

# anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

Vol. 52 No. 8

20 APRIL 1991

FIFTY PENCE

*"If my soldiers would really think, not one would remain in the ranks."*

Frederick the Great

**"Inflation below 6% in April" . . . "Business to get better"**

## **We Shall See!**

Who in their senses can take the opinion polls seriously? Every poll is of a different sample of people. If one were really to judge public opinion as it reacted to the antics of the government and the opposition parties, the sample should always be of the same group of people. But it isn't, and so in the same week *The Mail on Sunday* declared that the Tories were leading by one point while *The Observer* put Labour six points ahead. So what can you conclude from that?

By the end of March *The Sunday Times* had them both at 40% and gave its piece a three-line headline "Poll Brings Spring Tonic for Tories". We were also told that:

"Public confidence in the economic outlook is growing rapidly and ministers are now talking privately of inflation falling to

below 6% in April. According to a poll carried out for *The Sunday Times* by Market & Opinion Research International (MORI), economic optimism has shown its biggest surge in a decade."

Had the date of the issue been 1st April and not 31st March we could have imagined that it was an April fool. But not at all. They quote a 'senior minister' as saying:

"The message that inflation is about to fall like a stone and the interest rates will fall with it is clearly registering. People realise that better times are ahead."

*The Guardian* (23rd March) has an eight-column headline "6% inflation expected by April", in spite of the fact that the figures released that day for February showed a decrease in the inflation rate from 9% to 8.9%. The optimism for the dramatic fall in March and April is "cheaper

mortgages and the £4 billion budget subsidy to this year's poll tax bills" — no mention of 2½% increase in VAT and all the customs duties on petrol, beer, wine and spirits. And as some analysts point out, in February the inflation rate excluding home loans actually rose from 8.5% to 8.6%.

The weather experts almost always get it wrong so why trust the City and financial editors in matters of finance and business. "The City's optimism not matched in industry" says a *Guardian* headline (8th March). As to how they 'think' in the City is baffling for the layman. For instance, the government's latest figures of two million plus unemployed were 'greeted' by the City  
*(continued on page 2)*

**All the politicians will offer the Kurds are**

## **Crocodile Tears**

The US-led 'coalition' four-day ground war following the five-week air bombardment of the Iraqi military forces and the civilian population and infrastructure of Baghdad, Basra and other Iraqi cities was acclaimed by the pro-war media as an outstanding victory, *The Independent* adding "its main goals triumphantly accomplished" (28th February). However, its editorial "The doomsayers routed", was directed to those who had predicted a "catalogue of disastrous consequences before it was launched". And they selected politicians they particularly dislike such as Denis Healey, Tam Dalyell and Edward Heath, contenting themselves with a one-sentence quote from each to demolish them. *The Independent* did not include among the 'doomsayers' the US Pentagon who had arranged for the dispatch of 100,000 body-bags to the Gulf (we quoted from *The Observer's*

December report — it would appear that the actual number turned out to be only 45,000, of which a mere 100 or so were required) thereby indicating an official concern that the war could prove to be a bloody affair for 'our boys'.

As *The Independent* put it:

"It was feared that the allies' high-tech weaponry would not work properly, that the value of air power had been exaggerated and that the war would drag on Vietnam-style."

So those who feared it might were proved wrong. But *The Independent* has not one word for the thousands of casualties on the 'enemy's' side. After all they are the enemy and don't count.

On the political front, the editorial continued, the "doomsayers were no less gloomy". However, hedging

their bets as good professionals, *The Independent* declared:

"No one can yet tell how relations between the Western world and the Arabs will evolve, but not one of these fears [that Saddam Hussein would become a martyr, and Arab bitterness towards the West would increase] has yet proved justified."

And the editorial concludes with the reassuring thought that "in the end the pessimists were shown to have cried woe too loudly and too long".

*Freedom* cried woe from the beginning for quite different reasons to those expressed by the three politicians, though as we have pointed out, *The Independent* quite dishonestly selected the odd remark  
*(continued on page 2)*



## The West's Crocodile Tears for the Kurds

(continued from page 1)

whereas their contributions in the debates in the House were much more detailed, and both Heath and Healey were speaking as people who had actually served in the armed forces in World War Two.

We are opposed to all wars between States, not as pacifists, but because wars create more problems than they solve; problems which do not really concern those who are expected to do the killing and the dying. World War One cost ten million young lives — for what? The rise of fascism in Italy in the '20s, of Nazism in Germany in the '30s and mass unemployment between the wars. World War Two was declared by Britain in 1939 to defend fascist Poland from the bloodthirsty Hitler seeking *lebensraum* and that war cost fifty million lives, this time of young and old (since civilians were inevitably involved with the 'progress' of science in the art of killing — culminating in the dropping of the atom bombs by the Americans, latecomers as usual in the bloodbath, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki). For what? It produced two superpowers — the USA and the Soviet Union — who between them produced the Cold War which has been with mankind for the past 45 years. We are not proposing to list all the wars since 1945 in which the superpowers have been either the participators or the instigators; the suppliers of cash and armaments, know-how and CIA/KGB assistance.

Time marches on. Kuwait has been 'liberated', the Iraqis have had their military power decimated and Saddam Hussein's enemies encouraged with words to rebel. The Kurds have been rebelling and being killed at the hands not only of the Iraqi, but of the Iranian and Turkish governments. It is estimated that up to 100,000 have been killed in the past ten years. They are again, and again are being killed by superior Iraqi military forces. *The Independent* (12th March) from its comfortable offices in the City Road, produced an editorial on the theme that "Iraq's rebels deserve help", meaning that the 'coalition' (that is, the US) should invade northern Iraq. After all, as they point out, they bombed Iraq for five weeks from the air; they actually are in

occupation of one-fifth of Iraq's territory, so why not go the whole hog and send 'our boys' and their war machines to finish off the job so well started?

By 29th March the generals at City Road were complaining about "Bush's short-sighted policy":

"Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq now face the imminent prospect of being slaughtered by the advancing forces of Saddam Hussein."

Note the term 'slaughtered', never mentioned when the Americans were carpet bombing the retreating Iraqis. And they repeat it, for:

"Not only they, but women and children and Iraqi soldiers who have helped them will be slaughtered too."

Did *The Independent* ever describe the bombing of Baghdad by the Americans and British airmen as slaughter, even when it had to recognise that the much-vaunted precision bombing was nothing of the sort?

Had the Americans really wanted to get rid of Saddam Hussein (let's not mince words — have him assassinated)

they do not lack the personnel to carry out such operations. *The Independent* should know since it recently published an article by its Washington correspondent, Edward Lucas, on one of the largest CIA undercover operations of recent years involving no less than 600 Libyan prisoners of war captured during Libyan border raids into neighbouring Chad. They were trained in sabotage and other skills with a view to 'destabilising' Libya and their arch-enemy Colonel Gaddafi. Apart from the CIA the Israeli secret police, the Mossad, are experts in terrorism and kidnapping (remember Vannunu?).

But the fact is that Americans fear the Iraqis as much, or perhaps more, than they do the Iraqis so far as 'stability' in the Middle East is concerned. A correspondent in *Time* (6th April) points out that:

"the fundamentalist Shi'ite Muslims in Iraq who oppose Saddam's regime bear an uncanny resemblance to the Islamic fundamentalists who replaced the hated Shah of Iran in 1979. If the Iraqi Shi'ites succeed they will certainly

amalgamate with their Shi'ite brethren in Iran to fuse a powerful force in the Gulf."

And the writer concludes that the last thing the Americans would wish to have been responsible in provoking is that of "unbalancing the equilibrium of power in the Gulf".

And what of the 150 Iraqi war planes which were flown to Iran and which Iran has now announced will be taken over by way of reparations for the eight-year Iran-Iraq war?

To 'liberate' the Kurds just from the Iraqis and not from the Iraqis and the Turks would complicate matters still further. The Western powers have never had any objection to the Arabs killing each other.

And now the United States is planning a permanent military base in the Gulf in Bahrain. In any case, as the White House pointed out, "We have had a naval presence in the Gulf since 1949 and we'll continue to have that".

The massive US military intervention in the Middle East, far from bringing peace has, in our opinion, released forces which in the long term in spite of their military might they will not succeed in extinguishing.

## The Press & the Gulf

As expected, news manipulation, censorship, disinformation and bare-faced official lying have all played their part on the Gulf War's home front. But even more alarming has been the unprecedented enthusiasm with which newspapers and broadcasters have been prepared to act as willing mouthpieces for the Ministry of Defence and the American-led alliance.

The Gulf crisis has been a dismal episode for British journalism. The media war fever was so great by the end of the opening day of the Anglo-American air attack on Iraq that British ministers and White House officials were driven to issue warnings against the dangers of 'overly euphoric' and 'gung-ho' reporting.

The hysterical jingoistic gibberish emanating from the tabloid press is only a subsidiary part of the problem. Far more important has been the role played by television news and current affairs which — with some honourable exceptions — has faithfully reproduced the Western powers' view of the crisis ever since the invasion of Kuwait.

American and British communiqués were routinely reproduced as fact, while every film of

bomb damage or statement released by the other side was dismissed as propaganda. Familiar TV faces like Kate Adie and Martin Bell appeared swathed in battle dress muttering sweet nothings in the nation's ears via an MoD-controlled satellite.

The so-called quality papers also mostly failed to do their job of examining the origins of the crisis and questioning the claimed justifications for war. None bothered to send reporters to talk to refugees from the bombing in Iraq until well into the war — despite the lack of reliable information about casualties.

There is little doubt that official control of information was far tighter and more comprehensive in this war than it was in the

**"You cannot hope to bribe or twist, thank God, the British journalist. But seeing what the man will do unbribed, there's no occasion to."**  
Humbert Wolfe, 1886-1940 (*The Uncelestial City*)

Falklands War, itself a strictly censored war. And unlike the US media, British newspapers and broadcasting organisations accepted their government's 'guidance' on the release of 32 different categories of information with little argument. The drip-drip of the Thatcher years had taken its toll, most obviously on the BBC, which was vilified for refusing to refer to 'our' troops in the Falklands, but which is now praised for its war coverage by Tory MPs. The BBC's 1982 pronouncement — 'the widow of Portsmouth is no different from the wife of Buenos Aires' — was impossible to imagine being repeated in the context of today's war.

The media certainly helped to swing public opinion behind the war. But some journalists strained at the leash. The National Union of Journalists issued its own guidelines on war reporting which, among other things, called for the labelling of censored material and support for colleagues who came into conflict with their bosses over attempts to distort or suppress stories. The NUJ guidelines drew support from Mark Fisher, Labour's media spokesman, and both *The Guardian* and *The Observer* printed health warnings on MoD-censored stories.

