

anarchist fortnightly

Freedom

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"The trade of governing has always been monopolised by the most ignorant and the most rascally individuals of mankind."

Thomas Paine

Riots of Hope or Despair?

The recent wave of riots indicates the high level of resentment and alienation against authority. As the social, political and economic situation deteriorates this resentment will increase. As yet it is unclear whether the government will move towards repression or reform as a response, neither of which address the fundamental causes of this anger. The challenge to anarchism is to attempt to channel this emotion and energy towards constructive changes which will bring about an increase in freedom. At present the riots are an indication of the deep crisis of the state which is largely being evaded and ignored by the government. Eventually the state will have to meet its unpaid bills, and this should be a cause for optimism among its

opponents. Authority everywhere is in trouble. The difference between here and Eastern Europe is one of degree, but also that here perceptions are tightly controlled. Perceptions are not realities and the 'business as usual' facade of the media looks increasingly worn out. Most conscious individuals will see the switch from communism to capitalism in the East as no solution. Compare the treatment by the media of the Moscow rioters against the putsch with that of their treatment of rioters in Handsworth, Cardiff, Oxford and Newcastle. Little by way of explanation is offered, attention is being focused on peripheral issues and not the causes. From the point of view of the British state, the discovery of their power and

potential by people needs to be prevented at all costs. 'People power' is not an importable commodity. 'People power' in Eastern Europe is a media sanctification of the power of the mob. In this it seems to be similar to Rousseau's General Will. Expediency dictates that it is *right* when directed against tyrannical leaders and the party bureaucracy of the East. When set against those same tyrants and bureaucrats here it is definitely *wrong*. There are two principal causes of the riots: the economic situation (compare with the riots of the early 1980s), but more immediately the frustration at the powerlessness and lack of purpose of the rioter's lives. All of these are the fault of the state.

60,000 more on the dole ... but prosperity is round the corner

Government ministers aided and abetted by the capitalist media go on suggesting that the recession is 'bottoming out'. All the evidence is to the contrary. The fall in the interest rate will benefit tycoons like Maxwell and Murdoch who owe the money lenders more than £1,000 million each. For them ½ of 1% puts £500,000 in their respective pockets, but for the mortgage payers it does very little. What it does not do, which is the government's theory about reduction in interest rate, is to release more spending power. Ask any mortgage payer (other than the stinking rich who have mortgages because they then save on income tax) and they will tell you that any savings will be used to reduce their repayments and not to lash out on 'spending'. The media parroting government statements about retail spending going up by a percentage point in August are suggesting that this indicates an upturn in the economy. In the same breath we are told that another 60,000 have lost their jobs,

that pay increases have gone down, which to our simple minds means that an awful lot of people have less money to spend. So how come that the statisticians tell us that retail spending has gone up?

The Price of Privatisation is paid for by the Taxpayer

The coal mining industry depends essentially on supplying the electricity power stations. But the power stations have been privatised and in the best capitalist tradition are looking for the cheapest sources of coal. They are not worried about the miners' jobs. Nor are the bosses at the Port of Bristol which has just been sold off to a private owner, First Corporate Shipping. National Power and the new owners of the Port of Bristol have signed an agreement to build a £65 million coal importing facility in the Royal Portbury Dock which will be capable

(continued on page 2)

The state cannot do anything about the economy which in its present form is in a graveyard nosedive. Shallow Tory analysts looking for a scapegoat might well point to high interest rates following Nigel Lawson's pre '87 election 'boom' and the budget for the rich. Really, the problems are much deeper, concerned with the high levels of imports on even basic goods (hinges from Seattle, bolts and nuts from Asia) but also the lack of investment in training, research and in structural changes to bring about greater efficiency. These criticisms of the economy meet it on its own terms, they do not address the fact that their economic system is founded upon a fundamentally flawed premiss — that of making money pure and simple,

(continued on page 4)

Anarchist Book Fair
19th October
from 10am to 6pm
 at
Conway Hall
Red Lion Square
London WC1
(nearest tube: Holborn)

Yeltsin rises

The intention of the 19th August putsch in the Soviet Union was to restore power to the Communist Party. In Marxist jargon, the seizure of power by Marxists is called 'working class victory', but the putschists did not use Marxist jargon or talk about equality or common ownership. They favoured a market economy, they said, but thought it would be better for the people if the market economy was controlled from the top.

One communique actually cited Chile as an example to be followed. A strange example to choose. Allende, the only Communist President ever to be elected in American-style elections, was defeated and killed in a military rising backed by the CIA, leading to a military dictatorship in which the economy was ruined by military expenditure.

The old stalwarts of the Party seem to have believed the propaganda they had put out for seventy years, and to have assumed that if they took the opportunity to get rid of Gorbachev and his decadent ideas, the workers would rally to their support. Whatever the reason, when they found themselves faced by massive public opposition, they did not make a fight of it but quietly gave up.

The net effect of the putsch was to ruin what remained of the Party, by weakening the politically cautious Gorbachev and strengthening more forthright anti-Communist politicians, particularly the courageous, committed and astute Boris Yeltsin.

There can be no doubt of Yeltsin's courage. When the guns of a tank were trained on his office window, he actually walked out of his office to climb on top of the tank and make a speech condemning those who had sent it. The

decision not to interrupt the speech was made by the army officer on the spot, acting against the general sense of his orders if not against the precise text. Yeltsin (to the best of our knowledge) did not know whether he would be allowed to continue, or arrested, or shot on the spot. His display of nerve was amazing.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Yeltsin's political persona is the speed with which he has taken advantage of opportunities. Having worked his way up inside the Communist Party, after Gorbachev took power he became a more outspoken advocate of Gorbachev's reforms than Gorbachev himself, then chose a moment when the television cameras were on him to resign from the Party with maximum fuss. Before anyone could get rival political parties going, he organised a presidential election, stood against some unknowns, and got himself elected President of Russia by popular vote. Gorbachev was elected President of the Union of Parliament (like a British Prime Minister) and is held by most commentators to have worse democratic credentials.

After the defeat of the putsch, before Gorbachev could act, Yeltsin appointed his supporters to the Union government, confiscated the assets of the Communist Party, banned nine periodicals including *Pravda*, and took over (but didn't disband) the KGB. He had no 'constitutional authority' to issue these decrees, and most of them were quietly dropped, later. But he had enhanced his power.

Let there be no doubt either of his political commitment. It is only in politically undeveloped countries that people can get into power whose only aim is the glamour of power (like Emperor Bokassa), and only in poor countries that power allows you to appropriate the available wealth to yourself. Like John Major, Lenin and Hitler, Yeltsin took power as a first step in setting the world to rights.

Conceptions of a world set to rights vary, of course. People seek power in order to relieve the suffering of the poor, to ease restrictions on the rich, to rid the country of foreigners, to return the country to religion, to extend an empire, or to throw off an imperial yoke.

Yeltsin, to judge by his pronouncements, is committed to allowing free play for capitalists in Russia. He may well be convinced that this will improve the standard of living for all Russians in the long run, in the same way Lenin was convinced that state capitalism would benefit everyone eventually. In the short run, market economy causes hardship, but as Norman Lamont put it: "Unemployment is the price we have to pay for increased prosperity".

The world's greatest capitalist state, the United States, is also by coincidence the state with fewest legal prohibitions of speech and political assembly. Some confused commentators, apparently unaware of examples like Chile, think that capitalism and democracy are causally connected, and therefore that Yeltsin being committed to

capitalism must also be committed to democracy. He talks in favour of democracy, but everybody does that. Some of his pronouncements, such as the threat to "renegotiate the borders" of states which leave the Soviet Union, so that ethnic Russians can stay within the Russian empire, resemble the pronouncements of fascists.

The bravery, quickness and commitment displayed by Yeltsin are similar to those of Mussolini (Hitler was even quicker and committed to the point of fanaticism, but less physically brave). Things are so fluid in Russian politics that it is too early to say Yeltsin wins, but some say Gorbachev can only survive now, politically, as long as Yeltsin finds him useful.

The lesson of the failed coup is that the power of bosses and rulers is limited by what ordinary people will tolerate. The coup failed, as the poll tax failed in Britain, because in general people refused to co-operate.

It is said, notably by Yeltsin's supporters, that Yeltsin 'led' resistance to the coup. But he was not leading the resistance when it started. Street demonstrators were refusing to abide by a curfew, soldiers were refusing to enforce it and television people were refusing an order not to broadcast the demonstration live, when Yeltsin courageously mounted the tank, and deftly made himself look like the leader.

There is no need to show people that they can resist what they do not want. The jobs of anarchists is to show that bosses and rulers, whether boring or charismatic, are dangerous and unnecessary. When people in general are against bosses and rulers, effective action will follow naturally.

And Now ... the Party Political Circus

The political silly season (rudely interrupted by events in the Soviet Union) as always is followed by the political party conferences, obviously a pleasant social occasion for the delegates and standing ovations for the platform's stars, but very little else. The TUC gathering has come and gone revealing, if nothing else, how reactionary some of the leaders of the largest unions are and how barren of ideas.

By contrast the Liberal Democrats at their conference in sunny Bournemouth were determined not only to rouse their delegates into believing, in this election year, that they

could put the Labour lot out of business, but having nothing to lose they were prepared to raise standard taxes to pay for more education and other services (we noticed that they were not proposing to bash the rich, though they made a scathing attack on the top people who paid themselves enormous salary increases while exhorting their workforces to limit theirs).

And of course our Liberals are the only true Europeans, the true free-traders and single currency advocates, all topics which according to the media pundits are not all that popular with the electorate. Paddy Ashdown certainly did his stuff most successfully.

By comparison, David Owen's one-man political broadcast for the SDP on all television channels, far from harming the Liberals was more of a funeral oration at the grave of the SDP — to think that here was one of the 'Gang of Four' who were going to 'break the mould' of politics!

By far the most interesting speaker — from an anarchist point of view — was Des Wilson, the Liberals' campaign manager. He really let rip about the politicians, the government and civil servants, but not all the delegates applauded — least of all the Liberal MPs who, after all, are part and parcel of the 'best club in Britain'.

"Liberal Democrats would make power an issue. 'We've never really fought an election single-mindedly, with anger and passion, on the corruption of the system and the need for wholesale change'.

This time the election would be about more than just personalities and parties. 'We're going to make it about the state of British politics and the system itself'.

British politics was corrupt and rotten. 'Never has the honours system been so defiled as it has been by the Tories. Since the Tories came to power, knighthoods have been awarded to 85 top executives from 66 companies that have donated to the Tory Party more than £13 million.

