

anarchist fortnightly

# Freedom

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FIFTY PENCE

*"They that make  
half revolutions only  
dig a tomb for  
themselves"*  
St Just

## INFLATION DOWN – UNEMPLOYMENT UP!

We write on the eve of the monthly official announcements of the number of workers joining the dole queue at the same time as the government is also considering reducing the entitlement to the dole for the unemployed from one year to six months.

In view of the publicity given by the media to the various attempts by the New Age Travellers (by which we assume they are referring not to the gypsies but to the teenage drop-outs

who can't find work) wanting to settle on farmland temporarily, the government has seized on adverse reactions to say that their benefits will be withheld if they cannot prove that they are seeking employment. This is surely an update of Tebbit's ludicrous 'Get on your bike' to the unemployed seeking non-existent jobs.

At the end of the twentieth century not only have the authoritarian so-called 'communist regimes' been proved to be bankrupt, but what so far is not being recognised in the West is that the capitalist system is engaged in self-destruction. The authoritarian-communist regimes were faced by the lollipops of the consumerist, greedy capitalist West without taking into account that thirty million workers in the G7 countries were out of work – something unheard of in the so-called

'communist' countries, but it is already a major problem as they join the capitalist rat race.

All kinds of 'solutions' to the capitalist crisis have been advanced by eminent economists, bankers, businessmen, building societies and ICI leaders, not to mention the media experts. Not surprisingly they all propose different panaceas: cuts in interest rates is the favourite, but some believe that only by solving the housing problem (by once more subsidising the already subsidised mortgage payers) will money start flowing, house prices will rise, and all will then be rosy in the capitalist free-for-all market.

All nonsense in our humble opinion. The problem of the capitalist system today and in the future is that whatever remedy they seek to cure one ill automatically creates another. Some say reduce interest rates to help  
*(continued on page 2)*

### EDITORIAL

#### News from Angel Alley

The next issue of *Freedom* (vol 53, no 18) will be published on **19th September**. As our subscribers are aware, *Freedom* fortnightly is not quite 'fortnightly' since we publish 24 issues and not 26 issues in the year. However, Freedom Press and Freedom Bookshop will be functioning as usual, apart from Monday 31st August when both the bookshop and office will be closed. The bookshop will be open as usual on Saturday 29th August, though it would be wise to ring up (071-247 9249) before coming in – just in case!

**Raven 19** is being typeset and we hope to be distributing it before the end of September. And two more new Freedom Press titles are well on the way. *What is Anarchism?* an Introduction will include a long introductory article by Donald Room followed by contributions on a wide range of aspects of anarchism extracted from Freedom Press titles old and new. It will be the ideal introduction for the growing number of people writing to us wanting to  
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### PRIVATISE THE PRISONS?

For the government privatisation is the solution to all of mankind's ills. We cannot understand (we can really!) why they don't even privatise government. Do they assume that they are a superior race? The latest brainstorm is to privatise the prison service and they have selected Strangeways gaol, the centre of recent destructive demonstrations, to see what happens.

Can you imagine getting businessmen to run the prisons *for profit*? Why else ask a businessman? The success of running a prison on business lines is surely to satisfy the unwilling customer to ensure that all the prisoners come back again! After all, the various privatised public services are doing their best to get the customer to consume more. But prisons are supposed to reform criminals. If private enterprise is more efficient in that respect then, for heaven's sake, within a generation there won't be any prisons. Which is *bad for business*. So government must offer bonuses to private enterprise for reforming

the 'criminals'. Assuming that they go about their task with the zeal of missionaries, then what will happen? No more prisoners and then they are out of business, and the government is laughing! We don't believe a word of it. Crime is a vested interest not only of prisons but of the legal racket at all levels. capitalism is the permanent criminal at large!

### SUBSCRIBERS!

*If the numbers above your name on the address label are 5313 this will be the last issue you will be receiving unless we get a subscription renewal. We hate to lose you but we cannot afford to subsidise you!*

'Ethnic cleansing' has appeared in the news media only recently, as a term for the attempt by people describing themselves as Serbs to get people of other descriptions out of the 'Serbian areas' of Bosnia. But though the term is new, the practice and its advocacy is quite old and widespread.

The most notorious case of 'ethnic cleansing', perhaps of all time, was the systematic killing of six million Jews by the Nazis. Most of this was done during the years 1942 to 1944, when Germany was at war and expulsion of large numbers of Jews to other places would have been impossible. The then rulers of Germany were so keen on 'ethnic cleansing' that they diverted valuable resources from the war effort for the purpose, and went on with it even after it became clear that they would probably lose the war to

enemies who would regard genocide as a crime.

The Nazis' allies in Croatia, the Ustashe movement, not only co-operated in the deportation of Jews to the death camps, but also did some 'ethnic cleansing' of their Serb population. This fact of history is now used by Serbs as the excuse for their 'ethnic cleansing' of Croatians and of Bosnian Muslims (although in fact the Bosnian Muslims were also victims of the Ustashe).

The massacre of the Jews by the Nazis is now used by Israeli fascists as a justification for demanding 'ethnic cleansing' of Palestinian Arabs from Israel (with the outrageously false accusation that the Arabs were allies of the Nazis).

The Khmer Rouge, when they were rulers of Cambodia, had a policy of what might be called 'class cleansing' - killing off the 'bourgeois', by which they meant anybody who had come under the influence of foreign education, except for themselves. Now restored as a member of the ruling coalition, the Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan is going for 'ethnic cleansing', threatening violence against the ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia unless they leave.

'Ethnic cleansers' abound outside of government. In Germany in 1991 there were 40,000 paid-up members of political parties advocating 'ethnic cleansing'; 1,300 violent attacks on asylum hostels, camping sites and parties of foreigners; 383 arson attacks; 449 persons injured and three Africans killed. A party advocating the expulsion of Algerians

and others from France attracts 20% of democratic votes in some places. The organised fascist parties in Britain are tiny, but there are enough 'ethnic cleansers' to mount violent attacks on persons not perceived as ethnic British.

Since the defeat of the Nazis, 'ethnic cleansing' massacres have occurred at the hands of ordinary people, without open government support, in Bali and Burundi.

Evidently, the anarchists have no instant solution to the problem of 'ethnic cleansing'. If we had, we would instantly solve the problem. But we are right in believing that the problem has even a theoretical solution? Is a harmonious multi-ethnic society possible, or is the desire for 'ethnic cleansing' an instinctive, inevitable fact of human nature?

It is observed that among gregarious mammals in general, there is an 'us and them' feeling, a group bonding which excludes individuals not of the group. Like pair bonding (falling in love) and primary bonding (the bond between mother and young) it is a genetically programmed 'social instinct'. Some people are offended by the suggestion that anything in human behaviour is genetic, but let us assume for the sake of argument, that group bonding is built-in and unavoidable.

As with other social instincts, group bonding appears among individuals who recognise each other as individuals. Humans commonly feel themselves to be members of several overlapping groups - family, workmates, neighbours - but the group members in all these cases are known individuals.

'Groups' of people who do not know each

other - ethnic categories, race categories, age categories, genders, the human species as a whole - are abstract concepts. Other gregarious mammals cannot conceive of them. It may be argued that the 'us and them' feeling is part of our genetic make-up, but the contention that it is instinctive to think of an abstract concept in 'us and them' terms does not seem reasonable.

Anarchists do not set out to change human nature, but we think a society, something like a harmonious anarchy, is possible within the repertoire of natural human behaviour. Government, patriotism, enormous expenditure on weaponry, and 'ethnic cleansing' are also within the repertoire of human behaviour - evidently - but none of them is inborn. They are cultural, and cultures can vary.

Ethnic categories themselves are cultural. It is said of Henry V of England that his great achievement was to make the Normans, Saxons and Angoulemes who inhabited England think of themselves as 'English'. Tito tried to make the disparate groups who inhabited Yugoslavia think of themselves as Yugoslavs, but the memory of conflict was too recent.

Still, it seems that only a minority of Serbs is in favour of 'ethnic cleansing'. It is not mentioned on Serbian television broadcasts, and many Serbs who have found out about it have demonstrated against it in Belgrade. The struggle against ethnicity, patriotism and so on has not been very successful so far, but if we want to be optimistic we can find grounds for optimism.

DR

**MORE EDITORIAL COMMENTS on page 3**

**EDITORIAL**

**News from Angel Alley**

(continued from page 1)

wanting to know more about anarchism. The second title in production - title not yet finalised - will be about 'Anarchism and Ecology' and will include an interesting debate to which we invited Murray Bookchin to reply, since he is at the centre of the debate. The opening essay asks 'Can Life Survive?' and the interesting and unusual concluding essay is on 'The Apple's Fall from Grace', a history of the popular fruit showing what capitalist free-enterprise and greed have succeeded in doing to that once succulent flavoured fruit.

Far from resting on our laurels (or lying in the sun) during the fortnight when we will not be having to produce *Freedom*, we shall be discussing how to make improvements to our journal. Our original plan, when *Freedom* went fortnightly, was to have section editors who would be responsible for filling agreed spaces on their chosen topics. This would involve them in seeking collaborators for their topic and ensuring that their space was filled each issue. Alas, though a good start was made in 1990 with the new format fortnightly, and though we have retained in the *Freedom* contacts column on the back page sectional editors and regional correspondents, with one or two exceptions, it hasn't been working.

In spite of our failure to produce a 'planned' *Freedom*, the paper has come out regularly and on time. But apart from the editorial comments, 'Wildcat', Arthur Moysé, and 'Food for Thought and Action' which are produced in Angel Alley, and our three or four regular contributors Michael Duane, Dave Duggan, Stephen Cullen and Brian Morris from outside, we just don't know from one issue to the next what contributions will materialise. This is not the way to produce an anarchist fortnightly paper!

One friendly critic has remarked on the lack of international news in *Freedom*. Agreed! But to write something worthwhile on international topics requires comrades to specialise on a particular country or region. For every issue of *Freedom* this writer accumulates hundreds of relevant press cuttings which, when sorted out, provide dossiers for some fifteen or twenty topics, apart from 'snippets' suitable for an anarchist notebook. At most four topics find their way into the editorial pages, the remainder in due course ending up in the dustbin!

If we really want to produce an alternative press that can eventually neutralise the lies of the mass media (not to mention their mass circulation) we must be able to enlist the talents of those who share our concerns not for reforming the capitalist system but for propagating the alternatives which are well within our reach if we are prepared to make the commitments *long term*. Any offers?

