

*anarchist fortnightly*

# Freedom

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*“Let us take supply-side theory at its face value ... It holds that the poor do not work because they have too much income; the rich do not work because they do not have enough income. You expand and revitalise the economy by giving the poor less the rich more.”*

J.K. Galbraith  
(in *The Observer* 1982)

## NO CAPITALIST SOLUTIONS TO THE RECESSION

The pundits – the economists, the journalists, the politicians and the industrialists – all are telling the government how to solve the present crisis by monetary quick-fixes. The most popular is a drastic reduction in interest rates which, they say, will stimulate investment in industry. Then there are those who advocate capital expenditure on the infrastructure – more roads, ever-wider motorways; some even include the railways and public road transport in their plans. The building lobby calls for a massive programme of more houses, more conference centres such as that Birmingham white elephant of a conference centre (recently advertised by the one-day

talking-shop of the heads of the EEC). Others put their faith in the Gatt ‘free trade’ talks succeeding in spite of French resistance.

Not one of them questions the whole capitalist system with its social and economic inequalities and injustices. All they are seeking to do is salvage a corrupt system (in many respects more than that of the late unlamented Soviet Union) and it will invariably be at the expense of the poorest minority.

*The Independent* (22nd October) devoted a whole page to its ‘Manifesto for National Recovery’ – ten points, half of them covered in our first paragraph, were purely financial: “tell

the banks to stop foreclosing on sound businesses” (which bankers have hastened to point out that they cosset ‘sound businesses’!), “eventually restore the pound’s link with EC currencies” and a call for an “independent” Bank of England. The correspondence that has resulted (or that has been published) has (with the exception of a blistering swipe at the capitalist system from our friend Nicolas Walter) more or less supported *The Independent’s* manifesto.

Let the purists and dreamers among our readers should think that we have any intention of joining the save-capitalism-brigade, we repeat once more that our view is that capitalism is finished but will continue so long as a non-capitalist alternative is not advocated and defended to the bitter end. However, the alternative will not be developed  
*(continued on page 2)*

## MORE ON THE RICH AND THE POOR

In the last issue of *Freedom* we drew attention to the fact that *the richest are getting even richer* (31st October) giving only examples from the United States, and mentioned, in passing, their equivalents in Germany and Japan. In case readers might imagine that things are looking down for our millionaires, don’t shed a tear: they are doing very nicely!

Of all sources, *The Observer* (1st November), whose boss after all is Tiny Rowland who collects a salary and bonuses of £2 million a year for his expertise, spills the beans on our native millionaires.

“Millionaires are now two a penny in Britain. Nearly 100,000 Britons have somehow managed to hoard personal fortunes worth more than £1 million ... The nation may be going noisily to the dogs, but at least one group is quietly thriving.”

The information has been provided by the magazine *Business Age*, which has arrived at the figure by carrying out a survey of published wills. And apparently every day no less than four wills worth more than £1 million are published. To quote *The*

*Observer’s* lyrical correspondent:

“A lot of rich people are popping their clogs out there.”

More seriously, the magazine’s researchers calculate that in Britain there is a millionaire for every 630 people, that is 95,000 millionaires. What is especially revealing is that the equivalent official figures for 1987 were 25,000 and in 1989 63,000. So as the ‘economy’ was going into recession and the number of unemployed were increasing month by month, so were the number of millionaires.

But let’s be clear about the millionaires and their millions. In our piece in the last issue of *Freedom* about the top American millionaires it was estimated that the wealthiest 400 had incomes of £155 million a year or more and that their total wealth was £176,000 million. We didn’t give the British equivalent. According to *The Sunday Times* supplement on the 300 wealthiest millionaires in this country, their total wealth was put at £100,000 million –

not far short of the American tycoons. But we quote this figure to give an idea of what the *actual wealth* of the 95,000 British millionaires represents. Not just £95,000 million but in *£trillions*.

At the same time as all these astronomical figures are made available, governments are penalising the poor, the unemployed, the handicapped, while the top executives are getting more and more increases in salaries and perks.

The Reward Group, according to *The Independent* (30th October) found that:

“Company directors responsible for shedding staff and minimising wage increases received pay rises of nearly double the inflation rate.

Boardroom personnel specialists enjoyed a 7.5% increase in the last year, compared with the present inflation rate of 3.6%. The survey also found that female personnel managers in senior positions received 23% less money than their male colleagues.

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# NO CAPITALIST SOLUTIONS TO THE RECESSION

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so long as most people believe in the capitalist system. The role of anarchist propaganda at this stage of the 'crisis' is to show that the only possible alternatives within the money system, as it exists, require none of the proposals in *The Independent's* manifesto, for all they do is to create as many problems as they solve. To radically reduce interest rates will be welcomed by borrowers, large and small, but will almost certainly be used by them to reduce their indebtedness (apart from business indebtedness to the banks, there is a £300,000 million mortgage indebtedness and the plastic card spree debt is another £50,000 million). Good for them, but the lenders will be receiving correspondingly less on their savings, so will have less to spend.

To increase the lanes on motorways and even create new ones is to encourage a Parkinson's Law on the roads: more cars, more lorries. And the proposals for rail are all directed to feeding the Channel Tunnel, the bankrupt Docklands / Canary Wharf extravaganza and high speed Inter-City services mainly for businessmen and politicians.

*The Independent* hopes that the replacement of "treasury forecasters with an independent body" and the setting up of "a new Department of the Economy" will help to solve capitalism's problems.

What is the crisis about? Technology has made it possible for everybody in the world to enjoy a healthy material standard of living with leisure. But not only are millions of people in the third world either starving or will starve

eventually (and not only as a result of civil wars) but in the prosperous first world - thirty million people in the United States of America alone are on the bread-line (let us see what the new saxophone-playing President Bill Clinton will do to solve that one). And in this country there are more than eleven million people living below the officially recognised poverty line. We know nobody is allowed to starve, so far, though we don't know what that nasty sneering piece of work, the Minister of Social Security, Peter Lilley is plotting in the government's proposed benefit cuts to be announced. And throughout the prosperous European Community the numbers will go on increasing as unemployment strikes at all levels. By next year more than twenty million wage-earners will be without a paid job.

The causes are two-fold. Firstly, industrialists and their 'expert' advisers are constantly seeking to replace men/women by machines, robots, computers, and at the same time needing expanding markets. Secondly, more and more 'wealth' (money) is being concentrated in fewer hands.

The result is that production exceeds demand. After all, even a millionaire can't be expected to change his television, car, yacht, residence, etc., every six months. And as more and more people are joining the dole queue or taking 'early retirement', they are certainly going to hold on to their bits and pieces of equipment as long as possible.

The other problem for the capitalists is the concentration of money (wealth) in ever fewer coffers. For instance, the other

day the Tate Gallery paid £2 million for a painting of An Iron Forge by Joseph Wright. The beneficiary was the estate of the late Earl Mountbatten. That's money - purchasing power in the capitalist vocabulary - which will produce more money (interest) for those who have so much that they don't know what to spend it on! And that interest will be added to the interest-gathering account, and so on *ad nauseam*. Meanwhile, the goods and services (good and bad or useless) are being produced and millions of would-be purchasers haven't the means to purchase.

Within the money system there is only one way of dealing with this problem: by taxing the rich, not with a token 5% which was the Labour Party's proposal in its 1992 Election Manifesto, but a massive tax increase on the stinking rich "until the pips squeak" (a remark attributed to the former Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer which he strongly denied - and we can believe him!) No politicians seeking office, Tory or Labour, will stick their necks out for that one.

Both Labour and Tory politicians shed crocodile tears about the unstoppable unemployment queue. But neither party (and *The Independent* manifesto doesn't even raise the question) faces the obvious fact that with the growth of technology in industry and services the same production and services can be produced with less human labour. In a non-capitalist society everybody would be happy at the prospect that machines would deal with routine work and unpleasant, heavy, unhealthy but necessary tasks. But in the capitalist society it means sackings, voluntary or compulsory redundancies, while those still employed are expected to work harder and very often overtime or else.

Surely if the advantages of technology were to be enjoyed by all of us the first thing to do would be to reduce the working week for everybody. Some would have to enjoy a lower standard of living, but are they aware that in their taxes they are having to contribute to the three million

## Russian Anarchism Today

The anarchist movement has seen some transformations. As is known, the Organisation of Anarcho-Syndicalists (KAS) was formed in 1989, but after the leaders of the Moscow group had made compromises and cooperated with the central committee of the young communists, along with other state organisations, KAS went through a period of crisis and split. The anti-KAS movement was organised by the Alliance of Anarchist Movements, (ADA) which currently has no common organisational structure and has attracted various anarchist tendencies. The most interesting activities of this grouping have been of an ecological nature. In 1991 the Initiative of Revolutionary Anarchists (IREAN) came into being, which proposed the creation of the Federation of Anarchist Revolutionaries (FRAN) in January 1992; FRAN has been the most active organisation dedicated to a defence of the anarchist position in Russia, the Ukraine and Belarussia. 1992 also has seen the setting up of the International Workers Association (IRA or ILA), which has supported the establishment of anarcho-syndicalist structures; today there are sections in Russia and the Ukraine.

Currently, a second generation of the anarchist movement is appearing, the first generation of '88-89 having been absorbed into the state structure, as, for example, the Kharkov branch of KAS which is actively working with parliamentarians and distancing itself from anarchism, as has the Muscovite group of KAS whose editor of *Obchichina*, Goubarev, has now become a reporter for *Moscow News*; the leader of KAS, Andrei Issaiev, has become president of the Moscow section of the Labour Party,

Alexander Tchoukaev  
(translated by Neil Birrell from *Le Monde Libertaire*, Paris)

fellow wage slaves who have been put on the dole, and the million or more who have been out of work for more than a year and are on Social Security? The official figures are that with 'benefits' and loss of tax every one of them costs the taxpayers £8,000 a year, so for four million in that situation another £32,000 million is wasted because, let us not forget, the real wealth producers are not Thatcher's City crooks but the millions of producers of our daily NEEDS.

Finally, another suggestion which will not be welcomed either by the CBI, the Tories or the Labour Party. The world could be prosperous now. But we will limit ourselves to our own country. If we limited what we produced to what we need and, so far as trade is concerned with other countries, to what they need and we need, much of the goods and services now being produced could be cut out altogether.

To explain what we mean we cannot do better than quote the conclusion of Nicolas Walter's letter to *The Independent* (28th October):

"The problem is not the economy but society. Far too many people are living miserable and meaningless lives in the pursuit of happiness and in the midst of plenty. The problem is not unemployment but malemployment. Far too many people are doing work that is not worth doing. The problem is not under-education but miseducation. Far too many children are being taught things that are not worth learning. The problem is not lack of confidence in politics or business, but lack of confidence in ourselves and one another. Far too few people know how to practise self-help and mutual aid. The problem is not the quantity of goods, but the quality of good. Far too many people eat and drink junk, watch and listen to junk, read and write junk, think and talk junk. Yes, this includes you."

