

anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

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

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

'GOVERNMENT BY JOURNALISM'

It is always worth repeating, especially in a country that boasts that it is a democracy, that the definition is: *government of the people, by the people, for the people*, which surely assumes that we the people share common objectives for the common good, are well-informed, and see to it that our wishes are carried out.

Unfortunately we neither share common objectives nor believe in the common good; far from being well-informed we are brainwashed by the media and the advertising moguls; and instead of seeing that our wishes are implemented we are at the receiving end: being told what to do whether we like it or not - or else!

The standard replies are that every adult has a vote and we can change government policy by this means; that we have freedom of the press - after all, no one prevents anarchists from propagating their ideas; and Parliament is the voice of the people.

That the majority of our fellow countrymen believe all this to be true is evidence of the extent to which they have been brainwashed - virtually from birth, for the real

UNDERMINING GOD-POWER

The *Independent's* religious affairs correspondent has surely not done God, let alone the church, a favour by pointing out (18th May) that:

"Churches which used an experimental advertising campaign were able to increase their Christmas attendance last year; churches which ignored the campaign saw their attendances drop, according to a survey conducted by the diocese of Oxford."

About a third of the country was covered by the advertising campaign to attract the wayward sheep back to the fold. The slogan was:

"Christmas. It's enough to bring anyone to their knees. Remember what it's all about: come to church this Christmas."

and was used on "twenty local radio stations, 150 billboard and 55,000 car stickers.

powers are not the politicians, mostly third-rate ham actors, but the media - the millionaire press and, for the new illiterate, television with the accompanying advertising bombardment which has determined for a majority what life is all about.

It is ironic that the recent excellent Canadian-made film shown on Channel 4 in the series 'Channels of Resistance' *Manufacturing Consent - Noam Chomsky and the Media* was screened from 11pm to 1.45am when

most wage-slavers are recuperating to face another day's hell getting to work and at their jobs, and was also interrupted at least five times by advertising which sought to make you feel a failure in life if you didn't acquire this or that latest product of the technological age!

Make no mistake, this was no coincidence. The media, including Channel 4, are the bastions of the

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HAVE WE GOT OUR PRIORITIES RIGHT?

The government is having to borrow some £50 billion to balance the books, and needless to say it is proposing to drastically reduce public spending.

From the various public pronouncements it is clear that one of the main targets is the National Health Service, in spite of the fact that "hospital waiting lists in England grew by more than 75,000 in the year after the general election" (*Guardian*), "patients in rural areas forced to pay more for medicine: claim" (*East Anglian Daily Times*), "million people wait to go into hospital" (*Guardian*), "nurses say too few staff for proper patient care" (*Guardian*), "patients to be told not to waste time" (*Independent*).

"Patients who persist in calling out doctors at night for minor problems will be warned they risk being dropped from their doctor's list. Labour fears that the move will foreshadow charging for night visits by GPs."

It certainly didn't bring the churches that participated to their financial knees - a mere £10,000 (£60,000 if organised by the advertising gurus). No research has been done to see whether the recruits to Christian genuflection have become regulars. All the diocesan director of communications in Oxford could say was that "the survey shows advertising works". What will the Almighty have to say to that?

And according to the British Dental Association, dental treatment on the NHS should be provided only for children and the poor. According to the *Guardian's* medical correspondent, "the proposal marks an acceptance that for most adults dentistry is being privatised". David Blunkett, the Labour spokesman on health, feared the association's proposal would mean higher charges for many people and that "a service for the poor always ends up a poor service".

The proposed cuts are even more drastic if one bears in mind that the Thatcher government was running down the services throughout the 1980s. According to a Labour Party analysis based on government figures, more than 40,000 acute care hospital beds have been closed by the NHS since 1979 - that is more that one in five beds available when they took office in 1979. In the same period, however, there was a growth of 5,000 - 70% - in the number of private hospital beds. Similarly, during those years at least, 538 NHS hospitals - or more than one in five - have closed, whereas private hospitals have risen from 150 to some 200.

According to Dawn Primarolo, Labour's health spokeswoman, the NHS has been "shortchanged" by

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The railway unions have accepted compromise with British Rail over redundancies and the employment of outside contractors on maintenance work and have called off their campaign of 24-hour strikes. However, the major problem facing not only the railway workers but the travelling public is the government's apparent determination to go ahead with its privatisation programme in spite of opposition from every quarter, including a large number of Tory backbenchers.

Their crazy plans for privatisation will only be halted by a massive campaign of protest by the railway workers and the travelling public. In our opinion the initiative must come from the railway workers in the form of a massive advertising programme in which they explain to the public what privatisation will mean for services, safety and fares. We also think that the unions should expose the BR management not only for its inefficiency but for hoping to get a few plums out of privatisation – management takeovers of various franchises, as their colleagues in other privatised services have done in the past. They should also show that a national network with workers control at local level would reduce many of the delays and problems which today haunt the service but are the result of control being more and more centralised and computerised, and could easily be reduced. But of course it would mean a larger workforce instead of, as at present, large-scale redundancies.

The railway unions should also explain for the benefit of the stupid members of the public that a good service is one that operates throughout the day even when there are not many passengers. They should remind the commuters in the south-east that through no fault of theirs tens of thousands fewer passengers are travelling on their services for no other reason than that they are unemployed

Direct action against railway privatisation

and have no reason to go up to London. But the trains still run with fewer passengers and less revenue. Are they less efficient as a result? Private enterprise, which makes no bones about the fact they are in business to make money, can only conceive of a service *so long as it makes a profit*, which everybody knows will mean that a whole number of services under privatisation will be reduced or scrapped. We could go on *ad infinitum* with arguments against the privatisation of the rail network (while at the same time criticising the

present organisation and advocating workers' control), but what concerns us now is that the government's plans for privatisation should be defeated – but knowing that nothing will move them in the Westminster talking shop other than a massive public campaign to force them to abandon their crazy programme.

In our opinion the railway workers' unions must mobilise the travelling public on to their side starting with a massive press campaign. Had the unions organised another

24-hour strike it would have cost the workers a day's wages, but also the unions a day's strike pay for many thousands of members. The union should ask members to contribute half a day's pay to mount a press campaign – whole pages in the national press – in which they explain with facts and figures what privatisation will mean for the travelling public – not only the commuters but the pensioners and students who will undoubtedly lose their cheap tickets – culminating in massive demonstrations throughout the country which no government, not even the present idiots can ignore.

We think that such a campaign has possibilities of success since the government's privatisation plans are seen to be unrealistic even by Tories who believe in privatisation in principle.

'GOVERNMENT BY JOURNALISM'

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capitalist system. Their top people are grossly overpaid, so not surprisingly they have a stake in maintaining a society dominated by a rich, privileged minority.

In case it has already disappeared in the memory hole (news has a short shelf-life in our world – just as well for our rulers!) quite recently senior managers at London

"The average man's opinions are made for him like the house he lives in ... What is called the rule of the majority in a bourgeois democracy is, therefore, in reality the rule of those who control the methods of manufacturing opinion, especially in the schools and the press." – Bertrand Russell (1924)

Weekend Television were offered a share option scheme which, to quote the *Guardian*, "will give them a £55 million jackpot to be shared between 45 people". Needless to say, the station's chairman Sir Christopher Bland comes off best with a mere £7 million in the autumn. Another fifteen will become millionaires.

To maintain the myth of freedom of the press Murdoch, for instance, has no hesitation in publishing a regular column by the former editor of *Marxism Today* (RIP) in the *Sunday Times*, not to mention Labour Party names who are 'worried' about party policy. For these voices, for what they are worth, are then drowned by a hundred broadsheet pages of 'business', 'your personal finance', lashings of millionaire sport, etc.

Chomsky is right when he takes the view that the "media serve a kind of propagandist function promoting the interests of the ruling class". But the anarchists have been saying this for a very long time, as readers of *Freedom* can confirm.

For instance, what do our readers say about the following extracts from a *Freedom* editorial with the topical heading 'Government by Journalism'?

The editor was commenting on an article by a journalist in the *Contemporary Review* who maintained that politicians were out of touch with the people and that the press had to "step into the breach". Personal and class interests, not to mention "individual ambition" of public men "creeping on to power by bribery and treachery" etc., all contributed to making "representation in practice nothing but a farce". And *Freedom* commented:

"All this is true enough, but the said farce will be driven from the stage of history by something of sterner mould than a newspaper government. All rulers, whether they be called emperors or editors, have one end aim by which to justify their existence, namely the supposed necessity to force the masses of the people to respect the property of a few."

That extract appeared in *Freedom*, volume 1, number 4, in January 1887. Yes, 1887! The 'reformists' of the Labour Party talk of shedding all the "old ideological baggage" as worthless because materially most people now enjoy a higher

standard of living than workers did a hundred years ago. Agreed! But do these 'reformists' not see that "life is not bread alone"; that the wage system should be unacceptable to socialists; that the gulf between the rich 5% and the 50% who own less or nothing cannot be tolerated by a society claiming to be civilised.

The campaign for equality can only be waged by the wage slaves, and not by the millionaire press and its overpaid top journalists. Anarchists have no faith in politicians; we have even less in the media hacks!

New FREEDOM PRESS titles — MAY 1993 —

Freedom to Roam Harold Sculthorpe

Short, witty essays by a rambler on the problems encountered in walking in the countryside as the military, large landowners, factory farmers and, more recently, water companies try to exclude walkers from the land.

68 pages ISBN 0 900384 68 9 £3.50

Social Defence: Social Change Brian Martin

Argues for social defence as a grassroots initiative linked to challenges to oppressive structures in society, such as patriarchy, police and the state. Filled with examples from Finland to Fiji.

168 pages ISBN 0 900384 69 7 £4.95

Violence and Anarchism various authors

A supplement to the *Freedom* Centenary Series. An attempted assassination of Hendrick Verwoerd, prime minister of South Africa, was greeted by a *Freedom* editorial headed 'Too bad he missed'. The controversy this provoked is reprinted in full.

