

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

Vol. 54 No. 24

11 DECEMBER 1993

FIFTY PENCE

"The true purpose of
... society ... is to give
every member of it the
largest possible
opportunities in life."

Charlotte Wilson

CAPITALISM AND THE ANARCHIST ALTERNATIVE

To those readers who occasionally criticise *Freedom's* editorial emphasis on the economic as opposed to the spiritual - 'man does not live by bread alone' - our immediate response is that without 'bread' man could not even survive, let alone dream, love and create the language and music which distinguish us from the rest of the animal kingdom.

But, that said, our 'emphasis on the economic' is not that of the capitalists who dream of even greater profits* but

* Two of America's largest corporations yesterday bowed to growing pressure to improve profitability by revealing plans to axe more than 21,500 jobs.

Philip Morris, the world's largest tobacco group, is to shed 14,000 jobs and close 40 plants as part of a £300 million restructuring scheme ...

American Telephone & Telegraph, the leading US telecommunications group, plans to cut the 51,000 workforce at its NCR offshoot by up to 15%. AT&T acquired NCR in 1991 for \$7.8 billion after a bitter and protracted takeover battle." (*Guardian*, 25th November 1993)

in fact the 'dreamer' who never ceases to be amazed, and enthralled, by life itself, by all the thoughts that impose themselves daily, and which are largely dismissed because, on the one hand, they are considered to be 'unrealistic', and on the other 'one hasn't the time'. 'Life is too hectic' we are told, yet technology surely makes

it possible for leisure for us to do *all* the things we want to do?

Why are there *officially* twenty million unemployed in the twelve Common Market countries? The answer is *the capitalist system* which by definition is 'production for profit'. If any capitalist 'saint' challenges us we shall offer a valuable document we have been sitting on since the beginning of the year. It is the Business Section of *The Independent on Sunday's* front page feature for 3rd January 1993: "Firms reveal they put profits before ethics". Talk about the Prime Minister's 'bastards'!

Reporter Russell Hotten had these tit-bits to offer on the 645 replies to his survey, of which 480 came from 'senior managers and professionals' and the rest from 'junior managers'. 85% were males "most aged between 35 and 54". His opening paragraph sums up the capitalist ideal:

"The new values of the 'caring 1990s' have largely failed to penetrate the UK boardroom, which still believes firmly in

(continued on page 2)

A DIFFERENT 'GREETINGS CARD'

At this time of year even anarchists seem to send friends and family greetings and good wishes for the coming year. Why not this year include with your greetings the current issue of *Freedom*?

We will supply copies at hardly more than the postage:
5 copies for £1, 10 copies for £2
(USA \$2 and \$5 cash).

We need many more readers and this is a way you can help!

THE BUDGET GOOD FOR THE CITY AND THE RICH

A fortnight ago we asked: "What will the Chancellor have to offer? Nothing. In fact because his main concern is the £50 billion deficit, those basic services we all need at some time or other will be further eroded. He will probably offer financial sops to British industry, but will not stop the flow of capital to the cheap-labour Far East nor prevent the unrestricted imports from these countries which make a farce of arguments about 'level playing fields' in industrial production."

In effect this is what he has done, favouring the City and by not increasing the top rate of income tax, the stinking rich are laughing all the way to the Bahamas for the winter.

The Guardian (1st December) reports that:

"The City gave an immediate thumbs up last night to the Chancellor's 'no nonsense' Budget package, which is being tipped as tough enough to open the door to another small cut in interest rates.

Almost £6 billion was added to share values on the London stock market - with more than half the gain clocked up after Mr Clarke began speaking.

The market in government securities (gilts), which had been quiet ahead of the statement, was also in a mood to celebrate as prices moved up smartly on the back of the Chancellor's forecasts for inflation and his plans for sharp cuts in public spending borrowing requirement over the next few years."

24 hours later *The Guardian* (2nd December) reported that the stock market had soared to "an all time high in one of the busiest trading sessions on record. Around £16,000 million was added to share values."

BELGIAN WORKERS SET AN EXAMPLE

Described by Sarah Lambert, Brussels correspondent at *The Independent* (27th November) as "a spectacular show of solidarity" by the Belgian workers' unions, who organised the first general strike for more than fifty years. "Millions of workers across the country stayed at home or manned picket lines"! All transport came to a standstill, schools, banks, shops, industry and the ports were closed, and newspapers failed to appear. According to *The Independent*:

"The all-out stoppage follows a co-ordinated pattern of regional strikes that will continue until 10th December - the first day of the European Union summit - when a second general strike is planned."

CAPITALISM

Making Money by Hook or by Crook

In this writer's view everything that capitalism touches either turns to gold ... to corruption ... or to monopoly. A few examples to be going on with.

— 1 —

According to Steve Connor and Rhonda Siddall in *The Independent on Sunday*, "Rivalry holds up discovery of breast cancer gene" (31st October):

"Several teams of scientists closing in on the discovery of a gene that causes breast cancer have abandoned collaboration in their intense rivalry to win the race.

Secrecy - spiced with mis-information - has replaced the co-operation that once aided the efforts of geneticists in Britain, the United States, Canada and France, such are the rewards for being first.

Glittering prizes and guaranteed research funding await the first team to locate the precise 'address' on the human map of the gene responsible for the inherited form of breast cancer ...

Privately, the scientists admit that they would find the gene faster if they were collaborating, but the urge to win the race has undermined co-operation. There is even dark muttering of researchers giving their rivals a false trail."

— 2 —

According to Lisa Buckingham in *The Guardian*, National Health Service Trust chiefs were awarded rises of up to 33% last year:

"A survey by Incomes Data Services reveals that, in the two years since the first 57 NHS trusts were established, the remuneration of chief executives has soared.

The most highly paid trust executive now receives £63,000 a year more than it is possible to earn within the mainstream NHS. Almost half the trust executives have remuneration packages which beat anything on offer within the state system ...

But, in contrast with wider industry trends and in conflict with a specific government mandate, many of the new trusts are trying to restrict access to top pay information and are being less than fulsome in the disclosure of executive pay and bonuses.

In the year to March, the average increase of chief executives was about 8.7%. This compares with the 1.5% wage ceiling imposed on public sector workers shortly after that and the average merit rise of 3.6% given to NHS general managers at the start of September."

Meanwhile, a record number of people are waiting for NHS treatment, and "amid signs that waiting times for treatment are

CAPITALISM AND THE ANARCHIST ALTERNATIVE

(continued from page 1)

the greed-driven motives of the past, according to the first extensive survey of business ethics to be conducted in Britain."

No question of misunderstanding the motives. The researchers found that:

"businessmen showed little desire to serve the community, and although they displayed a high degree of ethical awareness, many would jettison their principles if they affected their company's profitability."

According to the survey:

"Junior executives and women took the moral high ground, caring more about green issues, staff relations and trade with countries that abused human rights.

Yet 20% of women doubted they could remain truly ethical in business, as opposed to 12% of men."

But, dear reader, have no illusions. The 'junior executives', just like the junior government ministers, all dream of getting to the top, by which time they are middle aged. And the report points out:

"As the majority of British business is run by people who are old and male, the climate was summed up by one respondent: 'In general, business ethics does not come very high in the general scale of human behaviour. Professional standards and levels of caring sometimes leave a lot to be desired'."

Lest you think all these quotable bits are an anarchist invention, we can assure

you that the survey was carried out by the University of Westminster for the Co-operative Bank.

Anarchists have no objections to the kind of technology which reduces human physical effort in producing the necessities of life. Any anarchist working on the land will confirm that statement. On the contrary, we aim for a world in which everybody will be able to enjoy health (which the abolition of heavy labour, thanks to machines taking over, should ensure) and leisure, so to enjoy life in its fullest sense.