In the affluent West not only can they afford to keep 28 million skilled and unskilled, willing and unwilling workers in idleness, they can also afford a multi-billion dollar 'defence' budget and embark on costly military adventures. They can afford to indulge the rich with tax concessions and expense allowances. And last but not least they can afford industries and services which are useless and/or harmful. In the same breath they say we cannot afford a cheap public transport service; we cannot afford a first class education for all; and we cannot afford to improve the conditions of the low paid, the unemployed, the pensioners and the handicapped.

A large portion of existing services and industries in the affluent society could be dispensed with without society being any the poorer. A simple test is to ask oneself the question: 'What would most disrupt your life? A strike by miners or Fleet Street print workers; farmworkers or workers in the arms industry; health workers or journalists; transport workers or salesmen; water, gas and electricity workers or stockbrokers, Members of Parliament and company directors; postal services or advertising services; dustmen or asset strippers; grave diggers or underwriters?' You can check your answers quite simply. When government and media, and the idle rich, attack striking workers for 'holding the nation to ransom' and for being 'greedy', you can be sure they are workers doing a worthwhile job for society. In most cases they are among the lower paid. Is it not ironical, for instance, that a higher proportion of farmworkers in full-time employment are entitled to Supplementary Benefit than in any other industry?

Extract from the Editor's Preface to *Why Work? Arguments for the Leisure Society*, 210 pages, Freedom Press, £4.50 (post-free inland)

## MORE ON THE RICH AND THE POOR

(continued from page 1)

Although the gap between men and women has narrowed, the analysis suggested that the personnel function needs to put its own house in order prior to exhorting others to do the same.

The study also declared that:

"... the typical personnel director earned nearly £50,000 a year [that's nearly £1,000 a week], drove a 2-litre Ford Granada, changed every three years and got free petrol. Most travelled first class on British Rail and Club Class by air and received private health insurance."

If you think that's a lot of money, what do you think of the free market price tag on the services of Dr John Nicholson, "a business psychologist who quit academia in 1988 to work full-time as a consultant" and who has been appointed as an outside adviser by Mr William Waldegrave, recently appointed as Minister for John Major's hair-brained Citizen's Charter. This gentleman normally charges £1,100 a day (repeat, a day) for his brains. But he points out that he looks upon it as "the most exciting job a consultant could have wished for" - so much so that he would have done the job for nothing. That was said in a moment of euphoria. Anyway, he says he will get only a "fraction of that". His appointment is for two years and he will "nominally work for one and a half days a week". Say, for a consultant, including working lunch, eight hours a week, not at £1,100 but, say, at only £500 a day. After all, who will 'respect' his 'expertise' if he charges less? A mere £4,000 a week to brainwash somebody or other!

Meanwhile, at the bottom of the pile, conditions get always worse. According to a survey by the National Children's Home (the second largest child care charity) many of the poorest families they questioned in a national survey are having to borrow money to buy everyday necessities including fuel and food. In their opinion very little money was spent 'unwisely' and that "even with prudence and caution, the amounts received are

inadequate", suggesting that state benefits need to be higher. They conclude from their survey that it gives them:

"confidence that the results reflect the experiences of many hundreds of thousands of families living on low incomes in Britain today."

Yet leaked government papers suggest that most, if not all, social security payments may be frozen or cut during the next financial year because of public spending restraints (*The Guardian*, 29th October). That despicable creature Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, who got a standing ovation from the hanging and flogging 'representatives' at the Tory Party Conference last month, is behind these moves. Not only is he launching a war against the 'dole cheats' who do the odd job on the side to supplement their miserable dole, but also declaring war on the single parent mothers who, he maintained, had babies in order to get a council flat. It would be interesting to know how this young monster is proposing to go about determining the different categories of single parents. But he is also out "to tax invalidity benefit which is received by more than 900,000 people" (*The Guardian*, 28th October).

More and more people are beginning to recognise that when governments say they have to cut public expenditure, the only ones to suffer are the under-privileged - the underclass. It is a growing section of our society.

Many long years ago the trade unions were created to fight for workers' rights against their exploiters. Today there are more unemployed, unorganised and exploited workers, than ever before, as well as millions of pensioners and nearly a million more on invalidity benefit, who are threatened by the government's cuts.

Surely we have the time. Let's use it to plague the Lilleys and these other thugs day in and day out, not just in London but in every town and city in the land. And don't waste fresh eggs on these rotten power-hungry parasites!

## The Poor: the First Victims of Cuts

It's not just in this country that cuts in public services automatically hurt the poor. For instance, California, described as America's "richest and most populous state", met its \$10.7 billion deficit in September by savage cuts by which, according to *The Guardian's* correspondent in Los Angeles (4th September):

"The sick, elderly and disabled will lose aid supplied by local authorities. Schools will have bigger classes, fewer teachers, worse facilities. Libraries will close and parks will decay. Poor mothers in the inner cities will lose \$50 a month.

Cuts in health services will close one-third of 47 clinics in Los Angeles county alone. Medical analysts are forecasting the return of epidemics of children's diseases such as measles, whooping cough, diphtheria and mumps. Most astonishingly, the state has cut education funding to bring California from 35th to 39th of the fifty states in per capita student spending. Fifteen years ago it was in the top six."

All kinds of excuses (such as worldwide recession) and scapegoats (Reagan and Bush for federal cuts between 1982 and 1991) are being quoted as the reasons for the cuts. But in fact "politicians in Sacramento intensified their cosy relations with well-funded lobbyists representing vested interests" and as a result:

"Meanwhile, the state's powerful agribusiness enjoys huge subsidies for scarce water, minimum grazing fees on public lands, and assistance in building infrastructure. Banks received their welfare in the public bail-out of the savings and loan scandal. Even California's industrial strength, aerospace and Silicon Valley, were subsidised by huge government spending on defence.

Sacramento's answer now is that the poor, sick, young and elderly must pay."

## Britain the 'Taiwan of Europe'

The latest blow for the poor in this country is the government's announcement that it will be abolishing the *statutory wage councils* which determine the minimum pay rates for nearly 2½ million of Britain's lowest paid workers.

It is one of the proposals in the 100-page Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Bill, which received its first reading last week. It is obviously clobbering the trade unions in an obvious attempt to reduce their already limited powers under previous legislation to bankrupt them. We shall return to this, but the proposal to abolish the statutory wage councils is because however useful they may have been in 1909, according to the government they are just a bureaucratic nuisance in 1992. Mr Major let the cat out of the bag, however, when he declared that they were to be abolished "because they distort the operation of the labour market". With millions out of work and many desperately needing any

kind of job to earn some money, one can imagine that most employers will be offering slave wages knowing that there will be takers who will work hard because they know that outside hundreds are waiting to step into their shoes.

We recall a programme on television some months ago showing how Manchester Council went about selecting the six road-sweepers they required from *more than 1,000 applicants!* We mention this not because the council will necessarily take advantage once the statutory wage councils are abolished, but to illustrate the desperation of people today in this country seeking a paid job.

Chris Pond of the Low Pay Unit said the legislation would turn Britain into the "Taiwan of Europe" whereby we would be competing on low costs rather than quality. It was, he said, a "charter for cowboy employers".

It has been pointed out that 80% of the 2½ million low-paid workers are women. One of the Ministers had the impertinence to suggest that these women were in these jobs for 'pin money' and it wouldn't affect their general standard of living if they were paid less!

We all ought to be protesting, not only at being wage slaves, but also at being referred to as the "labour market" by our classless Prime Minister, and that we can only expect what the market can afford.

How much more provocation do the people of this country need before they rise in their millions against the capitalist system?

## A Double-Crosser Double Crossed The Case of Roy Lynk OBE, UDM

The defeat of the miners' strike of 1984-85, over leaked government plans for massive pit closures, was mainly due to lorry drivers prepared to transport the coal from the pits and the ports to the power stations (the railway workers refused to be scabs) and the breakaway miners UDM (Union of Democratic Miners) led by Roy Lynk who went on producing coal throughout the year-long strike.

David Hart, who advised Thatcher and the Coal Board during the strike, has recently revealed a few background details. Not only did the ministers give 'verbal assurances' that no Conservative government would let down the UDM when Roy Lynk had said he was "nervous about setting up the union without pledges from the government", but apparently:

"Ministers feel that Mr Lynk had helped to rescue the government during the miners strike and that it was in his debt. Business supporters of Lady Thatcher, who had nothing to do with the mining industry, were so impressed by Mr Lynk that they provided generous and vital money to set up the UDM." (*The Times*, 24th October)

Thatcher rewarded Lynk with the OBE, his badge of shame, and when the then chairman of British Coal, Lord Haslam:

"... asked for permission to close substantial numbers of pits, she refused and Lord Haslam condemned 'highly speculative Draconian' forecasts of 15,000 to 40,000 redundancies when he announced in 1990 that the workforce would be reduced by 6,000 over the next three years on top of 1,300 cuts already announced."

Once Thatcher was out, another Coal Board chairman, another Prime Minister with Tarzan Heseltine by his side were in, all the promises

vanished into thin air. The Draconian proposed pit closures included a number of those in the UDM area. Roy Lynk, instead of committing hara-kiri, spent a week down a mine. When he emerged for the photographers he threatened to return his badge of shame and not to stand for re-election. He has apparently had second thoughts, but not about his role in 1984-85 as the scabs' leader.

It's poetic justice when one double-crosser gets his comeuppance by another! We only hope the miners and other workers will have learned something from this little true story.

everywhere. And sometimes life on the streets depresses me to the point that I feel half dead with shame, exasperation, regret and anger. Walk around the streets of the big cities of Britain in the day and see them, the great bloc of the silent people of Britain, those who have no voice, those whom the Daimler drivers walk on. I've seen the silent ones in Kirkby, Bootle and Waterloo in Liverpool, screaming at their malnourished kids (frozen pizza and oven-ready chips with cherry cola) to 'fucking shut up will yer!'. The kids'll only have to wait ten years or so and they'll have their own to scream at. I've seen the silent ones shuffling to the down-at-heel 'Scot-Mid' stores in Edinburgh, a lifetime of physical work leaving you with nothing NO-ONE CAN SAVE A BLOODY BEAN IF YOUR WAGES ONLY COVER LIVING! AND THE CUNTS KNOW THAT, BUT THEY DON'T MENTION IT IN PUBLIC - YOU MIGHT LOSE VOTES. I've seen them in the Clydeside towns up from Glasgow, in Greenock, in Paisley. The old before they're young. Have you noticed how a middle class woman will look desirable well into her forties and fifties, yet working class women have run to seed as they broach 30. This system is not just the enemy of sanity, it's the enemy of beauty, it's the enemy of life.

