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FIFTY PENCE

"High hopes were once formed of democracy; but democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people, by the people, for the people. It has been found out."
Oscar Wilde

Reflections on the CAPITALIST RACKET!

What are the government's panaceas? When challenged by Her Majesty's Official Opposition to say what they have done to bring an end to the recession, all they can do is prate about the 'war against inflation' and their objective of further reducing it to 2% at any price - because you don't have to be an expert to observe that as inflation has come down unemployment has gone up.

The strategy is that inflation based wage increases will be kept in check, as will production costs, thereby making industry more competitive. Meanwhile another 100,000 wage and salary slaves are on the dole and unable to enjoy all the 'bargains' on offer!

Other gurus, many in the Labour hierarchy, maintain that only a massive decrease in Bank Interest Rates will encourage investment in

In these columns we have argued that the crisis of capitalism worldwide is such that whatever solutions are advanced by governments and their economist gurus, the fundamental problems of over-production and maldistribution, of vast wealth for some and killing poverty for many, remain untouched.

industry. To what end? To re-equip with more sophisticated machines (preferably automated, computer controlled and with all the rest of the technological paraphernalia) without which, apparently, you can't compete in world markets, can you? As if all the other capitalist enterprises are not also thinking along these lines.

And, incidentally, none of the gurus

takes into account that the world's industry, and services, are more and more in the hands of the vast multi-nationals who can switch production from one part of the world to another to suit their financial interests irrespective of governments.

The multi-nationals can also control the money markets since they deal in all the major currencies. Just as if you are a large coffee producer, such as Brazil, you can 'up' the markets by buying as much coffee from the other producing countries at the right moment, and then ensure that less coffee is on the world market than the demand. Simple! Well, exactly the same racket is operated on the money markets and the multi-nationals, having a lot of all the currencies, can 'play the markets'. After all, the government and the Bank of England are doing this all the time. At the time of writing the £ sterling is at an all

(continued on page 2)

Lloyd's Names Come Unstuck POOR LOSERS

The 'serious' press has been full of articles about the thousands of 'names', some threatened with bankruptcy as a result of the disastrous 1989 year for Lloyds the insurance giant.

The very fact that you cannot be a 'name' in this game unless you have realisable assets of at least £250,000 limits the name-game to the rich, and the rich are notoriously greedy and their dream in life is to make even more money than they already have.

In 1989 as a result of all kinds of world disasters they have come unstuck. But nobody tells us how much money they 'won' in the years before 1989. For after all they are gamblers who have the advantage over the poor punters in that they don't even have to lay down their stakes. Thus their fortunes can go on

being placed in other interest-earning investments. In other words, they are hoping to get a second income for nothing! For once that they have come unstuck some of them are crying their eyes out and shouting FOUL. We can hardly sympathise with these greedy punters. However, one interesting thing that has come out of this sordid business is that at Lloyds there are 'insiders' who select for themselves the safest insurances and they are certainly not among the losers.

But capitalism is the survival of the crookedest. Some learn it the hard way. But in this case they are poor losers because they are already rich and hoping to get even richer without any effort on their part. Serves them right we say!

ALL IS FORGIVEN, ERNEST

Ernest Saunders, mastermind of Guinness the brewers' success who nevertheless was condemned to a five year prison sentence as a high class crook and who was released long before serving anything like his term, on grounds of health, not only has recovered the latter but he is also now a consultant (presumably on how not to get caught) and his former employers felt that he should be given a pension in recognition of services rendered. The figure quoted is £65,000 a year. Not bad, all things considered!

**'ALL THE PERKS
FOR THE RICH'
(see page 2)**

All the Perks for the Rich

For *Freedom* readers it must make boring reading to have a regular retailing of the salary increases that the top earners pay themselves while in the same breath they threaten their employees with sackings (as a result of lost orders, they say) if they press too hard for wage increases. But we are propagandists for anarchism (which means economic and social equality while every individual retaining his/her individuality) against capitalism which is just the opposite, and we can only hope to convince by repeating the same arguments but, as ever, with new examples.

The Water Board chiefs have, according to *The Guardian* (30th June) "faced the wrath of unions, politicians and staff" when it was announced that they had received "salary increases of up to 31% last year". This is chicken feed compared with Michael Grade, Chief Executive of Channel 4 television, who got a 68% salary increase last year and a 'golden handshake' of £250,000 bringing his 'earnings' (if you can call them such) for the

year to almost £500,000 (hold it: £10,000 a week!)
 The shopkeepers are also doing very well for themselves. *The News of the World* in a cosy uncritical feature in its supplement: 'Who's Minding the Shops?' (28th June) provides its readers with details of the pay packets of eight leading retail shop bosses. The poorest of the bunch is the chairman of W.H. Smiths, who only gets £3,480 a week, compared with the boss of Woolworths who get £2,413 a day. Other modest earners are the chairman of Boots the Chemists (a mere £6,600 a week) and of Seers (a more modest £5,115) and by comparison the general manager of Dewhurst's the biggest butcher's chain has to be content with £3,846 a week (but as a member of the Vestey family, who own the business, he has many other perks to allow him to buy the occasional bottle of champagne to celebrate the fact that the Vestey empire has

so well tied up its business activities that it pays no taxes).

The big earners are Marks & Sparks' chairman who gets just under £10,000 a week (which of course you need if, as we are told, he owns a £1 million home in Surrey). In the interests of good business for the shareholders and yours truly, he "was forced to give 600 staff the boot".

Dixon's boss gets a little more - £11,000 a week with a nice little £1 million apartment in London's St James Place. As well as "giving a fortune every year to Jewish charities" he donates about £100,000 to the Tory Party.

We could go on boring you with more 'success stories' at top level, such as, for instance, the case of the chairman of Scottish Power who had his pay last year almost doubled from £2,000 to £3,900 a week; or, for instance, the case of Anthony Simmonds

Gooding the ousted chief executive of BSkyB (which lost £759 million last year) who, according to *The Independent on Sunday* (28th June) got a pay-off of nearly £650,000. Why make a profit?

Once you start, it becomes almost an obsession. For instance, the man 'tipped' to take over as Governor of the Bank of England and who is now chairman of the investment banking group S.G. Warburg was paid last year a modest salary of £195,000, no increase on the previous year. Even so, £3,750 a week and without having to get your hands dirty (literally, that is) isn't too bad. BUT *The Guardian* report (2nd June) provides its readers with details of the perks, consisting of: "an annual performance related payment of £316,000, but his emoluments were boosted beyond £1 million by a further performance related payment of £687,000." Total £1,200,000!

The Guardian cynically points out that the gentleman in question, Sir David Scholey (they are all Thatcher Knights) is already a director of the Bank of England "which has been urging pay restraint" and even the Governor "waived the bulk of his pay rise last year". We imagine that he did not apply for Social Security benefits as a result of this generous gesture.

POSTSCRIPT
 This writer, like millions of workers who have not spent a lifetime telling others what to do but have produced something that others consume, is expected to live on £2,819. No, not per week but per annum, per year! And one should add that one contributed to that 'bonanza' for forty working years, with no contribution by the boss.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CAPITALIST RACKET!

(continued from page 1)
 time high vis-a-vis the US dollar. In the past two months the 'value' of the £ sterling has risen on the money markets from \$1.70 to \$1.90 - 20 cents, or more than 11%. Apart from the currency speculators who are doing very nicely - if they are on the right side - the British government has to choose between the advantage that imports from the USA are now cheaper by 11% or the disadvantages that exports to the USA are automatically 11% more expensive (no fault of the British worker but of the currency racket); and what is very important for the Chancellor of the Exchequer is that oil prices are quoted worldwide in US dollars - so less money is coming into the Exchequer from North Sea oil exports. In this racket what can the government do? Quite simple. Instruct the Bank of England to buy a \$ billion on the markets with £ sterling, and we shall see the £ drop - just like the coffee business!

the French government has published its figures: 2,900,000 people out of work - 10% of the working population. And in France they have a so-called socialist government. But it is impotent to make capitalist work. In fact we are at a loss as to why they call themselves a socialist government when all they are trying to do is make the capitalist system work!

But to come nearer home. What has our government done so far as unemployment is concerned (apart from taking youngsters into training schemes which make the unemployment figures look 'more encouraging', but end up with the trainees back on the dole)?

As we all know, women in our society are discriminated against. So voting feminists must have welcomed the appointment of Gillian Shephard as Secretary of State for Employment. One of her first tasks was to deal with the European Community's proposal that no wage-slave should work more than a 48-hour week. Not for the Brits (mostly dark-skinned, underpaid, unorganised) says Mrs Shephard, and gets away with it.

The second has not yet been determined, but it refers to equality of the sexes so far as the retirement age is concerned. We men in Britain are discriminated against. For us, retirement (for state pensions, that is) is 65 and you dear ladies, comrades, feminists, are released from the treadmill at 60! What does your Mrs Shephard propose? That you should go on working another five years before you get your pension!

Can you imagine anything in these two government proposals more intended to actually increase unemployment?

So what is behind their intentions if not to save money. The Equal Opportunities Commission has made it abundantly clear that "thirty million women pensioners will be worse off if their pension age becomes 65". The Labour spokeswoman Margaret Beckett has pointed out that, as it was, "the number of women in poverty has more than doubled since the Tories took power in 1979".

The question is: to save money for whom? There can be no doubt that Mr John Major and his 'classless society' is as phoney as his predecessor (all togged up in Moss Bros ermine for the day). They not only defend the rich, they make sure that in spite of recession worldwide, the rich are getting richer. Look at the vast salary increases the top men (they are all men at the top) are paying themselves even though their companies are announcing huge losses. Their employees are being made redundant in their thousands and those remaining are expected to work harder and accept wage freezes.

All we can say is that so long as the wage/salary-slaves accept the situation as their lot, nothing will change.

