

anarchist fortnightly

# Freedom

Vol. 53 No. 2

25 JANUARY 1992

FIFTY PENCE

16222

"What is called the rule of the majority in a bourgeois democracy is in reality the rule of those who control the methods of manufacturing opinion, especially in the schools and the press"  
Bertrand Russell (1924)

## When will the Government STOP PLAYING AT TRAINS?

We've all at some time in our early years enjoyed playing with train sets. Some of us played at being 'postmen', others were bus conductors or firemen. All good fun while it lasted. Most of us have, however, realised that the real thing is much more complex both in scale and the problems that public services present to those who are involved in operating them. Unfortunately, the present Government apart from being completely dominated by the *idée fixe* that private enterprise is *invariably* more efficient than public enterprise, has produced a whole number of Transport Ministers who, without exception, have remained at the train-playing stage. They have all promised White Papers on their privatisation brainstorms and we are still waiting. It is all very well for the Prime Minister to explain away the non-appearance of the latest White Paper on the grounds that such major decisions must be thrashed out by the Cabinet; compromises all round in order to arrive at the best solution. One is asked to forget that this Government has been in office for thirteen long years and they haven't arrived at a 'solution' yet for the railways. Who do they expect to fall for that one?

For all these years the Government has been in the hands of the road lobby. Thatcher had no hesitation in saying that she never travelled by train. The latest of the train-playing Transport Ministers, Malcolm Rifkind, declares himself to be a train-lover and makes sure that the press shows him getting on and off trains. This new-found love for trains

has obviously been imposed on the Government partly by the implications of a Channel Rail Tunnel, but also principally by the danger that road transport is virtually coming to a standstill in every town and city centre. The construction of more motorways which the road lobby is advocating (for instance, there is a proposal to widen the M1) will simply mean that more vehicles will attempt to get into the towns and cities. Since Government and Opposition Parties are now all dedicated environmentalists (to win your votes) one would like to think the Government's 'New Look' so far as the railways are concerned has also this in mind - though we doubt it.

According to the informed commentators, the delay in producing a White Paper has nothing to do with second thoughts about

privatisation. These people are worse than the Muslim fundamentalists who assure us that they are in direct communication with God. Their God is Mammon. Anything that makes money is good. You can't make money running a public service which aims at providing for everybody's needs.

Long before nationalisation the 'big four' railways (which the Prime Minister is apparently all in favour of re-establishing - that's train-playing nostalgia with a vengeance) closed down branch lines which still didn't prevent them from being bankrupt and most grateful when the Labour Government of 1945-50 nationalised and handsomely compensated the shareholders - indeed British Rail is still saddled with the interest on that hand-out. Under the Tories in the 1950s we had the Beeching Cuts -

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## STRIP THE OPINION POLLS!

Opinion polls could be very interesting and woeful in a real democracy. Even an anarchist society would need to consult constantly local, regional, national and international opinion on vital issues *in the interest of everybody*. But the difference between an anarchist society and the existing so-called democracies\* is that an anarchist society can only be one of equals. Existing 'democracies' are societies where privilege is entrenched and the whole permanent machinery of Government (quite apart from the parliamentary actors 'now potential television stars' who come and go) will never be changed via the ballot box. Surely we have experienced Government long enough to know that this is a fact.

Opinion polls as conducted on behalf of newspapers and BBC

Newsnight are meaningless for a number of reasons. If they are intended to indicate how public opinion reacts to the day-to-day pathetic skirmishes between the three political party leaders in and out of the House of Commons, then for such a sample (never more than 2,000 respondents) it could only remotely indicate how opinion fluctuates from day to day depending on what the Prime Minister says about the economy, or what the shadow Prime Minister says about the health service *if the sample were always of the same people*. In *Freedom* we go on pointing this out. And confirmation of our contempt for opinion polls is provided, as we go to press, with the publication of two opinion polls on the same day, one

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# STOP PLAYING AT TRAINS

(continued from page 1)

more lines made redundant without privatisation! Imagine what will happen if private enterprise is let loose on the existing railway network!

If one excludes the obvious train-playing options one is left with that of selling off the profitable operations such as freight and Inter City (which in fact are not so profitable) and left with the passenger services – the commuter lines – which carry by far the largest number of passengers daily and which also invariably invite all the criticism and jokes about our railways. And in our opinion there is no solution that money can buy for this problem which dominates the whole capitalist world.

What British Rail is expected to do is to convey to their London termini every weekday in the space of, at most, three hours, one million (two million?) passengers and to return the same number to their suburban and county homes. Little wonder that a signal or points failure at some junction, or an engine failure, or a line-side fire, or a tree on the line, are not minor incidents when so many trains are moving through a particular section. This is put down to railway inefficiency when it happens. Yet every day on the morning radio programmes one hears that on such and such a vital road a lorry discharged its load and as a result there is a two-mile queue of cars heading for London, that on another lunatic drivers created a pile-up of twenty cars in the fog with a few killed and, most important of all, the road is blocked with a four-mile tail-back of eager commuters who wouldn't dream of using the inefficient trains. Yet this daily chaos on the roads is never reported in the national press. Presumably the road lobby PRs see to that, with the co-operation of our media hacks.

Whatever future is planned (?) for the railways, there can be no satisfactory solution by privatising the network – by which we mean organising the network as a financially profitable enterprise. We also think that so long as we have monster cities dominated by offices employing millions who live in dormitory towns miles away, and most of whom are expected to clock on at 9am (cleaners at 8am, bosses at 10am) short

of doubling the commuter lines, a comfortable service is out of the question.

So the first anarchist 'solution' is that, far from building more offices (which surely the last straw was the Liverpool Street Station billion pound development – blessed by the Queen! – which has added more hundreds of offices which

## TRUST THE COMPUTERS?

The East Anglian Daily Times recently reported that an Ipswich train from Liverpool Street "suddenly began to head for Southend ... when points were mistakenly set at Shenfield", said an Inter City spokeswoman. She added that "it was identified incorrectly as a Southend train by our control, which sets signals along the route".

Fortunately the train driver, having a reliable 'computer' in his head, and his eyes and experience, immediately realised the mistake. He stopped, reversed and got to Ipswich with only ten minutes delay.

Who shall run the railways? The computers or the railwaymen?

now have to be filled with more paper-producing typists), we should be converting offices into pleasant flats for renting at reasonable prices available to non-yuppies, and moving more offices (assuming we need them) to where people live. In other words, make the jobs come to the people and not vice versa.

The second anarchist 'solution' is much more important. You will have noticed that in this media attention to the Government's plans for the railways, all kinds of experts in the academic world and political world (for example, the notorious Adam Smith Institute hotheads who have a considerable influence on the Government) are quoted, but not one representative of the railway workers – NUR and ASLEF – has been consulted or interviewed! These are the people who in fact run the railways yet have no say as to how they can best be operated both for the public and for the staff.

All the Government's options for privatisation are concerned with breaking up what they see as a nationalised monopoly, in spite of the fact that all the privatised public services – British Telecom, electricity, gas, water – are still

monopolies, but private ones ripping off the public in spite of the toothless watchdogs ostensibly looking after our interests. The only way to have 'competition' in these services would be for the whole country to be dug up with miles of trenches to lay a new set of cables, pipes, power stations ... you name it. And in the end? The 'competing' services would either agree on price fixing (without saying so in public) or, if they couldn't, then the big fleas would eat the little fleas. It has always been so in the capitalist world and there is no reason to think that it has changed. Read the financial pages of our 'serious' press. They call them by all kinds of names, but in fact they are take-overs by the strongest who then shed all the unprofitable enterprises, selling off all the profitable bits of land for development and consigning people who have given a lifetime's work to the enterprise onto the scrapheap.

But to return to our second 'solution'. The only pictures of Minister Rifkind we have seen show him entering a First Class carriage or a sleeper. We have never seen him consulting the railwaymen. Anybody who has will know that they know more about the railways than the Ministers (who, after all, come and go – some five in the last thirteen years compared with a working lifetime among railway workers, who more often than not also come from railway working families). Unlike the Minister, they would not have the cheek to suggest that they could run the whole network. What they do know is every detail of their bit of the network.

Even in its present depressed state, the railway network employs 130,000 people. If they were engaged in producing motor cars they could be concentrated in half a dozen massive factories and control would be a relatively simple management problem. And this is what the Government imagines can be applied to

the railways. And this is why we say they are playing at trains. The 130,000 people involved in operating this extraordinary service are employed over some 8,000 miles of track with all kinds of different problems to contend with – and at a local level they know what these problems are and, given the power to deal with them, they will.

But more and more power is being centralised, and computerised, with the result that when something goes wrong along the line which could be solved at a local level, this is forbidden.

A large number of the delays are 'signal or points failures'. In the 'primitive' days of signal boxes this couldn't happen, and we hope the apologists for the computerised railways will not suggest that more trains are being run today than when there were signal boxes at reasonable intervals all connected with each other.

Our third anarchist 'solution' is that the subsidies for the commuter lines should be paid for by the firms operating in the crooked City of London's mile.