I'm mad, probably in all senses of the word. But there was a lad in my mother's class who walked backwards because there was no medical treatment for working class Scousers fifty years ago; my mother's best friend slept with her brothers and sisters under old coats; my father was taken to a Catholic orphanage on a rag and bone cart and split up from his brothers and sisters; my uncle died at 19 (no medical attention again - fear of the cost) without having worked a stroke (no work), his mother said it was a good thing as he would have ended up in the war. And it gets worse the further you go back, which isn't far because the working class don't have individual histories. So, that's all in the past, what's that got to do with anything? It's got a lot to do with everything, as the inheritance of wealth is the keystone to the class system, and 'individual initiative' counts for nothing, not a bloody bean, if you haven't got money. And where has the boss class' money come from?

(continued on page 4)

## Lower Class Bile

I've just listened to some fart of a Constituency Labour Party delegate telling Radio 4, me, and the world, that the new (wot, not another one) Labour Party will show the voters that they "care about individual initiative, care about individual achievement". This is coded politics, the only sort of politics the vote-hungry can engage in. What the fart meant was that the new Labour Party will let the speculators, the new rentiers of the Thatcher privatisation era, the golden hello and golden handshake mob - the BOSS CLASS - keep their plunder, keep what they've expropriated from the real wealth creators - the men and women who labour.

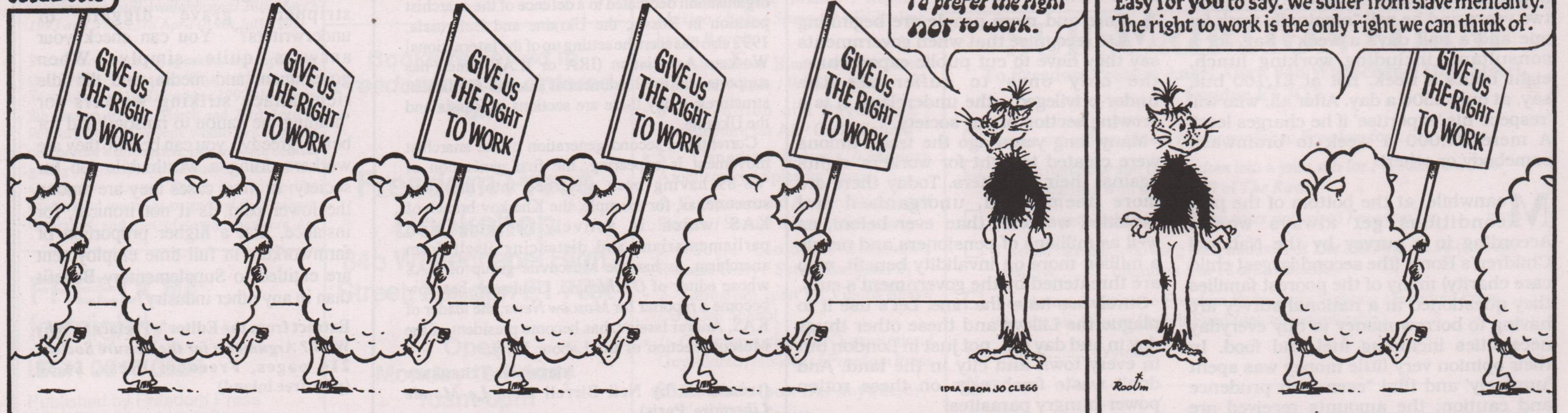
But I'm too harsh. Radio 4 also let me hear Denis Skinner. No one would call him a class traitor, and I don't aim to. But how can the man stand it? How can he continue, year after year, inside a Party that never did, and never will, dig capitalism's well-deserved grave? God knows. The best of luck to the beast. Keep giving it to them! But the same damn system will be here when they make you a peer.

I've spent the morning watching the new

academic year's intake arrive at Edinburgh University (I'm caretaker in a block of student flats). At one stage there were two Mercedes, three Volvos and a fucking huge Daimler disgorging the young of the people that the CLP fart was talking about - the 'individual initiative' types. What happened to access to Higher Education? What access? The only group to really benefit from the introduction of student grants back in the early 1960s were middle class girls. The working class representation at Universities has hardly changed. When will people like the fart realise that you can't tinker with the system, all that happens is you reinforce it. The others, the Daimler/Volvo/Mercedes drivers start higher up the fucking ladder, so how are we supposed to catch up, even if we wanted to?

Cars, especially big cars, are more than just a symbol of all this. A big car doesn't tell you that the driver is a pimp, drug dealer or other middle class / upper class type, it tells you that the driver has no experience of life on the streets. I've no car, and can't drive, so I walk

WILDCAT



How many things we possess and how much we move about are often linked as cause and effect. The jetsetter may take less property around the world with him/her than the hitch-hiker or the refugee. The concert orchestra moves further and faster, with its huge load of instruments, than the Senoi who live in the jungles of Malaysia making shelters and everything else from the jungle when required.

Thus the Senoi might be said to represent an anarchist ideal, only making use of things when they need them. "All property is theft" and the State has always made life very difficult for people like the Senoi – people who don't fit in, don't conform. They have always lived in the jungle, as an organic part of it, so why should they wish for deeds of ownership?

When wealthy people are tired of their possessions they may take an 'adventure' holiday, carrying a back-pack full of material advantages, to make up for their lack of the Senoi's survival skills. They want to experience the basics of life: its vulnerability, lack of privacy and interdependence. And the State encourages this, as long as it is rich people on holiday. But don't try to make it a way of life, or you will be in trouble.

The inhabitants of a Sarawak longhouse and

## Property and the Pattern of Settlement

hippy communards, who removed internal dividing walls in their houses, were equally oblivious to being watched, having apparently lost the need to possess a piece of private territory. The differences of material culture should not prevent us from observing the similarities of basic experience. Rampant deforestation is destroying the Dyaks of Sarawak – just as our Western governments 'discouraged' the hippies.

Transhumance – the seasonal movement of tribes to keep in step with their food needs – applies the same social pressures on the Nuer, the Redjang, as it once did upon the Esquimoux. Such cycles of coming together in huge numbers and then dispersing into small groups, according to the season, is most unpopular with potential landowners and government officials in city offices. It was all right for the European aristocracy, who flocked to the capital city for the 'season' and then retreated to their country 'seats'. And

similar seasonal migration to the cities for work, has been encouraged by the South African government for generations. But poor travellers are not allowed to come together on Salisbury Plain in summer, though wealthy members of caravan clubs are welcomed in their thousands to North Norfolk for an annual jamboree. The pleasures of the gypsy life are celebrated in literature and daydream – but like other freedoms, they are only for the rich.

Does the internal courtyard of a block of flats imply the same unity as a monastic cloister or the parade ground of a fort? A focusing inward, a rejection of the outside world. Is the hall of a private house what the city square is to Aldermen and politicians? Monks, soldiers and psychiatric patients may all have come from the outside world to share lives in a settled institution with minimal personal

property; parallels in the relationships of such inmates is to be expected. Again, governments are not happy about this kind of settlement, unless it is under their direct control.

And what of the majority of mankind who appear to live in private dwellings, alone or with a family, spending many years, or even lifetimes, in the same detached mansion, tiny flat or fall-out shelter? Surely the medieval burgher would feel more comfortable in a modern town house than in a monastery, fort or Saxon great hall of his own time? Has the capitalist pattern of settlement come to dominate society because the wealthy have forced it upon the rest of us?

I have suggested that there are at least four other totally different patterns of human settlement, each of which satisfies deep needs within human nature. But unless we are rich, we will be forced to settle for the fifth. Of course governments will allow us to choose the sixth: the slave ship and concentration camp – no property and as much movement as death.

John Myhill

## Dorset Diary

Dorset is not the most important county on the map for the travellers and to my knowledge no festivals took place or were planned here this summer. So it was interesting to read in the local press this week of the "summer of mayhem" and "confrontation" which "cost poll tax payers thousands of pounds" (sounds more like mayoral cars) and "caused chaos on the roads". All of which we are led to understand is the rationale to support the new 'get tough' policy being implemented by North Dorset District Council against a couple of dozen people who are camping in a paddock in Okeford Fitzpaine.

Whether the encampment is legal or not doesn't seem to be important. The travellers say they have permission from the owners of the land, but the reaction to this of Steve Graeser, the council's senior enforcement officer, is simply that "difficulty in locating the precise owners prevents confirmation of this".

Nor are the proper channels of the law to be observed in this special case. The chief planning officer Robin Kennard points out that "to go to the courts" and "obtain an injunction" of course "takes time". So instead planning laws are to be used. The travellers have been served with notices requiring them to leave the site and not return. This is useful. No time wasting, no need to find out what the real situation is and, most importantly, the travellers are effectively denied the chance to have their say.

Some liberal voices of opposition are to be heard with Marion Bullock, a local Gillingham councillor, championing the travellers cause. "What is needed are small sites on common land or under council control

away from villages for up to ten vehicles where they could stay for up to 28 days." Hardly the kind of solution which would appeal to those who have rejected a system that offers them so little, but then their opinions count for so little in the debate.

Just a local story about a couple of dozen 'hippies' being shunted around another county? Not at all. The establishment are out gunning for the travellers in large part because they hit where it's most dangerous by questioning the underlying ideology on which the system depends. In particular, the sanctity of property is being questioned. This is not to say that the travellers are all ideologically motivated. Many simply want away from an urban environment that has been so hostile to them with all its housing and poll tax problems. But by playing around with alternative lifestyles they are demonstrating that the rat-race of materialism is not inevitable and that there is a choice and in so far as this is inspirational, and I for one find it so, it is also dangerous.

So the attack is on. The Tory Party declared war on the alternative at their party conference and this is only the latest in a battle which goes back at least to Bean Field where the State proved quite happy to use violence against the unarmed and defenceless. For the travelling community to survive, and indeed hopefully grow, they will have to be ready for the coming onslaught. Clearly mutual aid within their communities, co-operation and strength of numbers are their most powerful allies. Links must be forged between the travellers and those who support their search for alternatives to the bankrupt system which is beginning to totter as we head for the next century.

But it must be realised that a lasting victory will require a political solution in the sense of solving the land question. As long as the travellers remain economically dependent on the State (the pittance they call Social Security – some 'security' £40 a week) this rug can, and will, be pulled from under them and they may be forced to accept Ms Bullock's 'ethnic cleansing for Dorset' policies.

The travellers are an imaginative, resilient community and I don't think the State will succeed in eliminating them, but the future will be hard and we in the anarchist movement must give them all the support – moral and, where possible, material – we can. If we do we may still be able to have a party at Stonehenge.

Neil Birrell

## Lower Class Bile

(continued from page 3)

From exploiting generations of Britons, generations of subjects of the Empire and beyond. And what are they doing with that blood money? Exploiting this generation of the workers.

