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FIFTY PENCE

"The wage-slave thinks only of his job; the capitalist (the employer) thinks only of his profits; the anarchist thinks of providing for everyone's needs and leisure to enjoy life to the full, here and now"

Anonymous, 1994

DEATH ON THE ROCK EUROPEAN COURT SLAMS SAS SHOOT-OUT

Last week the European Court of Human Rights, the final court of appeal, condemned the killing by the SAS of three IRA members on Gibraltar in March 1988. This was a bad blow for the British Government, which has always maintained that the shooting down of the three suspected terrorists on and near Winston Churchill Avenue was 'lawful killing' done for the protection of the public.

The court's decision, by ten votes to nine, that the British Government was guilty of breaching Article 2 of the Human Rights Convention by using excessive force, left ministers in self-righteous disarray. A deranged deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine appeared on BBC television to denounce the court's ruling. He would not even confirm that the government would pay the £38,700 in legal costs to the families of the deceased as ordered by the court. Ever the bad loser, Mr Heseltine whined on about the possibility of withdrawing the government's support for the European Convention of Human Rights. In the end he said: "We shall do nothing". Which means that there will be no public inquiry into the case.

Bloodbath Blunder?

The European Court has found that the shootings were unnecessary and in breach of international conventions. It ruled that, as the authorities had photos of the trio, it ought to have been possible to arrest them when they crossed the border between Spain and Gibraltar. It also claimed that handlers of the SAS shooters had fed their men false intelligence, thus encouraging them to shoot first and ask questions afterwards.

It turned out that the trio was unarmed and that the suspected car bomb was not on Gibraltar. In truth the three were engaged in a reconnaissance expedition on The Rock and were about to return to Spain when shot in a hail of bullets.

Mr Heseltine claimed that in 1988 the government was in an impossible situation trying to defend itself against terrorism. Just the sort of excuse any government might use to

breach international law or behave immorally. The European Court did not find evidence of a prior plot to kill the Gibraltar Three, but it is still not known at what level - politically or militarily - the operation was sanctioned.

The view seems to be that there was no conspiracy but rather a shambles of intelligence judgements and incompetent operational co-ordination from the time when the three IRA members first crossed the frontier into Gibraltar. At that time I lived near the border and worked in the Gibraltar ship repair yard where I was a shop steward. Judging from the geography of Gibraltar, it struck me, and others, that the best place to kill the trio would have been the airport, several hundred yards from the actual spot where the killings took place. The trio would have had to cross the airport both entering and leaving Gibraltar and at the airport, on a Sunday, witnesses would be at a minimum. Instead the killings were carried out near a garage surrounded by flats full of witnesses.

The explanation for this decision to act, which may have been in panic, could have something to do with the trio splitting up near the garage. Perhaps they had spotted their tail. What followed was described by one ballistics expert at the Gibraltar inquest - which I covered for *Freedom* - as a "frenzied attack" in which one of the trio, Savage, received sixteen bullets and the other two were hit by twelve shots between them.

Comedown for a colonial power

One government minister claimed the European Court decision flouted the thoroughness of the original Gibraltar inquest of September 1988 which decided the shootings were justified. But reports since show the jurors at the inquest to have been deeply split. After the court was told of a deadlock a majority verdict of nine to two was accepted. Vital evidence from the Spanish police was never presented to the inquest. The presiding magistrate, Felix Pizzarello, was weakened by his lack of power to subpoena documents and witnesses. Much of the 'scene of crime' evidence was removed.

At the time José Netto, leader of the Gibraltar Transport and General Workers' Union and a lifelong anarcho-syndicalist, told me he could not understand why the SAS soldiers had been allowed to leave Gibraltar after the killings without having to undergo an investigation into their actions by the Gibraltar police. That view would represent the anti-colonialist view of many Gibraltarians; with the Gibraltar authorities forced to play their familiar role of glorified flunkey to the British military. Since then politics in Gibraltar have become increasingly nationalistic.

Last week's arrogant response by British ministers to the European Court's verdict will do nothing to discourage this. It reflects the attitude of a former great colonial power which has come down in the world and is now being brought to book by a foreign court in Strasbourg for a cock-up committed by the high command of the SAS.

Brian Bamford

14th ANNUAL **ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR**



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PLUS ÇA CHANGE ...

Paul Foot in his *Guardian* column (September 25th) offers Jack Straw a quote from *The Poor Man's Guardian* of 25th February 1832 (yes, 1832!) which was replying to a *Times* leader which, like John Major 162 years later, was complaining about the streets being "infested with beggars". And the answer was:

"Why are there any beggars at all, let the *Times* correspondent ask with greater justice, and he will find them the inevitable consequence of that unnatural system of inequality which puts himself in a condition to apply such a revolting question to his fellow creatures and natural equals".

And surely the answer is the same today! Perhaps the language would be more clipped, but the criticism of the capitalist system that produces the 'beggars' remains to this day.



OUT WITH THE BEGGARS

The media have turned Jack Straw's statements about the beggars into a major issue. In a capitalist society they will always exist and the rulers have no mechanism to abolish this phenomenon. The tramps, the new homeless (after all there are now more homeless who are neither scroungers nor 'criminals' but simply people who have been made redundant and as a consequence are no longer able to pay the banks) are part and parcel of the capitalist system, even in the prosperous G7 nations.

The capitalist press sought to exploit the remarks made by Labour's shadow home secretary purely for political party reasons and it will all soon be forgotten. After all, who remembers what the Prime Minister had to say about the subject way back in May 1994? The *Guardian* ran a three-line three-column headline: "PM attacks 'offensive' beggars" and I quote the opening paragraph:

"John Major provoked an outcry last night when he said beggars were offensive and could drive tourists and shoppers away from cities. The law should be used rigorously to deal with them."

It is worth quoting Major verbatim to realise the intellectual calibre of our 'rulers':

"'It is not acceptable to be out on the street' the Prime Minister said. 'There is no justification for it these days. The problem about begging is as old as the hills'."

'It is a very offensive problem to many people who see it'. In areas that depend on tourism 'it is damaging to everybody if that sort of activity continues. If people are in desperately straited circumstances we have a social security safety net in this country which they can use'."

One then has to ask why "the problem of begging is as old as the hills"? As I write, the official figures admit that in this country there are one and a quarter million *long term* unemployed. Could there be a few tens of thousands among them who are homeless, in despair, driven to drink (perish the thought!). Not in Major's Britain. Our "social security safety net" looks after everybody in need! Does it?

At the time Labour's shadow housing minister John Battle defended the "homeless people in poverty" as victims of the government's policies since they were responsible for ending "benefits for 16 and 17 year olds". And this view was echoed by Shelter (the charity for the homeless). The shadow chancellor Gordon Brown attacked the PM for blaming "everyone but himself. He attacks the poor instead of poverty" the causes of which "are the result of the absence of any policy to tackle them". The Liberals' president Charles Kennedy joined the fray declaring that "the Prime Minister's attack on homeless people is an absolute outrage".

The *Sunday Mirror's* contribution to the 1994 debate was to quote the Marble Arch Traders Association "which runs shops in a part of the capital plagued by beggars" who declared that "seventy per cent are young people or poor unfortunates turfed out of mental institutions".

And in view of the current attack on beggars, winos, etc., by the shadow home secretary Jack Straw it is surely more than just interesting to know what he had to say when Major was lambasting the beggars in our midst:

"Labour front-bencher Jack Straw stormed: 'Mr Major bears the greatest responsibility. As a Social Security minister he ended benefits for 16 and 17 year olds which sparked the explosion of young beggars'."

As far as one can ascertain from press reports in 1995, Jack Straw has forgotten 16 and 17 year olds in his attack on the beggars.

Giulio Andreotti is most unfortunate. Top politicians are not usually prosecuted for political villainy, except if they are defeated in a war or an internal coup. In ongoing democracies, the custom is for top politicians who are exposed as crooks to resign, and rely on their colleagues to protect them from prosecution.

Mr Andreotti's case has some parallels with that of United States vice-president Spiro Agnew in 1973. Mr Agnew had earlier been governor of a state, where he had made a fortune by paying out tax money for the building of roads which were not in fact built, and sharing the proceeds with the contractors.

American vice-presidential candidates are chosen by presidential candidates. Agnew was politically unattractive, given to pontificating about the moral degeneracy of activities like popular music, and it is alleged that Richard Nixon selected Agnew as running mate for the second term for the protection of his own position. Nixon's enemies knew that if he was impeached or assassinated, he would be replaced by the appalling Agnew.

After Agnew went, Nixon lasted less than a year. Agnew escaped jail by plea bargaining and turned his hobby into a lucrative profession, pontificating about moral degeneracy in books and lectures.

If the allegations against Andreotti are shown to be true, he will have suffered the

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same misfortune as Agnew, which was to be shopped by crooked associates in custody for other offences. By Italian law he is too old to be sent to prison, so his escape from a jail sentence for jailable offences may be another similarity in the two cases.

The same group of members of the Christian Democratic Party was in power in Italy for some fifty years, swapping jobs among themselves whenever the government was defeated. As one of this group Mr Andreotti took turns at all the ministries, including seven separate stints as prime minister. It is alleged that they are a criminal gang and that Andreotti has been chosen to take the rap because, being too old to go to prison, he has less to lose than his younger colleagues. On the other hand, he is more credible as a Mafia man because his political base is in Sicily and because, like many Mafiosi, he is a keen Catholic and attends mass every morning.

