

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

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FIFTY PENCE

“Freedom, like love,
must be conquered for
ourselves afresh every
day”

H.W. Nevinson

THE BUDGET DOUBLE-CROSS MAKING THE POOR PAY FOR THE RICH

Surely no one will be taken in by the Scrocodile tears in the millionaire press and among some Tory politicians at the thought of thousands of old age pensioners shivering to death as a result of the imposition of a progressive Value Added Tax on domestic fuel supplies in the next two years. We have no doubt that by the time the tax starts killing us oldies off, Mr Lamont (he'll

CORRUPTION UNLIMITED

It is quite impossible to keep up with the news of corruption at government and City and industrial levels which surfaces in the media daily. Both the Reagan and Bush administrations in the USA were riddled with corruption. In Japan one almost feels that no politician worth his salt could be anything but corrupt. In the late Soviet Union the party bosses in the so-called independent republics all had their rackets, just as in the East European bloc no leader failed to salt away his 'retirement' pension in a Swiss bank account. Recently much publicity has been given to corruption in government circles in France, Italy and Spain, mostly as contributions to party funds in return for contracts in public works and government supplies.

In Britain everybody knows, because it is public knowledge, that the Labour Party is largely financed by the Trade Unions. On the other hand, the Party of government does not issue details of who finances its propaganda. *Labour Research* recently produced details of some contributors from company balance sheets. But in 1992, in election year, £17 million was contributed to the Tory coffers from nameless admirers, and the Party chairman is not prepared to say where that money came from. Why, in the circumstances, should one assume that only the French, Italians and Spaniards are prepared to give favours in return for donations to the Party's funds?

Recently the EC required that ??? should refund a £44 million 'sweetener' that the government gave them to take over the ailing Rover motor industry. Did we, the public, know anything about this?

And we haven't heard any more about enquiries as to how young Mark Thatcher has come to be worth £24 million in a matter of a few years.

still be there!) and a generous government with its sights set on a general election in 1996 will find an excuse to give the oldies a special bonus to keep the home fires burning and will expect them to once more give their cross to their Tory benefactors.

In fact the whole Budget was a double-cross - as usual. Why should it be otherwise, seeing that the government is only concerned with maintaining the status quo in a capitalist regime? The likes of Lilley, Portillo, Bottomley and Shepherd are typical of the thug-like Thatcherites who look upon the City tycoons and crooks as the 'wealth producers' who have to be protected and encouraged, and the rest of us as the undeserving work-shy scroungers, not to mention the oldies who have lived too long and are a burden on the working population which has to pay more taxes to keep them ('divide and rule' is an historic British tactic not only for Europe!). It was a double-cross

because once again the Budget protected the rich and clobbered the poor. Andrew Marr in *The Independent* writes:

"We British have always had a thing about it [income tax], hating it with special fervour. At elections, the size and direction of income tax seems to matter more to voters than anything else. It is invasive in a way that spending taxes are not."

And the regular shouting match between Mr Major and the Opposition's Mr Smith is that Labour lost the election in 1992 because they proposed tax increases for those earning more than £400 a week whereas the Tories said their aim was to reduce taxes. But having won the elections they are now adding 1% on national insurance for employees but nothing for their bosses, and the introduction of VAT in two bites to 17½% on private and fuel and energy consumption. Therefore, says Mr Smith, how can the electorate ever trust these crooks again? Tut, tut! Mr

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NO CAPITALIST SOLUTION TO THE UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS

Both political parties now declare their first priority is to deal with unemployment. In spite of their passionate declarations as to what they are doing (government) and what they would do (opposition) the fact is that they can do nothing. *And what is amusing for anarchists is that as they privatise more of the public services they can do even less.*

Witness the coal fiasco. Had they not privatised the electricity industry - giving the new bosses carte blanche to eliminate the British coal industry if they so wished and introducing gas powered stations, and importing coal from Colombia, Australia, South Africa, Poland and nuclear power via cable from France - there would have been no crisis in the coal industry of the magnitude it is assuming, even with the face-saving decision to subsidise it to the tune of £500

million to keep some of the 31 condemned pits open at least for a year or two.

But neither government nor Opposition can tackle the question of unemployment so long as they believe in 'market forces' and refuse to stimulate demand by a radical 'redistribution of wealth'.

As we write, the monthly figures of Britain's trade with all countries outside the European Community shows that imports exceeded exports by £1,300 million, in spite of a devalued pound sterling which the 'experts' assured us way back on 'Black Wednesday' last September would result in increased exports. Well, it hasn't happened and will not happen because the Western

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THE BUDGET DOUBLE-CROSS MAKING THE POOR PAY FOR THE RICH

(continued from page 1) Smith. Since the Labour lot lost, you are saying that if returned to office *you wouldn't* increase taxes. The industrial revival under Labour would provide all the revenue (on profits presumably) to finance your Brave New Britain. We don't believe it for one moment.

But let us return to aspects of the Budget which would, we submit, confirm our view that even Citizen Major is more concerned with the welfare of the rich and the capitalist system than of the welfare state - in spite of his declaration at one of the Prime Minister's Question Time circuses that he had "given the first government commitment to a policy of full employment for more than a decade" (Anthony Bevin in *The Independent*).

With an estimated deficit of £50,000 million for 1993-94 the Chancellor had a number of options for meeting some of this deficit. He invariably chose not to tax the rich by increasing 'super tax' (which had been lowered under Thatcher from 80% to 40%). There would be no increases in income tax - the only mechanism available to the capitalist system to 'redistribute wealth'. (That it has never succeeded even under Labour governments is surely proof that it is a waste of time for genuine socialists to imagine that capitalism can be voted out of existence!)

Mr Lamont gave a number of financial

lollipops to so-called small businesses (incidentally nowadays a 'small business' is one that employs anything up to 100 wage slaves) to keep them going. He declared that they were the backbone of capitalism's recovery. You bet! More small businesses go bust every week as more naive optimists are persuaded to gamble their redundancy money in schemes which will never prosper - through no lack of enthusiasm or energy on their part, but because the whole system is ganged up against them.

It is true that the media have played up the domestic fuel tax - so nobody can ignore this aspect of the government's aim to raise money by *direct taxation* as opposed to clobbering the rich by *indirect* - that is, income - tax.

The 15p increased tax on petrol is by standards of fairness - in a capitalist society - fair since it makes you contribute more for the more mileage you cover, whereas road tax, further increased by £15 to £125, is blatantly unfair. Not only did the Chancellor justify the increase on the grounds that the abolition of VAT on new cars would be continued, but whereas the road tax was originally based on the horsepower of the vehicle (so that the Rolls Royce owner paid a lot more than the modest owner of an Austin 7 or a Deux Chevaux) today there is no distinction. In addition, there are

millions of car owners who have never owned a new car and who only own a car because in many rural areas, for instance, there is no public transport and no work locally so without a vehicle to get to the nearest town there is no chance of a job. They are paying an additional £15 a year for the benefit of the rich who can change their car every year.

The Chancellor also announced that two railway schemes were approved. One was the new line from Heathrow Airport to Paddington at a cost of £330 million, and the fast line from St Pancras to the Channel Tunnel at Folkestone at a cost of between £2-3 billion. The Chancellor was at pains to point out how many thousand jobs would be secured. But apart from the jobs created who will benefit from these two prestige schemes? Not the unemployed, nor the homeless, nor the thousands of people needing hospital treatment and who have to join the long waiting lists and put up with pain and anxiety. Three hours to Paris and half an hour from Heathrow to the centre: this 'matters' only to the rich. But there is no money to improve the public transport system that millions of people need day in day out just to get to work. Yes, the government has allocated another £2,000 million for more motorways for the car commuters - hardly among the low paid, surely?

Have we made our point?

NO CAPITALIST SOLUTION

(continued from page 1)

capitalist world is in a crisis of over-production - or at least that supply exceeds demand.

So long as the electricity generators are allowed to import coal at the expense of thousands of jobs here; so long as we go on importing millions of radios, televisions, computers, washing machines, lawnmowers, cauliflowers, lamps, furniture, animal feed ... you name it, all the items we can, or used to, produce here; which in the name of market forces are being imported because they are cheaper and the consumer benefits. But in reality it is at the expense of millions of unemployed who have at least to be fed and housed (more or less) - not by the government but at the consumers expense - if we are to be considered civilised by the community. So where is the saving?

In this connection one of the most ridiculous and wasteful aspects of the capitalist system and its so-called market forces which results not in trade but in 'import-export' is that transport costs account for 20% of world so-called trade!

The second and no less important consideration in any serious war on unemployment is that full-time jobs should continue to be the five eight-hour days working week. So long as this remains the criteria both for employers, unions, government and, above all, the wage slaves themselves, unemployment will go on increasing inevitably.

After the Budget there was a headline in *The Independent* (17th March) which read 'LESS JAM TODAY - AND EVEN LESS TOMORROW'.

Our reply to that headline is that there has been 'TOO MUCH JAM FOR TOO MANY PEOPLE WHO PRODUCE NOTHING THAT WE NEED'.

Neither the Tories nor the Labour opposition propose to do anything about our parasitic capitalist system, which explains why, inevitably, if enough people come to share the anarchists' conclusions change will come about not by a new party, Green or otherwise, we must be prepared to destroy privilege!

Last week the Health Minister was questioned in Parliament about an office refit at Lewisham Hospital costing half a million pounds. During the financial year just ending, a year when many hospitals had to suspend services because they ran out of money, it seems from listening to NHS workers that almost every hospital had its manager's office lavishly refitted, but only exceptional cases were mentioned in Parliament or the press. Lewisham, it seems, is exceptional by being more lavish than most - a quarter of a million instead of half a million and the expenditure would probably have passed unnoticed.

Highly-paid managers, to 'cut our bureaucratic waste' in the NHS, were mostly appointed in 1991-92 and began really to take control in 1992-93. Naturally, since they were business people, their first priority was to replace the dull offices in which bureaucracy had been carried on with swish managerial suites.

A refit was urgently needed at Brighton General Hospital, expecting visitors from the Conservative Party Conference at Brighton in October. Of course, Conservative delegates would judge the hospital by the state of the manager's office.

