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FIFTY PENCE

"The danger is not that a particular class is unfit to govern. Every class is unfit to govern."
Lord Acton

FREEDOM FOR ISRAEL'S FORGOTTEN HOSTAGE!

For weeks and months the media have been exploiting the hostages saga to the point of nausea. It is interesting that the only journalist among those released was also the only one to avoid their sordid interest in the details of his captivity. Equally nauseating were the politicians in congratulating each other for the success of their diplomacy as each victim emerged from captivity into the welcoming arms of the world's television entertainers.

Prayers are being said daily for the remaining hostages, but we have not yet noticed prayers or protests at the inhuman conditions in which Israel's prisoner-hostage Mordechai Vanunu is being held. It can be argued that as an Israeli citizen he cannot be a hostage in his own country. But the fact is that he was *kidnapped* by the Israeli secret service Mossad either in

this country or in Rome (with the publication of Mr Hertz's book we imagine the sordid truth will in due course emerge) and taken to Israel. Eventually tried for revealing to the world — not for money but to relieve his conscience as one who had contributed to this crime against humanity — that Israel had been secretly developing and producing atom and nuclear bombs. He was sentenced to eighteen years imprisonment.

There is imprisonment and imprisonment. Mordechai Vanunu has been subjected to the most inhuman treatment by a government which is always reminding the world of the ghastliness of the holocaust to justify its own violent and vicious treatment

of the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

We have heard the released hostages from the Lebanon describing the conditions in which they were held. Only last month we also heard, thanks to Phil Davison in *The Independent* (22nd September), the conditions in which Mordechai Vanunu has had to live (or survive) for the past five years. He has spent them "in a cell equipped with bed, chair, table and a shower which doubles as a primitive toilet". His cell is 6ft by 10ft, that is two large paces by four small paces. *And for nearly five years he has spent 22 hours a day in that cell.* Those two precious hours out of his cell are spent "in a small yard sealed off from other prisoners". His only human contact, other than with his torturers, is a "supervised one, through a wide screen, with his mother and siblings for one hour a month" (our italics).

For the first two and a half years a fluorescent light was left on in his cell 24 hours a day while he was watched by a closed circuit television camera. As his relatives describe it:

"In legal euphemism, it is called solitary confinement. In reality [it] represents the kind of psychological torture the world thought had ended with the demise of military and communist regimes."

It is time that a worldwide protest be organised to oblige the Israeli government to release Mordechai Vanunu. The Madrid conference is surely the right moment for such a mass protest movement to succeed.

the territory they occupied was theirs "forever", as Shamir declared. Indeed, the former War Minister, Ariel Sharon, responsible for the Israeli invasion of the Lebanon and now, significantly, the Housing Minister and who has himself taken up residence by way of example in the occupied territory, said at a meeting in Oxford on 18th October:

"It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the intention of the present American government

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"PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST"

MADRID A DAMP SQUIB

We go to press before the American/Russian organised 'Peace in the Middle East' conference in Madrid takes place. Though Israel agreed to participate and the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) officially will not in order to placate Israel's demands, we expect nothing positive will emerge unless Israel's paymaster — the USA — threatens to cut them off without a dollar.

It is also our opinion that the Madrid gathering had to take place in order to justify America's hard line with Iraq and for ignoring the Israeli question. To implement all the United Nations resolutions regarding Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and now its possible nuclear weapons research, but to go on ignoring similar UN resolutions about Israel's continued, illegal occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and South Lebanon, not to mention the fact that *Israel actually possesses nuclear weapons* would

appear to world political opinion as suspect — which it is!

The Israeli government is anxious to increase its population with the large Russian Jewish contingent (which incidentally would much prefer to go to America if only the Americans would let them in), but the Americans are prepared to lend the Israelis \$10 billion to house them in Israel but not in the occupied territories, in spite of the fact that they know this is exactly what the Israelis have been doing so far with their Russian immigrants!

It is said that President Bush is resisting the American Jewish lobby. We find this hard to believe. The Madrid conference (which we are assuming is actually taking place) was possible thanks to compromises by the Palestinian organisations. The Israeli Prime Minister made it absolutely clear that there was no question of "peace for territory". All

The Stinking Rich

A couple of months ago *The Evening Standard's* Londoner's Diary quoted a former Labour Cabinet Minister Richard Marsh (since ennobled and an enthusiastic convert to the Tory fold) as saying: "As far as socialism means anything, it must be about the wider distribution of smoked salmon and caviare". That was in 1976 when he was in the Labour government.

In 1991 we have the former Tory Prime Minister Ted Heath talking about the extremes of wealth in British society, and how the exclusion of sections of the community had isolated some people in inner cities (*The Guardian*).

We have certainly had examples of the "extremes of wealth" here and elsewhere in the consumerist world. The other day, for

instance, in a court case it came out that the Duchess of York's wedding dress had cost £30,000. Not to be outdone, this is also what Elizabeth Taylor recently spent on her eighth wedding dress in three shades of yellow. On her husband-to-be she spent \$2,000 for a "styling, colouring and highlighting job by Mr Eber on Mr Fortensky's hair, as well as extensive bridge-work on his teeth and manicures", not to mention a \$110,000 wardrobe. Altogether this disgusting exhibition of money to burn cost \$2 million, held at Michael Jackson's 2,000 acre ranch near Santa Barbara and was attended by more

than 200 guests including notorious crooks as well as political crooks — including two ex-Presidents of the USA and their wives.

It is not surprising that fashion 'creations' for the disgustingly rich cost what they do. The 'serious' Sunday supplements inform us that some of the models who display the latest Paris, Rome or London 'creations' are paid £1,000 a minute for their services. Yes, £1,000 a minute!

The Independent gave details of the shopping list of the "truly well-heeled New Yorker". The cheapest item on the list is a pound of Tenscher's imported chocolate truffles, costing a mere \$40 (£23).

"The most expensive is another imported item ('genuine imported' is a sure sign of luxury, and thus of an above-average mark-up on the American retail scene), a Rolls Royce Corniche III convertible. Cost: \$226,700.

For between \$60 and \$70 you can get a wash, cut and blow-dry at a well-known New York hair salon, a whole ounce of Baluga caviare or a stall seat for 'Cats'. The luxury life apparently also includes the hire of a limo, the use of a maid — and a trip to Paris (by Concorde, naturally).

Two of the items are produced by Moët and Hennessey. A bottle of Hennessey XO cognac a mere \$90.65, and a bottle of Dom Pérignon an inconsiderable \$79."

We shall be told that this extravagance is limited to a very few people in the world and to strip them of their wealth would make very little difference to the rest of the population. It was the argument used by old man Ford years ago about distributing his wealth. He said that it would benefit every American by a few cents and invited them to come and collect their share.

The fact is that today there are literally millions worldwide (including the third world) with untold wealth which they lavish

on each other — the crumbs go to the domestics, the gardeners, the chauffeurs, the nannies, the odd job men. Their striking wealth is banded about without shame in the Sunday supplements and in the ever-growing number of marinas worldwide where yachts, cruisers — ever larger — are anchored eleven months of the year just as their two and three and four houses are occupied for brief escapades.

The stinking rich, with few exceptions, haven't a conscience, are indifferent to living in a world where thousands of human beings are dying every day from starvation. We don't expect anything from them, but what is both sad and deplorable is that the rest of us, through thousands of charities, seek to relieve our consciences and a bit of the poverty while leaving untouched the obscenity of a whole class of parasitic rich.

No government will abolish them. The Bolsheviks did in 1917, but then created their own privileged class. And the new broom in the East is making way for another privileged-capitalist-class.

The old slogan "workers of the world unite" is as true as ever it was, and when people say that anarchists are opposed to organisation our reply is that we are not opposed to organisation — on the contrary, what we are opposed to is the creation of *bureaucracies* and *leaders*. Which of course explains why the trade unions are impotent.

Giving with one hand and taking with the other

Prime Minister John Major made his generous contribution (with our money) to reducing the third world's debt to the banks at the recent Commonwealth jamboree. At the same time the World Bank figures show that the third world repays to the greedy West more than it gets in loans. For instance, Latin America in 1990 paid back \$1.56 billion more than they received in new funding.

The Brits love their horses!

The government has succeeded in having special dispensation from the EC so far as the export of live horses for slaughter is concerned. We are delighted. What we can't understand is why the influential huntin' and shootin' fraternity who obviously 'love' animals, apart from foxes and partridges and pheasants which they rear in order to have something to hunt and shoot, are so less concerned, for instance, about the export of live sheep for slaughter which is as much a traumatic experience for the sheep as it is for the horses, not only because of the journey itself but because of the neglect of basic services on the journey. A BBC investigating group revealed that sheep could easily travel 24 hours and more in three-floor lorries without water or food. A number died before reaching their destination, but this was considered as a normal price to pay by the buyers.

Anarchists are not by definition vegetarians, though many are (many capitalists are, too, so please don't draw political conclusions!). Those of us who work on the land are not sentimental about the bunny, or the other predators who fancy our vegetables. If we give them sufficient habitat we must defend ours. As to the domestic livestock there is no question but that factory farming not only is obscene and cruel but what is produced is,

from a culinary point of view, inferior. Today factory-produced meat is tasteless and tough. No wonder more people are going vegetarian. But then vegetables have lost their taste as they are being hybridised, which satisfies the supermarkets controlling nearly 80% of the retail business and requiring uniformity in size and colour and seasons of twelve months, but at the expense of flavour.

But to return to *nos moutons*, as the French farmers would say who are resisting imports of our sheep just as their government is to the human two-legged invaders from the third world. *We are opposed to the capitalist system because it invariably brings out the worst in human behaviour*, whether they are farmers or politicians.

The ultimate in capitalist obscenity is surely what Farmex, a company in Western Australia, recently announced:

"It planned to ship ten million sheep a year to the Russian republic on converted Soviet whalers, and to slaughter the animals at sea to avoid the high costs of Australian slaughterhouses. The carcasses would then be chilled and frozen for the rest of the voyage. It would be the first time such slaughter at sea had been carried out."

This is capitalist progress, comrades!

MADRID A DAMP SQUIB

(continued from page 1)

is to shoe-horn Israel back into the impossible [pre-war] 1967 borders. Forcing Israel into these borders will lead to its destruction."

Needless to say, Mr Sharon's solution was that "accelerated Jewish settlement of the occupied territories was a surer guarantee against war".

Prime Minister Shamir has not contradicted this extremist, and we have not heard a word of protest from Mr Perez's Labour opposition. We surely must conclude that there will be no peace in the Middle East so long as the USA continues to subsidise the Israeli war machine to the tune of billions of dollars a year.

We also imagine that if the Madrid conference is taking place there will be Arab countries questioning the fact that the United Nations (a.k.a. United States) is probing into the nuclear bomb capacity of Iraq but has been silent about Israel's, about which the world has known since 1986 when Mordechai Vanunu spilled the beans, and has now been reminded once more with the publication of Seymour Hertz's *The Samson Option* in which the American investigative reporter puts the number of nuclear warheads mounted on artillery shells, in land mines in the occupied Golan Heights and on missiles at more than 300. According to New York agencies, the number is "far larger than the United States has suspected" and apparently Israel "has gone on full nuclear alert three times in the past, once during the Gulf war".

