

# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

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FIFTY PENCE

*"The law has no claim to human respect. It has no civilising mission. Its only purpose is to protect exploitation."*

Peter Kropotkin

Major calls for private sector wage restraint ● Bank of England to look at lenders' policies on interest rate cuts

## PM talks up confidence

*The Guardian 17 November 1992*

So long as the politicians, the media and the economists stubbornly refuse to question the responsibility of the capitalist system for the homeless, for massive unemployment and the poverty and ill-health much of which is now recognised as coming from stress – on the one hand are those who through unemployment are unable to meet the basic needs for a modest existence through no fault of their own, and on the other the additional pressures put on those in

## IT'S ONE BIG CON!

work – then all the government talk of 'confidence' is pure rhetoric. **It is One Big Con**, and we include in this conspiracy Her Majesty's loyal Opposition.

The Labour lot (the Liberals talk big because they know they have no chance, certainly not in the foreseeable future) are now declaring

that with Labour it will not be necessary to increase income tax to achieve their capitalist utopia of full employment, a healthy Health Service, homes for the homeless and fun and games for the oldies and the handicapped – in a word, back to the ideal of security from the womb to the tomb. *That too is One Big Con!* Why?

## THE ARMS RACKET

The Iraq arms scandal is all grist to the Parliamentary Opposition's political mill. But in fact it is small beer. What is important is the complicity of the permanent civil servants and the revelation (assuming it was needed) that the ministers are dummies, hack actors mouthing the briefs that are handed to them signing all kinds of documents which they haven't even read. What supermen of the Opposition expect them to be when in the course of a day hundreds of documents come to their ministry?

The real scandal is that the principal members of the United Nations Security Council are the largest exporters of arms of every kind. It has nothing to do with 'security'. Where are the biggest customers if not in the Middle East, where oil flows freely and dollars flow in abundance from oil sales. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are being supplied on a huge scale by Britain, the USA and France. The Russians are unloading all their surplus planes and artillery on Iran for much-needed foreign currency. Needless to say Israel is not amused – though it is armed to the teeth and with nuclear weapons as well, thanks to its American paymaster.

But the world is the armament industry's oyster. In September President Bush announced a £2,000

million deal to sell 150 F-16 fighters to Taiwan even though it meant upsetting China. But business is business, after all. And this is the crux of the matter, as Alan Clark was pointing out at the recent Old Bailey farce where the directors of the Churchill Matrix factory were whitewashed of any crime when the prosecution collapsed and they were welcomed with champagne by friends and media. And the cost to the taxpayers was a mere £3 million for the lawyers!

And what about the £22,000 million European Fighter Aircraft (EFA) which Warfare Minister Rifkind is determined to retain even if the other three partners opt out on the grounds that it is a useless luxury. Though the government is quite prepared to sacrifice the livelihoods of 30,000 miners who would otherwise produce 30 million tons of coal which can be used (it's only the capitalist system which thinks it makes 'commercial' sense to import coal from Australia and Colombia) – their real concern about the EFA is that to abandon it would result in the loss of 40,000 jobs.

So on the one hand they are prepared to sacrifice 30 million tons of coal and keep 30,000 miners on the dole. On the other they want to keep 40,000 workers producing x numbers

The simple answer is that capitalism is not a welfare state system; it owes nobody a living. It exists to perpetuate the unequal society of the rich and the poor. It defends its minority status with laws that protect its ill-gotten gains and a legal system and the necessary civil and military power to maintain that unequal society. However pathetic we may think the royal family and hangers-on to be, let us not underestimate the importance of the monarchy as the symbol of the unequal society of privilege, but also of the 'stability' of such a society.

*(continued on page 2)*

of EFA planes for which there is no use (unless one can replace the Russian enemy with another mythical enemy) and which will be sold off in their old age to a third world country and so increase their indebtedness to the first world.

When will the people of the prosperous countries realise the uselessness of a large proportion of what is produced, and on which workers and technologists spend a working lifetime?

We live in a technological madhouse, but we can escape it if we realise the fact and refuse to spend our working lives in useless and harmful occupations in order to get a pay packet. Isn't life more important than a pay packet?



(continued from page 1)

(Incidentally, the reality is that the Queen is the richest person in this country – worth billions of pounds, and like ‘God’ exempt from paying taxes!)

In the West we are so smug, so superior, that nobody, other than anarchists and a few socialists, realise that we have our own in-built all-white social and economic ‘apartheid’. The rich live in their ‘castles’ away from the proles in their council houses and their cardboard boxes; they have their Harley Street specialists and their private clinics, hospitals and nursing homes just waiting for them and their money while the rest of us queue up, for up to two years, to have minor operations on the NHS; the rich have their *pied à terre* in the most select districts of London and all their second homes, holiday residences, their yachts and other toys to keep them amused and away from our cold and damp winters.

Needless to say they have not been troubled by unemployment. They are too rich to be employed – most of them are probably unemployable, apart from their visits to the City to see how their shares are getting on.

For the Labour Party, or any other party that has the presumption to imagine that the Parliamentary system can ever legislate for the abolition of privilege, is

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unbelievable when one has the experience and history of such attempts.

The failure of the Soviet Union is not the failure of communism or socialism (as Mr Major is always maintaining in the cut-and-thrust at Question Time with his Labour provocateurs).

It is the failure to realise that communism or socialism cannot be imposed from above without a new ruling class emerging and resulting in a new social and economic aristocracy. In the Soviet Union, far from the state ‘withering away’ as Marxists foretold, it got more and more powerful and the new ‘aristocracy’ clung to its power and material privileges just as in the capitalist world. And though we know too little about what is happening in Russia following the overthrow of the Soviet hierarchy, we can imagine that some heads have rolled and new ones have appeared at top level, with the additional excuse that the free market is a free-for-all and to hell with ideology!

And the poor and downtrodden in the Soviet Union will, most of them, be poor and downtrodden in the new Russia with whom the media went to town as Major and Yeltsin signed a ‘friendship’ pact a week or two ago. They are now capitalist birds of a feather.

But to return to our shores and the government’s plans to fill us all with ‘confidence’ in the capitalist system, and *Freedom’s* view that capitalism is on its last legs but will continue so long as its victims – the unemployed, the low paid, those with disabilities, including old age – simply accept without any kind of active protest (grumbling is not enough) their situation of inferiority knowing that a large minority in the country are literally living off the fat of the land. And all the measures taken by the government in a vain effort to redress the finances of the capitalist system are all directed at the expense of the poor and powerless.

We must create a Union of the Powerless; we must re-learn that unity and co-operation is our *only strength* if we really seek to free ourselves from the uncertainties, the injustice, the anxieties of wage slavery.

Who was it who said that when the wage system replaced feudalism the irons were transferred from the ankles to the wrists? In the prosperous West more and more wage slaves are now salaried slaves with pension schemes and private ‘health’ schemes, company cars, cordless telephones and the rest. But the boss is still the boss. He still hires and fires and the criterion for all his decisions is the *profitability* of the enterprise. Can you blame him? But why do we put up with him and the capitalist system?

## They're Running DOWN the Railways!

The government seems as determined to destroy the railways as it is the coal industry, if an *Independent* leaked document is to be trusted (20th November): “The government is set to scrap all BR’s freight operations after privatisation – thus forcing more than 150 million tonnes onto the roads.”

On the same day British Rail announced that 5,000 workers were to be made redundant in the next four months. And if the freight trains were to be axed then at least 16,000 rail freight staff would be sacked.

Of course the railway network is feeling the effects of the recession both with its passenger

services (especially in the South East commuter belt where unemployment has been striking hardest in the past year) but also on freight services. It is estimated that receipts have fallen £400 million on a turnover of £3,000 million this year.

But is the railway network a public service or is it not? If it is then it cannot be allowed to be run down either in the number of services nor in the quality and safety of the network. **But this is exactly what is happening.** Only last week delays of up to four hours were experienced on the services out of Liverpool Street between Ingatestone and Chelmsford simply because rats had gnawed through a signal cable at about 2.30pm and, according to the *East Anglian Daily Times* (18th November), “engineers were unable to repair the damage until 10.30pm that night”. Another topic, with leaves on the line, for music hall jokes about our ‘inefficient railways’.

What irate passengers and other critics refuse to recognise is that as more and more operations controlling the movement of trains are computerised, there are fewer competent people locally to deal with such problems and to improvise when something goes wrong.

The line between Ingatestone and Chelmsford consists of a double track with no crossings or sidings. Surely while the repairs to the cables were being dealt with, hand-signalling on that stretch could have been organised ... if there were people available to deal with this problem.

The 5,000 staff to go in the next four months are part of British Rail’s policy over the years to save money. Yet at the same time not only is the network becoming less efficient but also less safe as necessary maintenance work is neglected due to lack of capital. Until we give the railways the same priority as we do to the road network the situation can only deteriorate, not only on the railways but on the roads as well.

## ... and the Percentage Con

How quickly politicians learn to be at ease in the rarefied world of privilege. Thatcher had no difficulty once in office in graduating from her parents’ corner shop to hob-nobbing with royalty, the aristos, the sheikhs of Araby, just as Roy Jenkins who can boast of his miner father as he dons ermine in the House of Lords and is quite at home as Chancellor of the University of Oxford. Not surprising therefore that our PM John Major, without university degrees, son of a trapeze artist (probably a useful background for political u-turns), seems quite at home at all the summit meetings (is it perhaps because they are all phonies, well trained actors, playing a part?) And last week there he was all dressed up to kill at the Lord Mayor’s Guildhall banquet, facing the *crème de la crème* of the City and the business and landed hereditary aristocracy. And he told them that the Chancellor had clipped the wings of the public services limiting pay increases to 1½% and that private enterprise should do likewise and this, he said with emphasis, must include those in the boardrooms. Spontaneous applause from the caviare, champagne and orchid-decorated tables. (The applause was obviously for the suggestion that the employees should curb their demands!) In any case, already a number of enterprises have frozen increases – some, like Fords, have told their employees to spend a week at home on no pay. But when it comes to the top boys, some of them can say that they have accepted a mere 1½% increase on their salaries and this earns the applause of the suckers who can’t work out percentages anyway. There are lots

of people in menial jobs earning less than £100 a week gross. A 1½% increase is a mere £1.50 a week – a packet of cigarettes. For Lord King, boss of British Airways, who was earning £408,000 pa (£7,846 a week) last year, 1½% represents another £117 a week. Actually Lord King paid himself an extra 64% , raising his modest £408,000 pa to £669,000! Not surprising Lord King told Mr Major where he got off, politely of course, if Lord King knows how: “We run our own business and we try to run it in a sympathetic and friendly way with the government and the regulators”. Which translated into everyday language is to tell Mr Major and the government to mind their own business!

