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FIFTY PENCE

"Wherever you begin by denying the fundamental liberties of mankind, and equality among people, you move towards the concentration camp system, and it is a road on which it is difficult to halt."

Primo Levi*

WHEN WILL WE 'STRIP THE RICH'?

Tiny Rowland, the deposed chief executive of Lonrho (incidentally deposed by the German financier who had taken a stake in the ailing Lonrho two years ago and was hailed by Tiny as "the company's saviour" - that's gratitude if you like!) has now expressed an desire to purchase the oldest Sunday newspaper *The Observer* from the *Guardian* group for £30 million. (Incidentally, Tiny was forced to sell Lonrho's loss-making *Observer* to the *Guardian* group two years ago for £27 million.)

What is of interest to anarchists in this news item is the fact that Tiny Rowland is in a position to buy *The Observer* with £30 million of his money for his own amusement. To quote his own words: "In two years' time there is going to be an election and I'd like, at my age, to have a bit of fun" (our italics). Mr Rowland can obviously afford £30 million to 'have a bit of fun' since he was Number 78 in the *Sunday Times*' last annual survey of Britain's Richest 500, with a fortune of £258 million which grows year by year and is now quoted as £400 million!

Our press cuttings folder with the latest news of salary increases and bonuses for top executives is bursting to come out and reveal how greedy they all are. We will eventually get around to that. But the Tiny Rowland case provides us with the occasion to illustrate the basic fact that nothing has changed in the capitalist world. We don't care who the rich are - aristocrats or 'upstarts' - they are a privileged minority who should be unacceptable in any society believing in justice, equality and fraternity. Obviously Mr Major and his Tory millionaires believe in none of these values (apart from when they get on their knees in church).

* **Primo Levi** (1919-1987), Italian writer and chemist born in Turin to Jewish parents. During the war he fled into the mountains and formed a small guerrilla group but was betrayed and in December 1943 was arrested, turned over to the SS and dispatched to Auschwitz. The ten months spent there before the Russians liberated the camp haunted him for the rest of his life and may have prompted his suicide in 1987.

The Labour Party is Her Majesty's Official Opposition in Parliament. What they *are not* is an opposition to the capitalist system. Apart from the fact that in any of their public utterances they rarely use the word 'socialist' (at least they are honest about that!) but neither do they ever attack the capitalist system. They attack sleaze in the City and among some politicians; they deplore the incidence of mass unemployment and of crime; they condemn the failing health service and other public services, but never a condemnation of the capitalist system as being responsible for crime, corruption and social and economic injustice.

That society, according to a *Guardian* feature ('30/30/40 Society', 23rd January 1995) is dividing before our eyes, opening up new fissures in the working

population. The first 30% are the *disadvantaged*. These include the more than four million who are out of work, including:

"... those who do not receive benefit or have not looked for work - within official definitions - and so do not count as officially unemployed. It also includes unemployed women, and women who cannot work because the loss of their husband's income support would more than offset their wage. This 30 per cent, under stress and with their children poorly fed, are the absolutely disadvantaged."

The second 30% are not all that much better off. They are:

"... made up of the *marginalised* and the *insecure*, a category defined not so much by income as by its relation to the labour market. People in this category have insecure working conditions and have been at the receiving end of the changes

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THE FUTURE? FISH & CHIPS ONLY AT THE RITZ!

Fishing interests are preparing to declare war on Spanish and Portuguese boats when by agreement of all the EU countries they will, at the end of 1995, be entitled to fish in one section of a 92,000 square miles area referred to as the Irish Box.

It is ironical that British fishing interests declare this section, which is on the Atlantic side of the Republic of Ireland, is *their exclusive 'territory'*, the more so when the EU agreement excludes Spanish boats from the Irish Sea and Bristol Channel which also bounds Ireland on one side! So what about the poor Irish fishermen? Where do they have a look in?

Our sympathies are for the small offshore fishermen, most of whom have been driven out by the big boys with their ocean-going trawlers literally 'hoovering' the sea bottom who are the real enemy.

A whole page feature on 'The Empty Oceans' by Geoffrey Lean in the *Independent on Sunday* (15th January) on what man is doing to destroy life in our oceans - life that has hitherto provided the livelihood for millions of our fellow beings worldwide as well as, much more importantly, to quote Geoffrey Lean:

"One billion people in Asia alone depend on fish as their main source of protein; indeed it supplies two-fifths of all the protein consumed in the third world. Yet as catches fall, and populations go on growing, the amount of fish available per person has fallen by 10% in just five years."

There were some three million fishing vessels at the last count, every one of them seeking to maximise their catches and to hell with conservation and the future.

It's not only the farmers who are subsidised to pollute the environment (and the consumer) but according to Geoffrey Lean "fishing is subsidised by governments to the tune of over £30,000 million a year worldwide". Which means not only more boats with the latest technology and equipment to speed up this process of fishing the oceans dry. Satellites and sonar are available to the big boats, some of which have huge nets "fifty miles long with openings that would alone accommodate sixteen jumbo jets".

So let's put this militancy of the Newlyn Cornwall fishermen in its proper context. Forty Spanish boats

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But of course violence pays in a world where the weak strike back!

Peace is on the lips of the politicians in Britain (over Northern Ireland), Israel, Algeria, South Africa, the former Yugoslavia and we have lost count of their protestations in the African continent. As anarchists are at pains to point out, governments understand violence better than anybody else; after all, government is based on violence! Laws (most of which, whether in 'Nazi' Germany, 'Stalinist' Russia or 'democratic' Britain) protect the privileged minority* and in the unequal society can only be enforced by the threat of violence (police, courts, fines, prison). Demonstrations by objectors are opposed by police with all kinds of weapons, and in extreme cases with the military.

So when the politicians raise their hands in horror if demonstrations end in violence (in spite of the fact that in this country the violence is invariably provoked by the police) we should not be surprised even if the physical violence explodes among the demonstrators. After all, the very fact of demonstrating is, in the eyes of the police and the government, an act of violence! 'Law abiding citizens' do what they are told. The unemployed, according to that fundamentalist Tory Minister Peter Lilley, are simply not looking for the jobs because they prefer to sleep in shop doorways in London and 'live on drugs'!

When will the ever-growing number of

people of all so-called 'classes' realise that apart from a very few in our society (not just in this country - it is a pattern worldwide) there is no guarantee for all of us to have at least the basic necessities of life: food, shelter, clothing and, we anarchists would add, equality and freedom to live out our years happily and cooperatively. Joys denied for the majority by the capitalist system.

The British have at last declared that they have no vested interest in Northern Ireland (*Freedom* had told them that a long time ago!) but obviously cannot get out (and now more so since in Parliament they rely on Unionist votes - what a shambles!) without creating all kinds of new problems both political and economic there. Imagine the effect of withdrawing 20,000 troops on the local economy! Imagine the effect on the politicians and their hangers-on on both sides!

The anarchists can only offer one solution, if only one could penetrate the great misunderstanding which has been fostered virtually over the centuries. Northern Ireland is a financial liability so far as Britain is concerned. The real contemporary problem dates back to when the Wilson Labour government sent in the army to protect the so-called Catholic minority from the excesses of the Protestants! To have been prompted to do so must have indicated that the Catholics were really being persecuted by the majority of Protestants.

So when one reads in the media and is reminded of 25 years of IRA violence, one

should also take into account that the British government is on the verge of actually seeking a solution - obviously a 'political' solution to the Irish question - in spite of all that they have been saying of the IRA and of Gerry Adams. (We viewed with more than interest the television programme on Mr Brooks' hero!)

But surely the only real solution for Northern Ireland is that the ordinary people there should realise that they are the victims of capitalism, with unemployment at 25%, and that they should abolish not only the British but the Protestant and Catholic God who, if it existed, as Bakunin said, should be abolished.

For years apartheid in South Africa was never questioned so long as the black majority blindly followed Lutuli and his collaborators. With Mandela and the ANC (and a worldwide opinion among the militant minority whose efforts should never be forgotten) a campaign of violent resistance in the '60s, which continued in spite of the imprisonment of Mandela and other leaders, finally broke white domination.

A *Freedom* editorial (20th June 1964) reported in its opening paragraph that:

"... as he was led off with his seven companions to begin serving the life sentences passed on them ... Nelson Mandela the African leader is reported to have 'smiled and given a thumbs up sign'."

And the editorial concluded with:

"If and when South Africa's 14 million non-whites succeed in freeing themselves from domination by the white minority (3½ million) it will be by their own efforts and not by resolutions in the United Nations and pious protests on the steps of St Paul's. Lutuli has been en-Nobel-ed and surpassed. Mandela and his friends have assumed the leadership of the struggle. They don't need our bundles of petitions and protests. What they do need is material help of every kind."

After 27 years in captivity a septuagenarian Mandela emerges and, like Nehru in India with the British, overnight becomes the President of South Africa. But that is not enough. Already the white minority are seeking to challenge an elderly-conciliatory-Mandela.

But for the Intifada (the Palestinian armed resistance) the right-wing Israelis would still be lording it over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Just as we don't think the Northern Irish problem will be solved so long as the British remain in occupation without at the same time offering the more-British-than-British inhabitants the means to emigrate to the country they so love (Britain), the only solution to the Israeli problem is for their American paymasters to

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* Before we are accused of attacking the 'impartiality' of the law may we suggest that laws are only made to protect the privileged minority from the 'mob'. After all, the legislators belong to the privileged minority!

WHEN WILL WE 'STRIP THE RICH'?

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blowing through Britain's offices and factories. There are now more than five million people working part-time, 80 per cent of them women."

It is the last category - 'the privileged' 40% - which in the *Guardian's* definitions has increased its market power since 1979. We quote the category and the conclusions with interest, and with surprise that there is no criticism of the system that produces such anti-social reactions.

"The last category is that of the privileged - the just over 40 per cent whose market power has increased since 1979. These are the full-time employees and the self-employed who have held their job for over two years, and the part-timers who have held their for more than five years. The 31 per cent of the workforce still represented by trade unions generally fall into this category."

It is this segmentation of the labour market that is sculpting the new and ugly shape of British society. The fact that more than half the people in Britain who are eligible to work are living either on poverty incomes or are in insecure work has had dreadful effects on the wider society. Britain has the highest divorce rate and the most deregulated labour market in Europe, and these two facts are closely

related. The impact of inequality is pervasive, affecting everything from the vitality of the housing market to the growth of social security spending."

In conclusion: when will we 'strip the rich'? And the answer is surely when the producers of the wealth - that is the food, the shelter, all the goods and services we all need to ensure the necessities of life for everybody - take over once and for all and this means stripping the rich and only starting with Tiny Rowland and Britain's other 499 of the Richest 500! But no government will accept the task. Only the 30-30 'disadvantaged' and 'marginalised' and 'insecure' can do it. We are not talking about week-old calves or lambs for export but with 60% - more than 36 million human beings going on supporting the other 26 million in clover.

The capitalist system is entrenched and will not be affected by a change of government. There is only one alternative and, if you haven't guessed, it means doing something about getting rid of the rich and of privilege! And don't rely on the Labour Party to give you a hand!

FISH & CHIPS ONLY AT THE RITZ!

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allowed into the Irish Box will obviously have some effect on the catches of the individual boats. "Any Spanish here is bad news", says Landry Tonkin, 63, Newlyn skipper for thirty years. "They have big boats, terrible boats, they have no mercy, they take everything." It's always the foreigner who "has no mercy" yet Mr Tonkin said (*Guardian*, 23rd December 1994) that "he had repeatedly warned scientists that to allow fishing in the spawning grounds was economic suicide". To quote the skipper, "We need to leave the fish alone to breed but if we let the Spanish in they will take the lot". Poor Mr Tonkin! The Spaniards haven't yet arrived but fish stocks in the area have decreased over the years to such an extent that the younger men have given up, seeing no future for them.

