

## The real lessons to learn from THE AMERICAN MID-TERM ELECTIONS

The United States mid-term elections have been declared by the press here as a disaster for the Democratic Party, and in particular for President Bill Clinton. It is noteworthy that our millionaire press should also maintain that the results have some bearing on, and some lessons for, their recent blue-eyed Labour-boy Tony Blair.

For anarchists the mid-term elections are full of interesting facts, hardly encouraging for the politicians and depressing for those well-meaning 'soft lefties' who think that our wicked world can be improved, nay radically changed, via the ballot box and the 'right' people. First and foremost is the fact that of the 193 million of voting age in the United States, only 132 million were registered voters, and of those 132 million only 38.7% actually voted that is 51 million. In other words, 142 million Americans entitled to vote didn't. Let us have our arithmetic crystal clear, of the American citizens entitled to vote 51 million did and 142 million (including 41 million who didn't register for whatever reason) didn't! So the so-called Republican landslide was determined by a 26.4% turnout of the electorate entitled to vote. So much for 'democracy' and the enthusiasm it generates among the people in the 'richest' 'most powerful' nation in the world today. Surely the message from such a turnout is that for the majority a change of government or administration makes no difference economically, socially or politically. They have voted with their feet, but we suspect with sadness

class with the only language they can understand!

The American weekly magazine L Time (21st November) gives a list of the "Ten Biggest Spenders" in the recent election jamboree. For the Senate, Michael Huffington, well known here thanks to his glamorous Greek wife, spent no less than \$25 million (£16 million) to buy a seat in the Senate, just as Oliver North, known worldwide as a top level crook over the arms for Iraq scandal and for which he was sent to prison but somehow never went there, spent \$16.75 million (£10.5 million). Both obviously didn't spend enough to get elected. But other millionaire spenders for the Senate and the House certainly paid their way with the cheque book. As to what the Clinton/Democratic 'defeat', 'landslide', means our view is that if anything conditions for the underprivileged in the USA will get that much worse than they are already. After all, the majority who didn't vote are those who need most both materially and in health care. At best for them nothing will change. Time gives answers from an opinion poll which, we repeat, only confirmed the general public's desperation so far as the political parties and the future are concerned.

### A Question for Prime Minister's Time

The ceremonial for the new session of Parliament and the government's programme, delivered with boredom and solemnity by the Queen weighed down by a 3lb crown and held to the ground by a train requiring four pages to help her on her way to the throne, should be seen by the unemployed, the old and the inform who are being squeezed financially as the rich get richer.

This editorial writer interrupted his piece on 'Cuts in the NHS' (page 2) to watch television's report on the opening of Parliament. One can only describe the whole ceremony as a combination of obscenity and hypocrisy. We invite Denis Skinner or Tony Benn to put a question to the government (and we will not even offer them a free subscription to *Freedom*) to ask what this ridiculous farce costs the taxpayers.

nd as the television cameras panned The gathered assembly in the Lords it confirmed, for this writer at least, that no law, no legislation will uproot the privileged minority. So long as the victims are prepared to go along with this situation and accept that it's their fault if they are unemployed (not enough skills, you know!) and anyway, the rich and poor, that's how It is so don't bother to vote because that won't change anything. The American people have already realised that. But there is an alternative when the victims of capitalism - the underpaid, the unemployed, the old, the handicapped and now more than ever the young, join forces to stake their claim not with a cross once every five years but in the streets of every city, town and village. And if they organise their protests nationally the police and their riot shields and truncheons and mounted police will go home, defeated, and the politicians will see the writing on the wall.

To the question "Will the Republicans do a better job running (continued on page 2)

And all those tiaras in the House of Lords and that 3lb crown, as well as those colourful uniforms, will disappear – or perhaps inspire a fantastic ballet? that it is more in desperation than with any intention of facing the ruling

### Reflections on our ROLL-ON, ROLL-OVER FERRIES

In writing about the Baltic ferry disaster (Freedom, 15th October) we pointed out that while bow doors that let the sea in obviously do not contribute to the safety of the vessel, it is the design of these ships which is at fault.

Following the 'Herald of Free Enterprise' disaster in 1987, with the loss of 193 lives, the Royal Institute of Naval Architects (RINA) warned that ro-ro ferries were:

"... unacceptably vulnerable in that there was a likelihood of rapid capsize should the car deck be flooded for whatever reason." Following the 'Estonia' disaster this year the RINA warned that many ro-ro ferries, especially the older ones, are "still vulnerable to rapid capsize", adding:

"Whilst no vessel can ever be regarded as unsinkable, it should be capable of absorbing a number of errors and misfortunes before there is a danger of sinking ... It is horrifying to find that ro-ro vulnerability has again been tragically demonstrated with the loss of the Estonia."

Professor Kenneth Rawson, chairman of the RINA safety committee, expressed the view, according to an (continued on page 2)

# EDITORIAL COMMENTS

# Cuts in the NHS, but there's taxpayer's money for private hospital

The government is always reminding us L that when they make cuts in the public services they are after all acting on our behalf since it's our money which they are using to the best advantage, etc. However, how many of us were aware of the fact that some six months ago a £180 million private hospital near Glasgow opened its doors, and offered its beds and services and its four hundred staff to members of the oil-rich nations to enjoy luxury operations at luxury fees? Very few of us outside Scotland. But how many even in Scotland were aware that the government had contributed £30 million of 'state aid' to this £180 million project until last week when the news was that the managers of the Health Care International (HCI) hospital (did you even know the name?) had called in the receivers after only five months that they had been in the sickness (perhaps including maladies imaginaires) business for the rich because the private money-lenders had refused a "£15 million rescue package".

Once more Michael Heseltine had to explain away using our money for speculation in the private sector. The American backed HCI hospital was, he said, "a very deliberate decision to create health excellence and jobs" and the old chestnut "if you never take risks, you never achieve anything" – which of course multi-millionaire Heseltine can well afford to say, but he is using *public money* which is apparently not available for all kinds of urgent services in the NHS.

# In Brief

FREEDOM • 26th November 1994

A coording to Alex Bellos (Guardian, 5th November) the Church of England is urging the clergy to "modernise their style of preaching. Instead of mumbling, boring, rehashed speeches, it wants services to be more entertaining and effective." And our upbeat Archbishop of Canterbury, as he re-launched the ecumenical College of Preachers, added his contribution to the jazzing up of religion with the reflection that:

"In any age of mass media and secular influence, effective preaching is required to renew the churches and transform the country." and worship to reflect more adequately ... the aspirations of all those who strive to create the wealth of our country." And the most important quote since the above were hedged in with conditions such as that "wealth creation is not synonymous with the co-called free market", was that:

"The archbishop's speech was part of a campaign to reconcile churchgoers with the business world. Defending the role of financial markets, he said it was a cosy myth that 'real work is making things whereas the really questionable activity is financial wheeler dealing'.

The Opposition can protest until they are blue in the face and nothing changes. We repeat for the umpteenth time, when will we the victims decide to act, and not via the ballot box or new political gurus? The anarchist message is ACT FOR YOURSELVES against governments but, in concert with your friends and neighbours, against privilege, against the built-in corruption that is capitalism.

# **ROLL-ON, ROLL-OVER FERRIES**

#### (continued from page 1)

East Anglian Daily Times report (8th November), that "new measures should be brought in to give ro-ro ferries greater stability". For, as the professor points out, since the 'Estonia' conformed to the present international stability standard SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea), 90 he must "cast doubt on its validity".

Christian Wolman in *The Independent* (8th November) makes it quite clear that:

"The disasters have led the RINA to say the design of the ships is inherently unstable and that transverse retractable bulkheads, dividing up the car deck, should be fitted." (our italics)

At last an admission that the ships are unstable *per se.* But who designed the ships? And what pressures were put on the architects involved to cut corners by the prospective clients, who after all are concerned with making money from the enterprise? As we reported (*Freedom*, 15th October), the Estonian carriers declared they would weld the bows of their ferries the much larger British operators made it clear that they wouldn't, and we commented: Class One UK Certificate in Competence'. He says P&O insist on its captains and their second-in-commands having this qualification. He adds: 'Ferry safety depends on the way it is operated more than any other factor'." (East Anglian Daily Times, 8th November)

But what has all that assurance to do with whether the ship's design has been for *profit* and not for *safety* and is unstable?

A gain a spokesman for the merchant navy officer's union NUMAST said:

"It is all very well clamping down on the conditions of ships, but stress and fatigue on seafarers should be given equal attention." (our italics) The new Bishop of Durham, who has survived the gutter press's reminder of a 'naughty' incident in his distant past, aided his mite when he said that:

"Those who preach must be more professional in their methods of communicating Christ's message in a modern world. The preaching of the Gospel both inside and outside our churches needs close examination and probably radical revision."

Our first reaction is to ask these God-lovers what is God doing? Is he Almighty or not? And if he is, why is Mammon winning all the tricks and the churches are emptying? Those who might conclude that Freedom's Godless editors are being more than irreverent should read the Archbishop of Canterbury's address to the Manchester Business School (Guardian, 8th November) when he said, among other things, that "wealth creation is part of God's plan", that the Church should "improve its relevance to people in their working lives – not least in business. I should like our liturgies

### THE AMERICAN

However, financial markets could be 'exploited for evil or unwholesome purposes', he said."

Among the lowest paid workers in this country are the farm workers who produce the food that even the Archbishop of canterbury needs in spite of his important connections with 'God'. And of course his salary is paid for by the Church which, as we all know, depends on its investments in the 'financial markets' to keep him and the thousands of other 'professionals' in jobs!