The vast majority of top politicians keep within the law, which is not surprising. They make the law. The classic case is that of Hitler, authorised by parliament to make laws at will (many of his statutes, including some barmy racist laws, are still on the German statute book). Naturally he took the opportunity to legalise his own activities. No other politician

has so much personal power awarded by a democratic process, but top politicians in general make the law collectively and it would be surprising if they made laws to which many of them could not conform.

Keeping within the law, however, is not the same as being harmless. Agnew fiddled a few million dollars. Truman ordered atom bombs to be dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Agnew broke the law. Truman kept within it. Which did more harm?

Most of us who live in democracies believe, by habit and precept, that democracy is the only alternative to arbitrary dictatorship. There are laws to which even members of the government are subject, as is proved by the fact that Andreotti has been arrested after being a member of the government for fifty years and then defeated at the polls. If we don't like the laws we can advocate electing an alternative government at the next election, and if our advocacy is successful the new government can change the laws.

We ordinary people, we are led to believe, are too stupid and wicked to govern ourselves, which is why we elect politicians to govern us.

From this it would appear to follow logically that politicians, or at least those who get into government, are such paragons of wisdom and

virtue that they are capable of governing not only themselves but we ordinary people as well. And that at election time the majority of us wicked and stupid individuals becomes collectively virtuous and wise enough to choose the best politicians.

But of course nobody who thinks about it at all thinks that politicians, or unelected rulers such as capitalists, judges and generals, are paragons of virtue and wisdom. The argument advanced for democracy is not that it is perfect but that no alternative way of organising society would improve the lot of ordinary people.

We do not agree. We think that a society of ordinary people, not surrendering their power to politicians or anyone else but co-operating for their own benefit, would provide more choices for ordinary people than democracy can.

Some opponents of anarchism insist that we have no case unless we specify in detail the

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VENEZUELA: GOLD AND ECOCIDE

With the enthusiastic complicity of the State and the participation of Canadian, US, British and South African transnational mining companies, Venezuela is seeing the setting up of a project promoting the immediate exploitation of a rich gold reserve which, according to its promoters and beneficiaries, will turn out to be the discovery of the famous El Dorado – sought after so remorselessly in the 16th century by Europeans in these lands.

We are talking of between eight and twelve thousand tons of probable reserves which would represent 10% of world stock with a current market value of 140 thousand million dollars. And if that were not all we are supposedly speaking of a high quality mineral with extraction of 8, 12 or even 16 grams of gold for every ton of processed material, which compares very favourably with the production from South African seams which give an average of 4 grams per ton. So it is not strange that people have noticed a certain 'gold fever' which has been fed with the notion that the richness will prove a solution to the grave economic difficulties that the country experienced during the 1980s.

Before 1991 gold extraction on a wide scale was under the jurisdiction of the State, which showed little interest since oil was more profitable, and it maintained only modest production from the old seams of El Callao which never went over 12 tons per annum and allowed for small scale mining by crafts people to extract a small tonnage of alluvium gold. But since then, inspired by the

neo-liberal economic programme, a process was set up to give out big contracts for gold exploitation which up until 1994 had contracted out 436 sites over a surface of 1,283,882 hectares, nearly 12,839 square km with a projected figure of 30,000 square km (an area nearly the size of Belgium or Catalunya, and slightly bigger than the Venezuelan Andean region). Official and private voices speak of production figures for the year 2000 of between forty and sixty tons, turning the country into one of the major world producers and giving jobs to some 120,000 people and a national revenue of 250 million dollars per annum. Activity at the first major mine will begin in 1996 (Las Cristinas in the state of Bolivar and run by the Canadian company Placer Dome) and will yield 300,000 ounces of gold per annum, i.e. 9,331 tons.

But this promised bonanza poses an enormous ecological problem: gold mining is only possible to the South of the Orinoco river in the vast region of Guayana which, like the rest of the Amazon river basin, has unique bio-

Venezuelan Corporation of Guayana and the energy ministers (especially the current Erwin Arrieta, also general secretary of OPEC) accused of being, either directly or through front-men, the main receivers of mining permits which they then sell on to the TNCs in exchange for handsome commissions. These corrupt handouts even include areas which have been specifically excluded by legislation which set up the Canaima National Park (where one can see those extraordinary geographic formations known as 'tepui' and the highest waterfall in the world the Cherun Meru or Salto Angel) where eighteen contracts have been signed, giving away about 5,000 hectares in the North of the Park. Other natural sanctuaries have been affected such as the Southern Protected Zone of the State of Bolivar, from whence spring the biggest rivers in the country, and the Forest Reserve of Imateca which suffers 40% of the mining activities in the region despite the promises of the bureaucracy which claims to protect it. With regard to the Amazon State mining activity is proceeding apace in order to render obsolete any attempt to put a brake on its activities which in reality is becoming more and more a *fait accompli*.

The fatal impact represented by the mining 'boom' on the indigenous population of Guayana is self-evident. This group is made up of some 8,000 people from Pemon, Yanomani, Piaroa, Guakibo, Yekwana and another seventeen ethnic groups (25% of the country's aboriginal population and 80% of its autonomous groups). For them, the occupants of history perfectly integrated within this fragile environment, such ecocide represents a direct genocidal attack which dates back considerably but which has recently become more acute due to the aggressive re-emergence of those small mines (in Brazil called 'garimpeiros') who are the shock troops in the territorial occupation and mineral exploitation whose forthcoming benefactors will be more powerful. It has been calculated that there are some 30,000 of these mines in the region and this destructive activity ranges from the poisoning of rivers and lands with mercury (in Curoni they are mining 3,000 kg of this material per annum which is highly toxic and is used to separate gold from other minerals) and including water contamination and sediment disturbance (the river Curoni in 1982 had an average content flow of 4,500 tons per day of such water; in 1995 it has 10,500 per day) and culminating in the murder and human rights violations of large numbers of indigenous people.

With calculated hypocrisy the defenders of the TNC mining establishment maintain they are unmasking the crude damage caused by the 'garimpeiros' arguing that they are promoting a 'more rational and ecologically more sustainable' exploitation. However, there has been no previous experience of an open-cast mining system in tropical areas where its introduction has not produced irreparable damage, nor is there a single scientific work published which confirms what the mining companies are saying. In fact the technology that will be used by Cristalex, Yellow Jack, Monarch or Placer Dome is the same which is used outside the tropics and will not be challenged by the complacent attitude towards environmental protection which the State will undoubtedly assume in order 'not to upset foreign investors' which shows clearly, that which we have no hesitation in qualifying as, the greatest threat to the ecology of the region. That this is no exaggeration was confirmed on the 19th August when one and a half million litres of cyanide waste were poured into the Omai and Esequibo rivers near Guayana causing the worst ecological disaster in this country as a result of the activities of a gold subsidiary owned by TNCs in the US and Canada. Moreover the demands for profit which would allow these companies to operate put such pressure on the State so that it not only cedes to demands for lower taxes, export of profit but also all kinds of 'indirect advantages' (cheap energy, communications, various public works etc.) not to mention the

secret demands relating to the over exploitation of the workforce where its history in South Africa, Brazil or the Dominican Republic is a grave portent of what can be expected by the workforce. It will be in this way that the supposed wonders of the golden illusion will disappear in a puff of smoke without compensation for the great economic, ecological, social and cultural costs that it will inflict.

There has been a response to the situation, emanating from ecological and pro Venezuelan indigenous people's groups organised in 1995 and forming the National Co-ordination against Mining which by means of actions, documents and declarations has attempted to bring attention to the problem. Of course the lovers of power and the wider media have attempted to minimise this voice of dissent and imposed the agreement of the 'respectable' voice of the country which belongs to the marvels of the mining companies and their governmental cohorts. Despite this a level of consciousness has been reached and some debate has occurred relating to this issue between those who are interested in the ecological and indigenous question forcing Congress to deal with the issue which in turn has frozen the process of contract signing since the end of 1994 and so that the Procurator General, very recently, declared the whole process illegal. We do not believe that this means that the government of Rafael Caldera has decided to give up on the neo-liberal policies for the gold mining industry but rather that these are simply manoeuvres to distract and pacify potential opponents and to simply moor a business which promises to be so profitable for its beneficiaries and so catastrophic for the Amazonian Venezuelans. However, we must keep up our vigil and not give up in our opposition to that which is being prepared for us.

Note: To lend support to this campaign and to get more up to date information write to: Coordinadora Nacional Contra la Minería, c/o GIDA, Apartado Postal 47450, Caracas 1041-A, Venezuela.

Colectivo Plum@, Revista Correo A, Venezuela

ON THE AIR IN BRAZIL

Curitiba is the capital of the state of Parana, in the south of Brazil, located at about 350 kms to the South East of Sao Paulo with a population of about one and a half million and is thus the tenth largest city in population terms in the country. There they are living through a pioneering experience for the Brazilian and Latin American libertarian movement: the setting up of an anarchist radio transmitter. It's called 'FM 107.9 Burro Brabo: Radio Libre Pirataria' which came on air in the first half of 1995.

The launching and running of this initiative was taken care of by groups who have been active in the area for some time: GR.A.VID.A (Direct Action Anarchist Group and editors of the information sheet *Direct Action*) and the collective of the paper *Jornal Do Bacacheri*. With an effort which can only be described as extraordinary, given the difficulties which will always attend such a project in Latin America, they managed to concretise the idea and began to transmit music, protest, humour, poetry and anarchism to the listeners in some areas of the city.

