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FIFTY PENCE

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it."

Tom Paine

IDENTITY CARDS? SAY 'NO'!

The *Mail on Sunday* (17th May) splashed a two-line headline which no one could miss: 'ID CARDS ARE ON THE WAY'. We can't imagine that this is not 'inspired' by some government leak and we think it should be taken seriously.

Britain was one of the few countries in the western world where the citizen was free to call him/herself by whatever name, so long as ownership of property was not involved. Up to the time of the 1914-18 war, this country was the haven for *political* refugees, anarchists, marxists, socialists from Russia, Italy, Germany, etc., with no questions asked. In World War Two we were obliged to have identity cards mainly for the purpose of obtaining *rationed food*. Needless to say, it was quite easy to produce fake IDs which helped quite a number of anti-militarists to change their identities, as well as a number of people on the run to collect their ration books. Rationing continued in this country for a number of years after the war, and with it the ID card. But when rationing was ended all kinds of bodies were in favour of retaining the

ID card for *their* benefit. For instance, the Post Office Savings Bank. But thanks to strong public opinion which realised that this was the thin end of the wedge, the government was obliged to abolish the identity card in the 1950s.

The argument in 1992 for re-introducing it is, to quote the *Mail on Sunday*, that of the Ministers "faced with the prospect of having to give in to EEC demands to scrap border controls", and:

"ID cards are now seen as the most effective way to stop Britain becoming an open house for illegal immigrants and international criminals."

Come off it! *The identity card is an internal pass*. We have had passports for years for those of us who travel to other countries. In order to keep out "illegal immigrants and international criminals"? We who live in this country won't help all that much by having identity cards! By all means ask those who come into this country to present an identity document. And those of us who go abroad will, on our return, produce a 'European

Community, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland *Passport*' which indicates to all that we are kosher and not 'criminals'. But we may well be anarchists!

If the *Mail on Sunday* is really reflecting government intentions, then the public should mobilise to resist this infringement of one of our few remaining freedoms. One may have driving licence, plastic cards galore, library tickets, you name them.* Confronted by a policeman you are not obliged to show an ID and still entitled to give your name as Joe Bloggs. It is still a freedom worth defending.

* According to the *Mail on Sunday*, Downing Street said the Prime Minister "was very relaxed about the proposal". He felt that "the carrying of personal identification is now acceptable to the majority of the public. Many people now have them to enter their place of work, as well as credit and bank cards." The same source maintains that he will receive "the backing" of the new Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke, the Education Secretary John Patton, the Health Secretary Virginia Bottomley and Social Services chief Peter Lilley. A fine collection of right wingers.

The Economy

WHEN WILL THE WORMS TURN?

Even the government spokesmen admitted that the March figure of only 7,000 to add to the army of unemployed was a 'freak' figure (*Freedom*, 2nd May) and in fact for April it has jumped to 42,000, bringing the official number of unemployed people drawing the dole to 2¾ million. But the real number is a lot more.

For instance, it *excludes* 300,000 people on Youth Training, 140,000 on Employment Training, 18,400 on Employment Action and 36,000 on other government schemes - another *half a million* to add to the official statistics.

But then there are people who are unemployed and who no longer draw the dole. According to the

Guardian's economics correspondent (15th May) the figure of 1,099,000 people out of work and claiming benefit since the spring of 1990 is admitted by government officials as probably *understating* the scale of the rise since "many women laid off during the recession were ineligible for benefits and therefore would not show up on the count". So it's more than obvious that between 3½ and 4 million people who need to work because they need the money to live are without work and relying on the dole and other 'benefits' which are provided by the state. Some are supplementing the inadequate 'benefits' by other means. Officially over the whole country the unemployment rate is 9.5%

compared with 5.6% in 1990. The rate among men is now 12.8%, and for women 5.2%. (The last figure for women is understandable from the foregoing explanation that many women workers losing their jobs are not entitled to 'benefits'.)

To this capitalist shambles all the new Minister of Employment, Gillian Shephard, had to say was that the figures were "clearly disappointing"! *What were you expecting, madam?*

The Major government is only concerned with two items in the capitalist bill of fare: inflation and interest rates. At the sumptuous dinner laid on last week for the
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WHEN WILL THE WORMS TURN?

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Chancellor of the Exchequer by the CBI (the bosses' Trade Union) he went on and on about the government's successful campaign to bring down the inflation rate, now below that of Germany (4.8%) but he would not be satisfied until Britain could compete with Japan's 2% inflation rate. Interest rates had to be reduced when it was the "right moment" to do so. Surrounded by the tycoons of industry, useful and useless services and gimmickry, his call to the bosses was to restrain the wage demands of their employees if we are to remain competitive, blah, blah! Not a word about some of the champagne-swilling, over-fed-with-all-the-luxuries-from-the-starving-third-world among his stuffed-shirted directors about their salary increases and bonuses in the middle of a capitalist recession. Not a word about the millions of unemployed and what the government, in its wisdom, proposes to do even if only to halt the numbers of workers* that are being thrown onto the scrap-heap. Why? Because the government has no solution to the problem of unemployment, assuming that it would wish to reduce it.

This writer's opinion is that massive unemployment is the government's 'secret weapon' not only to neutralise the trade unions - loss of members, due to unemployment, among other reasons, and consequently loss of revenue (which at the same time affects union contributions to the Labour Party) - but also to make workers and 'employees' more amenable to demands by their bosses, for fear of losing their jobs. The cost is £ billions in dole money and other 'benefits' but it's obviously considered by the Tory government and their paymasters - the CBI, and landowners,

the Sheiks of Araby *et alia* - as being well worth the price.

Were the government to be concerned about, at least, reducing unemployment, surely, since they arrogate to themselves powers to conscript the citizens to engage in killing and being killed, of taking over a farmer's land and people's houses to bulldoze a motorway right through, they could also demand that the hours of the normal working week should be reduced and overtime should be abolished.

One of the most controversial proposals by the EEC, so far as the British government is concerned, is that nobody should work more than a 48-hour week. Perish the thought! Madam Employment Secretary was heard to say on Radio 4 by this writer that "workers love to do overtime"! Which workers? We will provide the answers since nobody asked her: *the underpaid, the exploited manual and unskilled workers as well as those services such as public transport*. They would prefer a decent wage and more time to live. After all, what are we here for? Just to keep the stinking rich** and the rich and the yuppies and the football, tennis and snooker millionaires and the rest in clover?

SAY NO! and we shall start changing the face of this planet!

* Or 'employees' for those wage-slaves who don't like to admit that just as the humblest of workers they too depend on a boss who is now showing himself in his true colours and firing them pro-rata even faster than their 'workers' - the ones that dirty their hands.

** See *Sunday Times Magazine* (10th May 1992) on the top 300 who "between them are worth £50 billion".

Bobbies' bonanza to end?

One of Ma Thatcher's favourite sayings was: "You can't solve a problem by throwing money at it". The truth of this saying is nowhere better demonstrated than in the Thatcher government's attempt to solve the 'law and order' problem by increasing funds to the police.

During the Thatcher years, while real wages of most government employees fell, the real wages of police officers went up by 50%. As numbers of teachers and nurses were cut, the number of police officers was increased by 10%, and auxiliaries were recruited to do the office work. The overall cost of the police service rose by 87% not including inflation. Meanwhile recorded crime rose by 47% and the detection rate fell from 41% to 34%.

The basic pay of a constable aged 20, who has completed police college and a probationary year, is now £14,841 a year plus free housing or housing allowance. A London constable, on basic pay plus housing allowance plus London weighting, gets £22,032 not including overtime. A constable with 21 years service, who may be aged only 49, retires with a tax-free lump sum of £46,000 and an index-linked pension of at least £9,000 a year.

The old working class expression 'a bobby's job', meaning a job involving little work, is probably unfair to bobbies. But nobody can deny that they are highly paid for whatever it is they do.

When Major appointed Kenneth Clarke, the politician who had cut teachers' and nurses' pay, to the Home Office it seemed likely that the bobbies' bonanza was about to run out. The first sign of it actually happening appeared on 11th May, when the aristocratic journalist Christopher Monckton, well known as a recipient of approved 'leaks' from Tory ministers, wrote in the *London Evening*

Standard quoting "some little-known but highly pertinent Home Office research on crime and police effectiveness".

Monckton carried on about how the police shift system is fiddled to maximise everybody's overtime payments. Ominously for the police, the article quotes what it says is the conclusion of the Home Office research report:

"The evidence about police effectiveness, coupled with financial restraints, led some American police departments to reduce manpower in the late 1970s; the New York Police Department reduced its workforce by a fifth. One result was that recorded crimes continued to rise, but no faster than before. And arrests for serious offences actually rose."

Then on 20th May came Kenneth Clarke's official announcement, in a speech to the Police Federation, of an enquiry into the police, to report in 1993. The enquiry will be 'independent', but Mr Clarke specified some of its findings in advance:

"I believe the service, all of you and all of us, deserve an up-to-date, careful and independent look ..." [translation: overall costs to be cut] "... at roles and responsibilities, careers and performance, management, leadership and rewards ..." [translation: there will be a hike in the pay of top managers] "... that come with new responsibilities and new ways of doing the job" [translation: new top jobs will be invented so that those now at the top can be promoted]

Meanwhile, a dozen people get released from prison by showing that the disbanded West Midlands Serious Crime Squad faked their confessions, but no member of the squad is to be prosecuted for faking confessions because there is "insufficient evidence". So there's a hint of how to raise the detection rate.

And nobody is mentioning the traffic-directing jobs which the police do quite efficiently. So perhaps these jobs are to be done by less well paid traffic wardens.

THIS IS THE CRAZY WORLD WE LIVE IN

The *Guardian's* Washington correspondent reports on:

"A new commodity market in creating acid rain opened yesterday when the first 'right to pollute' was traded between two American power-generating companies almost 1,000 miles apart.

Wisconsin Power and Light, a 'clean' company near the Canadian border, sold the right to emit 10,000 tons of polluting sulphur dioxide, the main source of acid rain, to the dirty smoke-stacks of the Tennessee Valley Authority. The sale price is believed to be nearly \$3 million, or \$300 for each polluting ton.

The pollution commodity exchange, expected to be the first deal in a fast-growing market, is the deliberate result of an experiment in the environmental benefits of free enterprise: a controversial provision in the 1990 Clean Air Act.

It aims at increasing the incentives for power companies to invest in non-polluting new technology by giving them the right to sell the pollution they do not emit to companies whose sulphur dioxide emissions are above the legal limits. While giving 'dirty' companies a way to carry on polluting without investing in the new 'scrubber' technology, it imposes a financial penalty on them.

