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FIFTY PENCE

"High hopes were once formed of democracy; but democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people, by the people, for the people. It has been found out."

Oscar Wilde

The Vultures are all Ready to Descend

The undeclared Gulf war between America and Iraq — or to judge by the media reports — the carpet bombing of Iraq by the American air force which apparently meets with no resistance is now also being directed to so-called 'military objectives' in Kuwait itself. After the 'allies' were 'invited' by Saudi Arabia to 'protect' the rulers of that dictatorship and the oil, of course (for a substantial 'fee') and by the Emir of Kuwait and his hangers-on to drive out the Iraqi invaders from their 'beloved' land (also for a substantial 'fee').

The 'allies' at the time of writing have not yet set foot

on Kuwaiti territory — they have certainly contributed to the destruction of Kuwait city and whatever the propaganda may say about the oil wells being set on fire by the Iraqis, if the 'allies' mean business when they discharge their bombs at the rate of thousands of tons at a time surely some of them must explode on oil wells. What else is a target? Of course, the Republican Army, the crack regiments of Iraq. But they don't seem to be sure that they pin-point even them.

The war that was going to 'liberate' Kuwait, that was going to be over in a day or two, then a week or two, now a month or two, appears to be much more successful in destroying Iraq's and Kuwait's infrastructure. Compared with the 'allies' carpet bombing in Iraq and Kuwait the reported Iraqis' looting, raping and other 'crimes' in occupied Kuwait will prove to be peanuts when finally the truth about the 'allies' carpet bombing is revealed.

In the last issue of *Freedom* we suggested reasons why both sides suppressed news of casualties from the carpet bombing of Baghdad. The fact that Iraq is now admitting a few thousand civilian victims as a result of *(continued on page 2)*



POST-WAR

Elementary Capitalist 'Economics' Inflation Comes Down Unemployment Goes Up!

On Thursday the British public were told that unemployment had risen by another 100,000 in one month to a whisker under the two million (there are those who say that if one really got the figures right it would be nearer three million — anyway two million is good/bad enough. On Friday we were told that inflation had gone down from 9.3% to 9%. So in the last three months inflation has come down from 10.9% to 9% and unemployment has gone up from 1,600,000 to 2,000,000 — official. Any correlation in these figures?

'Interest Rates must go Down Dramatically'

It's obvious that the industrialists and people with mortgages and the government with a deficit of payments last year of £16,000 million are all pressing for a reduction in interest rates. On the other hand savers are quite happy with a high interest rate. The banks couldn't care less: they get their 2% or more on borrowings irrespective of whether the interest rate is 14% or 10%. It simply means that once again the big borrowers, the Murdochs and Co who run their multinational businesses on massive borrowings, benefit even when the bank rate is reduced by half a per cent.

The cartoon by John Olday first appeared in *Freedom* in June 1945, at the end of World War Two (Europe). This and other World War Two cartoons by John Olday are included in two important *Freedom Press* volumes: *World War - Cold War* 422 pages £6.95 and *Neither East Nor West* 192 pages £4.50 (post free inland, overseas please add 15%).

Opposition in Opposition

The British opposition to the Gulf War, which was discussed in the last issue, has continued to fall into disarray. As a result it has been unable to take advantage of the steady degeneration of the fighting into a long and dirty campaign with the inevitable rise in lies and casualties on both sides, while the Anglo-American war methods approach genocide and the Anglo-American war aims approach unconditional surrender.

On 11th February the regular weekly meeting of the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf, the main umbrella organisation of the movement, degenerated into a series of bitter disputes and separate meetings arguing about what the CSWG is, whether it should have an agreed policy and, if so, what it should be. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the main organisation involved, presented a list of Fifteen Demands for a Just Peace in the Middle East as a proposed minimum policy document, but this was not accepted by the majority of those present. As a result, CND and some of the other moderate organisations then held a caucus meeting which decided that this document should indeed become the official statement of policy of a reconstituted Committee and that any organisations or individuals not accepting it should be excluded. It remains to be seen whether this rather crude and clumsy manoeuvre will prove successful or will provoke further faction-fighting.

The double problem is that the leftist groups involved in the opposition are really interested not so much in the issue of the Gulf War as in their private sectarian battles, and that the Broad Left coalition in physical control of the CSWG has adopted a line which avoids the obvious absurdity of advocating victory for Iraq only to fall into several other equal absurdities. The fifteen-point statement is badly organised and badly written, much too long and too vague for its purpose, full of sentimental aspirations rather than political

arguments, and ridiculously idealistic about the status of the United Nations and the value of international sanctions, conferences and agreements.

The situation is reminiscent of that in the nuclear disarmament movement some thirty years ago, when CND became respectable and responsible, abandoned its original fairly simple demands, and embarked on a series of complex policy statements which divided rather than united the rank and file — a precedent later followed by the more radical Committee of 100 as soon as it too had lost the initiative. The differences today are that there is no mass movement in the country independent of the London leadership — whether moderate or leftist — and that there is no large libertarian component committed both to total non-alignment and to direct action.

At the same time, there have been many practical complaints about the organisation of the demonstrations against the Gulf War — both the marches and the rallies — and especially about such things as the lack of singing and music, the bad behaviour of some contingents and the bad quality of some speakers, and the general low tone and morale of the participants. Veterans have even been heard to remember with nostalgia such figures as Peggy Duff and George Clark, who for all their faults did know how to make big demonstrations work.

Few anarchists can feel comfortable with the new policy statement of the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf, which largely relies on nation states to solve the problems largely caused by nation states, and which tends to tie the peace movement to the left of the Labour Party and the fragments of the Communist Party. But more anarchists should nevertheless try to take part in the movement, so as to reinforce genuine opposition both to war and to the social and political factors which make war possible and inevitable, and

also to encourage and support more appropriate methods of action.

There are all sorts of groups holding all sorts of meetings and producing all sorts of publications — the best being the weekly *War Report* produced by “a group of independent journalists” — but the general result is confusion. The best chance for constructive development is joint action. During the past fortnight there have been several regional actions — including one on 17th February at Fairford, the British base for American B52 bombers — which have helped to stimulate opposition around the country. The next National Demonstration will take place in London on Saturday, 2nd March, once again marching from the Embankment to a rally in Hyde Park. We must hope that the organisers and organisations have begun to learn the lessons of the past seven months, and that the many individuals and groups opposing the

war have begun to mobilise on a larger scale and in a more effective way.

We have a double task. We must try to overlook the many trivial differences among ourselves and between us and other groups, and at the same time explain our particular position politely but clearly. There is no point in following our leaders, and discussing military victory or defeat or comparing economic or physical sanctions or bewailing human or environmental casualties. The only point is to build a simple principled opposition to the Gulf War and to develop a critical resistance to the system of power and violence which leads to war. The first step is to stop this war; the next step is to stop the next one. The current peace negotiations may achieve the former, but far more is needed to achieve the latter.

NW

CENSORS EVERYWHERE

How much ordinary people learn about the Gulf conflict varies from country to country. Under totalitarian regimes like those of Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia, ‘news’ is restricted to whatever the government wants people to hear, true or false. Saudis were not told about Iraq’s annexation of Kuwait until five days after it had happened, presumably because the government needed time to decide whether to welcome it or object to it.

Some other regimes, such as those of Israel and Egypt, assume the legal right to total censorship, but use it with discretion. It was an Egyptian journalist who revealed that he had telephoned Iraqi soldiers in Khafji, when the official story was that the Iraqi expeditionary force had been defeated before reaching the town.

Journalists from the United States and

Britain are not subject to formal censorship, apart from a ban on precise information of potential use to the enemy. But there are two ways in which knowledge is denied to the interested public.

One is the secretiveness of official sources. In Britain there is the new Official Secrets Act, which forbids any government employee to say anything at all without prior approval from the government. In America, there is a superstition among the military that it was journalists who turned the public against their atrocious war in Vietnam, so they tell them as little ‘negative news’ as possible. Reporters in the war zone are accompanied everywhere by military bodyguards, whose commanders are known to tot up ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ points in the reports, and praise or blame the bodyguards accordingly.

The other is the patriotism of the news media, which leads them to ‘support our boys’ by hiding the unpleasant truth. It has been decided, for instance, not to show television pictures of badly wounded soldiers, or large numbers of allied corpses. On 21st January, when Iraq broadcast ‘interviews’ with captured airmen, woodenly reciting the lines they had been given, the American television network CBS decided not to relay the pictures to American viewers (they changed their minds when their competitors refused to co-operate in this particular censorship).

The British Broadcasting Corporation has always banned the broadcasting of the songs which soldiers are forbidden to sing by Queen’s Regulations: ‘MacAvity’, ‘Subla Bay’ and ‘Bury me out in the Desert’ (one about a soldier shooting an unpleasant officer, and the others about soldiers dying in battle). In celebration of the Gulf conflict, the BBC has added 67 more songs to its prohibited list. These include ‘Boom-bang-a-bang’ (a nonsense song which won a Eurovision Song Contest), ‘Walk Like an Egyptian’ and, of course, ‘Give Peace a Chance’.

DR

The Vultures are all Ready to Descend

(continued from page 1)

the American sorties, is that the Iraqi politicians think that they will gain from world opinion without affecting morale among their people. They are probably right, but so far as we anarchists are concerned it only increases our contempt for all ruling classes who show concern for human lives only for base political advantage. The fact is that when we, the public, will learn of the real number of victims in the massive American air raids, the media will have by then distracted the public’s attention to other things. Only now, forty-five years after the events, are we learning about the treatment of German prisoners of war by another bunch of ‘allies’. James Bacque’s recently published book *Other Losses, an investigation into the mass deaths of German prisoners at the hands of the French and Americans after World War Two* (MacDonald, London 1990, £13.95) is a harrowing account of the sadistic treatment, especially by the Americans, of hundreds of thousands of German military prisoners left to die from starvation as a result of withholding food supplies which were available through the Red Cross. It’s only the defeated who are the ‘war criminals’. The carpet bombers of Hamburg and Dresden, the atom bombers of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are the heroes of that war of genocide, just as the carpet bombers of Baghdad will in due course sit in judgement on their defeated Iraqi enemy (their former ally in the war against Iran who are now being wooed to join the crusade for the defenceless small nations!)