John Prescott, the ebullient Labour Shadow Minister of Transport, has just declared that a Labour Government would re-nationalise the railways. We would even, as anarchists (who won't be voting nevertheless), welcome this commitment if this time, unlike 1946, nationalisation of the railways meant providing a good service for all at public expense and recognising that a good public service can only be provided not by the Ministers but by the thousands of workers who have the problems at their fingertips and, given the power, will produce the best solutions for the benefit of everybody.

One final reflection. The Tories believed that privatisation is the answer to all our economic and social problems. Apart from the long list of services already privatised, railways, coal, postal services and prisons are all in the pipeline. Our naive question is: Why have they not suggested privatising Government? We offer no prizes for the best answers!

## Individualist anarchism is class-struggle anarchism

Once heard a drunk on a bus declaiming: "I'm a farkin anarchist; I say farkin bring back farkin conscription and farkin capital farkin punishment, and anyone who disa-farkin-grees, I'm not farkin intristid". He was not unique in equating anarchism with bloody-mindedness. There are also educated authoritarians who say "I'm an anarchist, but ..." and sartorial stylists who paint A-in-a-circle symbols on their leather jackets without having the least interest in anarchism as an idea.

To distinguish themselves from such 'anarchist' poseurs, holders of anarchist opinions often describe themselves as anarchists of a particular kind, such as communist anarchists or socialist anarchists.

Two self-descriptions in fashion today are 'individualist anarchist' and 'class-struggle anarchist'. It is mistakenly supposed by some that these names represent different ends of a spectrum of anarchist beliefs. In fact, the only disagreement is about words. The two groups have the same span of opinions, but find unfortunate associations in each other's choice of name.

Class-struggle anarchists object to the word 'individualist' because it is associated with competitive individualism, the doctrine that the strong should be allowed to enslave, intimidate and rob the weak. Anarchist individualism is wholly opposed to such a doctrine.

Individualist anarchists object to the term 'class-struggle' because it is associated with

the Marxist ideal of a very strong government 'ruling on behalf of the working class'. Class-struggle anarchists are opposed to this idea.

Anarchist opinion is "that liberty without socialism is privilege and injustice, and that socialism without liberty is slavery and brutality".\* All anarchists are individualists, in the sense of believing that all individuals should be autonomous and able to run their own lives free from coercive institutions. All anarchists are for class-struggle, in the sense of believing that members of the poor and oppressed classes should fight against poverty and oppression.

It has been suggested that the choice of name roughly corresponds to the class structure of the anarchist movement. Anarchists born into the blue-collar working class, it is said, tend to prefer the term 'individualist' because they have struggled to be recognised as individuals, while anarchists from the white-collar and trading classes tend to prefer the term 'class-struggle' because they romanticise the working class. Be that as it may (and the only evidence is anecdotal), the important point is that the difference is verbal and not ideological. If we argue about the choice of words, let it be clear that words are all we are arguing about.

Donald Room

\*Michael Bakunin, *Liberty and Society, Federalism and Anti-theoreticalism*, c.1864 (thanks to NW)

## STRIP THE OPINION POLLS!

(continued from page 1)

giving the Tories a 4.5% lead and the other a 3.5% lead to Labour!

The boast of the capitalist 'democracies' is that via the ballot box we can change society. Theoretically this would be true if all vital things to that end were equal in capitalist society. In theory education to the highest levels is available to everybody. But as everybody knows, for all kinds of reasons this is not so. In theory freedom of speech and to publish is available to all. In fact the media are completely dominated by the millionaire press. There are fewer and fewer independent publishers and the whole machinery of distribution is being more and more dominated by a handful of wholesalers for periodicals and supermarket booksellers.

That the Labour Party can't publish a

weekly (we know about *The Daily Mirror*) that concentrates on its policies when anything up to ten million people actually vote for the party leaves one speechless. But it also exposes what we called the entrenchment of a privileged minority which will never allow itself to be voted out of its privileges.

Observe developments in South Africa. Mandela is falling over backwards to be 'reasonable' to the white *herrenvolk*. Up to now he has refused to denounce the use of violence by the ANC because he realises it is the only language understood by the white masters. Observe developments in the Middle East, to expect the Zionist fundamentalists to consider the plight of the Palestinians in the occupied territories if they were not faced by violence from the *intifada*, is the kind of wishful thinking of well-meaning but completely unrealistic pacifist-'fundamentalists'.

Forget about the opinion polls! We say STRIP THE EXPERTS! Start thinking for yourselves!

\*We say so-called because the freedom to vote only means freedom to vote for a bunch of politicians all concerned with maintaining the status quo: capitalism and the unequal society.

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## The Generals' Election

Some young men join the army to see the world, and some, as the saying goes, join the Navy to see the next. However, other reasons for enlisting vary from unemployment to the desire for hero status. Of the many reasons, the desire to defend Queen and Country is possibly the least popular. It is certainly the least valid because the Armed Forces exist primarily to protect the interests of a small section of our society, i.e. those who hold the wealth and power. Patriotism, which is plugged remorselessly by those in high places, nevertheless plays a vital, if largely unconscious, part of the trawl for new recruits, especially in wartime, but the transparency of this gimmick is plain to anyone with knowledge of the genealogy of our Royal Family. Everyone, it seems, must have a preference for that which is British, except the Royals, who are so adulterated that their veins cannot know whether to throb at the sound of the British, German, Danish or Greek national anthem.

People who are lacking in universal principles have a system of priorities in which self is uppermost, and the interests of the peer group, or patriotism, come a poor second. While businessmen pay lip-service to the Flag, their reluctance to pay taxes leads them to tax havens — a practice that became so common that the government decided some years ago to drastically reduce their tax levels in an effort to stop the practice. The Union Jacks that fly proudly outside their factories are strictly for the employees, not for the factory owners.

So it is that patriotism is mainly for 'other ranks' and not for Generals, who do not need urging to defend their considerable interests; they truly have something to defend. The 'Country' does not belong to you and me, and the Queen represents the interests of those who have a big stake in it. She has more in common with foreign powers, genealogically and financially, than with us.

Recruiting adverts make much of the opportunities, the free education, the pay, and the excitement of life in the Forces, but they do not tell young recruits that from the moment they take the oath of allegiance they will surrender all independence of mind. They do not refer to the fact that all Servicemen — British, German, French or what-have-you — might one day be pleading "I was only carrying out orders", if they should find themselves on the losing side. In every country all over the world young men are being recruited or conscripted by similar methods to protect the interests of their rulers. Many are being killed at this moment, and involving children in the slaughter. Nothing can justify such barbarity.

The difference in genetic make-up between whites, blacks, yellows and redskins is less than the difference between individuals of any one country, so that there is no genetic reason why countries should want to fight one

another. War is the inevitable result of the politics of sovereign States which depend for their survival on convincing their subjects of the evil nature of other States and the goodness of their own.

There is no sense in dying for Generals and financiers who rate your lives beneath their own, and there is no justification for killing people of whom you have no personal knowledge. Nor is there any power, natural or 'supernatural', worth killing for: Abraham should go down in history, or mythology, as a demented potentially infanticidal murderer. And those who take up arms to defend the rich and powerful have only themselves to blame if they pay the ultimate price for their folly.

Very soon a General Election will be upon us. It could more accurately be described as a Generals' Election because we will once more be asked to vote for politicians who represent them and the business of war. Must we give them our backing by voting Tory, Labour or Liberal Democrat? Is there no choice other than those three evils?

EFC

On 22nd November 1990, a nuclear submarine dragged a fishing boat under water off the Isle of Arran, killing all on board. A year later there was a Fatal Accident Inquiry, where it was established that the submarine crew had detected something dragging against their engine.

Thirty three minutes after the accident they surfaced to find out what was wrong, and sighed with relief when they saw two fishing boats in their vicinity. According to their sophisticated electronic equipment there had never been more than two. But the electronics were faulty. There had in fact been three.

Immediately following the Inquiry, the

minutes before the accident the commander had been looking at his garbled instrument board and asking: "Where the fuck are we?" The electronics are secret, but without a doubt they are complex and delicate, and it is not at all surprising that they go wrong. The guiding devices on the nuclear weapons are a good deal more delicate than radar and sonar. If one were aimed at a Soviet missile silo, there is a distinct possibility that its electronics may be faulty and direct it to a different place. London perhaps.

With the Cold War over, the hypothetical target for the submarine's nuclear missiles no longer existed. But that made no real

## Nuclear balls-up

Ministry of Defence increased the distance by which submarines are ordered to stay clear of fishing boats from 2,000 yards to 3,000 yards. This seems a bit pointless. The submariners presumably thought they were 2,000 yards clear of any boat, but in order to snag the nets they must have been within 700 yards. Given the same faulty equipment, they could have made the same mistake thinking themselves 3,000 yards clear.

Evidence emerged at the Inquiry that a few

difference. With the dicey electronics, it was always too dangerous to actually fire a missile. Even if the equipment was infallible, a nuclear war could destroy not only subjects but the government itself. Nobody has dared to use a nuclear weapon in a war since 1945, when there was no risk of retaliation.

