Only one of our 8 had street theatre

experience, so the play was somewhat stylised in both structure (the idea of a trial) and speech (too many slogans). Its strongest points were the mimes, the evidence of the witnesses (unemployed, homeless, factory worker and prisoner) who related how they were spending their own silver jubilees, the songs at the beginning and end of the play which helped warm up the atmosphere, and the jokes cracked between the 'royal couple' and the audience. Several times we had to stop and wait until the kids had returned from 'pelting a passing pig'

who had come within stonethrowing distance of the play.'

'One of the main longterm problems was the identification of the street theatre with the Provos. This was mainly because of their strength in the areas where we performed, and the easy confusion of our anti-monarchy propaganda with their 'anti 'lizabret' statements.' Black August are now working on a new play around the government's intentions to clear away housing for motorways. □ John Roberts



Sabotage and the Special Branch at British Steel

On January 21 this year, the 100-strong workforce at a British Steel Corporation factory Reinforcement Steel Services in East Greenwich received notice of the management's intention to close the plant due to an overestimation in the level of demand for steel in the area, and a general recession in the steel industry. Built only two years ago to provide reinforced steel for the Maplin airport and Channel tunnel developments, the factory had maintained a high level of

production supplying other projects in the area, the National Westminster tower and the Docklands redevelopment for example, despite the original plans for the airport and tunnel being shelved.

The main union concerned, the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) began negotiations with the Corporation to keep the factory open but quickly abandoned the workforce's demands and successfully persuaded a minority to accept severance payments.

Some weeks later, the workers voted to stop work and support the NUPE organised day of action against the cuts on May 11, and despite threats of disciplinary proceedings from the management a stoppage took place. As a result of supporting something directly relevant to their own situation six were sacked and seven others suspended. On May 12th a full works meeting decided on immediate occupation not only in protest against the management's action, but also in response to weeks of fruitless negotiation by the union. Once in occupation the workers discovered management documents which gave an astonishing picture of the collaboration that nationalised industries have evolved with the Special Branch and other agencies to enable them to forestall 'labour problems'. The documents included a detailed report on 'sabotage' at the factory during July-September 1975. The management held two men, Ray Duffin and Paul Lutener responsible to the extent of checking with the Economic League for information on them. (The Economic League is a right-wing anti-nationalisation organisation exchanging information on left-wing/trade union militants for money and information in return.) They also recorded that the Special Branch had a file on Lutener for his political activities, namely 'distributing National Socialist (that's right!) literature (Lutener is an SWP member) disturbing the peace during demonstrations and taking part in illegal demonstrations.' Duffin was suspect owing to a crime he committed in 1954, for which he had been bound over for two years. An unsigned letter from someone in the BSC hierarchy in Sheffield to Roebuck the works manager states:

'We have taken expert advice on your problem at Greenwich and as expected there is little direct action we can take which could not be interpreted against

us under Unfair Dismissals. maximum amount against a claim could be £5,200 which I consider too high a price to pay. We are advised to keep meticulous records of anything that happens concerning some individuals so as to build up a dossier... at the time things happen. Also as outlined to you we must be exact task masters and tighten up on discipline... so that even if a slip is not made, we might overcome the problem.' Another document proved to be the management's day by day account of the two week stoppage, over safety and operating procedures that took place just before the closure announcement including the activities and details of overheard conversations of named individual workers who were attempting to block the move to fulfil orders placed at Greenwich with supplies from Sheffield. A third document contained plans for moving the production of steel at Greenwich to a new site at Enfield, dated January 23rd, only two days after the closure announcement, which showed the union/management negotiations about 'keeping the factory open' to be a complete farce.

Armed with this information the Occupation Committee sent delegations to steelworks all over the country trying to get their support. At the ISTC National Conference in June (only the second or third since they started in the 20's) their request of a meeting with Bill Sirs the ISTC General Secretary was refused. So was their request to meet Charles Villiers the BSC chairman. Resolutions passed at the NUPE and NALGO national conferences resulted in donations of £1300 and £6830 respectively, despite warnings from ISTC that they were supporting an unofficial action. But overall the occupation received very little support and even less publicity.

Eventually, after fourteen weeks, continued lack of support and solidarity forced the workforce to discontinue the occupation on August 19. A week earlier a Greenwich worker had told Zero 'We still feel that our decision to occupy was the only thing we could do that would be effective, but having had virtually no publicity, support or solidarity, we aren't feeling too enthusiastic or optimistic about carrying on with it. Everyone feels uncertain about ending up inside... who would know why we were there anyway? We feel that the union's behaviour has been one of the worst things affecting this dispute' □ Sue Blake

Music for socialism

Words and Music is a week-long series of concert-debates being held at the Almost Free Theatre in London at the end of October. The seven events are presented by Music for Socialism, an organisation which since its inception early this year has presented a 2-day festival of Socialist Music and a series of Sunday night film-and-music events at the Other Cinema.

The aim of Words and Music is to try to advance the level of musical/political debate beyond a concern with the political content of lyrics—in other words to examine music as music rather than as an instrument for delivering a 'message'.

The programme for the seven days, starting on Sunday October 23rd, is as follows:

Theatre and Music—How can socialists develop a political music within a theatrical form where the audience is accustomed to treating it as mere entertainment—especially when performed within the confines of a stage? How might the effect of even 'socialist' lyrics be blunted by the framework of the theatrical clichés



Greenwich workers playing the management's game in the management's offices.

within which they are often located?' (Performers—Monstrous Regiment, Estelle Schmidt).

On Monday 24th—Improvisation and Structure—How can new forms of improvisation expand the breadth of what we might consider as 'music' and musical structure? Break down the distinction between 'culture' and the rest of life? provide a living statement against the confines of bourgeois High Art? (Steve Beresford, hearstic music, David Toop & Paul Burwell, feminist improvising group—Georgie Burn, Lindsay Cooper, Dagmar Krause, Maggie Nichols).

On Tuesday 25th—Composition—What are the political problems for musical work which tends to be judged as a 'finished product' for its classical/eternal credentials? (Michael Nyman, Brian Eno).

On Wednesday 26th—Agitational Music—What are the problems of doing agitational music in a 'gig' situation, where songs of class-struggle may find an audience appeal for largely anti-quietist or vicarious reasons? (Jack Warshaw, Sandra Kerr & Ron Elliot, CounterAct, Hackney & Islington Music Workshop).

On Thursday 27th—Voice Styles—What are the possibilities of the tradition of voice styles for countering the way that bourgeois culture (especially formal music training) constrains the human voice—and therefore human thought and action—to a set of rules to be executed on command? (Bob Davenport, Maggie Nichols, John Pole, Brian Pearson).

On Friday 28th—Words in Context—How can setting words to music heighten words rather than disguise them? How can songs complement each other so that, in context, the whole is larger than the sum of the parts? (Leon Rosselson, Roy Bailey).

On Saturday 29th—Virtuosity—How can technical feats in music be developed politically? When does virtuosity become merely a sterile technicism and/or 'cultural excellence' as judged by the standards of bourgeois art? (Evan Parker, Paul Rutherford).

'Words & Music' at the Almost Free Theatre, 9-19 Rupert St., London W1, Oct 23-29 at 7.30pm. Admission 50p (all-week ticket £2).

For further information, or to offer help in organising these events, phone Les 01-607-8117

Police shield racist right

Politics has been getting decidedly hotter recently, with increased violence on demonstrations and attacks on several bookshops. Centreprise, a bookshop/community centre in Hackney, East London, has had its windows smashed several times and in June the words 'Niggers Out' were painted across its front. The centre houses a youth club used by the local black kids. In August, hundreds of pounds worth of books were burned when petrol was poured through the letterbox and set alight, just a few days after the violence during the march through Lewisham staged by the National Front, who are very active in the Hackney/Hoxton area. Other shops attacked over the past few months include Bugle L'Overture in Ealing, which was daubed with racist stickers and slogans, and received threatening phone calls 'get out, black bastards', Atlas Books also in Ealing.

New Beacon in Finsbury Park and Unity Books in Harlesden, which was completely burned-out by a fire-bomb in August.

The police's political neutrality is exposed for the sham that it really is by their failure to do anything about these attacks, with some officers going so far as to say (off the record) that such shops are 'asking for it'. Police action on the Grunwick pickets, their protection of the National Front at Lewisham and Ladywood and their confrontations with black people (not only at the Notting Hill Carnival) has shown the police in a more provocatively political role, and at least some senior officers are worried that this may not be acceptable to the general public. The police have always been a political tool of the state (see Tony Bunyan's 'Political Police in Britain') and we know that their clothes about 'law and

order' mean the law of capitalism and the order of the state, but they are still carefully nurturing the softer image of the helpful, friendly 'British Bobby' in order to secure the co-operation of the public, without which they can't operate. They are now afraid that the credibility of this image, and their much-vaunted 'traditional special relationship' with the public, will become increasingly strained, to the point of collapse.

