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FIFTY PENCE

"A wise man neither lets himself be governed nor seeks to govern others; he wishes that reason should govern alone and always."
La Bruyere (1688)

"There are three kinds of lies: LIES, DAMNED LIES AND STATISTICS"

In the past months we have been bombarded by the Government with all three in good measure. The official opposition has responded in kind. But on balance, however, the Government won hands down — to prove that the bigger the lies, the more phoney the statistics, if repeated often enough could become the 'truths' of the day. Unfortunately for the Government, some of the statistics can be checked by people's daily experience.

It was to be expected that the Monmouth *debacle* for the Tories would produce the "ferocious Tory attack in wake of by-election defeat" (*The Independent*, 18th May), "Major

Note: The heading comes from Mark Twain's *Autobiography*

accuses Labour of lying" and the battle of words by the media depending on their own prejudices goes on. What is so obvious from observing the Parliamentarians at work is that they don't debate but simply make statements, rattle off statistics, and needless to say, we are always being told by the Government how much better the Health Service is compared with when Labour was in office — that is twelve years ago! Who can check on what they say? For instance, they say that more money in real terms is poured into the service now but without knowing how many people were treated then and now, and one would also need to know how many had major operations and how many were old folk, mental patients, or how many just went in to have a wisdom tooth extracted! What *does* matter is that about one million people are waiting

to have hospital treatment, some are having to wait a year or more. So clearly not enough money is being invested in what is in fact the National Sickness Service (who will come up with a project investing in health?)

A lively contribution to the lies debate comes from a Dr Bob Bury in Leeds (*The Independent*, 21st May) who writes:

"William Waldegrave, the Secretary of State for Health, tells us: 'What we cannot deal with is straightforward lies, put through everybody's letter box', (Tory onslaught after poll tax defeat, 18th May). Believe me, I sympathise. That is just how many of us working in the NHS felt when
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FIRST CLASS CROOKS and the Love of Money

The banks report that plastic card frauds are growing — over £150 million last year — and that there is now talk of having the holder's photograph affixed to his plastic, apart from all kinds of other technological wonders that can be thought up to limit the number of frauds. But as a spokesman pointed out, no sooner is some new security measure introduced than it is neutralised by the wide boys.

However, the plastic card frauds are small fry compared with the growing number of major frauds — or should one just say that some are caught only bending or breaking the rules of the City mafia? For instance, Mercury Asset Management, one of the largest fund managers in the City, has been fined £50,000 plus costs for breaching the rules of the Investment

Management Regulatory Organisation (IMRO). This follows a £100,000 fine imposed on Hill Samuel and there are a further sixty complaints being examined, twenty of which may lead to disciplinary proceedings.

But the honest-to-goodness frauds are being reported almost daily. Two cases of solicitors have been reported just recently: one absconded to Greece with a quarter of a million pounds of clients' money, the other, a Scottish solicitor, has been arrested in Lausanne and faces sixty fraud charges for his alleged part with two Germans in European-wide multi-million pound investment swindles.

The Independent on Sunday (12th May) reported that the chief executive and finance director of the Spastics

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More for old money-bags

While Mr Major and his Chancellor are warning workers to curb their pay demands if they don't want to lose their jobs, the top people go on giving themselves huge salary increases. The latest is the Governor of the Bank of England — described as an "arch-exponent of wage restraint" who gave himself an extra 17% last year. Farm workers were given about 7% this year, bringing their gross wage up to £129 a week or £6,708 a year.

Now 17% on the Governor's salary means an increase of £22,500 a year to a gross salary of £155,000 pa, which is what twenty farm workers receive between them for doing a productive job of work. When will they stop talking about percentages and give the actual wage increase. After all, if the Governor had 'only' received 7% like the farm worker his *increase* would still be a respectable £9,275 compared to the worker's £550. In fact the Governor's rise is more than the farm worker is paid in a year. There ain't no justice!

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Society had resigned after allegations that they had used their positions to solicit business for a private care consultancy.

It would appear that fraud in the charities business is not uncommon. Not surprising considering that there are no less than 200,000 of them! Now the Charity Commissioners are computerising their files in the hope of catching out the tax dodgers (the fact is that many 'charities' are linked to companies to reduce liabilities) said to be getting away with about £120 million a year. They also hope to reveal abuse in fund raising.

With our computerised banks it is not all that difficult for money to go 'astray', and the deficiency is in the end discovered but only when it is too late and the crook is probably sunning him or herself on the Costa del Crime.

The TSB Bank in the Channel Islands (of all places) discovered one day that £5 million was missing from its operation. Though it was said to have reduced the bank's full year profits by a half — not to worry for the TSB is doing alright with a £312 million profit last year.

Currency speculations can be very profitable as well as very dangerous. The giant Allied Lyons group, for instance, lost £147 million on 'currency option dealings'. Heads rolled eventually but the cover-up was such that one is surely entitled to believe that somebody along the line made a packet! Local authorities have also been involved in 'sophisticated money deals'. Some borrowed abroad to pay lower interest rates, others entered what the law calls 'swap arrangements' — deals that involve exchanging one rate of interest for another, and which the Law Lords ruled unlawful and so the banks couldn't reclaim some £550 million of uncompleted debts. Nevertheless eighty British and overseas banks have been issuing writs against Town Halls demanding repayment of £125 million.

And last but not least, all had not been as good at Lloyds where three Lloyds underwriting syndicates went bust some four years ago and the 2,000 greedy, rich 'names' face an imminent cash call of at least £40 million in order to cover the underwriting losses incurred. We say greedy and rich because the 2,000 names (including billionaire Robert Maxwell,

FIRST CLASS CROOKS and the Love of Money

actress Susan Hampshire, international arms trader Adnan Khashoggi) were only trying to make more money with the money they didn't need anyway.

The *Independent's* financial editor ('Not a green light for corporate fraud', 7th May) maintains that "the most effective deterrent against crime by those prominent in the City or corporate worlds will always be the prospect of disgrace".

But he admits that "if humiliation before one's peers is a powerful force for keeping the rich on the straight and narrow" the fact that certain practises that were legal in the 1960s are now outlawed "is testimony to the sad truth that disgrace was not enough". It certainly isn't, as can be seen by the way the Guinness crooks go straight from jail to their business interests, even if the Queen strips them of their 'honours'. And it has always been so. Those of another generation will recall the Hatry scandal with the fire assessors Leopold Harris who also started the fires!

But apart from the crooks at top level who are not caught (the ones who are are almost certainly only the visible tip of the iceberg of fraud and corruption) the other

profession cashing in on fraud and litigation in the City are the lawyers — as always. In a survey just published by accountants Peat Marwick McLintock of law firms, a steep increase in the number of fraud cases over the next five years was forecast. Seventy per cent of the top 100 law firms surveyed (including ten of the top twenty City firms) claim that "the recession has increased their litigation business" (*The Guardian*). The "forensic division" of Peat Marwick McLintock "assist lawyers with investigations into company accounts, fraud and negligence". The head partner of this division suggests that "people may be more fraudulent. I certainly get the impression there are more ingenious people about committing fraud".

And not only in Britain. The New York correspondent of *The Independent on Sunday* (19th May) reports that:

"Hundreds of staff at the United Nations have been involved in a tax fraud costing millions of dollars and possibly going back twenty years... some are believed to have netted \$300,000 over several years. The corruption became so entrenched that, after retirement from the UN,

some experts in the fraud set themselves up as paid advisers to help the next generation work the fiddle.

Attempts to investigate the fraud have been met by death threats, burglaries that removed file and computer records, and attacks on vehicles."

Why is an anarchist paper dealing at such length with these financial scandals? Firstly, because most of the people involved are not the small-time 'crooks' and moonlighters who also draw the dole, or workers wanting wage increases not less than the inflation rate and who are the normal targets for the gutter press, but the pillars of capitalist society. Their greed has no limits and they confirm the anarchist view that "the love of money is the root of all evil". We also believe that capitalism is largely responsible for that disease.

The things our top people say

The Master of the Rolls, Lord Donaldson defended Lord Lane, the Lord Chief Justice, against critics calling for his resignation after a series of "miscarriages of justice" (the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six, for example) maintaining that:

"any suggestion that a judge, however eminent, should resign or retire on account of the acts of omission of any other judge is not only absurd — it reveals a frightening degree of constitutional illiteracy upon the part of those who make it.

Judges are wholly independent of each other and are neither accountable nor responsible to anyone for their actions on the bench. Their only responsibility was to the law and their consciences."

The (unsuccessful) Tory candidate at the Monmouth by-election, Roger Evans, has some illuminating revelations about his lifestyle when he addresses the press:

"If one has a silly misadventure, like a piece of glass in your hand, which is the last one on which I used BUPA, in doing so I released resources and did not delay hospital waiting time for other people to use the NHS. I wanted it done on a specific date, so it did not interfere with my job" (Mr Evans is a "busy barrister")

Asked about his son's private schooling he had this to say:

"It's a question of freedom of choice where children are educated. People forget, and socialists ignore, that children are individual persons with differing characters and aptitudes and prejudices."

The children's choice or the parents'? No question as to whose choice it is with Mr Evans. He said it was not possible for a diplomat or a serving member of the armed forces to send his children to day schools (what connection this has with his profession as a barrister is difficult to fathom). "There are times when you are not going to be there", he added.

He concluded that "it is better to give them 100% of your attention in the holidays, legal vacations and parliamentary recesses". The *Independent's* political editor reminds his readers of Thatcher's "controversial statement" in the 1987 election

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Cartoon by Philip Sansom, *Freedom*, October 1959

"Lies, Damned Lies..."

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his predecessor's booklet *The NHS Reforms and You* dropped through our letter boxes last year. In that case though, insult was added to injury by the knowledge that the mail-shot had been paid for with millions of pounds of taxpayers' money — at least the Labour Party pays for its own lies with its own funds.

The biggest lie, perhaps the biggest whopper ever told to the British public, was the claim that the reforms would increase patient choice. That lie at least has been nailed as GPs, who before April Fool's Day could refer patients to any hospital in the country, are forced to use those with which a contract has been negotiated by the district health authority.