Brighton General is built in the style of architecture known as Queen Ann Front and Mary Ann Back. An elegant facade overlooks

Managerial Suites for the NHS

the sea, and behind the facade is an untidy clutter of extensions and outhouses. In April, the stately front housed some of the wards. By October, it had become the office block and all the wards were at the back. Obviously the move was costly, and to meet the cost it was necessary to cut down on some consumables. The reason the move got reported in the press was that the hospital ran short of white-cell filters used in the treatment of leukaemia.

A complaint to the Charity Commission led to press reports of the office refit at the Royal Marsden, a London hospital specialising in cancer. A charity, the Royal Marsden Hospital Appeal, raised half of the £25 million needed to refit the whole hospital. Out of this money, the manager's office was equipped with a personal kitchen, a bathroom with a power shower, several chesterfield sofas, a chandelier, and a unique carpet incorporating the RMH logo.

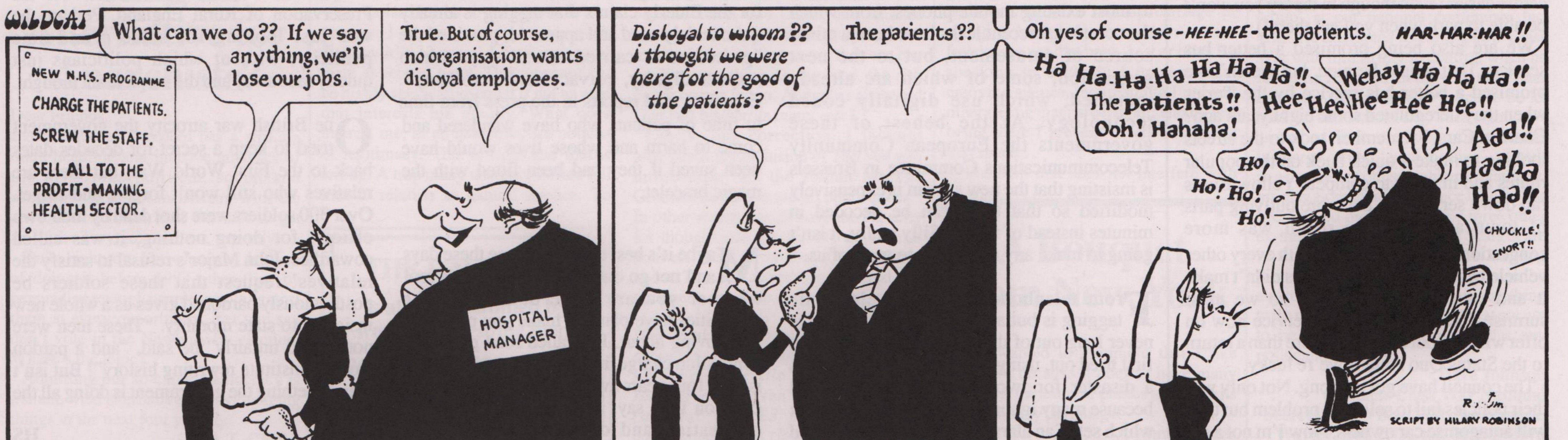
The carpet alone cost £60,000 including fitting. The area it covers includes part of a corridor which used to be a busy wheelchair route. Porters have now been instructed to take wheelchairs up in the lift to the next floor, wheel them along the upstairs corridor, and

bring them down again, so as not to damage the carpet.

Now some of the people who stood about in shopping malls rattling collecting boxes all day, have asked the Charity Commissioners to investigate whether the money they collected was misapplied. Phyllis Cunningham, the hospital manager, is holder of the title Businesswoman of the year 1992. The expenditure of her office was approved by Marmaduke Hussey the chairman of the hospital board, better known as chairman of the BBC.

If the spending of health funds on offices were to continue year after year, perhaps even the Tories would begin to ask whether putting business people in charge of health services is really the money-saving wheeze they thought it was. But it will not continue. The office refurbishments were one-off capital projects, now completed and paid for.

In the new financial year, therefore, there will be less spent on office refurbishment and more available for treating the sick. Then we may expect Tory boasting that the business-trained managers they installed have succeeded in getting more health services for the same money.



Report of a lecture on 'Bread Riots in Eighteenth Century East Anglia' by Frank Grace at Grundisburgh Local History Society

Even for someone old fashioned enough to find the public lecture a splendid form of entertainment, this particular evening promised to be odd. It turned out odder than I thought. Here in dark blue Grundisburgh was a group of people listening intently to a speaker telling them that the poor and dispossessed had a clear idea of social and economic justice, that they would take their own initiatives to ensure it, that free market capitalism didn't work, and that if you deprive those at the bottom of the heap of any effective

The Moral Basis of Resistance

voice in the determination of their affairs you will get 'disturbances' ... and applauding warmly at the end.

The topic was the so-called Bread Riots in eighteenth century East Anglia and Frank Grace, every well-meaning *Guardian* reader's idea of a history lecturer, suggested at the very beginning that contemporary lessons might well be drawn from the events of this period. Riots of this type, he argued, were not just spontaneous explosions of anger but a patterned reaction to social change that was found in many rural areas at that time. The ingredients were familiar. Dramatic inflation following wars that were draining local

resources, an intensification of poverty as market economics superseded both custom and a decaying (in this case Tudor) legal framework, erosion of employment opportunities however wretched, the latent external crisis (as revolutionary feeling in France came to the boil) and people reacting to social change over which they had no control by limited direct action.

The term riot, as E.P. Thompson had pointed out,* is quite misleading when applied to many of these events. They were an assertion of what he calls the moral economy of the crowd. These crowd actions were based on a belief in traditional rights and customs and in general they were supported by a wider consensus of the community, so strong that it overrode motives of fear or deference. The enclosure movement had already violated many existing ideas of what constituted the common wealth and the destabilising forces of a market economy were clearly seen by those closest to the markets at the time, the women, to be resulting not just in want but also in a loss of community. In other words, whatever triggered the event the food riot was a complex and disciplined form of direct action. Its basis was a set of moral ideas about economic roles within the community which constitutes, in E.P. Thompson's words, "the moral economy of the poor". It was the outrage to these moral assumptions that was the occasion for direct action.

Interestingly up to 1800 some, but by no means all, members of the magistracy seem to have treated these 'orderly riots' with some sympathy, even occasionally a degree of support. 1800, though, was the watershed. After 1800, as this particular group became increasingly identified with agricultural and industrial capitalism, as the big nineteenth century landowner began to emerge, the repression became ferocious in its intensity. Ahead lay the Luddite riots of 1812 and the last agricultural labourers' revolt of the Swing

period. Both can now clearly be seen as the responses of people to economic and social change over which they had no control. It is now generally recognised that the Luddites were far from being the few dim machine wreckers of the schoolbooks of my childhood. They were articulate people who had clearly grasped the problems of the technological change facing them. And it took three times as many troops to hold down Yorkshire and Lancashire as Wellington had for the Peninsular war.

That, however, was a different world. Eighteenth century rural England, in spite of the enclosures and paternalistic though it was, had a sense of economic morality that surfaced periodically in most social layers. It was certainly at the basis of the relatively disciplined food riot which represented one attempt to keep that morality active and alive. Ahead lay a darker period where starvation among the poor would be accepted as part of the natural order of things and the attempt to stay alive would carry a death sentence.

Perhaps that too is coming again. We too are faced with a situation where, with all the injustices that existed, a society (where all had a stake in ensuring that welfare provision was as generous as possible) is being destroyed in the name of market capitalism and the illusion of choice for the few. It is an illusion though, because, as reforming Victorians saw only too clearly and as any American city shows today, we can none of us escape the consequences of economic and social disintegration.

The ordered food riots of the eighteenth century – "collective bargaining by riot" – were briefly effective on a local basis. It would be as well to reconsider their efforts, not to write them off as historical failures, but to absorb their lessons of direct action and the importance of a moral community. As Frank Grace mischievously ended, "it would be possible to get quite political about this".

John Pilgrim

* See 'The Moral Economy' and 'The Moral Economy Reviewed' in E.P. Thompson's *Customs in Common*, Merlin, 1991.

Dorset Diary

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole together form the biggest conurbation south of London. Such a large concentration of people will, of course, cause problems when they want to move around. It wasn't such a surprise therefore when we learnt recently from local planners that traffic between Bournemouth and Poole in twenty years time will be as bad as it currently is in central London. Given that there it reportedly moves about as fast as it did in 1915 this is pretty bad news. However, the problem is not confined to the future. Ignoring for the moment the snarl-ups and the pollution – a pain to say the least – a bill of £70 million had to be footed last year to pay for crashes and casualties on our roads when 52 people were killed and 426 injured seriously enough to be hospitalised. Put another way, more than one hospitalisation every day and a funeral a week, and that's just this little corner of the world. Nor was last year extraordinary. The previous year saw 51 deaths and 498 hospitalisations. Such figures are distressing.

Of course, the local council is concerned. Perhaps all the more so as it is Liberal Democratic and this type of thing is right up their street (no pun intended). They have announced the "toughest ever anti-car policy for the area" in Poole and Bournemouth. So what does this amount to? Well, increases in car park costs are on the way, as are more yellow lines to prevent parking in certain areas. In addition to this I'm happy to be able to inform you that as of this week I'm now sitting in Britain's fiftieth 20mph zone. All very exciting.

Such measures are of course the stuff of local politics – bitism you might call it – a tackling of the symptoms without getting to the roots of the problem, which is that we live in the biggest conurbation south of London and there are too many cars around. Squeeze a balloon and the air goes down at the other end, but it's still there. None of the measures above will do anything to take private cars off the roads or bring everyday life down to a more manageable scale. And the council certainly realises that given that, in contrast to all these good intentions, another 'relief' road is planned to make access to and from the town centre easier (even though in theory you won't be able to park when you get there!)

We are also being promised a better bus service. That would be nice, but weren't we promised a better bus service by the Tories when they deregulated some eight years ago? Charles Cars, I remember, took to the streets looking to make a quick buck on the popular routes and in order to compete Yellow Buses ran down services to the more outlying parts of town and the only result was more congestion in the town centre with every other vehicle being a bus. Charles cars didn't make it and went out of business, so we must surmise that any 'improved' service now on offer will turn out to be little more than a return to the Status Quo Ante if we're lucky.

