

# anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

*"He that will not reason is a bigot; he that cannot reason is a fool; he that dares not reason is a slave."*

Sir William Drummond

## BUYING VOTES WITH EMPTY PROMISES

Though the actual elections are a year away the media have decided that the campaign for votes has started and the government are responding with Green and White Papers, mutual insults on the box and above all promising that the '90s will be a capitalist utopia for all, with public services leaving nothing to be desired. It's going to be a privatised 'from the womb to the tomb'.

Considering that the Tories have been continuously in office for the past twelve years it must seem extraordinary to simple folk that they have taken so long to realise that our public services are bad, not because they were nationalised\* but because they have been starved of funds and as a result services have had to be run down.

The Major government's discovery that we have a railway network that could take thousands of long-haul lorries off the roads, far from deserving the applause by the sycophants in the media should have been received with derision. Apart from the influence at government level during the past decade of Thatcher, who boasted that she never travelled by train, the road lobby *was and still is powerful* in involving the oil barons, the motor car manufacturers, the road transport moguls, as well as the civil engineering industry. Therefore we are convinced that Mr Rifkind's 'bombshell' is only an electoral 'squib' which incidentally has already been seen as such by some on his own side.

As one of his colleagues put it (according to *The Sunday Telegraph*, 2nd June): "I think it was quite well put over, but when you get down to

what he's actually going to do about it, it's sweet damn all!"

The quoted 'colleague' was concerned as to how much money Rifkind could prise from the Treasury. But this, in our opinion, is a minor question compared with the government's intention, which Rifkind stated with 'enthusiasm', of privatising the railways. *The Sunday Telegraph* had a picture of Rifkind actually waving a green flag as he set in motion the first electric train on the Edinburgh-Glasgow line, and another of him in the restaurant car with the caption "the Transport Secretary who actually catches trains". *That's all he knows about railways if he is "enthusiastic" about privatising the system!*

Surely anybody who knows anything about the railways will know that in between the wars they were bankrupt and had to be taken over (just as in the case of the mines). What was wrong with the nationalisation of the railways was that those who actually operated the services had no say in the operation. More than ever today with electrification of trains, points and signalling and centralisation, through the computerisation of control, men on the spot when there are breakdowns or electrical failures have no powers to deal with these problems. Hence the massive cumulative delays when something goes wrong.

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## Exorcising Thatcher

To think that less than a year ago apart from a few 'wets' among the Tories they were all showering superlatives on the "Lady who was not for turning"; the Boadicea of the Falklands; the terror of the unions and the architect of Britain's so-called success story. Then suddenly Brutus, Cassius and the rest of the Cabinet stabbed her in the back and she was out on her face with Denis organising the removals men, having only four days to clear out of Number Ten. She has never got over the shock and has been telling the world about it ever since. She has been to America lecturing at nice fat fees; she has received the highest honours from the hands of President Bush himself. In South Africa she received a royal welcome in recognition of her efforts to sabotage sanctions against the racist regime of that country. Her most recent port of call was Moscow where she met her old friend (of whom at their first

meeting years ago she declared "I can do business with him", or words to that effect). All she gave him this time was probably bad advice about jumping out of the Russian economic frying pan into the capitalist free market fire as well as an hysterical account of her greatness as a leader.

Now it is quite clear that Thatcher's Nantics in the past seven months since her removal from Number Ten have convinced her former colleagues and most supporters of the capitalist media that it's time to completely finish her off (politically of course!). Tory ex-sycophants like Cecil Parkinson have publicly advised her to retire from the House of Commons. What they don't realise is that as an ex-Prime Minister she is entitled to a place in the House of Lords where she could go on ranting to her heart's delight.

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\*Anarchists have never fallen for the nationalisation gimmick as introduced by the Labour politicians which gave no power to the workers in those industries and services, and expected them to be operated purely as profit-making enterprises.

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The government's proposal to privatise actual train services (such as the Gatwick and the Stansted airport to London services) leaving the actual infrastructure (tracks, signalling, safety, maintenance, etc.) to British Rail is a reflection of their political fetish for privatisation at any cost and the examples they give include the rich man's Orient Express which probably runs twice a week and as far as this end is concerned it's just a Pullman train from Victoria to Dover! The operation of the railway network involves *thousands of train movements a day*, and to imagine that there can be hundreds of operators running their own trains on the network is sheer lunacy. Steven Bell's cartoon in *The Guardian* (4th June) sums up the chaos that privatisation would produce.

The government has also just discovered that the H in NHS is about Health which is the opposite of sickness. (We cannot claim that the minister read the last issue of *Freedom* where we wrote that: "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?") So now out comes a Green Paper telling us all that the government will be doing (if re-elected of course!) to encourage healthy living — more exercise, more quality food, less smoking.

Education has become priority number one for the government recently, only because the polls say the public is dissatisfied and not because they or any government is interested in having an

## Exorcising Thatcher

(continued from page 1)

But it's the media who can and are out to destroy her. *The Sunday Telegraph* (2nd June) has a three-line four-column heading "I was deceived over Major, says bitter Thatcher" and she is quoted verbatim telling friends that she was mistaken in her judgement of Mr Major and wrong to have chosen him as her successor. "He stands for nothing — he is nothing. He is grey. He has no ideas. I have been totally deceived." Needless to say three days later all this has been denied? After all, Peregrine Worsthorne (who got a knighthood for crawling on all fours to the Iron Lady) and *The Sunday Telegraph* have been her staunchest supporters. Why should they invent the statements?

Even less polite is Robert Harris in *The Sunday Times* (2nd June) whose piece has an even more humiliating heading: "Potty for power, Thatcher has to learn there's no way back".

In *Freedom* we have on more than one occasion pointed to the fact that most political leaders eventually become drunk with power — even when that power is no more than that of a film or a footballing Gazza or a snookering Davies.

*The Sunday Times* article retails all the evidence to show that she is 'potty'. To our minds the verbatim report of what she told the Russians about herself is sufficient:

"In Moscow last week, she gave the most revealing insight yet into her appetite for power. Apparently after the first round of voting for the Tory leadership, she briefly considered announcing that she would stay as prime minister whatever the outcome of the second ballot. Here is the quote in full (to get the true flavour, I suggest you try reading it aloud, blinking rapidly): 'I could have said, it is only the leadership of the party. It is not for prime minister, therefore I will continue as prime minister because I was elected as prime minister and I have never been defeated by the people and I have never been defeated by parliament as a whole. I could have divided the two; it would have been possible'."

It makes you feel sorry for the old girl, doesn't it!

## BUYING VOTES WITH EMPTY PROMISES

educated public. They could make the politician's life very uncomfortable.

And last but not least, as we write, the government is shortly to launch a Citizen's Charter White Paper. At a press conference the spokesman refused to give any indication of the 'eye-catching' proposals therein though he mentioned that it had been contributed to by both public and private sector representatives including Marks & Spencer which might give one an idea of what this Charter is all about.

On their side the Labour politicians have not remained silent. Their programme *Labour — Opportunity Britain: Labour's better way for the 1990s* is a swish production with an introduction by Neil Kinnock.

How many Labour Party members and sympathisers have read this bulky document (the equivalent of a 100-page book) or could afford to pay the £11 (demanded from *Freedom* for the privilege of having a copy) it's difficult to tell. It is a comprehensive programme dealing as far as one can see with everything from education to transport, from health to wealth, from rights of employees to defence industry diversification. Unlike the recent conversion of the Tories from everything for the Top Boys and confrontation, to Major's trapeze u-turn to the 'classless' society and 'love-your-neighbour' ploy the Labour lot repeat their philosophy of 'opportunity' for all to have the chance to get to the top — and those who inevitably will have to be at the bottom (or there would be no top) will have a better deal than with the Tories.

We won't swear to the absence of the word 'socialist' from this document but if

it has crept in it was an accident. The fact is that it is a programme to give capitalism a good name by trying to get rid of some of the rough edges — the gross inequalities — of capitalism. We know from past experience of Labour governments that this cannot be achieved however well-intentioned they may be, for obvious reasons.

The real power lies with the banks, the pension and insurance funds, the multi-nationals, and nowhere in the Labour programme are they concerned to control them. Nor does the party do anything significant to redistribute wealth by the only means available to them: taxation of the rich on a massive scale. They are proposing to increase taxation at the top level by a mere 10% to 50% and are obviously proud to point out that this is lower than in Germany, Italy and France where in the first two there are right-wing governments. They are also making those earning more than £20,280 a year pay National Insurance (at 9%) on all earnings above that amount — which under the Tories they don't pay. They are also increasing the number of taxation bands with the aim to benefit those on low incomes but are relying on greater production and productivity which in turn will produce more tax revenue (an extra £20,000 million in a five-year period) to implement pension, health and other services.

The 'economic recession' is not going to be solved simply by producing more, and more economically. So long as there is a free-for-all the capitalist countries of the West will invest in the cheap labour countries of the third world — as they are doing now. For instance, farmers in the Common Market countries are being paid £80-£90 an acre to set aside (not cultivate

land for up to five years) arable land and at the same time are importing from third world countries millions of tons of animal feed (manioc, maize) because it costs much less than feed wheat or barley grown here. One beneficiary of this is the Governor of the Bank of England, who recently got a massive salary rise (see *Freedom*, 1st June). He is also a large non-working farmer and he now gets £60,000 from setting aside some of his farmland. £60,000 for doing nothing!

