

# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

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FIFTY PENCE

*"War is a quarrel  
between two thieves  
too cowardly to fight  
their own battle."*

Thomas Carlyle

## IT'S NOT IN OUR STARS NOR IN OUR GENES 'THAT WE ARE UNDERLINGS'!

Millions of citizens of this country who buy any of the three large circulation Sundays (*People*, *Mirror*, *News of the World*) are offered their future (just a week ahead, obviously!) by 'experts' who can tell them what the stars foretell. We are too optimistic as to the intelligence of our fellows to imagine that they can really take 'Mystic Meg' in the 4½ million circulation *News of the World* seriously. But we are not so sure! After all, these three Sundays between them sell more than seven million copies, week after week, plugging 'Mystic Meg', 'June Penn' or 'Russell Grant' referring to themselves as "Britain's number one astrologer", "Your own key to destiny" and "Your next seven days from Britain's number one astrologer". If you are a conscientious student of the stars for what you must do next week, the trouble is that *they don't agree!*

So as Cassius was reminding Brutus and us listeners on Radio 4's breathless performance of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* last week:

"Men at some time are masters of their fates. The fault dear Brutus is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

We agree wholeheartedly but alas those who would have us remain as underlings have discovered a new star: *the gene!* The experts now tell us that we are made up of thousands of genes, and there are good ones and bad ones and it will be shown that we are no longer the victims of our 'stars' but we are certainly determined by our 'genes'. The scientists have spoken and we must accept our fate: some of us have *criminal* genes, some have *genius* genes, etc.

It's a repetition of the old, old story: the blacks were savages, the poor were poor because they were genetically lazy and couldn't be educated, and so on.

We are glad to see that in the serious press there is a vigorous reaction to this latest genetic determinism. And especially to the idea that criminality (by any standards including anarchist) can be explained by genes. For anarchists *the capitalist system is criminal!*

It encourages those who are underprivileged in our society to accept the fact that they cannot do anything to take matters into their own hands.

As more and more people employed in the services we need to maintain our basic comforts are being sacked on the grounds that we cannot afford

*(continued on page 2)*

## WORTHWHILE DIRECT ACTION

As more and more workers are made redundant it is encouraging to report when they rebel and react. Weeks and weeks ago Chelmsford bus workers went on strike when the new boss (they were being privatised) refused to give an increase in wages and threatened to sack them if they went on strike (even if it was as a result of a ballot). 103 bus workers in Chelmsford were sacked.

What is interesting about this struggle is that their union decided to finance a *free bus service* in Chelmsford. It started weeks ago with six mini-buses and as we write now operates twelve for the citizens of Chelmsford. It is a success and their supporters, the passengers, are contributing no less than £4,000 a week into the buckets.

But one cannot suppress the fact that there are all those drivers who are prepared to be blacklegs. We salute the union and the drivers of the free-for-all mini-buses in Chelmsford. They are propagandists for a better world. Why don't the blacklegs realise that in the long run they are their own worst enemies?

## NO POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND DRAMA

As we have maintained all along, there can be no solution for Northern Ireland so long as the politicians and other vested interests are involved in any future discussions. The British government clearly wants to get out simply because the province is a liability for the British taxpayer, and just as they are seeking to make savings on NHS, on education and on benefits, they can see a saving of a few hundred million pounds if they could withdraw the 20,000 troops and let the local politicians get on with it. Unfortunately to say that would not be considered diplomatic language, especially since at the moment they might have to rely on the votes of the Reverend Ian Paisley and his gang of Protestant Unionists in the day to day debates in the Commons.

But even though Major is falling over backwards to assure the Unionists and the people of Northern Ireland that no decisions will be taken without first consulting them, the latest of one Sir Patrick Mayhew's declaration to Sinn Fein that they would not be invited to sit at the table if the IRA did not give up their

weapons, convinces us that nothing will change. As we never tire of pointing out: violence is the language of government *as well as the only language they respect*. For the IRA to give up their arms before any discussions can take place would automatically rule them out of any discussions!

We don't know how passionately the inhabitants of Northern Ireland feel themselves to be Irish (the Republicans) or British (the Unionists). We suspect that most of them are not involved in the political struggle and would simply wish to enjoy their lives. The ultras - Republican and Unionist - are probably in a very small minority. Why don't those who feel so strongly attached to the Republic go and live there and the Unionists who feel so British join us on these islands. And the government could well afford to finance the move with all the savings that would accrue from withdrawing the troops and all the civil servants and other bureaucrats from the province. The obvious is not understood by bureaucrats who can only thrive by complicating issues!



# The Anarchist Response to the Official VE 50th Anniversary 'Victory' Celebrations

**F**reedom readers who also subscribe to *The Raven* should have, by the time they read these lines, received issue no. 28, the winter 1994 issue, which we hope they will enjoy and overlook the production delays. Journals like *Freedom* and *The Raven* with no paid editors or contributors (or offered hot money from the KGB or the *Sunday Times*!) have problems with maintaining dates of publication. *Freedom* has got into a routine and we are not often late. *The Raven* is a more complex editorial problem and with a view to dealing with it we have decided as from now what the main topics of the 1995 *Ravens* will be. Apart from the first issue (no. 29) which must be printed by the end of April for reasons which will be obvious when we list the four topics for 1995, there will be considerable advance notice for would-be contributors to the other three *Ravens* to respond in good time.

**T**he first and urgent appeal to contributors to *The Raven 29* is that it will deal with the anarchist approach to World War Two, the 50th anniversary of which the victorious warmongers will be celebrating, and presumably later in the year there will be more celebrations to commemorate victory over Japanese imperialism.

In that issue of *The Raven* we will seek to expose the hypocrisy of the historians and politicians who seek to explain and justify the

most murderous conflict in history (they still cannot say whether 25 million or 40 million innocent victims perished) as anything but a typical war between capitalist powers either, on the one hand, Germany seeking *lebensraum* (which defeat in the previous holocaust had deprived them) and on the other the victors (of 1914-18) defending their ill-gotten gains and colonies. For the benefit of our younger readers who had not been thought-of or planned in the early '40s, we think it important to include in that *Raven* contributions from conscientious objectors, Bevin Boys as they called those who opted to work in the mines and those who took land work as alternatives to prison sentences. Naturally we also invite contributions from those comrades who took the uncompromising 'hard line' and either went on the run or faced tribunals and were awarded prison sentences.

However that *Raven 29* will essentially aim to expose the hypocrisy of those who argued that the 1939-45 war was a crusade against fascism and nazism and Hitler in particular, if not the German people as a whole. This, in our opinion, *myth* has been sustained over the past fifty years largely as a result of the sustained propaganda (and we use the word in its worst sense) by the Jewish-Israeli lobby worldwide, that the holocaust was the ultimate in human brutality – implying thereby that it provoked

the declaration of war by the British and French governments.

[Jewish lobby please note: Roosevelt can be seen on the television screen at the time declaring that not a single American would be sacrificed in the European war, and it was only the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbour that suddenly galvanised the Americans into military action. Before that all they were interested in was selling arms to the belligerents for gold and for long-established British interests in South America.]

Nothing could be further from the truth. The holocaust was a consequence of the outbreak of war. In the '30s there was nothing to prevent Germans, whether they were Jewish or not, from leaving Germany. The only barrier was whether you were rich or poor – just as it is today fifty years later *throughout the world*. The Jews who could afford to get out of Germany in the '30s left, and many came here. The ones who were herded into the cattle trucks in the '40s with the gypsies, the old and the sick, were the usual victims of war which in the situation of a Germany humiliated by the Versailles Treaty had to find scapegoats, and it was the poor Jews. The wealthy have no problems other than the 'problem' of being rich!

**W**e make no apologies for having been carried away by our determination to

make *Raven 29* an anarchist interpretation of World War Two 'celebrations' by the victorious powers, because eventually even the historians will have to recognise that it was yet once again a conventional capitalist war. (The Russians would obviously have never got involved, viz. the fact that they signed a non-aggressive pact with the Nazis in 1939 because the Soviet regime was in turmoil; the military top brass were either shot or put into concentration camps and were thus in no situation to wage a war. That when Hitler ratted on them they eventually responded in kind, it was at a loss of life on both sides compared with which the losses in Britain, France and the USA – and we are prepared to include the holocaust – are almost insignificant. More than ten million Germans perished in that holocaust along with at least 25 million Russians.)

**O**n the 50th anniversary of that great 'victory' for the triumvirate of the Roosevelt-Stalin-Churchill warmongers, we will also in *The Raven* be reminding readers not only of the holocaust, Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki (yes, Coventry and Hamburg!) but also of the victorious Americans and French being responsible for more than a million German prisoners of war *dying of starvation*.

## IT'S NOT IN OUR STARS NOR IN OUR GENES 'THAT WE ARE UNDERLINGS'!

(continued from page 1)

them, it is surely time to ask ourselves what are the services we need to maintain LIFE (in capital letters so as not to be misunderstood!).

**N**o individual chooses to be born. The moment we are, in a civilised society, we should have basic rights. To deny them we are murderers, literally. So even the capitalist society realises now that they cannot allow the unemployed to die of starvation. But are the unemployed – who in this capitalist society of ever-growing automation, which automatically drives more and more people onto the unemployment scrap-heap – proposing to accept a lifetime of unemployment and charity, or to react and demand the right to their share of the wealth of the community.

We can produce abundance for the needs of mankind. Capitalism is concerned with the profits, the prosperity of the few. We are anarchists because we know that prosperity is possible for all humanity!

## Scapegoats for a rotten system

**T**he media, and now even Major himself, are 'shocked' by what the top boys in industry and the privatised utilities are paying themselves, as well as all the perks that come their way (which can be more than their salaries).

We anarchists are not 'shocked' nor do we think this is the unacceptable face of capitalism. We go on repeating *ad nauseam* that it is *capitalism that is unacceptable*.

