

anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

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"A wise man neither
lets himself be
governed nor seeks
to govern others"

La Bruyère
(1688)

Why only three, Mr Major? ALL POLITICIANS ARE 'BASTARDS'!

The intimate thoughts of Prime Minister Major about three members of his cabinet when the official interview at Number 10 was over were recorded for posterity by what one might describe as 'undercover' journalists with their secret mini-recording devices. Though it may make top politicians more careful in future as to what they say 'off the record', they surely can't complain since MI5 and MI6 are doing this every day with their 'undercover' spies. They did it with the CND and now all the evidence is that they planted their spy right in the heart of the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) with a view to destabilising the organisation (see 'Towards the Police State' on this page).

But to return to the Prime Minister's unofficial summing-up of his cabinet colleagues and critics who call him 'a wimp' (whatever that may be) he obviously thinks highly of those who vote for him and has no regard whatsoever for the two main Opposition parties' leaders. The one advantage of live radio broadcasts, and more so when television give the unemployed and the aged an opportunity to observe Parliament at its worst, is confirmation that with a few exceptions (and we will come back to them) they are a collection of 600-plus mediocrities - at best ham actors - playing the game according to rules which ensure that nothing changes. Government and Opposition are the mouthpieces of an

entrenched social, financial and economic system which ensures that a minority will not only hold on to most of the nation's wealth but will inevitably - by the logic of capitalism - accumulate more wealth, and as always at the expense of ... *the have-nots!**

And the status quo is maintained by the permanent bureaucracy (ministers come and go, civil servants go on forever), the law, the police, the armed forces and the banks, the pension funds and the multinationals.

So those entering Parliament thinking that they can change the system are either dreamers or fools.
(continued on page 2)

TOWARDS THE POLICE STATE

The miners' strike of 1984-85 was such a long time ago and all the false accusations levelled at Arthur Scargill have been relegated to the 'memory hole'. But perhaps they haven't and the government may be facing yet another scandal if a motion signed by two Labour MPs, George Galloway and Tom Dalyell, is proved to be true. What they are saying is that Roger Windsor, chief executive of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) during and after the strike was "sent in to the NUM to destabilise and sabotage the union at its most critical juncture". They and four other Labour MPs maintain that allegations against Arthur Scargill, published in the *Daily Mirror* which paid Mr Windsor £80,000, were made under "the guidance" of Mrs Rimington, now director general of MI5 but at the time head of the agency's F2 branch responsible for monitoring the trade unions.

Mr Windsor, from exile in France with his ill-gotten gains, has not surprisingly strongly denied the charges. And Mr Major, asked by one of the Labour MPs whether Mr Windsor "had ever been employed by HM Government", replied, not surprisingly, with a brief "No". Somehow we feel that Tom Dalyell would not stick out his neck unless he had some solid facts to back his case.

We look forward to the sequel of this exposure of the government's 'dirty tricks' department.

UNTO THE WELL-OFF ... ANOTHER £35 BILLION

In *Freedom* some time ago we referred to a new 'rentier class' springing up as a result of a generation of owner-occupiers dying and their property passing on to their children who are themselves middle-aged home-owners, albeit in some cases still with mortgages.

The *Sunday Times* (25th July) puts a figure to this "bonanza of £35,000 million a year for some of Britain's well-off families". In a report by Morgan Grenfell the merchant bank, it is estimated that in spite of the slump in house prices "average cash windfalls from inherited property will more than double to £75,000 by the year 2011".

Needless to say, "middle-class families will be the main beneficiaries as the home-ownership revolution started by Margaret Thatcher extends to three in four of the population, higher than previous forecasts".

According to the report, "inherited properties rose by a third to 128,000 in the decade to 1991, while their value quadrupled to £8,500 million"; and the number of inherited

properties will at least double within the next twenty years. Since it is the government's policy, and Mr Major has said so loud and clear, that those who already have should be encouraged to build onto their pile, tax is now payable only on estates of £150,000 or more and, as the Labour MP Frank Field has pointed out, not only can it be avoided if property is transferred before death but the existing inheritance tax "is still a voluntary tax because of the loopholes".

The Chancellor Kenneth Clarke is hinting that a VAT of 8% may well be included in his November budget on newspapers, books, children's clothes and food. But not a word about taxing the rich, and the new rentier class.* After all, they are the 'wealth producers'. What would we do without them? A hell of a lot!

* Neither is the Labour Party leadership saying that the rich must be taxed 'till the pips squeak'. Only the Campaign Group of Labour MPs and MEPs (35 in all) are for higher taxes for the rich.

Racism, the doctrine that one's own ethnic group is superior to others, and fascism, the cult of unity and leadership, often go together. Not being a psychologist, and therefore having no reputation to lose if I am wrong, I dare say they have the same psychological root: a feeling of personal inferiority, compensated by a sense of belonging to a superior race, and/or a group which will come to dominate by being united.

But the connection between racism and fascism is not logically necessary. A South African fascist group, hitherto called the World Apartheid League, has decided to turn non-racist and change its name to the World Preservationist League.

Winston Churchill MP has been shooting his mouth off again, deploring racial attacks but repeating that they are caused by inhabitants of Britain who are 'not British'.

Yet the inhabitants of the British West Indies became British citizens when slavery was abolished in 1833, and the inhabitants of India (including Pakistan) became British citizens when the government took over from the East India company in 1858. So inhabitants of British colonies who migrated to metropolitan Britain were of British descent for many generations.

Whereas Winston Churchill is only seven-eighths British at the most. His great

An anarchist notebook on racism

grandmother was an American of Dutch descent.

In 1953 Australia leased to Britain an area of desert on which to test atomic bombs. Not all lands described as 'desert' are barren, and the designated bomb site provided a living for some five thousand people, the Maralinga.

However, the Maralinga has no right to live there. Eighteenth century biologists held that aboriginals were not *homo sapiens* but a lower species of the genus *homo*, to be regarded not as human, but as part of the indigenous wildlife. No biologist held this opinion in the 1950s, but it was still the basis of Australian civil law. The census listed numbers of Australian citizens, immigrants, and sheep, but not of aboriginals or kangaroos.

The Maralinga were told to walk to a place called Yalata, five hundred miles away - aboriginals were known for their ability to 'go walkabout' for long distances. Evidently, they did not all obey the order. The bodies of four men were found in the area after the first atomic explosion, and there may have been others turned to dust near the centre of the blast.

The settlement at Yalata became famous for alcoholism and clinical depression. A report of 1984 blamed this on the Christian missionaries who ran the camp on behalf of the government, who deliberately set out to destroy the Maralinga civilisation.

In 1967 a referendum of white Australians voted 90% in favour of making aboriginals into citizens. In 1975 the Aboriginal Land Rights Act was passed, making it possible for aboriginals to lay legal claim to their homelands. The reforming Prime Minister Gough Whitlam was then dismissed by the British-appointed Governor General, but the Act remains on the statute book.

In 1985 a court of law decided that the old Maralinga homeland belongs to the Maralinga. Unfortunately, however, the nuclear weapons tests have left it radioactive, and the Maralinga have no means of cleaning it. A circle eight miles across is uncleanable by any means and will be radioactive for the next 250,000 years. The rest can be cleaned by removing the topsoil, but that will cost an estimated hundred million Australian dollars, or £45 million Sterling.

Earlier this year, the British government

agreed to pay £20 million towards the cost, and a campaign is now under way to persuade the Australian government to pay the rest. If the clean-up starts now, the Maralinga can 'go home' in 2003.

Another race thought of as sub-human were the pygmies of Africa. The famous 1930s film *Bring 'em back alive* retails the superstition that their physical and intellectual development ceased at the age of ten years.

In the Congo Free State, personally owned by the King of Belgium until 1908, negroes were subject to one of the most appalling regimes ever. Subsistence farmers, they were required to bring quotas of saleable crops to the government stores. Nothing whatever was provided in return, but if they did not pay their taxes in full their hands would be cut off or they might be shot dead.

Pygmies, however, though they might be enslaved by negro farmers, were exempt from taxes because they were classed as jungle animals.

Belgian Congo, which took over from (continued on page 3)

ALL POLITICIANS ARE 'BASTARDS'!

(continued from page 1)

They are neither. They are all 'bastards' concerned only with their personal problems, ambitions or vanity!

In this writer's opinion, the worst offenders are the ones considered to be the 'idealists' who are not seeking office and are prepared to be unpopular with their party's leadership. Tony Benn is the best example of a small number including Skinner, the good old 'Beast of Bolsover', who don't join the chorus but, apart from the fact that they have no influence on the party leadership, they are giving a false credibility to Parliament in the eyes of inexperienced young idealistic socialists.

Tony Benn is a 'bastard' because he first joined the 'Best Club in London' in 1950 - 43 years ago, and he still stands for election and always makes sensible contributions in that madhouse which are only recorded in *Hansard* (which nobody reads) and on his tapes for posterity when he gets home at night. He is a pillar of the parliamentary racket which ensures that everybody can blow off steam but everything goes on as before.

The politicians are all 'bastards' because they are only concerned with the voting racket. They are not concerned with justice, freedom, equality. At the general elections in 1992 the Labour party proposed a modest increase in income tax for those earning more than £21,000 p.a. (a mere £400 a week!) and it was said that this lost them the elections. So now the Labour Party will solve the

Tories' £50,000 million a year deficit without increasing income tax and will also show the electorate that they have nothing to do with the union 'barons' - you know, OMOV (one man one vote) but they hope the unions will go on coughing up the cash all the same to keep Walworth Road in business.

Dear reader, can you not see that all these 'bastards' are not only, in many cases, using the political connection to give them entrées to *quangos*, 'consultancies', directorships (look at 'get-on-your-bike' Tebbit - now a Lord and pontificating on every subject under the sun, and with how many directorships in the city?) but they are not in any way doing anything to remove the injustices in our society. Capitalism cannot be reformed. It presupposes a society based on injustice. This writer still recalls the song he and other little victims of elementary school education in the distant past unthinkingly repeated - that second verse of 'All Things Bright and Beautiful':

*The rich man in his castle
The poor man at his gate
God made them, high or lowly,
And order'd their estate*

That was one Cecil Francis Alexander (1818-1895) doing his bit of propaganda for the capitalist cause, but face up to the fact that John Smith and his 'Shadow' front bench are, at most, saying that they have the solution to unemployment but never do they suggest that there must be a radical redistribution of wealth. If one

honestly believes this one must also, in our opinion, declare that only by a social revolution (which may in the end involve violence) will the entrenched power of the 5% who own more than 50% of the nation's wealth be taken over by the people for the people.

We know that some of our anarchist comrades have been more 'pragmatic' than this writer, in that they seek the 'possible' within existing society. On occasion they have short term success, but mostly disappointments. Those of us who are not 'all-or-nothing' anarchists, but who are neither 'possibilists', have no illusions as to the social and political role that anarchists can play in the world as it is so long as we are a miserable minority. The anarchist revolution will only be made when the majority of the people will be convinced that the capitalist-militarist system is evil and against all their aspirations for a fruitful happy existence. Only then will it be possible to destroy the capitalist system based on privilege, injustice and armed might. Hopefully by then we would have undermined the armed forces protecting the status quo. Otherwise, with due respect to the many anarchists who are political pacifists, without the use of a superior force there will be no social revolution, no change.

