

# anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

*"Anarchism asserts the possibility of an organisation without discipline, fear, or punishment and without the pressure of poverty..."*

Emma Goldman  
(from *Living My Life*)

## FACING THE FACTS UNEMPLOYMENT HERE TO STAY ... UNLESS!

When will all the experts, the politicians, the industrialists, the bankers, the multinationals, 'come clean' and recognise that so long as the capitalist system flourishes – or even survives into the next century – there will be no solution to massive unemployment, massive crime and violence and sickness and ill health on a scale not experienced even in the nineteenth century. UNLESS those who have the power (and we are not talking about the political pipsqueaks whose only role is to dabble with a few

### Now it's Winston Churchill\* Calling Immigrants 'Selfish'

Everybody knows about young Winston selling his grandad's waste paper for a mere £12,500,000. When he launched his attack on immigrants, he hadn't yet heard about the picture sale in New York which included some choice pieces being off-loaded by his mamma, Pamela Harriman. Three paintings by Picasso, Renoir and Matisse found her a mere £11,400,000 richer. Anyway money always breeds money, doesn't it? What young Winston was belly-aching about were those awful people in the third world where there were "more and more hungry mouths and hungry bellies".

"It is no wonder, when they see on their television screens the life that exists in Europe and the USA, that if they can get on a banana boat or a 747 and they will come by any way – legally or illegally."

\* In the last issue of *Freedom* we quoted Lord Young accusing the schoolteachers of being greedy. Not content with his £1 million a year (which a reader of *The Guardian* pointed out represented what a schoolteacher would earn in a forty-year career!) news is now that Lord Young's Cable & Wireless has bought a recent stake in Israel's Telecommunications monopoly for £63 million. Milord said that the investment was the first step towards making the Middle East a fourth region of strategic significance for the company – joining the Far East, Europe and the Caribbean. Good news for Lord Young!

billions of pounds a year when daily trillions are circulating worldwide and determining who will produce what and where) face the fact that technology has run amok and the greatest threat of war is when production exceeds demand (in capitalist terms, meaning that the would-be consumer does not have the means to purchase all the sophisticated rubbish which is designed to replace what Monsieur Poirot refers to as "the little grey cells", as well as the daily basic necessities to maintain a healthy existence) at a time when unemployment is at record levels. If not war (which anyway creates as many problems as it is supposed to 'solve') then more millions of wage/salary earners will join the ranks of the unemployed as production is reduced to meet demand, as well as demanding from those who are still in a job longer and harder working hours. According to a study by the Henley Centre for Forecasting (in *The Independent*, 6th May):

"The growth in British working hours, now the longest in Europe, means millions of people are sleeping less and spending less time with their families as 'battery-charging' time is cut.

But working hours will go on lengthening, and free time diminishing, for the remainder of the 1990s, breaking up evenings and making the leisurely weekend a thing of the past."

Another statistic of interest is that though only 10% of full-time British employees are contracted to work more than 40 hours in fact a third are doing so. On the one hand 57% said that "they never have enough time" but on the other only 5% "would take a pay cut to get more free time" and believe it or not "one in four full-time workers would pay extra to avoid queues at airports"! Obviously they can never have enough money to satisfy their wants: videos, mobile phones and holidays in the Canaries or Thailand! On the employers' side, fewer workers and longer hours reduces the National Insurance and

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## OUR POLICEMEN ARE WONDERFUL! OR ARE THEY?

**T**he *Guardian* (16th May 1995) gives front-page headline "Police wipe guns debate off agenda" on the strength of a poll of all the members of the Police Federation of England and Wales in which 74,000 out of 126,000 officers voted 80 for to 20 against the "routine arming" of the police. There was, apparently, surprise at the high rejection vote in view of "an increase in violence against the police which has seen nineteen officers die in ten years".

Perhaps it is just as well that the police are presenting a non-violent 'image' since all the news as we go to press is to the contrary.

The new batons, approved by smarmy Home Secretary Michael Howard, have had their first victims in the hands of our wonderful policemen!

"Brian Douglas, 33, suffered a fractured skull following a struggle with two police officers in south London, although a

post-mortem examination has yet to establish the cause of death.

A second man, who was also arrested by the officers, claims his hand was broken during the fracas. The Metropolitan Police officers involved were using the new straight, acrylic baton which is gradually replacing the force's wooden truncheon." (*Guardian*, 10th May 1995)

And as we write the trial of three police officers, including one woman officer, is going on at the Old Bailey for the manslaughter of Joy Gardner, a black 40 year old mother of two children who was to be deported as an illegal immigrant. The three police, members of Scotland Yard's Aliens Deportation Group, went to her flat on 28th July 1993 at 7.40am (the early hour is typical. *Freedom Press* editors way back in 1944 were also arrested at that hour!). Mrs Gardner shouted "You are not coming in. I am

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UNEMPLOYMENT HERE TO STAY ... UNLESS!

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holiday money, etc., and increases the profits.

But there is no escaping the fact that capital goes where labour is cheapest and quickly becomes as skilled as in the West, and unless governments are prepared to halt the movement of capital and to impose tariffs on imports of manufactures, unemployment will simply go on increasing in Europe. As it is, according to a report written by Frank Field, the Labour MP Chairman of the Commons Security Committee, nearly half of all households in Britain are receiving means-tested state benefits.

"The document, called *Making Welfare Work*, shows that there were nearly 16 million claims for means-tested help in 1993. These include income support, family credit, housing benefit and council tax benefit. When those claiming more than once are removed, the net figure was just under 9.8 million - equivalent to half of all households in Britain." (*The Independent on Sunday*, 14th May 1995)

We haven't seen the report *Making Welfare Work* (just published) but have seen an extract with the significant title 'The Poison in the Welfare State' which seems more concerned with exposing the claimants who cheat than attacking the system that denies millions of families the opportunity to earn a decent living.

And how ironical to expose the poor who may occasionally get a paid odd-job and don't tell the DSS, when the media are overflowing with fraud at top level on a massive scale. Or when, as not just the tabloids but the 'serious' broadsheets,

pages are devoted to the great victory of a football team in the premier league which was attributed to its benefactor and business genius who invested no less than £60 million - repeat, £60,000,000 - in "expensive transfers" (did you know footballers are now bought and sold like slaves?) and the "redevelopment" of the football ground. All paid in cash. Jack Walker sold his steel business to British Steel in 1989 for £330 million (his wealth is now estimated at £400 million). Needless to say this patriotic Englishman lives as a tax exile in Jersey and flies to his club's games in his own jet (source: 'Britain's Richest 500, 1995' in *The Sunday Times Magazine*, 14th May).

The welfare state is a misnomer. It was never intended to replace the unequal, unfair capitalist society, but to perpetuate it by ensuring that even the poorest would have the means to survive and not rebel. For the Tory backwoods men like Portillo, Lilley and Howard, the time has come to put the 'scroungers' in their place. All the legislation points in that direction. Will the victims, the proles of 1995 react? They certainly have the time. Have they the will, the conviction that what is needed is not a change of politicians and promises but a concerted struggle against the whole system. It won't be the old who will lead it. The ghastly future faces the young, UNLESS ...

In a future issue we shall suggest one anarchist's alternatives as a possible first step to a fairer, happier, more rewarding life.

OUR POLICEMEN ARE WONDERFUL!  
OR ARE THEY?

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phoning my solicitor". The police simply cut the security chain and forced their way in. Once inside "all she could do was wave her arms and make a lot of noise" and declared "I will kill myself rather than go back to Jamaica". One of the police called out "deck her" and they all tumbled to the floor. According to Mr Bevan for the prosecution, "Mrs Gardner went down face first. She was turned on her back". He added that:

"the restraint belts were then wrapped around her waist, thighs and ankles. Sticking plaster was wound around her head and a second reel used to finish the job.

She was left lying face down while the police began to gather her possessions. But she rapidly lost consciousness and within five minutes police were checking her pulse. They called an ambulance.

It is accepted that the police officers did everything they could to revive Mrs Gardner", said Mr Bevan.

She died four days later. The post mortem showed that she died of extensive brain damage as a result of the gag but medical case disputes the cause of death."

In statements after their victim's death the three police officers testified that the tape had not fully covered her mouth or 'airways'. As we write the trial continues, but we can only ask ourselves why did the

police use two reels of surgical tape - a total of 13 feet. Surely they made her into a mummy.

The policewoman said that what they had done "was reasonable in all the circumstances", adding that "the equipment, I understood, was authorised".

Two brawny policemen and one policewoman needed to reduce a woman to a mummy in order to deport her. And what did they think they would do with her two children?

By the time this issue of *Freedom* appears we will know perhaps the outcome (you can't be sure - after all, why is the trial taking place nearly two years after the crime?)

The other piece of news about our wonderful policemen is that in spite of growing complaints to the Police Complaints Authority nothing much happens. Indeed less than 8% of the 150,000 formal complaints lodged against the police over the past decade have resulted in an officer being disciplined. *The Independent's* crime correspondent quotes critics as claiming that the low number of officers who were disciplined "reflects the fact that the police investigate complaints against themselves". The old old story: who is to judge the judges?

IN BRIEF

Poor Animals - Poor Humans - Poor Rich - Poor Fish

We believe that humans will be compassionate to animals (without becoming vegetarians!) only when they learn to be compassionate to their fellow beings. And this means the end of war as Number One condition. But one cannot not report animal ill-treatment when it is on such a scale as in the transport of 1,000 cattle from the port of County Louth (Republic of Ireland) to Egypt. The ship was apparently caught in gale force winds in the Bay of Biscay. On arrival at its destination 138 animals were dead. We don't suppose the butcher minded, and how would the customers know? Give a thought for what the animals suffered.

From poor animals to poor humans. One reads of people who donate a kidney to a loved one who would otherwise die, but imagine an otherwise healthy young person selling an organ to a stranger because he/she is poor. In India this is well known. Two *Guardian* reporters in Bangalore confirm that this happens quite openly. Indeed it is legal in most parts of India to sell organs for transplantation. But:

"Hospitals in Bangalore, Bombay and Madras have become magnets for affluent patients from the Middle East, Europe and south-east Asia who are attracted by the relatively low cost of an operation or who cannot obtain transplants because of long waiting lists in their own countries."

One 33 year old man, a bank manager from Bangalore who bought a woman's kidney, said that the transaction "benefited both parties". He paid £4,500 for all medical expenses and the donor got £700 of it which, he pointed out, was "nearly four times the average annual salary for an Indian worker".

In China they have gone one better if one can believe two Chinese refugees - one a former police official - who were testifying in US Senate hearings recently and maintained that:

"the Chinese government remove organs from executed prisoners and sells them for medical transplants in state-owned hospitals."

Theoretically this would be acceptable compared with the Indian system but for the fact that it could encourage the state to increase the crimes for which execution is the sentence!

