

A DICTATOR DIES . . . LONG LIVE THE DICTATORSHIP

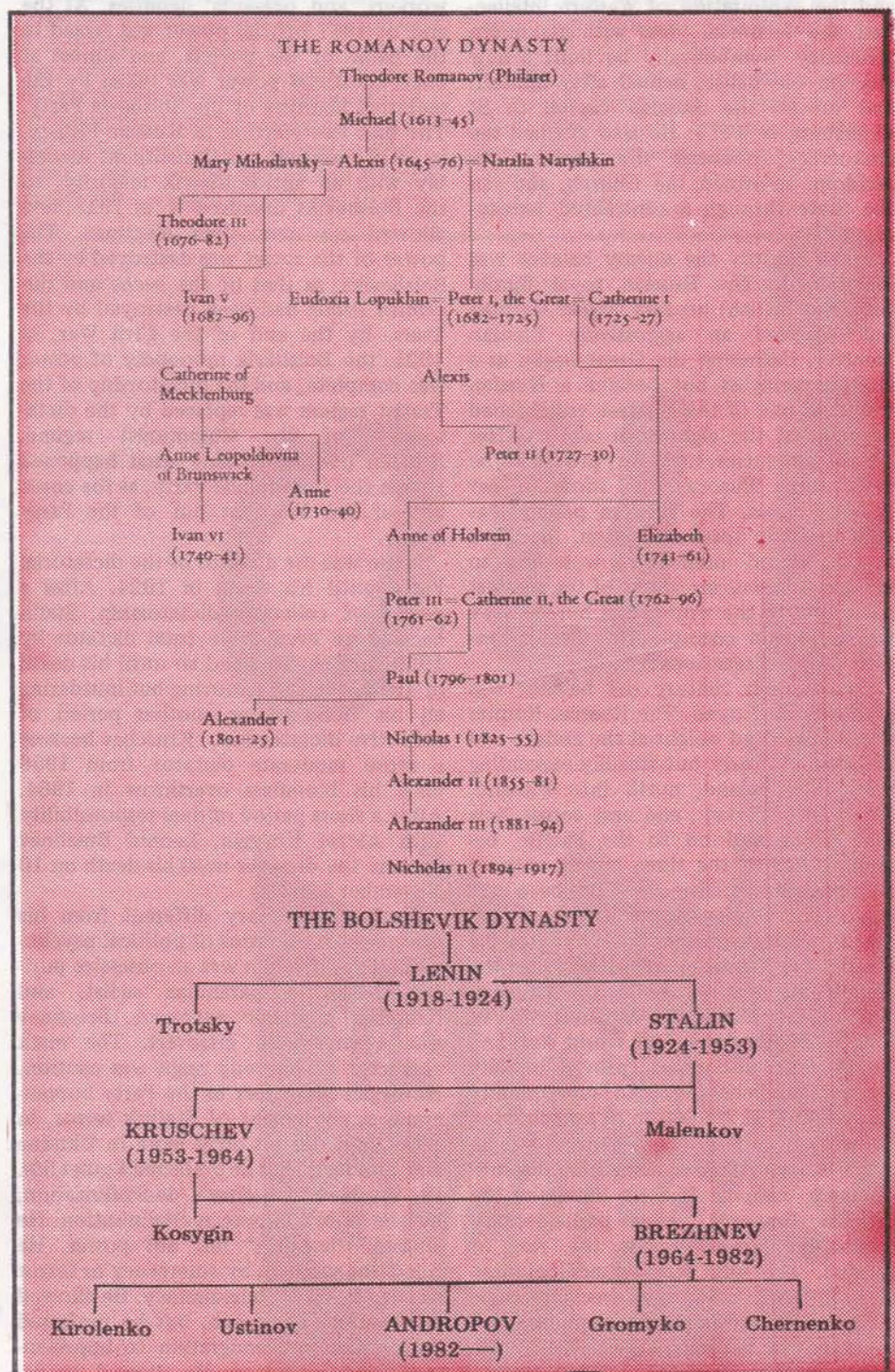
RUSSIA has been ruled by a dictatorship almost continuously for more than a thousand years. The original 'Russians' in the early Middle Ages were Viking adventurers from Scandinavia who first seized control of the rich trade along the rivers between the Baltic in the north and the Black Sea and Caspian Sea in the south, and then in the ninth century became princes of the Slav populations in the trading centres. The popular assembly (*veche*) which was the traditional administrative body of the Slav settlements was gradually subordinated to the alien monarchy, just as happened in most of the rest of Europe.

In the tenth century the Russian princes adopted a Slav identity from their subjects (like their distant cousins, the Norman rulers of Sicily, northern France, and England), and also accepted Christian religion and culture, again just as happened in most of the rest of Europe. The exception was that Russia was converted and 'civilised' not from Rome but from the Byzantine Empire, and still shows signs of Greek influence.

In the thirteenth century the Russian monarchy was shattered by the Mongol conquest, and Russia was ruled by the Muslim Tatars for two centuries. Eventual Russian resistance to the 'Golden Horde' was led by the rulers of Moscow, who united the Russian principalities and threw off the alien yoke in the fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century the Muscovite king, Ivan the Terrible, combined the Russian State and the Orthodox Church in the harshest dictatorship in Europe. He became Tsar (Caesar, Emperor) in succession to the Byzantine Emperors who had been destroyed by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, Moscow became the 'Third Rome' in succession to Constantinople, and the Russian Empire became the Eastern equivalent of the Holy Roman Empire in central Europe.

Russia occupied the position it has held ever since, of a great power between Europe and Asia, having at the same time a strong cultural and a weak political life. Ivan set the pattern of an autocracy ruling by force and fear. The clergy and aristocracy

continued on page 2



A DICTATOR DIES . . .

continued from page 1

cracy were both totally subordinated to the monarchy, and the popular assembly (now called the *zemski sobor*) was again eliminated, while the Tsar was maintained by a secret police.

In the seventeenth century the Tsarist regime was stabilised by the succession of the Romanov dynasty, and then Peter the Great instituted what has been its double nature ever since — the autocracy of the Tsar over all classes and groups with the minimum political and personal freedom, and the exploitation of Western intellectual and technical ideas with maximum efficiency. Symbolically he built a new city on the Baltic, named after himself, and moved the Russian capital to St Petersburg in 1715. He also crushed the aristocracy, reduced the peasants to serfdom, reformed the Church, and ran the State through a centralised bureaucracy.

For a century the uneasy balance was maintained. The Russian royal family (like the British) became largely German but adopted an aggressively Russian identity. Catherine the Great began as a German princess but became a Russian Empress, one of the greatest 'enlightened despots' of the eighteenth century. Her liberal tendencies, however, proved to be even more illusory than those of her Western rivals. The Russian people was held down in total subjection, though a few privileged intellectuals were able to lay the foundations of one of the greatest literatures in the world. The bureaucracy was rigid and corrupt. The Church was primitive and reactionary.

For another century the balance was gradually destroyed. The Russian Empire was a huge dead weight at the eastern end of Europe, slowly but steadily expanding west into Poland, north into Finland, south into Turkey, and east across Asia into China and on to the Pacific, becoming one of the three largest units of European imperialism, as it has been ever since. The Tsarist regime was an almost total dictatorship modified by growing inefficiency (proved repeatedly in the Napoleonic War of 1812, the Crimean War of the 1850s, the Japanese War of 1904–1905 and the First World War) and by growing discontent (proved initially by peasant rebellions and subsequently by attempts at revolution or assassination or both).

The Russian Tsar remained an absolute monarch, like the Turkish Sultan or the Chinese Emperor, while parliamentary democracy spread across the rest of Europe. The serfs were emancipated so late, in 1861, that they became wage-slaves of the old landlords, and many left the land to become wage-slaves of the new industries. The class struggle became

bitter and violent. The upper-class senates and middle-class assemblies came too late and proved too weak, and the Duma of 1906 was that dangerous institution, a parliament without power. As in France, delayed reform and uneven development brought on one of the greatest popular revolutions in history.

In 1917 all this changed for a time. The liberal politicians took official power, but unofficial power was taken by the *soviets*, the spontaneous councils of soldiers', workers' and peasants' deputies. At the end of 1917 official power was seized in the name of the Soviets, and almost at once unofficial power was taken by the sectarian Marxists of the Bolshevik Party. The first free election in Russian history, in 1917, resulted in a Constituent Assembly with an anti-Bolshevik majority; so the Bolsheviks dissolved it, in 1918, and allowed no more free elections. The power of the *soviet* was destroyed by the Bolsheviks, as that of the *veche* and the *zemski sobor* had been destroyed by the Tsars. By the end of the Civil War, in 1921, the Bolshevik monopoly of power was complete, and the dictatorship of the Tsarist regime was replaced by the dictatorship of the Communist regime. Russian politics became what happened within the Communist Party, at the court not of the Emperor but of the Party leader.

Lenin was the dictator of the dictatorial Party until his death in 1924. After a period of collective dictatorship, Stalin became an even more total dictator by 1929, and he remained so until his death in 1953, not just removing but murdering all his rivals. After another period of collective dictatorship, Khrushchev became a more moderate dictator from 1956 until his bloodless overthrow in 1964. After a short period of dual responsibility with Alexei Kosygin, Leonid Brezhnev became the dictator until his death on 10 November 1982.

