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“When something becomes the fashion, that is the time to put a bomb under it.”
Joan Littlewood

NOW IT'S THE TURN OF THE PARTY CONFERENCE SILLY SEASON

The so called political silly season is over. Ministers, and their gurus, the politicians and their hangers-on, have returned from their far-flung holidays to take over the reins of power and to pontificate on how to solve the world's problems. But before the Westminster talking-shop reopens the parties and the trades unions will be holding their seaside jamborees.

The media have been doing their best to help influential TUC leaders to chuck out poor old Norman Willis if he doesn't decide to go quietly. The Tories are threatened by their 'Maastricht Sceptics', the anti-ERM, lower-interest-rates and other

lobbies all much more concerned with narrow sectional financial interests than with a 'United Europe'. But we are sure that when it comes to the point on no account will they rock the Tory boat!

As for the Liberals, they will need to woo the Labour Party or stagnate. Nobody will bother over-much about the Greens, who are obviously more efficient in destroying their party than in building it up (membership down from 24,000 to 8,500). Three leaders have gone - one to replace 'God' and save mankind (he should have stuck to football), the other two in a huff, and we imagine they have discovered greener pastures for their political

futures. (After all, David Owen's recent meteoric rise in the political hierarchy, in spite of being known as the creator of a party which has gone into liquidation, must surely give them an idea or two about their possible futures, if only in the House of Lords!)

With possibly another four years as Her Majesty's Opposition, the Labour Party delegates can afford to present a united front at their conference, if only to give the new 'shadow cabinet' time to settle down (as if they hadn't already!). Meanwhile one imagines Neil Kinnock will be writing his memoirs. He has already made a good start in the world of journalism with a feature article on the editorial page of *The Observer* ('Europe has the only cure for sterling'). As for the former deputy-
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The Money Market Place

How ridiculously the Neanderthal Tories defend British sovereignty and a paper currency (all the coins are not worth tuppence, melted down) when it is so obvious that it is just another commodity in the Tories' boasted free market which must face the realities of *supply and demand*. They are obviously humiliated at the thought that the 'enemies' of 1939-45 'we' defeated are now the bosses (financially) of Europe. If only they read *Freedom* at the time, we told them so and why. *Germany and Japan were not allowed to have a war industry after 1945*. They built modern consumer industries out of the ruins of war and captured the markets!

Mr Grinning Major recently boasted of the £ sterling taking over from the German mark as the determining currency in the EC at the same time as the Chancellor was buying up surplus pounds on the market with a borrowed \$7,000 million in order to prevent the pound from going below its ERM base! What sovereignty is left

when the whole economy of a country is determined by the financial market place, by supply and demand?

Before the Russians opted for the chaos of capitalism they had the rouble as their internal currency and for all external commerce they used foreign currency. So apart from loans and credit, they imported what they could pay for with foreign currency obtained from exports. Thus the rouble and the cost of living was not affected (indeed, the price of bread had not changed in twenty years) by outside market forces, apart from consumer goods which had been imported.

This is no longer so. The rouble is related to foreign currencies, inflation is escalating about 100% per annum, and more and more people are realising that the joys of joining the capitalist system has produced penury for millions of former Soviet citizens. Out of the frying pan, into the fire!

Poaching on the Rich to Feed the Poor

Pensioners enjoyed an unexpected treat when Robin Hood style poachers anonymously delivered packages of stolen salmon to their homes.

With the deliveries came a printed card: "From your caring poachers. We take from the rich and give to the poor."

About twelve packages were left at homes in the Sutherland village of Helmsdale, including ten at a sheltered housing complex which overlooks a top fishing river. One woman, concerned about receiving stolen goods, phoned the police to ask what she should do with the salmon. "First take a pan of cold water ..." began an officer in reply.

(Source: *East Anglian Daily Times*, 10th September 1992)

NOW IT'S THE TURN OF THE PARTY CONFERENCE SILLY SEASON

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leader Roy Hattersley, he is already an established journalist/author and certainly more radical in that field than as a Labour politician. So they won't be troubling the new-look Labour shadow cabinet, which has been described as consisting of a right-wing minority (a minority including John Smith and the two whiz-kids Brown and Blair), supported by a majority of right-of-centre MPs and is considered to be even more to the right than Kinnock's bunch.

So what is left of the 'left' of the Labour Party hierarchy? A few voices which can still get a hearing in the capitalist press (generally in order to bash the Labour Party) and include Peter Shore, Tony Benn (both lifelong opponents of the EEC) and Brian Sedgemore (a lifelong pro-European), all of whom berate the Smith shadow cabinet for "adopting monetary policies barely distinguishable from those of the government".

Since the Labour Party can afford to throw away £6 million on fighting the general elections but could not even 'afford' to keep the *Labour Weekly* going (let alone *The Daily Herald* which ended up being today's *Sun!*), the Labour left have only two outlets: *The Tribune* weekly and more recently the (Tony Benn inspired?) *Socialist* which appeared fortnightly to start with but is just holding on as a tabloid monthly and is more interesting and radical than the older *Tribune*. Both journals are most critical of Labour Party policies. In passing, mention should also be made to articles appearing in the *New Statesman & Society*.

But not one of these journals or their contributors, and they include Bill Morris the new General Secretary of the TGWU (one of the largest unions and a valuable sponsor of *Tribune*), and 'Red' Ken Livingstone, ever suggests that the function of socialists is to seek to destroy the capitalist system! On the contrary, they all have their pet theories as to how a Labour Government would succeed in making the capitalist system work for everybody's benefit!

For instance, Mr Sedgemore (not a blue-eyed utopian idealistic anarchist, but a tough lawyer) is for a 12% devaluation of the pound within the ERM and suggests that there will be a backbench rebellion among the Labour

Party members if the "leadership fails to adopt an alternative economic policy and revive the commitment to the concept of full employment".

Full employment in a capitalist system is a nonsense. The only time when it appeared more or less workable was after the Second World War, that is thanks to the ghastly loss of life plus the wholesale destruction of millions of houses, and the infrastructure. Does Mr Sedgemore want another war, perhaps, to clear the air?

Tony Benn is the only one of the Labour Party left who really raises the questions that any socialist still in Labour should be asking. In a *Guardian* article ('A shot in the arm of democracy', 27th August) he asks:

"Why is it that at the moment when this country faces so many urgent and difficult problems, British politics have become so stale and stagnant?"

And he replies by pointing out that there is nowadays "no real argument going on about alternative policies" for apart from "minor criticisms of individuals" the "degree of agreement that exists between all the political leaders" is unanimous. We

also heartily agree with Mr Benn when he says:

"No one is now permitted to suggest the possibility that what has gone wrong might be attributable, at least in part, not to wicked ministers but to the economic system itself. The word 'capitalism' has been steadily removed from our political vocabulary along with 'socialism', and this has happened inside as well as outside the Labour Party."

Obviously Mr Benn does not see *Freedom*, but it wouldn't matter all that much if he did for he is as committed to authoritarian politics and the capitalist system as are all the new Labour 'shadow cabinet'. He outlines his seven alternative policies, all of which remain securely in the existing social and economic system.

In our opinion socialists, as well as anarchists, should be united in working for the defeat of the capitalist system, and this will never be achieved in a million years by those who advocate being part of the machinery of capitalism. Tony Benn with all his experience, both as a Minister and a long-serving Member of Parliament, on his own admission had observed the degeneration of the Labour Party and yet if he would be happy just to convert the ossified bureaucracy to use the world 'socialism' now and then as well as execrating 'capitalism' at least once a year at conference, he must be denounced as a phoney who enjoys the publicity which he would not receive were he to join the

socialists and anarchists in the wilderness who are genuinely seeking to put forward the alternatives not to the various capitalist theories for its salvation but for its abolition. And it has to be done not from inside the establishment but in the street where the people are!

POSTSCRIPT

What is important to stress for our non-anarchist readers is that the Labour Party has never been socialist and has consistently moved over the years more and more to the right. On another page we reproduce an editorial from *Freedom*, 'Great Future for Contented Cows' published in 1964, which confirms this view and also deals with an anarchist viewpoint on the trade unions and their relationship to the Labour Party, a burning topic today.

This article is one of a collection of *Freedom* editorials written during the years 1951 to 1964 when Labour was in opposition. Published in volume form with the title *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy* (Freedom Press, 142 pages, ISBN 0 900384 16 6, £2 post free inland). Any socialist with illusions as to being able to 'reform' the Labour Party can save wasting his/her time for a modest outlay of £2!

The Merchants of Death are in business with a vengeance

The Cold War, which was the justification for escalating the so called 'defence' programmes in the United States and most Western European countries – and in particular in this country where the percentage of GDP spent on 'defence' was the highest in Europe – has been declared officially to have ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union. But not so the need to keep up our military power, according to the experts and the new Minister of Defence (who was recently promoted from the Ministry of Transport and before that was an expert on Scottish Affairs – how versatile are these politicians, but they are not experts in any real sense of the word other than being like good actors able to quickly learn their parts). Thatcher too warned

against lowering our 'defences' (after all, son Mark was doing very well in the Middle East selling arms, especially when he was preceded by mama! How else could such a thick-head now be worth £20 million).

With the capitalist system in what we hope could prove to be a terminal recession, the last thing the politicians (and the war industry) can afford to do is to suggest that we are living in, or at least in sight of, a peaceful world. To do so more millions of workers will be on the dole and many industrial enterprises (and their shareholders) will be in the doldrums – or even in Carey Street.

It is ironical that the five permanent and influential – since they are enjoying the veto – members of the United Nations Security Council are the main producers and exporters of arms!

At the moment the two most publicised arms deals are by the United States. One wonders why Taiwan really needs 150 F-16 fighters at a cost of £2,000 million, or why Saudi Arabia

needs 72 F-15 fighter-bombers costing about £2,500 million. Where are their targets?

Needless to say, China has protested to Bush reminding him of the 1982 agreement between the two countries to limit arms sales to Taiwan, and threatening to import less war planes from the USA! It's crazy isn't it? But this is capitalism, politics, corruption, the lot. And the Jewish American lobby is up in arms over the arms deal with Saudi Arabia. After all, the Saudis may have been America's staunchest allies in the Gulf massacre of some 200,000 Iraqi civilians in record time, and are even now hosting the latest British and American incursion in Iraq, but the leopard can't change its spots: they are ARABS!

Bush, as a pragmatist, (how else can a politician survive?) has weighed up the situation as far as his planned future is concerned – which is to spend the next four years with Barbara in the White House – so it's a matter of votes. On balance, he needs more the votes of the workers in the war and ancillary industries than of the Jewish lobby which, his advisers have probably told him, represent only a minority of the Jewish vote anyway. When you realise that in 1991 the United States sold a record \$41,000 million (£20,000 million) in arms which represented 10% of US exports, and then add to that three or four times as much to supply US 'defence' requirements, one realises that Bush and Co not only cannot afford, in capitalist terms, to axe the arms and 'defence' industry but would not be allowed to do so by all the vested interests for whom the idea of peace would spell bankruptcy and mass unemployment.

