

anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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THIS IS A FREE
DUMMY OF
WHAT THE FORTNIGHTLY
FREEDOM
WILL LOOK LIKE

A Fortnightly **FREEDOM** from January

Yes, *Freedom* will be going fortnightly in mid-January, and this 'dummy' gives you an idea of the new format, layout and the kind of topics that will be among our regular features. Some of our new readers may think that we are too ambitious in our plans for the fortnightly, but they may not realise that from 1951 for more than twenty years *Freedom* was a weekly and that from 1961-1970 we published 118 issues of a 32-page monthly *Anarchy* as well.

Our decision, therefore, to come out fortnightly in 1990 and to ensure that *The Raven* (our 96-page quarterly) does appear quarterly, has not been taken lightly or without experience of the problems that we can expect to have to face and solve. Were we to be a commercial enterprise our first concern would be to raise the capital, and having persuaded the capitalists that it was a profitable venture in the long term, there would be no problem in engaging an editor, reporters, sales manager, advertising manager and all the other administrative team to launch the paper. In the case of a paper like *Freedom* which does not employ any paid staff we start by asking ourselves who shall we be able to rely on to write for it. It's not just that we shall need twice the amount of 'copy' for the fortnightly but that the fortnightly must be a *different* publication from the monthly.

And it must be for another reason too. As anarchist propagandists we feel that neither *Freedom* nor *The Raven* have been used to the best advantage up to now. For it was obvious (unfortunately only when we started to take decisions about the irregular appearance of *The Raven*) that we could not usefully publish two magazines (a monthly and a quarterly). So a little late in the day we have

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News from the Crooked Square Mile

According to a survey carried out — not by the anarchists but by the police — more than half of the banks and financial institutions in the City have been subject to fraud amounting to hundreds of millions of pounds. Last year the City of London police investigated nearly £500 million of fraud and attempted fraud.

But this is only the tip of the fraud iceberg because it would appear that about 17 per cent of companies fail to report such 'crimes' — some because they fear publicity apparently. One institution, for instance, admitted that it had not notified of a fraud totalling more than £1 million!

All this washing of dirty City linen took place at the International Police Exhibition and Conference in London last month.

In the police survey 58 merchant bankers, investment security and foreign banks were questioned. Most of them said that fraud had increased dramatically within the past ten years, particularly in computer electronic fund transfer fraud.

Highlights from the survey included the company which had been defrauded of more than £10 million on two occasions, and another which had been fleeced of between £1 million and £10 million *no fewer than six times*.

Perhaps the reason for the reluctance of many companies to report fraud is contained in

this revealing tit-bit from the survey: that about 68 per cent of the frauds have been perpetrated by employees '*the bulk of whom were at manager or director level*'!

After such revelations about the Crooked Square Mile we were surprised to learn that there were only two 20-man teams engaged in investigating the City's top level crooks, and that Detective Superintendent Don Randall of the City of London Police who had spilled the beans alleged that all cases of fraud were being actively investigated by these 40 men. Remember when the Thatcher government was manning a campaign against the unemployed who were making a few pounds on the side and not declaring it they increased the DHSS snoopers by several hundred?

According to *The Guardian* (21st September) 'More than £25 million may have gone missing in the Eagle Trust scandal. Sources close to the affair said losses could be double what was originally feared'. The sordid details involving the top boys, with a boardroom shake-up involving five dismissals of executives, directors and company secretary, can be enjoyed in *The Guardian* for 21st September. Talk about Labour Party or Trades Union battles — which of course the media emphasise. These scandals are limited to the financial pages and who other than the top crooks read them?

ANARCHIST FORTNIGHTLY

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taken the decision of aiming to make *Freedom* more of a newspaper and less of a magazine. That long book reviews are material for *The Raven* and *Freedom* instead will give a wider, briefer coverage of the books, pamphlets, journals which we think our readers will find to be useful and interesting. Similarly with the more academic articles (excellent contributions), and the space made available will be used for discussion of the topics in the 'news' from an anarchist point of view.

With *Freedom* fortnightly we shall be looking for new readers who are not anarchists but who are on the Left and are despairing of the political parties. If they are to make sense of anarchism we must show them that the anarchist approach to the day to day problems makes sense and how it differs from that of the capitalist press as well as the various social democratic periodicals.

Earlier on we said that our first concern with launching a fortnightly newspaper was to secure the necessary collaboration to make it lively and informative, hard-hitting in injustices and uncompromising in its anti-authoritarian, anti-capitalist position. *Freedom* has not the financial means to carry on its own 'investigative journalism'. Fortunately the capitalist world is so dis-united that an intelligent reading of the capitalist press, provincial as well as national, provides us with all the factual material we need to attack the system, to seek to persuade more and more people not that there is 'an unacceptable face of capitalism' (a famous phrase coined years ago by Mr Heath about the shady goings-on of Duncan Sandys in the Cayman Islands) but that capitalism is unacceptable; that everything it touches it poisons. In a word, that capitalism is rotten to the core. Thatcher is just a passing incident. Unlike the leader of the Liberal Democrats at their annual conference whose whole proposed strategy for the coming years was that Thatcher must be defeated at all costs — and capitalism and the H-bomb are okay — we anarchists will go on insisting that the Thatchers, the Tebbits and all the renegade Labour top boys come and go but what needs to be attacked is the capitalist system. The real rulers of that world can be found in the financial columns of the capitalist press — the multinationals, the insurance companies, the banks, the pension funds, the large landowners, and the various powerful lobbies.

We must maintain in the columns of *Freedom* a sustained attack with facts on this evil system; we must expose the hypocrisy of those individuals and

parties who prattle about the environment but who will not admit that so long as the profit motive, the capitalist system, exists considerations of the environment can go to hell! If they were serious the government would not propose spending £6 billion on more roads to attract more cars, but would talk about introducing free public transport. If the Labour Party were serious they would not talk about increasing production but of the redistribution of wealth for we already produce more than we can consume (empty houses and 150,000 homeless, and 'poverty traps millions on fringe of society' — *The Independent*, 19th September 1989).

We believe that this attack on the system will be more effective in *Freedom* if we can rely on more and more of its readers feeding us with examples from their local papers and from direct experiences of the capitalist system at work. If our optimism is rewarded we will probably get more material than we can use, but none will be wasted.

We are also aiming to have regional as well as sectional editors. By the time the first issue of the fortnightly *Freedom* comes out we hope to be in a position to give a list of the regional editors so that readers who want to contribute local material which has a wider significance can be in touch with the regional editor. The present contact column in *Freedom* is unreliable. Many new readers have written to us saying that they have not been able to make contact. A half-page of the fortnightly will be allocated to announcements and in future the contact column will only include those contacts who actually are distributors of *Freedom*. More details in the November issue of *Freedom*. We have never accepted paid advertisements. However, we feel that the half-page can serve a useful purpose for readers in all kinds of ways — accommodation, book wants, exchange and mart, contacts and meetings, and that we are not exploiting them in charging for the space their announcements take up at cost. We reserve the right to refuse advertisements.

The second most important consideration when we go fortnightly is distribution, something many would-be revolutionaries seem to overlook. *Freedom* has always had a very healthy subscribers list. But in the distant past we also had regular outdoor selling. In those bad/good old days during the last war we would sell 500 copies of *War Commentary* at Hyde Park (Marble Arch) on a Sunday, and the Glasgow comrades with their outdoor meetings

and their weekly lectures would sell up to 1,000 copies of each issue. Nowadays, even anarchists seem to think that outdoor selling is a waste of time and that distribution should be left to the professionals. That W. H. Smiths and Menzies are going to distribute *Freedom* is pure wishful thinking.

We have to create our own distribution network. Many small newsagents would stock our paper if they could be relieved of the bookwork (returning unsold copies, paying, etc.). This is done by a few comrades who take a number of copies on a sale or return basis and supply local newsagents and settle up with us at regular intervals. And the unsold copies can be used to introduce potential new readers.

Freedom fortnightly will have a regular column with reports of local propaganda activities and projects. Unreported in *Freedom* monthly but just the kind of initiative we shall be including in future was the mini-bookfair held in the meeting room over the Hadleigh Public Library on a Saturday last January. The comrades contacted the local CND, Amnesty International, the Labour Party, as well as a number of fringe groups, inviting them to come along and, if they wished, to sell their literature. Refreshments were also supplied free of charge by the local comrades. The London comrades brought up the literature and a stimulating day was had by all. And, last but not least, £350 worth of literature was sold. Yet the local bookseller — who attended and was most impressed — had never sold any Freedom Press or Black Rose books. We shall be repeating the Hadleigh success next January, but we think that such mini-bookfairs can be repeated throughout the country if just two or three local comrades take the initiative. Freedom Press will provide the literature and at least one comrade to help with the organisation.

What we must, however, impress on our reader comrades is that Freedom Press is not an Amnesty, CND, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace organisation with its paid officials whose task it is to organise the activities of their members. We are not criticising these organisations but simply pointing out that Freedom Press is an unpaid group of anarchists engaged in making anarchist propaganda in their 'spare' time (since they have to work to earn a living) and therefore we rely on those who share our aims and aspirations to be generous with their time. There is no better way for making contacts than by selling *Freedom* at political meetings, demos, and especially — but this requires a special effort — at some strategic street corner regularly and preferably on a Saturday! With the latter you make contacts, you make friends and comrades.