*Guardian* journalists voted nearly four to one at a packed chapel meeting at the end of January to support the campaign against the war. And a few days later, 800 journalists, broadcasters and their supporters attended the first meeting of a new group, 'Media Workers Against the War', to hear Fleet Street columnists Paul Foot and Ed Pearce denounce the fighting.

Seamus Milne

Reproduced from *Sanity*, March/April 1991, original title 'A bad war for journalism'. The author is labour correspondent of *The Guardian* and a member of the NUJ's national executive.

## THE POLL TAX Life After Death

Since Heseltine's announcement that the poll tax was being abolished, the press have referred to it as 'dead' and, though far from resolved, the issue has been dropped from its regular spot in front page headlines and editorials. However, it is still getting more coverage now than during much of last year; its timely death now is the fruit of that largely unpublicised rebellion. The rebellion continues, though Heseltine's announcement has made many people less vociferous in their opposition to the tax.

I think fears that 'son of poll tax' will be a chip off the old block (and that, therefore, this victory is a false one) are exaggerated; the government will not waste their own time any further by foisting on us a local tax as intrinsically difficult and expensive to collect as the poll tax. My main concern is less what the government do that the rest of us become too complacent and snatch a defeat from the jaws of victory.

In the last issue of *Freedom* I suggested that the anti poll tax movement must continue to fight on three fronts:

1. continuing to support non-payers;
2. supporting poll tax prisoners; and
3. extending principles of organised non-payment to other areas (i.e. taking the anti poll tax struggle to its natural conclusions).

I now want to illustrate these ideas with examples of what is happening and what might be happening.

Brighton Council have summonsed three to five hundred people a week from today (8th April) until June. Obviously if only a fraction of them turned up each time, most cases would have to be adjourned. Perhaps because of the feeling that 'the battle is over', only a small number did turn up today (and an equally puny number of activists). However, I witnessed some spirited and effective time-wasting, not all of it intentional; one man, who said he actually approved of the poll tax but who had been billed twice, complained at length about the council's incompetence in summonsing him after he had repeatedly written to them to explain that he had paid.

Brighton Council have a policy of using their own bailiffs as 'debt counsellors'. Not content with agreeing to new schedules of payment for non-payers, the Labour authority is also pleased to send these bastards round to hassle people to pay even more each instalment. This move is clearly part of their aim to intimidate people. After all, if bailiffs are successful in taking people's stuff, they're going to be stuck with loads of second-hand electrical goods which they will not be able to sell very easily.

Toby Estler, a comrade who has worked on behalf of the poll tax riot defendants and a regular reader of *Freedom*, was recently jailed for three months allegedly for kicking a policeman at the anti poll tax riot of 31st March last year. Like many people nicked that day, his only crime was being present at a demo where the cops defined all members of the crowd as a serious problem. Sussex Poll Tax

(continued on page 3)

## "Business to Get Better"

(continued from page 1)

with an upsurge in the value of shares! In fact the "big gains have added 20% to London market values this year" in spite of the admitted recession. Which means that the City is expecting business to get better rather than worse.

Yet this year in the first three months there have been 650 bankruptcies per week and the 'experts' are expecting some 40,000 for the year, 15,000 more than in 1990.

In February the Confederation of British Industry was reporting "the bleakest outlook for order books in more than a decade and the lowest manufacturing inflation in 15 years" (*The Independent*, 25th February). Yet a month later *The Sunday Times* (31st March) reported the "CBI's new forecast for the economy will share the chancellor's optimism about a summer pick-up in activity". This optimistic note is immediately followed by:

"The CBI expects recovery to be slow, and unemployment to continue rising until well into next year. But a revival of business confidence will eventually pave the way for more investment and jobs, the CBI believes."

It doesn't make sense, does it, when one reads of the redundancies, sackings due to a shortage of orders. The Engineering Employers' Federation reckons that British engineering

companies will shed 100,000 jobs this year and the same in 1992. It also predicts a 7% fall in engineering output this year and no improvement next year (*Independent on Sunday*, 3rd March). British Telecom is planning to axe 36,000 jobs in the next three years (*East Anglian Daily Times*, 5th March). British Airways is cutting out 4,000 jobs and standing down 2,000 on half pay (12th February). IBM are reducing their workforce worldwide by 14,000 by the end of the year, and British Steel have announced closure of one of its blast furnaces at Ravenscraig with 1,100 more job losses. Even the publishing industry has announced the loss of 230 jobs. Hardly the kind of news to back up the government's optimism.

Perhaps the inflation rate will go down but only because unemployment will be rising at a faster rate than ever. Government Job Centres report the lowest number of vacancies in eight years. This applies to all parts of the country except Scotland. The number of claimants chasing each vacancy stood at 17 compared with 9.4 a year ago.

When shall we see massive demonstrations by the unemployed in this country, at least to compare with those against the poll tax?

What an example the people of the 'liberated' countries of Eastern Europe are setting the apathetic democracies by their mass protests!



With the release of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six, the government are engaged in a desperate rear-guard action to restore 'public confidence' in the police and judiciary. Other obvious miscarriages of justice keep on cropping up — the Maguires, the Bridgewater Four, Martin Foran, and the Tottenham Three, for example.

The government has responded by announcing the establishment of a Royal Commission, a well-known delaying tactic, and assuring us that these are isolated cases of injustice, the fault of the odd rogue copper under pressure to get results.

However, the case of the Cardiff Three suggests that the police and judicial system are rotten to the core. Here is a case not 'tainted' by the Irish question or the involvement of the Midlands Serious Crime Squad, but is as obvious an example of a fit-up as you are ever likely to see.

#### Lynette White and the white suspect

In the early hours of 14th February 1988, Butetown prostitute Lynette White was brutally murdered in her flat. She was stabbed over 50 times, her wrists were slashed, and her head was almost severed. In the flat police found traces of blood from her attacker. A spray of blood had left the imprint of a man's hand on the wall of the flat. A witness told of seeing a white man in a distressed state and covered in blood near her flat in the early hours of the morning.

The police issued identikit photos of the suspect and appealed through BBC's 'Crimewatch UK' for the public's help. For eight months the police continued the search for this man, but with no success.

#### Eight, then five, then three

The police then made a quantum leap backwards and arrested eight men, seven being black, from Butetown and concocted a case against five of them which they took to court. Ronald Actie, John Actie, Tony Parris, Yusef Abdullahi and Stephen Miller, were charged with the murder of Lynette White.

The main evidence against the five was based on a retracted confession of Miller (boyfriend/pimp of White, with a mental age of 11); contradictory statements from two prostitutes who claimed that they had gone to the assistance of White and had been made by the five to take part in her murder; the allegation by police supergrass Ian Massey (then serving 14 years for violent robbery and mysteriously released soon after the trial) that Parris has confessed to the murder while on remand; and the statement of Abdullahi's girlfriend that he had threatened to 'do a Lynette White' on her during a row.

#### The trial of Butetown

Butetown, in Cardiff's docklands, comprises one of Britain's oldest black communities. One third of the present population of 4,000 is black, and

# The Cardiff Three — and many others

the area suffers from many of the deprivations of a classic inner city area.

Much has been written about Cardiff's recent good race relations, but this has not always been the case. Deaths occurred during the 1919 race riots in Cardiff; and Butetown locals established armed patrols for their own protection. During the inner city riots of the 1980s, Butetown briefly sparked into life with locals attacking Butetown police station.

When the trial of the five black men opened in Swansea in May 1990, the prosecution started first of all by attacking the character of Butetown and its inhabitants. One senior police officer had described it as a "square mile of vice". This attack was particularly necessary because of the poor quality of the Crown's case:

1. There was no forensic evidence linking the five men to the murder — the traces of male blood in Lynette's flat did not match with any of the accused — nor did the hand print left on the wall.

2. The two main prosecution witnesses, prostitutes Angela Psalia and Leanne Vilday, gave several different stories to police at different times, each contradicting the other. Vilday was hypnotised in an attempt to prove her truthfulness, but while under hypnosis could say nothing about the murder. The judge warned the jury that both women were liars.

3. Ian Massey was the chief witness in the trial of a Manchester policeman jailed for 17 years for violence and corruption, but released after the credibility of Massey's evidence was undermined. Parris denied confessing the murder to Massey while sharing his cell on remand.

4. Yusef Abdullahi's girlfriend later retracted her claim, telling Abdullahi's brother she had made it up to hurt Yusef. Evidence to this effect was produced in court.

5. Miller had made a confession to the murder, implicating the others, while in police custody. He subsequently retracted, saying that it was the nineteenth statement he had made to the police and that it was made under duress. In court it was shown that Miller had the mental age of an 11 year old and was susceptible to 'suggestion'. In the light of recent revelations about police interrogation methods, such contested confessions must always be treated with suspicion.

The prosecution maintained that all the defendants were in a Butetown nightclub, the Casablanca, on the night of the murder, and had left the club with Parris in order to confront White. While in her flat all had taken part or aided in the

brutal and bloody murder of Lynette. They were then alleged to have returned to the nightclub after changing their clothes. The prosecution then produced witnesses who stated that all five had been in the club that night.

#### Three go down for life

Four of the defendants admit they were in the Casablanca club that night but produced a total of thirteen witnesses saying that had not left the club before the time of the murder. Parris claimed he was working as a glass collector in the club so could not have left without being noticed. Yusef Abdullahi denied knowing any of the other four men and claimed he was in fact working on a ship docked in Barry (eight miles away) all that night.

At the end of one of the longest trials in British history, the Actie cousins were acquitted and Parris, Miller and Abdullahi were found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. They immediately lodged appeals.

#### The Conspiracy Prosecution Service

Concern at the verdict emerged immediately, especially amongst defence lawyers and the local Butetown community, where a campaign to 'Free the Boys' began.

Concern has turned to outrage now that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have decided to release to the defence lawyers 22 statements that they had withheld from the defence during the trial. These statements are the dynamite that would have blown apart the Crown's case.

1. A witness who saw Abdullahi on board ship at Barry at the exact time that Lynette was murdered. He had gone out on deck as it had started raining and saw Abdullahi on deck. To check his story he went to the Met office to see when it had started raining that night. The Met office replied the rain started at 1.30am — the exact time when Lynette was murdered.

2. Parris now has witnesses to prove he was collecting glasses at the Casablanca, and the manager of the Casablanca club claims that Parris was at the club all night — otherwise there would have been a shortage of glasses.

3. Witnesses who claimed that neither Parris or Miller changed their clothes during the night.

4. A previously edited part of Vilday's filmed hypnosis session where the police present admit it is obvious that she knows nothing about the murder.

