

anarchist fortnightly

# Freedom

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**Inside:** 1984 OLYMPICS; DENMARK UNMASKED; REVIEW: CENTAUR-READY

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# THEY'RE OFF !

# ...Day One at the 1984 Olympics

From a BBC sports broadcast,  
30 August 1984:-

GOOD morning. This is David Coleman for BBC Sport reporting for you at the close of the first day's competition at the 1984 Olympiad in Athens, Greece.

It's been my privilege to be present at this most historic occasion. This is the first Olympics to be held under the new system set up by the International Olympic Committee after the collapse of the 1980 Olympics in Moscow. Recognising that sport and politics could not be separated, the IOC has radically changed the games so that all events are now explicitly political. Athens, the new permanent home of the Olympics, was chosen because it was the birthplace of many of today's political institutions, including tyranny, oligarchy and democracy. The Olympic programme has been divided into two main sets of events, right wing and left wing. A fence sitting competition has been set up for those who can't quite make up their minds where they belong.

There are no national team contests in the left wing events of the Games and in many events flags and national anthems have been abolished. There are contests between political tendencies, however, and today the rebel Olympic drama when the Spartacist League, the smallest tendency here at the Games, came out on top in the One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward Footrace for Trotskyists. Constant

splits amongst the teams made this event a real feast for spectators with new tendencies forming all the time, but the Spartacists definitely went further backwards than all the others.

The featured track event was expected to be the anarchist marathon, starting in the main street here in Athens, and finishing at Utopia - just round the corner. The atmosphere was electric, with squads of spectators chanting "One, Two, Three, Eight, Smash the Boss, Smash the State!" and "Baa, baa, Bakunin". However, the race was unable to get underway because the starter, who was a Marxist academic, would not say "Go!"

The Chairman Mao Memorial Swim for Class Collaborationists attracted a record field, including Britain's Callaghan, Spain's Carillo and Deng Xiao Ping, who competed in both left and right wing events on the same day, which is now the subject of a special IOC inquiry. Cuba's Fidel Castro was undecided about whether to start and eventually chose to be one of the judges. Britain was represented by Jim Callaghan and the CP's Costello. The race began slowly, as none of the competitors was prepared to go to the front in case they exposed their backs. The pace quickened in the middle stages and in a sensational finish, marred only by the disappearance of several swimmers, Italy's Enrico Berlinguer inched over the class line, just ahead of West Germany's Helmut Schmidt. Britain's representatives tried hard, but were no match for the more experienced European Social Democrats, Eurocommunists and Russians.

In the first right wing event decided today - leaping the credibility gap - the world's capitalist politicians were in fine form. But none of them was successful. The only entrant to complete the leap was

the one with the biggest credibility gap, Richard Nixon of the United States, but he was later disqualified after IOC officials discovered he had attached two tiny jet engines to his track shoes. Edward Kennedy fell into his gap and at last report was still trying to climb out.

The first of the team events, the detente shuffle, is still in progress. It's become a triangular contest between the United States, the USSR and China. According to a message just received from the stadium the USSR has again switched its support from China to the United States, but negotiations between the latter two teams are on again. Deng Xiao Ping for China has offered troops to put down the popular rebellion in Thailand in exchange for two calculators and a dozen bottles of Coca Cola.

In the two day quasi-fascist decathlon it looks likely that again the battle for a gold medal will be fought out between Chile's Pinochet, Israel's Begin and Britain's Margaret Thatcher. Australia's representative, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, was a bit out of his depth here. Bjelke scored well in shooting and bookburning, but finished far down in marching and saluting. New Zealand's Robert (Piggy) Muldoon impressed the judges with his backwardness and could be rabid enough in tomorrow's section of the decathlon - propaganda and Commie-kicking - to bid for the bronze medal at least. There was a minor sensation in the left wing events when Britain's Len Murray was ruled ineligible to compete. TUC officials said they would lodge an appeal and enter him for Climbing the Greasy Pole - one of the right wing events held later in the week.

And that just about wraps up BBC Sport's Olympic coverage. Tomorrow's right wing events include skating on thin ice for the parliamentarians at the indoor rink and the second day of the quasi-fascist decathlon and bribeathon for Third World Dictators. The left wing events will include the three-legged race for combined worker-peasant entries, the Space Invaders Contest for student radicals and the feminist consensus, in which no gold medal will be awarded. And everyone here is looking forward to the big Sandcastle Showdown between left and right later in the week, when the left will be trying to build their sandcastles faster than the right can kick them over. And until next time, this is David Coleman, in Athens, for BBC Sport.



General Pinochet shooting political prisoners in the stadium.

# Right around the world

IN many respects for anarchists to talk of 'right' or 'left' is nonsensical. From where we stand, everybody is on the right - a fact only partly recognised by the arguments in the recent controversy about whether we are 'part of, or against, the Left' and the discussion at the Oxford conference.

It is a matter for some congratulation that at last - and the confusion has reigned in anarchist movements around the world for a long time, costing many lives and much disillusionment - the consensus of opinion is concentrating on the understanding that the anarchist movement cannot be part of the political spectrum at all, and so cannot be part of the left, any more than of the right.

From the very first successes and excesses of revolutions 'led' by parties of the left, as in the Russian revolution, through the impotence of social democrats of various shades (the Labour Party is a good example) to do anything to permanently affect class rule and capitalism, to the numerous examples of revolutions which have been gradually rolled back (as in Portugal) once the working class has lost the initiative to the politicians - every experience backs up the dictum "those who make half a revolution dig their own graves".

The fact is the left and right each contain the seeds of authoritarianism, the concept that the masses must have leaders, and each think it better that they have the wrong leaders (temporarily) than no leaders at all. The Communists in Germany in 1933 accepted Hitler's triumph at the polls and, believing his regime would be short-lived and would end in

chaos, chanted "After Hitler - our turn!" rather than challenge the concepts of state domination that he stood for. Hitler's methods were so similar to Stalin's that there could in any case be no arguments about right and wrong about those - the only grounds for conflict were about motivation - the same grounds which divided Christians against each other, for that matter.

Thus it was that when war came, in the first place Stalin and Hitler did a deal in 1939, and then, when Hitler broke the agreement of non-aggression and invaded Russia in 1941 - the arch enemy of the working class (and Communism), Winston Churchill, found common ground with Stalin in the war against Hitler, bringing the anti-Communist Chiang Kai Chek into the grand alliance as well.

We pick over this ever so ancient history only in order to show that, in extremis, ideologies don't mean a thing where power is concerned. Ruling classes, of whatever kind they be - royal and aristocratic, managerial and bureaucratic, dictatorial or democratic - will always operate their method of government according to what the circumstances demand. Dictators try to be immortal and make their dictatorships permanent because it is in the nature of the beast to believe that nobody else can do the job as well as they can. In a democracy there is a built-in escape clause for both government and people to allow for change when things go wrong.

In our post-war history, it has seemed to be the rule that the Tories got out when economic storms gathered on the horizon; they sat

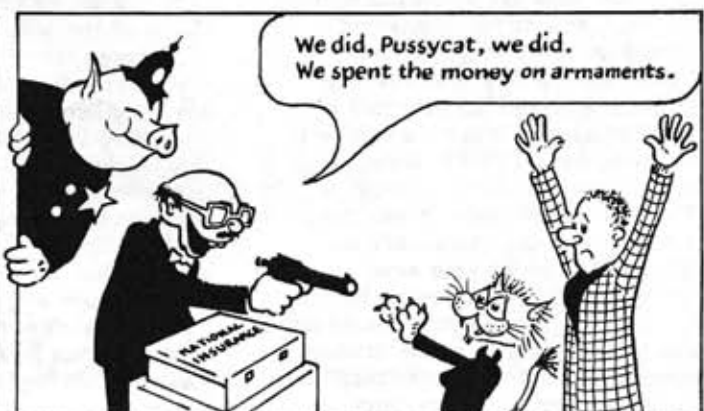
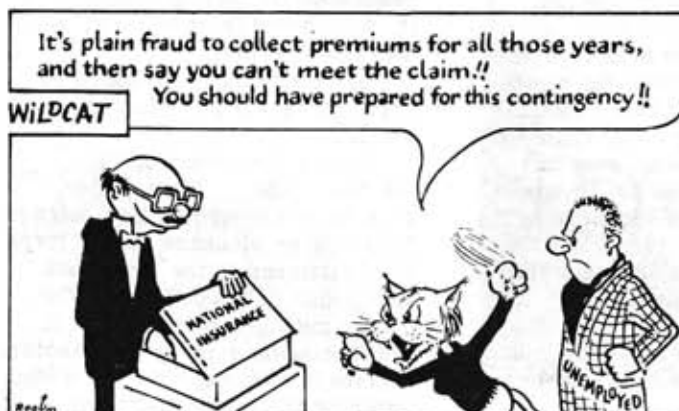
back and came back when Labour had seemed to make a cock-up of circumstances that were going to be cocked-up anyway.