The third consideration in *Freedom* going fortnightly was how to pay for it.

Compared with journals like *Tribune* or *Peace News* with a salaried staff, our problem is essentially one of paying the printing bills, which even when your printers occupy the same building and are printing *Freedom* at cost, we shall still suddenly need to double our income from sales and subscriptions. And just as our dear old comrade Art Bartell made it financially possible to launch *The Raven* he was equally enthusiastic when we put to him the project for a fortnightly *Freedom*. But we do need also the financial support of all the comrades who welcome this step forward we shall be taking in January. If 1990 is to a success — and this means positive responses from all the contributors we have contacted and the potential ones who respond to this 'dummy' issue — our aim is to become once more a weekly paper in 1991.

If Freedom Press were only publishing *Freedom* our new commitment would not be daunting. But *The Raven* no. 7 was published last month, *The Raven* no. 8 has just appeared, and *The Raven* no. 9 will be on sale in December. We have also completed, for us, a massive publishing project, with volume 3 of the Freedom Press Centenary Series comprising the main volume *World War — Cold War* (selections from *Freedom* 1939-1950) which is 424 pages, and four supplements: a new edition of *Neither East Nor West* (selected writings 1939-1948 by Marie Louise Berneri, 208 pages), *Neither Nationalisation Nor Privatisation* (selections 1945-1950, 80 pages), *The Left and World War II* (selections from *War Commentary* 1939-1943, 80 pages), and *British Imperialism and the Palestine Crisis* (selections 1937-1949, 112 pages) . . . a total of some 900 pages which may be ignored by the mass media celebrating the glories of World War II but which we suggest will go on being read when volumes for the 50th anniversary of the declaration of World War II will have long ago been pulped. But this publishing effort has left us financially 'breathless'. But not defeated! We shall welcome any donations to the Freedom Fortnightly Fund, but equally we shall appreciate those friends and comrades who can only offer some of their time — writing, helping with the dispatch of *Freedom*, selling *Freedom*, and organising mini-bookfairs in their locality.

With such support we can make *Freedom* into an invaluable co-operative effort. No matter if it lacks the 'professionalism' that seems to concern the pedants if we can produce a paper which is alive, which reacts with enthusiasm for the many generous gestures and is fierce in its indignation at the injustices, the corruption, the greed, the vanity, the waste, the inequality, the falsity that are the lifeblood of capitalist society.

FREEDOM PRESS

SUBSCRIPTION RATES 1990

The price of the fortnightly *Freedom* will be unchanged at 50p and *The Raven* (96 pages) £2.50 per copy. Though postal rates will be going up in October we are not increasing the subscription rates. What we are doing is to introduce a six months subscription to *Freedom* for the benefit of readers who cannot afford to pay a whole years sub in advance. The first issue will appear on Saturday 13th January and fortnightly thereafter, except that there will be no issue on 25th August and 29th December, making a total of 24 issues in 1990.

New readers sending subscriptions for the fortnightly will be sent the November and December issues of *Freedom* free of charge. So send your subscriptions NOW!

	inland	abroad surface	abroad airmail*		inland	abroad surface	abroad airmail*
Freedom (24 issues) half price for 12 issues				Joint sub (24 x Freedom, 4 x The Raven)			
Claimants	8.00	—	—	Claimants	15.00	—	—
Regular	12.00	15.00	23.00	Regular	20.00	24.50	37.00
Institutional	20.00	23.00	31.00	Institutional	30.00	34.50	47.00
The Raven (4 issues)				Bundle subscription for Freedom (6 months)			
Claimants	8.00	—	—	2 copies x 12	10.00	11.50	15.00
Regular	10.00	11.00	16.00	5 copies x 12	20.00	22.50	30.00
Institutional	12.00	14.00	19.00	10 copies x 12	40.00	45.00	60.00

*European subs paid at airmail rate will be sent by Letter Post

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

To FREEDOM PRESS in Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

- Please enter my subscription to *Freedom* for issues
- Please make my subscription to *Freedom* into a joint sub to *Freedom* and *The Raven* for 1990 starting with number 8 of *The Raven*
- I would like the following back numbers at £2.50 per copy post free (numbers 1 to 7 are available).

I enclose £..... payment

Name

Address

..... Postcode

Industrial News

With Solidarity We Can Win

THIS slogan did much to support the efforts of workers in Poland during their long struggle to free themselves from the total political domination by the Polish Communist Party since 1945. It remains to be seen whether the real economic interests of the Polish workers will be served by the coalition of Solidarity and the Communist Party in the Polish government.

What is good (even with Maggie's blessing) for the workers in Poland must equally apply to those workers in Britain intent on defending and improving their living standards, etc.

A brief examination of recent industrial strife — on the railways, in the docks, and earlier in the mines — will serve to underline the contention that where there is solidarity, unity and concerted action, workers can win their immediate aims, but the absence of solidarity, division and isolation, results in defeat.

The 1989 wage claim made against British Railways on behalf of most grades of railway workers produced a show of solidarity between the major trade unions representing the whole range of rail workers and ancillary services. Whether by design or accident the rail workers were aided by coincidental pressure on the transport system in London by 'unofficial' strikes by Underground workers. A series of one-day strikes called by the NUR, threats of strikes by the other unions and refusal to cross picket lines succeeded in breaking through the government imposed limit on wage increases.

A rearguard action by the NUR after the BR increased offer had been accepted by the other unions, partially managed to stave off a worsening of negotiating procedures. Not only was there solidarity and concerted action by the workers concerned and despite the efforts of BR and the media to make a scapegoat of the NUR general secretary Jimmy Knapp, there was much public sympathy for the plight of the low-paid railworkers and even long-suffering commuters rounding on BR management.

In contrast the recent failure of the registered dockers covered by the Dock Labour Scheme, to successfully defend their favourable conditions of employment after the government's abolition of the scheme, was largely the result of the lack of solidarity and sympathetic action outside the ranks of the relatively small number of registered dockers. The port employers were able to create a division between the different classes of dock workers who, although mostly members of the same union — the TGWU — were legally prohibited from calling for solidarity in the form of sympathetic strikes and secondary picketing.

Again during the miners year-long struggle with the National Coal Board, acting on behalf of the government in the matter of pending pit closures, although there was much evidence of traditional solidarity throughout most of the mining community, the 'divide and rule' tactic based on past preferential treatment by the NCB towards such areas as Notts., together with media exploitation of factional differences within the miners union, seriously inhibited the ability to effectively invoke miners' usual sense of solidarity, nationally.

Personality clashes between the NUM president Arthur Scargill and leaders of the Labour and trades union movements could account for the lip-serving-support-short-of-real solidarity, but it is suspected that extra parliamentary activity and solidarity does not come easily to the likes of Neil Kinnock & co.

Betrayed and abandoned by the latter-day Ramsay McDonald's and Jimmy Thomases, as in the aftermath of the 1926-27 strike, the miners admitted defeat and the pit closures continue.

Prior to the electoral victory by the Labour Party in 1945, it had been possible to discern a growing advocacy of the need for social and industrial solidarity in the struggle towards the creation of the 'New Jerusalem'. The conflicting views, of the parliamentary reformers with their reliance on the capture of the reins of political power, and of those convinced of the need for control and power to reside in freely organised industrial and social groups intent on being responsible for their own lives and livelihoods, would appear to have been resolved in favour of the reformers with the advent of the post-war Labour government. Exploiting the miners' long-held belief that the working of the coal mines of Britain should be for the benefit of the community by way of workers' control, 1947 saw the nationalisation of the mines by the Labour government which provided for over-generous compensation to ex-colliery owners, placing an onerous interest burden on the future viability of the coal industry and giving direct managerial control to the former owners and their managers.

This was not the workers' control of the mines on behalf of the people as expected by miners. The new bosses were the old bosses writ large with the power of the State behind them.

The same story was repeated again and again with each successive nationalisation of the railways, gas and electricity industries, steel and road transport. With so-called public ownership of these largely run-down uneconomic basic industries desperately in need of capital redevelopment and technical modernisation, such

necessary revitalisation has been achieved at enormous public expense, apart from the exploitation of the workers within these industries and the fleecing of the domestic consumers.

As predicted in the columns of the anarchist press of this period, at the very best, the political panacea of nationalisation by the Labour government was no more than rationalisation of these industries to provide cheap, subsidised energy, resources, materials and services to the other privately-owned profit-

making based industries of this country.

Now with the current programme of privatisation, despite the fact that upper class representatives have always controlled publicly owned industries and privately owned industries have hogged the benefit from the nationalised ones, in order to feed the greed for increased profit, the wheel has turned full circle with almost total imposition of the sacred right to make private profit from the very means of life.

Tom Carile

Sinking the Flagship

Perhaps in a bout of overconfidence, Mrs Thatcher called the poll tax the flagship of her third term in office. The evidence from Scotland is that with nearly one and a half million people either not paying or in arrears, this flagship is taking on water fast.

