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“It is preoccupation with possession more than anything else that prevents men from living freely and nobly.”
Bertrand Russell

Thought for the ‘Silly Season’ DON’T TRUST THE ‘EXPERTS’

One feels that in the affluent capitalist world of the G7 the only growing industry is that of experts. As fewer and fewer people dirty their hands producing the food we eat more and more experts and consultants (employed by the ICIs and Fisons, the machine manufacturers and the landowners’ agents) descend on the remaining farmers ‘advising’/‘instructing’ them what to grow and how, to the very last detail. And of course the advice/orders are influenced by the vested interests of those giving the advice or their masters. This approach applies to all sections of industry and now even with the public services.

Let’s face up to it, with some honourable exceptions, all this growing industry of expertise is a racket! Unfortunately the media are the worst offenders and have succeeded in brainwashing the

public with their own experts and ‘authoritative’ polls, into accepting that a monopoly of the ‘true facts’ are held by an elite who also know all the answers. In our so-called democracy we only have a capitalist national press just as in the USSR they only had a Communist Party press. We call ours a *free* press and that of the USSR *unfree*. For socialists and anarchists they are both unfree. If we overlook our mass circulation tabloids (which also have their ‘experts’ but on sex problems rather than economics) the so-called serious

broadsheets all have their economics correspondent/editor, their political commentators, their industrial editors and of course the arts have their pontificators. They are all presented to us, the serious reading public, as *experts*. And last, but not least, we have the *A*experts *par excellence*, our politicians. They are modest experts in that they surround themselves with the permanent experts in the civil service, and a few freelance economists, journalists, business tycoons, speech writers, make-up
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Does the USA want peace in the Middle East?

I

In order to justify a massive bombardment of Iraq and Kuwait with untold casualties (how many will never be known — surely history will refer to it as the American holocaust?) the US are not only exploiting the fact that Iraq has vast hordes of chemical and other warheads (one wonders who supplied such lethal weapons) but are also vainly attempting to bring about a peace conference in the Middle East. The fly in the ointment every time is Israel’s Prime Minister Shamir who says he is willing to take part in talks but refuses to sit in the same room with a representative of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) for the West Bank and Gaza Strip and equally denies the right of any Palestinian
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BIG DEAL!

The Government’s Citizen’s Charter (costing £8 million and paid for by the taxpayer) is a pathetic propaganda exercise for the Tories, and the critics could well ask how it is that it has taken twelve years to produce, just in time for the next elections! It might be said that Major is not Thatcher. But the Charter is so typically a *consumerist* document and Mrs Thatcher epitomised the consumerist, confrontational society. Mr Major is also committed to the privatisation of all the public services. Various ministers have reiterated that railways, postal services and the mines will be privatised at the earliest possible moment, thereby clearly indicating that the Charter is a purely political document quite unconcerned with the practical consequences of such actions.

Anarchists do not see nationalisation as a panacea or as the only alternative to privatisation.* But we
*See the following Freedom Press publications: *Neither Nationalisation nor Privatisation*, selections from *Freedom* 1945-50, 81 pages, £1.95. *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy*, 142 pages, £2.00. *Why Work? Arguments for the Leisure Society*, 210 pages, £4.50.

have no hesitation in saying that to privatise public transport and postal services, with all their faults, is the equivalent of jumping out of the frying pan into the fire. As we have repeatedly pointed out, the nationalised industries were never really nationalised in that they were never run by the people who worked in them. The former bosses became the new management and the industries were expected to operate as profitable enterprises, not as public services. We are now seeing, for instance, the Railways Board chairman saying that they need £10,000 million to modernise the network. He talks of 158mph inter-city services. This is another example of costly, inefficient operations which only benefit the rich whose time is apparently so valuable. This is the business approach: competing with the airlines. But public transport is essentially providing local services which link to the mainlines. As for the postal services, we surely had an example of what private enterprise could do years ago, when the postal workers were on strike for better pay. The same right wing Freedom Association now trying to
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Thought for the 'Silly Season'

DON'T TRUST THE 'EXPERTS'

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experts, speech therapists, fashion experts (after all, politicians' main public exposure nowadays is on television and your hair-do, dress, etc., are essential PR attributes). Remember Michael Foot's image in anorak and flowing white mane at the Cenotaph, of all places, lost him thousands of votes say the 'experts'. All brainwashing balderdash for which the media are responsible.

Let us start with government ministers (and the shadow opposition). Nowadays most of them are either lawyers or economists which it might be argued is an excellent training for twisting the facts.

We have had in the past three weeks perhaps the perfect example of the art in twisting the facts both from the politicians and the experts in the media.

The official figures for the June balance of payments showed a swing by over £500 million compared with May to a slight surplus of £23 million — the first since February 1987. The right wing *Independent* (23rd July) whose economic correspondent we quote refers to:

Reflecting factors like weak home demand and a long term improvement in exports of Japanese cars made in Britain, manufacturing recorded a £117 million surplus — the first since February 1984.

The figures also disclosed that for the second time this year Britain chalked up a small surplus in trade with the European Community.

And on another Business & City page of *The Independent* the same day another expert, Hamish McRae, makes sure in his opening paragraph (rather like the pollsters and the weather experts) that one cannot be sure of one month's figures — it can be "a deeply misleading pointer to the underlying trend".

But then the poor man sticks out his neck and declares:

But even allowing for the background noise in the numbers, on the face of it the current account figures seem to signal that the balance of payments problem is over, while the retail sales figures signal that the recession is over. The first conclusion is probably right and the second conclusion is probably wrong.

All the other experts on the serious press reported this surplus in the balance of payments without question, though with some surprise *The Financial Times* thought it "remarkable and unexpected". It was a "surprise" for *The Daily Telegraph* and "far better than expected" for *The Times* and *The Guardian*. But it was left to the editorial writer of *The New Statesman & Society* (26th July) to drop a bomb on the complacent economic hacks (experts) on the dailies. To quote:

What none of the quality financial

commentators cottoned on to was the fact that the trade figures would still be in substantial deficit were it not for Britain's mercenaries' endeavours during the Gulf war.

In other words, the current quarter's 'invisible' earnings include £1,200 million in contributions from Germany, Japan and the Gulf States for Britain's mercenary forces' activities. And as *The New Statesman & Society* puts it:

For June, that adds up to a hidden £400 million contribution to the trade balance — or the difference between £23 million surplus and a £377 million deficit. War has been good for the balance of payments.

But for *The New Statesman & Society* looking at the small print the expert economic hacks would have got away with it. *The Guardian's* Victor Keegan in his 'Notebook' acknowledges *The New Statesman & Society's* researchers (not as generously as he should have) but otherwise no correction has been made by the dailies or Sundays. So much for the integrity of these experts.

Another characteristic of the experts is that they are all so well informed that they can leak the news. *The Independent* on Sunday (28th July) now produced by the same staff as the daily (for reasons of economy) splashed over its business supplement:

The car industry had exported a "record" number in June (45% more than a year ago, said *The Independent* on Sunday, 28th July). By Monday it was being pointed out that this was just an exceptional month, that the Germans were having trouble with their market and this was a one-off. And to add to the gloom was the forecast by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders that it was expected that another 30,000 jobs would go in the next twelve months bringing the total for the two year period ending next summer to 70,000.

What is especially alarming for the white-collar employees and professionals is that unemployment is now hitting them hardest:

The human cost of recession in Britain's wealthiest region was revealed today as the Employment Department announced that 300,000 people in London and the South East have lost their jobs in the last 15 months ...

But nowhere has been harder hit than London and the commuter belt where unemployment had leapt by a record 88% since March 1990. There are now 639,000 people out of work in the South-East — up more than 25,000 on the May figure. Of the 299,600 who have joined the dole queues since the figures started to rise, almost 137,000 were in London. (*The Evening Standard*, 18th July)

And unlike the unemployed manual worker who can always make a few pounds as a *bricoleur* (see *The*

depends on means, and most of the world's people haven't the means to buy all the 'goodies' that the consumerist society produces (and that the third world is producing more and more of but not being able to afford) the only salvation for capitalism is to make some gestures for re-distribution of wealth towards the have-nots. Up to now every government, Tory or Labour, has managed willy-nilly to ensure that the rich have got richer and the rest poorer. The present government in its twelve years has beaten all records for the number of homeless, unemployed and social security claimants, not to mention record 'crimes' against property — a sure indication of real poverty (in spite of treating the forces of law and order most generously).

A future Labour government promises a minimum wage for the low paid and to make the rich pay an extra 10% on their ill-gotten gains as well as raising the limit on National Insurance. These are peanuts and they know it.

The politicians — all of them — are out for votes and power at any price. The bosses — the CBI — are concerned with profits. Their gloomy quarterly forecast ends with the expected demand for at least a 1% reduction in interest rates. As *Freedom* has pointed out time and time again, all this will do is increase their profits. It will not influence investment in industry, nor in more jobs. To give an example: ICI have announced higher than anticipated profits, of £507 million. In the same breath they are proposing to axe another four to five thousand jobs in addition to the ten thousand already axed in the past twelve months. Needless to say the top executives get their salary increases above the inflation rate as well as bonuses even on trading results which might have been worse!

As anarchists we have no illusions that capitalism will stop seeing profit as its guiding star. Neither do we have illusions that starry-eyed socialists (most of them with large incomes) will somehow tame the beast, or that the rich will willingly give up their privileges and wealth for the common good. Alas, if we do want to change society we must be prepared for struggle and sacrifice. The underprivileged third world is setting the example without much help from us in the West.

We seem to have lost the power to protest in depth. 100,000 people braved the rain in Hyde Park to hear (over loudspeakers) and see (on video screens) the tenor Pavarotti, yet with three million unemployed there has not yet been one mass demonstration against the iniquities of capitalism. When will we wake up?



BIG DEAL!

(continued from page 1)

break the anti poll tax MP's protest were organising a private service with disastrous results and charging about £2 a letter — some of which were never delivered anyway!

The Government's Citizen's Charter seeks to get efficiency and service with a smile by waving the big stick. We anarchists think that you will only get good service by giving complete responsibility to those who operate these services. It may take a little time for it to work, but if you know that you are directly responsible for the service you are providing, surely only then can you criticise others who are providing the services you are enjoying if they don't come up to expectations. Is that not common sense?

Unfortunately for *The Independent* on Sunday the CBI's quarterly survey of industrial trends according to *The Guardian* the next day (29th July) was all doom and gloom.

