

# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

Vol. 53 No. 13

27 JUNE 1992

FIFTY PENCE

"If ever there should  
exist a state exclusively  
composed of good men  
they would seek not to  
govern."  
Plato, The Republic

## CAPITALISM on the brink of BANKRUPTCY?

In the last issue of *Freedom* (13th June) we wrote about the government's '50 Days of Dynamic Inaction' and suggested that nothing would change for the better (in terms of employment) in the next fifty days – and, we could well have added, in the next five hundred days. And we concluded with: "That's Capitalism".

It is perhaps not surprising that all the capitalist critics who welcomed the final collapse of the Soviet Union's communist hierarchy and their successors' uncritical acceptance of a capitalist economy, are unable to apply the same critical faculties where capitalism is concerned.

Yet surely everything points to the fact that capitalism is on the brink of bankruptcy (in more ways

than just the literal meaning of the word), unfortunately not because of pressures from socialist and other alternative economic systems, but as a result of the greed that capitalism generates among its own and which it seeks to instil through its virtual monopolistic control of the mass media, at all levels of society. Furthermore, our whole system of competitive education (in spite of a large number of dedicated teachers) inevitably conditions a majority of young people to view their fellow students as 'competitors', 'rivals' in the 'struggle to get to the top'.

[Incidentally, *The Observer* (14th June) reminds one that: "An avalanche of half a million job-hunting school leavers is set to join the labour market next month,

but dole-queue figures show *they have practically no chance of finding work*" (our italics).]

Not for the first time, we have pointed out that capitalism thrives so long as 'demand' exceeds production. The moment the roles are reversed capitalism is in trouble. Again as we have often pointed out, capitalism solved a lot of its problems by wars. After all, think of our European Community, especially of Britain, France, Germany and all those artificially created Central European nations, and Russia. They were always at war, and all about markets whatever they may have said about noble ideals of freedom and democracy. It was all about capitalism.

The war of 1939-45 convinced them that wars were no longer profitable. The Cold War was the alternative which has proved very profitable to the Western powers and bankrupted the Soviet Union without a shot being fired between them, even by mistake, in nearly fifty years!

Years ago in *Freedom* we also pointed out that had the Soviet Union opted out of the Cold War armaments race not only would they have been able to raise the standard of living of  
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### 'SAVING THE WORLD HAS ITS IRONIES'

A recent issue of *The Independent* published a picture of a luxury cruiser and headed the text 'The Gas Guzzler':

"Running at 30mph this luxury cruiser travels about 0.3 miles to the gallon. In one hour it will consume the same amount of fossil fuel as is available *annually* to the average member of the poorer half of humanity. The typical First World citizen consumes at least fifteen times as much fossil fuel as his Third World counterpart, the burning of which adds to global warming. This poses a problem of equity as the world's leaders ponder sustainable development for all the world's people."

*The Independent* on Sunday (7th June) had on its front page a picture of a Jumbo jet with Mr John Major waving to the photographer as he left for Washington. The caption is well worth producing:

"Rio bound John Major says farewell at Heathrow yesterday on his way to the Earth Summit via Washington. His Jumbo Jet carried fifty other passengers – it has

a capacity of 400 – and 100,000 kilos of fuel. Saving the world has its ironies."

We congratulate *The Independent* for this practical way of exposing all the hypocrisy surrounding the Rio Summit on Planet Earth. As *Freedom* put it in the last issue: we can only destroy ourselves, not the planet. The prosperous First World with the exception of the USA – who didn't sign the various documents while at the same time Bush declared that the USA was the world's greatest friend of the environment and wildlife – all declared themselves committed to the objectives, but when presented with a projected bill for \$10,000 million a year, all they could stump up was a mere \$2,000 million.

Mr Major offered a generous £100 million! And to think that Britain spends a lot more than that every year just holding onto the Falkland Islands!

**FEDERALISM**  
COLIN WARD on  
'THE ANARCHIST  
SOCIOLOGY OF  
FEDERALISM'  
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# CAPITALISM on the brink of BANKRUPTCY?

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their people but they would have also created considerable financial embarrassment for the Western powers since the armaments industry in Britain and the United States was a vital part of their economy and 'prosperity'. Now the collapse of the Soviet Union as an excuse for their maintaining a large military establishment - not to mention more and more 'research' to make war even more ghastly - has been removed. Or has it? Not at all. Neither Britain nor the United States can 'afford' to get out of the armaments business. The new Defence Minister, Rifkind (only three months ago he was Minister of Transport!), interviewed on 'Newsnight' (16th June) made it quite clear that while welcoming the Yeltsin-Bush talks in Washington (at which they agreed to get rid of a few missiles on both sides, presumably to show that these meetings produce 'results'. Yeltsin, for the benefit of those at home, declared that it was "the greatest day of his life". But both sides were left with more than 3,500 nuclear missiles which, launched in anger, could perhaps end *man's* reign on Planet Earth?) Mr Rifkind saw no reason to reduce Britain's stock of some 500 nuclear missiles. Pressed by Jeremy Paxman to identify the potential enemy for whom these missiles were intended, our former Transport Minister now turned military strategist had no potential enemy to pinpoint!

The foregoing is relevant to our thesis on the bankruptcy of capitalism. The importance of the arms industry is that scientists and technologists will go on, so long as they are financed, in producing more and more sophisticated weaponry as well as their antidotes (thus ensuring you never stop research) and this is more profitable for home and export than many consumerist industrial goods which, even if not designed to have a short life, in view of the growing worldwide production (encouraged by the G7 industrial nations' investing in the Asian cheap labour market) is creating an unsaleable surplus. The result: a buyers' market. That's fine for those who have the cash or the credit to buy. But the phoney Lawson bonanza of the late 1980s, which was bought for £300,000 million in mortgages and another £50,000 million on the plastic cards racket (and surely helped to win the 1992 elections for the Tories) is now being painfully repaid by an ever-growing number of repossessions by the money-lenders and massive sacrifices by the plastic card suckers.

Modern technology not only is able to produce more and more but also

with fewer and fewer workers/employees. After all, the latest victims are the white collar workers who only produce more and more paper and who are paid more than the workers who produce the goods and services that they invoice. Now the invoicing has been taken over by the machines and so the largest number of employees joining the dole queue this month come from the South East, the solid Tory belt, the last people Mr Major wants to sacrifice in his pursuit of the classless society!

But he and his Adam Smith gurus have no answer. For the only possibility is to increase the purchasing power of all consumers. *In simple language, this means taking away from the rich and giving it to the poor to spend.* All governments, whatever their professed intentions, always ensure that the rich get richer and the poor poorer. Major's 'classless' government doesn't even contemplate a redistribution of wealth. Nor have they any ideas to deal with unemployment, which again increased massively last month. Indeed, an interesting *Guardian* editorial, 'When the Promises come to Nothing', concludes with this significant reflection:

"One of the problems is that the government doesn't exactly have a vested political interest in moving swiftly out of recession. The longer the present recession lasts (as long as it doesn't go on for years and years) the more likely it is that the country will be in an economic upswing during the next election four or five years hence.

Even at this distance, it is impossible to cast off the shadow of a general election."

In a polite sort of way, *The Guardian* is suggesting that far from being concerned with the interests of the nation the Tories are, only two months after the elections, thinking of their chances next time! To think that millions of people vote for these (Tory, Labour, Liberal, the lot) political charlatans!

Anarchists still believe that until we can get rid of governments, anarchists, socialists and greens must remain 'in the street' and use their power - as workers opposed to capitalism, to wage slavery and believing in co-operation as opposed to competition - to force governments to adopt alternative policies or else.

Capitalism is bankrupt and has no solutions. The Parliamentary Opposition - Her Majesty's official Opposition - is equally bankrupt since their only ambition is to operate that corrupt system 'more fairly' than their Tory counterparts. Every Labour

government has only succeeded in making the rich richer and the poor poorer. When are the frustrated, genuine socialists in the Labour Party going to join

the anarchists in the street and call for others to join us there? Only then will we be able to challenge the bankrupt capitalist system!

Output falls by 0.4 per cent but manufacturers report stronger order book  
*Guardian May 24th 1992*

## CBI spots signs of recovery

### Retail sales fall short of traders' expectations

THE GUARDIAN  
Friday June 12 1992  
**CBI's report cheers Portillo**

THE SUNDAY TIMES • 14 JUNE 1992

## Cupboard is bare as Lamont tries to promote recovery

*Sunday Times June 14 1992*  
**No recovery for 3 years, say ministers**

*Times June 20th 1992*  
**Confidence has sagged again, CBI confirms**

## DO YOU LOVE THE BOSS?

One of the aspects of capitalism which you never see discussed in the press is how people react to the fact that they depend for their jobs on an individual or some set-up (but which finally depends on an individual whether you are hired or fired).

Do people enjoy working for somebody else, and are they anxious about security so far as their jobs are concerned?

Two recent news items on the subject make interesting reading for anarchists. British Telecom (BT) although making record profits announced that they were going to prune their workforce of 200,000 by between 20,000 and 25,000 employees, who would be given generous redundancy payments. No less than 120,000 - we repeat 120,000 out of the 200,000 workforce - applied for redundancy!

A government survey published earlier this month showed that almost two out of three men were taking early retirement (before the official retirement age of 65). It also showed that 70% of men had an occupational pension.

If we can draw conclusions from these statistics, they are that most people *hate* their jobs and are saving as much as they can from their wages/salaries in order to retire as soon as possible.

We only have one life on this Planet Earth (good luck to those who kid themselves about having a timeless second existence - we are sure that they will be disappointed) and most of us spend a third of our lives (and the potentially richest years) doing a job - whether it's socially useful or just profitable for the boss - in order to earn the money to pay a landlord for a shelter and provide for the other necessities of life.

Another third of life is spent resting or sleeping, or washing or cooking. So what's left?

No wonder when the opportunity presents itself to have early retirement so many opt for it. Yes, it means lower material standards, but it also means more time to yourself - to live. More freedom to enjoy life - the only one we can enjoy. Let's make the best of it!

## Anarchist Essentials

Personal individual sovereignty, together with voluntary association: these are the twin foundation stones of modern anarchism, whether individualist, collectivist or communist. On this bedrock can be built the practice and defence of both personal freedom and social solidarity, or as Benjamin Tucker might have described it, 'the temple of liberty'.

It is clear that the exercise of personal freedom is carried out within the context of the society which produced us. Our very consciousness and our inner self, while our own realm and property are the product of the accumulated knowledge and wisdom or 'culture' of past and contemporary humanity, of 'society'. Now society, in the form of friends, relatives and contemporaries, is a very real and concrete thing. It is not an artificial edifice created by philosophers. It is not something of which politicians can say, to quote the odious Margaret Thatcher, 'there is no such thing as society'. It is the sum of us all, of all our activity: domestic, economic, public and intellectual. Without it no one alive could have developed into a free sovereign individual capable of exercising choice and making decisions.