The plan was developed and urged on Congress by the environmental defence fund, which believes in using the price mechanism to encourage businesses to reduce pollution.

This is an interim procedure, because the Clean Air Act imposes progressive limits which will be tightened from 1995. All new power plants are expected to be non-polluting, incorporating the latest scrubbing technology.

The Tennessee Valley Authority claims it is not only buying pollution rights, but also time for its own long-term \$750 million investment programme to clean up its plants and reduce its sulphur dioxide output by 800,000 tons by the end of this decade. The rights it has bought to emit

On 13th May a paratrooper lost his legs in a mine blast in Northern Ireland. In response, a gang of paratroopers went into a nearby nationalist town, Coalisland, and cordoned off an area within which they beat people up at random. They were withdrawn from the area and replaced by the King's Own Scottish Borderers. Then a gang of nationalists leaned on some Borderers and took a machine gun and a radio off them, so the paratroopers were sent back in, and within a couple of hours they had shot three men in the legs.

In 1964, when the white minority government of Rhodesia made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence, some well-intentioned idiots circulated a petition demanding that paratroops be sent to Rhodesia to act for the black majority. The twits evidently thought of paratroops as mindless automatons who would simply carry out whatever orders they were given. But paratroops are not automatons; they have minds. They are not particularly interested in social justice (otherwise they would never have joined the army), but are unsophisticated patriots. British paratroops in Rhodesia would not have enjoyed defending the rights of Shone and Ndebele-speaking blacks against

10,000 tons of sulphur dioxide are minuscule in comparison."

So we are now at the stage where, just as farmers sell milk and potato quotas, industrialists in the USA are also able to buy and sell 'pollution'.

How much madder can mankind get without somebody shouting from the roof-tops for all to hear?

British troops out of Ireland!

English-speaking whites. 'Brits versus wogs' would have been a line-up more to their taste, and they would have changed sides at the first excuse.

It is often forgotten that British troops were originally sent into Northern Ireland to defend the civil rights of the minority Catholic community. British troops were among the first to forget it. British troops defending people who think of themselves as Irish, from people who think of themselves as British, is too paradoxical for unsophisticated British patriots. Straightforward 'Brits versus Micks' is more to their liking.

Readers with long memories will remember that it was the unsophisticated patriotism of British troops which forced the British out of Kenya in the 1950s.

The common British attitude at the time was anti-colonial but pro-Christian. British government propaganda was to the effect that the army was there defending Kenyan Christians from being murdered by Mau Mau, the Kenyan independence army who were represented as murderously anti-Christian.

However, when Mau Mau killed a British soldier, other British soldiers went on the rampage in Nairobi, attacking anyone who was black, shouting 'one of you killed one of us'. Evidently, they saw the conflict as a simple matter of 'Brits versus wogs', and when the propaganda was seen to be false, British public opinion swung overwhelmingly in favour of withdrawal.

Kenyan and Rhodesian nationalists used the slogan 'one man one vote. It is not used by nationalists in Northern Ireland because there the oppressed have the vote already. But in an electoral democracy where people vote on

tribal lines, the majority tribe must always be the ascendant tribe.

What the nationalists in Northern Ireland want is for the six counties to be re-incorporated into the Irish state, subject to the Irish legal structure with its censorship, anti birth control laws and general detestation of thought. We can sympathise with those who are afraid of this, but we can also sympathise with those who are denied equal rights because they are the minority tribe.

The only way to end tribal conflict is for individuals to stop thinking of themselves as members of tribes, nations, races, religious communities or whatever, and to start thinking of themselves as individuals. This is the anarchist solution, and in the current climate of patriotism it is not an instant solution.

But anyone can see that British troops are part of the problem. Their activities increase support for the IRA, another gang of unsophisticated patriots, among the nationalist population, and their very presence in Northern Ireland induces people in other countries to supply the IRA with funds and weapons.

British troops out of Ireland! This would not bring peace overnight, but it would be a start.

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What a perverse world we live in! In the past fortnight the columns of the media have been filled with accounts of the circumstances surrounding the deaths of nine healthy British soldiers killed by so-called 'friendly fire' in the Gulf war. At the same time three harrowing life and death cases have made the headlines and one disgusting example of the medical profession using healthy human beings – for payment of course – to carry on their experiments. The latter makes one feel more than suspicious that the other three are not also being used as guinea pigs.

To briefly comment on the 'friendly fire' we can but quote David Fairhall in the *Guardian*:

"The term 'friendly fire' is no more than a self-contradictory euphemism coined to describe one of warfare's nastier realities.

The military have been accidentally killing their

And the writer goes into more details which makes it even clearer how these 'accidents' happen.

As Mr Major told the House after the verdict of 'unlawful killing', everybody was sorry for the victims and their families and it was hoped that lessons would be learned from this tragedy. In fact at least half of the so-called Alliance Forces' losses in the Gulf were by 'friendly fire'. These were the guinea pigs for the next military adventure.

The medical profession is not averse to disposing of human guinea pigs. Guy's Hospital is one of the government's opted-out hospitals making sickness profitable. Nine young healthy people have spent a fortnight in the hospital beds as human guinea pigs, on whom companies are testing drugs for side effects. When they were discharged they

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own troops ever since they stopped settling disputes by ritual, hand-to-hand contests. It is one of the reasons they have distinctive flags and uniforms.

Modern high-tech weaponry has complicated the problem immeasurably. While radios enable scattered units to keep track of one another and aircraft can interrogate one another electronically by a system known as IFF (identification friend or foe), the speed and scope of modern battle stretch those resources to the limit.

The increasing use of long-range 'fire and forget' missiles instead of guns or bombs is making matters worse.

received £2,000 each. According to the *Independent* report (13th May) when it comes to drug testing, animals are given more legal rights than humans. We have no time for young healthy people who are prepared to be guinea pigs for £2,000. They can't think much of their lives.

But much more worrying and sinister, in our opinion, is the case of four year old Daniel who has a facial cancer which has paralysed part of his face and is affecting his sight and hearing and whose mother is pleading that he should be allowed to die, against the medical profession which is wanting to give him a further course of radiotherapy sessions. His mother insists that her boy says that he cannot stand any more pain. At the time of writing (20th May) the hospital is still considering *court action to ensure therapy continues*. Who knows best in these situations: a mother with six children or the medical profession experimenting with drugs that even they admit have at most a 30% chance of success? Furthermore, Daniel's mother has presumably been advised by other experts that "he will be brain damaged and have to be fed by a tube for the rest of his life".

Another 'sensational' case reported in the media is that of Annie who is "kept alive by an oxygen supply and intravenous drip at the cost of \$500 a day and constant care by her mother". In addition she has had three open heart operations in America "in which she was given a 10% chance of survival". As a result of one of the operations she has "lost the power of speech". That apparently is just one of the hazards of this battle to keep people alive at any cost, even if they end up as helpless vegetables.

Another pathetic case of a four year old (*East Anglian Daily Times*, 15th May) is that of a child born "with a perished bowel and needs a bowel and liver transplant". According to the medical advisers, the 'life-saving' operation can only be carried out in America

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The Rio Jamboree

Nobody expects anything to emerge from next month's Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro other than hot air and platitudes and empty promises.

When President Bush, who is threatening to pay a lightning visit to Rio, was confronted with the question about the US reducing its CO2 emissions, all he said was that he would not agree to any proposal that could upset US business interests – that is, he believes in a free for all for the money makers. We also refer readers to the item dealing with 'pollution quotas' in the United States.

But America is not alone in caring more about money-making than in the fate of Planet Earth – after all, the planet will survive long after mankind will have destroyed all life as we understand it. And even that will take longer to bring about than in the lifetimes of all those humans who are alive today. So why should they worry?

Earth Summit is going to be a luxurious jamboree for some.

In a very informative article by the environment correspondent Jo Revill of the *Mail on Sunday* (17th May) we learn that:

"It is the largest-ever gathering of world leaders. At least 132 will jet into Rio, flanked by scores of delegates, scientists, lobbyists and their own private armies of security men.

Orchestras composed of native Indians will

serenade them in their hotels, protesters from every imaginable pressure group will march outside, and 5,000 journalists will swamp us with media coverage from the spanking new conference centre. (The building cost around £15 million, the telephone lines some £40 million.)

A conservative estimate of the numbers attending what has been billed as the last great chance to save the Earth – a conference to end all conferences – is running at 40,000."

Soaring pollution world-wide is blamed on cars and no country is seriously tackling the problem which can only be dealt with successfully by concentrating on public transport, road and especially rail, while at the same time making private transport prohibitive and public transport so cheap – indeed it could be made into a free service* – that only millionaires and the drivers of vintage cars would be prepared to pay the price.

But one can imagine the resistance such a proposal would meet from all the vested interests in the car and ancillary industries.

Toyota, which produces nearly five million cars a year world-wide, has come up with its 'contribution' to Planet Earth. No, it's not proposing to reduce its car production. Instead it is financing research "to produce genetically engineered trees which absorb larger amounts of carbon dioxide than ordinary trees" (*Guardian*, 19th May). This artificial tree is expected to take between four and five years research.

What next can we expect? perhaps 'genetically engineered' human beings who will thrive on large amounts of carbon dioxide? Anything but getting cars off the roads and developing an efficient public transport for all to enjoy.

* We recommend Colin Ward's *Freedom to Go: after the motor age* (Freedom Press, 112 pages, £3.50 post free inland)

Suffolk children set an example for the politicians

Pupils of Stoke-by-Nayland Middle School created their own tree of life yesterday as they made their pledges to the planet.

The event, part of a campaign initiated by former Friends of the Earth director Jonathan Porritt, involved 200 pupils at the school.

The children made two copies of their pledge – one to be attached to a Tree of Life outside the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro next month, and the other to be sent to the government.

Teacher Cathy Pountney said she had been inspired to join the scheme after seeing a feature on the BBC TV children's programme 'Blue Peter'.