In correspondence we received in June these enthusiastic friends tell us that shortly they will be able to cover the whole of Curitiba along with its outskirts thanks to a new aerial they have bought. This was an on-going situation. They also sent us a call so that sympathetic people from all over the world send them support: publications, taped music, poetry, info, suggestions and of course any other form of help (if possible economic). Since everything which arrives is welcome and indispensable so that these radical Don Quijotes can continue with their marvellous project on their 'Burro Brabo'

You can contact them at: GR.A.VID.A, Caixa Postal 3395, CEP 80001-970, Curitiba-PR, Brasil.
Colectivo Plum @, Revista Correo A, Venezuela



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constitution of the society we advocate. Malatesta writes of people who want to know on what days of the week the inhabitants of anarchy would cut their toenails. But of course we cannot logically do this.

We can imagine anarchist societies and write fiction about them, but we cannot tell sovereign individuals how to conduct their lives. Nor is it important that there are questions we cannot answer. The only way we can move towards an anarchist society is to change opinions about that is possible and desirable, and opinions will not change quickly enough to create an anarchist society overnight.

What we can do is make significant moves towards an anarchist society, and enlarge people's choices here and now by encouraging ordinary people to withdraw some measure of deference and consent from politicians, generals, capitalists and all the other bosses.

One way to do this is to disabuse people of the superstition that successful politicians are virtuous. We are grateful to Mr Andreotti for his help in this endeavour.

diversity characteristics whose preservation is vital and where human intervention must be measured against the highest standards in order not to upset the balance of this the greatest example of natural complexity in the world and which makes Venezuela the fourth country in the world with regard to biodiversity. Guayana is made up of 44% of Venezuelan territory but with only 5.5% of its population which is mainly concentrated in a small area near Orinoco, the rest of the area having remained relatively free from the predatory intervention of the State and capitalism. The mining potential of Guayana (gold, diamonds, bauxite, iron, radio-active materials, titanium, etc.) has been known about and exploited for some time but the areas where these activities have taken place, the methods used to pursue them and their impact on the ecosystem has scarcely affected this vast area (although the environmental disasters caused by small mines, state technocrats and landowners has already caused some damage in certain areas).

Now with the new dreams of gold the danger has grown and what we are currently seeing confirms this fear. We are now seeing the same process of handing out contracts which, as one might expect of the Venezuelan State has been accompanied by all sorts of vice and corruption whose greatest perpetrators have been the successive presidents of the

HOME AND AWAY

In their race to grab votes both the government and opposition appear to share common ground in their rejection of Chris Patten's call for the 3.3 million people of Hong Kong to be given the right to move to Britain when it ceases to be a British colony. What has not been stressed is the fact that Hong Kong is the first British colony which is losing its status without the approval of its citizens.

Britain has a moral obligation to provide an alternative to people about to be handed over to China's ruthless and oppressive regime, a regime which stifles dissent and suppresses human rights. In the current *Spectator* magazine Paul Johnson has written a highly inflammatory article where he suggests that Britain should invite the Hong Kong Chinese to live here and charge them an entrance fee to be used in financing a repatriation package for discontented Caribbeans and Africans

living here: "For every Hong Kong Chinese given a passport and admitted, funds would have to be provided to enable one immigrant to leave and his/her citizenship to be revoked." He continues, "Thus the actual total numbers of British minorities would remain the same, but their composition and quality would change radically".

He goes on to make a feeble attempt to cover his back by saying that before anyone reacts in "feigned politically correct horror" to his businesslike suggestion, he would like to see an honest attempt to find out the feelings towards it of ordinary members of the black minority. Perhaps Paul Johnson should abstain from writing insulting and hostile articles and conduct this grassroots research

himself among Britain's black people, perhaps he could take so-called comedian Bernard Manning along for the laughs.

Intolerance and expediency on a national scale is often neglected at a more parochial level. In a social security benefits office in the London Borough of Camden last week a group of eight people arrived holding balloons advertising McDonalds. Very soon a wave of whispers broke around the room and I soon heard that these cheerful people were some of the Polish Gypsy refugees who have been granted political asylum here. Local papers the previous week had given front-page space to the Borough of Camden's offer to house 150 Polish refugees in fifty of its council homes. Rented accommodation on Camden is scarce and the borough has a high incidence of racial tension, and during my one-hour wait at the office I was told, without asking, by three different people that Camden's action was "disgraceful", an "insult to the borough's homeless" and "a fucking cheek". The letters page in the local papers reflected this general view with only a sole voice mentioning the Nazi murders of Gypsies and the contribution of Polish people during the war. There are an estimated one million Gypsy people in Eastern Europe and many are still experiencing brutal racist attacks.

In Moate in Eire last week organised protest took place against the housing of a Traveller family. One of the organisers is said to be a Father Liam Farrell, who tried to excuse his involvement by saying that the protesters were concerned for the family, worried about how they would make the transition from an urban to a rural area. Others were more honest and spoke of "inferior people" who "contribute nothing to society".

Over the past ten years Travellers' groups are asserting their rights to be treated with respect. Their struggles for civil rights are similar to those of indigenous peoples everywhere and must be supported by those of us who appreciate the value of people

own name and address. A lengthy reply will eventually come from a Miss L. Wilton although whether actually a she and not a he, it, pseudonym, computer or a panel, the equivalent of a magazine Agony Auntie, must remain undetermined. She claims to be "a member of a small team of people in the Ministry of Defence which deals with Flying complaints". True the letters appear to be individually signed, but everything else about them is standard except for one's own name and address and their reference number. The letters explain in about 700 words how essential these incidents are, despite the disappearance of the threat from the east, and gives a long list of fanciful reasons why these flights must continue and hope that this will make these intrusions less objectionable. The most interesting thing about these letters is the reference number. It would appear that in the first three and a half months of last year they had received 35 complaints. At the rate of less than three letters a week, one wonders what he, she, they or it do the rest of the time.

If one complains a second time Miss L. Wilton's reply is much shorter but in similar vein. But what's this? Can they really have received over 860 complaints in the first eight months of this year? This works out at about 25 standard letters a week. Still not a lot of work but surely a big enough increase to justify a productivity bonus. On second thoughts, knowing the government's capacity for dispensing misinformation perhaps these figures should not be taken too seriously.

Anyhow why not fill in a few cards to relieve their boredom? Mind you, it would be cheaper and quicker just to telephone 0171-218 9000 and ask to be put on their register of dissidents.

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remembering their histories, retaining their customs and sharing their culture. Until all people are enabled to live the way they wish in permanent homes or itinerant lifestyles, it will be all too easy to blame local resentment for government policy rather than to blame government ineptitude for local discrimination against those in need.

A day of action is to be held to celebrate twenty years of the Elgin Avenue squatters' victory in West London. Events will include films, discussions, music and exhibitions tracing the history of the struggle for homes and an assessment of the current situation for squatters and the homeless. The fight for affordable rented accommodation continues. More information available on 0171-277 7639.

Silvia Edwards

Rambling Notes

A Duke is a Duke

One of the characteristics of people with power, both legal and illegal, is that they have others to do those unpleasant tasks sometimes necessary to maintain their position. This enables them when convenient to disclaim all responsibility for the actions of their underlings.

Such thoughts came to mind recently when I read an item in the Spring 95 issue of the Ramblers' Association house journal. Under the headline "His Grace Joins Us" we were informed that "Britain's largest individual land owner, the Duke of Buccleuch has joined the Ramblers' Association - continuing his family's century old tradition of supporting the public's right to walk on his Scottish estates of more than a quarter of a million acres".

Sad therefore to have read in the *Guardian* (22nd February 95), in an article by George Monbiot, of a researcher at Edinburgh University studying the Direct Action Movement who, whilst filming hunt saboteurs, was knocked over and beaten up by a senior hunt servant of the Duke of Buccleuch. As he kept on filming, his footage includes a boot slamming past the lens and into his face. When he took the matter to the police it was referred higher and higher until it got to the Crown Council, the highest legal authority in Scotland, who instructed the Procurator Fiscal to drop the case. The victim failed to find out why, in a minor assault case, this decision was made at the highest possible level, but then when John Major sought to appoint the chiefs of his police authority, the Duke was one of the men he chose.

Mobile phones and more

Some might think that mobile phones have no place in an article on rambling or indeed no place anywhere, but stories about their use and misuse are beginning to appear. Stories of families setting up their picnic in the car park, or going off to the pub for lunch whilst sending their children off into the hills with - yes, you have guessed it - the mobile phone. If you get lost just dial 999 and a mountain rescue team will turn out to rescue you. With friends like these who needs enemies?

In most of the country for most of the year, carrying a phone is just so much unnecessary weight, but in bad weather and/or rough isolated country it could just save a life. A heart attack or a leg broken in a fall and help could arrive sooner. Some walking groups have considered hiring a mobile phone for their more adventurous expeditions, but

others have pointed out that they can be unreliable in countryside areas, particularly with hills, valleys and mountains around, and battery life is limited. Higher tech is not necessarily better and walkers already carry a whistle and know the accepted emergency signal. Think, perhaps, of the mobile phone as a long distance whistle that can talk and there is a place for it, if used with discretion.