* Not an original thought. It's a fact of life that goes back a long time. Our church-going rulers were taught it with their mother's milk - "Unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (St Matthew, XXV, 29)

Where Ignorance is Bliss ...

The Thatcher circus was in Russia last month where She was given a honorary doctorate at the Mendeleev University. Needless to say She was telling the Russians how to run their country in the best interests ... of capitalism.

But what deserves to be recorded 'for posterity' of that memorable occasion is the Baroness' interpretation of Russian history as quoted by *The Guardian's* Moscow correspondent David Hearst (23rd July):

"She reminded her Communist-educated audience of the twin evils of the 20th century: 'Nazism and Communism', and how Freedom had triumphed and Socialism failed. She told of the books on Stalin her father had hidden because they were too terrible for a child to read ('I found these books and I read and read. It was horrible')."

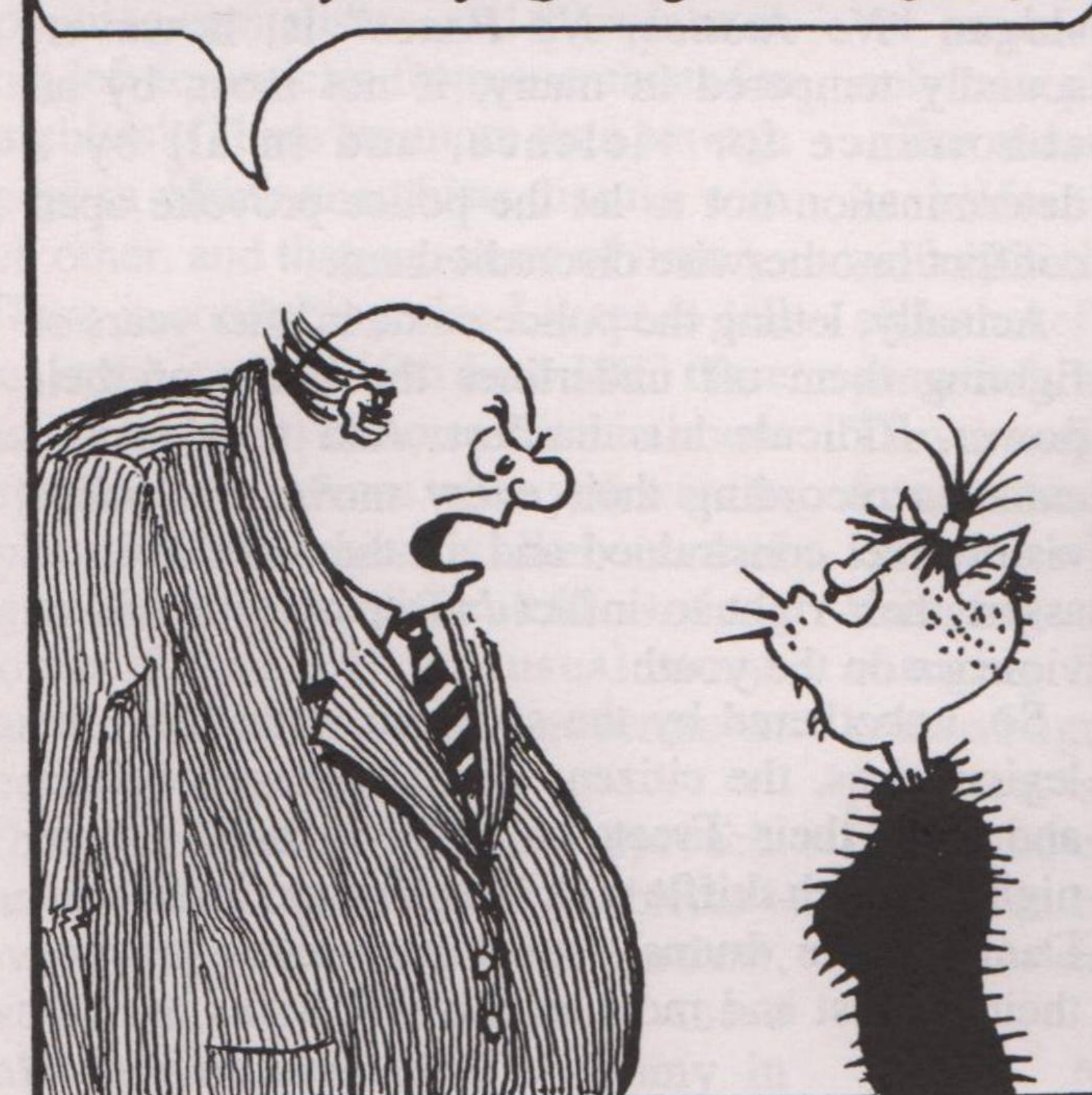
Tsarist Russia may have been a land of icons and cockroaches, and there was the small matter of the serfs, 'but at least they were more or less free to express their views'. So it was to pre-1914 Russia that Russians should now look 'with a great deal of healthy curiosity'.

'When Russia had the gold standard, when there was a system of commercial law and growth of private enterprise, she had the highest growth rate in the world', said Lady Thatcher, leaning on these last words as if she alone had discovered them.

The audience fanned themselves with their programmes. They had stood and clapped as 'the greatest and brightest woman' - another of the epithets - had floated on to the podium and into her red velvet throne."

What a stupid woman. But what of those who actually attend her 'lectures'?

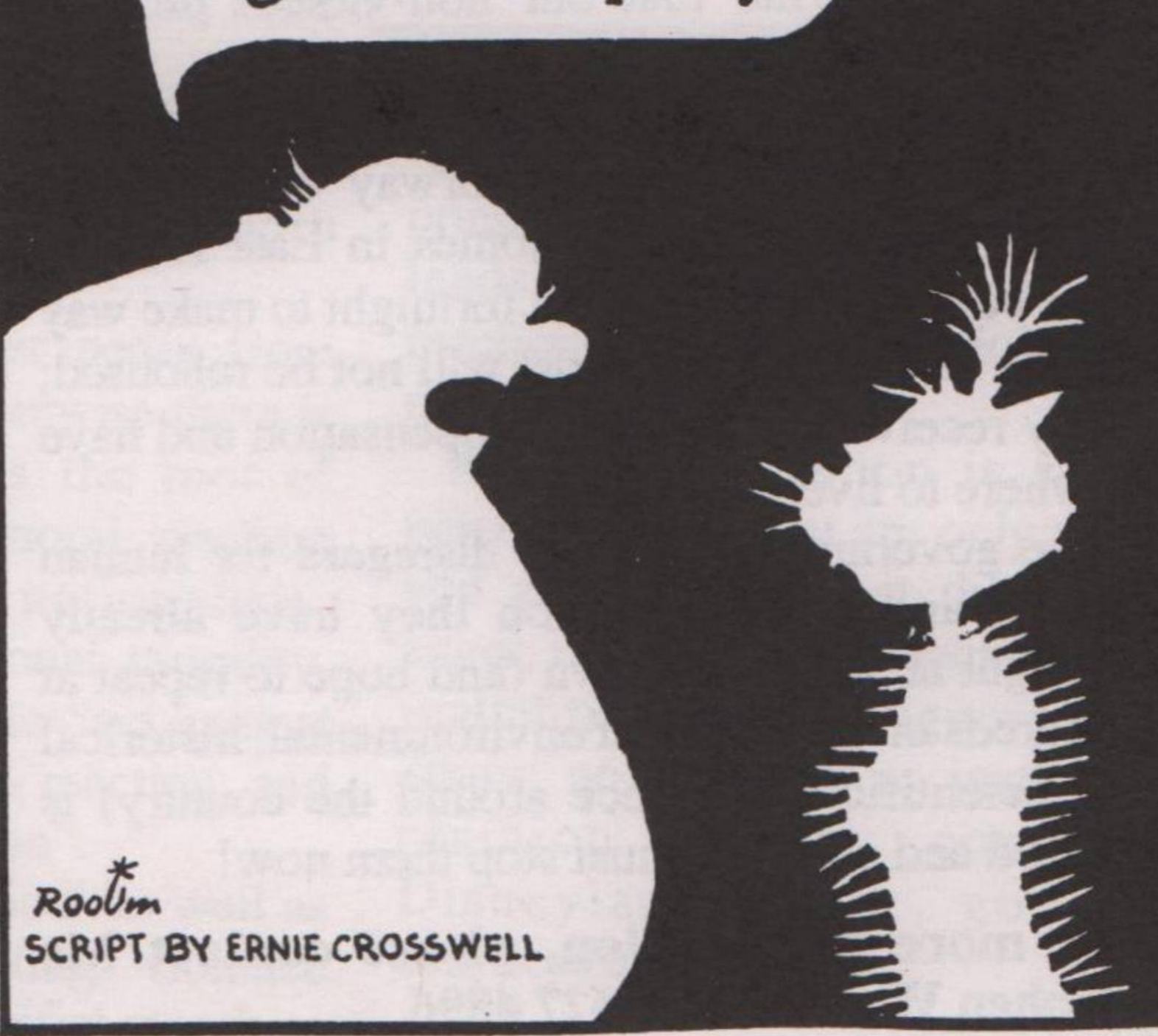
WILDCAT Don't blame Norman Lamont. He was only carrying out government policy.



Don't blame John Major, either. He was carrying out government policy too.



And don't get ready to blame John Smith or Paddy Ashdown. Whoever wins the next General Election will be carrying out government policy.



You can blame me if you like. But I'm not up for election.



Roobin
SCRIPT BY ERNIE CROSSWELL

Tales of Big Brother

There is without doubt a high level of social control being exercised in this country which results in interference with people's lives. The increasing use of video cameras is the most obvious form of a Big Brother mentality, and the form which I imagine most people expect it to take. But there are other dimensions and a lot of people seem to accept the justification for increasing demand to prove who you are, to fill in forms, give references and contacts, to have to say where you have been and where you are going. The justification being that you just can't trust people, it seems. And it is not just the state apparatus using its cold, lumbering, de-humanising bureaucracy, that operates under a mentality of wanting to control and treating you with suspicion.

Several times this year I have had to endure the intrusions of business and state alike and been left feeling like I didn't matter, that I was to be treated with suspicion and must provide any personal details asked for. All along I felt like the people I was dealing with were just 'following orders', not thinking about what they were doing in any deep way, just carrying out the needs of the bureaucracy they have learnt from their employers. When I moved to a new address with my partner we found ourselves being 'investigated', for want of a better word, by the DSS to see if we were cohabiting. We were, but neither of us wanted to be forced to be considered dependent on the other and also I would lose the small amount extra I get for being above a certain age. So we had this man come round early

on a Saturday (double time?) and asked all sorts of personal questions like 'Do you shop and eat together?', 'Do you go out socially together?', 'Who owns this and that?', and the like. They decided we were cohabiting despite our best efforts. We appealed and then they decided we weren't. Nice to know the DSS has approved our living arrangements.

Whilst we were being asked lots of questions the inspector (or whatever nice title they give themselves) told us of a case he had dealt with. The long and short of it was that an old man and woman who were just best friends lived together, ate and shopped together, went out together socially were, in the final decision, cohabiting. The inspector said it had nothing to do with sleeping arrangements (the DSS aren't allowed to ask sexual questions) and so the two people lost some of their benefits. It's nice to know we are free to live as we please in our later years.

