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FIFTY PENCE

"If human beings are fundamentally good, no government is necessary. If they are fundamentally bad, any government, being composed of human beings, would be bad also."

Fred Woodworth

The smiles, the handshakes, the baby kissing, the lies and the promises – that's all over: NOW LET'S FACE THE REALITIES!

It has been one of the dirtiest election campaigns and one on which no expense has been spared. The Tories were undoubtedly the biggest liars, having to convince the electorate that their thirteen years in office were an undiluted success story. In fact they spent more time denouncing the pre-1979 Labour Governments and presenting spine-chilling accounts of what would happen to every citizen high and low if they were foolish enough to elect Labour to government.

It couldn't be another Zinoviev letter since, after all, the Tories' great friend Yeltsin was a market capitalist with whom they were hoping to do business, just as Mrs Thatcher a few years back expressed her opinion following her meeting with Gorbachev that he was the kind of chap with whom she could "do business"!

The Tories' psychological warfare was mainly directed against Neil

Kinnock as a lightweight 'windbag' who could never stand up to his international counterparts, and it was interesting to note that the last Conservative television programme concentrated entirely on John Major. He was everywhere hob-nobbing with the world's political leaders: an equal among equals, a born leader. And all his ministers showered him with their superlatives – including ministers who had helped to stab Thatcher in the back! When he made his final peroration in a monotone, without a flicker of a smile or a gesture ... one felt almost sorry for the poor chap!

We said at the beginning that no expense was spared for the electoral circus. According to *The Independent* (7th April) spending on posters during the campaign amounted to more than £4.5 million, with the Tories' share at £3 million. A mere bagatelle compared with the

total advertising bill, which exceeded £30 million of which the Tories' share is £20 million.* All this in order to persuade a few million 'don't knows' and other 'floating voters' to put a quinquennial cross against their would-be minders!

When anarchists are criticised for making no headway with their ideas, imagine what Freedom Press could do in the way of anarchist propaganda if we had at our disposal not £30 million but just £1 million to broadcast our political and social ideas.

This very week we received an enquiry from somebody in North London which reads:

"Your existence was drawn to my attention by some libertarian friends in America, who showed me one of your books. Both my American friends and I are desperate to obtain further titles. Do you operate a mail order service which US residents could use? ... My friends were unable to find any of your books in the USA. Do you not have outlets there? ..."

Not '1984' but 1992 in Britain

Readers of Orwell's 1984 will remember his horrific accounts of the treatment of prisoners in what was assumed worldwide to be a picture of the Soviet Union – which made it into the best-seller it never deserved.

Well, we have in 1992 not a novelist's account of man's inhumanity to man in the Soviet Union ... but a real event on our own doorstep.

Alex Mason, 28, a police constable was recently jailed for 30 months for "repeatedly stamping on a motorist's head and then trying to conceal the incident". 'Incident' indeed!

The victim Harold Benn, 27, was not a violent man, nor armed. He was breathalysed in Tooting, South London, and the result was negative. But he was then arrested "on suspicion of driving a stolen car". He

protested and officers "summoned help".

We quote from *The Independent* report:

"Between 15 and 20 officers surrounded Mr Benn and bundled him face down into a police van. Mason stamped on his head at least three times with the heel of his shoe. Mr Benn complained after he was released from Tooting police station when it was found he owned the car"

So Mr Benn was neither drunk nor driving a stolen car. Unfortunately he is black. The only redeeming feature of this 1984-style head-stamping is that Mr Benn could not have expected to get justice but for the fact that two police officers (one a woman) who witnessed the head-stamping reported the 'incident'. The woman officer told the court that she had been 'cold-shouldered' as a result.

This parenthesis may seem trivial on the morrow of a general election in which millions of citizens have put their crosses on the ballot papers. In our opinion quite the contrary. All the participants to the political circus are offering their services to operate one

(continued on page 2)

*In addition organising the election (polling stations, part-time employees, extra police, etc.) have cost the taxpayer a mere £40 million!

**FREEDOM PRESS
BOOKSHOP will be
closed over the Easter
weekend: Good Friday
17th, Saturday 18th
and Easter Monday
20th April**

NOW LET'S FACE THE REALITIES!

(continued from page 1)

system: *the capitalist system*. Not one of the parties involved questions that system. Those of us outside the political parties who do, never have an opportunity to express their support for an alternative non-capitalist society. The politicians – especially the young ambitious Labour shadow ministers – seek to convince the public that we must keep up with the times. We can't look backwards. "Technology and all that has changed all our views about life and what it's all about." Principles were okay a hundred years ago. Trades unions were okay a hundred years ago. Co-operatives were okay a hundred years ago.

Now the watchword is the market economy. Let the cheapest overseas supplier come in whether he employs slave labour, subsidises exports, pollutes the environment in the process. This results in millions of unemployed in the importing country.

We are living in this very situation. There are more than twenty million unemployed in the twelve member countries of the European Community. It is estimated that the former Soviet Union republics

and their satellites will have a further 45 million unemployed since they appear to have chosen the market economy / capitalist 'solution'. (The only 'success' story to emerge from that disaster zone is that there are already a growing number of millionaires. Surely a proof, if it were needed, that capitalism is good for a minority.)

Nobody in the media or among the politicians asks why the 'prosperous' countries of the West are deep in recession. They dare not, for they would have to admit that modern technology had one the one hand made it possible to produce all our wants worldwide, but on the other the capitalist system ensures that wealth is concentrated in the hands of a small minority who however greedy they are (and they certainly do their best to denude the planet) just cannot absorb the markets for this ever-expanding potential production of goods and services.

The Labour politicians make *investment in industry* a top priority, but unless they keep out imports from the cheap (meaning cheap labour) countries all they will do is to add to the unsaleable surpluses and to the bankruptcies.

The Tories say they are the party to take the country out of recession. In the same breath they deny ever having taken the country *into* recession! They are right about the latter statement. A *laissez faire* approach to the capitalist economy (the Tories have intervened only in curbing the powers of the trade unions, and they may live to regret it) can only, in the 1990s, when even the third world is being rapidly industrialised (thanks to Thatcher's government in 1979 releasing capital investment worldwide at the expense of investment here) lead to massive unemployment and further cuts to the few public services which give any credence to the capitalist system as one that is concerned with the daily needs, especially of the weaker members of our society.

The Communist guru (now something else!) Eric Hobsbawm dismissed anarchism as only possible in simple agricultural societies, while at the same time suggesting that Stalinist Communism had the solutions for the modern technological mass production industrial societies. Another guru, this time for the capitalists, Hayek dismissed the socialist dream as a nightmare!

Mr Hobsbawm's Utopia – the USSR – has collapsed ignominiously. Mr Hayek's capitalist Utopia is consuming itself by its greed.

Whatever government takes office this month, nothing will change because capitalism is what it is. What about examining in depth the anarchist alternative?

After the 9th April jamboree DOES IT MATTER WHO WON?

Though the Labour Party took more than forty seats from the Tories they needed twice that number to take over the political, social and financial mess in which this country finds itself. Obviously Mr Kinnock and his friends were thirsting to get to Downing Street and all that goes with it by way of the trappings of power. Now this could be Mr Kinnock's last chance as leader of his party.

Actually, in our humble opinion (and of course we cannot compete with the expert political commentators and the pollsters – who, in fact, got it all wrong!) the younger politicians in the Labour hierarchy may come to welcome the fact that they are not having to take over a crisis of such proportions. All we can foresee so far as Mr Major's new government is concerned is complete inaction so far as the economy and unemployment are concerned. They will just go on prating about the market economy and blaming the world recession for all our woes, and unemployment will go on rising, the homeless will go on increasing and public services will go on being cut and/or privatised.

The immediate reaction of the City to the Tory victory was for share prices to leap up, sterling gained on the deutschmarks and on the dollar, followed immediately by the pundits suggesting that as a result interest rates could be cut. We are writing only on the morning after, but we suggest that by the time this issue of *Freedom* appears all the euphoria

will have been overtaken by the stark reality that these are gimmicks which are very profitable for the speculators but don't make an ounce of difference to the hard facts of life in capitalist Britain.

That the Tories in government for thirteen years have been unable to prevent two slumps or recessions hardly convinces one that they now know how to get out of this one.

The real world crisis is one of the maldistribution of wealth. There is plenty for all in the world, but unfortunately worldwide power is in the hands of a greedy rich minority. They possess or control the resources of life; their privileges are entrenched in a legal system of their own creation and protected and enforced by the police, the prison service and the army – all led by their own class.

There are no means of solving these basic problems by simply putting a cross against the name of somebody who promises to run the system 'more fairly'. Pressure must come from below, from the victims: the unemployed, the old and the sick, the homeless, the exploited 'unskilled' labour. Petitions are fine, but governments will only respect the people in the street. When, for instance, will a new, militant trade union movement be born? Sack the tired old bureaucrats and build a new workers' organisation based on solidarity and not inter-union competition!

American women defend their right to abortion

Up to 300,000 people, mostly women, took part in a demonstration in Washington called by the National Organisation of Women and many other abortion rights groups, to make clear to the government and to the Supreme Court hearings to be held later this month on a Pennsylvania state law which severely restricts access to abortion, that they want to be in charge of their bodies. Jane Fonda summed it up so well when she hurled at the government: "We say to the government: you have enough problems of your own. Stay out of my womb!"

Officialdom seems biased against the pro-abortion women starting with Bush himself. The Supreme Court now joined by Justice Clarence Thomas, Bush's appointee and the star turn in the recent unsuccessful rape trial, has a conservative majority which will probably overturn the 1973 *Roe v Wade* decision guaranteeing the constitutional right to an abortion.

Can one imagine anything more outrageous, let alone anti-democratic (whatever that means in authoritarian society) than that a group of men calling themselves the Supreme Court have the power to deny every woman in the land their right to decide how they will dispose of their bodies: whether or not to conceive?

No recession for lawyers and accountants

The latest libel case involving the pop star Jason Donovan ended with judgment in his favour and damages of £200,000, but in addition to that it was estimated that legal charges on both sides amounted to a further £200,000. How can one ever justify such outrageous costs for a hearing that lasted only a few days?

We can explain how the racket works. When the anarchist editors of *Freedom's* predecessor *War Commentary* were arrested in 1944 they contacted Ernest Silverman, wayward brother of Sydney the Labour MP responsible for the abolition of the death penalty, a solicitor's clerk at the time for advice, which was: "You will get as much law as you are prepared to pay for". One other quote: John Mortimer QC and another in the television serial 'Rumpole of the Bailey' has rightly pointed out that the biggest 'closed shop' is the legal profession!