The council have got it wrong. Not only will their policies fail to solve the problem but they will antagonise car owners. Now I'm not a car

lover and have been knocked off my bike a few times and hospitalised once by the damned things, but progress is not made by causing confrontation or resorting to coercion. Most, or at least many, car owners see their car (rightly or wrongly) as a need, not a luxury, and resist any attack on their perceived right to dominate the environment with it. It is as always a long educational haul that is needed. For example, if those who feel they need their cars could be brought to face the question of the opportunity cost in time and leisure which running one entails, a start could be made. Keith Patten's calculations* showing that car owners spend some 20-25% of their working week financing their cars should cause many to think again and perhaps as we move towards a smaller more face-to-face society (if we ever do) the need for a car will not be so greatly felt. But I shan't rehearse all the arguments here. Of course, the other side of education is example ... so on your bike!

Neil Birrell

* *A Decade of Anarchy 1961-1970* edited by Colin Ward.

NEWS AND VIEWS

Manchester police are desperately seeking help from their welfare department. They find they need debt counselling because of a sudden drop in income of up to £25,000 a year from up to £45,000 a year. The reason? A loss of overtime due to the end, after three years, of Operation Container in which they solicitously looked after 27,000 prisoners in police cells at a cost of £1,500 per prisoner per week whilst Strangeways prison was being modernised, well, repaired. The answer – learning to live on only £20,000 a year or another prison riot?

Can you believe that mobile phones are getting too difficult to tap and that eavesdropping on private conversations could become almost impossible? No, this is not an April 1st hoax but a genuine complaint by the governments of Europe. This does not apply to most existing mobile phones, from which the occasional recent leaks have been a minor source of amusement, but to the next generation, some of which are already installed, which use digitally coded technology. At the behest of these governments the European Community Telecommunications Committee in Brussels is insisting that the new system is expensively modified so that tapes can be decoded in minutes instead of weeks. Silly really, it isn't going to make any difference to most of us.

From telephone tapping to electronic tagging is but a small step and tagging is never long out of the news these days. When first tried out, using defendants on bail, it was a disaster for two main reasons. It failed because many ignored the anklets or bracelets which set of an alarm if they broke curfew and

it failed because the technology was inadequate and inefficient, worse in fact than car alarms. But the idea was too useful to the state to be dropped and the technology could always be improved. Consider the potential advantage to the government if it could know where everyone was day or night. It would make identity cards look very old fashioned. Babies could be tagged at birth, and why not use a permanent implant? They are already being tried out experimentally. What the state needed was a soft sell. Long term this could be ... your children could never get lost nor fear abduction. Short term there are the elderly, how compassionate to be able to let them, although a little senile and forgetful, wander freely in the knowledge that they cannot wander too far and come to harm. Even Age Concern is not against the idea and a recent report by the charity Council and Care for the Elderly claims that tagging is already quite widely used and approved, provided the "procedure is carried out in ways which respect dignity, privacy and autonomy". Expect to read reports in the press from time to time of patients who have wandered and come to harm and whose lives would have been saved if they had been fitted with the magic bracelet.

Maybe it's best to stay at home these days and not go out – you pay for your roof whether you are there or not and the authorities have plans to make you pay more for moving about. It's called road pricing, a congestion charge, initially for London, and it is only four years away. But only if you use a car, you may say, and don't cars cause the congestion and don't they pollute the

atmosphere? Isn't public transport better? Yes of course, but with the bus system in London increasingly run primarily for profit and bus crews having to go on strike just to try to stop their wages being drastically cut, you will be lucky to find a bus going where you want to go, and have a long walk at either end as well. Still, walking is healthy, well, outside the cities it is, but the government has plans to make you pay for walking in the country. The Environment Minister has proposed a toll on ramblers, he says to reduce the erosion of public footpaths. A recent account of his views contained so many contradictions as to defy analysis, but he seemed to be looking for ways to boost the income of farmers by turning the countryside into a museum and the farmers into curators. He claims support from the two most reactionary conservation bodies, the National Trust and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England. Perhaps he was just looking for some prime-time publicity, without which politicians just quietly fade away and die – a pleasant thought.

One British war atrocity the government tried to keep a secret for decades dates back to the First World War, but there are relatives who still won't forgive and forget. Over 300 soldiers were shot dead by their own officers for doing nothing, it was called cowardice. John Major's refusal to satisfy the relatives' request that these soldiers be posthumously pardoned gives us a whole new insight into state morality. "These men were not treated unfairly" he said, "and a pardon would constitute rewriting history"! But isn't that something the government is doing all the time?

HS

Freedom to Travel

On 10th March a grey horse pulled a carved and decorated bow-top wagon up to the entrance of the House of Commons. If a horse-drawn caravan is a bit of history taken out for effect, travellers and travelling are not. Not yet that is, but new legislation plans to put an end to this the original way of life.

Eli Frankham and friends from the Romany Rights Association came to join the lobby against reforms to the Caravan Sites Act 1968. Liberty, who organised the lobby, estimated the turnout at a thousand travellers from all parts of Britain. "It was a mix of Irish, gypsy and new age travellers; the first time they were all united and it's a foretaste of the opposition this has aroused".

The consultation paper has enraged groups as diverse as gypsy civil rights groups and the Country Landowners Association with its proposals to abolish any statutory duty to provide sites and at the same time increase power preventing any other kinds of site. Proposals effectively preventing travellers from stopping anywhere.

The paper also suggests increased fines, impounding homes and the means of moving them, and all kinds of special orders and new criminal offences. As Pat Cooper, who travels in the Norfolk area, said: "That man from the DoE kept talking about the 'gypsy problem'. I resent being described as a problem. The law is the problem. If it was any other ethnic group there would be an outcry. And yet we've been persecuted down through the centuries."

Of course new legislation will affect all travellers. And at the end of another summer of engineered clashes between police and 'new age' travellers at festivals and raves, notably Castle Morton, voices were heard eagerly promising to put a stop to gatherings, an end to all this anarchy. New travellers had already taken over the demon role from

gypsies in the popular imagination. Instead of 'dirty gypsies' it is now 'dirty crusties', for some the dreadlocks, constant vehicle maintenance and a certain pride makes this literally true. But that word carries a sub-text of intense hatred, the kind of hatred that equates clean with good and dirty with bad and therefore the need for 'cleansing'.

When gypsies associations were 'consulted' they were assured that they would not be affected. And when it became obvious they would, it led to a certain hostility towards those who had chosen travelling. Chosen with a few pushes and shoves from unemployment and homelessness. Festivals and raves attracted attention and there was resentment at new age people for apparently precipitating more controls. How convenient for the law-makers to deflect opposition and encourage blame elsewhere for their intention to force gypsies not only off the road but off the official sites into housing. Assimilation in effect.

As Eli Frankham from Cambridgeshire put it: "What we're getting is ethnic cleansing, what we need is political cleansing". And Mickey Bowers, another speaker from Chichester, warned against believing that Labour would be any different. They hadn't been in the past, he said.

The speakers - mainly travellers, plus a Lib Dem MP, Safe Childbirth for Women, and Tony Benn - had plenty of audience feedback. Both Irish and gypsy travellers called out angrily against 'designated areas' (if the local authority provides a site, however small and unhealthy, it is illegal to stop anywhere else in the area). "And give us back the land that was stolen, the common land." reminders came from the floor that gypsies have always been travellers and in Britain since the sixteenth

century. Sid Rawle, veteran new age traveller and now with children and grandchildren on the road, called for respect and co-operation between the different travelling peoples. "I know that when there's a housing crisis more people take to the road. Don't let them put a wedge between us."

In spite of the more or less equal numbers of traditional and new travellers in the lobby, the issues that were chewed over by little ground at the back of the large committee room were those that have affected gypsies and the Irish for years; the hated maze of regulations on private sites and the dumping of local authority sites near sewage farms and rubbish tips or flyovers.

The Caravan Sites Act was designed to provide legal sites and gave local authorities an obligation and funds to do so. It also provided for flexible planning regarding private sites. It hasn't worked well and the original good intentions have been distorted.

"I own my piece of land but getting planning permission for my two sons to put their trailers on it is a nightmare." In practice 90% of gypsy applications for permission to put a mobile home on their own land are refused. And it can cost thousands to go through the appeal procedures. Gypsy women from Scotland explained official sites "are like prisons. They employ caretakers and they want to know your business, some are afraid to stand up to the wardens." Each family has a pitch where only one traveller is allowed - not enough they say - and if, as is the way of travellers, the family leaves to visit or work elsewhere then twelve weeks off site is the limit. After that it's not your pitch any more.

The Scots women say what's needed are transit sites so travellers can travel, and private

licensed sites so they can stop. But neither culture nor history nor citizenship seems to give any human right to follow the life, "we are born into".

What all travellers share is an intimate knowledge of eviction and harassment on the road, allied to a familiarity with the complicated workings of the legal system worthy of a judge. In the last three decades there has been a proliferation of obstacles alongside great changes to the countryside. The spread of motorways contributed to the consequent disappearance of the 'long acre', the wide roadside verges, and other traditional stopping places. The growth of agribusiness did away with the interdependence of farmers and travellers; seasonal labour and therefore a seasonal home has almost ceased to exist.

So what's so great about the life that not only a civil rights movement has grown up to protect but waves of new travellers regularly take off and create their own version? Since the '60s people have seen a travelling way of life as an alternative to careers and consumerism.

On a fundamental level there is independence and a co-operative spirit when small groups travel or park up together. And contrary to myth not all settled neighbours are antagonistic. The desire for a harmonious way to live is supported by green or spiritual ideals as the old party politics became more obviously barren. The new nomads prefer doing it and working it out on the way rather than talking about the future. Ethnic nomads want their culture acknowledged.

Everyone agrees that in spite of the harassment they love the life. Liberty says there is a need for a charter for travellers' human rights. And the Travellers Resource centre says: "It's not illegal to be a traveller but these proposals will legitimise the attitude that travellers have no rights in this society".

Bernardine Coverley

Class War splits

Elsewhere in this issue we publish a letter from Dave Johnson, a Class War Federation organiser, stating that nine recent members are no longer members. The nine include Tim Scargill, who was Class War's most energetic organiser last year, and Ian Bone the founder of Class War. We gather from the national press, however, that Tim Scargill is describing himself as the Class War candidate in the coming Newbury by-election.