We could not but think of the growing number of homeless when we read the following item from *The Guardian's Society magazine* (10th May):

"SNOOKERED: A Sheffield hotel manager did his best to please actress Raquel Welch, playing locally in Shaw's *The Millionairess*. The twelve best suites were taken by snooker players, so he knocked down a wall to join her two rooms, lent her a microwave oven to cook meals and let her use the fire escape as her own front door."

There's always a room (a suite) at the top for the rich.

In the last issue of *Freedom* we quoted the £1 million a year chairman of Cable & Wireless accusing nurses of being greedy. At Sotheby's (New York) at a recent auction of contemporary art one Roy Lichtenstein's 'cartoon blow-up' painted in 1964 and entitled 'The Nurse' fetched \$1,652,500 (say £1 million plus). And to think that those 'greedy nurses' would have to work at least forty years for what was paid for that 'cartoon', poster, call it what you will. What an unjust world we live in!



Another fish crisis (see *Freedom*, 13th May 1995) is on the way in spite of the dramatic occupation of the abandoned Brent Star storage buoy by Greenpeace activists. Shell, the owners, are proposing to dispose of it by sinking it in deep water in the North East Atlantic. As was to be expected, the government accepted all Shell's assurances that the 462 feet tall structure will be dumped in deep enough water not to interfere with the Shetlands fishermen, nor to pollute the ocean. After all, as we pointed out in *Freedom*, the government dumped no less than a million tons of munitions and 24 chemical weapons ships in the sea around the British Isles between 1945 and 1963 and have lost the records. Can you imagine why they should worry is Shell adds a mere half a million tons to the collection. The Shetlands fishermen do, but they don't count. After all, they are only trawling for food.

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**Kaos?**

... sums it up in the slogan under its title: "Nobody over, nobody under, just plain anarchy". Inside we are informed that it comes out irregularly at regular intervals and that the writers (all articles are unsigned) are not responsible for their actions, writings or opinions.

However, the paper does seem quite wide ranging in its coverage: anti-fascist news, homosexual festivals, an attack on the use of lobotomies and electric shock treatment, situationist cartoons etc. It also carries some international news including reports on the Criminal Justice Bill in this country and various other things of interest to anarchists and trade unionists in various parts of the world, ending in an expression of pleasure at the deaths of the British anti-terrorism security chiefs in the helicopter crash last June.

One interesting article in the international part deals with the current student revolt in France. Written by a Norwegian exchange student in France it gives an insider's picture of the situation in French schools. The writer describes the unrest there and several big strikes during the last years suggest things are happening in France, but comments that it is "a society characterised by competition, careerism and hierarchy to an even greater degree than we are familiar with in this country".

On the Norwegian home front there is an attack on the Norwegian government's granting of a licence to the multi-national mining company Rio Tinto Zinc (poor old RTZ. And now facing problems we see in Sierra Leone - check out last year's 'Focus on... Bougainville' for more on this outfit) to prospect for minerals in a 38,000 sq. km. Lappish area in Finnmark in north Norway. The Lapps believe the prospecting threatens the very basis of their upland livelihood and culture, but the government has acted without consulting them, and despite the fact that the Norwegian parliament has ratified ILO convention 169 enshrining the rights of indigenous populations over the areas where they live and make their living the Lapps' appeals to RTZ and the Norwegian parliament have fallen on deaf ears.

Anti-fascism is clearly an important issue for Norwegian anarchists (as seems so often the case with countries that have suffered its consequences more directly than others) since apart from two articles in *Kaos?* it is covered

## NOBODY OVER, NOBODY UNDER ... A BRIEF TOUR OF THE NORWEGIAN ANARCHIST PRESS

Recently we've been trying to get a picture of the anarchist scene in Norway by scanning through some of the periodicals we receive from over there. (we've been looking at *Kaos?*, *Blitzavisa Smorsyra*, *Lonnsslaven* and *Gateavisa*). Triumphantly nihilistic and chaotic might summarise the position if it had to be done in three words.

in all the other papers. Fascism is essentially seen as a growing middle-class threat which must be fought on an international basis via class struggle and links with the Third World, "Fascism", one article ends, "must never be legitimised, it must be isolated, stamped on, spat upon, crushed and buried". A new anti-fascist organisation has recently been formed in Oslo whose emphasis is on anticipating Nazi activity rather than simply responding and insists on the need for clearing them from the streets with "hard and brutal" physical force.

**Blitzavisa Smorsyra**

... picks up the anti-fascist theme in a two page article on Berlusconi in Italy. This is a puzzling journal seemingly run by a collective/individual called Herr Gustav Blitz and there is some evidence that it comes from the squatters movement. Whether it is anarchist or not is altogether unclear though it refers to other anarchist journals. (The producers may find our puzzlement enjoyable given the essentially mocking and aggressive tone.)

**Lonnsslaven (Wage Slave)**

... is a seemingly more industrial news and syndicalist paper though also far more 'heavy' than the rest. It carries a lot of news taken from the international anarchist movement. There are articles on the Air France strikes, Italy and trade unionism in the USA. The paper interestingly tries to draw links, parallels and lessons; for example between the French and Mexican situation, and more generally an analysis of the New World Order - they try to demonstrate that the Chiapas insurrection should not be understood as an isolated protest by the most impoverished Indian group in Mexico, but as one of several reactions on a world scale to the liberalisation and rationalisation initiatives that follow in the wake of the New World Order and that the NAFTA agreement is an example of and that it is against this background that we must understand the enormous resonance that the action has found in the rest of America. But they conclude less than optimistically that: "Even if, for instance, both the airline workers in France, and the Indians and land workers in

Mexico know what they must fight against, an important issue both for them (we would imagine) and for us is what to fight for".

**Gateavisa**

... invites us to "steal and copy as much as you can manage (we do) but by all means mention the source" so we've done so, but should you wish to write for them perhaps you should be aware that "manuscripts received that are not used (and in particular poems) are burnt at a simple ceremony every full moon".

Much more 'alternative/life-style' with drugs, music reviews, a trip through Burma, house-partying and Charles Baudelaire (who obviously escapes the monthly bonfire). Some internal discussion also enters the pages, as in an article by Thomas Hylland Erikson: 'How will the moment of truth be?'

The writer points out how lucky the post-war generations of Scandinavians have been, how they have not had to make a single really difficult decision. Their comfortable existence was and is a necessary condition for the utopian ideologies that saw China as a model and could present Albania as a better place to live in than Norway, while the hippies knew they could experiment with life styles without having any effect on the foundations of the prosperity they in fact built their existence on - industrial capitalism. Later the punks staged a kind of revolt without making it clear to anyone, including themselves, what exactly their demands of society were. Norwegians do not have the slightest idea of what life and its problem are really like in the world outside.

Whether you would prefer to live in Norway or Albania would seemingly be beside the point. Are you starting to feel uncomfortable?

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO 'SOLIDARITY'?

Remember the late '70s and all those Tories so recently converted to syndicalism and wearing their 'Solidarnosc' badges with such pride? What lessons can be learnt from the Polish experience? Were the Tories right all along?

Lech Walesa, that 'man of the people' heroically holed up under house arrest during the Jaruzelski regime is, of course, now happily enjoying the fruits of presidential perks and beginning to make daily rumblings about sending on 'holiday' political opponents he doesn't like. As elections approach he hints at various dubious constitutional moves to defer said elections and thus enable him to keep a grip on that power he seems so much to enjoy. Very Yeltsin.

So what happened to the idealism generated in some areas (mainly liberal and conservative but many on the left also) by the original union? An interesting article by one of those who was dominant in the early days, Karol Modzelewski, in the French press last year<sup>1</sup> offers us some analysis.

Poland, he argues, was the first country to set out on the road to capitalist reform and the only one to have an opposition political class ready to take over the reins of power. Back in 1980-81 the leaders of the Solidarity Trade Union had little choice but to follow the demands of the masses: every time they

took a decision that was unpopular with the rank and file they risked losing their position as leaders. So, asks Modzelewski, how come they (the people) got lumbered with neo-liberal Thatcherism in 1989? What happened between '81 and '89? His answer: Martial law.

Jaruzelski may not have succeeded in eliminating the leadership but he, more than successfully, disciplined the masses and brought in a measure of 'stability' (Jaruzelski has apparently now retired from politics to spend more time with his family). The outcome was a hardened, elitist bunch of anti-Communists of a liberal disposition ... very liberal, very conservative.

Perhaps equally important, by playing the heroic, martyr card, the new emerging elite enjoyed considerable support drawing succour from what was now serving as a democratic myth which could cloud the introduction of the economic death sentence: "Wanting to construct a capitalist economy as quickly as possible, Solidarity, once in power encouraged the business class with large fiscal handouts and abandoned the protection of the weak. Price rises, wage freezes, public expenditure cuts ... characterised the policy. The burden of transformation, the crisis and attendant inequalities was born mainly by the workers, public sector employees and the peasants in other words those who had formed Solidarity's grass roots ..."

Is there anything new under the sun? Anarchists have always warned of the dangers of power for both users and used alike. Merely by seeking power our would-be leaders sell us out. So what of it all? How popular now this 'grass roots' organisation? How fares Thatcherism in Warsaw?

Fortunately, now, the Emperor is beginning to be seen in his splendid nudity. The trade union which still bears the name has lost 80% of its membership and in political terms sucks up to the right. Recent electoral indications indicate that people have had enough and of course we're not dealing with a bunch of illiterate, tribal Slavs. Faced with this naked vision can we point to the possibilities of an enlightened renaissance over in the East? It would seem not. The main winners in this climate of discontent are the former communists (and of course the Thatcherites - So for Christ's (wash my mouth out with soap and water) sake what is the difference?).

A return to the status quo ante is, of course, not on the cards. But fortunately the commies don't seem to need one. What one is threatened with is the conclusion that the Poles have not learnt enough from the past to realise that the old paths have failed and that new ones are going to have to be tried.

1. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, November 1994.

## PANAMA

More news is coming through in response to our quarterly international bulletin ...

Five years ago American troops invaded Panama to impose a government that would be loyal to the plans for economic exploitation imposed by the IMF and the World Bank. The conquest continues today with the government of Pérez Balladares having been initiated by Guillermo Endara. Its economic plan: pay off foreign debt, reform the Work Code, pursue a privatisation programme and open up our market by means of the GATT and the new WTO; its political programme: collaboration with the occupation of Haiti and the aggression against the people of Cuba; its support for the middle classes is ample proof of the continuation of this policy by Balladares.

**Why the invasion?**

In the early morning of 20th December 1989 hundreds of Panamanians were killed and thousands (old people, women, children) by the Yankee army, as also were those militants who, lacking the military means to overcome their oppressors, could only give their lives for the cause of liberation. Tens of thousands in the Chorrillo area saw their homes burnt to the ground by the imperialist troops. A puppet régime formed with Christian Democrats and

members of Molirena - who will now always be associated with the invasion - was installed with the support of the Church. Once the invasion was complete the PRD, by forming the 'opposition', legitimised the Yankee régime. Indeed Social Democrats throughout Latin America, to which the PRD belongs, called on the world to recognise Endara's government.