The Labour Party document is concerned about "Safer, Healthier Food" (page 25) and to that end promises a few lollipops for farmers who go "more organic" but they don't even question the existence of prairie farms. After all even the Tory government made the breweries get rid of some of their thousands of tied pubs on the grounds that they were operating a monopoly. So why not look upon the farming companies owning tens of thousands of acres as monopolies and break them up. Since they are always quoting what other countries are doing one could mention Denmark where farm sizes were limited to a maximum of 300 acres. To do so would also have the beneficial effect of bringing down the artificial price of land in this country.

Neither the Tories nor the Labour Party can solve the problems of inflation, interest rates and unemployment and the Labour Party at least should have the honesty to say so.

The crisis of the capitalist system is that production, potential production, more than exceeds 'demand'. Meanwhile, millions of people are starving and many more millions are living very modest lives compared to the affluent West. The problem is one of the *distribution of wealth*.

If our society solved that problem there would be no 'recessions', no unemployed, and a good standard of living for all. Capitalism is production for profit for a privileged few worldwide.

## Let them eat greens

As I was searching for articles to include in the forthcoming issue of *The Raven* on health, I read John Hewetson's forceful chapter 'The Prevalence of Ill Health' in *Ill Health, Poverty and the State*. What is particularly startling and saddening is that this chapter, written in 1946, could apply quite appropriately to conditions in 1991 despite over forty years of the National Health Service.

The government's current green paper on health conveniently omits any mention of health problems and their direct relationship to poverty. Although an earlier draft of this green paper contained statistics which underlined the link between bad housing and health problems, all the finished report conceded to was an acknowledgement that the link between housing and health "has long been recognised".

The 1980 Black report on health underlined the fact that poorer people suffered poorer health and made 37 recommendations to rectify this imbalance. Despite this attempt to eradicate class differences in health issues matters have remained much the same. Clearly the government would wish to bury this fact at the bottom of the muesli barrel so as not to spoil their squeaky-clean glossy brochure approach to the health care of the nation.

A Gallup survey based on 928 face-to-face interviews with adults in 100 districts across Britain between 21st and 28th May, asked the participants if they broadly approved or disapproved of the current changes to the NHS: 69 broadly disapproved, 18 approved and 13 didn't know. Thirteen per cent of the population are already covered by private health insurance. Eighty per cent would be if

they could afford it. Baroness Cumberlege, a Conservative health advisor, quoted these statistics as the Brighton Conference on Health Service Management this week. She used these statistics to support her proposal that the public have lost their confidence in the National Health Service and she predicted that the NHS would fast become a health service for the poor, the old, the uninsured and the chronically sick and disabled.

On a recent Radio 4 programme 'Medicine Now', a doctor was underlining the correlation between poverty and disease. Women from low socio-economic groups tend to have babies with lower birth weights. Cardiovascular disease can be established in these babies as earlier malnutrition gives these children a poor preparation for life and a potentially faulty development of vital organs. Healthy eggs and sperm from healthy people are imperative for healthy foetuses, so if either parent is malnourished the foetus begins life at a disadvantage.

Another item on the same programme was about a new treatment for sufferers of schizophrenia just developed by Sandoz pharmaceuticals. Heralded as making a 'miraculous' improvement, the new drug, Clozapine (check spelling — heard, not read) has two minus points — one is that the patient needs to have a fortnightly blood test to eliminate possible blood abnormalities, and the other, more insurmountable hurdle is the cost — £2,400 per patient per year.

Dr Brian Harris argued that the cost, although high, could be reduced if more people used it and anyone with any first-hand knowledge of this dreadful condition will not think £2,400 per annum an unjustifiable sum.

What should also be considered are the

inevitable savings which will be made when routine and crisis hospitalisation of sufferers is reduced. Here again we see a situation where the poor lose out. A wealthy person could pay for medication privately; for a poor person £2,400 may represent their total annual income.

All the old arguments about the misappropriation of public funds come to mind once again. The only positive and promising development in the health area at present is the public's refusal to accept the government's obvious deliberate dismantling of the NHS. I hope there is still time to reverse the trend.

Silvie Edwards

### New Freedom Press titles

These titles are in the Freedom Press Anarchist Discussion Series

**John Griffin, *A Structured Anarchism: an overview of libertarian theory and practice*, 40 pages, ISBN 0 900384 58 1, £1.00**

**Michael Duane, *Work Language and Education in the Industrial State*, 36 pages, ISBN 0 900384 59 X, £1.00.**

**Colin Ward, *Freedom to Go: after the motor age*, 116 pages, ISBN 0 900384 61 1, £3.50.**

Counter-cultures grow up when, for a variety of reasons, people wish to emphasise their independence and non-conformity with the culture around them. They are acts of personal revolt; but most such cultures are not specifically revolutionary, if only because working for revolution entails attempting to convert the majority, and this either implies a degree of self-censorship, to enable the revolutionary to communicate with the class, or — where the revolutionary maintains individuality (as for instance happened with the more active Greenham women and other peace camp activists) — it necessitates a far greater commitment and readiness to suffer hardships than normal, in order to cut through the barriers which eccentricity would otherwise interpose.

In the early '60s, arising as part of the hippie cult, a number of people dropped out of peace and syndicalist movement activity arguing (with a considerable degree of justice) that the ultimate revolutionary activity which the establishment fears more than all others is that workers should start to enjoy themselves, to live fulfilling lives. But it turned out that they had not found some mysterious way whereby workers could live without the pressures of capitalism; they were advocating mere hedonism (reinforced with cannabis) which could only be attained to any extent by lying low, out of the observation of the police, i.e. by conforming politically.

The early skinheads were for the most part a revolt against the orthodoxies of the Labour Movement, against its connections with middle class learning, and against the influence of hippies and the New Left; which allowed for the curious sight of people walking to Selhurst Park along Thornton Heath

## Post-Punk, Youth and Rebel Counter-Culture

High Street happily brandishing both *Workers Press* and *Spearhead*.

Growing out of the skinhead culture, but with a far more emphasised desire to shock for the sake of shocking, punk culture burst upon the world in the aftermath of Paris and Prague '68, in the lead-up to the miners' struggles that brought down the Heath government, hence the initial uncertainty as to whether it was a movement of the Left or of the Right. As the dominant culture swung rightwards in the following decades, the mainstream punks (or by the end the post-punk streams) adopted many facets of the earlier hippie culture but retained from their punk and skinhead ancestry the contempt for the 'wimpishness' of hippie-pacifism. (This spawned its own counter-culture as the Right regrouped and revived the skinheads).

By the time mainstream culture and politics had moved through Callaghan monetarism to Thatcher; a hard political current had emerged within the youth culture. Earlier punks had paid lip-service to anarchism and/or fascism (the and/or is deliberate — there were occasions when punk bands wore both anarchist and fascist insignia) and so it was hardly surprising that leftist-inclined politically active punks were to adopt anarchism, and give rise to a new variant of anarchism. It is also not surprising that this variant had an inbred contempt for the older variants, and for their links with middle-class-seeming politics (Green,

non-violent, non-sexist). But youth revolt entails not only rejection of the established consensus, but also of the conformism of the main (working class) resistance to it; and it was inevitable that — in the name of working class revolution — this new youth cult anarchism would shun all contacts with the organised working class and should confine its activity to within its own youth framework.

Whilst rejecting state/bourgeois/middle-aged-and-middle-class/official youth provision, the youth cult was clamouring for the provision of venues which its members could control themselves. Such venues had to find funds, which came either from councils, business interests or charitable trusts; organisations that the culture abused. As with the more hedonist hippies, many youth cult groups learned/developed two entirely distinct images; within their venues, there was a right-on quasi-anarchist ethos; but modern youth cult music and culture demands expensive, indeed extravagant, facilities, which can only be obtained by getting grants; and so to the outside world the venues present a very different face (perhaps still slightly left-of-centre, but never so far that the local police and Tory councillors will be too alarmed).

In a very real way — though obviously not as a geographical entity — the venue is a return to the medieval ghetto (reborn so disastrously in Nazi Germany) the leaders of the community treat with the outside world; and in return for a degree of safety, non-interference in their own business, cultural and internal legal affairs, as for the acknowledgement their own autonomous power within that community (which is made more absolute by being acknowledged by an authority not answerable to the community) they police their

constituency on behalf of the dominant culture. Within the ghetto it is taken for granted that there will be rebel voices, totally rejecting the external culture; and provided that the community leaders are ready to ensure that this rejection does not manifest itself overtly outside the prescribed areas, this is readily tolerated; some specific customs are nominally forbidden but a reasonably blind eye is turned and only some peripheral community customs are actively suppressed.

This ghetto-restriction defines the area of activity of those who choose to base their political activity inside it. Within the ghetto they may say anything, provided that it does not cause the ghetto to be raided from outside and so endanger the autonomy of the ghetto; but they will not, and cannot, take their revolt to the outside world.

Ten years have passed since the new variants of anarchism that were geared to this youth culture emerged; they were years of depressing Right wing rule, when both the main working class and the middle class New Left resistance to the Right were thoroughly defeated. It is natural (and for good reasons) that the anarchism that arose at the beginning of the decade should have sharpened its rejection of reformism, and its contempt for the wider Left — but at the same time, those are ten years in which the youth culture in which that anarchism has worked has made ever greater compromises in order to survive and the walls of the ghetto have grown greater.

