

FREEDOM ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

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SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES

THE EMERGENCE of the National Front has once more raised the spectre of fascism on the streets. For anarchists, the question of tactics and ideas of how best to fight racialism has once again to be raised. The problem of fighting fascism in the streets poses more problems for anarchists than it does for those other groups who call themselves anti-fascists (whether they range from certain Tories to the authoritarian left of the SWP/WRP).

As the two points of view published in our last issue show, there are differences in judgement of the value of the confrontation on the streets, and the debate is continued on our letter page (6). Also in this issue two items (Letter from Laurens Otter on anarchists & trotskysts; and the Midlands Federation statement on p.3) raise the ghost of the popular front and the question of whether it is right for anarchists to put their propaganda into second place in a united struggle against a common enemy.

There are issues on which we campaign with groups whose aims and methods are close to our own. (For instance, we co-operated very effectively with the Committee of 100—but the issues are rarely so clear-cut.) There are issues in which our protest is one among those of other protesting groups whose motivation and aims are very different from ours. We have to remember that our means determine our ends. Political groups whose main aim is to achieve political power are not so fussy as to the means they use and for anarchists to take part in a popular/

united front is suicidal. Once the fascists have been driven off the streets then it will become our turn to be driven off. Several anarchists and anarchist groups have voiced the opinion of "No platform for fascists" (see Midlands statement). Punch-ups in the street might deter the National Front from publicly intimidating people; they do nothing to erase the prejudices and fears on which their ideas are based from people's minds. Free Speech for Fascists is one thing; their being allowed to intimate people is another. However long it might take, there is no substitute for clear and precise anarchist thinking and 'propaganda'—fascist ideas have to be brought out into the open and defeated by reason. Intimidation, on the other hand, has to be dealt with by community solidarity and mutual aid. The basis of anarchism is self-help and we must recognise in the authoritarian groups and the wider anti-fascist groups that their statist attitudes have sapped self-help in every sphere of life.

The National Front are gearing their campaigns (street fights, etc.) to achieving electoral success, and their not being allowed to march drives their racialist attitudes into more 'legalised' channels such as media support and political mileage which is benefiting them in terms of electoral gains. In spite of the publicity at Ladywood about 20,000 people didn't vote for anybody, because no doubt in their minds they realised the truth that no party is on their side.

As regards the Midlands Federation statement, we welcome a new and viable federation but

feel that decisions are sometimes made as a result of frustration arising from the difficulty of getting anarchist ideas across. We think it a very big mistake not to use the electoral charade, which gives the social democratic state a semblance of government by consent. At a time when the forces that control society appear more powerful than ever before and the 'ordinary' person feels so powerless it is more urgent than ever before that anarchists should convey to individuals their collective power to change things directly.

We entirely agree with Canterbury (July 9)—and disagree with the Midlands—in stressing the truly vital importance of anti-election campaigning. Even where numbers are small much more could be done than hitherto in preparing and distributing anti-election material, and we see no good reason at all why this should consist of superficial sloganising rather than sound argument. Constructive work of this kind is far more crucial to the development of anarchism than is fascist-bashing, and the next elections should see anarchist groups and federations making their presence felt all over the country by means of posters, stickers, public speaking and local distribution of anti-election leaflets.

Members of FREEDOM Collective: A.A., G.F.,
F.A.W., M.C

D.P. records a dissenting opinion that the street battle as at Lewisham is 'futile but it's necessary'.

Letter from Ireland

AS I listened to the riots at Lewisham and then at Ladywood, Birmingham, I wondered what makes us tick so horribly. I am just on 80 and all my life wherever I have been it has been the same, no matter what Government is in. I remember - because I was living there at the time - how the British Raj was for ever attacking Gandhi and putting him in prison and the ghastly way the police mowed down the takers of salt who were completely pacifist. They came up, men and women and scooped up their little token shellfuls of sea salt and the police mowed them down with lathis (a particularly brutal form of baton). Then another lot came. Repeat repeat repeat. However, in the end the police themselves got sickened and would not strike any more and ten days later Gandhi was marching up the steps of vice regal Lodge to take tea with the Viceroy and putting a token pinch of salt into his cuppa.

I saw the rise of the Nazis during the thirties when they could have been stopped, but no-one did. Churches and States alike were silent and so the terrible things went on happening and the 1939 war erupted. There were the hunger marches in England in the thirties and again the powers were on the side of the rich and the poor and starving were mowed down. In my own country these things have gone on for 800 years, and the Queen of England comes over and talks about how she was crowned Queen of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The papers did not tell you that 320 people were arrested for NOTHING before the Queen arrived, nor that James Daly, a lecturer at Queens was himself arrested at dawn together with some French visitors by the Royal Marine Commandos, who brought a sniffer dog into his house and tore the whole place to bits. When James Daly said to a major who forced his way into the house, "Is this trespass? Are you upholding the law or breaking it?" the reply was "Fucking bastards, one more word out of you and you will be in Fort Monagh and you'll get a rough time. This is not a threat, it's a promise." The soldiers said to Daly's children, "Poor little bastards. Fancy having a father and mother like you."

I came out of the Four Courts recently where I had been hearing a case about the banning of the Family Planning booklets and as I appeared I was attacked both physically and with vile abuse by members of what I call the "Purity Leagues." They call themselves The Irish Family League, The League of Decency and Parent Concern etc., and are against all contraception and wish it banned by law. They are cruel to a degree to homosexuals. Did a garda come out to rescue me? Not on your nelly, though I am old and very lame. Mind you, to be fair I think if I had gone back in and demanded one they would have come. One female brandished her placard in my face and nearly knocked my spectacles off, and also nearly knocked me down, as I am very lame, having lost half a leg when a "Good Catholic" knocked me down by cutting in on the zebra crossing three years ago. It is MORE than time that all religions and all governments were done away with and human beings were allowed to be human. In this country the cruelty to animals is beyond belief. Priests go to enclosed hare coursing on

Sunday afternoons, freeing their sexual urges by watching a tiny harmless animal being tortured to death. Then they go to say mass and tell poor women who are already overburdened and live likely in a tent, caravan or one room, how wicked they are if they practice contraception. We are hell bent on genocide in Ireland if not in the whole world.

I am of the opinion that if people are given vile weapons sooner or later they will use them. No policeman should have a baton or a gun or a shield. No protester should have an iron bar, a brick or a bottle! I have just heard how the police in Soweto have shot another black man. His only sin the colour of his skin, which does not make a p worth of difference. I have a coloured granddaughter and I adore her.

This reader thought your reprinted gay poem of the Centurion and Jesus very very beautiful after the first sort of shock. It showed LOVE and that is what we one and all are so short of.

.. By the way, not all journalists are rich and own houses. Many in Dublin are out of work and drawing the dole. I am lucky enough, in spite of my age, to just keep my head above water, but I live in a tiny bedsitter and buy my clothes second hand!

H.B.

Dublin

FRANCE

EQUAL publicity has been given in France to the report on violence by that best-selling author and government minister Alain Peyrefitte, whose private apartment on the rue du Ranelagh was recently burgled and his collection of priceless statuettes stolen. It is reliably reported that the country has been shaken to the core by the revelations of the Violence Committee, whose members (all of whom have also been burgled) claim that the chief source of violence is the Town, or more precisely, as the French language has it, the "gigantism of the agglomerations" and the "provocation of concentrations." Peyrefitte et cie come out sensibly enough in favour of "minituarisation", or the small-is-beautiful point of view. He makes no less than 105 Recommendations against Violence, which, he reassures the government, are all fairly cheap to implement. Among them are the setting up of committees (what else?), education by TV, more green belts, tighter film censorship, the replacement of the death penalty by a "security penalty" of 15-20 years' gaol without pardon for certain crimes. The French have at the same time taken note of Peyrefitte's counterpart in England, Sir Leon Radzinowicz, whose recent publication "The Growth of Crime, the International Experience" observes (and I quote from the French) that "no national characteristic, no political regime, no juridical, police or judicial system, no system of punishment, of treatment or even of terror has protected a country from criminality."

But, strange to say, both Peyrefitte and Radzinowicz steer clear of the real heart of the matter. We shall have more censorship of films and TV, but no censorship of the Censors, we shall have smaller buildings and cities but not smaller prisoners or police forces. Of course, the Peyrefitte report came out a

few days before the demonstration at Malville. One must be fair, n'est-ce pas? What more could we ask than the reassurance that, to quote from L'Express, "Violence has become an affair of State" and that "violence has been written into the government programme"?

FERNANDO POO

GREECE

THE APPEAL hearing of our four Greek and three foreign (two French and one Dutch) took place in Athens on 27 and 28 July in a decidedly hostile atmosphere. As previously reported in FREEDOM the seven had been accused of resisting arrest, causing public disturbance, insulting the police and God, after a deliberately set-up police provocation. In the first trial, nearly two months before, all had been found not guilty on all charges, and the public prosecutor had deemed it necessary to save both his and the police's face by appealing.

From the very beginning of the proceedings it was clear that some sort of conviction would be forthcoming. Remarks by the president of the court confirmed all expectations. He asked himself, and the public in general, how it was ever remotely possible that such people as the accused with their long hair could defend Greece against the Turk. Other such remarks and comments, such as those referring to the defendants' attire, drew heavy protest. The president then defended himself by claiming he was not prejudiced - it only seemed that way ... This sort of comic interlude relieved some of the boredom in the packed courtroom.

The verdict was in fact better than expected. With the exception of two Greeks, all were once again declared not guilty. The two convictions were reduced to a 20 and 40-day suspended sentence for a period of three years. The reputation of the defenders of law and order has been saved!!!

FRANCOIS EVERSON

NOSTALGIA
AIN'T WOT IT USED TO BE

WE ARE TOLD we live in an age of nostalgia; a seeking of roots even if they only go back to Vera Lynn and spam. The death of a cult figure like Elvis Presley sends middle-aged men back into Teddy-boy suits and paroxysms of sobbing nostalgia—"he was the gretest, things will never be the same."

But there are limits even to nostalgia. The anniversary of the judicial murder of Sacco and Vanzetti passed almost unnoticed in the media, as we call it, no special television 'I was there' features, no Sunday supplement spreads. Only the Guardian, faithful to its liberal traditions, gave us a good food guide round up of preliminaries to the scorching of the flesh procedures by Richard Boston—who failed to get the famous speech in the right place, and gave the extended version which is of doubtful provenance. The BBC's Alastair Cooke, a soured liberal ex-Guardian man, took refuge behind his aunt in voicing doubts of the doubtless innocence of Sacco and Vanzetti

However nostalgia is only suitable for happy events and Boston is no place for a laff. J. R.

THE SITUATION IN ITALY

ON Saturday 20 August the score of London comrades who had been able to gather at very short notice profited from the visit of comrade Luigi Carlizza from Italy (FAI) who spoke to us about the movement in Italy. He outlined the structure of the anarchist movement which is mainly organised in three federations, the FAI (Anarchist Federation of Italy), GAF (Federation of Anarchist Groups) and GIA (Groups of Anarchist Initiative).

The anarchist movement in Italy had been through a relatively quiet period in the 1950s and early 60s, but the student ferment which followed the Paris "May Days" of 1968 brought a number of young people to the anarchist movement, finding its principles of freedom and opposition to the State sympathetic with their own needs and demands. Yet the circumstances of these young people's lives went against permanence and continuity of participation in the existing groups and federations, their leaving school, going to university and into jobs resulting in a continuous flux and loss of contact. Therefore a need was felt to bring about a more organised movement with closer contact between different groups and more efficient and organised activities.

Whilst the FAI, with its long tradition and its weekly *Umanita Nova*, has become a focus for debate on current situations, there is at the same time a mass of other groups throughout Italy, based on particular affinities which do not adhere to any of the three federations. The FAI has set itself two tasks: the theoretical one of trying to provide the political answers which people were looking for when they came to the movement after the heady days of '68; the other the organisational one of getting the groups throughout the country in contact.

To this end this year's Carrara congress will spend six days examining recent and current events in the Italian political situation, with the aim of reaching clarity and understanding on such wide-ranging subjects as the women's movement, youth movements, changes in social classes, relationships of production, trades unions, political parties, unemployment, exploitation and alienation in work, what is going on in the anarchist movement, where it stands as regards armed struggle and insurrection and "working with the masses", social struggles in education, planning, land, etc., as well as discussing internal organisational

problems and preparing for the forthcoming international congress in November.

