

# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

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**INSIDE: PRISONERS POLITICAL? AB2. Review: RAVACHOL**

## British Army - Out!

IS IT accident or good timing or simple irony that the hunger strike in Ireland is coming to crisis point just before Christmas.

If it is deliberate timing, then we must assume that the IRA are content to appeal only to their own religious community, for there is not the slightest doubt that the English - upper, middle and working class - will continue to feed their faces to the best of their economic capacity and won't give a damn about how many Irish starve themselves to death.

Although British troops are concerned in this imperialist exercise in Northern Ireland, it must be remembered that so far there is no conscription in this country, so nobody is in the army against his or her will; every English casualty is a professional who went in with his eyes open and accepted the risks and hazards of his chosen job.

'Chosen job', of course, is a simplistic term for an occupation accepted when there was precious little other choice, but the work ethic and the alienation bred by capitalism - plus, perhaps, parental tradition - make a well-paid job as a soldier (and today they are well-paid) quite an attractive proposition to an ignorant youth. Our education system takes care of the ignorance.

Being a professional means that he has sold himself to the state. And it is quite impossible after 10 years of struggle in Northern Ireland - and this is only the current wave of struggle, forgetting the three hundred years of bitterness preceding it - to believe any other than that the present situation suits the British state very well thank you.

Why? Because the state has to maintain an army, the first, but unadvertised function of which is to defend the state against its own people. Outside enemies are always useful - as long as the damage they

can do is not too great - to provide the justification for the army. But basically the army is an extension of the police - to maintain the status quo. Whoever heard of the police bringing off a coup d'état. It's when the army changes over that the state is vulnerable, indeed, defenceless.

Having to maintain an army, then - what is the British state, at the present time, to do with it? Having lost all the old imperial regions where the army could keep itself in trim, winning glory to enhance its reputation at home, it is forced back on its own doorstep. No more North West Frontier; no more Zulu wars; even, no more Sommes or Waterloos.

With conventional wars now outdated by the immensity of nuclear conflict, and with modern technology making traditional capitalist divisions in society more and more nonsensical, with, in fact, the aims of our social revolution more realisable - what is to be the function of the army?

We suggest: more intrinsic to capitalist class society. While a handful of technicians with fingers on buttons can take care of the inter-continental threats - which are all more for internal consumption anyway, for it's the wolf at the door that brings the sheep to heel - it takes the gun on the street to keep the people indoors, where the media brainwash them.

We have discussed in these columns before the militarisation of the police. We must not forget the 'policification', if there is such a word - and there is now - of the military.

The conflicts of the 21st century are going to be internal conflicts. States and super states will come to terms. Zones of influence will be - are already, surely - agreed upon. The internal affairs of other tyrannies must be left alone. Think now of Poland, Hungary, Chile, South Korea

and ... Ireland.

The official IRA was allegedly Marxist, sympathetic to communism, but there was no hint that Russia would support any action. The support for the Provisionals has come more from Irish Catholics in America - not playing international politics, but dredging up nationalistic and religious memories of the dominating, hateful class at home.

The Irish had better, therefore, reconcile themselves to the fact that there will be no support from the British people - exploited as they are by the same ruling class - until they face the repression of that ruling class by the same methods that are already employed in Northern Ireland. That unhappy 'province' - forgive us that word - is not only at the sharp end of the economic depression which is hitting us all to some degree or other.

It is, more importantly, providing the practice ground for the army. Every soldier in the British army is getting practice in what are called 'Low Intensity Operations', which means not experience in a battlefield in the old sense of the word; no military barrages and then over the top in a mass bayonet charge at similar masses of cannon fodder, but the day-to-day surveillance and muted brutality of a military-policing operation geared to keeping down a civilian population.

To this extent, being cynical, the Irish militants are providing a very useful service for the British. If they didn't have an Ireland, what would they do?

It is on the basis of this realisation that anarchists should carry on the struggle over here. Having rejected, or never having considered, English nationalism, we can hardly be expected to get enthusiastic about Irish, Welsh, Scottish, African or even Polish nationalism. To hell

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with all that! What matters is the freedom of self-determination of persons everywhere and, having said that, we must realise the common struggle of persons everywhere if that is to be achieved.

What the Irish - divided among themselves most painfully as they

are - will do with their self-determination is their affair. Our business is to see clearly that they are being used by our oppressors to perfect their techniques for oppressing us.

Weapons are being honed in Ireland, ready for use against the English working class. It is in our self-

interest for this to be stopped, quite apart from principles or concepts of solidarity.

We might not have seen this quite so clearly ten years ago (see FREEDOM, 20 March 1971) but the call we made then is still the right call now: BRITISH ARMY - OUT!

# Prisoners Political?

BELFAST Anarchist Collective's open letter to FREEDOM, published in its last issue, expressed 'anger and despair' at the line taken by the editors on political status for the H-block hunger strikers in the Maze and in Armagh.

It is clear from what they write that BAC is more angry with the lack of response of British anarchists to the repression in Northern Ireland in general than it is about FREEDOM's views on political status. However, we feel the question of status is one that must not be evaded and that, at the risk of repetition, our views may require a little further elucidation.

What, then, does special status mean? As far as we can tell, it means a manner of self-organisation within the prison, or camp, whereby the inmates are able to associate together, arrange their own daily routine, wear whatever clothes they want, and are responsible to their own delegates or leaders, thus having only indirect contact with the prison authorities.

Once such a mode of organisation becomes general, it evidently ceases to be special, and to join or express unconditional solidarity for the awarding of special status, rather than to advocate self-management as a general rule, seems to us to be a nonsense in anarchist terms.

The argument that the IRA prisoners in Northern Ireland constitute a special group and should be treated as such, is not a strong one. Much is made of the special discrimination meted out to them by the Diplock courts, but even these are not so constituted that they make the people who appear before them more special than a majority of defendants appearing in courts throughout the world. (\*)

On this basis other repressive factors are of equal validity to the argument for special status - for instance solitary confinement as a means of destruction of the personality (as in West Germany) or detention without trial for years at a time (as in Italy), and so on. Yet it is

worth noting that there have been divisions within the Red Army Faction and the 2 June Movement in Germany, some maintaining, like the Irish republicans, that they should be treated as prisoners of war, others refusing the concept, or at least refusing to divorce themselves from the situation of the mass of prisoners.

Likewise in Italy, there are prisoners of the Red Brigades who claim political status as soon as they are arrested, while others - many autonomists, for instance - state that they will not claim such status.

It is simply not good enough for BAC to tell us, when we state that wherever in the world we look we can find reasons for giving prisoners political status, "You don't have to look far!" Our point is this. Firstly, inevitable confusions would arise from a decision by anarchists to champion one lot of prisoners as 'special' against another who, while equally political, do not want different status. Secondly, support for a special status campaign would lead to the untenable situation whereby anarchists would find themselves sitting in judgement on who may legitimately be considered special, and who merely common. They would find the boundary between the two shifting inexorably backwards. They would increasingly find that there can be no clear differentiation between them. And this is because of the way anarchists have always seen the world - as a zone of war not between a number of power groups or aspiring power groups, but between people and states.

Thus, for instance, once anarchists supported special status for the Irish republicans (and the Ulster unionists?) there would be no reason not to support a similar demand, should it be made, for Tartan Army prisoners or Welsh nationalists; and after that, why not for Asians or blacks imprisoned by magistrates' courts after race riots or on 'sus', or for women imprisoned by male judges for killing a man in sheer

self-defence or desperation? And so on. Is the war for a united Ireland more important than the war against patriarchy or racism? Is conscious political motive for an act more crucial to the argument than unconscious or semi-conscious rebellion against repression, in whatever form? Is tyranny over a large minority in N. Ireland somehow worse than tyranny over a smaller group or single individual in any country? If so, how can it be quantified? How can we judge?

Manifestly such considerations do not mean that there are not many ways in which anarchists can express solidarity - and actively - with the hunger-striking prisoners in Ireland. Anarchists should press the government to drop all punitive measures against the prisoners and to abolish the Diplock system; in wider terms, they should spread information about what is going on in Ireland, as BAC request. At the Oxford meeting earlier this year, the holding of an anarchist conference on Ireland was suggested and we hope this can take place in 1981 and that it will signal a real advance in our understanding of the situation and ability to do something about it.

What, however, we refuse to do is to put our very anarchism in jeopardy by lagging along behind the left, and joining in the clamour for an essentially elitist slogan. The anarchist response to the demand for special status is the demand for self-organisation for all who wish it, including the republican prisoners. If the latter will not see and accept the justice of such a demand, then so be it.

EDS

(\*) BAC were particularly upset about the reference to magistrates' courts. But they did not read carefully enough. We wrote that 'in the final analysis... there is not such a big difference' and we stick to this. What we meant was not a comparison in terms of severity or brutality, but a reference to the fact that all courts of law are class-based and that injustice is built into them.



# ANGRY BRIGADE II

This communiqué was sent to **FREEDOM** by the Angry Brigade II.