This has meant that the punk anarchism has been replaced by a series of groupings which can be described as anarcho-vanguardist in their concepts of revolution, but whose actions are really the product of their ghetto activity. Their activity is such that they cannot work within the wider movement without importing their ghetto into it, where the rejection of the Left — in the name of the Left — and of all working class organisations — in the name of the working class — is absolute. LO

## Tory Bedtime Stories

The number of hospital beds, doctors and nurses has remained fairly constant for years, as indeed has the population. The waiting list problem must therefore be due to people living longer, more specialist operations such as organ transplants, etc. Quite clearly, the answer to the waiting list problem is more hospital accommodation, doctors and nurses — which means more funding.

Now, I feel sure that the British public, if asked, would gladly pay whatever extra tax it takes to pay for that funding. So why doesn't the government put the question?

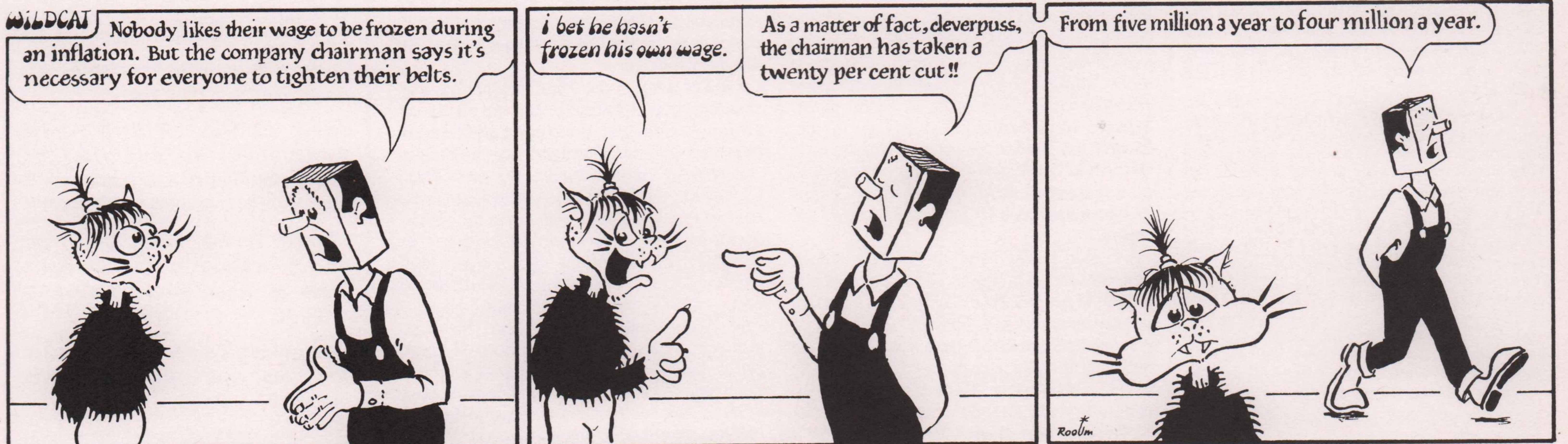
The answer lies in Tory dogma, which cannot allow for the possibility that people can act altruistically. The whole idea of Conservatism is based on the idea that people are selfish and competitive. A few years ago it will be recalled that the Thatcher government gave, as one of its excuses for cutting taxes on the rich, the explanation that they would be less inclined to make use of 'tax havens'. More recently Nicholas Ridley warned of "riots in the shires" if the old rating-by-house-size was restored. Tory dogma has it that people are intrinsically greedy and that the exceptions are to be respected only as though they are beings from another world.

The man in charge of the government's 'opt out' health programme is William Waldegrave, who is a product of (wait for it!) Eton College. William, not satisfied with

having had his privileged education subsidised by British taxpayers and Berkshire ratepayers (by way of an ancient charitable status fraud) has the unenviable task of defending a market forces approach to the hospital waiting list problem in the knowledge of what market forces have done to industry and the Balance of Payments. So difficult is William's task, he justifies the changes largely on the unsubstantiated evidence that standards in the NHS vary enormously from region to region. For example, he tells us that waiting lists in Liverpool are only a quarter of those in the South East. But, of course, such information is meaningless unless we are also told other figures, such as the sizes of the populations served — it could be that the South East regions have twice the number of patients per doctor or hospital bed, or more doctors moonlighting on private hospital work, or both. Sadly there can be no satisfactory solution to the health problem, whether we have Tory, Labour or Liberal Democrat governments. And just as people tend to get the governments they deserve, so do we get the health service we deserve. We are faced, as always, with a 'guns or butter', or more accurately guns or health problem. Nor is it just a case of guns — if the population gave up drinking alcohol, for instance, the burden on the NHS would lessen dramatically because alcohol, much more than smoking, puts young people in hospital beds. EFC

## Railroaded

The government's decision to switch transport emphasis to the railways and away from the congestion of the roads is to be the most welcomed not as a victory for the struggle of railway workers to argue their case but as a sensible social-environmental policy. However, the motive behind the change in emphasis is designed to draw attention away from road traffic problems and to circumvent political discredibility over the government's ruination of rail transport. Moreover, £17 billion whilst sounding a lot of money overall when distributed between the 2,000-strong station and depot facilities amounts to only £350,000 for each facility — much less than the poll tax deduction grant given to each local authority. Moreover, once management pay rises are met and staff wages updated in line with inflation the change left over from £350,000 will not pay for a dozen new rail carriages though might once again be used for improving the plastic furniture in the foyers of each railway ticket office. The government clearly believes that people have no sense of proportion when it comes to discussing financial figures needed to beset the damage inflicted upon the industrial and transport economies of this country. £17 billion for each local authority area is the least amount required to meet the cost of a transport revolution and the dirty proceeds of privatisation revenues clearly covers such envisaged small-scale and local-national projects. Let's not forget Glasgow Rangers spent £5 billion to produce a small-capacity British premier football ground. CA



# Democracy

Democracy, literally strength of the people, is a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people collectively and is administered by them or by officers appointed by them. In a very loose sense, perhaps only from the slogan 'government of the people by the people for the people', Soviet Russia could lay claim to being a democracy. When Adolph Hitler gained power in a Germany which, unlike Britain, boasted a written constitution, he did so legally by attracting more votes than any other single political party. Once in power, he was endorsed by votes in excess of 90%. In a sense, then, Hitler was a democratically elected dictator. In the light of the foregoing observations, it becomes necessary to examine the validity of the general assumption that we in Britain live under a democratic system. Is the claim justified, or is it a golden fleece under which a more sinister animal hides? Has it any more validity than, say, the title of German Democratic Republic, which was paraded for forty years before its people took to the streets and proved its transparency?

One sobering fact is that a majority may represent no more than 51%, and a minority as much as 49%. More alarming is the fact that a very significant proportion of the electorate do not, for various reasons, go to the polling booths. Another significant minority, those under the age of 18, are disenfranchised. Thus a 'majority' may represent less than a quarter of the population. Clearly, democracy comes in many guises, and that the much vaunted democracy in Britain is far from perfect was acknowledged by Lord Hailsham when he described our political system as an "elective dictatorship". Even that uncomplimentary description may be seen as flattery when one considers the many executive and legislative positions that are filled by appointment rather than by election.

That all is not well in the state of democratic Britain is evidenced by the demands of Charter 88, headed by Lord Scarman, which calls for a written constitution incorporating, among other things, a Bill of Rights, subjection of executive powers and prerogatives to the rule of law, freedom of information and open government, an electoral system of proportional representation, reform of the House of Lords, and independence of the judiciary. No doubt Lord Scarman and his fellow campaigners are aware of the judgement of Sir W. Ivor Jennings KBE, QC, Litt D, LLD, who, in his much acclaimed book *The British Constitution* wrote "The British Constitution provides no check against a Conservative government which really intended to go 'authoritarian', because a government which has majorities in both Houses can do what it pleases through its control of the absolute authority of Parliament ... even a written Constitution, however, is but a slight check — as Hitler showed in Germany — and the foundation of our democratic system rests not so much on laws as on the intention of the British people to resist by all the means in its power — including sabotage, the general strike, and if necessary civil war — attacks upon the liberties it has won." Strong stuff indeed, which would-be democrats would do well to take seriously. In the thirty-odd years that have elapsed since Jennings wrote that down, the situation, arguably, has much deteriorated, due in no small measure to a new Official Secrets Act.

A good example of the dictatorial powers of a "Government which has majorities in both Houses" is the poll tax. This unfair and unpopular measure was railroaded through Parliament to the horror of many Tories as well as the Opposition parties. This law, a hyena rather than an ass, enacted by a powerful minority, backed by Lords whose bottoms had forgotten what a Westminster seat looked like, and penalising the deprived while benefiting the wealthy, has criminalised some people to such an extent that the Government itself now realises that it will have to be revised, if not rescinded, if its chances in the next elections are not to be seriously damaged. As Sir Ivor Jennings warned, a written constitution is no cast iron guarantee to genuine democracy. The United States of America, which has had that facility for many years and is perhaps the most highly regarded democracy in the world, fails to attract more than half of its eligible population

to the polling booths. Among those vote-shy hordes there may be millions of poor citizens who would laugh at the word democracy which is plugged by every politician who finds himself in front of a microphone. As with many of their underprivileged counterparts in Britain, they might claim that the wealthy candidates who seek their votes do not represent their interests.

What it boils down to is that the masses of underprivileged people in 'democracies' as we know them can only rely upon the goodwill of those who legislate for and administer the law. The measure of the worth of a democracy is the concern and treatment of its minorities and underprivileged.