Now Ms Pountney and her colleagues will package up the pledges, which include promises to recycle paper, not buy pets from the wild, plant trees and cycle, walk or use public transport rather than a privately-owned petrol-engined vehicle.

from *East Anglian Daily Times*, 22nd May 1992

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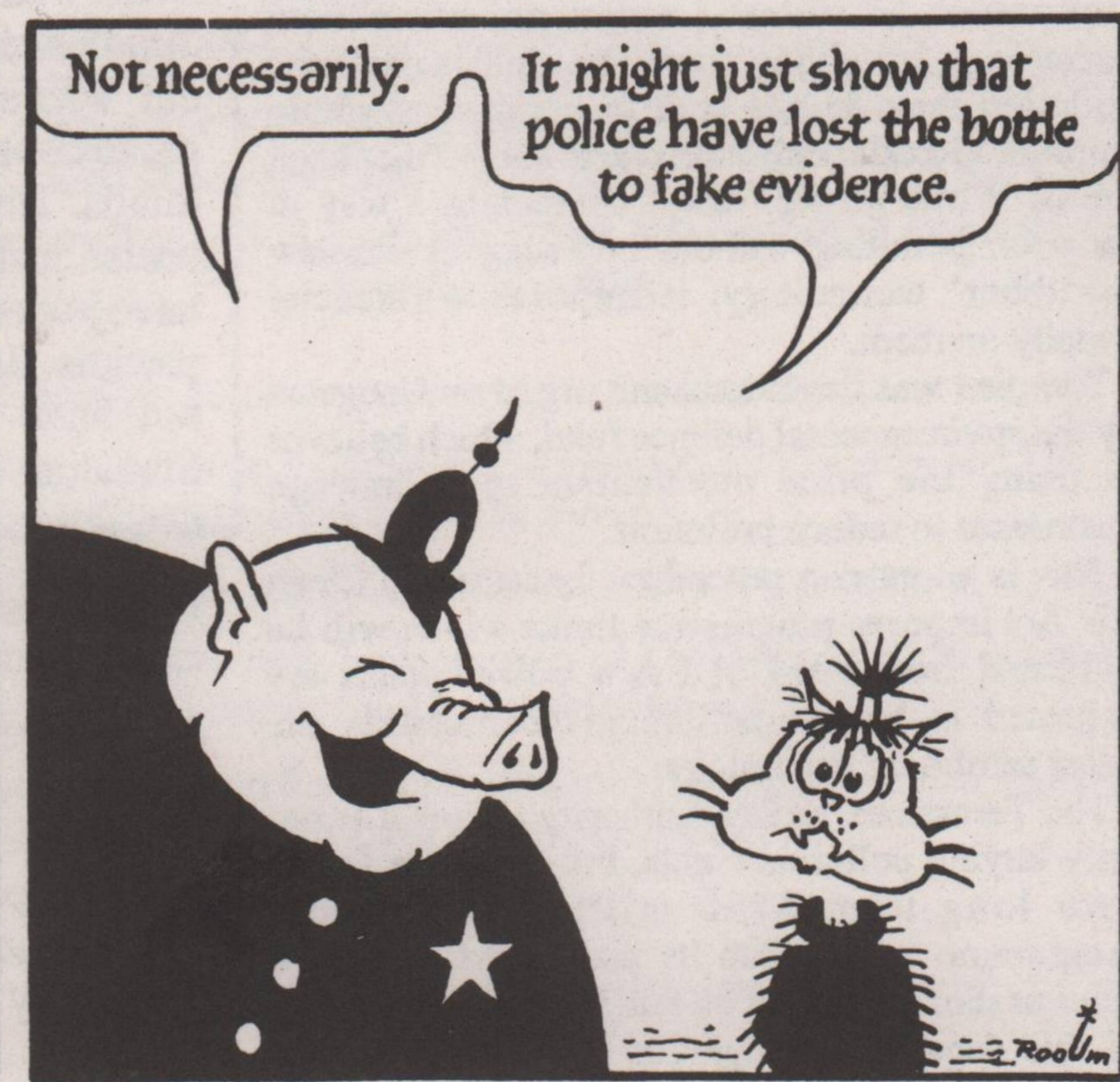
Paying Farmers NOT to Farm

As we go to press the first announcements from Brussels are that the EC farm ministers have at last agreed on reducing subsidies on cereals and other foodstuffs. The details have still to come, assuming that anybody other than accountants will understand what it's all about. But the major so-called 'breakthrough' is that cereal prices will be reduced by 30% – that is to say that any feed wheat going into intervention will now only fetch £77 a ton instead of £108 as at present. In other words, as we have pointed out before, EC intervention prices will be closer to world prices for cereals. However, farmers will receive 'compensation' if they put 15% of their land out of production ('set-aside'). So far set-aside land has been taken up on only a small scale, mainly by large farmers. The new 15%, virtually compulsory,

set-aside will mean some four million acres going out of food production for which farmers will receive a mere £300 million to compensate them. As a result, will this solve the cereal over-production in the EC, estimated at some 38 million tons? Not at all, for unless there is also some kind of quota system on the use of artificial fertilisers, the farmers will simply put more on the other 85% of acres and instead of four tons to the acre they will get five tons!

The British cereals barons of East Anglia will be laughing and more 'small farmers' (small, where cereal farmers are concerned, means 150 acres at least) will pack it in and their land will be taken over by the barons.

Last year another 5,000 farmers sold up. This year more still will be swallowed up by the beef and cereal barons.



Letter from America

Stunned. That's the only word to describe the initial reaction to the Rodney King verdict; but that initial reaction was quickly replaced by another: rage. Everyone has seen the television coverage of the rioting in Los Angeles, but there were expressions of outrage all over the country.

The day after the acquittal of the four police sadists who used Rodney King's head and torso for batting practice, demonstrations started at noon in San Francisco's Mission District, a Latino neighbourhood containing a large number of young politicised whites as well as a fair number of blacks living in public housing projects.

After the initial rally at 24th and Mission, the demonstrators marched for several hours through the Mission while their ranks grew steadily as bystanders joined them. Late in the afternoon they headed for another rally at the State office building on Van Ness Avenue (the major north-south thoroughfare in the eastern part of the city).

I and several friends had headed for that rally after getting off work around 5pm, and by the time we got there there were easily 1,000 people milling around, not listening to the usual bullshit spewing from bullhorns wielded by members of the usual political sects. The crowd was growing rapidly and within about fifteen minutes had nearly doubled in size; and it was angry, very angry. During this time Van Ness was completely stopped up for several blocks, and the cops were keeping a discreet distance.

Around 5.30pm the southern edge of the crowd started cheering: the march from the Mission District, even though still a few blocks off, was coming toward us and was

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where it is claimed they have "the special drug which stops rejection of the transplanted organs". That 'special drug' and the transplant will cost a mere £350,000. That leaves quite a bit to the imagination.

In this materialistic world it is worth mentioning that neighbours and friends have so far raised £100,000.* But perhaps the kindest thing for this toddler would be to keep her away from the 'eminent transplant surgeon' who is prepared to have a go, at a price, and to ensure that her short life will be as happy and painless as the medical profession can also make it.

Our society is morally corrupt. We have no hesitation in sending *only* our healthiest youngsters to fight and die in senseless wars – all wars – and have endless battles about the 'right of life' for foetuses and those of unfortunate humans who, by an accident of birth, will never be able to enjoy a normal life. When we have the courage to free those unfortunate and refuse to send the healthy young to their slaughter we may well consider that we are becoming civilised.

*As we go to press it is learned that the Sheikh of Araby has contributed £150,000.

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THE RIOTS IN SAN FRANCISCO

completely filling 75-foot-wide Van Ness Avenue for as far as anyone could see. Within minutes they had joined the demonstration at the State building, swelling the total number of demonstrators to perhaps 10,000. At about that point, a number of us started chanting "Pacific Heights! Pacific Heights!", hoping to get the march going again, this time through one of San Francisco's poshest neighbourhoods, only a mile from the demonstration site.

Unfortunately, the crowd turned east and marched through the Civic Center toward Market Street and the Tenderloin, one of San Francisco's poorest areas. Still, it was a heady feeling marching with thousands of other angry people chanting "No justice! No peace! FUCK ... THE ... POLICE! (not one single news report or broadcast to the best of my knowledge even mentioned this chant, which the crowd kept up for several minutes en masse).

But at that point the crazies took over. After marching a couple of blocks down McAllister Street, I was dismayed to see a demonstrator, a white guy in his 20s, smash out the windshield of a ten year old Datsun. (At least in my experience, 'class enemies' do not normally drive beat-up ten year old cars.) He and several others proceeded to smash the windows on every car in McAllister.

Shortly after the window-smashing began I jumped up on a wall to try to see how many people were marching. It was impossible to tell, as there was a solid mass of people for as far as I could see in both directions.

After a couple of minutes of watching, I jumped back down into the crowd and began marching again with a friend who looked around and said: "Jesus! We'd better start looking for an escape route". Within seconds people in front of us began running back towards us in panic as a phalanx of cops started coming up the street. I started running too, and quickly jumped the short stone wall at the main library and started running south along Larkin Street, where I was nearly run down by a cop on a motorcycle. After another couple of blocks, I made it to an underground station, walked a block through it, and eventually emerged at 7th and Market, the site of the office building where I worked. After letting myself in, I went back to my second storey office to watch the action.

(Don't judge me too harshly. I was in the midst of packing all my belongings to move out of state within two days, and getting arrested would have been at least a minor disaster. I should also mention that San Francisco cops normally deal with 'riots' and unruly demonstrations by making illegal mass arrests and at times hold hundreds or even thousands of people for a day or two. The local district attorney – a 'liberal' Democratic Party weasel – then drags the illegally arrested through court, a process which usually takes months before the charges are dismissed. So, even if I did nothing illegal, there was still a very good chance I'd be arrested just for being out on the streets, and I decided to sit the demonstration out.)

Even so, I still had plenty to watch. A large group of marchers with 'Revolutionary' Communist Party banners at their head charged up 7th Street, smashing windows and setting garbage cans on fire. Interestingly, they destroyed a news-stand (the sole means of livelihood for an old newsie) and smashed the window of a small barber shop, but they didn't touch the worst vulture on the block: a cheque cashing 'service' which mercilessly exploits those too poor to have bank accounts.

According to friends who were out on the streets, the demonstration then moved east down Market Street, while window-smashing continued and looting began. Eventually the

marchers/rioters headed for Union Square and looted several posh shops before heading up Nob Hill toward the swank hotels on its summit. While there they destroyed a stretch limo and smashed a hell of a lot of windows. Later, they broke up into smaller groups of a few hundred to a thousand and continued smashing and looting for several more hours in the downtown area. Eventually, the cops began their usual tactic of sealing off areas and making mass arrests, eventually arresting close to a thousand people.

Around 9pm I headed for home and walked west along Market Street, my feet crunching broken glass virtually the entire five blocks until I hit Van Ness. As with the window-smashing I had observed, there was little rhyme or reason to the destruction. A run-down drugstore was smashed and looted, while several expensive shops were spared; a hole-in-the-wall shoe repair shop was trashed along with a coffee stand, but the facade of the Bank of America was also extensively damaged. In short, there were virtually no signs of 'class consciousness', just anger.