A close second to the hypocrisy of this Crusade for the ‘defenceless’ small nations has been the business-like

approach by the Western Crusaders to extort as much as they can in hard cash both from their hosts — Saudi Arabia and the Kuwaiti playboys in exile — as well as from the reluctant ‘allies’ — such as Japan and Germany — for their services. That is not only for the hardware but possibly for the lives of their servicemen. We haven’t had details of the negotiations between the American salesmen and their hosts, but business is brisk and the billions of dollars are coming in fast both from the Kuwaiti casino playboys and the hand-chopping Saudi Arabian royalty. And Douglas Hurd has been touting contributions from the Germans and the Japanese, and with \$100 million from one and \$300 million from another and extra profits on the oil market things are looking up.

But much more important for the economy are the contracts to rebuild Kuwait (and why not Iraq?) when the ‘allies’ have finished destroying it all. This is not anarchist fantasy. The businessmen are already negotiating contracts. Obviously America will get the lion’s share (just as she is getting billions of dollars from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to ‘liberate’ and ‘protect’ them, compared with the millions poor old Douglas Hurd can claim for Britain’s services). It is estimated that to reinstate Kuwait city for the privileged rulers will cost a mere \$100 billion. But there is also the military side to the post-Gulf war. According to *The Guardian* of 5th February: “A secret deal worth more than £1 billion to build a new naval dockyard for Kuwait and airfields and barracks for Saudi Arabia has been provisionally agreed between Whitehall and Arab leaders”.

This will mean “hundreds of millions of pounds worth of work for British construction companies hit hard by the recession”. We don’t need to be told that war is good for business. Even before the war Saudi Arabia had already ordered ‘large numbers of Tornado aircraft’ as part of a £1,000 million arms deal. But this is peanuts compared with the “£20,000 million worth of contracts to restore transport and water and sewerage services to the region”, for which the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign Office have set up a joint committee with engineering and construction companies to promote British bids.

War is a dirty, destructive business. But for some, including the Merchants of Death, it is a very profitable dirty business. Will mankind never learn that war only provides rich pickings for the business vultures? The rest of us are always its victims.

Saddam’s Palace built with British taxes

Our contemporary *Private Eye* has unearthed a press release issued by the Northern Ireland Office two years ago.

It boasts of how Mivan Overseas Ltd had landed “the most prestigious contract” in the Middle East, to build an administrative palace for President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, with “60mm-thick bullet-resistant glass...specialist doors and windows, mechanical and electrical services”.

The contract included diesel generating

stations, since power stations had been attacked by Iran during the Iran/Iraq war, “and this prompted the Iraqis to provide strategic factories with their own source of power”.

The work was “supported under the 40/30 marketing scheme” (of the Northern Ireland Industrial Development Board) “and through the work of the British Overseas Trade Board”. That is to say, it was heavily subsidised by two different government departments using tax money.

The Minister in charge of the Northern Ireland Office at the time was Tom King, now Minister in charge of the British war effort.

The 15th January Anti-war

For a week before this date, KPFA, the listener-sponsored Pacifica Foundation radio station (which incidentally had been started over forty years ago by a small group of militant war resisters after their release from prison), had repeatedly announced that a demonstration was being called for this date protesting the accelerating movement of the American government toward starting a shooting war against Iraq. The protest was scheduled to begin at 6am in front of the Federal Building in San Francisco. The call was put out by an amalgam of peace, religious and labour groups. By the time I arrived at the site of the demonstration from my home 35 miles up country, there already were thousands of people in the streets surrounding the building. The atmosphere crackled with the energy being generated. Groups of protesters marching, singing and chanting anti-war slogans, were circling the building with large protest signs. Anti-war songs and chants filled the air. The protesting group had stopped all traffic for blocks around. At the back of the building a large number of women demonstrators had obstructed the back doors and I was told that many of them had already been arrested.

The main entrances to the building had been sealed off by individuals in surplus US Army body bags (surplus body bags?) lying as if dead, obstructing the doorways. These people who seemed to be a cross-section of the protesting throng in age and class, were surrounded by a cordon of helmeted, armed police and federal marshals. The crowd which continued to increase in number was predominantly young with equal numbers of men and women. There were fairly large contingents of Vietnam war veterans, religious groups, peace groups and a number of small groups affiliated with self-proclaimed Marxist Revolutionary factions. There were 'punk' groups, groups of solemn middle-aged middle class church people, and a large contingent of gay activist groups, both radical lesbian and gay rights people. In short, an amazing cross-section of the local population was represented.

The march around the building eventually encompassed almost 10,000 people. About 10am the police started to arrest the demonstrators blocking the front entrances in an effort to clear the doors. In spontaneous reaction, as the police dragged off the 'war dead' protesters in their body

bags, the supporting crowd cheered the protesters on and their places were immediately taken by others who sat down in solidarity to continue the non-violent demonstration. I was among them and was soon arrested with a large group of men and women. Later reports issued by the police indicated that more than 600 individuals were arrested this day.

We were hustled into the Federal Building where we were searched, handcuffed and then taken up into the building to a floor that contained a number of holding cells. These cells were pretty crowded and when they brought us into the prison area a great cheer of welcome went up from those who had already been arrested. I think that there were six or seven cells on this level. Our group of men was separated from the women, who were taken off to a group of cells that were out of our view. The rest of the men in the group that was arrested with me were divided up between three crowded cells. The cell they put me into was about 14ft x 20ft in area. It had been designed to hold no more than forty people. There were two benches on either side of the cell which could accommodate about twenty people. The rest of us stood. As the hours dragged on, some of us managed to find a few square feet of floor space on which to sit. The air was stale and overheated. There was an open toilet and a sink at the very back of the cell.

They kept adding new prisoners to each cell until each of the three cells in the block we were in held about sixty-five men. Every time a new group of prisoners was brought in, the three cells broke out in a spontaneous demonstration of solidarity, marked by shouts of welcome and applause. In the cell I was in, the men's ages ranged from youths in their late teens and early twenties, to myself the oldest at seventy-two. I'd say the majority of the men seemed to be in their middle thirties or their early forties. I had the impression that this age group represented people who had participated in, or who remembered the anti Vietnam war protests. Included among this age group were four Vietnam

war veterans wearing armbands proclaiming their past history. There was a small group of men in their early fifties who seemed by comportment and dress, to be middle class members of one of the peace churches. We had a couple of priests with us, one man well known for his active work in the gay community, and another young Korean priest dressed in what seemed to be a Catholic habit. We also had a large contingent of young 'gay activists'. Most of the men with whom I managed to talk told me that this was their first experience of being jailed. I marvelled at their good humour and dedication. When they complained about the overcrowded, overheated conditions that we were subjected to, I recounted some of the tactics that the 'Wobblies' developed when they were imprisoned to counter the actions of the jailers. But, since they thought we were soon to be released, although fascinated by my account they decided not to react at this time. But, they soon learned why ex-cons refer to being imprisoned as being in the 'slammer' — whenever they added another person to our cell the cell door clanged shut.

The dress of many of the younger men could be described as nouveau punk, street chic. Many tattoos were in evidence as were ears adorned with multiple earrings. I talked with one young twenty year old man, tall and handsome, who when I asked how he got involved in the demo replied that he had suddenly realised that the politicians were threatening his lifestyle if not his existence, and he joined in quite extemporaneously.

Time passed slowly, and in addition to the spontaneous outbreaks whenever new individuals were brought in to be added to our cells, the group sang many songs expressing their anti-war sentiments, songs not part of my past and therefore unfamiliar to me, just as my repertoire of 'Wobbly songs' would have been unfamiliar to them. When it became apparent that we would be held until much later in the afternoon, someone in the cell started to yell for food and soon the entire cell block started chanting 'pizza, pizza, pizza' in short staccato bursts. It was of course to

no avail, but it did create a wonderfully good humoured, charged atmosphere. Some of the people had managed to bring in rolls of printed slogans with adhesive backs that they distributed throughout the cell. These stickers soon plastered the cell walls and some were even stuck on the ceiling. Here is a sampling of the slogans passed around:

- 'Stop Violence Against Women'
- 'Saddamize Bush'
- 'Environmentalists For Peace in the Middle East'
- 'Fuck Don't Fight'
- 'Health Care Not Warfare'
- 'Visibly Queer'
- 'Promote Bisexuality'
- 'No Blood for Oil'
- 'The Government has Blood on its Hands'
- 'One AIDS Death Every Ten Minutes'
- 'Veterans Wage Peace — Peace Action Teams'
- 'International Jewish Peace Union'
- 'Support Our Troops — Bring Them Home Now! Alive!'
- 'Resist the American Way of Death'

We were finally released at about 4.30 in the afternoon, after being processed and cited. As we left, a large number of the young men who had been with me told me that they were heading for the Bay Bridge. It seemed as though their next tactic was to shut down the bridges, thus isolating the city during the rush hour. They told me that they intended to jump out into the traffic and barricade the bridge with their bodies and bring "the whole damned city to a halt". When they asked me to join them I laughingly told them that with the present state of my co-ordination I'd be lucky not to stumble and break my neck if I tried climbing onto the bridge. Later that evening the news reports told of the bridge's being shut down for several hours and of several hundred more arrests being made. The late TV news coverage showed the remarkable sight of young people evading the police who were in hot pursuit as they climbed the bridge abutments and

The Gulf and the Greens

The Gulf war is the product of two military-centralist regimes — those of Saddam Hussein and the Pentagon. It is self-evident in the case of Hussein. The Pentagon, through its C-in-C, put 200,000 troops into Saudi Arabia without any mandate from Congress and on 8th November doubled that figure, again quite arbitrarily. If Hussein had intended to attack Saudi Arabia he would have done so within days, when the way was clear. He made no move. The US build-up soon went far beyond Saudi defence. The intention clearly was war and that war is now in progress.