What was the objective? To set up a government willing to impose the economic régime and to attack the workers conquests made over the previous years by the Panamanian people struggling against the military régime.

**The people fight back**

Resistance began swiftly with the formation in May 1990 of the Committee for the Recovery of Sovereignty which brought Trade Unions, political groups and parties, refugees from Chorrillo and the widows and orphans together to mobilise the people towards the ejection of the Yankee military. Tens of thousands took part in mass demonstrations.

The working classes began their fight back against the economic measures imposed by

the invaders. Since the middle of 1990 the Coordinating Committee for the Right to Life organised mass demonstrations of workers to oppose Endara's economic policies. Throughout 1992 and '93 syndicalists struck against Article 25 of the legal code which sought to take the backbone out of the public sector, paralysing the privatisation programme and achieving salary increases. The World Bank had to reprimand Endara for his 'financial compromises'.

The Constitutional Referendum of '93 revealed the popular opposition to the régime by three to one. The general elections of May '94 also showed dissatisfaction although channelled through the PRD. It is the later policy of 'reconciliation' which has salvaged the Endara régime. Many Panamanians who gave it their support were stupefied by the degree of submission given to the imperialists by the PRD. The reforms rejected by the referendum have now been imposed including an agreement concerning the Canal which is a betrayal of the Panamanian people showing that the régime wishes to keep Panama under the Pentagon umbrella.

If we wish to make progress in our struggle it will not be by means of Balladares who simply seeks to finish off Endara's work. We call on all the workers to continue their struggle. We still have time to save our accomplishments but we will have to struggle!

A. Leon  
Panama



## Through the Anarchist Press

For several years in the '60s we used to have an anarchist platform in Hyde Park, sometimes even two. No doubt it was a circus and most of the audience came to see the speakers making fools of themselves. Those with the loudest voices usually attracted the largest crowds, but every experienced speaker knew that without hecklers the crowds were thin. Some of the hecklers were more knowledgeable than the speakers and some experienced listeners followed the hecklers round getting enjoyment out of the havoc they were able to cause. One of the chief hecklers was an anarchist himself, very ready with dates and facts and could quote long passages from anarchist writers and was inordinately pleased with himself as the crowd grew into a multitude around the anarchist soap-box. It was due to the sharp wit and repartee of the exchanges and the audience loved the drama. A really brilliant speaker when confronted with more than one heckler could pick and choose which one to answer. What he had to watch against was the hecklers completely taking over the meeting, the audience deserting the speaker completely. The memory of these people was astounding. "You are contradicting yourself, they'd say, or "Kropotkin never said that" or "Emma would be ashamed of you".

Now that we are returning to Speakers' Corner, no doubt the situation has changed drastically. But, for the spreading of anarchist ideas, a public meeting is invaluable. Not only many thousands listen to you with attention, but what you say will surface in everyday conversations at home, in the workplace or wherever. Here was also a chance to sell anarchist literature at the gates and many people afterwards attended the meetings in the evening organised by the London Anarchist Group, which has since sunk without trace although it was very lively and influential in those days.

There is something about the human voice and the interchange of ideas which can be very liberating for both speaker and audience alike. No doubt there is the feeling of the marketplace about it, but here you can hear the *vox populi* and many writers hung up with their syntax would benefit from such raw exposure. The crowd is made up of individuals and when it comes to question time the queries come thick and fast, asking what then is the anarchist point of view. In those days I was probably better informed by just listening to the crowd than reading any number of newspapers.

The effect of regularly speaking at Hyde Park, especially on the anarchist platform, gave one without doubt an audience of which any well-known actor would be proud. Not a day would pass without somebody stopping you in the street with "Hey, I know you" or giving you the thumbs-up sign for no reason at all.

Of course speaking at Hyde Park is speaking in the shadow of the Tynburn gallows, thereby continuing a quaint tradition. Those condemned to die were allowed to make their final speeches with the crowds gaping at them and by tradition you may set up your stall at any such place - at Tower Hill, for example, and in Manette Street just by Foyles in Charing Cross Road, where I remember an anarchist meeting so large at the time of the Cuban crisis in 1962 that the crowds were standing in the middle of Charing Cross Road and the traffic had to be diverted.

I also remember that one of the most successful public meetings which were held by Hyde Park took place in 1968 when members of the London Anarchist Group II kept up a marathon speak-in for thirteen days, basically to stop the war in Vietnam, but also to spread the ideas of anarchism. The crowds were vast and appreciative. One of the speakers was Bob Dylan and Joan Baez sang a song for peace. Even the hecklers applauded.

John Rety

## The Bishop, the Guru and the Drag Queen

In the 1890s Emma Goldman said that "Prostitution has been and is a widespread evil, yet mankind goes on its business perfectly indifferent to the sufferings and distress of victims of prostitution. As indifferent indeed as mankind has remained to our industrial system or to economic prostitution." Sadly, this could be an apt response to present day news that many Western men are travelling to Thailand in order to have sex with younger and younger children and thereby escape the prosecution they would risk here. It is very difficult to apply the anti-censorship argument here, were these businessmen to return with visual souvenirs of their holidays. The Feminists Against Censorship meetings I have been to have always seemed convincing until a heckler or two mentioned children or young street girls in the third world and made me feel uncomfortable.

I wonder how far the Bishop of Edinburgh is prepared to go in his plea for understanding adultery and the promiscuous gene. I felt a certain sympathy for the Bishop's predicament this week. The press swooped in and scrambled his genetic and moral imperatives and left him with egg on his face. His wife meanwhile was apparently "laughing herself sick" at the Bishop's embarrassment. Any sympathy was short-lived when I considered the constraints that religious imperatives have placed on individuals across the centuries and the resultant guilt and misery that these have caused.

In the troubled world of feminist politics the backlash continued and there's nothing like a claws-drawn scrap amongst the girls to command ring-side frenzy and delight among spectators. The contrast between erstwhile liberal feminist guru and *Guardian* columnist Germaine Greer and the more down-to-earth *Guardian* columnist Suzanne Moore only made it to the second round. Germaine has thrown in the towel by resigning from *The Guardian* which refused to publish her article condemning Suzanne Moore as a 'lipstick feminist'. Greer, it appears, felt let down by Moore's lack of support after a gross inaccuracy was included in an unsolicited biography of Greer. If accurate the content of Greer's criticism of Moore is reminiscent of the type of radical feminist response of the '70s not usually associated with Greer. Responses like the London Women's Liberation newsletter which states "Straight women think, talk, cross their legs, dress and come on like male transvestite femme drag queens". Is the libertarian Greer of the past becoming rigid and sour in later life? I hope not. Where is the serenely celibate anti-hormone therapy Greer of three years ago?

For the real transvestites amongst us there is, it appears, recognition and tolerance from an unexpected source - London Transport. Travelcard holders will now be allowed to carry two photocards (daytime formal, nighttime drag) to avoid possible confusion at barriers and on the buses. There's progress for you.

Silvia Edwards

## Nuclear waste train held up at Stratford Station

Three anti-nuclear demonstrators were arrested at Stratford Station, East London, on Thursday 18th May. Trains carrying radioactive waste rods stop at Stratford almost every Thursday to change drivers. Such cargoes have used the North London and Gospel Oak lines for many years, but official secrecy means few people are aware of the nuclear waste passing by their homes. Fuel rods are taken from Bradwell nuclear power station in Essex to Sellafield (Windscale) in Cumbria for reprocessing. These cargoes continually give off radiation. If a container were to break open in an accident large amounts of radioactive material would be released and could spread over a wide area. In a town this would result in thousands of deaths. Our lives are regularly being put at risk by the nuclear and armaments industries - is this really necessary? Is it acceptable?

Last Thursday a demonstration took place at Stratford as the train - officially described as a 'light' engine! - arrived at 2.40pm. About a dozen local people handed out leaflets on the platforms and held placards explaining what was happening and why. Meanwhile two demonstrators waiting on Platform 10 climbed onto the tracks and sat together in front of the halted engine, whilst a third spray-painted 'Help! Danger!' on the flask carrying the radioactive rods. Transport Police were called (the signalman reported that up to twenty people were chained to the flask!) and the three demonstrators were arrested. No resistance was offered and apart from one railway worker clobbering a protester with a piece of cardboard there was no violence. Supporters staged a demonstration outside Forest Gate police station and leafleted passers-by until the last of the three was released on bail at 10.30pm.

Chris Gwyntopher and Katy Andrews are charged with obstructing the railway and Oliver Stoll with causing criminal damage.

All three are local residents. The case is due to be heard at Stratford Magistrates' Court in June.

## Call for papers

As part of the fifth conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas (ISSEI), 'Memory and History: European Identity at the Millennium', which will take place in Utrecht in the Netherlands from 19th to 24th August 1996, a workshop 'Anarchist Literature and Literary Anarchy as Itineraries to Freedom' is planned.

In recent years growing attention has been paid to the significance of (political) anarchism in European (and American) literary life during the past centuries. The workshop is designated to survey and assess different approaches in current research/criticism of anarchism and literature, anarchist literature and literary anarchy. Possible subjects to be discussed are the role of political anarchism in literary life of the past centuries, anarchism and anarchy as intertexts, literary themes and figures, anarchism and aesthetics, literature as prefiguration of anarchy and/or anticipation of anarchism, 'anarchism' and 'anarchy' as interpretatory denominators, anarchism/anarchy and (post-)modernity. These subjects can be discussed either in general or in relation to specific authors, currents, periods. The conference language is English.

Abstracts of 150-200 words for papers to the workshop should reach the workshop chair, Hubert van den Berg, Department of French, University of Amsterdam, Spuistraat 134, NL-1012 VB, The Netherlands (Fax: +31-20-5254429) as well as the conference chair Professor Dr Ezra Talmor, Department of Philosophy, Haifa University, Mount Carmel, Haifa 31999, Israel (Fax: +972-3-9386484) by 31st August 1995. Completed papers must be submitted by 1st March 1996. Papers should not exceed 3,000 words or ten double-spaced pages including notes. Selected papers will be published in the Proceedings.

## Folk Hero

A new folk hero has arisen, with the folk-heroic reputation of 'robbing the rich and giving to the poor'. Lord Williams of Chirnside spent three million pounds on two hotels and a restaurant, and paid for Highland Games and pipe bands, in Tomintoul, a village in the Scottish Highlands, turning it from near destitution into a quietly prosperous tourist centre where locals can make a living instead of having to commute long distances or migrate south.