Since David 'Hammer' McNece replaced Sir Robert Mark as Commissioner in London, things have been heavier and the riot shields introduced near the end of the Lewisham demo will now be regular features on the streets (our first import from Ulster). Anyone who's been to Grunwick's knows that the police are using violence more readily and with greater viciousness than before, it's happening at every major demonstration as a matter of course, not just in isolated incidents, as the fascist elements begin to get the upper-hand within the police hierarchy. Many people, including some anarchists, believe that most uniformed constables are just ordinary people who regard policing as 'just a job' and are being taken-in and used by the state. This may well be true in some cases, but it's important to realise that most of them see their work as 'protecting the community' and they're trained to view everyone on the left as either a great threat to their way of life or as some kind of lunatic trouble-maker. We can't afford to put ourselves at risk by kidding ourselves that we can get through to them by arguing because ultimately, the police will obey orders from their superiors; if they're ordered to charge a demonstration with truncheons drawn, they're never going to think 'but these are just ordinary people, just like us', they're going to beat the shit out of you, push and kick you to the ground, drive vans at you and charge into you with horses—all of which they've done in London recently. So, we've got to think about our tactics in view of the changing situation, it's going to be necessary to plan demonstrations, to meet beforehand to discuss what's going to happen and what to do in the event of arrests. We should go in groups and try to stick together to make it more difficult for police 'snatch squads'. (In any case, it's about time an

anarchist presence was recognisable on demonstrations.) We've got to expect violence from the police now, and recognise that we can't go along to demonstrations thinking that we won't get nicked as long as we keep out of the fighting because it's fairly obvious that they'll get you if they want, and they're not bothered about evidence. The police leadership is now steering the force towards an overtly political, paramilitary role in order to combat political dissent, and the signs are that attitudes throughout the force are changing, especially with regard to paramilitary equipment. Riot shields are probably the first step towards introducing full riot gear as used in Ulster and Europe—Water Cannons, rubber bullets and gas—and guns have always been readily available. McNece is determined to live up to his Glasgow reputation as a hard man, and will use any tactics he thinks necessary to defeat the left, and he's not worried if he offends public opinion in doing so.

The case for P.I.E.

P.I.E. (Paedophile Information Exchange) was founded in October 1974. It has a membership of around 200, and functions to lessen the isolation felt by paedophiles in our society, to provide a forum for public debate on paedophilia and to seek to alleviate through public education and law reform the very real suffering of many adults and children.

Since P.I.E. was set up in 1974 the organisation has been consistently misrepresented in the press (esp. the Daily Mirror, News of the World and Sunday People) and those of its members who have come out publicly have been harassed and subjected to threats. P.I.E. held its first public meeting at Conway Hall on Sept 19, (after an earlier meeting at the Shelton Hotel was banned). This was picketed by the National Front and men going into or leaving the building were pelted with rotten fruit, attacked and beaten up. The headlines next day read "Mothers Seek Revenge Against Sex Perverts", what in fact was happening was that the Front were trying to gain some cheap publicity and easy political capital, as much to justify their anti-gay policies as anything else. The Press described P.I.E. as a group of men (women are P.I.E. members also) who want to make sex legal with four year olds, their insistence on speaking only in extremely emotion and uninformed terms has made any clear discussion about P.I.E. and its aims very difficult.

I would like to use this space to try to explain P.I.E.'s programme, which I don't see as unreasonable, so that at least future debate might be based on informed knowledge rather than hysterical prejudice. Most of this information comes from the pamphlet "Evidence on the law relating to, and penalties for, certain sexual offences involving children", this was presented to the Home Office Criminal Law Revision Committee in November 1975.

The main proposal is to abolish the age of consent, at present 16 for heterosexuals and 21 for homosexuals and that criminal law should be concerned only with those sexual activities which: a) are not consented to, b) result in mental or physical harm, c) give rise to reasonable complaints from a member of the public, d) involve the use of intimidation, e) continue after prohibition by the administrators of the children's acts.

The basis of their proposal is that children are willing and able to consent to sexual acts between themselves and with adults. There is however no definition of what constitutes a sexual act, a recurring problem in sexual politics. They do not consider that a



Lewisham: Riot shields appear for the first time on English streets.

Photo: Andrew Ward (Reprint)

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child under four years is able to communicate consent therefore would not wish to make sexual acts with a child under that age legal.

I hope that this brief and somewhat incomplete summary will help clarify P.I.E.'s purpose, as an Anarchist I do not have any great enthusiasm for their "Law Reformist" policy, but, at the

same time this has been a useful approach in the short term for other sexual minorities, as for example the 1967 Sexual Offences Act which made homosexual relations between men legal. **Tom Woodhouse.**

For further information contact P.I.E. c/o Release, 1 Elgin Ave., London W9.

Maternity care a woman's right to choose

Plastow Maternity Hospital, one of only two maternity hospitals in the London borough of Newham in the East End, is now occupied by its staff following the decision of the Area Health Authority to close it down at the end of the year. The occupation began in July and the hospital is working at full capacity, providing normal facilities and the staff say that it is actually providing a better service than before the occupation. The staff are in full control and management are not allowed into the building, apart from one administrator. Newham's hospitals are, and always have been, in a very poor state, and as the Action Committee points out, cuts will leave an even more inadequate service. Newham is one of the most deprived and depressed areas in Britain, with the worst record in virtually all social services, and one of the highest infant mortality rates in Europe. The closure of Plastow Hospital can only mean that this will get worse, and in the Action Committee's words: "The people taking these decisions are usually not affected by them, and they certainly aren't

concerned with the people of Newham." Dorothy Potter, speaking for the Committee, said that Newham's two Maternity Hospitals were themselves inadequate and that further facilities were needed rather than cuts. Staff are worried that closure will mean that women in Newham will not be able to get adequate ante-natal care and that life will be endangered. The only other maternity hospital in Newham is Forest Gate, which is right on the edge of the borough, and Newham's poor transport services make this almost inaccessible for many women, (there is no bus service on Sundays and only one infrequent route passes the hospital during the rest of the week.) Many women are reluctant to go to Forest Gate at the moment because of the difficulty in getting to it from the other side of Newham, and the staff at Plastow point out that the proposed closure will take away from women the right to choose their hospital. In response the Area Health Authority points to the falling birthrate as evidence that Plastow hospital is no longer needed. In fact both Newham's

hospitals are fully booked. The proposed new Newham hospital is not scheduled to open for another 15 years and even then no assurance has been given that it will contain a maternity unit. Savage cuts in the health service over the past few years have meant that the few and outmoded hospitals left in Newham are hard-pressed to cope with the needs of a population of over 200,000. The Action Committee believes that if they don't fight this closure the AHA will close down other hospitals in the borough. The three unions involved—NALGO, NUPE, COHSE—have so far given full support to the occupation, and support and donations have come from most of the major unions, as well as local tenants associations, playgroups, doctors, ambulance workers, trades councils and the Community Health Council. A march has been organised through Newham for October 1. With support, the fight to keep the hospital open can be won—donations should be sent to: Plastow Maternity Hospital Action Committee, Howards Rd., Plastow, London E13. **Geoff Ingarfield**

kept in total isolation for more than three months. Letters and newspapers are censored, and no relatives have been allowed to visit them. The defence lawyers are having difficulties placed in their way. They are under obligation to 'observe secrecy', can make no official statements, and have not been told the exact charges against their clients.

The whole prosecution case is based on the capture of Norbert Kroescher, and the action German police allege he planned. The story put out by the mass media is that several people were planning to kidnap a Swedish ex-minister Anna-Greta Leijon, who was responsible for the extradition and subsequent death of Red Army Faction (R.A.F.) member Siegfried Hauser. Hauser was involved in the occupation of the German Embassy in Stockholm by members of the R.A.F. in April 74. He was very seriously wounded in the following shoot-out, and doctors said he should not be moved. Leijon however ordered his immediate extradition with the result that Hauser died during the train journey back to Germany.

The accusations against the others arrested or deported is not that they have committed any crime, but that they have sympathised or been in contact with Norbert Kroescher who is now in prison in Germany, will all that implies. Swedish comrades are turning to all anarchists and libertarians abroad to build an international campaign to break the silence surrounding this model trial—a trial where half the accused have already been condemned and deported. Send letters now to Swedish Embassy, 23 North Row, London W.1.

Also awaiting trial in Sweden is libertarian comrade Ted Bergstrom, accused of placing a bomb outside the Spain Tour travel agency in Stockholm in autumn 1975, in protest against the execution of 5 comrades in Spain. He admits to being involved in the action, and has put out a political statement. Held in total isolation, he would appreciate letters from comrades (in English) while waiting for his trial. Write to: Ted Bergstrom, 1023, Box 121 06, 10223 Stockholm, Sweden. **Pete Webb**

Bulgarian prisoners

On the 10th and 11th of September, pickets were held outside the Bulgarian Tourist Offices and the Bulgarian Embassy in London. They had been organised by the London group of 'Social Revolution', and between 25-30 anarchists/libertarians attended. One comrade was arrested for 'obstruction'. The pickets were called to coincide with Freedom Day in Bulgaria, which commemorates the overthrow of the Nazi regime there in 1944. Yet ever since the Stalinist dictatorship was set up, libertarian and other dissenters have filled the prisons, and have been continually persecuted. In particular the pickets were held to appeal for the release of the libertarian prisoners Alexander Nakov, Atanas Kucev, Lubomir Djermanov, Gaucho Damianov and Atanas Artukev. Send letters to: Bulgarian Embassy, 12 Queens Gate Lane, London S.W.7.

