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FIFTY PENCE

"From every respect paid to property flow, as from a poisoned fountain, most of the evils and vices which render this world such a dreary scene to the contemplative mind"

Mary Wollstonecraft
(*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*)

NO 'LEVEL PLAYING FIELD' UNDER CAPITALISM

One of the currently most hackneyed, abused official phrases – second only to 'marked confidence' – is 'the level playing field' as applied to the present trade war which we are led to believe will be ended once the GATT (General Arrangement for Trade and Tariffs) is agreed to by all the 180-odd nations, and which will unleash a period of 'world prosperity'! The Americans talk of a \$200,000 million bonanza in world trade.

All eyewash. Just as there is no such thing in the capitalist world as 'a level playing field' any more than the frequent protests by industrialists (only when they feel the draught) about 'fair competition'. Competition is the opposite of cooperation. Therefore by definition competition

means that you intend to win and the others to lose. That is also their intention. So what can be *fair* about competition? Your ultimate intention is either to absorb or to eliminate opposition in your particular field. In the capitalist world it's only governments which fondly believe that they can legislate for 'fair trading' and can prevent the creation of cartels and monopolies. Hence the political dogma of the Tories to privatise all the public service monopolies in the fond belief that the private sector is dedicated to competition, service with a smile and innovation, whereas as we have seen all the privatised public services are in effect private monopolies, their profits are escalating as are their charges, they are streamlining staff

which is good for the shareholders but bad for the taxpayers who have to meet the cost of more fellow citizens on the dole. (The government doesn't increase taxes to meet the ever-growing dole bill. It would expose them and their policies. Instead they cut basic services, which invariably hit the poorest hardest.)

In the opinion of anarchists no 'level playing field' can exist within the capitalist system. And this applies especially to the land which at the moment is the principal stumbling block in the GATT negotiations. Even in a non-capitalist world, food production would be dependent on so many different climatic, geographic and other factors – such as soil composition – to make it quite impossible to talk of a 'level playing field' regionally, let alone nationally or internationally.

In our opinion the land is our most precious asset and should never be privately owned.* There was a time
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Now even wars must be run at a profit ... or are they?

The National Audit Office has revealed that so far as Britain's contribution to the Gulf war goes, it was on the surface a financial success! Estimating that the adventure would cost more than £2 billion, the British government passed the hat round. The response from the Arab countries was generous: £582 million from Saudi Arabia, £600 million from Kuwait, and £278 million from the United Arab Emirates. Hong Kong and South Korea, for reasons best known to them, chipped in with £34 million. Of the European nations a token £15 million came from Belgium – after all, Brussels does a roaring business out of the politicians of the EEC year in year out. And, ironically, Germany contributed £274 million and Japan £192 million. The vanquished of World War Two were determined to keep out of what might have been a bloody war, and now being the two

most prosperous capitalist countries* could afford to make generous contributions to poor old Britain still dreaming of its 'glorious past' – and launching into costly, stupid adventures such as the Falklands with which the British taxpayer is now saddled for years to come, just as with Northern Ireland.

* Thanks to the victorious nations of World War Two decreeing that they should remain disarmed for fifty years – during which time they were able to build their domestic industries with the latest in technology at the time when the Cold War crusaders of the West were spending fortunes on weaponry that was apparently 'obsolete' by the time it was 'in use' and therefore had to be replaced by better and deadlier weaponry, and those of the Soviet Union were draining the economy to keep up with them. Britain is still caught in this Cold War mentality by insisting on the nuclear submarines and the multi-billion pound fighter aeroplanes, with which all their partners including Germany want to cut their losses and get out.

*The subject is dealt with in greater detail in *The Raven* number 17, 'Use of Land', £3 from Freedom Press.

So perhaps the Gulf war will be recorded in the annals as a financial victory for Britain, since the begging bowl produced £2.16 billion and the British military contribution to the 'liberation' of Kuwait and the massacre of the Iraqi soldiers and civilians cost *only* £1.50 billion. A gross profit for the balance sheet of £660 million.

No mean achievement for democracy and capitalism in these hard times! But of course everything is relative. For instance no one in this country will ever forget that traumatic Black Wednesday when the enemies of Britain combined to flood the money fronts with billions of sterling currency and in a day they were able to clean up a profit of £500 million,
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NO 'LEVEL PLAYING FIELD' UNDER CAPITALISM

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when the Labour Party talked of nationalising the land if returned to office. This has now been dropped from their manifestos, but what is happening under Tory governments plus the EEC if not some kind of nationalisation by stealth?

For a number of years the EEC plus the government provided a free-for-all so far as our cereal farmers were concerned. It all went to their heads. Whenever a farm was for sale they were there and the banks to back them. Those days are past. The subsidies are being slashed (and GATT will reduce them further, as well as increasing the competition) and a compulsory 15% set-aside on cereal producing land is being imposed. As everybody knows, farmers will make up for any reduction in income by pouring more fertilisers on the rest of their land and producing more tonnes to the hectare as well as more pollution of our rivers and underground water supplies. There is also money available to 'beautify' the countryside. And is due course the cereal mountains increase (in spite of the financial incentive with set-aside to reduce output), governments will intervene further and already there is talk that the 1½ million hectares being set aside now in this country could well be doubled in a very few years. Meanwhile, small farmers and market gardeners are leaving the land and the cereal barons are getting bigger. And as they get bigger the number of people either directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture and horticulture is decreasing at an alarming rate at the expense of our rural communities and industry. As the unemployed farm workers make their way to the towns to look for work, or the dole, the affluent city executives and their families establish their weekend retreats in the country.

For the French farmers and workers, who appear to be the only 'resisters' in the GATT negotiations, the problem is on a much larger scale than in Britain. But what we as anarchists look upon as the major problem: private property and capitalism, are questions which neither the British nor the French farmers are prepared to address.

We take the view than even in a capitalist world the land should belong to the people. That the land should be used for the benefit of all the people in the country

Wars at a profit?

(continued from page 1)

just like that! And since then though there have not been any more Black Wednesdays the money markets have been going up and down like yo-yos, and if you are speculating not on your next holiday but in millions, a fluctuation one way or the other of a couple of cents is certainly more profitable than investing in military adventures.

But just as it is said that all clouds have a silver lining, the opposite is also a possibility, and in the case of the Gulf war profits a fact which one cannot hide, even in this month of goodwill to all including our enemies, is that apart from having to deduct (according to the National Audit Office) all kinds of sums for replacing stores and equipment and other items of purely book-keeping adjustments (as one would expect from the NAO) it's right in the foot of the Christmas stocking that the bad news is beginning to smell. The report confirms that the Export Guarantee Department which financed British exports to Iraq (to help them to mount their war first against Iran and then against Kuwait) has, to quote *The Guardian* (2nd December), "left the taxpayer to pick up a £940 million bill which the Iraqis have refused to meet". Poetic justice with a vengeance!

and not abused as it is at present by a large majority of farmers, either to make ends meet or, in the case of the factory farmers, to maximise their profits.

As we said at the beginning, nature does not provide a 'level playing field' even on a few hectares, let alone in a country. Yet we need to use all our land for the benefit of all and use surpluses for the benefit of people in other countries who have suffered from natural disasters: floods, droughts, hurricanes... there is no end to the unpredictability of nature! And last but not least, we can trade our surpluses of quality produce with those countries where climate encourages the production of what are, for us, exotic fruits!

We have left to the last the most obvious inequality in exposing the hypocrisy of the capitalist 'level playing field'. When the Thatcher government won the elections of 1979 the first thing they did was to free the export of capital, which the patriotic industrialists did with gusto to the tune of billions of pounds to the countries of cheap labour. They still are and so some industries have disappeared altogether in this country and we now import the same goods from Taiwan, China, Korea, etc. And for the privilege of buying in the cheapest market we pay the difference to our millions of unemployed who are thrown onto the dole.

And just to show how ridiculous is all this GATT and 'level playing fields' of the the capitalist system is the fact that since the Black Wednesday, British goods *vis-a-vis* the French market are nearly 20% cheaper, not because the British producer has suddenly pulled up his socks and is 'working harder'! Not at all. Just that in the money market there are

too many pounds and less French francs! But the speculators, as we write, obviously feel they they have given the pound sterling enough of a bashing. Now they are picking on the franc. There are those who hope Mr Kohl and the mark will

What is the anarchist alternative?

A reader writes "Your headline 'No Capitalist Solution to the Recession' (14th November) is right, but are there any anarchist solutions? Reading *Freedom* for the past twelve months has not revealed them, to me at least.

You rightly say we won't get an alternative so long as people believe in the capitalist system. But a heck of a lot of people are beginning to seriously question it now. A recent Lou Harris poll in the USA showed 83% of the population regards their economic system as inherently unjust.