**Minister Defends Jobless Total 95,000 more and she says it is "showing signs of improvement"**

In the 25th July issue of *Freedom* we quoted the Minister of Unemployment as saying of the surprisingly low figure of 7,000 more on the dole in June that she was "wary about placing too much emphasis on one month's unemployment data", to which *Freedom* commented:

"it is not surprising because if the July figures leap up she can use the same arguments to explain it away or just consider the figures 'disappointing'."

Sure enough, the July figures were ghastly - some 95,000 new recruits for the dole queue (made to look less ghastly at 29,000 by those who came off the register either because they

found work or had been on the dole for twelve months and were no longer entitled to be on the register - but still unemployed) and sure enough the Minister did not let us down. According to the *Evening Standard* (13th August):

"Mrs Shepherd defended the jobless total saying 'At this stage of the economic cycle there is bound to be a mixture of good and bad news and unemployment is likely to be one of the last economic indicators to turn around. It is showing signs of improvement. *The rise is not unexpected given last month's small increase*' (our italics).

We told you so!

**INFLATION DOWN - UNEMPLOYMENT UP!**

(continued from page 1)

all those who are indebted up to their eyebrows to the moneylenders, and this will release money to spend. But at the same time those who lend the money will receive less and so will have to spend less. Anyway it's all theoretical since one of the large building societies has already increased its lending rates.

Far from wanting to advise the government on how to deal with the crisis of capitalism, we cannot but mention that there are in the capitalist system three ways of increasing spending and reducing the alarming public borrowing (more than £28,000 million). The first is to tax the rich until the 'pips squeak'; the second is to reduce the working week to a maximum of thirty hours and abolish overtime; the third is to reduce the so-called 'defence budget'.

What does the government do?

According to the media they are relying on an automatic economic upturn in two or three years time which will encourage them to win an early election in 1996! Far from taxing the rich, there are proposals to increase the level of mortgage tax relief from £30,000 to £60,000 which would only benefit the rich. They talk of raising the retirement age for women workers from 60 to 65 years instead of reducing the retirement age of men to 60 from 65 as at present. And thirdly they have commissioned the fourth Trident missile, and are also committed to the billions which Germany has turned down, convinced that it is cheaper to pay for the preliminary development of this monster than to go to the bitter end with stock of a weapon which will never be used.

The capitalist system, so long as it discards war as a solution to its

**Scientists' Brainstorms**

The *Guardian's* Los Angeles correspondent (3rd August) on the subject that homosexuals are 'born not made' writes that:

"A study by two researchers at the University of California Medical School in Los Angeles concludes that a nerve cluster connecting the left and right sides of the brain, the anterior commissure, is larger on average in homosexual men than in heterosexuals.

Scientific proof that homosexuality is a genetic condition would have enormous implications for ideas of morality, the law, politics and even employment. 'It would reduce being gay to something like being left-handed, which is in fact all it is' says the San Francisco gay author Randy Shilts."

We much enjoyed and agree with the letter-writer Ian Christie of Halifax to the *Guardian*:

"I was intrigued by your report (3rd August) of American research which purports to show that the brains of gays are different in structure or size to those of heterosexuals.

What does this mean for bisexuals? What if, say, you love men in your 20s, women in your 30s and men in your 40s? What if you make love to a woman in August and a man in September? What if you're in love with a man and a woman simultaneously? Does your brain undergo rapid changes? I think we should be told."

perennial problems, can no longer survive without conflict while it resists distributing wealth which it can only do by increasing taxation for the rich. And this it will resist to the bitter end since, after all, it is the *mouthpiece of the rich*.

Are we so sure that the European Community, Japan, the United States and all the developing nations will solve their economic (financial) problems without war in the long term?

Recently I was asked by the editor of *Syndicalist Bulletin* to write something on 'the boss class's offensive' and how to confront it. The deadline he gave me was too tight for me, but I must say I would have been more at home doing something on the suicidal inclination of the worker's movement.

It doesn't take much to notice that, at least for the time being, the British labour movement and their unions are not only off the centre stage politically, but seem to be incarcerated in the dressing room. Today if one scans the national press the labour or industrial pages have all but disappeared. Long ago, *Freedom's* industrial editor gave it up as bad job saying he couldn't find anything to inspire him on the industrial scene. And he was right, I can't think of a more tedious time for industrial writers. Recently a local journalist told me that he had been re-labelled 'Business Editor', having in the past had the title 'Industrial Editor'. He said he couldn't remember the last time he stood on a picket line as a reporter - simply because today they are so few and far between. Even papers like *Direct Action* and the Trotskyist press are often full of anything but industrial news.

Possibly an individual worker could tell us of cases of action on the shop-floor which don't get into the strike statistics or the press reports. Very likely, in the future, some industrial sociologists will uncover a range of industrial sub-cultures of the 1990s which contrast with the official statistics and demonstrate industrial action has taken on other forms and tactics.

### Big union bureaucracies

Since the miner's strike of 1984-85, there seems to have been a cultural change in the way industrial struggle in this country is conducted. I do not doubt that at that time the government had a plan (it was called the Ridley Plan, I believe) to deal with the miners in the event of a national strike. But the success of such a plan had to depend largely on the predictability of the miner's response to the government offensive. The type of mass action put on by the NUM executive required wider public support which failed to materialise in any effective way.

This represented a fundamental flaw in the tactical operation of British syndicalism. It was folly to assume that the formula of mass strikes which had worked so well in the 1970s, would suffice in the very different economic and political conditions of the 1980s. In a sense it was like using horses to fight World War One, like fighting a battle today according to lessons learned in the nineteenth century.

In a boom economy or a society in which the government is committed to at least nominal full employment, the syndicalist tactic of mass strikes may have worked. But in a country in which the manufacturing sector was in radical decline with a government set to increase unemployment, such as Britain in the 1980s, different strategies - perhaps more anarchistic, more imaginative - would be required.

The big national strikes became fashionable

## Suicidal Tendencies in the Workers' Organisations

towards the end of the 1960s, when the unions in Britain decided they could be used successfully both as instruments of trade union economic and political muscle. Before that time, in the 1950s and 1960s, strikes had been mostly unofficial and factory based, and led by shop stewards in what came to be called 'Wildcat Strikes'. Around 1960 the anarchists and syndicalists tried to widen these local disputes by creating a national organisation committed to solidarity - the National Rank and File Movement. In this operation we failed to unify the worker's movement or to give the struggle wider significance.

Are the British worker's organisations doomed to either pursue narrow sectional self-interest at shop-floor level or to become mass bureaucratic national bodies unable to operate flexibly?

Orwell, I think, said the main weakness of the Marxist approach is their inability to read the minds of opponents; the popular syndicalist often has a single-minded stupidity

that size, strength of numbers, paper memberships and bureaucratic bulk can overcome in all circumstances. Left to itself, syndicalism often lacks initiative and imagination, and in some cases requires an anarchist input.

### The urge to centralise

What I am saying is rather banal really, but it requires to be stressed: that there are no magical formulas that can ensure the success of the workers' movement, be they Sorelian myths about 'General Strike' or Marxian laws of history. These are matters of faith which lead to disillusion when they don't work out as promised.

The belief that workers' solidarity was something easy that could be summoned up like a genie out of a bottle, becomes a suicidal impulse when nothing materialises. The TUC and its member unions demonstrated their impotence when they failed to get their

members to respond during the miners' strike of 1984-85 in face of calls for solidarity. Because of this, the TUC and Mr Willis today have no more political impact on the affairs of state than the Church of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In truth the British unions in the 1970s had become too large and bureaucratic. Roberto Michels, the Italo-German sociologist, showed that the internal life of every mass organisation tends towards oligarchy. In such an organisation it is easy for trade union leaders to over-estimate their strength under the delusions produced by their mass membership on paper; just as it is for them to neglect their members' needs and concentrate on ideological dogma.

The British union leaders and the British left in general have lacked an anarchist vision, they have been influenced by the Jacobin tradition: that is the monolithic, the centralised and the bureaucratic approach to organisation. It is interesting that after the miners' strike the leftist militants within the leadership of the NUM should seek to undermine the federal structure of that union. It is curious that the instinctive urge of the British left is always towards greater centralisation.

BB

## Postscript to the 'Scargill Scandal'

Some readers may recall that in 1990 *Freedom* published a defence of Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield, President and General Secretary respectively of the NUM (National Union of Miners) against the abuse from the capitalist press led by Robert Maxwell's *Daily Mirror* who accused them of financial corruption - of dipping their fingers in the till, of diverting solidarity funds from the workers in Soviet Russia (as it then was) and a lot more.

Johnny Miner's front-page article on 'The Scargill Scandal' (*Freedom*, 24th March 1990) concluded that "the charges against Scargill and Co appear to have been trumped up" and suggested that "neither Scargill or the NUM [were] in a position financially to go to court" against the *Daily Mirror* which was goading them to do so if their accusations were false. That article provoked criticism from some anarchist quarters, and a letter from Donald Room (*Freedom*, 7th April 1990) in which he pointed out that *Freedom* did all it could to support the miners' struggle in 1984-85 but adds that "nevertheless *Freedom* was castigated for 'failing to support the miners' because it failed to follow the Marxist press in heaping adoration on Arthur Scargill". And he continues:

"As an associate of the *Freedom* editors of the time, I have always been a little proud of our refusal to join the Scargill cult. And now, just when it seems our stand might be vindicated, it is wantonly abandoned.

The front-page article on 24th March achieves a level of Scargill worship never surpassed. Not only does it assume Scargill's innocence, it also makes excuses in anticipation, just in case Mr Scargill

should take no action over the dreadful attack on his reputation."

Room apparently sides with Robert Maxwell when he writes:

"There is no base for the assertion that 'the taunt voiced by Robert Maxwell, virtually inviting Arthur Scargill to sue for libel, seems to have been made in the certain knowledge that neither Scargill or the NUM are in a position financially to go to court on this matter'.

The NUM is already financing an independent inquiry, so the cost of collecting and organising evidence, which is the large part of the cost of a court case, is to be incurred anyway. Assuming the allegations against Scargill and Heathfield are lies, taking the slanderers to court will not only restore reputations but also yield considerable profit. If neither Scargill nor the NUM has enough ready cash, their bankers will finance the action on the basis of an independent legal report. (Perhaps this is why the NUM has decided to start with an independent legal enquiry instead of issuing a writ in the first place.)

Obviously, the reason Maxwell is crowing is that he believes the allegations against Scargill and Heathfield are incontestable. And if neither Scargill nor the NUM goes to court on this matter, the only believable explanation will be that the allegations are true."

One *Freedom* correspondent, J.C. Harrison (5th May 1990), challenged Room for suggesting that "justice could and should be found in a British Court of Law in a case involving those arch enemies of the establishment: Scargill, the NUM and Gadaffy".

