

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

Vol. 55 No. 14

9 JULY 1994

FIFTY PENCE

"Thought is anarchic and lawless, indifferent to authority, careless of the well-tryed wisdom of ages"

Bertrand Russell

SHUFFLING THE POLITICAL PACK BUT ... NOT THE POLICIES!

It's not just the Labour lot attempting a spring-clean following the death of the leader. Both Tories and Liberals seem to think that they must meet the Labour 'challenge' by a reshuffle even if it's just switching old tired faces from one ministry - or shadow ministry - to another to create the impression of a new look party. For the Tories, Norman Fowler obliged by stepping down as Party Chairman - last time it was to spend more time with his family, this time to make more money in the business

GOLDEN 'PENNIES FROM HEAVEN'

Since the media are full of smisprints we could not believe our eyes when we learned (from the *Guardian*, 18th June) that the top man in their "top ten corporate earners" was a Peter Wood - just plain Mr - who last year was paid (in our opinion 'earning' is another matter) £18.5 million! We referred to the accompanying article 'Boom Time on the Boards' to check whether the decimal point had gone awry. Not at all!

"Peter Wood, the Royal Bank of Scotland executive who created its successful Direct Line insurance business, remains way out in front with £18.5 million."

Elsewhere we defend the striking signalmen whose basic pay is £146 a week.

(In passing, this OAP writer should mention he and a few other million geriatrics who are expected to 'enjoy' their last years on £58 a week - a 'rise' of £1.50 a week to pay for the fuel tax but not for all the other increases.)

Mr Wood makes in *one week* £356,000 which is what 6,000 geriatrics who stamped their cards or had it deducted in forty years at work are now 'enjoying', and are expected to be grateful to the government and to those in work.

But there is no limit to what the currency speculators can make (or even lose). Wall Street speculator
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world. And for the Liberals their former leader is giving up membership of the Club, and rumours have it that Alan Beith is also going to be moved on. Meanwhile for the Labour lot the three contenders for the leadership are touring the country hawking their policies and personalities.

All good fun in the silly season, and it certainly keeps the media busy (when they are not busy cutting each other's throats in the circulation war). But is the public so gullible and stupid as to believe that it will make a ha'p'orth of difference to the economy, to the health service, to unemployment, to homelessness or to the crumbling infrastructure as to who will lead Her Majesty's Opposition

or who will be the new Minister of this or that Ministry? One would like to say NO. But alas the general public is as brainwashed and dogmatic as the third rate politicians who aspire to direct the affairs of the country and the world.

Major's veto of the proposed commissioner to succeed M Delors has immediately made him into the 'strong man' so far as his tabloid media supporters (or bosses perhaps?) are concerned. But this is all eyewash to distract attention not just from the in-fighting between the Tory Euro-sceptics and those who are pro-Europe but from *the crisis of world capitalism* which can no longer be solved by the normal mechanisms available to the capitalist system.

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MORE THAN EVER - SOLIDARITY FOR THE SIGNALMEN!

According to the *Observer* (26th June) "two jobs are currently being advertised internally at Railtrack" for station cleaners at £154.30 basic a week and signalmen at £146. Far from suggesting that station cleaners should get less than signalmen, we are saying that signalmen are justified in striking for at least parity with station cleaners.

Anarchists are in principle opposed to differentials among workers in any particular enterprise. If they are all contributing to the final product - be it motor car or a public service such as transport - pay differentials inevitably divide the working force to the advantage of the employer. In other words: *divide and rule by the wage packet.*

Obviously in a capitalist society the employer couldn't care less whether his wage slave has family commitments or none at all - after all, he pays him the lowest rate he can get away with for the job. It is therefore not surprising that workers and the unions have over the decades pressed for differentials which entitle the 'skilled' worker higher rates and even

'bonuses' compared to his 'unskilled' mate, and as a result there is antagonism among the workforce which in the end only benefits the boss.

In the past only the former NUR (National Union of Railwaymen) sought to represent all railways workers. The engine drivers and firemen (ASLEF) thought of themselves as the key men of the railways. And the clerical staff would have no truck with the 'unskilled' - who needless to say actually did all the donkey work which made the train network feasible. What would the train drivers do if the plate-layers didn't keep the 20,000 miles of railroad in good condition? And who would pay their wages if the booking clerks didn't issue tickets, and so on. Surely the cleaners who go through the trains at the termini removing all the rubbish left behind by the overpaid commuters deserve more!

The government prefers to finance (with taxpayers money) its privatisation dogma at all costs than to recognise that the whole concept of breaking up the railway network into
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SHUFFLING THE POLITICAL PACK BUT ... NOT THE POLICIES!

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British chancellors point to their 'success' in keeping down the inflation rate. Ask them what have they done to achieve this, apart from holding down wage increases for the millions of workers in the public sector, which includes most of the lowest paid workers, and where they think putting out jobs to private contractors will lower those wages even more they do so.

On the other hand the top people are getting more of the national cake and though in theory the government disapproves, this writer heard Mr Major tell the assembled House that it was not his business to tell the private sector what they should do. Not only did he not think it was his business but he also knew that he could not do anything about it even if he wanted to.

This is basically why anarchists are indifferent as to who occupies the government benches, and consider all the electioneering (now with one man one vote in Labour will cost a million pounds to decide which of the three contenders for the leadership will win) is only good for the politicians' egos but will not change the basic problems of capitalist society today.

Please tell us Tony Benn MP (in *Tribune*, 'Charms and smiles aren't enough') and Jeremy Corbyn MP (in *Red Pepper*,

'Searching for socialism') how the capitalist system can be transformed into socialism via the ballot box. Of Tony Benn's eleven point 'commitments' for the Labour Party only one could be said to be in favour of a redistribution of wealth when he writes "a fair tax system that takes full account of the ability to pay". Jeremy Corbyn's contribution is all rhetoric. If his call for a "minimum wage" can be described as a redistribution of wealth, so be it!

For anarchists the only 'redistribution of wealth' that matters is when the 10% who own 75% of the wealth of this country are dispossessed and it is returned to the people for the benefit of all. It is a far cry, we know, and the problem is not made any easier to solve so long as people like Tony Benn, Alan Skinner, Jeremy Corbyn and others who call themselves socialists are not prepared to denounce the parliamentary racket and declare that the socialist struggle can only take place in the factories and workshops, on the land and in the streets. And to the politicians and multinationals' European Union we should oppose them with not a European union of workers but one that is worldwide and based on mutual aid among today's wage-slaves.

The impossible? Yes, as we write, yes! But to go on hoping that a change of faces among the political mafia worldwide will bring any benefit to those, the majority worldwide, at the bottom of the economic/social ladder, is pure wishful thinking.

For this reason the anarchists are convinced that their propaganda in the wilderness today can only bring positive results. For the world we live in today is rotten to the core. Why try to make it respectable for a privileged minority to go on exploiting the rest of us?

GOLDEN 'PENNIES FROM HEAVEN'

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George Soros, who beat the Bank of England and the British government a few years back, 'earned' say the newspapers £724 million last year. And to give an idea for the benefit of those of us who can't count beyond a hundred, Mr Soros's 'earned' speculations exceed "the gross domestic product of at least 42 countries".

Mr Soros is not the exception to the rule, that the golden pennies don't come to the likes of you and me. Terry Maher, founder of the Dillons/Pentos bookshops who thought that he could drive all the small bookshops out of business with his supermarkets, has at last been chucked onto the labour market - BUT with an encouraging £400,000 handshake! One wonders what the 185 bookshops' staff who got the sack found in their last pay packets? Incidentally the incumbent, one Bill McGrath, received a £250,000 'golden hello' (not our description) welcome.

The Cayzer shipping family, according to the *Independent* (24th May), was:

"poised to treble the value of its 27.3% investment in Exco, the money and securities broker, when the company is floated on the stock market in July with a value of more than £200 million."

That's a good day's business surely? And in the process what have they produced to justify their millions?

The Merchants of Death

Apart from the drug industry (legal and otherwise) the armaments industry is the other one that goes from strength to strength while the politicians never stop talking peace.

It was France's turn to hold their arms fair last month. All the latest weapons of death on display with the salesmen cracking up their killing potential.

Greenpeace upset good business relations by demonstrating against the manufacture of anti-personnel mines which, to quote the *Guardian*, "are supposed to be under a United Nations moratorium". The reaction of Franz Wolfgang of the German explosives manufacturer Dynamit Nobel was "bloody bunch of stupid, irresponsible, left-wing fools. I'm fed up with the questions about anti-personnel mines. We don't make them and we never have." But the *Guardian's* correspondent points out that:

"... there in Nobel's own literature it says: 'An AP-2 (anti-personnel) mine ... has been developed with the principal aim of protecting mine barriers'. 'That's wrong', said Mr Wolfgang and started crossing the offending passage out with a gold company pen in the shape of a rifle cartridge. 'We've stopped production'.

