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FIFTY PENCE

*"The object of associating is to increase the opportunities of the individual."*

Charlotte Wilson

## THE 'SILLY SEASON' IS OVER ... NOW IT'S THE PARTY POLITICAL CIRCUSES!

As we write the TUC have had theirs and the Liberals are in the middle of theirs – the circus masters shocked on the first day when their political fledgelings won the vote for 'decriminalising' the use and possession of cannabis and we still have not heard whether the Liberals propose to abolish the monarchy.

Poor Paddy Ashdown! He obviously feels himself to be PM material (after all why shouldn't he with the opposition?) and he just cannot have these tearaways spoiling his public image. And for the benefit of television he was seen to storm out from the platform even before the vote on cannabis had been taken!

We can only assume that the Labour Party conference will be centred on establishing the new leader as the only legitimate heir to the late lamented John Smith. The Tony Benns and the Dennis Skinners will get their usual rounds of applause and nothing else.

The Tory platform will as usual, whether it's boom or bust, be able to reassure their predominantly blue-rinse elderly delegates that all is well in the best-of-all-worlds for the well-heeled. All the rest of the community are lazy bastards when they are not criminals. And of course there are the traditional motions calling on the government to re-introduce hanging, birching, probably even drawing-and-quartering. We are indebted to *The New Statesman's* diarist 'Shoreditch' for what he considers the Tory motion par excellence (after all, imagine this writer ploughing through a thousand  
*(continued on page 2)*

### CLOBBERING THE POOR, AS USUAL

The latest targets for the fraud sleuths are the 700 or so vendors in the London area of the magazine *Big Issue* and who are among London's thousands of homeless trying to make a few quid on the side.

The *Big Issue* was started three years ago and now operates in most major cities in Britain. It sells at 60p and the vendors get 35p. Apparently the Fraud Squad have asked John Bird, editor and founder of the magazine, to hand over the names of the vendors in the London area so that they can check the names against records of those signing on for social security benefits. According to *The Independent* he is "legally obliged to comply, or face a series of fines". One hopes that the vendors had the good sense of being 'Mr White' as salesmen and 'Mr Brown' for the DSS!

As the law stands at present, a single person receiving £45.45 unemployment benefit a week would forfeit his benefit for that day if he earned more than £2 a day! How mean can you get!

No expense is spared in trying to prevent the poor from getting away with false claims and benefits. The computer wizards persuaded the idiots in government that the whole benefits system could be computerised, and they have done so with a vengeance, and at the expense to the taxpayers to the tune of £2,600 million – so far! – and it's not working!

A report just published, *Are Major Information Technology Projects Worth the Risk?*, declares that:

"Overall, a major risk was that of costs rising out of control. In fact these rose from the original estimate of £700 million to over £2.6 billion by 1993. It is unlikely that any of the cost savings, estimated in 1989 at £175 million, will now be achieved."

Leslie Willocks, co-author of the report and a lecturer in 'management studies'(!) at Oxford, said that:

"The spend is in fact so large that the Department has actually stopped counting it. If there had been better management not so much would have been spent."

Perhaps the Fraud Squad should investigate the DSS! For instance, the report mentions that the Department "threw money at problems", employing consultants at an annual cost to the taxpayer of up to £22 million!

Accountants, solicitors, experts, consultants, ad-men, are all in the capitalist racket on a grand scale as the result of the massive privatisation programme. Some £600 million have already gone to them over the privatisation of the railways, which somehow we feel may never happen.

The trouble with the vocal public, in general, is that they look upon their much less fortunate brethren as the 'scroungers, cheats and crooks' who they, as taxpayers, are subsidising, but are completely blind to the massive rackets that are going on all the time also at the expense of the taxpayers.

When will people realise that there is nothing honest about capitalism. Yes, of course millions of us are making a 'decent living' in the capitalist world without fiddling. But make no mistake that that 'decent living' is at the expense of the real victims of capitalism, not only in the third world but on our very own doorstep.

The Fraud Squad are gunning for the *Big Issue* vendors. We anticipate that their next target will be the LETS movement, to which we shall return in the next issue.

### THE BOND MARKETS RULE

In the last issue we were able to provide official confirmation that governments have no power over the multi-nationals and trans-nationals. Now one learns, according to *The Independent*, that "national anti-inflation strategies are increasingly globally led".

"Crucially, monetary authorities around the world still have some control over short-term interest rates – these are their principal weapon against inflation. But they have virtually no control over long-term rates, that is, the rate of interest at which governments and large companies borrow for periods up to thirty years on the world's bond markets.

The fact that short-term rates rise at the first sniff of rekindled inflation shouts that we are in a world of stable prices and we had better get used to it." (our italics)

The opposition parties, assuming they win the next elections, what can they do to break the stranglehold of the moguls of capitalism? This is one reason why anarchists prefer to preach in the wilderness than to be gobbled up by the lions in the capitalist zoo!

**The 'Silly Season' is over ... now it's THE PARTY POLITICAL CIRCUSES!**

(continued from page 1)

Tory motions to find the prize winner!). The *New Statesman's* prize-winner reads:

"This conference urges the government to recognise that no sane person wants a classless society which is a society run by bureaucrats and composed of slaves; it therefore urges the government to grant tax relief for the employment of domestic servants. This will bring employment to the unemployed and civilised living to the middle classes."

Surely one could not even invent a 'typical' Tory motion to beat that one.

But these are the people with privilege (because they have money and cunning and connections - it's a freemasonry of power which has become international).

All three political parties, as we will go on repeating, are in the business to win power through office - and that means *your votes*. Apparently at least two million of us are not on the voting register and one can imagine, alas, that it's not because they are anarchists (this writer makes a return, is on the electoral register, but has never voted for somebody else to run his life).

Voting or referenda in a capitalist, unequal society is merely a poll which indicates who Tom, Dick or Harriet think will offer them the best *material* bargain. For instance, *The Independent* (14th September) reports that:

"Defecting Tory voters are disillusioned with government free-market rhetoric on health and education as well as angry about crime and tax, according to confidential internal research ordered by John Major."

So where does *politics* come into this kind of voting? It's like shopping around for bargains in the supermarkets. And the Liberals have already started, with one of their spokesmen declaring that the top income tax rate of 60% they had previously proposed is now to be 50%.

As we pointed out at the outset, as we write the two major contestants for your votes have yet to set up their marquees and the clowns to resort to their tricks. Watch out: for your votes they promise utopia and they give you nothing.

Anarchists honestly tell you that they can offer you *nothing* if you are not prepared to recognise that we can only change the unequal, unjust society by changing our own way of life, our values and our objectives. This doesn't mean going religious or looking for new political gurus.

It simply means, in the first place, being convinced that all the do-gooders no less than the political bastards are all concerned either with their own power

and/or material privilege at your expense.

And secondly that even if as an anarchist you can live more or less the way you want to live personally, intimately, then, as this writer, you cannot close your eyes to world poverty, injustice, privilege, and be content with having solved your personal way of life and not feel it can be happy and fulfilled so long as so much unhappiness surrounds us. For this reason some anarchists are propagandists in the hope that the time will come when an overwhelming majority of 'electors' in our sham democracies will give the politicians the 'up yours' two-finger sign and realise that the only power that will change our society is that of the people in the streets.

All you will get from the ballot box is a double-cross in return for your cross, whoever wins!

**Comments on the CAPITALIST RACKET**

The Canova's 'Three Graces' statue has been much in the news, mainly because the Getty Museum offered £7 million for them - and not because of the shapely bottoms and breasts, which for this writer (neither a collector nor a museum director) are the main attractions, but hardly worth £7 million, assuming he had them!

What interests us is that as usual it's not the work of art that is involved but money and rackets! The capitalist dirt will out because the capitalists have no loyalty. Thanks to the *Guardian* (14th September) "we know who are seducing the naked ladies who live in a box, but for whom do they work?"

The statue was commissioned by the sixth Duke of Bedford in 1814. In 1979 it was offered by the family in lieu of inheritance tax but was not accepted and was instead sold for £1.25 million in 1984 to Fine Art Display and Investment. The spokesman for the latter - note this is "a company set up and registered in the Cayman Islands in the same year" - is a Geneva-based lawyer who says he is also chairman, "but declines to say who else is in the company beyond volunteering there is 'no British involvement'" In other words, the present Duke is not involved. He would be more than naive if he had been. He is no naive Duke. He is a tax exile in France!

**More Unemployed off the Register ... but more unemployed!**

For the umpteenth consecutive month the government's figures show that unemployment is coming down with a vengeance. And nobody believes them for the obvious reason that their figures are for those on the unemployment register only. They don't include those who have been unemployed more than a year - and have been taken off the register and passed on to the other charity department. Nor do they mention those who are in temporary or part-time jobs, or who hope to be able to make ends meet as self-employed. And what about school-leavers who are kicking their heels and are *not on any register*?

But the other obvious cause for doubting the credibility of all the optimistic statistics is to be found in the financial pages of the daily press. Just a few September headlines: "Power firms put 900 jobs under threat", "Leaked plans show 5,000 jobs losses as post offices close", "Midlands Electricity plans to cut 1200 jobs", "Tory councillor laments city [Tyneside] job losses", "Government's drive to privatise the Inland Revenue - may lead to loss of 30,000 jobs by the year 2000", "Norweb ... axing 1,200 jobs over the next five years". Last, and certainly not least, "Redundant miners left on employment scrap-heap". According to a survey just released "more than half of the miners who lost their jobs in the government's pre-privatisation pit closure programme have failed to find work". With the closure of 34 pits in that exercise 40,000 jobs were lost.

But search as one might in the same journals for any reports of new enterprises, new jobs: *there are none*.

What is both sad and criminal about the whole business of unemployment and exploitation of part-time and home-workers is

that everybody in this country could enjoy all the basic needs for a comfortable life with a minimum number of hours producing all our material needs and services.

But because of the maldistribution of wealth we have millions of people with so much that they don't know what to do with it, millions of families where both partners have full-time jobs, and other millions where neither partner can get a job.

Needless to say the employers are exploiting the situation to their profit. Is it possible that in spite of all the government's monthly phoney statistics about the economy and unemployment, the bleak future for young people is at last being realised by their parents who may well be both drawing a salary now but cannot see a bright future for their children?

Will Hutton (*Guardian*, 19th September) argues that one must be clear about the capacity of 'markets' to solve the problem of our age.

"Three-quarters of the British, according to last night's BBC2 'Money Programme' poll, are not confident that their children will get jobs when they reach employment age. Their pessimism is justified. One in four men of working age is unemployed."

And this will only get 'worse' the more technology takes over the routine work. Anarchists are all in favour of palming off dreary routine to the machines, but not at the expense of human beings who should in a rational society benefit from technology. Under capitalism, as more employees are realising, they are the *victims* of technological development.