Our present malaise in the West and the world over, is that people are controlled, manipulated, indoctrinated and, where these methods fail, coerced and bludgeoned into giving up the exercise of their freedom, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation,

oppression, famine, tyranny, genocide, as we can see daily in the newspapers and on television. Humanity is being crushed and the world with all its life steadily destroyed by these malignant forces.

Liberty needs to be exercised if it is not to atrophy and die in the hearts of humanity; it needs to be defended by whatever 'means' are appropriate to the 'ends' desired. No state, no government, no capitalist boss, no imposed social order has the right to put limits upon the freedom of the individual or to exploit us for their own profit. Faced with their presumptions usurpation of our liberty we can fight back with non-cooperation, and with passive and active resistance using methods such as the boycott, the rent strike, non-payment of tax, sabotage, the general strike and, where all else fails, violence.

Under anarchism I am prepared to give my free cooperation and voluntary association for my own and others benefit, but no one can command or coerce my obedience, submission or other abasement. Under anarchism the free individual is neither slave nor master.

If we are to light the spark of imagination that leads to revolt we need to reach out beyond our 'anarchist ghetto' using all our resources, intelligence and wit. The mere rhetoric of freedom had proved popular enough with people for the purposes of the Tories; what might happen when the

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In *Raven* number 17 'ON USE OF LAND' the editorial put forward arguments as to why nobody should own the land. The capitalist system encourages the abuse of the land, which is our most important asset. Without it we would starve. We can do without cinemas and motor cars, but without the land?

The *Raven* editorial argued that most farmers had no feelings about the land. They looked upon it just as a factory owner looked upon his factory, whereas we thought that because the land was so important to the health of the community it rightfully belonged to the community and not to any individual to dispose of to suit his narrow personal financial interests.

In the last week or two we have been provided with examples of the duplicity of so-called farmers who, when money is available or when it is a question of making more money by going out of production, are the first to put forward the arguments which

## TRUST THE FARMERS?

contradict everything they maintained hitherto.

The *East Anglian Daily Times* (13th June) had a feature on one Captain Robin Sheepshanks, a Suffolk landowner who farms 1,100 acres and who had planted three miles (20,000 hedging plants) of new hedgerows over the past two years. The article does not tell us how long the Captain has been farming those acres, for it would obviously be interesting to know why on an estate of more than 1,000 acres there were no hedgerows. Surely somebody at some stage must have chopped down the existing ones. And if it wasn't the Captain, whoever it was must have been paid by the government to do so. Something like 25,000 miles of hedges were grubbed up in this country in the '80s, all paid for by the government who encouraged them to do so.

Captain Sheepshanks, like most landowners, only does good works if he is paid to do so. He got two grants: one under the Countryside Premium Scheme, "the remainder will qualify for help under the Ministry of Agriculture's Improvement scheme".

More farming benefactors: three brothers in the Woodbridge area of Suffolk have for years run a pig 'factory farm' with as many as 10,000 pigs under the worst possible conditions for the pigs, and one can imagine that much of the effluent found its way into the rivers. And the stink for the locals was legion. All protests were turned down with the brothers defending their way of farming and the stink produced.

New legislation, some of it not to be enforced until 1999, gave our two pig 'farmers' ideas for the future, which was to present a planning application to give up the 10,000 pigs and instead carry out a £3 million conversion of the 56 acre site into an industrial site! The plan was rejected by Suffolk Coastal District Council, but this did not prevent the brothers from lodging an appeal with the Environment Department. The hearing is taking place as we write, but what is relevant to our thesis is that because the brothers are expecting the £3 million industrial development to be more profitable than pigs they are using arguments to show that the conditions in which the pigs have been kept until now are not satisfactory, that there is a serious problem with the effluent (to satisfactorily dispose of it would require an area of 700 acres, whereas all they have are 58!) – and the brothers are all of a sudden thinking of the long-suffering community and submitting that "the proposal will benefit local residents by improving the appearance of the site and by reducing odour".

What hypocrites! For years their pigs have been kept in restricted conditions – they admit that under the new regulations they would have to build more units to keep them in larger pens. They have obviously been polluting both the water courses and the environment for years, and they would probably have gone on for many more years along the same lines. The prospect of having to lay out money to meet the new regulations was too much for the brothers, so they thought up a scheme to make money rather than coughing up. It stinks, just as much as their 10,000 factory pig unit!

For months *The Observer* has been drawing attention to a racket which has benefited large landowners to the tune of £150 million – virtually blackmail money. At last it would appear, according to *The Observer* (14th June):

"Parliamentary watchdogs are to investigate the 'inheritance scandal', under which private landowners are exempted from multi-million tax bills – with little or no benefit to the country-going public.

The probe was set in motion by the influential Public Accounts Committee last week, as the

Inland Revenue moved to allow the Countryside Commission to go public on hitherto secret inheritance tax deals.

Last week *The Observer* revealed how landowners avoid paying very large sums of money due in tax to the Treasury on condition that they allow public access on their estates. However, details of the deals, known as conditionally exempt transfers, are kept secret so the public has no idea where access has been granted in return for the money."

The blackmail in all this is that landowners threaten to plough-up wildlife sites unless they are paid not to. In the past ten years some £40 million has been paid out for loss of profits, even though they originally had no intention of ploughing up these particular sites. But the prospect of money makes these already stinking rich landowners do anything to get more.

## Anarchism Today

Anarchism is the philosophy that favours a free society organised along lines of voluntary cooperation, individual liberty and mutual aid. As such it implies the abolition of the state and present day exploitative capitalism.

An anarchist society would be a decentralised network of communities and individuals working together to satisfy their mutual needs for goods and services, while exploiting no one, and living in harmony with the natural world. Every person has the right to make all decisions about their own life. All moralistic meddling in the private affairs of freely acting persons is unjustified.

Government is an unnecessary evil. All governments survive on theft and extortion called taxation. All governments force their decrees on the people, and command obedience under threat of punishment. The principle outrages of history have been, and continue to be, committed by governments and the ruling classes. On the other hand, every advancement of thought, every betterment in the human condition, has come about through the practices of individual initiative and voluntary cooperation.

Anarchism implies cooperation, individual freedom and responsibility.

Anarchist tactics combine the pragmatic with the ethical. The anarchist philosophy is not one which is attached to dogma and bases its observations on a 'common sense' and practical approach to life. But neither does anarchism forget 'ethics'; the ethics of individual sovereignty and voluntary cooperation. For anarchists the 'means' used do not justify the 'ends' obtained, rather the 'means' used to determine the 'ends' obtained.

The anarchist idea of a society based upon the 'precepts' of individual sovereignty and voluntary cooperation may not be realisable in the short or medium term, but acceptance

of anarchism implies living 'free' now, not waiting for the advent of some future revolution. Anarchists work to expose and oppose every form of oppression and exploitation that presents itself to the contemporary world.

Anarchist methods of action vary with the individual, group and issues involved. Consequently a wide variety are used from individual boycott to protest, letters to the press, non-cooperation, civil disobedience, non-payment of taxes, strikes, sabotage, the go-slow, the mass demonstration, the general strike, even insurrection. For the most part they are non-violent, however where the situation is extreme – in situations of violent oppression, of dictatorship, of total censorship – then use of violence is justified. Nearly all anarchists reject voting, the ballot and representative democracy as vehicles for social change just as they reject all other forms of the political state and authority.

Examples of anarchist efforts to put their ideas into action now can be seen in their involvement in campaigns about issues such as housing, pollution, the arms trade, peace, work and leisure, workers control of industry, self-employment. Such a diversity reflects both the breadth of anarchist ideas and the determination to be as 'free' as possible in our own lives as present circumstances allow. This is not 'dropping out' of society, it is a way of building the structures and relationships of the new society within 'the shell of the old'.

Taken together these various aspects of anarchist activity – publishing, writing, campaigning, living our lives as much as possible our way – represents a coherent attempt to spread anarchist ideas as widely as possible. Moreover, it leaves us free to adapt our actions to the needs and spirit of the times, and to add new ideas and innovations to our 'view' of the world as our experience grows.

JS

## 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)

## Anarchist Essentials

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substance and reality is made public and people act accordingly?

The free individual is the basis of all society and association, whether in groups, societies, unions, worker cooperatives or single issue 'campaigns'. The voluntary cooperation and association of free individuals is sufficient to meet all individual and wide social needs, including production and exchange of goods and services, social/health services and all personal and domestic relationships. Such a society as envisaged by anarchism implies individual liberty, mutual aid, personal responsibility and voluntary cooperation. As others before have observed, this is why so many people are afraid of it. When we can assuage that fear we will begin to make some progress towards anarchy.

Jonathan Simcock





# The Anarchist Sociology of Federalism\*

## The background

That minority of children in any European country who were given the opportunity of studying the history of Europe as well as that of their own nations, learned that there were two great events in the last century: the unification of Germany, achieved by Bismarck and Emperor Wilhelm I, and the unification of Italy, achieved by Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi and Vittorio Emanuele II.

The whole world, which in those days meant the European world, welcomed these triumphs. Germany and Italy had left behind all those little principalities, republics and city states and papal provinces, to become nation states and empires and conquerors. They had become like France, whose little local despotisms were finally unified by force first by Louis XIV with his majestic slogan 'L'Etat c'est moi', and then by Napoleon, heir to the Grande Revolution, just like Stalin in the twentieth century who build the administrative machinery to ensure that it was true. Or they had become like England, whose kings (and its one republican ruler Oliver Cromwell) had successfully conquered the Welsh, Scots and Irish, and went on to dominate the rest of the world outside Europe. The same thing was happening at the other end of Europe. Ivan IV, correctly named 'The Terrible', conquered central Asia as far as the Pacific, and Peter I, known as 'The Great', using the techniques he learned in France and Britain, took over the Baltic, most of Poland and the west Ukraine.

Advanced opinion throughout Europe welcomed the fact that Germany and Italy had joined the gentlemen's club of national and imperialist powers. The eventual results in the present century were appalling adventures in conquest, the devastating loss of life among young men from the villages of Europe in the two world wars, and the rise of populist demagogues like Hitler and Mussolini, as well as their imitators, to this day, who claim that 'L'Etat c'est moi'.

Consequently every nation has had a harvest of politicians of every persuasion who have argued for European unity, from every point of view: economic, social, administrative and, of course, political.