In *Freedom* (19th May 1990) Room agreed. But

"...you can predict how judgements will go because

they follow earlier cases, and for that reason most libel actions against newspapers are settled out of court."

Hmm! Followed by all kinds of Roomian theories about juries being unpredictable and that the Maxwell lawyers "will almost certainly advise a substantial out-of-court settlement whenever Scargill and the NUM issue a writ." So the *Mirror* accusations were lies, according to Room? And then at a tangent he confirms his first letter:

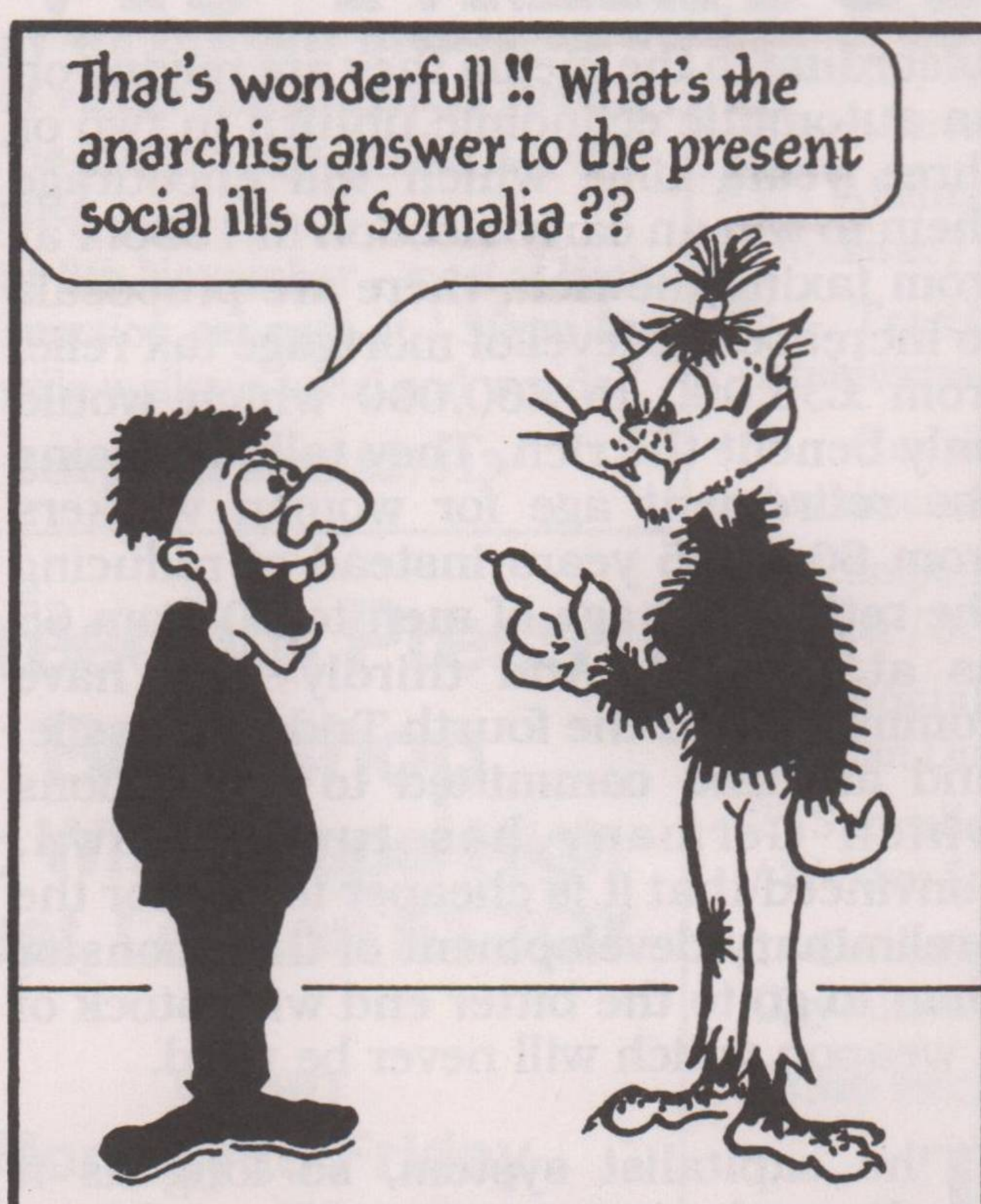
"My earlier letter was in protest at the *Freedom* article which assumed that neither Scargill nor the NUM would issue a writ, and supplied excuses in advance. Short of money they may be, but if they can afford to hire lawyers for their internal investigations, they can afford to hire lawyers for a lucrative open-and-shut libel action. Anyone who believes in Scargill's innocence must presume that a writ will be issued."

Johnny Miner contributed a useful article some months later, 'The Scargill "Scandal" Confirmed', and Brian Bamford contributed an interview with Dave Douglass, an NUM official (another of two pamphlets, published by the Direct Action Movement) 'Coal and Creative Accounting' (*Freedom*, 11th August 1990).

We published an editorial footnote to Johnny Miner's piece which in retrospect is, we think, of interest:

"The 'Scargill Scandal' will continue for a long time yet with the tabloid and more 'serious' press discovering and inventing more 'scandals' every day. However, as we go to press it is reported that Captain Bob (Robert Maxwell) and the Union of Democratic Miners are interested parties in the privatisation of the Electricity Generating Board.

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# TIME TO SHOOT THE BAD GUYS

As you'd expect, the managers and experts who steered the ships of state into this recession are not being penalised for the losses and failures of their companies. The solution to such problems waits on you and me, the 'consumers'. All we get from politicians, bosses and their agents are more words and the cliché of the year: EVERYTHING IS IN PLACE FOR THE RECOVERY, so they tell us as they help themselves to even bigger salaries.

Occasionally, as with British Petroleum, the situation is so bad and the failure of management and its advisers so obvious and total that sacking a few thousand poor souls in the lower echelons isn't enough to placate shareholders and creditors. There has to be a scapegoat. So they fire the MD. This is what you have to do to clear the air when you've debts in excess of £16 billion. Don't worry if the amount is beyond your comprehension, you're in good company.

BP is something special in other ways. It's the biggest and greatest local pirate ship of them all, a company replete with the finest managers and experts in the land. Well, this magnificent crew is collectively responsible for making a string of daft investments in lousy operations, mostly by takeover, chasing expensive pie-in-the-sky kites launched by their experts and basing it all on an inevitable hike in crude oil prices that hasn't happened. Behind this nonsense and the facade of competence stands a collection of ignorant

and confused people who through illusion, deception, collusion and a mass of bad ritual all but convinced themselves they'd cracked those twin myths - infallibility and immortality.

How is it this collective madness, until yesterday rampant throughout the corporate world, has taken over the thinking and actions of so many great and gifted men?

Obviously, now, these company men can neither be great nor gifted. We were misled. It's just that their true status as privileged power-hungry salary slaves was for so long successfully camouflaged by fat salaries, fast cars, overseas travel, owning two houses and the rest. In spite of all this they remain employees, and therefore the dependent servants of their organisations.

The first scientists and educated men to go into business may have possessed in their make-ups elements of the independent explorer. Today's graduates are mere tourists and interchangeable piece-parts in a foreign land pretending to discover and know their economic domains from the safety of offices, press-button technologies and given routines and relationships.

No doubt BP was made in part by 'men of the world' - wily field geologists, exploration engineers who served their time in the oil fields, shrewd political operators in the Middle East, and men who lived close to 'the natives'. Such people do not influence BP

today, if they exist at all. This story is repeated in every large corporation of the industrial estate.

The modern manager, professional, expert, each alike, is already a dinosaur, over-specialised in knowledge to the point of incapacity, a man who has traded experience for superfluous technology and inauthentic corporate rituals that render him impotent in the face of people and events falling outside his programme. He is like an over-equipped medieval knight whose armour is so heavy he has to be hoisted onto his horse. He sets out for battle, praying that his enemy is similarly handicapped but less well equipped, otherwise all is lost.

What are these rules that dominate corporate man's thinking, the assumptions underlying his activities that may have worked for him once but now do so less and less?

In this respect the convergence of business and formal education, which politicians are so keen on, is an important pointer. Any distinctions between manager and expert are all but gone. Few experts strive to cultivate and maintain their independence. Their allegiances to a professional ethos are nominal and minimal; their ambitions within the corporation always to join management.

In their corporate capacities both executives and experts behave as though only the known and knowable matter. They have no place for the unknown, life's mysteries, the sacred.

Faced with the unpredictable, as they

frequently are, they cling more desperately (with the help of electronics and other business aids) to what is knowable. They give to what they know a value it doesn't warrant, while they discount and abstract the unknown, rendering it insignificant in their deliberations.

Being visual literary/numerical folk, corporatists discount the information available to them via their other senses as lacking objectivity. Unless they can subject what they hear, feel, taste or smell to measurement, i.e. visual parameters, such sensations are inconsequential. Corporatists are, we all are more or less, committed to a form of sensory colonialism which values the languages and phoney experience of distance and rejects the languages and real experiences of proximity. For the closer we get to the phenomena to which we attend, the less we depend only on the visual sense or abstractions of it. Intimacy in all manner of relationships is the enemy of industrial corporate man. To illustrate, in the bad old days you'd find among field geologists many seasonal veterans, people who knew from first hand the territory they explored. Now even team leaders are seldom over 35 years old. Wisdom and experience have given way to youth and technology. Administrators, managers and scientists are not just masters of written words and numbers and the programme machine. They are also their victims.

Another important set of assumptions follows from the emphasis on number. The more we know the better our decisions and actions. The faster we know the better able we are to act before others. Information clarifies. Again, experience suggests quite different assumptions might help us to grapple more hopefully with our most intractable problems. If and when we assume that information confuses we might begin to tackle also the growing problems of information overload and stress.

Again our skills in handling written words and numbers typically leads us to begin problem solving by abstracting the phenomenon from its context, so we easily forfeit a holistic perspective. Such analysis is not ecologically sound. Remember E.M. Forster's great dictum, "Only connect".

These are the kinds of assumptions underlying the so-called 'Information Society' - a misnomer for corporate strategies which are designed to conceal human ignorance on a massive scale. Indeed, it may be that ignorance is to us what sex was to the Victorian middle classes. How can we learn anything if we can't first acknowledge our ignorance.