Brezhnev was very different from his predecessors. In terms of political psychopathology, if Lenin was an obsessive puritan, Stalin a paranoiac sadist, and Khrushchev a manic extrovert, Brezhnev was a pragmatic introvert. The main character of his long reign was caution. He began his career in the Party bureaucracy at the height of Stalin's terror, in 1938, and did his dirty work in Ukraine and Moldavia, but he preferred a quiet life. He reversed Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation, but he didn't impose re-Stalinisation. He amassed 'honours' but not power. He ruled not so much by emergency or terror or surprise as by bureaucracy. He allowed no freedom of speech, but he preferred harassment and emigration to imprisonment and execution. He allowed no de-

cline of Russian imperialism, but he preferred subtle pressure to open fighting. The invasions of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and of Afghanistan in 1979 were careful and successful, and the risky wars were fought for Russia by Vietnamese or Cubans.

The 'Brezhnev doctrine', that Russia can interfere in the internal affairs of any country in the 'Socialist' world is only a reflection of similar policies followed elsewhere by Britain and the United States. Russia has once again taken its place as an equal partner with the other world empires, but it is still that huge dead weight at the eastern end of Europe, the total dictatorship merely being Communist instead of Tsarist.

But it is a non-hereditary dictatorship, with no reliable mechanism for the succession, and the apparently obvious candidate is seldom successful in the end. Lenin was finally succeeded not by Trotsky but by Stalin; Stalin was finally succeeded not by Malenkov but by Khrushchev; and Khrushchev was finally succeeded not by Kosygin but by Brezhnev. What matters is not who laughs first but who laughs last. Brezhnev has been immediately succeeded by Yuri Andropov, who became secretary of the Party within three days; but he seems unlikely to survive long, if only because he is rather old and rather ill.

In the Communist system of so-called 'democratic centralism', the dictatorship of the dictatorial party by the gang in the middle, the man (always a man) who really matters is not the President or the Prime Minister or the Chairman of this or that committee or bureau, but the Secretary of the Party, and what matters is whether he is generally recognised as the *khozyain* (boss) or *vozhd* (leader), the personal dictator of the vast Mafia which rules this vast Empire. Andropov is that man for the moment because he represents the interests of the Committee for State Security (KGB), the current euphemism for the secret police, which he headed from 1967 to May 1982, and of the armed forces. But we shall see how long he lasts.

Andropov is a child of the Bolshevik Revolution, being born only in 1914, and working in the Party bureaucracy since 1940. He is said to be the first intellectual to run Russia since Lenin, and he is also said to have opposed the invasion of Hungary in 1956, at a time when he was the ambassador there, and of Afghanistan in 1979, and to have favoured the relatively humane treatment of dissent under Brezhnev. But he is no more a sincere supporter of liberalism than Brezhnev was a sincere supporter of detente, and if he proves too weak he will disappear as fast as he appeared. One little dictator may have died and another little dictator may have taken his place, but the great dictatorship lives. Until that is broken, Russia will continue to have no future but its past.

Reports France

RECENTLY the 'Union des Anarchistes' held its yearly assembly in Fumel (Lot-et-Garonne). For three days we talked about the main subjects French anarchists are concerned with, such as workers' cooperatives, the rise of 'New-Right-Wing' associations assuming the form of anti-authoritarian movements, our joining the 'Free Forces of Peace' (Forces Libres de la Paix) and our position on the thesis of violence as a revolutionary instrument.

This meeting also permitted us to confirm our desire to communicate with other libertarian movements, or those sympathising with our ideas, all around the world. That's why we'd like you to send us information on your movements, your struggles, your actions, and, if you have some, your publications. In this area, what we propose to you is simply to exchange your magazine(s) and ours: for the moment, we've only got one, *Le Libéraire*, a monthly published by two groups of our Union. And, obviously, we're ready to relay at our level your information, your campaigns, etc ...

MOTION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY - 1982

- Whereas the use of violence has always allowed the principle of authority to survive, and, as it has been said, 'revolutions have perished by sword',
 - Whereas the end does not justify the means, but on the contrary the means allow the end,
 - Whereas a humane society could not be built upon a heap of corpses,
 - Whereas our libertarian ethics hate bloodshed and an anarchist civilisation, a true world association, will not come out of a carnage,
 - Whereas, in the field of tactics, the powers are favoured by the privilege of might,
- The 'Union des Anarchistes' rejects the illusion (marxist or other) of a great social battle, of a popular insurrection or

a civil war necessary to the resolution of class antagonisms,

wishes to avoid a slaughter and to obtain by pacific means, such as civil disobedience, the breaking off from the old world,

and thinks that what matters is less to unsettle the tyrant than not to support him.

UNION DES ANARCHISTES

Address mail to:
Diane Gastellu,
Allee des Sarrailh, s,
Route de Pau,
40300 Peyrehorade,
France.

Italy

WE would like to inform you about a project and a proposal that calls for your interest, your participation and your thoughts. We are various groups in Milan; anarchists, independents and others, who are very interested in the political work which is done, with different characteristics and aims, in the various European countries. We, ourselves, work in various fields; house squatting, unemployment, political music expression - all this to obtain our final objective; the demolition of every power form.

Our urban reality is rather complicated and diverse. In fact, we do not really exist as a movement but as many different groups that are trying to co-ordinate themselves. One of these groups, NERO (Black. This is also the name of an anarchist paper in Milan), wants to promote an active meeting between the available Italian realities and those European groups who have the same objectives. What we expect from the meeting is:

- to know directly, by direct contact, the European movements, without the falsifications of the mass media.
- to use this knowledge, not to organise new political work models but to understand other European metropolitan realities, to know their needs and their contradictions.

So we are most interested in those

groups who express their personal views against authorities and institutions. We think that this meeting could be a useful and complete conference. We would like to see the use of various aids such as videotapes, films, musical and theatrical expressions, as well as the knowledge of the work developed by each of the groups during its activity.

This meeting will take place in Milan during next 3-4-5 December. We invite you to that meeting and will be grateful for any suggestions you might have.

NERO
Via Correggio
18-20149 Milano

England

LIBERTARIAN WALKING CLUB

SINCE the inaugural advert in FREEDOM (August 82), the club has had three walks: Kent (near Ramsgate), Essex (Saffron Waldon) and Middlesex (Enfield). A total of eight people have taken part. So far we have contacts in Shropshire, Brighton and London, as well as in the three areas where we have walked.

We meet at one person's house and go off from there on a local walk. We then return to the house (after, of course, sampling whatever pubs, cafes, fruit stalls etc occur on our route) and have a meal and a chat. All three walks have been very successful. As well as enjoying the changing seasons in the woods and fields and by the rivers, we get away from urban pollution for a day, get to know different parts of the country, and make new friends amongst our comrades.

If you would like to 'join the club', send some SAEs, so we can send you details of walks; and please say whether or not you want your name, address and phone number to be put on the contacts list.

LIBERTARIAN WALKING CLUB

Libertarian Walking Club
15 Matcham Road,
London E11.

WILDCAT



PROSTITUTES PROTEST

ABOUT a score of women from a Women's Centre in the Kings Cross district of London are occupying a church in the area to attract attention to what they say is illegal activity by the local police in dealing with the prostitutes who work in the 'Red Light' district around Kings Cross Station.

Involved in the work of the Women's Centre are various groups with specific interests. The group that seems to be organising the occupation of the church is the English Collective of Prostitutes — with the assistance of other groups — and this is the text of a statement they handed out at a press conference held in the church on their first day:

The ENGLISH COLLECTIVE of PROSTITUTES is occupying the CHURCH of the HOLY CROSS, Cromer Street, London WC1, because we will no longer tolerate the illegality and racism of the police in ARGYLE SQUARE and the whole of KING'S CROSS area. WOMEN AGAINST RAPE and BLACK WOMEN for WAGES for HOUSEWORK share our WOMEN'S CENTRE at 71 TONBRIDGE STREET and are sitting in with us.

We are here to demand:-

- 1 An end to illegal arrests of prostitutes;
- 2 An end to police threats, blackmail, harassment and racism;
- 3 Hands off our children — we don't want our kids in care;
- 4 An end to arrests of boyfriends, husbands, sons;
- 5 Arrest rapists and pimps instead;
- 6 Immediate protection, welfare, housing for women who want to get off the game.

We ask to see:-

The chairpersons of the Police Committees of the GLC, Camden and Islington.

The Chairpersons of the Women's Committees of the GLC and Camden.

A representative of the Home Office who will listen to the truth about the Metropolitan Police and take the news back to the Home Secretary.

All MPs who are concerned to know about the illegality and racism of the police.

We welcome everyone's support, especially women and women's organisations. An attack on prostitute women is an attack on all women. In supporting us you support yourselves.

For obvious reasons, all the women present wore masks and none of the pressmen there were tactless enough to ask their names, but their spokes-

women were articulate and clear, bitter and angry in what they had to say in amplification of their statement.

Any woman can be picked up by the police on the street and charged with loitering or soliciting, whereon the magistrate automatically takes the word of the police and from then on the name of 'common prostitute' ensures increasingly heavy fines every time the police like to rope her in. If she pleads 'guilty' the fine might be marginally less, perhaps, but if she doesn't, then she faces harassment and further illegal arrests outside.