Anarchists ask when will the victims realise this and turn on their oppressors?

According to the financial press reports "three electricity companies spent £23.5 million between them ... buying back shares to boost share values for shareholders". And the *Guardian* gives details of how Norweb, which is axing 1,200 jobs over the next five years, spent £11.9 million buying back 1.5 million shares, "lifting its share price 4p to 795p. Manweb spent £8.35 million buying back a million of its shares at the same time as 'slicing' 500 jobs in the next two and a half years. The shares went up in the market as the jobs went down.

In the capitalist world even cancer can be good business. According to the *Independent's* science correspondent:

"The gene for breast cancer - which kills more than 15,000 women in the UK each year - has been found by American scientists, who immediately applied to patent the discovery.

This means that any future diagnostic test for breast cancer based on the gene research will be the property of a US biotechnology company - a prospect that worries some British researchers." (our italics)

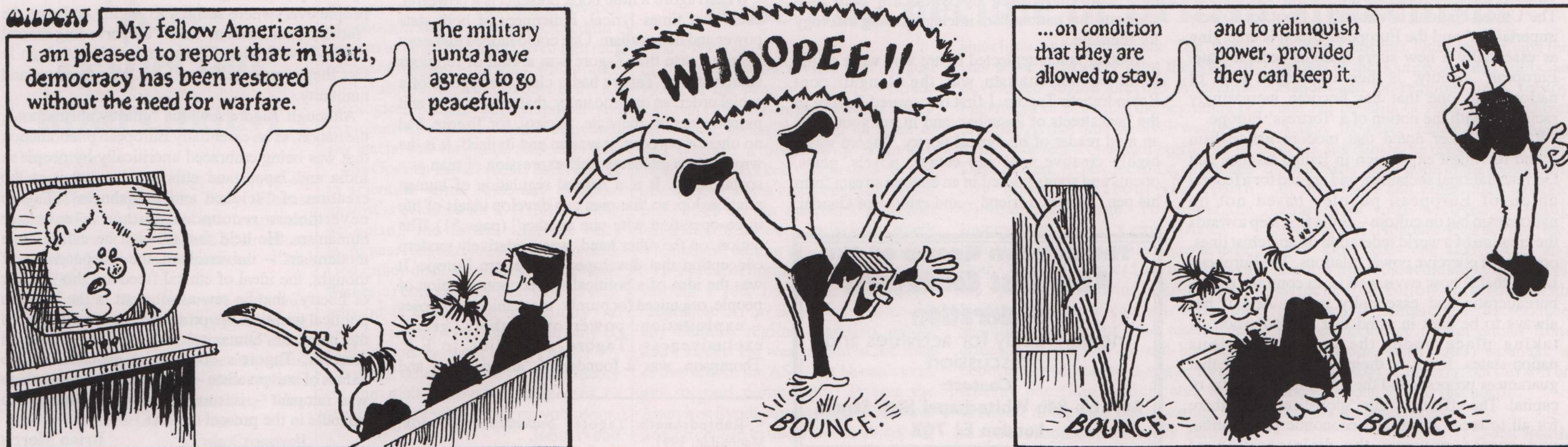
Though it is pointed out that less than 5% of the 27,000 new cases of breast cancer in the UK each year are the result of the inherited defects in the breast cancer gene, the discovery is expected to understand the other non-inherited cases.

Professor Mark Skolnick of Utah, who has won the race, is wasting no time in capitalising on his victory! According to the *Independent* report:

"He has set up a company, Myriad Genetics, to develop a diagnostic test and to exploit the research commercially. A patent on the gene will protect the millions of dollars spent finding it and making a test, he said.

Our first question is whose millions of dollars? The professor's? Our second question is: did the professor not benefit from earlier researchers' findings? Anyway what kind of person exploits the misery of others commercially?

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## — ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

## Akiva Orr and the politics of free enquiry

Even anarchists can fall into the trap of assuming that people agree with the governments in whose territories they live, or with political factions associated with their ethnic origins. It's an error. For example, I know people described as Ulster 'Protestants' who believe they would be better off as citizens of the Irish Republic, and people whose origins are 'Catholic' who don't believe in a united Ireland. And, like you, I know people from Northern Ireland who find nationality irrelevant to their lives.

It's the same with Israel. Every friend of mine who happens through the accidents of history and persecution to hold an Israeli passport, deplors the politicians of both left and right since 1948, and sympathises with the plight of the Palestinian Arabs, though not with the politicians manipulating them. Their espousal of anti-nationalism has earned them continual hostility and sometimes physical danger.

One of these is Akiva Orr. Eleven years ago he wrote a book *The Un-Jewish State: the politics of Jewish identity in Israel* (Ithaca Press, 1983). It was largely ignored by the British press as it expressed opinions which were outside the narrow range of acceptable political stereotypes. Undaunted, he has just produced a new collection of essays from the minority press, taking us up to the mutual recognition in September a year ago of the Palestine Liberation Organisation head by Yasser Arafat and the Israeli government led by Yitzhak Rabin, with a handshake on the White House lawn. His conclusion is headed 'Palestine Occupied Territory to Become a Bantustan'. This new book is *Israel: Politics, Myths and Identity Crises* (Pluto Press, 1994).

Both books attack head-on the nature of the state of Israel. Its Declaration of Independence proclaimed it to be a state like any other, except that it was to be a Jewish state, and was followed by the Law of Return which said that every Jew has a right to immigrate there. These proclamations were both the cause of and the result of endless debate, because of the paradox that most of the founding fathers were

secular people who had no intention to discriminate against non-Jews.

Orr draws heavily on verbatim reports of debates in the Knesset and judgements in the Israeli Supreme Court, stressing facts that have been obscured by the rewriting of history. For example, in the early days of immigration the opinion of orthodox Jewry was that Zionism was a blasphemy, that the adoption of Hebrew as a daily language was impious and that in the Palestine of the 1920s "the orthodox religious Jews preferred to align themselves politically with Palestinian Arab parties against Zionism".

Both books are intended to show how the insoluble problems of Israel's national identity have arisen from the unanswered question: 'What is a Jew?' The secular majority yielded, and has continued to do so, to the religious minority's definition, and in consequence all legislation concerning birth, marriage, divorce and burial reflects this minority view. Ben-Gurion, in Orr's words, "preferred to outrage the Israeli Jews rather than world Jewry. Hence the vote by atheists for religious monopoly on all matters of marriage and divorce. Apparently, loss of integrity is preferable to loss of identity."

It might seem a relatively trivial infringement of civil liberties, like the imposition of Catholic dogma in these matters in other countries, but it has had far-reaching effects. In his new book, for example, he lists the essential characteristics of political Zionism, and argues that:

"These features outline the inevitability of conflict with the indigenous Palestinian population. Only by expropriating the Palestinians and opposing

their aspirations to independence could Zionism achieve its aim. The dependence of Zionist ideology on national identity linked to religion brought about the political and legal dependence of the secular Israeli majority on the religious minority in Israel. All Israeli governments, dominated by the Zionist labour movement which considers itself socialist and atheist, refused to separate religion from the state."

He believes that the creation of the state of Israel has, paradoxically, created a non-Jewish identity and consequently a quest for a collective identity which has brought ugly symptoms, both tragic and farcical. The tragedy is, of course, in Israeli attitudes towards the Palestinians. The farce was illustrated by the mass euphoria in the year when Israel won the European basketball championship. The television cameras found one man in the deserted streets. He explained that he wasn't interested in basketball, so the interviewer inquired: "Are you by chance one of those who hate the state?"

This crisis of collective identity has similar features, Orr argues, to the breakdown of individual identity described in R.D. Laing's *The Divided Self*. He believes that contemporary political thought has failed to come to terms with the frustrations and anxieties generated by the feeling of threat to this collective identity. Hence its inability to cope with the eruptions that result and which cannot be explained convincingly in economic or political terms.

And this explains why, for example, the Islamic revolution in Iran "came as a total surprise to CIA experts, Middle Eastern scholars in western universities, the entire

spectrum of marxist intellectuals, the oriental specialists in Moscow and Peking, and the revolutionary left in Iran itself". In this connection, Orr's new book includes a most interesting essay asking 'Who is afraid of Satan?' which is well worth considering at length:

"Islamic civilisation is defending itself against the impact of Western civilisation. It feels (and is) under attack, even though the West is mounting no conscious attack on Islamic beliefs and has no intention of doing so. It is the inventions of the West (which the Islamic world so desires) that constitute the cultural threat. A society which desires the fruits of Western civilisation cannot ignore the philosophical seeds. These seeds radiate a different set of principles, values and beliefs. The Amish sect in the USA knew this and decided to isolate itself completely from all modern technology. A sect can do so, but a state cannot, particularly when it faces the possibility of armed conflict with another state. It is not merely television, radio, aeroplanes and rockets which undermine traditional theistic beliefs; every product of science used on a social scale is a cultural agent contributing to the breakdown of traditional beliefs ...

Some of the responses of Iran's clergy to the legalistic attitude of Western governments in the *Satanic Verses* affair display symptoms of paranoia. Those in authority in Iran cannot grasp that no Western government can remain indifferent to a public incitement by the leading figure in a foreign country to assassinate one of its citizens or to burn bookshops selling a particular book. These people genuinely believe that there is a planned, co-ordinated and well-organised conspiracy by Western powers against Islam, and that Salman Rushdie's book is part of it.

Western analysts, on the other hand, are blinkered by their belief that religious and cultural anxieties are a mere pretext whereas 'power politics' are the 'real' issue. They interpret Islamic responses exclusively as manipulative moves in the political power game in the Islamic world. This too is a 'plot theory'. Each side interprets the other's motives according to its own. The possibility that the other side could have a genuinely different notion of existence threatens them with the relativisation of their own notion."

Akiva Orr is a stimulating example of that rare kind of political writer, like Noam Chomsky, who works away at every issue that confronts him in the spirit of free inquiry.

Colin Ward

In the world today we are witnessing two, somewhat contradictory, political processes.

On the one hand our attention is drawn to the phenomenon of 'globalisation' and to the apparent 'demise' of the nation-state. On the other hand, we are seeing the resurgence of a strident nationalism throughout many parts of the world, the break-up of the old Soviet Union and Yugoslavia seeming to reaffirm the triumphant model of the nation-state. Nationalism has thus again become a central topic of debate and the current issue of *Society and Nature* (vol. 2 no. 2, £7.00 plus postage, available from Freedom Press Bookshop) has illuminating discussions on nationalism, from an anarchist perspective, by Noam Chomsky and Murray Bookchin.