The tourist attraction of the village, and the Laird's reputation among the villagers, is now enhanced by the knowledge that the money was stolen from (whoopee!) a police slush fund whose existence was known only to Lord Williams and a few high-ranking officers in the secret police and the Home Office.

Anthony Williams was an accountant at Scotland Yard for 35 years, beginning in 1959. His earliest known fiddles date from 1981, but his big opportunity came in 1986 when he was asked to take charge of the finances for a secret operation using a light aircraft to keep watch on known IRA arms caches. It seems none of the police involved were interested in the money side of the operation, so he was left to requisition from central funds and pay into the dummy companies involved on his own initiative.

From 1986 to 1993 he requisitioned about £7 million and paid out about £2 million, £3 million went into the economy of Tomintoul and £2 million elsewhere, including a payment of £60,000 for the barony of Chirnside. He has been sentenced to seven and a half years, and when he comes out in about three years time will no doubt be feted in Tomintoul because he has benefited them at the apparent expense of nobody except the national 'tax payer'. As the curator of Tomintoul museum told a journalist: "Most of these fraud type people spirit the money away into foreign bank accounts, but he put most of it into our wee place. It really made Tomintoul a better place. Just look around you."

The crest of the baron of Chirnside is a magpie, and the motto "Bravely onward".

## Jet bloodied in VE Day protest

A full-scale replica of a Hawk ground attack aircraft was covered in 'blood' at the VE Day celebrations in Hyde Park on 8th May. Protesters climbed onto the plane, blood was poured and a banner held saying 'War didn't end in 1945 - British Hawks are killing civilians in East Timor'. As the surrounding crowd screamed abuse, police climbed onto the plane, handcuffed the protesters and dragged them to the ground.

The protest was part of an ongoing campaign against the sale of British Aerospace Hawk ground attack aircraft to Indonesia, which has illegally been occupying East Timor since 1975 despite numerous UN resolutions calling on it to withdraw. In the twenty years of occupation, one third of the population of East Timor - some 200,000 people - has been killed. Hawks from a previous deal have been seen attacking villages in East Timor, and there is every reason to believe that these planes - 24 of which have been ordered, with delivery due to start in January 1996 - will be used for the same purposes, despite government denials.

The two people arrested, Andrea Needham and Mark Chapman, were held by police for eight hours, charged with criminal damage and bailed to appear at Bow Street Magistrates Court on 22nd June 1995.

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# Not the Little House on the Prairie

Little Tenement on the Volga

by C.S. Walton

Claudia Press, 120 pages, £5.99

Remember the late-night television series 'The Twilight Zone' with its strange and haunting 'dah-dah-dah-dah, dah-dah-dah-dah' theme tune? And the highly weird situations, developing from the apparently normal, which it portrayed? Reading this book you sometimes get the feeling that you're there in 'The Twilight Zone', or even a sketch from 'Monty Python', so surreal are many of the events described.

In fact you're in the post-Cold War, post-Soviet Union Russia in its sixth largest city, founded as a trading post in the sixteenth century, now with a population of 1.5 million and Number Three on the US nuclear strike hit-list due to its military/industrial and aerospace importance. Samara, formerly the closed military city of Kuibyshev, lies on the Volga a mere 600 miles east of Moscow, but might just as well be on the moon for all the difference it makes.

The author, better known to *Freedom* readers as Claudia, went to live there, working and learning Russian for over a year, and has transformed her experiences into a wonderful and at times brilliant account, some of which, had one not seen corroboration in other sources over the last decade, one might find unbelievable. Yet it is not only believable but fascinating, and written with sympathy and sincerity spiced with perceptive humour – a humour only surpassed by that of the unfortunate residents whose drab miserable existence they have not only learned to bear but can actually make jokes about.

By any standards Samarans have had it bad: famine and cannibalism in the 1920s; pogroms in the 1930s when the NKVD's victims were buried in mass graves in Park Gagarin; enforced mass conformity and stagnation in the years since. Here is modern Russia in all its provincial desperation: the bankrupt economy with its attendant black market and mafiosi; the unemployment, alcoholism and drug addiction; the muggings and murders; the appalling status and treatment of women; the begging and chronic housing shortage; the apathy and resignation in the face of greed, bribery and corruption. Most of this makes the 'hardships' of life in Moscow that western reporters whine about seem like a picnic by comparison.

In a previous review of this book (*Freedom*, 25th March 1995) Mo took a swipe at Claudia, accusing her of an "unorthodox stance on sexual politics". Well let's hope so! Since when have anarchist views on sexual politics

been orthodox? (Orthodox: holding correct, i.e. currently accepted, opinions, esp. in theology – *Oxford English Dictionary*.) Let's face it, if our opinions were currently accepted we wouldn't even need to be anarchists.

Mo also charges her with "blaming women, at least in part, for their predicament". This is as silly as it is ignorant: she does not blame the women for their predicament, she merely notes the fact that sometimes their behaviour encourages or reinforces that of the men. This is an unremarkable observation and applies to all groups of oppressed and oppressors. There is a perfectly understandable tendency in most people to go along with what those in authority demand at any one time (and in some cases all the time) in order to make life that little bit more bearable, if only temporarily, as Reich pointed out long ago in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*. Indeed it sometimes goes beyond this, for example when people vote for their own oppressors. To point out such behaviour is not to condemn it, it is merely a recognition that we are all, sometimes, partly responsible for our own subjugation and that this forms part of the problem we are trying to address. We have learnt this behaviour from experience and history: uncompromising resistance very often leads to an early grave and I doubt whether that is something which either Mo, or Russian women, want.

But I digress. The author herself makes it clear in this book that the real responsibility for Russian women's dreadful position lies with the political system which is dominated at every level by (mostly drunken) men, and with a closed society steeped in tradition, throughout both the feudal and Soviet systems: men go to work, get pissed and beat the shit out of their women; women go to work, take the beatings – even buy the vodka – and wait hand and foot on their men. One can see why the resurgence of the Russian anarchist movement (as described in *Anarchy in the USSR\**, £3.00) was, and is, so necessary – even inevitable.

Just the descriptions of ordinary everyday situations are so bizarre that one can hardly help laughing, even when they are quite bleak, whether it's Boris the neighbour and black-marketeer explaining why he moved his interests out of privatised public toilets in the bus station into dealing in prescription drugs and syringes, then into electronic goods and pirated videos; or hair-raising accounts of what – to us – would be simple shopping trips; or the author's accommodation in No. 4 Specialist Alley. Each of the six 1870s merchants' families flats in the block had been converted after the revolution into 10-12

rooms, each of which now housed a couple or a family – a minimum of 25 people in accommodation designed for perhaps six. They have to share one kitchen (two sinks and three gas stoves) and one washroom. "Clothes and sheets were washed here in metal tubs. Water had to be heated up on the stoves. The washrooms contained two lavatories and two cold water taps over a trough. Some residents kept their personal wooden toilet seats hanging from nails on the wall ... It was hard to believe that 75 years had passed since the Party district housing committee had requisitioned the block, partitioned the flats and allocated them to workers' families. This temporary arrangement had stuck, while time passed the inhabitants by." Oh, but what fun the mornings were: "Every day at seven I was awakened by the sound of the neighbour's radio through the dividing wall. After a blast of mechanical bird-tweeting a hearty woman would urge the nation to rise to its feet and exercise. She sounded as though she was just bursting to call us 'comrades'. She made me feel like Winston Smith." And this is 1993. Still, the neighbours did have a favourite way of forgetting all this, apart from the vodka: "Not wanting to be drawn into kitchen politics ... I did not join the other women when they gathered in front of the television for their daily escape into Mexican soap operas. The transmission of these exceptionally dire soaps is probably the most popular feature of post-communist Russia. My neighbours said they wanted to see how people lived in Mexico. When I said that blonde ladies in *palacios* were hardly typical representatives of the Mexican population they looked at me sceptically, as though I was a purveyor of communist propaganda."

In the context of this new Russia it was not the least bit surprising to see the following

report in a recent newspaper: "Police Pimps: Authorities suspended an entire police precinct near the Kremlin after finding a police-run prostitution ring, a newspaper said yesterday" (*Guardian*, 6th May 1995) shortly after reading this book. It is not an easy book to categorise, traversing various literary borders as it does. But it combines the elements of an exciting foreign travel book with both the illumination of political and social analysis and historical explanations of some of Russia's cultural high weirdness. The author does not wear her politics on her sleeve here, but we get the message clearly enough through her close observation of the other-worldliness of provincial and rural Russia, the real Russia of the 1990s.

Unreservedly recommended as the best non-fiction book you're likely to read this year.

KM

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on

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## Food for Thought ... and Action!

Recent arrivals at the Freedom Press Bookshop.

*Class War No. 67*, Class War Federation, bi-monthly. One of the funniest covers for some time graces this issue, and features Norma Major in a dainty dress and jacket leaning on the shoulder of our great leader – except that the inane grinning head inside the clothes is not poor Norma but the moronic Tony Blair. The caption reads: "The media made them superstars. We'll make them wish they'd never been born!" Contents include a double-whammy attack on both Labour and the Tories; a laugh at Scottish Tories' local election wipe-out and a preview of the May local elections; articles on the anti-roads campaign, Mexico and the Balkans; and a long piece on the single-issue reform politics of many of the 'animal rights' protesters. Some might say that the bad syntax, mis-spellings and general profanity spoil what might otherwise be a good paper. Yet the earthenness and disrespect can also be said to provide a necessary counterpoint to the anarchist publishing field, where an awful lot of crap can be found written in perfect English. Good luck to 'em. 16 pages, 50p (also No. 66 still available).

*Society and Nature: the international journal of political ecology* No. 6, S&N Press, tri-annual. Given that the members of the editorial board are based in Britain, Greece and the USA, and that each issue is published in both a Greek and an American edition, it's a wonder that they manage to get this hefty journal out at all, never mind three times a year. But here's No. 6, still going strong, on the theme of Socialism and Ecology – the first one I've had the chance to look at. The journal is a newcomer to the anarchism/social ecology circuit and very much a theoretical and analytical heavyweight. Nearly all the contributors are writers and academics (or former academics) and the length and depth of the articles reflects this. The impressive list of international advisory board members includes names like Brian Morris, Noam

Chomsky, Janet Biehl, John Clark, Murray Bookchin, Dan Chodorkoff, Susan Brown and many others. The principal articles in this issue are 'Is Real World Socialism Possible?' by André Gunder Frank; Takis Fotopoulos on 'The End of Socialist Statism'; 'Habermas and Castoriadis' by Konstantinos Kavoulakos; 'Libertarian Ecology and Civil Society' by John Ely; and Murray Bookchin on 'The Ecological Crisis and Socialism'. The rest comprises a long and illuminating exchange of letters between the editor and the editor of another journal, *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, with a view to cooperating over publication and content, but the latter had ideological objections and the idea was dropped; plus two book reviews and a statement of aims. All in all an intense and worthwhile read, and certainly good value – most serious books of this size would set you back £11 or so. 235 pages, £7.00.