This isn't a beautifully crafted bit of writing. It's not meant to be, it's just pure lower class bile. It's a fraction of the anger we need to end this appalling system and give us all peace, space and a better world. A BETTER WORLD, NOT A MILLION MORE VOTES.

Steve Cullen

## Housing For All

As winter closes in it is perhaps a good time to spare some consideration for the many thousands of people who will spend it on the streets.

There can be no more obvious monument to the disgusting attitudes engendered by the masters of capital than to see people sleeping on the streets in locked doorways, while masses of housing remains empty.

The state of housing distribution and utilisation in this society is quite shameful. For people at the bottom of the pile, options amount to a whole lot of nothing.

For those with some money there is the possibility of buying a house, that is if you don't mind being tied to the whims and financial games of a bank or building society (is there really any difference?) for twenty to thirty years; not to mention wage slavery to pay for it. A life sentence? Even then it's not yours. Until it's paid for completely the bank can reclaim it at any time and put you on the street. Anyway, for most of us looking in the estate agent's window is nothing short of a sick joke!

If buying is a non-starter then you could always try renting. It is, however, hardly worth even bothering to go to the council unless you've got at least five years to hang around waiting, and then you'll get a run-down, dirty, damp room in a slum, marginally better than nothing, maybe. Really good for your health though, a particular bonus if you happen to have children. Their current solution for families who are absolutely stuck for housing is bed and breakfast – usually one room as above, which costs the council a fortune and becomes a permanent placement.

After the council we come to the realms of the private landlord. There can be no more contemptible set of people – profiting at the expense of other people's basic requirements; and often not just profiting but bleeding dry their tenants for accommodation, basic to say the least. And of course the law is totally behind them. Landlords basically have the right to do as they please: keeping deposits for the most thinly veiled excuses, evicting at will, massively increasing rent at a whim, putting down all manner of restrictions (no pets, no children, no DSS – sound familiar?) and generally making people's lives all the more difficult. Of course a lot of rented accommodations are winter lets, so come the summer you can sod off! Tourists are worth more money. Never mind the disintegration of the community, which the landlord rarely lives in anyway.

Add to these people who have bought property

and find they can ill afford it and increasingly are renting rooms in their house. So, if you can afford it, and you don't mind buying someone else's house for them, maybe this will do. Or, perhaps you could get a job with a tied house (they do still exist in agriculture), but remember to behave and doff your cap at the right time or you could find yourself jobless and homeless.

Failing all this, and it quite often does fail, there is the street. To get money off the DSS for accommodation you first have to have accommodation, and of course nobody will give you accommodation until they've first taken your money. Some help the state is, surprise, surprise!

In the spirit of anarchy some people choose to help themselves. Self-build housing is an example of this. Not very immediate, and prone to the hassles of planning laws.

Then there are the travellers, who to a greater or lesser extent move around with their housing, choosing to live in a variety of vehicles and/or benders (constructed from a wooden frame and covered in tarps – very cosy!) This seems to upset property owners hell-bent on defending their little bit of England. Consequently, travellers attract the unwelcome attentions of the state authorities both nationally and locally, not to mention their boot-boys – the police. 'Get back in the gutter, none of this self-organisation you scruffy lot.' In a similar vein there is also the option of squatting property. This also tends to upset property owners and periodically interests the police.

The less strong – the elderly, who annually suffer hypothermia as they cannot afford to heat their houses; infants and the sick, who succumb to illness in squalid conditions; and the increasing number of mentally ill people kicked out of institutions and slipping into alcohol and drug abuse on the streets, often don't make it.

So much misery, hardship and harassment so needlessly caused. And yet the solutions are so simple!

For a start, people need to control their communities and have security where they live. This requires the dismantling of private property. No one has rights over where you live, but at the same time it is only yours for as long as you want to live there. Remove the economic limitations placed on society and people will be able to make their housing habitable and fit to live in as they wish. Available accommodation could simply be registered in local offices, of which there would be one office in each community. Finding accommodation would then simply be a case of visiting these offices and finding something suitable for your needs.

We must demand free housing for all! Communities count, not landlords, bankers, estate agents, bureaucrats or councillors. It's time we took control!

Ging

## Down with Kultur!

Our comrade JL from Wolverhampton writes: "Here the new Tory/Alliance council are proposing to (and no doubt will) close five local libraries ALL of which are in working class areas". A sure sign that this will happen is the fact that these libraries are selling off a large number of books at giveaway prices.

**The Mystery Religion of W.B. Yeats**  
by Graham Hough  
published by The Harvester Press, Sussex

The philosopher the late Swedenborg, taxonomist and all-round good time Charlie, acquired the reputation of being able to empty a bar, a church or a brothel of the faithful in zilch seconds flat by constantly chanting that: "Thirty five tons of steel ain't hay". This statement has always been accepted as no more than an eternal truth, but it was put to the test into and within London's Tate Gallery when two rectangles of solid steel weighing 35 or 40 tons each were eased into the gallery by its board of directors, so a sad-eyed fellow wine lover holding up the wine table informed me. It is the thought or sight of these cultivated aesthetics stripped to the waist and to the note of a single drum huffing and puffing 35 tons of solid steel into the gallery that explains why the Town's frau is to be found at the bar of the White Hart pub kneeling and weeping for these unfortunate men.

With the exception of the Prime Minister, it is accepted that the social and industrial economy of these islands are hell bent for oblivion, and when any society lays festering with no answer of how to salve the wounds then pseudo-social politics, economics and mysticism finds a breeding ground, so too with the 35 tons of steel. The social back-cloth to the American sculptor Richard Serra's steel blocks that bear neither decoration or inscription is the steel industry of these small sunless islands. Having had its workforce slashed to its quivering bone, the programme is for the European cartel to seek EC handouts of £3 million and in return to cut 50,000 steel jobs and pare down the industry to its skeleton to compete with the low-wage imports from Eastern Europe so that by some perverted

logic the steel industry could believe they owe little Richard and the Tate a PR debt of gratitude. Throughout human recorded history men and women have sought to come to terms with the World Invisible and to make physical and material contact with it, yet in the entire history of the human race it has never been achieved. All that was asked was to transmute lead into gold, or eternal life, as I said to the Queen Mum in the White Hart while topping up her glass and fishing for my chance of getting a hereditary peerage, for it is a small gift for an old and long-loving admirer to ask. Find a gigantic block of carved stone in some forest or bleak plain and the rational mind and the scientists and the mystic fantasist will make common cause in attributing to the dumb rock attributes it could never have. From Easter Island to Stonehenge, they will demand their common law rights to hop, skip and jump around the stones. Richard Serra's 35 tons of mindless steel is in the Tate Gallery for no other reason than that it is steel and hernia-producing. If it was wood or concrete or plastic, as art it would be old hat and one doubts if the Boys in the Back Room would give it space, but a 35 ton block of unmovable steel contains its own mystic and mystery. Shelley, in the opening lines of *Ozymandias* (1817) wrote:

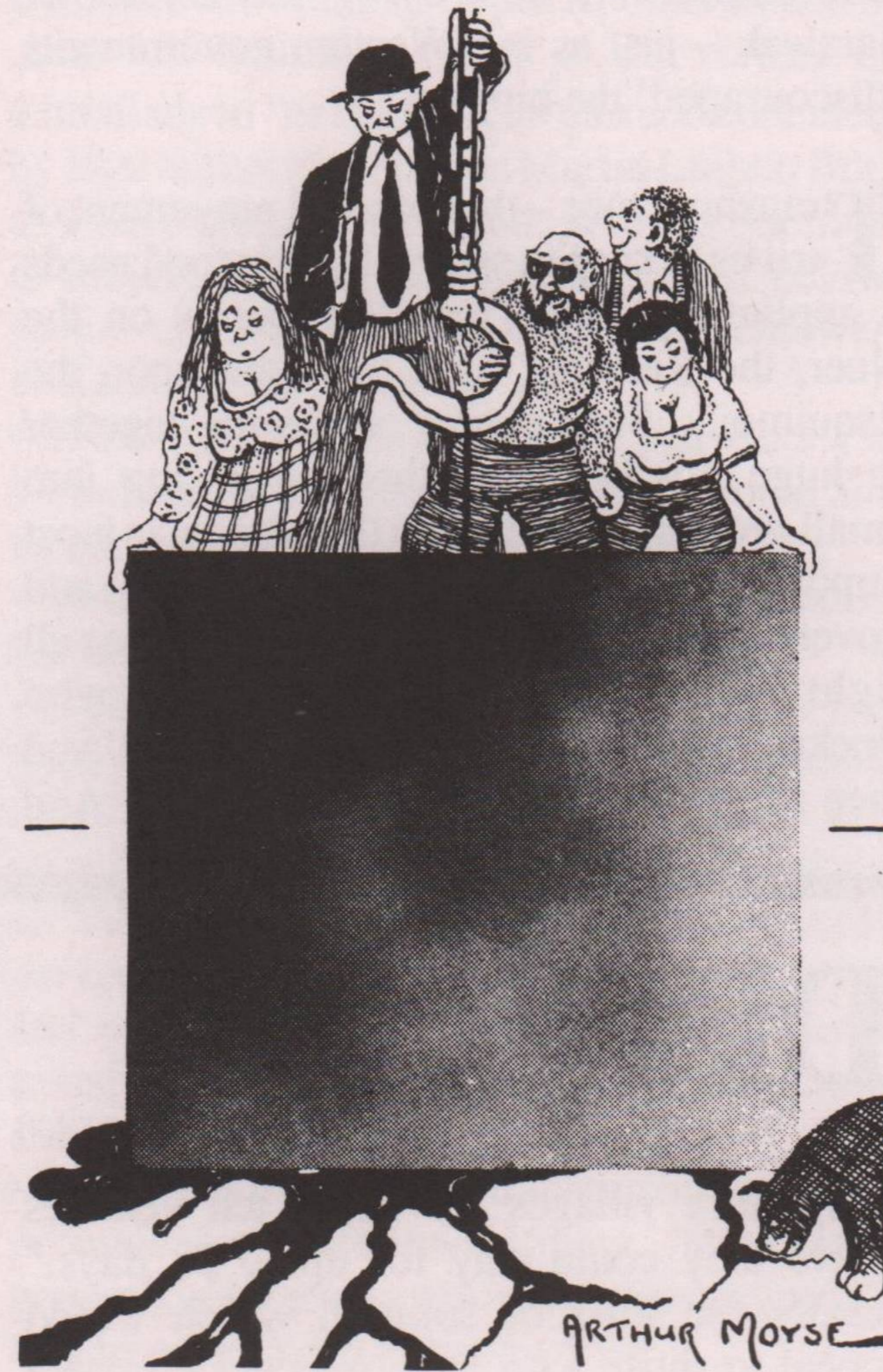
"I met a traveller from an antique land / Who said two vast and trunkless legs of stone / Stand in the desert ... near them, on the sand, / Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown, / and wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, / Tell that its sculptor well those passions read ..."

and he spelt it out. The old days of Flower Power are long gone, man, for it is now the

# Holy Clang

hard sell when in 1992 unfortunate children have been kidnapped, mutilated and killed in what is claimed is drear Satanic rituals and the old writings are being dusted off.