Even the elite budget-holding practices are under considerable financial pressure to avoid extra-contractual referrals. As predicted, money is not following patients, patients are following the money. And anyway, is it really lying to say that trust hospitals have opted out of the NHS? Certainly those of us who find ourselves working on one feel very much cut adrift as the secretary of state publicly washes his hands of our problems."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont will not easily live down his statement to the House that:

"Rising unemployment and the recession have been the price that we've had to pay to get inflation down. That is a price well worth paying."

Not only has he been attacked for showing no compassion so far as the growing army of the unemployed and their dependents are concerned, but the fact is that in spite of another 84,000 on the dole last month inflation has not gone down.

To confuse the public there are two sets of inflation rates: the all-items measure of inflation — the so-called headline rate — is the one the Chancellor and Mr Maples the Economic Secretary to the Treasury concentrated on since it showed a dramatic fall from 8.2% to 6.4%. However, as *The Guardian's* economics correspondent points out, though Mr Maples asserted that "the most important thing is the retail headline price index" in fact the most useful measure of 'underlying inflation' or 'core inflation' was one which excluded mortgage interest payments.

Excluding the cost of home loans and the poll tax then, the RPI (Retail Price Index) rose from 7.3% to 8.9% while the RPI excluding all mortgage costs increased from 6.9% to 8.5%. The Treasury says it is unfair to exclude mortgage payments which have gone down slightly and to include the increase in VAT. On the other hand, for the growing number of millions in this country who cannot afford a mortgage but have to pay VAT the Underlying Rate gives a better picture of the RPI. Of the fourteen categories in the RPI, eleven showed a monthly rise of more than 1% and seven an increase of 2% or more.

The Government's self-congratulation on the fall in the headline-rate can be explained by two actuarial fiddles:

"the figures were influenced by a number of one-off factors and the way in which the RPI is made up. Last month's figures were flattered by the removal of last April's increases from the calculation of the annual rate, since they

included 1.35 per cent on inflation caused by the introduction of the annual rate.

Similarly, the figure now includes the decision to reduce poll tax bills by £140 a head this year, a move which cost £4 billion but reduced the RPI by 1.4 per cent.

The reduction in mortgage interest payments at the start of April took a further 0.4 per cent off the inflation rate."

So that's another example of the government being 'economical with the truth'.

For months now we have been assured by all the Ministers concerned that the recession was bottoming out and though unemployment would take longer to slow down all the signs were that the economy was on its way up, so long as employers resisted wage demands (except for themselves, of course, because it is a fundamental law of economics that top people work harder the more they earn and the workforce only works harder if paid less!)

Yet when the Prime Minister was wined and dined recently by the bosses of the CBI, his 'keynote' speech was far from optimistic. He warned that the economy was unlikely to make a dramatic recovery and according to *The Guardian* (22nd May) reporters "he struck a markedly more cautious note on the economy, admitting that times were tough and watering down Budget forecasts predicting an improvement in the second half of the year".

So all the Chancellor's assurances last month during his business visit to Washington that recovery from the recession "is around the corner" was yet another Government lie to keep up the nation's morale?

THE RAVEN

ANARCHIST QUARTERLY

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The Factory and Beyond

FASHIONABLE ADDICTS CULTIVATING CURSES AND TABOOS

Last month child adoption agencies in Britain were accused of being racist for their attempt to discourage couples from seeking babies from abroad. This criticism is based on a study by the International Bar Association.

What is racist? What is race, for that matter? Most of us use the term 'racist' to slag off people we don't like. Like the word 'fascist' it has been devalued by over-use. But while 'fascist' now seems to amount to meaning 'bully', the word 'racist' seems to signify biological snobbery by those it is targeted on.

Today many biologists say we can only talk about the biological aspects of race in a most careful and limited way. Do 'races' exist then? Whatever the biologists say most people believe there are 'pure races', hence race is an everyday social categorisation.

But is 'race' a useful means of social identification?

The writer Wyndham Lewis, in his book *The Art of Being Ruled*, says Marx with his 'class war' showed how easy it is to substitute 'class' for 'race'. Elsewhere Mr Lewis says "Sometimes the fashionable error at the moment is to neglect the factor of race, as though there were no such thing as race, but only classes ... class is, of course, the great rival of race".

The views of Wyndham Lewis were seen as reactionary even when they were written in the 1920s, but Orwell said of him that there

were more ideas to the square foot of print in the writing of Lewis than any other English writer this century.

If anything 'race' is less fashionable today among leftist intellectuals, and may soon become a taboo expression in respectable left-wing circles. And yet the term 'racist' remains an indispensable swear word with which to damn our enemies, and to command the respect of the simple minded.

Ideological drunks

The Johnny Yen attack on common sense in *Freedom* (4th May) reads like the withdrawal symptoms of an ideological drunkard. My earlier case for common sense in this column was to urge people to give up using the delusive drug of theory (especially Marxist theory) and start thinking for themselves.

How do I know Mr Yen is an ideological drunk? Marxism is clearly yesterday's fashion, yet like all drunks the morning after, he longs to return to the stupor of the night before. He recommends "that the solutions and explanations offered by common sense

must be chosen selectively (using a coherent theory ...)", this implies he will pick up and choose from the evidence to suit his beloved 'coherent theory'. Mr Yen then adds that if the precious theory should clash with the observations of our senses we should not be dismayed because, he tells us, "things are not always as they appear". We may be seeing pink elephants again!

Thinking for oneself, without ideological props like Marxism, is a tough business. The kind of theory Mr Yen advocates is a recipe for self-deception: because he is looking for evidence favourable to his theory he will undoubtedly find it. Then all inconvenient facts may be dismissed as pink elephants since things may not be as they appear.

Let me refer Mr Yen to Paul Feyerabend, the 'anarchist' philosopher of science: "Ideologies", he says, "can deteriorate and become dogmatic religions (example: Marxism). They start deteriorating when they become successful, they turn into dogmas the moment the opposition is crushed: their triumph is their downfall" (1978).

When we look at a historical mess like Marxist Russia, where do we stop saying "things are not always as they appear"? Do we accept the earlier anarchist evidence of what Kropotkin, Goldman and the Spanish CNT were saying at the beginning of the 1920s —

that Soviet Communism was not working? Then after Stalin, the Ukrainian famine, the massacre of the Soviet peasantry and the rise of critics like Muggeridge, Orwell and Gide in the 1930s, do we throw in the towel or do we say only Soviet Russia can save the world from fascism? Later there is the Spanish civil war, the Nazi-Soviet pact, the purges of members of communist parties in Russia and elsewhere. As the shortcomings and evidence pile up, together with the corpses, at what point would Mr Yen declare that appearances are real?

Sobering up is never easy!

Inappropriate laughter

If straight Marxism is no longer a favourite tippie, there are other fads in the offing such as the 'politically correct' movement in the USA. This has been called 'Marxism without economics' and it seeks social change through manipulating language and substituting newer categories like 'blacks', 'gays', 'women' for the older categories of 'working class' and 'race' I referred to earlier.

Language manipulation by political engineering is not so new as we may imagine. Wyndham Lewis wrote a chapter, 'The Taboo on Generative Terms' in 1926 in which he complained: "The number of generic terms that you may not use increases daily ... as a result of the feminist revolution 'feminine' becomes an abusive epithet".

One delightfully curious code invoked by the 'politically correct' movement, a very serious movement, is to be found at the University of Connecticut which prohibits "inappropriately directed laughter". These codes are designed to curb behaviour that may give offence to racial and ethnic minorities, to women or to homosexuals or lesbians.

This is what Feyerabend calls "Primitive Puritanism" with its "restrictions, demands, moral arias ... everywhere".

Oddly enough I chastised some Asians only last year for "inappropriately directed laughter" when, travelling up the M1, they related a dirty joke about a Jewish girl and an Irish lad. In the inevitable sexual coupling, performance was unsatisfactory because either the woman's vagina was too big or the man's penis too small — their post-coitus conversation ran as follows:

Irish man: "I always thought Jews were tight"
Jewish girl: "That's funny — I always thought the Irish were thick"

When I piped up to say the joke was 'racist', they tossed me out on the hard shoulder. In making people 'politically correct', I think we are going to have a few teething problems, comrades.

Mack the Knife

THE BATTLE AGAINST EDUCATION CUTS: WHICH WAY FORWARD?

Readers may have heard about the recent student unrest here in Brighton. Some pundits in the media predicted this to be the beginning of a wave of student action that will soon sweep the country. It would be nice if it happens, but if it takes the same form as the action in Brighton it will constitute very much a defensive rear-guard action to protect existing areas of 'freedom' rather than a force for positive change, as in the late 1960s.

The trouble started in Brighton because it was decided that twenty part-time lecturers would be made redundant so that the Art College (part of Brighton Polytechnic) can save money. This means the complete axing

of certain courses. To protest, students at the Art College occupied part of the building, holding a 'work-in' rather than a sit-in. A few days later, they gave up the occupation but continued to seek publicity for their cause. The day after the occupation, the Duke of Kent made an official visit to one of the Polytechnic buildings. To add insult to injury, the Polytechnic arranged for the place (or part of it, at least) to be redecorated for the visit. The students protested at the visit. They then marched from the Polytechnic to the University of Sussex where the Duke was to dine with the University Vice Chancellor Sir Leslie Fielding (unaffectionately known as Lord Les) and the Mayor of Brighton. Students from the University joined the Polytechnic students outside the University refectory (closed to students so that his lordship could eat in peace) and chanted and waved their banners for the benefit of the cameras as the Duke, Lord Les and their entourage turned up in their cars.

As the Duke and his cronies came out of the refectory they were dismayed to be greeted by loud booing and jeering from a section of the crowd. Many of the Polytechnic students were dismayed too. For them, the demo was an opportunity to get some positive publicity from the mass media for their campaign against the education cuts. Booing the Duke was seen by them as a diversion which would alienate the popular support their cause was receiving. They had even written to the Queen to protest about the cuts (politely, no doubt).

But if 'public opinion' is seen as both reactionary and indispensable, continually pandering to it will get protesters nowhere. Writing to the Queen is a case in point.

Today (20th May) the government announced plans to raise polytechnics to the level of universities. What this means, of course, is that universities will be lowered to the level of polytechnics; both are to become sausage-factories. At the time of writing, the Poly students have managed to occupy another building. Clearly we must support all efforts to resist government attempts to take resources from the education system. But the tactic of attempting to appeal to the less reactionary wing of the ruling class presupposes that this element will take our side against the Tories. Asking someone in power to fight our battles for us is not only a waste of time but counter-productive.