This time, whether by luck or judgement, Labour got out just as the whole world was entering an economic down-turn and the Tories, who really do pride themselves on knowing how to organise prosperity, have inherited one of the biggest cock-ups of the century - for a trade recession has coincided with a technological revolution, the scope and effects of which nobody really knows, and military tension at a time when war has been made unthinkable even by the ruling class - for next time, they go too.

One thing, however, they are all agreed upon: the situation needs a firm hand. Thus, 'the swing to the Right'. In every country, the fear of freedom which immobilises so many and expresses itself by the search for strong leaders, is played upon, together with all the good old-fashioned patriotisms and prejudices.

We think it is a mistake to underestimate our rulers and so, for instance, we don't think it was just stupidity that made James Prior blurt out last week that the unemployed should be 'encouraged' to undertake 'voluntary' work instead of being paid to do nothing. Nor that he was followed by Lord Gowrie (who?) his no.2 at the Department of Employment (sic) going a step further and suggesting compulsory voluntary work!

We think these were straws in the wind, performing two functions: testing public opinion and dropping the idea into the public consciousness. We warned in our last issue about the possibility of military conscription. Would not conscription for social service be a step in that direction? A move to the right by a party of the right is only logical - and the situation could be inherited by Labour if and when they come back.



# DENMARK:

## The mask comes off

People in Denmark having any illusions about which side of the fence Social Democracy is on had a rude awakening recently. The government of Copenhagen led by its social democratic mayor Weidekamp was forced out of its usual "repressive tolerance" and had to use open force in order to stop a local struggle.

The immediate issue was a neighbourhood-built playground in one of the lower working class areas of the city. It immediately widened with the escalation in police violence and the denial of a Danish tradition of each area deciding their own affairs (naer-demokrati).

Having already committed itself to a massive urban renewal project and with many construction plans under way the government hit a sore spot in Nørrebro. They had ignored an alternative plan and the 40,000 signatures collected opposing it. The place of immediate contention was an empty lot that had been occupied and converted into a playground years before. Next to it was an old factory which also had been occupied and used as a local culture center (also slated for destruction) Nørrebro Beboer-aktion (Nørrebro tenant action) one of a number of activist groups in this highly politicized neighbourhood, decided to launch an around-the-clock blockade of the park. Confident it could win using various non-violent tactics, it enjoyed strong physical support from residents. A few years before another occupied building had been levelled by police but not before it had been turned into a day-care center and held for 6 months. The final police assault was met with spontaneous resistance as paint and other objects kept "falling" out of windows on them.

The volunteer watch committee was representative of the area as people from 10 - 60 took their turns. After all where were

they going to play (or where were your children going to play depending on your age). The buildings were already jammed together as it was and the city wanted to put more in the few open spaces left.

A telephone tree was formed and organizing was done in other parts of the city. The "Plan" affected nearly every section of town. Christiania lent money and energy as they knew they would be next.

A month passed and nothing happened except a house and a park near Christiania was occupied. The house was taken by children between 12 and 17 armed with clubs to confront the two watchdogs (it happened they liked ice cream) and turned into a "children's house" (børnehus).

Then 100-150 police appeared with a crane quickly evicting the watch committee and surrounded the park. The tree was activated (and of course it didn't work right). Still about 600 people showed after news spread by word of mouth emptying offices and schools. The people mostly were standing around trying to decide what to do.

The group finally split and occupied two nearby busy intersections. The police were then obliged to abandon the park and try and break the blockade. After some pushing and shoving they withdrew. People then went back, repaired the damage and resumed the watch.

A week later the police struck again same time and tactic except now they brought an extra 400. The same response came from the people gathered (even the same intersections). The police now however had enough people to hold the park and attempt to break the blockades. The police went after both at once and the normal Danish practice prevailed. People sitting, arms locked and the police meticulously trying to pry them apart.



Succeeding in breaking one people just moved and blocked another. People on Nørrebrogade started moving toward the bridge leading into the centrum. Police responded by putting about 300 on it, even some from the park as it was now levelled.

More and more people kept arriving as word of what happened spread.

A barricade went up on Nørrebrogade. More police arrived and moved on this outrage. At the other blockade buses' tyres were flattened in the long lines. The police decided this was the bigger outrage and moved on it. Nørrebrogade quickly built another barricade and occupied the bridge lowering the flag to halfmast.

Police quite humourously kept moving back and forth in force from one to the other trying to open the traffic. As they did people kept applying their creative skills.

Most of NB had been arrested early so the "vanguard" was gone. People just decided on the spot what to do. Bicycle couriers kept track of police and reported the action between groups. At one point buses were hot-wired and driven, flat tyres and all across the street. Children climbed and played on them and a few got on the radio to tell them where they could get off.

Police reinforcements arrived and it seemed playtime was now over. This time nearly 600 police using baton charges easily overran the bus barricades and cordoned off the area.

A stand-off now existed as barricades had now been erected on all possible entrances into the park and more on Nørrebrogade. Night was falling and people set about strengthening barricades and re-building the park. Nearly 3,000 people present now. Materials being in short supply a large adjoining construction site was raided and stripped, the equipment sabotaged. Usable material for the park, all else for the barricades. Spray paint appeared and prettied up the surroundings.

By 11.30 the bus barricades were gone and so were the police. Some barricades topped 20 ft. with the addition of those portable construction offices.

People dancing, building, singing, planning, laughing, arguing and waiting.

Police now stormed a barricade and headed for the park. They were greeted with smoke bombs, rocks and bottles and retreated, none too orderly, through a now flaming barricade.

Arguments ensued as to how, with what, and even if to defend the park.

People awoke the next day to a new childrens' park and a surround surrounding array of barricades (some had dump trucks added, tyres ritually flattened).

A carnival atmosphere prevailed and the Battle of the Cameras was on. Curious people taking pictures of things, other curious people taking pictures of people, and still other curious people taking pictures of the people taking pictures.

That afternoon police delivered an ultimatum. Street barricades (as opposed to park) were to be moved or they would storm them. (oh, my!) Rush hour traffic was to be opened. Also the first serious internal conflict developed. NB started taking down barricades and ordering people into the park. One was occupied however as people refused. NB claimed we were passive and reasonable and didn't want a massacre. People countered that the police weren't in a position to give orders (or NB for that matter) and that they wouldn't stop at a few street barricades at any rate. Besides they claimed they only knew how to put them up! The deadline passed, the rush hour passed and the police passed and at dusk the barricade was then moved back.

Next day was May Day. Lots of celebration. An anarchist/Christiania march from the centrum to the park was diverted at the bridge.

The following day (three days of "bicycle only" traffic) police arrived for negotiation. Troop carrier in the air spoke to what they meant. Seems that if we moved the barricades together and let them take down two for fire and ambulance services they would leave us alone. Amazingly NB agreed (for us all of course), wouldn't you know that after two were down they announced all were coming down. 600 police had by now just wandered in. NB ordered people into the park but three remaining barricades were occupied by about 600 people (out

of 2,000 present) to the refrains of 'you're just another brick in the wall'. Police now surrounded and attacked, chasing people through the park, beating the slower ones. Having occupied half the park they proceeded to take down the barricades. 200 riot police remained through the night and about 600 people were in the park.

Next day about 700 riot police surround and storm the park. Again the slower ones were beaten (kids, too!) People move to block intersections (again the same ones!) No sitting down today folks as they use baton charges, dogs and special punishment squads for selected people. Tactics are designed to trap people who are then beaten senseless. Alternative actions that were thought of by people who happen to be running together are sabotaged by NB telling people these others were "splittists" and that they had a plan. We never did see it however.

So ended 5 days of work, culture, and play. Peoples consciousness grew by leaps and bounds. The park is destroyed but the struggle is just beginning. Other areas are threatened and people are organizing themselves to meet it.

This was the largest action ever in Denmark so there were lots of mistakes. Hopefully we won't be fooled again!

Kammeratlig.

THE BANANA BANSHEE



Main barricade on Nørrebrogade

# Market Economy & Agriculture

The talk about market forces by the present incumbents at Westminster is no more true than when the last lot were in power. The introduction of the 'cost-plus' economy of the second world war has never changed. It is the way the multi-nationals operate. Have you ever heard of a multinational going broke? The market is supposed to promote healthy competition, but these boys control the market and make sure that there is no competition, healthy or unhealthy.

The movement into control of agricultural land by finance houses, already pronounced, is matched by the increasing control over agricultural products exercised by large multi-national concerns. By bulk purchasing they control both the price and the processing of seed, fertilisers, herbicides, insecticides and fuel. Food becomes ever more expensive and 'rationalisation' means that many varieties of fruit and vegetables will totally disappear.

Here and there, however, one sees rearguard resistance being mounted against these trends, particularly as oil, the life-blood of modern mechanised agriculture becomes more and more expensive. An early morning radio programme on agriculture recently was discussing schemes to 'twin' agricultural producers in the third world with farmers over here to exchange ideas. In this case it was to be with farmers in Tanzania, and the discussion was about tractors, the farmer here saying that it is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain the cost.

The discussion revolved around the possibility of developing more efficient designs for oxen-drawn machinery which may be applicable here in due course. An instance was quoted of a farm in Gloucestershire of a farmer hay-making with horse-drawn implements.