Anti-personnel mines are particularly vicious since they are too small to detect easily and remain active for years or even decades. When touched, they send out hundreds of low-flying metal shards that tend to blow off victims' legs but do not necessarily kill them.

High emotion about tens of thousands of maimed civilians in Cambodia, El Salvador and elsewhere led to the three-year moratorium agreed upon last year. Greenpeace believes many companies still make them but call them something else."

According to an *Independent* feature, up to three hundred people step on mines each month in Cambodia - so much so that, with Angola, Cambodia has the greatest proportion of amputees of any country, "about one in

every 250 people". The same paper points out that the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) is "spearheading a campaign to have the international export of land mines stopped". Apparently Germany is in favour but:

"John Major has argued against a ban. British defence industries are important mine manufacturers."

Perhaps Mr Major will next suggest building an export industry for artificial limbs.

Israel's paymaster, the United States, will be supplying that country with "25 of the most sophisticated fighter bombers in the world" which have a range of 3,600 miles and which, according to the *Independent*:

"... would enable the Israelis to carry out strikes deep into Iraq and Iran without refuelling."

Apparently Israel will fund this \$2.4 billion enterprise out of the US's \$2,000 million annual military aid. However, according to Arthur Atkins of the Arms Control Association in Washington, the financial side of the deal sounds pretty fishy:

"Basically we are giving Israel the planes and, through the gear that goes with it and the offset deals, a lot of advanced military know-how and research and development opportunity. We are really bending the rules."

Critics of the deal say it signals a decisive enhancement of Israel's military capabilities, thus giving it "the power to strike at potentially dangerous nations far beyond its borders: Iran, Iraq, Algeria and Libya for example".

So much for the great peace initiative in the Middle East. Is it surprising that the Arab nations look upon Israel as America's Fifth Column in their midst?

MORE THAN EVER - SOLIDARITY FOR THE SIGNALMEN!

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franchises is doomed to failure. They are even proposing to privatise the infrastructure (which became Railtrack on April Fool's Day) in the hope of getting a few billion pounds from developers (more interested in the adjacent land than in the rail network) which would then allow them to cut some taxes just before the next parliamentary elections. In capitalist terminology this is called good business, we call it corruption pure and simple!

We write on the very day of the third one-day stoppage by signalmen. Obviously the government defending its dogma has no hesitation in squandering more taxpayers money to win. The signalmen are talking of increasing the stoppages to two days a week. The public should realise that to allow the

government to defeat this courageous action by most of the signalmen will lead to more repressive measures not only affecting useful jobs but living standards of the lower paid.

One other thought for those of us with well-paid jobs, holidays and all the perks, official and unofficial: how can one criticise the signalmen using their only weapons - their skill and their willingness to sacrifice money and perhaps jobs, yes perhaps for more money but surely not just for money.

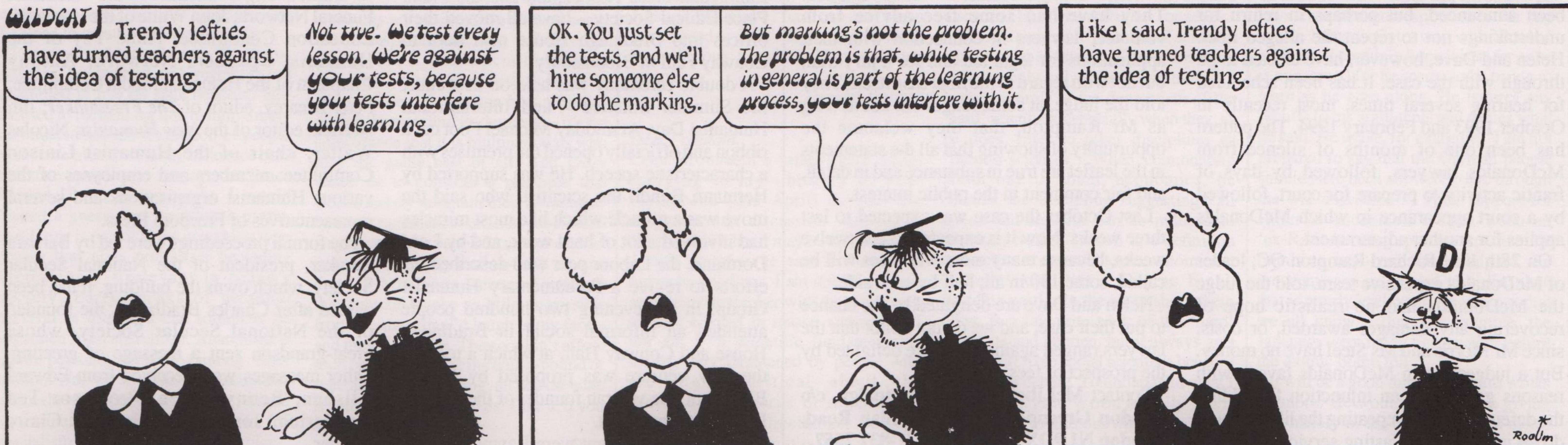
The travelling public who may be the 'victims' of the strikes should be the most active defenders of the strikers. After all, most of us are wage slaves (whether we are paid daily, weekly or monthly, by cash or by cheque) and the sooner this is realised the sooner shall we be able to produce a world for all to enjoy.

And news from 'liberated' South Africa. With the lifting of the United Nations arms embargo against Pretoria, Armscor, the state owned weapons firm, now has plans to double its exports within a year. The *Guardian's* correspondent writes that "Nelson Mandela has given the scheme his blessing" even though:

"After years of denouncing Armscor as modern day merchants of death, the ANC might have moved to shut down South Africa's weapons industry. Instead, President Mandela bowed to the economic potential of the arms trade, already one of South Africa's largest manufactured exports. In doing so he offers an argument favoured by his predecessors.

'I don't think it would be fair to say that a particular country should not engage in trade in arms. Arms are for defending the sovereignty and integrity of a country. From that angle, there is nothing wrong with having trade in arms', he said just before the embargo was lifted.

After all business is business in South Africa too, even with Mandela in command!



The gremlins which infect my video recorder have shown interesting signs of moral evolution. They are making choices which favour the better, if not the good. An interesting start. My superior gremlins chose to ignore my desire for Bob Monkhouse; instead they recorded an informative programme about John Patten. Our alleged Minister for Education was caught revealing his attitudes to sex education. The effects generated by this great leap forward for gremlinkind are spreading; first to me, and now to you, and then who knows ...

Apparently John Patten is "incensed, incensed to think that very young children could themselves be exposed through role play and through teaching to things that at a particular age they shouldn't even be beginning to think of understanding" (sic).

One is not surprised at the lack of clarity in this statement from a person in Patten's position. What I think he is saying is that he is incensed by the things young people think and may wish to understand at a particular (unspecified) age. He is incensed because 'the things' concern sex.

What Nothing-Explicit-John means is that he wishes to stop people thinking. In this case about things which he cannot cope with, but also in ways of which he disapproves. His view of education is clearly a perversion of the meaning usually attached to the word.

Patten's policy on sex education can be summed up thus: 'Don't do it, at least not until you are sixteen, but preferably not until you are married'.

What nasty piece of work is this man? He presumes to order peoples' thoughts in the most personal area of their lives; he assumes rights over their bodies. Unfortunately, he has the power to inflict his peculiarly narrow

Patten's fatal perversion

views of morality and behaviour upon young people. His rationale (if I do not flatter him with the ability) is that he must protect their innocence. Ignorance and prohibition are the means he has chosen. Remember he withdrew Health Education Authority sex education leaflets because "they were too explicit". Oh dear.

As his views conflict with declared government aims of reducing the number of teenage pregnancies and abortions, perhaps he should explain how promoting ignorance and innocence will help. And when he says that sex education is the primary responsibility of parents, a sentiment with which I agree, perhaps he would explain how parents themselves, educated to be ignorant and innocent, will be able to cope?

In opting for innocence, Patten fails, not unwillingly one suspects, into nature's trap. That 'innocence' of youth, when the brewing hormone cocktail makes everything so bright, vivid and desperate, is nature's way of ensuring that the gene pool gets an irregular and unpredictable shake up. In a state of innocence young boys and girls are intended to fuck irresponsibly and produce unintended babies. It is behaviour typical of healthy young animals, and no amount of prohibition, legislation or mythological moral prescription will stop it.

A major part of Patten's perversion is his expectation that young persons will ignore the thing which interests them most and devote their attention to subjects they find boring and pointless. Of course, when Patten was at that stage of his life the odd (very odd by today's

standards) flogging helped to focus his attention. His education was obviously achieved at a heavy cost to his intellect.

Patten's present predicament is symptomatic of a wider two-part dilemma. The historical part tends to merge into the sociological. Historically, the British ruling classes have always been against educating the lower orders, and they are still against it. They see education as a means of maintaining elite exclusivity, the very substance of British society.

