

# FREEDOM

SEASON'S  
GREETINGS  
TO ALL OUR  
READERS

ANARCHIST MAGAZINE

Volume 49 Number 12 December 1988 50p

## DIVIDE & RULE

WHEN Margaret Thatcher came to power in 1979, she declared that one of her aims was to make the State 'Not the master, but the servant of the people'.

Since then every major measure that the Conservative Party has introduced has whittled down the various services which were handled by government departments for the benefit of the people — in a word, the Welfare State — and strengthened every aspect of state power which makes it, in a word, the master, not the servant of the people.

In only one area has the Tory programme reduced state control to a significant degree, and that is, surprise, surprise, the extent to which the running of capitalist society is reigned in by controls restricting its more ugly and excessive features. What Edward Heath called 'the unacceptable face of capitalism' is allowed to be unmasked and show its ugly mug for all to see. Yah!

The excuse for all this is that it is said, in Thatcherite terms, to be for the ultimate good of the economy, that the 'free' market shall have free reign to find its own balance, to respond to the needs of the people (*which* people?) and to bring prosperity to the country. Which part of the country has not been specified.

To this end, all local authorities have been reduced to mere rubber stamps, or, like the Greater London Council, abolished.

Anarchists were never very enamoured with local councils. We found them infected with just the same sort of pompous self-serving bureaucratic types as those which infest the central government. But at least they were more accessible than Whitehall bureaucrats and there was often a kind of childish fun to be got out of baiting councillors in the Town Hall. You might even, occasionally, be able to defend or achieve the provision of a local creche, sports club, meals-on-wheels, or something else of equal earth-shattering importance.

Feeble and frustrating as this might have been, it was the nearest we ever got to having a decentralised structure where in practical needs of communities were considered. They weren't communes, or soviets, comrades, but they did exist to provide services rather than to conscript

us or rob us through taxation of wages, for purposes over which we have no control, or even knowledge. The local town hall would tell us where our rates were going in terms of services, roads, transport, education, etc, and developments in our neighbourhoods would be notified, with the intention of letting us go through the motions of being consulted, even if, at the end of the day, we were ignored. Where central government is concerned, we are just ignored, period. Except for being taxed to pay for bombs, guns, nuclear power stations, motorways, secret services we are not supposed to know about and, of course, all those bureaucrats in Whitehall, beside which our local town hall bumbles pale into insignificance. Oh, and yes, the politicians we love to hate, but whose salaries we pay.

It may seem surprising to some that opposition to the Thatcher government has been swept away with such ease. The fact is that there is a great deal of anger building up among the public, but no credible channel for it to express itself. The Labour Party is so concerned to be the 'Official Opposition' that it is more official than opposition. 'We will not break the Law' cries Kinnock, as mounted police break heads on picket lines, and Thatcher breaks her word every week.

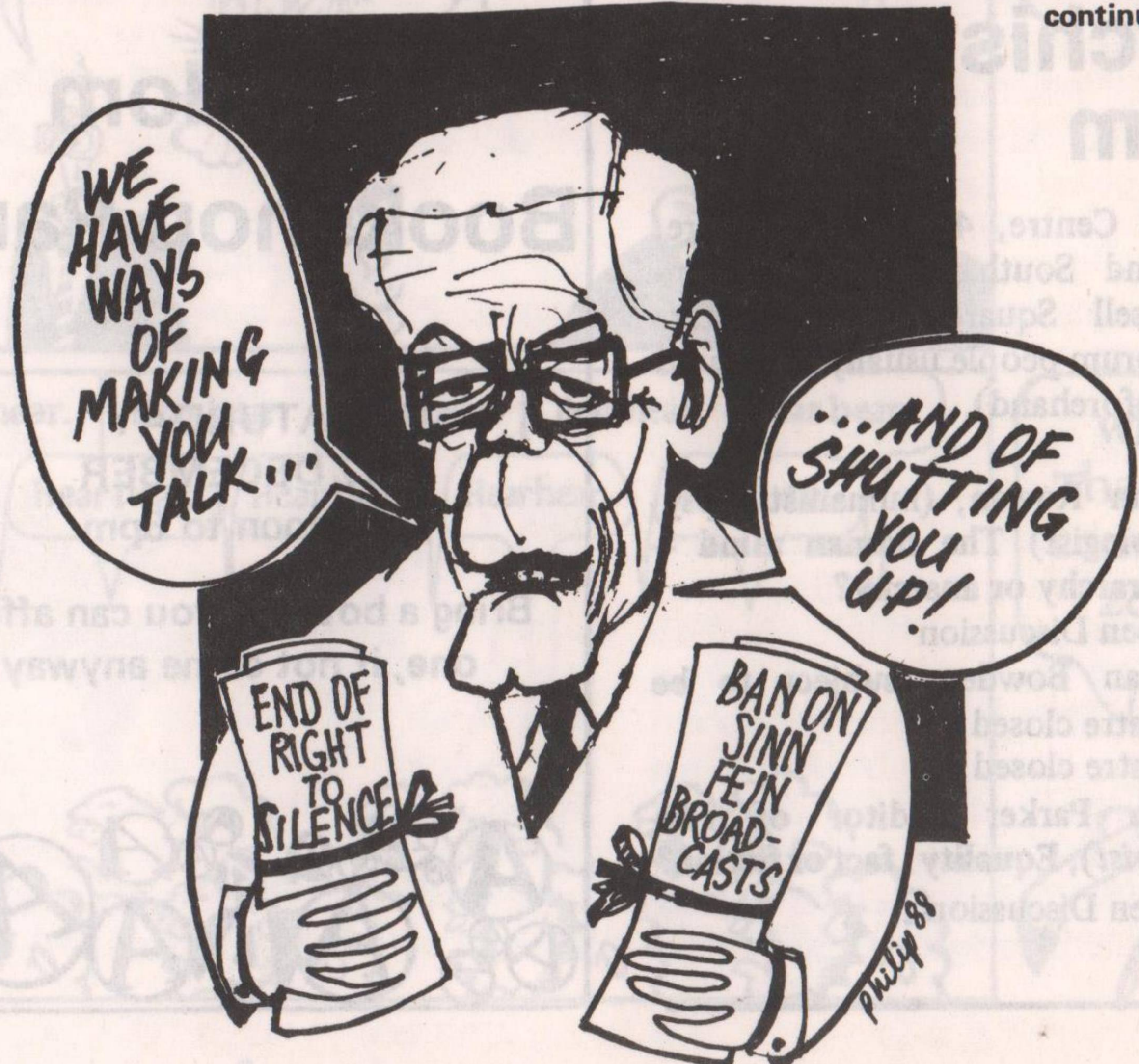
The fact is that socialists of every brand simply cannot come up with arguments against central government domination of absolutely everything, since that is what socialist governments aim at — and brutally achieve wherever they have been able to grab power, by whatever means.

The British working class is not going to the barricades in defence of nationalisation because it gave them nothing to make them feel they were a part of it. All right, spending state money in the mines made them safer and that must be applauded. But the miners still had to be docile labour units as far as the Coal Board was concerned.

And so it was with every nationalised industry. Sure, some labour-saving systems were introduced — but not for the sake of the men or women involved, only for the sake of profit at the end of the day. 'Efficiency' meant only meeting output targets profitably. Unhappily, that didn't always work out — which gives the Tories their great argument against public ownership, but would they ever say 'Consult the workers'?

Of course not, but neither would the Labour Party. So it is not surprising if, today, there is no enthusiasm among the workers in state-owned industries to rise in their defence, for that is what

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# FREEDOM

anarchist magazine

volume 49 number 12

December 1988

published by

Freedom Press  
(in Angel Alley)  
84b Whitechapel High Street  
London E1 7QX

ISSN 00 16 0504

typeset by

Mum's the Word

printed by

Aldgate Press  
London E1 7QX

distributed to bookshops by

A Distribution

## Donations

MID-OCTOBER – MID-NOVEMBER  
1988

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Tewksbury PS £4; London E11 LTR £1;  
Buxton PW £1; Bristol AFC £6; Liverpool  
MD £2; Canterbury KS £1; Gateshead GD  
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£1; Wolverhampton JL £6.

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Mid-Oct – Mid-November Total = £56.50  
1988 TOTAL TO DATE = £723.55

## London Anarchist Forum

Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square,  
WC1 (Behind Southampton Row, op-  
posite Russell Square. Meetings start  
8.00 pm, Forum people usually in ground  
floor cafe beforehand).

- Dec 2 John Rowan, (humanistic psy-  
chologist) **The human mind –  
hierarchy or anarchy?**  
Dec 9 Open Discussion  
Dec 16 Ruan Bowden, subject to be  
Dec 23 Centre closed  
Dec 30 Centre closed  
Jan 6 S.E. Parker (Editor of *The  
Egoist*), **Equality: fact or fiction?**  
Jan 13 Open Discussion .

## NE London

### Anarchists and Greens dayskools at NELP

WHY? Primarily to educate ourselves  
about anarchist and green issues.

WHEN? Certain Wednesdays, 1pm to 4pm

WHAT?

14 Dec: Animals and the politics of food

25 Jan: Housing (squatting, co-ops, etc)

WHERE? SIS, Holbrook Centre,  
Holbrook Road, Plaistow, London E13.  
(near Plaistow tube and buses 69, 173)

Free. All welcome. Creche facilities.  
Disabled access is bad.

## London ACF

### Anarchist Communist Federation

First Thursday of every month 8.30pm

Marchmont Community Centre,  
Marchmont Street, London WC1.

5 January: Why we need anarchist  
organisation.

## Poll Tax!

Can't pay! Won't pay!

Resist the Poll Tax!

Anarchist Communist Federation  
(London)

Public meeting

Wednesday 25 January 1980 at 7.30pm  
Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,  
(nearest tube Holborn)



## Freedom Bookshop Party

SATURDAY  
17 DECEMBER  
12noon to 6pm

Bring a bottle if you can afford  
one, if not come anyway.



## Leslie's

Turner's Road, London E14

Now open Tuesdays and Thursdays

6.00pm to 9.00pm and Saturdays

1.00pm to 4.00pm.

For squatters' advice and wholefood  
co-op (very cheap).

Downstairs bar/space/events  
will open in the New Year.

## Greenpeace (London)

Open meetings Thursdays 7.00pm  
at 6 Endsleigh Street, London WC1

Greenpeace (London) is a peace/green/  
anarchist group founded 1970, no formal  
connection with Greenpeace Ltd, estab-  
lished 1977.

Contact Greenpeace (London)

5 Caledonian Road, London NW1.

## Porton Down Peace Camp

A SITE for a permanent peace camp at  
Porton Down has also been found. We  
need you to set the ball rolling. If we  
hold this site a February blockade to  
commemorate Halabja can be organised.  
Contact P. N. Rogers, Box ZZ, 34 Cowley  
Road, Oxford. Telephone (0865) 249406.

## Kurds

FREEDOM's last issue publicised the  
terrible plight of the Kurds. A weekly  
picket of the Iraqi Embassy is being  
planned to protest against it. Let us call  
for tyrannicide not genocide. Contact  
Roger Dwek on 01-607 7984 for details.

## Broadwater Farm demo

PC Blakelock was killed during an anti-  
police riot at Broadwater Farm Estate,  
Tottenham, in 1985. The identity of the  
killer(s) is unknown, but Winston Silcott,  
Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghip were  
found guilty, on evidence which has been  
questioned by Amnesty International and  
also by two independent enquiries. An  
application to appeal will be made to the  
Appeal Court on Monday 12 December.  
Picket of Wormwood Scrubs Prison,  
Sunday 11 December. Details: London  
Greenpeace.

# Nuclear weapons no deterrent

GEOLOGISTS' views, based upon fossil evidence, concerning the roots of human-kind are roughly divided into two schools of thought; those that say the existence of humanity stems from 20 million years ago, and those that say human existence stems from 5 million years ago. If this is so the period known as pre-history makes up by far the vast bulk of human lifetime. The period which is collated is thus called history and can only be described as a brief glimpse of real human history.

It is in that context that the social evolution of any human pastimes should be correctly viewed, including the 'thing' called war. War to my mind is when armed hostilities between countries or regions occur. The declaration by a Government of war is another matter. The system that we find ourselves in says war does not exist only within the terms of Government declarations. Anarchists say war exists only within the terms of notable destruction of human life through violent actions that would not occur if it was peacetime. The term notable suggests the pattern must be more than isolated sporadic instances of murder.

To talk of nuclear weapons having clear historical evidence in deterring war is an utter nonsense. That view only works if one accepts that war is only determined by Government declaration. In modern times Britain's direct involvement in Korea, the Falkland Islands, and Northern Ireland, must be considered as wars that nuclear weapons failed to deter.

If any question arises about the 'directness' of Britain's involvement then I suggest the person asking the question should address him/herself to the vast body of people who have direct experiences, or to the relatives who have had people seriously injured or killed in these wars. For instance, my dad fought in Korea as part of the British force, he was a Derbyshire man with a blood-line stretching back hundreds of years. If that is not British direct involvement what is? The same principle applies to the American involvement in Vietnam, and the Russian involvement in Afghanistan.

The possession of nuclear weapons has done nothing to deter war, unless one starts to redefine 'notable destruction of human life through violent actions that would not otherwise occur in peacetime' as being conflicts, or internal troubles. If one does that, then one accepts all the jargon of the system that proliferates war through much of its human culture. When Argentina attacked 'NUCLEAR' Britain then according to the system's terms the deterrent argument should have been put completely to rest. It failed to deter Argentina.