Johnny Yen

Midlands Anarchist Forum

I am hoping to establish a 'mobile' monthly/bi-monthly discussion event in the Derbyshire/Nottinghamshire area similar to the London based 'Anarchist Forum'. The idea is for a different group/individual to 'host' each event in a different town and venue, such as an upstairs room in a pub/club.

A local or guest speaker would present a paper followed by discussion. There need be no chairperson or formal membership. The first meeting is being planned for early September.

If you are interested in either attending or hosting such events, please write c/o Box A, The Owl Press, 47 High Street, Belper, Derbyshire DE5 1GF.

Jonathan Simcock

Things our top people say

(continued from page 2)

campaign that she wanted to go to hospital "on the day, at the time, with the doctor I choose". We would add the latest Thatcherism which echoes Mr Evans feelings: "Home is where you come to when you have nothing better to do". And to think these are the people who have pretensions to run our lives for us!

The right-wing former Scottish Solicitor General, Sir Nicholas Fairburn, addressing the Scottish Conservative Party conference in Perth, lived up to his reputation of being a show-off and stupid and ignorant. He was not sacked as Scottish Solicitor General for these reasons but for being involved in an *affaire* (pity the lady!).

His subject for the Party faithful was the recent disaster in Bangladesh in which more than 100,000 lives were lost in the cyclone:

"It is not death which is the problem — which the media would have you believe — but birth.

I hope it will not sound unpitiful if I remind you that the population of Bangladesh, reduced by 120,000 ten days ago, has already overtaken that number.

I hope it will not sound unsympathetic if I remind you that the population of Ethiopia and Somalia — constantly bleeding the hearts of the media — is on a curve of increase.

When the earthquake happened in Mexico City, the population was replaced within 24 hours. The population of China increases more than the entire population of Scotland every ten days."

Sir Nicholas added: "It is no good talking about environmental problems, green problems, national emergencies, people washed away in floods, if the rate of population is not stopped.

That, I believe, is the world's greatest problem."

There is no doubt that the problem is birth. Think how much nicer the world would be if people like Donaldson, Thatcher, Evans and Fairburn (and a lot more 'top' people) had never been born!

War Games Wales

The Cold War is supposedly over in Europe but Wales remains one of the most militarised parts of the UK. In every county of Wales there is at least one military installation ready and waiting for the call. These range from missile testing sites at Pendine in Dyfed to the massive American arms dump at Caerwent in Gwent. NATO's latest tank range is based at Castlemartin, near Pembroke.

Mid Wales is also a favoured site for low-level flying by the RAF, sometimes as low as 100ft — far lower than allowed in other European countries like Germany. In April as part of a NATO exercise, Elder Joust, over 700 sorties were flown in only three days.

On Friday 10th May, just such a flying exercise almost resulted in a tragedy of momentous proportions. A Royal Navy Sea Harrier missed the Caerwent arms dump, one of the biggest in Europe, by only four miles — a matter of seconds in terms of flying time. The plane was also only seconds away from the densely populated towns of Newport and Cwmbran. There is no telling what the scale of the tragedy would have been had the Harrier landed on the arms dump.

This is the first such crash in this area of Wales, but such incidents are not uncommon

for the rest of Wales. In eleven years there have been 25 similar plane crashes. It now seems only a matter of time before such an incident leads to large-scale civilian casualties.

EM

While the Chancellor and numerous company directors have been attempting to discipline Britain's workers into taking pay increases well below the inflation rate (in real terms pay cuts), bosses at the newly-privatised South Wales Electricity (SWE) have been showing what they feel about wage restraint — they have just awarded themselves pay rises of up to 45%!

In the most extreme case, this amounts to a rise of £29,000 for the year and raises the top earner's salary at SWE to over £100,000pa. Proof that privatisation actually works is that domestic electricity users faced price rises of 12.9% last year and 10.5% this year — both well above the inflation rate. Electricity is a 'natural monopoly' and there is no real competition — therefore the customer is there to be screwed. The bosses at SWE have absorbed the real lessons of privatisation.

EM

Anarchy Now!

If there is one thing on which anarchists agree it is that anarchy would be a society of freedom. This is no sooner said than it has to be qualified: under anarchy all would be free to do as they liked, provided they didn't interfere with the freedom of others.

That sounds innocent enough but in fact it's a massive restriction, for the freedoms anarchists value do interfere. Freedom for everybody to get enough shelter, food and clothing interferes with the freedom of those who want to monopolise these things, freedom to resist taxes interferes with the freedom of those wanting to collect them, and freedom to stay out of jail interferes with the freedom of those who want to put you in.

One freedom interferes with another, and would continue to do so in an anarchist society. To exclude non-anarchists would be to restrict their freedom to enter, while to admit them would mean having to

deprive them of freedom to impose exploitation, police, prisons, war, the state and coercion. And to postpone anarchy until all are anarchists would also be an interference.

If anarchy offers only the freedoms which do not interfere with the freedom of others it is pointless, for those are mostly trivial. To be worth working for it has to be a society in which chosen freedoms are maintained and others, which conflict with them, suppressed. It has to be a society in which people do interfere with each other's freedom.

The things that do not interfere with anybody's freedom are the things nobody objects to, and we are already free to do those. If anarchy means nothing more than freedom to do as you like provided it doesn't interfere with the freedom of others, then we have anarchy now.

George Walford

We are all Guilty!

The concluding paragraph in *Freedom's* leading article ('But war is the real crime against humanity', 4th May 1991) is utter nonsense. Why stop the blanket condemnation of those indirectly involved in war to those actually working in the armaments industry? What about *Freedom* editors and readers who might be the rail workers who transport the goods, or the posties who inadvertently deliver the call-up papers? We are all guilty! This is crap, and dangerous crap at that.

Such arguments ignore the questions of power and powerlessness. The individual munitions worker does not have the same degree of influence over events (and hence culpability) as does a General or a Prime Minister, for example. Acting collectively, munitions workers might have the power to stop war, but they can be no more condemned for failing to do so than can *Freedom* editors be blamed for not producing the revolution every Friday lunchtime.

Under the logic of that concluding paragraph, the men who were ordered 'over the top' during World War One were as much to blame as the callous General who kept ordering them to do so. Such an argument lets the real criminals off the hook — since if they/we are all guilty, who are we to say that they are more guilty than ourselves?

I for one refuse to see the squaddie and the General, the worker and the capitalist, the voter and the politician as being moral equals in such questions, since to do so ignores the realities of present power structures and their inherent inequalities of power. Any other approach reduces us all to the same degree of culpability and prevents us identifying alternatives for the future — since if we are all guilty, it's not any system that's at fault, but us. Anarchism should have no truck with the reactionary notion of original sin.

Eddie May

Sacco and Vanzetti and the Room characters

I was asked to write a foreword to the *Wildcat ABC of Bosses* by Donald Room, which has recently been published by Freedom Press, and while writing this I was struck with the fact that the well-known anarchist figures of the 1920s, Nicolo Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, who were judicially murdered in 1927, are to some extent the ancestors of Donald Room's characters *Wildcat* and the *Free-range Egghead*. The fact that Room tries to get his message across through the medium of knockabout farce, does not obscure the fact that there is an important element of tragic martyrdom in both cases.

Sacco was an unintellectual, although not unintelligent, action man given to fine rages when the occasion demanded, and his sentiments and reactions are often exemplified by the contemporary *Wildcat*. Vanzetti, on the other hand, was a very intellectual and widely read anarchist propagandist: the *Free-range Egghead*, of course, a caricature of such a type, with his serious devotion to theory and his painstaking efforts to explain, even to the most dull-witted, the rational basis of anarchism.

After Vanzetti had been sentenced to death for the crime he did not commit, because of the violent anti-radical hysteria of the time, he said the following, in his halting English, in the course of a poignant speech:

"If it had not been for these things, I might have live out my life talking at street corners to scolding men. I might have die, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not failure. This is our career and our triumph. never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man as now we do by accident. Our words — our lives — our pain — nothing! The taking of our lives — lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler — all! The last moment belongs to us — that agony is our triumph."

Vanzetti was martyred along with Sacco, and their deaths caused protests and reactions throughout the world. These modest men achieved an unlooked-for fame. The reactionary nature of the American society of the time was clearly seen, and anarchism was given a new impetus among serious-minded people. But here in Room's comics a different sort of martyrdom of the *Free-range Egghead* is depicted. He does indeed, in Vanzetti's words, "live our [his] life talking at street corners to scolding men". When he lectures in halls the audience is scanty and feeble. No brutal authority thinks it worthwhile to frame him and send him to the electric chair, and with his noble devotion to his self-imposed duty, perhaps he would rather suffer such a fate. No wonder his comrade the *Wildcat* — and sometimes you and I — are moved to terrible anger. This is our agony — and can it be our triumph.

Tony Gibson

News from Northern Ireland

One of the biggest public scandals ever in the Republic of Ireland deepened recently with the announcement that there will be a full judicial enquiry into the Goodman affair. This will be the first such enquiry into an Irish company since 1948, when the then Taoiseach, Eamon De Valera, was implicated in dodgy dealings around the sale of a distillery. Now the Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, fresh from a trip to receive an honorary law degree in the USA, is under serious pressure because of possible links with Larry Goodman, head of the biggest beef processing company in Europe. The catalogue of abuses by the Goodman Group reads like a guide to crooks and capitalists (same thing!) with massive tax evasion, fraudulent claims for EC subsidies, re-boxing of meat out of EC intervention cold storage for shipping on to Iraq and Morocco regardless of quality, bogus quality stamping and obstruction of customs officials. The beans have been spilled to an Irish journalist working for Granada's 'World in Action' programme by a former accountant for the Goodman Group, who's revealing quote that "we had the right connections at the right places that could control any investigation that could be put in place" must send shivers up the spines of senior civil servants and politicians close to Goodman. The man himself, Larry Goodman, is in serious trouble as this latest twist in the affair may mean that the 33 banks all over the world to whom the Group owes £500 million may pull out of a re-financing deal. They have already charged that a lot of the money raised by Goodman from the EC and other sources went to private share dealing, with accounts in Liechtenstein and Cyprus, and links with other crooked bastards in the City of London.