It looks as if Class War has undergone what often happens to little groups with formal membership cards. It has split into two groups, each faction claiming the group name for the time being. One faction evidently backs Tim Scargill's parliamentary candidacy (he hopes to beat Labour into fourth place), while the other seeks recognition among fellow anarchists.

Splits are regrettable of course, but not necessarily harmful. The anarchist movement at this time can manage without unity or formal organisation. What it needs is energy, to spread the anarchist message beyond itself. A split may be beneficial, if it causes the factions to make more energetic propaganda.

On the other hand, a split can be very damaging if it causes the factions to waste energy and paper slugging each other off. We hope the next issue of *Class War* will make no mention of the split, but concentrate on the job of being a crude and lively propaganda sheet.

(Note that *Freedom* and *Class War* do not compete for the same audience. *Freedom* addresses itself, in the words of one slagger-off, to "those who like to think of themselves as intellectuals", while *Class War* addresses itself to those who like to think of themselves as crude and lively.)

Anarchism and Organisation

The last issue of *Freedom* (20th March 1993) is our point of departure. As a kind of response to Nabokov's 'Toilers of the world disband ... Old books are wrong ... This world was made on a Sunday' we had the editorial writer urging the 'unemployed of the world to unite'.

Peter Cadogan too offered sound advice on anarchist organisation with his 'start different, stay different, keep it small, stick to the unstructured, make it multi-purposes, assure of its independence, insist on equality, etc.' Of course, we still have our own in-built shortcomings to contend with. The purpose has to be coherent to, and broadly accepted within, the group, not easy for anarchists. More important, those difficulties most anarchists have, particularly the either/or thinkers, in reaching out, moving towards and connecting with have got to be put up-front so we can't bury them under bullshit. I'll bet Jonathan Simcock (see his 'Spirit of Community' last issue too) has no trouble reaching out. he does it through music, a universal language with no exclusive categories. Mostly we have to do it through work.

Chanting 'mutual aid' is the equivalent of singing hymns in church when it just conceals our tragic flaw - that we can't co-operate. Maybe in order to overcome our individualistic and loner mentalities we have to look to others for help with an open mind. All this is a preamble to my story.

Last weekend Paule and I went on a Permaculture Design course just up the lane from Botch-Up Farm. Twenty landless enthusiasts were trying to build a bit of life into one of Suffolk's many prairie 'farms'. Almost all the participants were unemployed or self-employed. I liked their openness and

enthusiasm, the absence of acrimony and the spirit of co-operation. Our feeling then, and still is, is that we'd like to be more closely associated with this lot. To get closer I'll just have to suspend judgement for a while. So you'll get no rubbish from me in this piece.

Another homily. getting closer has to be a conscious decision for every rational, thinking, individualistic loner, particularly if he has a way with words. Labelling and rubbishing, the wonders of criticism, are most surely our defence against and unknown and potentially hostile world and then we go and wonder why we're short on love. Permaculture you can be sure is loaded with flaws. Its guru is a mad Australian, some people's antidote to Rupert Murdoch. But you'll get no criticism from me here. You'll just have to suck it and see. After all, he could be a mate.

Permanent culture is an anarchistic strand of the ecology movement which puts organisation, in the form of design, up front. I don't think I heard anybody mention the word co-operation once in the weekend. Everybody was doing it. Permaculture goes straight for industrial man's jugular. *The relational is everything* is its central myth. It has familiar ideals. Proponents work through mutual and, in harness with nature and using appropriate technology. They also claim relief from drudgery. Although its central theme is to create and maintain permanent edible eco-systems, its principles are applicable to wealth creation on a broad scale - local enterprise, community building, education, whatever. Though land based, some of its most interesting activities and uses are found in cities and suburbs. Permaculture works off and sets in reverse the destruction caused by capitalism - loneliness, inner city decay,

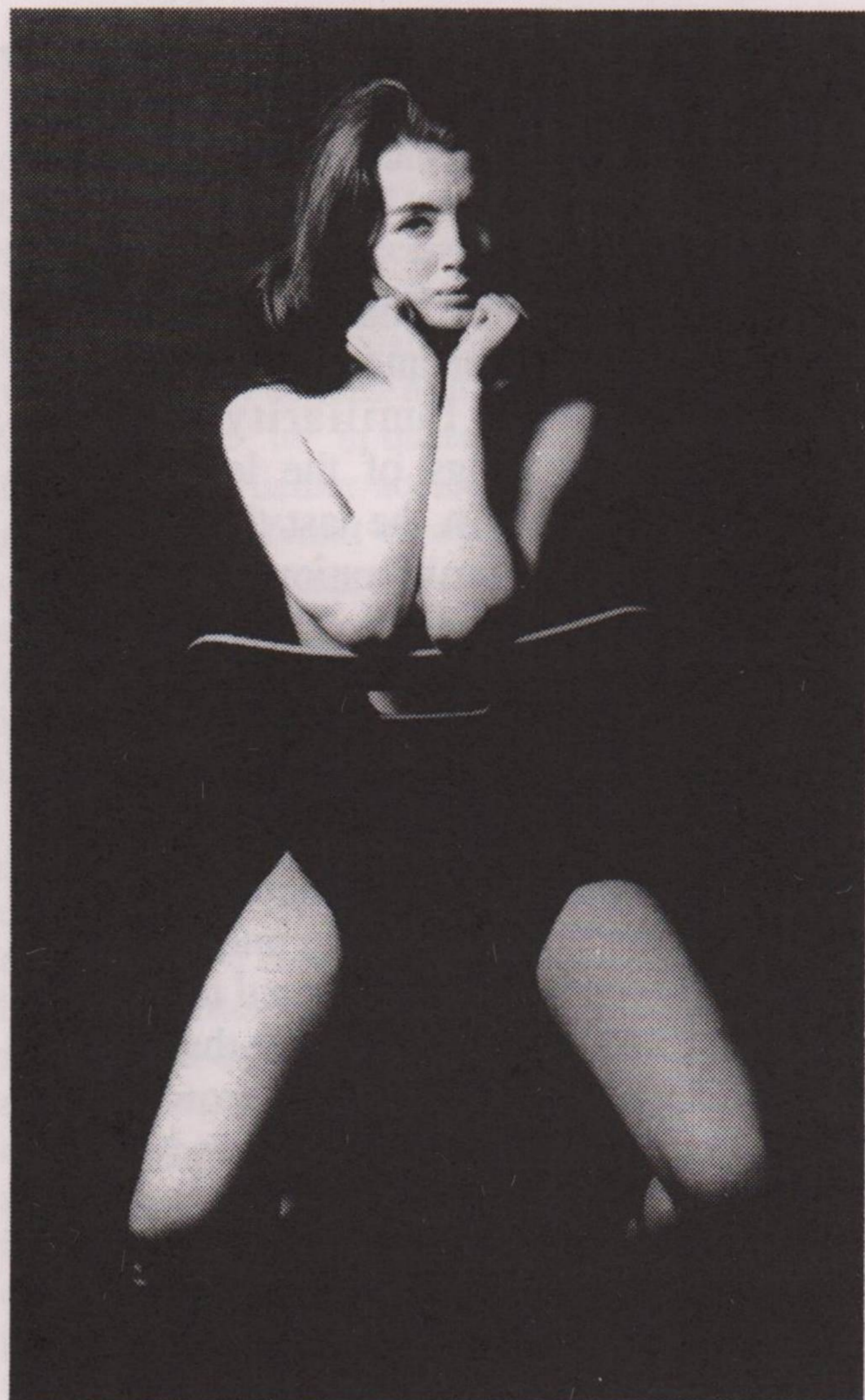
prairie farms, saline lands, deserts, unemployment. It starts us from where we are now, with optimism and hope. It could be a winner.

The particular element of permaculture relevant to the idea of self help among the unemployed is LETS (Local Exchange and Trading Systems). It's the brainchild of a Canadian and is going strong in parts of Canada and Australia. You've probably read something about it in the daily paper - you may even know more about it than I do. LETS groups are good at self-advertising. They need to be to get a more co-operative, socio-economic system up and running in the face of widespread lethargy and despair. The idea is to take trade back to its fundamentals, as localised exchange which sustains the community as a whole. It is based on need not greed.

In essence, LETS are an administrative form of bartering allowing people to obtain a range of goods and services, for which they may be unable to pay in money, in exchange for their own goods and services. The formality, the administration bit, enabled the exchange system to be more sophisticated than the usual one-to-one bartering. You can provide goods and services for one set of parties and get the return from a completely different set. You have more choice. The administration system also makes it easier for people who don't easily get along with others to do so by bringing in participants, arranging meetings, listing skills and products on offer and keeping records of transactions. It assumes social dependency.

Anybody can start a LETS just by getting together with a few mates, putting an advert in the local paper for interested parties

(continued on page 5)



It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only for it was the Swinging Sixties and to be young, to have money in your pockets and a safe job meant that the world and all its comedy was yours. It was the age of the sexual revolution when for the young and the pontificating platform intelligentsia the sexual mores was the revolution. It is to the credit of those who added a greater freedom to those who use the English language that they defied the state and its

physical apparatus by publicly printing our ancient tongue. Not in the rarefied works of self-protecting intellectual circles but in crudely produced poetry magazines and in eye-aching broadsheets such as *IT* and *Oz* that cocked its juvenile cocks at the father figure of authority and the credit is theirs and they indeed deserve it. Within the Barbican Art Gallery wherein the free wine has given place to the cup of free coffee – Christ thou should be living at this hour and the Barbican press office would provide the water – is mounted the Sixties exhibition that offers a charming nostalgic version of life and the AIDS-free love within those Thatcher-free years. But what we are given within the Barbican is but one deceptive facet of that time, for on display is the visual trivia produced by men and women with little talent but to amuse, and we were amused for that shallow revolution demanded little of us than we enjoyed it. One thought of Germany of the '20s, of the French Revolution, of the Russian Revolution, and while the men, the women and the children fought and starved and died, the intelligentsia within the confines of their protected towns played out their fantasies on stage, on canvas and within the printed pages to the tap, tap, tapping of their own drums and their own recordings they became the history of the age, for the nameless dead have no history. One wanders through the Barbican Art Gallery seeking the free coffee among so much worthless trivial rubbish knowing that one enjoyed it for one had health, money in one's pocket and those who laughed and danced had that 'secure job for life' that the young in Thatcher's Britain can never know or understand. The giggling CND marches through the country, the left-wing clubs, the middle class left-wing meetings that were never meant to achieve anything, and the childlike fun of action painting, of throwing paint onto sheets of hardboard. But of the luncheon CND marches nothing is here, of the Spies for Peace when people were arrested on