Capitalism ensures privilege, luxury, exploitation, the best of all services for a minority at the expense of the majority.

Capitalists retain their privilege and power by laws which are enacted and applied by a society which in the main is so politically ignorant as to be quite capable of voting against its basic interests.

Capitalism is enjoying a last gasp thanks to the demise of the so-called communist economy in Soviet Russia. But it is doomed because it will be consumed by the greed of its major exponents. Will the world be faced with yet another war - the third world war - another capitalist war to *salve* capitalism? And will the opposition to capitalism be ready with its alternative?

— 3 —

lengthening too". Official figures from the Department of Health show that over a million people were on the lists in September, 13,000 more than in June.

Britain's withdrawal from the ERM on that 'Black Wednesday' is proving a *Golden Wednesday* for forty of Mrs Thatcher's 'wealth producers' (all for themselves, of course!) Don't ask us to explain how the racket works. According to Lisa Buckingham in *The Guardian*:

"The stock market flotation of management buy-out companies, following Britain's withdrawal from the exchange rate mechanism, has created more than forty instant multi-millionaires, a survey published today reveals.

Buoyant stock market conditions, following the UK's departure from the ERM, released a pent-up demand from investors looking for an exit route from buy-outs, according to the study conducted by *Director* magazine and Nottingham University's Centre for Management Buy-Out Research.

Michael Peagram, chairman of Holliday Chemicals, heads the executives for whom flotation has meant immediate arrival in the upper echelons of Britain's richest people. Mr Peagram's share stake is worth £39 million."

And so on with the other forty 'instant multi-millionaires'. It's all legal and above board ... and not daylight robbery!

— 4 —

The latest 'below board' city scandal, fraud on a truly entrepreneurial scale, was that of Roger Levitt, founder of the Levitt Group, and his 'right-hand man' Mark Read, which crashed in 1990 owing £34 million to rich investors like Frederick Forsyth, who never have enough and seem to fall for the con-man

Leisure

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

W.H. Davies
(1870-1940)

who promises them a lot more. Serves them right, we say!

What has upset the 'respectable' capitalists is that this obvious big time crook got off with 180 hours community service, and plus "a loss of directorships for seven years". Surely it is a reflection on the crookedness of the capitalist system that the judge was suggesting thereby that Levitt might well have been offered a few directorships in these seven years. After all, if you can manage to go bust on £34 million, some of it has surely been salted away by Mr Levitt? If not, then nobody in their right minds would offer him a directorship in the next seventy years!

The Guardian's editorial 'Levittating the Laws' is an excellent piece as far as it goes. It starts with three examples of the application of law where money is concerned. According to Home Office research, "40% of people found guilty of theft of under £200 are sent to prison by Crown Courts". Last week a pregnant mother was given a five-day prison sentence for not paying a £55 penalty for not paying her television licence. "She was only saved from jail when two solicitors had a whip-round to pay the fine". The third example was, of course, Roger Levitt. *The Guardian's* comment was whether "anyone would want this discredited fraudster anywhere near them, even on community service".

And the editorial ends:

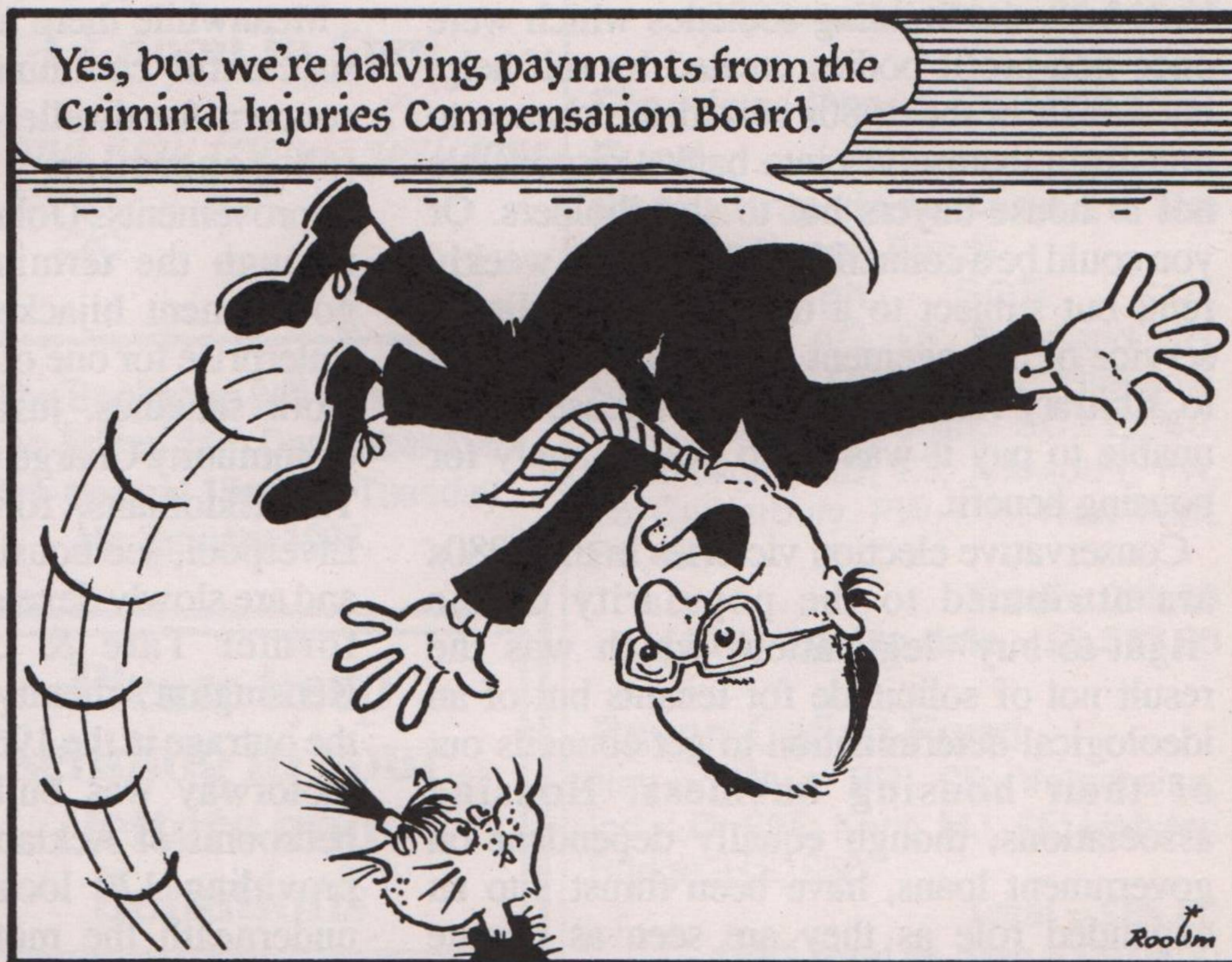
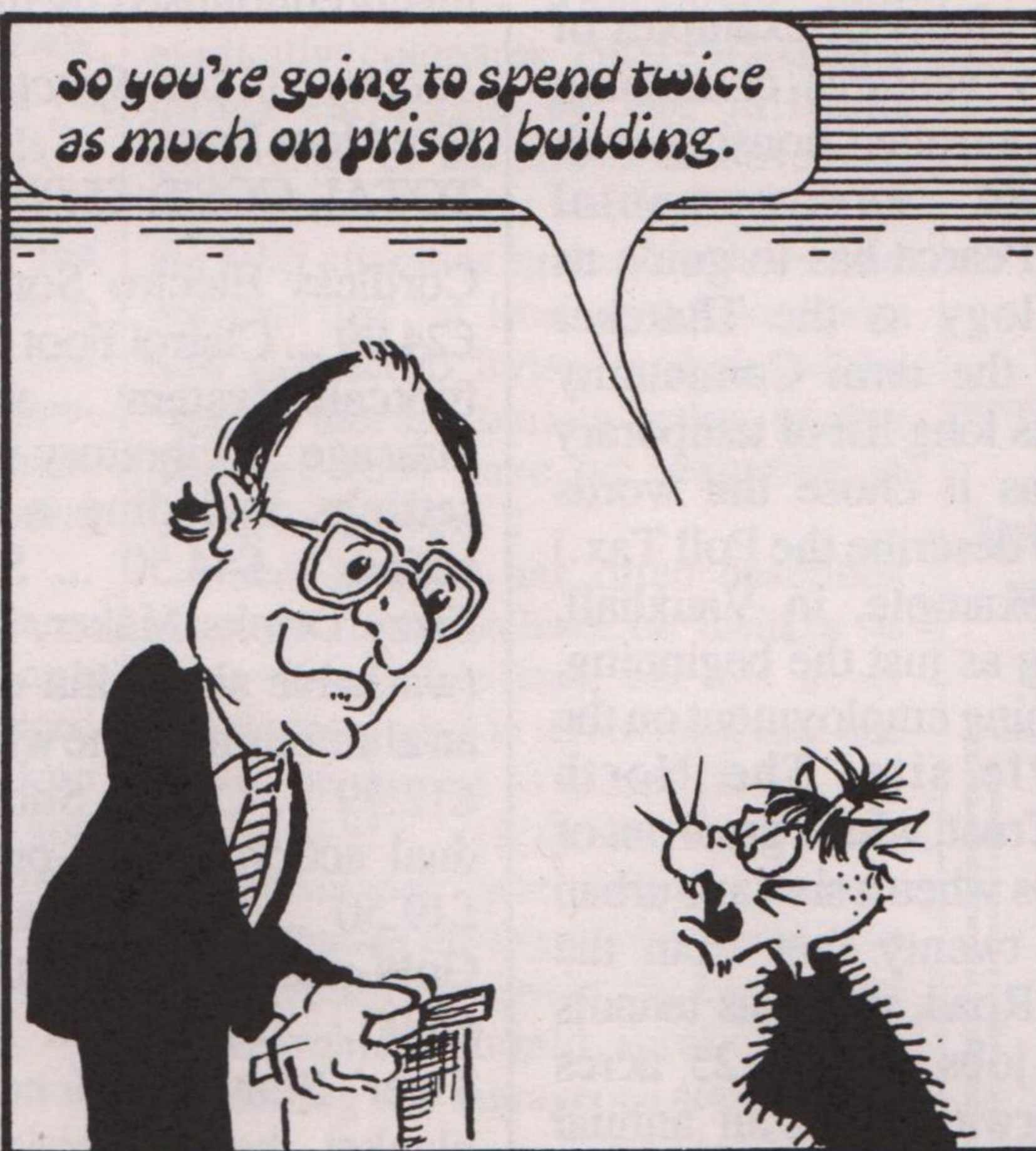
"... this can only be guessed at. But the average person, unversed in the niceties of plea bargaining, the sight of Mr Levitt walking free (as long as he remembers to pay his television licence) is further proof that there is one law for the rich and one for the poor. The whole episode stinks, stinks, stinks."