The British fishing industry is just as responsible as 'the bloody foreigner' in showing no regard for conserving this food bonanza for all to enjoy. Again, forgive us for introducing the words capitalism and greed.

Governments have a large responsibility in this worldwide disaster because just as they paid farmers to grub up hedges so as to increase cereal production (more than 25,000 miles of hedges suffered) and are now paying them to set-aside a million acres and to re-plant the hedges, so these same governments encouraged - and subsidised - fishermen to invest in longer boats and more sophisticated equipment to clean up the oceans. And now they are paying

fishermen to scrap their trawlers!

And since governments admit they have no money of their own, all this chaos is being paid for by a supine public that goes on voting for them in order to be clobbered next time round!

The fishermen are proposing to declare war on a possible forty Spanish boats allowed into Irish coastal waters which the British say are theirs. Why don't we, the 56 million on this island and the millions on Ireland, start telling them that all the water and its fishes belong to us and not to a bunch of pirates intent on fishing the seas dry?

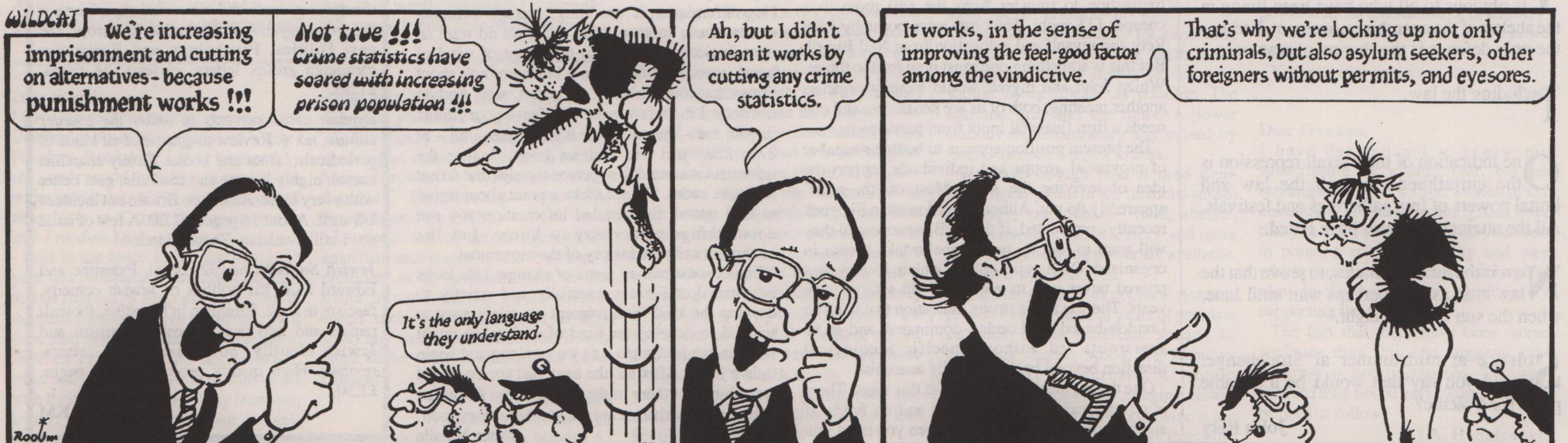
... and no more bathing in the sea!

A report by Norwich Union Coastwatch AUK declares that half of Britain's coastline "can be considered polluted". This conclusion is based on a survey covering 1,800 kilometres of coast. Only 8% can be considered as being "of excellent quality".

The report's co-ordinator, Dr Gareth Rees, said:

"It's an inescapable fact that the nation's coastline remains contaminated with an unacceptable level of revolting waste. Quite apart from becoming an eyesore, our coastline is increasingly a potentially dangerous place for visitors, especially children."

Volunteer surveyors found nearly 36,000 "items of sewage waste" as well as picking up more than 40,000 plastic bottles and 3,000 tyres! (source Jon Zilkha, *Guardian*).



Through the Anarchist Press

London anarchists have been wondering if a day could be set aside for a communal get-together of the population. In past years, and for historical reasons, May Day was usually chosen. I remember attending such a march from Tower Hill to Victoria Park organised by Workers Mutual Aid, when the slogan was May Day is Workers Day. But as Kropotkin could have pointed out, in these latitudes the beginning of May is a bit chilly and damp for a picnic. The suggestion is then to hold the gatherings in future about the middle of June when the sun is at its greatest potential voltage and many such festive congregations could grace a convenient beanfield. It was about ten years ago that reaction was at its most savage and brutal, when of course the families of miners and printworkers were defeated and the convoy was smashed in one particular beanfield.

In the meantime (and a mean time it is) what is proposed is a walk through picturesque scenery.

Might is still right (even if the latest lot is only best at irritating). One law replaces another, and both are continued to be used. None of these laws, hastily written to satisfy demand, are anything approaching natural law. In the old days the law pretended to be virtuous. Immorality was not a fit source for taxation. Now they wish to bring criminal business under the same roof, as long as the state gets its share all is well.

Injustice is unequal justice. The law now wishes to curtail the movement of individual and the population in the minutest way. The law stands that should you walk down, however peacefully, any public pathway you can now be challenged by a person in appropriate fancy dress and told not to proceed. Disobeying such an injunction means instant arrest, bother and expense. Ever since the Falklands war, when the term exclusion zone made the dictionaries, such zones have been devised by our lawmakers. There are fences put up by property and privilege through which you may not pass. Not through common land, not down by the riverside or up the mountain or down to the seashore.

Through this land you may not pass. Why not? It's orders. They pay me wages, not you, sir. Is that all? That's all sir, now move along or otherwise I'll have to arrest you. Arrest me! What for? Never mind the what for, just move along.

Authoritarian law is the codified will of the rulers. There are extenuating circumstances for the wickedest crimes against humanity. The rulers are above the law.

This is the malaise, comrades, and the cure is obvious to all who have been living in the shelter of the anarchist movement. Perhaps the only defence is the sharing of resources.

Including the law.

One indication of the overall repression is the curtailment through the law and brutal powers of free gatherings and festivals. All the attempts last year have failed.

Now is the time, comrades, to prove that the law is an ass. Or perhaps wait until June, when the sun is at its height.

Solstice at midsummer at Stonehenge, would you say that would be a suitable place for a picnic?

John Rety

But of course violence pays in a world where the weak strike back!

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offer some of the vast unoccupied areas of that continent for their sole occupation. Of course they will not. Israel is in fact America's colonial outpost in the oil-rich Middle East. Note all the tears now being shed on the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp by the Russians. The Americans at the beginning of World War Two, 1939, in the words of Roosevelt, would *not sacrifice one American life* in that war. Only when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour were they suddenly concerned with the European massacre and made profit with land lease and other rackets.

But for the Intifada Israel, armed and financed by the USA, is still declaring that Palestine is historically theirs while millions of Palestinians who were driven out of their lands have no hope, no future. As it is, there are hundreds of thousands of them in the Gaza Strip and West Bank still living in encampments since the Israeli takeover in 1948, and in the very year when Auschwitz is being solemnly observed by all the respectable war-mongering nations!

Anarchist Federation of Britain: the continued saga

In previous editions of *Freedom* I related the details of the AFB 'Resurrection' Meeting (*Freedom*, 12th November) and its aftermath (*Freedom*, 26th November). When I said I would organise the next meeting I suggested that the London Anarchist Forum might be willing to be the host at our regular Friday night slot, but two members of the audience – both members of the London Anarchist Communist Federation – said it should be a special meeting and it was important to invite Class War. Eventually I booked the Small Hall of Conway Hall for Wednesday 7th December 1994. As I previously related, I invited Class War and a number of other national and regional groups. I also sent fifty circulars to the Anarchist Distribution Network in Sheffield and to many listed in the *Anarchist Yearbook*.

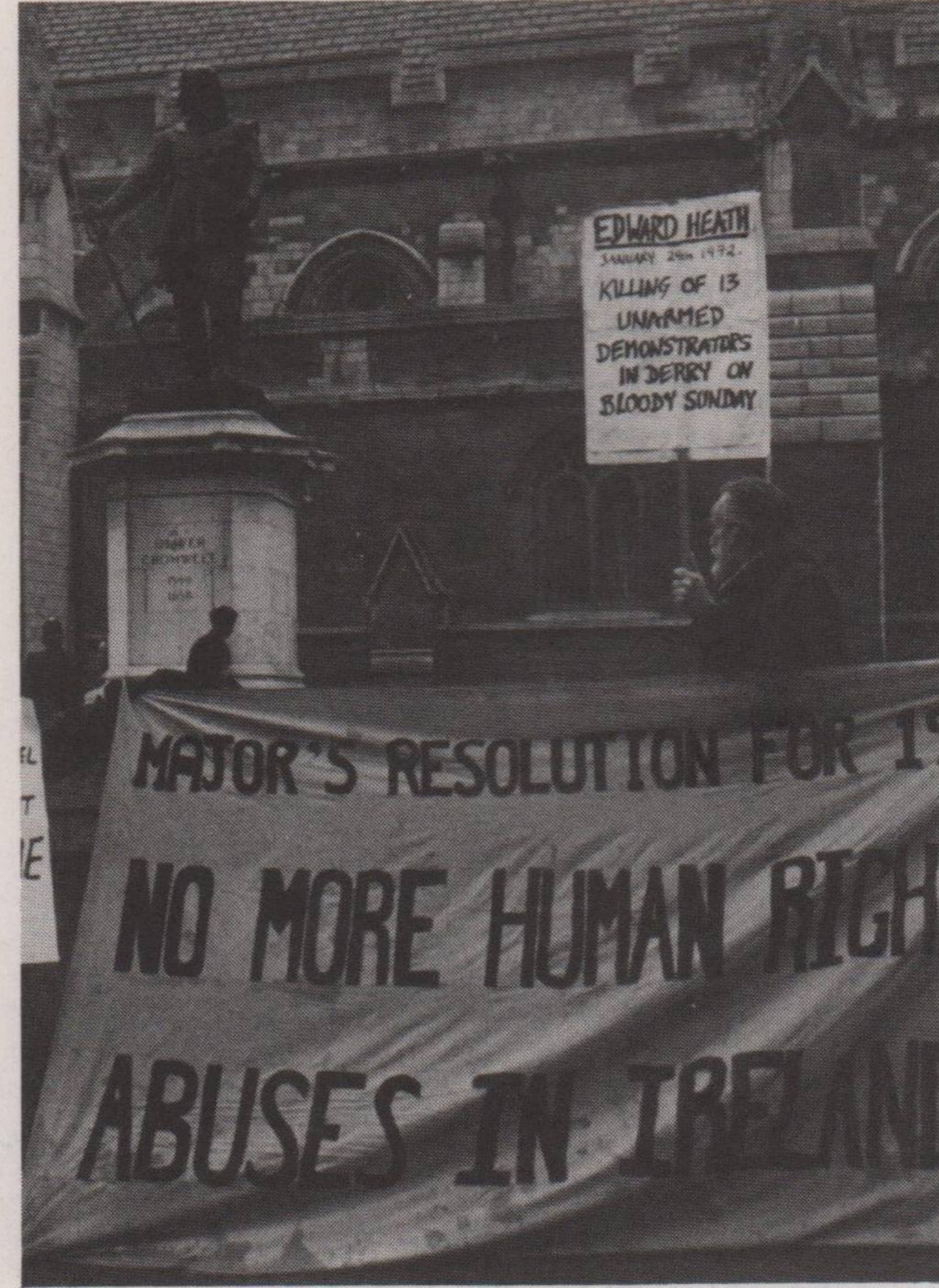
On the night we were, as John Rety said, inquisite, putting it politely. Neither of the members of the ACFI mentioned above turned up. Neither did any other members of the ACF. Nor anyone from Class War. Nor representatives of any of the other groups and publications I circularised, and I am told the Anarchist Distribution Network has not to this day distributed my circular. But the London Anarchist Forum had discussed the matter and supports the idea in principle, as does the East Midlands Federation and other individuals. *Freedom* too is supportive of the notion.