5. Numerous other statements that place Miller and Parris in the Casablanca club at the time of the murder.

6. Two merchant ships sailed from Cardiff the night of the murder but police made no inquiries.

7. The CPS has promised to release other material in the near future.

#### The Royal Commission

One of the revelations from the Birmingham Six appeal is the role of the CPS in withholding information vital to the defence, and the Commission will look into the inequity of this practice. By withholding such statements from the Cardiff Three the CPS arguably was party to a conspiracy, in practice, to pervert the course of justice.

What justification did the CPS have for failing to give the defence these statements at the time of the trial? If they believed that this information would undermine the Crown's case, then a fair-minded person would say this is exactly the reason why the defence should have been informed — since for a conviction to be safe, it must be beyond all reasonable doubt. The witness statements certainly cast doubt upon the safety of the convictions. In effect, the CPS have aided the framing of the Cardiff Three.

There is also another compelling reason. Three weeks after the conviction of the Three, Geraldine Paulk was murdered in Fairwater — two miles from Butetown. She had been stabbed 83 times, and her wrists and throat had been slashed. Any copper worth their salt would immediately want to interview three men convicted of a strikingly similar crime. However, Parris, Miller and Abdullahi were already in prison at the time — one alibi the police and the CPS could not ignore.

Eddie May  
Cardiff

#### Sources

Wales on Sunday, 17th March 1991.

Black Bag, Channel Four, 19th March 1991.

The Guardian, 20th March 1991.

## CYNICAL MANOEUVRE

From time to time details of the seedy, dishonest world inhabited by state intelligence organisations come to light to variously amuse, shock or disgust us. When they do we are reminded, by their obsessive secrecy — often to the point where their very existence is denied — that the reason for such secrecy is that they are doing their masters' dirty work: the kind of 'work' which, done by you or me would be denounced as illegal and immoral by the authorities and punished. They must deny such activities, of course, because they give the lie to their claim to be somehow more moral, more principled and better behaved than the ordinary people they claim to be protecting. So any revelations about such activities are to be welcomed.

#### Do what I say, not what I do

One such revelation occurred in January on Channel 4's 'After Dark' programme where one Bruce Hemmings, ex-CIA agent, revealed that in the mid-1980s, contrary to the public posture of the US government of never talking to terrorists, having no dealings of any kind with countries harbouring them and putting heavy pressure on the rest of the world to do likewise, US officials actually met representatives of Abu Nidal in Baghdad. The Iran-Iraq war was in full swing and although supposedly neutral the US, which had decided that its interests would not be served by an Iranian victory, offered to supply Iraq with lots of electronic goods, military equipment

and satellite intelligence of Iranian troop positions.

#### You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours

However the officials, probably from the Pentagon, had a small problem: Iraq was on America's list of countries harbouring terrorists and would first have to stop doing it. Would Saddam Hussein mind asking them to go somewhere else to plan their future car bomb attacks? According to Hemmings, the Iraqis did better than that and arranged a face-to-face meeting with those nice men from Abu Nidal. It is unclear whether they subsequently did move, but the US State Department soon ostentatiously informed the world that they had, and the promised supplies began to flow into Iraq like honey. Hemmings did not say what Abu Nidal got out of the deal, but it looked like a straightforward case of mutual back-scratching.

#### The end justifies the means

Now comes the news that the Senate Intelligence Committee is investigating allegations that last autumn the US State Department blew the cover of two or three Palestinian agents working undercover, either for Israel or the US (or both) inside a Syrian-based terrorist group, resulting in their deaths. The person alleged to have given the Syrian government the intelligence which led to their murder was none other than Secretary of State James Baker, on an official visit to Damascus. It is not known whether the

## The Poll Tax: LIFE AFTER DEATH

(continued from page 2)

Resisters Support Fund and the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign have announced a prison picket for Wednesday 1st May at Wormwood Scrubs prison, where Toby and other poll tax prisoners are being held. (The picket lasts from 10am to 2pm and the prison is in Du Cane Road, W12, nearest tube East Acton or 72 bus). As you can see, this is being held on the real May Day, not the May Day bank holiday, and is an opportunity for anarchists to claim back May Day from the state. Not only are these events good fun, they are excellent morale boosters for those inside, who can certainly hear the chanting just outside the perimeter wall. Contact the Poll Tax Prisoner Support Group (tel: 071-833 8958) or the TSDC (Room 205, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X) for further details.

On the question of using the structures in place in the anti poll tax movement for other things, I had in mind such things as resisting payment for council rents, mortgages, gas and electricity bills and so on. There is an interesting "open letter to everyone in the anti poll tax organisations" from the National Claimants Federation in number six of the excellent *Refuse and Resist* (available, for a donation, from PO Box 239, Glasgow G3 6RA) on this topic, and I strongly urge people to read it. Among other things, the letter argues that arrears for the amenities I mention above should become

collective not individual issues; and by community action to resist cuts to services (such as supporting strikes) there is less chance of payers and non-payers blaming each other instead of the Tories. The letter points out that the generalisation of successful anti poll tax activity to other areas has already begun: in Edinburgh, sheriff officer pointings for debts other than poll tax have been successfully resisted; and in north London, a house repossession by bailiffs was prevented — both through anti poll tax networks.

But cuts to services are already beginning to happen, too. *The Guardian* (9th March 1991) reports that the fire service is threatened with severe cutbacks as a result of spending limits forced on local councils by the poll tax. Our response to this, argues *Poison Pen* (available from PO Box 71, Hastings, East Sussex), should be mass public support for an unofficial fire service run by the workers themselves, as happened in the case of the ambulance workers' dispute, which received massive financial support from the public.

Mortally wounded and mad with rage, the dying poll tax lashes out blindly at its enemies, trying to take some of us with it. As we make its wreath, we must take care not to rest too heavily on our laurels, for they won't support the weight of future battles. Enemies of the state have had plenty of opportunities to learn from failure. Now is our opportunity to learn from a success.

Johnny Yen



## The Future of Coal in South Wales

The news that British Coal intends to close the Penallta colliery (employing 600) signals the end of deep shaft mining in south Wales. This will leave only two collieries, Tower and Merthyr Vale, employing under 1,000, working in the coalfield. British Coal has previously said that in such a situation the costs of administration would not justify keeping only two pits working — so it seems that the end is only a matter of time.

The reasons for closure have nothing to do with the lack of reserves or unprofitable working. Both Deep Navigation (closing on 29th March 1991) at Bedlinog (see *Freedom* 9th March 1991) and Penallta have recently produced record output levels. However, the winding-down of work at Deep Navigation has resulted in flooding at Penallta (just one mile away underground) which British Coal says makes working at Penallta too difficult. Yet all the remaining pits in south Wales have substantial reserves left untouched. Paradoxically only privatisation holds any hope for the remaining pits. This is the final irony of the miners' experience of nationalisation.

In the debates within the south Wales miners' movement before and after World War One, critics like Noah Ablett, Frank Hodges, A.J. Cook, W. Hay, etc., had warned their fellow workers against the false panacea of nationalisation — only workers' control, they argued, would protect the workers' long-term interests. The capitalist state would use all its powers to defeat the miners if the need arose. Such has been the miners' experience.

Under state control the mining industry has been destroyed by, among other things, the false energy policy of nuclear power. The more expensive, but secretly subsidised,

nuclear power was used by the state, under Labour and Tory administrations, to break the country's reliance upon coal and therefore break the power of organised labour. Nuclear power was not cheap, safe, nor clean, as claimed, but it was under the state's total control, unlike the coal industry where the NUM still had some say.

The state allows no competitors to its power and all should remember the lesson of the mining industry.

### ... and of the Poll Tax

The Tories are in desperate straits over the poll tax. Beaten outside Parliament by the mass non-payment campaign they are attempting to mount a political salvage operation. Lamont's Budget was a doomed attempt to bribe us to pay this year's poll tax, while the government attempts to foist the bastard 'son of poll tax' upon us.

Reducing poll tax by increasing the rate of VAT by 2.5% is yet another regressive taxation measure to bail out a failed previous regressive taxation attempt. VAT falls upon all sorts of necessities and hits the poorest hardest. For example, tampons are liable for VAT — so every month women are now being expected to pay for the poll tax. This burden of course falls hardest on those least able to pay.

Obviously we can't expect people to mount a consumers' boycott of essentials like sanitary protection, therefore we have to continue with the non-payment campaign. The poll tax is almost dead — don't pay this year's bills and we should be able to bury the poll tax and its bastard son. Don't Collect — Don't Pay!

EM

## The State is Your Enemy

Selections from the anarchist journal *Freedom*, 1965-1986

Available now

£5.00 (post free from Freedom Press)

# VRES IN THE DARK

disclosure was inadvertent or was deliberately designed to remove an obstacle to getting Syria involved in the anti-Iraqi coalition. But the explanation supplied by Baker's ubiquitous mouthpiece Margaret Tutwiler, that there was a threat to kill a US ambassador "in the region" sounds rather hollow when one remembers that in the run-up to the Gulf war Bush and Baker repeatedly threatened to bomb Iraq despite the risk of killing thousands of Western hostages held there. Against that scenario what's one ambassador, more or less (especially compared with valuable field agents on covert operations)? In any case, after first refusing to confirm that anyone had been killed or that Baker had said anything that might have caused it, Ms Rotweiler went on to say that even if he had — which he hadn't — it would only have been to protect the life of an ambassador. Well, why try to justify it if it didn't happen? The unmasking of foreign agents in Syria would certainly have been a powerful sweetener for the bitter pill the Syrians were being asked to swallow in siding with the Great Satan against Iraq.

### Kurds talk Shi'ite

As the aftermath of the Gulf war sinks in, provoking popular uprisings against the Iraqi government, we can now see just how much substance there is to US threats to get rid of Saddam. Two of the biggest threats to him, the Shi'ite Muslims in the south east and the Kurds in the north, have been trying hard to make common cause against the army in their

respective regions, but they are fighting at cross purposes. True, both want rid of Saddam, and in co-ordinating their opposition to some extent they are speaking the same language. But the Shi'ites would like to take over in Baghdad with their own oppressive regime, whereas the Kurds have only ever wanted autonomy in their region. Now it is obvious that for all its bluster and rhetoric the US, faced with the slaughter of thousands of people by the Iraqi army and the probable deaths of many more from disease and starvation, will do nothing to aid the victory of either group beyond chucking rice and blankets at them from the air. It is opposed to any further movement westward of Islamic fundamentalism and neither it nor the British government want to see a sovereign Kurdish state there because of the implications for the other states with Kurdish minorities: Iran, Turkey, Syria and the USSR. Despite rumours that American Special Forces were helping the Iraqi opposition this is likely to be only a token gesture, if true (at least until a new 'strong man' emerges from within the army or the Ba'ath Party). Evidence for this maverick attitude can be found in a previous covert operation inside Iraq.