'Why should these so-called captains of industry get knighthoods anyway? They lecture the country on pay restraint — yet the salaries of top executives of the top 100 companies have increased by 79% over the past three years'.

Politicians, civil servants and industrialists

appeared to get rewarded in direct proportion to their failures. 'The fact is that everybody in power, whether it be ministers, civil servants or so-called captains of industry, operate within a kind of protection racket'.

Mr Wilson also accused Tory ministers and ex-ministers of 'hypocrisy'. He said: 'What about ministers responsible for the health services and the education services sending their own children to private schools and subscribing to private health care.

'Is it any wonder that people shake their heads and say you're only in it for yourselves ... when they see a former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, go straight from the Treasury to £100,000 a year for a two days a week consultancy with Barclays Bank?

'When they see Norman Fowler, former Transport Secretary, who introduced the National Freight Corporation privatisation, become a director of the National Freight Corporation? When they see Peter Walker, former Energy Secretary, supporter of gas privatisation, go on the board of British Gas? When they see Lord Young, former Trade and Industry Secretary, become chairman of Cable and Wireless at £400,000 a year?'

'Someone, sometime, has to tell the people the truth and we're going to do it. We have a big idea. It's to create a system that works for people'. Offering to change and clean up the system was a 'high risk political strategy'. But the Liberal Democrats would tackle it. 'Politics in Britain will never be the same again'.

(from *The Guardian* report, 12th September 1991)

workmen will order the soldier to take money from the people for the landlords. A House of Commons consisting of 660 workmen and 10 gentlemen will probably, unless the 660 are fools, order the soldier to take money from the landlords for the people."

A hundred years later we have a House of Commons with some 200 Labour Party members. How many of George Bernard Shaw's 'workmen' among them? How many on the opposition front bench? But how many lawyers and professional men in the House?

The House of Commons is a stepping stone for careerists both in the political and business fields. Des Wilson referred to the Tory ministers who went straight from ministerial office to directorship/chairmanships. But he could have quoted a list of Labour and Liberal politicians who have gone the same way. What is specially interesting in the case of the Tories is that a number of them got sinecures in the industries they had been responsible for privatising. Especially that smarmy Transport Secretary Norman Fowler, who resigned ostensibly "to spend more time with my family", and became a director of the National Freight Corporation, the privatisation of which he had been the minister in charge!

When the Labour Party in its most active

(continued on page 6)

The Price of Privatisation is paid for by the Taxpayer

(continued from page 1)

of handling more than five million tons of imported coal a year from Australia, the USA, South Africa and Colombia. This is only the first step. Ports on the east coast will also be developed to handle imported coal. When completed, something like fourteen million tons of foreign coal could be brought in for use in the power stations.

All this is because at present imported coal costs £36 per tonne compared with the present local supplies costing £47.

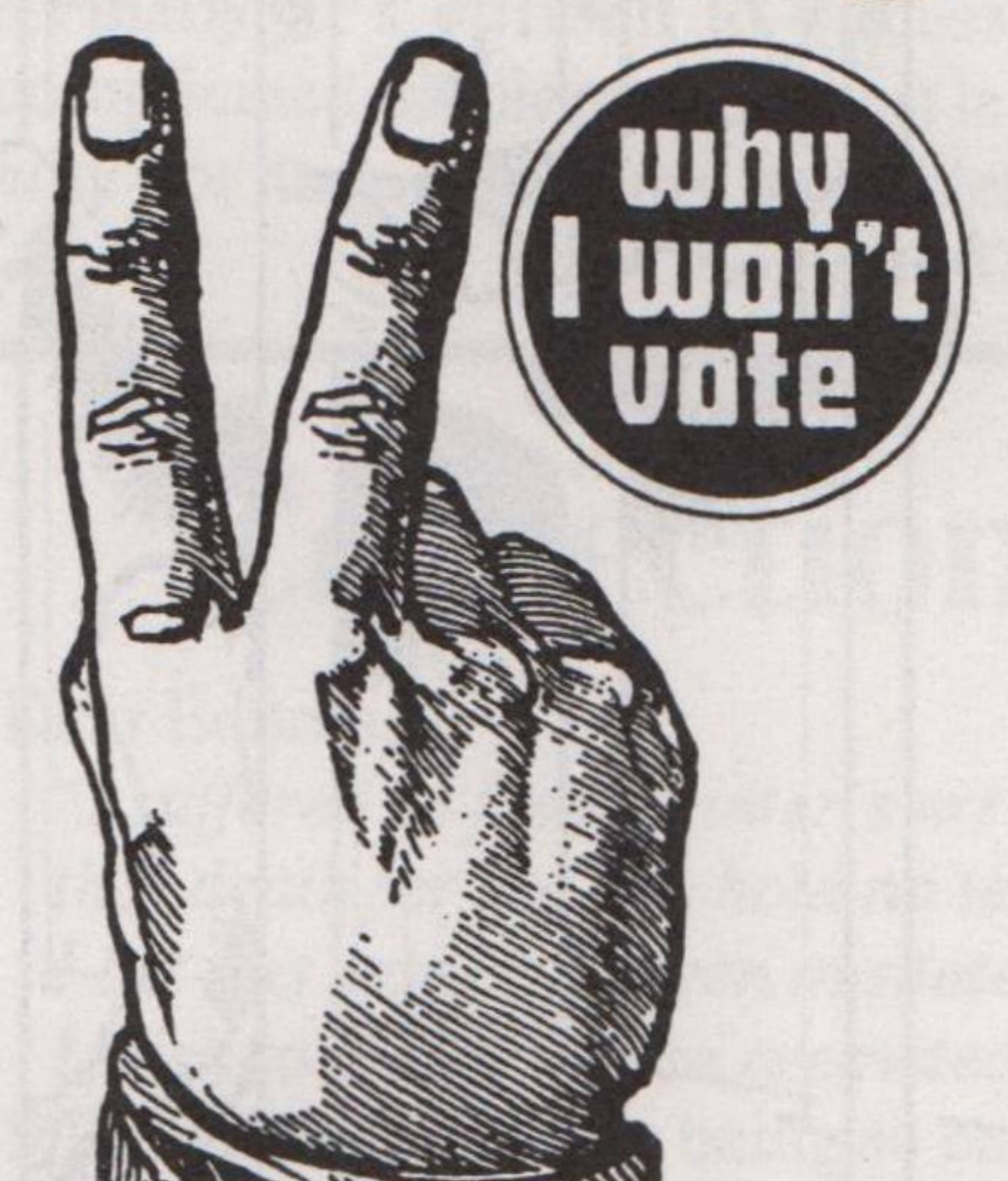
According to *The Guardian's* correspondent:

"Advisers have calculated that one pit and between 800 and 1,000 miners' jobs are lost for every one million tons of UK coal that is replaced by foreign coal."

Since the government is aiming to sell off the coal industry, this is bad news, but it is even more bad news for thousands of miners who will be made redundant with little hope of finding other employment. But also once a pit is closed down it would be virtually impossible if, at a later date, changed circumstances made it worthwhile to resume work in those pits.

Is this all about capitalist efficiency? How more efficient are 14,000 miners producing nothing than when they are producing coal?

On Voting



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So now it's the Liberal Democrats who are going to 'break the mould' (they have in the Party two old political hacks from the SDP mould-breakers to tell them how they didn't!). Surely if the public 'out there', as they say, has heard and digested what Des Wilson told the delegates and the television audience in his speech, nobody would believe it possible to clean up such a political and financial mafia except by a revolution!

The anarchists way back in 1889 parted company with the socialists who said they would bring about socialism by the ballot box. It was all a question of getting the right people into Parliament. Bernard Shaw, a century ago, explained how simple the operation would be: "A House consisting of 660 gentlemen and 10

The socialist advocates of 'good' government as a practical and progressive alternative to 'bad' government must surely admit that their theory that government can ever be anything but 'bad' is receiving one set-back after the other these days. Their arguments for the 'good' government theory are that while recognising that it is not an ideal form of social organisation, nevertheless, if only we could put good men with good ideas at the helm of the ship of state all would be well. The trouble today is that we are governed by 'bad' men and equally 'bad ideas'.

Even if we forget the bad old pre-war years; close our eyes to the lessons to be learned from the revolutionary government of Russia or the Popular Front governments of France and Spain, and limit ourselves to a survey of these post-war years of 'liberation' from the yoke of fascism and colonialism, is there honestly any evidence to support this 'good government' theory? Israel, the brand new state, born of the persecution of a people for their minority (rather than their religious) status; India, liberated from humiliation and the rule of the pukka sahib by a resistance movement which made imperial government untenable; Ghana, granted its independence through a combination of circumstances ... in these countries, leading the governments are 'good' men, not cheapjack professional politicians but men who paid for their resistance with long terms of imprisonment. Educated men, men who, we are told, much more enjoy browsing in Blackwell's Oxford bookshop or spending their evenings with old friends than shouldering the burdens of state. Has their background as 'good' men, as intellectuals, in any way made their governments 'good' governments?

Perhaps, to answer this question, one needs to define the objectives of 'good' government. Is it the raising of the standard of living or that

The Myth of 'Good' Government

of the nation to the status of a world power? Is a good government the one that succeeds in maintaining law and order ... or a combination of all these? We are hard put to think of other 'objectives', yet in considering the above list we cannot point to any government whose objectives were in fact the lowering of the standard of living, of reducing the nation to that of a third rate power, or of abolishing law and order.

All governments hope for the acquiescence of the people, just as they all surround themselves with the necessary force to impose their wishes should that acquiescence be absent. All governments respect the 'rule of law', a meaningless phrase since it is the government which makes the laws, and breaks them, to suit its convenience.

The fact that to many of us the difference between the regimes in Spain and Russia and those in the 'democratic' countries is tangible should not, however, lead us to confuse a subjective reaction with what should be an objective appraisal of government *per se*. It is surely significant that totalitarian regimes arise in those countries where existing governments have lost or are on the point of losing control for a number of reasons: either as a result of popular discontent or from rebellion within their own ranks (generally among the hierarchy of the armed forces). Hitler, Mussolini and Lenin are not phenomena of particular countries. They can arise in any country in similar circumstances.

In this context it is worth quoting Winston Churchill's 1935 summing up of Hitler:

One may dislike Hitler's system and yet admire his patriotic achievement. If our country were defeated I hope we should find a champion as admirable to restore our courage and lead us back to our place among the nations.