The two processes, however, are not in radical opposition, for those economic processes which seem to be undermining the nation-state – the creation of an international capitalism through the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, transnational corporations and various trade blocs like the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement – are in fact, as Chomsky observes, leading to the creation of a "de facto world government" which has powers which are virtually immune from popular democratic control. The United Nations is virtually a front for a 'new imperialism' and the European Union is emerging as essentially a new supra-national federal state. European 'identity' is thus a resurgent form of nationalism, one that has become increasingly racialised with the notion of a 'fortress' Europe.

Rudolf Rocker noted that modern nationalism found its fullest expression in Italian fascism and German national socialism, and argued for a federal union of European peoples based not on nationalism but on culture – as the first step towards the creation of a world federation on anarchist lines, one free of coercive power relations. The European Union that is now envisaged is, in contrast, statist, bureaucratic and essentially racist. And it has always to be kept in mind that 'globalisation' is taking place under the aegis of various nation-states, for it is their coercive power that guarantees property and the internationalisation of capital. The effects of this 'globalisation' is there for all to see – social and economic polarisation, widespread poverty, the disintegration of

## Tagore and Nationalism

communities, ethnic and imperial conflicts, political instability and the undermining of popular democratic control, and the deregulation of the environment.

In the present climate Rocker's *Nationalism and Culture*, (£16.00 post free from Freedom Press Bookshop) first published in 1937, is surely worth re-reading. It is scholarly, radical, encyclopaedic in scope, offering a very readable survey of European culture and its decline, as capitalism and the nation-state developed to undermine human dignity and freedom. Rocker never denied that people have a sense of belonging to a community, a feeling of attachment to a particular culture or place. But for Rocker 'nationalism' was something very different. It was a kind of religion, a 'new faith'. He felt that it was the state that created the nation, and that nationalism was essentially a reactionary phenomenon, creating artificial boundaries between people. Nationalism, he wrote, has "never been anything but the political religion of the modern state" (page 201). This perspective has been reaffirmed by Bookchin who also suggests that nationalism is a legitimising ideology for the state.

Another much neglected figure who wrote a little book on nationalism was the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore. I first discovered Tagore in the backstreets of Zanzibar, and in my youth was an avid reader of his lyrical poetry. Tagore was a highly creative soul and essays, novels, plays, poems and songs poured in an endless stream from his pen. He was a friend – and critic – of Gandhi,

although, interestingly, he does not appear in Attenborough's film of Gandhi. Tagore is always depicted as a rather serene saintly figure with a long white beard, the embodiment of the oriental sage. But if you read his poems – especially those recently translated by Ketaki Dyson – you realise that Tagore was not only a man of radical aspirations, in his indictment of religious cant, violence and commercial greed, but also a rather complex, complicated and troubled individual, one who perceptively explored the ambiguities and contradictions of human life.

In 1916, during the First World War, Tagore went on a lecture tour of Japan and the United States. He was then in his fifties, having suddenly found himself famous after receiving the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. He lectured in these countries on nationalism, and these lectures were published the following year as a small book. This book has recently been reissued,\* with a helpful introduction by E.P. Thompson, whose father was a critic of the Raj and an early biographer of Tagore.

What Tagore's little book presents is a powerful, even if at times lyrical, indictment of both state power and nationalism. One could indeed make out a strong case that Tagore was a kind of religious anarchist. For Tagore had a clear conception of a social order, an organic unity, that was prior to, and independent of, the state. Society, for Tagore, had no ulterior purpose: it was an end in itself. It is, he wrote, "a spontaneous self-expression of man as a social being. It is a natural regulation of human relationship, so that men can develop ideals of life in co-operation with one another" (page 51). The nation, on the other hand, was a relatively modern conception that developed in Western Europe. It was the idea of a political and economic union of people, organised for purely 'mechanical' purposes – exploitation, power over others, greed, exclusiveness. Tagore, according to E.P. Thompson, was a founder of 'anti-politics' and

presents a severe indictment of both the nation and nationalism. The political civilisation which has sprung up in Europe, Tagore writes, is over-running the whole world like a "prolific weed". Based on exclusiveness, it is ever-watchful to keep "the aliens at bay or to exterminate them ... it weaves its meshes of lies without shame, it enshrines gigantic idols of greed in its temples, taking great pride in the costly ceremonies of its worship, calling this patriotism" (page 25).

Whereas the early dynastic states impinged on local communities at intervals rather like natural disasters, the 'tentacles' of the modern nation-state, Tagore writes, penetrates deeply into the social fabric of a community. It is like a "poisonous fluid" that undermines spontaneity, vitality and freedom; it forges "iron chains" of organisation that controls our lives at every turn. The nation, Tagore thus concludes, "with all its paraphernalia of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns, its blasphemous prayers in the churches ... IS THE GREATEST EVIL" (page 65).

What particularly troubled Tagore was that people everywhere seemed to readily embrace the "fetish of nationalism", this "all pervading mental slavery", with cheerfulness and pride – though in fact they were sacrificing both their freedom and humanity.

Although Tagore saw this "ghastly abstraction", the nation, as an essentially European phenomenon that was being embraced uncritically by people in India and Japan, and although he saw it as the creation of "science and selfishness", Tagore nevertheless renounced neither science nor humanism. He held fast to what he called "true modernism" – universalism, the independence of thought, the ideal of ethical freedom, the "banner of liberty" that he saw as inherent in the Western political tradition. He protested against injustice in the name of 'humanity' and, as E.P. Thompson remarks, Tagore's courageous espousal of the values of universalism – at a time when nationalism was rampant – is surely something we need to rekindle in the present context.

Brian Morris

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\* Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism*, London, Macmillan, 1991.

## McLibel defendants score a couple of points

Proceedings in the McDonalds libel case were resumed, after the summer recess, on 12th September. Dr Sidney Arnott, a cancer expert called by McDonalds, had already given his evidence in chief and was now available for cross-questioning.

After some hours in the witness box he was asked his opinion of the following statement: "A diet high in fat, sugar, animal products and salt and low in fibre, vitamins and minerals is linked with cancer of the breast and bowel and heart disease".

Dr Arnott had already said that he found evidence for cancer causation unconvincing, but in answer to this question he replied: "If it is being directed at the public then I would say it is a very reasonable thing to say".

The defendants then reminded the court that the quotation was a statement from *What's wrong with McDonalds?*, the leaflet which is the cause of the libel action, and the statement identified by the plaintiffs as the central and most defamatory allegation. In his opening address McDonalds leading barrister, Richard Rampton QC, had said that if it were widely believed McDonalds would rapidly go out of business. In pre-trial hearings, applying for the case to be heard by a judge alone on the grounds that the scientific evidence would be too complicated for a jury to follow, Mr Rampton had said the statement would be the "kiss of death" for McDonalds.

Score one for the defendants.

The next witness was called by the defence: Stephen Gardner, a professor of law at an American university, who was previously Assistant Attorney General of Texas in charge of consumer protection. He testified that in 1986 the five biggest American fast food chains - McDonalds, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Wendy's and Jack-in-the-Box - were all contravening federal law by failing

to state the ingredients of their products. The Attorneys General of Texas, California and New York jointly advised the firms that they were acting illegally, and four of them rapidly agreed to make informative brochures available to customers at all their branches. McDonalds alone were 'recalcitrant' and told the Attorneys General they needed more time to consider the matter.

Then a month later McDonalds issued a press release and began an advertising campaign claiming that they were voluntarily pioneering a unique project to provide this information. No mention of the federal law or the industry-wide agreement to comply. A McDonalds internal memo was read to the court which said the reason McDonalds were complying was "to help blunt the growing interest of state and federal lawmakers for ingredient labelling legislation".

Asked if McDonalds did not deserve praise for compliance anyway, Mr Gardner said that "McDonalds deserved nothing. Figuratively speaking, they had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the fold".

A year later, Mr Gardner said, McDonalds had been in trouble for an advertising campaign in which the buzz-words were 'nutrition', 'balance' and 'McDonalds good food'. They were written to as follows:

"The Attorneys General of Texas, California and New York have concluded our joint review of McDonalds' recent advertising campaign which claims that McDonalds food is nutritious. Our mutual conclusion is that this advertising campaign is deceptive. We therefore request that McDonalds

immediately cease and desist further use of this advertising campaign. The reason for this is simple: McDonalds food is, as a whole, not nutritious. The intent and result of the current campaign is to deceive customers into believing the opposite. Fast food customers often choose to go to McDonalds because it is inexpensive and convenient. They should not be fooled into eating there because you have told them it is also nutritious. The new campaign appears intended to pull the wool over the public's eyes."

Mr Gardner said the campaign was promptly discontinued. McDonalds witnesses have told the judge in the McLibel trial that the campaign was *not* discontinued. But the disagreement turns out to be one of semantics: what exactly does it mean to say the campaign was discontinued or not. The fact is that the contracts with the advertising media were continued, but all but one of the ads were replaced and the buzz-words 'nutrition', 'balance' and 'McDonalds good food' were no more mentioned.

Another point to the defence.

The case is not front page news, but it gets occasional mentions on television and in the press and almost all the mentions are damaging to McDonalds. They must regret ever bringing the case.

It seems likely, however, that they never intended the case to come to court. They issued writs with the intention that the defendants would agree to stop publication of the leaflet, and three of the original five defendants have indeed agreed to back down. In our comrades Helen Steel and Dave Morris, however, McDonalds have challenged two people who positively relish such challenges, who have the energy to cope with years of pre-trial messing about, who have the ability to prepare their own defence, and who, being benefit claimants, have nothing to lose.

Whatever the eventual outcome of the trial, it strikes a blow for the principle that it is dangerous to issue libel writs for the purpose of censorship.

On Friday 14th October a picket from 4.30pm to 6.30pm outside McDonalds' European HQ, High Road, London N2 (opposite East Finchley tube station). On Saturday 15th October a support march to assemble at Euston Station front at 12 noon. Contact **McLibel Support Campaign**, c/o 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX.

## A view from Dublin on troops in Northern Ireland It was always time to go

The autumn 1994 issue of our contemporary *Workers Solidarity*,\* published in Dublin, commemorates 25 years of army occupation and IRA activity in Northern Ireland. We could not agree more with two *Workers Solidarity* headlines: "It was always time to go" and "Nationalism ... no thanks".

*Freedom*, like other British anarchists, has always supported the 'troops out' campaign. British troops may have been sent to Northern Ireland in the first place to protect Irish nationalists from the 'B Specials', racist thugs licensed as Special Constables by the Stormont regional government. But the British Army is the last home of British imperialism, and it was obvious they would soon side with those who wanted Northern Ireland to remain British, against those who wanted otherwise.