GOOD NEWS

CAPITALISM KAPUT!

Surely the good news for anarchists and genuine socialists is that the capitalist system is as bankrupt, if not more so, as Kevin Maxwell, recently declared owing a mere £400 million.

The very fact that all the capitalist 'experts' have different solutions to the present world crisis just goes to show that the system is in a terminal decline from which we hope it cannot recover.

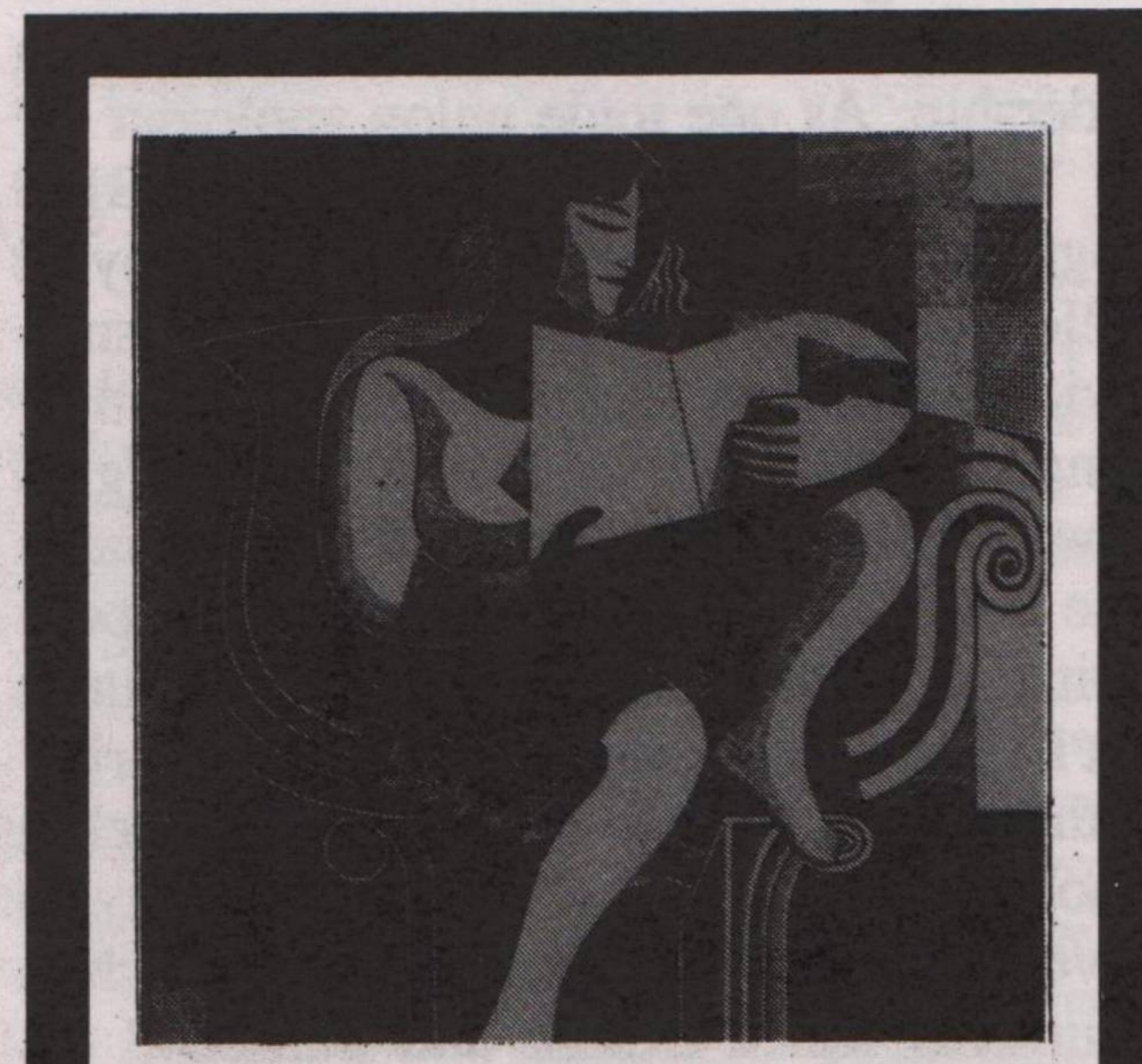
Capitalism today depends on consumers having the means to purchase more than they need. And in the 1980s they were encouraged to do just that (including buying their houses at inflated prices) by being offered credit galore. The bubble has burst and unemployment in the south east is where it is hitting hardest and repossessions are increasing all the time, as white collar Tory voters who have never dreamed of unemployment stalking them are having to give up their £250,000 residences, and the banks are writing off billions of pounds of mortgages and loans they won't recover.

Unlike the Labour Party and all the left who are advising the government how to salve the capitalist system, we welcome its crisis,

and we repeat that we look forward to its demise.

BUT all systems, however bad, go on surviving if no alternative is presented. So until an alternative to the capitalist system is seriously advanced and accepted in our society we shall go on having an economy which will increasingly favour more and more the large multi-national enterprises in industry and our agriculture will also end up in the hands of the giant supermarkets, who are already in a financial position to tell growers what to grow and at what price. And those at the poverty level will continue to increase.

Anarchists are certainly in the wilderness today. But we go on advocating anarchism because we are convinced that when people will, at long last, see through the bankruptcy of capitalism they will realise that the anarchist alternative is the only one that offers everybody a comfortable material life with freedom – that is also the time to 'do your own thing'.



ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR

CONWAY HALL
RED LION SQUARE, LONDON WC1
17th OCTOBER 1992

CORRECTION

At the end of the Editorial Comment 'Inflation Down – Unemployment Up' (22nd August) we are made to say: "And thirdly they have commissioned the fourth Trident missile, and are also committed to the billions which Germany has turned down ..."

The italicised nonsense should read: "and are also committed to the £20 billions project on the European Fighter aircraft, in spite of the fact that Germany has withdrawn from it".

Yugoslavia

The First Casualty

War between states is an atrocity and it is not surprising that it brings out what is worst in humankind. Civil wars are of a completely different nature. The 'enemy' is known personally: your near neighbour, perhaps, your employer or the local police, the priest or politician who have lorded it over for years without resistance. So from a certain point of view the reaction in civil wars, especially in the first days of the clash, can be more violent, involving feelings of hatred or revenge, than in impersonal wars between states in which the conscripts ordered to kill don't even know the 'enemy'.

For the same reasons, however, we imagine that acts of heroism – of sheltering a friend who is in the wrong place (which can so easily be the case in Yugoslavia at present) – happen all the time. After all, the history books only talk of the holocaust. The innumerable number of Jews who were given shelter by their neighbours and survived are not recorded. Yet surely this is something deserving to be remembered?

It was rightly said in the First World War that *Truth is the first Casualty in War*. And in civil wars too. This writer recalls the press reactions to the Spanish Civil War of 1936-39. With the exception of *The Manchester Guardian* (as *The Guardian* of today then was), the media were pro-Franco and we were subjected to a bombardment of 'atrocities' in which the 'Reds' would set fire to churches, murdered the priests and raped the nuns. No atrocities on Franco's side, of course!

The media today have targeted the Serbs as the enemy and the atrocities are being retailed with gusto. So far as we have seen, only *New Statesman & Society* (31st July) has exposed the way the atrocity stories are being manufactured in the civil war in Yugoslavia by the media, as they were quite prepared to do in World War One and the Spanish Civil War and World War Two. We cannot summarise this well-documented report by Karl Waldron in the space available, but what is interesting is that both the Croats and the Serbs are paying public relations firms in this country (and presumably in the rest of the Western world) to flog their propaganda with the media, which may explain why Yugoslavia fills the news columns of the 'serious' press (the tabloids have more important topics with which to titillate their readers). The *New Statesman & Society* article ('Spin Doctors of War') also very importantly examines an 'atrocity story' which received prominent press coverage here and follows it through from its origins and cannot but come to the conclusion that it was 'manufactured'.

But surely this does not come as a surprise? When will we really know what is happening in Yugoslavia, in Afghanistan, in Ethiopia, in Somalia, and a hundred other corners of the world where at least the one thing we do know without doubt is that the poor majority are bashed and starving and their oppressors are living it up with the support of the G7 capitalist moguls.

The media are part and parcel of a worldwide conspiracy against the poor and oppressed.

AT BLACKPOOL

TUC Invites the Boss Man

Fifty delegates at the TUC conference at Blackpool last week walked out when the CBI £130,000 a year Director General, Howard Davies, mounted the rostrum to harangue the assembled delegates, among other things, that public sector workers should receive rises only were they justified by 'productivity'. According to *The Independent Labour Editor* (9th September):

"To interruptions from activists from government unions, he said that there should be tight control on their pay, which should be subject to the same disciplines as in private industry."

To this overpaid expert we would like to ask how can the 10.30 train from anywhere be made more

productive? By rounding up people in the street and obliging them to travel on the 10.30? This mania about 'productivity' is yet another excuse for wanting to 'privatise' all services and end up with no service.

The delegates walking out were led by the miners' president Arthur Scargill and railway and some teachers' delegates.

According to John Pilger in *New Statesman* (11th September) on the opening day of the conference:

"... the silence was, as usual, interrupted by Arthur Scargill who said the unions should break Tory trade union laws just as millionaire shop owners defied Sunday trading laws. For his clarity, he received a rousing reception as usual, which was hardly reported – as usual. But this year there is a difference: the beginning, I believe, of a movement of mass resistance, with or without the TUC."

We only hope he's right. If only the unemployed made a start!

Tory Fifth Column at BBC?

The Tories are always protesting about the Labour bias among the news presenters on the BBC, and especially so during the recent election campaign. *Socialist's* diarist Cyn Street (June 1992) points to the number of Tory MPs' wives in key positions at the BBC at the time:

"'Panorama' reporter Jan Corbyn is married to former Treasury minister John Maples (who lost his West Lewisham seat). 'Newsnight' presenter Sue Cameron is married to Tory MP Keith Hampson. And, scandalously, 'Behind the Headlines' producer Anna Arki, who is married to Tory Euro MP Bill Newton-Dunn, worked in Conservative Central Office under her married name, helping to churn out Tory election propaganda.

Talk about one law for them ... Can you imagine the fuss that would have been made if a senior BBC producer had been helping Labour's campaign team!"

Up with Skool!

According to a recent survey, most children find the summer holidays too long and boring:

"Two-thirds of 5 to 7 year olds and half of 8 to 11 year olds looked forward to the autumn term, and 54% said they would rather have a shorter break, according to Research & Auditing Services, who questioned 386 children.

Many said there was nothing to do, no one to do it with and the weather never lived up to expectations.