79 pages ISBN 0 900384 70 0 £2.50

ALSO TO BE PUBLISHED DURING 1993
The first volume of the *Freedom* Centenary Series covering the years 1886 to 1932, and a volume on the life and work of Emma Goldman. Details to be announced.

HAVE WE GOT OUR PRIORITIES RIGHT?

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"shortchanged" by £40,000 million because the government "had failed to match EC average spending on public health care".

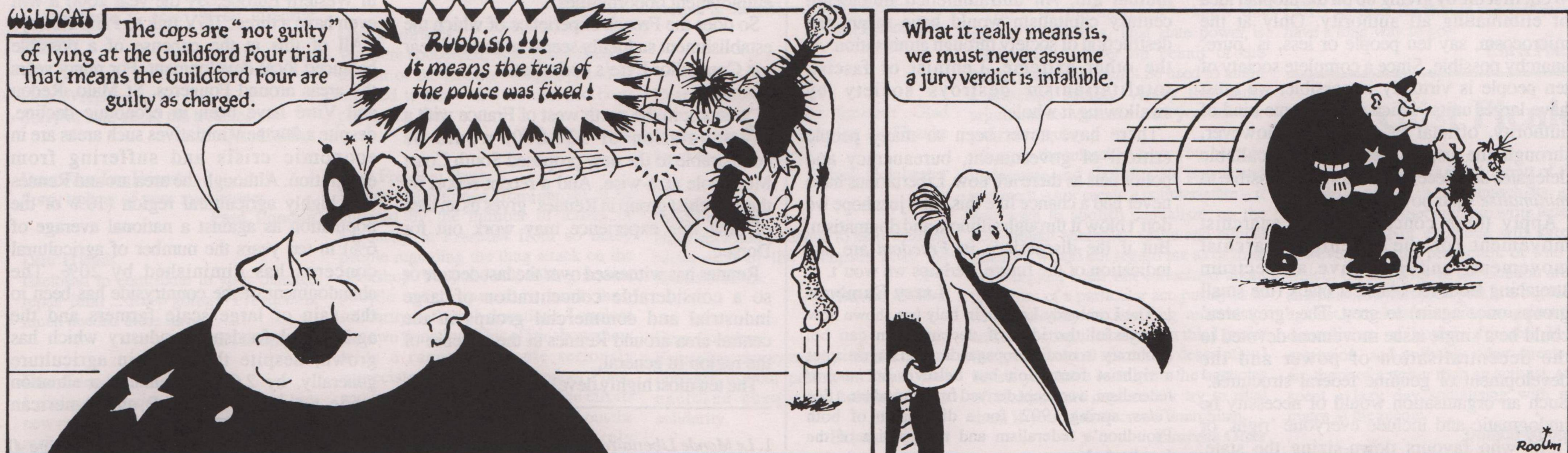
Now compare the government's cheese-paring approach to the health service with their munificence for the so-called 'advanced European fighter aircraft'. The cost of that extravagance has gone up from £7,800 million to £13,000 million – a mere £5,200 million. Why?

Quite simply because the Ministry of Defence in its wisdom decided that 200 of these monsters were not enough for our safety from an enemy, so they increased the order by 50. Just for the extra cost – which, apparently, the British taxpayer can afford – how many hospital beds in the NHS could be reinstated with staff?

Do you think these decisions should be left to government bureaucrats? If you don't then it is not enough to grumble or write to your MP. We the people have the power if we organise to impose our will. Simply to vote once every four years is a waste of time.

Ask your neighbours: what is more important for our well-being – a health service geared to good health or another 50 'advanced European fighter aircraft' which will only burn up more fuel on useless exercises and then be scrapped as a new generation of equally useless aircraft take over? Surely, if they are not mad, they will go for health.

The next step is for the citizens to go on the streets to demand just that, and make it clear to the politicians that a National Health Service is their first priority and refuse to accept that the government knows best. However, to convince them of our determination token protests and demonstrations are not enough. It must be a sustained campaign covering the whole country. Yes, bringing to country to a standstill if necessary.



News and Views

Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) and the camcorder (video recorder) have transformed the relationship between 'us' and 'them'. We are familiar with CCTV in our banks and building societies, but its use is now much more widespread and to be found in all kinds of public places including railway stations, leisure centres, hospitals and even elevators. But this is only the beginning and recently an American television programme *Videos, Vigilantes and Voyeurism* shown on Channel 4 described plans to put entire cities under surveillance with the down-town business district of Newark, New Jersey, already under 24-hour cover. For the technically minded, the cameras used can pan and tilt through 360 degrees and are fitted with a 310mm zoom lens to close up on anything suspicious. Lest you think that this is just US hyperbole, the *New Scientist* (8th May 1993) reported that the centre of the quiet market town of King's Lynn in Norfolk is now monitored by a network of 45 cameras in one of the biggest security systems in the country, a dubious distinction it shares with Newcastle on Tyne and Northampton, among others. The installers claim that within five years every town in Britain will have a similar system.

The official justification for this massive intrusion into our privacy is its effectiveness

in combating crime – robberies, burglaries and drug dealing – and is the price we must pay to live in a safe and secure society. Strange how the amount of crime seems to increase in proportion to the introduction of measures to combat it. The video recordings obtained can be used as evidence in court and may be enhanced to improve the quality of the picture. Although at the moment such manipulations are limited to removing visual noise and correcting colour casts, who knows what the future may hold. Police claim that these recordings are rarely needed in court as the accused usually readily confess to their crimes on being told that they have been videoed, even without seeing the pictures. Must be a great saving of boot and fist.

Lest you anticipate protest about this, we have to tell you that a survey in King's Lynn found that 96% approved of the cameras. A wider study for the Police Research group at the Home Office found that 80% welcomed them although one third did agree that they could be used to spy on people. Only one person out of nearly 2,000 commented that the quality of life is affected by knowing that you are being watched. In the US only the isolated voice can be heard saying that CCTV will affect what people will do or say, or that a watched society is a conformist society. There is a small minority who think that such

Authority and the future of anarchism

Colin Ward, Peter Cadogan and Arthur Moysé have created a stimulating discussion on the future of anarchism. We must indeed try to overcome the legacy of the nineteenth century and Peter really hits the nail on the head when he states that in the old movement "people wanted jam tomorrow and sold their souls to a dream". How did this utopianism come about? Go back to Proudhon, check his proposals and you won't find a great deal of fuzzy idealism. For the 'father of anarchism' authority could never be completely abolished, only minimalised, and his 'anarchy' was conceived as a myth much like Sorel's 'myth of the general strike', i.e. an ideal which may not necessarily be attained. According to Proudhon society should be based upon autonomous counties and municipalities united in a federation. The economy would be a mix of individual and co-operative enterprises. His vision was pragmatic and anti-utopian, but somewhere along the line anarchism became converted into a pie in the sky religion much like marxism, where some glorious day – The Revolution – alienation would be abolished and the lion would lie down with the lamb.

One way to get out of the bind that anarchism is in would be to discard what it became and go back to what it was, i.e. adapt Proudhon's concepts to our present situation. Add Peter's small groups and maybe we can begin to come to terms with the problem of authority. How? Well, first off by giving up on the utopian idea of eliminating all authority. Only at the microcosm, say ten people or less, is 'pure' anarchy possible. Since a complete society of ten people is virtually impossible, we must have larger units, which means some kind of authority, official or unofficial. However, through the use of federalism, recallable delegates and decentralisation it is possible to *minimalise* such powers over us.

Apply these concepts to the anarchist movement (or the potential anarchist movement) and you have a spectrum stretching from the blackest black (the small groups once again) to grey. The 'grey area' could be a single issue movement devoted to the decentralisation of power and the development of genuine federal structures.¹ Such an organisation would of necessity be undogmatic and include everyone 'right' or 'left' who favours down-sizing the state.

Between the 'black' and the 'grey' could be a kind of anarchist Fabian society which would devote itself to coming up with practical alternatives to the government programmes that are of some use to people (such as education or health care). Black versus grey should not imply a hierarchy not any sort of vanguardism or even Bakuninist 'guardianship', but rather a division of *function*.

It would then be possible to envisage future society as a web of social relationships with more or less authority according to the size of the group and the alertness and awareness of the people involved. As many *Freedom* correspondents have shown, libertarian aspects such as federalism, mutualism and voluntarism exist within our present society. Our task is to make people aware of the libertarianism within daily life and help generalise these phenomena. We should never cease asking questions such as: 'If credit unions are so successful why do we need banks?' 'If co-ops, why capitalist corporations?' 'If mutual aid societies, why state bureaucratic welfare systems?' Or 'Couldn't such and such be done better at the neighbourhood/city/county level?' It wouldn't be too much to stress the point that without these libertarian aspects we wouldn't even have a society (even one as screwed up as the present one). Society means some level of reciprocity, autonomy, voluntarism and mutual aid. An untrammelled nineteenth century capitalism would have meant the destruction of society through atomisation. At the other extreme, Leninist or fascist, totalitarianism destroys society by swallowing it whole.

There have never been so many people critical of government, bureaucracy and politicians as there are now. Libertarians have never had a chance like this, let's just hope we don't blow it through silliness and dogmatism. But if the discussions in *Freedom* are any indication of the future, perhaps we won't.

Larry Gambone

1. The Lombardy League in Italy has shown how successful the idea of decentralism can be. (Contrary to media propaganda, the League is not a rightist formation but believes in *integral* federalism, a concept derived from Proudhon.) See *Telos*, spring 1992, for a discussion of both Proudhon's federalism and the politics of the Lombardy League.

cameras should be obvious and readily identifiable.

Yet to cross the Atlantic is the UAV, a small Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, fitted with video cameras, that can be controlled from a car on the ground to monitor large areas very effectively. Found useful in the Gulf War to observe Iraqi troop movements, it has since been used on the US Mexican border to detect illegal immigrants. Its value in monitoring civil disturbance is obvious and every Chief Constable in Britain must be longing to have one, or two, or three. So much quieter and less obtrusive than a helicopter.