Over the last few years the military display at the Manchester Show has been picketed with anti-recruitment leaflets exposing the role of the British Army in N. Ireland. Each year the picket is disrupted by the police and arrests made. This year's picket took place on the 23rd and 24th of July. On the first day Keith Hackett was arrested and the picketers prevented from carrying on leafletting under the threat of further arrests under the incitement laws. The day following over 20 people picketed and were left unharrassed by the police. Over 1,000 leaflets were handed out and a picket of the Magistrates Court has been arranged. For further information ring 061-861-0080. **Pete Webb**

Swedish repression

On April 1 this year, an enormous police operation began in Sweden with 100 police raids on known activists throughout the country. As a result 30 people were arrested, of whom 10 were eventually released. Of the remaining 20, mostly foreigners, 7 were subsequently deported.

Norbert Kroescher and A. Adornet, two German comrades, were sent back to Germany two days after arrest without being allowed to contact a lawyer. The remaining 5 people, Mexican, Chilean, British and Greek, were deported two weeks later. Seven Swedish comrades are still in prison, and have been



Women outside occupied Plastow hospital

ZERO3

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3rd Fridays in October and November. Friday Oct 21 dance to Ova (ex Lupin Sisters)+ Dire Tribe 7pm-11, Bar+Food. Friday Nov 18 (unfinalised at time of going to press) 7pm-11, Bar+Food. Both at Seven Dials Club, Shelton Street, Covent Garden. Covent Garden tube. Be there. (80p. Clamant's 80p.)

Feminism and the Italian Left

liberation?

I don't think it a shame to recognise that anarchist revolutionary organisation of the class struggle have always been male dominated. I don't blame anybody for that, but I think it's high time we got rid of old-fashioned patterns even within our own tradition. In the last analysis the problem which haunts women's consciousness within the anarchist movement proceeds from the same contradiction which marks the attitude of the movement toward society and political intervention in it. After having discussed on several occasions with many comrades (women and men) on different levels about the 'inexplicable' deafness of the world toward anarchist theories in general (whilst marxism is still advancing, sigh!), I realised that it isn't all a question of contents, but that the effective solution lies in method. It's a problem of culture and communication in the broadest sense.

Unfortunately a lot of comrades are still convinced that propaganda is composed of newspapers, leaflets, posters and some sporadic public speeches, or great demonstrations in the streets. We can use these devices all right, but in a new form. First of all we must bear clearly in mind the quality of the message we want to communicate, and this must be varied according to the class or category or type or generation of people we are addressing. Most comrades, on the contrary display an urgent need to say everything to everybody all at once and the inevitable result is nothing but a few oddities people don't listen to, or at best, they laugh at our 'dreaming'.

I don't mean that the right way lies in the system of half-truths, which is a very dangerous tactic (typical of the Communists) aiming at gaining sympathies from the largest strata of society at the expense of ideological consistency. When people realise it they feel as though they have been cheated and fall back into wild reaction. What I mean is to translate into sectorial terms the fundamental principles of anarchism without creating sectarian divisions. As anarchists we must admit that it is impossible to forecast the future of the social revolution, honestly, and tell the people: it will be so and so...; but our great strength lies in an infallible method: the anti-authoritarian practices, which can be applied to any social reality as well as to any individual person. The great difficulty lies in how to use it. Many anarchist comrades talk of anti-authoritarianism whilst being quite authoritarian themselves; the case more frequently than one might like to suppose.

The proper way of political intervention in society from an anarchist point of view, must be built more on facts than on words. For instance, when a woman is haunted by the problem of abortion it is better to talk to her about the Spanish Revolution, anarcho-syndicalism and Nestor Makhno, or give her the address of a good doctor? Should we be proud of our theoretical planning for people's happiness in the new social order when an increasing number of young comrades feel like committing suicide (and some actually do) because they are in utter despair and alone even among scores of perfect militants? Sadly but truly we must recognise that the monster of alienation has caught our minds and souls too. That's why we think of our brothers and sisters as mere objects, not as persons. That's why so many prejudices are still ruling our behaviour. Thus, going back to the women's liberation issue, I think that anarchist women must start facing their problems seriously in their own ways and, when necessary, they must take sides against their male comrades too. There are a lot of questions that need answering today so I would be very glad to know your opinions about these problems... Ciao! Anna Maria V.

Postscript

In confirmation of my point of view about the matter, many things have happened that could possibly bring the Italian anarchist movement to the point of structural crisis. In recent issues of some of the Italian anarchist magazines, articles written by male comrades 'appeared about feminism. I, together with many other libertarian and anarchist women, do not hesitate to define them as purely reactionary pieces, as striking examples of the meaningless delirium deriving from an ideological stubbornness. To define oneself as an anarchist and to write such stuff in anarchist papers displays such a tragicomic attitude as to reach absurdity. Moreover I am surprised that the editorial staff of the two reviews published it without a word of comment.

Anyway I really can't help laughing at such "darkened" minds which rival and even outdo the Roman Catholic press in their conception of the role of women in society... Another fact of utter irony was the rape of a young female comrade of Novara by three... anarchists! I am not surprised! I'm not surprised! The case was reported in a June issue of *Umanità Nova*. As far as I'm concerned the case needs no comment. See how the "glorious" Italian anarchist movement works?

Anna Maria can be contacted through Zero.



The women's liberation movement in Italy is many-faceted. It can be divided into two main streams: 1) the revolutionary groups, 2) the reformist groups. The latter includes the U.D.I. (Unione Donne Italiane) which is the women's organisation of the P.C.I., and various other women's committees of Left parties such as the Socialists, Radicals, and the ex-extra-parliamentary groups, like women belonging to Lotta Continua, Avanguardia Operaia, etc.

Among the first groups I place all those collectives which proclaim their autonomy and call themselves simply 'feminists' even if there are a lot of differences and divergencies in their demands. From a libertarian point of view the reformist groups aim only at political gains: that is, their 'feminism' is functional for the enlargement of the electoral basis of the parties they depend on. This fact creates a great deal of confusion in public opinion, although their propaganda does contribute a little to attracting interest to feminist issues. In the last analysis they form a movement which exerts some pressure on their respective parties to lobby the government to solve social problems by means of the legal system, for instance, the campaign for the legalisation of abortion, or before that the campaign to confirm the divorce law.

The revolutionary groups, on the contrary, insist upon the existential aspect of women's emancipation from the roles and tasks imposed upon women at any time and under any government for either socio-political or economic reasons. Among these groups the main difference is indicated by the presence or absence of a marxist-leninist matrix. In general their claims can be accepted from a libertarian, and some even from an anarchist, viewpoint, because they aim at: self-realisation in freedom, justice and equality; they deny divisions of roles and delegation of power; they are particularly opposed to the Church and its moral and political oppression; they preach solidarity and self-help—autonomy and self-management in their own lives; and consequently they are aiming at the affirmation of the individual.

The divergencies come to light when dealing with praxis and methods, which depend on different analyses of Italian social reality. One current which does not tie in with anarchist praxis is that of *Salario Al Lavoro Domestico* (Wages for Housework). They say that by demanding a salary for the unpaid housewife they will open a great breach in the capitalist system, acting as a lever on one of the greatest contradictions of capitalism. They seem not to realize the implied perpetuation of roles. They claim a complete emancipation for women through work as if it were only by obtaining an 'independent (how independent?) job outside the walls of 'home sweet home' that a woman can count herself free. Another marxist-leninist handicap among many

feminists is to consider women's liberation as a branch of class struggle in its classic terms. That is, only proletarian women are worth addressing because they believe bourgeois women to be free already since they can buy easy divorce and abortion and they don't have to remain secluded in the house. On the contrary I believe that freedom cannot be measured in terms of money (this is quite a 'piccolo-borghese' standard). I am of good bourgeois origins myself, and I have only to look at my mother and many other millions like her to realise what her 'freedom' represents.

At the opposite pole there are those who conceive of feminism in 'mystic' terms. These are very narrow and exclusive groups totally devoting their energies to so-called 'training for self-consciousness' which I simply call 'a new version of collective psycho-analysis' or 'group psycho-therapy'. They aim at minimising the real impact of social and political forces. They build a moral alibi for themselves and are exclusively concerned with emotional stresses and absurd existential motivations such as the complete negation of the male, and so on.

