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FIFTY PENCE

*"A week is
a long time in
politics."*

Remark made in 1965 by
Harold Wilson
when he was the
Labour Prime Minister

LABOUR PARTY RENOUNCES SOCIALISM

The Labour Party conference in Brighton embraced the old-fashioned Conservative principles of one-nation patriotism and kindly paternalism. So much so that as the conference finished an old fashioned Conservative MP, Alan Howarth, resigned from the Conservative Party and joined the Labour Party; the first time in history that an MP has crossed the house in that direction, though several have gone the other way.

Nobody can say, this time, that the Party hierarchy took the membership in a direction it did not particularly like. There was some dissension from

a minority but, for the first time in any Labour Party conference, the platform was not once voted down. The news media are agreed that Tony Blair's speech was inspiring. The Party looks even more certain to win the next general election than it did in 1992.

The Tories under Thatcher strove, as a matter of principle, to increase the differentials between rich and poor. Talking of "rolling back the state" they largely replaced local democracy with a quangocracy of capitalists appointed by the state. Under Major, with Howard as Home Secretary, they have set aside laws for the pleasure of

behaving vindictively towards criminals and foreigners.

No doubt the old-fashioned conservatism of New Labour is preferable to the untrammelled greed and vindictiveness of New Toryism. But whatever became of socialism?

Full employment

Robin Cooke was cheered at the conference when he promised that full employment was one of Labour's eventual aims. It will do the party good at the next election. It may also get the Marxist organisers of 'right to work' marches rooting for a Labour victory (though it may be disputed whether this will be an electoral advantage or a kiss of death). But whatever happened to "From each according to ability, to each according to need"?

(The phrase is claimed by Marxists on the ground that it was used by Marx
(continued on page 2)

TORIES ARE 'DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES'

"The politicians are guilty of a great deceit, a giant fraud, a gross betrayal of our country." This came over the airwaves. It was Michael Heseltine telling the truth. It would surely bring the government to its knees. The next bulletin set the words in context and it was clear that it formed part of the customary histrionics of the Tory Party conference. There was nothing new there, just the same old favourites, the same crusade against social security scroungers, the same tawdry xenophobia, the same unfunny over-rehearsed wisecracks, the same draconian crackdown on offenders, the same wicked fairy overseeing the festivities ready to prick the fingers of those daring even to glance leftwards, and finally the same honest John (ordinary bloke: "I know what it's like when the week's money runs out on a Thursday") Major trying to hold it all together and sweeten the bitter taste in the mouth.

As the general election draws nearer it is time for the Tories to define their differences from the Tony Blair camp. With the two leaders' outlooks accused of being interchangeable by many punters, it was time for John Major to highlight his distinguishing features. No volatile body language for him, no strutting or hopping, just a stiff upper lip allowed to quiver very slightly at times of deep-felt emotion,

all in all a perfect mix of humour, sobriety and measured determination.

After Portillo's bullish crassness on Tuesday and Heseltine's farcical ranting on Wednesday, it was almost comforting to see a stage-managed John Major still hanging onto the leadership and trying to gloss over the bad behaviour of his party's hooligan element. In eighteen months time the Tories could swing it again and Michael Portillo could be pitching the war cries - a chilling thought.

The conference has seen transparent strategies galore to woo the electorate. Extra funding for the assisted places scheme was surely on the agenda to highlight once more Blair's hypocrisy in placing his son in a grant-maintained school out of his borough, whilst proposing to scrap assisted places if elected. Labour offered 3,000 more police on the beat over three years, so the Tories promise 5,000 extra immediately. Harsher sentencing, a crackdown on beggars and social security scroungers, Queen's English for all, phasing out of inheritance and capital gains tax (CGT relief will benefit only 2,500 people). They certainly know how to appeal to the baser side of human nature.

Tory Party chairman Brian Mawhinney's remarks that Camden Council funded an Asian women's group to play hopscotch at the centre has been dismissed as nonsense by

the council. This disgraceful gaffe by Mawhinney didn't get the media coverage it deserved. The centre is in fact funded jointly by the council and the Save The Children Fund, of which Princess Anne is patron, and provides job training, advice and English language tuition. Still anything for a cheap laugh eh, Brian - and how they laughed! The Asian centre in question had five windows smashed this week and remarks like his do not help racial harmony. How strange that a party in power for sixteen years can still blame everyone else for the state of the nation.

Anarchists should be as jubilant as the Tories at the end of the conference. The televising of the country's leaders prattling and posturing should make our cries of 'Don't vote, it only encourages them' totally redundant. People should be gathering in the streets to express their disgust and dismay, but the third-rate pantomime continues and enough voters could well file dutifully into the polling booths to give these charlatans another costly season.

We should now spend a few moments meditating on the puzzling choice of the Tory Party theme song: "Love lifts us up where we belong"! Try substituting the word 'love' with a more suitable word. Yes, that's the one!

NO CAPITALIST SOLUTION TO UNEMPLOYMENT

As the Tories gather to boost what the capitalist media cannot deny is a low profile (and they will do it in spite of the defection of the MP for Stafford and the death of Lord Home, described unanimously across party boundaries as a *gentleman* as opposed to a *politician*) of course the delegates who are there are the *hard core* of the party (just as a week before the Labour hierarchy were having their political batteries given a boost). But what none of the three political parties can offer is a solution to the problem of unemployment. And the reason for this is that the capitalist system is concerned primarily with profits. If an enterprise is not profitable then it must be axed. As we write, the fate of the long established leftist weekly journal *New Statesman and Society* is threatened because its millionaire (49%) owner is unconcerned about anything other than whether it can pay its way. To hell with the 20,000 circulation if it's not profitable. This approach, and the *New Statesman and Society* is just a small example, dominates the whole economic scene today. As we write Lloyds Bank is proposing to swallow up the

TSB with an estimated loss of 20,000 jobs. But this is only in addition to the 115,000 jobs already lost in bank takeovers in the last few years. Introduce more machines, whether it's in the banks or in the factory or larger ones in agriculture, and the price to pay in human terms is more wage earners made redundant (with or without a mini-handshake).

For anarchists who are not luddites any mechanical device that relieves the individual from repetitive and boring activity, especially when that activity produces nothing of social or material value to the community, is a step forward to the dreamed-of society of *leisure* – that is of *active leisure* – of self-employment. How else to express it other than on the one hand playing one's part in producing the material needs and services of the community and at the same time enjoying the leisure to explore one's dreams and fantasies, one's intimate relations?

Which is why we go on maintaining that mass unemployment, not just in this country but throughout the capitalist world, cannot be

solved by any of the programmes advanced by the Labour Party here or the Chirac government in France, so long as there is no radical *redistribution of wealth*. It's not only a question of 'stripping the really rich' (for instance the *Sunday Times*' riches 500 are worth some £60,000 million) though it should be a priority, but of recognising that work-sharing is inevitable in our technological world and this would mean that the standard of living of millions of well-to-do families would have to be more modest in their demands than they are today.* Alas we are a long way from such a situation thanks in part to a vicious press more concerned with bashing the poor than censuring the rich. In a recent *Sunday Express* (1st October) splashed across five columns of the editorial page one hack, Tom Utley, was telling the paper's two million purchasers and their families "*How income tax could be abolished*". Quite simple:

* This approach is developed at some length in the 22-page editor's preface to the Freedom Press volume *Why Work? Arguments for the Leisure Society* (210 pages, ISBN 0 900384 25 5, £4.50).

get rid of "welfare spending"! After all: "There will come a day, if things go on as they have done these past sixteen years, when the welfare state will eat up every last penny of the nation's wealth. That is no wild exaggeration, but a straightforward statement of fact. When the Tories came to power in 1979, spending on health and social services consumed 15.4 per cent of the total output of United Kingdom plc. Today that figure is up to 20.5 per cent at £130.8 billion – and rising. That means that more than one fifth of all the money the nation produces is spent by the state on health and benefits."

The problem for hack Utley is not the capitalist system nor the idle rich but those work-shy beer-swilling bastards, not to mention others having 'love-on-the-dole'! Listen to him: "... the average worker, putting in a five-day week, has to give up a whole day's wages every week to finance the welfare bonanza – feeding other people's illegitimate children, giving housing and hand-outs to new arrivals from abroad, buying beer for the work-shy and heroin for the hopeless. That is economics gone bananas."

The old are not spared either: "With our rapidly ageing population, the demand for state pensions is growing all the time – and there are far too few young people coming along to man the wheels of industry and to keep the money rolling in."

No mention, of course, that that "rapidly ageing population" had been at work for a lifetime and not only feeding the young but compulsorily *contributing every week* to the state pension!

Utley quotes a hair-brained scheme by one Barry Bracewell-Milnes, an economist, "which would cut government spending by no less than £100 billion over 25 years". And that:

"... would slash the national tax bill by 36 per cent, allowing the government to abolish income tax, corporation tax and all capital and inheritance taxes – for ever."

Wishful thinking! The problem of unemployment and the ever-growing divisions in society can only increase under capitalism the more so long as power continues to be concentrated in the transnationals and multinationals.

Anarchists would welcome the collapse of capitalism by its own greed, but what we want to see is that when it happens its victims are ready with a humane and egalitarian economic system to put in its place. None of the political parties will do this. At present only a few socialists and the anarchists offer the alternative society.

LABOUR PARTY RENOUNCES SOCIALISM

(continued from page 1)

in 1875, and by anarchists on the ground that Bakunin used it in 1970, but it is probable they were both quoting Cabet who published the phrase in 1842. It expresses the aspiration of socialism as such, not a particular faction of socialism.)

There is nothing to stop people working. A nineteenth century French government scheme relieved unemployment by paying men to spend mornings digging trenches on the beach, and afternoons filling them in. Every able-bodied person who can borrow a spade and get to the beach has a 'right' to do such futile work now. No payment of course, but your slogan says nothing about payment.

The problem is that under the capitalist system the only way most people can get a share of the world's wealth is to be paid for working, whether the work adds to the world's wealth or not. So people habituated to the capitalist system say they want work, when what they really want is a livelihood.

Weapons manufacture may not feel as ridiculous as digging holes and filling them in, but in the long run it is equally futile, or worse. The best thing that can happen to a weapon is that it becomes obsolete and the material gets recycled. If it is used it is not merely wasteful of the world's wealth but actually destructive. But as our Wildcat cartoon last issue observed, the arms trade is justified on the ground that it provides jobs. And, we may add, not only jobs for arms manufacturers and traders. Even when there is no war, as now, left-over land-mines are continuing to provide work for the manufacturers of artificial limbs.