### Covert action "not missionary work"

The Kurds should be glad the US has not intervened to 'help' them militarily. Some, at least, will remember the last time that happened. In 1976 the Pike report of the US House Committee on Intelligence was leaked

## News from Northern Ireland

The 75th anniversary of the 1916 Rising has come and gone with a whimper. This is unlike the 50th anniversary in 1966 which was celebrated with pageants, flag-waving and a general air of triumphalism. What has happened in Ireland in the past 25 years to bring about such a change? On the surface it would appear that the Irish Establishment wishes to play down an event in history which, it is felt, legitimises the continuing armed struggle of the IRA. And further to this, whole reams of historical revisionism have been pumped out in the past 25 years which go to great lengths to cheapen the contribution of the once-lionised heroes of 1916. What lessons can anarchists take from this experience in Ireland? Certainly and most obviously we can learn that history serves only our masters who can trot out any number of willing academics in any era to deliver the required line. And furthermore we can learn (for yet another time!) that the State would have us believe that only their violence, whether structural or physical, has legitimacy.

While I never expected that the role of working people in seeking to throw off the burdens of imperialism by armed insurrection would have been praised, I still find it surprising that even the romantic, bourgeois nationalist ideals of Pearse and the other leaders have found such disfavour. There was a time when Ireland saw itself as a leader in the non-aligned world, a friend of the oppressed nations of Asia and Africa to whom it gave a lead in being the first nation to throw out the colonialists. But membership of the EC has put an end to all that. Now Ireland abstains rather than votes against the Big Powers of Europe on tricky issues. Fearing to offend their more powerful neighbours the Establishment in Ireland will do anything to play down the colonial past. In a museum display to mark the 1916 Rising a text reads that the leaders were 'shot' rather than 'executed'. Language itself lies down in the face of late twentieth century Euro-economics.

Yet the failure to meaningfully and unapologetically mark that day must do

something to the minds of Irish people. 'We are terribly sorry, old chap, for that unruly bunch of poets and workers who took over the GPO in 1916 and we will do all we can to denigrate them in the minds of our people even as we do all in our power to assist you in brutalising Irish people in Britain, just so long as you keep taking our young people who want work or abortions or whatever else it is we won't give them in our own gombeen State', I can just hear C.J. Haughey telling John Major at their next get-together. Appeasing the British is the converse side of the IRA's armed struggle. In both cases the colonial masters are setting the agenda and in both cases Irish people are being brutalised. It is far more difficult to face into the task of organising and preparing for the social revolution that would really change society in Ireland than to follow the tradition of the blood sacrifice that led to thousands of Irish men dying in the trenches and in Dublin in 1916.

I was interested to notice that Sinn Fein and others who claim a radical view on Ireland highlighted James Connolly in all their statements on the 1916 Rising. This is an attempt to lay claim to socialist credentials and to occlude the basically nationalist agenda of Sinn Fein, both in the past as well as in the present. Connolly, for all his faults and ambiguities, had the wit to say to the members of the Citizens Army he led that if the Rising was successful that they should hold on to their weapons as they would probably be needed when the forces of reaction sought to take control. And take control they did very swiftly, as the stories of the soviets that appeared in Ireland, especially the one in Limerick in 1919, very clearly show.

So if the Irish establishment won't celebrate and commemorate the role of Irish working men and women who sought to defeat the Irish bosses in the lock-out in 1913, and who sought to challenge the imperial might in 1916, and who tried to bring power into the hands of the people through soviets in 1919, then let this column celebrate them unapologetically.

Dave Duggan

to the New York newspaper *Village Voice*. It documented how in May 1972 President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger personally conspired with the Shah of Iran to arm and finance the Iraqi Kurds in their struggle to hold on to the semi-autonomy they had fought for since the 1920s. The CIA, which had three times vetoed the plan, was instructed to implement it, but it was directed by Kissinger. The idea was to put internal pressure on Iraq during its dispute with Iran over the Shatt-al-Arab waterway. This was not an attempt to topple the government, merely a cynical manoeuvre in which the US supplied the Kurds with just enough assistance to pose a threat — to keep the pot boiling — but not enough to allow a Kurdish victory. But the Kurds were doing unexpectedly well, and by 1974 the Shah realised that Kurdish autonomy in Iraq would have implications for the aspirations of Iranian Kurds, and he decided to withdraw from the Iraqi operation. He said he would agree to stop supporting it in return for a small territorial concession along the Shatt-al-Arab, and the Iraqis agreed. The CIA, however, was alarmed. In an unusual attack of humanitarianism it warned of a catastrophe for the Kurds if US military aid was also cut off, and the Kurds pleaded with Kissinger to grant them political asylum or at least to supply humanitarian aid. But Kissinger would have none of it and pulled the plug on the operation in 1975, and the US, then as now, abandoned the Kurds to their fate at the hands

of the Iraqi army. Weakened by the loss of US/Iranian aid and a final military assault by Baghdad, they were butchered in their thousands. Kurdish towns and villages were subjected to massive napalm bombing and summary public executions on the orders of the then vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council, Saddam Hussein. Kurdish resistance collapsed. Up to 45,000 were killed and 200,000 made refugees.

In 1973, at the height of the Iraqi operations, Kissinger was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (the new Director of the CIA was named in 1975 as George Bush). Kissinger later justified to Congress his refusal to grant political asylum or humanitarian aid by calmly pointing out that "covert action should not be confused with missionary work". Well, thank you Henry for at least being honest about that.

### Partners in crime

The truth about this situation is what it has always been: that nation states only recognise other nation states and those in control, or in imminent control, of them. They respond only to power — individuals and ethnic minorities count for nothing, except insofar as they can be usefully manipulated in the interests of power politics, whether openly or covertly. Thus the US, even after all the bombing and destruction of the centres of power in Iraq knows quite well who its friends are — not the Palestinians and Kurds of this world but the Shamirs, Assads, Sabahs and Husseins.

Kevin McFaul



## People Without Government

People Without Government

by Harold Barclay

Kahn & Averill/Left Bank, paperback, £6.95 (post free)

The first edition of *People Without Government* was published in 1982, and the review in *Freedom* (on 12th March 1983) began more or less as follows.

The familiar way of expounding anarchism is through the prescriptive methods of propaganda, whether by word or deed, or of action, whether indirect or direct, and this has been the usual procedure of the classic anarchist writers and the historical anarchist movement. But there is also what may be called 'academic anarchism', which proceeds through the descriptive methods of examining how groups possibly could or actually do function in accordance with anarchist principles, whether consciously or unconsciously, and of exploring how such behaviour may be generalised in society.

Such an approach is taken by Harold Barclay, a lecturer in anthropology at Alberta University, in *People Without Government*. He argues "that anarchy is by no means unusual; that it is a perfectly common form of polity or political organisation. Not only is it common, but it is probably the oldest type of polity and one which has characterised most of human history". After distinguishing between anarchism (the ideology of society without institutionalised authority) and anarchy (the mere absence of government), and between 'intentional' and 'unintentional' anarchies, he summarises the many known examples of anarchy — especially as recorded by anthropologists among hunter-gatherer, gardener, herder and agricultural societies, but also in religious and utopian communities, in revolutionary collectives and co-operatives, and so on. The result, as expressed by the book's subtitle, is 'an Anthropology of Anarchism'.

Barclay takes his examples on their own terms rather than as illustrations of a thesis, and he not only recognises but emphasises the non-anarchist elements of many anarchies — the prevalence of patriarchy and tyranny of conformity in most primitive societies, the instability and ambiguity of most libertarian experiments. He concludes that "the kind of free society which might be more durable and resistant to corruption ... would be one in which each person and group was involved in a complex web of mutual relations so that each bond within the web would act as a counter-balancing force to every other"; but he adds that such anarchy is "unlikely to be achieved" and that "we are left with a politics of permanent protest".

A new edition of *People Without Government* was published in 1990. It is variously described as a "completely revised and updated reprint" and as a "completely revised edition"; it is in fact a slightly revised edition. The most obvious change is the shift from old pejorative names for some peoples to new neutral names — Eskimo to Inuit, Bushman to San, Lapp to Samete, Berber to Imazighen. At the same time, the discussion of segmentary lineage systems is extended, the discussion of the origin of the state is revised, and a discussion of relative homicide rates is added; and a few errors have been corrected and a few references updated. But no attempt has been made to take into account or even to add to the bibliography the later work done during the intervening eight years, either in the anthropological study of societies which have little or no government or in the historical study of groups which have tried to minimise or eliminate existing governments, and the book is essentially the same as it was — still excellent, but now inevitably a little dated.

Barclay is not just sympathetic to anarchism but involved in the anarchist movement. In

American Psycho

by Bret Easton Ellis

published by Vintage Books/Picador, £6.00

The Serial Killers

by Colin Wilson and Donald Seaman

published by W.H. Allen, £12.99

Murder most foul is the keystone of popular nightly mass entertainment for we the people and without the ghastly horror of the finding of the mutilated corpse from beneath the floorboards or in those guilt-sodden shrubberies our news media would be dull indeed in that 7.00am November journey to the factories, for be it

*People Without Government* he acknowledges his debt to the pioneering works of Kropotkin (*The State: Its Historic Role* and *Mutual Aid*, both still available from the Freedom Bookshop), and refers to the consciously anarchist attempts to establish anarchies, especially in the Russian and Spanish revolutions and in the libertarian communities of Britain and the United States; and the book has a short preface by Alex Comfort, once a leading anarchist writer in Britain. Barclay also contributes to several anarchist papers, including ours. An essay summarising the argument of the book appeared in *Freedom* on 6th March 1982, and he contributed articles to *The Raven* numbers 7 and 9.

Altogether Barclay is an important writer, and *People Without Government* is a valuable book. It is indispensable for any serious consideration of the basic arguments for anarchism — that a society without government is not only desirable but possible, and that several societies have existed and survived and indeed prospered without government — and it is fortunately very readable. Anyone who has the first edition will want the new one, and anyone who doesn't have the book will need it.

