

# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

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FIFTY PENCE

"Freedom of speech means nothing if it does not mean the freedom for that to be said which we do not like."

Voltaire de Cleyre\*

## 'THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL'

Some readers may recall an occasion when the Iron Lady (Thatcher, for our younger readers) was at pains to point out that the "Good Book" says it is the "love of money" and not money *per se* that is "the root of all evil". So be it! As anarchists, no one will expect us to agree even though this writer shares the common-sense approach to money as such expressed by Malatesta years ago (see page 2).

For anarchists, capitalism which is production (whether of goods or services) for profit surely is, by definition, the "love of money" as well as the power, the privileges and even in many cases the leisure\* it provides in a capitalist society for a not insignificant minority – possibly a third of the population, say some of our 'experts'.

For most of us money is neither power, privileges nor leisure, but the wherewithal to provide shelter,

\* In the capitalist society, apart from the anarchists, no one attacks the backwoodsmen and women who have enjoyed a capitalist 'welfare state' from 'the womb to the tomb' for generations purely on the grounds of birth, and fed by profitable marriages.

### THE BANKS ARE LAUGHING ...

The banks which a year ago were crying their eyes out at all the bad debts they had to cope with – and an excuse for upping bank charges and drastically reducing interest rates on deposit accounts – haven't taken long to be again in the black with a vengeance.

Barclays, for instance, converted a loss of £293 million in the second half of 1992 into a profit of £335 million in the first half of 1993, in spite of "nearly £1 billion provisions charge and massive losses in US operations".

The National Westminster rose by 13p on news of pre-tax profits of £421 million for the same six months – a doubling of last years £211 million – and an extra 4.5% dividend for shareholders.

The same 'good news' for Midland Bank shareholders. Profits jumped to £385 million from £144 million in the previous half year.

Meanwhile, more and more customers are being squeezed by rapacious banks.

food and clothing, without which a basic existence in a capitalist world is not possible. Yes, it is quite true that the prosperous capitalist powers won't let you starve to death, though they are not concerned by the image of 'cardboard-box squatters' in all the cities of prosperous Europe, as they boast at the same time of more owner-occupiers (and say very little of the massive repossessions by the capitalist money-lenders).

In the world of capitalism money is a commodity, like potatoes, bread or cabbage. It's bought and sold in the market place. Unlike the cabbage, etc., you don't even have to see what

you are buying. Think of it: on the money market in the City of London something like \$300,000 million is bought and sold every day and London, for some curious reason, remains the biggest money bazaar worldwide, the turnover of foreign exchange markets, to quote Keegan in the *New Statesman*, "has ballooned to almost a trillion dollars every day". Most of us can imagine what a thousand looks like. A million is already difficult. A trillion is, we quote, a million million million, which is surely impossible to conceive! What is significant is that, as Keegan points out, this money market is at least  
(continued on page 2)

## SAVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT!

The privatisation of the railways could well be halted by a massive public campaign. Nobody other than the government can see that privatisation by any stretch of the imagination could improve services. Everybody, other than the government, recognises that it is a lack of funding on the railway infrastructure that is slowly paralysing services. The Minister, Mr McGregor, protests that more money is being invested in the railways than ever before, when everybody else says it's not true.

But what is so obvious, and none of the media writers are prepared to say it – or if they are, their employers cannot afford to lose the advertising revenue – is that the government is obviously in the hands of the 'road lobby' – the civil engineering contractors and their hangers-on: gravel pits and cement – and of course the motor industry, which has been spending millions in the media day in day out to flog their wares.

The railways have no vested interests apart from the public – the stupid public which is too lazy, too defeated to react against a campaign which, if successful, will not only mean an artificial increase in fares but also a cut in services, as well as more minor lines being axed.

Far from anarchists wanting to defend British Rail – after all, the present Chairman of BR was appointed to supervise the privatisation of the network. Unfortunately the spectre of unemployment affects all wage slaves in the private and public sectors, at the expense of any direct action. The railway workers are no exception. They have recently accepted derisory pay increases and redundancies (which for those left means a greater work-load for the same pay).

Meanwhile complaints about services naturally increase. But surely it is time that the travelling public on public services such as the railways should start complaining at top levels. Do we own the railways? If we still do, then when are we going to find the time to protest and thereby ensure that we get the services which most of us want? The government is obviously in the hands of the road  
(continued on page 2)

\* Voltairine de Cleyre, *Anarchism and American Traditions*, 16 pages, 75p post free.

Paul Avrich, *An American Anarchist: the life of Voltairine de Cleyre*, £32.50 (hardback only)

# 'THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL'

(continued from page 1)

20-30 times higher than the amount of trade transacted! And he adds, "if anyone is bothered by such things these days". Alas, most people are not, which explains why the majority are being taken for a ride, and are also paying for it!

Delors and the advocates of a single EC currency are not 'bolshies' wanting to destroy capitalism. They are 'good' capitalists seeking to counter the 'Almighty Dollar'. Surely one does not need to be in the 'know' to see a capitalist future world consisting of three major centres of (capitalist) power: the USA and satellites, Japan and satellites, and Europe of the Common Market, plus

## SAVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT!

(continued from page 1)

lobby: billions of pounds for the roads, including widening motorways, and increasing lorry loads to a massive 44 tons for those travelling to a railhead. As a media cynic has pointed out, Folkestone is a railhead for a 44-tonner from Glasgow! - who is going to monitor this latest government racket? The press is full of the corruption in Italy and France *et alia*, but the government's privatisation of the railways is an example of corruption - even assuming that nobody in the government or Tory Party is getting 'sweeteners' or 'backhanders' from the road interests - then the corruption lies either in the dogmatic view that all that is privatised is more efficient, which is not true or, much more likely in our opinion, that the government is positively involved in destroying the railways network as they are seen to be successfully destroying the mining industry.

As we said earlier, the rail unions are now too divided, too weak to halt the government's crazy privatisation programme. But it is an occasion for the travelling public to make BR and the government sit up and take notice. But it means a *travellers/commuters' strike* which will not only make BR and government sit up but the protesters' employers will also have something to think about!

recruits from the Scandinavian countries and from the former Soviet Union.

This is an alarming prospect, not for this writer who is on his way out *willy nilly*, but for the young generation who face a future not only of mass unemployment but of yet another world war compared with which, the 25 million deaths in World War Two (nowadays we are only reminded of the holocaust, thanks to Israeli propaganda to justify its barbaric military assaults on the Palestinians in the Lebanon and the other occupied territories) could pall into insignificance in view of the more sophisticated means now available of destroying human life as well as the environment.

Obviously as anarchists we not only want to see the collapse of the capitalist system, because we think it basically rotten. In so far as it can benefit a determined, as well as maintaining a privileged, minority this is only achieved *at the expense of the toiling majority*.

In our opinion the capitalist system is bankrupt because its greed has produced the situation where production exceeds demand *on its own terms*. We emphasise those words because in fact half the world goes hungry and the 'prosperous' world have a million tons of meat and some thirty million tons of cereals in so-called 'intervention' all going rotten because in

the Common Market capitalist world, 'God' forbid! you don't give it to God's starving creatures for nothing do you?