Of course it 'stinks'. This 'plea bargaining' goes on all the time. The Levitt trial was scheduled to last four months at a cost to the public of £x million. At the last minute he pleads guilty on a lesser charge and the prosecution forgets about the rest. Other notorious such cases were those of Eagle Airways boss Bamberg, and who will ever forget Bloom of the washing machines? The extent of his fraudulent 'wealth producing' exploits was such that it would have taken the courts more than a year to possibly unravel his speculations. It was cheaper to let him go - and he went to the USA and the last we heard of him he was doing very nicely out there!

— 5 —

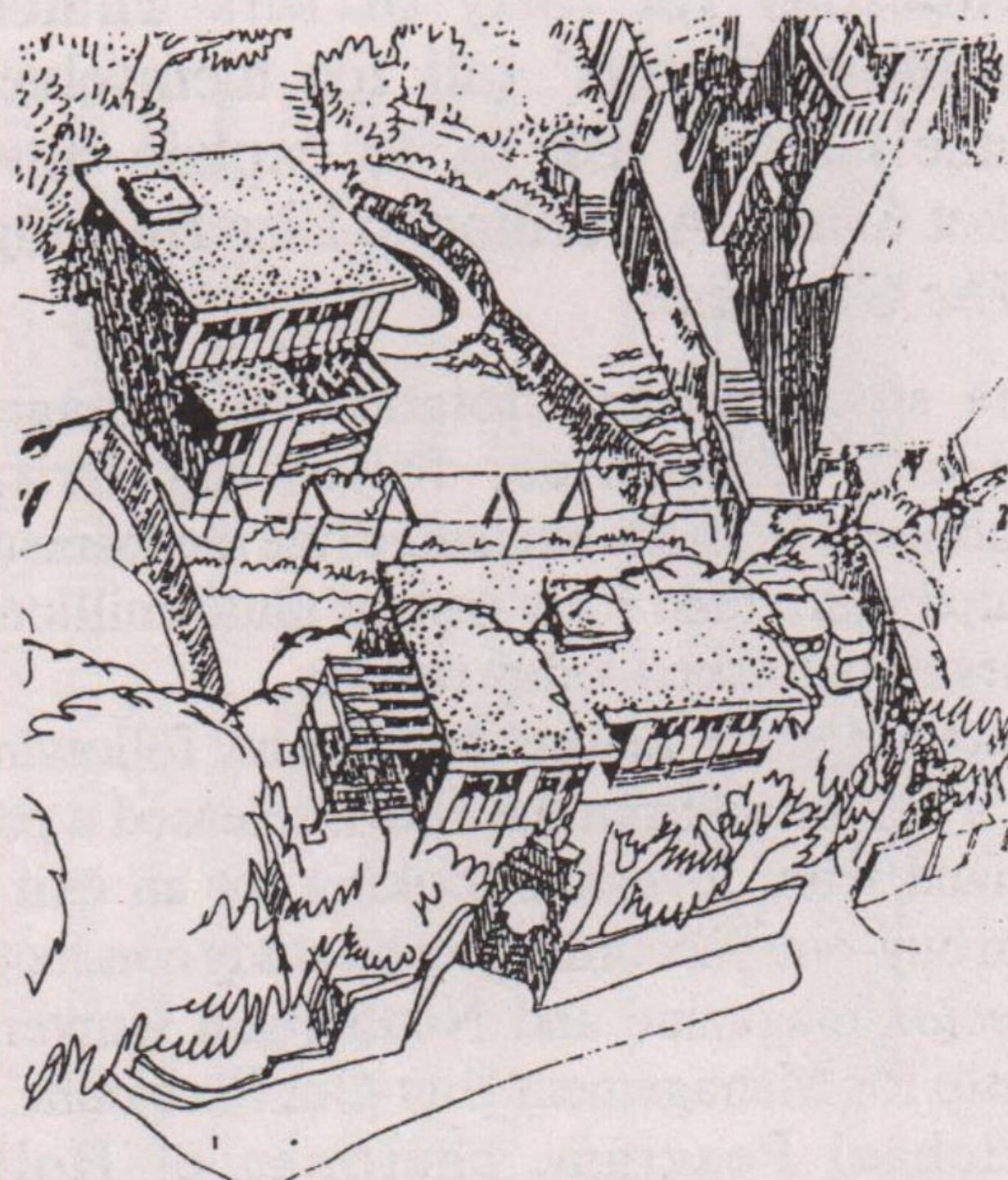
We said that *The Guardian's* editorial was excellent "as far as it goes". What it does not admit is that capitalism is, by definition, corrupt. Everybody in the West recognises that the so-called communist regime in the Soviet Union was corrupt through and through. What they cannot see is that capitalist society is also corrupt: from top to bottom. Because the system is corrupt it invariably encourages people to behave accordingly.