The percentage racket is a dishonest way of hiding facts (when statistics say, for instance, that the number of crimes of violence or child abuse have increased by x% it means nothing if one is not informed of the actual number). It is also, as we have just demonstrated, a way of hiding the growing gap between the poor and the better off. Members of Parliament have been told by the Chancellor that their pay increase will be limited to the 1½% being applied to all employees in the public sector. He sought to sweeten the pill by declaring that all government Ministers would have a pay freeze. Neil Kinnock, now on the back benches but appearing in a television quiz programme (for a handsome fee?), quite rightly pointed out that on £33,000 a year (£634 a week) it didn’t matter one way or the other for him, freeze or no freeze. And when

one bears in mind that most of the Tory MPs have outside directorships, business interests, consultancies (the biggest racket of all), they can face a mere 1½% – about £9.50 a week extra in the pay packet without having to pawn any of their cherished antiques. On the other hand, pensioners on £54 a week will be lucky to get 3½% (based on inflation rate) next April, which will add a magnificent £1.89 a week to their munificent £54.

One other example of the percentage racket. The Prime Minister at the rich men’s banquet tore a strip off the bankers who are said to be slow in reducing the interest rates charged to small business borrowers. He didn’t mention what the banks have been offering the *lenders*. Girobank, once upon a time the ‘people’s bank’, now taken over from the Post Office by one of the building societies, has issued a leaflet giving the interest rates for *lenders*. In their standard deposit account linked to a current account as from 12th October they were quoting gross interest of 1% to lenders (.75% net). Since then the Chancellor has reduced the interest rates by 1%. Does this mean that if you have a deposit account with girobank you will receive nothing gross and have to pay them .25% for the privilege? We are putting the question to Girobank, who are *Freedom Press’* bankers, for clarification!





## Twyford Down - the fight goes on

Although the M3 contractors are now arriving, still no work has been done on the Dongas SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) area, and elsewhere on Twyford Down workmen are constantly being non-violently harassed and obstructed from getting on with the government's evil scheme to replace Twyford Down with a huge motorway cutting. Since the beginning of October there have been confrontations every weekday between the protesters at Twyford Down and contractors trying to gain access. Eviction orders have been served and an appeal is to be heard on 9th December. Until then, the fight continues.

The protest now consists of daytime actions to prevent workmen bringing bulldozers and turf-cutting equipment onto the Dongas area, which has been fortified. There have also been protests further along the Down, where work has been started near the Arathusa Clump dew-ponds. Two caravans with security men and dogs are now installed on the Down - one at Arathusa Clump and the other in the ploughed field above the Dongas Camp. There have been a few night-time outings with the Dragon - a colourful Chinese-style dancing dragon borne aloft by 15-20 people, and carried to the accompaniment of drums, gongs and ululation - but the night-time work at the Hockley traffic lights is now almost completed and these outings are mainly to harass the security guards on the Down and at the Hockley works depot.

### The contractors arrive

On Friday 9th October, workmen made their first attempt to bring turf-cutting equipment onto the Dongas. They refused to cross a picket line of protesters, but did break down the gate above the Dongas SSSI with a hawser - one of their vans mysteriously ran over a nail and burst a tyre as they were doing this. Two men with a theodolite, who refused to identify themselves (some of us thought they were not surveyors at all), later walked onto the Dongas. Protesters sat around them and harassed them as they tried to move about. Eventually they left saying they had got what they wanted. The gate was repaired by protesters the

next day, but the contractors commenced work on turf-stripping at the other end of the Down near the ruined water-meadows. The atmosphere was very tense over the weekend. There were many visitors to the Dongas, but no action. Where, we wanted to know, were the hundreds of people we had expected to join us when the work started?

On Monday 12th October the Department of Transport (DTp) sent an official - Roger Jackson, the Clerk of Works (who said he was working for "John Kelsey") - accompanied by two policemen, to tell the Dongas Tribe to vacate the campsite on DTp land. He tried to be very firm, but there were a lot of people on the Dongas that day and they argued with him and with Sgt Orde and his constable. They gave up and went away.

Around this time, Tarmac announced that they were bringing forward their start date - apparently they think if they can flatten the Dongas area quickly the protesters will have nothing left to defend and will therefore leave. On Thursday 15th a fence was finally put up enclosing the DTp's land, but no work was done otherwise. On Friday protesters were again successful in ensuring that no work was done. A pact was made between workmen and tribe, that if they did not do any work over the weekend, the tribe would not take down the fence. Over the weekend, however, the Dongas Camp moved off DTp land onto adjacent land at the Dongas owned by Winchester College.

Monday 19th was the busiest day so far with great activity. This was the furthers the DTp's machinery had managed to get. Fast tractors and earth-movers were driven at great speed, careering across the field and over the ditch. Protesters stood or sat in their path along the top of the Dongas and confronted workmen in what one local reporter astoundingly called a "gentlemanly protest". A bulldozer fell into a trench, and again machinery retreated and no work was done for several days.

### The 'Big Brother' state steps in

On the Thursday the DTp put up notices ordering people off the Dongas, although the camp is no longer on their land, and naming specific people -

including a local former Tory Councillor! - barred from setting foot on their land. The DTp also applied for a Possession Order, enabling them to bring civil proceedings to evict.

The question of how the DTp got hold of the names is interesting - one was the correct name of a man who had not used his real name for many years and it was not even known to other protesters. Obviously, names had been obtained when the arrests were made the week before and passed on by police to the DTp. John Denham, the MP for Southampton, wrote a letter in protest to Hampshire's Chief Constable John Hoddinott, saying: "I would question whether it is appropriate or legal for the Hampshire Police to use evidence gained in law enforcement for the purpose of enabling a government department to pursue a civil action against these individuals." Police spokesmen for Hampshire Constabulary and the Winchester Police refused to discuss the issue with local press reporters. Networkers involved in the protest, such as Raga Woods and TDA members, also strongly suspect their phones are being tapped. We are using other people's phones for communication to avoid the MI5 dirty tricks brigade, but numbers given remain the primary point of contact for people wishing to help the protesters.

### Where are our supporters?

On Monday 26th October when vehicles and workmen loomed up at 9am, there were only two protesters per machine. Sadly, many at the Dongas Camp are not surprisingly getting disheartened by the lack of support from people in the green and anarchist movements from whom they had expected a physical presence when the real confrontation began.

On Wednesday 28th Winchester College suddenly and unexpectedly attempted to evict the protesters at 24-hours notice. There was a hastily-arranged hearing on the Thursday at Winchester Magistrates Court. The case lasted two hours. Maps used in court did not define boundaries of DTp land clearly (the protesters have a better map, but it was not produced). The Court was unable to decide whether Winchester College or the DTp owned the land, and the case was therefore deferred until 9th December. If the hearing is lost then, it will be necessary for a new group to take over the protest.

A group of people has to form *now* to move onto the Dongas in the event that the present protesters, whose names are known to the police, lose their appeal against the eviction order on 9th December. This is vital. If you or anyone you know would be prepared to do this, or to lend support in the early stages of reoccupation, please get down to the Dongas Protest Camp as soon as possible so that you can familiarise yourself with the terrain and what needs to be done.

### How to get there

The camp is about half an hour's walk from the railway station. Follow signs to the town centre, and then to Chesil Street. By bus, turn left out of the bus station, walk past the statue of King Alfred and turn right into Chesil Street at the junction. At the Bar End interchange, a roundabout above the bypass, carry straight across into Morestead Road.

By road, take the Morestead Road turning off the A33 Winchester bypass.

100 yards up the hill along Morestead Road is a sewage works with a car park on the right. A path from here leads up to the Dongas (it can be difficult in the dark if you have not been before).

Contacts: Stephen Ward 081-527 4896, Raga Woods 0703 611561, Chris Gilham 0962 867338.

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ON

SOCIOLOGY

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With the decision to ordain women to the priesthood having been taken by the General Synod of the Church of England, we are confronted with what feminism is all about - blatant careerism.

### Jobs for the girls!

The promotion of 'gender' as the banner and means of professional advancement is now well advanced in British society. There is nothing wrong with this of course, the Freemasons operate in a similar fashion. But what I object to is how they wrap it up in the language of liberation and 'empowerment'.

### Bashing women?

I have had complaints that my column is anti-feminist, if not downright racist, even anti-semitic. My worry is that some of these people shout before they are hurt. As George Orwell said in 1948: "Some people go round smelling after anti-semitism all the time".

This kind of mentality was shown recently on 'The Late Show' where Shere Hite accused Christopher Hitchens of 'woman bashing' for suggesting that Bill and Hilary Clinton may not represent the renewal of the magic of Camelot. On the contrary, claimed Hitchens, Hilary Clinton, as boss of their legal firm, was a reflection of that band of 'greedy lawyers' who inhabit the USA. For Hitchens their firm was not so much distinguished for its part in the struggle for civil rights, as some on the left are trying to make out, but rather for dipping its fingers into the honeypots of scandals like the Bank of Credit and Commerce International and the savings and loans affair.

All Mr Hitchens got for his pains was a chorus of 'How dare you' from the feminists on the show.

