

anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

Vol. 52 No. 1

12 JANUARY 1991

FIFTY PENCE

"By definition, a government has no conscience, sometimes it has a policy, but nothing more."
Albert Camus

NOT A SINGLE LIFE FOR OIL OR THE SHEIKHS OF ARABY

It is difficult enough for the daily press and media to keep up with the political and diplomatic developments in the Gulf crisis (though some of us a less polite description of the antics of the politicians would be to describe it all as bluff and counter-bluff *aided and abetted by the media*). All a modest anarchist fortnightly — a voice in the political wilderness — can do is to repeat what anarchist editors were saying in 1914 and in 1939 in *Freedom*: that wars create more problems than they are supposed to solve and at a price in human lives and misery which itself should convince us all that the Gulf venture if it ends in war will only benefit the merchants of death and a new bunch of politicians and their hangers-on.

Thanks to our scientists, 80% of R&D — Research and Development — in this country is directed to perfecting the means for destroying 'the enemy', a full scale war in the Middle East technologically will make the 1939-45 appear to be a minor conflict. An American publisher has chosen this moment to produce a volume mainly of photographs of that minor conflict (*Life: World War Two*).

In *The Independent* (4th January) Anthony Burgess reviews this 'coffee-table' book in which, he points out, appears:
"at a strange time when the Germans and Japanese are demonstrating that economic conquest was what they had really meant, and what we shudder at: the prospect of a new war."
Later in his review he concludes that it has "to be accepted that what the war was really about: the death of Europe and the aggrandisement of America". He adds, "but that is to be too cynical". We think not. America has no intention of participating in World War Two — apart from profiting by land-lease and as a result taking

over British financial interests in South America in payment — until the Japanese attacked them at Pearl Harbour.

"Then came the chilling statistics — 15 million dead in battle, 40 million civilian dead and missing, 35 million military and civilian wounded, 28 million homeless, 35 million imprisoned, 5 million orphaned, 11 million exterminated. But 'however much they had suffered, most of the world lives'. Including a lot of the buyers of *Life*."
Surely if there is a war in the Middle East once again it will be for the aggrandisement of America. How otherwise explain the inordinate haste with which hundreds of thousands of troops and equipment were deployed in Saudi Arabia (largely paid for, needless to say, by the Saudi Arabians). Only Thatcher and her successor and his ridiculous Defence Minister Tom King are obviously hoping to enjoy some of the crumbs from what they hope will be an American victory banquet. The rest of Western Europe wants to keep out of trouble — even little Belgium refused to sell ammunition to our British warmongers who in spite of not having shot a round in anger since the Falklands venture are short of ammunition. Perhaps they had been selling it to Iraq over the years?



"Why is he looking so happy?"
"He volunteered for the Gulf war and was rejected."

Liberated Eastern Europe BACK TO SQUARE ONE

An A.P. report from Budapest states:
"Hungary wants to buy much of the arsenal of former East Germany, a defence ministry spokesman said yesterday.
German officials acknowledged that Hungary has expressed interest, but said no decision had been made. Czechoslovakia and Poland are also potential purchasers.
Hungary is attempting to meet its defence needs independently of Moscow for the first time, after the cost of Soviet weapons automatically tripled on Tuesday, with Moscow's switch to hard currency accounting.
The defence ministry said the Hungarians want 360 T-72 tanks, 350

BMP infantry fighting vehicles, more than 1,000 trucks, 72 122mm artillery pieces, 50,000 AK-47 automatic rifles, 50 million rounds of ammunition, 100,000 anti-tank guided missiles and 200,000 grenades.
The move comes as some Hungarian military figures express concern about tensions with neighbouring countries. Romania, and Czechoslovakia to some extent, have been criticised by the Hungarian government for alleged mistreatment of their Hungarian minorities.
How soon these new 'democratic governments' revert to type! We shall probably hear next that they have also recruited the police from the old regime.

Is it significant that the two Western enthusiasts for a war to 'liberate' Kuwait — America and Britain — are both oil producers? Both countries are cashing in on increased revenues from oil sales as a result of prices escalating. So far as Britain is concerned the Gulf crisis produced an extra £750 million in oil revenues in the third quarter of 1990 and obviously will go on producing extra revenues *unless ... there is peace in the Gulf!*
The Guardian (13th December) quote's OPEC's president Sadek Boussena of Algeria in his address to the first conference of the oil ministers of the Arab cartel, warning them that "the world faces an oil glut that could send prices tumbling and bring years of turmoil in the event of

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Not a Life for the Sheikhs

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a peaceful solution to the Gulf (our italics). He accused the big Western oil companies of flouting agreements with OPEC aimed at stabilising the oil market and forcing the cartel to 'extreme levels of output'.

But in a measure of the cartel's impotence amid the uncertainty of developments in the Gulf, the conference was not expected to reach any decisions except to endorse the free-for-all output levels decided in August to plug the gap caused by the absence of four million barrels per day from Iraq and Kuwait.

The main beneficiary of that policy has been Saudi Arabia.

It is believed to be producing at the moment around 8.5 million barrels a day, some three million barrels more than its quota.

While most member states stressed, as did Mr Boussena, that the July quotas would come back into effect when the crisis was resolved, speculation centres on whether the Saudis will cut their output.

Who now dares to say that the 'Gulf crisis' is about the protection of small nations against Big Brother? It's all about oil and profits. Kuwait is just the pawn in this capitalist game.

The eminent Arab writer Abdelrahman Munif, whose writings are banned in several Arab countries including his own, which has stripped him of Saudi Arabian citizenship, has no doubt: "The West is not fighting for democracy or human rights in the Gulf but just the opposite", and in his article on 'The Bitter Fruit of Power Politics' (*The Guardian*, 27th December) he points out that most of the countries in the Middle East, "especially the oil-producing states, remained outside the mainstream of the modern world with regard to both their ruling regimes and their political institutions". The "ruling families" recognise no participation from outside, or human rights.

When the Americans and even the Labour Party in this country talk of a return of the Kuwait government in exile they are talking of a system where a mere 85,000 citizens had a right to a vote.

Mr Munif declares that the aim of the West is "to protect its interests in the region, to guard allied ruling regimes and to justify existing relations with the present regimes of the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf". It might be thought that Mr Munif is prejudiced. On the contrary we quote him because he is in fact full of admiration for the West and its "greater concerns for democracy and human rights", particularly in Eastern Europe over the past few years! So his conclusions, it would seem to us, are of importance not to the American and British governments thirsting for a military victory, but to the people of the West whose protests and demonstrations against war are the only weapons they have to prevent yet another bloodbath.

Mr Munif considers that it would be "wrong and over-simplified" in the present

The European Question*

As a football scoreline to be on the receiving end of an 11-1 defeat cannot be a pleasant experience but in the world of politics it must surely be a position well recognised by anarchists. Indeed it is, I would say, almost to be welcomed. I often find myself — perversely perhaps — defining my own position on a question by identifying the common ground of those who participate in the system and then opposing it. I find in this respect Chomsky's past and current analysis of American foreign policy enlightening. The common ground in, for example, Nicaragua was that the Sandinista government deserved to be overthrown — the only subject of possible debate within the media was how that was to be achieved. That the sovereignty of an independent state was not the business of the US was not considered.

The attitude of political parties in this country towards Europe does not lack such a consensus. Despite much heart-searching in the past and credible tears about our Commonwealth friends, we went into Europe in 1971 and some twenty years later the consensus is that we should stay there. Serious argument that we should leave is to my

knowledge not covered in the media except perhaps on the rarest of occasions.

Entry into the ERM was also not seriously questioned. The message from Madrid carried with it only a *when* with no mention of an *if* and debate was confined within these parameters. Should we join immediately or *when* inflation had come down or *when* inflationary projections suggest that it will fall or *when* we have a party conference? All the mainstream parties (with the exception of the Greens if they are to be counted) carried out the debate within these more or less well-defined limits.

The same is now the case with regards to full monetary union and it is here that we come back to Mrs Thatcher's 11-1 defeat. I think that if we listen carefully we find the consensus is still intact. It is the date of 1994 that she objects to more than union itself. She spoke, unrealistically, in terms of decades rather than years but that it will happen in one form or another is not to be questioned seriously.

"When I've gone", would seem to be the essence of her message, but whether she will find that a realistic option if she is still the number 10 next year is surely open to question. For Mrs Thatcher is fast becoming recognisable as a relic from the past. We no longer live in a world where the grocer's shop is the essential economic unit. Today the money markets rule supreme. Mrs Thatcher did not wake up one day and put the interest rates up with all the consequences thus involved through caprice. Her then Chancellor Nigel Lawson did so at the dictate of the international money market. His policy of following the German Mark depended on the market showing 'faith' in Sterling which they did only when interest rates were high and gave a good return on their speculations. No government would have been in a position to act differently.

In order to ease the flow of capital it is now clearly in the interests of the money market to undermine the economic independence of individual European Nation States and to the extent that this is synonymous with National Sovereignty Mrs Thatcher's analysis of the situation is correct. With a single currency, gone will be the possibility, and

with it discussion of that possibility, of protectionism — in the past considered a means of combating international economic speculation.

Roy Jenkins recently summed up the position. On all the major questions concerning the integration of Europe as a common market Britain has dragged her feet but inevitably, inexorably she is going down that path. This is not surprising. Such are the wishes of those who control capital and therefore power. Within the parameters of the system one can argue that it's a good idea to get on board the European Express whilst it is still in the station, or that we can pick it up a few stops down the line. That we will not be on board when it finally arrives, as Mrs Thatcher may wish, is not open to negotiation.

Closer links with the peoples of Europe and indeed the world stands as one of the major driving forces of our movement and the aim of our propaganda. But it is also clear that once again we must oppose the consensus of the system. What used to be referred to as the Common Market (an economic entity) became the European Economic Community (a European economic entity) and now the European Community (a European entity). This linguistic metamorphosis has been matched by its opposite in reality. It's a casino that now aims to expand beyond Europe. To oppose it in the short term we must seek an economic independence like that visualised in the *Fields, Factories and Workshops* of Kropotkin and in the writings of those who have expanded upon his vision.