'Work' in the everyday sense that most people use does not mean expending energy or doing something useful, but doing something you are paid to do, whether or not you would rather be doing something else. Most people would rather be in charge of their lives, but the capitalist system allows only two alternative ways to a good livelihood: 'work' or (legal or illegal) theft.

The Labour Party is for full employment, while socialism is about creating a more equitable system.

Selective education

The Tories, as part of their misnamed 'rolling back the state' policy, encouraged schools to opt out of local authority control into state control. Labour policy is to change the status of opted-out schools in such a way that they can be represented as either coming back under local authority control or remaining outside it, according to the preference of the voter being canvassed.

Roy Hattersley denounced this policy in an excellent speech, saying it amounted to selective education, and David Blunkett replied with another fine speech saying it didn't. Both are against selective education because they want every child to have the best education appropriate to that child.

This was precisely the object of selection when it was introduced by local authorities in the 1930s and made nationwide by the 1945 Labour government. It is now discredited, but it was honestly held at the time that the way to give every child a good education was to separate the bright from the less bright at the age of eleven years. When this was the general view our

editorial writer heard an argument against educational selection which had nothing whatever to do with providing the best for each individual: "selective education deprives the working-class of its leaders". Bright working-class children would go to grammar schools and eventually qualify for middle-class jobs, leaving no bright working-class people to be trade union secretaries and working-class Members of Parliament.

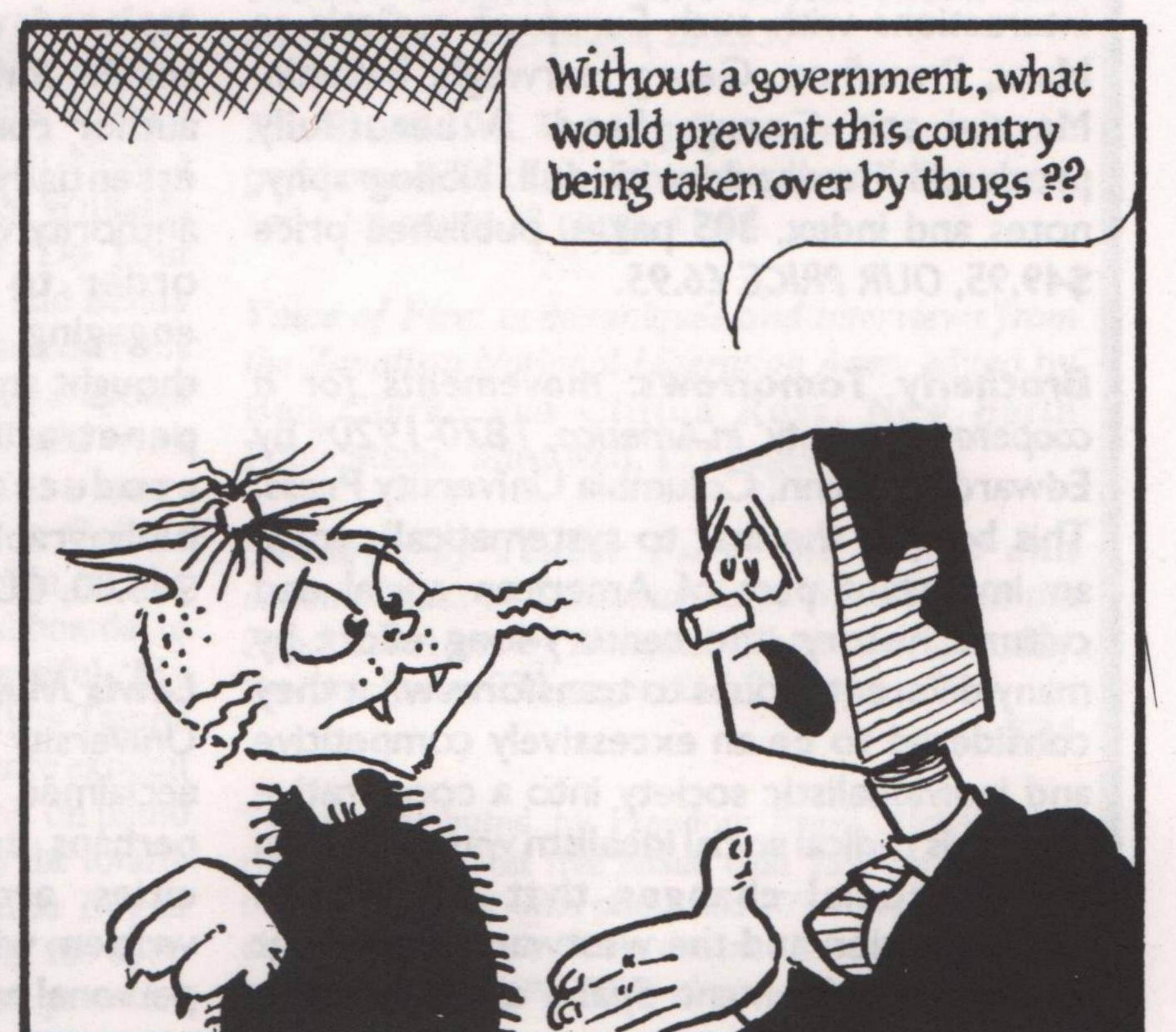
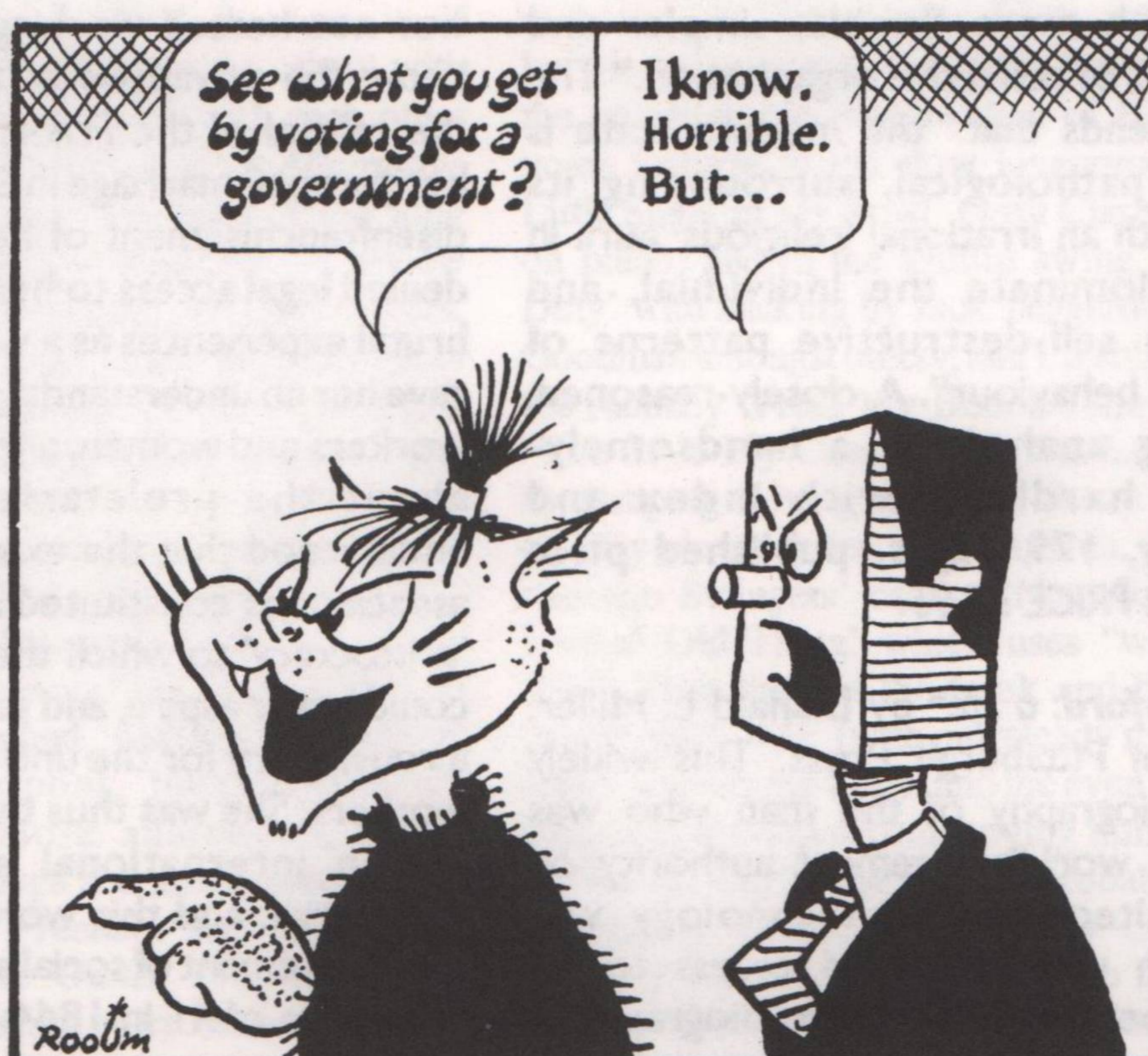
The person who put this argument was not against selective education as such. He had been educated at fee-paying schools and was sending his children to fee-paying schools. He approved of the rich having a good education, but wanted the working-class to have an evenly poor education, because that way the working-class as a whole would be better off. A good example of kindly paternalism and old fashioned Conservatism (though I believe the chap thought of himself as a socialist).

It is significant that neither Hattersley nor Blunkett said anything about the ten or eleven percent of children who go to fee-paying schools, some selected by examination but all selected for smaller classes and other educational advantages, by having parents rich enough to pay fees.

No doubt the reason is that ten or eleven percent is a big proportion of voters, so no political party wants to antagonise the fee-paying classes (Blunkett was repudiated and rebuked by Blair earlier this year when he suggested abolishing the dodge whereby school fees are tax-free). But the effect is to line up the Labour Party with the old fashioned Conservatives.

Socialism gets a mention

There was one reference to socialism in Mr Blair's speech, but it may have been a slip of the tongue.



THE THREEPENNY OPERA COLUMN

NATURAL CAUSES KILLED KISZKO

Natural causes killed Stefan Kiszko! Or so it said on the death certificate. Me, I can't help but notice that Stefan served sixteen years for a crime that it turned out he could not have possibly committed: the murder of schoolgirl Lesley Molseed. Late in the day his wrongful conviction was discovered and he was released. About a year after his release Mr Kiszko died.