The blackleg former president of the breakaway so-called Union of Democratic Mineworkers, Roy Lynk, who to a certain extent contributed to prolonging the miners' strike of 1984-85, has received his reward (unlike his union, which suffered major closures of pits which it controlled) by being appointed as one of the five part-time members of the Coal Authority, established last week to oversee the mining industry after privatisation. His successor as leader of the UDM, another rat whose privatisation bid was rejected last month, commented on the appointment of Mr Lynk: "No doubt people will say he's been rewarded for supporting the Tories - and he probably has".

"... in a sense they are right for the inexorable fault is that these vessels are unstable in their very design."

Now following the virtual confirmation of this view by the RINA, the spokesman for one of the large operators, P&O Ferries, obviously had to do something to reassure the travelling public. Not having ever made the drawings even for a rowing boat, he was able to declare that safety issues are not as black and white as the RINA suggests. It is worth quoting the P&O spokesman, Brian Rees, verbatim:

"If they emphasise the technical side what people lose sight of is that the ships are only as safe as the people operating them', he says. 'Our safety comes into play in the way we train and the second second second second

How right he is, but is he not also concerned about the "conditions of the ships"? Again no capitalist enterprise operates other than for profit. So not surprising that not only have the designs of the ro-ro ferries cut corners for profit but conditions for crews have made demands that would have not been acceptable when, for instance, the cross-Channel services were operated by British Rail. To demand 24 hours on and 24 hours off, let alone 48 hours on and off, invites human beings to neglect their duties on which the safety of the ship and its passengers - especially in the Channel - is concerned.

But that said – when will the seafarers rebel? – we return to the major threat to our safety as travellers, which is ferry boats designed for profits and not for safety. Surely this is a scandal that needs the kind of attention that is currently being concentrated by the media on a few Don Juan politicians. Indeed, could all this not be just another example of capitalism at work. We would not dream of using the word 'sleaze' – only because, as readers must surely know by now, we anarchists maintain that capitalism by

### MID-TERM ELECTIONS

#### (continued from page 1)

Congress?" - 31% said 'better', 16% 'worse' and a majority of 45% said no difference. Again in another poll to the question "Now that the Republicans control Congress, is this a new era of government in Washington ..." (32% said it was) "or will there be a continuation of politics as usual?" (63% said politics as usual).

A narchists will not get much - consolation from the results of the mid-term elections, nor even, alas, from the overwhelming majority - 142 million out of the 193 million who were entitled to put their cross even if in the end to be double-crossed. But surely we are entitled to argue that the electoral system, referenda and any other system, have no meaning or usefulness in a society divided between a minority that owns everything and a majority which owns but a worthless vote. No wonder they don't vote. But when will they realise that they are the real producers of wealth with the real power in their hands?

And we ask: What about Neil Greatorex? What was he trying to do?

It's twenty years ago that Lord 'Lucky' Lucan bludgeoned to death his children's nanny and disappeared, and nothing more has been heard about his death or whereabouts. Needless to say it is making good television. What interests this column are the statements by his widow. We quote from The Independent of 8th November:

"He is dead. My husband was a nobleman and he would behave in a noble way."

The fact that Lady Lucan was also attacked on the night the nanny was murdered has not prevented her from saying that she was not bitter about her husband. Indeed, she went so far as to declare:

"There was no bitterness on my side. I have always called it a tragedy, a misunderstanding."

Surely, since the 'misunderstanding' was that he killed the nanny instead of his wife she must, considered as a candidate for sanctification in due course!



26th November 1994 • FREEDOM

# HOME NEWS

The ten-day anarchist festival at the end of October was thoroughly worthwhile, a joyful affair which succeeded in bringing the scattered anarchist movement together, more than the two book fairs alone have ever done. It was less successful, however, in being "ten days that shook the world". The world hardly noticed it, in spite of much hard work bringing it to the attention of the media. And what little mention there was, outside of the anarchist press, was mostly negative.

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One journalist inspired to write by the festival programme was Jon Ronson, author of the 'Human Zoo' column in The Guardian Weekend of 12th November. He writes that he went to one of the advertised events, "an event jam-packed with a creche, vegan food, a seminar entitled 'Poetry as a Political Weapon', stand-up comedy, class warriors and animal rights activists". In fact it was one of the many events which was advertised but not organised, and Jon Ronson squeezes two thousand words of mediocre witticism out of its non-occurrence. The London listings magazine Time Out included a short item, a photograph with a few sentences of caption which misrepresented anarchism completely. A common misuse of the word 'anarchist' is its application to anyone who does something illegal for a political objective, however far that objective may be from anarchist aims. Guy Fawkes, for instance, is sometimes described as an anarchist, even though his avowed objective

# Anarchy in the UK: the down side



On Thursday 27th October, some people went to the 121 Centre with a leaflet which they wanted reproduced in the bulletin for the following day. Told that their leaflet was not suitable for the bulletin, the visitors lost their tempers, punched one of the 121 comrades and threatened violence and destruction to prevent the bulletin from being produced at all. Eventually they arrived at a compromise. The gang would allow the bulletins to be produced if the leaflet was printed separately and circulated with the bulletin as an insert, and the publishers might comment on the leaflet in the bulletin itself.

The leaflet accuses a musician of rape, giving his name, the band he plays with and his private address. It is stated that he angrily denies rape and has asked for a meeting with his accuser and the accusing group to state his case. This is presented as further evidence of his guilt.

was to replace an arbitrary regime with something even nastier.

The photograph in *Time Out* is of some yobs who went into W.H. Smith's Oxford Street shop and tore up every magazine with a photograph of a woman on the front – not just the 'men's magazines' with photographs of pretty women wearing smiles of welcome, but also the abundant 'women's magazines' with

# The Anarchist Federation of Britain

Pollowing the suggestion of those who attended the initial meeting organised at the 'Ten Days Conference' I drew up an initial report both from the minutes and how I saw what happened and circulated this and the details of the next meeting (Wednesday 7th December 1994) to Freedom, Peace News, the ACF (Organise), Class War, the 121 Centre and East Midlands Anarchists. So far an abridgement of my report has appeared in Freedom (12th November 1994). Peace News ignored it and did not even mention the meeting in its diary column, and I have had no response from Class War, the ACF and 121 Centre. The London Anarchist Forum have already looked at the proposal briefly and will have a fuller discussion on Friday 2nd December. The East Midlands Anarchists have discussed the matter and I have also had a detailed response from Neil Birrell (in Dorset). Following the suggestion of Donald Rooum, and in order to widen the discussion, I have sent fifty copies of a summary and invitation to the movement through the Anarchist Distribution Network in Sheffield (with a request for postal cost requirements). So far they too have made no response. I have also circulated a number of other groups, publications and individuals whose addresses I have obtained from the Anarchist Year Book 1995 and elsewhere. Again no response. I have talked to Jonathan Simcock and had a written reply. Briefly, unless there is a response from other regions, the East Midlands Anarchists, who are prepared to give the idea conditional support, might be prepared to have a national anarchist conference within the period April to August next year to discuss these matters. They strongly insist that any national body should not be London run/organised and meetings should be held outside London. Neil Birrell feels any national grouping should be 'bridge building' in form, drawing in all groups who see themselves as part of the movement and only ignoring those who refuse to participate. Which means, he says, men will have to speak to feminists (and the other way about too), syndicalists to greens, pacifists to urban guerrillas and so on. He suggests that federalism might hold the key (and if I myself might borrow an idea from the Trotskyists - horror, horror - organised factions motivating the specific to their own ends whilst still participating fully with the generality in regard to broader aims). Lastly, might I mention one criticism of the 'Ten Days Conference'. Some have said why did not the London Anarchist Forum play a larger part in the conference. We were told that John Rety would be giving a talk at Conway Hall on the first Friday and a major conference would be held in Hackney on the second Friday, so we cancelled our meeting the

first Friday but reasoned Hackney was a bit far for many people and so organised a central London meeting the second Friday. The conference organisers had not told John Rety the date so his meeting was held the following week so LAF could have had the meeting, and the Hackney meeting was transferred to Conway Hall which decimated the LAF's meeting attendance. When the organiser of the 'Ten Days Conference' was invited to speak to the LAF in the planning stage, he contemptuously refused to come. Who said we do not need a national coordinating body to iron out the kinks in our organisational planning? **Peter Neville**  the heads and shoulders of pretty women wearing deadpan expressions – apparently in furtherance of a campaign for censorship to be imposed in this country, similar to that imposed in Iran.

The worst of it is that in *Time Out* these censorious yobs are described as "international anarcho-feminists". Those in the photograph are recognisable as people who took part in the anarchist festival, apparently in the mistaken belief that 'anarchism' is compatible with dictating what people are permitted to read.

It would be nice to be efficient, but efficiency is not part of the anarchist message so anarchist events which do not take place do no harm in the long run. Whereas the idea that censorship freaks are anarchists, if only they go in for direct action, is a real setback for anarchist propaganda.

One of the successes of the festival was the publication of a daily bulletin, produced at the 121 Centre and edited by our comrade Jamie. Even this, however, became the victim of authoritarianism. The publishing group of the bulletin comment:

"Today's bulletin contains an insert that was produced independently of the bulletin and the 121 Centre's collectives. There is a leaflet being circulated about [name of person] who plays in [name of band]. The leaflet alleges that he raped a woman in Germany. We at *Bulletin the Head* know nothing about who [the band] are or what they do. We don't care either! However we feel that people should read the leaflet and make up their own minds about this issue. We do not think the bulletin is the right place to publish accusations of this sort, especially under duress."

#### Jamie comments:

"Rape is a deadly serious accusation. I am anti-rape. I am also anti-censorship. However, I am also vehemently against politically correct fascists who bully others into being their unwitting mouthpiece. Jamie. I'm not afraid to sign my fucking name."

