

anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

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“Inequality is the source of all revolutions. No compensation can make up for inequality.”

Aristotle

IT'S NOW 3,000,000 – OFFICIAL and worse to come

It may be recalled that the Chancellor, Mr Lamont, in justifying his anti-inflation campaign which he won at the expense of a million wage-slaves joining the dole queues, declared that it was “a price worth paying” for it was going to lead to Britain’s economic recovery. All kinds of other ‘incentives’ for ‘recovery’ have been introduced, such as the collapse of the £ in the money markets and the streamlining of

manufacturing and services industries in order to be more ‘competitive’ (in some cases to the point where only the receiver in bankruptcy is there to pick over the ruins).

Guardian, 18th February). **“Dole pushes DSS bill to £78.3 billion”** (*The Guardian*).

Now with the latest official figure of more than three million unemployed actually on the dole (and everybody knows that the real number of actually unemployed is nearer four million) the politicians are suddenly unanimous in declaring war on unemployment! **“Angry scenes in the Commons as unemployment passed the three million mark”** (*The Independent*). **“Labour pledges full employment”** (*The Independent*, 18th February). **“Unions call for action to end jobs ‘slaughter’”** (*The Independent*, 19th February). **“Labour gives jobs pledge”** (*The*

The ‘serious’ press editorially and in its financial columns is never without advice, and solutions, if only the government were to listen. They would even be heartened by the headline in the ‘Business and City’ page of *The Independent* of Monday 15th February which declares, over six columns, that **“High street spending spurts as unemployment slows”**, if they ignored the opening paragraph of the article that followed, which reads:

“Unemployment rose much less sharply than the Treasury or the City expected last month, leaving the seasonally adjusted
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Towards a Toothless NHS

When the government told NHS dentists more than a year ago that they were being paid more than had been agreed and that it would claw back £200 million in ‘overpayments’ half of all dentists, after ballots, decided not to take any new adult NHS patients. Needless to say, a fundamental review of dentists’ pay was ordered by the government and the report published in January suggested (according to *The Independent’s* medical editor) “targeting limited NHS dental resources more keenly and envisaged a system where state support only amounted to 15% for adults”. As it is NHS patients are already paying 75% of the cost of their treatment up to a limit of £225 (children and those in receipt of income support are exempt – for the time being).

ITALIAN UNEMPLOYED ON THE MARCH but governments can do nothing

About 100,000 workers marched through the streets of Naples last month to protest at the rising rate of unemployment. An eight-hour general strike brought the city to a standstill.

highest in the south, all parts of Italy are affected. In the industrial area around Turin unemployment is estimated to be 12-13%. Apparently every month in 1992 each of the motor giant Fiat’s plants closed for a week as output was reduced by 250,000 vehicles. And last months the company announced more temporary lay-offs affecting 24,000 workers.

Official figures put the numbers of unemployed in Naples and the surrounding Campagna at one million, including 300,000 school leavers looking for their first jobs.

In an attempt to stem the flood of unemployment the Italian government was proposing to bring forward the starting dates for a number of public works projects said to be worth about £22,000 million (assuming there still is a government in Italy as we go to press!)

Though the unemployment rate is state and enter into a contract with their dentist for regular treatment”.

Denplan, a private scheme started six years ago, has enrolled more than 4,000 dentists and more than 250,000 patients and as a result of the dentists’ ‘rebellion’ is now attracting between 500 and 1,000 patients a day, and is described by *The Independent’s* medical editor as “another nail in the coffin of a comprehensive NHS dental service”.

When they enrol the dentist decides which one of the five price categories to put them in, and the price varies between £5 and £18 a month. No mention is made in the article, but one must assume that the dentist can refuse to enrol prospective patients when he has had a good look into their mouths! Where will they go for treatment when, finally, all the dentists will have opted out? NHS – RIP!

The pattern in all the prosperous capitalist countries is the same. It was well summed-up by *The Guardian’s* Milan correspondent in describing the Italian situation:

“As manufacturing industry shrinks, service industries are suffering, too, with
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Denplan’s promoters maintain that it is not an insurance scheme. “Patients are enrolled when their teeth and gums have been put in good

The frauds of war

The Crown Prosecution Service is considering who to prosecute for fraud, following swindles during the Gulf War. Ministry of Defence investigators have worked out that someone overcharged on the ships hired for transporting troops and supplies. Among the names being considered are those of businessmen who had earlier been selling 'defence equipment' to Iraq.

The arms business, when it is legal, is commonly spoken of in dishonest euphemisms. All armaments, including things like anti-personnel bombs which can only be used for attack, are described as defence weapons. The British nuclear submarine force, which is dependent on missiles purchased from America and deters nobody from anything, is described as 'The Independent Deterrent'.

The arms business tries to damage persons and property, and succeeds. It does no good at all, except to the manufacturers and users of arms, who benefit to the disadvantage of everyone else. The amounts to be gained are colossal. It is no surprise that the arms trade attracts criminals. It would be amazing if it attracted anyone else.

Older readers will remember the case of the Ferranti gang in the last 1950s. The Ferranti brothers had a contract to develop electronic equipment to military aircraft, not for a fixed price but on a 'cost-plus' basis; they were to work out their costs, add an agreed percentage as their profit, and put in an invoice for the total.

Such a lucrative contract, involving no financial risk whatever, is rarely available outside the armaments industry. It might be supposed that the Ferrantis would have been content to dance all the way to the bank with their legal takings, but no. They added up their costs, added their agreed percentage, then treated this total as their costs, to which they added their agreed percentage again. And again and again, systematically, every time they sent a bill in.

All their invoices were agreed without question by chaps at the Ministry of Defence, but this is not evidence of collusion. The MoD in the 1950s was staffed by high-ranking officers promoted during the war, filling in their time until retirement. 'Ferranti? Very

reputable firm. Wouldn't be ashamed to take a job with them after retirement. Quite safe to sign their invoice without reading it. Pass the brandy.'

The swindle was uncovered later by the parliamentary accountants, the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Making sure every item of expenditure is covered by a properly authorised order and a properly itemised invoice, which is the way accountants try to save money, is an expensive business and probably counter-productive in enterprises which are generally honest. The accountant Michael Checkland, for instance, was appointed Director General of the BBC to save money, and spent so much more on accounting procedures than he saved on fiddles that he overspent by £24 million. Similar waste is now being caused by accountants running the health service.

However, it is quite a good idea to have accountants watching an intrinsically dirty business like the 'defence' industry. The Ferranti gang was discovered to have stolen many millions of pounds - many tens of millions of pounds in today's money. And the interesting thing is that even after they were caught, they got away with it.

The Ferranti brothers were too powerful, and too important in the 'defence' industry, to be prosecuted. They paid back that part of their ill-gotten gains which was still in the bank, amounting to something over half the total they had nicked, and walked off scot-free with the rest. Their firm remained, and still remains, the principal supplier of electronics to the British military. They retired from the board of directors in the 1980s, but are still the major shareholders in their firm.

We shall see whether any of the Gulf war profiteers currently being studied by the CPS are in fact prosecuted. If any do come to trial, we confidently predict they will be small operators, muscling in on the profits of the really big crooks who will stay at large.

Life is easier under a government which feels secure, than under one which feels threatened. Secure governments can afford to provide services which the capitalist system prevents people from supplying themselves, and permit the publication of anti-government propaganda. But the underlying truth is that all governments are military governments.

Big military suppliers, provided they do not try to overthrow the government, can get away with anything.

ITALIAN UNEMPLOYED ON THE MARCH

(continued from page 1)

transport and retailing particularly hard hit. The railways expect to lay off over 53,000 of their 165,000-strong workforce, while the post office plans to cut 30,000 jobs.

The shopkeepers' association says about 30,000 people will find themselves out of work as 15,000 small shops close."

Italian economists doubt whether the £22 billion injection in public works will make much difference to the general situation. One does not have to be an economist to come to the same conclusions when one looks around at the G7 nations (the top seven industrial nations in the world) which all have the same problems: it's either that productive capacity exceeds demand or that they can no longer compete with the developing industrial world in the Far East, which is after all their own creation.

When Mr Major returned from his 'goodwill' mission to the USA he declared that he was confident that by the end of this year Britain would lead all the other community nations in the economic recovery.

What utter nonsense. But on the other hand, what could the poor chap say? That things will get worse still? As they certainly will.

A Class War MP?

At election times, people's thoughts are turned to politics, and every political persuasion tries to take advantage. This includes the anarchists, who put on a burst of propaganda denouncing the electoral process, in the hope of making people wonder whether government is the only way society can be organised.

Anarchist activity in April 1992 included an anti-election rally in Trafalgar Square, initiated and largely organised by our comrade Tim Scargill of Class War.

Last month the MP for Newbury, Judith Chaplin, died suddenly. If the Major government does not resign and call a general election soon, there will be a by-election in Newbury, and Tim Scargill has issued a press statement saying he will be there. This time, however, he will not be organising an anti-election march but standing as a candidate, a "fighting alternative to the Smith-Major consensus", with a view to making the by-election "a referendum on the monarchy". He seems to be calling himself the Class War candidate, though we are told he has resigned from the Class War Federation.

Freedom will not be revising its anti-voting

IT'S NOW 3,000,000 - OFFICIAL

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total under three million, official figures will show on Thursday ..."

for when Thursday came the official addition to the dole was a record high - some 90,000!

The government has appointed a brains trust of seven economists to advise them. All one has heard so far is that six of them (Wynne Godley being the odd man out) have advised no increase in income tax though rumours persist that the Chancellor in his forthcoming budget will increase some VAT taxes as well as taxing food, and possibly newspapers and books (which its advocates point out is a normal charge in a number of our EEC 'partners'/competitors). Needless to say a typical British reaction of the 'it's-not-cricket' and 'fair-play' fraternity has been to suggest that only luxury foods, smoked salmon and caviare for example, should be VATted!

All the Chancellor of the Exchequer will do in fact on Budget Day (16th March) is to do nothing! Yes, he will rob Peter to pay Paul. Some will get a few crumbs, others will get nothing. And since under the capitalist system the 'wealth producers' have only produced more 'wealth' for themselves (in shares, property and currency speculation) you can be sure that there will be nothing for the real wealth producers and those of them among the three million officially on the dole.