ALMOST TEN YEARS have passed since the political situation in the UK called for the type of direct action as practised by the Angry Brigade. The wheel has turned full circle and we are obliged, once again, to prepare to defend ourselves against the provocations of a virulently anti-working class state and its multinational manipulators, such as the Steering Committee of the Bilderberg Group and the Trilateral Commission.

Since the Thatcher government came to power, we have seen a rapid increase in the power of the repressive organs of the state, with a correspondingly obsessive and paranoid emphasis on perfecting its machinery for 'counter-subversion' and 'law and order', political euphemisms for the control and elimination of all real, potential and imaginary dissidents. The increased expenditure on police, prisons and army, the constant surveillance of trade unionists, harassment of investigative journalists, whistleblowers, environmental, ecological and community activists, the extended deployment of the SAS in Northern Ireland with their assassinations of outspoken socialists such as Miriam Daly and, probably, Noel Little and Ronnie Bunting, the overt terrorising and intimidation of anyone remotely connected with the struggle in Northern Ireland, the emphasis on population control in police training and the increased number of armed police patrolling the streets of Britain, the new picket laws, etc; all these things indicate that the consensus in British politics is rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

This growth in state security is necessitated by the political and economic policies of the Thatcher government and its supporters.

They know only too well that the economic situation is unlikely to improve without a reversal of their policies. This, in turn, is going to lead to large-scale social unrest. There are no workable economic remedies available to them within the monetarist ideology with which they are obsessed. Unemployment will rise steeply, inflation will worsen, more factories and businesses will close down or go bankrupt, apathy and tension will pervade social relationships, the trade union leadership will be unable to restrain the rank and file, people will get angrier and more frustrated, and stronger and more desperate forms of control will have to be imposed as the system starts to fail, go hopelessly out of control, and finally collapse altogether.

Why now and not before? The late sixties saw a similar period of strident anti-working class hysteria and legislation which led up to the infamous and unsuccessful attempt to control organised labour through the Industrial Relations Bill. This led to the downfall of the Heath government. Having failed to break the labour movement through the courts, the Tories have now turned to a more oblique approach: a deliberate policy of mass unemployment! No doubt the Thatcher clique will be strengthened in their resolve with the election of Reagan, and begin to intensify their policies with each concession made to them.

We are no vanguard, nor do we claim to lead or represent anyone other than ourselves in our resistance to the arrogance of the present government and the misery, frustration and despair created by its selfish and inhuman policies. It is simply that we as individuals are approaching the limits of our tolerance. We see ourselves as an expression of the anger, resistance and hope created by the impeding

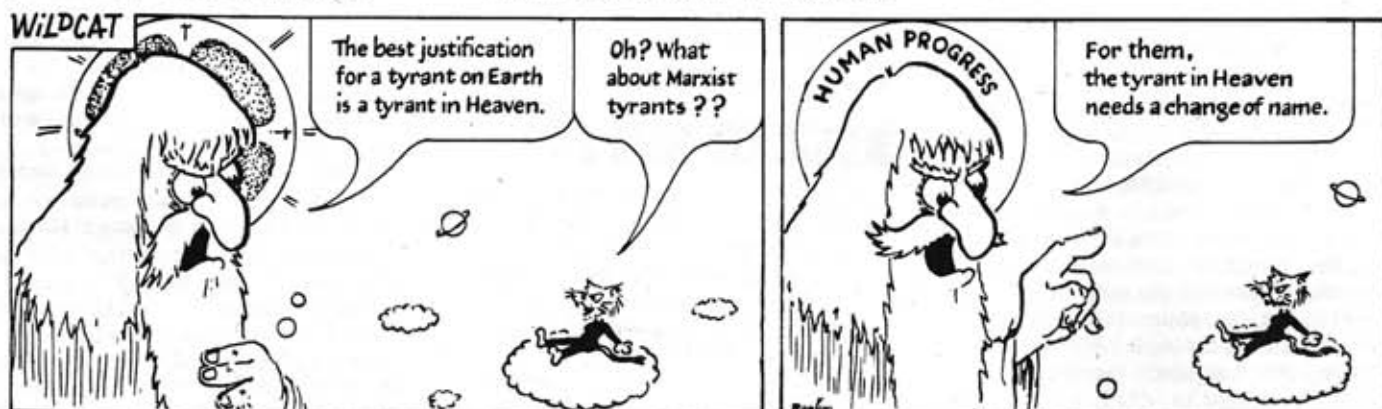
failure of this rapidly polarising society.

In the past ten years we have operated mainly in France, Italy, Spain, Germany and North America, and have acquired new skills, expertise, personnel, and access to information sources. The more recent actions of Action Directe indicate the strategy and tactics we should employ. As before, there will be no 'mindless terror', no deaths, no hijackings, no hostage-taking of innocent bystanders. We have nothing in common with the tactics or policies of the Red Army Fraction, Red Brigades, PLO, or any other authoritarian group committed to a struggle for power or control of the state at the expense of the man and woman in the street. The social revolution will not be built on the corpses of the old rulers or their functionaries; it can only be built by people taking control of their own lives, asserting their independence, their rejection of the state, of power politics, of authoritarian lifestyles and the competitive values of consumerism forced on us from birth to death.

In fighting these evils we also have positive aspirations. We wish for a self-managed society as the only possible basis on which we can build a more just, equitable and libertarian world for ourselves and our children. The increased power of the state, the aggressive confrontation policies of the Thatcher government, the breakdown of free collective bargaining and consensus in everyday life, the ever-increasing estrangement of people from the decision-making processes, etc., indicate only one course of action. We must reject and resist this inexorable erosion of our humanity and hopes with whatever means are available to us.

WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT - DO YOU?

- THE ANGRY BRIGADE II  
(I.R.S.M.)





# CHAPMAN

WHO WOULD have thought that one death could apparently unite something like three-quarters of the Western world in mindless adulation of the victim? The last person to go even close to that was Robert Kennedy and before that it was his big brother.

And yet John Lennon gets shot and absolutely everyone goes apeshit. OK, I admit, it upset me when I heard about it but wouldn't it be fun if the Dead Kennedy s did a song along the lines of 'Ono, Chapman, what have you done?'

The death of John Lennon has presented us with the most spectacular (sic) example yet of absorption of protest by the society of the spectacle, as well as an opportunity for all the lefty rags to show how similar they are to that same society.

Remember how, not all that long ago, the Beatles were 'shocking' and shock horror stories about them and their friends were all over the papers? Then they started getting

a bit political, so that became the 'shock horror' and some of the music became 'alright in the right place'. And then after the split nearly everything they'd done became 'cultural', and Paul went mainstream while John went more political. Then John went into hibernation while Paul went more and more mainstream. There was nothing left to worry about. John gets shot and all those 'wonderful' memories of Beatlemania get revived (certain songs excluded and 1970-1974 not talked about). And all this from the very same press who told us that the Beatles were the end of western civilization as we know it. (If only...)

In the meantime the left wing rags all claim him as a sympathiser, (even those who once labelled rock music as deviationist etcetera) and quote his lyrics at us without mentioning that his personal fortune amassed writing the said lyrics amounted to something like £100,000,000, and I for one have never heard of him doing much to give it to starving people in Kampuchea or even reducing the price of his records. And I've never met anyone personally who actually is so

rich that they buy their five year old son a real aeroplane with a real pilot and why are we treating these people as heroes?

He wrote some great political songs but they are now part of the system (that is, of course, assuming that they were ever anything different.) How else do we explain the Amerikkkan DJ who played 'Imagine' and called it 'one of the few non-political songs on the album'?

In the meantime some poor guy who probably didn't have a clue what he was doing is being called a 'lunatic' by all parties and all the world mourns the death of a hero, while howling for the blood of his killer and won't be satisfied until justice is done and seen to be done, not to mention plenty of public mourning for good old John Lennon, everyone's favourite working class hero.

Now, I wouldn't go so far as to say that Mark Chapman was actually paid by the CIA or anything, but there's nothing like false sense of security and unity just before a war.

DS

## A CENTRE

ABOUT 35 people attended the Anarchist Centre meeting at the Conway Hall on 11 December. Ronan Bennett reported that there were about £4000 in the kitty, about £3000 of which had come from the Crass/Poison Girls record, but that the money didn't seem to be coming in as fast as before, probably because apparently nothing is happening.

Premises which might be suitable have been found in Farringdon Street (or was it Road?) but as it is a double property and the centre would only need half of it, it isn't certain whether the negotiations will be successful.

There was a long discussion about the need to involve as many people as possible in the centre, both to get it off the ground in the first place and to keep it going once it's opened. Two concrete suggestions came out of this. One, that everyone who lives in London should keep their eyes open for any property that might be suitable - warehouses, derelict churches (!) etc - ring the relevant estate agent to see if it's still available, what the floor area and other facilities are (what's wanted is a hall with at least 15,000 square feet and a

couple of other rooms besides), and then, if it sounds hopeful, to ring Ronan (leave a message at Rising Free: 01-359-3788) and give him all the details.