While there was almost no racial animosity among the demonstrators (about two-thirds of whom were white or latino), the two eyewitnesses I spoke with told me that there was an interesting division in the activities of blacks and whites during the riot: the whites were mostly interested in smashing windows, causing trouble and venting outrage at the

police, while almost all of the looting was done by black teenagers. If true, this isn't terribly surprising. It's probably safe to say that most of the white radicals out on the streets had consciously rejected the consumerist society they were intent on trashing, while the 13, 14 and 15 year old black kids doing the looting had grown up dirt poor in one of the wealthiest and most expensive cities in the world, so they took advantage of an opportunity to grab some consumer goodies when they could. To the extent that they turned their attentions to upscale shops and boutiques, all I can say is more power to 'em.

Still, riots do not revolutions make, especially riots of this type. To the extent that the riots in San Francisco and Los Angeles showed how fed up and angry people are, they're encouraging. But at the same time, the aimlessness and senselessness of most of the destruction graphically demonstrates the low level of political consciousness even among those angry enough to take direct action.

Unless there are major reverses in public policy – that is, the adoption of social democratic 'reforms' to buy off the public – it's a sure bet that the level of frustration and anger will continue to rise and will result in even greater outbursts in the future, probably the near future. In the absence of a more politically conscious public, it seems obvious that nothing good will come of this. Clearly, those of us who engage in anarchist organising and outreach activities have our work cut out for us if we hope (however barely) to channel these coming outbursts into a more constructive direction.

Chaz Bufe

News from Northern Ireland

It's business as usual in the colonies these days with the paras running amok in Coalisland. And no matter how anyone may protest that this is not a colonial experience (bringing in the heavy troops to stamp on the natives) everyone I've spoke to here, Unionist and Nationalist, perceives it as the manifestation of colonialism. And what in fuck's name were soldiers doing with the heavy duty machine gun they lost in scuffles with unarmed punters on their way to and from pubs, houses and shops? Now that the politicians are corralled in Stormont huffing and puffing over their Talks Process, mates, the arch-Tory loony can clap the troops on the back and say that the paras were right to open fire on the crowds. Such sneering racist and upper class exhortations to the army to put the boot in are the stock-in-trade of comfortable British politicians who have waved the Butcher's Apron (the Union Jack) from Amritsar to Aden to Derry and now on to Coalisland. I am calling on all readers of *Freedom* to challenge immediately in whatever way possible the use of the Paras in Northern Ireland and, further, I suggest to any anarchist who has not given serious consideration to the idea of withdrawing the troops straight away, do so now.

Of course the Republic's Foreign Minister David Andrews was correct when he said that such actions act as a recruiting drive for the Provisional IRA. It's hard not to see that this might be part of the new regime being deployed from Stormont by 'Mates and Mayhem'. The Provos blow the legs off a soldier and the paras go ape-shit! This makes events in Coventry look like a Royal garden party. British ministers have defined all citizens of this part of the Kingdom as legitimate targets and have

upped the ante as a backdrop to the talks process. Have the Tories started their new term committed to sorting this thing out one way or another ... as long as they come out on top! And MIS, the redundant sleuths of the Cold War, are re-deployed here to muddy the waters even further. It's as if all the worst baggage of British Imperialism – the racist politicians, the shock troops and the dirty tricks brigade – are all to be let loose on the wee north.

The second to last paragraph of the editorial in the last issue of *Freedom* hit the nail on the head. State violence draws out yet more, facing us with the increasingly urgent task of dismantling the state. How else can freedom and peace be achieved?

Where did the bishop get the money? Where is he now? How can the church tell me what to do after this? How many more priests and bishops have children hidden away? Will celibacy be scrapped when the next Pope comes along? Will all the women used and abused by priests come out now? If the bishop has sinned does this nullify all the sacraments he has administered since his sin? How badly will this news affect support for people who won't allow women access to abortion in Ireland? Where do we locate moral authority now if we can't locate it in our bishops? These and many more are the questions thrown up by the revelations concerning Bishop Casey. The moral certainties that supported Irish society for centuries have taken a severe blow, particularly in the heightened atmosphere around the issue of abortion.

And T-shirts are reportedly on sale in Galway with the script: 'WEAR A CONDOM ... JUST IN CASEY'.

Dave Duggan

Pacifism is Realism*

Nothing can be more confusing than the general anarchist view of pacifism. The reason for this sorry state of affairs stems from a stubborn reluctance to put the matter to discussion, and the consequent inability to understand what the human animal is capable of, and what he is not, in that direction.

Most anarchists – with a few notable exceptions like Kropotkin, who surprised his comrades by coming out in support of the war against the Kaiser – are absolutely against taking up arms on behalf of any government, but many reserve the right to take up arms against governments, as was the case in the Spanish civil war of 1936-39. In other words, for many anarchists tactical (i.e. premeditated) violence is permissible. This they believe in spite of admitting that violence breeds violence, and in approving the dictum of the old French anarchist Sebastien Faure, who said: “I am aware of the fact that it is not always possible to do what one should do, but I know that there are things that on no account can one ever do”.

Surely one of the things that “on no account can one ever do” is to join in premeditated actions that inevitably involve the killing of women and children, as was the case in the Spanish revolution.

All this does not preclude the use of violence under all circumstances provided that it is unpremeditated and, by that token, unarmed because, despite what some religious people might say, humans, as an animal species, are ‘programmed’ to react violently to attacks upon themselves and their loved ones, a reaction that is necessary for the survival of all animal species. Indeed, we have little control over this instinctual behaviour: our basic instincts take over control in the heat of such events whatever our philosophies might be.

There may be ‘grey areas’ where it is difficult to discriminate between what is provoked and what is not, between what is armed and what is unarmed (what if a pacifist, under sudden attack, finds an axe lying fortuitously to hand?). However, the pacifist is highly unlikely to find a gun available, let alone know how to use it.

Anarchists who allow tactical (i.e. premeditated) violence cannot possibly have fully reasoned out their position. All other things being equal, the side with the heavier weaponry wins the battle, so that the anarchist, being in a minority, would need far greater superiority in weaponry to stand a chance of victory over any government. To think otherwise is to court a kind of suicide, or martyrdom. It amounts to romanticism to wish to ‘go down fighting’ rather than die submissively, when either reaction cannot possibly affect the outcome. It is noticeable that even anarchist histories of violent conflicts, including the Spanish revolution, pay scant, if any, attention to the women and children who get caught up in the fighting. It is almost as if, like the animals involved in such slaughters, they belong to a different species than the men with the guns. In view of this, it comes as no surprise that women are as silent in anarchist circles as they are elsewhere, and the prominent few who do make their mark have little or nothing to say about the male oppression of their sex. The days of the barricades are gone, and for all the good that it did, it is just as well. The time has come for anarchists to put logic before romanticism – for that is what the use of tactical (premeditated) violence amounts to. The red and black anarchist flag (standing for blood and martyrdom?) should be changed to all-white, or dispensed with altogether. The

reality is that premeditated violence, and those who support it, is the curse of the human race.

Both the historical record, and the multitude of conflicts that rage across the world at this moment in time, bear witness to the futility of force of arms in the settling of disputes.

Nothing has ever been gained from this barbarism apart from a reduction in the world’s burgeoning population. Pacifism is realism. Let the discussion start now.

Ernie Crosswell

* The title is the author’s, not ours – Editors

The civil war amongst revolutionaries

The Spanish Civil War: the view from the left

Revolutionary History, volume 4, numbers 1-2 (£12.95) Socialist Platform (available from Freedom Press Bookshop, add postage 10% inland, 20% overseas)

“The Second World War has begun. It attests incontrovertibly to the fact that society can no longer live on the basis of capitalism. Thereby it subjects the proletariat to a new and perhaps decisive test ... If however it is conceded that the present war will provoke not a war but a decline of the proletariat ... the inability of the proletariat to take into its hands the leadership of society could actually lead under these conditions to the growth of a new exploiting class ... either the Stalin regime is an abhorrent relapse in the process of transforming bourgeois society into a socialist society, or the Stalin regime is the first stage of a new exploiting society ... if the world proletariat should actually prove incapable of fulfilling ... nothing else would remain except only to recognise that the socialist programme ... ended as a utopia.” (L.D. Trotsky, 1938, *The USSR in War*)

Socialist Platform has now fulfilled its ambition to publish a ‘complete’ history of the Spanish Civil War, that it promised when it was first founded. Ostensibly a compendium of all revolutionary (left of Stalinist) positions only excluding the anarchists it is, it is said, intended to redress the record after years of Stalinist distortion. It is in fact somewhat more sectarian.

Whether by accident or design, the book is published after Russian Stalinism has collapsed, overthrown not by a revolutionary proletariat pushing on to socialism, but by masses who prefer old-style capitalism to the state variant. It means that the revelations about Stalinist counter-revolutionary activity are now almost *de trop*, since few need to be informed about the ills of the Stalin regime and its foreign agents.

It may be unintentional, but since the bulk of the book is given over to attacking others for their failure to oppose Stalinism (and let us admit here and now that the charge that the anarcho-syndicalists of Spain did fail in this, however magnificent their struggle was, is

largely well founded) the book reads as if its primary purpose is to attack anarchists.

In my case this impression is stressed by the fact that after I had ordered my own copy, I received extra promotional leaflets asking me if I would order more and circulate the readers of *Syndicalist Bulletin* as they were very anxious to ensure that anarchists were aware that the book was available. Though I didn’t know that the anarchist case was to be excluded, I was suspicious enough to say that I would only do so if I knew that some anarchist had been given a right of reply to inevitable Trotskyist attacks; and heard no more.

I will have to leave to others more versed in Spanish than I a full commentary on their actual history of the war, but there are points in the book that I feel it necessary to answer here and now; since 121 pages – about one-third of the book – is given over to a translation of M. Casanovas’ (Bortenstein’s) book, which was in Paris in the late ’40s and early ’50s, the standard Trot polemic against anarchism. When as a callow youth I first read it I almost went back to Trotskyism until, almost at the end, I came to a section where Casanovas considers (and to his satisfaction) refutes the anarchist ‘excuse’ that if the revolutionaries had taken power, Stalin would have stopped supplying any arms, and so Franco would have undoubtedly won. He, in the spring of 1939, wrote:

“If the Socialist revolution had triumphed in Spain, Stalin would have been forced to choose between it and fascism. Considering the clientele upon which he depends, it would have been difficult for him to have chosen fascism.”