NW

## Murder

adult comic, paperback, serious hardback, play, film, university dissertation on Greek drama or the Icelandic saga, without the corpus delicti hamming it up as Top Banana to the falsely accused we will all end up having to read the editorials in *The Guardian* to kill the waking hours. When the gallows broadsheets found a paying market for the last true confession of the pirate or the happy highwayman tap dancing on the end of their rope, it set off a cycle of fashionable styles of murder that dropped the slaughterhouse of the Jacobean theatre and found an audience with the questing academic or the soulful aesthetic given to Thomas De Quincey on "murder considered as one of the fine arts". George Orwell, who believed what he read that he had his hand on the throat of popular culture, held that murder of the 1920s was a lower middle class style of self-expression, a world of economic misery, debt-ridden, mean side streets, custard, the pathetic dirty grey-green garden 'out back' to bury the murdered wife or relative in for the £128.50 insurance money and then the Law with a Birmingham accent. It was the world of the unfortunate William Wallace but Orwell, as ever, was wrong for it was also the world and time of the gay happy shootings when fashionable laughing ladies of the hour shot their cigarette-smoking rotters with their little pearl-handled revolvers in romantic gas-lit mews where bowls of flowers hung from doors prior to the fashionable laughing ladies being hung. It was the age of the detective story on sale on every bookstall wherein was the detailed plan of Lord Elpus' oak-lined study and in every story the unfortunate M'lord lay doornail dead on the oriental carpet, all doors and windows locked within, and a Burmese dagger in the aristocratic back. At 3.17pm M'lord answered

This article is intended as a reply to the two articles written by Ulli Diemer published in *Flux*, October 1990 (available from Freedom Bookshop, 70p including p&p)

Diemer characterises anarchists as anti-intellectuals who worship action, especially violence. He claims that anarchists consistently, wilfully misrepresent Marx. The faulty view of Marx stems from the fact of the historical power-struggle between Bakunin and Marx over the International. If Marxism is thought of as hierarchic, statist and authoritarian by anarchists, this is because of Bakunin's misrepresentation of Marx. However, it is in truth the anarchists who have these faults, for Bakunin was guilty of all of these and more. These claims do not stand up when examined.

Diemer accuses anarchists of taking the part for the whole when examining Marxism, however he makes the same mistake when he dismisses anarchism because of perceived faults on the part of Bakunin.

Here is an important difference — Marxists can never jettison Marx, but anarchists have no such commitment to Bakunin. Diemer believes that Marx cannot be rejected, but he can be 'transcended'. But how much of Marx's doctrine needs to be 'transcended' before the Marxist becomes an un-Marxist?

In becoming a Marxist one is making a declaration of faith in, and commitment to, the founder and prophet. In so doing they bow the head and state their submission, and so are joined in some mystical way to the truth of those weighty documents — *Capital*, the *Grundrisse*, the *Manifesto* and all the rest. Such heavy books. The statement 'I am a Marxist' must be rather like a blank cheque, or a Kierkegaardian leap of faith.

Behind this attitude of submission lies an implicit or explicit claim to truth of an over-arching and final sort, demanding belief, and action. Does this claim receive textual support in Marx? If not, the Marxists are untrue to their master, and the possibility of refutation and rejection arises. But should the claim be supported in the texts, the accusation of authoritarianism is upheld, and Marx thereby makes claims to infallibility which are impossible to believe.

Marxist sects compete with each other as to whom is the most faithful interpreter of the doctrine. This follows from the requirement for submission. Without dogmatism this

## Bakunin, Marx and

competitive orthodoxy would be meaningless. Here then is an important difference between Bakunin and Marx, for Bakunin is anti-doctrinal. A consequence of the theoretical ascendancy of Marx's work (intellectualism in Diemer's account) is that they are being used as a means of establishing control within the sects, and as a means of differentiating between them (as is theology in Church denominations). Bakunin, by contrast, is more loose, and less theoretical.

Marx's theories about the modes of production, of conflict between exploiter and exploited, iron laws, and all the rest of it, are fixed, and the truth. Bakunin by contrast is human, fallible, in some ways a child, romantic, the figure of Rudin in Turgenev, in his youth captured by German Idealism. Bakunin may be inconsistent, but when we compare him with Marx, sometimes Bakunin is the clearer sighted. His dismissal of the command of the many by the few could easily be a critique of the excesses of Marxism-Leninism. At least, in his mistakes, Bakunin is human.

We can see evidence of Marx's ill-tempered dogmatism when we examine his *Conspicuous*, his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* or his pedantic objection to Bakunin's use of the phrase "the economic and social equalisation of classes". Marxists might well be critical of Bakunin's anti-Germanism, but against this we have Marx's Russophobia expressed in his *Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century*, a work which is excluded from the canon.

"My life itself is a fragment" (Bakunin). Both sides admit his inconsistency, which follows from his anti-doctrinalism. Take, for example, his abstentionism. His complaint against the German Social Democratic Worker's Party was that Liebknecht, Babel, etc., were betraying the essential gulf between the bourgeois and proletariat. Diemer draws our attention to Bakunin's letter to Carlo Gambuzzi advocating that he stands for election as a deputy. From reading the letter we can see this is a *specific* response to a particular situation, a tactic to protect the movement in the crisis following the fall of the Paris Commune (1871) and the Europe-wide wave of persecution. Bakunin explicitly states there is no risk of

Gambuzzi forgetting, deforming or abandoning his revolutionary principles (see Dolgoff, pages 218-219).

### Marx and the state

Does Marx preach a continuation of the state? According to section II of the *Manifesto*, it would appear so. Here we have a description of the character of the revolution, which talks about centralisation of credit, state ownership of transport, communications, factories and farming. All these belong to the 'transitional' phase before utopia is reached in the 'withering away of the state'. These measures are 'imposed' by the proletariat. But once made, how will this power ever be surrendered? Marx argues that this centralisation is imposed on behalf of the collective will of the proletariat (see *Conspicuous*). The difference between Marx and Bakunin seems to amount here to a dispute over the character of the administration of this phase. Both believe the mass should have control, and both advocate delegation. Bakunin, however, is uneasy about this. He senses that power corrupts, and so will have none of it. Bakunin hates compulsion and obedience (see *On Safeguarding Freedom Against the Abuse of Power*). But some form of delegation is necessary, only with revocable mandates (see the *Programme of the International Brotherhood*).

The state's existence is therefore linked to this centralisation. How should a revolutionary movement connect with the wishes of the populace, how do the masses know what is good for them? Yet there is an assumption, both by Marx and Bakunin, that their revolutionary movements align with the mass. For Marx, communism is "the real movement which abolishes the present state of things" (*The German Ideology*). We have this inevitable progress towards communism driven by economic forces, and by contrast, the people themselves in the present working to "shorten and lessen the birth pangs". For Bakunin, there exists this shadowy, secretive organisation, the International Brotherhood, who operate as revolutionary propagandists. Diemer objects, claiming this "Revolutionary General Staff"



# for the Masses

the ringing phone, at 3.17pm the rays of the summer sun struck the wax holding the spring that held the Burmese dagger hidden in the overhead chandelier, the wax melted and the spring sprang the dagger across the oak-lined study into the back of the phone-answering M'lord. It was the Englishman and American Chandler and Hammet who led the pack that finished the oak-lined study and the Burmese dagger syndrome, for they sneered at it in print and in the rough pages of pulp magazines such as *Black Mask*, they wrote of a world of American criminal politics where murder was not for hate or revenge but for the elimination of the competition. Loyalties, friendships were secondary in a world where sentences were as short and as brutal as a speeding bullet and corrupt politics gave way to honest killings. Where love between men and women should give way to a greater truth and a paying audience in that 'she stood in the doorway and she let her coloured kimono fall open. Her blonde hair fell around her shoulders and her red lips smiled. I shot her once and she looked at the red blood lip red dribbling out. "Why", she whispered, "why?" And she lay on the floor all blonde and beautiful and I whispered "You shouldn't have told the Greek, baby", and I felt sick and phoned the Big Mick at City Hall saying it's finished.' This is our world of 1991, for let there be no illusions about this for every time some unfortunate is murdered from the west coast of Ireland across Europe, yea even to the American CIA, that murder is the product of 'political' discussion and 'a fool hath said in his heart' will be willingly ordered out to commit it. And comrades who among you applauded a killing 'for the greater good'. Mass production has now produced for the buyer the age of the disposable for logic dictates that it is economically cheaper to

throw away than to repair and emotional need and public taste demands that, in the violent world of murder, multiple murder must displace the single killing.

The function of the single killing was the solving of who stuck the Burmese dagger in M'lord, but with multiple killings it is the enjoyable horror as the body count mounts up, be it Thatcher Private Enterprise or uniformed military gung ho. Yet I hold that repetition of a limited subject must of its very nature bore the reader like a vegetarian cook book, political manifestoes or the Royal Academy summer art exhibitions. The pleasure of the Jack the Ripper school of academic research lies with 'Jolly' Jack and not with the



unknown number of unfortunate women, and while De Sade and Grimm's fairy tales set the style, modern writers of the school of blood ignored the work of those boys. It has been left to Bret Ellis and his publisher to supply a solid slab of mass killings, mutilation, sexual variations on the torture theme, that is a DIY handbook for anyone rich or sad enough to tour Ellis's map into the sad by-ways of the human mind. It is said that Ellis has already scooped up over \$350,000 from the American publishers and I would hold that the book was clinically and coldly produced for a mass money market.

The James Bond authors shyly dipped their toes into the bathwater left by the author of *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* when rape and sexual mutilation was blamed on pure cry villain but Ellis has moved away from the sophistry of canting morality to provide his readers with the hedonistic pleasures of sadism in all its drear butchery and like vegetarian cooking it is a limited subject.

Already the guardians of our collective conscience are panting for *American Psycho* to be banned and these drear people could offer it no better sales pitch for censorship is the ultimate evil for one knows that without their smug authoritarian rage this book, rather badly written, rather humourless and of its style understandably boring would have found its market and sunk down literature's loo. For my brief and borrowed reading I can only advise to borrow but not to buy. Serial killing became the fad in America with Manson and his clowns and with the Boston Strangler, and it was but a matter of a short time for the experts to hoist themselves onto the bandwagon complete with rubber-room psycho jargon but, as we say in the White Hart, after the first murder one switches over to another television channel. For those who are interested in mass murder purely as an art form or for purely sociological reasons, comrades, then Colin Wilson and Don Seaman's book on *The Serial Killers* is the

thing for the Christmas stocking. I have a great admiration for Wilson who in the dear dead days stood on many an anarchist platform giving his interpretation of anarchism. He churns out his facts and fantasies and as with many an academic one can hear those reference cards flip-flip-flipping. He is readable, be it the lost city of Atlantis, flying saucers or mass murder, but in his latest book on mass murder Colin fails to hold the reader's undivided attention for, as we say in the White Hart, one murder is like another. Colin had access to the 'files' and the experts, but when the mass murderer is caught one has one more drear sad sack in the net. Colin argues that sexual mass murder and mutilation are crimes peculiar to our times and is part of our technological society, which is rough luck on the unfortunate women, and the anthropologist Leyton, I understand, agrees with him in that it is class related murders and that 'Jolly' Jack the Ripper was our first essay into mass sexual killing. But I would agree with Martin Fido that they are both wrong and, as with Ellis's book *American Psycho*, I would state that any professional advertising campaign, as in the last few years in relation to serial sexual killings, must be a money earner. I found *American Psycho* boring, but then I do not condemn De Sade but find the poor old sod boring, and Colin, lad, from your number one fan I found *The Serial Killers* boring with the exception of Hamilton Fish the mass murderer who treated the human race as no more than a private supermarket. He killed children and ate them as a perfectly logical thing to do, he tortured them and he tortured himself yet feared pain, he saw visions of Christ and his angels and he looked forward to the death penalty and for his service the State rewards him and Hamilton Fish was electrocuted on 16th January 1936, but let us weep for the innocent and the guilty who we cannot protect for we too are the victims.