On the financial side I received a worried telephone call, on the day, from Conway Hall's manager who said would we mind changing to a smaller and cheaper room as he had two big music groups who needed to be kept apart for sound reasons, if you see what I mean, and looking at the overall lack of written support I agreed with some trepidation to transfer from the £40 room to a cheaper £15 room. The costs were borne by John Rety and myself and a donation from Neil Birrell. But this is something one must note for the future. Whilst John and myself would happily organise another meeting, both of us are pensioners and one needs a firm financial input from participants.

The present position appears to be that a number of provincial groups and individuals support the idea of reviving the AFB. Most of 'the sects' apparently do not. Although, as Jonathan Simcock recently commented, if the AFB is successful they will want to join in, not I hope to take it over in organised ORA-type splits, which history has proved never gets us anywhere but sets us back years. There is also a strong indication that it not be London-based or London-dominated and it be grassroots led without specific ideological direction beyond being generally anarchist.

One thing I must however say at this stage. There is no organisation or secretariat and no funds. If anyone wants the idea to work then you must join

'NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION' FOR HUMAN RIGHTS Action on Cromwell's Statue



On 1st January 1995 the London direct action group ARROW (Active Resistance to the Roots of War) urged the British government to adopt a new policy towards Northern Ireland by climbing the statue of Oliver Cromwell in the grounds of the House of Commons and holding banners. Two members of the group laid banners at the base of the statue describing Cromwell as one of the 'men of violence', while others held placards apologising for British violations of human rights in Ireland in the past.

One placard remembered Cromwell's slaughter of 3,500 men, women and children in Drogheda in 1649, while other signs recalled the 'terrorism of the Black and Tans' in the 1920s, the horrors of internment in the 1970s and the use of plastic bullets throughout the past 25 years.

"It's time that the British people and the British government recognised and apologised for the crimes we have committed in Ireland over the years", said Gill Allmond, spokesperson for the group. "It is also time that the British government committed itself to stopping the abuse of rights in Northern Ireland. This is the New Year's Resolution that we were urging the government to adopt. This commitment is badly needed to help the peace process to a successful conclusion."

Two members of the group were arrested for a 'breach of the peace' after scaling the twelve foot security fence and climbing onto the pedestal of Cromwell's statue near the public entrance to the House of Commons. After being held in Charing Cross police station for four hours they were released without charge.

SIDELINES

A brief overview of some of the publications we stock regularly but have not mentioned due to limitations of time or space (?)

Green Anarchist no. 36, winter '94-'95. The media, *Green Anarchist's* first ten years, Diary of Actions, Green Thought, Letters, Reviews. A3, 24 pages, now £1.00.

Girl Frenzy no. 5. "By women for people." Excellent non-sectarian non-doctrinaire magazine. Girl Action, comic strips, music, Women with Guns, interviews, The Four Fannies, book reviews and more. 44 pages, £1.80.

The Freethinker January '95. Persecution of secular Bangladeshi author Taslima Nasrin, the search for Jesus's dad, genetic engineering, Mormon-Humanist dialogue, letters, reviews. 16 pages, £1.00. Also available: December '94 issue with the Eruv court challenge, near-death experiences, Irish dog-collar sex scandals. (Several other back issues also available.)

Asylum: for democratic psychiatry, vol. 8, no. 3. The 'Tough Love' therapy that killed Nirvana's Kurt Cobain, psychiatric abuse, therapeutic abuse and emotional rape, Leros – the worst psychiatric institution in Europe, the new Politics, Psychology and Resistance campaign group, letters, reviews. 38 pages, £1.50.

Bypass: cross currents in under the counter culture, no. 4. Review magazine of all kinds of periodicals, 'zines and books. Firmly anarchist stance, highly literate and readable, gets better with every issue. Accent on Britain but includes US stuff. About 36 pages, £1.20. A few of issue no. 1 still available. Recommended.

Jewish Socialist no. 32. Israel, Palestine and Edward Said, the politics of Jewish comedy, fascism in Italy, feminism in Palestine, football racists and anti-racists, post-modernism and Jewish identity, holocaust books, letters, reviews. High quality production. 40 pages, £1.50.

KM

Peter Neville

DIRTY WATER...

When Olivio Gherman, head of Romania's delegation to the UN on Population and Development in Cairo last September said "each person on earth should have free access to air, water, education and contraception", he may not have been advocating the introduction of a cash-less society, but his remarks make a good starting point for thinking about the first two of his objectives. The air we breathe is of course free, although often grossly polluted, no doubt only because neither state nor private exploiter has found a way to charge. Water is another matter and in this country is, for most of us, controlled for profit by a private monopoly. Since the government managed to privatise water supply in 1989, despite much opposition, it has been subject to the laws of monopoly capitalism so that it now costs much more (prices up 77%). For some it has become too expensive to buy – their supply has been cut off, whilst others have been forced to have it metered and now have to count every drop, and this for something essential to health and life, in a country where there is a natural surplus despite the loss of about a quarter in the company's distribution system.

Although water is essentially a local resource, the history of its supply is one in which any measure of individual control has been steadily diminished, from the days in which it was organised by local councils until 1973, when control passed to regional water authorities, directly but inadequately, financed by the government until the recent privatisation which put control into the hands of the shareholders for whom it is no more than a source of income. Interestingly this

Science News

process is about to be repeated in Scotland where supplies are still provided by local councils and are cheaper and of better quality than those of England and Wales. The government having failed to privatise directly due to the enormous opposition, now plans to transfer control to new specially created water authorities (quangos,) accountable to the Secretary of State. This will, as it did in England and Wales, make privatisation easier later.

Anyone interested in a blow by blow account of the mechanics and politics of water privatisation will welcome the publication last year by Penguin Books of *Coming Clean* by David Kinnersley, but be warned as this is not an unbiased and independent account of how it happened because the author played a major role in the process as consultant to the Environment Secretaries involved and especially to Nicholas Ridley who managed many of the stages. Ridley was unpopular with his own side but not with Kinnersley who, when establishing Ridley's suitability for the job, explains that he was a first class fly-fisherman.

Although there is a surplus of water in this country, and water recycles naturally, a major theme of this book is that we must all use less water and that the way to achieve this is to use market forces to put up prices and especially to install meters, to the extent that in the book the water companies are berated for not doing this fast enough. High prices to the author are not a problem, if some families cannot pay then that is a matter for the state welfare services and we all know how generous they

are.

To control the excesses of a monopoly supplier of an essential commodity we have a government agency OFWAT at a cost of £6 million a year with the power to prevent excessive price increases, but in practice it has shown itself to be more concerned with maintaining company profits and shareholders' dividends and has been quite unconcerned with the bosses' massive salary increases and the millions they have made out of share options. This was well demonstrated last July when the regulator set the maximum price rises to be permitted for the next five years, with the result that water share prices soared. Kinnersley, writing before the July, considered that this price review would be a test of the regulator's effectiveness in keeping price increases down. One hopes that he is now suitably chastened.

So what use is this book to most readers of this paper? The answer must be – not a lot. The author is clearly knowledgeable about water resources in this country and elsewhere and no lackey of the government of the day as was demonstrated recently when he protested that the Environment agency to be set up in 1996, to replace the National Rivers Authority and the Inspectorate of pollution and local waste regulation, will not have the means to prevent pollution of the environment by industry possessed by its predecessor. The book is informed on the problem of river pollution and the arguments are extensively backed up by relevant data although there is no corresponding discussion of the pollution of tap water. It provides insights into the minds

of establishment figures – how they think and work which are probably valid outside the narrow focus of this book. And that's about it really.

... DIRTY LAND

About four years ago, the government promised that we should all be able easily to find out about the near half a million acres of land contaminated by toxic chemicals, the result of old industrial activity, and even ask our local councils to clean them up (Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 143). Two years later news leaked out that the government was having second thoughts (*Freedom*, 1st May 1993) as the result of pressure from the property and insurance industries who feared that this would reduce the profits of land developers.

Now finally Environment Secretary John Gummer has come clean. Dirty land will stay secret and certainly not be listed in a public register as that section of the Act, which has never been implemented anyway, is to be repealed. Now it will be left to developers to clean up a site but only to the extent that there is a real hazard of immediate risk to health or the environment, with only a vague requirement for councils to oversee any necessary remedial action on advice from the toothless Environmental Agency to be introduced in 1996. Isn't it interesting how the voluntary approach is the one preferred when it is in the interests of land developers, industrialists and big business? Never mind that there are tens of thousands of plots of land in the country, many now with houses and gardens on them that may be contaminated.

HS

History Workshop November 1994: Propaganda by the Deed Strand

History Workshop is both a journal (of socialist and feminist history) and an annual conference. For the second time – in 1994 – there was a Propaganda by the Deed Strand, a strand for anarchist (libertarian socialist) activists within the wider workers/feminist/peace/green/etc., movements, who see their direct actions as a means of spreading anarchist ideas and who wish to consider such activity with like-minded comrades. It deals with recollections rather than with academics studies.

The '94 History Workshop, held in mid-November in Brighton, around – or answering – the theme of 'The End of History' (the idea that with the supposed collapse of various leftist 'isms' historical analysis is not an obsolete tool). *Such History Workshop themes are set to encourage discussion rather than support the views of right-wing analysts.* Over the years there has been a decline in the attendance at History Workshops and strands presented reflected the comparative decline of the left in general. Nevertheless the liveliness and size of our strand showed interest in the material presented, even if most of us were aged over 50, and this cast doubt on how much action would follow discussion.

The strand drew contributions from people who had first-hand experience of organising non-violent direct action, of work struggles, challenging authoritarianism and other contributions from the anti-bomb movement. We agreed that ideas have to be mixed with other sets of ideas in the process of sharing effective action. Contributors showed how this has been done in non-authoritarian ways.

Unfortunately the first session (which was to have been chaired by Philip Sansom) with John Banks was to have given an account starting with resistance within the army during the war, covering the post-war anti-fascist struggles in Ridley Road and elsewhere, the League for Workers' Control, the Congress Against Imperialism and Third Camp, but had to be cancelled as John slipped a disk and Philip had an eye operation.

Mike Randle (for the theoretical second, and practical first – his chair Tony Smythe had to cancel through flu) author of *The Blake Escape* and *Civil Resistance*, gave a workshop on 'From Operation

Gandhi to the Committee of 100'. He outlined the rise of the non-violent direct action movement from the early '50s to the formation of the Committee of 100 in 1960. This workshop reminded us that the motivation for the movement came as much as a reaction to post-war nationalism and stuffiness as to the threat of nuclear annihilation.

Cultural forces like the Goon Show and rock 'n' roll, symbolised rebellion that was as rich in life energy as it was short on analysis. In the long run (at 55 I am well into the long run) I would rather have the life energy and save the analysis for the Trots. Mike's message that "you do it because you know in your heart that it's right" caught what activists feel.

Far from being a nostalgia trip, this and other contributions were critical of what the speakers and others did, and how it was done. For example, the way it took us so long to change (and then only for a short time) the little-Englander parochialism of CND. Also I was surprised to learn that the Committee of 100's forerunners, NVRG and DAC, were actually quite bureaucratic in organisation.

Andrew King was next, chaired by Peter Lumsden (formerly a Church of England priest, now a Roman Catholic layman), talking of Christian Anarchism, mixed basic Christian tenets with those of anarchism. He spoke of his personal experience of working as a priest while being involved in the anti-nuclear movement in general, the civil disobedient wing in particular and the latter's Christian sections in addition. Relating this to Greenham Common and the New York *Catholic Worker*.