Not so long ago I suddenly got a poll tax bill forwarded from when I lived in Bristol. The bill was for £946 - for an address I was at for *one week*. It seems that the city treasury's bureaucracy assumed when I signed on at that address I had been there since the damn tax was imposed and had so far eluded them! So I had to go through the process of

proving I wasn't in Bristol before that time and say where I actually had lived. It was worrying because this level of debt is the sort of thing that follows you around hassling your life with 'bad debt' records and debt collectors. They never apologised, cold bastards.

Next on the list is when Katherine, my partner, and I had to go away because of a bereavement elsewhere. When she phoned the Benefits Agency to explain why she had missed signing on the woman she was speaking to said 'Will you be looking for work whilst you are there?' Shocked, she tried to emphasise the fact that she was helping arrange a funeral, to which the cold bureaucrat just said 'Well, would you be prepared to come back if we found you a job?' We were stunned by the lack of sympathy and the hard-faced and stupid attitude. Could a human being really be saying something so cretinous and unfeeling. Easily it seems. Tales from the bureaucratic crypt.

We moved recently and encountered the beast again with its relentless demand for information, this time from the Yorkshire Electricity Board and the rental company we hired a van from to move our stuff. The electricity monopoly had a form waiting for us when we got to the new place, not something I gave ever had to fill in before. Usually we just tell them 'put the account in this name' and that's that. But this time they wanted a form filling in which asks for the names of all adults living in the accommodation, name and address of previous occupier, name and address of the landlord. If you fail to give your own last address the form says they may request some form of security. With all the profits they make what the hell are they worried about. The most bizarre encounter was hiring the

van. We told them (Dennis Taylors of Hull) our address, where we were moving to, Katherine's parents' address and my fathers. They required two forms of ID so I produced my cashpoint card and passport along with my driving licence, the latter two they photocopied. But this still was not enough because I could not give an employers name and phone number or any other local contact who could prove who I was. Before I really understood what she was doing, the woman who was dealing with us phoned my father and asked if he could confirm who I was, give my date of birth and *describe me!* Surreal but sadly very real. We left the office with heads reeling. What next, a DNA sample?

All we try to do is live and everywhere we go now it seems there are restrictions, rules and suspicions. Every time I cash a giro I have to show ID. They are using their power and resources to hassle people into conforming to this bureaucratic nightmare that dehumanises us, often turning those who run the systems into cold and obedient automatons, reduces us to a statistic to be processed and made to fit the requirements of the system and its paranoia not our needs. These bureaucracies have a rationale that induces a mentality in its workers where the system is the prime most concern and people are reduced to what they fill in on a form and are not to be trusted. The fear, of course, is that by refusing to give the demanded information, by taking even a small stand we will be hassled, punished, refused what we need, and life generally made more awkward and miserable. The problem in conformity to the rules is they get stronger and people weaker, that we will be ever more subsumed and vulnerable and unable to avoid the control of more and more aspects of our lives. I think I'll go and live in a cave.

Ian Borrowes

Twyford Down Injunction - Civil Liberties Threat!

Six Jailed!

Six Twyford Down protesters, four men and two women, have been jailed for 28 days after they breached an injunction banning them from entering the Tarmac M3 construction site at Winchester.

On 4th July more than 500 people joined nineteen injunctionees in a mass trespass at the site after 55 people had their right to protest taken away by an injunction ruling in the High Court. For us, the preservation of our heritage and the need to keep the planet a place fit for life outweighs any injunction passed by a High Court Judge. We totally reject the courts and the corrupt state they uphold.

Eight of thirteen summonsed people showed enough 'respect' for the court to turn up for the hearings. Paul Rogers (of *Green Anarchist*) was let off on the grounds that he had not been properly served with the original injunction. Seven were sent to jail for 28 days (one, a single mother, 'purged her contempt' - i.e. arse-licked the judge) three days later and was released.

In his summing up of the injunction hearing on 2nd July, Mr Justice Alliot claimed there was "concerted action towards a common end" and dismissed the 'idea' that hundreds of protesters

could consist of small groups or individuals acting autonomously. This total lack of imagination epitomises the linear, hierarchical attitudes of most of the establishment. He also suggested that an injunction seen in the vicinity supporting active protesters on DoT land could be held to be a joint tortfeasor. This might extend to filming, making notes or simply watching. The implication is that one individual can be held responsible for the actions of another, even if at another place and time, if they are deemed to be acting "towards a common end". There is to be an appeal on these points, and Liberty have taken up the issue.

The government's position is clearly being called into question, not just by anarchists but by all sorts of people of many different social and political backgrounds who have become involved in this fight.

Indeed it is hard to see how we, and not the government, can be accounted the 'criminals' when one sees what they have done to this former beauty spot with its rich scientific and archaeological treasures, in open disregard of their own law of European Commission Directives. Yet it is our people who are locked up and gagged.

The 55 injunctionees are additionally threatened with a trial case for damages being brought by the DoT. The figure quoted is "well over a million pounds" but probably in the region of £1.9 million. The DoT have already claimed costs, currently reserved pending trial, which they say so far total about £100,000. Obviously we don't have anything like this amount of money either as a campaign or individually. To ask 55 ordinary people to find nearly £2 million is nonsense - what is the DoT really trying to achieve?

The present litigation is against not only a few protesters but what few civil liberties we have left.

Despite what has happened and what we are threatened with, we are not going to shut up and go away - to do that would be to abandon any thought of standing up to the worst excesses of this government and to abandon the well-being of our planet. It is vital that our non-violent protests continue and grow.

Thousands of people are threatened with homelessness by urban motorway construction. People dwelling in forty homes in East London have been evicted in the last fortnight to make way for the M11 link road. Most will not be rehoused; many received little or no compensation and have nowhere to live.

The government's callous disregard for human beings and the destruction they have already wrought at Twyford Down (and hope to repeat at hundreds of other sites of environmental, historical and scientific importance around the country) is wicked and evil. We must stop them now!

For more information, please contact Mr Stephen Ward on 081-527 4896.

An anarchist notebook on RACISM

(continued from page 2)

Congo Free State, was less cruel but equally racist and continued to exempt pygmies from taxes. Zaire, the successor to the Belgian Congo, has a non-racial constitution with equal rights for all. But Zaire is military dictatorship so equal rights for pygmies means that they are subject to taxes and military conscription.

Two exhibitions of aboriginal Australian painting are on show in London at the Hayward Gallery and Hossack's Gallery. Catherine Milner, informed by the proprietor of Hossack's, writes in *The Guardian* (17th July): "Not all members of the tribe are privy to all the Dreamings and symbols. Some are only for men; others only for women and children ... When aborigines first sold paintings, secret symbols that had been closely guarded from the whites and other members of the tribe for millennia were suddenly available for all to see. Now specially appointed aboriginal 'police' vet all those paintings being sold."

In other words, full citizenship for aborigines means subjection to religious censorship.

DR

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Travelogue: to Christiania

Freedom to go. Picked up by nice Danish musicians. They listen to tales of dancing round the midsummer Mapypole with Stockholm anarcho-syndicalists - back to basics.

Delusions of exceptionalism, yet to be shattered. The yuppies say the rich need to be paid a little more and the poor a little less, but that Sweden's wealthy-fair state would never sell down the river all the people who've worked all their lives to build it. The last to fall, and the fallen are many. The protestant work ethic on welfare, scorning the drunks, wanders in search of aluminium cans (returnable at 5p a piece) in bins that have been scoured six times in the last half hour.

Musicians arrive in Copenhagen and point the way to Christiania. "Don't go there, drugs, police ..." warn children who nevertheless have the sense to ignore the pornography shelved at their eye-level. "It's a dying trade" the Danes say. Fortunately romance novels lurk high out of reach.

Up on a roof. First contact, a chat and a smoke with some welcoming characters, some of whom lob the odd egg at the intruding riot police. The amplified laughter seems more effective. Community spirit tough to beat. Quartered lemons are passed round and squeezed round eyes to ease the sting of the tear gas left as a calling card by the Politi. Rituals of success.

We have to go in because of the drugs, argue the top cops. Funny how the hard drug pushers on another side of town seem to be left alone. They were kicked out of Christiania years back by its stronger citizens, along with the weakened custom after years of failed attempts to run rehabilitation programmes. Impossible while the fatal 'just one fix' was still on tap round the corner. Now, with only the good ol' basics in or near the hippest bars in town, temptation is too far away for many who otherwise might give in to it.

But the invading force, of course, needs to justify its calls for more resources. And they are many and powerful, those who are threatened by this "dream of a life in freedom and the idea of a city ruled by its inhabitants" (as it says in the tourist guide book). Thousands, young and old, from far and near still feel attracted to the magic mixture of anarchy and love of the 'Freetown'. And it is they, marvelling at this environment of hope and self-built houses, the visiting kids who sit down for a toke by the lake, that are the usual prey of the denim radio-controlled volunteers who relish the sight of terror in young eyes and the feeling of forcing handcuffs way too tightly onto bodies whose every muscle is tensed in fearful non-cooperation.

The locals, both inhabitants and visitors, wise to the whistles of the dealer's runners, are harder to catch. Trumped-up arms cache charges are splashed all over the morning papers. The popular slogan "No Justice, No Peace" is, however, soundly tempered in many, if not most, by an abhorrence for violence, and in all by a determination not to let the police provoke open conflict or otherwise discredit them.

Actually, letting the police come in after years of fighting them off underlines the limits of their power. Ridicule hits hardest. And with neutral cameras recording their every move, the police visibly feel constrained and all the more keen to assert their right to inflict 'acceptable' levels of violence on the youth.

So, unbothered by the sporadic visits from the legionnaires, the citizens of Copenhagen defend and enjoy their 'Freetown'. Where bands play at night (English skiffle with New Yorker clarinet and Danish snare drums), street performers practice their hardest and most astonishing tricks by day.

(continued on page 4)

The Rain in Spain as an Anarchist Parable

Students of Spanish rural anarchism often explain its psychological appeal by reference to very ancient traditions of communal agriculture, forestry and fisheries, deeply rooted, in opposition to the *latifundios* of absentee feudal landlords. The name always associated with the recording of this history was a prolific self-taught writer from rural Aragon, Joaquín Costa. He was part of the nineteenth century movement known as Regenerationism, trying to bring Spain into the modern world and famous for his slogan 'School and Larder'. He had a programme based on education, irrigation, land redistribution and technology which appealed to the anarchist propagandists, as did his most famous book *Agrarian Collectivism in Spain*.¹

In fact, Costa was far from anarchism. He argued for a "revolution from above" and it was regimes of the right which did most to implement the reforms he proposed, from that of Primo de Rivera before the republic and the revolution, to the Franco regime after it. This applies especially to schemes for irrigation, the key to agricultural improvement in an arid land. But curiously enough, even before the Civil War, "Costa's books were being sold by weight and taken away in barrows for pulping", while after it the British scholar George Cheyne found that as late as 1960, "the very mention of his name in academic centres or libraries would provoke reactions of indifference or of displeasure or even, in some cases, openly expressed antagonism ... second-hand booksellers, fearful of police intervention, would deny any knowledge of them".²

Every so often I struggle with a few pages of Costa's book since his accounts of water collectives seem so interesting, not only a refutation of current theories about 'The Tragedy of the Commons' (see *Freedom*, 10th July 1993), but as an example of anarchist jurisprudence based on popularly accepted standards of behaviour without resource to the law and the machinery of law enforcement. In the *huertas* of Aragon, rights to water in an area which without barrages and canals is subject to irregularity of rainfall and prolonged droughts, belongs to the farmers and peasants, large and small, through which the water passes.