*Alternative Press Review: your guide beyond the mainstream* # 2/1, CAL Press, quarterly. Feature articles in this issue range from a survey of film noir to 'Spiritual Anarchy and the Wild Man in Colonial America', via 'Paul Goodman and the Media', 'The New Mythologies of Rape' by Wendy McElroy, and a couple of pieces on 'The Company' – CIA manipulation in domestic US politics and how to resist it now the Cold War is over. Then there are 11 pages of selections from various recent books or periodicals; all kinds of short pieces on the alternative press and media; 12 pages of reviews; plus letters and loads of cartoons and excellent illustrations. Another 82 stimulating pages-worth, at the new lower price of £3.00. (Also a few copies of No. 1/3, equally good, at £3.50.)

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**EMMA GOLDMAN** Born in Kovno, Lithuania in 1869, she emigrated to the USA in 1885. Following the Haymarket affair of 1887 she was drawn to anarchism. Under the influence of her mentor, John Most, she became an agitator and orator, and, after his death, the best-known anarchist in the USA. She founded and co-edited the journal *Mother Earth* (1906-1917), propagated anarchism, birth control, women's rights, worked in the Free Speech movement and against the war. Arrested in 1917, she was deported to Russia in 1919. Disillusioned, she left with Berkman and others in 1921. She wrote her very successful memoirs *Living My Life*, and was one of the most active supporters of the Spanish Civil War. She died in Toronto, Canada, in 1940.

The portrait, right, 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 Errico Malatesta, William Godwin, Marie Louise Berneri, Rudolf Rocker, Emiliano Zapata, Noam Chomsky, Élisée Reclus, Michael Bakunin, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Colin Ward and many more.

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EMMA GOLDMAN



— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

# Garden history becomes relevant

Wander into any bookshop in any high street and you will find an endless stream of books on two topics: cooking and gardening. Even though everyone cooks and though gardening is this country's most popular outdoor pastime, it is evident that many of these books are read not for instruction on food preparation or cultivation instructions but for sheer pleasure.

Now if anyone deserved the epithet 'armchair gardener' it is me. I am the world's worst, or most erratic gardener (though fortunately all my neighbours are very good practical ones). But I am fascinated by the social history and sociology of gardening, and I notice that all through the history of garden literature the modest instruction manuals are full of political assumptions.

Candide, the hero of Voltaire's nice little book of that name, was unable to agree with his instructor Dr Pangloss that we live in the best of all possible worlds, but concluded that, whatever else happens, we must go and work in the garden. His famous remark is often taken to imply a withdrawal from political issues, and half a century ago George Orwell reported that when he chanced in his column in *Tribune* to mention his pleasure from the sixpenny rambler roses he bought at Woolworths, he got an indignant letter from a reader who said that roses are bourgeois. He found that other readers, too, assumed that "any pleasure in the actual process of life encourages a sort of political quietism".

Gardening writers tend not to be supporters of the political left. One exception was the celebrated Dr Harry Roberts, famous as a 'penny doctor' in the East End of London early in this century, who wrote a long series of gardening books, and in his *Keep Fit in Wartime* of 1940 argued that "we must apply the old Communist formula: to each according to his need, from each according to his ability".

Another was Edward Hyams, a pioneer

vine-grower in England known to anarchists for his excellent, but posthumous, biography of Proudhon (*Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: his revolutionary mind and works*, John Murray, 1979). His long series of garden books included *A History of Gardens and Gardening* (Dent, 1971) and *English Cottage Gardens* (Nelson, 1970; Penguin, 1987) in which he described how between 1760 and 1867 the English ruling class "stole seven million acres of common land, the property and livelihood of the common people of England", which he called a "gigantic crime, by far the grandest larceny in England's history".

Since Hyams died (in Besançon in 1975) there has been a gap in left-wing garden literature, but it has been filled by a writer and gardener called Martin Hoyles who has produced a series of gardening histories which are pricey but desirable (this is why your local public library exists). The first was *The Story of Gardening* (Journeyman Press paperback, 1991, £12.95) where, in his very first sentences, he takes up Orwell's point:

"It comes as a shock to put the words *politics* and *gardening* together. Usually they are seen as two completely separate spheres. What can gardening have to do with politics? Gardening is surely an escape from politics and the garden is a refuge from harsh political realities."

He only cites this conventional wisdom in order to refute it, and his comprehensive history supports the view that access to land is an intensely political issue. When I first read

this book I noted that Hoyles has an index entry on "Politics, incompatible with gardening", and there's an obvious sense in which this is true. There is seldom time for both.

For example, when I talked to the hard-working secretary of the Birmingham Allotments Council, which federates more than 100 local societies, he ruefully explained that he had been obliged to give up his own plot, as negotiating with the city council's politicians and officers exhausted all his spare time. And it reflects my own garden neglect. With David Crouch, who is a better gardener than me, I wrote *The Allotment: Its Landscape and Culture* (Faber, 1988; Mushroom, 1994, but out of print again) and travelled the country talking to gardeners, while my own garden was taken over by thistles and nettles.

Martin Hoyles, on the other hand, has pursued his investigation of the history of garden literature in a pair of books. He has written a two-volume book on gardening books from 1560 to 1960. The first was *Gardeners Delight* (Pluto, 1994, £22.95), quickly followed by a second, just out, which is *Bread and Roses* (Pluto, 1995, £22.95). Both will be paperbacks sooner or later.

Having explored in his earlier book the social history of plant cultivation against the background of exploration, empire building and the horrors of the enclosure, he moves on to exploring the variety of pastoral idylls that motivate garden makers. In the first of these books he classified over two thousand works, from sixteenth century herbals to admonitory wartime manuals for vegetable production. He gave special attention to the division of labour between master and man, mistress and serving-maid, with particular attention to efforts to ensure that children became gardeners, whether in family or school.

In the latest book, *Bread and Roses*, he examines a further series of themes in relation to the literature of gardening, from the disputes between royalists and their opponents in the seventeenth century onwards. He is, for example, careful to show how the English landscape garden of the eighteenth century, constructed to the designs of Capability Brown and repeated all through

the period when the plutocracy was scattering off-the-peg country houses around Britain, was at the expense of the displaced poor. And he cites the opinion of another garden pundit of the time, Uvedale Price, whose motives were not of "libertarian outrage at the injustice that attended enclosure and the creation of extensive gardens", but were both aesthetic and political:

"In Capability Brown's designs Price sees 'something despotic in the general system of improvement - all must be laid open - all that obstructs levelled to the ground - houses, orchards, gardens, all swept away'. He condemns such tyranny, which 'for the sake of mere extent and parade of property, only extends the bounds of monotony, and of dreary selfish pride; but contracts those of variety, amusement and humanity'."

Hoyles pursues this egalitarian approach through the subsequent history of gardening in England, observing how the tradition was dependent upon an army of cheap labour, and watching the consequent shift from "bedding-out" plants to herbaceous borders, as well as the twentieth century impact of the two world wars and the changing place of women in gardening. And he concludes by observing how "English gardening literature reflects the ethnocentrism of English culture in general".

Now this kind of study of the literature of gardening might have been seen as purely academic, but for the fact that scattered around Britain today there are people making token occupations of land and citing the printed opinions of the Digger, Gerard Winstanley, and the invasion of common land at St George's Hill in Surrey in April 1949, when the Council of State was informed by a local landowner that people were sowing the ground with parsnips, carrots and beans, with the intention of restoring "the ancient community enjoying the fruits of the earth".

Suddenly access to land has been put back on the political agenda, except among the politicians of right or left, except for the threat from the Criminal Justice Act. See, for example, John Rety's report in *Freedom* of 13th May 1995, 'Land is the big issue', which was echoed by sympathetic reports in the press from *The Guardian* on the left to the *Daily Telegraph* on the right.

It might even be that, just as farmers are claiming a subsidy for their 'set-aside' land, given on condition that they grow nothing, the claims of the landless for freedom to grow could be pushed back into the list of issues that actually involve people. Then the immense literature of gardening might actually become important.

Colin Ward

## The most dangerous feature of the state

To live in a state is to live in continuous danger for it produces massive poverty and, in many countries, disease, riots, revolutions and 'conventional' wars. Besides this continuous danger there is the threat of a greater one that hangs over our heads like the proverbial sword of Damocles. To understand why this danger exists, we must understand how power is distributed in the state.

There are massive inequalities of wealth and leisure in the state, and so people have to be induced by propaganda, enticed by rewards and forced by violence to live together in such an unjust way. One or more rulers exert this control in government. Although a government has all the power, it delegates its authority to manage day-to-day affairs. Those immediately below the government have less power than the maximum, those below still less, and so on, to some extent, down through society. Most people in society have no power at all. The state is hierarchical. Those at the top of the power structure direct the power of all those below them so that they have complete control of everyone. If there is more than one ruler at the top of the power hierarchy, the power is diluted and the excesses of any individual curbed, but if there is only one ruler, his or her power is unrestricted.

There is an ever-present danger in the state because any individual at the top of the power structure may have the opportunity to seize it all. That individual then becomes a dictator, and he or she can control all the country. People become dictators by being born in the right bed, by being elected in a democratic parliament and by seizing power during a coup. They do not need to be mentally well or moral to become dictators. Just the reverse, so that most are mad with power and wicked.


At the end of January this year there were memorial services held to remind us of the

terrible deaths that took place in the concentration camps of Auschwitz and other German towns fifty years ago. These generated several articles stating that we must be vigilant so that the horror was not repeated. Some people wanted to know if it were possible for the horror to happen again. Unfortunately, the power structure of the state society makes it possible to happen anytime. So the answer to the question 'Could there be another holocaust?' is 'Yes, and most likely there will be'. Hitler could destroy one and a half million people in the most horrible way because he could use the state pattern of society.

Because dictators and governments can control everyone, they will behave in a very wicked way if it suits them. To retain their power they have brutal and repressive regimes that imprison without trial, torture and kill dissidents. If they want to exterminate a particular race or religious group, they will do it. No government of any kind has any compunction about killing millions of people. In Britain, as in other countries, we do not know our real rulers, but they have, without our consent, agreed to the development of the atomic bomb and made war against the Germans, the Falklanders and the Iranians. They decide whether we shall arm, with what and by how much. Millions of us may have to suffer and die in an atomic war or in a holocaust of one kind or another.

We can protect ourselves from our continuous danger and from periods of special danger only by creating a free society where people cooperate with one another of their own free will. We cannot change the behaviour of governments and so we must protect ourselves by discarding them.