It has often been asserted that freedom is information. As recognised by Charter 88, that freedom, never much in evidence, has lately been diminished by a new Official Secrets Act which allows for no right of appeal in areas which are all-embracing, including not only

military matters but commercial ones as well, and those who like to think we in Britain are particularly blessed in the democratic stakes might do worse than ponder the fact that the Government which in reality is a mere handful of elected persons advised by a court of extra-parliamentary officials, including the Secret Service, under the Crown Prerogative, is not subject to the assent of Parliament for declaration of war, recognition of foreign governments, signing of treaties, granting of pardons, charters or commissions, conferring of honours or making of appointments and orders in council. Nor is the government subject to the law.

So long as we have all these restrictions, and a press which effectively censors itself for fear of receiving 'D' notices from the Whitehall watchdogs, a police force which is unaccountable to us and goodwill that only stretches to keeping people barely above subsistence level, the word 'democracy' will do no more than raise a cynical smile to those whose lives have seen through the facade — eyes that have been opened by bitter experience.

EFC

## Rambling Notes

Every year some hundreds of existing footpaths are closed for ever and a few new ones are opened. We are in danger of losing more and more of our rights to roam freely on uncultivated land, threatened as they are by, among others, the National Trust, British Rail, the water companies, the Forestry Commission, the military and many landowners.

Footpaths are often the means of reaching mountain, moor, heath, down, cliff, beach or shore, of reaching the places where you can wander freely. But sometimes you can't leave the path. On the 4,000 acre family estate in Oxfordshire of the eighth Earl of Macclesfield and his son and heir, Viscount Parker, who don't like ramblers, there are 400 acres of rough uncultivated downland in the Shirburn and Pyrton hills which form part of the Chiltern escarpment. When, last October, about 100 ramblers took to the public path that crosses this land, they were escorted by ten policemen including a sergeant and an inspector and closely watched by the viscount and a posse of his friends from the local gun-dog club, just in case anyone should try to stray from the straight and narrow.

Of course they could fence in the path, a solution that might appeal to the descendants of the seventeenth century god-fearing royalist, diarist and author John Evelyn. They continue to control the considerable estates at Wootton in Surrey where he was born and they don't like walkers either, reputedly referring to them as louts and hooligans. Unable to abolish the public path through the estate, they have done their best to isolate it with fencing and notices. Glimpses from the path reveal parkland with the river running through it, artificially dammed in several places to form surprisingly natural looking lakes. Very pleasant it looks, but it is not for walkers to enjoy.

Rights of way are, of course, a matter of class — the landowners and their rich friends from the city don't need them because they have the rest of the land to use. This is recognised even by class war anarchists to judge by a recent article in *Class War*. At the other end of the libertarian left spectrum the *Southern Resister*, organ of the southern region CND, devoted a page and a half to a discussion of rights of way (April-May 1991) from which we learn that the BBC Radio 4 'Archers' programme, that signifier of lower middle class values,

typecasts ramblers as yuppified cranks. From the indecisive middle, the newly-appointed editor of *The New Statesman and Society*, anxious no doubt to establish his radical credentials, demands under the heading 'Land Wars' to know why Britain doesn't have a general right of access to uncultivated land.

Ramblers Association members, in their Forbidden Britain campaign, organise each year walks to maintain existing paths which are under threat and establish new ones. For their efforts last year they were described by a regional secretary of the County Landowners Association as "a militant and abusive minority whose activities threaten ordinary people's enjoyment of the countryside". What could he have meant? Yes, access to the countryside is very much a class issue; of the fifty-nine inspectors who decide on footpath closures and diversions, none are women, all are over 50 (45 over 60) and 38 are of the retired colonel category.

The National Trust, owning one per cent of the land supposedly for our benefit, keeps ownership of some of it quite secret, such as Max Gate and its grounds in Dorset, the home of Thomas Hardy. It often restricts access and doesn't hesitate to block rights of way for its own convenience, as it has done at Hidcote garden in Gloucestershire and Stourhead estate in Wiltshire where a public path is blocked by barbed wire as it enters National Trust land. And as for class, when the representative of the Open Spaces Society attended his first National Trust council meeting, he was asked why he was there. "Isn't the National Trust rather on the fringes for you in the allotments movement?"

British Rail has promised to use footbridges and minor diversions so that none of the seventy paths in the way of the proposed seventy miles of channel tunnel rail link will be blocked. Good, but then why is it putting a private bill through Parliament so that it can close ten paths where they cross the London-Newcastle east coast line creating twenty cul-de-sacs? Such an easy way to extinguish a path with little opportunity for objectors to object and no need to build a footbridge. There are 2,000 places in Britain where paths cross rail lines, 100 of them on the east coast line, so is this just the beginning?

When land changes ownership it is a convenient time to close a path. For the new water companies opportunities for

profit from selling land free from the encumbrance of rights of access is already being demonstrated. I pick on Yorkshire Water for being quick off the mark. They have persuaded the Peak District National Park Planning Board to erect a 'no entry' notice on a path above Holme leading to Wessenden Head moor and the Pennine Way, because they have leased the land to Boss North Inns for grouse shooting.

But it is the Forestry Commission sales that are now providing the biggest threats to access. Although there are no rights of way on Forestry Commission land access is permitted and indeed often encouraged by the provision of picnic sites, car parks and nature trails, but this could all disappear when ownership changes. The government has instructed the Commission to sell a further 250,000 acres of forest and woodland during the next ten years, to add to the 350,000 sold off in the last decade. Not all these woods are coniferous deserts, many are popular recreational areas, but when ownership changes, fences and 'no entry' signs appear. Sales represent a major loss of public access to the countryside. There may be one intended near you. Why not find out and, if there is, do something about it.

Many excuses are used to justify keeping people off the land. The military, well known as land grabbers, most ingeniously claim that they are protecting sites of special scientific interest and, in particular, rare plants in danger of extinction. Footpath erosion is another excuse used to justify restricting access, but how widespread is it? On the most recent bank holiday Saturday I stood on the Pennine Way above Hebden Bridge, near Stoodley Pike, memorial to the Napoleonic Wars, counting the eroders as they tramped past. It was not a demanding task for in one hour there were none.

Finally, the most outrageous proposal comes from Sir Frederick Holliday. He is head of the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee, so must carry some clout with the establishment. He suggests walkers should have to buy a ticket from the landowner to walk on his mountain, moor or footpath. This 'fresh air tax', as it has been called, is the latest idea by the authorities to control our movements. It is fortunate that they cannot yet control our minds — or can they?

HS

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**Freedom to Go: after the motor age**

by Colin Ward

112 pages, Freedom Press Anarchist Discussion Series, £3.50 (post free inland)

The Anarchist Discussion Series is a new departure for Freedom Press. I understand the intention is a series of shorter books on particular topics written, if not by experts (for are not anarchists of all people wary of 'experts') then by people knowledgeable on their subject. For those of us who are already sympathetic to anarchism, such as the readers of *Freedom*, the series will clarify our ideas and thus make us better propagandists, but more importantly for that great public out there whom we hope to convince of our ideas, will show that anarchism has something practical to contribute to those matters which impinge on everyone's experience. We all travel, to get to work (a regrettable necessity) or to get away from it all on holiday (and find ourselves stuck in traffic jams along with thousands of other people doing the same thing) and we all demand the products which are brought to us by the enormous container lorries which block the roads for our cars as well as shaking to the foundations the historic towns we like to visit.

In reviewing Colin Ward's recent *Talking Houses*, I quoted him as saying that anarchism will not be accepted by the majority of people unless it is seen as an extension of the bottom-up, instead of the top-down, approach to the solution of practical problems. "We are much more likely to win support for our point of view if we put anarchist answers which can be tried here and now, than if we declare that there are no answers until the ultimate answer: a social revolution which continually disappears over the horizon". Today few people think of 'anarchists' as madmen, but to many people, including those who have the responsibility for implementing the policies of the decision-makers, we are thought of as utopian dreamers, dwelling in the land of "wouldn't it be nice if ...".

Moreover, there are special problems in trying to isolate the topic of transport, as Colin Ward hints in the opening words of this book: "I wanted to write an anarchist book on transport. This is not a simple task and the connections are not easy to make. It must be for this reason that the last attempt was made as long ago as 1943 by George Woodcock in his pamphlet *Railways and Society*".

# Freedom to Go



The publication of *Freedom to Go* is particularly timely when the major political question of the diversion of the transportation of goods from road to rail is likely to become a General Election issue; I understand that *Freedom's* leader-writer is to mention the subject in the same week in which this review will be published.

The difficulty in making the connection would seem to be that transport is so inextricably woven into the fabric of society — the production and distribution of goods, and the transportation of workers to and from dwellings and workplaces — that one cannot, as one might with housing, look at it in isolation. The tendency of the anarchist, therefore, is to dismiss the practical problems by saying that come the revolution we will only work for one day a week, or that most of the present-day traffic will become unnecessary, or to dream of some idyllic rural life in which we make do with very little in the way of material goods, which is not likely to have much appeal to the urban commuter or the worker in the manufacturing industry.

The dilemma for the anarchist is summed up in the quotation from ex-London busman Arthur Moyse that: "whatever solutions they

formulate for solving social ills can only be put into effect by the very political organisations they wish to destroy".