And not only the woman. Her husband, lover or brother becomes immediately suspected of living off her 'immoral earnings' and thus becomes himself harassed or arrested — whereas the real pimps (and most of the women in the ECP seem not to be involved with them) can buy their way out of trouble by backhanders to the fuzz.

Fines get increasingly heavy — up to £200 being not uncommon. A woman will get seven days to pay — and everybody knows that the only way she can pay fines of that size is to go straight out on to the street to earn it. With today's high level of unemployment she stands little chance of getting a job — and on application to the DHSS, she is told she can do so much better on the street!

Black women, of course, have to put up with the racist sneers of the police. 'Where's your black pimp, then?' is a favourite opening gambit. Odd, that, since pimps, and especially black pimps, loom so large in the imaginations of the police, only eight pimps were arrested last year, against 1000 women!

Nor can women live together and help each other. Two women sharing a flat — and immediately you've got a brothel! A woman who wants to keep her children — no matter how well she may be bringing them up — is regarded by the authorities as 'unfit' to have the charge of a child and the kids are taken off and put into care.

Readers will remember the hullabaloo a few years back about lesbian mothers, but the position of prostitutes is far worse. Once labelled a common prostitute and you are fair game for police, rapists and murderers alike — remember how long it took to find the Yorkshire Ripper, until he started to attack 'respectable' girls? The ECP spokesperson angrily cried 'You call us Common Prostitutes — but what about the Common Rapists? If we go to the police and complain of rape, we are laughed at and told they have no manpower available for such

investigations — but they always seem to have plenty available to harass us!'

The police seem to be a law unto themselves. The ECP has lodged complaints but they all get blocked and when they go on to local representatives — they don't want to know either.

We think they are being optimistic in expecting local politicians (still less at the national level!) to be seen to be taking an interest in these problems. There are votes at stake, after all — and there are plenty of complaints from the 'respectable' ratepayers of Camden about the activity around Kings Cross — forgetting or not wishing to remember that women and girls fleeing from the massive unemployment in the North get off the train at Kings Cross Station and never get very much farther.

They might be seeking work or they might be fleeing from domestic violence from their frustrated and angry menfolk. The streets of London provide some easy pickings — for a while. The Women's Centre in Tonbridge Street exists to help all women in trouble or in need of friendship and help. Last year someone tried to burn the Centre down — but there was no protection or investigation from the police.

No doubt the poor police themselves are frustrated — for the law on prostitution is itself a mess. Soliciting is illegal. Living off immoral earnings is illegal. Keeping a brothel (however defined) is illegal. But prostitution itself is not!

And everybody knows it cannot be stamped out — but by God (sic) the women can be made to pay. Well, these women of the English Collective of Prostitutes are very angry and are determined to be heard — and to claim such protection as is their right under our hypocritical laws. We don't know what is being done by Scottish and Welsh and Northern Irish prostitutes, by the way, but we understand that letters of support are coming in from all over — including from a French Collective and from a group in Greece.

As we go to press, their occupation of the Church of the Holy Cross is in its sixth day and has attracted some muted publicity in the press. On last Thursday the press conference was quickly brought to an end so that the usual congregation could hold its usual mass — but we understand that on Sunday, that congregation declined to come into the church but preferred to hold its service in a hall opposite — where one good christian objected to prayers being said for the fallen women occupying the church.

Well, well. We seem to remember that gentle Jesus was very supportive to a certain Mary Magdalen, and silenced a jeering crowd with 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone!'

Well now — how about it, local representatives? Is there one among you who is without sin and will grasp this hot potato?

P S

CRASS STATEMENT In brief

CRASS'S latest single, *How Does It Feel (To be the Mother of 1000 Dead)*, a violent but considered attack on Mrs Thatcher's handling of the 'Falklands Crisis', was released on Saturday 16th October to coincide with the Falklands 'victory parade' through the City of London the following week. The initial sales of the record were very high, 15000 in the first week, although because of the dishonest way in which the 'charts' are compiled it only reached number 51. The record created an immediate wave of interest in the national press and on Tuesday 19th October Robin Eggar, a rock journalist on the *Daily Mirror* reported that it was 'the most revolting and unnecessary record I have ever heard' — a statement that reflects the tenor of most of the coverage at that time. Robin Eggar's brother happens to be Timothy Eggar, Conservative MP for Enfield North, who describing himself as a 'dutiful brother', read the article and was duly enraged; so much so that he immediately tabled a written question to the Attorney General requesting that Crass be prosecuted under section 2 of the obscene publications act. He also issued a long and incredibly reactionary press release in which he attacked the record on a political level as being 'an insult to the Prime Minister, the government, the armed forces and the families of those who died in the Falklands'. He continued that 'This is the most vicious scurrilous and obscene record that has ever been produced. It goes beyond the acceptable bounds of freedom of speech', a statement that clearly goes beyond the acceptable bounds of logic and rationality. Further he hoped that radio and TV stations would ban the 'frightening' record. His press release appeared in the national press on Thursday October 21st, mostly in its complete form — *Telegraph*; front page, *Guardian*; page two. The *Express*, the *Mail* etc, etc.

Although the publicity that the record was given boosted sales and therefore further promoted the ideas expressed in it, Crass objected to Eggar's accusation that the record was 'an insult to the families of those who died'.

'You accuse us of disrespect for the dead, but it was you who slaughtered out of national pride.'

If he had had the decency to read the words in an unprejudiced state of mind he would not have been able to make that claim.

Crass accept Eggar's other accusations and claim that they fully intended to insult those parties as it was *them* that had insulted 'decent consciousness' with their futile, unnecessary and barbaric little war.

The story was broadcast by the BBC,

both nationally and internationally. It was picked up by foreign stations, such as CBS News who were relieved to be able, at last, to present news demonstrating the degree of dissent in the UK over the war. Throughout the war coverage was severely censored by the MOD.

The other notable event was an interview with LBC at which Mr Eggar was also present. Finding that Crass were not stereotyped 'media image' punk rockers, he swiftly did an about face, now claiming that the band had every right to their opinions. Opinions that only twelve hours before he had described as 'obscene and depraved'. The adverse publicity that the government began to receive resulted in a message circulated in the Conservative Party that the issue should be ignored, 'We have decided not to give these people the dignity, so to speak, of having public platform.' On Tuesday 26th October, therefore, the Attorney General, Sir Michael Havers, found that the record 'does not contravene Section 2 of the Obscene Publications Act.'

Apart from the predictable 'shock horror' coverage, no reports have been printed that fully state Crass's position, that of compassion and genuine concern for those people who were made victims of the barbaric policies of Mrs Thatcher and her government. Nor has the AG's decision not to prosecute been publicised. This means that many shops have become wary of stocking the record.

Crass feel that the whole issue illustrates the gross and insidious way in which the government attempts to censor those who do not support its actions and politics. Eggar stated in the *Enfield Advertiser* that 'although he was not considering private prosecution he was not going to let the matter drop.' Crass are aware that the Attorney General's decision will not end the story, the government and its agents have still more insidious ways of silencing dissent. They have since they formed 5 years ago, experienced constant police harassment, ranging from raids on shops distributing their material to directives circulated to Town Councils advising a ban on all concerts as a result of their supposed 'civil disobedience'.

Crass are not affiliated to any political movement or party and feel that the time has come for PEOPLE everywhere to be able to stand up and air their discontent with the current 'state of the nation'.

Our basic right to express our own views is being threatened by a government that chooses to ignore world opinion; ultimately what chance do we have against this juggernaut, if we are not prepared to vocalise in our loudest voice that which must be heard, soon it could be too late.

A subversive in Albania has voted against the nominated candidate in the recent National Assembly elections. An official communique says that there was 100% turnout of the 1.6 million electorate. There were eight spoiled papers. The dissident individual is said not to share the national 'atmosphere of great political and revolutionary enthusiasm'.

THE Greek government has announced its intention to abolish dowries. At the moment the dowry 'is property brought to the husband by the wife to relieve the financial burden of the marriage'.

OBSERVERS in South Africa have pointed out that 20 or so trade unionists have been detained and interrogated during the last eighteen months. However 'even with all the draconian legislation at the disposal of the Security Police' no convictions have been obtained.

HOW much more evidence of the reactionary nature of socialist and communist politicians is needed? This year the town of Commentry in central France celebrates 100 years of Socialist rule. The mayor has been the same for 35 years. During most of this time the left wing council has usually been elected unopposed. What an opportunity to demonstrate the power of reformist socialism! Yet the mayor basks in self-congratulation at the 'climate of confidence' between the town hall and big business. 'I refuse to give any public support to workers' protests.'

TANZANIA has a handy law for neutralising political dissent. The president has the power to detain indefinitely, without trial, people who are 'dangerous to peace and good order'. The law is intended to 'nip in the bud all opponents, political troublemakers, coup plotters and the like'. However such is the climate of liberalism in Tanzania that no political prisoners are being held. Instead the law is being used to hold more than 1,500 others, where the police do not feel that they have sufficient evidence for a normal prosecution. President Nyerere is said to be too busy to actually check the details of all the cases where he applies his powers.