'You're woman bashing' is the general war cry of many feminists. It has an all-purpose use for when some recalcitrant man dares to

## - THE FACTORY AND BEYOND - Ambitious women, tactics and racism

raise some query about any of the central tenets and assertions of the current feminist doctrines. As a tactic in which the woman poses as a victim in order to triumph in arguments it may suffer from over-use. But on the political left the ploy continues to have a certain utility, because otherwise there wouldn't be so many leftist lap dogs willing to support the thinly disguised power worship of many of the feminists.

For my part I sustain my anarchist virility against women bosses and managers, as much as I do against their male counterparts. Indeed, in the same way that Gandhi used to take young girls into his bed in order to test his own commitment to chastity, so I try to get myself a woman boss to prove my anarchist virility.

### Modern Spain

The 'racist' murder in Madrid of the Dominican immigrant Lucrecia Perez this month shows Spain is entering modern times. Catalonia staked its claim to be European earlier this century with the discovery of a body in a suitcase in Barcelona. Premeditated killings used not to be considered the norm in a hot-blooded country like Spain.

On this occasion, Senora Perez was gunned down by four hooded gunmen as she sipped soup with her fellow squatters in a disused disco at Aravaca on the outskirts of Madrid. *El Pais* reports that the bullets used in the shooting were of the type used by the Spanish Army, and witnesses caught up in the spray of

bullets claim one of the gunmen used a professional stance.

Recently Madrid has had a poster campaign calling for a stop to immigration, and urging that Spaniards should be put first. There are less than 15,000 people from the Dominican Republic in Spain, and *El Pais* says "... the population of foreigners in Spain is relatively small: less than 2.5% of the total population, a percentage less than most of the countries of Western Europe". The immigrants from the Dominican Republic work as maids, gardeners and handymen - jobs that most Spaniards don't want.

At present the shootings and anti-immigrant campaigns in Spain only represent a muffled echo of the modern movements in France and Germany. As *El Pais* says: "Until now the groups expressing racist ideologies have little influence here, in contrast, for example, with France, where the exploitation of xenophobic sentiments has resulted in a Party, that of Le Pen, which has got the support of 16% of the voters".

But the fact that Spanish society is still thankfully a bit backward when it comes to organised racism, or even perhaps what is now called 'institutionalised racism', does not mean that Spaniards are without their own special culture of racism. The Spanish authorities may well accept the refugees from Bosnia, who the UK Home Office are now rejecting, but last year there was a massacre of gypsies at Mancha Real, and North Africans

travelling to Africa through Spain from France during their vacations often run into ethnic abuse from the locals. Spanish attacks on Moors and Gypsies may have a historical basis - persecuting the Spanish-speaking immigrants from Latin America is a new and worrying trend which may have something to do with Europeanisation of Spaniards.

Racial prejudice is not a crime which can be legislated away. It is a deep psychological condition, which I doubt can be changed much by argument. I remember when, in the 1960s, I worked delivering cans of Butane Gas to the villages on the Cabo San Antonio near Alicante, though the only foreigners there were then tourists, my Spanish workmate had to invent racial categories. He did this by claiming that the inhabitants of some villages had the "character of the Jew" because they saved up, bought land and were generally parsimonious. Other villages, such as Ondara, which were more happy-go-lucky and had lots of bars, he maintained were truly Spanish. In yet other villages, such as Pego, which he found particularly disagreeable, he claimed the inhabitants were probably descended from the Moors.

From this it seems to me that racism is a mental condition through which one may deal with outsiders. It is a kind of categorisation device which we all attach to other social groups. All too often it can lead, as George Orwell warned, to the classification of people as if they were different types of insect. Perhaps I was guilty of this when, earlier this year, I described Marx as an "old Jew Boy". But many such categories are not imposed upon people, some folk are only too eager to embrace labels, and today many such self-inflicted labels are of racial and ethnic origin.

Mack the Knife



## part 1

## Europe and the EEC

Europe is big. Although only the fifth largest continent, it covers 9,842,000 sq km and has a population of some 720,000,000 people. It should not be confused with a rather exclusive club which was started in 1958 which is currently referred to as 'Europe' as in 'Are you in favour of Europe?' This conveniently hides the fact that this club is concerned with politics and economics rather than the social and cultural. I shall refer to it as the EEC.

It's growing. By the end of the century it will probably number nineteen member states, and 375 million consumers/citizens (not people). Given the probable growth of Europe's population it's not very big but it makes up for this by its 'American Express' status with a projected GDP of \$7,000 billion and potential control of 40% of world trade and 30% of world production. It is therefore for the rich, but even among the privileged few there are some who cannot take the pace in its more exclusive corners such as the ERM which Britain so humbly bowed out of so recently.

Membership of the EEC or the ERM is granted or blackballed by the EEC's ruling class and its institutions: international speculators, Bundesbanks, multinationals, etc. By direct control or manipulation the ruling class control the economics and politics of individual member states. Ideological hegemony sets out the parameters for acceptable debate within which all establishment political parties and institutions can participate rendering certain stances null and void.

In this country the image of the train has been extensively used as an image for the unquestionable. We are allowed to discuss whether, for example, we should board the 'European Express' whilst it is in the station or whether we should climb aboard a few stops down the line, and we can even choose our own seat in a first or second class compartment, but that we will be on board is

sacrosanct and opinions which waver from this line are not given space. Dissenters are ignored or, if this is not possible, discarded (which largely explains Thatcher's fate and may well yet decide Major's). There was no debate on the EEC during the election this year; inter-party consensus was total.

## Maastricht

The French have held their referendum. How does this democratic display square in with the above? Firstly, the train was not being discussed, only how long the journey should take. Secondly, when it was called it was felt to be a foregone conclusion. Thirdly, is anything goes wrong the ruling class can dispense with M Mitterand and the process can be renewed with lessons having been learnt.

As a political event the French referendum must be exposed for the hot air it was. The Danes voted 'no' but then we were told they didn't count, not one of the big boys. But the referendum was really only about monetary union – a small aspect of the total picture – and we've seen this month that such questions are not decided by government and referendums. Governments are only one part of the ruling

class's armoury, and a paltry one at that. When Lamont tried to buck the exchange speculators he was sunk before he started. The billions he had at his disposal as he sat down at the gambling table were peanuts in comparison to the estimated \$1,000,000,000,000 deemed to pass through the exchanges every day, of which in excess of 90% is pure stake money. The government and the Bank of England are small fish in comparison with these guys. Never mind the 'Oui' or the 'Non'. 'Restez chez vous' is sounder advice when it comes to referendums and elections.

And they did. The encouraging factor of this political charade is the way we have seen just how fed up the French are with their establishment. Only about 30% bothered to vote yes (roughly what you'd expect given the class structure) despite the sunshine and even those who did were more than half-hearted about it in many cases. *Libération*, reporting from Bordeaux in the week before the referendum, quoted one French voter as saying he was voting yes "... for fear of making a historical cock-up". Not the most positive of reasons. Another, Jean-Marie Petaux, said "I don't know. Nothing satisfies me. Voting no means De Villiers, Le Pen. Why vote no? I'm not going to give them the

satisfaction. But I don't want to be a naive sheep-like yes-voter either." The French were always looked upon as reliable to support the establishment stance on the EEC. Petaux is not untypical. Just take a look at the worried looks we saw this summer on the faces of Chirac, D'Estaigne, Mitterand, Bérégovroy ...

## Where do we stand?

From EEC-sceptics like Ridley to Federal-fanatics like Heath, the establishment is pro-EEC to a wo/man and they're digging their own graves. So let's broaden the picture a little (or a lot) and look at Europe as a whole: How popular are Mitterand, Major, Kohl, Yeltsin, Milosevic, Gonzalez? Even Haval, a popular Czech president, has been spurned because of dissatisfaction with the system. For us as anarchists the situation could hardly be better except for ... the filth.

Out of the sewers come the fascists, the patriots, the religious fanatics, slaughtering their way around the ghettos of Germany and the concentration camps of Yugoslavia. And they appeal to those who apparently applaud from their balconies. The people of Europe are disillusioned and history threatens to repeat itself. They need a vision that can carry them into the next century and hopefully beyond. Can we provide it?

Neil Birrell

(part two in the next issue)

## The Credit Card Route to Jerusalem

Since the end of World War Two the USA has been our economic barometer. And 'has been' is about right. Today we are switching our readings to Germany, the EC, Japan and the Pacific rim. The dollar is in deep jeopardy.

About 1967 something happened in the West. Large numbers of people began to find out that they had all the mod cons they needed – never wholly so, there was always something new or better on the electronic market. But soon afterwards Murray Bookchin, looking for a title for a new collection of essays, hit prophetically on *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*. There was a new animal on the prowl – its name was surplus.

Our very system turns on scarcity. Without scarcity our present way of life will collapse. The rule of scarcity, money and the market began in the 12th century, less than a hundred years after the Conquest, when sheep were discovered to wear a golden fleece. Banks were born, towns were chartered, the Common Law was promulgated, the Wool Staple was followed by the Hanseatic league and the Woolsack arrived in the House of Lords. Tribalism and feudalism dissolved in money and the market. The process took about four hundred years to work its way through the system. The monks, the Cistercians, started it and in the end it destroyed them. They had created a monster they could not control.

There had been markets before of course, especially in classical times, but they were marginalised in the long centuries of the Saxons and Danes when society turned on subsistence and service.

## The economics of it

Given production of use-value, price depends upon supply and demand and money is the measure of price. Society has many arbiters, custom, law, authority, force, class, fear, loyalty; and in early days the market, with its prices, was just one more to add to that list. Slowly it worked its way up the ladder until, in our own Reagan-Thatcher era, we saw it arrive at the top, apparently undisputed in its absolute supremacy. Then it failed to work, it ceased to deliver. Where does that leave us?

Debts and surpluses appeared that the money system could not handle. There were mountains of unsaleable food and lakes of surplus drink. Governments, pressed by the producers and the requirements of the market, were compelled to attempt the restoration of scarcity by restricting production and at the same time buying, storing, dumping or destroying the surplus. Milk

production is by quota, market forces are virtually excluded and the price is kept up. Currently, by EC decision, every farmer is required to take 15% of his arable land out of production and accept £85 an acre per annum for doing nothing with that land. Demand for the standard car is down by 20% and for the Rolls Royce by 50%.