The second, and in the short term probably the most hopeful, suggestion was that the Centro Iberico in Harrow Road should be approached with a view to mounting Anarchist Centre meetings, gigs etc. there. The idea was that as there is already a large building squatted by anarchists, it would be a good idea to make use of it, if we can, so that the Centre can be seen to be doing something real, rather than just existing as a pipe dream in the heads of a few Utopians. There will be a meeting early in the new year to report back on the discussions with Centro Iberico. In the meantime, keep your eyes peeled and watch this space.

V.

## KILNER HOUSE

ON Wednesday, 10 December Sheriff Black called at Kilner for a pre-arranged meeting to 'discuss' the eviction. He was accompanied by a policeman in a pin-stripe suit. Black named Monday, 5 January as the day he expects us all to leave. We remain prepared.

S.H.

## THE PRINCE - A DENIAL

We have not been given to understand today that Prince Charles is not to wed Miss Gladys Boggins of Walworth. A non-communicque from Buckingham Palace has specifically not confirmed or denied that the Prince has been meeting Miss Boggins in a railway siding near Stratford. (That's Stratford-atte-Bow, not Stratford on Avon, where speculation is still not rife about the Prince not seeing the Hon Lady Hathaway-Shotley any more, though they saw a lot of each other during the heat wave during the cold spell last autumn, according to an unreliable source from the Palace.)

A well-known Buck-House watcher from the Hippodrome, however, has let it be known in no uncertain terms that since white Protestant virgins are hard to find, it must not be assumed that a black Catholic, or even a brown Hindu, would not necessarily be quite unsuitable to be considered adversely, matrimony-wise, in view of the undoubted



need not to have an heir to the throne who is not exactly Jewish, while acknowledging that it would cement relations with an oil-producing state (or oil relations with a cement-producing state) to vaguely consider an alliance with a Muslim lady, or even a Muslim gentleman, or even a muslim eunuch providing a proper state wedding could be mounted and Miss Dierdre Ramsbottom of Smethwick could be kept quiet, no doubt in consideration of a princely sum, heh, heh.

Meanwhile the champers is perhaps not yet on ice to celebrate the non-announcement of a disengagement and so the wedding bills will probably not chime till the Spring,

when a not-so-young man's fancy might lightly turn to thoughts of polo with or without a hole in the middle and the Queen might very well, or not as the case might be, call in desperation a groom from the royal stud farm and the nation can release its bated breath with a huge thigh of relief or relief, safe in the knowledge that the dynasty may or may not go on in the Mountbatten tradition which as history has already shown may or may not go on for ever however much the hoi-polloi might be diverted from their real problems which really are really non-existent compared with the choosing of a royal bride.

UP/YRS



## FREEDOM PARTY

There is going to be a party at Freedom on Saturday December 20th at about midday to which all readers of Freedom and their friends, enemies, distant relatives etcetera will be tolerated, on condition that they come along in an amusing mood with lots of spirit(s).

This is nothing whatsoever to do with the events occurring five days later.....

# Citizens Band Anarchy

I HAVE always believed that technology can be subversive. Technical changes occur faster than the inefficient grinding on of State apparatus can keep up with.

Who would have thought that in two years or so, a quarter of a million people would ignore the law - and go on to do their thing regardless. This is now the estimated number of illegal Citizens Band radio operators in Britain.

C. B. radio grew rapidly in the U. S. A. and became a major network of totally spontaneous inter-communications between people. Although legalised there, no amount of State monitoring could ever cope with the regulation and control of so many millions of users from teenagers to retired people, and Truckers to prostitutes plying a trade 'on the air'. The whole network, became a self-regulating, or 'cybernetic' growth, with all the fascination of supra-state, or direct action spontaneity in action.

The pressure for such a convivial tool to spread far and wide has resulted in at least 61 countries establishing a legal C. B. radio network for their peoples. The USSR is one, other Iron Curtain countries also have C. B., most European countries allow it, but Britain does not. One attitude of the paternalistic authorities we have is the comment by Lord Wells-Plestel, Minister of State in the Home Office: 'The Government must recognise the serious disadvantages of allowing large numbers of people to communicate with each other.' This amazing

statement was a public one, it is a powerful argument for the view that we have a remarkably repressive Government underneath the 'kid-gloves' of the British State.

But people have voted with their feet. Hundreds of thousands have not primarily broken the law - they have ignored it. Does this mean that thousands of Anarchists have now suddenly turned up? Of course not, but the willingness of all these people to see the folly of waiting like little lambs to the slaughter for the State to 'allow' them the freedom to communicate, and when people read the rubbish from public persons like the above quote, many may realise that extension of the questioning to the whole apparatus of State oppression by law is really on the cards.

What are Anarchists doing to move into this fruitful area? Not very much from my viewpoint. The C. B.ers are rapidly forming Clubs with hundreds of members.

These should be a fine source of new members to the anarchist movement. It is remarkable how C. B.ers who perhaps have never heard of Anarchism in any of its guises, nevertheless immediately apply the fundamental characteristics. The State extracts fines up to £400 in successful prosecutions. The Mutual Aid networks of the C. B. clubs help pay these, and help offset the effects of the confiscation of the rigs. It costs the State up to £4,000 to carry through the case, so there is no hope that the eradication of the C. B. phenomenon can ever be achieved by legal State apparatus.

The new 'breakers' coming onto the unofficial C. B. frequency at 27 MHz is a much higher figure than the number of prosecutions.

One C. B.er, using his pseudonym 'Mack the Hack' has written, 'So why does a 40 year old man with two teenage children and a big dog that will bite if anyone touches me or my property (HO warning) play with C. B. radio? Of course I am aware of the consequences if I get caught . . . . is it such a crime to modulate on 27 MHz, what harm does it do . . . . we have been told many times by the powers that be that it would never be legalised on 27 MHz. Did they not once say that we would never go to war against Germany, or that we would never be allowed to join the Common Market, or better still they said that women would never be allowed to vote?' I wonder if this 'C. B. Breaker' realises how near to our position these observations bring him?

Altogether the British State representatives, by their stonewalling attitude and paranoia have done Anarchism a potential service by introducing thousands and thousands of people to direct action, networking and the power of ignoring the law. The paternalistic and arrogant reaction on the part of these people in power, has yet again pointed up to their psychotic state of 'god-like decision making for other lesser mortals.'

I suggest we give any mutual support to this movement which would help to raise awareness that when freedom is taken with determination, the 'authorities' can do little about it. Ultimately the derision in which these power hogs will be held will hasten their 'withering away'.

KEN SMITH





## 'Melmoth'

SO MELMOTHS, you insist that art, if it is to have any subversive value (and what value can art possess if it is not subversive?) should consist primarily of a revelation both to the artist and to the public and should consequently represent a communicative event which surpasses the sterility of the cliché and the pose. Bizarreness or weirdness of imagery cannot, as often happens, be mechanistically correlated with the intrusion of the surreal which manifests itself above all in terms of the explosive impact of its content.'

So why in the drawers in the wastelands illustrated by the dream are there the bones of burning stars illuminating the idle wind? to name but a few.

Surrealism is the corpse of a stillborn attempt to create a marvellous compensation for daily misery. Surrealists blazoned all the right slogans on the walls about seizing desire, re-creating creativity etcetera etcetera and all they managed to create were a few pretty images as a hint of the marvellous world of dreams realized. But what has it achieved? Where can it go from 1924? Nowhere is the answer because it started in the wrong place.

Yes we have dreams, yes we need dreams; but from the expression of dreams to the realization of dreams is the vital step that the Surrealists in general, and Melmoth in particular as a particularly dead example of it, can never make because they never tried to understand what is between expression and realization and why it isn't moving. The why and the what is fear, Melmoths, something we are mostly too scared to talk about.

Melmoths, I want to know why I'm scared of myself, I want to know why I'm scared of other people, I

want to know why I used to get out of bed and put my clothes on at 7.30 five mornings a week in the cold when every nerve in my body was screaming 'Get back to bed where you belong', and why I used to run for that stupid train to get to work without breakfast and why I didn't smash all the machines in the factory when I wanted to.

I want to know WHY, Melmoths, why am I afraid? And once I know why then what do I do about it? and your spectacular posturing and excessive pre-occupation with absurd images ad infinitum help me in that not one iota.

History repeats itself, according to many well known plagiarists, first as tragedy and secondly as farce. 1924 was the tragedy because they missed the point. 1980 is Melmoth.

DS

## Outdated Individualist

Dear Freedom

Parker implies by a quote from Enzo Martucci, that the essential quality the distinguishing characteristic of anarchist thought is the emphasis it gives to discovering those paths of creative action 'most useful for the realisation of the individual' (22 Nov. 1980 - p. 9). Because Stirner is known for the singular emphasis he places upon the individual and his freedom to think and to act as he pleases he can be regarded as an anarchist thinker.

But what anarchists mean when they speak about realizing the latent virtues and talents of individuals is not what Stirner means.