The Tories in particular, but not exceptionally, have never resolved the problems presented by technology. In the past the question was: what do you do with the serfs when you no longer need them to till the land you have stolen from them? The answer was the colonies. Today the question is: what do we do with superfluous urban masses, now industry no longer needs class-structured manpower? Unfortunately there is no easy answer.

Patten's instinct, misled by his ignorance of nature, is to stop them breeding. He could achieve that by information and reason (you know, John, education - remember?) but keeping people ignorant prevents reason prevailing. In the passing gap between serfdom and industrial labour, where more egalitarian nations introduced education to cope with technology, the chance was lost. Lost because Britain focuses on past privilege rather than future opportunity. The elite fear the effects of an educated population on the privileges of the useless classes.

The effects of this fear are evident. 'Training' is offered instead of education, as if people were akin to dogs or to be treated as re-programmable robots. It is a politically safe ploy in the face of meek calls for action. Similar is the move to make higher education career oriented. They don't want you thinking, but will accept your functioning inside some safe institution. As for sex, authorities in church and government have long known that if you can control peoples' sexuality, that paradoxically strongest and yet most vulnerable part of our make-up, you are well on the way to controlling everything else. As long as we are afraid or ashamed, they are secure.

So what are the roots of Patten's perversion? His education, undoubtedly based on a moralistic blend of Plato and Christianity, probably carried him as far as the Middle Ages. That time was itself haunted by the ghost of the Roman Empire, with its message of vast successes in the imposition of order upon others. From the eighteenth century he,

along with all rulers, has caught the virus of competition - at least for others. At the time of Locke and Darwin, when the competitive ethic was held to be the natural route to social harmony, it was understood that unsuccessful competitors died. Thus, by the beautiful provisions of harmonious nature, the surplus population ceased to be a problem.

This illuminates present attitudes to health, welfare provisions and education quite nicely. It also reveals why victims should be blamed for their misfortune. The success of the competitive ethic was also understood to require strife. If this occasionally spilled into war, so what? From the General's point of view the imbecilic attrition of the First World War can claim a dim measure of sense at least as valid as Patten's strategy for sex education.

The sociological dilemma also has roots in contaminated soil. The government claims to support family values, but can anyone be sure what this means? A familial context of love and continuing care, to each according to emotional needs and from each according to ability, is undeniably a desirable nurturing life-context. But if you bring up people to love, accept and care for each other, is this not in direct contradiction to the requirements of the state? I may be wrong in my belief that a large part of non-officer service personnel come from imperfect domestic situations, but it is a fact that more than one recent Eastern dictator chose his personal guards from the orphanages.

The sensible young people in the television programme were very relaxed about cuddling each other. They were also clear and articulate about their needs from sex education, far more explicit than Patten in fact. They wanted details of what they called 'heavy petting' - masturbation and oral sex. They also wanted all the other information relevant to their bodies and their selves. 'It's my body, my life' and 'If you want it, you go for it!' were their attitudes on the law and their sexuality. Quite right.

Of course, government policy was backed up by an institutional clone. A Dr Margaret White, who relies on the law to encapsulate social and biological wisdom, claims that sex is harmful to girls under sixteen. No proof was called for, nor was the matter of harm to boys mentioned. But apparently the second they are sixteen and, of course, preferably married, the ability to be harmed miraculously disappears!

Sanity was available from Doortje Braeken of the Dutch Family Planning Association. She pointed out that despite explicit prime time television sex education and an age of consent of twelve, Dutch young people get into sex later than the Brits. Does Patten know that our under-sixteen abortion rate is eleven times theirs? Min Vrouw Braeken expressed

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McLibel case reaches court

The libel case brought by the McDonalds fast food chain against our comrades Dave Morris and Helen Steel has begun at last. It opened at the High Court in London on Tuesday 28th June. As we go to press on 2nd July no evidence has been called, but both sides have made opening statements to Mr Justice Bell who is trying the case alone.

Most libel cases are heard by a jury, but in this case McDonalds have successfully argued, at the High Court and then at the House of Lords, that the scientific evidence will be too specialised for a jury to follow.

For those new to the story, the case concerns a leaflet attacking McDonalds, issued by the anarchist group London Greenpeace in 1985. Most of the allegations are against the meat trade, and might be said of any butcher by any vegetarian, but the leaflet proved very popular and affected McDonalds sales. London Greenpeace could not be sued because it is not a legal entity, so private detectives went to London Greenpeace meetings to find out who was who, and in 1990 McDonalds issued writs for libel against individual members of the group.

The cases against most of these individuals were later dropped, for reasons which have not been announced, but perhaps in return for undertakings not to repeat the alleged libel. Helen and Dave, however, have elected to go through with the case. It has been scheduled for hearing several times, most recently in October 1993 and February 1994. The pattern has been one of months of silence from McDonalds lawyers, followed by days of frantic activity to prepare for court, followed by a court appearance in which McDonalds applies for another adjournment.

On 28th June Richard Rampton QC, leader of McDonalds expensive team, told the judge the McDonalds had no realistic hope of recovering any damages awarded, or costs, since Mr Morris and Ms Steel have no money. But a judgement in McDonalds favour with reasons given, and an injunction forbidding the defendants from repeating the libel "would do an immense and lasting service no matter

how much money it will take to achieve".

Regardless of other expenses, the trial alone will cost McDonalds more than a million pounds. The effect of the hoped-for injunction will be that if Helen and Dave repeat the allegations, McDonalds may apply to have them sent to prison for contempt of court. Many who know them doubt whether this will shut them up. McDonalds will probably win, but the case will do even more damage than the leaflet to their reputation.

Mr Rampton said that if people said they did not like McDonalds products because they contained meat, or they did not like the taste, McDonalds might not like it but it would not be libel. But in this case there is the false allegation that a McDonalds-style diet was linked to cancer; if people came to believe that then McDonalds would rapidly go out of business. Other objectionable allegations are that McDonalds are or have been responsible for cutting down rainforests to make cattle ranches, that they are against trade unions, and that they aim most of their advertising at children (only 25% is aimed at children, Mr Rampton said).

Helen and Dave are conducting their own defence as they have been refused legal aid. They have had some free advice from volunteer lawyers in connection with their applications for legal aid and for a jury trial, but not with regard to the libel case itself. They told the judge, at some length but not as long as Mr Rampton, that they welcome the opportunity of showing that all the statements in the leaflet are true in substance and in detail, and fair comment in the public interest.

Last October the case was expected to last three weeks. Now it is expected to last twelve weeks, because many more witnesses will be called, some 150 in all, half by each side.

Helen and Dave are delighted by the chance to put their case, and we do not doubt that the lawyers ranged against them are delighted by the prospect of fees.

Contact **McLibel Support Campaign, c/o London Greenpeace, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, telephone 071-837 7557.**

Humanist Centre opened

A new Humanist Centre has been opened in London. The four national Humanist organisations - the British Humanist Association, the National Secular Society, the Rationalist Press Association and the South Place Ethical Society - have all moved their offices into Bradlaugh House next door to Conway Hall in Bloomsbury.

A double ceremony was held on 21st June, the Summer Solstice - and International Humanist Day. At midday Michael Foot cut a ribbon and officially opened the premises with a characteristic speech. He was supported by Hermann Bondi, the scientist, who said the move was a miracle which like most miracles had involved a lot of hard work, and by Lord Dormand, the Labour peer who described his efforts to revive a Parliamentary Humanist Group. In the evening two hundred people attended an informal social in Bradlaugh House and Conway Hall, at which a toast to the new venture was proposed by Harold Blackham, the veteran founder of the modern Humanist movement.

Among those present were Raymond Firth,

the anthropologist; Antony Flew, the philosopher; Alan Brownjohn, the poet; Naomi Lewis, the critic; Lord McIntosh; Lord Raglan; Ellis Hillman, the new Labour mayor of Barnet; Nigel Collins of the Humanist Funeral Network; John White of the Humanist Education Committee; Anne Toy of the Humanist Speakers Network; Antony Chapman of the Humanist Media Committee; Peter Brearey, editor of *The Freethinker*; Jim Herrick, editor of the *New Humanist*; Nicolas Walter, chair of the Humanist Liaison Committee; members and employees of the various Humanist organisations and several representatives of Freedom Press.

The formal proceedings were led by Barbara Smoker, president of the National Secular Society, which owns the building. It has been named after Charles Bradlaugh, the founder of the National Secular Society, whose great-grandson sent a message of greeting. Other messages were received from Edward Blishen, Benny Green, Professor Ted Honderich, Jonathan Miller and Claire Rayner.

Chomsky on Asia

As part of the current focuses on different countries in Asia we asked Noam Chomsky to comment on some of the issues we are raising. Below we publish his replies to some questions we posed ...