Within the anarchist movement, woman's liberation flounders about in a floating situation. In general anarchist women nowadays are clearly and almost sharply divided. On one side there are those who maintain that feminist issues are but a small section of the main aim of the emancipation of the whole of humankind, that the solutions for the 'woman question' are implicit in anarchist theories, therefore it doesn't need any particular priority. On the other side there are those who maintain that for too long and too often the actual urgent problems of women have been resolved by anarchists by means of a few generalities and even banalities. I take the side of these comrades who declare that it is impossible to rely on past traditions since there is no female tradition in the history of anarchism, except for the heroic Emma Goldman (but almost a century divides her from us, and many of her statements now sound like romantic appeals, which indeed they are).

The Spanish experience also shows the limits of anarchist conceptions of women's role in society (compare the dreadful statements made by Federica Montseny in 'Ceux de Barcelone' by E. Kaminsky and the social organisation patterns recorded by Gaston Leval in 'Ne Franco ne Stalin'). I know very little about the organisation 'Mujeres Libres' but I don't deceive myself about it: I don't want to take up a negative position for the sake of polemic, of course, but I'm tired of being entangled with either idealistic issues which smell of millenarism, or specific issues of 'once upon a time' which cannot cope with my actual place in this society and in this time. I also cannot rely on the 'classics' of anarchism: where or when did they ever deal in detail with women's



Gay News March Photo: Manning Star

Gays Under Attack:

'Capital punishment for homosexuality—volunteers needed.' This message appeared on posters in Los Angeles following the successful campaign in June by Anita Bryant and Save Our Children Inc. to dismantle gay rights legislation in Dade County, Florida. That same month in San Francisco, anti-gay propaganda culminated in a man being stabbed to death outside his home by four men shouting 'Faggot! Faggot!' The dead man's mother intends to sue Anita Bryant for stirring up hatred towards homosexuals and provoking the murder of her son. Since June an estimated

70,000 gays have demonstrated in the streets of major USA cities. In Los Angeles, 9,500 people marched down Hollywood Boulevard protesting against Bryant's presence in California. The marchers included heterosexuals and representatives of ethnic minorities. In response to Save Our Children's obsession with child molesters, some banners read "Anita, WE are your children". One group carried the banner "Parents of gays join in the fight for your children's rights". Although less lurid, Mary Whitehouse's anti-gay activities in this country

Out of the closets & into the hospitals.

resemble Bryant's both in the manipulation of religious emotion and in the puritanical emphasis on clean living and decent family life. Both women, too, are associated with right wing organisations which are unscrupulous in the methods they use to further their repressive aims. The recent outbreak of anti-gay campaigning has recharged hatred and violence towards gays in this country. On the night of July 23rd, after leaving a gay disco in North London, Peter Benyon was beaten to death by a group of men using pieces of wood and crowbars.

"He was on the ground and whenever he tried to move they just hit him again", said an eye-witness. In South London, a woman may lose her sight after being hit in the face with a broken bottle in one of a series of attacks by gangs of young men lying in wait outside a weekly women's disco.

Two hundred gays took part in a silent march through the rain in North London the Saturday after Benyon's murder. They were there because they recognised that these are not isolated, unconnected incidents, but are part of general

increase in violence against gays—a violence legitimised by the propaganda of such groups as the Festival of Light and also by the outspoken prejudices and hostility of many public figures. Violence itself is nothing new. Queer-bashing is commonplace—but the popular press pays attention to such attacks only when murder can be linked with a juicy story of perverted sex. In most of the left-wing press—nothing. Some violence is taken for granted, not recognised for what it is—it marks invisibly the boundaries of where we should be, how we should live. Gay men, prostitutes, and any woman out alone at night are thought to incite and invite violence simply by being. Such groups are trespassers by definition. The hate-filled men who physically attack us act as agents for a patriarchal state whose interest is in keeping all of us in our place. Raped women who are insulted, abused and humiliated by police, courts, and the press know this. So do homosexual men who are spied on and beaten up by the police, condemned by the courts, and often ostracised or raped by 'straight' fellow prisoners with the connivance of warders. Those on the receiving end know all this. But many liberal sympathisers seem to think that since the 1967 Act which legalised sex in private between consenting adult men, there is no problem for homosexuals—apart from the occasional verbal insults by unenlightened people. (Lesbians—thanks to Queen Victoria—never had problems anyway, except perhaps having failed to meet the right man.)

Such attitudes ignore reality and trivialise oppression in a way that is hard to forgive. There are more homosexuals than blacks in this country. We are harder to see, but we are also oppressed and discriminated against, outsiders and scapegoats. And for many of us this oppression comes on top of what we experience through being female, working class, or black—a connection missed by those trade unionists on the Grunwick picket lines who shouted at a group of gay men coming to join them: 'We don't want no fucking queers here!'

Social and self-hatred is a subtle psychological weapon. From childhood, being gay is not allowed as a possibility. Favourite insults between children are cunt, bender, lezzie, pouf. The most common words for homosexuality are insults. If a child or young adult suspects it in herself, it is something to suppress. Being forced into such invisibility prevents us from loving and accepting ourselves and in turn being accepted by other people in all areas of life as ourselves—for being gay is an essential part of our selves. The feminist/libertarian idea that the personal is political means making connections between all aspects of our lives. It does not mean that what people do in their private lives is their business. Heterosexuals can afford to maintain their privacy in the knowledge that they are accepted and acceptable. For gays, privacy is no choice—it means enforced secrecy and secretiveness. Other weapons against us include job sanctions. Closet (concealed) homosexuals who are discovered may lose their jobs—in Inner London recently a residential childcare worker was forced to resign for this reason, though in less 'sensitive' jobs, discretion may mean that gayness is overlooked.

Being openly gay creates more problems. Recent cases include John Warburton, a schoolteacher who was sacked and blacklisted after discussing his homosexuality with pupils who had seen him on a gay demonstration; Louise Boychuck, sacked for wearing a Lesbians Unite badge to the office; a British Home Stores shop assistant who was sacked after appearing on a television programme with his lover. Veronica Pickles, a health visitor, was taken off her midwifery course, also after appearing on TV. She was reinstated after a vigorous support campaign, but first faced such humiliations as being followed on her rounds by the Area Health Authority, making sure she was behaving herself. Homosexuals are considered a threat to children. Whether we are seen as potential child molesters or as inadequate role models, we are likely to be denied the possibility of working with children, or sometimes even living with or seeing our own. For lesbians involved in custody cases, it is one of the few occasions that the supposedly primary need of a child for its mother is outweighed. The most tolerant employers are reluctant to let gays work with children—if only for fear of public reaction.

We don't want tolerance, but self-determined sexuality, freely expressed, as part of a transformation of sexual and social relationships. When we make this demand openly, the surface tolerance starts to crumble. Tory MP Ronald Bell recently condemned the state of affairs in this country when one can see 'huggers and lesbians flaunting their vice under the impudent banner of gaiety... I voted for the Bill which allowed buggery between consenting adults in private. But now, wherever you go you see them flaunting it in the streets with demonstrations and stickers.' The same point was made in the debate in the House of Lords this summer during Lord Arden's unsuccessful attempt to get the age of consent for male homosexuals lowered from 21 to 18. As well as the usual talk of the 'infectious growth'

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Destination Point On A Never Ending Journey

George Woodcock, editor of the recently published *Anarchist Reader* looks at the resurgence of anarchism in the light of its formidable list of historical failures.