What anarchists mean by this liberty for self-expression and development was clearly stated by Bakunin:

Man completely realizes his individual freedom as well as his personality only through the individuals who surround him, and thanks only to the labor and the collective power of society. Without society he would surely remain the most stupid and the most miserable among all the other ferocious beasts ... Society, far from decreasing his freedom, on the contrary creates the individual freedom of all human beings. Society

is the root the tree and liberty is its fruit.

(from Sam Dolgoff, Ed., Bakunin on Anarchism New York 1972, p. 236)

What Stirner means by liberty is obviously different than this.

Parker, at one point, speaks of Stirner's advocacy of an 'anarchy of individuals'. What can this notion mean? Is it any more meaningful, or relevant to anarchists, than Stirner's own notion of an 'association of egoists'? I think not.

Parker is quite right when he says that Stirner's 'anarchism is thoroughly Individualist'. But surely an approach that so neglects the collective element of anarchism must be rejected by proponents of an anarchist point of view today? No doubt Stirner has a certain place in what historians might regard as the 'anarchist tradition'. But how can Parker quote with approval John Carroll's claim that Stirner's 'brand of anarchism (is) the one most congruent to today's situation'?

JIM COOK

Canada

## Stirner's Religion

Dear Editors,

In his article on Stirner (FREEDOM 22 November, 1980), S.E. Parker writes: 'Stirner reminds us that the word "religious" comes from a Latin word which means "to bind".' In fact, the derivation of the word 'religious' is uncertain. It may come from another Latin word, meaning 'to gather together'. If so, a truly religious person is one whose energy is gathered together, not dissipated in conflict: a religious person is psychologically integrated, whole (the word 'holy' basically means whole).

Stirner's teaching often seems religious in that sense. For example, defining the essential difference between the egoist and the non-egoist, he writes:

'You (the non-egoist) cut your identity in two and exalt your "proper self", the spirit to be ruler of the paltrier remainder, while he (the egoist) will hear nothing of this cutting in two...'

Stirner, of course, always speaks of religion contemptuously; but he is referring to religion as society



understands it and organizes it - which is, indeed, a 'bind'.

S.E. Parker belongs to the 'permanent protest' school of individualist-anarchist thought, which views society as a permanent tribalistic tyranny, against which a tiny minority of exceptional people will be forever struggling to assert their separate individualities. I doubt if that view is to be found in Stirner.

True, Stirner was neither a socialist nor an idealist. But he never ruled out the possibility that the integrated individual might, in the natural course of events, bring about an integrated world.

Stirner was, certainly, a rebel against the tyranny of tribalistic society. Such a rebel feels himself to be an outsider, alone, and is therefore apt to emphasize his separate individuality, as Stirner did. But he may go on to discover the extraordinary fact that aloneness basically means all-oneness - a psychological state in which, not only is there no internal conflict, but the barrier between oneself and the external world has disappeared.

Given that state, human beings could live in harmony without tyranny. Tribalistic society (which is always disintegrating anyway, social religion and morality being phoney), would finally dissolve, and the truly religious and moral sense of oneness would produce real integration.

Stirner may have been making that extraordinary psychological discovery. S.E. Parker thinks there is no evidence to suppose so; I think there is. But, in any case, that discovery - which can only be made by the individual as such - now seems essential for human survival.

FRANCIS ELLINGHAM

Bristol.

## Support Carl Harp

Dear Friends,

On May 12 1979, while confined in the Washington State Penitentiary I was denied all due process and administratively segregated PENDING criminal disposition in a hostage taking incident on May 9, 1979 in the penitentiary. On June 13, 1980 all criminal charges were dismissed by the court at the request of the administration on

the grounds in part that the matter could be handled on an institutional level administratively. I have had no due process concerning the matter since and by law should be in the general population of the Washington State Penitentiary or any prison I'm confined in from Washington State if not in Washington State. I have been found guilty of nothing institutionally and/or criminally around the hostage taking incident, but am classified here as a threat to security due to the hostage taking incident in Washington State. The hostage taking incident is moot by law on any institutional level due to the above stated reasons and violation of time limitations institutionally in both Washington and California State. I cannot in any way be punished and/or restricted for what does not legally exist and for what I have never been found guilty of, legally or otherwise. My very transfer to this prison is illegal for one of the reasons used to justify the transfer was this threat to security. The other reason for this transfer was I, after over a year now, still need protection from Washington State Correctional Officers/Staff they claim. It is also claimed I requested this transfer and that is a damned lie. On May 9, 1979 I publicly and officially requested Federal protection and custody from Washington State Correction Officials and Staff because I feared for my well being and life after exposing all the inhumanity and injustice in the Washington State Penitentiary on May 9, 1979 and their part in it. Against my will I was transferred to this the most racist, gang-run, violent, unfit for human habitation death trap in Amerikkka where the longer I'm here the chances of my survival literally or otherwise decrease. First they beat me half to death and rape me with a riot baton on July 8, 1979, for May 9, 1979 and other legal and/or political work I have done in prison then they send me here to be hurt again serious or killed outright for it and for exposing the beating and rape job. Too high, but little or no help so maybe they will succeed we'll see. More than a few people know this who should be doing something about it legally or otherwise yet are doing nothing.

I don't know how to handle this except try with what help I've got to do something about it myself. I fear I and what help I have got is not enough. It's so obvious what's

going on and why, but it seems like nobody cares. When I'm killed or seriously hurt though they will make me their hero, their martyr, and I don't want to be a hero, a martyr - I just want to win, to live, for myself and others like me, for my friends and loved ones. The lack of support is license to murder in this case, and I request that all of you do whatever you can to the best of your ability to make waves, to save me. Needed are protest letters and petitions to everyone in creation you can think of, demonstrations if possible, space in publications, funds, etc. Struggle for/demand my outright release from prison or to at least stop this that is happening and may happen. Thank you for your support in the past and present. I love you all.

Love & Rage,  
CARL HARP

San Quentin

## FUNDS

### DEFICIT FUND

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Previously acknowledged = £1603.72  
TOTAL TO DATE = £1624.99

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TOTAL TO DATE = £829.67



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ernative Lifestyles, 7/355 North-  
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ouri, 65201.

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Hamburg 90.

Schwarzer Faden (Black Thread),  
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Reutlingen.

Libertad Verlag, 6br Schmuck,  
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## AUSTRIA

Liberté, Postfach 86, 1033 Wien.  
Monte Verita, Neustiftgasse 33,  
1070, Wien.

## FRANCE

Federation anarchiste francaise,  
145 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris,  
Telephone (33).1. 805 34 08.

(Groups throughout France.)

Union Anarchiste, 9 rue de l'Ange,  
63000 Clermont Ferrand.

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Mejlgade 48, 8000 Aarhus.

Copenhagen:Anarkistisk Bogcafe,  
Rosenborggade 12, 1130 Kobenhavn K.  
Rainbow Anarchists of the Free City  
of Christiania, c/o Allan Anarchos,  
Tinghuset, Fristaden Christiania,  
1407 Copenhagen.

## NORWAY

Anorg, Hoxtedtv. 31B, 1431 As.  
(publish 'Folkeblad' quarterly.)

## SWEDEN

Syndikalist Forum, Tenstiernas  
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Syndikalistiskt Forum (anarcho-  
syndicalist bookshop), Husagatans  
5, 41302 Gothenburg(tel 031 132504).

## FINLAND

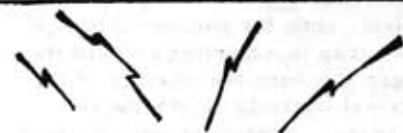
Anarkistiryhmä, c/o Terttu Pesonen,  
Neljas Linja 14 D 83, 00530 Helsinki  
53.

## Odds & Sods

Anarchist Party - (Food Drink  
Music) Thursday 22nd January at  
7.45pm at Livingstone House,  
Livingstone Road, London E15.  
50p in Aid of Breakout .

Anarchism - Students' Role - A  
weekend conference on 28th Febr-  
uary 1981. For further details write  
to NELP Anarchist group, c/o Alan  
Leader, S.U. Office, Livingstone  
House, Livingstone Road, London  
E15.

Friends and comrades interested in  
re-forming the Scottish Libertarian  
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On December 25th 1980 at 3.30pm  
there will be a SPECIAL broadcast  
to commemorate the 338th anni-  
versary of the birth of Isaac New-  
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# Ravachol & Co

## LIFE, DEATH & EXPLOSIONS



This is a translation of *Ravachol & Cia.*, illustrations by Flavio Costantini, text by Pietro Favari, a large format book containing many beautiful full colour illustrations. Published by Quadragono Libri it is in Italian. Available from Freedom Bookshop at £5.95 + 75p postage. Translation by Stefano and Gabriella. The illustrations we have used are from *The Art of Anarchy* published by Cienfuegos Press.