There was lively questioning from the floor, one of the earliest questions being about the syndicalist movement. Comrade Carlizza said that for the past 4-5 years anarchists have been trying to establish an anarchist presence in the work place in three main ways. Firstly, by working within the union structure which up to recently has been dominated by two unions, the Communist-controlled CGIL (General Confederation of Italian Labour) and Catholic-controlled CISL (Italian Confederation of Labour Unions); the speaker explained that the Communist Party's "historic compromise" (with the Christian Democrats) had resulted in the CGIL concerning itself with keeping quiet and keeping its members in order. Secondly, by establishing libertarian nuclei in individual factories and thirdly by advocating the more general idea of the workers' councils. But the anarchist presence is not yet a major influence in workers' struggles in Italy. The GAF have established a presence in the railway workers' union in Turin, however.

About the "New Left" in Italy, the speaker said it was not comparable with the "new Left" in some other countries. In fact it sounded as if it did not exist. The three main groupings started out as extraparliamentary parties, but came together under the name of "Proletarian Democracy" to enter the elections of June 1976, got four seats and fell under the domination of the CP. Out of the "crisis" of extra-parliamentary groups came several "autonomy groups", the most numerous being among students, another in the area of workers' autonomy - obviously more organised within the work place than are the more generally libertarian students - and a third, orientated to clandestine armed struggle. But the speaker did not think it correct to refer to the autonomy groups as political organisations; while their activities, being spectacular, gain attention, they are restricted to specific issues, and the clandestine groups the anarchist movement is not interested in working with.

The events of the past 10-12 years, and the crisis of the political parties, leave the anarchists as the only people now with anything to say.

M.C.

THE 2nd MIDLANDS CONFERENCE

THE SECOND Midlands Anarchist Federation conference took place on 25 June 1977. Besides the groups at the first conference (i.e. those from Birmingham, Leicester, Coventry, Leamington and Warwick University) there was representation from Nottingham, Wolverhampton and Oxford. Apart from a general exchange of information, the following topics were discussed:

FEMINISM The idea of an anarcho-feminist caucus was discussed at some length. Doubts of the need for such a grouping were expressed on the basis that anarchism encompassed feminism in as much as anarchism has a commitment to the liberation of all individuals. However it was felt by many that this ignored the specific forms of oppression experienced by women. These are not only economic and political, but are bound up with the deeply seated attitudes that women are inferior, and that, as in other cases of oppressed sections of society whose oppression goes far beyond that of the white male heterosexual worker, there is a need for these sections to form groupings within the anarchist movement to discuss and combat their own particular problems. On a very immediate level it is immensely useful to have a critical faculty within the anarchist movement to tell us when we are being sexist (or racist, etc). There are also many struggles of the woman's movement which the anarchist movement tends to ignore or give a token seal of approval only. Above all it is vital (or so it seems to me at least) to alleviate now all forms of 'supplementary' oppression within capitalism, so that these groups can play their full part in the years of

revolutionary struggle and revolutionary construction to come.

CAMPAIGNS There was a consensus that an anti-election campaign in the event of a general election would not be productive; that such a campaign would, given the facilities at our disposal, result in sloganeering rather than presenting our case as anarchists. It was felt that in these circumstances it would be more useful to embark on campaigns against the National Front and National Party.

Basic agreement for the 'no platform for fascists' policy was expressed, and that this should be achieved by mass action in driving the Front off the streets (rather than using the legal apparatus of the state). Propaganda against the Front, it was decided, should concentrate on present activities rather than their Nazi past, and it was resolved to exchange ideas on leaflets and posters. In the event of an election before the next meeting, it was decided to call an extraordinary conference for this purpose.

In connection with the Murrays, support will be given to Noel's private prosecution against the police for brutality: there is a benefit concert in Leicester after the next conference.

Also discussed was an idea for disseminating anarchist ideas: an anarchist "Roadshow", intended to help in the formation of new groups a travelling bookstall, speakers, theatre and song. We are at present mustering our resources for this enterprise.

See Contact Column for details of next conference.

FLAG.

MEETING AT
FREEDOM BOOKSHOP
SATURDAY 1st SEPT
12.00 a.m. (prompt!)

BUBACK — AN OBITUARY

THE NEW censorship laws (notably articles 88a and 130) have already had their effect on freedom of expression in West Germany. Already many left wing bookshops have been raided, and books confiscated and others voluntarily withdrawn from public view. To give but one example, a warrant to search a bookshop in Landshut that was reported to have the book Haymarket in stock, was issued in August last year, and then confiscated on the grounds that it contained descriptions of how explosives could be produced. Written by Horst Karasek and published by Klaus Wagenbach in Berlin in 1975, Haymarket is a historical work about anarchists of German descent living in Chicago in 1886, and documents their struggles for the eight-hour day and the classic case of the judicial murder of eight anarchists. There is also the example (see over page) of the re-trial of the publishes of the book Wie alles anfang, whose author draws conclusions from his experience of the urban guerilla movement that are not dissimilar from the passage printed here and freely translated from the German.

This obituary was first printed in the newspaper of the student council (Asta) of Göttingen University. The article came anonymously from a student calling himself a "Mescalero" after the apache tribe of New Mexico, and who is known to be a member of the anarchist "Movement of the Undogmatic Spring". The appearance of the obituary resulted in uproar at the University, with a row between the Chancellor and the students developing into police action against the Asta, in the form of raids and then criminal charges. Amongst the material confiscated was documentation, incidentally, on the anti-nuclear demonstrations of Brokdorf and Grohnde. The conflict escalated with the publication by 43 professors and lawyers of the same obituary in a document in which they declared the importance of a "debate on the relationship of violence in our society." The piece was also reprinted in the last issue of the German anarchist paper Befreiung in solidarity with the Göttingen Asta and "our common interest in the freedom of eur press." We print it here for the same reasons, and because of the vital importance that we attach to present events in West Germany, as well as for the tongue-in-cheek yet also serious contribution it makes to a theme that concerns us all.

... MY first reaction to the shooting of Buback can be quickly dealt with. I cannot, and indeed, will not, hide a secret numbed joy. I have heard such types agitate and incite people before. I know the role that this man played in hunting down and torturing people on the left, turning them into criminals. Anyone who had looked closely enough at his portrait in the last few days could see what features are growing more prominent in this Constitutional State, which he embodied so well. And recognise too the characteristics of that bloc of right-thinking Democrats who, as one man, now shout in shocked indignation.

Really I have only the smallest regret that we can no longer put this face in the small red and black criminal album that we intend distributing after the revolution, to capture the most hated and most wanted criminals of the ancien regime and bring them to open trial ...

But this is not all that has occupied my own and many others' thoughts. We cannot feel so simple a joy as over the demise of Carrero Blanco. Not that I allowed myself to be swayed by the remarkably well-orchestrated "public" shock and hysteria: this spectacle functions better each time, and none of us believe any more that a few critical voices might still be raised from among the ranks of political enuchs who thrive off the manufacture of "public opinion." But that doesn't mean that I can remain indifferent to the indifference of the mass media, the official stâtements and commentaries, to the extent that I no longer care when a particular action does occur ... With regard to Stammheim we missed an opportunity to use the disquiet arising from the blatant breaches of law practised by Buback, Maihofer, Shies and Bender. That opportunity is now gone. Now - following the assassination - every move against the "terrorist scum" can be justified ... This may only be a personal impression. I had neither the energy nor the ideas to contribute to the affair. But what I want to criticise can be demonstrated with the example of the Roth/Otto trial. In this trial Buback's strategy was to pronounce the left police murderers, even though it was proved that they (Roth and Otto) had not used their guns. The revolutionary left are killers, their theory and practice determine them as killers, prepared to use ANY means - this was the view of the prosecution and (obviously) the judge.

By carefully sifting through the minutiae our comrades managed to expose this strategy and forced the indifferent mass media to report on the

irregularities and distortions of the trial. The mini-Stammheim in Cologne threw a spotlight on the real Stammheim. Last Wednesday the defence counsel for Roth and Otto demanded their release from custody after testimony accusing them of conspiracy to murder the policeman Paul had been proved invalid. The equation "Left means Killers" was disproved. But the comrades' good hand of cards was destroyed by the death of Buback, which has given the Minister of Justice the means of negatively influencing the verdict.* The blindness of those for whom the political world is restricted to Stammheim and who conduct their struggle and choose their methods in total independence from the "political conjuncture" as a whole could in this way make other comrades vulnerable. "Counter-insurgency" in reverse ...

I have in the past (as have indeed many others) sympathised with the actions of the urban guerillas. I who, as a civilian, never held a gun in my hand, have set off a bomb... I have imagined myself as an armed guerilla, hunted, living in some conspiratorial group, having to make sure that my daily movements (shopping, emptying waste paper baskets going to the cinema) do not betray me.

I wonder how, isolated from the daily personal and political continuity of life, I would be able to decide on any action with my people. Months in advance I would need to prepare myself for the event of killing Buback; logistics and ballistics would control my every thought; I would have to be convinced of the necessity of that particular person having to die; I would have to include the possibility of another person being involved, of a third person being lamed for life.

I would like to completely re-think my position. I still believe that the decision to murder and kill lies with the rulers, the judges, the police (Bullen), the factory guards, the military. To be like them I would need to be specially trained, to be coldblooded like Al Capone, brutal, calculating, quick on the draw.

How shall I decide if Buback is important enough, not only for me and my comrades but also for others; that he is more important than Judge X or Prison Y or one of its prison wardens? Or should the shopkeeper on the corner who is always shouting "Off with their heads!" carry less guilt than Buback? Simply because he has less responsibility? Why this cult of the personality? Couldn't we for a change kidnap a cook and then see the reaction of these right-thinking Democrats? Should we not concentrate altogether more on cooks?

When a State-appointed killer is murdered in Argentina or in Spain I don't have to face this problem. I have the feeling that the people's hate for these figures is really a people's response. But who and how many people wished Buback dead? Where would I draw the deciding line between life and death, were I belong to the urban guerillas?

We must all get away from being the target for people's hatred in the place of the true oppressors, as we have avoided supporting political parties. If Buback was not the victim of the people's anger (or, where I am concerned, of class conflict) then the violence that expressed itself as it did has as little to do with the population as Buback's did.

We need only open the daily newspapers and read the headlines: the strategy of liquidation is the strategy of governments. Why should we copy them? People (the people) fear it through their own experiences as through incarceration and labour camps. Whatever we do casts a light on what we are trying to achieve. We will not liquidate our enemies, nor lock them up in prison, while on the other hand we do not have to feel obliged to handle them gently.

Our aim is a society without terror or violence (though not without aggression or militancy); a society without forced labour (though not without drudgery); a society without law or prisons (though not without norms of conduct). Such an aim does not advocate every means, only some of them. Our way to socialism (in my view, to anarchy) should not be strewn with corpses.

Why liquidate? Ridicule can also kill, for example: in the long term. Our weapons are not just imitated from the military, but the kind they cannot shoot out of our hands; our strength does not need to be contained in such phrases as "solidarity"; our power, finally, cannot be that of Al Capone's, a mimicking of open street-terror; it should not be authoritarian, but antiauthoritarian, which is more effective. To achieve power (Oh God!) the Left should not let themselves become killers or rapists or knucklemen, any more than they can be saints or innocents.

NOTES ON GERMANY

IT WAS mentioned a couple of weeks or so ago by someone reviewing Hitler's Children for a Sunday paper that the number of deaths so far attributable to the Red Army Fraction and related groups combined does not yet equal the number of deaths caused by the Birmingham bombers. It was, of course, meant as a pat on the back for the British authorities and their coolness compared to the German - one that is, though, hardly warranted when one recalls the PTA or, indeed, the over-reaction to the clashes at Lewisham and Ladywood. But apart from this, can the difference between the bombings in Birmingham and in Germany be summed up in terms of statistics alone, any more than the difference between the deeds of the RAF and those of the veteran SS colonel Herbert Kappler?

Questions of ethical conduct, of life and death are not, unfortunately, what it is about. Even the Sunday reviewer should have known better! The important point is not the precise quantity of flesh and blood torn apart with explosive or filled with lead, but the precise goal aimed at in the process. Looked at that way, how compare 335 Italian-Jewish hostages or 20 or so Brummagans, with - "traitors" excluded - a handful of NATO soldiers, a Judge, a Chief Public Prosecutor or a Banker?

There is, of course, no comparison, the roses on Herr Kappler's mat being a recognition of this on the part of Soltau's respectable burghers. Besides the fact that while everyone has heard about his triumphant escape from Italy almost no-one here was aware of the thirst and hunger strike of around 45 RAF and 2nd June prisoners during the same week, let alone of the issues behind it, which, briefly, are as follows.