As an article signed by Conor McLoughlin in *Workers Solidarity* recalls, when in 1973 the (Loyalist) Ulster Workers' Council called a general strike against the "power sharing executive" imposed from London, the (Labour) Northern Ireland Secretary Merlyn Rees issued an Order in Council giving him power to use troops to maintain essential supplies. But the army brass hats just refused to cooperate. Three months later a senior British officer boasted of the mutiny in the right wing Monday Club magazine: "For the first time, the army had decided that it was right and that it knew best and the politicians had better tow [sic] the line".

*Freedom* is against nationalism, Irish or any other. We agree with *Workers Solidarity* that the way forward in Northern Ireland is to work against the nationalist, sectarian and tribal differences which divide the population. Protestant workers have prospered at the expense of Catholic workers, and it appears that Sinn Fein now wants Catholics to gain at the expense of Protestants. Either way, the workers lose.

This writer, however, has a question about a sub-heading in *Workers Solidarity*: "Sinn Fein's strange 'socialism'." As I remember it, there was a split in the IRA and Sinn Fein between the 'Officials' who were socialist and the 'Provisionals' who were nationalist and sectarian. After Official IRA withdrew from the armed struggle, the Official Sinn Fein changed its name to the Workers Party or some such, leaving Provisional Sinn Fein to take the Sinn Fein name for itself. My question

is: when did Provisional Sinn Fein declare itself socialist? I must have missed it.

After America, Ireland was the first British colony from which the British were ejected. The British covered their embarrassment by calling it the Irish Free State, counting it among the self-governing British Dominions, and continuing to paint it red on the maps. More serious was the spoiling operation by which they conducted the referendum on independence by counties. In every other colony which the British evacuated, the referendum was counted for the country as a whole, and the minority who fought to remain British were abandoned to the new rulers. Ireland alone was split, six counties with a pro-British majority but a huge Irish nationalist minority remaining British, so that 'the troubles' could continue.

An article in *Workers Solidarity*, signed Andrew Flood, quotes an early Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Lord Brookborough, that Northern Ireland was created as "a Protestant state for Protestant people", which was the justification for oppression of the Catholics. But it should be noted that (although the Protestant minority in the 26 counties has not in fact fared badly) the Irish have always associated Catholicism with nationalism, and many saw the Irish Free State (later called Eire, and now the Republic of Ireland) as a Catholic state for Catholic people. Indeed, the Eire constitution of 1938 gave the Roman Catholic hierarchy power to veto laws passed by Parliament, a power never enjoyed by Protestant clergy anywhere.

The tolerant attitude of the Roman Church today did not exist before the 1940s, did not become official until the Second Vatican Council of 1963, and is not yet embraced by every Catholic.

For a long time after the British left Ireland in 1921, the Church referred to Protestants as 'heretics', and as late as 1936 the Vatican made a Saint of Sir Thomas More, a notorious persecutor and burner of 'heretics' in sixteenth century England. The fears of Protestant workers in Northern Ireland were used by the British government as an excuse for continued imperialism. But they were and are genuine fears, and the present pronouncements of Sinn Fein do nothing to dispel them.

\* *Workers Solidarity*, 75p (or £1 if ordering by post from bookshop).

## ANARCHIST MOVEMENT NEWS

### Locals a practical example

Norwich Solidarity Centre has been open since May 1992 and is run by the local group of the SF (Solidarity Federation). The Centre has books, pamphlets, posters and badges for sale; information on subjects from anti-racism to industrial law; a small but growing library as well as a small but shrinking stash of booze for when meetings drag on too long. We produce the local Solidarity Bulletin; organise public meetings with speakers or videos and hold social events which, besides raising much-needed funds, also allow newer members to meet others in a less formal situation than a meeting. This social or 'club' aspect is vital in maintaining interest and attracting new contacts and members.

The Centre isn't a general advice or information centre, a set-up which can lead to a producer/consumer scenario where those running it are expected to advise those who call in. We do not wish to see this type of divide being set up between working class people. We don't see ourselves as experts, we simply offer practical solidarity and the opportunity for centre users to get involved in our activities as equal participants.

Although the centre itself has clear anarchosyndicalist politics, groups that we support such as AFA and ACT-UP can use the facilities. The response so far has been encouraging. New members are slowly but steadily joining and old activists have got more interested again and come out of hibernation. Having a centre, even a small one, gives us an important focus. It shows we mean business, gives us a lot of credibility and has been a unifying factor in the activities of anarchosyndicalists in the area. Ideally we want the centre to be a place where all sorts of activities can go on and to act as a place to rekindle some real solidarity and confidence within the working class.

Getting people involved, especially unemployed workers and workers in industries with no network, has been the main problem. As anarchosyndicalism isn't solely concerned with economic or political issues, but with both, activities can be varied and such problems can be sorted out with a little imagination. Also if a number of members wish to work on one particular area or topic they can set up a working group.

To summarise then, having a local centre, even if it's just a single room to start with, has many advantages. It immediately takes us a step away from being just another abstract political group, and shows we're doing something real. We now have a centre open at certain advertised times when someone can be found there. And of course it has a political role to play in promoting revolution. We'd say give it a go in your area.

Norwich Solidarity Centre  
PO Box 73, Norwich NR3 1QD

### Solidarity Federation

The Solidarity Federation (SF) was formed in March 1994 when the Direct Action Movement (DAM) - the British anarcho-syndicalist organisation - merged with the Educational Workers Network (EWN), the Public Service Workers Network (PSWN) and the Transport Workers Network (TWN). The Solidarity Federation now forms the British section of the International Workers Association (IWA).

*Direct Action* has resumed publication as a free (donations invited) broadsheet (new series, no. 1, summer 1994) and bulletins are also produced by the various networks. Details and local contact addresses from **National Secretary, Solidarity Federation**, PO Box 384, Preston, Lancs, PR1 6PQ.

**What is Property?**

by Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, edited and translated by Donald R. Kelley and Bonnie G. Smith

Cambridge University Press, £35.00 cloth, £12.95 paperback

The 'Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought' are new editions of old writings, mainly intended for students but also appealing to general readers. The series has become one of the most impressive though neglected recent developments in serious publishing, offering carefully produced and reasonably priced versions of more than fifty classics of all kinds, familiar and unfamiliar, ancient and modern, English and foreign, good and bad. For some reason, anarchism hasn't been represented very well until now – a rather disappointing edition of Bakunin's rather disappointing *Statism and Anarchy* (1971) – but now there is a new translation and edition by Donald R. Kelley and Bonnie G. Smith of Proudhon's famous *What is Property?*. This is very welcome, but it does raise some problems.

The first problem is the need for this edition. *What is Property?* was originally published in three separate parts – the first as a memoir presented to (and rejected by) the Besançon Academy in 1840 (reprinted with a new preface in 1841); the second as a letter to Auguste Blanqui in 1841; and the third as a letter to Victor Considérant in 1842 (for which Proudhon was tried and acquitted on charges of sedition). An English translation of the first two parts was made more than a century ago by the American anarchist Benjamin Tucker and frequently published on both sides of the Atlantic – most recently in 1970 in the Dover Anarchy Library, with a new introduction by

**What Is Property?**

George Woodcock (published in *Anarchy* 106). The present edition contains a translation only of the first part. So the immediate questions are whether a new translation is needed and, if so, whether the first part is all that is needed. The answers are Yes. The old translation was good for its time, but it is frequently inelegant and occasionally inept – as in its version of the famous opening slogan: 'Property is robbery' rather than 'theft'. And the first part contains the meat of the book that made Proudhon famous.

The second problem is the value of the book. *What is Property?* is one of the classics of political and economic thought, but like most classics it is little read, and much of it is not worth reading for its own sake. Much of the argument is obsolete because property is no longer considered as a sacred object, and Proudhon's attack on it has lost the sense of sacrilege that it conveyed when it was first published. He refuted abstract theory in terms of abstract theory; the two have now cancelled each other out, and discussions of ownership and labour are conducted in far more practical and concrete terms. Much of the factual material is also obsolete because conditions have changed so much in a century and a half. As so often in political thought, the slogan is better than the argument behind it. 'Property is theft' is almost all we need to remember from the hundreds of pages Proudhon devoted to proving the point.

But the book isn't just about economics, as suggested by its title, but is also about other things, as suggested by its subtitle, 'An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government'. This leads to the final problem,

the editing of this version. Kelley and Smith are American academics and have produced an academic 24-page introduction which concentrates rather narrowly on the topical and national significance of the book – echoing the emphasis of K. Steven Vincent's book *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Republican Socialism* (1984). They are very well-informed and informative about Proudhon's life and work and the political and economic context, but they stop short at the publication of *What is Property?* saying: "This is not the place to review the extraordinary fortune" of the book, which became "a black legend in the annals of Western political thought". They mention that posterity tried to "conscript him into one ideological movement or another", listing "socialism, Christian as well as utopian, anarchism, communism (and anti-communism), syndicalism, federalism, mutualism, and pluralism" (they also mention fascism). They add a two-page bibliographical note (which is so full of ridiculous mistakes that it must have been prepared by someone who can't read or can't type) which includes the remark that "Proudhon's 'influence', real and alleged, has spanned a vast literature, the bibliography of which begins with M. Vettlan, *Bibliographie de l'anarchie*" (for 'Vettlan', of course, read Nettlau). Then they stop.

This seems an odd way to treat a classic, the whole point of which is that it lives on after its own time, and especially an author and book which exerted so much influence for so long. From our point of view, the point here is that in *What is Property?* Proudhon was the first person to say he was an anarchist and one of

the first people to say what anarchism was. The fifth chapter begins with a remarkable discussion of moral and social feelings in humans and animals, which amounts to a good summary of the naturalistic and evolutionary theory of politics, and it continues with what Kelley and Smith call his "famous Credo":

"What is to be the form of government in the future? 'But', as some of my younger readers may protest, 'you are a republican'. Republican, yes, but this word defines nothing. *Res publica*; that is, the public thing. Now, whoever is concerned with public affairs, under whatever form of government, may call himself a republican. Even kings are republicans. 'Well, then, are you a democrat?' No. 'What, you are a monarchist?' No. 'A constitutionalist?' God forbid. 'You are then an aristocrat?' Not at all. 'You want a mixed government?' Still less. 'So what are you then?' I am an anarchist. 'I understand you; you are being satirical. This is a remark aimed at the government.' By no means: I have just given you my serious and well-considered profession of faith. Although a firm friend of order, I am, in every sense of the term, an anarchist."

This is followed by a remarkable discussion of the political implications of such a statement, culminating in the assertion that "Anarchy, the absence of master, of a sovereign, such is the form of government to which we are approaching every day". Here began the first lesson.

