

Sample Page JACK SARGEANT/CREATION BOOK By Chris Barber [11970 words ex-bib/foots]

LOOK BACK IN ANGER by Chris Barber
THE ANGRY BRIGADE, UK, 1968-1972...and After?
 (plus **The First of May Group**)

BLOW IT UP, BURN IT DOWN, KICK IT 'TILL IT BREAKS

The Angry Brigade is mainland Britain's only officially recognised urban guerrilla group, terrorist insurrection or underground resistance movement. In three years they claimed responsibility for over thirty bomb attacks, including London's Post Office Tower, the **Miss World Beauty Contest**, and two Government Ministers' homes. Yet in meticulously calibrated attacks on fat-cat and political-state property - no one was killed or kidnapped. **AB** evolved like a subterranean designer logo representing a diffuse movement of social rebels and outcasts, '*a many headed hydra...*' sporadically situated in England's urban wastelands. They allied to a clandestine, pan-European terror network, via the First of May Group, orchestrating simultaneous bombings across the continent. Despite leaving a trail of destruction, and letters threatening the lives of rich businessmen and powerful politicians, the top cops assigned to catch them hadn't a clue what they were up against, causing a major police shake-up. The eventual trial at the Old Bailey is the longest in British legal history. But the police and the media conspired in a web of secrecy, leaving compelling questions unanswered to this day. Did the Government conspire with the police and press in a grand state cover-up? Were all the real terrorists captured or were some framed by cops while others escaped the Law? Why is so little known about the Angry Brigade, now?

SITUATIONS VACANT

In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into representation.

THE SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE by Guy Debord [SS:1]

Core initiators of the Angry Brigade campaign were inspired by The Situationist International, a tiny pan-European group of *avant-garde* artists and radical intellectuals, who advocated a heady brew of Anarchist orientated Agit-Prop (agitation/propaganda) and revolutionary *praxis* – putting (political) ideas into action. The Situationists formed in 1957, notably attracting disgruntled Surrealists, determined that radical art potentiated social transformation.

Guy Debord was the seminal Situationist and writer of their manifesto **THE SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE**. In this eclectic, philosophical and polemical work, Debord argues that life in modern, developed societies has lost all semblance of authenticity. In both Western “democracies” and Soviet republics, centralised power wrests with privileged elites, coercing the majority of citizens, through inaccessible bureaucracy, media propaganda, and (when required) outright state terror. Maintaining this *status quo* depends on propagating the work ethic, which alienates people through boring and repetitive labour, leaving people too tired to think about their misery or express their actual desires. This is perpetuated by offering you the illusion of quick and easy escape from the “poverty” of existence, and active participation in social consensus, through financial ability to consume luxurious, life-enhancing products for your toil.

Essentially this highly plausible model of society is derived from Karl Marx's early theory of reification or alienation (**PARIS MANUSCRIPTS OF 1848**) and revived by the Hegelian-Marxist critical theorist Georg Lukacs (**HISTORY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS**). Chuck-in Wilhelm Reich's post-Freudian, libido psychoanalysis, add a sprinkling of Karl Korsch' and the lessons of Dutch Council Communism, and you up stakes to the Frankfurt School. Weimar Germany hosted the likes of Herbert Marcuse, Walter Benjamin, and Theodore Adorno, whose notion of “negative-totality” explains how modern capitalism develops subtle and sophisticated methods of control, by directing each citizen's desires towards short-lived escapism – from flashy cars to Hollywood movies. Socio-Psychologically internalised into mass-consciousness, as the only available alternative to the drudgery of daily life, social conditioning becomes absolute in a One-Dimensional, technocratic society. The Frankfurt-ers recognised a potential escape route from this dystopia, via selective *avant-garde* and utopian art movements"; such expressions were considered as partially autonomous from the dominant system

Debord and the Situationists digested this, peppered with political ingredients from Trotskyism and Anarcho-Syndicalism, and spiced-up with arty morsels of Dada, Cobra and Lettrism This cooked-up into a tasty Molotov cocktail to calibrate against the system, and Situationists got their underground presses churning-out subversive pamphlets like **ON THE POVERTY OF STUDENT LIFE** and Raoul Vaneigem's **THE REVOLUTION OF EVERYDAY LIFE**. They coherently argue you can escape social conditioning and illusory freedom, upheld by authoritarian society, by releasing your radical subjective desires...