During the last hunger strike in April the prisoners at Stammheim were examined by several officially appointed medical experts who came to the conclusion that if they were to survive they needed company, and that their poor physical and mental health was a direct consequence of their isolation. One of these experts later recommended that they be held in groups of at least 15 people. Gudrun Ennslin, on behalf of the RAF, called off the hunger strike at that time on the understanding that the authorities had agreed to extended integration of prisoners, but by July it had become clear that the authorities had changed their minds, and on 8 August a clash between prisoners and prison officers in Stammheim led to the present thirst and hunger strike in jails throughout West Germany. But prison condition, unless unusual enough to provide headlines - if then - make poor news; the fact that a man and a woman, even when "lifers", are not allowed to have sex together, or that they are not allowed to close the door on the prison guards, or that they are deprived of social as well as sexual intercourse, and that social isolation is once more the order of the day, or that the remaining core of the so-called Baader-Meinhof group will die rather than do without it, is just not dramatic enough until there's a corpse or two. And even corpses are quickly forgotten, not just by those who made

them and who at this moment are prepared for them (the situation as I write is still one of deadlock), but by some too on the other side, when they have drawn out of them the capital they need.

Well, if that's death then what is "life" plus 15 years for good measure? And would some amongst us, notwithstanding our vast differences and, I think, our fully justified distrust, and would not some among their own supporters, no do a Frau Kappler, so to speak, if Stammheim were the military hospital in Rome and if there were in any country a town like Soltau where they could go?

But this is a society of law and order where only Nazis and their kindred are saved by wives with trunks and cars nonchalantly waiting in the courtyard below, and by the not-to-be-sneezed-at assistance of well-wishing governments. Stammheim was not built for the Nazis, and if Spandau may live on as the propaganda tool of a regime that way surpassed Hitler's in terms of statistical murder, not even the Kremlin really believes in Spandau any more, and almost everyone believes in Stammheim.

Surely this has become one of the most eloquent symbols of what we, as anarchists, are up against; and when, of all people, some anarchists would seem to support gaol sentences (not for the RAF as it happens, but for certain others) its mental as well as physical destruction may seem impossible. Yet destroyed, in both senses, it has to be and (of course) the sooner the better.

¶ ¶ ¶

MEANWHILE the High Court of Karlsruhe has ordered the re-trial of Gisela Erler and Herbert Röttgen who run the publishing house Trikont, and who were acquitted on 27 October last year of a charge of "glorifying violence" and giving support to punishable offences (the new censorship laws had not yet reached the Statute book). The prosecution arose out of Trikont's publication of the book Wie alles anfang (How it all began) by the former 2nd June member Michael "Bommi" Baumann, who is still being sought by the police. The court action (see FREEDOM, 3 April and 6 November 1976) was initiated by a State prosecutor who argued that the guerrilla bank robberies and other crimes referred to in the book had been described in a "cynical and inhuman" way and did not adequately convey the pain felt by the victims... All this despite Baumann's conclusions that the shot-gun tactics of 2nd June and similar groups should be abandoned. In solidarity with the publishers an international team of about 300 was organised, and a new edition of the original, which had been confiscated, was released. The move was supported by over a thousand writers, publishers, papers etc., including Freedom Press. No subsequent action was made in confiscating the book. Now, however, in ordering the re-trial, the high court of Karlsruhe claims that the lower court in Munich had committed legal errors

in acquitting the two defendants and in recommending that they be financially compensated for the banning and confiscation of the book. This will be an important trial for the future of literary and press freedom in West Germany.

And this is not the only re-trial to be planned for the near future. Indeed, a pattern seems to be emerging whereby re-trials are ordered whenever a lower court acquits a defendant in a political case, or treats them mildly. Such is the case of Karl-Heinz Roth who was freed on 12 July on the basis of lack of evidence after a new judge had been called in to replace the original one, sacked for bias in favour of the prosecution. Such also is the case of Ralf Stein. As readers of this paper may remember (interview with Ralf of 15 May 1976, 3 April 1976) he was formally sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, most of which he had already spent in pre-trial detention, and was freed at the end of the proceedings. Charging him with five offences, including membership of a "criminal association" and possession of weapons, the prosecution had demanded a 4 year sentence. The appeal hearing began on 16 August in Cologne district court, of which we hope to carry more news later.

¶ ¶ ¶

WITH the murder of the banker Juergen Ponto, in which Susanne Albrecht, daughter of a friend, is alleged to be involved, it is reported that the German government has launched a secret investigation into the phenomenon of the women guerilla. The results will not be made public, "but will be fed into the new anti-terrorist police branch known simply by the letter 'T'" (S. Times). A long article in Der Spiegel whose 8 August cover bears a large and lurid picture of Susanne Albrecht with the words "Women and Violence" splashed across, gives a detailed account of the views of the Various Experts on the subject. This highly illuminating article, observing that almost two-thirds of those being sought for terrorist offences are women, lists such suggestions as the wish to escape sexual bondage through the masculine symbol of the gun, the desire to feel like "female supermen", the rich female's sense of class guilt, etc. Top marks in perception must go to the chief of the Defence of the Constitution police, Gunther Nollau, for seeing "something irrational about the whole business" that must somehow be related to an "excess of emancipation." But there are dissenters. The international lawyer Hubert Armbruster, maintains that female terrorists are still sexually dependent on male ones, while the sociologist Erwin Scheuch, maintains that from the point of view of intellect and character, women are often, indeed mainly, the strongest. Thus the controversy continues. What makes a woman a killer? Perhaps one day we can look forward to a similar investigation about men?! But whatever the verdict of the secret report T we can be sure it will not allow for any boringly political or social explanations.

¶ ¶ ¶

A concept and practice which develops from a power/militancy that has the people's blessing, and which directly involves them, this is (practically speaking) our objective of every day. That the Left does not acquire the killer-face of Buback.

A little clumsy, aren't I? But it's honestly meant ...

A Göttingen Mescalero

* see Notes on Germany.

Lewisham



THE contrast between the hysterical opposition to the National Front on the part of the Left and widespread support for it among sections of the working class is an example of different class/individual interest leading to different political outlooks.

The white working class, especially the low-paid "unskilled" section of it, is attracted by the Front's policy of repatriating immigrants because this would improve their conditions. In jobs, housing etc., through the law of supply and demand.

The largely middle class left welcomes immigration for the same reason the capitalists do. It keeps the price of unskilled and semi-skilled labour down. This benefits them because otherwise they would have to cut down on their frequent nosh-ups at the trendy pigs'-troughs advertised in *Time Out* and elsewhere, as well as have to pay through the nose for a lot of other goods and services. They would in fact be in much the same position as the worst off sections of the working class are today.

All this of course explains their inability to discuss the immigration issue rationally, their hysterical labelling of anyone opposed to immigration as "racist", when working people are only trying to defend their own interests. This is very bourgeois and reactionary of us no doubt, but it does appear to be what all other sections of society are up to, so why should we be exceptions?

Of course it would be wrong to ascribe entirely selfish motives to these revolutionaries. They probably hope that as the immigrant population becomes increasingly threatened by the growing strength of the Front, aided and abetted by the set piece publicity stunts provided by themselves, large numbers of immigrants will flood into the leftist organisations, thus providing these armchair generals with the cannon fodder they need to convert their power fantasies into reality.

Their appeals to the white working class to support them are ludicrous. For instance, they call for the removal of all controls on immigration. For the unskilled working class, black as well as white, this would be a catastrophe, reducing them to a soup-kitchen level of existence. This may be what our revolutionaries want, of course, in the hope that it will provide another source of recruits. But we can't be blamed for not relishing the prospect.

As far as anarchists and libertarians are concerned, it isn't going to make any practical difference whether we join in these "circuses" as David Peers called them. But there is another side to the whole issue of immigration.

When confronted with the arguments of workers who support the N.F. it is pointless to scream about racism and fascism. However, it is possible to get people thinking about the class nature of present society by pointing out why our rulers need a large supply of immigrant labour and why the middle classes take a so-called "liberal" attitude to it. In this way it may be possible to show up a lot of the crap about the "nation" and "national interest" for what it is, thus helping to undermine the fascist ideology instead of reinforcing it as the present tactics of the "Left" are doing.

A.K.M.

London N.W.1.

Dear FREEDOM

ALAN Albon, in the last issue of FREEDOM, expressed the view that the violent nature of demonstrations such as we have seen at Lewisham, Ladywood, etc, are "counter-productive" and only, in the end, serve to strengthen the State.

Although I agree that the State will come to reveal more of its true character, in the form of greater powers of repression, the escalation of the conflict (especially by the police at these demos) will not have the desired effect of subduing the rebellious youth, and these violent clashes can, and do, serve a purpose.

Firstly, the intense assault of the National Front on the streets, by the left, will actively prevent these fascist thugs from intimidating coloured communities and other minority groups. A slight increase in their vote at the next election due to publicity, is unimportant. What is important is to keep them off the streets and to disrupt them, wherever they may try to spout their particular nauseous brand of fascism.

Secondly, the "mass base" which Alan Albon rightly sees as necessary for the transformation of society will hardly come about in a vacuum. Escalation of violence by the State will, by cause and effect, evoke a corresponding militant response from the least contented sectors of society, particularly the unemployed youth and students.

In France in '68 the Gaullist regime was nearly toppled by a libertarian insurrection precisely because the heavy handed tactics employed by the State against the young workers and students rebounded against it and its mighty capitalist edifice.

Perhaps over here in Britain, a spirit of rebellion will at long last be kindled.

David G. Holmes

Cornwall

Alan Albon replies: Let the debate continue. Probably one of the most important books published in recent years has been Jose Peirats' *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution* (Black & Red, Detroit, distributed by Solidarity Books of Toronto). For those who believe that the anarchist revolution will benefit by being tied to the tail of left wing politics this book contains lessons which appear to be still unlearned. As Peirats remarks in his preface: "Anarchism is largely responsible for its own bad reputation in the world. It did not consider the thorny problem of means and ends. In their writings many anarchists conceived of a miraculous solution to the problem of revolution. We fell easily into this trap in Spain. We believed that 'once the dog is dead the rabies is over.'" Guilt by association and relationship is the hallmark of the terrorist activities of the authoritarians of left and right and anarchists have been victims of both groups. I think that David

Holmes in his letter is quite wrong in believing that the action at Lewisham will deter individual attacks by thugs - it is likely to increase them. The answer to this is community solidarity and defence groups at the point of attack. The sort of simplistic propaganda of the NF is a symptom of decaying urban society, not a cause. The escalation of violence will never benefit the anarchist cause; it may well impede our attempts to influence the mass of people.

MATRIARCHY

Dear Friends

In Dave Cunliffe's letter, published 6 August, he quotes Margaret Mead's denial of any past matriarchy, saying that she "knows something about anthropology." Doubtless she does, but that's like saying H.J. Eysenck knows something about psychology. We are fortunately at liberty to heed other sources, and it is the belief that we can weigh one piece of evidence against another that frees us from dependence on experts.

Malinowski's studies of the Trobriand islanders were early enough to see how a transition from matriarchy to patriarchy was taking place, and Wilhelm Reich has reflected on this process in "The Invasion of Compulsory Sex Morality." He points to the link between the marriage institution and the centralisation of power in tribal chieftains. A marriage gift by the bride's family to the groom's father leads to male dominance, concentration of wealth and a denial of sexuality reinforcing each other.

Yours truly

Richard Gates

CORRECTION

Comrades—Something went wrong with the final sentence of my letter about the judge in the *Gay News* trial (August 20). It should have read:

'It is also ironic for a poem about Jesus to be condemned for blasphemy by a Jewish judge, and under a law which protects only Christians from attack!'

N. W.

Anarchism & Trotskyism

Dear All

May I take up the question raised by Steve Dawe and Dave Norman - without necessarily endorsing your earlier editorial or taking sides in what may be a purely semantic debate. Not that I wish to sit on the fence but that it is not in fact stated clearly in your editorial that you would reject the thesis:

- "effective campaigning on an issue may mean that we cooperate with a wide variety of statist groups"

nor that you would reject the postulate:

- "we affirm our belief in the value of uniting with Trotskyists on matters of common concern."

There have certainly been anarchists who would in all circumstances have rejected both of these postulates, but all the FREEDOM editors I know have in the past acted on the

LETTERS

assumption that both are correct, while insisting that they must be on defined issues, and in ways that did not involve subordinating anarchism to Trotskyism - or whatever else might be the faith of the statist socialist (or indeed non-socialist) concerned. It is obvious from the Canterbury Libertarian letter that they too accept some reservations for such collaboration.