Is peace possible in the long term so long as Israel is allowed to retain its nuclear weapons while all the other states in the region are to be disarmed so far as 'weapons of mass destruction' are concerned?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORK ON SUNDAY

— official

An industrial tribunal found that a man, Robert George (43) employed by Plant Breeding International plc, a subsidiary of Unilever, was unfairly dismissed for refusing to work on Sundays on top of 12-hour days the rest of the week on seed packing during the busy harvest period. Mr George is not a 'bolshy' or a 'trouble-maker'. He told the tribunal that he was an evangelist and wanted Sundays off to be with his family and attend church. He also pointed out that he had actually offered to work a 14-hour day for six days to make up for not working on Sundays, and in spite of having worked for the firm for fifteen years his offer was not accepted and he was sacked.

Mr George was represented by a barrister from the Keep Sunday Special Campaign who made the important point that the case raised "concerns for employee protection in the face of the Government's unwillingness to act to stop illegal Sunday trading".

How topical the problem is with the supermarkets, having the excuse that the recession is seriously affecting their profits, threatening to break the law by opening their stores on Sundays. You can be sure that Lady Porter (Tesco) or the Sainsbury clan, if this happens, will not be sitting at their desks on Sundays. Only the mainly *unorganised, underpaid* shop workers will be there for fear of losing their jobs if they refuse. Whether Mr George's victory has created a precedent which no employer can ignore is doubtful. After all, they are cunning enough to find other excuses for sacking employees who won't do as they are told.

The Government's union-bashing which obviously has the approval of the better-off wage (or should we say *salary*) slaves, and of those who think they are secure

in their jobs for life, *must be challenged by workers themselves*. The power of the union bosses depends on the apathy of the workers they are supposed to represent.

We are living in a society where we leave others to organise our lives. Our children are now abandoned even earlier in their lives to others; our livelihood depends on the good will of an employer; our old age on the magnanimity of governments. All we are expected to do every five years is to put a cross against a name and a party and leave it to them to run our lives for us. For the last twelve years a government with the 'approval' of about 36% of the electorate have been telling us all, including those who consciously don't vote for any of the parties, how we should run our lives and making it extremely difficult for all except the idle super-rich to keep out of their clutches.

Whatever we anarchists may think of the reactionary role of the trades unions, the fact is that for millions of workers throughout the world over the decades, organised labour has permitted more reasonable standards compared with the conditions of the helpless millions worldwide who are exploited throughout their working lives.

Postscript:

The above was written before the British Prime Minister expressed concern at the European Community's opposition to Sunday trading.

CASTRATION as well as HANGING for the Tory Party faithful's menu

The Tory Conference had its customary demand for the re-introduction of the death penalty by hanging. It must be said that they did not get much support from the platform and since the 5,000 'representatives' on the floor of the conference hall are only a *claque* whose standing ovations are timed for the benefit of ministerial egos and nothing else, we shall hear no more, for the time being at least, of their lusting after the hangman's rope. But this year they had another gruesome torture which, according to *The Independent*, "the Party faithful gave a rapturous reception". The loony right wing MP Geoffrey Dickens called for *child molesters* to

be castrated. He urged the government:

"If you want to stop child abuse and rape of women, pass legislation, and on the second offence — not the first in case there is a mistake — put it before Parliament that you can castrate the buggers."

The consideration displayed is exemplary by this old bugger! If a mistake has been made the first time by the man's accusers, then surely the second time is only the first time and they may be wrong again and in the meantime the man has lost more than his testicles.

And to think that this man Geoffrey Dickens is a Member of Parliament who has the pretension of wanting to run our lives for us!

Four killed by expensive toy

On 22nd November last year a nuclear submarine entangled itself in the trawl nets of a fishing boat off the Isle of Arran and dragged it underwater, killing the four fishermen on board. The submarine crew knew that something was wrong, so 33 minutes after the accident they surfaced and had a look around. Seeing two fishing boats they sighed with relief that they had not damaged one. The electronics on the sub were faulty, and had detected only two fishing boats in the vicinity where in fact there were three.

Last week, following the report of a Fatal Accident Inquiry, the Ministry of Defence increased the distance by which submarines are ordered to stay clear of fishing boats from 2,000 yards to 3,000 yards. The advantage of this is obscure. The order last year was that the submarine should be 2,000 yards clear of any boat, but in order to snag the nets it must have been within 700 yards of the boat and was probably closer.

Human error is being blamed and the submarine commander, a low-ranking young trainee, may be prosecuted. But faulty electronics are also to blame. Evidence emerged at the Inquiry that a few minutes before the accident the commander had been looking at his garbled instrument board and asking: "Where the fuck are we?" The electronics are secret, but without a doubt they are complex and delicate, and it is not at all surprising that they go wrong. A nuclear weapon, launched from a submarine at a Siberian missile silo, would have hit the target

if the electronics had been working perfectly. In practice it is quite possible that the electronics would have been at fault, in which case there is no knowing where the missile might have fallen.

Now the Cold War is over, the potential target for submarine-launched nuclear missiles no longer exists, but this makes no difference to the real situation. What with the dicey electronics, it was always too dangerous to actually fire a missile, so these £200 million subs were only messing about the same as they are now. The whole business of preparing for all-out nuclear war was always what it is now: a lethally dangerous, ridiculously futile, complete waste of resources. Nuclear submarines are just expensive toys.

Only governments have a use for such things. An individual might use a hand-gun to threaten or kill another individual, but only a government can use an atomic weapon to threaten another government, or in the last resort to kill some of the other government's subjects.

The greatest nuclear powers have now agreed to reduce their weapons stocks to a level where they will be able to destroy the biosphere only four times, instead of sixteen times. Perhaps they have recognised that the latest weapons technology is unusable because it is likely to kill the bosses as well as the bossed, and are moving towards total abolition and boasts that they have saved the world.

However, the fact is that all parties with a

serious hope of gaining power in Britain are agreed that the nuclear force should be updated, that the same is true of other states which have nuclear weapons, and that governments throughout history have always gone for the most up-to-date and lethal weaponry available.

There are those who say we must have governments because people are not perfect. This implies the possibility of perfection in the

minority of people who get to be the government. But they waste resources on expensive but useless toys, and send lads out on play exercises where they sink working boats going peacefully about their work. They must be mad.

Anarchists do not think people are perfect, or perfectible, or any romantic nonsense of that kind. They think people are generally capable of conducting their own lives, but that no person is good enough to have power over other people. Last November's accident off the Isle of Arran is another bit of evidence that anarchists are right.

Green decay

Since reading Vernon Richards' *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy*, I have been watching with great interest the development of the Green Party. Which way will it go? Will it conform to the anarchist analysis of political parties?

We have just had the Green Party conference. It has been obvious to me as an outsider, but a supporter of the broader green movement, that there has been quite an intense struggle for power going on inside the party. This is between an open decentralist group and an authoritarian centralist one. This much is obvious. But who was going to win?

The answer was, I believe, given at this conference. The Green 2000 group won the day, calling for two 'leaders'. They won the vote overwhelmingly: 1,133 votes to 278. The libertarian element seems to have been marginalised to a rump and reduced to unfurling banners stating "Green 2000 sell out" and "All power corrupts".

The centralising moves were supported by jet-setting Sara Parkin, who contrives to represent the British Green Party, I understand, while living in France, and Jonathon Porritt who these days graces the salons of the great and good. Parkin is for a "Green approach to government, which implies firm leadership", rather than the traditional Green way, "which implies chaos". She is a member of the Green 2000 group which believes in "the need for leadership as a function, which will be vested in a democratically elected and accountable team". She is also quoted as saying, in 1990, "the Labour Party has cleansed its stables and so must we. Parasites in the party can go somewhere else". All good authoritarian stuff.

Porritt, meanwhile, has accused the Greens of a "wholly irrational abhorrence of political leadership". I would have thought even the most superficial reading of the press would make abhorrence of political leadership a very rational position — but not perhaps for an aspiring leader. It will be interesting to see who finally is anointed leader of the party. I would put my money on Sara Parkin who, judging from her appearances on the television slot 'Question Time', seems already to have been chosen for this role by the Establishment.

I found it sad to see a party founded to

preserve our environment wrangling over power rather than setting the political agenda — a kind of fiddling while the tropical rain forests burn. This was of course inevitable as soon as a Green Party was formed with the intention of seeking office.

For elections are about the struggle for power. They have nothing to do with the good life, or the good society, or the integrity of the biosphere. Whatever the politicians say, come voting day that is all so much flannel. Voting is about winning power so that one sub-group of society may nakedly assert its interests of all others. Furthermore, when you vote not only do you give away your power to another, you also strip it of all social and moral content.

As for the decision of the Greens to centralise, this quite pleases me. It has finally laid to rest the idea that the Greens have been about breaking the mould of conventional politics, by being an anti-party party — in itself a contradiction in terms. Libertarian greens will now presumably stop wasting their time in party politicking and concentrate on what they can do themselves in their own areas.

With the libertarian support withdrawn, I expect the Green Party to sink like a stone and the true politicians will drift off to pastures new in the established parties to pursue the cult of the personality and other authoritarian games.

Gerald Hatton

The poll tax struggle — for local government

Less people may be resisting the poll tax through demonstrations and riots, but more people are resisting by not paying. It seems that people don't feel they need to protest so openly because poll tax non-payment is so easy to get away with.

A survey by David Blunkett suggests that one in four adults had yet to make their first poll tax payments for 1991-92 as at the beginning of August. Uncollected poll tax for 1990-91 still totals over £1 billion.

Even the Department of the Environment's own figures show that, by the end of June, a third of all adults in England had paid nothing towards this year's poll tax bill. At the same time last year, over three-quarters had paid something. Councils had managed to collect only 12% of this year's poll tax revenue compared with 19% at the same time last year. Councils claim that it is the government's announcement that the poll tax is to be abolished that is to blame, and have expressed fears that the situation will only get worse. And in Scotland, non-payment seems to grow exponentially. In the first three months only £43 million of 1991-92 poll tax had been paid. This is equivalent to only £11.50 of the average poll tax of £230.