The Baring scandal that is filling the financial pages of the 'serious' press is in a sense *farical*. The greedy young trader in Singapore money market was engaged in 'derivatives'. He was just gambling, he wasn't even buying or selling shares. He was gambling on the state of the market. He produced nothing yet was being paid some £200,000 a year, apart from all the bonuses he 'earned' when things went his way. He's now disappeared. Barings are in trouble – for the time being. The main victims will be the four thousand staff who were doing very nicely playing with pieces of paper – not even pieces of paper in these days of the computer and magic which we don't understand because we 'derive' our livings by producing something that we and others need!

## ART BARTELL aka Attilio Bortolotti



**A**s we go to press we learn from our Italian contemporary *Umanita Nova* that an old friend and comrade, Art Bartell, died at his home in Rexdale, Canada, on 11th February. He had reached the respectable age of 92 but had been in failing health for a number of years.

Attilio had been for many years an enthusiastic supporter of our work at Freedom Press. Financially he was generosity personified. Thanks to him we were able to launch *The Raven*. And over the years some Freedom Press titles could be published thanks to his generosity. And last but not least through his son (for by then our dear friend was very sick) we received a considerable donation towards the damage sustained at 84b as a result of the Nazi Combat 18 attacks, first on our equipment and later by arson in 1993.

We shall have more to say about this good, generous, life-loving comrade who meant so much to us at Freedom Press.

We send our warm condolences to his companion Libera and his son Lee.

**GOOD NEWS:** The first Wildcat collection, *Wildcat Anarchist Comics*, has been reprinted again, with better lettering on the front cover.

**BAD NEWS:** The price has gone up 45p to £1.95.





## Through the Anarchist Press

Perhaps the first thing to mention is that luckily I've found time to attend Norman Bacrac's illustrated lectures on natural science. Mr Bacrac is the present editor of the *Ethical Record*, a consistently interesting monthly journal which mainly contains the written texts of the wide range of talks at the Conway Hall. The lectures were given in the Ethical Society's time-honoured library, excellent surroundings in which to be reminded of the marvellous theories of science, looked at from a humanist point of view, and to take stock of past and present scientific activities.

However few its manifestations, the ground is still held by humanist science, just about. Science, of course, is free even if some scientists are in chains and a few are on unlimited expense accounts.

Yet I could never entirely distinguish between scientific games and experimental science and I wonder why it is so that the most profound scientific definitions click out of the human brain using the language of fairy tales, for example the ancient riddle of the snake swallowing its own tail that came to F.A. Kekule in a dream which suggested to him the graphic representation of the benzene ring.

Sometimes formulas have to be understood, sometimes experiments must be made. But then who harnesses all this knowledge and for what ends? Has there been really so much progress, when ten long moons ago our ancestors had a leephone, with its own distinctive pitch which could be heard for miles. What technology! Just a cunningly shaped wood slung round on a string with an outstretched hand. Whoever worked out the right proportions for that gadget could have been amused by Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle.

Important to take these things into consideration during a period of most intense technological strivings whose cost is astronomical and whose benefits are illusory. There has never been a dearer cost of living in any period of human history. Modifications of technology just for the sake of modifications, as Colin Ward pointed out recently, are nothing but a nuisance. I also would like to have a better typewriter not a different type of machine, although I still prefer to write my articles by hand and only then to type the whole thing out modifying where it may be necessary.

Capitalism, as readers have been told before, is only interested in profit. It may not have occurred to anybody before but the painstakingly put together table of elements from Actinium to Zirconium, all 104 of them at the last time of counting, figure prominently in the Dow-Jones Index. Possibly Adrian Mitchell's famous lines "Most people don't take notice of most poetry because most poetry don't take notice of most people" could apply to some scientists as well.

Salus populi suprema lex esto - let the welfare of the people be the final law. Those who call themselves scientists could use the old phrase as their guiding principle.

John Retey

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84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX  
— opening hours —  
Monday to Friday 10am - 6pm  
Saturday 11am - 5pm  
mail order also available from above address

## — ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

# Trivial tales with big implications

I never cease to be surprised at the way people who devote a lifetime's effort to propagating anarchism seldom pause to think about the nature of effective propaganda. By this I don't mean the techniques of the advertising and public relations industries which are a calculated effort of the powerful to conceal the truth from the powerless, but I do mean a consideration of what repels the outside population from anarchist ideas and what wins sympathetic consideration.

For example, in a journal theoretically addressed to those fellow citizens who believe in the ideologies of capitalism, the state, the nation, class, religion, race, I always shudder when I see that some anarchists think it important to denigrate other anarchists. It confirms the opinion I have heard from amused outsiders that the anarchists are a non-conformist sect like the Strict and Peculiar Brethren, or the United Reformed Free Church of Scotland (known there as the Wee Wee Frees) who expelled one of their members, the current Lord Chancellor, Lord MacKay, not because of the shame of his taking office in a corrupt government, but because he had been seen, not at one but at two Roman Catholic funerals.

My own view is different. I think that the way to persuade fellow-citizens to take anarchism seriously is to point to examples of popular self-organisation in the world where we actually live. Like other anarchists I was fascinated by the way that the Family Health Centre in Peckham, south London, in the '30s and '40s exemplified the principles of anarchist social organisation enunciated by Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin. That is all history by now, but there are people around in today's grim health service climate propagating the same ideas.

Similarly it impressed me in the 1950s that there was the same parallel between the ideology of the adventure playground movement in provision for children. I wrote about it in *Freedom* and later in *Anarchy* in the '60s. The effort won sympathisers who would have been untouched by a more generalised approach to anarchism as a political theory.

In the 1960s, thinking about ways of linking aspirations to popular interventions in the environment, and when vandalism emerged as a concern among citizens - then, as now, demanding short sharp shocks for young offenders - I vividly remember the evening when, around the kitchen of a London teacher, Paul Clark, seeking a more positive and anarchist response, we dreamed up the phrase *creative vandalism* to describe unauthorised and illicit modifications of the public environment which brought pleasure to all. No sooner was it decided to devote an issue of *Anarchy* to this subject than examples rolled in. The designer Lewis Woudhuysen provided one. He gave us a photograph to illustrate his point. In Wimbledon, south London, in a cul-de-sac called Sunnyside, there's an old transformer chamber belonging to what was then the London Electricity Board. Plastered with graffiti, it was a late Victorian structure, circular and topped with an ornate pinnacle.

After their exams in 1964 two local schoolboys resolved to paint it white with an ornamental detail picked out in green and brown. "It became an object of interest and amusement and for several months remained unscathed." But by the winter, it was demanding more than a one-coat job, and in the spring four boys adopted a more ambitious colour scheme: gold and white on a black background.

The police arrived on the Sunday morning and said to a member of the painting team:

"Let's have your name, Da Vinci". And an hour later they returned and announced that the electricity board would allow painting to continue. "By the end of the day, the structure resembled a delicious middle-eastern mosque, its pinnacle of gold reflecting the setting sun."

Now I have to explain that my anarchism is in no way connected to the pranks of a bunch of kids in Wimbledon, except as a parable, and that in the thirty years since then I have picked up a long series of moral fables of anarchy in action. But a year ago I was persuaded to go to Edinburgh to talk about the contrast between national and local administration in Italy, in connection with a conference and exhibition of the work of the architect Giancarlo De Carlo, who is well known as an anarchist. He, as usual, corrected me. "I simply aspire to be an anarchist", he said, and of course, devoid of us aspirants, you and me, as well as him, who is left?

But another speaker at that meeting was the architect Giles Oliver, who runs the Cambridge course on Interdisciplinary Design for the Built Environment. "You won't remember me", he said, "but I was one of those boys who twice painted that transformer chamber in Wimbledon thirty years ago". So when I got home I sought out that *Anarchy* cover and, sure enough, I recognised his 15 year old features. "Well, what you need to know", he said, "is that it started with a tradition of local involvement. I heard in the late 1970s that another bunch of kids have repainted it again, and very recently I was told that yet another generation had done another paint job."

He sent me items from the *Wimbledon News* showing that in 1983 a group of citizens had repainted this object, now seen as of special importance by the Science Museum, and that in 1993 the repainters included the chairman of the Wimbledon's Society's planning committee. An anarchist joke of creative vandalism had become a civic habit, featured, as the local paper explained, "as part of a special week of activities to improve the environment". To me such outbreaks of direct action are little snapshots of popular direct action in the environment, exactly like the current anti-roadbuilding campaigns.

When I was in Germany, for example, my hosts insisted that I should meet Klaus der Geiger, an anarchist musician in Cologne, who with his neighbours in the Mainzerstrasse

dug up the road to insert humps to deter the out-of-town motorists who used their street as a rat-run into the city centre. Arraigned in the city court, his fierce defence led the council to make his traffic-calming official.

And last year I heard about the Residents' Water Commission in the self-built settlements around Mar del Plata, a resort town in Argentina, south of Buenos Aires. This community group has been agitating for a public water supply in a sprawling hinterland where men with pick-up trucks sold water for more than the price of milk. The commission began by distributing 40,000 litres of water free, every day, until it could enforce an official aqueduct. But in a country where the public education system has been sinking into decline for forty years, it decided to attack a non-water issue.

It set up a Day of Reflection on Education, asking everyone, with the help of the media, to bring building materials and labour to reconstruct School No. 35. This school, which had no caretaker, was only five years old, but had been devastated by thieves and drug addicts, quite apart from ordinary vandals, from the day it was built. The Department of Education was content to close it and reduce the salary bill. The citizen's Day of Reflection invaded and rebuilt it, adding a caretaker's house, challenging the authorities to staff it under the protection of the water agitators.

To me all these little local issues of direct action are important, and it is interesting to compare the decision about School No. 35 in Mar del Plata with the current school situation in Britain, where central government decisions on local authority budgets have resulted in sacking teachers to make the cash go further. Needless to say, it has led to people questioning the whole system where the centralisation of revenue gathering has ensured that they have not the slightest influence on the way their money is spent.