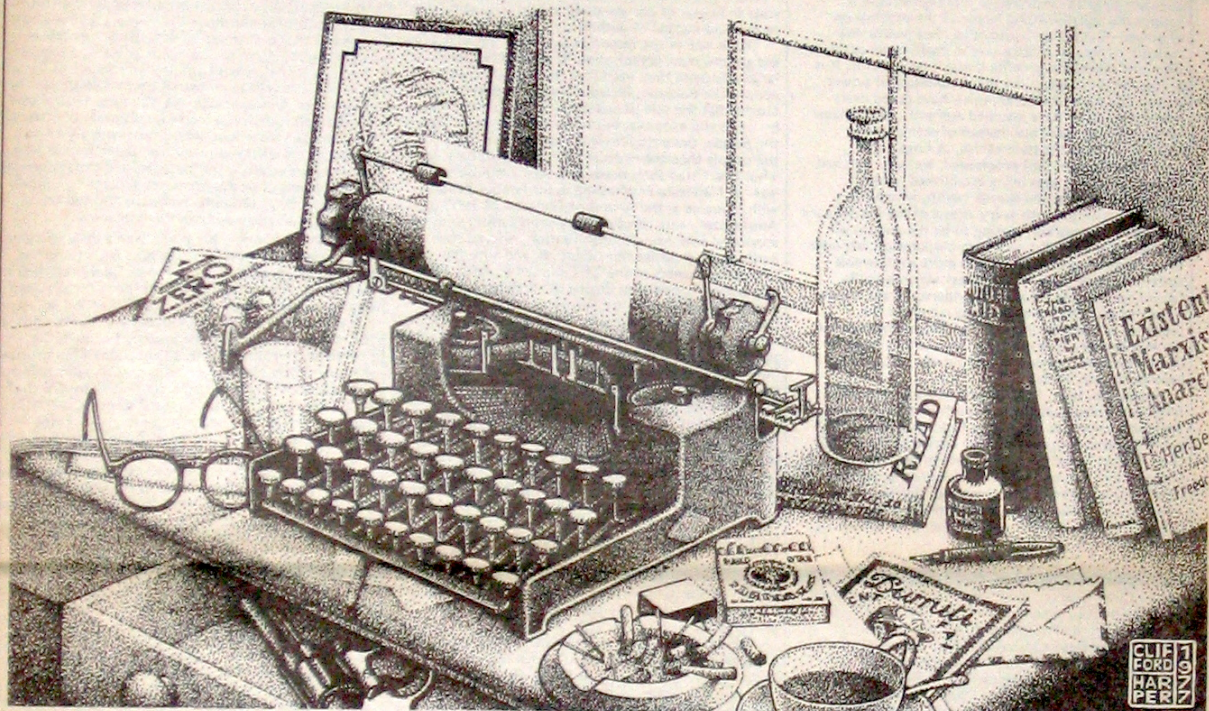


Illustration: Cliff Hurper

I suppose anyone who has a strong philosophic view of society—the kind of view that is loosely but rather incorrectly described as utopian—is always coming up against the modifications that real life forces one to make. There was a time—even in my own youth in the 1930s—when it seemed possible to imagine that the kind of ideal society one dreamed of might come into being through some miraculous transformation, in the twinkling of an eye. The revolution would take place, the new dawn would arise, everything would be different. But new dawn after new dawn has arisen: in Russia, in China, in Cuba, in Vietnam, in Cambodia, in Angola. The transformation of values has been proclaimed, and for a brief while it has seemed as though a new world was indeed in the making. And perhaps it was, but what kind of a world? We see, time and again, that the great symbolic act which all nineteenth century socialists—the libertarians Proudhon as much as the authoritarian Marx—believed central to human liberation is carried out. The private ownership of the means of production is brought to an end; no individual any longer exploits the labour of another individual. But is exploitation ended? Is freedom achieved?

All too obviously it is not. Utopia—if what has been achieved can be called Utopia—is no better and perhaps a bit worse than the society it displaced, because it has narrowed down the options for dissent, for rebellion, even for the kind of evasive action that is sometimes the only way to preserve a modicum of freedom when open defiance ceases to be possible. Individual exploitation ends but is replaced by collective exploitation in the hands of the party or the bureaucracy representing the state. Apart from that, all that has happened is that the political police have a different name (though they are often the same people) and new people tell us how we must be free while they enjoy those fruits of power which under left-wing authoritarian regimes seem to be hardly less tempting than they are under right-wing autocracies.

It is all very well to say that as libertarians we have known it all along, ever since Marx tried to clamp a power structure on the First International; ever since Trotsky and Lenin massacred the Kronstadt sailors

who rebelled in favour of free soviets in 1921; ever since the Stalinists played their power games behind the Republican lines during the Spanish Civil War. The fact remains that, while the authoritarian socialists have by now achieved, in an alarming number of countries, at least one of their aims, the seizure of power (even if they have done surprisingly little with it), the libertarians, where they have striven dramatically, have merely produced dramatic failures.

Sixty years ago, on the eve of World War I, anarchists controlled the CGT, the great French trade union movement. As recently as forty years ago they headed the largest working class movement in Spain, the CNT. During the Spanish Civil War literally thousands of villages, inspired by wandering anarchist apostles, turned themselves into libertarian communes, sharing their work and their produce according to the free community teaching laid down by Peter Kropotkin in books like *The Conquest of Bread*. In Russia, between 1918 and 1921, large areas of the Ukraine were turned into libertarian communes by Nestor Makhno and his Insurrectionary Army which for long defied both Trotsky's Red Army and the White Armies of the Tsarist generals. Even in Mexico the great movement of agrarian rebellion by the anarcho-sindicalist doctrines of Ricardo Flores Magon, who inspired his own libertarian uprising in Baja California. Even Gandhi, in India, read Kropotkin and Tolstoy and called himself an anarchist, devising an elaborate plan of a decentralised agrarian society in which the role of the state would become quickly superfluous owing to the development of a federated network of self-governing village communes.

All that promise, let us admit, in spite of those who would prefer a rose-tinted version of anarchist history, was negated. The French CGT was taken over by the Communists after World War I; the Spanish agricultural communes and the CNT were destroyed with Franco's victory; Makhno was defeated and died in exile; Zapata was murdered by people who pretended to be his allies and his movement became merely the legend of a lost leader who would return on a white horse; and we have all seen in recent months how little Gandhi's teachings

of a pacifist decentralised society mean in an India that is now a nuclear power.

And yet, with all this record of magnificent failure, of victories lost, of movements aborted, of promises frustrated, the idea, the set of mind we call anarchist has shown an amazing power of recuperation. Thirty years ago the anarchist following had shrunk to the tiniest of dissident movements—a few thousand Italian and Spanish refugees meeting forlornly to celebrate the past, some minuscule groups of faithful propagandists running little papers in countries unconquered by the dictators, and a tiny group of writers and intellectuals, like Herbert Read and Alex Comfort, Paul Goodman and Kenneth Rexroth, to name the best-known, who found anarchism the only political doctrine that seemed in any way compatible with the free life of the artist. To call oneself an anarchist in the 1940s was almost like belonging to an exclusive secret society so few were one's associates likely to be.

In the sixties all that changed. A vast increase of interest in anarchism and libertarian doctrines generally arose among people—young people especially—who knew very little of the history of the movement. Historical books on the tradition, like my own *Anarchism* and James Joll's *The Anarchists*, were written; the classic writings of Kropotkin and Proudhon and Godwin were reprinted; many of the central anarchist doctrines re-emerged among the ideas of the New Left—particularly on decentralism and participatory democracy.

What was it in anarchism that gave it such power to survive dramatic failures and to emerge in a later generation with such freshness and vitality? Since the anarchists had shown themselves so much less capable of creating and manipulating mass organisations than the Marxists, what was it in their teachings and their style that made the anarchist idea, if not the historic anarchist movement, suddenly so attractive to large numbers of people who had never heard it before? What message may the idea have for our time? And how can that message be applied in a practical way to the world we live in?

Clearly there are many arguments and proposals of continued overpage

the anarchists, as of other types of open thinkers, that have a bearing on present-day problems but in this exploratory survey I will restrict myself to suggesting three directions in which the teachings of the anarchists or libertarians retain their value despite or perhaps even because they have failed to gain the kind of spectacular political successes which history appears to have brought to the Marxists in the sixty years since the October Revolution of 1917.

First, there is the anarchist critique of power, which is superior to that of the Marxists, in that it stresses not only the economics of power but also its psychology. Of course, there is an intimate link between the economic system and the power system; anarchists like Godwin and Proudhon pointed this out long before Marx. But solving the economic question by taking the means of production out of the hands of those who use them to exploit the labour of others does not solve the problem of tyranny because it ignores the equally strong factor of the psychology of power—that power is addictive, that power does corrupt, because it is attractive in itself, quite apart from any economic benefits it may bring with it. It is because they have ignored the psychology of power that in one sense the Communists have failed everywhere; true, they have assumed authority in the name of the working class, but instead of seeing power wither away and the state vanish, as Engels and Lenin (and even Stalin) prophesied, we have watched more oppressive states being established, where freedom of writing and speech vanish, where the political police pry into every aspect of the individual's life, where the worker, ceasing to be the servant of an individual capitalist or a large corporation, becomes the servant of an even larger and more irremovable entity, the total state. This success which is really failure comes from refusing to understand the nature of power and also from failing to recognise the tendency of coercive institutions—of any institutions for that matter—to take on an autonomous impetus and perpetuate themselves without any relevance to genuine human needs.

Anarchism, then, I regard first of all as a critical tradition, whose judgments of authoritarian socialism have been proved as correct by history as its equally condemnatory judgments of the capitalist state and the so-called free enterprise system of economic exploitation. Anyone who has looked at power and its manifestations from the anarchist viewpoint is unlikely to be taken in any of the manoeuvres of politicians, whether right or left. She or he will seek a politics without politicians.

The second reason why anarchism is worth

reconsidering—and why I think it has gained renewed popularity in the last few decades—is that it is not a matter of rigid dogmas, and thus is flexibly responsive to changing social conditions and also to the individual insights of those who think about the changes. There has never been an anarchist orthodoxy and the great libertarian books, like Godwin's *Political Justice* and Proudhon's *What is property?* and Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* and Herbert Read's *Education through Art* have never been regarded as Bibles for the faithful in the way *Das Kapital* has been among the Communists. Anarchists do not have that kind of obedient reverence. She or he has respect for good thoughts well expressed, but never considers them the last thought; social concepts should always evolve according to social circumstances, and this is why there have been almost as many kinds of anarchism as there are individual anarchists, though the core beliefs remain the same—rejection of the coercive state in favour of decentralised voluntary institutions; mutual aid instead of authority.