The investment costs of British agriculture have recently been studied by a group at Reading University. The conclusion is that many are grossly over-capitalised. The taxation and financial system encourages

the purchase in a good year of large quantities of unnecessary machinery. The report says:

The time has come to reassess the nature of, and reasons for, capital assistance by the state, especially in the light of the observation that the long-term efficiency of the industry may not be well served by promoting investment at the current rate.

The NFU is a very efficient pressure organisation for the big farmers, who make much of subsidised over-investment. Agricultural efficiency may not be as good as in the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark, in spite of bigger government subsidies.

Compared with manufacturing industry in England, agriculture is more efficient and productive. This has been achieved by reducing the labour element and by enormous over-investment.

Obviously from a social point of view the whole urban industrial system has collapsed, and can only be sustained by non-marketable products like arms. The microchip will add to the social problems so long as this technical development is in the hands of multinational companies bent on retaining power and profit. No doubt in the industrial field, if used to produce necessary goods and eradicate alienating work within a sane social system, silicon chips will profit mankind as a whole. It would also need a change of land ownership, with some communally owned farms of not more than 500 acres to produce corn on a mixed farm basis, together with smaller communally related gardens where communities could retain some measure of self-sufficiency and varied production of fruit and vegetables without the social and environmental hazards with which we are faced.

There is now an enormous demand for allotments and I am sure that many would be glad to return to their ancestral country side under an equitable social system of self-management.

Alan Albon.

# ANTI-WAR WORK

A SMALL group of people in south London, "including anarchists, pacifists, trade unionists, and people who just hate the idea of a nuclear holocaust" have formed the Southwark and Lambeth Anti-War Movement. One of its members, John Lawrence, writes to FREEDOM: "we are trying to take the question of war into an inner London area where people already suffer such deprivation that the prospect of war appears almost an irrelevance to them. We are encountering some police hostility - and have already received a fragrant tribute from psychopathic patriots who have pushed human excrement through my letter box and smeared it all over the front door. We also had to do battle with the communists who love the CND but won't stand for criticism of the Russian State".

A resolution passed by a meeting of the new anti-war group in Brixton on 16 June pledged its members to "appeal to scientists, technicians and workers to cease developing and manufacturing weapons of war - chemical, biological, nuclear or conventional - and use their skills instead for the good of humanity in ways that have been precisely worked out by the Lucas Aerospace Shopstewards Committee ..." It also recorded its insistence that "objection to military service be made a universal human right - available both to potential conscripts and to serving soldiers, without tribunals or legal penalties"; its opposition to the "world-wide indoctrination of children with the glorification of war and nationalism" and support and encouragement for the activities of local and national peace movements.

Anyone in the Southwark and Lambeth area interested in joining the group is welcome to attend. Activities consist chiefly of leafletting and running a bookstall. The group has also recently organised a showing of the film 'War Game' in Camberwell. Contact address: 29 Love Walk, London SE5.

# LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

## Libertarian Calvinism!

Dear comrades

What a bore Jeff Cloves is (his letter in FREEDOM 21.6.80). I haven't been reading FREEDOM for as long as he has but I've still seen plenty of letters from people like him who have found a comfortable little niche in the anarchist ghetto and don't like having their dogma called into doubt.

Jeff takes up my question "Are we a part of the left or are we opposed to it?" And he declares that if I have to ask the question in the first place then I'm a lost cause anyway! What a wonderful contribution to political debate this is. Apparently Jeff Cloves' version of anarchism is something that cannot be questioned or discussed in a rational fashion. You must feel it in your bones or do without it. It's a libertarian version of Calvinism: you're either one of the Anarchist Elect or you're not. If not then there's precious little you can do about it.

No you've got it wrong Clovey old fruit. Anarchism is libertarian socialism and it only takes on any meaning when it starts relating to the broad thrust of the class struggle. You'd be better off getting together with a few Jehovah's Witnesses: they're really into the idea of irrelevant little sects as well.

Yours

MARTIN SPENCE

and Washington DC. If Carter had any support at all he would not be threatening Mrs Timm, the mother of a hostage, Ramsey Clark and Leonard J Weinglass who went to Iran despite the ban. He knows if he acts, public sympathy will shift from apathy and confusion to condemnation of him and the establishment.

From my own experience, I live in Orange County California where the economy is based almost entirely on war industries. I have had two bumper stickers on my car, three actually; one read 'Resist the draft (conscription)' one 'No boycott' and one 'Invest in your own destruction, buy government bonds'. Thousands of cars over a four month period have passed me or been passed by me and I have had only three comments of an adverse nature. One called me a faggot and the other two were worried that the Russians would take over the country. This is an area which in world wars one and two were known for resorting to physical violence. I have received many more knocks which I thought were approving.

As to bumper stickers on the subject the most prevalent - one in a hundred - is 'Thanks Canada' (for saving six diplomats in Tehran); the aggressive ones 'Nuke Iran' and the like are about one in a thousand.

To me this does not represent a war hysteria. The people know they don't own the press and they are waiting for events to break.

Very truly yours

HOWARD G. JOHNSON

## DESIRES

ANARCHIST WOMEN'S RESEARCH GROUP would like any information on anarchist women active in the late 19th & early 20th century in England. The group is specifically interested in the Witcop sisters. Contact Box 101 at Freedom Press.

RESIST War and Politics. A group of comrades in Glasgow are planning to set up a new anarchist monthly with the above title. Readers should send 30p for a copy of the paper to Colin, 60 Moulin Circus Glasgow, G52 3LO. Says Resist: "It will have a literary/philosophical bent but we intend to have news stories etc as well.... The paper will not represent any particular faction from within the spectrum of anarchist opinion." The first issue should be ready by the end of July.

AS a result of the many discussions and meetings which were sparked off by publication of Beyond the Fragments last year there is to be a one-day conference in Leeds on 30 August.

Beyond the Fragments presents a critique of existing 'revolutionary politics' both Leninist and libertarian. It advocates a socialist movement built from the bottom up upon the experience of individuals and groups who are already fighting back around particular issues: women's groups tenants' groups radical currents within the labour movement anti-nuclear movement and so on.

The idea of the conference is not to launch any 'grand new initiative' but to strengthen contact between those people who are interested in this political approach. It should be of interest to many libertarians.

For further details contact:  
39 Kelvin Grove Liverpool 8  
(tel: 051-727-4608)

## ANARCHIST PARTY!!!!!!!!!!!!!! FREEDOM PARTY - August 9th

(no we're not going into politics) we - that is FREEDOM-are having a bash at which all our readers (except the Special Branch) are welcome to come and get pissed, talk to FREEDOM collective people and anything else they do at parties. It's at Centaur 313-315 Caledonian Road London N1 (Caledonian Road Tube or Caledonian and Barnsbury BR North London line.) Starts at about 2.30pm until everyone goes.

## Imperialist Hysteria

FREEDOM

I read the FREEDOM Anarchist Review of 21 June 1980 (vol. 41, no. 12) 'Afghanistan - world crisis' with great interest and found it very enlightening. However I disagree with the statement on page 11 col. 2 that large sections of the American population are gripped with war hysteria.

True large portions are confused and don't know what's going on. (The citizens of an imperialist power are the last to know). The war hysteria from the beating of the Iranians to the latest Carter threats are media hype. The same person was photographed beating Iranians in Beverley Hills

## GRAFFITI CORNER

POETRY IS THE  
FUTURE OF  
THE WORLD

IT JUST SHOWS

YOU WE'VE GOT  
NO FUTURES

down wit's interference

# FREEDOMCONTACTS

**FREEDOM PRESS**

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84b WHITECHAPEL HIGH STREET  
LONDON E1 Phone 01-247 9249

This list shows all groups who have given us an address. If you want to be on it - drop us a line.

## INLAND

**ABERDEEN** Libertarian Group c/o 163 King Street, Aberdeen.  
**ABERYSTWYTH.** David Fletcher, 59 Cambrian St., Aberystwyth  
**BARRY.** Terry Phillips, 16 Robert Street, Barry, S. Glamorgan.  
**BELFAST** Anarchist Collective, Just Books, 7 Winetavern Street, Belfast 1.  
**BIRMINGHAM** anarchists/anarcha-feminists meet Sundays. Contact Alison at Peace Centre, 18 Moore St., Ringway, Birmingham 4 (tel. 021 643 0996).  
**BRIGHTON** Libertarian Socialist group, c/o Students Union, Falmer House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton.  
**BRISTOL.** City: 4 British Road, Bristol BS3 3BW.  
Students: Libertarian Society, Students Union, Queen's Road, Bristol.  
**CAMBRIDGE** anarchists, Box A, 41 Fitzroy St., Cambridge  
**CANTERBURY** Alternative Research group, Wally Barnes, Eliot College, Univ. of Kent, Canterbury  
**CARDIFF.** Write c/o One-O-Eight Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Road.  
**COVENTRY.** John England, Students Union, University of Warwick, Coventry.  
**DERBY.** New address awaited.  
**DUBLIN.** A.B.C. Collective, 7 Ballsbridge Ave., Dublin, Eire.  
**DUBLIN.** Love V. Power, Whelan's Dance Studio, 51 South King Street Dublin 2.  
**EAST ANGLIAN** Libertarians, Martyn Everett, 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex.  
**EXETER** anarchist collective, c/o Community Assn., Devonshire House, Stocker Rd., Exeter.  
**GLASGOW** anarchist group, John Cooper, 34 Raithburn Avenue, Castlemilk, Glasgow G45.  
**HASTINGS** Anarchist Group, 32 Whitefriars Road, Hastings (print shop & alternative rights centre).  
**HULL** Libertarian Collective, 16 Park Grove, Hull, North Humber-side.  
**KEELE** anarchist group c/o Students Union, The University, Keele.  
**LAMPETER** anarchist group c/o Adrian James, S.D.U.C. Lampeter, Dyfed SA48 7ED, Wales.  
**LEAMINGTON & Warwick,** c/o 42 Bath St., Leamington Spa.  
**LEEDS.** Dave Brown, 30 Park Row, Knaresborough (near Harrogate), N. Yorkshire.