It was said that when Captain Bob Maxwell died lawyers would feel the draught as his technique, when questioned as to his financial dealings, was to immediately issue writs to shut them up. In fact in death Maxwell has proved a godsend to the lawyers and the other profession that is doing very nicely out of the

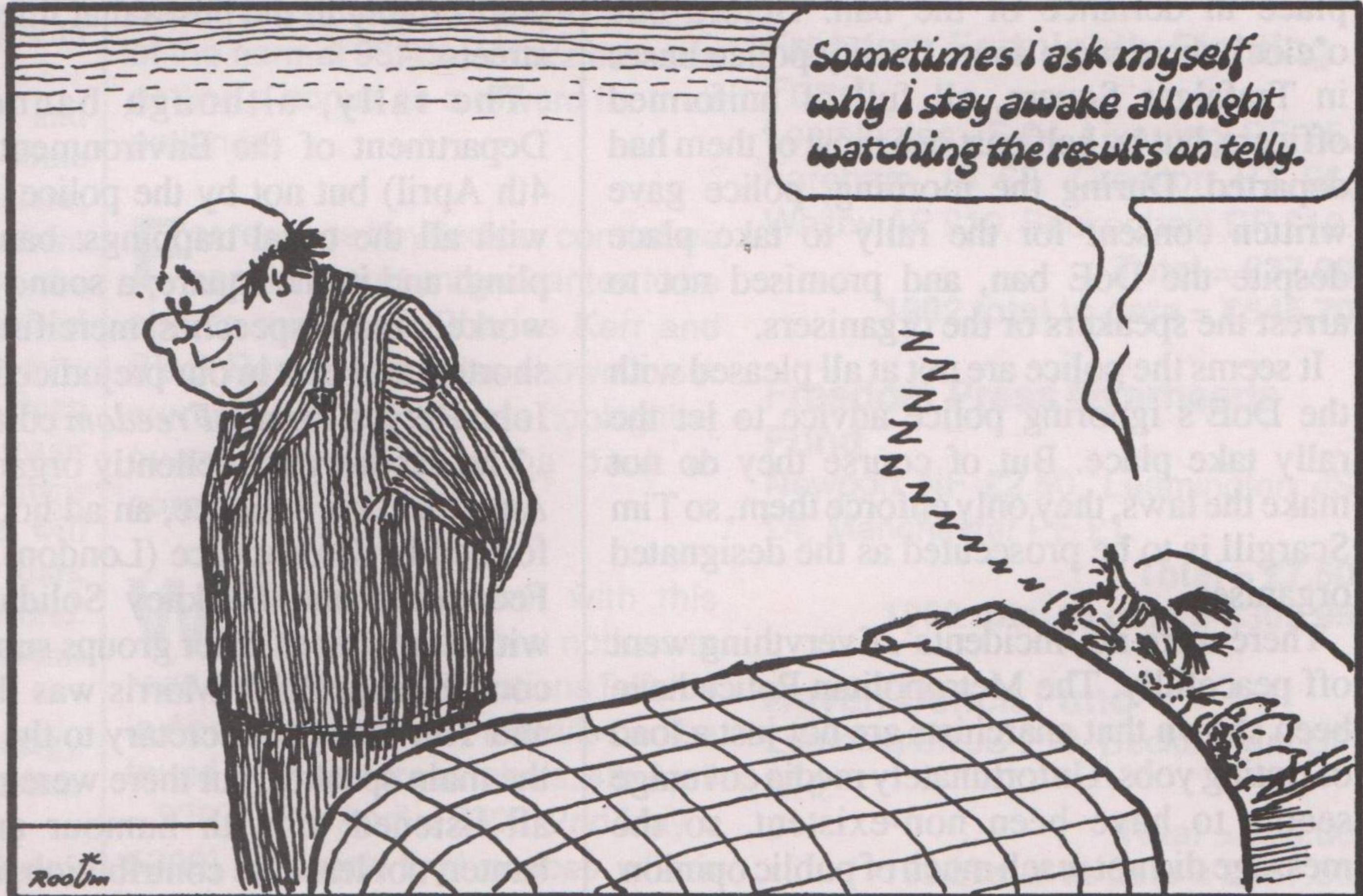
disaster, *the accountants*.

In a way they are the 'undertakers' of business failures. But they also flourish when business is looking up.

What we anarchists object to is that the lawyers and accountants are employed by governments both to draft the laws and the taxation regulations, for it is obvious that were they to draft the law simply and clearly there would be virtually *no litigation* and this of course would put most of the legal and actuarial profession out of a job.

Most people don't realise or remember that Mrs Thatcher before she became a minister specialised as a tax avoidance adviser (all above board, needless to say – but which indicates that the tax laws are riddled with loopholes).

The ridiculous fees demanded by the lawyers operate against those who have been wronged by employers or by the press but who lack the means to proceed against them knowing full well that they are facing people with superior means, and as our late lamented Ernest told us: *You get as much law as you can pay for.*



Who's for peeling the political onion of power? What will happen in the event of a Labour victory? The FT 100 share index, the money markets and sterling will demonstrate their disapproval!

So what? Well then, the new government will have to decide how it is going to respond to this movement in the markets. Labour claims to believe in the markets, and will not shun an unfavourable market reaction.

Consequently, John Smith – of whom William Rees-Mogg says: "One would have to go back to Snowdon in 1931 to find a Labour chancellor in office with less apparent knowledge of economic theory" – will have to make his mind up how to act. Sooner or later, whether quickly or slowly, he will be forced to play the game which the markets dictate he must play. The name of the game is that he will increase interest rates to calm the markets or he will devalue the pound within the exchange rate mechanism as some in the City fear. If he doesn't do one of these things on day one, the danger is that he may have it forced on him in the months that follow.

To the faithful this is called selling-out. But as Mr Rees-Mogg says: "Every Labour government from 1924 to 1979 failed in its mission"; perhaps anarchists will not have been too surprised to see Mr Smith sucking-up to the City already, even before gaining office.

This power beneath the surface skin of office is not a new discovery to a Labour government. The Labour government in the 1930s, which Malcolm Muggeridge claimed turned out "in practice to be only a rather more than usually ineffectual government", was drummed out of office by the financial markets. The picture is drawn by Muggeridge, based on what he was told by Sidney Webb: "... he [Webb] and the other cabinet ministers sat in the garden at 10 Downing Street on that warm August evening waiting for a telephone call from New York to tell them whether American banking houses were prepared to put up a loan sufficient to enable the Treasury

Anti-election notes

Thanks to all those who distributed the Freedom Press anti-election leaflet. Evidently, it was much more useful than the one we produced for the 1987 election.

Our entire print run of 5,000 sold out, except for the file copies. Another run of 3,000 copies, with local material added, was printed and distributed in Aberystwyth. 500 copies of the main text were pasted up in bus shelters in Reading.

About 1,200 anarchists took part in the anti-election march from Trafalgar Square to Parliament Square and back by a different route on Saturday 4th March. Speakers in the preceding rally included John Rety, a former editor of *Freedom*.

The rally had been banned by the Department of the Environment, and took place in defiance of the ban. Before one o'clock there were some twenty police buses in Trafalgar Square, all full of uniformed officers, but by half past one most of them had departed. During the morning, police gave written consent for the rally to take place despite the DoE ban, and promised not to arrest the speakers or the organisers.

It seems the police are not at all pleased with the DoE's ignoring police advice to let the rally take place. But of course they do not make the laws, they only enforce them, so Tim Scargill is to be prosecuted as the designated organiser.

There were no 'incidents'. Everything went off peacefully. The Metropolitan Police have been shown that anarchists are not just a load of rioting yobs. Unfortunately media coverage seems to have been non-existent, so the message did not reach much of public opinion.

The factory and beyond

The Political Onion

to go on supporting the pound on the gold standard. When the answer came as no, there was nothing more they could do. They just shook their heads and departed, leaving MacDonald to go to the Palace and resign". To Muggeridge, it marked the end of any "notion that the Labour Party, or any Social Democratic party similarly constituted, can be an effective instrument of fundamental social change". From then on, whenever he came across the great plans a Labour government might be expected to accomplish, he couldn't help thinking of that little cluster of respectable-looking men in the garden at 10 Downing Street, drawing at their pipes, occasionally getting up to stretch their legs while they awaited Wall Street's decision to settle their fate.

Labour is neither use nor ornament, as my dad might have said. Well, perhaps it has value as an ornament! As a symbol to the enduring silliness and stupidity of State Socialism.

Leadership qualities

The quality of our political leaders should not be judged on the basis of their poor performances in other fields. That Mr Major is a failed bus conductor, or Mr Kinnock turned into a feeble student at university, ought not to be held against them in their present chosen careers in public life.

Giulio Andreotti, the leader of the Italian Christian Democratic Party and a major figure in Italian politics since 1946, recently confessed that when he took an exam to be a civil servant in the ministry of finance as a young man he failed, getting only 18%. Since then, he pointed out, he has been both minister of defence and minister of finance.

Clearly patience is important to the aspiring politician, as well as having 'nowt better to do'. Before becoming an MP, Neil Kinnock's only claim to fame was as something in the Student's Union at the University of Cardiff. Mr Major seems to have had a chequered career before entering politics, but he told Sue Lawley something significant when he was on Desert Island Discs: he said he went into politics because he couldn't hope to be a great scientist or musician.

Now that is good advice to the unemployed

and unemployables of the nation – if you are no good at owt else and have nowt better to do, then become an MP.

Some of this century's greatest political leaders very nearly failed to recognise their full potential through getting side-tracked in vain artistic pretensions and commonplace careers early in life. Hitler wasted a lot of time trying to make it as an artist. He twice failed the entrance exams for the Vienna Academy. His father died believing the young Adolf to be a failure – with no talent as a painter and without the entrance diploma to enter a school of architecture, he had to become a draftsman. In later life he nearly settled for the minor profession of editor of *Volkische Beobachter*. That was in 1922. Luckily for him events pushed him beyond these such petty ambitions. Mussolini, another mediocre journalist, spent a few idle years as an elementary school teacher and attempted an excursion into a literary career. He had a go at some novels, mostly of an anti-clerical pornographic nature such as *l'Amante del Cardinale* (the Cardinal's Mistress), with priests and nuns violating their vows of chastity, sadistic portrayals of deformities and criminal passions. His style was that of the bombastic prose of a provincial newspaper; but, says the writer Ignazio Silone, "this didn't prevent Mussolini from becoming dictator in the land of Leopardi and Manzoni".

Mussolini it is true did work briefly as a bricklayer before going into journalism, which is perhaps more of a proper job than Mr Kinnock has ever done. In the years to come

perhaps we will see more of this kind of US-style career politician, like Neil Kinnock.