those marches just for shouting out 'RSG'. 'RSG?', comrades, asked the historians, for you will find nought about it within this exhibition. Sharkey and Metzger on trial at the Old Bailey over the ICA 'Violence in Art' exhibition, or David Ward the suicide fall-guy for the Tory establishment who's pathetic exhibition was held within a small shop, after his death, with the works hanging on crude hessian sheets, and it is said that certain agents of the government came into that exhibition and bought and removed every 'important face' that Ward had painted, and this within an exhibition wherein the hard-faced villains of the day literally rubbed shoulders with the cream of the society of the day. Jack Spot in the witness box at the Old Bailey and one peered down at his razor-slashed face and the interfering fools of that inglorious hour who pry through the children's comics seeking 'Violence in Art' as they now seek sexual or racist connotations. I see the work of Allen Jones within this Barbican exhibition, but not the table with its thick glass top supported by the life-size model, in full natural colours comrade, of a naked pretty woman on all fours. It is not here because, well, it is not particularly, shall we say, 'nice'. It is curious that though the language and the visual arts have been 'liberated' that one can now use the word 'fuck' or show couples copulating, puritanical censorship, while accepting this, is again and again dragging its slime up and out of its grace with once again demands for censorship of the press, television and news and views from outer space. The battle has always to be fought. There is so much that one finds to amuse within this Disney-type world of happy trivia, but to have been involved in it is to cry no, no, this is the falsification of history. When the Stalin Office of Fair Trade painted out Trotsky's photograph from the Lenin photograph should one be shocked or smile that this is no more than the world of vested interest based on ignorance or editorial or power-happy fear. The Barbican Sixties in

London 'tells it like it was'. No, this is history re-writ in dredged-up pretty pictures of a well-heeled middle class of weekend radicals but never the world of Rachman the slum landlord, Christine Keeler, Ward driven to his death by the establishment, and that working class revolt building up for that Winter of Discontent and the long and bitter miners' strike. Blame not the falsifiers of history, comrade, when they shape it to fit their cosy world, but seek and find for yourself or continue to read *The Times* and *The Sun* newspapers. But the Town and his contented frau have had their fill of coffee and they have supped of the sober colours of Rouault at the Royal Academy, for I have impressed upon them that tragedy is dark greens, reds, blues, yellows and brooding backgrounds, while farce is baby blues and pretty greens and flower pot yellows, for no matter how crude the draftsmanship obey that rule and you can choose to be a Georges Rouault or a David Hockney. But if in the end one is a philosopher, then to hell with paint and pencil and offer, like a Zen garden, an empty void into nothingness for Robert Ryman, exhibiting his 1975-1991 prints within the ghostly silent Victoria Miro Gallery in London's Cork Street, offers the Town and his bemused frau that for their concern. Frame after frame upon the white walls and each frame containing a single large sheet of pure untouched white paper. Nothing else, comrade, for this is Zen enframed, and why not. A single large sheet of untouched, unsullied white paper in its virginal purity as beautiful, as unworldly and as pure in its relation to the material world as the head on a pint of freshly poured Guinness.

Arthur Moyses

Anarchism & Organisation

(continued from page 4)

and setting up the administrative system. However, a big energy input may be necessary early on to get people cracking. The thrust of the scheme is to build up personal confidence and resourcefulness and increase trust, respect and communication between people. There are now a number of LETS operating in varying conditions of health. Rumour has it the Brighton and Stroud groups are thriving. Obviously where a vibrant informal economy is already in operation, the formal administrative system may be pointless, an unnecessary yoke.

Inevitably the value of goods and services and the unit of exchange itself are based on those in the formal economy, but negotiation always determines the final value. In practice LETS members rate labour over expertise. The system does need energetic fixers (bricoleurs) to get things going. It needs too participants who are prepared to jump in and use others services and goods before there is demand for their own (i.e. go into social debt). LETS obviously operate best in more stable neighbourhoods where there's not too much coming and going.

So it's up to the unemployed to unite with enthusiasm and become self-employed by helping one another. LETS is a vehicle worth exploring to this end.

Denis Pym

To find out more about Permaculture start with Patrick Whitefield's booklet *Permaculture in a Nutshell* (from 5 High Street, Glastonbury, Somerset, price £3.50) and for the LETS info pack phone 0985 217871, or write to 61 Woodcock Road, Warminster, Wiltshire.

Chaos

Awakenings – if you've seen the film, read the book. Oliver Sacks tells how decades of catatonia are ended by a new miracle drug (if only it could be used on the English electorate!). But, unlike most shrinks, he approaches each patient as a unique individual and is thus able to reveal an amazing variety of experiences. (For some the 'cure' is worse than the catatonia, rather like some revolutions, comrades!)

Sacks gets his approach from one of the unsung heroes of anarchism, Sir Thomas Browne, a seventeenth century Norwich doctor who wrote some of the greatest English prose. Browne always began from the individual, rather than from some abstract theory or fundamentalist dogma. He then allowed imagination to carry him forward in ways that rationalists would label 'chaotic'.

In the play *The Wild Duck* Ibsen suggests that happy people may not be able to stand too much reality. The hero, Eckdel, is 'awakened' by the 'truth' about his wife. His well-meaning idealist friend (the majority of us *Freedom* readers!) believes the 'truth' will bring the family to a new unity. Instead Eckdel explodes into general paranoia about his family. He quickly passes from nobility to hopelessness and rejection, which causes his beloved daughter to shoot herself.

Chaos theory, which is presently sweeping the sciences into the next century, claims to explain the sudden oscillations, which appear wholly random and unique. The most impressive results so far have been obtained on computers rather than in the real world. But what of the knock-on effects of this new theory on dominant thinking about society and

politics?

Doubtless Norman Lamont would argue that we are moving towards a time when budgets really can effect economic growth in a predictable way. But really the new science seems to have far more to offer us. If the central characteristic of the universe is 'chaos' then to say that anarchists would produce chaos is to say that we are in tune with the real nature of things. And the chaos that the scientists are revealing is complex, beautiful and perfect.

According to Stephen Hawking, God is unnecessary as time is curved, so there is no beginning and no creation. Without a creator, there is no model for kings, dictators and governments to use to justify their power. Knowing there is no all-powerful 'father' must make everyone question the orders made by states, schools, soldiers, judges and fathers like Eckdel. There is still room for ethical guidance from a suffering servant like Jesus or Buddha, but the only creativity that matters is our response to the increasing chaos predicted by the second law of thermodynamics. No matter how much governments centralise, computerise and militarise, they will not be able to cope with the increasing dominance of chaos.

Of course, if we were to delight in the variety of experience, and always sought the unique rather than trying to stick square pegs into round holes, we might find ways to deal with the ecological disaster that hangs over us all. We would also have an ideal anarchist society, but it might be safer not to awaken people with this truth. Are we ready for it ourselves?

John Myhill



"Sirs, has anybody taken down and removed the ALL WHITE PAINTING from off the gallery all white wall?"

— BOOK REVIEW —

The Red Prussian

The Red Prussian: the life and legend of Karl Marx

by Leopold Schwarzschild
Pickwick Books

I defy anyone to read Leopold Schwarzschild's biography of Karl Marx and to still have any respect either for Marx as a person or, more importantly, for his ideas. Neither Schwarzschild's sometimes quaint writing style, nor his liberal illusions, stop him from establishing the truth of his two main propositions. The first is that Marx despised the working class he pretended to champion, and the second is that his theories are no more than incoherent fantasies not to be taken seriously. The book is a 300-page hardback originally priced at £16, but Freedom Press Bookshop have copies to sell at £7.95 (plus postage and packing of £1.15 if mail order).

Smear: Wilson and the Secret State
by Stephen Dorril and Robin Ramsay
Fourth Estate, 1991, £20

Smear is one of the most under-reviewed books I have ever read, which is a pity because it is one of the best and most compelling. It is also a book which should be compulsory reading for all anarchists and compulsive reading for all state watchers.

You might say "I reject politics, so why should I be interested in what happened to Harold Wilson". This is the wrong approach. The book is less about Harold Wilson than about how the state goes about its business and importantly about spooks: the state security services. You know, the funny people who protect us from the reds and other dangerous types.

So, too, the book is about you and me, what we stand for, what we are opposed to and the problems we will face going about our lawful business. I nearly said awful business, for in a sense the book justifies much anarchist and some libertarian marxist thinking both about the state being the instrument of the ruling class and, following Gramsci, the state's autonomy as an ideological and repressive apparatus operating on its own in what it sees as the interests of a ruling ideology. Sorry to be reificationist here. That was not intended.

Stephen Dorril and Robin Ramsay are state watchers: an increasingly growing breed. They publish *Lobster* from 214 Westbourne Avenue, Hull HU5 3JB (copies £2 each plus 18p postage from Freedom Press), a magazine devoted to watching spooks. They also published an excellent pamphlet *A Who's Who of the British Secret State* (£5 plus 41p postage, copies also from Freedom Press). This is a very comprehensive list of MI6 members, the Special Intelligence Service of the Foreign Office (which has been depicted many times in its fictional form by writers such as Len Deighton, John Le Carre and others). And reading the biographies and subsequent careers of MI6 members you get a distinct impression you are reading a Who's Who list of the praetorian guard of the establishment.

Now perhaps some of you are a little sick of reading about this. We had the Wright affair and the Colin Wallace affair (the state lost both times), but we have a large new building for MI6 on the south side of the Thames, some say even bigger than the Foreign Office, and the large office building taken over by MI5 on The Embankment just past the Houses of Parliament. Odd to occur just at the time when the communist world is in shreds, although MI6 does appear to have found a new lease of life in Northern Ireland. Maybe this essentially foreign service has decided it was time to assume Northern Ireland is (always was?) a foreign country. With an eye to the future they may be putting sleepers in place. Maybe they need to justify their existence. And MI5 has taken over the anti-terrorist role from the Special Branch and the Bomb Squad. I suppose the latter are the ones shortly to return to the beat. Who will these people be spying on next, you or me, now the reds have gone?