If one accepts that in the bulk of human history, according to geological evidence, which is between some 5 and 20 million years, that humankind never experienced war only peacetime. Then the argument must be not for a continuance of nuclear weapon systems but a descaling of all technology. There is a

middle way which would be to get rid of only the ecologically destructive technology of which nuclear weapons are the crowning pinnacle.

The deterrence value of nuclear weapons only works if one is selective about the usage of history and chooses to measure the success of nuclear weapons against the two worst atrocities of human history, world war one and two. Fortunately it is utter nonsense when measured against the entirety of human history.

C A

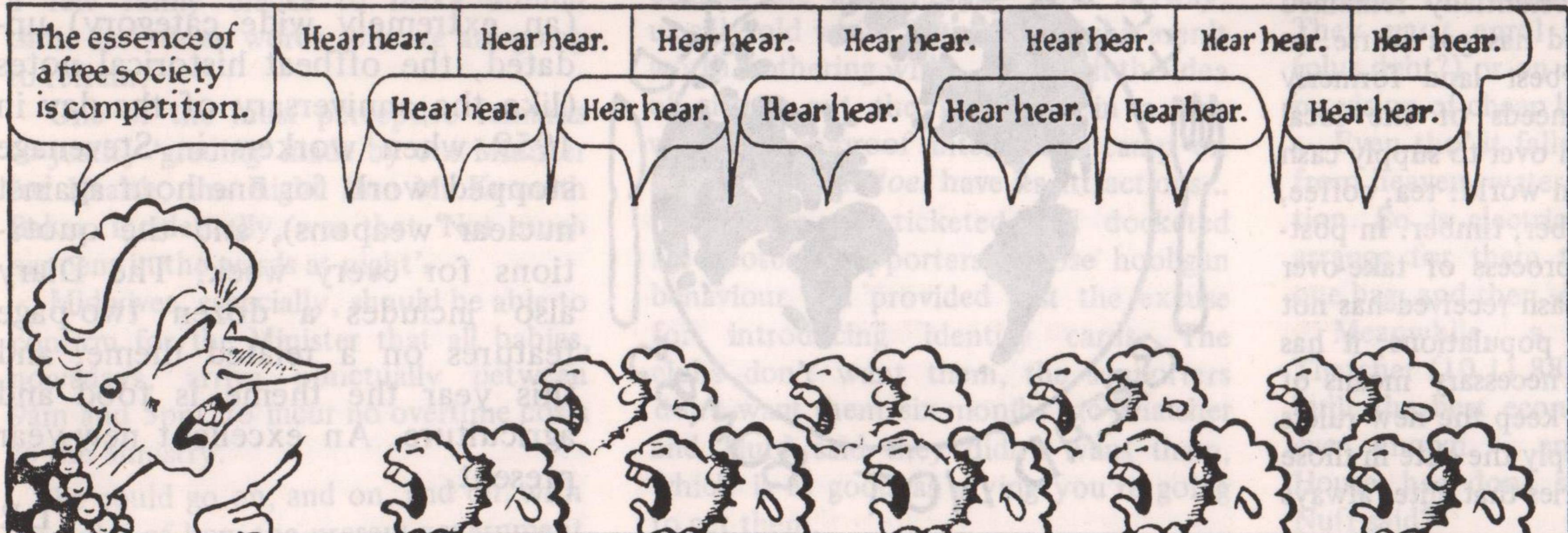
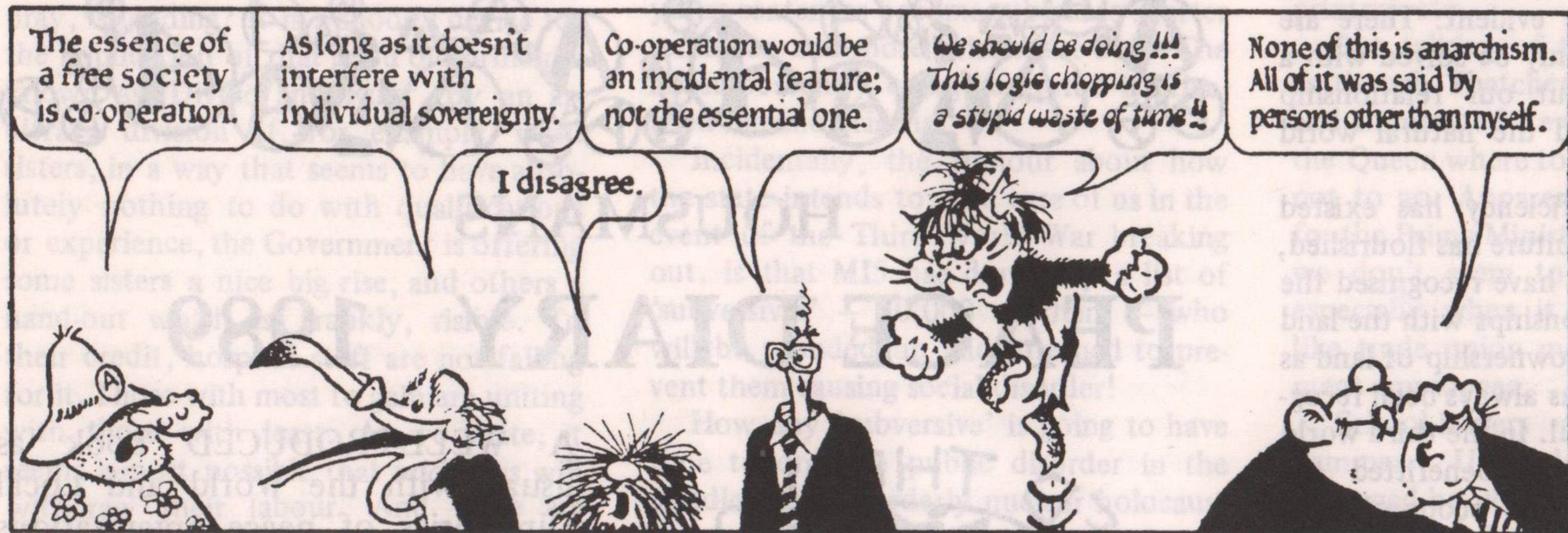
## The RAVEN



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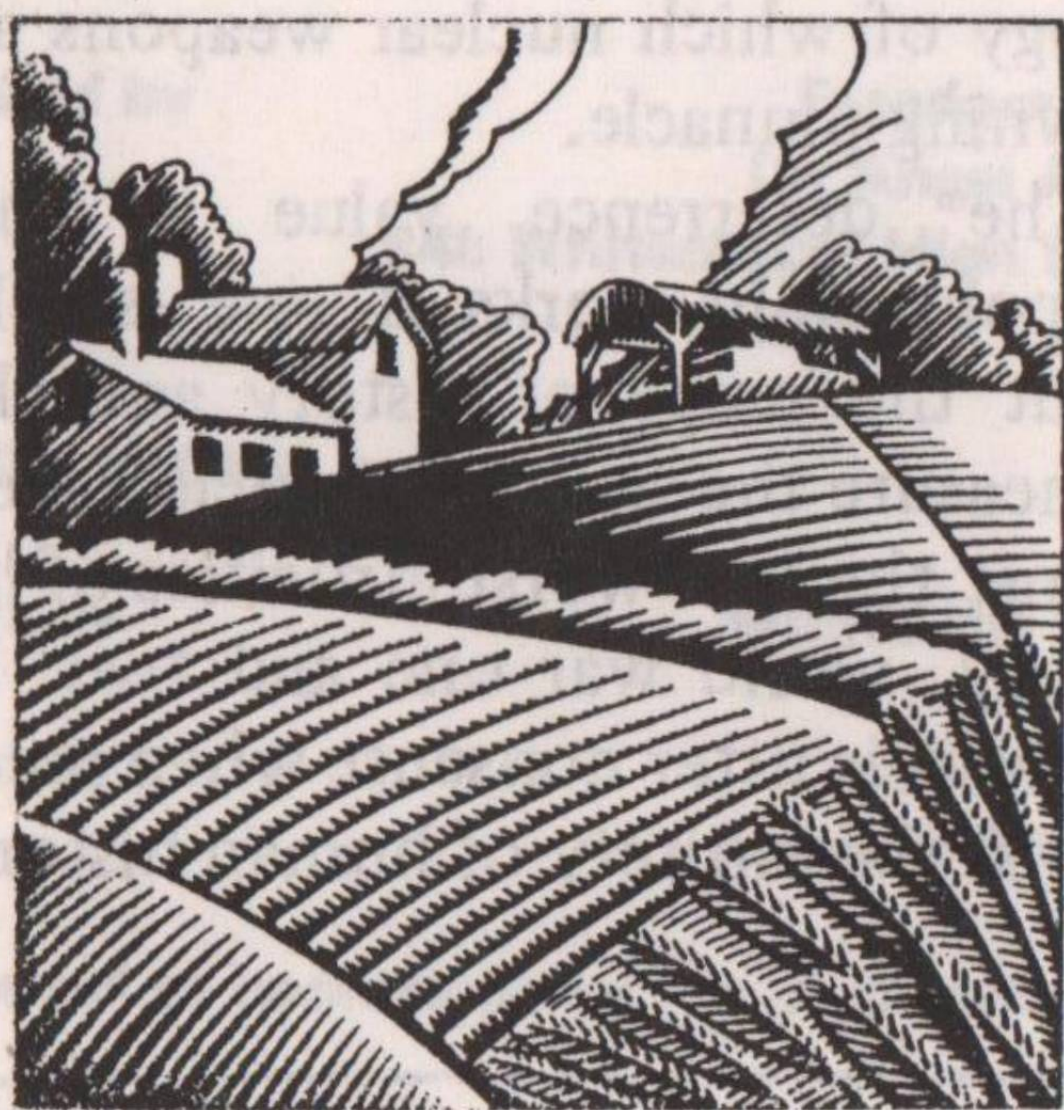


Anarchists  
practise  
dog-eat-dog  
co-operation,

whereas  
Thatcherites  
compete like  
zombies.



# Agripolitics and Ecopolitics



SINCE Agriculture got mixed up with politics more and more people have become short of food. When large surpluses are being stored at vast expense, in certain places, there are people in other places who do not get enough. There is no doubt that the growth of agriculture in the ancient world produced the surpluses that supported the non-productive supporters of empire such as the soldiery and bureaucracy, nor that their demands led to the desertification of the hinterland and the disappearance of some civilisations in the dust. Meanwhile hunter-gathering societies have survived in harmony with their environment for thousands of years, until relatively recently, when the idiom of land-ownership and exploitation has spread world wide. It is surprising that humans do not learn the lesson.

With technical advances in the means of exploitation the limitations of our planet have become evident. There are problems that can only be solved with a drastic rethink about our relationship with each other and the natural world in which we live.

Relative self sufficiency has existed in places where agriculture has flourished, and peasant cultures have recognised the importance of relationships with the land and its control. The ownership of land as a source of power has always been recognised by the powerful. In the third world independence has not benefitted the common people as the economic and political setup has essentially remained the same, and indeed has got worse. In colonial times the best land formerly cultivated for the needs of the local population was taken over to supply cash crops for the western world: tea, coffee, tobacco, cotton, rubber, timber. In post-colonial times the process of take-over has continued. The cash received has not benefitted the local populations; it has gone to supply the necessary means of coercion required to keep the new rulers in power, and to supply the elite in those places with the luxuries that elites always demand.

The history of human society is littered with examples of how ignorance of the ecological balance has resulted in both disasters and difficulties. We go merrily on failing to correct these matters, and with the technical ability to exploit the material and human resources to a far greater degree than ever before, the obvious results now stare us in the face. The political and financial forces, that are now in charge of the parlous state of our environment, will no doubt find ways of getting the population at large to pay for the pollution of the water supplies by the unholy alliance of farmers and chemical companies, who have vast fortunes out of their polluting activities. The destruction of hedges and the cultivation of unsuitable land has already been subsidised by the people who are now being asked to pay for the reconstruction of the countryside. The solution to the problems of the common Agriculture Policy are singularly inappropriate to this country where the peasantry had already disappeared. The milk quota system is tailored to the needs of the large farmer, as the quota is to the farmer and not to the land and this has resulted in concentration in larger and larger units, resulting in more intense drug-controlled disease and chemically stimulated production. Near where I live in the west country, where much milk production is concentrated, is a quarry where the latest

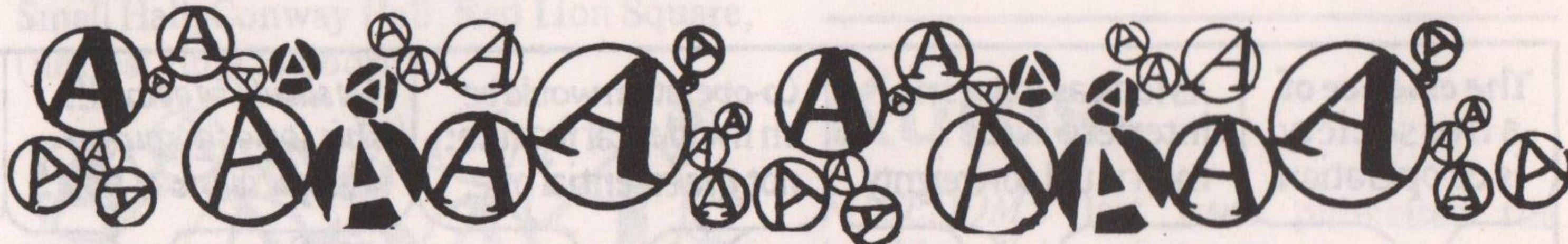
casualties of the latest cattle disease are being burnt.