The editors did not even feel it necessary to mention in their introduction this comment, nor that this was written just before the Stalin-Hitler pact. Even in the light of history, in the knowledge that the initial talks between Stalin and Hitler had already taken place before the collapse of the Spanish Republic, they cannot take on board the fact that Stalin would have done anything to prevent a socialist revolution in Spain, that the Nazi-Soviet Pact would have started earlier, or else the wartime alliance with Western big capital. They must be unaware that the Stalin-Hitler Pact was nothing new, there had been the Red-Brown referendum in Germany, and also the Bavarian National communist period. And these Trots call us utopian!

Thus they failed to understand just how determined Stalin was to prevent the revolution spreading; they failed to consider the implications of Trotsky’s own testament (quoted above), that the evils of Stalinism and reformism had (as was to be proved at the end of the war) affected working class consciousness; so it was not true that a successful Spanish Revolution would inevitably spark off a Europe-wide rising. Nor yet have they considered the implications of Mme Trotsky’s resignation letter; it is perhaps understandable that the book fails to consider the possible result if a revolution succeeded in Spain, with Stalinism and the bourgeois states all ganging up against it. Would we have had Trotskyism in one country? We anarchists can be proud at least of the fact that the nightmare of our revolution happening in only one country doesn’t even have to be considered.

However, though primarily an attack on anarchism, the book despite its claims to span

(continued on page 6)

The root of all evil

A.N. Wilson, the well-known biographer, novelist and erstwhile Christian apologist, writes:

“It is said in the Bible that the love of money is the root of all evil. It might be truer to say that the love of God is the root of all evil. Religion is the tragedy of mankind.”*

Very true and, being of this opinion also, I find it heartening that a man of his intellectual power should have shaken off the chains of irrational belief that were put upon him as a child.

Christian apologists sometimes use the argument that people of considerable intellectual power, such as Dr Johnson, were religious. But a man’s beliefs, his deepest principles, are not simply the product of his intellect; they are powerfully buttressed by emotion, and all too often maintained by fear. The weak and terrified child lives on deep within us long after we have attained adult status. Although fear and intimidation are at the heart of religious indoctrination, children’s positive emotions are also manipulated. The myth of gentle Jesus, the darling baby cradled in the manger, is played up every Christmastide, and the pathos of the crucifixion is invoked, with the monstrous implication that it is he or she, the little child, who is somehow responsible for this cruel torture because of acts of sin! Yet it is this same Jesus who, according to the Gospel of St Matthew, declared: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I am come not to send peace but a sword” (Matthew, 10, 34-36).

There are plenty of similar contradictions in the Gospels to bemuse and confuse the child, and they are not a source of weakness, but of strength, as they serve the essential purpose of religion: to administer a resounding slap in the face of reason and common sense.

If one refers to all the cruel horrors that are

practised in the name of religion, religious people declare that there is nothing wrong with Christianity, Islam, Judaism, etc. The horrors, they say, are due to the wickedness of human nature. The fact is, that although people can be cruel, intolerant, and irrational enough when acting in their own personal self-interest on occasion, they are infinitely more beastly when acting in the furtherance of a religious purpose, as history and modern tragedies bear witness. Strengthened by religion, ordinary weak, moderately selfish, and sometimes kindly human beings, can become transformed into monsters: monsters of arrogance and intolerance, unflinchingly flouting all human values, because they believe that somehow they are doing it to the greater glory of God.

By castigating religion like this in the late twentieth century in Britain, am I merely flogging a dead horse? Non-believers can regard the Church of England, and other such religious bodies, with amused tolerance, and do and say as they please. But what degree of freedom of thought, speech and action we have achieved has been hard-won through centuries of struggle, and such freedom as we have is tenuous. Among the preachers who coo to us gently over the radio, are those who would dearly like to get back to the days when their ancestors imprisoned, hanged and burnt us for questioning their power and dogmatism. The death threats against Salman Rushdie demonstrate that fanatics in Britain can get away with open incitement to murder, and snap their fingers at British law. It is permissible because it is a matter of religion! A.N. Wilson speaks truly when he says that “Religion is the tragedy of mankind”.

Tony Gibson

* A.N. Wilson, *Against Religion: why we should try to live without it*, Chatto Counterblasts, 1991.

THE RAVEN 17 On Use of Land

is a 112-page issue of our quarterly.

The editorial deals with the day-to-day problems including ‘set aside’ but also puts forward the anarchist view against the private ownership of land.

There are many other contributions on alternatives, such as the Whiteway Colony in Gloucestershire and a Swiss venture between town and country. The Spanish collectives of 1936-39 are also dealt with in detail. And Colin Ward contributes a piece, ‘Utopian Ventures’, in this country, while Stephen Cullen provides a piece on ‘The Highland Land War’, along with many other interesting articles in

THE RAVEN 17

112 pages £2.50 (50p postage)

Culture of Contentment

by J.K. Galbraith
Sinclair-Stevenson, £18.95

One of the minor pleasures of any major human social, political, revolutionary or government authorised war is that everyone but everyone can declaim profound truths not only on the cause and the obvious effects but what should have been done to avert the tragedy, but what should be done now to tilt the blood bank to the speaker's particular cause. The persistent and unavoidable flaw in the Grand Scheme is that those happily burning and looting your local supermarket or massacring the wife's relations in the next ethnic village have little time or use for debate, for as the poets continually write, 'Life is for the Living'. A meaningless saying when one mouths it, but after four pints of Guinness it comes out like one of the great profound philosophical truths.

And that video that has now become the Holy Grail of the pontificating liberal left. No child had a happier birthday present for forget the video carnage of Africa, Ireland or the Balkans, here was the hard porn movie as an art form of America held by the bollocks.

Within the White Hart pub a small group of the finest minds of their generation analysed, on their video recording of The Video, frame by frame each movement of the actors involved and at a distance of 3,000 miles took a card vote of innocent or guilty and in doing so did no more than was being done by any group with access to a television set. But in the White Hart ale became the chairperson and silenced the debate. The police are but the physical arm of the State and they act and react according to the temper of the times and their behaviour is dictated by the State's tolerance or fear of those who take to the streets to cheer the Queen or fire-bomb whatever is inflammable. If those cheering the Queen press a little too much on the tummies of the rout lining crowd facing policemen and women, then it must be the friendly smile and the request to move back, but if it is happytime in the working class areas and the torching of the friendly supermarket then the State demands batons, mace and guns by its physical arm.

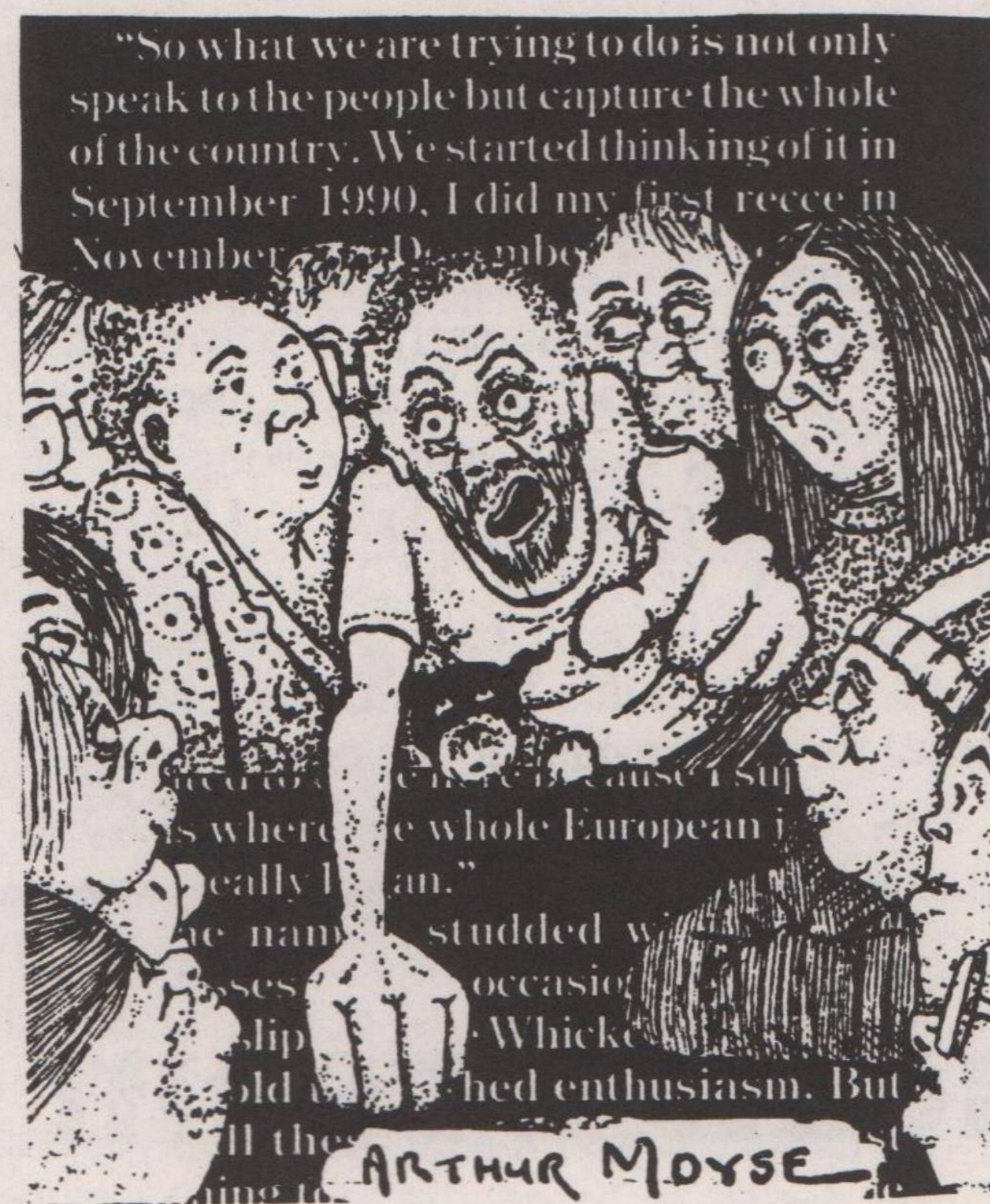
Then comes the accident of the lost ship, battle or gypsy video when the secret acceptable becomes available to the armchair moralists and in the matter of the internal overkill by the State a demand for fall guys by the authoritarian liberals, and fall guys, comrades, means and has always meant the Lance Corporal, but the hierarchy who demand and authorise the good, the bad and the bland behaviour of the servants of the State will never be brought to book as long as they control the physical arms of the State.