Meanwhile *The Sunday Telegraph* (28th July) in its City & Business supplement has as its main headline: "UK on the Up-Turn — Official"

But who takes seriously the utterances of the politicians — in particular government ministers? A "great improvement" in the economy in the second half of the year was predicted by the Prime Minister (*The Guardian*, 20th July). A week or so later the Chancellor Norman Lamont claimed "dramatic progress" in cutting inflation but further dampened hopes of a sudden end to the economic recession (*The Guardian*, 29th July).

Then we had more "sensational" news.

Employment Question by Denis Pym, Freedom Press, £2), what can unemployed bank or insurance company employees from managers downwards, or shop assistants hope to find to tide them over until their skills are again in demand? As all white collar jobs are being mechanised and computerised (even management is being taken over by computers) unemployment in this sector, in our opinion, will continue to increase. Only last month IBM, the world's largest computer company, announced that it was shedding 17,000 jobs, presumably many of the jobs being taken over by more sophisticated computers?

In our modest opinion (since we do not presume to be experts in capitalist economics — our only interest being to abolish the system) the recession will not 'bottom out' in the near future for one simple reason: that the existing industrial productive capacity exceeds demand. Since 'demand' in a capitalist world

On Voting



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THE FACTORY AND BEYOND

Spain – Corruption and Pistoleros

Spain is a nation blessed with one King, one President, a Vice-President and 'muchas lotterias'.

If one were disposed to the 'accident theory of history', one might trace the current political crisis in Spain back to a traffic jam which occurred at the Portuguese frontier near the Spanish town of Ayamonte at the end of the Easter holidays in 1988. On that day the then Vice-President of Spain was rushing back from his vacation to go to a bullfight in Seville. He was in such a rush that he tried to jump the queue at the frontier and was met with a torrent of abuse from the mainly Spanish drivers at the front of the queue.

Alfonso Guerra, the then Vice-President, solved this crisis by racing back into the Portuguese interior, and acquiring the use of a Spanish military jet to fly him to Seville in time for the bullfight.

That may well have been that had the Spanish television network not been alerted. Bulletins of the incident were flashed all over Spain, and both the Spanish and international press reported the affair. At that time a lady called Pilar Miro was head of the Spanish television network. She had previously produced some low grade films but her chief qualification for the job seems to have been that she was a personal pal of the Socialist President of Spain, Felipe Gonzalez.

In the months which followed the Guerristas (the name for Alfonso Guerra's supporters in the Socialist Party) fumed on about Ms Miro's exposure of Alfonso's traffic jam ordeal. Around November 1988 they hit lucky when evidence of her 'misappropriation' of expenses became public. She had, it seems, built up a vast wardrobe, acquired a collection of South African Kruger Rands, and like a good socialist pampered herself, all on public funds. She protested, of course, that all this

was necessary for a woman in her position to keep up appearances. But to no avail — even her friendship with the Spanish President could not save her and she left her job at TVE.

The Guerristas had drawn blood against a friend of Felipe!

At the end of 1989 another scandal began to hit the headlines. Juan Guerra, the brother of the Vice-President Alfonso Guerra, had gone from rags to riches during the lifetime of the Spanish Socialist Government. Somehow 'get rich quick' Juan had left the dole queue in Seville in 1982 to become a millionaire owner of farms, villas, town houses and businesses before the end of the decade.

This affair became known as the 'Guerra case' and was discussed in this column last year. Phrases like "enchuffisimo" and "trafficante en influencia" were thrown around, roughly meaning cronyism and nepotism. This gave rise to concerned editorials in *El Pais* about the danger of the Spanish public coming to see corruption as a way of life in Spain.

Eventually a disgruntled Alfonso Guerra had to leave office tainted by the row surrounding his brother. The "Gonzalez-Guerra tandem is broken" said one leading socialist recently, and with it the model of political power portrayed by the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) up until now. One old Sevillian socialist told the journal *Intervili*: "I always feared that one day Felipe and Guerra would split. Guerra is able to start a battle in the heart

of the [socialist] party against Felipe. Such a struggle would be dangerous and could be prejudicial to the PSOE".

Now other scandals surrounding the financial dealings of prominent members of the Spanish Socialist Party are surfacing. The societies 'Filesa' and 'Time Export', it seems, have been used by the Socialist Party to illegally extract money from various private companies. Some socialists see the 'caso Filesa', as it has been called, as a campaign against Alfonso Guerra and his supporters.

Things have now reached such a pitch that in a speech last month in Seville the King of Spain, Don Juan Carlos, felt able to allude generally to the problem of eliminating corruption from Spanish political life. The same tune was played by Ricardo Peralta of the United Leftist Party (yesterday's communists) who said: "Democracy is incompatible with corruption", and added that he welcomed the comments of the King.

The curious thing is that when one asks the man (and I'd better say woman) in the street in Spain: "What's the matter with the CNT?" he will tell you that the anarcho-syndicalist union is known to be against the King — against the monarchy. Now surveys tell us that the vast majority of Spaniards don't even read one book a year, and only occasionally read a newspaper, but they believe the King saved Spain from military rule at the beginning of the 1980s, while many frightened trade unionists were burning their union cards.

Many Spaniards probably believe the King to be sincere in his concern about corruption in the political life of Spain.

How many, I wonder, know of the CNT attitude to corruption? Next year the IWA/AIT Congress (anarcho-syndicalist international) is to be held in Seville to coincide with Expo — the international trade fair. Let us hope they put over a clear alternative to the party politicians.

State pistoleros

How best does a government go about eliminating its enemies?

Does it form a specialist body like the SAS, directly employed by the State, or is a more privatised model preferable?

While the Government of Great Britain has generally used state controlled operatives, the Spanish Government in dealing with Basque terrorism seems to have employed freelancers. The case against the policemen Amedo and Dominguez is now proceeding. Evidence so far seems to show that the police hired members of a group of 'anti-terrorists', labelled the GAL, to go around killing suspected Basque terrorists in Spain, the Basque country and in France.

The money for this venture came out of a special government 'reserve fund'. Amedo and Dominguez seem to have been the paymasters in the operation.

How high the responsibility for the hiring of these freelance pistoleros, and how rigorous the control, is not clear. But *El Pais* reports that the more senior police officers involved have been stricken with a bout of forgetfulness when under cross-examination, and the Minister concerned at the time of the killings has been less than helpful in explaining how his department came to employ a gang of mercenaries.

Mack-the-Knife

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representative from East Jerusalem to attend. There is no misunderstanding of Shamir and the Likud Party's position: all the Occupied Territories are part and parcel of Israel. The Golan Heights (part of Syria) would seem to be almost negotiable. And meanwhile Israel still occupies a part of Lebanon.

US representative Baker has gone to and fro visiting all the Arab states and Israel at least five times. Surely the Bush administration if they really want a solution could bring one about in 24 hours by announcing that the billions of dollars that they go on pouring into Israel to maintain this outpost of American imperialism will be stopped. It is as simple as that.

The Americans are "very concerned" about the chemical, nuclear, biological weapons (or potential weapons) the Iraqis possess. At the end of their hundred hour genocide attack on Iraq they declared that there should be no nuclear weapons in the Middle East. We have not yet heard a word from the White House that Israel should also disclose what nuclear weapons it possesses.

Surely there should be worldwide protest against the United States of continued financing Israel's war machine

Does the USA want Peace in the Middle East? – 2

if one really can accept the sincerity of their claim that they are seeking peace in the Middle East.

Looking up the Freedom Press Booklet *British Imperialism and the Palestine Crisis* in the light of the Middle East peace conference, I also found among my press cuttings an article written by Gerald Kaufman (in the magazine *Time and Tide*, summer 1984) two years after the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon. Titled 'The Death of Liberal Israel', it gives the views of the man who was then in the Labour Party Shadow Cabinet and is now Shadow Foreign Secretary, written at a time when, as he says, "the United States, Israel's one consistent and reliable supporter, maintained that support for military and political reasons but, for the first time, openly criticised the Israeli government and sometimes seemed to regard it as a political albatross round its neck".

Israel was, he tells us, the creation of Zionists

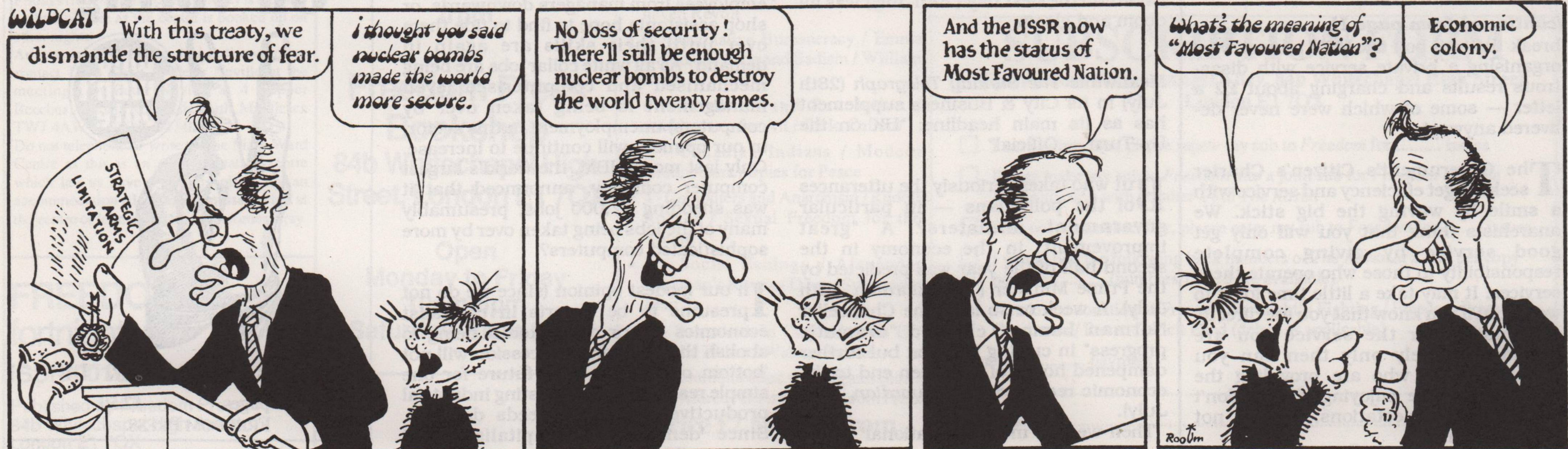
who were "often socialists, always idealists" and "middle class intellectuals" — it was these "sophisticated, Western Jews who won independence ...". They were joined by a population of Jews from the Levant, "uneducated", and forming a "deprived and discontented urban proletariat" — the Sephardic Jews. The ex-terrorist Menachem Begin came to power in the general election of 1977 by winning the votes of a significant proportion of this population for his right-wing Likud Party; not a majority, but because the system of proportional representation gave him enough seats to form, along with small groups of religious fanatics, an anti-Labour coalition who brought in "restrictions on the liberal cultural values" such as freedom of the press, radio and television.