Hitler's 'patriotic achievement' was in fact to restore the power and prestige of government in a country in which previous governments were powerless to maintain 'order' or solve the economic and political problems of the hour. Which of these governments was 'good' and which 'bad'? By Churchill's 1935 statement it is clear that he thought Hitler's government *good*, however much he disliked his 'system', and the Bruening government, which had no power, *bad*. On the other hand, if one accepts Jefferson's view that: "That government is best which governs least", then the definitions could be reversed.

The fallacy of attempting to divide

governments into *bad* and *good* is surely exposed in the foregoing. Governments survive not because they are good or bad but because they are *strong*. Governments are strong in so far as there is general public acceptance of the *principle* of government. They are weak where the resistance to government — not the particular government but the system itself — is strong. Thus it is those countries in which a revolutionary situation is present which are also the potential victims of dictatorial government. It is obvious that this should be so. But reformist socialists dishonestly argue against revolution (and for 'good government') on the grounds that revolution *inevitably* breeds dictatorship, which is in fact not true. The man who attempts to scale a mountain may well slip and be killed; but he may also reach the top. The man who forever stands at the bottom is sure not to slip and break his neck; neither, however, will he ever reach the top of the mountain!

The advocates of 'good' government are either wishful thinkers or politicians, and both believe in ruling elites of 'good' men in spite of the fact that Machiavelli warned us in *The Prince*, more than 400 years ago, that "a ruler must learn to be other than good".

Freedom, 7th August 1957

Governments as steps towards Anarchy

There are theories on both the left and the right of politics, which advocate a succession of one or more authoritarian societies, eventually culminating in a society without government.

Best known of these is classical Marxism, which holds that the state will wither away, when people are so equal and interdependent that they no longer need restraint. The first step towards this eventual goal is to impose a very strong government of people of good will who thoroughly understand the theory. Where Marxists have seized power, attempts to put Marxist theory to work have failed because those in power behaved like other bosses. Marxists tell us they were not true Marxists but treacherous villains. Anarchists say the problems of hanging on to power make all bosses behave in substantially the same way.

There are self-styled 'anarcho-capitalists' (not to be confused with anarchists of any persuasion) who want the state abolished as a regulator of capitalism, and all power given to capitalists. Many go no further, but some see the concentration of power in the hands of capitalists as the first step towards a society where every individual is his or her own boss.

Other forms of government advocated as intermediate steps on the road to anarchy are world government, proliferation of small independent states, government by priests, and government by trade union delegates.

The anarchists, and the anarchists alone, want to get rid of government as the first step

in the programme. This does not mean that they suppose government can be abolished overnight. It means that they struggle against government by opposing government, not by trying to replace one government with another.

The hypothetical question 'is anarchy practicable?' is less important to anarchists than the ethical question 'is anarchy worth struggling for?'

Unless and until a society free of coercion exists, nobody can be absolutely certain that such a society is feasible. If it not so, then Marxists and others who set up a strong government, hoping thereby to attain a free society, do not just fail to attain their objective, but end up with more of what they were hoping to eliminate. In opposing rulers and bosses of all kinds, anarchists at least give themselves a chance of ending up with a society freer than it would otherwise have been.

There is an important distinction between revolutionaries, who struggle directly towards a society free of bosses, and reformists, who struggle in the first instance to make bosses of themselves or people who share their opinions. Reformists measure progress by their nearness to power. Anarchists measure progress, in the words of Malatesta*, "by the extent government power and private property are reduced".

DR

* Malatesta's *Anarchy*, Freedom Press, £1.50, post free.

The Immoral Moralists

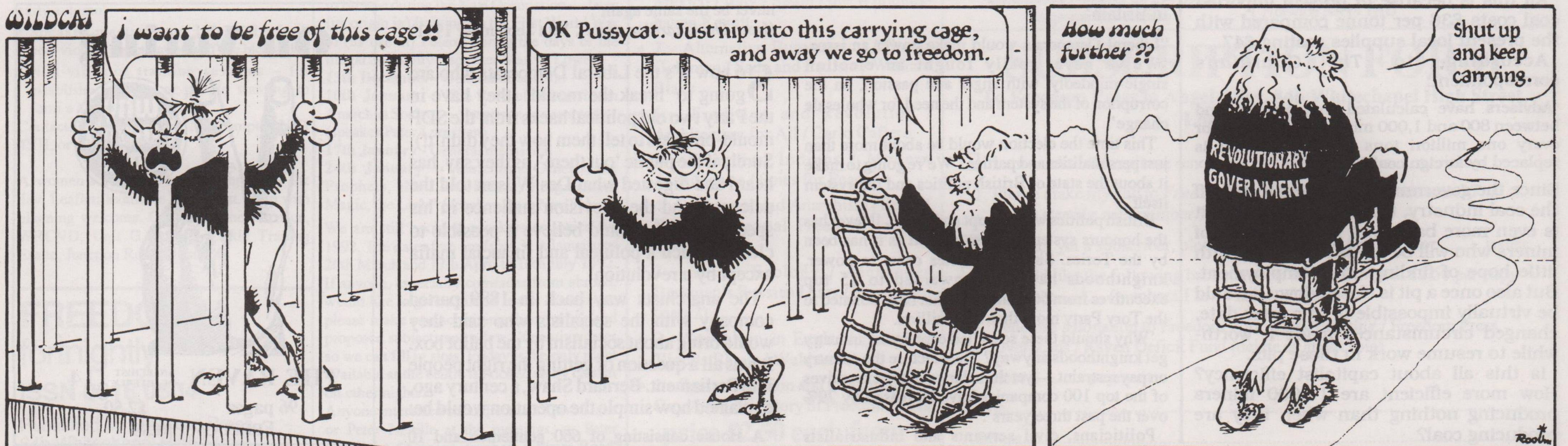
What an extraordinary society we live in when you can see the Prime Minister being photographed in Moscow with the wife and daughters of the Russian spy who defected to this country some years ago and who were about to be reunited with him here, while Randle and Pottle were prosecuted as a result of a petition to the DPP (Director of Public Prosecutions) by more than 100 Tory MPs for their part in the escape by the spy George Blake who was serving a 42-year sentence for spying for both sides instead of just British!

Only the other day gunner Vic Williams was sentenced by a Court Martial to a 14-months prison sentence (in addition to being held in military custody for 100 days pending trial) for one charge of desertion and two of "conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline". Not so long ago television audiences were being shown Mr Yeltsin standing on a Russian tank, and ordinary Moscow citizens yanking out the drivers of military tanks as well as obvious

fraternisation between people and military. This was exploited by the media here as good news and showing how responsible the Russian military proved to be.

We agree wholeheartedly — but why is it praiseworthy when, for reasons of conscience, Russian spies defect to the West and Russian tank drivers and other military personnel refuse to obey orders and fraternise with the people in the streets, but treason and criminal offence when a humble gunner obviously 'has seen the light' as to the disgusting job he is being ordered to do and rebels, or a spy decides that those he is spying on are less disgusting than his masters?

We would hasten to add that we think all spies are disgusting people and we have no time for professional soldiers. They are hired killers not expected to have views on right and wrong, but only to carry out orders. But obviously today so many young people join the services as the only job open to them. Those who, like the young gunner, deserted surely deserve our sympathy and approval.



Riots of Hope or Despair?

(continued from page 1)

without reference to the welfare and psychological well-being of the participants. Decisions are made purely on that basis of money — therefore if it is cheaper to close down a British factory and make the car bodies in Belgium, then that is exactly what happens without regard to the social consequences of those decisions for the workers. Money as an end is prior to the provision of material goods for the community and the personal fulfilment of the workers.

The flawed premiss that 'only money matters' is not just a British problem but also the ethos driving the multinationals, and indeed most of these decisions are being made by the anonymous, inhuman machines in Tokyo, New York and Bonn. The consequence of this global free-market dogma is that now we are left wide open to the international predators. After this prolonged period of systematic asset stripping, the economy is left looking increasingly thin. That the making of money in abstraction does not necessarily provide for our material well-being, and that as a motivating force its value in human terms is low, we need only to look at the Stock Exchange, with its miraculous power of generating millions of pounds out of nothing — and also its power to wipe out those millions at the flick of a switch. The power of the Stock Exchange over the existence of companies also demonstrates the anarchist idea that power and human happiness are incompatible attributes.

There is little that the British state can do to halt or reverse this decline. It is unable to mitigate the effects of long term neglect, nor to prevent the attacks of the foreign predators (Rolls Royce to be taken over by BMW, etc.). To generate sufficient funds for effective intervention would require a massive increase in taxation, and would be a candid admission of the failure of the last decade's policies. To halt

The cost of the increase in wealth for the few is the increase in poverty for the many

the process of asset stripping would be to go against the dogma of the free market. It seems that whatever alterations are likely to be made would be too little, and too late, and therefore the present non-strategy of denial seems to be the only likely option. This will consequently widen the gulf between leaders and population, and further reduce their credibility.

Neither can the British state do anything about the frustration and powerlessness felt by people. It could only devolve power at the cost of its iron-grip over people's lives. It could only reduce the frustration by listening to and following their wishes and thereby changing the centre of gravity of power. The state may well make some cosmetic move in this direction, but it knows that once this starts to happen in any meaningful way the drive towards democratic reform and openness increases, and the situation will run away with itself as it has in Eastern Europe. Any chink of light through the doorway of reform increases hope to the point where that doorway is slammed fully open.

Neither is the state in a position to grant purpose to the lives of the rioters and dispossessed. That great sop to the consciences of the wealthy, the 'trickle down effect', is simply a lie. The cost of the increase in wealth for the few is the increase in poverty for the many. This is most keenly felt in the anonymity and despair of those giant 1960s housing estates. The possibility of mounting some kind of moral/ideological crusade against a foreign enemy to distract attention from the domestic crisis (as with the anti-Russian hysteria of the Cold War) is probably not culturally possible. The Gulf War demonstrated this. Had the war

continued, and the casualties been high, resistance to the war would have deepened and further undermined the credibility of the state.

If we consider the riots as cultural events, then we can see that they fall into place within the context of the ready recourse to violence of the Rambo films, and the endless television car chases. In a world without excitement, what could be better than *real* car chases with the cops, and real violence? Here the danger for the state is large, because each event will have to be bigger and more violent than the previous. The state may well impose a news blackout to deny the oxygen of publicity but this will not affect

The great question is will this emotional force be channelled into change, or dissipated

the rioters on the streets and concrete walkways who are experiencing the excitement at first hand.