The quota system discourages the development of small mixed farming units where the cattle can be fed on home produced fodder, and where diseases and pests can be controlled by the rotation of plant and animal crops, instead of by the cocktail of damaging chemicals which now penetrate our water supplies, air and food.

The penetration of market forces into all areas of human activity has led to the values of the money changers affecting the field of research. This distorts the practical use of knowledge, for if you ask the wrong questions you get the wrong answers. The damage is compounded in Agriculture where you have colleges strongly supported by those chemical giants who derive large profits from agricultural activity, and students are encouraged to become more and more dependent on their products.

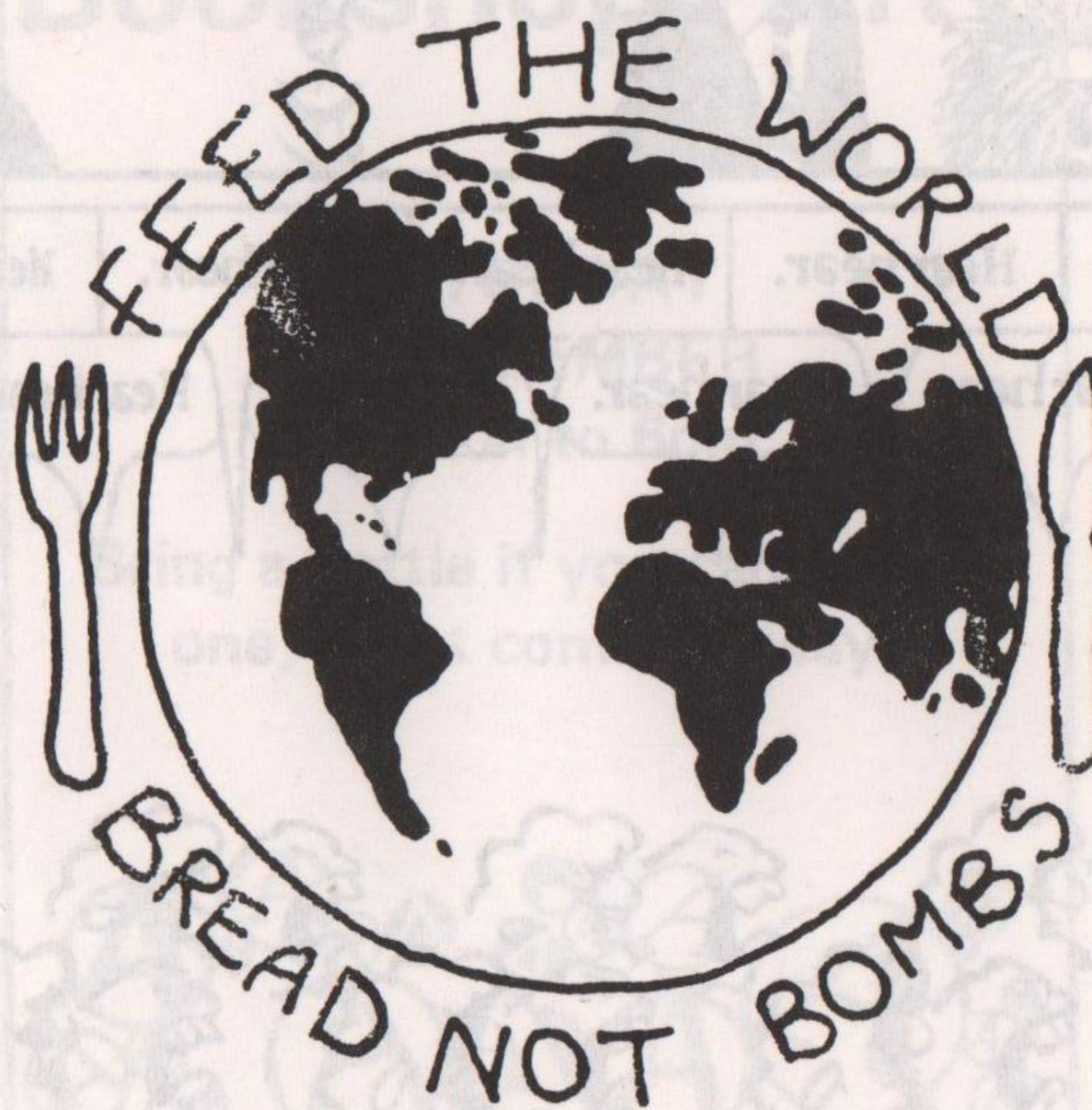
The simplification of complicated biological processes for financially related reasons has had damaging consequences that we see all around us, and we depend for the correction of these effects on the very powerful people who benefit from the processes that are causing the problems. The progress to correcting what is happening to the planet may well be slow.

Alan Albon



HOUSMANS

## PEACE DIARY 1989



A WELL-PRODUCED book as usual, with the World and Local Directories of peace organisations (an extremely wide category) updated, the offbeat historical notes (like the anniversary of the day in 1959 when workers in Stevenage stopped work for one hour against nuclear weapons), and the quotations for every week. The Diary also includes a dozen two-page features on a related theme, and this year the theme is food and agriculture. An excellent new-year present.

DR

## DIVIDE & RULE

continued from front page

they are: State Owned. Not socialised, not under workers' control, but bureaucratic monopolies.

The Tories, you see, are cunning: by their method of privatisation, they are making it possible for workers to buy shares in the industries in which they work. Why couldn't Labour have thought of that? For the same reason, presumably, that they couldn't think of offering council tenants the right to buy the houses, or flats, for which they had been paying rent for umpteen years. If Labour had had the wit to introduce that, PLUS the promise to use the money thus raised to build more houses for rent to first-time tenants — young single persons, single parents, newly-weds, whatever — they would have been on a vote-winner. And let nobody pretend that the leaders of the Labour Party could say 'Property is Theft'!

Perhaps the Tories greatest weapon, however, is their utter, ruthless cynicism. Their readiness to stand and lie their heads off with those sickeningly earnest expressions we can all see on the telly. Have you seen Cecil Parkinson recently? He's Minister for Energy (no snide comment, please!) and so will be guiding through the privatisation of electricity.

But what about Maggie? Remember when she swore, hand on heart, that 'The National Health Service is safe in our hands'? Now, for the first time in history, hospital nursing staff are determined to withdraw their labour if the introduction of 'grading' is not withdrawn. And what, pray, is grading? It is a shoddy device for the application of that good old principle known as 'Divide and Rule'. By an arbitrary division of, for example, ward sisters, in a way that seems to have absolutely nothing to do with qualifications or experience, the Government is offering some sisters a nice big rise, and others a hand-out which is, frankly, risible. To their credit, hospital staff are not falling for it. Those with most to gain are uniting with those with least. As we write, it seems almost possible that *midwives* will withdraw their labour. And there are a few funny cracks to make around those last three words, but we are going to refrain.

One of the most perceptive remarks to justify 'grading' made by our Minister for Health, the Right Hon Mr Kenneth Baker, incidentally, was that 'Not much happens in the wards at night'.

Midwives, especially, should be able to confirm for the Minister that all babies, nowadays, arrive punctually between 9am and 5pm, to incur no overtime costs to the Ministry.

We could go on, and on, and on, with examples of how the present government

of Britain is in all essentials a fascist government. And it's all happening so easily, almost without trying. Thatcher certainly came to power with the intention of smashing anything that smelt of socialism in Britain, including trades unions, tho' she just loves them in Poland. But so much has just dropped into her lap. The present 'troubles' in Northern Ireland had already been thundering for 10 years when she walked into Downing Street (the troops were sent in by a Labour Government, remember?) and they have provided good reason for stepping up all sorts of security measures, as well as providing good training in 'low intensity operations' for a British army with no empire to police. Further, as the IRA has not merely survived, but escalated the violence, more excuses are provided for wiping out long-held legal safeguards in British law — like the right to silence and the concept that you are innocent until proved guilty — the prosecution has to prove your guilt, you don't have to prove your innocence. All that to say nothing of the abolition of juries in Ulster's Diplock courts, the internment without trial which has come and gone and may come again, the excuses for development of special killer squads like the SAS, for use, not in wartime, but hand in hand with the security forces and the police.

Here on the mainland the police have been para-militarised and armed more than ever before — and internationalised, through Interpol, all with the excuse of combating international terrorism.

The prison population in free and sovereign Britain is higher than in any other EEC country — and will get higher yet as sentences become subject to shorter remission and more prisons are built. The latest obscenity being suggested is privatised remand prisons!

Incidentally, the rumour about how the state intends to take care of us in the event of the Third World War breaking out, is that MI5 has drawn up a list of 'subversives' — 20,000 of them — who will be rounded up and interned to prevent them causing social disorder!

How any 'subversive' is going to have time to organise public disorder in the middle of nice orderly nuclear holocaust boggles the imagination — but anyway, us silly old white fogies full of shit aren't worth bothering with — although the idea of sitting out the holocaust in a nice warm bomb-proof internment camp on the Isle of Man *does* have its attractions...

Also to be ticketed and docketed are football supporters, whose hooligan behaviour has provided just the excuse for introducing identity cards. The clubs don't want them, the supporters don't want them, six months ago Thatcher and Hurd said they didn't want them, which is as good as saying you're going to get them.

And so it goes on. For the first time, the existence of MI5 has been officially admitted, and in the Queen's Speech, too. As we all know, MI6 does not exist — they are the spycatching lot — but the internal thought police are now officially here, with their 20,000 subversives neatly listed.

Thought control is not the job of MI5 only, however. TV and radio broadcasters have now been brought to heel in the matter of informing the British populace as to what the hell all that trouble in Northern Ireland is all about — at least as far as getting it from the horse's mouth. Sinn Fein, a properly organised political party with members of Parliament (who don't take their seats) and thousands of voters in a province of Great Britain are not allowed to speak directly to us stupid and gullible commoners, who will be led astray and will all become catholic terrorists overnight if Mr Gerry Adams is allowed so much as a sneeze on telly. He can be reported, however, suitably edited, by a responsible employee of the media.

But we are all being picked off one by one. Last April the pensioners had their meagre allowances cut and are now being threatened by the means test; last month the students were told they would have to go into debt for years in order to get our advanced state's wonderful 'free' education. You'd think that further education in the technological age was a luxury this poor little banana kingdom could not afford, and when students protest they get their heads busted by the Metropolitan police's special squad of Cossacks, as also used against miners, printers, etc.

But talking of the kingdom, it looks as though Thatcher has finally come out and nominated herself as King — to tell the Queen where to go — or rather, where not to go. Apparently it's constitutional for the Prime Minister to do that, although we don't seem to *have* a constitution, especially when it comes to civil rights like trade union membership for government employees.

School-leavers are also under the hammer. Unemployment figures are massaged by youngsters not being allowed to sign for benefit on leaving school. They *must* enrol for further education (plus debt?) or on a YTS scheme for the provision of cheap labour.

Even tho' it falleth like the gentle rain from heaven, water is in line for privatisation. So is electricity. Could somebody arrange for them to be put together in one bag, and then see what happens?

Meanwhile, a final quote: from Thatcher (10.11.88): 'The Chancellor has built the best economy this country has ever known — and everybody in this House has done very well out of it!' Nuff said? **Philip Sansom**

# Brian Willson against the machine

ON SUNDAY 5th November, the BBC's 'Heart of the Matter' documentary looked at the case of Brian Willson, maimed when a weapons train ran him over during a peaceful protest at a naval weapons base in California last year. A preview article in the *Radio Times* called 'Man against the Machine' should have alerted most interested viewers; for those who missed this low-key but interesting programme, here's a short review.

Through interviews and amateur film footage, the programme first tried to verify what actually happened on the day the train ploughed into protestors sitting on railway tracks where they crossed a highway near the Concord Naval Base, from which arms are shipped to America's proteges in Central America. It then moved to an analysis of some of the issues, such as America's self-defined role as 'Policeman of the World' and the right and indeed necessity of citizens to protest the actions of governments of the states in which they live (although the government did not go so far as to suggest that governments themselves were part of the problem).

The star of the show, without doubt, was Brian Willson himself, a middle-aged all-American Vietnam veteran whom presenter Joam Bakewell described as 'amazingly normal', as if to object to the actions of the US Government ought somehow to make one abnormal.

Willson explained about the protest and his own attitude to it. Demonstrations had been going on for some months before the decision was taken to escalate the action non-violently by sitting on the tracks. The groups had informed 'everyone' that they were going to do so. 'I expected to be arrested and put in jail', Willson said. Instead, as the arms train approached with no sign of slowing down, protestors began scrambling to get off the rails — it was suggested that one protestor may have leaned on Willson as they struggled to escape, inadvertently pushing him back between the rails.