The whole business of preparing for all-out nuclear war was always what it is now: a lethally dangerous, ridiculously wasteful charade. The £200 million submarines have no purpose except to patrol up and down showing how strong the government is. The world's total nuclear arsenal is to be reduced by agreement, from enough to destroy the biosphere forty times over to enough to destroy it only four times. Big deal.

Anarchists do not think people are perfect, or perfectible, or any romantic nonsense of that kind. On the contrary, they think there is nobody good enough to make decisions for other people, and history support this opinion.

The historical fact is that everyone who was ever in power, at any time and in any place, has always tried to acquire the most technically advanced weapons available. It is part of the historical pattern that governments now want nuclear weapons. They cannot use them, but they can send lads out to swagger them up and down. If an occasional fishing crew is drowned going peacefully about its work, that is part of the price of so-called 'security'.

DR

## Remind me

There was great hope among radicals in Britain, the progress of the Jacobin years appeared to be completed, when the Great Reform Bill was enacted. 'Old Corruption', it appeared, was finally laid to rest, the whole economic basis of Toryism had been swept away and, indeed for more than a dozen years the only opposition to the new Liberal ascendancy came from the left (Chartists, early unions) — from those who were still excluded from the political process.

Some suggested that a new stratum of capitalist producers had emerged as a ruling class, but these were soon corrected by the heirs of the Jacobins who explained at great length (and frequently in patronising terms) that class division of society was only possible on the basis of hereditary land ownership — as indeed they had been arguing for the previous forty years.

Indeed this analysis was apparently confirmed twenty years later. In many ways, in those early years of the nineteenth century — notably the enormous boost the railway-building boom gave the price of land, but also the fillip that was given banking, the vast expansion in shipping needed to carry the goods of the workshop of the world (particularly with the invention of steam ships) — the old mercantilists had prospered more than the new capitalists. So in the 1850s the Tories swept back to power. Old corruption stood once more enthroned.

Louis Napoleon, at the same time, took power with the support of much of the aristocracy, and after disenfranchising a large

section of the electorate. He did, it is true, for a time support the Risorgimento — or at least its more conservative leaders — which made the Tories look askance at this evidence of residual Jacobin expansionism and gave hopes to some of the Jacobin epigoni. But in the early 1860s, after an economic crisis, Napoleon III was forced to put the French finances into the control of the Rothschilds and abandon interest in Italian politics. From then on his policies and behaviour were of the purest mercantilist 'recitade'.

In the USA, the country that had first arisen from the republican upsurge of the eighteenth century, the Democrats — the party of the industrial producers — found themselves allied to southern slave-owners, while the Republicans — the American mercantilist party — (partly for racist reasons: 'slavery leads to miscengenation'), partly to preserve the unity of the state as a mercantile whole, but only rarely for reasons of humanitarian principle were about to enforce abolition.

For all right thinkers, whether land-owning Tories or unreconstructed Jacobins, the issue was clear. There was no new ruling class. The dominance of capital in the 1830s and 1840s had been at most an aberration, probably an illusion. Capital could now be clearly seen in its proper place as the mere handmaid of mercantilism.

Remind me, hasn't something reminiscent of this happened recently, and didn't something happen in 1871?

LO

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# WARGAMES IN THE BALKANS

The recent news from the battlefields of Croatia is speaking of bombs, death and famine as usual. These are the things that people in this country were confronting in previous months and will continue to confront in the months to come. As the fights go on about who will rule over how many people, living in basements became every-day life for the majority of the population of Croatia. Faced with the horrors of war, more than 500,000 men, women, children, the old and the sick have lost their homes and are forced to live in a poor substitute for what were their settlements. This war has taken so far about 10,000 lives; soldiers and civilians equally, and the number is increasing with every new day, not to mention the wounded and those who suffer from want. Detailed material damage reports remind us constantly of wealth created by many generations just to be destroyed in a second.

Now, let's try to see the political background of this tragedy in ex-Yugoslavia, centred around two of the warring factions: the ex-republics of Croatia and Serbia. In Serbia, there was always an imperial tendency behind official policy striving for a more centralised state, with the desire to expand the territory of Serbia by annexing the two autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodine, and by imposing Serbian culture on Yugoslavia as a whole. During the past decade the government in Serbia had been practising the cultural and military oppression of the Albanian people in Kosovo, where Albanians were used as scapegoats for the domestic problems in Serbia and Yugoslavia. The republics of Slovenia and Croatia were openly showing their disaffection with federal government and their requests for national sovereignty while opposing the oppression of Albanians. In 1990 when the decay of the Yugoslavian state was more than obvious, these republics were the first to announce parliamentary elections and, by the end of the same year, all republics had their elections. In Serbia, and its 'satellite' republic of Montenegro, nothing changed because of the total monopoly those in power had over the media and voting system. This caused a series of protests and riots (mostly in the city of Belgrad, capital of Serbia) with roots in both political and economic crises and over which right-wing opposition gained control using the discontent of the masses as mere tools of their own lust for power. The riots were crushed by force and a newly 'democratic' regime was built up, proving again that 'might is right'. At Croatian elections those elected were right-wing nationalists, which resulted in armed resistance of Serbs in one part of the country where people of Serbian nationality are in the majority. That was a good excuse for the Serbian/federal government to send army troops as a 'peace-keeping force' and since all other nations but the Serbs abandoned the federal army it served well the political interests of the Serbian government under the mask of preventing conflicts between nations. 'All Serbs must live in one state' is the slogan propagated by Serbian officials, claiming that this or that part of Croatia (and other republics) was the homeland of Serbian people x years ago. Now, when the fights are extended to the biggest part of Croatia, federal army generals hand-in-hand with Serbian fascists are practising the policy of 'the more is conquered the better', and at the moment about half the Croatian territory is conquered. The Generals finally have a chance to exercise their skills in real wargames, a chance they

awaited for so long, bored in vain with theory. Right-wing and ultra-nationalist parties in Serbia, as well as anyone who maintains the war, have full freedom and protection from the 'socialist' party in power, to the extent that they form their own squads of so-called 'volunteers' to fight in Croatia together with the army. On the other hand, in Croatia war conditions also fit well into the interests of politicians. The ruling party (Croatian Democratic Community) is under pressure of opposition for the reasons that many mistakes were made and that they were incapable of solving economic problems in the period before an all-out beginning of the war. Therefore war is a good excuse to clamp down on any opposition and criticism in the name of defence and to introduce censorship control of the media in the name of 'state security'. They also hope that war will bring about the international legitimacy of the Croatian state, and that would mean the empowering of their positions. Without war and a good drama it probably couldn't be achieved, at least not for years, because of the complexity of the situation - the borders within Yugoslavia are the result of the Communist Party agreement after World War Two, and keeping the outward integrity of Yugoslavia better serves the European Community, US and others, than would six independent state (e.g. paying off debts). Ultra-nationalist opposition in Croatia is also gaining support from people aggravated and embittered by Serbian aggression and they also form their own fighting squads with more or less freedom, depending on how it fits with the ruling party.

The bloodshed continues and, needless to say, those who suffer most are the poor and the underprivileged, being again victims of power games they don't understand. In turn they get endless speeches from new-born national leaders, praising the deaths of those young men who allowed themselves to be dragged into a war by patriotic lies. A constant barrage of blatantly ignorant propaganda is what one can get from state-controlled media on both sides, regrettably. They're very successful in brainwashing and feeding hatred between nations. megalomania becomes a virtue for those who take for granted everything they're fed. Politicians talk about 'not giving up' and 'fighting to the last man', while assuring people that their lives and the lives of their families and their wealth won't be affected in any way. Sadly enough, people are ready to defend their positions and to be slaughtered for profits. And, of course, both sides worship the same God. Decorating the words of politicians with religious illusions, clergymen give false hope to soldiers, encouraging them to kill in the name of the country and to die content while doing it. Glorification of death and obedience to the flag are moral values that keep this war going.

We can conclude that the politicians of both sides have the same reasons for continuing the bloodshed and another thousand dead and wounded, another hundred thousand and homeless makes no difference to these power-mongers and their twisted minds. On the other hand, people put so much hope in the different personalities of politics and in western-style life, imagining capitalism as welfare for all.

Following the collapse of centralised bolshevik regimes in the countries of Eastern Europe and the USSR, the Yugoslavian system had also come to

an end, escalating in bloodshed that fortunately hasn't happened (yet?) in Eastern Europe and the USSR. Croatia is now in the position of fighting a defensive war, but it is a consequence of conflict between two authoritarian regimes, neither of which will bring more freedom to the people than they had before. National sovereignty tends to give freedom to the states but not to the people - new states are formed from the old ones and the old repression is continued in a new form. And surely we know that the 'free market' economy won't improve conditions of living, but will merely create new slaves for western capitalism, providing cheap labour for western companies and ensuring that the few get rich at the expense of the many, whose lives will remain in the pit.

The Serbo-Croatian conflict had culminated in massacres during World War Two - the same threatens the inhabitants of Croatia today. We can only suggest how, in this war no-one can win, might end - Croatian people will never accept the establishing of Great Serbia on their homelands; the Serbian government with its powerful army won't

give up conquered territory, and there's much doubt whether the involvement of UN forces will make any difference in solving the tragedy.