There will never be a better opportunity to press the point home here. But what is to replace it? The Labour Party does not want to get rid of capitalism - only to ameliorate its worst excesses. So there is little hope there, sadly.

Socialism operated efficiently and humanely is the only hope. We must inspire people with its alternative visions. The experience of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is behind us now. But operated properly there is no other realistic alternative.

Why don't you embrace this and get behind socialism for the sake of mankind."

P.A.T. Clarke
Ripon

come to the rescue. But this will only happen if their immediate interests coincide.

The post-GATT situation may well produce, on the surface, a 'level playing field'. What we anarchists know is that just below the surface are land-mines, booby traps, every device that the capitalist crooked mind can produce to prevent our enjoying a society of cooperation, equality and justice.

The Editors write: A number of readers approve of *Freedom's* negative approach to capitalism, but like our correspondent complain that we don't spell out what the anarchist alternative is. One of the most practical, down to earth anarchists, Errico Malatesta (1853-1932), writing at the time of the post-First World War upheavals in all the countries of Europe (and in particular in Italy where he had returned after years in exile, and where a revolutionary situation was developing), made the anarchist position clear: "We do not boast that we possess absolute truth; on the contrary, we believe that social truth is not a fixed quantity, good for all times, universally applicable; or determinable in advance, but that instead, once freedom has been secured, mankind will go forward discovering and acting gradually with the least number of upheavals and with a minimum of friction. Thus our solutions always leave the door open to different and, one hopes, better solutions."

This surely explains why most anarchists do not offer blueprints for a future anarchist society. But there are basic anarchist demands. Elsewhere in this issue we reproduce the seven basic objectives of *The Anarchist Programme*, Bologna 1920, which we think most anarchists would subscribe to today.

Their 'solutions' to the crises are always the same

All the political parties offer more or less the same solutions to the 'crisis' whether they are monetarists or Keynesians: production must become more 'competitive' in order to export, and to do this, as Thatcher was telling her Glasgow audience recently, we must revive the Victorian work ethic and "do an honest day's work for an honest day's pay" and then all will be well in the best of all worlds. What the old iron lady does not seem to realise is that each of the 24 nations of the OECD is also trying to become more 'competitive'. And this invariably involves introducing labour saving systems, robotisation,¹ and the very latest technology which increases the productive potential but dumps more workers on the scrap heap, whatever government spokesmen and the vested interests in high technology may say to the contrary.²

In addition all parties other than Thatcher's advocate a spending spree

1. A writer in the US government's journal *Economic Impact* (1983, number 41) gives the number of robots in use in 1979 at 2,000 but the point is made that the speed and force of change is such that by 1990 there could be as many as 200,000. And the *Sunday Times* financial editor last year quoted a leading Japanese industrial 'strategist', Hiroshi Takenchi, as saying that in 1982 there were already 20,000 industrial robots installed in Japan.

2. He (see note 1) added that the electronic revolution requires far less investment in plant, construction and transport than previous advances in steel, chemicals

and consumer goods. "Consequently the labour saving effects of electronic production are so great that they will decrease employment ultimately". Further evidence is provided by a report in early 1980 by the New South Wales Institute of Technology (quoted by a reader in *The Guardian*, 15th October 1982) which estimated that 244,000 jobs had been lost to computers in Australia. It revealed that while the computer industry directly and indirectly created 77,000 jobs the net loss of employment opportunities was about 150,000 to 160,000 for the period up to 1980.

dealers, but are top level operations between heads of government).³

The reasons for the crisis are so obvious that the experts cannot recognise them. The crisis has been with us for more than twenty years: technological development and capital investment in all branches of industry in the Third World (where labour is still cheap and obedient) have resulted in industrial capacity worldwide outstripping 'demand'. Greed is the Deadly Sin which afflicts capitalism today. With an ever-growing number of them, an insatiable appetite for La Dolce Vita and all that the technological age can provide, they have forgotten the first law of capitalism: that demand must always exceed supply. And differentials (another form of greed) are the Deadly Sin that has made a mockery of the labour movement's historic commitment to solidarity and equality and therefore to its political and economic credibility as an alternative system.

3. Between 1960 and 1976, cumulative military spending in the world totalled 3,325 billion US dollars (compared to, for example, cumulative economic aid to the less developed over the same period of 162 billion dollars). Nigel Harris in *Of Bread and Guns* (Penguin Books, 1983).

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

Europe and the EEC

part 2

Peter Marshall in his recent book *Demanding the Impossible* traces anarchism as a theme back as far as Taoism and whilst one can argue that it only became conscious of itself in the 19th century there can be little doubt that the themes we espouse answer and speak to the fundamental needs, desires and aspirations of wo/mankind. Our almost dogmatic non-dogmatism has allowed us, even if we have not always succeeded, to adapt to new eras when ideological strait-jackets have ensured that other political movements, such as Marxism, whilst dominating one or two chapters of the history books will at best appear only as interesting footnotes as time passes them by.

In the first section I have tried to draw the outline of a critique of the EEC as it stands today. But as Dylan could still be singing today, the times they are a-changing, and even only a month down the road it already requires updating. The people of Europe, not just the EEC, are making it clear that they are tired of the way things are and are not happy with the plans the politicians have laid down for them. They are doing the unthinkable tearing down Iron Curtains, starting civil wars (not all of it is to be welcomed) and not behaving on referendum days. Jonathan Fenby in *The Guardian* (25th September 1992) said of France: "The real concern [for the establishment] is that the country appears to be moving into a post-political age which its leaders and institutions cannot handle – and that their failure to do so will produce a rolling series of political and social dislocations at the heart of the European Community." His whole article was thought-provoking for anarchists, particularly as his analysis speaks not only to the French situation but also to that of Europe as a whole.

As we move towards the next century Europe finds itself scrabbling in the dark,

seeking a new way forward more certain of what it doesn't want than what it does. Can we offer it a vision, I asked. The answer is certainly yes.

Our vision of freedom is one which when explained is of universal appeal, offering a saner future for humanity and a clear vision of social justice. No one would reject it, but many would consider it unrealisable. Yet it answers the fears and hopes of our times so completely that this situation seems strange. Let me just take one example.

Colin Ward, who has and is doing so much to spread the word, in his *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow* brought Kropotkin's vision into the 20th century. He quotes Goodman in his introduction:

"The ways that Kropotkin suggested, how men can at once begin to live better, are still the ways; the popular misconceptions of the relations of machinery and social planning. Recently studying the modern facts and the modern authors, I wrote a little book [*Communitas*] on a related subject; there is not one important proposition in my book that is not in *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, often in the same words."

Things haven't changed and all those who have done so much to bring the ideas into the 20th century (Ward, Bookchin, Mumford, Goodman, Chomsky, etc.) in their own fields still speak directly to the people of Europe today. So why are we still in the wilderness?

I've said no-one would reject our ideas, but many would consider them unrealisable. But the problem lies largely in my enforced usage of the conditional. The world is not aware of us, they do not know we are here. Occasionally we are spoken of in this country in relation to environmentalism, the travellers, the poll tax, but our overall vision has not been heard. I agree fully with those who say we need to relate our ideas to peoples' everyday experiences, but the relationship must be two way and we need to raise an awareness of the visionary anchor that unites these issues. How?

Well first we must continue the process of self awareness which (historically) has begun so recently. We must reach out to our comrades elsewhere, thus giving succour to the debate which feeds the evolution of our vision. All over Europe, all over the world, anarchists must seek closer contact with each other. This could lead to a rejuvenated federation, a new kind of International, debating the new issues and seeking to set our own agenda. As we move into the next century we should be marching for freedom and propagating our own ideas, setting out our own vision and not reacting to those of others.

I am aware that the above may read to many as empty rhetoric. I hope it doesn't. If we plan now and if we begin the debate now, in the year 2000 (eight years away) we could see festivals, conferences and events promoting a new vision being co-ordinated by a rejuvenated, organised movement. What do you think?

Neil Birrell

AN ANARCHIST PROGRAMME

Since all the present ills of society have their origin in the struggle between men, in the seeking after well-being through one's own efforts and for oneself and against everybody, we want to make amends, replacing hatred by love, competition by solidarity, the individual search for personal well-being by the fraternal co-operation for the well-being of all, oppression and imposition by liberty, the religious and pseudo-scientific lie by truth, therefore:

1. Abolition of private property in land, in raw materials and the instruments of labour, so that no one shall have the means of living by the exploitation of the labour of others, and that everybody, being assured of the means to produce and to live, shall be truly independent and in a position to unite freely among themselves for a common objective and according to their personal sympathies.

2. Abolition of government and of every power which makes the law and imposes it on others: therefore abolition of monarchies, republics, parliaments, armies, police forces, magistratures and any institution whatsoever endowed with coercive powers.