Hence the many *comunidades de regantes* (associations of water users) in which each water user "has the right to vote for a representative to the *junta de gobierno*, which

in turn elects a *sindico*; the latter has special and absolute powers in times of emergency, and the combination of *sindicos* from each zone constitutes the Water Tribunal. Subordinate to the *sindicos* are the *atandadores*, men whose duties are vigilant rather than administrative".³

The most famous of the *Tribunales de las Aguas* is a well-known tourist attraction in Valencia, which meets every Thursday of the year at noon, sitting in a circle outside the door of the ancient cathedral. Eight farmers, each representing one of the networks of canals, channels and drains of the 2,300 acres of the *huerta*, meet to judge infringements or disputes over the water regulations. No lawyers and none of the state's laws are involved. Proceedings are verbal and are not recorded. Fines are sometimes imposed and are always paid. The decision of the tribunal is final. The tribunal is said to have existed continuously since its foundation by the Moors in 960AD.

A friend was visiting Valencia so I urged Ahim to bring back the literature of the tribunal. He kindly brought me a massive book with much more information than I wanted, but one thing I have learned from it is that philosophers of jurisprudence in several countries have seen these tribunals as examples of law-making and law-enforcement without resource to the state and its legal system.⁴ I know of only one modern anarchist book which raises this issue, but sadly it doesn't mention the Spanish experience of water tribunals.⁵

In the revolution of 1936 the *huertas* of Aragon were collectivised. All modern historians give their version of the events. In the most comprehensive anarchist account, Gaston Leval described the effect on the tribunals in upper Aragon. He mentions how the tribunal in Valencia settled disputes amicably and without the intervention of the authorities or the courts, and goes on to say:

"But such disputes disappear when men no longer have to compete and fight each other to exist, or when the will to acquire wealth for

oneself is no longer uppermost. In the region of Fraga fifteen *comunidades de regantes* covering the land in five villages, disbanded. The morality of solidarity produced that miracle. The old practice was replaced by a single collectivist administration, which coordinated the distribution of water everywhere, and which was proposing to improve the catchment basin and use of the rivers, especially of the Cinca river, by public works which none of the villages could have carried out individually."⁶

I would dare to suggest that Leval was wrong in welcoming the temporary disbandment of the water tribunals. This isn't because neither he nor the peasants could have known at the time that the collectivisations would be suppressed, not by the eventual victory of Franco but by the Communists, but because the *comunidades de regantes* were themselves an achievement of popular self-organisation. For the peasants were caught up in something that was quite beyond this level of mutual control. Burnett Bolloten, citing the historian of the CNT, José Peirats, explains how Community policy first dismantled the collectives and then restored some of them. He goes on:

"But while the situation in Aragon improved in some degree after the Communists had modified their policy, the hatreds and resentments generated by the break-up of the collectives and by the repression that followed were never wholly dispelled. Nor was the resultant disillusionment that sapped the spirit of the anarcho-syndicalist forces on the Aragon front ever entirely removed, a disillusionment that no doubt contributed to the collapse of that front a few months later. Peirats writes: 'The collective farms were once again authorised. The prisoners were released. Collectivisation got under way. The new sowings were prepared. But this time it was Franco who reaped the harvest ... One cannot play the game of demoralising a front and its rear with impunity'.⁷

In the early, punitive years of the Franco regime, the water communities, sanctified by history, were restored, and, since Costa's recommendations appealed as much to the right as to the left, new barrages and canals were actually added to the water system. I would love to visit the villages that Leval studied in 1937. I study the specialist literature

the vulnerable and the transfer of power and wealth to the rich, beyond any theoretical accountability).

And yet there is real resistance to this inexorable centralisation and the culture of no alternative and religious conformity which it breeds. A recognition that we need to apply pressure so that we are not, as individuals or communities, criminalised; so that we are free to enjoy the future (by pushing for state resources to be diverted to public transport, against pollution, and into coming up with a proper contraceptive).

Of course there's some things we can do for ourselves. We could grow our own food instead of relying on subsidies which starve the third world 'competition'. With 'our government' bragging that we'll take any shit we could uphold working conditions ourselves and if they don't like them let them take their jobs to people who need them much more. We could end all war simply by refusing to fight, by being agreed that we'd fight them if they made us.

And what with your riot police you won't need an army just to keep us down, will you Mr Major? Think how much you could save by closing the barracks and letting us build free-towns. What more beautiful irony than that the twentieth century totalitarian demand for forces consent, derived from Rousseau's theoretical social contract, be mirrored in reverse in the next century by our ruler's theoretical acceptance of our practically expressed demand to be left to organise ourselves. But, sadly, they want to turn the barracks into prisons.

The more of us who make some noise about what anarchy should be about, the better. And if you don't think people can be trusted to look after themselves way better than they're treated, then take a trip to Christiania.

Dom

in vain. The water historian Fred Pearce, describing the Moorish origins of the Valencia tribunal, goes on to explain gloomily, that:

"Out on the plains, between the large canal systems, there are dozens of smaller-scale village irrigation networks ... The rules attached to operating the irrigation systems survived the expulsion of the Moors in the seventeenth century, and only in the past thirty years has the system crumbled. At Ahin (which is Arabic for 'spring'), for instance, three large cisterns collected spring water through each winter for a thousand years. Each June for a few weeks, more than a hundred farmers opened the cisterns and water flowed along a kilometre-long canal to irrigate crops of wheat, maize, beans, cherries and almonds. But since the 1960s, many farmers have left the village, the cisterns and canals have silted up, taps have gone unopened and, since about 1970, no records of the irrigation system have been kept."⁸

That is a muted end to the story of self-regulation that the water tribunals illustrate. One historian of modern Spain explains that "The real Spanish revolution was not the defeated struggle of 1936-39 but the social and cultural transformation wrought by the industrialisation of the 1960s and 1970s ... Even in some of the prosperous agrarian areas of the north-east, the agrarian population declined because of the inherent unattractiveness of a rural lifestyle in an urban, hedonistic, consumer-oriented society."⁹ But maybe there's a reader in Spain who can tell me if the water tribunals still exist anywhere outside the tourist belt?

Colin Ward

Notes

1. Joaquín Costa, *Colectivismo Agrario en España* (1989, Editorial Americalee, Buenos Aires, 1944).
2. George Cheyne, *A Bibliographical Study of the Writings of Joaquín Costa, 1846-1911* (Tamesis Books, London, 1972).
3. Ruth Way, *A Geography of Spain and Portugal* (Methuen, 1962).
4. Victor Fairén-Guillén, *El Tribunal de las Aguas de Valencia y su proceso* (Caja de Aborros de Valencia, 1988).
5. Thom Holterman and Henc Van Maarseveen, *Law and Anarchism* (Black Rose Books, 1984).
6. Gaston Leval, *Collectives in the Spanish Revolution* (Freedom Press, 1975).
7. Burnett Bolloten, *The Spanish Revolution* (University of North Carolina Press, 1979).
8. Fred Pearce, *The Damned: rivers, dams and the coming world water crisis* (Bodley Head, 1992).
9. Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco Regime 1936-1975* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

Travelogue: Christiania

(continued from page 3)

The coolest of the cool cruise by on their 'Pederson' bikes dodging the 'Long-Johns' - stretched bikes with lowered tray in front of the handlebars but behind the front wheel, human powered machine capable of carrying with grace a large family's laundry or my kind, larger-than-life host. Bearded, beaming, cross-legged DIY-Buddha, he points the way to a church where we are treated to the fantastic sounds of a five-woman vocal ensemble from Zaire, Zap Mama. My only pennies on arrival spent - "Culture or hash" as he puts it.

Christiania has a thriving economy. Bike shop, huge old barn full of new and reclaimed building materials, top-notch bakery, veg shop, etc., etc. And a well-equipped carpentry workshop - somewhere to earn enough to buy the freedom to choose both.

After many ups and downs over the last twenty-odd years the place strolls on on a sound footing. One of the many essential nuclei for any thriving civil society. A living celebration of what can be achieved by a large determined number with the temperament to make collective decisions and the wisdom to work in conjunction, from a position of strength, with equally open-minded local officials.

These people don't respond enthusiastically when you tell them of the talk of a decentralist 'single issue' party(?). The ones I asked saw anarchy as far too complicated, impermanent, local, even contradictory, neither able nor willing to court powerful vested interests or make the reassuring empty noises which win votes. And nowhere have I heard much enthusiasm for this naive, Panglossian welcoming of the 'down-sizing' of the state (or rather down-shifting of burdens onto

News of the libertarians in Chile

It is hard to get a clear idea of what is happening in Chile as a whole with regards to the activities of libertarian groups. They can be found in various places: Iquique (to the north and sadly remembered for the bloody repression of the peasants there), Concepcion, Temuco and Talcahuano (to the south) and Villa Alemana (central). However, most groups and individuals who see themselves as part of the libertarian movement are in Santiago where they are involved in numerous aspects of social life.

The Libertarian Communication Collective was begun in 1990 by activists returning from exile and a group in Conchali and has produced a journal called *Accion Directa* and pamphlets on various occasions such as Women's Day and May 1st, the last being a flysheet criticising the municipal elections and another called *Insubordina* which was against military service. Today, the group is trying to set up a workers co-operative aiming to produce, distribute and sell different written and audio-visual materials. They are also trying to set up a cultural centre with a bookshop, exhibitions, concerts, workshops, etc.

Another group, associated with Fundacion Clotario Blest, produces a 16-page review three times a year dealing with social movements and human rights.

The anti-military service collective (COSMO) produces a newsletter and organises rock concerts. Libertarians are also involved with the magazine

produced by one of the countries non-governmental organisations, *El Canelo*, which is ecological in its approach. The green movement in Chile has met with some success and is currently moving towards becoming a political party along the lines of the German model. Although they are often fighting different battles, the main split between the anarchists and ecologists concerns the forthcoming presidential elections. The ecologists want to use it as a platform and to this end are supporting Max Neef, whereas the anarchists would have preferred a 'dummy' candidate in order to denounce the electoral system.

Other individuals are involved on an individual basis in consumer groups, Indian and gay rights groups. Others are in rock groups and produce fanzines like *Intoxicacion Social*.

Another activity is archive development for the libertarian movement aiming to disseminate information with news of the movement around the world in a journal called *News Letter*.

Despite appearances, the different groupings are not completely isolated from each other and anarchists involved in different collectives meet together regularly. Their organisational forms are many and testify to the richness and diversity of the Chilean movement.