These hastily-written comments are enough to show the problems which our comrades were facing when they wrote them. If we are attacked by avowed fascists like Combat 18, we know what to think immediately. Authoritarian thugs who think they are on our side present us with a puzzle.

# **Through the Anarchist Press**

London has borne the brunt of this Country's political activities for too long. Compared to other capital cities, it is a difficult place to live in, especially as there is a lack of municipal acumen which such a metropolis demands by its very nature. Visiting other cities in the country there are only a few which are beset by similar difficulties, such as the seats of government (Westminster), seats of finance (City of London) and a focal point for tourism.

Scotland's capital cities perhaps are beset only by the latter consideration. Nobody knows if Cornwall or Wales have any capital cities. As for Ireland, Stormont in Belfast has been abolished, which leaves only one civic power in Ireland - that which resides in Dublin. However controversial the above may be, from an anarchist point of view and from the point of view of somebody who either lives or works in London, the anarchist movement has seen more political activity in London than in other parts of the country. Should government move out of Westminster or the City of London go bankrupt, both a very likely event only a few years ago but now as real power has shifted politically to Brussels and financially to Tokyo, London can easily become a ghost town in which, like in many other towns in these isles, a third of the population is without a job and lives in hand-outs. The above remarks (cryptic admittedly, but surely understandable to readers who in 1962 were deemed by a devoted questioner to "be

highly intelligent") are after all addressed to the incipient anarchist movements on these isles.

The reference to Dublin, which cannot have but one tenth of the problems of London, is that it is nevertheless a civic power, same as Westminster, with a military pocket in Ulster/Northern Ireland which is under military rule.

The present talks are a farce and everybody should know it. The troops should be withdrawn forthwith. As for London, the same for Belfast. There is now talk of restarting the Anarchist Federation of Britain, but first of all local federations need to be put in place. Such as the Administration of Anarchist Activities of London, Isle of Man, Cambridge, Belfast, etc. The title AFB is a misnomer and only vaguely points at a direction. But it is significant that even the highly successful Anarchy in the UK '94 had to take place in London. Next year allow a Londoner to suggest that Anarchy in the UK '95 should take place simultaneously in all the suffering capital towns, Glasgow, London, Belfast or even Dublin. Surely anarchists do not believe in frontiers?

noticeboard, I venture to give the whole list. I wonder if people realise how much love and attention to detail characterises these cheaply put out communications. This is the whole list as I copied it out from left to right:

Global Partnership (conference) / Visions of Poesy (bookjacket) / Survivors of the Mental Health System / Music concert (benefit) / Poetry readings schedule / Book list / Storytelling ceilidh / Photographic Society (leaflet) / Tree dressing event / Bicycle maintenance workshop / Anti-Criminal Justice Bill week of activities / Stop the CIA week / Benefit for Mordecai Vanunu / Stop the Hawks / Flysheet Camp (holidays for urban children in the countryside) / Women's art group / Age Concern / Art therapy / M11 campaign / Lancashire hot spots / Piano tutor / Free Information Network (contacts list with 256 addresses) / Technology course / Local history studies / River Action / Recycling / Tenants Federation news / Anti-whaling leaflet.

No doubt there are noticeboards all over the town in colleges and offices. However, you usually need a rubber stamp from the principal's office before the leaflet is displayed. I find such noticeboards full of information and I wonder how they will get comprehensive attention.

Visiting my local community centre I carefully looked at the noticeboard, the contents of which could easily fill and no doubt interest readers of this paper. Every time I visit the Freedom Bookshop, their wall for similar and different notices is completely full. The person who runs this noticeboard at the community centre takes, I am told, at least an hour a day putting up the notices and carefully filing the old ones. There must be hundreds of these noticeboards now in London and they serve a very useful service. Just to give an idea to readers of the range of interests appealed to on this randomly selected A correspondent asked, in jest of course, that if I were so clever could I inform the writer of the exact time of the coming anarchist revolution. As this is not the first time that I and many other comrades have been asked precisely the same question, I've decided to make some culminations (oops, calculations). After a pleasurable hour or so with pencil and paper, I can now give the exact time for such an event to take place at 5pm on 16th November 1999. If anybody wishes to verify this all they need is a pencil and paper and a few pleasurable hours to spare. John Rety

### INTERNATIONAL NEWS FREEDOM • 26th November 1994

# News from Venezuela

Following on from the last bulletin sent out in the summer from Freedom's International Section we have received more information, and a copy of their publication Correo A, from the Colectivo PLUM (A) (formerly **Colectivo Circulo A) in Venezuela...** 

Correo A is a publication of Colectivo PLUM (A). That is a socialist libertarian group working in Venezuela since the '80s, where an anarchist tradition did not exist until then. The first number appeared in November '87 and we have tried to publish four numbers per year. We produce around 1,200 copies that are sold at the rather symbolic price of US \$0.17, and they are distributed in Caracas and twelve other cities in the rest of the country. Correo A is not just the oldest libertarian publication here, but it is the only regular press of the radical left in these years. Because of this it is well appreciated among politically motivated young people wanting alternative points of view, in an intellectual environment where alternatives are few. We have published a few booklets about anarchism and in December 1990 we co-edited with Editorial Recorrtes (related to the Federacin Anarquista Uruguaya) the book (sold out) El Pensamiento de Malatesta written by Angel Cappalletti, one of our collaborators. We have further projects along these lines which will be carried out when our means allow. Colectivo PLUM (A) tries to organise groups to discuss and act according to anarchist ideas and take part and collaborate with several social and popular movements. Even though we are rather few in number we try to keep a permanent and enthusiastic presence in the fight which we hope will develop a higher consideration for out politics. We keep contacts and we interchange publications with 68 libertarian groups in 22 countries. We are now trying with some others.

magazine next November we are organising a film and video series, provisionally titled 'Lights! Camera! (A)!'. We hope to start in Caracas at the end of this year or at the beginning of 1995, counting on the support of the Cinemateca Nacional – the national film centre - (indispensable to get hold of some essential material and use their theatre) and the Cinema Club of Faculty of Engineering of the UCV (which has the equipment and space to show videos). Later the series will take to the cities of Barquisimeto and Valencia, where friends have already made moves to guarantee places and dates with cultural and educational centres. So it seems as if everything is going very smoothly, not to mention other possible places in Venezuela we have yet to contact with the certainty that more possibilities will arise. Thanks mainly to the Cinemateca archives, we already have a base on which to build the films La Patagonia Rebelde, Viva Zapata, A Nous la Libert, Dead Poets Society, Sacco and Vanzetti, some Marx Brothers films, some short films and our videos of the 1993 International Anarchist Exhibition in Barcelona. However, this is only a start. We need to show as many key testimonies of the presence of anarchism on the screen as we can. For this reason, once again we call for the support of our friends from all over the world, asking you to send video cassettes in whatever

format or films - spoken or subtitled in Spanish – which you are willing to donate to us and which naturally depicts and stresses the libertarian message as a possibility now and in the future. This request also extends to graphic and printed material along the same lines, since we would like to accompany the films and videos with an exhibition of posters, photos, reproductions, catalogues, press notes, etc.

We know we are asking a lot and that it's not

easy to come up with what we want, but we are sure that any help you can give us will bear fruit in the growth of our movement in Venezuela, just as it was two years ago with our exhibition 'La A Dentro del Circulo' (The 'A' in the Circle) the first public act of the contemporary Venezuelan anarchist movement. We'll let you know how we get on. N. Méndez Casilla 25, Fac. Ingeniera, UCV, Caracas

**1040 Venezuela** 



The worst rainstorms in living memory caused at least 32 deaths in Piedmont, Northern Italy, on one day last month. The fascia board in the photograph declares '350th Anniversary of the Miracle of the Madonna of Pilone'.



To celebrate the seventh anniversary of our

# Copernicus? Isn't that a rock band?

while back a survey was taken in Canada on A the public awareness of basic scientific facts. An unbelievable fifty percent of the population were of the opinion that the sun revolved around the earth. They seem to have completely missed the Copernican revolution. Even if you discount the elderly who did not receive an education or the minority of immigrants who are illiterate, you are still left with one hell of a lot of people who went through the school system and yet maintain this medieval world-view. Furthermore, our culture is permeated with Copernicanism - think only of the television news or science fiction.

At first glance one is tempted to laugh at 'the masses, them asses', and agree that some self-appointed elite should guide them out of the darkness. But given the fact the heliocentric conception is part of education and culture, one must conclude this ignorance is wilful. They prefer to believe their senses, for which the sun travels around the earth, to the commonsense shattering theories of science. Look at this again – all the powers of the media and education system has been brought to bear upon these people, yet they prefer their own version of reality. There is something hopeful in this, don't you find? What other things the establishment says do they also refuse to believe? There is also a lesson here for anarchists. We tend to scapegoat the media and the education system. Supposedly, the masses do not believe as we want them to because they are brainwashed by these institutions. If only the media and schools were fair (i.e. gave our viewpoints extensively) the populace would rush to sign up for the revolution. Given the high level of suspicion indicated by this survey, the situation must be a lot more complex than that. Maybe we are partly to blame for our lack of appeal. Perhaps we are seen as one more elitist group telling them how to act and what to believe.

ast week an event occurred in Delhi that, by the standards of current political warfare, may seem small. But in fact, for its exposure of the evils that lurk at the heart of Indian society, its influence will be debated for years to come.