The latest gimmick is Mr Major's long-loved 'hard Ecu' which is now being traded by the 'serious' media. It's all nonsense. Don't bother to learn what difference exists between the 'soft' and 'hard' Ecu. The fact is that the currency market is very profitable for a lot of people. Governments come and go but the money markets go on for ever ... *unless*. Who is going to call the tune? Who is the most powerful? The answer is quite simple. According to *The Independent* (3rd August), "City firms are estimated to have made between £1,000 and £1,500 million extra profits in the first half of this year, thanks to exchange rate volatility and lower interest rates".

Ask yourself what have these City firms actually produced to justify the extra profits. Indeed what did they produce *anyway*?

Just one other statistic for reflection by workers. When the bosses are at pains to make their workforces work harder for less money in order to keep their jobs, what would they make of this news item which informs us that investment in the third world countries (that is the hunting ground for our patriotic capitalists looking for cheap labour) "has shot up in the past few years from \$500 million to \$40,000 million!" In the so-called 'free market' you look for the cheapest labour. But if this means putting thousands of

workers here onto the dole, cannot people see that they may well pay less for an imported product but are having to contribute to the dole for the local worker who has lost his job as a result?

Tory, Labour, Liberal, Green and all the other loony parties and sects only offer the same political medicine bottles with different labels. Nothing will change so long as the majority of people don't think they can run their own lives without having to make bags of money - those who do are a miserable lot of 'bastards' anyway. But we think that you can only make your life worthwhile with other fellow spirits! Join the anarchist family!

The Raven  
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anarchist quarterly  
is on

CRIME

96 pages £3.00 post free

## News and Views

Now that Michael Mates, ex-Northern Ireland Secretary in the government, has disappeared into indecent obscurity, if only for the time being, and the dust has settled, we might address more calmly the moral issues raised by the question of large donations to political parties. This has a long tradition in British politics and in the days of Prime Minister Lloyd George the reward for contributing to party funds was an appearance in the next honours list, and the same device was used more recently by a labour government. This had at least the merit of costing the tax-paying public little, but is now frowned upon so the link between donation and reward is more obscure, although none the less real for all that. Today the donor may not

be known unless he is so accident prone as to become accused of fraud. Any attempt now to unravel the complexities of the Asil Nadir / Michael Mates affair and the £400,000 donation to the Conservative Party would be fruitless and one suspects that the government was relieved when Asil jumped bail, and not just because the state would be saved the cost of his trial.

One of the changes in British politics in recent years has been the abandonment of even the pretence of any need to occupy the moral high ground. In the Tweedledum Tweedledee system that we suffer, a type of justice should be achieved by the opportunity this gives the opposition to expose government delinquencies, but this is limited if both sides have dabbled in the same mire. Labour attacks on the Conservatives for the secret donations they have received from wealthy capitalists is hampered because Labour has similarly taken money from Robert Maxwell, for example. Neither party wants to give back donations from such disgraced figures and evade the need by promising to pay only if they should prove to be stolen, confident that they have the means to ensure that this can never be established. The device by the Labour Party of holding £1,000 ticket fund-raising dinners, which give the ticket-holder the opportunity to sit at the same table and hopefully catch the ear of a shadow Cabinet Minister, is a recent ingenious development.

Anarchists are not likely to be surprised by all this, taking it for granted that parties that support the capitalist system will take money from wealthy capitalists who will in return expect to benefit directly or indirectly from the policies these parties advocate, but the unfortunate water rate payers in the Thames region do not even have a choice, since Thames Water donated £50,000 last year to the Conservatives.

As a thing you would not even do to a dog, said the judge, who was of course a man, as he sent a young woman to prison for six months, despite three reports recommending probation, for neglecting her two year old daughter by going out to work instead of living on state benefits. She chose to work even though half the money she earned was used to

pay a childminder, but when the minder fell sick she decided, after minimising the risk, to continue to work, leaving her child alone in the house for half-days and later for the whole day. Her decision was no doubt wrong, but she surely needed help, not a prison sentence which would not solve her problem. Judges, along with the rest of the state establishment, can have no conception of the desperate straits single parents may face and the difficult decisions they, without help, may have to make. This little story exposes the hypocrisy of the government which continually subjects single parents to verbal abuse for relying on state benefits, threatening to cut them back, but punishes any who, however misguidedly, try to remain independent and self-sufficient.

Is there anyone else out there who still believes that the National Trust takes the land that it is given and holds it in trust for all to enjoy? If so, they need to know about the new footbridge across the Thames at Bourne End. This has been added to one side of the existing railway bridge and forms an important new link in the Thames Path National Trail which is due to be formally launched by the Countryside Commission next year. It will be of great benefit to both local and long distance walkers, so how could anyone object? Well some did, fortunately without success, not least among them the National Trust. For the Trust owns Cock Marsh at the northern end of the bridge and claimed that it would increase the number of visitors to its property with consequent harmful effects.

The state social security system denies the poor the incentives they need, according to the No Turning Back Group of Conservative MPs, one of whom is Peter Lilley, Social Security Secretary, and another is Michael Portillo, the Treasury Chief Secretary. This bodes increasing hardship for the poorest members of our society. It is one of the more unpleasant dogmas of capitalist economic theory that the poor must be made poorer to persuade them to go out to work, whilst the rich must be made richer or they will just sit about all day doing nothing.

HS

## MALATESTA on MONEY and BANKS

It is a mistake to believe, as some do, that the banks are, or are in the main, a means to facilitate exchange; they are a means to speculate on exchange and currencies, to invest capital and make it produce interest, and to fulfil other typically capitalist operations, which will disappear as soon as the principle that no one has the right or the possibility of exploiting the labour of others, triumphs.

It is customary in [anarchist] circles to offer a simplistic solution to the problem [of money] by saying that it must be abolished. And this would be the solution if it were a question of an anarchist society, or of a hypothetical revolution to take place in the next hundred years, always assuming that the masses could become anarchist and communist before the conditions under which we live had been radically changed by a revolution.

But today the problem is complicated in quite a different way. Money is a powerful means of exploitation and oppression; but it is also the only means (apart from the most tyrannical dictatorship or the most idyllic accord) so far devised by human intelligence to regulate production and distribution automatically.

For the moment, rather than concerning oneself with the abolition of money one should seek a way to ensure that money truly represents the useful

work performed by its possessors.

Let us assume that a successful insurrection takes place tomorrow. Anarchy or no anarchy, the people must go on eating and providing for all their basic needs. The large cities must be supplied with necessities more or less as usual.

If the peasants and carriers, etc., refuse to supply goods and services for nothing, and demand payment in money which they are accustomed to considering as real wealth, what does one do? Oblige them by force? In which case we might as well wave goodbye to anarchism and to any possible change for the better. Let the Russian experience serve as a lesson.

And so?

The comrades generally reply: but the peasants will understand the advantages of communism, or at least of the direct exchange of goods for goods.

This is all very well; but certainly not in a day, and the people cannot stay without eating for even a day. I did not mean to propose solutions [at the Bienne meeting]. What I do want to do is to draw the comrades' attention to the most important questions which we shall be faced with in the reality of a revolutionary morrow.