More enticing for some walkers is the Global Positioning System (GPS) which is a small hand-held receiver containing a powerful microchip that can pick up the continuous radio signals emitted from the navigation satellites circulating the earth and calculate its exact location, and much else, from the time taken for the signals to reach the receiver. Now invaluable for airline pilots, surveyors and sailors etc, it could also be useful to walkers in some situations and is already the subject of consumer tests in walkers' magazines. The story of its development has its ironies. Developed by the US government, the Pentagon ensured that the encoded signal, which enabled any position to be established to within 10 metres, could only be used by the military. For the rest of us the signal was deliberately degraded so that it could only establish a position to within 100 metres. When the US Federal Aviation Authority threatened to introduce high speed but expensive computers that would correct for the errors deliberately introduced by the Pentagon, they prevaricated for a year but then gave in and made the more accurate system available to civil airlines. Now ways of overcoming this signal degradation are even becoming commercially available. On the downside, this navigation system provides any state with a cheap way of guiding missiles on to specific targets.

The GPS will no doubt remain anathema to primitivists, but as it becomes cheaper, more reliable and easier to use, it could become as useful to walkers as the ... err... mobile phone.

A Pointless Protest?

The farmers of North Yorkshire have been complaining that the noise of hot air balloons is damaging their flocks so what do they think of low flying military air-raft, I wonder? For inhabitants of the small towns and villages of the Pennines and the walkers who use the maze of footpaths that traverse the hillsides of these narrow valleys in search of peace and tranquility a far greater disturbance comes from the Tornados that thunder through, apparently just skimming the headtops. The noise is terrifying both for its decibels and its unpredictability.

A few bother to complain and CND obligingly provides printed and pre-addressed postcards which make for easy filing in an MoD cabinet. You only have to fill the appropriate spaces with time, place, direction of the offending vehicle and of course your

Report from Aberystwyth

The IWW was invited to send delegates to what was called a 'People's Parliament' at the former Welsh Parliament at Owain Glyndwr House, Machynlleth, Dyfed. Bob went as our delegate on 16th September, armed with a poster and a few IWW leaflets.

About forty people turned up representing various left-wing organisations throughout Wales. The speakers on the platform included a Scottish Nationalist, a campaigner against open-cast mining and a campaigner against water privatisation. The meeting was chaired by a member of Fanner Goch (Welsh Socialists) and bilingual translation facilities were provided. There were many Welsh Nationals in attendance, some seeking a Welsh Assembly within the British Isles and others seeking total independence from Britain.

After the official speakers the meeting was thrown open for discussion. A Green Anarchist called Bill Pritchard gave a very good speech, more or less saying why delegate to politicians what you have the ability to do for yourselves and advocating direct action.

Bob spoke on behalf of the IWW. Here is the text of what he said:

"Bob Mander, delegated on behalf of Aberystwyth Industrial Workers of the World.

Comrades, the evils the speakers have described are the evils of capitalism, that is the enemy we must eradicate. You believe that you can do this through the medium of a Welsh Parliament, but I would warn you that if you are granted a Welsh Parliament it will only be because the ruling class see it as an expedient that in no way threatens the underlying social system.

In considering a Welsh Parliament you must take into account the nature of so-called representative government and the corrupting nature of power, for you will be bringing into being a mechanism whereby every political opportunist and con-man will be enabled to jump on your back.

If a society is to be run in the interest of its people it necessitates their active participation in the decision-making, for you can only trust what you control. Therefore to achieve a truly socialist form of society it must be built from below up, it cannot be conferred by politicians. That is why we in the IWW say we must build the framework of the society we want within the shell of what we have got, and this must be built industrially.

Political rights and social justice do not originate in parliaments, rather they are forced upon parliaments from the outside, and even with their enactment into law is no guarantee of their security, for as the Mexican revolutionist once said: 'Remember what ever a government gives you it can just as easily take away, but what you take by your strength you can hold by your strength'.

Hasn't your experience of the English parliamentary system taught you anything? All politicians are con-men and racketeers."

Here the meeting broke up for a tea-break. The second session was to discuss practical measures to bring about a Welsh Parliament, so Bob left.

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Through the Anarchist Press

Fancy that you have received a letter which was once urgent but for some reason or another you have neglected to read. No fault of your own really. You put it somewhere carefully to read it at your leisure, then something else called your attention and by the time you wanted to read it the letter had disappeared.

An annoying, but at least explainable occurrence. Ten years or so later you find the letter which explains everything you wanted to know – but it is a trifle too late. The person who wrote it has gone out of your life – the whole set of people have dispersed, disappeared. Certainly there will be a small satisfaction to realise that what you still hold dear also existed in the past, that your ideas were shared by others, that you are not such a maverick after all. At least you hold the letter in your hands and it brings tears to your eyes even though that world is now gone and there is nothing you can do about it. You can't blame anybody else, it was your own fault, your own carelessness.

Recall that Digger once wrote: "There'll always be Chaos, until Anarchy is restored."

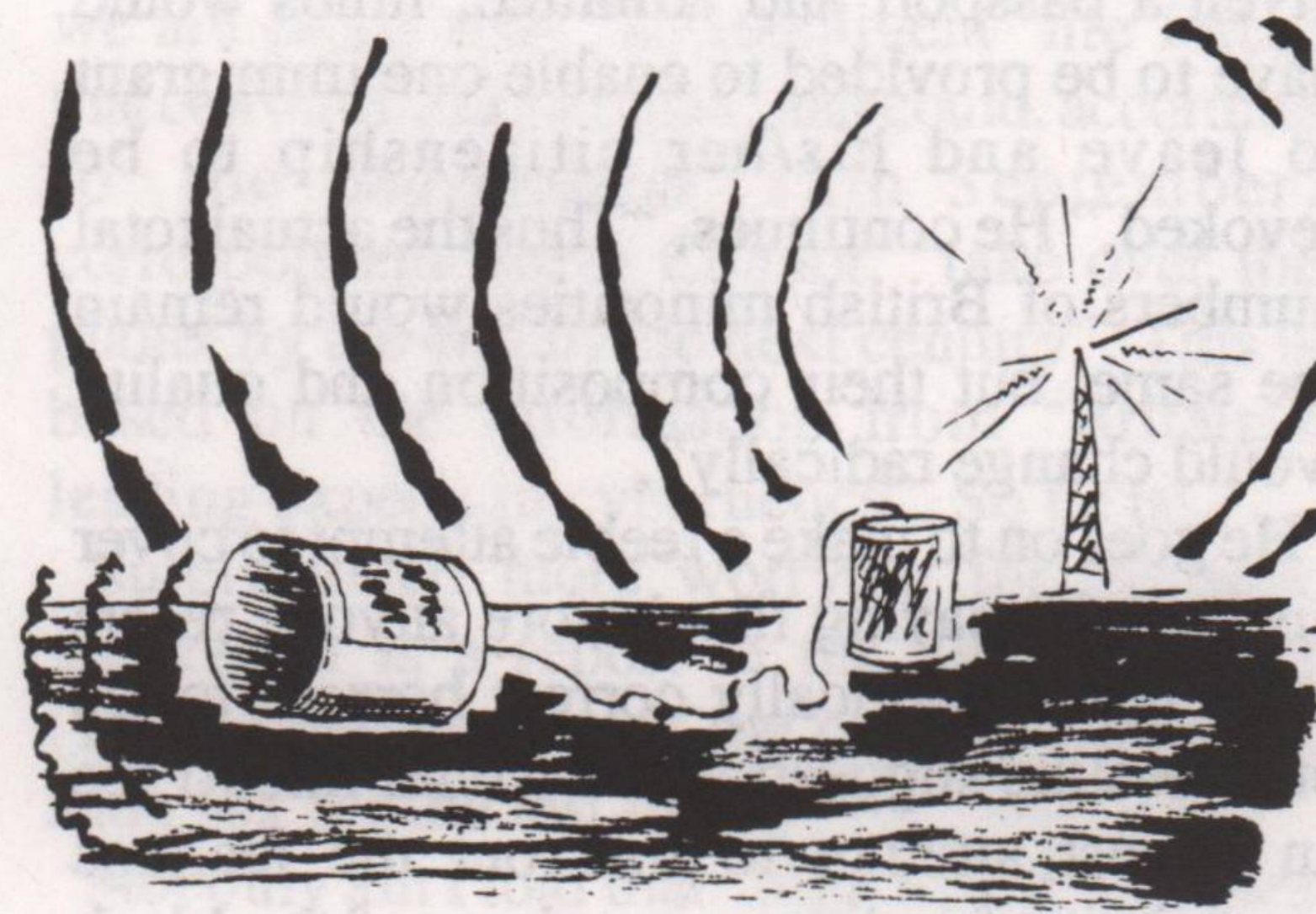
Even though, that is nothing compared to what society (if that is the word) can do in making everything that was once important become not only unimportant but completely inaccessible. Technologies change so quickly. Each and every change demands a new apparatus. A few years later you won't find the spare parts, and the whole lot will not work without just that little bit.

What I'm really talking about is anarchism, which needs its own technology, and the unopened letter found ten years later is the best example I can offer at short notice. Yes, the person loved you, 'wait for me', the letter said, 'we'll work things out.' You stare at the letter – you can hardly remember the occasion or even the person who wrote it, the importance of the message is obscured by time. Oh well, it could have been so, it wasn't and now it never will be.