After his release a police investigation led to the arrest of former Chief Inspector Dick Holland and forensic scientist Ronald Outteridge, who were alleged to have suppressed vital evidence which would have proved Stefan innocent. But a stipendiary magistrate sitting in Rochdale decided that because of the loss of documentary evidence, and the death of some witnesses, taken with the length of time which has passed, the two men couldn't expect a fair trial.

Now businessman Vance Miller has been trying to raise funds to force the prosecution of the former police officer and forensic scientist. Last month a fund-raising event put on by Mr Miller was broken up by police who claimed that the venue didn't meet fire regulations.

TORY BRUTALISM BUGS HOWARTH

Anarchists ought not to be surprised by the departure of Alan Howarth from the Tory Party. In January an editorial in the *Observer* described the Job Seekers' Bill as "one of the most draconian and potentially anti-libertarian measures ever introduced in the

Commons". The *Observer* editor declared this monstrous Bill "passed its third reading with barely a squeak from the House". Adding that "the most devastating attack came from a Tory MP, Alan Howarth".

Last week after his resignation Mr Howarth again referred to the imposition of the Job Seekers' Act, which will inflict more misery on the unemployed, as among the grounds for his disillusionment with the Tory Party. This Act, when it comes in next autumn, will subject the jobless to constant accountability to minor officials at the Job Centre about their movements and attempts to get work.

Señor Portillo may have been referring to the enemies abroad when he said: "Around the world three letters send a chill down the spine of the enemy: SAS". But what should be scaring the shit out of the Tories' enemy within – the jobless – is the coming imposition of the JSA.

Although it has appeared on the agenda of the Northern Anarchist Network Conference, and some demonstrated against it at the Labour Conference in Brighton, the potential brutality of the Act has not been widely recognised even among the unemployed. In March some anarcho-syndicalists were involved in setting up a campaign against the Job Seekers' Act at Ashton on Tameside near Manchester. About thirty-odd people attended and their campaign has continued throughout the year. Organised resistance nationally seems to be patchy, though the Job Centres are already introducing pilot schemes.

When questioned, Patrick Mckenner, of one of the dole officer's unions, told supporters of the Tameside Unemployment Campaign that

he didn't yet know how the jobless would be able to challenge staff decisions to cut off benefits. Derek Pattison, a veteran syndicalist, retorted that when the Act comes in and dole staff start to axe benefits they are going to be like German soldiers on the Eastern Front in the Second World War.

The government is gradually getting the message and implementation of the Act has been postponed. A secret memo to employment ministers warns that Job Centre staff are at risk of assault and abuse from jobless claimants angry about the Job Seekers' Allowance. Many Job Centres are open-plan and vulnerable to attacks by indignant claimants irritated by loss of benefits. It is feared that not everyone is law-abiding and when faced with no dole some may show a reluctance to starve.

Senior Employment Service health and safety assessors have urged the introduction of "clear escape routes" and personal alarms, advising that "the impact of the changes is expected to lead to more occasions when job-seekers will receive unpalatable and unwelcome information". The report adds: "It is the view of the assessors that the introduction of JSA will increase the level of risk of actual and attempted assault and verbal abuse ... and that appropriate remedial measures will be required to reduce this risk." One Labour MP has said that the Job Seekers' Allowance "threatens to turn Job Centres into fortresses".

For my part I can see an opportunity for personal advancement. As a pseudo-anarchist I have offered my services to promise security and protection to Job Centres and their staff. People like Mr Howarth have spent too long in Stratford-upon-Avon as MP for the Bard's constituency. The heroes of Brutalist Britain

are, as Miguel Portillo perceives, roughnecks not poets. Mussolini made his way in the world by offering his party as a protection racket for employers, going round to strike-torn factories to beat-up the pickets. So why not sort the dole queues out in the same way?

UN SET TO STUDY SAS SHOOTINGS

An application is being made to the United Nations special rapporteur on "extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions" to investigate the killings of the three IRA members in Gibraltar in 1988. The families of the three have asked the UN to investigate the killings. They believe that, despite the Strasbourg judgement reported in the last issue of *Freedom*, a "cover-up at the highest level" has blocked a full investigation into the deaths.

The British government used Public Interest Immunity certificates to gag orders signed by ministers and stop consideration of anything but the immediate events leading to the killings on the Rock. The long-term planning of the action by military intelligence, including a meeting of ministers which okayed the intervention of the SAS, have never been looked into either by the inquest jury in Gibraltar or by the human rights judges in Strasbourg.

Evidence from the Spanish police, which conflicts with that of the British authorities, has never been presented. The European Court of Human Rights declared that the act of killing the Gibraltar Three was an act of incompetence by the British authorities, the families of the dead maintain there was a plot to kill the three.

Mack the Knife

FPD TRAWL LANDS HUGE CATCH: part 1

Freedom Press Distributors have been out fishing in the depths and shallows of the literary seas again. Using undersized nets and ignoring EU quotas, we set out with modest ambitions and unexpectedly caught whole shoals of big 'uns. We managed to land the catch under the noses of the authorities, who assumed that it had been blown into our nets by the force of the French nuclear tests ... (stranger things happen at sea).

Midpassage: Alexander Herzen and European revolution 1847-1852* by Judith E. Zimmerman, University of Pittsburgh Press. Often called the first revolutionary exile, Russia's modern revolutionary movement really began with Herzen. This in-depth account of the most exciting period of his life covers not just the man but also the era, in which revolution and rebellion were breaking out all over Europe. After fleeing to the west following two periods of internal exile in Russia, he never went back but engaged himself with other exiles and revolutionaries from all over Europe. The author examines his role in the French revolution of 1848 and his complex ideological and personal interactions with such European radicals as Marx, Proudhon, Georg Herwegh, Bakunin, Mazzini and George Sand. A beautifully produced hardback with full bibliography, notes and index, 305 pages, published price \$49.95, OUR PRICE £6.95.

Brotherly Tomorrows: movements for a cooperative society in America, 1820-1920* by Edward K. Spann, Columbia University Press. This book is the first to systematically trace an important part of American social and cultural history: the century-long effort by many different groups to transform what they considered to be an excessively competitive and individualistic society into a cooperative one. This radical social idealism was a reaction to the social changes that came with modernisation and the westward movement in urban development. Spann examines each

phase in this crusade, from Millenarianism and Owenism through Fourierism to Modern Socialism, and the relationships between them. He discusses the various influences on the movements, as well as the leading radical players, and shows how the expanding modernism and material wealth of post-World War Two American society brought an increase in individualism which led to the collapse of social idealism after 1920. A large hardback with full bibliography and notes, plus index, 354 pages, published price \$44.00, OUR PRICE £5.95.

The Spirit of Revolt: anarchism and the cult of authority* by Richard K. Fenn, Rowman & Littlefield. "The increasing secularisation of society has meant that the sense of order and direction formerly provided by individuals' identification with religion is now obtained from identification with the state. Fenn provides a critique of the state in modern societies from the premise of the anarchist project, i.e. the emancipation of humankind from all forms of order except those arrived at by continuous and spontaneous acts of free consent that require that the state be replaced with more flexible, simpler and smaller forms of collective organisation." The author contends that "the modern state is essentially pathological, surrounding its authority with an irrational 'religious' aura in order to dominate the individual, and engaging in self-destructive patterns of thought and behaviour". A closely-reasoned, penetrating analysis in a handsomely-produced hardback with index and bibliography, 179 pages, published price \$45.00, OUR PRICE £5.95.

Lewis Mumford: a life* by Donald L. Miller, University of Pittsburgh Press. This widely acclaimed biography of the man who was perhaps the world's foremost authority on cities, architecture and technology was written with unprecedented access to his personal papers. This is the first biography of

Mumford, who has been called "the last of the great humanists". He was the author of *The City in History*, a vast and profound work, and *Technics and Civilisation*, a brilliant and original work published in 1934, the second half of which Freedom Press reprinted in 1986 as *The Future of Technics and Civilisation*. In his introduction to that book Colin Ward says of him "it is hard to think of another American writer this century ... who has so continually interpreted for his fellow citizens fundamental questions that so seldom get asked, let alone answered ... Mumford's debt to Kropotkin was profound and handsomely acknowledged." This enormous volume shows how that debt and the influence of many other people helped to shape his life. A massive 628 pages including 16 pages of photographs, index and notes, published price £15.95, OUR PRICE £4.95.

The Workers' Union* by Flora Tristan, translated with an introduction by Beverly Livingston, University of Illinois Press. Flora Tristan was a remarkable woman for her time. Born in 1803 the illegitimate daughter of a French mother and a Peruvian father, she was not herself working class but came to know the privations of the workers due to the refusal of the French state to recognise her parents' marriage in Spain. This meant the disenfranchisement of her family, who were denied legal access to her father's estate. Her brutal experiences as a wife and mother soon gave her an understanding of the plight of both workers and women, and she took to writing about the proletarian condition. She understood that the existing French artisans associations constituted a kind of proletarian 'aristocracy' to which the unskilled labourers could never aspire, and produced her book as a rousing cry for the universal unionisation of workers. She was thus the first person to call for an international association of the proletariat, and this work can be seen as an early statement of socialist-feminism. She died at the age of 41 in 1844. This smartly bound

hardback contains the prefaces to all three editions, songs for a Workers' Union, an index and a selective biography of works by and about Flora Tristan. 159 pages, published price £12.95, OUR PRICE £2.95.

Vera Zasulich: a biography* by Jay Bergman, Stanford University Press. A fascinating account, and the first complete one in any language of the life of the Russian revolutionary Vera Zasulich, who gained worldwide prominence in 1878 by walking into the office of the brutal Governor of St Petersburg, General Trepov, and shooting him. Such was the disaffection even then of the Russian people that the sympathetic jury acquitted her. Kropotkin noted the "profound impression" she had made on workers in Western Europe, and parents in England were even said to have named their children 'Vera' after her. Fleeing to the West, she moved from populism to Marxism, preaching revolution and trying to keep the peace between the two groups. We learn, among other things, that Nechaev, apart from trying to get his hands on Alexander Herzen's inheritance by seducing his daughter Nathalie, also tried to get his hands on our Vera in order to use her as a courier. Fortunately for her perhaps, she managed to avoid his (at least physical) clutches, unlike poor Ivan Ivanov, a fellow revolutionary whom Nechaev and his friends murdered in cold blood in a Moscow park. Zasulich finally fell out with the Bolsheviks whom she accused of betraying the revolution, and died, disillusioned, in 1919. There is lots of material about her relationships with many of the leading, and obscure, players of the time in this sympathetic portrait. Another well produced hardback with notes, bibliography and index. 261 pages, published price \$39.50, OUR PRICE £4.95.