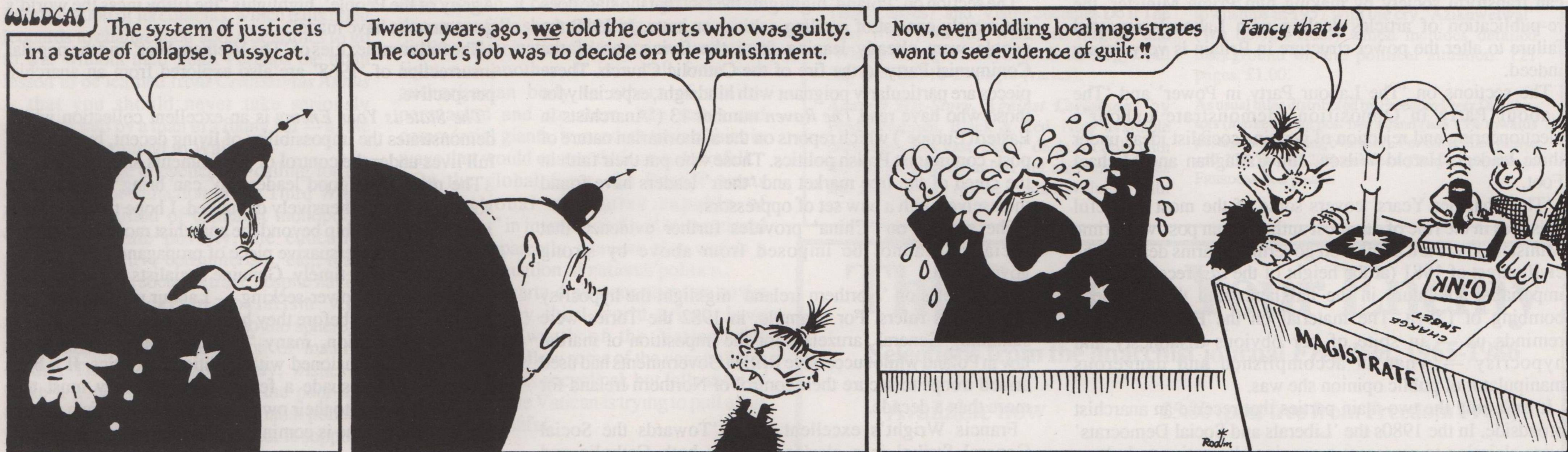
The tragedy of all this is that it illustrates graphically the destruction of meaningful agriculture by capitalism and agribusiness. What can anarchists say in specific response to such developments in food production and distribution? Would an anarchist society produce beef on such a scale? Certainly there would be no 'intervention' or beef mountains and the only hope out of this debacle is that some politicians, as well as Larry Goodman and his associates, get into some serious shit. That would still leave us with the problem of job losses for workers in the plants, North and South, run by the Goodman Group ...

The talks among the so-called constitutional parties in the North trundle on through a morass of procedural difficulties. As I write (Monday 20th May 1991) there is a serious bout of huffing going on around the issues of Dublin's inclusion in the talks, where they will be held and who will chair them. Of course, all the speculation on possible independent chairs has assumed it would be a man, adding further to the incredible scene that there is not one woman in any of the five negotiating teams. If this is not the greatest illustration of the unreality of the whole affair, I don't know what is. And today a pastor speaking at yet another funeral said that politicians had achieved nothing in the past twenty years. How right he was! Unfortunately he then went on to say that prayer and God's intervention were the only answer, illustrating the particular bind of people in this part of the world. Neither God nor politicians will produce the salvation of Ulster! Only working people banding together to see off the Goodmans. Haugheys, Brooks and the pastors can really sort this place out.

The release of the April unemployment figures shows that Strabane in County Tyrone still rides high as the unemployment blackspot of the North, despite a slight monthly decrease. Over 3,000 people, or 24% of the workforce, are unemployed, most of them classified as 'long term'. In Derry and Limavady the figure reads 18.7%, up 89 on March to 10,434 people. The plan by Du Pont to site a national toxic waste incinerator in this area depends heavily on the economic dependency illustrated by those figures and allows the company to play economic blackmail with everyone here.

And here's the sports section! Derry Football Club, at the end of their most unhappy season, have appointed a new manager. He is Roy Coyle, former manager of Linfield FC in Belfast, a club which makes Glasgow Rangers look like a model of inter-religious harmony. Roy Coyle is a Protestant with a strong symbolic background in Protestant football clubs and his appointment to the top job in the football team of the most Catholic city in the six counties has caused a great stir. Ah well! If we must have bread and circuses let us be glad that they are at least politically interesting ones.

Dave Duggan



Advocates of Nihilism

Kill the rich!!! Feed the poor!!! The battle cry on the Bash The Rich march in Henley on Thames a few years ago. Angry voices projected towards people who don't realise the results of their actions or lifestyles. The roles can be reversed onto the warrior rabble, however!

Within the National Health Service there is a trend moving towards acknowledging people rather than the label of who they are. For example the phrase 'mentally handicapped people' is now being changed to 'people with a mental handicap', or more commonly 'people with learning difficulties/special needs'. Likewise with all the scaremongering of AIDS patients, now the emphasis is on people with AIDS/cancer, etc.

The psychology of language is one of the most subtle and oppressive ways of keeping people down and in their own bondage. Within the anarchist movement there is the proud banner-waving of being working class. Come the revolution the working class will rise up and remove the middle classes with no thought that they are instigating a state of genocidal consciousness, no less worse than that which Hitler established against the Jews/gays/gypsies, etc.

Through hatred towards a particular group, we project our own fears and pain. We've been hurt, so let's place the blame on someone else rather than facing the reality that often our own inadequacies are the result of our suffering.

The working class and middle class, by the very action of identifying with their 'role' are associating, not with their humanity but with

a self-imposed, oppressive label. When will we in the anarchist movement lay hold of our humanity and acknowledge that we are people first and foremost. People from working class or middle class backgrounds. People first!!! Rather than a label that has kept us in a condition of limitation for centuries.

I've always assumed that the anarchist movement has been trying to move away from 'label habitation' (even anarchist is a label!). To move into our liberty, do we not need to leave behind the outdated industrial working class patriotism? We are on the verge of the 21st century, how many more centuries until we acknowledge that we are all one people on a very fragile planet?

G.I. Gurdjieff referred to the inhabitants of planet earth as 'asleep'. Unconscious, unaware robots. How true he appears to be! Just because we smash the state with our fists, boots and bombs. Just because we remove the aristocracy, police, bankers, armies, does not mean we will be a free people. If anything we will establish the same kind of organisational state as before. Look at all the past revolutions. There lies within our consciousness and personalities far more subtle oppression than, as far as I can see, the anarchist movement gives credit for.

How often are people aware of the way they respond to situations in life. Are you, reader, aware of your thoughts and feelings? Do you choose what you think and what you feel? Or are you swept along by unconscious habits, patterns, conditioning? Conditioning from outside of yourself, as well as conditioning you may have taken on board yourself to allay

the external bombardment of your own personal space?

To beat up a policeperson or to trash a rich person's property is merely to reinforce that person's conditioned response to the attacker. We indeed have the right to get angry, but are there not more creative ways to release it?

A policeperson or banker is as much a human as you or I. They are acting on a set of conditioning that they most probably don't even realise (just as you or I are), or even if they do they may be too goddamned scared to try and break away from it due to peer pressure, security via money, family, social standing, etc.

As soon as we start liberating our own psychologies, we aid others to do the same. We can form support groups for each other rather than seeking to destroy. This does not mean we need stop working for our visions in the here and now, but again I raise the question to beat the state supporter up is it not tantamount to a highly oppressive act? Does it not establish, yet again, a genocidal consciousness?

Funny, I could have sworn the anarchist movement was about creating a free and just society for all people of the earth, rather than the 'anarchist elite'.

Rob

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AFTER T

The last two issues of *Freedom* have carried interesting and important articles around the implications of the research of Festinger and his colleagues forty years ago.

Tony Gibson (*Freedom*, 20th April 1991) gave a reasonably fair summary of the research reported in *When Prophecy Fails*. Unfortunately Johnny Yen (*Freedom*, 4th May 1991) appears to miss the key premises of 'Cognitive Dissonance' theory and hence much of his 'criticism' is unhelpful. I feel the following points need to be made before informed discussion can continue.

Leon Festinger, who died a little more than a year ago, had been one of the central figures in the field of social psychology. Arguably his latest work was of more interest to anarchists — he attempted to discover the mechanics of the division of labour amongst early human groups and travelled the world studying the key archaeological sites of early mankind, reporting his 'findings' in *The Human Legacy* (1983).

His early fame partly rested on the fact that many of his predictions were counter-intuitive — for example, that the smaller a reward people receive for acting in a manner contrary to their attitude the more likely it is that they will modify that attitude!

It had always been argued (by 'common sense'!) that a state of uncertainty precedes a decision and that this is resolved when the decision is finally taken. Festinger argued that, on the contrary, it is the making of a

THE STATE IS YOUR ENEMY

The State is Your Enemy: selections from the anarchist journal *Freedom* 1965-86
Freedom Press, 270 pages, £5.00

This collection is volume 6 in the Freedom Press Centenary Series: it brings the sampling of the first 100 years of *Freedom's* archives more or less up to date.

The State is Your Enemy is organised in terms of political theme and geography: it contains 97 articles on subjects as apparently diverse as Chinese 'communism', the Vietnam war, trade unionism, political parties, fascism in Britain, the popular insurrection of 1968 and international conflict in the Middle East. But the book does have a unifying theme: the futility of putting faith in governments, parties and political leaders of any kind.

In a volume celebrating the longevity of Freedom Press, it must have been tempting for the editor, Charles Crute, to put together a collection reflecting the full diversity of *Freedom's* concerns. A volume including material on the arts, sex, technology and education may have constituted a more effective advertisement for the breadth of material to be found in *Freedom* — but a valuable opportunity to create a very effective piece of anarchist propaganda would have been missed. Instead he has opted for a selection which focuses on anarchist objections to the state and — as a result — produced a much more important book.