The prescience of George Orwell continues to amaze. His description of a country rigidly controlled using television technology was dismissed by his critics as fantasy or at least just a parody of life in the Soviet Union and of no relevance to the liberal West. Admittedly he did not foresee that electronic miniaturisation means that such cameras can now be concealed in any piece of household or street furniture but, much more significantly, he did not envisage that whilst we are watched we can also watch back.

There are, apparently, some forty million camcorders worldwide, fourteen million of them in the US, in the hands of ordinary people, literally so, as, no bigger than most still-cameras, they can be held and used in the palm of the hand. They can and increasingly do record what the government is doing to people. In the US any notable event is already likely to be recorded by someone. The video evidence of the beating up of Rodney King on 3rd March 1991 is not the only or earliest

example of this, although it got the most publicity.

Outside the US undercover recordings in the occupied Gaza Strip have helped expose Israeli military brutality there, but the most interesting exposure of nefarious government activity occurred in Baghdad during the Gulf war. Whilst we were being regaled with lies about the pin-point accuracy of the US, sorry Allied, bombing, John Alpert of NBC was recording the widespread destruction and civilian deaths. We were not allowed to see this at the time and it cost him his job, but the footage exists.

However, the increasingly widespread availability of camcorders is not all good news. In the US groups of vigilantes have already been searching out deviant behaviour in their community and harassing harmless individuals who don't happen to accept the mores of the majority, leading in at least one instance to suicide. Another unpleasant aspect of their use is in a form of morbid ambulance chasing to obtain recordings of car crashes, fires and other human tragedies to sell to their local, or better still national, television – an example of entrepreneurial spirit that should please our government neo-conservatives.

The penultimate word must go to Alvin Toffler, author of *Future Shock*, who has said that this is not something that our present political structures are going to be able to accommodate without phenomenal change. He might have added that the kinds of change we get need not be decided by governments. We can decide for ourselves if we so choose.

HS

Dorset Diary

The capitalist economy, as opposed to the other/alternative economy (more of which at a future date), is laying down its 21st century plans for Dorset.

Meetings between top officers (non-elected) and members of four councils (Poole, Bournemouth, Southampton and Portsmouth) have taken place and the South Coast Metropole partnership scheme is in existence.

Late April saw Bournemouth Council's policy and resources committee approve a charter to define the scheme's objectives which are, in a nutshell, to achieve closer integration with the EEC. Its next step is to link up with the Normandie Metropole which has already made approaches to form a 'Trans-Manche Partnership'.

The council leader, Doug Eyre, claims that schemes like the French one could be extremely successful and beneficial to the regions involved. The question which springs to my mind and possibly yours is 'in what way?' Councillor Eyre give us his answer when he says: "Our view is that Dorset is not seen in Europe in the way we want it to be seen, and that is as a major economic player" i.e. beneficial to the business community. Europeans are good at such things, he thinks, and says: "What appeals to me is that working together as a region is set to boost wealth and employment opportunities".

So does the French experience of which the establishment suddenly seems so fond of bear out Councillor Eyre's optimism?

Rennes, in the north west of France with a population of 521,000, would be comparable to the new proposed South Coast Metropole size-wise. And a recent report by the anarchist group in Rennes¹ gives us an idea of how this experience may work out for Dorset.

Rennes has witnessed over the last decade or so a considerable concentration of large industrial and commercial groups in the central area around Rennes at the expense of the region in general.

The ten most highly developed companies in

the area are involved in only four areas of activity: cars, electronics, agricultural foodstuffs and telecommunications, but they account for 60% of the working population as opposed to 21.8% in these industries for France as a whole. This ensured that employment in the Rennes area between 1982 and 1988 rose three times as fast as in the rest of the *département*. 73% of the service sector and 62% of the manufacturing sector is situated in the Rennes area. Three companies: Citroen, Canon and Bridel control 70% of exports from the *département*, of which 80% are destined for the EEC.

For these reasons Rennes has become an important focal point for the large capitalist groupings at the heart of the European single market. Given such a perspective numerous projects are being carried out in the Rennes region, to serve the interests of international capital and geared towards the main European centres. From now until 1995, Rennes airport will establish direct links with London, Brussels, Amsterdam, Geneva and Frankfurt. In 2010 an international airport is planned for western France situated between Rennes and Nantes. The Rennes region will also be linked to an inter-regional European axis. Within this framework Rennes is destined to become a megapolis for the international single market in Western Europe. By the year 2000 it will even have a direct TGV link to Paris-Roissy.

All of this at the expense of a possible balanced local development. For many years the areas around Fougères, St Malo, Redon and Vitre have been in economic decline, despite a few new initiatives such areas are in economic crisis and suffering from emigration. Although the area around Rennes is a highly agricultural region (10% of the population as against a national average of 6%) in ten years the number of agricultural concerns has diminished by 20%. The abandonment of the countryside has been to the gain of large scale farmers and the agricultural foodstuffs industry which has grown, despite the crisis in agriculture generally, by 2.6% per annum, a situation made worse by the CAP and American pressure at the GATT talks.

1. *Le Monde Liberaire*, 25th February 1993.

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The recent expulsion from Israel of 400 Islamic fundamentalists was the latest in a series of actions designed to delay or scupper the peace talks with the Palestinians. This deliberate policy of expelling, jailing or killing its most inoffensive opponents – writers, doctors and so on – allows Israel to claim that it can't talk to the Palestinians because they are all terrorists. Naturally if you dispose of – one way or another – all the moderates then eventually the only people left with any influence will be your most implacable opponents. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Israeli death squads

In the eyes of many people, of course, terrorism and the Middle East are synonymous and the Israeli state since its foundation has merely continued the tradition of the British state which controlled the region until 1948; right down to blowing up the houses of 'extremists' and executing suspects. Even as the Israeli government makes what it hopes will be seen as a gesture of supreme magnanimity by allowing back into the country thirty Palestinians illegally expelled *twenty years ago* – a useful smokescreen for the untold thousands of others expelled likewise since 1948 – more information is coming to light about the activities of Israeli commandos operating in the West Bank and Gaza. The *Mistra'arvim*, or Samson Units, number several hundred and operate 'behind enemy lines', i.e. in the occupied territories, like the SAS – heavily armed, disguised as Arabs and speaking Arabic. Their function is to 'neutralise' Palestinian terrorists (these include the young stone-throwers of the *Intifada* apparently) which in practice means kidnapping suspects where possible, but more often shooting them dead. Those captured or shot are usually found to have nothing to do with terrorism, according to an officer in one of the units in a recent television documentary.¹ The Israeli 'intelligence'

1. *Dispatches*, Channel 4, 27th April 1993.

Dorset Diary

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The French anarchists seem to have made their point better than the Dorset Conservative Party and our situations are comparable: an agricultural area (traditionally) with a potential industrial base (the new Metropole) and international communications (up and coming Hurn airport, never mind Southampton airport/seaport, Portsmouth, etc).

The industrial base has of course been somewhat decimated in recent times. The biggest single employer in Poole is the locally based Hamworthy Engineering. Big European capital has not moved in though presumably this is what the new plans hope to change. However, the service industries take the lion's share of local employment with the biggest employer in Bournemouth being Chase Manhattan, so American capital is there.

If the local Tories think that the EEC is some kind of idyllic paradise for small business men and women to flit back and forth across the Channel shaking hands in French restaurants over beneficial trade contracts (quite sweet I suppose) then I think they've got it wrong. It's far more about big companies creating an environment and workforce to favour exploitation on an international rather than a national scale. Councillor Eyre again: "The Europeans see regions as natural economic groupings, but we haven't got the equivalent in our country, where ... counties ... are only lines on a map ... not designated economic units". The story of what American capital did at Hoover is destined to be repeated many more times if Tory simpletons achieve their dreams.

Neil Birrell

MURDER AND SUBTERFUGE BUSINESS AS USUAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

organisations Shin Bet and Mossad get their information – frequently bogus – by systematically threatening to deny Palestinians studying in Arab countries the right of re-entry to the territories unless they co-operate. It is thought that Mossad has penetrated every Palestinian faction, for varying periods, since 1967.

The cause – but whose cause?

The notorious Palestinian terrorist Abu Nidal is himself now believed to be an Israeli agent. Born in Jaffa in 1937, the son of a Palestinian orange grower, his real name is Sabri al-Banna. His experience of Israeli persecution, then expulsion, of his family and the confiscation of their land combined with a deeply unhappy childhood to create a festering resentment, and he was soon looking for ways to hit back. After a brief flirtation with the Ba'ath Party he joined *Fatah*, the Palestinian resistance, but he soon found them too moderate and set up his own radical group in opposition to Arafat's leadership. He was made Iraq representative to get him out of the way, but continued his attacks on Arafat over the 'Voice of Palestine' radio station in Baghdad and through his faction in the command structure. He was eventually replaced. Seizing all the assets from the Iraq operation, Nidal cut his association with Arafat and set up his own *Fatah* with other disenchanted PLO members. He made it known that he hated the PLO as much as he hated Israel. But his organisation's armed attacks on Israelis and Palestinians, far from helping the Palestinian cause as he claimed, did nothing but harm to it and nothing but good to the Israelis, as the author and journalist Patrick Seale has shown in his recent book.² The gratuitous outrages against Jews and Israelis – mainly innocent, unarmed civilians – brought only international condemnation of all Palestinians as terrorists; and the assassinations of leading PLO moderates who wanted to talk to Israel brought only Israeli satisfaction at that many fewer Palestinians to have to negotiate with.