Virginie
International Section of the FAF

Governments are ambivalent about science. They view the free discussion of ideas with dubious incomprehension. People with ideas are always potentially dangerous. Ideas aren't always amenable to market forces. Nevertheless, they have always been eager for the pay-off, in terms of military and industrial technology, that scientific work can provide. If, it should be noted, it doesn't seem likely to damage establishment interests. The fate of Professor Salter's Duck* clearly showed that when scientific ingenuity clashes with vested interests like the nuclear and defence lobbies, then scientific method and assessment of evidence goes out of the window. Figures and reports are faked. So we build a radio-active monument at Sizewell B that will lose billions of pounds, while wave-power research costing around three million was closed down. The deceit involved in this decision was breathtaking, even by the standards of recent Tory governments. With the assistance of the Department of Energy reports were falsified, vital information withheld, and the development of renewable energy crippled. The idea of science as involving the free flow of ideas has been a bit of a joke for some years but was certainly farce at this time. Distinctly odd from a government that is supposed to believe in the free play of market forces.

This ambivalence has particularly been noticeable recently. John Patten (who thinks that children should be formally instructed in

The Long Result

the immorality of telling lies – thus effectively debarring them from careers on the government side of energy research as well as politics) recently called for an emphasis on religion rather than science. "Science is over emphasised as a means of understanding the world" he said. Shortly afterwards William Waldegrave produced the first Science White Paper in twenty years because there was now concern that the emigrations of the Thatcher era, rivalling the scientific exodus from Hitler's Germany, were showing signs of reviving as science schools were turned over to short-term market forces, funds and research slumped, and demoralised researchers moved to the USA.

Peter the Great once said wistfully that if Russia had science perhaps the West would not regard them as barbarians. Conservative politicians do not apparently have these status hang-ups. Like other governments, though, they do want to dictate what scientists should find. However complacent some scientific timeservers may be, this is not the way to get usable results. Think of Verwoerd's South Africa, keeping blood from black and white donors in separate blood banks, although the two were chemically identical. Or of the agricultural disasters caused by Stalin's espousal of Lysenkoism in Russia. In Britain much of the present series of crises are caused by a similar desire to dictate results, whether in physics as with Professor Salter's duck or in economic as

with Wynne Godley's models. Godley was the one economist who was consistently correct in his forecast of the results of Thatcherite measures. Thatcher did not like his answers and removed his grant for building economic models. Those who say that Godley was only concerned with propping up capitalism and not replacing it – like Keynes before him – might reflect that a correct diagnosis with an adequate prescription is surely preferable to a wrong diagnosis.

The recognition that science and technology, like the economy, were suffering badly from the effects of myopic Thatcherite ideological fixations was one motivation behind the Government White Paper *Realising Our Potential*. Trailed as the most important event in scientific policy-making for twenty years, it effectively invokes the eighteenth century idea of the scientist as a servant of the ruling class. Scientists and engineers running the research institutes are to be superseded by, and subordinated to, a layer of industrialists and commercial experts. Young scientists must be educated (the White Paper prefers to say trained) to be the servants of industry. PhD's might challenge a few assumptions, like the primary aim of science being the creation of wealth for capitalists, so we are to develop our scientific potential by creating fewer of them. Subordination is to be ensured by the creation of more scientific skivvies in the form of

MSc's. The 'correct' capital creating lines of research are to be ensured by industrialists telling scientists what they should be doing. Presumably the scientific underpinning of health and environmental research will be the Cinderellas of the new arrangements. In other words, the White Paper is to give the government unprecedented control over science. It is part of the general move towards a totally centralised society that has been exemplified by the national curriculum. In this brave new government directed future, Professor Salter's duck will be unlikely to get to the small scale testing stage it did reach. Indeed the closure of the Warren Spring Environmental Laboratory and the threat to others like the National Physical Laboratory, suggests that whoever reads Waldegrave's White Paper, Michael Heseltine will resolutely ignore it.

In the heroic days of scientific optimism, when all problems seemed soluble, Tennyson wrote of his joyful discovery of "the fairy tales of science and the long result of time". Today the fairy tales come from government statistics, whether about science or the National Health Service. The long result is to be subordinated to market forces and the chaos and inhumanity of a neo-Victorian capitalism.

Yes, it does matter to us. J. Bronowski showed quite clearly why. "The world today is powered by science," he wrote in *Science and Human Values*, "for anyone to abdicate an interest in science is to walk with open eyes toward slavery."

John Pilgrim

* Salter's Duck is a machine designed to float on the sea and convert wave energy to electrical energy. The Energy Support Unit, which advises the Department of Trade and Industry, stated offhand that it was uneconomical. There were allegations of bias, since the Energy Support Unit is in fact a unit of the Atomic Energy Authority. In response the DTI appointed Tom Thorpe to investigate the economics of wave power. Thorpe reported in 1992 that wave power would be cheaper than atomic power, and recommended the building of a pilot plant. In July 1993 there was a scientific conference on wave power in Edinburgh. Thorpe was expected but did not turn up, and the DTI announced that he had been moved. Delegates, including Salter, were said to be 'shocked' – Eds.

— OBITUARY — Léo Ferré

The last of the great French anarchist singers died in Italy at the age of 76, on Bastille Day, though his family concealed the fact until after the national celebrations he detested.

Léo Ferré was born in Monte Carlo on 24th August 1916 into a respectable bourgeois family. His French father was the personnel manager of the Casino, and his mother was a native of Monaco. He had a Catholic education, studied law and politics in Rome and Paris, but abandoned an orthodox career for music and politics. He became a pianist and composer in Paris during the 1930s, and also became a convinced anarchist under the influence of the Spanish Civil War. During the Second World War he took refuge in Monaco, where he worked for Radio Monte Carlo. After the war he returned to France and joined the bohemian intelligentsia of Paris.

Ferré was primarily a singer, but he was also a poet and a composer of songs, setting his own words or the words of some of the great French poets. He also tried his hand as a serious composer and conductor. He preferred live performances, but he often appeared on radio and television, and he made hundreds of records. He dressed in black, to symbolise his political allegiance (a style copied by Juliette Greco and many others), and he showed a fine shock of hair. He never moderated his total opposition to the state, the church and the army, and several of his songs were banned by various authorities for religious or political reasons, but he did moderate his personal behaviour when he became famous and rich. He was hailed by huge crowds when he gave his support to the rebels in the Events of 1968, but at that point he left France, and he settled in Italy for the last 25 years of his life. He died at his home in Tuscany and was buried in Monte Carlo.

Ferré was the equal of Jacques Brel, Georges Brassens, Yves Montand and Edith Piaf, though he wasn't so well known outside France, and some of his songs entered the canon not just of political but of universal culture. His best-known anarchist piece was *Ni dieu, ni maître* (Neither God, nor master), but his signature tune was *Avec les temps ... tout s'en va* (In time, everything goes). And now he has gone too.

Of Patriarchs, Priests and Privileges

A *Times* report from Anne McElvoy (21st July) says that Patriarch Aleksii welcomed the move last week by the Supreme Soviet to ban foreign evangelists from preaching on television and radio and to impose a registration process on pavement preachers, saying that it "fully meets the expectations and needs of the Orthodox clergy and church members".

Vyacheslav Polosin, an Orthodox priest who heads the Russian Parliamentary Committee on freedom of conscience, complained that foreign religious groups were putting the Russian Orthodox Church at a disadvantage when it was trying to recruit members after years of repression.

Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople supported the action to be taken against "certain foreign religious missionaries and sects who can afford to lease big halls and buy television and radio time to advocate their ideas".

Under this proposed new law on religious broadcasting, airtime will be made available only to those organisations that obtain official registration at the discretion of the authorities. Opponents of the proposed law complain that it is reminiscent of the persecution carried out by the Communists, some accusing the Orthodox Church of seeking to restore the monopoly on faith that it held under the Tsars and re-establish its influence after years of co-existence with the Communist authorities.

A report in *The Universe* a few weeks ago told of a similar situation in the Ukraine, with the Orthodox Church apparently winning in the unholy battle against the Roman Catholics and others for old church properties and privileges.

Further evidence of collusion and exclusion between governments and religious hierarchies in their fights for power over people comes from another new 'democracy', Albania. An *Observer* reporter, Helena Smith, reported from Dervitsani, Southern Albania, (18th July) that Father Michalis Dakos, who

flies the Greek flag over the altar of his church, told her: "My child, the government in Tirana is trying to turn Albania into an Islamic state ... it is plotting to turn the Christians into Turks (Muslims). I'm afraid that soon there will be a religious war here".

Helena Smith goes on to say: "Just over a year after [Albania] acquired its first democratic government, the mood among its religiously divided people has turned ugly", and, she continues, "the expulsion, last month, of Father Dakos' friend the Most Reverend Archimandrite Chrysostomos Maidonis from his seat in Gjinokasten, Southern Albania's main town, has sent passions skyrocketing".

It all goes to show that professional religious leaders are the same the whole world over, from Dublin to Dervitsani. They deviously mouth PEACE, LOVE and FORGIVENESS – all the while putting power at the top of the agenda. Thus the Pope, on 15th February 1929, introduced this prayer for the Good Friday Mass in appreciation of recognition of his temporal power by the Italian government: "Let us pray for the king, that God may grant to him, for our perpetual peace, the subjection of all barbarous nations". And when Mussolini had his way with Abyssinia, the Pope called him a man of God, and the Bishop of Messina blessed the Italian fleet on its way to Africa.

It is a great mistake to play down the sinister influence of religious leaders, be they Christian, Jewish, Muslim or whatever. They are given privileges on the tacit understanding that any opposition to their sponsors' policies will be ineffective. Religious leaders are governments' main guarantors that ethics do not get in the way of Abyssinians, Concentration Camps, Falklands, Desert Storms, Bosnias or arms manufacture and sales. When populations observe their moral guardians appearing to condone such barbarism, any private reservations they might have are quickly put aside.

EFC

Careless in the Community

On 30th June I joined a large number of community workers for a conference. Astonishing that people with their views are still able to gain paid employment within state or state-dependent voluntary bodies. Their commitment to long-term working alongside ordinary deprived people, encouraging self-determination and co-operation and never enforcing decisions from above, and enabling people to benefit from a 'welfare' system that is geared up to oppress them – that is all good anarchist stuff. But by avoiding the ideology and linguistics of libertarians and adopting instead the Newspeak of the New Right, they are able to maintain a precarious toe-hold within officialdom.

Where 'cost-effective' means cheap or not at all, where 'choice' means take the money and do as we say, where 'empowering' means removing professional support and 'care in the community' means repossessing the homes of the elderly to pay for geriatric control, then the language used by professionals who wish to maintain the last vestiges of liberty for poor folk can too easily become a re-patterning of their own thoughts – as seen in large parts of the Labour Party.

A glimmer of hope came from the self-help groups. Here we find people who have been labelled 'clients', 'victims', 'disabled' or something more specific and unpleasant. But from the oppression of the system and the strength of knowing each other, they have come to see themselves as 'users' of the

(continued on page 6)

Common Sense on Economic Madness

Freedom commonly carries commonsense comment on current economic madness, but much of it overlooks an aspect of it of fundamental importance. Colin Ward's and Mike Montrose's pieces in the 10th July issue are examples.

What follows below is adapted from a letter I wrote to the Canadian monthly *Economic Reform* in January last year, seeking to influence its thinking, but is equally relevant to anarchist argument against capitalism.

We have suffered two world wars, and countless others, in the struggle for markets in this century – with the aim, not of increasing our imports of goods to benefit our own citizens, but to offload our 'surplus' production onto others abroad – not because it is unwanted for our own citizens, but because the system we use fails to distribute to them the purchasing-power to buy it.