At a time when Neil Kinnock hopes to persuade us that we can transform society by making him Prime Minister, the re-publication of articles dealing with Labour's repeated failure to alter the power structure in Britain is very timely indeed.

The sections on 'The Labour Party in Power' and 'The Labour Party in Opposition' demonstrate Labour's electioneering and rejection of genuine socialist ideas under three leaders: Harold Wilson, Jim Callaghan and Michael Foot.

'The Thatcher Years' covers some of the most shameful episodes in the rule of our most authoritarian post-war Prime Minister. There are articles on government arms dealing, the civil unrest of 1981 (at the height of the last recession), the imperialist adventure in the Falklands and the American bombing of Libya. The material on the Falklands crisis reminds us — in spite of her obvious dishonesty and hypocrisy — what an accomplished and dangerous manipulator of public opinion she was.

It isn't only the two main parties that receive an anarchist broadside. In the 1980s the 'Liberals and Social Democrats' were claiming to represent a genuine alternative to Labour

and the Tories: both of these two 'centre' parties claimed to offer a more participatory kind of democracy. But the articles reprinted here demonstrate that they were merely carving out an unoccupied electoral niche. Their real aim was not to empower Britain's electorate but to empower themselves.

Since we will be called upon to take part in the great democratic charade within the next twelve months, anti-voting pieces from six General Elections are an essential inclusion. Jack Robinson sums up the futility of voting: "Universal suffrage is one more of the illusions of liberty".

If our faith in political parties is misplaced, what about the organisations which represent us at work? A collection of articles with the title 'The Workers and Trade Unions' shows that all too often union leaders have been responsible for manipulating their membership in the interests of capitalism and the state. *Freedom's* industrial correspondents offer the anarchist alternative of workers' control and abolition of the wage system.

A section on 'Disasters' demonstrates that states are more concerned with maintaining the profit system than the safety of the public.

Arthur Moyse's compassionate and angry pieces on the tragedy at the Welsh mining villages of Aberfan in 1966 (when 116 children died as a result of a colliery tip collapsing on their school) show that capitalist industry will always disregard the interests of the people who serve it — whether it is managed by private owners or central government.

The section on 'Poland' highlights the fact that the state does not merely consist of a ruling cabinet or junta. In 1980 the people were already leaping from the frying pan of the Communist Party to the fire of the Catholic Church. These pieces are particularly poignant with hindsight, especially for those who have read *The Raven* number 13 ('Anarchists in Eastern Europe') which reports on the authoritarian nature of post-communist Polish politics. Those who put their faith in the creed of the free market and 'their' leaders have found themselves with a new set of oppressors.

The section on 'China' provides further evidence that socialism cannot be imposed from above by strong government.

The articles on 'Northern Ireland' highlight the hypocrisy of Britain's rulers. For example, in 1982 the Tories were slamming General Jaruzelski for the imposition of martial law in Poland while successive British Governments had used armed troops to secure their control of Northern Ireland for more than a decade.

Francis Wright's excellent piece 'Towards the Social General Strike' is a clarion call for both Catholic and

Protestant workers to recognise that their real enemy is "a corrupt capitalist system backed by military force". Wright wrote his article in 1977 — but there is still no sign that this classic example of the state's tactic of divide and rule is coming to an end.

I doubt that Philip Sansom takes much pleasure in the accuracy of his predictions in his section on 'Fascism'. Gazing into the depths of his crystal ball in 1978, Sansom warned that fascism in Britain would not grow out of the 'bully-boy' tactics of groups like the National Front but from authoritarian tendencies within mainstream politics. Thatcher not only stole the NF's nationalist platform, she also pushed back the frontiers of liberty at an alarming rate: a catalogue of civil rights abuse by the Tories would include 'death on the rock', Clause 28, the Stalker affair, the muzzling of the television news producers in relation to Sinn Fein, police violence at Wapping and during the miner's strike ...

In addition to his many incisive articles in this volume, Philip Sansom is represented by eighteen cartoons more observant and witty than anything to be found in the daily papers: he conveys the pomposity, slyness and arrogance of our political leaders brilliantly.

The tragedy in 'Biafra' in the late 1960s is a shameful episode which many people have conveniently forgotten. Seven articles from the period 1967-70 reveal the dishonourable roles of Britain and Russia in this bloody local conflict. Justin's passionate and humane piece, 'Biafra — Agony of the People', highlights "the filthy mess the world's governments have made".

The full complexities of 'The Vietnam War' and the popular insurrection of '1968' are also explored from an anarchist perspective.

The State is Your Enemy is an excellent collection which demonstrates the impossibility of living decent, humane and full lives under the control of governments and the state.

The myth that 'good leadership' can bring about a freer society is comprehensively debunked. I hope the book finds a sizeable readership beyond the anarchist movement since it is an extremely persuasive piece of propaganda.

Its issue is very timely. Genuine socialists are horrified at Neil Kinnock's power-seeking — Labour usually wait until they are in office before they begin to sound *exactly* like the Tories. In addition, many "floating voters" seem to be completely disillusioned with traditional politics. If a book like this can persuade a few people that they must take political power into their own hands, then anarchism may be an idea whose time is coming.

Andrew Hedgecock

THE FAILED PROPHECY – what next?

decision that creates dissonance, i.e. dissonance is a negative motivational state.

He first became a 'public' figure when his research into the small 'religious' community was described in *When Prophecy Fails*. It is important to note that the target community was very small. Those who met regularly in the living room of their 'seer', Mrs Keech, numbered less than a dozen individuals — indeed, there were times during the few weeks of research that there were as many incognito 'observers' at the 'meetings' as there were genuine 'members'.

Whether the members of the group were "fairly ordinary and reasonably well educated American citizens" as Tony Gibson claims, I will leave to the reader to decide. In fact they had a similar history in esoteric movements as their inspirer, Mrs Keech, who had been involved in theosophy for at least fifteen years, had joined the dianetics/scientology groupings and 'cleared' by and 'auditor' and could subsequently boast "I can remember the day I was conceived". She had long been aware of other 'intelligences' in the universe — the 'Elder Brothers' or 'Guardians' as she was to call them — and shared with a large minority of the American public, at that time, an intense interest in 'flying saucers'. In communications with her deceased father, she developed the art of 'automatic writing', the main method by which the intelligences from other planets were to communicate with the community.

Often members of the group were Edna Post, another 'cleared' scientologist, Thomas and Daisy Armstrong, ex-medical missionaries who were devotees to Rosicrucianism and the occult, and Bertha Blatsky, a 'cleared' scientologist whose 'voice' was literally used by the creator himself to pass messages on to the members.

The starting point of Festinger's Cognitive Dissonance theory is that:

1. There must be conviction;

2. There must be commitment to this conviction;

and these premises were clearly applicable to the small community around Marian Keech. (This is where Johnny Yen misses the point by arguing that there is nothing intrinsically motivating about individual awareness of inconsistency because "most people are quite happy to tolerate inconsistent thoughts".

People are *not* prepared to tolerate inconsistencies in cognitions that are *central* to their belief systems!)

Dissonance Theory predicts that *given the conviction and commitment* of the group members, should the 'prophecy' fail to eventualise then the 'believers' *provided they have social support with their community* will carry out the 'cognitive work' to which Yen refers, become *even more convinced* of the correctness of their views and will *at the same time need to proselytise* because "if more and more people can be persuaded that the system of belief is correct, then clearly it must, after all, be correct".

As Tony Gibson has reported, this is exactly what happened. The nine members of the home group who had been totally committed passed through the period of disconfirmation not only with their faith unshaken but in several cases their faith in Mrs Keech was greatly strengthened. Indeed, as the hours passed they became increasingly convinced that ordinary visitors to the house were actually 'space pilots' in disguise.

Furthermore there was a surge in publicity seeking. Thomas Armstrong, one of their leading spokesmen, recently sacked from his job at the university, produced a press release which confirmed that:

"... the Flying Saucers or ... 'Guardians of the Earth' are here for a definite purpose. They have been surveying the earth where there are faults in the earth's surface and they are prepared to land in cases of an impending emergency and evacuate some of the people ...

It is now commonly known ... the surface of the earth is in an unstable condition. This very year on 4th October, the News Press said in part: 'As for the earth skin slipping ... there is a slip of about 75ft per year between the earth's outer skin and her inner core. To make matters worse the AP reports that these scientists confirm an increasing tip in the earth's axis ...'."

This burst of publicity activity must be contrasted with the reticence of the community *before* the predicted deadline. Just five days before the expected flood, America's major reporting services converged on the Keech home to follow up the story of Dr Armstrong's dismissal from his university post (because of his religious involvement). The media representatives received a cold and hostile reception; during

two days of constant vigil they received only one brief interview with Mrs Keech.

Like Johnny Yen, I don't have any evidence that would support Tony Gibson's assertion that Marxist-Leninist groups have stepped up their propaganda in recent months. My own experience is that the Stalinist groups (surely the only relevant groups to this discussion) have, in fact, quietly disappeared into the shadows. However, Gibson's mostly excellent article offers a surely valid explanation as to *why* individuals cling to failed prophecies — "look to their thwarted ambitions, failed sex lives, their hankering to break out of their 'stifling families', their dreary jobs ..." — but the implication is surely *not* an appeal to 'common sense' (how can a disciple of Festinger make such a suggestion?) but to appreciate that the way forward if we are to help our fellow human beings escape the dead-end ideologies of religion (including 'secular' marxist religions) is *not* to see our task as one of 'winning' intellectual 'arguments' by producing 'convincing

evidence' but rather to understand that *all* 'religious' beliefs are grounded in the individual's feelings of inadequacy. It is the task of revolutionaries to help others gain confidence in themselves and in their ability to manage their own lives.

This surely is the real contribution that libertarians have to offer. I appreciate it is easy to make such glib, general assertions; it is the day to day struggles in which anarchists, along with other workers, are always involved — strikes, poll tax demos, etc., etc. — the 'do it yourself' politics of rank and file movements, in contrast to the 'leadership' solutions offered by Marxist-Leninist political 'führers', trade union bureaucrats and religious messiahs. Any action that builds the self-confidence of working individuals to manage their own lives cuts the ground away from the authority structures of society ... and the absurdly pathetic minority/religious communities that their system engenders.