A Trojan Horse

Based on information from interviews with friends of Abu Nidal, many top members and ex-members of his organisation and of Arafat's *Fatah*, and a variety of foreign counter-intelligence sources, Seale concludes that either Nidal was recruited directly by Mossad, probably when he was in Sudan with *Fatah* in 1969, or that some of his top aides are controlled by Mossad, or that it has got its own agents into his organisation, or a combination of these. Many of his own men have believed for years that they had been penetrated by Mossad, and evidence that it controlled at least some Nidal operations, is not hard to find. Just to take one example, Nidal has killed more young Palestinian fighters – including massacring many of his own men – in 'factional feuds' within the refugee camps than the Israeli army managed to do in the first two years of the *Intifada*, and it was hardly restraining itself. But perhaps the most convincing evidence that Abu Nidal is a Trojan Horse in the Palestinian camp is that alone amongst all the resistance groups, his never seems to have been the target of a serious Israeli attack. Israel has a publicly-stated policy, known throughout the world of always retaliating against Palestinian attacks on Jewish or Israeli targets, which it invariably does, quickly and violently. Yet Abu Nidal's groups have never once been hit, even though Israel knows exactly where many of his bases are, and even who occupies which buildings. Even after the massacre of 21 Jews

2. *Abu Nidal: a gun for hire* by Patrick Seale, Arrow Books, 340 pages, £5.99 plus postage and packing from Freedom Press.

in a Turkish synagogue there was no response from Israel.

Talk softly – but carry a big stick

Despite all the rhetoric to the contrary the last thing Israel has ever wanted is real peace negotiations, leading inevitably to Palestinian autonomy at least, or even – God forbid – a Palestinian state!

The present talks – repeatedly stalemated – with both sides at the same table is as far as they've ever got and the Israelis, despite pressure from the USA, use every trick in the book to ensure that there is no worthwhile outcome: arrests of delegates, expulsions of harmless clerics and academics, military attacks on refugee camps, the new wave of repression in the West Bank and Gaza, etc. And the strategy continues to work – the Palestinian delegates are already losing credibility among the young militants of the *Intifada* for wanting to resume talks in the face of the latest provocation, as shown in the following *Guardian* article (23rd April 1993):

"Yasser Arafat's *Fatah* organisation has circulated leaflets in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip warning of retaliation for attacks on Palestinian peace negotiators. The leaflets say attacks will be met with an 'iron fist'.

The warning follows several death threats against Palestinian delegates to next week's round of Middle East peace talks in Washington.

The *Fatah* message grimly underscores the bitter divisions among Palestinians after Wednesday's disputed decision to rejoin the talks. Two members of the negotiating team have resigned in protest and several more are said to be deeply unhappy.

In the face of overwhelming pressure, the negotiators abandoned their demands for an improved package of measures from Israel, including the speedy return of deportees and the renunciation of deportation in the future.

Their reluctance to do so was manifest, with the team leader, Haidar Abdel Shafi, sardonically referring to the need for Arab unity.

As the negotiators returned to the West Bank yesterday, crossing the Allenby Bridge from Jordan, Israel Radio said they had been assigned bodyguards – a dramatic acknowledgement of the new dangers facing the peace process, and a potentially damaging blow to the delegates' credibility.

Since last December's deportations, there has been a steady shift in public opinion in the occupied territories towards fundamentalist groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

— ITALY —

Everyday life self-management

Mainly set up in the 1980s, self-managed social centres (CSAs) have flourished throughout Italy. From the north to the south, today they number over one hundred. Houses, factories, fortresses, asylums, cinemas, monasteries, schools ... so many buildings which had been abandoned or promised to property speculators have been occupied in order to give birth to spaces of real freedom, creativity and communication. Many of their births were painful, given the omnipresence of state repression (evictions, trials). Today such problems are still common currency, since the politicians cannot tolerate these cultural and social spaces over which they have no control.

In addition to this repression there has also been over the last few months fascist action and provocation (Milan, Rome, Livorno).

Despite these attempts at intimidation and to criminalise the movement, more occupations are coming about so that they don't have it all their own way.

To choose one example from amongst so many: that of the anarchist CSA in El Paso de Turin. Founded on 5th December 1987, it is sited in a working class district and built in an end of the century villa (a former asylum). The occupation was supported by the local population who showed both material and moral solidarity and who have still to this day never let it down. Despite this support several attempts at eviction have occurred. However, the determination and combativeness of

The more moderate negotiators backed by the Palestine Liberation Organisation, having failed to secure any significant concessions from Israel, now have to convince the nearly two million Arabs of the occupied territories that talking peace is not the same as selling out to the Israelis and the Americans."

By eliminating the leading 'doves' (or better, getting someone else to do it for them) and then provoking the remaining population, Israel can declare to the world that there are no credible moderates to negotiate with, only terrorists. 'And we know how to deal with them'. The problem for the Palestinian negotiators, ironically, is that they are increasingly likely to be dealt with in the same way *precisely because they are so moderate*.

Putting the questions

Across the world, from ex-Yugoslavia to South Africa (which so often seems to mirror the Israeli situation) the lives of ordinary people are being sacrificed to the desires of megalomaniacs in their state-building games. In this power-play of states and would-be states, with the world looking on helplessly from the sidelines, the question we must ask the Arab rulers, Israel and its puppet-master the USA is how long do they think they can toy with people's lives in their strategic playground before they are engulfed in the upsurge of anger that will follow their New World Ordure? The question we must ask the Palestinians is how long are they going to let them? Ordinary people on both sides will have to learn to throw off the parasites and stand together if they are ever to resolve this historic tragedy. Or, to put it another way: if politicians and priests are the answer, it must have been a bloody stupid question.

Postscript: Seale's book is a useful survey of who did what to whom, and when, in the Middle East terrorist can of worms. It is also a good insight into some of Mossad's operations, and the whole Israeli-Palestinian conflict since the founding of Israel, and is untainted by the usual pro-Israeli bias. A comparable anarchist viewpoint of the problem during the preceding decade can be found in the Freedom Press collection of articles written at the time³ which, as well as looking in detail at specific incidents analyses the broader political background.

Fatima

3. *British Imperialism and the Palestine crisis*, selections from *Freedom* 1937-49, Freedom Press, 104 pages, £1.95, post free from Freedom Press.

Bring on the Dancing Girls

There was a time, ah yesteryear, when nothing could excite the romantic Left more than the shouted, staged, printed or illustrated word 'Revolution' be it on stage, page, film or police organised demonstration, for it was their Rorschach ink blot and at the sight and sound of it they would salivate like Pavlovian dogs trained to hare it to the cookhouse at the chimes of vespers. It is excusable for we survive within a small self-contained island and our revolutions, like our large and small wars, are fought in other people's back yards. It is understandable that because we received our blood and pain on edited cinema film or censored newsprint our distant small wars and revolutions should be academic and a thing of passionate debate and a collection at the door so that come the words 'Tradition and REVOLUTION in French Art' we hightail it to the National Gallery in demonstrator-free Trafalgar Square flaunting our 'Ban the Bomb' badges to person the painted barricades in the company of the Town and his *Guardian*-gripping frau. Only the wine flowed red, for though we were the creatures of Pavlov and Rorschach we failed ourselves for 'revolution' is but 'revolving, motion in orbit or circular course or round axis or centre, rotation, etc.' and instead of viewing the visuals of the French Revolution it was but a rather - £4 admission - drear parochial display of French academic paintings with, as I recall, a single small painting of Marat haranguing a willing street audience. Revolution, of its very nature, must always be

a thing of the dispossessed and a thing of blood and failure for out of the courage and death that forges it are produced fresh chains by the new commands that have always been created yet, and for all that, this is the tragedy of the dispossessed, there is that moment in time when evil can no longer be accepted and a halt sealed in blood.

But not in the National Gallery exhibition, comrade, for as good ol' Brian Sewell, the sage of the *Evening Standard*, wrote it is "A crude French lesson" and the cry is 'Nay, nay Brian' just some slack French academic painting from the Musée des Arts from the town of Lille of the years 1700-1880. Within the arts revolt or revolution has always been



Food for Thought ... and Action

*Social Ecology, Anarchism and Trades Unionism** by Graham Purchase, Monty Miller Press. Based on three articles from the Australian journal *Rebel Worker*, this pamphlet comprises a critical examination of Murray Bookchin's main writings on social ecology and the way it fits in with trade union and anarchist theory and practice. A5 size, 12 pages, £1.00. (It is also reprinted in the new Freedom Press title *Deep Ecology and Anarchism: a polemic**, by Bookchin, Morris et al, alongside other articles both for and against deep ecology. 80 pages, and better value at six essays for £2.50.)

Year 501: the conquest continues by Noam Chomsky, Verso. Sharpening his teeth again for his latest major work coinciding with the 500th anniversary of the 'discovery' of the Americas, Chomsky shows that one year on (year 501), little has changed in "the great work of subjugation and conquest". Analysing Haiti, Latin America, Cuba, Indonesia and even pockets of the third world developing in the United States, he draws parallels between the genocide of colonial times and the murder and exploitation associated with modern-day imperialism. However well-versed you think you are in the history of colonialism, this will open your eyes to events you never knew about. 331 pages, £11.95.

*The Place of Anarchism in Socialistic Evolution: an address delivered in Paris** by Pierre Kropotkin, translated by Henry Glasse. Where anarchist ideas fit in with the general socialist schools of thought. Written in 1887. A5 pamphlet, 16 pages, 80p.

I, Claudia: feminism unveiled and Love Lies Bleeding by Claudia, Claudia Press. Both pamphlets are now reprinted together in a handsome book, of which the author says: "I do not expect this will change anyone's views; I simply hope to encourage the more perceptive reader to cut the the hypocrisy of the women's movement and recognise it for what it is: middle-class aspirations and puritanism

masquerading as rebellion". 60 pages, £3.30.

The Ego and Its Own: the case of the individual against authority by Johann Kaspar Schmidt a.k.a. Max Stirner, introduction by Sidney Parker, Rebel Press. Well, I suppose it had to happen eventually. That's the problem with a book, record, film, etc., about which enough of a song and dance is made: it rapidly becomes a cult and when all available copies have been sold, no matter how bad, boring or just plain irrelevant it is, someone is sure to come along and re-issue it. And so with this book. Ever since it went out of print some years ago we have received continued requests for it, and enquiries as to when it would be reprinted. Indeed, such has been the clamour at times that one almost feels obliged to put up a sign in the bookshop window saying 'L'Ego nouveau est arrivée!' The metaphor of the Beaujolais ad - immature, overrated and superficial as that wine is - is not inappropriate here. George Walford in *Angles on Anarchism* (Calabria Press, £2.00) accuses Stirner of using "the ethic of the nursery" and says that those who consider him a deep thinker are wrong; that looking for profundity in *The Ego* was "like searching in a dark cellar for a black cat that wasn't there". Even John Clark, more favourably disposed (*Max Stirner's Egoism*, Freedom Press, £2.00) agrees that Stirner's thought "must ultimately be looked upon as a process of egoistic enjoyment for the author". (How's that for a delicate euphemism for mental masturbation!) Whatever nuggets it may contain, the fact remains that Stirner's book has been very influential among the libertarian right (or free market shits as they are more accurately known) - the so-called anarcho-capitalists. If you really must wade through this printed marmalade, it's 366 pages and £8.50.