Extracted from *Malatesta - Life and Ideas*, 312 pages, £4 (post free inland) from Freedom Press.

## The Media Distortion of the Left

Reams have been written (and published in anarchist, socialist and pacifist journals) about the evils of the capitalist control of the mass media, and the gross imbalance between its circulation and the minuscule one attained by the libertarian press; so it may be surprising that one aspect of the evil has been almost totally ignored. This control allows the capitalists (probably unconsciously) to determine and distort the nature of the movement of radicals opposing capitalist rule.

The majority of people, including those who begin to become aware of the evils of existing society, get their information from that mass media. They therefore believe that the movements that oppose it are as they are depicted in the media. The media tells them, for instance, that all opponents to nuclear weapons are communists or communist fellow travellers (i.e. partisans or dupes of the rulers of another equally militarist and state capitalist power) and naturally they tend to believe this.

Consequently it is common for people starting to question the ruling system (often, but by no means exclusively, the very young) to begin by accepting the myth 'that extremes meet', that the determined opponents of a system must therefore favour a not dissimilar system. They, in consequence, at that stage yearn for a moderate opposition that will not have the evils of the system under which they live, but since it is moderate it is not assumed to favour the alternative system and its evils.

But it is the nature of capitalism (of both varieties) that at fairly regular intervals it causes the rulers to behave in ways that wake up their ruled to the evils of the system. (Also, of course, age is a factor – the child who at 13 shuns extremism may well at 16 court it.) So those who, one year, yearn for a moderate opposition to the system and who do not

embrace the existing opposition because they believe what the media says must be true, a year or two later start looking for the opposition movement they earlier shunned as extreme.

But the opposition movement they seek is not the one that exists, but the Aunt Sally the media has slanged. When the new convert so created finds members of the real radical movement who do not have the views the media has attacked, (s)he assumes that this opponent of the system must be half-hearted, not prepared to stand by the views of the real opposition. Must be as (s)he so recently was a moderate, rejecting the full opposition case as extremist. The fact that the real radical may well be far more militant than anyone who conforms to the stereotype is neither here nor there.

If I may illustrate this by the example of CND – and specifically the First Wave of CND which was a particularly clear case – the new convert (probably converted to actual campaigning by Gaitskell's success in reversing the vote in the Labour Party, thus effectively blocking the possibility of the 'moderate' advance even to the 'unilateralist initiatives' previously promised) would have noted – for the first time – that the real unilateralists (then mainly grouped in and around the Committee of 100) criticised Soviet militarism and would see this as proof that they (as (s)he had so recently done) refused to make a full rejection of nuclear weapons since they do not conform to the portrait of a nuclear disarmer previously painted.

The new convert there – as in many similar circumstances – ignored the evidence since this conflicted with the beliefs (s)he had held so long; and assumed Stalinism was the really militant

nuclear disarming position. However since the facts, manifestly, did not fit the picture, since the Communist Party was by no means militant and at most half-hearted about disarmament, they had to transform even Stalinism into its caricature. First a number of solidarity campaigns with third world national liberation fronts; but even these were not enough and we were 'treated' to the melodrama that Maoism constituted in this country. The worship of the Little Red Book.

Curiously, on the way to the Maoist travesty, anarchism 'benefited' – in a sort of knock-on effect – from the brief adherence of the 'Easter Anarchists'. A section of the new Stalinist youth, shunned by the Communist Party proper (since the converts actually wanted to do something, even though they had no ideas what they wanted to do) shunned also by the various Trot sects (since they could see that endless discussion of fine theoretical points can often be a good excuse for avoiding activity), a large number – mainly teenagers – of people no anarchist had ever seen before wearing YS and YCL badges, used once a year, to proclaim themselves anarchists.

Unfortunately they were under the misapprehension that the sum total of the anarchist case was going to have a punch-up with the police; or occasionally – for variation's sake – with the leadership of CND; and, since they themselves belonged to vanguardist groupings, it was natural that they also believed that anarchist groups would wish to see our banners used to rush to the head of the march, for these purposes. They were all too often under the impression that anarchism had no views to which anarchists might want to convert others; I remember the puzzlement of one such, seeing me selling various anarchist journals and pamphlets, since he was under the impression that anarchists never did this; why was

I – obviously, since I sold literature, not an anarchist – also carrying an anarchist banner?

Obviously, in cases such as these, some who first came in contact with anarchism when they held views that were in no sense anarchist, were converted by the contact.

But naturally a larger number moved on to groups that were more in tune with a desire to have meaningless and fruitless punch-ups now, proclaiming themselves the while the vanguard of the proletariat. (*The actual workers being all abused as bourgeoisified.*)

It is as I say a pattern that has been reproduced – perhaps less markedly – many times. Though it would be crediting the ruling class with too much intelligence to suppose that such influxes of people with over-simplistic anti-capitalist concepts into the left were deliberately planned in order to ensure that all sectors of the left (even anarchists) could be easily made into Aunt Sallies; it is all the same one of the consequences of capitalist control of the media. Under a class society it is not only the society that had inevitable contradictions.

LO

## MERCHANTS OF DEATH

1

### Business before guidelines

A senior Foreign Office diplomat told the Scott inquiry yesterday that is "did not really matter" if the government's guidelines banning the exports of arms to Iraq were broken.

Sir David Miers, formerly in charge of the Foreign Office's Middle East department – now ambassador to the Netherlands – said employment and commercial considerations were more important than the guidelines. "Real people were being thrown out of work when everything turned on a semantic exercise about how the guidelines should be interpreted", he said.

*The Guardian, 21st July 1993*

2

### Controls brushed aside in race for sales

At a moment when Washington is seeking to restrain Russian arms sales, the US has achieved dominance of the third world arms market. Of the \$23.9 billion (£16 billion) in arms supply agreements signed by third world countries in 1992, the US share rose to 57% compared with only 13% five years before.

The US has taken over the third world arms market largely by replacing the former Soviet Union, and through its political strength in the Middle East in the wake of the Gulf war, according to a report by the Congressional Research Service.

*The Independent*

3

### £500 million Kuwait arms deal for Britain

GKN's Sankey division, which made its first fortune producing 5.5 million steel helmets for British Tommies in the First World War, was yesterday confirmed as the producer of 250 Desert Warrior armoured fighting vehicles in a £500 million defence deal with Kuwait.

Production, planned to begin in late 1994, will secure 500 jobs at Telford, Shropshire, as a British Army contract comes to an end. It increases hopes for further Kuwaiti orders, most probably for Piranha light armoured vehicles.

*The Guardian, 10th August 1993*

Business is business, especially in these hard times!

Friday last. The first three items that go for news at 6am on Radio 3 were the parliamentary games over Maastricht, attempts by the media to make heroines of those two young women caught smuggling dope in Thailand, and reports of the millionth sighting of 'the economic recovery'. This abstract illusion has to be the establishment's reply to the Loch Ness monster. Sorry John Major, 'Johnny Minor', Kenny Clarke, Rupert Murdoch, old uncle Lord Hanson and ALL, your bit of abstract fantasy is no match for a tale which at least tickles the imagination. You'll just have to try again at 7, 8, 9, 10 ...