Derrick A. Pike



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## Calidoscopio

Cali is the third biggest city in Colombia. A city which is in the process of becoming a major metropolis, a process which is at once aggressive, violent and dehumanising. It has a population of 2,000,000 – 40% of whom live in absolute poverty (800,000 people). Another 40% are poised on the edge between the middle and lower classes whilst 20% have to work outside the area. 10% of those who can work don't have any (the figure doubles when related to young people) and 50% survive on the daily leftovers selling everything and consuming dreams. There were parliamentary elections followed by more local ones. Of every one hundred people who were eligible to vote 70 didn't. Of the other 30 one has to take into account the votes that were bought, those that were stolen, those that were sold and those that were swindled, those that were forced to vote and those deceased voters who still registered their votes. Such are the miracles of Colombian democracy. Here folk listen to salsa - good, bad and indifferent – at all hours and in every place. The people are dark-skinned, fun-loving and dancers who keep at it until they drop. The bursts of music mix with the bursts of machine-gun fire. The average killing every weekend is between 30 and 50 – mainly the young and women. Here to be young and poor is to invite death. Death squads stalk the streets shooting, kidnapping and 'disappearing' girls and boys. Nobody says anything, nobody knows anything, nobody hears anything. Fear closes the eyes, the mouths and the ears whilst the government washes its hands and promises exhaustive investigations which generally come to nothing. The local council in Cali recognised that in 1993 68% of the murders that took place went unpunished. Nobody can explain how it is that these murderous squads can pass along the streets which are full of armed police, detectives, soldiers, secret police agents, ordinary police agents and military barracks. Perhaps they don't see them? Or perhaps ...



The blue sky is dotted with clouds of polluted air: from the west come rivers and streams of pollution; the people are as warm as the climate; football and frivolity gain the attention of thousands of people every weekend; the population growth is intense and overwhelming ... urban chaos is on the way. And so it is in Cali just like so many other places in Our America: an inhuman product of the development policies of Big Capital. Cali is a paradise for the TNCs who came in the 50s and 60s and seized the best lands, the greatest riches. Standing beside them, hand in hand with the powerful, are the drug traffickers who are simply another strain of the bourgeoisie and who have contaminated the whole political and economic environment. Much of the aforementioned violence has its roots in the drug-trafficking world and its roots. A veritable narco-tragedy. But the consequences of the drug dealing are not just the bloody ones. It is a whole subculture which proclaims easy riches, ostentation, fiddles, machismo and frantic consumerism, dragging down with it into the mud thousands and thousands, especially the young, with the

approval of the ruling classes shamefully enjoying the fruits of the drug trade. The opportunities for living a life with dignity become fewer and fewer. Industrial restructuring, privatisation and neoliberalism have added to the increasing number of closures of factories and companies, hyper-commercialisation of education, health and recreation, the growing numbers of women and children who work either in subhuman conditions and for any salary they can get or fall into delinquency and prostitution. Official figures show that 61% of those who commit crimes are under the age of 21 many of whom are in prison for having tried to get a few pesos to survive.

Government statistics are eloquent: whilst a simple diet costs in the region of US\$300 per month the income of poor families only comes to about US\$90, if indeed they are lucky enough to have an income. Such a state of affairs has sharpened the peoples ability to survive and resist. Here we call it 'the gleaning culture' – those strategies that people adopt in order to live from day to day always looking for ways to acquire the necessary pesos which will allow them to eat in the daily struggle to

survive: parks, traffic lights and the streets themselves have become commercial areas where a small business can be set up in order to cheat hunger. Thus there you will be able to buy a hot dog, a coffee, a newspaper, a loaf of bread, a red rose or a quick fix. Although libertarian and alternative groupings are weak and marginal there do exist thoughts, discussions and practices which are linked to social projects which give rise to new ideas and new ways to live. Lack of co-ordination is, however, one of the greatest weaknesses. Nevertheless in the teeth of the neoliberal storm and the ferocity of the regime, the building of a new society is making progress along with setbacks and fears, threats and successes progress is being made, slowly but surely as it advances hand in hand with hope.

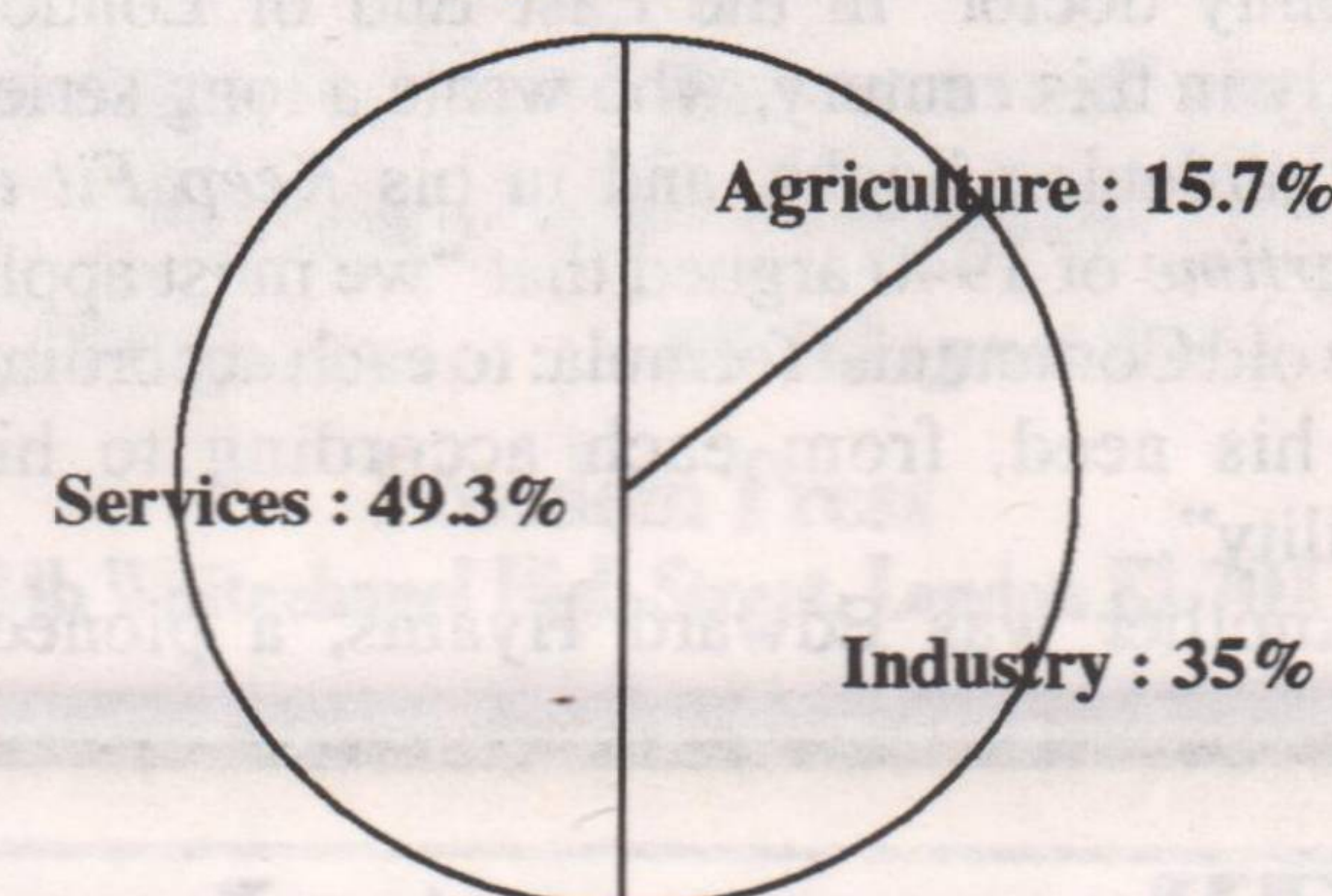
Willi

translated from *Correo A*, April 1995

### FACT FILE: COLOMBIA

Population: 33.4m  
 Population per sq. km: 31  
 Human Development Index: 77  
 Average annual inflation (83-93) 27.1%  
 Main export destination: USA 39.2%  
 Foreign debt (as % of GDP): 36.7  
 Cost of living as at Sept 1993  
 (New York=100): 63  
 GDP per head in purchasing power parity  
 (USA=100): 20

#### Origins of GDP



## Chomsky and Third Worldism: a reply

Dear Comrades,

Apologise??? Milan Rai (8th April 1995) thinks that I should apologise for stating the simple truth? Bullshit!!! He states that "there are two pieces of writing that Chomsky – and his co-author Edward Herman – wrote about the Khmer Rouge atrocities". Two he has read!!! I cite the following: 1) *Radical Priorities*, 1981, pages 77-82, pages 93-94. This reference cites original references to *Dissent*, Fall issue, 1978, pages 386-389 and *New York Times* (8th December 1978, page A28). 2) *Necessary Illusions*, 1989, pages 153-160, pages 383-384. This cites another original reference in *Manufacturing Consent* (1988 with E.S. Herman). Chomsky also cites two other references of his own on this subject (page 383) that are incompletely footnoted, i.e. a review in *Inside Asia* and its reprint in *The Chomsky Reader*. 3) *Towards a New Cold War*, 1982, pages 382-383, page 389, pages 407-408 and pages 425-426.

Counting Rai's two references, I am up to the number ten. Two, my bleeding asshole!!! I'm not going to bother looking up another ten or twenty or whatever. There's a consistent pattern here. Rhetorical tricks aside, the best that I can make out from Chomsky's confused writings on the number of Cambodian victims is that he believed (*and defended this belief*) at one time that 100,000 is an appropriate number. Chomsky admits (in *Necessary Illusions*, page 383) that his estimate for the number of victims assumed in *After the Cataclysm* was based on incomplete evidence, yet he adamantly refused "significant revision of what we published in 1979". The 100,000 number is stated very plainly on page 93 of *Radical Priorities*. The source that Chomsky chose to believe because it fits his preconceptions was the US State Department (see *Necessary Illusions*, page 156).

There is a rhetorical trick called 'granting the opponent's premises in order to still prove him wrong'. Chomsky engages in this in regard to Khmer Rouge atrocities on page 77 of *Radical Priorities*, though his asides make it very plain that he doesn't believe any 'high' estimate of these atrocities.

The quote from page 293 of *After the Cataclysm* – "when the facts are in, it may turn out that the more extreme condemnations were in fact correct" – is indeed a rhetorical trick. The quote that Rai brings out is immediately followed by the following: "But even if that turns out to be the case, it will in no way alter the conclusions we have reached on the central question addressed here: how the available facts were selected, modified or sometimes invented to create a certain image offered to the general population."

In other words, 'even if you're right and I'm wrong I'm still right'. More importantly Rai's quote is prefaced by 158 pages of Chomsky doing exactly what I said he was doing in my first letter, i.e. attacking a number of different claims of Khmer Rouge atrocities in order to minimise said atrocities.