This is one of the reasons why, when the anarchists did go into mass organisation, they usually failed, largely because they neglected the exhortations of people like Bakunin, Proudhon and Kropotkin, who taught that the role of anarchist militants was to teach by word and example, but never to organise or lead the people, since true revolutionary action came from the people themselves deciding at the most basic level what best fitted their needs and their condition. This was—as Malatesta emphasised in his famous debate with Monatte at the Anarchist Congress of 1907 in Amsterdam—why revolutionary syndicalism, with its inevitable concern with organisation, offered such perils as an exclusive line of action, and why the syndicalist leaders of the CNT slipped so easily into governmental positions during the Spanish Civil War. Proudhon was being a true anarchist when someone talked to him of his party, and Proudhon answered in horror, "My party! I have no party!" Anarchism and a party, like anarchism and a dogmatic political creed, have always been contradictions in terms. And this makes anarchist arguments perpetually applicable in all new circumstances.

Which leads me to the third reason why anarchism survives and is worth reconsidering: it is not based on those abstract theoretical systems which, projected by political parties into actual existence, tend to reproduce themselves as coercive inanimate structures. Anarchists, to the contrary, believe that people are naturally social beings and therefore order does not have to be imposed on them. "Anarchy" in Proudhon's paradox, "is order". If people are left to work out their

needs collectively at the basic level they will naturally produce the right social forms and mechanisms. This is why anarchists deny not only governments (which impose political forms from above) but also centralisation (which rules from the still point of the vortex). Because the anarchist does not see society as an artificial political construct but as a natural development out of social tendencies that exist throughout the animal world (see Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*). She or he is in favour of allowing natural balances to operate not only in the relations between people but also in the relations between people and their environment. Thus libertarians have always argued not only for a free education but also for an integrated education, which would combine intellectual and manual skills, and for decentralisation of industry as well as of political structures, so that there will be a vital relationship between agriculture and industry (see Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops*), and the great megalopolises can be brought under control. Such preoccupations made the anarchists of seventy years ago true precursors of the environmentalists today, and I believe the only way towards a recovery of ecological balance is to follow the anarchist pattern of political as well as industrial decentralisation. The corollary of decentralisation is of course federalism—not the politically oriented federalism of countries like Canada and Switzerland which tends merely to be a mask for centralism—but the true federalism in which decisions are made in the localities and the regions and the structures of power are never allowed to solidify into the icebergs of bureaucracy that nowadays threaten all our voyages towards freedom.

Utopia? An impossible goal? Even a desirable goal? In the sense of a static world where everything had been solved, hardly possible and certainly not desirable, since perfection is the end of motion, which is death. But consider Utopia—the free and florescent society—as a destination point on a journey that never ends, and the matter is different. The journey becomes the liberation. For the great thing about the kind of society that anarchism seeks to attain is that its essentials do not have to be manufactured artificially by political technicians; as Colin Ward argued so persuasively in *Anarchy and Action*, the infrastructure of a free society already exists among us, in our behaviour to each other, in the voluntary co-operation into which we enter spontaneously without the help or encouragement of governments. We have to recognise the anarchy around us and begin with that: if we wait for the revolution that will present us with freedom, we can wait for ever. That revolution, in so far as it ever exists is latent among us here and now.

of this filthy disease', more liberal speakers expressed anxiety about how an Act which had been intended to ease the burden of men unfortunate in their sexual tendencies had been taken advantage of by people daring to think themselves normal. At last waiting till 21 gives young men a chance to get over it—maybe with the help of aversion therapy or hormone treatment. Meanwhile, men are in prison because their lovers were old enough to marry but too young for gay sex. Bill Walker is serving 18 months for buggery and gross indecency (i.e. having sex) with his 16 year old lover. The situation for lesbians is less clearly defined—though associating with known lesbians can be enough

to categorise a young woman as 'in moral danger', and liable to a care order. In general, though, even when lesbians are visible—we're not seen. At a picket outside the Attorney

General's Office after the Gay News trial, a passer by began arguing with some of the men that we had no need to be so public and vocal with our badges and placards. When one of us joined in the discussion, she was told,

'What's a nice young girl like you doing here? You must have lots of boy-friends.'

When we make ourselves seen, we risk being

beaten up for it—more risk added to the main risk of being a woman, especially a woman outside her proper place.

A real woman is safe in the home. And a real man is keeping her there. Women and men whose sexuality or way of living challenge this face all society's techniques to straighten them out—or at least keep them hidden—from social work to psychiatry to prison to fists and knives and crowbars. Lesbianism challenges the system in which women are forced to depend, economically, socially, sexually, on men—a dependence which props up the whole rotten patriarchal system. Male homosexuality isn't essentially subversive, (think of Ancient Greece or some modern Arab states), but it can be if it questions the male/female power structure, or challenges the social repression of sexuality. In the USSR, for instance, male homosexual acts are seen as Acts against the State, punishable with up to 8 years' hard labour and social ostracism. Lesbianism 'doesn't exist'.

China doesn't admit to such problems. Homosexuality is mentioned only in the context of pre-revolutionary sexploitation. Sexual behaviour of any sort is controlled, and a popular textbook condemns masturbation as a dangerous activity which diverts energy from the Revolution. In the right-wing military dictatorship of Bolivia, the *Camba Civic Command* has been formed, dedicated to hunting down and killing homosexuals, prostitutes and drug dealers. The CCC is modelled on Argentina's Triple A political murder organisation—while in Argentina itself, an article published by the Ministry of Social Welfare called for male homosexuals to be exiled to forced labour camps, and lesbians to be jailed or killed (since they are not fit for childbearing). The Right lays bare those ideas of women's and men's place which are shared by all patriarchal states.

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, the existence of repressive laws, even though seldom used, means gays experience constant insecurity. Last year, gays living in and around Belfast were intensively investigated and harassed by the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

Twenty-five activists were arrested and interrogated, and files were seized. Charges were dropped as a result of an organised support campaign and sympathetic publicity, but

the laws are still there, and can be used to intimidate individuals and damage the growing networks of politically conscious gays. In England, institutionalised oppression is increasing, as in police harassment campaigns in Bradford and Cornwall, and this summer's Jubilee cleanup of male and female prostitutes in London. Right-wing pressure groups such as the *Festival of Light*, *The National Viewers and Listeners Association*, *The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child*, and *The Responsible Society* are mobilising support. Recent successes include the defeat of the *Arran Bill*, the *Gay News* verdict, the increasingly frequent refusal of bookings of town halls and hotels to gay organisations—and the vicious publicity which provided the ideological justification for violence. The current attacks on abortion by these groups are part of the same backlash which is hitting gays.

The 60's saw reforms motivated by liberal compassion for unfortunate individuals, the misfits, homosexuals, the unhappily married, pregnant women unable to cope. These reforms gave some real benefits. But once we come out and say we are not misfits or victims, that we are glad to be gay; that we are going to be open about, and enjoy, our own sexuality; that for women this means the right to have an abortion if she doesn't want to be pregnant, **THAT WE WANT CONTROL OVER OUR OWN LIVES**—the backlash begins. Gays are fighting back—for example, an Ad Hoc Committee formed at the time of the *Gay News* prosecution has been co-ordinating pickets and marches. But the numbers involved are small, and it's easy to feel isolated. Repression is increasing, and liberal indignation is not enough to stop it. The suspicious contempt of the left for 'unpolitical' groups such as the *Campaign for Homosexual Equality* and publications like *Gay News* doesn't help, either. In the end we are all affected by this repression. In the Soviet Union, groups of young people who refuse to conform to the standards demanded by their society are called 'unofficial lives'. Unofficial lives are a threat—to the state, to the patriarchal family, to existing power shapes and structures. Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation embody the threat of total revolution, transformation. And the right wing are often the first to realise this—and try to stop it. Margot Farnham, Judy Greenway.

Information from: *Camp Times*, *Gay Left*, *Gay News*, *Lesbian Tide*, *Outcome*, *Peace News*, *Peoples' News Service*.

Mary Whitehouse's phone number is 0206 230 123

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REVIEWS

**AGAINST OUR WILL, MEN
WOMEN AND RAPE. By
Susan Brownmiller.
(Penguin Books 95p.)**



Against Our Will is a shocking and frightening book. The material which Susan Brownmiller has so thoroughly researched comes across as a truly terrifying reality. The inflammatory nature of the subject, rape, demands careful distinctions between verifiable incidents and exaggerated accounts, rumours, hysterical irrational fears, propaganda. This book succeeds in making these distinctions, rationally, sympathetically, and honestly.

The meaning of the word rape must be assessed in a twofold manner — as a single act which recurs as part of objective reality with a frequency and variety that is appalling and, further, as a concept which has had a use in the coercive and competitive authority structure in which women are subjugated to men, used as sexual objects, as valuable commodities in the marriage market, as sacred and dangerous symbols of power in slave systems, as propaganda items in war machines.