The situation is not going to go away. It can only get worse. Every employer has to cut unit costs if he is to stay in the competitive market. He does this by computerising his work processes and cutting staff. Ever increasing unemployment is built into the structure of the economy *under its present rules* (those of money, the market, scarcity and price) and *within those rules* there is no answer. The law of surplus is slowly and inexorably destroying the law of scarcity, i.e. the very system we have lived under for centuries. We face collapse and have no option but to go through with it. It is no one's fault, it is the way things are. Our task is to discern the shape of anti-chaos amid chaos itself. This they have so far failed to do in the ex-Soviet empire and the sufferings this winter are going to be immense.

## Towards the next stage

Messrs Clinton and Major have got the beginning of the message. Pro-active politics is back, intervention is respectable again – but it may be too late, the recession is sliding into slump. Political leaders have to think about votes and voters are deeply self-centred. Their first and last question is: "What's in it for me?" And this is essentially short-term. We, in the US and the UK, like the Italians, are into client politics. People do not want to know about matters in depth and long-term – yet there is no other way. Both the US and the UK have permanent war economies, i.e. vast number of jobs dependent upon military contracts and military service. This is finally disastrous and the prime cause of the huge indebtedness of the US, but is there any prospect of the President and the Prime Minister facing it? There is not. There is only one place to go and that is over the precipice. But once we understand that we can work on it, get ready for it and have contingency plans ready for the day. The trouble is that we have yet to start. People are still content to bury their heads in the sands of Westminster and Whitehall, hoping that this is just a cycle like any other and it will correct itself in time if we just hang on and muddle through. Not this time. Today the name of the game is trauma and the unknown: invent or perish.

We are already into the absurd. For the unemployed man to work is a penal offence and

there are paid spies out to catch him at it. With many hundreds of millions starving we are deliberately cutting the production of food. With the Cold War over we are trying to intensify the production of arms – since the end of the Gulf War the US arms industry has actually grown. We are pouring arms into a Third World already ruined by its military priorities. We are actively persuading men at the height of their powers to take early retirement. The North Sea oil bonus has been thrown away. The government, tunnel-visioned on inflation, has neglected everything else. Unemployment will soon pass three million and head for four. Before it gets there Los Angeles will come to London.

## From production to communication

Jürgen Habermas, in his latest book *Autonomy and Solidarity*, says that we are out of the age of communication. The extraordinary consequence, if one takes his point, is that in some way we do not yet understand, communication is about to take the place of the market as the regulator. What does that mean? We do not know, we have to find out. The penalty of not finding out will be horrendous. The more work we do now, the less the suffering later on.

The quintessential task is two-fold, at least. What form might the post-economics of surplus take? And, politically, what will succeed the nation-state given that the nation-state has been and remains (residually) the political form required by the law of scarcity and the sword? The sword, of course, like scarcity, has died in the West because weapons of mass destruction, in association with the departure of empires, have made international war redundant. War and scarcity have died together.

Can we take communication at a crude financial level? There are any number of other levels up to and including the personal/spiritual one, but one thing at a time.

When I go into my local supermarket today the checkout assistant no longer has to check on the price inscribed on my purchases. There is no such inscription anyway, just a barcode read electronically by the new state-of-the-art cash register. The only items not barcoded are loose fruit and veg. A new form of communication, the barcode, has taken over. Presumably the software has to be updated daily. Then if I so wish I do not need to use either money or cheque. The machine reads my credit card and debits my bank account at the same time. Book-keeping is abolished. Cash in the usual sense, paper and metal money changing

(continued on page 7)

## Russia: Brief Glimpse of an Empire in Crisis

Despite international financial aid for Gorbachev's reforms, the country has failed to come out of the economic crisis. Nationalist conflicts, particularly in the Asian republics, have become civil wars (Nagorra Karabach and South Ossentia). These nationalist conflicts have been aggravated this year by the confrontations in Moldavia. Hence, Gorbachev's departure and the creation of the CIS have done nothing to help improve the situation in the former USSR.

The widespread strikes of 1989 and 1991 saw an increase in salaries, but the labour movement has failed to forge a common sense of direction to achieve more tangible demands. White-collar workers (health workers, primary school teachers, etc.) find themselves in a particularly critical situation, as do students and pensioners.

During the period from August '91 to January '92, the average [monthly] salary was 350 to 500 roubles, whilst meat cost 70 to 150 roubles a kilo, ham 1,040 roubles a kilo, oil 150 roubles and bread up to 4 roubles. However, these products were often in short supply on the high streets. Yeltsin, since taking power, has pushed Russia towards a market economy, that is to say a capitalist economy, often saying that communism and liberty are incompatible. Since march 1992, the economic situation in Russia has begin to stabilise itself. Today the average salary is between 1,500 and 2,000 roubles, although it should be pointed out that some professions – miners, for example – have achieved salaries of between 15,000 and 20,000 roubles. But commodity prices continue to climb. All Yeltsin's reforms have been implemented. The question of private ownership of, for example, land has still not been resolved, although all collective farms have been closed ... the forced march towards liberalism is not without obstacles.

Alexander Tchoukaev

translated by N. Birrell from *Le Monde Libertaire*



## Viruses of the Mind

### Viruses of the Mind

by Richard Dawkins

British Humanist Association, £2\*

Richard Dawkins is best known as an exponent of Darwin's theory, especially for his lucid and exciting popular works, *The Selfish Gene* and *The Blind Watchmaker*. Because Darwin's theory explains how the wonderful complexity of life might have developed on its own, without an 'infinite mind' or 'cosmic guiding force' or any such mystical nonsense, Dawkins is sometimes denounced as 'reductionist' by the mystically inclined (I think 'reductionist' means finding out about the universe by studying bits of it – as opposed to studying the whole of existence at once, a practical impossibility which is the mystical ideal).

Dawkins has expanded Darwin's theory into the study of human culture, inventing the word 'meme' for a unit of cultural inheritance, comparable to a biological gene. Examples of

memes are the components of language, which like genes are mostly stable, otherwise we would not be able to communicate, but subject to mutation, otherwise there would be no regional accents.

On 6th November Dawkins gave the 1992 Voltaire Lecture at Conway Hall, and the text of his lecture, *Viruses of the Mind*, was published on the same day.

In general, a virus is a parasitic bit of instructional code which gets itself replicated by invading a mechanism which automatically carries out instructions. A physiological virus is a piece of DNA which gets into the nucleus of a living cell. A computer virus is a piece of software which gets into a computer. A virus of the mind is a piece of lore which gets into a mind eager to absorb culture, especially that of a child at the stage of rapid language development.

What distinguishes a virus from a gene, a useful bit of software, or a meme, is that it consists essentially of the instruction 'copy

me'. When it gets into the cell, computer or developing mind, it is copied and recopied, and all the copies are copied and recopied until the copying machinery is overwhelmed.

All but the simplest and least harmful viruses also embody codes which protect them and facilitate their spread. DNA viruses instruct host cells to make protein coats for them, facilitating their migration to other cells. Computer viruses incorporate delays of various kinds, which allow them to be introduced into many computers before they become active.

A person suffering from a virus of the mind, Dawkins says, has the symptom of a deep inner conviction that something is true or right in the absence of evidence or reason. "We doctors refer to such a belief as 'faith'." The virus protects itself by inducing secondary convictions, chief of which is that where faith is concerned, lack of evidence or reason is a positive virtue. Dawkins quotes several religious authorities on the virtue of believing absurdities:

"Any wimp in religion could believe that bread symbolically represents the body of Christ, but it

takes a real red-blooded Catholic to believe something as daft as the transubstantiation."

This is by no means the whole substance of his lucid, entertaining and elegantly-argued lecture, but it gives the flavour. His extempore answers to questions after his lecture were equally cogent and witty. A questioner, who tried to justify religion on the basis that the atheist Marxist regimes were among the most cruel, was told that viruses of the mind are unquestionable dogmas of any sort, not only those which include gods.

In his preamble, Dawkins quoted Voltaire: "Anyone who uses reason is a plague on the state". Neither Voltaire nor Dawkins would declare himself an anarchist, but they undermine government by encouraging the habit of reasoning. The text of Dawkins' lecture should circulate throughout the anarchist movement as a counter to the pernicious habit of mystification.

Donald Room

\* BHA publications are not ordinarily available in shops, but BHA are letting Freedom Press Bookshop have a few of this title. When ordering by post, please add 20p inland, 40p overseas, as a contribution to postage.

## National Recovery: it's carnival time again and again

Public life is sinking in an orgy of words, busy-ness and flesh pressing. Doesn't everybody tire of all those ridiculous grey men posing and posturing in their grey suits, pissing in each others pockets and colluding with the media to keep the confidence trick going? GATT, Maastricht, 'the new economic strategy', weapons for Iraq, all part of the fix – recovery. It's all become one great, ever-running inauthentic ritual.

As the *Freedom* editorial of 18th November 1992 pointed out, there's no capitalist solution to this recession. There's no institutional fix either, that's why there is no alternative. Industrial man is stuck with his one-best-way, the thinking that assumed serious questions have but one answer to be determined by rational processes. So we are trapped in all those ridiculous monopolies – employment over wealth creation, school over learning, bureaucracy over organisation, transportation over movement, the police over law-and-order, etc., etc. It gives us a set of assumptions that homo sapiens doesn't question too, like people are costs, machines are assets, information clarifies.

It's time, as any gambling man knows, to stop backing a dead horse. This system can't deliver. Time too for discerning people to band together and pursue their socio-economic interests wherever possible outside the system.

In the 'good old days' of virtual full employment it was no serious sin to attribute to unemployment and its institutions a monopoly over the creation of wealth and well-being. The assumption worked even if a few cantankerous anarchists and libertarians objected. But the myth of universal employment died in 1973 with the oil crisis and the economic imperative began to be asserted with a vengeance. The inefficiency of employment as the only vehicle for getting things done was exposed in the following year by the miners when the rest of us produced more in a three-day working week than we could manage in five days for a long time after.