This is a way in to the task of drawing people's attention to the anarchist case against the state. Because I think it important from an anarchist point of view to publicise local self-organisation, I watch the way that others, untouched by our propaganda, adopt a similar approach. Maybe I've misunderstood the anarchist message all these years, or maybe my fellow anarchists are too poor or abstemious to pay taxes or are all in jail for non-payment or are experts in tax-avoidance. But in terms of small but vital things of spending revenue as well as those of local direct action, I think that the topics that move our fellow citizens are of interest to us, however remote they may be from the vast social changes we would like to see. That is why I was delighted by the story of that unofficial paint job in Wimbledon.

Colin Ward

**MARIE LOUISE BERNERI** (1918-1949), the elder daughter of Camillo and Giovanna Berneri, two outstanding Italian anarchists of this century. She became involved in the anarchist movement in France in the mid-1930s. Living in England since 1937, she was one of the founders and editors of *War Commentary* (which became *Freedom*). One of its main editorial writers, she was also an effective public speaker and organiser. A remarkably beautiful woman, highly intelligent and deeply committed, she was the outstanding personality in the English anarchist movement of the 1940s, who seems to have impressed everybody who met her. Her main work, *Journey Through Utopia*, was posthumously published in 1950.



MARIE LOUISE BERNERI

The portrait, left, is a black and white copy of one of 36 portraits of anarchists drawn in three-colour line by Clifford Harper, included in a set of picture cards each with a potted biography on the reverse and published by Freedom Press.

Other portraits include such varied anarchist figures as Kropotkin, Bakunin, Lucy Parsons, Tolstoy, Louise Michel, Emiliano Zapata, the author B. Traven, the artist Camille Pissarro, our own Colin Ward and many more.

The 36 picture cards (known to collectors as trading cards) come in a neat box, price £5 (post free in the UK, or at £5.45 including p&p abroad) from Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.



The 9th March 1995 was the hundredth day in court\* of the McDonalds libel action against our comrades Dave Morris and Helen Steel. With 150 witnesses still to be examined, the court is likely to sit for at least another 150 days, making it the longest libel trial in British history.

Earlier reports in *Freedom* suggested that McDonalds were asking only for an injunction to stop the defendants repeating the alleged libel, not for damages or costs. Our apologies for the inaccuracy of those reports. As their leading counsel Mr Rampton told the judge on the first day, McDonalds are asking for damages and costs but not hoping to recover any which are awarded, because Morris and Steel have no money.

Paradoxically their poverty is their strength. They may be ordered to pay £5 million or more (court costs are £8,000 a day, and

\* Assuming there was no rescheduling after *Freedom* went to press on 5th March.

## McLibel's Hundred Days

McDonalds legal expenses about the same), but it will mean no more to them than if they were ordered to pay £500.

In January, after some evidence about degradation of forests for paper making (McDonalds use a lot of paper), the defendants called the managers of McDonalds restaurant in Kings Road, Chelsea, and the local Residents Association to talk about the litter generated by that particular store. The Residents Association had objected to the proposal for the shop on the grounds that it would cause litter. The managers said there were litter patrols every thirty minutes. The residents' spokesman said that despite assurances before the shop opened, litter patrols had only been regular for the first three weeks, after which they became infrequent. The most recent was last August.

'unsatisfactory'. He agreed, however, that after it was classified all of it, including the 'unsatisfactory', went into McDonalds hamburgers.

He said any beef which arrived at a temperature of more than four degrees centigrade received a "cast iron rejection". The defendants asked him to look at some of McKey's own forms, showing that beef arriving at over 4°C had been accepted. Ah yes, he said, in such cases "the quality control officer receiving the meat would make a management decision which was right for the company".

John Atherton was called to talk about food poisoning, as the person responsible for the health and safety of McDonalds employees and customers. He said the firm receives 1,500

to 2,750 complaints of food poisoning a year, plus a lot of complaints about foreign bodies such as chicken bones in chicken. The firm admitted responsibility for an outbreak of food poisoning in Preston in 1991, and in Oregon and Michigan in 1982, all due to strain 0157H of the common gut bacterium *escherichia coli*.

He also agreed that a McDonalds worker in Manchester had been electrocuted in 1992 (following which 'Residual Current Devices' had been fitted in all McDonalds washing-up areas), and that the Accident Prevention Unit of the Health and Safety executive had reported that in some shops "McDonalds hustle policy was, in effect, putting the service of the customer before the safety of employees".

Further information from McLibel Support Campaign, c/o 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, tel/fax 0171-713 1269.

## IN BRIEF

Flight Lieutenant Jo Salter, a Tornado bomber pilot in the Royal Air Force, has become the first woman pilot to be declared 'combat ready'. RAF publicity handouts, copied by media defence correspondents, presented this as a breakthrough for feminism, the end of an irrational misogynistic taboo.

But it could be interpreted as recognition that warfare has now become inescapable.

A hundred years ago the people who set out to kill in a war were far more likely to be killed than the people who stayed at home. Therefore from the point of view of the community, tribe or nation and its ruling clan, it was prudent to send men to kill and keep the women at home. A man can have hundreds of babies a year, while a woman can have only one or two. So if most of the men are killed the population can be restored within a generation, whereas if most of the women die the population might never recover.

Now that there are horrors like Tornado bombers, however, civilians have no better chance of survival than front line troops and the old rule that women must remain civilians has become obsolete.

### Prince Philip loses temper

McDonalds solicitors have supplied bundles of documents to the defendants, one of which accidentally included a handwritten letter with an interesting anecdote about the Queen's husband. The defendants read it out during questioning of David Walker, Chairman of McKey Foods who have supplied all the beef to McDonalds UK since 1978 (the firm used to be a McDonalds subsidiary, but Mr Walker is now the proprietor).

In 1983 Prince Philip, on a state visit to Canada, lost his temper with the President of McDonalds Canada, whom he accused of "tearing down the Brazilian rainforests and breeding cattle". The Chairman of McDonalds Corporation then "issued a worldwide edict that no McDonalds plant was to use Brazilian beef". By permission of the then President of McDonalds UK, however, David Walker carried on importing beef from Vestey's in Brazil throughout 1985, and this was kept secret from Prince Philip, the World Wildlife Fund, Friends of the Earth and the BBC, who were sued by McDonalds in 1986.

Mr Walker testified that samples of all raw beef supplies to the McKey processing plants were tested for bacterial content and classified as 'satisfactory', 'passable' and

## Renewal on the Left?

There has been much ink spilt over the supposed current crisis of ideas on the traditional Left. While anarchists have long held the ideas of the statist and authoritarian Left to be deeply flawed, the collapse of Soviet imposed regimes in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, the disintegration of Soviet Communism and the effects of four successive election defeats on the Labour Party have all contributed to a period of ideological soul searching by our erstwhile opponents.

Now the old Communist Party of Great Britain is no more, and elements of it have regrouped and renamed themselves 'The Democratic Left'. Some would argue that this is a typical *Stalinist* move and that a leopard cannot really change its spots, but on a local level, in this part of the Midlands, there seems a genuine spirit of renewed openness towards and enquiry about libertarian and anarchist ideas previously spurned by the Marxist Left.

In recent months there have been two meetings, among the regular monthly meetings of the Loughborough Democratic Left, where anarchist ideas featured as the topic of lectures. The first one, last September, centred on alternative/anarchist economic ideas from LETS schemes, the informal economy, workers control, to the rejection of work. This provoked a lively discussion. The second more recent meeting in January featured one Doug Holly of the Red-Green Network who is, in his own

words, a "born again anarchist". He spoke to a meeting of some 25 people on the topic 'The New Politics of the Left'. In his address Holly argued that anarchism and more recently feminism have contributed to an increasing questioning of hierarchy, to new methods of political practise, where the personal is political and the political is personal. This has led directly, especially since the 1960s, to a development of a grassroots community based libertarian and green politics.

Holly linked these ideas to those of social ecology and direct democracy as espoused by the anarchist Murray Bookchin, though Holly was critical of Bookchin's espousal of athenian direct democracy, flawed by being for males, citizens and slave owners. Holly was also critical of Bookchin's lack of a strategy beyond the neighbourhood and small community. For Holly anarchist federalism would be a useful adjunct to Murray Bookchin's social ecology.

Holly's talk was well received and presented aspects of anarchism in a positive way to a mostly non-anarchist audience. Are such meetings anecdotal evidence that after a century of hostility to anarchism, 'refugees' from the old Marxist Left are rediscovering the ideas of anarchist and libertarian politics?

JPS

### A Duke's back garden

In the 25 years since the historic rally at Chipping in Lancashire, ramblers have gained access to only 3,239 acres of the 64,000 acres of open moorland known as the Forest of Bowland, a marvellous open space for walkers seeking to escape from the cities and enjoy a measure of solitude, and today that is still all that is available to the public. Most of the remainder is just one of the Duke of Westminster's back gardens and he is concerned that walkers would frighten the wild birds of prey, although all the evidence points to keepers being the real danger to the birds that conservationists are concerned to protect, for raptors survive 40% better on non-grouse moors. Last September about 700 people protested peacefully, and without trespassing, about the lack of access to this land and have been promised in return just a few extra miles of keeping to the footpath. A little direct action trespassing could hardly have achieved less. Something to think about for this year's Ramblers' Association Open Britain Day on 24 September.

Strong-arm tactics by landowners, or more likely their minions, are not uncommon and one of the most recently reported took place on a right of way through Eaton Park near Chester, which coincidentally happens to be another of the Duke of Westminster's back gardens. A family group, when walking on the public footpath, made the mistake of stopping to eat their sandwiches and were then shouted at and harassed by a security guard wearing a pseudo-police uniform and driving a Land Rover. He made high speed

## RAMBLING NOTES

threatening manoeuvres around them until they escaped from the park.