Certainly a change of government won't make any difference. After all, in the Labour Party's post mortem of the election defeat, even the modest tax proposals of John Smith which would have clawed back a few billion £s from the stinking rich were, in retrospect, considered to have lost them the election!

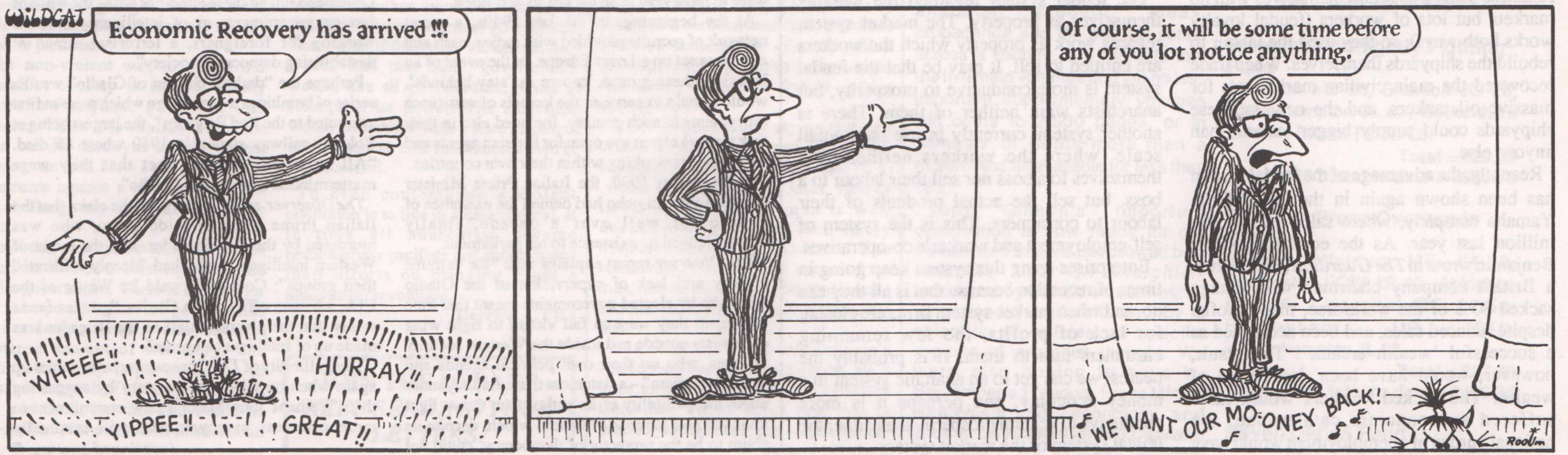
If so, what a hope for the revolution! Because whether our pacifist comrades like it or not, the capitalist system will only ever be defeated by direct action: by a conscious majority of the people no longer willing to serve a privileged, corrupt ruling minority.

Feudal System for Prosperity?

Anarchists are not in favour of the feudal system, the market system, the chattel slavery system, or any other system of masters and servants. But we may compare them without being in favour of them. In the feudal system, workers (serfs) belong to estates which provide them with a constant livelihood, in return for their labour being constantly on call to the estate. In the market system, labour is bought as required like any other commodity, and workers sell their services for the best price they can get. It is generally accepted in the west that the market system makes for prosperity in an industrial society, but this may be a mistake.

When the industrial revolution happened in western Europe, the market system was already well established. The Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century caused an acute labour shortage, and serfs left the estates to which they were legally bound, to work for wages elsewhere. A generation later, attempts to restore the feudal system in England resulted in the Peasants' Revolt against

(continued on page 3)



ARE THESE 'STATE SECRETS'

Who do you think wanted *forcibly* to sterilise more than 100,000 people he described as "mentally degenerate" and send many tens of thousands to state-run labour camps? Hitler did, and we all know that, but this was more than twenty years before Hitler and not in Germany but in Great Britain. And the man who proposed these draconian measures was then the Home Secretary ... *Winston Churchill!*

Clive Ponting in *The Guardian* 'Outlook Supplement' (21st June) quotes from government papers that have only now been released at the Public Records Office and writes that they "reflect his deeply held fear that the 'British race' faced inevitable decline unless its 'inferior' members were stopped from breeding".

It is equally interesting that Churchill was strongly attracted by ideas of national efficiency and, to quote Clive Ponting, author of the article:

"that embraced causes as diverse as conscription, better social services on the German model to tie the workers into the state and, on the fringes of the movement, social eugenics: the idea that the 'British race' has to be purified to be fit for the struggle with other nations."

Ponting goes on to point out that Churchill was 'strongly' attracted to such ideas even before he stood for Parliament in 1899, as evidenced in a letter to his cousin in which he wrote: "The improvement of the British breed is my political aim in life".

Presumably none of these 'revelations' have been included in Churchill's own writings.

This would not be surprising in view of the fact that the 'great warrior' against Nazism and all its pretensions about race purity and all that crap would look a bit silly if he admitted that he too was concerned about the 'British breed'!

Churchill is dead and buried and like all 'great statesmen' virtually forgotten (apart from a few roads and gardens named after him). What is, to our minds, much more important is that these documents have been *officially suppressed for more than eighty years.*

So when we are told about 'open government' it's all nonsense. What goes on behind the scenes can be suppressed either by the obvious device of 'incinerating the documents' or of putting a seal on them for 30, 50 or even 75 years.

A case in point is that of the trial in 1952 of two young persons, Bentley and Craig, for the murder of a policeman for which Bentley, though he did not even have a gun, was hanged and Craig, who did and fired the fatal shot, escaped the rope because he was at the time under age.

Unfortunately for the bureaucrats at the Home Office, Bentley, who was nineteen but with a mental age of ten, had a sister who was determined to clear his name and she has gone on for forty years, with the help of sympathetic lawyers, to penetrate the official wall of silence which in the Bentley case is a *75 year ban on disclosure of the relevant documents!* Surely one is entitled to conclude that the Home Office had something to hide and still

thinks it should, for another 35 years, by which time the devoted and persistent sister, Iris, will no longer be around and nobody will be interested anyway.

The indefatigable lawyer for the underdog – Benedict Birnbaum – has been pressing William Waldegrave, the minister in charge of the government's so-called 'Citizen's Charter' involving opening up parts of Whitehall to public scrutiny, to release the

documents. And the Home Office has reluctantly agreed to "consider a posthumous pardon" as a result of 'new evidence' submitted by Benedict Birnbaum. 'New evidence' indeed! Let them start by releasing the documents which Mr Birnbaum suggests will reveal that the then Home Secretary Maxwell Fyfe ordered Bentley's execution for political reasons "as a deterrent to others" and not because he was in any way involved in the shooting of the policeman.

What other travesties of justice are locked up until they no longer matter?

Indecent Indulgences

So it appears that voting Conservative has become a secret and solitary vice. It is not just that people refused to tell the canvassers. To take just my area. The Wrekin was until very recently a marginal constituency, and still only has a 6,000 Labour majority. It's an area where only last summer the police shot a mentally disturbed youth for reasons that only an ultra Tory solicitor could find justifiable.

A constituency where in '83 and '88 the local military base in order to demonstrate its pleasure in a government with concern neither for humanity nor the environment, and to get rid of outdated military hangars, set them alight (claiming external arson) showering the area with asbestos ash; the cove in which the corpse of Hilda Murrell was dumped is by the constituency boundary. For years the local Tories have been accosting socialists in the street to say that though they are born Tories, they will never vote Tory again.

Living in Wellington (an old market town) on the outskirts of College Ward (the Tory end of the constituency) I didn't see a single house with a Tory poster in its window (few houses had any posters at all, but all that were there Labour). Ultimately, of course, we'll have to find a way to allow people to practise their perverted pleasure pursuits in privacy, in a way that they don't thereby affect the rest of us. For the moment, there are more serious problems. Once again the cry is going up that the election has shown that the Labour Party is too far to the left.

We are told we have to accept that it is proved – as it is – to be unelectable; that a coalition of it and other parties is essential. Apart from the fact that short of fusion with the National Front it is hard to imagine a Labour Party that is any further Right than that Kinnoch led, it is historically nonsense. They said in 1931 and '35, that Labour would never be re-elected, and again in 1951, '55, '59 and in '70.

Actually on all occasions when Labour has been elected it has followed an apparent swing to the

Left. Ramsay Macdonald had opposed the 1914-18 war, and Henderson had led the party; after the war the war-resisters won the argument, and Macdonald came to power as the candidate of the Left, winning the election two years later. The Liberals put him out of power, and half the party leaders wanted to do a deal; then the General Strike, the Right of the party proposing joining a National Emergency Government to oppose it; again Macdonald led the Left of the party, getting it to keep more radical policies, and as such he led the party to power at the next election. No need to dwell on what happened.

During World War Two, Labour joined the coalition, outside which (the Communist Party having supported the Stalin-Hitler pact) former Popular Frontists formed Common Wealth as a new socialist party; the impact of which created a Left within Labour which in '44 forced through a total reversal of party policies so that after the Conference, Ernie Bevin said to Mikardo: "You realise, young man, you've lost us the election". In the late '50s CND was launched and this revived Labour, so that when Gaitskell died the Left's candidate was elected to lead. In the early '70s the extra-parliamentary Left's agitation pushed the Bennites into getting their policies accepted as the party programme.

Each time a Leftist was elected leader, or as the Left pushed through its programme, political pundits said 'Labour has deliberately turned its back on power, moving into the wilderness, in psychological rejection of reality'. The standard Left Labour claims that the sins of Labour Governments are because the Right sold out, have never been true; it was always the Left of centre Labour that took power and it has always been a Left Labour government that then found itself confronted with the reality of the State and tried to manage capitalism.

LO
Wellington, Shropshire

Feudal System for Prosperity?

(continued from page 2)

serfdom and in favour of the wages system. The feudal system was legally abolished in England in the sixteenth century, with Scotland and the rest of western Europe not far behind. The Industrial Revolution occurred within the market system and (eventually) made for increased prosperity all round, but it is not clear that the market system itself had anything to do with the prosperity.