I gave the fourth, chaired by Richard Ehlers. Drawing on a 22 year career in local authority social work, I mentioned how some anarchist ideas have at times influenced aspects of my work and the better practise of the profession. I used progress in mental health as a base for this case.

Pointing to the present impotence of UNISON and the awful record of town hall employers, I hit at the old left position of 'public sector good, private employers bad'. In which setting are professional standards and political principles least compromised?

"The anarchist contribution to social works development has yet to be written. Its record, like social history, is in the memory of practitioners who have opposed the static and oppressive. At times social workers have used libertarian organisational methods to gain elements of workers' control and challenge authoritarianism. Can the existence of such a movement be denied because it fails to get into the ad-soaked pages of *Community Care*? I would like to see a meeting of anarchist social workers and our friends before the sustained attacks on us take effect. Perhaps the next History Workshop could provide such a venue."

Carl Pintel's session on 'Nursing Militancy' had similar lessons in overcoming hide-bound methods. He spoke on the history of hospital-based industrial action, touching only lightly on today's present gloom and inactivity. Carl recounted how industrial action has been taken to safeguard professional standards (and the credibility of practitioners) in the face of managerialism. Carl, now a Socialist Party secretary, recounted experiences that reflected those of us who also work in the public service but carry different banners.

Rip Bulkeley (chaired by Jay Ginn, née Nightingale) in the last session spoke about the anti-nuclear movement of the '80s, indicating how the mass movement remade itself, including how the European Nuclear Disarmament movement encouraged the anti-nuke message in former Soviet countries. Broader perspectives were being used.

We were reminded of how peace camps made bridges between the people who invited arrest by taking direct action and those who supported them in various ways. These camps linked different types of activists across generations and income groups. They linked those who only had to lose their obedience to the state, with people who gladly offered them floor space for sleeping bags. Maybe some of this relationship still exists between some owners of floor space and today's activists.

Which brings us to the strand business meeting. Attendees agreed that although it was enjoyable our strand suffered from the absence of those activists who have the most recent experience, and stressed that the strand convenor for the next History Workshop should make priorities of activists from the campaign against the Criminal Justice Act, from anti-roads demos, from animal rights (or compassion in farming) campaigns, from anti-fascist struggles and from Rape Crisis.

Just as not all (nor even most) Greenham Women called themselves anarchist but all took part in propaganda by the deed, and their actions certainly moved in an anarchist direction, so the strand is not

limited to those activists in the fields mentioned who call themselves anarchists.

If 'old hands' like us are not going to be totally sidetracked, the lessons from such must be learnt, otherwise our history of activism might be wasted.

There will be no History Workshop now until July 1996 (as yet the propaganda by the deed strand, unlike the older anarchist strand round 'Anarchist Studies' – has no existence independent of the History Workshop).

Martin S. Gilbert

Hawk Deal Protesters

Four peace protesters who pleaded not guilty to charges of 'going equipped to commit criminal damage' at Preston Crown Court have been acquitted.

Michael Bane, Rachel Julian, Kate Witham and Chris Cole were charged following a demonstration against the supply of Hawk aircraft to Indonesia at the British Aerospace (BAe) factory at Warton, near Preston, last February. The four had intended to paint 'Stop the Hawk Deal' on the main runway but were stopped by security guards before being able to do so. During the court case, prosecution witnesses admitted that flight testing of aircraft was stopped because of the presence of the demonstrators. The four had intended to present a defence of lawful excuse, arguing that it was BAe who were committing crime by supplying the genocidal regime of Indonesia with more weapons.

At the end of the prosecution case, however, Judge Appleton invited Rachel, Kate and Michael to make a submission of 'no case to answer' as the prosecution case was 'very confused'. Following the dismissal of the case against these three, the prosecution adjourned the case 'for instructions', which turned out to be that both the CPS and BAe felt it would be oppressing Chris too much to continue the case against him. The jury therefore returned formal verdicts of not guilty against all four.

The day after, Chris and Michael returned to the Warton runway with four others from the Stop the Hawk Deal campaign, only to be ejected (but not arrested) once again. Michael said: "The campaign to stop this deal is growing, but the clock is also ticking away to the day when the planes will be delivered. We have to increase the pressure on BAe and the government to get this criminal deal stopped. Join us."

Food for Thought ... and Action!

Flood! a novel in pictures by Eric Drooker, Four Walls Eight Windows. Coincidences are by nature somewhat arbitrary: sometimes beneficial, at other times downright embarrassing. As I was compiling this column the skies opened up over northern Europe and the last I heard Holland was slowly sinking to the bottom of the North Sea. Despite that, Drooker's work is important and relevant in both a literal and figurative sense, as anyone who's seen it in such places as *World War Three Comics*, *The Village Voice* and even *The Guardian* can testify. Highly reminiscent of some of Clifford Harper's work, *Flood!*, in menacing scratchboard graphics, portrays the life of a city dweller in the last days of the twentieth century. It is "the tale of a post-industrial native – of his hopes, dreams and fears; of his survival in a world of concrete, metal and plastic; of his passionate vision of modern civilisation and its effect upon the human soul". One day it begins to rain – and just doesn't stop. By the way of a preface the author includes from a Bessie Smith song:

"It rained fo' days and the skies turned dark as night
Trouble takin' place in the lowlands at night
Thundered and lightened and the winds began to blow
Thousands of people ain't got no place to go ..."

The alluring pictures seem to get more compelling the higher the flood waters rise. Excellent stuff at an excellent price: still on sale in some shops at the original price of £10.99, our price for this large format book of over 160 pages is a mere £4.95 (postage as per original price please).

The Futurist Cookbook by F.T. Marinetti, Bedford Arts. In 1909 the Italian F.T. Marinetti, poet and founder member of the 'second wave' of Futurists, published his first Manifesto, one of many published by him and others at almost yearly intervals thereafter. Futurism marked an important stage in the move from nineteenth century Romanticism to the twentieth century passion for speed and technology, and lay the groundwork for later avant garde movements. It was prompted by radical innovations in science and technology, painting and music and the uneasy political atmosphere in Europe prior to World War One. The

— SPECIAL BARGAINS EDITION —

Futurists had two serious problems, however. Firstly, they were obsessed with innovations, which led them to throw the baby out with the bathwater, thus cars and aeroplanes good; anything that moved slowly – including the digestive system – bad. Secondly (and far more seriously for Italians) they hated pasta. Couldn't stand the stuff. Pasta was stodgy, anti-virile and produced sluggishness and lack of energy and originality. In 1923 Marinetti came up with a revolutionary answer – *The Futurist Cookbook*. Designed to drag food out of its nineteenth century 'bourgeois' past and into the dynamic, technological, urban twentieth century, it would revitalise Italian culture by changing the way Italians ate. In this respect it was certainly novel: if his Cosmic Apparitions dish (turnips, spinach pie and candy floss) didn't enliven your jaded palate then his Aerofood creation (fennel and kumquats with sandpaper and velvet) would surely enliven your intestines. But in fact the *Futurist Cookbook* – this is its first English translation – is not a cookbook at all, despite all the extraordinary and often quite mouthwatering recipes it contains, but a very clever joke. Lesley MacDonald describes it in her introduction as "one of the best artistic jokes of the century". This becomes clear as you realise the importance of colour, touch, shapes, sounds, materials and utensils (no knives and forks allowed), light and darkness, even the use of perfumes. These people were more like culinary guerillas, surrealists of the palate. No other cultural movement, says MacDonald, has produced a provocative work of art disguised as an easy-to-read cookbook. Of course, like many artists, Marinetti had his faults, and when it came to politics he was definitely a few bricks short of a load, as witness his short-lived attraction to fascism. That's flawed genius for you. But this new edition of his book is a winner, you can't take that away from the lad. And many of the dishes are a real hoot. Wait until you get to the

Tactile Dinner Party, where you all have to put on pyjamas made of materials such as steel wool, cork, cardboard, etc., and then have to select as your partner another guest by tactile inspiration in a darkened room. The first course is served by waiters holding musical boxes with handles which you turn with one hand while eating with the other, the waiters dancing on the spot until everyone has finished. The book is beautifully produced with quite a few photographs, and good background on both the author and the movement. Original price £11.99, our price £5.95. Large format, 176 pages. Limited stock, first come first served – go for your pens (state an alternative in case you miss out, and again please pay postage as per original price).

The Race for Riches: the human cost of wealth by Jeremy Seabrook, Green Print. "But for the intractable problem of wealth and its abusive and monopolistic control of the necessities of the poor there would be no problem of poverty." The author of the highly-praised *The Myth of the Market* is no mere environmentalist or conservationist, but closer to a green anarchist in the mould of Murray Bookchin. Here he gives the lie to the myths of modern economics and progress which offer people an illusion of relief from poverty whilst in fact grinding their faces in the dirt even harder. Using the styles of documentary, novel and polemic, he builds up a passionate attack on capitalism's relentless destruction of the eco-system, on the 'free' market, on the monopolistic press empires, on both Thatcherism and the useless, spineless Labour Party. He gives details of the misery of peoples lives in London, Wales and parts of India in a very clear and readable style. Less forthcoming with the solutions than the problems, the book is nevertheless a call for "liberation into a sustainable harmony will the earth that bears us all". Amen to that. Original price £4.99, all 182 pages on offer to

you at only 99p. Postage as per original price, i.e. 50p inland.

Pesticides and Your Food: how to reduce the risks to your health by Andrew Watterson, Green Print. If you can't do the only thing which would guarantee no chemicals in your food – i.e. avoid all things produced by agri-business – then this detailed and exhaustive handbook will tell you at least how to reduce the worst and most persistent pesticides in your diet. It is sourced from many countries, including the UK and other Commonwealth countries, the EU and the USA. It gives non-technical answers to the many questions about the use of pesticides and includes detailed directories of foods and pesticides as well as a guide to products sold for garden use. If you can keep a straight face there's also a section on 'How Pesticides are Controlled' (sic). Another bargain at 99p for 148 pages (postage as per original price of £7.99).

Anarchist Studies vol. 2, no. 2, White Horse Press. The latest issue of this theoretical journal, while not exactly a bargain has at least gone down in price by 95p. Features and articles include 'Ethics, Anarchy and Sustainable Development' by Glenn Albrecht, 'Kropotkin, Self-Valorization and the Crisis of Marxism' by Harry Cleaver, 'Chaos and Anarchism' by Graham Purchase, 'Green Politics' by John Crump, and 'Planning and Freedom' by Ursula Huws. There's a good chunk of book reviews, including one of *Freedom to Go: after the motor age*, one of our titles by Colin Ward. Some meaty, thought-provoking pieces here which, if they're too dry for some, provide a welcome antidote to some of the specious crap published elsewhere in the name of anarchism. 186 pages, £6.00.

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The term 'fundamentalism' has Christian origins. It was first used in the early part of this century by a group of Christians, focused around the oil millionaire Lyman Stewart, who financed the publication of a series of religious tracts entitled 'The Fundamentals'. Published between 1910 and 1915 these tracts had a wide circulation, selling over three million copies. Thus emerged the 'fundamentalist' movement within Christianity. It was essentially a reaction against the liberal tendencies within the Christian church, and emphasised a 'return' to fundamentals, a 'back to basics' approach. The movement stressed the literal truth of the Bible, and the fundamental importance of some key doctrines – the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of Jesus, the authenticity of the miracles that he performed, salvation through Christ, and the imminent second coming of the messiah. Fundamentalism, in its original meaning, was thus a radical reform movement within Christianity, hostile to the compromises that liberal protestantism had made with secular thought and secular politics.