The great opportunist

Mrs Thatcher said recently of the Labour leaders: "They can change their suits, but they can't change their socialist spots". It is doubtful if the 'socialist spots' of the Labour Party was ever more than a mild case of the measles. In any event, it would seem that Kinnock's leadership has put them well beyond any recurrence of the complaint.

Mr Kinnock has that talent so vital to the successful politician: he is an opportunist of some genius. He is also a quick change artist! During his reign as leader of the Labour Party he has managed to lapse his membership of CND, adopt devolution, accept the trade union reform legislation of the Tory government, and move to the approval of the sale of council houses.

This skill in changing his tune, and getting his party to follow, is a mark of some ability.

Capitalist voice

The syndicalists of the 1960s used to have a paper called *Worker's Voice*; the voice of capitalism as portrayed by *The Financial Times* is much more pungent. In an editorial last weekend, it warned a possible Labour government that: "It may be hard for immobile British politicians to comprehend, but levying high taxes on practitioners in international finance markets may be one thing, collecting them quite another".

State socialists, if such a curious creature still exists, please note: having a Labour government is one thing, having an effective Labour government which will provide serious social change is quite another.

Mack the Knife

A political disease or two

Yesterday, our first magical day of our spring in Suffolk, was marred by a visit from the vet, a visit not instigated by me but by the big sheep breeders and the government as usual looking after your and my interests. The vet brought with him two enthusiastic assistants, students doing a bit of practical work. He had come to take blood samples from our forty ewes to test against maedi-visna, a wasting respiratory disease.

No doubt their visit to Botch Up Farm provided a welcome relief from the normal fare in cats and dogs and their indulgent owners.

I asked the vet if he'd informed his assistants about maedi-visna on their way out to my place. "Well, I was hoping you would do that" he replied. A pretty good answer I thought, as neither he nor I nor anybody else we know has ever encountered the disease. Just in case the students still thought they were engaging, at last, in a piece of real work I went straight for the jugular, which of course was what they were looking for in my sheep. "Maedi-visna is a political disease" I announced as I laboured for them catching the sheep and identifying their ear numbers in an otherwise well-acted charade. "Its purpose is to exclude non-accredited continental breeds of sheep from the best showing and selling opportunities in Britain and to shut out smaller breeders who are not able to afford the vet's fee for testing, and the annual policing fee paid to the Ministry of Agriculture.

"Maedi-visna exists on the continent, in Norway I think" protested the fourth year vet student. The vet, being a wise man, remained silent. "Maybe," I replied, "but there are real, serious problems associated with our breed of sheep that government, vets and breeders would be addressing if they were really concerned about the health of animals and people."

Then I mentioned scrapie. Now scrapie exists in Suffolk sheep and is the forerunner of mad cow disease which was originally contracted, or so the experts reckon, from cows being fed sheep offal as protein. Scrapie and mad cow disease seem to have both natural and cultural origins and not being an either/or problem are seemingly impossible to tackle through the programmed scientific mind. At any rate, for some years before the outbreak of mad cow disease nobody at the

(continued on page 4)

Banned rally in Trafalgar Square

750 anarchists and 1500 police held a rally in Trafalgar Square on Saturday 4th April. I don't know if they were all anarchists and I didn't count the police so my journalistic credentials are suspect. In the event most of the police spent the afternoon sitting comfortably in the buses that littered the side streets.

The rally, although banned by the Department of the Environment (*Freedom*, 4th April) but not by the police, went ahead with all the usual trappings: banners on the plinth and in the square; a sound system that worked; many speeches, mercifully short, the shortest and best in our prejudiced opinion by John Rety, a former *Freedom* editor.

The event was excellently organised by the Anti-Election Alliance, an ad hoc committee formed by Greenpeace (London), Class War Federation and Hackney Solidarity Group, with a number of other groups supporting and contributing. Brian Morris was the link man and Tim Scargill, secretary to the committee, the main speaker, but there were many others all listened to with humour and friendly banter, not least the contribution, in solidarity

for free speech, by a speaker from the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group who have maintained a vigil for many years outside the South African Embassy in the square. She called for one person one vote in South Africa – well, it was neither the time nor the place for a discussion on the philosophical implications of her contribution.

After an hour we marched (walked?) noisily down Whitehall, very noisily passed the presumably empty Houses of Parliament, along the Embankment and back to the square via Northumberland Avenue, for some brief concluding comments from Tim Scargill.

To all those who stayed away fearing violence – there was none. To the media, too busy pursuing the three electioneering wankers round the country, to attend – we were more fun.

As an attempt to keep the Houses of Parliament empty we were not successful this time, but as a demonstration that there are people who recognise that the election is a farce, it counted.

HS

Chomsky's Anarchism

In the introduction to *The Chomsky Reader*, James Peck writes that Noam Chomsky is a radical intellectual who "fits nowhere", a writer who belongs to no political tradition because thinking within traditions is anathema to him.

This is patently not true.

Chomsky has always situated himself squarely within the anarchists or libertarian socialist tradition, rightly sensing that these two terms are synonymous. This is clearly evident in the first chapter of the book where, in an interview with Peck himself, Chomsky explicitly refers to the anarchist 'tradition' and speaks of the important insights offered by Bakunin, Kropotkin and Rocker. And it is of interest that Peck's anthology – though it includes some of Chomsky's famous and substantive articles – does not include any of his specifically anarchist writings or interviews – like his interview with Peter Jay on *The Relevance of Anarcho-Syndicalism*. And that's a pity. But in disregarding Chomsky's connection with anarchism Peck is by no means unique; he is merely following a common pattern, namely the tendency to by-pass the anarchism that grounds Chomsky's thought. Several anthologies and histories of anarchism in fact virtually ignore Chomsky. Peter Marshall in his recent book puts him alongside Paine, Spencer, Russell and Foucault as a 'libertarian', but in his strident anti-capitalism, Chomsky has always been more than just a radical liberal. He is certainly more of an anarchist than Herbert Read, as Peter's account of both men makes clear, yet the latter writer gets seven pages to Chomsky's two.

Chomsky, of course, although one of the most original and profound of contemporary scholars – he has revolutionised the study of linguistics as well as having had an enormous influence on philosophy, anthropology and psychology – has never claimed to be an original anarchist thinker. He has described himself as a "derivative fellow traveller" but his style of libertarian socialism clearly has affinities to that of Bakunin and Rocker's anarcho-syndicalism, as well as to the left-wing Marxism of Pannekoek and Guerin – as he continually acknowledges.

Over the last decade a number of anthologies of Chomsky's writings and interviews have been published.

Language and Responsibility (1979) was based on conversations with French linguist Mitsou Ronat. Its main focus was on linguistics and the philosophy of language; only the first chapters dealt with Chomsky's political writings, and it has little on anarchism.

Carlos Otero edited a very useful selection of Chomsky's political writings, *Radical Priorities* (1981). The book focused on shorter pieces, and had an equally useful introduction to Chomsky's social theory – although Otero tends to view Chomsky as an original anarchist thinker, something which Chomsky has never claimed to be.

The Chomsky Reader (1987) contains most of Chomsky's substantive articles on political economy; it has, however, little on language, and as said, nothing on anarchism apart from

A political disease or two

(continued from page 3)

Ministry of Agriculture saw fit to research or monitor the problem of scrapie in sheep. Yet every breeder of Suffolk sheep knows the disease from experience. I once bought a ram from the President of the Suffolk Sheep Society that developed the disease. Yet scrapie and mad cow disease are so serious they may yet find their way into our nervous system and this chronic nervous disease leads to a nasty end.

However, for us breeders of Suffolk sheep, maedi-visna is real and scrapie just another 'non-notifiable disease' as the once President of the Suffolk Sheep Society informed me.

Denis Pym

Chomsky's reflections on the Spanish Civil War. The introduction is short and lacks substance.

None of the above texts, therefore, give a balanced approach or introduction to Chomsky's work. In the bookshops now, however, is yet another book on Chomsky, again edited by Otero, and for its range it is probably the best. It consists of a series of interviews with Chomsky by a wide variety of people, from very diverse backgrounds, and it covers all aspects of Chomsky's work. Stretching to over seven hundred pages, it consists of fifty interviews. Chomsky, for sure, is quite a good writer who eschews jargon, but all his writings reflect his wide erudition and a rather dense scholarship so that they do not make easy reading. His interviews, in contrast, are lucid, reflective, succinct, and didactic – and thus very easy to follow. Inevitably there is a lot of repetition in the book, but it is a book that one can dip into at any page, and it is graced by a long and interesting introduction by Otero. It regrettably lacks any index, but then, judging by their other publications, Black Rose Books don't believe in them. But this book badly needed one.

Given its scope – reflecting a range of Chomsky's thought – it is impossible to review the contents of this anthology in a short space. But it might be useful, in summary fashion, to outline some of the main themes of Chomsky's political theory as evident in the text.

Chomsky continually questions the idea that Western intellectuals are independent scholars, who tend to adopt critical and liberal attitudes. To the contrary, he sees such intellectuals as the 'new mandarins' ready to serve as ideologists, functioning to serve corporate and state interests. They are largely myth-makers.

Like Bakunin, Chomsky accepts the essential validity and usefulness of Marx's theory of capitalism. The general idea of class analysis he therefore suggests is indispensable to an understanding of contemporary social processes. The notion that 'class is a chimera', an old ultra-conservative doctrine currently espoused by some anarchists, Chomsky sees as part of the 'manufacture of consent'.

Being a linguist, Chomsky provides some interesting analyses of the way in which language is used by political commentators and the media to shape, and mystify, our understanding of social reality. Thus to translate: in the 'national interest' means in the interest of the state and corporate power and not that of the people; 'pacification' is a euphemism for the mass murder of third world peoples; 'terrorism' in reality the violence of the state against the people and not the reverse; 'democracy' implies the rule of an elite who represent corporate interests and not the active participation of people in the democratic process. 'Neo-Conservatism' in the United States was in fact a response to a decade when many sections of the population – feminists, blacks, students, anti-war radicals – ceased to be apathetic and passive and began to organise themselves and to enter the political arena. This for the elite created a 'crisis of democracy'. Even the term 'radical' has changed its meaning: it now refers to someone who supports capitalism and believes in state power and state violence. 'Free world' means the unfree world of capitalism.

Chomsky emphasises that the media has become almost completely subservient to the state, contrary to its public image. They rarely expose or critically analyse state policies, and as they are themselves major corporations, they share the interests and perceptions of other elite groups in society. The media via the

state is dominated by the material interests of corporate groups that control the domestic economy. What has thus been created is an illusion of a free and open debate, while ensuring that only a narrow spectrum of opinion and analysis ever reaches the public. What we are not getting is a system of 'brainwashing under freedom', a system of propaganda that is much more subtle than that of the Nazis.