We all of us have this fantasy figure of a person that we would have wished to have as a father, but for myself I could never have accepted the thinking liberal's John the Baptist, the American social and economic writer John Kenneth Galbraith, for I know that I could never have lived up to his ideals for, as they always said to poor ol' Randy, 'You'll never be a patch on your father Winston'.

Galbraith, over the long years, has poured

Rooting, tooting and looting

out a stream of heavy breathing books on the nature and the flaws in his American society. With pages lit by the torching of Los Angeles, his book the *Culture of Contentment* is, to coin a cliché, sweeping America as he warns that America's future will be the crushing of mass uprising by the military of America's black citizens, Boer-style 'laagers' and the civilian police being transformed into military-style



"Finally, comrades, by a majority consensus decision we must formulate our Party line appertaining to volcanoes and earthquakes"

police. It reads like Britain's Tory 'rivers of blood' speech, 'but then who's counting'. Galbraith makes the point that as a society becomes more affluent it needs an influx of the lovely old unanswered anarchist question from the speaker at the back: 'But comrade, who will do the dirty work?' because the better types refuse to do it, but that is rubbish. What an expanding industrial society needed was human manpower and with the raw material that is what the industrialists always import and the myth that only these people will do the 'dirty work' is pure bullshit for pay someone £500 a week, give them a white coat and demand that they have a knowledge of Greek or Latin and you would then need to have passed a university entrance exam to hygiene the shit-house, providing one was wearing surgical gloves. The old and obvious truths are that when the artificial industrial economy of a society collapses then one is left with an unfortunate sea of unskilled labour and all the social problems it has now created in every country in the western 'free' world and then, comrade, the amoral torchings, shootings and riots.

Franklin D. Roosevelt faced up to this great social evil, and it was the greatness of the man

that he attempted to solve it and in doing so became the enemy of the embittered American Left and Right. Roosevelt applied the Keynesian economics of fuelling the pump by pouring millions of American tax dollars into great public works projects as the kick-start for the American internal economy, and to his credit it was projects of social need. Hitler used the same Keynesian method but to finance the recreation of the German military machine, yet Keynes was right and in a capitalist economy it works for it restarts the crazy economic cycle. Crazy because it is not the long-standing and sensible social solution. Roosevelt is still the enemy of the rich American Right for using their profits to save their way of life, and of the American Left for halting the 'revolution' by giving the American hungry access to bread. But, comrades, if any one of you sneer 'Oh God' then spare a second thought for the man, the woman and the child who stood homeless and hungry in the 1930 Great American Dust Bowl or the long, long soup kitchen queues in every American town.

Comrades, you voted Conservative by the nature of your thinking, lies, lies, lies, but let

me quote you an authoritative published voice of Toryism: "The Cabinet must sling out every Bill which, if enacted, would add to public spending. Each Minister round the table must be told to bring forward proposals for legislation which would reduce, not increase, public spending. Now is the time to be tough." And comrades, that means the poor, the old, the sick and the homeless. The new in-word is 'THE CONTENTED' meaning the wealthy and the 'superior working class' and if you believe that they will pay taxes to save their own worthless skins, then dig up Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Major, Britain's new puppet Prime Minister, is the new hate figure, but I am indifferent for that poor useless bastard will do what he has to do or, like the Duke of Windsor or Ma Thatcher, be kicked out. Comrades, on your secret Sky television sets you watched and listened to the Queen's speech, but know this, that our fight must be for the old, the sick and the homeless and always for our own individual liberty.

Arthur Moyses

Food for Thought ... and Action

Recent additions to Freedom Press Bookshop stock.

The Skeptic volume 6, number 2. This issue contains an examination of the origins of some of the ideas put forward in L. Ron Hubbard's *Dianetics*; a story of an enslavement by, and subsequent escape from, the cult of the Divine Light Mission; an examination of the claims made for a device called the Synchro-Energiser, "a high-tech computer-driven brain balancer"; an article on the possible inventor of the Loch Ness monster; another on crime-fighting and psychics; plus lots of snippets of 'paranormal' events reported in the press and mass media. Good stuff, 28 pages, A4 magazine, £1.85.

*The Decline of the American Economy** by Bertrand Bellon and Jorge Niosi, Black Rose Books. US domination of the world economy has rested on technological supremacy, surplus of capital for export, perennial merchandise trade surplus, and military superiority. All but the fourth of these factors no longer holds, and the US is now a debtor nation. Between 1950 and 1984 the real standards of living of West Germany, France and Italy rose to twice that of the US, while Japan's grew four times as quickly. The American share of manufacturing, mining and agriculture is diminishing, and more than half the jobs created in the US in the past five years pay less than \$7 an hour. But the situation is less clear-cut than might be implied by these figures, and sensibly the authors draw no definitive conclusions. Instead they end with a series of hypotheses, depending on which way the four 'pillars' of hegemony – economic, commercial, political and military – swing in the future. But they do expect the multipolar system which has displaced US hegemony to continue and become more pronounced. Altogether a meaty tome, packed with facts and figures and backed up by a statistical appendix, but written in a clear, readable style by these two prominent economists. 242 pages, £9.95.

The Art Strike Papers by James Mannox et al / *Neoist Manifestos** by Stewart Home, AK Press. Two-in-one with these two pieces printed back-to-back in the same book. *The Art Strike Papers* is a collection of responses to the proposed Art Strike 1990-93 following publication of the *Art Strike Handbook* in 1989, and contains some persuasive and hard-hitting

arguments both for and against. 52 pages. *Neoist Manifestos* is a selection of long-unavailable material from SMILE magazine numbers 1-8, including examples of Home's polemical writings. The Manifestos are a prime source for anyone studying the post-war avant-garde, but many people will read them simply for their vitality and wit. As former chief theoretician of the Neoist group, Home often writes under the 'collective pseudonym' Karen Eliot, which he encourages anyone to use in order "to examine practically the philosophical question of individuality" (???). The pretentiousness of his poetry – mercifully confined to five pages – should be avoided, however. 44 pages. One further point about *The Art Strike Papers*: the argument seems to be that 'art' as a formal activity "is another bit of repression in opposition to authentic living. Hence we would be better off without it – and by ceasing to produce art we would cease oiling the gears that crush us". But beware! In his quest to examine philosophical issues such as individuality and truth, Home confesses, "I spread ideas that I consider fallacious and carefully watch other peoples' reaction to them". £5.95

*The Assault on Culture: utopian currents from Lettrisme to Class War** by Stewart Home, AK Press. A reprint of the 1988 Unpopular Books edition (with a large hike in price, it must be said) this is a good, straightforward account of the vanguards that followed Surrealism: Fluxus, Bauhaus, Neoism, the Situationist International, Yippies, White Panthers, Punk and Class War to name but a few. *NME* described it as: "a concise introduction to a whole mess of troublemakers through the ages ... well-written, incisive and colourful". 115 pages, £5.95.

The following titles are now out of print: *The Anarchist Reader* by George Woodcock (Fontana) and *The Myth of Mental Illness* by Thomas Szasz (Paladin).

KM

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The civil war amongst revolutionaries

(continued from page 5)

the left singularly fails to give a wide cross-section even of dissidents from within the Trotskyist movement. Though one of the editors of *Revolutionary History* is/was a distinguished Oehlerite, and though Casenovas printed patronisingly talks of Oehlerites in exactly the same terms that he complains that the POUM talks of the Fourth International – saying why don't they forget their petty criticisms and rally round, even though they have doubts that the party line is valid, hoping by coming in to change it – there is no extract in this compendium from Oehler's block notes, let alone mention of the

fact that one of Oehler's comrades – Russell Blackwell – later became a leading syndicalist in the USA.

Though there are all sorts of textual attacks and marginal references to Bordiga, Vereeken, Sneevliet and Rosmer, none of their views are allowed to penetrate to the pages. Munis is lauded and it is even mentioned that he later broke with the Fourth International (as did Mme trotsky) and reference is made to a partial explanation of this, previously made in RH, but no word of the reason appears in this book. They are only included in the compendium as aunt sallies.

LO

The Factory and Beyond

REDUNDANT CLASSES?

A chip shop in Heywood, Lancashire, has a sign which says 'MEN IN OVERALLS WELCOME'. Whenever I see such a notice, or am stopped from going into a pub in my boiler-suit, I always remember George Orwell's account of workers in their work-clothes proudly strolling up and down the Ramblas in Barcelona during the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

In England today workers, while not quite persona non grata, are not very welcome even among sections of the left. While no anarchist would want to defend the union barons or the block vote, I can't help but think that Neil Kinnock's recent proposal that the trade unions be asked to give up the right to vote in the selection and re-selection of Labour MPs and parliamentary candidates, is a step down the road of kicking the workers out of decision-making, and towards bringing in those types who look comfortable in a collar and tie.

Dress sense and appearance has long been of concern within the Labour Party. According to MacNeill Weir, MP, who was MacDonald's Private Parliamentary Secretary in the second Labour Government in the early 1930s, the question which "filled the mind of the King [King George V] to the exclusion of all else" was whether members of the new Labour Government would

"conform to the etiquette of the Court and wear the appropriate dress". In the event they decided to accept the advice of their leader, Ramsay MacDonald, that to break with tradition and eschew Court dress would be unwise.

One wonders if the attachment of the Labour Party to the working class was ever much more than a ceremonial affair, but traditionally for the far left at least it was the class that was to be the historical agent of social change. Yet today it seems the far left has never forgiven the miners of Britain for failing to carry out their revolutionary mission to transform society in the 1984-5 strike. In their disappointment they have turned from working class politics to body politics, sexual politics, gender politics, and all those forms of political exotica which in the 1960s was the prime preserve of the anarchist movement.

Perhaps even here on the far left the working man was really regarded patronisingly like the gibbering 'Lucky' in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, rather than as the heroic creatures in socialist realist art. The *Daily Worker* became the *Morning Star*. The

Spanish Communist Party became the United Left Party. The Italian Communist Party was renamed in 1991, the year of the centenary of Gramsci's birth.

Now the working class seems as fanciful as the pantomime horse. A creature to be trundled out as in Trotsky's account of how six factory workers and six peasants were included in the delegation to Brest-Litovsk, but took no part in the negotiations. They were only allowed to attend ceremonial events and partake of the refreshments offered.