Needless to say, in efforts for unification promoted by politicians we have a multitude of administrators in Bruxelles issuing edicts about which varieties of vegetable seeds or what constituents of beefburgers or ice cream may be sold in the shops of the member-nations. The newspapers joyfully report all this trivia. The press gives far less attention to another undercurrent of pan-European opinion, evolving from the views expressed in Strasbourg from people with every kind of opinion on the political spectrum, claiming the existence of a Europe of the Regions, and daring to argue that the Nation State was a phenomenon of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, which will not have any useful future in the twenty-first century. The forthcoming history of administration in the federated Europe they are struggling to discover is a link between, let us say, Calabria, Wales, Andalusia, Aquitaine, Galicia or Saxony, as *regions* rather than as *nations*, seeking their regional identity, economically and culturally, which had been lost in their incorporation in nation states, where the centre of gravity is elsewhere.

In the great tide of nationalism in the nineteenth century, there was a handful of prophetic and dissenting voices, urging a different style of federalism. It is interesting, at the least, that the ones whose names survive were the three best known anarchist thinkers of that century: Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Michael Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin. The actual evolution of the political left in the twentieth century has dismissed their legacy as irrelevant. So much the worse for the left, since the road has been emptied in favour of the political right, which has been able to set out its own agenda for both federalism and regionalism. Let us listen, just for a few minutes, to these anarchist precursors.

## Proudhon

First there was Proudhon, who devoted two of his voluminous works to the idea of federation in opposition to that of the nation state. They were *La Fédération et l'Unité en Italie* of 1862, and in the following year, his book *Du Principe Fédératif*.

Proudhon was a citizen of a unified, centralised nation state, with the result that he was obliged to escape to Belgium. And he feared the unification of Italy on several different levels. In his book *De la Justice* of 1858, he claimed that the creation of the German Empire would bring only trouble to the Germans and to the rest of Europe, and he pursued this argument into the politics of Italy.

On the bottom level was history, where natural factors like geology and climate had shaped local customs and attitudes. "Italy" he claimed, "is federal by the constitution of her territory; by the diversity of her inhabitants; in the nature of her genius; in her mores; in her history. She is federal in all her being and has been since all eternity ... And by federation you will make her as many times free as you give her independent states". Now it is not for me to defend the hyperbole of Proudhon's language, but he had other objections. He understood how Cavour and Napoleon III had agreed to turn Italy into a federation of states, but he also understood that, *per esempio*, the House of Savoy would settle for nothing less than a centralised constitutional monarchy. And beyond this, he profoundly mistrusted the liberal anti-clericalism of Mazzini, not through any love of the Papacy but because he recognised that Mazzini's slogan, 'Dio e popolo', could be exploited by any demagogue who could seize the machinery of a centralised state. He claimed that the existence of this administrative machinery was an absolute threat to personal and local liberty. Proudhon was almost alone among nineteenth century political theorists to perceive this:

"Liberal today under a liberal government, it will tomorrow become the formidable engine of a usurping despot. It is a perpetual temptation to the executive power, a perpetual threat to the people's liberties. No rights, individual or collective, can be sure of a future. Centralisation might, then, be called the disarming of a nation for the profit of its government ..."

Everything we now know about the twentieth century history of Europe, Asia, Latin America or Africa supports this

perception. Nor does the North American style of federalism, so lovingly conceived by Thomas Jefferson, guarantee the removal of this threat. One of Proudhon's English biographers, Edward Hyams, comments that: "It has become apparent since the Second World War that United States Presidents can and do make use of the Federal administrative machine in a way which makes a mockery of democracy". And his Canadian translator paraphrases Proudhon's conclusion thus:

"Solicit men's view in the mass, and they will return stupid, fickle and violent answers; solicit their views as members of definite groups with real solidarity and a distinctive character, and their answers will be responsible and wise. Expose them to the political 'language' of mass democracy, which represents 'the people' as unitary and undivided and minorities as traitors, and they will give birth to tyranny; expose them to the political language of federalism, in which the people figures as a diversified aggregate of real associations, and they will resist tyranny to the end."

This observation reveals a profound understanding of the psychology of politics. Proudhon was extrapolating from the evolution of the Swiss Confederation, but Europe has other examples in a whole series of specialist fields. The Netherlands has a reputation for its mild or lenient penal policy. The official explanation of this is the replacement in 1886 of the Code Napoleon by "a genuine Dutch criminal code" based upon cultural traditions like "the well-known Dutch 'tolerance' and tendency to accept deviant minorities". I am quoting the Netherlands criminologist Dr Willem de Haan, who cites the explanation that Dutch society "has traditionally been based upon religious, political and ideological rather than class lines. The important denominational groupings created their own social institutions in all major public spheres. This process ... is responsible for transporting a pragmatic, tolerant general attitude into an absolute social *must*".

In other words, it is *diversity* and not unity, which creates the kind of society in which you and I can most comfortably live. And modern Dutch attitudes are rooted in the diversity of the medieval city states of Holland and Zeeland, which explained, as much as Proudhon's regionalism, that a desirable future for all Europe is in accommodation of local differences.

Proudhon listened, in the 1860s, to the talk of a European confederation or a United States of Europe. His comment was that:

"By this they seem to understand nothing but an alliance of all the states which presently exist in Europe, great and small, presided over by a permanent congress. It is taken for granted that each state will retain the form of government that suits it best. Now, since each state will have votes in the congress in proportion to its population and territory, the small states in this so-called confederation will soon be incorporated into the large ones ..."

Colin Ward

(to be continued)

\* Text of a lecture delivered to a non-anarchist audience in Milan.

It is often said that the activities of criminals and of the police are two sides of the same coin, but the situation is actually worse than that if one considers how often the police escape with official impunity for their anti-social actions. Reading the report in the press the other day on the cushy number the British police are on to – over £80,000 a year after ten years' service, thousands more in expenses, free or subsidised housing *and* (at least in London) free public transport, plus many other perks – one wonders *why*, in that case, they so often commit crimes themselves if crime is caused by economic deprivation. Yet as we see every day in the press and mass media, if they're not busy framing innocent people they're busy gratuitously shooting them or beating them up, and I. Borrows' very good article in *Freedom* (30th May) 'The Burning of the American Dream' gives other examples. Jack Vance admirably sums up the situation in the following extract from his novel:

"Humanity many times has had sad experience of super-powerful police forces. As soon as the police slip out from under the firm thumb of a suspicious local tribune, they become arbitrary, merciless, a law unto themselves. They think no more of justice, but only of establishing themselves as a privileged and envied elite. They mistake the attitude of natural caution and uncertainty of the civilian population as admiration and respect, and presently

they start to swagger back and forth, jingling their weapons in megalomaniac euphoria. People thereupon become not masters, but servants. Such a police force becomes merely an aggregate of uniformed criminals, the more baneful in that their position is unchallenged and sanctioned by law. The police mentality cannot regard a human being in terms other than as an item or object to be processed as expeditiously as possible. Public convenience or dignity means nothing; police prerogatives assume the status of divine law. Submissiveness is demanded. If a police officer kills a civilian, it is a regrettable circumstance: the officer was probably over-zealous. If a civilian kills a police officer all hell breaks loose. The police foam at the mouth. All other business comes to a standstill until the perpetrator of this most dastardly act is found out. Inevitably, when apprehended, he is beaten or otherwise tortured for his intolerable presumption. The police complain that they cannot function efficiently, that criminals escape them. Better a hundred unchecked criminals than the despotism of one unbridled police force!" – Jack Vance in *Star King*

The American screenwriter and author Richard Price, interviewed on a local London radio station (GLR, 16th June) described what happened to him while he was researching a novel based on a nineteen year old black kid and set in New Jersey. Price spent five years on the streets with gangs, drug dealers and the police, and found that the police were deeply

## UK / LA Law

involved with the drug trade: they have to be or they wouldn't catch anybody, they say. They give protection and immunity to certain low/middle-ranking dealers and turn a blind eye to their activities in return for information on the wholesalers, but in order to get that information the dealers have to be allowed to stay out on the street. They are then encouraged to get deeper into the organisations in order to get better info.

One day, whilst working on his book in a police station, Price asked the police chief if he knew of a drug dealer he could talk to. The cop promptly put out a call on his radio pager and in no time a dealer, whose own pager had picked up the message, was in the office and was asked to give Price a conducted tour of no-go areas and introduce him to some of the big fish. The dealer, only a small fish himself, already had a number of convictions and was known to have committed several other offences. Price asked why the police chief didn't instead arrest the man, but was told: "He's more use to us out there. Besides, there's no APB [All Persons Bulletin] out on him so we don't have to arrest him". Although Price didn't mention the subject of kickbacks to the police, it is common practice for

wealthy crooks to offer them bribes to 'keep them sweet'.

But it was on the subject of the Rodney King case and the subsequent riots in LA that Price made his most salient point in the interview. He said: "There are Rodney Kings every night in every town in America. The only difference with this one was that someone got it on video. Rodney King probably got off lightly compared to what's happening to other people all over the country who we never hear about, who get what in police parlance is called 'T and R' – 'Tortured and Released'".

An interesting footnote to all this is that Price describes himself as an ex-junkie – not only hooked on heroin but also on Hollywood screenplays, and he admits that it took him eight years to break the habit of writing crap for film companies in return for huge commissions. He had sworn never to do another one, but has now accepted a \$2 million advance from Hollywood to condense this book into a screenplay, so the film moguls evidently expect to clean up at the box office. What it will become for the public, however, is just another commodity in the spectacle to be passively consumed as entertainment, in the same way as the Rodney King affair and the LA riots, instead of an urgent social problem which we need to get out there and do something about. **KM**



# In Search of a Glorious Death

In Search of a Glorious Death  
by Carlo Mazzantini  
Carcanet, £13.95

On the 25th July 1943 Mussolini was overthrown, not by a popular uprising nor by revolutionary forces, but by a *coup de main* engineered by members of the Fascist Grand Council, the army and the King. Two weeks later, on 8th September, the new government of Marshal Badoglio announced that an armistice had been signed with the Allies. The 8th September marked the beginning of organised resistance to fascism in Italy, as the anti-fascist parties forming the National Liberation Committee, CLN, the communists also formed the National Liberation Committee of Upper Italy, CLNAI, whilst the King and Badoglio attempted to put together a 'co-belligerent' army to fight with the Allies. But the 8th September was also the jumping off point for those, like Carlo Mazzantini, who still called themselves fascists.

Mazzantini was just seventeen when he left home with a truck load of his friends to join what was to become Renato Ricci's new fascist militia, the Guardia Nazionale Repubblicana, GNR. Some 150,000 volunteers joined, the majority as young, and younger, than Mazzantini. By early in 1944 they were to be involved in the most violent partisan war in western Europe, as the GNR, the new Italian Army, and various Black Brigades fought the partisan armies that eventually numbered 250,000 men and women.