### Good news?

The Countryside Commission, which tends to be sympathetic to the rights of walkers, is not now to be merged with the much larger English Nature. Is this good news or not? John Gummer announced last October in response to mounting protests, that instead, there would be "a programme of closer working between the two organisations". Sounds to me like just another way to restrict the activities of the Countryside Commission. The Government has also abandoned plans to privatise the Forestry Commission, which means that walkers may continue to enjoy the pleasures of walking in its 2 million acres. But it still plans to continue selling off 37,000 acres every year to private owners, so the fences will still be going up, but just more slowly.

### Whose Trust is it?

The National Trust (NT) is celebrating this year its 100 years of caring for the land it looks after on our behalf by fencing in some of the common land it owns; ironically adopting a procedure that it was set up to prevent. The enclosures of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries which drove workers off the land into the towns, conveniently

providing cheap labour for the industrial capitalists, led in the nineteenth century to some pressure groups and individuals getting together to set up the NT to protect what little accessible open space that remained and ensure that it was available to townspeople for their enjoyment. This was codified by the National Trust Act of 1907 which put a duty on the Trust "at all times to keep such common or commendable property unenclosed and unbuilt-on as open spaces for the recreation and enjoyment of the public". Now the Open Spaces Society, which took part in the setting up of the NT in 1895, reports that the arrogant landowners and minor aristocrats that now run it "plan to fence in the Quantock Hills in Somerset" and "will probably fence Dumpden Hill in Devon, Danbury Common in Essex, Hindhead, Surrey and many more".

The NT call this managing the commons and justify it by a perceived need to introduce grazing to control the vegetation. Other approaches such as traditional shepherding and hefting, installing cattle grids and calming traffic which do not impose a psychological barrier to hill and heather are ignored, no doubt because fencing is cheaper, the more so as the Countryside Commission will pay for fencing. Footpaths are sensible on cultivated land but have no place on common and uncultivated land which, in the words of

Octavia Hill, one of the founders of the NT, should offer the freedom to roam without the constraint of following a right of way which amounts to the "narrowest admissible pathway to the public".

### Windsor view

A one and a half mile vital link in the new 180 mile River Thames path is being obstructed by the Windsor clan because it goes through one of their back gardens (aka Windsor Park) and they claim that walkers might disturb their peace and security, this despite the intention of these Windsors to start drilling for oil just a few hundred yards away. The path has indeed been blocked since 1860 to all except tenants of certain Grace and Favour properties in the park because Queen Victoria used an Act of Parliament and knocked down a bridge to keep everyone else out. All attempts to negotiate a re-opening of the path to avoid walkers having to divert onto a busy main road having failed (the Countryside Commission even offered to let the top Windsor formally open the Thames Path next year) a group of about 500 ramblers and protesters against the Criminal Justice Act decided to trespass the path on the 19th February last. The Windsors were believed to have been at home at the time but the walkers were protected from the wrath of the family by about 400 police and were able to complete the walk successfully. In a minor disturbance at the end, the police are reported to have arrested about twenty people although oddly, none of them was called Windsor.

HS



**Bad Girls and Dirty Pictures: the challenge to reclaim feminism**

by Alison Assiter and Avedon Carol  
Pluto Press, 1993, £9.95

**Nudes, Prudes and Attitudes: pornography and censorship**

by Avedon Carol  
New Clarion Press, 1994, £9.95

In a sense these books complement each other. They are written by members of Feminists Against Censorship (FAC). The one a reader giving a range of viewpoints, the other a more detailed analysis. Assiter and Carol's book, I think, better serves the general reader who wants to dip into the subject. Carol's book provides a more detailed analysis for reader and writer who wish to engage in an informed debate with both those who advocate censorship and a general public who express alarm at certain apparent but in fact largely unreal happenings.

Assiter and Carol's book, which for brevity's sake I shall refer to as *Bad Girls*, has twelve chapters. Running through these: Gayle Rubin on Anti-Pornography Politics looks at why opposition to pornography appears so attractive to many feminists. The Primarola Bill and First Amendment to the United States Constitution are examined, and then Carol and Pollard look at Changing Perceptions in the Feminist Debate. Alison King looks at the methodological background of pornographic research, pointing out the traps which analyses of pornography fall into when approached by its opponents. Allison Assiter looks at theoretical approaches to the topic, essential in this kind of study. Nettie Pollard looks at the case of child pornography. Children are a group more often sinned against by its protectors than protected. Tuppy Owens refreshingly points out that both men



It was illegal to show pubic hair in nude photos

# A Reclamation of Feminism

and women actually enjoy sex, looks at developments in the pornographic industry and the poor quality of much material, and then talks about her work with handicapped people. Avedon Carol critically looks at the 'snuff-movie industry', pointing out that much of it is merely a matter of make-up not reality. Nobody has actually yet snuffed it, all the apparent victims are still alive. Claudia looks at the fear of pornography. Christobel Mackenzie invites you to fight sexism not sex, and the authors sum the field up, dare I say it, masterfully. Detailed notes are provided, plus a bibliography and well-organised index.

I suppose one can say there is a degree of unevenness about the contributions, but rather than tear them to pieces it is important to point out that each author has tried to produce a balanced contribution and if the writing is sometimes at different intellectual levels that is the book's charm. It does not trust the topic at the reader, but by the judicious use of contents list and index it enables the reader to make choices about what they want to read, and if they want more depth the notes on each section provide this. I expect few readers will read it from cover to cover, but like a good reference work will dip into it periodically until, with some feeling of frustration, they will settle down to look at the work as a whole, which will then lead into the second book. Before looking at this, what is *Bad Girls* about?

In a sense *Bad Girls* is concerned at the way some feminists appear to have been co-opted by the moral right (the Christian right) into taking up authoritarian and puritanical anti-pornography positions which in the long run militate against feminism itself, for the moral right is not interested in change and improving women's rights but on orthodox views of the family and women's role within it.

Whilst it may not necessarily be the same people involved, nevertheless those who oppose pornography parallel the 'right to life' people and those who oppose family planning and contraception.

That pornography is distasteful to many feminists is correct (although, as the book points out, not to all feminists, nor certainly to many in the gay and lesbian communities) but the FAC writers point out the danger inherent in embracing a pro-censorship, anti-pornography stance as avowedly unfeministic and ultimately authoritarian which sets limits to

feminism itself. The writers show an awareness of the way many feminists are being manipulated by anti-feminist forces and the need to re-establish the reality of the debate and express where feminism's real interests lie which are, in many cases, the antithesis of puritanical feminism.

If some feminists feel a dislike of certain publications and certain depictions, that is fair enough. But calling for their banning by legal means changes nothing. It merely pushes it under the carpet. After all, they need not purchase the publications, and enforcement will not be done by feminists.

I must admit I have found this dogmatic dislike on the part of some anarchist-feminists puzzling, especially when they will not debate but continue to have closed meetings. When invited to put their views to, say, the London Anarchist Forum they have a habit of not turning up to advertised meetings, so much so that it was decided at the last Forum planning meeting not to invite feminists, although a suggestion that I give the talk was turned down as it is still believed in some quarters that only a woman can talk on feminism.

Also I have felt for a long time that only one type of feminism was being presented to the anarchist movement, a type held in particular by some of the participants in anarchist publishing, who act as gatekeepers preventing both other feminists from expressing alternative viewpoints and, by a combination of censorship and induced male chivalry, effectively silencing or condemning anarchist writers who either present alternative views or wish for a more balanced approach.

The suggestion that FAC are supported by the pornographic industry is laughable. The assumption shows no understanding of the nature of economics. Capitalism feeds on demand and scarcity. Would today's drug problems be so apparent if drugs were legally available? Power requires control. Control requires policing. If pornography were banned it would, like drugs, simply become a scarce commodity controlled by criminals and its users criminalised by police

Avedon Carol will be talking about Feminists Against Censorship at a meeting of the London Anarchist Forum at Conway Hall on Friday 10th March 1995 at 8pm. Further details about FAC can be obtained from BM Box 207, London WC1N 3XX. Both the above books are available from Freedom Press at £9.95 (plus 10% postage and packing inland, 20% overseas).



The New Man is a dictator

systems and courts. If nothing is illegal one does not need police. The more that is made illegal, the more the police are required and these can, of course, be used by those in power for other control purposes. Such is the nature of capitalism and the state.

I wonder when certain feminists are going to wake up to the fact that abolishing pornography leads to abolishing contraception and abortion and women going veiled. Does pornography exist in the Islamic states?

Avedon Carol's book includes detailed accounts of much of the propaganda used by the anti-pornographers pointing out how insubstantial this is and how little based on factual evidence. She pays special attention to the work of pro-censorship feminists such as Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon who, in trying to circumvent the United States First Amendment, were putting forward policies which were so vague and general they could be easily used by police and courts against gays and lesbians or anyone they wished.

Whether this opposition to what they call pornography is just sloppy thinking on the part of some feminists who do not understand the effects of their action is debatable. Much opposition to pornography stems from firmly held beliefs and in proposing legal solutions, a very unanarchistic thing to do. They have no idea how much they are shooting themselves in the foot or putting ammunition in the hands of those to whom we are opposed.

Now one is not saying that unpleasant people do not do unpleasant and even criminal things to each other, but stopping people using pornography does not affect these, although if some sex criminals hoping for a reduced sentence are not induced to report that pornography led to their crimes, it does not mean pornography creates crime.

Shakespeare once said, "nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so". You may say, some things are bad and some good independent of my thinking. This is to say food is good or bad independent of my stomach; the policeman's baton is good or bad independent of its exercise on my body; the knife is good or bad independent of me, you may say.

Does my thought of the use of the knife not determine for me whether it is good or bad? Does my thought not determine whether the knife is lethal or of use value? In the hands of an assailant the knife is lethal to my thinking. In the hands of a soldier on the battlefield it has good value. The knife in itself is neither good nor bad but thinking makes it so. The soldier by his passion for patriotism regards the knife, bayonet or bullet indispensable. What does 'for patriotism' derive from if not from thinking 'rightly or wrongly'; predicates which again are derived from thought. The knife in the hand of a surgeon could be propitious in my way of thinking.