The recently late Northcott Parkinson in his amusing book *Parkinson's Law* pointed to this tendency of how, in government service, bureaucratic administration usually increased as tasks declined. But it was not MI6, the Special Intelligence Service, that did over Harold Wilson. This was MI5 the Security Service. Still largely drawn from the same public school and Oxbridge connections, but including some proletarian elements. After all, public school and Oxbridge are often spotable.

The book itself is well researched, although there is so much information that is classified and we have no Freedom of Information Act in Britain; so much is hearsay or open to conjecture, but the authors have gone to a lot of trouble to check their facts and only if there is a real opening up of the files will they be refuted unless, of course, the files have already been destroyed or never existed.

What we have emerging is that there is a secret state within the state operating without much responsibility for its actions, costing millions of pounds of money, not under Parliamentary control, even by, say, the Public Accounts Committee or by the Audit Commission. It operates so secretly that one section hardly knows what another section does. And ironically, like all bureaucracies, it engages in faction fights. MI5 fights MI6, both fight the armed services who fight each other, who fight the Civil Service which fights the Treasury, who fight the Cabinet, who fight Parliament and amuse us all when we watch Parliamentary Committees, and who especially fight any attempt at change, especially to what they see as the status quo but, so far as the spooks go, it is an internal war within the secret state and operated in accordance with certain guidelines.

I remember when I was younger talking to a former member of Army Intelligence who told me an interesting story about the second general election after the war. A group of middle ranking army officers of about Lieutenant Colonel rank, the rank that still controls troops, who fearing a second term of Labour Government would destroy *Britain as we know it*, decided to organise a coup. Looking around for a figurehead they contacted a senior member of the General Staff who immediately alerted his colleagues.

These dealt with it in a typically British manner by immediately posting the potential coup's members to the furthest reaches of the Commonwealth. You see, the establishment had no fear of a Labour Government. They knew they could handle them quite easily through the old boy network and the Security Services. They regarded the coup's members as good chaps but simply naive. In Greece, you will remember, a Colonels' coup was allowed to take place.

The problem of social order has never been Russia or communism. These organisations such as MI5 and MI6 are simply instruments used to justify the existence of the intelligence and security services and provide jobs for the children of the elite, a kind of round table, because with the decline of empire imperial posts are no longer obtainable. If Russia and communism had not existed it would have been necessary to create them like that marvellous opportunity to blood the police into the new thinking, the miners' strike. I conjecture that the appearance of the new visible public buildings are really a realisation of the necessity to have a more visible security police to protect what they see as *Britain 'as we know it'*. A visible version of Thatcher's strong state to maintain public order as the country goes through economic decline.

Stephen Dorril and Robin Ramsay's book is timely because it explores the reality of

government and the state. It also indicates our main means of opposition: openness. The more open we are the less reason the state has for justifying secrecy. For secrecy indicates there is something to hide and supports suppression. Openness in government destroys a strong state. It also allows for change.

On the other hand it is good for the revolutionary movements? A strong security service is good for an authoritarian revolutionary movement such as marxism because it justifies its existence. If a state collapses the revolutionary movement learning its trade in opposition apes the former state in its structures and activities, like the Bolsheviks. Many members of the Bolshevik's Cheka were former members of the Czarist secret police - it's just a job, they were merely professionals. What worries me sometimes about some of the people I meet in the anarchist movement is how secretive and authoritarian some of them are. How lacking in openness. How unwilling to listen and examine alternative ideas. How authoritarian and secret-statelike they are.

Perhaps this is one of the most compelling reasons for reading a book like Stephen Dorril and Robin Ramsay's *Smear*. After reading it one has an intense feeling of desire to open the windows and let the air in, to shout from the rooftops and to get a spade and dig out all the bureaucratic roots, the dead wood, the foundations of capitalism and the state and the secret canker of rottenness which it supports. Read it if you dare.

Peter Neville

Food for Thought ... and Action

More ideas to chew on at the bookshop.

Demanding the Impossible: a history of anarchism by Peter Marshall, Fontana. Now out in paperback and much cheaper, it is still huge but much smaller, if you know what I mean, and praised by reviews in a wide range of publications from *City Limits* (RIP) to the *Sunday Telegraph*. It is destined to become the standard work in anarchism - superseding George Woodcock's *Anarchism* according to several reviews, including Woodcock himself. Sales of the book may enrich Rupert Murdoch's publishing empire, but not as much as the contents will enrich the movement. 767 pages, £9.99.

Casablanca vol 1, no 3. From the sublime to the scurrilous. This is a new satirical magazine describing itself as "a round-up of the unusual suspects in politics, media and culture" (geddit, geddit?). It promises to be to critical writing what Rick's café was to *Casablanca* - a haven for those the authorities would rather didn't exist. And it's not afraid to send itself up either. This issue features an account of the descent of the near-broke *Spare Rib* collective into isolated Stalinist purity; politics at the *Observer*; a shamelessly opportunistic article on Malcolm X's killer, nicely linked to a cover picture showing Malcolm X's face on the label of a can of beans marked 'Brand X', with the slogan 'Buy Any Beans Necessary'; a review of the success (or otherwise) of the Art Strike 1990-93 by its proponent Stuart Home; plus more good writing on the BJP in India; the slaughter in Bosnia and more. Monthly A4, illustrated, 40 pages, £1.85.

The Red Prussian: the life and legend of Karl Marx by Leopold Schwarzschild, Pickwick Books. This critical biography of Marx, first published in 1948 and reprinted in 1986, is a devastating revelation of his character, and in the years since it first appeared further evidence has only reinforced the author's thesis. There is a good deal about the jealousy between Bakunin and Marx and about how Marx and his faction in the International cooked up charges to get Bakunin expelled. This is a scholarly book, but written somehow in an easy flowing style which at times reads almost like a historical novel, although no assertions are made which cannot be backed up with documentary evidence. Poor old

Karl Popper had to admit that it showed Marx as nothing like the freedom-lover and humanitarian that many people thought him, "a man who saw 'the proletariat' mainly as an instrument of his own personal ambition. It must be admitted that the evidence is shattering". Hardback at paperback price, 382 pages, £7.95.

The Heavy Stuff Special Edition: coal communities in conflict by Dave Douglass, Class War. The front cover of this pamphlet bears the logo 'The Thought Behind the Anger', but Douglass allows some of the anger to come bubbling up in this brief account of the struggles of the mining community since the formation of the NUM. Put together hastily in reaction to the government's decision to close 31 pits last October, it brings the struggle up to 1992, on the eve of the big nationwide demonstrations against the decision, and ends with the optimistic observation: "At the time of writing, a victory is clearly visible". With the imminent publication of the government's revised energy 'policy', however, Mr Douglass will be sorely disappointed. A5 pamphlet, 24 pages, £1.50.

TV Times: a seven day guide to killing your TV, anonymous, Oxfin. This far outweighs similar recent pamphlets in terms of layout, style and depth of analysis, not to mention size and price. Laid out in a day-by-day style like TV listings, it dissects and demolishes not just television but the press too. The University of Chicago's 13-year study of television concluded: "The longer a person watches television the more drowsy, bored, sad, lonely and hostile the viewer becomes". We all watch it and probably all wish we didn't. This excellent pamphlet gives hundreds of reasons why not to, with a good section on the tricks used to keep our attention on the screen. As they say, it's not *what* you watch - it's that you're *watching*. Ideal for all your telly-addicted friends and ... you? Good use of colour and lots of illustrations, A5, 40 pages, £1.00.

The Impossible dream no 4, edited and designed by Lance d'Boyle, XNTRIX Publishing. Originally the magazine of the anarchist punk band Poison Girls, Freedom Press has acquired the remaining stocks of this issue to help with our finances. Printed on high quality glossy art paper,

this is a large format magazine composed of striking black and white photomontages combined with provocative text to produce an overall impressive result. Writers include Vi Subversa (of Poison Girls), William Burroughs, Andrea Dworkin and others, on a variety of topics: multi-national capitalism; the destruction of tribal societies by Christian evangelists; sexual envy between men of different races; and junkies. There's also the text of one of the group's songs, 'The Price of Grain, the Price of Blood'. Who said punk was dead? A3, 14 pages, available at below half price, 50p plus 35p postage and packing.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO BOOK BUYERS Owing to circumstances beyond our control our policy on book stocking, postage and packing charges for mail orders, and supplies to the trade is having to undergo some changes. Quite a number of books and pamphlets will from now on no longer be post free to individuals, unfortunately, and will no longer be available at trade discount to bookshops and stalls.

Happily, however, many other titles are now available to take their place. These changes will be included in our new booklist which we hope to have ready sometime in May. (Subscribers will receive a copy as usual, as soon as it is ready.) Meanwhile you can find out the details of the changes before you order by checking with the bookshop first. We are sorry about this temporary hiccup which is due to the drastic reorganisation, at short notice, of one of our suppliers.

The new booklist will also contain many price changes. Here are some examples, with immediate effect: *Society of the Spectacle* by Guy Debord is now £5.00 plus p&p. *The Revolution of Everyday Life* by Raoul Vaneigem is now £5.50 plus p&p. In addition all Spectacular Times and Rebel Press publications (some 25 titles) now incur postage and packing charges, and we can no longer supply any of the titles mentioned here to the trade.

KM

Titles distributed by Freedom Press Distribution (marked*) are post-free inland (add 15% towards postage and packing overseas). For other titles please add 10% towards postage and packing inland, 20% overseas. Cheques payable to FREEDOM PRESS please.

IN DEFENCE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH

With the current rise in prominence of the neo-nazis the issue of freedom to express one's thoughts and hatreds in words is being brought into question. There is clearly a belief that such freedom is only acceptable whilst it is not used to express the 'unacceptable' and the question is do we believe in the unqualified freedom to say what we will or only so long as it is not offensive to us? Obviously the 'us' in question is no single group for in any particular society there are numerous groups with different views and beliefs. The crux of the matter is whether we accept difference, even to the extent of the politics of hate, or whether we accept restrictions on this freedom which turn it into an Orwellian phrase where 'freedom' is in reality restriction.

We have to ask if some have the moral right to define what others may say and this begs the question: who does the defining? Despite any advantages we may find in restrictions (such as not having to listen to the vile ranting of racists and neo-nazis) I do not believe anyone has the right to demand others accept one belief, one agenda or mode of thought over another for such a state of affairs is control and subjugation of people. It immediately means some have power over the opinions others may express in public and often in private. The problem is that all too often in their daily lives people have the values of others imposed upon them, the emphasis is put upon the speaker who must censor what they say due to social pressure ('you can't say that!') or legal restrictions.