A Pershing II missile has managed a test flight of 60 miles. This is something of an achievement. The first test, last July, was a complete failure. This follow-up has been postponed several times because of electrical problems. The Pershing II is due to be deployed in Europe, to hold back the Red Hordes, next year.

MISREPRESENTED again. The *Guardian* says that the current laws on Sunday shopping are 'anarchic'. We can understand how people's reaction to the regulations can be so, but a law 'anarchic'?

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTER

ON 14th October at the Litton Systems Canada Ltd, in Rexdale Ontario, Canada, a huge bomb blast ripped apart one of the production buildings. Seven people, policemen and security guards at the plant, were injured in the bombing. This action, claimed by 'Direct Action' has reopened discussion among anarchists in Canada over tactics in the anarchist struggle. The following letter was sent to us by some Toronto anarchists.

VANGUARD TERROR VS STATE TERROR

Dear FREEDOM,

The October 14th bombing of Litton Systems in Rexdale has given rise to a storm of debate about armed struggle. We would submit that there are no absolute criteria by which these acts can be judged but, in considering specific acts, there are criteria that can be applied.

First, given that any such act will invariably be used as a pretext for repression, did it accomplish anything the achievement of which might outweigh or, at least, mitigate these negative consequences? And did it lead to an increase in the self-activity of the people? Our goal is a society in which people freely manage all aspects of their lives, and how can this be brought about save by the involvement of everyone at every step in their own liberation?

Violent activity that arises out of a

mass movement can be an expression of people's growing self-activity. Vanguardist violence leaves people in the role of spectators. Clandestine organizations tend to become isolated from the people and to develop their own *raison d'être*. Both the terrorists and the reformists presume to know 'what's best' for the people and abandon the difficult task of awakening them to the possibility and necessity of revolution.

The bombing at Litton cannot be said to have increased the self-activity of either the community or the employees at the plant in opposition to the cruise missile. The injuries suffered by seven people will no doubt make reaching these workers even more difficult. Nor did the bombing effectively sidetrack war production as the production facilities were entirely untouched. Nonetheless the RCMP, SIS, Metro Red Squad and others will use the bombing as the excuse for a 'fishing expedition' and will practice a little of their own state-sponsored terror on the left.

The fact that an act brings down repression does not in itself condemn it as an effective action, particularly revolutionary action, is bound to have that effect and one cannot avoid stepping on official toes if one intends to revolutionize society.

Nor can the fact that an act is violent in and of itself be used to condemn it. We beg to differ with the U of T Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament which declared to the press that 'Whether it be individuals or governments, the use of violence as a way of achieving goals is no longer possible.'

Condemning the violence of isolated armed struggle groups while asking people to put their faith in flyswatter referendums and the morality of profit-and-power-driven madmen is asking people to commit collective suicide. For us, the only solution is revolution. Revolution, not as a mere change of rulers but as a fundamental transformation in the values, thinking, and spirituality of millions of people.

For people of conscience, violence is always a horror and a disaster but, rather than counsel people to go peacefully to the gas chambers, we will teach the lessons of Vietnam, Chile, Poland and October 1970 — that no ruling class will ever voluntarily retire from the stage of history. We do not rate very highly the chances of a violent revolution, but, if its that or killing our sisters and brothers around the world for the State, then there is only one moral choice: civil war.

In this time of mass media demagoguery, we should concentrate not on defensive apologetics, which amount to nothing more than statements of our loyal opposition to the status quo, but on exposing the real terrorists: the states wielding nuclear and conventional weapons, preparing for world war while smashing (or preparing to smash) all resistance to war at home. As Noam Chomsky has pointed out, terrorism are those selected acts of violence which our rulers oppose. Those who decry and persecute 'terrorists' are themselves terrorism's biggest perpetrators and collaborators.

ANGRY BRIGADES

Received a few days after the Wakefield bombing. . .

To: Prison Officers Training Centre
Wakefield

We have decided to blow up your prison officers training centre. As the situation we face becomes more desperate, people have to take more desperate measures in order to survive. Your response is to lock us up. Your prisons are packed more than ever before. The only industry that is booming is the repression industry, and we dont like it. How many thousands of us are rotting in your prisons simply for trying to survive? We are not unreasonable people, but we have been pushed too far - we have nothing left to lose. We will not sit by while you practise your torture and murder (remember Barry Presser?) No doubt you will suppress the truth of this attack, as you have with previous actions, but that will not deter us. We dont like you; we dont like the state you are a part of; we dont like the governments you serve. Look over your shoulders pigs, WE ARE EVERYWHERE. WE WILL DEFEND OURSELVES.

ANGRY BRIGADES

RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

DEMOS WORK!

Dear People,

There has been much alarm and despondency lately due to the rumour, not unfounded, that the state don't give a hoot for public opinion anymore, and that demonstrations are ignored. So it might cheer you up to know that facilities for Doug Wakefield's visitors have been improved a little since demos by Friends Of Doug Wakefield in Liverpool, Tyne/Wear and Hants. (Incidentally you can write to me and I'll tell you if there is a branch near you). The Friends were upset due to the treatment of Doug's 75 year old mother-in-law who wasn't allowed to use the loo until she'd been searched, although all other visitors to other cons were. Doug's sister only visited once in eight years due to the rigorous search procedures including waking and upsetting her small son, who had his nappy searched (it was clean at the time worse luck).

Since Friends Of Doug Wakefield all over England wrote to the Governor at Albany we have been allowed HOT CUPS OF TEA and can use the visitors loo. Recently Doug's courage had reached such a low ebb he was considering a 'permanent hunger strike' luckily he was at Albany where the staff are a little more humane than his previous segregation units, and thanks to my being informed AT ONCE (instead of, as with George Wilkin-

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

son and so many others — half hour before the prisoner dies) we have restored his confidence and assured him that there are people who really care about him. This was done by dozens of Friends of Doug's writing to him from all over the country telling him that he is not forgotten and giving him news of our various activities.

Recently, following an appeal in *FREEDOM*, a record player was found for Doug. However HE WASN'T ALLOWED TO HAVE it because it incorporated a radio and tape recorder. The Welfare Office at Albany then collected from his colleagues enough money to buy one for Doug, only to find that the company that has been supplying (Evesham) prison record players for years, has STOPPED producing them. He STILL hasn't got one. A prisoner now on the wing at Albany is giving up his own one so that Doug can have it, he has several more years to do himself which won't be much fun without even a record player. You would think that would be the problem solved — is it heck, it's just beginning. He can't just hand it straight over to another con's property apparently! Oh well, I'll keep you informed with that one.

I enclose an exact copy of the encouraging little note Doug received from the Home Office regarding his wedding. (Which has now been delayed till Christmas).

Doug has been in absolute SOLITARY for five years now and a further two years interrupted brings it up to seven. Initially a fight ending in the tragic death of the other man brought Doug to prison, since then everything that has happened to him is a result of the POA being unable to believe that here is a spirit so strong and so stubborn it cannot be crushed, so free it cannot be cowered or subdued. I get about a hundred letters a week from prisoners, long termers in top security nicks who have known or heard of Doug at some time during their sentence, all mention him sooner or later and all admire him and express their wishes that he be returned to association. The rumours that the prisoners, themselves don't want him back on the wing is pure POA bullshit, and Home Office propaganda.

Meanwhile he sits in his solitary cell deprived of sensory pleasures that we all take for granted. Colour, smell etc. Except on our visits his eyes cannot focus on anything further than eight feet away, since they built the extra wall outside his window 'for security' (in case Joseph in his multicoloured dreamcoat pops by with his magic ladder I suppose.) Local 'Doug Wakefield Friends' and support groups: - Paul Sedgwick: 94 Burleigh Road South, Anfield, Liverpool 4, Merseyside. Annie Clifton: 14 Warren Road, Leyton, London E10.

June Peacock: 7 Dudley Drive, Fordley, Crumlington, Tyne/Wear.
Steve Bennet: 107 Medina Road, Cosham, Hants.

If there isn't one near you, write to Annie for details on starting your own group. Write a support letter to MR Doug Wake-

field, HM Prison, Albany Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5RS.

Luvins,
@NNIE

The Autobiography, 1,000 Days In Solitary by Doug Wakefield, with an introduction by Geoff Coggon (Warwick University) is still available from PROP or RAP, 56 Dames Road, Leyton, London E10 (01-556 0289). Price £1.25.

FACTORIES, OK.

Dear *FREEDOM*,
First of all we would like to say that Leeds DAM has 15 members not three as NW seems to think (*FREEDOM* Oct 2nd).