In Japan, the feudal system was still intact when industrialisation occurred, and was adapted to the needs of industry. Large manufacturing firms replace large landowners as feudal lords, but lifelong allegiance, in return for lifelong livelihood, is still the normal contract between employer and employed. This may be the basis of Japan's industrial prosperity.

The history of the shipbuilding industry shows how it works. In the late 1940s and early '50s the shipyards had no customers; navies were stuck with many more ships than they could use in peacetime, and the needs of commerce were met by redundant naval ships being sold off cheap. European shipyards stopped buying work, as they stopped buying raw materials, until the market recovered. Japanese shipyards found themselves with no markets but lots of workers (feudal loyalty works both ways), so they used the labour to rebuild the shipyards themselves. When trade recovered the main civilian market was for massive oil tankers, and the new Japanese shipyards could supply bigger tankers than anyone else.

Recently, the advantage of the feudal system has been shown again in the case of the Yamaha company, where sales fell by £59 million last year. As the economist Chris Benjamin wrote in *The Guardian* (22nd June), a British company chairman would have sacked 30% of the workforce, made profits despite reduced sales, and been acclaimed as a successful 'wealth creator'. The result, however, would have been destruction of wealth. The sacked workers would have suffered an economic catastrophe, the national burden of unemployment would have

increased, and the manufacturing base of the company would have been weakened. 'Wealth creation' would have meant showing a profit for the shareholders at the expense of prosperity.

The chairman of Yamaha, however, is a feudal lord. For him, losing a third of the workforce would be to lose a third of the company's assets, which is much worse than seeing a drop in sales. He has resigned, with a pretty speech hoping that his resignation would allow the company to be united again.

If western capitalists were really interested in prosperity, with such accepted indicators of prosperity as low inflation and full employment, they might try to establish a kind of feudal system. In the absence of sales, for instance, they might set the workforce to improving the capital assets of the company instead of sacking them.

But our 'wealth creators' do not want prosperity. They want profits. There is a trade recession in Japan and company directors are responding by cutting their own salaries. There is a trade recession in the west, and directors' salaries are doubled, while a fall in real incomes for most people in continuous employment is described as an indicator of recovery.

The feudal system regarded the workers themselves as property. The market system regards work as property which the workers are entitled to sell. It may be that the feudal system is more conducive to prosperity, but anarchists want neither of them. There is another system, currently in use on a small scale, where the workers neither bind themselves to a boss nor sell their labour to a boss, but sell the actual products of their labour to consumers. This is the system of self-employment and worker's co-operatives.

Enterprises using this system keep going in times of recession because that is all they can do, and when market-system firms are closing for lack of profits, the few remaining customers turn to them. It is probably the nearest we can get to an anarchic system in a money economy, and perhaps it is more conducive to general prosperity than either the feudal system or the market system.

Keeping the Home Fires Burning

If we are to believe a report in *The Observer* (7th June), the massacre at the Bologna railway station in 1980 far from being just the work of the Red Brigades was stage-managed by the US/Britain/France Secret Services as part of Operation Gladio which was set up after World War two to prevent Russia from over-running Europe as Hitler was able to do. Although initially inspired, or (more likely) agreed, by the heads of the governments concerned, Operation Gladio required such a degree of secrecy that those leaders were to have very little idea of its activities.

At the beginning, in the late 1940s, a secret network of recruits provided with radios, cash and arms was set up all over Europe. In the event of an invasion, these groups, known as 'stay-behinds', would remain to serve as the kernels of resistance movements in each country. Included also in their task was to keep an eye open for Russian agents and sympathisers working within their own countries.

In November 1990, the Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, who had denied the existence of Gladio for well over a decade, finally acknowledged its existence to his parliament.

The Observer report explains that: "the extreme secrecy and lack of supervision of the Gladio networks by elected governments meant that time and again they were to fall victim to right wing extremists outside and inside the Western security services, who set their own political agenda and acted upon them" – a statement that could say more about the gullibility of its author than throw light upon the real purpose of Gladio which, despite its claim to be the protector of democracy, could not

reasonably be described to be left of any other organisation in the world. After all, 'democracies' which delegate their work to secret services cannot by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as such.

One example given for the tendency on the part of Gladio to "fall victim to right wing extremists" is the apparently random shootings in Belgian supermarkets which ended with a particularly nasty incident in 1983 in the town of Aalst, which became known as the Brabant-Walloon massacres. Senator Lallemand linked these atrocities with "the work of foreign governments or of intelligence services working for foreigners, a terrorism aimed at destabilising democratic society".

Perhaps the "darkest chapter of Gladio" was "a series of bombings a decade ago which were at first attributed to the Red Brigades", the largest being at Bologna railway station in 1980 where 86 died. "All clues point to the fact that they were masterminded from within Gladio".

The Observer report also makes the claim that the Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro, who was murdered by the Red Brigades, was the target of Western intelligence who had "deeply infiltrated their groups": Colonel Oswald Le Winter of the CIA, a liaison officer with Gladio, "goes as far as to say that the planning staff of the Brigades was made up of Intelligence agents".

The gullibility of *The Observer* reporter comes up again when he winds up his story by suggesting that: "Perhaps John Major's new commitment to more openness in government will eventually

(continued on page 4)

EUROGEDDON

As an anarchist, I define the state as the abolition of the self. The system is a machine demanding and coercing the individual into deferring and thereby annihilating him or herself in the mass. The individual is swept away by this all-consuming political, social, ideological, cultural and economic system.

Anarchists have devoted very little attention to the EEC as an example of the worst excesses of the statist mentality. The EC is a megastate, and seeks to submerge all of Europe within it. As a counter-example to the megastate, we can look at Yugoslavia. As a response to 45 years of enforced 'unity' large numbers of ex-Yugoslavians are now blasting each other with whatever weapons are at hand. This is how the Euro megastate will end.

It seems illogical and emotional, but I find consolation in the fact that the EC and UK will shake themselves to pieces. I feel a strong antipathy towards the megastate, and no thought cheers me up more than the idea of it smashing into a thousand pieces. My hatred for the Wallies of Westminster has a similar intensity. When I examine the grounds of my feelings I find that they arise as a response to their attempt to submerge me in with their putrefying system.

Throughout the former communist 'bloc' this putrefaction has long been obvious, but now the imposed unity is breaking apart. The west is similarly decayed, the difference being that the plastic and gloss paint is thicker, the control over perceptions here is more effective. The more vicious and total the imposed uniformity is, the more violent the process of disintegration will be, if and when the process starts. The great danger with this fragmentation is that it runs out of energy after the first layer is broken, leaving authority itself still in place. Instead of the single large state we find ourselves imprisoned within many smaller states. For example, 'Croats' have merely exchanged Serbian masters for Croatian masters. The momentum of disintegration has to be maintained until the very possibility of any government imposing itself is abolished.

The present situation in Eastern Europe is stuck in the nationalist mode of thinking. What fuels this fragmentation are the grievances which inevitably follow when the interests of the smaller group are submerged within those of a larger system. Similar tensions exist across Western Europe or in the Global Village / New World Order. It is not simply a matter of nationalism but a complex mixture of reactions against the attempts of the machine to impose political, social, cultural, ideological and economic norms.

The Europeans have sensed the possibility of this process of fragmentation infecting their own patch, and so in an attempt to appropriate it and so divert it are now speaking of a 'Europe of Regions'. Regionalism implies that the smaller, local unit still defines itself in respect to the whole, a region does not stand as an entity in its own right. This new found belief in regions is therefore merely a sop to the deep sense of grievance which fuels the

fragmentation process. As such it can never meet it. Regionalism as a response to the drive towards fragmentation is self-contradictory because in acknowledging, and thereby drawing attention to the disparity between the part and the whole, the Europeans can only fuel the process. In acknowledging its legitimacy, they may even initiate the disintegration themselves.

This fragmentation is starting in Britain, for the United Kingdom even in its name is a lie. It is neither united nor is it a kingdom. We are all aware of the calls for Scottish and Welsh nationalism. There is also a growing and deepening sense of grievance between the north and the south, with the south seen as imposing its wishes against the interests of the north, for example in government policies, and in all levels of finance between the regions. We see this attitude in culture in the denigration of the north as all cloth cap and fish and chips, and in the northern stereotypes shown on television. This divide is also shown in the reaction of northerners to talk about a national water grid for Yorkshire, Northumbria and the Lake District: 'I don't see why they should be allowed to take our water ...'

The basic problem is inherent in the notion of control. Westminster is seen to impose its alien decrees upon a locality, and these are always to its advantage, never ours. (The direction of flow of water in the pipeline.) There is some identity of interests between individuals living in a village, people working in the same factory, but less common interest with those outside the circle. The machine imposes on the individual in the same way as the economic system imposes on the local factory which was bought out by a larger company and then closed down. The economic viability of the local area is destroyed, just as the initiative of the individual is abolished. Dependency upon the machine is enhanced. The Ravenscraig closure in Scotland, or the merger/abolition of a South Wales electronics company by a German rival are repeated and multiplied in countless other instances. In Scotland and Wales, Croatia and Slovakia, people have a strong consciousness of national identity, and so their righteous hostility towards these events will coalesce around this. In other parts of Britain, local or social influence have yet to cohere and provide focal points around which these feelings can meet and intensify.

We do not have Mercian, Wessex or Northumbrian nationalism, yet, but it is a fact that people everywhere feel alienated from themselves. This is a product of the swallowing up of individual social, cultural, religious and economic identities by the machine. People are alienated from the jingoism and 'Rule Britannia' patriotism wheeled out by the media during the Gulf War or the Falklands, and prefer to treat them as a sentimental and shallow joke (Last Night at

the Proms). When left to themselves they prefer the particular or local demands of football teams or the gangs centred around specific housing estates indulging in behaviour frowned upon by those outside the group ('hotting' on the Blackbird Leys estate, for example).