Chomsky has indeed denied Khmer Rouge atrocities in a systematic fashion, for reasons of his own. It is in the interests of Chomsky's propaganda to underestimate the number of Pol Pot's victims because, as he states in *Necessary Illusions*, the attempt to judge the actual number of victims is irrelevant to his real purpose. It should be noted that Chomsky's position in the above book is in direct contradiction to his glee in establishing that Jean Lacouture's estimate of two million victims cannot be rigorously proven (*Toward a New Cold War*, pages 407-408).

Chomsky has not denied that Khmer Rouge atrocities happened, but he has deliberately and persistently attempted to deny their magnitude. This is also denial! Chomsky happens to be more honest than his apologists. I stand by my original praise and criticism of Chomsky, and I suspect that Rai's description of my "interpretations" of Chomsky as "questionable" are because he would like to enlist Chomsky in some belief system of his own. Chomsky is a gradualist who has more than once warned against "revolutionary romanticism". Chomsky is a consistent anarchist who has been consistently anti-communist and critical of third world regimes (unlike other 'third-worldists'). I

disagree with Chomsky on his choice of what is important and on his relative mildness in criticising the so-called left. That was all I "interpreted" about Chomsky, and I would like to see where I was wrong as I would tend to be on Chomsky's side in the first two items.

As to Chomsky's motives, they are pretty obvious, but for the ideologically blinkered amongst us I refer you to the index of *Towards a New Cold War* where the references to "East Timor compared to Cambodia" far outnumber any other item on Cambodia. Chomsky applies a very skilful criminal lawyer logic to estimates of Khmer Rouge victims while utterly failing to apply the same standards to East Timor. Fair enough, he's engaged in polemic to prove a point. Both cases, however, should be judged not with the standards of criminal law and a presumption of innocence but with the civil law standards of "a preponderance of evidence". Not one or the other but both. Just because right wing propagandists judge one side less harshly doesn't mean that we should do the same for the opposite side.

Chomsky has very plainly stated that he believes in a very much lower estimate for Pol Pot's victims than is generally accepted. Whether he still holds this opinion I don't know; I'm not a personal friend of Chomsky's. It is suspicious that my much more recent references than Rai's end in 1989. Maybe the silence says something as Chomsky has hardly been silent about anything else in the last six years. Unlike some, I don't think that Chomsky is infallible. The point is that Chomsky made a very stupid error because of his preconceptions. This error runs through Chomsky's work, which I have obviously read more of than Rai, in a very consistent pattern. I have seen Chomsky challenged on this point in person by an anarchist very involved in East European solidarity work over a decade ago. Boiled down the question was 'why are you so soft on the commies?' Chomsky replied (not denying that he was far more opposed to US imperialism than any other) that he criticised the country of which he was a part and which he hoped

to influence. Chomsky, by the way, is far less of a raving anti-American than most of his admirers would like to believe he is. As to why Chomsky's over-emphasis is a mistake I can do no better than to quote Chomsky himself in *Radical Priorities*: "One final remark. I've been talking about tactics, but I don't have any faith in my own judgements about tactics. I've been wrong much more often than I've been right. Therefore, you shouldn't have any special faith in my judgements in this respect."

Rai wishes to believe everything that Chomsky writes, including his contradictions. Fine. I'm a much more cynical person than Comrade Rai. What Rai should understand is that he does nobody any favours by denying Chomsky's mistake, neither the US's victims nor the anarchist movement nor Chomsky himself. Chomsky is generally right and useful, much more useful than I could ever be. When Chomsky defends the right of a French Holocaust denier not to be censored, despite his disagreement with said views, he stands on high principle. If this is unpopular and against trendy leftism so what? There is a point to Chomsky's actions in such a case given the threat to free speech from misguided leftists in our society just as there is a point to his more frequent attacks on US policy. Chomsky is not responsible for the use that airhead leftists make of his writings. He is, however, responsible when he applies his considerable talents to minimising the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge. In doing so he makes his general case weaker, and Chomsky himself has remarked on how he was "jumped upon" for this error. I'm sure his right wing opponents would jump on him in any case, but he has a weak point in this instance. Chomsky has criticised so-called 'revolutionaries' (in my opinion, 'make-believe' revolutionaries) in developed countries for the same error – for not judging the objective effect of their tactics.

Despite some anarchists' illusions it really doesn't matter much in the real world what I write about Chomsky's past error in a small circulation anarchist paper. The world goes on despite fantasies of 'revolution'. The problem is that Chomsky operates in the real world. He has more influence than Rai, myself and all the readers of this paper put together. Should this 'ancient history' (continued on page 8)



## Irish Peace Train

Dear Freedom,

Since M. Rai wrote, the Peace Train organisation has decided that the situation in Ireland is sufficiently satisfactory for a final Peace Train to be run on 14th October from (almost certainly) Cork via Dublin and other intermediate stations to Belfast and back. I invite M. Rai with all cordiality to join the train at whatever station suits him best and make the journey as my guest and find out for himself what we are all about. I suspect that most of the differences that seem to divide us could be found to vanish with enough discussion in a comradely atmosphere.

The Peace Train organisation was set up in 1989 by a group of people with extremely different origins and opinions to try to end what seemed to us to be the campaign of many then going on which was psychologically and physically dividing the two main communities the most, and was best realised by the populace, namely the persistent attacks by the IRA on the one railway line that links Northern Ireland with the Republic. If it had been the British military, the RUC or 'loyalist' paramilitaries carrying on this campaign I am quite certain we would all have reacted in the same way as we did.

The organisation was set up for the sole purpose of restoring normal rail communication between North and South, and apart from passing a resolution of sympathy and visiting and otherwise helping survivors after the various atrocities committed - by the 'loyalists' in a Co. Derry pub, by the IRA at Warrington, by the loyalists in a Co. Down pub and the IRA in a Shankill Road shop, etc. - we as a body took no part in day-to-day politics and obviously as a body set up to deal with a single calamity had no warrant to protest about British troop interference with border roads. Many if not most of us, however, in other capacities did (and do) express opinions on other matters than the railway link, and if M. Rai or anyone else wants to inform him/herself better about Peace Train activists as individuals, my best counsel is that they consult the Irish Labour History Society's archives at Beggar's Bush, Dublin.

I doubt if many people who did not actually travel on the Dublin-Belfast rail route on a day it was attacked can realise what a traumatic experience it was. I

remember one day embarking on the train at Belfast and finding myself sitting opposite two old ladies (Catholic, and statistically speaking nationalists) who were, very daringly, making what they were sure was their last journey to visit a sick relative in Wexford. Somewhere near Lisburn the train stopped and we were told the line had been blown up. The old ladies were naturally terrified. The train came in slow motion to Lisburn, where we were all turned out and advised to enter buses that would take us across the border to Dundalk to catch a train to Dublin. Despite their fear, the old ladies made the long and uncomfortable journey to Dundalk, scared (unnecessarily, but how could you persuade them otherwise?) of possible attacks on the bus.

Thoroughly weary, we all eventually reached Dublin, perfectly safe but the poor ladies had the mortification of seeing the day's last train to Wexford leaving Dublin as we drew into the station. Wars create, all the time, innumerable petty tragedies like that, which leave sour memories and, for old, young and invalid, possibly physical upsets of which warriors and politicians are too arrogant to be conscious.

On another occasion, after delivering a lecture in Belfast, I suddenly went totally blind. I stayed the night with a friend who kindly put me on to the Dublin train before going off to work, but that train, too, was stopped by an explosion on the line and I shall never forget the misery of groping and gasping from train to platform to bus to train and out again at the Dublin terminus to get yet another train, my day's timetable in shreds and my family in panic. Far worse things have happened to millions in this country, of course, but the accumulation of numberless petty disasters to ordinary people is something that they could do without and warriors could make unnecessary if they thought a bit. In this case the IRA did think a bit and, even before their ceasefire, stopped cutting the Dublin-Belfast line.

It is impossible to be sure, but I strongly believe that the tentative efforts of fraternisation between 'loyalist' and Republican militants that are becoming more and more visible are at least in part the result of contacts made by the Peace Train organisation with a number of those people. Noteworthy was a fine

Dear Comrades,

For the past ten years a number of syndicalists have had very informal links based on the fact that they have been working in the same sort of fields: for example the Trades' Council movement. Some of these are individuals with a long history of activity in our movement going back to the SWF (e.g. Pete Turner, Jay Ginn [née Nightingale], Jim Young, Derek Patterson, Laurens Otter, Brian Bamford and Martin Gilbert) while others were either expelled from the DAM or resigned from it (Hull Syndicalists, Mick Larkin, George Kirkman and, again, Laurens, etc).

From 1986 onwards Hull Syndicalists, York Libertarian Socialists (now defunct) and Laurens published *Syndicalist Bulletin*

programme on 14th May on television in the Republic in which former notorious 'loyalist' militants apologised for some of their past deeds and republicans of varied origins found themselves sharing with these 'loyalists' a common disgust for social conditions that drove young people, the one lot to kill and destroy in the name of Irish nationalism and the other in that of Ulster Protestantism, when both had a common enemy in the capitalist system that thrives on their divisions.

It is clear that neither of the two divided communities in Northern Ireland can achieve a 'victory' over the other without bloodshed of almost holocaust proportions. Each community has its own history, culture, ideals. Somehow the two need to learn, and, I believe, are learning that they have in common more than what divides them: above all, a common enemy far too sophisticated to care about borders and frontiers, and diabolically clever at enriching itself out of the exploitation of ordinary men and women, the more easily exploited the more they can be conned into hating other ordinary people whose religion, language, colour or any other minor attribute they have, are different from their own.

John de Courcy Ireland

## Syndicalist Unity

(or later SB pamphlets) which may or may not have had some resonance with syndicalists active in the British labour movement; suffice it to say it never really took off, and was never properly funded.

We can only talk for ourselves, but would imagine that our position is mirrored throughout the movement. Hull Syndicalists could never devote much time to strengthening national links between syndicalists wishing to work within the current trades' unions and trades' councils, quite simply because we have always been swamped with work on the local level and in the past - though not now - we were running the ill-starred *International Union Bulletin*.

This situation hasn't really changed (for example, we're currently organising a visit from the Chelmsford bus strikers to Hull, the Trades' Council May Day meal, a public meeting of the Hull Asylum Seekers' Support Group and activities around the Criminal Justice Act) and so, for a number of reasons, we do not wish to see the situation drift any further and feel we ought to address the problem of syndicalism's lack of cohesion and disunity in this country.

Would it not make sense, at least, to have some form of regular communication so that we could coordinate around disputes (e.g. the bus strike) and other campaigns, a sort of internal syndicalist bulletin to be open to the whole of the anarcho-syndicalist movement?

There is of course a more radical suggestion which has been suggested: unification of this country's slim syndicalist resources into the Solidarity Federation which emerged from DAM last year.