Large numbers of people in the cities will be experiencing the riots themselves, while in ignoring them the media will further reduce its credibility. For other reasons too, the circle of believers in the state is diminishing. With each media lie, distortion or omission, we have to ask ourselves who is being addressed in the partial accounts being rendered. Middle class views can no doubt be manipulated against the rioters just as they were against the poll tax protesters, the print unions or the miners. Perceptions are not realities, however, and as the numbers of disenfranchised increase, so will the anger and frustration. Rioters can easily be marginalised, but what about doctors and nurses, teachers, the unemployed, the firemen, the ambulance workers, etc., etc?

The government's circle of friends grows smaller. As this recession of political involvement spreads upwards through the social strata, and when the stagnation of the British state becomes more apparent after the General Election (regardless of outcome) frustration, anger and apathy will become more generalised.

The great question is, will this emotional force be channelled into change, or dissipated? We can look to three indicators of how things might develop.

The excess, existence and success of *Class War* illustrates the point that anger does exist against the present situation. *Class War* may still be in the early phase of its development and is still laying down foundations. Time will show whether its energies can be focused into becoming a constructive force for change.

For a time, the Anti-Poll Tax Movement tapped into this anger, but its energy was largely dissipated in wasteful and pointless political exercises. It had a lack of cohesion and unity over methods and final aims. Some wanted to abolish the tax, others the government which brought it about. Some thought of it as a ready market for recruits and paper sales. Others wanted to use it as a means of influencing the collaborationist Labour Party, or as a springboard to gaining their own power within Labour. Nowhere do we see an active and realistic programme for ridding us of the poll tax beyond the largely passive idea of mass non-payment.

The third indicator, the riots themselves, represent another, more immediately threatening manifestation of this energy. Despair has turned to anger, but not yet to action. The riots are not an immediate threat to the existence of the state (though they undermine its credibility) because they can be contained. As with drugs, as with crime, riots are essentially acts of harming the people committing them — the animals attacking the bars of their cages. The riots indicate to the authorities that they should increase the soma dosage rates.

"Where there is no vision, the people

watch television" — but with the deepening of the recession, the lack of change after the election (so much the worse for 'democracy') if there is a reaction, and even if it involves large numbers of people it will not bring about constructive and permanent changes if it is unfocused. There seems little doubt that things must worsen considerably, and so it is quite likely that large numbers of people, will be reacting against the present situation, but this in itself is not enough.

The case of the poll tax is probably the best example of the three. Trafalgar Square shows the anger against the state, but also the limitations of it. Mass disobedience has made revolt unthinkable, and authority knows this, hence the hysterical over-reaction at Trafalgar. It is said that a million evaded the census, it seems unlikely that this would have happened but for the poll tax. The idea of revolt has been put firmly on the map. Socially, economically and politically, a time-bomb is ticking away under authority.

All three cases show that the mob does not have a mind, for at present when the mass *does* act it is largely ineffective and short term. Moreover, protest in all the

familiar forms is easily rendered invisible. 250,000 protesters in Trafalgar Square merely provided plentiful targets for police truncheons and photographers. On another level, as an exercise in solidarity and as a barometer of public feeling it fulfilled its function. If 25,000 had gone to Cheltenham on that same day and torn Thatcher limb from limb the protest would have been more effective.

Mistrust and hatred for authority can only deepen because of their arrogance and complacency. Mass prosecutions, jailings, the corruption and waste shown by the BCCI collapse, petty harassment by the police, television licence detector vans and the DSS — at every point where the state impinges on people's lives it generates hostility. Problems breed, and the state would seem to be in a 'no win' situation. If they do nothing (the Gorbachev approach) people themselves will become the force behind change. A Tiananmen/Trafalgar Square crackdown will buy time, but make the reaction more intense later. A liberal-reformist attempt at constitutional change offers too little, too late, but opens the door to reform, and will make the demands for radical reform louder. The riots are the first demand for payment of the unpaid bills of the state, but now some kind of bridge towards reform ought to be built as the first step towards positive and lasting change.

Stephen Booth

News from Northern Ireland

The remarks by Peter Brook, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, that the security of everyone who's life is in danger could not be guaranteed at this time marks one of the most glaring admissions by an agent of the State that life in Northern Ireland is expendable. Events are happening here which would be seen as major catastrophes if they developed in Wales or Scotland. Certainly no senior government official would make such a remark about the lives of people in those regions. It can be argued that he was merely stating a truism about the inability of a State to deal with violent activity in a 'democracy'. Various constitutional nationalists have seen it in that light. However, James Molyneux, the sly old fox of Ulster Unionism, quite clearly asserts that the Secretary of State's remarks amount to an admission of failure, in particular of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which came into being because Thatcher said she wanted to see an end to violence. The hypocrisy of that assertion has been more than amply borne out by the deaths and injuries that have mounted since this Agreement's signing. For anarchists the response of the State to the increase in tit-for-tat killing across the sectarian divide is understandable. As long as it is members of the working class who are bumping each other off, they won't care. Paramilitary groups use this reality when they note that one dead soldier here or one dead body in England is worth far more to them than any number of dead bodies in the Six Counties. All of this makes Thatcher's remark that Northern Ireland is as British as Finchley seem particularly hilarious. In working out this latest stage in the post-colonial war in Ireland, the State is playing for time. The key weapons in its arsenal are the emerging Catholic bourgeoisie, emigration of both Catholic and Protestant young people, the submersion of ethnic groups, Irish/Gael and British/Planter, into an homogeneous Europe governed by capital, the erratic but strengthening collusion of the

Establishment in the Irish Republic and the containment of the sectarian conflict in and between the urban and rural working classes. To address all of this will require more than just the nationalist and loyalist dogma most working people are being fed with. New thinking and new opportunities need to be supported that challenge the role of the State and support working people in developing the strength and confidence to meet that challenge.

The local angle on the BCCI affair is that Lisburn Borough Council has £3 million of local people's money tied up in the bank. This money was earmarked for the building of a new civic centre in the town and the chairman of the Council's finance committee, Walter Lilburn, is quoted as saying that they have no immediate use for the money and regardless of the cost to developers like themselves it is in the interest of the country that the corrupt bank be wound up. I wonder how many of the good citizens of Lisburn are wondering why he stopped at banks! Why not local councils, government departments, parliaments. Now you're talking corruption!

Rising unemployment regardless of the level of inflation is borne out by recent figures in the Republic of Ireland. Long held up in Europe as a place which knew how to deal with unemployment, the failure of this fiscal policy to deliver the goods on jobs long after the promised date is producing panic among politicians down south led by John Bruton, leader of the arch-Tory Fine Gael Party. Obviously it is seen as a good stick to beat the government with. You can be sure that Bruton does not have the interests of workers at heart when he calls for a grand forum of politicians, trade unions, community groups and the unemployed. The figure for Donegal was 11,500 in June 1990. It now reads as 12,646, and this from a country with massive emigration.

Dave Duggan

Winning the Class War: an anarcho-syndicalist strategy
Direct Action Movement/IWA — Industrial Commission, 30 pages, £1.00

Just as the working class has become unfashionable on the British trendy left, so the anarcho-syndicalist Direct Action Movement has published a pamphlet about *Winning the Class War*. Just when 'communism' has become the most contemptible word in the international political vocabulary, the writers of this pamphlet declare their passion for 'libertarian communism', carefully evading any mention of anarchism.

Does this suggest insensitivity to current events or courageous determination to swim against the tide? A bit of both I would think.

And yet, this is the best pamphlet to come out of the DAM stable for a long time. Up to 10 pages of a carefully analysed account on the problems and options for working people.

They know the British working classes have their backs to the wall. That the trade unions as 'organisers of discontent' grease the system of industrial relations, look forward to the return of a Labour Government, have paltry visions of 'beer and sandwiches at Number 10' and wish only for enough members to pay the rent on the union headquarters, and finance a legion of officials. Increasingly these are the days of the career union bosses, some of whom have never even worked on the shop floor.

This week the TUC has decided it will not fully oppose the Tory anti-trade union legislation in order not to upset the Labour Party's chances in the next General Election. The pamphlet claims that "the failure of reformist unions to fight anti-working class legislation has led to a regeneration of revolutionary unionism in many parts of the world". Revolutionary unionism, going beyond reformism and pay bargaining, is what the DAM is after.

The pamphlet's writer, part of the DAM Industrial Commission, would not discourage people from joining unions and may even, like their predecessors in the Syndicalist Worker's Federation, encourage their own members to become shop stewards. Yet, they are against general participation in the trade union bureaucracy away from the workplace.

Alternatives to social climbing

In 1919, the syndicalist writer George Sorel (regarded by Gramsci to be an ideologist of the proletariat) wrote: "The idea of a government of producers will not perish; the

Syndicalism's Unfashionable Class

cry 'death to intellectuals' ... may in the end be taken up by workers the world over". The writers of this pamphlet, though they would not call for a 'government of producers', probably do not care much for either intellectuals or anarchists. Sorel, as a syndicalist, considered the anarchists of his day not well developed from a 'class' point of view, owing perhaps to their drawing support mainly from the lumpenproletariat (now called the 'underclass'), the students, and the peasants. Some of the DAM share this Sorelian attitude to the anarchists today and hold us in almost as much contempt as those they call the 'chic, middle class lefties'.

In a way they are right to sneer at the trendy lefties. The middle class left no longer, in the main, see the working class as a serious force for change in society, preferring to identify with other categories (which they used to call marginal categories) such as the women's movement, the gays, the blacks, and any other

cows which may be milked to political advantage.

Wyndham Lewis has said that "the first thing to strike you in the theory of revolutionary syndicalism is the entire absence of economics". History replaces visionary Marxist economics for the syndicalist, and this pamphlet is riddled with contemporary labour history.

The writers will be reassured by a recent *Sunday Express* / MORI opinion poll into social class in Britain, finding that Britons are "more class conscious than ever". Their grasp of history will tell them that class conflict continues in society, even when it is out of the headlines.

But social climbing is rooted in democratic society. Indeed, the main difference for workers between Western democratic regimes and Eastern communism is that the 'get rich quick' societies of capitalism offer a lottery of jobs and rewards, while the state

socialist systems provided carefully regulated hierarchies. Life's more of a gamble under capitalism, and in the near future many of the freed workers in Russia can look forward to hearing the free speeches of their professional politicians, while drawing the dole cheques like the rest of us.

The DAM pamphlet tries to seek alternatives, advocating networks of producers in 'free councils'. They describe revolutionary syndicalism as being in favour of worker's self-management and direct action, against the centralism of the state and its institutions, opposed to the party politicians, hostile to nationalism and militarism.