One in five 8 to 11 year olds spent at least five hours a day watching television or videos.

A third of boys and a quarter of girls read no books in the holidays."

No wonder they can't spell!

There are anarchists who argue that it is unrealistic to expect the trade unions to be what they were never intended to be. Even if we limit ourselves to that definition which states the function of the trade unions to be 'an organised association of workmen of a trade formed for protection and promotion of common interests' what reason is there to assume that these 'common interests' must inevitably always be the same. To write off the trade unions as reactionary and conservative bodies *per se* ignores the fact, as pointed out by the Webbs in their *History of Trade Unionism*, that they have "at various dates during the past century at any rate, frequently had aspirations towards a revolutionary change in social and economic relations". Are the trade unions today pillars of capitalism because of their structure and leadership, or are they what they are because the membership is what it is? Is the trade union movement reactionary because its members are concerned with improving their economic situation regardless of questions of social status and human dignity? If this is the case anarchists, it seems to us, can help to reverse the trend, not by seeking to draw away the revolutionary elements from the workers' movement, and thus leaving it even more at the mercy of the professional negotiators (while achieving very little with a revolutionary organisation which represents an infinitesimal section of the working class), but by working within the unions as anarchists, supporting the day to day demands for improved working conditions and a larger slice of the cake of production, and at the same time using every opportunity that presents itself to underline the ephemeral nature of legalistic methods of wage increases so long as the people do not control the means of production, the land, and all the sources of natural wealth.

Less than half the working community in Britain belongs to a trade union. It is true that among the 58% outside the unions are individuals who are militants and who either have a 'conscientious objection' to belonging or are not eligible, but let us be realistic and

GREAT FUTURE FOR CONTENTED COWS

Reflections on the relationship of anarchists to the trades unions in an editorial in *Freedom* weekly in 1964.

recognise that we shall find more revolutionaries among the 'organised' 42% than among the other 58%, apart from the fact that eight million organised workers are much more a potential force against the status quo than eleven million non-union workers.

Anarchists have a more important part to play in the trade unions today than ever before – at least so far as the affluent nations of the West are concerned. For if the trade unions have become, as it were, part of the establishment, it is because the 'prosperity' of the working class is as much the concern of the ruling class as it is of the trade union leadership. As one trade union apologist for the 'closed shop' pointed out in a BBC programme the other night, many employers 'welcome' it – that is 100% trade unionism – obviously because they then know where they stand and are not involved in struggles between the workers themselves. At the same time we read of union leaders who oppose limitation of company profits on the grounds that it is against the interests – the 'prosperity' of the workers!* It seems to us that such a chaotic situation is a golden opportunity to drive home to the workers the anarchist arguments which expose and transcend the petty interests both of boss and 'boss's man'.

The *raison d'être* of capitalism is, as ever, production for profit. The giant strides made in the field of technology during World War Two in the interests of 'bigger and better' destruction could not suddenly be turned off like a tap when Man eventually stopped slaughtering Man, and the problem which has faced the industrialists in the post-war years

has been that of productive potential outstripping purchasing power on a scale undreamed of in the pre-1914 or the inter-war years. In an effort to expand markets for the industrial nations all kinds of financial expedients have been resorted to; at home it is hire purchase facilities, and for the have-not countries long term loans and 'aid'. But this is not a new solution. Britain was doing just this in the nineteenth century, and just as the long term effect was to create, as Cole puts it, "powerful rivals to the British producer ... and bitter rivals in the remaining markets of the world", so the industrial development of the undeveloped countries today can only be viewed as a stop-gap solution to the problem which, if anything, will blow up on a much bigger scale than ever in the not too distant future.

The industrialists and their economic 'experts' are obviously aware of what is building up. We believe that they have discarded war as either a solution or even a regulator, whatever they may think of the effectiveness of a cold war economy. And because, in this writer's opinion, financiers, industrialists and politicians no less than CNDers, Committee of 100 and anarchists, want to go on living, an H-bomb war has been discarded because the destruction of mankind – capitalists, politicians and industrialists included – does not solve the problems of capitalism.

What then are the kinds of solutions one may expect in the next fifty years under a capitalist system? We foresee an intensification of monopoly on an international scale in order to streamline production of specific commodities to levels

which have a relation to 'demand' (industrialists denounce *nationalisation* but have no objection to take-overs, Common Markets and other monopolistic measures and set-ups. Where's the difference? Is it not significant that a Dr Beeching is as much at home as boss of a nationalised industry as he was as boss of Imperial Chemicals Industry?) We also foresee that workers will enjoy greater purchasing power, will work fewer hours (with new industries thriving on the exploitation of leisure) and that the unemployed, the aged and other unemployable members of society will have a New Deal. All that the trade unions of the past struggled to achieve for their members will be done by the employers' corporations automatically, not out of love for workers, but in the interest of profits and the maintenance of privileges. The only snag in this utopia of contented cows will be that though everybody in the West has all the gadgets, the services and the time-consuming pastimes that man's ingenuity can think up, the world will be suffering from a chronic shortage of food. Or will capitalists have found by then how to make food production as profitable as the manufacture of useless gadgetry?

We have attempted to present a picture of the capitalist future because we believe that only by seeking to foresee what our rulers have in store for us and concentrating our propaganda on the real dangers, can our efforts be used to their best advantage. And this applies with added force to the trade union movement which has the power, if only the rank and file could be made conscious of it, to halt the trends we have outlined – or at least those which will result in the concentration and consolidation of power, economic and political, in huge international combines – and seek to direct the great discoveries, the 'breakthroughs', in the fields of science and technology towards satisfying the basic needs of all mankind.

Editorial from *Freedom* weekly, 26th April 1964, and reprinted in *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy*, 142 pages, ISBN 0 900384 16 6, £2.

* A view shared by G.D.H. Cole.

The people who claim authority over learning, the administrators and their experts, have gone bonkers. Schools are hardly distinguishable from prisons and asylums. The latest 'improvement' is a new privatised Chief Inspector of Schools, one Professor Sutherland, who knows precisely the context in which we learn as well as what we should learn. Does his authority tally with anybody's experience? It certainly doesn't with mine. My 'worst' teachers forced me to find out for myself or from my mates. Fantastic courses I've attended left me with nothing but temporary good feelings. Some of the worst books I've read have stung me into action, caused sleepless nights and generally mauled my mind. I can't recall ever learning anything useful in the classroom. Learning often takes place informally, by accident. There are no rules, only guidelines. Furthermore, learning has nothing to do with passing exams, absolutely nothing. So who can tell me what is good teaching or identify one experience from which we will all learn?

The new privatised OFSTED of course, set to maintaining standards of good education and promising to look into the 200 schools 'giving the educational authorities cause for anxiety'. This charade is just the latest whack for teachers from a totalitarian regime that's determined to convert them to neurotic slaves and indoctrinate the kids into jobs that don't exist and make them consumers of processed foods, plastic baubles and government propaganda. You only had to see Professor

Expert Inadequacy and Tragic Flaws

Sutherland on the box to know that his title is a euphemism for bureaucrat. Dead men are running every public show in the country now.

Next day the 'new' Granada Television Chief was announced, an accountant, Charles Allen, 35 years young. So there is another problem solved. Television programmes just need a bit of business acumen to be transformed from the trash most of them are to something which is exciting, stimulating, informing, and the rest. If people from the business world are so smart, what the hell is wrong with the economy and company profits. After selling off the assets most of them can't even make money. Then we had in *The Independent* (9th September) all those clichés from Mr Allen about what he was going to do to make Granada more creative. No mention of making money. What's the difference anyway? Allen's in good company. Uganda's one-time President Idi Amin used to call his extermination corps the Research Department.

I've always been an adherent of the theory that whatever a man is selling publicly that's his tragic flaw. The world of ideas is obviously beyond Professor Sutherland. I imagine he can't do, teach or teach teachers either, so he's just the man to be Chief Inspector of Schools. As for young Allen, he's never been able to get to grips with anything creative or original in his life so he fled to accounting. I always thought the accountant's tragic flaw was an inability to grasp the concept of number, which would explain why they are so often adding on or dropping off noughts in their calculations. These days they can even turn their errors to advantage. It's called creative accounting. Perhaps that's where Allen got the idea he'd make the Picasso or Einstein of the television world.

Of course, this tragic flaw theory is only part of the picture, I've no doubt many of us are good at things because we possess some innate skills and more besides. However, these days authority imposes so much red-tape around 'task' that one needs to be obsessive and one-eyed to make a go of it. Obsession has more to do with inadequacy than talent. It is this underlying inadequacy with which we must all grapple from birth that anarchists

need to acknowledge, explore and prod if we are to knock authority and expertise off their pedestal.

This living more comfortably with our frailties is not helped by the way we think. The emphasis on mutually exclusive categories of experience gets us into all manner of difficulty, for human conduct is either competent or inadequate. The public world makes the negative categories taboo. So we devote endless effort, including the unthinking embrace of technology, to covering up ignorance, inadequacy and failure. The politics of authority and expertise is to prey on these frailties, that's what service now means.

I used to get invited to Australia every so often to engage in 'expert activities'. As most of my ideas were juvenile, irreligious or just plain bad, people were always asking me for my qualifications which I had neglected to advertise because they are fraudulent. I eventually solved the problem by putting the letters TTI after my name. When asked what this represented I put a stop to any further questioning on this line by answering that it meant I was trained to incapacity. Industrial education does indeed disable us by narrowing perspectives, outlawing the

vernacular, abstracting subjects from context, being intolerant of human diversity and generally reducing the scope for communicating with our fellow man.

Though man likes to think he's the smartest creature in the circus he's also the slowest animal to discard his infantile helplessness and dependence. It is the role of the state to ensure he doesn't succeed. Inadequacy and ignorance are our primary condition. Even in maturity we are all knowledgeable and ignorant, a success and a failure, competent and incompetent, good and bad. The categories are not really mutually exclusive at all. They each define and need the other.

So here we are in 1992 with man on the brink of 'discovering' the mess we're in comes from selling out to external authorities - government, employment, bank, education, etc - the slag-heaps for all our frailties. Dumping our insecurities on this lot does little more than deny ourselves the experiences of living. There's no problem that matters which they can solve. The securities they offer prove to be illusory. They have nothing but nothing to do with the experience of success, learning, wisdom or fun. It's time we got off our arses, shot the experts and acknowledged that our helplessness and inadequacy are part and parcel of our lives to be endured and endlessly worked on.

If Professor Sutherland and Mr Allen were to be paid nearer to what they are worth, say £200 a week, we might just get a bit of sound judgement and wisdom from them too.