Endlessly the technologies change. Morse-coded telegrams or simple semaphores give way to facsimile transmissions and to multiple digital message packs. The wire tray remains the same, the 'in' is always full, the 'out' is never empty. Life's little pleasures. What is the point of holding on to your superb collection of gramophone records. The gramophone is still there, but you cannot get a stylus. Lovingly you clean and oil the parts and the turntable works perfectly but the needle is worn away, useless. Then ten years later you track down a gloomy person in Tottenham Court Road and this person knows a person who also knows a person who rummages through a box who finds a stylus and *hey presto*, you are able to bring back the true recorded voice of a vanished period. Most of them dead and gone. Every one of them a rebel, a true anarchist. All the people you admire. The shuffled cards of technology have made them all unavailable, except for your treasure trove.

Let it be said, however, that we have been as careful as possible. Anarchist archives are kept at various places, in Amsterdam or at the Bishopsgate Institute to mention only two. Anarchist writings have been kept and annotated with care and attention and nothing much is lost or is irrecoverable (all honour to the VRs and to the NWs) but in other respects little remains of our architectural models, of recipes, of patterns of communication and transport and of modes of exchange.

Laboriously we put things together and in one swipe it all gets shattered. For every time the anarchists (the people, you and I and uncle Tom Cobbley and all) have worked out something simple or something simply brilliant, there come the shuffling bogeymen who change the technology and all our communications are cut and all our children are starving mentally and physically.



Far be it for me to assert that all is lost. Whatever skills human beings possessed in the past, we still possess. But doing cartwheels, either for carts or over our heads, has become less regarded than it used to be. A simple set of skis could take you from China to Alaska in winter, and no doubt it was a pleasant, safe and exhilarating journey. Today this could only be done on the screen of virtual reality as a simulated existence exercise.

Remarkably we have not lost the capacity to fulfil some simple functions. We can still breathe, eat, walk and blow our noses. But in the past century we have gone into a centrifugal spin when the speed of our answers recurring can no longer compete with the speed of our questions. And never underestimate the obstinate will of the human mind to stay on the treadmill of futility.

Ingeniously we continue with our inventions. This very moment above our heads fly countless numbers of people. Heathrow alone, from dawn to dusk, is a landing space for the arrivals of aircraft at the rate of one a minute. From here to Kathmandu, my loved ones fly as the engine slurps 10,000 gallons of kerosene per journey. You could populate a town the size of Birmingham with the number of people in the air above your distinguished head at this very moment.

Every day and night half of the population traverses the ground on their way to work and back. The rest of the country is deserted, nobody is seen for miles through the car and train windows, the entire population is stuck on long strips of roads and rail, top to tail, cars and lorries, and lorries carrying cars. In each car there is, look in the mirror comrade, an important personage with an unopened letter in a forgotten pocket. An invitation to a dance or an imprint of a lipsticked kiss or the time and date of the revolution from your local LAG (Local Anarchist Group) secretary.

Not to worry, As for me, during the next four hundred hours I'll lock myself in with my record player and will be listening to my 45s, my 78s and to my LPs of Dave Brubeck, Flanders & Swann, The Vipers, David Oistrakh, Under Milk Wood, the Yiddish Anarchist Choir of Pennsylvania and the Twittering Birds of Bucharest. I do not know how these and thousands of others have survived the ravages of time, the oppressors' wrong and the heartless evictions – yet the voice of the turtle is heard throughout the land. But after four hundred hours the stylus is guaranteed to go *kaput, schluss, fini, the end*.

Dreadful thought. "What happens after that", I asked the man. "After that", he said, "you'd better change your system". "Never", I said, "never". "Don't be a fool, just tape the whole lot and put it onto a compact disc. You can't expect them to make these needles just for you. This is the last of the E419s. Give in, like the rest of them". "Not I", I told him, "Once an anarchist, always an anarchist".

Such obstinacy is unbecoming to the philosophical mind", he said. "Go digital, that's my advice". "When I need your advice, I'll ask for it". As I left he was still rummaging through his boxes.

Through the Anarchist Press by John Rety with drawings by Emily Johns is soon to be published at £3.60.

In my postscript to the first part of this article (*Freedom*, 11th March 1995) I declared that, contrary to the accepted opinion of many, egoism was complementary to anarcho-syndicalism. It's my view that anarcho-syndicalism is a clumsy mouthful, therefore in the course of this article I shall use the term syndicalism assuming the term will be understood. The embryo of the federalist spirit of syndicalism was within the womb of the first international.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to portray the historical developments of syndicalism extensively. In a footnote I shall refer the reader to various sources of literature which may illuminate those readers who may have an academic interest in the pursuit of the core of the subject.

The federalist and anti-government, anti-centralist idea is inherent in society from time immemorial. The reader will therefore deduce that syndicalism has several precursors and is a transitory phase appertaining to modern industrial capitalism. Everything is in transition; the important thing is to realise it. As I said in the first part of this article: "everyone is an egoist; the important thing is to be conscious of it." It has been said that syndicalism is scientific unionism. I do not revere science but if I find it of practical use I shall apply it just as a builder applies geometry when constructing a building or an engineer makes use of mathematics. In syndicalism I recognise it as signposts indicating the roads which I should be travelling.

Spontaneity is not the death knell of wage slavery

At all great moments of history when the populace loses patience with having suffered so many injustices for several decades a social spontaneous combustion prevails. This spontaneity is an emotional outburst but is inadequate to perpetrate a social revolution. There must be a reasonably large minority, if not a majority, who are conscious of their goal. The emotional and psychic forces of people are a strong and essential contributory factor to achieve a complete fundamental change of society – a basic economic, social and cultural transformation. If, however, an organisation in industry and in the community does not prevail prior to this spontaneous upsurge any gains achieved will merely be ameliorations at best. At the worst political opportunists could usurp this spontaneous movement and canalise it along the lines of reaction.

FROM AN EGOIST'S

Local, regional and national federation is therefore a prerequisite for a successful social revolution, as a means of defence against reaction and a healthy development of economic and social welfare. To ignore this is to do so at our peril. It is erroneous to rely on spontaneity without the pregnancy of a fertile organisation, an organisation which mirrors the form of society we are striving after.

Syndicalism, in my view, can serve this purpose. Those who are myopic do not see the subtle difference between anarchism in general and its specific offspring anarcho-syndicalism. The federalist spirit of syndicalism is inherent and is not engaged in an industrial mould. It is flexible, which is much more than I can say for many of our so-called intellectuals. Intellectuals may have a learned academic education, but I confess that I have a bias in favour of the Jock Jamsons, the Henry Dubbs, the Jimmy Higgins, the Joe Soaps, the Terrible Teddys, the Despicable Dans, the Reprehensible Richards, the Malicious Micks, the Cheeky Charlies, the Naughty Nancys, the Artful Dodgers, etc. They have normally a down-to-earth experience of life through contact with corporeal flesh and blood humans and not the theoretical abstract conceptions of humanity. I accept that some intellectuals make some profound contributions to assist in the advancement of humanity, not to be confused with the sublimation of it. Of course it's the exceptional case which proves the rule. Syndicalism, like anarchism in general, was not the produce of universities, it was born by the economic and social experiences of the labouring classes. These experiences are far from being narrow and limited. Syndicalism therefore is not confined to industrial and specifically economic activity as some shallow minds would have us believe.

Shallow minds and gapers

As a conscious egoist and a syndicalist, I'm not a gaper nor shallow-minded fixity. I have no fixed ideas and in consequence I can more easily analyse objectively and subjectively. Trade unionists, political mountebanks and others shackled in their

fixations have failed to recognise, or simply refuse to recognise, the correlation of the movement of capitalism *laissez-faire* to monopoly and/or state capitalism and the movement of the trade unions from craft guilds to labour bureaucracy. In its economic structure the trade unions are obsolete and are a house divided against itself, they are unbrotherly brothers. In any given industry a host of different workers – skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled – are engaged in the production of the same commodity. They are united in production but divided and sub-divided in their unions. The shipyards are a glaring example. The entire workforce contribute to the production of chips and yet they are so myopic that they often alienate themselves and erect barriers from each other by their unions. The engineers may go on strike whilst other shipyard workers continue to work as normal. Being in different unions constitutional blacklegging is a regular occurrence.

Fossils of a dead past

In medieval times when a craftsman often produced a complete commodity by his own tools and labour, a trade union may have been an economic reflection of the time. It is now a fossil of a dead past. To continue organising in this manner is an anachronistic folly. In the twentieth century our organisation must mirror the objective economic and social situation. If we observe intently our objective conditions and not just gape at them, we will not be 'with it', to use a trendy expression. The objective situation relating to trade unions have been mentioned briefly – to embellish on this would be beyond the scope of this essay. It would necessitate illustrating the methods of struggle which trade unions adopt and the methods adopted by syndicalists. My footnotes, as indicated above, will refer the interested reader to the appropriate literature appertaining to the methods of struggle of the syndicalists. Let me just say tersely that the methods of trade unions lead to a *cul-de-sac*. The trade unions have no ultimate objective, they merely concern themselves with

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

LIBERTARIANISM AND THE GREAT HI-JACK

There was a time when you and I knew what we meant by the word 'libertarian'. It meant people like us, and there was a time when one of the regular features in *Freedom* was signed by a colleague calling himself 'Libertarian'. Friendly psychologists were accustomed to classifying people's attitudes along an authoritarian/libertarian axis, since their attitudes to current issues on penal sanctions, child-rearing, industrial democracy and a host of topics fell on a recognisable scale between two poles.