* See *Freedom*, 25th July 1964, 'Bloom - Boom - Bust', included in *Selections from Freedom*, volume 14, 1964, £1 (plus 70p postage & packing).



— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

The politics of community self help



The politics of community action emerged in the 1960s as a response to the wholesale destruction of housing, small-scale industry and local shops in the name of urban renewal. Policies of knocking everything down and starting again had been pursued by local authorities with central government support both in Britain and the United States, and slowly an ideology of resistance and neighbourhood renewal emerged as an alternative.

In both countries community self-assertion often involved begging for funds from agencies of central or federal government to find the means of fighting local government on the spot in the name of public participation in decision-making, or of seeking local government funding for fighting powerful private developers. How-to-do-it manuals on effective neighbourhood action began to appear (for example Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals*). But for some the experience was a reclaiming of the legacy from the nineteenth century when the emerging industrial working class built up its own networks of sick clubs, friendly societies, savings banks, building societies and the vast structure of the co-operative movement.

By the middle of the twentieth century politicians of the left believed that the state was the best provider of social welfare and the appropriate owner of the 'commanding heights' of the economy, all in return for universal and unavoidable taxation. By the end of the century politicians of the right, while continuing to gather the revenue, are selling off public assets and whittling away social welfare to ensure that those who can afford to purchase security privately and individually. Simultaneously they are destroying the last vestiges of independent action from local authorities and squeezing them out of the provision of housing. At the same time the collapse of manufacturing industry has created a situation of permanent unemployment.

Community enterprise has become a necessity since no politician of any party has anything to offer to those citizens whose needs, as John Pearce puts it, "are neglected by the private sector and increasingly abandoned by the public sector". His report *At the Heart of the Community Economy*, is published by the Gulbenkian Foundation (£8.50 plus £2 p&p from Turnaround, 27 Horsell Road, London N5 1XL), stresses that while ideas of collective self-help have taken strongest root in the poorest and most economically marginal areas, "that should not imply that the idea of community enterprise is only an idea for the poor and the disadvantaged, for the marginal and the weak".

All the same, the most significant segment of the community action spectrum has been in housing, and it owes a great deal to the revival of squatting, initiated by two people in Ilford in 1968. For many of the most successful housing co-ops grew out of the self-confidence generated in squats. The British allowed themselves to slip into a situation where a crude duopoly determined access to a roof over your head. You could become an owner-occupier with a long-term loan from the building societies which were once non-profit bodies created by self-help, but which in the 1980s seized the chance to transform themselves into banks, responsible not to house-buyers but to shareholders. Or you could be a council tenant, paying a weekly rent, but subject to a disastrously declining service of management and maintenance and to arbitrary rent rises with the excuse that if unable to pay it was up to you to apply for housing benefit.

Conservative election victories in the 1980s are attributed to the popularity of the 'right-to-buy' legislation, which was the result not of solicitude for tenants but of an ideological determination to get councils out of their housing business. Housing associations, though equally dependent on government loans, have been thrust into an expanded role as they are seen as private

(good) rather than public (bad). Some of us have insisted for decades that the first principle of successful housing is *dweller control* and that in the rental sector this can only be achieved by housing co-ops. The August issue of *Co-operative Housing Bulletin* notes that: "In 1977 there were just fourteen registered housing co-operatives. By 1992 there were well over one thousand, the number doubling every five years."

Their growth has been a huge success, but the outlook is gloomy. The main source of loans is the Housing Corporation, performing the function that the Public Works Loan Board once had for councils. In co-operative ideology primary co-ops need secondary co-ops to service, and sometimes initiate them, and need a tertiary co-op to represent their interests nationally. But to government, ordinary democratic accountability is a nuisance. In backing housing associations it is repeating the same errors that were made when councils dominated housing: it wants large-scale repetitive schemes and big associations to manage them.

John Hall, a veteran of co-op housing in Brighton, explained to me how government has been neutralising the co-op infrastructure to ensure that co-ops will be obliged to become powerless subsidiaries of large housing associations:

"By the end of 1991 the National Federation of Housing Co-operatives had been forced to close. This was a direct result of the late withdrawal of pledged funding from the DoE and the Housing Corporation. It happened despite assurances made to that year's NFHC conference by Sir George Young and top Housing Association executives, all of whom reiterated their unswerving support for co-operatives. When the plug was pulled there was no money left to be transferred to an alternative national body. The movement's national and most influential voice was abruptly silenced."

People who know the huge cost in postage and phone bills, printing and hiring venues, will understand how hard it is for the Confederation of Co-operative Housing to set up a new organisation.

Meanwhile there are plenty of examples of successful community ventures combining concern for dweller-controlled housing with job-generation and environmental improvements. (John Pearce has to guide us through the terminology as the Thatcher government hijacked the term Community Enterprise for one of its long list of temporary work schemes, just as it chose the words Community Charge to describe the Poll Tax.) The Eldonians, for example, in Vauxhall, Liverpool, see housing as just the beginning, and are slowly developing employment on the former Tate & Lyle site. The North Kensington Amenity Trust, which grew out of the outrage in the 1960s when a six-lane urban motorway was built twenty feet from the bedrooms of Acklam Road, now has tenants providing 170 local jobs on the 23 acres underneath the motorway, with an annual

turnover above £1 million. The Allander Group at Possil, Glasgow, employing 120 people, has become the biggest 'private' employer in the locality, but no such luck attended the Barrowfield Community Business in the city's east end, equally worthy but forced into liquidation. Its closure, as Pearce notes, "brought into sharp focus the key questions about which criteria should be used by which to judge success and failure."

Then there is Coin Street Community Builders on thirteen acres in the heart of the South Bank in London, providing housing and jobs under the slogan "There is another way". (For its unlikely history, see my book *Welcome, Thinner City*, NCVO, 1989.) Or there is the Girescope Co-op in Hull. They describe themselves in one of the 88 profiles in *Diggers and Dreamers 94/95: the Guide to Communal Living* (Communes Network, £8.50). They started in 1985 with nothing but anarchism and low cunning, and now have twenty houses for the young, low-paid and unemployed, and are busy generating skills and jobs.

The editors of *Diggers and Dreamers* begin their compendium with the words:

"Here we are, well into the co-called 'caring nineties' - the caring nineties of mass unemployment, permanent recession, soft-focus Thatcherism, global warming, new environmental disasters announced daily, wars in Europe, Africa, Asia ... How can we hope? Widespread disillusion with conventional politics and political parties as a source of hope, is leading more and more people to turn to small scale initiatives (community in the widest sense of the word). These initiatives are building on the successes (and learning from the failures) of the various experiments in community politics that started in the 1970s."

They are right, and the conferences of the political parties illustrate the irrelevance of

their preoccupations to local life and local hopes of incomes, while the physical surroundings of life deteriorate as nobody cares to employ people to maintain them. John Pearce, for his part, urges us to think with a little more sophistication about the wider economy and to see it as multi-layered and inter-dependent. It ranges from the roving trans-national corporations, through national and regional enterprises, down to small local business and administration, and beyond that to the informal economy of voluntary activity, the household, individuals and families. Somewhere between the formal and the informal economy is a slice we call community enterprise.