[An extract from *Il Programma Anarchico*, Bologna, 1920. The full text can be read in *Malatesta - Life and Ideas* (pages 182-198), Freedom Press, 312 pages, ISBN 0 900384 15 8, 3rd edition, £4]

3. Organisation of social life by means of free association and federations of producers and consumers, created and modified according to the wishes of their members, guided by science and experience and free from any kind of imposition which does not spring from natural needs, to which everyone, convinced by a feeling of overriding necessity, voluntarily submits.

4. The means of life, for development and well-being, will be guaranteed to children and all who are prevented from providing for themselves.

5. War on religions and all lies, even if they shelter under the cloak of science. Scientific instruction for all to advanced level.

6. War on rivalries and patriotic prejudices. Abolition of frontiers; brotherhood among all peoples.

7. Reconstruction of the family, as will emerge from the practice of love, freed from every legal tie, from every economic and physical oppression, from every religious prejudice.

National Anti-Asylum Bill Demonstration

Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square, Saturday 21st November

The demo was called by the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA), and supported by a variety of different groups. Although it would probably be true to say that the various political and anti-racist groups present at the demo would analyse racism in slightly different ways, they would all agree at least that the Asylum Bill, because it is so racist, needs to be vigorously opposed. Not that present immigration legislation is not already racist, of course. We need to oppose all immigration laws, but we are tackling the forthcoming Bill because it is forthcoming – if we can stop this then maybe we can do something about the rest of it. On top of this, the Bill does seem to be significantly more racist than previous legislation.

The turnout was disappointingly low. Perhaps it was the rain, perhaps it was that many people had already been on too many demonstrations recently. I suspect that, though these factors contributed, there are deeper reasons. The issue has not (yet) 'captured the popular imagination', 'struck a chord', 'touched a raw nerve' or however you want to put it. There seems a feeling abroad that the government's bureaucratic response to Bosnian refugees is morally wrong. Clearly this moral outrage is not enough. What seems

to be needed is the leap in strategy and perception from treating issues such as immigration and 'race' in moral terms to understanding them in terms of our class interests. Of course much of the anti-Asylum Bill propaganda (from the ARA, Anti-Nazi League, etc.) is moralistic. But rather than blame it for the present lack of active support for the struggle against racism, we might see it a symptomatic.

Compare the ARA demo with those that followed the government's announcement of pit closures. Sure this expression of outrage had a very strong 'moral' (and nationalistic) element. But it wouldn't have happened on such a large scale had not people also made certain links – the 'knock-on effect' in job losses, the pit closures as systematic of the imperative to put 'political' or 'economic' interests – the interests of money – before that of 'ordinary working people', the 'closeness' of the redundancies ('who's next?'). The plight of the miners seems to symbolise, in concrete terms, the full range of industrial/social/economic dilemmas or potential struggles.

The fact that the popular support for the miners has not more fully embraced an

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— HISTORY WORKSHOP —

Anarcho-Geriatria?

It was like an old boys reunion in the 'Propaganda by Deed' strand of this year's History Workshop in Newcastle. One comrade told me he hadn't fancied being wheeled out to give his memoirs as an ageing veteran, but being a veteran appeal to my vanity.

Laurens Otter was the convenor of this alternative anarchist strand in which contributors gave papers based on their own personal experience rather than academic research. Most of the contributors belonged to the direct action tradition of the 1960s. Many had links with the peace movement. Others, like Len Stableton and Hilda Gibson, traced their political origins and influences back to 'The Brotherhood Church', the Whiteways Colony and Tolstoi.

In his own paper Laurens Otter developed the 'mainstream' pacifist stream, drawing on the influences of anarcho-pacifists such as Tolstoi, Thoreau and Ammon Hennacy. He traced the impact of Gandhian mass movements on Western pacifism, and illustrated the importance of what he called 'radical pacifism' to much anarchist activity in the 1950s and '60s.

In his paper, Ernest Rodker dealt with the issue of community based politics. In 1960 he had worked with Danilo Dolci in Sicily and had returned to England in the early '60s to join the newly formed Committee of 100. Ernest was an activist on the Committee, and he is perceptive enough to realise that most of the worthwhile political and social movements which flowered later came out of the tradition of direct action which the Committee of 100 began. In most of these movements Mr Rodker was active, from the Vietnam protests, through the student campaigns of 1968, and the anti-apartheid movement, on to the squatters occupations, ultimately to end up in grassroots struggles in London, where he lives. A 'libertarian socialist'

doing his best to get better public transport, education, planning and redevelopment locally. A non-sectarian approach, ignoring elected power and party politicising, with its finger on the pulse of what matters for most people.

Martin Gilbert, another contributor, did his political apprenticeship in the peace movement, this time in the Youth Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Later he was connected with the old Syndicalist Workers' Federation. While in the USA he had been involved in opposition to the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement and the student campaigns. His was also a non-sectarian approach, arguing that in order to put ideas into action one had to work with others to create an emotional base to work in. Such community actions he calls 'enclaves of civility'.

Working together?

The get-together assembly (plenum) which occurred on Saturday evening was anything but civil. It was attended by several factions from the anarchist movement, and it was proposed that there be co-operation between us anarchists on the pit closures threat. Mr Nicolas Heath from the Anarchist Communist Federation rejected these overtures of solidarity from the Hull Syndicalists. He argued that as a 'class struggle anarchist' he could not bring himself to work with pacifists, individualists and others who had formed the anarchist movement in the 'good old days' when it had a significant following. He was supported in this sectarian approach by Mr Philip Ruff, one-time member of the Direct Action Movement and the now defunct Anarchy Collective who argued that

he had no formula for the future of anarchism. 'Whither anarchism' was not something he pretended was within his grasp, and all calls for collaboration were either naive or deceitful in so far as co-operation between different political tendencies within anarchism was really a cover for recruitment and poaching members. If that be so, and it may be so, it is a measure of our pettiness and the hole-in-the-corner nature of the British left. We should work within our own historical traditions in a narrow, closed and lonely endeavour, according to Mr Ruff. Of course, Mr Ruff is right to warn of the futility of minority groups playing ring-a-ring-a-roses with each other, but one would have thought some co-ordination between libertarians would be possible over something like pit closures.

Other speakers on the 'propaganda by deed' strand included Georgina Smith, one of the Greenham Common women. She gave a descriptive account of the struggle, giving historical details and explaining some of the legal aspects. Her point about the use of radio waves by the authorities was not well received by some of us. On reflection we may have been overly critical on this point. These are documented indications published in the book *Electromagnetic Man* (1989) by Cyril Smith and Simon Best which suggest that the Greenham women may have been targeted by electronic signals by the MoD. The writers claim: "... the American military and police have certain frequency weapons that have been used to control crowds as well as individuals". Perhaps we ought to keep an open mind on this matter.

Brian Bamford and Guy Cheverton were contributors who came out of the

anarcho-syndicalist tradition. Bamford was a member of the North West Committee of 100, but his contribution concentrated on his own involvement in the apprentice strikes in engineering in the 1960s and on his experience of undercover activities in Spain during the same decade. Guy Cheverton described his work on the Hull Trades Council and his commitment to the syndicalist cause. Essentially a practical approach to the industrial struggle, be it the miners, the local dockers or the international labour movement. Mr Cheverton is editor of the *Syndicalist Bulletin* published in Hull, and has links with the SAC in Sweden and the syndicalist CGT in Spain. These international connections seem to have helped give Hull Trades Council an international aspect, and Peter Turner told me Hull has one of the best organised trades councils in the country.

Other speakers billed to contribute were Ray Challinor on 'The Classical Anarchist Tradition' and John Eden on 'Victor Serge - the Incomparable Witness'. The Ukrainian trade unionist promised did not turn up owing to a visa problems, it seems.

Freedom reporter

CULTURE: the inculcation of hate

Like so many words, culture can mean many things to many people. Thus, in my dictionary it variously defined as 'cultivated', 'well educated', or 'a type of civilisation'. It is a word which might have been tailor-made for politicians to fool the public with.

Take Enoch Powell, for instance. Years ago, that cultured worthy forecast rivers of blood flowing in the streets as a result of the mass immigration of West Indians, saying that he was concerned about "distinctive differences of colour, culture, language and norms of behaviour" which would mean that their assimilation "would be slower than would suffice to absorb Poles, Huguenots or Jews". But since West Indians share the same language and religion and, if you like, culture, or norms of behaviour, it is pretty obvious that Enoch was really worried about their pigmentation. And having failed to grab the limelight on that dubious platform, Enoch high-tailed it to Northern Ireland to represent people in a province where the inhabitants, despite having all those ingredients of culture in common, murder one another with monotonous regularity!

Now it is in situations like Northern Ireland that we can find the clue to the actual meaning of 'culture' in political terms.