The issue seems to me too important to leave there. You and your correspondents may be divided only by a matter of emphasis or semantics; but there are those at either pole who might appear at first blush to endorse one or other argument, but who would in fact disagree more radically with either of you, than you with each other.

The dogmatic extreme of saying that in no circumstances will anarchists work with non-anarchists, is not a purist anarchist position, but a vanguardist and therefore by definition an anti-anarchist one.

The opportunist extreme of saying "unity is all that counts, we should not look a gift horse in the mouth, if we are offered unity", logically leads people to subordinate their activity to non-anarchists; and frequently to those mindless-militant non-anarchists who are most likely to involve others in fruitless activism, which leads to disillusion and has been a well trodden road out of the anarchist movement.

Anarchists as opponents of vanguardism, but advocates of a militant minority position within the mass working class movement (or in so far as such things exist) the semi-mass peace, civil liberties, ecological, women's liberation ... movements obviously must agree with the Canterbury Libertarian statement that we cooperate with a wide variety of groups, including having a united front at times with Trotskyists.

However a united front is not quite the same as the general import of "uniting with", it does not mean that one has to abandon the right - nay the duty - to argue one's own position against one's allies, albeit in an amicable manner, and to criticise their positions on other issues.

It certainly does not mean that one enters the same organisation in a way that allows non-anarchists to pretend that the differences no longer matter and that one accepts that the anarchist movement should be subordinated to the non-anarchist one.

It involves an assessment of the integrity of and the general nature of the groups with which one cooperates, Trotskyist or non-Trotskyist. This will shape one's relations with any group with which one cooperates and the degree to which one is suspicious of one's allies; there are Trots, not necessarily those with whom on paper we have the most agreement, not all in the same faction - though usually to be found in smaller "more sectarian" factions - whom experience has shown will keep their word when working jointly, and with whom collaboration is easy and friendly. There are others.

One organisation, experience has taught us, behaves like the 1930s C.P. in miniature. It beats up its own dissidents, plus any allies who step out of line; it is not above calling police to attack its ex-members, or other socialists selling literature.

Another organisation has a theoretical journal which was first launched as a paper of a

united front, this it was alleged was produced by a broad spectrum of revolutionary opinion including the anarchists, and it even published some seemingly libertarian critiques of the vanguardism, substitutionalism and authoritarianism of the rival groupings; it did not prevent the overnight expulsion of the more libertarian members of its editorial group (those who later launched Solidarity) for no stated reason.

The same body has a weekly paper which was launched ostensibly as a united front industrial paper; this was in fact an attempt (successful) to split an industrial rank and file movement which had been launched by a number of other revolutionary groupings, amongst whom were anarchists and Solidarity.

It also has/had a paper published for print-workers which was launched as a way of splitting (and then scabbing on) the rank and file print-workers' movement in London.

Space does not permit me to enlarge on this it would be easy to instance enough other aspects of this grouping to fill an issue of FREEDOM. It has frequently in spoken word and on at least two occasions in leaflets claimed that the group's ranks include the anarchists, trying to pretend that we have no criticisms of it, and this too when it was in the Labour Party. (Incidentally its decisions to leave the Labour Party, which until a month before it had claimed was the only home for socialists, even to the extent of calling us and Solidarity blacklegs for opposing the Labour Party, was made in remarkably short time with no published explanation for the reversal).

The organisation in question - IMG - has a record, if possible, of even greater opportunism and adventurism, than that of its twin rival just described. During the Vietnam war it was completely uncritical of the Vietnamese Stalinists to the extent of describing as agents of America those of us who pointed out that Ho Chi Minh had wiped out the second largest Trotskyist party the world had ever seen (some 18,000 strong) as also three other socialist parties and a number of industrial militants (in all at least 46,000 known militants) in 1946.

It has tried to divert support from industrial struggles and industrial organisation into fruitless punch-ups with Powellite dockers (c.f. in particular May Day 68). It has tail-ended the sort of Black Nationalist movements that have tended to split rather than unite workers in struggle. It has never shown the slightest inclination to do any serious organisational work amongst industrial workers; has never been known to maintain the same position three days running and is entirely untrustworthy.

Your correspondents rightly say that they would not be allowed to cooperate with Socialist Challenge anyway; they neglect the fact - which was the point of the editorial - that Socialist Challenge has said it wishes to carry an anarchist contribution, and it has been publicly reported that a group of anarchists are considering doing a Durutti column in its pages. It is even rumoured that a group of Programmist anarchists have considered contributing such a column (ironic when one considers that it was Programmist influence on the Spanish anarchists which caused the FAI to be able to exclude Durutti in the way it did!)

Fraternally

Laurens Otter

In Brief

ANARCHIST MOORLAND PICNIC
SHEFFIELD ANARCHISTS WELCOME COMRADES FROM OTHER AREAS WHO CAN JOIN THEIR EXCURSION ON SATURDAY 17th SEPTEMBER. Write in advance to 4 Havelock Square, Sheffield, OR BE THERE BEFORE 10 am on Saturday 17th. Extra cars for transport to the picnic spot will be very helpful.

W. Blake: a belated obituary

'Those who restrain desire, do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained, and the restrainer, or reason, usurps its place and governs the unwilling. And being restrained, it by degrees becomes passive till it is only the shadow of desire.'

AUGUST 12 saw the 150th anniversary of the death, in 1827, of William Blake, the famous Poet and engraver. Blake was one of the great pre-anarchist freethinkers and anti-authoritarians, whose early ideas were principally against the established church and religion, which he saw as the major evil of his day. This early stand against an authoritarian God later developed into an opposition of the dehumanising industrial revolution and the growth of ever more powerful states. It is ironical that his famous hymn "And did those feet..." (or "Jerusalem") has come to be regarded as a patriotic song.

N.

Cannon Fodder?

The Political Awareness of the School Leaver, Hansard Society, 12 Gower St., London WC1 £ 1.50).

A SURVEY of 4,027 school leavers aged 15-16 year olds. Among the results were:
More than 4 in 10 believed the IRA to be a Protestant organisation
1 in 4 link Nationalisation to the Conservative Party
1 in 20 cannot name the Prime Minister
2 in 10 Cannot name the leader of the Opposition
4 in 10 did not know that East Germany is a Communist country
2 in 10 thought Al Fatah was a group of Black African revolutionaries opposed to whites in South Africa
More than half thought the House of Commons made all the important decisions.

In the preface to the report Prof. Bernard Crick (of Birkbeck College, London University) said 'For a long time it has been clear that we have been taking for granted in this country a level of political knowledge and competence among ordinary people which no longer exists; if it ever did.'

Perhaps the most interesting point to emerge is the ignorance of where the political parties stand on the main issues of the day.

FREEDOMS CONTACTS PAGE

WE WELCOME news, reviews, articles, letters. Latest date for receipt of copy for next issue (No. 18) is MONDAY 12 SEPTEMBER. (But it is helpful to have it earlier—especially contact column entries).

NEXT DESPATCHING date is THURSDAY 15 September. Come and help from 2 pm onwards. You are welcome each Thursday 4-8 pm for informal get together while **folding FREEDOM** or despatching.

Groups

ABERYSTWYTH Mike Sheehan, Neuadd Caerleon, Victoria Tce., Aberystwyth.

BOLTON contact 6 Stockley Ave, Harwood, Bolton (tel. 387516)

CANTERBURY Dave Norman, 12 Claremont Place, Wincheap, Canterbury. Individuals/groups wishing to form Kent Libertarian Fed. please contact

CORBY Anarchists write 7 Cresswell Walk, Corby, Northants

COVENTRY Write John England, 48 Spencer Ave., Earlsdon, Coventry.

EAST ANGLIAN Libertarians, Martyn Everett 11 Gibson Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex

EXETER Anarchist Society, Devonshire House, Stocker Road, University of Exeter.

LEAMINGTON & Warwick c/o 42 Bath St., Leamington Spa

LEEDS, Tony Kearney, 4 Ingle Row, Leeds 7

LEICESTER c/o Blackthorn Books, 74 High-cross Street, Leicester

MANCHESTER contact Al on 061 224 3028

NEWCASTLE anarchist group, 91 Beaconsfield St., Arthur's Hill, Newcastle NE4 5JN

OXFORD, Martin Harper, Keble College

PORTSMOUTH, Carolyn Cahm, 2 Chadder-ton-Gardens, Pembroke Park, Old Portsmouth ST.

ALBANS John Morton, 21 St. Peter's Road, St. Albans, Herts

SHEFFIELD (1) Tikka, 4 Havelock Square. (2) Anarchists-Libertarians-Situationists Flat 1 1 Victoria Rd., Sheffield S10

STOKE anarchists, 52 Campbell Road, Stoke-on-Trent

THAMES VALLEY, Adele Dawson, Maymeade, 6 Congress Rd., Maidenhead, (tel. 062 2974)

WESTON-SUPER-MARE. Anyone interested in forming group contact Martyn Redman, Flat 5, 23 Mipton Road, Weston-s.-Mare, Somerset

LONDON FEDERATION of Anarchist groups Anarchist Black Cross, 123 Upper Tollington Park, N.4. (tel. 691 6533)

Anarchy Collective, 29 Grosvenor Ave., N.5. (tel. 359 5795—before 8 pm)

Brixton Anarcho-Situationists, 8 Heywood House, Tulse Hill SW2 (tel. 674 6402)

Clapham, 3 Belmont Rd. SW4 (tel. 622 8961)

East London Libertarians, 123 Lathom Rd, E.6. (tel. 552 3985)

Freedom, 84B Whitechapel High St., Angel Alley, E1 (tel. 247 9249)

Hackney Black & Red, 74 Brougham Rd. E8 (tel. 249 7042)

Kingston Libertarians, 13 Denmark Rd., Kingston-upon-Thames (tel. 549 2564)

South London College, Knights Hill, West Norwood (tel. 674 7886)

Zero tel. 555 6287)

MIDLANDS Anarchist Federation: Sec. Louise Crane, 13 Arden Terrace, Bravinstone,

Leicester (tel. 82345)

NORTH WEST Anarchist Federation, 6 Stockley Ave., Harwood, Bolton (tel. 387516)

(monthly newsletter, meetings)

ANARCHIST Students Network for contacts list & information on next conference write Exeter University Anarchists (see Exeter grp)

SCOTTISH FEDERATION

SCOTTISH Libertarian Federation: Aberdeen: Blake, c/o APP, 167 King St.

Dundee: Mike Malet, 1 Lynnewood Place

Edinburgh: Gibson 7 Union St. (557 1532)

Glasgow: C. Baird, 122 Benneray St. Glasgow G22 (336 7895)

Stirling: D. Tymes, 99 Rosebank, Sauchie, Clacks.

International

AUSTRALIA

Canberra: Alternative Canberra Group, 10 Beltana Rd. Pialligo, ACT 2809

Victoria: La Trobe Libertarian Socialists, c/o SRC La Trobe Univ., Bundoora, Vic 3083.

Libertarian Soc. Fed of Aust.: c/o 4 Roosevelt St., Reservoir, Vic. 3073

New South Wales P Stones, P.O. Box 26, Warrawong, N.S.W.

Sydney Fed. of Aust. Anarchists, Box 97, Broadway, 2007 Australia.

Sydney Libertarians, P.O. Box 54, Darlinghurst 2010

NEW ZEALAND

The anarchist movement can be contacted via-PO Box 2052 Auckland

PO Box 22-607 Christchurch

International Books, i23 Willis Street, Wellington.

Daybreak Bookshop, PO Box 5424 Dunedin

U.S.A.

NEW YORK: Libertarian Book Club, Box 842 G.P.O. New York 10012

S.R.A.F. Freespace Alternate U.339, Lafayette St. New York City, NY 10012

Missouri: Columbia Anarchist League, PO Box 370 Columbia, MO 65201

SAN FRANCISCO: Free Socialist, P.O.

EUROPE
DENMARK, Anarkist-Synd., Bogcafe Studiestraede 18 DK1455 Copenhagen

Germany
Anarchist Federation of Baden: ABF Info-Büro, Postfach 161, 717 Schwabisch Hall Germany.

Meetings

LONDON SEPTEMBER, Central London W.E.A. autumn programme: Problems of

Modern Africa: Music, right and left; Political Economy of Women, a historical

perspective; Social Psychology. Full Programme from Sidney Billson

33 Compton Road, N.1. (SAE please)

LAND for the PEOPLE every Tues. at 8a Leighton Cres. London NW 5 (Kentish

Town) upstairs No 8 (tel 267 1184 or 485 3572)

BIRMINGHAM Lib. Soc. meet Suns 8pm Fox and Grapes, Freeman street (Moor ST

station)
Left Without Marx? Part of the cause why libertarians have failed to create a coher

ent alternative to Marxism is that they have failed to understand it. Libertarians interested in a study group on Marx contact Left Without Marx, 15 Matcham Road London E11 3LE.