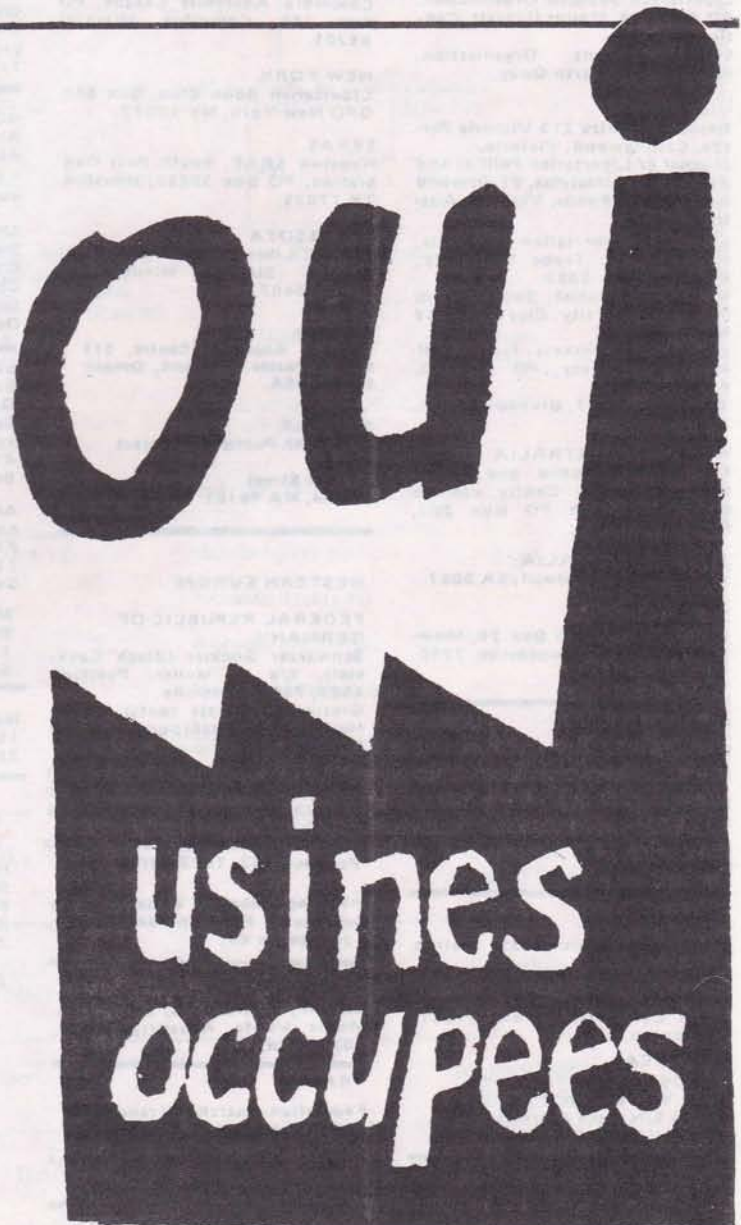
Next, some answers to D Danes criticism of Anarcho-Syndicalism (*FREEDOM* Oct 16th). It is false to argue that the factory environment itself is authoritarian. Workers' control and management aims at the abolition of power and authority within the factory, not of the factory itself, as the examples of the Russian and Spanish revolutions, France May 68 and to some

extent Poland 1980 all show. Technology likewise can be a means of liberation of humanity, indeed this is a major goal of anarchism. To propose that people should understand the technology they use is too much like primitive individualism. Anarcho-Syndicalists see economic and social revolution as going together. To take the example of ecology, by fighting the profit system we fight pollution caused by industrial processes designed to maximise profits.

Many DAM members having been through authoritarian workerist groups and having joined to counter the negative influence they have, far from wanting further domination, see Anarcho-Syndicalism as a means of liberation from Multi-National companies, capitalist states and state capitalism.

For those who want to know more, a new pamphlet has been published by Huddersfield DAM 'Writing on Anarcho-Syndicalism' price 25p available from Box DAM Peacocks, 58 Wakefield Road, Huddersfield. Send postal order for cost (blank) and second class stamp.

Yours,
LEEDS DAM



FREEDOM @ CONTACTS

international

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AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY
Research and Resources Centre for Libertarian Politics and Alternative Life-Styles, 7/355 Northmore Ave, Lyneham, ACT 2602.

NEW SOUTH WALES
Sydney Anarcho-Syndicalists, Jura Books Collective, 417 King St, Newtown, NSW 2042.
Tel: 02-516 4416.

Freedom, K153 Haymarket, Sydney 2000

Redfern Black Rose Anarchist Bookshop, 36 Botany Rd, Redfern NSW 2015

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

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

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

VICTORIA

Resource Centre 215 Victoria Parade, Collingwood, Victoria.
Journal of Libertarian Politics and Alternative Lifestyles, 51 Ormond Rd, Moonee Ponds, Victoria, Australia 3039

La Trobe Libertarian Socialists, c/o SRC, L. Trobe University, Bundoora, Vic 3083.

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

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

Treason, Box 37, Brunswick East, Victoria, 3057.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Freedom Collective and Libertarian Resource Centre can be reached through PO Box 203, Fremantle, 6160.

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Wintergreen/AR, PO Box 1294, Kitchener, Ontario, N2G 4G8.
Black Cat Press, PO Box 11261, Edmonton, Alberta.

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Montreal Que H2Y 3E9

USA

ARIZONA
Malicious Hooligans (anti-nuclear)
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CALIFORNIA
Autonomia, PO Box 1751, San Francisco, CA 94101.
Libertarian Anarchist Coffeehouse, meets last Sunday each month at Cafe Commons, 3161 Mission St, San Francisco.

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San Francisco, CA 94117
(415) 668-2785

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Houston SRAF, South Post Oak Station, PO Box 35253, Houston TX 77035.

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

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Portland Anarchist Centre, 313 East Burnside, Portland, Oregon 97209, USA.

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Left Bank Publishing Project
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Schwarzer Faden (Black Thread)
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Reutlingen, Tel 07121/370494

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Postfach 153, 1000 Berlin - 44

Reutlinge Libertad Verlag, Jochen
Schmuck Postfach 44 02 27,
1000 Berlin 44.

AUSTRIA

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Monte Verita, Neustiftgasse 33,
1070 Wien.

FRANCE

Federation Anarchist Francaise
145 Rue Amelot, 75011, Paris

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

GREECE

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

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17127, 1-20100 Milano.

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20100 Milano
Senzapatria c/o Mauizio Ton-
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Padova
c/o Piero Tognole Via C Battisti
39, 23100 Sondrio

BELGIUM

'Revolutionair anarchistes Kolle-
tif,
c/o Zwart & Rood,
PO Box 546,
B-9000 Gent,
Belgium

HOLLAND

De Vrijje, Postbus 486, 2000AL
Haarlem, Holland, tel: 023
273892

POLAND

Piotrek Betlejowski, age 22, Ul-
polnana 30/37, 09 402, Plock,
Poland.

DENMARK

Aarhus: Regnbuen Anarkist Bog-
cafe, Meijlgade 48, 8000 Aarhus.
Rainbow Anarchists of the Free
City of Christiania, c/o Allan
Anarchos, Tinghuset, Fristaden
Christiania, 1407 Copenhagen.
Anarkistisk Bogcafe, Rosenborg-
gade 12, 1130 Kobenhavn K.
Tel (01) 12 26 82.

NORWAY

ANORG, Høxtvedtv, 31B, 1431
As. (Publish 'Folkebladet' 4 times
a year.)

SPITSBERGEN

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Glygardynza Creke, The Mining
Community Huts, NY Alesund,
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SWEDEN

Syndikaliskt Forum, Tenstiernas
Gata 51, 11631 Stockholm.
Syndikalistiskt Forum (anarcho-
synd bookshop), Husargatan 5,
41302 Gothenburg (tel 031-13 25
04).

Anarchist Movement
c/o Maria Wingsborg
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literature

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we have to say that we'll try to
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A new edition of the 'Internatio-
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tarian groups, and enterprises (ie:
publications) is currently being
printed. Relatively soon we will
have more details and inquiries
can be sent to Bound Together
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CISCO, CA 94117, (415) 668-
2785.

Dear Comrades

We will be publishing a monthly
magazine called 'NEWSFRONT'
its aims are:- to challenge the anti-
T-Union, anti-Socialist etc, in the
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Express' 'Daily Mail' etc by artic-
les countering their views. If you
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Ring Richard 061 998 8516 or
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tickets.

Dear Comrades,

I would like to have an anarchist
penfriend to correspond with in
English. I am 30 years old, teacher,
with a wife and two children. Can
you do something about it? I
would be more than glad to hear
from you again.

Thank you so much,

Salud,
BERNHARD GIERSTL
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BAVARIA/GERMANY

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ACTIVE BIRTH

THE International Conference on Active Birth was held at Wembley Conference Centre on Saturday October 30th. Speakers included Janet Balaskas, Sheila Kitzinger, R D Laing and Michel Odent.

'We are swept into life by the power of the vagina', said Sheila Kitzinger.

'Birth has been forbidden', said R D Laing.

Sheila Kitzinger spoke of how birth should be and occasionally is, an intensely female and sexual experience. Her words were stirring and poetic as she described the physical process of the baby's movement from the womb down the birth canal, 'the vaginal muscles unfolding like the petals of a rose', and out into warm and friendly hands. The emphasis throughout the conference was on action; the repossessing of birth for the mother and child, not allowed or forbidden but chosen. We saw films of women giving birth actively. This is quite literal, women moving freely around a comfortable room, some in hospital, some at home. They used their bodies fully, taking any position that felt good and that aided the natural, downward movement of the child. Our bodies are amazingly capable; women stood, knelt, gyrated their pelvises or squatted for the demanding hours of labour. Two and a half thousand of us watched and lived every second with them. In spite of having three children myself, I've never seen and felt what I did that Saturday - the ecstasy of the baby's head appearing in the fully dilated vagina, inexorably and smoothly. Within seconds the mother gathers up the blood smeared creature and they feel the warmth and pleasure of each others skins and look into each others eyes.