The Jewish community became divided among itself, to the extent that young men who had voluntarily enlisted in the Israeli Defence Force (as the army is known) resisted being sent to the Lebanon and Jews abroad,

especially in the USA, could no longer support the actions of the Israeli Government. Kaufman's comment was that "the basic values that motivated the founders of Israel can once more be firmly established if those who still believe in them have the courage to stand up and advocate them". All Israel needs, it would seem, is a return to a Labour Government; and thus the wars of 1948, 1957, 1967 and 1973 (the War of Independence, the Sinai War, the Six Days War and the Yom Kippur War) can all be justified as being in the self-defence of a nation state. But how could Kaufman do otherwise? They all took place under a Labour Government run by "middle class intellectuals".

A reading of *British Imperialism and the Palestine Crisis* will show that this was not the position at all. The state of Israel was not the creation of idealists or "middle class intellectuals" but the result of British imperialism, and the present day situation is not a deviation from the ideals of the founders but an inevitable consequence of the new state of Israel.

I cannot do better in the space available here than quote Andrew Hedgecock's fuller review (in *The Raven* number 9): "In 1938 Reginald (continued on page 4)



NORTHERN IRELAND: AFTER BROOKE

In his speech to the House (3rd July) announcing the end of his talks, Mr Brooke said: "It is sensible to wait a few weeks before taking any steps in the direction of fresh talks, but of course I shall listen closely for any rustling in the undergrowth".

Michael Latham MP then asked him: "Can the Minister explain to the House, because some of us are feeling exasperated as we listen, why the politicians locally just cannot go on talking?" To this the Minister made no reply.

Why just 'the politicians'? Are not the troubles of Northern Ireland those of all its citizens? Are they not shared also by the people to whom Dublin, London and Brussels are answerable? As Robin Wilson has put it: "is it not time for the small 'p' politics of civil society to raise its ambitions — to exert direct impact on the big 'P' of the political arena?" And as Paul Smith has put it in *Peace by Peace*: "If anything genuine is to come out of this talks process, it will come from the real empowerment of the people of Northern Ireland".

But how do 'the people' find their voice? There is an interesting precedent. Back in 1984 when the Group of Seven (the big industrial powers) were about to meet for one of their summits which happened to be in London, a group of counter-economists including James Robertson, Paul Elkins and Jonathan Porritt, called a parallel The Other Economic Summit (TOES) to put an alternative case. They are still doing it, with an excellent track record. Can we launch 'The Other Northern Ireland Talks'?

In the present case the groundswell is in Northern Ireland itself where the forms of small 'p' association are into three figures — the latest including The Peace Train, Families Against Intimidation and Terror, and New Consensus.

The EC dimension

Richard Kearney of Trinity College, Dublin, has written an open letter to Mr Delors of the Commission of the EC: "Might I suggest that the time is ripe to consult with political leaders in

(continued from page 3)

Reynolds had expressed the hope that it was not too late for the Jewish and Arab communities to achieve self-determination by abandoning Zionism and Arab nationalism in favour of working together to push out British imperialists, Arab feudal landlords and Jewish capitalists. Sadly, there was little support for a libertarian international approach at the time. The Labour Party had exhibited its traditional hypocrisy on the question of imperialism by unanimously supporting the Palestine Mandate of 1936, on the basis that the country was the object of 'rival imperialist ambitions' ..."

The editor's introduction and the 'Postscript on the Intifada' give pointers towards some sort of hope for the future. The editorial shows how "these new imperialists have actually retained the laws used by the British in the '30s for ordering the deportations of militant Palestinians ..." "... The horrors authorised

Belfast, London and Dublin in order to prepare resolutions on the Ulster question for a future inter-governmental conference on European union? Could not such a European move supplement and subsume the existing Anglo-Irish initiative? Is there not a compelling logic to the notion of Ulster as a quasi-autonomous region relating, inter-dependently, to other regions on the island of Ireland, the archipelago of Britain and the continent of Europe." (*Letters from a New Island*)

The EC stands well in Dublin and Belfast. It is possible that it might make all the difference. It calls for close consideration.

Violence and intimidation

But the nettle has yet to be grasped. *The key to the future lies in the killing and the stopping of it.* But from this subject Mr Brooke averted his eyes. "We were not engaged in a peace conference". Why not? His trouble was that for all his immense diligence he met the wrong people and left out the essential subject.

Sheer human need means that the first imperative has to be a ceasefire that sticks and is underwritten by a security settlement that lasts, leading into a new constitutional settlement. Any attempt to do it the other way round will fail. Only action, only results will carry conviction. The pieces of paper can come later.

Unhappily it is plain enough that Northern Ireland is not yet ready for a settlement. Firstly it has to produce a new leadership and secondly (or at the same time) do something about the hatred, the fear and the bigotry that poison both sides. And that change has to come from below and within, albeit inspired by a new visionary leadership. No ceasefire, no settlement will stick until the people want it and demand it. No one can say when that will be. It may depend upon the women, Ulster's response to the election of Mary Robinson.

So can we look the matter of violence firmly in the eye? It arises out of the constant presence on the streets of the paramilitaries, the army, the UDR and

and even encouraged by the various governments (whether right or left, Likud or Labour), armed and subsidised by USA governments from 1948 to 1983 have been thoroughly researched by Noam Chomsky in *The Fateful Triangle*" (Black Rose Books, £8.95 post free from Freedom Press).

Israel's leaders "are now old and tired ... by contrast the new Palestinian resistance is young, fearless, informed, and materially with nothing to lose and everything to gain, is proving more than a match for Israeli politicians grown flabby with power (USA guaranteed) and past military successes ... Time is always on the side of the oppressed." (*British Imperialism and the Palestine Crisis*).

"To be the governing group in a Jewish state", wrote the Labour Party's Gerald Kaufman, "it is not absolutely necessary to enjoy Mendelssohn's violin concerto in the Mann auditorium in Tel Aviv or (as Ben-Gurion did) hasten to Blackwell's bookshop in Oxford when visiting Britain. Israel has the potential to be a tough democracy to find its own place in the world, a place that may not be envisaged by Weizmann or Ben-Gurion, but need not be the sour, bitter, Gentile-hating Arab-despising, inward-looking country that Begin attempted to fashion in his own image."

Talking of Ben-Gurion, let me conclude with this extract from *Freedom* (1949): "A press report states that an Arab Communist member of Israel's Knesset protested against the searches and evictions, describing the operation as 'undemocratic'. Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion 'turned upon him in full fury' and 'accused the Arab legislator of being a former ally of Haj Amin el Husseini, ex-Mufti of Jerusalem and thus a secret agitator against Israel. He asserted that Israel was surrounded by enemies and the infiltration served to undermine the security of the state. In the midst of his angry outburst, he accused the Cominform of 'slandering' the Israel government."

How familiar is this kind of language! When one has no answer one attacks the person or group of persons asking the question, and in working up personal hatred of those people

the armed police in a state of 'war' — the word used by the British Prime Minister in the summer of 1990.

What of the army? According to the media the army went to Northern Ireland in 1969. This is nonsense. The army has always been in Northern Ireland, but tucked away in the countryside, just as it is in Britain on Salisbury Plain. It came on the streets in '69 — that is something else. It can go back to the countryside.

What of the IRA? Back in 1962 it packed up, dissolved its military structure and buried its arms and ammunition until the Provos emerged in 1969 in the face of extreme provocation.

What of the Unionist paramilitaries? In the current troubles they were the ones that started it. The UVF and the Ulster Protestant Volunteers were both founded in 1966. The first death was on 7th May 1966 when the UVF tried to firebomb a Catholic bar and missed. The bomb went through the window of the house next door and Mrs Martha Gould, a Protestant, was burned to death.

What we know for certain is that the overwhelming majority of people in Northern Ireland want the violence and intimidation to stop. The important fact is the human one. But there are others. Violence cuts investment, destroys tourism and underwrites unemployment. It costs the British taxpayer £4 billion a year which could be much better spent elsewhere. It makes the security services the biggest single employer in Northern Ireland — what a confession of failure!

A peace package

1. As the generals have repeatedly told us, neither side is going to win — there has to be a political settlement. It is on the cards that the IRA will eventually come round to it. Their present fortunes and those of Sinn Fein are not good. Sinn Fein is in decline, its vote fallen from over 100,000 to 68,000. They face open hostility from all sides in the Republic. They can no longer collect in the pubs of Dublin. Sooner or later they will want out, but not by way of capitulation. Faces will have to be saved on all sides.

Nothing will be done in a hurry. The object is self-evident: *the agreed removal of all armed men from the streets of Northern Ireland*, which simply

means the condition we enjoy in the rest of the UK. There is nothing spectacular about that. All we are asking for is the commonplace. Yet people's perceptions are so shot to pieces that this simple proposition is regarded as fantastic and impossible! And that means time and groundwork. Public opinion has to come round to an entirely new view of the future — only possible if both communities mobilise their full PR strength round the new goal. Further it will take a long time to get round to the idea of a new unarmed police force, recruited, trained and ready to take over on the streets — backed by both communities. It may take five to ten years but political miracles began in 1989 so who knows? What is clear is that if nothing imaginative is done and a solution required to await long suffering, it might take twenty, thirty or even forty years. Is it seriously suggested that we can put up with that?

2. Some very pointed "rustling in the undergrowth". The Other Northern Ireland Talks are already happening in Northern Ireland, the Republic, Britain and the EC — but informally. Can we raise the stakes. Will people whose voices cannot be ignored take the initiative? It is not great numbers we want — but insight, imagination, vision — locating the questions, working out the answers, getting into the action.

3. The amendment of Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution — the best possible use of the Single European Act to make the disappearance of the economic boundary an occasion for greatly improved North-South relations.

4. A new sense that the EC prospect means that both unionism and nationalism can be subsumed into something that transcends them both — a common Euro-regional identity that they can share and yet remain autonomous.

The strange thing about the talks is that they collapsed among a lot of goodwill. *Hansard* makes very strange reading. We are into a creative hiatus. The timing for new thinking is now. These moments don't last. New Consensus and the Peace Train, a London-Dublin-Belfast tripos, could be pushing at an open door. But this is for everybody.