President Bush has set out the Pentagon's war aims. They are:

1. to destroy the chemical, biological and nuclear war potential of Saddam Hussein, a conventional war now being better than a nuclear war later,
2. to underwrite US and Western oil interests in the Gulf, and
3. to restore Kuwait's independence, in that order.

Politically the Pentagon has taken over in the US and a similar situation now threatens in the Soviet Union. An old truth is re-emerging. Some 2,370 years ago Plato, in his *Republic*, said that the Army (the Guardians) was the State. He got it right, but

we are not supposed to know! We are told by our new PM that we are not at war! Will he tell that to troops about to go into battle? Westminster has been coolly ignored by the PM exercising his vicarious monarchical powers. Whitehall and the MoD simply asked for rubber-stamping after the event.

The cover, of course, was UN Resolution 678, a piece of brazen political fixing by the US (supported by the UK), in which the Soviet Union and China were bribed or cozened into conformity and all the other UN resolutions suitably demoted.

Hussein is a killer, an international political criminal, and he has to go. Given sanctions his fellow Iraqis would have dealt with him in their own good time. They still will. It is his power over rewards and terror that keeps him going. Sanctions cut rewards and make him vulnerable. And sanctions need to be *sine die*, otherwise the way to war is wide open. And so it turned out.

Britain and the Gulf

Since 1945 Britain has been attached to the US like a limpet. It was Treasury policy as defined by Keynes — and slavishly followed by Labour and Conservative Governments alike. It began to crack a little when Britain joined the EC, but it still obtains, as the current Gulf coalition is our witness. Happily the rest of the EC, not to mention the Pope, is not so seduced or suppliant — and therein lies hope.

The Gulf war, compounded of two sets of militarists, is a gigantic mistake that the peace lobby is not going to be able to stop in the short term. Sanctions were never given a chance. Sanity has been forced to fail and we shall now only win our case when lies are drowned in innocent blood. The more and better our activity, the less the blood.

It is no use looking to the State for a remedy since the State, as the instrument of the Armed Forces, is itself the sickness. There is no way the State will deny its own nature and this is equally true of all the political parties that accept the State. "Vultures do not give milk" as Anthony Barnett put it at a recent Charter 88 meeting.

Individual MPs can rebel and some do, but there is no way now that they can structure and build their

opposition within the parameters of the machine. Their only option is to latch on to the growing extra-parliamentary initiatives — like those of the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf, CND Gulf Campaign, the 11th Hour Group and emerging Christian and other associations.

The future therefore turns upon building this people power with the help of such professionals who cannot be duped or bought. This cannot happen in 'normal' times when a touch on the tiller is all people expect. But in abnormal times, times of war and/or financial collapse, it is different. 1989 saw six insurrections, essentially non-violent, in Eastern Europe — that remains our precedent.

If the war lasts for months, with heavy losses, we can expect unprecedented politics this year. Troops will start to ask questions and when they get no answers some of them will refuse to fight. We have already seen the self-wounded on TV and heard of contrived pregnancy among the women out there. When the grunts in Vietnam refused to fight the war very soon came to an end. On the home front protest demonstrations will turn into incipient insurrection.

This time it is different. The political is personal and vice versa. Our lives, our taxes, our priorities, our personal substance (i.e. our integrity in facing the truth), our loyalties — they are all at issue.

What if traditional ballot box politics fails to work? We may face a challenge without precedent since 1648, the climactic year of the Civil War. Only this time the response will need to be non-violent, albeit militarily so, lest we produce yet another Lord Protector. We need the catalyst of NVDA (non-violent direct action). Will the 11th Hour Group do for the '90s what the Direct Action Committee and the Committee of 100 did for the '60s and the Greenham Women for the '80s?

We need to do something about our internal divisions. The cause of peace and freedom has long been its own worst enemy. How can we expect to deal with Saddam and the Pentagon when we are fighting each other? First we need to be clear and firm over the Gulf war: equal opposition to Saddam and the Pentagon, the first to be dealt with by the people of Iraq and the second by the people of the US with our support. Then we need to break with any dependence upon centralised parties. It is

good to learn from the new CND chair that the campaign has at last broken with the Labour Party — but beware of laggards!

The Green Party

The Green Party is important even if only a fifth of its 18,600 members are active. Handfuls of people can and do make history if they are at the right place at the right time with the right idea — and the energy, resources and imagination to turn it into action.

The national scene in the Green Party is interecine and its financial condition critical, but there is plenty of health and vitality locally. There will have to be drastic changes if political Greens are to turn out in strength against the destroyers of the planet, its peoples and its biosphere. The focal point of difference is surely this: is the Party to be centralist, i.e. based on General Elections, Westminster and Whitehall, or is it to be decentralist, based on grass roots activity, local, functional, area (i.e. regional), national and international?

But why fight over it? The two are different in kind and honest people are committed to one side or the other. So why not do both — *but separately*? Years of bitter experience show no one organisation can contain both without endless discord and bitter or despairing resignations. The ex-Green Party is already bigger than its parent.

Is not the reasonable thing to do — for the Party as such to carry on with its parliamentary objectives and the decentralists or confederals to hive off and form their own confederal association? They can then work together, as friends, over things like District and EC Elections and wherever they naturally overlap? But the essential line will be drawn — *the confederals will boycott the General Election*, on the grounds that the nation-state is on the way out and it is not for Greens to prop it up by supporting centralised institutions like Westminster-based political parties. And since means are ends in embryo, we have to be as decentralised as the society we aim to create.

The split in the Party needs to be amicable. How it is to be done has to be worked out from within. There will be difficult questions about money and assets, but with goodwill they are all soluble. The end product is the thing: two sets of Greens, in friendly fashion, but separately, using different means to attain green goals.

Peter Cadogan

When it comes to war the weaponry gets more deadly but the 'patriotic' slogans and the political hypocrisy remain the same: Freedom readers who did not experience the 1939 war and all its 'war aims' and 'high ideals' could do worse than consult two important Freedom Press titles in our Centenary Series:

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Demonstrations in San Francisco

stood defiantly waving their banners and posters at the police. They just as quickly disappeared when the police rushed them, to reappear again at another point. The police finally managed to drive the demonstrators off the bridge and secure the approaches sufficiently to allow traffic flow to resume. This tactic had been explored by militant groups before, most recently by the gay activist group Act Out in protest against the callous disregard for the victims of AIDS.

Although I think that tactics such as this may be self-defeating, alienating people that we must try to bring over to our point of view, I can easily understand the attraction of techniques such as these to young people filled with anger and frustration and who feel lost and powerless in a society that cares little for them. What a great sense of power they must experience in accomplishing the shutting down of these enormous bridges.

Tomorrow will mark one week since Bush ordered the killing to begin. It was a week of depression, anger, anxiety and frustration, marked by an increased tempo of anti-war demonstration. On Saturday over 70,000 — perhaps as many as 100,000 — people marched in San Francisco from the starting point in Dolores Park to the Civic Centre, a distance of about two miles. Again, the march was orderly, non-violent

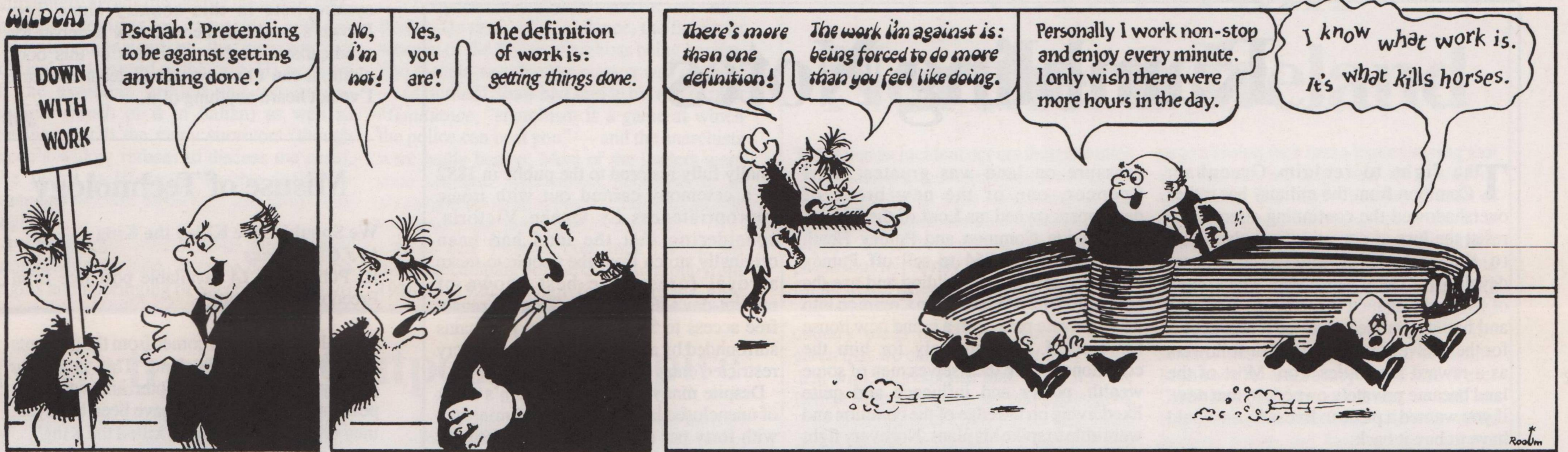
and electrifying as this wonderful turnout, representing all strata of society — men, women and children — expressed their opposition to Bush's and the military establishment's policy of 'death first'. The march was orderly — chanting anti-war slogans, singing anti-war songs, carrying banners, placards and signs of all sorts expressing their opposition to the war, this enormous turnout marched and sang and danced their way to the focal point of the rally, the large open square in front of San Francisco's City Hall. Emma Goldman would have loved to have been part of this demonstration, she could have danced to the rhythms of any of the numerous musical groups that were participating. All of the issues around the war were addressed by the banners and signs. Except for one strange sign I spotted in the parade: 'Support Saddam Hussein Militarily', and two young people standing on the sidelines holding a sign supporting the war, most of the banners and signs addressed themselves to the immediate halting of the fighting, calling for the energy and money being used for the killing to be put to positive human use. They expressed concern for the civilians and soldiers of both sides in the conflict that were being threatened and killed by the militaristic madman who started and continue this war. One of the most pertinent of the signs was carried by one of the anti-war women's groups: 'Stop the Testosterone War Now!'