For most practical purposes, culture is a form of behaviour which is determined by the nation-state in which a population finds itself, and, since nation-states find it necessary to have the support of religious leaders, that culture will have a religious component which does not seriously interfere with their policies and practices. If culture had meant anything else to the 'cultured' Germans of the 1930s, Hitler could not have become Fuhrer. 'I want you to turn a blind eye to this' say the dictators. 'What's in it for us, then?' say the religious leaders, and we all know what is in it for them - privileges in the form of rates relief, media advantages, educational favours, etc.

In countries where governments lose control of their populations, e.g. Bosnia and Northern Ireland, religious leaders take a more political attitude. Ian Paisley, fearing that his power could be taken away from him by the incorporation of the 'six counties' into the Republic of Ireland, far from pleading for the fighting to stop, whips his Protestants into a frenzy of hate, to the delight of the British government. That is what culture really means, when politicians use the word. On the other side of the wire, the Roman Catholic hierarchy, while condemning the IRA excesses, fall short of threatening to excommunicate their terrorist communicants because the common aim of the Eire government and the Roman Catholic leaders is to have the six counties back in the fold, thus

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Asylum Bill Demo

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'interest' rather than a 'moral' approach might be the reason that it has not yet moved on and developed its initial 'successes' against the government. As soon as the government made concessions to 'fairness' (the enquiry), the protests began to die down. Moving on would of course mean broadening the issue. It is not Winston Churchill with his sandwiches for Roy Lynk, and other tokenistic gestures, that will help effect positive change, but action in spheres that link up, directly or otherwise, with that of mining. Hence potential successful strikes in the tubes and trains and among public sector workers will have more influence on the government's actions than yet another peaceful march through the side streets of the capital.

There is a further point. None of us were surprised, of course, that the Tory MPs who initially opposed the pit closures sided with the government once the concession to fairness had been made. It is not that these people are simply unreliable bastards. The very fact that the 'national outrage' against the pit closures could unite left and right meant that its predominant demands were very limited. (Though that is no reason why people like us should not take part; we do so in the hope that the demands change through the collective protest itself, of course.)

For these kinds of reasons, I would endorse the actions of the 'anarchists and left wing extremists' who pelted the German Chancellor and President at the recent Berlin anti-racist rally. Once again, to gain the support of these figures, the official demands of the rally must have been merely symbolic or centred around the lowest common denominator. The demonstrators branded Kohl a hypocrite. Another way of putting it would be to say that Kohl and his government cannot be part of the solution to racism and fascism because they are part of the problem. Having Kohl speaking at an anti-racist demo in Berlin would be like having Kenneth Baker speaking at our anti-Asylum Bill demo in London. Both have blamed immigrants for the rise in fascism, and have done exactly what the fascists themselves are trying to do - helped construct an 'immigrant problem', colluded with the racism of their electorate, and framed the laws to keep immigrants out.

Dorset Diary

According to a recent report Bournemouth is ranked among the 'Top Ten' towns hit by the recession in Britain, with Poole coming 18th out of the 294 towns included in the survey. Unemployment in Bournemouth has soared by 168% in a little over two years, whilst Poole has seen a 215% rise. Wareham and Swanage have seen a rise of 265%, putting them in 44th position.

All this came before the announcement of the 1,400 job losses at the naval base in Portland, which has recently been in the news, and some 600 voluntary redundancies currently being sought in harbour related employment in Poole.

Not everyone is doing so badly though. The Frizzell family have just made a cool £42.8 million after selling the Frizzell Insurance firm to an American group in a deal worth £107 million. This shoves the family into the list of 'The 200 richest people in Britain League' at number 181. Not such good news for their employees though, whose jobs are now in question after Frizzell failed to ensure that they were guaranteed in the deal (obviously a minor detail not considered to be important).

I can understand that there will perhaps not be too much sympathy for we southerners for two reasons. Firstly, during the 'Lawson Boom' (the period now being looked back upon with the rosy specs when unemployment was still at around 1,500,000 and people were simply spending money they didn't have) we seemingly got the best of what little there was around. And secondly because jobs lost in the military and service industries are not as politically correct as those lost in the more traditional industrial areas of the economy.

I feel, however, that this reaction is

Since popular fronts are popular (i.e. able to appeal to all sides) typically because their aims are so moderate or limited, we should not be backward in coming forward in supporting moves to define more radical aims and strategies. Unity at any cost is not only desperate but counter-productive.

Johnny Yen

somewhat superficial. Certainly no sympathy for the welter of Estate Agents and 'Financial Consultants' who jumped on the bandwagon and now are having their fingers burnt. They'll just have to sell the Porsche and make do with two holidays instead of three next year. And thank God the sickening conversations of 'How much has your place increased in value since last week?' have dried up. But you know it's not just a middle class paradise down here. I worked in a local secondary school throughout the '80s where social deprivation, though hidden from the tourists, was more than apparent, job expectations were low and many went off to the local Army Recruitment Office as a last hope. Local manufacturing firms like De Vilbis, Revlon and Max Factor were laying off rather than taking on.

And is mining more politically correct than the army? Well, perhaps yes. But as anarchists we have a wider vision which doesn't seek to send people down dark holes to ruin their lungs and die early. We care about people, we care about the environment and we care about communities.

It's this last point which I think brings us closer to the solution. It's not so much the fact that the mines, the naval training centres and so on are closing but rather it's the devastation of communities which leads to a breakdown in the social cohesion which will of course be fundamental in any anarchic equation. Nor are we separated by the north/south divide. I remember during the 1980s miners' strike how we here in Dorset 'paired' with a mine in Wales. We went and saw at first hand not only their union but their community was fighting for its survival.

At the bottom line employment doesn't matter. Communities and people do, and work (not employment) is vital to both. This is not the place to go further into the question but if you're interested do go and read (or, like me, read again) Freedom Press's excellent publication *Why Work?* And if you haven't the time to read the whole thing just read Denis Pym's thought-provoking article 'The Other Economy as a Social System'.

Neil Birrell

The Human Way

Culture: The Human Way

by Harold B. Barclay

Western Publishers, 1986*

The idea of a fixed human nature is one of the great conservative forces in society. In Britain it was trotted out by the 'new' Conservatism as a justification for an ethic of possessive individualism. Belief in its basis is a characteristic of Essexpersons from all over the country. The jackbooted Stalinist wing of the feminist movement has used it as a justification for ideas of censorship that would remove one of the few areas of freedom to have enlarged in the last thirty years. And sadly it has recently been appearing in the anarchist press in the guise of essays on the dubious virtues of sociobiology. In modern form this is expressed not as original sin but as the concept of genetic determinism – the idea that human behaviour can be reduced to the action of a cluster of immutable but as yet unlocated genes. As you can't do anything about 'human nature' the argument implies, you had better accept the world as it is. More or less anyway. It is a revival of discredited instinct theory in modern dress and in its popular manifestations is a form of word magic that explains nothing. In its name we build more prisons, transfer public wealth from the poor to the rich, destroy such welfare provision as was developed in the post-war world and fight in prolonged rearguard battle against sexual, economic and (in the Neanderthal areas) racial egalitarianism. What a boon to Thatcherism sociobiology was! Interesting too that at a time when heavy cuts were being made in higher education, money for sociobiology, like military budgets, could always be found.

*Available from Freedom Bookshop at £4.95, plus 49p postage inland, 98p overseas.

All of this makes it fortunate that Harold Barclay's excellent introductory book is available at reasonable price to readers of *Freedom* and *The Raven*. Barclay's major premise is that culture, not biology, is the basis of any explanation of human behaviour. It is the unifying concept in anthropology, the best explanation for the enormous range of possible behaviour that has been developed. Barclay defines this somewhat slippery concept as ideas in people's heads that are learned, devised and shared. He notes that although often a conservative force (ask any South African or American black) it is nevertheless the main agent of change in human societies.

This is the essential nature of human beings. Not only are they capable of learning but they are dependent on learning to a greater degree than the rest of the animal kingdom. This is something that the sociobiologists and their facile analogies with stickleback courting rituals tend to ignore. It cannot be emphasised too much that culturally acquired behaviour may limit the rate of change but it also makes change possible. There is no way to change our genes and it is this that has made sociobiology so attractive to the Thatcherites of all political parties and none. Genetic determinism would remove our visions of utopia, and, as Oscar Wilde noted, a map of the world that does not contain Utopia is not worth having.

Anthropology and ethnography are important, in part because they give us data on the diversity of human behaviour, on the plasticity of so-called human nature. Harold Barclay contends that although there are the 'universals' – all human beings are social for example, the myriad expressions of human characteristics, altruism for example, or aggression, preclude us from adopting a

biological explanation. Genetics may be the foundation stone (something of a tautology as Nic Walter is fond of pointing out) but it is historically derived and learned ideas – culture in other words – that:

"... creates the complex edifice that allows us to understand human behaviour around the globe. We require the concept of culture to explain how altruism (or aggression or jealousy) can be expressed in such a multitude of forms."