Brought up with the various myths that constitute much of the popular history of the Second World War, it is hard to imagine why any boy of seventeen with no stake in the power structure of fascism should want to defend that system in its death throes. This book answers that question, and it is a salutary reminder of the importance of the irrational in shaping the actions of men and women. During the truck drive from Rome one of the young

volunteers with Mazzantini, a tailor's apprentice called Strazzani, believing that they are going to fight at the front with the Germans, argues that they should sew tricolour badges on their uniforms. One of the other boys counters by saying that it won't be permitted: "But Strazzani wasn't to be swayed - he had an answer to everything; besides, he'd thought about that one: 'That's okay - what we'll do is wear them inside our jackets ...' 'But what's the point?' He looked at him in astonishment. 'Don't tell me you can't see it! This way they'll be able to recognise us when we're dead! All they have to do is open our jackets, take one look at the badge and they'll say: Ah yes, this one was Italian!'" (page 21). And he meant it. He was killed, just as he wanted to be, fighting the 'traitors and cowards of the 8th September'. This is something that is hard to accept, but it was the case, it is the case. In another incident a fascist militiaman, Giulio Fasano, is shot through the mouth and killed whilst he is singing. The reaction of his comrades is a mixture of anger that he has been killed by an Italian, but delight that he died singing. The fascists go everywhere singing. They defined themselves through song, they defined their enemies through song. As Mazzantini says, "Those eighteen months of hatred and bloodshed passed by in a great sing-song" (page 77). Excerpts from their songs fill the book: "O long live Rome battalion / You're the best of the lot / Out of all the Republic / You're the finest that we've got" (page 208), and, perhaps more surprisingly: "Peace, peace to the huts of the

poor / But for palaces and churches - dynamite / we'll stab the bastard middle classes / We'll rise against them and we'll fight" (page 87); and the repeated refrain: "Together we will die / United we will die".

But before they died they did plenty of killing. Killing partisans in action, and killing hostages as reprisals. Mazzantini makes it plain that they weren't trying to convert anyone, they weren't trying to build anything new, they were acting out their own personal dramas, or, as some saw it, the historical drama that was Italy. In this, Mazzantini's book is valuable for our understanding of today's supporters of the far right. The young Mazzantini and his comrades were the first neo-fascists, in that they had no positive, creative end in sight. They didn't seek to build a new national economy, they didn't seek to create a corporate state, or a new Empire. In fact, they had little idea what the official line of Mussolini's Italian Social Republic was. They couldn't have cared less. They were out to prove something else, they were out to reject the rest of the world, which they saw as some sort of worthless, complacent music hall, to use Drieu La Rochelle's phrase - a fascist version of society as spectacle. These neo-fascists fought for their own reasons. One of the fascists, Corporal Ceroni, attempts to explain why it is that they are fighting: "The nation? The fatherland? ... No! It is not that anymore, but only me, you and the *Graf* Brembo, that's all. Here we are, the only ones left, the only

ones who say: we won't surrender! ... Victory? Defeat? ... That's for the others - for the Germans and the Allies. We're out of all that. All we've got - or rather all we've been left with - is our own individual fate" (pages 29-30). That represents the psychology of many young neo-fascists and neo-nazis today. It is a product of alienation, it is their personal answer to the alienation of capitalism. The question is how do you replace that particular reaction to alienation with something that is creative?

*In Search of a Glorious Death* is a painful book, it gives a glimpse of the horror of violence, of beatings, of killing. Hostages are beaten, firing squads execute more hostages, fascists are burnt and beaten to death. Even the killers are horrified on occasion. Early in the book Mazzantini recalls how his entire unit was drawn up to watch a firing squad at work. After the burst of fire one victim, an aristocrat, is left standing, only his leg jerking in nervous terror. The fascists are riveted by this horror, until one of the officers starts shouting "What are you bastards doing? What the hell d'you think you're doing! Fire for Christ's sake, will you! Fire!" There's a massive fumbling for weapons and the entire unit starts shooting wildly at the man. In panic they keep on firing until their colonel, screaming, gets them to stop. "Then silence. A tremendous unbearable silence - a silence which contained everything: hate, anger, fear, desperation. A silence which oppressed us, which held us in its grasp. There beneath a leaden sky in that enclosed square at the foot of the mountains: a silence, real tangible, stony silence. Silence" (pages 66-67). It would be the same shooting fascists, shooting capitalists, shooting men, women and children.

Mazzantini was captured in Milan at the very end of the war. He expected to die, like tens of

(continued on page 6)

## Theologians Under Hitler

by Robert P. Ericksen  
Yale University Press, New Haven and London

Why should "three well-meaning, intelligent and reputable Protestant theologians - Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emmanuel Hirsch" - choose a political stance that, while it did not bring them directly to kill or gas Jews, nevertheless led them to support Adolf Hitler and National Socialism long after the true nature of that regime had been exposed? Kittel, with his extensive knowledge of Judaism and the Talmud, won himself a leading place in the world of Nazi scholarship on the question of the Jews and erected a theological basis for their oppression while professing Christian and academic values. Althaus, a leading Lutheran scholar, occupied the middle ground in seeking to act as mediator between the Nazis and their victims, but welcomed and supported Hitler until shortly before the war. Hirsch made the unity of the German Volk a central preoccupation, was an active apologist for Nazism and colluded with Nazi officials in their harassment of more liberal colleagues. "These men were by no means uncommon or isolated. Their assumptions, their concerns and their conclusions represent a position that must have been common to many professors, theologians and pastors in Germany. *They were not extremists*" (my italics).

In trying to find clues to the reasons for their betrayal of Christian and academic values Robert P. Ericksen first surveys Germany during the period from Bismarck to the Second World War. Bismarck's high-pressured unification and industrialisation of what had for centuries been separate and autonomous states maintaining a feudal structure, brought disintegrating shifts in the social, political, economic and cultural patterns deeply rooted in tradition.

The central fact of large-scale industrialisation brought masses of workers together in large towns and cities; created a new proletariat with powerful demands for political representation; brought about a geographical mobility hitherto unknown in Germany; disrupted, through changing patterns of income and mobility, the well-established structures of life in the country and in the old towns; and by changing patterns of expenditure and consumption, broke down old concepts of taste not only in dress, furniture and decoration, but in reading and the arts.

At the same time important changes were occurring in intellectual and scientific assumptions. These changes came from the failure of eighteenth century rationalism to solve the major social problems of war, disease and revolution. Within sixty years from the middle of the nineteenth century Darwin, Freud and Einstein had dealt devastating blows to long-held scientific and theological beliefs. In Germany these reinforced the social and political turmoil of the period and added to the anxieties of theologians in particular where modern studies, using more scientific methods and forms of criticism, had cast doubts on what hitherto had been taken as

'gospel truth'. With the emergence of a new philosophical materialism rooted in science, history and sociology, the theologians were really alarmed. Trained to respect 'authority' and having seen the authority of the state routed in war and made publicly to acknowledge responsibility for the war, they felt that they were being swept away, so that when Hitler appeared they were to grasp at him as a bulwark against a flood of disintegration.

Ericksen systematically shows the development of each man's thought through their writings and sermons and in the context of the main lines of theological debate at the time. Given their background and their assumptions he presents an arguable case for each man up to the point when none of them could have avoided facing the crisis between the Nazi doctrine they so wholeheartedly espoused and their Christian profession. Beyond that point their defence falls.

Ericksen also points the finger at Christianity: "The role of Christianity is also called into question by this study. These three theologians saw themselves and were seen by others as genuine Christians acting upon genuine Christian impulses. Even in retrospect a Christian basis for each of their individual positions can be discerned; Christianity has strains which are both anti-Jewish and anti-modern. In light of the German experience, a Christianity which stresses these strains, in which, for example, the love of Christ cannot be readily perceived, should arouse our suspicion."

Ericksen does not attempt to examine factors in the childhood of the three men that could have led to their submitting so abjectly to an illegal and criminal power. He makes no mention, for example, of Wilhelm Reich's study, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, which draws heavily on the German experience; of Erich Fromm's *The Fear of Freedom*, an analysis of what occurs to create the fascist character-structure necessary to bind together, like sadist and masochist, both the dictator and the willing millions who sustain him in power; or the various studies of character by Freud himself. Perhaps he felt that such material, however relevant, might be beyond his competence or interest. What he does say, on the very last page, is in the nature of a warning directed at America, though it applies with equal force here in Britain and in Europe in view of the more recent rise of the National Front:

The scenario to fear, then, is one in which a combination of crises makes life difficult; a lost war, economic collapse, shortage of oil, shortage of food. If this is coupled with a meaningful attempt to follow democratic principles, to allow true freedom and give a true political voice to plural groups within society, beware. Then we will hear calls for toughness, for law and order, for national unity ... Will we

avoid being the Kittel, Althaus or Hirsch at that time? Will we avoid using our intellect to rationalise a position that protects our comfort and our best interests, closing our eyes to the pain created for the different or less fortunate among us? Until we have pondered these questions we will do well not to condemn Kittel, Althaus or Hirsch too loudly."

Let me end this review with a short fable: Once upon a time, while waiting for the corn to ripen, men picked coloured stones from a brook and played with them on a pattern traced in the sand. In time they gave values to the stones to make the game more interesting and laid wagers on the outcome of the play. Later, when they found particularly pleasing combinations of colours, they attributed to the stones qualities they found in themselves or others. They even gave to certain moves and designs the names of the players who had found them and awarded high honours and prestige to the most notable.

The players contended with one another about their own moves and about whether or not certain moves were within the traditional rules of the game. They even set up colleges to study the history and traditions of The Game, and founded Chairs to attract the most eminent players. Rather than the simple stones and patterns traced in the sand they made great discs of gold with the patterns engraved on them and used jewels of different colours, large and small, to play with. They erected vast temples with altars and golden tabernacles in which to house The Game, and on solemn occasions their most eminent priests and scholars - for that was what the most able players were now called - would bring forth The Game and, with great ritual and to the sound of trumpets, would play in front of thousands of onlookers.

Temple played against temple and nation against nation, each striving to show that their Game was the cleverest and the most beautiful and their rules the purest in descent from ancient times. But as they played each became obsessed by the righteousness of his Game and the moves with which he played so that in the frenzy of contest blood was spilled. Each nation mustered more and more to its cause and deaths multiplied so that the carnage drained the lands of their youth and impoverished the peoples. For hundreds of years this folly continued without respite.

Now we have just learned that a traveller has returned from a remote valley in the mountainous massif where the man from Bogota found The Country of the Blind. He tells us that to this day they play the same game with stones and patterns traced in the sand, but that when they have finished they fling the stones back into the brook and obliterate the patterns in the sand with their feet.