In Cardiff on Monday 11th September, some residents of Canton, at a meeting, decided they would like to form a local anti poll tax union. This they are now doing and soon the Canton union will join seven other Cardiff anti poll tax unions, all active in helping form a mass non-payment movement. At the Canton meeting attended by around 40 people — mostly middle aged and over — around 20 immediately joined the fledgling union, determined to increase its size and influence in the coming months.

On the next evening Cardiff City Council (which has a Labour majority) held a series of 'informing the public' meetings, ostensibly aimed to explain the poll tax but in reality attempts to scare off the possibility of a mass non-payment campaign. The Riverside/Canton meeting was attended by well over 200, again mostly middle aged and over. The council provided little new information and side-stepped the crucial question of how much the poll tax would actually be. This was despite their own City Treasurer previously

estimating the figure of £253 for every person and later claiming that the NALGO pay rise would result in a higher poll tax. Not surprisingly people at the meeting were very angry at this reticence, some immediately smelling a rat. No doubt the Labour council is scared to publish their estimates for fear that the real figures would give added vigour to the 'Don't Pay' campaign. After an hour (the council only booked the school for an hour, taking some 40 minutes to explain the poll tax) the meeting broke up and the general feeling was one of anger. A quick show of hands indicated that the non-payment campaign will have a good base to build from.

So, the campaign against the poll tax in Cardiff is well under way. At least eight anti poll tax unions are already active and more are in the process of being established. The only real opposition has come from the Labour Party, who oppose effective opposition and proclaim that only a Labour government can defeat the poll tax. But what if Labour doesn't win the next election? It seems that the people of Cardiff realise defeating the poll tax is too important to leave to the wonderful Labour Party. The future for the Tory flagship looks bleak indeed.

EM

Anarchists in Norfolk

(from our correspondent)

Development

'All property is theft' for native Norfolk people have had their heritage stolen from them. All the best houses belong to incomers, whilst the locals have fled to Norwich and their children are often homeless. The rising crime rate shows that not everyone is taking the invasion lying down. The rivers have been poisoned with sewerage, but not of course by anarchists. When the multinationals take over our water, we will be ready for co-operative action.

The Arts and Crafts movement, with its anarchist links, which hastened the exodus of Londoners to the Home counties and the West 100 years ago, operates in reverse in Norfolk. Now the incomers are here, they demand Arts and Crafts in rainforest hardwood, so what chance have anarchists to make an impact. Street arts of painting, music, drama and dance all flourish in Norwich, the city where Tom Browne developed the idea of imagination.

Race is an issue here because there are so few black people. That is why wealthy white Londoners want to live here. So we have a scheme to give employment to the boat people, so that they can come to Norfolk instead of being forced to return to Vietnam.

Straw burning is Norfolk's contribution to global warming, so we provide advice on growing tomatoes

LOCAL NEWS

and figs, or in low lying areas the provision of tropical water sports.

Government oppression

Here on airstrip USA, the daily flypast reminds all of us of the enemy within, the military might that suppresses even the thought of revolution. The forces that intimidate us, not the Russians.

French Revolution celebrations took the form of the usual storming (out) from Norwich prison — so regular an occurrence that the locals hardly notice. Our only political prisoner is in Thetford, birthplace of Tom Paine, doing four years for Animal Lib. Local battery farmers are so frightened of the ALF that they have barbed wire, searchlights and security firms. These batteries are the real Bastilles, and there are many of them in the country where Matthews is king.

Chemical warfare — a young friend burnt himself to death in Norwich market recently. Norwich is increasingly popular with tourists.

Letters to those with expensive homes, purportedly from the poll tax officials, stating that certain facts have come to light about their recent poll tax registration, were not, of course, sent by anarchists.

Local GPs asking their patients to lobby MPs is a wonderful precedent. They are to be encouraged to take a leading role in raising people against government — after all, they will get

the extra work, treating the wounded.

Education is hard during rapid development, as staff and pupils change too much, schools are created and expand too fast. There is no continuity, no sense of belonging. Anarchy is a common experience for children in the state system. This is why private (public) schools are booming in Norfolk. This is a wonderful opportunity for anarchist teachers to de-school their classrooms.

* * * *

ALTHOUGH the number of homeless families staying in Hove in bed & breakfast has gone down to 190, the amount of time they are waiting is increasing. Some families are having to stay in temporary housing for almost two years.

The new Housing Bill, which means that landlords can charge much higher rents than previously, and the increased ability of entrepreneurs to buy council blocks and estates, is only making the bottom of the housing market increasingly small and shoddy. Building new council houses would be far cheaper than paying Hove's exorbitant bed & breakfast prices.

Roads

EAST Sussex County Council, in organising a public consultation for a new road building scheme in Brighton, paid £18,000 to an Eastbourne 'public relations' firm. Instead of hiring people with experience in public consultations, they chose people whose sole business was selling. Overall, they spent £200,000 on the promotion which 'encouraged public consultation'.

Johnny Yen

The Labour Party's Policy Review

NO CHALLENGE NO CHANGE

If any anarchists or true socialists remain misguided enough to believe that the effects of Thatcherism might be ameliorated by the election of a Labour government, they will certainly be disabused of the notion by the policy review document entitled *Meet the Challenge, Make the Change*. This glossy tract does nothing to challenge the dominance of Thatcherite ideology. Little attention is paid to the needs of individuals or communities since Labour's major concern is meeting the needs of 'a modern competitive economy'. We are informed, for example, that education 'at least to the level of our competitors' is vital if we are to become better producers in an advanced technology market place. Kinnock and company reduce education to a mechanism for training new wage slaves and consumers for the benefit of capitalist employers and the state. In 'meeting the challenge...' all human affairs are reduced to a set of equations in which the outcome is always 'greater material consumption'.

Meet the Challenge, Make the Change — a new agenda for Britain
published by the Labour Party, 150
Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT,
£2.50

'Meeting the challenge...' will afford little comfort to those concerned with the extension of individual rights, since Labour's plans for a free society involve minor adjustments to the machinery of social control such as ensuring consistent prison sentencing, extending the availability of legal aid and strengthening links between the police and the community. Even the timid reforms proposed by the Charter '88 group are not wholeheartedly embraced: while a Labour government would replace the House of Lords with an elected second chamber there are no plans to alter the system of election to the Commons since, it is argued, this would decrease democracy in Britain. Is it a coincidence that removing power from the peers (many of them hereditary) would facilitate a Labour government's grip on power while proportional representation would weaken it? These policies for 'a modern democracy' provide a perfect illustration of the spurious rationalisations that political parties are prepared to make in order to acquire power and cling to it.

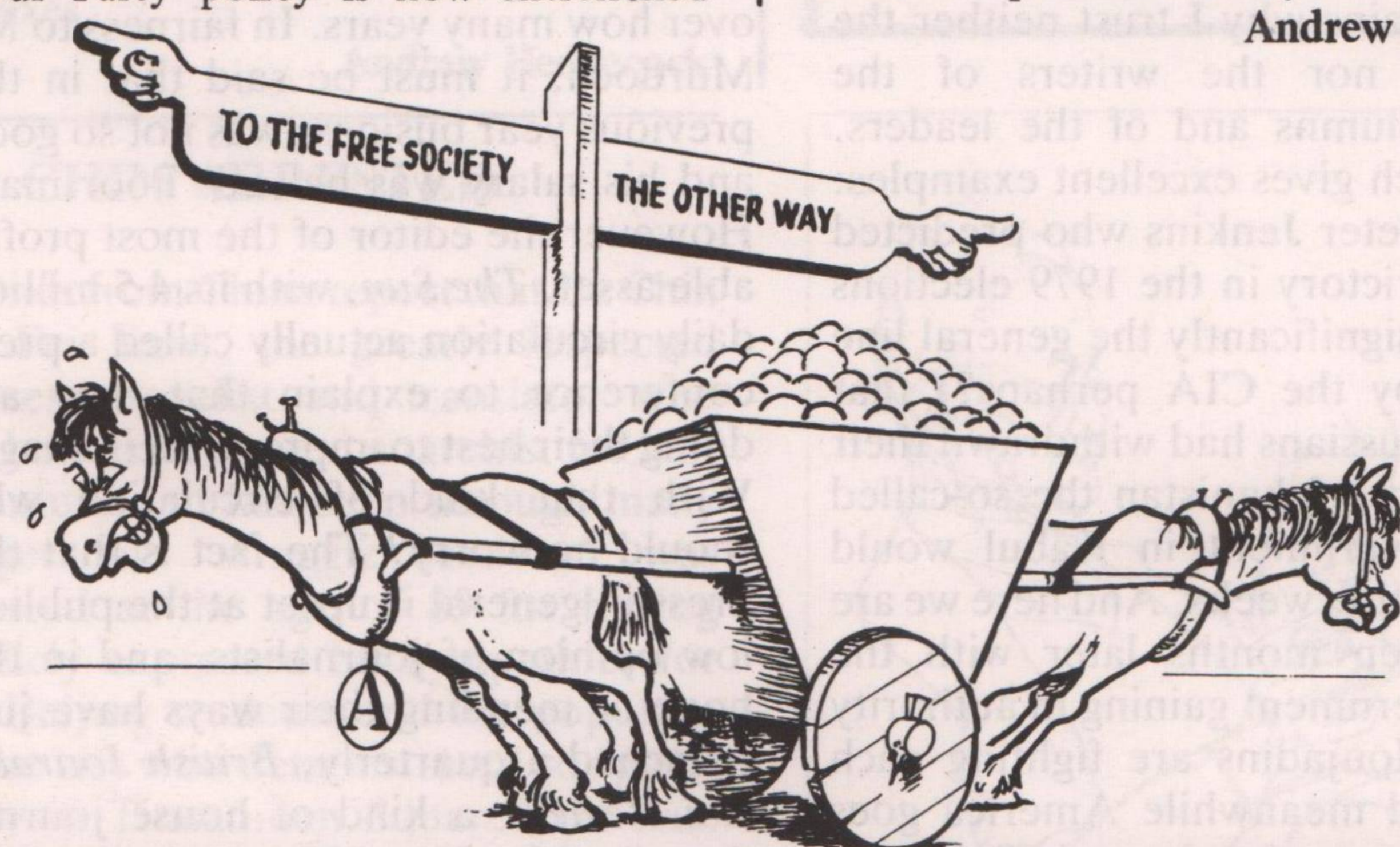
For many years the Labour Party has eschewed the view (held by anarchists and genuine socialists) that war is the result of economic competition between states. In a document which states that