The event was the private screening of Shekhar Kapur's Phoolan Devi: Bandit Queen, already hailed as the greatest film ever made in India. It created something of a sensation at the Cannes Film Festival this summer and opened to rave notices in Britain, the country that financed it. About four hundred Indians, a fair cross-section of the capital's opinion-forming elite of media people, lawyers, social activists and bureaucrats, were invited to make up their minds before it was shown to the Censor Board. Two hours later they poured out of the hall stunned, some ashen-faced and trembling, but mostly dead silent. The film is unquestionably a landmark in Indian cinema but it hopes to achieve something more. By radically altering the way truths are told, or remain hidden in India, it seeks to redefine the way Indians look at themselves. It is the toughest, most violent and brutal film ever made in India; but, as Shekhar Kapur its director kept warning the audience before the show, the truth is more brutal than fiction. The film is based on a book of the same name by Mala Sen which, in turn, is based on a long time the author spent with Phoolan recording her life story during her years in Gwalior jail. The bare facts of the dacoit queen's life are not unknown: cast off by her family in marriage to a much older man at the age of eleven, she was sexually abused by upper caste Thakurs and landed in jail. Rejected by her parents, she was carried off as a sex slave by Chambal dacoits, among whom she met her lover Vikram Mallah, and so became a dacoit herself; after Mallah was killed by rivals, she was tortured and gang-raped by the Thakur gang before forming a gang of her own. Her one act of vengeance, before gaining national notoriety and surrendering to the government at Phon

in Maldy Prates in 1983, was the killing of twenty Thakurs in an incident known as the Behmai massacre. All this is known. How to put it on film?

Shekhar Kapur does it three ways. First, by sticking to the facts and telling it from Phoolan's point of view. Second, by enlarging those terrible facts into two of the most hideous themes of Indian life: violence against women and caste exploitation. And, third, by turning it into a dramatic narrative so swift and dense that it is a tribute to the powers of cinema and his own skill as director. The horrors of this film include scenes of child abuse, rape by police in custody, beating, gage-rape and mutilation by upper caste dacoits of a low caste woman and a blood-soaked retributive massacre of Thakurs.

The most horrifying sequence – the film's dramatic centre - is where Phoolan, after being beaten and gang-raped, is stripped naked before the villagers and made to fetch water from a well in full public view. Medieval India? Not at all. This is the stuff of reality behind those everyday caste-war headlines in the papers. You don't need UN statistics to confirm that, in sheer numbers, there is more crime against women in India than anywhere in the whole world, except possibly sub-Saharan Africa. Caste and gender is at the root of the cruelty. Phoolan is but one symbol of it. Yet the scenes of sexual brutality in Bandit Queen never descend to being gratuitous or prurient; and the blood-curdling violence even the film's Bundelkhandi dialect, with English subtitles, is violent – that socks you between the eyes can only make you think. Madhu Kishwar, the crusader for women's rights, told me after the show that she was astounded by the strength with which Kapur had held the balance between sexual provocation and humiliation. She hailed it as a "watershed in Indian film making that must be fought for to be shown to Indian audiences".

of the film's key scenes, such as Phoolan being gang-raped by the Thakurs, he locked himself up in a room – the door opening and shutting as one man after another strides in to imagine what it must feel like. "There is no pain in gang-rape, no physical pain after a while. It is about something as dirty as abject humiliation of a human being and the complete domination of its soul. It is not about sexuality, it is about oppression and subjugation."

Kapur himself – now 47 and grey-bearded, much more than the killer in those cool textile adverts or the maker of commercial hits like Masoom and Mr India - says that, even though it was a 100% commissioned film by the Channel Four network in Britain with a clever young Indian producer, Sundeep Singh Bedi, he would hardly have had such freedom with an Indian financier. "I was freely allowed to interpret the script, choose my cast, which I found mostly among the National Drama School actors, select my music from the Pakistani qawwal Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, and conduct acting workshops among villagers in Madhya

Larry Gambone

Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh who supply the backdrops throughout."

After the film's rousing reception at Cannes, he is swamped by offers from America. Hollywood rings him non-stop, but he doesn't return the calls. He is working on a script called The Nine O'Clock War. "It is about a war in a Third World country that a major news network, say CNN for example, starts filming; then it finds that the advertising for the war show is so fabulous that it doesn't want the war to stop."

Phoolan Devi herself has not seen Bandit Queen yet. She lives in a flat in Gulmohar Park in Delhi; in 1991 she tried to contest the Lok Sabha election and found no truck; she recently got married. The past is behind her, she has signed away the book and film rights for (hopefully) a goodly sum of cash. Excellent. But Bandit Queen the movie will live forever.

Shekhar Kapur himself says that for some

John Shotton

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# BOOKS

### New additions to the Freedom Press Bookshop stock.

Anarchy in the UK ... the comic!, Slab-O-Concrete Publications. With the very first Anarchy in the UK event - rumour has it that there will be more, on a regular basis - comes this special collection of cartoon strips by some of the best talents in the anarchist movement. Styles range from surreal through to traditional to collage to situationist, and covers topics from government to homophobia, from science fiction to consumerism, from the levitation of Parliament (one of the actual events during the festival - what d'ya mean, you missed it?) to lampooning the stereotypes and clichés of anarchists and their ilk. The artists include Peter Pavement, Arthur Moyse, Brian Talbot, Paul Petard, Hunt Emerson, Donald Rooum, Erica Smith, Peter Rigg, Captain Courageous, Clifford Harper and many others. A lot of work has gone into this comic, which has now taken on the status of a de facto commemorative icon. It comes complete with a free microzine, normally 30p, thrown in. If you weren't there or were there but didn't get it, now's your chance. 44 pages, A5, £1.00. Anarchists: a set of thirty-six picture cards\* designed by Clifford Harper, Freedom Press. A new departure in publishing for Freedom Press, these cards consist of "portraits of those who dream of a different way of life" along with their potted biographies printed on the backs. It follows the long-standing tradition in many countries, among both adults and children, of collecting and exchanging 'trading cards', either in self-contained packs or as enclosures in packets of sweets, tea, cigarettes, etc. The men and women portrayed here, some of whom you may never have heard of, represent a surprisingly wide cross-section of anarchist and libertarian ideas and practice. From the fifteenth century Rabelais to contemporary figures like Noam Chomsky and Colin Ward - both still alive (and kicking!) - via the old favourites like Bakunin, Kropotkin, Goldman, Zapata and many more. However, if you're a fan of anarchocapitalism, hard luck, you'll find no advocates of it here, it doesn't sell. A very attractive four-colour pack, the size of playing cards. £5.00 (which will save you the price of 36 biographies!)

Special Solstice Edition Food for Thought ... and Action

called the PSBR but used to be known as the National Debt, what it consists of and who is responsible for the gigantic sums of money wasted. "Faced with the spectacle of ... Cabinet Ministers and other pundits on the subject of the 'economy', 'recession', 'inflation', 'recovery', etc., the task of making some sort of pattern of it all seems formidable, but ... we now have a searching and factual examination of the fiscal (mal)practices of Government and the interests they serve; an object lesson in relating a careful reading of the newspapers to the wider currents of contemporary history." Enough bare-faced statistics to make you weep - or laugh, depending on how black you like your humour. Somewhat marred by the way it is laid out-chapter headings would have been useful; even a contents page would help - it is nevertheless easy enough to find your way through once you get into the swing of things, and Mr Trevor is to be congratulated for having the patience to wade through the tedious financial sections of all those newspapers in search of his evidence. A useful addition to the armoury of anarchist arguments against the supposed necessity of government. 93 pages, £4.99.

(retrospectively) illegal by laws passed in the mid '80s, and a number of people have been caught hacking. Sterling traces the evolution of the organised and semi-organised phone-freak and hacker community from the '70s and the ignorance, paranoia and hysteria that fuelled the nationwide law and order crackdown in 1990, carried out by the joint forces of telephone security companies and law enforcement agencies at local, state and national levels. Yet most hackers, renowned for their adoption of bizarre and outlandish names, are harmless, simply equipping themselves with a telephone, a computer and a modem and hunting down information for the sake of it, or setting up and running electronic Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) for cheaper free exchange of information. The New York Times Book Review said: "there is a real risk of automated anarchy lurking in the electronic limbo between telephones and computers". Yes, we know, and a bloody good job too. A fascinating read, and some good tips as well. 328 pages, £6.99. Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution by Arif Dirlik, University of California Press. Given the lack of information in the West about the anarchist movement in China, a serious, detailed, academic study like this is like a breath of fresh air. And given the apparent totalitarian nature of modern Chinese social and political events, it comes as a pleasant surprise to learn that for more than two decades at the beginning of the century anarchism formed the basis of Chinese revolutionary culture. Indeed there was no Marxist Left of any significance in China until about 1921, and even after that date anarchism continued to have a profound influence in radical thinking. Although it tended to decline later in the century, it has recently undergone a remarkable resurgence, an effect of which is visible in the publications and activities of the Democracy

Movement. Dirlik thoroughly examines the fundamentally anarchist nature of the early Chinese revolutionary movement, including its effect on nationalism, utopianism, science and morality. He details the conflict between the anarchist and the socialists and marxists, while he never loses sight of the overriding fact that anarchism had, and still has, a profound influence on all Chinese revolutionary thought. An important study, and one which Dirlik describes as a preliminary one to further work on the subject. 326 pages, £12.00.