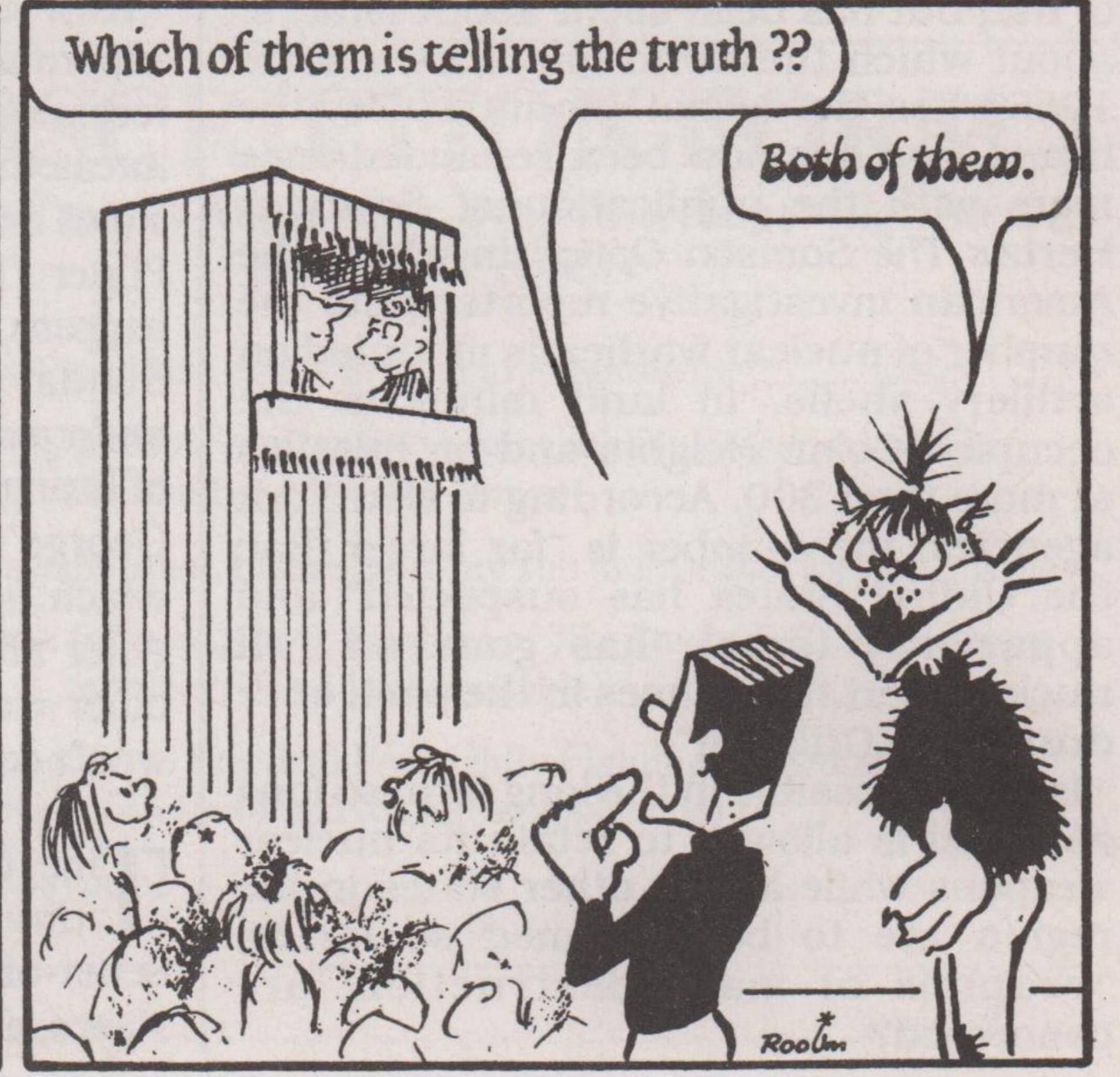
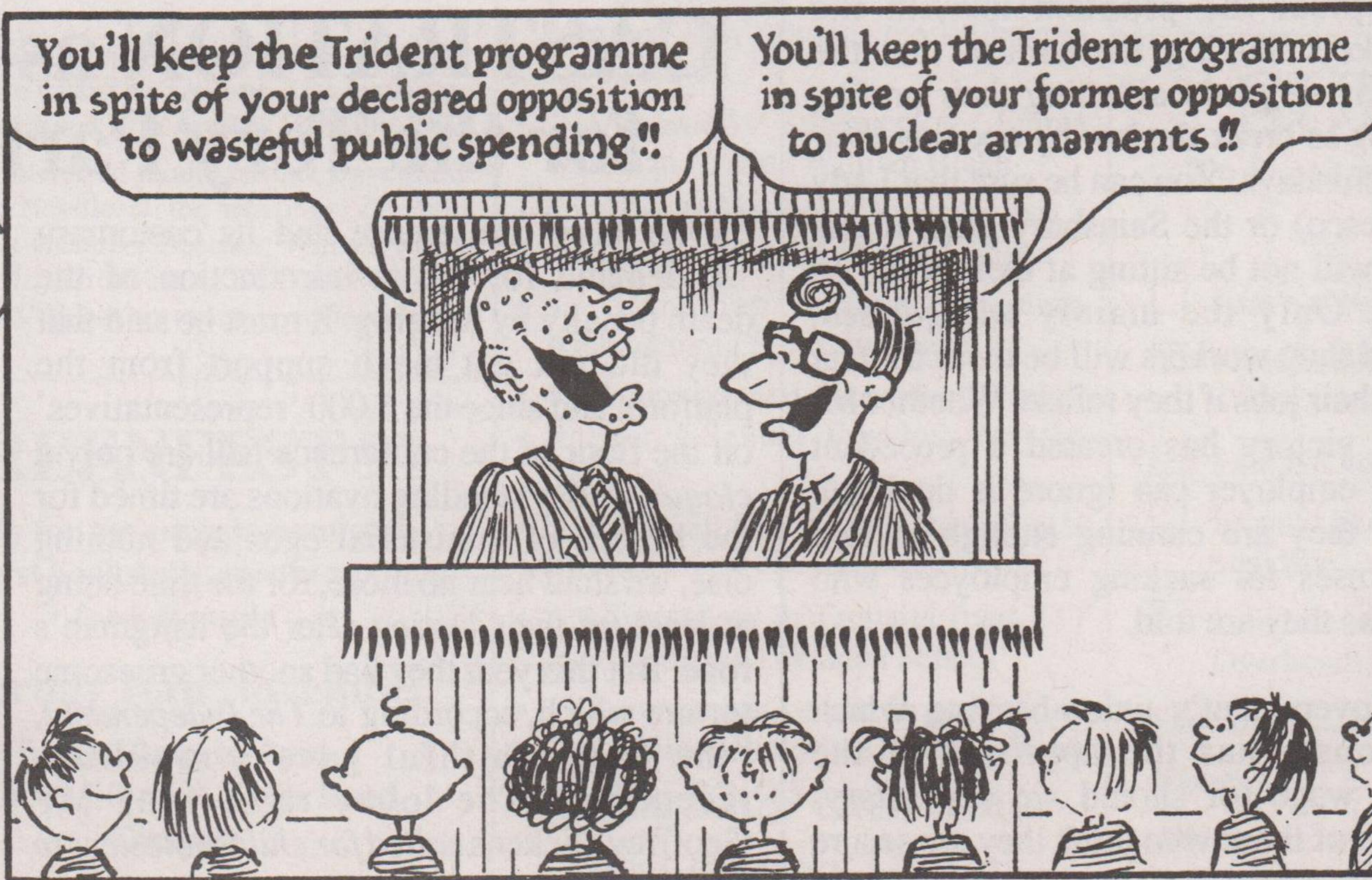
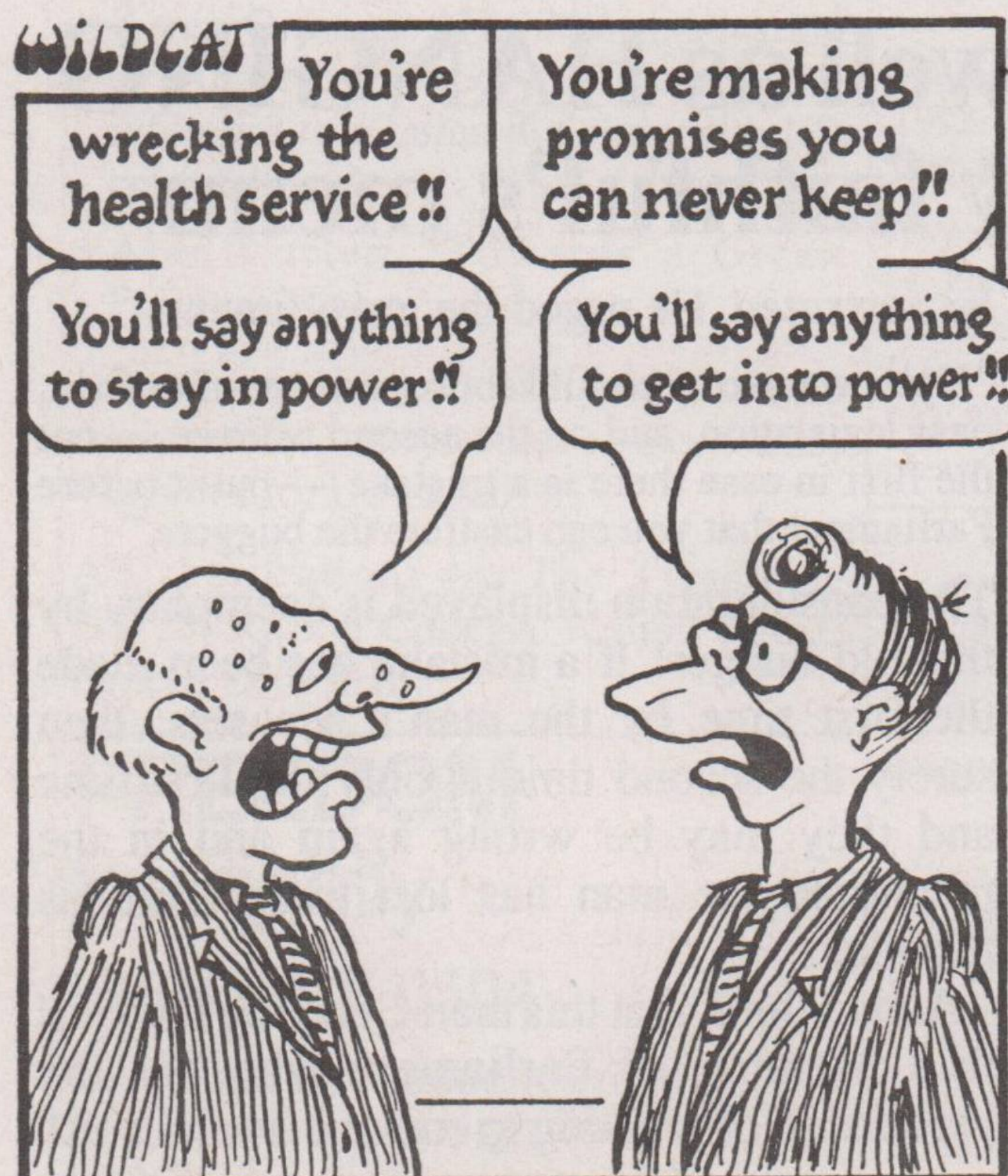
Meanwhile, 5.7 million summonses for non-payment have been issued and £4 million liability orders granted. The number of summonses is expected to rise to 7.5 million before the end of

the year. Sixty seven people have now been imprisoned for non-payment (for details contact the TSDC, Brixton Law Centre, 506 Brixton Road, London SW9).

Legal news on the poll tax front includes the recent ruling allowing those summonsed to have McKenzie's Friends present once more (for background to McKenzie's Friends, see *Freedom*, 17th November 1990 and 26th January 1991). The Court of Appeal has decided that magistrates will no longer be able to prevent people from having such 'Friends' with them in court. The ruling quashed liability orders against Michael and Carol Barrow imposed by magistrates in Leicester because they were denied the assistance of McKenzie's Friends in August, and overturned a High Court ruling in December that magistrates had complete discretion.

And what of the 'alternative'? According to the London School of Economics, 37% of families will gain from the forthcoming council tax and another 37% will lose. But who thinks there can be such a thing as a fair tax? The Tories bleat that people will always complain about taxes. But that's because the system of property, tax and money is essentially unfair. There'll never be a 'fair tax', so we should resist the latest con as much as we have resisted the poll tax.