The do-it-yourself politics of community self-help are both confusing and confused. They make enormous demands on their activists who have to learn to be skilful manipulators of sources of finance and an endlessly-changing series of government initiatives with a bewildering series of acronyms. They have to learn how to be patronised by royalty with a good grace and how to scoop up the crumbs from the European Community's table.

But they are a forerunner of the politics of the next century, whatever changes there may be in the structure of local government and the complexion of government. John Pearce concludes his study of community action in Britain with a reminder of the global context:

"What happens on British housing estates is modest compared, for example, to the disturbances in Los Angeles and to the slums of Bombay, but the roots are the same: unfairness, a sense of no future, and the abject failure of the present system to provide for all mankind."

The Los Angeles riots last year brought 52 deaths, 8,000 injuries, 12,000 arrests and losses of \$800 million. City, state and federal authorities are now wooing the local community activists with the funds that have been consistently denied them in the past. But crash programmes bring minimal results. It would have been better to channel consistent support to initiatives that have struggled for years to build up a community's self-confidence, self-regulation and self-employment.

Colin Ward

Dorset Diary

The satisfaction which no longer comes from the use of abundant commodities is now sought in the recognition of their value as commodities: the use of *commodities* becomes sufficient unto itself; the consumer is filled with religious fervour for the sovereign liberty of the commodities. Waves of enthusiasm for a given product, supported and spread by all the media of communication, are thus propagated with lightning speed. A style of dress emerges from a film, a magazine promotes nightspots which launch various clothing fads. Just when the mass of commodities slides towards puerility, the puerile itself becomes a special commodity; this is epitomised by the *gadget*.

Society of the Spectacle by Guy Debord (Freedom Press)
TOTAL COST: £5.00

Cordless Electro Sonic Jewellery Cleaner, £24.99 ... Clairol Foot Spa with Whirl (luxury footcare system ... warm water and deep massage ... vibratory massage with 4 switch settings including a soothing pulse vibro action), £44.50 ... Soda Stream 'Gemini' Fizzy Drinks Maker, £26.99 ... Cat's Cradle (washable sheepskin effect fabric fitted over an aluminium frame which fits onto radiators), £12.99 ... Clairol Snoopy Hairdrier (unique dual action tamper-proof switch operation), £19.50 ... Coca Cola Bean Bag, £18.99 ... Gold-plated 'Dennis the Menace' cuff links, £4.90 ... Biederlack Multi-Purpose 'Burma Tiger' Blanket (7% cotton, can be used as a blanket, bed cover, wall hanging or rug),

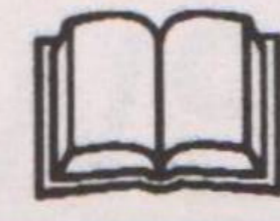
£18.99 ... Carmen Total Nail Care System (shapes, files and polishes nails, includes slim battery operated wand), £9.99 ... Ultimate Terminator (saying 'Hasta la vista baby' for ages four and over), £16.99 ... Executive Cheering Basketball Hoop (position over waste basket and discard papers through the basket hoop, a direct shot into the net will activate cheering sounds of congratulations), £9.99 ... Girl's World Magical Styling Head (style her 'growing' hair and apply the special cosmetics, fit tiara on her head, clip on earrings, spray them with water from the special 'perfume' bottle and they light up and sparkle), £19.50 ... Star Trek Talking Alarm Clock (wake up to the sound of Captain Kirk's communicator followed by 'Landing party to Enterprise - beam us up Scotty!'), £16.99 ... Novelty Duck (ceramic duck, will brighten up any bathroom, with toilet brush), £12.99 ... Russell Hobbs 'Country Style' Can Opener / Knife Sharpener, £12.75 ... Jurassic Park 'Jungle Explorer' (features a blood sampling missile, with two blood sampling projectiles, for ages four and over), £14.99 from Argos 'takes Care of It' (Autumn/Winter 1993)

TOTAL COST: £273.29

CARE Africa, food for one child for one week in Africa
TOTAL COST: £2.50

A Merry Spectacle to readers of *Freedom* from Dorset Diary (£5.99)

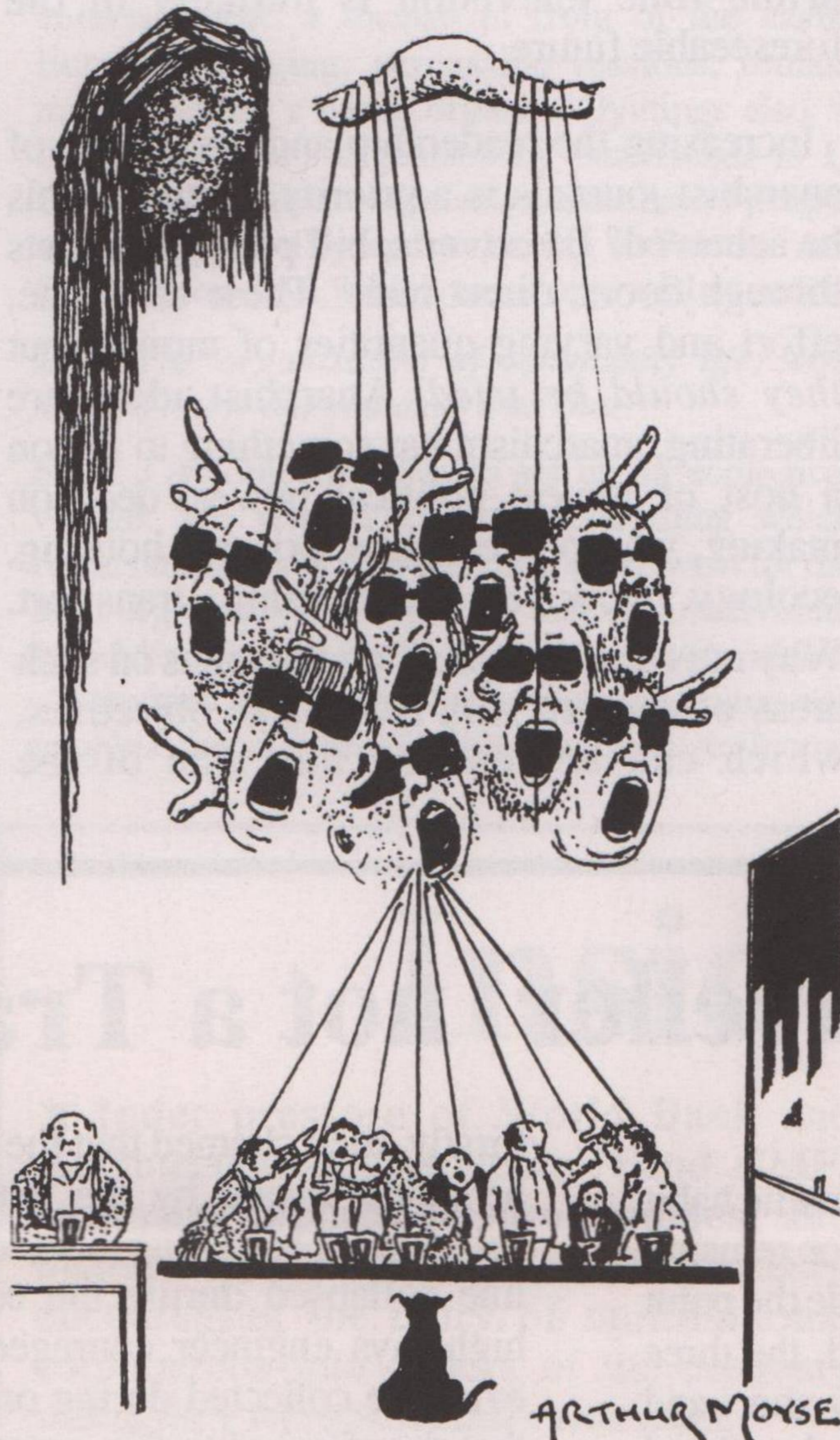
Neil Birrell

**The Diary of Jack the Ripper**by Shirley Harrison
Smith Gryphon, £15.99**The Diaries of Alan Clark**Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 421 pages,
£20.00