I can identify with people living in my village or working in the same factory or field of endeavour. I can even work together with them because there is a genuine community of interest present. This common interest does not extend to Westminster, neither does it include the megastate. We can only identify with others if there truly is a community of interest between us.

All the empty talk of a 'Europe of Regions' will not take away the fact that there is no community of interest in the European Community. There is no community of interest in the global village. If a car factory exists in Bavaria, and another exists in Coventry, in a single market they will be in rivalry. If an industrial bureaucrat in Detroit decides that the German plant is more efficient and closes the Coventry plant down, that is no help to the people in Coventry. The history of the past 25 years is so full of such examples that anyone can see that my interests do not coincide with those of the whole.

This pattern is repeated in every aspect of the machine's contact with the individual. Government robs the local economy via taxation, and imposes its edicts. The local culture is abolished, its place is taken by

Mickey Mouse and Macdonalds. Television channels push the same American films, and London Home Counties oriented middle class sit-coms, etc., etc.

The process rolls on like a steamroller. Its process seems irresistible. Every night on television we can see the ex-Yugoslavians defending themselves against outsiders. It seems strange and wrong, but whenever a shell explodes or people fire Kalashnikovs at random round street corners, something inside me cheers because here the sense of grievance is being brought out. Here a monolithic, uniform imposed culture is being smashed. What is happening there is a response to the forced, false unity of what went before.

It is only a matter of time before we get to smash Mickey Mouse's bloated, self-satisfied face in. The EC circle of stars on the neutral observers' vehicles and helicopters make excellent aiming marks. Belgrade will soon come to Basildon, Sarajevo to Stevenage. It is only a matter of time. At the moment, the sense of grievance against Westminster and the megastate is subterranean and unvoiced, but it can only grow. First it has to be put into words. The way we have been treated by you stinks. The personal scars of unemployment, the cultural scars, the communal scars like those left on the miners' villages after '84 - all these accounts are going to have to be settled. The more this imposed, false unity is forced, the more violent the eventual reaction. As Malcolm X once pointed out, we can either respect each other or we can both die together. This is the lesson we can all learn from Yugoslavia.

Stephen Booth

Keeping the Home Fires Burning

(continued from page 3)

produce some answers to the many Gladio riddles". It is scarcely believable that someone making such a statement can have the wit to question, as he certainly does, the integrity of the British Intelligence services.

This report was obviously written on the assumption that Western nations are, in reality they sense, genuine democracies, whereas in reality they are dictatorships of the plutocratic kind where rigged voting systems are employed to hide that unpalatable fact. As the author himself explains, all of these 'democratic' governments are happy to allow their secret services and military to pursue policies without accountability, and even without their knowledge, so that the question arising is: who is he kidding, us or himself? We shall have to

console ourselves with the fact that he at least gives us plenty of information to contradict his assumption that we in the West live in true democracies. That way, we get the message between the lines and he gets his salary.

In view of the foregoing, it is much less than a short step to the conclusion that the IRA and the Ulster "freedom fighters" have long been "deeply infiltrated" by British Intelligence agents for the purpose of destabilising our 'democracy' to give an excuse for the introduction of draconian laws to thwart any popular demand for real democratic government. The loss of the Soviet Union as a reliable 'enemy at the gates' must have posed quite a threat to our rulers. Until such time as a replacement can be found, it could be in the interests of our lords and masters to keep the Northern Ireland pot on the boil. No wonder 'IRA terrorists' escape from custody with such ease and frequency!

EC

Food for Thought ... and Action

Recent additions to Freedom Press Bookshop stock.

Green Anarchist number 30. Rumours of *Green Anarchist's* death were, as they say, greatly exaggerated. It was only sleeping and has now been restarted with a new editor. This issue includes 'Anti-Fascism', 'Death of the City', 'The Personal is Political', 'ALF Hit List', 'Save Our Squats', 'Earth First!' and a 'Festival List'. 24 pages, now £1.00.

Alternative Green number 2. Started by *Green Anarchist's* ex-editor Richard Hunt, this new publication, in stiff on the LA Riots, the Earth Summit and a piece in favour(!) of nationalism. 20 pages, 90p.

Workers' Solidarity number 35. Published by the Dublin-based anarchist group the Workers' Solidarity Movement. A rather good magazine, very interesting and well produced. This one includes 'Say No to Maastricht', 'Colombus - Slaver and Thief', 'The IRA's Armed Struggle' and a lot more. A few copies of the previous two issues are still available if you're quick. 20 pages, 75p.

Fatuous Times number 2, *Special Liberate Mickey Mouse Issue* on the transformation of society and culture into giant theme parks. A good, thought-provoking publication in which many pages are designed as self-contained posters or leaflets which readers are encouraged to cut out and photocopy for flyposting or distribution. One such in this issue is a double-page excellent anti-clerical rant. Pages not numbered, £1.50 (and number 1 is still available).

Jewish Socialist number 26. Useful articles on 'Yugoslavia', 'The New Generation of Jewish Comedians', 'Gypsies', plus lots of news stories. It also includes articles arguing against circumcision and other Jewish rituals, and every issue has pieces on Israeli and Palestinian opposition to the Israeli state. Consistently high quality in both production and content ... and

you don't have to be Jewish, or socialist, to enjoy it. 32 pages, £1.50.

Fifth Estate spring '92.* Hot off the Detroit presses with a long article by George Bradford (author of *How Deep is Deep Ecology?**). Contains 'The Fall of Communism: The Triumph of Capital' plus all the anarchist news, views and reviews from the Great Satan. The recycled paper gives it a rather grey appearance but the content is never dull. 31 pages, £1.50.

Fighting Talk number 2, *Journal of Anti-Fascist Action*. Recognising that where fascism arises it is often a working class phenomenon whose victims are, ironically, also working class. AFA set out in 1985 to build a broad-based *working class* resistance to the growth of fascist and racist influence. In an article on the Anti-Nazi League the editors contrast this approach with the ANL's - and its parent group the Socialist Workers' Party - appeal to the middle class, celebrities and television soap stars. They note that despite the AFA's open, democratic structure the SWP refused to join when invited, but instead relaunched the ANL. Well, of course they did, it's something they can control. This mag contains plenty of useful information and news and also incorporates the defunct *Cable Street Beat Review* (motto: 'Hate Fascism, Love Music'). 16 pages, £1.00.

CIA (Cartoons Included Also) number 16, *Special Women's Own Issue*. Produced by Nottingham Community Arts, this comic/magazine almost defies description. The bizarre design and layout mean that just flipping through it is exhausting on the eyes. But there's no denying its vivacity - the energy positively leaps out of the pages at you. Irreverent and disrespectful throughout. 28 pages, 90p.

KM

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A GOOD MAN FALLEN AMONG CONSERVATIVES?

Question: When is a Conservative not a Conservative? **Answer:** When he is George Walden MP, and writes *The Blocked Society*.*

• He has a very unusual political pedigree. He was a professional diplomat for twenty years before he became an MP; an insider who turned out and dared to tell the tale:

"The British political system is like some old-time variety show at the end of the pier. The crowds know the whole thing by heart – which is why they keep coming. And as accomplished professionals the performers have a fair contempt for the audience. They know through long experience that the older the line the bigger the laugh. And amongst the rival applause and the hooting and jeering, no one notices that the pier-head may be subsiding."

• He puts the blame firmly on 'deference', not capitalism (he is all in favour of that), on the great English kow-tow born of the public school system. Let us prise our minds open: "How can we develop a society of responsible and assertive individuals when our constitutional legacy is based on superannuated patterns of deference? In practical terms that can include everything from the easy acceptance of the unauthorised authority of hereditary peers; of the reigning government's right to withhold inconvenient information; or of the voodoo theories of the education establishment."

• Little can be done because there is no effective opposition. As things are:

"It is frankly absurd to have, as the main opposition party in this country at the turn of the millennium, something called 'Labour'. No other major European country maintains such a dinosaur, even in captivity. This is not a modern political party, but a great sump of social resentments and economic and educational frustrations. It is all a bit sad ..."

• He then imagines the scene (without actually proposing it) if fee-paying was abolished:

"The upheaval of the governing classes in Britain would be stupendous. Backbench committee rooms would be packed with tense white faces. The post of Education Secretary would be sharply upgraded. There would be a new anguished edge to editorials thundering about standards; and extra cross-channel services would be laid on at weekends to transport adolescent refugees to and from their new private schools set up in the disused castles of Normandy."

Socially speaking, it would be a hilarious spectacle. If I were God, I would do it out of devilment – though even the Almighty might hesitate before risking a revolt by the English upper classes. He has His future to think of."

His remedy is technically feasible, but probably politically impossible, unless and until the system breaks down from the top – then anything can happen. He points out that since 1979 the number of pupils in private education has, as a proportion of the whole, increased from 5% to 7.8%. In very few years it will be 10%. The nature of class division, that is to say, will soon be twice as bad as it was as recently as 1979. Bring back Disraeli!

His answer is a vast increase of the assisted places scheme whereby, in return for direct financial support, private schools could open themselves up to all the talents as autonomous schools within the state system. There would be no abolition of private education but a vast, well-endowed, official exercise in democratisation. There would be no fall in standards since entrance being by competitive examination, they would be more likely to go up than down. The self-styled public schools

would become as public as they were in the fourteenth century when they were first established for poor pupils.

Although his answer to fee-paying privilege is the heart of his case he does also cover most of the rest of the education water-front, urging nursery schools for all, a searching look at the educational achievements of primary schools, the breaking of the quasi-monopoly of comprehensive schools (different kinds of schools in the same town), greater powers for heads over recruitment and dismissal, higher pay for teachers, obligatory early retirement for inadequate, a reformed and upgraded inspectorate, better standards for teacher training colleges to meet international comparisons and, finally, a General Teaching

Council to maintain professional standards.