RAVACHOL lies on the bed. Scattered around the floor, a hurricane lamp, crowbars and on the chair a revolver: everything that a burglar needs. While his lover, Madeliene Labret, brushes her hair, Ravachol reads *'Le Père Peinard'* and *'The Wandering Jew'* by Eugene Sue. It was the writings of Eugene Sue that converted Ravachol, in his youth a practising catholic, to anarchism. Francois Claudius Koenigstein, (Ravachol was his mother's maiden name) was born in Saint Chamond in the province of the Loire, on the 14th October 1859, his mother was French and his father Dutch. His childhood and adolescence could have been used as models for those of the characters of Sue, or other novels of which the working class literature of that time was full. The father a steel worker from Isseux, the mother a silk spinner, the father who mistreated his wife and then abandoned her in poverty with four children, the youngest only three months old.

Francois Claudius spent his youth in the countryside working as a shepherd; later he worked as an apprentice dyer. At around eighteen years of age the reading of *'The Wandering Jew'* and some conferences of militant anarchists and collectivists caused him to lose his religious faith and begin thinking about social problems. This book by Eugene Sue, who Gramsci, in his analysis of the popular novel, described as one of the first writers, along with Victor Hugo, of the *'feuilleton'* - 'with an overt ideological/political message', deeply touched the young Ravachol. He will write in his memoirs: 'Reading this book I began to hate the behaviour of Priests: I felt sorry for the two young girls and their companion Dagoberto'.

What were the aspects of *'The Wandering Jew'* that made it the *'Livre de chevet'* of the young worker? The plot is, obviously, as in every good novel, very complicated. The heirs of the Rennepont family must arrive at a house in Paris before midday the 13th February 1832 so as to have the right to participate in the division of the inheritance (enormous of course) of a Huguenot ancestor. Naturally the heirs belong to different social classes and come from all over the world. Amongst them is a sincere Jesuit missionary. The members

of his order, however, use all manner of cunning and evil means in an attempt to make the other heirs disappear, so as to pass the entire inheritance onto their brother who has already promised his part to the order. Two of the heirs, the Indian prince Djalma and Adriana Di Cardoville, a rich and beautiful woman, fall in love and are pushed into committing suicide. The worker Jaques dies an alcoholic. The industrialist Hardy dies in his burning factory. The two orphans and their companion Dagoberto, are drawn, by their spirit of charity, into a hospital for cholera victims and themselves die from the fatal disease. Rodin too dies, the evil Jesuit who planned it all, poisoned by the emissary of a powerful and exotic secret society, the Indian Thugees, dedicated to assassinations. Gabriele, the honest Jesuit missionary, upon discovering the abominable misdeeds of his brothers, destroys the box containing the precious inheritance. *'Deus ex Machina'* of the whole affair is, naturally, the wandering Jew, and his companion, who besides mysteriously helping the heirs of the distressed family, symbolises also the working class and the oppressed minorities. Even though it is full of those fine democratic sentiments of '48 of which Gramsci speaks, the book does not escape the quicksands of the melodramatic *'feuilleton'*, *'larmoyant'*, consolatory, so in the final analysis it is prevalently cathartic.

At the same time Ravachol began to read the anarchist periodicals, *'Le Proletaire'*, *'Le Citoyen de Paris'* and in later years, *'Le Père Peinard'* and *'La Révolte'* which completed, with more detailed political theory, the formation of his political convictions, which up until then had been arrived at intuitively from personal experience and the romantic, sentimental messages of those novels. *'Le Père Peinard'* was written completely in *'argot'* which gave it a powerful penetrating force with regard to its working class readers, selling 20,000 copies an issue. This is how the editor, the anarchist Emile Pouget, presented himself in the first issue: 'What a joke! Look at me here trying to be a journalist. How did it happen? I'll quickly tell you. It had been quite a while that lots of ideas had been filling my head; this tormented me so much I couldn't even sleep. To see this stomach-turning *'fin de siècle'* where all is false, corrupt and criminal, looking on with my mouth shut at all these swindles, Christ! I couldn't stand myself! It made my blood boil to see those government pigs fattening themselves on our sweat, of those *'good'* people there isn't one worth anything. In the House, from the extreme right to the extreme left, they are nothing but a bunch of animals who sit around warming their chairs... Let's be clear, in my role as editor, don't expect me to write like those idiots of the Academy... But those who slave in factories and workshops, all those who sweat blood, and how much they sweat, will understand me. The language I am using is the language of the people. To be understood by the good people, that's all I want, I couldn't care less about the rest.'

With this direct prose, Emile Pouget attacked the judiciary, the army, the financial scandals, the social injustice, the bureaucracy, Parliament, and socialist reformers. *'Le Père Peinard'* was also illustrated with satirical cartoons, the graphic tradition of which can be found in some of Costantini's work.

The periodical, *'La Révolte'* was very different, calmer, it wasn't only meant as an agitational news-sheet but also as an instrument of political and philosophical analysis. *'La Révolte'* boasted of its illustrious contributors, Elise Reclus and Prince Kropotkin, it even had a literary supplement. The editor in chief was Jean Grave, originally a cobbler, later a printer, finally a journalist and anarchist writer, as well as the author of two books, *'Les aventures de Nono'* in 1901, and *'Terre Libre'* in 1908, in which he describes two utopias in edifying terms. The first is a childrens book: Nono, a nine year old boy falls asleep and dreams of living in the land of *'Autonomy'* where education is very important, taught in schools run by the pupils. The second is for young people, describing a libertarian commune created by a group of exiled political refugees on an island, where they find that they have to confront all the problems that arise when coupling anarchist theory with the building of a new society, and the dangers of falling into authoritarianism. Most important is the debate amongst the *'Freeworlders'* about the administration of jus-



tice, whether to introduce a judiciary system and punishment, and what to do with thieves and those who refuse to work or accept the rules of the community. Jean Grave comments, More often than not, if not always, these conflicts showed

their roots to be firmly planted in the remains of their bourgeois education and social structure of the other world, from which, even if their ideas had evolved, they had not yet been able to completely free themselves!

## FIRST CRIMINAL INITIATIVES

BETWEEN times of work, Ravachol alternated with ever longer periods of unemployment. So as not to starve to death, the family soon got used to stealing chickens in the countryside around Saint-Chamond, until he found work in Saint-Etienne, where the whole family then transferred itself. In his spare time, sundays, for five francs, he'd go and play the accordion in workers clubs, imitating the style of the anarchist poet Célestin, known in the Saint-Etienne - Forez region as 'the brutal one', he'd sing social ballads, amongst which this parody of the Marseillaise.

### Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.

Figli della stessa patria, Non sentite questa voce, Che grida alla Democrazia, Allarmi contro la - - Borghesia?	Children of your fatherland, Do you not hear this voice, That shouts to democracy, Warnings, against the - - bourgeoisie?
Combattiamo per - -l'indipendenza E, la sant' libertà, Con lo sforzo della nostra - - potenza	Let us fight for independence And glorious freedom, With the strength of our power.
Trasformiamo la società. Per ristabilire - - l'Egualianza	Let us change this society. To bring back equality
Pieno dev'essere il cuore - - di collera, Ridurre i borghesi in - - polvere	The heart must be full of - -anger, To crush the bourgeoisie into - - dust
Allora invece d'aver - - la guerra, Avremo la Fratellanza. Perche, bisogna su questa - - terra	Then, instead of having war, We can have brotherhood. Why, on this earth must we
Tradirci, quando dovremmo	Betray eachother, when we - -should
Amarci tutti come fratelli? I nostri padroni ci dividano. Scacciamo questi capi - - autoritari,	Love each other as brothers? Our masters divide us. Let us drive out these - -authoritarian rulers,
Fiori di odio e di injustizia, Popolo, abbattiamo le - - frontiere	Born of hatred and injustice, People, let us break down the - - frontiers
Al grido: 'Viva l'Egualianza'	To the cry of 'Long live - equality'.

Besides playing the accordion and writing songs, and due to long periods out of work, Ravachol began his career as an outlaw in Saint-Etienne: bootlegger, forger, and even murderer when he killed a rich old scrooge during a robbery; a member of a religious sect the 'Beghini' who had amassed a large fortune from collected alms. 'In search of a way to survive, and have a bit of money left at the end of the day, and certainly not to live in luxury and hoard gold' as he writes in his memoirs, Ravachol dedicated himself completely to crime. As if obeying Max Stirner's theory that, 'Only through crime can the individual destroy the power of the state'.



The picture shows a robbery that took place in March 1891 at La Côte, a suburb of Saint-Etienne, in the summer residence of the sisters Louise and Jenny Loy. Before leaving the villa Ravachol collects the dining-room chairs, covers them with petrol and sets fire to the house. His actions take on an allegorical meaning. The destruction of the Viennese straw chairs, taken out of the dining room, becomes a symbol of the destruction of bourgeois values by the anarchist individualist. On the floor, beneath the totem of chairs, the broken image of Saint Francois de Sales. Another symbol. The rejection of his catholic education, his childhood and youth.