Despite, or in spite of, the Byzantine politics of the angels over the Keys of Heaven, the old loyalties continue to out-vote the rational and one knows that one must continue, blacklisting and censoring allowing, to annoy those drear associates of anarchist philosophy who choose to believe that somewhere among the dead verbiage of printed words there is secreted the 'message' to enable them at some time to take over some form of authority over others. A futile task by futile people. Jack the Ripper has always had a place in the hearts of the Whitechapel intelligentsia in that we are all authorities on who the lad was. Commoner or Royal, without fear we name him, and for my part it was ol' Doc Gull and the indisputable evidence lies in the paintings of the painter Sickert. All them little ol' gulls hidden among the brushwork. Drear truth is that Jack the Lad was some unfortunate working class mental misfit, but all the actors, politicians, public, police, victims and killer in that Grand Guignol are now kaput and after saving the world and endorsing liberal authoritarianism in the name of theory we can sit at our table in the White Hart beer house knowing that within the old White Hart pub George Chapman, a throat-slicing barber, was and is included among the Ripper suspects. Shirley's *Diary* ... by the Ripper is held, by the experts, to be a con job that did not come off, and I regret that. It is said to fail, like Hitler's diary, on handwriting, paper and ink, but that gives a new suspect in the person of James Maybrick who was poisoned by his wife who in her turn was sentenced to be hanged. When the marital tensions became too much for the Liverpool lad he would buy his return ticket to London and slaughter those unfortunate women. As with the battle of Cable Street and the fascists and the violence of Column 18 of 1993, we are bound by geography within this circle of violence and mock it and deride it as one will

the barred windows and the screams of women in the long night dictates who shapes history, and this at a time when the artificial snow proclaims the coming of the Lord, two small children have been condemned, found guilty and imprisoned, for the awful killing of a very small child that the professional bleeding hearts will be hard pressed to wave away. Among the anarchists, full-time or weekend, literati there is and always has been the threat that when X, and guilty association, go to that overcrowded ranting room in the sky, Y will 'expose' them and on rare occasions, with the exception of Emma Goldman, only commissioned hagiologies 'hit the street', as they mouth in Wapping. This year the pulps have 'thundered off the press', as the old midnight movie Warner films proclaimed, and they have this in common that most of them are unreadable except via the index. Thatcher's apology for ruining a society is as unfunny as the Maastricht Treaty and as short on jokes, but its sheer weight makes it an ideal weapon for domestic murder. The evil hatred she felt and put into political operation against the working class, in print she turns against her own rat pack who mafia'd her into office and kicked her out for she did not study her Machiavelli and eliminate everyone who kissed her hand or her arse for she studied Reagan and not Joe Stalin. But we comrades should avoid the supercilious smirk for politics is not about putting an X on a piece of paper for in every association of individuals, be it collective, commune, party or pure beer, there are those who believe, according to their particular God, that they have an ordained right to control others. But the pulps roll off the belts from Saint 'Lord Arnold Goodman's' 'tell them I'm on my way' banalities at Chapman's for £20 for 467 pages to My Lord Denning's *Life* with only 449 pages from Hutchinson and free-lanced, we assume, by Iris Freeman. Here are two old men who worked within the authority of the

state and used that authority, one to circumvent and one to impose the labyrinthine laws of their society. Of Judge Denning many claim that he was a liberal judge, and if one is sweating over a dock rail for believing that all property is theft, pray that you may cringe to a liberal judge, magistrate or Father Confessor. I listen to the echo from the beer table of the White Hart pub crying 'We should have more liberal policemen' but liberalism is a minor decadent luxury that we all claim to indulge in for the liberal accepts the greater evil but salves their own conscience by giving



TO HELL WITH A CAPTION

Arthur Moyses

an aspirin tablet to a hanging man, vinegar in the mouth of the crucified Christ.

An autobiography does not expose one's unspoken hates of one's fellows it exposes the writer in all their, usually, aged nakedness and it is the self-tormented image of the writer that remains in the mind, space allowing. The Oscar must go to Alan Clark for here is participations from Tory government offices reduced to joke level for, as we all know comrade, from Caesar to John Major they are but the mouthpieces of the powerful economic and social pressures that create them, elevate them into useless offices and destroy them when they are deemed 'date expired'. Clark went through the process, but Clark is no fool. The author of four major books covering two world wars ranging from 1914, Crete, the Russo-German conflict and air war during 1914-18, his diaries print an image of a politician who regarded his various offices as a bore yet too concerned with the minutia of small matters and an index becomes important as when, in Velikiye Tournovo, sailing through Bulgaria he records that it takes three tons of rose petals to make a litre of oil and in a footnote that a Victorian painter painted a Russian Emperor wallowing in Heliogabulus rose petals. For some it is the pain of bondage or Miss Whiplash and her cane, but for me it is the rose petals even if it is only a footnote. Clark writes of television's Sue Lawley that she, "an attractive woman, spotted at once that I [Clark] have lecherous tendencies but did not actually fancy her". One can seek to sweep away all this as no more than egotistical trivia as no more than harmless sexual peccadilloes from toe-sucking to the cane and the French maid's apron, but these are people who, with the exception of Jack the Ripper, have over the last thirty years destroyed a society economically and industrially. They have forced open the class divisions within that society not felt since Dickensian times, given fear to those in employment and destroyed hope in those without employment. Nothing for the youth to build on and a society without mercy or pity for the aged and the sick. Trivia comrades? It is a trivial society and these people made it so.

When is a Traveller not a Traveller?

Settled residents of any locality are suspicious of strangers. For individuals to prosper in a stable community they depend on maintaining a good reputation. Travellers are not so constrained as they can theoretically avoid the immediate consequences of irresponsible acts by travelling on.

This instinctive mistrust of new temporary arrivals in a neighbourhood easily develops into a phobia, and the newcomers are feared (and consequently hated) before they have displayed any unpleasant behaviour at all.

However, it can happen that the travellers arriving in a place are at least as worthy as the people already there, and a potential asset to the neighbourhood.

From the evidence produced at the local public inquiry into an encampment of travellers at Upper Hill, near Leominster, it seems to me that here was just such a case.

Yoke Farm lies in a lovely bit of Herefordshire. It is owned by an anarchistic farmer who, as part of his diversification programme, gives sanctuary to travellers.

Between twenty and thirty people in buses, trucks, caravans and bender tents occupy a six-acre meadow sheltered by tall hedges; draw their water from a central tap fed by spring water, collect fuel from his woodland and, by burying their excrement, add to the fertility of a pretty grove of trees. They pay a modest rent to the farmer and ask for nothing more than this idyllic setting in return.

The residents of Upper Hill voiced their fears to the Parish Council who called on the District Council to take action.