Michael Duane

# Theologians Under Hitler



# Purple Blues

There were white lips within the White Hart as by the hour and on the hour fresh news was slipped under the pub door on Royal and scented notepaper by Our Mole within Buckingham Palace. Slim white fingers that could type the need for bloody revolution, with calm indifference, quivered as they gripped their beer glasses as the matter of Diana and Charlie's possible marriage break-up hit the fan, and the question of the possibility of cold fusion that had threatened to split the movement no longer became a matter of bitter and angry debate, for the division around the beer table was hopelessly locked between the Chelsea Set comrades supporting Di and we few for Bonnie Prince Charlie. I have been called upon to suffer more than most, for every time I have passed Buckingham Palace on my way to the sergeants' mess within Wellington Barracks, I have had my elbow gripped by worried strangers pleading to know if the vague shape sailing off the roof of Buckingham Palace is the suicidal Princess of Wales (check gutter press) endeavouring to make the *Guinness Book of Records*, or the Queen Mum and Princess Margaret discarding the 'empties'.

But this is not to mock these two unfortunate people who are but the victims of the media mob, for in themselves they are but the products and the victims of a social system within which they were born. I will accept Prince Charles, for anyone who can spend happy hours discussing philosophy with flowers should be sitting at the beer table with us within the White Hart. There is a political undercurrent that is moving into a swell with a right wing set for another five years in office,

and a divided and spineless opposition who are working, with complete success, to bring back into being an observable class divided society within Britain. There will always be those who can raise a cheap laugh by raising up their half pint glass of Real Ale and giggling 'what about the workers', or wearily declaiming in discussion 'Oh God, he's on about the working class again', but when thousands of well-paid white collar workers and technicians are monthly being sacked (sic) 'made redundant', the joke tends to sour in the mouth. That Britain's health service has been class divided by economic weapons will no longer be denied by the highly paid middle class that milked it before moving into BUPA 'Private Health Care', pay by credit card, and are already moving out and on to a more elite, higher costing health care scheme. The mass educational system is now becoming private cost paying for those who can afford the Wealth of Nations and wages for the labouring classes are being cut either by literal reduction or enforced unpaid longer hours of work.

If you think I jest, comrades, then this day I sat as an unwilling volunteer, with others, with a small group of children who were sitting a Tory educational test to find out how the Tory educational programme was working out on these human guinea pigs.

These children had 'learning difficulties' and our officially agreed task was to read out the questions to these small children. But of that Tory day, comrades, we were sadly

informed that the school could not afford to give us a midday meal because of lack of money, but we could sit with the children and share the school's meals. This does not affect me because wherever there is a pub then man is born free, but comrades, could that happen in a public school, a private school or a grammar school. I understand that a major London bus company is to slash the wages of newly-employed bus conductors by £28 a week, and for those fortunate to be already employed then a 'change' in working hours and conditions. Social commentators accept that the difference between rich and poor in Britain is widening, but what has to be accepted is that it is political. Within the last few weeks Establishment voices have been 'printed' that the mistake the Royal Family made was to marry 'commoners' and, as one with a vested interest in this matter I must stand aside, for my Uncle John, who was a



"I've just informed my househusband, spokenwordwise, that we're negotiating for our divorce"

"How wonderful"

card-carrying life-long lunatic in Hanwell Lunatic Asylum (official name), many times informed me as a child that we were of Royal blood, and I believe him.

A happy reader of *Freedom* gave me the orthodox tongue-lashing crying in the wilderness that anarchists ain't interested in art messagewise and that no one, but no one, had ever heard of Brian Sewell except his mum, dad, Sir Anthony and the editor of London's evening million-selling newspaper

nature which have overt social implications. "Nature is not intrinsically anything that can offer comfort or solace in human terms - if only because our species is such an insignificant latecomer in a world not constructed for us ... The answers to moral dilemmas are not lying out there waiting to be discovered."

Both Huxley and Kropotkin argued from observations of nature to ethical conclusions. This is an invalid method of argument, but if Kropotkin's reply to Huxley had been that his method was invalid, it would have looked like an evasive quibble. How much more satisfying to meet Huxley on his own ground, and demolish his thesis with a great mass of counter-examples.

DR

\* Stephen Jay Gould, *Bully for Brontosaurus*, Penguin, £6.99. If ordering by post from Freedom Press Bookshop, add 70p inland or £1.40 overseas - a right waste of money when the book is there in your local bookshop.

\*\* The current edition of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* is published by Freedom Press at £5, post free inland, add 75p overseas.

*The Evening Standard*. Any smug self-serving spear-carrying foot soldiers of the Philistines are so wrong, for of their inverted pride they are so wrong.

Any platform is valid upon which to argue a case or a cause, and it was eggs that destroyed one of Ma Thatcher's ministers, and it is French lambs that trigger off major riots in France. Little Brian, late friend of Sir Anthony Blunt the lookerafterer of the Queen's paintings and point East, every week is given a full page in London's millions-circulating newspaper to discuss art and his opinion, which is singular, and in a full two-page spread he rubbished the Summer Exhibition within the Royal Academy, which is shooting at dead ducks, but centred his 'art' review on the old and dangerous demand for a return to 'elitism' and others have climbed upon that painted bandwagon. Leslie Geddes-Brown of the *Telegraph* printed his anger, but joined in the praise of London's own 'A Salon des Refuses' at the Llewelyn Alexander using the 14,000 paintings that the selection committee of the Royal Academy gave the bum's rush to, eased out of the back door minus submission fees. Elitism is a thing to be feared for it stinks of military dictatorships. Of the demand for the 'finest' economic and industrial minds in the country to take over a society, of high pay for a bureaucratic teaching establishment to get elite teachers, of elite medical skills ending up in credit card BUPA while the old, the sick and the poor rot in overcrowded waiting rooms and wards.

The Victorians loved elitism and in its pseudo Greek and Gothic building it reduced the individual to a meaningless nothing as it was meant to do. Its elitist period was without doubt the greatest dead period of the visual arts in Britain's history and every provincial art gallery and almost every major London art gallery basement is lumbered with the painted picture postcard neo-photographic shit.

Because of the Royal punch up between Charlie and his old woman, we are again hearing those dangerous demands for a control or censorship of the press that will make it so pure that even the most neurotic subscriber to women's lib could read it without screaming copper. You have the informed, intelligent, socially-conscious committee-produced press and leave me the gutter press, and at the end of the day I will tell you the gutter gossip that will end up as emasculated, non-libellous tired truth a week later. And to kill intelligent conversation I will watch Rory Bremner, the impersonator and comedian, on BBC2 peak viewing time entertaining an audience of millions with his impersonation of national and international figures that include among the princes, presidents and prime ministers good ol' Brian Sewell.

Arthur Moyses

## Kropotkin no Crackpot

All the books of Stephen Jay Gould are thought-provoking and enjoyable, especially to those who enjoy the witty pursuit of truth among obscure details of fact. I heartily recommend all of them.

*Bully for Brontosaurus*,\* the latest to appear in paperback in this country, is especially interesting in that it includes a sympathetic study of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*\*\* entitled

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Street, London E1 7QX

## In Search of a Glorious Death

(continued from page 5)

thousands of other fascists who were killed after the end of the fighting, but the moment was missed, and the partisans who'd captured him befriended him, despite having battered other fascists to death. From there Mazzantini had to begin a long road to the recovery of his personality. The book finishes with Mazzantini's visit, ten years later, to the place where he'd been held by the partisans. He searches out an old anarchist, Angiulin, who'd impressed him during his imprisonment. The anarchist and the fascist exchange memories. Angiulin is disturbed that Mazzantini and his comrades were nearly shot by the partisans. they are both moved by the memory of the murder of partisans, of fascists, of people, or of "utterly normal" living men and women. And that's the great question, how do we break down the barriers, abandon the labels which are put on us, which we take on ourselves, and which make us into oppressors and killers?

Stephen Cullen

'Kropotkin was no Crackpot'. Gould informs us that standard courses on evolutionary biology present Kropotkin as "daftly idiosyncratic, if undeniably well-meaning - one of those soft and woolly thinkers who let hope and sentimentality get in the way of analytic toughness". I have read several textbooks on evolutionary biology and looked at the indexes of several more without finding a mention of Kropotkin. Anyway, Gould rejects the view that Kropotkin was unscientific.

Darwin and all his followers recognised that the 'struggle for existence' is pursued both by competition among individuals for more efficient use of resources or avoidance of predation, and by individuals acting together against hostile environments. Darwin and Wallace studied nature in the rich tropics, and saw the 'struggle' as mostly competitive. Kropotkin studied nature in Siberia, and saw the 'struggle' as mainly against the environment.

In the intellectual climate of nineteenth century Russia, Kropotkin's ideas would not have appeared egregious. British thinkers like Darwin could see the population growing at a faster rate than the food supply, and saw in Malthus's principle of overpopulation a profound and universal truth. Russian intellectuals lived among a sparse population in a huge, under-exploited land mass, and saw Malthus as an interesting reactionary. Kropotkin appears unique to the English-speaking world because he was the only Russian evolutionist who wrote in English.

*Mutual Aid* was written in reply to *Evolution and Ethics*, an essay by T.H. Huxley. To simplify Huxley's argument, he said natural behaviour was the war of each against all, therefore the only hope for decency in human society was to repress natural behaviour. Of course Kropotkin, as an anarchist, would find this ideologically distasteful. But more significantly, as Gould points out, Kropotkin as a Siberian-trained Russian naturalist would find it factually mistaken and wrong-headed.

Gould is suspicious of arguments about



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Dividing my life, as I do, between living in England and Spain is like being stretched on the rack of 'progress' twice over. Modern mass man (no apologies to the gender politicians) marches on even in the once anarchist Holy Land of España. Spain, of all places, is going glibly down the road of trashy modern building development, more motorways criss-crossing the countryside, golf courses across the sierras.

It's like going through the same nightmare twice. Supermarkets replace the corner shop; up goes the multi-storey and it's bulldoze the communal patio. In comes the two-car family – one for playing dodgem cars in the city, the other for more serious driving. Consumer capitalism rules – drugs and crime make life a misery for citizens in most of Spain's major towns and cities. The once charming Barri Xines (Barrio Chino) I knew in Barcelona in the 1960s is described by Vazquez Montalban\* as being transformed thus: "The social cauldron that the Ramblas had become at the beginning of the transition (after Franco's death), with people getting drunk in the Boadas cocktail bar and sipping 'orxata' in the Café de la Opera, gave way to a lonely, night-time scene of the most sordid pursuits of the flesh and drugs, hard and soft, classified and otherwise." Nationally, the 'escandalo Guerra' of yesterday which involved a top politician has today been replaced by the 'escandalo Ibercop' that seems to involve the Governor of the Bank of Spain and Carlos Solchaga, the Minister of Economics in the Socialist Government.