The introduction does end with a brief conclusion that "Proudhon created ... a tradition of social, economic and political thought that ... has persisted down to the present day", and that a study of the man and his influence "must begin with this seminal book". How true, and what a pity that there isn't more useful guidance in what is otherwise a very useful edition.

NW

**YUPPIEDOM AND THE LIMITS OF RATIONALITY**

Some time back, early in Thatcher's reign, a freelance consultant mate of mine murmured over his beer that he was getting a thousand quid a day for a particular job. "Hell, no way can you justify that. It's going to bugger you up." He replied to my wimpish intervention with confidence: "No problems, you only get yourself in the shit if you believe you're worth it."

The arrival of the Yuppie on the business scene has been a central story of the last fifteen years. But city whiz-kids, computer freaks, stock exchange jobbers, commodity brokers, new ad-men and the media economists have only been the youthful glitzy front for cohorts of executives, advisers, experts and consultants who are ripping off the system today. Unlike my mate, most of them reckon they're worth every quid they can grab. Bloated with self-importance because they're versed in the complexities of modern capitalism, and magicians in handling the words and numbers our abstract world now demands, thousands of executives and experts are wallowing in our Victorian sewers.

This new breed of fake capitalist should not be confused with the traditional sort. For a start they're all either employees or highly dependent on employing institutions. The risk of financial failure does not figure highly in their lives; quite the reverse, their incompetence and loss of office can be richly rewarded. They maintain their privileges through a myriad of collusive games designed both to seduce and deceive one another and the bystander.

In these everyday games of business folk, expert elevates executive by pretending that managers are men of consequence; proven in their rational thinking and decisiveness; men to steer the enterprise through troubled waters. The manager, in his turn, reciprocates by upholding the relevance of the expert's skills to the job in hand. When it comes to action the more familiar stories are of a different kind. These are about managerial ineptitude and professional irrelevance. Furthermore, the 'odd' incident of corruption and greed reported by the media is now sufficiently frequent for most observers to suspect that business and government are awash with lying, cheating, fraud and theft, particularly at top levels. Burnham's 'managerial revolution' is turning into a bad dream for outsiders just when politicians, teachers and civil servants thought all the answers to their problems of organisation lay in 'the principles of management'. On the contrary, so many of our more pressing issues are proving intractable simply because these have been defined in terms of the capacities and limitations corporate managers and experts bring to them.

Many people have long suspected but lacked the courage to say that employment is riddled with this invisible army of termites munching their way through the wealth created by others – termites which, like the Australian white ant, wouldn't survive any sort of examination by the light of day.

There are literally thousands of mini 'Lord' Williamsons, of Fraud Squad fame; Bob Hortons, of Railtrack and glorious failures at BP; Ralph Halperns, the sexologist and former champion of Burtons; John Cahills, £3 million richer for doing a magnificent job at British Aerospace. But there is only one Geoffrey Archer, the Houdini of Yuppiedom, once described by a stuttering student, a banker, as 'The b-b-b-biggest a-a-a-arsehole I've ever met'. Archer is a proper capitalist.

These are the kinds of men to put the Great back into Britain. Their lesser mates sit in their thousands on quangos, enquiries, committees and lucrative government contracts and dispense the largesse of capitalism whilst pocketing fat fees. What we do know about these heroes of the 1990s is that they are big on power and they fancy themselves. They also possess programmed and inflexible minds. They often proclaim themselves as 'living in the real world' but their arrogance is born of having been cocooned from experience by way of schooling and employment. Their 'real world' is the artificial world of abstraction, hotels, cars and planes. However, as I've already asserted, these are not capitalists but the 'apparatchiks' of that genre. To paraphrase old Nap, 'They're just shit in smart suits'.

According to industrial man's folklore, we are supposed to equate life with having a job which delivers status, security

and material well-being. Many people, and not just the winners, still live according to this light. The armies of the unemployed notwithstanding, universal employment, as the 'new' Labour Party leadership proclaims, remains our central social myth.

In advanced industrial societies employing institutions are the primary vehicle of capitalism and the powerhouse of a way of life based on literacy, which imposes a rational frame on all of experience. However, the activity of employment is also industrial man's central social ritual. It involves the participants in routinised, repetitive activities in which the relationship between means and ends is often confused and obscure – not rational. The collusive games of work which keep the merry-go-round of capitalism moving go mostly unrecognised by our 'ejukated aileet' precisely because these games are shrouded in and camouflaged by a language of reason. What some sociologists euphemistically describe as the routinisation of rationality is a plethora of rites which mostly lack authenticity because their religious basis is denied.

It ought to appear odd to every thinking soul living in a 'democratic society' that employment, a condition of servitude, should represent a state of elevation, and self-employment something less. Once we apply reason to this thing called employment all manner of insanities emerge. For example, the pay executives and experts receive makes no sense in terms of the primary tasks of economic activity. If all of the great arsenal of weaponry associated with information technology, integrated systems, robotics and the rest could deliver a fraction of the promises advocates make for them, why do managers and experts get so much pay? Anybody who has researched the efficacy of wage incentive schemes for manual workers operating under contemporary conditions will know that 'performance related pay' is mumbo jumbo, unless we ditch the notion of performance as accomplishment of task in favour of it referring to executing tricks in public places. It is of course a smart device for getting rid of people the firm doesn't like and legitimising vast salary increases for the 'good performers'. It's part and parcel of the need to keep images shining. 'Image', we should remind ourselves, is about mystification not clarification. It conjures up the appearance of something which is actually absent. There is also the matter of 'paying' for a lousy job which is both stressful and increasingly distasteful. In the capitalist system money is life and those who have money become lovable, glamorous and to be envied.

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## Food for Thought ... and Action

**Here and Now: a magazine of radical ideas #15.** Latest issue of this generally very impressive magazine, with its focus on professionalism; managerial and bureaucratic ideologies; includes John Barrett's 'The Season for Security'; notes on desocialisation; Ian Tillium's long and stimulating 'Technological Despotism'; 'Corrupting Left Intellectual Culture' by Tom Jennings; two informative pieces on the new German; some excellent lengthy reviews of, amongst other items, Mike Davis's brilliant pamphlet *Beyond Bladerunner: urban control and the ecology of fear* (available from Freedom Press Bookshop at £2.95 plus 10% postage and packing); and the saga of the parapolitics magazine(s) *Lobster*. Also includes a very useful listings section and a few letters including one which begins as follows: "I am slightly perturbed by what still seems to me to be a dominant current in *Here and Now* - that of smug armchair theoreticians as the sole and justificatory role for its existence". A harsh but valid point - and not just concerning *Here and Now*! A4 magazine, 36 pages, £1.20.

**Alternative Press Review: your guide beyond the mainstream #3** (spring/summer '94). Third issue of this interesting and very well produced magazine from the USA. Contains various articles reproduced from a variety of sources, including 'Time Bombs: why the new global economy will trigger more explosions like Chiapas' by Noam Chomsky; 'Forests of the Milk Rivers: some thoughts and details on bio-diversity' by Wade Davis; Sunfrog on 'Pornography and Pleasure: beyond capital, beyond patriarchy'; 'Alternative to What? rock'n'roll is the health of the state' by Tom Frank, an examination of youth culture as reflected through the culture industry; 'Redefining the Radical: PC as media scare and

translation', an excellent overview of the Political Correctness thing by Douglas Spencer (reprinted from the last issue of the magazine *Here and Now*); 'The Political Economy of Ecstasy' - Ecstasy being the drug - by Aarch Stanton (also reprinted from *Here and Now* magazine). Also contains an interview with Left Bank Books collective in Seattle, letters and various reviews, including the *Alternative Press Review* listings section itself. This magazine is edited by the ex-editors of the impressive magazine *Anarchy*, Jason McQuinn. Now that he is putting all his energy into this project it can only improve. A4 magazine, 84 pages, £3.50.

**Aufheben: revolutionary perspectives #3** (summer '94). Don't be put off by the pretentious title, this is an excellent if at times somewhat dogmatic magazine written from an "autonomous Marxist" perspective. This issue contains a long piece, 'Auto Struggles: the developing war against the road monster', which takes a very informed look at modern capitalism's road building programmes and the resistance to this. Also contains the second part of 'Decadence: the theory of decline or the decline of theory?', a critical examination of various theories of capitalism's decline or decay, focusing on such groups and theories as socialism or barbarism, the Situationist International, the autonomist current of Marxism (Tony Negri, etc.), Paul Mattick, etc., etc. Some good long reviews also included. Not light reading, but very impressive. A4 magazine, 44 pages, £2.00.

JC

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provide the decor for all those collusive games in which the big boys are forever engaged - all those millions of bits of paper being shuffled around, factual reports, presentations, meetings, endless computer print-outs, junkets and travel. Pirates have to keep on the move. Anybody who works in one place can't be doing anything worthwhile. It's bad for the mystique of management and expertise anyway. In effect, all travel and the company car are the modern equivalent of the Emperor's new clothes. It is essential that managers and experts alike eternally service the illusion of achievement, while their assistants and secretaries do 'the work'.

There is of course another twist to the story of Yuppiedom, the effects of which are yet to test capitalism. There was a time when the agents of capital were sufficiently confident in their capacity to win over to their side questioning and adventurous youth, and not a few managers relished the challenge. In the context of declining employment opportunities for both managers and professionals, substantial differences are emerging among graduates in their disposition towards employment and treatment by employers. A still sizeable minority obtain a 'job with prospects' right after graduation, and even by their mid-twenties are on their way to the 'big time' - £25,000 plus salaries, Audi car, plenty of travel. These youngsters are noteworthy for their ambition, conformity and loyalty to capital. They will do whatever it takes to get on. Meanwhile, an ever-growing minority of graduates become 'ejukated' itinerants, job-hoppers, part-timers, engage in low-skill activities or become self-employed or unemployed. They choose or are forced to the margins of institutional life.

### Elevating nonsense

In spite of the appearance of the marginalised graduate the enormous numbers of people actually engaged in professional services and managerial activities (around 25% of the workforce) runs counter to the claim that technology not only replaces manual skills but 'brain' workers as well. The application of electronic devices to problem solving ought to herald the age of retrenchment for executives and professionals - so we need more of them and they must pay themselves more money!

Why do we reward some people so richly to participate in mere ceremony when any monkey can put on a suit, operate a portable telephone and personal computer, drive a Porsche, attend meetings and mouth his fair share of ... 'What are our objectives?' ... 'Let's get the facts sorted out' ... 'Let me make myself perfectly clear' ... 'We must improve performance' ... 'in the real world' ... 'the bottom line' ... 'absolutely'. The champion of business needs to 'believe' too that the economic bubble is not cyclical. Bust never happens, recession was

yesterday, recovery today, boom tomorrow. Another chance to make a killing. Share prices in X have jumped 50%, somebody can smell a drilling site. Of course the question is trite - we pay our executives and experts well because these are the shamans and guardians of capitalism and its principal agency, the state.