In another more recent *Freedom* article, also quoted here, Peter Neville tells how he turned up in the rain at a meeting of environmentalists to find the car park full as all the members had turned up in their cars. But Neville's conclusion, which puts him in the company of the town planner and the professor of government who are quoted by Ward as defending the 'road lobby', is that "as things stand an anarchist society is any society that extends the freedom of the individual and one of the best ways to do this is to have a motor vehicle. Many comrades appear to see anarchism in a more restrictive welfare-statist sense. Surely we should be finding more ways to extend our freedom, not more ways to hedge ourselves in by restriction".

Now both Peter Neville and I are car owners, while Colin Ward, I think I am correct in saying, is not. I sometimes use my car to transport Colin Ward's books to anarchist book fairs (while Colin Ward's books transport me often in my mind's eye to foreign climes), but with respect to the particular point Neville is making, anarchism is if anything a

collectivist philosophy, and to put the emphasis as Neville does on the 'freedom of the individual' without taking into account that one's own freedom is bound up with that of one's fellows surely leads us back to laissez-faire capitalism and its guardian the State.

One of the interesting points Ward makes is that although the British railway system was built by private enterprise, from the start in the early nineteenth century state regulation was seen as necessary. In another place the point is made that railways could not only open new horizons for ordinary people, and transport food and raw materials, thus creating a more equitable society, but also the troops and police necessary to quell any popular rebellion, a topic which is not expanded on but which I would be interested to learn more about. Is this why Britain avoided the kind of insurrections which took place in continental Europe in the nineteenth century?

Ward quotes George Barrett's *Objections to Anarchism*, which was recently reprinted (in *The Raven* number 12) in which an imaginary heckler asks, "suppose one district wants to construct a railway to pass through a neighbouring community which opposes it. How would you settle this?" Barrett's reply is that objections to collective enterprises are objections not to anarchism but to society itself, and Ward's point is that those French citizens who demonstrated against the high-speed trains from Paris to Le Mans, and those British citizens who object to the Channel Tunnel route are not objecting to railways as such but rather to the disruption of their communities in ways which bring no benefit to them but are designed for the speedier transportation of a wealthy business class.

Colin Ward's achievement in *Freedom to Go* is to make the essential point that the political significance of the transport debate lies in the conflict between individualism and collectivism, and to demonstrate that the anarchist approach is the only one by which such apparent conflict can be resolved. As is usual with him, he disclaims originality, emphasising his indebtedness to the writings of others, but his perspective is very much his own and he brings a charm to the writing which makes this book a pleasure to read.

The first chapter, 'Lone Rangers or Wagon Trains?', shows how in the twentieth century our society has been transformed by the motor

## Blowing the 'College Teaching' Biz

"I am sick of the art-adoration that prevails among cultured people, more in our time than in any other: that art silliness which condones almost any moral or intellectual failing on the artist's part as long as he is or seems a successful artist. It is still justifiable to demand that he be a successful being before anything else, even if at the cost of his art." Clement Greenberg, *The Question of the Pound Award*, 1949.

As a full-time independent, I don't often attend academic conferences; but since I'd written a book on the subject to be featured (John Cage), I was invited to give one of the two major addresses. Perhaps because I'd not had such an experience before, the conference was a revelation. Quite simply, the presenters could be divided into two groups — professors and non-professors — and in all eyes the fundamental difference between us was that, to put it mildly, the professors didn't know as much about the featured subject or think about Cage's unusual work as profoundly. Their presentations tended to be simplistic equations of their pet analytical ideas with at best cursory examination of the subject's work, to a predictably obvious degree that could not survive publication but might withstand live recitation *once*. Out of naivete perhaps, I was shocked.

Why were these professors invited? Many were affiliated with the host institution, some were 'big names' who had passing personal contact with the subject, a few were long-term colleagues of the organiser, which is to say that

within the political requirements of the situation, all three sets 'could not be excluded'. Why did they participate? Damned if I know if there were reasons other than vanity, a few bucks and perhaps the opportunity to generate further biz. None seemed embarrassed by what I took to be the implicit theme of their performance — that since they were professors they didn't really need to know anything.

It seems that even with reduced teaching loads university professors are the guys who don't know much and haven't learned anything new in years. My suspicion is that to an increasing degree they devote most of their non-teaching time to posing as professors, which is to say serving on university committees, throwing around the weight gained by their positions, and behaving pompously before impressionable audiences, all on the assumption that their academic titles would successfully cover ineptitude and other sins. (Thus does academia clearly resemble another institution similarly organised into hierarchies whose titled rankings compensate for the gut incompetence of those on the upper level — the military!)

A second disturbing incident followed the publication, in an avowedly conservative magazine, of an article of mine on the awarding of literary grants. My critic happened to be a chaired professor at the same Ivy League university that awarded me a degree (with 'honours') a quarter of a century ago. In the course of putatively rebutting me, this 'distinguished' professor attributed to me, in quotation marks, something I did not say and do not believe. In short, he fabricated evidence

opportunistically. When I was an undergraduate, students caught fabricating evidence would be flunked automatically. Yet, even when I exposed his fabrication in a letter to the editor, there were no explanations and no apologies. My first thought was that the rumour must be true — standards at such Ivy League universities aren't what they used to be — and then that this Ubermensch must be answering to a law lower than that once imposed on students.

A third incident happened to a very close friend of mine who recently heard about his wife of long ago, now a professor, complaining to a mutual friend that her former husband forced her to type his MA thesis. In fact, the thesis was written well after they had separated and was typed for hire by someone else. What accounts for this superficially innocuous fib was that the ex-wife, in the course of switching from English Literature to 'Feminist Studies', needed to invent a personal history of male abuse to 'qualify' herself for the new position (and in part compensate for her own tardiness in boarding an opportune academic train). "You're better 'qualified'", a friend explained, "if you can tell a story that is untrue or, even better, known to be untrue. That shows your commitment to the ideology, in this case of uncovering male exploitation". In a climate like this, all notions of academics as disinterested seekers of truth have been forgotten.

One of the charms of Charles J. Sykes's illuminating *ProfScam* (1989) is explaining these last two incidents to me. Quite simply, he shows how the purported principle of 'academic freedom' has become a lever for professorial fibbing and other intellectual abuses unavailable to independents (let alone normal human beings), and it would seem that professors on the political left are no less immune than those who place themselves on the right. Since professors can get away with fibbing to students, who are beholden to them for a grade, some let that bad habit deceive themselves into lying before the general public. (Or thinking that former students are still students? But since I no longer

car, which can be both a personal liberator and a social menace — especially as the car has destroyed public transport systems. Ward quotes Lewis Mumford, writing in the 1930s, as extolling the benefits of the car, and Henry Ford's idea of every farm worker up a dirt track being able to afford a Model T. This was a common enough idea in the days when a car was a rich man's toy (I always think of *The Great Gatsby* as the first great novel of the motor age). It is when what was the prerogative of the rich becomes available to everyone that the problems arise, and to adopt such commonly-advocated solutions as taxation on the use of cars would mean individual transport becoming once again available only to the better off. Ward's answer is the *sharing of individual solutions*, which may be seen as the theme of much of what follows.

The second chapter is called 'Why Don't Other People Stay at Home?'. People have always travelled, but not always voluntarily, and many motorists are not willing drivers. The railways were in the nineteenth century a democratic institution, and when Ward quotes Arnold and Ruskin as having a contempt for the masses it is in the context of showing that this is an attitude we all share. We all want to travel but hate the crowds.

'The Individualist Backlash' is concerned with the road lobby, and this is followed by chapters on 'Human Costs', 'Energy Costs' and 'Environmental Costs' and on the social and political issues behind the railway system. 'All Too Heavy Goods' shows that the size of lorries was determined solely for the convenience of shippers, and questions the notion that everything should be available everywhere. 'Gondolas of the People' goes into the real costs of public transport systems and looks at the possibilities of the rural bus, and what were called trams in Britain and trolleys and street-cars in the USA.

'Could We Have Free Travel?' looks at the attempts in London in the 1970s to abandon earlier plans to push motorways through

London, and to attempt to ease congestion by providing low-fare or free-fare bus and tram systems. 'Calming Traffic in Towns' examines modern traffic engineering, including the collective taxi (jitney) in use in poor countries. Ward's answer is what he calls the "polynucleated city region", as an alternative to either suburban sprawl or Jane Jacobs' idea of the "compact city" and concludes that "we must be won back from car dependency".

*Freedom to Go* ends with a call for us to make six demands on politicians and policy makers:

1. No more motorways
2. Invest in railways
3. Push the transport of freight from road back to rail
4. Demand urban transit systems
5. Find economical rural alternatives
6. Calm traffic in towns.

Although this book has a British emphasis (and deliberately excludes considerations of sea and air transport) Ward ranges widely in his comparisons, from studies of the decline of trolley and railway systems in the USA, and the intensive railway systems in Switzerland and the Netherlands, to the small metal workshops of the third world countries which keep cars on the road years after they would have been scrapped elsewhere.

Within his self-imposed limitations, Ward has done an excellent job, and in his consideration of the conflicting points of view on the complex issues of transport, he invariably gives due weight to and fair consideration of the opinions of both sides before coming firmly to an anarchist conclusion. But in recommending this book I would point out once again that it is published as one of a Discussion Series. The material here merits more detailed coverage than can be provided in a review, and I would hope that it will inspire further discussion, especially in the pages of *Freedom*.