Neil Birrell
Dorset

* This article was written when Mrs Thatcher was still Prime Minister. However, with the new PM the arguments still stand — Editors.

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This volume is one of a set which celebrates the **FREEDOM PRESS** Centenary by reprinting articles from anarchist journals published by the press between October 1896 and October 1986.

The main volume of which this book is a supplement is **World War - Cold War** Selections from the Anarchist Journals **WAR COMMENTARY & FREEDOM** 1939-1950 Published September 1989, 430 pages, £6.95. ISBN 0 90038 448 4

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crisis to look at only the currently evident factors "without being aware of the deep causes still at work below the surface of events". He opposes the use of "force or coercion" by the West for the reason that "the existing regimes must not be defended or made to prevail". "The West must understand that the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf cannot be reduced to a handful of sheikhs or considered a mere reservoir of oil." And we should all be making it clear to our governments by every kind of protest that not a single life must be sacrificed for oil or the Sheikhs-of-Araby.

We Didn't Say This

The British Constitution provides no check against a Conservative Government which really intended to go 'authoritarian', because a government which has majorities in both Houses can do what it pleases through its control of the absolute authority of Parliament. It is possible that the King might intervene and exercise some of his dormant legal powers. Subject to this, we always run the risk, because we have no written Constitution limiting the power of Parliament. Even a written Constitution, however, is but a slight check — as Hitler showed in Germany — and the foundation of our democratic system rests not so much on laws as on the intention of the British people to resist by all the means in its power — including sabotage, the general strike and, if necessary, civil war — attacks upon the liberties which it has won.

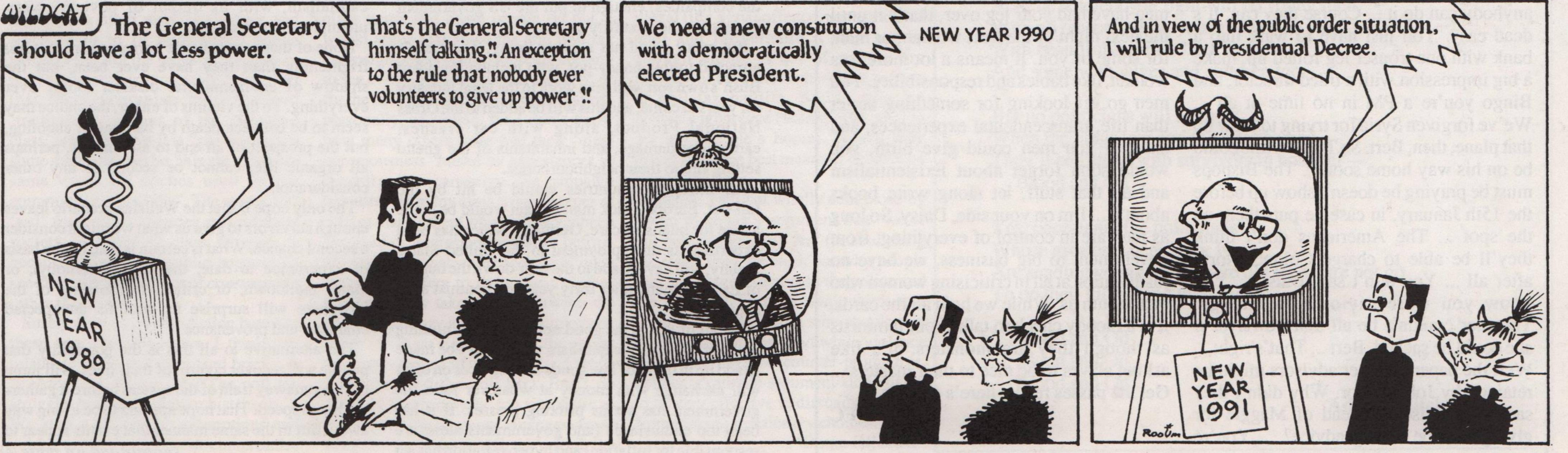
Extracted from *The British Constitution* by Sir Ivor Jennings KBE, QC, Litt D, LL.D

Growth

(continued from page 3) develop rapidly in today's world, so do ideas. The collapse of the tyrannies in Eastern Europe are an encouragement to all of us. They fell simply because of the withdrawal of popular support and all the tanks and secret police couldn't save them. The happenings cannot give any comfort to those in authority in the West who stop to think about it. Control and power are exercised differently, but are no less real and menacing to those who recognise what is going on. The varying capitalisms of the West are as unstable as those of Eastern Europe; a collapse of the economies could be followed just as suddenly by a collapse in the credulousness of people. This gives no guarantee that they will take control of their lives again, but it will be one more set of illusions out of the way.

Meanwhile people at large will buy whatever consumer goods their purses will run to, and the owners of capital will buy the new capital goods that their profits will allow, or not. If the business prospects do not look good they will keep their profits under the mattress or in the bank. Then the capital goods — trucks, milling machines, steel billets — won't be brought in. A slump will begin, workers will 'put off', and the system will wind down until the shortage of goods looks like an opportunity for some optimist to start producing again. The alternatives within this system are always a slump or growth, too little or too much. A slump that threatens the majority of people with debt, in some cases denying them the bare necessities of life; and as an alternative, the growth which is destroying the planet.

KS



Who are they? They are the Union of Communication Workers (UCW) and the Royal Mail (RM).

The union are pillars of the present socio-economic system — and the UCW is a particular example of this. This is a reflection of the social and working conditions and mode of relationships of its members: absenteeism, apathy, ignorance, mis/under-representation, lack of commitment, impotence, deprivation and no control of the means and mechanisms of decision making, implementation and correction....

As in political, social, economic life at large: the UCW is not democratic; it is very secretive, a 'closed shop', and it is elected accordingly; its elected 'officials' enjoy a high privileged position as such within the work place. There is no rank and file power over decision making mechanisms, nor implementation. The communication (is there any?) and decision making process is vertical, in character and shape, equal to the one with management, the government, or the police....

The rank and file is one body — a conglomeration of individuals each to him/herself — the only common and shared element being the fact of having to work everyday for the same company — and the officials of another body — a privileged, elitist one, and split very much from the everyday

UCW + RM : a marriage

work relationships, suffering and reality (do they really want to know?).

The social patterns of individualism and lack of solidarity are to be found in the workplace too!

The union urges its members to do as much overtime as they can/want. The union co-operates fully, actively and silently with all the new structural changes that the Royal Mail is making. And there is no information to the members prior to and during studies, plans, projections; one gets to find out when the changes are made — as a matter of fact: irreversible fact! Sometimes the management is the only one to approach a consultation, a question!

Changes have been made to pave the way and prepare the workforce for the privatisation of what once was the Post Office. Now the PO is a bundle of mini-firms: the Post Office Counters, the Royal Mail Letters, Royal Mail Parcels (Parcel Force), Royal Mail International.... The catering services are now provided for by Quadrant — a sub-contractor. Thus, such an important aspect of life as food — despite much dissatisfaction — is put

further out of the members control. For what is the voice, the vote wanted, when there is no power?

The UCW — in its two bodies, the members and the officials — is a non-political institution: no change of the system, no 'pro' a new social system. The union is just a bureaucratic, legal aid, leisure and administrative machine. Another brick in the wall! And they think that with no Berlin Wall there are no more walls waiting to be dismantled!

Although on the job application form one has to answer questions like: have you or any relative been a member of a communist/socialist party or visited a communist country? And to notify the corporation of any holiday to such countries, yet there must be some radical members. But there is no anarcho-syndicalism within the Royal Mail. This reflects the lack of anarcho-syndicalism in this land.

Any radical, any anarcho, any libertarian member has to work to build an alternative union — in the

Royal Mail in particular; as well as in any other workplace in general. We cannot keep calling 'left' any party, organisation, group — let alone the Labour party, the TUC, the unions! — unless they are in theory (and more so in practice) working for a society without a State, with no Parliament, with no military/police, with no civil servants, no judiciary, no prisons....

By building an alternative anarcho union, we can not only practice anarchy, we can also extend the audience for anarcho information and media. Theory and practice — which are inseparable anyway — are both vital in today's social conditions and relationships. In which the masses are depoliticised and deprived of all means of self-organisation and self-expression; in which the masses are mere instruments of, and means in the hands and brains (and the profits) of increasingly powerful state and multinational corporations. Unless, of course, the masses are willingly wanting and consenting to this mode of affairs. If this is the case, this could in part explain why anarchists are in such a minority.

PHE

Waiting for the Bus

Hope the bus isn't late, Bert. I'm freezing. There's four Bishops in the paper saying war with Iraq isn't morally justifiable ... Let's see, four out of forty-odd, that's ten per cent. Shows they are getting a bit worried. Well, three months is a long time for them to keep quiet. They like something short and sharp like the Falklands, all over and done with before they get much of a chance to commit themselves. Anyway, they are appointed by the government, so you can't expect them to turn round and tell the boss that he is evil ... What's the government waiting for then? Why don't they attack? ... They don't want Saddam to blow up all the oil wells in Kuwait. It's all bluff. Calling up reservists and TA personnel is all designed to frighten the Iraqis. The government is hoping Saddam will be topped, or toppled. And the Bishops have something more important to worry about, like Sunday shopping and women's ordination ... I see Wales is advertising factory floor space at less than a quarter the price they charge in Slough ... Isn't that bloody great, Daisy. Seventy years ago they split up the families in Wales by forcing Taffy workers to come to Slough to find work. Now they are trying to split up the families in Slough by sending them back to Wales. In a few years time Slough could be a ghost town. Bloody sure I'm not crawling out of my grave to see what the High Street looks like. It'll be warmer down there ... Mrs Potts was wrong about Heseltine being Prime Minister ... Tarzan spoils his chances when he walked out of a Cabinet meeting a few years ago. The Establishment don't want anybody with minds of their own for PM ... He says he came up from the working class, and anybody can do it ... Course they can. It's dead easy. You just have to walk into a bank with one trouser leg rolled up, make a big impression with a titled director, and Bingo you're a PM in no time at all ... We've forgiven Syria for trying to blow up that plane, then, Bert. So Terry Waite could be on his way home soon ... The Bishops must be praying he doesn't show up before the 15th January, in case he puts them on the spot ... The Americans don't think they'll be able to charge Colonel North after all ... You don't say, Daisy ... You know you were saying how Maggie Thatcher couldn't be all that powerful if she could be sacked, Bert ... That's right ... Well the paper says her advisors might be retained by John Major. Why didn't they sack the advisors instead of Maggie for giving her the wrong advice? ... You're