Denis Pym

MALATESTA ON TRADE UNIONS

"The trade unions are, by their very nature, reformist and never revolutionary. The revolutionary spirit must be introduced, developed and maintained by the constant actions of revolutionaries who work from within their ranks as well as from outside, but it cannot be the normal, natural definition of the trade unions function. On the contrary, the real and immediate interests of organised workers, which is the unions' role to defend, are very often in conflict with their ideals and forward-looking objectives; and the union can only act in a revolutionary way if permeated by a spirit of sacrifice and to the extent that the ideal is given precedence over the interest, that is, only if, and to the extent that, it ceases to be an economic union and becomes a political and idealistic group. And this is not possible in the large trade unions which in order to act need the approval of the masses always more or less egotistic, timorous and backward." (1922)

The above is a short extract from the chapter 'Anarchists and the Working Class Movements' in *Malatesta: Life and Ideas*, 312 pages, £4 (post free inland).

THE RAVEN - 18
ANTHROPOLOGY,
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HM Inspectors

Given that four successive elections (the last of which was held at a time when even the blindest must have been aware that we were in the early stages of the slump) have produced Tory governments, there is obviously something fundamentally wrong with our educational system. (Though somehow one doesn't feel that those most clamorous in criticising it are anxious to redress the system's obvious failure to teach people how to think.)

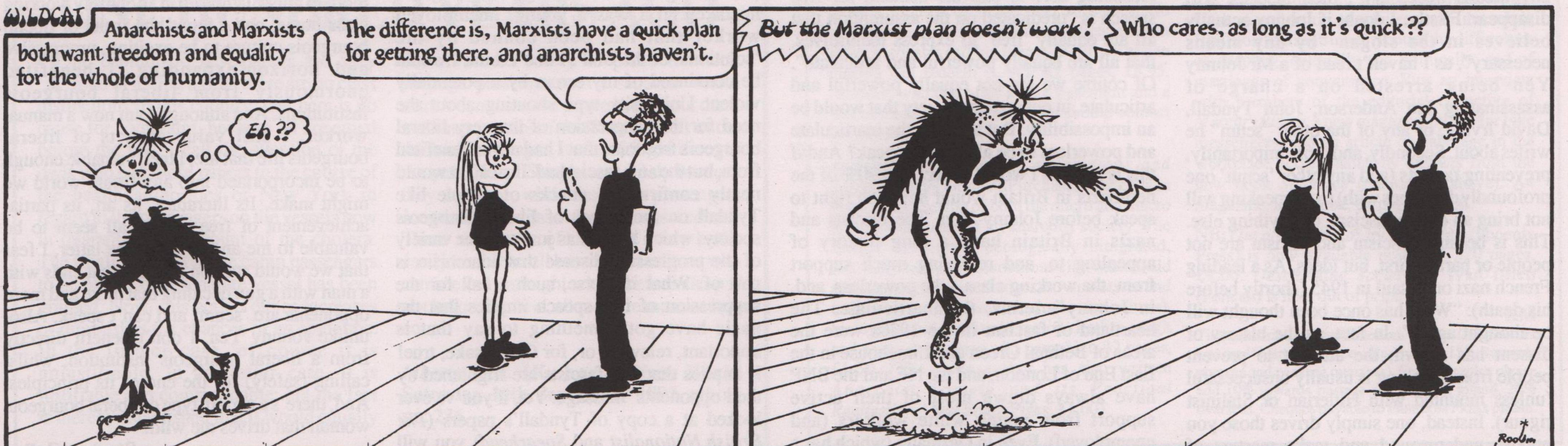
The government, which has been alleging for years that the schools are bad and that it is all because of trendy socialist teachers, now says it has a report from inspectors which confirms this view. Curiously it doesn't intend to print this; while insisting that the evidence in and conclusions of the report confirm its arguments, it is refraining from revealing this evidence or these conclusions. It is just selectively quoting from the report.

It is, of course, the nature of any academic thesis that it has to consider and assess every possible explanation (however unlikely) for an observed event, that it has to eliminate all impossibilities in order to attain an idea of what is most likely, and so even where the writer thinks a potential argument ignorant and absurd, it has to be listed in order to give

the reasons for rejecting it. So the thesis will read: 'we observed so and so ... the reasons for this, of course, just could be X, Y or Z, but X would seem unlikely since ... Y hardly less unlikely because ...'

So any study and discussion of any situation where remarkably high examination results had been observed by a competent panel would, by definition, have to include the words: 'It is conceivable that these results were achieved as the result of falling standards' (along with other possible explanations) and this would be before any statement such as 'our examination of previous tests, and our observation of people's marking, does not however accord with this possibility'. Since the government obstinately refuses to publish the report as a whole (no doubt it is now an official secret and any of the inspectors who pointed out that they were being misrepresented would be betraying a government confidence and could easily be discredited for so doing), and since this government has been notable for being able to manage economy of truth, if not the financial economy, one must suspect that something of this sort has occurred.

LO



Love, Sex and Power in Later Life

Love, Sex and Power in Later Life: a libertarian perspective, by Tony Gibson
101 pages, Freedom Press, £3.50 (post free inland)

One of the surprises of the contemporary social scene is the way so many young people, whilst enjoying for themselves the benefits of the sexual revolution of the past forty or so years, cannot accept that older people not only fuck but actually like fucking. The irony of this is compounded when one considers that the generation the young would condemn to an asexual Darby & Joan existence is the one that was the most involved in achieving liberation from the sexually repressive attitudes of church and state which they now enjoy.

The campaign against late Victorian sexual hypocrisy dates back to the early years of this century, when Marie Stopes in Britain and Ruth Sanger in the US, braved 'public opinion' and the wrath of the state by providing information on birth control, making it easier for couples to enjoy sex without the fear of unwanted pregnancies. The young now reap the benefits of the subsequent revolution in sexual mores, whilst those in later life must sometimes wonder why 'public opinion' seeks to deny the same freedoms to them. True, ageism has joined racism and sexism as a signifier of a set of unacceptable attitudes, but with ageism these are more concerned with employment whilst the sexual aspects remain generally taboo. So, Tony Gibson's book is most timely and to be welcomed and the publishers, Freedom Press, are to be congratulated.

Tony, who needs no introduction to readers of *Freedom* whether young or old, has produced a well-structured account of the social and professional pressures to conform sexually as they have changed over the past

thirty years and in particular how they have affected, or in many cases failed to affect, the older generations. The contributions to this sexual revolution made by such internationally known scientists and writers as W. Reich, A.C. Kinsey, A. Comfort, W.H. Masters and V.E. Johnson, are acknowledged and assessed but we are also reminded of the contributions made by writers less well known outside the anarchist movement, including John Hewetson, Philip Sansom and Tony Gibson himself.

An essential part of this movement for sexual liberation involved the struggle by women to overcome the hypocrisy of a male dominated society. Anarchists and anarchist women in particular, by the lifestyle and the values they held, were active participants and many in the feminist movement were influenced by these values, traditions of thought and, most significantly, anarchist organisational methods and structures. It is unfortunate that not all anarchist males found it easy to cope with some of these attitudinal changes when they met them in feminist guise.

The myth that to be old is to be asexual is dispelled in the book and the physiological changes that do occur as we grow older are discussed and put in perspective. Although this is no DIY instruction manual it is made clear that these changes can be quite naturally accommodated and can indeed materially enhance the pleasures of sex. The old adage, use it or lose it, is as applicable here as anywhere.

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The tyranny of the professional is a topic that crops up not infrequently in contemporary anarchist writings and here the professionals are the doctors and other health care workers who do not see their patients as individuals with emotions and feelings but as machines to be repaired. The medical profession is very conservative and the elderly, when, in their wish to live a full life,

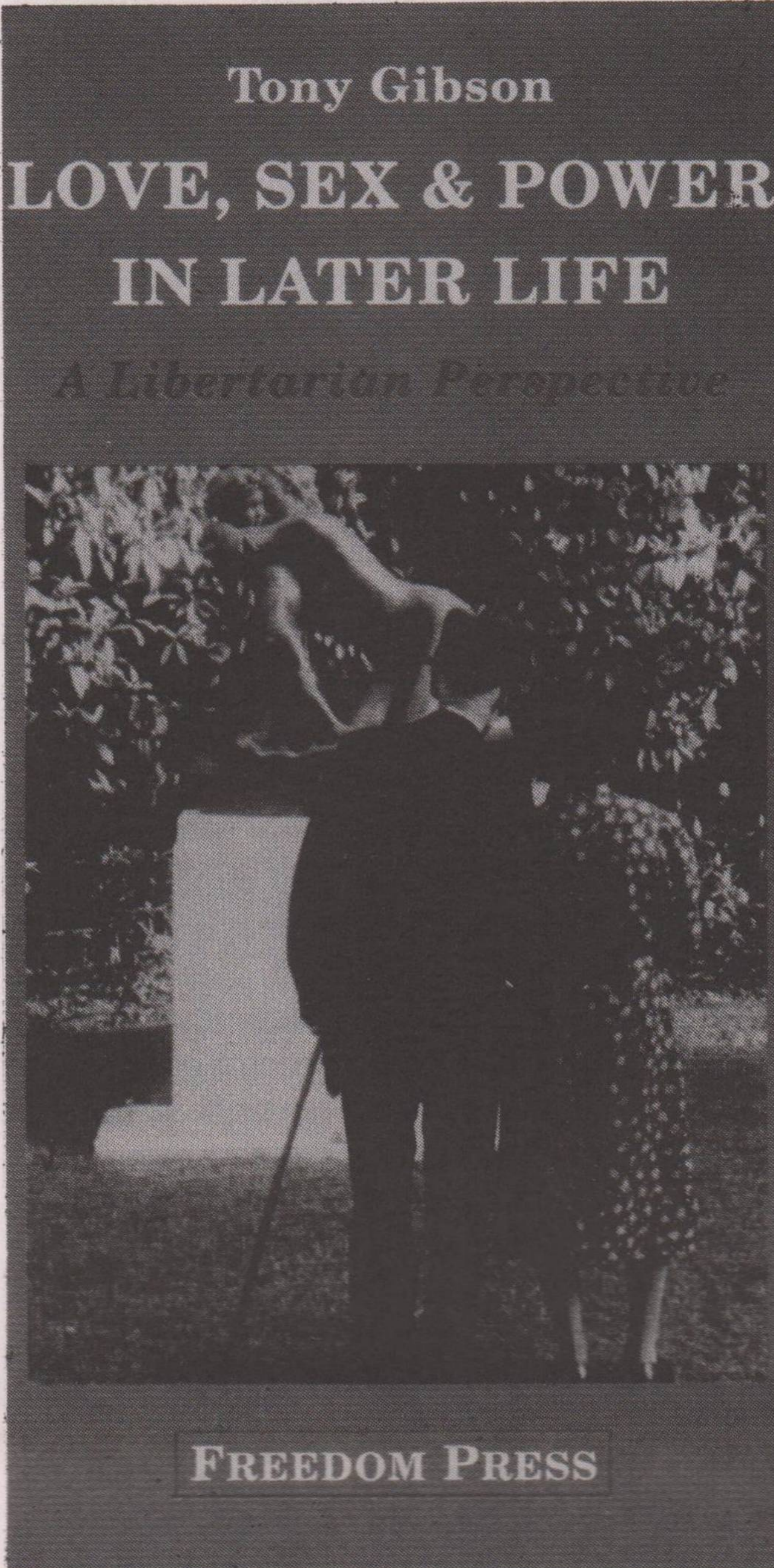
seek medical help often find themselves as disadvantaged as do the physically handicapped of all ages. If not thought too old to mend, they are viewed just as potential prostatectomies or hysterectomies. Of course ill health is likely to reduce sexual desire and capacity and is more common in later life, but this is true of ill health at any age. The need is for advice and treatment, but how often are the elderly told that they must just accept their lot? However, professional attitudes are changing, if slowly, and the reader is introduced to the relevant literature.