Charles Crute

# Food for Thought ... and Action

Recent additions to the Freedom Press Bookshop stock

**Russian Literature: Ideals and Realities\*** by Peter Kropotkin, with introduction by George Woodcock, Black Rose Books. Despite the barriers imposed by an autocratic government and rigorous press censorship, Russia in the 19th century produced masters of fiction and drama. First published in 1905, the reissue of Kropotkin's literary history celebrates the golden age of Russian writing. 385 pages, £11.50.

**Anarchy: a journal of desire armed**, quarterly A3 journal from Missouri. The front cover bears the legend 'Towards a Society based on Mutual Aid, Voluntary Co-operation and the Liberation of Desire'. We have the current issue and two or three back issues in stock. Suck it and see. Approx 35 pages, £2.00.

**Paris '68: graffiti, posters, newspapers and poems of the events of May 1968**, by Marc Rohan, Impact Books. This is just what it says it is, and contains many illustrations. The graffiti and poems are in both French and English. 142 pages, large format, £5.95.

**Society Without the State**, by Ronald Sampson, Peace Pledge Union. First published in 1970 as *The Anarchist Basis of Pacifism*, this is still a very useful and well-argued pamphlet, whether you're a pacifist or not — its importance for anarchists is in its critique of power and the state. A5 pamphlet, 26 pages, 60p.

**Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution\*** edited by David Porter, Commonground Press. Arguably the most important collection of Goldman's writings, a limited number of copies of which have again become available. If you failed to get your hands on it last time, now's the time to order again. "Emma Goldman described the efforts of Spanish workers and peasants to build and depend on anarchist society 'with almost bare hands and every hindrance in their way' as 'an inspiration one cannot easily forget'. It is a rare and intensely moving experience to witness through her eyes their constructive

achievements and their travail, caught between the fascist hammer and the communist anvil, ignored or vilified by Western 'progressives'. In the material he has found and presented ... David Porter has made a very significant contribution to the never-ending struggle for freedom and justice" — Noam Chomsky. 346 pages, £8.00.

**Solidarity: a journal of libertarian socialism\*** issue 27, summer '91. The latest issue contains several items of interest: George Woodcock on 'Fifty Days that Shook the World', the libertarian roots of the protests in Tiananmen Square / Robin Kinross on a new biography of Herbert Read / Ken Wellar on the anti-war movement during the Gulf conflict / and some interesting letters including one from Chomsky on the awarding of a medal to the Commander of the USS Vincennes, the ship that shot down the Iranian civil airliner in 1989. Quarterly (back issues available), 16 pages, £1.40.

**Fifth Estate\*** quarterly published in Detroit, Spring '91 issue. Emblazoned across the front page is the banner 'Resist the New World Order'. Inside there are lots of good things including 'The Empire at War', 'Civilisation in Bulk' on empire and ecological destruction, and 'The Myth of the Party' on Bolshevik mystification and counter-revolution. Other contents include news, reviews and cartoons, and there's an account of the final (for the time being) split in the Earth First movement in which *Fifth Estate* finds itself on the libertarian side. Same format as *freedom*, 31 pages and all for only £1.00.

**Tyrannopocrit Discovered** edited and introduced by Andrew Hopton, Aporia Press. Originally published in Rotterdam in 1649, the identity of its author is unknown. Speaking passionately on behalf of the common man, the author launches a revolutionary attack on economic inequality and the hypocrisy of church and state — personified in the figure of 'Tyrannopocrit' — and calls for a revolution based on sound religious and political principles. The first complete British edition of this important work, 61 pages, £5.00.

## The State is Your Enemy

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

272 pages £5.00 Post free in the UK from Freedom Press

need a grade to graduate, I am free to say this emperor has no clothes.) Such professors behave as though they are confident that their colleagues, regardless of political persuasion, would defend such lying, especially to non-professors, on the unionist principle that professors are allowed privileges, aka 'academic freedoms' (based upon professor-adoration), not allowed to common people. Not only does Sykes expose the severity of a morass that many take to be unexceptional, but his specific analyses exemplify the purpose of all great social criticism (or arts criticism, for that matter) — making the invisible visible.

### II

Sykes is correct in attributing many problems to the principle of tenure, by which an aspiring professor is granted lifetime job security after a trial period. Because of the need a quarter of a century ago for college teachers to service the post-war baby boom, many intellectually (and pedagogically) insufficient people were granted tenure rather easily at the time. Guys and gals tenured then now earn over fifty grand a year for no more than 7½ hours a week in the classroom. Once that demand for college teachers declined in the 1970s, the awarding of tenure became scarce; so that those who got their doctorates too late, their ambitions initially fuelled by the myth of academia as a land of economic opportunity, became a sweated class of part-time instructors, largely assigned to teach beginning students, moving from job to job strictly according to the laws of supply and demand, structurally unable to compete with the tenured professors who had already graduated, so to speak, from the free market. As a result, college teachers nowadays comprise two classes, in the Marxian dialectical sense — those who have tenure and cannot move (thereby creating communities of intellectual stagnation) and those who, lacking tenure, can only move.

It seems to me that the major social legacy of the 1960s has

been the revolt of the underling, whether female, black, gay or whatever, refusing to be subservient any more. To this powerful thought add the general parameters of this patently dialectical, explosive academic situation, and you wonder why the sweated class hasn't yet wised up and concentrated their critical energies on attacking that obstacle that keeps them chattel — tenure!

The fact that this attack hasn't happened, even though the untenured by now outnumber the tenured, makes me wonder about the 'radicalism' that conservatives say they find prevalent in American universities today. Is this 'radicalism' just a polemical invention? Or are graduate students cynically being taught that it is acceptable to be 'radical' about social problems far away, in Nicaragua and South Africa, while absolutely unacceptable, to the point of professional death, to protest about social inequities immediate to them? Can it be that by equating all attacks on tenure with McCarthyism and Yahooism the professors have pulled one of the great intellectual deceptions of our time? There are no standards and moxie left — only tenure and the benefits/abuses accruing to those who have it.

If the elimination of tenure brings a decrease in unjustified, undesirable privilege and an elimination of institutionalised dead wood, along with creating opportunities for the under-class, it should be classified as a left position (that resolves the wrenching dialectic mentioned before). It is also a libertarian position in bringing the values of a competitive free market — values that characterise cultural life in general — to a backwater that has declared itself institutionally exempt from such reality.

The people best positioned to attack tenure are not parents and students, as Sykes would argue in his conclusion, but the endlessly exploited underlings. Since teaching assistants and the like comprise the shock-troops of undergraduate instruction, an effective national strike by these sometime chumps would force the tenured professors to take over their

entry-level classes. If such basic university functions were not assumed, the students would leave and the universities would necessarily close down, eventually declaring bankruptcy and thereby voiding all tenure contracts. Once reorganised, such universities could create wholly new, inevitably better faculties from a freer market-place. It seems obvious that the elimination of university tenure would bring a more fluid professional world, genuine academic freedom, along with a greater public accountability and thus more human and intellectual responsibility. (When I ask itinerant academics about this, they usually tell me that the sweated class is 'scared' that, if they struck, they would be easily replaced, which is to say that unemployed academics are thought to be scabs wholly devoid of class consciousness and that tenured profs, no matter their macro-politics, are thought to be scab-lovers.)

I should add that if university professors are to be truly professional, rather than, as now, grubby unionists, they would necessarily introduce mechanisms for policing abuses by colleagues. My own opinion is that professors caught fabricating evidence, plagiarising, reviewing books they patently hadn't read or completely ignoring their students, say, should be suspended without pay for a year, for much the same reason that professional athletes caught using illegal drugs are nowadays suspended — they set a bad example for children while exploiting their positions of influence and jeopardising the reputations of their colleagues. Need I say anything so obvious: celebrity athletes have less immediate negative influence upon America's future leaders than dispensers of life-determining grades.

Richard Kostelanetz

Richard Kostelanetz is a writer/artist living unaffiliated in New York. His work in several media has appeared around the world. He once spent a semester as a Visiting Professor of American Studies and English at the University of Texas at Austin.

Anarchists, in the opinion of Anatoly Lukyanov, President of the Supreme Soviet, are one of the few political forces to be taken seriously in the USSR. That was certainly not meant as a compliment for the various anarchist organisations, associations and dozens of smaller groups, but rather as a kind of warning and appeal to politicians and Party bureaucrats, perhaps even as lead-up to an anti-libertarian offensive. At demonstrations in Moscow and Leningrad the anarchists have always been present in such numbers that the Western media often have to report that "their presence could not be overlooked". Although the anarchist movement in the USSR is not on par numerically with the Democrats, Social Democrats, Liberals and other forces, it makes up for this with its active membership.

The brief history of modern anarchism in the USSR is connected with glasnost, perestroika and the rise of Gorbachev, like almost all political and social culture which has developed in the last few years outside the Party and bureaucratic control. Of course, this is meant as no justification for the West's darling 'Gorby' and his lack of democratic spirit. Until the death of Chernyenko all opposition was brutally suppressed.

According to Michail Tsomva, International Secretary of the Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists (KAS), the roots of modern soviet anarchism are to be found in the Komsomol, the Party youth organisation which today has lost virtually all significance. In the early '80s socialist groups and discussion circles arose in almost all parts of the country. Many of them were marxist-oriented. In 1985-86 some young people at the Teachers' College in Moscow began looking at the relations between Marx and Bakunin and soon developed an anarchist leaning. Andrei Isaev, Alexandr Shubin and others then founded the club Obshina in 1987 (an Obshina was a type of Russian village community — with collective production and without private property — which existed until 1917 when they were destroyed by the Bolsheviks). The club Obshina went public with a discussion meeting on 9th May 1987, and in September 1987 it published the first edition of the magazine *Obshina*, the first anarchist publication in the USSR for almost seventy years.