Arthur Moyses

# Anarchism

shows that it was Bakunin, not Marx, who was authoritarian. But Bakunin insists that the revolution must be organised from the bottom up. He believes in sincerity, that no propaganda can make the masses something they are not (Dolgoft, page 308). This is his essentially optimistic view of human nature. Both Marx and Bakunin must negotiate this gap between the limited number of revolutionaries, and the general application of their theories to society. revolutionaries need a role and purpose, and some flattery too. Marx does this through the idea that some groups of workers will be more advanced along the long road to utopia than others (see the *Rules of the International*, for example). Bakunin does this through the conspiratorial inwardness of his (largely imaginary) secret societies.

Diemer's characterisation of Bakunin as an authoritarian cuts across the testimony of Guillaume, who records the surprise he felt when he found that the basis of the Brotherhood was that of free association, not of obedience to orders from above (see E.H. Carr, page 371). Secondly, if Bakunin ruled his supporters as firmly as Diemer suggests, why did he allow his Italian supporters (Rimini, August 1872) to secede from the International, and thereby tip the balance of power further in Marx's favour?

## Marx and determinism

According to Diemer, Marx is not a determinist. If Diemer should turn out to be wrong in this, the term 'Libertarian Marxist' would appear to be a contradiction.

"It is a question of these laws themselves, of these tendencies, working with iron necessity towards inevitable results ..." (*Capital* volume 1, preface)

"The mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general ..." (*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, preface)

"Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life process ... life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life ..." (*The*

*German Ideology* volume 1, 'The Materialist Conception of History')

"It shows that circumstances make men just as much as men make circumstances ... the reality ... is precisely the real basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, in so far as things are only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals themselves." (*The German Ideology*)

Marx's determinism is clouded by his love of circular patterns of causation. Compare his statement about consciousness being determined by life with the *Third Thesis on Feuerbach*. Marx as a materialist looks first to the economic factors, modes of production, the material base, and only afterwards at the ideological superstructure. But notice this — Marx has very little time for this isolated individual, the little cog in the big machine. It is always men, men who act collectively, men as a class. Men who are caught up in the dialectical process, this struggle between exploiters and exploited. "Moreover it is quite immaterial what consciousness starts to do on its own; out of all such muck ..." etc. (*Consciousness and the Division of Labour*). This is part of what makes Marx so terrible — in this materialism, in this determinism we have a denial of human culture (of which the works of Marx are a part) and the denial of freedom. It is here that the root of the massacres and repression committed by the followers of Marx lies. Against Diemer's view of the "brilliant and fruitful" contribution of Marx to the twentieth century, anarchists can point out that it is not the 'authoritarian' anarchists who are responsible for the millions murdered and the long years of repression, but the Marxists.

## Historical questions

Diemer revives the old disputes over responsibility for the split in the International. He turns round the charge of authoritarianism. Bakunin is accused of entryism, he is said to have led the 'Alliance' into the International with the intention of taking control. However, this group was more like a loose federation of people with similar anti-authoritarian views than a cohesive, disciplined secret society. Some of these were already members of the International. Marx tried his damndest to keep the rest out. Once they were in he waged a campaign against them.

The first conflict was over the abolition of inheritance (Basle, September 1869). Despite the fact that there were only 12 'Bakuninists' out of 75 delegates, the recommendations of Marx's General Council were overruled. Somebody must

have voted with them. Eccarius is reported to have said "Marx will be extremely displeased". This is evidence for Marx's attitude of proprietorship towards the International. After this came the Nechaev business, and the disaster of Bakunin's involvement in the revolt at Lyons. Then came the split in the Federation Romande at Chaux de Fonds in the Jura. Despite the fact that the 'Bakuninists' were in the majority 21/18 votes, Engels ordered them to cede the name and call themselves the Jura Federation. Perhaps this indicates the nature of democracy within the controlling body of the International.

The private London Conference (September 1871) which the Jura Federation were excluded from brought the Sonvillier Circular denouncing the autocratic General Council, as well it might. Already, the cracks showed in the International. At the Hague conference (September 1872) Marx finally 'triumphed' because most of the delegates present were German. As to the investigation against Bakunin, the committee found it could not make head or tail of the accusations, that is until Marx made his unprecedented intervention (this was the only congress he ever attended) when he read them the letter from Nechaev to the publisher Lyubavin. Afterwards Marx commented "the letter had done its work" in a letter to Danielson.

Who killed the International? In view of the fact that Marx seems to have controlled it via the General Council, the answer would seem to be Marx. Marx seems to have been in the stronger position. It is a mistake to see the conflict as a struggle between two equals, as numerical breakdowns of the votes show. Many of those voting alongside Bakunin's supporters were simply against the authoritarian drift of the International. But rather than risk a rematch at some later stage, Marx effectively pulled the plug on the whole thing in his call to move the General Council to New York. Authority kills, and if this was not the act of an autocrat, it is difficult to see what could be.

SB

## Bibliography

- E.H. Carr *Michael Bakunin*
- Marx *Conspectus of Bakunin's State and Anarchy*
- Marx *The Alleged Splits in the International*
- Dolgoft *Bakunin on Anarchism*
- Aileen Kelly *The Fatal Charm of the Millennium* NYRB, 22nd January 1976



# When Prophecy Fails

In recent years we have witnessed the heartening spectacle of the collapse of Marxist-Leninist regimes in Eastern Europe and the admission of the failure of Marxism in the Russian Empire. It has given me much satisfaction to watch on television the crowds in Eastern European towns making the symbolic gesture of pulling down statues of the sainted Lenin from public plinths, an act of blasphemy that must have been deeply shocking to many Marxists who have lived comfortably in the West for so long mouthing Marxist-Leninist prophecies with smug assurance. The shocking mess that is left behind by the collapse of Marxist regimes is pretty terrible, but at least a step in the right direction has been made.

It may seem surprising, therefore, that here in Britain we have an apparent resurgence of Marxist groups going full steam ahead in propaganda drives for their own brand of Marxism, as though the whole thing had been a great success rather than a catastrophic failure. The Gulf war has come as a godsend to them, and as an excellent article in *Freedom* on 23rd March 1991 by Mack the Knife, and a letter from Laurens Otter, describe, all sorts of groups of 'Trots' — Spartacists, Redgraveists, Morenoists and Moronists — are having a ball at the expense of common sense. I particularly liked the pithy exposition of the position by Mack the Knife:

"Even if we were being attacked by men from Mars, the *Workers' Voice* or some such sheet without questioning the social system on the Red Planet would surely proclaim 'Down with Yankee imperialism — support the Martians!'"

An imperialist war that was launched by Saddam Hussein, in his attempt to carve himself out a huge oil-rich Arab empire, has been represented as an *anti-imperialist* struggle. Here we are back to 1939 with Hitler trying to create an extensive Nazi empire, and coming up against the older imperial powers. The focus of attention on the Middle East has come at a very opportune time for those smarting from the spectacle of the failure of Marxist-Leninism as a practical creed, who are wondering what to do about it. We are witnessing something like the events of Pentecost in the Christian legend, when the failure of Christ's evangelical movement had to be represented as a great victory.

But we do not need to go as far back in time as Pentecost to get other examples of utter failure producing a resurgence of propagandising among the faithful. There

**Marxism is now one of the great world religions promising — salvation! And responsible for much cruelty ... and domination of the weak by the ... strong.**

have been many other examples, often associated with prophecies for the imminent end to the world. One such interesting example in the USA will be discussed below.

The increased propaganda of the Marxist-Leninist groups following the failure of their theories to work out in practice, is entirely to be expected according to the research findings of social psychologists. As Festinger puts it:

"Suppose an individual believes something with his whole heart; suppose further that he has a commitment to this belief, that he has taken irrevocable actions because of it; finally, suppose that he is presented with evidence, unequivocal and undeniable evidence, that his belief is wrong: what will happen? The individual will frequently emerge, not only unshaken, but even more convinced of the truth of his beliefs than ever before. Indeed, he may even show more fervour about convincing and converting other people to his view."

Festinger adds the rider that while an isolated individual may become disillusioned by the failure of a prophecy, where there is a mutually supportive group it will serve to strengthen the delusion and insist that all its members become additionally vocal.

This may make depressing reading for some, for they may ask 'What is the use, then, of presenting reasoned, logical arguments in a journal such as *Freedom* if they fall on deaf

ears?' Certainly, much that has been published in this journal will never convince hard-line Trots (or hard-line Christians, Muslims, Fascists, etc.) but the building up of a body of informed and critical opinion can, and does, influence the personal development of the uncommitted. This, as I see it, has been the long-term role of the anarchist movement, before I was born, and I trust that it will continue after my death. I am well aware that such a vague entity as 'the anarchist movement' contains, and will continue to contain, some groups and individuals who consciously eschew reason and prefer sloganising of the 'Two legs bad — four legs good' variety. Some warped individuals can find such activity emotionally satisfying, but they generally drift away and join authoritarian movements — even fascist ones! (I believe that the class war nutters no longer call themselves 'anarchists'.)

Here we come to an interesting paradox. Historically, anarchists are supposed to be wild, impractical theorists, but the Marxists are supposed to be 'scientific socialists' putting forward a down-to-earth blue-print for the future of society. Although the nineteenth

**The increased propaganda of the Marxist-Leninist groups following the failure of their theories to work out in practice, is entirely to be expected according to the research findings of social psychologists.**

century writings of Karl Marx have much to commend them as a critique of nineteenth century capitalist society, the history of the twentieth century has shown that in terms of prophecy his theories were just hopelessly wrong, and as a practical guide to the organisation of society they have proved an utter and admitted disaster. Of course, this is not admitted by the Marxists who have lived in relative comfort in the capitalist West.

Earlier, I referred to Pentecost in the Christian legend as an example of failure being represented as success by the faithful, and it is instructive to look at a more recent example. This is very well documented, and is written up in the book *When Prophecy Fails* by L. Festinger, H.W. Rieken and S. Schachter. It concerns a 'flying saucer' group in the USA which gathered round the person of a woman who prophesied that there would be a disastrous flood engulfing her part of the world, and probably extending to destroy the whole world. Her followers, however, would be picked up by a flying saucer and removed to another planet. This was no mere matter of words, for members of her group showed their commitment to this prophecy by giving up their jobs, disposing of their property, and taking various other irrevocable actions, as they thought they would be leaving this doomed planet. These people were not social derelicts, but fairly ordinary and reasonably well educated American citizens, some holding quite responsible jobs. The group was infiltrated by a number of social scientists who were interested to see from the inside how the movement would develop and what would happen when the promised flying saucer did not arrive, and the world was not flooded.