Gibraltar's disposable people

Anarchist trade union boss José Netto said: "I believe it's most unfair for the British Government, and even my own Government [the Gibraltar Government] to dispose of these people just like that". Mr Netto, a Gibraltarian TGWU union leader, was speaking on the television programme 'Taking Liberties' about the decision of the Gibraltar Government to send back Moroccans who have worked in this British colony, in some cases for about a quarter of a century.

This was his response to the Socialist Chief

Minister of Gibraltar, Joe Bossano, who was reported as saying: "If I am told by international law that the only way a Moroccan can work in Gibraltar is that I have to give his four wives and ten children the right to be given all the facilities which I have in Gibraltar: since I cannot afford to give him that, and since *I am a law abiding citizen*, I will tell him he cannot come". Mr Bossano, who was also a trade union leader in the Gibraltar TGWU before becoming Chief Minister in 1988, has served notice that sooner than grant the Moroccan workers all the rights they are entitled to under European law he will see all the Moroccans out of Gibraltar.

Had the Moroccans merely landed on the Rock in the 1960s like some twentieth century Dick Whittingtons in search of streets paved with gold, then perhaps there may have been some slight excuse for the attitude of the authorities. But the truth is the Moroccans were deliberately recruited in Rabat by the British Government, acting with the full approval of the Gibraltarians at that time. Then they were needed to overcome the labour shortage on Gibraltar caused by the gradual withdrawal of Spanish cheap labour.

Now, alas, the Moroccans are surplus to requirements.

Mack the Knife

The Burning of the American Dream

When four Los Angeles policemen were found not guilty of brutally beating a black man, despite the seemingly conclusive evidence of video-tape of the assault, the sense of injustice felt by many sparked off the huge riots that took days to abate. Some of the media at first blandly referred to the outbreaks in other cities as merely 'copycat' and so denied that there could be genuine motives for their occurrence. The attempt at denial continued even when it was accepted that there have been years of grievances building up and a high level of discrimination against the poor and people of colour.

This denial was expressed by one citizen of LA who, overlooking the smoke enshrined city from a nearby hill, said that no matter how unjust the verdict in the Rodney King case it did not justify the destruction he was witnessing (BBC1, 1st May). But as anyone who thought about the issue in depth realised and as was soon to be expressed by black spokespeople and academics/writers such as Marble Manning and Studs Terkel, there is far more to this than a verdict of a single case of race brutality.

There has always been social deprivation and human suffering in the US system and non-whites have fared badly since the founding of that nation. The poor have had to endure conditions of third world standards whilst frequently being treated with callousness and largely ignored. The system that causes poverty, that enables some to live in luxury whilst others go hungry, turns on the victims to blame them for 'their' failure, 'their' slums and 'their' poverty. The mainstream way of life is geared to success and praises those who succeed. One only has to watch the plethora of US television programmes and films to come across the emphasis they place on grades in school, on 'doing well' in business and so on. Yet by its very nature the capitalist system, particularly the US model and increasingly so with the British one, requires a surplus labour force and does not wish to expend its gains on keeping the poor in a decent standard of living. The wants of the 'haves' do not fit in with the needs of the 'have-nots' and the latter are a product of the former. The myth of the American Dream is that wealth is there for you if you work hard. Yet the reality is that only a few can ever be rich as it is logically impossible for the system to allow everyone to be rich, for who are to break their backs at mundane and unrewarding tasks in the fields and factories in order that profits may be generated to enrich the few.

Such a harsh system is bound to produce resentment as the wealthy accrue more money whilst many are underpaid and unemployed and forced to live in slums. The contradictions of building Stealth bombers at \$500 million apiece, of waging war in the Gulf to restore a dictatorship in Kuwait, whilst poor children suffer from lack of

medical care, will not go unnoticed forever even with a subtle propaganda system as strong as that in the United States. What the rioting has done is put the conditions of the poor on the agenda, something which the state has tried to ignore as it created and maintained this third world within its domain.

George Bush and his cronies may talk tough and say that the riots were never justified, but such talk is to be expected. They, as the state, believe they have a monopoly on violence and that no matter what the have-nots must not fight back. They pretend the only violence the non-whites and poor suffer is occasional police brutality or inter-racial conflicts which most of such communities are responsible for. But what about the violence of poverty engendered by the system, the 'violence by inches' that is poverty? The media love a fire and so are keen to cover and condemn rioting, but where are the headlines and news reports that tell us the infant mortality rate of blacks is twice that of whites and higher than that of Nigeria or Jamaica? And whilst they gave intense and sensationalist coverage to the Central Park rape case (when several young black men were found guilty of raping a white business executive without any hard evidence) where was the coverage when a black homeless woman in LA who had stolen an ice cream was shot eighteen times by seven sheriffs?

The everyday suffering endured by the have-nots has become even worse as welfare cuts increase and the state of their environment deteriorates, whilst at the same time the rich get richer. Between 1977 and 1988 the after-tax income of the bottom fifth of the US population fell by 10% whilst that of the top fifth rose by 34%! The reality of the American Dream is that the rich do their best to ensure increased wealth even when times are bad and at the expense of the poorer members of society.

It is also a myth that the system wants the disenfranchised to help themselves. What it really wants is for everyone to accept the capitalist model and to struggle to succeed within it, to help themselves via the system. So when some tried to help the people and organise them to help themselves without consideration to the needs of capitalism, the state and capitalists destroyed such movements and tried to eradicate such ideals. So when the IWW and other unions were successful in the last century and earlier this one, the guardians of the state set about destroying them. The unions sought to give power of production to the workers, with consideration to their needs and not those of the wealthy. As history shows, they were shot, imprisoned, executed and deported.

In more recent times there grew community power groups who had had enough of government indifference to their suffering and began to organise themselves. The American Indian Movement and the Black Panthers were concerned with rights and

their standard of living and thus questioned the right of the state to take their land and exploit them. They too were destroyed, infiltrated by the FBI, shot and imprisoned.

What the state and its minions do not want is grassroots self-help by the poor and oppressed as it requires them for its exploitative economy. How can the rich stay that way if people set up community based ideologies that will confront their dominant ideology? The threat was all too great and the Black Panther's breakfast clubs for poor people were a direct statement that whilst the state was ensuring the wealth of others it was not even ensuring the poor were able to feed their children.

The barrier between the haves and have-nots is the police, which is an institution concerned with upholding the law, but as the law is wealth/property based it clearly isn't going to favour the poorer sections of society. The in-built bias ensures the wealth of the few whilst allowing them to dictate morality to everyone else, telling us to obey the law as it is for the best for society, whilst in reality it is a set of rules created by and benefiting them. So when another citizen of LA said he would use a gun to 'protect' his home because that is what 'they' are doing to 'us', because "that is what they are doing to us, they are killing our cops" (BBC1, 1st May), he was not wrong. In the moments of violent confrontation the veil was down, the reality could be seen as the police protected the haves from the have-nots.

The coverage of the rioting has focused on the looting surely as a way of avoiding the real issues of poverty in the US system that is to blame. Images of people storming into shops to take all they can carry is easily condemned and allows the rioting to be tainted by accusations that the riots became an excuse to take what is not theirs. But as one demonstrator put it, after years of false hopes and living in poverty, why not take a few T-shirts and a TV? The American Dream breeds desire for consumer goods and excess of things that we need, so what of those who are unable to achieve the goals set by the system? After years of seeing all this wealth and not having access to it, it is hardly surprising some decide to take it when they can. And surely some of the looters were trying to get things they need, like clothes, which they are unable to afford because they live in poverty.

Sadly a riot is a spasm of violence in which people lash out at what is there. It is hard for it to truly affect those it should, and the areas that are gutted and ruined are those in which many of the rioters live. Without direction and political aims, which the state seeks to deny them, most riots will be momentary affairs that will not be able to fundamentally change the way things are done. One only has to look at what occurred after previous riots to see that little will truly be done by the government. But one can hope that it will galvanise more people into action and enable them to see what

is wrong and work out how to confront this in the long term.

But for now the system remains capital-oriented, wanting profit and not concerned with the needs of everyone. One can see how wealth/property is more of an issue to the US system in that in all of the coverage I saw on television in the first few days, no American expressed horror or concern at the death of what was then thirty or so people, but constantly focused on the looting and the damage to property. And some shop owners protected their premises with guns, shooting at anyone they thought was a looter near them. That is the essence of the Dream: wealth not people, where life is secondary to property and where they punish those who would have it otherwise.

I. Borrows

SANE STRATEGIES

(continued from page 8)

anarchism are lost in this way is difficult to establish, but I get the feeling that they may be considerable.

Anarchist books are central to our propaganda effort. When we scan our catalogues it is readily apparent that the great majority of these publications are concerned with revolution on the grand scale, be they critiques of state and capital, descriptions of our heroic past or biographies of key personalities. I am not criticising the availability of these valuable works, but pointing out that this is what the newcomer to anarchism is presented with, and that it is overwhelmingly of a maximalist nature. Many newcomers, particularly if they fail to make friends with other anarchists, are unlikely, I feel, to remain with us for long, especially if they do no more than wait for something momentous to turn up. It is a matter of regret that *Freedom* no longer carries a nationwide list of group contact addresses – means need to be found to prevent any new blood seeping away unnoticed.

It seems to me that it would be to the advantage of the movement in general to have more written emphasis on the importance of small group structures within which individuals, and in particular newcomers, can draw the maximum possible support and encouragement and where achievable goals can be pursued. Whether these goals are connected with the development of one's own ideas, personal freedom, etc., or with something more tangible and ambitious such as the founding of a co-operative, is not important. What is important is for the individual to feel that some worthwhile progress is being made and to have fun within a milieu which builds self-confidence, self-esteem and high levels of sociability and interdependence. We all need to feel part of an alternative environment which is supportive to those feeling the pressures of our wretched society, and which also helps to develop the qualities which are indispensable to the free, responsible and sane society of the future.

John Griffin

Christianity and Anarchism: some corrections

Mike Quentin-Hicks (16th May) makes statements which are inconsistent with historical evidence. It is just not true that "we do have many facts to go on" about the life of Jesus. The facts are so few that it is uncertain whether he lived in the first century AD, or lived earlier, or was a myth. The sayings attributed to Jesus do not teach both "the spiritual and mystic path" and "the way to justice and equality in the material world". On the contrary, they teach concentration on the spiritual and neglect of the material: "Set your mind on God's kingdom and his justice before

everything else, and the rest will come to you as well". Pre-Constantine Christianity was not libertarian. Paul (died about 67AD) writes of the Christian calling: "Every man should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a slave when you were called? Do not let that trouble you, but even if a chance of liberty should come, choose rather to make good use of your servitude". Constantine did not make the Church of Rome an established church. He legalised Christianity in 312AD, but did not himself convert to Christianity until he was on his deathbed 24 years later. Throughout his reign the state religion was "official paganism" with himself as a god.