The Waddington Gallery is to art what Macdonalds is to the masses in that like a Hammer Horror film one lives in drear fear



"ANYONE KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO little RICHARD?"

that, come the full moon, it will enlarge turning the whole of Bond Street into a City of the Living Dead and that will include VAT. To stay on the Waddington mailing list I must state for the public record that they have claimed to have exhibited many a major collection of art. And come the Town and his white-faced frau dodging the walking dead queuing at the Sainsbury's check-out counters, the old visual horror comics are back on the walls and who can deny Jack B. Yeats the first stir of the witches brew. Many a bookshelf message seeker will ask 'who is Jack B. Yeats and what was his stand on sexual harassment and saving the whale?' and the answer is that like Juan Gris at the Whitechapel gallery, he had a bandwagon to ride to gallery glory on. His paintings are a mish-mash of bright and pretty colours that claim an Irish theme, but their raucous dazzling out of focus paintings owe nothing to the sad and muted greens of that tortured island. Jack's claim to the West End gallery walls is, for me, the fortunate fact that he is the brother of the Irish poet W.B. Yeats and their mysticism is but the visual of the poetry and behaviour of his brother W.B. Yeats. The work of the artist, craftsman or poet cannot, and never must be, judged on moral terms and W.B. Yeats poured out all his emotional torments into his magnificent poetry be it nationalism or the occult. Graham Hough's well researched book on W.B. Yeats and his companions' vain attempts over the long years, within and without the society of the Golden dawn, and Madame Blavatsky writing wit' the words, wherein they put on the robes, cut up papers and lit candles, but fortunately, unlike the late Soho cellar priest Aleister Crowley, they never sacrificed a cat. They peered and probed through the 'old writings' be it the Cabala, Hermes Trismegistus, Father Christian Rosenkreuz, Cornelius Agrippa, Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, old Eliphaz Levi, Doctor Dee and Kelly, and in spite of all the mystic bull over the long centuries no one ever bent a spoon by supernatural methods. Only the gnostics were right, but they always got a bad press from the Christian control of the media. In the end, as ever, there was always the great escape clause of C.G. Jung's 'Collective Unconscious' psychology, that great flush toilet escape valve. All that is left is the Egyptian god Thoth squatting in the British Museum, that one and only tiny figure who over the centuries has been worshipped for good or evil causes. Hough writes that:

"if you want to explore the shadow side, the hidden channels of human experience, you must be prepared to keep bad company - indeed, it is in what the world of scholarship and organised intelligence would call bad company that the deepest mysteries are most likely to be discovered."

An eternal truth my 'hyperthetical' comrades, but give the last lines on the mystic 35 ton block of steel squatting within the Tate Gallery to the poet Shelley's closing lines:

"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings / Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair! / Nothing beside remains. Round the decay / of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare, / The lone and level sands stretch far away." (Shelley, 1817)

Arthur Moyses, 1992

## The Dogma of Class Denied

In a previous article ('Society and Class, Two Pernicious Errors', *Freedom*, 27th June) I was critical of the notion of class. In this article I wish to develop my ideas further.

In the last article, I explained relationships between people using two models, the beehive and the plughole. I rejected the idea of class having any predictive power towards the improvement of the human situation, because this assumes class has homogeneity. The idea of class is useful in a limited, descriptive sense, but in shifting from description to prescription we go beyond the facts. We should beware of ascribing unity to that which has no unity ('The Yugoslavian Fallacy').

Marxists and many anarchists still hold to what I call 'the dogma of class'. This is the idea of that single, homogeneous entity, the working class, and that this group will bind together and overthrow the state. Here is an example of a typical statement of it:

Given that all of us want change, the question is 'where does change come from?' Real change 1) must come from below; and 2) must be collective. Since we live in a capitalist, class-based society, that means it must come from independent working class action. That is the bottom line ...

The dogma of class is shot-through with musts ... must come from below ... must be collective ... must come from independent working class action ...

The dogma of class assumes the categories of exploiter and exploited, but these are inadequate conceptual tools with which to examine the situation. Who exactly is the exploiter? Everybody in the developed world exploits the undeveloped, while many middle class people are in turn exploited by the companies they work for. It is not only a matter of one economic group dominating another, but rather that these categories break down when we try to use them to measure up against the situation.

"Since we live in a capitalist, class-based society" - but there is nothing inevitable about this. We can decline to participate. The idea of the exploited as a class cannot accommodate the unemployed, who are not permitted to sell their work in the labour market. The unemployed, as individuals, have only marginal significance in terms of purchasing power. To a large extent the unemployed are denied the option of participating. Other modes of

existence are possible, we could opt out of the process and live like Thoreau, or become Green Anarchists. The assertion that the capitalist, class-based framework dominates us points towards a fresh definition of the problem which goes beyond mere economics, for how can anybody be said to live at all under capitalism?

When we ask ourselves 'What is the problem?' we see straight away that it is not the domination of one group (the exploited proletariat) by the other (the exploiter bourgeoisie) as if our world could admit of such a simplistic, dualistic analysis, but rather that every individual is rendered meaningless by the machine. On Sunday 25th October 250,000 people marched through London to protest against the mine closures. Their protests count for nothing with the government. The exploited print workers remained nothing to the late Robert Maxwell. Rent striking students remain nothing to the University Vice Chancellors. 57% of the voters not voting Tory remain nothing to the Tory government, the wishes of the people who do not want European Union remain nothing to the Eurocrats, etc., etc. These are just a few examples. The problem is much wider than mere economics, the meaninglessness of the individual has many different facets.

The dogma of class asserts a value judgement, that the exploited are to be preferred to the exploiter, that the working class are to be preferred to the middle class. This value judgement does not address the problem, because the machine's evaluation of value cuts through all economic levels. The computer executive on £60,000 p.a. is just as worthless and insignificant as the pensioner and the unemployed person. Whether we choose to value the one against the other does nothing to alter the fact that they are both lost and without meaning, without freedom, or any value to their lives when faced by the machine.

In opting for the poor, we may feel that we are joining the side of the angels. This does nothing to address the problem. We should recognise that the value judgement is grounded in middle class sentimentality. There is nothing romantic about being poor.

Against the implicit classism of the value judgement 'real change must come from below' I

say that neither the working class, nor the middle class are exclusively the source of human value. The machine, on the other hand, is the source of our negation. We can only give value to humanity by destroying it.

The bottom line of the dogma of class asserts that independent working class action is the proper engine for change. This excludes the efforts of individual middle class people and so denies validity to the efforts of a large proportion of political activists. It is not the socio-economic background of the people who are working for change which is important here, but whether or not their actions are productive.

Independent working class action as the proper engine for change assumes the value judgement discussed above, but it also assumes that it is meaningful to speak of the collective working class, that the working class can come together and act as a homogeneous entity. (A point which was questioned before.) What price the four and twenty Marxist sects?

The phrase 'independent working class action' seeks to assert, (at least within the working class, the only class that counts) the democratic basis of that change, while at the same time denying the validity of any vanguard. This is self-contradictory, because it denies the right of the vanguard revolutionary group to dictate to the working class, while asserting at the same time the right of the proletariat to dictate to everybody else.

Here it is plain to see that no anarchist could hold the dogma of class because anarchists believe that no person or political group has the right to dictate to the individual.

The dogma of class here assumes that the working class as a whole and the vanguard group are in competition for control over what we might term the collective will. It is doubtful whether such a dictatorship of the majority could ever be formulated, but assuming it could, this collective will should remain in charge, over and against the wishes of the vanguard. Anarchists deny the validity of both forms of control. We return again to the difference between anarchism and Marxism, a difference over the definition of the problem itself, the one limiting itself to the economic, the other broader in scope, including cultural, social, political, and many other fields. It is not simply a matter of economics but of all aspects of the machine.

Stephen Booth

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**Nature's Web: an exploration of ecological thinking**

Peter Marshall

Simon and Schuster, £9.99

Peter Marshall is a historian of ideas, known to *Freedom* readers as the author of *Demanding the Impossible*, the splendid great tome on anarchism published earlier this year (Harper Collins, £25), and two Freedom Press titles, *The Anarchist Writings of William Godwin* (£3.50) and *William Blake Visionary Anarchist* (£2.00).

*Nature's Web* is an enjoyable and useful book, concisely describing all sorts of attitudes to nature, as recorded since 600BC. It must be remarked, however, that the subtitle is misleading. This book is not about ecology. The names of seminal ecological thinkers, like G.E. Hutchinson and Raymond Lindeman, do not appear in the index.

The "ecological thinking" of the subtitle refers to the metaphysical attitude (I do not use 'metaphysical' in a derogatory sense) which sees humans as part of nature, in contrast to 'anthropocentric thinking' which sees humans as superior to nature.

Ecology is indeed the subject of Chapter 24, where we learn that the word 'oecologie' was first used by Haeckel in 1866, that 'ecology' was generally accepted as the name of a science after the International Botanical Congress of 1893, and that Charles Elton defined ecology as no more than scientific natural history.

But there is no sense of interest in the questions which ecology investigates, such as why there are so many different kinds of organisms, and why some habitats harbour more of them than others. Ecology is seen as important, only as the precursor of, and backdrop to, "ecology as a social and political movement".

By the 1950s, ecologists were able to predict the size at which, say, a population of arctic lemmings would exhaust its food supply and suffer an ecological catastrophe. Some ecologists use the same statistical techniques to calculate how long the human population of the world could keep on increasing at the current rate. Some, such as Professor Wayne Davis, went public with sensational 'worst case' calculations, hoping to scare people into decelerating population growth.

I guess it was then that people began to confuse the opinion with the method, and

**Business Practices in the NHS**

The Tories tell us they have no intention of privatising the NHS. They are simply introducing business practices into the service, because people trained in business are less wasteful of money. A case in point is detailed in the annual audit of the Department of Health, published (and reported in the press) on 27th October.

Mr Chris Watney, trained as a management consultant, was engaged as director of regionally managed services for the West Midlands regional health authority. He hired a firm of management consultants, United Research Group (URG), to examine how the authority's supplies division could be made commercially viable. The authority paid URG a fee of £2.5 million, plus expenses. The expenses include leases on homes in London for URG executives and their families, and the hire of aircraft to commute the executives from London to work in the West Midlands. The total comes to about £4 million, all paid legal and above-board, so the National Health Service cannot claim a penny back.