learning fast, Daisy. If Kinnock gets to be Prime Minister, he might be using some of them too ... What do you think about us going into monetary union with the EEC? ... Won't make any difference to people like us, Daisy. Instead of being short of strong pounds, we'll be short of hard Ecu's ... AIDS deaths are well up again, at 81, for November. The government's chief medical officer says there has been some under-reporting going on in past years ... A doctor in my paper blames it on too much confidentiality ... You have to report all the other diseases. You had to be isolated yourself for weeks with polio ... I know, Daisy, but that was nothing to do with the national sport. A lot of good literature would be lost forever if the medical profession told the truth about certain practices that a lot of people take for granted. A lot of so-called sex experts have got egg on their faces since AIDS came along. They thought they could condone any old behaviour because syphilis and gonorrhoea and hepatitis were curable. Now they are fighting a rear-guard action against all the odds. People have been encouraged to put sensuality before sense. Trouble is, people are bored stiff. They let the government run their lives. God and the State will provide. Switch on the video. Sit back and be entertained ... What's life all about then, Bert? ... You know better than I do, Daisy, because you're a woman. It's about children. No children, no human race. No human race, no purpose in life. Simple as that. The other animals know it, why don't we? ... I think it's because you men invented gods and an after-life, a sort of purpose in death. Now you've invented videos and nuclear weapons. Once you men have had your leg over, that's it until the next night or the next woman, or man, for some of you. It means a lot more to a woman, like babies and responsibility. You men go off looking for something larger than life, transcendental experiences, and isms. If you men could give birth, you would soon forget about Existentialism and all that stuff, let alone write books about it ... I'm on your side, Daisy. So long as men are in control of everything, from government to big business, we have no justification at all in criticising women who bad-mouth us. While we hold all the cards, it is a bloody cheek to talk about feminists as though they are monsters. It's like asking slaves to be nice to their masters ... Get the passes ready, here's our bus ...

EFC

Growth

By the time these words are read world capitalism may have imploded upon itself and left a black hole of economic slump. The huge gaseous mixture of credit and inflation, of non-wealth ('service' industries: paper shuffling, defence, crime) against which money is issued, is frightening investors, and nothing frightens people like fear on the part of others.

J.M. Keynes' multiplier effect: that a little economic activity can spawn a lot more, also applies in reverse. A little bowel looseness on the part of some investors can produce diarrhoea in the rest.

The Japanese stock market lost nearly half its value between February and September 1990. But something just had to give. The value of Tokyo real estate, which was said to equal that of the entire United States, or the Western hemisphere, or the solar system, is in free-fall. A broom closet, suitable for a harmonious family of four, was available for less than a trillion yen per week.

But these yen had been an indispensable support of Reagan's Voodoo Economics. The Japanese had been using them to buy US Government Bonds (IOU's printed on bullshit paper), save the Administration the unpleasant job of raising taxes, and shrug the debt onto future governments. Added to these fears were the collapse of the American building societies (S & Ls). They have been allowed by Reagan to lend money not only for housing but for any cause which took their fancy (freeing the Market!). Temptation arrived in the form of proposals by engaging rascals to buy major US companies with borrowed money at huge rates of interest (Junk Bonds). It all had to end in tears.

The crest was probably the giant R.J.R. Nabisco company and the attempted takeover of the Goodyear Tyre and Rubber Company by Jimmy (Goldenballs) Goldsmith. After that, it was all downhill. With the slowing of the economy, the borrowers could not repay their instalments and the companies they had taken over started to go bust. The building societies should have gone bust too but a joker appeared. An earlier Administration had guaranteed their funds so the loss was transferred to the State.

At present, the figures quoted are some five hundred billion dollars (eleven noughts), but figures as high as a trillion (twelve noughts) have been quoted (and this does not include the losses of the companies) enough to put the US government in debt for the next fifty years.

But every cloud has a silver lining. The rascals attracted to this honey-pot, who include President Bush's own son, will give work to the legal industry for years to come, and this will be added to the Gross National Product, along with car crashes, earthquake damage, and inhabitants of the ghetto setting fire to their neighbourhoods.

All European countries would be hit by the fall-out. Europe's sick man Britain would be made a case for intensive care. Germany, which has been exporting its unemployment to the United States mainly, will have to add to the turn-down the burden of East Germany after forty years of Leninist state capitalism.

But all of this is the good news. There is nothing in the arithmetic of capitalism which can't be made to add up in the end. The goods and services on offer will exchange with money at whatever ratio the government has set its printing presses. If it has been too enthusiastic (and governments alone are responsible for inflation) and hyper-inflation has set

in, the remedy is to hand, as was seen in Germany under Erhard in the 1950s, or Collor in Brazil in 1990. You declare the currency null and void, illegal, unacceptable, and exchange it ten for one with new currency. It hurts the not so well off, but you have to be cruel to be kind. In any case there's no business like show business.

With the show back on the road, wages will buy back the consumer goods at the new ratio, and profits will be spent on expanding activity, on Growth.

That is the bad news. The alternative to slump, unemployment, neglect of the poor, the sick and the old, to grave economic sickness, is the catastrophe of environmental destruction which inevitably follows from Growth.

Ecological neglect is not new. The Roman farmers started the process that reduced North Africa from a grain producing Eden in the Sahara Desert. Grass on the Pennines where the Romans smelted lead is today still toxic to sheep. In the Vale of Swansea, which was the world's biggest non-ferrous metals port of the nineteenth century, the soil is so contaminated that food crops cannot be grown (see *Derelict Britain* by John Barr).

These were all special cases. The quantitative growth of the danger is such that we must regard it as different in character. The earlier cases were localised. What we have now is omnipresent. There is no part of the world from the Antarctic to the Congo which is not menaced. The Pacific is radioactive and emptying of fish — the twenty mile long 'wall of death' monofilament nets are seeing to that. The agents — Korean, Japanese and Taiwanese fishermen — have moved into the South Atlantic and have even appeared in the Mediterranean. A Cornish fisherman friend tells me he has calculated that his crew catch two marketable fish for every square mile of sea bed they trawl.

It is not as though we were not warned. Decades ago George Stapledon, Edward Hyams, H.J. Massington, among others in this country, were predicting environmental collapse, as were Rachel Carson and Barry Commoner in the United States, Rene Dubos and Rene Dumont in France, Josue de Castro in Brazil.

They attracted a few followers, but most of us dismissed them as ecofreaks concerned with peripheral issues. We preferred to concentrate on the economic base-ideological superstructure of capitalism, with its output of poverty, wars, unemployment and stress.

None of these apocalyptic horsemen are any less frightening than they have ever been, but the shadow of environmental disaster looms over everything. To the victims of either, the choice may seem to be between death by hanging or shooting, but the prospect of an end to all humans, perhaps all organic life, cannot be second to any other consideration.

The only hope is that the Wellsian scenario leaves enough survivors to give us what we might consider a second chance. What is certain is that, on the basis of experience to date, the super-Chernobyl, or major meltdown, or critical overloading of the biosphere will surprise us with its unexpected character and provenance.

The alternative to all this is the possibility that people will recover control of their lives, will jump off the runaway train of the system before it gathers too much speed. That hope appears to be a long way away. But in the same manner that events appear to

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Gentle Liberator

John Hewetson died just before Christmas. He belonged to that elite of medical practitioners from posh family backgrounds who, by choice, spent their working lives in poor districts and were rewarded by the devotion of their patients.

In 1945, when he was casualty officer at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, he was sentenced with other editors from the anarchist Freedom Press (Vernon Richards and Philip Sansom) to nine months in jail for seducing members of the Forces from their duty. Wormwood Scrubs was just over the road from his regular job and he was in great demand for consultation, not only from fellow inmates but from prison officers, for advice on their family problems.

For John spent a lifetime in quiet propaganda for what he, in his cordial way, called a sexually affirmative outlook. There must be many elderly woman readers who remember the liberation provided by a trip to his first shabby little surgery for contraceptive help which was hard to find in the early post-war years.

In 1951 a wave of child murders with sexual overtones led to him writing, between surgeries, his pamphlet on *Sexual Freedom for the Young*, drawing on the work of Malinowski and Reich, and recently reprinted (in *The Raven* no. 4 from Freedom Press). He remarked two years ago that "I did a lot of work on birth control from my earliest days because anxiety about getting pregnant was tremendously common when I was first in practice. It was an enormous factor in preventing working class women from enjoying their love-making, and this was especially true in those who most believed that they were more likely to 'fall pregnant' if they had an orgasm, and who used to try and inhibit their orgasms."

My memories of his practice in those days are of him doing his rounds in a white 1922 Rolls Royce tourer, greeted by everyone in the street, and of a journey to an anarchist summer school in Liverpool in a 1937 Austin 7 with the door falling off.

Ironically, the very morning I intended to get my head together and get down to writing this tribute to John Hewetson, the early morning news programmes on the radio were crackling with the story of a new report on the relationship between poverty and ill health.

Ironic, because among my early collaborations with John was to design the cover for his booklet *Ill Health, Poverty and the State*, published by Freedom Press in 1946. This was a brilliant and damning indictment of capitalist and authoritarian society, packed with facts and quotations from medically impeccable sources, going back to the early years of this century — and beyond.

An example from 1909: "That poverty *per se* must be reckoned as one of the factors in the destruction of human life is shown by the infant death rates of the different social classes". And in 1933, that analysis still showed, as illustrated in a table of infant deaths across five social classes (today known to market researchers as A, B, C1, C2 and D) from the ages of one month to two years.

In that year, in the Newcastle Upon Tyne area, the difference between deaths of one-month-old babies was that 50% more died in class D than in class A, but by two years old the difference had escalated to 250%! In other words, oh baby, choose the class of your parents before you pop out, for the quality of the style you are born into will dictate your fate.