It is not so unusual nowadays that mothers, after hours of hard work delivering, can get up and walk; but in spite of this the cultural and political attitudes are to treat birth as a sickness. We saw a brief film of a conventional birth. White bright sterile surroundings, the high trolley, the obstetrician and his assistants, masked, gowned and wielding instruments. In the middle the hapless victims - the pinned down mother-to-be, glimpsing only the backsides of uniform or the drips as the baby is extracted like a tumour through the vagina or, more increasingly, the abdominal wall. Swiftly the pulsating umbilical cord is severed and mother and child separated. The baby is then carried away by rubber gloves to scream in another room while the sedated woman is left to recover. The first painful separation, the first surrender to authority.

It is several centuries since men took over birth and pushed women down on their backs, 'the stranded beetle position' as Sheila Kitzinger called it. Apparently Louis XIV invented this passive position so he could have an unimpeded view of his child being born. Birth is also a cultural event; in many countries women squat and stand, they can because they are more agile and supple. The culture of the West has made women into manageable objects ignorant of the workings of their own bodies and accepting the superior knowledge of male dominated medicine.

I learnt a lot about the body that day. Simple really, why didn't they tell me? But there is so much advantage in not

telling, not least the financial investment in technology. If it is there it must be used. Boys with the toys syndrome. The argument of the active birth movement is that more births will be trouble free celebrations if women repossess the act of birth. They should choose where and in what manner to give birth and for the births that do need medical assistance, technology can serve rather than dominate. We saw a baby in an incubator but it stood next to the mother's bed. We saw in Michel Odent's birthing room in a French hospital a woman's breech baby born naturally before the twin was born by caesarian. 'Normally' both would have been born on the operating table with no active participation from either parent.

This is the moment when all those women who have needed medical help or who feel safer in the world they are used to, raise their voices. Yes, but ... Active birth also means choice and it means changes in our culture. Until more women know more about the physical processes and until birth is brought out of the hospital closet, people will still be afraid to experience what birth can be.

In Holland, according to the Dutch midwife who spoke, it is customary for babies to be born at home. The family can be supportive and there is already a trusting and friendly relationship between the family and the midwife as she provides ante-natal care as well as attending the birth. Lucky Dutch mothers have a helper who lives in for ten days to help run the household and this includes looking after other children. In England at present luck or determination plus money are needed in order to have real choice. There are independent midwives but this means time and energy to find out the alternatives and sometimes having to pay for them. It is luck if your local doctor is keen on active/natural/home births. If s/he isn't it means finding one who is willing. It is illegal to deliver a baby without medical approval. A father was prosecuted recently for this.

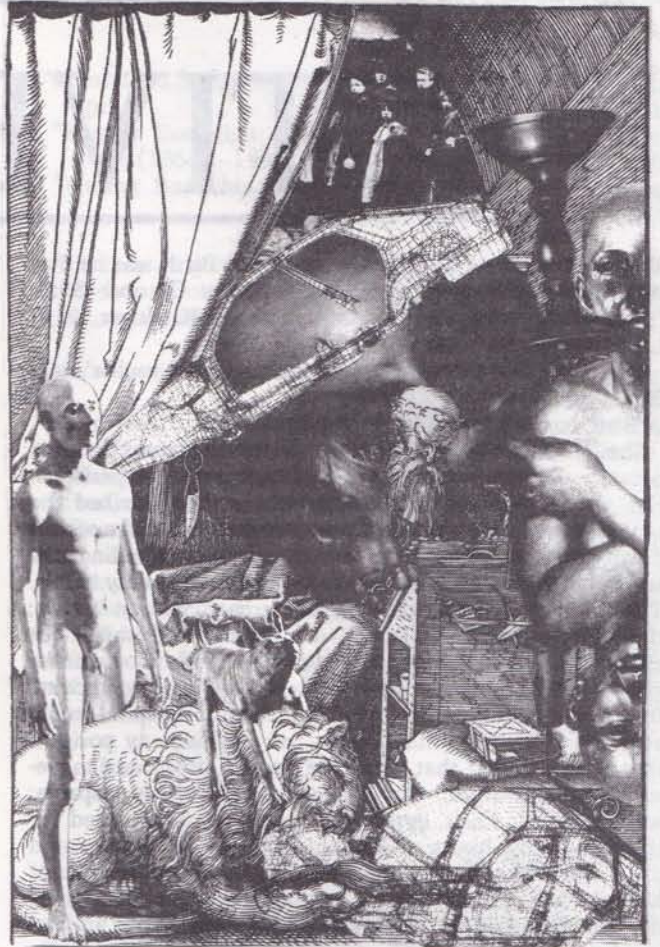
What is encouraging is that this conference, with two and a half thousand tickets, was sold out over a month previously. Over half the people attending were midwives, midwives from Humber, Lanarkshire, Leicester and in the seat next to me a GP from Glasgow. Unfortunately there were no hospital midwives speaking. It is a difficult job as they are caught between the needs of the mothers and the bureaucracy of the hospital system.

What is discouraging is that the conference was expensive at £8.50 + £1 for a programme + £2 for a creche. No reductions for unwaged. The creche was not advertised; I asked and was told it was only if absolutely necessary and I was advised to find a helpful friend! If my three children had all been young I could not have gone. This was infuriating and seemed at odds with the active birth philosophy not to have much choice once the children had arrived. We need more than a good beginning.

A liberating day, but it seems that choice is still only available sometimes for some people.

BERNARDINE F

VESTED INTERESTS



BRITISH MUSEUM P. 3 Inches 4

AND ARTHUR MOYSE

THERE comes that moment of high drama when a solitary figure rises to his or her feet, depending on whether they are wearing pink or blue bootees, to declare their 'vested interest' in the matter in hand. All eyes turn to the speaker as he or she gathers up his or her papers and with that air of nobility born of great sacrifice to the public weald walks out of the room and off to the nearest pub. Be it Parliament, the committee room, the political forum or the shareholders' meeting it is always an impressive sight of one man or woman's sense of public honour. So, too, for my part I must declare my vested interest in two mini major art exhibitions. As regards one I am still bitter and as regards the other I have a cynical amused approach to the official line of bull. So be it. Within the Victoria and Albert Museum is the Boilerhouse Project. It is a gallery given over to a monastic calm and an exhibition at stated times of all that is deemed best in world commercial hardware. And we were there, the finest and the fairest of the Fourth Estate, to view 'the most complex of all consumer products', the new Ford Sierra car. Four and a half years in the making, longer than the making of *Abbott and Costello meet the Bride of Frankenstein*, 7,500 separate parts, 1,000,000 dollars a day budgeted on its development over a period of 52 months, and all to win back the European customers from the Japanese car manufacturers.

And one looked at the cars on display within the gallery setting, for the runaround had now moved into the world of High Art, and I drank of the Guinness and ate an occasional oyster with that flair that I acquired from the James Bond films. In 1957 Roland Barthes wrote in his book

Mythologies, and if ever I come across a copy I must read it some time, that 'I think that in today's terms the car is a near enough equivalent to the great gothic cathedrals; I mean to say that it is one of the great products of the age, passionately conceived by anonymous artists, obsessed by its image, and on the other hand in daily use by the whole population who find in it a perfect, magic object', and here you have a slice of pseudo-intellectual, pretentious rubbish by one who it would appear had never worked on an assembly line. The great gothic cathedrals, the Space Craft moving into the unknown timeless zones of infinity space, the graceful, lovely beauty of the Concorde should be, by all men and women, accepted as magnificent acts of human creation. Communal acts of creative beauty that the rational, logical mind can argue, with white foam sticking to its lips, are a waste of wealth and of human labour, but if I must be called upon to waste my small wage and my physical labour then let it be for things of great and awe inspiring beauty that common sense declaims should never be attempted for their conception belongs to the land of dreams and their fulfillment can never be achieved in our lifetime, for remember this comrades they said the same of the ball point pen:

And the car? A useful piece of mechanical trivia that takes its place with the bacon slicer as a welcome but irritating need amongst the needs of our crowded age. My vested interest in the car industry is that in the 1930s I was honoured by being blacklisted in the matter of employment by General Motors and in the early 1930s I organised
CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

WHOSE BENEFIT ?

CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM.

VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION Starting in October newly-unemployed people will no longer have to register at a Job Centre before claiming benefits from the DHSS or DoE. This is part of the moves to sell off or close Job Centres. Instead, there will be a new system of

AVAILABILITY TESTING. The burden will now be on you to prove to the dole office, firstly that you are 'genuinely' available for work, and secondly that you are 'genuinely' looking for a job. This will give them much more power. When you first sign on you will be asked "Would you take any full time job which you can do?". If you say 'no', you will be asked to fill in an Availability Form. You should answer the questions on this about acceptable wages, hours and travelling distance, in as general a way as possible - your answers may be used to stop benefit. Special attention will be given to single parents and women with children, who will have to prove that they have already made arrangements for someone to look after the kids should they be offered a job. While you are filling in this form, the clerk will be looking you over as part of a programme of

ETHNIC MONITORING. This is a race check. You will either be handed a card asking your place of origin, or else visually assessed and colour-coded by the counter-clerk. This is similar to the checks being made from now on in hospitals, where you may be required to produce proof of your nationality, such as a passport. There are five categories - West Indian/African, Asian, White, Other or Refusal. You can insist you are put down as 'Refusal' if you wish.