'Labour's goal [is] an internationally competitive economy' it comes as no surprise to find a continuing enthusiasm for NATO or that criticism of the Tory approach to defence is based upon the government's failure to provide 'adequate' and 'efficient' defence for Britain. Labour's hypocrisy in presenting itself as the party of peace has never been more evident. It is pointed out that the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons has made the world a more dangerous place and that a Labour government would respond to the threat by seeking 'the utmost responsibility' in the export of skills and material necessary to their manufacture. The scope and scale of arms exports would also be limited and an embargo imposed on sales to states which 'might use them for internal repression or international aggression'. While the alternative purposes to which 'reputable' regimes might apply their arms are not revealed, we are secure in the knowledge that Labour will ensure that poisonous gas is used 'with the utmost responsibility'. Labour Party policy is now entrenched

in the notion of economic growth to the extent where no challenge is made to even those aspects of capitalism as repellent as the arms trade.

Meet the Challenge... aspires to a return to the 'welfare capitalism' favoured by all post-war British governments until the triumph of the Tory right in 1979. Kinnock's capitalism with a human face represents a precarious balancing act. For example, while there are vague hints about extending employee participation in industry to meet the demands of those voters who are tired of the inequality and authoritarianism of life under Thatcher, there are no plans for genuine worker's self-management since Labour cannot afford to alienate the CBI, the Stock Exchange and the editors of the tabloids if they are to be electable. This glossy package, with its ethos of market socialism and its emphasis upon material prosperity, may well earn the grudging acceptance it needs from the capitalists who continue to control our lives but its policies will do nothing to bring about a freer or more co-operative society.

Andrew Hedgecock



Land Notes

With monotonous regularity every year after the wheat harvest the correspondence columns of the press are full of accounts of the accidents caused by straw burning ('we had a 31-vehicle pile-up on a dual carriageway immediately across a field from the village... at the time the village and road were enveloped in dense smoke' — Abingdon, Oxon. reader in *The Guardian* of 26th August). Even the Right-wing Tory MP for Bury St Edmunds, Eldon Griffiths, admitted that 'some farmers had slipped back this year into the bad habits of a few years ago. He had flown over East Anglia and the area was full of 'billowing clouds of filthy smoke, an embarrassment for this part of the country'. But though Sir Eldon was all in favour of 'the courts throwing the book' at those farmers who were 'breaking the regulations', he was not in favour of a total ban on straw burning because (to quote the *East Anglian Daily Times* report) 'there was currently no satisfactory use for the volume of straw produced'. Like all experienced politicians he chooses his words carefully. Note that he doesn't say 'there is no satisfactory use for straw'. How could he when it is currently used for paper making, for bedding animals, for packaging, for feeding boilers, building materials (Stramit), and a host of other uses. Organic farmers and growers would also point out that it can be ploughed in, or composted if farmers were not in such a hurry to harvest one month and drill the next crop a couple of months later.

This country is producing some 24 million tons of cereals plus some 6 million tons of straw each year. Most of the latter goes up in smoke simply because for most farmers at a cost of a few gallons of diesel and a box of matches they save themselves time and money. And since both are their major

BURNING TOPICS

concerns in life the pleadings of Ministers and the media have no effect. Nor indeed do the protests of their neighbours. In an interesting editorial in the *East Anglian Daily Times* (28th August) it was pointed out that in the 1970s 'a great deal of time was devoted to discovering new ways of using straw' and a whole number of means of disposal as enumerated above were developed. But the 'difficulty' in most cases was 'that they did not save the farmer any money'. The editorial concedes that 'there are, of course, some farmers who would be prepared to make a small sacrifice in order to dispose of their straw in an acceptable manner', BUT, and here comes the crunch, 'investors were not prepared to rely on such benevolence'. Money is the criterion by which all activity is judged in a capitalist society. We could not express it more clearly than did R. W. Robert of Cornwall (in a letter to *The Guardian*, 29th August 1989) in reply to another correspondent who wanted 'something done' about stubble burning. It could be eliminated by next season, 'all they need is to confirm to the Minister of Agriculture that they and all other consumers are willing to pay 12% more for their loaves of bread and 10% more for their pinta, on condition that the farmer receives all the increase and the Minister outlaws the practice of burning'. In other words, farmers will do anything if they get paid for doing it. Since 1947 they have cut down 109,000 miles of hedges because the government paid them to do so, just as some of them are now replanting hedges because they are paid to do so. Any why are they growing more and more wheat (this year some 4 million tons more than we require) if not because the guaranteed price in the European Community is still above world prices?

So far as the land and land use are concerned, there are many more important 'burning topics' for anarchists than the stupid, wasteful burning of millions of tons of straw. Nevertheless, this issue is one of the many reasons why the whole question of land ownership needs to be given priority. After all, agriculture is without question the major industry which we cannot do without. It is also our largest industry. And yet the land on which we depend for our daily food is in the hands of... we don't know! Any policeman stopping a car driver can within seconds check who the owner is, but we do not know who owns the land of Britain, and our rulers have no intention of finding out.

Salmonella, lysteria and the ill-effects of the various pesticides and herbicides used in factory farming, not to mention the injections, hormones, compound feeds, containing animal droppings, with which our 'quality' meat is produced, are burning topics for anarchists. And we must look at the organic movement (as distinct from the individual organic grower/farmer) very closely and critically. Can, in fact, organic and factory farming live alongside each other in a capitalist society?

It is said that the EEC countries are 'overproducing' basic foods (cereals) which cannot be exported (only because the Third World countries who need them cannot pay for them). Yet the FAO and market analysts who keep a close check on food production make it clear that in a normal year there is in store only enough food worldwide for 60 days. A prolonged drought can produce problems even in the advanced countries. The USA had two seasons of drought which cut down on their cereal production dramatically — as well as driving a number of small farmers to the wall. This year in Europe

it is estimated that potato production is down by 20% in spite of irrigation on most of the large holdings.

That farmers are being offered payment of some £100 an acre to put a minimum of 20% of their arable land out of production is criminal while millions in the world are undernourished. Needless to say yet again those who benefit are the large farmers who will put out of production their poorest land (which originally was used for grazing and only ploughed up when the EEC offered ridiculously high prices for wheat) and will go on increasing the fertiliser applications on the rest of their land, so that in the end production will be at the same level and the rich farmers will be richer. And the other question is that the small farmers are feeling the pinch and many of them are selling up. And the buyers are no longer the pension funds and the insurance companies who got out of land ownership when land prices peaked, but the big farmers, in spite of the fact that they too are complaining of not making a 'decent living'! The average farm in the UK is now 150 acres compared with less than 50 acres on the continent. But that is the average. One needs to probe the figures in more detail to realise in how few hands the land of this country is now held.

The question of land ownership and use from an anarchist point of view is an enormous subject and we hope that those of our readers involved in agriculture and horticulture, and even interested enough to realise its importance for all of us, will let the compiler of these notes have their views, and their experience, and any local material of interest. We are also hoping, next June, to bring out an issue of *The Raven* on the question of the land and its use and ownership. We are therefore hoping that the 'Land Notes' will encourage discussion, and perhaps at some stage a meeting to outline the contents of that issue of *The Raven*.

AN ANARCHIST'S NOTEBOOK

Sean French writing in the *New Statesman & Society* (1st September) confesses to spending 'a lot of time reading newspapers and magazines and I'm always particularly fascinated by opinion columns and leaders'. I confess to being similarly addicted. But I also agree with him when he says that this is not because I think I'll learn anything. Quite the reverse. What I enjoy about them is their utterly bogus air of authority. I've always been aware that I don't know anything, but I'm increasingly suspecting that no one else does either.