It's not just that there isn't enough employment to go round. Much of the new employment government, schooling and business are directing towards us is either mindless, key-punching, screen-watching inactivity designed to prop up moribund institutions, or yet more opportunities to engage in disabling professional activities to keep people from thinking and acting for themselves. Just how financiers, economists, programmers, accountants, teachers, social workers, lawyers and bureaucrats ride out every economic storm is not magic at all if you remember the adage, the last thing to go is always religion. Professionals are the priests of the industrial system. In hard times we kill off the producers, self-employed and small businesses first. Bees are much smarter than people, when food is short they dump the drones.

This doesn't alter the fact that everywhere we look there is work which needs to be done. But employment for the most part is not the way. Since employment is industrial man's central social ritual, it is also the key to cracking all those other monopolies.

It's not easy for industrial folk, even anarchists, to question universal employment. Nearly all of us have it, want it or need it sometime. Disputing this comfortable servile state is on a par with medieval man rejecting the authority of the church. Those, like the gnostics, who tried it frequently came to a nasty end. Nevertheless it is time we acknowledged that universal employment, so long the acceptable face of capitalism, is now the root cause of many of our intractable problems. It is also, in my view, incompatible with another of our myths – a vibrant democracy.

I'd like to continue this diatribe against employment by coupling it with another of industrial man's taken-for-granted – transportation. In our culture movement is a proclaimed personal freedom. It is also a virtual imperative, i.e. not a freedom at all, an essential treatment for all our artefacts and is dominated by machines. That's transportation.

Since, through employment, our economic and social lives are divorced one from the other, we depend on transportation to get us to and from our employment and in the conduct of much business.

Capitalism depends on the reification of trade, as Mr Clark of arms and poisonous gases for Iraq reminds us. The profits associated with manipulating goods and services can enable raw materials of little value to be worth a hundred times more in the final transactions. This usury is made invisible through the endless movement of goods, like the conjuror's sleight of hand. The magic of mark-ups, fiddles, packaging and re-packaging is legitimised in the name of 'value added'. We also have in this stable VAT, a somewhat fraudulent tax too frequently based upon a deception, a tax on nothing save one party's opportunity to gain financially from handling, but adding little or nothing of real value to the product.

In movement between jobs, changing homes, coping with suffering or loss, people are typically at their most vulnerable and so open to exploitation. Tourists and travellers too are the fish chasing the bait of the shopping mall and duty-free shops. Mobility is good for business.

Capitalism needs transportation, the packaging of movement, as much as it needs the ritual of employment. But ecologists now confront us with the horrific costs of transportation in the degradation of life, hospitalisation, pollution and environmental destruction. Slowly we begin to expose the cover-ups and technical camouflage and to ask the critical questions. Is all this movement of people, goods, information necessary? Who gains? What are the costs and who carries them? Wouldn't life be better with less of it?

People in search of a saner lifestyle will be seizing every opportunity to control their own lives. Looking for ways and means of reuniting their economic and social activities in one place through local enterprise, resourcefulness and collective action. Getting together with friends and neighbours to be more self-sufficient in food, energy, shelter and entertainment. Looking for opportunities at the margins of industrial society, away from centres, in wastelands, areas of neglect, off-the-beaten-track in those vacuous spaces spurned by the predators and the immune where there is more time

and space than we can imagine even in dirty, densely populated old Britain.

I don't go along with the idea of reducing the employment week to give more employment for all. This strategy adds to machine-based movement, is not efficient and preserves the tyranny of employment. If government has a role in making alternatives available it is by legislating a minimum wage for every adult. No other single act by government would serve better to reduce quickly the authority of employment and employer. It would acknowledge too the right of every person to gain from a technical progress which has reduced our real role in the formal economy to insignificance. We all have a right to share in the ingenuity of our forefathers and mothers. However, independent folk will not be waiting for this improbable act by government.

Significantly nobody in authority is saying anything about young people in their schemes for recovery. Yet thirty years ago Harold Wilson gave to the spirit and energy of the young a key role in his white-hot technological revolution. As I've argued elsewhere, the onslaught against children and youth from the system is now total. There is no place for playful questioning youth. We need young people only as adjuncts to the programmed machines, full of dope not hope, pacified by computer, television and disco musak. That way there's no risk of their pulling down our pack of cards. In 1992 the system could not handle another 1968.

So let's speculate even more unwisely. I see dimly prospects of a role for young people in the revitalisation of rural Britain. Against this dream young people today do not possess the knowledge of or interest in the country life of their counterparts in earlier times. But rural communities and land use are becoming more derelict by the day. Events could change attitudes overnight.

For a start, the opposition from the old vested interests is weakening. It is less likely to come from farmers, the self-employed and rural business, than from oldies living on fat pensions, commuters and multiple home-owners – the people who want their village to be the prettiest in England. The energies of this lot, if they have any, is committed to some metropolis and movement. They just sleep in the country.

Retrenchments in farming activities and declining house prices begin to offer glimpses of opportunity to those who want to blend work with play and craft with growing food. As times get tougher and with land ownership still concentrating in fewer hands, it should also be easier to re-open the ownership debate.

For young people who want to pursue a more hopeful future than cities, suburbs and sterile employment offer, collective action may be a way forward. The prospects of a hopeless job or no employment at all ought to provide the seed bed for a resurgence of the 'back to the land' movement among 'ejuated' youth. Besides, it's time our youthful city ecologists dispensed with their abstract worlds, got off their bums and started a few practical initiatives. Time to start exploring the country for one place to live, work and play. Time to make decentralisation a reality.

Denis Pym



## Kropotkin at 150

The 150th anniversary of the birth of Peter Kropotkin on 9th December (27th November, Old Style) is being marked by several meetings in several places.

Perhaps the largest event will be in his native Russia, where an International Scientific Conference is arranged for the whole week from 8th to 14th December. This is organised by the Kropotkin Commission of the Russian Academy of Science, under the chairmanship of the leading scholar Leonid Abalkin. It will begin in Moscow (where Kropotkin was born in 1842 and spent most of his childhood until 1857, returned in 1917, and is buried), visit Dmitrov (where he went in 1918 and died in 1921), and end in St Petersburg (where he went to school from 1857 to 1862 and lived again from 1867 until his arrest in 1874 and escape in 1876).

There will be a dozen sessions, some divided into sections (political, biographical, scientific, sociological, ethical, geographical). More than 60 papers have been promised by scholars from several countries – mostly Russia, but also Japan, Netherlands, Spain and the United States. The only British contributor listed in the programme is John Slatter of Durham University, but the American participants include several familiar names. Most of the subjects sound thoroughly academic, but there are also such topical titles as 'Kropotkin's anarchist-communist model as a response to the ecological and social crisis at the end of the twentieth century' and 'Kropotkin's doctrine of anarchist-communism in the contemporary West European anarchist movement'. It remains to be seen whether Kropotkin's ideas seem any more relevant to the predicament of Russia (and the world) at the end of the Communist

### What is Anarchism? An Introduction

by Donald Room  
Freedom Press, £1.95

This little book is an important addition to Freedom Press' list. Split into two parts, an introduction by Donald Room followed by a series of brief extracts by anarchists from William Godwin to Colin Ward, it is the ideal primer.

Donald Room's 28 introductory pages answer just the sort of questions that people who have no knowledge of anarchism and anarchists may wish to ask. He has dealt with three aspects of anarchism using Nicolas Walter's headings: 'What anarchists believe', 'How anarchists differ' and 'What anarchists do'. Each section is also accompanied by cartoons of three characters from Room's famous 'Wildcat' strip – a bonus for all fans of the fizzing moggy, and free-range egghead. Donald Room has certainly packed plenty into his introduction, nicely balancing bits of anarchist history, politics and mythology, with information about anarchist activity today. Some of this material will be familiar to readers of *Freedom*, but is worth reading again. One example is Donald Room's contention that individual anarchism is class-struggle anarchism. His main contention here is that we confuse ourselves, and others,

period than at the beginning.

We hope to have a report of the conference, and we also hope that at least some of the papers will be available for publication in English.

It is a pity that no such event has been arranged in Western Europe, where Kropotkin lived for more than forty years (thirty in this country), and where his ideas are surely just as relevant as anywhere else.

## A Kropotkin Classic

### In Russian and French Prisons

*In Russian and French Prisons*  
by Peter Kropotkin, edited by George Woodcock  
413 pages, Black Rose Books, distributed by Freedom Press, £11.50, paperback

This is the latest volume in the 'Collected Works of Peter Kropotkin', edited by George Woodcock and published by Black Rose Books in Canada. Like the previous volumes in the series, it is a reprint of an earlier English-language edition with a new introduction by Woodcock.

*In Russian and French Prisons* was Kropotkin's first book in English. It appeared in 1887, when he had settled permanently in England after spending two years in Russian prisons and then three years in French prisons. It was based mainly on articles published from 1883 to 1886 in the *Nineteenth Century*, the leading liberal magazine in this country, which consisted of detailed accounts of the prison and exile system in Russia and of the prison system of France drawn from personal experience and documentary evidence. Kropotkin added some supporting material, as well as a critical discussion of the moral influence of prison on prisoners and of the place of prisons in society which he delivered as a talk in many places during the late 1880s. The book is one of the most powerful attacks on the prison system ever produced, and it became a classic of libertarian literature. Its main defect is that it was written for British and American readers but included little about British and less about American prisons, so that its approach seemed rather indirect even if its message was clear enough. Its particular information has of course dated very badly after a century, but its general argument still remains all too valid, as is accepted by every later commentator.