In recent years, however, the rubric 'fundamentalism' has been applied to a wide variety of social movements that have emerged in many parts of the world – in various religious and social contexts. Sikh fundamentalism in the Punjab, the Opus Dei movement within the Catholic church, Jewish fundamentalism in Israel, Hindu fundamentalism in India, the rise of the 'new Christian right' and the 'Moral Majority' in the United States, as well as the emergence of radical Islam in countries throughout the Middle East. The concept, in fact, has been used so widely that some sociologists have questioned its utility. Jan Pieterse, for example, completely rejects the concept as it implies an 'essentialising' approach, one which conceals the diversity of the different phenomena and tends to polarise political debate. Thus Islam gets conflated with Islamic fundamentalism – for, in a sense, in believing in the literal truth of the Koran, all Muslims are fundamentalists – and an equation is made between the adherents of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority and radical Islamic movements like the Mojahedin in Iran, although the political contexts and meanings of these two movements are quite dissimilar.

Many people, nevertheless, have sought to retain

Fundamentalism

'fundamentalism' as a concept and have suggested ways in which to understand it as a social phenomenon.

In essence, fundamentalism combines two inter-related features. The first is that whatever their social and theological differences – which can be enormous – all fundamentalist movements share a common characteristic: they call for a 'return' to the 'holy texts' (or traditions) which are interpreted in literal fashion as embodying sacred or eternal truths, and these truths are held to be 'absolute', which means they are thought to be of divine or quasi-divine origin. Thus fundamentalism puts a cardinal emphasis on faith rather than on critical reason.

Secondly, fundamentalism is not simply a defence of tradition or a belief in some sacred text, it implies also a political project, one which aims to win or consolidate power in order to give the religious doctrines social and political expression. It is then essentially a theocratic project, aiming to create, through state power, a religiously sanctioned society. Along with an emphasis on faith, one also finds, therefore, an attitude of intolerance to all those who resist the imposition of the religious doctrines. Fundamentalist movements are, therefore, a serious threat to human well being, to civil liberties and to human freedom.

If one wishes to get a better understanding of religious fundamentalism in the present context, you can hardly do better than read the current issue of *The Raven* which is devoted to this topic. This is one of the best issues yet, for all the articles are substantive, readable and enlightening. Editors are rather effusive regarding the collections they edit, but in describing this present collection as 'informative' and 'thought-provoking' the editors are close to the mark. The content and style of the articles are, of course, varied, but the collection as a whole has considerable merit.

To begin with, the collection is highly informative, giving a wealth of historical and sociological data on various fundamentalist religious movements. The rise of fundamentalism in Christianity is cogently discussed by three of the contributors – Walter, Barclay and Shotton – and John Shotton offers a very interesting, if at times rather dense, discussion of Hinduism. The discussion focuses on the emergence of 'Hinduism' as a conceptual category during the

nineteenth century, the diverse forms which this religion has taken over the centuries – Shotton indicating that many Hindu sects were not noted for their religious tolerance – and the emergence of Hindu fundamentalism in recent decades. He emphasises that this phenomenon is more political than religious, and is supportive of the ambitions of the new powerful middle class with its moorings in urban India – although Shotton has little discussion on Indian politics per se.

Barclay's contribution, in contrast, gives a short but cogent discussion of the self-styled 'Moral Majority', emphasising its anti-intellectual bias and the fact that its politics are of the Calvinist variety. Such politics suggest that the state's role is to promote 'true religion' and that legislation should reflect 'Christian' teaching. In doing so, the Moral Majority has completely rejected the libertarian tradition in protestantism – espoused by the Anabaptists, Mennonites and Quakers. In the first part of his contribution, Barclay argues that the Roman Catholic Church is also as much a threat to freedom as Protestant fundamentalism. Although not mentioning Opus Dei, Barclay emphasises the poignant fact that the Catholic Church – that "lamb in adversity" – is not a benign liberal institution; on the contrary, it is a powerful worldwide organisation of enormous wealth and influence, whose core principle, modelled on the Roman Empire, is to centralise power in the hands of a clerical hierarchy, the head of which is an 'infallible' Pope. The authority of the papacy, Barclay outlines, has little scriptural warrant. With its monolithic ideology Catholicism, he argues, is largely a "system of mind control".

Radical Islam per se is not the subject of a sustained discussion – Khomeini is hardly mentioned in the collection – but it is touched upon by several of the contributors, and Barbara Smoker gives a controlled but impassioned critique of the "fundamentalist Muslim agenda" in Britain. This she sees as a serious threat to basic human freedom. In her essay, entitled 'Empowerment of Intimidation', she bewails the way in which many well-meaning liberals kowtow to the Islamic fundamentalists. Seeking to impose their own religious precepts on the rest of society and to curb freedom of expression, the "extremist mullahs" do not represent, she

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Remaking History

I have devoted every spare moment for weeks reading a new book by Raphael Samuel of Ruskin College and the History Workshops. This is *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (Verso, 479 pages, £18.95) and according to the publishers is the first volume of a trilogy. His book is about the democratisation of history. On the one hand there are the professional historians, living in an enclosed world of learned journals, "where young Turks, idolising and demonising by turn, topple elders from their pedestals, and Oedipal conflicts are fought out. The mere fact of publication turns the novice at a stroke into an authority, and articles are referred to, within a year of publication, as 'path-breaking', 'seminal' or 'classic'. Academic rivals engage in gladiatorial combat, now circling one another warily, now moving in for the kill."

On the other hand, and apparently on another planet, is an enormous popular interest in history. He gives one weekend's programmes on one television channel to illustrate this and pursues the theme through the museum boom, the intense interest in graphic material, especially flourishing series of your local town or village in old photographs and old picture postcards, the fact that every county record office is full of people pursuing their ancestors, and the popularity of costume dramas.

Another theme is the way in which each

generation creates its own image of the past, a theme illustrated in fascinating detail by comparisons between David Lean's 1940s film of Dickens novels and recent stage and film versions, as well as by a remarkable comparison of the 1937 and 1985 productions of Lupino Lane's musical *Me and My Girl*.

"What has perhaps shifted in the forty years since the first production, along with the terrain upon which working people might find some sense of collective self-regard and enthusiastic purpose, is also the confidence with which transgressing class boundaries can be seen as a brave and correct impulse, one which might be politically productive or even generate some happiness ... Doing the Lambeth Walk - or rather watching it done in a West End theatre - like any other trip down memory lane - is certainly not a short cut to some untarnished haven of authentic working class culture. But it does encompass some of the compassionate collectivity which is the basis for a solidarity across social difference."

Samuel devotes a chapter to bashing the heritage-baiters, who see the boom in 'heritage' as a project "to anaesthetise and sanitise the record of the past while making it harmless and unthreatening in the present".

And he makes the wry comment that local authority interventions in the field of heritage are routinely savaged and treated with derision, although "this is one of the very few spheres of municipal enterprise in which public sector employment, instead of contracting, has actually contrived to expand, and it may be that the critics, though coming from the left, have taken on, as if by osmosis, the authentic accents of that new right for whom the very idea of the public is suspect".

All the same, he leaves me unrepentantly on the same side as the most acute of the heritage-baiters, Patrick Wright, who, in his book *On Living in an Old Country*, explored

among other things, the way that the National Trust, founded to give the urban poor access to the countryside, has, by its centenary year, become part of the Country House industry, presenting the oppressors of the rural poor as enlightened patrons of the arts and benefactors of the peasantry.

Some of Raphael Samuel's most absorbing chapters are about the huge changes in public taste in design, architecture, planning and conservation that our new fixation with history have brought. He gathers these themes together under the title *Retrochic*, a word I couldn't pronounce until I realised it means 'retrospective chic'. Unlike other forms of revivalism, he explains, retrochic has been technology-led. It uses "the most up-to-date technologies to age or 'distress' what would otherwise appear brand new, such as 'antiqued' pine and 'stonewashed' jeans; to re-mix 'classic' rock albums or tracks; to recycle archive prints".

And among the odd facts about contemporary life that pack this book is the news that:

"... the pub mirror craze, which brought the humours of the old curiosity shop and the Portobello Road stallholders to the gift trade (at the height of the boom, in 1977, the mirrors were being turned out at the rate of a hundred thousand or more a week) was based on the application of silkscreen or transfer printing to the simulation of cut glass. Electronically driven laser-cutting has allowed the architects of the new railway terminals to achieve a Crystal Palace effect (at the new and brilliantly successful Liverpool Street Station it is impossible for the onlooker to tell where restoration ends and new-build begins)."

He reminds us that in the '50s and '60s householders were ripping out those marble fireplaces that now cost the earth in the

architectural salvage trade and hard-boarding doors to cover up dust-collecting panels. meanwhile in public housing "architects praised each other for their 'bold, uncompromising lines', their 'courageous' minimalism, the 'crisp elegance' and 'clean-cut' 'orderly' resolution of space problems, their ruthlessness in dispensing with clutter; and it may not be an accident that, as visitors to late 1950s and early 1960s housing developments will know, one of their most distinctive achievements was the near abolition of the kitchen". A few decades later, for the affluent, the 'farmhouse kitchen' is the most expensive room in the house, concealing its modernity behind 'antiquated' pine, 'traditional ash' or terracotta tiling.

What applies to kitchens goes for politics too. Compare the versions of their past and present peddled by the Conservative and Liberal parties in the '60s and '90s. Raphael Samuel tells us that his second volume *Island Stories* "is about the wildly different versions of the national past on offer at any given point in time", and that his third volume on 'Memory Work' is about the commemorative arts and the ways these give expression to the idea of progress, the sense of loss and the glamour of backwardness. It concludes, he explains, "with some chapters on the interplay of memory and myth in oral testimony, drawing, self-critically, on the writer's own use of it; and argues that subjectivity, like history itself, is socially constructed, a creature or child of its time".

I am sure that these are concepts that can be applied to anarchist history and the uses we make of it. Take the debate to take place between Peter Cadogan and Nicolas Walter next Friday at 8pm in the Conway Hall in London on the topic of 'anarcho-terrorism'. Won't the hall become not a theatre of memory but of selectivity in choosing which aspect of the past it is worth our while as propagandists to stress today?

Colin Ward

Some snags in 'Modernism in the New Middle Ages'

A few errors crept into the article on 'Modernism' in *Freedom* (14th January 1995): Alain Minc is a French sociologist, and not necessarily a 'French socialist'. Modern life is focused ... on economics and accountancy, and not perhaps 'accountability'. Later on in a sentence with a double negative, 'revolutionary syndicalist' was somehow replaced by 'revolutionary anarchist'.