This pamphlet is a mark of DAM's self confidence. Here they are laying down the basis of a clear alternative programme to the Statists, the party politicians and the social climbing socialists. It doesn't matter if they are perverse in their language, or even rude to *Freedom* and the anarchists. I can forgive all that, just so long as DAM refrains from joining that yelping league of lady's lapdogs behind the feminist gender politicians, the fashionable ideologues, and all those whinging ethnics who put colour before class.

Brian Bamford

A Structured Anarchism: an overview of libertarian theory and practice by John Griffin, 37 pages, £1.00

This book is written, the introduction tells us, to help anarchists sharpen up their thinking in certain areas; it is not intended as an introduction to anarchist thought, although it would have obvious appeal to interested non-anarchists, and thus the helpful introduction and glossary (Chapter 1) do more than merely define 'isms' or explain the author's usage of terminology.

This is a short opus, and with the preliminaries over Griffin launches straight into the heavy meat. Chapters 2-5 (on 'Sociology', 'Social Psychology', 'The Market and Money' and 'Systems of Production') offer very useful background reading on the anarchist perspective and critiques of classical and Marxist sociology, ideology and economics. This is a good, clearly-explained descriptive section and well worth reading thoroughly.

The next section, Chapters 6-8 (on 'The Factory Collective', 'Competition, Capitalism and Bureaucracy' and 'Ecology,

Towards a Structured Anarchism

Technology and Organisation'), looks forward to the problems likely to be faced by a collectivist society — and suggests some possible solutions, based on recent experience rather than theory alone. Griffin puts forward cogent reasons for his argument that in the initial stages an anarchist society would be collectivist (libertarian and using a monetary means of exchange, rather than based on mutual aid or pure communism) and would continue many of the forms and aspects which exist in present-day society.

I found this section interesting, but personally felt it to be the least satisfactory part of the book, particularly Chapter 8. Perhaps this is because these chapters are more personal in style and point of view and thus not as detached in tone or as rigorous in their analysis as the earlier ones.

Whilst it is definitely stimulating and

thought-provoking, much of this booklet is indeed of a speculative nature — one almost misses the comforting inexorability of Hegelian/Marxist dialectic! I think that to a great extent the title is misplaced, in that the view of anarchism which emerges is not to my mind particularly 'structured'. However, besides being consistently well-written and informative, this short book does raise many important issues and make many useful points — for example in Chapter 4, Griffin rightly complains that at present anarchist discussion of economic and organisational problems lacks depth and suggests ways in which our thinking in these areas might move forward, and I was glad to see the emphasis in Chapter 6 on the crucial question of scale in production units although surprisingly smallness of scale is not advocated throughout. Chapter 4 as a whole deserves to be read and re-read, not just for what it says about money and trade but particularly for its insights into the way real people actually think and behave as individuals and in communities.

Chapter 9 (Conclusions), whilst slightly didactic in tone and perhaps unnecessary in a book of such short length, summarises the author's position as expounded in the earlier chapters and in so doing gives a good if very brief overview of present thought and trends in the anarchist movement.

This book is not — nor was it intended to be — a seminal or original work in terms of theory, but it contains much to mull over and digest and is of relevance to anarchists of all persuasions — and may also be of interest to non-anarchists (or the perplexed amongst those of us who call ourselves anarchists) who want a short, clear and concise view of what modern anarchist thought is about. Particularly this is a welcome contribution to economic thinking and has appeared at a time when the main alternative system to our present free market chaos, the centralist command-economics of state capitalism, seems to be acknowledging failure.

A worthy first effort, John! I'm looking forward to the next.

Katy Andrews

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ROMANTICISM

According to Bertrand Russell, Romanticism was first connected with politics through Rousseau. He tells the reader of *The History of Western Philosophy* that the Romantics wanted "beauty rather than utility", that their morals were based primarily on aesthetic motives, that they admired strong passions whatever the consequences, and that blood relatives, nationality and race held very great importance for them. The learned sage was, of course, considering a particular section of humanity at a particular time in history, but in reality, romanticism, with a small 'r', has been affecting human lives for thousands of years before Rousseau made a note of it. The fact that it is still in full cry despite the advances made by scientists suggests that it is being used by those in power for their own ends.

Romanticism is directed at the emotions, obviously, since it is quite incompatible with the scientific and logical approach. Romance, as our dictionaries explain, is falsehood. An animated mouse called Mickey may have its delightful place on a screen where the watching infant has no reason to connect it with reality, but the attribution of magical powers to human beings in a serious context

is something young people, especially, should not be subjected to.

Romanticism enters into every aspect of our lives with disastrous consequences. It is the prime conditioning agent of governments, religious movements, the military and commercial interests. It is disseminated by royalty, the priesthood, politicians, generals, newspaper owners, film magnates, brewers and fashion designers. Music, ritual and regalia are cunningly employed for its advancement. It is the life-blood of nationalism, racialism and religion. It supports war, elitism, the automobile industry, Eton College and holy matrimony. As the latter dissolves into unholy divorce at an alarmingly increasing rate, so do the other institutions beget dreadful calamities.

Of all the forces that impinge upon our lives, nationalism is surely the greatest. This idea, which is presented as a vital necessity to our safety and well-being, but in fact constitutes the gravest threat to humanity, is pressed home with relentless vigour by intensive indoctrination — a process which calls heavily upon romantic notions.

Since infants are incapable of assimilating ideas of nationhood, they must first be

encouraged to accept and conform to strange ritual and accept fantasy and fiction as though it were true and factual. If this process is carried out over the ensuing years, the child will automatically accept it and subsequently join in unquestioningly; it is in the nature of children to imitate adults and to obtain satisfaction from so doing.

One of the first rituals, christening, or some other equivalent depending largely on country of birth, usually takes place at the stage when the infant is not aware of the significance of the ceremony, but there may be an awareness of something strange; all those people, the water, the silence, a strange intoning voice, a funny smell perhaps, which makes an impression on the innocent mind. Thus begins a long, intensive process of indoctrination which, whether or not aided and abetted by the child's parents, continues at nursery school and subsequently throughout the educational programme. The result of such indoctrination into the romantic, i.e. false, idea of nationalism is an acquiescent population which, even in the worst financial crises, can be rallied behind the flag by warnings of an (inferior) enemy outside the gates. That population will not be aware of the enemy within.

The more heterogeneous the population, the more intensive must be the indoctrination; thus in every school in the USA the lessons

(continued on page 6)

The Government's Biggest Con is Over

When a country is managed with blatant inefficiency and social conditions become intolerable, those who are not anarchists imagine that all is required is a change of government. So they trot along to the polling booths and vote to replace Tweedledum by Tweedledee. They have been conned by their government into believing that the state pattern of society is faultless and indispensable, so they think that all they have to do is choose the right kind of government. Sometimes they may even change from a democracy to a dictatorship or vice versa.

If the social conditions in a country are absolutely intolerable, however, an ever more drastic change is considered necessary. The people, while still believing that there is no alternative to the state pattern of society, now blame their troubles on the economic system they happen to be using. They now believe that the social failure they experience is the result of using either capitalism or socialism. So to improve their lot, those who live under a capitalistic society change it to a socialist society, and those who use a socialistic society change it to a capitalistic society.

Recent events in the USSR have now proved that socialism, as administered by governments, is a failure. So the people there are accepting what is now called a 'market economy'. This is the fashionable name for capitalism. The word 'capitalism' is not used because it might conjure up pictures of societies where the few exploit the many, where there is great wealth inequality, massive starvation, inflation, and unemployment. It might conjure up pictures

of countries with so few houses that many have to sleep in cardboard boxes. The capitalistic governments are now telling us that socialism is a failure because there is a lack of food and goods in the shops. What about the thousands of people who die of starvation every day in the third world? They are using the capitalist economy. Perhaps someone should tell them how lucky they are!

Because the Western governments have a capitalistic economy, they are interested in its maintenance. That is why we find that during the Russian revolution of 1917, Western forces were sent into Russian soil in an attempt to stop the spread of socialism. And now, in 1991, when a coup could have prevented the spread of capitalism, the Western forces were on the side of the established government that was changing it! Now the American government offers to help the people in what was the USSR only if they 'reform' and change to what is called a free society. By a free society, governments do not mean a society where people are free to govern themselves; they mean a society where those with enough capital are free to exploit other people.

All history has now proved that both

capitalism and socialism, as administered by governments, is a failure. It is now blatantly obvious that the failure of our society is not due to the political party we have in power, the

form of our government, or the economic system we happen to be using. It has never been easier to show people that the cause of their troubles is the state pattern of society. So now is the time to expose the governments' biggest con job.

People have been conned into accepting the state long enough. It is time they realised that the state must be destroyed and replaced by a truly free society. Now is the time for anarchists to help them do it.

Derrick A. Pike

Law 'n' Ordure

It is essential that revolutionaries understand the nature of the society that they reject, and the movement of opinion within it; therefore, however little anarchists may be interested in the 'Law and Order' shrieks of the political mainstream, it is worthy of our notice when the term is radically re-interpreted, when one day it means one thing, and another something completely different.

When Thatcher came to power, Tory Conference calls for law and order (while no doubt in part merely the product of the perennial baying for blood by the hangers and floggers, and also in part a weapon in an anti-union crusade, pickets and strikers, *whether their actions were in fact legal or not*, being painted as threats to the law, and equated in propaganda with housebreakers) were nevertheless built into something of a faith.

The impression was given that if ever the Tories were elected to power, the criminals would hand in their jemmies and forswear burglary for ever; that there was widespread contempt for 'law and order' which was all the fault of Leftists — pacifists who opposed military service and weaponry, the aforementioned strikers, people who tried to obstruct 'the democratic right' of fascists to beat hell out of their black neighbours, cranks who objected to 'legitimate' business exercising its right to poison the environment, and 'humourless' women who objected to men treating them like dirt.

This contempt for law and order from the Left (and the permissive society which was deemed to be connected) and also the disrespect being shown to politicians, judges and police (particularly after exposures of corruption in the alternative press) was the main (if not only) reason for the large number of thefts or acts of violence. All, in consequence, that it would take to lessen this rising wave of crime was to restore the dignity of the forces of law and order, and elect a government which would back these.

Nowadays, when Tory politicians talk on this their favourite subject, it is usually to upbraid householders and car owners for not taking sufficient care of their property, for leaving things unlocked (long gone are the days when Tories on platforms would take it for granted that we ought to be able to live in a society where everyone could

safely leave their goods unsecured, trusting their fellow citizens); everyone knows that the incidence of crime has increased — during Tory rule — exponentially.