What can the government do with its philosophy that the 'free market' determines the economic viability, not just of a particular enterprise but of a whole community, the nation?

Capitalism is production (including services as well as motor cars and cabbages) for profit. No profit, no production. Anarchism is production for needs. The needs are not money but the basic comforts: food, shelter, clothing

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No Recession for the 'Wealth Producers'

Headline in *The Guardian*: 'Lloyds Bank surprises City with £801 million pre-tax profit' which is an increase of 28% over 1991, and the *Independent's* headline reads 'Lloyds Bank raises payout by 10%' and comments:

"Lloyds Bank yesterday underlined the high street banks' extreme sensitivity to political accusations of profiteering when it declared that sharply rising profits last year had nothing to do with its UK branch banking business."

The merchant bank Kleinwort Benson announced better than expected profits for 1992, up to 66% to £46.3 million. And the nineteen firms that run the market in government stocks had record profits of £65 million in 1992.

And what did these 'wealth producers' produce other than profits? A lot of paper!

stance. Smith-Major consensus, Fascists, Trotskyists, Raving Loonies, Class War - we find some more likeable than others, but we want None of Them to have power over us, so we vote for None of Them.

This despite having been once told, by a comrade on his way to vote for a Socialist Party of Great Britain candidate, that voting for a no-hoper was a creative way of registering a non-vote.

and, not least surely, leisure to give meaning to one's very existence.

Under capitalism, for the vast majority the first 'need' is money, for without it you may have all the leisure but your shelter may be a cardboard box and your food the Salvation Army's soup kitchen.

Anarchists are opposed to the Labour Party's 'full employment' society which is *unconcerned with what is being produced*. The obvious example is the production of submarines, tanks, war planes, etc., for export as well as to maintain Britain's £24,000 million annual 'defence' so-called budget. And the car industry. We would not need cars if we invested in a good public transport system. And in an age, potentially directed to leisure, what *raison d'être* for air travel? We are even being threatened with a new generation of aeroplanes which will carry up to 800 passengers! Cars and planes are among the greatest polluters of our environment and threats to our health and yet the government is spending £2,000 million of our money on more motorways (at the same time as they starve the railways of capital for maintenance and replacement of clapped-out rolling stock). The road lobby certainly has the Cabinet's ear and perhaps the Party's funds are not being neglected.

For anarchists *full employment* means that everybody contributes to the commonweal. We repeat: food, clothing, shelter for all, which with the beneficial technology available today can be provided without stress on, say, a two-day working week (Kropotkin produced some valid statistics for today years ago in *Fields, Factories and Workshops*) and with an extra day's work we could also provide not only a free public transport system but also all the other useful services we need: health, education, libraries, you name them! And with the leisure? Far from echoing the television's selected youngsters who declare that they are 'bored' in order to explain why smashing everything in sight gives them 'kicks' (some have even volunteered to join the punch-up in Yugoslavia) we maintain that the anarchist approach to *production for our needs* makes sense, whereas having a job which you hate because it has no meaning other than getting a wage packet at the end of the week is *demeaning and depressing*.

Today to work in an armaments factory not only pays good wages but is also a status job. To keep the streets clean, to collect the rubbish is under-skilled, under-paid and un-appreciated in our snob society. Yet when will we succeed in convincing our fellow beings that we need the street cleaners and the dustmen much more than we do those who produce the weapons of death?

Cooking the Books

according to Larry Elliott (*The Guardian*)

Unemployment is now calculated on the basis of whether unemployed people are eligible for state benefits and available for work. If not, they do not show up in the monthly figures.

Since 1988 very few 16 and 17 year olds have been included in the figures, because it is assumed they are working at school or on a government training scheme.

There have been 32 changes to the benefit rules since 1979, and all but one has resulted in a lower total. Campaigning groups such as the Unemployment Unit say the jobless total would be well over four million if the government still used the old methodology.

NEWS AND VIEWS

On a recent afternoon the House of Commons was almost completely deserted. So what's new about a member speaking to an almost empty chamber, isn't it like that most of the time? But this time they were not moonlighting, they were attending a private showing of a film in one of the committee rooms. The largest in fact, their first choice was too small. Apparently there is a European satellite television channel which broadcasts from Denmark called 'Red Hot Dutch' (or did the press invent that title?) and three times a week, after midnight, it shows films deemed so corrupting that they are unsuitable for you and me to see. Although these videos are claimed to be completely free of violence, our legislators have called them pornographic. Presumably our members considered it their duty to see for themselves.

Leaving aside the merit of these videos and whether we could or would want to go to the expense of acquiring a suitably tuned satellite dish and a no doubt expensive but essential decoder, we will not have the opportunity to decide for ourselves. By now Peter Brooke, Secretary of State for National Heritage, who is of course himself completely incorruptible by pornography however unpleasant, will probably have had his own very private viewing so that he can get the government with the support of Members of Parliament to

ban the sale of the decoders in this country. Censorship has many faces.

In the 1950s anarchists used to smuggle contraceptive devices into France because they were proscribed there. No doubt a lucrative commercial trade will now develop, smuggling decoders into Britain. But, come to think of it, is there now anything that would be worth smuggling from Britain into Western Europe and is that not a measure of the decline in recent years of our freedom of choice?

Habeas corpus (have thou the body) is often quoted as the protection an individual has against indefinite imprisonment by the state on mere suspicion and without stated reason. It enshrines the power to demand that a gaoler produces a prisoner in person, in public, although in court, and that he gives reasons for the detention to a judge who decides on the legality. Many people would probably trace its origins back to the Magna Carta, the supposedly great charter of personal political liberty which the English barons obtained from King John at Runnymede in 1215, which was however more concerned with forcing the King to share with them his power to exploit the common people. The origin of *habeas corpus* is obscure but linked to the so-named Acts of Parliament of 1679 and 1816.

So, how does it work in practice? Any usefulness we may think it has is diminished when we realise that it can and has been

suspended in times of political and social disturbance, but is it effective in these quiescent times? We have an illustration before us at the moment.

Back in December a woman territorial army officer was arrested and detained without charge, in virtual solitary confinement, in Colchester barracks. Her application for a writ of *habeas corpus* on the 19th January did result in charges, though unspecified, the next day under the Official Secrets Act (secrets from whom, one wonders) but no body was produced. Her application was heard by judges in secret, or behind closed doors as they prefer to call it, and rejected with no reason given. They have since said, eleven weeks after the arrest, that they might reconsider in the not too distant future. The Ministry of Defence have indicated they needed another three months. Perhaps by the time you read this the body may have been produced, but I doubt it. How fragile is our freedom if only the law protects it.

John Bugg is dead. Difficult to believe that that bearded figure will be seen no more, hands in pockets, striding across military establishments, defying authorities to arrest him. In the end they did give up trying to because they couldn't make their charges stick. Difficult to believe that he will not be appearing again in courts throughout the land supporting defendants as a McKenzie friend with such skill and knowledge of the law that

peace protesters were able to win their cases even when solicitors had advised them to plead guilty because they had no chance.

Although in the past he had been police cadet, soldier, military policeman and policeman, he later became an Intermediate Treatment Officer helping young people in trouble with the police or school. Then, in 1986, appalled that planes had taken off from RAF Mildenhall in his native Suffolk to kill Libyans, he became, at great personal cost, an indefatigable peace protester. In the few years since then he has persistently challenged attempts by the authorities to block ancient rights of way, where they crossed military establishments, by simply walking those paths. A case of gamekeeper turned poacher.

Perhaps his greatest achievement was finally to establish through the courts that the by-laws restricting public access to the rights of way on military bases, drawn up by Michael Heseltine when Secretary of State for Defence, were invalid and, as a result, hundreds of peace campaigners were able to claim damages for wrongful arrest and imprisonment. He will be sadly missed.

HS

DEFINITIONS

SOCIOLOGIST: A person who can talk statistically about the plight of the underprivileged without being in danger of experiencing their feelings.

FREE LOVE: A contradictory term which mistakenly suggests that love can be something other than freely expressed.

CULTURE: A flattering term which is mostly employed to describe a way of life forced upon people by tyrannical powers.

FEYEREBANDISM: Blaming science for the mistakes of scientists.

MATRIARCHAL HUMAN SOCIETY: A sheer impossibility which is the product of domineering male imaginations.

QUANGO: Something it takes more than two to do.

SURREALISM: A non-communicable disease.

INFILTRATION: The method by which closet Conservatives attain power in the Labour Party in order to change its policies so that Socialists can be expelled.

GENEVA CONVENTION: A device designed to make barbarism acceptable to those with weak stomachs.

POST MODERNISM: The meaning of this curious term may become clear in a few years time when Post-Post Modernism is invented.

WORKSHARE: It could conceivably turn out to be National Service.

EFC

So March comes in like a lion and out like a lamb. Given the amount of wind and rain that my bike and I have had to endure since about last September any laws of Karma that may affect this little corner of the universe should reveal that I am up for parole and a little sunshine. Therefore for the next few months, weather permitting, Friday mornings will find me digging the last of the couch grass from plot 46a at the Alder Farm allotment just round the corner from where I live.

When I first rented my 126.5 square metres of weed from the local council some three years ago now, I remember standing on it, reflecting on the extent of the problem facing me. Lali, the lady who works a plot a few along from mine, was positive: "No need to cultivate it, just stand on it. The amount of spare produce people down here will give you will see you happy".

That's the atmosphere. Within a few months of my arrival Alan was supplying me with seed (the runner beans were particularly good), George B had supplied me with fruit bushes and rhubarb, Tom was handing over spare lettuces, Keith had given me everlasting onions and some cabbage seedlings, another George had given me cauliflowers and peas and an anonymous donor had left some strawberry runners. A year and much digging later, I was able to share around my first crop of cabbages and Brussels sprouts and I made

Dorset Diary

it clear that the raspberries were there for the taking.

At first I used to ask if I could borrow wheelbarrows, dibbers, mattocks and the like, but it was soon made clear that that wasn't how it worked. Although few of my fellow allotmenters will have read Proudhon, the *jus in rem / jus ad rem* distinction is what applies. Basically, if you need it take it and put it back when you've finished. George B organises the muck. It just happens that way. He comes round once a year, takes your order and your money and a couple of weeks later there's your muck. If someone is ill for a long time, as Jock was last year, those with adjoining plots keep things ticking over until they can get back to work.