Following an internal review of this amazing rip-off, Mr Watney left the authority's service suddenly, with a golden handshake of £80,000. He is now "realising a life-long ambition to sail round the world in his yacht".

**Nature's Web**

began to use the word 'ecology' by mistake, for a wide range of ethical attitudes and socio-political endeavours. In this erroneous sense, 'ecology' is a rather vague term, as likely to be used by the 'anthropocentric thinkers' as by the 'ecological thinkers' of Marshall's language.

The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, Marshall tells us, coined the word 'ecosophy' to mean a metaphysical doctrine which is partly inspired by the science of ecology, but draws on much wider philosophical and religious traditions. According to Marshall, 'ecosophy' derives from the Greek *sophia*, 'wisdom', and *eco*, 'earth' (though my dictionary says *eco-* is from the Greek *oikos*, 'house, and the Greek for 'earth' is *ge*). But in 1973 Naess abandoned his pretty neologism and called his doctrine 'Deep Ecology' instead. Why? Was he trying to represent his metaphysical doctrine as a scientific hypothesis? Or did he think the word 'ecology' so abused already that the damage was irreparable?

In Chapter 31, Marshall writes "Ecology as a disciplinary subject offers a rich backdrop to environmental ethics". For all I know, his first draft read "Ecology offers a rich backdrop to ecological thinking" and he changed it because he noticed that it was confusing to use 'ecology' with two different meanings in the same sentence. Throughout this one chapter (except in the title, "Towards a libertarian ecology") he avoids using 'ecology' in any but its original sense. For metaphysical purposes, he uses terms like "environmental moralists", "a holistic environmental ethic", and "biocentricity". He might have done so throughout the book, making the subtitle 'an exploration of holistic thinking' or some such. Thus he might have avoided adding to the confusion of language.

If I labour the point, I plead the excuse of bitter experience. When I was a student of ecology, I bought a pamphlet titled *Ecology*, assuming it would be relevant to my studies. It turned out to be a verbose political tract by an American conservative. I still mourn the loss of time and money I wasted on it.

With that one reservation, this is a splendid book. Concisely written, but nevertheless long (513 pages including the index) because it covers so much.

Attitudes to nature are described, as recorded in the literature of religion, mysticism, philosophy, science and art from all over the world, for two and a half thousand years. The religions discussed include Taoism, Confucianism, and various types of Buddhist, Jew, Christian, Moslem, Romans, Greeks, Celts, and North American Indians. The philosophers include Plato, Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, d'Holbach,

Bentham, Hegel, Kant, Heidegger and Russell, the scientists Versalius, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin, Huxley, Einstein, Teilhard de Chardin, and Lovelock. I will not make a list of the poets and politicians. The relevant ideas of all these people are not set out drily, but described in lucid, entertaining language. This is a good read, as well as being a useful reference book.

When so much is covered so concisely we must assume that there are oversimplifications, and it would be surprising if there were not many errors of detail. But we may follow up the ideas of particular thinkers, if we wish, through the extensive references and bibliography. *Nature's Web* may be seen as an introduction to the thoughts of many thinkers, and in many cases that is all we need.

One chapter is about Deep Ecology and Social Ecology. No doubt the protagonists of these two doctrines would argue with Marshall about the details, but there are enough quotations to show that his descriptions are right in substance, and we are saved the trouble of searching for essentials among the wordy rhetoric put out by the protagonists themselves.

Marshall is objective in his descriptions, without pretending to be impartial in his judgements. It is clear from his choice of words that he is for some thinkers and against others. Generally he is for 'ecological'

thinkers, except where he sees them as 'reductionist' (as in the case of Richard Dawkins). In places, he shows himself to share the mystical ideas he describes.

"Shaftesbury was one of the first to appreciate the sublime in nature which leads the observer towards the infinite mind". Note the word 'appreciate' rather than 'proclaim' or some other word indicating neither agreement nor disagreement. Similarly, saint Bernard "recognised" (as distinct from 'opined') "that as spiritual creatures we have need of a body in order to obtain knowledge of those things which make us blessed".

Sometimes Marshall flags his own opinions by referring to a 'genuine' ecological approach.

The last two chapters are about Marshall's own opinions. His "ecological thinking" is shown to be anarchistic; he describes the idea without using the word. He advocates a vegan diet while recognising that it is not always possible in practice. He thinks we should be "guardians of being", nurturing life where necessary but otherwise letting life be. His attitude to nature is somewhat mystical, but he does not go so far as to suggest 'cosmic purpose'.

The last chapter, "Ecotopia revisited", described Marshall's ideal human society, the "ecological society" which is indistinguishable from the ideal of anarchy.

Donald Room

All the books mentioned in the first paragraph are available from Freedom Press Bookshop. For *Nature's Web* and *Demanding the Impossible* by post, add a contribution to postage, 10% inland, 20% if ordering from abroad. The Freedom Press titles are post free inland, add 15% overseas.

**Gosh! Comics Raided by Customs**

A new threat to freedom of speech has arisen in Britain. The Customs and Excise Investigation Branch is collecting evidence with a view to prosecuting Gosh!, a comic shop in Great Russell Street, London, opposite the British Museum.

The police often bring such cases. *Freedom* has in the past reported the (successfully) defended prosecutions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Men Only*, the distributors Knockabout Comics, and Gay's the Word bookshop, and there are countless undefended and unreported prosecutions. But HM Customs have hitherto confined themselves to confiscation of 'indecent' material. For them to prosecute appears unprecedented.

Gosh! stocks a wider range of material than most comic shops. It is a favourite of *Freedom's* correspondent for its collections of newspaper strips from all over the world (including Freedom Press's Wildcat collections).

Eight customs officers raided the shop on 20th October, and stayed there for seven hours, searching the shelves for offensive material. They had all been supplied with typewritten guidelines detailing what to look for, ranging from 'decapitation' to 'urination'. You might think it would be difficult for customs officers to take such nonsense seriously, but you would be wrong.

A customs officer informs us privately, that customs officers are trained to suspend their judgement and their sense of humour, and solemnly obey any order whatever. There are stringent rules against April Fool jokes in customs offices, following bizarre incidents of officers carrying out completely daft spoof orders.

Several hundred titles were taken away from Gosh! for further examination. Joshua Palmano, proprietor of the shop in partnership with Jill Palmano, was interviewed 'under caution' on 3rd November. He was told the investigation is still at the data-gathering

stage, and no decision taken as to exactly what the charge will be. However, the raiders took some material which was not imported but published in this country, and this suggests a case under the Customs Consolidation Act of 1872.

This Act brought together several earlier Acts, mostly concerned with preventing the import of plant diseases. The schedule of prohibited imports, revised from time to time, currently includes potato plants from areas infested with Colorado beetle, and cactuses. It is a historical accident that "indecent material" has also appeared in the schedule since 1872.

The Act provides that if prohibited items are imported and subsequently mixed with home-produced items, the entire mixture is forfeit. In the case of infected potatoes this makes sense, but as the Act is worded, it applies to literature as well. Believe it or not, British comics, whose legality would not otherwise have been in question, were removed from Gosh! on the ground that they were 'contaminated' by imported comics.

Some of the American items removed are Batman comics, and it is to be hoped that if prosecution goes ahead, Batman comics will be on the indictment. The publishers, DC Comics, would be prepared to pay for expensive lawyers to prevent bigots in British Customs from damaging their business. Their London solicitors are taking a close interest in the case.

Bringing prosecutions like this has always been police business, and we can only guess at why HM Customs are encroaching on it. Perhaps they are miffed because the police recently found a load of imported Semtex explosive, without calling in Customs to take a share of the credit. Petty-minded? Well yes, someone at HM Customs is indeed petty-minded.

Whatever the reason, this new attack on civil liberty needs to be resisted.

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# A Question of Blood

Yet again we learn of the death of a Jehovah's Witness due to his refusal to accept a blood transfusion. Countless Witnesses and, more tragically, Witness children have died since the ban on blood first took effect in July 1945.

The Watchtower Society is worthy of serious study. With an internal structure that can aptly be described as 'fascist', it has shown a consistent and regular growth during the last century. Worldwide membership doubled in the ten years 1980-1990; the current rate of growth being 6.1%. Worldwide, up to ten million individuals attend their meetings, although only half of those have been 'baptised' into the Watchtower Society.

To become a Witness one must not only accept the doctrines and practices of the Society, but must attend five meetings each week, carry out home studies and spend time each week 'publishing' the good news about Jehovah's Kingdom on the doorstep. Failure to carry out the last of these requirements means automatic exclusion. There is no such thing as an 'inactive' Jehovah's Witness.

To me, one of their most interesting characteristics is not the absurdity of their beliefs but that fact that they so regularly 'update' their doctrines, often performing a total volte-face, and then, years later, returning to the original viewpoint. Yet, amazingly, these revisions of doctrine never seem to have the effect of weakening the fervour of their commitment. Their blood doctrines have also been subject to constant modifications.

Most primitive religions have ambivalent attitudes towards blood. It may be regarded as pure or impure, attractive or repulsive, sacred or profane. Rituals relating to menstrual blood were 'shared' by natives as far apart as Polynesia, Australia, Africa, Central Asia, America and the Arctic. Handling blood was sometimes forbidden, sometimes mandatory but almost always dangerous. The spilling of blood was frequently forbidden, by tribes as

distant in time and locality as the Scythians (of Herodotus) and the Iroquois; the Hindus abolished their earlier sacrificial practices to avoid shedding blood. For the ancient mind, blood, even when shed, was still perilous and potent, full of latent life and capable of working on persons and things in contact with it.

To a great extent these crude and archaic ideas have been kept alive by today's Jehovah's Witnesses. Possibly the first doctrinal contact between Witnesses and the general population is on the 'question of blood'. Witnesses claim to base their approach 'on what the Bible says' - and the Bible has a lot to say, they assert, 'blood' being mentioned more than 400 times. The argument goes that after the Flood, Jehovah allowed mankind to add flesh to his diet (eating meat would clearly have been incongruent in Eden!) with the proviso that "only flesh with its soul - its blood - you must not eat" (Genesis 9: 3-4). In pouring out on the ground the blood of animals killed, Noah and his descendants showed their respect for the Creator's wishes: "... your blood of your souls shall I ask back" (Genesis 9: 5-6).

The identification of 'soul' and 'blood' is forcefully developed in Leviticus - "for the soul of every sort of flesh is its blood by the soul in it ... you must not eat the blood of any sort of flesh" (Leviticus 7: 13-14). So the pouring out of blood was not simply a ritual - rather it was a recognition that the 'blood' of a being is its 'life'; by pouring it out on the altar or on the ground, the Israelite was returning the creature's life to God.