Desires

Anarchist Gay Lib Group -to put Anarchist ideas across within the gay movement.

Anyone interested in forming such a group contact Alan Bray, Flat D 23, Great James,

London WC1. (tel 405 8850 fri evening/week ends)

CLAPPERCLAW unique folk band will play free (expenses only) at your next benefit

or event. Guaranteed fun. c/o 87, Bulwer Road, London, E. 11. or tel (01) 555 5248

People With Disabilities-libertarian group, enquiries c. Housmans Bookshop,

5, Caledonian Road, London N1.

Required somebody to teach thick anarchist Spanish at weekends London write

Alan Albon c/o Freedom Press.

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11th -23rd August Incl, Croton N.Y. USA. A.B. £ 2.25; Wolverhampton, J.L. £ 1.00; JKW IOp; Leicester, 50p;

Wolverhampton, J.L. £ 1.00 JKW IOp. Total-£ 5.55

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Comrade readers this is not really good enough, our costs continually rise; there

are three things you can do -help us produce the paper, sell more copies or if

you are unable to do either send us more money.

Prisoners

Mike Murphy (CO1039) HM Prison, Ashwell, Oakham, Leics.

John Nightingale (336645) HM Prison Parkhurst, nr. Newport, Isle of Wight

DUBLIN anarchists Bob Cullen, Des Keane, Columba Longmore, Military

Detention Centre, Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare, Eire.

MARIE MURRAY and **NOEL MURRAY** (life sentences). Defence Groups: London c/o 29 Grosvenor Ave., N. 5.

Dublin: 155 Church Road, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, Eire.

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FREEDOM'S Anarchist Review

3 SEPTEMBER 1977



JOHN OLDAY, proletarian revolutionary and artist, has died in London at age 72, his much-abused body failing to support his still fertile, rebellious mind. His fighting record began as far back as 1916, when he was but one of the starving women and children of Hamburg, Germany who exploded in savage bread riots as the Kaiser strode toward defeat and ruin in the First World War. The 1918-1919 sailor-worker revolt followed, in which John, at the age of 13, served as an ammunition feeder for a Spartakus machine-gun post where all were killed but he, though he was captured and nearly executed. In the early '20s he took part in mass expropriations, joined and was expelled from the Communist Youth, fought in the abortive worker uprising of 1923 in an Anarcho-Spartacist guerrilla unit, and was an agitator in the French-occupied Ruhr.

Born Arthur William Oldag, illegitimate son of a German mother and Scottish father, John became an important cartoonist and expressionist artist under that name in Weimar Germany. He renewed his guerrilla activity shortly before the Nazis took power, producing then a powerful series of anti-Nazi cartoons and slogan stickerettes which were miniaturized and secreted into booklets of official postage stamps distributed throughout the Reich.

Between 1925 and 1932 in fact, he had not been involved in revolutionary activity at all, concentrating on furthering his career as an artist. This was to stand him in good stead later when, returning again to activities with the Spartacist group in the early 30s, he continued to pose as a crazy homosexual artist, but using his position among the intelligentsia

Tribute to John Olday

and upper-class Nationalists to gather information which he passed on to the underground. He was even able to continue with this dangerous game after the Nazis came to power by doing a deal with them (they wanted to show the world that satirical cartoons could still appear in Germany)—until the price became too high and he had to get out. In 1938 he escaped a Gestapo trap and fled to England, where he published *Kingdom of Rags*, an anti-fascist documentary illustrated with the horrifying sketches he had brought from Nazi Germany.

Receiving financial backing from an anti-Chamberlain faction in Parliament, Olday (his new underground name) co-ordinated from London and Holland the sinking of a Nazi munitions ship, murdered a Jewish renegade working for the Nazis in Antwerp, parlayed with dissident German Communist exiles in Paris, and wrote the script for an appeal to the German workers to sabotage the Nazi war machine which was read over Radio Strassbourg. Olday's wife, Hilde Monte, for whom a memorial museum in Israel is named, was an anti-Nazi Jewish resistance fighter who, along with John, did much of the groundwork for the 1939 Munich Beer Hall bomb explosion which nearly killed Hitler. She was shot by the SS in 1944 on the Swiss border while on a resistance mission.

With the outbreak of war, refusing to work for British intelligence or to mute his call for class war, John was press-ganged into a British Army punishment corps from which he deserted. Until 1944 he remained underground in London, editing and cartooning the anarchist *War Commentary* and circulating clandestine soldiers' letters among British troops. Calling

for revolutionary anti-militarism and the formation of worker-soldier councils, which were beginning to have effect in war industry and various war theatres, this effort brought the wrath of the Government and the imprisonment of anarchist militants.

The IWW in the USA came strongly to the support of Olday on his arrest and trial in 1944-45. John had worked closely with IWW seamen in the underground fight against the Nazis, and maintained contact with Hamburg through the war via Scandinavian Wobbly seamen shipping into Nazi Germany. His powerful drawings from the March to Death collection were featured in the Industrial Worker regularly during the war, along with letters, poems, and reviews of his work. Released from prison in 1946, Olday was thrust back into a military punishment unit. There he organized German POWs into the Spartakusbund, Gruppe Bakunin, the direct heir of the Anarcho-Spartacists of 1918-40. On their return to Germany, these young revolutionaries established 60 Spartacist groups, primarily in the East Zone. They were liquidated to the man by the Stalinist secret police in late 1948.

Released, Olday worked for a time with the anarchist Freedom, then emigrated to Australia, where he became the most notorious artist and cabaret performer of the '50s. Returning to Germany in the late '60s, he worked with student and gay-liberation groups, then went to London to work with Freedom, followed by Black Flag, before founding his own International Archive Team.

These last two years John was a member of the IWW General Defense Committee. Though a councilist to the end, his firm advocacy of the IWW-GDC in Mit-Teilung (the German-English newsletter he produced);

his contact with dissidents and prisoners in Germany, Italy, France, and Japan; his translations of IWW and GDC material into German for our new members there; and his striking drawings and cartoons, featured in the Industrial Defense Bulletin, were a tremendous aid to the IWW. He was a fighting rebel to the last.

I had the honor of working with John during January and February of this year in London. He was dying, and a weaker man would have surrendered to death; but he kept fighting and producing in spite of incredible pain and dire poverty. IWW Toronto will soon follow our publication of his polemic on guerrilla warfare, Trotz Alledem ('In Spite of All') with an important historical work, Spartacus and Insurgent Anarchism: The 1918-1923 Revolt in Germany. Other material, including drawings and lumpenproletariat poems, also will appear.

John, you tough, querulous old bastard: farewell.

With much love
GARY JEWELL, IWW Toronto.

Footnote:

The above tribute to John Olday is taken from The Industrial Worker (July 77) and is fundamentally as printed therein except for one inserted paragraph and one deletion for which I take responsibility. The alterations have been made as a result of communications from Gary Jewell himself. Incidentally the army unit, the Pioneer Corps, is not a punishment corps as Gary describes it, but a corps which does the labouring work for the fighting units.—PS.



Recollections of

The Wartime Years

THOUGH I had not seen, nor been in touch with, John ('Jo') Olday for the past twenty-five years at least, news of his death filled me with sadness and a feeling of personal loss and I can only explain this by saying that not only did we have a close and positive friendship for a number of years but that, certainly in the 1940s, his personality was such that once having met him it would have been difficult ever to forget him.

I just cannot recall how and when we met. We started to publish his cartoons in War Commentary in 1942 (signed XXX and not in his name—the triple X would seem to be a Germanic tradition, for Max Nettlau did likewise in his unsigned articles in Spain and the World) and I do know, from personal involvement, that he was 'on the run' for almost

two years before being picked up in December 1944. I assume he had joined the army as a volunteer and that we met at the Freedom Press offices in Belsize Road, Swiss Cottage, London in 1942.

However, what I am not vague about are the army leaves he spent with Marie Louise (Berneri) and me in our flat in Chalk Farm (London) and what good company he was. He was also the ideal guest: you never felt that you had to entertain him or minister to his needs (he was an excellent cook who, from his experience of living in post-World War 1 Germany, excelled in the art with our basic wartime rations). As soon as he came through the door (in uniform, with pack and rifle!) he became part of our household, a small detail which I feel is worth mentioning, because Jo was a complex personality—on the surface the bohemian,

the artist, the romantic, but underneath the disciplined, neat and tidy person. He was no Soldier Schweik; his uniform was immaculate as was all his equipment, his boots as polished as he was trim, pink and streamlined physically; his gestures and gait reminded one of a dancer, light and svelte. He was more at ease squatting on the floor than seated in a chair. He was a chain smoker and went for spirits, with a preference for rum. He talked about other drugs that he had taken but never produced any in our company.



To my mind Jo above all wanted to be a successful artist—as opposed to a political cartoonist—and to the extent that he never achieved public recognition for this he failed. He also wanted to be a successful writer and playwright. To these ends he was always seeking for a dedicated band of followers to stimulate and support his artistic bent. Being homosexual, it was a succession of young males who stimulated his undoubtedly great talent but in due course abandoned him to make their own way and mostly not in the anarchist direction. And then suddenly in the 'fifties one learned that Jo had emigrated to Australia!



Whether he joined the British army in the first place to fight the Nazi regime, I don't know and cannot recall any discussion on the subject. However when he contacted us he was obviously in a strongly political anti-war phase and there were at no time any differences between us on the question of opposition to both sides in the military struggle. Think-

ing back, I am amazed that his decision to desert the army came so soon after his contact with the FP group. He had come on a long leave and was staying with Marie Louise and me at the flat when he announced his decision. It meant that he would have to change his identity, dispose of his uniform and weaponry and find somewhere to live and an Identity Card in order to eat and move around—and of course money. All the necessaries were found for him and at the latter stages of his two years on the run a sympathetic employer whose name I think was Griffen, in the engineering spare parts business, gave him employment. But before that, apart from a few of us who had made ourselves responsible for him, he had the unstinted support of that delightful, lovable, interesting and eccentric old lady, Winifred Smith, a New Zealander who though brought up in the strict traditions of her time and married to a parson, had seen the Rationalist light in her fifties with such force that not only had she succeeded in liberating herself from the tentacles of the Church but, more important, had persuaded her husband to abandon his calling. No mean achievement and a victory for women's lib. But Jo was more than her match! She loved his gentle bullying and provided us with the wherewithal to pay his rent and more besides, as well as contributing to Freedom Press funds.

Jo could well have seen the war through in his hideout but for a blunder which not even an amateur revolutionary would be expected to make. He had been offered a big office typewriter which he needed in connection with his propaganda to the armed forces. In order to save a taxi fare he hired a handcart and collected the machine and trundled it across London. . . . in the middle of a war! Needless to say, he was stopped and asked for his papers. The police were less concerned that he might be a deserter than that he had stolen the typewriter. They took him into custody, checked on his Identity Card and found that it belonged to someone in Southend who had reported its loss! So began weeks of drama with Jo refusing to reveal his identity either to the police or at his appearances in Court. For us to make any moves on his behalf would have only provided clues as to his real identity and it was obviously his wish not to say who he was (though it was of no real assistance to him since it meant that he was duly remanded in custody after each appearance in Court). However we did try to cover up his traces so far as War Commentary (which the Freedom Press group was publishing every fortnight) was concerned, assuming that our readers included the Special Branch. This meant continuing written features by Olday such as From the Ranks and a regular strip cartoon depicting a trio of Schweik-like soldiers and their apparently 'irresponsible' pranks in case the diligent Special Branch sleuths might link their absence with the man without an identity in Brixton. It was a good comrade from the West Country, Ron A, who produced the fake strips which were so good that not even Sherlock Holmes, let alone our Whiteheads and Joneses of the SB, would have had his suspicions aroused!

Jo's undoing was a chance encounter in Brixton Prison with a Special Branch officer who remembered having interviewed him when he came to this country in 1939. Once his identity had been established the spiteful magistrate made him pay for all the 'trouble' he had caused and sentenced Jo, in January 1945, to one year's imprisonment for 'stealing by finding' an Identity Card, a 'crime' which was normally awarded a month's imprisonment.