### Rational thinking and collusion

Apart from those who suffer delusions of grandeur, there are also those who take the ideals of professionalism (service, personal autonomy and excellence) seriously and therefore will number among the casualties of the system. Dedicated doctors, district nurses, production managers, teachers find their employment absurd when task is consumed by the quest for profit or efficiency, administrative activities and a mass of bad rituals. Inevitably experience convinces thinking professionals that any 'better' job is almost certain to embrace similar absurdities. Many of us find ourselves in such circumstances, but this does not prevent us soldiering on as slaves until we die, retire or are sacked, presumably because nothing matters more to us than the status, security and the privileges employment brings. So we perpetuate a fraud. We collude with our employers, colleagues and clients to maintain the deception that all is well and that what we do is worthwhile.

When Ivan Illich was reminding us that experts disable us more than they enable, university academics still did the bulk of their own administration aided only by a handful of educationally-minded administrators, often true servants of the cause. Wise teachers kept student numbers to manageable proportions, limited their formal activities like lectures and exams and made much of face-to-face transactions in teaching. But literary media are at the heart of industrial education and administration - both share the same formats. Lesser academics found a way out of their limitations by opting for administrative work and, initially at any rate, were thanked for their decision by colleagues. But as administration grew, partly in response to external demands and partly on the basis of activity expanding to fill the time and space available, power and control passed to the lesser academics. Both parties saw a way out of the resulting tensions and conflicts in specialism: the appointment of full-time non-academic administrators, fund-raisers and public relations people. These new men were careerists with little interest in education. Together with the academics-turned-administrators, they provided the Trojan Horse for interfering government. The rest of the story we know, many of us from bitter experience in health and welfare as well as administration.

I want to rub in the bit about the victim colluding with

## Through the Anarchist Press

Perhaps there is no such thing as insular politics and my experiment of not reading the 'national papers' is proving to be correct. Here in Madrid, even with my rudimentary knowledge of the lingo it is obvious that all that percolates from the UK is a tired story about royalty and 'profiles' of entertainers. Even if Burgess, a very knowledgeable writer, didn't believe in the existence of England and thought that London was the capital of Ireland. In *El Mundo*, the daily newspaper, the only reference I could find to the existence of our beloved country is one line giving the exchange rate of the 'libra enteplice' at 199.808 pesetas.

What is agitating the newspapers here is the equivalent of what agitates our papers at home - the extradition of people from Uruguay and France, forest fires, illegal immigrants arriving in ramshackle vessels south of Spain and, of course, the saga of Cubans sailing to Florida.

What is more heartening from an anarchist point of view is that I could purchase a monthly *CNT* newspaper from the local kiosk in a very undistinguished part of Madrid and I also encountered an anarchist bookstall at the local flea market at the Tirso de Molina, which can be found there every Sunday. The red and black flag is also flying proudly over the large and busy offices of the CNT.

The main articles - which I found very well argued and easy to read, having been brought up on *Freedom* editorials - concerned the role of the G7, its bid for world domination and the

role of the international 'peace-keeping' force. Another article by Paco Cabello analysed the nature of the yearly occurrence of forest fires, the resultant loss of land and governmental incompetence and lack of concern, in a very similar way to what is happening in the UK.

Except for centres (towns, cities) Spain is a barren land and underpopulated. The jargon of 'capitalism' is probably most confident here than at home, and the musical and motor-engine phrase 'fine tuning' is the easy expression used by triumphant economists as the industries sack thousands of workers, ensuring high profits for the few.

But, in conversations with comrades here, the anarchist movement here can do no more than to consolidate its position for the time being. The reputation of the CNT here is very high and its straightforward solidarity with the workers in all circumstances gives it (I can't find another word) 'affectionate' look. Can you imagine a local union at home being treated as implicitly.

As for prices here, they are about the same as in the UK. Politicians at Westminster may froth about the white heat of technology, but there seems to be an irreversible downward slide at home compared to things here.

Slogans and wild gestures are of little use. Unless we can create an organisation which is both known and respected and can achieve some cohesiveness the future, from this distance, looks bleak.

John Rety

insanity by following a little more the rationale of employment. Man needs employment to live - well, to live a respectful life. Employers depend on the commitment of key employees to their quest for profit. Bosses and their agents help this commitment by converting the quest for profit into the endless striving for 'greater efficiency'. Nobody can fail to believe in efficiency, provided he doesn't think too much about it. In the old time and motion study days - their last fling in the 1960s - efficiency was about producing more from the same inputs or reducing inputs to maintain outputs. It even bore a tenuous link with sustainability. All that has gone. Now the word is just a front for the privilege of the big, rich and powerful to throw huge amounts of money at the task in hand, to make more, and unload the costs on the politically weak - the poor, the third world, kids, the future. My advice to men and women of action is to threaten to hit on the nose any thug who uses the word.

Back on the job, 'efficiency' is variously served by getting the slaves to work harder: retrenchments, new technology, reorganisations, etc. The part of the bosses' man in this is to deliver closer supervision. This is not a wise long-term policy for people who have to live and work together. Tension between the parties increases. Performance goes nowhere. Experts are called in to deliver more impersonal controls: job descriptions, performance targets and evaluations, new work schedules, procedures, rules, plans. In effect these 'aids to performance', no matter how they are labelled or fudged, add up to just a bit more old fashioned bureaucracy.

Impersonal controls are based on written words and numbers, the stuff that computers and bureaucrats alike feed on. However, as everybody knows except senior managers, the effect of the 'new' controls leads inevitably to diminishing employee commitment and encourages work avoidance - working to rule, more absence, more travel, more stress, more bullshit. Further demands come from the top for supervisors and operating managers to 'achieve objectives' and this increases the tension in the workplace and, as every old lag knows, the vicious circle goes on and on.

To man the victim of such absurdities, Joseph Heller of *Catch 22* fame offers a sort of slave or employee charter - hence, no doubt, the popularity of his book. The world is indeed mad and the victim alone is sane. But nobody should be able to get away with this cop out. When we collude with insanity we too become insane. We have to face up to a disturbing predicament. Our rational propositions have become unhitched from reality and are therefore without existential reason.

Denis Pym

(to be continued)

In 1899 old Queen Vicky and Kaiser Bill did some horse trading: Bougainville, most definitely ethnically, geographically and culturally one of the Soloman Islands was handed over from this (British!) colony to Imperial Germany and attached to (German!) New Guinea. The Bougainvillians were not consulted. In 1914 Australia took New Guinea off the Germans, attached it to (Australian!) Papua. Thus it remained, apart from a brief Japanese interlude, until 1975. The Bougainvillians were not consulted and began to object.

These objections became particularly vocal around 1969 when the people of central Bougainville learned that they did not own the land more than 3ft. below their gardens. This belonged to 'the crown'. It had been granted to Bougainville Copper Ltd., (BCL) part of the Australian face of Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ) of London, who were planning on digging it up including, of course, the gardens trees and rivers. The Bougainvillians became stropky.

The objectors, particularly the land-owning women, were hit on the head with batons, tear-gassed and where necessary jailed by the Australian-led police. The multinationals got the land, dug a six km. long deep, deep hole at Panguna and shipped out much copper and gold. The rest, pretty poisonous tailing's, was thrown into the Jaba river system, which died.

The 'benefits' were considerable: 2,341.7 million Kina (over three billion Australian dollars) with the local Bougainvillians the 'Landowners' getting rather less totalling some 28 million Kina.

Demands for independence went unsatisfied and a more militant leadership of the Panguna landowners emerged calling for more money, ecological safeguards and - shock horror - part ownership of the copper. The multinationals laughed. The Pangunans 'stole' explosives blew up pylons and closed the mine. The PNG riot police did their duty. People were killed. In March 89 the PNG army came in. More people were killed - including soldiers. Villages were burned. The people formed the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). Australia sent Iroquois helicopters. All in vain. The mines stayed closed and by March 1990 with the situation out of control the PNG army, mutinous and defeated, was withdrawn. In May 1990 an Interim Government declared independence. The Australian Labour government decided on invasion.

The fundamental element of this plan which is being pursued to this day has been the total blockade of independent Bougainville. The

## Focus on ... Bougainville

The following is an abridged version of an article by Max Watts in the *Anarchist Age Monthly Review* (August 94) published in Melbourne Australia.

blockade, completely dependent on Australian support, has a dual function: to stop supplies getting in and information getting out.

The Australian government assumed that the public in Australia would become increasingly unhappy at supporting a war of Neo-colonial re-conquest, a small, but specifically Australian ... Vietnam. If it were impossible to maintain complete silence the war was to be presented as an internal matter, concerning only PNG, or, even better, as a civil war between 'loyal' Bougainvillians and villain 'criminal' secessionists.

The plan spelled out that while Port Moresby pretended to negotiate with the Interim Government, the PNG army should re-conquer the outer sections of the island building on local conflicts and recruiting local militias.

The hardships caused by the blockade, above all the lack of medical supplies, have been quite cold-bloodedly integrated into this strategy. Aid, food, medicines, must be channelled exclusively to sections re-conquered by the PNG army. This is clear Labour government policy. The so-called 'care centres' even where run by the Red Cross, have always been part of the re-conquest plan. Inside them, Bougainville women and children are to be kept away from their men folk, fighting for their country; outside they are legitimate targets in a country wide free fire zone.

Initially the planners assumed that the government would collapse quickly. Although thousands of Bougainvillians, mostly children and the elderly have died, four

years down the track the war continues. The interior, the mine and access roads are still in rebel hands. The planned, anti-BRA militia has become effective only in the SW, in parts of the Siwai region and even there little territory has been taken.

As the wars drags on information leaks have begun to appear. An Australian radio expert, Sam Voron, ran the blockade and set up Radio Free Bougainville (RFB). Despite enormous difficulties it is still broadcasting and although ignored by the Australian media they are used by Radio New Zealand International, less dishonest in its Bougainville reportage. Others like Rosmarie Gillespie have run the blockade to take medicine in and news out. The Australian government go to great lengths to discredit these people's reports and she has had her passport confiscated.

One particular aspect of Australia's war against Bougainville which the mainstream media ignore is the growing resistance to the war internationally and internally. Criticism by the UN, AI, Medecins sans Frontiers and others may briefly and distortedly appear in the 'quality' press but almost nothing is reported nationally about the growing opposition within the Australian union movement. The Bougainville Freedom Movement, apart from organising medical shipments tries to redress the balance, 'carrying a glass of clean water up-hill against a torrent of shit coming down'.\* Some efforts have been successful but much remains unknown to the broad public.