Although a strong advocate of committed scholarship and knowledge, Chomsky repudiates the idea that knowledge and understanding are the preserve of intellectuals and experts. Specialist knowledge may be important in certain areas, but the understanding of social life is open to everyone. To unmask political ideologies all that is needed, he feels, is open-mindedness, healthy scepticism and normal common sense.

Chomsky is highly critical of American foreign policy – as reflected in its interventions in Vietnam and in other areas throughout the world. Both 'liberal' and 'conservative' opinion in the United States is committed, he suggests, to basically the same state capitalist ideology, and to the free exercise of state power to construct a global system in which US-based corporations can operate freely, and in which human and material resources can be exploited for their benefit. He refers to this as the 'fifth freedom' of the US constitution, namely the freedom to rob, to exploit, and to dominate other people.

Although sympathetic to Marx, and such Marxists as Pannekoek, Chomsky is highly critical of the Leninist tradition, with its notion of a vanguard party. This leads inevitably, as in the Russian revolution, to the destruction of all popular forms of democracy. Chomsky sees Bolshevism as a right-wing deviation from traditional Marxism. He is also critical of the kind of anarcho-capitalism advocated by Murray Rothbard – for he feels the inequalities of power under capitalism will inevitably give rise to an extreme form of authoritarianism. It would be like living under Genghis Khan. What Chomsky argues for is council communism or anarcho-syndicalism, which, as social forms, he sees as highly appropriate to advanced industrial societies. What he would love to see, he writes, is "centralised power eliminated, whether it's the state or the economy, and have it diffused and ultimately under direct control of the participants" (page 162). He sees this as entirely realistic under present conditions.

As a political commentator Chomsky sees his role as not to convert, but to inform. He does not want people, he says, to slavishly believe him, any more than they should believe the party line that he criticises – academic authority, the media, or overt state propaganda. Some have wondered how his politics and his linguistic theory connect up, and of course they don't in any simple fashion. But underlying both his linguistics and his trenchant political critiques is Chomsky's anarchism, his belief that the essence of human nature consists of an underlying need for freedom, the freedom to express ourselves through language which he argues is inherently creative, the freedom to have self-fulfilling and creative work, and the need to be free from external arbitrary constraints and controls. It all mounts up, he suggests, to what Bakunin called an "instinct for freedom".

There are problems in Chomsky's social philosophy, for as a Cartesian rationalist he tends to ignore the intuitive and non-cognitive aspects of life, and there is little in the way of an ecological perspective in his writings. He has, too, a rather uncritical faith in science and the beneficial effects of existing machine-technology, and this, as Pat Flanagan long ago argued (*Freedom*, 1982, 43) is far from being entirely compatible with worker's self-management. But like that other Jewish radical scholar, Albert Einstein, Chomsky has always been a devoted servant of truth and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, of justice, and of human liberty. He is one of the most seminal thinkers of our time, but he is also fundamentally an anarchist.

Brian Morris

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THE RAVEN – 16
ON EDUCATION (2)
96 pages, £2.50 (post free inland)
from FREEDOM PRESS

Poll Tax Rebellion

(continued from page 5)

them, Labour were attacking non-payers and attempting to undermine the campaign. The anti poll tax movement centred on activity by the people themselves, it was non-directive and non-hierarchical, and thus the antithesis of Labour's 'pragmatic' and defeatist response. In failing to act in any way which mattered, Kinnock and the unions thereby demonstrated their irrelevance – a fact which will shortly be demonstrated in the coming election.

Lastly, two slight criticisms of this book. Firstly, aspects of violence and the more militant forms of direct action are down-played. For example the firebombing of Northampton's Madagan's office as a response to the first use of bailiffs to enforce poll tax (July 1990), or the actions of scum-buster patrols on the estates, could have been given a more forceful emphasis. Secondly, more seriously, there is insufficient detail about the bias, systematic distortion and downright suppression of reporting about mass non-payment and the anti poll tax movement by the media. A revolutionary critique of the present political structure is going to have to address this problem. This being said, the book is well worthwhile and the photographs by Mark Simmons are excellent. Buy this book!

Kevin Klubman

HOMELESS PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA

(continued from page 7)

convinced that the anarchist future is inherent in the present.

Homelessness and peonage are conditions of Russian and American one-world capitalism. All capitalists try to detach 'economics' from the human community. President Bush and other warlords of the world are impelled to extinguish the very idea of freedom, the idea that a new society, a liberatory society, is possible. But the worldwide crisis in production is dangerous, and unresolvable within the delimitations of capitalism! A new concept of, and basis for, human freedom has become an imperative need. The anarchist vision of the future proceeds from our conviction of the necessity to totally uproot the 'permanence' and the foundations of capitalism and statism ... and create a new society.

Séamus Cain

There has been more press coverage of Peter Marshall's book *Demanding the Impossible* following the account here a few issues ago (22nd February).

The hostile Marxist review in *City Limits* (13th February) was answered by two letters the following week a short polite one from Nicolas Walter mentioning "several false claims about anarchism", and a long rude one from Ron Allen of the Anarchist Communist Federation beginning: "From the right wing's pet historian Norman Stone via the Labour buffoon Michael Foot to the Bolshevik GP David Widgery, the critics in the establishment press have used reviews of Peter Marshall's book on anarchism to launch lying and inaccurate attacks on the philosophy of the same name." The reviewer Arthur Neslen briefly replied, making the claim that "no socialist has ever advocated a holocaust"; he hasn't read the socialists who have done just that, from Marx and Engels onwards. From the other end of the spectrum, Alec Campbell's review in *The Daily Mail* (13th February), headlined 'Tales of the barmy army', described anarchism as "the politics of

Demanding the Impossible

mad March hares" and "Mad Hatters", and referred to some of the sillier statements and actions of anarchists though he did sympathise with Bakunin's call for "the total abolition of politics" in the shadow of the coming General Election.

As often happens, some local and provincial papers published more sensible reviews than most of the national ones. Louis Heren in *The Hampstead & Highgate Express* (14th February) gave a sympathetic summary of libertarian ideas and actions, ending with the comment that "it's worth trying", but carelessly attributing to Thomas Jefferson the later motto, "That government is best which governs least". David Bell in *The Yorkshire Post* (3rd February) described the book as "a solid, if unrelieved, survey of anarchism" which is "a compelling successor to George Woodcock's book", gave a fair account of the movement, and ended with the nice remark that "the first reaction of an anarchist to a

problem is not to throw a bomb at it it is to write a book". James Ferguson in *The Oxford Times* (6th March) discussed anarchism with sympathy though not much knowledge, described the book as "an encyclopaedic account of its intellectual traditions and principal adherents", and doubted the relevance of Marshall's reference to Margaret Thatcher.

As also often happens, some Scottish papers published more knowledgeable reviews than most of the English ones. The socialist poet Alan Bold in *The Glasgow Herald* (30th January) said that the book "is no objective history of anarchism but a labour of love by one who believes", complained that Marshall "makes the mistake of assuming all libertarian thinking is inherently anarchist", objected to some of the people covered (Paine, Mill, Whitman, Morris, Nietzsche, Thoreau, the Sex Pistols), and described anarchism as "an ideal dreamed up by writers with a distaste for what passes as reality". J.B. Pick in *The Scotsman* (29th February) noted that the book "comes at an apposite moment", described it as "the most comprehensive account of anarchist thought ever written", and mentioned some of the peculiar inclusions (Augustine and Sade) and unfortunate omissions (the novels of Ramon Sender and Ursula Le Guin, the work of A.S. Neill and Carl Rogers).

But there were two well-informed and well-argued reviews in English national papers. In *The Independent on Sunday* (23rd February) Lorna Sage said that "the book is a kind of model of what it talks about a sphere of near-structureless co-existence, a commune or phalanstery for all the friends of libertarianism from Wat Tyler to Walt Whitman to Tristan Tzara", including "a wildly assorted bunch of precursors, fellow-travellers and avatars, ranging from seventh-century BC Taoist thinkers to punks and Greens", that Marshall "wants everyone, somehow, to be on everyone else's side", and that "there's something wrong here ... unless

you accept muddle as anarchy in action". In *The Financial Times* (15th February) A.C. Grayling made several sensible criticisms both of the book and its subject, calling the former "a sustained polemic on behalf of anarchism" and the latter "touching but naive", and also pointed out the irony of a book in favour of anarchism being written and published in the commercial market.

The BBC World Service broadcast a review by its political correspondent Andrew Whitehead, who has done research of his own into the history of anarchism, though one wouldn't know it from his superficial summary. A review by Nicolas Walter appeared in *The London Review of Books* on 21st February, but a letter from him in the following issue complained that it had been so drastically and clumsily cut as to be a travesty of what he wrote. We understand that it was shortened by nearly half; perhaps the full version will appear in the anarchist press, though it was deliberately written for non-anarchists.

A curious epilogue appeared in *The Times* on 21st March. In the feature 'My Perfect Weekend', the novelist Isabel Colegate said that she would take with her *Demanding the Impossible*: "It's about anarchism: a splendid doctrine made impracticable by seemingly ineradicable flaws in human nature. Reading about it is stimulating and funny and sad. What more can you ask of a book?" Well ...

The Sunday Telegraph, which had published a hostile review by Kenneth Minogue, included the book in William Startle's 'Review of Reviews' column (16th February), pointing out that it had "split the critics down the middle". One would certainly like to split some of the critics down the middle, but most of them were pretty kind to the book, whatever they said about anarchism. And, whatever we ourselves may think of the book, it has certainly introduced several reviewers and many readers to the subject. We understand that it has sold well in the expensive hardback edition, and will soon be appearing in a paperback edition. What is needed now is some serious discussion of it in the anarchist press.

MH

Food for Thought ... and Action

Recent additions to Freedom Press Bookshop stock.

— PERIODICALS SPECIAL —

Here and Now* number 12, West Yorkshire Here and Now. This magazine only comes out occasionally so it's nice to be able to mention a new issue, despite the price increase. It has to be said that this is not exactly light reading — in fact the rather intellectual approach tends to render some of the material impenetrable, or at least heavy going. But for those who are fed up with the shallowness of much libertarian writing it will come as a breath of fresh air, despite the sometimes Marxist/Situationist influences. Number 12 is on "the proliferating agencies of control; agencies which have apparently flourished under a period when 'rolling back the frontiers of the State' constituted the apotheosis of government rhetoric and ideology". The articles cover 'managerialism', professionalism, full employment, 'satanic' abuse in the Orkneys, and there is some good stuff on Stonehenge and the travellers, the Balkans and Kurdistan, amongst other topics. There is incidentally a thoughtful and positive review of Freedom Press' *Freedom to Go* by Colin Ward. The only problem with this type of magazine is that if you try to read it on the bus or train you're liable to come to, with a jolt, miles past your stop. 44 pages, £1.20.