Soon the White Villages of Andalucía may be replaced by Barratt built blocks. Already farmland around Ronda, that spectacular city of the south, is being bought up by foreign companies bent on giving us golf wherever we go. In La Linea de la Concepcion, I have heard of flats put up and held together with ten-of-sand-and-one-of-cement, such were the cuts and backhanders going on that the cheapest substance – sand from the beach – had to replace other materials. Gone are the days when, in this sometimes unbearably hot country, you can leave your doors and windows open.

Today most Spaniards seem to expect their leaders to try it on – corruption is seen almost as a fact of public life.

#### 'Backwardness' benefits Spain

We have witnessed recently mass strikes in two seemingly different EC countries. The German

## Spain: the Demon Progress

public sector strike allowed their trade unions to score a victory over the complacent Kohl government. On 28th May, the Spanish unions organised a half day 'General Strike' over the social measures adopted by the Spanish Socialist Government in their plan for convergence with the other nations in the EC. It is thought by the unions that the unemployed and others will lose protection under the government scheme, and they are also complaining about the manipulation of workers on temporary contracts, which has long operated to the benefit of the bosses.

The remarkable thing about these strikes in Germany and Spain is that they were wound up and paraded out like well oiled machines. The union leaders, whether the well-groomed leaders of the German public sector unions or Nicolas Redondo and Antonio Gutierrez, sporting open-necked shirts, for the Spanish UGT and CCOO, looked like managers fixing up a deal.

The pigs became men, and the men became pigs. The Spanish working class trooped out on that absurdity – a half-day token General Strike, with much of the dreary discipline of Germans, and then trooped back, in some cases after spending the afternoon on the beach of course – we must make a few concessions to national temperament.

But were the Germans acting out of character in coming out on strike at all? Has the consensus where everything is smoothly managed at the top by political fixers and bureaucratic managers broken down at last? The editor of the *Financial Times* thinks not: "Reports of the death of the German economic consensus turn out to have been exaggerated". Commenting further on the negotiations in engineering which followed the public sector dispute the editorial says: "The wage deal agreed this week in the German engineering industry – 5.8% this year, followed by 3.4% in 1993, along with an hour's cut in the working week – shows ... that the German consensual approach to economic policy making is still working."

The *Financial Times* editor muses that this consensual German mechanical mass man is operating "a monetary policy that, however painful, is appropriate, not merely for countries like Italy, Spain and the UK but for France as well". Given

the discipline of the European Monetary System we may all eventually model ourselves on the Germans.

In the Spanish 'General Strike' the conservative daily paper *ABC* claimed two out of every three Spaniards stayed away from work. Depending on the progress of negotiations, the unions are threatening a 24-hour strike in October. The Government, which is claiming more than half of Spaniards didn't back the strike, is hoping to press on with laws to ban political and general strikes.

In a sense the Spaniards still show a certain superiority. Their strike was not just about pay and narrow sectional interests, but was over social and political issues. The British TUC couldn't organise a convincing 'Day of Action', much less get people to take time off work to fight a cause with no direct immediate benefit to them. The Spaniards, to their credit, still have that breadth of vision which takes them at least briefly above the rat-race of consumer capitalism.

The Spaniards benefit from being backward peasant types at heart. They have not yet quite surrendered to the disciplined, well-policed, herd life that most desire – but they are trying hard, just as they are trying to become good Europeans.

#### Anarchist antidote to mass man

In *Direct Action*, the paper of our friends in the Direct Action Movement, it was argued that: "The Spanish 'socialists' and others in power wish to present Spain as an up and coming European country ready for the fin de siècle pillage of world capital". Consequently this year we have the EXPO in Seville, the Olympics in Barcelona, and Madrid is the cultural capital of Europe. This trumped-up craze to be modern and progressive contrasts with what Marx called the rural idiocy of the countryside, and the widespread begging and poverty in the Spanish cities.

Everyone, almost, likes to think they are modern and progressive, from the jet set capitalist to the most worn down Bolshevik. Thus recently, when a professor of literature at Granada University was asked on the radio programme 'Third Ear' about what the Spaniards think now of Gerald Brenan, he said: "They like him as an individual, but they don't

think much of his books emphasising anarcho-syndicalism, which they prefer to regard as a marginal movement in Spanish history". It was also claimed that most Spaniards prefer to forget about the Civil War.

Today the Spaniards would rather see Gazpacho\*\* join the hamburger in world cuisine than to offer the world an alternative social system. The Spaniards may be embarrassed by anarchism in their history, but some may claim that Gazpacho is more subversive. Muggeridge mentions that anarchism "as worked out by Catalonian anarchists, it was productive of something scarcely distinguishable from Welwyn Garden City".

Though it is tempting to regard the Spaniards as natural anarchists, it is more likely that the social conditions of rural life in Spain created the circumstances for anarchism in Spain. The growth of big industry changed the character of the working man in the early part of the century. The worker in a big factory may be more class conscious, but he lacks individual initiative and the capacity to act alone or in a small group. Until recently industry in Spain was slow to develop on a big scale, such as in Germany and Britain.

Ignazio Silone has argued that the stronger resistance to fascism in Spain than in Germany in the 1930s was a result of the Spanish working class being based in small factories, artisan's workshops and among the peasantry. He says: "The growth of big industry has been a powerful help in reinforcing the tendency of Germans – workers included – toward *zusammenmarschieren* (marching together). Their interplay struggles are essentially struggles between different machines. Individual initiative has been reduced to zero."

The trouble now is that Spain is catching up to the rest of us. Factories are not the only organisations which produce Silone's mass man, we now have the mass media; the huge state bureaucracies; the whole regimentation of consumer society. Spaniards used to say 'Nothing is ever written about a coward' – Spain still needs an anarchist antidote to the mass man, as does Europe.

Brian Bamford

\* *Barcelonas* by Manuel Vazquez Montalban.

\*\* A cold Spanish tomato soup.

## Society and Class: Two Pernicious Errors

What is 'society'? It seems to be used as an all-embracing, blanket term for humanity. Most often, it seems to be used in terms of obligations expected from, and benefits directed towards individuals. This alone should make us suspicious of it.

'Society' may simply be a classificatory term. If this is all, then it may have some use, but if it is to be any use in analysis, we need to be more specific about what we are talking about. It is necessary to focus on the concrete, whereas much talk about 'society' is vague and woolly – all context and no content.

The meaninglessness of its use in this way can easily be shown: if we think of a society of oppressors, a society of exploiters, or a society of rapists or cannibals. When used as a catch-all in this way, how can it be said to have any cohesiveness? It is important to avoid the 'Yugoslavian Fallacy' – we should beware of trying to bring together as one that which has no unity.

In what sense can people be thought of as having some sort of homogeneity? What ties bind people together? A society may be a group of people having the misfortune to be governed by the same masters, but if this is all, then we can see that the concept of 'society' is one being used by those controllers to manipulate them. If 'society' implies a network of obligations and supposed benefits it appears to be two-sided, but we can see at once that this is a deception, the reality is that it is a one-way street, the few 'benefits' you may receive are there to increase your dependence.

The idea of 'society' is past of the mechanism of control. As long as people believe there is some sort of community of interest between themselves and their controllers in Westminster, Brussels or

Washington they will continue to align themselves with the distorted and warped perspective sold to them by the systems of indoctrination controlled by these. The falsity of this so-called community can be exposed when we consider who is being talked about in the politician's statement "we are going to recapture Kuwait".

Individual relationships with other individuals are real, and concrete. If we think of 'society' as nothing more than the sum total of these relationships in a network, then perhaps we are talking about something which is real. The danger is, that we go beyond this into the mistake of thinking that society is something more than this – that we make the error of believing the whole to be greater than the sum of its parts.

'Society' as a controller's concept is part of the mechanism whereby the human mind is colonised. We can see, understand and

acknowledge an obligation of proximity, such as that of two neighbours fixing the common fence between them. The abstraction of 'society' by contrast, is a one-way street whereby the individual's own interests are lost completely (soldiers fighting in the Gulf for multinational oil companies, for example).

This leads to the two models of understanding.

1. First of all we consider the individual, for without the concrete and particular act of exchange between individuals – the first step – one cannot in any sense be said to have approached the last – 'society'. We consider the individual, those in the immediate proximity to him/her, people nearby, moving to others further off. The curve of concern dips more and more steeply the further one gets away from the individual. (It matters not whether we think in geographical, mental or temporal distances.) Pictorially, this might be thought of as a beehive, or Christmas pudding.

2. Talk about society is the reverse of this. Society is more important than the mere individual, the individual is lost in a strong network of enforcement. Context is emphasised, while the individual, particular links are not. In this second model, the individual disappears down the plughole. (*see diagrams*)

The first model, the beehive, is closer to reality. It can accommodate friendship and individuals helping each other. The second model is inspired by Hegel, and others. The individual is lost in the web of abstractions and counts for little. Heaven preserve us from the second model – it makes people passive, robs them of the initiative, even of the ability to defend themselves, for they defer to their oppressors. If we think of a leader's interests as those of society, and put our own interests second, we take away the individual, the concrete and the particular. If we wait for 'society' to defend our interests, we shall be waiting a long time, for "society does not exist" (Margaret Thatcher). In believing in the myth of the two-way transaction, we are lost.

The first error, that of belief in 'society', is something imposed on us by leaders to enslave. The second error, that of believing in the notion of 'class', is a harm that we do to ourselves.

The error of 'class' is particularly harmful because radical people who may actually be capable of changing some things for the better have hobbled their analysis by their sentimental attachment to this idea.