John Hewetson, as I have indicated, was not alone in realising all this, but he did not have many professional companions in declaring that the only solution was the abolition of the profit and monetary system and the creation of a free society with production based on need, not profit. His conclusion in *Ill Health, Poverty and the State*, for example, goes like this:

"The achievement of full health demands a radical change in our economic system. It demands nothing short of the abolition of poverty, the placing of production on a basis of needs. Let us so organise our economy that when people need a commodity, that commodity is produced. It is necessary to destroy altogether the form of economic organisation which only produces when there is a prospect of selling, and which, therefore, inevitably deprives the working class, and which cannot afford to buy, and who form the bulk of the community ... Full health is a mirage until profit economy is swept away. But it will be easily realised when the means of life are freely available to all."

So where is the irony I mentioned at the start? Oh yes, those radio news flashes. Well, on the 31st December 1990 — 81

But after that he settled down as the doyen of a very remarkable practice at the Elephant and Castle. One of his partners was Robert Ollendorff, the brother-in-law of Wilhelm Reich. Another was John MacEwan, advocate of holistic medicine, and then came the husband and wife Petroni team. I was on their list for decades, and the important thing for me was not the validity of the various claims of



John Hewetson 1913-1990

years after our 1909 quote, 57 years after our figures of 1937, 44 years after Freedom Press's publication of Hewetson's booklet and 42 years after the creation of the National Health Service by the post-war Labour government, the Association of Community Health Councils (ACHC) have produced a report confirming that the gaps in the health of the community in general have not narrowed, but are widening as we go towards the 21st century.

The gospel stories about everything being better than ever before, so ably put about by ... er, what was her name now? ... turn out to be stories economical with the truth. The fact is, says the ACHC, that no more than lip service is being paid to preventative medicine — which includes not just regular check-ups, cutting down waiting time, etc., but maintaining adequate stocks of cheap but decent housing — and that the babies of unskilled workers today have a 70% better chance of dying in their infancy than the babies of 'professional' workers. So what's new? It would seem that John Hewetson's conclusion was correct.

Colin Ward says, "John spent a lifetime in quiet propaganda", which is, I think, slightly an understatement. He was certainly not a street-fighting man, not even an outdoor orator, but he could be deadly in debate and most incisive in the many articles and editorials he wrote for *War Commentary* and *Freedom* over more than twelve years. He went to prison twice — once as a conscientious objector and again as the 'disaffector of the Forces' Colin has referred to. He lost his job at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, as a result of his imprisonment in 1945 (as did Vernon Richards also) but both managed to avoid further harassment and to lead constructive lives.

For John this meant building the unique practice that Colin has described. But certain things can be touched upon today

alternative medicine, but the fact that a range of alternatives to the orthodox views was *available* to every patient. I can't imagine another GP health centre where this was true. John's open end libertarian attitude brought its own penalties. He became one of those doctors known to be 'soft on drugs' when the real problem was that he couldn't believe in the other 'treatments'.

He and his partners were for over thirty years the Visiting Medical Officers for the Camberwell Reception Centre, the 'resettlement unit' for homeless single people in south London, known as The Spike. He knew the accidental horrors of ordinary life that finally dumped men there and he fought a long rear-guard campaign against the civil servants of the DHSS who successfully achieved its closure. No-one was interested in publishing his detailed statistical report on The Spike in 1983.

John knew more about the seamy side of life than anyone I ever met, and the last time I heard from him he was pouring scorn on John Selwyn Gummer going on about "any form of fornication" and reflecting (in connection with AIDS) about Schuster picking up syphilis from the pretty chambermaid of the Eberthick household while the composer was dedicating his *Fantasia in F Minor* to her mistress. But who passed the contagion to the chambermaid? Naturally, the Count.

There's a relationship between knowledge and who has access to it, and John Hewetson spent a lifetime as a doctor patiently pushing down the class barriers in medicine which divide the sophisticated from the inhibited. There are people like him around today, but who has time for them when the emphasis is on making general practice cost-effective? I wish we had more printed words to remember him by. I'd recommend his essay on 'Mutual Aid and Social Evolution' which is a preface for the current Freedom Press edition of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*. Ask around on his old patch and you will find a multitude of people for whom he was an ironic, earthy and gentle liberator.

Colin Ward

that had to be dealt with tactfully at the time. It was a well-kept secret that a small 'workshop' — for want of a better word — was set up in London in the 1950s for the purpose of getting birth control materials into France, where De Gaulle's authoritarian rule and Mother Church forbade such sinful things.

The supplies were requested by French women (and, I shouldn't be surprised, a few men) and by various means, including voluntary working by men and women here in London, guided by John, both goods and expertise were exported to Gaullist France. It was not until the early '70s that the French law was relaxed and it became legal for birth control to be practised by adults over 18!

As I have written previously in these pages, John Hewetson was a pioneer among male doctors for freely available birth control and abortion on demand. Here in Britain, abortion was available legally, after the famous Bourne case of 1936 — but under such carefully hedged-in conditions that it was virtually only the moneyed classes for whom it was possible legally and safely.

It was necessary for the woman to get a statement or certificate from a general practitioner, a psychiatrist and a qualified gynaecologist before the latter could legally and privately (i.e. not on the National Health) terminate a pregnancy. For those with a few hundred guineas in their pockets it was virtually abortion on demand, as long as the proper certificates showed that their health, or that of the foetus, was endangered by a continued pregnancy.

Because of John's known advocacy of abortion on demand over many years (as I have also said before, the first article I ever read *anywhere* appeared in *War Commentary* in 1943) he had come into contact with others in the medical professions who, like him, were very careful not to step outside the law — for that could lead to being struck off and banned from practice forever — but were quite prepared to work within the limits of the law — to their own judgement and to their own reduced scale of fees, for worthy or desperate cases.

Among Colin's "many elderly women readers" (do we have many?) there must also be a few whose lives were not only transformed by liberation, but also escaped the occasional consequences of careless love! There must be hundreds of thousands more for whom the changes in the law on abortion in 1968 have saved months of anxiety, panic and pain. There

(continued on page 5)

Anti-war protest in Edinburgh

An anti-Gulf war rally, called by Edinburgh ACND and Christian CND, was held at the foot of the Mound in Edinburgh on Saturday 22nd December. Although the organisers had intended it to be a cross-party rally, only speakers from the Labour party (no doubt to the electoral annoyance of Kinnock and Kaufman), the Scottish Green Party, SWP and CND bothered to appear. Interestingly, the Scottish National Party, whose supporters often make much of the fact that many Scots have died in England's interests, are clearly quite happy for Scots to die in the interests of the American government. The SNP's message to the rally was that "it was not appropriate" for Scotland's independence party to appear. So now we know what they mean when they say "independence in Europe". The weather throughout the rally was pretty bad, with heavy rain no doubt helping to keep numbers down to around 150 to 200. One comfort was that the same conditions seem to have kept attendance at the Princes Street stores down to tens of thousands. A good proportion of those at the rally were from various Marxist and Trotskyist groups. This was fortunate as it enabled me to sell *Freedom* to someone, but no doubt the various press photographers were able to get suitable pictures of the crowd backed by SWP banners — much to the satisfaction of newspaper editors in their war-drive campaign.

Of the seventy plus Scottish MPs, only fourteen have come out against the use of force in the Gulf. Two of these, Gavin Strang and Tam Dalyell, spoke at the rally. Dalyell concentrated on the appalling consequences of oil well fires in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. There are, according to Shell and BP, some 300 deep wells in Kuwait alone. Shell engineers have stated that no-one knows just what happens when a deep well goes on fire. Iraqi forces control all the Kuwaiti wells, and no doubt have plenty of modified Scud missiles trained on Saudi ones. The Allies in Saudi might be able to stop any Iraqi bomber getting to Saudi wells, but they can't shoot down the Scuds. A CND speaker also pointed out that estimates of up to two and a half years are being made as to the time needed to tackle such fires — individually. The resulting smoke would cause

catastrophic environmental changes. Dalyell's final point was one that the 'gung-ho' brigade could do well to reflect on. History shows that when battle-hardened troops meet inexperienced forces, it is always the latter that come off worse. The Iraqis have eight years experience behind them. A British tank officer in the Gulf recently stated on the radio that the Allies had been reading up about the campaign in North Africa in the last world war. He didn't say whether they'd reached the part when retreating elements of the Afrika Korps bumped into the newly arrived, and well-equipped, Americans at Kasserine Pass. The Americans were comprehensively defeated, and the Germans re-equipped their forces with American material. Is there a lesson there for American 'planners'? The Christian CND speaker made the very valid point that if you want to free the Kuwaitis, one way of not going about it is by unleashing the most horrendous war on Kuwait. At least the Iraqis in Kuwait are in bunkers, unlike those whom the Allies are going to liberate. Further, it is all totally unnecessary. Since the application of the toughest sanctions ever seen, the Iraqis haven't sold a barrel of oil, which provides 95% of their foreign earnings. If the American and British governments hadn't driven themselves into such an untenable macho position, there would be no need for war. If the West and the East hadn't equipped and trained the Iraqi forces, they wouldn't be capable of fighting such a war.

A few hours after the main rally, CND held a vigil in Stockbridge, minus the press and cameras, and minus the 'revolutionaries'. A dozen CND supporters handed out about 400 leaflets against the war in this mainly middle class area of Edinburgh. It's always difficult to tell what people think as you hand out leaflets, but most people seemed to be firmly against the prospect of war, a feeling that was common to people of all ages. There were only two

pro-war reactions: "I'm all for war", and "We want a nuclear war". If the latter bloke waits a while, he'll get one! If the feeling of those who spoke to the Stockbridge CND agreeing to their anti-war stance is widespread, why isn't it being reflected in the media? I see that Maggie's resignation honours list includes a knighthood for the editor of *The Daily Express* and an MBE for the editor of *The Star*.