In January 1994 the NSW South Coast Labour Council joined the protest calling on a Black Ban on all shipments to PNG. A Gibraltar registered ship wanting to load 15,000 tons of wheat has fallen under the ban. This led to a meeting with Foreign Minister Gareth Evans where he repeated the standard line: it is a PNG internal matter. Australia will continue supplying arms and finance. The BRA are criminals and in any case 'we' have won and 'they' have lost. There are only a few hundred BRAs left. Even in Port Moresby this

\* BFM POB 134, Erskineville 2043, Australia Fax (02) 267 4746

## Hawk Protest at Farnborough Airshow

Three members of the peace group ARROW (Active Resistance to the Roots of War) were arrested at the Farnborough Airshow last week in protest against the sale of British Aerospace Hawk fighter aircraft to Indonesia. Indonesia has illegally occupied East Timor for over eighteen years, ignoring ten UN resolutions calling on it to withdraw. During this time 200,000 people - one-third of the pre-invasion population - have been killed. Hawks from an earlier deal have been seen bombing civilians in East Timor, and ARROW has been campaigning for over a year to get the current deal stopped.

The group hung a banner showing a backdrop of mountains and graveyards in East Timor, then staged a die-in in front of it, during which a large quantity of 'blood' was poured on the ground to symbolise the blood of the people of East Timor who have been killed by the Indonesian military. Others handed out leaflets to delegates to the airshow, which is the largest weapons showcase in Europe. David Polden, Chris Cole and Andrea Needham were arrested and taken to Aldershot police station where they were held overnight. They were subsequently charged with two offences: criminal damage and an offence under the Public Order Act. Appearing in court the following day, they were released on conditions that they stayed at least five miles away from the airshow site until the next hearing on 29th September.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

In Britain we are being persuaded to donate organs from transplants in the event of being killed in road accidents. In India, according to the Madras correspondent of *The Independent* (13th August):

"Every year dozens of Britons, disheartened by the years-long queues for kidney transplants on the National Health, come to India for surgery. It is far cheaper and quickly arranged.

The slum where Vajaya lives ... is called Villivakkam but everyone knows it as 'Kidney-vakkam'. More than 900 of the 4,500 inhabitants have sold a kidney ...

Huge profits go to the middlemen and the doctors. Dr Simran Nandy, a prominent Delhi surgeon responsible for pushing the new laws on organ transplants through parliament, said: 'It's like prostitution. It's an immoral trade in which the poor are forced to sell bits of their bodies to the rich'.

Most donors are women. I asked Vajaya why. She nodded towards her snoring husband. 'We women are healthy. The men are drunkards', she said ... Although most of Villivakkam's dwellers cannot read or write, they are well schooled in matters of blood groups and tissue types and what the going rate is for a kidney. Prices vary from £300 to £350. The kidney recipient usually is charged £14,000 for the surgery."

was treated as a joke. To placate unionists a parliamentary delegation was sent.

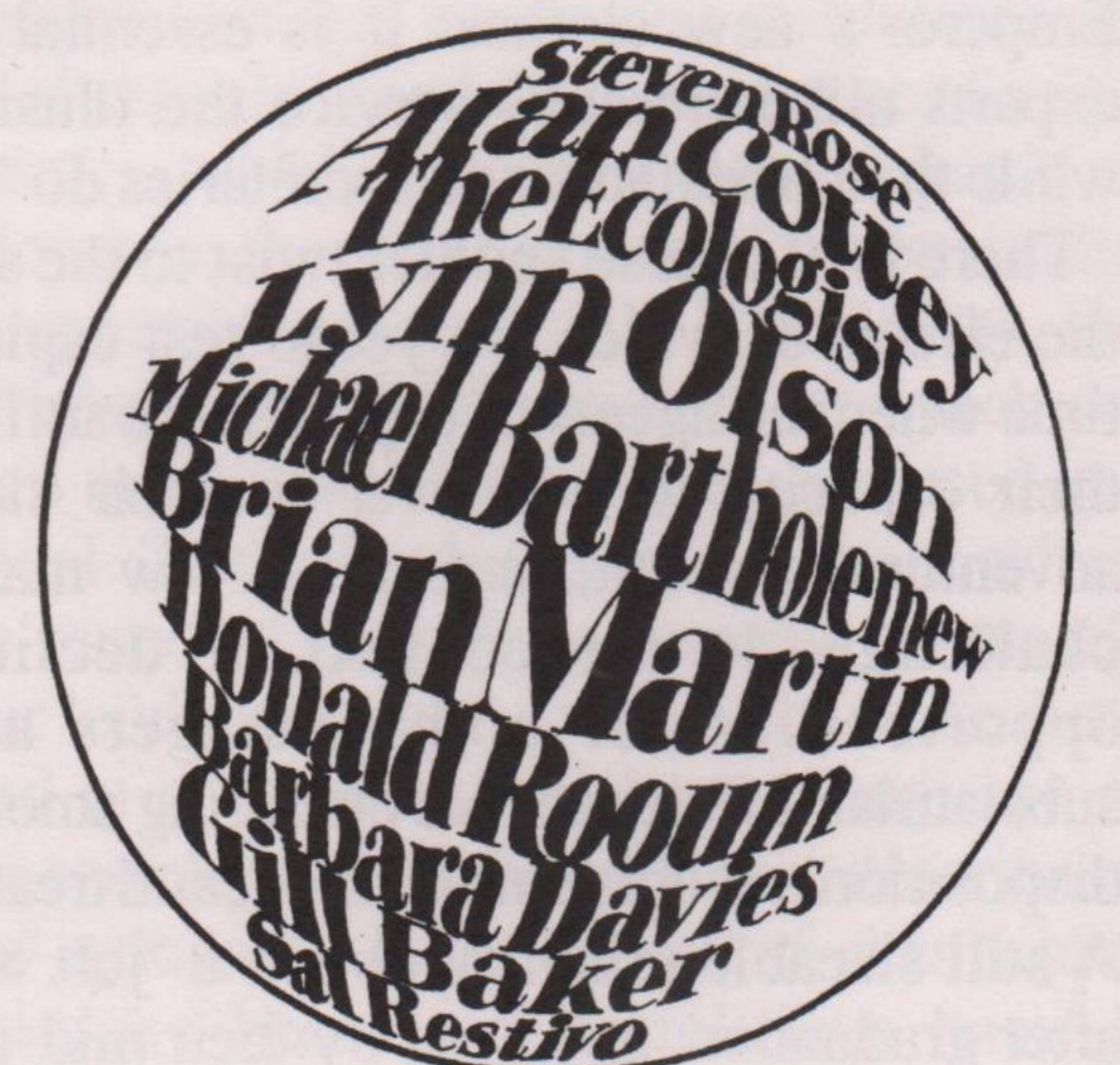
It went for three days in April and turned out to be an exercise in fig-leaf hanging, obfuscation and deception. The Bougainvillians had always welcomed outsiders, often risking their lives to bring outsiders in. On the other hand such visits had been restricted or banned by the PNG government. Initially at least the 'left' delegates seemed to believe they would visit all Bougainville and talk to all Bougainvillians including those the Australians had been machine-gunning and suffering under the blockade.

However, a few days before the visit Canberra announced it would be restricted to PNG army bases and PNG occupied parts of the island. No contact with independent Bougainville. Canberra claimed that the BRA would endanger the delegation. The fact that it was these Bougainvillians who have constantly asked for international, even Australian visitors, was - as usual - suppressed. The delegation went and returned. Apart from one right winger they've said little so far.

The right-winger, Mr Loosely has said that Australia, 'may have either inadvertently or through sheer neglect contributed to some of the problems' which have hit the Bougainvillians. A rather curious way of defining five years of war, waged against a small people, by the Australian establishment! 5,000 perhaps 10,000 deaths directly attributable to a blockade which wouldn't have lasted a week without Australian military assistance. Loosely, and his delegation, may surprise us yet, when their 'report' comes out, but in the meantime I much fear that they have only, once again, loosely hung a fig-leaf over Australia's war, against Bougainville.

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## Laboratory animals and human health

Dear Freedom,

What are the editors of *The Raven* thinking of, publishing a piece like Barbara Davies' defence of animal research? Surely the function of an anarchist journal is to disseminate anarchist views, not to re-state conventional defences of the status quo?

Barbara Davies' article made me furious because it did not acknowledge the reality of animal experimentation. Perhaps she is not familiar with it.

During my years as a scientist, I saw thousands of laboratory animals in universities, medical schools and pharmaceutical companies. I observed their living conditions (small wire cages), their diet (dull pellets of chow), their environment (totally unstimulating and unrelated to that for which they had evolved). It is a miserable life, and for the majority a painful death.

It is a myth that most scientific research is about enhancing the health or happiness of humans or other animals. For academics, research is about status and income: publishing as many papers as possible in high status journals. This is important because it determines what jobs they get and what grants they can command. Of course they justify their work in terms of human (or, more rarely, animal) benefit because this impresses the media, the people who allocate grants, and the gullible. It is good public relations.

I used to experiment on rats. This work – like all the work I observed in the various laboratories I visited – has done nobody any good. Except for me, of course: I gained status in the form of a PhD, and a comfortable life as an academic – until I recognised that exploiting animals in this way was ethically indefensible.

Tearing off my blinkers to acknowledge the reality of animal research was a painful process. Like all those who make a career in the life sciences, I had embraced the hidden agenda which conditions the reactions of the expert elite. Dissecting, then torturing, animals is a rite of passage for committed scientists. It proves that they are objective and rational, not sentimental and emotional.

Some years after giving up animal research, I re-entered academic life as a medical sociologist, studying (among other things) the effects on human health of all this scientific progress. My conclusions became the material for a book I co-wrote with Colin Johnson, *Cured to Death: the effects of prescription drugs* (Secker & Warburg, 1982). *Cured to Death* reveals that the picture described by Barbara Davies of the benefits of medicine is totally distorted and misleading. The evidence in our book reveals just how little influence medical advances have had on human health, and how our focus on

medicine distracts us from the real determinants of health – such factors as adequate nutritious food, education, an egalitarian society and freedom from pollution.

Barbara Davies suggests that animals are better off in the laboratory than on the farm. I agree that some farming practices are cruel and unnecessary, but I would remind her that most of these depend on drugs – the products of laboratory research – for their success. On traditional farms, animals enjoy conditions that are not so far removed from those for which they evolved. Most sheep and cattle wander the fields freely; they have a social life; they listen to the birds and enjoy the sunshine. It is a much better life than that inflicted on laboratory animals.

It is not necessary to do research on animals. There are many effective systems of medicine which do not require animal research, and those who imagine that only those systems which are dependent on western scientific convention are worthy of consideration are either blinkered or ignorant. There is still much progress to be made in methods that depend on the systematic observation of humans, methods which do not cause damage or require injury to animals. However, these methods do not benefit the chemical industry, and therefore do not get the levels of financial support given to laboratory animal research.