I'm much older and perhaps less modest than Sean French (though I suspect his is false modesty, otherwise why write an opinion column — and an excellent one — each week in the *New Statesman & Society*?) and I am convinced that I know an awful lot which explains why I trust neither the politicians nor the writers of the opinion columns and of the leaders. Sean French gives excellent examples: deflating Peter Jenkins who predicted a Labour victory in the 1979 elections and more significantly the general line (inspired by the CIA perhaps?) that once the Russians had withdrawn their forces from Afghanistan the so-called puppet government in Kabul would collapse within weeks. And here we are nearly seven months later with the Kabul government gaining in authority and the Mujadins are fighting each other. And meanwhile America goes on sending arms for them via Pakistan.

But what about Thatcher's prediction on the eve of the European elections that the Tories had caught up and were running neck-and-neck with Labour. And when proved completely wrong she then, according to *The Guardian*, 'blamed her party's organisation for the Tory defeat'. Did any of the press point out the contradiction to remind the public which has been trained by the media to have short memories?

But to come back to the hacks. With the rare exceptions — James Cameron is one of the few that springs to mind — they sell their services and 'opinions' to the highest bidder. They also move from one paper to another, presumably to get a new lease of life by peddling another 'line'. Peter Jenkins mentioned

by Sean French was pushing the David Owen SDP line with his wife, who was a candidate when he was writing for *The Guardian*. Now he is safely tucked away with *The Independent* — and has no opinions and so will never be wrong.

And as for the politicians, surely the candidate for the 'utterly bogus air of authority' is David Owen. He wrote off the Labour party, and here he is ready to work with them, and yet the media

go on interviewing him as a serious statesman whose opinions are of importance, instead of laughing him out of court as a vain, ambitious phoney. We don't even know whether he was a good doctor.

The media are very worried about their image. Murdoch and co. couldn't care less. After all, his News Corporation showed increased profits in 1988 from £192 million the previous year to £235 million, which meant that our Rupert's wages went up a mere 210% to £6.5 million last year. And to top up this modest reward for his efforts, his family holding in the News Corporation 'earned' — to use the official lingo — around £10 million in dividends. What the report does not tell us is what dividends must be added from the investments from an income of £16.5 million per annum (less tax, of course) over how many years. In fairness to Mr Murdoch, it must be said that in the previous year business was not so good and his salary was halved. Poor man! However the editor of the most profitable asset, *The Sun*, with its 4.5 million daily circulation actually called a press conference to explain that they are doing their best to improve their image. With that kind of circulation why should he worry? The fact is that the press in general is upset at the public's low opinion of journalists, and in the hope of mending their ways have just launched a quarterly, *British Journalism Review*, a kind of house journal described by Hugo Young (a member of the editorial board) as being 'produced mostly by journalists, as a forum providing critiques of the bad and celebrations of the good, whether in print or the electronic media'. We shall see what effect this has on the hacks. Judging by some of the tripe Mr Young contributes in his *Guardian* commentary with, in Sean French's words, an 'utterly bogus air of authority', I would be surprised if anything good comes from the quarterly. If I am asked to give an example of the tripe served up by Mr Young, here is a typical piece from *The Guardian* (20th July 1989): 'The perversity of the railwaymen was a blow to the travelling public, but the seed of a disaster for the Labour Party. Need it have been so? Whether or not there are more strikes, Monday's decision by the NUR executive poses the question sharply: is it not time, for Labour's own salvation, that the party freed itself from the burden of apparent solidarity with every action which any trade union, by due process, decides to undertake.'

'One should perhaps refine the proposition. Why do Labour's leaders, however critical they may be in private, invariably refrain from a public denunciation of strikes, or any but the most

inconspicuous public distancing from their perpetrators? From enjoying considerable public support, the railwaymen transformed themselves overnight into public enemies. The Conservatives leapt vigorously aboard the reversing bandwagon. On Tuesday, Mrs Thatcher could not contain her delight at the turn in events. It seemed, on the face of it, the moment for a well-judged statement from Mr Kinnock unambiguously de-coupling the Labour party from an act of suicidal folly by the NUR.'

Well, that 'seed of disaster' clearly never germinated because in September the opinion polls (whatever *they're* worth) gave the Labour party a 10% lead over the Tories. Has Mr Young admitted he was wrong on all counts? Of course not. Today's instant journalism, once read soon forgotten. Some of us should have an efficient filing system and file away the utterances of politicians and journalists in order to smother them with their crap at the right moment.

But anyway a quarterly in which all the journalists contribute their *mea culpas* and promise never to sin again is wishful thinking. Many years ago Humbert Wolfe summed it up in four lines:

*You cannot hope to bribe or twist
Thank God! the British journalist
But seeing what that man will do
Unbribed, there's no occasion to
I think today one would have to
question the first two lines!*

We hope 'An Anarchist's Notebook' will be a fortnightly feature and preferably not by the same writer each issue. We also welcome suggestions, local newspaper items could be worked into this notebook.

A NEW PUBLISHING VENTURE

George Woodcock collected essays

Negotiations are proceeding for the publication of a series of volumes of the essays George Woodcock has written over the past fifty years on many subjects. Quarry Books of Kingston, Canada, and New Amsterdam Books of New York are negotiating for a joint American edition, and if an agreement is reached the first volume will be one of anarchist and quasi-political essays. Freedom press, it is proposed, will distribute the series in Britain.

SONG OF ANARCHY

Song of Anarchy and other poems

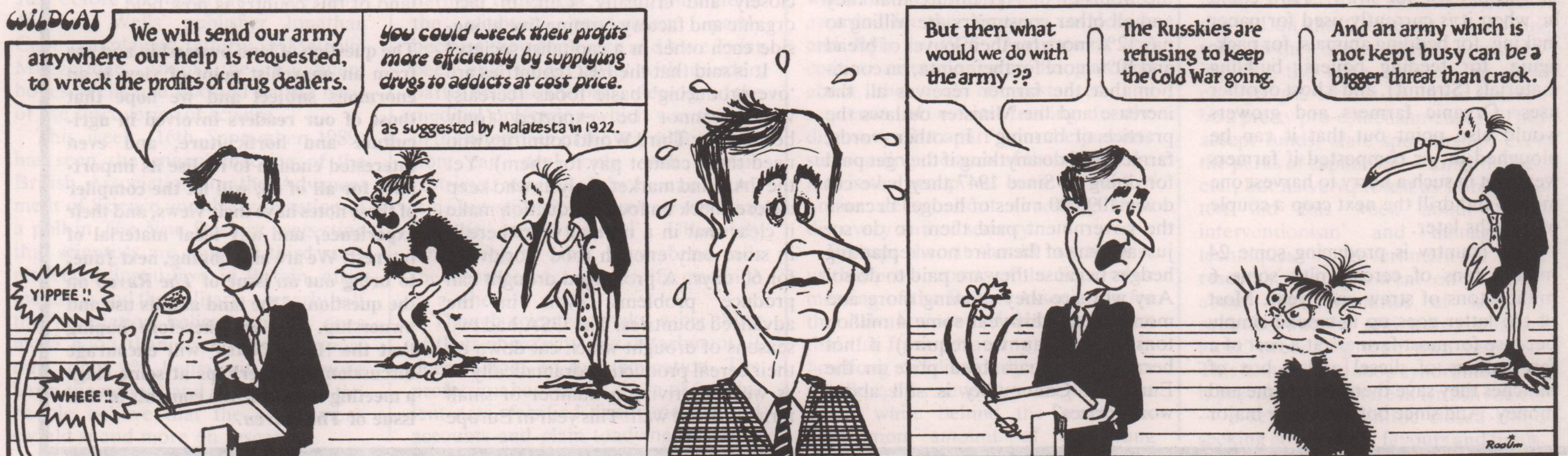
by John Rety

Box 2, 99 Toriano Avenue, London NW5, £3.00

JOHN Rety's *Song of Anarchy* is his footnote to history in that one must have lived within his company and in his time for a full understanding of his long poem. It is autobiographical whose understanding is for 'we in the know' for we know who 'Arthur Rowe' is and who 'Jack who reads the meter' is and who is 'David' and 'Mary' and 'Peter', and I am 'Arthur Moyses who used to know me'. Your history, culture-seeking reader is Stalin, Hitler, the war and Aldermaston, for these dead events fly-speck the pages of your college-issued 20th century history books, but when Rety lines 'Stuff the duff said all and sundry' in relation to Aldermaston one must know that it refers to the late CND Peggy Duff raging at us as we the anarchists broke up CND ranks to broken-step march up the small path to the illegal RSG secret Top Brass hideout. In small rooms over the tea cup over the wine glass the ancient voices breathe 'Do you remember' and others take up the tale of the brave days and the heroes, but it was ever so, for we are the burned-out warriors of a cause we chose ourselves and it is not peculiar to us, for slice the political salami or the back-street tribal gossip where you will, the question always arises 'Do you remember?' Vladimir Nabokov in his novel *Pale Fire* created a character the pedantic academic who can destroy all art by analysing every comma or scientifically testing every brushstroke, carbon-dating Christ's cross or demands to know, as another academic requested to know 'How can you have a weeping moon?' Ah. Every few minutes during the day I bend the knee in homage to the critic Clive James for his wit and store keeper knowledge, but when in a 1980 review of Johnston's poems he refers to Johnston's Spenserian stanzas or Larkin's pentameter, Pushkin's tetrametric creations and Pope and Roy Campbell's use of polysyllabic rhymes one feels that for us the pig ignorant rank and file protestors it is back with the felt tipped pen and the lavatory wall but the saving grace is that when Clive James, Gore Vidal, Lord Hailsham or Bertrand Russell left the academic chair and endeavoured to produce works of literature be it fiction or poetry they penned the usual banal crap of men without art. Rety was a child of the late world war and lived through the age of flower power, espresso coffee, ban the bomb, skiffle, the demonstrations to the American Embassy and the angry young men.