I have picked one of my own hobby-horses as a basis for discussing this book, but its content is far wider than this would suggest. It deals with culture as a concept, clears away the perennial confusions between culture, nation, society and race, looks at some of the major theories of cultural dynamics. In the process Barclay brings in the anarchist examples of postal and international railway systems as examples of non-centralised non-coercive authority to supplement a succinct discussion of stateless societies.

The basis of anarchism is cooperation, of course, and Professor Barclay is concerned to emphasise just how basic this is to human existence. Thus he downplays the competitive rivalry that latterday Hobbesians are so keen to emphasise. For example:

"... competition is one human characteristic. It can be encouraged and made into a central feature of

human behaviour or it can be downplayed so that it is hardly recognisable ... competition is no more important, certainly no more natural than is cooperation or conflict. Indeed cooperation and conflict seem to be universal features of human society and cooperation is an essential ingredient to the survival of any society. One cannot say the same of competition."

To say that this excellent book was originally intended for introductory anthropology courses is to praise it with faint damns. Anyone interested in ideas, anyone interested in the nature of human beings will find this book intriguing and readable. Not only is it more accessible than most books of its kind; it is clearly written, properly contentious in the right places, and in general a first class antidote to the received ideas about human nature that have become so prevalent in the last 25 years. It lays a lot of myths.

For any newcomer to the study of human beings this is a first class introduction. People with some background in anthropology will find it a good refresher course that is not afraid to raise problems and issues. For anarchists in general, looking for a realistic view of humanity to provide a basis for their ethical beliefs, this is the best book of its kind presently available.

John Pilgrim

*Background to Petra Kelly's battle to reform the deformed human mind and her assumed death by suicide: A RECONSTRUCTION

Bommi Baumann wrote in 1967 that even peaceful life in the first German commune (Kommune I) was made impossible by police harassment. That same year, in a demonstration against the presence of the

Shah of Iran in West Berlin, a student was mortally wounded by a policeman.

In 1969, protest against the presence of the USA's Nixon in West Berlin resulted in a bomb explosion in his motorcade; the bomb had been supplied by the West German security police.

In 1970 the Red Army Faction came into being. In 1974, Ulriche Meinhof was sentenced to eight years in prison. On 9th May 1976, she was found hanged in her cell. *The police described her death as suicide*. Subsequent coroner's testimony suggested that she had been raped and then strangled before being hanged.

In 1977 the former officer in Hitler's SS, H.M. Schleyer, head of the German Industry Association, was found dead in the boot of a car (he was also a director of Daimler-Benz).

And so it went on with intensifying security police activity. Running concurrently was the early rising of the growing counter cultural green consciousness. In 1972 Petra Kelly founded the party Die Grünen, describing it as "the anti-party party", rejecting conventional politics. Disaffected General, and equally committed, Gert Bastian was her companion.

Petra Kelly's advocacy of a non-violent transformation of society found resonance not only in flexible West German minds but also in the green-minded here and in the West generally. She became Speaker in the West German Bundestag in 1980 until 1982, when she shared an Alternative Nobel Prize. In 1983 she wrote in *Resurgence*: "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality". But meanwhile, what she called "the deformed human mind" has remained the intractable enemy.

In October 1992 Petra Kelly was found dead dressed in her track suit in bed. Gert Bastian was found dead in the hallway. *The police described the deaths as suicide*.

Rodney Aitchtey

*In 1979 John Calder published the translation of Bommi Baumann's *Terror or Love? The Personal Account of a West German Urban Guerilla*, originally published in West Germany in 1975 and confiscated. A statement by Heinrich Böll, written in 1976, opens the book and it is closed with one by Daniel Cohn-Bendit. Available from Freedom Bookshop, £4.95 (post free).

CULTURE

(continued from page 4)

increasing the power of both institutions. With Bosnia up for grabs, the three religious communities involved are at each other's throats. Under Tito, the Muslims, Roman Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs were forced to live together in the same towns in a somewhat strained relationship – like the Northern Irish, they lived in different ghettos together. With the destabilisation of Yugoslavia, that precarious peace has been shattered. A Bosnian woman refugee, brought over by the Christian ALERT rescue agency (why don't they get Northern Ireland sorted out before meddling in Bosnia?) told a *Guardian* reporter that she came from a town where the three religions were equally represented, and added: "It worked very well. But the war made people take sides" – a case of putting carts before horses since they had been made to take sides by their respective religious leaders long before the war started. Curiously, in all the reports on Bosnia, in the newspapers and on television, we hear not a word about those religious leaders that bear half the responsibility for the fighting; how can they disappear like that? No doubt whatsoever, these cultured priests and imams will resurface when the situation resolves itself, to carry on their despicable trade of setting people against one another.

The religions involved in the Bosnian and Northern Ireland tragedies have nothing in common with personal feelings about the origin of the universe or what are sometimes called 'spiritual' feelings. Religions like Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam are to do with power. And if religious leaders can sign treaties with Hitlers, they can sign treaties with the Devil himself. So much for culture.

EFC

The Secret Agent

a BBC2 production after Joseph Conrad

This was a three-part television production adapted from a novel by Joseph Conrad. It is of interest here because its plot is based on central characters as revolutionaries, often called 'anarchists'. Briefly, a shabby character, Verloc, who has been playing a number of ambiguous roles as revolutionary, police informer and spy is pressurised by a smooth official at the 'Imperial' (i.e. Russian) embassy into getting up an 'outrage' in order to provoke a clampdown. Unable to obtain effective help amongst his contacts, he obtains a bomb and his 'simple' brother-in-law is killed trying to lay it at Greenwich Observatory, a symbol of science and therefore a 'ferociously imbecilic' target. He is pursued by The Heat, a pun which would at the time have been meaningless, a dogged inspector wearing a remarkable bowler hat in the shape of a police helmet who is determined to pin the blame on Michaelis, a prominent intellectual anarchist, presumably based on Kropotkin, in the long tradition of 'round up the usual suspects'. The establishment suavely covers things up. There are a couple more tragic deaths.

So, any review has a number of problems: does it address the television production in terms of itself, in terms of its adaptation of a novel or in terms of its treatment of a topic and what it means to us. Well, on the first point, it was well made and acted. David Suchet was a fine seedy pornographer, a contrast to his previous period role as bustling, self-confident Hercule Poirot. Cheryl Campbell was Winnie, his wife, beginning as patient, grateful for any kindness, not asking about things which were not her business, and her turn to shocked rage when she learns about

her brother. The rest of the cast were equally good, especially the smoothly hypocritical Russian diplomat. As usual with such productions, the sets were lavish, from the nicotine-brown drizzle of Soho streets to the splendour of society balls and the grandeur of the embassy. They couldn't resist the Victorian train scenes, all hissing steam. Oh, David Suchet isn't fat enough.

As an adaptation of the book, it couldn't win. Three hours of television had to be relatively superficial, finely produced as it was. It is a cliché to remark that Conrad could outwrite most native English speakers, despite only learning it as an adult. All I can say is, if you haven't read it already, get down to your local library, and while you're about it, read *Under Western Eyes*, another study of emigré politics, and *Nostramo* about a South American revolutionary. If you have read them, go and do it again.

Is it a fair treatment of anarchism? Yes and no. It is a fair treatment of a certain aspect, the clichéd one, the self-deluding, self-referential outsiders. There are several excellent character types here: the arrogant intellectual contemptuous of the unseeing masses' ability to understand, the violence-obsessed fanatic, and so on. (A good modern treatment with a similar theme is *The Good Terrorist* by Doris Lessing.) We have all met them in our little sub-society. What it misses is that broader involvement. You would never guess from this that there was a wide anarchist and syndicalist movement. You would barely guess that there was an industrial working class. Which doesn't alter the fact that it is a fine book and an entertaining television series.

David Peers

Feminism and Power

In his article in *Freedom* (28th November), Mack the Knife criticised feminism for being about gaining women access to power in society. This criticism illustrates a problem for those who believe in ending the oppression of women without having a wider agenda, for how can one oppose their subjugation and yet allow some to then become powerful? Those who do use feminism as 'careerism' and to justify privilege and power acknowledge one form of oppression (against women) whilst ignoring the other forms prevalent alongside it (against children, those who work, non-whites, the poor, etc.).

Mack regards feminism thus as being "all about blatant careerism" which I see is a problem of some feminism to face but as such is a generalisation and it is important first, I feel, to note feminism is no single set of ideals and goals. The feminist movement was clearly a vital part of the radicalism which came into life in the 1960s and confronted an aspect of long accepted authoritarian behaviour, standing up for women's rights and giving them a voice in male dominated society. It enabled women to challenge domination by men, their stifling role in the home, low wages, violence against them, and so on. One only has to view how 'traditionally' a woman's identity was expected to be subsumed by men's, for example as Miss Sue Brown once married became formally Mrs George Green, her identity swallowed up by her husband's. She went from being noted as single and 'available' (miss) to being the wife of so-and-so (Mrs His Name). When engaged she wears a ring but the man does not. Everything about this process expresses ownership and a subservient position to the man.