The book had a considerable impact when it

was published, and the story goes that the Russian authorities were so alarmed by it that their agents bought all the copies of the first edition. This seems a curious thing to do, since it would benefit the author as well as the publishers, and it was an easy matter for the latter to produce another edition at once. The book was never republished again in Britain, but in 1971 a facsimile reproduction was published in the United States by Schocken Books, with a new introduction by Paul Avrich and a translation of the preface Kropotkin had written for the Russian edition of 1906. The Black Rose edition of 1991 is a slightly enlarged facsimile reproduction of the text of the Schocken Books edition rather than of the original edition, though there is no indication of this. It also reproduces Paul Avrich's translation of the 1906 preface (along with its misprints), again with no indication – it even includes a footnote signed 'P.A.' but omits the explanatory note it refers to, adding incompetence to impudence. It also reproduces the cover illustration, at least giving due acknowledgement to Vincent Van Gogh's version of Gustave Doré's drawing of a prison exercise yard. It doesn't reproduce Paul Avrich's eight-page introduction, but instead adds George Woodcock's twelve-page introduction, which is readable and informative, though occasionally inaccurate (Kropotkin's first prison article didn't appear in 1882, the political activist Nikolai Chaikovski wasn't the brother of the composer, and so on).

The 1887 edition of *In Russian and French Prisons* isn't actually as rare as might be expected, but anyone who wants to have a copy of this valuable book will be glad of the later editions. The 1971 version is more reliable, but the 1991 version is more accessible.

MH

## What is Anarchism?

by our habit of adopting secondary labels, such as 'pacifist anarchist' and 'class-struggle anarchist'. This habit combines with "obsolete word associations" and leads to apparent differences between us, says Room. This is comforting, but perhaps not the entire story. Nonetheless, Donald Room makes no attempt to present a 'glossy' picture of anarchism, but gives the reader an honest picture of anarchism and anarchists. The picture is brighter than I had thought, if Donald is right with his calculation of just how many anarchists there are in Britain – 500,000. Quick, an anarchist Britain is just round the next corner!

The rest of the book consists of 21 extracts chosen by Freedom Press under four headings dealing with anarchists' approaches to anarchism, anarchism and violence, arguments against government, and the relevance of anarchism. The extracts are brief, usually about two pages each, but very well chosen with plenty to exercise the reader's brain. The editors have also been careful to match the separate extracts, so there are some very nice juxtapositions of articles such as Marie-Louise Berneri's attack on the murderousness of capitalist war, 'Government and homicidal outrage', following Charlotte Wilson's 'Anarchism and homicidal outrage'. The excellence of these two short pieces once again made me think that it is high time that someone edits a substantial book of writings by women anarchists. Any takers?

Other extracts that stand out are Malatesta's two on 'Anarchism, authoritarian socialism and communism' and 'Anarchism and property'. Not only does the first include Malatesta's amazing prophecy of 1920 that the Soviet system would end in the re-establishment of a bourgeois regime, but it also provides the most concise explanation of the differences between anarchists and socialists that I've read. His attack on capitalistic property (as opposed to that held by the individual worker – although he argued that this would disappear in time too) is also a marvellous piece of concise and clear writing.

Rudolf Rocker's critique of power merits a mention as this is really the nub of the problem – the desire for power. Only when this desire has perished will we see the arrival of an anarchist society, and all the delights that that will bring. George Nicholson's two pages on 'The simplicity of anarchism' is also good, almost a sort of anarchist catechism with just the answers – if that's not an offensive comparison. And there's an extract from Colin Ward's *Anarchy in Action*, with its always comforting, and essentially correct, analysis of the growth of giant government being matched by the alternative world of parallel organisations. If all that's not enough, there's Alexander Berkman, Bakunin, William Morris, Kropotkin, and more! And, thanks to the generosity of John Vattuone, it only costs £1.95. Buy several copies and give them to every non-anarchist you know!

Stephen Cullen

## Food for Thought ... and Action

More recent additions at Freedom Press bookshop.

*The Match!*\* issue no 87, published and edited by Fred Woodworth. Although very infrequent – about once a year – *The Match!* is always a stimulating and informative read with its own inimitable style. This issue contains an article on statistics of people murdered by the police in America, commentaries on a wide variety of social and political trends, lots of book reviews and an excellent letters section covering many pages, and more. 80 pages, £2.50. (Issue number 86 is also still available and the contents equally good, 60 pages, same price)

*The Anarchist Yearbook 1993*, Phoenix Press. As in the previous two years, this pamphlet lists anarchist organisations, publishers and periodicals in the UK. This time it is mercifully free of the sectarian slugging-off which appeared in its predecessor. 32 pages, £1.50.

*Enragés and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68\** by René Viénet, Autonomedia / Rebel Press. Here at last is the long-awaited, first English translation of the original 1968 edition of this invaluable work. It is a first-hand, insider's account of the role played by these two radical student groups in the revolutionary events of the time, and their refusal of all contact with the 'leftist' parties, the unions or the media. Illustrated throughout with contemporary photographs, graffiti, posters, comic strips and slogans, it also contains 34 pages of original documents. 158 pages, £5.95.

*The New World Order and the Third World\** edited by Dave Broad and Lori Foster, Black Rose Books. With the recent political events in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East, there is talk of 'a new world order'. This collection of essays asks just how new is this new world order, and what are its implications for the Third World countries. This book takes a look at the history of US international relations, then goes on to analyse the problems and possibilities for the Third World becoming more independent. The editors' preface states: "It is our hope that

this collection will help readers to penetrate the rhetoric of a 'new world order' and provide a tool for political action against that supposed order". A well annotated work. 160 pages, £10.50.

*Beyond Sexuality*, Anslim / Phoenix Press. This is not an 'all men are rapists' book, nor an 'everybody should be gay or lesbian' book, but a thoughtfully-produced and written discussion of sexual politics from an anarchist viewpoint which is on the whole well balanced and informative. Its five chapters cover all kinds of topics from economics and sex, 'new men' and the men's movement, feminism, bisexuality, gay men and lesbians, violence against men, child sexual abuse, sado-masochism, marriage and dependence, celibacy, pornography, and almost everything else to do with sexuality. A good partner to Tony Gibson's *Love, Sex and Power in Later Life* (Freedom Press). The sources of information are referenced and there is a list of contact addresses for further information. 115 pages, £4.50.

*Anything Can Happen* by Fredy Perlman, Phoenix Press. A collection of nine of his shorter writings, this is for the Fredy Perlman fans. The title piece is one of his more optimistic essays, where he reminds us that the authority wielded by the institutions that oppress us comes from our acquiescence. Withhold that recognition and ... anything can happen. Taking us from the revolutionary upheavals of the 1960s in France and Italy, in which he took part, to the ecological concerns of today, these essays mirror the changes and contradictions in Perlman's political analysis and include *The Reproduction of Daily Life*, *Anti-Semiteism and the Beirut Pogrom* and *The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism*. 127 pages, £4.50.

KM

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## THE DECLINE OF THE BRITISH POLITICAL PARTY

### What significance for anarchists?

On the 3rd June 1990 the SDP decided to wind itself up, this was mostly due to a massive decline in members (down from a peak of 68,000 to only 6,000 at the end).<sup>1</sup> The Communist Party (now renamed and with a new ideology) will probably go the same way for the same reason (membership being down from a peak of 56,000 in 1942 to under 5,000 at present). Most anarchists would say: "So what? The more authoritarian parties that collapse the better." However, these two examples are part of a wider trend which is important to understand if we are to be able to keep people active in politics (especially in libertarian activities).

Proving that there has been a general decline in party membership is difficult as few parties publish membership figures. The Conservative Party does not release figures, but from leaks and estimates by outsiders we can get a general picture. In 1953 membership was about 2.8 million,<sup>2</sup> in 1980 it was about 1.5 million<sup>3</sup> and by 1986 it had sunk to about 1.2 million.<sup>4</sup> The decline in the Labour Party is just as dramatic, with individual membership down from just over a million in 1952 to 666,000 in 1979. However, these figures (published by the Labour Party) underestimate the decline as they assume that in 1979 all constituency branches had at least 1,000 members (which is the minimum size each of the 623 constituent parties was allowed to be to affiliate). When in that year the 1,000 member rule was abolished, the 1980 figures showed that the actual membership was a mere 348,000. The newer parties like the Greens, the Trotskyites and the Nationalists who grew in the 1960s and '70s are now also losing members (the Green Party has shrunk from over 30,000 down to nearly 10,000 members in the last five years).

This decline is part of a wider change in British society. We are less likely to belong to a church, join a union, visit a cinema, go to a football match, read a political weekly or (in

the case of the more well to do) go to a dinner-dance organised by the local Conservative Association than people forty years ago. Home entertainment (television, stereos, videos and computer games) is replacing more gregarious social pursuits. Meanwhile political parties are becoming more reliant on a smaller elite of political hacks to run the party machinery.

Political finances are being severely affected by this trend. No longer can parties survive just on membership fees, they have to search elsewhere for donations which, obviously, favours parties with friends in big business or who get large sums of money from the unions. The SDP would have died much earlier if it had not been supported by businessmen like John Martin and David Sainsbury. The decline in trade unions and John Smith's attempts to reduce their influence in the party could mean financial ruin for the Labour Party.

In many countries (including France, Germany and the USA) political parties are subsidised by the government, but proposals to extend this system to Britain (for example, the 1981 report by the Hansard Society Commission, *Paying for Politics*) have been ignored. Many people would be hostile to using taxpayers' money to finance the party political circus, but if the only alternative is that only those parties that get big donations from the City can afford to run election campaigns (i.e. permanent Tory government) then perhaps it is time we looked at ways of changing how parties are financed in this country. Of course, in the long run anarchists want to abolish the government, but until we can achieve that we should try to make the system as fair as possible.

It is significant that the parties most perceived as single issue parties (the Green Party, the SNP, the far right and Plaid Cymru) are the only ones to have expanded at any time in the last thirty years. This is mirrored in the

growth of pressure groups like Anti-Apartheid, Amnesty International and the various environmental groups. In 1980 the combined membership of Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth was about 30,000, by 1985 it was 110,000 and by 1990 it was 440,000.<sup>5</sup> If Greenpeace was a political party it would have the second largest membership of all political parties in Britain. The National Trust has about two million members! Many of these pressure groups have a small group of activists while the vast bulk of the members merely buy the T-shirt and send off their annual supporters cheque. Groups like CND do have active members and the group does help politicise people, but the rise/fall/rise/fall of CND shows how vulnerable these single issue groups are to the whims of the public. A rise in 'armchair' pressure group members does little to stop the exodus of people from campaigning and political activity in general. Gradually we are getting more politically passive as the issues are neatly packaged and fed to us from the television screen while we vegetate on the sofa.