In my own opinion, it's up to the people of Serbia to dethrone their tyrants, and then it will be much easier for those who live in other republics to fight theirs. And there are perhaps some reasons for hope because a lot of people in Serbia don't want this war; there are more than 10,000 deserters in the federal army up to now, and there's some small, but organised, peace and ecology movements in all the republics. One of the problems for any progressive actions is mobilisation by force on both sides, and that is why some fled abroad, myself included. Anarchists are few in numbers and unorganised, which must be changed during the '90s if we are to be prepared to confront the next war and, to quote E. Schneider,\* "strengthen and raise the spirits of anti-nationalist forces and, in the process of time, remove the scum of human community".

Zoran Slobodar

\*The Wilhelmshaven Revolve in *The Raven* number 8 (1989)

## News from Northern Ireland

**B**loody Sunday happened in Derry in January twenty years ago this year. Fourteen people were killed by soldiers of the Parachute Regiment on specific orders to clear out the no-go area existing in the Bogside for the previous three months. In a recent television programme on the shootings soldiers said they came under heavy fire on entering the Glenfada Park and Rossville Street areas. This is utter rubbish, borne out indirectly in the television programme itself and by countless eye-witness accounts. No weapons were found on any of the individuals who were killed. No weapons were found in the area at all. As well as the obvious immediate outcome of the slaughter, the shootings have had a serious effect on the ability of people in Derry to believe in themselves, to challenge injustice and to develop confident and courageous methods of advancing the struggle for social revolution. This point was made in a recent interview with the son of Patrick Doherty who was killed on Bloody Sunday. In the interview, the son is quoted as saying: "Bloody Sunday was aimed at putting an end to popular protest. And in every respect that worked because it did effectively terrorise the massively popular civil rights organisation."

And despite the effects of Bloody Sunday, people in Derry have continued to creatively strive for freedom. And I am not referring to the military activities of the IRA, etc., which was exactly the response the British state sought when launching the Bloody Sunday slaughter. This year's anniversary will be marked by a weekend's programme of workshops, talks, seminars, concerts, marches, drama and discussion organised by the Bloody Sunday Initiative (who can be contacted at 1 Westend Park, Derry). In itself the Initiative marks a creative and important product of the horror of Bloody Sunday involving families of the people killed and others in ambitious plans for a people's archive, a memorial garden and a resource centre.

The whole question of how community groups and initiatives like the Bloody Sunday one get their hands on capital for their plans is a very tricky one. Doesn't a group become totally compromised once it takes government money? How do you keep control and adhere to your radical agenda when you have to meet government funding criteria? Real questions that

occupy the minds of community activists of all sorts in the north of Ireland where it is an avowed element of government policy to give money to groups as a way of disarming their more radical demands. The Creggan Community Initiative, a co-operative of householders in the Creggan Estate in Derry, has just been granted £2.4 million for the development of an enterprise centre. This money is coming from the Department of the Environment and the International Fund for Ireland, mainly American money set up in the wake of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. There are big plans for jobs, resources and shopping facilities in one of the most deprived estates in Ireland. The process whereby local communities interact with major funders outside the community in an attempt to better their lives is one of the lead edges in the movement for social change that anarchists should watch closely. It's all about control at the end of the day.

**I**n Crumlin Road jail in Belfast the issue of segregation of loyalist and republican prisoners really came to the boil with the killing of a loyalist prisoner in an IRA bomb attack in the prison. Fights between visitors, attacks on prisoners by visitors, and the foulest prison regime you can imagine - one wash in four days, all food to be eaten in cells, no slopping out arrangements - all ensure that tension remains high. Add to this the fact that most of the prisoners are on remand and you have part of the answer to why internment hasn't been introduced here ... yet.

**B**est to start the year with a victory! Du Pont have backed off their plans to site a national toxic waste incinerator in Derry. Never mind the politicians who claimed they were working away in the background all along! Never mind the cynics who say that Du Pont will simply upgrade their own incinerator and that's what they wanted all along! Never mind the company spokespersons who say that they made the decision on purely financial grounds! Listen to none of that bullshit! It was the actions of the people of Derry, Londonderry, Eglington, Muff, Moville, Stabane and other parts of the north of Ireland that made the multinational corporation think again. No mean feat!

Dave Duggan

## Anarchist Democratic Union

The Anarchist Democratic Union (ADU) was founded in April 1990. Now it includes organisations in five cities: St Petersburg, Archangelsk, Petrosavodsk, Orsha and Borisoglebsk.

Information publishing agency ADU 'AN-PRESS' publishes the newspaper *Free Agreement* (*Svobodny Dogovor*), some of the theoretical booklets *Anarchy*, and the review of the anarchist movement in the USSR *Bulletin AN-PRESS*.

ADU is a collective member of the Konfederatsion of Anarchist Syndicalists (KAS).

The fundamental items of our programme are the understanding of the necessity for the democratic stage in the development of our country as the transition period to the non-state society, decentralisation and self-government of all aspects of social life, and the rejection of violence as a method for the achievement of our political aims. Considering the importance of the co-ordination

of all the organisations within the anarchist movement, we are looking for the co-ordination with all of its trends. We invite you to contact us.

## Information Publishing Agency of the Anarchist Democratic Union - 'AN-PRESS'

AN-PRESS is the information publishing centre of the Anarchist Democratic Union (ADU). Founded in November 1990, AN-PRESS covers a large information system in Russia and in the other parts of the former Soviet Union: Ukraine, Belorussia and Siberia. AN-PRESS is the unique all-anarchist information agency in the USSR.

Staying on the positions of so-called 'united anarchism', AN-PRESS give in the pages of its *Bulletin AN-PRESS* (which is published twice a month) the information about the activities of the anarchist organisations of all trends - anarchist-democrats (ADU), anarchist-syndicalists (continued on page 8)

## INFLUENCES

Influences: Voices of Creative Dissent  
by Colin Ward Green Books, paperback, £7.95

Colin Ward needs no introduction to readers of *Freedom*. His latest book, subtitled 'Voices of Creative Dissent', contains six essays on writers who have influenced him – 'Education' (William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft), 'Politics' (Alexander Herzen), 'Economics' (Peter Kropotkin), 'Society' (Martin Buber), 'Architecture' (William Richard Lethaby and Walter Segal), and 'Planning' (Patrick Geddes and Paul Goodman). He is of course himself a voice of creative dissent and an influence on many people, partly because he always scrupulously acknowledges the influences on himself. "As a writer and propagandist", he says, "I find myself endlessly quoting other people, usually because they express what I feel far better than I could myself". Indeed he is one of those writers who incidentally stimulate their readers to read other writers. In this book, for once, that is the object of the exercise.

As he says in his Introduction, "it is certain that none of us would have lasted without the influence of others", from those who came before us and helped to bring us into the world to those around us who help to keep us here; and as he adds, we too are influences on others around us and on those who come after us, often in ways we don't expect. He distinguishes between good and bad influences, and emphasises that good people and ideas may be bad influences, when they become leaders and causes for which other people will die and kill. He prefers the "quiet voices of dissent and scepticism, questioning

the automatic inescapable influences all around us", the influences which provide negative feedback to check other influences. He adds that he has been "endlessly lucky with influences", because he "left school at fifteen and consequently was not told what to read". As a result, his influences, like those of many self-taught people, have come not from the canonical list fed to students but from his own choice, "the result of trial and error and much listening". And he pays a tribute to them, much of which might be paid to himself:

"My influences sought as wide an audience as possible. They did not all write particularly well, but they did address the reader as a serious person to be debated with, not as an ignoramus to be bullied or hectorated. Still less did they pander to or flatter the prejudices or superstitions of their prospective readership. My major influences founded no parties. None of them started wars or took part in governments. None of them inspired other people to hate each other. All were utter failures in the entrepreneurial culture. But in my experience not a day passes when I fail to recall the influence of one or other of them ..."

Godwin and Wollstonecraft are known mainly because of their literary and political writings, and also because of their brief marriage (and their child, Mary Shelley); but here the focus is on their equally remarkable educational writings, which were just as revolutionary in their emphasis on the

personality of the child and the principle of happiness. Herzen is known as one of the main founders of Russian populism, and also of what is known as Russian socialism (with a special emphasis on land and the peasants); but here the focus is on his creative approach and positive personality. Kropotkin is known as the main theoretician of anarchist communism (many of his writings are available from the Freedom Bookshop); but here the focus is on his economic ideas, especially as expressed in *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (of which Colin Ward produced an updated edition, *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow*). Buber is mainly known as a religious thinker and dissident Zionist; but here the focus is on his social ideas, especially as expressed in *Paths in Utopia*, and above all his advocacy of pluralism and voluntarism.

Lethaby and Segal are little known outside the architectural profession, but the eulogies of their faith in human scale and self-help make one realise how poor our culture is in its failure to take architecture seriously. Geddes and Goodman are (or were) rather better known, but again the eulogies of their faith in practicality and decentralism make one realise how poor our culture also is in its failure to take planning seriously.