The notion of 'class' starts in the descriptive register, when we think about people in terms of income, property, attitudes and outlook. The fact that when used in this way it may work can be seen in a limited way in advertising and opinion polls. The mistake is made when we move from the specific and local, to the broad and general, by jumping

(continued on page 8)

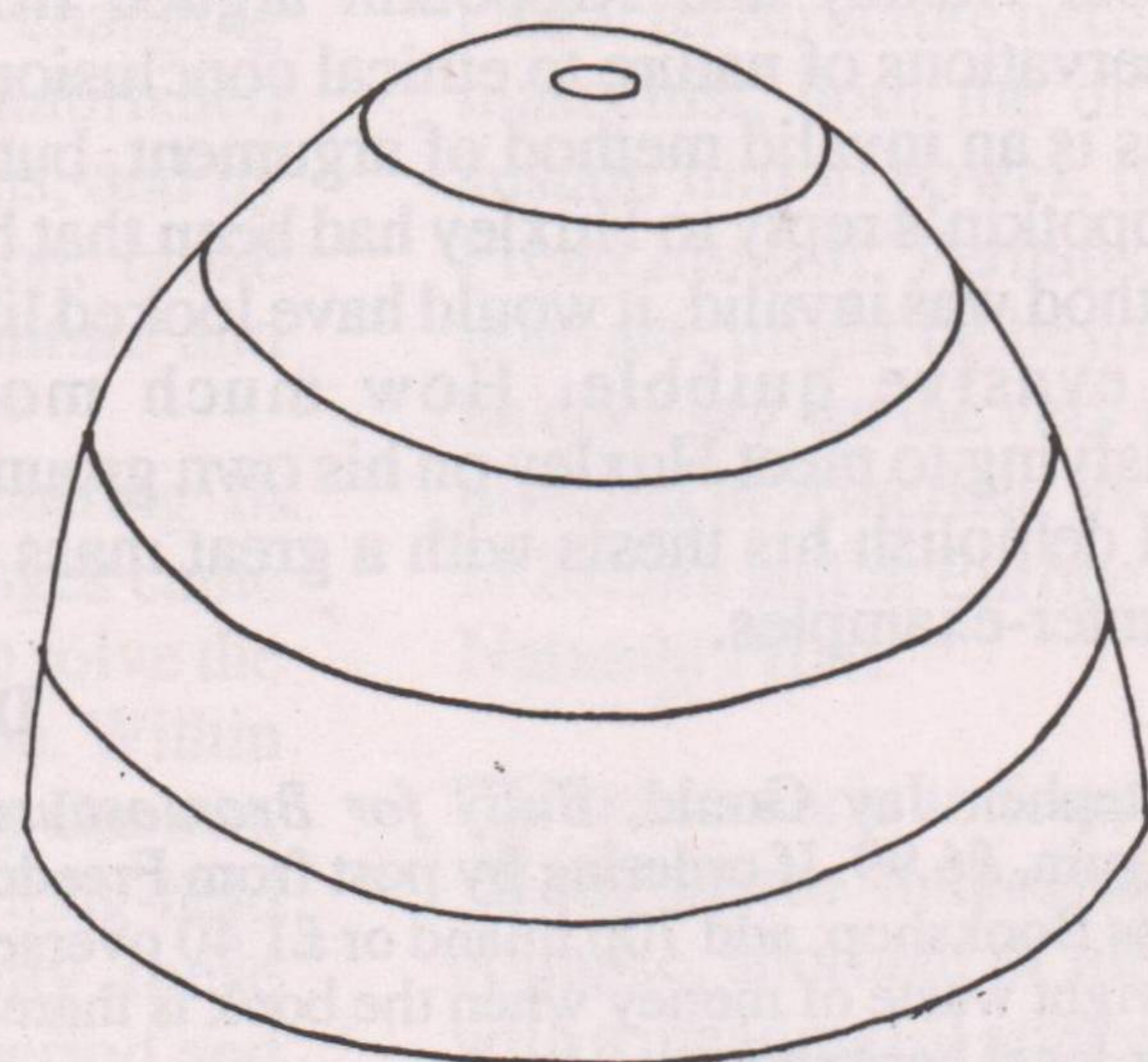


Diagram 1: The Beehive

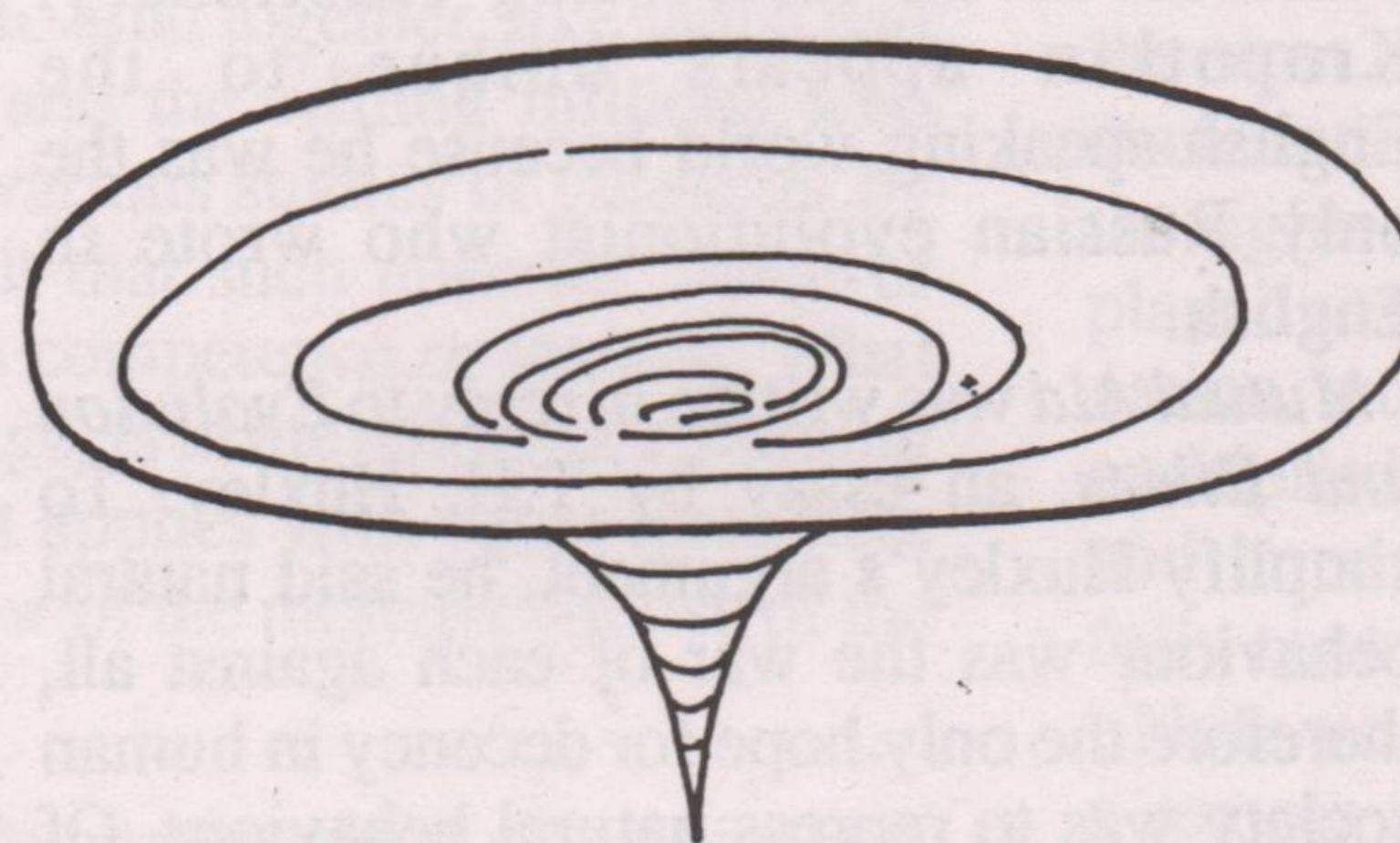


Diagram 2: The Plughole



# 'Small Capitalists' Good?

Dear Editors,  
Your headline declares 'Capitalism – the Real criminal' (*Freedom*, 7th March 1992). I have a suspicion that you do not really mean by this that you are opposed to the local butcher, baker, tailor, carpenter and so on, making a living, especially since quite a few anarchists work in one or other of these capacities.

Yet they are indubitably 'capitalists', they are working from a modest stock of capital and are performing a valuable service to the local community in which they operate by seeking to make a profit.

What I expect you are urging is that big capitalism is the real criminal, and so it is. Please do not dismiss this as a mere quibble, for there is a specific reason why it is the real criminal: it is not criminal because it is capitalism, but because it is too big for us on the ground floor to control it.

In democratic terms, capitalism is so big that it is out of control and because it

is out of control it is quite literally destroying itself and us. We have to see that the question of size is fundamental to any understanding of the modern crisis. Adam Smith was quite right when he urged that competition among lots of small capitalists, plus freedom of consumer choice, was enough to prevent exploitation and abuse.

But we no longer live in such a world: the giants now dominate the markets and dominate and exploit us. Nobody is going to listen to arguments in favour of 'abolishing capitalism' because far too many people, most of us, want the goods capitalism produces.

So the real question is: how do we control capitalism so as to ensure it serves the general interest rather than simply its own? And the answer: make it small, make it local and subject to the judgement of local people.

This, of course, is a task of enormous difficulty, but whoever said progress was

easy? In any case, we can have no progress at all if we do not grasp that 'small', whether it is beautiful or not, is today an absolutely vital means to human survival.

John Papworth

## From our racing correspondent

The Derby was won by the status quo, the Inland Revenue, Ladbrokes and an Arab millionaire – in that order – lesser beneficiaries including hat shops, pickpockets and a couple of OAPs down the road.

Among the losers were all of the horses, including the favourite which was beaten unmercifully by its jockey Molester Piggott, the general public who lost a day's pay and next week's rent, and the dignity of the human race.

The Lord's Day Observance Society remained untouched by this annual dose of Epsoms in view of the fact that horses have no collar bones, let alone souls, especially on weekdays.

*Guardian* racing correspondent Chris Hawkins lost his shire, his credibility (if not his job), and 33-1 shot Young Senor was the only one to come through with any credit when he refused to take part in the silly business.

For the record, one in three of the runners are owned by Arabs. My tip for the Grand National is: forget it.

Outsider

Please keep sending in your letters and donations

## Corrections

Dear Editors,  
When I read my letter in *Freedom* (13th June) I felt like crawling into a hole because I left out half of my argument, and ascribed the quotation to Claudia instead of George Walford. My apologies.

When George claims that the behaviour of women "depends less on their sex than on their ideology", he forgets that since women are almost entirely under the control of men, physically and mentally, their ideology is male ideology and they accept it readily because they are female – their sex and their ideology are one package.

Furthermore, it is not good enough to regard women, in this context, as just 'people' – women are subjugated people.

Incidentally, I am surprised that George – who has the conundrum 'Nothing is Absolutely True' plastered all over his

*Ideological Commentary* publication – should peddle, as fact, the story of a female concentration camp guard making lampshades from human skins. My mum succeeded in making me believe that the Germans marched through Belgium with babies' heads on their bayonets – but I was only about ten years old at the time ...

Ernie Crosswell

Dear Editors,  
I would like to correct an error which has crept into my article on 'Water Demands', *Freedom*, 13th June 1992. The phrase "Carsington reservoir will be the largest sheet of water in the country" should read "Carsington reservoir will be the largest sheet of water in the county"

Jonathan Simcock

(continued from page 7)

from description to prescription, if we believe that if certain conditions come together this 'class' will react as one and overthrow their masters. Again we are making the same mistake as with 'society' – that of believing in the unity of that which has no unity.