The problems that may be met on retirement and the difficulties created by the increasing gender imbalance with age, especially when ageism is compounded by sexism, are discussed with compassion and helpful advice offered. A libertarian concept of sexuality is outlined in which masculinity is not a matter of phallic prowess, but of giving and receiving sensual pleasure and emotional satisfaction, using a whole range of lovemaking techniques known by sex therapists as pleasuring, which are valid for young and old alike.

The sexual freedom now enjoyed by the young will hopefully soon be seen as equally acceptable for those in later life. Unfortunately this has not, as Reich and others have postulated, been associated with a corresponding demand for political freedom. Indeed political agitation against the state was at its greatest in the early years of this century with the country near to revolution, when sexually repressive attitudes were dominant. Now the reverse appears to be the case.

To conclude, this is an erudite work well referenced and with a useful bibliography for those who wish to know more, but it is also a good read, free from jargon, full of humour and leavened with literary quotations ranging from classical Greece to the present day. Don't assume that this is a book only of interest to the elderly. It is more a book to be enjoyed by the young of all ages.

Harold Sculthorpe



In an article on fascism and anti-fascism (*Freedom*, 22nd August), Johnny Yen attacked the concept of freedom of speech. It is his contention that freedom of speech is yet another capitalist illusion fostered by the liberal bourgeois in their own interests. He further claimed that the anti-fascist struggle necessitated the withholding of this freedom from fascists, and that only by adopting such tactics could the 'scum' of the NF be 'finished off'. It seems to me that this attack on the principle of freedom of speech is dangerous and needs to be countered.

Johnny Yen argues that there is a connection between "the policy of ignoring the fascists and the demand for 'free speech'". By implication, he seems to be arguing that if one believes that free speech should be available to all, then one is for the policy of ignoring the fascists - as if this was the only option for a free speech anti-fascist. He seems to think that by preventing the fascists from speaking "by any means necessary", then fascism will disappear. Firstly, I doubt if Johnny actually believes in the slogan "by any means necessary", as I haven't read of a Mr Johnny Yen being arrested on a charge of assassinating Ian Anderson, John Tyndall, David Irving, or any of the other "scum" he writes about. Secondly, and more importantly, preventing fascists (and any other 'scum' one profoundly disagrees with) from speaking will not bring an end to fascism, or anything else. This is because fascism and nazism are not people or parties first, but ideas. As a leading French nazi once said in 1945 (shortly before his death): "What has once been thought will be thought again". In fact, as the history of dissent has shown, the attempt to prevent people from speaking is usually unsuccessful (unless mounted with Hitlerian or Stalinist rigour). Instead, one simply drives those you oppose underground and make martyrs of

them. Further, when dealing with fascism or nazism, one is in danger of supplying the very excuse for violence that many fascists and nazis are looking for, if you attempt to "finish them off" by "any means necessary". Martyrdom is a great boost to the violent tendencies of certain people and, just as the old Anti Nazi League had Blair Peach to boost their morale, so the old National Front had Albert Marriner to provide an excuse for their violence. Had anti-nazis not thrown the brick that killed Albert Marriner, then the NF wouldn't have had the propaganda gift of his death.

Johnny goes through a short series of semantic acrobatics to 'prove' that there is no such thing as "free speech". His central reasoning here is that the demand for free speech is "predicated on the assumption that all are equally 'free' to express themselves, that all are equally powerful and articulate". Of course we are not equally powerful and articulate, in our present society that would be an impossibility. But are only the inarticulate and powerless to be allowed to speak? And if this is so, then I would expect that 90% of the neo-nazis in Britain would have the right to speak before Johnny Yen. The fascists and nazis in Britain have a long history of appealing to, and receiving much support from, the working class - the powerless, and, in Johnny's terms, the inarticulate. The heartland of fascism in the 1930s were the areas of Bethnal Green and Limehouse in the East End of London, and the NF and the BNP have always drawn most of their active support from young white workers (and unemployed). Even in Germany (which has a

differing history of nazism), it is young workers (and the young unemployed from the former GDR) that provide the neo-nazis with their most ardent support - as the Rostock case shows. These are some of the powerless and inarticulate in this bloody society. Johnny Yen - given his long-time University of Sussex address - is, in all probability, more powerful and articulate than these. Does he still wish to end free speech for those that benefit from liberal bourgeois standards? Or if not, please can he tell me why the University of Sussex is a cathedral of working class life and experience.

If anyone thinks that preventing nazis from speaking, and attacking them "by any means necessary", is going to succeed in finally discrediting such an ideology then they are mistaken. If I was a young, unemployed worker that had been conned by the 'solutions' of the BNP, I don't think I would be convinced of my errors by a potentially violent University type shouting about the need for the suppression of the very liberal bourgeois freedoms that I had never benefited from, but the anti-fascist had. Instead, it would neatly confirm the attacks of people like Tyndall on the values of liberal bourgeois society, which he sees as just another variety of the progressive disease that anarchism is part of. What is worse, such a call for the suppression of free speech implies that the nazis have got something to say that is important, relevant, or, for God's sake, true! It implies that anti-fascists are frightened by their opponents' message. Yet, if you've ever looked at a copy of Tyndall's papers (*The British Nationalist* and *Spearhead*) you will

know that the arguments therein are easily refuted. His economic arguments are non-starters in the modern world, his racial arguments are plain silly, his history is simplistic and conspiratorial, and his underlying tone is repugnant. The task is to ask ourselves why people are attracted to these 'answers' and to counter them with a sustained propaganda and information campaign.

Finally, to return to the concept of 'liberal bourgeois'. I reject the society and economy we exist in at the present. It is a liberal bourgeois society, so, in that sense, I reject such a society. But I do not reject all its values. Similarly, I reject capitalism, but I do not reject much of the scientific revolution that enabled capitalism to establish itself in its modern guise. I grew up in an entirely working class home, and I found the fruits of liberal bourgeois culture to be exciting, progressive and horizon-expanding. I benefited enormously from liberal bourgeois institutions. And although I am now a manual worker, I still value aspects of liberal bourgeois life that are, I feel, valuable enough to be incorporated into any future world we might make. Its literature, its art, its partial achievement of free speech all seem to be valuable to me and, without the latter, I fear that we would start on the path that ends with a man with a gun deciding that more and more opponents are 'scum' and can't speak. Also, unlike Johnny Yen, I don't benefit directly from a liberal bourgeois institution, whilst calling (safely) for the end of its principles. And, there's a certain type of liberal bourgeois woman that drives me wild!

Stephen Cullen

Liberal Bourgeois Freedoms

GETTING ANARCHISM ACROSS

We anarchists are only too aware that our viewpoint attracts the adherence of a very small proportion of the population. At the back of our minds lies the problem of quite how our influence might be extended, and yet it seems to me that very little has been written about the strategies that we might employ to that end. The problem, of course, is of immense proportions. Not only are our numbers very small, but also our position lies a long way from that of the great British public, which fears freedom and responsibility, and which knowingly consumes at levels which threaten ecological collapse. Assuming we don't despair and give up the unequal struggle, it is surely important to consider our approach to non-anarchists, and to endeavour to give our arguments with them the sharpest possible cutting edge.

Before going on to consider some proposals, it is as well to look at the complex nature of the problem, and that boils down to how people think. As a starting point, I have chosen to look at just one person I know well. I don't, of course, claim him to be typical of all, but I think the following provides some useful insights into how people's thought patterns can be at the same time resistant yet often responsive to libertarian ideas and behaviour. The person concerned is aged about 60. His formative years were therefore during the austere '30s and '40s. He must have had a good dose of obedience training in the rather less enlightened state schools of the time, and later in national service. In my chats with him, it emerged that he believed he was right to be strict with his children. He is acquisitive and often expresses low levels of solidarity with others; he opposes trade unions and consistently votes Tory. Such is the damage which an authoritarian socialisation has wrought, but he also has a more attractive libertarian side which shines through. He is a basically happy, sociable person, sexy and sometimes sexist, yet popular with women. He is easy-going with a lively sense of humour, and has bags of self-confidence; he is interested in and respectful of the natural world, being a keen sailor and ornithologist. Despite his (not very well understood) Toryism, he has a healthy mistrust of all politicians. I like him a lot, and we got on well together at work until his retirement caused the parting of our ways.

When we talked politics, my gentle prompting towards anarchist solutions were met by a bemused interest but consistent rejection. Then one day we got to discuss shared practical problems in our work, which had been triggered by some rather stupid and inconsiderate instructions from our section leader. Much to my surprise, given the above, he quickly agreed with me that the boss's presence was more hindrance than help, and that the lads in the section had more than enough expertise to be able to make good decisions about our work which were encouraging of both social harmony and technical efficiency. Despite his authoritarianism, when it came to practical and personal problems at the point of production, the man was not just accepting of but even enthusiastic about libertarian practice; the theoretical underpinning of that practice, however, he continued to reject. The pattern of accepting libertarian practice while rejecting or even being appalled by abstract theoretical arguments is one that I have found in others. The key to making some headway seems to turn on making that aspect of practice relevant to a particular situation in which

people are already involved, and where the shortcomings of authority are on full view.

Having praised a form of propaganda by deed, where does this leave the written approach? It is probably in this latter area that anarchists seem to make their greatest tangible efforts in the form of magazines, pamphlets, etc., and yet it is obvious that most people have little interest in polemic. A walk round the shelves of any non-anarchist bookshop will reveal very few publications connected with social and political thought. For those of us who are keenly interested in theoretical matters, this fact is particularly galling. Apart from the minute number of people who genuinely seek knowledge of alternative systems of belief, anarchist works tend to be of interest to anarchists alone. We need to face up to the fact that few are to be reached by critiques of state and capital, backed up with descriptions of what happened in Spain half a century ago. The issue is put crudely, but in essence this is what our propaganda largely amounts to. It reaches and stimulates those inside the movement, but generally fails to even scratch the surface of the problem outside it. It is, of course, important to have theoretical works available, without them anarchism cannot develop properly and respond to changing social conditions, however this doesn't make good propaganda. It has always been so; 'penny dreadfuls' always outsold philosophy!