Where do these fascinating morsels of information come from? Who dreams them up? What do they get paid? But don't think the BBC has got it wrong, we're all lunatics in this together. Mutual aid may be in bad shape but mutual deception is flourishing. I'll go along with your lies and inauthentic rituals if you'll reciprocate by giving mine the nod. The game's called employment.

Five hours later at Ingham near Bury St Edmunds with a trailer load of rams delivered for the first major sheep sale of the summer, I'm in the auctioneers tent with hundreds of other sheep people for the first event – the sale of sheep quotas. Abstractions before the real thing. This year every keeper of sheep, flatteringly addressed by the MAAF as 'Dear Producer', has been given a quota based on how many ewes he or she had in 1991. At present the annual subsidy in our area is reckoned to be around £20 per ewe. Quotas

## Illusions and Dissolutions

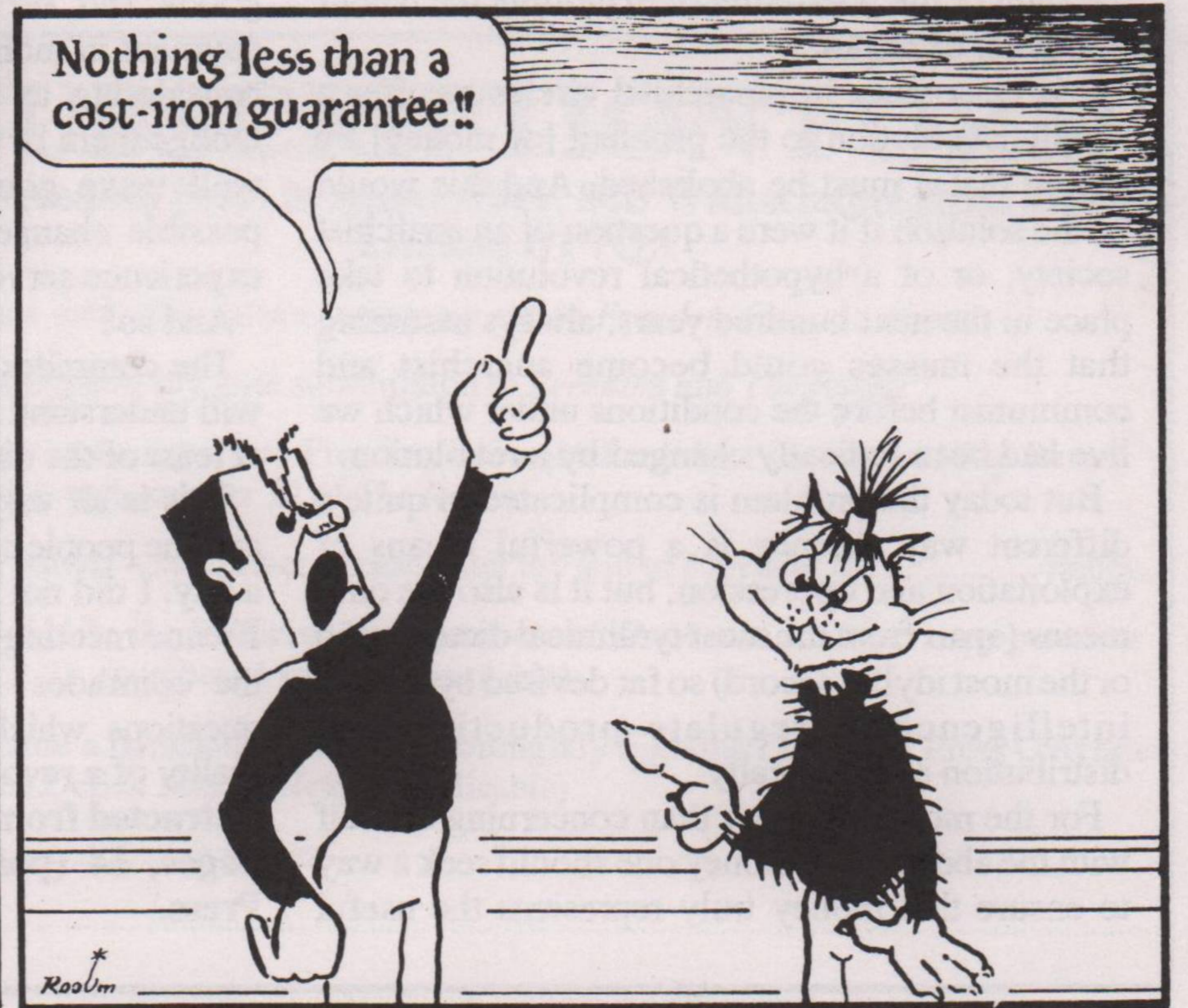
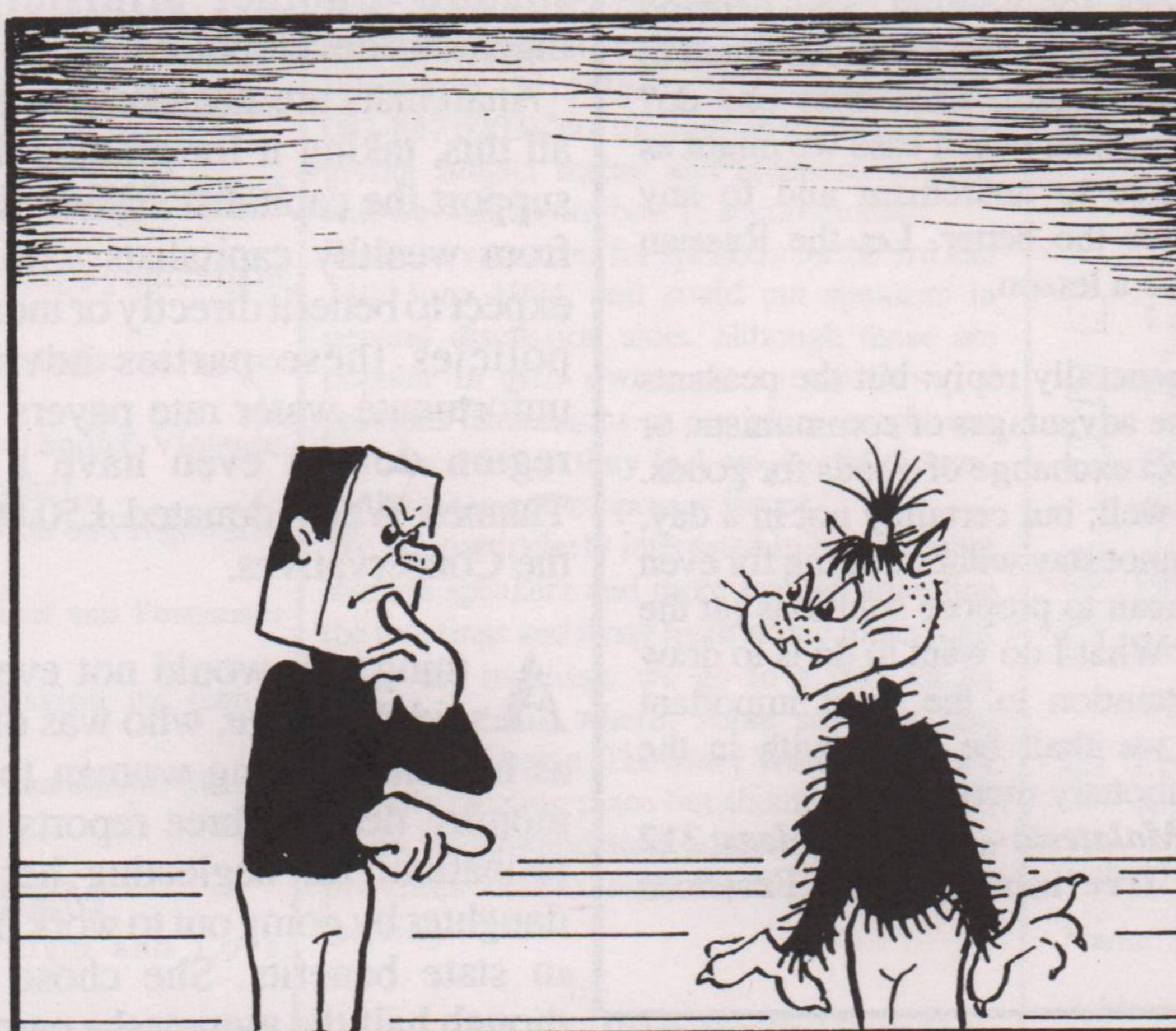
were selling for £34-plus per sheep, and the bidding was lively. However, the minute the auction finished the tent emptied leaving about six creatures, including kids and dogs, for the ram auction. The young auctioneer, struggling to find a buyer, knocked down animal after animal at just below the reserve price to a mythical Mr Mason. Had he been a little wiser I suppose he'd have varied the name of his ghost. Anyway with an empty ring it wasn't as easy for him as it had been for the caller at Peterborough last year when a 'formidable army of potential buyers' turned into sixty old age pensioners on a days outing. They'd been dropped off at the showground to eat their sandwiches by the bus driver.