Since the Industrial Revolution of the last century, labour has become increasingly redundant in the 'developed world' as machines have replaced it, but the need for a 'living wage' has maintained, by bitter struggle, a level of wages which firms' accountants see as uneconomic. This has had the effect of making human labour increasingly something to be avoided, so accelerating the changeover to automated production. It has made mechanisation too cheap, or human labour too dear, by the logic of cost accountancy.

But machines are not paid to consume, and production depends on markets. Markets depend on incomes, and for the workforce and its dependents (the vast majority of the population) incomes depend on 'jobs'.

This was seen as a serious problem by many American economists shortly after the Second World War, when Europe was still struggling to overcome the shortages resulting from that event.

They saw that the vast increase in productive capacity resulting from the removal of artificial financial restraints during the conflict threatened to 'saturate world markets' very soon – i.e. provide for everyone's needs! – so they dreamed up the deliberate policy of

planned obsolescence, which has till now had the effect they desire, of avoiding market saturation by making production deliberately more and more wasteful, to the point where the future is in serious jeopardy from depletion of resources, as well as from destruction and pollution of our environment.

But it still leaves vast numbers, even in the 'developed' countries, desperately short of things, and desperately seeking the incomes they need through the wages employment gives.

Just after the First World War this dilemma was observed and pointed out by C.H. Douglas, when he first proposed the issue of 'National Dividends' (now often called 'Basic Incomes') to distribute the 'wages of the machine' to the population as a whole, on an equal share, birthright basis – the 'common cultural inheritance' due to us all from the cumulative efforts and ingenuity of the past generation who created our productive infrastructure.

This would have had, and still would have, dramatic effects on the direction of developments:

We could begin to see the rational use of machines to benefit humanity, not to compete with it.

We could begin to tackle all those essential jobs for which there is now no time, as so much effort is put into making things no one wants or can afford, and then wasting vast resources, human and material, in the effort to persuade them to buy; and into making armaments and maintaining vast armies to provide profits for the armaments manufacturers (for whose products, curiously enough, there is never a shortage of purchasing power) and to keep other countries and our own citizens in order, as well as to keep vast numbers of people off the register of the unemployed.

Wages could drop relative to machine costs, because the Basic Income would provide the 'living wage', so there would develop a continuous range of wage levels, from the unpaid ('voluntary') right through to the

highly paid, without the jump at the beginning to a 'minimum wage'.

This would make repair once more 'economic', avoiding the junking of almost-faultless domestic machinery and equipment which now happens on a vast scale.

Pay differentials would have a vast shake-up, as people came to realise the social value, or otherwise, of the jobs they had or sought, and began to despise, for example, the armaments and advertising industries, and to value work in the caring professions.

All this would depend also, however, on how the Basic Incomes were funded, and on the money supply. We depend on a 'debt money' system, and the iniquities of the interest charged on this, including the consequent chronic shortage of purchasing power, are root causes of the current world problems, being the reason the capitalist economy has to expand perpetually to avoid collapse, such as it is currently experiencing.

I would recommend consideration of the benefits of its replacement by a 'credit money' supply. The American way of funding its War of Independence with 'printing press money', and Lincoln's issue of Greenbacks to finance the Civil War are examples of the possibilities (some believe that bankers arranged his assassination because of this threat to their interests), though we don't need to abandon cheque and electronic money; we simply need to stop the banks from creating it and claiming ownership.

The changeover to credit money could be effected by the initial funding of Basic Incomes by government-created, interest-free credits, at the same time progressively raising the reserve requirements of the point where they could genuinely lend only the sums deposited with them, i.e. they became mere savings banks and credit-transfer agencies (this would obviously involve introducing charges for all account transactions).

It then raises afresh, of course, the questions of how large the money supply should be, and how it should be controlled, and by whom – or is some automatic method possible,

dependent on feedback from sales?

The present debt system, even if it were shorn of the interest charged on it, creates a pressure for early repayment which means a need for quick profits (though this is greatly exacerbated by interest charges, especially when high). What the future urgently needs is a change to a system denied to meet real human needs efficiently with a minimum of production and waste, and the replacement of the financial profit motive by the desire for self esteem built on social approval, and this requires the removal of financial pressures for the 'quick buck'.

For many centuries, until the Middle Ages, 'credit money' systems ruled, and for long periods there were stable societies, living in balance with their environments. At times, inability to expand the money supply when it consisted of physical objects or materials (e.g. silver or gold) proved a brake on development, just as the artificial restraints on debt-money supply do today, though then, much more than in the 'developed countries' now, much business was conducted without money; but examination of the ways in which such systems operated can perhaps offer valuable lessons – both on their advantages, and on how to avoid their pitfalls.

These changes do not imply an anarchist society; and they seriously challenge the powerful, hidden 'vested interests' which are now in control. But the disastrous terminal consequences of the system they operate are slowly becoming clear to all, and the above would offer a way out – one which could move society a long way towards the anarchist ideal.

Brian Leslie

Careless in the Community

(continued from page 5)

system with the same kind of clout in 'welfare' as 'the ethical consumer' advocates for all of us in our relations with the multi-nationals. There is great strength in this position, as the wheelchair brigade have proven. It starts with a refusal to be patronised, a fearless acceptance of one's label, using it as a badge of honour rather than a disgrace. 'This is the way I am, so society better make room for me as I am one of many and refuse to be treated as inferior'.

Of course such assertiveness resonates with the New Right, so they cannot condemn it outright, yet they would really prefer the underclass to behave like 'wimps'. They can only hope that the assertive few can be bribed to capitulate, rather than putting their energy into developing the user group to which they belong. Community workers with a vocation are more difficult to deal with, as it is part of their personality to protect the weakest in the community, to treat them as equals and assist them even at the cost of a well-paid job.

The future lies with the USA where 'welfare' is breaking down in chaos, because the professionals cannot cope with the spiralling needs of the underclass, where they lack knowledge of the local community. It is all right for the police to rush in and arrest the wrong people. As long as the truth does not emerge, they will get a conviction that is good for their statistics. But for 'welfare' to start splitting up innocent families whilst missing those in real need, that soon breaks down because the soft-cops of 'welfare' really do want to help people and really do get upset when they get things wrong – which is why they are coming to Europe seeking more local, community-based models for working.

John Myhill

In the last eighteen months things have gone from bad to worse; in the next eighteen months they are liable to go from worse to catastrophic. The IRA has taken the bit between its teeth and is out to drive the British Army out of Ireland by major city centre assaults to which there appear to be no answer. The response of the UDA is to take the law into its own hands in its own counter-offensive – and if that means fighting the RUC and the Army then so be it. This is a situation without precedent. In the short term there is no solution – in the longer term there are convergent remedies:

1. Talks. These will be delayed by Unionist intransigence, nationalist dogma and government inertia. The immediate hope lies in the Dick Spring quarter: flexibility over Articles 2/3 and openness to the Euro-dimension. The need for new ideas is acute, especially that of making Northern Ireland an autonomous region of the EC, within the UK, and so free to negotiate with Dublin as it pleases. The British Army can then leave Northern Ireland.

2. A ceasefire. Successful talks and a ceasefire are the two poles of the same problem. One will not work without the other. The Secretary of State in his Coleraine speech (December 1992) suggested a deal – a withdrawal of troops from the streets in return for a ceasefire, an excellent idea – can it be worked on? But a ceasefire will only be permanent in the context of successful talks. The important statement on this subject is to be found on pages 54-56 of the Opsahl Report. First de-escalation, then a ceasefire. De-escalation can happen and is happening now in certain places. There is however a yawning gap from that to a ceasefire. Distrust is so massive on both sides that a ceasefire may only be possible on a unilateral basis: one side acts and puts the responsibility of response on the other side. In a suitable context it could happen – first make

— NORTHERN IRELAND — Crisis to Convergence

the context and find the place. Derry has been suggested as a location where de-escalation has been making significant progress for years. From one place it can catch on and spread around the country.

3. Public opinion. The blockage is in Britain where the tabloids are the worst enemy of the truth. But coming a very close second is the bi-partisanship of the two Front Benches in the House on the subject of Northern Ireland. As a result the press is fed nothing and gives the public a starvation diet. At the mention of Northern Ireland millions switch off. It seems that only trauma will break into the British consciousness. It began to happen over Warrington, but the big response there was in Dublin – Peace '93. The response here was limited to the Irish community in London. The Dublin response yielded a full 'Everyman' programme on 18th July and showed what can be done if one or two imaginative individuals make a start. Given time qualities yield quantities. We need a campaign for a just peace in Northern Ireland, with groups in every town in Britain. We know the form all too well – now we need the insight and the action.

4. Westminster, Whitehall and Dublin. The power is where the money (£3 billions a year), the troops, the police and the prison service come from. It comes overwhelmingly from London, but security costs in the Republic are also high (even dangerously so, in the light of its serious financial condition). The principal blockage is in London. If there is no change there, there will be no change

anywhere. Public opinion and the media need to put Westminster under heavy pressure to engage in a real debate. This involves ending bi-partisanship – the Labour Party, the Social Democrats and elements within the Conservative Party thinking anew and speaking out. There are some good signs apparent already – Kevin McNamara seems to have broken ranks (we have yet to see what he means by it) and Peter Bottomley has taken up individual Northern Ireland case histories with vigour and panache. In the Lords the cross-bench Lord Hylton is floating new ideas.

Then there are mid-term objectives that will help and do not require waiting upon any comprehensive settlement. Scotland and Wales have Select Committees, Northern Ireland does not, put that right. Get rid of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the immense ill-will it causes in Ulster. The government has all the powers it needs elsewhere. Change present parliamentary procedures to provide powers of amendment for Northern Ireland legislation and full-scale debate in place of the present impoverished half-hour treatment.

At the personal level people have to burn the midnight oil, read *Fortnight* (published in Belfast) and *The Irish Post* (published weekly in London). And you don't have to go to Ireland to meet the Irish, although that is a very good idea. There are more Irish people in Britain than there are in Ireland.

Peter Cadogan
Secretary, NI Project, The Gandhi Foundation

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When a person becomes an anarchist they usually find themselves in the position of being in a minority group in society. Most anarchists feel that for society to move in a more anarchist direction would need more people becoming anarchists. Because of this anarchists often spend some of their time trying to convince other people to become anarchists. Often this is done by discussion and/or attempting to give practical examples of how libertarian ideas/forms of organisation could solve various problems in everyday life. This, of course, is based on the proposition that if people hear about and see practical examples of anarchism there is a chance they will become anarchists. Although this is logical, sadly this does not have a very high success rate as the number of anarchists in the world still seems to be very small. Large numbers of people even when they hear about anarchism do not seem to accept it as desirable. It may well be the often uphill struggle involved in propagating anarchist ideas that helps cause many initially enthusiastic people to retire from the movement. It does seem to me to be a fact that anarchist ideas are largely dependent on rationality and rational discussion. The purpose of this article is to examine some of the irrational beliefs that are often present in society. It is, in my opinion, worth an examination of some 'New Age' beliefs and various cults with their beliefs/behaviour to see strong processes that will impede people from developing libertarian ideas.