Peter Cadogan

US Policy in the Middle East - 3

We should all take time out to congratulate the UN (read US) coalition for bringing stability, peace and freedom to the Middle East. Yes, thank you Bush, Major, et al. You have destroyed Iraq's infrastructure bringing disease and starvation; you have brought civil war in Iraq, you have idly watched the unleashing of massacres, torture and repression on Shi'ites, Kurds and Iraqis generally; you have aided the murder of Palestinians in Kuwait; you have given back to the Kuwaitis a feudal dictator; you have further armed a whole region of despotic, power-mad leaders; Palestine is still occupied and Lebanon is still in chaos. This, they tell us, is a victory!

The US-led war in the Gulf it now seems was nothing more than a wrist-slapping exercise. The bad boy Saddam, having stepped out of line (or was he pushed?) had to be taught a lesson. Teaching a lesson US-style involves obliterating a country and killing hundreds of thousands of people who have the misfortune of being subjugated to the miscreants rule. It is obvious that this war was never anything to do with getting Saddam. He is still very much in control while several hundred thousand paid the price of his adventurism with their lives. Now while the US power barons speculate where to put their permanent base in the Middle East and how much they will pay for their oil, Saddam is restamping his authority.

Following the Iraqi defeat and Bush's hints of support, Shi'ite rebels in the South and Kurdish rebels in the North rose against the ruling Ba'athist Party. The Shi'ites were supplied by the Iranians who said very little publicly, not wanting to dampen their improving friendship with the Iraqi Ba'athists. Kurdish rebels were, not surprisingly, left to fight

one hopes that the main issue will have been forgotten. How reminiscent of Hitler when he denounced 'international Jewry' or Stalin the 'Trotsky-Fascists'.

Can we learn a lesson from all this? If we do, and act accordingly, then a step has been made towards the realisation of a society without rulers."

Charles Crute

their own battles. Some supplies did come from Turkish Kurds.

Obviously the US Government is not going to support an independent Kurdistan as it would not only mean taking a portion of Iraq but also pieces of Turkey (NATO members), Syria (new found ally) and Iran (working together on this one). The Kurds were inevitably defeated.

By not involving themselves in the Kurdish and Shi'ite uprisings, the US allowed the Iraqi military to regain its 'dignity' in the inevitable massacre which followed the unleashing of their superior weaponry. Before we know it sanctions will be gone, the rulers will be the best of chums again and the capitalists will be getting fat on the profits of rebuilding and rearming the countries they so recently destroyed.

As for the Iraqi people, they are taking cover as the Ba'athists seek revenge. Thousands of Kurds sit on the Turkish border starving and sick, the Turkish government having closed the borders. They are more concerned with avoiding insurrection within their own Kurdish population than with starving people fleeing an avenging army. Despite Kurdish rebels laying down their weapons, the Turkish government has decided it is better to be safe and sorry! let's face it, you have to be desperate to seek sanctuary in a country with a human rights record like Turkey's. Turkish Kurds have long suffered at their hands, along with opposition groups and other undesirables.

But Kurdistan is no solution! Home grown rulers are no better than occupying ones, as the people of Pakistan, Bangladesh and dozens of other countries will testify. Why fight for someone else's power? Inevitably the rulers of a newly formed Kurdistan would find a new minority to oppress, dividing the people and making their exploitation all the easier. Nothing would have changed.

The power of the Kurds lies in their self-organisation, the only true liberation. They only need to look around to see the Palestinians, Iraqis, Kuwaitis, Saudis and all the rest of the peoples of the Middle East and the world who are striving for freedom. (Continued against their

(continued on page 7)

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The Lair of the White Worm
by Bram Stoker
published by Brandon, price £4.99

An unfortunate individual placed his palsied hand upon my typing arm and demanded to know what a novel by Bram Stoker had to do with the art dealing elite of London's Bond Street area and I struck the old man, sneering that I did not know. Yet in the end their one unity is violent and avoidable death. Bram Stoker, as you all know, was the author of the classic Gothic horror novel *Dracula* that though written in 1897 has never been out of print or cinema and many a happy ham has flapped across the stage or screen to sink his fangs into some panting female's lily-white neck. I personally am a bosom gourmet but let that pass. That Stoker's *Dracula* novel succeeded was that he milked the market of horror situations and like Dickens he produced an interweaving soap opera plot that alibied much padding and journalese bad writing. For Stoker it was strictly a one-off yet Brandon the publishers are to be congratulated in surfacing Stoker's next stab, non-fang-wise, at the Gothic horror with his *The Lair of the White Worm*. It is, I believe, Stoker's last novel dredged up from the hell of the unconscious in 1911 and it does not nor could not equal good old Fang the late night Freedom Fighter from Transylvania. For those among us involved in higher thoughts who do not under any circumstances read Stoker or the daily *Sun* newspaper one can simply explain that a decent type inherits a large slab of England but finds himself the victim of two land-owning Victorian cads male/female and she who holds an aristocratic title is a huge white worm and a vampire as any member of the Militant Left would have known. Stoker left *Dracula*, literally, for the birds cloudwise for with the female worm, after the reported minor carnage of the colonial wars, Bram Stoker began to

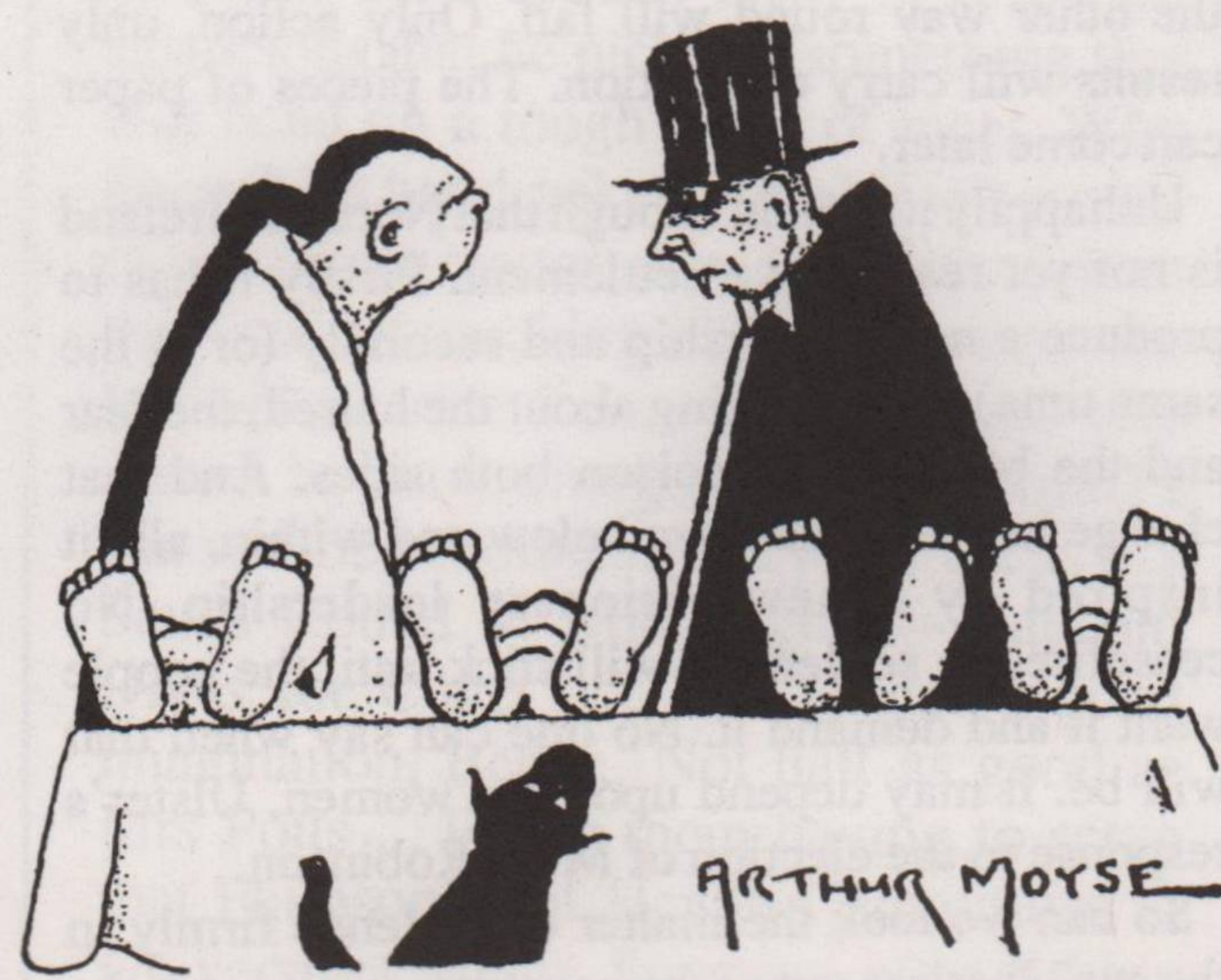
Pass the Hemlock, Honey

rationalise his subject matters and the worm was white because of the china clay in the soil that she crawls through and her Shakespearian exits and her entrances are performed from a bore hole in the cellar of her own wee abode. It was left to the Viennese to explain Count Dracula's non-vegetarian habit and Lady Arabella, the White Worm's phallus-style worming among the Wedgewood white clay deposits but it was the free market Americans who, through their adult comics, turned *Dracula*, the Worm, Spiderman and Superman, etc., into the defenders of the western world's version of a free society suck suck sliver sliver. All art is propaganda for it is a reflection of one's conception of a society that was, that is or that one conceives of and all we can ask of the viewer, the reader or the listener is that our propaganda shall be accepted as our propaganda and it shall always be honest, humorous and valid. The Americans rejected all three and gave their answers in mythological horrors as the only salvation for a solvable problem.

But for me horror stalks the Bond Street art area when the news was brought to me by weeping messengers that bodies were hitting the ground in the art world faster than an English Test Team's wickets. Gavin, who once owned the Piccadilly Clarendon Gallery, took a high glass of pills and drugs and jumped to his death via a BR railway bridge into the sweet flowing Thames. Owen Edgar was found dead in his car by another dealer, and William Desmond gassed himself in his car, and to complete the tragic barber shop quartet a non-executive director of the plush tread softly Leger Gallery sited at the plush end of Bond Street's millionaire row was also found kaput in his car. I never believed that art dealers could ever go bankrupt for of my innocence I always assumed that like

bookmakers they had an empty shop and that you gave them the works of your genius and the sucker punters bought it with all that middle class free money and that everyone was happy from the landlord, the dealer and the loot-happy punter, yea even to the foolish genius dribbling in his garret enjoying an open tin of Safeway's sardines in brine and the glory, man, the glory.