On his release from Brixton after serving eight months of his sentence the Military Police, needless to say, were waiting for him outside the gates and whisked him off to the Prestatyn Depot of the Pioneer Corps where, after being held for several weeks under arrest, Jo was charged as a deserter and brought before a Court Martial. In spite of his anti-Nazi record in Germany, and the time spent in prison in connection with the Identity Card charge, he was given a two years Detention Sentence.

Fortunately the Freedom Press Defence Committee which had been set up following the arrest of four members of the Freedom Press early in 1945 was not wound up after the Old Bailey trial in April of that year but was enlarged in scope and renamed the Freedom Defence Committee, publishing its first Bulletin in July. Herbert Read and George Orwell were chairman and vice-chairman respectively, George Woodcock secretary and Tony Gibson its treasurer. I say fortunately because at that time the only other organisation allegedly concerned with civil liberties was the NCCL (National Council for Civil Liberties), then, unlike now, a Stalinist-dominated set-up which had, among other things, refused to defend the four anarchists on trial because by 1945 our Stalinists were more pro-war than the military and for them all those who opposed it were 'fascists'.

cont. p.14.

Selections from

the march to death

by
John Halday

8. THE PROCESSION OF THE VICTIMS

"More people are dying in Europe and there is a sharp increase in infant mortality, according to the statistical year-book of the League of Nations. The death-rate figures do not include the war dead.

Examples of the increase in infant mortality in 1940 are Belgium 73 per 1,000 to 89, France 63 per 1,000 to 91, Italy 96 per 1,000 to 104. The general death rate in Germany per 1,000 of population increased from 11.6 in 1938 to 12.7 in 1940."

"Manchester Guardian", 9th March, 1942.



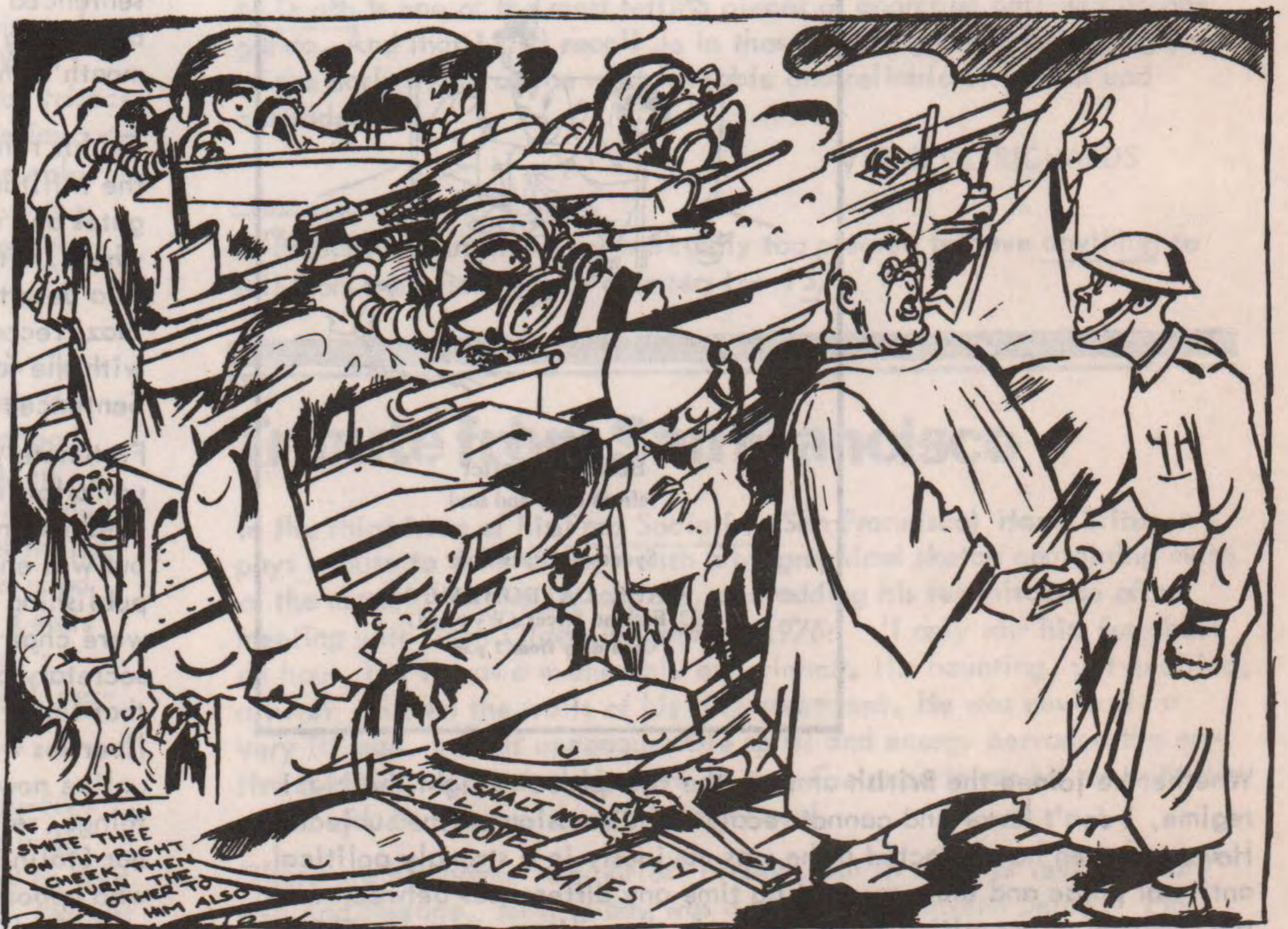
"In history the name of God is the terrible club with which all divinely inspired men, the great 'virtuous geniuses', have beaten down liberty, dignity, reason, and prosperity of man."
Michael Bakunin.

"May God help us in the great ordeal which now awaits us."
Archbishop of Canterbury and other dignitaries of the Church.

"When you come to think of it, it is a great honour to be chosen by God to be his ally in so great a contest."
Canon C. Morgan Smith.

"We thank God that He gave us a speedy victory to our arms . . . We thank him that injustice, centuries old, has been broken down through His grace . . ."
The German Evangelical 'Opposition' in the Spiritual Councils Proclamation on the capture of Poland.

"If there be a God, then what He would like me to do is to paint as much of the map of Africa British-red as possible. The government of the world by its finest race is the aim I have in view."
Cecil Rhodes' last will and testament.



GOD IS ON OUR SIDE



THE WORKERS' PARADISE

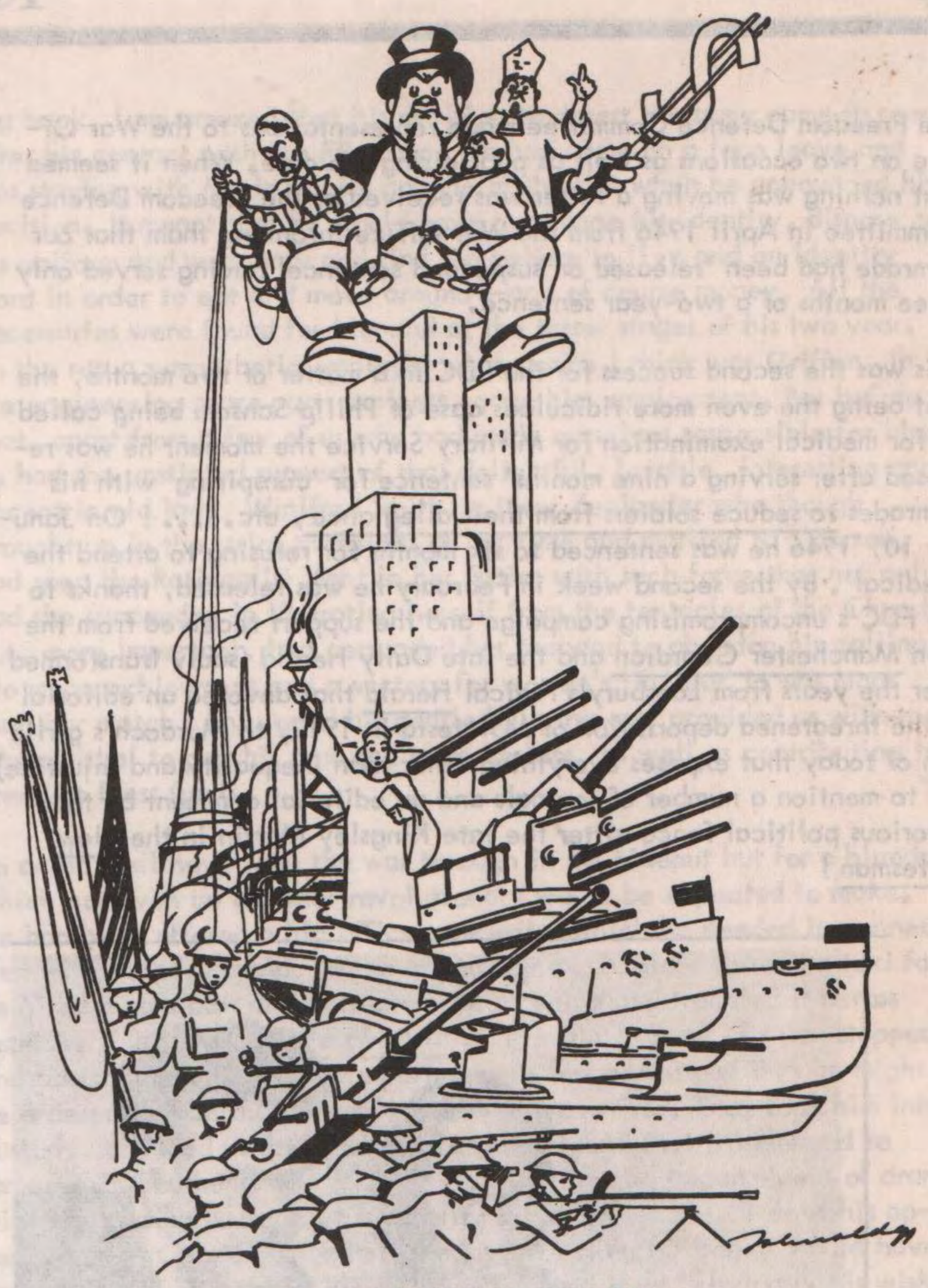
"There are at the head of the party three or four thousand leaders; they are our superior officers. Then come from thirty to forty thousand members occupying medium posts: this is the body of our subaltern officers. At last, from a hundred to a hundred and fifty thousand form the body of our sub-officers."

Stalin in a speech at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in March 1937.

"Admittedly there is in the U.S.S.R. of to-day no sign of the coming of identical, or even of substantially equal incomes for all workers by hand or by brain. On the contrary, the utmost use continues to be made of such forms of remuneration as piecework rates and payment according to social value (i.e., scarcity) or technical skill, not to mention also such devices for intensification of effort as socialist competition and Stakhanovite rationalism of industrial technique—all candidly justified by their demonstrated results in increasing production.

... The effect of those devices is to make the maximum divergence of individual incomes in the U.S.S.R., taking the extreme instances, probably as great as the corresponding divergence in income paid for actual participation in work, in Great Britain if not in the United States."

Sidney and Beatrice Webb, "Soviet Communism".



DOLLAR DEMOCRACY

2. THE SYSTEMS

"New York Stock Exchange had a boom yesterday following Von Ribbentrop's speech at Danzig. Wall Street interprets the speech as meaning a long war. Stocks rose almost to the highest levels of the year."