Women were expected as the norm to serve their husbands, obey their commands and be given money from his wages as he saw fit (an attitude often despised in the boss at work but ignored by him at home) no matter what work she had done for

him, the family and the home. She was expected to fuck him when he wanted, cook for him and accept his anger. Sadly these issues cannot only be talked about in the past tense as they are still prevalent and having to be confronted. But the formation of women's groups, support for those suffering domestic violence and rape, sexual awareness of themselves, raising awareness in both females and males about oppression of women, etc., have been vital advances gained by feminism.

But the problem Mack pointed out is crucial, for some who call themselves feminists are seeking an end to one form of oppression then demand an equal chance to gain oppressive positions in society. What is the injustice; the domination of women by men or domination of anyone by anyone? If it is unjust for a woman to be subjugated by a man does this value not extend to subjugation in any form? Sadly what has happened is that feminism is also used by some to demand access to the hierarchy and power, for a slice of the pie. The overall system of power is still in place and we are supposed to believe there is more equality because women are now a greater part of it. If power is wrong then it matters not who wields it. Personal gain by some of those previously excluded hardly counts as equality when the system is still authoritarian, exploitative and based on greed.

To use an analogy to illustrate these thoughts; if a plantation owner decided to stop beating the enslaved and also allow a few to become masters and help run the plantation, would this be just? Would it be equality if every person enslaved had a chance to try and become one of the few who became masters? Equality within a corrupt framework is not equality at all.

And those who gain access to power invariably believe in the ideology of power and will not seek to undermine its basis. Thus women who become part of the hierarchy act with little variation from

men in similar positions, as can be seen with the likes of Thatcher or Jeanne Kirkpatrick (a member of Reagan's brutal regime) or the Queen. They are operators of power and greed, values which do not change because of the gender of beneficiaries.

The North American feminist Bell Hooks made a salient point in an edition of *Z Magazine* when she asked if males alone were the victims of male violence would feminists do nothing? What she asked was whether they were seeking an end to male violence as it is wrong, or only to be a limited ending of it with regards to a selective group of victims. She illustrated the contradiction found within some feminist belief which is limited in its goals and seeks to end male dominance but not the wider problem of privilege and authoritarianism of which patriarchy is a part.

To use an analogy, an extreme one but which well illustrates the dilemma, if we lived in Nazi Germany would it be legitimate in protesting against Hitler's attitude to women? Should anyone demand equal rights for them within this foul and deadly regime? We would not want to see people demonstrating for women's rights to gas inmates of death camps or carry out midnight raids for the Gestapo and so would not support calls for equality in such a society. It wouldn't matter if as a rule the mass murderers excluded women from their ranks, the issue would be how to stop such actions from being carried out at all.

The same issue faces us in our society for whilst it is not like Nazi Germany elements are destroying the environment, selling arms to brutal regimes, operating secret services, restricting freedom to speak and travel, enriching a few whilst depriving many of basic needs, and so on. Women should not be allowed to join in perpetuating such injustices for the simple reason that no one should! Is it alright for Madonna to be so rich, while so many in the USA have no health care, because she is a woman? Or for the Queen to be excused her vast wealth and numerous homes and getting massive state

handouts? And what of Thatcher?

The problem that faces us is power, of which patriarchy and male domination are only a part. If we don't want bosses then it matters not if they are male or female and it is not sexist or 'anti-women' to object to the latter. It obfuscates the problems faced in seeking the liberation of women for it to be separated from the whole anti-power agenda. When Christopher Hitchens said Hilary Clinton was of the greedy lawyer class and benefiting from the S&L and BCCI scandals he was not 'anti-women' or 'women-bashing' but right. It is an obscuring tactic of those who believe in privilege and greed to reduce such relevant criticisms to cries of sexism. Those who defend the likes of Clinton are defending the US political-economic system which takes from the poor to ensure the wealth of the few, ignores poverty and punishes the poor, is inherently exploitative and based on inequality.

We must end the hostile way we live and this means getting rid of the ideologies of power and greed. Women must not be treated with scorn and violence, as items to own, as no-one should be so treated. Feminism can be a major element in this anti-power struggle but its success will surely be undermined if it becomes used to justify gain rather than struggling for fundamental change to the way we live. To conclude, as the libertarian and compassionate philosopher Erich Fromm wrote: "... women's liberation is of enormous significance because it is a threat to the principle of power on which contemporary society ... lives - that is if the women clearly mean by liberation that they do not want to share the men's power over other groups ... If the movement ... can identify its own role and function as representative of 'anti-power', women will have a decisive influence in the battle for a new society".*

Ian Borrows

*Erich Fromm, *To have or to be*, London, Abacus, 1976, page 188.

Sociology as Subversion

The natural affinity between anarchism and sociology was far more evident in the 1960s than in the 1990s, one reason for the timely appearance of *The Raven* number 19 'On Sociology', edited by John Pilgrim. The sociological imagination is fortunately not confined to sociologists (who often lack it to a disconcerting degree) and flourished in anarchist circles at least for that decade when *Anarchy* was edited by Colin Ward, who has it in spades. The affinity springs from the defining principle shared by anarchists and sociologists to practice subversion as a stock-in-trade. Even the most conservative sociologist, and there are plenty, is intellectually more subversive than many a commonsensical radical, because sociologists have to address jointly contrived and provisional nature of existing social arrangements, whether or not the term 'society' is used to summarise them. This is presumably the point of Stan Cohen's argument that "the political philosophy most consistent with sociology is anarchism". Hence sociology as we know it was (along with anarchism and much else) exorcised in the Soviet Union and very nearly bit the dust here but for Rothschild's spirited defence of the subject of 1982.

The core essay in this excellent collection is by David Lee, "on unreason and uncertainty in the practice of sociology", Essex sociologist taking on Essex Man. To the standard objections that sociologists cannot be objective, lack common sense (or trail far behind it) and can never agree about fundamentals, Lee replies as follows: First, sociological claims to objectivity have been too easily abandoned, not least by those sociologists who disclaim 'science'. But imagine a world of pure subjectivity - a solipsist's paradise: it is a chimera. "There is actually no such thing as wholly objective thought and action because we all use concepts and language which we have learned from others ... Personal and daily life revolves around the possibility of independent truth on one hand and mistakes and lies on the other." Objectivity resides in the pursuit of their disentanglement. Secondly, 'common sense' gave us flat-earthers and the belief that, for example, women cannot perform surgery or drive buses and, even if they could, should be prevented from doing so. Rational enquiry should never apologise for lacking the certainties of blind faith. Thirdly, the fact that sociology is not one, but a set of competing perspectives, is a strength not a weakness, as long as the ultimate arbiter of worth

is how rigorously empirical problems are dealt with rather than how cleverly the theory is constructed. The ultimate touchstone remains Popper's insistence that a non-dogmatic theory should be capable of being disproved, an acid test that finds Hayek wanting as much as Marx or Freud. In a splendid passage, Lee winds up the case for the defence:

"On the basis of unscientific dogma, Hayek's British disciples have used a major industrial country for the most blatant piece of social engineering in its post-war history, one which has been far more audacious than the modest interventionism of the Keynesian era. This engineered privatisation of the common wealth has unleashed such forces of deprivation and materialism, competitiveness and egoism that I fear chaps in the Basildon pubs will soon begin to bellow for more authoritarian solutions to the chaos which this experiment in 'freedom' has created. Common sense will then be a curse indeed."

If this piece fails to convince any doubters that sociology is rather more than bourgeois apologetics, it is difficult to see what could. But if they are at all persuaded by it, then there is much more for them to enjoy in this collection. There is C. Wright Mills's call of sociologists to task after decades of Parsonsian obscurantism. There is Robert Nisbet's reminder that social authority and political power were most impressively contrasted by anarchists from Proudhon to Kropotkin: how different the course of history might have been had Marx conceded something of Proudhon's point, instead of savaging its entirety in *The Poverty of Philosophy*. There is the passionate defence of Comte as vitally relevant to the modern world by Ronald Fletcher, and a vivid tribute to Fletcher by Laurie Taylor. John Pilgrim and John Ebbrell convey the central problem of sociology, the structure/agency debate, with a graphic clarity that puts many a sociological tome to shame. Our most redoubtable exponents of anarchism, Colin Ward and Nicolas Walter, write on Martin Buber and Peter Marshall's *Demanding the Impossible*. Anarchist themes are also basic to Harold Barclay's study of mutual aid and conflict resolution in a traditional Egyptian village, and Angus Calder's re-reading of Samuel Smiles. In 100 pages, at £3.00 post free to anywhere in the world, this issue of *The Raven* is phenomenal value for hard-pressed students. My only criticism is that it lacks a sociological view of the anarchist project itself. That, however, may be the theme for another *Raven*.