Pugwash

* All fish are post-free inland, but add 15% as usual if ordering from abroad. They are also available to the trade at discount while stocks last, although individual customers have priority when stocks are low.

OIL FUELS WAR

Behind closed doors in London a pact was signed by oil companies and agents of selected 'governments' regarding the disposition of the Caspian oil. Two separate pipelines will take the produce of this 'field', which is estimated to equal the oil in the Middle East. One pipeline will go through Russian controlled territory, the other will go to the Turkish port of Ceyhan. The war that has been raging in Chechnya had a lot to do with the amazing wealth oil produces for the controlling elites.

The western governments which are pushing through this deal are the US, Russia and Britain with no other European governments allowed a look-in.

The tension of war will increase in that region, adding to the civil conflicts. The historical 'rivalry' of Russia and Turkey will make the area the most dangerous yet.

The demand for oil both for industry and transport in a capitalist society results in over-production of unwanted goods and a system of artificial competition.

The price of oil has been kept down since 1973 - this has caused the continuation of the Middle East conflict and the tremendous loss of life and suffering in the area. Part of the policy is to restrict both Iran and Iraq while trying to build up Saudi Arabia which is more amenable to US policy makers. The main purpose of the continued boycott of Iraq is to restrict its oil production. In a similar manner the war between this country and Argentina now can be seen to have been also oil related as over eighty companies are scrambling for the rights of exploitation in the Falklands seabed - levies or taxes to be paid both to Argentina and Britain. The headline in a London free-sheet has the ironical title 'LA SOBERIANA DE LAS MALVINAS NO ES NEGOCIABLE'

Although the Caspian agreement has been signed, yet according to protocol it still has to be ratified by the Russian parliament and the US senate. There will be hardly any discussion



in this country in the British Parliament, perhaps because most people do not know that these negotiations have even taken place at all. The press, except for specialist journals, has kept the population ignorant about it. Nevertheless here is danger of the new war zone as neighbouring governments will jostle for grabbing their share of wealth, which will benefit only their bank accounts while the whole unfortunate region will be embroiled in conflict. The timetable for the oil to flow through is pretty fast, perhaps by the end of next year.

The main players remain Russia and the United States, Britain as usual being the broker. Once the Russians have agreed to sign the agreement, which was worked out in London, the two presidents Clinton and Yeltsin will meet so that the two can sign 'the historical accord'. The indecent haste of this whole operation is unbelievable even by modern standards. The date is 23rd October for this special Yeltsin-Clinton meeting and the venue is the old American Embassy building in Regent's Park, London, a few minutes from the trumpeting elephants in the zoo.

There has been growing opposition all over the developed world to the inordinate use of the motor car and against road-building by Earth First! and other organisations. Admirable their opposition in both trying to 'reclaim the streets' and defending the ecology, it is in the extraction and the marketing of the oil that the future war conflicts are decided. Only in the anarchist society would such products be used with the greatest caution and after full discussion, certainly not by the capitalist method of agreements signed in almost total secrecy, agreements which produce prosperity to the few and ceasing misery and war to the majority.

John Rety

TOUGH ON BEGGARS

A half-hourly announcement on Euston Station advises passengers - sorry, customers - not to give gratuities to beggars as so doing attracts them to the station and encourages them to stay. The underground in similar moralising tone has posters dissuading us from giving to buskers: A Scotsman approached me on the station and said he needed another 30p to get his tube fare home as he'd just spent the night in Albany Street Police Station. I gave him a pound. As I came out of the photo shop he approached me again. "Listen, hen," he said, "what I told you about just now was a pack of lies, I wanted the money to buy myself a wee drink - I couldn't let you go without telling you the truth."

I asked him if he'd heard of the Jack Straw solution to winos and dossers and he had been told about it by the *Big Issue* seller. He thought the station police had become tougher on them where they would once have turned a blind eye. He thought the homeless and the beggars were too much of an embarrassment for the government, and passers-by seemed so caught up in their own stresses that they hardly noticed him any more except when he was drunk and he'd seen them walking diagonally to avoid him.

In an answer to the recent government consultation paper on aggressive beggars, a feature in the *Big Issue* magazine, written and sold by the homeless, highlights the harassment and distress people living rough have been subjected to by

members of the public. Kicked, knifed, prodded with umbrellas, hit with bottles, robbed, verbally abused, with nowhere to run to, nowhere to hide away and lick their wounds. My pal on the station told me how it was the young he felt sorry for, especially the young girls who are prey to all sorts of perverts and dangers. He saw women in the traditional role of homemaker and thought that they became particularly bitter when this role was denied them. He also drew my attention to the problems of menstruating on the streets. I felt ashamed that I hadn't thought of it myself, but could imagine the gross inconvenience.

He thinks that there are four main categories of beggars: the drunks, the mentally ill, the young and the con merchants. "You can always tell the genuine ones, they're the ones who rush off to buy something as soon as they raise a pound or two. The ones who keep at it all the day are the ones on the make, the ones who treat it like a nine-to-five job."

As I crossed the Euston Road the group of windscreen washers were hard at work. They had a sideline today for those who are not car proud. Ten pink roses for £2.50. They said they didn't want to talk. They said I was getting in their way, losing them money and besides they didn't talk to anyone official! Why should they? I crept away smelling my roses.

Silvia Edwards

ANARCHIST NOTES IN BRIEF

STING STUNG I must confess that I hadn't heard of Sting until my eye caught a juicy item in the newspaper which said, among other things, that he is a famous pop star and that his millions (in all denominations presumably) were kept in 107 bank accounts! I then looked him up in the *Sunday Times* 1995 edition of *Britain's Richest 500* and though he comes 284th in the list he gets a *display* biography compared with his neighbouring millionaires such as the Marquess of Bath, the Earl of Mansfield, et alia. Mark you, on the same page and in the same millionaire category (£40-45 million) is one Bernie Taupin (pop music) and Eric Clapton (pop music). All unknown to this ignoramus, which only goes to show how out of touch the old can be. When you think that Sting's "success came with 'Synchrocity' which sold seven million copies" how could one have missed it!

Anyway, poor rich Sting has apparently been stung by his accountant to the tune of £6 million, and at the time of writing the accountant is in the dock. But what is £6 million when you've got £44 million and, according to *Britain's Richest*, it increased by £14 million in the year.

ACCOUNTANTS, LAWYERS, CONSULTANTS ALL DOING WELL

Apart from the fact that Sting's accountant was too greedy, he must have been doing well for himself since it was revealed in court that he 'borrowed' some £680,000 from one of Sting's 107 accounts to "pay a tax demand and thus avoid bankruptcy in the process" (*Independent*, 10th October). And solicitors are again in the news thanks to a *Which* report which accuses some of them of fleecing their clients after giving them bad advice. But even the 'honest' lawyers don't give their services and 'expertise' for nothing. Think of what they are getting in the Maxwell brothers' trial now in its 76th day!

The consultant has now come into his own in our sophisticated capitalist society. Sometimes I think we ought to change the old saw to 'those who can, do; those who can't become consultants'. It's certainly more profitable if you can persuade enough people that you have the answers to all the questions. The biggest suckers are government ministers. After all, what does a minister who is a lawyer by profession, like Kenneth Clarke, know about running the so-called Health Service without 'experts' and 'consultants' apart from the 'Yes Minister' civil servants. And before he learned too much about it he became Chancellor of the Exchequer! Not only do the ministers have speech writers but, even more important is to

have the 'experts', the 'consultants' who tell the minister what the speech writer has to write.

CONSULTING THE TRAINS OFF THE TRACKS

Labour Research (August 1995) reports that in reply to a parliamentary question John Watts, minister of railways and roads (what does he know about either?) revealed that: "the department of transport, the office of passenger rail franchising and the rail regulator paid out £51.2 million for consultancy services between 1991-92 and May 1995". £51.2 million virtually to destroy the railway network. Privatisation is a Tory dogma which everybody with any experience of railway operation knows will not only reduce services and safety but also increase fares. Once again the road lobby has won and Thatcher, who boasted that she never travelled by train, is laughing!

BRAVE NEW WORLD

According to *The Guardian Society* (11th October): "A Sunday workshop to teach the physical and mental benefits of having a good laugh has been organised by a Birmingham Council." Makes you weep, doesn't it!?

LORD HOME - LORD PRIVILEGE RIP

For the *Guardian* (10th October) there was no space on their normally interesting obituaries page other than for Lord Home of the Hirsel, accompanied by a life-size photo of that weak almost featureless head. When he spoke on television not only did it appear that he had difficulty in articulating, one wondered whether he had a mouth. Perhaps he was one of the *real* hunting and fishing aristos and one shouldn't blame him for his unfortunate background. Yet he had a brother William, the playwright, who as an officer in World War Two was court martialled for refusing an order which he thought would lead his men to certain death. Years later when his *Now Barrabas* was being shown at the Wyndhams Theatre in Charing Cross Road, a rota of *Freedom* sellers were there flogging our literature!

THE REAL LORD HOME

It's all very well for the politicians and the media to say what a modest man he was. The fact is that he was prime minister for just about a year. Now those of us who remember the likes of Heath and Thatcher at the beginning of their careers at the top can remember how *gauche* they were. Thanks to the hairdressers, the elocutionists, the consultants, they learn fast. They are *actors*, not serious social and political thinkers or activists.

Poor old Lord Home didn't have a chance to be either an actor or a serious political communicator.

The *Guardian's* maxi-obituary, which I haven't the time nor inclination to read, nevertheless provides me with references in the only two fillers which, as it were, fill the empty spaces. The first: "He liked telling an interviewer that he could never be prime minister because he did his sums with matchsticks. A year later he was in Number 10". And the second, which surely damns him for eternity as a *real aristocrat*: "The young member for South Lanark during the period of mass unemployment had few economic remedies to offer. Labour MP Emrys Hughes recalled in a critical biography (1964) that he had suggested in the Commons that unemployed coal miners and their families might be brought down from Scotland to the London area to work as domestic servants" (my italics).