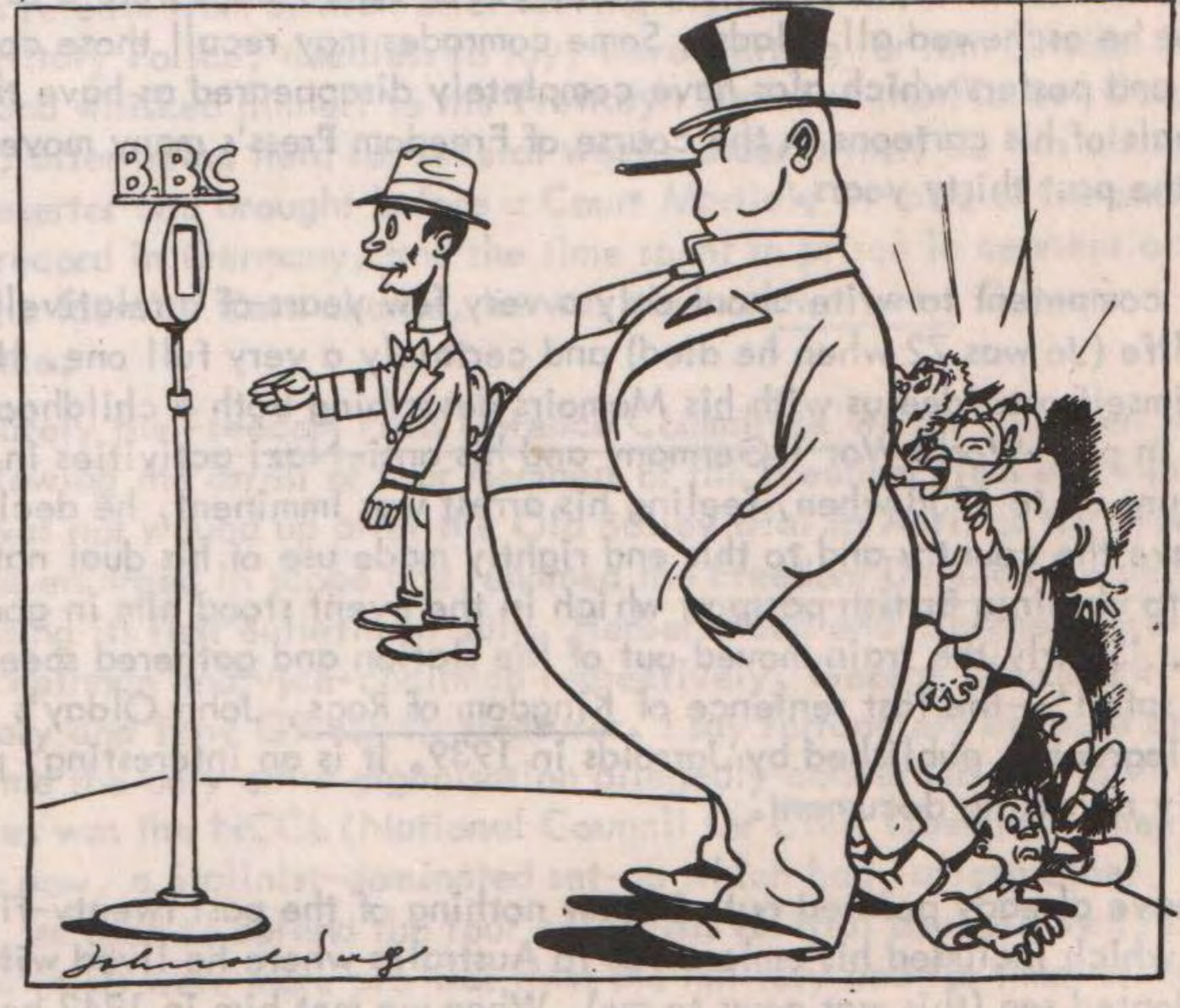
"Daily Sketch", 26th Oct., 1939.

"The arms manufacturers over the world are the cause of most of this trouble in Europe."

"The Nye investigations in Washington revealed the futility of League armament discussions, while British, American and French armament manufacturers were selling enormous supplies of arms to all the world and were maintaining secret agents at Geneva to defeat the very purpose of the Disarmament Conference."

"Nor have the English been better. They have themselves violated the Versailles Treaty in selling aircraft and other war materials to Germany."

Ambassador Dodds' Diary, 1933-1938.



THE VOICE OF FREE DEMOCRACY

The Freedom Defence Committee made representations to the War Office on two occasions as well as publicising the case. When it seemed that nothing was moving a letter was received at the Freedom Defence Committee in April 1946 from the War Office informing them that our comrade had been 'released on suspended sentence' having served only three months of a two-year sentence.

This was the second success for the FDC in a matter of two months, the first being the even more ridiculous case of Philip Sansom being called up for medical examination for Military Service the moment he was released after serving a nine months' sentence for 'conspiring' with his comrades to seduce soldiers from their allegiance, etc. ...! On January 10, 1946 he was sentenced to six months for refusing to attend the 'medical'. By the second week in February he was released, thanks to the FDC's uncompromising campaign and the support received from the then Manchester Guardian and the late Daily Herald (sadly transformed over the years from Lansbury's radical Herald that devoted an editorial to the threatened deportation of Malatesta in 1912, to Murdoch's girlie Sun of today that exposes everything other than inequality and injustice), not to mention a number of journals and an editorial comment by that notorious political fence-sitter the late Kingsley Martin in the New Statesman!



An informal picture of John Olday (left) and Philip Sansom taken at a Social held in their honour after their release.

And when they were both released we had a memorable welcome-back party in Tom and Elizabeth Earley's flat in Bloomsbury which for me, a reluctant party-man, will rank with Lilian Wolfe's ninetieth birthday celebration at Tom and Joan Currie's home, Tony Gibson's fiftieth birthday party, the first Anarchist Ball in Fulham Town Hall and, much earlier, the social at Conway Hall in the 'forties when we hired the large and small halls (as well as the kitchen) and packed the building in a Friends of Freedom Press Campaign to raise funds for War Commentary and our publications.

For that Social the walls of the Hall were lined with drawings and collages by Jo illustrating Freedom Press's publications and activities over a period of sixty years. They represented weeks of patient, dedicated cutting and pasting and arranging. Most of it was done at Jo's West London hideout, on the floor, the artist in his socks, sustained by tobacco, alcohol and simple food (uncooked bacon sandwiches were a favourite but he eschewed all salads). Some comrades may recall those collages and posters which alas have completely disappeared as have the originals of his cartoons in the course of Freedom Press's many moves over the past thirty years.

I feel competent to write about only a very few years of a relatively long life (Jo was 72 when he died) and certainly a very full one. He has himself provided us with his Memoirs describing both a childhood spent in post-World War 1 Germany and his anti-Nazi activities in Hamburg up to 1938 when, feeling his arrest was imminent, he decided to leave the country and to this end rightly made use of his dual nationality to obtain a British passport which in the event stood him in good stead. 'Slowly the train moved out of the station and gathered speed. I was safe!'—the last sentence of Kingdom of Rags, John Olday's autobiography, published by Jarrolds in 1939. It is an interesting, personally revealing document.

As I have already pointed out, I know nothing of the past twenty-five years which included his emigration to Australia where he lived with his adopted son (this was news to me). When we met him in 1942 he told us that he had married Hilde Monte, a typical hard line German Marxist intellectual, in order to provide her with British citizenship, but in the

years of our association with Jo she was just one of a group publishing a very serious Marxist magazine, the title of which I cannot recall though I am almost certain that it was published from an address in Soho Square, London.

Olday's first contribution in the February 1942 issue of War Commentary was a typical horrific, macabre, drawing, the figures were not real, they were ballet dancers, just as was the skeleton soldier in the March 1942 issue. It is really only in 1943, after he had deserted the army, that one has an awareness of the political cartoonist. I think I am right in suggesting that the inspiration, the ideas, for the outstanding cartoons and drawings in War Commentary and The March to Death from 1943 onwards came from Marie Louise Berneri. Many of his drawings illustrated editorials written by her and which she had discussed with him. She also edited a feature Through the Press and from the accumulated material came the plan for the production of John Olday's outstanding collection of drawings, The March to Death.

Published in May 1943 by Freedom Press in the middle of a fratricidal war, it exposed the hypocrisy of the whole enterprise by quoting from the most respectable sources (on the left hand page) and illustrating them on the facing page with John Olday's telling cartoons. The first edition of 5,000 copies printed on our old machine in the building facing our present premises in Whitechapel was soon sold out and another 5,000 copies run off and disposed of by the end of the war. Thinking of the difficulties we have experienced since the end of World War II to persuade booksellers to stock FP literature, I am still amazed by the sales through booksellers made by our two ace 'salesmen', Laurie Hislam (tragically killed in a motor accident less than ten years ago) and Philip Sansom. At that time there were no Alternative booksellers. We sold to W H Smith and Boots and other wholesale and retail booksellers. I suspect that among bookshop managers at the time there was a high proportion of pacifists.* After the war he reverted once more to the macabre. His collection of lithographs The Life We Live the Death We Die was not our cup of tea but we published it to please him as we felt such a gesture to him was called for, especially in view of the great success of The March to Death. But it was the end of his collaboration with Freedom Press and the beginning of a new phase in Jo's tormented life.

He secured a basement flat in the Westbourne Park area in London where in due course he held an exhibition of his work which did not however include his political cartoons. At the time he became very friendly with Charles Duff (author of the Handbook on Hanging) and his wife Peg. They did a lot for him with introductions to Charles' innumerable friends and acquaintances and by their warm hospitality, and encouragement in his artistic endeavours.

Jo was much too complex a personality ever to be a happy man. I am not even sure that he was specially concerned with being 'happy'. But I am sure that his attitude to life affected his potentialities as an anarchist propagandist. But then I am not sure that he ever saw himself as such! Having expressed my doubts may I add that I still think that The March to Death is one of the most telling pieces of anarchist anti-war propaganda. And that I still recall Jo in those exciting and challenging years of the early 1940s as the most loveable and reliable of friends and comrades.

VERNON RICHARDS

*/Probably—but also they were only too pleased to have anything to sell from their half-empty counters! —PS/

Tribute from San Francisco

In the third issue of his Free Socialist (San Francisco) Harry Siitonen pays tribute to John Olday, with a biographical sketch containing much of the material in the IW article, and adding his reminiscence of his meeting with John Olday in summer, 1976: 'I only saw him for about an hour, but it was a memorable experience. His haunting, yet exciting, artwork covered the walls of his tiny apartment. He was obviously a very ill man, but his unconquerable spirit and energy pervaded the entire quarters, and left their mark on me. The experience hit me with the power of a B. Traven revolutionary novel.

'There are big name "luminaries" around, but in terms of revolutionary soul and courage, John Olday was a truly heroic human being. I'm glad I met him.'

Printing sedition

LIKE Vernon Richards, my working association with John Olday was exclusively during the latter end of the war. In 1944 I was living in a ramshackle studio in Camden Town, situated in a quiet enclave behind a church and reached by a short leafy lane. The other studios were occupied by middle-aged artists who quietly got on with their work, minding their own business, while the war thundered on around them.

It was an ideal place to have a clandestine press, and soon after I was invited to join the Anarchist Federation I was asked if a certain comrade could come and live with me. I sometimes think that it was my tenancy of the studio that led to my invitation to join the closed membership of the AF in the first place!

The certain comrade was John Olday, then a deserter from the Pioneer Corps, whose marvellous cartoons had inspired my own poor efforts, but whose identity had until then been a complete mystery to me.

The articles and cartoons that John was at that time contributing to *War Commentary* were the public tip of the iceberg of work he was doing, for he it was who was building up the network of contacts that we had with soldiers, sailors and airmen in barracks, army camps and airfields around the country.

Every serving member of the forces who wrote in for literature received, in due course, a copy of John's Forces Newsletter which spelt out in greater depth and detail the subversive anarchist anti-war message.

These newsletters were produced on the kitchen table in the studio. Drawings were reproduced on a small, neat lithograph stone which John brought out from under the bed once a month, and collated together with duplicated sheets. None of the casual visitors who came to the studio from time to time had any idea of the seditious material that flowed out from there to about 200 members of His Majesty's forces, for the work was produced as quickly as possible and all traces cleared away immediately it was finished.

This was why, in fact, very little of it could be used by the Special Branch when they attacked Freedom Press in the Autumn of 1944. I had left London at the beginning of October on the book-selling tour mentioned by VR which took me all over the country. When I returned in the middle of November, the balloon had gone up in all directions. The threatened split in the movement had exploded in bitterness and violence; John Olday was in custody—but still not identified—and Freedom Press offices and the homes of several comrades had been raided. Including my studio in Camden Town where, thanks to John's meticulous destruction of all the traces, no evidence of the Forces Newsletter were found. Indeed, the clever Special Branch seem not to have associated him with that address at all—or surely I would have been charged, when they finally caught me, with harbouring a deserter?

However, as VR explains, the connection with Freedom Press was finally established, and it was John's wish at that time to be called as a defence witness at the Freedom Press trial.

In his own words, his intention was 'to use the court as a platform of aggression, profess responsibility for the seditious propaganda and, so to speak, openly declare war on war'.

But we all thought otherwise. None of us ever thought of ourselves as martyr material and held that all of us were more use to the anarchist movement out of jail. In a document I have in which John Olday speaks of himself in the third person, he writes: 'The accused comrades kept him deliberately out of the trial, to spare him harsh and long sentences. They themselves got nine months each. J. never forgave them for having missed the opportunity to defy and denounce the Government in the spirit of traditional anarchist anti-militarism.'