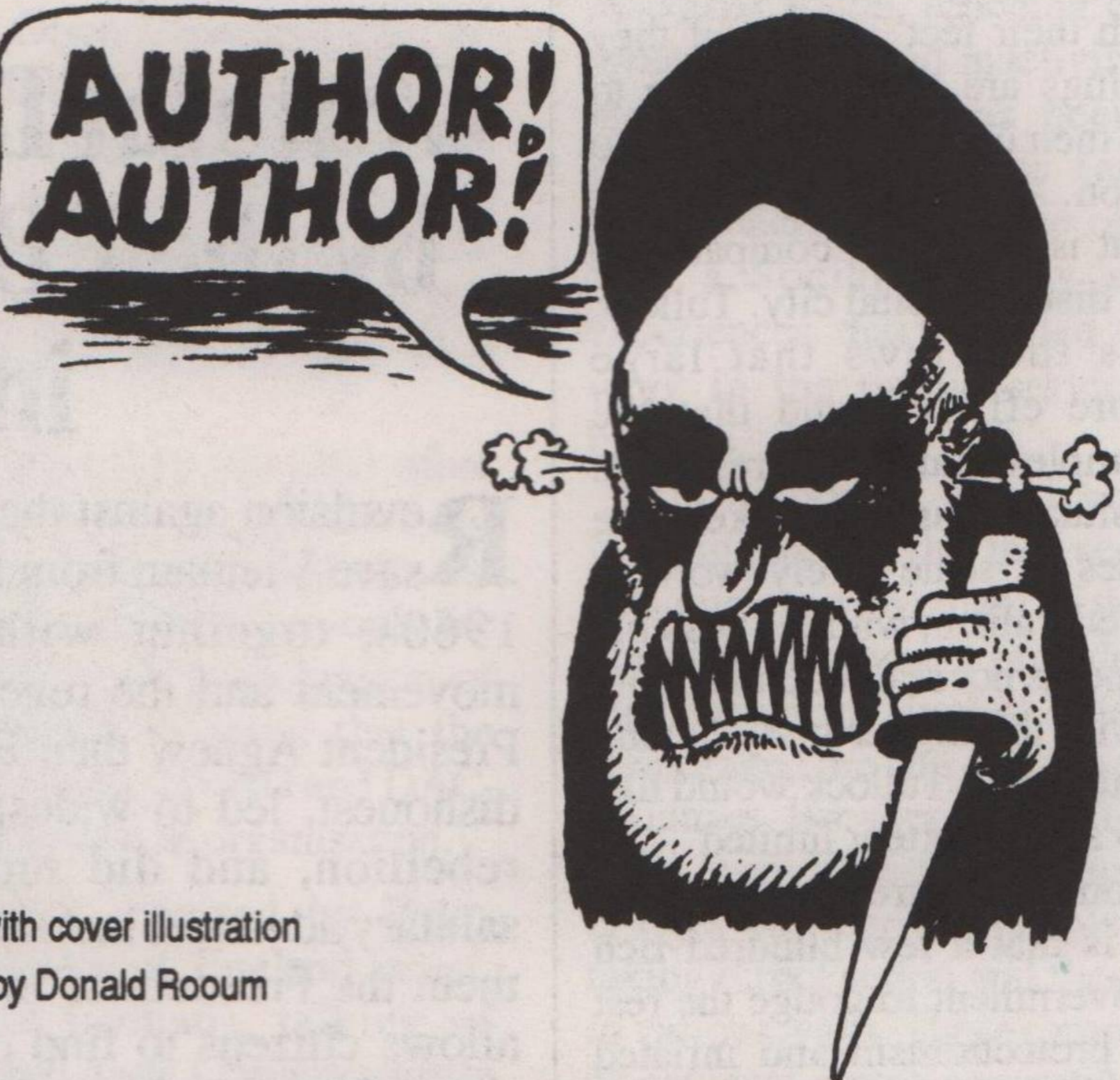
argues, the majority of Muslims, and their influence in education and in the field of social legislation must be challenged. Like Nicolas Walter, she strongly argues that the blasphemy law must not be extended to Muslims on the grounds of equity, but completely abolished. Having seen Smoker, with courage, resilience and integrity, debating religious issues with around four hundred hostile Hare Krishna devotees, her encounters with fundamentalist Muslim students - on which she draws for the present contribution - is praiseworthy.

Thus one can learn a lot from these informative essays, but two themes which emerge from the collection are also perhaps worth noting.

The first is that although fundamentalism has a specific meaning we are all, in a wider sense, fundamentalists. As Nicolas Walter suggests, we must all "stand on something", for all systems of belief - including science, rationalism and anarchism - to be coherent, must rest on some axiomatic assumptions, on some basic principles about life and social existence. All who stick to such principles are thus fundamentalists. But what characterises fundamentalism in its more specific sense is that it demands the suspension of critical reason and is based on the unquestioning faith in the authority of sacred texts. It is based, as the late George Walford puts it, on the "belief in the supreme value of authority".

This is brought out with salience in Bob Potter's contribution. This focuses on the Jehovah's Witnesses and on the psychological aspects of fundamentalism. Potter's account of this Christian sect, which he describes as essentially authoritarian, suggests that the fundamentalist individual is a person who is rootless and alienated and feels estranged from society and "the world", who has a fear of uncertainty and chaos, who, though self-centred, is obsessed with their own perceived personal inadequacy and is essentially anti-intellectual. A fundamentalist thus seeks to "confirm his faith, not explore it". Potter even goes so far as to suggest that a fundamentalist is a "psychotic person" - or at least religious visionaries are - which is a debatable issue long ago explored by the likes of William James. But what Potter suggests is that there is a lack of 'critical' thought in such groups as the Jehovah's Witnesses and that these groups offer status, meaning and a "warm social atmosphere" for the insecure individual. The trouble with this kind of psychological analysis, however, is that it seems to deny that

Raven 27
on
Fundamentalism



with cover illustration
by Donald Room

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fundamentalist movements - like radical Islam - may in fact constitute a kind of protest against social disadvantage, economic exploitation and state repression that many people experience.

A second theme in the collection emphasises the fact that fundamentalism is not restricted to religious movements. Walford notes the affinities between religious fundamentalism and political totalitarianism. Potter suggests that as a "style of thinking" fundamentalism may be evident among Marxists, while Ward, in a perceptive discussion, notes that fundamentalist "theology" may well be at work in Thatcherism and "the worship of the market". It is then important to realise that the whole Jacobin tradition in politics, recently discussed by Carl Boggs in his book *Intellectuals and the Crisis of Modernity* (1993), besides

being elitist and statist, is essentially "fundamentalist" in orientation. Boggs describes the Bolshevik revolution as "the first true Jacobin conquest of state power" in history, and suggests that the essence of the Jacobin - Promethean - political tradition is the fusion of knowledge and power. It was this Jacobin aspect of Marx that Bakunin criticised so cogently. Thus there are fundamental similarities between neo-liberalism (Thatcherism) - which seeks to impose its technocratic vision and managerial politics on all aspects of social life - the Jacobin political tradition - reflected especially in the statist politics of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, Maoism and the Shining Path - and religious fundamentalism. In the present collection of articles, only religious fundamentalism is highlighted. But the important point is that while religion cannot be equated with fundamentalism - for many anarchists have been religious thinkers - religion seems to be intrinsically connected with fundamentalism. Colin Ward quotes Fatima Nasreen, who said in an interview, "religion gives birth to fundamentalism as surely as the seed gives birth to the tree". Or as Walter puts it, "religion is intrinsically inclined to fundamentalism". But religion only becomes fundamentalism when it is implicated with state power and systems of social control - and this is affirmed by all the contributors to the present volume. As Nicolas Walter writes, Jewish, Christian and Muslim fundamentalists present considerable threats to freedom, not because of their their beliefs but because of "their aggressive and intolerant attempt to force their religious doctrines not only on followers of their own religion but on the populations around them".

Although there is an important note by Silvia Edwards on the journal *Women Against Fundamentalism*, as well as a short and interesting account by Donald Room of the Satanic child abuse cases, one of the limitations of the collection is that issues concerning women and the patriarchal nature of fundamentalism is not given a full discussion. Smoker has some important things to say about civil rights that are often denied women by the Muslim patriarchs, and Ward emphasises that women are certainly the "first victims" of fundamentalist political regimes, but gender issues tend to be marginal in many of the contributions - which is a pity.

But all in all, this is a useful, important and engaging collection of essays on religious fundamentalism and well worth getting.

Brian Morris

A network is a system of linking computers so they can share information. There are several types of net, but the one that interests us most is the BBS type network.

BBS stands for Bulletin Board Service. It describes a system where there is a central computer which users can call, using their own computer and a phone line. A BBS may have message areas (where users can leave messages to each other), file areas (with a variety of text and software files available), games and possibly a system for users to chat to each other 'live' (if there's more than one phone line connected to it). Or there may be any combination of these services.

Two or more BBS's can be linked together by a network to enable the passing of messages and files between them. They could be in the same town or on opposite sides of the world, and it allows the users of (callers to) one BBS to communicate with the users of any other BBS in the same network. This communication is done by sending messages rather than direct chat.

To give a practical example of this: you could call a bulletin board in Darwin today, leave a message addressed to the user of a BBS on the same network in Madrid and possibly get a reply tomorrow (although it's more likely to take a bit longer than that). All for the cost of two local calls. Files can be sent via a network in a similar way.

What I'm proposing is the establishment of a network of computers set up by groups of collectives throughout Australia. Any

A proposal to set up an anarchist computer network

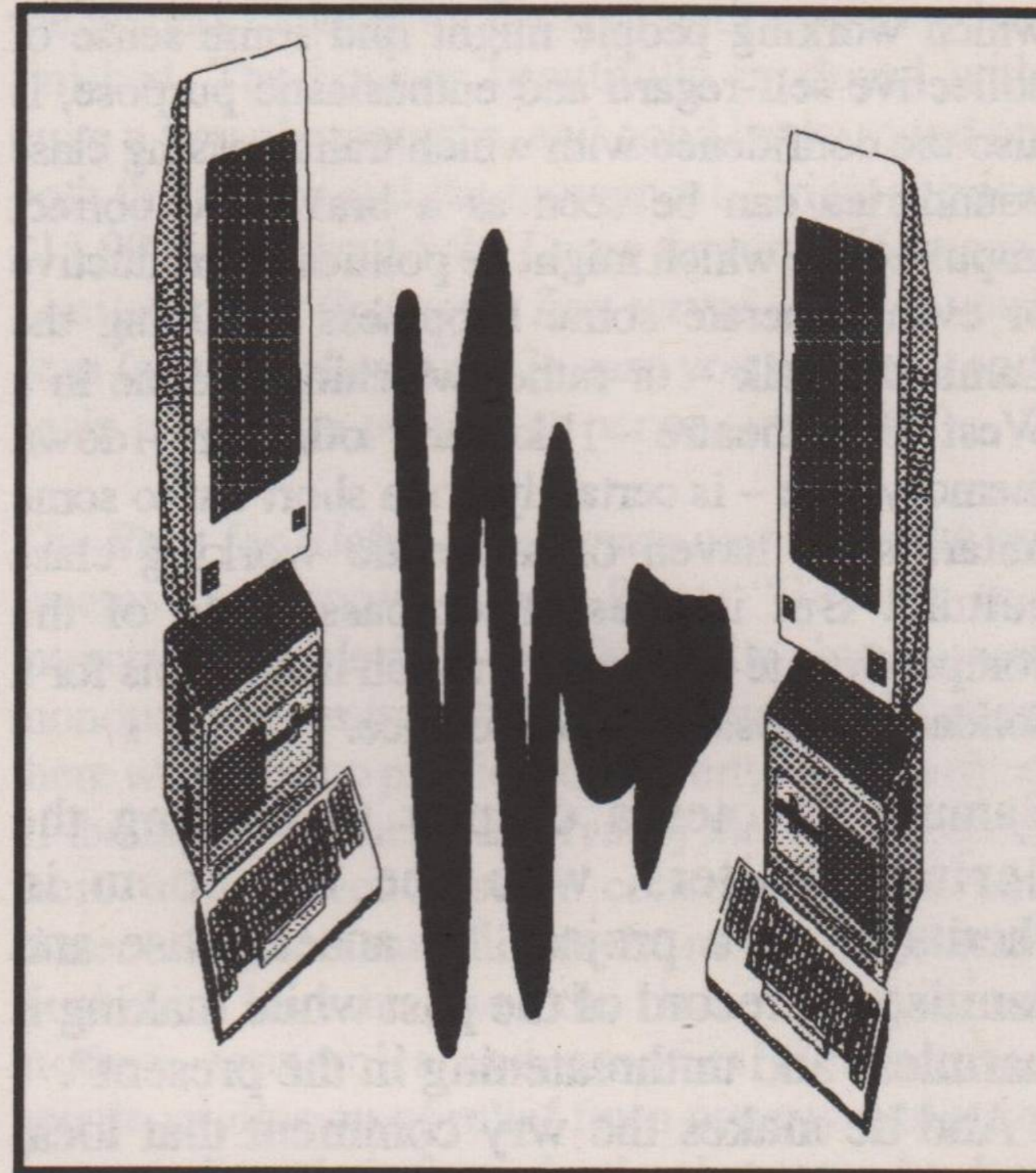
collective that wants to get involved will have to somehow get hold of a computer (preferably an IBM or compatible PC) and a modem. All the software required for joining the network is readily available, as is help with and advice on getting set up.