**LEICESTER.** Blackthorn Books, 74 Highcross St. (tel. Leic. 21896) and Libertarian Education, 6 Beaconsfield Rd. (tel. Leic. 552085).  
**LONDON:**

Anarchist Feminists, Base ment Office, Rising Free, 182 Upper St. N.1 (01-359 3785). Staffed Mondays & Wednesdays 10 am-6pm. for visits or write c/o Box 33, Rising Free.  
**Anarchy Collective,** 37a Grosvenor Ave., N.5 (01-359 4794 before 7pm) Meets every Thursday from 7 pm at Little A Press, 1 Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, Wapping (22a bus or Wapping Tube).  
**Freedom Collective,** 84B Whitechapel High St (Angel Alley) E.1 (01-247 9249)  
**Hackney anarchists:** Contact Dave on 01-249 7042  
**Kingston anarchists,** 13 Denmark Rd., Kingston-upon-Thames (01-549 2564).  
**London Workers' Group,** Box W, 182 Upper St. N.1 (01-249 7042), meets Tuesdays 8pm at Metropolitan pub, 75 Farringdon Road.  
**West London anarchists,** 7 Pennard Road, W.12.  
**XTRA: Structureless Tyranny,** 182 Upper Street, Islington, N.1.  
**MALVERN & WORCESTER** area. Jock Spence, Birchwood Hall, Storrige, Malvern, Worcs.  
**NORWICH** anarchists c/o Free-wheel Community Books, 56 St. Benedicts St., Norwich, Norfolk.  
**NOTTINGHAM,** c/o Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St (tel. 582506) or 15 Scotholme Ave., Hyson Green (tel. 708302).  
**OLDHAM.** Nigel Broadbent, 14 W<sub>e</sub> stminster Rd., Failsworth, Manchester.  
**OXFORD** anarchist group c/o Danny Simpson, Exeter College. Anarchist Workers group ditto. Anarcho-Feminists c/o Teresa Thornhill, 34 Divinity Road. Solidarity c/o 34 Cowley Road.  
**PAISLEY** (College) anarchist group, c/o Students Union, Hunter St., Paisley, Renfrewshire.  
**READING** anarchists c/o Ms. Shevek, Clubs Office, Students Union, Whiteknights, Reading.  
**REONDDA & Midglamorgan,** Henning Andersen, 'Smiths Arms', Treherbert, Midglamorgan, Wales.  
**SHEFFIELD** anarchists c/o 4 H velock Square, Sheffield S102 FQ. Libertarian Society: PO Box 168, Sheffield S11 8SE.  
**SWANSEA.** Don Williams, 24 Derlwyn, Dunvant, Swansea  
**SWINDON** area. Mike, Groundswell Farm, Upper Stratton, Swindon.  
**TORBAY** Anarchist Federation, 24 Beverley Rise, Brixham, Devon.

## NATIONAL

**MIDLANDS** Federation. Secretiat c/o Coventry Group.

**NORTH EAST ANARCHIST FEDERATION** -as for Hull.

**THAMES VALLEY** Anarchist Federation - contact Oxford or Reading group.

**ANARCHIST COMMUNIST** Association of class struggle anarchists (publ. 'Bread & Roses'), Box 2, 136 Kingsland High St. London E8.

**DIRECT ACTION** Movement, Sec. c/o Box 20, 164/166 Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M4 3BN.

**LIBERTARIAN** Communist Group (publ. 'Libertarian Communist', qly), LCG c/o 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1.

**POSTAL** Workers Network, write Box PW, 182 Upper St., Islington London N.1.

**SOLIDARITY** libertarian communist organisation (publ. 'Solidarity for Social Revolution') c/o 123 Lathom Rd., London E.6. Groups & members in many towns.

## MEETINGS

**ANARCHIST CENTRE** next meeting Conway Hall (North Room), 7.30 pm Wednesday 23 July.

**ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION** - a conference is to be held Aug 29 to 31 Write to: Co-ordinating Group, FWC (Studio 441), O & N Warehouse: Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, Wapping, London E1.

**ANARCHA UNITED MYSTICS** meet every Thurs from 8 p.m. at the Half-Way House pub, opposite Camden Town Tube Station, London.

## Sub. Rates

INLAND	£7
OVERSEAS	
- Surface mail	
Canada .....	C\$18
USA .....	\$15
- Airmail	
Australasia .....	£9.50
Canada .....	C\$22.50
Europe .....	£8
USA .....	\$20.



# CENTAUR - ready to go

IN our issue of 1st December 1979, the leading article in our Review was devoted to a description of the 'Centaur' project - a self-help community project in an inner London working-class area which was largely the work of two activists who wanted to challenge the 'hand-out' aspect of the welfare state and encourage self-reliance and mutual aid in a deprived community.

Walking the tightrope between getting help from a local authority and remaining independent is never an easy exercise and the first Centaur project fell foul of local politics and pressure groups working for a local community of Turkish immigrants - who may or may not carry more voting power and rate-paying value than dispossessed youths and old-age pensioners. Apart from which the unorthodox approach of our two activists - Marg Mcneil and Auriol Ashby - was not likely to endear them to the local authorities anyway.

So, by a combination of heavy violence by anonymous Turks and sly connivance by council personnel, the first Centaur project was lost. But splendid new premises have been found and acquired and it only needs now an initial burst of energy by a handful of volunteers for the Centaur community project to blossom forth again. Marg Mcneil is now battling on almost alone, with a single-minded determination to get it off the ground. To find out exactly what 'it' is, two members of the FREEDQM collective went along to the new place at 313-315 Caledonian Road, London N1 and taped the following interview.

If any of our readers feel moved to offer help with the Centaur project, please write direct to Marg Mcneil at the above address, and not to FREEDQM.

**PLEASE NOTE** Although reference has been made in the following interview to the proposed Anarchist Centre, we must stress strongly that there is no connection between that centre and the Centaur project, nor does our publication of the Centaur story mean anything other than that Marg Mcneil is a more forceful press relations officer than anyone at present working for the proposed Anarchist Centre! They are, anyway, two totally different enterprises with, as far as we can see, totally different aims. And there is room for both in London.

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An interview with Marg Mcneil of the Centaur Project of Caledonian Road, London N1 by two members of the FREEDQM collective on 24 June 1980.

**FREEDQM:** We understand that Centaur, according to your own article in FREEDQM of 1st December 1979, is aiming at being a self-help community project. Now self-help to do what?

**MM:** The whole philosophy of Centaur in a nutshell is to help people to become independent and stable and thus in turn, by those people being able to come together, to get an independent, stable and self-sufficient community. This formula could be applied anywhere, any country or inner city area or small country town setting.

**FREEDQM:** What exactly do you mean by 'stable'? Are you inferring that people are unstable?

**MM:** I think that the whole problem is that most people are totally disenfranchised soon after birth from having any real direct control over their own lives, their destiny or their immediate environment through effects of home, parents, school, business, civil service or the state, and people have grown up being used to not having to take the full responsibility of their own actions because the welfare state does so much for them. However, in the reality of most of the underdogs when they do arrive at the welfare state asking for help they are told to fill in a lot of forms and in the end they often get the answer 'No'. So Centaur is a place where they can build something for themselves, their own self reliance, their own interaction and their own succour. Or, as I described it in the article, a home from home of their own, where they are their own sovereign, they are not ordered about as in usual community centres or youth centres. Far more than that, with the income producing ventures it really is possible to get a large measure of self-sufficiency, not only for a community project but for the community as a whole.

**FREEDQM:** Would you say that you are setting out to try to help people to develop their own futures?

**MM:** I would put it the other way. Most people's egos have been very much subdued and pushed down.

**FREEDQM:** You say that you hope to remain independent, in fact you are determined to remain independent and to serve in response to the needs of the community in whatever direction they flow. Now this presumably means some form of independent funding or becoming viable as soon as possible so that you fund yourself by your own activities. Is that right?