Willson fell under the train, catching his feet, which were both torn off, and the side of his head, severing an ear and part of his skull. A video film taken by a fellow-protestor captured this horrific scene. A naval medical team at the site, shown clearly on the video, refused to help on the grounds that the highway was not Government property. It was twenty minutes before the County ambulance arrived, Willson meanwhile being kept alive by simple pressure on his arteries administered by his wife and friends. Both legs were amputated below the knees on arrival at hospital, and after a brain operation Willson was fitted with a



plastic replacement skull-bone. Today, he is learning to walk with prosthesis.

As the programme moved on to enquire into the deeper reasons for the protestors, it looked first at Willson's early life, raised in a right-wing Baptist family and in 1966 drafted to Vietnam as an Air Force intelligence officer, assessing bombing damage to Vietnamese villages. He became aware of the destruction of Vietnamese culture and also of the lies of the US Military which falsified casualty figures on both sides. As he put it, he began to question the moral ethics of US involvement in other cultures' affairs, and felt he had been 'duped'.

In 'Nam, his outlook changed. Back in the US, Willson began working with other Veterans who felt similarly. After a visit to Nicaragua, where America was becoming involved against the Sandinista regime, he and other Veterans held a 45-day Fast for Peace at the Pentagon. As a result of this he was investigated by the FBI.

'I've always thought that I was a good patriot, but ... I prefer to say "a good citizen", and a good citizen is aware of how we're all connected and how everything works together, and is very concerned about justice', Willson says, explaining — as the T-shirt he wears proclaims — that 'I love my country but I don't trust my Government'. As to why he took up direct action as the only viable form of protest, he says: 'They won't read my letters, they won't listen to my voice, but they have to deal with my body,' and this for him means 'You believe in the moral force of your presence ... and you have to be prepared

to accept the consequences of what happens.'

Accepting what has happened to his body is one issue — accepting that it was accidental is another. Willson is now suing the Navy and the train crew for assault. The train's lookouts say they had not been told about the demonstration on the tracks, and also claim that Willson is lying about what happened, despite the evidence even of the FBI. The legal limit for a goods train crossing the road is 5 mph — from the amateur video, the FBI assessed the speed of the train at 16 mph. A Navy re-run showed there should still have been time to brake and avoid the protestors even at 16 mph, but the video clearly shows the train continuing ahead without losing speed.

A Naval report on the incident had several key recommendations suppressed at a higher level. There is therefore a strong suspicion that it was planned by the US Navy. The Base Commander, who refused to be interviewed by the BBC, had contacted the County Sheriff to consult him about handling the protest and had agreed to give the Police 30 minutes' notice before the train was to move, so they could move in and take whatever action they felt appropriate against the protestors. The police claimed they were not given notice that the train was to depart, and were not on the scene at the time of the incident.

A Naval security man, John Banter, has gone on record — in the Navy's enquiry — as ordering the train to move; saying: 'There's going to be a confrontation sooner or later, we may as well have it now.' One of the train's two look-out

guards, who has been having psychiatric treatment since the event, claims that he had not overheard this remark.

Protests still continue at the weapons station, which has become a sort of mini-Greenham for the Politically Correct American Left; largely helped by the widespread publicity given to Willson. Willson's fame has spread worldwide — 200,000 people lined the streets to welcome him to Nicaragua, where he visited children maimed in the fighting there, and songs are already being written about the Concord incident.

Largely because of this popularity, Willson is regarded with suspicion by the patriotic right, who entertain conspiracy theories which the BBC unfortunately allowed to waste air-time in the interests of 'balance', although this had little to do with 'the heart of the matter' — which ought to have been about how and why individuals come to doubt and take issue with powerful interests, particularly Governments, not about anti-Red paranoia. Local Republican Joan Last, running for Congress, claimed 'paid agitators

pushed him back onto the tracks, wanting martyrs' and that 'wherever you have agitation you have professional agitators'; basically suggested that no-one ever does anything without being paid money to do it (which leaves a lot to explain about the Lifeboat Association, St. John's Ambulance Brigade and IVS, to name but a few). Last claimed the *Times* had revealed that Col. Qadhafi had given money to Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua to use for propaganda in the US, the implication presumably being that this was being used to finance Willson's speeches to conferences. Her attitude to peace agitators was that 'somebody's paying them' — presumably the BBC did not expect us to take this raving loony seriously, in which case I would have preferred them to ignore her.

Willson is now part of a group called 'Nuremberg Actions', concerned with war crimes and crimes against humanity and which believes US involvement in central America is illegal. 'Innocent people are still being murdered for very evil US interests', Willson says.

We unfortunately learned very little of Willson's own political beliefs. He clearly believes in the duty of everyone to take action against injustice, and the programme's conclusion was that the right-wing view that only by lobbying politicians can change be brought about constitutes a serious threat to civil rights in America. Joan Bakewell, in the *Radio Times*, said the idea behind the programme was that she wanted people to discuss 'whether, in a democracy, it's right to challenge the machine in this way or whether one should go through the electoral system'.

Anarchists should know the answer to that one; as Willson put it: 'I believe in democracy. But ... we don't have a democracy, we have an oligarchy'. Clearly, whether or not he is an anarchist — and I doubt he is — Brian Willson comes across as a man with few illusions about the nature of Government or its willingness to kill and maim to maintain power, wherever in the world it is found, not only in the US.

Bjarni

## Patriarchy

THERE appears to be some confusion in terminology in respect of the terms Patriarchy and Matriarchy.

The term Patriarch in its Classical Greek sense referred not to the domination of the female by the male but domination of the family by its oldest male member the patriarch. This essentially grandfather figure was the priest of the family god and therefore as the land was held by heavenly right the landholder. As patriarch he had control over the whole family of both sexes, its servants or slaves. This, at one time, included the power of life or death although in Athens during later times this function was curbed and taken over by the state.

Without wishing to get technical about the various stages of 'Greek' invasion or religion this classical period was a period of patriarchy. It is clear from the history, literature and other surviving records that this stage was one of several and Greek society had also been matriarchal. During the classical period women were held in a subordinate role being subordinate to their fathers whilst unmarried or husbands when married but both were subject to the patriarch until one of these males or the nearest male relative assumed the role. In an age where physical strength in combat was the necessity then male-female dominance was considered essential and in a tribal situation where clan identity legitimised role as landholder then the dominance of a male patriarch was considered equally essential.

The use of the term patriarchy by feminists to cover all males is part of

the corruption of language wherein an older specific term is used to cloud over and hide real meanings. Other words like calling the middle class the bourgeoisie, homosexuals gays and so on are other examples. The implication that all males are in a dominant role is clearly nonsense. Feminists imply that males are in a more fortunate position because they are unable to take on the biological role of motherhood. This may be true, but its truth is dependent upon one's viewpoint. This view does not provide any evidence that the male has greater control over his life. The need to provide the wherewithall firstly as a member of a family group, secondly within parenthood traps the male in a situation which many would prefer to avoid. Dominance may appear apparent because of a male's likelihood of being larger and of greater physical strength and of higher apparent earning power but real dominance comes from other factors such as knowledge, wisdom, legitimacy, wealth and much more so from interaction and span of control. Furthermore the difference in familial role does not imply male dominance but simply the sexual division of labour necessary because of the maternal nature of women's role within the family and the male need to provide succour.

Sociological evidence does not indicate that the majority of families are male dominated, or if you would prefer to use the altered meaning of patriarchy and matriarchy, patriarchal. In point of fact studies of working class families in Britain indicate that they are largely matriarchal. Studies of upper class families, where wealth holding is still

central, indicate that these tend to be patriarchal. Studies of middle class families tend to indicate either a potentiality for dual role dominance, due largely to the greater potentiality for women to actively participate in the occupational economy, or for a modified male dominance due to women's role as housewife and mother.

It is interesting that most feminists, and especially most feminist sociologists, appear to come from the middle class. This universal male dominance factor is often grossly over-exaggerated by these middle class feminists misusing their subjective experience to attempt to justify an apparent objective reality. The fact that male incomes appear to be larger than incomes paid to women does not imply a male dominance within the family as many women only work part time and much of the male income is often from overtime. Incomes paid to males reflect the sexual division of familial labour especially the continual demands of the female spouse for the male to be just that, the major provider.

In conclusion I must say I have not seen very much evidence that married feminists seek to find their spouses from those males on equal pay. In almost all cases I know of they seek spouses with considerably higher incomes than themselves. In other words whilst demanding equal opportunities and affirmative action they do not mean equality for all but are merely reasserting a matriarchal dominance, a dominance over spouse, family and subordinates. Their rejection of patriarchy is in essence a demand for matriarchy.

Peter Neville

# Gibraltar: cock-up or conspiracy

IN REACHING a verdict of 'lawful killing' by a majority of 9 to 2, the Gibraltar Coroner's Inquest into the deaths of three IRA members on 6 March this year, had to consider two rival explanations: the scenario of blameless blunders on the part of the authorities put forward by the Crown; and the conspiracy theory proposed by Paddy McGrory, the solicitor for the families of the deceased.

Since in modern societies the concept of a 'cock-up' cannot be explained in terms of wicked spells or evil spirits, the Crown had to contend with cloudy concepts like misjudgement, miscalculation and human error, while avoiding the pitfalls of possible negligence and recklessness on the part of the authorities. There had to be an acceptance by the authorities that they had at least made erroneous assumptions, in so far as it turned out that the terrorists were unarmed, had no means of detonating a bomb by remote control, and most important that there was no bomb to detonate in Gibraltar on 6 March. These misconceptions in themselves are fundamental to the SAS soldier's claim to have believed their lives, or that of others, to have been at risk. If you like, it is the subjective argument for self defence in so far as they thought their lives were in danger on that day.

The Crown solicitor had the job of keeping the evidence in the realm of blameless human error. There must be no hint of recklessness, and preferably no suggestion of negligence allowed to blemish the work of the police, the intelligence services or the SAS soldiers — the Gibraltar police and the SAS must not end up looking like a branch of the Keystone Kops. The overall impression created by the Crown case must be to show 'the authorities are only human' and 'how we all make mistakes'.

## Conspiracy?

Mr McGrory's conspiracy theory, presented in the coroner's summing up, amounted to this:

1. That the soldiers were ordered to shoot these three suspects to death, and they did so.
2. That there was an intent formed at a high level, not in Gibraltar, that these suspects should be killed and the operation was conceived and mounted with this aim in view. The Gibraltar police was not told the truth about certain matters.
3. That it was not necessary for the SAS soldiers to use force.
4. That if the use of force was proper then the force used was excessive, and

therefore not justified.

Any of these propositions, if accepted, according to the coroner, would lead to a verdict of 'killed unlawfully'.

But any conspiracy thesis must have its limits. Mr McGrory qualified his conspiracy submission by insisting that the Commissioner of the Gibraltar Police and his officers behaved correctly and without bad faith. There were sound tactical grounds for restricting the conspiracy to the British authorities in that the jury was Gibraltarian. Besides this evidence tended to show the British authorities didn't trust the Gibraltarians; only a few senior Gibraltarian officers were informed and involved in the operation. The decision not to involve the Gibraltar frontier police was significant, considering that the Spanish frontier police were alerted.

## Frontier fiasco

This business of the frontier is crucial, because the British authorities claim that all three of the suspects crossed without being detected. One senior officer in the Gibraltar police admitted it was part of the plan to let them through. Why was security at the frontier so lax? The Head of Surveillance said he did not like it, but claimed that was how the security people wanted it.

The coroner summed it up thus: 'The surveillance set is ludicrous. It is set up on the Spanish side with the real names given to the Spanish police, and PC Huart is put into a computer room to check passports which are fed to him by Spanish police. And mark it well, he is looking for the true names of the suspects and only those three names, at a time when the [false] names of Coyne and Reilly were known. How, it is asked, can it reasonably be expected of three terrorists on active service to use their real names? The reason is because it was intended to let them in.'

Moreover, if the aim of the operation was, in part, to prevent an offence, the Coroner described it as 'remarkable that no serious steps appear to have been taken at the frontier to stop the car coming in'. The suggestion here is that Savage was allowed to drive in, to entrap the other two into believing it was safe to cross.

Reports on the role of the Spanish police in the 6 March operation are conflicting. The British authorities claim that Spanish surveillance had lost the three suspects on 4 March at Malaga, and never picked up their trail again. Yet, reports in the Spanish press during the inquest maintained that the white Renault

driven by Savage was followed on 6 March by the Spanish police along the Costa del Sol to the Gibraltar frontier. The Spanish police also claimed that their communications with the authorities on the Rock on 6 March were 'intense and fluid'. None of this was tested in court, because the Spanish authorities refused to give evidence in a Gibraltarian court as it would involve giving political recognition to Gibraltar.

Did the Spanish tip off the British authorities that the terrorists were on their way, or not?

## Popular prejudices

Court decisions are not designed to produce desirable social consequences. The pursuit of truth, when it is wholehearted, must ignore moral considerations. Which means that the moral virtues, or otherwise, of the IRA bombers, or the SAS gunmen, ought not to be relevant to any objective conclusions of a court of inquiry into where, how and when the deceased died on 6 March this year.

On leaving the inquest on the night of the verdict the Crown solicitor was asked what he thought of his 'victory'. 'I'm a professional', he said. Modern lawyers, like the Sophists of Ancient Greece, are merely concerned to perfect the art of argument, not to declare conclusions of their own. Their success or failure in any given court room must depend greatly on their oratorical skills in appealing to popular prejudices.