One of the most obvious observations one can make in listening to and watching the coverage of the war by the regular news media, is that it has been completely co-opted by and controlled by the government's news bureaux. For example, the media's coverage of Saturday's anti-war demonstrations were sneering and denigrating in tone and what photo coverage they showed was to emphasise the small number of incidents of rowdiness on the part of some young people who engaged in trashing and window breaking. In the United States last Saturday there were over 250,000 in the streets throughout the country. The media reported less than 50,000. For example, despite the local count at the demo in Washington DC, where over 100,000 demonstrators expressed their opposition to the war and almost the equal number in San Francisco, the news media attributed only a little more than 20,000 for both places. The media has agreed not to broadcast news of the anti-war demonstrations to the soldiers in the near east. They also give no independent reporting back to the US from the war zone. Complaints about the military's control of news coverage that were expressed during the Panama invasion have been stilled. Instead the morning news consists of briefings from the military news persons extolling the wonders of the new technology of death that the US military is so proud of. Interestingly, in discussing these

weapons they never allude to their killing ability, but rather they talk of 'surgical strikes' and pin-point accuracy against military targets, in terms that sound as though they were healing tools rather than instruments of death.

Although I'm heartened by the early turnout of so large a number of people expressing their opposition to this deadly adventure that the US government is engaged in, I'm afraid that I really don't believe that we will be able to stop the war before many thousands of people are killed. Sadly, for each of us that are active in the streets or going to jail in protest, too many of the population support the government's policies or are too enervated by feelings of powerlessness or hopelessness. In a society in which individual initiative has been subverted by the belief that the politicians know best, it is easy to control public reaction. Eventually, I think that we will stop the war, as we stopped the Vietnam war, but I'm afraid we won't be able to stop it before large numbers of people will be killed. Next Saturday 26th January, there is another demonstration scheduled nationwide. We can only hope that it will be bigger and more expressive than the last one.

David Koven
Vallejo, California
22nd January 1991



More Demonstrations Abingdon & London

Demonstration 1 — shortly before the war started. It's Sunday lunchtime and about ten of us, members of the local peace group, spend half an hour or so in front of the war memorial in Abingdon High Street. The banner, which says 'No War in the Gulf', can easily be read by the people in the many passing cars. Their reaction? Very little fist-waving and jeering, but a lot of hooting and waving in support — especially, to our surprise, from young men in their twenties.

With two exceptions, we are not anarchists. The others are Labour Party members or supporters, or Greens. John, one of the former, talks about a recent meeting addressed by Glenys Kinnock. Come question time, he puts it to her that, since there is not the remotest possibility of a Labour Government doing anything worthwhile (except just possibly giving a few bob more to the OAPs), there is no reason for staying in the party. Her reply? "I've been a socialist all my life". He's going to join the Green Party.

Demonstration 2 — Saturday 12th January, London. Trudge from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square. A big demonstration with talk of 200,000. I suppose that's important, because it probably makes a little impact through the media (and through the medium of traffic hold-ups). There are good things going on — varieties of music and plenty of good humour, but also some depressing things. The people we pass in the streets seem not to see us. Worse still, the demonstrators

don't seem to question that. What seems to matter is that twenty seconds on the news which may or may not materialise — as if real face-to-face communication was a poor second best. Talking amongst ourselves, and not just amongst the converted, is what really worries the state. In one of the interviews in *Language and Politics*, Noam Chomsky says he tries not to convince people of his views, but to get them to convince themselves. Try doing that through BBC News.

What's the point of an anarchist spending his time like this? The peace movement, for all its confusions and all its fear of its own implications, is by its very existence a challenge to what the state holds most sacred — its right to go (or send) a-killing in the interests of capitalism. Surely we should be there making that challenge? That most peace movement people don't see it that way is an added incentive — many feel completely stranded, given all Kinnock and Co's blatant posturings, and are more open to radical alternatives than in many a long year.

Since the war started we have been out on Saturday mornings in the shopping precinct, as well as doing the Sunday lunchtime stint. The banner now says 'Stop the War in the Gulf'. Some people show their support, but more than before are really angry at us, as you might expect; many pretend to ignore us, not very successfully. Are we undermining their confidence that the war is right?

Mike Bloom

CARPET BOMBING'S VICTIMS

They tell us the Gulf war to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi monster Saddam has done everything you can see in normal make-believe television 'entertainment' in this country and America, *but for real*. He has not yet been accused of cannibalism — but that may yet be another of his crimes to add to the list. We are getting closer with the official American version of the bombing of the air raid shelter — that it was a military headquarters into which the monster had packed hundreds of innocent women and children knowing that they would be blasted to death so that he could make anti-American propaganda out of it.

If this were his intention how come that (as pointed out in *Freedom*) up to a couple of weeks ago neither side mentioned civilian victims, in spite of the fact that only a starry-eyed jingoist idiot could believe that as a result of some 60,000 'sorties' by the so-called 'allied' air forces directed mainly against Baghdad and Basra, only military targets suffered and that civilian casualties were minimal.

Anarchists have no illusions about Saddam Hussein. We had no illusions about Franco, Hitler or Mussolini when our 'democratic' Tories were praising them for

the same kinds of reasons that they were praising Saddam Hussein when he was blasting the guts out of the Iranians who were then our 'arch-enemies'.

We are sure that when the real issues in the present armed struggle are revealed they will have little or no relevance to the propaganda with which we are being bombarded by a press so well described recently as the warlords' 'media contractors'.

The Peace Movement and Kuwaiti Independence

Kuwait's existence as an independent state was the product of British imperialist action, there can be no doubt that historically it and Basra belonged to the same entity, and for most of the last four thousand years that entity has been linked to Baghdad. Until US petroleum companies ousted British interests from their near monopoly of Kuwaiti oil, America was most insistent on the necessity to reunite the countries (c.f. pronouncements made by the Eisenhower-Dulles administration on the issue).

If the peace movement is to insist on Kuwait's independence, without, say, a plebiscite, or constitutional reforms in Kuwait; if moreover this is to be done without an equal insistence on Israeli withdrawal from the Golan heights, West Bank and Gaza Strip; then it will have abandoned any claim to be non-aligned and it will be sanctioning military power to enhance injustice.

It will also be retrospective supporting the role British imperialism played in shaping the Gulf, and
(continued on page 6)

This is not a "just" war; it's just a war like any other.

A new anarchist classic?

Anarchist Society and its Practical Realization

Graham Purchase
See Sharp Press £1.00

Kropotkin, Malatesta, Alexander Berkman, Rudolf Rocker, George Barrett, have all written lively, concise accounts of anarchism, which are currently in print. Also, they have all been dead for at least half a century.

Their anarchism is not out of date. Events since their time have increased, not decreased, the relevance of their ideas. But they knew nothing of computers, television, instant news transmission, nuclear weapons, genetic engineering, or ecological crisis.

There is a place now for a new anarchist classic, written not by some old buffer who thinks of computers and television as wonders of the modern world, but by someone who has always lived with such things, and takes their existence for granted.

Graham Purchase has the qualifications, and makes a fair crack at producing a new classic, though of course it is too early to say it will become one. He writes concisely (about 6,000 words) and restates anarchism in terms of contemporary concerns.

The pamphlet begins by showing that

governments are a comparatively recent phenomenon, that useful organisation is mostly non-governmental, and that authoritarian socialism gets no further than authoritarianism. Nothing much new in that, except that the failure of Marxism has recently become more obvious.

It is when we reach the ecological crisis, in the fourth of seven sections, that the newness becomes apparent. 'Social Ecology' has been around for some time, but shorn of the long-winded rhetoric, all it really amounts to is 'after the social revolution, the environment will come right along with everything else'. Purchase does not thus trivialise environmental concerns. He makes them the basis of his argument.

"The ecological-anarchist approach to the global environmental problems we face is to save the whole by saving the parts...the only rational approach to bio-federation and environmental stability is to persuade people to deeply identify with the natural ecology of their local place — and protect that place... The global federation of ecological regions is necessarily anarchistic. For it is impossible to rank one ecological region above another... How can it be that the surrounding environment of Australia's parliamentary capital, Canberra, is more important than that surrounding the uranium mine at Roxby Downs, South Australia? Government can have no part in the forthcoming social-ecological revolution."

Like the old classics, this pamphlet includes

imaginative ideas about how the revolution will proceed, and how a free society will work. But like them it does so in such a way that the general gist of anarchism can be abstracted from the particular vision.

As Chaz Bufe puts it in a foreword, "Graham Purchase...is not arguing that his vision should be imposed; he is offering his vision in the hope that it will...stimulate others to reconsider their own desires about the type of society in which they want to live and to work toward the realisation of their desires".

DR

Tom Brown on Syndicalism

Tom Brown's Syndicalism
Phoenix Press, £3.95

The name of Tom Brown is synonymous with post-war British Syndicalism. Born in Tyneside, Tom served his engineering apprenticeship and much of his life was spent as an active shop steward and factory floor activist. A founder member of the Syndicalist Workers Federation (now renamed the Direct Action Movement), Tom did much to revive

interest in syndicalism and workers' control in this country after the last war. With others, he helped to launch *Direct Action* in 1945 and continued his close association with the paper for well over twenty years.

Tom Brown's Syndicalism is a collection of writings which were previously published in pamphlet form during the 1940s and 1950s under such titles as *Nationalisation and the New Boss Class*, *What's Wrong with the Unions* and *Trade Unionism or Syndicalism*. The book also contains chapters on the principles of syndicalism and the General Strike.

It is the publishers claim that this collection of Tom Brown's writings has been reprinted as a contribution to the debate on the relevance of syndicalism today. Although the book is dated and quaintly romantic and naive in places, it nonetheless presents a good case for the tactics of syndicalism as a viable method of changing society and an alternative philosophy to parliamentary socialism and reformist trade unionism.