# DESECRATION OF THE BOURGEOIS MAUSOLEUM

TWO MONTHS later, on the night of the 14-15th May 1891 Ravachol adds a new, and in a certain sense, imaginative, misdeed to his collection. Having discovered that in the cemetery of Saint Jean-Bonnefond, near Saint-Etienne, the Baroness Rochetaillée had been buried six months earlier, presumably along with all her jewels, he decided to steal them by breaking into the tomb. Having removed the tomb stone without anyone noticing, despite the noise caused by the falling slabs, and- 'seeing that I could continue my work uninterrupted'- Ravachol recounts in his memoirs, - 'I jumped down and broke the metal rings surrounding the coffin with a pair of pliers. After managing to break the lid I found a second coffin of lead which I broke open without any difficulty.

'I had brought with me a hurricane lamp that went out before I'd managed to finish the job. I climbed out to look for some dry flowers and faded wreaths with which I could start a fire in the tomb and make some light.' And he continues in the same style as the novels he read as a youth. 'The cadaver was beginning to decompose, I couldn't find the arms, so I tried to undress the corpse and found many little packets on its stomach which I picked up and threw on the floor. They were everywhere, and after finishing this job, I examined the hands, neck and arms, but didn't find a single jewel. Finding nothing and almost suffocating due to the smoke from the flowers and wreaths, I left the tomb and walked out of the cemetery through a door that could only be opened from the inside.'

Ravachol had let himself be tricked by the grandiose mausoleums that the 'fin de siècle' bourgeoisie had built in the cemeteries so as to show their wealth: even if behind the marble tombs and within the coffins of expensive wood one did not find the family jewels, but at the most a 'wooden scapular.

The cemeteries were at their most splendid during the 'Belle Epoque'. The merchant and industrialist bourgeoisie seemed determined to erect as many monuments as there were family tombs, to the glory of their wealth and ideology. Looking at the mausoleum sculptures of the end of the nineteenth century one realises that they are monuments that seem to negate allegory while wistfully trying to copy reality. The statues that represent - the-deceased-on-his-death-bed-surrounded-by-his-loved-ones, the-inconsolable-widow-in-her-mourning-clothes, the-orphan-in-a-childs-sailor-suit, the-broken-hearted-relative, to one side of the immediate family, all of them life size, never larger or smaller, the faces and bodies sculpted indulgently, showing their age, often advanced, blemishes (to the extent of showing details of warts) the clothes represented in marble with obsessive care and attention to detail, going so far as to show the weft and type of material, so as to be able to tell the difference between velvet and cloth. The skill of the sculptor was not measured by his ability to represent the sorrows of death but rather in his ability to reconstruct, lace, jewels, bowler hats, leggings, ribbons, bows, hair styles, veils, tears. Everything, that is, which shows their social standing even in front of sorrow. But in fact this exact and exasperating attention to detail lends itself to allegory, pertaining to, as the epitaphs prove, qualities of hard work, good business sense, solidity, parsimony, the ability to increase the families capital, in one word, money.



Sometimes within the nuclear bourgeois family other, traditional allegoric elements are added. 'Sorrow', 'Pity', 'Death', 'Angels', but their presence is never disturbing. They are allegories that have the same household features and probably the same origins as the buxom caryatids who eclectically hold up the doors of palaces. Their expressions, without having to bring Eros and Thanos into it, rather than evincing some metaphysical pain, resemble ones of post-coital exhaustion.



# A DYNAMITER IN PARIS

AFTER THE desecration of the Baroness Rochetaillee's tomb Ravachol was arrested for the murder, during a burglary, of the rich old scrooge. He managed to escape while being taken to jail, running two kilometers with his hands manacled. He finally left Saint-Etienne with one last theatrical act, a fake suicide, in an attempt to put the police off following him. This consisted of throwing all his clothes into the river Rodano and leaving a note: 'Comrades, not wanting to give pleasure to the bourgeois judiciary, and tired of seeing other comrades victimised on my behalf, I have decided to end it all. My only regret is at not having been able to save the old scrooges money so that others could use it in the service of the cause. Signed: Ravachol.'

Ravachol now dead, Léon Léger is born. With this alias Ravachol moved to Paris.

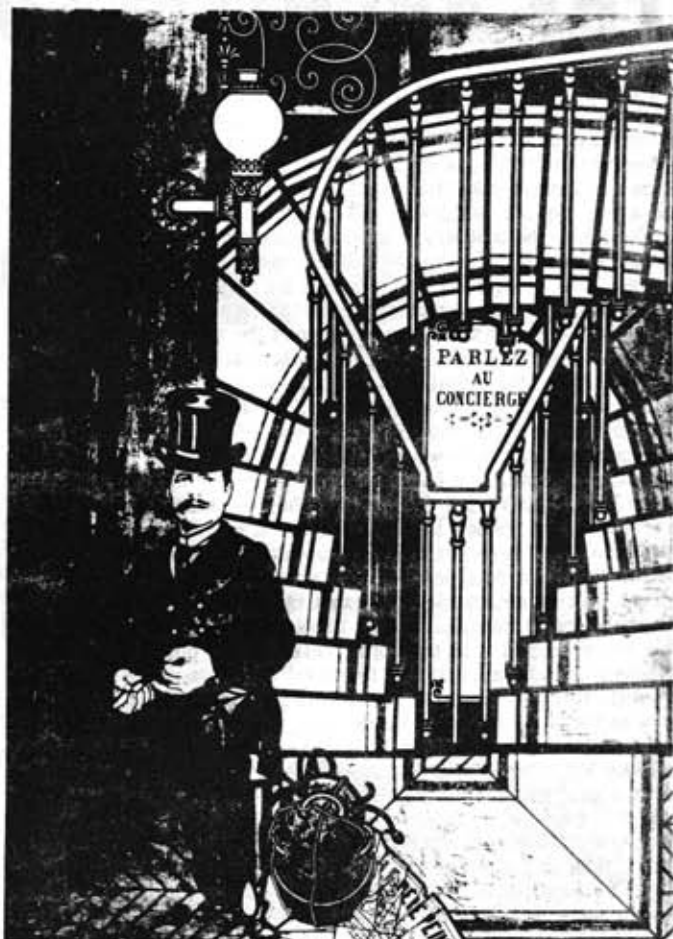
On Mayday 1891, after confrontations between the police and anarchists, the organisers of the demonstration were arrested. Decamps, Dardare, and Leveille, who each received maximum sentences (after the jury had asked for the minimum). The court was presided over by Judge Benoit and the sentence upheld by the deputy public prosecutor of the Republic Bulot, two names that the anarchists would not forget.

The Parisian debut of Léon Léger came as the organiser of the anarchist vendetta against these two representatives of law and order. On the 11th. March Léon Léger, along with his accomplices, including a woman who hid the bomb under her skirt so as to pass the 'La Chappelle' checkpoint, arrived at 136 Boulevard St. Germain, entered without anybody being suspicious, due to his good clothes and demeanour, top-hat, suede gloves, 'redingote', walking stick and Havana cigar. (With which to light the fuse.) Not knowing which floor of the building the judge lived on he stopped on the second and lit the fuse of his crude home made bomb, which consisted of a smelting pot filled with about 50 sticks of dynamite and bits of broken metal which would fly out in all directions when the bomb exploded. There was 40,000 francs of damage done and one person was injured, not Judge Benoit however who at the time was out to lunch.

On 16th. March, with the police still not knowing who to suspect, the informer X2SD, specialised in infiltrating the anarchist movement, sent a report to the prefecture, revealing: Yesterday, the 15th., the correspondent X2SD had occasion to go to Saint-Denis square, Thiers 12, the house of Chaumat, where during a conversation with this persons wife, who seemed somewhat the worse for drink, learnt the following: The attempted assassination at the Boulevard Saint-Germain was carried out by Chaumartin, his wife, and a cousin of theirs, so far known only as Léon Léger living in Saint-Denis, where there should also be the bomb making laboratory.'

'Be patient, be prudent, I am the only person to whom these facts have been made known and if I were to be suspected, their revenge would be terrible...'

Not heeding this warning the police immediately arrested the accomplices of Léon Léger/Ravachol, and he was the only one to escape. So, on his own, he carried out the second attempt: On the 27th. March he took a three-horse-bus, direction Batignolles, got off at 'rue de Clichy' and went to No.30, Bulot's home. Well dressed as ever he had hidden, in



a smart leather bag, 120 sticks of dynamite, more than twice as much as before, and the damage and the casualties were proportionately greater, (170,000 francs worth of damage and seven people wounded) But again the intended victim, Bulot, was not amongst those hurt. From this time on the bourgeoisie was scared: the houses of magistrates and policemen were avoided for fear of further attempts. The newspapers took it up with the government, 'France has fallen into the hands of incapables'-'Le Gaulois'-, who are no more able to defend themselves from enemies within than from the negroes of Dahomey'. 'Le Figaro' published a poem on these events:

Ravachol, chi conosce Ravachol,	Ravachol, who knows Ravachol?
Chi sa come e fatto?	Who knows what he's made of?
E un essere, e un mito, e un-uomo?	Is he a being, a myth, a man?
Si trovo il Reggente, si trova - il Mogol,	Regents can be found, the - the Mogul,
Il rubino, lo zaffiro, si seziona, - anche una tarma;	Rubies, sapphires, moths - can be dissected
Si trova tutto, si trova anche - la dinamite.	Everything can be found - even dynamite.
Ma nessuno sa dove trovare - Ravachol.	But no-one can find Ravachol.