What is intriguing is that although Labour makes much of the fact that the crime rate has risen so fast, it never considers why. It has never bothered to make the link with 'privatisation'. The theory is, of course, that things which were bureaucratically nationalised by Labour have been restored (the curious phrase, in the circumstances, of 'sold to the public' being used to make it particularly glamorous). In fact some industries have been privatised which were initially nationalised by Tory governments; some things, such as the TSB, have been sold which never belonged to the government in the first place (and Tory plans for local government will take that much further).

The whole process of asset-stripping (done in a way that makes a high percentage of the population, in some small degree, receivers of stolen goods) coupled with the relentless Thatcherite stress on the importance of material wealth, connected as it has been with a whole series of scandals (Wright, Belgrano, Donnington Fires, Stalker, Murrell, Larsen, Gibraltar shootings, Harrods money, safety sacrificed to penny-pinching causing Zeebrugge, Kings Cross, Clapham Junction and similar tragedies) of course makes absurd the almost idolatrous reverence for law and order that the Tories used to show.

But while Labour is ready to steal Tory clothes and is clearly aware that this, in particular, is an item of traditional Tory dress that the opposition can now don, there is no attempt to explain why the Tories didn't fulfil this promise. No effort to show the hypocrisy of the Conservative Party, no one tries to show that lip service to law and order was used to camouflage a regime of pillage. Naturally we expect gutlessness from the Labour Party, but is it only gutlessness? Or is it something more sinister. Is Labour's failure to make political capital — *one would have thought easy political gains* — out of this Tory deceit motivated by a desire to keep the voters in ignorance so that a future Labour government can get its snout into the same trough?

Laurens Otter

Romanticism

(continued from page 5)

are preceded by an act of devotion to the Stars & Stripes. Without that brainwashing, the Vietnam war might have been a non-starter, never mind a non-finisher. Likewise, the more outrageous the policies of governments, the harsher must be the brainwashing techniques; hence the formation of the Hitler Youth in the days of the Third Reich. An emperor, preferably divine, is a most desirable asset to any nation intent on barbarity, but since we have seen the last of that phenomenon, brainwashing techniques, of necessity, have had to be improved. Having no divine royal personage to rally its multi-ethnic population, the USA has done a remarkable job, relying as it does on a President who is, on paper at least, impeachable. In Britain, with a growing ethnically diverse population and a vulnerable established church, we may expect the American system to find its way over the Atlantic soon.

Shakespeare said that all the world is a stage. The pity is that this is so. And the orator is a particularly dangerous animal. Great oratory is poetry, rhythm, display, cadence and, usually, histrionics, where fact and reasoning take second place to rhetoric and emotion. So many great orators, like Hitler, are physically inadequate men who compensate by adopting that posturing talent. The voice is mightier than the pen — or muscle. Used in conjunction with music, spectacle, etc., which can affect all of the senses except the common one, oratory can be fatal. The difference between the orator and the rabble-rouser is purely political.

Romance is essential to business concerns. We have all heard the one about selling refrigerators to the Eskimos, but that in fact is just what the car manufacturers do. Nobody in their right mind would ever dream of paying money for a 100mph vehicle which is prohibited from exceeding 70mph for long journeys, 50mph for medium journeys and unable, due to traffic congestion, to average 30mph on short trips. Yet they fall over themselves in the rush to buy. As a result, they kill five thousand people and maim many times that number annually, they pollute the atmosphere, ruin public transport, clog towns with car parks and get 'piles' in the process.

The Eskimos must surely be laughing at us.

Alcohol is wreaking havoc in our society, yet royalty are toasted with it, police canteens serve it and churchmen pass it round as a symbolic substitute for Christ's blood. Alcohol is highly romanticised. Even government campaigns advise 'teach your children to drink sensibly' when nobody can possibly know whether they are potential addicts. Wine is so romanticised that hundreds of pounds can be paid for a litre of old, contaminated liquid drug.

Religion deserves special mention because, apart from its exceptionally romantic nature, it is used by governments as moral justification for their barbaric action. In the great war of 1914-18, both sides used the same religion to facilitate participation in what was to be the greatest mass slaughter in history. Tragically, people tend to accept the word of their religious leaders, thus relieving themselves of personal responsibility for their own actions.

A very important fact emerges from a study of nationalism, racialism and religion — virtually all of the apologists and leaders involved are of the male gender. It might come as a shock to most people that it is the man, and not the woman, who is the incurable romantic. Nevertheless this is so, and perhaps for a very understandable reason — women have no need to create magic out of the imagination. A woman's life is one round of pure magic from the moment that conception occurs. When the baby is born, the magician's rabbit comes out of the hat. From that moment on, the woman's life is full, there being little need, let alone time, to invent something 'larger than life'; no need for meditation in search of 'truths' that bypass reason. A woman's purpose in life is right there, staring her in the face, yelling its demands.

There is no real need for men to invent gods, invariably male, when there is a very necessary and very obvious role for them to play, namely helping to care for their children. Children should be a joy and a purpose in life that is of infinitely greater satisfaction than chasing flights of fancy and building the results up into dogma to be fought over on some bloody battlefield.

Ernest F. Crosswell

The Party Political Circus

(continued from page 2)

years in office after World War Two nationalised a number of industries and services, they put *their* men at the top. They were not paid as much as the industrial tycoons, but most of them used the power and status thereby gained to exploit richer fields. How many Labour Party ministers ended up in the Tory party?

So don't believe a word of this new look Liberalism. If they get power (and they are relying on a hung Parliament to do a bit of political blackmailing) they will be no different from any other politicians throughout history. After all, it was a Liberal historian, Lord Acton, who warned us that "power tends to corrupt", and not even anarchists are immune as the Spanish revolution of 1936 clearly demonstrated.

There are no 'good' governments; they all rely on force (police, prisons, army, laws) to implement their programmes, which in an unequal society will invariably favour one section at the expense of the other. Privilege in the affluent society is so entrenched that nothing short of revolution will ever dislodge it.

As anarchists we are certainly in the political wilderness (as our friend George Walford is

always reminding us). The Russian anarchists were the first victims of the Bolsheviks in 1917 because they argued that communism could not be imposed from above. Just as they split from the politicians of the Second International who said they were going to bring about socialism by the ballot box and 'good government'. The Communist Third International has collapsed and all the Social Democrats and their Second International can do is to try and convince us that they can run capitalism better than capitalists. Not a word about socialism!

So were/are the anarchists wrong and wasting their lives in refusing to be seduced by 'revolutionary' governments, 'good' governments, and 'socialism via the ballot box'?

Anarchism is, in the first place, *a way of life* for those who have spent more time thinking of all its implications than on scrawling 'A' symbols on walls. That some of us are also propagandists in spite of the apparent 'hopelessness' of our task is that we are even more certain that silence is even more hopeless. And not least, however well we may manage our own lives, inspired by our anarchist ideas, most of us also feel very much involved in the world around us!

Self-confessed War Criminals

To defend one's territory from the invader; to react violently to a military coup (such as in Spain 1936) would seem to be, to most people, a human, reasonable reaction. War between states is a crime which cannot be justified. The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq was a crime. The war by the United States and Britain plus bribed allies such as Egypt to dislodge Iraq from Kuwaiti territory was yet another war crime since it was obvious that, but for the oil and the possibility of Saudi Arabia also being invaded (more oil) where vast Western financial interests were involved, literally nothing would have moved US military might plus the British hangers-on to get involved.

They did, and the rent-an-army US-Brit forces have been generously paid for by their Arab hosts — so much so that the British government has been able to present a less unfavourable balance of payments for the first half of the year thanks to the £1,500 million contribution to their war effort from the Arab states!

The victorious allies returned home to a relatively subdued welcome and march-past in the UK, but to a rapturous welcome in the United States. General Norman Schwarzkopf had a hero's welcome. Paperbacks on his life and career have appeared in this country. There is also talk that he has retired from the army, that he will choose a political career to culminate his military genius.

But like all these hype situations eventually the truth, like worms out of the

woodwork, will emerge. And every time they reveal the ruthlessness of the American forces in action. Vietnam and the destruction of plant life by Agent Orange sprays; but before that, in the Second World War the calculated starvation of German prisoners of war (see *Freedom*, 4th May 1991). Now we are beginning — only beginning — to learn the facts of the American annihilation of the Iraqi forces.

The Guardian (13th September) to its credit, though on its back page, reproduces an American *Newsday* report on "Operation Desert Storm" which, were it not for the fact that it quotes verbatim American officers, one would have hesitated to believe possible.

"The American army division that broke through the Iraqi front line in Kuwait used earthmovers and ploughs mounted on tanks to bury thousands of Iraqi soldiers — some still alive and firing their weapons — in more than seventy miles of trenches, according to US army officials.

While 2,000 soldiers surrendered, Iraqi dead and wounded as well as soldiers still firing their weapons were buried beneath tonnes of sand, according to participants in the carefully rehearsed assault.

"Once we went through there, other than the ones who surrendered, there wasn't anybody left", Captain Bennie Williams, who was awarded the Silver Star for his role in the assault, said.

"For all I know, we could have killed thousands", Colonel Anthony Moreno, commander of the 2nd Brigade, said.

In most cases, each section of the trench line was assigned two Abrams battle tanks with ploughs shaped like giant teeth. The tanks took up positions on either side of the trenches, most of them 3ft wide and 6ft deep. Bradley Fighting Vehicles and

armoured carriers straddled the trenches and fired at the Iraqi soldiers as the tanks buried them with sand.

"I came through right after the lead company", Colonel Moreno said. "What you saw was a bunch of buried trenches with peoples' arms and things sticking out of them".

Every American in the assault was inside armoured vehicles, impervious to Iraqi small-arms fire. As the juggernaut rolled along, it had a dramatic effect on other Iraqi troops.

"I know burying people like that sounds pretty nasty", Colonel Maggart said, "but it would be even nastier if we had to put our troops in the trenches and clean them out with bayonets".

Colonel Moreno acknowledged the attack was at odds with an army doctrine that calls for, but does not require, troops to leave their armoured vehicles to capture the trenches, or to bypass and isolate fortified positions.

"This was not doctrine", Colonel Moreno said. "My concept is to defeat the enemy with your power

and equipment. We're going to bludgeon them with every piece of equipment we've got. I'm not going to sacrifice the lives of my soldiers".

Lieutenant Colonel Hawkins ordered construction of a three mile wide replica of the front lines at the Iraqi-Saudi border, so that the division could practise the burying tactics.