Generally the breeding sheep trade at Bury was lousy considering the demand for British sheep meat on the continent. As always the local press gave the sale the thumbs up. So what has happened to the demand for breeding animals? Why are the subsidies big news and the things they represent, the animals, discounted? It doesn't make sense unless people just don't believe in 'the recovery'. I fancy that's precisely where we're all at. We don't believe any longer in a materially better tomorrow. Those high butchers' lamb prices just aren't going to hold, but the subsidy is guaranteed for three years and government doesn't let you down. One goal to government hand-outs, zero for the recovery!

Hold on, the game's not over yet. New uninvited players are about to turn up on the pitch and they won't be bothered by the rules. We are getting closer to the day when governments can no longer dispense largesse, when business is swamped by its own corruption and incompetence, when the police don't even go through the motions of delivering law and order, when teachers give up on controlling kids, when unemployment loses its stigma and more and more people take matters into their own hands.

With this arsenal of hand-outs for everything and industrial farming in a mess, the land ownership issue is again being raised in lots of quiet little ways. Set-aside land has something to do with the new mood. The right to roam is spreading from town and city ramblers to the more conservative villagers. Footpaths are being resurrected and asserted. Cautious villagers are pinching 'keep out' and 'fishing forbidden' signs, more courageous ones are publicly standing up to landowners and occasionally winning. The new age travellers are staking their claims for access to land. What's to stop the trickle becoming a torrent? Most of the dams are in our heads. Old anarchists shouldn't throw in the towel yet, the revolution may be nearer than they think.

Denis Pym





## — BOOK REVIEW —

## New Town, Home Town

**New Town, Home Town: the lessons of experience**

by Colin Ward

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1993, £8.50 (plus postage 10% inland, 20% overseas)

This is another good book by Colin Ward on what might seem to be an unlikely subject to be of interest to anarchists – a book to break down some prejudices and reinforce others.

You probably start off like me – somewhat disdainful of the New Towns (unless you happen to live in one and have actual knowledge of them, not just hearsay). As you read Colin's history of their idealistic origins and real, if qualified, success, you cannot help but revise your appreciation upwards.

In spite of his unfashionable championships (among intellectuals, anyway) of the New Towns, he is ruthlessly perceptive of their failures and understands and explains the reasons.

The successes he measures by the real improvements in the countless peoples' lives who were propelled one way or another into the New Towns.

Other positive attributes he likes are the proliferation of works of art in public places, and the outstandingly high standard of landscape design.

In its own terms, constrained by the authoritarian hierarchical model it cannot escape from, the state did succeed in what Colin is generous enough to acknowledge as "a humane and sensitive achievement – a far better investment of public funds than most other post-war policies".

Some of his praise is comparative rather than absolute. For instance, the critics have pointed to the lack of very small firms and

self-employment, but Colin points out that such small businesses were also eliminated in the old inner cities, not by competition from the New Towns but by speculation in site values by developers. On the whole, employment opportunities were better provided in the New Towns and have been less drastically affected by national recession.

The lessons to be learnt from the real failures, which do not become clear from reading the 'bad press' to which New Towns have been subjected, are very much to the anarchist point.

The mechanism for the planning and operation of the New Towns is top down rather than bottom up, as Peter Hall of the Town and Country Planning Association observes. Colin quotes him further: "The New Towns Act of 1946 destroyed the essence of Howard's plan ... Britain would have the shell of Howard's Garden City vision without the substance."

Ebenezer Howard set down his vision in 1898 in a book *Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform* which was intended "to win Tory and anarchist, single taxer and socialist, individualist and collectivist, over to his experiment".

If it did not immediately do that, it was a powerful enough idea to impel a group of disciples to found the Garden Cities Association, which in turn became the Town and Country Planning Association that we know and admire today, and with which our comrade has been much involved. The original Garden City ideal was at the root of the post-war New Town movement.

Colin describes the ideas of the 'founding

fathers; for "a new environment planned on rational principles under a new form of land ownership, graciously combining healthy homes and town and countryside which offered a genuine community and a face to face culture ..." Ebenezer Howard's key concept was that newly planned towns should be self-governed, locally managed, self-built and the plans realised through thousands of small scale enterprises.

Colin quotes Howard's remark to the young disciple Frederic Osborn (who was to become the biggest individual influence behind the New Towns programme after the Second World War): "My dear boy, if you wait for the government to do it you will be as old as Methuselah before you start".

He goes on to give an account of the do-it-yourself New Town experiments sponsored by the Town and Country Planning Association (who you will remember employed Colin for some years as the editor of their *Bulletin of Environmental Education – BEE*) at Milton Keynes and Telford.

Greentown was never allowed to get off the Milton Keynes ground, but at Telford the tiny but magnificent Lightmoor initiative has made a valiant start. It is now struggling to embark on its even tinier second phase.

Colin Ward's subtitle is "the lessons of experience. This enables him to reflect on what might have been and to point out how anarchist principles, had they been adhered to, would have avoided many of the failures.