The anarchists to the tune of 'Carmagnole' answered:

'Danse, dynamite!  
Danse, danse vite!  
Dansons et chantons  
Dynamitons, dynamitons!

The spy received a 750 franc bonus and 50 francs for expenses. Ravachol sent a message: 'It doesn't end here, I am Daddy-the-purger, pharmacist of humanity. See you soon, your servant, the Assassin.'



# THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE STATE

Navy-Quay No.2, Ile St. Denis. A long thin island that divides the Seine into two large arms, traversed in its entirety by naval docks. Today it is an industrial area, warehouses, moorings for boats, a little further north the Marches aux Pucies and some suburban boulevards. When Ravachol lived in the area, Ile-St. Denis was still frequented by impressionists, attracted by the scenery and tranquility and its old inns. Costantini's painting shows Ravachol as he crosses the St. Denis bridge. The complex structure of the bridge, an example of the style of metal architecture that typified the building progress of the Second Empire, is one of the monuments that the paleo-bourgeoisie were erecting to themselves. A symbolical juxtaposition, Ravachol, alone in his anarchist individualism, and beneath him a symbol of the society he was fighting against.

That architecture should become one of the most obvious and long lasting representations of power, as well as technological progress, had been the case since the days of Napoleon III: when Victor Baltard finished the building of the Markets in the Halles in 1858, Napoleon himself insisted that the metal structures of the interior as well as the exterior be left visible, not so much due to a sincere love of its construction, but as a monument to exalt the technological possibilities of the material. In order to exploit it as much as possible he employed it in the construction of all public buildings destined for commercial or financial use, wherever there was a public to show them to. And so there sprung up an architecture in the style of Jules Verne, the first examples of which were the tower blocks (the first was the Bon Marche built in 1876 by Eiffel and Boileau). Symbols of the modern economy and the protoconsulism predicted by Zola: 'Il ne restait, au-delà du grand murmure de vente, que le sentiment d'un Paris immense, d'une immense qui toujours fournirait des acheteurs'. The new Louvre and the reading rooms of the Bibliothèque Nationale were completed, the stations of Paris and canals were built. The miracles of production were exalted in those farcical periodic celebrations, the World Fairs. It was for the one in 1889 that Eiffel built his 300mtr tower (highest building in the world till the Empire State Building) which supposedly represents the 'hyperbolic' use of the building material. Totally meaningless in technical and structural terms. (It is enough to realise, for example, that those four great arches at the base are totally useless, supporting no weight, they are hung from beams which they pretend to hold up.) In fact it represents, with its curves and arbitrary shapes, and decorative ribbons entwined in its structure, the umbilical link with the imminent explosion of Art Nouveau. When the tower was finally completed, the press and the public never stopped showing their amazement at 'something unexpected, fantastic, that flatters our own smallness'. During its construction however, the owners of houses nearby started legal proceedings, because, fearing its collapse, nobody would rent any of their property anymore. Not to mention the intellectuals and artists who, in an open letter that appeared in 'Les Temps' of the 14th February 1887, ferociously attacked 'the useless and monstrous tower' as an unbearable offence to the face of Paris. M aupassant, Meissonnier, Garnier, Gounoud, Sardou, Leconte de Lisle and Zola are some of the names that appeared as signatories, who protested 'the Eiffel Tower, which not even commercialist America would want, is the dishonour of Paris... and for twenty years we will see lengthening the hated ink-stain of a shadow of the hated tower of nuts and bolts.' Who knows how they would have reacted to the 'Tower' souvenirs made up as pepper grinders, thermometers, barometers, or under a snow storm in a little glass ball.

Other examples, less inoffensive and more organised than the naive ostentatiousness of the Tower, had been put into practice a few years earlier by Baron Haussmann, Prefect of Napoleon III. Owen and Fourier, in line with the birth of socialist ideas, had put forward town planning proposals, 'with a human face', that took into account the needs of the working class. The 'cleansing fire' of Haussmann, with the excuse of cleaning up the town and modifying the building programme to cope with the increased population (which in

itself would have been a modern and indispensable re-ordering of public services), was actually a plan to make the suppression of any street revolution and barricading easier.

With the building of the enormous boulevards the bourgeoisie satisfied their own ambitions and strengthened their systems of defence. 'The institutions of the material and spiritual domination of the bourgeoisie', wrote Benjamin, 'were bound to find their apotheosis in being surrounded by these enormous road networks. Certain avenues were covered before their inauguration so as to be uncovered like monuments'. Living in a beautiful neighbourhood, walking down the avenues past a line of beautiful houses, maybe horse riding in the 'Bois', whose wide pavements were built for just that. What does it matter if 'behind' these houses there is a slum or if on each side of these arteries there are still areas of no sanitation, that the rents continue to rise, pushing the proletariat out into the suburbs. 'The worst of the little streets and alleyways disappeared, with the mutual congratulation of the bourgeoisie for whom it was a great success, only to immediately reappear somewhere else, often in the same neighbourhood'. (Engels, 'The question of the housing problem') As for their anti-barricade and counter-revolutionary functions one could see the results in 1871, when the 'Haussmann method' helped in crushing the communards: it being harder to build the barricades given the great width of the boulevards, while making it easier to destroy them with an 'heroic' charge of cavalry, a few fusilades, or a direct hit with a cannon firing down a nice straight line.

Reassured by these anti-guerilla measures, the bourgeoisie could allow itself evenings of pleasure at the 'Opera', full once more, a sort of wedding cake monument, lavishly decorated on the outside so as to stand out in the monochrome panorama of the city. And all the interior, throughout the enormous salons, the dining room, the foyer, repeating the message of luxury, of sumptuousness, of plenty. All in all a 'parvenu' style of architecture.

\*This sentence refers to a painting not reproduced here.



29. Paris, December 9th 1892  
Auguste Vallée shows a rail  
north from the second row of the  
public gallery in the Palais  
Boulevard (see the chapter).  
Twenty deputies were slightly  
injured. What matter the  
victim of the press is a fine one.  
(Léonard Tallier)





E. Costantini 1900

## ARREST AND EXECUTION

AFTER the attempt at the house of the public prosecutor, Bulot, Ravachol went to have lunch at the 'Ristorante Very' on the Boulevard Magenta. A waiter by the name of Lhérot was complaining to a customer about a period that he had spent in the army, in a regiment of Zouaves. Ravachol took the opportunity to continue, this time in a somewhat more subdued way, the propaganda that he had just initiated somewhat noisily, trying to convert the young man to anarchism, who by complaining about the army seemed to be a potential recruit. Lhérot however remained unimpressed by the arguments of that strange customer. When, three days later, Ravachol returned to the restaurant, Lhérot, who recognised him from the description given in the papers as the dynamiter wanted by the police, immediately called the nearest police station. It took ten men, the police and some passersby seconded as voluntary deputies, to arrest Ravachol, possessed as he was with the strength of a cornered animal. Commissioner Dresh, made famous by the capture of the 'terrible anarchist' was immediately thrown out of the restaurant by the owner who feared reprisals, while his secretary handed in his resignation at the first opportunity.

'La Révolte', of Jean Grave, went on to propose that the judiciary should be added to the category of unhealthy and dangerous professions. Another anarchist news-sheet 'L'Agitateur', to confuse the issue, put out a notice that the police had not arrested the real Ravachol, but a double, as it was impossible that a man of his strength and cunning could have fallen so stupidly into such a trap. An anarchist bomb destroyed the 'Ristorante Very' ('this proves it' wrote 'Le Pere Peinard') on the eve of the trial, that began on the 26th. of April in front of the court of assise of the Seine in a Palace of Justice completely surrounded by police.

Ravachol was condemned to hard labour for life. During the trial he declared, 'anarchy wants to make of society a large family where the weakest is protected by all the rest, where the common good would be held by all, and everyone could eat as much as they needed. My intentions were to spread terrorism so as to make society take a more careful look at those who suffer. Those who try us as criminals are wrong, we are nothing other than the defenders of the oppressed. I HAVE SPOKEN !'

Two months later, at Montbrison, the court of assise of the Loire held the trial of Ravachol for the murder of the scrooge of Chambles, of a landowner and his maid near Saint-Chamond, and a mother and daughter in Saint-Etienne, as well as the desecration of the tomb of Baroness Rochetaillée. Ravachol was found guilty of the desecration and the murder of the old scrooge.

The court condemned him to death. In jail the guards were ordered to watch him day and night after which they gave a report which began: 'The undermentioned, known as Ravachol, after having eaten with good appetite, spoke to us in this way, 'Gentlemen, I have the habit, wherever I find myself, of making propaganda. Do you know what Anarchy is?', to this question we replied, 'No'.