On their part, affronted by the farmer's non-observance of their labyrinthine planning procedures, they slapped on an Enforcement Notice requiring the travellers to leave within 21 days. The farmer and the travellers appealed and a public inquiry was held in front of an inspector appointed by the Department of the Environment. The proceedings constitute an application for planning consent as well as considering the terms of eviction should consent be refused.

Leominster District Council appointed a barrister to conduct their case at great, and probably much underestimated, expense as the DoE inspector, wanting to let everyone have their say, allowed the proceedings to occupy four full days. The District Council's team was led by their counsel, a solicitor, the chief planning officer and an environmental health officer, and they brought in from the County Council a highways engineer and a gypsy affairs specialist.

The travellers were represented by Dr Donald Kenrick, who has given a lifetime to the study of gypsy matters worldwide, and the farmer was assisted by the author Jeremy Sandford of 'Cathy Come Home' fame. Jeremy is in the interesting position of belonging to a much respected local family and is thus on terms with the gentry while at the same time being deeply involved with gypsies and travellers. He has a small colony of travellers living on his own estate.

But to return to my original question - are they travellers?

The matter is of significance to the authorities who seek to divide (and weaken) the travelling community into 'genuine' gypsies and 'new age travellers'. You will know that for 23 years local authorities have been under a duty to "provide accommodation for gypsies residing in or resorting to their areas" as set out in the 1968 Caravan Sites Act.

At once it can be seen that local authorities want to exclude as many people as they can from qualifying for this 'special provision' under the Act.

The traditional gypsies, who in the 1960s were the only significant numbers of people on the road, were not even then a homogeneous group. There were large differences of culture and wealth among the gypsy people and there was much resistance by Councillors to making provision for those they perceived as 'not real gypsies'.

In response to this, and because the word gypsy was commonly used by the host community as a term of abuse,

many gypsies made it known that they preferred to be called travellers.

The '68 Act acknowledged this by defining gypsies as "persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin". A 1977 government circular elaborated: "this definition makes no distinction between different groups of travellers or their trades. It includes romany, didicois, mumpers, tinkers, hawkers, etc. In law, therefore, the term 'gypsy' refers to a class of person and is not confined to an ethnic group."

Already in 1977 the circular recognises that "fears have been expressed that the gypsy way of life encourages 'drop-outs' from settled society to enter it, there is little evidence generally to substantiate this". Those 'fears' have been revived in recent years by the emergence of a considerable, though still relatively very small, number of travelling people from a different background. To begin with they were described as 'hippies', later as 'new age travellers', more recently simply as 'new travellers', but there is no generally accepted appellation.

Local authorities have resisted calling them gypsies, or counting them as such in the regular surveys they are compelled to make. To do so would force them to acknowledge a responsibility to "provide them with adequate accommodation". As they have failed to do this, in the quarter century since the Act, for the 'traditional' gypsies that they do acknowledge, they would be hard put to it to take on this extra burden.

So at the Leominster public inquiry there were two levels of confrontation. The local authority sought to deny that the unauthorised residents were gypsies under the Act, and that even if they were, Yoke Farm was not a suitable place for them. To avoid enforcement action, the farmer and his tenants

(continued on page 7)

"For many people, anarchism is nothing more than a recipe for violence and disorder, yet anarchists themselves believe that their ideas are peaceful and constructive." This quotation was taken from an advert in 'Post-Script' for David Miller's book *Anarchism*. 'Post-Script' is one of the many book clubs whose adverts appear in the Sunday papers. I suspect it is because of the publicity given to anarchists by the media after the 1990 poll tax riot and similar violent clashes, rather than the continuing efforts of the anarchist movement to spread anarchist ideas, that a national book club can deem it profitable to market a book on anarchism. Not that there is any shortage of books, pamphlets and papers on anarchism. A visit to the annual Anarchist Book Fair at Conway Hall reveals the variety of groups and individuals publishing today, but these largely remain an inward looking set of publishers, talking to the anarchist 'ghetto'. How can today's anarchist movement get our ideas across to a wider audience than is possible using our present methods of small circulation journals and face-to-face contacts?

Publicity of the type resulting from the poll tax riot is double edged, it presents anarchism as a negative, violent philosophy. It may create an interest in anarchism among the young and rebellious, but anarchism should appeal to a wider section of society than this. Furthermore, it is publicity set to achieve someone else's aims, not ours. Can we use the national and local media in any way to achieve our purposes?

Talking to Ourselves?

Perhaps there are some possibilities. In the last century Benjamin Tucker's *Liberty* experimented with a letter writing campaign. If large numbers of comrades regularly wrote to local and national papers, or responded to 'phone in' radio programmes (for example 'Any Answers' on Radio 4) it would be a beginning at least. Another possibility would be to establish a fund to finance half/full page advertisements in regional/national newspapers. If the Conservative or Labour Parties can advertise, why shouldn't the anarchist movement. Video and audio tapes of talks are now being produced but these, like our books, pamphlets and papers, suffer from small circulations and anarchist access to prime time television is unlikely in the foreseeable future.

Increasing the readership and circulation of anarchist journals is a priority. How can this be achieved? By adverts, bill posting, leaflets through doors, direct mail? These take time, effort and varying quantities of money, but *they should be tried*. Anarchist ideas are liberating, anarchism has something to say on a host of issues: political power, decision making, war, peace, crime, prisons, housing, ecology, work, land ownership, transport. Why not carry out specific campaigns on such areas of concern with achievable objectives, which can be reached this side of the

'revolution'. This used to be a strength of anarchist and opposition politics, i.e. the successful campaign against the death penalty, the campaign to legalise abortion, successful 'squats' leading to establishing housing co-ops, etc.

If we leave the presentation of ideas on these topics to the establishment's television, newspapers and media, all that most people will ever hear and see of anarchism will be television footage of riots attributed to 'anarchist thugs'. It is time we acted to change this if the positive ideas of anarchism are to reach a wider audience, and we begin to build an effective anarchist movement.

Anarchism by David Miller, and first published in 1984, is a book well worth reading. Miller's work provides an overview of anarchist theory and practice. However, he does omit certain important areas, for example Proudhon's contribution to economic and federalist ideas which get scant attention. Nevertheless, Miller's work is important in that it gives an intelligent, non-anarchist assessment of anarchism and also examines anarchist-marxist debates on revolution, means and ends, etc.

The book is divided into three sections. Part I covers varieties of anarchism and looks at philosophical, individualist and communist anarchism. Part II examines anarchism as a

revolutionary ideology and Part III is titled 'Assessing Anarchism'. In this last section Miller looks at both the constructive achievements of anarchism, such as various of the intentional communities and the Spanish collectives of 1936-1939, and he goes on to define what are for him the principle shortcomings of anarchist theory/practice. Miller believes anarchist economic ideas of both individualists and communists are not adaptable to a modern economy. He does see some possibilities in Proudhon's mutualism, but goes on to state that there would still be a need for a central co-ordinating and coercive mechanism to make mutualism viable, in other words a 'state'. Miller does not actually explain the essentials of Proudhon's mutualist ideas in *Anarchism* which is an important omission. Miller's criticism of anarchist social ideas stem from his reluctance to believe that 'social control' could exist without police, laws, courts, prisons, etc. Miller sees the state in 'liberal' terms as a referee ensuring a level cricket pitch for all human activity. A final objection of anarchism raised by Miller is the attraction of 'nationalism' for most of humanity. Miller believes this mitigates against the creation of stateless societies.

Though anarchists will disagree with many of Miller's conclusions, his book is interesting as an overview of anarchism as seen by a non-anarchist. It deserves to be read, if only to enable us to make our ideas more understandable to people outside the anarchist movement.

Jonathan Simcock

When is a Traveller not a Traveller?