Renewing the Earth: the promise of Social Ecology edited by John Clark, Green Print. To say that this book, at this price, is the bargain of the year may well be the understatement of the decade. Even at the original price of £8.00 it was good value, but at £1.99 it's practically a giveaway. Having heard that it was remaindered at that price I feared that they may be faulty copies or might have outlived their shelf-life, but my enquiries revealed that it was part of an urgent cash-flow injection exercise at Green Print, who were experiencing a little local difficulty. The end result being that you, dear reader, are entitled for a mere pittance to sample some very stimulating essays (and two poems) by nineteen contributors on a broad range of topics, addressed from the perspective of Social Ecology. Critiques of science, technology and biology sit comfortably alongside proposals for a Social Ecology of communications and a Radical Eco-Feminism; essays against urbanisation, or on human nature, freedom and spirit snuggle alongside a piece on Anarchism and Animism and an account of a successful project to build a sailing ship for loan to fishermen in developing countries to encourage a return to balanced fishing methods and non-polluting fuels. The concluding essay is by Murray Bookchin, in whose honour the book is published. John Clark, besides editing it and writing the preface and one chapter, is also known to many people as the author of Max Stirner's Egoism, The Anarchist Moment and other works. This is an equally serious work, approaching the cerebral at times, but all the better for it and packed with ideas. An index and notes on all the contributors are also included. 219 pages, £1.99 (postage 80p inland). KM

The Hacker Crackdown: law and disorder on the electronic frontier by Bruce Sterling, Penguin Books. This is the account of a witch-hunt. A covert witch-hunt against activists in the US 'electronic underground' conducted by the police and secret service in a place called cyberspace – that 'nowhere' in the ether where telephone conversations take place. The targets are the increasing numbers of phone freaks and computer hackers, the former 'stealing' free calls from telephone companies, the latter gaining unauthorised access to information held on computers belonging either to the state or to large private companies. Hacking was made

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The National Debt: an interim balance sheet by Stanley Trevor, Anarcho Press. This is a detailed and meticulous examination of what is now politely

# – BOOK REVIEWS – Recommended Reading

### The Revolution of Modern Art and the Modern Art of Revolution

by the English Section of the Situationist International (Tim Clark, Christopher Gray, Charles Radcliffe and Donald Nicholson-Smith) Chronos Publications in The Boomerang Series, no. 3, A5 pamphlet, 26 pages, £2.75.

This short essay, written during the late 1 '60s (1967) and until now unpublished, was probably intended to be included in a journal to have been published by the English Section of the Situationist International. Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately?) for the authors, they were all – with the exception of Charles Radcliffe, who resigned a few months before - expelled from the group before they could produce a magazine, due to their relationship with the US group of malcontents Black Mask. Less 'intellectually pure' than their continental comrades centred in Paris (dominated by the figure of Guy Debord, author of The Society of the Spectacle), the 'English Section' produced what amounts to a brief summary of situationist theory, but with a more indulgent attitude towards the 'counter-culture' of the time than their continental comrades. A must for situationist train-spotters - and anyone else who might be interested.

### Ulster's White Negroes: from civil rights to insurrection

### by Fionnbarra O'Dochartaigh AK Press, A5 book, 133 pages, £5.95.

This book "outlines the early years of the L civils movement, and the new wave of working class Catholics, in Derry and elsewhere, who were no longer prepared to be treated as second class citizens. It documents in detail the growing confrontation with the state, leading to the introduction of British troops in 1969. And it records the massacre in 1972 of thirteen unarmed demonstrators on Bloody Sunday, and the subsequent collapse of Stormont." A well written and meticulously researched account of the civil rights movement that developed in Northern Ireland during the late '60s and early '70s, this book is written by someone who played a direct role in the events documented. "As an activist within the Derry Unemployed Action Committee and the Derry Housing Action Committee, and as a co-founder of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, [the author] was and is an integral part of the struggle." As the 'troubles' are seemingly wound down, it's a good time to reflect on the root causes that gave rise to them in the first place. Jez

n odd result of the Anarchist Bookfair Awas a series of telephone calls from overseas radio programmes for an instant comment either on the report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution or on religious fundamentalism. My problem was to find which I was being asked about. My lecture on the latter was more difficult to discuss because my aim had not been to suggest anarchist responses, but just to point out that nobody - socialist, communist or anarchist – had anticipated that at the coming turn of the century a huge political issue would be not the struggle between capitalism and workers' movement but the attempt by religious believers to impose their ideologies on the rest of us.

Should anarchists defend the hard-won achievement of the secular state? Most of us, whether in the USA, Europe or the Middle East, would rather move on to what we see as more relevant issues, and know all too well that there is nothing to beat religion, with or without its alliance with nationalism, to persuade otherwise rational fellow citizens to slaughter each other, and us. Members of the audience had plenty to say on topics which weren't relevant to the problems raised, so I was grateful when someone I couldn't actually see (half way down the hall on my extreme right) introduced a topic that seemed to me important in understanding the fundamentalist revival. This has to do with the personality trait called 'tolerance of ambiguity'. Some of us have a higher threshold of tolerance than others. He talked of the evidence that human life is often to search for certainties and that for many people the rules provided by a variety of religions were a short-cut to these certainties. Maybe the collapse of the Soviet empire and of socialist movements all over the world

# Can we co

encouraged people to seek an alternative in the older certainties once provided by religious faith.

For me this was an interesting idea, not in solving but in explaining the issue I undertook to talk about. I had learned of it, only at second-hand, from the views of the American writer Richard Sennett, but I gather that he derived them from a psychologist, Erik Erikson. The notion that Sennett explored, and that I quoted in my book *Anarchy in Action* in the context of American urban life and city planning, that "in adolescence men [and he uses this gender advisedly] seek a purified identity to escape from uncertainty and pain, and that true adulthood is found in the acceptance of diversity and disorder".

Now it happens that a veteran Marxist historian, Eric Hobsbawm, has recently brought out a new book Age of Extremes: the short twentieth century, which has resulted in a pile of correspondence around the topic of Marxist, rather than Christian, Islamic or Jewish fundamentalism, in New Statesman and Society. I want to loot one letter from that paper's pile for 11th November, for its wit and relevance to the topic of fundamentalist belief. It came from someone called Robin Oakley-Hill who drew some very entertaining social analogies from the laws of thermodynamics, and argued that:

"A Marxist belief may be a great source of energy for a small elite, but for a whole society it doesn't last even one lifetime. The Soviet leadership had to throw in state terror and nationalism to help out the

# BOOKS

FREEDOM • 26th November 1994

# 6

# A minor ability to abuse

### The 120 Days of Sodom

by the Marquis de Sade and Nick Hodges Delectation Books, £6.95\*

Diary of a Genius by Salvador Dali Creation Books, £8.95\*

### True Crime Time-Life Books, £11.99

It is given to few of us in this world to pursue a hireling trade wherein we can take both pride and pleasure. For most of us complaining millions our function is the economic exploitation of each other, for in any

how much they weighed, and for those who enjoyed his friendship he would take them down into his cellar and show them his collection of gallows hoods, ropes and straps and, for his piece de resistance, the fully operational gallows that he had assembled in his cellar. A stand up comedian of the first order and a craftsman. A solid citizen, as his fully paid up membership of the local Conservative Party demonstrated, Sydney died with a smile on his lips mourned by the blue-tinted ladies at Tory Party Conferences for he is now in Heaven, guaranteed in John's Citizens' Charter, weighing up the celestial choir should God feel a need to recourse to old time values of law and order. Murder, non-participating, has always been high on the list of public entertainments and it has produced its own star entertainers who, such is mass taste, are usually mass murderers. While the minority aficionados with more sophisticated tastes find their pleasures in mutilation, cannibalism and necrophilism, I for my part am no more than an old time voyeur and devotee of all in wrestling, but each to his own. Without sounding sanctimonious, one should point out that Albert and Sydney, the machine-gunner in a battle area, the tobacco industry or the acceptable terrorist organisations kill more people than any maverick mass murderer. But with this difference – that the executioner, the machine-gunner and the publicly supported terrorist groups are endorsed by the state overtly or 'come the signing of the treaty'. This does not come under the heading of Great Thoughts but is a simple known fact. As a wordy sadist the Marquis de Sade has always had a cult following composed of those who see him as an imprisoned champion of human freedoms and those looking for good solid sadistic pornography. Both are doomed to disappointment in any of the old bore's rambling writings for with the shelves of Soho packed out with child abuse, sodomy, bondage, masochism and sadism, de Sade

never did have anything to offer for apart from his wet-dreaming fantasies everything was cerebral, and his fault - "and it is a most grievous fault" - was that his views on personal freedom meant hurt and sorrow to others. The 120 days of Sodom in association with Nick Hodges should have been a must for every male juvenile's Christmas present but filthwise it disappoints for, to quote an Evening News review of the time there is nothing for men and women with "dirty raincoats or weak stomachs", and I must concur. It was left to Hedges to provide it with a satisfied audience when he staged it in 1991 in the fashion of the time as white-faced decked pantomime complete with swear words and the dropping of trousers. Prying my aged mind open, like unto a dying oyster, I can but say we, the Battersea-honed audience, clapped our applause and the credit belongs not to de Sade but to Nick Hodges for we may

deplore violence but by God we enjoy it in the abstract. And I was there.