KM

Titles distributed by Freedom Press Distributors (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.

deemed to be a thing of raw colours, rough draughtsmanship, loud noises and shouted slogans and it becomes no more than an act of defiance against the sterile dead-weight of any and every Right-wing Establishment for the Right never rebel, theirs is, and always, the staged coup d'état top heavy with generals, brass bands and flags and within the National Gallery is its microcosm in third-rate paintings from the dead hand of Amaury, Duval to Gericault raucous visual taunting of the French middle class.

The Vietnam war and the Muslim, Croat and Serb daily ritual of murder and rape via television's instant TV-rental communication has soured the romantic Left's desire for the blood and guts of the barricades and on stage, print and in the visual arts it has become the

inevitable rehash of the jolly '60s. In every major or minor war or distant revolution it has always been so easy to choose sides and write down the solutions as with the Football Pools coupons, but Yugoslavia offers we bar-room sages and 'real' coffee devotees no easy escape clause for when three alleged ethnic groups are killing, maiming and raping themselves in the shabby cause of nationalism there is a strange uneasy monastic silence within the printed pages from the anarchist to the non-party Liberals because for once history has caught us the conscience of mankind by the bollocks. When *Peace News*, everybody's favourite aunt, offers the solution of beating the plough-shares into swords "to establish such a counter-balance, it is

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Anarchist Studies

Anarchist Studies, Volume 1, Number 1, Spring 1993

Most anarchist periodicals are journalistic papers concentrating on propaganda for anarchism (or some sectarian variety of it), but there have always been more ambitious magazines containing more permanent material of artistic or academic rather than political interest. In the British movement during the past half-century, for example, there have been *Now* and the *Delphic Review* during the 1940s, *Anarchy* during the 1960s, the *Freedom Press Anarchist Review* and the *Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review* from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, and *The Raven* from 1987. These magazines have usually been associated with already existing anarchist papers or else with individual cultural efforts. The latest addition to the genre has rather different origins.

Anarchist Studies comes from the History Workshop movement, which began at Ruskin College, Oxford, as a cooperative venture in which students and teachers explored primary sources of popular history together. The more or less annual workshops at which papers were read and discussed from the late 1960s led to the appearance of a series of History Workshop Pamphlets from 1970 to 1974, a series of History Workshop Books from 1975, and the *History Workshop Journal* from 1976. This work depended on a combination of individual research and collective discussion, so that the standard of the results has generally been high even if the subject-matter has frequently been dull. (A wonderfully confused and conceited account of the movement appears in Raphael Samuel's compilation *History Workshop 1967-1991*.)

This movement has always been dominated by Marxist (and later also feminist) socialists, but from the start there were a few participants or associates who are anarchists, or at least interested in anarchism. In 1984 a few of them formed the Anarchist Research Group, mainly to organise anarchist contributions to the History Workshops, but additionally to hold independent meetings of its own. As a result of its work, anarchist sessions have been included in the annual workshops since 1985, and occasional meetings have also been held in London.

As with the parent movement, publications soon followed. Some of the papers given in 1985 and 1986 were published in David Goodway's History Workshop Book, *For Anarchism* (1989). A couple of members started a *Bulletin of Anarchist Research* in 1985, and a couple of other members tried to start a more ambitious paper to be called *Transition* in 1986. (The non-appearance of the latter led to the appearance of *The Raven* in 1987.) When the *Bulletin of Anarchist Research* got into difficulties, it succeeded by two papers a *Newsletter* of the Anarchist Research Group last year, and now *Anarchist Studies*.

Anarchist Studies is intended to be a full-scale academic magazine, published

twice a year (or four times a year if possible), with all the appearance and apparatus of a conventional learned journal. More than 40 people are named in the first issue as taking part in the project. The editor is Thomas V. Cahill, former editor of the *Bulletin of Anarchist Research*, and the Associate Editors are David Goodway, Sharif Gemie, and John Moore; the Book Reviews Editor is Carl Levy, and the Periodicals Editor is Karen Goaman; there is an Editorial Board of no fewer than 35 people, half in Britain and half abroad. Nearly all these people are identified by their academic institutions, though their actual status in the academic world is not clear. The production and distribution have been undertaken by a commercial publisher.

Such a magazine is obviously welcome, since any serious publication about anarchism is always welcome. An academic magazine has its own particular contribution to make to the anarchist press, even if the academic approach often seems to obscure rather than illuminate research. And there is certainly a need in this country for something like *Anarchist Studies*. With all this elaborate substructure in place, however, the first issue is a great disappointment. The sub-editing and proof-reading are no better than usual in the anarchist press, and the quality of production is well below what is easily available with cheap modern technology. Above all, the writing and editing are nowhere near good enough. After a signed editorial introduction explaining the inspirations and aspirations of the magazine, the keynote article is Murray Bookchin's exorcism of 'The Ghost of Anarcho-Syndicalism'. This is not an academic analysis but a polemical attack on the theory of anarcho-syndicalism and its practice in France, Mexico, America and especially Spain, with virtually no reference to any serious anarcho-syndicalist thought or activity, or indeed any proper consideration of the genuine problems of collective work in a free society.

There are three other main articles. Richard Cleminson describes the first spread of the ideas of Wilhelm Reich in Spain during the 1930s, a potentially interesting but actually tedious treatment of a rather marginal subject with no recognition of the fact that his theories are nonsense, whatever his contributions to sexual liberation. David Berry describes the contemporary anarchist press in France, on the basis of a cursory look at a score of papers bought on a single visit to Paris. Richard Kostelanetz discusses 'The Anarchist Art' of John Cage, the avant-garde musician who died last year, a fulsome obituary with no recognition of the fact that his 'art' was an embarrassing joke, whatever his political views.

There are three review articles. Ruth Kinna gives a clumsy critique of George Crowder's clumsy book on 'Classical Anarchism', an imaginary construct of the ideas of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, concentrating on a mechanistic view of the

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Anarchist Studies

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latter. Brian Morris gives a ponderous account of two recent books on nature and the environment by Americans who aren't anarchists. And the well-named 'Max Cafard' delivers an incomprehensible meditation on an incomprehensible book by another American who isn't an anarchist. There are also four short reviews of books published up to six years ago (indeed one of the reviews appeared in the *Bulletin of Anarchist Research* four years ago). There are notices of 40 periodicals, mainly from 1992, and of a dozen recent articles on anarchism.

Things improve at the end. There are two lively accounts of recent events the inaugural meeting of the Social Ecology Network in London in October 1992, and the Kropotkin Conference in Russia in December 1992. The former arose from Bookchin's tour of England a year ago, and Karen Goaman gives a very frank depiction of the contradictory elements present, including the predictable contingent of disruptive dominant males. The latter marked the 150th anniversary of Kropotkin's birth, and Laure Akai also gives a very frank depiction of the predictable combination of confusion and enthusiasm, including the predictable contingent of competitive ambitious academics. And Andrew Whitehead contributes a much better obituary of the veteran anarchist Leah Feldman, who died in January 1993, than any of those so far published.

Anarchist Studies contains 96 pages in slightly larger than A5 format. It is about the same size as *The Raven*, and it costs about twice as much.

NW

Anarchist Studies is published by White Horse Press, 10 High Street, Knapwell, Cambridge CB3 8NR. Annual subscriptions (two issues a year) are £12 for individuals and £24 for institutions, payable to White Horse Press, 1 Strond, Isle of Harris PA83 3UD. Single copies are available from the Freedom Bookshop at £6 (plus 34p postage & packing inland, 60p overseas).

Rescuing the revolution from prudes

Bad Girls and Dirty Pictures: the challenge to reclaim feminismedited by Alison Assiter and Avedon Carol
Pluto Press, 185 pages, £9.95*

A cartoon in *Wildcat Anarchist Comics* shows a 'feminist' who scrawls "sexist crap" across posters showing anything from hair gel to bananas which might be connected with sex, but ignores a blatantly sexist poster advertising "Buck-U-Uppo for the active man and his tired wife". She is labelled "prude hi-jacking the revolution" and she symbolises the sorry state to which the feminist movement had sunk in 1985.

An energetic group of American lesbians did much for women's liberation in the 1960s, and around 1970 they dominated the thinking of the English-speaking feminist movement. These women were so heterophobic they could just not imagine how any woman could enjoy screwing a man, so they imagined that every woman who screwed must be forced into it, one way or another. They persuaded many feminists that all heterosexual intercourse is rape, that polite sexual advances are attempted rape, and that anything calculated to arouse male sexuality is an invitation to attack women. Some heterosexual feminists were persuaded to become 'political lesbians' in the belief that heterosexuality was a betrayal of womanhood.

The worst result of this anti-heterosex was that it looked like simple anti-sex. Freaks, who get their kicks from censoring and punishing the sexuality of others, began to call themselves 'feminists' although they had no beef against the political or economic subjugation of women. Their 'feminism' was no more than a right-wing campaign against overt sexuality.

Some freedom-oriented feminists decided to

stop calling themselves feminists. Others struggled against the anti-sex tendency through the 1970s and early 1980s, before deciding that separate organisation was necessary. The first group of anti-censorship I heard of became active around 1984, in the San Francisco Bay area.

Feminists Against Censorship was formed in Britain in 1989, and this book tells us unsurprisingly that it was immediately denounced by anti-porn campaigners, who said it was heavily subsidised by American porn barons. In fact the total capital was £100 donated by the founder members, and porn publishers would more profitably subsidise the anti-porn movement since their profits are larger when their trade is illegal. But the anti-porn movement lives on myths.