Did I say work? Suppose it is really. But you go there when you want to, stay as long as you want to and there's no foreman measuring tea and fag breaks. It's up to you.

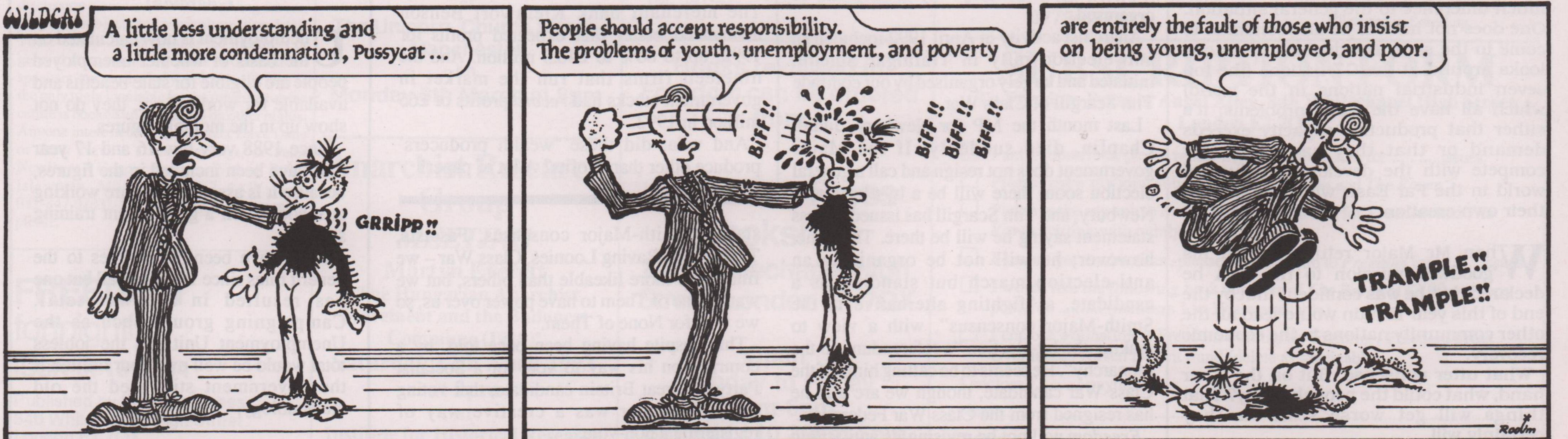
From the above it should be clear that there is something in allotments for anarchists apart from cheap food (if indeed it really is cheap). Down at our site some of us talk of the individualists and the socialists among us; both groups being essentially anarchic. Moves

are now under way to form an association which will provide us, hopefully, with a higher degree of autonomy and control of our environment (watch this space). Dealing with the council will, I fear, necessitate some compromise with anarchist principles (constitutions, presidents, etc.) but if an association can get control of unused plots and perhaps organise them into some form of commonly held smallholding the experiment could be interesting.

Were such experiments to become widespread, and I for one would be interested to hear from readers who have already travelled down this path, we would maybe start to witness the beginnings of some degree of popular control of land resources and food production and supply and as people get together to share knowledge and skills the field of control could spread ...

Well, I mustn't get carried away. We haven't even had our first meeting yet and, as the weather warms up, the couch grass will be back. So it's back to work and, if you're reading this in Poole and have nothing to do on a Friday morning, come on down to Alder Road Farm ... and bring a fork with you.

Neil Birrell



FREEDOM'S READERSHIP SURVEY – the 2nd 100

On the way to a more comprehensive analysis of your responses, here's another jaundiced evaluation.

There are a few differences between the first 100 respondents (*Freedom*, 9th January 1993) and the next hundred, the ones I looked at.

This sample is younger, more international (16%) and has three times as many female respondents (still only 15%!). In their relationship to the economic system, as with the first sample this one is evenly divided between 'wage slaves' and the rest – self-employed, unemployed and retired. Only 12% wrote in 'self-employed'. I fancy a larger number would go by this description. Around a third of the under-40s are unemployed, as in sample 1.

Number of replies

| age group | 18-40 | 41-60 | 61-100 | TOTAL |
|-----------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| sample 1 | 42 | 30 | 28 | 100 |
| sample 2 | 49 | 33 | 18 | 100 |

I chose to look most closely at answers to the questions on new features and things you would like to see more of in the fortnightly and the Freedom Press titles readers have liked.

Most striking is the big demand for more articles and reports on practical anarchism, "more living examples of solidarity and mutual aid", more street anarchism, local action and news, advance information on events and demos. Although some readers recognise this as their own responsibility for providing material of this sort, many don't. Somehow we've got to get into the habit of telling stories and passing on information on paper. One subscriber put practical anarchism into context by proposing that *Freedom* respond less to the macro issues bugging 'the system' and concentrate more on issues and

events of significance to the anarchist movement, i.e. be more introspective.

After that there's a demand among the academic/professional sort for more international news, even an international anarchist weekly, though this emphasis mattered only to a couple of the overseas readers in the sample.

Almost every section of the paper has its supporters and its critics. Will Arthur be surprised to know that not a few "only get *Freedom* for Moyses"? ... "But when is Arthur going to punctuate sentences. Nah, just kidding" wrote another. For every reader complaining about excessive theory and waffle, there's another who sees the need for good theoretical pieces. More book reviews, readers' letters, material on women, minorities, children and ecology are areas for expansion among smaller numbers of readers.

Others saw improvements to *Freedom* in terms of layout and design and there were calls in plenty for more graphics, photos and cartoons. Wildcat is a great favourite.

Among Freedom Press titles of interest and 'ones you have liked' – the masters and books about them are more than matched by Colin Ward's *Anarchy in Action*, Donald Room's *Wildcat* books, *Why Work* edited by Vernon Richards, and the new series of essays, particularly those by Stephen Cullen, Donald Room, Colin Ward and John Griffin.

Inevitably my mood influenced what I saw and read as I waded through the forms. I was struck by the criticism, plenty of it, from younger readers. "Too much of the gentlemanly, middle-aged, middle-class, white, male perspective".

'Have you introduced any new readers?' –

"No, too ashamed of the contents" ... "Most non-anarchists have never heard of *Freedom*, most anarchists dislike it." ... "This is the editors' paper and we're gonna get what they think is good for us!" ... *Freedom* needs a palace revolution. I thought. Could the Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund be diverted into putting the editorial writer out to grass? Only a second reading saved me from acting in a familiar precipitative way.

Now, in a more tranquil/lethargic mood, I put all the foreign mob together and decided to a person they are a friendly, cuddly lot, or were they just mates of the editors? They had plenty of constructive and

supportive suggestions, for example: we need more international coverage, more visuals (photos) if it doesn't increase costs too much, reports of direct actions, successful or not, with tactical lessons drawn, more women contributors, short history pieces, etc ...

However, this time I found plenty of warmth and support from among the younger local respondents too. After their critical comments there would be a "congratulations on the work you're doing, keep it up" ... or was it just Christmas?

Reading through this lot at the end of February, maybe we should shoot the editors after all!

Denis Pym

— LETTER FROM CANADA —

Another look at the economy

Want to take a trip back to the Victorian era? Just read the left press. Below the surface of most leftist writing about the economy seems to lie the hackneyed figure of the fat capitalist with the cigar. Admittedly, capitalists and speculators do exist, more of them recently in fact, due to the kind efforts of Ma Thatcher and Pa Reagan. But the left's antique blinkers hide information that could be important in developing a libertarian economic perspective. For once, let's discuss aspects of the economy that are in some ways *non-capitalist*. Before proceeding further, however, a definition is necessary. Capitalism is an economic system based upon private property, money, wages, prices, profits and production for exchange in a market. A system of state ownership of property coupled with a limited market is state capitalism (though the ignorant often confuse this with socialism). Both forms utilise authoritarian and hierarchical management systems.

First off, a pre-capitalist aspect of the economy – production for subsistence and simple commodity production/exchange. This aspect of the economy includes the free exchange of goods and services people do to avoid taxes as well as LETS systems, flea markets, yard and garage sales, marginal farming, home gardens, allotments and craft-making. In rural areas some people hunt, gather, trap or fish. The pre-capitalist sector is characterised by a complete avoidance of wage labour, hence does not show up in tax records and therefore is part of the black economy. In one province, British Columbia, estimates range up to 20% for the black economy, but figures for Quebec show only 3%. The problem is, for our purposes, the black economy includes illegal labour (some of which is in sweat shops) which cannot be included in a pre-capitalist framework. Therefore, as a wild guess, say 2% of the national economy covers the subsistence and simple commodity sector.

A post-capitalist aspect is the voluntary economy – non-wage, non-commodity sector built solely on solidarity and mutual aid. Some 27% of Canadians give freely of their time to voluntary non-profit, non-governmental agencies: everything from Boy Scouts and food banks to women's shelters and volunteer fire departments. Some difficulty exists in ascertaining the relative size of this area. But suppose each volunteer donates one hour a week and the value of this time is \$7 an hour (a low estimate), the result is almost \$3 billion or .5% of the GDP.

Co-ops, while producing or marketing commodities and using the wage-price system, can be considered as having post-capitalist attributes, since they are democratically organised and emphasise solidarity, federalism and mutual aid. These aspects are even more pronounced in self-managed, worker-owned co-ops. More than 43% of Canadians belong to a co-operative, 61,000 households (about 150,000 people) live in housing co-ops and about 10,000 people are employed in worker-owned and managed co-operatives. In combination with credit unions the co-op sector makes up about 12% of the Canadian economy (\$56 billion, based on 1988 GDP). Two facts stress the importance of this aspect of the economy: co-ops in total are three times the size of the military sector and the sixth largest financial institution in the country is a credit union (having some \$47 billion in assets).

One area of the economy which few realise has

post-capitalist aspects or potential is found at the municipal and county level. While the municipal economy is maintained by wage labour, it does not produce commodities and is not generally profit-oriented. Nor is this sector an example of state capitalism, unless one stretches the term 'state' to absurdity. (Is a village of 250 people a state?) Nor is there anything preventing it from becoming less capitalistic. Should, for example, a town decide that garbage collection is to be done by a worker's co-op, no legal restraints exist to stop this. The municipal/county economy includes streets and secondary roads, fire departments, municipally-owned housing, water and sewage, transit systems and garbage disposal. Sometimes also telephones and electrical systems are owned by towns or counties. This area accounted for more than \$39 billion in 1984, or almost 10% of the GDP.