How does all this affect the anarchist movement? Firstly, if we are to create a fairer

5. *Friends of the Earth Handbook* (1987) edited by J. Porritt, and *The Observer* 27th May 1990

and more caring society we must find ways of getting people to be active instead of passively staring at their new satellite television. Secondly, if people are less likely to join conventional political parties we must stress how different (and exciting) are our ideas compared with the tired old compromises pushed by the other parties. Thirdly, if politics is becoming the preserve of an elitist minority who are paid by big business to sell tired old lies to a passive population, then is it not time we got our finger out!

Erik Grigg  
(Crawley)

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## News from Northern Ireland

In their different ways, Ging (14th November) and Peter Cadogan (30th October) have responded with deadly accuracy to my request that some sort of correspondence or debate on Ireland should find itself onto the pages of *Freedom*. I thank and congratulate them both.

And I hope they and some other people feel that we can move on to developing, perhaps not the anarchist movement Ging envisages, but at least an anarchist agenda for Ireland in the here and now.

Peter's suggestions smack of the sort of approach anarchists might take. We should inform ourselves and present ourselves in existing organisations, keeping the anarchist agenda before them, ensuring that libertarian processes are followed, engaging in debate with people in those groups about what freedom might actually mean in class and personal terms.

And perhaps Ging might suggest that we'd be better off forming our own networks, associations and groups of like-minded people. Otherwise we run the risk of being duped by the hidden agendas many non-anarchist groups have. But do we then marginalise ourselves on the fringes of political activity and relegate our personal inter-relations in social life to in-fighting and bickering (at worst) and the hard, slow slog of movement building (at best)?

These are big general questions for anarchists across all issues and not just on Ireland. Personally I find myself doing a bit of both; being present in non-anarchist peace/cultural/political/economic groups and also seeking support from fellow anarchists locally. I imagine many readers of *Freedom* find themselves in similar situations, and if that is the case, rather than discussing the relative merits of either approach, let's move the debate forward by

looking at an 'agenda for Ireland' which can be developed in these pages.

I am writing this on the Monday after the Old Park bookie shop murders. Three elderly men killed by the UFF. The town centre of Coleraine was blown to bits, and an RUC man was shot on the Fermanagh border by the IRA. All in one weekend. And the so-called 'Talks Process' finally wound up amid a degree of acrimony and a flurry of recriminations. The government in the Republic has called a snap election, polling day the 25th November.

If there was ever any doubt about the need for some fresh, and freedom-filled, thinking about Ireland, there can surely be no doubt that anarchists must direct their attentions to the specifics of today and the social and political contexts applying in Ireland.

So what would be on this agenda? And how would items be discussed? What about words like 'demilitarisation' and 'people power'? What about words like 'smash the state'? What about 'federal structures that support cultural diversity'? And all the rest.

I'd like us to arrive at, say, a ten-point agenda as the anarchist agenda on Ireland for readers of *Freedom*. It would include all the key points that must be discussed and those discussions must point towards action; libertarian action.

To start the ball rolling, here's two items to consider: 'total demilitarisation in Ireland' and 'freedom to express differing cultural traditions'. I'm sure you have many more items for this agenda. Let's have them.

And as they come in I'll keep them rolling in this column and we can look forward to the developing debate and the actions that will follow.

Dave Duggan

## The Credit Card Route to Jerusalem

(continued from page 4)

hands, has been eliminated. Everything happens by taps on tapes and all at the speed of light.

This is not just new gadgetry. Something of historic significance, communication of an entirely new kind, has happened at the grocers.

### Implications for the future

Then looking ahead ... what if we find the way to restore full employment by reducing the working week, job sharing, part-time work and public works — in short we make the social market work? The result is that we are all employed and earning good money and there is no fear of any future unemployment. Unprecedented conditions of social and economic confidence exist. At the same time the electronic revolution has meant that we enjoy the production of wealth in excess of demand and we know that scarcity has gone for all time. Consumerism has died with scarcity and everyone knows that life is about joy and sorrow. The importance of mere things is something that our grandparents used to take seriously — and now even they know better. Given an entirely different non-material lifestyle, we can have whatever we want. We accept a social obligation to work for twenty hours a week for socially prescribed purposes. For the rest of the waking/working week we work at whatever we please. Money had ceased to be of any importance.

We all have plenty of money in the bank, i.e. more than enough. Most, if not all, of our shopping is done with the same credit cards that we have today. Since it is all direct debit we don't use cash. The shops and warehouses are stacked with more than we need and they are programmed to keep that up. Everybody is working — there is no unemployment.

Money and goodies are the last things we worry about. Each one of us has a complex of skills and interests that keep us busy for all our waking hours. Individual creativity with group backing is universal. We read in amazement about our forefathers who had to put up with the degrading circumstances of scarcity, war, coercion, fear and non-communication between classes and communities. The pity of it!

The one day we say to each other: "Why bother with credit cards?" It is all there in the shops. Greed died years ago. We will, of course, keep on working as usual and so provide all the goods and services that we need. Why should cashiers be tied to machines for so many hours a day? There are much more creative things for them to do. So we just don't use the cards any more. They have served their transitional purpose, they can go. They go. Hardly anybody notices. Someone on the box reminds us that they were the last vestige of the old order. So be it. That was a long time ago.

### Coda

*Homo sapiens* is, of his nature, a giving and receiving animal. We stem originally from the proto-hominids of five million years ago. Genetically we are programmed to give and receive — money does not come into it. Then some 10,000 years ago, shortly after the departure of the last Ice Age, our forebears took to the domestication of nature — first of animals (and so became nomads) and then of plants (and so became settled villagers). Unfortunately, stock on the hoof and crops in the field raised for the first time the possibility and desirability of loot and conquest — a surplus for the few underwritten by scarcity for the many — mediated by force. The state and scarcity came in together. Now together they depart, and the long night of civilisation goes with them.

But much of this is yet to come.

Peter Cadogan



## Anybody for Hobbes?

Dear Revolutionaries,  
One day after collecting my Certificate of Poverty from the local post office, I chanced upon a copy of Hobbes's *Leviathan* in the local library. Having little to do in my tortuous days of unemployment, I set myself the task of reading and understanding this co-called classic work of English political philosophy. Those who are aware of this work will immediately think of the complex arguments concerning the necessity in Hobbes's logic of the need for an awe-inspiring sovereign. Now, having found a great deal of distaste in Hobbes's unpalatable conclusions, it appeared to me that was it not precisely in his imagined State of Nature that an anarchist organic society may spring up and grow.

Hobbes describes the state of nature as solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. His argument proceeds that this state of nature would inexorably be in a state of perpetual insecurity and war, since men would be in constant competition for scarce goods. This competition for scarce goods is explained by Hobbes as being a consequence of a lack of industry, culture, society, etc. However, this mode

of existence would be of an evanescent life, since men who fear instability and the threat to their own being would divest their own ontological power to a Bellwether, who holding the yoke of authority has only a god as his judge and jury.

Now this fair adumbration has been done away with, the concern of my writing will perhaps become apparent. What I want is your response to this Iron Law and a fair indication of a libertarian's position on this matter. I am aware that an anarchist may not even bother to argue on the grounds of Hobbes's state of nature, but all the same it would be interesting if this could drum up a bit of debate which allowed for the move away from the usual soporific arguments which some people prefer to ponder over. If some people think I am a heterodox, then hurray for me, for my anarchism is a multi-dimensional philosophy, eclectic and profound.

The above is not merely an attempt to criticise for criticism's sake, but of a want to know what an anarchist thinks of Hobbes's logic. Now it is easy for an anarchist to dismiss my work and Hobbes as mindless shit. But I am on your side and as a heretic I believe in the paradox that in order to defend a belief it is of a fundamental necessity to know of it; to know of its essence and to start a defence of it by attacking the very roots of it.

D. Morris

## The Pacifism Debate

Dear Freedom,  
It seems the debate on pacifism will run and run and I hope it will not bore readers if I continue it by replying to Ernie Crosswell (Letters, 31st October).

On his first point, I disagree with his belief that women are automatically 'powerless pawns'. People are victims when the elites struggle for power and gender roles in such violence cannot be assumed. When needed, or when they themselves decide, women *do* fight and support conflicts, sometimes as a result of social indoctrination (the same as men are subjected to for most of their lives) and sometimes because they feel they must for their own beliefs. Thus women fought in World War Two, Vietnam, El Salvador, Peru, etc. Ernie is right to point out there are powerless pawns in wars, but many such conflicts are the result of elites whose ideology is power and who see people as their subjects to be ordered to do their will.

The second point Ernie made was to admit the lesser-armed side can win, but qualifying this by saying such victories merely change one oppressor for another. True, but the argument that weaker can defeat stronger thus still stands as the issue that he made is rather the *nature* of some victors.

Lastly, I find it ever strange that a

pacifist believes humans are 'programmed' to react violently to assault for surely this means we have no choice and so will have to be violent in some situations. When I showed that this was not so, as shown by Gandhi's followers, Ernie dismissed their non-violence saying "in a different situation, those Gandhi followers might have obeyed their animal instincts". But the point is they didn't! Why? One cannot create a 'truth' by dismissing difficult points that counter the argument.

If someone believes we are programmed in this way how can we be anything other than violent, and so how can one be a pacifist? I do not believe we are instinct-ruled animals for we have a consciousness that enables us to overcome 'inbuilt' restrictions, hence some people are pacifists. As yet, though, Ernie has not given a convincing argument, moral or practical, as to why we should be pacifists in all situations.

Ian Borrows

*(The 'debate' has a long history. Freedom Press will shortly be publishing a small volume on violence and anarchism covering a heated debate on the subject in 1960 - Editors)*

## Thoughts on the Social Sciences

Dear Editors,  
Brian Bamford is quite right to be sceptical about the social 'sciences'.