Surely truth is sometimes stranger than fiction! Don't forget that chap was Foreign Secretary for years and even Prime Minister! RIP!

Libertarian

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Fields, workshops and lowland crofts

I have the standard view of rural history in Britain that the land was stolen from the peasantry by robber barons in an accelerating process known in England and Wales as Enclosure and in Scotland as The Clearances. A century ago access to land was high on the political agenda, and it is now creeping back for everyone except, of course, politicians.

One of the ironies is that the conspiracy to keep the poor out of rural England is, in practical terms, not merely a matter of the rapacity of landowners, but much more a matter of planning policy. Any farmer could become a millionaire if he could sell his land to people who wanted to buy a few acres and build a house, which is an enormously widespread dream.

Planning policy since 1947 has decreed that agriculture is sacrosanct, and that all new non-agricultural development should be confined to the expansion of existing settlements. If you are rich, there are a hundred ways of getting round policy: hence the rash of barn conversions and gentrification of rural cottages. But if you're poor, keep out.

Immense harm has been done through over-production, including, where I live, contamination of rivers and water supply, but now every household pays farmers not to produce and to 'set aside' land for any purpose

but human settlement. I have cited before in this column the view of Maurice Ash that planning policy amounts to a conspiracy against the disadvantaged. "A conspiracy" he explained, "because it suits the policies of our centralised state to keep the cities as prisons for the poor. It suits both those who want to manipulate the poor for reasons of power, and those who want to keep them from the preserves of the rich."

In the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, where families were brutally dispossessed to make room for sheep and then for grouse-shooting, there were in the late nineteenth century a series of 'Land Wars' resulting in Gladstone's 1886 Crofters' Holdings Act (see Katherine Stewart, *Crofts and Crofting*, Edinburgh, 1990). Last month Dr Jim Hunter, a founding director of the Scottish Crofters' Union, gave the McEwen

Memorial Lecture in Dingwall urging that "feudalism should be eradicated from Scottish land law" and that both "state-owned and private crofting estates should be places in community ownership" (*The Scotsman*, 23rd September 1995).

Vast areas of the Highlands are in the hands of commercial shooting syndicates and Jim Hunter observed that the days of large barren estates were numbered:

"Anyone who contends that the Highlands and Islands depends on having people – mostly idiots – going around with their guns shooting our wildlife need their heads examined."

Needless to say, today's crofters do not make a living from their livestock rearing or cultivation or fishing, but combine it with another source of cash income like bus driving or catering for the tourist industry. Some, as at Scorraig in Wester Ross, are conscious members of the alternative lifestyles scene trying to market their expertise in wind power generation, and a handful may actually be in the over-publicised telecottage industry working from home in variants of new technology.

In central Scotland would-be rural settlers face the same obstacles as their English or Welsh counterparts: a blank wall of disapproval from the planning machine. One local authority has tried to make a breakthrough in trying to promote Lowland Crofting.

The people involved know perfectly well that this is a misleading description, but one which is better than the more accurate account which is Very Low Density Rural Housing and Woodland Development. This is in West Lothian, halfway between Edinburgh in the east and Motherwell and Glasgow in the west, not far from the old town of Bathgate and the new town of Livingston.

Knowing that the idea of a new low-density development in the countryside is a kind of blasphemy against planning orthodoxy, West Lothian District Council carefully chose an area of bleak treeless low-grade agricultural land where farmers, mostly graziers in fact, were anxious to get out of the industry, and have excluded places designated as "areas of special agricultural importance" as well as those described as "areas of great landscape value".

They specify that a farm of about 200 acres should be split, with one-third of the land "devoted to landscape improvement, public access and nature conservation and one-third,

the better farmland to be retained in agricultural use. The remaining third of the farm will provide the land for the croft holdings – typically a dozen or so." The purpose of the landscape improvement is to bring to reality the dreams of a Central Scotland Forest.

The complexity of these proposals, calling for enforceable agreements on the public aspect of the policy, call for a developer to buy the land from farmers who are queuing up to sell, to carry out the landscape policy and provide services like gas and electricity and basic farm-style roads. Luckily for the people who dreamed up the policy, the right kind of developer has turned up in the form of Donald Young the former director of the Central Scotland Countryside Trust. He told the journal *Planning Week* that:

"At the Trust I had become tired of banging my head against the wall in terms of trying to implement the Central Scotland Forest project on a large scale with wholly inadequate mechanisms. I have used agricultural techniques to provide woodlands, landscaping and services. If one used normal development approaches to providing services such as kerbed roads and street lighting, the schemes would not make money."

It certainly won't make the money that a commercial developer would expect, and there are more restrictions on the kind of activities the lowland crofters can indulge in: no regular access for heavy goods vehicles for example. On 22nd September the first of thirteen crofters moved in, aiming to spend part of their time and earn part of their income from growing crops and raising livestock, and the rest from some other source.

This was at West Harwood Farm and I had the opportunity to go there a few days later, as well as four more sites that are being parcelled up in this way. The planners told me that they had a positive bias in favour of 'eco-friendly' housing experiments, and at West Harwood Farm a reed-bed biological sewage treatment plant has been installed.

West Lothian District Council has been deluged with enquiries and there has been an enormous demand for its already out-of-print *Lowland Crofting Handbook*. This seems to me to indicate a huge submerged yearning for a new kind of rural living, and this is not surprising because of the collapse of most other ways of earning a living in a regular job.

It offers no solution for the problems of the poor, but that was not the intention. It is meant to be a breakthrough against the stifling assumptions of rural land-use planning. Katherine Stewart begins her book on old style crofting with the sentence "A crofter's son once defined a croft as a small area of land entirely surrounded by regulations". The same applies to the new style Lowland Crofts. And the reason is that the West Lothian planners know that a host of speculators are watching for a chance to move in. As Roger Rankin explained in *Planning Week* (28th September): "In some polite planning circles lowland crofting is not mentioned. In less polite circles, references to it are met with snorts of derision."

I don't deride it. I see it as the first chink in the armour of exclusion. For example, in this column (*Freedom*, 17th September 1994) I told the true story of a young man down our way who wanted to start a tree nursery and live in a caravan on the site until he could begin to recoup his outlay and begin building a house. Needless to say our local planners instantly turned down his proposal. So I asked a bevy of Scottish planners if he would be accepted as a lowland crofter. Yes, they concluded, so long as he put in the foundations and laid one brick a year.

This is one small step forward in overcoming just one of the obstacles to rural resettlement. I'm going to keep on watching what happens in West Lothian, not because it is revolutionary (except in planning terms) but because it re-opens the debate on popular access to land.

Colin Ward

Through the Anarchist Press

Now that this column is metamorphosing into a book it was time, according to promises long ago made, that I should look at newspapers other than the anarchist ones. So I ventured into the local library where weary-looking people sat at tables morosely thumbing through the daily offerings. I sat down with them and at once I was enveloped in indescribable gloom. I can't tell you how awful some of these papers looked and how badly they compared with such fare as comes from our presses.

I steeled my nerves, however, and decided to treat this as a necessary journalistic assignment and to look up something for my own interest as well as for our readers. For the previous day I was shown round the newsroom of such a periodical. It was a spacious room where about forty individuals sat motionless in front of their machines. It was difficult to tell what they were doing besides looking at their screens and occasionally scratching their noses. On the blue screens were the news words marching along like ants, coming from all over the world. Explosion here, explosion there, explosions everywhere. From correspondents everywhere in thick jungles and on the tops of volcanoes.

Every story was written by a competent journalist. They were all the bare bones of the event competently researched. Here in this room sat the sifters, editors, call them what you like. These were the people who decided which story was to run and which story was to be 'spiked'. After all, there was no space for everything and there were stories that however interesting it might not be *political* to print.

Two stories interested me most. One just came in from Kenya with the astounding content that one-tenth of that country's money has gone missing. This I thought would be headline news in the anarchist press at least – the fact that somebody or some people in government stole ten per cent of the entire wealth of the Kenya treasury. Their national bank could not find the receipts. So that was one story.

The other story, dateline Budapest, was from their man in Bulgaria reporting that an ageing nuclear reactor was causing great concern and experts were worried about a possible meltdown with the consequences of another Chernobyl disaster is not worse.

So there I was in the library the following day and as a matter of experiment I was

doggedly looking through the worthy papers until my eyes ached to see what showing was given to what I chose to be the headline news.

Well, either I have no journalistic acumen, sense or minimal understanding as to what should or should not be printed in the papers or some person in another room put a blue pencil through the lot – the dismal fact is that my editorial judgement differs from Wapping's choice. I saw one mention of the Kenyan financial scandal hidden at the bottom of a back page of a quality journal, but alas the possibility of a nuclear fall-out disaster was ignored by my masters' press one and all and I could find not a single word on the Bulgarian atomic power station on the blink.

But then such news may lie buried, unrevealed to the public, for decades just as the news of radioactive waste dumped in shallow waters and fishing grounds by Alderney Island.

I was reflecting what a privilege it must be to sit in a newsroom with its wealth of information, and how demoralising it was to sit in the public library the following day and read the dregs. So, comrades, I'm still of the opinion that my time is better spent reading the anarchist press, which is honest and uncensored.

There are many such newsrooms in this town where the news they read on their flickering screens is known to them only and stops with them. But that other type of news, how it gushes uncontrolled through their acres of print!

John Rety

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LAND AND FREEDOM YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Land and Freedom, which won the International Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festivals this year and has been widely shown in Spain, opened in London on 6th October and will be on release throughout the country.



Emma Goldman with a group of peasants in the Valencia region (from the Freedom Press volume *Spain 1936-1939: Social Revolution and Counter Revolution*)

The new film *Land and Freedom* is one of the great works of our time, and everyone should see it who has any interest in the Spanish Civil War and Revolution or in any civil war or revolution, in the labour movement or in land reform, in authoritarian or libertarian socialism, in history or in humanity, in love and hope, or by anyone who just likes good films.

The main narrative is simple enough. In 1936 a young unemployed Communist in Liverpool is moved by a visiting speaker from Spain to join the civil war which has just begun (as thousands of people did); by chance he joins a unit of the POUM militia on the Aragon front (as George Orwell did); he trains with them and then fights with them for several months; among those killed in the fighting is one his best comrades, partly through his fault; the unit liberates a village, whose inhabitants decide to adopt collectivisation; the unit decides not to give up its identity by joining the regular Republican army; he is wounded and sent to recuperate in Barcelona (as George Orwell was); there he has a brief affair with his dead comrade's former lover, but she leaves him because he decides to join the Republican army; during the May Days of 1937 he joins a Communist unit on the barricades; finally disillusioned by events, however, he tears up his Party card; he returns to his old unit and his lover; the unit does more fighting, but then is forcibly disbanded as part of the suppression of POUM; in the confusion his lover is killed; after her funeral he has to flee from Spain (as George Orwell did).