The atmosphere at the main rally was subdued, as well it might be. What was more depressing was the

very poor turn-out in Scotland's capital city. If this war comes about, it will be the most appalling war since the Second World War. The cost will be immense: in lives, in environmental terms, in resource terms (what's the point of guaranteeing access to the oil fields if all you've got it a massive fire?), in hopes of an eventual settlement of the Middle East problem — Palestine, in Arab-European relations (they're only on the other side of the Mediterranean), and in terms of the future. The war will not stay in a nice neat area of Kuwait. The war will not be won in days. Given all this, we must ask ourselves why it is that people prefer to shop or watch football than to protest about war?

Stephen Cullen

Science News

One way not to solve the housing shortage is to build a new town next to one of the biggest oil refineries in the UK. The project includes 4,000 new houses and three schools and the place is Canvey Island, the site of some of the most hazardous industrial activity in the country (*New Scientist* 6th December 1990). Mobil, the operators of the refinery, are not happy: a Bhopal-like incident in South East England would not be good for their image, and then there would be the claims for compensation.

The delighted new inhabitants would have to put up with the smells which emanate from the works and not think about Britain's largest toxic waste dump which is also close by. Add to all that the fact that the site is low-lying and must be susceptible to flooding, has a high concentration of heavy metals (including cadmium and arsenic) in its soil and is crossed by a high pressure pipeline carrying liquid petroleum. It seems hardly worth mentioning

that there is also a disused refuse tip generating methane gas in the area.

The idea comes from the mind of Peter de Savary, described as a yachting entrepreneur. Aldersgate Developments who want to build the town and call it Northwich Village describe the location as unique. They may well be right. Every project has to have its green spin-off these days and this is no exception. The developers have promised to use some of the profits to create a Marshland Park which would be run by a trust and David Bellamy is reported to have accepted the offer to be its first Chair. Perhaps he should be more careful about the company he keeps.

However, part of the site is on green belt land, technically not available for development, so the government had to order a public enquiry. We await the decision of the Inspector with interest.

HS

John Hewetson obituary

(continued from page 4)

are many doctors who have opposed these changes but many more who have supported them, thanks to the continuous work over the decades by John Hewetson and his partner John MacEwan, who is now also retired from the "very remarkable practice at the Elephant and Castle" to which Colin refers. MacEwan now has a chair as consultant in birth control at Kings College in London. Indeed, I heard his voice on BBC Radio 4 only a few weeks ago protesting about the government's plan to close down a number of birth control clinics. So he has now developed as an authority to be listened to.

(Incidentally, is the government's decision only to save money — or something to do with the smell of war in the air?)

I cannot close this section without once again quoting those famous words of Bonar Thompson, one-time Shakespearian actor and Hyde Park orator, who once earned a precarious living selling contraceptives at country fairs:

"There are thousands of people not walking about today who have me to thank for never having been born — and so, missing the war!"

My years of friendship with John Hewetson began in 1943, when I discovered the anarchist movement in London — having done three years work on the land in Kent. I was immediately impressed (although 27 years old, I was a political innocent) by the integrity and knowledge of world affairs expressed by this small group of people only a little older than myself. Hewetson was outstanding for his clarity of thought, firmness of conviction, and, no doubt, for an East End secondary school product like myself, his educated speech. My first collaboration with him was in drawing a cartoon which appeared with an indignant article of his on famine in India where, during the war, the British masters had manoeuvred even the 'pacifist' Congress leaders into supporting Britain in the war against Japan by promise of independence after the war. Part of the bargain had been (though perhaps not ...) that Britain could use India as a source of food for Britain itself — which meant great shortage for the Indians. It was still 'Imperial India' remember. But still things haven't changed a lot have they? Food is still a political weapon.

Within two years, John and Vernon Richards and I were in jail together on charges of disaffection of the Forces, a very serious offence carrying a penalty of fourteen years! I won't go into details of the trial, which lasted four days — but it was most illuminating. At one point John's counsel, a Mr John

Maud who later became Recorder in Exeter Assizes, referred to John as "that silver-haired surgeon, sitting in the most unhappy seat in England!"

Well, the unhappy seat was okay — it was the dock in number one court at the Old Bailey. But the "silver-haired surgeon" was a bit steep, since John wasn't a surgeon, and it was a family trait that Hewetsons all found their hair turning grey — white even — at a very early age! But it was good emotional stuff.

In spite of that, the jury found us guilty and we held our breath as the judge declared sentence: "I therefore sentence you all to nine ..." (pause) "... calendar months". Collapse of stout parties in the Special Branch pew! While we had thought for a moment he was going to say nine years!

What John knew, however, and nobody else since he hadn't breathed a word to anybody else, was that the judge in our case, Mr Justice Birkett, had been, as Mr Norman Birkett KC, a leading defence lawyer in Birmingham at the same time as John's father had been Chief Gynaecologist at Birmingham's chief hospital — and Messers Birkett and Hewetson senior had been great drinking chums in Birmingham's best clubs! Who says the old pals act can't work both ways?

My space is running out. I will end this stroll down Memory Lane with the last communication I had with John Hewetson. It was a letter written in a rather spidery hand, and it went thus, in part:

"I must write you a line after the fall of Ceaucescu. The events of the last six months in Europe seem incredible — we have been drinking to the damnation and destruction of these Marxist-Leninist regimes all our lives — back to Marie Louise's times. Orwell thought they were so ruthlessly defended they couldn't be brought down and now suddenly they have collapsed like the walls of Jericho!

How we would have celebrated if we had all been together as we were in the '40s. And how I would have loved to be laughing excitedly with Marie Louise ..."

Drink a glass with me and George not only to the damnation of the Stalinist shits, but to the old times that were so good!"

Doesn't sound like a man at the end of his tether, does it? John was 77 when he wrote that and he died of a stroke followed by a coronary on 20th December, a few days before his 78th birthday. The George he was referring to was George Woodcock.

Philip Sansom

From the point of view of an anarchist law is a particularly unequal horde of legislative red tape stopping any kind of informal 'grassroots' justice. Working class communities are overlooked night and day making sure that no 'crime of justice' occurs. The police force in their present form are only needed by the ruling classes, whose laws they enforce.

In this article I will outline why law should be resented and why the resentment should be a national phenomenon, leaving no support for a police force and in a perfect world, no-one wanting to be part of it.

What is cr

Whose law is it anyway?

From day one of our lives we have to obey the laws of our land. First at home then school and ultimately society as a whole. We have no say in these laws, we appear to have no choice but to obey them and be law-abiding citizens. But why should this be so?

We are always told that these laws serve us but quite simply they don't. They work against us and it is important to make this point clear. A lot of people tend to stand up and declare their trust in the law, working class people. It would be condescending to tar a class with the same brush. Many working class people hold no respect for the law whatsoever, others don't obey and some understand that it is their enemy. We all must understand this!

As soon as it is understood by the working (and the middle?) classes that law enforcement doesn't keep calm in a turbulent vicious society and that it should be hated, the better it will be. At this point mass anti-law movements will emerge. I don't envisage the police no-go areas, as Class War does, as being examples of the ideal environment in which police don't operate. Very few people go in these zones, the police being included.

It brings to mind the situation in some parts of America. No police enter zones of 'trouble' through fear. They know that there is warfare going on in that zone, not war against the police but within the community itself. This is not a desirable state of affairs.

Laws are not for people, they do not work for people. We have no say in them yet we are told to obey. Perhaps one of the most prominent examples of us having no say in the law is the poll tax. Many haven't paid out of principle but these people will, on the whole, give up. Don't get me wrong, I haven't paid my bill and have no intention of doing so. The thing is a lot of people are getting frustrated; at last they realise

Poll Tax: smear campaigns and local news

Following the national anti-poll tax demo of 20th October, the Militant Tendency leadership of the All Britain Anti Poll Tax federation have attacked the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign for being associated with anarchist groups such as Class War. They strongly criticise the TSDC's apparent lack of organisation and stewarding of the march and picket of Brixton prison. It seems to me that Militant, with their statist aspirations, regard 'good stewarding' as success in *controlling* a crowd; in other words, a 'good steward' acts as a would-be policeman, attempting to contain crowd anger and stifle crowd action. I expect much of Militant's irritation stems from the hostile reception given to Steve 'coppers nark' Nally at the Brockwell Park rally, particularly by comrades from Class War.

In a letter to the TSDC, Militant claim that all those who are critical of them are either fascists or *agents provocateurs*! Such absurd smears are surely signs of desperation as the anti-poll tax movement becomes increasingly disillusioned with Militant's tactics. Further evidence for this is an over the top attack on Class War specifically, which Militant have accused of racism and anti-semitism. This may be an attempt to capitalise on the (deliberate) misunderstandings in the Tory press, who reported that European 'nazis' were present at the October demo because journalists saw youths with armbands with the word 'nazis' on. (In fact the armbands said 'Gegen Nazis' — *against nazis*!) Anyone who has read *Class War* will know that accusations of racism are simply nonsensical; in the past Class War have been completely cleared by anti-fascist organisations of any involvement with fascists. I seem to remember it being reported in *Freedom* (vol 46 no 11, November 1985) that a journalist from *The Guardian* made a similar groundless accusation of anarchists being linked to fascists. But such smears are usually made by the authoritarian Left — particularly, one suspects, when they feel threatened by a growing 'rival' organisation or grouping.

Lady Thatcher's home town of Grantham has this week witnessed the first martyr to the poll tax. Bryan Wright, a 21 year old bricklayer, was sent to prison for 21 days for not paying his £277 poll tax bill. The council's states aim of deterring others by this action has backfired — at least as far as Bryan Wright's family is concerned. All five say they will not pay next year!

Impressive figures from Scotland were reported in *The Guardian* this week (8th December 1990). Officials admit that the non-payment rebellion is *still growing*! Scottish councils are still owed £142 million for the 1989-90 financial year, and with only seven months of this financial year gone they are already £185 million adrift! The paper reports that at least 1.2 million Scots, a third of those liable to pay poll tax, have been sent summary warrants by Sheriff's Officers. But debt recovery procedures have apparently broken down and the Scottish councils face a 'crisis'. As David Begg of Lothian Region council says: "The worry (sic) is that public resistance to the tax will get stronger, the higher the bills, the greater the problem, and more tax dodgers. And this is the easiest tax to dodge." Straight from the horse's mouth!