Pragmatic people like me would even use the word for politicians since we knew that in key social issues where change in the law was involved, like the parliamentary debates on abolishing capital punishment or on removing the legal sanctions against homosexuality, we knew that certain legislators, whatever their party, would take authoritarian or libertarian attitudes.

But then more recently clever young right-wing ideologists have appropriated the word 'libertarian' to imply their belief in an absolute free market, untrammelled by governmental or legal intervention to protect the disadvantaged. They invoke key philosophers from the past like Adam Smith or Friedrich von Hayek (author of the very influential book *The Road to Serfdom*). I'm convinced that they have hi-jacked these thinkers, just as they have seized upon the word 'libertarian' to mean what they decide it should mean. I'm still waiting for an anarchist re-interpretation of both Smith and Hayek.

Meanwhile the right-wing self-styled libertarians have it all their own way. In this journal Donald Room has endlessly attacked misconceptions of libertarianism in his Wildcat cartoons, and a friend in Canada has just sent me the Winter 195 issue of the American *Alternative Press Review*. Its cartoonist Tom Tomorrow is the equivalent of Donald in US terms. His version of Donald's cat is an enquiring penguin.

His sceptical bird asks a good citizen: "So Republicans want to constitutionally mandate school prayer, put the children of welfare mothers into government-run orphanages and eventually making reproductive choice [on

abortion] a crime against the State. So remind me, why was it that you voted for these people?" And the citizen replied: "To get Big Government off our backs, of course!"

Jason McQuinn, the editor of that journal, found himself obliged in the same issue to defend the word 'libertarian' against a correspondent who claimed that: "The libertarian ideology is firmly rooted in a free market, capitalist-leaning 'conservative' tradition (whether or not you like it)."

To this McQuinn made a reply which you or I would certainly agree with. His reply was:

"Your massive misunderstanding concerning libertarians would be merely amusing if they were not shared by so many other North Americans who

are similarly blind to the political history of libertarian movements. To begin with, the word *libertarian* originally gained wide political currency as a less inflammatory synonym for *anarchist* at a time when it was illegal to use the anarchist label due to political repression in nineteenth century France. In its original and primary sense *libertarian* remains synonymous with *anarchist*, i.e. one who values social freedom highly and attempts to live freely outside of the rule of hierarchical institutional authority. This has been the case now for well over a hundred years. Thus, throughout the world when one speaks of 'libertarians' one is understood by any historically or politically literate person to be speaking of anarchists. Except, of course, in the United States where we have experienced a truly amazing phenomenon through which the traditional meaning of the word has been almost completely

erased from popular consciousness by a capitalistic caricature of anarchy in which a goal of 'free' individual and corporate exploitation and domination has replaced the goal of human beings living freely in non-exploitive communities."

I find this such a useful and historically justified comment that I reckon you should cut it out and exploit it when next involved in an argument. To be sure, I am willing to extend the definition to include a broader spectrum of defenders of human liberty (not excluding a handful of MPs and judges, since I was delighted by a recent decision by Mr Justice Sedley on the implications of the Criminal Justice Act).

But this is hardly the point. Every reader knows that our current government's refusal to sanction the concept of a legal minimum wage worsens the situation of the poorest and most vulnerable of employees and that its anxiety to loosen the effectiveness of the concept of contracts of employment makes people wait, like the dock workers of a century ago, upon the whims of employers and the chance of a few hours' pay.

These are the fruits of the 'libertarianism' of the right and anarchists, like every variety of socialists, need to get their concepts straight. I was intrigued by a recent interview in *The Guardian* (8th September) with the producer Jonathan Miller. Ever since we were fellow-parents at a London comprehensive school, I've seen him as a libertarian ally even though he is far from an anarchist, I think. He was being asked about his new production of Bizet's *Carmen* at the British National Opera which cuts out all that romantic tourist Spanishism and makes it a gritty drama of working-class life. But in the course of the interview Miller summed up the implications of the talk of "setting people free from the Nanny State". He remarked that "the thing I find most appalling about Gingrichism and about Thatcherism is the idea that it's all right to intrude when it is acting coercively but not when it is acting enablingly".

Yet another of the struggles ahead is that of winning back the word 'libertarian' from those confidence tricksters of the New Right.

Colin Ward

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WINDOW PANE

getting a few more crumbs from the rich man's table. The goal of syndicalists is to end the struggle, not to keep it flourishing endlessly. Syndicalists will vote with their feet by marching into all places of work to take possession of the means of production and distribution. Then politicians and capitalists will be made redundant.

Who will run the country?

Why, those who have always run it: the labouring classes, by hand and brain. By being indoctrinated they cannot see the wood for the trees. The working class have always run the country but their minds are clouded because they do not own the land and the means whereby they live. Who gets up in the morning to operate the railways, to keep the wheels of industry turning, to produce the fuel for commercial and domestic purposes? Who tills the land, bakes the bread, who builds those palatial palaces which sail the high seas, who operates them? Who excavates the ores from the bowels of the earth, who transforms them into the finished products of utility? Who makes our domestic furniture? Tersely, who supplies our food, clothing and shelter? Is it the shareholders? Is it the politicians, or who? The answer is self-evident and if you don't know you're more of a loony than those who are housed in the loony-bins.

Organisation: vertical and horizontal

Syndicalism, or perhaps I should use the trendy terminology 'industrial and community networks' since syndicalism has become a sort of swear word. In any case the organisation begins at the base. In industry the organisation embraces all grades of workers breaking all trade union barriers, making the workers united in their union as well as in production. The assemblage of workers at the point of production elect their delegates, who are subject to immediate recall like the present shop stewards' movement. The delegates are federated in any given industry to a district federation which is affiliated to a national federation of the respective industry. This pertains

throughout all industries and services who dove-tail into a national confederation of labour. Contrary to organisations with a centralised control like the trade unions, political parties and kindred institutions, we have a decentralised control. As an egoist I may give some time to an association or a group. I could do this in my self-interest and because it gratifies me. I may use the group but not to its detriment but to mutual benefit. Myself, my whole self I do not give but retain possession of myself, I retain my autonomy. On a parallel with this, the local groups of our organisation although federated locally, regionally and nationally retain their local autonomy. Federation is for the purpose of self-interest and mutual aid. Briefly, that is the vertical form of organisation.

Horizontally the job committees are linked with other committees in different industries. These committees overlap and dove-tail into the affairs of the community, in any given locality. If necessary the local organs call upon the assistance of the region and in turn the national if necessary. The embryonic structures of these organs must mirror the goal we wish to achieve. The communal organs will endeavour to wrench control from town councillors whose activities are in the main influenced by powerful business interests. The industrial counterparts, the syndicates or works committees, will assiduously encroach on gaining more and more control over their respective workplace. This would be an educational pursuit illustrating that control is inadequate without ownership. In this process the workforce will learn in practice the validity of a do-it-yourself movement. The point of production and the embryonic commune will be the people's universities. Encroaching control must essentially lead to ownership; it will be the midwife, and social ownership of the means whereby we live will be the birth of a new-born healthy society. As aforesaid, everything is in transition. With the triumph of the revolution and the termination of the class struggle, the horizontal or local organs of syndicates or networks change their character and become the commune, an organisation of people living together for their mutual general welfare.

The commune replaces the non-representative town and borough councils. Most of the functions of the municipalities will still be exercised by the industrial syndicates. It is self-evident that local transport will essentially be the province of the transport syndicate or network, the hospitals by the health workers network and so on. These services require men and women of experience in these respective domains, an experience which is in the main absent in town councillors.

With the abolition of the money system the commune will not be burdened with the collection of rates and taxes and conducting businesses as municipalities do to accrue profits to assist rates.

The commune, a much smaller and decentralised body than the borough or town council, will concentrate on improving the communal welfare of the locality. In making their requests to the various syndicates - builders, health service, transport, power - the inhabitants of each commune will enhance their general welfare - local planning, parks, plots for vegetables, recreational sports grounds, trees and other vegetation in our streets and environs. Local industries integrated with agriculture would be facilitated. The commune would of course essentially be a different entity from a present-day council, which is mainly an organisation for the protection of the 'well-to-do' ratepayers controlled by a centralised body which puts fetters on the welfare of the Jock Jamsons, the Henry Dubbs and the Jimmy Higgins.

If as aforesaid syndicalism is scientific unionism, then the use of it must be accepted if it is proved valid in practice. Observation and experiment is the test of science. In human psychology, self-interest and co-operation, to my mind, have been proved complementary rather than contradictory - those who pursue and have a passion for material things or have a passion which becomes their dominion becomes a slave, a possessed person rather than a self-interested and cooperative person.

Egoism and co-operation is primary - intellectualism is subsidiary

No one should consider so-called intellectuals as being superior to them. Use your own observation and experience as your guide in the main. Advice or viewpoints from others

(continued on page 8)

SPANISH GOVERNMENT WOBBLER AS ANARCHISTS REVOLT

The last few weeks have been bad for the Spanish Socialist Government of Felipe Gonzalez. As a minority government, it is now threatened to be overthrown when its ex-partners in the CiU Catalan Nationalist Party vote against its proposed new national budget this autumn. The Catalan Party, having long supported the Socialist Government, now want to distance themselves before national and regional elections take place.