I am left in no doubt that a bottom-up self-help New Town, could it only be liberated from authoritarian planning laws (including the obnoxious zoning of land use) and find land at its true 'community' value – with further increments in site values accruing to the local community – would not only be feasible but would produce a Home Town that would be a lovely place for us to live in.

Brian Richardson

## An Anarchist Architect

De Carlo's\* strongly held belief in the power of public participation has often earned him the reputation of being one of the key 'socialist' architects of his era. It is a label he vehemently rejects.

"I am not a socialist, I am an anarchist, or at least I am trying to get there. It is actually impossible for anyone to say that they are an anarchist as it is always a goal, something you hope to attain. What matters is that you try and reach it."

De Carlo's definition of an anarchist is perhaps also his definition of the ideal architect. For him the anarchist represents the most modern of contemporary thinking. The anarchist, according to De Carlo, has a mind free of prejudices and preconceived ideas as well as being fundamentally against all authority and hierarchy. "He is ready to change his mind and always curious. He is also politically involved, not in terms of party-politics but in terms of how he responds to people as human beings."

With such radical political views, it is not surprising that De Carlo also predicts great change in the overall balance of political power. Pointing to the recent demise of communism, De Carlo predicts a similar downfall for the great gods of capitalism.

"Communism and capitalism are both based on the single principle that the economy is the basis of life. Both have the same roots and I believe that they actually survive by sustaining each other. I also believe the the indecent triumph of the market-lead economy will follow communism and will also fall apart."

taken from *RIBA Journal*, June 1993

\* The architect Giancarlo di Carlo was awarded the RIBA's gold medal – see Colin Ward's 'Anarchist Alternatives in Housing and Architecture' (*Freedom*, 26th June)

## Léo Ferré

The death of the French anarchist singer, which was reported in our last issue, was a major news item in the French media, with long favourable obituaries in the press and special programmes on radio and television, all emphasising his commitment to anarchism more strongly than ever happened during his life. And the glossy news magazine *Paris Match* for 29th July published not only his photograph on the front cover but also no less than 22 pages of illustrated features about him. Can one imagine such a thing happening in this country?

## Israel / Palestine

(continued from page 4)

social, political and economic life for the Palestinians. The different regions would be cut off from each other ...

ML: What is, in your opinion, the position of the Palestinians in all of this?

MW: The majority want negotiations, but they have no illusions. We see them holding the contradictory opinion: we are against but hopeful. The desire to alter the flow of events is essential. Firstly, the Palestinians are wanting improved conditions in their daily lives. Then it will be a question of injecting a new dynamism into the negotiations.

ML: And if the Statute were accepted would not opposition of some Palestinians lead to internal conflict?

MW: It all depends on the content of the negotiations. If in their daily lives the Palestinians perceive concrete changes, the support will be extensive. Even if the Palestinian flag is unfurled everywhere, if the conditions regarding health and education remain unchanged, then the deceptions will provoke profound divisions.

Translated from *Le Monde Libertaire*, 10th June 1993

## Materialism Re-stated

(an 'old' book that isn't so 'old'!)

There appears to be much more tolerance of religion and religiosity amongst rank-and-file libertarians today than was the case a century ago. There are a number of reasons for this: The 'church' is not seen to be as powerful as it once was. For many years the 'official' Marxist movements (now largely extinct!) found they could co-habit comfortably with their 'spiritual' compatriots. More recently, here in the UK, there has been the development of the 'multi-cultural' society – where once an attack upon Christianity might be tolerated, an attack upon the equally absurd beliefs of Moslems and/or Hindus is in danger of being interpreted as covert racism.

Whatever the reason, attacks on 'supernaturalism' are rarer today than ever before – and this at a time when the popularity of pseudo-scientific 'spiritual' movements is greater than it has been for many decades. Parallel with this 'neutrality' towards non-materialistic philosophies, it is often argued by libertarians that although our 'rationalist' and 'secularist' forebears 'had their hearts in the right place', their handling of religious questions was 'crude', 'mechanistic' and inappropriate in today's climate dominated by Karl Popper and his theory of 'falsification', defining the frontiers of 'science'. How totally inaccurate and inappropriate are such criticisms of some of the anti-religious publications dating from the beginning of this century.

A few weeks ago, exploring a second-hand bookshop, I stumbled upon *Materialism Re-stated* by Chapman Cohen, issued by the Secular Society in 1927. Just 100 pages in length, it has possibly never been equalled as a turgid, brief summary of what probably the majority of today's foremost 'philosophers of science' would argue to be the criteria of

science. Not only does Cohen anticipate the essential elements of Popper's contribution, but he 'goes beyond' Popper and anticipates some of today's 'objections'.

In his first chapter, Cohen insists on the need for a clear position on the 'naturalism' versus 'supernaturalism' debate, a point that is all too frequently ignored today. There can be no borderline position between these two viewpoints – no compromise is possible. The author reminds us that this has always been the central issue, and that human progress has always been associated with a materialist stance. He recalls that while Hippocrates, in a surprisingly 'modern' text written about 400BC, described epilepsy as a malfunction of the brain, the Christian thinking that was to take over the world several centuries later would describe the same illness in terms of possession by 'unclean' spirits.

In all respect, argues Cohen, "we are concerned with the world as we know it and with none other". But what do we mean by 'knowing the world'? We can 'know' it in an absolute sense – only in the sense that we can invent hypotheses and then test them:

"... 'matter' is no more than an hypothesis – that is, a conception framed to express one aspect of human experience.

... hypotheses are used to help to an understanding of the world around us ... science is ready to discard [it] as soon as a more satisfactory hypothesis can be framed."

This is, of course, precisely the viewpoint to be 'invented' (!) by Karl Popper half a century later. However, Popper goes on to argue that it is never possible to 'prove' hypotheses although it may be possible to falsify them, by checking the hypothesis against the 'facts'. Many have pointed to an inconsistency in Popper's argument – in terms of logic, what cannot be 'proved' cannot be 'disproved'

either – and here Cohen appropriately anticipates this objection to Popper. He refers to "the great Dr Johnson" who tried "in his ignorance" to disprove the thesis of Bishop Berkeley, by kicking the ground to demonstrate that it existed. The attitude of Dr Johnson, Cohen continued, is the attitude of the man in the street – to him the world exists as he sees it, matter is one thing, mind is another.

Dr Johnson has not appreciated that the world we know is the world of our experience – of a world outside our experience we can know nothing and can conceive nothing. We cannot think of such a world.

Cohen clarifies this beautifully and, at the same time, 'goes beyond' Popper:

"The whole confusion here has arisen in the crude assumption that reality must mean something outside consciousness *instead of being a name for one of the categories of consciousness*" (my emphasis).

So what can we know of the world? How can we determine what is a 'fact'? What Cohen suggests is today expressed by Lakatos – "all facts are theories". Rather than testing our hypotheses against 'facts' (as Popper would claim), Cohen and Lakatos argue, with better logic, that all we can do is look for consistency between our hypotheses ...