One remembers it as a period without vicious hatred when art was in ferment and Alan got eighteen months from the State for trying to blow out the front of the Spanish bank in Covent Garden and we took it in turn to take him his 'outside' meals. Rety published his *Soho* magazines and we sat in the poverty of

continued on page 6



BOOKS

continued from page 5

the French cafe and trod the town to the Malatesta and maybe they were the good days. But the question arises how valuable is Rety's poetry as poetry and as Peter asks in the White Hart pub, 'what is good poetry?' I would argue that trivial poetry as with Kipling is when the rhymes become more important than the internal rhythm and it lacks an internal valid subject matter. Much of the poetry of our times survives because of the person who penned them, or because they are part of an historic period, as with Picasso's 'Guernica', and they will die with the passing of their time. A poem will survive on a few single lines, as with Swinburne's 'When the hound's of spring are winter's traces', but true beauty and true poetry is contained in the King James translation of the Bible within its Song of Solomon: 'I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.' Rety's poetry is worthy of your attention and your coinage. Charlie said to me that 'they like your stuff because it entertains' and I know that this is the greatest fault for if Oscar had eschewed wit for academic facts in words of four syllables the better types would never have chased him out of the Café Royal and if he had only penned *The Soul of Man Under Socialism* he would now be safely embalmed upon the graveyard shelf between Kropotkin and Marx, written and unread. John Rety is for you, comrade, so take it and read it and enjoy it, and for the academic record my internal reference is a handwritten dedication. Ah.

Arthur Moyse

BIRD OF PREY

Bird of Prey — a novel about sexual abuse
Steve Tasane and Carly Dreyfuss
Clubman Books £5.95

Bird of Prey has many features in common with the worst hectoring novels: it is didactic (almost hectoring) in tone, it manipulates the reader emotionally and (despite the adoption of a naturalistic approach) some of the dialogue lacks realism. It is, however, a compelling and harrowing book which tackles a problem that too many people, particularly men, refuse to acknowledge.

Luke is a young working class man who would be appalled by overt sexual violence, but thinks nothing of casually exploiting the women around him. He sees the aggressive lechery of his friends as they verbally terrorise women in night clubs, as a bit of fun. Danielle is a student who is driven by a hunger for revenge upon predatory males, and plays dangerous games with men like Luke. The plot centres around Luke's psychological journey from complacent machismo,

via the heart of darkness of Danielle's traumatic childhood experiences of sexual abuse, to a degree of enlightenment in relation to the power that men have over women and the horrific ways in which it is often employed.

Tasane and Dreyfuss do not focus on the experience of the abuse alone. By unfolding the narrative through both male and female viewpoints they demonstrate the need for men and women to struggle together to wipe out sexism and sexual violence.

The novel is based upon the experience of Carly Dreyfuss, and her courage in reliving and sharing this horror must be applauded. While *Bird of Prey* makes no attempt to analyse the root causes of sexual abuse, this illustration of its effects should provide a catalyst for some thorough and systematic consideration of the problem. It is also hoped that at least a few men are provoked to re-examine their attitudes to women and into joining the battle to eradicate all forms of hierarchical relationship between the sexes.

Andrew Hedgecock

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BA CHIN ARRESTED

Friends from China report that Ba Chin (Li Fei Kan), the greatly respected Chinese novelist and translator who has been a dedicated anarchist for half a century and has been through many purges and 'struggle sessions', was arrested at the age of 85 for having publicly expressed his sympathies for the Beijing students and the populace of the city who demonstrated so splendidly in Tiananmen Square. He has, apparently, since been released.

INVITATION

Receipt of a copy of this *Freedom* fortnightly dummy is an invitation to become a subscriber — details of subscription rates will be found on page 2. American and Canadian would-be subscribers who wish to pay by dollar cheques should bear in mind that it costs a lot of money to encash them and we must ask them to add \$1.00 for that purpose.

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CAPITALISM ISN'T WORKING — Nor Are the Cover-Ups

WHY do the media take every opportunity to remind us that interest rates may have to go up . . . but they don't? Why do financial commentators keep telling us Mr Alan Bond's empire, reputedly £3½ billion in debt, is on the brink of collapse but it hasn't? Why are Western governments beginning to panic over the risk of a lemming-like rush by their youth to drugs and self-destruction? The answer is simple — the implications still impossible to face. Capitalism is not working (nothing new). More serious, nor are the collective games we play to conceal it. Gorbachev has stolen another march on us by admitting the failings of state communism. He may not know that capitalism is not the answer.

The effects of another percent or two on interest rates 'to put the economy right' would bring industrial stagnation, more unemployment, millions of mortgage payment defaulters and the collapse of numerous enterprises which have borrowed on the basis of a boom that has to last from here to eternity.

The real threat to Mr Bond's empire is not his creditors, who can't afford to blow the whistle because his debts are just too big, but investigations instigated by government agencies. Such is the ignorance around, they may not know what they are doing.

One way out for the system is to let inflation rip again. But this time the old belief — money never lets you down — must go. With it to the phoney security of pensions, life insurance policies, the professional's hot air and the rest. The few who can still 'do', mostly women, will get by but the rest of us will be like deflated balloons, happy to seize on anything that might blow our minds.

Our reaction to drops are widely depicted by our authorities as additive, leading to destitution and death. There was a time when frugs might have been

recognised equally for their enabling qualities. The professional acumen of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes was not diminished by his addiction to opium. In Ermanno Olmi's recent film 'The Legend of the Holy Drinker' the hero, Andreas, faces up to responsibility and involvement with the help of alcohol. The use of such aids to achieve the pure spirit of giving love (Andreas) and satisfaction (Holmes), without expecting anything in return, count for little in our milieu.

The drugs our authorities abhor are not in the hands of the big corporations. They happen to originate from places and people (e.g. Columbia, Vietnam, Pakistan) whose assets industrial societies have stolen. In exchange we leave them our excrement — financial debt, plastic baubles, piles of concrete and iron, machines that don't work, tons of professional hot air and the inevitable culture of poverty. Through the drug trade they have a chance to repay our generosity.

The threat to Western barbarism of the drug invasion is the temporary escape it offers. Vast numbers now find the slavery of materialism and the gilded cage of employment too much to face. All schooling — a compulsory, legitimate drug — is geared to preparing us for this insanity. The way there is through a lifetime devoted to over-valued, meaningless, ritualised activities. Doing jobs whose dignity technology (capital) has usurped. Making polluting products and providing dis-services we are manipulated into communing ourselves. If the drug invasion can help to pull down this pack of cards, the cost may be worth enduring. One thing is for sure, we in the West are not going to make life more meaningful and hopeful without going through a lot more pain and suffering in the near future.

Denis Pym

One electrician (a communist) with whom I served my time as an apprentice in 1956, used to claim he was following a 'scientific approach'. The idea of doing scientific tubing and wiring struck his more level-headed workmates as hilariously pretentious, even pompous.

Worship of science has a long history, one not just confined to communist electricians or the Marxists. Anarchists from Bakunin and Kropotkin down to Doctor Alex Comfort, have all made their pilgrimage to this particular Mecca. H. G. Wells held the view that if only the government of mankind could be left to a collection of the world's scientific masterminds, suitably enthroned in their libraries and laboratories, then all the obstacles to the universal attainment of the 'good life' for humanity could be removed. Just before the outbreak of the 1939-45 war, Wells' publisher Jonathan Cape complained bitterly to Malcolm Muggeridge about the fraudulent hopes Wells had boosted on the basis of the discoveries of science.

This week (16th September 1989) has seen the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science and the publication of a poll in *The New Scientist* suggesting that scientists are now the third most respected 'institution' in Britain, after medicine and the military — nearly half the population believe science does more good than harm (more important, only 9% believe it does more harm than good) and just over half the people believe that the government should spend more on research.