The book ends with a few necessary references, a useful bibliographical appendix – in which my edition of Kropotkin's *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (1971) is said to be "due for reissue", though a revised reprint was actually issued in 1988 – and a brief epilogue called 'A Last Word', described as "a final reflection in my shopping-bag of influences", and including a characteristic passage from Goodman:

"For me, the chief principle of anarchism is not freedom but autonomy, the ability to initiate a task and do it one's own way ... The weakness of 'my' anarchism is that the lust for freedom is a powerful motive for political change, whereas autonomy is not. Autonomous people protect themselves stubbornly but by less strenuous means, including plenty of passive resistance. They do their own thing anyway. The pathos of oppressed people, however, is that, if they break free, they don't know what to do. Not having been autonomous, they don't know what it's like, and before they learn, they have new managers who are not in a hurry to abdicate."

He adds: "I can't think of any reflection more apposite to our dilemmas at the end of the century". Nor can I.

Altogether this is a helpful and delightful book. It contains some nice photographs of its subjects and a few tiny errors. It also contains a dozen blank pages at the back which readers may use to list other good influences. But the first ones to try are Colin Ward's own books, which are conveniently listed at the beginning (and several of which are available from the Freedom Bookshop).

NW

## AN ALTERNATIVE TO 'EDUCATION'

Opinions held by those whose attitudes one regards as particularly horrible are not necessarily always wrong, and I don't believe one should let them drive one automatically into holding the opposite view. John Pilgrim in *Freedom*, 11th January 1992, refers to Margaret Thatcher's infamous "There is no such thing as society – only individuals and their families". If we stop after the word individuals, I entirely agree with Thatcher. I cannot see that anybody has ever demonstrated any human reality beyond individuals. Society is no more than a word for something that exists nowhere except in people's heads. Society does not feel, imagine, suffer anything, but it is a concept that has been used as the excuse for untold tyranny and atrocity. John Pilgrim may not agree with me. But does he want to call what I have just said 'infamous'? Infamous Thatcher herself may be, but surely not what she said on this occasion?

So again, that Thatcher's motives and starting points are quite different from mine did not prevent me thinking, like her, that sanctions should not be imposed on South Africa. Was she not right when she said that those who would really suffer as a result would be ordinary black people? The whites make sure they are the last to suffer. The fact that black leaders constantly call for sanctions is surely a very bad reason for supporting them. It is fine for the leaders to call for sanctions, since good care will be taken to see that they do not suffer hunger or excessive toil; and lower ranking militants, even if they do suffer hardship, will take consolation and strength from their sense of dedication to a cause. They have no right to impose their sacrifice on the mass of working people in South Africa in the name of that cause. And that I dislike the attitudes of the reactionary professor Norman Stone is no reason for me not to believe him when he tells us that a large majority of black South African workers polled were against sanctions. It is only what might have been suspected long before Stone told us.

Now we have Kenneth Clarke. In common, I suspect, with a great many people, I find it hard to think of a character in Britain today whose antics disgust me more. However, I have to agree when he attacks academic teacher-training and proposes on-the-job apprenticeship instead, even if he does it for all the wrong reasons. Has there ever been any real evidence that anything that is studied at departments or colleges of education has improved children's learning or increased their happiness? If now some children at school are happier and learn better than their parents, it will not be because their teachers have a knowledge of learning theory or the pedagogical method in vogue. It will be because teachers feel and show solidarity with the children, regard them as equals, and are enthusiastic to share their knowledge of their subject with them. Even that, of course, will often not be nearly enough so long as children are forced to do things they do not naturally want to do. And it is the compulsion, I suspect, that is the reason for the emphasis in so many quarters on training teachers to make lessons *fun*. Entertainment can

only be necessary where the subject is not fun in itself without artificial sugaring. If it is no longer acceptable to flog knowledge into children, then manipulate them into acquiring it, even if it's against their inclination.

My own experience of several decades was almost entirely limited to teaching English as a foreign language to adults. But in this field too it was always the informal and conscientious but 'unqualified' enthusiasts who were most successful, not those with professional training. We used to discuss – endlessly over cups of coffee or tea – the language, the problems individual students had with it, the lessons, and it worked pretty well – not perfectly, by any means, but better than any other approach I know of. Theory and pedagogy interested few, and in any case disagreement about these among us was irrelevant and had no effect on the excellence or otherwise of our work. Things like 'structured' lessons, still I gather all the rage at training institutions, are barren and useless, for several reasons: they ignore individuals and their individual needs, they ignore the unique flesh and blood realities of each class and each lesson, and they ignore the ultimate responsibility of the students.

It is time to rethink our whole attitude to teaching, to consider whether we should be worrying about *teaching* at all, should not forget pedagogy and concentrate instead on learning for ourselves and encouraging others to learn for themselves. All my experience has satisfied me that at least as far as language learning is concerned it is wanting to do the work oneself, not waiting for the teacher to do it, that is the key. I have found this approach the only truly effective one; it also seems to me the only ethical one. If someone is not eager enough to work at a thing for themselves, it is silly for them ever to start studying it. Where children are concerned, if they do not have the enthusiasm to work at something for its own sake, it is wicked as well as silly to impose a course of study on them. Naturally people should be free to express their enthusiasms and encourage them in others; but I imagine most anarchists would agree that they have no more right to insist on them with children than with adults. Yet many people, including at one level of thinking even Conservative cabinet ministers and, I suspect, many anarchists, have far too much reverence for teachers. 'Teacher' carries the implication of authority and reverence for authority. Let us by all means have enthusiasts, enthusiasts who are eager to answer questions. But let's dispense with teachers. And classrooms too, at any rate in their traditional form.

And let us also beware psychiatric, psychological and sociological researchers turned teachers of the rest of us. I am very uneasy at calls for this sort of thing like that made by Alex Comfort in his lecture of 1950 on delinquency, reprinted in the latest issue of *The Raven* (number 16). I'm sure Comfort was sincere when he distanced himself from any idea of a scientist's exclusive control. But what are the realities? In the forty years since he gave his lecture there has surely been no

lack of the research he urged, and lots of theory-making too. By chance only a few days ago, I saw a film from 1971 called 'Family Life' (harrowingly well acted, mainly by people I had never heard of) in which a young woman is emotionally tyrannised by her parents. But the greatest villains are the psychiatrists, and she ends up locked away in an institution where the teacher uses her as a demonstration object for his psychiatry students. A fictional story, but for me it rang horribly true. I believe it must be typical of the picture that anybody with their eyes and ears open must have got first or second hand, over the last few decades, of at least one aspect of psychiatrist activity. Certainly in every case of psychiatric intervention that I have had personal knowledge of, the experts involved have done serious, tangible, practical harm, or limited freedom, or increased misery. And I bet that anybody that feels they have been done good to by social workers also feels so because the social workers have shown solidarity and have been sympathetic, kind and helpful to them, not because the social workers know about sociology and psychiatry. I am frightened, too, by absolute words like 'psychopath'. I hope they are safe on the lips of people like Comfort (the many, many good things he has done does not guarantee it). They are unrealities, bogus absolutes, that are accepted by nearly all as realities, and anybody who is, for instance, named a 'psychopath' may find they are condemned as irrevocably as by a judge.

I am not saying there are not many psychiatrists of a quite different sort, unauthoritarian people with real compassion. And I don't deny that the establishing and collecting of facts is important and useful – if carried out and used by the right hands. But no amount of research and knowledge will bring more happiness to anybody if there is not already the will to 'understand' sympathetically. That will, that tenderness, has to come first. Yet if the will is already there, devoted but tolerant, concerned but not imposing, passionate but not arrogant, then I doubt whether research and 'science' have anything crucial to add. They may suggest some practical ways of bringing help to fellow human beings, but they cannot create the decisive tender urge to understand itself.

It is such an urge, and sympathetic imagination, that humans need to encourage in each other; and we should support it with basic but sound everyday logic that everybody can comprehend. Any movement that is not based on reason, and on everybody being able to comprehend, is setting out to be a tyranny. I do not pretend to know how the tender urge to understand and to aid is increased or decreased in people generally, and I don't think anybody else knows. It is one of those historical psychological mysteries that is unlikely to be solved. It may be just as well if it never is, because such knowledge would almost certainly be used to manipulate minds. So the only way left to influence people is by reason, and that is very good, because it is the only decent, honest way.