Essays on educational reform are notoriously boring. This one is not. And the reasons are at least two-fold. Firstly he attacks the deference system (the centrality of public schools to all else) and secondly he pulls the political plug on both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats. They both go down the tubes. Just as there is no Opposition in Northern Ireland (since the front benches conspire to agree) so it is over education. Class privilege is built into our system and it takes a Tory MP to challenge it! Shades of the dispatch of Mrs Thatcher!

Peter Cadogan

* *The Blocked Society* by George Walden MP (Tory Reform Group, 16 pages, £5)

Individualism Reconsidered

Individualism Reconsidered

by Joe Peacott

A B.A.D. Press Publication (B.A.D. Press Pamphlet no. 3), £2.00 (post free)

This is a most interesting introduction to the philosophy of individualist anarchism and its relationship to present day communist and collectivist anarchism. Tracing the individualist tradition through the likes of Benjamin Tucker and his circle through to present day issues such as feminism and national liberation struggles, Peacott criticises mainstream 'collectivist' anarchism for ignoring the individual anarchists, and also for relegating the importance of individual freedom below that of other issues. Indeed, Peacott extends this argument to claim that anarchist communists / collectivists are less concerned about individual freedom than anarchist individualists. Peacott also includes 'anarcho-capitalists' within the anarchist

tradition. These latter are two points unlikely to find agreement among many anarchists. Most anarchist writers within the collectivist and communist tradition – Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Rudolf Rocker, Herbert Read, Murray Bookchin – value freedom of the individual as much as an 'anarchist individualist' of the North American tradition; and most contemporary anarchists would not regard 'anarcho-capitalists' as anarchists at all!

Peacott is on firmer ground when he criticises authoritarian trends in anarchist group 'politics' and relationships since the 'means' anarchist use will determine the 'ends' we achieve.

The rear section of the pamphlet consists of an extensive bibliography of anarchist individualist works. Both Peacott's essay and the bibliography are well worth the reading.

J.P. Simcock

COLIN WARD

The Anarchist Sociology of Federalism*

(continued from last issue)

Bakunin

The second of my nineteenth century mentors, Michael Bakunin, claims our attention for a variety of reasons. He was almost alone among that century's political thinkers in foreseeing the horrors of the clash of modern twentieth century nation-states in the First and Second World Wars, as well as predicting the fate of centralising Marxism in the Russian Empire. In 1867 Prussia and France seemed to be poised for a war about which empire should control Luxemburg and this, through the network of interests and alliances, "threatened to engulf all Europe". A League for Peace and Freedom held its congress in Geneva, sponsored by prominent people from various countries like Giuseppe Garibaldi, Victor Hugo and John Stuart Mill. Bakunin seized the opportunity to address this audience, and published his opinions under the title *Fédéralisme, Socialisme et Anti-Théologisme*. This document set out thirteen points on which, according to Bakunin, the Geneva Congress was unanimous.

The first of these proclaimed: "That in order to achieve the triumph of liberty, justice and peace in the international relations of Europe, and to render civil war impossible among the various peoples which make up the European family, only a single course lies open: to constitute the *United States of Europe*". His second point argued that this aim implied that states must be replaced by regions, for it observed: "That the formation of these States of Europe can never come about between the States as constituted at present, in view of the monstrous disparity which exists between their various powers." His fourth point claimed: "That not even if it called itself a republic could a centralised bureaucratic and by the same token militarist States enter seriously and genuinely into an international federation. By virtue of its constitution, which will always be an explicit or implicit denial of domestic liberty, it would necessarily imply a declaration of permanent war and a threat to the existence of neighbouring countries".

Consequently his fifth point demanded: "That all the supporters of the League should therefore bend all their energies towards the reconstruction of their various countries, in order to replace the old organisation founded throughout upon violence and the principle of authority by a new organisation based solely upon the interests, needs and inclinations of the populace, and owning no principle other than that of the free federation of individuals into communes, communes into provinces, provinces into nations, and the latter into the United States, first of Europe, then of the whole world."

The vision thus became bigger and bigger, but Bakunin was careful to include the acceptance of secession. His eighth point declared that: "Just because a region has formed part of a State, even by voluntary accession, it by no means follows that it incurs any obligation to remain tied to it forever. No obligation in perpetuity is acceptable to human justice ... The right of free union and equally free secession comes first and foremost among all political rights; without it, confederation would be nothing but centralisation in disguise."

Bakunin refers admiringly to the Swiss Confederation, "practising federation so successfully today", as he puts it, and Proudhon, too, explicitly took as a model the Swiss supremacy of the *commune* as the unit of social organisation, linked by the *canton*, with a purely administrative *federal council*. But both remembered the events of 1848, when the *Sonderbund* of secessionist cantons were compelled by war to accept the new constitution of the majority. So Proudhon and Bakunin were agreed in condemning the subversion of federalism by the unitary principle. In other words, there must be a right of secession.

Kropotkin

Switzerland, precisely because of its decentralised constitution, was a refuge for endless political refugees from the Austro-Hungarian, German and Russian empires. One Russian anarchist was even expelled from Switzerland. He was too much, even for the Swiss Federal Council. He was Peter Kropotkin, who connects nineteenth century federalism

with twentieth century regional geography.

His youth was spent as an army officer in geological expeditions in the Far Eastern provinces of the Russian Empire, and his autobiography tells of the outrage he felt at seeing how central administration and funding destroyed any improvement of local conditions, through ignorance, incompetence and universal corruption, and through the destruction of ancient communal institutions which might have enabled people to change their own lives. The rich got richer, the poor got poorer, and the administrative machinery was suffocated by boredom and embezzlement.

There is a similar literature from any empire or nation-state: the British Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and you can read identical conclusions in the writings of Carlo Levi or Danilo Dolci. In 1872, Kropotkin made his first visit to Western Europe and in Switzerland was intoxicated by the air of a democracy, even a bourgeois one. In the Jura hills he stayed with the watch-case makers. His biographer Martin Miller explains how this was the turning point in his life:

"Kropotkin's meetings and talks with the workers on their jobs revealed the kind of spontaneous freedom without authority or direction from above that he had dreamed about. Isolated and self-sufficient, the Jura watchmakers impressed Kropotkin as an example that could transform society if such a community were allowed to develop on a large scale. There was no doubt in his mind that this community would work because it was not a matter of imposing an artificial 'system' such as Muraviev had attempted in Siberia but of permitting the natural activity of the workers to function according to their own interests."

It was the turning point of his life. The rest of his life was, in a sense, devoted to gathering the evidence for anarchism, federalism and regionalism.

It would be a mistake to think that the approach he developed is simply a matter of academic history. To prove this, I need only refer you to the study that Camillo Berneri published in 1922 on 'Un federaliste Russo, Pietro Kropotkin'. Berneri quotes the 'Letter to the Workers of Western Europe' that Kropotkin handed to the British Labour Party politician Margaret Bondfield in June 1920. In the

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

The Politics of Autonomy

Report from a public meeting in Brighton discussing need, desire and revolution

The meeting was organised by two local groups: Sussex University Autonomist Students and the Aufheben group. About forty people turned up to hear a speaker who was involved in the Italian autonomist movement of the 1970s and '80s. The various groupings of anarchists and Marxists comprising the autonomist movement had in common a rejection of the Community Party (which, at that time, had a powerful, recuperating function, not dissimilar to our own Labour Party) and a concomitant emphasis on rank and file control. The speaker explained that the government of Italy had used the threat of the Red Brigades to suppress much of the autonomist movement with a series of mass arrests. However, although the autonomist movement does not at the moment have the numbers it once had, the principles it embodies remain important.

The speaker began by describing the debate that has historically framed left-wing politics: reformism versus revolutionism. His point was that both sides in the debate – those that wanted to achieve the free communist society through allying themselves with the progressive forces of social democracy, and those that felt that change could only come through the total rejection of existing channels – shared the assumption of the necessity of the vanguard party. The role of such a party was to control and direct the working class; the working class were seen as stupid and as dominated by false

consciousness (inability to recognise their own interests), thus the party had to bring true consciousness to them, to tell them their real needs. Both models therefore tried to impose a programme on the working class, to channel and control it.

The speaker mentioned all this because, he said, the same argument between reformism and revolutionism dominates left-wing politics today. The distinctive contribution of the autonomist movement was to reject the reformism-revolutionism dichotomy and the top-down epistemology and theory of change that accompanies it. The autonomist movement championed instead the *politicisation of need*. In contrast to Orthodox Marxism, the key assumption is that history has a *bottom-up* shape; the working class does not need to be channelled and have ideas given to it; it defines its own pattern of organisation, based around its own needs. It therefore follows that reform and revolution are not stark alternatives but simply two *forms* of working class struggle.

The politicisation of need has two key features: the *refusal of work* and the direct *appropriation of wealth*. Since capitalism is essentially the boundless imposition of work on us all, wildcat strikes, refusal to get a job, shirking and other cases of avoidance of work for capital and the state are part of the struggle against capitalism. Similarly, the direct appropriation of wealth entails by-passing the means capitalism has to impose

work on us (e.g. forcing us to work to get money to live). The speaker gave examples, including looting, fare-dodging and squatting, which serve to satisfy people's needs without going through the work-related channels of capitalism. Another example of autonomist politics is the recent Los Angeles riots – in this case thousand of people looted and took over the city. Orthodox Marxism would dismiss this as merely spontaneous anger. But the speaker pointed to the relatively sophisticated level of self-organisation among the rioters: they used mobile phones to co-ordinate

actions and avoid the police, they looted the front of stores when police were at the back, and the back of stores when police were at the front, and so on. London, said the speaker, was also full of social subversion, although much of this antagonism is diffused; he had seen whole families fare-dodging on the tube (the method is to go through the barrier two or three at a time, or to pass tickets back to those following you). Obviously there is a limit to such actions, he said, but the point was to start with people's own needs and methods rather than to attempt to impose a pre-defined programme à la Orthodox Marxism. Orthodox Marxists might object that the cases above 'change nothing'. But the speaker's argument was that, by not recognising these examples as the refusal of work and the direct appropriation of wealth, Orthodox Marxists are unable to bring them together in a way that can bring more permanent change. And here is the key problem identified by the speaker – that of *connecting* different instances of struggle.