A personal example of how the emphasis is placed upon the 'speaker' to be responsible for the beliefs and feelings of the 'listener' is when I was unfortunate enough to work as a clerk in a stultifying office job. I had to endure the restrictions of a Christian bigot who, by virtue of authority over

me, kept telling me not to say 'Christ' or 'Jesus' as an expletive. Christianity was *his* belief not mine, yet his piety and reverence was imposed upon me. The words and history of Christianity do not belong to Christians alone yet we often find that, as with other organised religions, what *they* regard as sacred must not be criticised or taken in vain. What happens is such people see others as responsible for *their* feelings, imposing their view on to others rather than accepting others may well not accept such beliefs. The emphasis is on the speaker not the listener, the latter assuming some right not to hear that which upsets them. If we wish to live in a free society or build towards it then we are surely going to have to put up with those who have hateful opinions. There is no moral legitimacy to be gained for one view by oppressing *any* others and such action immediately means there is no freedom.

Stifling beliefs of others does not equate an argument with truth, only force. An example of this is the banning of the poem 'Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name' published in *Gay News* in the 1970s. The emphasis was put on the writer and the magazine who were told, by the state, it was offensive. In reality *some* people were offended but they were able to impose their view rather than accept being offended and accepting others' wish to question, to rewrite an aspect of history in terms of homo-erotica. Similarly picketing a bookshop stocking David Irving's book of nazi apologetics, as I believe some anti-nazi activists have done, does not give moral weight to their argument and also assumes again that we have a right not to be offended. Kicking it in and banning it does not make another thing right.

There also seems to be an assumption that to read

something is to condone the views held, that people may simply believe them and so such thoughts are 'dangerous' and we must be 'protected'. This essentially says people are too stupid to make up their own minds, that there is a 'truth' which must be accepted and doubt is not allowed. As well as the policing of our doubt, our disagreement, there is the question of who is to decide and dictate what is 'truth', what is 'acceptable'? An elite, a 'vanguard'? And surely an apparatus of control is required to punish infractions and dissent. This is what we have now in areas of our lives and yet still people refuse to conform, for good reasons or bad.

There is more to neo-nazism than simply reading *Mein Kampf* (which, like *Capital*, is probably not read by many of its followers). It seems odd to deny the structural problems we face as less important yet so often the focus is on what people say and write as if they have the magical ability to convince all who hear and read them. This is not to say people don't fuck up, believe in vile rubbish, as they did in Germany in 1933, in the USA allowing the war in Indochina to begin in their name, in the rise of neo-nazism, or in Britain where many swallowed the lies fed daily during the Gulf War slaughter. But if anything these monumental disasters are due to living in controlled societies where we learn not to think too much about issues beyond what we are told, societies where we learn from an early age that domination, power and greed are acceptable and even rewarded. This is after all the 'truth' we are expected to accept through schooling onwards.

This is not to say action is not necessary, for when people firebomb homes and attack people it clearly

is. But the racist attacks, the pouring of petrol through letterboxes, the knifings, the beatings, all continued throughout the 1980s and this far into the 1990s. But it should be noted these gained less coverage than when neo-nazis began to be more active and prominent. Once they began spouting an ideology of hatred, when offensive thoughts became articulated, more people began to take note and become concerned whilst the continual racism that went on before 'quietly' was less of an issue. David Irving's books were available then as they are now.

If we believe something to be truth it nevertheless becomes dogma if it is not allowed to be challenged and we become wielders of power if we feel it is our 'right' to dictate what is truth to others. No matter how offensive what people may say is, we cannot expect them to believe as we do, and if we believe in true freedom of speech then dissent, no matter how vile and how much it upsets us, has to be able to exist. It is undoubtedly unpleasant to defend the right of neo-nazi bastards to rant their ideologies of hate but, as Chomsky said, if we do not believe in freedom of speech for people we despise then we don't believe in it at all.

Ian Borrows

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What is Anarchism? An Introduction
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The arts editor of *New Statesman & Society*, Boyd Tonkin, wrote in that journal's issue of 5th March an absorbing critique of a new play by Alan Bleasdale, the television playwright of 'The Boys from the Blackstuff' and 'GBH'. Like them, his new stage play 'On the Ledge', in Tonkin's words, fashions "the miseries of Merseyside into a looking glass for England, without jobs, hope or pride". The play was first staged in Nottingham and is touring Norwich, Glasgow, Bradford and Newcastle, before opening at the National Theatre in London on 27th April. It is set on the top of a Liverpool tower block, with the neighbourhood burning all around, and Tonkin's discussion of it echoes the same mixture of admiration and exasperation that most of us must have felt about Bleasdale's television dramas.

I'm tempted to make a pilgrimage to Norwich to see it. What brought me to a sharp halt for thought was one of Tonkin's comments. He says:

"With much of Britain cursing the present and clinging to history, 'On the Ledge' certainly counts as a play for today. More ominously, it uncorks the spirits of fury and grief only to shut them again inside a facetious format from another age. One of the youngsters tries to paint 'anarchy' on the wall. Suspended upside-down by his mate, he spells it 'anachry', which is more than half way to anachronism. In British drama, the last trump does tend to sound like a blast from the past."

Note that he is not commenting, like successive education ministers, that the young can't spell any more, nor upon understandable difficulties of writing upside down. He's talking about the message.

I don't like to hear that the anarchist message belongs to another age, nor that it is simply a blast from the past. What intrigues me is the easy way in which Tonkin assumes this to be so. I don't believe that the author of the play he is discussing thinks this, but he evidently assumes that his readers will. I ought to explain that I actually know Boyd Tonkin, since I write for the same journal, so I know that one of the cities he likes best is Barcelona, where he has seen the anarchist bookstalls ignored in the

— AN ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

bustling street markets. Certainly I have met myself people who were Spanish exiles here in 1939 and returned home both before and after the end of the Franco regime, only to find that their grandchildren spoke a different political language. It's part of the human pathos of exile. The days of hope which shaped their lives were seen by another generation, not as a blast from the past but as quaint echoes from a simpler world. But we are in a British context, and if we can glibly write off anarchism as blasts from the past, what can we say about all the

Scandinavian countries where it stood most chance of making people happy.

Maybe Boyd Tonkin has a political manifesto up his sleeve which isn't a facetious formula from another age. He gives us no clues. Maybe his criticism is that we anarchists have failed to fill out the mis-spelled slogan with a series of currently relevant proposals that might win support from those fellow citizens out there. There are, no doubt, anarchists who would consider that this is not our function. For example, here are the concluding sentences

BLASTS FROM THE PAST

other political approaches on offer? We could dismiss the political right, but for the fact that the British electoral system has ensured since 1979 that a series of governments that won 43% of the vote in England, and of course a much smaller percentage in Scotland and Wales, has chosen to apply what one Conservative politician, Lord Hailsham, rightly called an elective dictatorship to the British, enforcing policies which have made the rich very much richer and the poor very much poorer.

Knowing that I wouldn't read it through choice, a fellow anarchist has just sent me a book by another ex-minister, Ian Gilmour, called *Dancing With Dogma: Britain under Thatcherism*, which gives chapter and verse for the disasters of the current regime, and he or I are bound to discuss it in these pages soon.

More important for us, the left, whether old or new, has worked itself into a situation of moral and intellectual bankruptcy just because it hoped to change society by manipulation of the state machinery and its bureaucracy. The result is that quite apart from the revulsion against Marxism in those countries that had the misfortune to be ruled by Marxists, there's a revulsion against social democracy, even in those nice

from what purports to be a review of the new Freedom Press publication *What is Anarchism? an introduction*, in this journal (6th March 1993):

"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."

The expression of this personal liberty seems to be precisely what those young men were doing on the ledge at the top of that Liverpool tower block. But while exploring blasts from the past, I need to quote from another anarchist writer, examining the theme of Alan Bleasdale's play:

"Our conventional and all too plausible picture of the immediate future is that it will be like today only more so: a mobile urban mass society, heavily dependent on the motor car in whose interests vast areas of the inner city are cut up by motorways with acres of sterilised no-man's land taken up by traffic intersections crossed by rat-runs

for the remaining pedestrians. The affluent meritocracy commutes to the business district or lives in the expensively renovated inner suburbs, the skilled and semi-skilled workers employed by international companies live in vast estates on the outskirts or in the tower blocks left over from the 1960s, while the permanently unemployed and the fringe drop-outs for whom idleness is less degrading than work, inhabit the transitional districts of run-down municipal or privately-rented housing. Can we seriously imagine that such an environment will be less prone to vandalism than the one we inhabit today? Or that some combination of education, exhortation and more efficient policing will reduce its extent? What is more likely is that the litter-strewn, windswept public spaces of the future metropolis will be more unkempt, battered and bedraggled because of the high cost and low prestige of maintenance work (in spite of unemployment), and that the spin-off of consumer technology will provide facilities for more sophisticated forms of vandalism."

That account of the back-drop of 'On the Ledge' was written over twenty years ago, when we had a Labour government led by Harold Wilson, in which Tony Benn was a senior cabinet minister, and published in a long out-of-print book *Vandalism* (Architectural Press, 1973). Every aspect of this prophecy has come true. And on every neglected estate, where the situation of unemployment has grown far worse and where the withdrawal of benefits for the young and the current horror of cutting off even water has sharpened the edge of despair, there have been small groups of citizens, usually women, desperately trying to assert the values of self-help and mutual aid. I'm thinking of the Eldonians in Liverpool or Frances McCall on the Calvey Road in Glasgow or the pioneers of food co-ops on Easterhouse or Dora Boatmah in Brixton. They are fighting a rearguard battle and every action of government makes their task harder. The very last label they would choose for themselves is anarchism, but that's our fault for propagating our blast from the past as either utopia or personal salvation.

Colin Ward

Fascists fomenting dissent?

Freedom has been sent a copy of an anonymous circular, denouncing the anti-fascist magazine *Searchlight* as ineffectual, inaccurate, lazy, corrupt, and in league with the fascists against rival anti-fascists. At first sight it appears to originate from someone connected with Class War; but on closer inspection it is almost certainly the work of fascists attempting to stir up trouble.