Description is not the same thing as control. We move, in thinking about 'class', from the objective description to the subjective wish. From the fact that a group of people acts in certain ways, even believes certain things in common, it does not necessarily follow that should external conditions change, they will continue to do so. Is their apparent homogeneity a cause, or an effect?

Obligations of proximity have meaning and force, but the power of relationships declines steeply the further away we go. If we talk about community, that implies we have something in common. We have to focus on this, to talk about it and explain it. Once we move away from talking about my specific, concrete interests, to talk about 'class interests' my interests are subsumed, therefore annihilated.

One day (Marxists tell me) the inevitable tide of history will wash us all up on the shores of the land of plenty. Given that this process is wearisomely slow and will not bring about this result in your or my lifetime, what is left of this 'we' they talk about? Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is to be preferred to Marx's because it at least acknowledges the importance of the individual's effort and responsibility.

The ideas 'class' and 'society' appeal to our wishes. We want to believe in society, we want to believe that there is a community of interest, and this is spread as widely and as inclusively as possible. If this is so, then this butter must be spread so thinly that it becomes non-existent and of no benefit.

Stephen Booth

# Killing

Ernie Crosswell's arguments in 'Pacifism is Realism' (*Freedom*, 30th May) deserve support as there are still far too many people on the left who think that violence has a role in the struggle for a fair, humane and peaceful society.

As Ernie said, the use of premeditated violence is unrealistic if your aim is to bring about positive change. There may be a case for such violence if you wish to avenge other acts of violence, relieve yourself of frustrations, or just for the sheer hell of it, but none of these reasons are likely to be connected with improving society. There is, in fact, little point thinking about using violence to bring about positive change as the other side, the government, has all the cards. In the days when armies were poorly disciplined, often made up of disinterested foreign mercenaries and equipped only with swords, pikes and a few muskets, then there were good reasons for hoisting your banner with a sabot on it, grabbing your pitchfork or sickle and heading off for the palace with ten thousand other peasants. But it's not like that any more. (And how often did the rebels win even then? Remember Pugachev, and he was only after making himself Tsar anyway, even if his peasants did love him.) Counter insurgency is a sophisticated branch of military and police science these days. Ally the latest in riot control techniques, intelligence gathering and computer co-ordination to the propaganda opportunities available through a compliant media, then you have to admit that premeditated violence is just not practicable, never mind 'right'. You only have to look at Northern Ireland. There the republican terrorist groups have plenty in their favour – a 'sea' to swim in in the form of the nationalist part of the population, a long historical tradition of political violence, plenty of money through fund raising and extortion, a crossable border and a relatively safe haven to the south, a ready supply of recruits, plenty of arms, and a voice in the USA – yet they (and their loyalist counterparts) are unable to 'win' against a government that has only used some of the weapons

in its armoury. The government has never used tanks in Northern Ireland, it had never used helicopter gunships, it hasn't sealed the border, it has hardly bothered to counter pro-republican propaganda abroad, and the continuing level of murder on all sides is seen as acceptable in political terms. If the IRA can't win given all its advantages, how the hell do 'revolutionaries' ever expect to win in Britain, or elsewhere in developed world?

But there are arguments that are more important, and less cynical, than whether a thing is practicable or not. Much as I hate quoting from the Bible, it does have some snappy ways of putting points across. In this case the saying that 'He who lives by the sword will die by the sword' has a lot to recommend it. It seems to me that if you attempt to make a new society by violent means then you shouldn't be surprised when you find that you have made a violent society. Violence is like many drugs, it's an easy habit to acquire, and a damn difficult habit to kick. Take Castro's Cuba for example. There's no doubt that the revolutionaries that sailed on 'Granma' went to fight a disgusting regime built on oppression, prostitution and violence. However, Castro so enjoyed his role as the revolutionary guerrilla that he just couldn't bring himself to take his uniform off – he's still wearing it today (although it's a much smarter, classier cut these days). Further, the Cuba that he built may have been a literate Cuba, but it is also the most militarised nation in the Americas, its main export in the 1970s being young men and women in uniform. Incidentally, the machismo of militarism is most probably partly to blame for Cuba's rampant homophobia. The violent means / violent ends lesson is, I think, a universal one, from the Minutemen to the destruction of the plains Indians and wars of expansion against Mexico and Canada, from the revolutionary wars to Emperor Napoleon, from the Long March to driving tanks over students, from Chief of Staff Trotsky to Kronstadt and all that came after ...

Why do so many on the left have this keenness for violence? Often it is a keenness that is partially suppressed, but it is there, as you will know if you've had any sort of conversation with a

complaining of trades' councils supporting the OILC, labelling this support as the "infantile disorder of ultra leftism". He was jeered and booed from the platform. Excellent debates favouring direct action were held regularly on the poll tax and anti-union laws.

Anarcho-syndicalist delegates from Manchester, Mansfield, London and Humberside decided then and there to form a national coordination of syndicalist trades' council delegates – not some pretentious new national organisation but as a way of strengthening syndicalist ideas inside the trades' council movement, so that the many syndicalists working in an isolated manner can come together on joint projects.

This coordination is open to all syndicalist and libertarian trades' council delegates, whether or not they are members of national libertarian organisations – with the stalinists in disarray and the trots fortunately absent, we have a real opportunity: don't miss it!

Write today for details to: Syndicalist Trades' Council Delegates, c/o PO Box 102, Hull, Humberside.

## Information wanted

The CIRA (Centre International de Recherches sur L'Anarchisme) in Marseilles seeks information about the international libertarian campings organised from 1953 (Italy) to nowadays, and especially about the camping organised in Great Britain (Portreath-Cambrose) in 1969.

We'd like to come into contact with all those who took part in those campings in order to collect precisions and testimonies (memories, anecdotes and possibly photos).

Please write to: René Bianco - CIRA, BP 40, 13382 Marseilles, Cedex 13.

## DONATIONS?

We are not publishing a donations list in this issue for the simple reason that in the past fortnight you, our readers, have contributed just £5 to our 'Overheads Fund'! We certainly won't stop publication of *Freedom* or *The Raven* as a result, but on the other hand we don't want to give the impression that it doesn't matter.

Your donations, large and small, are much appreciated and help us to remain solvent. Actually at this time last year donations to our three funds amounted to £1325. This year it's up to £1664, so we are not doing too badly. Just a hiccup this fortnight!

Class War supporter or any variety of Trot or, in the old days, the more formal pro-Soviet militarism of British communists. Why? I think it has a lot to do with people's understanding of the word 'revolution'. They may well have a very formal definition of what the term means, but they often have a very visual image of 'revolution' as an event. In that sense 'revolution' is often seen as a combination of historical myth and personal fantasy. The myth of the barricade, the heroic militiaman/woman, head bandaged (not guts spread all over the place), fag in the corner of his/her mouth, faraway look in his/her eyes, firm grip on rifle, waiting to defend the people against the fascist hordes. The truth is that many on the left have made a personal fetish of a certain type of violence, a fetish of a certain type of militarism. It is a fetish of men like Che Guevara, it is the fetish of the AK47 wielded by the militiaman, the fetish of the 'revolutionary' warrior as seen on many posters of the Spanish Civil War period, it is militarism by other means. And it has nasty similarities with other militarisms that any other leftist would hold his/her hands up in horror at. It was a fascist (José Antonio) who said that "Life is a militia", but many of the left believe that too.

Well, I can hear the 'revolutionaries' shout, how do we overthrow the system? By education, by changing attitudes, by argument. It is the only person-centred way, it is the only way to make change for the better permanent, it is the only way to make a just, peaceful society. Fuck knows if it will succeed, but it is the only way if you don't want to wade in blood. And if you think that screaming humanity is just an historical detail go and read Wilfred Owen's poems again, go and read Edmund Blunden's *Undertones of War*, go and read Barbusse's *Under Fire*, go and read Graves's *Goodbye To All That*, go and read the recent book by former Italian fascist Carlo Mazzantini, *In Search of a Glorious Death*, and see if you can still talk of violence with a light heart.

These are only some thoughts on the issues raised by Ernie Crosswell, and I've not touched upon other questions such as reactions to genocidal onslaughts, but I endorse Ernie's call for more discussion of this important topic.

Stephen Cullen



## MEETINGS

### Anarchism: Theory and Practice, Past and Present

Wednesdays at 6-8pm from  
10th June to 1st July 1992

An introduction to anarchism  
presented in four sessions led by  
John Griffin

- Anarchism versus Socialism, Labourism and Toryism
- Sociology and Social Psychology
- Economics and Organisation
- Anarchism in Action

Participants with little knowledge of the social sciences need not be deterred by the titles of the second and third sessions – all four have a commonsense approach and use the minimum of academic jargon. There will be time for any clarifications that may be necessary as well as for free discussion.

Course fee: £16 Course Code: 964 SS

Enrolment Times: Enrol in person (in advance if possible) 12.30 to 2pm and 5pm to 8pm Monday to Friday. Information available at the Centre from 10am to 8.30pm, or by telephone from 10am to 10pm Monday to Friday.

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42 Queen Square  
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## FREEDOM fortnightly

ISSN 0016 0504

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

Printed by Aldgate Press, London E1

## Anarchist Forum

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

### 1992 SEASON OF MEETINGS

26th June - 'The Left and Architecture' (speaker Andrew Lainton)

3rd July - 'Anarchism as a Positive Idea' (speaker Donald Rooum)

10th July - The 1992-93 Programme: a formative discussion

We are now booking speakers or topics for the 1992-93 season. The first term dates are from 25th September to 11th December. The terms have not yet been published but we expect the normal pattern. A number of potential speakers have indicated an interest although no specific dates have yet been set. If anyone would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, please make contact giving names, proposed subjects and a few alternative dates. These can either be speaker-led meetings or general discussions. Friday is the only night available for the meetings as the centre is booked up for classes on other nights.

Anyone interested should contact Dave Dane or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (Tel: 081-847 0203). The Mary Ward Centre is an adult education centre which lets us have a meeting place, not an accommodation address or contact point.

The London Anarchist Forum is not a membership group with a formal structure nor membership fees and a collection is made to give a donation to the centre. Will those leaving early please note this. We are not affiliated to other groups nor have the means to subscribe to these. We are a meeting point, a discussion group, not an action group. Many of us are active elsewhere. The Forum is our common ground. We aim to cover a wide spectrum of views.

We ask participants to allow others a chance to air their views without rude interruption or attempting to dominate the meeting. We would like the Forum to be a place where newcomers, especially those without public speaking skills, would feel welcome.

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