Together with similar discussion circles and marxist and Social Democrat groups, the anarchist and independent socialists launched the Alliance of Socialist Federalists (ASF) and the Federation of Socialist Social Clubs (FSOK). From the latter the first specifically anarchist organisation was formed in January 1989 — the Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists (KAS), which today is the largest and most significant anarchist organisation in the country.

KAS saw itself as "an independent political organisation of the non-party type, standing for stateless socialism on the basis of collective/employee property in the

workplaces, industrial and regional self-management, federalism and demilitarisation" (quote from the first congress programme). KAS united a broad spectrum of libertarian tendencies: anarcho-syndicalists, anarcho-communists, individualists, pacifists, socialist federalists, etc. KAS has both individual members and member groups. The organisational structure is basically a loose one, with no binding statutes and no formal membership. There are no fixed membership dues. In this way KAS hopes to avoid 'paper members' and the development of authoritarian tendencies. But this loose structure has seen a range of problems which deserve looking at.

After the first congress in May 1989, two congresses were held in 1990 where substantial disagreements emerged about the direction and future activity of KAS. The

Centre' (IKC) was set up, where information from the union and labour movement is sent and then disseminated in weekly bulletins and on radio by KAS-KOR, KAS's news service. KAS-KOR has a genuinely functional national network of correspondents who report on all that happens and is newsworthy in the labour movement. In practice, KAS-KOR is the news service of the entire Confederation of Labour. In addition, the IKC offers a legal and social counselling service for workers and is setting up an archive on the labour movement. A Workers' University is in the planning stages. Since prioritising its work in the Confederation of Labour, KAS's influence has grown; and this is at least one reason why the Confederation of Labour has not degenerated into an extended arm of pro-capitalist parties or a mouthpiece of the marxists.

## Anarcho-Syndicalism in the USSR Today

second congress of the two, in March 1990, led to the resignation of a sizeable minority, among which was the Leningrad ASSA and a number of anarcho-communists and anarcho-individualists. The bone of contention was the KAS majority's position in favour of market economics; but also the issues of direct action, violence as a method of political struggle, co-operation with the Greens and the left of the Social Democratic Party were hotly debated. The standing of several Moscow KAS members in the Moscow city council elections was also contentious, although now there is unanimous rejection of such participation in future. At the Kronstadt congress in March this year, previous members repeated their heavy criticism of KAS' economic platform. KAS was accused of reformism and 'libertarian liberalism'. KAS members themselves, however, put their internal differences down mainly to pragmatic issues like commitment and level of involvement. Although nobody has a monopoly on the truth, as they put it, many KAS members are said to have a rather vague understanding of anarchism. Good prospects are seen for spreading anarcho-syndicalist ideas and tendencies in the newly-developing labour movement. Here there is no room for anarchist clichés. A congress is being held around the middle of the year to develop an updated KAS platform.

Today KAS encompasses 500 to 1,000 activists in and around sixty cities of the USSR. Syndicalism is increasingly becoming the central ingredient, which comes as no surprise. Neither the ruling Communist Party (be it the conservative or the reformist wing) nor the pro-capitalist democratic parties can offer the population a tangible alternative, and at least a general way out of the catastrophe. The economic collapse which is now occurring looks to be setting the scene for a 'valley of tears' — one of the radical economic reform programmes which less and less people have any faith in. This can be seen from the strike waves which welled up last year and which are now rising higher and higher. One year ago, as a broad labour movement began to take shape, KAS adopted a double strategy. On the one hand, it took part in the activities of the Confederation of Labour, a broad umbrella organisation made up largely of free trade unions, strike committees, workers' clubs and associations, which represented a very broad spectrum of forces all the way from bourgeois and marxist forces to anarcho-syndicalists. At the same time, KAS in Moscow set up a union called 'Resistance' which was to stick to a clearly anarcho-syndicalist model. This has since flourished, which led to KAS taking on a more active role in the Confederation of Labour. In summer 1990, the labour movement 'Information and Consultation

Alongside its syndicalist work, KAS also devotes itself to cultural and economic topics. For example, a range of exhibitions is under preparation on 'The Life and Work of Bakunin', 'Russian Anarchism Past and Present', 'The Labour Movement and Syndicalism in Russia', 'Makhno: Myth and Reality', etc.

Most arguments and certainly the most heated ones are currently on economic policy, and this is likely to be the case for some time to come. That's logical really, due to the catastrophic state of the economy. Any political organisation which goes public gets plugged for its position on the economy above all else. In this context political utopians tend, even in the discussion stage, to recede into the background. Most organisations are united in their rejection of the Communist Party's totalitarian dictatorship. Now the most

important task is getting out of the economic calamity. While it's true that more and more voices in the population are calling for a 'strong man', a saviour, this is not so much the expression of a desire for a new kind of dictatorship as it is of powerlessness in the face of economic chaos, the mafia, corruption and bureaucracy.

KAS's economic platform does not go uncriticised from within, but seems to be in keeping with the opinion of a majority of members. KAS envisages a system of stateless market-socialism with mixed forms of property. It goes by the assumption that the market is the only possible form of economic circulation where the economy does not gain power over people. Economic planning is seen as being directed against the people and producing nothing but bureaucracy. At the same time, KAS strictly rejects both State and private property. Private property even contradicts market principles, says Alexandr Shubin, because it carries in itself a strong tendency towards monopolisation which by its very nature destroys market-economic relations. Instead KAS espouses collective and community property within a system of local self-management. The property of a business should belong solely to the workers of that business. In such a system the circulation of goods should be based on the competition principle, which is indispensable in any functioning economy. Autonomous, self-managed municipalities would run the system of welfare institutions (e.g. hospitals, homes, kindergartens, etc.); they would also be responsible for the socially weaker members of society — the elderly, the sick and children.

A congress has been arranged to flesh out this economic platform in fine detail.

**K. ten Broke** in *Direkte Aktion*, organ of the German anarcho-syndicalist FAU, issue number 87, Hamburg, May-June 1991. Translated by Will Firth.

Here is the address of KAS' International Secretary: **Mike Tsomva, Volzhsky Boulevard 21/62, 109462 Moscow. Telephone 179-1395.**

## Anarchism and Nationalism

In reply to the letter from John L. Broom concerning my contribution on Scottish Nationalism I feel compelled to address his question, am I "opposed to all expressions of nationalism, or just the Scottish variety?"

Since I've lived the majority of my life in Scotland I have only had direct contact with homegrown nationalism. The individuals I have come across in positions of power within the nationalist movement have seemed to me no different from others in positions of power, or those aspiring to it. What's the difference between the rich land-owning SNP MP and the rich land-owning Independent (endorsed by the Tories) prospective MP? A couple of months in the care of Hamish Watt. I will admit there is a difference between the party of the SNP and the large number of people in Scotland with nationalist feelings.

People in Scotland have cause for grievance, as do people the world over, and it is all too easy to blame them on English control, it's the secret scapegoat for all ills. A couple of drinks at New Year and everyone sing 'Flower of Scotland' and mourns the lost golden days and what could have been. Pride in one's culture, fine, but romantic tendencies based on historical selectivity and myth, no way. The swelling of nationalist pride at the drop of a hat I see as no liberating force, it seems like a good safety valve to have in a capitalist system. Many people genuinely feel Scottish independence would cure a multitude of ills, while all that would really change would be the hand on the tiller. The idea of decentralisation tied up in Scottish Nationalism is a positive thing, but why stop the erosion of power at the border, it's too short-sighted. Perhaps if the independent attitude and dislike of outside control that

people inherently feel was focused on a village level then real change would be possible. Naturally that's only if the negative flag-waving xenophobic side was done away with, otherwise all we have is smaller kings and kingdoms.

What of other parts of the world? I support oppressed people but not the nationalist parties. In the Balkan states, yes struggle to be free of the monster of state communism, yes I would stand beside the people in their struggle for that, but wave some dusted-down old flag, no I'm afraid not. In Tibet, yes China is pursuing a policy of what amounts to genocide. I support the Tibetan people in their struggle but I'm uneasy about helping reinstate a living god and his multitude of clerics, no matter how user-friendly he may seem. The Kurds, they have been badly shat on. I would support their struggle to survive, but what type of set-up would exist in a country they formed?

I support people fighting oppression but I stop short of believing that any nationalist based solution of a situation would be a fundamental improvement. Yes, separate Balkan states wouldn't have Russian soldiers killing people, Tibet without Chinese occupation and atrocities could only be a vast improvement. But nationalist solutions would provide only a change in the nationality of those enforcing power and perhaps the tactics.

At a recent demo I declined to buy a copy of *Republican News* from a seller.

"Don't you support the Irish people?", I was asked.

I said, "Yes, but not the IRA".

"It's the same thing", I was told.