Warren Christopher recently on a visit to China raised the human rights issue with the Chinese government. How has corporate interest reacted to his 'muddying the waters'? That Christopher raised the human rights issue in China is widely believed (less in the US than outside it), but it is true only in the narrowest sense. He added to the pleas from the Clinton administration that China make some kind of meaningless gesture so that the Clintonites could pretend not to be backtracking on another campaign promise. There was never the slightest chance that they would interfere with profits by bringing up human rights.

In general terms how do you see China fitting into the 'New World Order'?

As for China and the 'New World Order', the country seems to be splitting into a sector that is part of the Japan-based overseas Chinese investment network, linked to US multinationals and export-import as well, with the usual third world amenities: super-cheap labour, women burned to death locked into toy factories, fifteen thousand deaths from industrial accidents last year, and all sorts of other wondrous things that never come up in human rights discussions, because profits are involved. About three-quarters of the country seems to be either out of it, or perhaps even declining. Could be an explosion, I think.

The US has also lifted the embargo against Vietnam recently. A change of heart? And now that Coca Cola seems to have replaced the napalm, who did win the Vietnam war?

Lifting the embargo has a very simple explanation. Torturing people is fun, but making money is more important. US business was becoming concerned that it was being cut out of a promising source of cheap labour, markets, resources, so the government 'discovered' that Vietnam has been more forthcoming about POWs (the only moral issue left after aggression that killed millions of people and destroyed three countries - I doubt that Stalinist Russia could have gotten away with what Western commissars have achieved on this one).

Who won the Vietnam war? Over twenty years ago I pointed out that the US had already won - as, incidentally, was pretty well understood in the business world. It hadn't yet achieved maximal objectives, but had satisfied its major war aims, to ensure that there would be no demonstrable effect of successful development along independent state-directed lines in Indochina. The documentation on this is very clear, but unacceptable in the commissar culture, which insists on total victory in line with its general totalitarian thrust.

Perotti

John Perotti, the America lifer who has found his *métier* in prison as a jailhouse lawyer and campaigner for prison reform, was sentenced to thirty days Administrative Control Isolation (i.e. solitary confinement) some eight months ago, and is still inside. He is appealing for letters to be written to a judge, asking for a Temporary Restraining Order requiring the authorities to release him from isolation pending an enquiry.

Letters should be addressed to: **The Honourable S. Arthur Spiegel, Judges' Chambers, US District Court, 838 POost Office Building, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202, USA.**

Perotti's own address is John W. Perotti, SOCF 167712, POB 45699, Lucasville, Ohio 4569-0001, USA.

Focus on ... South East Asia

With this issue we continue to look at various countries in Asia.

Vietnam

Why did the US lift its embargo on Vietnam in February? Was it because:

- Bill Clinton's a real nice chap committed to the laudable idea of 'free trade'?
- The régime in Vietnam has had a change of heart and now encourages free and open political activity?
- There are about half a billion barrels of oil waiting to be mined along Vietnam's 3,000 mile coastline?

Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola waited a polite couple of hours before opening up in Vietnam after Bill Clinton lifted the embargo on 3rd February this year. Unfortunately for US corporate interest the other bees have been buzzing around this honey pot of cheap labour since the Communist Party happily set out along the capitalist road of reform in 1986.

Political reform? No. The Vietnamese state no longer seeks to justify itself with reference to Marx (not many do these days, indeed there's only five left including Vietnam and the other four are equally committed ideologically) but we wouldn't be alone in failing to identify this as a change of heart given the Vietnamese state's preference for the examples of the 'strong states' of the area such as Taiwan or Singapore, whose Prime Minister Mr Goh Chok Tong in an interview in the *Financial Times*¹ recently when asked if he expected to see opposition forces in

1. *Financial Times*, 21st April 1994.

There are rumblings throughout the region of discontent with GATT. What potential do the people have of winning such struggles in Asia or elsewhere?

In Asia there's plenty of discontent with GATT. In India they'll probably have to ratify it at gunpoint. No alternative, though. Power has shifted remarkably to absolutist, unaccountable institutions of a scale that would have made any classical liberal shrink in horror. National states are generally overwhelmed, and even rich and powerful ones like the US are fairly restricted in policy planning. A long story.

News from Chile

Further news comes to us from Chile this month from the KAS group in Santiago

The KAS group has recently launched a new anarchist monthly, *El Acrata*, which carries news of events in Chile and discussion articles of a more theoretical nature. The first edition carries an editorial on organisation arguing its case from a clearly syndicalist viewpoint. There is also an article on the Mapuche Indians, mainly historical in content, and information on anti-fascist activity in Mexico.

The group also informs us that they have been working with other groups in a campaign against conditions in a maximum security prison in Chile which has some fifty prisoners being held in unsanitary conditions. Seven anarchists organised a hunger strike and an occupation of the local branch of the Partido Por la Democracia (PPD) which was ended by police intervention.

The group would like to receive information about activity in the UK and are particularly interested in the possibility of receiving VHS video material of social struggle, etc. Any reader who may be interested in pursuing this contact should get in touch with *Freedom's* International Section.

Singapore replied "Not in my political lifetime". This would seemingly reflect the aspirations of the Vietnamese state. There will be no political reform here if the Vietnamese Communist Party has its way. Instead we are talking about the usual kind of reform: trade liberalisation, financial reform and price de-control. Indeed the latter had the predictable consequence of ushering in periods of 300% inflation in the 1980s which we are now told is under control though it's still running at 30% - high in regional terms - and will hardly be welcomed by a working population which comes cheaper than Canton - oh yes, in this crazy world it is possible.

"... I guess we will have our revenge. We will rewrite the war, we will win it, and we will make sure they starve."

So at least they're all positively employed in providing for an ever-increasing standard of living for the domestic population? Well, no not quite. Production is now nicely gearing itself up to the new sacred cow: international trade. Vietnam is now the world's third biggest rice exporter whilst many at home still go hungry. And oil. Did we mention oil? Just the mere sniff of it is of course enough and in Vietnam 1992 saw the production of 100,000 barrels per day, almost all of it going abroad to grease the global economy whilst adding to the drain of wealth this country so vitally needs to build up a viable economy. So there's money to be made and the world economy is coming back to the country it devastated some 25 years ago. Not everyone in the US is happy though. One Gloria Emerson (who must be important because she's quoted in the *Guardian*) expressing her regret says "... I guess we will have our revenge. We will rewrite the war, we will win it, and we will make sure they starve".² We are sure her views find an echo in various quarters of the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill.

But others are ahead in the race. Capital is moving swiftly to an economy where labour, as we say, is cheap with labour-intensive production - highly flexible and able to switch location quickly from one country to another when the labour force proves 'undisciplined' or insufficiently 'motivated'. Thus Japan, who, as Chomsky has said, are admissible to the charade as 'honorary whites' and other NICs have led the stampede with the US and EU now coming up fast from behind to use Vietnam as a production base. Equity capital

2. *Guardian*, 5th February 1994.

In the future 'Focus on ...' will continue to look at this area (South Korea will be next) as well as carrying out our plan to look at militarism and to re-focus on some areas previously covered. The first of these will probably be the former Soviet Union. We have other plans but are open to suggestions and contributions from readers.

DEEP ECOLOGY & ANARCHISM

A POLEMIC:

Murray Bookchin,
Graham Purchase, Brian Morris,
Rodney Aitchey
— with —
CAN LIFE SURVIVE? by Robert Hart
— and —
THE APPLE FALLS FROM GRACE
by Chris Wilbert

£2.50 (post-free inland)

is flooding in bringing Vietnam steadily into the growing international division of labour.

Investors can get a full 100% stake in some areas of the economy and transfer profits in full - Vietnam reaps no benefit.

Thus 1992 saw the first recorded trade surplus. Firth the country is bled for its raw materials accounting for some 70% of the overall total - cheap in the global scale of value - of the remaining 30% about 70% is with countries like Japan, Singapore, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Such investors can get a full 100% stake in some areas of the economy and transfer profits in full - Vietnam reaps no benefit. So appealing is all this that the last six years have seen more than 500 projects (\$4.6 billion) approved - some 20% of which are fully owned by foreign companies. Not surprising that an internal document for one major bank in this country says, in advice to its investors, that "direct investment is expected to continue expanding buoyantly in coming years".

For Vietnam the sums don't add up so favourably. As in China, rising unemployment and a social imbalance between urban and rural areas is threatening the state with the same unrest that China has seen. And of course there's the old story of foreign debt which, standing at around 150% of annual export earnings with payment arrears of about \$140 million due to the IMF, puts the trade aspect in a more realistic perspective. And the good news? With the lifting of the embargo ... this clears the way for the debt to be paid off ... Well, that is a relief.

News from the International Section

The International Section is the rather pompous title which describes a small but growing number of *Freedom* readers who are involved in the international side of *Freedom's* activities. Currently about a dozen people are more or less actively involved. They are either simply interested in international issues or have skills which help in this field - primarily, but not exclusively, linguistic.