Susan Brownmiller establishes a connection between the two meanings by a historical review of male property rights in women, and of the development of legal definitions of rape from early days when it was regarded as a crime against a male's interest, either that of the father with an economic stake in his daughter's virginity or that of the husband with exclusive rights of possession of his wife's chastity. The Middle Ages saw the beginnings of state concern in the safety of individuals and some attempt to define rape as an injury against the woman herself. That this attempt has remained a largely unrealised ideal is clear from the well-documented account of rape as it occurred in this century in all its ugly forms — from war rape to incestuous domestic attack — from lone assaults to urban gang rape. The author is at great pains to distinguish different types of assault directed at different types of victim, e.g. women of all ages, classes, creeds, children, prisoners of either sex, and at the same time to indicate what is common to all these types: coercive or manipulative domination of weaker persons by stronger individuals or groups by the physical and mental degradation of the victim.

The difficulties involved in seeking protection against rape derive from inadequate legal definitions, from a prejudice against women as a built-in formality in the legal system which embodies the idea of 'woman' as a

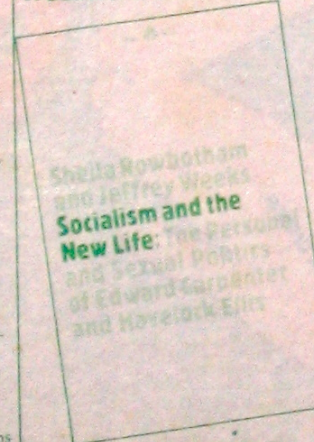
lyling vengeful creature who will cry rape for no good reason, and the reluctance on the part of the women themselves to be made public property as they inevitably are in the court proceedings which attend a prosecution.

The prevalence of rape and difficulties of redress leads Susan Brownmiller to the convincing conclusion that rape is 'a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear'. This is a highly radical suggestion and will be offensive, no doubt, to many men who cannot envisage themselves in the role of rapist. However while there is effectively a curfew on women, while we are denied security and equality in our own homes, while we are subjected to potential humiliation in a variety of more or less subtle forms, rape is a process in which we are all involved. Men and women are locked in a relationship of dominance/submission. This relationship must be broken if rape is to be 'denied its future'.

In the face of this radical critique the author's conclusion may seem weak and reformist to some, and no doubt repugnant to others. They amount to an insistence that the law be extended to cover more types of rape and that rape be defined with reference to other types of criminal assault, that prejudice against women in the courts be fully exposed and obliterated, that women should learn to defend themselves against rape and feel confident in their own strength. At the present time such a view demands that rapists be sent to prison. This will inevitably constitute a dilemma to anarchists since it means relying on the legal system to put right what is essentially a political problem, and to engage the interest of the state or the police is not likely to be regarded as a revolutionary or moral activity.

Whatever the objections that anarchists may raise against the conclusions in this book let us hope that they will debate constructively and not subject women, once again, to the same old arguments. Otherwise, most women, if there has to be a choice between anarchism and feminism, are likely to say 'sod anarchism' □ Jean Jones

**SOCIALISM AND THE
NEW LIFE. By Sheila
Rowbotham and Jeffrey
Weeks. (Pluto Press £1.80)**



In *Socialism and the New Life: The personal and sexual politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis* and its companion volume *A New World for Women: Stella Browne—socialist feminist* Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks explore the theory and practice of the radicals of 19th century sexual

politics through the individual lives of three people and their associates.

The material gathered together here could be a starting-point for further research and radical analysis of the pervasive control of our sexuality by society and an invitation to refute the liberal, biological models of social and sexual behaviour. At first I found this personalisation of ideas confusing, since I am used to accepting the theoretical concepts involved as being a part of our language and thought-structure and have imagined there to be no way of discovering how we come to have such concepts or how to criticise their presence in our midst, since the weight of our liberal culture spins such an effective web over the recent past.

The diversion/deflection of radical ideas through obscenity charges and other forms of repression lead to the adoption of a moderate stance by some of the pioneers of sexual reform, which in turn developed its own links with the later, fascist, theories of 'racial progress'. (This is not to say that all the early campaigners were so deflected; Stella Browne and Edward Carpenter certainly were not.)

After a spiritual/emotional crisis in youth, Ellis spent his life advocating sex-reform, believing that human nature is essentially good and that therefore sexual freedom would bring a new age of happiness in its wake. He was the first person to use the term homosexual (although not homosexual himself he married a lesbian, Edith Lees) and his first work 'Sexual Inversion' was published in 1897. It was effectively banned (all future editions of his studies were printed in America) and to this day no full British edition of Ellis' most important work has appeared. Ellis' aim was to show that homosexuality is not a product of particular national vices or periods of social decay but a common and recurrent part of human sexuality. He chose to do this by collating all the available data on animals, primitive peoples and ancient civilisations, and famous literary and artistic figures. He sought to detach homosexuality from its 19th century connotations of degeneracy, disease and insanity, and present it as a harmless quirk of nature, with overtones of moral excellence and respectability.

He was fundamentally a conservative in that he held homosexuality to be a minority anomaly: whilst he went to some length to stress that male homosexuals were not effeminate, he was unable to say that lesbianism was not a deeply rooted element of masculinity in women because of his inner acceptance of the heterosexual ideology of 'courtship' as the basic sexual structure of our society, with all that implies of male aggression and female passivity.

Ellis' second work 'Auto-eroticism', a term he coined, gave cautious approval to masturbation, and in 1927 another volume examined other non-reproductive forms of sex and sex-related behaviour, including sadism and masochism, coprophilia, necrophilia, kleptomania, and obsivism (his own predilection, that of observing the urination of women) etc. He felt that these things were natural and only harmful if another person were hurt.

He believed that every healthy woman should at least once in her life exercise her 'supreme function' in the interest of the race, which clashed with his firm support of contraception and abortion to be controlled by women.

Nonetheless, Ellis 'succeeded' in that he raised the question of sexuality from the depths of Victorian consciousness to the level of rational discussion. But he fundamentally rejected the idea that

sex-roles are socially moulded, unlike Freud, because he felt that such a view would not fit into any 'rational biological scheme'.

He had great personal charisma, and radicals such as Emma Goldman and Margaret Sanger saw him as a 'giant'.

In contrast to Ellis, Edward Carpenter's politics were lived out on the personal level, in that he deserted the ranks of the upper middle-class to live a simple life at Millthorpe, a cottage near Sheffield, where he attempted to live as one of the working people.

Edward Carpenter was in revolt from the crass materialism of the Victorian age; he was homosexual and ardently supported feminist aspirations. His ideas tended towards socialism with a drift towards the anarchism exemplified by Kropotkin's mutual aid, but rejecting that of direct conflict. Ms Rowbotham traces in delightful detail Carpenter's many links with socialists in Sheffield, Bristol, London and Cambridge, and gives us glimpses of the socialist fellowship and cultural life of that period, when it was considered axiomatic that to be a socialist implied internal change and conscious struggle with personal relationships. Nonetheless in spite of his support for the rebellion of women in his book 'Love's Coming of Age' Carpenter accepted 'masculinity' and 'femininity' as fixed characteristics and followed Engels in assuming that the sexual division of labour was a natural result of the biological difference between men and women. He developed a stereotype of androgyny, 'the inter-mediate sex'—i.e. homosexuality as transcending sex divisions, which unfortunately sidestepped the problem of male elitism in the world; he also portrayed feminists as not quite 'normal': some are 'without strong sexual or maternal instincts', some 'mannish', some 'homogenic' some 'ultra-rationalising and brain-created'. Carpenter's greatest achievement was his struggle to live out his political commitment as a transformation of everyday life. The socialist's vision of Utopia included happiness, love, and the new life, not just a redistribution of wealth.

Stella Browne (1882-1955) was remarkable in that she never wavered from her belief in women's fundamental right to control their own bodies and her commitment to socialist revolution. Although she was influenced by Carpenter and Ellis in her paper 'The Sexual Variety and Variability among Women and their Bearing upon Social Reconstruction' she also felt strongly that men had altogether too much to say about sexual response in women, and that men, by seeking sexual release with prostitutes before marriage, had brutalised concepts of sexuality, both their own and women's. She fought for birth control and abortion on demand, and left the Communist Party because they would not support the latter. She believed that women had a right to sexual pleasure, denied that the maternal instinct existed, presumably along with other "innate characteristics", and publicly testified, in 1936, that she had had an abortion—a remarkably courageous action.

Stella Browne was unusual in that she did not move toward the right in an attempt to win support for her aims: Dora Russell writes in 'The Tamarisk Tree': "Stella Browne was a holy terror. She made no bones about raising the abortion issue at meetings and, wisps of hair floating down from her untidy coiffure, would resist all efforts of a chairman to put her down." □ Zadie Farr

AGITPROP

GROUPS

* **BELFAST ANARCHIST GROUP**, Write c/o Zero, Rising Rev, 182 Upper St., London N1.