There is an area of semi-autonomous institutions such as public libraries, public schools, hospitals, daycare centres, clinics and charitable institutions. Hospitals and public libraries *alone* accounted for \$16.5 billion in 1985 or 4% of the economy. A public library or hospital is not run for a profit, nor produces or exchanges commodities and from a strictly capitalist point of view makes no more sense than gift giving.

One more area with post-capitalist aspects is the trade union movement. To include trade unions as part of the economy may seem surprising, yet they should be included as part of the service sector. Since about 40% of Canadian workers belong to a union the importance of this area cannot be denied. Unions are democratic non-profit institutions, organised federally around the goals of solidarity and mutual aid. It matters little that sometimes these principles are pushed by the wayside, the fact they exist is what is important. (The same could be said of the co-op movement.) Take two and a half million union members paying, say, \$500 a year in dues combined with union controlled investment funds and you get close to \$2 billion or .4% of the GDP.

Let's look at how we are doing – add together all the preceding groups and you find that 28.9% of the economy, or \$150 billion, is not strictly speaking capitalist. Such a figure tends to overstate the case, since some overlapping exists. Nonetheless, even after cutting the total by one fifth to allow for this, at least one quarter of the total economy remains. This is not small change! One might ask what these developments mean for libertarians? A significant share of the economy utilises concepts that we have always upheld, such as decentralisation, voluntarism, federalism, co-operation and mutual aid. Of course, we must push for the growth of the co-operative movement, in particular those co-ops which are worker-managed. Nor should people who prefer pre-capitalist, simple commodity relations be rejected, for no one is being exploited with this type of economic individualistic anarchism. Anarchists, from P.J. Proudhon to Murray Bookchin, have considered the municipality and the county to be basic units of society, hence this economic sector should not be ignored. It just needs to be taken out of the hands of the bureaucrats and politicians. The extension of mutualist principles in this area would have a profoundly revolutionary effect upon the rest of society.

Larry Gambone

Particeps Criminis – a Partaker in the Crime

In the '60s student rebellion worldwide was spreading to the classroom. Ivan Illich was de-schooling society and Summerhill was the democratic ideal sought for through many a confrontation with headmasters and governors. The trial of the Skool edition of *Oz* was a milestone in children's rights.

Freedom and the rights of self-determination can only be won by those who are oppressed. It cannot be given to them on a plate, as appears to have been done in the Children's Act 1989. This Act of Conservative benefaction gives children a power to be heard which they have not possessed since the witchcraft trials of the 17th century. Children are now encouraged to put adults into the dock and thence to prison with alacrity.

Some examples of children misusing their new power: a teacher forced out of his vocation by a group of boys whom he taught, who accused him of sexual assault; an OAP who pushed some boy vandals off his fence, was later arrested for assault by the police; a child who wanted her mother to return to her father, and so accused her stepfather of sexual abuse. Although these men managed to prove their innocence, they all suffered loss of trust in children and police, as well as the trauma of a false accusation and the financial costs of legal representation. Imagine the effect on the children if their false-witness action were successful in gaining their objective.

According to Dr Finkelhor of New Hampshire University, one in ten men will sexually abuse children, and some feminists would like to see all two million of these men in prison (over forty times as many as the present total prison population). Given the present tendency to arrest the innocent, no man could feel safe having any contact of any

kind with children.

Do we wish to create a society in which adults are afraid to play with children because those children have the power to have them put in prison? Do we want adults to be cold, distant and fearful in their relationships with children? This has already happened for those working as teachers, child care workers, foster parents and playgroup leaders. Soon the only adults who will be willing to offer children the physical responsiveness they need will be the genuine paedophiles.

Children do not want to be used in some vendetta between the sexes (increasingly common in divorce cases) or even as a media hype to take the pressure off government financial policy. Children may want to punish adults – that desire was well used by the Third Reich to gain information about the Resistance. But they cannot cope with punitive power any more than the leaders of the French or Russian revolutions. Children need something solid to push against. Of course they want the abuse to stop, but without the horror of becoming a police witness, without the taint of becoming an instrument of the state.

The main oppressor of children remains the state, which decides they they are to be poor children, which takes away all the functions of the family, which aims to separate them from solidarity with their class, their race, their culture and their locality. Compulsory indoctrination (school) is not the fault of the teachers, but of government.

John Myhill

Get your local library to order a copy of *Child Abuse Investigations* from Parents Against Injustice, 3 Riverside Business Park, Stanstead, Essex CM23 8PL (£12).

The Execution Protocol

by Stephen Trombley
published by Century, £9.99

What is Anarchism? an introduction

by Bakunin, Berneri, Rooum, Kropotkin, etc.
published by Freedom Press, £1.95

Physical extermination, sanctified by law, has always been deemed a satisfactory solution to a human short-term problem, but it does tend to be messy, create martyrs and has usually had to be sub-contracted. It is an understandable problem for established societies with an increasing work schedule, as in America, nomadic tribes or those living within the borderless forests of the world. The East always appears to favour the swift eyes-down-for-the-big-chop approach, while the West with a class with a vested interest in happy-hour economics finds favour with its legal bureaucracy. The plastic technology frontage divides us from the brute realities of the potato and the soil for we, metropolitan man, are a vast integrated parasitical mass living off the reluctant sweat and toil of the world's peasantry and whatever we desire, plan or wish for are luxuries in that the human race is seven days away from starvation if those market trucks stop rolling in to that neon-lit supermarket for comrades, wars, revolutions and political manifestoes are lost on that simple basic fact. The American Supreme Court in 1972 agreed with me and decided that rather than build more prisons to house the growing number of DIY population controllers who made the 'elementary mistake' and ended up in the Death Row blocks, the State, in its awful majesty, apply a legal and logical solution by shooting, gassing, hanging or electrocuting every one the wrong side of the cell bars. It is an unanswerable solution, as I pointed out to the deep frozen supermarket chicken. In a nomadic or primitive society tainted with liberalism the answer can be to drive away the socially undesirable from out of their society, but within a society when their social problem has passed beyond their ability to deal with it or when that society becomes the victim of mass starvation, I alone can offer no solution. When there is a vile and brutal killing of anyone there is a mob roar for revenge and a rage for the ghastly use of the awful old Judaic law of 'an eye for an eye' and the American Supreme Court has now decreed that judicial death shall be the order of the day. I oppose, and I have, with others, over the years protested outside prisons against the death penalty as a matter of pure self-interest, for it takes away from us the moment of blinding rage and that uncontrollable sickness to join the vocal lynch mob howling for sacrificial blood.

I make no defence for those who indulged in murder for their own foul reasons, but for myself I cry that if I do not demand a death in revenge then, with Pilate, my hands are clean. So be it. Using Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* on a scale of one to a thousand, Trombley's book will never make it as an addition to A Level exam world literature, but

Judicial Murder as a Career

with his recorder in his hand Trombley went from prison to prison – 'how' 'how' 'how' does the state kill a citizen apart from beating his or her skull in with a baseball bat? As Trombley records, the American state with all the technology at its finger-licking call still finds it difficult to physically exterminate the individual members of its huddled masses and Trombley records the bureaucratic fuck-ups. The star of his recorder is Frank Leuchter who is the death house craftsman par excellence in that for £40,000 to about £100,000 he has designed gallows, gas chambers, electric chairs and an injection machine for pumping the deadly shit into the body reluctant, as used in five States my friends. But this is the Thatcherite period when money was the



"You have the right ..."

keystone for human slaughter, a thing that never worried Hitler or Stalin. We are into the John Major period when every citizen must be made aware of their rights in law, even as to how the state will kill them. And for that Missouri gets the star on the dressing room door for when a man or woman is to be killed within that prison every single part of the procedure is explained to the prisoner even to the moment of death or, to quote the 1937 Janet Gaynor weepy 'A Star is Born' or to invent a quote for Jessie Tafero who literally burst into flames in 1990 in a Florida electric chair, "you ain't kidding brother".

From Thatcher economics to John Major's Citizens Charter, from post-war liberalism to state legalised killing is no more than the signing of documents by grey men in grey rooms.

But to go from the trivia to the sublime is to flat-foot it from the unfortunate hot seat Jessie to Freedom Press's £1.95 *What is Anarchism?* and after deep digging through those collective opinions one can only murmur, with a shy smile, yes, yes, and now tell us what you think, know or wish to propagate about anarchism. For every collected contribution from the yellowing pages is based on the fatal fallacy of an 'anarchist society' which means, in effect, when 'we' become the benevolent organisers of other people's lives. Every group without exception is dominated by a strong personality supported by weak-willed sycophants from the tiny little liberal commune, any editorial group, Wall Street to the Hitler-Stalin state apparatus, but the great mass of the people have their own lives to live rather than worry about the politics of power no matter what the blurb. Anarchism, of all

social desires, is to demand that within a society that one agrees to accept one's own personal liberty as an individual must be accepted and respected. If others around one struggle towards the creation of a just and humane society, with its flaws, then one will contribute towards it in one's fashion, yet still questioning, and one will contribute one's labour, pay one's taxes be it car, television or national tax, but demonstrating that one's personal liberty is paramount and one will not surrender it carelessly and mindlessly to any clerk in low or high office. If, comrade, you brush this aside with the old joke shop 'cynical smiling' mask then I will tell you that in this year of grace 1993 you call yourself an anarchist but work and pay your taxes and surrender your individual liberties every day of this year of grace 1993 so, little comrade, don't bullshit me. I am of that generation who have lived through two world wars, two world revolutions, tiny crystal radio communication to space visual satellites, men who have leap-frogged from moon walking into deep space and single bombs that can kill tens of thousands of people, so that one must suggest that Kropotkin's cosy pre-1914 First World War of blue skies, green fields, sheep in the meadows, or Colin's self-owned working man's terraced house with its roast potatoes, *News of the World* on Sundays and capital and labour holding hands around the tables have been by-passed by villainous ol' history.