**MM:** Yes. It's been very hard because we haven't been given the assistance of the local ILEA (Inner London Education Authority) as had been promised and it's been a long war of attrition.



**FREEDOM:** Why should the ILEA support you?

**MM:** Because we are the only facility in the length and breadth of the Caledonian Road for young people. There is nowhere else for them to go.

**FREEDOM:** No youth clubs around here? No church halls or anything like that?

**MM:** No. In fact the last attempts have been burned down. By the kids!

**FREEDOM:** What makes you think they won't burn yours down?

**MM:** You see that window (pointing to the huge plateglass shopfront) - the kids knew when I was purchasing this place and they kept the secret that I was getting it from the Co-op until the lease was signed. Had it got out to the council they would have spiked over selling the lease to me, and the local area youth officer had fixed it that no premises no grant; in other words a cat and mouse game with Centaur as the mouse.

**FREEDOM:** So you think the council don't really want you operating in this area?

**MM:** I think that it's a typical reaction of bureaucracy to any truly independent grass roots initiatives which don't conform to their control. Their control is usually a tacit one of grant aiding a group and in reality they can hold any community group to ransom like the oil sheiks can the West over oil. Once they stop the money the group is totally subservient.

**FREEDOM:** And yet to some extent you're going to depend on what are laughingly called public funds to start off with?

**MM:** The whole idea is to get sufficient money for the first year/18 months to prime the pump. Once I have got that, whether from an independent source or a statutory source, and hoping that with the right calibre of people as a team of staff, we can develop the income-producing ventures and get a large measure of self-sufficiency. That is the best way to be able to accept a grant. Money is like plutonium, you handle it with great care but the best way to be able to accept any grant is when you are in a situation where you are not dependent on it, and that you can take it or leave it. In that situation there aren't any strings attached.

**FREEDOM:** Once you get off the ground how are you going to keep your door open after the first year or 18 months? What are your plans for fund raising within your own activities?

**MM:** We have several schemes. A record exchange shop very near the West End and the City of London. Two practising rooms for professional musicians' groups, which are usually at a charge of £3 per hour or block booked by the day or week. They can bring in a sizeable income. Additional to that we have other projects such as a teenage work agency, getting casual jobs for kids. Motor mechanics later on, a community café of course.

**FREEDOM:** Motor mechanics? A sort of training scheme, you mean?

**MM:** Yes and where we can also help the kids to learn to drive. These things, just like the photography dark room and the pottery room, are the things that the kids really wanted to do. The whole philosophy of Centaur is not to put courses on people but to respond to the things they already want to do, for which they have enthusiasm and give them the opportunity to be able to do it, money willing. So the kids at the last centre wanted to have a pottery room, a photography room, they liked the record exchange and the emphasis on music and the connection with cars.

**FREEDOM:** How is the record exchange to work? Will you buy and sell and a certain amount goes to the Centre for the service?

**MM:** Yes, we will be registering as a charitable company so all the income goes back into the project. People buy, sell or exchange records from us. The advantage of a record exchange shop is that you don't need too much outlay of capital, you can choose which stock to buy and at how much so that you aren't loaded with useless stock.

**FREEDOM:** The practice rooms that you talk about for groups. Are these soundproofed?

**MM:** Yes, they will be. The whole of downstairs, that is the two practising rooms and the large meeting/dance room, have got to be thoroughly soundproofed and also a ventilation system put in, emergency lighting etc.

**FREEDOM:** Will there actually be performances put on?

**MM:** Yes.

**FREEDOM:** Are there any neighbours that could be upset by noise here?

**MM:** Only one on the top floor. A basement is the best place to have any recording room. There is a studio over the road beneath a driving school and you wouldn't know it was there. If it is thoroughly self-contained and you have double sound-locked doors you can virtually cut out all noise.

**FREEDOM:** What are the sort of age groups that you can see yourself aiming at?

**MM:** All ages. I hope that the point of this interview is to interest anarchists in London in involvement here, where they could see some practical anarchism in application in a community which can become self-sufficient. Therefore the appeal is to all ages, all colours, intentionally. The place would not be just overrun by kids - nor is it just a place for adults to hold meetings. It's where individuals can come together and by coming together you can have strength in numbers rather than fear of them.



SOON!!! This will be a Community Cafe

**FREEDOM:** So you will in fact be running various activities. Might there be something like bingo for the old people or is that already provided in the neighbourhood?

**MM:** There are already many bingo halls, including our former cinema in Caledonian Road. We don't seek to provide activities or to be a community centre for organised groups when there are already organised, constitutionalised groups who have plenty of places to meet. What we are after is reaching the individual. We all feel a bit isolated in a big city because we have lost the community spirit and lost touch with our direct community. There are still some traces of this alive in the Caledonian Road and all of the local kids produce a natural hum and atmosphere anyway.

**FREEDOM:** Will they get on alright with older people who might not share the same sort of interests?

**MM:** You had only to have visited the last centre to have answered your question, because there people came together in a natural, warm, friendly, personalised atmosphere. In other words, not a council tenants' hall looking like a gymnasium but somewhere which might have been scruffy but had everybody using it as though it was theirs, not being told what to do, but treated and respected like adults with integrity and sovereignty. Everybody coming there met each other on a human level, kids avid for curiosity and pensioners avid for contact as well. So it ended up that kids would 'adopt' pensioners or handicapped persons and that is where we succeed where privately used council halls based on one estate would often have a tug of war of usage between young people and old people.

**FREEDOM:** We find that very interesting, because most council activities tend to divide people into categories: their old, their young, their handicapped.

**MM:** Yes, totally. The whole philosophy of modern day social work, health work, community work as perpetuated by the authorities is to segregate people. It's almost a continuation of the old isolation hospital practice, which aggravates people's problems by intensifying the isolation which has usually given birth to them. Our whole philosophy is to do the exact opposite - just as in homeopathic medicine, to be preventative, to build up a person's natural stability, confidence and feeling of security and community, not to isolate and segregate. All too often now we have a feeling of specialisation and qualifications for tackling a problem rather than a coming together and a cooperation by people themselves.

**FREEDOM:** So you don't see yourself coping with problems so much as creating a healthy situation where hopefully the problems wouldn't arise?



**MM:** People will still have problems but having a local community home of their own on firm foundations is a source of strength. It can prevent some things happening.

**FREEDOM:** What exactly do you mean when you say you are seeking to provide kids with a common wisdom to re-educate themselves, rediscover the joys of learning and develop their own moral language? What is this word 'moral'?

**MM:** We all have a basic moral language personally. I think, as I said earlier, where people have been disenfranchised and confused by the state system, it's very hard to have any coherent beliefs that you can have faith in. The whole philosophy of self-help is one as in, say, the Spanish village communities during the Spanish Revolution, where there was a natural altruism and a positive outlook towards life. Helping one another, but a help based upon stability, not upon dependence, on inter-dependence of independent people. Obviously a community and a nation of people can truly become strong by helping each other. An altruistic, natural, direct self-help!

**FREEDOM:** To be really integral with the neighbourhood it should be really mounted and run by people living in the neighbourhood, but presumably you wouldn't turn down help from somebody from the next borough?

**MM:** No, obviously not. To have concepts of state lines and state boundaries is just another facet of segregation that we were talking about earlier!

**FREEDOM:** But you would eventually hope to encourage the people around here to be virtually running the place?

**MM:** Well, that's what was happening at the last place. The kids were running the record exchange and the community cafe - that's why it was so popular.

**FREEDOM:** How far away was that from here?

**MM:** Just up the road opposite Pentonville prison, less than half a mile.

**FREEDOM:** Half a mile from here - so obviously you're going to get some spin-off from the kids who already have experience of the place.

**MM:** Yes, I'm in contact with all of the kids that went to the old place. I live in the same community and they all understand that I can't open a place until I get enough staff to be able to do so. They respect the place - that's why the windows aren't smashed.

**FREEDOM:** What sort of staff are you actually seeking? What kind of help are you asking for?

**MM:** Very strong, mature people of the right calibre - because we're right in the front line. This is where kids get stabbed, die of glue sniffing, where you do have gang fights. Let's face it, we are dealing with the worst casualties that our kind of society can produce. We're dealing with the home repercussions of former colonialism; we're dealing with totally alienated black teenagers who don't even have their own West Indian identity, let alone an English one.

**FREEDOM:** It's obvious that you're going to need quite a bit of voluntary help to get this place together. You've got marvellous premises here and tremendous possibilities. Now what are the sort of people that you want? Never mind those who will cope with the human relationships when they begin to emerge but in order to get the place together now - what sort of help do you want?

**MM:** There are going to be three stages in opening Centaur. First, finishing the renovation and building work to make the building safe and to conform to all the building and other regulations. Secondly, opening up - in other words getting a momentum and steam up. To do that you need several natural characters who will strike the right note and create your basic centre, producing a regular group of people as a hard core to build on. Once that starts the place becomes a good meeting place - particularly for those readers of FREEDOM who want to see a practical application of how a community can become self-sufficient even though it's in the heart of central London!