David Downes

1842-1921: Kropotkin in Print

Memoirs of a Revolutionist, with an introduction by Nicolas Walter (Dover Books) 557 pages, £8.95. The most famous of anarchist autobiographies.

From Prince to Rebel by George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic (Black Rose Books) 465 pages, £11.50. This distinguished biography is better known by its original title *The Anarchist Prince*.

Kropotkin by Martin A. Miller (University of Chicago Press) 342 pages, £5.00. Fills in details of Kropotkin's activities in Russia prior to his flight to Western Europe in 1876, using archival sources unavailable to earlier biographers.

THE CLASSICS

Mutual Aid: a factor of evolution (Freedom Press) 278 pages, £5.00. *Mutual Aid* was Kropotkin's most influential book, and mutual aid was his most influential idea, with John Hewetson's long introduction 'Mutual Aid and Social Evolution'.

Words of a Rebel newly translated by George Woodcock (Black Rose Books) 229 pages, available in hard cover only at £20.95. Published this year, this is the first English translation of *Paroles d'un Révolté*.

Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow edited, introduced and with additional material by Colin Ward (Freedom Press) 205 pages, £4.00. The only available edition of this classic, combating the view that industry and agriculture has to be organised on a large scale and brought up to date by Colin Ward.

The Conquest of Bread with introduction by George Woodcock (Black Rose Books) 281 pages, £10.50. Kropotkin's vision of his ideal society and a manual for achieving it.

Act For Yourself (Freedom Press) 131 pages, £2.50. At the same time as he was writing *The Conquest of Bread* for the French anarchist press, Kropotkin wrote a similar series of articles in *Freedom* which

remained buried in the files for a century, but has now been reprinted with a scholarly introduction.

The Great French Revolution, 610 pages, available in one volume (Black Rose Books) at £11.50, or in two volumes (Elephant Editions) at £3.95 each. A rare example of history written from an anarchist point of view.

Russian Literature: ideals and realities (Black Rose Books) 376 pages, £11.50. More particularly Kropotkin's view of the novels of his day: he preferred Lermontov and Turgenev to Tolstoy and Dostievsky.

In Russian and French Prisons (Black Rose Books) 413 pages, £11.50. One of the most powerful attacks on the prison system ever produced.

THE PAMPHLETS

Anarchism and Anarchist Communism (Freedom Press) 64 pages, £1.75. Two for the price of one: 'Anarchism' is the famous article from the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'Anarchist Communism: its basis and principles' a well-known pamphlet.

The State: its historic role (Freedom Press) 60 pages, £1.75. According to the author of this anarchist classic, there is only one way of understanding the State and that is to study its historic development.

The Wage System can be found in the Freedom Press anthology *Why Work? Arguments for the Leisure Society*, 210 pages, £4.50.

Revolutionary Government, in which the author explains why revolutionary government is in fact an impossibility. In a new translation by Nicolas Walter, this can be found in number 14 of our quarterly *The Raven*, 96 pages, £3.00 post free.

All these titles are available at the prices stated, post free in UK, overseas add 15% (payment with order) from FREEDOM PRESS.

Bookchin & Deep Ecology

Dear Freedom,
Having received Peter Marshall's *Nature's Web* only a few days ago, I cannot speak to its merits as a whole but only to his discussion of the deep ecology / social ecology debate – and particularly Donald Rooum's dismissive attitude toward the debate in his review in *Freedom*, 14th November. Readers of *Freedom* would be very ill-advised to follow Rooum's rather flippant suggestion that Marshall seems to have said it all in his book with "enough quotations to show that his descriptions are right in substance, and we are saved the trouble [!] of searching for essentials among the wordy rhetoric [!] put out by the protagonists themselves".

Really! Far from saying it all, as Rooum suggests, Marshall only selects a few phrases and words from my writings on social ecology. He does quote three 'full' sentences over the span of his chapter on the debate but regrettably these are marred by excisions that restate my view in ways that are alien to what I mean, in marked contrast to his more faithful account of my views in his book *Demanding the Impossible*. I hope to be able to discuss our differences more fully in a work I am preparing, 'A Reply to my Critics'. Here I am more concerned with Rooum's flippancy than with Marshall's way of dealing with my views in *Nature's Web*.

My dispute with deep ecology raises such important issues as how to think (no small problem these days), the sources of the present ecological crisis, whether we are to use the state – and even preserve it as several major deep ecology theorists definitely believe we should do in one form or another – and the kind of practice that is needed to build a libertarian ecology movement. At present a heavy, anti-rational, quasi-theological, and primitivistic cloud of mysticism is settling over the American deep ecology

movement, due in no small part to the impact of deep ecology on the thinking of a sizeable army of academics and middle class literati.

It has always been my hope that a movement whose supporters raised the cry 'Neither God Nor Master!' would provide a ray of enlightenment to break through this cloud and offer a direction based on reason, a genuine naturalistic view of reality as distinguished from a mystical one, an anti-statist and socially combative commitment to change the world, and a coherent analysis of the problems that beset us. It is my deepest concern nowadays that people who profess to speak in the name of a revolutionary tradition created by people like Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Louise Michel and Errico Malatesta provide a voice of rationality and sanity as well as a refreshing secular sensibility to countervail the mystical *Zeitgeist* of our time. Rooum's contemptuous yawn in dismissing the social ecology / deep ecology debate and certain misinterpretations that Marshall makes in his chapter on the subject hardly provide a satisfactory understanding of the problems this debate raises.

Murray Bookchin

Special note to USA subscribers. It costs us £5 to cash a US \$ cheque drawn on a US bank. So will USA subscribers and donors if they are paying in dollar cheques please make their cheques payable to CHIPS BOOKSEARCH, but send remittance and other communications direct to Freedom Press.

Greenham Common Women

Dear friends,
We're writing to you to ask for your support during this important stage in the life of Yellow Gate, Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. The United States Air Force has now left the base at

Greenham Common, and it is now under the control of the MoD until it is decided what will happen next. But the work against the military continues at Yellow Gate. While continuing our demands for the base to *really* close and the land to be returned to common, we are also strengthening our campaign against the escalation of nuclear weapons in this country in the form of Trident. Trident war-heads are being made at AWE Aldermaston, and assembled at AWE Burghfield, both less than ten miles from Greenham. In August of this year on the anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, women from Yellow Gate took action at both bases. At Burghfield on 6th August five women were charged with criminal damage, and at Aldermaston on 9th August four women were charged with criminal damage. These charges come up for trial at Reading Magistrates Court on 1st and 2nd December for Burghfield, and the week starting 7th December for Aldermaston. The MoD have fabricated an extortionate sum of damage for the Aldermaston charge – £3,700 – compared to an amount in the hundreds for the similar Burghfield action. We believe this is an attempt to target the three full-time women at Yellow Gate, who all face this charge, and possibly to try and close the camp by imprisoning all three at once.

We need your help – we need women to stay at the camp during the trials and women and men to attend the trials and support any way they can through publicity or financially or offering transport to trial. We need to break the media silence around us and show the state it cannot continue its attacks on us with impunity – *show the state that you care about the future of the camp*. Yellow Gate is eleven years old this year – help us on to another eleven more!

Yellow Gate Women's Peace Camp
Greenham Common, Newbury,
Berks RG14 7AS

Less crap please!

Dear Editors,
Brian Bamford (*Freedom* 14th November 1992) has dragged me into his disagreement with John Pilgrim, referring to my pamphlet *A Structured Anarchism* and linking my views with those of the minimal statist Friedman, Hayek and Nozick.

I have already denied this ludicrous allegation made by Bamford in an earlier 'review' of his, and feel obliged to do so again. I do not expect *Freedom's* reviewers to indulge in "comradely back-patting" as he puts it, but back-stabbing is not acceptable. *Freedom* readers need reviews which are accurate, not launchpads for expressing the reviewer's prejudices.

Let's have more accurate reviewing, more properly reasoned argument and please, Mr Bamford, *less crap!*

John Griffin

[Bamford mentioned that Griffin: "referred approvingly to the 'conservative' philosopher F.A. Hayek and the monetarist economist Milton Friedman".

What Griffin wrote (*A Structured Anarchism*, pages 22-23) was: "some back-handed support for the collectivist position in my view is given by the classical liberal economists, Milton Friedman and F.A. Hayek".

We hope this will put the record straight – Editors.]

Mack the Hatchet?

Dear Editors,
Mack the Knife (or Hatchet?) gives himself an easy ride by presenting all feminists as "blatant careerists". The media similarly rubbish anarchists by presenting them all as mad bombers. Little wonder there are few women associated with *Freedom*, with Manarchists like Mack around. Who needs to be racist when there are women to be put down. That sex discrimination exists is widely acknowledged, even by the government. Would Mack exercise his mind, rather than his virility, by telling women how they can remedy the situation?