Creation Books, ever hopeful, have published Salvador Dali's Diary of a Genius, and it makes sad reading for Dali was no genius but a brilliant craftsman and the only one of the surrealist movement with a lasting reputation, but of the diary first published in 1964 by Editions de la Table Rond there is nothing of merit or shock. Let us be fair to Dali and quote what to me sums up the book: "30th July 1952. Because of a very long fart, really a very long and, let us be frank, melodious fart, that I produced when I woke up, I was reminded of Michel de Montaigne. This author reports that Saint Augustine was a famous farter who succeeded in playing scores." All this is moving to the edge of what is permissible by the state and by our associates in the drear world of political consciousness and when we applaud we are applauding our limitations. It is left to True Crime, Time-Life Books, to pander to our desire for vicarious pleasure with their treasury of serial killers. Ted Bundy gets the Golden Palm for his tally of, believed, a hundred murders, but in the end it makes sad and boring reading for surely it spells conformism at its most comformist. To kill and kill deserves no side-winding grin of approval for it requires neither art nor craft. Within this book two men stand out, for to them killing was a messy means to feed an appetite. In twenty years Fish violated thirty children a year, took to dancing naked in the moonlight claiming to be Christ, physically mutilated himself with hot pokers, nails and flagellation, and ate in a stew the flesh of a child he had killed. One feels, nay knows, that if Fish had rejected murder and cannibalism, stuck to nude moonlight dancing as Christ and concentrated on physical mutilation and flagellation, he could have made the Top Ten for Sainthood, for always in these offences there is a great stench of justified moralising. For Nilsen killing was an irritant and his pleasure from the killing of fifteen men lay in his appetite for necrophilia in that he would hide a murdered body under his floorboards and weeks later pull the corpse out, gently wash it, bed it and fondle it. With men like these the Marquis de Sade is no more than one of Dali's 'farts'. All this is relevant to us, comrades, for when we the intellectual coterie within Clutterbucks, the Lord Rodney and the White Hart declaim about an 'anarchist society' the question must be asked again and again: what does one do about the murdered body or 'missing believed murdered'? With prisons it is easy for the flip and flippant answer, it is to cover the prison noticeboard with 'Secure Hospital', but will there be some non-discussible collective trained and ready to hunt down the killer, an all-white-coats psychologists collective. It is a basic instinct and a basic question of what does one do within the White Hart's Anarchist Society concerning the secret killer and the death of innocence. **Arthur Moyse** 

grouping it cannot be otherwise. There are those fortunate few who take pride and find pleasure in their employment, and Sydney Dernley was one of those touched by the Birth Fairy with those gifts. Sydney was apprenticed to the master craftsman Albert Pierrepoint. Old Albert was Britain's public hangman and Sydney could not have found a better teacher of the ancient art for, though Albert was opposed to the death penalty, with the aid of Sydney they set an all-time British record when they hung James Inglis in seven seconds flat from the moment he was invited to step onto the gallows to the trick-or-treat opening of the gallow's trapdoor. Sydney, a solid citizen and treasurer of his local Conservative Club, sent 28 men feet-first into eternity in the span of five years, including Timothy Evans who was wrongly convicted of committing the Rillington Place murders, but Sydney was gifted with a sense of humour that allowed for human frailties practised by the legal office for, let us accept it, none of us are perfect, except the unfortunate Timothy Evans who pre-dated the swinging '60s by ten years. Sydney, as a local Mansfield wit, loved



to size visitors up and with a smile ask them

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ARTHUR MOYSE

# - ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK -

# pe with the fundamentalist issue?

little coked-up outboard motor of Marxism-Leninism ... Late-communist societies were getting clogged by entropy; no free energy was coming in because new thinking was, at best, discouraged, and real belief in anything had to be done in private.

Society is, after all, a thermodynamic system just like an animal or a heat engine, and it must take in free energy from outside or it will die. The only 'outside' to human society is the inside of people's heads. That, I suggest, is why all societies hitherto had religions to carry energy into society through people's heads. Compared to the long-lived power station of Christianity, Marxism is a poor little wind-pump. We find religion problematic now because the enormous physical energy inputs from the national grid and the pipelines tend to make it redundant, so the energy flow in the west comes mainly from the urge to make money. If we have to reduce fossil fuel use, we're going to need something better than personal ambition as the mental energy component and, while social democracy may be excellent for giving decent life-chances, it hasn't got that magnetic something that the great religions have for aligning human atoms towards social purpose. Islamic fundamentalism is an example of a really organised energy flow. At the very least, society needs to find a common reason for existing - which at the moment none of our politics is very strong on. The Tories have their own aim of farming the people in the most efficient way possible (within which there is room for argument between the battery hen tendency and the free range group), but the people no longer have any ideas that are strong enough to keep even a 100-watt lightbulb going. We need something better to keep the entropy at bay than a mere demand for more comfortable pigsties."

man's letter intensely stimulating. The question of the validity of extrapolation from physical laws to social behaviour is beside the point. He has got closer than most of us in explaining the attractions of religions belief. The weaknesses of the analogy is visible in his comment on the "really organised energy flow" of Islamic fundamentalism, which has wrecked civil society in countries like Algeria and is destroying it in a once easy-going and tolerant country like Egypt. And naturally, as a housing advocate, I'm irritated by his dismissal of the "demand for more comfortable pigsties". Such a view can only

might just as well call them worshippers at the shrine of the market.

But it is precisely because the political opposition dare not oppose this fundamentalist faith in the market that the issue raised by that letter-writer is important. It is true that in order to change society we need a belief held with the glamorous dogmatism and intolerance of a religious faith? This is the dilemma to which Mr Oakley-Hill rightly draws our attention, and which I failed to answer in exploring the fundamentalist phenomenon.

New from Freedom Press

Now, apart from its sheer fun, I found this

come from the well-housed.

But Mr Oakley-Hill's observation on the inevitable history of the Soviet Union reminds me of Martin Buber's careful differentiation between the social principle and the political principle. When power, authority, hierarchy and dominion take over, as he noted, "the result is a continuous diminution in social spontaneity". We have seen this in the pendulum of political ideology in Britain. After decades of a bi-partisan belief in state intervention which was seen as replacing the mutual aid institutions built up by working-class self-organisation in the nineteenth century, we have witnessed a dramatic shift to faith in market forces which has itself the characteristics of a fundamentalist religion. If you doubt this, note the way in which it has even changed our language. Travellers, hospital patients, parents of schoolchildren and even people posting letters are now called customers. We

In lectoral campaigning in the United States Lelections, combining the religion of the market with that of Protestant fundamentalism, provides an awesome case history. I don't suppose readers have any sympathy for the Clinton regime, but the anti-Clinton campaign was frightening. Writing in The Guardian (12th November 1994), Edward Pearce commented that "American religion is strong in the way that it stopped being strong in Europe outside of Ireland soon after the last war ... And that political religion is virulently right-wing in ways which Catholics and Protestants in Europe wouldn't understand ... Set all this upon the American incapacity for serious debate and argument and you get a country regressing into childhood."

Exactly what Richard Sennett was warning us about years ago. Colin Ward

### Visions of Visions of Poesy An anarchist poetry book including over two hundred poems by seventy poets with 26 illustrations by Clifford Harper Inleudes introduction, biographical notes on the contributors, bibliography and index. 317 pages ISBN 0 900384 75 1 £8.00

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# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

If there is symbol of American violence in Lthe last ten years, it is without doubt the spreading in all our major cities of soup kitchens and doss houses. Traditionally, soup kitchens appear as a sign of rising poverty in the most underprivileged social classes particularly those living on welfare. This new poverty has increased and is more and more visible. If we accept the figures in the latest census, the number of those living in acute poverty has gone from 25 million in 1980 to 37 million in 1992. In the 1970s the minimum wage in dollars, taking inflation into account, diminished by 22%. A report from the New York council, published in 1992 specified that nearly 1% of the population had spent at least one night in a doss house over the previous 12 months. Similar statistics come from the city of Philadelphia giving us an idea of the considerable number of homeless and economically marginalised people living in the centres of our modern cities. In response to this situation the American authorities have heightened repression against those who are begging on the streets and have authorised the setting up of private police units (often in collaboration with big industrial and

# Focus on ... the Richest Nation on Earth

The following article from the California based United Anarchist Front will probably bring feelings of déjà vu to readers in the UK. Looking at the Richest Nation on Earth (of course only rich for some – see 'This is no American Dream' on this page) perhaps gives us a taste of what is to come ... or is it what is already here.

commercial concerns), police forces which are financed by special taxes whose main role is to uphold 'law and order' in the urban centres (where commercial and finance institutions are situated) and to repress the homeless. In effect, after the 1960s, a record number of poor people flooded on to the welfare register, but this enormous growth in claimants has been hidden by the media and other sources of information. The main result has been that those seeking to fight against this situation had only a partial view of the situation and were acting individually without the possibility of specific organisations being set up with one notable exception: Welfare Right. Protest struggles and forms of agitation, even the most spectacular, in this situation were therefore marginalised and had little impact. The considerable rise in the number of welfare claimants led to the bankruptcy of municipal administrations (and also contributed to the US fiscal crisis), particularly in major cities like New York. In the more recent past, the last 20 years or so, the social services were dealt a number of

heavy blows as were the thousands who were kicked off the welfare register. Some states in order to achieve this objective cut back welfare rights to bachelors and introduced severe restrictions on the means to get a hold

served as the interface between the state and the locality, are fast disappearing. Nobody attends meetings and nobody seems interested in these very questions. Today, and this is particularly true of the ghettos, individuals refuse to give themselves over completely to something of a social nature. The soup kitchens and doss houses have simply become the tip of the iceberg, which highlight the worsening of conditions for the most vulnerable of the American workforce and the long term unemployed. So the welfare services have lost all legitimate power over the last twenty years, the spectre of the starving in the richest nation on Earth still shakes public opinion. During the most recent end of year celebrations for example, the media was flooded with calls for charity for the poor and demands were made for them to support those charitable institutions that have replaced the state. Another aspect of this spectacular increase in the number of soup kitchens is the disappearance of the feelings of shame to be seen in them and of the stigma attached to them twenty years ago. Many now attend them regularly as a means to increase their social gains, which are more and more diminished, and in this way to get a hold of those things they have less and less opportunity to acquire. There are now many, who with the money they save by going to the soup kitchens, buy other goods and/or alcohol or drugs. In the queues at the soup kitchens there is almost a party atmosphere having become another way of meeting people and socialising. It is above all another means of consuming in a personal fashion but it is also another approach which is very different to that handed out by the more traditional charitable institutions. Those who go to the kitchens are all too well aware of this. For the people living in the most poverty stricken sectors of the ghetto, going to the kitchens has become a means of collective organisation as a means of survival outside and in opposition to the establishment. They teach begging the only way to obtain those goods otherwise denied to them.