We might also pause to consider the likely impact of revolutionary propaganda where anarchism had its greatest successes; they just happen to have been among people of minimal education, indeed vast numbers were illiterate. So what practical good were Bakunin's or Kropotkin's works to Ukrainian and Aragonese peasants? Clearly the answer must be very little. Anarchist theory doesn't fill bellies or make a stitch of clothing, but those peasants, rooted in a more co-operative culture, clearly saw that anarchist methods could do just that, and a great deal more besides. Many were probably not even aware of the fact that they were anarchist methods. I rather fancy it was more a case of 'we've always wanted to do it this way, but they wouldn't let us'.

If at the time I had thought about these facts, I would have spent less time trying to convince my friend of the relevance of anarchist theory. Not only was its nature far from his understanding of how the world worked, but it also probably smacked too much of the politics with which he, like so many others, is so mistrustful of. From this, and other experiences, I conclude that practical applications of libertarian ideas are of the greater importance for propaganda purposes. Interest in the broader and more abstract issues, if it comes at all, seems more likely to be generated from a starting point rooted in practice rather than theory. It is also clear to me that the greatest impact will be among people we are well acquainted with, which implies individual or small group activity. Sociologists agree that peer group pressures - what your mates say - have greater influence on personal attitudes than written communications from the media, and this must include anarchist publications. The main thrust of

**John Griffin is the author of
A Structured Anarchism
A FREEDOM PRESS title
40 pages, £1 (post free)**

our propaganda effort, if one accepts the above line of argument, should therefore be within our own social networks rather than aimed in an inevitably impersonal way at society in general through the written word.

Whilst getting theoretical ideas across to the uninitiated is extremely difficult, limited progress may be made when discussion around some issue of the day has led to deeper questions being asked which challenge, or come near to challenging, the status quo. Again I am talking about situations which involve people we know, and where interest has already been aroused, as distinct from ideas being received 'cold' as is the case when, say, a magazine is picked up off the stand.

Whatever form our arguments take, when it comes to their delivery, I think it is important to be open and honest at all times. If asked awkward questions which seem to have no ready answer, it is surely better to say 'I don't know, I'll think about it and perhaps we can discuss it later', rather than make evasive and convoluted arguments designed more to 'have the last word' at all costs. People are already quite cynical about political chicanery and

have an intuitive nose for what smells of dishonesty. The last thing we need is to be thought of as being manipulative. I have used the word 'propaganda' throughout this essay for want of a more appropriate word which is less associated with the political dog-fight; what we are about is at root far from political. I see libertarian activity in this context as a natural flowering of our developing personalities, expressed in both thought and action, a transcendence of the political by the social.

The arguments I have put forward are strongly related to my own experience and observations. Others will have different perspectives. However we see the problem, it is important that we make anarchism relevant to the real problems which people face daily, and present it in a way which has the greatest impact. The timing for such an effort could hardly be more favourable with the left in decline and disarray. Given the will, anarchists should be able to fill the vacuum left by these miserable wretches who have so damaged the anti-capitalist cause, and establish anarchism as the sole bearer of a relevant and practical alternative. In order to get this across, our methods of communication need to be both subtle and very sharp if they are ever to cut through the fear and cynicism which run so deep. More ideas please!

John Griffin

Food for Thought ... and Action

Recent additions to Freedom Press Bookshop stock.

Sabotage in the American Workplace: anecdotes of dissatisfaction, mischief and revenge, Pressure Drop Press / AK Press, edited by Martin Sproue. This book documents individual reactions to the day-to-day frustrations and conflicts of trying to earn a living, and covers every kind of work from blue to white collar, bank tellers to paperboys, government agencies to the private sector. The sabotage ranges from slacking & petty theft to placing 'logic bombs' in computers and destroying company property. "It's no surprise to find that wherever there is harassment, low pay or poor working conditions, people feel resentful; yet it's inspiring to find that the lower down the totem pole people are, the more likely it is that they'll hit back with sabotage" (*Class War*). Large format, illustrated, 175 pages, £9.95.

Eccentricism 1992: the first translation of the Russian Eccentric Manifesto, various authors, The Eccentric Press. The introduction informs us that the Manifesto is "a great rarity" whose first print run in 1922 was limited to 1,000 copies, and reading it one can only say thank goodness. Apparently most of them were given to a couple of people to spread around Moscow. However, sales went so badly that the entire stock was finally dumped in someone's basement where it was "completely destroyed" in a fire. Alas, not completely enough: some misguided individuals have found enough remnants to do a reprint, mercifully limited to 500 copies this time - and that's 499 too many for such disjointed nonsense. It is so bad that to say it's outrageously overpriced seems almost irrelevant: any price would be too high. Its sole distinction is a striking layout, smothered in upper case letters, bold type and thick black lines, a triumph of image over substance. No amount of attempts to link this publication with Russian theatre and big names in early Russian cinema can redeem it. A5, 22 pages, £4.95. (Anyone who can offer a dark basement and a box of matches to finish the job should contact the publishers!)

Anarchist Organisation: suggestions and possibilities by Graham Purchase, Black Swan Press. A discussion of both the micro and macro level components of an anarchist society. The former covers the ecologically integrated, self-sufficient and autonomous city; mutual aid associations; skill exchanges, co-operatives and trade unions. The latter includes the cultural, biological and economic region. Rather rough and ready production. A5 pamphlet, 32 pages, £1.50. (The same author has also written *Anarchist Society and its Practical Realisation*, * See Sharp Press, £1.00)

Tea and Anarchy! - the Bloomsbury diary of Olive Garnett 1890-1893, Bartlett's Press, edited by Barry C. Johnson. The social world of the daughter of the British Museum's Keeper of Printed Books. She prized "intelligent independence" and her life outside the British Museum was surprisingly modern. She mixed freely with Russian revolutionary exiles such as Kropotkin, Stepniak and Volkhovsky, and was a sharp observer of contemporary people and events. Volume one of two, 12 black and white photographs, 252 pages, £11.95.

Did Jesus Exist? by G.A. Wells, Pemberton Publishing, second edition revised, corrected and expanded. 'Who cares?' you might say. On the other hand, if you've been following the recent controversy in the pages of *Freedom* on the subject of Christianity and anarchism, you might be pleased to see that Freedom Press bookshop's super-efficient crew have already obtained copies of one of the major works on the alleged water-into-wine merchant. 250 pages, £5.00.

Lobster number 23. This issue covers mind control experiments, US Army Intelligence and the US government, detailing secret projects - from LSD and other drugs 'tested' on military personnel, to mind-altering electro-magnetic weapons - carried out by a variety of agencies from Naval Intelligence to the CIA. Also, more on the JFK killing, notes on the extreme right in Britain, the Stalker affair and the first publication of the confidential Lobby Rules for political journalists in the Houses of Parliament. "The Lobby System", says *Lobster*, is "that peculiar British institution formed to allow the state and its political mouthpieces to lie to the media off the record". A4 magazine, 36 pages, £2.00.

Processed World* number 29. Concentrating in this issue on exile in, and immigration to, the USA. A collection of articles under the rubric 'Exile on Market Street' recount the difficulties of adapting, culturally and politically, and of marriages of convenience. Plus an interview with members of the editorial collective of *Mercury Rising*, a new magazine by and for bike messengers, and an article on sabotage in the workplace accompanied by extracts from the new book *Sabotage* (mentioned above). A4 magazine, illustrated, 64 pages, £4.00.

NB: Out of the Ghetto* by Joe Jacobs (Phoenix Press) is now available post-free, 320 pages, £9.00. *Deschooling Society* by Ivan Illich (Pelican) is now out of print.

KM

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ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The capitalistic newspapers are very fond of telling us that there are no class distinctions in this country, that here is no cause for complaint, because all are equal before the law. I call the attention of the owls who edit these papers to the course of the health authorities of New York in regard to the passengers on the vessels now in quarantine on account of the cholera. The frantic request of the cabin passengers to be placed on a separate vessel has been granted. Now, this action either increases or diminishes the chances of an epidemic. In the former case, of course it is unjustifiable. In the latter case, it is justifiable and commendable; but the fact is thereby established that it would equally

contribute to safety to place the well steered passengers on a separate vessel also. Yet not a word do we hear about them and their possible fate. They are left in the thick of the danger, to die of fright if not of the pest. Why? Simply and solely because they are poor, while the cabin passengers are rich. No class distinctions indeed! There are plenty of them on every hand, easily visible to all but the owl editors who can see only at night when, before sleep if not before the law, all men are more or less equal.

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

Legal News

Jail threat for poll tax non-payer thwarted

In July Brighton Council entered the final stage of their battle with poll tax non-payers. One person, Hilary Metcalf (a 'rebel' Labour councillor) singled out by the council as a "wilful non-payer", was summonsed to Brighton Magistrates Court for a committal hearing—in other words, they were threatening someone with prison for the first time. Being the first poll tax committal hearing in Brighton, this was a test case; it was an opportunity for anti-poll tax activists to try out certain legal arguments to keep people out of jail. A number of arguments were prepared; the second of these successfully got the case adjourned for a month. Before describing these arguments, it is necessary to put this important case in context by outlining the story of the poll tax struggle to date, both nationally and in the local area.

As has been well documented elsewhere,¹ the poll tax was defeated in the streets and in the communities; the uprisings outside the town halls and in Trafalgar Square frightened the establishment, and the huge numbers of non-payers, many of whom were well-organised and well-informed, made the government realise that the poll tax could not continue in its present form. The poll tax simply couldn't last and something workable (more collectable) had to be

put in its place, and quickly. The announcement by Michael Heseltine in March 1992 that the poll tax was to be abolished from 1993 (the last bills being sent out in April this year) marked the most significant political u-turn in living memory; the sinking of this Tory flagship represented an important victory for a working class whose morale had been at a low ebb after ten years of defeats at the hands of Thatcher et al. At the same time, this tactical retreat by the Tories did nothing to help the plight of the local councils who still had to collect money for poll tax bills for 1992 and pursue the bills unpaid since 1990. To the dismay of the local councils, once people heard that the tax was being abolished, many of them found further reason not to pay, and non-payment figures soared, particularly in Scotland. Although the local anti-poll tax unions became less active in many places (in Brighton, for example), it was still extremely difficult to collect money from people.