The prophecies became more and more specific. An actual date and time for the arrival of the flying saucer was prophesied, and detailed instructions were given for the proper conduct of the faithful, such as the removal of all metal from their clothing, as apparently one cannot take metal aboard a flying saucer! An endless series of meetings were held at the house of the prophetess, often lasting all night, and the university observers, who had to pretend to be believers, had to attend all these sessions to study the developing dynamics of the group. One aspect of the group prepared for their removal from this planet was that they became very inward-looking and secretive in regard to the journalists from local

papers who wished to write stories about them. However, when the flying saucer failed to arrive, and there was no flood on the predicted date, the observers expected a terrible disillusionment to set in, and the faithful to denounce the prophetess as a deluded fraud. They had lost their jobs, ruined themselves financially, deserted their families, etc., and been exposed to public ridicule by the press. But were they down-hearted — no! Immediately they welcomed all the attention they could get from the media, and even hit the national press. Like Saddam Hussein who announced the crushing defeat of his army as a great victory, they were proud to announce that all was well. The flying saucer had not needed to arrive because they had somehow saved the world by manifesting their great faith! They had become very vocal in proclaiming their ridiculous system of ideas of how the future was going to be governed by the all-wise spacemen who would soon clear up all social evils — if we will only believe!

It may be objected by some that to compare the Trots and similar political groups to nutters who expect to leave the planet in a flying saucer, and go to the length of ripping out metal zips and other fastenings to their clothes, is not quite fair. I disagree. Ordinary people will not only believe in, but act upon, the most absurd ideologies if their personal and social circumstances so constrain them.

We make a big mistake if we believe that what is published in the *Workers' Voice*, *The*

*Next Step*, *The New Worker*, *The Socialist Standard* and *Workers' Power* really explains what the writers are concerned with. Look to their thwarted ambitions, their failed sex lives, their hankering to break out of their stifling families, their dreary jobs — there you will find what motivates and determines their silly adherence to failed prophecies. Some of them, superficially, have always done rather well out of the capitalist system, and will continue to do so. But Marxism is now one of the great world religions promising — salvation! And like other great world religions it has been responsible for much cruelty, waste of human resources, and domination of the weak by the ruthless, strong and hypocritical.

And what of the anarchist 'faith', as manifest in the journal *Freedom*? Does it come within the ambit of my criticism? Well, to some extent, yes — but I have noted a considerable maturing of anarchist writings during the present century. Now we seldom get the old pie-in-the-sky prophecies for 'after the revolution' that used to characterise much of the early propagandising. A more realistic note crept into anarchist propaganda during World War Two. There has always been over the past century an uneasy relationship between anarchism and Marxism, just as in earlier times there was such a relationship between radical popular movements and Christianity. I would agree with Mack the Knife — "Forget the theory, use common sense!"

Tony Gibson

## Waiting for the Bus

Now I can see why governments hold secret talks with each other, Bert ... Go on, Daisy, I'm all ears ... That April Glaspie. Says she warned Saddam about invading Kuwait, but the Iraqis reckon she gave them the green light ... Crafty, wasn't it. You can't pin them down. Anyway, Jimmy Carter told the world that the Gulf belongs to the United States of America back in 1980 ... What did he say then? ... "Any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf will be regarded as an assault on vital strategic interests of the US of A, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." It was known as the Carter Doctrine ... Saddam must have known Bush would be prepared to use force, then, unless it is true that Glaspie gave him the nod ... Makes you stop wondering, doesn't it, Daisy. Obviously Carter didn't need the United Nations behind him then, and Bush was prepared to take the chance whether he got its backing for Desert Storm, which he didn't anyway, because the Secretary General said it wasn't a United Nations operation. Let's face it, the USA is the UN, at least until China gets its feet trodden on ... How many feet are there in China, Bert? ... If you take one and a half billion and double it, that's a lot of army boots, boots, boots, boots, marching off to war again ... D'you think China's playing a waiting game? ... I shouldn't wonder, what with Uncle Sam's financial state, racial problems, not to mention AIDS ... We had over one hundred AIDS deaths again last month, Bert. They must have been putting pneumonia down on the death certificates last year ... There's fiddles going on all over the place. Look at the poll tax. The leader of Camden Council where the poll tax is £440 wrote to *The Guardian* claiming that the huge rent rises in Wandsworth and Westminster meant that a two-adult council household in Camden would be £150 to £200 better off

than they would be if they lived in the flagship boroughs. I haven't seen any reply to the letter, so I assume there is a lot of truth in it ... Did you notice how many office blocks and factories were empty when we went to Slough for our bus passes? ... In a way, I'm glad to see it, Daisy. All this development has got to stop somewhere. The Berks County Council has reported that road traffic levels have reached saturation point. Now there's Eton College wanting to put a big housing estate on the only piece of spare land left in Slough, as well as a rowing course ready for the jolly boating weather, and the powers that be talking of widening the M4 and building a flood channel. Now the TV personalities who live on the outskirts are getting bolshie about it all because their nice little lives look like being interrupted. It's all right for them, they've got enough money to move a bit further out. All this has been going on under a council which has a big Labour majority ... Strikes me the Tories couldn't have made a better job of crucifying Slough if they tried ... The first thing on Labour's agenda is to become the government, aEd that means being acceptable to the establishment. Look how Kinnock and Co are trying to get Joan Twelves and her Lambeth Labour Councillors kicked out of the Party ... What have they done then, Bert? ... They've tried to behave like Socialists, objecting to 'our boys' being sent to fight for Bush in the Gulf, and supporting non-payment of the poll tax ... I see poor Salman Rushdie's wife has divorced him because he is so depressed ... I feel sorry for the bloke. Some of his supporters have disowned him because he became a Muslim to try and save his skin, and there's that Joan Ruddock giving away all her principles just to save her job. I never liked that fixed grin on her face, anyway. Here it comes. Let's see if these new bus passes work ...

EFC



## The Anti-Gulf War Campaign What went wrong?

Dear Editors,  
We have yet to find out what went wrong with the campaign against the Gulf war. If we don't get it right now the thing will go cold on us and be much more difficult later.

The campaign was led, nationally by The Committee to Stop War in the Gulf, the organiser of the big demos in London with people bussed in from all over the country. It was a significant sign of health that the Scots soon organised autonomously. The London Committee was set up at a meeting on 29th August 1990, and everything that followed stemmed from the substance of that meeting. It was called by the Left with the support of CND, *not* the other way round.

There were two disastrous decisions taken on 29th August. In deference to Iraqi democrats present at the meeting and their opposition to sanctions, *the UN case based on sanctions was dropped*, which meant that the UN was dropped.

### Vic Williams defence campaign launched

Vic Williams is a British soldier who went 'absent without leave' from his unit in Germany in December 1990 in protest against the Gulf war.

During the war he spoke out against it from many public platforms at demonstrations, rallies and meetings.

After being absent for 72 days he gave himself up to military police in London on 9th March, and is now in custody charged with desertion. If convicted he could face a very long period of imprisonment.

To ensure that Vic receives the maximum possible support for his brave stand, a defence campaign has been launched. Supporters include the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and Reservists Against the War (RATW).

#### How you can help

- Send messages of support to: Vic Williams, c/o 265 Seven Sisters' Road, Finsbury Park, London N4.
- Send donations addressed to Vic at the above address (make cheques payable to 'Vic Williams Defence Fund'). Apart from legal costs, while absent from the army Vic's army pay was suspended, he spent all his savings and ran up a considerable debt.
- A petition to the Ministry of Defence demanding that Vic be treated as a prisoner of conscience and released immediately has been drawn up. Copies of this sent on request.

David Polden (CND),  
Andy Wilson (RATW) and  
John Holmes (Committee to Stop  
the War in the Gulf)

No other campaign body took up the UN case and it went by default in the months that followed. What happened was then a purely anti-US campaign based on the slogan 'No Blood for Oil'.

The other matter concerned Saddam Hussein. What the Committee could have done was to adopt the Arab solution, i.e. that Hussein was guilty of the savage attack in Kuwait, had to go and would be dealt with by his own people (opposition or army) in their own good time. This was not done. Tony Benn said that he was not in the business of apportioning blame and let Saddam off the hook. This attitude came to characterise the whole campaign.

Over these two matters, firstly over sanctions and the UN and then over Saddam Hussein, The Committee to Stop the War in the Gulf was hoist with its own petard. The press, with good grounds, was able to write it off as a Leftist front and the prospect of a broad alliance round the UN case was thrown away. For months before the war began on 17th January, people like Denis Healey and Edward Heath had powerfully opposed the move to war. That nothing came of a remarkable cross-bench opportunity was largely due to suicidal sectarianism on our own side. Iraq's horrific state today is the outcome. We could have affirmed sanctions *sine die* and the removal of Saddam Hussein, albeit vicariously. It was not done.

One lesson of this experience is that events right at the beginning of any

campaign are vitally important. Decisions taken then are very difficult, even impossible, to change later. To be casual about foundations is fatal. As NW put it in *Freedom* (23rd March), what we have to get right is "who to work with or against and how to do so".

But the greatest fault, of course, is not in our ranks but in the Pentagon. This needs to be investigated in depth. The evidence suggests that the US decision for war was taken right from the beginning, and the UN, as in Korea, was only a cover. Pentagon policy was, and is, to stay in control in the Middle East. They knew that if they did not destroy Iraqi potential power through nuclear, chemical and biological weapons the Israelis would do it themselves. The US war in the Gulf was to pre-empt an Israeli attack on Iraq and thus to maintain American control. John Major, in speaking to the troops in the desert, said that it was either conventional war now or nuclear war later — the same message slightly disguised.

The route to indicting unjust war in general lies through the indictment of particular unjust wars. The Gulf War is a case in point and a good libertarian mandate.

Peter Cadogan

Send us your  
letters for  
publication

## Learn the Poll Tax Lesson

Articles in *Freedom* often traduce the state. They speak as if it were imposed on us by the rich, the rulers, the bosses, when in fact it is established, maintained and supported mainly by the great body of citizens and subjects. Those who wield the power of the state, the prime ministers, presidents, generals and police chiefs, do so by tacit permission of the people.

The rulers know this, they know that anything the general body of the people will not accept is 'politically impossible'. While posing as if they made the big decisions they take care to stay within the limits of what the people will tolerate. But sometimes they get it wrong, and then the truth comes out. The American rulers got it wrong with Prohibition and the British government got it wrong with the poll tax. With each of these the state found itself up against a large part of the people, and in each case the state gave way. Soon after the first resistance to poll tax appeared the principle of equal payments for all was dropped, and now the overall amount has been cut. Active campaigners helped but they could not have done it by themselves; they, like governments, succeed or fail as they comply, or fail to comply, with the preferences of the big numbers.