Thought of course is merely one of my qualities. I also have flesh and blood and in consequence I feel pain when a blow is administered. If I am incarcerated for the violation of a law, violence may be exercised upon my person by the lickspittles of the law in order to get me to reveal the identity of my accomplices. I may feel pain, then my thought comes to my aid. My thought, like flesh and blood, is mine. The thoughts of the lickspittles are not theirs, they are possessed by them, they are victims of their own creation. So I put my thought to use and bring my obduracy into play or I steer them wrongly. Yes, I tell them a lie. If I was possessed by truth I would have to be disloyal to my friends and pander to my enemies.

The truth is not above me. If I was a lover of truth I would be infatuated by an abstraction. If some truth exists, what do I care? Must I genuflect before them in reverence? A truth which is unpalatable to me will be subdued if I have the power to do so. A truth which is favourable I will accept. Economists have convinced me that the capitalist system prevails. I accept that this is a truth but a truth which I want to make an untruth. If I had the power to annihilate this chimerical monster I would not hesitate. For the present I can only gnaw at it like excavating at a mountain with pick and shovel until I muster sufficient dynamite to blow it out of existence and reach my destination. You, you and a several thousand times you are

# From an Egoist's Wit

the dynamite and detonator which I seek. It is self-interest but a mutual self-interest.

Do you think the powers that be will listen to your moralistic platitudes? They gave you the vote as a red herring. They give you free speech. But if they can give it to you, then they can take it from you. What use is free speech to sheep? They only bleat. You have to take it and not grovel for it. You have to assert yourself by action. You fireside philosophers are of no danger to them. You can ramble on about your theories in pub and club and the powers that be only treat you for what you are: armchair philosophers who speak like predatory eagles but are in fact barnyard fowls divested of their claws. Poets, subversive music, art, subversive song and ideals are treated with some tolerance as long as they remain idealistic expressions. But when the ideal becomes the real it is no longer the ideal. This is what offends the sensitivities of the powers that be. They know the man of action intends to make the ideal the real. Serve an ideal if you will so long as you will not transform it into the corporeal. To serve an ideal is to serve not yourself but another outside of yourself. I may have an ideal but it is not I and I am not it. Can the ideal be anything but my possession if I am to remain my own master? If the ideal gets above me for me to serve then I become a creature of my own creation. I am a possessed man.

Let me ask the question. Are you a singer before you sing; are you a dancer before you dance; are you a speaker before you speak; are you a thinker before you think? If I sing, if I dance, if I speak, if I think, where do these attributes stem from? I pinch myself and feel it, confirming that I'm still alive. Of course they stem from me. Your ideals, your truths are static without your activity.

Can they move as you do? For some, truth is eternal or they seek eternal truth. They cannot see the wood for the trees. They have an optical illusion, they approach truth like approaching the horizon; the more they approach it the further it recedes. Their mission can be fulfilled without travelling afar. It is on their own doorstep, symbolically speaking.

I am not truth, I am more than truth. In modern parlance with a twist of wit I have truth plus 'vat'. I do not accept absolute determinist thought or absolute truth à la Hegel and his admirers Herren Marx and Engels. I am transitory and leave the absolute behind.

I admire an inventor without reverence. James Watt invented the steam engine and this was subject to a transitory process. The discovery of atmospheric pressure was essential in this process and, incidentally, this process was in transition long before the advent of modern capitalism. This is a truth, but is now a truth which has little or no validity for me. It has escaped my grasp.

The capitalist class has wrenched control from those who have constructed it. The state machine as protector sanctions this state of affairs. The state is therefore my enemy and it exists only because of my weakness. So long as I retain my boldness of spirit, my recalcitrance, my obduracy, my intrepidity, my stealth, the state will not be secure. It is not my attributes which are a danger to the state but the multiplication of my attributes should it permeate those of like mind. The state can incarcerate me but cannot incarcerate a bold union of many.

I have a right arm which I can do many things with so long as it is mine. The state may incarcerate me. They may have my body but they won't have me, they won't have the whole of me, they won't have my mind. If they sever my arm from me they won't have my arm. Once my arm is severed from me it is no longer my arm. All they would have is a stinking corpse which would serve them no purpose. But with an anti-state union in force there will be no accumulation of arm corpses. Unity is strength.

A union of determined beings who won't succumb to any master, mundane or so-called divine, is a force that no agency can vanquish. In 1952, when I was forced to accept Her Majesty's hospitality in her house on the hill 'Barlinnie', I was asked to lead off a rebellion against a fish diet. The prison warders were cognisant of this but did nothing. Not because



## Puerto Real: anarchist landmark

**Anarcho-Syndicalism in Puerto Real: from shipyard resistance to direct democracy and community control**

Solidarity Federation / La Prensa publication, 1995, Norwich, £1.00 (plus postage 10% UK, 20% overseas)

This pamphlet is long overdue! Puerto Real is more than a footnote in the history of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism. From the rising of the shipyard workers in this town in 1987 to the present it has become a model movement for anarchists both in Spain and outside to a lesser extent.

Most of the text of this pamphlet is based on a talk given by Pepe Gomez, a militant of the CNT's Puerto Real, Cadiz, section, in London in 1993 to a Solidarity Federation day-school. The Solidarity Federation (formerly DAM) is a member of the International Workers Association together with the Spanish CNT.

The pamphlet is in the cheerful optimistic style so typical of most syndicalist literature. But in this sense it reflects Pepe Gomez's attitude: Pepe believes in the innate libertarian instincts of the Spanish people. He thinks the public of Spain have been misled and confused by the political parties and institutions of the state, and that ultimately they will return to libertarian communism as their natural home.

### Opening up communities

Puerto Real is a featureless town which has historically been heavily dependent on its shipyard. In most respects it is as unremarkable as, say, Oldham since they knocked down the Top Drum and the best pubs in the north of England. But what saves most Spanish towns is not so much the pubs as the Spanish people. The energy of the people of Puerto Real, as this pamphlet shows,

put it on the map with a rising against the socialist government's attempt to 'rationalise' (shut down) the shipyard in 1987 which shook Spain.

Pepe Gomez tells the tale of this resistance with charm and skill. But what began as an industrial struggle has spread into a challenge to the social set-up of the town. The pamphlet calls it direct democracy and community control. From pensions to the introduction of yet more golf courses to the Cadiz area, everything may be challenged by this kind of community based anarcho-syndicalism.

Puerto Real is really a suburb of Cadiz, just a short bus ride from the city centre. This alternative system of anarcho-syndicalism is influencing other towns and villages in the area. The pamphlet says local community groups are meeting regularly all around the Bay of Cadiz, as well as inland.

In a way the Puerto Real project forms a modern urban contrast to earlier examples of rural anarchism in the region. Casas Viejas was the site of a classic anarchist rural rebellion and a stepping stone to the Spanish civil war, and is a small town in the province of Cadiz, just down the road from Puerto Real. Julian A. Pitt-Rivers, the anthropologist, described the region thus: "It is highly significant that the Sierra de Cadiz was the cradle of agrarian anarchism ..."

The Puerto Real model also clashes with the approach of the trade union in Gibraltar, which borders on the Cadiz province. The Gibraltar ship-repair yard, where I worked and was a shop steward of the Transport and General Workers Union, was closed down gradually between 1988 and 1991. That was done by the Gibraltar Socialist Government, even though anarchists had influential positions inside the strong reformist trade union (the TGWU).

Nationalism in Gibraltar is a popular force which complicates the position for anarcho-syndicalists there. But when I last saw Pepe Gomez he too was concerned about Andalucian national flags on CNT demonstrations. Unfortunately we didn't manage to fix up a meeting between Pepe Gomez and Jose Netto, General Secretary of the Gibraltar Transport and General Workers Union, and a life-long anarcho-syndicalist, though the National Secretary of the CNT did visit the Gibraltar branch of the TGWU in 1987.

### Local community versus nation state

The problem with this pamphlet is the lack of criticism in it, it's like a travel brochure. It is glossy and well produced. Better than anything that the rival Syndicalist Bulletin group have put it out. Yet it is full of bits and bats - a right patchwork quilt of photos, interviews and excerpts. The Gomez exposition pulls it together, elsewhere it seems like the publisher is spinning the material out.

The pamphlet is important because what happened and is happening in Puerto Real is important, and not just for anarchists. It may even be of interest to outsiders or people not familiar with anarchism. It is not a difficult read.

And because it focuses on the theme of community control and direct democracy the booklet hits on the local issues so dear to anarchism. When he went to study the village of Grazalema in 1954, Julian Pitt-Rivers said that what attracted him was the attempt to formulate in anthropological terms the problem of the relation of the community to the nation, adding that: "The anarchists' rejection of all authority other than that which derived from within the local community clearly represented an extreme position with regard to it."

Because Puerto Real represents a new step forward for anarchism and urban community living in Cadiz, the Solidarity Federation has done a good job publicising it in English.

Brian Bamford

## Window Pane

they were afraid of me but because they knew I had the support of many inmates. However, to make a false show for the satisfaction of their superiors eight innocent inmates were singled out for punishment. It was a lesson in unity. Need I say more? However, that is another story. When I say it was a lesson in unity, it's because the punishment was mitigated to the transference of prisoners to another hall.

I am a conscious egoist but not egotistical. I have been asked many times to tell this story. If I told of several escapades this would seem to be egotistical and seeking notoriety. To be egotistical is to be possessed; possessed by vanity. I may want to possess something but not to be possessed by anything. I neither want to be a Mr Somebody or a Mr Nobody but merely a Mr Thisbody to merrily gratify my appetites. I have a digesting stomach, a thinking head and a social heart.