The veteran San Francisco feminist Gayle Rubin sets the tone of the book in the first paragraph:

"The targeting of pornography as a focus of feminist rage and political effort has been a dangerous, costly and tragic mistake ... it is important for feminists to realise that the arguments against pornography are incredibly flimsy, and that there is little intellectual justification for a feminist anti-porn position."

Pornographic works used to be written, but censorship freaks today seem only interested in visual material, and the writers of this book follow their example. In her erudite review of the evidence for a link between pornography and sex crime, Alison King defines pornography as "sexually oriented material of a graphic nature designed for recreation rather than education". It appears there may be some link between violent pictures and aggression, but pictures of genitals and sexual activity actually have a calming effect. My guess is, they give the potential aggressor something pleasant to think about.

One of the editors, Avedon Carol,

contributes an informative chapter on 'snuff movies'. Porn cinemas in New York are uncensored and cheap, but around 1975 there was a rumour that men were paying \$500 a time to see porn movies of women being murdered. In response to the rumours, a producer re-issued an unsuccessful film with a new ending tacked on in which the camera draws back to show the whole set of the end sequence and we see a script girl cut to pieces by the director. The New York District Attorney subsequently interviewed the actress who played the 'script girl' and testified she remained in one piece. This film made in response to a baseless rumour is now cited by anti-sex campaigners as 'proof' that the rumour is true. Incidentally the film is not pornographic, but a 'slasher' movie like *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

The other editor, Alison Assiter, reviews the opinions of various psychoanalysts and philosophers as to whether sexuality is constructivist or essentialist. I do not have the education to fully understand the terminology, and in my ignorance I cannot see how this relates to the topic of feminism versus censorship. Personally I would have put this chapter in a different book.

No reservations about any other chapter. There are relevant, entertaining, thought-provoking contributions from Claudia the publisher of *I Claudia*, from Tuppy Owens the publisher of *The Sex Maniac's Diary*, from Nettie Pollard and from Christabel Mackenzie.

This is a book to interest everyone who is interested in ideas. Every feminist, post-feminist, and seeker of a loving society should read it.

Andrea Kinty

* If ordering by post from Freedom Press please add £1 inland (£2 overseas) postage and packing. There is also a hardback version at £30 plus £3 (£6 overseas) postage and packing.

Donald Room's *Wildcat Anarchist Comics* is £1.50 post free inland (23p overseas). *I Claudia* just reprinted with *Love Lies Bleeding* at £3.30 plus 33p (66p overseas) postage and packing. Regrettably Freedom Press does not sell *The Sex Maniac's Diary*.

Paris May 1968 Recalled
Whitsun in the streets

The most revolutionary impression of Paris over the Whitsun weekend was that of the simple freedom of movement and human contact in and around the Sorbonne; a simplicity which ought to be a natural way of behaviour, but which now comes as a surprise in a modern city.

In the Sorbonne itself there is a total lack of suspicion and interference, in spite of fears of attacks by 'Occident' (a tough right-wing counter-revolutionary group). The whole world is there - students, workers, foreigners of all descriptions; activists (both serious and controlled, and the wild), liberal intellectuals, tourists. Hundreds of people sleep on floors and benches; there are rooms full of food supplies for the occupying students; and armies of students sweeping up. It seemed the natural thing for us to set up a stove and cook our meal in the Sorbonne courtyard, and other days we cooked and slept in parks and streets all over Paris; nobody objected and it provided a good way of meeting people. There was not a cop to be seen on the Left Bank (except those rushing through in armoured buses).

But there is a seriousness which makes the frivolity important, so that eating and loving and merry-making in the parks becomes both an object and a symbol of the revolution. The Sorbonne scene is run by a series of action committees, dealing with relations with the strikers, art and theatre, education, printing of tracts, organising of food, cleaning, etc. Meetings are continually being held to discuss both action and the philosophy of the revolution - live, exciting meetings where political speeches become poetry, both individually and *en masse*. Things happen quickly; some English students arrived on Saturday, got together a large heterogeneous group on the Monday to form an 'English Speaking Peoples' Action Committee', discussed a proposal to liberate the British Institute in Paris, and, at 4pm next day, with the co-operation of some students from the Institute and from the Sorbonne,

occupied the building. (Many of the teachers seemed quite pleased, and appeared to welcome the opportunity of teaching the less bourgeois-orientated versions of British culture which are to replace the Cambridge proficiency courses.)

In contrast to the freedom of the Sorbonne, there is the Ecole Des Beaux Arts, which is being run like a paramilitary poster factory, hard men with helmets and sticks at the gate questioning every would-be entrant in great detail. The restrictive atmosphere is not reduced by the Stalinesque architecture nor by the shining of torches into eyes in the *dortoir* (where rows of camp beds provide an ordered luxury absent at the Sorbonne). Two friends of mine found that to obtain three posters required the sorts of feats of conmanship needed to steal files on draft-dodgers from the Pentagon. But on the other side of the coin, they are serious. They want only people ready to work, for whom there are beds and food. They recently threw out a load of 'malingerers'. Conscious of the dangers of having 'foreign agitators' caught, they would not allow my two friends to go round Paris poster-sticking.

It is presumably the sheer number of people in the Sorbonne which allows it to remain open-to-all, yet relatively secure (as well as the group of 'Katangese' toughs who lived there until ejected by the students on 13th-14th June). It would require so many attackers to take the building that they would be dispersed before they had time to group themselves in large enough numbers to be effective. (*A propos* the attacks, a large number of books in the Sorbonne archives were burned on 31st May, a senseless act blamed by the students upon 'Occident', but no one was able to verify this. This has been the only sign of vandalism since the revolution began, however.)

Posters, slogans, pamphlets, newspapers proclaim every left-wing philosophy known (with the possible exception of the Communist Party - I only saw one sign, which announced

"The French CP does not want to change society, only the government", but this may have been a Trotskyist joke). A good news-sheet, *Le Pave* (The Paving Stone) prints a day-by-day account of the barricades and a letter on Black Power by Rap Brown; also a letter from the Soldiers Committee of Vincennes, warning soldiers of the dangers of being used by the government to break strikes: "You are the sons of the people ... to isolate you from the people it [the government] orders you to the barracks ... demand your passes ..." The *Voix Ouvriere*, a Trotskyist paper run mainly by workers, preaches full co-operation between workers and students, denounces the Communist Party and the elections. Several strikers we talked to who were on guard duty at the Renault factory at Billancourt did want complete revolution of the political system, did not support the CGT, but otherwise seemed fairly orthodox Communists who supported the Russian system and believed that elections would achieve revolution. According to one striker the average wage for operatives is about £18 per week, including bonuses, and it is perhaps an example of the French approach to life that it is the better-off workers, and those working in one of the most alienating work situations of all, who are the first to demand changes in the power structure.

However, they had no clear idea as to who they wanted to form a government (certainly neither de Gaulle, Mitterand nor Mendes-France).

Despite the proliferation of revolutionary ideas at the Sorbonne, as Cohn-Bendit pointed out at the LSE Teach-in on 13th June, the intellectuals were caught unawares by the sudden eruptions, without having formed a coherent and cohesive philosophy on which to base action after the crisis had occurred. This task has yet to be done, and the lack of such a philosophy may be one of the main reasons why the strikers did not take over the running of their factories, nor take control of the distribution services. (There is also the reluctance of the CGT to commit any 'illegal act'.) The ensuing paralysis was an important factor in generating the return to work.

I have an impression that the press is trying to exaggerate the split between the Communist Party and the more militant left, with the object of both discrediting the Communist Party

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Amidst all the celebrations of the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' voyage Rigoberta Menchu came in like a bad egg. This Guatemalan Indian so recently 'nobelised' reminds us that the ethnic Indian is more than an endangered species.

For sure, the nomination in Oslo, Norway, of Rigoberta Menchu by an inspired jury didn't inspire the same excitement amongst the Indian population as it did within the government of Guatemala. Jorge Serrano's government could well have done without such publicity. Hadn't it indeed done all it could in the months leading up to the vote to undermine such a choice? At a time when it was doing all in its power to present a democratic face to a country torn apart by political violence and apartheid, the event was most unwelcome. And moreover it had to face the sarcastic messages of congratulations from its neighbours – in this respect San Salvador really has a sense of humour – the whole thing was intolerable.

Rigoberta Menchu: the voice of another America

That's how Guatemala got the attention of international public opinion and the media. What a farce! Since 1st January last year this country of some 110,000 square kilometres has witnessed some 1,199 violations of human rights amongst which number 80 cases of torture, 57 disappearances of prisoners and 408 summary executions. All this in the year of celebrating the *conquista*. The Indians are having a fine time!

Rigoberta Menchu and her family have paid a heavy price for the civil war in Guatemala which over a period of thirty years has witnessed 100,000 deaths and 40,000 'disappearances'.

In a book of interviews with the Venezuelan ethnologist Elisabeth Burgos Me, *Rigoberta*

Menchu, the Indian dissident recounts the sufferings of her people and her family. She witnessed the brutal murder of her younger brother. For sixteen days he was tortured.

On the 31st January 1980 her father Vicente Menchu was burned alive along with 36 other Indian peasants after an occupation of the Spanish embassy: a demonstration which wanted to draw international public opinion (so difficult to attain). This led to Spain breaking off diplomatic relations.

In April of the same year, her mother was raped and tortured in unthinkable conditions. Her witnessing of these events allows us to understand all the better the revolt of this young woman.

Leaving behind her the linguistic prison into which the Indians had slid in order to preserve their identity, Rigoberta Menchu decided to arm herself with the language of the enemy: Spanish. So, in exile, she continued to denounce the oppression which had victimised her people for five centuries. Member of the CUC (clandestine organisation of

Indian peasant resistance), Rigoberta Menchu demands the rights of her people. She demands recognition of her language as one of the official languages of the country, its teaching in the schools, political representation and real power for the mayors of the Indian villages. She wants to finish once and for all with the internal colonialism of the landowners, the *ladinos* army which uses as its means a scorched earth policy, massacre, and torture.