Is this faith in science well founded? It is interesting that the three institutions in which the public is reported by *The New Scientist* to have 'great confidence' — medicine, the military, and the scientific community — are all professions whose practitioners can most easily get away with murder. Nobody in their right mind would blindly trust an electrician, a plumber or a builder to be let loose on their own house without some supervision, but as yet the doctor and the scientist have not been subjected to the same rigorous doubt by the public. They are trusted just as the priest was once trusted. Paul Feyerabend, the philosopher, has pointed out ' . . . doctors give incorrect diagnoses, prescribe harmful drugs, cut, x-ray, mutilate at the slightest provocation, partly because they don't care and have so far been able to get away with murder, partly because the basic ideology of the medical profession which was formed in the aftermath of the scientific revolution can deal only with certain restricted aspects of the human organism, but still tries to cover everything by the same method'. Ultimately amounting to what Feyerabend calls the incompetence of scientific medicine as a whole.

Though scientists make a big thing of their objectivity and detachment, it doesn't hold up to examination. The profession has had its share of fraudulent data, falsified discoveries, rigged accounts and plain toadying to politi-

Science and Anarchism

This column is about topics involving science and anarchism. These could be accounts of some evils of our present system or possibly roles of science in anarchist societies. There will be no attempts to justify anarchism on scientific grounds.

Science is a method of exploring the world which involves developing theories and testing and improving them by experiment. The writings about such work provide a basis for future advances. This knowledge is often used for totally undesirable purposes, what may be described as the pyramid syndrome of rulers.

Whilst simple systems can be fully understood, many processes are so complex that only partial knowledge exists, an example being living systems. When new discoveries do occur, the users of them often imagine in their enthusiasm that total knowledge is theirs. Great benefits are prophesied (religions are on safer ground in promising benefits only in the next world). Nearly all advances have both benefits and drawbacks so a full discussion with all affected is necessary, but this does not happen in our 'democratic' society.

Unfortunately scientists are bad at explaining their results to wider audiences, especially when they are not quite sure! Some applied scientists, like medics, often positively dislike questions, but it is difficult to improve on Moliere when describing the professions.

Turning to a specific topic — what better than the most basic that is so much in the news now — that is food. In general, we now have too much food in this country and it is of the wrong kind — stale, watered, polluted because of too little consumer knowledge and too much greed elsewhere.

My first contact with food, apart from eating, was in a food analysis laboratory in 1939. I remember that butter from Australia always had the same water content as the maximum

legally permitted. Since then, large farmers, food, agriculture and chemical companies with positive help from government have reduced standards a lot.

Returning to butter, when in New Zealand Alan obtained interesting details about Anchor butter, produced by a long established farmers co-operative. This type of organisation is clearly of interest to anarchists. The literature had details of how to keep the milk as clean as possible, low bacterial levels being vital for good flavour. Perhaps the major requirement for this is an ample supply of pure water — does this exist at all in England now? I suppose that butter was originally made from milk as a way of preserving it longer and became a delicacy. There are now frequent warnings of the dangers of eating too much fat, but the warnings, for commercial reasons, have got blurred into telling us to eat their product instead of reducing excessive use of one food component. There are 'spreads' and low fat products or, in other words, pay butter prices for water.

Instead of eating butter, margarine is pushed which will be at least as harmful, does not taste as good and has the cheapest fats, processed by methods of doubtful nutritional value such as hydrogenation.

Then, more recently, we are told to consume lots of polyunsaturated fats. These are essential but may do harm in excess.

Advice on healthy diet is outside the scope of this column, and there are some members of the medical profession and other organisations who do give sound information about food. The purpose of this article is to give details of an important aspect of life that could certainly be dramatically improved in an anarchist society, or to coin a slogan, 'eat well — become an anarchist'.

Norman Albon

Blinding Us With Science

cians — the Sir Cyril Burt scandal over innate intelligence, the midwife toad fraud, the Piltdown man hoax, Stalin's tame scientist Lysenko, the German scientists who fell for Hitler's 'racial science'. Even heroes of scientific discovery like Columbus played to the politicians to gain sponsorship of the Spanish crown, ultimately resorting to implied blackmail, and later had to manipulate the Spanish court to get Vatican approval of the Spanish claims to the discovered lands. Even Einstein is reputed to have fiddled his figures in some of his earlier research.

The rumpus which surrounded the discovery of Pulsars at Cambridge in February 1968, was particularly instructive. This involved bitterness when the Nobel Prize for physics was awarded for the discovery to Hewish and Ryle in 1975. Accusations and counter-accusations were flung around about the real circumstances and sequence of events leading to the discovery. But apart from the jealousy surrounding the aura of the award, the fact is the group has been accused of undue delay about revealing their discovery and of secrecy.

Perhaps then it should not surprise us that press reports of the September meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science suggest that 'far from advancing, science is in headlong and disorderly retreat. There is talk, as for several years past, of a crisis, while behind the scenes an uncommon amount of backbiting

between rival administrators is taking place'. The problem is that since about 1940, science has become more professional than academic, in that scientific research has become so expensive that it requires centrally located government funds to back it. Science is now incorporated into the state as an ideology in the same way as religion used to be. Ideologies, as we know, tend to go corrupt when they become successful and turn into dogmas — like, for example, Marxism. Bertrand Russell said that all 'dogma' belongs to theology and that all 'definite knowledge' belongs to science. To say, as some do, that science being a product of human effort has its faults, as individual scientists have their faults, but that it is an ideal to be strived for through the scientific methods, is rather like saying science doesn't depend on the scientists in the same way as Christianity doesn't depend on the Christians. Except insofar as they are constantly complaining that the state isn't paying them enough, the British scientists seem to be a pretty pro-establishment lot. They accept funds, state sponsorship, even the perks of capitalism — knighthoods, etc., but naively protest as Lord Dainton did this week about 'over-interventionism' and management techniques by government in basic research. He also went on to moan about the luminaries of scientific societies who he said were 'collaborators' protecting their own research. This is the closed shop syndrome which is prevalent elsewhere in British society — a series of scientific closed shops seeking government favours and funds,

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UNDERCOVER ANARCHISM: a start

Here, at long last, is the grand solution to the Freedom Press Overheads Fund (September total £707.22) and the Magazine Fund (£869.76). All we have to do is write to the gaffers of the 50 foremost companies, and ask them for £1,000 each. We could have five colour supplements, increase the print run, attract new subscribers by the thousand. There is plenty of money about. After all, these top company gaffers all earn from £6,000,000 to £319,484 each. A thousand quid must be fag money to them.

Aggressive begging has become one of the new British industries at a time when the money brew ferments to escalate the bubbles from the bottom towards the top. What bigshots actually do with their amazing pay is never quite clear. Quite possibly they invest a lot of it in order to make more loot, and with the interest they create vast money-making networks. You never get close enough to any of them to ask for the price of a cup of tea. Even if you could manage this feat, they would probably tell you to belt up.

At a time when Thatcher is demanding to know why a couple of British brokerage firms cannot be admitted to the Tokyo stock exchange, the social atmosphere in Britain is one of financial oppression. Everything, including all the well-shredded social issues such as the Health Service and local government, is rendered to questions of money. We all know that it takes money to run anything, but the stern government line has now successfully drained humanistic blood out of the veins of national life.

This manifests itself in curious ways. Matrimonial settlements in divorce cases are seriously affected when judges decide that houses must be sold and the proceeds split between husband and wife. Houses no longer sell.

The cost of rubbish bins is the subject of a price war at a time when we are supposed to be drowning under a sea of litter.

Contraceptives yo-yo in price. There are strong rumours that some French letters leak due to poor rubber quality.

Then there is the overriding question of what the hell is going in up there in the sky. Like a giant French letter, the atmosphere is supposed to be leaking. The cosmic view is that it is too late for anything. Within fifty to a hundred years, when some of us will be reading *Freedom* in the last few caves for habitation, there will be nothing left. Perhaps that will be a relief.

Not all of us are equipped to accept doom. It is a futile exercise at a time when we are watching the gradual crumbling of the Tory cake and hearing loudly voiced indignation of some very ordinary people when it comes to the wrecking of the Health Service and

the erosion of local government, also the chronic failure of the new social fund, due to social discrimination. There may be every reason to be optimistic about a future which can start in a couple of years. Kinnockism will not change everything. It will, at least, give us a new kind of optimism. It will be a turn in cycle with which we are all familiar — at least, those of us who are older than twenty. And if things do go wrong, we have, under Toryism, learned how to invent methods of attack.

What can we, on our side of this misty fence, actually do apart from the usual activities within trade unions and other groups and organisations? One of the neglected areas is local government in which patience is required in order to survive. If we assume that housing is a priority in many areas, there is nothing to prevent a local authority from setting up a housing association outside the constrictions of the government-dominated Housing Corporation. An independent housing association can start its own building programme. Likewise, a local authority can set up a cheap cafe, like British restaurants after the war.

Rather than theorising and dissecting political trends, we should start flying our kites from new bases. There is no actual evidence that the broad humanistic anarchist philosophy is totally unacceptable to others, especially when it is called by some other name. Admit that you are an anarchist and you are inviting some curious looks from most people. But when an anarchist thought is filtered into an existing organisation as an 'idea', it can gain support.

If a group of anarchists were to start a company called Good Works Ltd., and then ask the bank for a loan, they would probably get it. If the much-hounded gipsy fraternity were to call themselves Green Land Surveyors Ltd. and had a registered office, they would probably fare better than they do at present. The gipsy as a conservationist has some attraction.