Wildcat number 15, *Counter-revolution in Russia**, BM Cat. The publishers (who also produced the *Open Letter to Comrade Lenin**, the reply to Lenin's "Left Wing Communism — an Infantile Disorder", £3.00) say: "One of our long-term aims is an international journal of anti-democratic communism". Internationalist in outlook, this issue's contents include Iraq, the Russian Revolution, South Africa, the poll tax, Ireland, civilisation, satanism and drugs. 32 pages, £1.50.

Leisure: Cunninglinguals Issue. A magazine from Cardiff which can't quite decide whether to be flippant or serious (I know the feeling). A clever-but-dreadful 'computer-generated' comic strip is compensated for by an informative article on the joyriders episode on the Blackbird Leys estate in Oxford and its background; there's a piece on the implications of virtual reality; another on networking, described as a "dogmatic rant for an era of total niceness", illustrated by a row of men wanking each other (?); and 'The Piss Manifesto', a double page spread on how and why women should piss standing up. As if all this weren't enough to piss you off, the trendily laid-out contents page numbers of all the articles — very helpful you think, until you discover that

nobody has bothered to number *any* of the pages. Is somebody taking the piss, or what? A case of 'street cred rules' at the expense of accessibility. Even if you've got the *leisure* to wade through this, it might be better to use it to go out and get *pissed*. £1.00.

The Freethinker. secular humanist monthly, G.W. Foote and Co., volume 112 number 3. By contrast, the very staidness and boring predictability of the layout of this journal could easily deter you from even picking it up, yet once you've forced yourself to try it there are some surprisingly good snippets of information on the (increasingly desperate) God squad and their activities. These range from the Church of England's messianic manoeuvres and anti-homosexual activities, to the Vatican and Freemasonry, the scandal over the 14 year old rape victim in Ireland, via the Islamic *fatwa* on Salman Rushdie, and Christian fundamentalist firebombings of New Age bookshops. Very good value, 48 pages, 40p.

Girl Frenzy number 2, *Girlfrenzy*, occasional. A lively female fanzine which also seems to attract a fair amount of male readers — and why not? It's described as a magazine by women, for people. Far too much to mention here, but apart from acres of strip (sometimes literally) cartoons there are articles on SCUM and Valerie Solanas' continuing influence; the role and portrayal of women in mainstream comics; magazines for plastic men, i.e. *Esquire* and *GQ*; and reviews of both of Claudia's pamphlets *I, Claudia* (now sadly out of print) and *Love Lies Bleeding** (£1.80). A good handful — 36 pages for £1.50.

Two Sevens issue one. A football and music fanzine which, though well produced is quite dull and uninteresting — and on some things just plain silly, as in the piece on punk and post-punk music where the writer tries to equate Billy Bragg with Ian Dury, and the piece on crop circles which under the guise of analysing the 'phenomenon' actually seeks to mystify it even more. The editors would do well to read *The Skeptic* magazine — it might help them to get their heads out of their arses. The only interesting articles are those on junk food, food processing and fox hunting, whereas the piece entitled 'The State of the nation' is just so obvious as to be a waste of space. Again no page numbers, about 18 pages, £1.00.

KM

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Confidence and Diversity — the poll tax rebellion

Poll Tax Rebellion

by Danny Burns, photos by Mark Simmons
Attack International / AK Press, 202 pages, £4.95
(available from Freedom Press Bookshop, post free inland)

This book perhaps provides a more congenial perspective on the great poll tax revolt than the one written by Maureen Reynolds (reviewed in *Freedom* on 21st March). Danny Burns, a prominent figure in the non-aligned 3D network, concentrates on the diversity and depth of the anti poll tax movement. His account is positive and upbeat, but not over the top, nor is it unrealistic. We have a long way to go yet — "there is a lot more to come" he concludes.

The book starts with a measured and persuasive introductory section about the tax and the social injustice it represents. We move from this to the tokenistic 'Stop It!' campaign by the Labour Party and STUC in Scotland. Then we move to community resistance as the *real* way to stop the tax, with the founding of the first APTU in Glasgow. A key motif in this book is how people power and "extra parliamentary activity" brought down the tax, and how the *involvement* and diversity of approaches kept the movement strong.

The different approaches reinforces rather than conflicted with each other. People who were not prepared to break the law took one approach while others threw petrol bombs at poll tax offices (page 192), and these were complementary. This runs against the approach of Labour, who quickly lost the initiative, and Militant who failed to gain the wider confidence of the movement at the grassroots level.

Spontaneity is a word which aptly described the

way the APTU's were formed as a focus for community-based resistance of the tax, and how the idea quickly spread via informal networks so that by the time of Trafalgar, the Militant Federation was so out of touch that it wildly underestimated the numbers expected for the protest — 20,000 as opposed to 250,000 (page 80).

The section on Trafalgar clearly blames the police for their premeditated provocation, and outlines clearly and specifically how the arbitrary arrests, trumped up charges and systematic police perjury helped to further undermine the credibility of the festering barrel of 'British justice'.

Danny Burns' book strives to be a general account of the struggle in both Scotland, and England and Wales, even so there is a strong emphasis on Bristol and the West Country. This perhaps comes through in the section preceding Trafalgar about the regional town hall riots, which is a little too short. These were important too because they raised the perception of the mood of defiance. The post-Trafalgar Sheridan/Nally threat to shop the rioters is nicely counterposed by an account of the founding of the TSDC as yet another flexible grassroots response to the constantly changing situation.

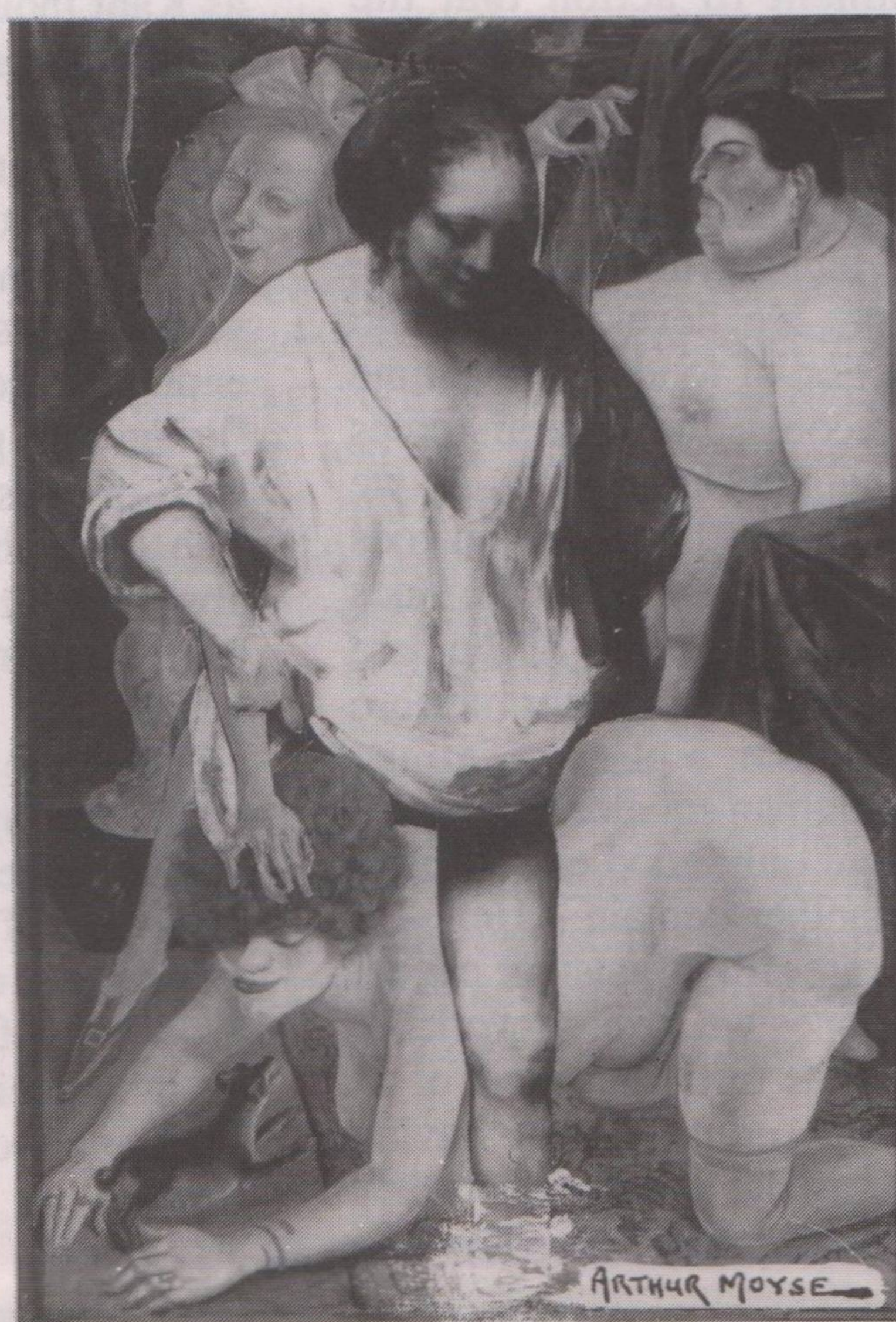
The section about the courts clearly shows the social injustice of the tax and the oft-repeated line "inability to pay is no defence", and how many people came away from their first encounter with 'British justice' appalled and angry (page 145). The bureaucratic arrogance of some of the court officials is also shown.