Bob Potter

Food for Thought ... and Action!

*Statistics for Social Change** by Lucy Horowitz and Lou Ferleger, Black Rose. Talking of 'Lies, damned lies and statistics'.

"Most people either fear or mistrust statistics. In fact there is a great deal we can learn through statistical analysis — both about establishment lies and about how the world actually works. This book goes a long way towards demystifying quantitative analysis". An accessible, comprehensive introduction to statistical techniques and their misuse in everyday situations. Explanations of methods are paired with exposés of their use by advertising, the media and the state. Numerous illustrations, 341 pages, £10.95.

*Until All Are Free: The trial statement of Ray Lue Levasseur**, Attack International. After being sentenced as one of the Vancouver Five to 45 years in prison for convictions ranging from bombings to seditious conspiracy, Levasseur and others were additionally charged in 1989 under an anti-Mafia law, with being a "racketeering-influenced corrupt organisation". "A moving declaration of war against a society that places profit before human need". A5 pamphlet, 47 pages, 50p.

Ideological Commentary: an independent journal of systematic ideology, edited by George Walford (author of *Beyond Politics*), bi-monthly. Selected articles from various back numbers include: No 51 (current), 'Ideology in Education' and 'The Origins of Socialism' / No 51, 'Anarchist Government' and 'Canoes and Pesticides' / No 44, 'Naughty Children' and 'Thinking About Knowledge' / No 41, 'Holistic Ideology' and 'Is Cheaper Better?' / No 49, 'Are There Classes?' and 'Viable Societies Do It The Easy Way' / No 48, 'What Are Wages?' and 'What's Wrong With Systematic Ideology?', all 30p each and 16-20 pages (varies).

Against His-Story, Against Leviathan! by Fredy Perlman, Black & Red. Now available once more, this vast 'essay' deals not only with the rise of totalitarianism but also emphasises the struggle to realise human values. With

illustrations "borrowed from William Blake". 302 pages, £6.50.

Fourth World Review: for small nations, small communities and the human spirit, bi-monthly. Described as organic politics for thinking people. No 45, Silver Jubilee issue celebration of the '25th Anniversary of the Fourth World' plus Leopold Kohr on 'The New Radicalism' / No 43 on 'Margaret Thatcher', 'The Gulf', 'The Luddites', 'Green Politics' and much more. £1.00 each, 32 pages.

*Lessons of the Spanish Revolution** by Vernon Richards. Deep in the bowels of the Freedom Press stock room we've come across a few packets of the hardback edition. This is minus the footnotes to the Bibliographical Postscript which was added to the paperback edition, but it will last ten times as long and costs only £1 more. 240 pages, hardback, £5.00.

Anarchism and Geography: contemporary issues in geography and education, Vol III No 2, no publisher given, edited by Ian Cook and David Pepper. Packed with interesting material: 'Anarchist Communes', 'Geography and Landscapes of Anarchist Visions of Britain', 'Portraits of Some Anarchists', 'Education For What?', 'Calling Up the Community', plus reviews and a section called 'Open Space'. An intravenous dose of fresh air into the minds of some of those staid geographers, one suspects. 168 pages, £3.00.

Lessons of Azikhwelwa: the bus boycott in South Africa by Dan Mokonyane, Nakong Ya Rena. A fascinating — not to mention cheap — history of the bus boycott launches in the black townships in 1957 with the cry "Azikhwelwa!" (We do not ride!) which includes detailed background on the political situation. 121 pages, £1.00.

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% inland, 20% overseas. Cheques payable to FREEDOM Press please.

Centissimus Annus

The Pope has come up with an encyclical on the centenary of the Vatican's first social statement, *Rerum Novarum*. *Centissimus Annus* is an argument of such improbability that one has to wonder how the printers managed to avoid an embarrassing spelling mistake in its title. Not having seen the actual document, I am indebted to Walter Schwartz of *The Guardian* for the interpretation of its contents, which calls upon leopards to change their spots, or armies to go to war without their guns. Perhaps the main lesson to be learned from *Centissimus Annus* is that you should never take seriously anything said by a man in a funny hat — a rule I would recommend to Walter.

This 114-page encyclical, in calling for the cancellation or reduction of the Third World debt, the abolition of capitalist monopolies which aggravate poverty, the education against destructive consumerism, etc., reads something like a socialist tract, despite having elsewhere bracketed socialism with capitalism as reducing man "to the sphere of economics and the satisfaction of material needs". The Vatican, apparently, wishes to make a good impression with the poor and downtrodden by advocating socialist policies without attracting the charge that it supports

Marx to any significant degree. Nevertheless it not only parades socialist policies but lends support to the authoritarianism that was the cause of so much suffering under the communists, e.g. when it says that the demands of the market should be "appropriately controlled by the forces of society and the state".

Roman Catholicism, being hierarchical and authoritarian, it comes as no surprise that the document falls short of calling upon people to disobey their national leaders and refuse to fight one another. It is a call from one authoritarian body to others of similar persuasion and structure, like states and commercial giants, to conduct their affairs in ways that would ensure their own downfall.

On the global front, the Pontiff wants "international structures capable of intervening" in international and intranational disputes, apparently unaware that war is a logical continuation of national politics.

Walter Schwartz draws our attention to the fact that many third world priests have suffered the wrath of the Vatican for attempting to follow some of the very policies advocated in this encyclical, but falls short of deciding that the Vatican is trying to pull a fast one on the faithful.

EFC

The State is Your Enemy

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

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Self Interest and Voting

When the Labour Party was formed in 1906, its basis was a very simple one, and eleven years later it was still: "to organise and maintain in Parliament and the country a political Labour Party". Only in 1918 (in view of its 1945 electoral success it almost seems as if the Labour Party thrives on wars and unemployment and similar human disasters!) the Party, according to Mr Attlee (now globetrotting Lord Attlee) "adopted Socialism as its aim"¹.

And since then, without wanting to be cynical, the aim of the Labour Party has been to taste the sweet fruits of office. It has supported two world wars — in spite of the fact that among its objectives was that of:

"co-operating with the Labour and Socialist organisations in other countries and assisting in organising a Federation of Nations for the maintenance of freedom and peace ..."

In 1929 as the largest Party in the House it took office under Ramsay MacDonald who, according to Mr Attlee, "seemed to think that by a course of studious moderation he could conciliate opposition, while doing enough to retain the support of his own followers". Then in 1931, MacDonald, who had:

"for some years been more and more attracted by the social environment of the well-to-do classes [and] had got more and more out of touch with the rank and file of the Party, while the adulation which is almost inseparable from the necessary publicity given to the leader of a great movement had gone to his head and increased his natural vanity [and] the philosophy of gradualness which he had always maintained became almost indistinguishable from Conservatism."

In 1931, MacDonald "betrayed those who had given him his trust" and formed the National Government. The Labour Party in the House was reduced to a "handful" under the "very able leadership of George Lansbury". In 1937 Mr Attlee was writing that the Party was "the alternative force in politics to Capitalism", adding:

"More than ever today there stands out the difference between the two systems, Socialism and Capitalism. Liberalism as a coherent philosophy of politics is dead. What was of value in it has been taken over by labour, and some part of its spirit has even gone towards modifying Conservatism."

The fact that after the elections of 1959 there is talk either of an *entente* between Labour and Liberals or of the replacement of Labour by the Liberals as the second party, only goes to

1 *The Labour Party in Perspective* by C.R. Attlee (Left Book Club, 1937).

show that *plus ça change* etc., or those who are always taken for a political ride are the mugs, the public!

In view of Mr Attlee's subsequent acceptance of office in a wartime Coalition Government, his unequivocal opposition to Popular Fronts in 1937 is interesting as well as revealing so far as his own achievements are concerned when he was a leader of a Party with an absolute majority in the House immediately after the war and when radical change was acceptable not only in this country but throughout the war-exhausted world at large:

"The Labour Party stands for such great changes in the economic and social structure that it cannot function successfully unless it obtains a majority which is prepared to put its principles into practice. Those principles are so far-reaching that they affect every department of the public services and every phase of policy. *The plain fact is that a Socialist Party cannot hope to make a success of administering the Capitalist system because it does not believe in it.* This is the fundamental objection to all the proposals that are put forward for the formation of a Popular Front in this country" [our italics].

In 1959 the Labour Party puts forward a programme which in effect tells the people *that it can operate the capitalism system more effectively than the Capitalists* (that is, the Tories). The public, even without Lord Attlee's pre-war Left Book Club bookseller to guide them, intuitively feel that the Tories know more about how to run the capitalist system than the 'socialist' dons and so vote for them — we are now talking of the 'don't knows', the 'floating voters', not the conservative-Conservatives and the conservative-Labourites who will vote Tory or Labour respectively even if an H-Bomb explosion blows them onto the moon (read Barbara Castle's sentimental opening paragraph in last week's *New Statesman* about the one-legged lady of 79 who "had never missed voting Labour and didn't intend to now". Shame on the Party, not on the loyal old lady!)

Socialism, as Mr Attlee pointed out in 1937, has nothing in common with, and is the antithesis of, capitalism. It is the advocacy of co-operation as opposed to cut-throat competition; it is equally not privilege; it is production for use and need and not for profit. (Incidentally whereas in Mr Attlee's 'socialist' paradise we were promised a 40-hour week, with paid holidays but

"deprived of the right of living in idleness at the expense of the community", the anarchist Kropotkin, more than half a century earlier, not only showed with statistics that we could produce all we needed — and do we really need those ghastly plaster ornaments in our 'sitting-room' windows and that mock-competition between *Omo* and *Daz*? — by working a four-hour day but that we could afford to overlook those of our fellow beings who were unaccountably so anti-social as to refuse to contribute their share to the common pool.²

The Labour Party, according to its objects, wants socialism but in practice wants power — within the limits of the constitution, of course. This means, quite simply, winning a majority of votes in the constituencies.

Since the Tory Party (and now the Liberals) have the same objective and, apart from their control of, or influence on, sections of mass-communications, also depend on votes

² The anarchists are realists when they take for granted that in the free society the parasites will be such a small minority as to be ignored. The socialists in spite of what they believe — we quote Mr Attlee: "The denial of the right to work is one of the great infringements of liberty imposed under capitalism, for it deprives the individual of the right of expressing his personality and exercising his functions as a citizen" — consider it necessary to establish the machinery of coercion in order to oblige the work-shy individual to contribute his share to the commonweal. In so doing they re-create all the machinery of coercion, the law, the police, prisons ... the State!

in order to be returned to 'power', it is clear that all parties must concentrate their resources on winning votes rather than in educating the people politically.