Here in Brighton we have seen the first non-payment of poll tax cases come to court. Although a disappointingly small number of those summonsed turned up, the day was a success overall. There was a large demo (100 people or so) and time-wasting tactics worked well (one case took over an hour!). The protesters in the public gallery had great fun winding up the magistrate; they were eventually ordered out for repeatedly 'whooping', but were let back in again not long after. The difference between Brighton and Hove seems to lie in the former's possession of a 'super-efficient' computer which has led to those only a bit behind with payments being hassled more than those who have paid nothing, to bills which contradict each other and to summonses being sent to the

dead and others not liable to pay. These cock-ups resulted in 80 cases being thrown out of court in one morning.

For further local news, reports on the national demo and other items of interest on the anti poll tax campaign, get *Resist!*, newsletter of Sussex Poll Tax Resisters Support Fund. Issue number 4 is now available, and very good it is too. For a copy send a donation plus s.a.e. to Johnny Yen, COGS u/g pigeon-holes, University of Sussex, School of Cognitive and Computing Sciences, Falmer, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 9QN.

Johnny Yen

Protest in Preston

Here in Lancaster, another 7,000 are being prosecuted for non-payment. When this is added to the 10,000 already done, and the 11,200 who dropped out of the register, non-payment even on the council figures is running at 28%.

Last Thursday 2,500 people were taken to court. Whereas in the first batch 10% would turn up, go there about and this time only 19 bothered to go into court (0.76%). The respect of people for the law and the courts is now at an all time low because the court is an evil force, and many, many people now have first-hand experience of this.

Respect for authority has also diminished because many of those who were sent the financial circumstances forms after the liability orders were granted against them have failed to return them. It seems that the national average is *less than 10%* — this despite the fact that it is a criminal offence not to send them back.

This non-compliance is now being used as a 'justification' for the council sending in bailiffs. In Preston, a protest outside the Director of Finance, Ian Threlfall's house was followed by a skip delivery. The APTU got a lot of publicity over this, and it made the front page of the *Local Government Chronicle*. Let them take their work home with them — I always said the poll tax was a load of rubbish!

Stephen Booth

Education cuts to keep down poll tax

Somerset County Councillors again discussed Education cuts (5th December) in a vain attempt to produce 'acceptable' poll tax bills for the coming year. Once again they were faced with a large protest demonstration — the third of its kind in the last fortnight.

This previously unheard-of level of protest is giving the Tory councillors sleepless nights and they are on the run. Now the council is proposing reduced cuts of over £3.5 million in the county's education budget. One source of saving is pre-fives schooling, with a quarter of places previously available being axed and 57 infant school teachers jobs going too. Needless to say, that didn't satisfy those outside the council chambers and the protests go on.

Thatcher gone. Heseltine at Environment trying to extricate the Tories from their own mess. Thatcher's 'flag-ship' has certainly run aground — now's the time to sink it!

Poll tax bills will be substantially higher this year — even if Heseltine is able to juggle the figures and throw some more money at the problem. Added to this, people's ability to pay — even if they want to — has been squeezed by high inflation, higher mortgages and debts, and increasing unemployment. The economy is in recession — Norman Lamont (5th December) said "business conditions are pretty rough", political speak for "we're in the shit!" — so the numbers not able to pay will be increasing too.

Heseltine has said (5th December) there will be no quick fixes for the poll tax before the next election (those banking on a Labour victory should think again) and that all options are being considered. We must make sure that only one option is left for the Tories — the abolition of the poll tax, and we must make sure that they go down, with all hands, with their flag-ship.

EM

Who Guards the Guardians?

A group of murderous robbers known as the *gang des postiches* (false hair mob - they wore false beards), hunted by the French police for five years, have been captured in the act of holding up a bank in Lyons. It turns out that they are all serving policemen, including four of the detectives assigned to hunt them down.

Crime, who commits it and why? Criticisms of law and those who enforce it

that they have no say in the law, they have no way of holding an opinion without breaking the law. Many aren't too respectful of the law, but are aware of its thoroughness. They will be caught up with and made to pay money that they don't have. Through this fear many people will give up. Giving up doesn't have to be necessary, although in today's society it's hard not to. Poll tax riots might warm your heart but it didn't achieve a great deal. Mass non-payment would be the only real solution.

At this point I can tie the issue of the poll tax in with law in general. Law can only be faced by mass resistance in the community itself. Violent acts might well be necessary in some situations

What are crimes if 'law and order' prevails?

A point to clear up is that a lot of things are legally categorised as being an act of crime, but a lot of crime quite simply isn't attended to. Law control agencies have deemed them legitimate. So what is a 'crime'? — Refusing to pay poll tax, stealing to feed a hungry child, pensioners not paying their heating bill (not a hungry child, use their life savings), a person using soft drugs in the privacy of their own home, etc.

What is this legitimised crime? — Corporate crime (millions get lost every year without ever finding a thief, it makes working class crime look like a drop in the ocean!), white collar crime (middle classes stealing from work anything from a pencil to false expenses, adding up to thousands per annum in some cases), 'gay' bashing, racial hatred, etc.

One form of 'crime' could be said to pin down the part of society which needs most help and gripping its neck firmly. Here 'crime' is committed through need. In the other section,

those who already have the best deal are being helped to fulfil their greed. Other elements of this section show gross 'overlooking' by the law enforcement agencies of areas where their assistance might actually be needed.

The law serves the ruling classes who use it to their advantage. It works against the rest of us making us as 'criminal' as we dare to try and get part of what it ours.

Crime is a concept which we have no need for other than to say that some things should not be allowed. On the whole these acts are caused by capitalism. Theft is wrong, but taking what you need is not. Inequality allows the rich to get richer and prevents the poor from alleviating themselves from their burden.

Crime is to break moral standards, but these morals can only be built in a society where there is a notion of equality. At which point crimes of a less class-based nature can be tackled with.

The police force

The police force is not necessary in an anarchist society. Inequality causes crime, once the inequality is lifted 99% of all crime will disappear. What crime does exist will be dealt with by the communities themselves.

Perhaps the most offensive thing about the whole system of law in our society is the police force. What is more worrying is that the majority of the people who are police on the street level are working class. They are working for what works against them! They don't get a pardon from their acts and should be discouraged from entry. The families they come from should disown them, also their friends should stop

calling round, they should be made to see that they are not serving anything but the ruling classes. They are not the backbone to 'stable' society. In some cases it is the police who actually cause crime and instability. Their presence in working class communities is often so dense that they can cause 'crime' and violence. For proof of this look at any riot in the last ten years — Toxteth, Brixton, miners strike, etc.

The police force is a major source of 'crime' itself, in all senses of the word. After all the police force's members are part of an unequal society, this is only to be expected.

To conclude, the police force operate to reinforce the inequalities caused by capitalism.

There is no need for police in an anarchist society (in an anarchist society it would no longer be necessary to use words like 'police' although it doesn't necessarily mean that there won't be some form of decentralised jury system. It would be as far away from an organisation as possible although it becomes obvious that there does need to be a rational and objective system of crime surveillance). We can start to keep the police out of our communities now, as they rely on our co-operation and civility. If we're openly anti-police yet at the same time give them no cause for immediate action, they will leave us alone. If the police threaten our communities our resistance will grow stronger.

We need to create caring communities where informal networks of crime reporting can appear. Communities where the definition of crime is decided by itself and regulated by itself. Leaving aside the pathetic attempt of the police to create 'Neighbourhood Watch' schemes. Police help is not needed.

Miles Smith

Pornish?

In a season when the 'Free World' is being regaled with TV images of the peoples of Russia queuing up for their limited supplies of food one is daily instructed that in a share-owning democracy a queue is alien to the Western way of life except for the unemployed, those without money and the bar in the White Hart pub. Yet one's gorge must rise when one views the Town and his frozen, frau outside the Royal Academy in Piccadilly in a queue stretching into the early winter darkness to purchase tickets to view the daubs of a very minor painter Claude Monet. As Impressionists they were the lads with the Chinese White and a touch of pink for, to requote those 'doing Art', they captured the light as it flooded across fields or buildings but, as with Chinese watercolours, they did no more than capture the surface reflections of the scene before them. I applaud the Royal Academy sales organisation for they have done a sales hype as always that the Tory party might envy for they coaxed a queue that if it was that length outside a Moscow food shop would have triggered off a blood-letting revolutionary repeat. And why was the Town and his shivering wife curled in that queue in the courtyard of the Royal Academy? To pay to view a series of Rouen Cathedral knocked off at various times of the days when one doubts if hardly anyone in the long Royal Academy queue would have bothered to travel to an art gallery if any of these shallow paintings had been, as they have, on free gallery commercial viewing. If I rant with the voice of bias then do not invite me to your New Year party were it not for the fact that the hard nosed dealers who flog mine and others genius are having some slight trouble trying to give the works of the French Impressionists away. Yea even to the deserving poor, queries the Town for Sotheby's sale of Impressionist and Modern pictures left 59% unsold. Blame is placed on Christie's and the New York art mafia when reserve prices had to be slashed to flog the daubs while in Christie's part two sale 65% went back under the counter as unsellable. I have always regarded the Impressionists as no more than good little earners for the international art market dealers. Pleasant trivia to decorate greeting cards. While the Town and his frostbitten frau queue to pay to view Monet at the Royal Academy an extremely worthwhile exhibition of

Impressionism and its , as the police might unworthily say, criminal associates are on free public viewing within the National Gallery a ten minute walk from the Royal Academy. And there for the free viewing of the public within their public gallery is ol' Claude Monet's 'The Beach at Trouville' plus all of "the school of" and a more interesting and worthwhile exhibition of a minor period and style of European painting.