Johnny Yen



Towards redefining regionalism in England

The thirteenth Regionalist Seminar on 7-8th September 1991 in Norwich at the University of East Anglia clarified a lot of things. Arising out of the EC interest in regionalism and widespread concern about the emasculation of local government, the subject has at last reached the political agenda. At Norwich we heard all the Parties on the subject.

We were told by their own representatives that both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats regard regionalism as a next-stage development of centralism, i.e. of servicing without autonomy. This despite the fact that the Liberal Democrat party is itself structured regionally. The Green Party is in the throes of such a split over this very subject that whatever it has to say cannot be taken seriously until it solves the problem of its own identity. Everything can be reversed tomorrow.

The Conservative Party takes a 'canny' view, declaring itself for consultation and piecemeal reform over local government and so avoiding any major restatement of principle. They are firmly opposed to Scots

and Welsh Assemblies (although in favour of one in Northern Ireland!) and it is over Scotland that matters are likely to come to a head after the next General Election.

There was an interesting moment in the Seminar when I pointed out that the greatest achievements of Western civilisation were in the city states of classical Greece and medieval and renaissance Europe — and the future too might lie in the direction of city regions. All were opposed to this, all (even the Greens) being defenders of the nation state!

We have some fifty cities or large towns in England and scores of smaller but significant towns. Around each big town there is a hinterland occupied by farmers who use the town as their market, by people who commute into town to work and by retired people. Farms have been industrialised and much of the work

on the land is done by outside contractors. Does the agricultural village, as such, still exist? It has been destroyed three times in 250 years, firstly by enclosures, secondly by overseas competition since 1875, and now by factory farming and over-production.

If regionalism is to centre on city regions (as seems to me to be right, proper and inevitable) it will be essential to work out some countervailing development of powers that will correct any urban-rural imbalance.

Among the main contemporary reasons for the decline of villages is the high cost of land (that deeply inhibits a return to agriculture) and the fact that the young want some 'life' in the evenings and at weekends and they are not going to find it in the village as at present constituted. In his classic but neglected work *Human Ecology*, George Stapledon argued the case for the ruralising of our towns and the urbanising of our villages, bringing the traditional dichotomy to an end.

Might it not be possible for 5-10 small towns and villages in the remoter parts, i.e. not part of the city hinterlands, to form an association and decide to take one of their number and equip it with all the facilities that attract people to towns, i.e. a market place and shopping centre, a college, a hospital, a library, swimming pool and sports centre, cinema/theatre, dance halls, magistrates

courts — elements of which will exist anyway — all without any great increase in population. (Stapledon thought that a village could take a 15% increase in population without damaging its identity.)

This is, of course, already happening. There is the case of St Ives just as one example. Some years ago the County Council came up with the idea of a sports and leisure centre for St Ives. It was then built, a most elaborate and ambitious place — so far as I know, no area in London has anything comparable. The car park is packed daily by local people.

Provide, i.e. get local people to provide themselves, with a complex of such magnets and the old town-country imbalance will be at an end. Set out to make things better than in the towns and the response can be amazing.

Hangover from the heptarchy

We still have it — a feeling that we ought to have seven Englands or fourteen or twenty-one. It is a gum tree. England in those days, before the arrival of the Danes, had no towns. These large areas are suited to a culture of villages, that is what they were designed for. Urbanisation started with the Danes and was taken up by the Normans. Throughout the Middle Ages, and until the disastrous Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 that swept away all Town Charters and imposed a central pattern on town government, we were governed by counties, hundreds, chartered towns, and the bottom tier, the parish. No two places were alike — the despair of historians! An excellent tradition — can we go back and forward to it again?

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Wilson's Secret State

Reading *Smear* (Stephen Dorrill and Robin Ramsay's just-published full-length analysis of the various evidence of MI5, etc., dirty tricks against the Wilson government), one question above all strikes the reader, or at least the reader who also reads their periodic publication *Lobster* and knows that one of the authors recently said he had revised his opinion of Wilson and his government in the light of his research and now had an unfashionable admiration for him/it. Why don't the authors (who have radical reputations) openly advocate the abolition of MI5? But then one could also say why, instead of saying that had Wilson pursued more far-reaching policies of reform, he would have tackled the powers that conspired against him head on and could have defeated them, they instead end by advocating a return to Wilsonian corporatism, which could only end by similar disillusion and defeat, once again opening the doors to the extreme right?

The authors say themselves that Wilson was never a socialist (beginning of Chapter XII), but right through the book is a defence of the Wilson record. We are given to understand that wicked people — bankers, press barons, civil service, military and MI5 and Tory politicians (Hereinafter BPCMT) — conspired undemocratically; that their behaviour made the Labour Government impossible. Of course they bloody did. The history of British politics is full of such actions. Not just socialists, nor even the pretend socialists of the Labour Party, but Grey, Gladstone, Lloyd George, even Asquith, took for granted that they were confronted by the enemies of democracy, and (though not always successfully) behaved accordingly. But this book carries no suggestion that Wilson should have known that this was inevitable. That he could have turned the tables in some, if not all, cases; had he waged a strong governmental and propaganda campaign against the BPCMT.

The fact that the bankers — with the complicity of Maudling and other leading Tory politicians (hereinafter 'with ...ians') — immediately tried to destabilise the pound when he took office was hardly unprecedented. Had Wilson ever bothered to study the history of the Labour Party (or indeed of the latter Liberal Governments) he would have known it was coming; should have warned electorally that 'enemies of democracy in and round the Tory Party' would so act, and so hung the treason label round the necks of the 'patriotic' party. That MI5 and other military elements — with ...ians — more or less openly conspired with the Smith regime (quite apart from its more secretive consideration of whether to stage a coup) was, in the light of the history of Ulster and Irish home rule, inevitable.

Though the authors only touch on it, there is abundant evidence (and it was available in '64) that MI5 was, during World War Two, more interested in gathering information about pre-war anti-fascists than it was in following up those who had been sympathetic to the Nazis; that throughout the war it had harboured in its own ranks people with pre-war fascist connections, that these were not regarded as security risks in anything like the way that former socialists (let alone communists) were regarded in and after the Cold War.

Had Wilson had any sense he would not have waited for positive evidence of links with the Smith regime before warning the country "that there were powerful elements in the military establishment, the secret services and the party opposite, who would not stop at offering aid and comfort to rebels against the crown" and would again have been able to brand the Tories as the enemies not only of democracy but of patriotism. It would have provided a useful excuse to expose the record of 1930s Tory-fascist links and done much to destroy that Party's main electoral base.

The fact that the press barons — with ...ians — consistently misrepresented all Labour actions, was hardly anything new. Wilson had seen it happen for years and he, like Gaitskell, had not been above benefiting from such misrepresentation when it was directed at the rebel (unilateralist) left. The fact that it makes up stories; the fact that MI5 — with ...ians — was feeding it lies was also unsurprising, and it would again have been possible to counter all this and turn it to Labour advantage had Wilson been sufficiently radical that he was at least prepared to speak openly about the undemocratic way the press is controlled. After all, it did not need a socialist to speak about "the prerogative of the harlot in every age". (Contrast his inaction with the behaviour of Yeltsin — certainly opportunist, and very possibly involving a double cross, after agreeing a deal with the putschists in the August Russian events.)

Given the consistent record of attempts to destabilise the Labour Government, this connection with Smith — that is proven treasonable activity — as well as what is known of the wartime activity, of the record in Northern Ireland, the Wright-type allegations; it would seem that the very least that supporters of a future Labour Government on anything like the same lines as the last, ought to demand is that such a Labour Government at least rectify the power situation by abolishing MI5 and similar agencies. If the Russians can advocate abolishing the KGB, cannot the British make the same demand?

It needs no very deep grasp of socialist theory (knowledge of history) to see that Wilson's total failure to confront the BPCMT, coupled with its continued attacks on those who (at least in Labour Party propaganda) were its allies, the trade unions, the peace movement, the ethnic minorities, women's organisations, anti-fascists, anti-imperialists, spread disillusion and opened the door to the rightish backlash that swept Thatcher to power. The authors are at pains to deny Maudling's accusation of a "loss of nerve" causing the economic troubles of '64; they fail to see that the viciously anti-working class legislation that Wilson then enacted was only necessary if it was wanted to preserve Britain as a militaristic and financially-rightist state. However, insofar as many of those who had voted for Wilson had expected to get away from the massive military build-up of the '50s, and away from Tory financial theory, there was a failure of nerve, for there was no attempt at making the social change that was necessary to neutralise the power of the bankers. It was a failure of nerve that characterised the whole of the Wilson era. To advocate that we repeat the experiment is to advocate that we once again prepare the ground for a Thatcher-type reaction. **Laurens Otter**

Waiting for the Bus

What are your thoughts on the Judge Clarence Williams case, Daisy? ... Well, I think that if women had been involved in his appointment, he would have been rejected. But, of course, he was appointed by men. And most men seem to think that a bit of sexual harassment is just what we women enjoy ... You must agree that most women don't kick up much of a fuss about it ... Come off it, Bert, the reason why women put up with suggestive remarks and wandering hands is often because they fear for their jobs. So long as it stops short of attempted rape, most of them keep quiet about it because the men will only laugh at them. Look at Clare Short and the ridicule she had to put up with in Parliament when she put down that harassment motion ... You've got a point there, Daisy, but don't look at me as if I'm a rapist — there are some of us men trying to protect you women ... Pull the other one. Men don't even protect their own kids. If they did, and got off our backs, we'd be able to protect ourselves thank you very much. Like Anita Hill said about Clarence Williams, allowing men to run our affairs is like using a fox to guard a chicken house. What's that book you got from the library? ... *Secret Service* by Christopher Andrew. It says that in 1937, some of our top intelligence people were certain that Germany was going to attack us. This was when a lot of our businessmen were still publicly saying what a good chap Hitler was ... Why were they so sure? ... They had the German and Italian codes cracked most of the time since before the Spanish Civil War. And they tried to tell us that Pearl Harbour was a surprise attack! Mind you, some say Churchill knew about it and didn't tell Roosevelt ... Perhaps Roosevelt knew too ... Well, I know there was a lot of anti-British feeling in America, and they needed something like Pearl Harbour to get them into the war, but I can't see Roosevelt

planning to lose all those warships ... What about the government privatising the prisons, Bert? Can you imagine it! Bet you Saunders and Ronson and Co will put in a bid. With their inside knowledge, they should make a go of it ... I can just see it — all those old lags with Guinness logos on their shirts smoking their rations of Hamlet cigars ... 'Best Prisons Guide' in *The Daily Telegraph* ... Prison Governor of the Year ... People will be holding up banks just to get banged up ... Waiting lists that will put the NHS to shame ... Old Prison ties ... Old Wormwood Scrubbian reunions ... Our inmates swear by a Bernard Matthews Roast Turkey Dinner ... What are all those screws doing on the roof waving placards? ... Sad about all those Thames Television people losing their contract, Bert. Some were saying how they'd worked so hard to give us the best programmes, and now they are to be slung out on the slag heap ... By the way some of them were talking, you'd think they did the job for free ... That programme on drugs smuggling at Heathrow Airport was interesting. It seems you can't trust the customs people, let alone the baggage handlers, if the price is high enough ... If you read *Secret Service*, it seems the least trustworthy of all people are Government Ministers. The evidence was that Czechoslovakia and France, with British help, were quite capable of stopping Hitler from annexing the Sudetenland if Britain and France had wanted to ... Then why didn't they, Bert? ... They wanted Hitler to go on and crush the Russian communists, and they were willing to sacrifice the Czechs and the Jews for it ... What's the answer to it all? ... Give up nationalism and religion and become a human being. Put principle before duty. Do your duty to principles and not to priests and politicians ... Easier said than done ... I know, Daisy, but some people don't even try ...