Amorey Gethin

# Should they eat Lenin?

## Unravelling the Franklin Mystery

by David C. Woodman

McGill, Queen's University Press, £25.00

## Vampyres: Lord Byron to Count Dracula

by Christopher Frayling

Faber, £17.50

## The Lair of the White Worm

by Bram Stoker

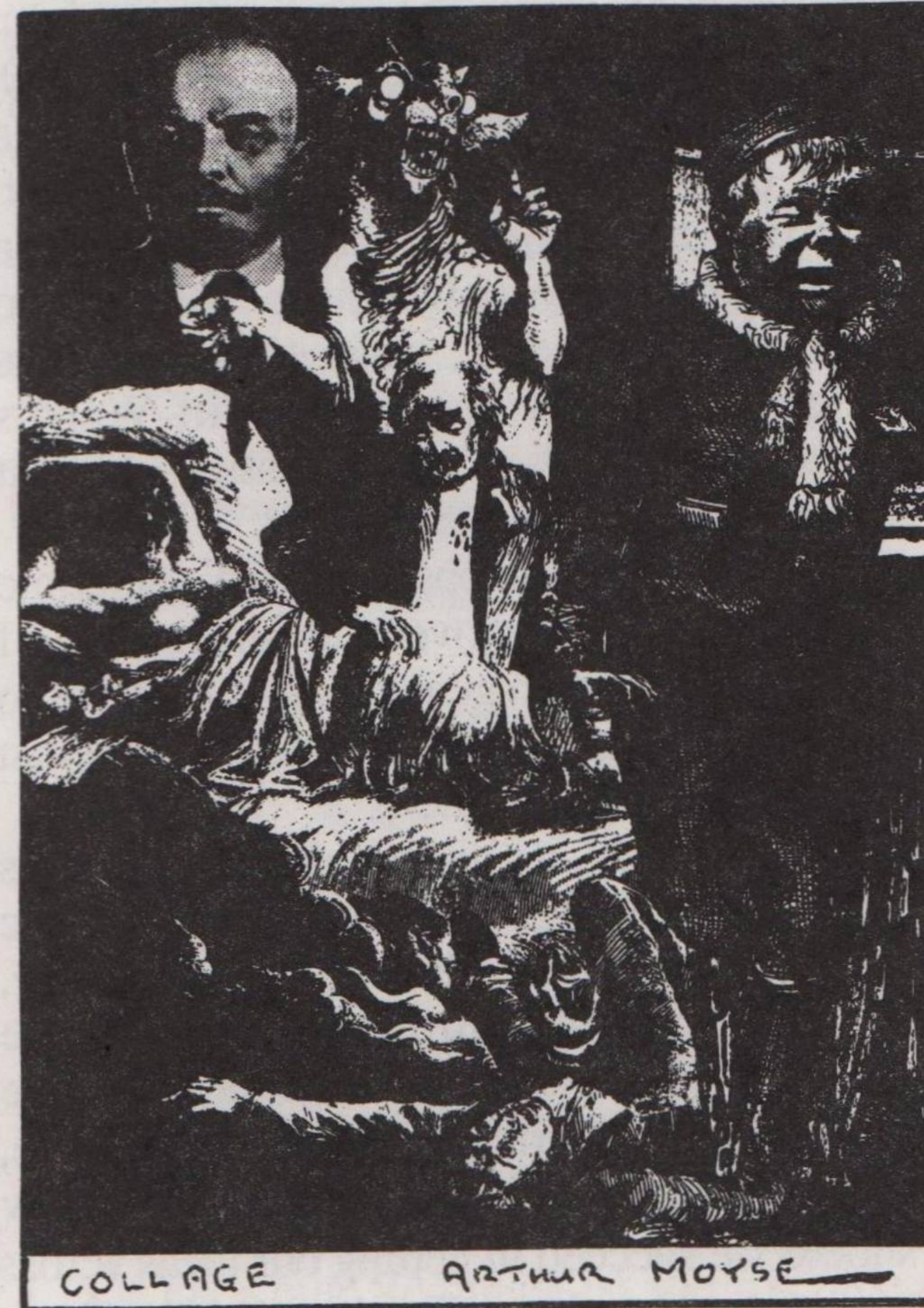
Brandon, £4.99

Many of the finest minds of our generation have been thrown out of the White Hart pub, yet of that small residue that are left the great debates continue to shake the beer puddles on the table tops. Deep, searching and profound, they explore and analyse the awful social problems that have always harassed mankind, and the subject matter is dictated by the temper of the time. It is fitting that with mass starvation threatening the peoples of Russia, a coming British election and a glut of vegetarians swilling beer at the table, cannibalism must and did occupy a group of Britain's finest minds. The cinema, that has always been foremost in shaping the way the world must think, has explored, as light comedy, farce or thriller, incest, bestiality and the drear world of paederasty. Now it has found itself a nice little earner in cannibalism with the leading man playing the gourmet as light comedy, for the days of the French windows and tennis are indeed over. It is right that we should explore and have open knowledge of the human psyche, but to understand is not to forgive but to try to contain the evils that we or other might be the victim. How to contain, comrade, is our problem. One learns, at the beer table of the White Hart, that there is a small elite group of card-carrying vegetarians who maintain that, if they so desire they may eat meat providing it died of natural causes, and it follows that if one's nearest and dearest died in good health but of natural causes, then one is justified in getting the casserole dish out of the microwave oven. For myself, I have no particular desire regarding any particular type of meat, but if it were served to me, then out of politeness and curiosity I would eat it. The cinema has used bestiality as a subject and neither you or I believe that when King Kong or a creature from a black lagoon grabs hold of the female leads all screams and kicking legs, Kong or the creature are just dilettante art connoisseurs looking for Dresden china. For incest, one can go back to the 1969 film 'Oedipus Rex' and forward to the explicit film 'Chinatown', the French film 'Souffle au Coeur', or 'La Luna'. Raise one's hands in horror, but it has always been a popular film subject. But with this difference, we have entered an age when the act is neither applauded or condemned, and therein lies the danger, for in any censorship or authoritarian society any hurt to our fellow men, women, children or beasts can be made acceptable if treated as amusing entertainment, and I would suggest that it could be for this reason that Anthony Hopkins as the smiling, good looking lead as a serial mass murderer who cooked and ate his victims in the film 'Silence of the Lambs' won a major award with awards floating all around. Bestiality, though a matter of court cases and porn circuits, had made its way into the continental family cinema artwork minus the explicit act, and for the sad world of paederasty Hollywood from the 1920s on has supplied a solid diet of small girls in tiny bras and small skirts kicking up their small heels on a large cinema screen that should be given over to gang murders and shoot-outs at the perennial OK Corral, which is what God meant it for otherwise why did he make it? Let there be no illusions as to whether we can be conditioned, for like Pavlovian dogs in the end we obey that conditioning. In South Africa a new meat is in the process of being marketed. It is cheap and nutritious and in tests it is claimed that 21% prefer it to lamb

or beef. The only problem is that it is rat meat and rat meat has always been deemed to be a bit dodgy. It has been called Ivondo and breeds in the sugar fields, with a weight of 20lbs and the ability to do a Tom and Jerry act by hunting dogs and cats. The fowl and pheasant dining marketing boys are of the opinion that these 20lb Mickey Mousers will eventually become the Dish of the Day in working class factory canteen menus and, with good television advertising and good supermarket layout, who knows, comrades, we may be eating it instead of the ol' boiled beef and carrots. Cannibalism has always been looked upon in our western society as a criminal social evil, with the exception of course of the Body and Blood of Christ, and Woodman in his book on the loss of Sir John Franklin's 1845 Arctic exploration, with a death loss of 130 men, makes the point that though they sailed off with every luxury that Victorian society could equip them with, when their ships were destroyed in the white wasteland they had literally to eat their own dead, even to making holes in the skulls of the dead to suck out the brains. This was the remains and the news that Eskimos brought back to Victorian civilisation and that civilisation could not accept it. The artist Landseer used that tragedy for a painting of two polar bears roaming around on an ice floe among the remains of ships, broken spars and sails, chewing on human bones. But only Goya painted a human being eaten, and then only as a fashionable horror painting, for it

was a society and an age, yea, even up the late nineteenth-hundreds, when the eating of human flesh without social comment still could not be accepted.

But horror is still the order of the night, for the Town and his screaming frau with the reprint of Bram Stoker's *Lair of the White Worm*, knocked off in 1911. Stoker was strictly a one-book man with his 1897 *Dracula*, but for those who like a Queen's Birthday Honours List for a vampire, then you have Lady Arabella and the huge White Worm. But it was 1911, and Stoker had to rationalise his horror that the Worm was white because of the china clay that it wriggled



COLLAGE ARTHUR MOYSES

through. It is a period novel worth reading for its attitude to the society of the day by one who was a success in it. It makes interesting reading for that reason, with the great White Worm coming up from below stairs all covered in china clay, and I would suggest that it would make a good night read for any member of women's lib to cuddle up in bed with.

As with Frayling's *Vampyres*, a magnificent anthology of vampirism from Polidori's *The Vampyre* via Byron to and past Krafft-Ebing, we have the writings of various ages, but always holding up the true cross as an alibi crying that their secret desires are the evils of others or the undead, and in doing so they gave *Dracula*, *Vampyres* and non-Latin pornography a bad press that they/it cannot yet live down.

Cannibalism has now moved into the world of light entertainment with this month's film from Jeunet and Caro at the Gate, Cannon and Metro cinemas, and surely it can only be a matter of small time before, in this food-hungry world, packaged rats nicely laid out on the supermarket shelves will be a shopping must for the Town and his purse-proud frau, and instead of giving your liver to the operational theatre it will find its place on the television cooking hour. Should they eat Lenin? Who am I to advise, but if they bring him out of that vacuum casket, as the Russian right-wing are demanding, and assuming that there is enough meat on the old boy, then it could be his last sacrifice for the revolution, into the empty Moscow foodshop to hesitate the food riots of a free market without bread for the masses.