It has been said from time to time that we live in a world of scientific understanding. This statement, even for the industrial world, is still largely untrue for large sectors of the population. While we do live in a technological world, surrounded by all sorts of devices, I doubt very much if most of the population of Britain could explain how a television set works. It may well be that a lack of even the most rudimentary understanding of technology could help people, often very articulate and intelligent individuals, to turn to mystical concepts as peddled by New Age /

Anarchism, Reason and Irrationality

Deep Ecology movements. Of course much of this is a recycling of Eastern religion with concepts taken from Buddhism, Taoism and Vedanta. It would seem that much mainstream religions such as Christianity find the going rather difficult in the modern technological world. Before anarchists and atheists start to get too pleased about this, it must be remembered that there are large numbers of other religions and cults to take the place of mainstream religions.

A factor in the seeking out of the irrational in the modern world is the need people have for certainty and security. Since the nineteenth century the traditional biblical view of creation has been challenged and debunked by science. Even the concept of a deity has been seen by many people as unnecessary to explaining scientific processes. However, there are still many people who feel the need for a god of some form. One solution for such people is to take a Christian Fundamentalist view and accept the Bible as literal truth. Many such people, in the USA, have provided support for political groups such as the New Christian Right. Another solution, for some people, is to accept technology and mix it into their cosmology. For example, there are cults which use 'Black Boxes'. A Black Box is a box-like device which, it is claimed, has miraculous properties which can cure all sorts of problems. Often they have dials on the outside which the operator adjusts when the box is being used. In many cases the inside of the box is empty or there is wiring randomly connected up to components which does not complete an electrical circuit.

Perhaps the most interesting are flying saucer cults. Some of these groups show an interest in technology combined with a relationship to spiritualism. Spiritualism

reached a level of fame during the nineteenth century, and then its mediums tended to relay information from a so-called 'spirit world'. Since the Second World War, in both Britain and America there have been groups that claim to be in contact with space beings through a medium.¹ A change of emphasis has appeared, from a spirit world contact with a being from another planet. The 'New Age' practice of channelling with claimed contacts with 'Space Brothers' is also a form of mediumship. By the 1960s cults like the Aetherius Society had a complex set of beliefs involving religious figures of the past living on other planets, flying saucers and mysterious devices. Interestingly, many believers in flying saucers have also been Spiritualists.

Two books that give a good description of cults are *Alcoholics Anonymous: Cult or Cure?* by Charles Bufe² and *Combating Cult Mind Control* by Steven Hassan.³ It does seem that membership of many cults are obtained by recruiting people who are going through a period of psychological difficulty. Many cults take care not to recruit people who are too highly disturbed. Such people would not be effective as members of the group. People who are higher up in the cult hierarchy are often intelligent, with strong administrative and financial skills. This makes them capable of running the organisation on behalf of the

charismatic leader to whom they are devoted. It has been suggested that the reason many cult members appear so strange, to an outsider, apart from their beliefs is because their personalities seem to be so similar. There is evidence from psychological tests in the USA that many members of a cult appear to undergo a personality change and develop similar personalities. This cult personality, it has been suggested, is gradually built up as the group uses forms of mind control.

Interestingly since the development of the Humanistic Psychology movement, personal psychological development can be seen as a double-edged weapon. In the hands of unscrupulous individuals mind control becomes an effective and dangerous possibility. 'New Age' type psychology jargon has already appeared in some business management practices.

While the examples given above may seem extreme they probably indicate thought processes and behaviour going on, to some extent, in quite large numbers of the world's population. It is just that the cultists exhibit these personality traits to an extreme extent and are therefore worthy of study. The left-wing is also notorious for all sorts of irrationalities and some groups could be classified as secular cults. Some anarchists are not immune from this with their endless factionalism and polemic abuse. Some of this can be seen in the light of the quest of insecure individuals seeking absolute certainty.

I would question how effective most anarchist propaganda is against beliefs and behaviour I have mentioned in this article. Any direct attack on these beliefs is seen as direct proof that there is a conspiracy by a hostile world that is out to 'get them'. Movement building by proclaiming the glories of the coming Anarchist Revolution seem to fall rather flat, as it usually does. For the moment it would seem that small scale efforts on a local scale would seem to stand more chance of success in developing ethical libertarian behaviour than calls for grandiose federations. At least it would help to indicate a possible way to a more free society.

D. Dane

1. *Cults of Unreason*, Christopher Evans, Harrap, London, 1973.

2. *Alcoholics Anonymous: Cult or Cure?*, Charles Bufe (available from Freedom Press, £6.95 post-free).

3. *Combating Cult Mind Control*, Steven Hassan, The Aquarian Press, 1990.

Those Massaged Figures

It has been obvious to everyone – even the media – for some time that the government has stepped up its manipulation of the unemployment figures (particularly in the cases of people being transferred back and forth to sick registers, and the fact that people signing on for work now are no longer allowed to cross the room to the desk that deals with dole claims, but the claim is now 'posted', often taking weeks to travel the few yards involved), as also other statistics on which it bases its claims that we are pulling out of the 'recession'. The concentration on inflation figures were of course always risible, the only thing that was amazing was that – so far into the slump – there was still inflation rather than deflation. That the figures were wrong surprises no one, the question is why?

Whatever the monetarist propaganda about British industry being able to compete in world markets better if wages and conditions were 'competitive', government ministers can hardly be so stupid as to be unaware that the cause of the slump was that a decade of Thatcherism so damaged the workers' incomes and prospects that the majority could not afford to buy, or if they could afford it could not be sure that they'd still have a job next week and still be able to meet the hefty hire-purchase/mortgage commitments that Thatcherism had earlier persuaded them to undertake; which is why small shop-keepers and market traders were the first non-workers to feel the pinch.

Alright, dropping out of the ERM temporarily fitted in with the Tory propaganda; devaluation has meant that the cost of British goods sold in Europe dropped sufficiently to undersell the other countries of the community. Briefly there has been a fluster of increased trade. A number of yuppie business executives (those used to trading on the continent) who would have been laid off have been kept on, some have been re-employed. Even a few productive workers have seen a stay of execution in their redundancies. There has even been – in very limited areas – a knock-on effect in an increase in certain forms of home trade.

But by definition this is self-defeating. Despite all the talk about 'we are coming out of recession, just as commercial rivals are going into it', the obvious effect is that the wages of continental workers will be rapidly depressed to march (with or without devaluation in other countries) so the overall market will shrink, just at the time that rivals will also be cutting the costs of the sales. So the 'double dip' dismissed as nightmare will in fact be seen to be a fairly optimistic prediction, far short of what will come. The government is busy pretending that the nasty slump is over; while taking credit for the 'competitive' edge it gained by devaluation it has sacked Lamont whose policies led to it, so as to blame him for the slump in the first place. But inevitably any kudos it gains must be short-lived.

What can Major hope to gain from such short-lived popularity? Well it takes peoples' minds of the Scott Inquiry. The Polly Peck Trial should have been next month, and the government's connivance with Asil Nadir's escape and its subsequent spurious use of 'sub judice' as a way of avoiding any enquiry about Nadir's business connections with Tory politicians, will again register on popular consciousness in the autumn. But that seems hardly enough. Unless Major is hoping to be 'forced' to call a snap election, after a defeat on the 'Social Chapter'. (Allowing massive use of monetarist propaganda in the election, at the same time as a purge of his party's most consistent monetarist candidates.) The fact that August elections are almost unprecedented, will mean that premeditation will not be suspected.

Last year, starting as the under-dog candidate, he managed to convince enough voters to re-elect him (albeit as head of a party most of whose parliamentary members despised him), given that people on all sides in parliament will have stood on their heads to bring him down, he may well think he can pull it off again. The left will need to think seriously about how it responds.

LO

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News from Angel Alley

As part from managing to produce *Freedom* on time, our other publishing initiatives, including *Raven 22*, have been delayed by typesetting. However the stolen equipment will have been replaced by the time this issue of *Freedom* appears and so then we will have no more excuses for delays – we hope!

As readers know, *Freedom* is a 'fortnightly' which misses two issues in the year – at a time when our printers close down for the August Bank Holiday and Christmas. So the next issue of *Freedom* will be a normal one dated 21st August, but there will not be one on 4th September. And there will be just one issue in December, on the 11th of the month.

We still have no news as to the extent of the damage – moneywise – of our recent troubles. What we do know is that converting Freedom Press into 'Fortress Press' – steel shutters on the ground floor windows and doors and replacing all the interior doors to conform to the fire authority's demands, or else – will set us back a few thousand pounds when all the bills are paid. So we still welcome donations and warmly thank all who have contributed so generously.

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Swansea, LR, 10; Wolverhampton, JL, £2.

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(which includes £2,197.00* in donations to the Damage Repair Fund)

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Tamworth, BS, £5; Swansea, LR, £17.

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1993 total to date = £580.00

Authority and the Future of Anarchism: don't polarise, don't call us fascists!

Dear *Freedom*,
It seems to happen more often these days that so-called 'anarchists' join the authoritarian forces to knock us down in our quest for freedom. At least that's what I've concluded after reading the letter 'Authority and the Future of Anarchism' (*Freedom*, 26th June 1993) written by Swiss anarchists Werner Portmann and Silvia Zweidler. In this horribly argued piece of writing Portmann and Zweidler try to convince us that Larry Gambone is a fascist and this his preoccupation with the works of Proudhon can only lead towards fascism. Personally, I myself think that Proudhon's writings are stimulating and interesting because of his pragmatic and anti-utopianist views on anarchism and economy. Now that I'm called a propagandist of fascism, I would like to comment in this 'itchy' issue.

Portmann and Zweidler don't motivate their insult. They use an 'old' and mean mechanism - perfected by the marxists and fascists - that has proven its bankruptcy in history since long: just by summing up some organisations in which elements of Proudhonism can be found they think they have a fair base to stop people from further reading. And indeed, traces of Proudhonism can be found in the League Lombardy and the League Ticinesi (and many other organisations). But so what? Are we religious zealots who want to follow our Big Master? Do we hang photographs and paintings of Great Heroes on our walls? Are we interested in becoming members of the Leagues just because of the reason that their members like to quote Proudhon? No, of course not.

And yes, Proudhon was an anti-Semite and he didn't like the emancipation of women. In the nineteenth century the Netherlands even had liberal-catholic bishops who favoured Proudhon. And at the turn of the century the Dutch railway entrepreneur and banker H.P.G. Quack wrote one of the most sympathetic essays on Proudhon ever written in Holland. But does this mean that we - as 'pure anarchists' - are not allowed to read Proudhon any more? Portmann and Zweidler act like priests when they tell us: "We must use Proudhon very carefully, we think it would be better for some *Freedom* writers to go back to the roots like Godwin, Emma Goldman and Malatesta than Proudhon". Why should it be 'better' for us to read other anarchists? I think Larry Gambone was right when he noted that anarchism changed when it became too closely related to utopianism. Our Swiss friends didn't understand Proudhon or Gambone too well. You see, the problem is you shouldn't use books to develop a theory (anarchist or not) for a future society, you

better read books to develop your own creative way of dealing with personal and political aspects of our lives in an authoritarian and capitalist society. And I don't think there is one single anarchist out there who studies nothing else but Proudhon.