I do support Irish people of any faith who

(continued on page 8)

## THE RAVEN

ANARCHIST QUARTERLY

13

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**Anarchism & Nationalism**

(continued from page 7)

genuinely want change, something better than what's on offer, who are suffering injustice, and who don't see doing the same to others as a solution. But I don't support inept sectarian armed struggle funded by extortion and drug dealing perpetuated by hatred. Gangsterism is as much a part of the IRA as Bobby Sands and the hunger strikers incredible strength and sacrifice — it's a job lot, you have to take it all if you wave the flag. Perhaps I could be called naive, what do I expect, this is a war, it's not pretty and it has to be funded. I think however that it's people who support this strain of nationalist struggle and believe that the ends won't reflect the means are naive. Do they really think that a result obtained by these people using these methods would be some new era of justice and equality?

Don't get me wrong, I'm no pacifist, and I don't blindly condemn violence, but I see the monster that it can be.

Nationalism is a parasite feeding off people's genuine problems and feeling of dissatisfaction. And when you're in power nationalism can be appealed to to raise an army and pursue a war.

What with diverting people's dissatisfaction, offering a 'cure for all ills' (without having to remove all ills) and being indispensable to those in power, or seeking it when you want to appeal to God, King and Country, Nationalism is a handy tool.

I support people's struggles against oppression but see the poverty of nationalism. Its appeal lies on a purely emotional level. I don't dispute the wrong of many of the ills fought in its name over the globe, and of some of its successes. It is, however, limited in its vision and stifling in its boundaries of change and dangerous in its small-mindedness.

Flett

P.S. What makes John think I'm a man?

**The Gulf War**

**Interim Balance Sheet of the American Success Story**

**They died...**

According to a Greenpeace report, the first comprehensive survey to be attempted on the human and environmental roll of the Gulf war, they estimate that:

"100,000 to 120,000 Iraqi troops died during the war.  
5,000 to 15,000 Iraqi civilians died during the war.  
2,000 to 5,000 Kuwaitis died during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait and the war.  
20,000 Iraqis died in the month-long civil war set off by the Kurdish and Shi'ite rebellions against President Saddam Hussein.  
15,000 to 30,000 Kurds and other displaced people have died in refugee camps and on the road.  
4,000 to 16,000 Iraqis have died of starvation and disease since the war ended.  
343 allied troops died in combat and accidents; among them 266 Americans, of whom 145 were killed in action.

Greenpeace said that 30,000 more refugees and Iraqis are estimated to have died of disease, lack of medical care, and malnutrition since the report was completed."

**So that these parasites might live...**

"For an elite group of affluent Kuwaitis the return of peace to the emirate means being able to enjoy the trappings of the good life again. Within days of the liberation in March, luxury American and German cars appeared on the roads of Kuwait city and there was a run on hiring domestic servants. Now the thoughts of the wealthy are turning to thoroughbred horses and the reintroduction of equestrian pursuits.

Kuwaiti's exclusive Hunting and Equestrian Club, which until recently was used to house hundreds of detained Palestinians, is slowly being repaired. Scores of wrecked vehicles, military and civilian, which litter the extensive grounds and hundreds of sandbags are being removed by foreign workmen. Lieutenant Fahd al-Ahmed was unable

to repel the invading Iraqis last August from Kuwait, but he did manage to save his string of horses from being pilfered and taken to Baghdad. Yesterday at the club on the outskirts of Kuwait City, he reminisced about how he saved three of his five horses by keeping them in his garden during the seven-month occupation.

"They could only get one meal a day and two of them died of indigestion caused by lack of exercise", he said as stood outside the boxes of two of his horses. 'I did not mind the smell in my house. My horses smell better than Saddam Hussein'.

There are only eight horses in the stables of the club, patronised by members of Kuwaiti's ruling al-Sabah family and its leading merchant families. Before August there were hundreds." (*The Independent*, 25th May)

One can be sure that the losses in horses will soon be made up by purchases at blood-stock sales — all good for business. The human losses can never be replaced so far as their families are concerned.

**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.

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**We are out here  
for them**

With the summer here spare a thought and a little time for those unfortunate enough to be stuck inside in the nice weather, through no choice of their own. The spotlight seems to have been successfully diverted from the poll tax with the talk of £140 off and its imminent scrapping, in two years granted, but time flies, as they say. But for those arrested and imprisoned in the fight against the poll tax and police aggression, the talk of an end to the poll tax must leave a bitter taste. Nearly six hundred people were arrested following the Trafalgar Square riot, following a series of show trials, resulting in extremely harsh sentences, a number of people have found themselves in prison. One person received two years for kicking a police van, another got three years for throwing a 'missile' at the cops.

It goes without saying that all those arrested deserve our support; they have done nothing that, given the right combination of events, we wouldn't have done. They defended themselves, others and the right to protest. One prisoner wrote that "we are no better and no worse than anyone else, we were just unlucky enough to get caught".

A letter or a card can make a great difference, if you're not a great letter writer then a colourful card with a supportive message will show your feelings. Another prisoner I received a reply from has received about three hundred letters and cards — imagine the boost that must give your spirits.

It's encouraging to receive replies to your messages of support but by no means expect them. Prisoners' resources are limited.

A full list of prisoners and their details can be obtained from the Trafalgar Square Defendants Campaign, c/o Haldane Society of Lawyers, 205 Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP.

**People without Freedom**

Dear Editors,

I am writing in response to Ernie Crosswell's letter (1st June) entitled 'People without Freedom'. I am heartened by his commitment to the social and political liberation of the females, but I find offensive his use of reverse sexism in attributing the characteristics of pacifism and selflessness as 'inherent' or 'natural' qualities of the female gender. I find this offensive because once one starts labelling certain qualities as innate, where can the line be drawn? For example, it used to be said that black people have 'natural rhythm', thus drawing attention away from any intellectual abilities or achievements, thereby reinforcing and justifying their marginalisation from the mainstream.

Biological determinism, which it seems that Mr Crosswell supports, has been much maligned in recent social research for its inability to

recognise the importance and influence of wider social constructs such as social and cultural background, geography, class, life chances, etc., which shape our personalities and opportunities.

To get back to my original point, how does being born female instil in me a natural tendency to be selfless or pacifistic or anything similar? I can recall too many occasions when I have behaved in the exact opposite manner. Moreover, if these are natural behaviours why does society employ so much effort to reinforce these feelings? Is it possible we might somehow shed them? If so they can't be innate. If these and other traits of womanhood (i.e. materialism, tenderness) come naturally why is everyone telling me how to be a woman? Surely this socialisation is superfluous?

Janelle Raynor

recruiting. We need to be involved in the class struggle where we live and work (anti poll tax, housing, workplace, anti-racism, etc.) as open anarchists and to have local and national anarchist organisations. As anarchists many of us hide our politics for fear of 'being like the Trots'. It is possible, however, to openly promote anarchist ideas and organisation without being authoritarian, as the struggle against the poll tax shows.

Similarly, large anarchist organisations can avoid being hierarchical: if we don't believe this, how on earth is an anarchist society possible? As Malatesta said, anarchism means more organisation, not less. Local and national organisation and involvement in grassroots struggle are all complimentary. If we refuse to organise for fear of the problems and dangers we condemn ourselves to being an irrelevant minority on the sidelines, and an anarchist society will remain a lovely but impossible dream.

The Anarchist-Communist Federation/Class War merger didn't come off due to the ACF being unhappy about Class War's lack of theory as an organisation, and opposed to the merger from the majority of Class War members. Since then (and partly as a consequence) Class War have been clarifying their ideas and have become more organised. We in the ACF feel that there have been some beneficial ideas for us too: for example we now have a new national structure which came out of the merger discussions.

Andrew  
for National ACF

**News from  
Angel Alley**

The last issue of *Freedom* was dispatched on the Friday through no fault of all concerned at Angel Alley. The Post Office counter clerks at our local office decided to have a strike on the Thursday and because we cannot use other post offices (with a franking machine the mail has to be delivered in bulk to the office where one is registered).

Disaster number two was to discover that some three pages of Colin Ward's new book had 'disappeared', so a 16-page section had to be reprinted. However, we still hope to dispatch all the special offer orders before this issue of *Freedom* reaches you with the news. Three of the remaining titles are ready and two are at the binders as we write.

We are anxious to publish in our *Freedom Press anarchist discussion series* a pamphlet-booklet on economics which should, among other things, explain capitalist economics, finance and existing alternatives — e.g. the system that has operated so far in Soviet Russia, or the Social Credit ideas of Major Douglas as applied in Alberta, Canada — and then outline an anarchist approach to economics. Such a project will require considerable research and thanks to a generous friend of Freedom Press we can offer some financial assistance to the person selected to undertake this research. We are sure that any interested comrade will already have ideas on the subject

and could without too much trouble let us have a synopsis of what he or she has in mind.

With the rise of religious fundamentalism throughout the world we feel that Freedom Press should published a detailed study of this dangerous phenomenon. Again, we invite interested readers to get in touch, and again we can offer some financial assistance with the research work that such a study would entail.

Our thanks to the friends who have contributed to our funds. In spite of the recession and growing unemployment which must hit our readers no less than the rest of the under £400 a weekers, donations are only £140 down on 1990. Last year the Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund at the end of May was £605 and the Overheads Fund £408.

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Dossenheim RS £9, Beckenham DP £20.

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**Letters**

**Anarchism &  
Organisation**

Dear Freedom,  
Johnny Yen's article in the 6th April issue suggested that there is necessarily a conflict between recruiting people to national anarchist organisations and being involved in the class struggle. This is only the case if a disproportionate amount of time and effort is spent

**Midlands  
Anarchist Forum**

Dear Freedom,

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 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



## MEETINGS

### Anarchist Forum

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

#### 1991 SEASON OF MEETINGS

**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).

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