For my digesting stomach I seek and consume wholesome food. For my thinking head I have cultural pursuits and especially acquaint myself with literature and seek rational discussion. For my social heart I have communion with others and when I love I can love with a full heart without taking the loved one for any more than the nourishment of my passion. Otherwise my appetites would take control and I would be a servile creature of my creation.

I could die for a loved one without having any abstract calling but because it gratifies me to do so. If my loved one has pain I feel that pain just as inflicting. I am not a prisoner of culture, but I am not a stone or a block of wood. I have emotions. Society is anterior to man, i.e. before man became man. Before man became 'human'. My emotions derived from society are one of my qualities. Qualities which require nourishment which I procure from society, just as I procure nourishment from food for my digesting stomach.

Our existence begins with the most intimate conjunction as we are already living with our mother before we breathe. When we see the light of day, we at once lie on a human breast. We are cradled by our mother and attached by many ties. Society is our state of nature. When we develop, we enter into

a society of our choice, not the one we were involuntarily born into. The one I was born into is not to my taste. I therefore seek society anew. It was once wisely said "the urge to destroy is also a creative urge".

I seek the destruction of capitalist society and envisage the forging of a new society based on unrestrained access to the means of life and the practice of voluntary association replacing the subjugation of men and women individually and collectively by political government.

This form of society is in harmony with conscious egoism, or, if you like, it's in harmony with the aspirations of a conscious egoist such as I. Each individual I am bold enough to say categorically is an egoist. The significance of the matter is whether one is conscious of it or not. The denial of egoism leads to varying degrees of dogma and is kindled to fanaticism more often than not.

Observe the angelic face of yon young nun. It is sad; by taking her celibate vows she has suppressed her vegetative needs. She has denied herself a natural love life. Her vegetative energy has become sublimated and so she is in love with love which is an abstraction. To give it some semblance of corporeity she calls it 'god'. By her self-renunciation you may say that is pure unselfishness. She is serving 'gawd'. By her self-renunciation she feels elevated. She is exalted and is booking herself in advance a reservation in heaven. She may be innocent of it but it seems to me that this is egoism by stealth. But you may say 'we have to have something to live by'. You may say 'what do you believe in?' If you change the pronoun of 'what' to 'who' I could give you my answer.

Before the revelations about Joseph Stalin's atrocities he was the great man of steel. The Russian people thought the sun shone from his posterior. He was their 'gawd' ... Stalin gives us guns, Stalin gives us butter, Stalin gives us tractors. Poor old Joe must have been working night and day. During the war in the factories we had music while you work. The tempo of the music speeded up the war effort. I wonder if old Joe worked to one of Cole Porter's records, 'Night and Day'. Was he not pure unselfishness himself? The Ruski thought how lovingly he cared for his people. Ah yes, for his people. Call yourself not one of his and you'll be given a trip to the Siberian saltmines.

All the causes which are presented to me to serve are nothing

but abstractions. The good cause. God's cause. The cause of humanity, of truth, of the nation, of mankind and innumerable other causes - read 'shadows' for that is what they are. Like nutcases we chase after shadows. The world is an insane asylum but it takes in such a huge space most of us don't notice it. To treat with so many causes would be laborious. As the allotted space is limited I have been thrown a lifebelt.

As they call in a pub 'time gentlemen please' you are consoled by the allowance of ten minutes drinking time. So there's time and space for one other hollow cause for you to ruminate on. The state calls you to the colours when it needs you. The patriots fall in bloody battle for the nation state and when thrown on the dunghill of history the nation comes to its bloom and it is the laughing heir.

You law-abiding fools; you think you are criminals when you violate the law. You don't go far enough. Don't just violate the law, destroy it. If you cut a tree you have to cut at the root. To cut it branch by branch is folly. They only grow again. To destroy the state you have to take it by the root and deprive it of its sustenance, which is its ownership of the means of production.

You, you, and a multiplication of you, by banding together in your union of expropriation must disregard the law and take possession. If this is a criminal act, so what? You violence is called crime, the violence of the state is called law. There is no difference in principle, merely a difference in terminology. Strike when the iron is hot and you will be the laughing heir.

### Postscript

I can and do observe that egoism and anarcho-syndicalism are complementary. Consequently I subsequently intend to illustrate the validity of this pronouncement. Space presently does not permit this. Meantime to those anarchists of the Kropotkin school let me say: Whilst admiring Kropotkin's sociological works I disagree with Kropotkin's criticism of egoism in his *Modern Science and Anarchism*. Kropotkin in his classical work *Mutual Aid* illustrates the effectiveness of association for mutual and common interests. However, blow the cobwebs away and you'll perceive that those who practice mutual aid to the widest extent practicable are in fact the most fully fledged egoists.

Iconoclast



## Focus on ... the Hamitic Region

Algeria has been much in the news recently. Here we seek not to bring you pictures of French paratroopers (of course you can read about the 'major stories' in the capitalist press, which we are happy to use, however we have our own agenda) but, as always, a different analysis of a region which is in the headlines. The Berber/Hamitic region of North Africa covers a region which defies definition in terms of the nation-state so we concentrate on the situation in Morocco and Algeria. Firstly some background notes for those to whom the area is unfamiliar, along with the present situation in Morocco, then an interview with a 'representative' of the Kabyle Social Movement. As with other recent articles on this page, not necessarily anarchism but we think of interest all the same ...

The 'Berbers' have been hanging around in North Africa for about five thousand years. The community covers more than 5,000,000 square kilometres from the Atlantic to the borders of Egypt and Libya and from the Mediterranean to Niger, Mali, Burkino Faso. Essentially nomads, their current social context can to an extent be gleaned from the current position of our own nomads, the so-called 'travellers'. Travellers in this country are of course well beyond the pale of any 'normal' civilisation, not only in *The Sun* but linguistically also, as reflected in the name 'Berber'. The word Berber comes from Latin/Greek roots from *barbarus*, 'stranger to the city' (or straightforward 'barbarian' if you prefer), hence 'non-civilised', 'civilisation' and all down the line - Tory Party conference speech writers would do well to check these columns for fodder for the blue-rinse brigade. Thus the 'Berbers' don't exactly like the name but prefer 'Hamitic' in reference to their language which, in a sense, brings us to the situation in Morocco ...

The Hamitics have always shown themselves resistant to the Moroccan sultans, French/Spanish *conquistadores* and other would-be colonialists. Indeed, it is generally accepted that the Arab expansionists of the ninth century really didn't make it in this region - the vast majority of Moroccans are of Hamitic descent and they speak their own language, which really has nothing to do with Arabic.

Not all of them, of course. Many, particularly along the Atlantic coast, had Arabic thrust upon them. Indeed up until September of last year Hamitic was very much a non-starter in most of the region, and Morocco was certainly a part of this.

But the Hamitics, particularly the young, have been making waves, setting up their own associations and periodicals and challenging the *status quo*. One militant, Ahmed Kikich, puts it this way: "... our independence with regard to political parties and the authorities is one of the factors in our success".\* The 'success' (linguistic) he refers to may seem trivial (try telling that to the Welsh!) to us in the West, but what has happened in Morocco is culturally significant. We neglected to point out that our 'militant' Ahmed Kikich is a poet and painter of some significance within the

### Fact File: MOROCCO

Arable land (%): 10  
Birth rate per 1000: 31  
Death rate per 1000: 8  
Infant mortality per 100: 70  
Life expectancy (male): 63  
Children born per woman: 4  
Literacy (%): 28  
Labour force (million): 7.4  
GDP (billion): \$21.90  
Unemployment rate (%): 15  
Exports (million): \$3,100  
Imports (million): \$5,100  
External debt (million): \$22,200  
Military manpower: 6,200,000  
Defence expense % of GDP: 7.1

Hamitic culture and represents a movement which declared in the '50s that it had always sought political roots to impose culture. Today it is the opposite.

The 5th August 1991 saw the signing of the Agadir Charter (today there are eleven associations who have signed) demanding equality between Hamitic and Arab culture and language. Few took notice at the time but the militancy and willingness of those involved to fight their own battles (our definition of direct action) has led to almost unthinkable developments.