The South American bishops are not doing anything unprecedented. They speak out on behalf of the poor, encourage the poor to help themselves, and urge the rich to help the poor. Bishops did things like that in medieval Europe. "The Bible has been given to the people in their own language". Good, in that it will encourage literacy. But if the people follow the Bible's teaching, they will learn to respect authority, and to forsake the material for the spiritual. "Leonardo Boff saw the Bishop/Priest/People trinity as a triangle with the people being the base". And the Bishop, presumably, being the pinnacle. Donald Room

Fiasco at Chiswick: Green Anarchist rally

I too attended the meeting 'Is modern industry a barrier to a free society' debate between Green Anarchists and the Socialist Party, in fact I gave the address for the Green Anarchists. Being 19 and it being my first public meeting, I may have been a bit brief, but to mistake me (I was wearing the Green Anarchist flower on my T-shirt) for the bearded socialist, I wonder if Paul Rothwell-Hartmann was even at the meeting let alone listening to what was said. Green issues are sadly overlooked in the anarchist movement as a whole.

There was oddly a lack of debate, due to my lack of experience and the Socialist Party speaking about technology and selectively quoting *Green Anarchist* number 29 and totally missing the articles calling for small command alternative technology using local materials like bio-gas reactors to generate electricity and stopping the need for central generating of coal, oil or nuclear power stations. This was not debated because of the lack of direction in the debate. The Green Anarchists, as far as I knew, did come to London by public transport. Paul, the only bearded one of us, came by coach and myself and Scott by rail. So next time, Paul Rothwell-Hartmann, get your facts right - and the matter of beards is only necessary in a cult of personality which Green Anarchist is not.

Saxon Camberley

News from Angel Alley

We had a hectic week dispatching *The Raven* and *Freedom* as well as running the bookstalls for the successful Murray Bookchin lectures in Cambridge and Bristol, quite apart from the routine dispatch of orders. We hope nobody was missed!

The sales success at both these lectures, and the other two in Leeds and London, convinces us that if only those of our comrade readers throughout the country would take the initiative to organise lecture/bookfairs for which we would be only too pleased to provide the literature, and perhaps even a speaker, our ideas would reach a new public that is wanting something more than any of the political parties can offer. After all, they are looking for votes within the capitalist system, and not for an alternative, non-capitalist, egalitarian society such as many socialists and certainly all anarchists believe in.

Though we think the capitalist system by definition is rotten, there are, unreported in the national press, all kinds of generous and good deeds which we all know about and to which the local press does give some publicity. We feel that *Freedom* should be balancing the rottenness of Big Business with examples of

mutual aid, local demonstrations in favour of the quality of life - in a word, the positive things which make life worth living.

CORRECTION

The editorial in *The Raven* number 17 had three misprints which might puzzle some readers.

On page 2, second paragraph, penultimate line: "One is talking of 18,000 that have to be ..."

On page 3, first paragraph, last two lines: "... incorruptibility of the farmer. For farmer read former."

On page 5, second line from the end: "supermarket grants" should read supermarket giants. Apologies!

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Stirner no anarchist?

Dear Editors, I should appreciate if you would refrain from sending me any further copies of *Freedom*. I just cannot bring myself to agree, in principle, with the contents. I'm afraid to say that the more I read of anarchism the less I agree with it.

As a staunch advocate of Max Stirner, I just cannot equate his 'individualism' with anarchism. Indeed, the more I think about it, the more inclined I am to believe that the socio/political systems of the western states are more suited to the aspirations of the individual than anarchism ever could be.

Indeed, my conception of anarchism was more aligned with 'the return to nature' brigade - a sort of naturalism, I suppose.

I'm afraid to say that I have an extremely romantic imagination - but the more I look at things the more I am beginning to 'grow up'.

R. McNulty
Aberdeen

Please keep sending in your letters and donations

ON EDUCATION

Dear Editors, There is probably less disagreement about education between Tim Francis and me than one might think from his letter in *Freedom* (4th April). I hope so, but I should like to answer the points he made.

As regards foreign language learning, maybe the most important question about teacher training is whether the students benefit. I have pointed out in other places that there is no objective way of testing this, so one is forced back on subjective impression. My own, in the 46 years since I went into the field of English as a foreign language, is that standards have

fallen somewhat. I do not understand how any review could demonstrate otherwise, but I should be grateful if Tim could let me know about the ones he refers to.

I agree with him: the current political debate has nothing to do with my ideas, and the National Curriculum is an authoritarian abomination, as are things like assessing teachers. In my original article (*freedom*, 25th January) I did say that Kenneth Clarke was acting for all the wrong reasons. The point I was trying to make is precisely that one should not have a knee-jerk reaction against an idea simply because it is advocated by villains in a current debate. Equally, one should

not support an idea because it is supported by the opponents of villains.

Teachers supported teacher training, I suspect, mainly because it implied 'professionalism', which promised better pay and status. This is very understandable in a world dominated by money and hierarchy; it is equally understandable that most teachers, having gone through the trouble of being 'trained', now feel vested interests are at stake, particularly emotional and intellectual ones. But teacher training apart from not, in my view, being useful, imposes an intellectual tyranny. What happens to the trainee who tells her superiors 'this is rubbish' or 'I'm not wasting my time on this idiotic task'?

For several years, in isolation and to the

extent the circumstances allowed, I worked with colleagues to resist the current teaching orthodoxies. The practical results were very encouraging. I am no longer in a position to do this. Does that mean I must not talk of my dreams for happier children and better learning? I should have thought that anarchism of all ways of thought was the one that most has to be outside current controversies - unfortunately. If we could this evening press a button that abolished the state overnight, the result would almost certainly be horrific. But does that mean we should not urge the end of the state and urge the attitudes that will lead to than end?

Amorey Gethin
Cambridge

Recently a friend and I were discussing the psychology surrounding the individual anarchist's struggle to develop his/her life within a hostile authoritarian society, whilst also advocating wide scale revolutionary social change. The idea that this struggle amounted to a burden which could cause mental illness was put forward, and by way of illustration, my friend alluded to the high incidence of depression, etc., among people he knew. Not wishing to accept a linkage between anarchism and mental illness, I argued with him, pointing out the support which could be gained from solid friendships within the movement. The discussion was to gain far greater significance for me, when three days later I received news of another friend who had attempted suicide. Most people knew of that unfortunate person's financial problems following redundancy, and the threatened break-up of a long relationship with a lover, would probably look no further for an explanation of the tragedy; adherence to a particular ideology might seem of minor importance. The ideology concerned is, of course, anarchism. Once the feeling of shock had receded, the earlier debate was rekindled in my mind. The more I thought about it, the more it seemed that my friend's argument was in fact valid.

When we consider the destructive potential of authoritarianism we can only be staggered, not only by its day to day impact on the individual at work, etc., but also by the continual threat it poses to all forms of life. I am thinking about the possibility of nuclear war and global ecological collapse. It seems to me that systems of thought which produce such appalling results are not just unacceptable from our point of view, they are also pathological. A society

which has created the means of its own destruction, which can even acknowledge and be very fearful of the dangers, yet still refuses even to consider alternative social arrangements, has to be afflicted with severe mental disorders, and on the mass scale. The great majority who either actively participate in this madness, or merely acquiesce with it, are responsible for its continuation, and affirm its status of 'normality'. Anarchists are taken to be abnormal in their aspirations, deviant or even insane themselves. Indeed, reactionary psychologists attribute an adherence to 'extremist' or 'eccentric' views such as anarchism, vegetarianism or alternative medicine as being indicative of mental instability in that it shows a tendency towards narrowness and rejection of 'healthy' social relationships: what incredible hypocrisy!

Even before a pen is lifted or a banner raised, anarchists stand rejected by all of the major social institutions and most individuals. Rejection on this scale can become an obvious burden to those who seek a society which is far more sociable. In the world of employment, it is as well to keep quiet about one's anarchism, and if engaging in debate there, to present one's arguments in the most subtle of ways, at which stop short of using the word 'anarchy'. Even among family and non-anarchist friends, it can be advisable to avoid the subject altogether. I know of one comrade who keeps his

revolutionary reading matter out of his living room bookcase, where it would be on full view to visitors! All of these kinds of defensive strategies are, in effect, acts of self-repression, indulged in through fear of being marginalised, but which in the long run can do us no good. There must be a psychological cost attached to consciously keeping our mouths shut, of not fully being ourselves.

When it comes to overt expressions of our beliefs, we may choose from a variety of options. The maximalist will attempt to engage in propaganda which is aimed, at least potentially, at the entire non-anarchist population: the recent don't vote campaign conducted by *Freedom* falls into this category. A much more minimalist approach might entail concentrating on personal development, lifestyle, etc., and forming friendship networks with others of similar outlook, thus building a counter culture within that which we wish to change. Comrades that I am most closely acquainted with operate in various ways at both levels, and see their anarchism, to use Dave Dane's excellent term, as a "directional philosophy"; a pragmatic view which is accepting of *all* freedom enhancing activities. Whilst not losing sight of the social revolutionary goal, we want to gain the satisfaction of attaining what is possible (in our case, developing libertarian theory) rather than wearing ourselves out with direct assaults on the bastions of power, which in current conditions

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seems about as rewarding as bashing our heads against a brick wall.

Whatever response individuals make, it is clear to me now that a considerable psychological cost is involved. When one has a clear understanding of how fulfilling, sustaining and stimulating society could be, the experience of frustrating and debilitating anti-social acts by others is likely to cause an anarchist more distress than a non-anarchist who merely accepts such occurrences as being part and parcel of life in general and which are to be dealt with or adapted to according to circumstances. Anti-social behaviour is unpleasant for all who experience it, but to the anarchist it is the more galling and likely to be resentfully brooded over all the more, especially when the forces of reaction seem unstoppable; like now. Quite how well we cope with the continual assault on our communitarian senses is of great importance if we are to retain both our sanity in an insane world and our revolutionary commitment.

For those who concentrate more on activities connected with our millenarian objectives, the psychological pressures arising from a failure to make progress are probably the most onerous: feelings of disappointment may turn into despair when the very highest expectations are thwarted. Many anarchists of this persuasion, I suspect, simply acknowledge the seeming impossibility of the task and move on to pastures new, perhaps in the Labour or Green Parties. At worst, they may abandon their interest in achieving social change altogether. Quite how many one-time converts to

(continued on page 7)

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