As it was John got 12 months in another court for 'stealing by finding' an identity card—to be followed by another two years' sentence in detention barracks (the notorious Stake Hill) on his being handed back to the army.

He did not serve much of this second sentence, but before his release he made many contacts among German prisoners of war on which he was to build the network which became the Anarcho-Spartakusbund, Gruppe Bakunin, in East Germany. He claimed a network of 60 groups, which eventually felt strong enough to emerge in the Communist East German state (against his advice)—and were promptly liquidated.

His later criticism of the Freedom Press tactics at the trial seems not to have taken account of the fact that if we had allowed him to play the self-sacrificial role he wanted, he would certainly have gone to a civilian prison for a very long time and his future work among German POWs would have been impossible, while much of his later work in Germany would have been much more difficult, too.



John Olday was always very much a 'loner'. In the strict tradition of the conspiratorial underground anarchist—a role, after all, imposed upon him by his years in the anti-Nazi underground—his attitude even to his closest comrades was always the very sound one of 'what you don't need to know you don't need to know!'

He was absolutely dedicated to his work, and especially to the work which he saw as something that only he could do. As in others we know in and around the anarchist movement, this can make for intolerance and certain difficulties in common work! But John could maintain friendship and indeed, as his Australian years showed, could express his many talents in writing, drawing and painting in channels unconnected with ideological revolutionary activity. I write 'ideological' as I am convinced that the cabaret and theatre work which John carried on in Sydney was subversive in its own way—after all he had learned that art in the cabarets of Hamburg in the twenties and thirties!

Around such characters, myths are bound to accumulate, and I am not putting him down when I say that John Olday himself was not entirely guiltless of allowing his own view of events to colour his recounting of them. How could it be otherwise, when so much of his kind of work had to be unrecorded and underground? But for John the function of the myth was for inspiration, not glorification—to inspire others, not to build up his own cult of the personality. And for an artist—and artists are notoriously egotistical!—this was the measure and the strength of his anarchism.

After the turbulent events of our wartime collaboration and separation, I saw little of John before he went to Australia, and indeed very little until two months before he died. I paid one visit to his cabaret when the Centro Iberico was in Haverstock Hill and found it rather sad. One does not have to think in terms only of what is 'fashionable', but at least any form of self-expression must relate to styles and attitudes of its time to strike home. Sadly, he hadn't forgotten the cabarets of Hamburg either!

One day last February, Ted Cavanagh, who had been working with John on *Mit Teilung* phoned me to say he was very ill. Having fallen out with all the other anarchists he had worked with here in London he was very much on his own. Gary Jewell had been staying with him from Toronto, but was having to go back. Could I do anything to help?

I went round to his flat in the seedy area off the Harrow Road that he had always liked—and was shocked to see the frail white-haired invalid who opened the door. He could hardly walk and had difficulty even in talking but he was still writing—feverishly, as if he knew he hadn't much time. He said he was glad to see me and said he was sorry about a rather frosty meeting we had had two years before. I don't think he knew it, but he was in the terminal stage of cancer and all he could eat, he said, was smoked salmon. Stylish to the end! I obliged by getting him some, and fortunately a young Japanese comrade, Kori Yoro, turned up who was a great source of comfort and help to him. But all he wanted to talk about was his work. He was producing page after page of minute writing—an autobiography in detail going right back to his earliest revolutionary days in the Spartacist uprising in Germany. But other work as well—a dissertation on Oriental and Occidental Objections to Anarchism and the work which Gary Jewell mentions on the 1918-23 revolts in Germany: Spartacus and Insurgent Anarchism, defending a revolutionary tradition in Germany.

I have received from Gary the first draft of the first part of this last work. The last paragraph of the introduction reads: 'I am fully aware of the subjectivity of my recollection. If this book helps to remove misinterpretations and dissolve old animosities, still recurring in the circle of the new generation of revolutionists, I shall consider myself amply rewarded.'

Legendary man

'Armed struggle...'

BY 1974 John Olday was one of the legends of the anarchist movement; and justifiably—for his periods of direct action were during some of the most terrible and excited periods of the century: the Germany of the Spartacists and Noske's Freikorps, the Social Democrats' republic and the period of Hitler's rise to power through the betrayals of the left and the opportunism of international capitalism.

For John the answer was always armed struggle, since the anarchist movement is by definition committed to the revolutionary overthrow of the state. He saw individualism and "anarchist-pacifism" as bourgeois infections of the movement, but was at the same time aware that armed struggle when utterly divorced from a general class struggle could degenerate into mere terrorism.

Apart from a brief, and completely casual meeting in Australia, around 1957, my first real meeting with John was when Albert Meltzer brought him to the basement at Hemmingford Road where I was printing the current issue of *Black Flag*. Few people carry their years so lightly—John was at that time about 68, a slight but wiry figure, polite, at times almost courtly, and as we subsequently discovered possessed of an extraordinary capacity for work. He contributed articles and cartoons to *Black Flag*, the *IWW Defense Bulletin*, and carried on a voluminous correspondence with comrades and groups across the world. Towards the end of 1974 he established the International Archive Team (I.A.T.) with the object of disseminating news and information within the movement. We were mainly concerned with those divisions within the international movement that tended towards legalism and economism and therefore diluted the revolutionary struggle. Personally I believe that he placed an excessive value on armed struggle as a single tactic, although this was preferable to those who elevated their tactical disagreement into a matter of principle.

He did valuable work in establishing contacts with comrades throughout the world and there are many who will remember his quiet astuteness and his powerful compassion. I mentioned before his, in my opinion, over-emphasis on the single tactic of armed struggle; he might well be right, but I am fairly certain that anyone who lived through the destruction of the revolutionary left in Germany without being cowed or participating in the sell-out that the CP dignified by the name of *Realpolitik* might have felt as he did. Those who remember our joint criticism of RAF and 2nd June Movement in Germany will know that his support for armed struggle could be critical. And he was quick to detect and condemn revolutionary elitism and vanguardist gestures.

TED CAVANAGH

'...a most gentle man'

JOHN OLDAY had already entered the world of legend when I met him. One knew the drawings and one knew the books and one assumed that he belonged to that elusive heroic past. It was when I began to receive his unsolicited letters that I was aware that here was a man active, cheerful and witty and I looked forward to the answers to my own letters. We met for the pub crawl and there within his flat was the documented wealth of his amazing life. The drawings, the cartoons, the books and the gramophone records all marked with his brilliant talent.

He spoke of pre-nazi Germany, of the world of the political cabaret, of the poet beaten and broken in the first of the Nazi concentration camps shuffling back into the defensive world of the German militant left that sought a refuge in John's cabaret. And of that dying tortured world John recorded in firm swift brutal lines the agony of those hours. And we went for our pub crawl from one side of London yea even to Earls Court and John Olday tall and slim, with his white hair streaked with grey, clad in his tight fitting blue jeans loped along beside me with the grace of a young lightweight boxer and always he talked and I listened to poli-

tical history made manifest to the artist who had had to practise his art one step ahead of the political police in country after country.

The artist is beholden to no man for in those few square inches he stamps his credo and his conscience for all men to bear witness and no-one, be they editor or subscriber can tarnish the visual image. He can only be rejected and in that act of rejection lesser men become that much less and what they offered in exchange is the forgettable dross of history.

Turn the pages comrades and it is only the work of the artist that lives in those grey columns be it a week or a century ago. John gave much to us and the tragedy, for us, is that the brilliance of his pen was allowed to lie idle on the unmarked paper. Time will judge John Olday's work and judge it well and history will ask who broke the pen and why. Of my life I shall remember him with pleasure, a most gentle man, witty and soft spoken, kind in his dealings with me and always blue jeaned, grey haired loping along London's nighttime pavements.

ARTHUR MOYSE

BOOKS

FREEDOM PRESS

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

THE BOOKSHOP IS OPEN:

Tues. - Fri. 2 - 6 p.m.
(Thursdays until 8 p.m.)
Saturdays 10 am - 4 pm.

(Aldgate East underground station, Whitechapel Art Gallery exit and turn right—Angel Alley is next to Wimpy Bar. On Saturdays take Toynbee Hall exit, turn left and walk down block.)

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When ordering books by mail please add postage as in brackets. Any book not in stock but in print can be supplied.

- *Murray Bookchin: *The Spanish Anarchists: the heroic years* £ 7.50 (86p)
- *Mikhail Bakunin: *The Confessions of Mikhail Bakunin* transl. by Robert C. Hawes. *Intro & Notes* by Lawrence D. Orton £ 9.50 (54p)
- James Hinton: *The First Shop Stewards Movement* £ 3.50 (54p)
- William Morris: *Selected Writings & Designs*, ed. Asa Briggs £ 1.10 (22p)
- Walter Crane: *Cartoons for the Cause* (large format, illus.) £ 3.75 (36p)
- Centre Internationale de Recherches sur l'anarchisme
Bulletin No. 33/44 £ 0.30 (10p)
- Index on Censorship Vol. 6 No. 4: Latin America: Polish Writers*
- Defy the Censor: 'A cup of coffee with my interrogator'* £ 1.25 (15p)
(Subscription to 4 issues—anywhere £ 5.50)
- *Manas (anthol.) *The Manas Reader* £ 2.95 (66p)
- Colin Ward: *Utopia* £ 0.75 (22p)
- G.P. Maximoff (ed.): *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin* £ 2.75 (54p)
- Jeffrey Meyers: *A Reader's Guide to George Orwell* £ 1.95 (29p)
- Bertrand Russell: *Roads to Freedom* £ 1.50 (15p)
- Mole Express: *The County Warbook* £ 0.15 (7p)
- *Augustin Hamon: *The Psychology of the Anarchist* £ 0.15 (7p)
- Whisper & Shout: *Family, Community & Education: aspects of Liberations towards a free society* £ 0.10 (7p)

Items marked * are published in the USA.

SOME FREEDOM PRESS TITLES

- ABC OF ANARCHISM, Alexander Berkman £ 0.50 (13p)
- ABOUT ANARCHISM, Nicolas Walter £ 0.25 (10p)
- ANARCHY, Errico Malatesta (newly back in print) £ 0.35 (10p)
- THE STATE, Its Historic Role, Peter Kropotkin £ 0.20 (10p)
- HOUSING, an anarchist approach, Colin Ward £ 1.25 (22p)
- MAX STIRNER'S EGOISM, John P. Clark £ 1.50 (20p)
- LESSONS OF THE SPANISH REVOLUTION, Vernon Richards cloth £ 1.50 (20p)
- COLLECTIVES IN THE SPANISH REVOLUTION, Gaston Leval cloth £ 4.00 (66p)
- paper £ 2.00 (66p)
- MARIE LOUISE BERNERI, A Tribute (with photographs) £ 0.30 (15p)

Still having problems with the paper... plus all the tourists on Victoria Station making it difficult to take the Red Star package of finished Freedom's to the Red Star office which has meant delays of up to 4 hours before Freedom can collect their copies (well that's British Rail's excuse!) so I'm still with the Review section - in case this has confused anyone, let me explain. Freedom is prepared and printed in 2 sections - the News section and the Review section. The News section is done one week and the Review section has to be at the Freedom office by 4pm on a Thursday to give the volunteers time to fold, collate and post it off to you. If delivery is late on this Thursday then a lot of volunteers get very pissed off. So as long as I am "unreliable" I print the Review section which is not quite so urgent as the News section... and now back in time... "When the Cape was discovered by the Portuguese, the Hottentots were numerous, and rich in cattle; and it was observed of them, that they kept the law of nations better than most civilized people". The Dutch formed their first settlement in 1652, and their governor, Van Riebeck, in his journal, shows pretty clearly the true buccaneering spirit. He speaks of the thousands of fine cattle belonging to the Hottentots; the ease with which the Dutch might have taken ten thousand head from them; adding that it could be done at any time, "and even more conveniently, because they will have greater confidence in us: with 150 men, ten thousand head of black cattle might be obtained without danger of losing one man; and many savages might be taken without resistance, in order to be sent as slaves to India, as they still always come to us unarmed." Under these ominous circumstances did the intercourse between the Europeans and South Africans commence. The wealth of the latter was their only crime; the confidence they reposed in the former offered the means of oppressing them. (p. 96 H.O.C. Report 1836) "we hope we will receive a favourable reply - otherwise the business will be unpleasant and full of trouble for you" (Abdulla of Mecca to Awwal bin Omar Kaitee in Arabia? See next Review for more details.) Oh dear, run out of space again and I did want to mention a special issue of AMPPO - Free Trade Zones & Industrialization of Asia; just published, 216 pages, \$9, PO Box 6250 Tokyo International, Japan. Essential reading.