What is the view of the Gibraltarians? Basically it is one of intense resentment at being involved in something which they see as not their concern.

Despite its strategic importance, Gibraltar is not a militaristic society — it is more like a hedonistic utopia on the lines of a holiday camp. The soldiers are all over the show, but are seen as less menacing than Butlin's redcoats. Those British Governors who have tried to uphold the serious spirit of a military garrison, rather than a commercial bazaar, have been unpopular here.

Perhaps the most historically characteristic job which existed in Gibraltar is that of sutler or camp follower — who sells provisions to the troops. A more sophisticated form of this 'Mother Courage' figure still dominates Gibraltarian society today. Such a character will despise anything which is bad for business. Bombs in the high street frightens off the shoppers. No business community will welcome the bomber into its midst, but the shadow of the SAS gunmen is not good for trade or tourism either.

Brian Bamford  
Gibraltar



# Vicious circle in Israel

## IN BRIEF

THE Israeli elections are over, and Shamir's right-wing Likud bloc will form the next government with the religious parties Aguda – the party of the Habad and Lubavitcher Hassidic factions – and Shas – the Sephardic 'Torah Guardians'. Israeli politics have moved not only to the nationalist right but also to the religious.

This should surprise no-one – it has long been suspected that the biggest division in Israeli Jewish society (Jews are six-sevenths of the voting population) is not that between Left and Right or even between Ashkenazim and Sephardim, but between the secular – whether Right or Left – and the religious. Increasing fundamentalism in the Middle East as a whole also affects Israel, partly perhaps in response to increasing Islamic fundamentalism in certain sections of Palestinian society, especially the poor and particularly in the refugee camps of Gaza and (to a lesser extent) the West Bank, Jordan and the Lebanon, for whom religion has provided not only a pre-Intifada shred of comfort but more importantly a means of establishing and defining a separate identity.

Some of the bloodiest wars in history have been fought over religion, and few religions are conducive to individual liberties. Therefore, we must see the election results in Israel as retrograde and dangerous.

Whilst the outside world focussed on the election campaigns – or slanging matches – of the major parties, particularly their perspectives on the 'Arab Question', the real issues have been far more fundamental, about the very nature of the Jewish State and its self-definition; issues accentuated by the continuing Intifada. The debate centres on the choice between giving up the Territories – the heartland of the Biblical Land of Israel – in exchange for 'peace', or outright annexation, a course fraught with international difficulties and which must destroy either the Jewish nature of the State, by incorporating 750,000 non-Jewish Palestinians, or the 'democracy' it claims, since to maintain Israel's Jewishness the State would have to withhold citizenship from its new Palestinian inhabitants (although citizenship might anyway be rejected by most Arabs, as it was when East Jerusalem was annexed).

Some 'hawks', such as Arik Sharon, who masterminded the Lebanon invasion, do plan annexation. However, the Palestine National Council appears to have pipped him at the post, not only accepting UN Resolutions 242 and 338 – which recognise the rights of all states in the

region to exist within secure and internationally recognised boundaries, so effectively recognising Israel's right to exist within the 1967 borders – but also declaring an 'independent State of Palestine' in the area of Palestine outside those borders. A peace conference will be needed to sort this out – which Israel predictably rejected within hours of the declaration.

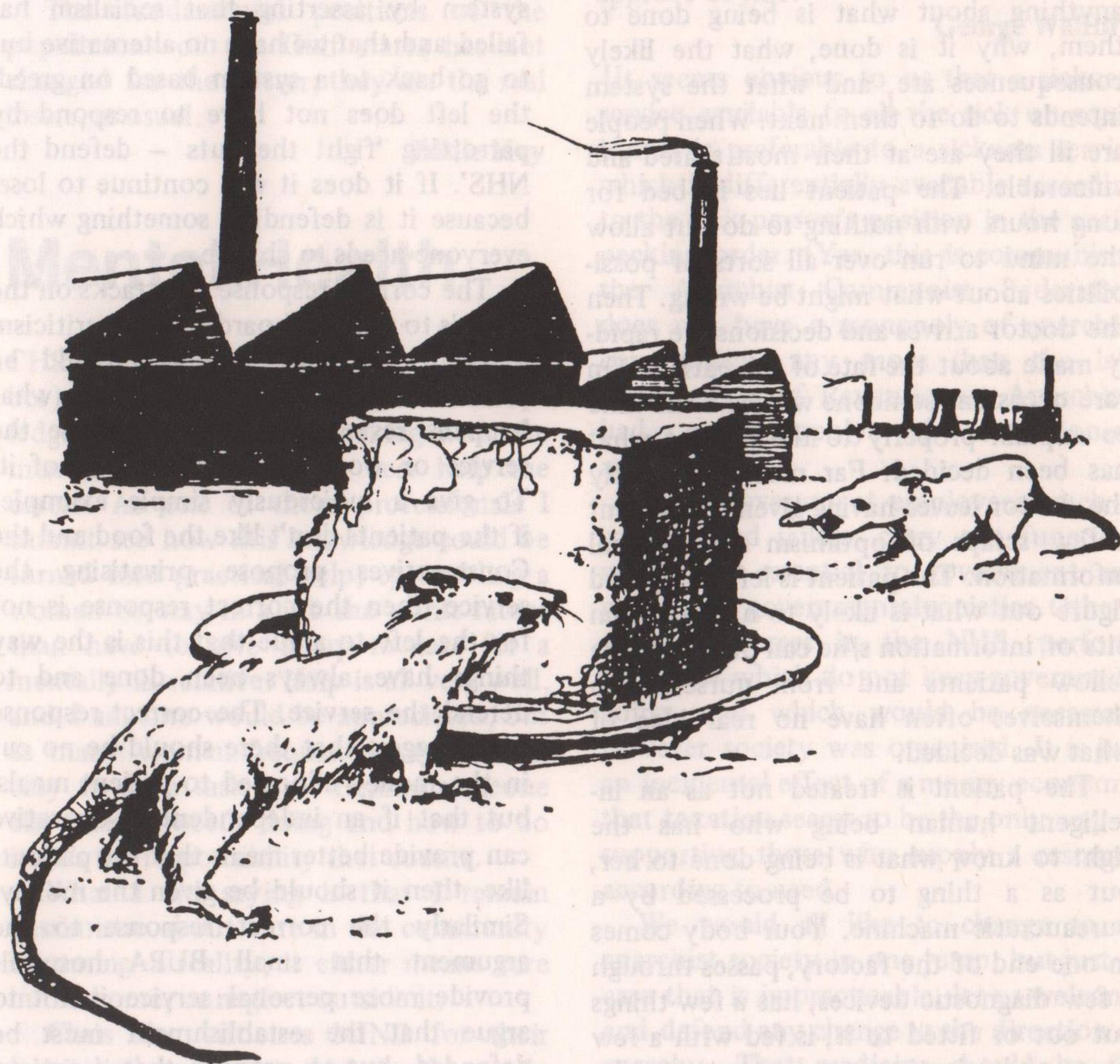
In the meantime, two great nationalisms roll seemingly inexorably towards a head-on collision; and Israel's secular, leftist and anarchist peaceniks find their position and influence yet more eroded and likely to worsen. The stronger the religious parties become, the greater the concessions the larger secular parties must make to entice them into a coalition; and the greater those concessions, the weaker become the secular forces and the stronger the religious. It's a vicious circle, and one which gives little comfort to anyone who would prefer to see more freedom, not less, for the people of the Middle East, both as individuals and as members of their various communities.

Katy Andrews

THE head office of the National Health Service at Elephant and Castle (an unprestigious district of London) needs extensive repairs, so the staff is being moved out for a time. They are going to the three top floors of Adelphi House (an extremely posh building in the Strand) where the rent will be one million pounds a year. The present tenant, a rich multinational, is moving out because the rent the NHS will pay is one third more than they can afford. It is announced that when the NHS moves back to Elephant and Castle, the top bureaucrats will stay on at the Adelphi 'for ease of access to the Minister and Parliament'. The Adelphi building is only a quarter of a mile nearer Parliament than the Elephant and Castle building, and the roads from Elephant and Castle are generally less congested.

Meanwhile the NHS is chronically short of funds for hospitals.

## TONY EARNSHAW'S VIEW FROM THE BACK OF TOWN



One of these rats is a politician.

# NHS: the left's blind spot

IF THERE is any area of our lives where the case for equality and the case against the money economy can be made most clearly then it has to be health care. There is an old song which runs 'If living was a thing that money could buy then you know the rich would live and the poor would die'. What the song expresses is a deeply felt belief that everyone has an equal right to life, that pain is equal no matter how much money you have, and that consequently no one has the right to jump to the front of a queue for health care simply because they have more money than those at the back of the queue. Immediately after the war this argument won sufficient popular support for the NHS to be created, despite massive opposition from the medical establishment.

Put the same argument now and the same level of support is lacking, but this is not because people's principles have changed, nor because the press propaganda machine is worse now than it was in 1948; the problem is that now a lot of people have had direct experience of the NHS and they have not always approved of the way they were treated by a bureaucratic command style organisation.

One of the commonest complaints which people make about their health care is that they are simply not told anything about what is being done to them, why it is done, what the likely consequences are, and what the system intends to do to them next. When people are ill they are at their most scared and vulnerable. The patient lies in bed for long hours with nothing to do but allow the mind to run over all sorts of possibilities about what might be wrong. Then the doctor arrives and decisions are rapidly made about the fate of the patient. On rare occasions someone will take the time to explain properly to the patient what has been decided. Far more frequently the doctor leaves having given the patient a few scraps of optimism and no real information. The patient is left to try and figure out what is likely to happen from bits of information s/he can pick up from fellow patients and from nurses, who themselves often have no real idea of what was decided.

The patient is treated not as an intelligent human being who has the right to know what is being done to her, but as a thing to be processed by a bureaucratic machine. Your body comes in one end of the factory, passes through a few diagnostic devices, has a few things cut out or fitted to it, is fed with a few drugs and injections, and comes out the other end in much the same way that a car comes off the production line at Fords. The difference is that the car

isn't exposed to patronising optimism at every stage of the production line, and the records on what colour it should be and what happened to it in other parts of the factory don't get lost so often.

At one stage in its history the NHS had one official trying to do paperwork for every patient in a hospital bed. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that the money would have been better spent on doctors instead of clerks. Since most of us have at some stage of our lives been patients in NHS hospitals the vast majority of the population has come into contact with this bureaucracy and knows some of the problems it can cause. You cannot hide the faults of a bureaucratic system from the people who use it. The individuals who work in the NHS have a very high reputation with the general public because they can see that the nurses etc. are often working exceptionally hard to overcome the difficulties and irrationalities of the bureaucracy. Very few people have a good word to say for the system itself. To any genuine socialist who thinks about the world as it actually is, rather than as she would like it to be, the message ought to be clear — if the workers have a high reputation and the system has a low one then there is something wrong with the system.

When the right attacks an unpopular system by asserting that socialism has failed and that we have no alternative but to go back to a system based on greed, the left does not have to respond by parroting 'fight the cuts — defend the NHS'. If it does it will continue to lose, because it is defending something which everyone needs to change.

The correct response to attacks on the NHS is to take on board popular criticism by outlining how a service could be provided in which control over what happens rests with those who use the service or work at the sharp end of it. To give a ludicrously simple example: if the patients don't like the food and the Conservatives propose privatising the service, then the correct response is not for the left to argue that this is the way things have always been done and to defend the service. The correct response is to suggest that there should be no cut in the money allocated to patient meals, but that if an independent co-operative can provide better meals than the patients like, then it should be given the money. Similarly the correct response to the argument that small BUPA hospitals provide more personal service is not to argue that the establishment must be defended, but to propose that a patient should have the automatic right to see anything written about her by a doctor, that hospital officials should be elected

by popular ballot, and that as many services as possible should be provided at small local hospitals and only specialist cases be taken to large centralised ones.

Not only is there a question mark over the left's attitude to how existing services should be run; there is also a massive question mark over its attitude to the whole question of our approach to health care. I read recently that on any given day more than one person in ten is on Valium or some other drug which helps with her nerves. This raises fundamental questions about the way that doctors are using heavy prescriptions to keep the population working at jobs, maintaining homes, bringing up children and paying off bills, despite pressures which are destroying their bodies and minds.

These are exactly the sort of questions which a radical campaigning left ought to be raising and bringing to the attention of the public. Instead they are treated as the province of quacks and eccentrics, and the call is always for more money to be spent on enlarging establishments which are failing to meet people's real needs. It took more than ten years for the feminist movement to get hospitals to begin to take seriously their complaints about the way childbirth is conducted under a bureaucratic health service. The traditional left either did not see this as a campaign which concerned them, or tended to defend the establishment.

The left's blind spot about the running of bureaucratic institutions is so great that when the first real attack on the profits of drug companies was launched it came from the conservatives, who forced doctors to prescribe drugs without expensive but meaningless brand names. Small wonder that we are coming close to our tenth year of Thatcherism with no sign of an effective opposition movement.

The fact of the matter is that the Labour party in Britain sees its role as that of defending public services like the Health Service and the Education Service, regardless of whether these services are doing a good job. This is because the members of the Labour Party are often beneficiaries of the patronage system created by these establishments.