These Biblical texts probably reflect the earlier universal view of the relationship between life and blood. When, today, we say that 'blood is life' we are asserting something quite different from the earlier usage. What we mean is that blood is essential to living, to keeping the organism active, and that life is not possible (in the higher forms of life, anyway) without blood. But primitive thought argues that life is blood and it therefore

follows that when blood leaves the body, so does life. Similar ideas are found in the Quran, where God is said to have created man from clotted blood.

According to today's Witnesses, these stipulations are not to be regarded as 'past history'. They were endorsed by the early Christian community, and they cite as evidence the remarks of the Apostle James in Acts 15. Tertullian refers to the refusal of Christians to "eat blood", an attitude endorsed by later authorities such as Martin Luther. But, as I have already indicated, Witness doctrine is subject to constant updating. I list below some of the milestones in Watchtower declarations on blood:

- 1909: The Watchtower rules that Acts 15, including the prohibition on blood, should not be considered as law for Christians.

- 1945: Watchtower denounces blood transfusions as pagan and God-dishonouring.

- 1960: Watchtower informs its readers of the many dangers associated with blood transfusions: "the poisons that produce the impulse to commit suicide, murder or steal are in the blood ... moral insanity, sexual perversion, repression, inferiority complexes and petty crimes ..." often flow from blood transfusions (Watchtower, 15th September 1960).

- 1961: Taking a blood transfusion becomes grounds for disfellowshipping. There is a general prohibition against the eating of meats that have not been properly 'bled'.

- 1964: Pet owners told it is wrong to allow transfusions to be given to sick animals. Food with blood is not to be given to pets.

- 1967: Organ transplants are a form of cannibalism and are to be shunned (Watchtower, 15th November 1967).

As can be seen, their blood doctrines are grounded on a number of Biblical statements relating to the eating of blood and indeed the Watchtower (15th September 1958) insisted that:

"Each time the prohibition of blood is mentioned in the Scriptures it is in connection with taking it as food and so it is as nutrient that we are concerned with its being forbidden."

However, can the many Biblical statements relating to the eating of blood be applied to the acceptance of transfused blood as a life-saving medical procedure? A blood transfusion is *not* intravenous feeding: it is actually a transplantation of a fluid tissue, *not* an infusion of a nutrient. In a kidney transplantation, the kidney is not eaten as food by the new body it enters - it remains a kidney with the same form and function. The same is true of the blood. When doctors decide there is a need for a blood transfusion it is not because the patient is malnourished; in most cases it is because the patient is lacking not food but oxygen, due to the lack of sufficient 'carriers' of oxygen, namely the red cells of the blood.

On several occasions the Watchtower has endeavoured to claim medical support for their view of transplanted blood as 'feeding' of the body; this they have done by resorting to quotations from medical sources of an earlier century (for example, citing the Frenchman Denys from the seventeenth century - see Watchtower, 15th April 1985). They cannot quote a single modern authority in support of their view.

The most recent elaborations of doctrine took place in the early 1980s. In November 1981 the *Journal of the American Medical Association* carried an article prepared by the Watchtower Society (it was reprinted in the Society's *Awake!*, 22nd June 1982). In an attempt to make their views more acceptable, the Society distinguished between blood usage that was 'unacceptable' and what was 'acceptable'. On the list of forbidden items were:

- whole blood
- plasma
- white blood cells
- red blood cells
- platelets
- storage of blood in any way, including storage of patient's own blood for later use by the patient.

Blood formations that were permitted:

- albumin
- gamma-globulins
- haemophiliac preparations (factors VIII and IX)
- diversion of blood through heart-lung machines and similar 'diversions'.

The whole schema is riddled with contradictions, as can be seen by considering the following points:

a) Plasma is banned - BUT as they admit in many of their own articles, plasma is 93% water, while the remaining 7% of it consists of the *permitted* components! In other words, plasma is forbidden, but its components *are* permitted provided they are introduced into the body separately.

b) White blood cells are forbidden BUT 98% of them are in body tissue, *not* in the blood. They are *not* a component of the blood but are there simply to be transported from the bone marrow or lymphoid tissue to the areas of the body where they are needed. Hence a person receiving an organ transplant (now permitted by the Watchtower Society!) will simultaneously receive more foreign white blood cells than he would in a blood transfusion. (Incidentally, mothers' breast milk during lactation contains up to twelve times more white blood cells than the equivalent amount of blood!)

c) Albumins are permitted - they are mostly used in the treatment of burns. A person with third degree burns over 40% of his body would need about 600gms - about fifteen litres of blood! Obviously, this amount of blood would have been 'stored' prior to use.

d) Gamma-globulins are permitted. For a single vaccination against cholera, about three litres of blood would be required, rather more blood than would be used in an average transfusion.

e) Haemophiliac preparations are now permitted. Before these preparations became possible, a haemophiliac had a life expectancy of 16.5 years. Today they have normal life expectancy - but to extend a single life by that amount we need 100,000 litres of blood! Just imagine the 'storage time' involved. Yet, Witnesses are not permitted to 'store' blood ... not even a few pints of their own, just prior to an operation.

Interestingly, as late as 1975, Jehovah's Witnesses who were haemophiliacs were not allowed to use blood particles in therapy, including blood plasma and derivatives containing blood factors (*Awake!*, 22nd February 1975). Later that year they changed their mind, but failed to put it in print for another three years, when Watchtower of 15th June 1978 revoked its earlier ban, allowing haemophiliac factors to be used. Only those haemophiliacs who contacted Watchtower headquarters in Brooklyn between 1975 and 1978 discovered the 'new truth' on this matter; others who failed to 'phone home' were left to follow the old mandate until 1978.

The reader can be forgiven for wondering how on earth it is possible for the 'Governing Body' (their term!) of the Watchtower Society to totally convince their followers of the correctness of their inconsistent, 'self-contradictory and uninformed beliefs.

The answer to this question must be the subject of a second article; an article that will explore the nature of the organisation, described by them as a 'theocracy', led personally by Jesus Christ (who has already returned!).

In the meantime, next time a Witness appears on your doorstep, invite him/her into your home and attempt to begin a rational discussion on the 'question of blood' ...

Bob Potter

## Anarchy in Ireland?

The problems that are today facing Ireland are in essence little different to those facing the rest of us. The basic problem is capitalism and all its inherent evils.

There are, I think, five power groupings in Ireland today:

- 1) the British state;
- 2) the Irish state;
- 3) the loyalists;
- 4) the Irish republicans/nationalists;
- 5) the PEOPLE.

The first four all wield some kind of power over people, whether it be through a legal system or the barrel of a gun. It must hardly come as a surprise when various political talks between these factions get nowhere. They are all defending their own interests, which means power and wealth for a small minority. While the Irish state may like a united Ireland its capitalists are not going to throw their lot in with the republicans, in a fight to the death with the British state. Likewise, is it any wonder that the loyalists in Northern Ireland defend their power and privilege, while the provisionals strive to extend their power into the legality of the state.

Britain too, far from having no reason to stay in Ireland has a nice low-key war going on, not too expensive, but real enough to blood their troops and test new equipment. How much technology, particularly in the field of intelligence and surveillance, has been tested in Northern Ireland? Then, of course, the IRA provide a convenient enemy every time British state propaganda requires one. They have at some time or other been linked to all manner of countries and organisations including Nazi Germany; the Argentine junta; Gaddafi and Libya; and Saddam Hussein and Iraq. Now these links may or may not be true but what the British state always fails to mention is its own

links with all these states! But then that's the nature of capitalism, isn't it?

This all manifests itself quite clearly in the IPLO, who with their Marxist-Leninist principles scrape around for any bit of power and control they can get. In the end they just end up blowing themselves away in drug money feuds; sounds reminiscent of similar events in the INLA a few years ago.

Because of these facts I think it is therefore futile to place any faith whatsoever in politicians, be they local, Westminster, Dail, EC or UN.

What we need to do is to build a movement within the people. This is the only place that change can come from. When people see that their common ground is with ordinary Catholics and Protestants, North and South, will the established powers fall.

Why should loyalists want to be part of a regressive Catholic state? Why should Catholics in the North have to be subservient to the British state, while the Southern Irish must bow to an Irish state robber class? Stuff the lot of them; when communities start to organise and reject these institutions, without letting new would-be leaders in, such as the IRA or UDA, then progress will be made.

We must also recognise that the leaders of the paramilitaries are merely political opportunists trying to grab some power by utilising genuine anger within communities caused by the brutalities of the British state and its machinery.

We therefore must build a movement in both Ireland and Britain at a grassroots level to take power from the state and its advocates and to build a genuine solidarity amongst the people.

Ging

If anyone is interested in developing this network, please get in touch at: South West Anarchist Network (please omit name from envelope), PO Box 4, Buckfastleigh, Devon TQ11 0YZ.

## Calling the 'Powerless Majority'!

Dear Editors,  
Vernon Richards' views on anarchism and violence appear again in the recently published Freedom Press booklet *What is Anarchism?*, repeating the opinion that the use of violence may be justified as a "revolutionary necessity, or tactic" and that non-violence cannot be made into a principle. Apart from contradicting the accepted view that violent means cannot produce a non-violent end, allowing for tactical violence would inevitably lead to chaotic situations.

If Vernon's piece appears to have some logic, it is because the terminology is imprecise, the worst case being his use of the phrase "purely defensive" – a vague description commonly trotted out by the generals and politicians.

The criterion for deciding whether violence is justifiable, or excusable, is whether it is unpremeditated or, for most situations, unarmed (generally speaking, group violence approximates to premeditated violence, but there can be exceptions, e.g. the lone armed bank robber is not covered by the group violence category). tactical violence is by definition premeditated, and therefore inexcusable.

The human animal instinct to react violently to sudden attack bears no comparison with premeditated violence where groups of people arm themselves for offensive 'defensive' reasons. It may not seem right that we should go unarmed in a violent situation, but, after all, this is exactly what children are

expected to do – not that they have any choice in the matter.

More confusion arises when Vernon, on the one hand, writes "recourse to violence, then, is an indication of weakness" and, on the other hand, allows for tactical violence – a little weakness is good for you?

Donald Room's contribution to *What is Anarchism?* claims that the organised anarchist armed violence against Franco was laudable because the "stated objective" was a free society. I do not doubt that most of them really believed it, but they had to make all sorts of compromises just to get some weapons, never mind what subsequent compromises had to be made on the battlefield.

In the last chapter of the booklet, its four authors make the statement that "all the means by which people are governed are anathema to anarchism" but there follows a warning that "in its application to the existing real world, however, [anarchism] is being applied to very imperfect situations" which means that "we have to live in the real world as it is ..." Are these authors asserting the obvious to prepare us for a backtrack on that statement? It would appear to be so, because they go on to invite us to excuse the "anti-war militants" who "support a violent revolution" on the basis that life is an "ugly reality". But, surely, one of the main "means by which people are governed" is violence, or the threat of violence – in which case guns should be anathema to anarchists (the absolute power gained through the ownership of a gun corrupts absolutely?)