Nevertheless, they had to try. These are their methods. First, obviously, they send out the bills. After one reminder (or two in the cases of the more liberal councils) they send a final reminder. The next stage is a summons to appear in court. This is non-compulsory, and in fact the council would prefer it for non-payers not to turn up at all. The purpose of the court hearing is to prove liability to pay; if you don't turn up you can't argue your case and the court (on behalf of the council) can just rubber-stamp your case. The non-payment campaign was aware that we could not win the poll tax war in this particular arena of battle; the courts are designed in the interests of the state, so if we appear to be successful here they will simply change the law. But the purpose of encouraging people to turn up and contest liability was seriously to delay the process of pursuing non-payers. If, for example, all the people summonsed actually turned up in court for liability hearings, the cases would last for years. A large number of arguments have been tried in liability hearings, but in most cases the council won their liability order. Having proved in court that the person is liable to pay, the council are free to pursue their next option. The liability order gives them the power to do a number of things. Thus, they have the option to arrest wages or benefits. These have not been their preferred method of pursuing poll tax debts, however. If the council does take the first of these options, it is only because the non-payer made the mistake of divulging their place of work; in such a case, the non-payer needs to get organised with their

workmates to put pressure on their employer not to implement the arrestment. If the council takes the second option, the non-payer must appeal to the DSS to stop the process until a tribunal hears the case; at the tribunal the non-payer must argue that such deductions are "analogous to the recovery of overpayments" and that the case against these deductions is supported by the commissioners' decision R(S)2/74, particularly noting paragraph 5.

The preferred method of all local councils of pursuing poll tax non-payers is through the use of bailiffs. This method has proved spectacularly unsuccessful. Why, then, do the councils use it? Because they hope it will frighten people into paying up. In many places, local anti-poll tax unions have organised pickets as a show of strength and solidarity with a non-payer threatened with a bailiff's visit. But, in England and Wales at least, only a little knowledge of the law is needed to deter poll tax bailiffs. The first point is that the non-payer should on no account let a bailiff into their house. Poll tax bailiffs in England and Wales cannot break down people's doors to gain entry (unless you have already let them in once before!); they can only lay claim to your goods if you let them in or if they find an open window; neither can the police help them gain entry. In Brighton, like many other areas, bailiffs have been largely unable to get hold of people's goods. In fact, their efforts have been half-hearted; they have simply left calling cards in many cases and then given up.

It is at this point that the council has the option of a committal hearing. Hove council has already held a number of committal hearings, but they have actually jailed only one person. Their aim is always to persuade the non-payer to make a commitment to pay up, usually by agreeing to pay a certain amount each week. Committal hearings are more serious than liability hearings; although non-payers cannot be sentenced to prison in their absence, they can be arrested and taken to court by the police (police are understandably reluctant to do this, however, since it would take up too much of their time). The important thing for the summonsed non-payer at this stage is the variety of arguments that can be used, and the greater power of the courts in these cases.

In the recent cases in Hove, for example, the first potential argument was to claim that the council had not sent out summonses for the liability orders; if the council had not actually done so (unfortunately they very rarely make this mistake) then the case

would have to go back to square one, since the non-payer would not have had the opportunity to contest the liability order. Similarly, if the council have not tried using the bailiffs, then the non-payer can argue that the committal hearing is premature; the council have not gone through the necessary stages of attempting to collect the tax. If and when these arguments fail, the non-payer's next gambit is to plead poverty. (In all committal hearings, only the class martyr declares from the beginning that they simply will not pay; this often gives the council no option but to jail them.) The court actually has the discretion to write off the person's poll tax debt entirely in such cases; but it is important that the non-payer brings in some kind of evidence of income and outgoings, and is consistent in their claims that they cannot even afford to go to the pub at weekends, etc. Failing this, the non-payer, on producing details of their income and living expenses, can avoid jail by agreeing to pay a certain amount each week; in many cases, a small amount is a minor victory when the alternative is jail. (And let's not forget that those 300 or so people jailed for non-payment have their debt scrapped when they come out after a few weeks.)

The Metcalf case in Brighton represented an alternative strategy to these listed above, however. Right at the beginning of the hearing, before the council representative had even made his case, Ms Metcalf (on the advice of her McKenzie's friend or informal legal adviser) raised two legal points (she had others prepared, but the second argument was successful so these weren't needed). Her first argument was based on the 'six month rule'. This related to the Magistrates Court Act 1980 (Section 127, regulations 20 and 41) and states that a case must come to court within six months and fourteen days of the original complaint. In the present case, the argument turned around the issue of the complaint itself. Ms Metcalf claimed that the complaint in question related to when the said arrears first became payable; the debt was due and was not paid one and a half years ago; thus the present case could not continue since the six months had expired.

The council representative countered this by suggesting that Ms Metcalf's non-payment was a continuing offence; the date the arrears became due and were not paid was irrelevant; each further day of non-payment constituted cause for complaint. The magistrates accepted this argument. Round one to the council.

Ms Metcalf therefore proceeded to her second argument. This second point of law related directly to her first argument. She pointed out that the case of Paul Mould of Wolverhampton, which was also based on the six month argument, was currently being taken to a Judicial Review. This appeal, the effect of which will be to clarify the effect of the six month rule on poll tax committal hearings (one way or another), began in April and is still pending. On Thursday 2nd July, another case based upon the six month rule (that of Karen Massey of Newcastle) was stayed pending the decision of the Mould case. The judge had decided that, since the two cases were similar, the decision in the Massey case depended on that in the Mould case. In other words, all cases using the six month rule argument should be stayed pending the Mould decision.

In Brighton, neither the magistrates, the court clerk nor the council official knew of the Mould appeal. Ms Metcalf produced as her evidence a press release by the Mould solicitors. After some deliberation, the magistrates decided that Ms Metcalf's request for an adjournment had to be granted. Round two, and the first match, to Ms

(continued on page 8)

Dorset Diary

The Dorset coastline must rank among the most attractive in the country. Bournemouth and Poole together can boast some eleven miles of sandy beaches, part of which, Sandbanks, has even been designated as 'clean' by the experts in Brussels. The coastal path which leads up out of Swanage and past Old Harry's Rock takes you along a route which allows you to look out to sea and, at the same time, if you turn around you have the rolling Purbeck hills where the hang gliders play. Look back the other way and on a clear day you'll see the Isle of Wight. Further along Lyme Regis attests to the changes which have hit the coastline with the march of time.

The wind surfers play in Poole harbour trying to avoid their richer playmates on the jet skis and in the speedboats – a veritable adventure park for those affluent enough to enjoy it. Big enough too. It used to be common local knowledge that Poole harbour was the second biggest natural harbour after Sydney, Australia. Rumour now has it that construction projects down under have now pushed us into the number one position. It's also becoming a more and more important cross channel route with the connection to Cherbourg now running all year round instead of just in the summer. A busy place indeed. However, when it comes down to it you really are better off on your surfboard or better still on the ferry well out of the water.

Down the road Winfrith sits in the scene that inspired Hardy and Stevenson. Since the building of the nuclear power station radioactivity levels in the harbour have risen to a level which gives cause for concern.

Not to be outdone, now we learn that Wessex Water are pumping sewage pollution into the harbour and ancient shellfish beds are being threatened with extinction. When rain is heavy raw sewage is poured into a harbour which twenty years ago was one of the cleanest in Europe. The shellfish farmers are angry, and rightly so. One, David Davis, said: "We have not caused the problem but it is us that is to suffer. Having been designated as a shellfish growing area we understood we would be protected against this sort of thing". Apparently, however, permission was granted and Wessex Water were acting legally. We could note here that they are also facing prosecution for polluting the Stour on four occasions in a year (apparently three times is okay so they have only to successfully contest one case). What will the outcome be I wonder?

It would be wrong to laugh at the naivety of the farmers and those who still have faith in the system that causes the problem in the first place. The problem affects us all. Change is coming to our coastline quicker than Lyme Regis would suggest and it's not so pretty. There is environmental concern in the county which has proved successful in other campaigns. Only a month ago local fishermen won their battle against the big oil guys to save their fishing grounds, but they did it through direct action rather than resorting to the courts.

In the meantime those who play in the harbour will probably continue to play, but if you come down for a swim remember what you might be swimming in.

NB

Village Affairs – Badger Scores

There they were all in capitals. The Parish Council endlessly discussing what to do with a concrete bench nobody wanted, the spoils of pandering to external authority. The councillors were all-a-tizz, the village had won this 'prize' for being one of the best kept villages in Suffolk. More was to come – first prize, no less, including a wrought iron sign on loan for a year publicising the generosity of Calor Gas. We're serious people in Polstead too, the sign was appropriately shrouded in union jacks for the official unveiling. And the concrete bench, well, it ended up in the kids' playground in 'Red Square'. Just the place for a poisonous gift.

Almost next item on the agenda came a suggestion from a villager (Badger to intimates) to erect a bus shelter by The Green. Badger has two kids and another on the way. He works in Polstead and is *not* on the Parish Council. His proposal carried emotional undertones. We've just lost our school, stolen by government at the very time when Polstead has more children than ever before, so the kids have to be bussed to the next village. Badger's item was the cue for our noble councillors to discard their roles as cultural cringers and assume the mantle of robust know-alls ... 'The proposed bus shelter was discussed five years ago. It will not be possible to get planning permission to build it. People don't want the shelter. It will be an eyesore.

We didn't need a shelter when we were schoolkids'. Badger baiting at its best.

However, this celebration in authority by the village's patricians was abruptly stopped by a fusillade from the plebs in the spectator seats. Hadn't the council just devoted half an hour to discussing what to do with a bench nobody wanted just because it came from some authoritative source, and now they were annihilating badger and his proposals without consideration because he came from their village. Worse still, Badger had done his homework and he's done more since. Planning permission isn't needed. Only two locals have been found who oppose the shelter. Badger is submitting designs and ideas for doing the job cheaply, including building it himself with his mates.

Politicians talk and talk about empowering people but they don't mean it because they'd be out of a job – their drug is control or the illusion of control. The barrage from the plebs was sufficiently vociferous and emotionally charged to lead one or two more sensitive councillors to persuade the others that Badger 'ought to look into the matter further and report back'. I fancy in the end Badger will have his bus shelter, in one form or another, but I hope it isn't a hole in the ground.

Denis Pym

NEWS FROM THE INSIDE

According to sources within Her Majesty's Prison Service, the recession is not only hitting the outside world, but the inside too.

At HMP Winson Green, Birmingham, the usual five-day working week has now been cut to just a two-day working week!

Prison authorities have also been informed that the EEC is to introduce a new 'minimum wage' for prisoners. This means that the average weekly wage in Winson Green Prison will rise from approximately £2 to around £8.

The only advice to Her Majesty's guests is: *take it easy, and don't spend it all at once!*

games & GAMES

Dear Editors,
Wet blanket anarchism is about as good as doom-and-gloom ecology. Denis Pym's article 'games and Games: Barcelona 1992' is a case in point. He started by getting his facts wrong, or wrong enough to give the wrong impression.

Paddington Recreation Ground is my local park where I have taken the air regularly for the last six years. Six years ago it still had its pre-1914 character and was dominated by a vast oval banked cycling track. The Westminster Council decided to redesign the whole place at huge expense and with much imagination and expertise. All-weather pitches for football and hockey were installed and these, like the all-weather illuminated tennis courts, have to be booked and paid for. What is wrong with that?