Arthur Moyses

## Women's Work

1991 was a year when feminists and women's feature writers have been taking stock and assessing the impact of feminism on women and society in the post-feminist era. Predictions of a 'backlash' against feminism which threatens to turn the clock back thirty years for women in terms of equality and status have alarmed many women who have dedicated a large part of their lives to redressing the balance between male and female roles.

The new Black Rose title *Race, Gender and Work* by Teresa Amott and Julie Matthau is a very timely and wide-ranging study of the economic history of women in the United States, and reaches the conclusion that though great advancement has been made in terms of equality, the battle for fair play has by no means been won.

Both authors are professors in economics and are long-term feminist activists. Their book is a broad and complex study of women from all ethnic racial groups. They identify three broad stages in the organisation and differentiation of women's work across American history.

The study covers the colonial era in the nineteenth century, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the post-World War Two period. They claim that colonialism destabilised the sexual division of labour which underlay and organised marriage and reproduction. For example, native American children were taken from their families and placed in Protestant boarding schools for their 'betterment and advancement'.

In the second stage, slavery was abolished but people of all racial groups were channelled into wage-labour capitalist relationships - white people claimed the high status jobs. Lower wages for women and unpaid housework underlined the supremacy of the male.

In the post-World War Two period women continued to do the bulk of unpaid work in the home and as carers for frail elderly parents and, whilst some women had reached high positions, overall inequality prevailed. The writers reiterate the contemporary criticisms that the 1970s women's movement was largely comprised of white middle class

### Race, Gender and Work

by Teresa Amott and Julie Matthau

Black Rose Books, 433 pages, £11.50

### Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics

by Janet Biehl

Black Rose Books, 159 pages, £9.95

heterosexual women and failed to acknowledge the very distinct needs of lesbians and women from minority ethnic groups.

The major part of the book concentrates on tracing the history of American Indian, Asian, Chicana, African, Puerto Rican and European American women. Each chapter heading is followed by an appropriate poem and goes on to examine the nature, history and success of each group in terms of feminist protest. The largest group - the African American - has made the most progress in the labour force and on the domestic front: "They demand that black men confront their sexism and force feminists of all races to confront the racism which divides women".

Another Black Rose title, *Finding Our Way* by social ecologist Janet Biehl, opens up a serious and pressing debate about eco-feminism in the ecology and feminist movements. She is eager to defend what she calls the "best ideals of feminism" from a "disquieting tendency that has arisen from within its midst". This tendency is ecofeminism. "Ecofeminist images of women retain the patriarchal stereotypes of what men expect women to be".

In this collection of four essays, Janet Biehl explores the role of the goddess, the counter-enlightenment, the western democratic tradition and eco-feminism's affinities with social ecology.

She challenges the eco-feminist belief that the goddess worshipping era was destroyed by invading armies and their claim to be able to equate these invasions with the rise of patriarchy and hierarchy. She accuses eco-feminists of shallowness of argument. She says it is lacking an understanding of the dialectic of several millennia of western culture. They reduce western social

development to a 'myth of regress' after the neolithic period. Biehl believes that whilst art and writing would have been richer and more representative had women had an equal vote, to disregard male dominated art would be peevish.

Her main argument is that the ills of society would not be solved merely through equality of the sexes. She stresses the corruption of the whole capitalist system and claims that whilst the eco-feminists would imply that a women-dominated world would be fairer, gentler and more peaceful, Biehl believes that the same hierarchical structures would inevitably evolve.

Feminists among us will applaud these successful attempts at setting the record straight. This is not the time for feminists to be complacent. Many committed people have fought too hard and too long to stand by and see this sort of inferior mystical veneer obscuring the very real achievements beneath.

A further American publication due to be published here in March is called *Backlash* by Susan Faloodi. In this book, discussed recently on Women's Hour, Faloodi claims that recent statistics claiming that single college women graduates are unlikely to marry are fallacious. She tells how every newspaper and periodical in the States plastered these statistics across their front and feature pages, but neglected to set the record straight when the figures were later proved false. The result of this situation has been to set women against their own cause, to frighten them into reconsidering their positions and assessing the price they may pay for their liberation.

Also discussing the question of feminist politics was Victor Seidler, who is co-editor of pro-feminist men's group magazine *Achilles Heel* and author of *Recreating Sexual Politics*. He stated that all men are threatened by feminism in some way as their power as breadwinners and voices of authority is threatened. His solution is that men should rediscover their masculinity now that women have withdrawn their emotional support from them and have left them to fall back on their own male relationships. Only when men can discuss their problems with other men on an emotional level without intellectualising everything, will men be able to take on equal roles with women within the family without embarrassment or threat to status. Sounds good to me!

Sylvie Edwards

## Anarchism: a personal statement

You only have to visit a bookshop such as Mushroom Books in Nottingham, or indeed any of the 'alternative' bookshops around the country, to see the wealth and diversity of the organisations, groups and ideas currently gathered under the 'banner' of the anarchist movement. The visual evidence to support this can be seen in the ever-increasing range of pamphlets, books and periodicals displayed. There are reasons for this: firstly the development of cheap, relatively simple and quick printing technology – the lithographic press and computer typesetting which has displaced the old letterpress technology. Secondly the energy of the individuals and groups involved in getting their particular viewpoint across in print.

The range of publications is impressive, from *Class War* to *Freedom*, from *Black Flag*, *Direct Action*, *Organise*, *Crowbar*, *Green Anarchist*, *Solidarity*, to *The Raven* et al, there are now more papers in print than ever before in the history of the movement in this country. In addition to this there are many papers, books and pamphlets from overseas comrades available to us: *The Match*, *Fifth Estate*, *Open*

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Saturday 10.30am-5pm

*Road*, *Our Generation*, *Le Monde Libertaire*, etc. I hope I have made my point.

However, I do not think that this necessarily involves a vast increase in the number of 'card-carrying' anarchists. Some of the groups evolved out of disagreements and diverging viewpoints as much as anything else. While members of *Class War* may claim, and may well indeed sell 8,000-plus copies of their paper, for most publications the print run and sales remain low, often well below 2,000. This reflects the extent to which we remain a voice on the margins of society. However, despite this I believe anarchism is a movement, a philosophy whose time is yet to come. We have ideas, ways of doing things which, to borrow one of Colin Ward's quotations, "speak to our condition" here at the end of the twentieth century.

Now, as a partial observer and sometime participant in the movement since 1977, I have drawn my own general conclusions as to what I find 'attractive' about the anarchist philosophy and movement.

For me, firstly, its historical analysis offers a refreshing change from received academic history. The thesis<sup>1</sup> that human solidarity, spontaneity and 'cultural diversity' are strongest when the state is weak or in decline supports our case for the abolition of the state, and also augurs well for society tomorrow should we succeed in getting our ideas across to society as a whole. This historical analysis tries to make sense of mankind's journey along the path from the gatherer-hunter societies of pre-history to today's nation-state and multinational capitalism with all the triumphs, tragedies and missed opportunities along the way.

Secondly, anarchism's general relevance as

underlined by its positive contribution to modern thought, which includes not just a decentralist and ecological vision of social organisation but also:

a) ideas relevant to housing<sup>2</sup> such as self-building, housing and tenant co-operatives;

b) work, regarding its organisation, be it in co-ops, collectives or in the form of self-employment;

c) production as such, i.e. what goods are produced, their design and use, the organisation of the exchange of goods and services, whether by a direct democratic form of planned economy or by an anarchist-collectivist version of the market/money system as discussed in John Griffin's pamphlet *A Structured Anarchism*.

Anarchism also has contributions to make to transport, health and many other issues of concern. This range of debate is our movement's strength. Anarchists look to whatever areas of knowledge enhance human understanding of ourselves and our world: history, sociology, ecology, psychology.

As pointed out by John Quail in his *Slow Burning Fuse*, the fortunes of the British anarchist movement wax and wane according to the 'the level of public self activity'. Indeed, the recent poll tax revolt was one such period.

We are also perhaps more formally organised than we have been for a long time with four separate organisations: Class War, DAM, ACF, AWG, which spread anarchist viewpoints with some effect. Also there are quite regular national gatherings such as conferences and book fairs. There seems to be a lot more activity of all sorts than ten to fifteen years ago, but there remains more that can be done. Anarchist radio, as pioneered by Radio Libertaire in Paris, and anarchist television might also be another medium of communication we could use. We limit our audience if we speak mainly through only the printed word. Times have moved on since Kropotkin founded *Freedom* and printed it using hand-set, movable lead-based type. Sad though it may be, reading as a leisure activity is in decline among the general public as electronic and computerised methods of communication expand their influence and we must take account of this in our own efforts to communicate.

There is a darker side to our organisational activities in the cliquishness and sectarianism that can descend on some groups, and this is an issue which needs to be addressed, but despite this life would be poorer without the hope and vision of the anarchist philosophy and movement. Long may both continue to develop and expand their influence.