This book pulls no punches with its treatment of the betrayal by Labour and the union bureaucracies. Instead of defending the very people who voted for

(continued on page 4)

Dem ol' fecund bellies

Communist Party knew the value of the visual arts. Lenin and Trotsky, the Nazi movements and the propagating Church militants know it, and they may be, nay are, cynical in their use of the arts, but unlike so many among us seeking 'the message' among the dead voices on 'reduced price' bookshelves, these people seeking authority over us know how to use the objective visual to shape the subjective mind. But with four major exhibitions and all that white wine, one can only soldier on with the Town and his world-weary frau carrying our bus passes to the Tate to view the work of Otto Dix. Our conception of pre-war Germany has, understandably, been conditioned by the artists, writers and playwrights who found



*The London National Gallery versus
The London Tate Gallery*

their audience within the intelligentsia of the left and it is understandable that it should be so for art blossoms in protest and from Germany of those years we are given a society of pain and rage wherein street violence and death was the order of the hour and sexual deviation was treated with wit and crude vulgarity. But it was also a bandwagon upon which those with slight talent could clamber if one please an audience in opposition to an alien authority and seeking justification for its own actions. I do not stand in judgement, for 20,000,000 innocent dead argue that there was a case to be made. Otto received the automatic rave reviews, yet I find so many of his paintings crudely handled and as ever they found their audience, be it right or left, who do not have to accept any responsibility for the evils of but a few years ago. The crippled soldiers move with the placid calm of old men with arthritis and the group of old women having been labelled prostitutes can demand an intake of breath or a raised eyebrow. I am not moralising on the failure of Dix's handling of his subject matter, just that for me he was one of history's by-standers who failed to record it correctly and lacked the true talent to lie in paint as with the true masters. And I asked of the Town and his eyes-sparkling frau, what does one do with the Victoria & Albert Museum's 'Jewels of Fantasy' exhibition. Each of us given our small bag of imitation diamonds, the white wine in champagne glasses, the food and the rounds and rounds of expensive chocolates, and we the selected few go 'down' with security to view the silver, the amethyst and turquoise, all cut and carved in various metals to be loaded onto the head of the unprotesting female from the top of her head down to her naval, and I sat on the loo seat within the V&A sipping my glass of wine knowing that these are but the pretty baubles of the market place hyped to art status and I waited to hear the voice of Ma Thatcher for this is her world.

But shedding our world-weary air it was

with the mob to the National Gallery for the Rembrandt exhibition, given the Fergie wedding treatment by the National Gallery PR, and as we nickname on the Stock Exchange every 'name' worthy of a telephone call breathed their hosannas on television and radio naming 'Dutch' as the world's greatest boy with the brush since Disney. But it was the Marxist critic who summed it up for all of them and for me when the apostle of the sweating peasant beautiful, who saw the culmination of art in Social Realism and social degeneration in abstract painting, breathed his sense of wonderment at the glory of Rembrandt's paintings of the nude women's fecund bellies in light on the shadowed bodies. I myself am a shoulder man, but each to his own and in those highlighted paintings by Rembrandt the critics, as with all of them, saw what they wanted to see and why not for this is what political manifestoes are about. 'Dutch' was a magnificent draftsman but the world's greatest painting genius, compared to Botticelli or Titian, nay lass. When things from a single source are assembled en masse one believes that one becomes aware of the major flaw, as with my relations, and it is that Rembrandt was a talented studio-bound artist whose workshop overdid the cliché of the shadowed figures with but half the face in the spotlight, with the exception of the fecund bellies. Like unto Sir John Gielgud posturing on a darkened stage with only the beaky profile in the spotlight, it is a repeat performance yet always worth the entrance fee. It is sad that Rembrandt ignored the great outdoors with his talent for in this magnificent exhibition only one single beautiful little landscape is on display and that is a lovely little view of his 1630 landscape with a stone bridge assumed to have been inspired from a print by Jan van de Velde. For me the beautiful little landscape and for others the fecund bellies wombful fruitful steady with the spotlight, Sid, but it was on to the culture provided bus with the Town and his world-weary frau to more Rembrandt at the ol' British Museum and the white wine and the little sausages and the heavy breathing.

Arthur Moysé

Ma Thatcher's destruction of Britain's economic, industrial and social fabric goes from the statistics to the unbelievable reality when those who pander to the easy money of the wealthy middle class open ranks and literally close shop prior to drinking the full glass of brandy and swallowing the whole contents of a bottle of acetylsalicylic acid, compliments of the NHS.

In the world of the 'free market' we have come to accept the media pictures of the drear dead towns with their closed shops and of the hopeless men and women who have now become politics new social harijan, and the tragedy is that for so many it was a world that would never be but for us, the rambling geriatric great unwashed, it was ever so, but never the wealthy, comrades, never the wealthy.

In London's Cork Street - Skid Row of mind-blowing priced contemporary art - gallery after gallery is closing down and with windows covered over one can hear the weeping and the wailing of the male dealers and the snarling rages of the female dealers as they curse the departures of the closed pockets punters. It is a curious situation that Milton Friedman, the late acting guru, as pay clerk to the late Ma Thatcher never seemed to have dreamed up in that in a period of artificial economic depression the once well-breeched should suffer pocketwise with the poor. But what one finds so very curious is that while the 'free market' goes down the pan the State of its bureaucracy, militancy and culturally continues to blossom like unto the green bay tree. While weary ambulance men and women continue to drag out the rotting bodies of suicidal art dealers from the closed art galleries of London, four major establishment art exhibitions grace London, and who am I to complain?

It was the Communist Party who always gave top priority to the visual arts for they rightly knew that for everyone who read 'the book' a hundred thousand saw 'the painting' or its reproduction and on every pre-war Communist demonstration the artists and/or their huge painted banners had a place of honour in those demonstrations. The

Church, State and Freedom

(continued from last issue)*

Fascism

What do we mean by 'fascism'? How can it be seen to affect our lives in the democracy called Britain? It is commonly held that fascism exists only when there is political oppression, racism, the denial of liberty and civil rights and concentration camps. These are all found in States that call themselves socialist or communist as well as in those that are right-wing dictatorships.

To understand how such forms of inhumanity can arise it is necessary to understand the processes that take place in the human psyche to prevent the mass of the people in any population simply refusing to allow power to be taken over by the individual and the small group that was seen to arise in Italy and in Germany. In *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Wilhelm Reich, who had become a psychologist and worked for many years with Freud in Vienna and Berlin until the arrival of Hitler, outlined the meaning of fascism as a form of character-structure which makes possible the domination of millions of people by a ruthless gang of political crooks masquerading as national leaders. As in the relationship between a sadist and a masochist each of the neuroses is necessary to the functioning of the other, so in dictatorships such as Hitler's it is necessary that the majority of the people should have a neurotic need for a dominant leader.

The word 'fascism' derives from the 'fasces', the bundle of rods surrounding the axe as a symbol of authority in Rome. The rods were held together by straps, rather like the bundle of rods used by chimney sweeps. Reich likened the character-structure of people under capitalism to the fasces: their impulses, desires, attitudes and feelings are only held

into a coherent whole by being restrained, shaped and directed by external authority. If the straps are removed the bundle of rods falls into a disorderly heap: people lose direction and purpose. From this would follow the break-up of society as we know it. Without external controls civilised behaviour, morality and order disintegrate. Parents and teachers often express such ideas when they assert that children need 'discipline' meaning firm control with punishment when transgressions occur.

Reich places the frustration of love and sex at the centre of the factors operating to create the fascist character-structure. I have little doubt that this is at the heart of the problem, but there are many other factors in the life of industrialised societies that reinforce this frustration and continue throughout our lives constantly to prevent the harmonisation of bodily function with intellectual and emotional activity - the normal pattern of natural Man as outlined by both Freud and Marx. As I have tried to show under the headings of Family, Schooling and Work, these many factors operate together to produce a powerful and unrelenting psychological pressure on the individual that essentially rests on fear. Like a young tree in a steady prevailing wind, the young psyche becomes permanently bent in the direction into which it is forced; as indeed it does in all cultures, but in capitalist mass-production economies at the expense of rational autonomy. In capitalist societies, as in the State Capitalism of Soviet Russia, the forces operating on the individual in the family, in school and at work convince him that he is insignificant, worthless, prone to evil and to be tolerated only if he conforms to every requirement of authority, even to the point of sacrificing his life in war at the behest of authority.

How does organised religion in the forms of the Anglican Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church, the Greek Orthodox Church or the religious power that today is sending thousands of young Iranians to die in the war against Iraq in the hope of reaching paradise through death

on the battlefield; how does organised religion differ from fascism, that is from any organised system of power that compels human beings by every means at its disposal to yield up every autonomous physical, intellectual and emotional impulse to the demands of that power? As I write these words, a Swedish pastor is describing how the State in Sweden has taken over the traditional functions of the Church in Sweden. He is describing how the spirituality - the sense of unity with others in love; the feeling that there are values other than the desire for wealth - that he once felt to be of the essence of what he meant by religion, are dying before the religion of the State - the hunger for material prosperity. And he sees the tide of alcoholism in Sweden to arise from the State's acquiescence in seeking to blunt Man's discontent with bread alone.

Many Christians and other religious people will be shocked to read what I have written because their lives are characterised by unselfish action for others less fortunate than themselves. Their experience of religion has arisen in the context of a loving family with open and democratic relationships among its members and with a concept of God that stresses love rather than fear. They often identify themselves with those who seek to bring more democratic reforms into our schools and into the organisation of work. They find their satisfactions in work for these ends. They tend not to be dogmatic about their beliefs and they can work with those of other faiths or those who profess none. But their experience is not typical. They need to look more closely at those less fortunate than themselves to see why others have a different feeling about religion.

Others will reject what I say about the family, about schools and about work as being out of date or ill-informed. If they do, let them ask themselves by what criteria we judge the success of the family, the success of education and the success

*This is the concluding instalment. Back issues with the first three instalments are still available for £1.50 post free.

(continued on page 7)

Church, State and Freedom

(continued from page 6)

of work in raising the standards of life for all? If their criteria includes good physical and emotional health for all, no wide disparity between the quality of life for the richest and that for the poorest, and a marked reduction in the level of both private and public crime and violence, then how can they claim that the family, education or work are being even moderately successful in their aims?

Discuss the concept of God with twenty different people and you will find twenty different concepts. Further, the more deeply you explore the concept with each of them, the more the concept becomes an expanded portrait of the speaker: the more subtle and sensitive the speaker the more subtle and sensitive the concept of God he expounds. It appears to be universally true that Man makes God in his own image.

So, apart from those who wish to dominate others for their own ends and those who have been so spiritually battered by unhappiness that they look for recompense in a life to come, how does the concept of God arise in the first place. The answer seems to lie more and more in the way the human brain works and, especially, to arise from the fact that we evolved speech.

Human beings evolved as helpless creatures, without armour, poison fangs or wings to ensure survival. They evolved speech, the gift that has to be given afresh to each generation and thereby ensures that each generation is not locked immutably into the concepts and problems of past generations. Speech is "encapsulated experience" as Alexander Luria and Lev Vygotsky discovered in studying how children acquire speech during social interaction with adults in, for example, following instructions - 'Give me the cup' - and later in using speech so acquired to direct their own actions (see A.R. Luria, *The Role of Speech in the Regulation of Normal and Abnormal Behaviour*). Thus we, through speech, transmit our own experience to the young so that they do not have to repeat our errors.