The Socialist Government is unpopular. Corruption at many levels has been reported and proved almost daily in the Spanish press, and some of the more extraordinary high-level cases of corruption in the Socialist Party and government have been repeatedly analysed in *Freedom* over the years.

In some ways the most serious case is now pending against the Gonzalez government. The Tribunal Supremo is examining evidence that Gonzalez himself may have been responsible for hiring a group of mercenaries, called 'the GAL', in the 'dirty war' against the Basque Nationalists of the ETA. Dozens of Basques were killed, mostly in France, by these freelance hired killers in the 1980s. Several ministers implicated have already resigned, and an ex-colleague of Gonzalez has claimed the President of the Government said he wanted to take the war against the ETA to the 'margins of the law'. Documents before the Tribunal Supremo are now suggesting that Gonzalez knew of the activities of the GAL as government-financed terrorists in 1983. It seems that this politically clandestine group was paid out of a special fund set up by the Ministry of the Interior.

Strikes and riots in Andalusia

At the beginning of September government attempts to re-convert the shipyards in Andalusia were met with violent riots and strikes. The workers of Puerto Real, Cadiz and Seville have reacted with radical protests against the government plans to close

factories and make cut-backs in these areas. In Seville on 4th September a director's office was destroyed, and in Cadiz and Puerto Real the workers closed off the roads and stopped the traffic thereby paralysing the town centres.

Strikes and demonstrations are also planned for September 7th, 14th and 21st against the application of a programme in the public sector to close plants in Cadiz and Seville and to reorganise the shipyards in Puerto Real. Up to a thousand employees from the Puerto Real yard took part in blocking the traffic, cutting off traffic over the bridge to the capital of the province, Cadiz. Meanwhile their mates in nearby Cadiz shut off the Industrial Road. In Puerto Real telephone lines were damaged and cut and a fire and other obstructions stopped the local trains. The police and other forces of public order do not seem to have been in evidence, only firemen and public works personnel turned out.

In Puerto Real, and to an extent in Cadiz, there has been a long history of militant trade union activity. See the Solidarity Federation pamphlet *Anarcho-Syndicalism in Puerto Real*. Both the CNT unions in Puerto Real and the anarcho-syndicalist CGT in Cadiz have had a working relationship and have been taking similar actions for the best part of a decade. There has been a history of anarchism throughout the whole region and province of Cadiz going back to the last century.

If, or rather when, the Socialist Government falls we must watch developments here in the province of Cadiz on the south west corner of Spain. Unlike Malaga, where the anarchists were also strong, tourism has had less impact on Cadiz and the experiences of the anarcho-syndicalists of Puerto Real have become a kind of working model for some. The British Solidarity Federation hold up this

* Available from Freedom Press Bookshop, price £1.00 plus postage.

ANARCHIST NOTES IN BRIEF

BRAVE NEW WORLD I couldn't believe my eyes, but there is it. First of all we are told that we are faced with "an intelligent 'life force' that can out-think humans" and could, according to the *Independent* (12th September) correspondent Steve Connor, "take over the planet by the end of the next century". This is based on the information from "Britain's leading experts in cybernetics". So be it!

Surely much more worrying for the new generation is a report in the *Sunday Times* (17th September) with the heading "Couples shun sex for the test tube".

Not only am I told that "high flying" couples "who have lost interest in sex are resorting to test-tube baby clinics to start a family". But incredibly the report goes on to point out that "Although they are capable of producing children naturally, some are spending up to £10,000 on fertility techniques to avoid a physical relationship that they regard as a chore."

Have these idiots not been told that it's not the fucking that is a chore but bringing up the children who may be on your hands well into their twenties in this age of unemployment!

So an oldie's advice to the young is to enjoy the *lovemaking* and put off the family unless you want it. But certainly don't pay somebody £10,000 to do it for you!

UNTO THOSE THAT HAVE more shall be given (official). Tax reductions obviously benefit those who pay taxes. The unemployed and the old on state pensions are in fact worse off relatively since there is no reduction in

concept of 'direct democracy and community control' as a kind of ideal for the future.

The trouble with working models is that they sometimes fail badly, such as the Soviet Union, and people fall on their arse, witness the Marxists after 1989. Many must hope that the Andalusian anarchists with their noble cultural roots are developing a more decent political civilisation.

Brian Bamford

indirect taxation (VAT) which all have to pay.

When on this subject one cannot resist quoting what the rich give themselves. Rupert Murdoch the media tycoon gave himself a 62% pay rise last year, which took him to £4.7 million per annum or for the likes of you and me £90,384 a week! Even assuming he doesn't get away with all kinds of expenses, to which such an 'important' wage-earner is 'entitled', maximum 40% tax, still leaves him with £54,230 a week to keep body and soul together!

The *Guardian* piece which supplies the above also mentions that his family owns a 34% stake in the Australian-based company "which runs his worldwide empire" and has "already helped him become the thirteenth richest man in the US with a personal wealth of £2.5 billion".

And according to the *Guardian* the "family is unlikely to sell its stake" while Murdoch is alive. But meanwhile "he has begun promoting his children through the ranks of the company".

The *new capitalist aristocracy*! They can be as stupid as individuals, but have the real power under capitalism. To seek to dispossess them without a frontal attack on the capitalist system is simply wishful thinking à la Blair's *New Labour Party 1995*!

NEW THOUGHTS FROM EX-CBI BOSS

Howard Davies, the ex-CBI boss, is reported as saying that "the most serious problem facing Britain is growing inequality". He also "appears to lend qualified support to a minimum wage 'as a last resort' to tackle inequality" (*Independent*). In view of these confessions by the former boss of the bosses' union one would have imagined that he had seen the light and joined a monastic order. Not at all, Howard Davies is now *Deputy Governor of the Bank of England*! The phoniness, the hypocrisy of these people beggars imagination!

THE REAL AIMS OF THE FALKLANDS WAR?

When Thatcher went to war against Argentina to defend that outpost of the British Empire and 1,700 patriots and thousands of sheep at a cost of some £2-3 billion and of hundreds of pounds a year ever since, no mention was made of the fact that perhaps apart from a few fish there could be some oil to harvest. It has happened. An Anglo-Argentinian agreement has been signed to "cooperate over oil exploration in the disputed waters" though Britain insists that there were "no implications for the island's sovereignty" (*Guardian*, 15th September).

In the end the real concerns of governments, whether British or Argentinian, are not about the people of the Falklands but about the potential wealth - and in this case OIL!

Libertarian

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More thoughts on Baby Thomas

Dear Editors,
Obviously the letters page of *Freedom* is there to give readers an opportunity to add to what has been written as well as to agree or disagree, but to publish Michael Gerard and Caroline Moles' diatribe ('Hypocrisy and the Law', *Freedom*, 23rd September) without an editorial comment if only to state the basic facts which they completely ignore, and presumably assume your readers will have forgotten, obliges me to reply.
They declare that my piece 'Thoughts on Baby Thomas - Hypocrisy and the Law' (*Freedom*, 19th August) was "wrong, wrong, wrong" and gratuitously add that "we would not be surprised if the person who was so willing to confide his body to the dustbin would hardly be likely to have had much direct experience". Just as your correspondents know nothing about my 'experience' neither do I of theirs but, like them speculating about this writer, I will about them and suggest that they have both the *religious bug* and are *anti-abortionists*.
That said, my main objections to the publication of their letter without any editorial comment are the statements they made about baby Thomas. I quote from their letter: "The main point is that this child is not like Tony Bland, destroyed and brain dead, but is conscious and has a future. This future will be extremely limited, but will probably seem worthwhile to Thomas.

When you work with a child like Thomas and you get a smile of recognition and fun you know that they are experiencing pleasure and enjoying life."
They completely ignore, as apparently do the editors, the condition of this 22-month old baby reported in all the press and which I used in my article. I must quote it again. I wrote: "That same editorial [from the *Independent*, 2nd August] gives the reader a picture of poor little Thomas who 'was brain-damaged in the womb. Now aged 22 months, he is blind and deaf, cannot talk and has no control over his limbs. He cries inconsolably. It is said that he cannot be cuddled properly because touching sends him into painful muscular spasms. He has fits and is fed through a hole in his stomach.'"
Your two correspondents talk about little Thomas giving one a "smile" and "experiencing pleasure" and - the last straw - "enjoying life"! How can anybody be so *inhuman* - other than religious fundamentalists, which I suspect them to be.
They end their letter with "Give the lad a chance". Poor little Thomas if he were the offspring of your correspondents! They would find that they would not be able to look after him after the initial euphoria - just as the parents of the recent siamese twins who appear to have already given photographic rights to the *Daily Mail* and, as I write, the father of 'Child B' is "negotiating to sell his story

to a daily newspaper" (*Guardian*, 22nd September). In the distant past the 'freaks' were displayed as 'attractions' in the funfairs which were part of the Bertrand Mills Circus.
Surely today when at least one part of science can foresee and prevent the birth of babies who have no future - that is of a more or less normal *physical* existence *from birth* - is it not a proof of *responsibility* to prevent that birth?
The last paragraph of your correspondents' letter gets wilder than ever (in my opinion, of course!) when they tell me to: "Remember that it was the Nazis who shunted people who weren't perfect into the gas chambers."
Why publish this rubbish? What has that to do with the article I wrote about poor little Thomas? Except for, as I suggested earlier, fundamentalists and anti-abortionists parading their dogmas. I note that they end up with a ridiculous 'investment': spending a lot of money on clearly artificial attendance to little Thomas who will never, they say: "... do anyone as much harm as those lively young people who join armies. Investing in ways to give him a good time is money better spent than teaching a young man how to shoot Irishmen or putting a penny towards developing weapons."
A fat lot of good that will do to little Thomas, however much it may salve the consciences of Messrs Gerard and Moles.