In conclusion, may I draw attention to the fact that three-quarters of humanity, i.e. most women and all children, seem to be almost totally discounted in the discussions in these columns. In my opinion, the violence will go on as long as that powerless majority remain locked out of our deliberations.

Ernie Crosswell

## Any Offers?

Dear Editors,  
Having already answered Stephen Cullen's questions there is little more to say. But for all the thousands of words they have produced, those advocating non-violence still have no satisfactory answer to the question: How do we defend social progress against armed thugs? I've rejected Ernie's suicide pact but for all his musings Stephen has no answer. If this is indicative of the weakness of the non-violent position I am genuinely surprised. Can anyone answer my question and save Stephen the cost of a one-way train ticket?

Neil Birrell

## Anarchist Summer School

Dear Comrades,  
I am more than delighted about your insertion of the short article in the current issue of *Freedom* re the projection of an Anarchist Summer School in 1993. On Wednesday 21st October I read out said article from *Freedom* to the ad hoc group who have supported the idea of a school from when it was initially sown. It can be seen that it will fertilise and to my mind will bear fruit.

It would be most encouraging if a few of the London group speakers could lend a hand at the Summer School. The ad hoc group here hope to incorporate a few workshops. In preference to having local speakers making a delivery on specific subjects like economics, organisation, federalism, decentralisation, the ad hoc group think it's advisable to have non-local speakers to make such deliveries.

What I am personally most enthused about is to be instrumental in creating greater cohesion among the various libertarian groups, hoping that they may build an organisation based on local autonomous groups which shall be united locally, regionally and nationally. In other words, a new Anarchist Federation of Britain.

Yours, with a clenched fist and a bent elbow,

Robert Lynn

151 Gallowgate, Glasgow G1 5AX

## Don't Give Up!

Dear Editors,  
Martin M tells us that he's "not turned on by sixty year olds but by sixteen year olds". This is a very common observation, and it is partly for people like him that I wrote *Love, Sex and Power in Later Life*. Poor old codger – he'd better risk £3.50, buy the book and pay special attention to Chapter 5. Help is at hand!

His reference to the photograph on the cover shows how myopic he has become at his advanced age, because the statue is obviously *not* of "two wild curvaceous young lovers", since one of them looks about four years old – and isn't that carrying paedophilia a bit far? I understand that these statues are in Battersea Park, so he can go there and perhaps stroke the figure of the little child – better than lusting after a real child, don't you think?

Tony Gibson

## South West Anarchist Network

Calling all anarchists in the South West. The time to act is now! We are a broad based libertarian organisation aimed at spurring action. We are interested in creating a network of people to promote the anarchist cause. Isolated? Want to paper sell, organise meetings or leaflet? Let us know, we can help. In fact, whatever you want to do we may be able to help, or put you in touch with other interested persons. Even if you just want a matter with like-minded people!

If we don't do it, who will? Get in touch! Get active!

Contact: South West Anarchist Network, PO Box 4, Buckfastleigh, Devon TQ11 0YZ.

Dear Freedom,

The comments made in the letters page regarding *The Raven* number 18 on 17th October suggest a rift between those who enjoy theory and those who prefer the practical approach to anarchism.

While sociology and anthropology are

not to be thrown in the dustbin, I feel they have a limited effect on change. They do, like other social sciences, reflect how our society works, how people live within their environment. At most they would help inform us about the nature of society and its incumbent problems. All too often

sociologists write for other sociologists, often using obtuse and difficult language. I found most of *The Raven* number 18 like this. However, Colin Ward's article was well written and easily understood, as with all his work. I would agree with John Pilgrim when he suggests "that we should look towards libertarian and anarchist elements in our society and seek to develop them". It is firmly based in reality and recognises that 'Essex man and woman' or the mass is not likely to rise up and revolt against the system and the way society works, all too often they are far too fearful of the consequences, they also might have too much to lose. Nevertheless, John's suggestion is that those libertarian activities that are carried are more subversive and effective than a headlong rush into the nearest riot squad cop's shield.

I conclude with the view that the social sciences offer us the opportunity to study what is, and through anarchists like Colin Ward we can see what is possible if people wish it. This is not to deride the social sciences but to allow us to use that information to effect change by pointing out the discrepancies in the capitalist society we all abhor.

Chris Platts

## Not Pilgrim's Parrot

Dear Freedom,

It is always nice to have for an opponent, someone as informed and serious as Mr Pilgrim. The never-ending sociological disputes are boring, consequently I didn't reply to his earlier letter.

He has a few funny ideas about me. Putting me down as a fan of Robert Nozick, the author of *Anarchy, State and Utopia*; a Thatcherite who doesn't believe in society; a "politically correct post-modernist"; an enemy of knowledge; and a smallholder.

Truth is that in my earlier review of John Griffin's pamphlet *A Structured Anarchism*, in which he referred approvingly to the 'conservative' philosopher F.A. Hayek, and the monetarist economist Milton Friedman, I merely suggested he ought to consider the work of the libertarian philosopher Robert Nozick, who operates in the same field and advocates the minimal state. Since then Mr Pilgrim has gone on to assume that I am some kind of anarcho-capitalist.

The same one-track mind seems to be operating where I quoted from Edward Said and Noam Chomsky in my recent review of *The Raven* number 18. Mr Pilgrim seems to take this as evidence of a "politically correct post-modernist position". It seems to me that one can agree with Chomsky that certain groups such as anarchists and peasants, etc., haven't had fair consideration in the past from the liberal intellectuals, without wishing to adopt the new kind of

politically correct orthodoxy with its linguistic totalitarianism as implied in some schools of feminism.

Many of the arguments in my *Raven* review, such as the vested interests of anthropologists and the exploitation of their work by the State and big business looking for justifications for imperialism and expanding markets, were illustrated in Harold Barclay's contribution. My worries about the methods used by social scientists have been summed-up in my earlier correspondence, but are held in anthropology by distinguished workers in the field such as Fred G. Barth and Michael Moerman, whom I quoted from in my review.

I have every respect for the work of Colin Ward, and have nothing against respectable anarchism. Nor do I eschew travel guides and travelogues in the way Mr Pilgrim does, they are valid pieces of research and ought, among other evidence, to be seriously considered as Mr Edward Said has recommended.

But what does Mr Pilgrim mean when he calls on me to "allow ... autonomy to the anthropologists ..." Autonomy (self-government) in this context amounts to protecting the discipline from the incursions and criticisms of 'outsiders'. Keep out the riff-raff! Let's preserve the purity of the social science! Down that road lies the dictatorship of the intellectuals.

It is to the immense credit of *Freedom* that it did not hesitate to publish a critical review of *The Raven*, its own stable-mate. Reviewing books is not a branch of marketing and sales, as Mr Pilgrim seems to think. Still less is it to do with comradely back-patting, or becoming John Pilgrim's parrot for the social sciences.

Brian Bamford

Please keep sending in your letters and donations

## Voluntary Euthanasia Society of Scotland

Dear Editors,

The ultimate act of self-determination must be the ability to choose how to die. Suicide is no longer illegal in Britain, but if you are unlucky enough to end up too weak or with no privacy to carry it out, then by law you must live out your life to the bitter end.

The 'crime' Dr Nigel Cox committed was to inject Mrs Boyes with something which numbed her pain enough to let her sons hold her hand, but which could not be classified as a painkiller. Doctors use the 'doctrine of double effect' to justify giving increasing amounts of painkiller to terminally ill patients, even if this shortens their lives, because the main objective is to control suffering, not to cause death. Dr Cox is an expert in his field. He had tried for weeks to ease Mrs Boyes. Eventually he accepted the fact that the kindest and most humane act was to let her die as quickly as possible – death as relief, not as punishment. He is a very brave man; neither of Mrs Boyes' sons has had anything but praise for him, and yet he is now a criminal.

The opponents of voluntary euthanasia

talk of the 'slippery slope', of the scenario where anyone not in the prime of life will be seen as fair game for euthanasia. Actually, there is a huge great barrier across that slippery slope, and that is that euthanasia has to be at the individual's own persistent request. If that is upheld, the future is secure.

What we can do now is step up our campaign to try to change the law, but more actively, we can each of us make out a Living Will. This is a document which can be signed when in sound health, and which stipulates what kind of treatment or non-treatment you want should you have an accident, have a stroke, end up paralysed, and so on. They can, of course, be revoked at any time. They still do not have legal validity, but the more people sign them the greater weight they will carry. They are available from: The Voluntary Euthanasia Society of Scotland, 17 Hart Street, Edinburgh EH1 3RN.

It might seem morbid to be so concerned about death, but as anarchists we struggle for the maximum control over our lives. It makes sense to make a positive choice about dying, too.

Zeb Korycynska

Read all about sociology in **The Raven 19** and see what you think!

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## 'Acid Rain Kills'

Dear Freedom,  
The message on the striking-looking first class 24p stamp reads: 'Acid Rain Kills'. Its message heeded by government – only a fortnight after the stamp's issue, orders were given to stop sales of the telling stamp.

Acid rain kills rivers, streams, lakes and forests, and now it is known to prematurely age human life itself.

This government is becoming increasingly intolerant of the least resistance, riding roughshod over any physical protest against environmental rape (e.g. Twyford Down).

The Gross National Product must, at any cost, be kept up by government. So let's keep in mind the '60s rechristening of GNP: Gross National Pollution.

Could it be that only by the system breaking down will life be able to reassert herself, and people recover health?

Rodney Aitchey

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# MEETINGS

## Anarchist Forum

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

### 1992/1993 MEETINGS

- 13th November - General discussion
- 20th November - 'A Retiring Person' (speaker Peter Neville)
- 27th November - 'Prison in an Anarchist Society' (speaker Peter Lumsden)
- 4th December - General discussion
- 11th December - 'Exploiting the State' (speaker Andrew Lainton)
- 8th January - 'An Anarchist Daily' (speaker John Rety)
- 15th January - General discussion
- 22nd January - 'Whiteway And On' (speaker Michael Murray)
- 29th January - General discussion
- 5th February - 'Anarchism and Feminism' (speaker Lisa Bendall)

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

We are now booking speakers and topics for the 1992-93 season. This is from 25th September to 11th December 1992, then from 8th January to 26th March and 23rd April to 9th July 1993. If anyone would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, please make contact giving names, proposed subjects and a few alternative dates. These can either be speaker-led meetings or general discussions. Overseas and out-of-town speakers are

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particularly welcome. Friday is the only night available for the meetings as the centre is booked up for classes on other nights. Anyone interested should contact Dave Dane or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (Tel: 081-847 0203). The Mary Ward Centre is an adult education centre which lets us have a meeting place, not an accommodation address or contact point.

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

**The Walsall Anarchist's Bomb Plot of 1892**  
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