The idea now dates back nearly two years and actually, just, predates the readership survey which showed that readers felt this to be an area which needed more attention. We feel we can be pleased with the progress we have made since then. We have published about sixty articles about the anarchist movement or issues of interest to anarchists in over forty countries in all the continents of the world. We have covered syndicalist, feminist, ecological issues, as well as, to date, half a dozen focuses which have covered more general political and economic issues. We have produced interviews, communiqués, reviews and articles of a more general style. We have also provided readers with contact addresses and information of events as and when we hear of them.

This you will have seen. But we are also actively sending out information to groups and individuals around the world. Currently, once a quarter, we send out a resumé of what is happening in this country to a large number of people around the world in a minimum of three languages (the last one which went out a few weeks ago was in English, French, Japanese and Swedish, the next one will probably be in English, French, Spanish and Italian).

We are not complacent and have further, we feel, exciting plans for the future. We will keep you informed from now on about what is going on in the International Section in this column. But don't feel it has to be a one-way process. You can contact us here at Angel Alley if only to comment on what you think of it so far.

**Pit Sense versus the State: a history of militant miners in the Doncaster area**by David John Douglass
Phoenix Press, £4.50

After the 1984-85 miners' strike, can I still bring myself to believe that history is proceeding in a clash of classes like some sociological struggle comparable to Darwin's survival of the fittest? Moreover, is it still possible to agree with Étienne Lantier in Zola's novel *Germinal*, or Dave Douglass, that ultimately working people will triumph?

Zola wrote his novel towards the end of the nineteenth century and a French film of the book about the struggles of the miners of the north of France has recently been released in this country. Arthur Scargill was impressed by this French adaptation of the novel, and even claimed he identified with Maheu, the typical miner, played by Gerard Depardieu.

Mr Douglass's book is also about militant working class activity, but focusing mainly on the British miners' strike of 1984-85. I approached it in a hostile frame of mind expecting it to be an uncritical account. Dave Douglass, after all, was a NUM branch delegate at Hatfield Main Colliery. Miners' leaders like Scargill have habitually denied the obvious, often claiming victory while standing amid the ruins of defeat.

It was refreshing then to read a straightforward description which admits to faults, while attacking the political 'clever-dicks' and know-it-alls who are forever telling workers what to do. Mr Douglass makes no bones about it: "The decimation, now relentless, is laying waste whole mining areas, and our industry and union, once so massive and imposing, lie in ruins, victims of the class war."

At the end of *Germinal*, after the defeat of the French miners' strike, Étienne asks himself: "Was Darwin right, then, was this world nothing but a struggle in which the strong devoured the weak so that the species might advance in strength and beauty?" But, he reassured himself thinking: "If one class had to be devoured, surely the people, vigorous and young, must devour the effete and luxury-loving bourgeoisie?"

At this moment it is harder to hold onto that view. As Mr Douglass says: "Exhausted and demoralised, the present has been taken from us ..." Perhaps today's big headed managers and the new boss class are made of sterner stuff than the bourgeois when Zola was a lad.

How they broke the miners

This makes depressing reading, and some will find it too tedious to contemplate. But to ignore the problems and pretend the situation is better than it actually is would be foolish. Failure to face the facts after the 1984-85 strike left the miners feeling muscle-bound. No attempt was made to look at further action and work out what went wrong in the strike by the NUM executive, and "... all areas and regions were thrown into their own backyards".

Mr Douglass makes the position clear: "Many perceived a paralysis in the National

British Miners' Obituary?

Executive Committee, there was no direction; we waited for a special conference to review the failure of the strike, take stock of what we had left, what ground could be held, what conceded - it never came". Meanwhile, he says: "the National officials continued to make speeches as if the strike was still on and our army was still in the field".

Nowhere was there an overall strategy after the strike!

But though Dave Douglass reminds us that the slogan 'Mines for the Miners' had been around for a long time, the NUM had no real strategy either to take over the pits or do anything else, either before or during the strike. Surely it was doing what most, if not all, British trade unions do: merely reacting to events? In this sense the miners, deeply conservative, ended up trying to uphold the status quo, save jobs, protect their communities and generally to preserve the customs and practices built up over generations.

This is important, because they were all things worth fighting for and saving and because the miner still exercised a large degree of control over his job and working day. Other workers, like me, can't help looking up to the miners, and even English novelists like Orwell and George Eliot have to express awe: "Here were powerful men walking queerly with knees bent outward from squatting in the mine ..."

But radical Tories like Thatcher, with her Ridley plan, had to build up coal stocks and ensure the movement of coal to the power stations, had a strategy and a plan to deal with a miners' strike. She wanted to set the agenda for the control of labour and the trade unions as part of her economic strategy. In *Germinal* it is Souvarine, the anarchist, who seeing the mining company had been hit by a crisis and needed to cut expenses declared it would require to reduce wages and that a pretext was what was wanted: "a strike, perhaps, from which its miners would emerge beaten and lower paid".

The British miners came out of the 1984-85 strike, as Mr Douglass says, "exhausted and demoralised" and as the years pass we watch the redundancies pile up and a once mighty movement dispersed and broken.

Lofty leaders with tunnel vision

Perhaps because he vaguely foresaw this outcome, Arthur Scargill at first opposed the strike. But though he represented himself and the miners well in interviews and was a brilliant tactician, he lacks a breadth of vision. He comes over as being single-minded, blinkered, with a pig-headed way of denying the obvious. To his credit he led the strike from the front, a characteristic not common among British trade union bosses.

And yet this desire to throw himself to the fore may have proved a fatal flaw! Dave Douglass outlines the dilemma:

"Arthur saw Orgreave as a Saltley Gate, a rally point for the whole trade union movement and the left; mass enough of our class together and we

could swamp them. This strategy was fatally flawed, not least because we'd tried it at Grunwick and ... lost, we'd tried it as Warrington and got battered to hell. For things had changed since Saltley, not simply the responses or lack of them from union bureaucracies and often from union members but also the degree to which the police had been given their head and told not to back off ... we would always ultimately lose that kind of head to head battle ..."

If Dave is critical of Arthur Scargill's one-track mind and obsession for self-promotion, he is equally dismissive of the left's armchair revolutionaries and other political pundits. 'WORKERS' POWER! WORKERS' POWER!' cried one salesman of a political sheet, while pickets and police gallivanted all round him at Orgreave. Some, like the Socialist Workers' Party, saw themselves at the head of a class army against the class enemy. Others urged the sending of formal resolutions to the trade union establishment. One youth from the Workers' Revolutionary Party proclaimed: "Now here's why you lost the 1926 strike ..."

Meanwhile, the activists got on with the job

using guerrilla tactics: blocking the Humber Bridge, blocking the M1, raiding scab pits or police bases, using ruse tactics to draw the mass of police off on some wild goose chase while the picket's main force hit some least-expected power station, wharf or scab pit.

Dave Douglass was in the midst of the picketing and the action throughout the miners' campaigns. He has a long history of militancy since the 1960s when he was a member of the Syndicalist Workers' Federation and has close relations with syndicalists and anarchists. His booklet is not the last word on the Doncaster miners or the 1984-85 strike, but it is an insightful document written up by an insider.

It will please the syndicalists around the Direct Action Movement / Solidarity Network, and the *Syndicalist Bulletin* crowd. *Pit Sense* is a condemnation of bossism and what Mr Douglass calls 'vanguardism', a repudiation of the state, the Coal Board, the union bureaucracy and all the snotty-nosed little sects like the Socialist Workers' Party and the Workers' Revolutionary Party who try to tell the workers what to do.

Brian Bamford

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —**Read, the crafts and apprenticeship**

In one of the Freedom Press publications reprinted in David Goodway's collection of Herbert Read's anarchist writings, Read speculates about the approaches to education we might have had. One of the possibilities was that "Instead of entrusting the education of children to bureaucratic organisations divorced from the main business of life, we might have developed the apprenticeship system and made education a preparation for vocation".

Here, once again, we find Read picking up the threads of the arts and crafts revival of a century ago, which when Read began his career as a critic had become the object of superior ridicule.

For one of the persistent preoccupations of the arts and crafts movement was that of re-forging the links in a lost chain, gathering from surviving craftsmen the tricks of the trade in a broken tradition, and at the same time taking a few local boys, and more rarely girls, to carry on the craft. There must have been many misconceptions and misunderstandings as these 'proper educated gentlemen' humbly sought the old men's collaboration. But it worked, and new craft dynasties resulted. Thus it was that Ernest Gimson sought out the old Bosbury chair bodger Philip Clissett to teach him the trade, which he passed on to Edward Gardiner who in turn passed it on to Neville Neal, who to this day makes the 'Clissett' and the 'Gimson' rush-seated chairs.