Granted, we are all proud of our independent thought, but at Peter Neville implied in the September issue of *Freedom*, there is precious little we can do about it apart from making ourselves heard in trade unions and other organisations. Nationally, it is quite another matter. You do not see declared anarchists in the Sunday quality papers, nor do you discover what they eat for breakfast or what sort of music they favour. Publicity is not for us. Few people have heard of Herbert Read except as the author of a standard work on surrealism. George Woodcock is rightly celebrated, but only as the author of a Pelican book on anarchism. After that, silence.

reeks of the God of Science demanding total worship! Science is great, everything else — sociology, philosophy, economics, knitting — are cult pursuits, the activities of ordinary mortals. But ordinary mortals have to try to live with the products and consequences of science. Balzac may not have been entirely correct in saying 'where you get the chemist you don't get wine', but some of the practices of the scientists do give cause for worry. Perhaps the most grim example is that in Nazi Germany science operated in the service of superstition.

The answer lies in tough scrutiny by laymen (or women) of the judgements of scientists, in the way that juries may examine, and accept or reject the pronouncements of 'expert opinions' in the courts of law. We need to know if some of their theories are as well established as they would like us to believe.

Fortunately, not all the public are taken in by the noble pretensions of modern science or what the scientists

What we really need is a proliferation of information based on local issues, probably in the form of simple information sheets. If it takes no more than ten minutes to read the *Daily Mirror*, then these sheets should occupy five minutes — the sort of thing you can assimilate while waiting for the TV commercials to come and go. We should also make the fullest use of the many free newspapers which are rammed through the letterbox every week. Most of these freebies carry editorial matter, and part-time reporters quickly gobble up points of view without benefit of very much editorial control.

Almost any subject can have anarchist interpretation. For instance, local supermarkets have surpluses, which are sold out of dump bins. Can they be persuaded to give these surpluses away to needy people? Can a local bakery produce twenty extra loaves a day for the same cause? Will the local council donate waste land to a small co-operative of people who want to grow food when no allotments are available? The clever adherent of our beliefs will see possibilities in this sort of action, because the givers will acquire a publicity cachet for their actions.

HEALTH: an Anarchist Perspective

LET'S be clear about health; it is not simply the absence of illness, nor is providing money to service sickness the same as creating health. The problem is that our culture has produced an illusion about health; the very word usually conjures up thoughts of the opposite, of sickness and disease. Thus even in anarchist circles discussions of health usually centre on ways and means of dealing with sickness. While this may be necessary it has little to do with health.

What is health? The broadest definition is that health is the ability to fulfil potential. Any person or life form is healthy when it is able to do all that it is capable of doing, of becoming all that it may become. While that may be okay for most of the biosphere, for humans there are immediate problems; much of what we are capable of is unacceptable, and life is too short for all we can visualise. So for humans health is a conditional state; if our expectations of life are fulfilled we tend to be healthy, if they are disrupted we suffer disease.

Expectations fall into two classes — those which are inherent in our biology such as food, air and water, and those which are generated by our interaction with the culture which nurtures us. Cultural expectations vary and are subject to change depending on the nature of the cultural dynamic individual's experience.

It is not possible to say which culture is best for people, what can be said is that all of the western industrial cultural

At a time when the country is groaning under the weight of new money, and people like Robert Montague, chairman of Tiphook, the container rental group, has received an 81% pay rise (he's on £370,000 now), it is time to take the flatulence out of the economy by demonstrating how redistribution can be made to work.

Fred Oughton

(Note: Fred Oughton frequently calls for action in his articles. It is true that anarchism is probably about nine-tenths discussion and one-tenth action. On this occasion, however, Fred offers a suggestion how local groups or even single individuals can express anarchism in the form of redistribution. If you want to explore the possibilities, write to him *c/o Freedom*.)

The Polish Concert Party

Jawruzelski: (exist stage right, pushes Walesa and Mazowiecki — naive newcomers — into spotlight with encouragement from Glomp in fancy dress) "Your turn now lads, they are starting to throw things!"

continued from page 7

built, as Lord Dainton concedes, upon 'an illusion . . . that government investment in science was bound to bring national dividends'.

Scientists tend to see themselves as something special, partly because generally governments see them as useful and partly because the public has undue faith in science owing to the mystique with which scientists have been able to surround their craft. Their glory, as Lord Dainton said, owes itself to the 'manifest success of science and technology during the last war' and 'that thereafter British science fell into a trap of their own making'. That of establishment science — science as a tool of the state.

But prestige is an addictive drug, and *The New Scientist* (16th September 1989) complains that 'from the attention devoted to science and technology in the media, you would have thought that it was some cult pursuit, like karate, ham radio or knitting'. This

say, I was reminded of this recently during a lunch break on the shop floor. We were discussing the injection of rats with Parkinson's disease, when one worker said 'Don't be daft, they [the scientists] say they are injecting rats when it's really chimpanzees and they say rats to avoid public concern'. Now whether this statement is true or false is not as important (chimps after all are more expensive than rats, though perhaps mental defects may be cheaper still) as the healthy scepticism which is embedded in the attitude. If people have the imagination to see behind the public utterances of scientists it might produce the kind of anarchistic antidote which Paul Feyerabend prescribes as a way of curbing the excesses of the scientists. That way both the road to Auschwitz and the nuclear holocaust may be avoided. If only somehow the commonsense of ordinary people could be brought to bear.

Brian Bamford

variations produce matching variations in the disease patterns they generate. Modern killers, such as heart disease, cancers and immune system dysfunctions (how refined the concepts of diseases are!) are linked directly to cultural variations. Anarchists would suspect this, since none of the modern cultures provide cultural or socio-political regimes which satisfy what we believe to be the expectations of a rational way of life. Or put it another way, an unhealthy way of life will create unhealthy people.

While equality is not the same as freedom, it is true that those societies which are more equitable produce more healthy populations. The Dutch, for instance, who design provisions for human need into the very fabric of their country, are actually reducing the percentage of GNP spent on servicing sickness. Such a proposition is unthinkable in Britain; many anarchists believe NHS funding should be increased. They are wrong; we should not be buying more mops; we should be turning off the taps that create the flood.

It is paradoxical that the means of creating health are totally compatible with anarchist philosophy and can be part of everyday life, yet it is far removed from the practice of many individuals. While accepting that we are contained within an unsatisfactory cultural structure, there is still much we can do to promote our own good health and in acting in our own best self-interest we would help change the culture. Eating organic food may lack the glamour of the barricades, but it hits the chemical companies who destroy both environment and health with chemcultured food. Pure air and water are rights we should fight for — still supporting BAT with your habit, comrade? And if an old fashioned revolution were to come tomorrow, how many anarchists are fit enough to cope? If you are serious about changing the world you have to be fit, or you just won't last. Culture is that which is repeated: living in ways which are good for you would change the culture. Eventually the 80% of modern disease which is avoidable would be avoided; that is the primary way to deal with illness.

I must admit that when talking about health to anarchists who have high political motivation I experience some despair. Quite often they are slob, typically flabby unfit smokers. I am left with the thought that if they care so little about themselves, how can they seriously care about anything else?

Colin Johnson

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What we have in mind for this section is outlined in our presentation article on page 2, second column, third paragraph.

History Workshop

**History Workshop 23
Salford 3-5 November 1989**

This year's History Workshop is to be held at Salford University. There is once again an anarchism 'strand' — with the following programme:

Sharif Gemie: Charles Fourier and the Politics of Harmony.

René Berthier: Can Anything New be Said About the Bakunin-Marx Opposition? A Methodological Approach.

Colin Ward: Unexpected Relevance of the Anarchists

David Goodway: The Anarchism of Alex Comfort

Tony Powell: Rallying 'Round a Fading Flag: Responses of the British Anarchists to the Spanish Civil War.

Caroline Cahm: Peter Kropotkin: Revolutionary Action Past and Present.

Registration fees: £12 funded individuals, £7 unfunded individuals, £1 unwaged individuals. All registrations to (and further information from): **Helen Bowyer, Working Class Movement Library, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX. Tel: 061 736 3601.**

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MEETINGS

Anarchist Forum

Fridays at 8.00pm at the Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square, London WC1. Forum people usually meet in the ground floor cafe beforehand.

September 29 — Introductory meeting & open discussion.

October 6 — David Dane **The Future of Anarchism**

October 13 — Peter Neville, subject to be announced.

October 20 — open discussion

October 27 — speakers to be arranged

November 3 — open discussion

November 10 — John Griffin **Summerhill and Libertarian Education**

**'Ideas and Action'
Anarchist-Communist Federation
Day School
on Saturday 2nd December
from 10.00am to 6.00pm
at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square
(nearest tube Holborn).**

This is a day school organised by the ACF, open to all those interested in the ideas of anarchist-communism.

Workshops on struggles in the workplace and neighbourhood, against racism and sexism, the poll tax, critique of Marxism, history of anarchist-communism.

Creche provided. Disabled access. Light refreshments. Entry £2.50 waged, £1.50 unwaged. Write for further details or advance tickets to ACF (London), c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

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