In my book *Antilinguistics* (reviewed in *Freedom*, 18th May 1991) I tried to show how most of the modern academic study of language is non-sensical abstract analyticising which bamboozles most of those who come in contact with it. It was a sad coincidence that my main target was Noam Chomsky. I wish my quarrel could have been with someone like Kissinger. But my field of work was language, and Chomsky was about the only linguist who seemed at least to try to deal seriously with a serious problem, the psychology of language, even if his solutions turned out to be absurd. I have suggested before in *Freedom* (1st June 1991) the contrast between the rationality of Chomsky's political writing and the fanciful system-building of his work on language, typical in many ways of academic intellectuality.

I do not know if there is the usual academic authoritarianism and pressure to conform in Chomsky's department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. What is certain is the tyranny his work has imposed on the

world of language study and language teaching practically everywhere. This is ironic, in view of his own attacks on the authority of experts. In practice there can be few people who have so promoted the cult of the academic expert, even if unintentionally. Chomskyanism itself does not dominate thought about language in every part of the world, although it does in many places. But Chomskyanism, supposedly so revolutionary and of such magnificently broad scope, has tended to make all linguistics intellectually fashionable, and, I think, helped to raise generally the status of social 'science', with what we are led to believe are its unique insights available only to those who work at universities.

In the end the power of academic social 'scientists' is possibly the greatest and most dangerous of all because, in the rich countries that control the rest of the world, dominant theory is largely controlled by the people at the universities. 'Ordinary' people's beliefs about economics, society, psychology, etc., are dictated, directly or indirectly, by academics. Until people in general learn to question the wisdom of social 'scientists' in a fundamental way there is

not the slightest chance that any significant number of people will question the very basis of the economic and social systems under which we live. Yet as things are now, academics are accountable to nobody but each other. They are even less open to effective outside criticism than politicians and financiers.

Brian Bamford's complaints about social 'science' seem mainly to concern a process which is the other way round. And indeed perhaps there are some anarchists who accept Chomsky's linguistic theories because they are those of somebody with anarchist sympathies. But the intellectual influence is irrational and dangerous whichever way round it works.

Although I cannot be sure I would feel the same if I had been the editor of *The Raven* 18, I should like to congratulate you for asking Bamford to review this particular one of your own publications. It is surely an example of just the sort of free thought that *Freedom* exists for. (I should like to add that I wrote this before I saw Bamford's letter in the latest issue, in which he pays you the same compliment.)

Amorey Gethin

## A POLICEMAN'S LOT

At the age of 44 I have just spent my first few days in prison. This could well be the start of a new career, as I wonder why I was ever so afraid of such a comfortable institution. There is plenty of company, the vegan food is good, it is always warm and there is plenty of time to read without distractions.

All the suffering occurs to those on the outside, where the family are short of handyman, breadwinner, father, son and partner. Society punishes the women, children and old people by giving the man a rest from work and responsibility.

And how does his prison sentence benefit the victims of 'crime'? Does it provide support and care for those who are damaged by the experience? Does it enable them to understand what happened and what the real causes were?

No, of course not. All it does is to

encourage vengeance as a major motive for action. And the generations growing up also want vengeance, against society, for the disruption that 'law' and 'justice' caused to their lives.

Waiting on bail for trial will take about a year. If all those at present on bail insisted on prison, the prisons would burst at the seams. Think of the unemployment that would be caused by closing prisons and police stations. These men (only a token number of women, and I include all the legal experts) would be almost unemployable in any productive process. They are skilled only in rules and regulations, and their only products are vengeance and punishment; as seen in thousands of broken homes and miserable families.

What can be done?

1. Stick together. Learn whom you can trust and avoid the rest. If you ever feel betrayed, avoid the Judas, but *never* seek help from the law.
2. Never earn enough to pay income tax - join a co-op for mutual aid and sufficiency without VAT goods. Without

tax governments cannot pay for punitive suppression.

3. Show solidarity with your class: that is the oppressed class - let your caring show. Promote political awareness not dependence.

4. Persuade others to opt out and live apart from the laws of vengeance and punishment of the innocent.

5. Do not be afraid. One-party states and minority governments are not overthrown overnight; but even Russia fell eventually to the will of the people.

John Myhill

## Thoughts on Ethnomethodology!

Dear Editors,  
Perhaps I might risk trying the patience of the kindly editors, not to mention the resigned readers, in order to point up Brian Bamford's extraordinary misreading of my last letter. I did not say he was a smallholder, did not say that anthropology should only be considered by anthropologists, and did not object to a critical review.

To take the points briefly, I did say that funding from a smallholding would be the only acceptable source of research money by his criteria. I did say that a review should involve some attempt to let the readers know about the content of the work, not just air the prejudices of the reviewer. Most importantly, at no point did I even suggest that anthropology and sociology should be the prerogative of a professional elite. If I believed that I would hardly have edited *The Raven* numbers 18 and 19.

I was suggesting that there was something of a contradiction between Mr Bamford's apparent support for ethnomethodology (which stresses the independence of the individual *vis a vis* society) and his portrayal of anthropologists as helpless creatures of their funding source. He can't have it both ways and even if he wants to there is no implication in my letter of the fantasia in his penultimate paragraph. Mr Bamford should quit while he's behind. Cheers,

John Pilgrim

## News from Angel Alley

The next issue of *The Raven* will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Peter Kropotkin. As well as being probably the best known anarchist worldwide, he was also one of the founders of *Freedom*. We are hoping (assuming no hold-ups) to be dispatching subscribers' copies at the end of December.

The next issue of *Freedom* (vol 5324) dated 12th December completes this year's series. A large number of subscriptions will then be due for renewal. We shall be sending out renewal notices with that issue and are relying on all readers who value the work being done at Freedom Press to renew as soon as possible. And if you can afford more then please send a donation to our funds. Like all minority, alternative initiatives, we are affected by the 'recession'.

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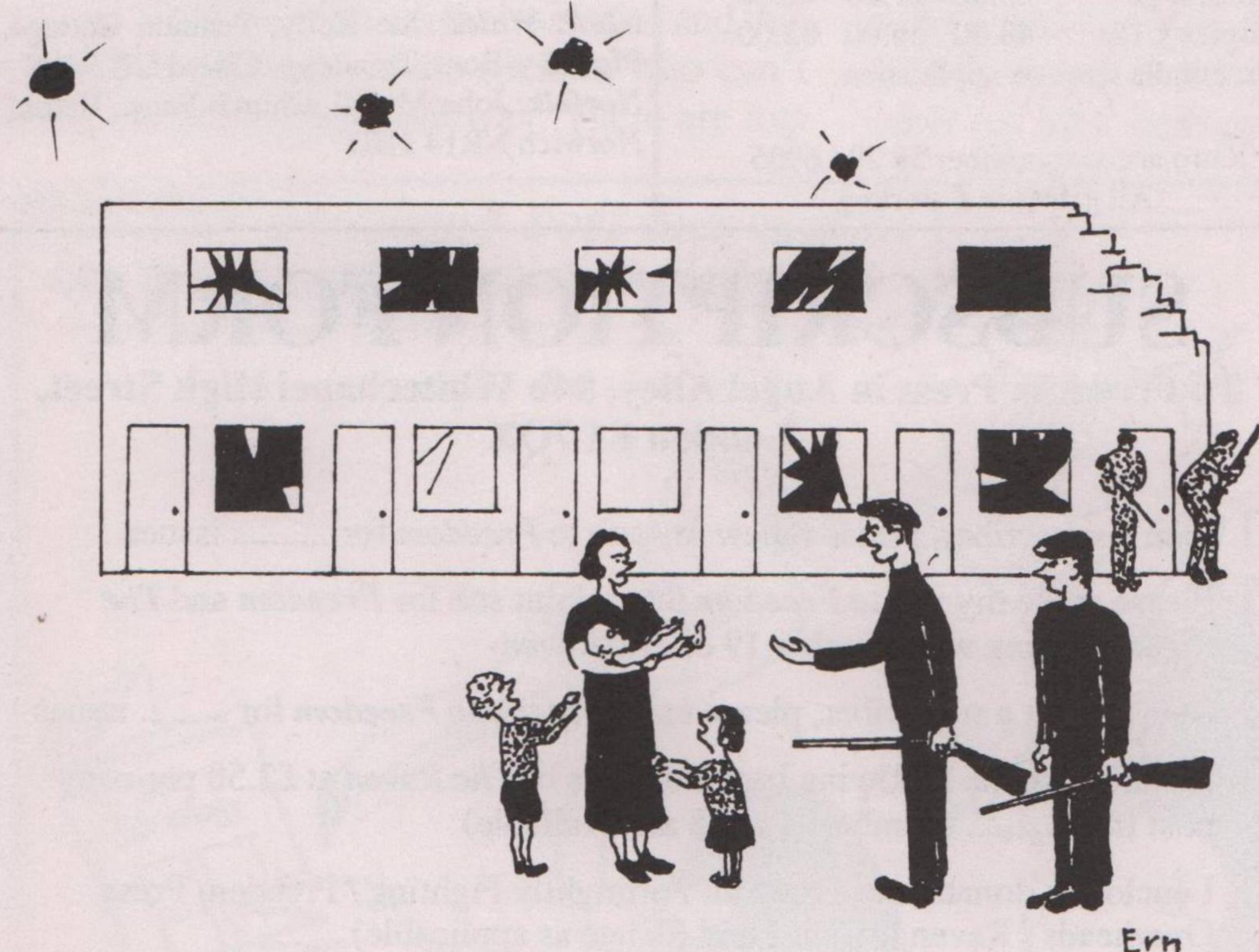
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Ern

"Don't worry. We'll fight down to the last woman and child"



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#### 1992/1993 MEETINGS

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 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 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

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

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*Devon:* Johnny Yen, 19 Polsloe Road, Exeter, Devon EX1 2HL

*Northern Ireland:* Dave Duggan, Black Cat Press, PO Box 5, Derry BT48 6PD

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