We use language to name the objects in our tangible world, to describe our transactions and our dreams of the day and of the night, and because the word is so powerful in recalling events, thoughts and emotions, we tend to assume that when we use a word there must be some real entity corresponding

to that word. When we say 'food is good' or 'sun is good' we are describing particular experiences that we have felt through the senses. But when, in reply to the question, 'What do you get from food and the sun?' we reply 'Goodness', we run together the two groups of experiences of satisfied hunger and warmth to form a further and more remote abstraction and begin to treat that abstraction as if it were of the same category of events as our sensory reactions to food/sun.

Language, by creating a symbolic representation of the world, makes it possible for us to experiment with that world in our heads and then, in action, to test our assumptions. So long as there is a close interaction between thought and act and so long as we are prepared to correct our postulates to accord with reality, we will 'keep our feet on the ground'. But if we neglect reality and allow our thoughts to proceed without constant recall to reality then we enter the realm of fantasy. Pleasurable, exciting or fearful as that may be it cannot command the commitment to action that the categorical imperative of reality compels.

Early concepts of God and concepts of God among primitive tribes who have had little contact with modern civilisations appear to be abstractions of the natural forces in their environment - animals, wind, fire, thunder, the sun, the moon, the sea, night, and so on. Before we developed enough techniques to increase the production of food and give time for leisure to study and keep records, the natural forces appeared to act in arbitrary and unpredictable ways. As we came to see patterns in their behaviour so the spirits and gods who inhabited all natural phenomena began to recede. Gods became 'God' who now existed, not in the ruck of the here and now but situated at a distance and with greater, if more remote, powers. God moved to Heaven, a place of infinite virtue and goodness, unsullied by human squalor and evil.

But the creation of Heaven where only good existed now made necessary the creation of another domain - Hell - to accommodate evil. Spiritually we are still infants: we cannot tolerate both bad and good in the ones we love, in works of art and in life. Death is as natural as birth, but most of us cannot accept it. Even Christians, conscious of having committed no unforgivable sin, still fear death when they have long passed their youth when death would be viewed as

an unwelcome interruption of an unfulfilled life. I suspect that we fear death because we have created a life that makes joy conditional on acceptable behaviour rather than the natural outcome of a healthy and creative activity.

Something of the difficulty that surrounds the notion of God is seen in the fact that, officially, it is heretical for an Anglican to refer to God as 'He' or 'She' since that would limit the godhead to the dimension of humanity. The confusion extends into every aspect of the concept. As soon as God is described as omniscient, ubiquitous, omnipotent, infinitely loving, infinitely x, y or z, then absurdity creeps in. What does it mean to be infinitely wise? We cannot experience infinity except as an arbitrary mathematical symbol. Apart from its existence as a symbol it has no meaning. Parallel lines meet at infinity, we are told, but that has as much meaning as 'the number seven is purple'. The concept of God, like the concept of infinity, is nonsensical - it cannot be experienced through the senses and cannot, therefore, be demonstrated by any of the tests that depend on reasoning.

The argument for belief in God now more often relies on intuition, i.e. that the existence of God is self-evident (much as Kant thought to establish the principles of ethics cf. his deontological slogan 'Let justice be done though the heavens fall'). More recent examination of intuitive acts and beliefs suggests that: a) they rest on subtle factors of observation or deduction from visual or aural data, or b) that they result from a kind of 'short-circuit' in the brain when the input end of a series of associative firings in a chain of nerves is close enough to the output end of that chain that the initial stimulus 'bridges the gap' either directly or through a new and shorter train of cells (see D.D. Hebb, *The Science of Psychology*). The theory that intuition rests on observation or recall of data absorbed at pre-conscious levels or data subsequently repressed, receives confirmation from psychoanalytic studies.

God is the creation of undemocratic societies. He is the instrument by which tyranny enters the minds of its subjects to internalise its control over them. For the oppressed God is the hope of future relief from that oppression and the recompense of 'pie in the sky'. In Lenin's phrase 'religion is the opium of the people' in that it desensitises the tyrant to the inhumanity of his power while it blunts the sensitivity of the oppressed by diverting their energies to dreams of Heaven.

Michael Duane

Homelessness has become an enduring characteristic of American life. There are 35 million people in the US with no health insurance. Many millions of people are relying on food stamps as their only way to keep on eating. Statist policies throughout the country have become more and more vengeful against the poor, malicious against the underclasses. The rulers of America have tried to persuade us that our disintegrating circumstances of work and existence are our lasting future. We are told that this deterioration is the only possible future.

The state of Minnesota is cutting the network of governmental social welfare! Governor Carlson has ordered severe cuts and repeated cuts to all 'public assistance'. During this time of global economic crisis, the day-by-day struggle for an increasing number of people means nothing less than a fight for absolute survival. The evisceration of social welfare in Minnesota is creating more and more homeless people.

'Work Readiness' is one form of public assistance in Minnesota. 'Work Readiness' pays employable people and helps prepare them for jobs. As of 1st December 1991, this programme was cut from twelve months to five months, leaving recipients without income for seven months, through a frozen Minnesota winter. Many of the homeless people in Minnesota have depended on Work Readiness as their only means of support.

Minnesota is the only state in the US with a public socialist tradition. The Farmer-Labor Party, an indigenous socialist party, was the dominant political movement in the state during the '20s, '30s and '40s. Although the Farmer-Labor Party was destroyed by the Stalinists, in a manner which paralleled the events in Spain, the tradition and legacy of the Party had continued. I have been told frequently by visitors that Minnesota seems like a separate country, with a separate culture and a separate social matrix. But, now, the complete disembowelling of state social welfare in Minnesota provides one significant

HOMELESS PEOPLE OF MINNESOTA

News from the Affluent World

measure of the seriousness of the economic crisis in the world today. It is also a measure of the effect of the cannibalistic Reagan-Bush policies. Historic 'socialism' in Minnesota is bleeding away!

As the economy disintegrates, there are few jobs available to individuals on Work Readiness. At any given time, according to government statistics, there are 64,000 people actively seeking employment in Minnesota, and only 14,000 jobs to be found. The state is committed to a policy of reducing 'supportive services' rather than increasing them in this time of crisis.

During the great depression of the 1930s, there were no 'political' shelters for homeless people in Duluth, Minnesota; there were relatively few homeless people in the city, there was no need for 'political' shelters, shelters organised by radicals. Now, however, anarchists in Duluth have opened two shelters for homeless people, and are planning a third. Yes, even in the ice and snow of Duluth, there have been people living outside in cardboard boxes, or in the doorways of hotels and public buildings, cars, steam tunnels under the city, water run-off tunnels, sewers, etc. The government itself acknowledged that there are at least 500 homeless people in Duluth alone. A number of people have been arrested while 'squatting' in empty houses owned by the federal government in the city. And there have been other acts of civil disobedience in Duluth.

In response to the cuts to Work Readiness, 300 people travelled to St Paul on 2nd

December 1991, to participate in a march and rally at the state Capitol. At the end of the day, fourteen people were arrested for civil disobedience. Several anarchists were arrested. A charge of trespass was placed against them for not leaving the rotunda after the closing of the Capitol. They were ordered to leave, and refused! The anarchists were talking to people about working class self-reliance, and resistance to governmental policies. One anarchist said: "We cannot accept circumstances that leave more and more people without adequate food, shelter or income. People cannot survive a Minnesota winter without an income". The captain of police at the Capitol was dismissed from his job because of this incident; he was accused of not being harsh enough with the demonstrators.

On Tuesday 18th February 1992, anarchists and others returned to St Paul. A makeshift soup kitchen was set up in the Capitol itself to dramatise the needs of poor and homeless people. One homeless man said to me: "This is not a recession, it's a depression! I think it will bring death and suffering". Homeless people mingled among the state legislators to describe their conditions of life to them. Five hundred people attended the soup kitchen rally and encampment. More actions are planned, the next one will be at the end of April.

The office of the Governor has estimated the state revenue 'shortage' as close to \$600 million. The Governor has called for serious cuts to all 'general assistance'. Dee Long,

Speaker of the House, describing the remnant of state social welfare said: "There's going to be cuts and cuts and more cuts". It is an uncomfortable and contentious time for Minnesota government.

Homelessness has become one dark and lasting attribute of American life. Sociologists proclaim that we have attained a romantic 'post-industrial society' and that the 'consuming and supplying economy' will displace the 'industrial economy'. But, without a substantive change for workers' freedom, a change in the control of the point of production, a change in the human relations of production, the creative economic growth needed for the human community will be impossible.

We create a new philosophy of freedom by speaking and acting for ourselves! Anti-authoritarian philosophy exposes and interprets economic situations. Anarchist ideas and socio-economic strategies move unseparated from organisation in personalism that quickly rouses people for action. We provoke a new commotion, a new tumult, for accomplishing the ideas of freedom. Most of the left, instead of putting voices to the urge for new freedom, and the urges for a dimensional humanism and truly personable interrelations, clutches at vanguardist bullying and economic materialist determinism, or electoral mysticism.

However, a new start, a new arising, cannot easily be discovered without the thrust of a liberatory philosophy of revolution. The objective of anarchism is not a bare transmutation in the form and conventionalities of property, but new social interrelations, a totally new humanism! New interrelations could unleash immense and extraordinary new human dynamism. This creative dynamism could finally unite manual labour and mental labour in each individual and in the human community. The vision of Kropotkin would become a reality. I am

(continued on page 4)

Anarchism and Democracy

1

Dear Editors,
I was very pleased to see Harold Barclay's letter in *Freedom*, 4th April, protesting that anarchism is different from democracy. I must confess that I got the same impression as Harold did from your 22nd February piece. Re-reading it I still find it difficult to draw any other conclusion, unless it was simply intended to say, not that true democracy is the proper goal, but that not even the inferior democratic ideal has been realised anywhere. However, the final paragraph seems to belie that interpretation.

Power over others wielded by the majority is not necessarily better than power wielded by a single person. (And to be alone and oppressed by all is probably the worst a human being can suffer.) By the time this letter is published we will have had a stark practical reminder of what democracy means. Each of us will have spent Thursday night, not deciding how we are going to run our own individual lives, but waiting to find out what *everybody else* has decided about us. A less farcical, more genuinely democratic political process would only make that even more true. This is one of the main reasons I do not vote: I do not want to impose my will on others.

The question of the majority's will is connected to the ecological problems John Griffin wrote about in his excellent article 'Green Fascism?' (*Freedom*, 21st March). (It made me realise dangers I had not thought of before.)

Even if some people are inspired by

2

Dear Editors,
No, I don't think Harold Barclay missed the whole point of the article 'Democracy begins at home'.