To this end the Tories have perforce been obliged to share the cake of economic prosperity more widely and curb the nineteenth century ambitions of the *ultras* in their ranks, while the Labourites have removed the teeth of their Bevens in the name of unity. So the Tories are a shadow of the free-enterprise buccaneers they once were and the Labourites are a copy of their original selves, a mere party seeking "to maintain in Parliament and the country a political Labour Party" ... by hook or by crook! — and the public voted accordingly!

[part of an editorial from *Freedom*, 24th October 1959]

RAVEN 14 On Voting

Whether or not we have a June General Election (we still maintain there won't be) we are ready with our arguments on why anarchists don't vote, and why we call on all those who call themselves socialists to withdraw their support from the Labour Party.

Includes a feature on compulsory voting in Australia, and some anti-election cartoons.

96 pages £2.50

FREEDOM PRESS

Waiting for the Bus

Fancy that philosopher at Swansea University College getting suspended and having to teach his students in a pub, Bert ... Best place to teach metaphysics, Daisy. Have a couple of pints and your brain's bursting with marvellous ideas. Aldous Huxley went one better; he took mescaline ... He's a Trotskyist too, the Swansea bloke. Do you think he's trying to bring down the University by claiming they have been dishing out degrees like Christmas cards to attract more paying students? ... As far as I'm concerned it doesn't matter how you dish out prizes for explaining how a table can't be in a room if you're not in there with it ... Is it jobs for the boys then, Bert? ... In more ways than one, Daisy ... Mrs Potts says you're materialistic, not going to church and not believing in God. She reckons you can't be a spiritual person ... While your friend Mrs Potts was cheering on Desert Storm, I wonder what she felt about all those women and kids having their spirits snuffed out in Baghdad ... Did you see that four out of five Americans were praying that Bush would not have to be given anaesthetic because they don't trust Dan Quayle? ... That's ripe. They put up with Nancy Reagan supposedly running the country for years. What a lot of tripe governments serve up to try and fool us. All this nonsense about John Major, too. He'll be discarded just like Maggie was when the Establishment decide he's no longer of any use to them. They all end up as wealthy scapegoats, with a peerage, and nothing really changes where the real power lies ... These bus passes are great, aren't they Bert ... D'you know, if we went to Slough every day like some of them do, we would be saving £500 a year ... I didn't realise it was that much. And still some of them moan because we had to pay a pound more for the passes this year ... It's disgraceful, I know, but what an example is set by the top

people. No wonder people are never satisfied. Millions starving in Africa, and still they're not satisfied. It's obscene ... The Princess Royal says that if we give up one meal, it will feed an African family for a week. If she gave up one meal it would feed ten African families for a month. Why is it that charities always have filthy rich people heading them? ... Good question, Daisy. I suppose one reason is the top people like to keep control of everything in case they get too radical. Look at Sir Nigel Mobbs, boss of the largest industrial landlords in the UK, Slough Estates. He has probably done more than any other single person in turning Slough into a concrete jungle-cum-racetrack and, would you believe it, he is the chairman of the Slough Social Fund and the Slough Occupational Health Service ... Yes, and I notice he lives way out in the country so that he will never have to use the clinic. They're getting round the table in Northern Ireland, I see ... They've found a bloody table at last, have they? They had better keep an eye on it in case it disappears ... They're going to have talks ... You mean they're going to have talks about having talks ... Yes, and they are trying to agree on where to hold the talks ... What's the problem? ... One lot wants to hold them in Dublin ... Why don't they hold the talks in the UN? ... They say it's an internal affair ... So the USA and Britain can poke their noses and their armies into the Middle East, but nobody is allowed to sort out the mess in Northern Ireland, not even the UN. Look out, here's the bus ... You sure it's the bus, Bert? ... Quite sure, unless buses are like tables. Keep your eye on it, Daisy, in case it isn't there ... I can't wait to get home for a cup of tea ... How do you know we've got any tea ... Or cups, not to mention a bloody table ...

EFC

Blockading the Birmingham Arms Fair

On Wednesday 15th May about 400 people from as far afield as Durham and Aberystwyth assembled in East One car park at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham. At 12.30pm we set off for the foyer entrance to hall 8 — in which the Arms Fair was being held. It's always nice to precede an action with a march — it gives a feeling of togetherness and purpose, and so it proved to do on this occasion.

As we approached the entrance we fell silent as had been suggested and in silence most of us sat down in front of the doors. The police tried to keep one set of doors free with a wedge of police and guards but this was circumvented by being surrounded by demonstrators.

From time to time a few visitors approached the entrance we were blockading, and climbed over or through us, but it soon became apparent that the majority of the Arms Fair visitors had been directed to the other main foyer some distance away, from which a long passage led to exhibition hall 8. Eventually some thirty of us went round to this foyer where we saw large numbers of visitors going in and out, but it was difficult to tell which of them were actually Arms Fair visitors and which were visiting other shows, and there weren't enough of us to mount an effective blockade anyway. So after a while we returned to the main blockade.

This was proceeding smoothly. A group from the Chile Solidarity Campaign were there in support — Pinochet had apparently been invited to the Arms

Fair — and at every hour there was an effective ten minute silence in commemoration of the victims of the Arms Trade — the only sounds being those of police radios and the flapping of metal wires against the tall flagpoles at the entrance.

At 4.00pm we all got to our feet and walked back to the car park in procession.

Lessons:

1. Not everybody taking part shared the same concept of non-violence. We really do need to get together more in groups before such events to work through our differences — the old idea of non-violent preparation for such actions needs to be reintroduced.

2. We would have needed much larger numbers to mount an effective total blockade of the Fair, but that doesn't excuse us from not having made more effort to communicate our views to visitors and exhibitors at the Arms Fair and at the NEC generally.

3. It would have been better if we had been organised in smaller groups so that we could have reacted more quickly and effectively to situations that arose. A number of people got into the Fair in spite of tight security and did their own thing, which was nice. We really needed more such small group action.

4. We can't rely on the media to report our actions, however effective.

David Polden

Antilinguistics

Dear Editors,
I should like to thank Silvia Edwards for her kind words about my *Antilinguistics*. She sums up my main arguments admirably in the fourth paragraph of her review (*Freedom* 18th May).

At the same time, though, two of her phrases there could perhaps be misinterpreted by those who did not read the book. 'Imitating' should not be thought to mean that I think using language has anything to do with behaviourism — far from it. And 'exact meanings' ought not to be taken as a suggestion that words in fact have ascertainable exact meanings if only we are careful enough. Definitions will not help, since they are only words about words; all words in principle distort reality, and many words create myths that lead to confusion and tragedy. 'Democracy' is an example that I think readers will appreciate. If people can

think wordlessly about what actually happens to actual human beings in actual places when this word is being used or is even merely in the air, they can easily see how mistaken and dangerous it is to admire and recklessly use such an abstraction.

Could I add a point about Noam Chomsky. There is an important difference between the ways Chomsky thinks as a linguist and as a political dissident. In his linguistics he invents systems and tries to fit the facts of language into them; in the process he often gets the facts wrong, particularly when the real ones are hard to harness to his theories. His politics, though, I believe arise from deep compassion, which he expresses in a passionate but rational concentration on facts stripped of the verbiage commonly used to disguise them.

Amorey Gethin

Doorways

Dear Editors,
George Walford (Letters, 4th May) says "a doorway both is and is not material". This confusion arises from the joining together of the two opposing words — 'door', which is material, and 'way' which is not, producing the nonsense word 'doorway'.

Would he agree that I have an open and shut case?

Ernie Crosswell

Letters

Poll Tax Rioters' Support Group

Dear friends,
We're writing to let you know that the PTRSG has now been dissolved a year after the glorious resistance to the police attack in Trafalgar Square on 31st March last year. The timing seems quite appropriate following the formal announcement of the abolition of the poll tax and the comparative success of the last national demonstration when at least a couple of minor police provocations were dealt with by the high degree of solidarity amongst the anarchist contingent. However, the real reason for our dissolution is that the money has finally run out, although it has to be said we thought it would disappear sooner.

A week after the 31st we discussed our appeal for donations to help the defendants, and we quickly collected £1,500. We would specifically like to thank one comrade from up north who gave a substantial amount. We were surprised that so few defendants asked us for money, nevertheless we helped half a dozen pay fines and compensation orders, and a couple with bail problems. Partly due to the lack of response we came to an agreement with the TSDC to pay £10 a month to all the prisoners; since October last year we have made 67 payments in all, and bought one prisoner a walkman.

Unfortunately just as our money has run out the number of prisoners has increased dramatically — approximately 25 on the last count. They urgently need your support, and money should be sent to the Prisoners' Group, TSDC, Room 205, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP. The Defendants' Campaign will continue to support all defendants and prisoners until the last person has been released.

The struggle goes on. Solidarity and best wishes.

PTRSG

Famine in Africa Man-Made?

Dear Editors,
An excellent article in the 18th May *Freedom*, 'Poverty the real enemy in Bangladesh', refers in passing to "famine due to drought in Sudan, Ethiopia and elsewhere". But is the famine due to the drought?

There is also a severe drought in Zimbabwe, but no famine there because food has been moved into the drought-stricken areas. Sudan and Ethiopia are actually exporting groundnuts and other comestibles. They are military governments at war with various rebels, and they need the exports to pay for weaponry.

They embrace doctrines — Islam and Marxism — which waffle on about caring for people, but their first priority is to maintain themselves in power. It is that order of priorities which is causing the famine.

DR

Anarchism and Nationalism

Dear Editors,
With regard to the contribution on Scottish Nationalism in your issue dated 4th May 1991, could I ask the author, 'Flett', and indeed other anarchists, whether he, and they, are opposed to *all* expressions of nationalism, or just to the Scottish variety? If the former, are they against the 'independence' struggles of the people of the Balkan states and other parts of the Soviet Union, the inhabitants of Tibet, the Kurds and so on? However, as the same issue of your paper contains articles relating to Greece, Hungary, Japan, Iraq, Kuwait, etc., it would seem that *some* nationalisms, at least, are okay so far as anarchists are concerned.