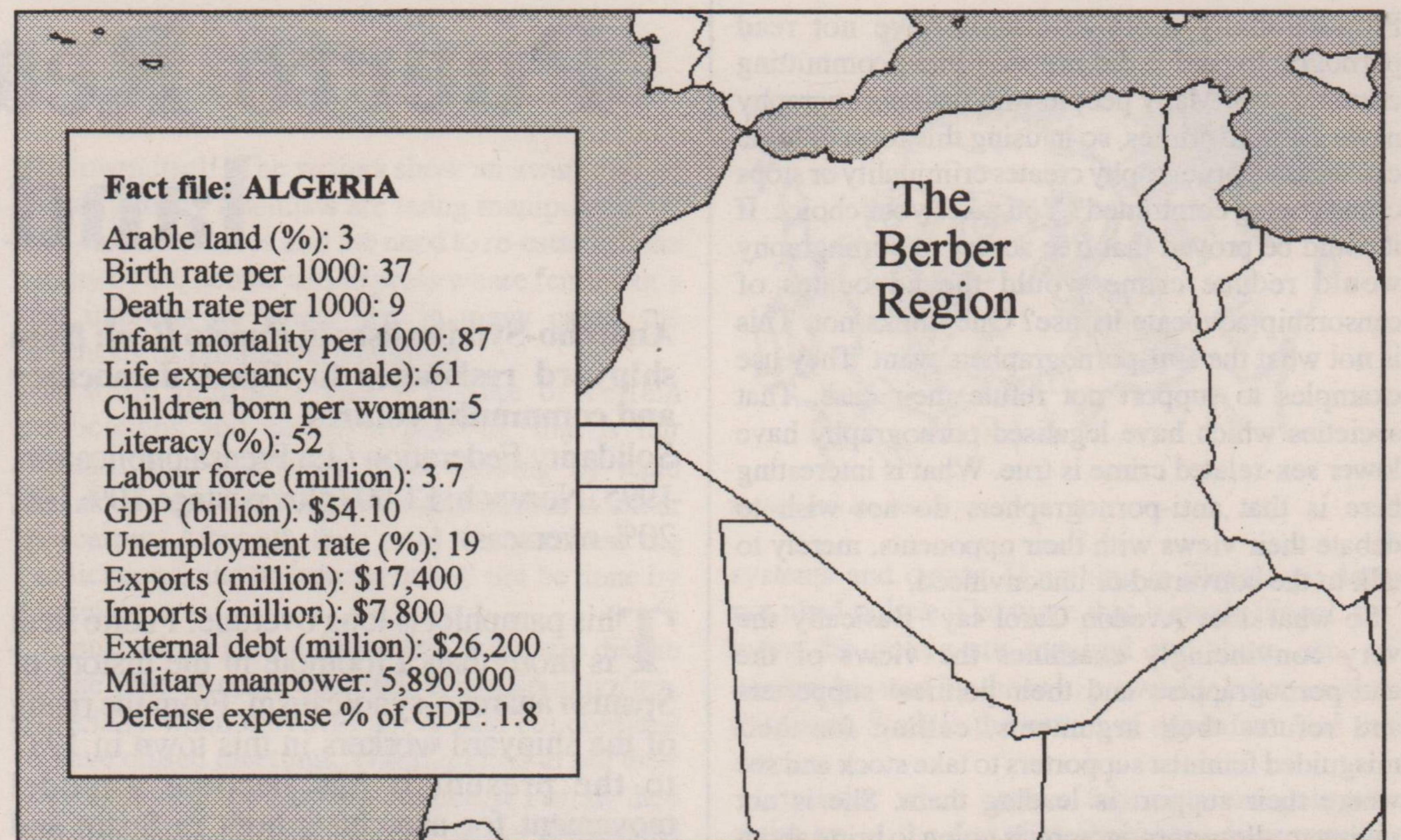
On 1st May last year a Hamitic demonstration took place in Errachidia led by the group Tilleli (Hamitic for 'Freedom') from Goulmima. The demand was for linguistic equality (small beer perhaps, see inset 'Moroccan Demonstration' for what happened at the march) but the march succeeded in putting the authorities on the

### MOROCCAN DEMONSTRATION 1st May 1994

Organised by the CDT and the UGTM - Moroccan trade unions - the demonstration was dominated by the demand for linguistic equality with slogans such as 'They teach Hebrew not Hamitic'. It finished without any major incident but with leaders of the UGTM identifying to the authorities the 'leaders' of the 'Berber' movement. As a consequence seven persons were arrested and 'interrogated'. They were later charged with 'incitement to public disorder' and with possession of 'incriminating documents of a foreign source'. There was a public outcry which, in part, led to the release of two of the arrestees and various sentences for the rest. The authorities had to give way to public pressure and a few weeks later they were released along with 424 political prisoners given an 'amnesty' by the king.

defensive. On 14th June the new Prime Minister, Abdellatif Filali, came before the parliament to announce that news broadcasts in Hamitic would be a thing of the future.

And so it was to be. News bulletins in Hamitic, unthinkable a few years ago, now go out on a regular basis. The 'Berbers' have the bit between their teeth and are unsatisfied. As with such things in Morocco, the regal stamp of approval was required and it duly came, but recognising Hamitic not as a language but rather a 'dialect' - many saw this as a sop to the Hamitic movement and insufficient. Few so far have gone as far as to demand an independent state (as nomads such a development is perhaps not to be expected) but, as we say, the authorities are on the defensive, members of the Hamitic movement in Morocco have been denounced as not quite "secessionist but almost" and the militants are of course "manipulated by foreign influences" and, to drive the point home, contaminated by "an AIDS-like separatism". A move towards separate development which could bypass some of the problems of the region is becoming a possibility, French paratroopers notwithstanding, worth keeping an eye on in 1995 ...



## A Libertarian Kabyle?

Next we bring you an interview which tries to bring out the nature of Kabyle society. Much of what follows won't strike you as fundamentally libertarian, but we feel that within the context of the politics of the region the following contains more of interest than other more 'fundamental' developments ...

### What is the economic and social situation in Kabyle?

From the economic point of view, Kabyle is an integral part of Algeria and for that reason is experiencing the same crisis which is happening in that country. Purchasing power is ever on a decline, families, often very large, are finding it difficult to respond to collective needs in an economic climate which continues to deteriorate.

Having said that, there are certain specific factors affecting Kabyle which functions on an economic parallel with Algeria. As a region it experiences high emigration which makes up for, in part, the shortcomings of the authorities and the state, which is why we suffer less from the economic destructuralisation of the country. Moreover, there is a long tradition of solidarity which demands that those with work and a regular income support those who are out of work. This practice of solidarity is a characteristic of Kabylie society and always has been, forming a vital part of the functioning of that society.

The social problem reflects the economic one. In Kabylie begging as such doesn't exist. It is something which is unacceptable in Kabylie society because the poor are deemed a social responsibility. Other villages look down on those which have one or several beggars. That is why poverty is less harshly felt than in the rest of society.

### Doesn't the crisis undermine these traditional structures of solidarity and mutual aid?

In effect, traditional society is beginning to break down, even in Kabylie where we are seeing the rise of Western type families. We have always been accustomed to large traditional families under the authority of a patriarch, with all his married children living under the one roof. This system, often very authoritarian, guaranteed one and all the minimum for survival. It is true that now this patriarchal system is breaking down, with married children tending to move away, which weakens the system of solidarity and as a consequence allows for the appearance of people without resources.

The other phenomenon is that of the rural exodus. The Kabyles, who live in the mountains and are essentially peasants, go into exile for economic reasons and move into the towns. Amongst our people, to go to Algeria is to impose exile on oneself, interior exile which is reflected in a Kabylie expression 'to go to Arabia'. These exiled people effectively, insidiously, progressively lose this instinctive sense of solidarity and so there appear, essentially in the towns, down and out families of Kabylie descent.

### Is there a libertarian tendency in Berber culture?

There is certainly a libertarian tradition if one understands by that the rejection of authoritarian, hegemonistic and statist power. Berber society has always organised itself along confederal lines and, within this framework, there are a number of tribes organised into villages. The latter organise councils of delegates, often from the extended families, which function by a principle of consensus. All decisions taken in the village are done so unanimously and action is only taken if everyone is in agreement. One voice of dissent can virtually veto a project. If libertarian is defined in this way, Kabylie society comes very close to a libertarian form of organisation. Having said that, it is not always the case that things happen in this way, in so far as social mores have changed and young people question this 'libertarian' system because of its patriarchal aspect which concentrates power in the hands of the elders. This represents the limits of this kind of analysis.

### Isn't there a contradiction between the libertarian and patriarchal aspects of the society?

For sure there is a contradiction and it's very hard to reconcile them. That is why at the moment we are beginning to see the beginnings of an inter-generational conflict. Today young people no longer accept this patriarchal authoritarianism. Thus in Kabylie villages there are power struggles between the elders and the younger generation, which leads, when the council is not simply dissolved, to a compromise where the council is made up partly of the elders and partly the younger generation. Every age group has its own priorities. The elders continue to concern themselves with everyday problems - the sharing out of the land, the problems of inheritance - while the young, more active, take on board responsibility for other problems such as maintenance of the slopes, the repair of village fountains, etc.

### What is the role of women in all this?

A lot has been written about the Kabylie women and there are contrasting viewpoints. Some say that women are free in comparison with other regions in Algeria since they have the right to go out and don't have to wear a veil. Others say Kabylie women are more oppressed than women who are subject to Islamic law. In effect the Kabylie woman is not very free, at least until recently. Today she has started on the road to liberation with school and university. Kabylie families do not, or at least very rarely, prevent girls from going to university. On the contrary, as much

(continued on page 8)

\* *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 1995.



# Positive Anarchist Economics

Dear Editors,  
That was a very interesting article by Colin Johnson in *Freedom* (28th January 1995) on 'Positive Anarchist Economics', but as necessary and desirable as LETS schemes may be, I cannot see them being as successful everywhere as they apparently are in Teifi, which is evidently a nicely self-contained area.

In inner city areas like my own in North London, there is a constantly shifting population speaking many different languages and many of whose constituents seem to adapt quite readily to the Thatcherite mentality in exploiting others less fortunate than themselves.

I believe that a stable community is necessary to build up the solidarity required for a LETS or ICOM to function most efficiently because you cannot adequately trust people that you have not known over a reasonable space of time. Conversely, there are many of those that you might have known for years who are even less trustworthy, as I will readily concede, but solidarity is important.

It is typical that the state, even as capitalism collapses all around us, should attempt to bring LETS within the taxpaying orbit, but I'm sure that the ingenuity and vision of those who have opted out of the rat-race, either voluntarily or compulsorily, will prove a match for the bureaucrats. I am, incidentally, a lay member of a retail co-operative committee, and my fixed-rate expenses, which are certainly not enough to live on but merely to cover telephone, postage, travel, etc., are taxable! Colin mentions the John Lewis partnership, but I don't think that this could ever be described as a workers' or any other type of co-op, as it still has an authoritarian management structure and pay differentials. It is probably more in the ESOP or management buy-out category and, if the employee turnover at my local Waitrose is any indication, staff relations cannot be anything special. Having said that, the orthodox co-op retail movement, from an employee standpoint, is no different to any other supermarket. Not a particularly good employer, and one with all the capitalist encumbrances of 'Human Resources Management' and what often amounts to

a company union, at least where the largest retail societies are concerned.