If you are looking for genuine defenders of good health care you have to look at the groups which are prepared to challenge all forms of oppression, like some of the ecologists, some of the feminists, oh, and of course, some of the anarchists! The rest of the left doesn't seem to have grasped yet that exploitation can come in many forms and that you cannot oppose capitalist greed effectively until you learn to expose the workings of that other method of exploitation — bureaucracy. **A K Brown**



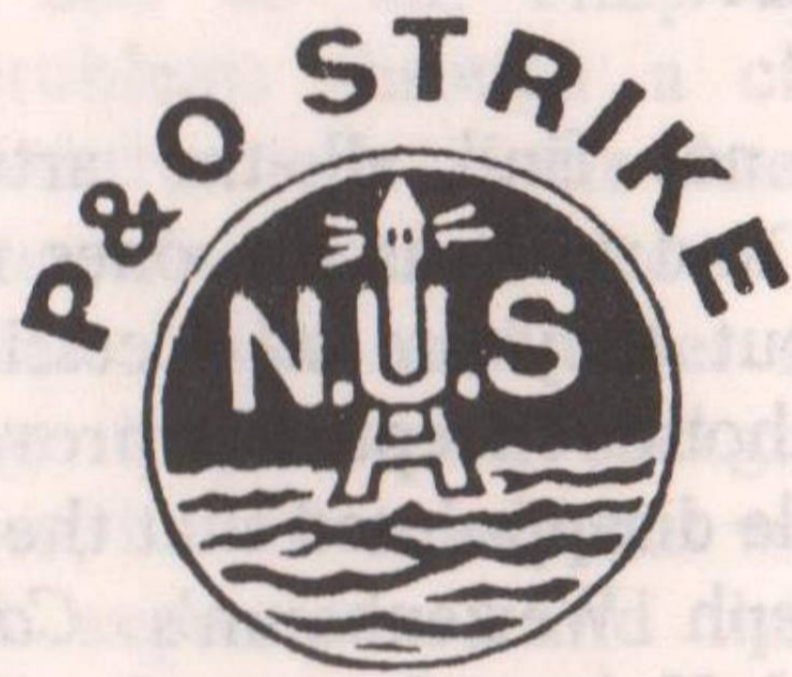
## Punishment

I AM doing research aimed at making a documentary video studying punishment within society. The video will compare rehabilitational and retributational methods of dealing with crime.

As the first half of the production I am hoping to use case studies such as intermediate treatment, tagging, the 'short sharp shock' and the events in Risley Remand Centre in the 1960's. The remainder of the production will be a more theoretical analysis of the motivations behind the various ways of dealing with offenders and considering the question of how far can society justify imposing such measures.

If anyone has any thoughts, comments or suggestions for any material that might be suitable please get in contact with me, Andy Lomas, 6 William Smith Close, Cambridge, CB1 3QF.

Andy Lomas



IN 'All at Sea' (*Freedom* – May issue) 'Old Salt' described the background to the dispute between P&O and the crews of their European Ferries. Since this issue has not been deemed 'newsworthy' by the national press, many people are unaware that the strike is still in progress 9 months after it began. Of the 2,300 seafarers (members of the National Union of Seamen) who refused to accept a shift system which threatens the safety of the public, only 430 have returned to work.

Despite a strong sense of solidarity in the Dover area, where the dispute is centred, it must be disheartening to be ignored by the media in this struggle to safeguard decent working conditions and the right of the public to travel in safety.

If you would like to support the seafarers in their dispute with P&O (profits of £274 million in 1987) you can send a donation to:

Womans Support Group Deal, Magness House, Mill Hill, Deal, Kent  
telephone (0304) 367840.

The Support Group aims to feed the strikers' families and to maintain the feeling of community which has developed during this period of hardship.

Andrew Hedgecock

## Million dead

WHILE agreeing on the main thrust of the lead article in *Freedom*, September – 'A Million Dead; and nobody wins anything' – that the populations of Iran and Iraq have been the real losers in the Gulf War, there has been a major victor from the resulting stalemate: the Gulf status quo.

Had Iraq been defeated this would have presented serious problems not only to neighbouring Gulf states but also to their superpower backers. Victory for Iran would have given militant Islamic fundamentalism a terrific boost, almost certainly aiding its spread into neighbouring states like Saudi Arabia. Hence Saudi support for the Iraqi war effort.

Thus, by military action, Iraq has delivered a setback to an ideology that threatened the status quo of the Gulf states and the superpowers. Also, given the importance any religious ideology necessarily gives to victory – a sign that the supreme being favours them and they are thus in the right – the stalemate has weakened the position of Islamic fundamentalism in Iran itself.

The fundamental positions of the populations of the Gulf states has not changed for the better; they are the real losers, as usual.

Eddie May

## Mental Health

CHRIS PLATTS writes (Letters, November) in his letter that we need the knowledge of professionals working with the mentally ill in order to best help the carers. As one of those professionals I cannot see how this knowledge could be turned into practical help; eg enabling a woman to stay in a job she wants rather than have to give it up to care for a mentally ill relative. Help is all very well, and I am sure would be appreciated, but as many women frequently say, it is as easy to do a task as to remind someone else that it needs doing and how to do it. It's the responsibility that counts.

What I am saying is that I remain pessimistic about care in the community becoming a reality, it either means care in the home, or neglect outside it.

Chris also criticises MIND for their 'capitalist' argument that good care in the community would be more expensive than hospital care (in that it necessitates small group homes, sheltered housing,

facilities for daytime occupation etc.) Unfortunately, capitalist or not, it is reality.

Whilst in an ideal world I would have no hesitation in agreeing with him, we live in the world as it is, and mentally ill people need help *now*. I am unable to believe that care in the community as he would like to see it could exist at present and so fully back workers in the public, voluntary and charitable sectors trying to maintain and improve current provision, and in fighting for more resources.

I would like to add that I am not sure exactly what information I could impart which would be helpful, perhaps the families of sufferers would be in a better position to tell him what help they need.

Clio

## Health Service

IN *Freedom* for November the London Group of the ACF have a strongly-worded piece supporting the NHS. This is a state-controlled organisation which the workers are under pressure to finance; any managing to make a living without paying towards it are likely to find the coercive forces of the state brought against them.

Does the London Group of the Anarchist Communist Federation really approve of this?

George Walford

[It seems obvious to us that a sickness service available to all the sick on equal terms, is preferable to a sickness service which is differentially available according to the sick person's position in the social pecking order. (Yes, this is communism; the Anarchist Communist Federation does not have a monopoly of anarchist communism, any more than the late Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists had a monopoly of revolutionary anarchism.)

Some government employees, such as soldiers and jailers, carry out functions which are essential to government and peculiar to governmental societies. Others, such as nurses in the NHS, perform functions which do not keep government going, and which would be necessary however society was organised. It is just an incidental effect of a money economy, that taxation seems to be the only way of supporting those who supply a resource according to need.

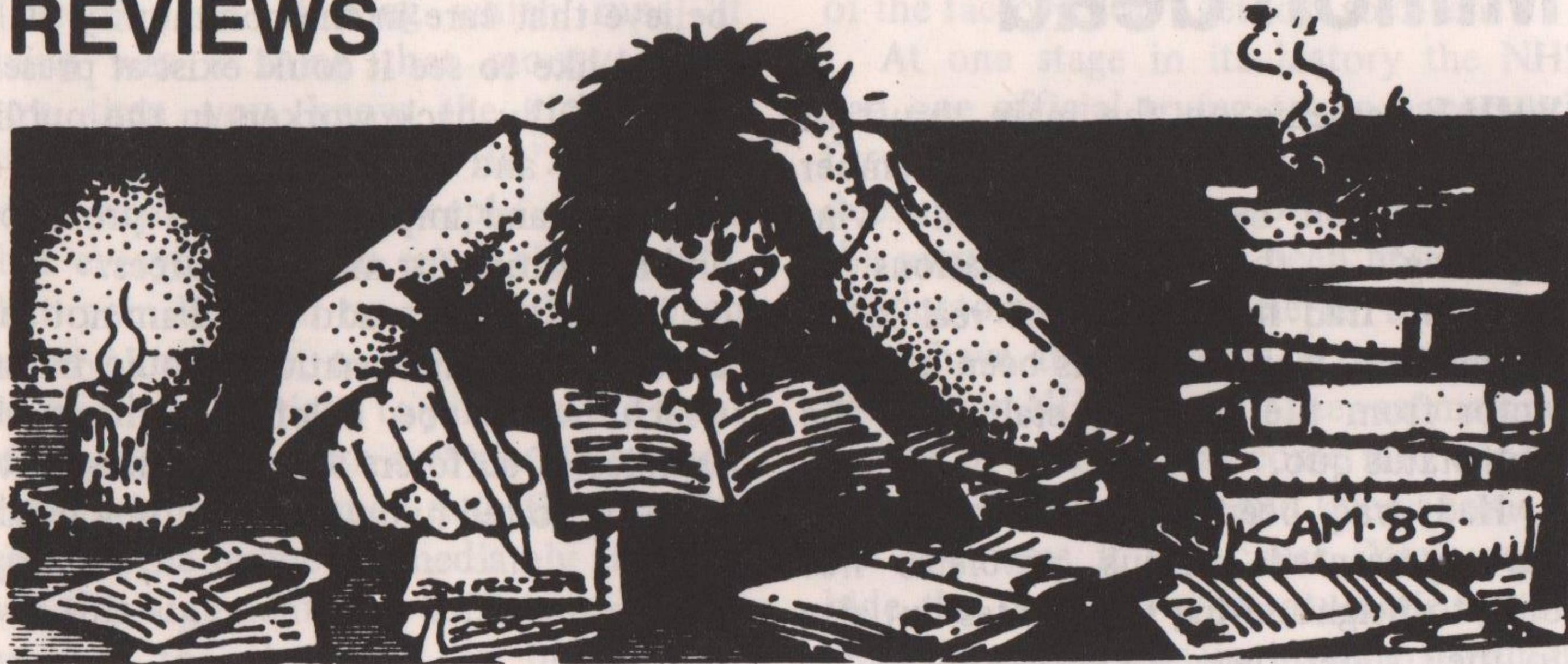
We would all like to change to an anarchist society in one jump; but just in case that is impracticable, let us welcome and defend any change in the direction of anarchy. That medicine should be for those who need it, rather than for those who can pay for it, is surely a step in the right direction.]

# Questioning Technology

A CRITICAL ANTHOLOGY

Edited and Introduced by Alice Carnes & John Zerzan

## REVIEWS



### Questioning Technology – A Critical Anthology

Edited by John Zerzan and Alice Carnes  
Freedom Press £5.00

RUFUS Segar's cover sets the tone of *Questioning Technology* in the form of a mini-manifesto: 'Read on: many hands present the other side – unplug from the systems and switch on to yourself – Wake. Look. Listen. Think. Get a bit mad. Act.' Zerzan and Carnes develop a vision of technology directly at odds with the seductive picture of a silicon chip based utopia usually painted in the media.

The anthology covers an enormous range of technologies: George Bradford asserts that the economic imperialism of the chemical industry means that 'we all live in Bhopal', while Jerry Mander pleads that we should abandon the television on the basis that it cannot be reformed into a machine with a democratic potential. Over half of the articles, however, are concerned directly with the computer, which Hubert Dreyfus characterises as 'the most powerful device ever invented by man' and the product of the assumptions which underlie the whole of western science and technology. The computer is taken as being emblematic of all our tools and technologies and the effects they have on our society, our environment and the way we perceive ourselves.

Any collection of writings on technology would be expected to contain some material concerned with pollution. Lenny Seigel and John Markoff catalogue the release of hazardous chemicals from the 'high-tech' industry of Silicon Valley, San Francisco. Do we find this information surprising because 'high-tech' is not visibly dirty or have we been so bombarded with positive images of it as a 'sunrise' industry that we forget that it is based upon old industrial technology; chemical processing?

The projection of machine models on to human behaviour and society is a theme which recurs throughout the anthology. Gregg Easterbrook, for example, suggests that interaction with computers leads us to interact with human beings in a machine-like way. Easterbrook believes that we are beginning to value machine-like qualities over human ones, to the extent where academic and analytical skills are becoming the key criteria by which we judge people.

In producing this 'antidote' to the pro-technology literature, Zerzan and Carnes have not been content to draw all their propaganda from the anti-technology lobby. Their selections on Artificial Intelligence (AI) include pieces by advocates of the view that machines can (and should) be used to replicate human behaviour, thought and emotions.

Ironically, these pieces provide the strongest arguments for the anti-technology case. Patrick Huyghe informs us that minds are like computers since they accept information and manipulate symbols. Huyghe quotes Minsky (the 'godfather' of AI) who goes further: '... we are probably computers. What that means is that if we don't like how we work then someday we are going to be able to intervene'. It is alarming to speculate as to the kinds of 'intervention' that the conception of human beings as manageable machines will legitimate.

Some contributors make positive proposals for the creation of a human centred society as opposed to a machine centred one. For example, Morris Berman's blueprint for survival in a post-industrial world includes recovery of the notion of community through devolution, abandoning mass production in favour of craftsmanship and ditching the idea of mass education since people will need to be fitted for life, not a career.

Berman supports his utopian assertions with the suggestion that our existing technologies have been so damaging that the only alternative to utopia 'is suicide'.

Langdon Winner ridicules the notion of 'arming the citizens' with micro-computers to combat the influence of large computer-based organisations. (The superior 'firepower' of IBM would triumph!) Winner predicts that the workforce in these organisations will be unable to present grievances since their computer facilitated isolation will prevent them from organising themselves.