Another police document describes the execution of Francois Claudius Koeiningstein, known as Ravachol, anarchist and terrorist:

74287 - Justice was carried out this morning at 4.05am. without any incident or demonstration. He was woken at 3.40am. The condemned man refused the visit of the chaplain and told me that he had no statement to make. At first pale and trembling, he immediately showed cynicism and exasperation when at the foot of the guillotine just before the execution. In a raucous voice he shouted some blasphemous and revolting obscenities. He did not utter the word 'anarchy' and, when already under the blade he gave his last shout, 5716 2907 4584, (which in the police code corresponds to 'Vive la république', infact Ravachol only had time to shout 'Vive la ré. . . .') which was obviously the beginning of 'Vive la révolution'. The most absolute calm reigned over the city. Report follows.

This is how 'Le Père Peinard' paid homage to the anarchist: LA RAVACHOLE - to the tune of 'La Carmagnole' and of 'Ca ira'.

Nella gran citta' di Parigi  
Ci sono i grassi borghesi  
Ci sono i poveracci  
Che han la pancia vuota:  
Ma quelli hanno i denti lunghi

Viva il suon, viva il suon,  
Ma quelli hanno denti lunghi,

Viva il suon  
Dell' esplosion:  
Chorus  
Balliamo la Ravachole,  
Viva il suon, viva il suon,

Balliamo la Ravachole,  
Viva il suon dell' esplosion:

Ah, ca ira ca ira ca ira,

I borghesi gusteran la bomba

Ah, ca ira ca ira ca ira,

Tutti i borghesi farem saltar

Farem saltar:

In the big city of Paris  
There are the fat bourgeoisie  
There are the poor  
Who have empty stomachs:  
But those are long in the-

-tooth  
Long live the noise, long -  
-live the noise,  
But those are long in the-

-tooth,  
Long live the noise  
Of the explosion  
Chorus  
Lets dance the Ravachole,  
Long live the noise, long-

-live the noise,  
Lets dance the Ravachole,  
Long live the noise of the-

-explosion!  
Ah, this will be, will be, -

-will be,  
The bourgeoisie will taste-

-the bomb  
Ah, this will be, will be-

-will be,  
We will blow up all the-

-bourgeoisie  
We will blow them up!

## ANARCHY CONTINUES

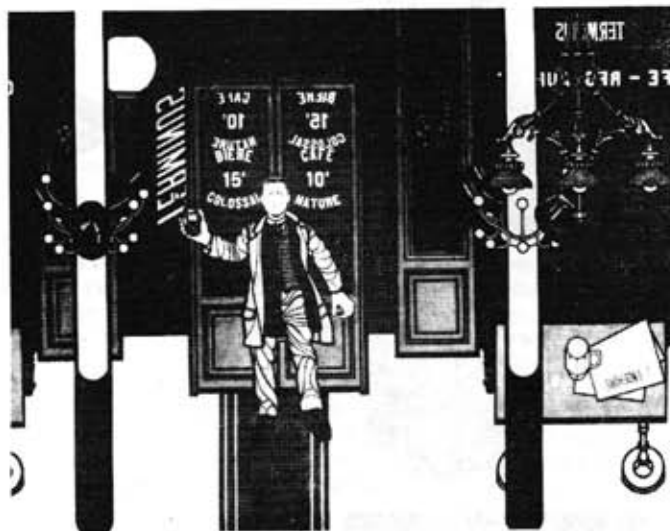
THE terror that came over Paris following the bombs of Ravachol was not destined to abate with the execution of the anarchist.

The period between December 1893 and June 1894 saw an impressive series of bombings. They were the last flames of what was called 'propaganda by the deed', of individualist and terrorist anarchy. After which most anarchists chose the path of revolutionary syndicalism, general strikes instead of terrorism.



# AUGUST VAILLANT

THE 9th of December 1893, at the Chamber of Deputies there is a meeting like many others. At 4 pm an enormous explosion blows up both public and parliamentarians. After the smoke had cleared tens of wounded were left lying on the ground. Twenty minutes later the president of the Chamber, Charles Dupuy, uttered the famous phrase, 'Gentlemen the session continues.' Amongst the wounded is also the instigator of the bombing, Auguste Vaillant, he is thirty-one and just back in France from Argentina, where he had gone as a sort of anarchist missionary to the people of the Chaco region. An experience that ended in bitter disillusionment after three years: the natives had shown themselves to be too brutalised by the exploitation by white colonialists to be introduced to the anarchist propaganda and philosophical debate argued by Vaillant. Back in his country he finds the power of the bourgeoisie at a low point in its credibility due to the 'Panama scandal' and decides to hit at its most representative institution. 'Tired of living this disgusting and suffering life, I have brought the bomb' - he would declare at his trial - 'amongst those who are most to blame for society's ills. The explosion of my bomb is not only the cry of the rebel Vaillant, but also, more than anything, the shout of a class that will avenge its rights and that soon will follow words with action.' But the power of the bourgeoisie re-vengeed itself by sending the anarchist to the guillotine, though he had killed no one.



arrogant mass that always goes out on the side of the strongest, habitual customers of the Terminus and other places like it. That is why I attacked the crowd without choosing a victim.

Emile Henry, declared guilty and condemned to death was guillotined on 21 May 1894.

# EMILE HENRY

TO avenge Vaillant there would be an anarchist of a very different history. Son of a communard, a bourgeois background, a more than clever student, with a promising career ahead of him, Henry refused to be integrated with bourgeois society, disgusted by hypocrisy, opportunism and social injustice. As victims of his vendetta he chose those of the social class that he had rejected, the petit bourgeoisie.

The 12th of February 1893, the cafe Terminus at 9 in the evening, full as usual with bourgeois wishing to enjoy themselves listening to music. Henry sitting at a table amongst them ordered a beer and a cigar: when he decides that the room is full enough he uses the cigar to light the bomb that he then throws amongst them: tens of wounded, one dead. Henry escapes by pretending to be chasing the assassin but is recognised by several people. The chase ends in rue de Rome where he manages to shoot a civil guardsman who was about to hit him with his sword, before being arrested.

Vaillant chose to aim at the institution that best represented the power of the bourgeoisie. Why then did Henry choose such an anonymous place, casual and not institutional? 'Why? It is very easy' answered Henry at the trial. 'Did not the bourgeoisie make a group of anarchists out of every blade of grass? One man only, Vaillant, nine tenths of the comrades did not even know him. But of this, no account was taken. There were massive persecutions. All those who had links with anarchism were persecuted. Okay! if you choose to make responsible a group for the actions of one man, and attack them all, then we too will attack all. Maybe we should aim only at those deputies who made the laws against us, the judges that apply those laws, or the policemen that arrest us. No I don't think so. All these men are only instruments, seeing as they don't react for themselves, and their mandates were instituted by the bourgeoisie for their own defence; they are no more guilty than the rest. The good bourgeois, without taking on any duty, ringing up the profits of their obligations, who live as parasites on the goods produced by the workers, it is exactly those that must have their share of the retaliation. And not only them but all the others who are happy with this state of affairs, who approve, satisfied, of the decisions of government and so become accomplices, those 'workers' who take home 300-500 francs a month and who hate the people even more than the haute bourgeoisie, this dull and

# Sante J Caserio

As well as Henry, Vaillant had another avenger, Santi Jerome Caserio, a twenty-one year old Italian baker's apprentice, exiled in France to avoid military service. The 24th June 1894, the president of the French Republic, Sadi Carnot went on an official visit to Lyon, on the occasion of a world fair. In the late afternoon Carnot left the Palace of Commerce where he had just attended a banquet, in order to go to the theatre for a gala performance in his honour. When the procession reached the top of Bourse Square, a young man broke away from the crowd and jumped on the running board of the carriage as if holding out a gift. Instead he took out of his jacket a dagger wrapped in a copy of the newspaper 'Lyon Republicain' and stabbed Carnot, who died soon after. The assassination of the President, who was much loved by the French, started off a wave of anti-Italian feeling. In Paris crowds of demonstrators demanded a declaration of war against Italy. In Marseille a ship carrying 700 Italian immigrants en route to South America was attacked by the mob and forced to raise anchor. Italian shops were looted everywhere. As for Caserio, he was executed on 16th August after having spent the entire period from arrest to trial in a strait-jacket.

# Georges Etievant

CONDEMNED to five years jail for complicity, with Ravachol, in a robbery of sticks of dynamite, and again condemned for various articles written in anarchist newspapers after having finished the first sentence, Etievant went underground. Having decided to finish it all, during the night of 18-19th January 1898 he broke into the police station on rue Berzelius at Batignolles, he stabbed the watchman and an officer. Overpowered he was locked in a cell, without the terrified policemen having remembered to search him. He took out his gun and from between the bars started shooting at the officers, wounding one before the commissioner managed to make him put his gun down.

Georges Etievant was condemned to death but the sentence was commuted to hard labour for life. He died in a penal colony a few years later.