* **MIDLANDS ANARCHIST FEDERATION**, Louise Crane, 13 Ardren Terrace, Braunstone Leicester. Tel: c/o Sid & Pat - Leicester 264151. Groups/individuals in Birmingham, Leicester, Coventry, Leamington, Warwick Univ., Nottingham, Oxford & Wolverhampton.

* **LEFT WITHOUT MARX?** Part of the reason why libertarians have failed to create a coherent alternative to Marxism is that they have failed to understand it. Libertarians interested in a study group on Marx contact: Left Without Marx, 15 Matcham Road, London E11 3LE

* **READING ANARCHISTS**, contact Reading Univ. Anarchists c/o Clubs Office, Student Union, Whiteknights, Reading. 1st meeting 20th Oct.

* **KENT ANARCHIST FEDERATION**: Steve & Dave, Canterbury A.G., 12 Clarendon Place, Winchapel, Canterbury; Dave Norman, Univ. of Kent A.G., Keynes College, Univ. of Kent, Canterbury; Jim Enderby, 70 Bradbourne Rd., Sevenoaks, Kent.

* **ANARCHIST STUDENT NETWORK** Contact Peter Baker, A06, Allesley House, Rhodes Residences, Univ. of Warwick, Coventry CV4 7AL. Nov. 4th-5th. Proposed date for next conference. For details contact Exeter anarchists.

* **LEEDS ANARCHIST GROUP**, c/o Tony Kearney, 4 Ingle Row, Leeds.

* **LIVERPOOL ANARCHISTS**, contact News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool 1. Tel: 051-708 7270.

* **LIBERTARIAN INDUSTRIAL NETWORK**, c/o Graham Short, 8 Mylor Close, Pennycross, Plymouth, Devon.

* **Proposed WELSH FEDERATION**, Contact Mike Sheehan, Aberystwyth Anarchist Group, 59 North Parade, Aberystwyth.

* **SWANSEA ANARCHISTS**, 37 Glamorgan Road, Uplands, Swansea.

LIBERTARIAN PRESS

* **SOLIDARITY**, paper of the solidarity national group. No. 4 out, 15p from S/NAG, 34 Cowley Road, Oxford. Sub £2 for 10 issues.

* **SOCIAL REVOLUTION**, c/o 88 Gregory Cres., Eltham, London SE9. Bimonthly 15p. We read it - it must be good! No. 8 out very soon.

* **ANARCHY MAGAZINE**, 29 Grosvenor Ave., London N5. No. 23 out, 10p post.

* **BLACK FLAG**, Over the Water, Sandy, Orkney KW17 2BL. Scotland. Every 6 weeks. Best coverage of the international anarchist movement.

* **PEACE NEWS**, for nonviolent revolution. Reports, analysis, news of nonviolent action for social change, building alternatives, alternatives, resistance to the mega-megamachine. Covering antimilitarism, sexual politics, ecology, decentralisation, etc. 15p fortnightly, £5.50 for 1 year from 8 Elm Ave., Nottingham.

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* **MATERNITY RIGHTS FOR WORKING WOMEN** by Jean Cousins 30p. **BATTERED WOMEN AND THE NEW LAW** by Tess Gill and Anna Coote 60p. **NCCL pamphlets** from 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1.

* **LIBERTARIAN COMMUNIST REVIEW** No. 2. Theoretical journal of the Libertarian Communist Group. 20p + postage. Also Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists (new edition) 20p + postage from 13 Colman St., Hull.

* **LIBERTARIAN SPAIN**, Bulletin of the Libertarian Spain Committee. 20p + post. 136 Burley Road, Leeds 4.

EVENTS

* **ZERO BENEFIT BOYS** 3rd Fridays in October and November. Fri Oct 21 - Oxy (ex. Lupin Sisters) + Dine Tribe. 7-11 Bar + food. Fri Nov 18 (not finalised as we go to press) 7-11 Bar + food. Seven Dials Club. Shelton Street, Covent Garden. Covent Garden Arts. Be there.

* **BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM NORTHERN IRELAND CAMPAIGN** Conference: 15-16 October at Cradwell Books, 235 Jesmond Rd., Newcastle 2. For details, sleeping space etc. contact Newcastle Anarchists (see below).

* **ANARCHIST WORKERS ASSOCIATION** public meeting on 'Russia 1917: Lessons for the Workers Movement', 27th Oct. at Centreprise, 136 Kingsland High St., London E8 - 7.30pm.

* **NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN** march in Birmingham, 29th October, to protest against lack of facilities and that NHS only handles 5% of abortions in that area - the lowest national figure. Ring NAC, 30 Camden Road, London NW1 (01-485 4303) for more details.

* **CONFERENCE ON ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM**, 22/23rd Oct. in Manchester. Contact Manchester SWF, c/o Grassroots, 109 Oxford Rd., Manchester 1.

* **INTERNATIONAL ANTI-NUCLEAR DEMO** at Kalkar (Germany), site of 290 MW fast breeder reactor. Details and transport arrangements from Box 17, Rising Free, 182 Upper St., London N1.

* **68 CLUB** at the new West Indian Sports and Social Club/Community Centre, Westwood St., Moss Side, Manchester 14. Sundays 8pm; 2nd Oct. Film: La Cecilia. 9th Oct. Club Benefit. 16th Oct. Discussion of Repression in Federal Germany.

* **23rd Oct.** William Tyndale - History of a Struggle, Terry Ellis relates the story. 30th Oct. Jill Norris on the working class women's suffrage movement in Lancashire, 1895-1905. Admission: 20p; non-members 35p (except 9th Oct.).

* **LIBERTY HALL** at The Odd Spot, Bold St., Liverpool. Sunday 8pm; 2nd Oct. "Care and Control" by Gay Sweatshop theatre co-op. 9th Oct. Film: Family Life. 27th Oct. **SON OF A GUN**, Sidewalk Theatre production at Half Moon Theatre, 27 Allie Street, E1. Oct. 4-8 at 8pm.

CONTACTS

* **RIISING FREE** urgently needs more full-time and part-time workers (sorry no wages). If you think you can help come into the shop and see us or phone. 1182 Upper Street, Islington. 01-359 3765.

* **THE PRISONERS RIGHTS ACTION GROUP**, c/o Grass Roots, 109 Oxford Rd., Manchester 1, are investigating conditions in Strangeways Prison. If you can help or give information write to above or phone 061-248 6640 (Mon-Fri) between 10am and 4.30pm and ask for Ted.

* **NEWHAM ALTERNATIVES PROJECT**, Free legal advice sessions every Wednesday, 6.30 - 8.30pm at 56 Dames Rd., London ET. (01-555 0289).

SEX/POL

* **FROM INSIDE PATRIARCHY:** Women Writers and Our Lives. A WEA Course on women's literature, meeting Tuesdays (starting Oct. 4th) from 7pm-9pm at Camden Women's Centre, Rosvixen Lodge, Lyndhurst Rd., NW3. Novels and poetry by women will be the focal point for discussion of women's economic, social and emotional survival. Contact Terry (01-722 9391) or Jill (01-359 9791).

* **THE WHOLE THING:** Californian lesbian anarcho-feminist press journal to bring together past, present and future writings on anarcho-feminist "theory" looking for information, suggestions, contributions, writings. P.O. Box 11308, San Francisco, Ca 94117, USA.

* **ANARCHIST GAY LIB GROUP** to put anarchist ideas across within the gay movement. Anyone interested in forming such a group, contact Alan Bray, Flat D, 23 Great James St., London WC1. (01-405 8850) Fri. eve./weekends.

* **ANARCHIST WOMEN'S NETWORK**, Contact Sophie Laws, 43 Grosvenor Terrace, Bontham, York. Issue 2 of Anarchist Feminist Newsletter (special A/F meeting report) 10p plus postage.

* **AN ARCHO-FEMINISM**, 2 statements from America. (21p inc. post). **FEMINISM AS ANARCHISM** by Lynne Farrow (25p inc. post). **ANARCHISM: THE FEMINIST CONNECTION** by Peggy Komesger - out August. 30p inc. post, from Black Bear Anarchism Feminist imprint, 76 Peckham Road, London SE5.

* **AN ARCHO-FEMINIST NOTES**, c/o Karen Johnson, 1821-8th St., Des Moines, Iowa. Quarterly publication. Donation asked for.

MUSIC

* **WORDS & MUSIC** - at the Almost Free Theatre, Sun 23rd Oct. for seven days. See elsewhere in this issue for full programme.

* **CLAPPERCLAW** folk group available for benefits/socials - expenses only. Contact 87 Bulwer Road, London E11. (01-552-8386).

* **MUSIC FOR SOCIALISM**, 30 Hornsey Park Road, London N8. 01-888 1161.

Zero

Feminism and the Italian Left "...anarchist women must start facing their problems seriously in their own ways...."