The final chapters of *Materialism Re-stated* explore the concepts that are still contentious and are used by today's advocates of 'spirituality' – 'mind' and 'self'. He approaches the field by looking at some of the terminology associated with physics:

"Science does not ask us to believe in something we call gravitation ... and then in a further unknown something which is the real gravitation ... we speak of a stone falling as a *consequence* of gravitation, but strictly speaking the stone falling is gravitation."

In a similar sense, he continues, we describe 'mental' phenomena – we frame the laws of physics, but at a certain point we find that

(continued on page 6)

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

# Yet another anarchist classic

*in empty hogsheads in wet; he did not have to go to school or to church, or call any being master or obey anybody; he could go fishing or swimming when and where he chose, and stay as long as it suited him; nobody forbade him to fight; he could sit up as late as he pleased; he was always the first boy that went barefoot in the spring and the last to resume leather in the fall; he never had to wash, nor put on clean clothes; he could swear wonderfully. In a word, everything that goes to make life precious, that boy had. So thought every harassed, hampered, respectable boy in St Petersburg."*

Tom, in turn, appears in the opening and closing chapters of *Huckleberry Finn*, establishing for readers that they are on familiar ground. Indeed, some critics are irritated by his return into Huck's life, since his pranks strike a jarring note in Huck's moral evolution. For the two books are very different in scope and style. Tom is the usual fictional boy as seen through indulgent adult recollection, up to every kind of mischief, playing the usual practical jokes, and filled with notions of adventure drawn from his reading of romantic fiction. His story is told by a knowing, avuncular narrator. But while working intermittently on *Tom Sawyer*, Twain's restless imagination conceived the notion of following a boy of twelve onward through his subsequent adult life. Tom was uninteresting for this purpose. His sceptical creator knew perfectly well that he would grow up to be a completely conformist, satisfied citizen. Twain never achieved this ambition, but began work on *Huckleberry Finn* as soon as he had finished the earlier story. Following his usual habit, he worked on it intermittently between 1876 and 1883, but made two key decisions that were to transform the planned sequel to *Tom Sawyer* into a subversive masterpiece. The first was to display through Huck's growing awareness, the dilemmas of nature and nurture. Right-thinking people believed in Original Sin, and that the function of child-rearing and education was, as Huck would see it, to "civilize" the young.

Professor Walter Blair of Chicago excavated from Twain's notebook for a lecture tour of 1895 a passage of great interest in which, looking back, the author made this clear:

*"Next, I should exploit the proposition that in a crucial moral emergency a sound heart is a safer guide than an ill-trained conscience. I should support this doctrine with a chapter from a book of mine where a sound heart and a deformed conscience come into collision and conscience suffers defeat. Two persons figure in this chapter: Jim, a middle-aged slave, and Huck Finn, a boy of 14 ... bosom friends, drawn together by a community of*

*misfortune ...*

*In those old slave-holding days the whole community was agreed as to one thing – the awful sacredness of slave property. To help steal a horse or a cow was a low crime, but to help a hunted slave ... or hesitate to promptly betray him to a slave-catcher when opportunity offered was a much baser crime, and carried with it a stain, a moral smirch which nothing could wipe away. That this sentiment should exist among slave-holders is comprehensible – there were good commercial reasons for it – but that it should exist and did exist among the paupers ... and in a passionate and uncompromising form, is not in our remote day realisable ... It shows that that strange thing, the conscience – that unerring monitor – can be trained to approve any wild thing you want it to approve if you begin its education early and stick to it."*

So we watch Huck's sound heart struggling not only with the appalling attitudes of his father, but the with deformed conscience that the good citizens had attempted to instil into him.

The second decision of Twain's that made the book exceptional was the device of telling the story in Huck's own words. He took pride in his knowledge of dialect speech, but had the additional task of convincing us that we were listening to the language of a semi-literate boy. He succeeded marvellously. A modern writer (and reader of this journal) Colin MacInnes, stresses Twain's gift for verbal syncopation, "which makes me believe he heard Negro music as well as coloured voices". He illustrates this by urging us to read rhythmically and aloud, a passage like this:

*"I had the road to myself, and I fairly flew – leastways I had it all to myself except for the solid dark, and the now-and-then glares, and the buzzing of the rain, and the thrashing of the wind, and the splitting of the thunder; and as sure as you are born I did clip it along."*

We are by now accustomed to the idea that the comedian is a deeply serious person. Mark Twain exemplifies this stereotype. He was born Samuel Clemens at Florida, Missouri, in 1835 and spent his childhood in Hannibal, Missouri, the model for St Petersburg in *Tom Sawyer*. His father, "silent, austere, of perfect probity and high principle", was a justice of the peace, died when Sam was twelve and Sam became a "printer's devil" on the local paper. He worked his way up to become what we would now call a media celebrity as a wise-cracking homely philosopher whose audiences paid him well to pillory their greed and hypocrisy and their support for bellicose imperialism.

By that time *Huckleberry Finn*, like *Tom*

*Sawyer*, had been long established as one of those books that parents bought for their children. But it has always had its critics on moral, rather than literary, grounds. Louisa M. Alcott, the author of *Little Women*, thought that "If Mr Clemens cannot think of something better to tell our pure-minded lads and lasses, he had better stop writing for them". Some other contemporaries found the book, in spite of Olivia Clemens' careful work on the text, to be "irreverent, coarse, semi-obscene, trashy and vicious". In our own day it has been hinted that, alone together on the raft in a journey of more than 1,000 miles, Jim, who calls Huck "honey chile" and "would always pet me", might have had a sexual relationship with the boy, who recalled that "we was always naked, day and night, whenever the mosquitoes would let us". On more solid ground, Ralph Ellison remarks that as a child he could readily imagine himself as Huck Finn, "but not, though I racially identified with him, as Nigger Jim, who struck me as a white man's inadequate portrait of a slave". All through the twentieth century there have been attempts by school boards and public library committees to ensure that the book should not be on their shelves. No interpretation could possibly make *Huckleberry Finn* politically correct.

If we have to import a message into the book, contrary to its author's admonitions, it is a tract on the virtues of non-violence. Hannibal, Missouri, was not the quiet drowsy town of St Petersburg. Walter Blair found that:

*"During his childhood, Sam three times came close to drowning, and before he was seventeen he witnessed the abortive lynching of an abolitionist, a death by fire, a hanging, an attempted rape, two drownings, two attempted homicides, and four murders. The town's religion stressed hell-fire damnation."*

In this violent town there was a family called the Blankenships, "the parents paupers and drunkards; the girls charged with prostitution – not proven. Tom, a kindly young heathen. Bence, a fisherman." Benson, the older brother, befriended a runaway negro in 1847, ignoring the reward posters, and took him food week after week. Twain's autobiography claims that he had drawn Tom Blankenship, as Huck Finn, exactly as he was:

*"He was ignorant, unwashed, insufficiently fed; but he had as good a heart as ever any boy had. His liberties were totally unrestricted. he was the only really independent person – boy or man – in the community, and by consequence he was tranquilly and continuously happy .. I heard, four years ago, that he was justice of the peace in a remote village in Montana, and was a good citizen and greatly respected."*

Tranquillity and comfort are Huck's big aims in life, and he finds them drifting downstream. "We said there warn't no home like a raft. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft." It is his microcosm of a peaceable kingdom, for "What you want, above all things, on a raft, is for everybody to be satisfied, and feel right and kind towards the others." Huck prides himself on his ability to lie his way out of any situation with an invented hard-luck story. he hasn't an ounce of *macho* pride, which is why he allows himself to be dominated by the endlessly confident Tom Sawyer, destined to become an organisation man. Huck fears and abhors violence, which in every one of his adventures leads to tragedy and misery.