This raised the issue of how the Italian autonomists of the 1970s and '80s had managed to connect struggles. These groups had successfully achieved a minimum level of organisation that was always grass-roots (bottom-up, horizontal). They had, for example, a free radio station to spread information about struggles. They also established social centres: these were squatted buildings used

(continued on page 7)

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The anarchist sociology of federalism

course of it he declared:

"Imperial Russia is dead and will never be revived. The future of the various provinces which composed the Empire will be directed towards a large federation. The natural territories of the different sections of this federation are in no way distinct from those with which we are familiar in the history of Russia, of its ethnography and economic life. All the attempts to bring together the constituent parts of the Russian Empire, such as Finland, the Baltic provinces, Lithuania, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Siberia and others, under a central authority are doomed to certain failure. The future of what was the Russian Empire is directed towards a federalism of independent units."

You and I today can see the relevance of this opinion, even though it was ignored as totally irrelevant for seventy years. As an exile in Western Europe, he had instant contact with a range of pioneers of regional thinking. The relationship between regionalism and anarchism has been handsomely, even extravagantly, delineated by Peter Hall, the geographer who is director of the Institute of Urban and Regional Development at Berkeley, California, in his book *Cities of Tomorrow* (1988). There was Kropotkin's fellow-anarchist geographer, Elisée Reclus, arguing for small-scale human societies based on the ecology of their regions. There was Paul Vidal de la Blache, another founder of French geography, who argued that "the region was more than an object of survey; it was to provide the basis for the total reconstruction of social and political life." For Vidal, as Professor Hall explains, the region, not the nation, which "as the motor force of human development; the almost sensual reciprocity between men and women and their surroundings, was the seat of comprehensible liberty and the surroundings of cultural evolution, which were being attacked and eroded by the centralised nation-state and by large-scale machine industry."

Patrick Geddes

Finally there was the extraordinary Scottish biologist Patrick Geddes, who tried to encapsulate all these regionalist ideas, whether geographical, social, historical, political or economic, into an ideology of reasons for regions, known to most of us through the work of his disciple Lewis Mumford. Professor Hall argued that:

"Many, though by no means all, of the early visions of the planning movement stemmed from the anarchist movement, which flourished in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth ... The vision of these anarchist pioneers was not merely of an alternative built form, but of an alternative society, neither capitalist nor bureaucratic-socialistic: a society based on voluntary co-operation among men and women, working and living in small self-governing communities."

Today

Now in the last years of the twentieth century, I share this vision. Those nineteenth century thinkers were a century in advance of their contemporaries in warning the peoples of Europe of the consequences of *not* adopting a regionalist and federalist approach. Among survivors of

every kind of disastrous experience in the twentieth century, the rulers of the nation states of Europe have directed policy towards several types of supranational existence. The crucial issue that faces them is the question of whether to conceive of a Europe of States or a Europe of Regions.

Proudhon, 130 years ago, related the issue to the idea of a European balance of power, the aim of statesmen and political theorists, and argued that this was "impossible to realise among great powers with unitary constitutions". He had argued in *La Fédération et l'Unité en Italie* that "the first step towards the reform of public law in Europe" was "the restoration of the confederations of Italy, Greece, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and the Danube, as a prelude to the decentralisation of the large states and hence to general disarmament". And in *Du Principe Fédératif* he noted that: "Among French democrats there has been much talk of a European confederation, or a United States of Europe. 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." He claimed that such a federation would either be a trap or would have no meaning, for the obvious reason that the big states would dominate the small ones.

A century later, the economist Leopold Kohr (Austrian by birth, British by nationality, Welsh by choice), who also describes himself as an anarchist, published his book *The Breakdown of Nations*, glorifying the virtues of small-scale societies and arguing, once again, that Europe's problems arise from the existence of the nation state. Praising, once again, the Swiss Confederation, he claimed, with the use of maps, that "Europe's problem – as that of any federation – is one of division, not of union."

Now to do them justice, the advocates of a United Europe have developed a doctrine of 'subsidiarity', arguing that governmental decisions should not be taken by the supra-national institutions of the European Community, but preferably by regional or local levels of administration, rather than by national governments. This particular principle has been adopted by the Council of Europe, calling for national governments to adopt its *Charter for Local Self-Government* "to formalise commitment to the principle that government functions should be carried out at the lowest level possible and only transferred to higher government by consent."

This principle is an extraordinary tribute to Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, and the opinions which they were alone in voicing (apart from some absorbing Spanish thinkers like Pi y Margall or Joaquin Costa), but of course it is one of the first aspects of pan-European ideology which national governments will choose to ignore. There are obvious differences between various nation states in this respect. In many of them – for example Germany, Italy, Spain and even France – the machinery of government is infinitely more devolved than it was fifty years ago. The same may soon be true of the Soviet Union. This devolution may not have proceeded at the pace that you or I would want, and I will happily agree that the founders of the European Community

have succeeded in their original aim of ending old national antagonisms and have made future wars in Western Europe inconceivable. But we are still very far from a Europe of the Regions.

I live in what is now the most centralised state in Western Europe, and the dominance of central government there has immeasurably *increased*, not diminished, during the last ten years. Some people here will remember the rhetoric of the then British Prime Minister in 1988:

"We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the State in Britain, only to see them reimposed at a European level, with a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels."

This is the language of delusion. It does not relate to reality. And you do not have to be a supporter of the European Commission to perceive this. But it does illustrate how far some of us are from conceiving the truth of Proudhon's comment that: "Even Europe would be too large to form a single confederation; it could form only a confederation of confederations."

The anarchist warning is precisely that the obstacle to a Europe of the Regions is the nation state. If you and I have any influence on political thinking in the next century, we should be promoting the reasons for regions. "Think globally – act locally" is one of the useful slogans of the international Green movement. The nation state occupied a small segment of European history. We have to free ourselves from national ideologies in order to act locally and think regionally. Both will enable us to become citizens of the whole world, not of nations nor of trans-national super-states.

Colin Ward

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The Politics of Autonomy

(continued from page 6)

to meet the needs of the neighbourhood (e.g. distribution) and to co-ordinate struggles across the country. Two years ago, using the opportunity of the holidays (when less people would be around), the city authorities in Milan sent in bulldozers against the social centre there. A mass demonstration was quickly organised, supported by the neighbourhood. When the cases of those arrested for involvement in this action came to court, even the judge had to recognise the social validity of the social centres and the charges were dismissed. On another occasion, there was some controversy over the issues of squatting and immigration. The autonomists supported squatting on the grounds that it reflected the needs of the immigrant community at the time. The Communist Party organised a demo that was pro-immigration but against squatting; forty immigrants turned up to take part. At the autonomists' demo, which was pro-immigration and pro-squatting, 4,000 immigrants turned up. These examples show how deeply rooted were autonomist politics in the working class communities of Italy; these ideas did not exist as a separated ideology, as in the case of Orthodox Marxism.

Turning to the general issue of organisation, the speaker criticised the policy of the SWP and other Trotskyist groups for their rejection of the validity of autonomous struggles. He pointed out that the 'black and white unite and fight' slogan beloved of the SWP reflected the assumption that blacks' and women's needs could wait until after the revolution. The decision, taken a few years ago by Tony Cliff, not to allow separate groupings within the SWP, was based upon a similar decision by Lenin in 1921. Instead of focusing on a fixed programme in this way, the speaker suggested that we look at needs here and now. Because capitalism divides us hierarchically, it may be necessary for different groups to organise separately (and that is a decision only they can take). The principle is the same as in the fight against capitalism and the state; just as they will give up their power when we force them to, so men will only stop being sexist when women fight against it. The speaker suggested that the different autonomous struggles (women,

blacks, squatting, industrial, etc.) should be in contact to exchange tactics, information and support. Such a network is already in operation – the European Counter Network, a computer system across Europe and North America in which everyone can give and take information about struggles (even you, reader). The network, in keeping with the autonomist tradition, is not clandestine. The aim is not to be a secret, elite sect (like many Orthodox Marxists) but to be part of local communities. Openness also has the advantage of not giving the authorities the easy opportunity to crack down on people on the pretext that they are 'terrorists' or suchlike.

Although the speaker's critical remarks were directed at the epistemological elitism of Orthodox



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Marxism (the 'I know what's best for you' syndrome), I suggest that broadly similar criticisms can also apply to the assumptions of many anarchists on the way the free society can be achieved, and the strategies justified by these assumptions. There is clearly a common epistemological thread in the following cases (these are somewhat caricatured, but it does not affect my point):

- The Orthodox Marxist (Leninist) claim that an 'enlightened elite' must lead the proletariat, supplying them with the right ideas.
- The anarchist claim that the most important tactic is to persuade people (all people, anywhere, at any time in history) through rational argument that anarchy (as an ideal) is a 'good idea'; propaganda is our most important weapon and our greatest foe is the bourgeois ideology that describes anarchy as chaos.
- The claim by anarchist groups who have become membership organisations that their ideological purity and homogeneity must be preserved (i.e. to be a member you must agree with all the group's ideas) so that, come the revolution, there is definitely a group present with the right ideas (in case the working class get the wrong ideas).

The common assumption here is that ideas are independent of, exist before, and are more important than existence and action. This is the idealist dualism that mind (ideas) and world (material being, action) are two separate realms. If you reject this assumption, you acknowledge that ideas are only taken up, and propaganda only works because it reflects people's material needs; the needs, like the ideas (for anarchism/communism) come from the working class themselves, in their own struggles to satisfy their existing needs; the desire to destroy the state and capitalism cannot be 'given' to the working class, no matter how rational your arguments, no matter how you dress up the great idea (anarchy or communism); appeals to people's needs have more success that exhorting them to fight for some great moral principle. Thus, instead of trying to put ideas into the heads of the working class, instead of trying to tell them what their needs are, the way forward is to support people

in their different collective struggles to satisfy the needs they know they have. Instead of selling papers to people (à la SWP), we can learn from their tactics and struggles by joining in more directly.