In 1986, when we left DAM, it was an organisation riddled with dogmatism and centralisation and it had a patently unrealistic industrial policy of changing itself into an anarcho-syndicalist union. Nearly ten years on and with a new name (Solidarity Federation) we feel that there is reason to believe that this organisation has changed for the better.

We have had contact with comrades (amongst others the Norwich group, Barry Pateman in Peterborough, Roy Emery and Brian Maynard in Somerset and Martin Howard in London) and the picture they paint of their organisation is of a small national grouping with perhaps fifty to sixty members, this time with a seemingly genuine commitment to a decentralised federalist structure. Their primary activity is to build the industrial networks in the transport, public service workers and educational industries.

In informal discussions we have asked Martin:

- 1) What the Solidarity Federation opinion would be of people who prioritised activity in the trades' councils?
- 2) About comrades who had relations with organisations outside the AIT?
- 3) About the level of dogmatism in the Solidarity Federation, particularly in regard to how an anarcho-syndicalist union would be formed, and their attitude to those who have an open mind as to whether such an organisation ever will be formed?

He believed:

- 1) That Solidarity Federation members would regard this area of activity as valid;
- 2) that this would not be a problem;
- 3) that Solidarity Federation, unlike the old DAM, was flexible and accepted the effect of changing circumstances.

We would therefore like to see all syndicalists in this country in the same organisation. To do this we would like to initiate a discussion on the subject amongst those who have supported *Syndicalist Bulletin*.

Perhaps a national meeting (in Hull or elsewhere) would be useful to decide where we go next (i.e. whether into Solidarity Federation or some other route independently - anyway, we'd like to see more coordination in the area of trades' council work).

Please write back by 7th June to tell us what you think.

Hull Syndicalists  
39 Sheriff Highway, Hedon, Hull,  
HU12 8HA

## On Avant-Gardes

Dear Freedom,

The recent letter (*Freedom*, 13th May 1995) signed 'K. Eliot' is the work of someone who has been spreading confusion for quite a few years now. The latest belching does not help a dialogue to take shape. In fact it is quite the opposite. K. Eliot is a collective pseudonym that a few scribblers have been hiding behind. The Eliot in this letter is easily identified. His impotent rage is all too evident.

He speaks of "the long overdue suicide of that pompous imbecile Guy Debord". Strangely enough Eliot quotes this imbecile a few lines further in his creepy letter!

A few years ago George Woodcock wrote a text called *The Triumph of Brutality* (16th June 1945): "The root of this brutalisation, which at best is a callousness towards human suffering and at worst an active interest in such suffering, lies in the lack of any real feeling of the integrity of the individual human being." Clearly Eliot and Co. have never read Woodcock.

Eliot and Co. have recently put out more ghastly material, this time it was *Green Anarchist* which was the target of these zombies. In there Larry O'Hara was called "Fat Boy Haw-Haw". The end of this leaflet told what kind of people we are dealing with: "Pol Pot had the right idea! Let the parasites drown in a sea of blood. A world population of one hundred thousand will be enough to build a pure society. Long live death." Eliot and Co. can make jokes out of the most terrible events. They represent well the inhuman society in which we are forced to live. It is the kind of sick joke yuppies, young Tories or neo-nazis might indulge in. Marinetti would have agreed with

'Karen Eliot's' eulogy of Pol Pot. He no doubt would have been one of the one hundred thousand chosen few to live on Earth along with Mussolini the ex-socialist. *Viva la Muerte* was the war cry of the Spanish fascists. Eliot and Co. are in good *Cie!*

For a few years now 'Eliot' has been saying that I wrote letters for Guy Debord. Like Goebbels he repeats a lie as often as possible in the vain hope that it will be believed. In fact I have never written letters for anyone. One thing is for sure, I will never use the stinking shield called K. Eliot. I leave it to the little men who go around with thick dark glasses and who act parts out of 'Reservoir Dogs'. Public schoolboys like to pretend what they are not. They are real poseurs. Maybe K. Eliot and Co. ought to go on an indefinite art-strike. That is what they do best. Gimpel the art dealer might even sponsor such a non-event. Eliot and Co. really belong to the pseudo-world of art. A real kennel of arty-farty types. It is laughable. Eliot and Co. have never been able to stomach situationists because they spoke of the supercession of art. Eliot and Co. are nowhere, that is why they spread confusion with empty logorrhoea. It will be interesting to see who backs Eliot and Co. and who criticises them. Already some people have taken a few of them apart, notably in the United States. The inhuman elements of K. Eliot will have to be left to rot as they represent the decomposition now rampant in all spheres of life, especially culture and separate politics.

If anyone writes *A History of the Situationist International*, K. Eliot will be no more than a footnote. One of them has already thrown in everything he has

- namely two poxy novels and some cultural studies - and all this stuff will soon be available in bargain basements at knocked-down prices, whereas Guy Debord's book and film called *The Society of the Spectacle* might be of use for a few more years!

The nothingness of K. Eliot and Co. is plain to see. They resemble a Swiss cheese! Maybe if they drank a bit more, their dialectics might improve. One poor guy they often quote and even publish has given up the fight. Mr Jean Barrot did not have the courage to print his one-sided critique of so-called situationism in French, for he knew critical flak would have come his way. K. Eliot makes out I am the defender of the "Holy Grail of spectosituationism". Far from it. I am and have been *against* certain aspects of the writings of Guy Debord and some of the positions of the Situationist International, and this for quite a few years. I am happy to say that I am not the only one. As for the pseudo-concept invented by the little creep who uses the name Eliot, it means nothing, just as he means nothing.

At least Neil Birell admitted in his letter to *Freedom* (25th February 1995) in answer to one of my previous letters, that I was right. I will be pleased to meet him when he comes to London and maybe we can collaborate on some project or another.

As for the crew called K. Eliot, they have lost all credibility. Those who associate with them do so at their risk and peril. Maybe the excellent writer who uses the tag K. Eliot ought to hang around more with journalists from *The Independent* as he has a lot in common with them. He showed us already what kind of material he is capable of.

The social revolution of which we speak has nothing to do with such practice and 'theory'.

Michel Prigent

## Chomsky and Third Worldism: a reply

(continued from page 7)

come back to haunt him he will have to choose more appropriate tactics than he has done in the past. How to respond is Chomsky's choice, and he has a heavier burden than any of his admirers could imagine.

Speaking of the real world, let's deal with Rai's final paragraph. I have met about 400 hundred people in my life who wanted to minimise (i.e. deny) Stalin's death toll and about 150 people who wanted to minimise (i.e. deny) Hitler's. The first were no-good commies and the latter were no-good fascists. Never once have I met the mythical 'objective person', Chomsky included, though Chomsky's motives are different from the usual. His motives are a lot cleaner than those of the vast majority of those I have seen carting his books around. Maybe the 'objective person' exists somewhere, but this is the real world Bubba and I haven't met him. If he exists he's probably either insane or very obnoxious.

To sum up, a careful examination of Chomsky's *extensive* writings on Khmer Rouge atrocities points out that he, at least in the past, systematically attempted to minimise them because of his preoccupation with American atrocities - which exist to the extent that Chomsky demonstrates. Why this is a mistake should be obvious to anyone who doesn't live in an incestuous left wing ghetto. An anarchism that appeals to ordinary

people cannot be built on third worldism or *any* of the systems of tribal politics that passes for leftism today. I think that I could demonstrate from Chomsky's own past writings how he would agree with such a statement. Chomsky was not my target; some of his admirers *were*.

Once again, Chomsky should be ashamed of his past actions in this regard, not because of the moralistic nonsense that I am sure Comrade Rai has in his mind but because it diminishes the effectiveness of Chomsky's propaganda to be caught in an obvious though unconscious falsehood. Chomsky spent considerable effort in his defence over this matter, effort that could be better spent elsewhere. From a very cynical point of view it is often better to tell the truth for effect rather than on principle.

I stand by my assertion that Chomsky's emphasis is wrong and the further assertion that this leads him to be 'softer on the commies' or third world "liberation" (sic) movements than he should be. This doesn't mean that he is a "useful tool" as the communists used to describe their fellow travellers. It means that he has a weak point that his opponents can too easily attack. It also means that he hasn't really taken to heart his own assertion that libertarian socialism's best prospects are in the developed world. That is where his emphasis should lay.

Sorry, no apologies here.

Pat Murtagh  
Canada



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- 26th May General discussion
- 2nd June Manufacturing Consent: the ideas of Noam Chomsky (discussion led by Peter Lumsden)
- 9th June General discussion
- 16th June The Forum's programme for 1995/96
- 23rd June General discussion
- 30th June Anarchism and Sociology: the ideas of Norbert Elias (speaker Peter Neville)
- 7th July General discussion
- 14th July Arguments in favour of Government (discussion led by Michael Murray)
- 21st July General discussion
- 28th July Anarcho-Syndicalism: an outdated myth? (speaker Dave Dane)

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A programme of free guided walks in the White Peak for Greens, Socialists, Libertarians and Anarchists.

**Sunday 4th June:** Ladybower Reservoir and Lost Lad walk. Meet 11.00am at Ladybower picnic site car park. Map reference 173 894. Bring strong boots, etc. Length 8 miles.

**Sunday 8th July:** Goyt Valley (near Macclesfield). Meet 11.00am at car park at Errwood Hall end of Erwood Reservoir. Length 6½ miles.

**Sunday 12th August:** Wirksworth to Alport Heights. Meet 11.00am at Wirksworth Market Place, Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Length 7-8 miles.

*Bring walking boots, waterproofs and food on all walks.*

Telephone for further details  
**01773-827513**



## Dales Red Rambles

A new series of free guided walks in the Yorkshire Dales for Anarchists, Greens, Socialists and Libertarians.

**Sunday 11th June:** Kettlewell to Starbottom. Meet at car park at Kettlewell at 11.00am. Length approx 6 miles.

**Sunday 23rd July:** Wensleydale. Middleham to Caldbergh. Meet outside Middleham Castle at 11.00am. Length 8 miles.

**Sunday 20th August:** Upper Wharfedale. Buckden to Yockenthwaite. Meet Buckden car park at 10.45am. Length 6 miles.

*On all walks bring walking boots, waterproofs, food and drink.*

Telephone for further details  
**01756-799002**



## ANARCHIST DISCUSSION FORUM

Saturday 17th June 1995, 2 - 5 pm

### 'Relevance of Syndicalism to Anarchism in Contemporary Society'

with

Bryan Bamford & Derek Pattison

Arts at the Turret  
Valley Road, Hebden Bridge  
West Yorkshire

For further details call  
**01422 842 558**

## ACF

### OPEN DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Held on first Thursday of every month at 8pm, Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, London WC1 (nearest tube Russell Square).

- 1st June - Pornography Exposed
- 6th July - Labour Party 'Socialism'

## FREEDOM AND THE RAVEN SUBSCRIPTION RATES 1995

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