EFC

Writers and Politics

by George Woodcock

Black Rose Books (European distributors: Freedom Press), 248 pages, £9.95 (post free inland)

The essays published in the first edition of this book (1948) were originally written in the mid-1940s. Yet, when Woodcock re-read his old book in preparation for its re-publication, he said that he was “perhaps more surprised by the continuities in my way of writing and thinking that it reveals than by the changes”. It speaks well of him. The man has principles that have remained constant through his life despite that fact that he has “broadened my [his] fields of interest enormously”.

Yet even in the '40s Woodcock's interests were very broad indeed. The thirteen chapters of this book, excluding the introduction, can be divided into four sections. ‘The Writer and Politics’ and ‘The Function of the Political Myth’ give a general overview of the author's idea of the way that literature and politics interact and of the dangers of and remedies for the mythological content of political commitment. Woodcock believes that a commitment to truth is of far greater importance than any adherence to an ideology. In his time for left wing ideology read communism, socialism, anarchism; in our time read feminism, green politics, minority crypto-nationalism, etc. He says that he “consider[s] that the man who is ready to apply to any subject on which he writes a standard of values based on a sincere

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conception of the truth is bound to act in his writing against injustice and falsehood, even if he does not write for the specific purpose of expediting social change”.

An especially pertinent point that Woodcock raises is the importance of rationality as a necessary component of ethical political action. He states that:

“It is true that myths stir the people to action. They lead them forward in emotional surges which have little reasonable in them, but which undoubtedly precipitate certain changes. Yet, because the mood of a people led by a myth is essentially irrational, the social changes that occur are moulded and turned to their own account by men who have contrived to retain their powers of calculation ... While the myth remains a potent factor in society, there is little chance of men becoming free from the power of the demagogue who is capable of creating myths or of adapting them to his own ends. It is only when people can see political realities in a rational manner and can mold their desires for the future according to practical standards, that they will begin to distinguish between really productive social advancement and the kind of action which results from accepting the impulse of certain images and emotional stimuli presented in the shape of a political myth ... Our plans should be concerned, not with abstractions, but with concrete facts, with people and things, with probabilities which can be proved or amended in accordance with experience. And, above all, we should be careful to avoid the deceptive use of symbols and images.”

These words deserve to be repeated today, not just to the wider population but also to far too many in our own ranks who feel that reason, science, evidence, simple decency and

common sense can be thrown out in favour of superstition, rhetoric, over-blown philosophy and a nit-picking sectoral attitude that encourages the sacrifice of the humanity of everybody who isn't in one's chosen ‘oppressed group’.

The next two sections of historical and literary essays on Proudhon, Alexander Herzen, Peter Kropotkin, George Orwell, Granam Greene, Ignazio Silone, Arthur Koestler, Kafka and Rex Warner are interesting as presentations of widely different writers and their widely different lives and interests. Some of these early studies, such as those on Proudhon, Kropotkin and Orwell, were the seeds of a few of Woodcock's later books. I personally found his treatment of Graham Greene to be the most interesting. Greene is a writer for whom a person like Woodcock would be expected to have little sympathy. The looming figure of the Roman Catholic Church stands guard between the two. Yet, as Woodcock says, “he is a Catholic propagandist, but this has never prevented him from being a good novelist or an indignant critic of injustice”. Woodcock studies Greene's contradictions at length, and these struggles within Greene's mind have more than a passing relevance to our own times where ‘crimethink’ (political incorrectness) is a fashionable epithet and where ‘deconstructionism’ poses as a literary method.

Deconstructionism is a dogmatic system of

insult-attachment, very akin to Stalinism, whereby a pseudo-intellectual may read into any cultural creation whatever he or she desires, all things being relative except the prejudices of the deconstructionist. It is also a Stalinoid and paranoid system of criticism wherein all examined material *must* conform fully to a rigid system of conventions of style and content. As Woodcock shows in his study of Greene, the real world is more complex than this latest academic fad can conceive. Every one of us is a mixture of good and evil. Good results easily come from bad intentions and vice versa. Reality comes in shades of grey.

The final essays, ‘The English Hymn’ and ‘The Peroxide Saint’, are historical studies of early modern religion. They are, of course, informed by Woodcock's atheism and personal distaste for Christianity, but ‘The English Hymn’ at least shows the ambiguity of the religious impulse, how liberatory impulses may find a temporary haven in religious imagery. I found ‘The Peroxide Saint’ to be the most entertaining, but I suspect that many *Freedom* readers who lack prior acquaintance with religious indoctrination will be less enthralled than I was.

Writers and Politics is an interesting and valuable book, and Black Rose Books has done well to re-issue it. Its deficiencies are minor. Publication and bibliographical information would be welcome. How about a few tiny, little, it'sy-bitsy dates? It would be nice to know when and where these essays were first published.

Pat Murtagh

ANARCHISM & MARXISM – 2

(continued from last issue)

Marx, in the *German Ideology* (1845) put his socialist ideas on a ‘scientific’ footing. Here he elaborates his theory of history, that socialism is happening and will happen through the development of economic forces. Marx did believe there was an end to (pre-)history when the ‘riddle’ would be solved.

Marx was to say, regarding his dialectics, “my dialectical method is fundamentally not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite”.

Stalin was to say, “dialectics comes from the Greek *dialego*, to discourse, to debate. In ancient times dialectics was the art of arriving at the truth by disclosing the contradictions in the argument of an opponent and overcoming those contradictions”.

Lenin put it this way: “Development is the ‘struggle’ of opposites”.

Hegel believed the world was nothing other than a series of complicated arguments, each unfolding by the negation of earlier ideas, whilst still preserving what is rejected, i.e. “a rejection that retains”. An example is the dialectic of Christianity from Catholic to Protestant. Protestant preserves Catholicism in its own self-understanding of what it wishes to reject (‘Protest’ against Catholicism). So the Hegelian dialectic sought to represent new thoughts on the basis of what was already thought. Could a similar case be made for anarchism's development from Marxism? The idealistic origins of Hegel's thought rejected ‘laws’ and strict rules. Hegel also used the resources of scepticism to ask ‘how can we know anything?’

So in this way how were Marx and later Marxists able to talk of inevitable ‘laws’ of history, and how does S. Coleman know whether anarchism is unlikely to happen? As Marx pointed out in *Capital*, “... present society is no solid crystal, but an organism capable of change, and is constantly changing”. From the scraps of information we gather about history we see around 8000BC the beginnings of agriculture in the near east, the rise of ancient Greece and Rome around 500BC, Norman feudalism in Britain around 1200AD, the English bourgeois revolution around 1600AD and the industrial revolution and the beginnings of capitalism around 1750. All this without the aid of Marx. Whether history moves via dialectics I honestly couldn't care less so long as it moves in the right direction. Marx, however, was certain.

“In broad outlines we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois methods of production as so many epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the *last* antagonistic form of the social process of production — antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from conditions

surrounding the life of individuals in society; at the same time, the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the conditions for the solution of that antagonism. This social formation constitutes, therefore, the *closing chapter* of the pre-historic stage of human society.”

Marx believed communism was inevitable and yet it depended on the revolutionary commitment of the proletariat. How can this contradiction be resolved? Is there in fact a contradiction, or will history simply resolve the matter in due course?

The proletariat must also seize state power which will then wither away. Bakunin was to say on that question:

“If their state is to be truly a people's state then why abolish it? But if its abolition is essential for the real liberation of the people, then how do they dare call it a people's state?”

They say that this state yoke, this dictatorship, is a necessary transitional device for achieving the total liberation of the people: anarchy, or freedom, is the goal, and the state, or dictatorship, the means. Thus for the masses to be liberated they must first be enslaved.

... They claim that only a dictatorship (theirs, of course) can create popular freedom. We reply that no dictatorship can have any other than to perpetuate itself, and that it can engender and nurture only slavery in the people who endure it. Liberty can be created only by liberty, by an insurrection of all the people and the voluntary organisation of the workers from below upward.” (*Statism and Anarchy*)

Others besides Bakunin have realised that Marxism's lack of a theory of power and psychology has allowed pure power seekers to take control. Marxism in practice has dismissed freedom and ‘rights’ as bourgeois prejudices, created uncontrolled bureaucracies for the exercise of economic planning, spreading into every sphere of life and backed by a growing military organisation. Taylor comments that Marxism lacks the Hegelian insight that ‘freedom’ is socio-historically constrained and can't be simply rejected for expediency's sake (or, to use one of Trotsky's dictums, “necessity knows no law”). Marxism contrasts a lack of present freedom with total practical freedom ‘later’. Taylor says in effect that in Hegel's sense Marxism is prone to terrorism.

English socialist writer Steven Lukes writes that ‘existing socialisms’ show:

“repeated failures of Marxist theory and ideology ... to provide a basis for resisting measures taken in its name ... Are there features of the original theory that have disabled its inheritors from offering such resistance? I myself think that there are. I believe that Marxism has from its beginning exhibited a certain approach to moral questions that has disabled it from offering moral resistance to measures taken in its name; in particular, despite its rich view of freedom and compelling vision of human liberation, it has been unable to offer an adequate account of justice, rights and the

means-end problem and thus an adequate response to injustice, the violation of rights, and the resort to impermissible means in the present. I believe that this disability was transmitted from the original theory to its main descendants. I also believe that it has characterised Marxist ideology far and wide.”

Albert Camus argued the end of (pre-)history and the establishment of a classless society is “the only justification for the sacrifices demanded of humanity in the name of Marxism”. Camus asks, however, is such a future ever likely to happen, and if it is not certain then the suffering is not worth the price. Camus poses the question of time, and how long we should wait.

“... what if that logic of history on which so many now rely turns out to be a will o' the wisp? What if, despite two or three world wars, despite the sacrifice of several generations and a whole system of values, our grandchildren — supposing they survive — find themselves no closer to a world society?”

It is obvious that dictatorship, forced labour and violence cannot succeed in creating freedom. As Camus says, “a time comes when deception transforms patient hope into furious disillusionment”. Are we not witnessing this now in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union?

Anarchism as developed by Proudhon and Bakunin (both Hegelians of sorts, and Bakunin as ‘Marxist’!) was essentially a critique of governments, authoritarians and in particular Marx and his followers. A case may be made for the libertarian aspects of Marxism, writers such as Chomsky, Pannekoek and perhaps Debord could be described as Marxists with strong anarchist leanings. A libertarian/authoritarian split which developed in the First International has, however, continued up to today. This split cannot however be a ‘short term’ one because they are incompatible. It is possible to link Marx's tactics to expel his opponents from the First International with later tactics employed by Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. Marcus Graham in *Marxism and a Free Society* remarks:

“... Lenin and Trotsky, the figureheads of the first marxist government to come into existence, instituted persecutions and executions of political opponents with their final most brutal and murderous act — the drowning in blood of the soldiers, sailors, workers and peasants who took part in the Kronstadt rebellion.