The framework of the narrative is clumsy but successful. The whole story in Spain is told through the eyes of the young man, but as a series of flashbacks from more than half a century later. The film begins with his death in Liverpool today. His granddaughter finds his papers, and as she goes through his letters and photographs and newspaper cuttings each episode unfolds. The film ends with his funeral, at which she recites a couplet from William Morris, throws into his grave a handful of earth which he had brought back from his lover's grave in Spain, and flourishes his red neckerchief. (If you have tears to shed, prepare to shed them then.)

The way the story is told is as effective as may be expected from the director Ken Loach (*Up the Junction*, *Cathy Come Home*, *Poor Cow*, *Rank and File*, *Kes*, *Days of Hope*, *The Price of Coal*, *Ladybird*, *Ladybird*, and so on), from his favourite writer Jim Allen, and from a marvellous team of technicians and actors, many of them amateurs and many of them Spanish. In such a context it is almost wrong to name stars, but Ian Hart as the young man, Suzanne Maddock as his granddaughter, Rosana Pastor as his lover give a lead without ever stealing a scene. The rest of the cast work now as a single unit, now as separate individuals, more like life than art. The crowd and war scenes are dizzy evocations of confusion, quite unlike the choreographed constructions of traditional cinema. The dialogue – much of it in Spanish – sounds as if it has been improvised rather than composed, and in some of the climactic scenes it must have been. The subtitling is adequate but only just. The photography is realistic but restrained. The violence is inevitable but not excessive. The sex is gentle and tactful by the current debased standards. Only people who were in that place at that time can say how accurate and authentic the details are, but it can be said that the whole treatment is completely convincing.

However, it should also be said in a political paper that the politics of the film is bad as well as good. It is good because it is put right at the centre of the whole story and is taken quite seriously; but it is bad because so much is left out. Trouble begins with the title. 'Land and Freedom' (*Zemlya i Volya*) was a slogan taken up by the Russian populist movement, and the name taken by the main revolutionary organisations, in the 1860s and again in the 1870s, which were followed by the Social Revolutionary Party, the largest organisation on the left until it was suppressed by the

Bolsheviks. 'Land and Freedom' (*Tierra y Libertad*) was then a slogan taken over by the Spanish anarchist movement in the early twentieth century, and the name taken by one of the main anarchist-communist periodicals and publishing organisations in Barcelona; this became the mouthpiece of the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI), the ideological conscience of the anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Labour (CNT).

It is a silent irony that the phrase is now taken by a film about a different organisation altogether.

For the particular party in the story was neither populist nor anarchist, but a coalition of revolutionary Marxist organisations formed in 1935 as the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (POUM). Nor was it Trotskyist, as was alleged by both Communists and Liberals, although it contained many former Trotskyists, but it fiercely criticised and was fiercely criticised by Trotsky himself. In practice it was very close to the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, though it also fiercely criticised the leadership (as did many rank-and-file anarchist and anarcho-syndicalists in Spain and the world – and in *Spain and the World*). What united the members of POUM and other revolutionary Marxist groups and of the anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist organisations in 1936-1937 was their shared hostility to the Communists and the Communist-dominated Socialists, whose pro-bourgeois political policy threatened the social revolution in the Republican part of Spain and whose pro-Russian foreign policy threatened the left-wing forces in the war against the Nationalists and Fascists.

One of the most surprising things about *Land and Freedom* is that sectarian details play virtually no part. We are shown hatred of the Fascists and hostility to the Communists, and love of the people and friendship with the anarchists (slightly spoiled by the usual misspelling of Durruti). But, considering that both Loach and Allen are Marxist intellectuals and veterans of Trotskyist organisations, it is remarkable that there are no references to Marx, Lenin or Trotsky, to any particular policies or leaders or even the title of POUM, to any Spanish newspapers or pamphlets or broadcasts, to any need for parties or lines or even ideology. This doesn't matter for anyone who knows about the Spanish Revolution and Civil War, but anyone who doesn't may be muddled and even misled by the apparent isolation and ingenuousness of the characters in the film.

Another problem is that what political line there is often gets lost. When the village is collectivised we aren't shown how it works or whether it works. When a collaborationist priest is shot we aren't shown what other atrocities may follow (apart from the contents of a church being burnt). When enemy soldiers are captured we aren't shown what happens to them. When the hero leaves the Communists we aren't shown how he gets back to the front. When his unit is disbanded we aren't shown how he gets away. It is refreshing to have a film with no intellectual characters, but disappointing to have one with so little intellectual content. It is stimulating to have a film about the working class, but unfortunate to have one which shows no one doing any work. Ken Loach and Jim Allen are

too sophisticated not to have thought about these questions, but they presumably decided not to answer them, just to tell the story. They were helped on the film by Victor Alba, the former editor of the POUM paper and author of its history, they must have read *Homage to Catalonia*, they may have consulted other sources, but they seem to have deliberately refrained from drawing any kind of tendentious moral, however apt. Perhaps they were afraid that the film might get too long, but it could well be more than three instead of less than two hours long. And of course the very naivety of the political content does actually make it more powerful in purely cinematic terms, however much political experts might regret the lack of clearer references.

At the same time there are a few contemporary references which are both illuminating and bewildering. At the beginning of the film, the graffiti on the concrete staircase of the dying man's tower-block include the symbols of both the National Front and the Anarchists; not quite Spain in 1936, perhaps, but not as far away as one might think. And at the end of the film, when his granddaughter waves his red neckerchief, some of the other people at the funeral give a clenched-fist salute; what kind of revolutionaries are they, now, and indeed what has the old man's politics been all this time? The arguments about whether to fight for revolution with the risk of losing the war, or fight the war with the risk of losing the revolution, echo left-wing arguments today as well as yesterday; though today what is in question is an election rather than the revolution, a mortgaged house rather than the common land, and a livelihood rather than life. It is tempting to be reminded of this island now, but it is more to the point to think of bigger problems altogether.

In general, though, the politics of the film is strongly libertarian without being crudely dogmatic. The direct democracy of the POUM unit and of the collectivised village is shown with no leaders and with much uproar, but to great effect. Although the central character is a man, the women characters say and do nearly all the important things from beginning to end. The feelings of comradeship and solidarity, of hope and love, of hate and fear are conveyed without sentimentality or rhetoric; there is none of the emotional and intellectual nonsense of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, though the narrative does resemble Ernest Hemingway's laconic technique. Some of the climactic scenes are extraordinarily impressive – the arguments, the funerals, the interventions of women, the decisions to collectivise the liberated village and to preserve the POUM unit, the horror of the May Days, the final destruction of the unit – and have the force of documentary rather than fiction.

The final judgement must be that *Land and Freedom* is powerfully moving – both in the sense of moving us to excitement and anger and sorrow, and in the sense of moving us to action. But what sort of action? What price land and freedom now? Where does anyone try to collectivise the land any more? Where does anyone struggle for true freedom any more? What has been the result of every civil war since the Spanish Civil War, whichever side won? What has been the result of every revolution since the Spanish Revolution, whether successful or unsuccessful? Is it just a nostalgic spectacle, or is it a timely reminder? Surely the latter. Jimmy Porter in John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*, who nursed his father dying from wounds in Spain, complains that 'there aren't any good, brave causes left'; even if this wasn't really the truth forty years ago, it seems closer to the truth now. But here at least was one good brave cause, which was lost not because it wasn't good enough but because it was too good, which was braver than anything most of us have ever known, and which shows both how things are and how they might be. Go and see the film, read more about the subject, and think.

NW

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THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT IN THE NETHERLANDS

There exists a national anarchist network in the Netherlands whose meetings are very poorly attended (about fifteen people every meeting). Its members don't do very much. They don't even have a publication. This network is a kind of informal meeting place for folk who call themselves anarchists and who don't even have a political programme. The name of the network is Landelijk Anarchistisch Samenwerkingsverband (National Network of Anarchist Co-operation) or LAS.

In the North of the country, there is a regional organisation, the Noordelijk Gewest van Vrije Socialisten (Northern Region of Libertarian Socialists) or NGVS. Its members organise, every year over Easter, an informal demonstration. It is a tradition which goes back to the '20s. In those days the anti-militarist movement was quite strong. In 1933 its members bought a plot of land as the authorities had banned their meetings. Although there had been a law in favour of conscientious objection dating back to 1923, many refused to take advantage of it and were sentenced to two years imprisonment. There was therefore a strong mobilisation out of which was born the NGVS, but now most of its members are of the older generation. Their quarterly, *Recht Voor Allen Van Onderop (Justice for the Underdogs)* is of very poor quality. There is also a rival grouping in the North, the Noordelijk Genootschap van Vrije Socialisten (Northern Association of Libertarian Socialists) who also put out a quarterly publication *Recht*

Voor Allen (Justice for All). To explain the rivalry between the groups would take a lot of ink and I imagine that even those most closely involved probably are unaware of its causes. The majority of those who are members of these groups are real ageing anarchist working class militants

There are two other publications. These emanate from the younger generation. There is the quarterly *AS (anarcho-socialist)* which is published in Rotterdam. This is a publication coming from an independent group of intellectuals. Nearly all its editors are academics. The contents of this publication are theoretical. Many of its editors are members of a political party. Theirs is a fairly revisionist anarchism which they call "pragmatic". They favour a "Libertarian State"!

Then there is *Buiten de Orde (Out of Order)* the publication of a formerly anarcho-syndicalist group. The group is called *Vrije Bond (Free Union)*. It's not an anarchist publication in the strictest sense of the term but its adherents publish articles on anarchism. One of its editors puts forward a "post-modernist anarchism", that is to say he makes a distinction between anarchism and anarchy. In his view anarchism as an ideology is dated. In Amsterdam there is *De Raaf (The Raven)*. This is the quarterly of the group called the Anarchist Federation of Amsterdam (FAA). Recently, our group *Vrije Socialist* has been collaborating with this group. *De Raaf* publishes articles coming from a wide

OKLAHOMA BOMBING UPDATE

Serious questions have arisen about the nature of the terrorist attack in Oklahoma City. Many explosives experts claim that a fertiliser bomb could not do the sort of damage that occurred there. High explosives would be necessary to sheer off the steel and concrete pillars holding up the building. There should also have been fertiliser residue on site, something not present according to independent investigators.