Much earlier, in the days of the Morris firm, as E.P. Thompson relates, "experienced craftsmen were engaged from the beginning, who taught Morris their business, and worked side by side with him in all experiments. When apprentices were taken on, a point was made of not seeking out the exceptionally gifted and outstanding lad; it was taken for granted that any intelligent lad had the makings of an artist and craftsman in him." Morris proudly said of an item he exhibited at the 1893 Arts and Crafts Exhibition: "The people who made it - and this is by far the most interesting thing about it - are boys, at least they are grown up by this time - entirely trained in our own shop. It is really free-hand work, remember, not slavishly copying a pattern ... and they came to us with no knowledge of drawing whatever, and have learnt every single thing under our

training. And most beautifully they have done it!"

It was the same story in the mid '20s when Michael Cardew rented the abandoned Winchcombe pottery and lured back Elijah Comfort, the former chief thrower, and took on the first of the Tustin brothers as a boy apprentice. By this time the network of poor but busy rural craft arcadias was varied enough to provide a round of formal and informal apprenticeships.

Readers who attend the meetings of the London Anarchist Forum will have met the veteran craftsman Michael Murray, who kindly gave me his youthful recollections. His father had a smallholding at Whiteway, near Stroud, "which had been acquired in 1901 by a group of disciples of Kropotkin and Tolstoy, to be run as a self-sufficient anarchist commune". He left school in the '30s: "... to be apprenticed to Eddie Nuttgens who made stained glass windows. I was lucky to start work when I did because I arrived just as the new studio was being built on the top of the hill. My first job was to make all the windows for this studio, and then the windows for the house next door. I remember having to choose how I made these, making each pane slightly different according to where they were placed. The patterns were regular, like stave lines in music, but I could choose where the bar lines should go ... Having glazed the studio and house windows, built the working benches, planted the apple trees, concreted the dew-pond and trimmed the hedgerow trees to allow the free access of northern light into 'our' easel window, I was able to start cutting glass for the east window in Queen's College, Belfast ... Fifteen months of such experience in cutting, mounting, glazing and final filling-in of the window was a real experience of colour selection, control and management learned unconsciously through the discipline of making. Working thus in a family studio I shared with a natural responsibility the ups and downs of personal frustrations and exuberance, excitement and fatigue in getting the work out in time."

Michael Murray, however, at an age when today's young people are trapped in the GCSE treadmill, decided to seek "a less extravagant skill which I hoped to be able to pursue in a more simple home workshop wherever I

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**Health Service Wildcat**

by Donald Room with Victoria N. Furmurry
Freedom Press, 48 pages, £1.95

Hospital league tables, ward closures, performance-related pay, 40% drop in nursing staff in the South East, patient left on trolley for 20 hours, mentally ill discharged to the streets – barely a day passes without such incidents making headline news and taking an electric hold on a British public fearful of losing its National Health Service, once the envy of the world.

But don't despair for *Health Service Wildcat* has spring in the nick of time to cheer the demoralised with a hilarious blend of pertinent impertinence.

It is a ruthless exposé of all that is suspect or downright silly in the government's restructuring of the NHS.

Admirers of Donald Room's 'Wildcat' cartoons will be delighted with this new collection (there are three other volumes) in which he teams up with Victoria N. Furmurry (a pseudonym – a relative of the famous St James N. Furmurry perhaps!). Victoria works in the health service and conveys that incongruous mix of sadness, anger and

Five Star Wildcat

Before Market Forces were introduced, we did not know where all the money went. Now, we can account for every penny.

Yeah!! At a cost of over thirty times the amount previously unaccounted for.

You're in a swamp of bureaucracy.



bewilderment so common among health service personnel in recent months. 'Wildcat' takes on the roles of both nurses and patient in her journey of discovery through the NHS and its ever-expanding bureaucracy. Her emotions range from gentle irony to blind fury as she confronts the ridiculousness of short-sighted

policies being introduced almost daily. 'Wildcat' takes on narrow-minded and bodied managers with pinnocchio noses, and then we meet Virginia Bottomley herself with that irritating veneer of reasonableness. "Before market forces were introduced," she reasons, "we did not account for every penny". To which 'Wildcat' retorts "You're in a swamp of bureaucracy" and with that Victoria sinks into the mire of her own making. If only! At times it seems inappropriate to be laughing in the face of certain death, but laugh we do, especially at the idea that a care service can be so stringently costed, itemised and analysed without losing the all-important and unquantifiable caring element!

Most readers of *Freedom*, and many other besides, are familiar with Donald's cartoons – there's one in this issue – and because this review is not illustrated it is difficult to convey the essence of the excellent drawing in words. In this collection he achieves his usual economy of line and cleverly keeps the action moving frame by frame. He achieves striking

visual effects by making the images spill out from the frame. At some points he extends this idea so that the central figure 'Wildcat' almost springs explosively back in the sequence to confront her enemies – sometimes he dispenses with the frame altogether – Donald Room's skilful draughtsmanship is well displayed in the actual printing of the captions where the typeface changes according to the mood of the speaker.

When *Guardian* cartoonist Steve Bell was asked recently whether he thought his own brand of political satire helped to change anything he modestly replied that he saw his role rather more as a recorder of government folly, rather like a radical town crier who exposes underhandedness and stupidity with cries of 'We know what you're doing'.

The future possibilities for this single topic volume are boundless. Where will 'Wildcat' direct her gaze and sink her claws next? 'Wildcat returns to the classroom', 'Wildcat meets MIS', 'Wildcat and the New Age Travellers'? So move over *Country Life* and *Woman's Own* because no self-respecting GP or hospital waiting room will be complete without a copy of *Health Service Wildcat* telling it like it is. Perhaps Virginia Bottomley could be persuaded to prove what a decent sort she is by sending a copy to every household as an amendment to the Patients' Charter. At £1.95 it's certainly more accurate, better value and much more likely to be read.

When asked whether the book's purple cover – the colour of mourning – was deliberately chosen to symbolise the passing of the NHS, Donald gave the enigmatic reply "If you say so!" 'Wildcat' shows a hatred towards current policies but, as she says, "Yes, but it's healthy hate".

This collection is just what the doctors ordered – or would order if they weren't so busy juggling their funds and improving their star ratings.

Silvia Edwards

might be called upon to work". Eric Gill introduced him to Douglas Cockerell's workshop: "... where Roger Powell taught me to fold, sew and press, plough and marble, tool and gild ... Whilst learning such skills my father visited Ditchling in the company of Laurie Cribb, Gill's master letter-cutter who was visiting Joseph Cribb, his brother, who was Eric's first apprentice. As a result of this visit I was offered a choice of apprenticeships in the working of stone with Joseph, silk with Valentine, silver with Dunstan or printing with Philip Hagreen. Ditchling was a marvellous school for teenagers. There were five families of craftsmen, their apprentices and the neighbouring farmers, with one of whom I lodged."

In this second apprenticeship he returned to earning half a crown a week "having previously reached a maturity of ten shillings as a glass worker" but supported himself working for the farmers and gardening.

What art college training could remotely compare with such an apprenticeship? Even in those days Bernard Leach was explaining that "the problem is made increasingly difficult for the reason that the people who are attracted today by the hand crafts are no longer the

simple-minded peasantry, who from generation to generation worked on in the protective unconsciousness of tradition, but mainly self-conscious art students". His advice to anyone contemplating sharing a workshop with others was "to choose untrained local labour" since "likely boys learn the jobs quickly, enjoy them and readily form a permanent team". He envied Michael Cardew in finding Elijah Comfort, "for such men know their locality and set a standard of horse-sense and breadth of treatment necessarily lacking in art students".

Cardew's successor at Winchcombe, Ray Finch, describes how for the firings, five or six times a year, the boss would issue a list of the pots to be made: "Smaller pots were made in runs of a hundred and upwards and each thrower made a number of shapes according to his capabilities and experience. Sidney, in his ninth year at the pottery, made small jugs, porridge bowls, egg-bakers, soup pots, egg-cups, butter coolers, jam pots and so on. Mr Comfort was then about seventy; he had spent a lifetime making washing-pans and flowerpots and now made casseroles, lidded breakfast dishes, platters, round dishes and oval baking dishes ... These were made round; afterwards a piece was sliced from the middle, the dish made oval and rejoined. He also made saggars when replacements were needed. Charlie, the current apprentice in 1936, made honey pots and beakers whilst I, the complete novice, was set to make pressed dishes." Cardew's own work took its place among these bread-and-butter goods.

Leach himself, in accents very like those of Morris, declared that "we are no longer peasants, but does this mean that we must all aspire to one-man exhibitions at the best galleries?" He asked, "what is the excellence we recognise in oak furniture, in wrought ironwork, in an edifice like Chartres, in medieval pottery? These things were not made by men of genius; they were made by Tom, Dick and Harry, who were sometimes very good stonecutters, joiners, potters, blacksmiths and so on. It was a communal contribution, and it provides a precedent. It tells us today that there must be a way by which the ordinary gifted or not gifted man can do something with his life that is worthwhile."