Tom Brown himself was a working bloke who was a good scribbler. He deserves full credit for one of the few attempts since the last war to knock together some clear ideas, simply stated, on syndicalism, or revolutionary trade unionism if you like.

It is a pity there has been no serious systematic study of syndicalism by syndicalists in this country since Tom Brown's work. If there is now a debate on syndicalism, as the publishers of this book claim, it can't be a very loud debate because I've not heard anything of it.

JM

Rambling Notes

The fight to reclaim Greenham Common from the military has rather overshadowed the continuing attempts to resist the loss of common land elsewhere to the industrial and agricultural developers. There was a time when much of the land was held in common, but kings and barons grabbed most of it and kept it for themselves or gave it to their followers as a reward for battles won. Most of the land became privately owned, so that now, if you wanted a piece to live on, you would have to buy it back.

Today one and a half million acres of common remain (four per cent of the land in England and Wales) but it is all owned by someone. These commons are a relic of the manorial system, when crops were grown on the better soil and some of the people as 'commoners' had rights of access to the poor land unsuitable for cultivation to graze their cattle. Sometimes they had other rights, such as pannage (the right to let their pigs eat beech mast or acorns) but god help the commoner who picked up the acorns himself or even shook the tree for his pigs; and turbary (the right to dig turf or peat for use as fuel) but in his own house only. These rights were attached to the house or cottage and many survive today. Common land is normally unfenced, but on four-fifths of it everyone except the commoner is technically a trespasser.

During the nineteenth century many owners of common land, especially if it was in or near a town, realised there were fortunes to be made from selling it for private development. All they had to do was get rid of the commoners or at least buy them off. We are able to enjoy the landmarks and walk in the green open spaces today because there were activists who resisted such disposals, using a combination of local direct action and the law, against such landowners and their lawyers. Courageous commoners, usually tenants of the local Lord of the Manor and often dependent on him for their livelihood, in alliance with middle class conservationists who had in 1865 formed the Commons Preservation Society (CPS), aimed to secure these open spaces for the use and enjoyment of everyone.

The battle for the commons was most intense in London because here the

pressure on land was greatest. Earl Spencer, one of the new breed of developers owned, as Lord of the Manor, Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath and planned in 1864 to sell off Putney Heath for residential building and use the proceeds to turn Wimbledon Common into a fine private park with a grand new house for himself. Unfortunately for him the commoners were themselves men of some wealth, power and influence and quite liked living on the edge of the common and were able to spike his plans. Not every fight was so successful. The commoners of both Plumstead and Tooting Commons had little wealth or influence and the owners just fenced in the land and built on it. Octavia Hill's efforts to save Swiss Cottage Fields failed and it is now Fitzjohns Avenue.

Berkhamsted Common was saved by an early example of Non Violent Direct Action, admittedly with the help of a heavy mob. It was acquired by Lord Brownlow who then bought out most of the commoners with small sums of money but failed to bribe the town with the offer of a 43 acre recreation ground. When the owner erected a five foot high iron fence across two miles of the common, blocking numerous rights of way, the inhabitants of Berkhamsted were furious. Advised that only a commoner could object they found one with sufficient means and courage to take on the owner. A Mr Augustus Smith, Lord of the Isles of Scilly, paid 120 navvies to go to the common one March night in 1866 and demolish the fence with minimal damage, laying the pieces on the ground in a heap, much to the astonishment of the owner's agent the next day.

Hampstead Heath, Hampton Court Park and Kew Gardens were all saved as open spaces and the rescue of Epping Forest was one of the great victories of the CPS. When in 1866 the Rector of Loughton, as Lord of the Manor, fenced off some 1,300 acres he deprived the poor of the parish of their right to collect firewood. When a man and his two sons broke through the fence they were sent to prison for criminal trespass. The full story of this and their other struggles can be found in an account of the early history of the CPS by G.J. Shaw-Lefevre. Here it is sufficient to say that Epping Forest was

finally fully restored to the public in 1882 in a ceremony carried out with ironic appropriateness by Queen Victoria, considering that the land had been originally stolen from the people to make a royal forest. The best known of present-day actions is the attempt to regain free access to Stonehenge, but it remains surrounded by a high fence, with only very restricted entry allowed to the site.

Despite many successes, Britain's stock of unenclosed land has steadily diminished with forty per cent disappearing between 1858 and 1958. In 1958 a Royal Commission proposed that all remaining common land be registered with guaranteed public right of access subject only to an effective scheme of management. Intended to save the commons, it was widely welcomed, but in many cases it achieved the opposite. Failure to penetrate the bureaucratic jungle to register a common left the land unprotected and vulnerable to enclosure by avaricious owners.

Another attempt to save the commons was made in 1986 when representatives of local authority associations, landowners, farmers, recreational and amenity bodies set up the Common Land Forum. It was hardly a revolutionary body, but it did achieve a consensus that there should be a national right to roam freely over all common land. They expected the government to legislate to this effect and the Conservative election manifesto of 1987 did contain a promise to "legislate to safeguard common land on the basis of the Common Land Forum". They should have known better.

Four years later, the government in the form of David Trippier, Environment Minister, having taken other advice and in particular that of about 200 grouse moor owners called the Moorland Association, has decided that in the interests of conservation and other existing users such access for walkers is not on. The excuse is the need to protect wildlife, although no conservation body considers that it would be threatened. The reason — the desire to protect the rights, reputations and especially the profits of the grouse moor owners. Perhaps Trippier shoots?

HS

Misuse of Technology

We Should Have Killed the King

by J.G. Eccarius

III Publishing, £4 (available post free from Freedom Bookshop)

The title of this novel comes from the peasants revolt of 1381 in England. This is briefly portrayed in the first chapter and when the peasants realise that they have been betrayed, they cry "We should have killed the King".

The scenes described in the rest of the book are most typical of the United States but have their counterparts in other societies, including the various political groupings and experiments in community living. The principal character, named Jack Straw after the peasant leader, lived in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century during the period of decline of that state.

I enjoyed particularly the description of wage slavery in the legal profession and most especially the account of how nuclear power stations in the Northwest States were financed by fraudulent loan issues. This story of a corrupt society is echoed in places like England and Australia to name only some examples.

There is a description of the destruction of logging equipment, topical in many parts of the world. This raises all-important questions about how or whether to use technology and how best to resist undesired technology.

At the conclusion of the book, which refers to the near future, the author suggests that the misuse of technology has led to disaster and asks whether hard-earned wisdom will be forgotten.

Although a short book, it is enjoyable and thought provoking.

Norman

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SACCO & VANZETTI

The Anarchist Background

Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background

Paul Avrich
Princeton University Press

The latest of Paul Avrich's many valuable books on anarchist history is a study of the two most famous of all anarchist victims of a legal miscarriage of justice.

Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were Italian immigrants in the United States who were arrested for a murder committed during an armed robbery in 1920, tried and convicted, sentenced to death, and eventually electrocuted in 1927. There was always serious doubt about their involvement in the crime, there was a national and then an international campaign against their conviction and sentence, and there have been many books on the case which have led to increasingly general acceptance of their innocence.

Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background is not such a book. Avrich deliberately avoids discussing the crime, trial, appeals, inquiries or campaign, and has concentrated instead on the personal and political background of the case. He has used all the available printed and manuscript material (much of it in Italian) as well as interviews with the many survivors (though Sacco's widow refuses to discuss the case). The result is likely to be the definitive treatment of this aspect of the subject in English.

Avrich begins with a short introduction summarising the case. Then he describes the origins and upbringing of Sacco and Vanzetti

(in southern and northern Italy respectively), their emigration to and early lives in the United States, and the anarchist movement which they both joined in about 1912. They joined the tendency among Italian immigrants which was led by Luigi Galleani, an eloquent advocate of militant anarchist communism, opposing both the individualists and the syndicalists, and favouring extreme methods of violence and insurrection. (This is reminiscent of the similar tendency among German immigrants 25 years earlier, as described in Avrich's earlier book on the Haymarket case, though he doesn't make the comparison.)

Avrich describes their meeting in 1917 and flight to Mexico to avoid conscription, which had been introduced on the American entry into the First World War. They soon returned to the United States, where they became more deeply involved in anarchist activities. Nearly half the book is devoted to the Red Scare which followed the war and the anarchist reaction to it — the result being a virtual civil war between the authorities and the militants. Both sides resorted to violence, the favourite weapon of the Italian anarchists being bombs. The trouble was that the contest was unequal — as Bernard Shaw had said in his recent play *Misalliance*, "anarchism is a game at which the police can beat you" — and the anarchists were badly beaten. Most of the leaders were soon arrested, imprisoned, deported, or in some cases murdered, and the Italian anarchist movement was permanently crippled.

Sacco and Vanzetti both took part in the illegalist campaign of the Galleani group from 1918 to 1920, though from Avrich's very

detailed narrative they seem to have been pretty minor participants — they are seldom mentioned in this part of the book covering this period, and they are not clearly identified with any particular action. Avrich then describes their arrest, which was almost certainly a mistake — they were involved in political bombings, not criminal shootings — but he makes no attempt to add anything to the enormous documentation of the resulting case (commenting only that neither their guilt nor their innocence can be proved).

The book ends with an epilogue describing the subsequent adventures of some of the other characters in the tragedy — not only Galleani (who was deported in 1919 and died in Italy in 1931), but such remarkable people as Ella Antolini (who was arrested carrying explosives in Chicago in 1918 when she was

only 18, served a prison sentence of only 18 months, escaped deportation, and lived on until 1984) and Raffaele Schiavina (who was deported in 1919, but later returned secretly to the United States, where he lived and worked as 'Max Sartin' until his death in 1972).

As with all Avrich's books over a period of 24 years, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* is well planned, well researched, well documented, well written and well produced. In the end, however, it is profoundly depressing — not only because of the terrible fates of the two protagonists and several of their associates, but also because of the unpleasant nature of the political milieu in which they lived. Anarchism seen almost entirely as a permanent pitched battle with the authorities has great romantic appeal, but it has little practical value in the difficult struggle to build a free society. The harsh moral of Sacco and Vanzetti — as they themselves bitterly recognised — was that they contributed more to the cause by their deaths than by their lives. But at least their lives have now been told as well as they could have hoped.