A seismograph in a nearby university shows that two explosions occurred, not one. Early news reports of the bombing also mention two explosions and one report claims that firemen discovered several

range of anarchist groups and individuals. In Amsterdam there is also a weekly alternative paper which sometimes publishes articles on anarchism, *NN* (this means nomen nescio, unknown suspect). The contents of these articles are also post-modernist.

Peter Zegers (Vrije Socialist, Amsterdam)

Contacts

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- Buiten de Orde, BP 1338, 3500 BH Utrecht
- De Raaf/FAA, BP 51217, 1007 EE Amsterdam
- LAS, BP 189, 7800 AD Emmen
- NGVS/Recht Voor Allen, BP 48, 8430 AA Oosterwolde
- NGVS/Recht Voor Allen van Onderop, BP 37, 8426 ZM Appelscha
- NN, Van Ostadestraat 233n, 1073 TN Amsterdam
- Vrije Bond, BP 61523, 2606 AM Den Haag
- Vrije Socialist, BP 713, 1000 AS Amsterdam.

canisters of unexploded TNT in the ruins. The remains of the building were trucked away and buried, making investigation almost impossible. This action, along with the many other questions and rumours, has led to talk of a government cover-up.

Some non-government investigators think the bombing was the result of an FBI-BATF 'sting' operation that failed. The bombers (that they presumably helped set up) managed to evade the roadblocks and parked their truck bomb in front of the building. High explosives stored illegally inside were then set off by the explosion of the fertiliser bomb.

After blaming the attack upon the militia groups, the media has generally absolved them of it, although the right-wing terrorist theme still pervades the liberal press (one important exception being Alexander Cockburn of the left-liberal *Nation*, who is sympathetic to the new populism). As for the militias themselves, a process of radicalisation appears to be occurring, no doubt spurred on by the new repressive legislation proposed by the Clinton regime and the police assassination of an Ohio militia member last June.

Recently J.J. Johnson, an important leader of the movement, who is an African American by the way, stated that it was necessary for the militia to become involved in organising people against police murder. He cited an example in San Francisco where the cops killed a 'drug suspect' and several hundred neighbourhood people rioted in response. He felt that the militia should become involved to counter these killings. When questioned about the native uprisings in Canada, he said that he "was sympathetic to the Canadian struggles and the one in Mexico".

On another occasion Mr Johnson claimed that many black people were getting involved in the movement in his area. He felt that it made sense for them to become militia members since nobody knows government oppression better than the African Americans. So much for the media propaganda about the militias being composed of Aryan Nations types and white supremacists!

Larry Gambone

I have reached that unfortunate state in life when I have no heroes and no villains only those I am fond of and those I dislike. It is a sad stage in life to arrive at and a weak heart, a weak bladder and no more P.G. Wodehouse becomes a magnificent painkiller (Indomethacin S.R.) for one's world conscience, raging hatreds and deathless loves die hard but like you, comrade, I see tragedy in the round in the old man or woman shuffling our elected council pavements. Old men and women, diseased, verminous and mindlessly lost within a society that can dream up no answer to that social problem in all the political manifestos or the wordy ramblings of we the voice of the people's papers. And in those wrecks of a society that refuses to be discarded I see the image of such as we not yet drowning in our economic and physical sewer but making brave gestures at the bar counters. It is good that the young should have heroes and villains for their moralities are in black and whites and mum cooks the dinners and dad pays the rent, but time and age is a hard teacher and we pass from cynicism to sensible understanding. In the ghastly '30s we had our heroes to a man and they were iconoclasts to a man as on the public platform or within the printed page they wrote and drew the exposés of the straw men and women within the pantheon of the illustrious dead and cheerfully living. The tongue and the pens were dipped in acid and none more than Michael Foot truly the hero of the chattering left. Small, thin and stooping with spectacles agleam with accusations, in the crowded halls his thin finger would stab at the black heart of evil, and God we loved it as this small man each time brought his cheering audience on its knees. The academic turned revolutionary, the brilliant pamphleteer who named living names before Lloyds Underwriters got into the act over half a century later. It was Foot's pamphlet *Guilty Men* wherein he named the men in high office who paid Danegeld to a Nazi government in exchange for a 'piece of paper' that signposts the swift road to world war and in the grim '30s Foot named them and his pamphlet became the Road to Damascus or a political Pilgrim's Progress according to one's ideology, religious or political. But all too often they were men without power and they strutted the hired platform of the evening

Blooming 'ell

like National Theatre ham actors baying Jacobean tragedy, and none more so than Foot. This small, thin, revolutionary rabble-rouser who that same day would write the editorial for a right-wing national newspaper, suck soup at the table of the right-wing press baron and sip wine as the amusing invited guest of those rich, impervious and indifferent to Mike's flaming rubber arrows. Nothing exposes dear old Mike more than when he wrote, in September 1995: "I read Byron's *Don Juan* and comprehended at last what my teachers should have told me at school, or at least at university, that it is the epic record of the most exciting period in



"A love story so unusual it has to be true"

human history: the era of the French Revolution, and the birth of the Rights of Man." This is the foolishness of the intellectual academic locked within a tiny economic social elite absorbing and regurgitating each other's printed opinions to believe that anyone a horse or a sore foot away from an ill-reported scene of violence within a nation's perennial enemy or a political small bookshop catering to a minority readership believed in, knew or cared about the Rights of Man or, if they were aware of it, the French Revolution for it is mass communication and mass human involvement that makes the nineteenth-hundreds, for the first time, world history. Two world wars, three world revolutions, women freed from the slavery of the washing tub, visual communication worldwide for the poor purse, food distributions of the world's harvests, men and women stepping onto the moon and out into deep space and, of course, the ballpoint pen. But on those gentle CND marches past the flowering hedgerows one stepped in tune to Michael's aged gait as he followed his walking stick, an old man deep in shallow thoughts. Yet he was a creature of his time and neither Blair nor Major nor Ashdown could command his sincerity and his flaming rhetoric within a world or a hall without microphones. But while Michael strutted the boards and sucked soup with the rich and the easily-forgotten it was not only the age of *Mein Kampf* and *Das Kapital* but there in the dark rat-ridden holds of merchant ships, acting as ballast, came American pulp fiction to pleasure the imaginations and fantasies of the eternally young. *Black Mask* for the intellectuals, but horror and terror as handbooks of sexual sadism as creatures of indescribable horror came creeping out of the worm-ridden graves to do rotten things to the heroine's sister. Wordsworth thou should be living at that hour. And it was the age of Bloomsbury as the Bloomsbury trivial groupies gave Foot's rage its intellectual edge and there, queening it in the centre of the Bloomsbury Group was the writer Lytton Strachey, the bearded thick-glasses

iconoclast, the Dark Destroyer of yesteryears heroes. In his top-of-the-pile *Eminent Victorians* the Victorian folk heroes were stripped of their reputations and their faults exposed under the gleam in Strachey's glasses. The accusing question that follows the quivering pointed finger into the face of the elderly woman handing you the old-time religious leaflet is always 'If God is good and all-powerful why does he allow babies to be burned, ah?' and like the old-time Stalinist she has the Party's answer but in Strachey's closed coterie brain locked behind their barricade of toasted crumpets there were no intruding pre-neo-Stalinists to defend the Victorian heroes. Economically secure in a secure Britain they fed off each other's opinions, saving their adulation for Strachey. Yes as within every closed society, be it family, religious, political or social, they betrayed each other and the key, as always,

that unlocked their need to betray was their lack of genuine talents. The trinity of Holroyd's great grey book,* Hampton's film of the suicidal Dora Carrington and the Carrington exhibition within the Barbican Art Gallery are not a tribute but a wake to a small group who have been dog-tagged by the cultural speculators to fill a page and a wall. The reviewers, of equally small talent, moved in to feast of the high-hung meat of the Bloomsbury Group, Freud and the lately defused and for their joy they became the iconoclasts of the week yet though it makes enjoyable reading like unto any entertaining mass murder trial they are wrong to stand in judgement for we live our lives according to our talent, our courage and our need to be accepted and we are answerable to no one but our own conscience and that you cannot betray.

At the Anarchist Bookfair I shall debate within myself whether to buy the drawings of fifty famous anarchists or a pint of Guinness and then betray my principles for another pint of Guinness that I will piss out that same night but maybe, comrades, some day it will be fifty-one famous anarchists.

Arthur Moyses

* *Carrington* by Michael Holroyd published by Vintage Random House, paperback, £9.99

Home and Away

Dear *Freedom*,
Silvia Edwards (*Freedom*, 7th October) raises the question of immigration. At risk of being labelled a racist, I'd like to offer a few comments.

Britain is already one of the most crowded countries on earth. A small group of islands with nearly sixty million people and few natural resources can never be a safe haven for every persecuted minority in the world. We are not a virtually empty continent like Canada or Australia, or even a moderately populated one like the USA.

Therefore to advocate an open door, as Silvia Edwards seems to, for the population of Hong Kong or East European Gypsies is to indulge in impractical fantasy.

She seems to disapprove of the understandable reaction of people in Camden Social Security office when confronted by a group of Polish Gypsies advertising McDonalds. To mention Nazi murders of Gypsies over half a century ago, as though these were the fault of the homeless and unemployed in 1990s Britain, who must therefore be pushed down housing lists and compete in an even more hopeless labour market, is to demonstrate the same middle-class contempt for the 'underclass' as the Camden Councillors. If this is the attitude of many so-called anarchists, it's hardly surprising that there is no support for them among the poorer sections of society.

Before some people start screaming racist and fascist, let me make it clear that I would be quite happy for anyone on earth to settle here without hindrance - provided every other country did the same. Since this will not happen without a worldwide anarchist revolution, which will certainly not occur within the lifetime of most of us, we have to deal with the world as it is with all its inconvenient realities.

It should also be pointed out that when liberals and lefties advocate uncontrolled

immigration to Britain they are only talking about certain parts of it. There are 8,000 Somali refugees in the Borough of Newham and 16,000 in Tower Hamlets (according to the chair of their association). I wonder how many there are in, say, Hampstead or Richmond?