Circulars of right-wing origin, claiming to represent left-wing views, are not new. In the 1960s a document was circulated to anarchists and others inviting them to join a clandestine organisation called 'Group 77'. Many members, it said, were also members of CND and a list of other well known bodies with nothing in common except that the right-wing did not like them, and one young female member had had her knickers removed by police following a Committee of 100 demonstration. Would-be members were invited to send their names and addresses to a box number.

The anti-*Searchlight* circular, signed 'Wombat 92', is much subtler than the 'Group 77' effort. It had us going for all of ten minutes.

It builds on antagonism which already exists. In 1987 *Searchlight* accused *Class War* of racism and got them excluded from the Anti-Fascist Alliance for some months, until they were exonerated by an Anti-Fascist Alliance commission whom *Searchlight* declined to give evidence. *Searchlight* exchanges information with the state security services and falsely claims that it is the only effective anti-fascist organisation. (Freedom Press Bookshop does not stock it but does

stock *Lobster*, an anti-fascist magazine which may perhaps be more effective.)

The Wombat 1992 document reproduces an editorial from a *Searchlight* special issue, about an earlier "series of phoney documents", listing names and addresses alleged to be those of Combat 18, the British National Party, and other far-right organisations. *Searchlight* says a cursory perusal revealed genuine names of fascists with wrong addresses, and wrong names with non-existent addresses. "The small number of accurate details concerned fascists whom we know to be acutely disliked within their own organisations. They were clearly being set up for an uncertain fate".

A martyr or two would be valuable to the fascist movement, especially if it could be arranged for the martyrs to be people not thought to have any other value. *Searchlight* says "in most cases the documents can be traced back into quasi-anarchist circles, where at least one key figure has a long history and, we believe, an ongoing association with people who now pull some of the strings in C18".

Searchlight mentions no name, but 'Wombat 92' calls this "the Scargill smears" (for Tim Scargill the Class War organiser) and refers to the lists of names as "the Scargill lists". "*Searchlight*", it says, "purposely confuses Scargill with Martin Wright, expelled from Class War in 1988".

Searchlight also advises anti-fascist groups not to respond to a questionnaire sent out by "someone claiming to be doing academic

THUGS ATTACK FREEDOM

You may find more literal errors than usual in this issue of *Freedom*. It was not possible to make all the proof corrections because the typesetting computer is smashed.

Shortly after the Freedom Press Bookshop opened last Saturday, 27th March, the building was invaded by five young men wearing balaclava helmets and carrying long wooden truncheons, one with a spike. Two stayed on the ground floor. The others came up to the first floor to attack the bookshop and the Freedom Press office.

They smashed up everything smashable: the typesetting computer (this is being set on a borrowed typesetter), the photocopier, the telephones. They knocked over the bookshelves. One display case fell on a customer in the shop, pinning her to the floor. Other people were pushed over, but no-one was hurt.

Aldgate Press's telephones, in the same building, were disconnected to prevent the alarm being called, but not smashed.

Before they left, the attackers sprayed 'C18' in large letters on the wall above the office door. Combat 18 is the name of a group describing itself as a 'fascist paramilitary organisation'.

They left behind a bottle of petrol, which fortunately they made no attempt to explode. It was clear that the attackers knew what they were doing. The operation was carried out with military precision.

research". Again, no name is mentioned, but 'Wombat 92' alleges this is a slander on the independent anti-fascist Larry O'Hara.

'Wombat 92' says "history shows there is only one way to stop fascism - physically". Not so. History shows that political opinions are never changed by punch-ups.

A big show of resistance may deter. In the neighbourhood of Freedom Press, for instance, following a series of racist attacks in

1984, the Bangladeshi community organised an anti-racist procession which completely filled Brick Lane, about half a mile long, with marching men. There was no fighting on the march, but racist attacks declined thereafter.

Fights between approximately equal numbers, however, do not deter but encourage. Anti-fascists belt fascists, fascists belt 'reds', and a good time is had by all. Without the confrontation, fascist rallies would be joyless, and attendance would decline. This, no doubt, is why 'Wombat 92' advocates countering 'Combat 18' with thuggery.

READERS' LETTERS

Sociology for Anarchists?

Dear Editors,
I must admit one thing that irritates sociologists and social scientists generally is to have to keep going over the same ground time and time again. Cannot these correspondents, we ask ourselves, read an elementary book on sociology occasionally? So, Amorey Gethin cannot afford to buy books on post modernism? Unless he is a sociologist he does not have to, but has he not heard of a public library?

If he wants a detailed analysis of the relationship between social sciences and the natural, physical or experimental sciences this has been covered by the sociology of knowledge within its branch of sociology of science. An elementary book on this would be Tomas Boronski's book *Knowledge* (Longman, paperback, £3.50) which covers the topic adequately.

However, it is worth pointing out that

Voting an Alternative for Anarchists?

Dear Friends,
Every issue of *Freedom* has a striking main headline and incisive analyses of the disastrous political, social and economic situation in Britain, with the obvious conclusion that we have to get rid of the Tory government, urgently.

Quite right too, but what way is there of doing it before 1997 other than by persuading enough people to vote against them at every opportunity. Yet you say don't vote in the Newbury by-election. Where's the logic?

Admitting our so-called democracy is a sham, what alternative way is changing things in the next four years?

P.A.T. Clarke

the French sociologist Emile Durkheim covered the topic almost a hundred years ago in *Rules of Sociological Method* (1895). A summary of what he said is that sociology is an objective science conforming to the natural sciences but its subject matter must be specific-differentiated from other sciences yet explained in a scientific manner. You can either accept this or reject it like Ernie Crosswell does in saying sociology is an inexact science, a comment which appears to be a contradiction in terms and which most sociologists would regard as incomprehensibly out of date. Crosswell did say he was a sociologist did he not?

In any case, what is so wonderful about the natural sciences? Much of the literature quoted by Boronski indicates a high degree of scepticism about just how scientific science is. Take the Velikovski affair. Whatever you may say about Velikovski's ideas - *Worlds in Collision* etc. - the fact is Velikovski played by the rules. He used scientific method and was rejected by the scientific establishment who violated their own norms in the process. I am not saying I agree with Velikovski's views as I have only read them at second hand. They appeared to be highly speculative and it is not an area that interests me greatly. What does interest me, as an anarchist, are notions of legitimacy. This is right and that is wrong. A trap many anarchists often fall into in relation to natural science. To

quote Boronski looking at the work of Barnes and Bloor (D. Bloor, *Knowledge and Social Imagery*, 1976, and B. Barnes, *Scientific Knowledge and Sociological Theory*, 1974): "Not only is knowledge in general a social product but so also is scientific knowledge [and] ... what is important ... [are] ... the reasons why scientists pursue particular research programmes and why they adhere to certain beliefs and not others" (Boronski, 1987, pages 28-29).

This is not to say that social scientists do not do the same. They do. But all scientists do. All researchers, all academics. Sociologists use the same array of scientific methods as other scientists wherever appropriate and where these are not, sociology invents new research methods, but always hoping to be as scientifically accurate as possible. To me it does not matter whether sociology is a science or not but that we do our best as researchers to produce new knowledge as accurately as possible. The notion that "natural science is politically and socially neutral" (Gethin) is a fallacy. Furthermore, just because rocks and plants and animals cannot talk back and people have motivation does not mean that we can predict everything all the time, the risk factor comes in too. And what about old God and his/her/its many acts?

Lastly, one correction. I thought afterwards my inclusion of *The Sun* was unfortunate. As the Italian Marxist Gramsci said: "We are all intellectuals". In other words, we all have the capacity for thought and reason. We do wish to convert *The Sun* reader. Our feelings about *The Sun*, which engendered my comment, are quite another matter.

Peter Neville

[We think sociology has had a good airing in our columns and now, what with Peter Neville's list of further reading and Raven 19 on sociology (available at £3 post free), this correspondence is closed.]

Appeal for Help!

For many years I looked forward to a society in which freedom would be limited only by the condition that one should not interfere with the freedom of others. Recently I have been trying to work out what this would mean in practice, and now find myself in trouble.

Apart from the freedom to think or feel without acting (no society can deprive us of that), there doesn't seem to be any freedom worth thinking about that does not interfere with the freedom of others. By keeping myself out of jail I interfere with the freedom of the police to throw me in, by refusing to do a job I interfere with the freedom of the bosses to exploit me, and by propagating anarchism I deprive the statist of their freedom from opposition. These examples come from authoritarian society, but in anarchy the principle would still hold. By reading a book, sitting in a railway carriage or riding a bike I deprive others of the freedom to use that book, seat or bike. By speaking to anybody I prevent them enjoying silence, by breathing I prevent others using that parcel of air, and by just being there I prevent others occupying that space.

'Freedom that does not interfere with

others' has come to look like an empty formula not corresponding to any objective reality. Changing the words, talking about range of choice instead of freedom, doesn't help a bit. I can't think of any significant choice that can be put into practice without interfering with the freedom of others to practise their choices.

This is distressing; it has brought on something like a Victorian crisis of faith. Can the readers of *Freedom* help? Can anybody tell me of freedoms worth thinking about that can be exercised without interfering with the freedom of others?

George Walford

Class War

Dear Comrades,
We have sent a press release to the national press to attempt to clarify that *Class War* is not standing in the Newbury election. For your information the situation is this. Tim Scargill attempted a 'coup' at our national conference last year. He attempted to form a new *Class War* with him firmly in control, when he failed he resigned along with two other members. Afterwards he asked to be let back in, and was told to "fuck right off", as we had discovered that money he was in charge of had 'gone missing', as well as a number of other problems relating to his megalomaniac ego. Since then he has been joined by Ian Bone and three other ex-members. Both Bone and Scargill are in contact with the media calling themselves 'Class War' - please be aware that they no longer have anything to do with the Federation, and that are not to be trusted by anyone who has any political principles.

Dave Johnson

Contact: *Class War* National Secretary, PO Box 2531, Smethwick, Warley, B66 2NH, tel: 0850 393975

A Bouquet from New York

Hello,
I just wanted to comment that I like *Freedom* because it doesn't have many graphics, cartoons or photos and I like its 'gentlemanly' language.

A young reader

THE RAVEN - 21

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Anarchist Research Group

MEETING

Martyn Everett

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