Ernie Crosswell

Correction

Dear Editors,
It seems that a malevolent gremlin got into my article on 'The Credit Card Jerusalem' (28th November). The opening sentence of the section headed 'From Production to Communication' should read: "Jurgen Habermas, in his latest book *Autonomy and Solidarity*, says that we are out of the age of production and into the age of communication".

Clearly this is such an important and interesting proposition which, if correct, alters one's whole perception of capitalism, that we need to get it right.

And while I'm writing may I congratulate the editors of *Freedom* on the classical simplicity of its layout. It is a refreshing relief after the overwrought graphics of certain other publications where design threatens very legibility.

Peter Cadogan

Dear friends,

I enjoyed Peter Cadogan's 'Credit Card Route to Jerusalem' (*Freedom*, 28th November) but would like to comment.

"About 1967" may have been when "large numbers of people began to find out that they had all the mod cons they needed", but it was not for want of trying to avoid this by the organisers of the capitalist system!

Incipient plenty has been worrying them all this century. Between the 'World Wars' they bought up and suppressed many labour-saving inventions, egged on by the Luddite unions seeking to 'save jobs', in addition to huge scale destruction of crops to maintain prices; while in the early '50s 'planned obsolescence' was dreamed up and enthusiastically adopted as a policy to preserve markets, leading to the undreamed-of waste, pollution and destruction of the scale of which most people are now only beginning to become aware.

The debt-money system is the basic cause of the imperative for 'growth' to keep capitalism 'healthy'. Allowing the banks to create our ephemeral (repayable) 'credit' (i.e. debt!) and lend it at interest to individuals, businesses and governments has crushed the system under an ever more rapidly growing mountain of unrepayable debt (the greater the interest rate, the greater the growth rate), and intensified the competition in the race to stay solvent. Solution: creation of permanent credit by the community via its elected institutions, spending it into existence – at the same time limiting and eventually ending the banks' right to create credit.

Capitalism is the cause of the gross maldistribution of wealth, with mechanisation and automation decimating 'jobs' without providing alternative adequate incomes ('the wages

Leslie & the Green Party

of the machine'), thus reducing purchasing power for essentials, and so the 'markets' for them. Solution: basic incomes, and land tax to fund them, at least in part.

'Nature' is un-priced by capitalism, therefore undervalued and wasted/polluted/destroyed. Solution: resource taxation, making new raw materials expensive, and so conserving and recycling them worthwhile – even financially!

Peter is right, I believe, that "we face collapse", but not that we have "no option but to go through with it". The measures outlined above could transform the situation, and facilitate a host of changes of attitude as well as of practice. How to get them into place is, of course, another matter; but the first essential is to

popularise them by advocating them; and as the collapse approaches, we have a better chance of success, given popular support.

They may not fit in with anarchist ideas, but the alternative of simply welcoming the collapse is not attractive. Apart from the misery and chaos that would result (even worse than now!), the chances of spreading anarchist ideals in such a situation are minimal – witness the recent history of Russia and Eastern Europe; but if these policies were put into place, then the scene would be set for anarchist ideas to flourish – which is why there are many anarchists in the Green Party actively working on its policy development, as well as keeping it 'leaderless'!

Brian Leslie

News from Angel Alley

We have completed our 24 issues for 1992. Far from resting on our laurels we shall be using the break to deal with administrative chores: sending out the annual statements to recalcitrant bookshops and others, taking stock at the Freedom Press bookshop and a Freedom Press stock-take to see whether reprints of some titles should be considered, discussing new titles for 1993 (incidentally, we welcome suggestions from comrades as to titles they think will further our propaganda), and organising ourselves (and we hope hearing from our not very vocal regional and sectional editors) to deal with the geriatrics among us who far from looking for pastures green are simply asking to have the time to *cultiver leur jardin* to supplement their old age pensions! So an active 'break' before we produce the first issue for 1993 (on your address label it's 5401).

With this issue we are enclosing a simple Reader's Questionnaire. Its purpose is to get our readers' advice as to how most convincingly to make anarchist propaganda by the written word, and by finding out how you, our readers, first came across *Freedom*, to see how we can explore new outlets. Needless to say the information is not for passing on to others who will smother you with their publicity material. The fact that we don't ask you to add your name and address is proof of this. Obviously if you want to be involved in any of the activities suggested to further *Freedom's* work then you must add your name (and address if you are not a subscriber).

What in the trade they call 'feedback' is even more important for an anarchist journal and publishing group, and we have to confess that apart from when renewals are due and are paid and accompanied very often by a short encouraging note (which we *do* appreciate – don't believe those who say anarchists haven't got a 'soft centre'), for the other 364 days of the year we don't get feedback from 99% of our readers. Why is this? Perhaps the questionnaire will give us some clues. Those of you silent for 364 days of the year, please complete that questionnaire and return it to us as soon as possible, so we can use the break before the next *Freedom* to collate your answers and let you know what you think we should be doing.

Lots of renewal notices will be sent out with this issue of *Freedom*. Because we have a fortnight without *Freedom* this gives us time to deal with the annual rash of subscription renewals, so please deal with your subs renewals and the questionnaire as soon as possible.

We are still hoping to dispatch *The Raven* number 20 'On Kropotkin: 150th anniversary' to current subscribers by the end of this month. If the label on your *Freedom* envelope has after the *Freedom* numbers (5324 if your sub is now due) 20 that means that your subscription to *The Raven* expires with this issue. And any number below that means you won't get *The Raven* until we hear from you. Sorry, but we just cannot afford to continue unpaid subscriptions in the hope that they will be renewed.

Those who broke into *Freedom* Press last week helped themselves not to the literature but to the bookshop float and our stamp book with about £80 worth of stamps. In spite of the building resembling ever more a fortress this must now be the fifth break-in. On this occasion the marauders would have seemed to know where to find the key to the Freedom Press office and where the stamp book was kept. Perhaps a coincidence!

Our losses are yet another reason for having an Overheads Fund as well as the *Freedom* and *Raven* funds. This is just a gentle hint if you have any spare cash to add to your renewals!

DONATIONS

20th November - 5th December

Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund
Ilford SG £6, Beckenham DP £10, Wolverhampton JL £2, Slough EC £4.

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1992 total to date = £1,346.60

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1992 total to date = £1,502.50

Raven Deficit Fund
Dossenheim RS £10.

Total = £10

1992 total to date = £833.60

We send our warm greetings to all readers and DOWN WITH CAPITALISM!

MEETINGS

Anarchist Forum

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

1992/1993 MEETINGS

11th December - 'Exploiting the State' (speaker Andrew Lainton)
8th January - 'An Anarchist Daily' (speaker John Rety)
15th January - General discussion
22nd January - 'Whiteway And On' (speaker Michael Murray)
29th January - General discussion
5th February - 'Anarchism and Feminism' (speaker Lisa Bendall)

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

Books reviewed in *Freedom* can be ordered from

Freedom Press Bookshop
 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

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Poetry Reading

at Torriano Meeting House
 99 Torriano Avenue, London NW5

20th December 1992

at 7.30pm
 with

Jeff Cloves
 and

John Rety

reading Black and Red verse

Balkan Peace Vigil

Monday 21st December 1992

On the steps of

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 Trafalgar Square, London WC2**

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THE RAVEN - 19

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Saturday 19th December

12 noon to 5pm

— bring a bottle —

Yellow Gate Women's Peace Camp

are calling women for the weekend of

12th - 13th December

There has been a new shift of the military's strategy - this means the peace camp is moving into a new era. The Trident warheads are being made at AWE Aldermaston and being assembled at AWE Burghfield, both less than ten miles from Greenham. The warheads are already being transported up to Faslane using the motorway system.

Come to Yellow Gate and find out what is happening and how you can help to resist.

Contact:

**Katrina, Aniko or Lisa at
 Yellow Gate
 Greenham Common
 nr Newbury, Berkshire RG14 7AS**

Red Rambles

A programme of free walks in the White Peak for Greens, Socialists, Libertarians and Anarchists.

Sunday 10th January - Wirksworth to Alport Heights. Meet at Wirksworth Market Place at 1pm. Length 4 miles.

Sunday 7th February - Hidden Valley Walk. Meet at 1pm at Dale End (half a mile west of Elton). Length 4 miles.

Sunday 7th March - Derbyshire 'Edges'. Meet at 11am at the National Trust Car Park (next to Robin Hood pub on A619 Baslow to Chesterfield road). Length 8 miles.

Telephone for further details:
0773-827513

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- I would like the following back numbers of *The Raven* at £2.50 per copy post free (numbers 1 to 18 are available)
- I enclose a donation to Freedom Fortnightly Fighting / Freedom Press Overheads / Raven Deficit Fund (delete as applicable)

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