In the late '60s social and educational critics like Illich, Reimer and Laing obtained a degree of publicity in their attempts to expose the disabling effects of experts and professional practice. In his book *Medical Nemesis*, Illich depended entirely on medical sources to advance his argument that the net effect of the medical profession on health had been negative. Most of the improvements in our health and well-being he attributed to hygiene. I've no doubt that examinations of the contributions of professionals and experts to wealth creation would provide similar results. For the past two decades they've been getting away with murder, deceiving and disabling us in the name of informing and enabling, and it's time, as Brian Martin indicates, we started stripping the experts.\* It's time, too, we started questioning their salaries and fees and their privileged place in employment. It's time, too, we examined the place of deception in language and took to heart Nietzsche's: "It's the lie not the truth which is divine".

Denis Pym

\* *Strip the Experts* by Brian Martin, published by Freedom Press, ISBN 0 900384 638, £1.95.

## SCARGILL

(continued from page 3)

Maxwell, with his *Daily Mirror*, has led the anti-Scargill campaign and the breakaway union's leader - Lynk introduced the Russian official who originally said the Russian miners had donated £10 million to the miners' strike fund. Maxwell says he will operate through the UDM. Lynk says he has nothing to do with Captain Bob and that his union can call upon £1,000 million for the purchase. Read the next thrilling instalment of this sordid tale in *Freedom*.

That was the end of the Scargill Scandal, apart from a brief note in *Freedom* (20th October 1990) with the heading 'Which Paper do you Read?', also worth reproducing:

"Both *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, neither of them Labour-lovers and certainly not Arthur Scargill-lovers, gave a fair report of the special delegate conference of the National Union of Miners held last week. Compare the three-column headline of *The Guardian* - 'Miners Leaders Back Scargill Over Funds' - last Thursday with the single-column 'Savaged Scargill Hangs On' of Robert Maxwell's *Daily Mirror*.

Compare *The Daily Mirror*'s: 'But Labour MP Kevin Barron - once one of Scargill's best friends - said "the vote does not matter, Scargill is finished".' with *The Guardian*'s 'Even staunch opponents of Mr Scargill such as Kevin Barron, the NUM sponsored MP, said they had been able to put their case fairly. Despite being censored by the meeting for his public comments on the affair, Mr Barron said "We have to accept the decision of the conference".'

And *The Daily Mirror* is supposed to be pro-Labour."

But readers may well ask 'Why dig all this up?' Simply because all the accusations levelled at Scargill and Heathfield by the press were examined by the law enforcers with

gusto. The last of the official investigations, according to *The Guardian*'s Labour correspondent (3rd August) into the finances of the National Union of Mineworkers arising out of the campaign of media allegations of 1990 "has given a clean bill of health to the union and its two national officials, Arthur Scargill, the president, and Peter Heathfield, the general secretary".

"The Inland Revenue's special investigating office has signed a legal agreement with the NUM 'accepting that secret accounts set up to avoid sequestration and receivership during the coal strike of 1984-5 were valid trusts and not the property of the NUM as was claimed by Gavin Lightman QC in his report on the allegations'."

How more imaginative than our dear comrade Donald Rooum was the Inland Revenue in

**"If the Coal Board in 1984 had had to operate on the principle of the free market the strike would have been over in four weeks. The total cost of the strike was £15,000 million and no shareholder would have been stupid enough to pay it"**

accepting the fact that if the State will sequester any monies you receive to carry out such a far-reaching strike you don't offer your head for the executioner's axe. (A pacifist will perhaps argue that you should - not necessarily to win the struggle, but to convert the enemy!)

*The Guardian* report states that:

"The Inland Revenue has also accepted that all money in the accounts is accounted for and loans repaid."

And the NUM's solicitor said that:

"The agreement established that there had been 'no impropriety' on the part of the NUM's officials or trustees in the running of the seventeen separate accounts.

The agreement brings to an end the investigations and legal actions which arose out of allegations originally made in *The Daily Mirror* and Central TV's Cook Report in 1990.

They include a Fraud Squad investigation which was abandoned; legal action against Mr Scargill and Mr Heathfield by the NUM on the advice of Mr Lightman, which was settled out of court; and prosecution over the secret accounts by the government's Certification Officer, which collapsed after a two-day hearing last summer."

Not only was the original allegation by the

*Mirror* and the Cook Report of corruption against Scargill and Heathfield found by the Lightman Report to be "entirely untrue", but *The Guardian*'s Labour correspondent reports that they have:

"... recently seen the 1985 Soviet Communist Party central committee document authorising the payment [of the £1 million donation] and its diversion to the Dublin fund, which was personally signed by Mikhail Gorbachev.

Last year, an investigation by the *Guardian* and Channel 4's Dispatches uncovered evidence that the campaign of allegations was linked to a 'counter-subversion' operation against the NUM by the security services."

The miners' strike of 1984-85 was a most inspiring manifestation of workers' solidarity by those who would not give up at any price and were only defeated by a government determined to destroy that solidarity at any price and by the small section of workers - the so-called Union of Democratic Miners and road transport workers (rail workers refused to transport coal) who went on working.

Not being readers of *The Daily Mirror* we specially purchased a copy on 3rd August to see whether they would have a piece on the Inland Revenue report. Not a word. Not surprising really when you come to think of it. At the time when the editor-mouthpiece of Robert Maxwell was denouncing Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield, there was the boss milking the *Mirror*'s pensions fund to the tune of about £400 million! - and the sleuths at the *Mirror* were uncovering ghastly frauds by their *bête noire* Scargill for thousands of pounds. And even some anarchists allowed their dislike for Scargill to get the better of their judgement!

Scargill has been vindicated and once more the media have been proved wrong. Unfortunately memories are short and the media in general have no morality, no concern for the truth.

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# The Bolshevik Tradition

(continued from last issue)

Contemporary historical scholarship has tended to vindicate the pioneering accounts of the Russian revolution by anarchists such as Voline, Berkman and Maximoff. Thus, Sirianni's study of *Worker's Control and Socialist Democracy* (1982), Mandel's study of *The Petrograde Workers and the Seizure of Soviet Power* (1983) and Israel Getzler's *Kronstadt 1917-21* (1983), would all have been music, as one historian has put it, to the ears of Maximoff and Berkman. Thus he suggests that we are in the midst of a sea-change in the historiography of the Russian revolution, involving a vindication of the libertarian approach of the early anarchists, 'impressionistic' and 'polemical' though their personal accounts may have been (Acton, 1992).

This is not the place to review the important studies of Voline, Maximoff and Berkman – all of which are available at Freedom Press. Needless to say, all are still well worth reading. Written by Russian anarchists who were directly involved in the struggles, their books have a passion, an immediacy and a relevance that is lacking in some of the more scholarly tomes. But it is of interest also that some of the harshest critiques of Bolshevism have come not only from anarchists but from within the Marxist tradition itself. Two are worth noting: Victor Serge and Rosa Luxemburg.

Victor Serge, one of the great radical writers

of the present century, is a much neglected figure. Throughout his life he struggled against oppression. Born in Belgium, of Russian parentage, French by adoption and literary expression, he was a true internationalist who ended his life, like Trotsky, as an 'exile' in Mexico. Though not a theoretician, he was stridently anti-capitalist, deeply mistrusted the state, and remained throughout his life a kind of libertarian Marxist. He was definitely not a party man. While Peter Marshall, in his history of anarchism, devotes several pages to defenders of capitalism like Ayn Rand and Rothbard, Serge strangely is mentioned only once. One line. Serge was, however, in his early life a committed anarchist and spent five years in prison (1912-17) because of his association with the 'Bonnot Gang' and because he was editor of the weekly *Anarchie*.

Although Serge sided with the Bolsheviks in 1917, it is clear from his *Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901-1941* that he was highly aware and critical of the totalitarian implications of Marxism. As Bolshevik thinking, he wrote, sees the party as the repository of truth and any form of thinking which differs from it as dangerous and reactionary, so it inevitably generates an intensity and an intolerance – it is a "clerical mentality which is quick to become inquisitorial" (page 134). In May 1921 Serge wrote from Petrograd to a French anarchist comrade, reflecting that:

"the prime error of the present Russian regime is to have created an entire bureaucratic mechanism to manage production instead of leaving it to the workers organised by industry (i.e. syndicalism). It has failed principally in attacking, through methods of centralised discipline and military repression, any individual initiative, opposition or criticism (even a fraternal and revolutionary one), any aspiration towards liberty; in short, in being guided by a spirit contrary to that of anarchism" (cited by Peter Sedgewick in *Serge, 1967*).

Serge supported the Bolsheviks but kept his critical independence; and on several crucial issues he thought they were profoundly mistaken – in their intolerance, in their faith in the state, in their leanings towards centralism. He likened Lenin's strategy to that of the Jacobins; thought the Cheka a new form of Inquisition and, as said, thought the psychology of Bolshevism totalitarian. The Bolsheviks claim Serge as one of their own. It would be difficult, however, to find anyone more devastating in their criticisms of what constitutes the essential tenets of Bolshevism. So it is with Rosa Luxemburg.

Luxemburg was never an anarchist. She remained all her life a Marxist, and an advocate of the 'party'. The role of the latter, however, she saw as one of propaganda and education rather than as a disciplined body that would control and direct the revolution. Her critiques of Lenin and the Bolsheviks are perhaps well known, but they are nonetheless

worth reiterating. Although she always remained an admirer and a supporter of Lenin and Trotsky, she was profoundly against their conception of the party. Like many Marxists, then and since, she wrongly felt that there were only two alternatives possible during the civil war in Russia: to support the Reds, the Bolsheviks, and supposedly advance the workers' revolution, or support the Whites, and the counter-revolution. That there might be a third alternative never crossed her mind; that there could be a struggle against the militarism of the counter-revolution by the workers and peasants without recourse to state institutions she never explored (and Norman Geras follows her in this); that the Bolshevik type of 'dictatorship of the proletariat' might not lead to socialism she was not able to foresee. But her acute misgivings over Lenin's conception of the party were important and, at the time, prescient. What 'dictatorship' meant for Rosa Luxemburg was clearly very different from what it meant for Lenin – it meant, in her words:

"dictatorship of the class, not of a party or of a clique – dictatorship of the class, that means in the broadest public form on the basis of the most active, unlimited participation of the mass of the people, of unlimited democracy" (Waters, 1970, page 393).