It is whispered that five Cork Street galleries owe the banks £25,000,000 between them which is more than you and I earn in a week and that the rat-run of gallery dealers has begun. It is a parasitical world yet one cannot withhold sympathy when Michael Parkin says that when Henderson came to see him, before the old Etonian drowned himself, he drank a full bottle of Bolinger before pouring out his sorrows. But all joking aside, as I said to the Captain of the Titanic, it was the art game, the old snowball game, the old three card trick, the



"I'm sorry Count but it's Friday night and the morgue's stacked out with dead abstractionists, surrealists and minimalists."

Arthur Moyses

old South Sea Bubble game. Year after year I have hammered out the message that rubbish is rubbish. Call me John the Baptist and pay my rent, I don't mind, but the New Philistines set the pace. They kicked out the labouring class from their slum houses/flats and turned them into yuppie maisonettes, pale yellow with a hanging basket over the door, and they raked in the free-flowing market and, comrades, there was literally nothing to buy with that free-flowing money. In the Bond Street area the wide boys/girls set up their galleries and all the crude expressionism or dated fluid abstracts filled the galleries month after month and they sold just as the comic postcards sell in the local supermarket for Mothers' Day because, comrades, there was nothing else to buy with literally handfuls of useless money.

But now the Thatcher market has fallen into this political artificial recession/depression when only the men and the women and the children of the labouring class suffer. But the junk art galleries are closing and what is left of the dealers have signed a petition saying that the death of the Barber Shop Quartet was nought to do with Bond Street's Cork Street and that they are still feeding high on the hog. Rents are rising and the bottom has dropped out of Ma Thatcher's sucker market so one applauds their bravery but what cannot be ignored is that the free-loading in the major art galleries is red wine and a sandwich and that Waddington's the major art gallery in Cork Street, who appears to own more gallery space than Colonel Sanders' finger lickin' chicken take-aways, will not kick into the street party for the art lovers complete with all the wine you can slurp or the steel bands you can take.

Too long the children of the poor, their fathers and their mothers suffered in this artificial Thatcherite depression, but now the cries of anguish go up the social scale because, comrade, they are more articulate and they made us laugh, but Christ they made us suffer.

I wish to argue that human beings are natural anarchists; that is, I believe there is ample evidence to indicate that we are questioning creatures, actively seeking independence, equality and self-sufficiency in relationships with others of our species. When William Godwin writes in *Political Justice* that: "Nothing can be more necessary for the general benefit, than that we should divest ourselves, as soon as the proper period arrives, of the shackles of infancy; that human life should not be one eternal childhood; but that men should judge for themselves, unfettered by the prejudices of education, or the institutions of their country", he is suggesting that the tendency of adult society, already distorted from a natural path, is intent upon controlling the natural pursuit of individual development.

We are by nature, both loving and co-operative animals as well as aggressive and competitive animals (as Kropotkin argued in *Mutual Aid*). But our aggressive impulses are directed against the constraints of nature (our own and external forces) and the social elements which attempt to thwart our natural desire for experience. In other words, I think that our aggressive instincts are only destructive of others when they have been redirected by our education — both formal and deliberate and incidental and unconscious. Adult society is deeply fearful of the infant's blind pursuit of independence and pleasure and convinces itself that it must somehow subdue the infant to the social reality as adult society sees it at the time. Again, Godwin is right on the mark:

But government is the perpetual enemy of change. What was admirably observed of a particular system of government, is in a great degree true of all: they 'lay their hand on the spring there is in society, and put a stop to its motion'. Their tendency is to perpetuate abuse. Whatever was once thought right and useful, they undertake to entail to the latest posterity. They reverse the genuine propensities of man, and, instead of suffering us to proceed, teach us to look backward for perfection. They prompt us to seek the public welfare, not in alteration and improvement, but in a timid reverence for the decisions of our ancestors, as if it were the nature of the human mind always to degenerate, and never to advance.

No process of education is ever entirely effective, and there is always a modicum of resistance in everyone. Some people become fully occupied and open revolutionaries against the forces of convention and tradition which they see as stultifying. Others convince themselves that restraint has made them responsible and satisfied though not happy and fulfilled. On the other hand, education, both formal and non-deliberate, does redirect and distort our nature into directions which are destructive of other individuals and

protective of the social system, the State, ideas and ideals, so that we compete with the intention of destroying or merely gaining power over other people instead of over nature or over our own environment. As E.G. Schachtel points out in 'On Memory and Childhood Amnesia' (*Metamorphosis*, New York 1959, pages 317-8, 320), we could learn much about a particular society by paying attention to what of the natural drives of the infant are weaned out of the infant or forced back to unconscious wishes (repression).

Two probably unconscious wishes dressed up with idealised justifications come to the foreground in modern society: one is an anxious fear of natural rebellion on the part of the State assisted by a large part of the powerful section of society (money, status and education) which is justified by the altruistic purpose of educating the young and the poor. Without conscious knowledge of the purpose, the powerful section of society decides that education of the poor is a good thing for the poor: i.e. it will allow them to fit into the concept of competitive society which seems to come naturally to the powerful. Thus, the combination of altruistic feeling combines with the self-protective need to manipulate the mass into conformity with the emerging social values in order to perpetuate the existing routine as an idea and an ideal. This, I believe, is what led the powerful to exert control over formal education (called acculturation in our time) near the end of the 18th century and to develop the structure of education over the next hundred years to arrive at our present condition of a state controlled bureaucracy which overwhelms us all.

There are, however, several encouraging signs. We all know that bureaucracies don't function very well and the response to failure seems usually to be to make them larger. The policy makers, the administrators and the workers (i.e. the people within the system) often fail or refuse to do their jobs for a variety of humanitarian, selfish or careless reasons.

Even more important, whatever the expectations, clients (ordinary people) seldom live only as social beings: they are always running off the rails, sometimes to their own harm. But we all know of examples, I'm sure, of that knowing dumbness created by Jaroslav Hasek in his good soldier, Joseph Schweik, by Shakespeare in Falstaff, and by Cervantes in Sancho Panza. In novel after novel Thomas

Hardy presents the same sort of character, and because his idealistic critics are so obsessed with contemporary middle class morality, they don't know what to do about such characters. In a late novel, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Hardy presents his character, Tess, as a woman struggling with a great dilemma. She is at war within herself. The morality which she has learned at the national school taught by the London schoolmistress is at war with her natural, sensual impulses. As a consequence of having partially internalised the morality, she has none of the means of survival which comes so naturally to her mother and nothing of the knowing dumbness which allows other lower class characters to deny the seriousness of middle class values by energetically but inadequately subscribing to the forms.

Of course, these are fictional characters, but novelists also create some version of the reality which they know. There are indications, even in written history, that human beings, led by instinct or design and of their own volition, function outside and beyond the official systems. Christopher Hill, historian of the 17th century and the English revolution, tracing the movements of Levellers, Diggers, Ranters and other revolutions which failed in *The World Turned Upside Down*, notes with some pleased amazement that the ideas — even the songs — of those seemingly suppressed and abandoned movements appeared again in the late 18th century and early 19th century. After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, after the punishments and the recanting, the ideas left no trace in writing, and Hill can only conclude that there was also a lower class oral culture continuing on.

One can also see this in the 20th century. D.H. Lawrence indicates it, as does Paul Thompson in *The Edwardians*. The rebellious and revolutionary movements of the 1960s and 1970s serve as more recent examples. Old rebellious patterns resurface indicating that even the development of the national school system did not whither the oral tradition and its culture entirely, and I believe that it is still around today. But it is also certain that the situation involves something more than the term 'oral culture' takes in and which few historians have the means of taking into account. There are sensual, sexual, doing and suffering human beings in relationships, and it is in those relationships where most of life is lived, not in schools or in

Natural Anarchism

Against Redistributing Poverty

Against Redistributing Poverty
Wages for Housework Campaign and Payday
Men's Network

Hackles should instinctively start to rise as soon as the State, particularly under the Tories, begins to murmur about wanting to help us out. But publicity, particularly adverse publicity about the Child Support Bill currently slinking through Parliament, has been minimal.

The public face of this legislation has been that it is designed to alleviate the poverty of children by tracing absent fathers and forcing them to pay maintenance. Most people's gut reaction to this is that it's all fair enough. But predictably, behind the smiley face comes the grim and devious trooper that is the reality of state social intervention. This pamphlet is a look behind that mask. The two groups involved carefully examine the state's real motivations and base their resistance on a perspective far removed from the liberal collaboration of the poverty industry.

The most important thing to realise is that the money collected from absent fathers will not go to the women and children. All of it will be deducted from the mother's Income Support (and the proposed Child Support Agency will essentially only be interested in mothers on Income Support). The only beneficiary will be the Treasury.

The only proposal in the Bill which has proved newsworthy has been the threat to cut single mother's Income Support by 20% if they refuse to name the father. Indeed DSS interviewers have already been threatening women in this way, illegally. To go by previous tactics, while the state would be only too glad to implement such a policy it may also be willing to sacrifice it as a 'compromise', creating the illusion that the legislation is then acceptable. The only dissent raised by an otherwise supportive scab poverty industry has centred on this aspect of the Bill, and in fact it has now been defeated in the Lords. It is therefore all the more important not to confine our attentions to this proposal alone. It is also dangerously simplistic to think that the Bill is only an attempt to save Benefit money.

Its major purpose is an attack on women's economic independence from men which Income Support provides. The family has always been recognised by the state as an important instrument

of social control and there has been vocal political alarm at its increasing self-destruction and abandonment in the UK as everywhere else.

"The financial independence of Income Support has helped women to break away from the traditional division of labour in the family: women as the dependent carers, men as breadwinning tyrants. By breaking away, women have made space for and strengthened the efforts of every member of the family — young people, men and other women — to reconsider what kind of relationships we want to be part of." (*Against Redistributing Poverty*, page 4)

By forcing women back into economic dependency on men it is forcing them back into the family, in contrast with and under the economic influence of ex-partners. These men may well feel that they thus have continued 'rights' to a relationship — increasing the risks of rape, violence and general abuse. "The state upholds men's power over women in order to uphold its power over everyone".