I would suggest that the articles are worthy of a lesser analysis but what I find disturbing is that to the young seeking an answer as to what the hell we are talking about is that almost every one of these contributions belongs to the world of flying saucers and fairies dancing in the morning dew school of social fiction, for its flawed premise is 'come the anarchist society' that those paying their house mortgage, BUPA and private pension contribution do not for one moment believe will ever come into being. I believed that the fundamentals of a socialist society could and can come into being within my lifetime and that anarchism as a personal stand for individual liberty *within any social framework* is of this day 1993. The contributors offer 'dirty work' as a patronising fun thing for we the great unwashed, while my 'hero' Malatesta wrote that: "In the meantime, the need for not interrupting production, and the impossibility of suspending consumption of the necessities of life, will make it necessary to take decisions for the continuations of daily life at the same time as expropriation proceeds". So from 'Walt Disney anarchists' to the 'anarchist strike-breaking truncheon' and all in a few sick pages. These contributions offer nothing to the young seeking understanding for they form a nasty image of one of those small lower middle class cliques within the anarchist movement seeking their own style of authority, over an indifferent population, that their lack of talent and public acclaim denies them. To understand, little comrade, seek other voices and other rooms but realise that your freedom, your personal liberty within any society is the fundamental basis of an anarchist way of life.

Arthur Moyses

— FILM REVIEW —

Malcolm X

Malcolm X
directed by Spike Lee

Soon to be released in the UK, I saw this film in Searly December in the south-eastern USA – in a cinema empty except for myself and six French Canadian tourists. Indeed, although the publicity surrounding this movie has been almost overwhelming, one does wonder who it really aims to appeal to as an audience and what it hopes to achieve.

The story, thanks to media hype, is presumably well known. The film is based on *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Alex Haley (who wrote the excellent *Roots*) and is essentially a political and spiritual biography of the man born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1925 who was to become one of the most important radical black leaders in the United States during the 1960s. Malcolm adopted X as his surname in 1952 in place of his 'slave name', the X representing the loss of the culture and African names of the black Americans. Malcolm X was a particularly complex character whose thought and political outlook was never static but went through several major changes during his adult life. One of the few constants about his thought was that he questioned everything. To regard him as a 'black racist' is not entirely untrue, but this is only a small part of the whole.

X's life, as portrayed in the movie, can be divided into roughly three parts. The first deals with his experiences in childhood and youth – the burning of the family home by KKK riders, the death or murder of his preacher father (an 'uppity nigger'), his move to live with a half-sister in Boston, and the criminal life which landed him in prison. Secondly, his introduction to the Black Moslem 'Nation of Islam' movement following transfer to the Norfolk penal colony in 1948, and his rapid rise through the hierarchy of this somewhat sinister organisation following his release. This period marks the beginning of his self-education and the early development of his political consciousness and involvement in the black civil rights movement which in 1960 led to an ideological shift away from the Nation of Islam. By the middle of July 1963 his position had shifted to one of support for political violence, and in March of 1964, having been

dismissed from his post in the Nation of Islam in January, he left that organisation. The third part of his career – and the shortest – is the last year of his life, in which he made the Hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca, toured Africa and on returning to the US in June founded the Organisation of African American Unity. He now embraced mainstream Islam, taking the name El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, and adopted a new stance in which he began to throw off the separatist politics of his former beliefs.

Naturally, a three-hour film cannot cover every aspect of such a lengthy and varied political career. The first problem, particularly for a young person who has not studied this period in American history in any depth, is that much background detail is not explained – the Black Moslem leader Elijah Mohammed suddenly appears in the film and the viewer is expected to know who he is; likewise Martin Luther King and other personalities. Events too, such as the JFK assassination, are not dated. (By the time the film appears in Europe everyone will have read the hype and so much of this will be known, but I had the unusual experience of seeing it within a week of arriving in the US and knowing nothing about it!)

Being rather young at the time of the Civil Rights and Black is Beautiful movements, and not having read much about this period in American history, everything in the movie was entirely new information to me. I cannot compare the impression conveyed by the film with any personal recollection of the period or the main character. In any case it would not be clear whether any such discrepancy would be due to Alex Haley or Spike Lee or both. It would be unusual, however, for any director to choose to film the biography of someone they did not find interesting and worthy of study, and not surprisingly both Lee's direction and Denzil Washington's excellent portrayal of the character of Malcolm X are sympathetic to the point of occasional eulogy. One therefore wonders how much has been glossed over, omitted or presented in an overly-favourable light. Clearly, unlike many civil rights activists, Malcolm X was never a pacifist, believing firmly in the right to meet violence with violent resistance, and this film makes no attempt to pretend otherwise, going so far

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To answer this question I have to begin with a series of propositions about the history of anarchism:

1. As a political ideology, anarchism was formulated in the 19th century by its founding fathers who, like those of other varieties of socialism – Marxist, Fabian, Social-Democratic – had an optimistic view of inevitable progress towards their goal. They all believed that the conquest of power by 'the people', whether through parliamentary means or through direct action in the streets and factories or through armed struggle, would bring the changes they sought in society. In considering the failure of the anarchists to achieve this goal, we have to remember that bureaucratic state socialism of both social-democratic and Marxist types has failed too. Indeed, anarchists could claim that seventy years of experience of state socialism has delayed the socialist cause by a century.

2. The 19th century anarchists were unique in their rejection not only of capitalism but of the state itself. This was seen as proof that they were not to be taken seriously. Yet the whole history of the 20th century had justified them. It has been the century of *total war*, where the elimination of civilians has become accepted as the consequence of sophisticated weaponry, while the great powers have rivalled each other in selling the means of destruction to every little local dictator in the rest of the world. It has been the century in which mass extermination became the accepted policy of civilised states.

3. The 19th century anarchists looked forward confidently to popular revolutions that would open the way to what they saw as a 'free society'. Events were different. The Mexican revolution of 1911 resulted in the deaths and

as to intercut original newsreel footage (a device made very good use of in this movie) to draw a contrast with King.

Malcolm X moved from a position of advocating emancipation as the work of black people themselves, rejecting the help of others entirely and even embracing a vision of total apartheid and possibly a mass return to Africa, to a belief in the necessity of compromise in order to achieve advancement. This won him many friends, but lost him others who felt he had sold out. Although one gains little idea of the 'inner man' from this film, it shows excellently the enormous effect the personality of Malcolm X and his gift for speaking in public exerted over others, and allows us to draw our own conclusions (although in interviews Lee states that the assassins were clearly from the Nation of Islam) as to who eventually gunned him down in New York on 21st February 1965.

Although many of his pronouncements were ambiguous, and although his views changed as his political and spiritual thought matured, such that all sorts of people now quote Malcolm X in support of any number of ideologies, he will perhaps be most remembered for the famous phrase "Freedom by any means necessary". For him, freedom was such a necessary end that all means were justified in obtaining it. Was this the message of the film? Was the message also that people are not static, that minds can change and even sincerely held and forcibly expressed opinions be later rejected honestly in the light of further thought? I do not think the film actually pushes any particular 'message' although the temptation to do so must have been there – but rather leaves us to think for ourselves and encourages us to enquire further.

I did not find that Malcolm X the movie changed my view of anything or left me politically better informed, but it was enjoyable, well acted and paid wonderful attention to detail throughout. I found the over-eulogistic ending embarrassingly awful and to some extent it detracted from the story which had gone before. Malcolm X, portrayed in this film 'warts and all', was a man whose character and personality were strong enough to stand on their own.

I am not sure whether it is wise to treat Malcolm X or any other popular leader as a great hero. However, the story of black people in the United States is a sorry chapter in world history and it is hardly surprising that heroes should be sought.

Incidentally, the well-chosen soundtrack includes some great music, with numbers from Ray Charles, Billie Holliday, Aretha Franklin and others.

Katy Andrews

— A DIFFICULT QUESTION TO ANSWER —

What will anarchism mean tomorrow?

At a party in Amsterdam to celebrate the 100th issue of *De AS*, which is an anarchist journal with the same format as *The Raven*, I met a group of people intent on discussing the anarchist press. There were, for example, the group who produce *De RAAF*, the paper of the Amsterdam Federation of Anarchists, and those who still issue a bulletin called *De Vrije Socialist*, the title of a famous Dutch anarchist paper started in 1898. I thought I had escaped without making any of those rash promises we tend to give in a convivial atmosphere, but then I was cornered by a nice bunch of people who had just issued the 28th number of their anarchist quarterly *Perspectief*, from Ghent in Belgium. They wanted me to tell them my response to the question "What will anarchism mean tomorrow?" It is a topic I would be happy to evade, but, having been asked, this is what I have sent them.

posthumous glorification of anarchist heroes like Zapata and Magon and the dominance for eighty years of the ironically-named Party of Revolutionary Institutions. The Russian revolution of 1917 resulted in the brutal suppression of the anarchists, and any other dissidents, by 1921 and then seventy years of Leninist-Stalinist dictatorship from which a new generation of anarchists have only recently emerged. The Spanish revolution of 1936 brought the suppression of the anarchists long before the end of the civil war, and was followed by 35 years of Fascist dictatorship. How would Mexicans, Russians or Spaniards today respond to calls for revolution?

4. By the end of the 19th century some anarchists were beginning to formulate the doctrine of anarcho-syndicalism, seeking to turn every workshop dispute into a battle for control of the means of production. It denounced as a betrayal every agreement that the reformist trade unions won over wages, hours and conditions of work. The gains of the unions were written into the law in many countries. (In Franco's Spain as much as in social-democratic Sweden.) By the 1990s employers all over Europe are seeking to avoid the rules with the aim of reducing the cost of labour to that in Taiwan or Colombia. Every Ford worker knows that industrial militancy will result in the multi-national company moving production to another country. This issue is at the heart of the British government's abolition of minimum wage agreements, at the decision, as I write, of the Hoover company to shift production from France to England, and of the British government's rejection of the 'Social Protocol' of the EC Maastricht treaty, and it affects the future strategy of the political left, including the anarchists.