But we few, we magnificent few, on press day drank of the wine, admired the exhibition and Mollie smiled at me. Only time is the ultimate judge on the ultimate value of anything but in any contemporary society false values are created when State or private vested interest hoard their rubbish and tell the unfortunate art teachers of the world to tell their pupils that this, as with the Impressionists, are major works of art because the building that houses them is important. Yea comrades even to the bookshelves. The 'free' capitalist market, mein little dauber butterfly kissed with genius, is just as false. It was the fact that Egon Schiele's portrait of Tony Rieger sold for £220,000 and a Georg Grosz for £187,000 that pleased me, for I can recall being in a small off Bond Street gallery while a Georg Grosz watercolour nude was removed from the small art gallery on a 'phoned in rumour that the police would be visiting the gallery regarding an obscenity complaint by a 'member' of the public. It was a hoax but the frightened art gallery owner removed the Georg Grosz painting. The Royal Academy has made amends over its Impressionism exhibition by a fine exhibition of the paintings of Egon Schiele who kicked off this mortal coil in 1918. As an Austrian youth he watched his father die of syphilis and it is claimed had an incestuous affair with his sister while taking more than an academic interest in male and female masturbation. He served a short spell in the period slammer for alleged rape and had a homosexual affair with a friend while, as part of his artistic career, he was charged but found not guilty of showing pornographic drawings to children within his studio. They can now be viewed within the Royal Academy Schiele exhibition but no heavy breathing comrades for in 1990 they are just brilliant line drawings. All the forgoing concerning Schiele can be written off as no more than the normal life of a young Austrian youth, but what is of sad interest is that in 1912 the Austrian social establishment condemned

Schiele's work as pornographic and in 1990 there are those who still dismiss and condemn it by that same judgement. They are brilliant line drawings that bring to life on the page a figure in its animal appetite and its human fear. They exist only in the line drawing for to remove that line leaving only the few moulding coloured brush strokes means that the figure no longer exists, only a slight coloured abstract. They were the product of a society that had gone into wealthy decay for it is the world of Oscar Wilde and the Greenery Yellowy period when it was the pleasure and the game to shock the bourgeois when the new rich demanded their dirty paintings in the form of the naked virgin tied to the rocks while the knight in armour worked on the problem. But Wilde and Schiele taunted the Establishment, and Wilde died in foolish misery and Schiele coughed to death with Spanish Flu. For the Germans such as Grosz there was no humour

and their nude women raged against a corrupt and vile society and in this 1990 age when greed without pity is now held as the highest social virtue one knows that it is the paintings of Georg Grosz that transcends time for us. It is to the credit of Brian Sewell that he demands that we recognise that art outlives the social pornography of the day for Sewell wrote that "we damn the pornographer too readily without recognising that his work is as old as art and often part of its purpose" and in my small measure I endorse that and when I hear the canting authoritarians calling upon the State to use its physical arm to stop those who would smoke, allow their dogs to shit, eat meat, read *The Sun* newspaper or read/view/produce what they claim is pornographic and all for my protection I cry but it is you who we fear for you are the mindless authority.

Arthur Moyse

News from Angel Alley

Greetings to all our readers for an active 1991 for peace and anarchy (as we understand it and not as repeated ten times a day by the media). 1990 has been our busiest year in all departments of our activities. We thought December 1989 was a good month — well, December 1990 has surpassed our expectations with income from all sources (subs, literature sales and donations) up by more than £2,300. For the whole year and including the bookshop sales our income for 1990 is £15,000 up on 1989, which confirms our last News notes in which we were calling for more comrades and friends:

1. Giving up more of their time to write for *Freedom* and *The Raven*.
2. To canvass local bookshops to supply them with our journals on a sale or return basis and do all the necessary collecting of unsold copies and money and from time to time forwarding the cash to Freedom Press.
3. To organise Alternative Book Fairs. The third one in Hadleigh (Suffolk) held last month was not as financially successful as one would have liked — still, we were able to meet old friends and make new ones, as well as selling £190 worth of literature. Last but not least, the local bookseller in the High Street is now stocking *Freedom* and *The Raven*.

We optimistically await your response. If we are to create an alternative press it's no use waiting for W.H. Smith, Menzies, Waterstones and all the other supermarkets in the new look book and periodicals empire to offer to distribute anarchist literature. We have to do it at a local level.

The Freedom Press Distributors book sale announced elsewhere in this issue is, we hope, an inducement to all our readers to take some of our stock onto their bookshelves. We are not just offering as the commercial booksellers do the titles that don't sell. We believe in all the titles we publish or distribute and know that in due course they will all find readers, and then in most cases if the finances are there we reprint. No, the reason for having our sale is in the first place to make room for new publications. At the moment our stock is housed in three premises, including our long-suffering binder's, but we are fortunate that all the premises are in London which makes it possible to replenish stocks in Angel Alley without too much delay. And of course by transferring some of our stock to your bookshelves we can accumulate the cash to produce more Freedom Press literature. So take advantage of Freedom Press Distributor's book sale.

We haven't included our overseas subscribers because there are not enough of the 1990 catalogues left, but as soon as the new catalogue is printed copies will be sent out to them and similar discounts offered.

We have been touched by the encouraging, appreciative remarks accompanying many reader's renewals of their subscriptions to both journals. Editors of political journals cannot please everybody and so we expect to get our ration of brickbats, but we are not so case-hardened that we cannot purr when we receive the bouquets! One reader in particular just recently told us that the first item he read was this column because it gave a feeling of personal contact with us at Freedom Press. We only hope that many readers will feel the same for this indeed is the purpose of this column, which this time with all those wonderful donations will be more like two columns!

DONATIONS

1st - 24th December 1990

Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund

Douglas PC £5, London NW11 RM £20, London NW8 NIB £10, Hitchin LA £20, Harrow MB £7, Brixham FY £10, Eichstatt RU £2, Bristol APC £5, London DR £500, Pinner ROM £2, Poole NB £2, Hove JY £3, London NW1 AM £5, Stockport HW £10, Wolverhampton JL £2, Nayland AG £25, Cleveland TE £2, Camberley S £6, Vallejo Ca DK £10, London N12 NW £25, Ilford TAS £6, Perth ZK £4, Keighley RG £4, Albury AFS £2, Teignmouth MD £5, Retford EO £100, London SE26 JAB £5, London SE3 PJW £6, Orpington CRP £6, Hove HC £5, London SW2 WHG £6, Valparaiso Ind LO £5, Oban GVC £6, Sheffield IFD £5, Polstead DP £5, Gillingham LR £10, Stirling AD £5, Hartfield OM £2, Lymington MS £2, Bristol CJP £11, Lancaster JA £15, London N4 LF £5.

Total = £891.00
1990 Total = £1939.85

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Total = £155.00
1990 Total = £950.95

Raven Deficit Fund (first list)

London SW7 DLL £27, Douglas PC £2, Hitchin LA £7, Brixham FY £7, Liverpool SC £9, Pinner ROM £3, Hove JY £3, London NW1 AM £2, Tokyo GK £10, Stockport HW £10, Hong Kong RHP £7, Stretford NB £9, London N13 NG £4, Perth ZK £4, Keighley RG £3, Teignmouth MD £5, Guernsey LP £4, London E10 BM £4, Lancaster JA £10.

Total = £130.00

FREEDOM PRESS DISTRIBUTORS BOOK SALE 1991

15th January - 31st January

With this issue of *Freedom* we are including our 1990 catalogue and are offering a discount of 25% (a quarter) off the published price on all titles (subject to availability — one or two titles may have gone out of print).

This offer is being made only to inland subscribers and callers at the Freedom Press Bookshop. On orders by post under £10 retail, please add £1 for postage. Orders over £10 and under £25 add £2, and all order over £25 add £3 for postage. Cash with order please.

New titles not in the 1990 catalogue which are included in the sale:

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The Raven (all issues 1-12 available) £2.50 each

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Alexander Berkman *The Bolshevik Myth* £3.95

As well as the following Pluto titles:

Rudolf Rocker *Anarcho-Syndicalism* £8.95

Alex Comfort *Authority and Delinquency* £8.95

Corrections and price changes in the 1990 catalogue:

Why Work? Argument for the Leisure Society new edition now £4.50 and not £3.50

History of the Makhnovist Movement is listed as 32 pages, when it is in fact 284 pages, which explains why it costs £5

Marxism, Freedom and the State is listed as 453 pages, when it should read 64 pages, the £1.50 price is correct

Please ignore the Subscription Rates on the back cover of the catalogue as well as the Sales Information on the inside front cover, apart from how to get to Freedom Press Bookshop — we are still there!

All orders and cheques/POs should be made out to Freedom Press and sent to 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

(Note: all prices above are before discount)

On the nature of anarchist organisation

Dear Editors
I do not disagree with any of the points expressed in Tom Jennings's piece (15th December).
Of course it is important that there should be a sense of unity among anarchist groups. What worries me is the tendency of those anarchists who set up 'organisations' to marginalise those anarchists who decline to join. Sometimes, for instance, they have described themselves as 'revolutionary anarchists', and non-joiners as 'liberals'. This is to sabotage the sense of unity among anarchists, not to enhance it.
Different anarchists have different visions of society without bosses, from peasant-subsistence to super-technological, from autonomous small communities to a centralised world economy controlled without coercion. In anarchist theory these difference of imagination are unimportant. We all agree that we cannot dictate how the inhabitants of a free society organise their affairs.
But differences in how we imagine anarchy have some influence on practical organisation. We tend to 'create the new society within the shell of the old'. Those who imagine the free society as having a permanent organisational structure set up anarchist groups with a permanent organisational structure. Those who imagine the free society as people working together as and when it seems useful, organise themselves in that way.
If we recognise that the difference in how we imagine the free society is unimportant, we can see that the way we organise ourselves is equally unimportant. What matters is the effort we put into the struggle towards a free society. Whether or not we have membership cards, or whatever, is a total irrelevance.