This was the message too of the Barnstaple picture-framer's son, William Richard Lethaby, greatest of the arts and crafts teachers, who strove so hard to wed the craft apprenticeship ideal with that of the art school. As art adviser to the LCC's Technical Education Board in the 1890s, he complained that the curriculum of the average art school

(continued on page 7)

Food for Thought ... and Action

More goodies from Freedom Press Bookshop.

The Skeptic vol 8/1, bi-monthly. More on the crop circles sage in this issue, plus 'Parapsychology in the UK', the dangers of New Age 'crystal healing', sceptical predictions for 1994, and more. The previous issue covers flying saucer cults, the Marie Celeste 'mystery', and 'psychic channelling'. This is a regular publication in the bookshop and we also have quite a few back issues on topics from 'psychic questing', meditation, near-death experiences, supernatural IQs and cold fusion, to the Cyril Burt affair, vampires, alternative medicine and much more. A valuable magazine in the debunking field. 28 pages, A4, £1.85.

Beyond Hypocrisy: decoding the news in an age of propaganda by Edward S. Herman, South End Press. A highly original volume that includes satirical essays, cartoons and a cross-referenced 'doublespeak dictionary' with examples of the all too frequent use of these terms. The book highlights the deception and hypocrisy contained in the US government's favourite buzzwords. It offers abundant examples of duplicitous terminology, ranging from the crimes of free enterprise celebrated in the boardrooms of Wall Street and the press coverage of elections in El Salvador and Nicaragua to George Bush's use of the famous 'smart bombs' to prevent 'collateral damage' in the war against Iraq. Two notable sections are on 'Civilised and Barbaric Shooting Down of Airlines' comparing the attack on the Korean Airlines flight 007 by the Soviet Union in 1983 with that on the Iranian Airlines flight 655 by the USS Vincennes in 1988; and on 'The Search for Defensible Frontiers' which lists the various forms of subversion practiced by the US against eight countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, in a table ranging from 'Buying Labour Leaders' and 'Black Propaganda' to 'Sabotage' and 'Direct Invasion or Sponsored Invasion'. 240 pages, including 39 pages of notes, index and illustrations, £10.95.

Green Line no. 115, Catalyst Collective. Rather unjustly this magazine has not been mentioned for quite some time in this column, although it is stocked in the shop regularly. The first thing to say about it is that it is not *Alternative Green*, which astute observers will have noticed we no longer stock. This decision has led to a lone, sulky picket of the shop on certain days of the week by its editor, Richard Hunt, who affects to believe that we are somehow obliged to stock it because of its 'anarchist' content. (Other publishers of material we also do not stock are noticeable by their absence outside 84b, recognising that the titles we do stock are our choice, not theirs.) But Hunt, who is becoming well-known as a maverick in green and libertarian circles, knows perfectly well that the main reasons we do not wish to sell *Alternative Green* are because of the nationalist and racist articles it has published – which *Green Line* has not – and his support for Iraq during the Gulf War, which *Green Line*, again, did not stoop to. Not to mention the mutual admiration society established between Patrick Harrington (ex-NF and now *Third Way* editor) and Richard Hunt. In addition to this, *Green Line* is both more literate and more libertarian than *Alternative Green*, and better produced. Current articles cover eco-sabotage, the Criminal Justice Bill and direct action against multi-national banks, amongst others. Recommended. Back issues available. 20 pages, A4, £1.00.

For further information on Richard Hunt's chequered history in the movement and as a former editor of *Green Anarchist*, see the pamphlet *Green Anarchism: its origins and influences*, £1.00 plus postage and packing.

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But what then does revolution imply? We say that the structural fault in our civilisation which leads to war lies in the doctrine of national sovereignty, which requires for its expression and propagation the social organ known as the State. Modern wars are conducted by States, through their paid servants – the politicians, civil servants and armed forces. Wars do not, in our stage of development, break out naturally between peoples, and in spite of all the powers of persuasion which States can command and direct, the peoples remain largely indifferent to the issues involved in State wars. Put in another way, we might say that modern wars are essentially ideological, and ideologies belong to classes, not to peoples. The peoples have no ideologies anywhere. They have interests and prejudices, customs and superstitions: they may be selfish and egotistic, but everywhere and at all time their main purpose is to secure a living from the soil, or from the labours of their hands or brains: and they know that such a purpose is not furthered, but frustrated, by war. Lives, houses, cattle, tillage, material possessions of every kind – these are the common wealth of the people, however unevenly distributed that wealth may be. That kind of wealth is destroyed by war. What is not destroyed by war is another kind of wealth – gold, bonds, credits and other goods not made by labour: these may escape war, just as German Bonds will survive this war, or as Russian Imperial Bonds have escaped 'the greatest revolution in history': but this kind of wealth does not belong to the people, but to the State and its servants, and, one must add, to its dupes.

A One-Man Manifesto
and other writings for Freedom Press

HERBERT READ

Read, the crafts and apprenticeship

(continued from page 6)

made him think of learning to swim in a thousand lessons without water.

He wanted a school where the crafts were taught by outstanding practitioners, not by professional teachers, and when he was appointed as the first principal of the Central School of Arts and Crafts, he had his opportunity. In every craft field, he found the right lecturer. For leadwork, for example, a subject on which Lethaby himself had written a textbook, he engaged W. Dodds, registered plumber, "a description of an instructor's qualification unlikely at that time to be found in the prospectus of any other art school". For lettering, he found an unknown calligrapher, Edward Johnston, and persuaded him to teach. One of Johnston's first students, in 1899, was the 17 year old Eric Gill and, as Lethaby required every student to learn a useful craft, Gill learned stonemasonry too.

Lethaby, like so many of the arts and crafts pioneers, was an architect by origin and was a designer rather than a craftsman. He was one of the founders, with Ernest Gimson and Sidney Barnsley, of Kenton and Company, the short-lived furniture firm, and he designed tiles for Wedgwood, cast-ironwork for the Coalbrookdale Company, as well as furniture, embroideries and fireplaces. He was not hostile to mass production and indeed was one of the founders of the Design and Industries Association in 1915.

The paradox of Lethaby's activities was that though the latter part of his life was devoted to institutionalised education (for as well as his work at the Central School he became the first professor of design at the Royal College of Art) he had no belief in that system of learning. He declared that "those who believe in the condensed ignorance called Higher Education have succeeded with great difficulty in at last creating a dislike for that greatest of blessings, work". His ideal was the kind of craft apprenticeship that Michael Murray described to me. A description by Esther Wood of the early days of the Central School notes that "some curious varieties of personality and character may be seen in almost every room. Young and middle-aged men, strong manual labourers, refined and scholarly-looking craftsmen, quiet earnest girls and smart little lads scarcely out of their fourth standard, are gathered together round the tables and desks or thinking out their designs plodding steadily on at some set task".

There is not a college in the country today to which this century-old description could

apply. All the subsequent reforms in art education have moved it further and further from Lethaby's ideal, as the academics tightened their grip on the educational machine. "Education", he thought, "is better underdone than overdone". The abandonment of his educational ideal of apprenticeship with a master of his craft in favour of an ever longer institutional tutelage, by no means implies that the ideal is dead. It simply means that many people are obliged to attempt something like it in their twenties or thirties, doing what they should have been able to do in their teens.

Lethaby's version of the arts and crafts vision of an earthly paradise rested on a concept of socialism which condemned the creation of an idle poor just as much as an idle rich. "Have you ever stopped to think what you really want out of life?" he would ask his students. His own apposite conclusion, *eighty years ago*, was this: "For the earlier part of my life I was quieted by being told that ours was the richest country in the world, until I woke up to know that what I meant by riches was learning and beauty, and music and art, coffee and omelettes; perhaps in the coming days of poverty we may get more of these".

Herbert Read, in his voluminous writings, sought endlessly to resolve the contradictions of crafts in an industrial society, and the closest he got was, as David Goodway notes in his introduction to *A One-Man Manifesto*, in his advocacy of a 'double-decker' or 'duplex civilisation'. The prerequisite is, Read explained, to "let every individual serve an apprenticeship in handicrafts ... creative arts of every kind should be made the basis of our educational system. If, between the ages of five and fifteen, we could give all our children a training of the senses through the constructive shaping of materials ... then we need not fear the fate of those children in a wholly-mechanised world."

Read found that while his *Education Through Art* was seen as "too difficult for the people it might most benefit" it was also "by far the most influential book I have written". It was, but a far more accessible form of the same gospel came from the ideology of the arts and crafts movement, endlessly under threat from our current rulers' attempt to impose on all publicly-funded schools, a 'back to basics' national curriculum, which is the result, just as Read argued, "of entrusting the education of children to bureaucratic organisations divorced from the main business of life".

Colin Ward

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Patten's fatal perversion

(continued from page 3)

the view that in matters of sex the British were crazy. While agreeing with her sentiment, I must reject this. I think criminally insane described the official position more accurately.

The Dutch are strange. Because they have egalitarian education designed to further individuals rather than protect privilege, they believe they can trust their people. We know we cannot trust ours, particularly historical anomalies like John Patten. The fact that he has been perverted by his education does not mean that he should attempt to do the same to others. But unfortunately one problem with perverts is that they try to pervert others.