NW

News from Northern Ireland

When an incident occurs that promotes a lessening of confidence among the general public in such institutions as the police or the state, shouldn't anarchists be happy? Shouldn't we be glad that the pernicious hypocrisy of the state is held up for all to see when armed troops gun down unarmed young men driving in a car on country roads in County Armagh? And given that we can feel like that how do we deal with the response that 'well, it is the British state that is corrupt and oppressive. If we lived in some kind of Irish state these things wouldn't happen'? Certainly this reaction has been voiced in the aftermath of the killing of twenty year old Fergal Caraher by soldiers at the end of December. His brother Michael, injured in the shooting, has spoken out on his release from hospital and given a totally different version of the events from the official version. Regardless of the truth or otherwise of Michael Caraher's version, no soldier will ever be brought to court charged with murder. Precedents for killings by soldiers which go unchallenged exist aplenty here. And yet while for some people this reality fuels the thrust of Irish nationalism, for others it is seen as the price to pay for there being a war on and the Carahers were 'quite probably Fenians from South Armagh anyway'. So is confidence in the state and the police actually challenged by analysis of murders like this? And in what way can anarchists see it impinging on the process of creating freedom and justice here?

Meanwhile the Secretary of State, Peter 'Babbling' Brooke, has seen his talks process come to a final halt. He may try another bout of shuttle diplomacy among the so-called constitutional parties, but already Jim Molyneux, the Official Unionist leader, has remarked that local politicians had better start to watch out because they were in danger of making fools of themselves by participating in an activity that was going nowhere.

A particularly local story spawned by the imperialist adventure in the Gulf was the decision by management of Ulsterbus to ban the displaying of a recent edition of *The Sun* which had as a front

page a Union Jack and a legend saying that this should be displayed as a way of supporting 'our boys'. Sammy Wilson of the Democratic Unionist Party wants to know who complained about the poster and the management of Ulsterbus, trying to play down the row, has cited the "sensitivities of life in Northern Ireland" as the reason for the ban. Bigger the sensitivities of life in the Gulf of course. Meanwhile Secretary of State Peter 'Babbling' Brooke continues to call on Republicans to renounce violence while backing Major and Bush in their orgy of destruction in the Gulf. Amazing!

An eco-story of great importance is building in Derry. Du Pont, the enormous chemical multinational, which has a plant in Maydown just outside Derry, has been caught on the hop by the vehemence of the public reaction to the leaked plans that it is assessing the feasibility of building Ireland's first toxic waste incinerator. Local opposition has been widespread and sharp with the local MP John Hume and fellow SDLP members rattled by the dilemma facing them. The siting of a toxic waste incinerator in Derry, on a sea lough of outstanding natural beauty, would be just the logical conclusion to the efforts of Hume and others to woo foreign investment into the region. Already the carrot of jobs is being dangled, compelling stuff for a city with 10,000 people on the dole, and we may yet have Du Pont wave the big stick of a threat to pull out altogether if we don't lie down and take what they have in mind for us. I have every confidence that the local population will see the development off, but it will be a very tough fight. If anyone has any thoughts on this drop me a note.

One semi-wry comment on this issue was that the only way to stop Du Pont from going ahead with the incinerator was for the IRA to shoot some of the construction workers. This has to be one of the clearest illustrations of the way in which military activity can disempower people and the culture of militarism and violence, so graphically illustrated by events in the Gulf, is promoted.

Dave Duggan

News from an Outpost of Empire

Probably nobody thinks of the Falklands nowadays any more than did the Thatcher government until the Argentinians (the Argies to the tabloid press) showed an interest. Just like Kuwait. Then of course we had 'a duty' to the 1,500-odd inhabitants who lived a miserable existence tending sheep mostly on land owned by some large absent landlords. The cost of waging a

war in the Falklands, 8,000 miles or more from the base cost more than a £1,000 million. But having defeated the Argentinians we were then stuck with defending the Falklands! So a permanent military force had to be stationed there and a new airstrip constructed at a cost of £100 million to be able to reinforce the garrison. And presumably the armed forces there have to be relieved now and then. How many millions of pounds is this costing the taxpayers in Britain?

In miniature this will be the situation in the Middle East if it does not turn out to be another Vietnam. But there is news from the Falklands not in our national press but of all places in the *Farmers Weekly* (15th February).

One must put the reader in the picture. The East Falkland land had been owned by the Falkland Islands Company which once owned half the island. It was bought by Coalite and two years ago was taken over by Anglo United. Now they are putting up for sale four farms, including Goose Green, surely a household word for Falkland war watchers.

Four farms may seem very little but in fact they cover no less than 800,000 acres or more than 1,000 square miles. Can you conceive of such an area — and owned by one company and which owns a lot more than that. Islanders have been offered this land which carries some 200,000 sheep at only £7.50 an acre, yet the islanders are uninterested. It is said that the Falkland Islands government, which has already bought land from the Falkland Islands Company, is a potential purchaser.

The deaths on both sides and the mutilated in that Thatcher adventure could have all been avoided by offering to make every inhabitant a millionaire with what it has cost so long as they move their homes in St Tropez if they yearned for the sun or in the Orkneys if they really enjoyed the tough life, and the Falklands could have either been returned to the Argentinians or colonised by birds and other wildlife.

But instead taxpayers in this country go on paying our £100 million plus a year to keep a battalion of soldiers kicking their heels in that ghastly climate and 1,300 obdurate 'colons' declaring their 'Britishness' as they tend their sheep on somebody else's land. How narrow minded can you get?

Peace Movement & Kuwaiti Independence

(continued from page 4)

Muslims will be justified in believing that we stop short of an examination of our own country's past crimes.

It remains to be seen just how far the leadership intends to move away from traditional non-alignment and take this purge. Is it only that members of the National Committee will be expected to be faint-hearted supporters of Western imperialist interests? If so it hardly matters. Or will all local committees that do not sign this document be disaffiliated? A policy which would lead to yet further schisms within the movement.

This new scheme will make matters complex given that the majority of the smaller Trotskyist groups claim there is a duty to support Saddam Hussein, alleging that he is waging an anti-imperialist struggle (how they reconcile the fact that Iraq is undoubtedly a capitalist country, Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution which insists that a petit bourgeois-movement cannot in the modern age lead a democratic or anti-imperialist struggle with this position goes unexplained) and consequently already support rival campaigns calling for victory to Saddam.

The prospect of having two organisations calling for Iraqi victory, a third effectively demanding victory for the USA by non-overtly military means, with the real peace movement excluded from all (unhappily, possibly, in the company of the SWP) doesn't appeal one little bit. But then we have had to work in an uncongenial setting before.

Laurens Otter

Police Harassment of Staffordshire Irish

(from our correspondent)

A series of IRA attacks in and around Staffordshire recently has focused the police's anti-terrorist activities on the area. However, their hunt for the IRA cell appears to be little more than harassment of the Irish community living in the area, most of whom are students. A variety of tactics are used by the police.

Following IRA attacks Irish students are brought in for questioning. This is completely indiscriminate. Many are even Loyalist and/or Protestant. The police must surely be aware of this, but continue to arrest them.

People are routinely followed at night when driving, especially if they have Irish number plates.

Anything deemed as suspicious behaviour leads to arrest and a night of questioning.

Houses are watched with people being knocked up late at night by the police to question them as to what they are doing.

Cars are checked and registrations taken. People are followed, even from their houses to the local pub.

Another form of harassment has been to question local people as to the activities of Irish people, so creating an air of suspicion against them.

All this police work has led to one arrest for possession of firearms. He was, however, arrested

in London and caught purely by chance after being pulled for jumping a red light. An assault rifle was found in the boot of his car.

What all this has caused is an increasing contempt amongst Irish students towards the police. It has also led to one or two amusing incidents.

A college car club held a night time treasure hunt. One Irish student having got completely lost decided to ask directions. Unfortunately the 'concerned citizen' he asked decided that an Irish person driving around at night was a suspicious occurrence and made a citizen's arrest. The student spent the night answering questions at the local station and has subsequently come in for extra attention. He fortunately sees the funny side of it.

On another occasion, a group of Irish students decided to play 'army' in the back garden with improvised balaclavas and water pistols. Their close proximity to a military base, however, led to a police raid and a night in the cells answering the usual questions.

What the police are actually doing is to alienate the Irish community here, many of whom would have previously supported them. They are inadvertently sowing the seeds of discontent with British law and justice among the people the State relies on for support in the Six Counties. Here everyone is treated the same, Protestant/Catholic, Loyalist/Nationalist. Maybe they will begin to see their interests are not so different.

unlikely. They already know of the statement by Manfred Opel of the German SPD who was told by American contacts that 300,000 Iraqi civilians were killed or wounded in the first week of the war, yet the bombing campaign "will continue for the foreseeable future".

Of course, they will argue that the respective cases of the IRA and the British government are quite different: although both are murderous elites, only one had its violence sanctioned by law. The lesson to be learned by the likes of us who don't have access to power through elaborate weaponry is that we can't rely on those that do to act in anyone's interests but their own. The only type of power we have is an emergent property of the weight of our numbers. We must use this power in the protests against the war; and we must mobilise it on 23rd March to make this demonstration against the poll tax the biggest one yet. Keep the home fires burning!

Johnny Yen

The Cardiff Anti-Poll Tax Federation goes from tragedy to farce. Internal disputes within the Militant Tendency mean that the campaign organiser, a Militant supporter, was not allowed to address the recent Federation meeting by the Federation's chairperson, also a Militant supporter. For perhaps the first time in history we had the scene of one Militant windbag trying to shut up another Militant windbag. Not a pretty sight!

Militant have never been ones to worry about democracy. True to form, they pulled a fast one recently in getting a motion passed that the Federation's monthly delegate meeting be relegated to once every three months. These monthly meetings are now to be replaced by monthly committee meetings. In effect, the delegates have lost all real power

to direct and determine the policy of the Cardiff Federation.