Ideally, there will eventually be at least one collective in all the main cities and hopefully also a few in other places too. These collectives will be responsible for the operation and administration of their part of the network and jointly responsible for the administration of the whole net.

How the individual collectives operate outside of immediate networking responsibilities may well vary from one to another. How we all link together will be pretty standard, but how each collective chooses to use their access to the net will be up to them. For example, it will be possible to run a public access bulletin board to allow people to call up from outside and gain access to the network. This BBS could be open to anyone interested or it could be private and only available to authorised users.

Another possibility is the use of the network to produce a nationwide and possibly international newsletter, which could be

published in a form that suits local readers. The material would be easily available and with the right equipment and software the production of a newsletter or magazine could easily be at least partly automated. This would put our media on a more equal footing with the commercial press and allow people who don't



We could have told you so!

Ideas long espoused by anarchists are getting a hearing in some very unusual places these days. One place is a small volume entitled *Vers l'organisation du XXIe siècle*, the work of Group Innovation, eighteen American, Canadian and French businessmen and academics specialising in management. What they have to say is very interesting.

Group Innovation are of the opinion that Fordism and Taylorism are obsolete and therefore the present crisis of capitalism is more structural in nature than conjunctural. The only response to this situation is to adopt a new system of management based upon recognising the intelligence and ability of the workforce. (About bloody time!) The old system, they state, was based upon hierarchy, autocratic leadership, a homogenisation of work and individualisation. The new must be focused upon networking, interdependence, power-sharing and team-work.

This is not like the 1980s Quality of Work Life programmes which they consider "worse than Taylorism" and a "soft tyranny". Instead the changes must be real, "... a new type of organisation, different from what has been, in the decentralisation and redistribution of power ... The old organisational forms are mental prisons". Previously obedience was what counted, in the future it will be *intelligence*.

They even introduce a kind of Proudhonian dialectic. "The notion of a 'motor of contradiction' is probably the most difficult for us to assimilate in our Cartesian spirits". Future organisations have to live in a paradoxical world and must operate accordingly. It is necessary to think both long term and short term, of stability and incessant movement, of the centre and of decentralisation. Only through contradiction comes innovation for "organisations wishing to produce wealth must unite the opposites".

The group points out the marked decline in public confidence in hierarchic organisations such as government and business. One of the reasons for this is that "... the aims, desires and needs of citizens is a function of their educational level" and this educational level has increased remarkably in the past thirty years. At present 60% of adults in the USA have some post-secondary education. The figures are similar for Canada and, with the exception of Britain, the other major economies have 30% or more. With a bit of understatement the authors claim that these educated workers "do not find any possibility of development in Fordism-Taylorism". Only a genuine redistribution of power in the workplace will satisfy them.

The New Federalist by an American economist named Gordon Tullock discusses the need for political decentralisation and the development of a genuine rather than an *ersatz* federalism. Since this book is published by a free market think tank, the

Fraser Institute, one might be of the opinion that this book is a call for letting the market do everything but, surprisingly, such is not the case. He specifically rejects free market libertarianism and says markets can't do everything, for "there are a number of things better dealt with by the government". This might not sound encouraging to an anarchist, but this depends on what he means by government. Generally, he does not mean the *state*, although he sees the necessity of a limited role for it. Tullock favours the small local or village government and voluntary associations. He freely acknowledges that nothing is new in this idea and that China and India for thousands of years were composed of self-governing villages.

The author prefers local governments for two reasons. "The smaller the government, the smaller the number of voters, the smaller the number of voters, the more power each individual has." As well, the multiplicity of small governments means people can't 'vote with their feet', that is, if they don't like the way things are they can move to another village more to their choosing. There is also the matter of information. At the local level we can be more aware of what is going on, compared to what is happening in a distant capital city. Tullock dismisses as myths the views that large organisations are more efficient and that the modern world is so complex that it requires them. On the contrary, the situation is more likely the opposite, for economies of scale rarely work in government. Existing federalism, with the possible exception of Switzerland, is not real federalism but a division of power, with the higher body having ultimate control over the lower. Tullock would like to see this situation "to a large extent limited".

The author clears up one of the great mysteries of modern life - how it is that a few hundred rich farmers can use the government to gouge the rest of us with subsidies, protectionism and inflated prices. He explains this as the result of *vote trading*. The legislators representing the wealthy agricultural interests agree to support other legislators in their own acts of banditry if at a later time they will support farm subsidies. The enormous size of the state and the distance from the voters make this sort of sleaze inevitable. However, vote trading is much more difficult to accomplish at the local level - another reason to eliminate the state.

As well as the village or country he sees a need for "sociological governments" which are associations dealing with education, family matters, etc. Only the people who wanted to form or belong to such groups need to do so. Any rules they made would be valid providing they did not clash with the general standards of society - for example, no associations dedicated to rape and murder. In education there could be individual school boards set up by and for Catholics,

Protestants, non-believers, Muslims, Buddhists, pagans, etc. This way there would be greater freedom of choice and less societal conflict would result since people would be associated with like-minded individuals rather than trying to force their views upon the majority. Funds for social welfare could be channelled through these "sociological governments" as well as the local governments. This would mean greater efficiency, a more humane treatment of the poor and more choice.

Even though neither of these books are anarchist, what they are writing about can only be pleasing to our ears. We can also afford to be amused. Anarchists have only been saying these sorts of things for the past 150 years. What these books also represent is the fact that society, in order to survive, is having to seriously question the old ideas of hierarchy, authoritarianism, centralism and statism.

Larry Gambone

have access to a computer to access information from the net.

Something else that could be done is to set up a community media group allowing people outside the network collective to have access to a computer. This would encourage more input to the net and allow those who haven't got access to computers to join in.

Eventually, I hope we will be connected not only to collectives within Australia but to other anarchist groups all around the world. There are anarchist computer networks operating in Europe and linking up with them could be fairly easy. There are undoubtedly anarchist groups in New Zealand and North America who we could also connect with. In fact, ultimately, wherever there are anarchists and computers, we could be in direct contact with them. This will make it much easier to share ideas internationally and to find out what's really going on around the world without having to rely on the lies of the capitalist media. It will also lead to a much greater strength and international solidarity in the anarchist movement worldwide.

We need to work on both the national and international aspects of the network more or less together. However, until we've got a network going here we won't have very much to offer an international network in return for all the information that will be coming our way. I feel we must have at least two Australian cities in our network before we commit ourselves to linking up overseas. This will not only increase the flow of material but will share the burden of maintaining the international connections.

Finance for the network is something that we have to think about. It can be set up very cheaply, but the running costs will mount up, particularly with the expense of maintaining regular overseas communication. We will need some means of covering these expenses collectively.

If you're interested in becoming part of this network, the first thing you should do is form a collective with other interested people in your area, get yourselves some computer equipment and then get in touch with us.

Contact @NET collective, c/o The Anarchist, PO Box 332, Albert Street, Brisbane 4002, Australia, or call 'the eXchange' bbs 03-383 3094.

This article has been reprinted from *The Anarchist* volume 1, number 1, PO Box 332, Albert Street, Brisbane 4002, Australia

Grateful Dead lead singer was employed by the FBI to "channel youth rebellion into benign directions"

Revulsion against the United States war to save Vietnam from the Vietnamese in the 1960s, together with the Civil Rights movement and the revelation that first Vice President Agnew then President Nixon were dishonest, led to widespread discontent and rebellion, and did indeed produce some salutary advances in American society, among them the Freedom of Information Act which allows citizens to find out what information about them is held by the federal authorities.

More progress might have been possible had not a part of the rebel movement decided that an effective method of personal rebellion was to go for hallucinogenic drugs like LSD - 'turn on, tune in and drop out'. Musicians like Country Joe and the Fish, with witty songs against the war culture, were replaced in popularity by groups like the Loving Spoonful and the Grateful Dead, who extolled the drug culture.

The diversion of revolutionary energy into drugs was clearly harmful to the revolutionary movement, but few seriously suspected at the time that it was directed by the state. However, a document recently discovered under the Freedom of Information Act showed that this was so.

One Brent Mydland, formerly keyboard player with the Grateful Dead, started a lawsuit under the Act in 1985 to check on a rumour that the band's fan mailing list had been sent to the federal Drugs Enforcement Agency. Mydland died of a drug overdose in 1990, but his friends carried on with the suit until it was successful.

The document now revealed is an internal memorandum of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, dated November 1968. It expresses concern about the "merger of violent leftist groups with elements of the hippie and drug culture, notably the yippies and rock groups such as MC5", and gives this as the justification for employing Mydland's colleague the guitarist and lead singer of Grateful Dead, Jerome Garcia, "to channel youth dissent and rebellion into more benign and non-threatening directions".

How much was paid to Garcia for this service is not stated. He was in any case very wealthy as leader of a best-selling rock band. Mydland apparently had no knowledge that his fellow musician was an FBI agent, and any revolutionary who had said so at the time might reasonably have been dismissed as paranoid.

Censorship at Freedom!

Dear Freedom,
I am writing in response to your recent coverage of the views of Cambridge Anarchists regarding pornography and censorship.

Myself and three friends had the somewhat dubious honour of attending a meeting on 'Anarchists and Pornography' organised by Cambridge Anarchists as part of the 'Anarchy in the UK' event the night before their infamous W.H. Smith direct action. We were told that this meeting was a reaction to the 'Smutfest', a pro-sex cabaret-style event. I quizzed members of Cambridge Anarchists and not one had attended the Smutfest or knew of its content. I explained to them and they then tried to shut me up, stating that this subject was not for discussion at this meeting!

The meeting was in two parts, the first being a clumsy propaganda exercise closely controlled by Cambridge Anarchist activists. The meeting was split into about six groups, Cambridge Anarchists making sure they had at least a couple of people in each, and we were then asked to read a ridiculous scenario surrounded by cut-ups from Dworkin/Mackinnon literature (both definitely pro-censorship). I was surprised that one of the women in the famous 'women in chains in W.H. Smiths' picture from *Time Out* became interested in my suggestion of liberated porn, but then the brainwashing kicked in and I was told that even *Quim* magazine and gay male porn were made by men to exploit women. I also got called 'weird' by another Cambridge Anarchist sympathiser for knowing women who like porn.

The stuff we had read was then taken as a whole meeting discussion, most of which seemed well rehearsed by the members of Cambridge Anarchists and Campaign Against Pornography in the meeting. Cambridge Anarchists refused to discuss censorship at all when it was put to them that they were pro-censorship.

Within my group discussion I had found the same to be true, though I did find that one male Cambridge Anarchist activist thought it would be morally acceptable to physically assault consumers of any pornography.

After the meeting, myself and a member of Feminists Against Censorship were invited by the camera crew to debate the issues with Cambridge Anarchists and Campaign Against Pornography, and of course we agreed. When we entered the room where the camera was set up Cambridge Anarchists and Campaign Against Pornography got up to leave, stating that they would not appear on camera with anyone who was pro-porn. We were amazed at their attitude. Obviously Cambridge Anarchists are ruled by the same logic as Campaign Against Pornography, who also refused to debate with anti-censorship speakers.

They filmed their part alone. We filmed our part afterwards, after which my colleague was asked by one of the Cambridge Anarchists / Campaign Against Pornography contingent "Do you think the holocaust is debatable" and

then said "I don't want to hear your answer". Indeed!

So let's make it clear, Cambridge Anarchists are pro-censorship and are allies of Campaign Against Pornography who are allies of the Christian right and the morality crusade. And for a group who seem to despise sado-masochism so much they do seem to like some heavy bondage if the picture is anything to go by.

Iain H.