The only alternative to enforced contact with and dependency on an ex-partner will be to take up waged work on top of the unwaged work of caring for children. This 'option' is heartily and explicitly encouraged in the White Paper 'Children Come First' (October 1990) that preceded the Bill: "If maintenance were to be received in addition to Income Support payments then the custodial parent would have to earn a higher salary to be as well off in work. It would act as a disincentive to going to work and further frustrate the ambitions which the parents have for themselves" (quoted from *Against Redistributing Poverty*, page 12)

This idea that single mothers are somehow a) not working, b) desire above all else a job outside the home (in effect a second job), and c) that this is the best route out of poverty, is supported by the poverty industry who consequently come in for some well deserved criticism here. The facts constantly belie this myth: forcing single mothers into the worst paid work by increasing their poverty fulfils only the employers ambitions of hiring workers for less. It should be obvious to all that forcing women onto the extreme bottom end of the labour market affects not just the individuals involved but the bargaining position of all of us who have to sell our labour.

This attack and the posing of the two 'options' of family hell or low-waged work on top of unwaged

(continued on page 7)

Food for Thought ... and Action!

Recent additions to the Freedom Press Bookshop stock.

Flim-Flam!: Psychics, ESP, Unicorns and Other Delusions by James Randi, Prometheus Books, introduction by Isaac Asimov. A thorough debunking of the paranormal by one of the fiercest critics of its practitioners. Far better than his disappointing television series. 342 pages, with photographs and illustrations, £8.95.

*Lib Ed: A Magazine for the Liberation of Learning**, summer '91 issue out now. Contents include articles on the National Curriculum, racism, Summerhill and self-government, Francisco Ferrer's ideas and schools in Brazil, music in schools, plus reviews, letters and a page of national and international contacts. Quarterly A4, 24 pages, £1.00.

Green Anarchist number 27, summer '91. On Gormless Greens, Murray Bookchin, animal liberation, Stonehenge, plus a festival list and more. Quarterly A4, 24 pages, 60p.

Workers' Scud: No Patriot Can Catch Us!, produced by a "united front of communists, anarchists and others". A collection of articles written in the aftermath of the Gulf war. A4 format, 20 pages, 40p.

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Flux: A Magazine of Libertarian Socialism, number 1. Described as an expression of disaffection with the revolutionary left, and put together by a small group of libertarian socialists in Nottingham. Most of this issue is

taken up by three pieces: Anarchism versus Marxism, Bakunin versus Marx and Inside the Anti-Poll Tax Campaign. Previously reviewed in *Freedom* and now in stock. A4 format, 18 pages, 50p.

Clash: Newspaper for/of Resistance in Europe, number 2. No shortage of interesting material in this journal, from squatting to the Gulf crisis to hunger strikes in prison to interviews with Kurdish women. Unfortunately, despite its commendable international perspective and undoubtedly good value, it suffers from poor translation — they appeal to people to translate their own articles — and is printed on dreary grey paper (recycled?). Otherwise well-produced and worth a look. Illustrated A4 magazine, 80 pages, £1.50.

Additional information: First the good news — the Bookshop's new booklist and separate pamphlet list are with the printers now, so should not be long in appearing. All subscribers will get them sent automatically with the paper when they're ready. The new Freedom Press Distributors trade catalogue for retail booksellers is already out. If you know a shop which would like to stock anarchist and radical books but doesn't know about Freedom Press, put them in touch with us. Now the bad news — the following titles are now out of print: *Questioning Technology*; *Radio is my Bomb*; *I, Claudia*; *The Squatters' Handbook* and *The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture*. The following are out of stock: *Fifth Estate* (spring '91 issue — no more will be ordered as the summer '91 issue will replace it soon) and *The Modern School Movement* (Perez et al), but we may get more stocks of this one at a later date.

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the clutches of bureaucracy, and it is in the delineation of these relationships as they oppose social organisation that the great novelists excel.

It was in recognition of this condition and a desire to make a place for it which was behind A.S. Neill's books and his school, Summerhill, which was more community than school in the usual meaning of the word. Neill's ideas and practice were the most important inspiration for the development of free schools during the 1960s and early '70s. From the beginning of the development of state schools there have been alternative schools and proposals established as a protest against the state schools or simply alternatives, but none went so far as Neill to project the idea that it is wrong to attempt to mould a child's character.

Paul Goodman stated this natural anarchism theory well when he wrote in *New Reformation*:

In anarchist theory, the word 'revolution' means the process by which the grip of authority is loosed, so that the functions of life can go on freely, without direction or hindrance. The description of a revolutionary period, therefore, consists of many accounts of how localities, factories, tradesmen, schools and communes go about managing their own affairs, defending themselves against the central System, and making whatever federal arrangements are necessary to weave the fabric of society.

Goodman also spent his life criticising institutions and bureaucracy on both the left and the right and devising ingeniously simple proposals for avoiding or eliminating the stultifying effects of our practices: "I think it is first of all to escape being trapped", he writes, "that I improvise dumb-bunny alternatives to the way we do things". But in spite of his protests, I'm sure he knew how unlikely it was that his proposals would be accepted by the entrenched bureaucracy. This is especially true of his proposals for education. Most of them are modern adaptations of pre-industrial conditions of the poor with some economic additions, which he believes are easily accomplished today, in order to eliminate the harsh living conditions of the poor. For example, in an essay published in 1969 and included in *New Reformation* in a revised form, he summarises his proposals for education in five points:

1) Incidental education, taking part in the on-going activities of society, must again be made the chief means of learning and teaching.

2) Most high schools should be eliminated, with other kinds of youth communities taking over their sociable functions.

3) College training should generally follow, rather than precede, entry into the professions. [He also believed that no one should enter university before the age of 30 because 'University education, in the liberal arts and the principles of the professions, is for adults who already know something. Otherwise ... it is just verbalising', and he proposed a system of apprenticeships.]

4) The chief occupation of educators should be to see to it that the activities of society provide incidental education, rather than exploitation or neglect. If necessary, we must invent new useful activities that offer educational opportunities.

5) The purpose of elementary pedagogy, through age 12, should be to delay socialisation, to protect children's free growth, since our families and community both pressure them too much and do not attend to them enough. Modern times pollute and waste natural human resources, the growing children, just as they do the land, air and water.

What he says is undeniably true: "the present extended tutelage is against nature and arrests growth".

The effort to channel the process of growing up according to a preconceived curriculum and method discourages and wastes many of the best human powers to learn and cope ... schooling isolates the young from the older generation and alienates them.

His argument that youth should be guaranteed a living no matter what they are doing is also the result of sound argument and it is clearly possible. The 'defence' budgets of the states, large and small, and their military 'aid' to other states and groups could make life comfortable everywhere. The judicious division of land could make everyone who wanted it as small holder of a vegetable garden and a cow without in any way interrupting an automating industry except in those areas where land has already been ruined through bad use by corporations and governments and by war. Small schools, village and city, are the most practical. There should be free, non-compulsory, available teaching and equipment for everyone within easy walking distance as well as libraries, institutes and meeting rooms. A large measure of financial security and emotional independence would bring about great changes in social and private relationships.

But none of this is likely to happen instantly since it clearly threatens the system and those who support it either because they profit from it or because they fear that any change can

only make life worse than it already is. In spite of all the written and spoken argument and in spite of all the direct action of small numbers of people creating alternatives either singly or in groups, it is likely that the least we can hope for at present is the continued survival of the sceptical nature of children, and the most we can hope for is to nurture this sceptical nature into adulthood so that in better times the life outside the institutions can bring about the critical intelligence we so desperately need to make life more human.

As further demonstration that the idea of community, of people voluntarily associating for the good of all, which I have been discussing, is a common and continuing one, I will end with the first paragraph of a review by George Woodcock of *The Search for Community* by George Melnyk, a book which is yet another set of proposals for breaking away from the nation state:

Authority often wins its greatest triumphs not by repression, which is obvious and can be resisted, but by the very subversion of which it accuses its enemies. For the state has sought to make itself indispensable, and has largely succeeded in this by weakening the very structure of mutual aid that naturally sustains a society. From this point of view, the welfare state, with its paraded compassion and its relentless interference with the lives of people, is even more dangerous than the openly autocratic state. By replacing voluntary co-operation with the bureaucratic management of our lives from the cradle to the grave it removes the alternative structures that sustain not merely our self respect as human beings, but also our essential freedom. So long as the possibility of managing their own affairs and providing voluntarily for their neighbours' needs is sustained, men and women remain to that extent free. When the welfare state takes over those functions, freedom withers at the same time as initiative.

I think we must make use of the welfare state as a temporary substitute for the communal condition because it isn't possible to replace the welfare state with a collection of communal arrangements wholesale. But I also believe that the wish for communal conditions is never entirely replaced by dependence on the welfare state. It merely lies dormant or expresses itself in weaker and sometimes distorted ways. Whatever social arrangements may appear to be, the state of freedom, self and mutual respect, and voluntary co-operation, is the human goal.

John R. Doheny
Vancouver

US Policy in the Middle East

(continued from page 4)

oppressors, the ruling classes, they would be a massive and unstoppable force. As long as divide and rule tactics are allowed to prosper there will be no liberation.

The people of Palestine are still no nearer being liberated from Israeli occupation than they were before the war. More hollow promises from the Western leaders! The PLO either calls for talks between themselves and other governments, or else factions promote the killing of Israelis in mindless attacks. The Israeli government goes on as before — suppressing, torturing and killing ordinary Palestinians.

The other Middle Eastern leaders now have more Western connivance, more money and more weapons. Still the people have no freedom. It is still a life sentence to be born female, individual expression is not tolerated and poverty is the norm.

The Kuwaiti people suffered devastation to their country because of a pathetic carve up of land on a map years ago by the ruling classes. Not content with their wealth, they have continued to squabble. Saddam's greed finally got the better of him and he decided to take what he wanted. Children behaving in this manner over a packet of sweets would most likely have them taken away from them. There is a lesson in that for us all!

The Al Sabahs have now triumphantly returned to Kuwait. They must have earned their riches in the form of gold medals. They were first out of the country, first to have electricity and water restored after their return, first to secure their wealth and first to plead hardship from the war. In a poor second came the Kuwaitis, cold and hungry, the threat of epidemics looming and even worse. Since the PLO leadership jumped in the wrong bed, ordinary Palestinians are now feeling the wrath of Kuwait,

as they suffer beatings and murders while the authorities turn a blind eye.

The Al Sabahs are now resisting the introduction of Western style 'democracy' (i.e. there isn't any). It's hard to see what their problem is, there's certainly no shortage of wealth and privilege in Europe's royal families. Running the government must allow them to be twice as lazy!