This not only shows a contempt for rank and file control — what else should we expect from Leninists — but also heralds the gradual disengagement of Militant from active participation in the anti-poll tax campaign. The campaign has failed to enable Militant to make a move to recapture the influence it has recently lost in the Labour Party. There has been no great rebellion of the rank and file Labour Party councillors and activists, from which Militant hoped to form a base to mount a campaign against Kinnock and Co. For Militant, the anti-poll tax campaign was a means to an end, little more than that.

Nor has their involvement seen an increase in their numbers and influence — in Cardiff the opposite has happened. Militant's antics have alienated any potential support their original leadership of the campaign might have gained.

So, expect to see a gradual withdrawal of Militant's activities around the poll tax (just as the SWP are now conspicuous by their absence). They evidently expect the campaign to wither on the vine without their activity. In Cardiff the opposite will hopefully be the case, since Militant's policy and style have been counter-productive.

We have to be ready in our local groups, and in the wider movement, to help reorganise the campaign and take into 1991 with a will to win. Our first step should be to organise for the coming demonstration in London this March — to show the movement is here to stay and win, and that the State can't beat protest off the streets.

EM

The Power of Numbers

Resisters inflict significant losses on poll tax alliance of government and local councils

As the distance grows between the time of the 31st March poll tax riot and the court hearings for those arrested, so do sentences become less severe. Many reading this will recall the case of Robert Robinson a.k.a. Simon O'Reilly who was sentenced to two years for supposedly kicking a police van — it ran over his foot! (Cards, letters of support, etc., to HM Prison Camp Hill, Clissold Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5PB — his prison number is RA 0741.)

Recently two rioters from Brighton had their cases heard. One was given a year's jail sentence, the other was fined £250. We speculated that had their cases come up in the month following the riot, they would have received double that amount.

Although we gather that being involved in the riot is such a serious offence that the mere mention of a connection with the events of 31st March is tantamount to a confession of guilt, the traffic is not all one way. A token number of obviously ludicrous

cases have been thrown out when it is clear to magistrates that a conviction makes the judiciary a laughing stock. They cannot tolerate, as Willie Whitelaw once said, people laughing at the system; for a system that is not taken seriously will be ignored, made obsolete and in effect abolished.

Hence the case of Roy Hanney, whose case was thrown out last year because it was obvious that the 'arresting' cops had fabricated the evidence (they copied each other's witness statements including wrongly reporting the day of arrest!) Similarly, a student from my university, Ragnar Pederson, won an appeal against a conviction for 'threatening behaviour'. The appeal judges conceded that shouting "Fuck off, you fascist bastards!" at a police transit van that deliberately tried to run him over on a pedestrian crossing was not reproachable behaviour. (I come back to a point I've made before in these pages — does the presence of a crowd really make people 'lost control', or is their behaviour quite understandable, nay reasonable, given the circumstances, both immediate and in the wider social context?)

Full marks must go to the Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign for the work they have done to help people with their legal battles (getting witnesses, etc). But even when we lose, and people are fined or banged up, there are still positive things we can do. As I mentioned above, prisoners can be sent letters (and radios and money). Write to the TSDC, c/o Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, Room 205, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1, for a prisoners' list.

For those fined we can raise funds. Last week, the Sussex Poll Tax Resisters Support Fund had our most successful fund-raising event yet. Three bands — The Levellers, Citizen Fish and The Aardvarks — played for virtually nothing at a major venue in Brighton. Over a thousand people turned up. Even after money had been shared with a local Hunt Sabs group, the Resisters made over £1,000 — and this was on top of the money we made on our literature stall (for a copy of our excellent newsletter *Resist!*, send a donation and s.a.e. to the Brighton Regional Correspondent address).

This significant dent to the impunity of the ruling class (significant at least as far as those getting fined are concerned!) was followed the next day by another blow to the monoliths image of the 'mother of parliaments' — the IRA came within about ten yards of wiping our war cabinet! If the local response to the Brighton bomb is anything to go by, then pubs all over the country were full of people celebrating last night! While as anarchists we recognise that the IRA's nationalist politics do not represent a solution for most people, some of us welcome their choice of target on this occasion.

Now that the Tory government have had a taster of just what it's like to be bombed, will their attitude change towards the citizens of Baghdad? Highly

Waiting for the Bus

Petrol's gone up then, Bert ... It's like house prices, up and down like a yo-yo ... Funny, sugar and tea and coffee and bread go up all the time. Why don't they ever come down. Nor bus fares. You'd think, now we've got North Sea oil, petrol would be about fifty pence a gallon ... That wouldn't do, Daisy, we've run out of roads as it is ... They say petrol prices could rocket if this war goes on much longer ... Yes, and depending on what comes out of it all, the price could fall lower than ever ... Mrs Potts says her granddaughter likes it at Bristol University, but it's a long way to go from Reading ... It's not so bad as Tom Wainwright's grandson. He's at St Andrews in Scotland, and they live at Southampton ... That's daft. There's universities at Reading and Southampton. Why the hell they can't go there beats me ... Come to that, why can't they study French and Maths at their local polytechnics or colleges of further education, and live at home rather than in digs ... Why is it then, Bert? You seem to know all the answers ... In a word, Daisy, elitism. Take the kids away from caring families, turn them into go-getting selfish status-seekers that will support the Establishment and regard the rest of us as peasants ... Some of the girls must get homesick and lonely, so far from home. You do hear of suicides ... Yes, and they are fair game for randy lecturers ... Mrs Potts says there's plenty of clubs to join at university ... I know, Daisy. A young friend of mine who was at an American university said they had one club there that was devoted to getting hold of exam papers before the exam took place ... That surely could not happen here, Bert? ... I don't know, when I was in the RAF an officer gave us all the papers to an Aircraft Recognition paper on the day the exam took place ... Is that why we shot down so many of our own aircraft? ... I was mad, because I knew I could pass the exam anyway ... That Kenneth Clarke was on telly again, spouting about bad spelling. I

thought he was a medical expert ... Only thing he's good at is learning his script. I've never come across such a bighead. Bet the kids couldn't stand him when he was a schoolboy ... What do you make of that CIA bloke who said their Intelligence was so good they knew the sizes of Saddam's officers' underpants? ... If they knew that much, they must have known Saddam was going to invade Kuwait ... Why didn't Bush call an emergency Security Council meeting, then, or at least give Saddam a public warning? ... Bush must have wanted his army in the Gulf for some reason. Got to be keeping some control over oil ... You were a long time getting your book at the library, Bert ... I know. There were about eight people in front of me with about ten paperback novels to check out ... They're talking about making a charge for library books ... I think it would be a good idea to charge something for fiction books. A library is supposed to be something to do with people's education, not bloody Mills & Boon type rubbish. They should have to pay for their fantasising ... Do you think the Argies will have another go at the Falklands now we're busy in the Gulf? ... Never thought of that, Daisy. Maybe they'll try a spot of 'linkage' tactics first. Then there's Gib, of course. Daisy, we live in interesting times! In the 1980s we were trading happily in the arms bazaars from Farnborough to Paris and Baghdad, and now just look at it. Our politicians were telling us that if we didn't sell arms to Iraq and all the other dictators, somebody else would. What sort of principle was that? Now the Bishops are telling us we are waging a just war. Never mind, there's one bright spark on the horizon ... What's that, then? ... Out of 34 Labour MPs who voted against the war, six were women. That's over half the number of women Labour MPs in the House of Commons. Daisy, there's hope for the world yet ... And it's a woman bus driver. Come on, Bert, let's go home ...

EFC

THE RAVEN

ANARCHIST QUARTERLY

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The War: Videos for Idiots?

Some years ago, one topic for an essay in our English mock Matric exams was 'Comment on the statement that in order to ensure peace we must prepare for war'. I enjoyed attacking this premise even though I knew the essays would be marked by a right wing Tory.

This policy is still that of our government even though demonstrated to be false by many, many wars. It is similar to the policy that high interest rates are the only way to 'cure' inflation even though all their MPs in marginal seats feel the electoral kiss of death.

Now we are again being asked to go to war in order to ensure peace. Let us first look at the arguments put forward by the USA government and their juniors, the British government.

We must go to war over the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq even though other occupations have been ignored. The presumption that if this is done, it won't happen again, is against all past experience.

Some kind of action was authorised by the United Nations to give a semblance of authority other than the USA government. The bribery and pressure that was used and the deals made to

obtain this limited sanction rather reflect on the integrity of the UN.

The situation is presented in a simple way (with appeals to God!) as coming to the aid of poor rich Kuwait rather as it was poor little Belgium in 1914. It is certainly not like catching a burglar and we know that both the USA and UK governments are the men to provoke increases in crime in their own countries. Why would they be any better in the world at large?

Then, as not so many now believe in Satan, we are told that Saddam wants to rule. I think there is some evidence that some groups in the USA think there is some evidence that some groups in the USA think that they can rule the world with high technology.

The resources and population of Iraq are such that, without support from other peoples they only pose a threat to adjacent countries with small populations such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Emirates. The war against Iran was only made possible by massive support from the USA, UK, USSR and France.

Cessation of arms shipments would

ensure that Iraq did not invade other countries. This would take a few years, much better than what we have now. The effect of the oil embargo would be much quicker. The reason that this did not happen is in order to maintain the arms industry.

The arguments put forward by Iraq are that their boundaries were established by Britain after the 1914-18 war. There is no special reason for an independent Kuwait (less than for an independent Ireland, Scotland and Wales). The Americans have taken up the mantle of Empire to protect their oil business. There is certainly some truth in these points, even recognised by Mr Heath.

It seems that Iraq fought the bloody war against Iran at the instigation of the West and expected some reward which was not given, so their government decided to take what they could. When thieves fall out!

There is no doubt that the aim of uniting the Arab people against Western exploitation has been advanced so that perhaps the world revolution will start in the Middle East from which it could spread over both Asia and Europe.

Norman

Who's the real enemy?