‘The end justifies the means’ served as a guide for Lenin and Trotsky, even if it led to the murder of ideological opponents. In this respect they only emulated the tactics and methods employed by their Marxist predecessors at the Hague Conference of 1872. One may surmise that Mikhail Bakunin, James Guillaume, W. West and Victoria Woodhull escaped death by Marxist firing squad only because the General Council under Marx had no machinery of government at its disposal.”

RSW
Bradford

Her most gracious majesty Queen Elizabeth II, or Brenda as we of that small and intimate group who are privileged to address Her Majesty as such within the privacy of Buckingham Palace, has agreed to allow a hundred of the paintings from the Royal Collection to be placed on public display within the National Gallery. Within the National Gallery one treads softly as one does in the presence of Lord Mark Thatcher, for one felt that one was in the end result of greatness, tragedy turned to farce.

I have a great liking for the Queen Mother and, as we stood holding up the bar in the White Hart pub in Whitechapel, I made my point that whatever virtue could be found in this collection was, like good money swamped by bad money, in the end a ragbag of the established, the great, the good and the weary awful. The Queen Mother gave her enigmatic smile but refused to be drawn and as we drained our Guinneses she murmured, "The next round's on me".

On display are works collected by Charles I to the late Queen Victoria, and Charlie played it cool with his cards close to his chest by laying in a groundwork of established genius for later Royal collectors to add to, but with Albert and Queen Victoria trusting to their own bad taste it was downhill all the way with Victorian rhubarb unloaded onto the nation by the wheeler-dealers working the art market. There are paintings here going back to the first Elizabeth and by their very age, as with myself, they are worthy of awed respect and youthful interest in an exhibition that contains work by Holbein, Rubens, Canaletto and Vermeer, but when work by people such as Lady Butler, Landseer, Frith, Martin or Tuxen are added to the stew one feels an uncontrollable desire to seek out and comfort dear ol' Brian Sewell of *The Evening Standard* who wept that: "The exhibition is overall a wretched disappointment, muddled, ill-chosen, and not helped by the confusing basement rooms in which the works hang", and Britain's premier songbird for all things bright and beautiful was not weeping about the 1991 political conferences.

We are of the age of the 'great disposable' wherein we can never form a judgement for everything is received by us, like the supermarket new-laid egg and the stoneground bread, as the art of the technician completely alien to the 'first principles'. Here are the first principles within the Queen's collection and one must accept that so much of it was factory fodder from the great studios of the period, from the crude slickness of Canaletto to Breugel's 1551 'Massacre of the Innocents' wherein the figures were painted in first and the background snow added last to

Brenda's finger paintings

fill the space around the figures, something that cannot be reproduced in reproduction so that, like unto forged banknotes or political manifestoes, they are worthless in relation to the original unless one is a true pragmatic believer or too rich or too poor to care in this age of the great disposable. And I said this to the Queen Mother as we held up the bar in the White Hart, and she smiled her gentle smile and I said: "Please, your Majesty, the next round is on me".

But for the Town and his bored frau it was time to leave the old established within the National Gallery and to seek out the happy-time filth for we are all voyeurs in our National Health hearts and what better way to do it than with the authority of the State.

So it is with a wink and a nod and downcast eyes by the monstrous regiment that 10,000 advance ticket holders, at £5.50 each, forming the vanguard of London's finest will flow head high into the Hayward Gallery to view Toulouse-Lautrec's brothel paintings. Like Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' we have lived out our lives with those and other reproductions and they have exhausted all critical bullshit but for Henri, the official war artist brothel painter, it is that adventure into low-life through the safety of reproduction, be it film,



So unlike the home life of our own dear Queen

One of the longest standing is the Whiteway Colony which has now been in existence and flourishing since 1898.

Each commune is autonomous and continue the aims and visions of their founders. Most of them look for new members but, in today's shoddy language, the reader is advised to 'shop around' before applying to join. But short stays are always welcome in many of the communes, with or without the proviso whether you may wish to join in with their activities during your stay.

The one I visited recently is housed in a beautifully kept seventeenth century building, what they used to describe as Strawberry Hill Tudor, but amazingly cheerful in its capacity to accommodate a bustling community.

The commune has fifty acres of agricultural land which is staffed by enthusiasts from all over the world. The commune is also well-known for its educational work, has an excellent library, and at night you can see by the light of the stars.

The attraction of good company in a healthy society may not suit everybody's taste, but to quote the poet tramp W.H. Davies:

"A poor life this, if full of care
We have no time to stand and stare!"

John Rety

play, news media or visual arts, that decent people want. Not for them the happy-time filthy postcard, the suburban brothel or the Kings Cross knee-trembler, for they wish to delve into that forbidden society behind the razor wire of the State's authority and via the late night television, the play, the tabloid if

"Angry wife Dorreth Currithers ripped off one of husband Lascelles's testicles with her fingernails in a quarrel. He passed out after seeing it in her bloodstained hand, a court heard yesterday. It was taken to hospital with him but surgeons were unable to sew it back."

they dare admit to reading it, or the film, and for that I have sympathy for Sir Allan Green the former Director of Public Prosecutions and the women of Kings Cross for having the courage to put their economic needs or appetites to a solution damned by their peers except in reproduction upon the walls of the State galleries.

But come, lad, said the Town and my elbow-squeezing frau, thou doth protest too much and what better way to show it than to the Hamilton Gallery in Bertie Wooster's Mayfair. There by the quiet of the American Embassy in an area so rich that members of the Militant Tendency touch the forelock when shuffling through its silent streets, is 13 Carlos Place. Its gallery is so plush, so ultra conservative that one doubts if they would let

Lord Mark Thatcher in without his coronet, and there on exhibition are the photographs of Joel-Peter Witkin the American photographer whose work would make Cindy Sherman's — late of the Whitechapel Art Gallery — work appear as placid as Green Party propaganda. In 1984 Joel gave us the human head of an old man sliced like an apple with the two halves turned and kissing. He has produced a parody of an eighteenth century still life, but not for Joel dem ol' skulls for within the pomegranates rest a human foot and a dead baby. Witkin did his time as a front-line photographer, should the call come, with the United States Army and he is now a Catholic living in New Mexico which, so I am informed, is the hang-out of the Catholic group given the bums rush by Holy Mother Church for practising a bloody enactment once a year of the crucifixion, and this in a land too much in love with the obscenity of death.

There is and always will be an audience to witness the horrors that men and women can inflict on each other, be it the fairground freak show of my sad youth or Tod Browning's 1932 MGM film 'Freaks' that was disowned by the studio for its 'tasteless' use of real freaks. But tonight, comrades, you will switch on your television and watch a film/play of a murder and in the news watch the screaming death of uninvolved innocence. Beneath the surface of you all, with the exception of myself, is that old original sin sado-masochism, and you sup off it, with the State's authority, in reproduction and for that you broke Sir Allan Green the ex Director of Public Prosecutions for going to the fountain head instead of the supermarket's chemically adulterated imitation pure.

Arthur Moyses

Food for Thought ... and Action

Recent additions to the Freedom Press Bookshop stock.

On US Gulf Policy by Noam Chomsky, number 1 in the Open Magazine Pamphlet series. Concentrating on one aspect of US foreign policy, Chomsky shows how it is entirely consistent with its history of aggression against countries whose own policies are against US interests. Writing in November 1990, at a time when it looked as if diplomacy and negotiations would eventually resolve the crisis in the Gulf, he predicts that the US will use force, basing this on his analysis of the US record at the United Nations, its habitual resorting to aggression to win arguments, and its complete disregard for international law. A well-designed and produced pamphlet. A5, 16 pages, £2.50.

On the Mass Bombing of Iraq and Kuwait, commonly known as 'the Gulf War', with *Leonard's Shorter Catechism*, by Tom Leonard, AK press. A good, thoughtful work on the subject by this Scots poet, despite the wordy title. The *Catechism* is a series of satirical questions and answers on the war, which is excellent but could have been done in half the space using a normal size typeface. A5 pamphlet, 22 pages, £1.95.

*Freedom To Go: After the Motor Age** by Colin Ward, Freedom Press. Although mentioned in these pages before, I'm taking the opportunity to do so again as I've just seen a very favourable review of it in the September issue of *Architects' Journal*. Under the headline 'Inspirational Anarchy', John Adams praises Ward's attempt to tackle a difficult subject from "the most difficult ideological perspective of all" — the anarchist one. He goes on: "True to form, Ward has produced a thought-provoking mixture of idealism and common sense. The source of his enduring optimism that the human spirit will triumph over the dehumanising forces at large in the world, is a mystery; but in this book, as in his journalism, I find it inspiring". So get it or be square! 112 pages, £3.50.

Never Work! by Ivan Ullmann, Reader's Indigestion. It's nice to see pamphlets that are both thoughtful and well-written, and both interesting and well designed. What's more it's *cheap and illustrated!* It outlines the anarchist attitudes and alternatives to 'work'. A good introduction. A6 pamphlet, 24 pages, 50p.

Power, History and Warfare by Howard Zinn, number 8 in the Open Magazine Pamphlet series. From a lecture delivered at the University of Wisconsin, this pamphlet was stimulated by the Gulf War, and written by Professor Zinn of Boston University (author of *A People's History of the United States*). It is an excellent and very amusing analysis of the expansionism of the US from the start of its history, showing just who the real warmongers have been from the Florida 'purchase', the Mexican 'cession' of California, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona, the 'saving' of Cuba from Spain and the seizure of Puerto Rico, to the subjugation of the Philippines, most of Latin America — not to mention Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam — all by military aggression. Zinn shows that far from being 'human nature' wars require people to be enticed, cajoled, bribed and finally forced to take part in them — with the aid of a servile and self-censoring press, of course. A5, 16 pages, £2.50.

The bookshop is having a **GRAND SALE** throughout November with selected books and pamphlets at reduced prices (to customers calling at the shop), and for those spending £15 or more we are offering an overall 10% discount (except on reduced titles). Come one, come all!

KM

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On the Margin

Many people look for signs of a society in which each individual is able to function. Many models have been tried, and one of them is the rather mysterious commune movement — little publicised and by and large unnoticed by the majority of people. Yet its persistent survival shows resourcefulness and tenacity. But it is not generally known that in our midst there are flourishing communities all over the country, communes ranging from a membership of three to those of many dozens (in other parts of the world, many thousands).

For those who live in the midst of the prevailing economic system and yet are looking for a possible way out of the rat-race, the new book *Diggers and Dreamers* (Commune Network, c/o Redfield Commune, Winslow, Bucks MK18 3LZ) is a useful, entertaining and friendly introduction to the existing pioneers of the communalist idea. Each of the 81-plus groups have also contributed a specially written description of its aims and elaborate amusingly on present and past activities.

The obligations of government

In his much acclaimed and much reprinted book *The British Constitution*, Sir Ivor Jennings KBE QC LLD LitD, wrote: "The British Constitution provides no check against a Conservative Government which really intended to go 'authoritarian', because a Government which has majorities in both Houses can do what it pleases through its control of the absolute authority of Parliament".