I am, admittedly, a utopian socialist with anarcho-syndicalist tendencies and I would dearly love to see the new co-operative commonwealth and William Morris style production, but it is clear that few in the trade union movement share my views. On 25th February 1995 I attended a conference at Congress House called by the Greater London Association of Trades Councils on full employment, a recall conference from one held last year. It was noticeable that the vast majority of delegates pinned their hopes on some magical upturn in the economy, two speakers actually mentioned a shorter working week (IWW policy for at least fifty years), several highlighted the collaborationist tactics of right-wing trade union leaders and their hostility to any equal recognition for the organised unemployed (like the pre-World War Two National Unemployed Workers' Movement) and also any form of co-operative. This was

well documented by a speaker from the CDA (Co-operative Development Agency for ICOM-type groups) who showed that the prevailing trade union mentality is one of constant opposition to big business / monopoly profits, but only to the extent of getting a bigger share for their members, nothing about ultimate workers' control, and yet many of the same unions invest pension fund or other money with the very monopoly exploiters of natural resources who employ their members! As a prelude to the cashless society, should we not launch a campaign for trade unions to invest their money in all forms of co-op enterprise, *genuine* friendly societies, building societies, etc. (not with a view of going public in the future) and/or founding some productive enterprises of their own. Nationalisation does not mean common ownership unless in some vague abstract sense, but co-operation in its widest mutualist application certainly does. All power to the co-operatives!

Bill Brewer

Dear Editors,  
I always enjoy reading me ole mate of the '60s Colin Johnson, but this time I think he is up ye olde pole (*Freedom*, 28th January).

The LETS idea started in Canada about twenty years ago so there has been plenty of time to test it out. Can I ask a simple question? Is there *one* reader of *Freedom* who is a member of a LETS scheme that has proved itself over the years? Please stand up! What! Not a soul! Not even Colin himself? Does any one reader *know* of any such person?

The fact seems to be that the LETS idea serves to warm the cockles of the heart and there it stops, one more exercise in self-delusion, one more deflection from feasible challenges where we might get real results.

But at a deeper level it is worse than that. Even if a LETS scheme was to work

what would it amount to? *It takes us right back to the mere quantification of human relations.* I do a job of work and cost it in terms of time, and a new green currency of group devising, and the figure is then put into a computer to my credit. I can then spend it. We are back to money and the market with a change of labels. Capitalism again!

Is there an alternative? Of course there is, as old as the hills, as old as mutual aid itself. We do things because we are giving-and-receiving animals and that is the way to live. Parents and children know this and communities used to know it. Happily this simple truth is the big discovery of the '90s.

For over a hundred years devoted readers, writers and editors have kept *Freedom Press* going. Have they ever asked for credits?

Peter Cadogan

## Are Wars Avoidable?

Dear Comrades,

The excellent cartoon by John Olday, appearing in *Freedom* 25th February 1995, illuminates the economic strife that generates conflict. This applies whether one is talking about the Second World War or the 25-year conflict in Ireland.

All your correspondents, in my opinion, fail to appreciate the forces that are propelling protagonists to end the Ulster conflict.

When the Troubles began, the Irish Republic had a backward economy, sunk in the mire of rural squalor. Now Eire has the fastest growing economy in the Common Market. With the greater security that would come from an end to sectarian life, American investment - there are forty million in the United States of Irish descent - would flood in to exploit the cheap labour and other resources.

All this makes the ultimate prospect of a united Ireland tempting to the landed aristocracy of Ulster, the force that has provided the underlying power to

Orangism. They can see they have less and less to gain from keeping links with Britain - a declining economy, increasingly preoccupied with its own internal problems - and more and more to lose by keeping out of a united Ireland.

Equally for Britain, the prospect of remaining in Ulster has become unappealing. The cost of continuing an unwinnable war against the Provisional IRA rises by the day. The lavish subsidies given to the Ulster satellite state, buttressing private industry, education, welfare, etc., seems unjustifiable when viewed against the swingeing cuts made to basic services on the British mainland. And, with the end of the Cold War, the strategic importance of Irish ports and electronic listening stations has gone.

Wars continue until the protagonists realise that they stand to lose more from continuing the fight than they could win from ending them. That was not so 25 years ago - it is today.

Raymond Challinor

## Grateful Dead and the FBI

Dear *Freedom*,

Not being a regular reader of your newspaper, it was a pleasant surprise to see some humour tucked away at the bottom of page 7 - I refer to the unsigned article on the Grateful Dead lead singer, Jerry Garcia (*Freedom*, 11th February 1995).

That it was a spoof was given away only by the tongue in cheek reference to Country Joe and the Fish who "... with witty songs against the war culture, were replaced in popularity by groups like the Loving Spoonful [sic] and the Grateful Dead, who extolled the drug culture ..."

It was in fact Country Joe et al who were at the forefront of the psychedelic tidal wave - being perhaps the first rock band to explicitly extol the effects of LSD (in the track 'Bass Strings' on their debut album 'Electric Music for the Mind and Body').

Anyway, I look forward to more of the same: Allen Ginsberg (part-time research work on the development of biological warfare delivery systems), Bob Dylan (narcotics division, FBI), Timothy Leary (undercover investigator, US Bureau of Taxation), Lou Reed (Julliard graduate), Ken Kesey (major shareholder, Ciba-Geigy), Lenny Bruce (KKK wizard) ...

Chris Whitehouse

Dear Friends,

The inaccuracies in the article 'Grateful Dead lead singer was an FBI agent' cannot go unchallenged. To say that the Lovin Spoonful replaced Country Joe and the Fish is sheer fantasy. The Lovin Spoonful were a hit-making band from New York topping the hit parade before Country Joe and the Fish had even recorded. Country Joe and the Fish were contemporaries of the Grateful Dead, both evolving out of the folk/jug band scene of mid-sixties San Francisco. As for the drug culture, Country Joe and the Fish were just as involved in it as the Dead or any other of those bands. They openly sing about marijuana and LSD on their first album, along with political songs.

As for Jerry Garcia being an FBI agent, I would question the validity of the document concerned as the date which it is dated, far from being a top-selling rock band the Grateful Dead at this time were an underground band with a cult following. It was not until the early 1970s that the Dead started to break into the big time, by then there was far less drug influence in what was a much more countrified sound with lyrics mainly about working people. If the FBI wanted to try to influence the youth rebellion, I would have thought they would have recruited some of the mega-million-sellers around at this time.

John P. Johnson

(continued from page 7)

as it was shameful a few decades ago to allow your daughter to go to school after the age of twelve, now people take pride in the fact. Social values in this area have been turned upside down. In former times, women were always oppressed by men but there was always a labour division which gave her a degree of freedom in so far as she played a very important domestic role: the responsibility of running the household, a responsibility which was denied to men. Moreover, in Kabylie women have always had the right to go out - from a Western point of view this may seem trivial, but in a Muslim society for a woman to be allowed beyond the front door is already something significant. Women are allowed out of the house to go into the village to see their friends (however, it is true that she is not allowed to leave the village unaccompanied). In fact, Kabylie women are prisoners in a big prison rather than just a cell.

**Is secularism possible in the Kabylie society?**  
If one means by secularism the separation of political and religious power, then I would say that Kabylie society is essentially secular. Firstly because Islam is lived only within limits. It is a religion which is not very rigorous, all Kabylies associate themselves with the Islam of the ancient cults. It is a mix of Islam and ancestral beliefs of an animist kind. This allows for a certain freedom which is conducive to secularism. Moreover, the council of the elders, the *taimsât* has nothing to do with religious power. This council can be made up of both practitioners and

non-practitioners who come together to manage the village, which in itself is a sign of tolerance, secularism and the acceptance of others.

**What is the relation between Berber society and atheism?**

It is difficult to answer such a question. Public opinion in Algeria generally, including the Kabylie region, renders the thought unthinkable. Even the idea of atheism is inconceivable, we are entering the realm of the unthinkable. However, atheists exist in Algeria and in the Kabylie communities but this is an individual atheism rather than a militant kind. There is no collective atheism. An atheist would never declare himself to be such unless he knew you very well and felt you were sympathetic to his viewpoint. Atheism is a word which in our society is shocking. We cannot conceive the idea that there should not exist some kind of divine power. Atheism is taboo in the same way as Islam is. Nobody would openly question the Koran or that Mohammed was a prophet. There are certain taboos that for very obvious security reasons nobody today would touch upon - they would run the risk of at best being ostracised from their society or at worst a real physical risk since the rise of integrationalism. In fact it would have been more possible for atheists to state their beliefs publicly ten years ago than it would be today. The concept of atheism strikes fear into people's hearts even if some practices are in reality of an atheist nature.

translated from *Le Monde Libertaire*,  
4th January 1995

## Not in a thousand years!

After a lapse of a year or so, I spoke to a dear friend. She greeted me with: "Well what do you think of your ideas now? They don't work, do they? The world is in a bigger mess than ever. Your ideas will not work - not in a thousand years!"

My immediate reaction was to point out that she was telling me that her ideas did not work either. She supports the state and war and yet she was saying the world was in a mess.

But what did she expect, and what for that matter do some anarchists expect? The state society has existed for seven thousand years and modern anarchists have been trying to abolish it for only a hundred years (round figures). They have not succeeded, although they have worked for one-seventieth of the life of the state. What a surprise!

The state pattern is difficult to abolish because those who have most to gain by using it are precisely those who have the power to keep it. The privileged have the power to destroy their critics and control the thoughts of everyone. That being so, it is a miracle that people can now learn the truth about the state and the anarchists' philosophy. If anarchists get depressed and imagine they are achieving nothing, they should realise that they are succeeding if they do no more than keep the anarchists' philosophy alive.

There is no reason to be disappointed if they do not create the anarchists' society in our lifetimes. It is not going to be created in such a short time as a century. Nevertheless, it is

going to be created in less than a thousand years - a lot less if those who now criticise the anarchists will join them.

The human species has survived because, unlike other animals that are now extinct, we have always adapted our environment to suit ourselves. Now we have to adapt that part of the environment that is humanity itself. And we shall do it.

Derrick A. Pike

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