5. The 19th century anarchists, like the whole of the left, assumed that nationalism was a superstition that the 20th century would outgrow. They thought the same about religious beliefs. The last thing that they or anyone else envisaged was the late 20th century rise of militant religious fundamentalism, whether Christian, Jewish, Islamic or Hindu. The result is that, like other non-religious, non-nationalistic people, we have no idea of how to approach these unwelcome phenomena. Do we attack religious revivalism with the risk of feeding rather than reducing its divisive power? Or do we anarchists, hostile though we are to the state, find ourselves defending the secular state against those organised minorities who want to use it for their own purposes? This may not yet be an issue for us, but it is an issue in the United States in defending the secular state against Born Again Christians or for anarchists in Israel defending the secular state against ultra-orthodox Judaism or for Egyptian anarchists defending the institutions of the secular state against Islamic fundamentalism or in India defending the secular state against Hindu extremism.

To my mind, these five propositions about the difference between the world of the anarchists at the end of the 19th and of the 20th centuries result in the need for a different style of anarchist propaganda at the dawn of the 21st century. Faced by the eclipse not merely of anarchism but of the mainstream of socialism I think it important to stress, as I did twenty years ago in the book *Anarchy in Action*, that anarchism is not a theory of utopia but a theory of organisation. I agree with Paul Goodman's remark that "A free society cannot be the substitution of a 'new order' for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of social life".

This belief automatically excludes me from the ranks of those who think in terms of mass revolutions (whose first victims, whether in China or Cuba, have been the anarchists) but it includes me among those who, in the useful polarity posed by Murray Bookchin, believe

in *social ecology* rather than in *deep ecology*. I think that the new support for anarchism in the 21st century will come not from Green parties but from the broader Green movement.

Inevitably the ideas of the 19th century anarchists were *Eurocentric*, even when they were brought to Japan, China and the cities of Latin America by students and immigrants. But one of the anarchist *enlargements* of the late 20th century is the contribution from a different style of anarchist thinking, with a different label, from the Sarvodaya movement in India,¹ and from the evolution of self-help, self-employed settlements in Africa, South Asia and Latin America.² The triumphs of the unofficial economy, keeping society going in the hopeless climate of South America in the face of a predatory ruling class and a military caste which shifts periodically into state terrorism, is now classified as *basismo*, a society which has to build itself from the base.³

I believe that an intelligent 21st century anarchism will draw on its links with the worlds of the Green movement and with the unofficial and informal economies of the poor world, as well as those of the poor in the rich world, to draw anarchist lessons on human survival. I think that the lessons of the 20th century enhance the anarchist message, but that our language has to take account of new and complicated social facts.

Colin Ward

1. Geoffrey Ostergaard, 'Indian Anarchism: the case of Vinoba Bhave' in *The Raven*, vol 1 no 2, August 1987 (London, Freedom Press).

2. See, for example, Jorge Hardoy and David Satterthwaite *Squatter Citizen: life in the urban third world* (London, Earthscan, 1989) and Bertha Turner (editor) *Building Community: a third world case book* (London, BCB, 1988).

3. See the final chapter 'Basismo as if Reality Really Mattered, or Modernisation from Below' in David Lehmann's *Democracy and Development in Latin America* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990).

Food for Thought ... and Action

Recent additions to Freedom Press bookshop.

Radio Sermonettes* by the Moorish Orthodox Radio Crusade Collective, The Libertarian Book Club. Apparently first published as radio broadcasts, these writings expound what the authors describe as 'immediatism', a new movement devoted to restoring face-to-face relations between people which they say grew out of their anarcho-situationist standpoint. The first chapter is more or less a manifesto, and the subsequent ones elaborate the theory or describe some of the practical implications of it: for example, playing games; holding parties, either costume or food and drink or linked verse; gift-giving 'potlatches'. The main points being that all those present should take part in the activity, and that it should not be 'mediated' by print, film, fax or other tools of the spectacle – i.e. there should be no spectators, only participants, and any gifts should be made by the gift-giver, not ready-made. Immediatism thus contains both aesthetic and political elements: 'poetic terrorism' and 'art sabotage' being just two of its manifestations. But the best bit about it is that the authors say it should be done *in secret* in order to prevent the activity in question being understood and acquired by "the agents of alienation" and hence sold for profit as yet another commodity. Some intriguing ideas here. A5 pamphlet, 40 pages, £2.00.

A Short History of Political Violence in Britain* by Martin Everett, published by the author. A diligent and very useful account of another 'Great British institution' – the habitual use of political violence by the state or its agents to enforce its will on the people, from the Norman Conquest through to the present day. Inevitably in a small pamphlet the information has had to be condensed, but the footnotes give plenty of information on where to find more detail. In times like these when the state and its friends in the press and mass media are continually denouncing the 'violence' of any who dare to raise their voices – never mind their hands – in protest at daily injustices, it's nice to

see somebody trying to redress the balance somewhat by demonstrating what hypocrites and wanton bullies these finger-pointers are. A5 pamphlet, approx 14 pages, £1.00.

Since the arguments between social ecologists and deep ecologists are flavour of the month at the moment, I thought I'd add a little fuel to the fire, so to speak, with the following collection of goodies, all from the Mundi Club:

Terra: a magazine for deep green eco-terrorists, issue 1, 'The Environmental Benefits of the Gulf War'. A 'terraist' journal covering national and global green politics. A4, 12 pages, 60p.

Mappa Mundi: exposing the global eco-terrorists, issue 2, 'Car-Buncle – the preposterous world-view of the motorist'. Maps out the dominant, anti-planetary world-view of the global ruling elite, establishes an 'Eco-nomic League' to catalogue eco-crimes and provides a Greenlist of anti-green consumer superstars. A4, 24 pages, £1.00.

The Terra Firm: a theoretical journal for deep greens, off-print 1 of issue 2, 'Ban Cars'. This is a much shortened version of 'A Preliminary Proof for a Temporary Ban on Cars, an Application of the Carbon Theory of Value'. (If after reading *Terra Firm* you want to get the full text, you can trade it in and get £1 off the normal price.) A4, 24 pages, £1.50.

Off-print of issue 2, 'An Ecological and Political Critique of the Rio Earth Summit' (same deal as above if you want the full issue no 2). A4, 16 pages, £1.00.

Trotwatch has now been reprinted and is available again (£1 postage & packing).

Government in Violence* by Leo Tolstoy, Phoenix Press, £5.00, is also back in stock.

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— NEWS FROM THE MUSHROOM — A Report on New Age Ecological Politics

1992 brought a wider sense of the threat of the New Age Traveller. The massed invasion of Castle Moreton Common south of Malvern demonstrated their potential. Festivals in the countryside are the corollary of the urban riots as indicators of alienation, and both are seen as a challenge to the hegemony of the state.

In the wake of the failure of Green 2000, the eco-yuppie wing of the Green Party, the activists have come to see that the traditional methods of protest are bankrupt. Lobbying and forming pressure groups are widely perceived to be useless, and this has led people towards local initiatives and personal action. Two examples of this are the occupation of Timbmet, the tropical hardwood importers at Cumnor near Oxford on 11th May, and the sustained series of protests and the land-squat of the Dongas Tribe at Twyford Down near Winchester. The discredited reformist tactic of lobbying and publicity seeking is being discarded in favour of more militant and confrontational action.

Groups such as Earth First!, Green Anarchist and Carmageddon have a natural constituency at the disaffected periphery of the Greens. Support for such extreme groups will naturally pick up when orthodox campaigns fail or are ignored by the state. The wider and less visible support for these is to be found in the New Age Traveller, lifestyle and summer festival scenes. These share their rejection of dominant cultural values, preferring and individualist, hedonistic existence which rejects the demands made by society but acknowledges the forces of ecological imperatives and the need to coexist rather than compete against nature. Out of this drifting milieu also come the dedicated and committed activists of the Animal Liberation Front and other radical animal rights groups. We also find Deep Greens like the Carmageddon anti-car protest movement, the Social Ecologist followers of Murray Bookchin who publish a student-orientated magazine *Green Revolution* from Bristol, or the

Hull based Mappa Mundi anti-car propagandists.

Not all of these are as far out as the magazine *Green Anarchist* published quarterly from Oxford. The main plank of *Green Anarchist* is its uncompromising rejection of technology, industrial society and big business. *Green Anarchist* is probably the loudest voice of the New Luddites, shouting for "A Free Society in Harmony with Nature" from beneath its masthead and proclaiming "Together we'll smash civilisation" in the editorial of its Spring 1992 issue. *Green Anarchist* emphatically rejects orthodox politics and pressure group style publicity schemes, itself advocating a more direct, boot-in-the-groin approach. It rejects popular culture and the 'New World Ordure', a cartoon shown new age hippies burning down Disneyland.

Green Anarchist is well known for being the magazine to publish the design of a home-made shotgun more dangerous to the user than the person being aimed at. It openly proclaims its subversive intent, urging readers to subscribe under false names - "Remember the state thinks we're subversives and regularly monitors our mail". Green Anarchists were in evidence on the fringes of the Green Party, disrupting the Bridlington Conference (April 1991, see 'Anarchists left out in cold by party' in *The Independent*, Monday 15th April 1991) and unfurling a banner reading 'Green 2000 sell out! Planet not Parliament! All power corrupts!' during the Greens' September 1991 Wolverhampton Conference.

Another example of this emphasis on activism rather than the single-issue, monolithic campaign can be seen in the battle inside the US inspired Earth First! movement, which was brought to Britain during 1991. Earth First! tried to reach Green activists with a tour during October/November of that year. Originally Earth First! was an eco-fundamentalist group dedicated to taking direct action (tree spiking) to protect US wilderness. The Earth First! parent group produced a manual of sabotage, *Ecodefense: a field guide to monkeywrenching*, offering advice on how to spike trees and contaminate excavator's oil systems with grit.

The US organisation split, and a similar polarity has emerged in the UK manifestation of Earth First!

where a bureaucratic centralist management echelon led by George Marshall has attempted to steer the group towards the tried, tested and failed publicity campaign direction. It's the story of the Green Party all over again, with the activists mocking Marshall's strand as 'Office First!'. Knowledge of ALF-style tactics using autonomous cells to make direct strikes against laboratories and equipment has prompted a parallel track approach as a response to the May 1992 Earth First! decision to become an orthodox pressure group. Using the umbrella designation 'Earth Liberation Front!' the activists advocate sabotage like the destruction of Fison's peat cutting machinery on Thorne Moor (8th April) whole Office First! and the reformist bureaucracy of Friends of the Earth fall backwards to dissociate themselves from such extremist developments.