The third stage is fully operational - although that itself would be done in different steps. First of all, we would open the large front shop up. This has got the community café and the comfortable armchair area. Then - capital resources and people resources willing - we will be opening the record exchange, the practising rooms and the larger meeting area soundproofed downstairs.

Finally we will be opening up the dark room, the pottery area and the mechanics' area, plus as well, on the back of the building, the sun roof and patio which can also be used for eats and activities in the summer.

**FREEDQM:** In the middle of all that you said that this could be a good meeting place for readers of FREEDQM. Do you see this then as a sort of libertarian social centre as well as a place for community activities of the sort you've outlined?

**MM:** Yes, though one not of propaganda but of practical application.

**FREEDQM:** Would that mean practical application in the work of the centre?

**MM:** No - for the community - for the London community where FREEDQM's London readers live and for the local community. It is a place where people can come together. Let's face it, most FREEDQM readers feel pretty isolated. The anarchist scene in London is pretty fragmented; several groups producing several worthwhile magazines but no practical projects or things where their beliefs can have a practical testing ground in application.

**FREEDQM:** You know of course that there's a scheme in hand at the moment for setting up an anarchist centre which will include a meeting place. Probably it would be more geared to propaganda but that remains to be seen. Do you think that yours will be different from that inasmuch as it will be linked with organic activities in a community within a neighbourhood?

**MM:** Exactly. Centaur has been going for 10 years, and the intrinsic quality of Centaur is that it is practical deeds by action rather than deeds by words. The whole idea of Centaur is not propaganda, but that actions speak louder than words. If we are able to create here in the centre of London a self-sufficient community where you feel a harmony and a sense of spirit then the bush fire can be applied by any community up and down the country; all they have to do is to get a short life or cheap lease on a house and shop, run a community café, a record exchange or other income producing ventures there at first. I started my two previous places off by living above the premises as well and that way cut down overheads. It shows that anything can be possible if there are enough people willing to stick at it and see it through and the rewards are enormous because in a world and society where there is a poverty of opportunity and under-employment and under-stimulation of talent (where people are made for jobs and not jobs for people), here is the exception where they are for once given the means and opportunity to do the things they couldn't usually do. To me there is no point in FREEDQM readers just getting together amongst themselves in a talking shop; the whole idea is being able to give fresh air to their beliefs and being able to implement them - in that sense, that is Centaur's intrinsic identity and its whole approach. No doubt the other comrades have their own concept of what they are trying to set up.

**FREEDQM:** Immediately - what do you want? To come back to the question - which you didn't actually answer very precisely - what skills are you looking for now to set the place up?

**MM:** Carpenters, electricians, plasterers, plumbers, bricklayers and anybody who is practical and willing to help. As

I said, there are three stages. First, the renovation and building stage. We aren't asking for subscriptions; in our case we are asking for practical help to put the place together. Our old teenagers and other local volunteers have already been helping. The whole philosophy is a common ownership; that we have put the place together. In that sense not only do we not have vandalism, we have a sense of identity that it is our own home that we have made ourselves without any help from the authorities. So we need not only skilled craftsmen, but anybody who is willing to lay his or her hand on a shovel or a hammer, and willing to help in any way.

The second phase, also vitally important, is to develop this place into a drop-in meeting place. For this we want naturally sociable characters. At our last place you did feel a natural hum and harmony when you went into the place, and actual energy and enthusiasm and aspirations that for once were given rein. But you need a good hard core of regular users of the place to make it enjoyable and fun to come to. If it's a regular drop-in place you get spontaneity, variety and a good circulation of people coming in. That is the desired effect. FREEDQM readers in London can meet and develop good relationships with local kids from the area; there could be a sharing of each other's problems and the kids are really keen to meet adults.

Kids are usually treated with a total indifference by the adult world. Very rarely do they ever find an adult that looks them in the eye and actually speaks directly to them - apart from when they are complaining about some vandalism or throwing down some litter in the estates. Let's just face it - in any city there's a whole amount of untapped energy and communication missing and people would be living in a great deal more harmony if it was there. I am sure even FREEDQM readers wish they could have a lot more contact with the community in which they live!

The final stage is the operational stage. Ideally for that we need to have a hard core team of at least six full time staff. You can't run something of this dimension on just volunteers alone, unfortunately. You are dealing with a community which is very deprived, which is impoverished - not only financially - and it's a long process where people do need all the help and support and assistance they can get. If you look at what happened with Makhno in Ukraine where he was crying out for the anarchists in Moscow and the other cities to come down and help - in the same way I would hope that FREEDQM readers in London can see that this is a vital project which is really at the crossroads. It's just really like an urban Summerhill set in an inner city, but where you are going beyond Summerhill. It's not just a small residential community for some middle class kids, it's involving the whole community with all the casualties and demands that society has created. It's ambitious, it is a challenge, but unless we try to make our community better to live in, which always means that we try and answer our ambitions, we have no effect on the community when we leave it and die.

So that really is the invitation from Centaur and the rewards which are a lot more than physical, that it hopes it can offer to anybody using it.



Marg Mcneil (R) talking with a member of FREEDQM collective

# LIB ED

A BOUT 40 people attended the workshop on Libertarian Education at the Oxford conference on 21/22 June, which was convened by members of the Lib Ed collective, initially to discuss the future of the magazine. I found it an interesting and stimulating discussion, although ultimately inconclusive, for reasons which I shall outline later.

The discussion was opened by four members of the Lib Ed group (to whom most humble apologies for losing the bit of paper on which I wrote your names) who talked about the way the paper has progressed over the last ten years, and how they feel about its future. Over the years, the paper has covered just about every issue in education which is of interest to anarchists and libertarians, and find the prospect of going over more or less the same ground all over again rather daunting. They are also unsure exactly whom they are addressing; one of the main reasons for the sense of discouragement which the present collective describes is the lack of feedback from readers, which has two main effects.

One, they have to write almost the whole of the paper themselves, which leaves precious little time for discussion about policy, future direction, etc. and, two, they have absolutely no idea whether or not what they are doing is considered valuable and worthwhile by the readership, whoever they may be.

The second of these two points was answered, more or less, by other people at the workshop who read Lib Ed regularly. All said they found Lib Ed stimulating and supportive - which seemed to indicate that all the regular readers were involved in education in one way or another. The Lib Ed people said that they had tried to avoid giving too much space to issues concerned solely or mainly with the state education system, preferring to concentrate on alternatives to formal, compulsory schooling. However, there is a limit to what can be said in an original way about deschooling, free schools and so on, particularly when the vast majority of children are still forced to go through the state system willy-nilly.

It was at this point that the discussion broadened into a consideration of the role of anarchists and libertarians in education. Can anarchists justify working within a hierarchical, authoritarian system, whose main function appears to be to produce the kind of citizens the state will need in the next generation? If so, how? And if not, what should anarchists be doing? (At this point I feel I should declare an interest: I am a teacher in a state primary school). Perhaps we should all opt out of the state system, and set up 'free' schools - but 'free' schools tend not to be free; the workers have to be paid, materials acquired, premises bought or rented, etc., so this alternative is not available to the vast majority of children, whose parents cannot afford the fees. It was pointed out that while Summerhill was (is?) a free, anarchistic environment for the children lucky enough to be there, for the workers - teachers, ancillary workers, cooks, cleaners, etc., - it was just as oppressive and authoritarian as any other job.

Other 'free' schools, particularly those in inner city areas, have been 'recuperated' to some extent by the local education authorities - you take our problem kids and we'll give you their capitation allowance, then you'll be able to keep your heads above water and our truancy figures won't look nearly so bad. Is this really what free schools are about - containing the rejects of, and those who have rejected, the state system?

And what about anarchists working within the state system? It isn't nearly as centralised and authoritarian as, say, the French system, but as my father used to say, ten times nothing is still nothing. How can we justify ourselves? We can say that if all anarchists opted out of the system, then

the vast majority of children would never meet anyone who tried to give them a different perspective on life. I try to run my class in as libertarian a way as possible, but that statement in itself is something of a cop-out - how libertarian is it possible to be? Small things matter, like not telling the children where to sit in the classroom, talking to them as if their opinions mattered, involving them as far as possible in the decision making which affects the class, making them feel that it is their class. But then I referred to it just now as my class, which in a very real sense it is. After all, the children do what I ask them to do, not what they want to do, because I have to justify what goes on in the classroom to higher authority.

In the same way, the really important decisions are as much beyond my control as they are beyond the children's. I can only hope that when they are older, these children will remember that for once in their lives, someone treated them as individuals, as independent people whose opinions mattered, and that they will be able to build on that admittedly very small foundation.

So how do anarchists justify working within the state system? This question brings us to what I perceive as the central dilemma of anarchists and libertarians working within a basically authoritarian structure, and one which the discussion did not (could not?) resolve. The dilemma is this - on the one hand, we abominate the state and all its works, including the education system as at present constituted; on the other hand, we are concerned that the next generation should grow up able to think for themselves, to make informed and intelligent decisions about their own lives; and since the majority of children are incarcerated in schools for 11 years the best way to reach them is to be in the schools with them. But if we do this, are we not compromising our own principles? The answer to that, it seems to me, is yes, of course we are, but that as long as we are aware of that fact and do our best to keep the compromise to a minimum, the good that we may do is more important. This is most unsatisfactory, needless to say, but what are the alternatives?