The Pentagon has withheld details of the assault from both the House of Representatives and Senate armed services committees, according to committee officials.

The Senate chairman, Sam Nunn, said he would seek additional information from the Pentagon. "It sounds to me like another example of the horrors of war".

That Saddam Hussein is a criminal does not need repeating. But what of the 'Crusaders for the Liberation of Kuwait'?

When will Bush and Schwarzkopf and his minions be hauled before a war crimes tribunal?

Riots for Social Improvement

Some riots (i.e. fights between gangs of police and gangs of civilians) are connected with the quality of life in the places where they take place. During the past ten years they have occurred in Brixton, Bristol, Liverpool, Cardiff and Tottenham, among other places, and during the past couple of weeks in Oxford, Birmingham and Tyneside.

They develop in similar ways. A poor area becomes poorer. Some of the inhabitants turn to crime. The place gets a reputation as a criminal area. As a result unemployment increases, services are withdrawn, businesses leave the area, and local voluntary initiatives fail for lack of resources. Crime increases. The police get heavy-handed and contemptuous, the population resentful. Eventually someone is killed or injured by the police. This is the trigger for rioting to start.

Government spokespersons and right-wing media carry on about lawlessness and lack of parental discipline, and call for crackdowns. Opposition spokespersons say there can be no excuse for rioting, but the government is to blame for increased unemployment and shortage of police manpower.

Eventually the police win the battle, arrests are made, 'order is restored'. But that is not the end.

What happens next is that businesses, local authorities, charities, environment ministers after favourable publicity, all rush to help. Services are restored, local voluntary groups are financed, living conditions get better than they have been for decades.

Meadow Well in North Tyneside was the location

of riots on four days last week. The trigger was the death of two young men in a stolen car, which the police say was incompetently driven at speed, and which local residents say was rammed by a police car. Some of the rioters have told reporters they set fire to shops with the intention of inducing police into the area, so that they could be attacked.

In March this year, the Neighbourhood Initiative Foundation, a charity, published a book by its director Anthony Gibson called *A New Heart for Meadow Well*, describing the work of local volunteers in this area of high (80%) unemployment. In October (unless plans are changed) the Department of the Environment is to publish a guide book on neighbourhood self-help initiatives, using Meadow Well as a model.

Since March, the local youth club has closed, the local library has closed, and a group of mothers who ran trips off the estate has run out of funds.

Does anyone doubt that funds are even now on the way to Meadow Well to re-open the closed facilities and restart the stopped initiatives? In a year or two, Meadow Well might become fashionable, as Brixton has since the riots of 1981. Without the riots, Meadow Well would just have fallen further into ruin and decay.

We do not advocate riots. That would be pointless. People riot because they are furious, not because (as bemused right-wing commentators sometimes guess) 'anarchists from outside the area' instruct them to riot. But we observe that in the long run, riots tend to improve the quality of life.

Science News

August, the month the press is said to seek out silly stories, is also the month the British Association for the Advancement of Science holds its annual jamboree. This year, in Plymouth, scientists brought news of their latest discoveries to the general public, particularly its younger members, in talks designed to show how science is both interesting and of benefit to mankind. Those of us not attending the conference could only read what news editors thought sufficiently titillating, although many of the speakers seemed to have been quite adept at feeding them publicity-seeking headlines.

We learnt that frequent sex (how frequent?) is enjoyed by nearly half the couples in their sixties but by only 15% of those surviving into their eighties; that teenagers misbehave because they watch too much television, not because they witness too much sex and violence but because they are left with too little time to learn to socialise. "We could all write music like Mozart if we practised enough" made a good headline but complete nonsense. Dinosaurs croppped more than once, of course, and we learnt that they were caring parents, although not how much this contributed to their 165 million years survival. About humans we were not surprised to learn that the IQ test is not an ideal way to measure human potential nor that families now take fewer meals together, particularly in those homes where the mother worked full-time outside the home. Living in the country is risky, we were told, even in Britain — you can catch a rheumatic disease from tick bites, bracken spores can give you cancer, a scratch from a bramble can give you

hepatitis, and as for pruning roses, there were 1,800 secateur accidents last year. Apparently ships of the future will be crewless although hopefully more effectively than London's Docklands Light Railway. One step closer to the completely leisured society no doubt.

The keynote speech was given by the former chairman of British Gas. He praised the industrial culture and regretted the lack of support for its efforts but said nothing of captains of industry using their pay increases to cavort in the Caribbean while their workers join the dole queue, nor of industry's contribution to the destruction of our environment.

One subject not discussed at the conference was disposal of the nuclear waste created by science and industry. NIREX, the organisation responsible for disposal of low and intermediate waste, having failed to persuade people in other parts of the country to accept it, now favours dumping it in tunnels under Sellafield, a.k.a. Windscale, in Cumbria. After all, the place is pretty radio-active already. But the greatest madness comes from a government appointed committee which is suggesting that high level waste could be put there as well if the tunnels were made big enough, although it would cost as much as the Channel Tunnel. They also suggest this would be somewhere to put Britain's worn out nuclear submarines. The heat likely to be generated below Cumbria would make global warming due to greenhouse gases locally irrelevant. Faced with such dangerous nonsense, what chance has the British Association for the Advancement of Science of persuading the British public of the humanity and sagacity of today's scientists?

HS

News from Angel Alley

Did you miss us? Life went on as usual in Angel Alley with some of us having to double up for those on holiday.

The advert in the last issue of *Freedom* for the bookshop contained a serious mistake. On Saturday nowadays the bookshop is open from 10.30am to 5.00pm, not 2.00pm.

At the time of writing *The Raven* number 15 is all set up in type, but it may not be out this month (September) as hoped. But you never know what miracles can be achieved by our comrade printers Aldgate Press!

We have a number of Freedom Press titles in progress as we write. We are hoping that the two remaining volumes of the centenary series will be published by January and there are three discussion series titles being researched and written which, hopefully, will also be published by the end of the year.

With this issue we shall be sending out pink reminders which regretfully are final reminders. We can ill-afford to lose readers but financially we cannot afford to go on sending *Freedom* to lapsed subscribers who cannot

even take the trouble to write and say that they want the paper but cannot afford it.

Our thanks to all friend who have sent donations to our three funds.

DONATIONS

16th August-7th September 1991

Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund

Liverpool MD £20, Wolverhampton JL £2, New York FT £15, Newport NHF £5, Chorley PC £4.50, Ilfracombe RIL £1, Penzance JM £2, London E11 BM £1.

Total = £50.50
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Total = £67.34
1991 total to date = £630.27

Raven Deficit Fund

Gateshead GD £13, New York FT £15, Chorley PC £5.

Total = £23.00
1991 total to date = £455.60

Natural Anarchism

Dear Editors,
John R. Doheny's article 'Natural Anarchism' (*Freedom* 10th August) argues that human beings are natural anarchists, meaning "we are questioning creatures, actively seeking independence, equality and self-sufficiency". Yes, we do display these tendencies, but we also display contrary ones, and these have predominated; unless we accept this the rise and long history of authoritarian society, with its hierarchy, dependency and imposed inequality remain inexplicable.

Doheny calls the work of A.S. Neill in support, but he gives us no reason to think that the children who enjoyed the free self-expression of Summerhill grew into those troublesome, argumentative, revolutionary creatures known as anarchists; rather than actively seeking independence, equality and self-sufficiency they seem to have fitted into authoritarian society more smoothly than most. Neill himself provided the nearest approach to an anarchist in that scene, and he did not come from a school encouraging children to express their natural impulses.

So far as adult society goes Doheny argues only for the presence, since the seventeenth century, of a persistent anarchist or anarchistic minority in the more advanced nations. What happened to humanity's natural anarchism during the previous forty thousand years?

Over many years of trying to understand why anarchism makes so little progress I have found myself obliged to accept that we cannot sensibly regard it as a natural tendency. Early human communities, closer to the natural condition than modern societies, did not have government, but they still do not rank as anarchies in any sense recognised by the anarchist movement. In his valuable book *People Without Government*, Harold Barclay tries hard to

show that they do deserve the title, but he succeeds only at the cost of redefining an anarchy as a society which may include slavery and a debased pariah caste (see recent correspondence in *Freedom*).

Theories of anarchism do not begin to make sense unless they recognise that it arises as far more a social than a natural phenomenon. In social history the movement towards it first appeared as a response to the centralised state of modern times, and in the mental development of the individual it differs radically from childish impetuosity and juvenile disorder. Unlike these features, anarchism calls for effort from its adherents, and it acquires enough meaning and value to justify this only as the person comes to appreciate the failings of the more obvious approaches to society and the problems it poses. Hence the rarity of anarchists, a highly unnatural species.

George Walford

On the Gibson Pilgrim Saga

Dear Editors,

I am not sure as to the root causes of the slanging match between Tony Gibson and John Pilgrim — I suspect they go a little deeper than nineteenth century ideas about motivation. As an occasional reader, though, I do find the attempt to argue that those who read or draw from Marx are necessarily Marxists, and that Marxists are necessarily communists or supporters of communist regimes to be sinister, illogical and at variance with the facts. It suggests the sort of rigid orthodoxy that we used to associate with the Communist Party or the Catholic Church. At the very least it suggests that (some) anarchists have an idea of a 'politically correct reading list' — deplorable to say the least.

Gibson and Pilgrim, however, appear to be occupying different universes with Pilgrim talking about Marx's contribution to sociology and Gibson about Marx's rather less admirable political activities. The two aspects do not always sit easily with each other.

In one respect, though, Pilgrim is quite right. It is necessary to separate Marx's sociology from his political predilections, just as it is necessary to separate Kropotkin's study of ecological balance and mutual aid from his support for the Provisional Government of 1917 or his flirtation earlier with propaganda by the deed. It is even more necessary to separate Marx's own ideas from the variegated body of scholarship and opportunism that followed.

Marx's solid contribution to the social sciences (including history) cannot be dismissed because of the hostilities of the First International. Marx belongs, along with Spencer, Durkheim, Weber, Mill and Comte, among the founders of sociology. All of them had their ambiguities. One can draw libertarian and authoritarian traditions from J.S. Mill, for example, just as one can draw statist and anti-statist lines from Marx or, to go back a bit, fascist or anarchist lines from Rousseau.

Bakunin can indeed be credited with being the first to infer Lenin from Marx but it is not the whole of Marx even if we treat Marx simply as a political philosopher. It is tendentious to pretend it is. And if it be true, as Barbara Goodwin says, that anarchism and Marxism are both species of the genus socialism it is also true that communism is best understood as a political practice rather than as an ideology.