The Earth First! / Earth Liberation Front! split is



reflected in the magazines *Wild* and the still-born *Earth First! action update* plus local sheets like the *South Downs Earth First!* magazine and *Do or Die*, all competing to be the representative voices of the movement. Vitriolic anonymous leaflets have been circulating denouncing leading figures for their passive, paternalistic centralising approach. It is rumoured that up to twenty Earth Liberation Front! cells are operating nationally, perhaps their most prominent activity to date has been the flooding of a water meadow at Twyford Down.

Twyford itself is perhaps the most sustained example of this 'shift towards activism', and the 9th December eviction of the land squat of the Dongas tribe invites comparison with that of Molesworth in the mid-1980s. There are other parallels to be drawn too. Michael Heseltine's use of troops to evict the Rainbow villagers and the present Department of Transport's use of security firms and sub-contractors to intimidate the settlers.

We might make other links between this present current and the earlier militant protest culture which brought us Class War and 'Stop the City'. There is a certain similarity of tone between the gloating reports of arson attacks and vandalism in animal rights magazines, *Green Anarchist* making a Dryden Award to a man who attacked a poll tax bailiff with a blowtorch, and *Class War* with its 'hospitalised copper'.

It is perhaps no coincidence that both *Green Anarchist* and *Class War* can both trace their histories back to the turning point of the easter 1984 'Stop the City' organised by London Greenpeace, but unlike the essentially urban movements like *Class War*, DAM and the *Class Struggle Anarchists*, the new wave Greens are rural and do not fit into the paradigm of class politics. In the past, the two strands have been mutually antagonistic, but are now showing signs of closer links and co-operation. *Class War* now publishes a whole page 'Muckspreader - spreading the dirt on the green front', while *Green Anarchist* sells pamphlets about the LA riots based on articles originally published in *Class War*. This closeness is to be welcomed.

While the stale orthodox pressure groups and parties continue to decline in membership and impact, the New Age groups are multiplying, gaining in strength, renewing and transforming themselves in the process. *Green Anarchist* is being forced to go tabloid, and new pamphlets and locally produced magazines are appearing all the time. Economic decline and events like the Braer tanker disaster strengthen such trends, while demonstrating the bankruptcy of the single-party state. 1993 will continue to see their growth.

Kevin

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Sociology for Anarchists?

Dear Editors,

I think Peter Neville (*Freedom*, 20th February 1993) is wrong to see sociology as a subject "just like any other academic subject, physics for example".

Quasars, knowing what they are, and discussing them, are of no direct and immediate importance to all, to me or anyone else. My ignorance has no more significance than not knowing, say, what an aardvark is. On the other hand, the thinking on subjects like economics, sociology or psychology can and often does have a direct, immediate and fundamental effect on everybody's life. And it is surely the intention of social 'scientists' that it should do so. So these subjects should be explained and discussed in terms that the greatest possible number of people can follow.

It would be a very good thing for social science articles to be longer if that was the result of their authors avoiding technical terms. It seems to me that these terms often act as quick, apparently 'scientific' generalisations, ready-made tokens, that excuse writers from explaining carefully to themselves and to other exactly what is happening and what people are feeling in real particular cases. But it is not only the technical terms that often make true understanding difficult, but obscure expression in general. I must confess I find even some letters in *Freedom* very hard going.

Natural science is politically and socially neutral. Social 'science' is clearly not. Natural science is pretty safe - safe for the rest of us - in the hands of natural scientists. (Its application is another matter.) Social 'science' is a mass of biases, as the never-ending arguments among social 'scientists' show, and is thus far from safe in their hands.

Natural science in natural scientists' hands can of course be dangerous sometimes too. That is

because natural scientists can be moved, by economic or social prejudices, or ambition, to cheat. They do not normally get away with it for very long, though. Sooner or later general agreement is reached by natural scientists. There is a basic difference between the ways in which natural science and social 'science' work. Natural science is based on evidence that can be observed by the physical senses and measured, and on conclusions argued rationally from that evidence. Both the evidence and the argument from it can be tested by other scientists, and all natural scientists agree on the principles by which that should be done. Social 'science' deals to a large extent in abstract concepts that cannot be measured, and as far as I know there isn't a general agreement on the method of argument. (If sociology was mainly a matter of statistics - which are important - there would not be so much to worry about so long as the statistics were reliable. But it is in the nature of the social 'sciences' that there is much more incentive to cheat.)

Does Peter Neville think that an understanding of sociology is important or even essential to a person wanting to understand and perhaps embrace anarchism? Can he say who are thinking persons or intelligent readers and who not? Does he think one - or *Freedom* - should not try to persuade *Sun* readers to become anarchists. Is it necessary for a person who wants to discuss anarchism to know what figurational sociology and post-modernism are?

Finally, I could not afford to have one book on post-modernism on my bookshelves, let alone six; and there are a great many people much worse off than I am.

Amorey Gethin

News from Angel Alley

Apologies for no 'News from Angel Alley' in the last issue, but it should not be interpreted as a general exodus. In fact in *Freedom* Press Bookshop, January was a record-breaking sales month.

Freedom and *Raven* renewals have been coming in fast and furious and Harold, who has taken over the subs, is encouraged by the response. However, if we have not heard from those of you whose subs expired at the end of 1992 and, after all, we have sent you five issues of *Freedom* on spec, this is the last issue we shall be sending if we don't hear from you.

Completed '*Freedom* Readership Surveys' are still trickling in and your views about *Freedom* and how we can make our propaganda on anarchism more effective and convincing are never too late. Elsewhere in this issue Denis Pym presents a lighthearted impression of the second 100 replies. He suggests that perhaps the regular editorial writer should be put out to grass - and he agrees! Applicants for the (unpaid) job please send your CVs in writing to the non-executive, non-existing editorial collective post haste!

We are still hoping to dispatch *Raven 21* by the end of March though the response for the issue on 'Women and Anarchism' has

been very disappointing. Mary Quintana, who demands that *Freedom* should have a women's page in each issue, has sent us a long communication on the same subject. We are not printing it, because we cannot accept her thesis that women comrades and readers are discriminated against in *Freedom*. Here and now we invite our women readers to contribute articles or letters to *Freedom*!

Thanks to all who have contributed to our funds.

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1 A WOMEN'S PAGE?

Dear Editors,
There are quite a few questions I'd like to ask pro-feminist anarchist men.

Do you see yourself as a 'potential rapist' or at least accept that your interests are served every time a woman is raped by a man? A charge recently revived and found proved (in a broadsheet newspaper), in the wake of the mass rape of Bosnian women by Serbian soldiers, was that 'all men are potential rapists'; the article went on to claim that the power of all men over all women is vindicated and upheld every time a woman is raped.

Do you believe that men go to war because, by shedding the blood of their enemies, they are somehow compensating for their 'menstrual envy'? In other words, is adult maleness a sociobiologically determined state of beastliness? The theory of 'menstrual envy' has found an airing in the mainstream press. But what I'd like to know is whether those women who handed out white feathers during the First World War were affronted by the idea of some men not being menstrually envious.

Do you believe that (non-feminist) women do not realise how much men hate them? (A claim made by Germaine Greer not so long ago.) Do you believe that one in four women is the victim of domestic violence, one in five women the victim of rape or attempted rape, or one in three children the victim of sexual abuse? Or do you think the statistical books might just be cooked here?

Do you think it is possible that feminism is a dogmatic, authoritarian ideology and therefore unlike an ideology like anarchism? Might it not be the case that feminism's aim is not the liberation of women but the subjugation of men?

Tim Thompson

2

Dear Editors,
Mark Stevens in his letter to *Freedom* (20th February 1993) seeks to chide me for using a naughty word in my letter to a respectable anarchist paper. Tut, tut, what would the Vicar say!

I used strong language in my letter quite advisedly, for I have noticed that when the Free Range Egghead and his kind publish excellent pieces in *Freedom* nobody seems to take much notice. It is when Wildcat puts her paw in that people sit up and take notice!

Stevens says he wants the opposite of "the rational and the practical"; but that is the *irrational* and the *impractical*, although he refers to "intuition and

spirituality". I suggest that he goes to his Vicar for the latter two commodities and does not bother his head about anarchism. For if he starts to read anarchist writings he will come across naughty works like Bakunin's *God and the State* which urge us to seek that which is rational and practical rather than to be led by the nose by the Vicar in pursuit of the "spiritual".

He continues to plead for a women's page in *Freedom* ("even a column would be a start", he says). But to have such a page would be to pander to the conventional sexist attitude that is all too common in the publishing industry. You don't have to tell me about the unfair discriminations from which women suffer. I've lived with strongly feminist women all my adult life and well know their viewpoint. To offer them a 'women's page' in an anarchist paper would be a bloody insult! (Tut, tut, another naughty word – is Mr Stevens blushing?) If this idiotic idea were acted upon then should we have separate pages for black, brown, yellow and white people? And perhaps separate pages for gays, lesbians and oldies? The point that I want to make, and make most strongly, is that *every single page of an anarchist paper should apply to men and women alike, to everyone irrespective of their biological sex, sexual preference, skin colour, age, class origin or other personal index*. We are all human and members of one society, and the aspirations of anarchism apply to us all.

Tony Gibson

3

Dear Editors,
I do wish people like Mark Stevens would think through the implications of what they are saying. To jettison reason in favour of intuition is to open the door to any charlatan or maniac who feels strongly about anything. Hitler and Margaret Thatcher are two obvious examples of people who intuitively knew they were right. I'm sure that all the new racists feel much the same way. I would have thought that the last fifteen years of 'conviction politics' would have provided sufficient reason to avoid the path he seems to be suggesting.

In making the extraordinary suggestion that moral disciplines do not involve reason, and suggesting that we should abdicate out intelligence in favour of some sort of warm gooey emotional bath Stevens is in fact perpetuating the old sexist stereotypes that have served to keep women in varying degrees of helotry. Similar ones served to keep

black people in subjection (the natural sense of rhythm nonsense for example). Obviously if women are deficient in reasoning abilities then no matter how wonderfully and spiritually intutional they cannot operate in those areas where reason predominates. That is sexist claptrap and any woman who falls for it is being conned.