The truth of that statement was verified when the Thatcher government managed to pass the Poll Tax Bill, in the face of its great unpopularity, by ferrying aristocrats from all over Britain to the House of Lords, many of whom had forgotten what the place looked like, to vote for a law that would cut the rates on their properties by huge amounts. Thus began an upturn in the fortunes of the Labour Party, whose supporters fondly imagined that Kinnock was the man to sweep away the whole rotten edifice of Toryism for ever.

However, Sir Ivor Jennings, perhaps because he was a pillar of the Establishment, failed to warn his readers that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a Socialist to get real power in Parliament, which explains why Kinnock, frantic for the limelight, has been obliged to become a conservative, albeit with a small 'c', in order to be acceptable to the Establishment for Premiership. The sober fact is that without the blessing of the Establishment, which effectively controls the media, legislature, judiciary and almost every aspect of power, it is practically impossible for a Socialist to do anything but waste his time in Westminster.

Kinnock, faced with the choice, had no option but to drop Labour clauses and adopt conservative policies which would otherwise spoil his chances of Premiership. To this end

he was at last obliged to go on television and tell his Party faithful that, whatever they and their delegates decided at the Party Conference, "the obligations of government" demanded that his government would make its own decisions.

What this all amounts to is that there cannot be other than a conservative majority in both Houses of Parliament.

How was it that the perspicacious Sir Ivor failed to point this out to his readers? Was it an oversight, or did he realise that such an exposure might threaten his career? We might well suspect the latter because, in the same paragraph, he went on: "the foundation of our democratic system rests not so much on laws as on the intention of the British people to resist by all the means in its power — including sabotage, the general strike and if necessary civil war — attacks upon the liberties it has won". This statement is not only a complete vindication of the anti poll tax campaign at street level, it is a condemnation of the whole process of so-called British democracy. According to Sir Ivor, only extra-Parliamentary action can produce or maintain democracy in Britain!

Many anarchists, surely, will not be happy about the efficacy of civil war in bringing about democracy, but we can certainly agree with Sir Ivor in voting with our feet is the only way of achieving anything at all. Those who disagree must explain how it is possible to effectively change the Constitution by constitutional methods, how it is possible to challenge a Sovereign power without breaking its laws, and how it is possible to legally challenge a Parliament which cannot even be challenged by the Courts.

EFC

Redefining Regionalism

(continued from page 4)

There is no need for regionalism to have any overall shape except that of decentralism. No two areas of the country are alike and it should be the right and responsibility of each to work out its own destiny in its own distinctive way. God help us from metropolitan system-makers! I come from Tyneside where Newcastle is the natural metropolis. Gateshead, Durham and Sunderland don't have any serious problem with that so long as their interests are properly respected. The situation is quite different in East Anglia, which in turn bears no resemblance to Greater London. The essential answer, then, is to have each part of England ask its own questions and find its own answers. This does not obviate the case for taking a good look at what has been happening so successfully in Italy and Germany. We have a lot to learn.

Tentative conclusions

In an industrialised society like ours based mainly on towns, the essential unit of regionalism is the city region. The boundaries of its hinterland are a matter of geography, tradition and what people feel about the place they belong to. The important thing is to consult them.

Rural areas, beyond city regions, need the kind of cultural revolution described above to make them enjoyable places to work and live in, to be the means of building self respect and authentic sovereignty. The case for unitary government everywhere is made. Two tier government, county-district, has been tried and found wanting. This leaves us with the problem of democratic forms *within* the city region or rural region — a key problem but not the subject of this paper. Not the parish, but the equivalent of the parish, may be the answer. The remit of the parish was indicated

by its officers: the churchwarden, the overseer of the poor, the surveyor of the highways and the constable. Hardly adequate for today! The shopping centre has replaced the church as the focal point.

None of the party politicians at Norwich had any idea of regional autonomy. It was a wholly foreign language to them. Somehow it needs to be appreciated that *the demise of war in Europe alters everything*; especially does it make centralised finance redundant. This is cardinal to politics with a small 'p'. The acid test of decentralisation is the decentralisation of taxation. All regions need to raise their own, otherwise their autonomy is a sham. Such national government as may be marginally necessary will then be financed by subventions from the regions. And the regions will deal with the European Confederation directly.

Patricia Lady Hollis, of the Labour Party in the Lords, unwittingly presented us with the principal challenge. She said: "*People power raw, cannot create an alternative*. That can only be constructed through the political system." And by political system she clearly meant the received system of political parties, general elections, Westminster and Whitehall. If she is right then we, in the alternative lobby, are part of a lost cause. But she is not right. People power is launched by non-violent insurrection and the abdication of the old order. We have just seen this happen in six Eastern European Soviet satellites and now in the Soviet Union itself. But in the absence of originality they have all gone back to the market and parliamentary democracy. *We cannot go back to what we have already got!* That means that the challenge before is to invent and build working structures of direct democracy — a task without precedent in civilised society. A new regionalism is part of it. Its deeper structure can only be that of countless *small, unstructured, multi-purpose groups of equals* providing for the future what churches and political parties have provided in the past.

Peter Cadogan

A Structured Anarchism

Readers of *A Structured Anarchism* will find a sustained acknowledgement of just how difficult it is to achieve a widespread revolutionary consciousness, which is truly *social* and internalised strongly enough to be effective at the level of individual *behaviour*. We anarchists don't seem to have learned this lesson; if we had, we would expect less of the millions 'out there' who are not committed anarchists, least of all communist-anarchists. Fear/will to power/cynicism about the possibility of social change for the better, make for strong running engines which pull in the opposite direction to that which anarchists desire. We usually prefer to sweep these awkward facts under the carpet. Within the context of tiny meetings and in the pages of journals with tiny circulations, we shut out the real world, and in so doing define our own ghetto. Within this cosy world, we can keep our lily-white libertarian petticoats unsullied by any messy compromises; it's all so much more comfortable to have one's own idealistic position buttressed by what like-thinking others say. Heresies can bring explosive responses, and/or be quietly ignored.

The most popular line of approach in the British anarchist movement, that of the communists, insists that anarchism must mean the destruction of the state, the dispossession of the capitalists, and the dismantling of market economic relationships. *A Structured Anarchism* has the audacity to challenge the latter demand, and even suggests that the self-regulating tendencies of the market, purged of the capitalists, can be useful in assisting the integration of economic activities in modern, complex technological societies: heresy indeed! Collectivist rather than communist anarchism is therefore advocated as a more readily attainable, but rather less free society. Currently functioning workers' co-ops are discussed to provide indicators as to how such a society might operate. The 'problem' of money and markets is seen to be secondary, when no really worthwhile social progress is possible without the removal of the state and the capitalists. Movements towards communism are anticipated, assuming post-revolutionary social attitudes continue to be encouraging of freedom in all walks of life. The above line of argument is linked to a comparable position adopted by Malatesta.

Perhaps it would have been prudent for me to leave it at that, however I didn't: if collectivist-anarchism was a worthy objective, it

was logical to pick over its shortcomings and heedless of the flak that I knew such open, non-propagandist writing would draw, I plunged into analysis which included an assumed need for collectivised banking, taxation/social security provisions, and the bureaucracy which goes with them (shock horror!). Here lay some juicy pickings for opponents. Mark Shipway (*Freedom*, 19th October) duly sank his teeth into them and tried to make collectivism sound just like capitalism, even though he should know that the former lacks both state and capitalists. They say that walls can have ears; sadly ears can have walls. The attainment of a society based on common ownership without a state, capitalists, stock market, etc., would be a truly momentous achievement, yet Mark can only grudgingly concede that it "might be a fairer set-up" (my emphasis). We are all painfully aware that such supposedly modest gains have never been realised anywhere before. To hear some communists talk you would think that money and markets is *the* problem; getting rid of the state and the capitalists is just a little job for any old wet Sunday afternoon, eh Mark?

It was unfortunate that part of Mark's argument concerning my views on moneyless economies was based on a typo — "no means of ensuring work done" should read "no means of *measuring* work done" (page 17). I am not clear as to how Mark's idea of 'stocktaking' is intended to work in a complex and highly mobile city-based society. His example concerning shoes, which can be produced indigenously in small workshops, also evades the problems which I posed in the pamphlet, in relation to complex engineered items requiring raw materials from other countries; countries which incidentally may still have capitalist economies and require cash for their exports. Oh, I see, the communist revolution is to take place worldwide and simultaneously — some chance! In any event, post-revolutionary workers will surely have more than enough internal organisational problems on their plates to worry much about the correctness of using the money system.

Finally, Mark states that the revolution "must" eliminate money, wages and the market "entirely and immediately". Ah, and if some people prefer to continue using any of same, it sounds as if there is just a little bit of good old coercion awaiting them from Mark's Revolutionary Guards.

John Griffin

"... pink triangles and yellow stars ..."

It isn't just the Soviet Communist Party that has been suffering splits and desertions recently. All is not well with the 'Conservative Family Campaign' based in darkest Surrey.

This neo-fascist front organisation, like all front organisations, sucked into it people who were blissfully unaware of its real motives, agenda and ideological foundation. But the pennies are beginning to drop.

Its publication recently of an anti-gay 'charter' has, so far, led to the resignations of at least three of its leading Parliamentary members — among them Jerry Hayes MP, who accused the Conservative Family Campaign of having exactly the same ideas as Hitler; and Baroness Cox, a woman not exactly known for her liberal views. Several others are also considering resigning, although Ivor Stanbrook has announced that he will not be one of them. Considering his recent campaign to stop known Nazi war criminals in this country being prosecuted, this is hardly surprising.

Historically, the anti-gay, Christian supremacist Conservative Family Campaign is the third manifestation of fascism in Britain. It takes its inspiration from a 1967 statement of the long-time neo-fascist activist A.K. Chesterton, when he said: "If scapegoats have to be found, do not look for them among the Jews or the coloured people, look for them among the champions of Sodom". Readers of *Freethinker* may recall that its first chairman, a political 'never was' who seems to hate everybody, unsuccessfully sued me for libel for revealing its neo-fascist ideological base to the people of Newport.

It taps into a mother lode of extreme right-wing ignorance, intolerance and bigotry for its support.

Some inkling of the warped mentality of the people who support it was obtained during a phone-in discussion programme on its 'charter' broadcast on Radio 4 on 31st August.

One supporter made such an offensive, racist

remark about what Africans are supposed to do in their "... mud huts ..." as he put it, that the presenter immediately cut him off, something I have never known happen before on any BBC phone-in programme, and I've listened to many of them over the years.

Another, who claimed to be a "... psychologist who works with homosexuals ..." (and I have my doubts about that claim) made a number of completely false accusations against gays, including a monstrous libel against the film director Derek Jarman.

By no means were all the callers friendly to the Conservative Family Campaign. One critic described their campaign as being reminiscent of "... pink triangles and yellow stars ...". How true.

The Conservative Family Campaign spokesman on the programme claimed that they wanted only two restraints: "... prevention of immigration from high risk areas of the world without a test..." (is this a reference to Africans in mud huts, I wonder?), and health workers with AIDS to be compelled to disclose their condition.

Ceri Hutton, of the National AIDS Trust, questioned whether these were the only restraints the Conservative Family Campaign wanted. She was quite justified in being suspicious.