Free schools - and not all of them are anarchistic in their approach and ideology - are never going to reach more than a handful of children, not least because children this side of the revolution are obliged to do what their parents tell them to do, and most parents are concerned to ensure that their children should 'do well'; that is, succeed in terms of exam successes and a 'good' career. They are not prepared to take the risk of jeopardising their children's future by subjecting them to an unorthodox education.

Deschooling - the de-institutionalisation (sorry!) of education - is not going to happen this side of the revolution at all. We can talk all we like about education being a process which continues throughout life, but until we break down the prejudices in the minds of yer average parent that education is something which happens in school - and stops when school stops at age 16 or 18 or whatever - then we haven't a snowball's hope in hell of bringing about a deschooled society. And only the revolution will do that.

This article is a very personal impression of the discussion which took place. It seemed to me that the people who took part in the workshop could be divided into two very distinct groups: those who have only experienced 'education' on the receiving end, and those who are involved in education as workers - teachers, lecturers, etc., - and that there was a distinct divergence of views between the two groups as to the role of anarchists and libertarians in the education system. This article is written from the point of view of a worker in the system, and so may not adequately represent the views of those who are not professional 'educators'.

The outcome of all this was a general consensus that Lib Ed should continue as it provides a useful basis for discussion, but that all of us who are concerned to continue the debate about education in an anarchist society, and about how anarchists involved in education now should act, should support Lib Ed by writing articles and letters, and giving the magazine our active support in every possible way.

VERONICA

\* This was a new meaning to the word I learned at the conference and I couldn't resist putting it in.

# A Big Small Splash

In the early part of the war I had the honour or the privilege, slice the salami how thou wilt, of staying at the north country home of the Queen Mother. It is true that as 'her privates we' I was sleeping in the Royal stables while the officers and the gentlemen slept and dined in the great house and though I never met the members of the Blood Royal no one can deny me that I was on the visiting list without even holding political office, fronting a pop group or dealing in property.

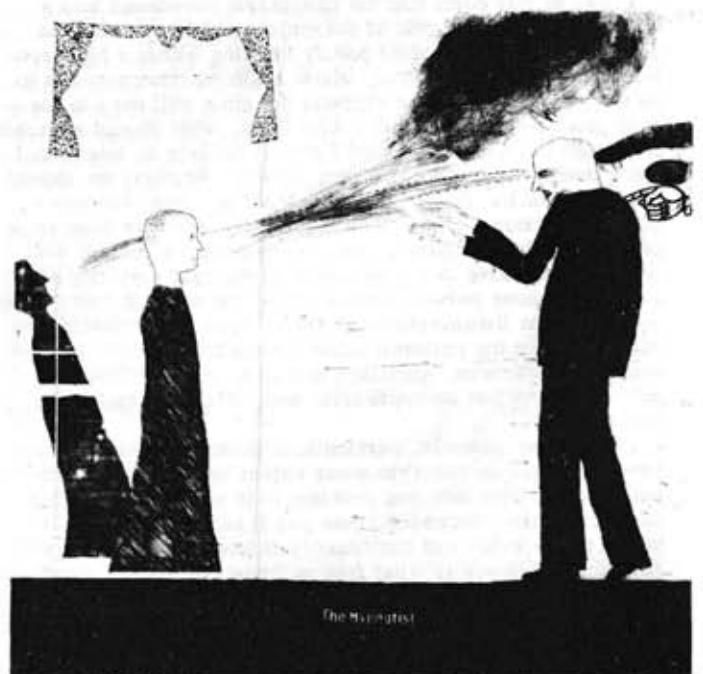
Every third night we did guard duty and in the dark morning hours after having broken into the cookhouse I would enter the silent empty Royal kitchen, fill the huge stone kitchen sink with hot water and, having stripped naked, would sit in the hot water in the Royal kitchen sink, rifle ready and loaded within grabbing distance to die wet and starkers should the Royal family's German relations come crashing through that Royal kitchen door.

It is this rare privilege of bathing in the Royal sink that I hold gives me more right than most of the Establishment's critics to pass an opinion on the exhibition of paintings and photographs of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, for, bodywise and crockerywise, we did share the same stone sink. I can pretend neither rage nor anger against those spawned into a social strata over which they have neither the wit, the power or the imagination to reject for like a Pharaoh, a caged canary, a Vatican Castrato or any small child--working class or wealthy--they are conditioned to take their place in the society of the day. The exhibition is within the National Portrait Gallery 'and, wine in hand, we walked and we talked among all those fashionable photographs of the period and all those bad paintings by the society painters of the mode and the fashionable hour. What one remembers from this rather sad and ineffectual exhibition is that the worse painting of them all should have been by Augustus John. It is so bad--casual, lazy--that the work would seem to be by a man living off his reputation, and painted in 1940 when I was sitting wet and starkers in the Royal sink, rifle at the ready, and I think that there is a lesson there somewhere. Hard on John's sandals for "second worst painting of the exhibition" is a "sketch" by Graham Sutherland when he was basking in the hate and the glory of his Somerset Maugham painting and they are not just bad paintings but grossly incompetent paintings. Out of this sorry shambles only a lovely watercolour by Savely Sorine, painted in 1923, is of any aesthetic worth. We survive into the future only by virtue of the creative work of the poet, the writer or the artist, and the Queen Mother has been 'singularly unfortunate in her choice of court daubers. Like the prostitute the artist is paid to amuse no matter how verbose or profound the manifesto, and when the artist hawks the work for sale one studies the buyers and so it is within Hamiltons at 13 Carlos Place. It is off Grosvenor Square, and the Gallery has the air of a wealthy church cloister, wherein one would expect to find a Christ carved in gold. It is early evening, and the gallery begins to fill; as a creature of habit I choose a champagne and move and move again among the chattering, well-dressed guests; I ask a quiet question here and a quiet question there as I seek out the young, neatly bearded artist and I question. They are London's wealthy Brazilian colony from the Embassy, and the business houses assembled to pay homage to a Brazilian artist--brow heavy with his country's and the world's honours, but the work is so very bad. Crude slap-happy abstractions, and all the verbiage in all the hand-outs could not find talent in these over worked canvasses. Maybe somewhere in Claudio Kuperman's other work there is genius, but it is not on display within the Hamiltons Gallery. The Pope hands his gold ring to the poor after the shanty town

has been cleaned up for his visit, the security police murder men and women by the hundreds and their dead bodies are left lying on the dirt roads for the dogs to eat. Torture is the norm and the presses are broken and the priests are beaten down, with clubs, with their congregations, and a bishop is murdered as he prays at his altar. Tyranny and murder strut the streets in the State's uniform--for tyranny and murder are the State, and I move among the laughter and the wine, drinking the champagne, and I listen without understanding to the chatter and the laughter of the wealthy Brazilians and read again the list of Kuperman's triumphs in San Paulo, Milan, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Paraguay, Paris, and learn that he "took up residence in Rio de Janeiro, where he is still living to this date" and I think of the dead bodies lying in the dirt roads as food for dogs, and the Pope's gold ring for the poor who will never profit from it, and I make my way out of the cloistered charm of this lovely gallery.

If murder be the order of the day then what better place than the Imperial War Museum in the Lambeth Road, for there, among the toys of war, is an exhibition of the late Edward Ardizzone. Here is an artist who stood outside time, for it is almost impossible to date his work. The light sketch and the gentle watercolour tinting was his medium, but here was a visual social reporter who could take his place alongside Rowlandson and George Grosz. Hogarth without moral rage, he poured out a world of whores and seaside landladies, pot-bellied men in pubs and wise children. His world was the world of contented working class, beer-happy lower-middle-class men and the seedy grandeur wherein they acted out their lives on the pages of so many cheap happy type magazines. Rest you well Ardizzone for you rest in a goodly company.

It is the hour of the dog and fashion is the order of the day for there are great causes but the banners lie furled in the college common rooms therefore the Town and his index link frau (index linked maan, Ed.) play the Roman to the Greek and who better than to play the Greek to the rich and brutish nouveaux riches than David Hockney. I like the man, nay



David Hockney. "The Hypnotist" 1963

# Rehearsals for Change

"Rehearsals for Change" Dennis Altman, Collins, 1980  
\$4.95.

A reviewer of this book, in another publication began by commenting critically that Altman, on a TV publicity interview, used phrases like 'participatory democracy'. He uses them in the book too, thank Kropotkin, and far from proving that Altman's ideas must be out of date, they and the context in which they are used demonstrate the continuing simplicity of the question to be answered by all would-be change-agents: - 'Do we do as we are told, or do we do as we want to.' And should we choose the second, how do we exercise our freedom responsibly.