Proudhon shows us that an important part of our economy is in fact libertarian and that we - as anarchists - have to concentrate on practical guidelines to stimulate this libertarian economy and to reduce the influence of the authoritarian (capitalist) economy. Love, self-esteem, mutualism, self-help, voluntarism, alternative housing, mutual banking, offering labour instead of money, small businesses which don't depend on economical growth, co-ops, ecological and workers' associations ... all these libertarian expressions play a significant role in our society of every day. We should be more optimistic about the fact that capitalism and state socialism weren't able to liquidate these important aspects of our lives. Proudhon teaches us to be creative and independent and wrote in his book *Systeme des contradictions economiques, ou la philosophie de la misere* (1845) as a defence against the utopian theories of political and religious leaders whose only goal was to discipline and control the crowds. In this 'post-modernist' era people seem lost in a crisis of ideologies again, and especially leaders of any nature are anxious to find a new bind that ties us

slaves together. Proudhon taught us to be suspicious about these authoritarian attempts. He criticised the socialists because they democratised slavery while he wanted to liberate labour, all individuals, and all people. That's quite a difference.

I don't think it's a good idea to fight ideology with more ideology. Too long we were waiting for pie in the sky. Anarchism is a universal principle, based on the sovereignty of the individual, mutual agreement and mutual associations. It's anti-utopian by nature because these libertarian principles reveal themselves every moment of the day anew. Anarchy is the force of life. The nice thing about Proudhon is that you'll find 'Proudhonism' just there where the name Proudhon isn't even mentioned. An example is the 'anarchistic' neighbourhood Tepito in Mexico City where 20,000 inhabitants threw out the big banks. Now they're investing their money and labour into fifteen local funds. I think Colin Ward - who wrote marvellous articles on city life in the so-called 'third world' - would say: 'People make their own cities here'. That's only one reason why it's still worthwhile reading Proudhon (start with the title I mentioned above). Anarchism can do without narrow-minded slogans. Our Swiss friends should be less rigid because they act like frightened parents who still think that after smoking a joint you'll end up a heroin-junkie. Come on!

Siebe Thissen
Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Social Defence, Social Change

Dear all,
It would seem a few gremlins have attacked my review of Brian Martin's book *Social Defence, Social Change*.

Firstly, the sentence that reads: "However, any new regime is likely to prevent any further chances of a revolution or similar occurring again, they are going to be more aware of people's power to undermine their position and I would ..." etc.

Should read as follows: "However, any new regime is likely to prevent any further chances of a revolution or similar occurring again, they are going to be more aware of people's power to undermine their position but I would agree ..." etc.

And in the last paragraph the final sentence which reads "Social defence is a means to achieve this ..." should read "Social defence is a means to change this ... etc. There is no way I would want a centralised military state.

Chris Platts

Pacifists' Reply

Dear Comrades,
Stephen Booth says (24th July 1993) that whatever gains self-governing communities make, sooner or later they will have to be defended against the state by physical force. He writes: "I don't see any way round this". Nor will he unless he thinks a little more deeply than he is going at present.

Stephen writes: "People like the travellers are already living the non-violent revolution". If he believes this, he must have some very queer ideas about the nature of a truly anarchist community. Upsetting people with their presence and receiving a state pension every week is not living in an ideal community. It is not living apart from the state; it is living as part of the state. To make the revolution, anarchists must live autonomously on their own land.

Stephen also writes: "Wherever peaceful revolt works, it will be opposed. This is just a fact of life". And so it will be if we attempt to build our communities without at the same time off-setting government propaganda with our own. The people who would oppose us are not the feeble men in Westminster but those they employ, and it is these people who stand to gain from the creation of an anarchist society. It is that fact which is our strength.

Building an anarchist society nonviolently will be immensely difficult but it is the only way. Building it by violence against the might of the state is impossible.

Derrick A. Pike

Dear Editors,
A few words for Stephen Booth (*Freedom*, 24th July 1993).

There is a certain inner peace from which action springs; otherwise there is only reaction, which is the root of violence. Pacifism and moral idealism are reactions; as are nationalism, patriotism and conventional morality. Stephen's determination to "act against Disneyworld" is clearly a reaction, and violent: "shoot the madman".

Almost all of us, the 'good' as well as the 'bad', are only reacting: violence lurks behind even the pacifist march or

Up with some freedoms, down with others

Dear Editors,
Some freedoms are more important than others. Freedom from death, torture, imprisonment and rape is infinitely more important than freedom to sit in a chair (or George Walford's freedom from answering my questions).

While George debates linguistic conundrums, Bosnian women and children die and starve as a result of ideologies which, according to him, are not invented and imposed by men, but are apparently somehow implanted by celestial agents.

Ernie Crosswell

I am sorry to dispute with George Walford, because I warm to his criticism of orthodoxy. There is the danger of intellectual authoritarianism even among anarchists! But I think he has got it quite wrong this time! It seems to me that in his sensible way Donald Room says all that needs to be said about the principles of 'freedom' in his letter in the 10th July issue of *Freedom*.

George Walford asks for examples of freedoms that can be exercised without interfering with the freedom of others. I am at the moment learning Turkish. I don't think this is interfering with anybody else's freedom. In Britain I am at least free to learn Turkish when I want - although I might not be if I lived, say, among the minority Greek community in Albania just now. But if I am a child in Britain I am certainly not free to learn what I want when I want. In a genuinely free community children would have such a freedom, and I cannot see that either they or adults, by exercising that freedom, would be interfering with anybody else's freedom. Are there not an almost unlimited number of similar freedoms, both important and trivial, that impose on nobody?

For example, in a 'free' community farmers could grow whatever crops they wanted without interfering with anybody else's freedom, so long as they didn't, for instance, use noxious chemicals or divert so much water to their own use that they deprived others. Naturally, by occupying and using the land in the first place they are theoretically limiting the freedom of others. How important that is in practice depends very much on how much there is of the tolerance, goodwill and give-and-take that Ian Borrows rightly emphasises in his letter (24th July). It is almost certainly true that, as he says, people would willingly behave far better once the manacles were off people's minds.

One sphere where I think there is a really serious practical problem is housing. The problem Ian refers to (as an illustration) is largely a problem caused, in the present set up, by the law. Privilege and capitalism depend almost entirely on the law. There can be no ownership in the current sense without the law to enforce

it. But even without the law there is a great difficulty. Everybody cannot live in the house they most want to live in. Not everybody can have, for instance, that lovely view they have longed for. Here freedom really is an interference in others' freedom. Making all humans content with the house they live in is one of the several problems that make a huge reduction in the population necessary.

I agree entirely with George Walford that we should explain why anarchist freedoms are superior. But it surely confuses the issue for everybody to say that they are superior to other freedoms, even if in one abstract way they are. The crucial difference is that most of those other 'freedoms' are power.

Amorey Gethin

Dear Comrades,
I can understand the Anarchist Communist Federation's objection (*Freedom*, 10th July 1993) to your offer to print whatever the mindless thugs who have damaged your paper have to say. Who in their rightful mind and senses wants to read basic, bigoted and banal propaganda in a paper to which many people look for a free and fearless exposé of the horrors and delusions of an authoritarian world? But you were perfectly correct to do so, and your chief justification is that these hollow psychotics who are victims of the society you ably criticise have not taken you up on the offer. I never thought that they would. I would go a step further and suggest that *Freedom* should hand out a standing invitation to all the enemies of anarchism to parade their opinions in your paper. Give them the front page if necessary. Your golden defence that none may deny you is your right of reply. The unerring judgements and moral sense of anarchism grounded in all-around realism would demolish any opposition. Your critics know this. They will send spies, rant and rave, label you as deviants and worse, and write clever nonsense about you, but engage in a free and fair debate with *Freedom* they never will. If any of them did then it would be marvellous propaganda for *Freedom*.

I keep on hoping that chiefs of police, armed forces, MPs, bureaucrats, modern architects, fascists, head-shrinkers and all their cronies in safe holes would step into *Freedom's* arena and defend and explain to the death their views and actions. We can rest assured that they never will do this. What a short, effective and entertaining way of getting a real and true alternative philosophy across. If they got sentenced to reading six anarchist classics then either they would have nothing to say even though it would not stop them making all the usual noises, or anarchism would get some strange converts. With every brick thrown at you by the mob while they will not take up a reasonable offer to talk to an intelligent audience, they do their cause and their conscience no good at all. I repeat they know all this. So do we. All we will ever hear from them is the sound of silence. Although I dare say some pens are scribbling away at secret reports. If that's their life then they are welcome to it.

Mary Quintana

The value of anarchist papers

Dear *Freedom*,
Just recently I heard of the attacks on your bookshop and the Freedom Press building. So here's my donation.

Freedom must go on; it is the best anarchist paper I know, aiming at non-anarchists with the articles explaining capitalism - and there is even room left for articles from anarchists for anarchists! (There are more than enough papers in which anarchists discuss with each other, and that's a waste of time.)

There is something else I want to tell you: in the issue of 19th June 1993 there was a letter from Amorey Gethin about the problems one faces when you want to explain what anarchism is all about. And I agree that it is very difficult to convince people if you tell the usual story: anarchists want to abolish government because government is bad.

Therefore I have a different approach. Mankind faces many serious problems - poverty, exploitation, pollution, destruction, etc. The cause of these problems is the market economy in

which production is 'regulated' by competition and making profit.

To end these problems we need an economy in which production is adjusted to the needs. And controlled by the people and not the market: the people decide what, how, when and how much we produce. Adjustment to needs can only take place at community level.

This means that communities must be as self-sufficient as possible. And self-sufficiency means independence and therefore people won't tolerate somebody else to tell them what to do. They handle their own affairs: they are free, without a government.

That is what anarchism means to me: bringing about a better society by changing the way of production. (Of course I agree that states serve only one purpose, and that's to protect the privileged elite, be it the party members in the former communist Soviet Union or the big bosses in capitalist societies.)

Marcel Teunissen
Nijmegen, The Netherlands

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demonstration. Ethics, as a philosophical "method of judging our putative moral principle", is an intellectual game which leads nowhere: being itself part of reaction (and therefore violence) it can never end it.

What ends reaction is simply the perception that you are only reacting: if you are 'all there' at the moment of anger, it fades away. Reaction thrives on inattention, not on ignorance about ethics; and as long as inattention and reaction prevail, our demonic Disneyland will go on to self-destruction.

Francis Ellingham

Tibetan Outrage

Dear *Freedom*,
The brutality of Tiananmen Square was horrific enough to occupy the front pages of the British press for some time.

The continuing genocide of the Tibetan people - a small nation hidden away behind mountains - continues without respite and, apart from the BBC film, without protest.

An added scandal is the fact that China, the perpetrator of this outrage, is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

Michael Duane

London Anarchist Forum

Regular attenders have decided to continue meeting informally over the summer until the Mary Ward Centre re-opens on 24th September. *Time:* about 8.30 onwards. *Dates:* Fridays from 13th August. *Venue:* The Three Tuns public house, Sandlands Street, off Red Lion Street, Holborn WC1.

— Anarchist Picnic —

London Anarchist Forum are holding another picnic on August Bank Holiday, at 2pm on Monday 30th August 1993 on Parliament Hill (south side of summit), Hampstead Heath. Everyone welcome. Bring food for sharing and a bag for rubbish. Anyone got a flag?

Red Rambles

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

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.

Telephone for further details:
0773-827513

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