POSTAL CLAIMS. You will no longer get an interview at the DHSS. Instead, the dole office will give you another, even longer, form (a B1PC) to fill in and send off to your local SS office. This may sound great - no waiting or queueing. BUT... the form is 8 pages long with 109 questions. If you fill it in wrongly, it will be sent back for you to do again. You won't get any money until it's right. In a recent tryout, only 1 person in 20 did it correctly. You will be asked about your relationship to other people in your household. Beware - for example, if you say your landlord is a relative, or that a person of the opposite sex who isn't a dependent lives in the household it can lead to even longer delays and reductions in benefit. (Still it's not all bad - 1000 of the bastards will lose their jobs as a result of this change).

COMPUTERISATION. Over the next few years, the DHSS system is to be computerised. Until this change is finished, there will be

utter bureaucratic chaos. It's already next to impossible to get a straight answer to any question at the DHSS. Doing everything by post will make it hard to get any answers at all. Once the system is complete, your record will be instantly available, anywhere in the country, to the DHSS, other government departments and the police. Naturally, no safeguards have been announced for correcting mistakes in your record. Perhaps the most important change is the one even DHSS officials haven't been given adequate details about. They call it

UNIFIED HOUSING BENEFIT. From November 22nd, council tenants will no longer receive money for rent and rates from the DHSS. Instead, it will be paid direct to the council. It is estimated that 2 million households will be worse off as a result. For example, those who claim rate rebates from the council rather than supplementary allowance to cover the rates. It will be actual money out of everyone's pockets (people won't be able to pay heating bills in the winter using rent money.) For many council tenants the only way they have of forcing councils to carry out essential repairs and services has been to withhold rent. This and rent strikes will now be impossible.

From next April the scheme will be extended to claimants in private rented accommodation and homeowners. Unlike council tenants money will still be paid to them not their landlords. But it will be paid out by the council not the DHSS. From December the DHSS will be handing over to councils details of people claiming rent or rates in their area. Claimants will have to fill out a form for the council detailing what rent and rates they pay. As the councils integrate the DHSS records into their own we will see 1) complete chaos to start with and many people accidentally cut off while its all sorted out 2) a spate of prosecutions as many people are caught out either claiming more rent and rates from the DHSS than they're actually paying (using forged rent books), or more rate rebate than they're entitled to. Be warned! The scheme replaces all rent and rate rebate schemes as well as Supplementary Benefit payments.

TAXATION OF BENEFITS. This has already started - the only difference it makes is that you cannot claim a tax rebate as soon as you become unemployed. Most people's benefits are too low to be liable for tax. However in future if the lower tax level isn't raised, benefits will creep over it as they slowly rise, and claimants will have to repay tax due when they finally get a job.



**why should we
accept falling
living standards**

Effects

These changes are meant to cope with the extra workload on the system of Employment. But they are much more than a reorganisation. They widen the division between those with jobs and those without. They are meant to divide those with some prospect of getting a job, from

The new policy admits that unemployment not only has to be controlled, but unemployed have to be controlled. The unemployed and underemployed have to be controlled. The unemployed and underemployed have to be controlled. Benefits will not be a right, but a privilege.

Despite the claim that they will make the system more rational, it will cause a lot of confusion. The government is reluctant to tell us what is happening because they know most of them will oppose it. The changes will put more pressure on them, which will mean a lot of waiting and aggravation for us.

The new regulations are meant to cut down on the amount of benefits. If you found, when you had a job, that you were worth more than that you're unemployed you'll be getting even less, and being

Bosses 'give' us jobs so we can make money for them. They give us money directly — for example, office jobs organising other people in essential services which aren't profitable (health services, the apparatus of social discipline and death (law and war). But there's plenty of work — even jobs doing nothing at all useful. However, bosses start weeding out those people that they can't get jobs don't make enough money. All over the world that's been going on since the sixties — the result is mass unemployment.

Mass unemployment is nothing new. It was constant in Britain during the war and jobs for everyone making war. After the war we had a safety net meant only a few hundred thousand unemployed. The welfare state was designed as a safety net for this relatively small number. As the number of jobs grew. Larger numbers of women and young people found relatively well paid work, especially in the expanding service sector. In the fifties immigration was encouraged to fill low paid jobs and benefits followed.

Of course not everyone was usefully employed or well paid. But that a high level of steady, comparatively well paid work was maintained during permanent expansion. This was disproved at the end of the series of struggles, not about poverty, but because having better lives people wanted more. While profits were high it had been easy to raise benefits. But militancy had reached the point where bosses share of the cake. And simultaneously profits began to fall. Immigration was ended, and women youth and ethnic minorities were pushed out into the slowly expanding dole queues.

Financially those were the good old days for claimants. It was better than they had ever been. (Indeed they'd overtaken many low paid jobs.) On the negative side unemployment was still low enough for them to be able to police claims — forcing the unemployed into low paid jobs under the cohabitation rules etc.

Twelve years later the situation is totally reversed. Benefits are at subsistence levels. (In 1978 20% of workers would have been better off.) Today, after the ending of earnings related supplement and the abolition of the official poverty line. This despite the fact that 7 million families are below the official poverty line.) On the other side mass unemployment

call 'fiddles' or 'fraud' are an important way of keeping up a reasonable standard of living, as the real value of benefits falls.

Effectiveness

Some people have come to realise that being jobless is not the worst thing that can happen to them. Despite the lack of money, it's possible to spend time in a more worthwhile way than when at work. We don't have to accept that being out of work is a punishment. To see life on the dole as the ultimate horror serves only to keep everyone in misery. That is the idea. When unemployed people are able to enjoy themselves and refuse to be punished for being jobless, it disrupts the function of unemployment, which is to keep wages down and people in their place.

If a worker complains about low wages or bad conditions, they're told that plenty of others want the job. But people can and will find successful ways of surviving on the dole. Then it becomes easier to tell them to stuff their jobs. The new regulations are meant to scare us, just as the threat of redundancy threatens those in work. Faced with these latest attempts to deepen the divisions between 'workers' and 'the rest', it is in the interests of us all to resist them.

SS with too many claims to police. With over a million long term unemployed the system is on the verge of collapse, and benefit offices are striking over workloads. The Welfare State, designed for times of low use and high profits is breaking down.

For the bosses the need is to redesign the system on the basis of mass unemployment. The first stage of this — widening the gap between those with jobs and the 'poor' — is almost accomplished. For ten years every government has been preoccupied with reducing 'surplus employment', reducing state expenditure and holding wages down. The Tories didn't introduce monetarism (the Callaghan govt. did), and nor did they 'create' mass unemployment. They have happily encouraged it however — to maintain incentives to work harder for less money, by making benefits as unattractive as possible. To use the fear of unemployment to chip away at the safeguards and benefits workers have won in the past. For Tories disciplining the poor is a matter of 'law and order'. More Fraud Squad officers, more riot trained police thugs, longer sentences. In the future they promise more of the same — more cuts, more stick for those who protest, more of the 'discipline of the market-place' until the 'upturn' arrives, and the economy takes off with low paid jobs for all.

Labour offer us the other half of the double act. The Tories call for lower wage settlements — Foot calls for an 'understanding' on pay. While the Tories threaten to dismantle the Welfare State, Labour promise to 'save' it — but of course there won't be money to restore cuts or improve it. Labour offer a fair deal for claimants — no more cuts in benefit. But of course there won't be money to raise them above bare subsistence levels. Labour promise an 'end' to unemployment, or at least a reduction to one million over five years. What they're offering is only another shortlived economic deflation, with jobs for a year or two building houses or roads or drains, before the project ends (North sea gas conversions anyone?) or the money runs out in another economic downturn. For Labour disciplining the poor means more social workers and more benefit staff. It means more Govt./TUC unemployment centres with paid workers, treating claimants as individual 'cases' with problems. It means more resources into keeping claimants isolated and impotent, more help for them to 'cope' with poverty. Better that than more police? Well of course welfare cops smile as they prosecute 'scroungers', or take the kids into care.

Mass unemployment is here to stay. Its quite conceivable that levels may drop at some time, its quite certain that the fall will only be temporary. There's no sign today of any recovery — and after years of decline Britains in the worst possible state to benefit from one if it came. We have to be clear about it. Mass poverty is here to stay and so is the discipline needed to police it. Whether you're wacked in the guts by your Tory 'Community Policeman' or just nauseated by your smiling Labour 'Community Worker' the only choice is to vomit.

SICKNESS CLAIMS.

The system of 'self-certification' which was introduced earlier this year is the 'soft' edge of a new policy for dealing with sickness claims. This is aimed at drastically reducing the number of days 'lost' through people going off sick. The hard edge is that from next April, you will have to convince your employer that you are genuinely sick. They will be responsible for paying the first 6 weeks benefit, and so will have every incentive to scrutinise your claim to be sick very closely — and keep records of how often and why you're sick. And of course small companies will often treat their obligation to pay you with the same contempt that they treat minimum wage requirements, equal pay requirements, Health and Safety standards etc. This is part of the purpose of these changes.