I have a different problem from that time-serving reviewer referred to above, whose strength is clearly not socio-political analysis. My problem is that I agree with virtually all Altman has written, have, in fact, been trying to write some of these things myself, and find little to be critical of, at least, in what is here. What is not here is a different thing but I'll come back to that.

What is here is a succinct, readable analysis of 1980 Australia drawing on sources as diverse as the 'Anarchist Case Against Terrorism' and Richard Crossman's diaries yet going beyond them.

Dedicating the book to Salvador Allende .... 'killed in seeking a more humane society,' Altman moves easily between the traditionally-defined worlds of politics and culture. He makes no bones about his task or difficulties confronting actualisation of his suggestions:

"Whenever I would tell people I was working on a book on the prospects for social change in Australia the usual answer was: It'll be a short one." (p 1)

Beginning with 'Who We Are and What We Want' he early identifies the nature of the problem - hierarchical social structures through which the authoritarians educate and subdue the populace, and convince us all of the beneficence of their decisions. Many remain unconvinced, but what to do.

Altman moves beyond the typical Marxist approach, seeing it as just as anti-human and materialistic as that which presently exploits us all, big and small alike. In passing, where I would disagree with Altman is in not accepting the prevailing Marxist view as being what Marx actually wrote. I rather feel that Marx was just as aware of the dangers of State Socialism as anyone but, at least, in his completed works, he tended to place his emphasis on centralised control, so Leninism-Stalinism can be attributed to his teachings if not to his intentions.

In moving to articulate a new definition of politics Altman does what I've been hoping widely-read authors would do. Firstly, he accepts the reality of mass-consciousness:

"One of the great dilemmas for the left in all Western liberal democracies is that they are too often in apparent opposition to the majority they claim to represent. Indeed periods of political excitement and radical gains seem usually terminated by dramatic swings to the right." (p 5)

Secondly, he provides an adequate explanation:

"It is not merely that we are taught respect for authority and hierarchy; rather the very structure of the family in which most Westerners grow up teaches us to accept a certain set of power relationships, which is duplicated in the school . . . ., the factory, the army and even the political system." (p 105)

Thirdly, and for a large part of his time he sets out the need for, and the parameters of a new individual consciousness, drawing on gains made by feminists, communards, gay activists, ecologists etc. But while none of the attempts at describing 'the new consciousness' can be regarded as anything like complete by itself, even integrated satisfactorily (which has not yet been achieved), '... there is nothing inevitable about the triumph of their vision of the future.' (p 192) Drawing 'the inspirations for the various social movements and participatory politics' together, he comments:

"Ultimately a successful strategy for change will be one that finds a way of synthesizing change at both the level of the state and of civil society, that extends our concept of political while also coming to terms with the way in which politics reflect the way in which we have internalised conceptions of everyday life and behaviour. . . . But we must at the same time beware of any simplistic belief in change 'in the head'; a new consciousness does not by itself lead to a new politics." (p 109)

His specific suggestions involve the initiation and support for as much personal cultural activity as possible - newspapers, festivals, schools, etc., etc. Interestingly, and as he admits, at variance with numerous of his activist contemporaries he suggests emphasis be placed on work for the election of ALP governments, and for change of policies within the ALP.

Here, I must admit to ambivalence. My initial reaction is to mistrust the social-democrats and right-authoritarians who make most public ALP policy, but I agree that the possibilities under Whitlam for change, socially towards self-managed projects and communities were far greater than under L/CP regimes. Most unfortunately the ALP does not seem to have realised the importance of the low-level small-scale information disseminating and confidence-building efforts of various neighborhood aid and resource centres. To me these things are vital, as much to the ultimate survival of the ALP itself as to the revolutionary project. Happily, Altman emphasises these, in his description of a libertarian socialist future. I am less optimistic that Altman recognises the physical and psychological barriers to the putting into practise of the theory even by the most committed activist. Just to ask one pointed question; why is the mythic 'Rainbow Region' of New South Wales so disastrously divided by the same personal failings as any urban disaster area. Given Altman's own background its rather surprising that there is very little sexual politics in this book, and very little confrontation of the obvious failings-out among people already set out along the road he suggests. Such directness is, I believe, the necessary ingredient for further improvement.

Interestingly and soberly Altman's last chapter is 'Obstacles to Change.' 'It is hard not to be pessimistic,' he says. But as he concludes:

"(Men) and women have more control over their history than the dominant culture suggests."

The rest is up to us. If we believe, and struggle, we have a chance for a satisfying, complete life, otherwise....

BOB JAMES



## DEADLINES

Contributors may like to note FREEDOM's publication deadlines:

1. news section - i.e. short articles, letters, notices etc. Monday immediately preceding publication date  
2. review section - i.e. long articles, Monday preceding news section deadline.

admire him, and he has used his slight talent to amuse the jaded palates of the giggling connoisseurs of the pretty and the trivial. There is no crime in this, for if those with wealth or power hire the artist to amuse them let him paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel or as with David Hockney paint or draw Ossie wearing a Fairisle sweater, or Henry bedded down in Sant' Andrea in Capri, but the popularity of all trivial creative work is that it demands no intelligent discipline on the part of the spectator and with all third rate escapist forms the judgement of the many-headed mediocracies is the final and ultimate judgement. And we wander around the Tate viewing David's drawings and prints and I stand behind Bernard Levin and prove to myself that I am almost a head taller than the sage of the suburbs, peering at his Tate Gallery handout and eyes up at the numbered drawing, with that agonizing air of a tourist determined to absorb culture with the same dedicated devotion that I absorb Guinness. There is a talent within Hockney, and it flowers briefly in a small number of drawings and prints when he reflects the style and the social commentaries of the 1920-1930 German artists. There are times when one sees the echo of Grosz, but then it is gone. There is no reason why Hockney should use his small talent to record the ills of his age, for as an artist he owes the world nothing, and there is no market for the work of visual protest; only when the dead are long gone buried and the bars are rusted is the world's sorrow a saleable commo-

dity, but as with many, nay all Pop stars, Hockney amuses and takes his well-earned rewards, and I wish him (and Kasmin) well. Last year Hockney designed the sets for the Glydenbourne opera and the world of fashion applauded their favourite son and this year it is given to the 87 year-old Erté from America's tinsel town to paint the backcloths for Der Rosenkavalier. For his the roses, the evening dress and the cream and strawberries, but somehow the applause seems to be missing for this ancient gilded youth and the Electrum Gallery seems very lonely with Erté's beautiful mannered designs after the crowded rooms of Hockney's Tate Exhibition. There within a few square miles of London, South American murder squads, the Pope's gold ring, Hollywood and the gay laughter of Los Angeles becomes the meeting place for the artists hose hired laughter drowns out the cry of the world's agony.

But the music of the clown is not lost for John Carter at the Nook Jacobs Gallery off Bond Street offers us for our admiration and attention well-hung empty frames to frame sweet nothing. A few years ago Hockney painted a large painting called The Splash --all millionaire swimming pool of baby blue sky and water, and it was hailed as a Twentieth Century masterpiece, and I made my small splash in the dark empty hours of the morning in the Royal stone sink, and it is all water down the drain of history.

Arthur Moyses

## George Garret

Liverpool 1921 - 22 by George Garret

George Garrett was born on Merseyside in 1896, of an Irish family. At an early age he went to sea as a stoker. After jumping ship in the USA in 1918 he became a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (the famous 'wobblies'). On returning to Liverpool in 1921 he became involved in the unemployed agitation of that period and helped to organise the civil disobedience campaign against the Parish Guardians of that year. After a bloody confrontation between the unemployed and the police George and his comrades stood trial for unlawful assembly and after a farcical trial were convicted, but released by the judge on the grounds that they had already been punished severely by the police violence meted out to them. In 1922 George led the first hunger march to London. Due to the blacklist he was forced to return to America in 1923 to find work and was again active in the IWW. On his return he was to spend almost 10 years on the dole; constantly active in the unemployed movement. During the same period he wrote short stories, essays and literary criticism for a number of magazines. In 1936 he was George Orwell's guide to Liverpool when the latter was writing 'Wigan Pier' (an account of their meeting can be found in Orwell's 'Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters, Vol. One, pp 213-14). In 1937 he became a founder member of Merseyside Unity Theatre and was acclaimed for his performances in such plays as 'Waiting for Lefty' and 'The Hairy Ape'. In World War Two he returned to the sea. Later he wrote a number of plays for Unity Theatre. He died in 1966.

'Liverpool 1921-22 (originally published by Unity Theatre in 1948) is George's account of the unemployed disturbances of that period. It contains graphic accounts of life on the dole day-to-day in that period, a full account of the campaign against the tyrannical rule of the Guardians, the full story of the trial of the unemployed committee and George's portraits of his comrades on the committee - Bob Tisseyman, the leader of the Liverpool police strike of 1919; Mary Bamber, Liverpool's greatest woman union organiser; Jack Braddock, another wobbly and later leader of Liverpool Labour Party, and others. To the 32 pages of George's text have been added a 4 page introduction by George's old friend, Jerry Dawson, and a 4 page appendix of selections from George's other writings. There are also two photographic illustrations.

Available to order - from Freedom Bookshop.

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