Joan Howe sees isolation as the means by which computer networks will act as a force against feminism. She envisages an 'Electronic Traditional' lifestyle with women working at home via a remote computer terminal in addition to carrying out the traditional 'duties' of a housewife.

In 'Technostress', Craig Brod suggests that the introduction of computers to the workplace will result in increased stress levels for white collar employees working at a pace and rhythm dictated by the machine. Companies, he suggests, will match 'a mechanistic model of the worker' with the computer, and be able to standardise and monitor workers' performance.

I did not find all the articles as persuasive and vital as the ones referred to here, but they are *all* accessible and were, without exception, provocative. I was a little disappointed that the extract from Joseph Weizenbaum's *Computer Power and Human Reason* (well worth reading in full) was not the section describing people interacting with his program 'ELIZA'. The anthology would have benefitted from an example of the ways in which people are seduced into surrendering their judgement to programmed machines.

The importance of *Questioning Technology* is demonstrated by the one joke item it contains: John Gorman's whimsical *Which* report on the relative merits of a Cairn Terrier and a Macintosh computer is a perfect illustration of the ludicrous extent to which computer jargon and machine metaphors have encroached into human affairs. The fact that it is not always so easy to observe the inappropriate ways in which the machine has led us to think about ourselves makes the publication of this collection very timely indeed.

This highly readable anthology is highly recommended to anyone who is concerned that our use of technology may bring about a more authoritarian society and a devastated environment, but it is *essential* reading for anyone who is still convinced that we can build utopia with our existing tools and techniques.

Andrew Hedgecock

## Godwin's Political Justice

Mark Philp

Duckworth, £28 & £12.95

WILLIAM GODWIN has been the subject of many books, but few of them are really satisfactory. The only good modern edition of his masterpiece, *Political Justice*, appeared as long ago as 1946, and is almost unobtainable. However, the best biography — *William Godwin* (1984) — and the best anthology — *The Anarchist Writings of William Godwin* (1986) — both by Peter Marshall, have appeared during the past few years. And a couple of years ago Mark Philp produced the best study of his ideas. *Godwin's Political Justice* is an academic book, based on a university thesis, but it is quite easy to read and follow, though rather detailed and repetitive, and it is a very impressive (though rather expensive) piece of work.

*Political Justice* presents its readers with several well-known problems — there are significant and often drastic variations between its three early editions (1793, 1796, 1798); the author's meanings and motives at various times and in various contexts are often ambiguous or even contradictory; the real place of the book in the history of political thought is uncertain; and so on. Philp approaches these problems through a close comparison of the texts of the three editions of *Political Justice*, but also of Godwin's manuscript diaries and other notes, and he brings in Godwin's background and influences, his other relevant writings, his personal experiences, and the political circles he moved in (one special feature is a very detailed analysis of his meetings with his political associates).

It is impossible to discuss all the aspects of his stimulating book, but it is worth summarising its most important points. Philp emphasises — and perhaps over-emphasises — Godwin's place in the world of 'Rational Dissent' (the progressive Nonconformist counter-culture of eighteenth century England), and by contrast under-emphasises Godwin's debt to the 'Philosophes' (the freethinking intellectuals of eighteenth century France); if this is a fault, it is a refreshing one, since it redresses the old imbalance the other way, and rightly reminds us of where Godwin came from, even if it wrongly argues that he stayed there — remaining some kind of Christian even when he had explicitly rejected Christianity.

Philp questions the accepted view that *Political Justice* derived directly from the debate over the French Revolution, and he stresses Godwin's non-revolutionary and indeed counter-revolutionary tendencies. He questions the traditional view that *Political Justice* is an incoherent book, and he stresses that Godwin's philosophical position was perfectionist rather than utilitarian. He argues that

Godwin's views were more widely shared than is generally recognised, referring to his part in the civil liberties struggle of the 1790s (though he considers that Godwin was less important in this context than is often claimed) and the political elements of his novels.

Philp argues that Godwin's revisions to *Political Justice* represented neither a timid retreat from extremism into moderation nor a fussy wish to tie up loose ends, but rather a pragmatic attempt to adapt his proposals to the changing political situation, as the revolutionary movement and the radical intelligentsia both declined. He also argues that Godwin's belief in the possibility of a society without government was a rational position to hold in his social circle two centuries ago (he makes no comparison — or contrast — with the present!), and he incidentally attacks both the old liberal and the new Marxist sneers at Godwin and his circle. The lasting impression given by the whole work is that it is a convincing attempt to raise the status and stature of Godwin and also an entertaining and challenging book to read — helped by having notes on the page rather than at the end of the book, but hindered by having too many misprints.

NW



'Aged Ignorance' For Children:

*The Gates of Paradise* (1793)

**William Blake**

Peter Marshall

Freedom Press £2.00

IN THE Bible there is one true statement: 'The letter kills; it is the spirit which gives life'. Peter Marshall's biography of William Blake is a superb example of this. The author has cut through the mass of 'letters' — catalogues of works and references, lists and chronicles of dates, events and details — with which so many biographies are cluttered, to let the spirit of Blake's personality and creative work shine through.

Many biographies of Blake have been published over the years, to say nothing

of collections, editions, interpretations and criticisms of his works. The majority, however, present him as somewhat obscure and mysterious and take pains to emphasise (wrongly, as Peter Marshall has here shown) that every detail must be pigeon-holed and chronologically identified before his symbolic expressionism can be understood. Marshall demonstrates that, on the contrary, the symbolism is directly accessible and the works comparatively easily understood when they are viewed against the background of the political and cultural turbulence of the time.

Mathematics teachers know only too well how impossible the subject is to learn for someone convinced of its difficulty and how quickly it can be mastered once the victim has been persuaded that it is after all straightforward. If Peter Marshall were a mathematics teacher, even a dunce could be a mathematician. As it is we can all be experts on Blake.

Many poets think of Blake as 'out on a limb' and many visual artists regard him as eccentric and idiosyncratic; orthodox political thinkers see him as a religious utopian with no feet on the ground, anarchists claim him as an inspired revolutionary. All these descriptions have some foundation but all of them are wrong. Like most thoroughly alive people, Blake cannot be classified; he is a complete and completely unique individual, a versatile creative artist and a many-faceted personality. His work, sometimes severely criticised but largely ignored in his own lifetime, has since inspired thousands of people in many directions — aesthetic, political, psychological, religious and personal. His life, sad and happy, tragic and comic, like the lives of most people, reflects the response of the society in which he lived to his truly original, sincere personality. And this response is of course one of the political lessons to be learnt from it.

Peter Marshall does not fall into the mistake of over-romanticising Blake's life, but neither does he ignore the true romanticism implicit in it. In particular, he does not commit the error so common among scholars in all fields, of accepting and using antiquated and stereotypical notions of success and failure. He shows indeed how, despite his lack of commercial or social success, Blake was ultimately one of the few truly successful people of his generation, for he never abandoned his striving for that personal, moral and artistic integrity and consistency with which the whole corpus of his work is imbued.

I think we all owe a debt of gratitude to Peter Marshall for this excellent little book and to Freedom Press for bringing it out at such a very reasonable price. We need more such blows against philistinism!

Oliver Mahler

## The Child in the Country

Colin Ward

Hale £12.95

WHEN I was a baby my mother stayed on a farm on the edge of Epping Forest at Chingford. When I was a child in North London the country was more readily available and, close to Edmonton where we lived, was the Lea Valley. That is now under water and the steady spread of London outwards made the countryside less available.

However, I personally always felt a strong attachment to the country. While still at school I used to go on all-night rambles through Epping Forest, finishing up at a pub in the country with cider and sandwiches. This was with the Labour League of Youth, an organisation constantly 'disciplined' by the Party.

Many of us had grandfathers who left the country for work in towns as small craftsmen, the female members of the family working at home.

The chapter about the evacuation of children to the country during the war is an interesting one. Of course a lot depended on the person that the children went to, whether it was a happy experience. In those days when a proportion of children never left their homes, or went only for a week at the seaside, or in the case of East End children in the Kent hopfields, evacuation was quite a traumatic experience. Through evacuation people were brought face to face with the appalling conditions in our industrial cities, and it formed the basis of the Welfare State. Of course, as we see so vividly today that what the state hands out it can also take away, and when the basis of society is not really changed the welfare depends ultimately on those who are in control.

My own children were all brought up in the country, as I worked on farms in the early period of their childhood. One of them was fortunate enough to go to Kilquarity, a Free School in the beautiful countryside of Southern Scotland where they kept animals and the children took part in the weekly meeting that helped to run the school. The other children really enjoyed the farm where we lived and used the space they were fortunate to have, and disappeared into tents and huts and were only seen for their food. They were not so enchanted with first their village school and then the large comprehensive in the local town. Schools here are too big (in Sweden they are never more than 500), and the fact that children in the country often have to travel to these very large schools makes it difficult to take part in other activities after school.

There is an interesting chapter on the strike at the Norfolk village of Burston, where in 1914 the teachers were dismissed by the local dignitaries and the

pupils went on strike in support of their teachers. The alternative school set up by public subscription did not close until 1939.

The children of the rural poor suffer from bad transport services, and families often have to run cars they can ill afford.

At the farm where we live we hold annual camps for city children, where they enjoy the space of the countryside as less and less space is available. Activities like fishing in the sea, as well as association with the animals and food produced on the site.

An interesting book, easy to read and with the usual research that we experience from Colin Ward.

Alan Albon

## The Geography of Freedom

Marie Fleming

Black Rose Books £8.95 paperback

ELISÉE RECLUS, the great French geographer, was a particularly attractive and influential member of the anarchist movement for 40 years until his death in 1905, but he isn't at all well known outside France — though the best biography, by Max Nettlau, was published 60 years ago in German and Spanish — and he is particularly little known in the English-speaking world. Nevertheless, two books on him were produced in North America ten years ago — Gary S Dunbar's *Elisée Reclus: Historian of Nature* (1978), concentrating on his geography, and Marie Fleming's *The Anarchist Way to Socialism: Elisée Reclus and Nineteenth-Century European Anarchism* (1979), concentrating on his politics. A new edition of the latter has now been published as *The Geography of Freedom: The Odyssey of Elisée Reclus*.

The first comment must be on the strange way the book is presented by the present publishers. The complete change from one silly title to another is matched by the complete absence of any acknowledgement that this is an old rather than a new book, either in the publishing details in the book itself or in the publicity for it, and only in the author's introduction and bibliography are there brief references to the fact. The introduction by George Woodcock makes no reference to the original edition, though it reads rather like a review of it (beginning with the now absurd remark that 'we have long needed a biography of Elisee Reclus in English').

The second comment is that the actual text hasn't been changed much, except that the opening discussion of anarchism and socialism has been cut very considerably — and very fortunately, since it mainly revealed the author's ignorance of the subject — and that the narrative has been revised in many places — not always for the better — and the overall length of the book substantially reduced.

The narrative of Reclus' life and work is the most valuable aspect of Fleming's work, being based on detailed research in the primary sources and giving a great deal of interesting information about a fascinating man. But it is still very clumsily written, and whenever it ventures into any kind of historical or political comment it collapses into banality. Despite the many revisions, several of the factual errors in the original have been perpetuated. A major example is that Reclus' favourable attitude to terrorism is still seriously exaggerated. A minor example appears in a long footnote on a series of pamphlets published from 1885 to 1888 on agricultural and industrial production and on wealth and poverty; Fleming says that Reclus 'made some contribution' to them and cites as evidence for this a reference in Nettlau's 1897 bibliography of anarchism, but she hasn't noticed Nettlau's correction of this mistake 30 years later in his biography of Reclus and in his history of anarchism, where he attributes the pamphlets to Henri Sensine.

There are also many unnecessary blemishes in the new as in the old edition, such as persistent uncertainty about the spelling of personal names and publication titles and stubborn ignorance of English grammar and style. So this is a useful book, but still a far from satisfactory one.

MH

## Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Anarchism But Were Afraid To Ask

Black Sheep/Dark Star/Rebel Press 90p

THIS is the second edition of an excellent anonymous pamphlet which appeared in rather scruffy format a couple of years ago. It is now produced to a standard which matches the worth of the text (though it does not flatter the cartoon illustrations which were drawn with a cruder reproduction system in mind).

Every anarchist who explains anarchism expresses their own version. The authors of this pamphlet, however, are unreservedly fair to those whose versions of anarchism are different from their own, using structures like 'Traditionally anarchists believe . . .' / 'There are, however, some anarchists who believe . . .'

'Start to work out your own version of anarchism', is their advice, 'By doing so you will be adding a new member to a movement that always needs new members, particularly ones who have thought things through . . . *Be an independent thinker. There is no other sort*'.

Intelligent and thoughtful without being 'intellectual', timely rather than historical, and not too expensive for ordinary people, this is a valuable little textbook of anarchism.

DR

## Free is Cheaper

Ken Smith

John Ball Press (May Hill, Gloucester)  
£12.95 hardback (or £7.95; see footnote)

I met Ken Smith in the early fifties when living at a community called *Communitas* in Gloucestershire. He a member of the SPGB and I an anarchist. We found our views coincided on the necessity for the state to wither away; whether it could be done through the parliamentary system was in dispute. This book is no doubt a result of 35 years thinking about and researching the issues.