If this perspective attracts you, you will be interested to know that the speaker at the meeting and some other people have just produced a journal called *London Notes* (available from Box LN, 121 Railton Road, London SE24). It describes in more detail the European Counter Network, and tells you how to get connected. The Aufheben group are also soon to produce a journal, *Aufheben: Revolutionary Perspective for the 21st Century*. Among other things, it will contain an in-depth analysis of the Maastricht Treaty, a post-mortem on the failure of the class struggle wing of the anti Gulf war movement and a critique of the Orthodox Marxist 'capitalist decadence' thesis. The Aufheben group can be contacted c/o B&B, The Unemployed Centre, Tilbury Place, Brighton, East Sussex. Sussex University Autonomist (Anarchist) Students can be contacted c/o Student Union, c/o Falmer House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, East Sussex.

Johnny Yen

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.

THE RAVEN 17
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Rigid Role

Dear Editors,

There is a natural tendency for people to see you as the job you do. To avoid this, you may try to broaden the scope of the relationship. But to them you appear to be expressing opinions that go beyond the limits of your job description. Can you relate to them as one human being to another, when there seems to be no common ground outside your work?

A broader relationship is necessary if conflict is to be avoided. We cannot succeed as anarchists if our relationships are limited by the work we do. Similarly an anarchist newspaper cannot succeed if it limits itself to what the capitalist media label as 'news'. Instead of the scandalous Royals, we could write about the need to abolish the monarchy! We already produce articles on non-voting, when all the other papers are full of polls. But if we ape the propaganda of the multi-nationals, our efforts will be seen as negative, as going beyond the limits of our job description.

What is news for an anarchist? Events close to home that we can be part of; where we can co-operate with others to bring about change. Political action in other parts of the country which we can learn from and apply to our own situation. Analysis of social structures which may help our political actions. In short, news is for us a tool we use to overthrow whatever oppresses us.

Mankind is threatened by its own adaptability: our willingness to accept any escalation into depravity as inevitable; if it enables us to maintain our habits of behaviour, way of life, routine, patterns of thought, our rigid role. Huge changes are taking place in our social structure, technology and environment, yet we limit our response. Reacting only when made redundant, taxed beyond our means or when a road threatens to go through our garden. Even if we throw

over our jobs and work for an ideological group full-time, we may do so because the group gives us a more satisfactory specialist role than we had previously. Is our role, of protesting against x, more important than preventing x? Is a scientist's experimenting role more important to him/her than the discoveries to be made? Even artists may become specialised so that their role becomes more important than the art.

Acceptance of a rigid role leads to a manner of speech that easily becomes long-winded and fence-sitting. People avoid taking a stand until there is nothing left in their conversation to take hold of. Ideas can only develop by opposition to other ideas; so that this kind of moderate conversation avoids development.

I am sure you have all come across the 'how to do well in your job and get promotion theories' which emphasise informal ties – old school ties are the best to get on. But, if the basis for successful work becomes the ability to form informal ties, then the criteria for assessing what informal ties are will change. What once was regarded as informal (eating and playing together, going to the pub, etc.) will become regarded as part of the job. Either people lose the pleasure of informal relationships or friendships become more important than job skills in organising work. Here surely is a role for anarchists!

An anarchist should be able to undertake any kind of work; because we work by voluntary co-operation with others. So you may be a builder in the morning as you assist with a self-build project; a farmer in the afternoon as we work on the food production co-op; and a carer in the evening, as we work to give less able people the opportunity to live fuller lives; and hopefully always the poet and always the journalist, sharing our experience of this new way of life that goes beyond the rigid role.

Marriage is a rigid role. What is needed

Violence: a reply

Dear Editors,

The best targets in life are always those you set up yourself in order to shoot down. Take for example the romantic image of the bandaged barricade revolutionary Stephen Cullen depicts (*Freedom*, 27th June 1992), a picture typical of that presented by pacifists when they wish to criticise those who disagree with them. Yes, there are people like that, but many of us who are not pacifists do not fit his stereotype.

I loathe the very idea of violence. I stand, I feel, in a representative section of the anarchist movement stretching from Kropotkin to Tolstoy. But, whereas Tolstoy took the pacifist position, Kropotkin didn't. Why not?

If we are serious about our position as anarchists we must wish to achieve an

are many separate rites of passage, that would enable people to formally commit themselves to others: one relationship for sex, another for comfort, another for mutual analysis, another for shared fun, another for childcare, another for house-share, and so on. The aim should be for more formalism: a greater diversity of roles. The person in possession of many distinct role relationships will find it difficult to become rigid about any of them.

I know lots of you reading this have changed your way of life in accordance with your anarchist principles, so let's hear about it. That would be news to me, far more than our usual attacks on government and economic oppression. However well written, they only confirm my existing opinions. That may be good enough for the reader of *The Times* or *The Sun*, but it is not news for me.

John Myhill

anarchist society. The time factor is not relevant but the central question is crucial and relates in a direct sense to strategy. Cullen says it all when he refers to his strategy: "Fuck knows if it will succeed...", which to me suggests he doesn't think it will and in this sense he is probably right. Let's try and sort the problem out.

It seems to me that there are three types of violence. Firstly, the Emile Henri and RAF* type. Well, I don't repudiate them totally (nor, seemingly, does Cullen: "There may be a case for such violence if you wish to avenge other acts of violence ..." etc.). Hans Martin Schleyer was an ex-officer in the Waffen SS who had been given a position of power in post-war Germany – there was some justice therefore in his execution. However, such actions will not in themselves bring us any nearer to a free society. The RAF strategy of pushing the State into an oppressive position by means of violence to which there would be a popular reaction also seems limited in its potential.

The second form of violence I would identify is that where violence is used to achieve a specific goal and this, I feel, is the sort that Cullen is thinking of in his article. Let us consider his example of the IRA. I do not support the IRA – no anarchist would – but they have considered the question of strategy. You use tanks when you have an enemy in front of you to use them against. This is why they have not been used in Northern Ireland. The IRA, sensibly, chooses where and when it will operate, it does not allow the enemy to do so. Notwithstanding their romanticism, this is a lesson we can learn from Guevara, Mao, etc. From the point of view of achieving revolutionary change, surely this is common sense: choose your own

ground. However, although he perhaps exaggerates somewhat, Cullen is essentially correct that to use offensive violence against a seemingly all-powerful twentieth century state has historically proved limited in its success.

The third form of violence is, however, more hopeful of success, more defensible from a moral viewpoint and, most importantly, the very success of social change is dependent upon it – I'm talking about self-defence. The Viet-Cong were successful in their resistance to American imperialism. The French Resistance played a crucial role in anti-fascist resistance during World War Two. The Spanish experiment failed because of a failure to protect the revolution (revolution in Cullen's sense, not romantic) not for lack of will but through incapacity. The defence of social change will always be crucial and violence may be necessary.

I feel that violence, unfortunately, will be necessary to achieve fundamental social change. Today it has no role. Today we must start by means of education and trying to change attitudes but the more we are successful in these endeavours the more the State will throw off its liberal mask and ultimately it will use violence to protect itself. Non-violent civil disobedience will play a role here, but some violence, I feel, will be necessary and unavoidable.

Nell Birrell

*We take it that our correspondent refers not to our Royal Air Force, but to the German 'red Army Fraction', details of which are given in the 48-page pamphlet 'RAF' recently reprinted by AK Press and available at £2.00 from the Freedom Press Bookshop – Editors

More Letters on
page 8

Accentuate the Positive

Because anarchy is a negative term, it means different things to different people, ranging from complete chaos to peaceful co-existence. For most people who describe themselves as anarchist, however, it implies a kind of socialism, albeit extreme, which would demand an extraordinary capacity for self-discipline on the part of its adherents. This could account for the fact that the general public dismisses the idea as pie-in-the-sky.

People have reason to believe that anarchism is unworkable, which may be the reason so many of them put their faith in enjoying such a paradise in some future life.

If anarchism is to work, it means that we who profess to be striving towards it must try to be pretty damn perfect – at least as altruistic as a gathering of Jehovah's Witnesses at the annual Twickenham rally (and a lot better behaved than they are for the rest of the year when they are not on public display). We would need to be filled with an overwhelming desire not to do just what might take our fancies at any particular time, and be happy to put up with such restrictions.

Impossible? Perhaps not. After all, people risk their lives going to save dogs from the sea, women go through all sorts of hell to have babies, young people submit to years of constraining discipline to get A Levels, editors of journals like *Freedom* submit themselves to hours of work every week with a deadline to meet. It has to be a possibility. But we have to get it right. It is a waste of time submitting yourself to discipline for the cause of, say, the National Front – and A Levels are of doubtful advantage to the human race. It depends upon the duty you subscribe to.

Anarchism is very idealistic, even if it does have a rational basis. It is no use pretending that we can get away with any of our selfish habits and human weaknesses when we are presenting our ideal to the public. We need to be more 'religious' than the members of The Lord's Day Observance Society on a Sunday – without the help of the

Almighty. Let's face it, anarchism is idealistic to say the least.

The good news, however, is that anarchism, unlike religion, makes sense. The absence from society of religion, racism and nationalism, which is essence amount to the same thing, should be ample reason on its own to attract people to the idea.

So, what can we do about our selfish habits and weaknesses? Not a lot, maybe, but we can at least admit them to ourselves and stop pretending that they are compatible with an anarchist way of life.

We need to define, as well as we can, the line between freedom and licence, and not hide behind glib phrases which leave questions to be begged. It is not good enough to say: "If someone wants to take drugs, then that's their business", as does the author of *Drugs*, a Phoenix Press pamphlet distributed by Freedom Press, when some drugs, like alcohol, cause so much trouble for third parties. We need to be certain that there are no victims before trotting out another cop-out chestnut, 'victimless crime'.