(continued from page 6)

had to show that the travellers were indeed of "nomadic habit of life" and that there were no planning grounds for refusing permission for them to stay. The travellers also made the point that if the planning permission were to be refused, the three weeks notice for them to quit the site was cruelly short and Jeremy Sandford spoke eloquently of the hardship they faced if it were insisted upon, asking instead for a respite of a year or more. He pointed out the lack of alternative sites, and nobody who was cross-examined on the council side had any idea where the evicted travellers might go.

The traffic engineer agreed that they would not find a lay-by within the county and admitted that it was a political decision by his employers that was behind the systematic blocking of lay-bys throughout Herefordshire.

On the question of what would happen if eviction were enforced, the planning officer didn't know if any vacant pitches on council-provided gypsy sites would be made available to them, did not know what provision could be made under the Homeless Persons legislation, and rested his case on the claim that as they were mobile they could go and find another place for themselves.

So they were admitted to be mobile and without a settled dwelling place, but were they "of a nomadic habit of life"?

During one of the adjournments a High Court ruling had been published that sought to exclude many new travellers from being defined as nomads. Judge Harrison, president of the Appeal Court, had derived a narrower definition of the word from its general synonym for 'wanderer' to its earlier origin as 'one of a tribe that wanders about seeking pasture for its flocks'. That being too specialised even to apply to the traditional gypsies who are already accepted as being nomadic (even if they are on a residential site or even house dwelling), he interpreted this as meaning travelling for a purpose. He further particularised this purpose as being "the search for work". So now the debate turns on what constitutes work. Paid employment is clearly accepted as work, but what if the work is contributed to a mutual aid pool – gift work as it might be termed?

Many of the travellers at Yoke Farm work for each other in their own travelling community as caterers, teachers, therapists, etc., and without monetary reward. And what of voluntary work done by travellers in the settled community, as some of them do. Does that constitute work?

All this awaits the interpretation of the DoE inspector, and the minister, but whether they are argued to be gypsies under the Act or not, the planning appeal, with or without the special status gypsies are supposed to have still has to be determined on its own merits.

The council, of course, sought to deny that it had any merit.

Firstly, they claimed that the highways around the site would be made unsafe by the extra traffic (this they sought to substantiate by saying that they were already unsafe!), but this line collapsed during the course of the hearing when the highways engineer courageously submitted supplementary evidence collected during one of the adjournments showing that the effect of traffic generated by the site was negligible.

The environmental health officer, who feared an outbreak of cholera, sought to impose an ablutions block and associated sewage disposal system that would have been a major constructional project and would have quite changed the character of the site.

Although prepared to admit that any 'improvement' in hygiene would be welcome, he lacked experience of alternative systems. He declined to accept the scheme I prepared (as an 'expert' witness appearing for the farmer but briefed by the travellers' sub-committee on 'green' site development) for a composting-privy based system of hygiene. I put it to the inspector that this was a proven technology and that it was not only a viable alternative to water-borne sanitation, but in some ways a preferable one.

The planning officer gave a slipshod proof of evidence probably because he was confident that the development was so universally disliked that he need only go through the motions of presenting his case. An unorthodox proposal by a bunch of social non-conformists didn't fit with his jargon world of 'structure plans', areas of 'great landscape value' and 'development in the open country' and therefore didn't stand a chance. He may be proved right, but the council was probably quite taken aback by the vigour and intellectual quality of the resistance put up by the farmer, his tenants and those supporting them. One of the most powerful of these was a splendid local resident, previously unknown to the travellers, who delivered a cogent plea for tolerance, comparing the energy and idealism of the travellers favourably with her other neighbours. Shocked by the allegations of lack of hygiene, she had taken the trouble to consult the local sewage works who supply nearby farms with thousands of gallons of untreated sewage material and who assured her that it is perfectly safe to spread it on the land, which in fact farmers had done in fields adjoining Upper Hill.

The planning officer, by contrast, had done little research. Under cross-examination he displayed a lack of knowledge of the area especially as a place resorted to by gypsies; he didn't know his own council's definition of a gypsy as recorded in their minutes, and refused to read this out to the hearing when it was put in front of him.

Interestingly, it was the same as the government circular I quoted earlier, and differed from the county council's one. (The county council is involved because it has the duty to draw up the programme which is then supposed to be

implemented by the district councils – no wonder it is so difficult to get any sites built!)

Its specialist witness described quite shamelessly a procedure they use to identify gypsies for whom they accept some responsibility, which is frankly racist. It depends on the examining official conducting a questionnaire not only about habits of life but also ethnic connections. Although he admitted this is not a legal definition, he claims he can nevertheless be sure at the end of an interview whether or not a person is a gypsy.

What the two witnesses did share was complete unconcern about where the evicted travellers could go or what hardship might befall them.

The planning officer seemed unaware of the relevant human rights provisions of international law and referred to in the government Planning Policy Guidelines (the much-quoted PPGs), for instance the 1993 UN human rights resolution that calls for the abandonment of the practice of forced evictions. He didn't even bother to give his own opinion of the appearance of the travellers' encampment in this undeniably beautiful meadow – he merely reported impersonally that "it is considered to have an adverse effect on the landscape".

I gave it as my professional opinion as an architect of forty years experience, 25 of them in local government, that as developed at present the encampment had a pleasing appearance. I told the hearing of the travellers' plans to enhance it further by landscape design – planting more trees to screen the plots and building their compost privies with dark-stained timber and turf roofs.

The organised group of local objecting residents were even less impressive than the council. It turned out that the only real reason they had for opposing the travellers was their fear (probably unfounded) that the value of their property would go down. The rest was prejudice – "fear of the other" as their spokesman put it.

The little community of travellers at Yoke Farm want to have good relations with their neighbours. They are committed to an ecologically enlightened lifestyle and wish to dwell as lightly on the land as possible. When they leave they want it to show no permanent disfiguring signs of their occupation.

I support them in their aspirations, as do many settled residents of Herefordshire, and I am delighted that such attractive and enterprising people should be among us.

The council rejects them and, even if compelled to grudgingly accept them should the inspector so rule when his decision is published roundabout Christmas time, will still try and impose unwanted and unnecessary arrangements for hygiene on them.

Some reconciliation will have to be made. It needs to succeed as a model for many other havens where people exploring new lifestyles can go.

I shall report further in due course.

Brian Richardson

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7th January - General discussion

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 - Can we Return to Earth the
Treasure Wasted in Heaven? (debate between
Peter Lumsden and George Walford)

18th February - Discussion on Anarchism
and Morality

25th February - Anarchism and Ecology
(speaker: Gideon Kossoff)

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

11th March - An Experiment in Cognitive
Therapy (speaker to be announced)

18th March - General discussion

25th March - General discussion: Bringing
together the strands

SUMMER TERM

15th April - General discussion

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ISSN 0016 0504

Published by Freedom Press
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

Printed by Aldgate Press, London E1

22nd April - Anarchism and the Gift
Economy (speaker: Michael Murray)

29th April - General discussion

Sunday 1st or Monday 2nd May - *May Day
Picnic*

6th May - Anarchism and Utopia (speaker:
Jason Wilcox)

13th May - General discussion

20th May - Talk by a member of the Socialist
Party of Great Britain (specific details later in
the year)

27th May - General discussion

3rd June - Vacant slot

10th June - General discussion

17th June - History of Native Americans
(speaker: Jim Baker of Boston BAD [Boston
Anarchist Drinking Club])

24th June - Vacant slot

1st July - General discussion

8th July - Drawing up the 1994/95
programme

Monday 29th August - *Summer Picnic*

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