J. Simcock

### Footnotes

1. Rudolf Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture*
2. Colin Ward, *Talking Houses*

## Of freedom's method

R.G. Collingwood, a much-neglected Professor of Philosophy at Oxford and a considerable libertarian, died in 1943. He was not fashionable, i.e. he did not fit in with either the Austen-Ayer school at Oxford or that of Wittgenstein at Cambridge. See his *Autobiography*.

He argued that new discoveries in *method* transformed civilisations. In classical Greece, given Pythagorean discoveries in music and mathematics, Socrates and Plato invented the new method of dialogue, dialectics. Aristotle followed them with his rational inductive method of sorting out encyclopaedic scholarship, the beginning of science.

Present western culture is the product of the Cartesian method of natural science. There was a decisive shift from the organic to the inorganic, from *anima* to *vis*, from the holistic judgement (with very mixed foundations including astrology, superstition and theology) to the method of mathematics. Even today we remain in the Cartesian age of quantification. Even Kropotkin, trying to make a break via the idea of mutual aid, remained a prisoner of positivism, i.e. the scientific method.

So Collingwood asks: "What follows Descartes?" And answered that human perceptions and reflections, hitherto governed by the ideas of natural science (above all mathematics), now need to be governed by history, i.e. our understanding of the past-present-future process as it affects our own kind. This is not to put science down but to place it firmly as second to the human order of things, i.e. after the humanities, which I take history to typify.

One can check this with friends, colleagues and contemporary writers. I hazard the guess that about 90% of men (I am not sure about women) think empirically, pragmatically, commonsensely, i.e. not historically.

It is interesting that a high proportion of people who have the most marked impact on contemporary thinking and action, whether they have come from the right or the left, have thought historically. On the left I am thinking of Christopher Hill, E.P. Thompson, Michael Foot, Nicolas Walter and Neal Ascherson, but it is the same on the right: Churchill,

Enoch Powell, G.K. Young and Norman Stone. Method, as such, is neither progressive nor reactionary; that depends upon the ends it is used to pursue.

### What of anarchist method?

Anarchist method to date has been essentially reactive propaganda against the state and great private wealth; freedom very loosely defined and justice hardly defined at all. At an early stage two other methods intruded and threw anarchism off course. The first was that of Marx who put all his eggs in one basket, i.e. the future of the industrial working class and its dictatorship; the second was overt terrorism justified as 'propaganda by the deed', heavily employed on the continent for some 35 years before World War One. These two intrusions in Britain deeply inhibited thinking on the subject of non-violence, imposed class-struggle ideas on anarchism and so constrained overall thinking as to render people unable to break new ground save over particular issues as over Spain, housing, education in art, details of historiography, and in sustaining Freedom Press for over a century.

What might pro-active anarchist methods consist of?

1. Thinking historically, anthropologically, aesthetically, psychologically.
2. Thinking ecologically, i.e. of humans in the biosphere and of their joint health.
3. Recognising that there is no progress without the original exercise of the individual genius; but also that inventiveness is still-born without backers. We can think individually but we can only act in groups.
4. Recreating authentic dialogue by multiplying single-figure groups and their networks. The leader-and-led syndrome is the product of church and state – leave it behind. Make the fullest use of high tech communications.

As to ends?

1. Dissolve the state in internationalism and regionalism.
2. Dissolve scarcity and the market in surplus – say 'hello' to Jerusalem.

Peter Cadogan

## Upper Class Leftists?

In *Freedom* of 14th December reviews of two books, one by William Morris and the other about him, occupy a full page. Thoughtful, informed and informative though they are, both of them display one surprising omission.

Look at these quotations:<sup>1</sup>

"RICH SCUM ... Thought-terminate 'em" (*Class War*).

"... the rich will always save themselves, leaving us to go on paying for their greed and inhumanity with our lives" (*Nottingham Anarchist News*).

"[we] who are wage slaves ... live in an inflexible world determined for us by others who you can be sure are not thus constrained" (article in *Freedom*).

"As long as workers in Britain accept that 'their' state has a right to occupy part of Ireland they will be unable to develop independent working class politics, unable to develop anarchist politics" (letter in *Freedom*).

"The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself" (SPGB, also Proudhon).

A strong tendency in anarchism and libertarian socialism presents them as movements of the workers, the poor, the oppressed, an assertion of their interests against those of the capitalists, the rich, the bosses. Of the two books reviewed, the one edited by Coleman and O'Sullivan links Morris with this theory, speaking of his understanding that socialism arose out of material circumstances.

This makes it surprising that neither of the reviews (and, as far as the reviews tell us, neither of the books) mentions that William Morris stands on the wrong side of the great divide. His biographer E.P. Thompson, not inclined to present Morris in a bad light, puts it bluntly: "The toil, under appalling conditions, of the workers in the tin and copper mines of Devon and Cornwall shielded him from poverty, and gave him his freedom of choice ..." His material circumstances set him with the rich scum, with the greedy and inhuman, with the unconstrained, with those to whom the state does belong. Economically he stands with the exploiters, with the oppressors, with – let us not balk at a word – with the capitalists.

If we could dismiss Morris as an isolated exception, the theory that economic material conditions fundamentally determine political

outlook might still stand up, but too many prominent revolutionaries have occupied similar social positions. In the words of one anarchist historian of anarchism: "A high proportion of celebrated anarchists came from the aristocracy or the country gentry: Bakunin, Kropotkin, Cherkesov and Tolstoy in Russia, Malatesta and Cafiero in Italy, are typical examples. Others, like Godwin, Domela Nieuwenhuis and Sebastien Faure, were former clergymen or seminarists" (Woodcock, *Anarchism*). We can add the founders of communism: Engels a Manchester manufacturer, Marx living partly on subsidies from Engels, on profits from the exploitation of his workers. Enough revolutionaries have come from the upper levels of the economic pyramid to demolish the theory that would explain revolution as a response to exploitation or oppression.

A small but significant minority of the 'upper' classes support revolution. This may not matter, except as an indicator. But it undeniably does matter a great deal that the overwhelming majority of the poor, the oppressed, the workers, do not support it. With information about anarchism available without charge in every public library and (as *Freedom* recently reported) with the state beginning to offer instruction in the subject, they stay away in their millions.

The belief that socialism arose out of material circumstances and that the economic material conditions of life under the capitalist state will turn the great numbers against it, has been contradicted by events for well over a century now, and we have no good reason for expecting this to change. Persistence with this exploded theory prevents us getting down to the job of finding out how it comes about that a small minority, of rich and poor alike, support anarchism while the great majority of each class ignore it. When we have understood that we shall have a hope of making progress towards the ends sought by William Morris, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta, and so many others. But not before.

George Walford

### Note:

1. Exact references for all quotations available on request – GW





## Anarchist Communist Federation Calendar 1992

Unless otherwise mentioned, all meetings will be held at the Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont Street, London WC1, beginning at 8.30pm.

- **16th January** - 'Crime in an Anarchist Society', a continuation of last year's excellent series 'Thinking about Anarchism'
- **23rd January** - This week's discussion: 'The Revolution - what form will it take?'
- **6th February** - Public meeting: Philippine worker speaking on the current situation in the Philippines
- **13th February** - Public debate: 'Freedom - how do we get it?', with the Islington branch of the Socialist Party. Held at the Highbury Roundhouse Community Centre, 71 Ronalds Road (off Holloway Road), N5, at 8pm (nearest tubes: Highbury & Islington or Holloway Road)
- **20th February** - Discussion: 'Science and Anarchism'
- **5th March** - The last of the 'Thinking about Anarchism' series. Topic: 'Anarchist-Communist Production and Distribution: is a centralised authority unavoidable?'

If further details are required, please write to: ACF (London), c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

**FREEDOM**  
fortnightly  
ISSN 0016 0504

Published by Freedom Press  
84b Whitechapel High Street  
London E1 7QX  
Printed by Aldgate Press, London E1

## MEETINGS

### Cambridge Anarchist Group Public Meeting Monday 3rd February at 8pm

*Donald Rooum will talk on*  
**'Anarchism as a Positive Idea'**  
at  
**The Man in the Moon,**  
Norfolk Street, Cambridge

For further information contact:  
Cambridge Anarchists, Box A,  
Grapevine Bookshop, Gwydir Street,  
Cambridge

### Anarchist Forum

Fridays at about 8.00pm at the Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square (via Cosmo Street off Southampton Row), London WC1.

#### 1992 SEASON OF MEETINGS

- 10th January** - 'Radical Islam' (speaker Peter Lumsden)
- 17th January** - General discussion
- 24th January** - 'Anarchism: Ancestor Worship or Blueprint' (speaker Peter Neville)
- 31st January** - General discussion on John Griffin's pamphlet *A Structured Anarchism* (Freedom Press, £1)
- 7th February** - General discussion
- 14th February** - 'Structural Thinking' (speaker Silvia Bercu)
- 21st February** - 'Co-editing *Freedom* in the 1960s' (speaker John Rety)
- 28th February** - General discussion

We are still booking speakers or topics for 1992. The dates free are from 6th to 20th March and 17th April to 10th July. If anyone would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, contact Dave Dane or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (Tel: 081-847 0203).

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