In February 1987 it published in its newsletter a "... ten point plan [of] ... proposals for curbing the spread of AIDS". These included additional restraints it wanted, including the cutting off of funds to the Terence Higgins Trust and the Family Planning Association, the re-criminalisation of homosexuality, compulsory national AIDS testing of the whole UK population and, most ominously of all, "... AIDS victims to be isolated ..."

It remains to be seen whether this self-inflicted wound will lead to this tiny, squalid bunch of right-wing extremists crawling back to whatever political cess-pit they originally emerged from.

RA

Money – a middle way?

Dear Freedom,
Mark Shipway argues (19th October) that John Griffin's *A Structured Anarchism* would be indistinguishable from capitalism, and advocates a moneyless society. But since "money, wages and the market ... will not wither away", he anticipates a revolution which "must eliminate them entirely and immediately".

But is this a realistic hope? People's whole culture and way of managing is based on monetary values, and I am not alone in seeing some transitional mechanism being essential to achieve the moneyless anarchist utopia—if it is ever to be achieved at all!

Mark sees the continued use of money as fundamentally at odds with anarchist ideals, but I put it to him that it is the present money system on which capitalism is based which makes this so.

I fully sympathise with his "gut reaction against the toll of human time and energy wasted in carrying out tasks only in order to earn money to purchase the means of existence". C.H. Douglas made this same objection in 1918 when he started to develop his proposals to remedy the situation, and advocate

'National Dividends' to bring about 'Economic Democracy' by starting to divorce incomes from employment. His logic was based on the concept of the "common cultural inheritance" or the "wages of the machine"—the view that our present productive capacity was not due just to the present owners of capital, but had been developed over the past centuries by the collective ingenuity, skills and hard work of past generations, and so all present citizens should be entitled to a birthright share in the wealth produced: their National Dividend.

This idea has persisted, and recently the alternative name for it has been adopted of the Basic Income, advocated by, among others, the Green Party.

Given Basic Incomes sufficient to live on in modest comfort, people would no longer be 'wage slaves'. Freed from this slavery, they could choose whether to engage in money-earning activity or in more socially rewarding work—or to divide their time between these and/or other pastimes.

This would not of itself solve all the problems of capitalism; indeed, if the money-creation mechanism were not also changed, it might bring about the

collapse of the system, as it is dependent on ever-increasing levels of production to keep it staggering on.

We have at present a 'debt-money' system, whereby the money on which society depends is created by private banks, and lent to the rest of us at interest; so for production to continue, over any period at least enough extra money must be created and lent to pay the interest accrued over that period (less the payments-out to the rest of us for goods and services used by those banks—which is negligible). This creates the imperative to produce and sell more, to increase profits in order to pay off these loans and interest charges. The total of debt outstanding is rocketing, and is

totally unrepayable under this system—and high interest rates make it accumulate that much faster.

If instead we had a permanent 'credit-money' supply—money brought into circulation without debt and the burden of usury—then we could begin the process of gearing production to meet real needs; and not fretting or suffering if we found that we weren't needed in this process.

I have not read John's *A Structured Anarchism*, but only the correspondence in *Freedom* which it sparked off between these two; but I suggest that the above indicates a 'middle way' which realistically could be the basis for an ecologically benign, libertarian society which itself could then evolve into a fully anarchist one, making rational use of technology to meet human needs.

Brian Leslie

Protest Votes

Dear Editors,
Roughly one quarter of the eligible population will fail to use their vote in the coming general election. The reason, for many of them, will be disillusionment with this procedure and a feeling that Parliament cannot, or will not, do anything for the common man or woman. The shame is that the Government can afford to ignore these millions because their feelings are not registered at all.

Sinn Fein have overcome this difficulty by putting up candidates who refuse to take their seats in Parliament, thus letting the Government know the strength of their opposition. I suggest this is one leaf we should take out of their book however much we may dislike their politics.

The anti poll tax campaign would be the obvious organisation to put the plan into operation.

Ernie Crosswell

[Of course this is not a new idea. Guy Aldred stood as a candidate years ago, saying that if he won he would not go to the House. He didn't win. We wonder what he might have decided to do had he won! — Editors]

Please keep sending in your letters and donations

Romanticism

Dear Editors,

I have to come back to Ernie Crosswell (19th October 1991) as his reply to my comments still irritates me. Basically I have difficulty with his notion of 'primary purpose': a watch's primary purpose is to keep time, a telephone's primary purpose is to provide communications links and a bomb's primary purpose is to kill—objects have primary purposes and I can relate to that, but *women are not objects* and it is important that men stop treating us as such whether that is through their actions or indeed, as in Ernie's case, their words.

This is the reason I cannot accept Ernie's change of terminology from women's purpose to their primary purpose. My children are not my primary purpose. I too am entitled to a life. That life can and does include them, but as an individual my life is not fulfilled by the fact that I have children.

I have often come across men who have this romantic notion of what womanhood

is all about, and as a woman I know that for me it is not primarily about bearing children and secondly about showing men how to live peacefully and righting all the wrongs the power-mongers have given to us all. It is up to men and women to work together for a peaceful world. Women cannot be held responsible for the future of us all. The notion of running back to mummy who will kiss it all better is a falsehood. We all have responsibility and it's up to us all to realise that.

Perhaps if Ernie wants to think in terms of primary purposes then that purpose should be for us all to take responsibility for the future and not just pass the buck onto other people just because of their gender, and if there is to be any wresting of power, which I hope there is, I would think it to be preferable for men and women to join together and wrestle that power from those that really have it and through it manipulate and control us all.

Eileen

A Structured Anarchism

Dear friends,
I thought that I would contribute to the debate on economics that seems to have been raised by the publication of *A Structured Anarchism* by John Griffin. I think John Griffin is to be congratulated for producing a pamphlet that looks at the problems of economics, instead of just quoting Kropotkin or even Marx as so many anarchists do! It is likely that this pamphlet will cause offence in certain quarters because of its views on money.

A big question seems to be the role of money in an anarchist society. The problem with anarchist-communism in the sense of immediate abolition of money would seem to be that this has to happen worldwide.

This in itself requires acceptance of a libertarian communist viewpoint by the vast majority of the world's population. What do dogmatic anarchist-communists do about other anarchists/non-anarchists who wish to keep some sort of money or means of exchange? I feel that much of the reasoning behind the argument for the abolition of money is almost an article of faith and has not been thought through.

Certainly Malatesta did not think a communist society could be established immediately and felt it was an ideal (see *Malatesta: Life and Ideas*, edited by Vernon Richards, pages 34-38). In the Spanish Revolution there were attempts to abolish money by a small number of agricultural collectives, but this was felt to create more problems than it solved. In *The Anarchist Collective*, edited by Sam Dolgoff, there is a section called 'Money and Exchange' (pages 70-76) in which Dolgoff argues the need for money as a means of exchange. Perhaps what follows by implication (these are my thoughts) is also a need for banks, welfare and taxation in some form or other.

A problem anarchists face is that they are a very small minority (usually!) and often just facing inwards talking to themselves. The enormous problem they face is to convince people to become anarchists and move society in a libertarian direction. Sadly a lot of anarchist thought on economics is rooted firmly in the last century and has not really developed.

While I do not believe that there will be one revolution that will bring in 'the anarchist society'—it is a process of change that goes on forever—anarchists badly need to come up with convincing economic ideas that people can start to apply here and now. Just saying that the revolution will abolish money wages and the market—and will only happen when everybody has become a convinced libertarian communist—will get us nowhere fast. How does society move in an anarchist direction?

It seems likely that after a revolution with a large libertarian content there would be a mixture of different economic arrangements, e.g. collectivist, communist and small capitalist. One thing I do feel sure about is no one revolution would eliminate all evil forever.

D. Dane

News from Angel Alley

Dear reader, you probably haven't observed changes on the address label—why should you? But you should, with the next issue, because we have had to transfer our subscriptions list for *Freedom* and *The Raven* from one computer system to another which has meant re-setting the thousand-plus addresses on our mailing list. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy but no-one—not even anarchists—is perfect so when you receive the next issue of *Freedom* please check the address label and if there are any mistakes let us know by return.

The new system, for the time being, has an advantage over the old one as well as a disadvantage. The advantage is that instead of mysterious numbers under the address, you will now see numbers above the address which are obvious, for they correspond to the issue number on the front page of *Freedom* when your subscription expires. For instance 5224 is volume 52 (which is 1991) and issue 24 (which is the last issue of 1991). The disadvantage which our computer buffs assure us will be rectified in due course is that your subscription to *The Raven*, if you have a joint sub, is not included.

This has been an expensive operation. What with the printer (which cost £200) and the typesetting

(another £160), all this modern technology is here to stay and is certainly expensive, so those of our readers who are not trying to live on OAP or unemployment benefits, please think of our ever-growing overheads! Postage has gone up only two pence on *Freedom*, but on our publications and the ones we distribute it has been crippling. We haven't increased any of the book prices and continue to offer all Freedom Press and Freedom Press Distributors titles post free inland. Extreme examples, perhaps, but the postage on Voline's *Unknown Revolution* or Chomsky's *Language and Politics* is £2.50 per volume!

Since we are anarchist propagandists and not into trying to make Freedom Press into a 'profitable' enterprise, we aim to keep our prices as low as possible. Even with the publishers for whom we are distributors we still keep our prices as low as possible and offer the post free advantage for inland readers.

The annual Book Fair at Conway Hall in London was well attended and Freedom Press Distributors' three tables were well received. We met comrades from bookshops in Germany and Holland, with whom we were able to exchange useful notes. We also met old comrades and made many new contacts. And though on our left and in front of us other groups were selling Freedom Press literature, our sales reached last year's total of £600. A very satisfactory day's work!

Of course we enjoy having the London Book Fair, but having a bookshop anyway in London we are even more interested in mini book

fairs outside London. We didn't get much response when we raised the matter some time ago. Any offers or suggestions from Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Southampton, Reading, Brighton, etc., etc? We must create our own distribution network—the W.H. Smiths *et alia* won't do it for us. The responsibility for doing so is as much that of those of you who are our comrades as it is for us. We are doing as much as we can.

For instance, last month we splashed out with a half-page advert in *The New Statesman* and a quarter page in *The Tribune*. Financially a disaster! You who are anarchists should be the best propagandists; the 'introducers' to new readers and sympathisers. Without this support we cannot advance. Don't tell us you haven't the time. Those of us who produce *Freedom*, *The Raven* and all the new Freedom Press titles, and the bookshop, make the time for what we believe in!

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- 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.

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 please).

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FREEDOM CONTACTS

Sectional Editors

Science, Technology, Environment: Andrew Hedgecock, 9 Hood Street, Sherwood, Nottingham NG5 4DH

Industrial: Tom Carlile, 7 Court Close, Brampton Way, Portishead, Bristol

Land Notes: V. Richards, c/o Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Regional Correspondents

Cardiff: Eddie May, c/o History Department, UWCC, PO Box 909, Cardiff CF1 3XU

Brighton: Johnny Yen, Cogs U/g Pigeonholes, University of Sussex, School of Cognitive and Computing Sciences, Falmer, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 9QN

Northern Ireland: Dave Duggan, 27 Northland Avenue, Derry BT48 7JW

North Wales: Joe Kelly, Penmon Cottage, Ffordd-y-Bont, Treuddyn, Clwyd CH7 4LS

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

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