Lenin and the Bolsheviks, she thought, were completely mistaken in the means they employed – decrees, draconian penalties, dictatorial force in factories, rule by terror. Without unrestricted freedom of the press and assembly, without elections, without a free struggle of opinion, political life in Russia, she argued, would become more and more crippled and would eventually die out completely, leaving only the party and the bureaucracy as active elements in political life. This is, of course, precisely what happened. Freedom only for the party, or for

the supporters of the Bolshevik government, is no freedom at all, she wrote. Her chief criticism of the Bolsheviks, suggests Tony Cliff, one of the leading theoreticians of the SWP, "was that they were responsible for restricting and undermining workers' democracy. And on this issue the whole tragic history of Russia proves that she was, prophetically, absolutely right" (1980, page 68). This, of course, is precisely what the Russian anarchists were struggling against – the Bolshevik suppression of the soviets and worker's and peasant organisations. But, rather strangely, Cliff and the SWP still continue to advocate the Leninist conception of the revolutionary party, and while they pay homage to Luxemburg's stature as a Marxist revolutionary, they still continue to chide her for erroneous views on party organisation. But in many ways Luxemburg is now closer to the anarchist tradition than she is to that of the Bolsheviks.

Did Lenin lead to Stalin? A serious study of Lenin's ideas as he expressed them in his various political tracts, and of the Bolshevik regime from 1917 to 1923, seriously suggests an affirmative response.

Brian Morris

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Two questions anarchism needs to answer as a movement are the question of identity and the question of direction. Who are we? Where are we going? We need cohesion and we need a sense of purpose.

Cohesion is important if we are to achieve anything because there are so few of us. Even though we may disagree with other anarchists' approaches, we can still offer support – we want to get away from futile and pointless bickering amongst ourselves. Diversity can be a strength, where we have many approaches feeding into the same problem, but diversity can also be a source of weakness when scarce human resources are spread too thinly.

It seems to me that there are three levels of activity, all of which see anarchism as a vehicle for change:

- Changing yourself.
- Changing other people.
- Challenging/overturning the system.

The first level is important as a starting point, but worthless as a final resting place. 'The only person you can change is yourself' is ultimately a cop out, a rationalisation of compromise with the state. The state can afford to tolerate a personal and introspective 'anarchism' because it is no threat to it. As a counter-proposition I propose that *the success or failure of a political movement can be measured in terms of the impact it has on ordinary people*. Now it may well be the case that we have enough trouble developing and enhancing our own autonomy without having to worry about those still left inside the system. I think that this is a mistake, we ought to be seeking to influence people. To do this we need to communicate our ideas, and if this is to be effective we must take a long hard look at what we are doing and the results we are achieving, and if it is not working to try to find new ideas and new techniques.

The danger with the second level of activity is that publications become ends in themselves – the 'Socialist Worker Syndrome' – that there is nothing real behind them, no action backing them up. The effect is wholly in print, or in closed political meetings, or theory completely divorced from reality. The paper operating in the political never-never land of theory is the opposite end of the spectrum of error to the introspective, solipsistic anarchist who changes only himself/herself.

## Where do

Preaching to the converted has no effect on the wider world. The public will judge a political group by the effect it has on their lives, not upon the words in print in its publications. This is part of the problem with the TUC and Labour Party, which have no existence outside smoke-filled committee rooms and the demonology of Tory tabloids. What effect has the Labour Party had on ordinary people recently? What has it delivered?

So long as the magazines are not backed up with action – or linked to changes in people's ways of acting then thinking – they are irrelevant. Rather than being addressed internally, we need to shake ourselves free from this siege mentality.

At present there exists a terrible vacuum on the political scene. Labour has failed and is politically finished, while the Tories are morally and spiritually bankrupt. The economy is in meltdown. We are heading for five, maybe six, million unemployed by the year 2000. What will the social, political and economic consequences of this be?

There is a widely held perception that the existing options do not work, that the past and present lingering political paradigm is finished. This crystallises in the slogan 'Voting is not enough'. The danger is that this vacuum will not be filled with anarchism but by authoritarianism. There is a parallel to be drawn between the failure of Major's Britain and the Weimar Republic. It may well be that the state will magic up an external threat, but it seems more likely that it will initiate some domestic jihad against a scapegoat group – a Tory/Fascist crusade against blacks or travellers.

To fight against all this we need a pragmatic alliance of the decent. These will not necessarily all be anarchists, but what they will have in common will be the rejection of the existing bankrupt and stale political paradigm. The emphasis will have to be on practical and local solutions to problems. The anti-political alternative will gain in credibility provided it can deliver results. One example of this approach could be a Mutual Aid centre in a town, a cross between a CAB and a skill exchange where unemployed people meet together and which acts as a focal point and network to link skills and needs.

## INTERVAL FOR TEARS

'DEATH', SAID THE Queen Mother, 'comes to us all' and who am I to contradict a woman I love and admire for being able to hold up the bar of the White Hart pub, pay for the next round and make philosophical statements worthy of a *Freedom* editorial without her lips once leaving the rim of her pint beer glass. But the horror of death is the rebirth, for one has no longer listened to the sacrilegious spiel over the corpse of one whom one despised and hated than within the span of a few fingers of years they are resurrected, and one knows that Milton's and Blake's belief in evil as a living thing is true. Every five years the dead jokes are re-told as new, political manifestos rehashed, small wars re-fought, novels retyped, plays re-mouthed, demonstrations re-marched and sadly, sadly academic and exhibitionist talentless art reproduced and re-hung. With the glass of white wine held high as one's Olympic liquid torch gargling its message that crap is crap, no matter how expensive the art gallery rent one must still accept the verbal bashings of the forgivable young and those who did Art at Coll.

In that Golden dawn when we all danced bare-footed amid the early morning mushrooms and there was no Women's Lib to make us cry, Freedom Bookshop in Red Lion Street, off dying Bloomsbury, offered the reading world its permutations of truths. It was the age of small hidden low-rent shops for the romantics, for but a few steps from Freedom was the Russian Tsarist shop full of shadows and portraits of the Tsarist Royal Family, icons, medals, books of Holy Writ and ancient jewellery, and the old woman standing silent in the shadows, tall, thin and white-haired. Or, for the Town and his slow-walking frau, black or white magic for those with the taste for raising the dead or herbal tea. Those small shops worked in inverse ratio to expensive

physical pornography in that the cheap rents cast the keys to the opening for the enquiring minds. All this is past history and good-time mythology of the school of 'I remember, I remember', yet they still exist for the sale of the weird and wonderful in decayed side streets and small and empty courtyards where the dust vies with the dead leaves of autumn and winter's rain beats on untrod stones.

Art galleries are the Heartbreak Houses of profits and reputations for of necessity they hawk their pretty wares to the fashionable wealthy and for that they must scavenge where the wealthy spray their pretty dross, but who are we to complain for we may not wine or dine or sleep with them, but in the fashionable galleries we can view their taste and our pleasures and prejudices can be satisfied for the price of a shave and a clean shirt.

Off Bond Street is the Anthony D'Offay Gallery in Dering Street. Opposite the pub, a shy-making little gallery whose title one hesitates to try and pronounce among the well-informed, it unfolds its greater glory in a larger gallery in one more side street, where the vans unload, and every gallery shy-making exhibition is a major exhibition and, like Guinness, a work of 'genius'. Each time, as I enter with bowed head, I wonder who buys the matters on display for in their conception they may suggest side-show talent for the kultur-seeking minority, but genius it ain't. Georg Baselitz has been hailed by bird-happy minds as the greatest German artist of the month, and it could be true depending on the gothic competition, but here is a brush-hand who had been declared by Richard Dormant as one whose 'paintings are a physical attack on the canvas' and at a time when most of the world's boxing talent is heading, via the courts, into the national

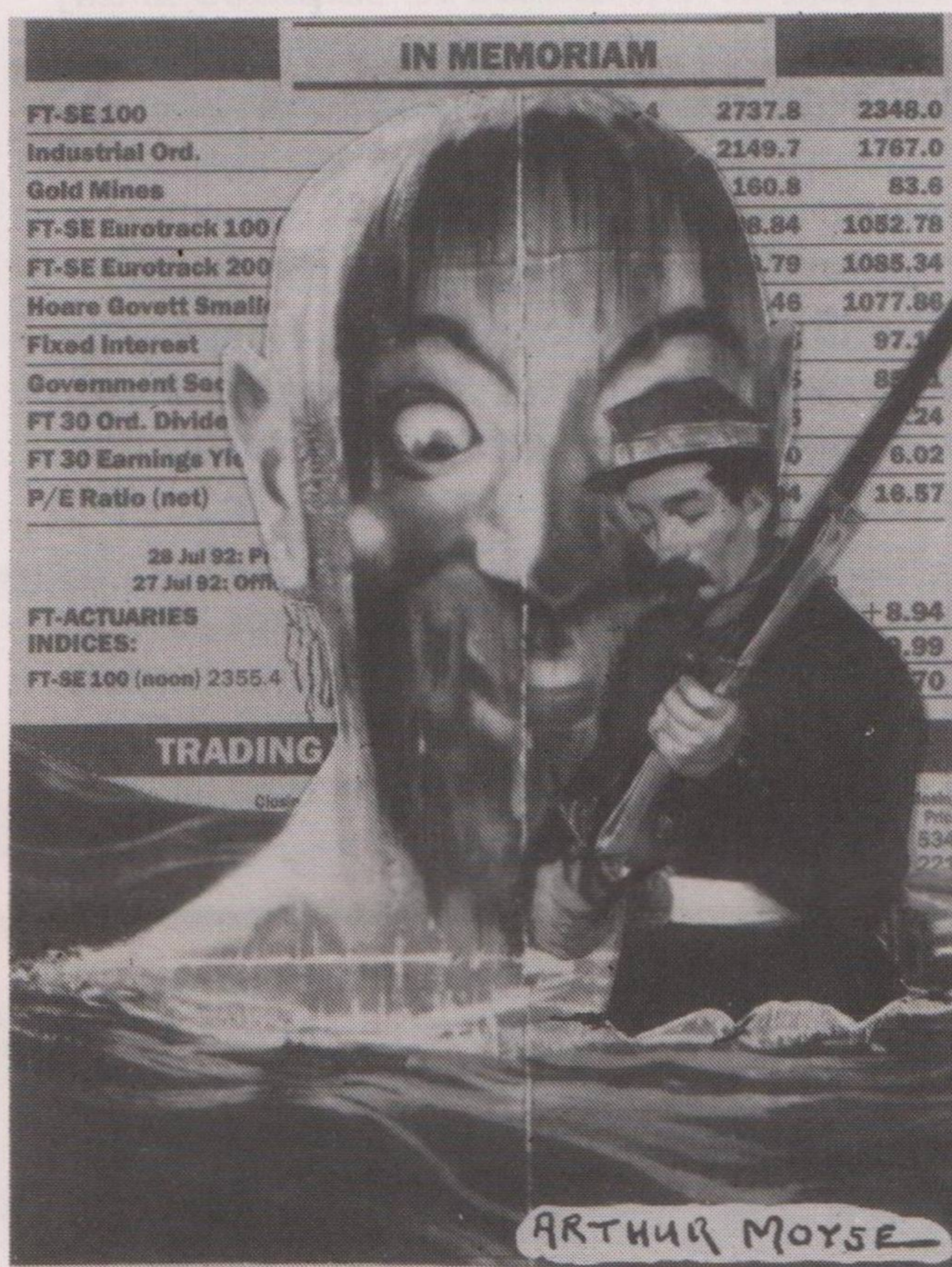
slammers, Georg may be working on a new career canvaswise, paintwise, k.o.wise. Like so many a contemporary, be it in politics or in the arts, all truth is destroyed by garish showmanship, and I would hold that to alibi the crudity of the mess of bright prime colours. Georg hangs certain of his figurative paintings upside down, turning a bad portrait painting into a bad abstract painting, mete for the kultur rabble. It is claimed of Goering that at the mention of art he reached for his gun, but it is no more than a view he shared with Hitler, Stalin, Truman and those among us seeking 'the message' behind the pretty picture on the cover of Penguin Books for in the sterile mind all creative art is secondary.