## DO NOT PASS 'GO'

Clinton's new Criminal Justice Bill seeks, on the one hand, to answer public demand for action in a country which saw 24,5000 assassinations last year. But, more importantly, it seeks to serve the American military-industrial complex and the state forces of repression. By the year 2000 its provisions will account for the creation of 100,000 new jobs in the police forces, an increase in mandatory minimal prison sentences and (surprise, surprise) more prisons and the setting up of correctional centres á la Willie Whitelaw - with 'military' discipline which of course may come in handy in a country which has appointed itself the policeman of the 'New World Order'. Some voices of protest are to be heard. Not too much from the National Rifle Association who have come out more or less unscathed with little more than symbolic control of one or two kinds of weapons - the rest being ignored. All this of course for political reasons. Not so important when you're dealing with blacks. For the Black Caucus has also expressed some reservations given that the death penalty affects their political constituency most. Since 1976 it has been established that a black person who commits a crime is more likely to be murdered by the state than someone who commits a crime against a black. No problem. Blacks don't vote. On with the bill. 55 new offences which will carry the death sentence are to be added to the statute book and in addition to this there's the new 'three strikes and you're out' baseball approach to criminology. This is the insane idea that a recidivist two times over gets a life sentence. Not enough for the Pennsylvanians whose mainly Democratic representatives want in this case to substitute life for death in a 'three strikes and you're dead' approach to criminology. In Georgia they're going for a 'two strikes and you're out' approach. One Criminologist, Jeremy Miller, has a nightmare of all this, 'seven and a half million in jail by the year 2000 of which five million will be black, abandoning the urban centres to women on their own with their children?' Extreme? One accused, a small time drug trafficker in California has only just escaped 'life' having been found guilty of using soft drugs in prison. The new bill aims to criminalise society in its entirety. All this in a country which was jabbering on not so long ago about human rights violations in China. Pots and kettles we say. We may have our own problems with the Criminal Justice Bill in the UK but remember that it's to the US that so many of the present regime look for future policies for these shores. Keep an eye on America and you keep an eye on the future.

of it. Charitable institutions took the place of the state, so much so that today they are overwhelmed by calls well beyond their limitations. The desire of the state to transfer as much social spending as possible into civil society and the community ironically dates back to the 1960s. Recuperate and decentralise have become the slogans of the day as far as state social policies are concerned

(politically speaking the state wished to liberate the public from the impersonal and bureaucratic obligations of the public sector) ironic, once again, because this transfer to the community has taken place when the latter has been reduced to near disappearance, reeling after two decades of economic reconstruction. The mythical communities to whom would be transferred responsibilities and services no longer exist. Local groups which, in the 1960s,



Following on from our recent 'Focus on Ecuador' we bring you this article which recently appeared in the French Anarchist Federation's journal *Le Monde Libertaire*.

E cuador is the small country on the Pacific coast of South America. Its geography and climate is dominated by the Andean mountain range which crosses the country from North to South forming the three main zones: the Coast, the Mountains and the Amazon. The famous Galapagos islands are also administered by this country. Caught between two imposing neighbours, Colombia and Peru, this little country is about half the size of France with a population of some 11 million. The economy is dominated by oil; political life is a political theatre where various clans act out their parts from ultra reactionaries to ultra populist but these subtleties are not the subject of this article.

The real problems of this country are economic dependence, the dictatures of the IMF, debt, misery, the exclusion of minority indigenous peoples and environmental destruction perpetrated by the TNCs under a pretext of development.

Recent events have called into question the activities of Elf-Aquitaine, although these have received little coverage in the media. Here is a report from Yvonne Yanez, president of the Accion Ecologica organisation, who was in the town of Coca, the main town of the Amazonian oil producing region (Antoine Barral).

**Coca 23rd June 1994:** I came to visit the oilfields of Elf Hydrocarbures Equateur. Unfortunately things didn't go according to plan. The [conservative] government of Sixto Duran Ballèn passed a new agrarian law which went against the interests of the Indians and the peasants. As a consequence the Confederation of Ecuadorian Indigenous Peoples [CONAIE] organised a national uprising which saw the participation of numerous organisations including those in the Amazon region.

Elf is carrying out its operations in the national park of Yasuni, the home of the Quichuas, Shuars and the Huaoranis. The Quichuas and the Shuars cut off Elf access routes and captured the oil-well chief Michel Martin. In return for his release they demanded that drilling at the Cupi well and the production at the other three wells owned by the company be stopped. Whilst these events were taking place I was at the base camp, twenty kms from the site where the hostage crisis was unfolding ... Finally the problem was resolved with all foreigners, including Michel Martin, being taken

out by army helicopter which of course stopped the drilling. A short while later Maxas Oryx, Oxi, Elf and Petroecuador had a meeting with the army Action Note Collective Baltimore Le Monde Libertaire 28th September 1994



The USA is of course the 'richest nation on Earth' with the biggest GDP in the world. But how well is that wealth shared out? How rich is this nation culturally and at what expense to the environment is this achieved? Here are the facts:

- The US budgetary deficit stands at \$450,000,000,000.
- In New York 67,000 peope 'live' on the streets.
- More than 24,000,000 receive food aid in



minister in the town of Coca. It was decided to militarise all the wells in the Amazonian region and to control the indigenous uprising. Throughout the country strong reinforcements were brought in and there were several deaths as a result of clashes between the army and the Indians. The current situation is that the strike has been forcibly controlled and several radio stations have been closed down. However, CONAIE and affiliated organisations are still in a state of mobilisation against this law. Accion Ecologica has set up a solidarity campaign with the Indian people.

The town of Coca after twenty years of 'oil development' is a depressing spectacle. For the fourteen or fifteen thousand inhabitants there are four hundred bars and dozens of brothels, but there is a shortage of drinking water, no sanitation and the hospital is short of basics, including gauze. If one considers that this region accounts for half the nation's exports such degradation is inconceivable. Life is expensive and the money is destined to go elsewhere. In other towns like Lago Agrio, Shushufindi it's the same story. So many years of petrol but nothing but crude oil spilt over the streets. *Le Monde Libertaire*, 19th October 1994

the US.

- 1,959,000 Amerindians live on reservations in the US.
- Average daily consumption of red meat per person is 300 grams per day.
- Every 11 minutes someone dies in a road accident in the US.
- 69% of the US population is a member of a religious congregation.
- The USA has the highest divorce rate in the world (1,000,000 in 1991).
- More than 2,500 prisoners are currently on 'death row'.
- American youngsters spend 73% of their free time watching TV.
- The USA has invaded (militarily) 22 countries this century.

Information from Ekintza Zuzena (Basque Libertarian Journal) summer '94

# READERS' LETTERS

FREEDOM • 26th November 1994

# **The Limits of Rationality**

#### Dear Freedom,

The printed word is a useful tool for informing, but it's a lousy medium for communicating because, in the absence of face-to-face contact, message sender and receiver have to invent one another and the invention is often way off target.

In my article ('Yuppiedom and the Limits of Rationality', Freedom, 1st and 15th October 1994) I thought I was addressing the predominantly educated and otherwise privileged readers of Freedom. John Wood reckons people out of work won't like the article. I know they'd be less bothered than he is.

Defending one's written views is not always wise. The situation is seldom clarified to anybody's satisfaction and the risk is run of converting excrement into property. As Wood observes (Freedom, 29th October), I own enough shit already. However, there is in Wood's outburst further support for my argument.

The intention of announcing one's associations with capital and privilege is not to claim the superior ground, well surely not in an anarchist paper, but to implicate oneself in the villainy, hence all the 'we' and 'our' stuff.

By contrast John Wood fancies himself as a purist, the Robespierre of

anarchism maybe. He seeks a social order based on rationality and SCIENCE; cleansed of the criminals of capital; sustained, no doubt, by smooth relations. I don't think it's my privileges that bother Wood, I am sure he's got a few of his own, but my opinion that his utopia is another form of authoritarianism.

I notice elsewhere he reckons science and technology can be distinguished but nevertheless are closely connected. However, he wants to identify criminals and victims as mutually exclusive categories of people. The distinction is, as always, easy to make on paper but difficult to sustain in practice. Too many 'victims' refuse the role and too many criminals are good at playing the victim. One party is necessary to define the other, etc. John Wood is "bloody angry", he'd like to kick my head in, "no threat intended". That's fair enough, but being firmly committed to rational thinking he prefers to distance himself from the irksome task and have the people in the East End dole queue do it for him. I thought getting other poor sods to do the rough work is the way the privileged and criminals usually operate.