In any case, a statement by an anarchist on the precise relationship between his philosophy and nationalism is surely long overdue in the pages of *Freedom*.

John L. Broom

Keep sending us your letters and donations!

Child Abuse

Dear Editors,

I was not sure of the main thrust of Mack the Knife's argument against social workers. Is he arguing that child abuse doesn't exist, that it is fabricated by the soft police in order to break up happy homes? Or is he arguing that what parents do to children in the privacy of their own homes is nobody else's business?

By 'ritual abuse' most people mean the abuse (usually sexual) of a number of children by a number of adults (in itself a too-common activity). This is made worse by using threats of retribution to ensure silence, backed up by trappings which the child might associate (rightly or wrongly) with black magic.

In our society we take little collective responsibility for protecting the vulnerable. It is much safer to assume that someone else will do it, or to kid ourselves that we have misinterpreted 'normal' behaviour. Believing some of the things that happen to children is so awful that we accept all too easily explanations with little substance.

Mistakes have been made, there is little excuse for dawn raids. In my experience, however, social workers often delay action — 'to give parents another chance'. I have seen broken bones which could have been avoided in this way.

Unfortunately, with our society the way it is, we have a choice between adequately staffed social work departments (currently very understaffed, leading to over-work, too much responsibility too soon and burn-out) and allowing our children to be abused.

In the interests of a freer society we need our children to grow up in security and self-confidence, rather than — as is the case — to grow up believing that one is either victim or victimiser.

Clio

Class War Conference

Dear Editors,

I have to respond to Chris Platt's criticism of the Class War Federation (*Freedom* 4th May 1991).

Yes, anarchy isn't a party-based organisation but joining anarchist groups prevents the feeling of isolation that isn't wholly alleviated by subscribing to anarchist publications. There isn't anything wrong in building larger groups, being part of a large group adds to the collective confidence of individual members. As to violence, some people are capable of solely talking to spread their ideals, this is fine but others feel their need to express their contempt for this society by using direct action from time to time. For instance, when meetings or demos are attacked by whoever, the fighters amongst us defend the situation. They defend those of us who find it impossible to fight physically and a group fights better than separate individuals. This is violence only in the eyes of the media. There are many styles of groups concerned in the class struggle ranging from those who use force to those who purely theorise. They all aid the struggle and I would omit none of them.

As for being led or told what to do by a hierarchical group, I think that would be impossible in any anarchist based organisation. People would leave if badgered, belittled or treated as idiots. The only people who the *Class War* paper badgers, belittles or treats as idiots are the boss class, royals, etc., as far as I can see, and in that it is effective. I don't feel belittled when I read it.

I don't think any groups or individuals should be demeaned for their activities or ideals. We're all different and approach the same targets in this struggle from different positions and in different ways. Being critical of each other is what the boss class wants to see, especially in print.

Max K-v-T

Purpose in Life - 2

Dear Editors,

May I reply to CA (23rd March) who commented on my 'Purpose in Life' article of 26th January.

1. "The only biological differences [between male and female] are of a reproductive nature."
False — the male is larger and stronger.

2. "The female is only necessary to the child-rearing process during the suckling stage."
False — the female is necessary also during the gestation period. It is during this period that the female is most vulnerable.

3. "Social history has proven that ['elevation' of the female] has led to a sense of lost magistics in the male."
If magistics (which is not in my dictionary) means ego, is the loss of it such a bad thing?

4. "There is no inherent fixed social difference between the male and female sexes of the human species."
Can social differences be inherent? The point is that in all societies males have almost total control over females. This power is so overwhelming that the vast majority of females cannot even imagine it any other way. The pity is that the few

females who do are given short shrift, even by some males who sport the anarchist label.

Of course, some females get their own back on an individual basis, but that should not surprise anybody.

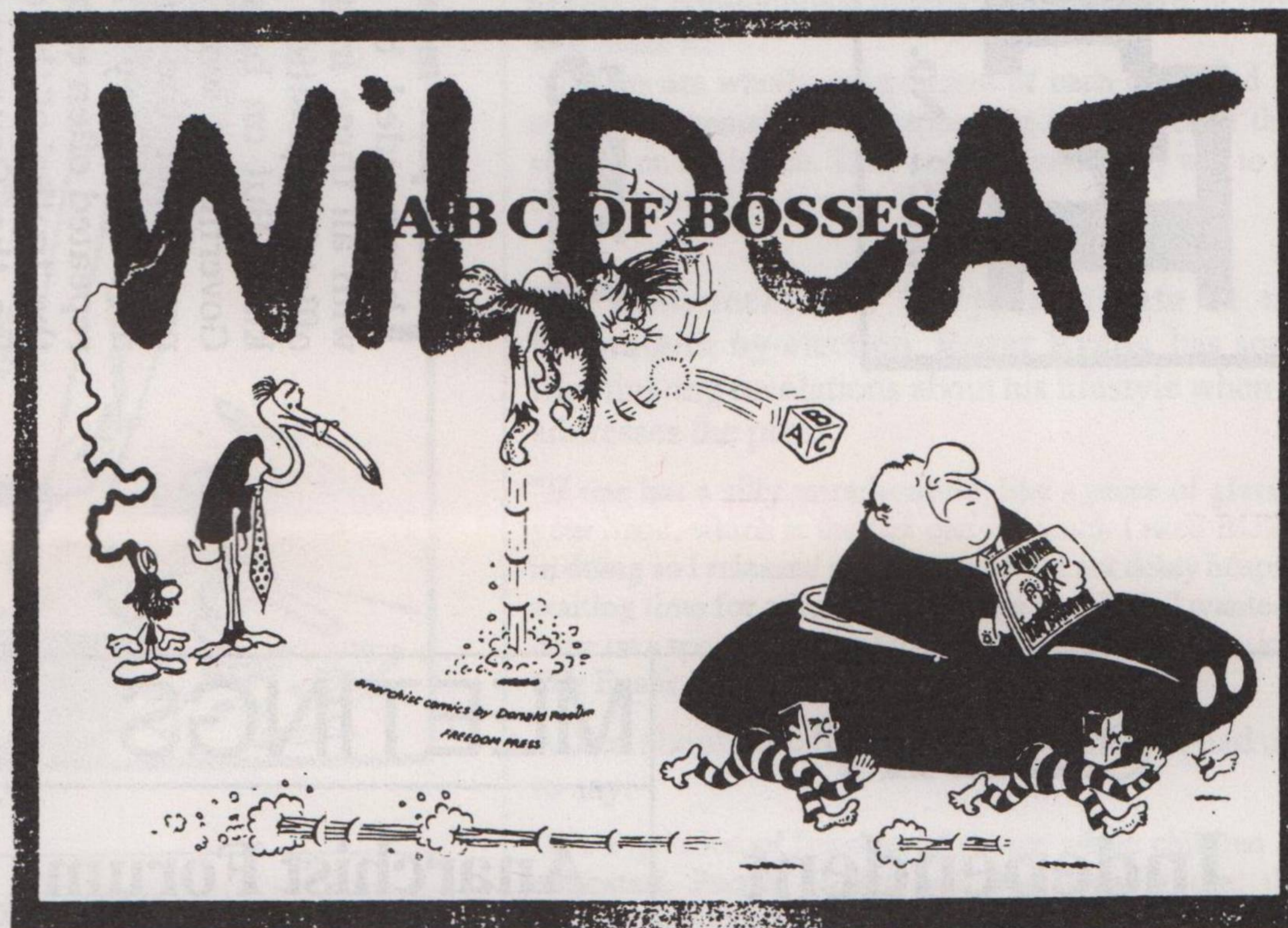
Ernie Crosswell

More readers' letters on page 4

People Without Freedom

Dear Editors,
George Walford's letter (18th May) helps to expose the myth that oppression will disappear with the overthrow of governments. Governments are male-inspired phenomena, and will only cease to exist when the males are overthrown by females refusing to co-operate in their oppressive schemes. Anarchists, of all people, should be the first to give support to the female virtues of pacifism and selflessness instead of pretending that anything can be solved using violence as a tactic.

Ernie Crosswell



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News from Angel Alley

We hope to have a supply of the new Freedom Press titles from the binders to dispatch in the first week of June. At the time of writing *The Raven* number 14 'On Voting' is about to be printed so it too may be ready for dispatch in the first week of June.

We are printing editions of 2,000 copies of each of these six new titles. This little adventure will set us back at least £11,000 in printing and binding costs.

For the autumn we are aiming to produce at least one centenary volume (1951-1964), two of our discussion series titles, the anarchist poetry volume promised so long ago but delayed through no fault of ours, and possibly a massive Kropotkin volume still to be published in an English translation, and of course another two *Raven's*. That 'modest' publishing programme will cost in the region of £20,000, and much of it will be financed from the sales of our ever-growing list of Freedom Press titles (there are now some 50 titles in print), as well as from the sales of the

many titles handled by Freedom Press Distributors which doubled in value in 1990 to more than £20,000. But since the losses on *Freedom* and *The Raven* are not nearly covered at present by donations, once again our literature sales have to provide the balance. And every £2,000 needed to meet the bills for *Freedom* and *The Raven* means one book less from Freedom Press.

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1991 SEASON OF MEETINGS

7th June - 'Turkey: Past, Present and Future' (speakers M. Kemal Tilgarimolu and Serpil Kara)

14th June - 'Kurdistan and the National Question in the Middle East in Retrospect' (speaker Aliser Mameki)

21st June - To be arranged

12th July - To be arranged

The meetings from 7th June to 14th July may be at the earlier time of 6pm to 8pm (the Centre may wish to close earlier). Watch this space.

We are now booking speakers or topics for 1991-92. The dates are 27th September to 13th December 1991, 10th January to 20th March and 17th April to 10th July 1992. If anyone, including comrades from abroad, would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, please make contact giving their names and proposed subjects and a few alternative dates so we can start filling slots. 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 topic to be discussed and then not turn up, as happened on a number of non-speaker evenings this session. Non-anarchists who turn up tend to get annoyed when this happens and this does the movement no good.

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).

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!

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