The distortion of funding by powerful industrial interests means that university departments, many of which are totally dependent on grants from pharmaceutical companies, often focus exclusively on types of research which involve torturing animals. The teaching they provide is in turn distorted and the

## Satan's work

Dear Freedom,

In his article on 'Creation Science' in *Raven 26* Donald Room describes the ideas of Philip Henry Gosse, who basically takes the view that all evidence against creation – e.g. geological findings giving the earth's age in hundreds of millions of years, the fossil record, astronomical evidence of distant and therefore old galaxies – was deliberately planted by the creator to mislead.

Room takes the view that this is rejected by most creationists because it paints God as a deceiver. It strikes me that this is probably not the real reason for its rejection. After all, creationists readily accept the picture of God as a sadistic, vindictive torturer and murderer portrayed in the Old Testament. A little deception should cause no great moral qualms.

Their real problem is this. If you accept that God went to such trouble to promote a false view of the universe you must ask the reason why. The most obvious explanation seems to be that God didn't wish us to believe in him. Given the track record of religion – the wars, witch-hunts and taboos it has promoted, its ideological backing for tyrannical and exploitative political systems – one could say that he had very good reason for this.

The Gossian model seems unassailable in scientific terms since any evidence against is evidence for it. It follows from accepting the model that the only legitimate religious view is atheism since God either does not exist or, if he does, wishes to conceal that fact. Conversely, religion is either false or contrary to God's will and its existence can only be explained as the work of SATAN!!!

It might be a laugh to try out this theory on the next Jehovah's Witnesses or similar gentry who knock on your door.

John Wood

scientific establishment as a whole shares the restricted focus reflected in Barbara Davies' article.

In theory, the idea that we can save human lives by experimenting on animals has validity. Whether we find that idea acceptable is a question of personal moral belief. But the reality is that experimenting on animals is part of a wider system that is concerned with financial profit, not health. If our primary reason were health we might choose to keep animals on organic farms, but we would not waste their lives and our resources by imprisoning them in laboratories.

Arabella Melville

(Arabella Melville is a human female.)

[*The Raven* on 'Science: 2' also includes a fierce polemic against animal experiments, by Gill Baker – Editors.]

## Plain or innuendo?

Dear Editors,

Tony Gibson's review of *Raven 26* is the worse thing I have ever read in *Freedom* in 24 years of reading this publication. His comments on Barbara Davies' article makes me wonder if Tony has ceased to be an anarchist.

Barbara Davies is paid by huge multi-national drug companies specifically to oppose those who criticise the huge trade in unnecessary torture, whose only function is to protect those drug companies from paying compensation to drug-damaged patients. To call that torture 'science' is to give it dignity, which it does not accord to the animals who suffer.

Barbara Davies' article is not 'plain' but full of unsubstantiated innuendo. And if her readers had minds, that would already be made up. No anarchist can support multi-national cruelty and exploitation and oppose the bold, direct action of libertarians who risk and often serve long prison sentences in their attempt to make people aware of the cruelty that is taking place all around them.

I have nothing against armchair anarchists, especially if they feel they are too old to get involved in direct action (though thoughts of Bertrand Russell in his nineties might stimulate them). It can be quite interesting to read their more scholarly meanderings, as long as they can let go of logical positivism and realise that science left all that behind with Heisenberg and Wittgenstein and now inhabits a post-modernist era where chaos theory provides special inducements to anarchist theorists. I am glad that Alex Comfort is still living (Tony's letter) but 'Lady' Thatcher's doyen of science, 'Sir' Karl Popper, is dead, so leave his 'evil' "interred" with his bones'.

John Myhill

## Political debate and participation: reviving direct democracy?

Dear Freedom,

Anarchist acolytes of the new information technologies have seen in the Internet and personal computers linked via telephone lines and modems the possibility and means of creating a 21st century form of 'Direct Democracy'. A revival of the Athenian Polis via 'IT'. They envisage the 'Global Village' linked by such means, discussing issues of local, national and international concern, debating, taking decisions by means of referenda, electrical assemblies via video telephones, E-mail.

Channel 4 and the Sunday *Observer* have entered this arena with their creation of 'The People's Parliament'. However, their 'People's Parliament' owes comparatively little to the information technologist's vision and could have been set up almost at any time in the last twenty years, given television, telephones and mass circulation newspapers. The 'People's Parliament' is a weekly televised debate between a panel of 'ordinary' people serving as 'MPPs' in a mock-up of the House of Commons. It uses the latter's 'adversary' style of debate, plus 'select committees'

to debate an issue of topical interest. The debate is also carried in the *Observer* with a choice of telephone voting lines to enable the wider public, as well as the studio MPPs, to express an opinion. The newspaper's results are published in the consecutive week's edition.

Some of the debates have been of interest for libertarians, for example the issue of whether young offenders should have custodial or non-custodial sentences, whether the right to strike should be abolished for workers in 'essential services'. Some of the results of the debates have been refreshingly 'libertarian' and the quality of some contributions distinctly libertarian, for example the comment that "only slaves cannot withdraw their labour", but is this so surprising when 'ordinary' people are able to debate and express opinions free from media and political manipulation? The debate about young offenders came out strongly in favour of non-custodial treatment, while the debate on the right to strike for workers in essential services was two to one in favour of retaining the right to strike.

Is it now time to 'trust the people'?

JPS

## Pseudonyms

Dear Comrades,

I see Peter Neville wants a list of pseudonyms used by anarchist writers in libertarian (or other left) papers.

I am by no means certain that I can remember anything like a full list, but as far as I can I am happy to supply. There are a lot of them as on occasions when I have edited papers and have not wanted the vast majority of articles to have 'LO' on them I have used four or five at a time.

I wrote my first political articles under the name of Jolf Ross (or when I used it later, Jolfe Rosse). I then didn't want to be mistaken for my mother, who was a stalinist fellow traveller. Jolf is from my initials. The last letters of my name would read 'NSSR' and as I had an aunt whose stage name was Oriel Ross that seemed a possible rendering.

My illegible handwriting was once mocked by a college dean (who knew perfectly well who I was) pretending that I had signed John St Lawrence, and my brother suggested I remember this as a useful *nom de guerre*.

My first two christian names are Jean François and this, or (*anglice*) John Francis, has provided me with another two, whilst reversed as Nohj Sicnarf it has sounded like a suitably academic central European sociologist. Sneraul Retto has also served its purposes.

The late Buck Taylor always used to call me Giflo (an obvious play on JFLO) and so published a number of my articles in *The Libertarian*. He also used Dowgry (the Cornish for Otter). When in the early

'50s I lived in France I occasionally signed articles in *Le Lib* or *Soc ou Barbe Loure* (French for Otter).

In *OXAN*, in *The Libertarian*, in *Freedom* and in *Chain Reaction* (the Telford Anti-Nuclear Group paper) I have had columns: 'Unfair Comment' by Thought afore Malice (though when the first of these appeared in *The Libertarian* it was, without my agreement, published as 'Sitting on a Column' by Simon Stylites).

Letters sent to *News and Letters* in the States tend to get cut up, with snippets of them printed with descriptions rather than names dreamed up by the editors, so I wouldn't like to begin to list the pseudonyms given me in those columns. *Agitator* (the early name of *Solidarity*) when publishing an article on civil disobedience re-christened me mud-dweller or some such, I forget what exactly.

In the early '60s Gabrielle Cohn Bendit (then in *Noir et Rouge* and *ICO*) quite deliberately (and after consulting Ken Hawkes) took articles from *Direct Action*, translated them, altered them so that they appeared in a French context and appended French-sounding names. I appeared under three such, I'm afraid I can't remember which.

Will that do?

Laurens

**Please keep sending in your letters and donations**

## Any 'respected' anarchists?

Dear Editors,

Presumably in an attempt to destroy an opponent's argument, Tony Gibson parades Paul Feyerabend as a "respected philosopher" ("The Method of Freedom is the Method of Science", 17th September).

The fact that Feyerabend was recognised and rewarded by a university establishment does not necessarily mean that he should command the respect of anarchists, or any other philosophers. Are there any respected anarchists? Who are they? Respected by whom?

Ernie Crosswell

## Rise and decline of British anarchism

Dear Freedom,

In his enthusiastic review (6th August 1994) of the pamphlet by his comrade Laurens Otter, *Anarchists and the Peace Movement*, Brian Bamford happens to talk about "a breakaway from the Syndicalist Workers Federation in the late '60s, in which he claims Nick Heath helped set up the Anarcho-Syndicalist Alliance with a view to backing the North Vietnamese regime against the USA".

At the risk of boring people like Donald Room I feel I have to defend my reputation. At no time have I defended any Stalinist regime. Bamford should know better. He was around at the time of the birth of the ASA, but he can't even get its real name right! It was the Anarchist Syndicalist Alliance. This was a name chosen to underline an alliance of

anarchists and syndicalists. The group was not a breakaway from the SWF, it developed inside the old Anarchist Federation of Britain at the beginning of the '70s. At that time the SWF was down to more or less a one-man outfit, run by Dave Pickett. At no time did it, or I, make any statement about the North Vietnamese regime. To repeat the statement by Otter is a gross slander.

But then there is a hidden agenda here. Both Otter and Bamford are members of the Syndicalist Bulletin Group. Otter is a leading defender of pacifism within the anarchist 'movement' and resents any criticism of the way he and his fellow believers have pushed a vague form of liberal pacifism which was at its strongest in the '60s but is waning with the development of class struggle

anarchist currents. Otter and Co. sing the praises of the bourgeois statist politician Gandhi and the religious freak Tolstoy and the benefits of Non-Violent Direct Action. However, rather than engaging in serious debate, he does what so many 'anarchists' have done in the recent past. In the '70s I and other class struggle anarchists were accused of being Trotskyists, Anarcho-Bolsheviks, etc. Now Otter goes one step further and accuses me without the slightest shred of evidence of fellow-travelling with Stalinism. I demand that he produce concrete evidence (actual quotes from publications, with dates) or make a public apology. I'm sorry, but this sort of libellous conduct will just not do.

Yours for anarchism,

Nick Heath



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**- Autumn 1994 -**

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**Sunday 6th November:** Swithland and environs, Leicestershire. Meet 11.00am at Griffins Head Pub, Swithland (south west of Quorndon, exit junction 23 M1 and A6 from Loughborough). Walk leader Mike Hamilton.

**Sunday 4th December:** Blackbrook and environs, Belper. Meet 11.00am at Long Walls Lane on Belper to Ashbourne Road.

**Telephone for further details**  
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