Blasting away at our differences, playing the either/or game and claiming the role of victim gets us nowhere. If we want to put anarchism into practice we have to find common cause and common ground with those who would be our neighbours, and that means getting closer to them. To this end the written word had only the smallest part to play. **Denis Pym** 



capitalism and the state, their final goal is not always an immediate priority. During World War Two, the allies used aeroplanes to destroy German towns, even though the destruction had little effect on the German war effort or on the people's morale. This delayed the victory because the aeroplanes should have been guarding the many ships that were being sunk in the Atlantic. In Japan, two atom bombs were dropped to destroy two cities. Even if it is believed that one bomb had to be dropped to enforce surrender, what possible reason could there be for dropping the second, other than the Americans wanted to destroy more wealth? More recently in the Gulf War, the Allies spent weeks destroying property in Iran, and then, when they decided they had destroyed enough, they

# **Anarchists and Ireland**

#### Dear Editors,

The last line of Peter Cadogan's letter in 29th October issue entitled 'Northern Ireland: time to go?' advises that "we should take steps not to burn [our fingers]". He is comparing US government policy on Ireland with British government policy on Ireland and advising caution. I wonder what Peter and other readers of Freedom are advising anarchists to do in the face of the massive changes in Northern Ireland? For instance, what can British anarchists do to ensure that the debate going on here about the RUC and the future of policing is informed with libertarian thinking? At a public meeting in Derry recently calls for the disbanding of the RUC were matched with queries from community workers in working

class areas as to where people go to sort problems out now that the IRA is perceived to be withdrawing from its social control activities.

And what insights, contributions and advice can readers give regarding the issue of the release of prisoners, another subject being intensely debated in public here. The Republic of Ireland government has announced plans for an early release package, taking a 'softly-softly' approach by first letting out people who are due for release soon anyway. Should all paramilitary prisoners be released immediately?

Should anarchists be debating these questions and if they don't engage with such questions can they call themselves anarchists?

**Dave Duggan** 



It is very good of you to give some details of my new booklet, The Nature of the State.\* The sentence "During most wars the main concern is the destruction of wealth, not the killing of people or even victory" may perplex some of your readers and they will, of course, have to read the book for a full explanation. I would, however, like to explain here that I have not said that governments do not want victory. Of course they do. But because the main purpose of war is the destruction of wealth to preserve

sped off to the desert and destroyed the enemy armies in a few days.

There are many other original theories in my book which anarchists will find interesting and useful.

**Derrick A. Pike** 

8

[Reviewed in 'Food for Thought' on 12th November, The Nature of the State is available at £4.15 post free inland, please add 10% for overseas orders.]

# Anarchism: Left, Right and Green

A-caps believe in federalism, the

decentralisation of power to the regions

and municipalities, and voluntary

organisations to replace state

institutions. They are opposed to

imperialism. Some even approve of

#### Dear Freedom,

Jonathan Simcock is such a reasonable fellow that his description of anarcho-capitalists as crypto-fascists surprises me. Perhaps it is the way the author has presented the material in Anarchism: Left, Right and Green. There is also the possibility that North Americans are more familiar with laissez-faire anti-statists and hence do not find them quite so intimidating. I know 'left' anarchists who came out of that milieu and am also aware of those who have attempted to bridge the left-right anarchist gap. I have been reading A-cap literature off and on for the past 25 years and I don't recall coming across anything that smacked of fascism and racism. Certainly, one could not accuse Murray Rothbard or the late Karl Hess of such opinions. Flip through a copy of the Laissez Faire Books catalogue and you won't find any fascist or racist literature. Fascism is based upon the worship of the centralised state and the desire to incorporate all institutions within it. The 'right libertarians' are diametrically opposed to this, wishing to destroy, or at least severely curtail, state power and wish to see a plethora of autonomous and voluntary associations. Almost any leftist is closer to being a fascist! (Which makes sense since fascism is the child of leftism - something that should never be forgotten.) The divergences of opinion within what is considered the right libertarian milieu can also cause confusion. The so-called Libertarian Party, for one, was long ago captured by conservatives and is not a good example of anarcho-capitalism. The followers of the detestable Ayn Rand also muddy the waters, these people really do lack humanity and compassion, but Randists form a small minority of right-libs. Then the so-called there are libertarian-conservatives, who in reality are only conservatives. True enough, some do apologise for Thatcher and this is silly, since Lady Harriet actually increased the power of the state. But then there are the left-anarchists who wank over the latest crop of ML guerrillas, once Castrist, then RAF, then Sandinista, now Zapatista. Naivety and hypocrisy are not the monopoly of right-wing anarchists. There are good reasons to have reservations about A-cap theory. (I often find right-libs infuriating, especially in regards to such things as Medicare or the minimum wage.) Most particularly the glorification of the market, the total ignorance of the workers' movement and Dear Freedom. workers' control. But you cannot dismiss them as having nothing in common with anarchism. Far from being "libertarian on a limited range of issues", genuine

Regarding Jonathan Simcock's review of Ulrike Heider's Anarchism: Left, Right and Green (Freedom, 29th October 1994), Simcock's suggestion that Heider's characterisation of me as a "proto-fascist" is merely "uncomfortable" is the understatement of the year. In as much as her book is marked by truncated quotations, the creative use of ellipses, and outright distortions, it is unworthy of being taken in any way seriously. Indeed it deserves the severest condemnation for the extremely low ethical level that it represents. I have written an extended review of this appalling work in a forthcoming issue of The Raven and would recommend that readers of Freedom consult it.

#### Dear Editors,

From being an occasional reader, I have now been a subscriber for a couple of years, and I note with some concern the

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### HERBERT READ **A One-Man Manifesto** and other writings for

results of the 1992 Survey. There is no obvious solution to your circulation problem that I am aware of, but I would like to present an observation or two of my own.

Firstly, the paper is a little too intellectual for a mass readership. This would not be the case were you to recruit activists from other parts of the political spectrum, but this does not seem to happen.

Secondly, whilst I think that the layout and production standards of Freedom are of high quality, and that its international coverage is excellent, the letters page betrays the size of the readership. I feel that I know most of the regular contributors personally although I have only, knowingly, met one of them. The inward-looking attitude and obscurity of subject matter which they present are exceedingly boring to those readers who are outside their charmed circle, indeed a revival of the medieval debate about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin would probably induce a more. vigorous literary input. I realise that you are not overwhelmed with contributors, but if you aim your journal at the average Guardian readers then you will get a predictably 'Hampstead Thinker' type of response. Your informed coverage of what constitutes proper socialism should commend the paper to the less-bigoted type of trade unionist (there must be a few still out there somewhere) and those left-wingers who have outgrown their allegiance to vanguard parties. Maybe that is the direction to go? I await the outraged response from your regular hacks!

worker cooperatives. Theirs is an intransigent anti-statism, something refreshing at a time when some left-anarchists seem to be closet social democrats. In North America, where they are numerous, laissez-faire anarchists cannot be ignored, snubbed or written off as 'fascists'. If we are ever going to build a decentralist movement they must be taken into account.

Larry Gambone



#### Dear Editors,

I went to the Anarchist Bookfair at the Conway Hall on 22nd October; it was busy and for me that was encouraging. I had an enjoyable time meeting old friends and making new ones. I attended Colin Ward's talk on Fundamentalism', which was interesting and stimulating.

Religion is as much a threat to freedom as the state is, and I feel that it is a more subtle threat by assuming the mantle of God and not material wealth and power. I find the Bookfair a unique and interesting affair, far superior to any conference in its informal nature. Let's have more of them in the future - maybe outside London! Another thought - since the Criminal Justice Act is now in force, has anyone got any ideas of how to sabotage it, making it into a farce rather than the worst piece of legislation this century? **Chris Platts** 

#### **Murray Bookchin**

[As we go to press, we have ourselves only just seen a copy of Anarchism: Left, Right and Green. Published in San Francisco by City Lights, the book is available in Britain at £11.99 (postage extra) but we have not yet made a decision whether or not to stock it in the Freedom Press Bookshop.

Perhaps intending readers would like to await Murray Bookchin's review we have not heard the last of this book - Eds.]





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**Bill Brewer** 



[Note that Colin Ward's talk on 'Fundamentalism' will be printed in full in the next issue of our 96-page quarterly journal The Raven. Due out before Christmas, The Raven 27 costs £3.00 post free. And also see Colin's remarks in this issue of Freedom -Eds.]

# subscription early

If you are a subscriber, the label on the envelope in which this Freedom arrived should bear a four-digit number above your name (probably hand-written as the label printer has been out of action for more than a year). This indicates the volume and number of the issue at which your sub is due to end.

About half the current subs expire with our next issue, 5524 (volume 55, number 24). This means that unless subs are renewed early, I will have the extra job of inserting photocopied reminder sheets into half the envelopes.

I respectfully request you to renew your sub before it falls due. And heartfelt thanks to those considerate readers who have done so already.

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Meets Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.

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2nd December An Anarchist Federation of Britain? (general discussion led by Peter Neville)

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**16th December CHRISTMAS PARTY** 

7th January Employment, Unemployment, Further Education and the State (speaker Peter Neville)

14th January General discussion

21st January Cities and Libertarian Social Movements (discussion led by Dave Dane)

28th January All slots are vacant to the end of July, although a number of invitations have gone out.

If anyone would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, overseas or out-of-town speakers especially, please contact either Dave Dane of Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (telephone number 081-847 0203, not too early in the day please) giving subject and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate. These could be instead of a general discussion but the latter are not merely unfilled slots but popular occasions in their own right so we are unwilling to relinquish too many.

> Peter Neville / Dave Dane **London Anarchist Forum**

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#### - 1995 -

Sunday 15th January: Derbyshire Edges walk. Meet 11.00am for 11.15 start at National Car Park next to Robin Hood Pub on A619 Baslow to Chesterfield Road. Length of walk 7 miles.

Sunday 12th February: The Roaches and Ludd's Church, Staffordshire. Meet 11.00am for 11.15 start at roadside near to 'Windygates Farm'. Length 5 miles.

Sunday 5th March: Edale and Kinder Scout. Meet 11.00am at Edale Railway Station Café. Bring waterproofs, walking boots, food and hot drink. Length 8 miles.

Sunday 9th April: Brassington and Harborough Rocks. Meet at Brassington Village Hall at 11.00am. Length 5 miles.

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