Apart from language, her second arm, the Bible, in her hands becomes an instrument of subversion, because Rigoberta Menchu is a 'revolutionary Christian', a "catechism who can walk on land" as she defines herself. Close to this church that has sought clandestinity she denounces the other church which has sided with the authorities, the one which preaches resignation.

On 21st October, on returning to the Vatican the Pope demanded that the Indian populations should pardon the excesses committed after the conquest of the New World – nothing new in that. But of the current situation, not a word. Hardly sympathetic or aware of liberation theory, John Paul II chooses his own camp.

On the same day two of Rigoberta Menchu's comrades were lifted and beaten up.

Yann Barte

Bring on the Dancing Girls

(continued from page 5)

necessary to deploy a great number of civil servants, administrators, police and even judges, who must be available on the spot, literally day and night, *with the authority to contain any violence efficiently*" (number 2366) then one knows that it is back to the happy weird world of the major / minor art galleries wherein acceptance is the only demand on the throbbing gentle minds. It is there for the non-viewing within the Hayward Gallery wherein one is called upon to enter a huge room of a black darkness that one believes one could almost feel, one stands isolated and lost in that pure and unadulterated Miltonian darkness until someone takes hold of my elbow and I know that an attendant has entered and taken pity on me and as he guides me through the blackness into a space of faint and subtle glowing light while overhead there is a small square of bright blue. It is the work of James Turrell demonstrating what can be done to you and your interplay with space and light that you cannot come to terms with without pre-knowledge. It is not art but, as with so much that the small-minded among us refuse to come to terms with, it is the tools that shape men and women's final creative works and never an end product, no matter how exciting, in its own right.

Lines, lights, abstract colours, perspectives are but the tools of the creative artists and to use them as but a thing in themselves may amuse but are but no more than childish games. In 1456 the Florentine artist Paolo Uccello painted his master work the 'Battle for San Romano' within which his mania for perspective became known. Though he is

accepted as the grand old daddy of perspective he is, and always will be, accepted as a master painter, but not so a painter such as Victor Vasarely, 1968, who found colour and sterile space an end in themselves, or Bridget Riley the Queen of the Swinging Sixties who in 1960-1970 slayed the London art scenes with lines demanding nothing of the intellect only of the bemused eyes as they fair groundwise appear to bend and twist. There comes a time when we must make a physical stand against ever encroaching evils or the intellect becomes no more than sterile amusement, soundings in an empty room, lines leading nowhere unless used in an attempt to justify the physical defensive action that one must finally take.

With the Town and his easily-amused frau let us tread the town to the Barbican and the '60s art scene, or the Hayward to enter the room of finger-feeling blackness wherein the 'all black painting' can no longer exist and let us accept that the sterility of form without substance and intellectual content has arrived at its ultimate conclusion within the All Black Room and one's only contact with the mind is the physical feel of an unknown hand holding my elbow and guiding me. In that sterile darkness we communicated, but for the romantic Left they have communicated too well and the dead and weeping-wounded via television have soured the abstract desires for 'bloody revolution' and the 'glory of the barricades' for, comrades, you can find those sterile tools within the All Black Room, within the Hayward ART GALLERY, and when they have to be felt for in that darkness weep as you take them down.

Arthur Moyses

Nellie Dick 100!

On 15th May 1993, Nellie Dick, a veteran of the libertarian education movement in Britain and the United States and also one of the very last survivors of the old Jewish anarchist movement in London, celebrated her hundredth birthday with a huge party at her home in Oyster Bay, Long Island.

Nellie Dick was born Naomi Ploschansky in Ukraine, and brought to London as a baby. Her father was active in the Jewish trade union movement and worked with Rudolf Rocker in the Jewish anarchist movement. Nellie (as she called herself) attended the Jubilee Street club which opened in 1906, and took an important part in bringing other young people into the movement. She started an anarchist school which became one of the most successful of the movement's activities, though she always insisted that it wasn't a narrowly Jewish concern. In 1913 she met James Dick, who had run an anarchist school in Liverpool from 1908 to 1911 and who wrote regularly in the anarchist press, and he joined her school. They worked together from 1913 and lived together from 1914. Under the pressure of the war they married in 1916 and emigrated to America in 1917. Most of her family returned to Russia after the Revolution.

For more than forty years Jim and Nellie Dick took a leading part in the Modern School movement in the United States. They worked

at the Stelton school from 1917 to 1924, ran the Mohegan school from 1924 to 1928 and the Stelton school from 1928 to 1933, and then ran their own school at Lakewood from 1933; this was the last Modern school to close, in 1958. They retired to Miami, where Jim died in 1965, and where Nellie took an active part in the Senior Citizen's movement. She now lives with her son, James Dick Jr, who attended their schools and later became a paediatrician.

Nellie Dick continued to take an interest in libertarian education after she retired, and gave several interviews which have been used in studies of the subject and have sometimes been published. The best account of her work appears in Paul Avrich's book *The Modern School Movement* (1980), and the latest interview was given to Andrew Whitehead in December 1992 and published in the *New Statesman & Society* on 14th May 1993. On 15th May a personal telephone call was made from *Freedom* to wish her a happy birthday, and a telegram was also sent: "In 1911 you gave a speech at our 25th birthday as one of our younger comrades. Today we send a message on your 100th birthday as one of our older comrades. We salute your contribution to the common cause, and wish you a happy party. No master, high or low!"

Whitsun in the streets

(continued from page 6)

morally, and demonstrating the ineffectiveness of the remainder. A *France-Soir* journalist we talked to thought that the CGT were philosophically behind the Renault workers, but that they did not want to commit themselves publicly to what they thought would be a failed revolution, so they simply arranged that the terms they negotiated with the government would be bound to be thrown out by the workers.

One of the most hopeful signs during the revolution has been the involvement of professional groups. *Le Monde* ran an account of a meeting on 23rd May of 700 architects in the Institut d'Urbanisme, which gave full support to the students and decided to participate through their profession in the movement towards changing the structure of society and of the professions. They have also occupied their regional council office and intend to hold all future meetings at the Ecole des Beaux Arts (*L'Express* reports that the occupation of the architects' regional council office was undertaken by a group of which 90% were architects and only 10% students).

A 'Commission of Inter-Professional Relations' (Ex-ENSBA) consisting of groups of architects, city planners, highway engineers, builders, masons, social psychologists, etc., voted unanimously at a meeting on 1st June to set up an organisation to fight against the capitalist structure of the professions.

Practically every educational institution in Paris has been taken over. A friend of mine at a school for interpreters, for example, has spent the past two weeks working extremely hard on the details of a new 'constitution' for his college.

The main work of the students over the Whitsun weekend appeared to be the organising of groups to go to the factories to help persuade the strikers to continue. The seriousness had not evaporated over the hot sunny weekend. The Odéon on Tuesday was still packed with ardent debaters, speaking in rapid but ordered succession. The atmosphere was holiday, but a heady holiday which was no escape from life, like our standard fortnights in Blackpool or Torremolinos, but a confirmation of life. A holiday in which everyone participated, a holiday which everyone had themselves created (in this sense it was more than the joyful feeling of disruption produced by heavy snowfalls or power failures). The crowds in the Sorbonne did perhaps appear to be milling about aimlessly, but it was the open aimlessness of people searching, questioning, come to discover the situation and their part in it, and by their very being there they made the situation.

The Sorbonne so clearly stands for something, indefinable but definitely something much more than the system of human relationships we survive on at the moment. Even when the present excitement and openness has died down, as

Cohn-Bendit says, the people now know their power and even if there is no immediate change in work conditions and relationships people who feel that the mechanised role-playing life is again overpowering them can continue to provoke crisis after crisis until the changes do occur. The renewed attacks upon the police of 11th June showed that the students have by no means lost hope in the revolution, and whether or not revolution is achieved the affluence of Western society in general and the committed position taken by so many French professionals, intellectuals and students are bound to ensure that substantial changes do occur within the educational and professional systems.

It is more difficult to predict what will happen in the factories. But perhaps the whole feeling of the revolution was crystallised in the meeting we had with a group of anarchist workers when we were cooking our supper in the street in Les Halles, during the monster traffic jam on the Tuesday evening. They leapt out of a café on top of us, asked us what we thought of the revolution, declared the strike was continuing 100%, clenched fists, proclaimed "C'est une révolution de vivre, les patrons, les ouvriers, tous les deux", and "les syndicats sont dépassés, dépassés", leapt into a big Citroën van shouting they were off to the provinces to spread the word, and just disappeared down the street where traffic had been moving at the rate of two car-lengths every minute. A minute later they were gone, but leaving a stronger impression on us than any other people in Paris.

PB

First published in *Anarchy* 89, July 1968

An open letter to all anarchists

What I want to do here is note briefly (and perhaps a bit naively) something that seems to me to offer the possibility of an escape from a sort of cynical idleness into which anarchists can easily sink. As a result, it represents an open letter to all anarchists. It may indicate an organisational route to take. At the very least it should provide a point for debate.

In *Malatesta: Life and Ideas* (Freedom Press, 1984), Vernon Richards writes: "I, too, think the anarchist movement has failed ... because most anarchists have seemed unable or have been unwilling to distinguish between their problems as conscious individuals and the problems of society as a whole. And because they generally manage to find solutions to their basic material needs which permit them to live full lives they assume that what they have done others can also do, and either they conclude that propaganda is unnecessary, in which case they spend the rest of their lives living out their one-man-revolutions; or if they feel an urge to communicate their 'discoveries' to their fellow men tend to express and project their personal experience and solutions as applicable and possible for the community at large ... In practice the results from such propaganda have been limited because its impact is personal and not social."

This is a critically important perception. The

whole impulse of capitalism (which is the engine of production within society) is towards the explosion of social space. It throws people apart with enormous force, isolating individuals and rupturing the social relations between them, replacing them with the tenuous threads of consumption, production and exchange.