In the Middle East the goalposts haven't so much

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Against Redistributing Poverty

(continued from page 6)

work is the attack on Income Support as a wage for the work that all mothers do as carers.

It is of course an attack on the poorest men as it exhorts a larger proportion of their income. It is also an attack on the black community especially. Of Afro-Caribbean families in the UK 43% are one-parent/woman-headed and 47% of Afro-Caribbean children are born outside marriage. Therefore black families and social networks would be proportionally more vulnerable than white families, even though black families are a minority of those attacked by the maintenance proposals.

It is an attack on us all, not only with the bureaucracies' sweeping new powers of surveillance as the state intrudes its policing of our sexual and social relations, but in its reinforcing divisions between men and women, forcing us back into relations which long struggles have rejected.

This pamphlet is readable, well researched and a vital explanation of the motivations behind state action. It is unique in its definition of Income Support and clear in its explanation of the importance of women's economic independence for us all.

"Let us be clear. We are against the maintenance proposals not because we are being asked for money on behalf of children, but because the money is not going to children, it is going almost entirely to the state ... which deprives women and children in particular of cash and services they are entitled to, only to further tighten its grip over all our lives". (Payday Men's Network, *Against Redistributing Poverty*, page 35)

"The principle underlying this publication is: single mothers' Income Support is a wage, not charity, for the unwaged work which government and industry could not function without and which they must pay for". (Wages for Housework, *Against Redistributing Poverty*, page 3)

Sam

been moved as chopped up and carved into chess pieces — king takes everything! But Saddam is a reminder to all third world rulers — don't step out of line, or else! It's currently known as the 'New World Order', but sounds not unlike the old one.

It is depressing to watch helplessly as the lives of ordinary people slip into chaos as leaders squabble for supremacy. It is all too obvious from our vantage point to see that the solution to this is to

unite and rid themselves, and for that matter ourselves, of those who would rule over us, taking control of our land and lives for our benefit, not others. We must continue the struggle and hope that our day of liberation draws nearer, when those who would oppress and subjugate us will be gone for ever, and we shall have anarchy, peace and freedom!

Andrew McGingle

Waiting for the Bus

Seen anything of Mrs Potts lately, Daisy? ... Funny you should ask. She went to a medium who told her somebody close to her with a name beginning with an R was ill. Sure enough, a favourite cousin of hers called Ron has got angina ... Well, apart from the fact that I don't know many people of our age who haven't got it, ask her why her clever medium couldn't say his name was Ron ... What about that bloke who can bend spoons then? ... It's a bit suspicious that he picks on something that will bend on a tough piece of meat. Why doesn't he bend pokers? And if it's a case of mind over matter, why can't he crack an egg without touching it? And if wings can fall off aircraft from metal fatigue, why wasn't he put in charge of Desert Storm? I can see the headlines: 'Fury Uri Turns Six Scuds Round in Mid-Flight — Saddam Dives for Cover' ... You've got a good imagination, Bert ... Not half as good as Mrs Potts ... Fancy them having to scrap that Philosophy of Health Care course at University College, Swansea, after dishing out all those degrees. They said there wasn't a sufficient body of agreed knowledge to justify the course ... They've got a Chair in Parapsychology at another university. It's a laugh. Just because they've got a bit of autonomy they start inventing courses to further their little empires, or some rich character comes along with a cheque book and before you can say 'rubbish' they've set up a Chair in the Economics of Wine Tasting ... No wonder we've got a failed bus conductor supposedly running the country. What do you think about that Australian survey that says moderate drinkers live as long as non-drinkers? ... How did they manage to find enough moderate drinkers to do a survey, I'd like to know ... Seriously, Bert, do you think moderate drinking could have a beneficial effect? ... Possibly. Perhaps it

clears the bowels of people who don't eat properly, but the problem of alcohol is knowing where to stop, and there are plenty of other laxatives on the market ... Perhaps it's all down to reducing stress ... You could be right, Daisy, but it's still a game of Russian Roulette if it's not done under supervision ... Do you think joining the EEC will change British politics? ... Could do, Daisy. Might put the kybosh on the Royalty, the House of Lords and shake up the judicial system a bit ... What about the minimum wage? ... Well, I expect we'll have to accept it. So long as they don't suggest a maximum limit — now that would spoil the party ... These highly paid bosses reckon they're worth every penny because of the responsibility they carry ... If I was overworked, I would ask for help, not more money ... I read in the paper that the Birmingham National Exhibition Centre is not going to have any more defence contractors' shows because they got hundreds of letters of protest about the show in May. I expect you're pleased you wrote now, Bert ... Yes, I'm quite chuffed about it ... What did you think about those two stuffed dummies, Michael Caine and Roger Moore, at Prince Philip's birthday party? ... Never seen anything more patronising in my life. If it had been our television set I would have switched it off ... Mrs Potts likes Prince Philip because he does a lot to save endangered species ... Pity he doesn't do anything about endangered grouse, not to mention endangered human beings? ... What could he do about the human beings? ... Become one, for starters ... Wish something could be done about our endangered buses. Look at this one we've got coming now — it's a G registration ... And the driver's no chicken either ...

EFC

Readers' Letters

Dear Editors,

Tony Gibson's characteristically choleric reply to my query as to what assumptions about human motivation are central to Marxist thinking failed to answer the question. He also managed a McCarthy-style smear, inverts my meaning at one point, fails to see that I was making two separate points and appears to attribute to Marx views which Marx specifically rejected. I am used to my youthful idols having feet of clay but this is the first time one has had a head full of the stuff.

In the first place I am not a Marxist of any kind, least of all the sort of apologist for communist regimes that he appears to mean. Tony Gibson knows this, unless he thinks I experienced some sort of communist conversion in the years since I was a member of LAG and wrote for *Freedom* and *Anarchy*. His statement that I would be

embarrassed by the collapse of communism is a simple smear for which there is no substance in my letter. If he really thinks that using Marx's model, or investigating his sociology, means complicity in the varieties of communist regimes from Lenin onward then he'd be better off in the company of people whose sociological illiteracy matches his own — like Stalin, who rejected sociology as bourgeois ideology, the Greek colonels who banned it as communist, or Margaret Thatcher who didn't like people asking awkward questions.

I read Marx for much the same reason that I read Comte, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel and Kropotkin. They are among the founders of my discipline. Only the latter do I find politically congenial, but there are always fresh insights to be gained from each of them. And Marx's model remains a classic machinery for thinking about man and society, not least the regimes whose departure I celebrate just as much as Tony Gibson.

Talking of which, Lenin's planned

economy was modelled directly on wartime Imperial Germany. Not even Gibson can regard this as Marx inspired.

However, the point of contention is the mysterious "assumptions about human motivation" that Gibson regards as central to Marxist thinking. My query was quite genuine as I hadn't come across them. He is too busy being rude to actually delineate them but if I understand him correctly he attributes to Marx an "orthodox 19th century utilitarian view". We must I suppose find Marx guilty of being 19th century. But orthodox utilitarianism? Marx specifically rejected Bentham with his ahistorical 'normal man' motivated by rational self interest and holding true for all societies throughout history. At the other end of the utilitarian tradition John Stuart Mill's psychologism with its insistence that all social phenomena are rooted in the nature of human individuals, that society is only the sum of its individuals, would seem to be the obverse of Marx's conviction that the study of human

MARXIST?

nature must lie within the study of society and history. Not only, according to Marx, can one not explain society in terms of individual psychology but there is no such thing as individual human nature in abstraction from the creative process of society. This would seem to me to be in accordance with 20th century social psychology but 19th century utilitarianism it ain't.

And Bakunin? Well, Dolgoff's *Bakunin*, page 236, quotes Bakunin as writing that: "Man becomes conscious of himself and his humanity only in society and only by the collective action of the whole society". While Maximoff's volume quotes (page 158) "... the individual, his freedom and his reason, are the products of society, and not vice versa: society is not the total of the individuals comprising it". Seems pretty close to Marx's "it is not the consciousness of men that

determines their being but on the contrary their social being that determines their consciousness" to me. Whatever divided those two in terms of political policy their views on the nature of man seemed to be identical.

The question remains. What are these orthodox utilitarian assumptions of human motivation that Marx made and how are they central to Marxist thought? Gibson will get further by answering my original query than by yelling 'Commie bastards' at the social sciences in general and me in particular.

It occurs to me that last time I was ridiculed in the anarchist press I was accused of writing manifestoes for the Conservative Party. Now, according to Gibson, I am a Marxist and an apologist for everything that happened after 1917. Yet my basic Kropotkin/Wardist position is unchanged. As Mort Sahl used to say: "Maintain a consistent political position and you'll eventually be tried for treason".

John Pilgrim

Anarchism and Nationalism - 1

Dear Freedom,
I am writing in reply to John L. Broom's letter (29th June) concerning the article I wrote on anarchism. I'll reply to his letter point by point if I may.

Firstly, why has he got this thing about pseudonyms — Flett is actually my name, I was born with it and in the village in which I stay it's the most common name. Anyway, there seems nothing wrong with pseudonyms if people want to use them and I can think of a few reasons why people would want to, but I'm not.

As for gender, I think in the context of what we are discussing it is not relevant. I raised the issue in passing to attempt to draw attention to your unconscious sexism. But his defensive stance tends to indicate that he himself feels he was caught with his ideological trousers down.

As for the topic under discussion, I am not claiming, or trying, to give a "precise relationship between nationalism and anarchism", only what I think. If John wants precision or some mathematical formula then he's not talking what I consider anarchism. I attempted to view the subject, as I try on most topics, on whether it increases the autonomy and freedom of the individual or that of those in control. As such, nationalism I feel is no movement for true change, just the creation of a new state or revival of old powers.

I see no contradiction in saying that the Baltic States and Tibet would be better off, at least perhaps safer for individuals, if their neighbour left them alone. I never said nationalism is "wholly wrong", just that it is a regressive movement in society, easily manipulated by those in, or seeking, power and a con job built on people feeling they have some blood tie to something as abstract as a country. A set of geographical dividing lines, a shared language, or not even that sometimes, a common currency and government and army — yes, that is really worth believing in, suffering for and in the case of war, giving up your life.

For what, a piece of coloured cloth and a skirl of the pipes — fuck that!

And yes, I would like to see countries turned into anarchist societies, but I'm not naive about it. But I believe it to be the best way for people's happiness and well being. I believe that anarchism is more than a "noble idea". Why? Because I'm not a left wing socialist with nationalist daydreams.