Hence Huck's famous conclusion that "I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can't stand it. I been there before."

You don't have to join a book club to read this book. Quite apart from the Penguin and Puffin editions, you can pick up copies at every school jumble sale. people just aren't ready to appreciate it as an anarchist epic.

Colin Ward

It started fifteen years ago when by chance I was asked to edit and introduce a handsome edition of Kropotkin's memoirs for a posh book club. It got me labelled as a Russian literature specialist and I did Turgenev and Herzen too, but was then switched to America with Thoreau. The private joke in the publishers' office was that whatever the book, I would turn it into an anarchist classic. They had such a narrow, if characteristic, view of anarchism that they didn't recognise that the volumes they pushed my way were precisely that already.

Years rolled on, the posh book club changed ownership, and I thought the connection was over, but suddenly I got asked to introduce Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, a book everyone read in childhood and mixed up with the same author's *Tom Sawyer*, which was intended for a juvenile audience. But *Huck Finn* re-read turns out to be a work of moral grandeur and an undoubted anarchist classic too.

We first met Huck in the pages of *Tom Sawyer*, where he is introduced as the juvenile pariah of St Petersburg, Missouri, "cordially hated and dreaded by all the mothers of the town, because he was idle and lawless and vulgar and bad – and because all their children admired him so, and delighted in his forbidden society, and wished they dared to be like him." The Huck we are introduced to in the earlier book is described by his creator as a romantic outcast, seen from the outside:

*"Huckleberry came and went, at his own free will. He slept on doorsteps in fine weather and*

## Materialism Re-stated

(continued from page 5)

description inadequate, so we frame laws of biology, later we hypothesise laws of psychology, etc., etc.

Our 'self' consciousness needs no 'supernatural' terminology. "There is no constant self-unifying ego such as 'ghost' theory requires" adds Cohen, rather the memory supplies the unifying link. "The sense of personal identity depends not so much on the operations of a mysterious 'me' as it does upon the things thought about".

In his final pages, Cohen presents a draft theory of psychotherapy that fits neatly with today's behavioural techniques (interestingly, the only therapy that 'works'!). He postulates that many of the 'abnormal' personality developments are related to different sets of memories being 'engaged' by the mind. His style of argument anticipates what is today the norm in the field of 'artificial intelligence' where 'mind' can be conceived as a series of programmes in parallel and 'self' consciousness as the addition of one more programme with the function of being able to monitor the other programmes. Cohen advanced his 'explanation' realising that any attempt to explain the disintegration of personality in non-material terms would necessitate the postulation of numerous psyches (or 'demons'!). Today, half a century later, many working in artificial intelligence would claim to have demonstrated the appropriateness of Cohen's hypothesis.

Recent surveys have shown that while two-thirds of British adults are unaware that the earth goes around the sun, once a year, these same individuals do know their 'star' sign and the personality characteristics allegedly associated with it! A glance at the shelves of any bookshop or newsagent will indicate the popularity of mysticism amongst today's readers. Books on the occult, tarot reading, aromatherapy and astrology are often much more in evidence than serious works of science.

Religion is *not* dead nor will it just 'wither away'. The continuing popularity of obscurant thinking is something to be fought on all fronts – perhaps we could do with a reprint (albeit an 'updated' reprint!?) of Chapman Cohen's little masterpiece!

Bob Potter

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## 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 Cups 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?

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## London Anarchist Forum

Meets Fridays at about 8.00pm at the Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square (via Cosmo Street off Southampton Row), London WC1N 3AQ (tel: 071-831 7711).

### 1993/1994 PROGRAMME

**Autumn Term 1993** – Friday 24th September to 17th December.

**Spring Term 1994** – Friday 14th January to 25th March.

**Summer Term 1994** – Friday 22nd April to 8th July.

**Dates of picnics** – Monday 30th August 1993 at 2pm on the south side of the summit of Parliament Hill, Hampstead Heath, and Sunday 1st May 1994, venue to be announced.

### AUTUMN TERM

**24th September** – Introduction to Anarchism (speaker: John Griffin)

**1st October** – Discussion on Talk versus Action

**9th October** – Anarchist Communism (speaker: Dave Dane)

**15th October** – Discussion on Anarchism in the Community

**22nd October** – Anarchist Individualism (speaker: Donald Rooum)

**29th October** – Discussion on Anarchism and Responsibility

**5th November** – Anarcho-Syndicalism (speaker: Pete Turner)

**12th November** – General discussion on Anarchist Economics

**19th November** – Pacifism and/or Violence Today (speaker: Tony Smythe)

**26th November** – Discussion on Progressive Social Change

**3rd December** – Anarchism and Feminism (speaker: Lisa Bendall)

**10th December** – Discussion on Equal Opportunity

**17th December** – Social Anarchism: Music, Poetry, Stories, Humour

### SPRING TERM

**14th January** – Anarchism and Love (speaker: Peter Neville)

**21st January** – Discussion on Anarchism and Sexuality

**28th January** – Anarchism After the Revolution or Anarchism as a Way of Life (speaker: Andrew Lainton)

**4th February** – Discussion on Anarchism in the Nineties

**11th February** – Anarchism as Religion (debate between Peter Lumsden and George Walford)

**18th February** – Discussion on Anarchism and Morality

**25th February** – Anarchism and Ecology (speaker to be announced)

**4th March** – Discussion: With what other groups should anarchists work?

**11th March** – Post-Modernism: Enlightenment's Suicide Note (speaker: Paul Wilding)

**18th March** – Discussion on Post-Modernism and the Cultural Implosion

**25th March** – General discussion: Bringing together the strands

Other topics suggested, provided one can get speakers, might include the ideas of Starhawk (say Witchcraft for the Nineties or A New Role for Feminism), the Collapse of Marxism and writers such as Peter Marshall and others if available.

If anyone would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, overseas or out-of-town speakers especially, please contact either Dave Dane or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (Tel: 081-847 0203), not too early in the day please, giving subject matter and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate.

We have vacancies for speakers on the 3rd and 24th June 1994, and could put speakers in general discussion slots, although these are popular in their own right as overflows of previous discussions or as a place people can introduce things they feel we should discuss, for instance contemporary issues.

We are particularly interested in having more women speakers and more women attending the meetings and those from ethnic minorities. After the meetings we go to a pub for an informal drink where, some say, the real discussions begin. The Mary Ward Centre is a friendly meeting place but should not be used as an accommodation address. A cafeteria provides drinks and meals prior to the meetings.

**Peter Neville / Dave Dane**  
for London Anarchist Forum

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