The great central area, where the cycle track used to be, was laid out as an extra-large cricket pitch which (if no match is in progress) is used *freely* by countless young people for football, baseball, cricket and the rest. Together with other facilities, the overall result is a huge improvement and much of it *gratis*.

Interestingly, the Ground does not belong to Westminster Council. It belongs to 'the people of Paddington' to whom it was given by an affluent

benefactor before 1914. It is administered by the Council.

As to other matters. It is true, of course, that the motor car has ruined the play-potential of the streets on which Denis and I played between the wars. All that means is that we have to make play provision elsewhere or through pedestrianisation; and we have made a poor showing to date. All the greater the need to come up with some constructive suggestions and public backing.

As to the Games - they have given us great entertainment, drama, tragedy and delight. Of course the rubric 'money rules' has tended to corrupt there, as it does everywhere. So what's new? Given our present system (and for the time being we have no other) how could it be done otherwise? Just compare the Barcelona Games with World Wars One and Two and reflect on the meaning of the Women's 10,000 metres result! What more can we ask for?

Peter Cadogan

Denis Pym replies:

Thanks for all those adult facts about the Paddington Recreation Ground, Peter. I thought my piece explaining the concept of games was based on anecdotes, observations and assertions. I wanted to underline one theme in Stephen Cullen's book *Children in Society* of the loss to children, of adults usurping or preventing their play on *every front*. It's not just capitalists who do the damage. Much of it is done in the name of CARE. Kids don't want "expertise, constructive suggestions and public backing" which means more organisation by adults. They just need the time and space to be themselves.

I too use the Paddington Recreation Ground, mostly in the company of a small boy. As an adult consumer I appreciate its organisation, facilities and gardens. Who knows, in my dotage I might even find myself on the same bench as Peter passing the day.

Heh! Give us the wet blanket mate!

Not to worry about Jesus!

Dear Editors,
Peter Dodson (Letters, 22nd August), still worrying about Jesus, "wonders how four men... could chronicle the teachings and relate events leading up to the eventual death at the hands of the state of someone who never existed". Easy. The canonical Gospels in the New Testament are only four of dozens of accounts of Jesus which chronicle teachings and relate events, but which are either obviously repetitive or obviously contradictory or obviously imaginary, and which have no historical authority at all. The same pattern applies to hundreds of other people in the earlier Jewish scriptures (the Old Testament) and in the scriptures and mythologies of all other peoples.

There is a large category of figures who fall between clearly legendary characters and clearly historical persons. In each case, many people have believed that they lived as human beings, but there is little or no convincing evidence that they did so. They may have been nothing like the images for which they are well known, or they may well not have existed at all. This category includes Gilgamesh, Hercules, Moses, the Buddha, King Arthur, William Tell, Robin Hood - and Jesus.

As for the claim that even if the man didn't exist the teaching remains, what is the authority for the teaching if it is based on a lie about the teacher?

NW

Anarchism and Violence

1

Dear Friends,

The continuing violence versus pacifism debate is very interesting and thought-provoking. I think that the question of when it is possible to use or avoid violence is best resolved when it's actually faced; it is futile to discuss the issue with reference to hypothetical future circumstances.

Derrick Pike (Letters, 11th July) writes that the defection of half or more of the army to the anarchist cause "would be impossible". He can't know this for certain (I personally feel that for the revolution to be a genuine popular movement for social change as opposed to a minority SWP-style coup d'etat, the support of half or more of the army for the anarchist cause would be very probable). Similarly those who say violence will be needed to assist the revolution don't know if it will be or not; to go on assuming blood will need to be shed, however, is a fairly sure-fire way of assuring that blood is shed.

I do not believe that violence is a valid way of solving a problem nor an instrument of social change - it is at best a fairly blunt instrument to be used as a last resort, and I do not believe it has any place in our revolution nor in the anarchist movement. However, it cannot be rejected outright since a situation may unfortunately arise when violence must be used to resolve a great injustice that cannot be solved by non-violent methods.

JD

2

Dear Freedom,

Neil Birrell quite rightly responds to my letter on violence, which was, I have to admit, somewhat long-winded. What was worse, my detailed response to Neil's original letter didn't really take the

argument much further forward, but rather bogged it down in a series of minor points. However, even after reading Neil's reply, I still feel that more needs to be said, in particular the exact nature of the argument needs to be re-stressed.

Firstly, let me say that I do not think that I am a pacifist as I can think of circumstances in which I would use violence. It was Ernie Crosswell in his original article (*Freedom*, 30th May 1992) who used the title 'Pacifism is Realism'. I am forced to agree with both Neil and with IB (*Freedom*, 8th August) that finding oneself in the middle of war one often has little choice but to defend oneself. I implied as much in my original article when I said: "I've not touched upon other questions such as reactions to genocidal onslaughts". What I have been arguing is that there is no case for regarding premeditated violent revolution as offering any hope for anarchism in a modern westernised society. And no-one has yet disproved this contention. Neil asks, what would I do if he pointed his gun at me. The answer is, I would shoot him if I could. If I was 'successful' (and I'm pretty good with a Browning), then I would have killed him and defended myself, but I wouldn't have created an anarchist society. And violent 'revolution' will never create an anarchist society. It won't because:

1) it would fail - the state has all the cards in this respect;

2) you don't make anarchists by killing people, you make killers and dead people;

3) if we did 'win', we could have only done so by organising a bigger, better equipped, better trained, better disciplined army than the state. In other words, we would have created a new state - so we wouldn't have won!

If Neil or IB or JS would like to disprove any of the above contentions, let

them do so - but they'll have a damn hard time trying!

One last (little) point. Neil tried to claim that letters to *Freedom* on this subject have been in his favour. You can't count, Neil. Since Ernie Crosswell's original article only JS has written a letter in your favour (plus IB's article), whereas apart from my article and letter there have been letters from Derrick Pike and Neil Fisher in agreement with Ernie Crosswell's original piece. And if you still think that "a large proportion of the anarchist movement" is in favour of violent revolution, then all I can say is 'Nuts to them!'

Stephen Cullen

3

Dear Editors,

Neil Birrell started his letter (22nd August) with the promise to define violence, but went on to use the phrase "violence in self-defence" which is used frequently by governments and army chiefs to describe their policies. Clearly nothing could be less precise.

While three-quarters of the population (the very young, the very old, and the women who look after them) are unarmed pacifists-by-necessity, the remaining quarter of the population (active adult men) see fit to embroil them in wars on the pretence that they are defending their interests. Thus the left-wing defend them against the right-wing, and vice versa, the Christians defend them against the Muslims, and vice versa, etc. As a result millions of these pacifists-by-necessity suffer death, mutilation and starvation every year.

I hope Neil can see that this "violence in self-defence" fails to defend anyone.

The key to whether violence is permissible or not depends on whether it is premeditated (or, in most situations, armed). As seen above, premeditated violence, far from being beneficial, leads to barbarism. I ask Neil what right has one quarter of the population to subject the other three-quarters to such horrors? Ought we not to stand by our unarmed women and children and say the killing must stop?

Ernie Crosswell

Freedom, Reason & Tolerance

Dear Editors,

Over the past few months I have witnessed in your letters column a number of writers trying to sell their wares! Why should one particular view be more valid than another? The views of society at large may not be to our taste,

but we would be far worse off without them. Christianity versus anarchism, pacifism versus violence, all have valid points to offer, yet we are often led to believe that this or that particular view is the answer.

As a libertarian (and atheist), I find many Christian views somewhat distasteful - yet I believe that these views are nevertheless worthwhile and enriching, which can only serve to advance intellectual dialogue.

Even after reading a copy of *Green Anarchist* (which I personally found crude, childish, badly collated and printed) I am still of the opinion that it has a message to convey - and the world of publishing is the richer for its input, however negative!

All have a right to propagate their message - be that message foolish, perverse or even 'wrong'. Absolute freedom is where *all* voices are heard. People have a right to be wrong, even if that viewpoint leads them to their own destruction. Every idea/belief must be allowed to circulate freely. Only in the light of publication and expression will 'wrong' opinions and beliefs diminish. Impose upon this, and you impose upon freedom. Both anarchists and libertarians share the same bed, yet we often enter and leave by two different sides! Let the debate continue - but with the rallying cry of: FREEDOM, REASON AND TOLERANCE!

JP

'Give women a chance' says Ernie

Dear Editors,

I. Borrows ('Gender and Ideology', 8th August) writes: "This [dominant male ideology] can be changed when the controllers of a society feel it is in their interests to do so". But, since the controllers of societies are males who, whether right wing or left wing (see IB, 'Pacifism is not Realism', 8th August), think little about having women and children massacred in order to gain or hold on to power, it is obvious that women need all the encouragement they can get to oppose the most virulent form of domination that exists.

To make references to some women who become minor bosses within our male-controlled systems is to indulge in trivialities - as Claudia (see letter, 25th July) is beginning to realise?

We will never know the potentialities of women while we are so frightened to give them a chance.

Ernie Crosswell

Legal News

Jail threat for poll tax non-payer thwarted

(continued from page 7)

Metcalf. The adjournment was until August. However, when Ms Metcalf came to court again, the Mould decision had still not been reached, so Ms Metcalf's case was adjourned until December! And if the Mould decision had not been made by that time, Ms Metcalf can simply ask for another adjournment.

What then? Clearly there are other arguments Ms Metcalf and others like her can use even if we lose the six month rule argument. This is why it is important that people turn up at cases like this to observe the arguments for future reference; even if you do not use them in your own case, you may be able to help others with them.

The bad news for those whose committal cases have already been heard is that, if they made an agreement with the council to pay a certain amount each week, then there is nothing more than can be done in the courts. But if you make no agreement and are jailed, you may appeal against this decision citing the Mould case (get yourself a solicitor).

We must not rely solely or ultimately on cases like the Mould appeal; clearly, if Paul Mould wins his appeal this will be an absolute disaster for the councils; there will be changes in the law to make poll tax jailings possible again. It is useful to know about the case and be able to cite it in a court of law at the present time, however; it is just one strategy out of many more we can still use to resist the attack on our living standards that is the poll tax. Non-payers with committal hearings coming up should be in contact with their local anti-poll tax unions. They and the non-payers could usefully get hold of the Magistrates Court Act, the 'Ex Part Mould Case' and details of the Massey case.²

Johnny Yen

1. See, for example, *Poll Tax Rebellion* by Danny Burns, AK Press/Attack International, £4.95 (post free inland) from Freedom Press Bookshop (highly recommended).

2. TSDC / Poll Tax Prisoners Group, c/o Brixton Law Centre, 506 Brixton Road, London SW9.

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1992/1993 MEETINGS

- 25th September - Donald Rooum will introduce his new book: *Anarchism: An Introduction*
- 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

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