Okay, let's talk about Scotland then. The SNP does not 'satisfy' the nationalist feeling felt by many people in Scotland, it attempt to feed off it like a parasite; they play the nationalist card cynically for their own ends — power. As for Hamish Watt, he isn't bothered about home rule for Scotland, only power, again. Scottish independence would be an improvement because Scotland voting Labour would give a Labour government in Scotland rather than England voting Tory and getting it too?. Well, only if you believe that a Labour government is better than a Tory one. Smells like the same crap to me.

Yes, on nations, "Scotland has been one for 1,000 years", and yes, this means nothing to me. Before that it was made up of a few small countries. Just because it has become one this means I've to stop waving this flag and pick up another? Countries are flexible, temporary entities created for ease of control and to help halt hostilities between groups of power brokers in the short term. And your Scottish heritage? It should focus more on the facts — your heroes: Robert the Bruce sold William Wallace to London to be hung, drawn and quartered for his own skin and a chance at the crown, Bonnie Prince Charlie couldn't speak to the poor, indentured labourers who died for him. At Culloden more Scots were fighting with the English. It was the clan chiefs who threw the people off the land to make way for sheep and caused untold misery and suffering. Scottish history, like that of all peoples, is made up of the continuous struggle of those without power to survive in a semi-decent manner. This tartan and bagpipes is a

con, trying to make people feel they have a vested interest in the country, that it belongs to them. Hell, most of it is owned by the MoD, rich individuals and pension trusts, the church and many more, certainly not its inhabitants who are not even free to roam at will in sections of it.

So no, I have no loyalty to the lion rampant or the union jack and will have none of the circle of stars that represents a united Europe. It's only departments in the capitalist world created for the ease of administration.

I see no contradiction, though, when I see pictures of people in the Yugoslavian republics barricading the streets and fighting the army. I think, good on you. If I were there I'd do the same, fight the immediate visible threat. But I'd want it to develop into more than I think it probably will. And I believe that the attitude of some of those resisting invasion would not be too hot in many ways. But I believe that people should be supported in such struggles in the hope that through them they realise their strengths, and hopefully their power to change their lives, and use it to create real change. See beyond the negativity and con of nationalism and continue to struggle for a point beyond it. Note that I'm saying the people in the struggles, not the power-mongers and nationalist bigots. They are manipulating the people's deep felt hopes. They want to control and sterilise them. The successes of the people will be taken from them and in a year or two they will find themselves wondering what they achieved, what they suffered for. While they face the troops, people in the background will be organising, striking deals and setting themselves up to take over. Their biggest fear is the wave of uprising sweeping them away too. But then they're okay because they are the same nationality and it's a nationalist uprising, isn't it?

So to end, I support people struggling to try to achieve a better life, but not always what they see as the way of doing it. To John I say, using his analogy, I don't want no bread, although I think it's what you get following nationalism's promise of half a loaf. I want the whole fucking bakery. And I believe we can get it.

Flett

More About Money

Dear Editors,
I write in response to Mark Shipway's letter in the 27th July issue of *Freedom*, where he asserted that "it's just not possible to separate money as a means of exchange from the exploitation of labour power, nor from the existence of the state. Each presupposes the others".

It is true that money is essential to the capitalists, for without it they would be unable to extract unearned income from the economy. It is also true that the coercive powers of the state have always been needed to keep the capitalists in the saddle in times of unrest. Money can however be used purely as a means of exchange; its use does not necessarily presuppose the existence of capital and state.

It is important not to confuse money with capital. Capital represents very large concentrations of money invested in the means of production by the capitalists for their private gain. If the capitalists were to be expropriated, their worth distributed to all, and made subject to community control, the capitalist system would be at an end. The use of money could then revert to purely utilitarian purposes in that it would relate work done by all to levels of consumption.

Moneyless economies are possible (though of course not capitalist ones) but I find it difficult to see their relevance for anarchists beyond the agrarian

Who will do the dirty work?

Dear Editors,

Like most sensitive readers of *Freedom* I was shocked to read an item in the 13th July issue, but then I am easily shockable, that recorded that Britain's Prime Minister John Major applied for a job as a London bus conductor and failed the test. For 31 years I did that shame-making job that socially can only be on a level with that of the street cleaner or the shit-house wallah. This is no letter of protest, merely an interest in a social philosophical problem concerning the 'better types' that constantly annoys them and that is how can moronic labouring types fit only to be shit-house wallahs, street cleaners or bus conductors move into positions of authority over them when these unfortunate people do not even possess one single sheet of educational documentation stating that the State has classified them as suitable leadership material.

Over the years I have happily attended many a libertarian Tory backlash and on a number of occasions among the dedicated civil servants and dedicated teachers I have heard myself referred to as "he is not a real art critic, he is only a bus conductor" and I bore the blow and drank the wine. To be told by a senior

statesman "By God, couldn't have got a better job than a bus conductor" and no question mark at the end. To know a gentle ex-bus conductor who in the 'no industrial pension' period told me that after the age of 65 years the only job offered to him was that of a shit-house cleaner, but as he told me he could not take it as "local people knew him" and of his shame he committed suicide. Of the ex-woman bus conductor who took the job of shit-house wallah in Kensington High Street and hid in a doorway on the other side of the road, for shame, until she could run across the road at the opening time, for fear of being recognised. And to think that John Major failed those tests and that 'awful' man is Prime Minister. As the labouring class say, "there ain't no justice mate".

For myself, at 77 years of age I am no longer dismissed as 'the bus conductor' but as 'the artist', but Christ it was a long hard trawl to shake off my ghastly past, but now I can look with contempt at John Major, Prime Minister, for he could not even reach my low social status of 31 working years of 51 labouring years as a low type bus conductor.

Arthur Moyse

Anarchism & Nationalism - 2

Dear Editors

I agree with much that Steven Cullen writes in his interesting article 'Anarchism and the Problem of Nationalism' (27th July), and I thank him for responding so fully to my request to produce an anarchist view of the relationship between it and nationalism.

Like Flett's contributions on the subject, however, I feel that Steven's article is almost entirely negative, and attempts to answer none of the questions I put to Flett in my letter which you kindly published in your issue of 29th June. Are anarchists in favour of Home Rule for invaded countries such as the three Baltic states and other parts of Russia, Tibet, Palestine, Kurdistan, and so on? What is their attitude towards self-determination for peoples? Could Steven please reply to these simple queries, and also does he think anarchism is a practical possibility in the foreseeable future?

Of course, not being *that* old, I learnt that Scotland has been a nation for 1,000 years, just as no doubt Steven 'learnt' the 'facts' about Frederick the Great, his 'brutal father', etc., he quotes. Steven also repeats the familiar legend that Scotland is at least two nations, represented respectively by the Highlands and the Lowlands. Yet I strongly suspect that if the country I live in were to be invaded again tomorrow, Gaelic-speaking Scots (whether Protestant or Catholic) would fight to repel the invaders alongside 'liberal, civic' Scots, just as they did at Bannockburn! Like so many other anarchists (including Flett) Steven seems to confuse nationalism (can be good or bad) with imperialism (always bad).

I find Steven's statement that

commune, the libertarian economic needs to move beyond this context. Technically advanced societies, in my view, require money as an accounting mechanism to integrate the vast complex of activities which they entail.

The expropriation of the capitalists and the removal of the state must be the first priority. If this objective is not achieved, then the free society, with or without money, is an impossibility.

John L. Griffin

"Protestant action in Edinburgh in the 1930s showed a different face of Scottish nationalism" somewhat puzzling. Far from being in favour of Scottish nationalism, Protestant Action, and particularly their founder and leader, John Cormack, was violently opposed not only to Scottish independence but to any form of home rule, believing no doubt the ancient *canard* that "Home rule is Rome rule" (see *Edinburgh Divided* by Tom Gallagher, page 173).

Finally, as an atheist, pacifist and republican I take strong exception to Steven's assertion that I will be "ready-made cannon fodder" for "Alex Salmond, James Connolly, Ian Paisley, the Queen", or any other member of the motley crew he mentions. I would undoubtedly have been shot as a vile traitor for refusing to kill or maim English soldiers at Bannockburn or Flodden, and unless Alex Salmond stands as a left wing militant Labour candidate at the first general election following Scotland's regaining of her independence, he will undoubtedly not receive my vote or support. Meanwhile, are Steven and Flett quite content to endure another four or five years of Tory misrule over Scotland, even though the Scottish people again return a large majority of Labour MPs to Westminster?

John L. Broom

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On Voting

Dear Freedom,
There's another side to your view on not voting. I can see the case that not voting is a strong two-fingered gesture to the whole corrupt process, and that there is often nothing to choose between candidates. Not voting points to our withholding of consent, and is a means whereby the uncommitted might be brought into seeing through the sham of it all. Anarchists here had an anti-election poster campaign. However, although I only partly believe it, I would like to present the other side of the argument.

Everybody will probably agree that anarchists should be working towards making the world a freer and better place. The question is *how* do we go about this, for anarchists are not wholly absorbed in their plans for a future utopia but are passionately concerned with the present, the here and now, and the possible.

Correction

Dear Freedom,
Could I correct a typographical error that distorted a sentence in my article 'Anarchism and the Problem of Nationalism' in *Freedom*, 27th July 1991. "John L. Broom writing in *Freedom* in defiance of Scottish nationalism" should have read "... in defence of Scottish nationalism". Thanks.

Steve Cullen

The electoral system exists as a fact. You put forward the idea of the possibility of a world where nobody votes. Realistically, e.g. in a council election, this will never happen because unopposed candidates get in without elections and even if nobody else voted, the twelve Tories who nominated the candidate would.

Politics is often quoted as "the art of the possible". Now we know for certain that some candidates are worse than others, and that great evils happen (e.g. the closure of hospitals) because people voted for the worst people. We have a duty as decent people to oppose these things and try to mitigate the effects of what we know to be the evils of government. *One* relatively painless way (but not the *only* way) is by placing a cross in the state lottery. Anarchists, of course, have few illusions about this and will oppose them in other ways, but to vote against them is, in the first instance, a line of (albeit weak) defence against them.

This is essentially the "lesser of two evils" argument for voting. I concede it isn't a very good one. But just one more point. We can use the electoral process to make propaganda *against* the state, as an opportunity for challenging established ideas, and as a public spectacle which ought to be turned into farce — a carnival of the absurd. The best thing that could happen in elections will be the day that Screaming Lord Sutch wins, but this will certainly never happen if we ignore elections and allow Tories to win them by default.

Steve Booth

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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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