Dear Freedom,

The last issue of *Freedom* (28th January 1994) carried a 'Spot the Difference' photo-montage of a report of fascists trashing Mushroom Bookshop in Nottingham and of anarchists destroying pornography at W.H. Smith in London.

May I describe some of the differences? In Nottingham staff and customers were attacked, at W.H. Smith they were not. In Nottingham the fascists tried to do as much damage to as much of the shop as possible, including to the children's area, in London the anarchists only destroyed pornography. Mushroom has over the years been subject to many attacks by fascists - including attempted arson - this has not been the case with W.H. Smith. Some of the fascists who attacked Mushroom Bookshop were wearing swastikas and other nazi emblems indicating at least a sympathy with the politics of mass murder and genocide, the anarchists held different beliefs.

I will make no comment on whether the direct action against W.H. Smith was right or wrong. The point is simply that it is bad politics to compare like to unlike.

Roger Green

Dear All,

A few points on 'Readers Write ... Freedom Answers' in the current issue (28th January 1995) of *Freedom*.

1. My own view is that I object to any form of pornography which translates sexual activity into sexual dominance and this is usually the aspect of pornography to which women object. It is often the case that women are shown as little more than sexual toys for men, to be manipulated in whatever way suits only the man's needs without any consideration for women's feelings and needs. Pornography often depicts pretty, pliant, undemanding bits of female flesh and not real women. It is control of the female by the male and as such is part of the continuum of inequality which women experience. It is not just an issue of censorship but of asking that you understand the power factor that pornography represents to many women.

2. It was somewhat dismaying that you chose to refer to Frances Vigay as "this simple lady", using the words as a form of abuse. In anarchist terms I would ordinarily find the adjective 'simple' to be a compliment but that did not appear to be your intention. Likewise, the use of 'lady', although Frances Vigay did not use this word, preferring 'women'. Whenever I have been referred to as a

Dear Friends,

I have just read the letters concerning the Cambridge Anarchists / Frances Vigay / Freedom Bookshop / porn censorship, etc., and would just like to assure the wider readership of *Freedom* that not all anarchists in Cambridge support the anti-Freedom line - at least I don't.

I sat in the fence for a long time over porn and prostitution but finally decided that to support its suppression put me in the same camp as people I wouldn't want to be seen dead with. As long as violence, children or animals are not involved, what adult men and women want to do with their bodies is none of my business, and if they prefer to pose or sell themselves to get food or pay the rent

rather than 'living' on the pittance of dole, then good luck to them.

I was finally convinced of the case against port censorship by an article by Mary Hayward, 'A Feminist Case Against Censorship' (in *The Freethinker*, July 1988).

I suppose one of the strengths of the anarchist movement is the freedom it promotes in us to think about all the issues in our lives, but we do seem to spend such an awful amount of time attacking each other while the bosses laugh all the way to the bank - will it ever change?

Bill Wells

A Cambridge Anarchist
(with a small c and a bigish A)

'lady' it is usually with the suggestion (tacit or otherwise) that I adopt the attitude of a meek, mild, accommodating female (not for nothing do Catholics refer to Mary as 'Our Lady'). I don't want euphemisms for dominance - I want equality.

3. I was amazed at the space you had devoted (nearly two pages) to the matter. Some editions ago Bill Brewer said he found the arguments on the letters pages to be somewhat esoteric and yet you gave no similar response to what is, I suggest, a more basic issue.

4. You clearly do a good job at Freedom Press and no doubt most readers appreciate the unpaid time and effort you give, but please consider what messages you are projecting. You also mentioned widening the readership and that's a good idea. I pass my *Freedom* on to other people. There are many in society who are struggling to make sense of the senseless who will hopefully welcome anarchist views when they are made known. However, if regular readers find difficulty in understanding those views as expressed in *Freedom* or find them tainted by bruised egos and invective, what hope for dissemination?

Jean Pollard

Editorial Reply

Perhaps Jean Pollard should increase her subscription to cover two copies of *Freedom*, one to pass to a friend and another as a file copy for future reference. She is 'amazed' at the amount of space we devote to trying to explain what anarchism is about and to answering the most serious allegations against us, yet the first time she picks up her pen to write to us she devotes some 300 words to pornography, which she appears to have studied with all the fascination this subject holds for the puritan, and completely misses the point of our article.

The original report in *Freedom* (26th November 1994) entitled 'Anarchy in the UK: the Down Side' reported on some of the less pleasant events during the ten-day anarchist festival in London during 21st to 30th October.

With reference to the demonstration at W.H. Smith's at which magazines were destroyed, we stated that "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".

Our correspondent Roger Green seems to have swallowed the line that these people are 'anarchists', although we were at pains to say "the worst of it is that in *Time Out* these censorious jobs 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".

In reply to Roger Green, the headline to our photo-montage was designed to elicit just such a response as he gives - although we imagine that he is not himself an anarchist, we are grateful to him for so serious an analysis. We accept that the demonstrators were not 'fascists' and that it is not helpful to use such words as terms of abuse - any more than to use 'anarchist' in such a way - although Roger tends to assume that they were anarchists. It is true that they did not assault the staff or customers of W.H. Smith, but a similar group of women (or ladies?) did make a physical assault on members of the 121 Centre, as we reported, and their tactics were those of Mussolini's black shirts.

Our picture was printed in the context of their allegations that we had been acting as censors.

Peace in Ireland

Dear Freedom,

Whilst I applaud the successes of the peace group Negotiate Now in raising the profile of the issues surrounding Northern Ireland (I attended some of their demonstrations), I feel that I must voice my uneasiness with Milan Rai's article on 'Justice and Peace in Northern Ireland' (*Freedom*, 14th January 1995). Like so many others I was overjoyed at the coming of the ceasefire, but my feelings would not extend to apologising for any one of the political groupings involved. To paraphrase one vocal critic at the Trafalgar Square demonstration organised by Negotiate Now: 'why should we applaud three gangs of murderers?' Major, Molyneux and Adams are turning to us saying 'back us, we've stopped the killing'. It doesn't take a genius to realise that they were responsible for all the blood in the first place.

It is difficult to see how a group such as Negotiate Now can unambiguously pursue peace whilst appearing to support the stance of one of the political parties (Sinn Fein), and b) presenting the main lever for change as being that of pressuring the British government, thereby validating the government's role as powerbroker. It is not as if government and political parties are the only means of achieving change. The counter-argument might be that, in this situation, it's only by being realistic and accepting the existing political institutions that lives can be saved. But this is the familiar blackmail of all governments, another form of the violence that all those in power wield in order to maintain their position. We should not accept the false argument

here; there are other options besides returning to the terror or supporting the politicians in manipulating their 'peace'. Unfortunately, to delineate such options requires great energy, vision and idealism. This is what anarchists should be doing with their time, and this is what we should be reading in these pages, rather than the article in question.

Milan Rai's article is simply a well-written piece of republican journalism. It contains no new ideas. It tells us that Sinn Fein's proposals to the British government constitute a "fairly modest package"; of the validity of Sinn Fein's claims "there can be little room for doubt among decent people". I don't know about you, but the phrase 'decent people' makes me bristle almost as much as 'right-thinking people' so beloved of the Tory speech-makers. The article also informs us that it is "difficult to see major figures on the Unionist side willing to make the compromises necessary" whilst "the record of the past few years [of the Republican leadership] gives some ground for hope". Two points: firstly this whole language reinforces the channelling of aspirations into the existing political institutions, the very ones responsible for the violence. Secondly, surely a peace group must seek to build bridges between communities, to eventually unite the revulsion with violence common to people everywhere? And how can a peace group build such a consensus whilst appearing to support the political stance of one side, and thus inevitably alienating a large number of potential supporters?

I look forward to Milan's reply.

Patrick Nicholson

Death of Guy Debord

Dear Editors,

I would like to say a few words about the death of Guy Debord which you covered in *Freedom* (14th January 1995). Gianfranco Marelli does not know why he committed suicide. In a letter to Brigitte Cornand with whom Debord did a documentary film, he said he suffered from alcoholic polyneuritis. Everyday life had thus become unbearable.

Marelli wants to know the truth of Debord's story. First of all Marelli ought to know *his own story* and be accurate when he writes anything. For example, he speaks of the Movement for Bauhaus Cinema, when in fact it is a matter of the Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus. It seems Debord never attended Lefebvre's seminars in Nanterre, but he sent a

tape-recorded text which was played to the students and their professors.

Guy Debord died on the very day it was announced in the media that some of his films would be shown on Canal X. he probably calculated that he had nothing to lose. Thus he would reach a wider audience, but not whilst he was still alive. It is ironic Debord liked to create situations, and he proved it to the end. Not many people can claim to be so inventive. He died in the same manner (more or less) as Hemingway, whom he admired, and at the same age.

A few people have attempted to write the history of the Situationist International, but all have failed precisely because they do not know the subject in hand. To write such a history it is necessary to have been involved in such undertakings otherwise you end up like G. Marelli, who says: "Will we ever know the truth?"

Michel Prigent

In the Capitalist Madhouse

Dear Friends,

In response to your editorial (*Freedom*, 14th January 1995), there is no need to extract fossil fuels, especially if the only reason for doing it is to maintain jobs. We must put our priorities in order.

I say that responsibility for generating electricity should lay with each community as the means of doing so should be as 'clean' as possible. The national grid and the massive power stations are unnecessary and indeed by their existence a threat to ours.

We have enough land if used more economically (not in the financial sense) to supply our needs - food, shelter, electricity, fuel, clothes, etc. - and other means of generating power are available, i.e. wind, water and sun.

In direct relation to coppice systems, proven by thousands of years of practice, coppice is an excellent means of supplying timber, wood, for whatever purpose. It also creates a vibrant woodland ecology, encouraging flower and plant growth which otherwise is too shaded to grow, bringing more insect life

and subsequent bird and animal life, not something to be sniffed at.

We may well have 300 years of coal supply, but if we maintain this way of life and consume at such a rate that needs power stations and industrial machinery, we will not have 300 years of life as we know and love.

Yours in ever optimism.

Paul

Dear Freedom,

I have decided not to renew my subscription for a third year, but am sending a cheque for £3 as a token of my continuing support for the good work that you do. You seem to be at your best in pointing out the stupidity and vice which permeates our society. It is good also to find someone steadfastly supporting the underdog.

The fact that there have been worse societies than this one suggests that progress is not impossible. The way forward may not be easy to find and may be hard to follow.

J.A. Houldsworth

**PUBLIC DEBATE ON
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A debate arising from recent correspondence in the New Statesman & Society will be held between **Peter Cadogan** and **Nicolas Walter** in the Small Hall at Conway Hall Red Lion Square, London WC1 on **Friday 17th February 1995** beginning at 8pm under the auspices of the London Anarchist Forum.

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- 10th February General discussion
 - 17th February Anarcho-Terrorism - a debate between Peter Cadogan and Nicolas Walter
 - 24th February General discussion
 - 3rd March Creation Science (speaker Donald Room)
 - 10th March Feminists Against Censorship (speaker Avedon Carol)
 - 17th March General discussion
 - 24th March An Appreciation of George Walford (speaker Adrian Williams)
 - 31st March General discussion
 - 7th April Vacant slot
 - 14th April General discussion
 - 21st April The Anarchist Barometer (speaker John Rety)
 - 28th April General discussion
 - 5th May Pro-Sex Feminism and Sexual Freedom For All (speaker Tuppy Owens)
 - 12th May General discussion
 - 19th May Just Talking (speaker Don Howard)
- Many meeting slots are vacant, although a number of invitations have gone out and we are waiting for specific dates. If anyone would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, overseas or out-of-town speakers especially, please contact either Dave Dane or 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. A collection is made to pay for the cost of the room. Donations are accepted from those who cannot attend regularly but wish to see the continuation of these meetings.
- Peter Neville / Dave Dane
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