Libertarian and Sectarian Anarchism

Dear Editors,
Having been an activist for 55 years I now learn that I am an "intellectual", an "intellectual idiot" and that I read "too many books" (which comes strangely from a publisher) in *Freedom*, 9th September. Ah well, as they say, you can't win 'em all. It takes me back to '56 when I faced the same charge from the leaders of the Communist Party for presuming to make a public defence of the Hungarian Revolution of that year. Clearly I was misleading 'the honest workers'.
To be called names, however, is better than what I feared, i.e. non-publication, the spike. It says something for the integrity of the editors of *The Raven* and *Freedom* that I have been published verbatim by both, and have been by Freedom Press generally for the last 33 years. The Press was originally part of the remarkable explosion of ideas and political invention that took place between 1883 and 1895. We should all care about its reputation and its future.
Residual organisations have a limited shelf-life. The fact is that the four great teachers - Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta - failed to found a significant anarchist movement except in Spain, and even there it met with the stickiest of ends. Freedom Press is the British residue, living mostly on nostalgia. There are plenty of other residues in London. Look at the SPGB. Look at the PPU having just sold Dick Shepherd House. Look at Democratic Left / New Times trying to transcend its CP past but not knowing where to turn.
But 'out there' all sorts of people are stopping motorways, open-cast mining, McDonalds and live animal exports, not to mention Brent Star. And where is Freedom Press? Where is the Anarchist Research Group, of which I have been a member almost since it sprang from the loins of the History Workshop? Where is anarchist opinion of *any kind*? Apart from one of two individuals, like Colin

Ward and Nicolas Walter, it is unheard of! *It fails to register because it has nothing to say*. That is my moan.
And there is a great deal to say. I could draw up a list as long as your arm, but this is a letter not a treatise. According to my reading of the situation we have about three years before we have to face some grim critical situation, political not economic. We *need* critical and creative power, we *need* ideas.
Past-present-future is a continuous process. If we get one wrong we get all three wrong. Current faults are four-fold:
1. Failing to face the essential political questions of violence, terror and war.
2. Failing to understand the lethal content of self-centred individualism, puritan *laissez faire* and Stirnerite.
3. Failing to devise a workable alternative political, social and economic structure.
4. Failing to ask and respond to the ultimate question: what is it to be a human being?
These may sound negative, but how can we make a new start and deliver the goods unless we know where we have failed to date? It is a tremendous challenge, can we get on with it? I shall have an announcement to make at the meeting of the London Anarchist Forum at Conway Hall on 13th October.

Peter Cadogan

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Who should apologise for the war atrocities?

Dear *Freedom*,
One of the most nauseating spectacles during the VJ celebrations was that of men probably in their dotage bemoaning the fact that the Japanese had not apologised for the hardships they inflicted on their prisoners in the Far East. They ignored the fact that all peoples cause suffering, and there was no suggestion that the Allies should apologise for dropping two atomic bombs that must have caused more suffering than that endured by all POWs everywhere. Yet the hypocrisy did not stop there.
If these veterans cared about the suffering of themselves and other POWs why, after fifty years, had they not taken the trouble to discover the causes of war? Why do they not understand how people are corrupted by their government so they support war and committed

atrocities while making it? The veterans should know by now how the Japanese government debased the character of its soldiers and how it fed them lies to make them behave badly. The Japanese government told their soldiers that the allies took no prisoners, so it was better to die fighting than to surrender, and that even if conditions in their prison camps was bad then being in them was better for the Allies than being shot. Likewise, the allies were subjected to a vast amount of propaganda so that their characters were degraded. What sort of men could unload an atom bomb over a city so thousands died - even innocent babies and children? Only men who had imbibed the lies their government had fed them about the reasons for war.
When we study the causes of all our suffering, we know the main culprit is the state. It is the state that corrupts the

character of people, be they British or Japanese, so that they behave evilly. If there is any apologising to be done, we should all do it. We should apologise for using the state pattern of society. Because we use it, all of us are guilty, not just a few Japanese prison guards who died a long time ago. It is time everyone rejected the state so that we stop being corrupted and become innocent.

Derrick A. Pike

Proudhon had a word for it

Dear *Freedom*,
From the first programme by Jools Holland (a popular musician and entertainer) on the relaunched Jazz FM: Q: Why do communists only drink herbal tea?
A: Because proper tea is theft.
A telephone call produced a correction (he *had* heard of Proudhon) but he didn't broadcast a plug for Freedom Press.

David Peers

Correction

Dear Editors,
Two misprints in my letter about 'The Bomb' (*Freedom*, 9th September 1995), one unimportant, the other important. I was 20, not 21, when I met Morrison. And in my last sentence I wrote "... maybe there *has* [not 'had'] never been a better time to persuade others of this truth" - i.e. *now*, when both the Marxist-Leninist and capitalist systems are shown to have such disastrous results, is a good time for people to question the whole basis of the world's political and social organisation.

Amorey Gethin

(continued from page 6)

you may use if you think fit. Never, never, never accept a viewpoint merely because some intellectual has expressed it. Malatesta has expressed that "syndicalism is a much too simplistic conception of the class struggle. It is a concept according to which the economic interests of all the workers - of the working class - are identical, the conception according to which it is enough for workers to take in hand the defence of their own interests and the interests of the whole proletariat will be at the same time defended against capitalism. I suggest that the reality is quite different. Like the bourgeoisie, like everyone else, the workers are subject to the law of universal competition which derives from the existence of government and private property and which will only disappear when they are extinguished. Thus in the true sense of the word there are no classes because there are no class interests."
Could it be that Malatesta has been reincarnated in the form of John Major? John Major says we have a classless society. I'm learning every day. Some workers may be consoled to know that all are equal but some are more equal than others *à la* Orwell. If, as Malatesta states, workers are subject to the law of universal competition, how shall we manage to travel from a competitive society to a cooperative society? Co-operation must prevail, at least in pockets within the framework of capitalist society, and essentially must be inflated before capitalism and its protector can be extinguished.
Again I say to the Jock Jamsons, the Henry Dubbs and Jimmy Higgins, treat the intellectuals as they should be

treated: with subsidiary importance. You, my comrades of the proles, are the back-bone of any potential revolutionary situation. Space limitations restricts any further comments I would wish to make on some of Malatesta's contradictory and unwarranted critique of syndicalism. Allow me then to play hunch-cuddy-hunch and leap-frog into our own contemporary period.
Bookchin, one of our contemporary intellectuals, in his enthusiasm for his pet subject, ecology, is confused as many others are about syndicalism. He misrepresents the situation by putting the cart before the horse. He condemns syndicalists for advocating organisation in the factories, thereby assisting in dehumanising the worker. How naive can one get? Production in factories is oriented primarily towards the enhancement of profits and only secondarily for consumption needs. It is therefore the social relations resulting from the capitalist mode of production which dehumanises people. How does Bookchin propose to humanise people if he does not recognise the need for organisation in the factories and workshops. How does he propose to expropriate the expropriators? The syndicalists advocate organisation at the point of production with a view to appropriating ownership and control of the means whereby we live. In doing this people will be liberated from their drudgery and inhumane conditioning. Whilst the Bookchins are thinking about means to improve the quality of life the industrial workers will be doing just that in practice. By their ingenuity and the exercise of their mental and physical labour power, the worker can convert munitions factories into wind generator factories,

smaller factories of the future, of course, amid garden cities. Water can be harnessed to propel turbines to generate electricity. There are many sources of energy from the sea and the solar regions which can be utilised by industrial workers when their labour power is applied to them, enhancing our quality of life, eliminating pollution, whilst the Bookchins are still riding their hobby-horse.
In my view it is in your interest to link yourself with others for mutual benefit. You desire freedom, but not to be free from everything. You want to be free from some things and to be free to have what your competence can give you, such as a loved one. Free access to the means of life furnishes you with the many things you desire. To empower you to achieve this you require association. Mutual aid and self-interest when dove-tailed offer the best guarantee of a loftier and more elevated evolution of human society. Self-interest is the best guarantee to retain individual and group autonomy. To my mind syndicalism is the primary force which will achieve free access to the means of life.

Iconoclast

Further reading

- Syndicalism* by Tom Brown (£3.95)
 - Anarcho-Syndicalism* by R. Rocker (£2.50)
 - Anarcho-Syndicalism in Puerto Real* by Pepe Gomez (£1.00)
 - History of the FAI* by C. Gomez Casas (£10.95)
- All available from Freedom Press Bookshop.

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- 3rd November General Discussion
- 10th November Anarchism and Material Culture (speaker Kevin Littlewood)
- 17th November Discussion Group
- 24th November Arguments in Favour of Governments (discussion led by Michael Murray)
- 1st December topic to be announced (speaker Don Howard)
- 8th December General Discussion
- 15th December Christmas Party
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