The tendency of anarchists, therefore, to prefer the resolution in largely personal terms of this essentially social problem in fact works in the same direction as the forces applied by capitalism. If anything, it reinforces the illusion that there is a personal solution, an individual paradise waiting in the vacuum between the atoms that make up the social structure or in a completely detached a-social twilight zone. In fact such 'solutions', far from being expressions of autonomy are parasitic on the present social structure.

What is required is a reversal of the tendency towards separation. That is, the condensation of social space from the existing atomised space inhabited in capitalist society. How can this be achieved?

From an explicitly anarchist viewpoint the obvious practical starting point is to provide for the basic material needs of an ever-increasing element of society through the creation of functioning productive and service collectives. Their existence creates a social space which did not exist before (at least not of that quality) within which new and stronger social, personal and economic relationships can be formed and developed.

Some examples include:

- Food co-ops – bakers; brewing; collective food production, e.g. market gardens, allotments or farms; food distribution. These attempt to supersede the

wholesale/retail market in providing the necessities of life.

- Building collectives – providing a resource of skills, materials and facilities for building and repair.
- Social clubs.
- Collective resource centres – providing advice and materials.
- Collective childcare and schooling provision.
- Production collectives – providing necessary products, work and/or income, e.g. clothing, furniture and other household goods, motor vehicle and machine repair.
- Communications collectives, e.g. printing, radio, video.
- Collective health care, e.g. clinics, surgeries.
- Energy supply, e.g. wind, water, solar and other fuelled generators.
- Collective defence – this would be fully integrated with all other functions.

Practically, the purpose, intent, form and function of these collectives must be clearly worked out, set down and understood by those involved. There must be no ambiguity. The progressive compromises with conventional economics which arise from such ambiguities subvert any social revolutionary aims. The result is a miserable and destructive embrace between idealism and the 'harsh realities' of the capitalist market. And as this pair spiral down into a capitalist hell, there can only be one winner.

Starting at an extremely local level, and based on the simple principles of mutual aid and co-operation, these forms of organisation have clear advantages over their capitalist equivalents by providing a flexible response

to the real needs of the local, and giving those involved real choice and control over the material conditions of their lives. For anyone living under conditions over which they seem to have no control, especially the millions of poor, unemployed and marginalised people, this would be a powerful seduction. The collapse of the official labour market provides the appropriate conditions for the unemployed to collectively reclaim and reconstruct their lives, to construct their own history, an expression of their will to begin to live rather than just exist.

The argument that things are bad, that we are poor and that survival is all that we can manage is a conscious trace of an embedded ideology of recuperated passivity and powerlessness, an acceptance of any conditions. Many people have renounced their critical faculties in favour of a dubious 'quality of life', the price of which is amputation from simple human sensibility such as sympathy and compassion, but not the shallow, mawkish sentimentalism that acts as a substitute under these conditions. These responses are excuses for passivity and clearly people can only grasp their own destiny in any real and material sense by acting in the world, for themselves and against the prevailing social conditions.

The essential aim therefore of developing this sort of organisation is to regain control over the immediate physical and social conditions of existence in a very concrete manner. In addition this empowers and inspires others, creates a new social territory (and the need to defend it), and develops an autonomy from the present power structure. All of these are vital prerequisites to the social revolutionary aim of constructing a new world.

The first move towards that development might be to establish a dialogue between people interested in setting up these sorts of collectives with the express intent of discussing practical issues related to their construction, maintenance and support. If you are interested then write to: An East End Anarchist, c/o Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.
An East End Anarchist

The Raven

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Feminism

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READERS' LETTERS

Solidarity from Freedom's readers

Dear Editors,
Life would be much the poorer were it not for *Freedom*.

Neil

Dear Editors,
I'm sure fascist hooligans won't stop *Freedom* doing good work.

Tim

Dear Editors,
So sorry to hear about the attack on *Freedom* by the intellectual giants of the far right. Perhaps we should consider it a back-handed compliment. The fascists think *Freedom* is so persuasive in its arguments for anarchism that it scares them ... pity their imagination only allows them to react in an infantile manner.

Jim

Dear *Freedom*,
Sorry to hear about the troubles ...

JA, Halifax

Dear *Freedom* Friends,
Sorry to hear of your misfortunes.

Paul, London

Dear Friends,
Enclosed to contribute to your damage repair fund ... Keep going – *Freedom* is much needed these days.

Peter, Hamburg

Dear Friends,
I enclose a cheque ... to repair and buy new equipment. I hope that these attacks make you even more determined to fight

on instead of succumbing to the people responsible ...

CPS, Colchester

Dear Comrades,
Just heard ... that very disturbing news. I know that you weren't in the best of financial shape before that happened and would like to offer you some aid.

See Sharp Press

Dear Friends,
We were distressed to hear of the attack ... anyone who reads *Freedom* or visits Angel Alley knows how desperately we need *Freedom* today. Keep up the good work and accept this gesture of 'good old' solidarity.

De Vrije Bond, Netherlands

Dear Comrades,
We were concerned, as so many friends, to hear of the fascists' thuggery, and as relieved to know that no-one had been physically hurt.

FT, New York

Dear *Freedom* Press,
I have just returned from abroad to be cheered by the number of letters of solidarity in *Freedom* from so many people regarding the thug attack on the bookshop. They are still rolling in, and people are prepared to back their solidarity with cash donations. I enclose my own donation. This affair shows how wide a range of people seriously appreciate the work of *Freedom* Press, and in the long run it may be the efforts of the silly hooligans who carried out the attack have been entirely

counter-productive from their point of view, in that they have strengthened rather than weakened the anarchist movement. It makes us realise that freedom – in its broadest sense – must be maintained by constant vigilance and active struggle. In the words of Blake: "The sword sung on the barren heath, The sickle in the fruitful field; The sword he sung a song of death But he could not make the sickle yield."

Tony Gibson

Dear *Freedom*,
I was saddened and angered to hear of your recent attack by a right-wing mob. Hope everything is now returning to normal in the offices. Best of luck.

Owen, Llandudno

Dear *Freedom*,
Sorry to hear about the 'incident'. Glad to see everything's carrying on. Thanks for doing all you do.

Paul, Colchester

Dear *Freedom*,
Have enclosed a cheque to help with the restoration of the premises after the fascist bust-up.

David, Oxford

Dear *Freedom*,
Extending my sympathy for the recent outrages to your premises. Please find enclosed cheque as token of my solidarity.

Brian, Glasgow

Dear *Freedom*,

We wish to join with all the other comrades who have expressed their sympathy and solidarity after the fascist C18 attack.

Workers Solidarity Movement,
Dublin, Ireland

An Open Letter

Dear Stephen Booth,
A Trot (or other such) would say to you: "why don't you believe in taking over the state and using it against capitalism?" Almost every one of the arguments you produce ('Letter to a Pacifist', 15th May 1993), every instance of the brutalities you mention (or their equivalents) they too would produce, and deduce from them the necessity of controlling state power.

You – as the anarchist – know the answer to the trot. That state power is intrinsically power on behalf of the ruling class and cannot be used to attain a classless society. Apply that same argument to violence and you answer your own query.

Just as the anarchist says you have to undermine and abolish state power and not use it – nor create a counter-state – if you wish to abolish capitalism, so the non-violent anarchist (pure and ethical pacifists would not regard me as of their number, and I am not concerned about the ethics of a particular act, purely as to its practicality in attaining anarchism, and respecting their rights in this I prefer the non-violent anarchist description) insists you have to subvert the agencies of violence not capture nor try to rival them if you wish to create anarchism.

Laurens Otter

LETS

Dear friends,
Paul Petard's letter criticising the LETS scheme (17th April) is somewhat heavy-handed. They may not be perfect, but they at least offer the opportunity to work together and perhaps share the rewards more equitably than under the capitalist system. These are early days and I'm sure LETS schemes will develop a more libertarian style in the future. After all, people are still conditioned to think in capitalist terms and work in old ways. However, if more libertarians became involved in, or established, such schemes the problems Paul highlights would disappear.

This is not to deny his final paragraph about the unemployed taking over the material goods in their neighbourhood. There is room for both his ideas and the LETS scheme. He should remember we have a long way to go.

Chris Platts

Anarchist Picnic

Dear Comrades,
As Peter Neville says in his report of the anarchist picnic, some anarchists are activists while other prefer to write letters and articles. Not everyone will agree, however, with his perception of who is which. On 3rd May in the London area, anarchist activists took part in a big rally against homelessness, a demo against the demolition of houses for the M11 extension, and probably other events. I am more of a writer than an activist, so I spent a lazy day socialising with my mates at the picnic.

Donald Room

MEETINGS

Anarchist Forum

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

1993 SEASON OF MEETINGS

4th June - 'From Anarchism to Ideology' (speaker George Walford)
11th June - Open discussion of 'The Moral Collapse of British Society: the solution'
18th June - 'The Return to the Region' (speaker Andrew Lainton)
25th June - Open discussion
2nd July - 'Anarchism and Creative Unemployment' (speaker Michael Murray)
9th July - Last meeting: planning the 1993/94 programme

The next academic year's term dates have not yet been decided, but one can presume a similarity to other years. If anyone would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, overseas or out-of-town speakers especially, please contact either Dave Dane or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (Tel: 081-847 0203), not too early in the day please, giving subject matter and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate. We are particularly interested in having more women speakers and those from ethnic minorities. After the meetings we go to a pub where, some say, the real discussions begin. Please note the Mary Ward Centre is available for hire for other meetings Monday to Saturday. Details from Patrick Freestone at the Mary Ward Centre.

PN for London Anarchist Forum

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Sunday 11th July - Circular walk through Holloway and Dethick. Meet at the Village Green, Holloway, map reference 325 563, at 1pm. Length 3-4 miles.

Sunday 8th August - Ladybower Reservoir and Lost Lad Walk. Bring strong boots, waterproofs, food and drink. Meet at Ladybower Picnic Site, map reference 173 894, at 10.30am. Length 8 miles.

Sunday 5th September - Church Broughton and deserted medieval village. Meet at entrance to Church Broughton Parish Church, 1pm. Church Broughton is 5 miles west of Derby. Length of walk 4 miles.

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