Donald Room

The Relevance of Orwell

Dear Editors
In *Freedom* (1st December 1990) the article by Hywel Jones, 'Is Orwell still relevant?', raises several questions.
Jones states: "... the 1917 Russian Revolution ... was that if an elite of dedicated communists could gain power ... they would gradually create through education ... 'a new socialist man' ... decent, unselfish, etc. To be fair, Marxist-Leninists *did* try to create such a paragon". Is Jones trying to tell us that by brutally destroying all dissent, by destroying the workers' councils, by throwing anarchists into prison, by executing anyone who dared to disagree, by slaughtering the peasant Mahknovists and the workers of Kronstadt, and by driving millions to death in the slave labour camps, the Marxist-Leninists were trying to create some paragon of socialist perfection?
Jones continues: "... the Soviet Marxists were faced with gigantic problems ... backwardness ... climate ... uncooperative ethnic and religious groups ... dissensions ... foreign hostility ..." By repeating this worn-out bolshevik myth, is Jones overlooking the possibility that the real 'gigantic problem' was the 'elite' themselves?
Jones compares the "... politeness of Muscovites and the cleanliness of their city ..." to "... dirty London or nasty New York". Would Jones also have been impressed with the cleanliness and the non-nastiness of the slave-labour camps? And would he have been pleased with the politeness of their slow-dying inmates? And why would most Muscovites jump at the chance to migrate to "dirty London or nasty New York"?
Jones goes on: "During it [the Second World War] and for a short time afterwards Marxist-Leninism made such gains that it truly seemed the ideology of the future". What "gains" is Jones talking about? The brutalisation of humanity and the imprisonment of anyone who

Direct Democracy Network

Dear *Freedom*
The Direct Democracy Network — this will be an international project which aims to produce some practical analysis of direct democracy (its strengths and weaknesses) with a special interest in mass organisations which use rotation of delegates as a way of increasing the general level of participation (e.g. Spanish dockers' Co-ordinadora and the CGT-CNT branch at Michelin in the Basque Country).
We would like to hear from anyone with practical experience or who is interested in giving their criticisms of draft texts and doing translations — where possible we will work in Spanish as well as English — or in any way getting involved. Various already existing texts on the subject will be sent to anyone interested. Contact me at 39 Vesta Road, Brockley, London SE4 2NJ.
Mick Parkin

questioned the authority of the state?
Jones says: "... I'll say this about Russia and East Germany and the rest: they did at least *try* ..." Try what? Try to destroy every last vestige of independent thought and free initiative?
Jones asks: "What had America ever done but worship the dollar and never give a sucker an even break?" Could he find an answer to his xenophobic question by opening a few history books?
He asks: "Who nowadays reads the social ideas of H.G. Wells or Lenin or Shelley or Sartre or Rousseau?" By what justification does he drop a bolshevik butcher like Lenin into the same bag with Wells, Shelley, Sartre or Rousseau?
And what have these tiresome, stereotyped apologetics for the state-powered brutalities of the Leninists-Trotskyists-Stalinists to do with a comment on the relevance or Orwell?
Lynn Olson
Valparaiso, Ind.

I enclose a couple of poems I've written lately about the Gulf crisis which you're welcome to use in *Freedom* if you like. 'Ten Holes for a Soldier' has been published in *The Guardian* and 'Blood and Oil' in *Tribune*, but they were meant to be published together. I've been reading them around the country and Pete Moser, the musical director of Welfare State International up in Barrow in Furness, set 'Blood and Oil' to music and we were singing it last weekend in Lancaster.

Adrian Mitchell

Ten Holes for a Soldier

Two holes were the size of the holes in his ears.
They were rounded and as they opened and shut
They seemed to make a sound like sighing.

Two holes were the size of his nostrils,
Close together and dark inside
And breathing out a smell of something rotting.

Two holes were the size of his eyes
And they were trying to clench themselves
To hold back the red tears.

One hole was the size of his mouth
And it cried out
With the voice of an old child.

One hole was the size of the hole
In the end of his cock
And it was skewered by a white-hot, turning gimlet.

One hole was the size of the hole in his arse,
Small and wincing away from the light.
And it went very deep.

Petrol was poured into all his holes.
All of his holes were set on fire.

They covered his holes with a clean uniform.
They flew him home. There was a flag.
In the village he loved, they put him in a hole.

Blood and Oil

To the British Armed Forces

And once again the politicians
Whose greatest talent is for lying
Are sending you where they're afraid to go
To do their killing and their dying.

You are young and you've been trained to fight,
You're brave and well-equipped and loyal.
That's why they're sending you to Hell —
Blood and Oil.

It's not to defend the Falklands sheep
Or keep Christians apart in Ireland,
But to sit in a tank until you are moved
On a giant chessboard of desert sand.

You're not there to fight against tyranny,
Or free hostages or defend British soil
But for economics, the dollars of death —
Blood and Oil.

And the soldiers you fight will be young men
With no reason to kill, young men like you
With beautiful families back home
And some with wives and children too.

But no politicians will be there
When the lungs tear and the arteries boil —
They'll be filmed with survivors in hospital —
Blood and Oil

Yes, once again the politicians
Whose greatest talent is for lying
Are sending young men where old men dare not go
To do their killing and their dying —

Blood and Oil
Blood and Oil
Blood and Oil

Adrian Mitchell

Anarchist Fundamentalists?

Dear Editors
I want to comment on 'Anarchist Fundamentalists?', the interesting piece of polemic directed at Nicolas Walter in *Freedom* vol. 51 no. 23 (1st December). In doing so, I am assuming that this article was broadly supported by all the editors, since it was unsigned. I will make the further assumption that the editorial in *The Raven* no. 11 shares the same editorial support since it too was unsigned.
The writer of 'Anarchist Fundamentalists' argues strongly against " 'updating' our social, economic and political views so that they can be 'acceptable' as we approach the 21st century". He or She then goes on to imply that since anarchist ideas are not generally popular, the role of anarchists is largely to *change public perceptions* rather than mold anarchist values and assumptions to fit (misguided) public perceptions. But the writer of *The Raven* no. 11 editorial, commenting on the fact that the Communists have dropped 'traditional' notions of the 'working class', suggests that it is "sad to see that some anarchists in the '90s are using the same worn out clichés used by the communists in the '30s". The reason it is 'sad' that some comrades still interpret society in terms of class struggle is because the general public supposedly see their identity in terms of *consumption* rather than class.
Surely there is a contradiction between these two editorial views. I think this relates to an issue I discussed briefly in *Freedom* vol. 51 no. 24 ("The poll tax struggle: its relation to anarchist theory"). We start with theory, assumptions and values; to what extent do we compromise

these principles in order to be popular? Clearly we don't want to be dogmatic; but neither do we want to fall into the trap of accepting popular notions of economic and social relations between people which may be misleading. While we must obviously keep an ear to the ground, as the writer of 'Anarchist Fundamentalists?' argues, some aspects of anarchism are essential and cannot be ditched in order to be fashionable.

Johnny Yen

They're all human

Dear Editors
With reference to Owen Maroney's letter in vol. 51 no. 23 ("They're all human"). While it may be true that some people from the start interpret everything in class terms and some people do not, I would argue that since the anti poll tax campaign began *some* people are coming to see events such as this increasingly, or for the first time, in terms of class. I speak personally, of course, for I don't know how many others have had their 'class consciousness' raised by experiences in the anti poll tax campaign. The campaign has attracted many class struggle types as well as many who have never been involved or interested in politics before. My statement that we are seeing an "open class war" refers to the violent clashes that have now taken place between the police and many anti poll tax protesters, many of whom rightly regard the police as "embodiments of the state" (and hence 'protectors' of the poll tax). But I do concede that it may be too simplistic to 'read off' class consciousness from struggles that appear to fit the model; the

Thanks for the letters

Keep sending them in!

question of how many of those who fought with the police on the anti poll tax demos has become an increasingly class conscious as a result is an empirical one which is not easily resolved.
'Violence' against bailiffs (supergluing locks, etc.) may not bring down the state, I agree, but mass non-payment is *not* illegal (it's a *civil* offence, not a criminal one) and furthermore it may not be enough alone. A lot of people are ignorant of the quite limited legal powers of poll tax bailiffs. Bailiffs play on people's ignorance (with threats, etc.) to get into people's homes. Attack may therefore be the best means of defence on some occasions.
Finally, I am not wholly convinced by Owen Maroney's argument that "we're not going to get very far" (in abolishing the state) until we work out why people join such organisations as the police and the National Front. I don't think that there is any *one* reason why people join these organisations. And while violence may sometimes be counter-productive, neither is rational argument alone likely to be very effective in dissuading people from making reactionary choices.
'Demo Hijacker'

MEETINGS

ACF Dayschool

Saturday
2nd February 1991
Conway Hall, Red Lion
Square, London WC1
(Holborn tube)

Timetable

10.00 - 10.30 : Registration
10.30 - 10.45 : Introduction
10.45 - 12.30 : Eastern Europe — an analysis of the current situation including the economic crisis, 'new' governments, pro-capitalism, and history from 1917.
12.30 - 1.30 : Lunch
1.30 - 3.00 : Anarchist Communism — the history of anarchist communism, its ideas and their relation to Marxism, role of the revolutionary organisation, and anarchist communism in practice today.
OR Poll Tax — examination of events so far, demos and riots, the Federation and independent initiatives.
3.00 - 3.15 : Tea break

FREEDOM fortnightly

ISSN 0016 0504

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

Printed by Aldgate Press, London E1

3.15 - 5.00 : Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism — what is the relationship between anti-imperialism, nationalism and libertarian communism. Discussion around Iraq and Ireland.

Cost: £3 waged / £2 unwaged

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Please try to book in advance and also send details of creche facilities needed or any other special requirements to:

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11th January - 'Propagating the Libertarian Message' (speaker J.M. Alventosa Ferri)
18th January - 'Financing Anarchism: Will Anarchists Have to Reinvent the Poll Tax?' (General discussion)
25th January - 'Public Transport and State Centralism' (speaker Peter Neville)
1st February - 'Anarchism and the Egoism of Max Stirner' (speaker S.E. Parker)
8th February - General discussion
15th February - 'The Thatcherite Phenomena and After: Anarchist Alternatives?' (Speaker Peter Neville)
22nd February - 'Building the Anarchist City' (speaker Andrew Lainton)
1st March - General discussion
8th March - 'Anarcho-Pacifism' (speaker Marten Low)
15th March - General discussion
22nd March - 'Anarchism in Spain: The '90s' (speaker J.M. Alventosa Ferri).
19th April - 'Anarchism and the National Curriculum' (speaker Chris Draper)
26th April - General discussion
3rd May - 'Race: The Problem for Libertarians' (speaker Peter Neville)
10th May - General discussion

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number 12 on Communication
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