SPECIAL CLAIMS CONTROL UNITS. The government has steadily increased the number of unemployment benefit review officers, fraud officers, liable relative officers

(chasing 'defaulting' husbands or wives for maintenance) and special investigators attached to the local office or group of offices. But these have been completely snowed under by the volume of claims to be chased. The latest innovation is the Special Claims Control Unit. These are teams of special investigators (often ex-policemen) who move from office to office to 'blitz' claims. The idea is that they systematically investigate 1 in every 20 claims, looking particularly at women, long-term claimants, people with skills who might be fiddling etc. Houses are watched, neighbours are questioned and so forth. If they have any grounds for suspicion, however feeble or unjustified, you will be called for interview. (They may try to prevent you taking a friend with you.) There, if they haven't proof of wrongdoing, they will try to intimidate you into making a statement or withdrawing your claim. Often they will try to persuade you that you are in the wrong when you are not, and that to 'regularise' your position you should sign off and make a new claim. This is a trick — if you do, it will be taken as an admission that you were fiddling. The purpose of groups like these is to force long-term claimants off the register to join the 17% of people already not bothering to sign on.

Some advice

1 Don't be too worried. The new regulations will make things harder but making us afraid is just what they want.

Carry on claiming for what you need.

2 Find out what is happening. Make contact with others who are claiming. Pass this information around and discuss it. How have others overcome problems? Try to publicise the answers.

Find out when and what your local DHSS is clamping down on (read the local papers). How are they conducting the investigations and interviews?

3 Keep covered. If possible try to work together. Take a friend to any interview. Say as little as possible. (Don't answer questions if you have no change of circumstances to report.)

If you live with others who are claiming, make sure you've got all your facts and stories straight. Many people are pressured into withdrawing valid claims by the DHSS twisting what you have said and making you think you are in the wrong.

Tell others if you see people snooping around, and refuse to answer 'innocent' questions from strangers about your friends, e.g. where they are.

4 Other implications. In the winter some people use their rent allowance to pay the heating bills. As this now becomes impossible, cut-offs and harassment will rise. Again, get together with people to oppose this, and argue directly with the LEB and Gas Board workers who carry out the cut-offs. If this doesn't work, do all you can to stop them.

5 Be careful. If you fiddle, be more cautious. Some fiddles don't work any more, such as those involving rent.

If you do odd jobs, be careful about using your real name. Watch out for suspicious questions from would-be customers.

6 Don't be conned.

Being unemployed is a fact of the present and the future. Don't be fooled into thinking that a vote at the next election will make things better. No political party or campaign can guarantee you a job. You must start fighting for more money and less hassles for yourself as an unemployed or unwaged person — not just as someone who is forced to accept the next offer of a job.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

and led three small strikes at the great Root Combine when they took over the Talbot luxury car factory. The three strikes failed, for panic was the order of the day among the small group of youths and men that I had organised, but the pleasure was, and O Boilerhouse Project I thought of it while coaxing out of its shell the protesting oyster, the sight of top management snarling groupwise across the assembly lines to a seventeen year old grubby youth who had three times halted production in the matter of compulsory overtime, forced Sunday working and a reduction in pay on forced overtime from eight pence an hour to seven pence halfpenny an hour. Odd comrades but true and Roland equates the polished rattling ironware with the gothic cathedrals. The grown men weeping in the lavatory when they were sacked; the men who slashed their throats with razors as their final cry of despair; the split pins cut in half; the bolts sawn in half; the pieces of brown cardboard dipped in black paint and used to plug holes in the side shields of the engines to avoid spending time getting the holes spot welded – and all to avoid wasting time in a daily desperate attempt to finish each job on time and with no financial gain to the worker O Boilerhouse O.

The Ford spokesmen give of their praise to the Japanese employers and to the Japanese workers, pointing out that the Japanese workers produce over three times as many cars a year as the British worker and for less wages and more bloody fool the Japanese worker if what the Ford spokesmen say is true that 'It "is" simply that Japanese workers achieved their efficiency by an expense of spirit, independence and free time that would be unacceptable anywhere in Western Europe'. The role of any employer is to force as much work, and as many working hours, for the least possible pay, from the man or woman forced by social and economic circumstances to work for him and by the same justifiable logic the worker should strive to work as little as possible, to produce as little as possible, for the highest possible pay, and if comrade on your State educational grant you raise your hands in liberal moral horror then simply question who makes the rules of the game.

But enough of Guinness and oysters. It is with the 'own and his moped frau that we must roar across London to the Royal Academy to view their monthly major exhibition and to drink of the wine and smile at the gentle little Indian waiter as we fight our way past the mad Pole to feed off the Indian food before viewing with a jaundiced eye the Royal Academy's Contemporary Indian Art, for there, leading the parade of contemporary Indian artists, is F N Souza with his brush at the high port. And what vested interest cried the Town and his sari draped frau could I have in an Indian artist born in Goa in 1924. In 1958 there was the eight weeks bus strike with strike pay of £2.00 a week and at that same time there was in the back streets of Hammersmith in a working class terraced house a small art gallery run by Mrs Durga Lall. Short and fat and hopelessly in debt she would literally walk the streets around Bond Street pushing for sale the works of artists involved in her gallery. Poverty was the order of the day and Durga Lall and I would pool a shilling or so and I would go to the small corner shop and buy a tin of cat food paste and some plain biscuits and we would sit on the floor of her gallery feeding her cats with the cat food paste and also spreading it on our plain biscuits for to eat while Durga Lall waited for the elusive customer.

I appeared in the North End Road Court as a character witness when she fought her case for back rent, against the advice of her southern Irish lawyer, and won, 'Ah god sure and didn't we beat the bastards', and I was threatened by irate local shopkeepers over uncollected debts when short fat smiling Durga Lall disappeared in Australia and I tried to work out her never to be paid debts. It was on my door that the police beat when Durga Lall wrote to the Metropolitan Police asking them to trace me and they

'found' me, assuming I was her absconding husband. It was to me that Arts Council of Great Britain wrote when Durga Lall contacted them to find me who was never lost, assuming that I was Durga Lall's absconding husband. O Durga. It was at Durga Lall that Victor Musgrave of the fashionable west end gallery screamed with rage when he found her scribbling down the rich clients' names and addresses from the gallery's visitors book. And it was Durga Lall, that plump little art dealer with a gallery in the back streets of working class Hammersmith, who, almost a quarter of a century ago, trooped across London, most of the way on foot, carrying F N Souza's paintings to offer them to the fashionable Bond Street galleries, and it was Durga Lall, short and plump and broke, who acted as godmother to Souza's child in those small rooms off the Edgware Road where the mother worked as a seamstress. And come Souza's first major exhibition in a fashionable gallery off Grosvenor Square and not a mention of Durga Lall and her back street gallery in the well laid out catalogue. Souza is now a minor fashionable artist in the limbo of the American art scene and Durga Lall is now somewhere in New Zealand and it is all small time history except that I have a vested interest that I hold gives me the right to be cynically amused at an exhibition of 'Indian art' produced by painters who shook off the dust of the great sub continent before most of the readers of this paper were born. London over the last few years has been plagued with 'major' exhibitions claiming to be the visual expression of a separate social culture and almost without exception they are third rate works using a style of subject matter that at its best is no more than a pastiche of State museum style of traditional paintings and at its too often worst is crudely painted naive work using an absentee version of ill remembered local scenes painted in crude western style of garish colours and student style draftsmanship, but sadly and all too often it is work that will only be accepted by the State galleries of the west if the artist plays babu native or a butch version of Madame Butterfly.

Only the British Museum plays safe by clinging on to the womb of history for, moving among the graveyards of the past, they can only come upon, if not the treasures of, then at least fashioned keys to a craftsmanship that produced its trivia from Samurai armour at the British Museum at their Edo exhibition to the small and pleasant Portuguese exhibition at the friendly Museum of Mankind off off off Bond Street. But for the culture craving Town and his moped frau it is Hockney at Kasmin and Proctor at the Redfern and who am I to mock the fallen. And for those who love dying falls there is the work of Philip Guston at the Whitechapel as a pale echo of Picasso and Wilson and Ward at the Tate when there should be Claude and Gericault for they are hard working pupils 'in the school of'.

But for my sins let me withdraw a reluctant apology I made to the pleasant and friendly exhibition organiser at the Tate Gallery regarding the role of the State Gallery Directors in the matter of charging the common people to enter their own public galleries should Thatcher lunatic economic politics prevail. I stated that the Directors should have said that they would resign en masse and he stated that they did protest and I withdrew I withdrew but this I now remember and it is this that though the State directors covered their bets by publicising a protest I, unofficially, entered a room within one of the State galleries when charges were being bruited last time and I saw the coin entrance machines within the gallery ready to be installed and if your protest is sincere Comrade Directors you refuse as a matter of personal honour to let the political coin collecting machines within the doors you claim to guard in the name of the people. Ilya Ehrenburg protested and betrayed all his cultural life and come Comrade Directors you would not wish to end up like Ilya Ehrenburg, rich and powerful. Ah well.

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Friends,

It would seem that the FREEDOM Deficit Fund is likely to meet its (minimal) target of £2000 this year; but the Premises Fund towards the overheads on our premises (the Rates alone are over £17000 per year!) is not. Your help is still needed!