As I tried to show in *Raven 19*, sexually appropriate behaviour is learned. It varies from culture to culture, society to society, both geographically and historically. If Mr Stevens has any empirical evidence to the contrary I for one would like to know of it. But he's on a dangerous quest. 'Different but equal'

has been notable largely in attempts to justify existing patterns of subordination this century.

Odd though it is to find myself in agreement with Tony Gibson, I have to say he is quite right in that respect. It is not just Lilian Wolfe turning in her grave. I imagine Emma Goldman and Mary Wollstonecraft, not to mention Malatesta and Kropotkin, are all on a fast twirl as well.

If Mr Stevens were not so hostile to rationality he might try reading them, and then looking at the evidence, and then shutting up. Women have enough problems from a patriarchal society without being defended by arguments that really justify their continued subjection. The last time I heard those arguments was from Mary Whitehouse.

John Pilgrim

ILLUSION OF PC

I

Dear *Freedom*,
I am afraid that Ian Borrows has totally misunderstood the nature of political correctness and in doing so has whitewashed the last rotten vestige of Stalinism. The basic idea behind PC begins with the Marxist-Leninist cult of the USSR – any criticism of the Workers Paradise was 'objectively fascist' and sceptics were vilified in the worst manner. *The whole point of PC is to suppress critical thought*. Radicalism does not imply PC, but a mindless, simplistic, black and white authoritarian leftism does. The first time I ever heard the term used was in the early 1970s by some Yuppies ridiculing the Maoists of the 'laughter is bourgeois' variety (yes, some Maoite moron actually said that). At this time Weatherman had also deemed criticism of the Black Panther party to be 'racist', an example of the New Left PC. The term was considered an insult, a synonym for prig or self-righteous creep, and remained so in the Vancouver left scene at least until I moved from there in 1986. When in the last '80s some young American radicals took up the term in a positive way I was horrified, especially when nonsense started appearing to the effect that whites could never criticise blacks, nor men, women and Shakespeare (among others)

II

Dear *Freedom*,
The article 'The Illusion of Political Correctness' (6th February) must certainly have struck a chord with anarchists, socialists and indeed many liberals, all of whom I'm sure are no stranger to the accusation of falsehood when confronting accepted 'norms'. However, the point of relevance, I believe, for those of us who hold an oppositional viewpoint is the wariness of opening ourselves up to the 'political correctness' attack and so say nothing, or else marginalise what we say by qualifying it with 'I don't want to sound too right-on, but ...'

So, how are we to go about countering the 'political correctness' putdown? Other than refusing to apologise for our beliefs (which doesn't actually side-step the full force of the attack), I believe that we can only wait for this politically rhetorical term to be consigned to history along with the now-defunct 'loony left'. When it is, and those against whom 'political correctness' is a valid attack (although I doubt they actually exist) have moved onto the next flavour-of-the-month, then those of us with genuine convictions shall be fully vindicated. Although by then an alternative equally marginalising label will doubtless find its way into our vocabulary.

P.J. Hale

derided as a Dead White European Male. If the media is making a thing out of PC, it is ultimately the fault of the left for allowing these bullies a free run. Actually, the Canadian mass media does a fairly good job of distinguishing between, say, the Green Party and the monomaniacs who firebomb butcher shops or between mainstream feminism and 'feminazis' like Andrea Dworkin. It is the right-wing lunatic fringe which uses its own version of the Stalinist amalgam technique to equate radicalism with PC. (These nuts try to make Hilary Clinton out as a dangerous feminist extremist!) The PCers, in shouting that 'radicalism is under attack', are engaging in another old Stalinist ploy – whenever the Communist Party was being lambasted, they would start shrieking that 'the Left' or 'the Workers' Movement' was in mortal danger.

Nor has the media needed to invent 'leftist lunacy', believe me, after almost thirty years as a dissident I know that the left includes some very fine people, but also some of the worst crackpots, fanatics and hypocrites alive. If the left doesn't want to be picked on, it should clean up its act! Conspiracy theories about the media are just a cheap cop-out, made even worse through sullyng George Orwell's name by dragging him into it. (Orwell was a critic of PC when it was in its 1930s toddler stage.)

One last point, anarchism has nothing whatsoever to do with a totalitarian abomination like PC. Anarchism is based upon a balanced scepticism, a critical thinking that accepts no sacred cows, it is joyously *incorrect* and by its spirit of freedom can never turn into an ideology for hate-mongers and weepy masochistic liberals such as are found in the cult of Political Correctness.

Larry Gambone

III

Dear Editors,
Ian Borrows (6th February) writes about the undesirability of Political Correctness (PC). A further point is: who decides which words and ideas are PC and which are not? Ian's mention of 1492 and *Last of the Mohicans* can illustrate this. In 1492 the Caribs were shown as gentle and hospitable until Spanish excesses forced them to be cruel. In *Mohicans* all the Amerindians were shown as warlike and some as cruel and treacherous as well. I have a friend who believes that all Amerindians were peaceful before the colonialists arrived. To him this is PC. When I tell him the Aztecs practised mass ritual slaughter of prisoners *before* the Spanish arrived he tells me it's just colonialist propaganda and that I'm not PC.

It isn't hard to see the motive of those of the left who promote PC. They have failed in every endeavour – disarmament, internationalism, anti-capitalism – but rather than admit their failure they have come up with this PC nonsense as though

Feminism a Dogma?

Dear Editors,
In reply to Ernie Crosswell's letter (*Freedom*, 20th February 1993) let me say that, knowing Emma Goldman's essay *The Traffic in Women*, I don't think her statement on the subjugation of women is inconsistent with the other statement taken from *Woman Suffrage*. On the contrary, both are correct in that they show that both men and women can be oppressors as well as be oppressed! So Emma is definitely *not* "an example of muddled thinking", as Ernie wants to sell us. Quite the contrary, woman, *as well as* man, must assume responsibility for what she does, rather than allow herself to be devalued as a childlike person without any responsibility. What about female chauvinism, by the way, existing alongside male chauvinism, whose existence Ernie and other feminists have always tenaciously denied.

Yes, Emma was much reviled and, strangely, here we have another *male*, viz Ernie, who simply devalues a brilliant woman critic of such farsightedness as Emma who (as one among other such critics) always insisted that both men and women are *fallible human beings*. We are all here to learn. Whereas your perfectionist feminists, with your sterile 'vision', are evidently not.

Let Ernie read what Jonn Roe from Rio de Janeiro wrote in his letter to *Peace News* last May. Also, may I suggest to Ernie that he first wait until my full article appears in the forthcoming issue of *The Raven* where I elaborate on this issue – it's *not* most unfair to blame ideologies for our ills which are by the way invented and enforced by both men and women! Where is your anarchism, Ernie? Unlike Marxism, anarchism is not an ideology because it seeks to abolish power structures; nor are women's and men's lib because, unlike feminism, they endeavour true equality between the sexes. This includes respect for male life as much as for female life. Remember that men in Bosnia are prevented from leaving the country (because they are useful as conscripted cannon fodder), whereas women's lives are saved by allowing them to pass the borders, together with children.

I think I certainly do *not* miss the point that "on the higher levels it is almost exclusively men who oppress both men and women" because this simply is not true. Look at the education sector, for instance, which is firmly in woman's grip. This even goes as far as making children women's properties. Aside from that, these (comparatively) few men in power are mostly backed up by women who educated them and who want to have them provide for them so that they can lead a stress-free and enjoyable life. Thus the old gender stereotypes are reinforced and things do not change. Here women are in power too.

Anarchism means doing away with all tyrants, be they external or internal ones (again, what Emma insisted on).

Peter Geiger
Hamburg

they are doing something positive. It isn't positive, it puts thought in a straight-jacket and gives ammunition to their enemies, as Ian Borrows pointed out.

Who decides what is true? In your issue of 9th January I asked for a discussion of the seven demands of Italian anarchists made in 1920 and repeated by you last December. One demand was that there be unanimity of opinion on scientific matters. This was a bloody stupid demand, both in 1920 and 1992. Such demands, like PC, are the products of small minds and I still wonder why you printed it and failed to discuss it when asked to do so.

Mike Montrose

More on Sociology

Dear Editors,
In reply to Peter Neville (letter, 20th February), sociology is recognised as an inexact science (or pseudo-science) because, unlike physics, it is to do with people's ideas about the behaviour of other people. Quasars, whatever they are, appear to emit certain signals, observable through telescopes, which appear the

same to any viewer, Marxist, Christian or whatever.

Bosnian barbarism is not the result of Bosnians' inability to understand post-modernism, figurational sociology, quasars or relativity. It is the result of greedy, power-hungry 'cultured' politicians and hypocritical 'cultured' religious leaders setting people against one another.

One does not need to attend universities which turn out those 'cultured' specimens to understand the world's problems – a short course on the behaviour of the 'lower' animals should tell us where we are going wrong.

Ernie Crosswell

P.S. Those readers who criticise the monotony of regular editorial commentary should understand that:
a) they are necessary for new readers,
b) they are an alternative to spending money on the millionaire press, and
c) they are useful for providing material for letters to those national papers.

Donald's Appalled

Dear comrades,
I am labelled, insulted and appalled by the statement in Mack the Knife's column (20th February) that sociobiology is "advocated by Mr Rooum in *Freedom*".

I have never believed the theory that human social behaviour is genetically determined, and I have certainly never advocated it in *Freedom* or anywhere else. Whatever have I done to Mack the Knife to deserve such gratuitous misrepresentation?

Donald Rooum

Anarchist Forum

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

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 19th March - Open discussion
 26th March - 'Anarchism and the Labour Party' (speaker Peter Neville)
 23rd April - 'Anarchism and the Collapse of the Cold War and the New World Order' (speaker Dave Dane)
 30th April - Open discussion
 Monday 3rd May at 2pm - May Day Picnic in Osterley Park, Hounslow. Details later.
 7th May - 'A New World in Our Hearts' (speaker Chris Draper)
There are vacancies for speakers from 14th May to 2nd July
 9th July - Last meeting: planning the 1993/94 programme

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 be either speaker-led meetings or general discussions. Overseas or out-of-town speakers are particularly welcome. Friday is the only night available for the meetings as the centre is booked up for classes on other nights. Anyone interested should contact Dave Dane or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (Tel: 081-847 0203). Not too early in the morning please.

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