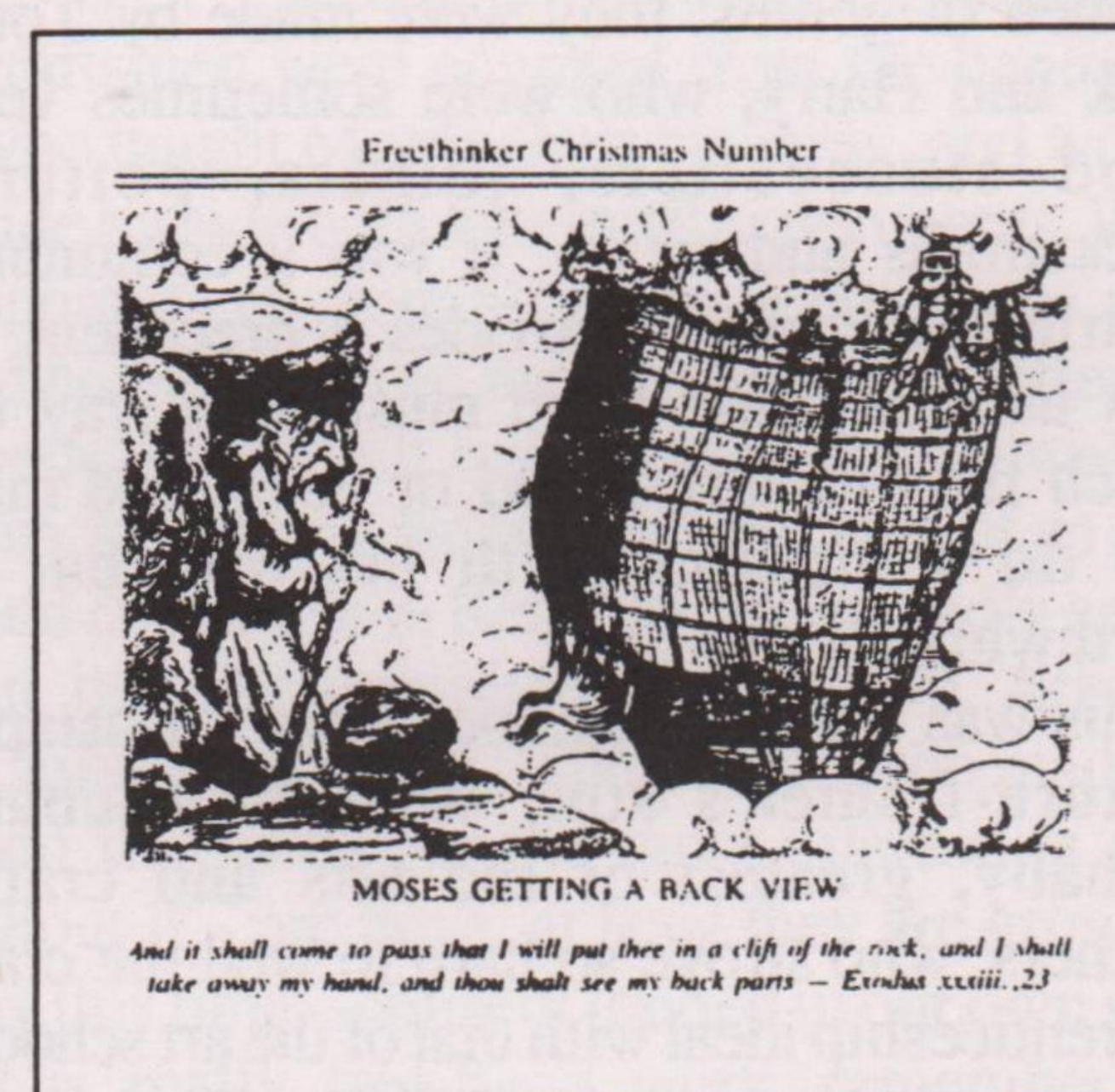
At best Patten shows himself to be a man of unreasonable emotions who should not be allowed to influence the young. At worst, in the age of AIDS when the government told us not to die of ignorance, he is creating social conditions which will kill people. Is not inflicting sexual ignorance on people the same as murder?

I am incensed, not infuriated, to think that very privileged and irresponsible politicians could expose, through legislation and misguidance, young people to premature pregnancy and the possibility of fatal disease. Their age is irrelevant: when they are ready, even if not ripe, they will behave naturally. Knowledge will modify their behaviour, ignorance will not.

I am grateful to my gremlins. They have evolved to the point where they behave instinctively. I am given hope by the intelligence young people display; they are fitted to survive in their environment despite the Pattens in their way. But where should we look for wisdom? Certainly not to those who are incapable of evolving. Politicians are becoming increasingly non-viable. We can only hope they will be subject to their own laws and suffer the failure they would inflict upon others. It is time they died out; their time has passed, and quite right too.

Colin Johnson

Raven 25 on Religion



96 pages £3.00 (post free anywhere)

Through the Anarchist Press

Perhaps the decision that I should not read other than the anarchist press will one day be appreciated by the world of music, for I have finally taught myself to play the guitar and the piano in the extra time provided and since then I have played on these unsuspecting instruments some interesting tunes and am able to report now that I can finally play to my own satisfaction a delightful food song by the composer Carey Blyton. The words by J.A. Lindon say all I can say, and better, about the present political situation: "Scouring out the porridge pot, / Round and round and round! / Out with all the scraith and scooper, / Life the eely ooly droopery, / Chase the glubbery slubbery gloopery / Round and round and round."

Anarchy in the UK (the October event) is proceeding apace. It is something to look forward to. What interests me most is what I shall think of it November after all those hundreds of events which have taken place. It will show in no uncertain manner the amount of support forthcoming from the population at large. The anarchist movement has always been good at protest, now could be the time for all and everyone to see and experience the harmonious nature of living in an anarchist society.

The late prevalence of a close and confined atmosphere has been rather favourable to the growths of weeds, observed Sam Weller. Now that I have little time to attend to such matters, I have been wondering why have weeds received such a bad press. What others regard as weeds would feed the whole population.

Information is a thorny process. Much of the knowledge of today will have been forgotten by tomorrow. What interest me might not interest others. To live an open life is an anarchist characteristic. We are what we are. There are long files on people who live today. Hundreds of years ago similar files existed on other people. A famous author, Thomas Kydd – what remains of him? Not one letter, not one signature, not one book has been attributed to him with certainty, yet he shares a bench with Christopher Marlowe and his *The Spanish Tragedy* is an outstanding masterpiece. Yet there was surveillance on him every adult day of his life. He was supposed to have written the *Ur-Hamlet*, but no copy exists.

Elbow grease is the best furniture oil, but however hard you polish the old table, it does not take long for somebody else to scratch his name in it.

Not quite sure if it was the same Guy Fawkes who said: "Desperate diseases require desperate remedies".

Cuddling may well become the subject of the latest Home Office inquiry and may well be considered to be made illegal. Highly paid experts at the Home Office have discovered that cuddling leads to anti-social and deviant behaviour.

Eras come and go. It used to be a craze to try to give the exact date of historical events. The most amusing is the era of Abraham which was given as 1st October 2016BC. The least amusing is the one that began 6th August 1945.

John Rety

— PUBLIC MEETING —

**'Back to the Future:
Anthropology and
Anarchism'**

Speaker: Brian Morris

Thursday 7th July at 8pm
Marchmont Community Centre
Marchmont Street
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Printed by Aldgate Press, London E1

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8th July The Demands of Science (speaker Peter Neville)
15th July The Politics of Pollution or Ireland and Environmentalism (speaker Robert Allen)
22nd July Marx the Forgotten Anarchist (speaker David Murray)
29th July General discussion
5th August Vacation
12th August Vacation
19th August Vacation
26th August Vacation
Monday 29th August SUMMER PICNIC (venue Hadley Woods, details later)
3rd September Introduction
10th September Misrepresentation and Sociobiology (speaker Donald Room)
17th December Should Anarchists Take Part in Revolutionary Governments? (debate introduced by David Dane)
24th September General discussion
1st October 'The Catholic Worker' (speaker Peter Lumsden)
8th October Gustav Landauer: The Spirit of Place and Anarchism (speaker Andrew Lainton)
15th October General discussion
22nd October No LAF meeting - Ten Days That Shook the World Conference (discussion at Conway Hall led by John Rety)
29th October General Discussion
5th November Play Gives a Meaning to Existence (speaker J. Taylor)
12th November General discussion
19th November The Belief in Politics (speaker Eve Segur introduced by George Walford)
26th November General discussion
3rd December Use of Comics as Propaganda (speaker Donald Room)
10th December Sanctuary (speaker Adrian Williams)

Peter Neville / Dave Dane
London Anarchist Forum

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