In Tony D'Offay's side street major gallery, where the vans unload, is the exhibition of conception of Anselm Kiefer who is, and I can but quote, Germany's 'most beautiful painter in modern times' – or in other words go for a quick pee and another genius bounces on. Yet one must be honest, said the Queen Mother

holding her pint up to the strong electric light and giving Kay the ol' Imperial eye, the exhibition arranged by the 'notorious' and 'controversial' German artist Anselm Kiefer stays in the mind long after one had left Tone's gallery. It is dedicated to *the Women of the Revolution*. Within that bleak gallery are arranged 22 or 27 full-size metal frame beds as in a barracks, and grey sheets of lead are the sheets and in the hollows of these empty sheets small puddles of water have formed, even to one bed where the water had leaked through to the bucket beneath. On papers above each bed is the name and occupation of each absent woman. Dead flowers and lumps of earth lie around, while at the end of the gallery/barrack-room is a huge sheet of thin lead upon which is a photograph of the back view of a man in a military greatcoat and boots (whom we know from other similar works – such as the *Heroischer Sinnbilder* which began his career – to be the artist) and hanging above it are dead sunflowers.

The old ICA many years ago, with much publicity, produced what was to be a monument to the 'Unknown Political Prisoner' and it ended up, despite the small manqué, as no more than sterile intellectual double-talk. We have lived out our lives, we the fortunate majority, with film, painting, sculpture and photograph of the misery and horror of the unrecorded unnumbered and unknown men and women, and Kiefer in this Anthony D'Offay exhibition gives us a chance to step into and out of one small bureaucratic organised man-made grey hell. Kiefer is a strange man of whom much of his work appears to seek to bait the German middle class, as in 1969 when his exhibition 'Occupations' consisted of amateur photographs of himself posing in various European countries giving the Nazi salute. The artistic reason is, claim his admirers, is?! yet Kiefer's contributions to the 1980 Venice Biennale had the German critics angry of what they felt was Kiefer's glorification of the Teutonic muscle-bound past. I do not know, but this I do know, that Kiefer's 'Women of the Revolution' is a true memorial to any imprisoned or murdered woman and the D'Offay Gallery must be given the gold medal for this truly worthwhile exhibition.

Arthur Moyse



## we go from here?

Through this, in a modest sort of way, jobs would be completed, paths laid, fences mended, old people fed or taken shopping. This idea could only function if people pay in as well as take out, but the point is that all skills at whatever level are recognised as valid, and that people find new ways of co-operating.

Another idea currently being floated is that of an unemployed peoples' trade union (this could well be related to or complementary to the first idea). The problem with this is that the concept of 'union' is rather discredited. The idea has plenty of potential but will only be of limited use if its purpose is simply to win limited concessions from the state. It needs a positive programme to move unemployed people away from passive dependence on the state, but there is plenty of mileage in the idea.

A third idea which has been suggested (*Freedom* Editorial, 8th August) is that of a mass circulation alternative newspaper. Why is it that people will pay money for *The Sun*? – a paper which offers people no answers and though the ideology it pushes is itself an expression of the problem?

Here again though, we lapse into the 'Socialist Worker Syndrome' – we put the cart before the horse if we believe that a national mass circulation newspaper will solve things. We need to turn this relationship around. Hitherto, faith in the panacea of propaganda has assumed that by preaching to people they will modify their lives. Instead, first comes the action by which we create for ourselves. The communication of these actions, solutions and ideas can only come second. A national mass circulation magazine should only be a by-product to the solution, not mistaken for the solution itself.

It is true, though, that to advance we have to alter perceptions. The secondary part of this process will involve the development of alternative media, and the weakening of the ideological hold that the state's media has over people. This will not be easy, but will have to take place before any meaningful and lasting change can come about.

We need to turn around the existing pattern of

relationship between individual and media. At present, with the BBC and *Sun* model, the individual is a passive consumer, and the 'reward' for the act of consumption is illusory. With anarchist media, the important factor is the individual who creates the event. Anarchist media should be interactive. Thus the anarchist mass circulation paper reflects and represents a reality which is present in breadth and depth throughout society. It would be something like an information network where local developments, approaches, events and ideas are fed in and circulated to all.

Such a medium of communication would be highly versatile and responsive to peoples' needs and aspirations (unlike the state-sponsored media). The nearest thing to a mass circulation publication anarchists have is *Class War*. *Class War* (perhaps one-sidedly) keys into ordinary peoples' discontent and anger with the present social and political scene, but at least in this it addresses people where they are. It is notable that when *Class War* departed from its emphasis on the practical and became more theoretical, consciously building a party, it became less successful. People don't want to join political parties, parties are part of the present system – they know they don't work.

A mass circulation anarchist paper is not a matter of it being controlled by any one group, and tightly pushing any one political line. The more partisan and limited it becomes the less it will key into ordinary peoples' lives. The less they will want it.

Movements or parties are judged by results, and the key to success here is the depth of effect they have on ordinary people. In this, consistency and longevity are more important than a flash-in-the-pan overnight success followed by months or years of nothing. Instead of this continual drifting we need to come up with some sort of positive programme with specific objectives and realisable methods by which these can be brought about. If we can make our project self-sustaining then so much the better. The best propaganda is that which ordinary people create for themselves.

Stephen Booth

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

## A Singular Misunderstanding

I have been shown a postal card from an English Socialist who, though he claims to have read *Liberty* a long time, writes as follows regarding it: "I cannot understand *Liberty*. How can they reconcile the fact of private ownership and perfect freedom? It seems to me that, if a section monopolize land and means of production, the remainder cannot be free. I read Mackay's *Anarchists* some twelve months ago and derived a great deal of good from its scathing criticism of modern society, but could not agree with the conclusions he drew. They are most unwarrantable. Mackay's ideal seems to be complete *laissez faire* and the gospel of getting on at all costs".

I am reluctant to believe that this gentleman, who, I am told, is very intelligent, "cannot understand *Liberty*", but it is evident that he does not. Where, during his long reading of this paper, did he ever find a declaration in favor of the monopoly of land and means by a section? Regarding land, it has been steadily maintained in these columns that protection should be withdrawn from all land titles except those based on personal occupancy and use. Does this bear any resemblance to monopoly by a section?

Regarding the means of production, *Liberty* has constantly deplored their monopoly by a section and has sought the causes thereof. It has found these causes in the banking privilege chiefly, and in the patent and tariff privileges secondarily. It has shown the economic processes whereby these privileges result in the monopoly of capital, and the way in which capital would flow into the hands of labor, were these privileges abolished. Until this English Socialist has pointed out the flaw in *Liberty*'s demonstration of the cause and cure of monopoly of capital, it does not become him to represent the paper as an advocate of monopoly of capital. How "reconcile private ownership and perfect freedom"? Pray, how reconcile private freedom with anything but private ownership? If the laborer who creates wealth cannot keep it if he chooses or cannot exchange it for the wealth created by another laborer who is willing to exchange, is he free? It is nonsense to claim that he is. Mackay's ideal, it is true, is complete *laissez faire*. *Laissez faire* means 'let do'. Does this English critic, who claims to have "gone forward towards Anarchist-Communism", believe in not letting people do?

T

*Liberty* vol. IX, no. 2, New York, Saturday 10th September 1892, whole no. 236.

## Fascism and Anti-Fascism on the South Coast

Current anti-fascist activity and information centres largely round the British National Party (BNP). Readers may be aware that this grouping is the result of a split in the National Front (NF). Most NF members, and some of that group's most prominent figures (such as John Tyndall) formed the breakaway BNP. So where does this leave the NF? Moribund, it would seem. But this is no reason to ignore these scum in the hope that they will go away completely. In fact, as someone remarked to me recently, the NF's current weakness is all the more reason to finish them off. This issue is all the more pertinent in an area like that covering the coastal towns of Brighton, Hove and Worthing. The NF once regarded this area as a stronghold. Some of its former leaders, as well as other scum like Anthony Hancock (publisher and supporter of the anti-semitic academic David Irving), still live in Hove and nearby towns. A local anti-fascist activist told me he found hundreds of BNP stickers along main roads near Brighton station and on the seafront. But the BNP have no party active in the area. The NF, however, overshadowed by other fascist groups in other parts of the country, have recently made a bid to relaunch themselves down here.

The NF organised a public meeting at a hotel in Hove. Just to show how seriously they were, the guest speaker was Ian Anderson, their leader. I don't know what kind of audience they expected – there aren't many skinheads down here (not that Anderson any longer wants his party to be associated with hooligan types). In the event, there were more anti-fascists demonstrating outside than the number of fascists that could possibly be expected. About 200 turned up to this demo, which was called jointly by Anti Fascist Action and the Anti Nazi League. The aim was basically to prevent the fascists from holding their meeting, by any means necessary. In fact, however, when the manager of the hotel realised who had booked the room, he cancelled the meeting himself.

In a newspaper interview published the next day, the same hotel manager somewhat euphemistically described the NF as "wallies". He didn't like the demo outside his hotel, however, and suggested that the best policy towards the NF is to ignore them. We have seen how 'successful' this has been in France, where the left's tactic of ignoring the fascists has allowed the fascists to become an important force in French politics; it has also enabled anti-semitism and racism more generally to become respectable and legitimate political gambits. We might discern a strong link between the policy of ignoring the fascists and the demand

for 'free speech'; both are, in a sense, liberal *laissez faire* attitudes. The demand for 'free speech' for all, which would allow the fascists to have a platform, is predicted on an assumption that all are equally 'free' to express themselves, that all are equally powerful and articulate. It also presupposes that words are neutral things that cannot in themselves oppress or threaten people. Because we are not all equal, and because words are often part of powerful ideological discourses that can indeed effect certain acts (words don't just *describe*, they also *do*), we must indeed fight fascism (as part of fighting the state) and we must not heed bourgeois liberal demands for 'free speech'.