In *Freedom* of 14th July 1990, the

article 'Anarchism' by DR put it clearly: "Even the most oppressive of bosses needs at least the tacit consent of the majority of subjects..." and "the limits of political power are decided, not by the good will of the powerful, but by what the unpowerful will tolerate". There's only one thing wrong with that; it suggests that the rulers are the powerful ones. Taken individually, that is so; each ruler does have more power than each subject. But taken as a group, rulers against subjects, power lies with the subjects. In their millions, their tens and hundreds and thousands of millions, they are the powerful ones. The rulers oppose anarchism, but that hardly matters; if they *wanted* anarchy, and the people didn't, we wouldn't get it.

The enforced changes in poll tax have once more shown that "power belongs to the people" is not an aspiration but a direct statement of present fact. Anarchists who blame the rulers, the rich or the bosses for the persistence of the state, or for its actions, are misdirecting their attention; it survives, achieves what it achieves, and commits the horrors it does, because most of the ordinary people accept or support it.

George Walford  
London

## War Conference Disrupted

On Friday 22nd March, I walked into the Hilton International Hotel in Kensington and after a brief search found the Patio Rooms where the secret '1991 Conference on Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict' was being held. I walked up to the front of the gathering and read from a prepared statement, accusing the delegates of conspiring together to commit murder. My speech was accompanied by the sound of jaws dropping. I got about a third of the way through before being pounced on by security.

The conference was organised by Advanced Technology International for the 'defence' industry to "analyse the effect on the industry of changing force structures necessary for future operations in 'Out of Area' locations. A panel of experts from European armed forces and from the defence

industry will address the role of technological solutions in this scenario" (quoted from *Jane's Defence Weekly*).

Although the conference was supposed to be at a secret location, I simply called the organisers and said in my best south London accent that I had to deliver some projector screens to their conference and could I have the address. They duly obliged.

On 14th to 16th May, the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham are hosting the Defence Components and Equipment Exhibition. We must show our opposition to the continuing 'war business'. Two groups are organising opposition, please contact either of them and help stop the arms trade: West Midlands CND (contact Andy, tel: 021-643 4617) or AAROW (contact Chris, tel: 081-316 6278).

Chris Cole

## Food for Thought ... and Action!

Recent additions to Freedom Bookshop stock

*The Free\** by M. Gilliland, Attack International. Reprinted and with a striking new cover, this is a visionary novel of revolution and love, with a glimpse of a brilliant new world to come. 160 pages, £3.00.

*Homage to the Spanish Exiles: voices from the Spanish Civil War\** by Nancy Macdonald (translator of Abel Paz's *Durruti: The People Armed*), Human Sciences Press. By the end of the Civil War in March 1939 there were over 500,000 refugees from Spain registered in France. This is the story of some of them and of Spanish Refugee Aid, set up to help them by the author. 358 pages with black & white photographs, good value hardback at £9.00.

*RAF, A.K. Press, A5 pamphlet. Communiqués, statements and a chronology of events from the German urban terrorists. 24 pages, £1.00.*

*How Deep is Deep Ecology? with an essay review on women's freedom* by George Bradford, Times Change Press. This would make good complementary reading to Murray Bookchin's article 'Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology' in *The Raven* number 3. Bradford offers a critique of the American radical environmentalist group Earth First!, and suggestions on the way forward for radical social change. 86 pages, £3.50.

*More of the Shame\** compiled by Larry Law, Spectacular Times, A6 pamphlet reprint, 32 pages approx., 60p.

*Fin de Spectacle\**, compiled by Larry Law, Spectacular Times, A6 pamphlet, 22 pages, 50p.

*Writers and Politics\** by George Woodcock, Black Rose Books. Reissue of a book originally entitled *The Writer and Politics*. An examination of how a variety of (male) writers use their thought and writing to assist the establishment of social justice. Included are Proudhon, Kropotkin, Orwell, and many others. (Given that I found five spelling mistakes between pages 3 and 5, can we expect a scathing review in these pages in the future? Perhaps the sequel will be called 'Writers and Spelling'!) 248 pages, £9.95.

*The Traffic in Women and other essays on feminism* by Emma Goldman, Times Change Press, 64 pages, £2.50.

*A set of 8 postcards* consisting of black & white photographs of the historic anti poll tax riot of 31st March 1990, by David Hoffman. Good quality prints at only £2.40 a set or 30p each. All proceeds go to the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign (TSDC).

*Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution\** edited by David Porter, Commonground Press. Now back in stock. 346 pages with some photographs and illustrations, £8.00.

*The Sans-Culottes in the French Revolution 1793-97*, Edinburgh DAM, A5 pamphlet, 16 pages with illustrations, £1.00.

*Zapata of Mexico\** by Peter E. Newell, Cienfuegos Press. Now available again. 176 pages, £4.00.

*Let the Niggers Burn! the Sir George Williams affair and its Caribbean aftermath\** edited by Dennis Forsythe, Black Rose Books. A collection of essays by black Canadians on racism and other problems encountered by the black immigrant in Canada. Remarkably cheap book, although all copies are somewhat damaged (the pages are intact but the covers are coming off). 209 pages, £2.95.

*Against Separatism\** by Joe Peacott, BAD Press. A critique of feminist separatists. A5 pamphlet, 28 pages, £2.00.

**Please Note:** Unfortunately the ACF pamphlet listed here on 23rd March, *Marxism and its Failures*, is already out of print. And if you want a copy of the other two titles in the series, *The Role of the Revolutionary Organisation* and *The Myth of Labour's Socialism*, you'll have to be quick as both are running out.

**Many of these titles will be reviewed in Freedom in due course.**

As usual titles distributed by Freedom Press Distributors (marked \*) are post free inland (add 15% towards postage and packing overseas). For other titles please add 10% towards postage and packing inland, 20% overseas. Cheques payable to FREEDOM PRESS please.





# PICKET!

## Wormwood Scrubs Prison

Du Cane Road, W12

on

Wednesday 1st May

10am to 2pm

Tube: East Acton, Bus: 72

For further details contact TSDC Poll Tax Prisoners Support Group, Room 205, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X. Tel: 071-833 8958.

## CARDIFF

### Independent Book Fair

Saturday 8th June

11.00am to 6.00pm

at

Clwb Ifor Bach, Womanby  
Street, Cardiff

Further information from  
PO Box 368, Cardiff CF2 1SQ  
or phone Eddy on 0222 237397

**FREEDOM**  
fortnightly

ISSN 0016 0504

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

Printed by Aldgate Press, London E1

## The State is Your Enemy

Selections from the  
anarchist journal *Freedom*,  
1965-1986

The Labour Party in Power – The General Elections – The Thatcher Years – The Labour Party in Opposition – The Liberals and the Social Democrats – Fascism – Freedom of Speech – The Trade Unions and the Workers – Northern Ireland – Disasters – China – The Vietnam War – 1968 – Biafra – The Middle East – Poland – The Anarchist Alternative

includes cartoons by Philip Sansom (SKITZ)

272 pages £5.00

Post free in the UK. When ordering from abroad please add 20% for postage and packing

**FREEDOM PRESS**

84b Whitechapel High Street,  
London E1 7QX

Books reviewed in  
*Freedom* can be ordered  
from

**Freedom Press  
Bookshop**

84b Whitechapel High  
Street, London E1 7QX

Open  
Monday to Friday  
10am-6pm  
Saturday 10am-2pm

## Anarchist Forum

Fridays at about 8pm at the Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square (via Cosmo Street off Southampton Row), London WC1.

### 1991 SEASON OF MEETINGS

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

17th May - A Poetry Evening with Dennis Gould

24th May - A Talk from a Member of 'Spanner' (speaker John Howell)

31st May - General discussion

Volunteer speakers or discussion group leaders are wanted for the meetings. 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 (the Centre may wish to close at 8pm).

We are now booking speakers or topics for the new academic year. The precise dates have not yet been finalised, but are likely to be from late September 1991 to mid-July 1992. If anyone, including comrades from abroad, would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, please make contact giving a few alternative dates so we can start filling slots in advance. We meet on Fridays from 8pm as normal. Friday is the only night available as the centre is booked up on other nights. Please do not ask for a general topic to be discussed and then not come, as happened on a number of non-speaker evenings this year.

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 (Tel: 081-847 0203). Do not telephone or write to The Mary Ward Centre as this is an adult education centre which lets us have a meeting place, not an accommodation address, and messages left at the centre of letters sent to it sometimes stray. The anarchist conference suggested for summer 1991 did not receive sufficient support, but who knows what 1992 might bring? Details of this summer's anarchist picnic will be forwarded later. Any suggestions for venue? Not up a hill again please!

## FREEDOM AND THE RAVEN SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	inland	abroad	outside	Europe
	surface	surface	Europe	airmail

*Freedom* (24 issues) half price for 12 issues

Claimants	10.00	-	-	-
-----------	-------	---	---	---

Regular	14.00	18.00	27.00	23.00
---------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Institutions	22.00	25.00	33.00	33.00
--------------	-------	-------	-------	-------

*The Raven* (4 issues)

Claimants	10.00	-	-	-
-----------	-------	---	---	---

Regular	11.00	12.00	16.00	14.00
---------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Institutions	13.00	15.00	20.00	20.00
--------------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Joint sub (24 x *Freedom* & 4 x *The Raven*)

Claimants	18.00	-	-	-
-----------	-------	---	---	---

Regular	23.00	28.00	40.00	37.00
---------	-------	-------	-------	-------

Bundle subs for *Freedom* (12 issues)

	inland	abroad	abroad
	surface	surface	airmail

2 copies x 12	12.00	13.00	20.00
---------------	-------	-------	-------

5 copies x 12	25.00	27.00	42.00
---------------	-------	-------	-------

10 copies x 12	48.00	54.00	82.00
----------------	-------	-------	-------

Other bundle sizes on application

Giro account number 58 294 6905

All prices in £ sterling

## 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

*Norfolk*: John Myhill, Church Farm, Hethel, Norwich NR14 1HD

## SUBSCRIPTION FORM

To Freedom Press in Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street,  
London E1 7QX

- I am a subscriber, please renew my sub to *Freedom* for ..... issues
- Please make my sub to *Freedom* into a joint sub for *Freedom* and *The Raven* starting with number 13 of *The Raven*
- I am not yet a subscriber, please enter my sub to *Freedom* for ..... issues
- I would like the following back numbers of *The Raven* at £2.50 per copy post free ..... (numbers 1 to 12 are available)
- I enclose a donation to Freedom Fortnightly Fighting / Freedom Press Overheads / Raven Deficit Fund (delete as applicable)

I enclose £..... payment

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....