John Ebbrell

Dear Freedom,

Firstly, thanks for printing my letters/articles on nationalism, etc.

I feel I must reply to Ernie Crosswell's letter about my last piece. He criticises the last section in it, in which I expressed my feelings on Yugoslavia. I wrote the letter and posted it a month before it appeared and I agree with him in so far as I feel developments have made my statement seem confused. I wrote it after I had seen some of the early footage from there: a road blocked with lorries to stop the army being bombed by a jet. What I wrote was my gut reaction — the lorry drivers' running for cover didn't seem to allow for any intellectualisation of the event. It's the same when I see pictures from anywhere in the world of cops beating people, I know where my sympathy lies and what I would wish to happen to the cop. With the lapse in time and the development of a complex and messy conflict, I can see that my gut reaction to a specific situation doesn't read well now.

As for contradictions, life's full of them, and compromises, both to varying degrees. People do what they do, no matter how well they articulate what they think the right thing to do is, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I suppose contradictions can be reduced if people stay 'pure' and don't mess their hands with the real world. Have the 'ideologically correct' interpretations which compel you to remain aloof. And this leads to Ernie's 'semi-anarchist' range of individuals, thanks to there being no party line to toe. I, like I think many people who call themselves anarchists, didn't come to my beliefs through books, I felt certain things to be unfair and saw the use of power and the treatment of people and found myself

Nationalism

with a view on the world. I found anarchism encompassed what I felt and through time and experience and learning developed what I believe. I've read many classic anarchist works, Goldman and Berkman I found inspirational, they articulated what I felt but could grasp at the time, and gave new views and interpretations. I've always thought that the beauty of anarchism was its focus on people, its room for differences in them and its belief in their value and rights. The recognition of the reality of power and thinking for yourself. So people who act as if they have the 'holy scriptures' on anarchism and seem to jealously guard their treasure have always seemed a bit out of place to me. Elitism has always struck me as little more than power, using peer group pressure to obtain its position and keeping it through creating a god which only they know and can interpret.

The last paragraph in Ernie's letter is a puzzle. I'm not sure whether it reveals more about himself than being a put down of me. I'm not unemployed, although I have been for periods, so as for "asking the DSS", well I don't feel I have a great dependency on them, through luck and design. I'm tempted to think that Ernie is falling into the trap of assuming stereotypes from my writing, or showing his own dependent attitude.

Anyway I wrote a letter and Ernie wrote one, I felt his was a bit sharp. I can't express myself perfectly (who can?), perhaps that's why people like books,

they find someone who can express what they themselves feel but can't articulate as well as they'd like. But you can't judge a dog by its bark, picking gleefully on a perceived error or contradiction is surely counter-productive to a useful discussion. Ploughing in with put-downs and aiming for point scoring isn't surely what it's about. All we see in people's words are a piece of them, I had no desire to 'impress' John Broom or Ernie Crosswell, or anyone else for that matter, I was attempting to put my view forward. Hoping it would interest others, start a discussion, make someone think, hell, even laugh if it amused them. I enjoy reading people's articles in *Freedom*, I may not agree with them or even understand some of them, but I appreciate that it is a thought they are sharing and that most of them are motivated by a concern for the world. It's just words, a thought, make what you will of it but it's not worth starting a fight over. But then again I'm probably making judgements on Ernie as a person because of the manner of his criticism of my article, so more contradictions. Well none of us are perfect, worth recognising that sometimes.

Flett

Yet more about money

Dear Editors,

I would like to follow up Mark Shipway's letter in the 24th August issue of *Freedom*.

It is true that a libertarian society based on a money economy, pre-supposes a form of social security/taxation system, to ensure that those unable to work (the old, sick, disabled, etc.) could gain access to the means of life.

I do not think it necessary to "dragoon the workshy into production". I have found that people enjoy working together, not for a boss, but towards an end which they can see is socially useful. Furthermore, it should be remembered that those not involved with production, inevitably have little control over its methods. In my view, we need as many people as possible involved with production, but for far fewer hours than is worked currently.

If, Mark, you can accept the need for an accounting mechanism to integrate production, then you can hardly deny that this means money. Your method of counting (who does this?) "the numbers of homeless and hungry people, to calculate the numbers of dwellings and tons of grain needed to house and feed them" strikes me as being needlessly bureaucratic; a genuine free market, bereft of the exploiters will do this far better. What's wrong with using the tried and trusted workers' co-op as the basic building block of libertarian economic organisation?

Finally, it's difficult to discuss these complicated problems in a short letter — why not have a go at my pamphlet?

John Griffin

Correction

Dear Editors,

"I suffered so from printer's errors that death for me can hold no terrors. I bet this stone has been misdated; I wish to God I'd been cremated."

S.E. Parker and I were being so carefully polite about each other — and then your printer omitted the first two letters from my 'inoffensive' (issue of 24th August, page 8).

George Walford

Marxism v Anarchism

Dear Editors,

I am sorry to have upset John Pilgrim so (*Freedom*, 10th August), and to have mistaken him for a Marxist when he is really a follower of Colin Ward and Kropotkin. I'm sorry he finds me 'choleric' (such a gentle bloke as me!) and feels that I have 'smeared' him — such was not my intention. All the same, there do seem to be rather a lot of readers of *Freedom* who are mistaking Marxist ideas for anarchist ideas, for instance S. Coleman of Detroit (*Freedom*, 24th August).

Let me try to clarify things. Over the past couple of years I have been absolutely delighted to see the vindication of anarchist ideas in the collapse of Marxist-Leninism, first in Eastern Europe and now throughout the Soviet Empire. All my adult life I have been convinced that Marxism wouldn't work in practice: instead of the state withering away as predicted, terrible regimes of tyranny have been instituted, and now people-power has been able to turn against these regimes. Whatever cock-ups follow, including some outbreaks of civil war, this is better than the un-human dictatorships that have arisen in attempts to force society into so-called planned economies. Yet living through such a momentous historical period, I myself have been unable fully to grasp the magnitude of the worldwide revolution. In admitting my own inadequacy in this respect, I would comment that *Freedom* as an influential anarchist organ, has failed to make much intelligent comment on what has been happening — how anarchist writers of the past have been proved to be so thoroughly right.

It is difficult to write of these things without referring to people, and in doing so I fear that they, like John Pilgrim, will feel that I have been unfair to them. For instance, in *The Raven* number 12, we have George Barrett writing over seventy years ago, putting forward anarchist

ideas with admirable clarity — ideas that are as pertinent today as they were when he wrote them. In the same issue of the journal we have an article by Johnny Yen which appears to me a muddled mish-mash of Marxist sociologists hawking on about social class. Now in the 1950s, I took a degree in sociology at the LSE (a good degree!) and spent years arguing with the Marxist lecturers. I was nearly forty when I went there, and had been thoroughly exposed to all kinds of anarchist ideas, both in theory and practice, so I was fortunate enough to see the limitations of these high priests of The True Gospel. They seemed to think that anarchism was a silly idea that had died out in the nineteenth century. I am sure that there are still high priests of Marxism at the LSE trying to make sense of all that has been happening in recent history, just as the disciples (if they ever existed) strove to show that the howling failure of Christ's (if he ever existed) mission on earth, was a hell of a success.

We should rejoice that Marxists and crypto-Marxists are now reading and writing to *Freedom*. The time was when they would have scorned to read this, or any other 'anarchist rag'. Should I be grateful for having to study all that sociological crap at the LSE? Well, I was a very mature student who had learned a thing or two in the hard university of life, and inspired by the great anarchist teachers and propagandists. I was lucky. But had I been aged only 18 when I went there, and lived in bourgeois comfort ever since — would I now be writing Marxist apologetics to *Freedom* — if ever I deigned to look at the paper?

Tony Gibson

Please keep sending in your letters and donations

MEETINGS

SHUT DOWN HEYFORD

On Saturday 26th October there is to be a mass blockade of USAF Upper Heyford. This action is called by Swords into Ploughshares and is being organised by Stop the War Machine, with the backing of CND.

The themes of the blockade are:

- Opposition to US and British military intervention around the world.
- Opposition to new nuclear weapons.
- People power can change things.

Even though Heyford is to become a stand-by base, its devastating military capacity will not be lost, and hardened missile bunkers are currently being built at the base - likely storage for NATO's new generation of Tactical Air to Surface Missiles.

The planning group is encouraging people to form into affinity groups for the day, and is offering the following for the late summer and early autumn:

- Speaker meetings on Upper Heyford, non-violent direct action and the blockade.
- Non-violence training sessions - for established groups or people wanting to form a group.

Contact: 155 Adnitt Road, Northampton NN1 4NH, or tel: 0604 39583

A women's action is being planned for the day. Leaflets available on request. Help with planning welcome. Contact: Anne Harrison, WRCND, Unit G, Arno's Castle Trading Estate, Junction Road, Bristol 4.

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Anarchist Forum

Fridays at about 8.00pm at the Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square (via Cosmo Street off Southampton Row), London WC1.

1991-92 SEASON OF MEETINGS

27th September - 'Anarchism and the Mexican Labour Movement' (speaker Dave Dane)

4th October - 'Freedom and Freedom Press' (a discussion with some Freedom Press comrades)

11th October - 'Feminism and the Origin of Social Work' (speaker Peter Neville)

18th October - General discussion

25th October - 'Art, Culture and Society: A Life of Riley' (speaker Michael Murray)

1st November - 'The Left-Green Network in the USA' (speaker Mark Newnes)

8th November - General discussion

15th November - 'The Importance of Small Groups' (speaker Peter Cadogan)

22nd November - General discussion

29th November - To be announced (speaker Julay Arici)

6th December 1991 - 'The Clandestine Press in Europe during the Nazi Occupation - from (its origin in) Belgium in the First World War to (its use in) Poland during the days of the illegal Solidarity' (speaker Martyn Lowe)

13th December - General discussion

10th January - 'The Role of Prison in an Anarchist Society - the prison as a sanctuary' (speaker Peter Lumsden)

17th January - General discussion

24th January - 'Anarchism: Genesis, the Prophets, the Law, Ritual, Progression, Magic, the Light' (speaker Peter Neville)

We are still booking speakers or topics for 1992. The dates free are from 31st January to 20th March and 17th April to 10th July 1992. If anyone, especially comrades from abroad, would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, please make contact giving their names and proposed subjects and a few alternative dates so we can fill in slots. Friday is the only night available as the centre is booked up by classes on other nights.

Anyone interested should 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, but not too early in the morning)

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