I was talking recently to a woman poll tax resister. She is middle-aged and has never been politically active before the poll tax. She mentioned quite spontaneously that while thinking about the war in the Gulf she was wondering who the real enemy was.

Which set me wondering as well. That this otherwise quite ordinary person should have such a revolutionary thought. That it was bad news for the government that the poll tax was producing such sophisticated reactions.

The Gulf war is not having the expected benefits of shutting off rational thought, at least as far as this tax is concerned. Conservative politicians remain deeply worried about its effects on their votes. The tax is still difficult to collect. Our local paper was recently advertising for strong, young men willing to work 'unsocial hours' to act as bailiffs. They might have added 'willing to undertake anti-social activity'.

The British government is waging a war on two fronts. As a US poodle it is waging an external imperial war

against the people of Iraq in particular and the third world in general. On the home front it wages a war of oppression on the dispossessed. The poll tax bailiffs, controlled by the local authorities, are an example of this internal oppression.

For large numbers of British people the knock on the door from the bailiffs (or the fear of it) is a more real and greater threat than Saddam will ever be.

Gerald Hatton

Joke explained

Dear comrades, I hear that the Wildcat strip of 9th February, in which John Major grows a long nose with a pork pie on the end, contained references which some readers found obscure. Heartfelt apologies.

Telling lies causes a nose to grow in the film 'Pinocchio'. I understand the incident occurs in the old Italian story on which the film is based, and refers to a saying about a lie becoming 'as plain as the nose on your face'. The pork pie is rhyming slang: 'pork pie', lie.

Roo*Um

Anarchist Fundamentalism

Dear comrades,

Just a few notes on the most recent issue of *Freedom* (15th December) to reach me. In regard to the quarrel with N. Walter I admit that I haven't read the original pamphlet, but common sense dictates that Walter is probably right in his assertion that some of the arguments "don't convince" anyone but already committed anarchists. Be that as it may, I wouldn't dream of taking sides. It is a minor argument that shouldn't sink to the level of personal insult. I have recently received my yearly bundle of solipsistic verbal diarrhoea from the 'anarcho-insanity' fringe, and it is my opinion that reasonable anarchists such as both *Freedom* and NW should exercise a little self discipline as there are far worse things amongst those who call themselves anarchists than 'fundamentalists' and 'anarchist

professors'. Save your polemic for those who hate humanity, wish to 'abolish civilisation' or advocate either mindless violence or a self-absorbed 'elaboration of a deconstructed critique'.

In regard to Harry's 'Anarchy starts with yourself' I agree with him in his rejection of revolution but for entirely different reasons. He coerces people; I coerce people; you coerce people. That is the real world. I most emphatically disagree with his prescription of yet another sub-culture. Sub-cultures are where conformist coercions reach a height that it is simply impossible to attain in the real world. I have too much respect for myself and other people to enter or to build what is essentially a religious cult. I am sorry if I may hurt your feelings, Harry, but it is the truth. You would be wise to heed it for your own sake.

Which feeds into your article called 'Prediction' by Eddie May. As an ex-social democratic activist from an hereditary social democratic family, I can point out that the disintegration of your Labour Party is analogous to the

disintegration of my own country's equivalent, the NDP, and it is probably equivalent to the changes going on in most social democratic parties worldwide. I would have great hopes, not 'wishful thinking' for the opportunity to present an anti-statist alternative to the rank and file of these parties. But, but, but!!! This means 'rank and file' not 'left wing activists' in general because these activists in general have economic positions which depend upon the maintenance and even expansion of statism. It also demands organisation and a willingness to meet people where they are now. I have little hope of such organisationalism and basic affection for ordinary people arising amongst the anarchist milieu as I see it today. Pessimism, however, is not intellectual conviction, and maybe there is a lot more 'hope' than either EM or myself would be willing to admit.

Anyway, this goes on too long. Hope all is well with you in the new year. My cats and I send our regards.

Pat Murtagh
Winnipeg, Canada

A balanced picture

George Bush takes the stand. A tear wells up in the corner of his eye. The sycophants rise in unison, clapping wildly, one eye on a promotion. "God bless our boys, for ours is a just cause". The applause is rapturous and never ending. In Baghdad only the bombs are never ending!

The picture cuts as we go over live to 'our' reporter in Saudi Arabia. "We are under attack from incoming Scuds. We are being gassed". Or at least that's what the subtitles say as I couldn't understand a word the gas-masked reporter said.

"This war is not about oil", Bush continues. His nodding yes-men agree for they know that America is really short of sand. Chemical agriculture is not desertifying the grain belt fast enough so industry wants a cheap supply of sand they can import!

Our gas-masked reporter is back. It seems it was all a false alarm. The only thing flying about is Saudi was a fair amount of bullshit! "But here's some archive footage of a Patriot missile in action to make you feel proud of our military technology. Now isn't that impressive? Stirred any patriotic fervour yet? Please don't consider how the research and development time, money and expertise could have been used for a cure for AIDS or something. And don't consider how every one that is fired could have built and equipped a community

hospital."

Dear old George continues, he's doing his "puppy dog — where's my dinner" look. "We are fighting for peace, freedom and justice". His devoted audience foams excitedly at the mouth mistaking the expression for that of a mad dog.

Meanwhile, "Here are some pictures of civilian casualties taken by Iraqi television. This crude piece of propaganda — whoops, a slip of my impartial tongue there — may or may not be genuine. hey! I'm sure that one moved. And didn't he used to be in 'Dallas'?"

"Latest reports coming in say the allies have flown thousands and thousands of missions today with the British Tornados having done nearly everything, which Sandy Gall is trying to confirm. Allied commanders categorically state, and we have no reason to doubt their word, that all bombs and missiles hit military targets harming absolutely nobody and the people of Baghdad were able to get a full night's sleep".

The President of the 'Free World' leaves the platform. He is mobbed by his adoring throng. His generals at his heels, he skips into the sunset. The world will sleep happy tonight.

"And now, we were going to show you some pictures of desperate refugees fleeing the war zone, but we can't as it's actually time for Aussie soaps".

TV watcher

IF YOUR SUB IS DUE FOR RENEWAL PLEASE DEAL WITH IT NOW!

Freedom was there

Dear editors,

Contrary to NW's report, I have seen *Freedom* sold on each of the four national anti-Gulf war demos — September, November, January and February. I have seen Class War banners as well as DAM, ACF and AWG ones. On two such demos the Hull syndicalists had a banner and on two Wrekin syndicalists had banners.

There has also been considerable leafletting by the 'No War but Class War' confederation of groupings about which I sent a statement (hoping for publication) the other day.

The suggestion that anarchists would support the CND bureaucracy (in its modified support for Western militarism) against Trotskyist 'leftists' I find offensive.

LO
Wellington

News from Angel Alley

A comrade writes to say that at the recent anti-Gulf war demo on 2nd February the anarchists were "thin on the ground" and suggests that *Freedom* should seek to "mobilise" our "forces" to make our presence more noticeable on such occasions. Obviously *Freedom* will give as much publicity as we can to any initiative but comrades must surely appreciate that, like themselves, we have limited time for our activities and in keeping two journals going, running a bookshop and dealing with hundreds of enquiries, as well as many more hundreds of orders for literature, we are kept busy twelve months of the year. So all we can do is pass on the message and any suggestions will be published in *Freedom*.

We would however make one suggestion which is perhaps more relevant as there appears to be some friction in the anti-Gulf protest movement at present (see page 2). In the Aldermaston marches before the Communist, Trade Unions and Labour Parties decided to cash in on the success of these leaderless demonstrations we anarchists participated as groups or individuals joining in anywhere in order to discuss and to sell *Freedom*. On the three or four days culminating in Trafalgar Square we would be very disappointed if when we came to settle up for sales of *Freedom* we hadn't reached the 1,000 copies mark. May we suggest that anarchists are more interested in making contact with the marchers than with the spectators?

A few subscribers have reported receiving defective copies of our last issue — two outside sheets and no inside one. If your copy is like this, let us know and we will send you a replacement immediately.

With this issue of *Freedom* we shall be sending our pink reminders to those readers whose subscriptions expired last December

(and some even earlier) and who have not yet renewed. These readers will have received four or more issues since their subscription expired so we hope we will not be considered 'ruthless' or 'commercial' if we say that this will be the last issue they will receive until we hear from them. We repeat yet again that any comrade who just cannot afford to pay even the claimants subscription but wants to go on having *Freedom* has only to tell us and we will continue sending our journal free of charge.

However, what we shall be doing very shortly is to circularise readers for our free lists who are not often in touch, to make sure that they wish to go on receiving *Freedom*. And hopefully persuading those who can afford a subscription — and we know quite a few! — to take the plunge and show their generosity!

And to the generous contributors to the current list of Donations (and for their encouraging remarks to keep going with our propaganda) our best thanks.

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1991 SEASON OF MEETINGS

- 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

Volunteer speakers or discussion group leaders are wanted for the 'To be arranged' and 'Discussion group' slots as above and from 17th May to 31st May 1991 — all at 8pm to 10pm. We hope to continue the meetings from 7th June to 14th July 1991 either at the same time or at the earlier time of 6pm to 8pm (however, if we are the only group using the Centre the staff may wish to close at 8pm). Anyone interested in leading a discussion to contact Dave Dane or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW.

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FREEDOM CONTACTS

Sectional Editors

Science, Technology, Environment: Andrew Hedgecock, 9 Hood Street, Sherwood, Nottingham NG5 4DH

Industrial: Tom Carlile, 42 Gaston Avenue, Keynsham, Bristol BS18 1LT

Land Notes: V. Richards, c/o Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Regional Correspondents

Cardiff: Eddie May, c/o History Department, UWCC, PO Box 909, Cardiff CF1 3XU

Brighton: Johnny Yen, Cogs U/g Pigeonholes, University of Sussex, School of Cognitive and Computing Sciences, Falmer, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 9QN

Northern Ireland: Dave Duggan, 27 Northland Avenue, Derry BT48 7JW

North Wales: Joe Kelly, 28 Erw Llwyd, Rhosllanerchrugog, Clwyd LL14 2EL

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