This is by no means necessarily an endorsement of either the Anti Nazi League (ANL) or Anti Fascist Action (AFA). Our comrades in the Direct Action Movement (DAM) argue that we should

support the AFA as it is non-sectarian and part of the working class (they point out that the ANL is an SWP initiative and tends to work through co-opting celebrities). This sounds fine, but if the argument is that we should fight fascism because the latter is in competition with bourgeois democracy (as was proposed by the AFA speaker from London at a meeting in Brighton earlier this year), then anti-fascist activity is simply a vehicle for supporting the state. And what of the ANL? The above arguments against them (by AFA and DAM) are well known. My own experience of them down here is that they are just a list of names. What meetings do they have round here? What do they do apart from hand out stickers? Most of the people at the demo were not ANL members; but no doubt many of their names have now been added to the list.

Johnny Yen

## STOOPS ESTATE, BURNLEY

The shock and dismay within Labour Party circles in Burnley over the riots in the week ending 26th July has to be seen to be believed.

Whoever started them we'll probably never know, but they didn't appear to be an accident. However, no one should be surprised in any way. Burnley, a semi-derelict town that is fast decaying, was a place waiting for trouble and the Stoops Estate area was the one place for it to start.

Much has been made of the fact that some £10 million have been spent on bringing the estate and its sister estate, Hargher Clough, back into the mainstream of civilisation. However, for several years – possibly 30 or 40 – the corporation housing estates in Burnley have been allowed to become slums, Stoops and Hargher having suffered major neglect. The overall area, known as the Wood Top / Accrington Road district, is recognised as a drug pusher's paradise.

Interestingly Burnley has had a Labour Council, more or less, since 1925, and a Labour MP since 1935. It was a matter of pride that 'you can put a pig up under Labour colours and we'll get it in'. However, the collapse of the Tory opposition in the early '60s gave the Labour Party a clear road in the Town Hall.

It was admitted, openly at one time, that the only active opposition to the Labour-controlled Council was the Burnley Anarchist Group, plus one CPer and a stray Liberal Councillor. This lack of social democratic opposition proved to be too much for the Labour Party.

For years there have been complaints regarding corruption, and whilst these have never got beyond the rumour stage, it is generally supposed that there is truth in the matter. What is true is that the Council, openly derided by many as the 'wooden heads', has been led by the nose by the local authority senior officers.

On top of the poor housing record of the local authority which has had a vicious effect, it is claimed that there have been 2,000 redundancies in the area covered by the troubles over the last twelve months. Youth unemployment, being at 65-70%, among the highest in Europe, and of those arrested 64-66% were out of work.

For years though the district has been known as 'rough', it was with the advent of the poll tax that working class opposition to both national and local government policies began to take shape in this area of north east Lancashire.

The work done in the formation of the anti-poll tax union cannot be discounted. Though this was initially formed as a Militant initiative, these people were too lazy and too stupid to do any work, consequently for the first two years of its life the APTU was run by two anarchist (DAM) comrades supported by a number of rank-and-file Labourites and anarchist outsiders. When its success was assured, the SWP and the Militants took over and it became eventually a Labour Party re-election circus. However the anarchists had tapped a vein of discontent and various well attended meetings took place, the one nearest the Stoops and Hargher estates nearly breaking up in a fight. Opposition to the poll tax being what it was, the local labourites couldn't ignore it, and we had the ludicrous spectacle of a Labour Council calling on the population to pay up whilst the Labour Party / Trades Council – same people, different caps – held a public meeting calling on the electors not to pay.

The end product of all this was a Labour Council, in its determination to produce results, sending its own supporters to jail.

The result being that at the last local election only some 27% of the electorate voted, leaving the left and their more orthodox companions shattered. In some 'staunch' Labour wards, the turn out was down to some 16%.

The 'nights of violence' saw petrol bombing, barricades, police bombarded by

stones and bottles, property and vehicles set on fire. The local paper referred to the 'security forces' and told of palls of smoke hanging over the estates.

Initially it looks as though the police were set up. After calls to them complaining about motorbikes being ridden up and down the area late at night, police vehicles found themselves riding around an area where the street lamps had been put out.

More than a hundred police officers were eventually called in and found themselves drawn into a warren of streets, crescents and avenues. The hapless constables were pelted with bricks and missiles by gangs who then retreated leaving plod to wonder what was happening.

Later the police responded by raiding houses on the estates and mass arrests, both during and after the violence. Doors were kicked in by the police and arrests were made from comparative innocents who were only avid spectators. Complaints were made of policemen and women running through the estates threatening with arrest residents who were standing at their fences simply looking on.

Immediately the outburst took place everyone in authority either pleaded ignorance or implied it. It wasn't the estate, it wasn't the council, it wasn't the police. The local MP told the press that he was monitoring the situation. He said: "If we need more provisions for youth facilities, increased use of the Community Centre, let's do something about it". Someone should tell Mr Pike that the horse had already left the stable.

In this writer's opinion, what has happened is that several years of neglect and indifference by the council has exacerbated the effects of central government policy. The social democratic system that this country professes to follow is either unable or, more likely, unwilling to offer any relief to the sufferers, and violence follows from frustration felt over a lifetime of comparative poverty

Seamus More

### Obituary

## War Hero or War Criminal?

What is the essential difference between one man who takes a central, active part in the killing of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children he has never met, by dropping bombs from an aeroplane, and another man who runs amok in a superstore, mowing down a dozen or so strangers with an automatic rifle? To the majority, the latter killing is both unjustified and illegal, while the former, subject to which side you support, is as justified as it is legal – *c'est la guerre*, as they say with a doubtful shrug of the shoulders.

People may well shrug their shoulders when they try to kid themselves that blasting women and kids to hell with bombs can be justified, because, unlike the crazed gunman in the superstore which brings universal condemnation, wartime massacres are by no means given a certificate of justification by everybody in the world.

That the law, in any one country is an ass, is an opinion held by most people who are not involved in making laws: if this is the case, then international law is a pack of hyenas. When the leaders of one nation decide to go to war with another nation they assume, without consulting their populations, that the whole population is at war with the whole population of the other nation, including babes-in-arms who have no vote and no clue as to what is going on.

Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, who died recently from motor neurone disease at the age of 74, survived one hundred bombing missions and was over Nagasaki as an observer when the second atomic bomb was dropped on Japan. How many babes-in-arms were killed and injured by his bomber group is a question whose answer can only be guessed at, but we can be sure that it

was well in excess of any superstore massacre. Son of an Oxford law lecturer, Cheshire took his silver spoon with him to Stowe public school and Merton College, Oxford, managing, despite a wildly fluctuating academic record and an ambition to "make pots of money without too many scruples how", to get a second in jurisprudence – so he should have realised the enormity of his RAF deeds. More importantly, as it turned out, he joined the university air squadron and the RAF Volunteer Reserve. Indeed, the fact that, after the war and two mental breakdowns, he converted to Roman Catholicism, contemplated being a monk and spent most of the rest of his life trying to help suffering people (Cheshire Homes), suggests that he did very much realise the enormity of his actions despite protesting publicly that Nagasaki and carpet bombing were justified. That he said he wanted to belong to a church that had the authority to forgive sins can be taken as another sign that he was far from convinced of the morality of his wartime career.

Interestingly, Cheshire was diagnosed by one neurologist as being defective in the capacity to feel fear – which could be translated into extreme courageousness or a less complimentary pathological condition – I seem to remember a similar ambiguous character reference being applied to another wartime flying ace, 'Screwball' Beurling, and it could be significant that neither of these two aces availed themselves of the opportunity to take a rest from their macabre duties.

But while such men are idolised and feted, let us not forget that the difference between a war hero and a war criminal is decided by the side that is victorious, and that the victorious side is likely to be the one which uses the most barbaric weapons.

WW2 Fighter Pilot

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## Violence: a Reply

Dear Editors,  
The length to which Stephen Cullen has gone to reply to my last letter leads me to feel that I would like to pursue this issue a little further. I will try to be brief and then leave it to others to discuss the issue. I didn't originally feel there was a lot between us. On the question of violence, ostensibly what it was all about, strangely enough I still don't think there is. But it is there and I would like to define it a little more precisely than he does.

I do not disagree with him on much of the content of his letter. I loathe violence (yes, you've heard that before but please accept it) and oppose it in most situations. Stephen says I put arguments forward in favour of violence. Not so. I am simply trying to point out that the situation is not as black and white as he would appear to think. With respect, his position seems to be the fanatical one.

However I, and a large proportion of the anarchist movement (as I think letters on the subject are beginning to show), do draw a distinction between violence in self-defence and other forms of violence. It's not a question of being pro-violence, it's a question of being realistic. Let me pick up one example that I gave.

Vietnamese opposition to the French occupation of their country started in a pretty placid manner: strikes and the like.

The French response? Well, they slaughtered some 10,000 Vietnamese and deported some 50,000. This is the quagmire the pacifist position so often leads to and it has no response which is effective. It was only the violent response of the people which was successful in defeating the French, culminating in the battle of Dien Bien Phu (an appropriate strategy at the time which could not be repeated against the American aggressor). Such open pitched battles were also not so necessary in Algeria where violence was also a necessary element in expelling the French. However, France in 1954 was not comparable to the military might of the USA some fifteen years later. Different tactics were necessary and were used: violent self-defence was successfully employed.

Stephen doesn't like the word execution. It is ugly. However executions, whether we like them or not, do take place. I take his question about the 9mm to be rhetorical, but supposing my answer to his question were yes. What will he do when I point the gun at him? Personal revolutions could become pretty short lived (like the 10,000 Vietnamese) in such situations. What should Bosnians do to defend themselves today? How do unarmed blacks in South Africa protect themselves from the trigger-happy security forces? These questions need an answer. Pacifism doesn't stop violence, it simply leaves the stage clear for those who wish to indulge in it.

Neil Birrell

## Christianity & Anarchism

Dear Editors,  
Mike Quentin-Hicks makes an elementary mistake in his response to my brief comment on Christianity and anarchism. He confuses a respect for the freedom of individuals to pursue their own beliefs with a respect for their actual beliefs.