I judge a book on how easily read and understood it is. I raced through this book and it sounds like the author talks lucidly and without bullshit. Society now is a black comedy that managed by the politicians, the bureaucracies and financiers, completely mad. In a time when all are being told that the Market will solve the problems, this book fairly and squarely points out that it is the Market Economy itself that is the cause of the problems. Capitalism, as the author succinctly points out, is the organisation of scarcity. As any small grower knows, an abundance may mean that the grower may not be able to pay the rent. Abundance in a free society is no problem.

The synopsis of Chapter 1 says:

'Economic stalemate since the Tudors. Reason is Market economy itself: Market economy not necessary in history but a cul-de-sac. Plenty always available until capitalism introduced scarcity/poverty. Urge to cooperate freely as old as the human race.'

The probability is that the downward path occurred when William the Conqueror introduced the first great privatisation of land. The book challenges many accepted theories of history such as the causes of large population increases, and points out that widespread poverty is a modern phenomena and as we have all observed the number engaged in productive activity is extremely small.

Part two of the book consists of a chapter on each of the eleven principal employers of labour. These the author terms industries (though I have always thought an industry has an end product). However, to look at one of the industries I am acquainted with – the food industry, agricultural matters and the land – it is interesting to note that:

'The Tories favoured protection: high tariffs on imported corn, so guaranteeing them as land owners a high price. The Whigs wanted free trade in corn so that bread and beer for their workers was cheap and would result in cheaper labour.'

The Tories now of course say they are in favour of letting the Market Forces go

without restraint. To do this in practise would result in more chaos than already exists.

The other industry I have experienced is the shelter industry, first as a productive worker, then just before I retired part of the growing on costs of that industry. I might say that I received more as part of the on costs than I did as a productive worker. As the man says:

'There are more people shuffling the money about for the housing industry, building societies, banks, insurance companies and other assorted loan sharks, than there are engaged in the actual building and maintenance: bricklayers, plasterers, carpenters and plumbers. The wealth the money changers consume can only come of that created by the building workers.'



When I build a three bedroom house in the early fifties the actual costs were about £340 per bed space. My labour was subsidised by my full-time agricultural work. The on costs were small in the materials and the interest on the loan to buy them. Now the phalanx of non-productive paper shufflers behind each productive worker is enormous.

Part 3 of the book offers conclusions, and points out that parties of the left and right offer no solution and are the real utopians, as the devastating analysis of the Market System in Chapter 16 shows.

There are still vast areas of human activity based on money-free activity, which is why in a way *Freedom* survived for 100 years while many contemporaries fell by the wayside. The author points out work done in the home by a woman with two children has been estimated by an insurance company as being worth £350 per week. The average allotment holder produces more protein per acre than any commercial undertaking. To quote the concluding paragraph:

'We are surrounded by mirror images of what our free world will look like, albeit distorting mirrors. It is foolish for sceptics to say it won't work; it already does. The only difference is that instead of waiting for an indulgent authority to hand things down to us, meanwhile retaining the power to take them back, we shall make and do them for ourselves. Then the enormous

burden of control and regulation, of calculating and mediating, will fall away like the melting of ice, after the Siberian winter of the Market system. If we listen and look, we can already hear the cracking and see the fissures.'

Yes, a much needed book. I thoroughly recommend it.

Alan Albon

Freedom Press Bookshop has a number of copies available at the special price of £7.95 (plus 75p postage and packing). First come, first served.

## Lectures in America

Gertrude Stein

Virago £6.95

INFORMED opinion on any subject is interesting – uninformed opinion is a total waste of time.

The opinions expressed by Gertrude Stein on painting and painters, English literature and the use of words, museums and First World War battlefields, and when a play is a play is a play, are informed. After all, she spent the greater portion of her life presiding over a Paris salon thronged with the talent of the time. And what talent . . . Cezanne, Renoir, Matisse and Picasso among the painters, Scott Fitzgerald and Hemingway among the writers.

So when she delivered a series of lectures on her return to America in 1934 they were greeted with huge enthusiasm. These lectures in America were first published fifty years ago and are now published in paperback by Virago.

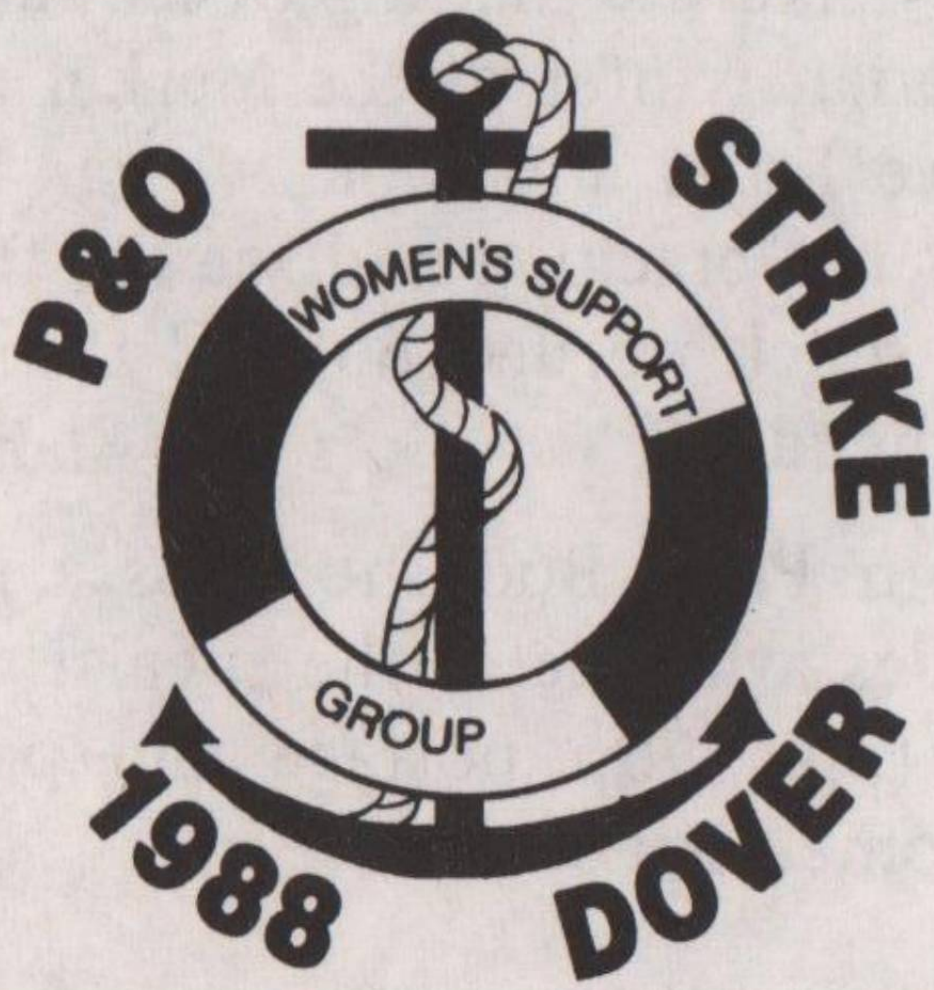
Stein was a literary legend in her own lifetime and lived up to the legend. Mention her name and someone is sure to say 'a rose, is a rose, is a rose . . .'. In *Lectures in America* she really does say 'an oil painting is an oil painting'. Taken out of context that sounds pretty puerile but read the whole paragraph: 'As I say in sleeping and waking in front of all these pictures I really began to realise that an oil painting is an oil painting. I was beginning after that to be able to look with pleasure at any oil painting'.

She has the true teacher's ability to direct the attention to the heart of the matter and do it with the minimum of imagery but lots of skilful word repetition. She also has a sense of humour and at times seems to be sending herself and her audience up – if it was possible to send up a lecture hall full of earnest Americans in the 1930s.

*Lectures in America* is not one of those un-put-downable books. It is safer to put it down frequently and go away and do the ironing or wash the car or whatever, or one becomes punch drunk with prosody. That is an uncomfortable state which can be equated with a surfeit of any over rich and indigestible delicacy.

Helen Fenton

# Postcards for Christmas

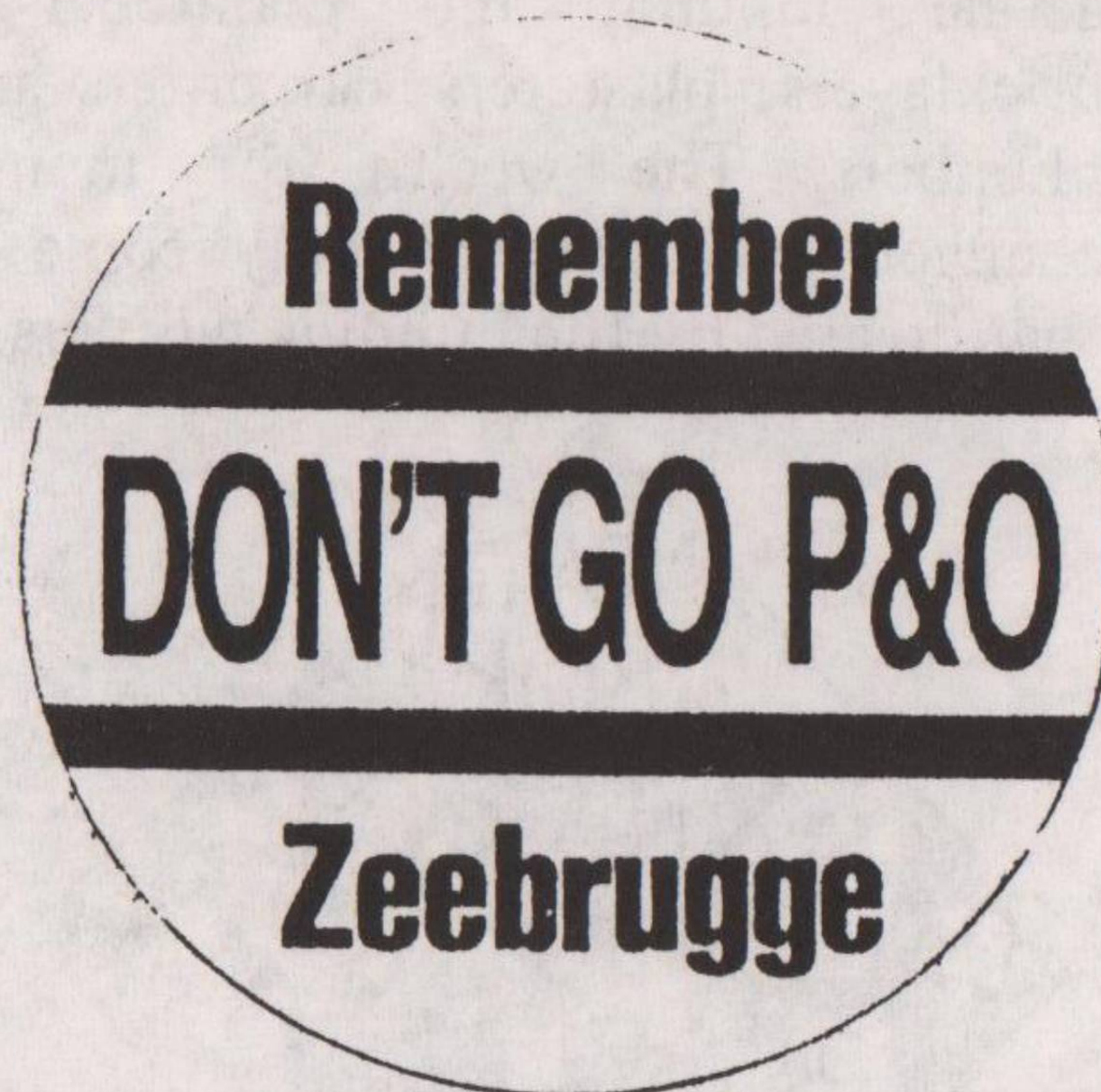


FOR all those of you who are into Christmas/Yule — or who just can't avoid it — we have a good selection of cards in the shop. SAS (South Atlantic Souvenirs) have produced a range of satirical Christmas cards in colour at 25p each; we have marvellous sets of 30 black and white centenary cards about the Haymarket affair (1886, Chicago) at £8.50 which include photographs and illustrations from newspapers of the time, photographs of the defendants, Mother Jones, posters etc from the Haymarket Scrapbook (Charles H Kerr publishers £10); the French review *Itineraire* has reproduced sets of 4 black and white photographs of the Sacco and Vanzetti case which were first published in *Le Libertaire* in 1921 and include the two men, and their funeral procession, price £1.50; *Itineraire* has also reproduced as postcards a wonderful set of 9 anarchist magazine covers, in full colour, from the Spanish Revolution, including one published by the Light and Power Workers'

section of the CNT and two by Mujeres Libres (free women). Price £3.50 per set.

In addition the bookshop also stocks over 1000 book, periodical and pamphlet titles, many more than we can put on our stocklist. A comprehensive list of all our periodicals will be published in future editions of *Freedom* — in the meantime there is still time before Christmas to send us your order or pop in and choose from our ever expanding stock.

Bookworm



PS As mentioned elsewhere, despite the fact that the NUS leadership has collectively shit itself and withdrawn support from the P&O strikes, the NUS seafarers at Dover are *still* on strike against the company's medieval policies, and the Freedom Bookshop has a collection box for any donations you might care to make.

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