We need to throw the long spoons out of the anarchist kitchen, and refuse to associate ourselves with people who take delight in the hospitalisation of policemen. Every policeman is a potential anarchist whose conversion can only be delayed by such callousness on the part of those who are recognised as anarchists. And for anarchists who depend upon the 'working class' for the realisation of their dreams, policemen should surely be counted as reluctant enemies of the people! Solidarity cannot be furthered by dilution of our principles in order to attract more supporters.

This is neither a plea for martyrdom nor a claim that strict adherence to principles can be fun. It should mean, however, that a non-anarchist existence is to be regarded as less satisfying than anarchism, despite the problems we face as a much maligned and misunderstood minority. In our isolation, we can at least live happily with our consciences and impress a few people along the way.

EFC

The Money System

Dear Editors,

John Pilgrim's report on Murray Bookchin's lecture makes me greatly regret having missed it: but though I agree with John's comments on the chances for a future for humanity, there is one critical factor in the equation conspicuous by its absence from this lecture and from all the recent debate sparked by the Rio talks – the driving force for competition and 'growth': our debt-money system.

The soaring debts of the Third World; the rape of the planet; the 'mysterious' business of the 'recession'; 'inflation'; the growing gap between rich and poor throughout the world; 'unemployment'; the inability of the 'economy' to survive cuts in arms spending ... etc. – these all have a common cause in the mode of operation of our system of debt-money, in which the private banks, national and international, create 'credit' by the simple act of entering it into their accounts as a loan to a customer and then charge interest on it.

The simple fact that virtually the whole of our money supply is created in this way means that, perpetually, more must be created and loaned in order to 'service' existing debts, which by the nature of the system can never all be repaid, and for the system to continue functioning the total debt must grow, as it does, exponentially until the system collapses under the weight of its own debt-burden, as happened in the '20s and is happening again (recommended reading on this: *A Matter of Interest: re-examining money, debt and real economic growth* by William F. Hixson, 1991, ISBN 0 275 93895 6).

This, combined with other forms of usury (exacerbated by recent and current high interest rates) makes all the rest inevitable. Until this matter is tackled all efforts to cure the symptoms are doomed to ultimate failure. We are all victims of the system, and escape is almost impossible.

The brain-washing imposed on us to

divert attention from this matter is frighteningly effective, to the point that even many anarchists clamour for 'job creation' at a time in history when, despite the almost universal application of the crazy idea of 'planned obsolescence' – the throwaway society – automation is replacing humans by machines in production and distribution and it should be glaringly obvious that what is needed is not jobs but equitable distribution of the right to share in the products of those machines.

Abolition of money is too radical an idea for most people, as yet; but unconditional 'basic incomes' or 'national dividends' for all, is an idea gaining growing acceptance, and is well worth pushing, to break away from the work ethic – though this is of secondary importance to the replacement of debt-money with permanent money, created and spent into existence by socially controlled institutions. Since we cannot hope for an anarchist society in time to avert the catastrophes John lists, let's settle for UN, government and community banks. Yes, we all know governments are in the hands of their paymasters, the financiers, and the mass media are also, so little help can be expected from them until the truth about money has become widely enough known. Then there is a chance – just a chance – that human society will regain enough sanity, just in time, to avoid those final acts of self-destruction! The rejection of capitalism, as of communism!

'Spreading the word' is no easy task. Example: after years of intense debate the UK Green Party adopted policies for both basic incomes and community credit – replacing the banks' power of credit-creation – as well as for land value

taxation / community ground rent to tackle the inequalities inherent in private ownership of land. These are still in its 'bible') but, following the Green 2000 coup, only land value taxation gets a brief mention in its '92 election manifesto; and not even this in its pamphlet "Trading in Futures?" on the Earth Summit. One step forward, two steps back!

Brian Leslie

Beyond Sexism

Dear Editors,

Ernie Crosswell tells us that "women" – all women as such – are "subjugated" and "almost entirely under the control of men, physically and mentally". This hardly gets beyond straightforward sexism; although substituting condemnation for approval, it retains the idea of the male as powerful and dominant, the female as weak and submissive.

I remind Ernie that some women are anarchists. That some women control some men. That some men are subjected and controlled by other men. If he takes account of these things he will see that to present one sex as simply under subjugation and control by the other is to shut one's eyes to a great part of life. As between men and women subjugation is affected by social status, by education, by wealth and poverty, by age (in their earliest and most formative years most males are controlled by women), by physical strength (some women are stronger than some men) and by emotional disposition. The social issue – the persistence of a system in which control and subjugation of some people by others plays a major part – is determined by the prevalence of authoritarian ideology, held by many women as well as by many men.

George Walford

Pacifist Panaceas?

Dear Comrades,

I welcome the few articles you publish on the necessity for a revolution to be non-violent but find it difficult to understand why most anarchists do not accept the logic of the arguments. Your contributor JS, for example, admits that: "For anarchists the 'means' used do not justify the 'ends' obtained, rather the 'means' used determine the 'ends' obtained." And then a few lines down he writes: "For the most part they [strikes, etc.] are non-violent, however where the situation is extreme – in situations of violent oppression, of dictatorship of total censorship – then the use of violence is justified." For heaven's sake, if the means used are going to determine the ends we obtain, then the use of violence is never justified.

The non-violent way to obtain our anarchist society is set out in my *Anarcho-Pacifism: questions and answers*. There it is explained how the state can be destroyed simply by not making use of it. Now I add the obvious arguments against a violent revolution and challenge any anarchist to disprove them.

To obtain victory, the anarchist forces would have to be at least equal to those of the government. There is no way for this to be possible because governments have a large standing army and an immense amount of weaponry. The anarchists' only hope would be to persuade at least half of the army to desert and join them, but this also would be impossible. Nor could anarchists obtain help from overseas. No government

would help foreign anarchists, and no group would be allowed to do so. With their modern methods of surveillance, governments would know what was happening almost before the anarchists, and they would suppress any form of revolt immediately. So anarchists cannot choose to use violence because it would never be successful.

Although it is only academic, let us suppose that the anarchists managed to create a military force equal to that of the government. To obtain victory, they would have to create and obey a central control that co-ordinated their efforts. That central control must have power to enforce its command or it would be useless. In other words, the anarchists would have to use a form of government. Then, even if they were victorious, they would find that their 'government' would, like all governments, refuse to relinquish its power. The anarchists would be saddled with a state pattern of society, and so their revolution would be unsuccessful.

To even contemplate a violent revolution is to live in a dream world. It is time all anarchists became revolutionary pacifists and concentrated their efforts on bringing about a non-violent revolution.

Derrick A. Pike

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KEEP SENDING YOUR
LETTERS!**

Christianity and Anarchism

Dear Editors,

As an anarchist who happens to hold religious convictions, I get rather fed up with *Freedom* contributors who consistently deride religion per se. The latest example, in *Freedom* dated 13th June, was S. Colman's letter which – rather simplistically I thought – stated: "If anarchy means no masters or rulers, and if God is a master or ruler, well ..."

Anarchism is surely about *human* relationships and about forming a society where no man or woman would hold power or authority over others. There is no inconsistency in anarchism and a belief in a superior *spiritual* entity (call it God or what you will). The conflict of principle is between anarchism and those orthodox authoritarian religions which have a pyramidal power structure as rigid and clearly defined as that of secular society itself.

Is Mr Colman really saying that you cannot be an anarchist and also be (for example) a Quaker or a Unitarian?

He is also wrong about Jesus. That he lived on earth as a man is well documented historical fact, rarely disputed even by atheists. The controversy surrounds the *nature* of the man, who or what he was, but that is quite another issue and a highly contentious one.

As to what Mr Colman calls Bakunin's "perfect answer" ("If God *did* exist, we'd have to kill him"), well, an orthodox Christian would argue that that is precisely what *did* happen – at Golgotha!

Peter L. Dodson

News from Angel Alley

The *Raven* number 18 on 'Anthropology, Anarchism and Africa' is at the time of writing ready for printing. With Aldgate Press equipment that doesn't take long. The binders take more time. But it will be some time this month that we shall be able to send out subscribers' copies. So please have patience a little longer.

New *Freedom* Press titles are slow in coming out this year. There are still two of the centenary volumes to complete the series 1886-1986, and we go on hoping that they will be printed by the end of the year. We are convinced that they will constitute a unique contribution to anarchist thought, ideas, propaganda and the political scene across a century. We estimate that the five main volumes and the no less important supplementary volumes will come to 2,500 pages, or in numbers of words more than a million! And all available for less than £50.

Tony Gibson's important contribution is now ready for our printers and that will be followed by a valuable title *On Anarchism* introduced by Donald Room with a long essay, and followed by a selection of articles on specific aspects of anarchist thought. We were also hoping to have by September a *Freedom* Press title on *Anarchism and Technology* and another on *Anarchism and Capitalist Economics*, but whereas *Freedom*

Press propose, it's our two writers who dispose!

A number of subscriptions were due for renewal at the end of June. We are sending out notices and hope for an early response. Readers whose subscriptions expired in April and have not renewed, this is the last issue of *Freedom* they will be sent until they renew. The number above your name on the address label tells you when your subscription expires. 5313 means volume 53, which is 1992, and 13 is the issue number, which is 27th June. If the second lot of numbers is 09 your subscription is more than two months in arrears and we can't afford to go on sending *Freedom* if you don't renew.

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MEETINGS

Anarchist Forum

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

1992 SEASON OF MEETINGS

10th 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

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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. Anarchism accepts the uniqueness of the individual and although what one might say might be subjected to critical evaluation by others we all have a right to the expression of our views on anarchism so long as we allow others the same right. In this we would like more women participants and comrades from ethnic minorities.

The Forum is now also generating off-centre discussion groups on more specific themes elsewhere on other evenings. Details by invitation from Forum participants at the meetings.

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