Mike accuses me of being intolerant towards Christians and Jews. But I have the utmost tolerance for individuals to follow whatever religious (or any other) belief they desire. This type of respect is consistent with my statement that anarchism possesses "an ethics based on mutual respect and generalised benevolence". However, respect for such individual freedom does not demand an identical type of respect for the beliefs themselves. I can respect the freedom of others to have political views which are different to mine even though I vehemently disagree with the views

themselves, and the same goes for religious beliefs or any other part of an individual's 'world-view'.

So, Mike, I have no problem in respecting the choice of some anarchists to have religious beliefs, but that does not mean that I should quietly accept their point of view as well. In accordance with this, my earlier letter was not an attack on religious anarchists but rather it tried (very briefly) to point out the incompatibility between anarchism and Judaeo-Christian-Islamic religious beliefs. As Mike also suggests, perhaps I was idealistic in my views on the basis of anarchism, but I'd rather be 'idealistic' about the virtues of humans in this world than believe in the reality of a supernatural boss who sanctions war, infanticide, race-hatred, selfishness, elitism, intolerance, authoritarianism ...

JA

Please keep sending in your letters and donations

## Does God Matter for Anarchists?

Dear Editors,  
Well I was certainly wrong about one thing at least – the existence of Jesus as a historical figure is disputed by atheists, vehemently. Your heading 'Christianity and Anarchism' would, I feel, have been more appropriately headed 'Anarchism and Religious Belief'.

Be that as it may, my original letter sought only to point out that there is no contradiction between anarchism and religious belief. Instead I drew a lot of fire over what I consider to be a secondary issue: whether or not it can be proved that Jesus ever existed. Several of your correspondents have given erudite and scholarly reasons for their doubts, and I cannot claim to be nearly so well-read on the subject as they appear to be.

But with regard to the Gospels, one wonders how four men – admittedly writing some decades after the events – could chronicle the teachings and relate

events leading up to the eventual death at the hands of the state of someone who never existed. Notwithstanding, regardless of the source, the important thing is that the teachings remain. No doubt there are contributors to *Freedom* who could give cogent reasons for doubt that Gotama the Buddha ever existed as a historical figure, but this in no way negates the significance of the eight-fold path of Buddhism, which again is perfectly compatible with anarchist theory.

As Mike Quentin-Hicks said in his inspiring letter to *Freedom* (8th August): "If anarchism is a life-affirming philosophy, then let's get on with it". It's disconcerting to find intolerance, yes, and prejudice in the letters column of a journal of *Freedom's* calibre. We're all on the same side, for God's sake (whoops, sorry!)

Peter Dodson

## Early Anarchism

Dear Editors,

A lot has been written recently on the subject of Christianity in relation to anarchism. Naturally this debate can continue until the end of time, but here it would be interesting to point out that *true* Christianity does indeed have anarchist characteristics. Indeed, no period better than seventeenth century England brings these traditions to light.

The English Civil War provided a unique opportunity for the propagation of radical Libertarian thought and deed. None were more radical (and none more feared by the state) than the Ranters. There were Antinomians (Calvin's 'lower class' alter-ego) who rejected any adherence to any law which imposed upon the liberty of the individual.

Fear of these individuals grew to such an extent that even Parliament ordered the confiscation and burning of several Ranter tracts. Luckily the many writings, or 'rantings' some would say, survived and became the bedrock of libertarianism. The tracts of Coppe, Salmon, Clarkson, etc., show a remarkable insight into how these

radicals fought against a world corrupted by money and state church power.

Ranters held strong pantheist views and believed that God resided in *all* mankind; and manifested itself as an 'inner light' many would call 'reason'. They disliked all authority and also any form of structured organisation, rejecting scripture as both dogmatic and a cunning conspiracy against the common people – though they were not above using scriptural 'proofs' for their own particular ends. 'All is Ours' was a slogan which echoed many of their actual beliefs: property and goods were to be held in common ... no such thing as sin ... no laws except one's own conscience ... that all people were born equal ... and all were part of God.

It was a call to a living 'faith' which placed individual liberty above the law, and gave the feeling of living life in the presence of the eternal. Death held no fear, for as a river runs back into the sea, then so man becomes absorbed back in his origin – creation.

Needless to say, persecution of these radicals was quick to follow, continuing throughout Cromwell's Protectorate and well beyond the Restoration period. Despite the crackdown, Antinomian belief continues to this day, remaining true to its libertarian heritage. To many Christians, Antinomianism still represents a threat which they believe must be combated at every level, including censorship, otherwise anarchy will reign!

Even John Wesley noted in his journal a meeting with an Antinomian whom he described as "Satan's first-born", which shows the fear and resentment of a free religious belief.

A free mind and a free soul naturally leads a person into confrontation with mankind's enemy – the state!

JP

## Christianity & Anarchism

Dear *Freedom*,

Mike Quentin-Hicks follows the advice of Brian Martin in *Strip the Experts*\* – when you are defeated on the facts, shift the focus of the debate.

His whole argument in his article of 16th May is based on the premise that "we do have many facts to go on" about the historical Jesus or Yeshu, a mystical teacher who also advocated justice and equality in the material world. Peter L. Dodson (11th July) concurs: the life of Jesus is "a well documented historical fact, rarely disputed even by atheists".

A host of experts demonstrate that the factual basis of his argument is untrue, so now he says it does not matter whether it is true or not. His Christianity is "a spiritual path not dependent on historical evidence", and all he wants is the same tolerance for religious contributors to *Freedom* as is given to materialists and atheists.

Another bit of advice from *Strip the Experts* – imply that the experts have hidden motives. *Nobody ever suggested that religious contributors should not be tolerated.* The question of religious tolerance never came up.

If we are going to debate religious tolerance, I am in favour of it. Religious anarchism – bowing to supernatural authority while rejecting earthly authority – is paradoxical but not self-contradictory. Let religious comrades be tolerated. Let them be welcomed as comrades.

But factual errors should always be corrected.

Donald Room

\* Brian Martin, *Strip the Experts*, Freedom Press, £1.95 post free inland, add 38p when ordering from abroad.

## Contentious Remarks?

Dear Editors,

Regarding your editorial comments on my letter (*Freedom*, 8th August). Far from "crossing swords" with me on the subject of pacifism "for forty years", you have avoided combat. In *Freedom* (20th October 1990) you reprinted a passage from *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* by V. Richards under the heading 'Anarchism and Violence', which I criticised in *Freedom*, 1st December 1990, on the grounds that its use of imprecise terminology confused the issue. You ignored it. It is my contention that the non-violence issue cannot be resolved until a distinction is made between premeditated and unpremeditated violence. This applies to the protagonists on both sides.

That I am not an 'absolute' pacifist has nothing whatever to do with my past Royal Air Force involvement – it is because I realise that all animals, including humans, instinctively react violently to attack on themselves, families and friends. However, the use of violence as a 'tactic', and armed violence, are necessarily premeditated acts and therefore contrary to the principle of non-violence.

It could be that my viewpoint is just as dodgy as yours in the estimation of most anarchists – but we shall never find out if you refuse to discuss the issue using precise terminology. It does you no credit to make personal remarks about myself while ignoring my criticism. Attacking the person instead of the argument is a sign of weakness. On behalf of the powerless women and innocent children who get caught in the crossfire between armed groups of men who claim to be acting purely defensively, I ask you to take up the debate on this matter of life or death before a Sarajevo comes to these shores.

Ernie Crosswell

### Correction

In our Editors' 'Contentious Remarks' (*Freedom*, 8th August) a misprint makes us write that "our good friend Crosswell on his own admission was one of HM's millions of conscripts, which perhaps explains why he is *not* such a fundamental pacifist". For *not* read *now* – Eds.

## On Authority

Dear *Freedom*,

The giveaway in Mike Quentin-Hicks' letter (8th August) is his qualification of 'authority' by the word 'worldly'. This is precisely the point at issue; the appeal of all religions to an 'unworldly' supernatural authority is exactly what anarchists are opposed to. What sticks in our craw is their saying that there is an authority above the individual conscience.

I share his admiration of liberation theology, religion is often the basis of resistance of oppressed people, but it becomes oppressive in its turn when victory is achieved. The Boers had a 'libertarian theology' in the Dutch Reformed Church when they were being oppressed by the British, and the sense that God was on their side played a large part in their eventual victory. Unfortunately they still believed that God was on their side.

One of the most constructive ways of combating theism that I have found is to question the place of gratitude in Christian prayer and liturgy. It is natural enough to be glad that one has the necessities of life, but to thank God for it is to imply that he is responsible. The inescapable conclusion is that he must also be responsible that so many lack necessities. One Catholic group I know has changed its ritual as a result of these objections.

But once religions concede that they are human creations, they will need anarchist support in their task of returning to earth the treasure wasted on heaven.

Peter Lumsden

## Proudhon's Federalism

Dear Editors,

I was a bit sorry that the only comment from an anarchist point of view on the talk I gave in Bologna on the federalism of Bakunin, Proudhon and Kropotkin, was David Hartley's note of surprise that I said that Proudhon advocated a right of secession in his theory of federalism (*Freedom*, 25th July). I freely admit that my only reason for saying so was footnote 23 on page xiv of Richard Vernon's translation of *The Principle of Federation*, where the editor explains that in a later work (*The Political Capacity of the Working Classes*) Proudhon "contends quite explicitly that there must be right of secession in any federal arrangement".

Colin Ward

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### 1992/1993 MEETINGS

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**2nd October** - General discussion

**9th October** - 'Anarchism and the Limits of Reform' (speaker Dave Dane)

**16th October** - General discussion

**23rd October** - 'Women in Society' (speaker: Mary Quintana)

**30th October** - General discussion

**6th November** - 'Work' (speaker George Walford)

**13th November** - General discussion

**20th November** - 'A Retiring Person' (speaker Peter Neville)

**27th November** - 'Prison in an Anarchist Society' (speaker Peter Lumsden)

**4th December** - General discussion

**11th December** - 'Exploiting the State' (speaker Andrew Lainton)

**8th January** - 'An Anarchist Daily' (speaker John Rety)

**15th January** - General discussion

**22nd January** - 'Whiteway And On' (speaker Michael Murray)

**29th January** - General discussion

**5th February** - 'Anarchism and Feminism' (speaker Lisa Bendall)

Meeting slots still available until 26th March 1993 and from 23rd April to 9th July 1993

We are now booking speakers and topics for the 1992-93 season. This is from 25th

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September to 11th December 1992, then from 8th January to 26th March and 23rd April to 9th July 1993. 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. Overseas and out-of-town speakers are particularly welcome. 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).

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