The point is summarised in two sentences: "But democracy, by its very definition, is government by the people of the people for the people. The *people* means *all* of us, and that we should run our own lives."

Oh, very clever. The writer should propose to a college debating society 'this house affirms that anarchists are in favour of government'. But an anarchist propaganda sheet is not the place for such misleading verbal trickery.

"Government of the people, by the people, for the people" is a poetic expression which uses 'the people' in three different senses: the people as a collection of individuals, the people as the majority, and the people as a single entity. In prosaic terms, it means power over individuals, exercised by the majority through its elected officers, for the benefit of the population as a whole. This is the democratic ideal.

The anarchist ideal is different, a society in which nobody has power over anybody, but each individual retains absolute sovereignty, and works with others only voluntarily.

Voters in a democratic election contribute to the choice of who shall govern on behalf of the majority, and in so doing consent to be ruled by whoever the majority chooses. Anarchists, who are against consenting to be ruled, are against democracy. Not against the perversion of democracy (though that may be mentioned), but against democracy as an ideal. Yet your sackworthy editorial writer juggles with words, to represent anarchism as the struggle for democratic government.

Harold Barclay is right to be concerned when the front page of *Freedom* is used to display rhetorical cleverness at the expense of clarity.

Donald Room

racism when they demand lower birth rates, it is surely true that over-population is one of the world's greatest problems. But in one way it is even worse for people in rich countries to have children than it is for people in poor countries to have them. Parents in rich countries, both individually and collectively, make absolutely sure their children have enough to eat. So in a very real sense each child they have takes food out of the mouths of children in poor countries.

Selfishness like this, including selfishness about the environment, is the essence of democracy. The basic principle of democracy is that what the majority want must be done. This is no mere abstract theory. It is a cruel psychological reality which makes us constantly be told that whatever the majority decide must be gracefully accepted. This acceptance is treated as a high moral precept. As long as such a cult of the popular voice prevails, selfishness will prevail. People in rich countries will only start meeting their responsibilities to people in poor countries, as well as to each other, when the democratic ideology is replaced by ideals of tolerance, solidarity, and consideration and respect for individuals.

Amorey Gethin

Our editorial writer is proposing to reply in the next issue

3

Dear friends,
In response to Harold Barclay's letter in *Freedom* on 4th April 1992. I would like to suggest that anarchism has a great deal to do with democracy, though not the current form that holds itself up to be democracy.

In my view democracy is about people making decisions together and deciding how to run and control their own affairs co-operatively. This is also my view of anarchism.

The added extra element is that there should be no form of coercion by one individual towards another. The real essence of this means that people should not fear any reprisals for their expression of views and feelings.

Our current society and system of government does not allow for this above scenario to exist. As Noam Chomsky suggests in his pamphlet *Media Control*, the current established democracy is based on the premise "that the public must be barred from managing their own affairs and the means of information must be kept narrowly and rigidly controlled".

I would disagree with Harold's view that "anarchism is not democracy". For it is democracy. However, I would agree with him if he was to assume that democracy is based upon Chomsky's conception of current forms of democracy.

Chris Platts

Nazis, Animal Rights, Deep Ecology

Dear Editors,
Once upon a time there was a major political and social movement which advocated what is often referred to as a 'holistic' philosophy. That is, life is conceived as an organic, interconnected whole. Mechanical science and other analytical approaches which seek to dissect this whole are deprecated. The movement further held that there are no distinctions between 'man and beast'; humans are only another species of predatory animal. This movement advocated regulations establishing humane slaughter of animals, mercy killing for animals whose lives had

become a 'torment' and the prohibition of vivisection. In addition it claimed to protect wildlife and showed immense concern for endangered species. Most of the elite in this movement were vegetarians, and while it did not advocate imposing vegetarianism on all, it would appear that the elite hoped that eventually vegetarianism would prevail.

What is this movement? No, it is not some sect of Deep Ecology or Animal Rights. It is, in fact, Hitler's Nazi Party.

The above features of the Nazi movement are taken from a recent article in *Anthrozoos* (1992, number 1) 'Understanding Nazi Animal Protection and the Holocaust'. The authors, Arnold Arluke and Boria Sax, attempt to answer the contradiction of Nazism: the concern for animals and wildlife on the one hand, and the sadistic contempt for human life on the other. They argue that most human societies divide the world between human and animal, but the Nazis had a hierarchy which classed some humans as superior (e.g. Germans), and others as sub-human and, indeed, below all other animals (e.g. Jews). They also point to much evidence which suggests that, especially leading Nazis, could not pursue proper healthy human relations. Intimate human relations were more difficult to maintain than relations with animals.

The Deep Ecology movement and Animal Rights groups are not some derivative of Nazism. Nevertheless, there are sinister similarities. Aside from the denigration of humans and the worship of 'nature' as some mystical organic whole (e.g. Gaia), one can note among some members of the Deep Ecology movement the desire for a major holocaust in which millions of humans will die. These millions, of course, will come from the starving, more dark complexioned poor of the third world. Dave Foreman is a major example of this position.

Like the Nazis, perhaps Deep Ecology and Animal Rights folks have a problem with their human relations.

Harold Barclay

Fiasco at Chiswick

I attended the meeting (public debate between the Green Anarchists and the Socialist Party, Friday 20th March 1992), there was no debate. The Green Anarchists dominated the proceedings. All the Green Anarchists wore long beards. The premier Green Anarchist complained of being dominated at a congress of lawyers, he fritted (sic) the young Socialists who seemed to me to be inexperienced idealists, which gladdened my heart. I spoke up to say it was news to me that the Soviets had disposed of some of their time-expired nuclear submarines under the Polar ice cap.

But lack of debate saddened me. I retreated to a public house which does not have music. Lo and behold, the Green Anarchists entered the pub. I asked the most immaculate bearded Green Anarchist (sic) where he came from. Lo and behold, he could have come by public transport (I consider it anti-social to use a car in London), he had a refrigerator. Considering I do not possess a 'fridge' in order to save energy - although my electricity bill virtually doubled during the miners strike, I thought of the Russians trying to survive without well-stocked refrigerators.

Paul Rothwell-Hartmann

How Dare She?

Dear Editors,
I read Ernie Crosswell's article 'How Dare She', 21st March, and found myself in agreement with him on some of his observations, outraged by others, and by the time I had finished it I was none the wiser as to what Ernie's views actually were.

I agree that feminism has, for some, developed a negative meaning, but I would suggest that this is not due to feminists' statements, rather it involves the fact that many men and some women too feel threatened by the idea of women claiming their freedom to be individuals.

I gather from what Ernie writes that he feels himself to be "above rape" and so he feels a certain amount of outrage when confronted with statements such as 'all men are potential rapists'. I can relate to his feelings here as I too become outraged when I read things like the 'primary purpose' of women and suggestions that babies are 'rewards'.

Objects have primary purposes. If these objects fulfil their primary purpose they are then classed as 'good' objects. So how does Ernie feel about women who actively choose not to have children. Surely by his insulting choice of terminology he must designate these as 'bad' women. So how do you stand on lesbians, Ernie?

Does Ernie also have a problem shaking off Christianity? He certainly has an obsession with the concept of Hell. Many women, he claims, go through it so they can have children. Personally I do not believe in Hell, but I do know that lots of women suffer after they have children: they suffer guilt if they want a bit of life themselves and often poverty too. Perhaps, though, Ernie

would see this as a glorification of their femininity, marvel at the self-sacrifice these women make. Wake up, Ernie, there is nothing ideal in poverty and shit-encrusted nappies!

I have just watched a documentary on a training programme that Marines go through in order to become members of the Red Berets. There were a lot of men willingly going through terrible physical exertion and were I naive and gullible enough I could deduce from this that since they suffered so much to gain admittance to the Red Berets, it is the primary purpose of men to join this regiment. However, I have no intention of making such a sweeping and outrageous statement that I think would be both insulting and patronising to men.

By discussing women in such ridiculous terms as purpose, Ernie is treading on very dangerous ground. He is asserting value judgements on people: this one fulfils its primary purpose well, this one does not, equals this one is good and this one is bad. What comes next?

At the moment our society expects the same 'standards' of women as Ernie does. They should be good mothers, good women. If a woman breaks the law she does so on two counts, and therefore women are more likely to be sent to jail for an offence than men. This is because in the first instance there is the offence the woman has been tried for, then follows the fact that she has offended against society by not fulfilling her feminine role. The state's view of women and crime is illustrated by the fact that Cortonvale, the only prison for women in Scotland, is called an 'institution' thereby inferring that the women who are there are suffering from some illness.

I do agree with Ernie that rape and killing are both expressions of the same idea: the exertion of power over another. I would, however, have been more supportive of him had I not got the distinct impression that these issues were used merely as a prop to back up his views on women's primary purpose. After all, what was Ernie doing by setting himself up as a judge of Andrea Dworkin if he was not exercising a position of power over women? Another bad choice of terminology that smacks of authority and power over others.

So wise up, Ernie! Rid yourself of the confines of your romantic notions of women. We are people. We are individuals and the limitations of your ideology stinks of oppression.

Eileen Flett

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News from Angel Alley

The *Raven* number 17 is now with our printer comrades. As we pointed out last time, from no material we ended up with too much for a 96-page issue. We've had to hold back two or three contributions. Even so, it's going to be 112 pages instead of the normal 96. So subscribers are getting a bonus as a reward for their patience!

For reasons beyond our control we cannot at present guarantee to be able to supply all Charles Kerr and Black Rose Books titles shown in our current book lists. We are hoping that eventually we shall be back to normal.

We are sending out with this issue green renewal notices to readers whose subscriptions fall due in April and early May (details can be found on the address labels: 4th April = 5307, 18th April = 5308, 2nd May = 5309) and pink final notices where

subscriptions expired on 8th February (5303) and 22nd February (5304).

Our thanks to those readers who don't forget our funds - all in need of your support!

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1992 SEASON OF MEETINGS

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4th May - May Day Picnic, 2pm in grounds of Alexandra Palace, everybody welcome (Wood Green tube)

8th May - General discussion

We are still booking speakers or topics for 1992. The dates free are from 15th May to 10th July. If anyone would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, please make contact giving their names, proposed subjects and a few alternative dates.

Friday is the only night available for the meetings as the centre is booked up by classes on other nights. Anyone interested should 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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On the last Thursday of every month London Greenpeace has a public meeting where a speaker starts off the discussion and then everyone who wants to can have their say. These public meetings are at the Peace Pledge Union, 6 Endsleigh Street, London WC1 (near Euston tube). They start at 8pm and go on until just before 10pm.

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