I don't suppose people like Silvia Edwards want to see Britain's inner cities turned into third world shanty towns (though I suspect such a stunt would suit certain interests down to the ground) but to favour uncontrolled immigration without thinking through the implications for those who must suffer the consequences - including, note well, minority groups already here - does nothing for the credibility of anarchist ideas in general.

To forestall the tedious tantrums of 'anti-fascists' I am not opposing immigration on racial or nationalistic grounds. I am saying that Britain, and especially the poorer areas, cannot accommodate any more immigrants of any kind, not even if they are white-skinned and speak perfect cockney English.

John Wood

Mr Wood's letter makes some valid points, but I must reiterate my point that the Hong Kong Chinese are a unique case and should be offered residency in Britain. Britain may be overcrowded but not by Hong Kong standards.

Just for the record, I do not live cocooned in leafy Hampstead but in a council flat near Euston Station among a large Bangladeshi community. If the government were to provide sufficient funds for rented community housing and cease the right to buy policy so that local people have satisfactory housing, resentment towards the immigrant would fade away.

Silvia Edwards

Not Ready

Dear Editors,
While the highly publicised leak that one of the Blair coterie wrote a document saying that Labour is not ready for government since it hasn't an agreed platform and recent record of activity on the lines of those of the Thatcher-Tories 16 years ago won't greatly surprise any anarchist, it perhaps contains germs of truth which we can use to reveal more about politics.

Let's look back twenty years. Labour in power, Wilson - a politician with a 'leftist' reputation - leading his third government, making no effort to challenge class society.

The government that made no objection to US mass murder in Indo-China, which enthusiastically endorsed the way the petroleum companies engineered a murderous civil war in Nigeria, which turned a blind eye to the actions of the fascist regime in what was then Rhodesia, which - though it had promised to get rid of Polaris and American bases in Britain - was in fact arranging for the installation of yet more modern weaponry.

The Opposition was fully cognisant with this, though this didn't prevent it for one moment bleating about the rule of law and the need to subdue 'powerful forces, like the trade unions' to such rule. At a Party conference a year before they took power, they laid down their strategy of provoking a major struggle with one or other trade union in their second period of government.

Soon thereafter, as a result of this, the Tories were elected. By deliberately sending the wrong signals to a fellow monetarist regime in Latin America, they convinced it we wouldn't mind if they took from us a little inhabited archipelago off their coast. They moved, at the expense of several hundred unnecessarily killed, the Tories managed to get cheap publicity: the reputation for courage and patriotism and a passport to re-election.

They then set about confrontation not just with the trade unions but with those

who oppose nuclear weaponry and, more immediately important to them (since they had resolved to make their battle with the unions concentrate on the miners), those who opposed nuclear power. They did not stop at murdering an elderly woman. When the battle came with the unions a whole department of government was given over to manufacturing acts of violence to be attributed to the miners and to covering those that were used against them.

A strategy such as that could only be mounted against someone alleged to be of the left. But it is the lack of readiness for similar activity that apparently convinces Mr Philip Gough that Labour is not yet ready for government. For me, personally, this lack if the only good thing I have ever heard about Tony Blair.

LO

Libertarian and Sectarian Anarchism

Dear *Freedom*,
Praise from Peter Cadogan is an insult rather than a compliment. When he singles out Colin Ward and myself as the only people responsible for "anarchist opinion" which is heard (7th October), he puts us in a difficult position. I at least refuse to be conscripted into his campaign against the anarchist movement.

In general, the significant facts about Peter Cadogan are as follows. He has been involved in many organisations for more than half a century, but he has always treated them as what he wants them to be rather than as what they are. He has looked at many publications for more than half a century, but he has always read into them what he wants from them rather than what is in them. For several decades he has been making statements about various events and tendencies and organisations and publications which sound dramatic and seem significant but which are usually complete nonsense.

In the particular case of the anarchist movement and anarchist publications,

the relevant facts about Peter Cadogan are as follows. He has never been and isn't now any kind of anarchist - as he said in his first article in an anarchist paper. He has never read and doesn't now read most of the writings which have been produced by anarchists, either in the past or in the present, and he doesn't know about the content or even the existence of nearly all of them.

As for the current situation of anarchist propaganda, in English there is indeed Colin Ward, but there have also been David Goodway and Peter Marshall in this country, Noam Chomsky and Murray Bookchin in the United States, George Woodcock and Dimitri Roussopoulos in Canada, and so on, who have addressed considerable audiences in books, articles and broadcasts. And there are many more writers and speakers in many other languages who have been doing the same. We may not all agree with all of them, but we can't deny that they are writing and saying all sorts of interesting and important things. To ignore their existence is to confess ignorance of anarchism today. And to say that there wasn't "a significant anarchist movement except in Spain" is to betray equal ignorance of anarchism yesterday.

Peter Cadogan has nothing to do with all this; he knows virtually nothing about anarchism and has virtually nothing to say to anarchists. If he appears in anarchist papers or at anarchist meetings, it is because of the excessive hospitality of anarchist editors and organisers and the excessive tolerance of anarchist readers and listeners. But no one should suppose he has any standing in the anarchist movement.

NW

Congratulations

Dear *Freedom*,
Congratulations on the continued excellence of your international reporting - *Freedom* is a valuable source of the world stories that the mainstream media decide to ignore.

Austen Naughten

Food for Thought ... and Action!

Recent arrivals at Freedom Press Bookshop.

Gunrunners' Gold: how the public's money finances arms sales, World Development Movement. If there is anybody left, apart from dyed-in-the-wool Tories, who believes that since 1979 we have been living in some kind of *laissez faire* capitalist paradise where the efficient prosper and the rest go to the wall, then they should take a butchers at this bulky report and ponder over the thousands of facts and statistics. They show conclusively that over a fifth of British arms exports are in fact paid for not by foreign governments but by the British taxpayer (and even when we're unemployed we still pay VAT, duty and other hidden taxes). Apart from high-profile scandals such as the Malaysian Pergau Dam bribe-for-arms, the hidden public subsidies to the government's friends in the arms industry take many forms, including not only underwriting the deals by the Export Credits Guarantee Department, but even subsidising the arms companies to sell the arms and the bank that makes the loan by guaranteeing repayment in full if the buyer fails to cough up. Nice work if you can get it, and plenty of people are getting it: in 1990 alone 373 ex-MoD and armed forces personnel left to take lucrative jobs in the arms industry, or the banks that finance it. In addition the public are paying £8.6 million a year on teams of civil servants "promoting arms exports to a degree which non-military industries can only dream about". DTI officials and British 'diplomats' around the world (including 126 military *attachés* in 70 countries) spend one third of their time on legalised gun-running. Not to mention foreign visits by MoD and Foreign Office ministers who systematically act as salesmen for the arms industry (cf. Margaret and Mark Thatcher - and Denis, when he could let go of the whisky bottle for long enough). Looking back at the Conservative leadership election one even starts to feel sorry for Michael Portillo and the way he was stitched up by the Major camp. There he was

shunted into the most time-consuming job in British politics - Defence Secretary. Poor old Michael, no wonder that smile looks a bit forced these days. He won't have time to wipe his arse now, never mind stand for leadership challenges, what with selling tanks here, planes there and chasing up arms contracts everywhere. John Major may have failed the test to become a bus conductor - a job requiring brains but no cunning - but as a politician, a job requiring all cunning and no brains, he knows how to see off a rival. This report goes into minute detail on all the main arms deals going back over fifteen years including Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and many others, and even has information from the (still unpublished) Scott Enquiry into the arms to Iraq scam. Recommended, large format and illustrated, fully sourced and annotated, 101 pages, a snip at £3.50.

Bypass No. 5, Slab-O-Concrete Publications. Part of a growing and encouraging trend in a sort of modern *samizdat* 'zine publishing, *Bypass* is itself dedicated to listing and reviewing the others with the aim of putting them in touch with each other and you. A sort of British version of the *Alternative Press Review* but cheaper and without the long articles. Or as they put it themselves: "a review magazine for 'zine producers, self-publishers, small presses, pamphleteers, DIY media creators and outside agitators. Reading it connects you to a whole chunk of the 'underground' press. It is a tool to enable you to find out what others are doing and communicate, exchange and network on a direct basis ..." This issue has about 400 reviews of everything from 'zines by techno-rock fans, poetry devotees and sexual deviants (and conformists), to cryptozoology and beyond, passing on the way anarchism, strip cartoons, football, horror, feminism, fiction, more anarchism, green guerrillas, anti-CJA groups and much, much more. Hence you will find *Freedom* and *The Raven* nestling among *Twelve Ounce Prophet #1* on graffiti art, *Sky High Heels* on cross-dressing and

It's Grim Oop North #3 whose pages are handwritten on one side only. A large proportion are actively anarchist/subversive and browsing through this magazine opens up a whole world of fascinating concerns and preoccupations. There's the inevitable quota of vanity publishing and prima donnas, but that just adds to the enjoyment. Well written and produced, A4 quarterly, 36 pages, illustrated, £1.50.

Copulation Blues: 16 original blues vocals, cassette, Saucy Sounds. This is an excellent collection of songs recorded by various artists from 1929 to 1940, many of which had to have their lyrics drastically toned down before release and some of which were never released. They range from the enticingly erotic to the outright 'pornographic', as some would describe them. Most are not ever mentioned even in learned jazz anthologies, even though many include famous names in their line-up. Sidney Bechet and his New Orleans Feetwarmers kick off at a fast boogie-woogie style lick with 'Preachin' Blues'; the unmistakable rough velvet of Bessie Smith's voice features in the slow languorous 'I Need a Little Sugar in My Bowl' (with Clarence Williams on piano) and in the soulful swing of 'Do Your Duty' with backing by Jack Teagarden and Benny Goodman amongst others; and Lil Johnson delivers the raunchy 'Press My Button', the more upbeat 'You Stole My Cherry' and 'Stavin' Chain' with its romping driving rhythms. Some of the songs employ clever lyrics as metaphors, as in Oscar's Chicago Swingers' catchy 'New Rubbin on the Darned Old Thing' which uses "washboards in tubs". Then there is the frank and beautiful 'My Daddy Rocks Me' (with one steady roll) by Tampa Red's Hokum Jug Band; and the even more explicit Jelly Roll Morton accompanying himself on piano in 'Winin' Boy'. Best of all is probably the totally outrageous 'Shave 'Em Dry' by Lucille Bogan which will have you wanting to do it on the spot. The excellent Howard 'Stretch' Johnson provides

the valuable sleeve notes on some of the songs and the social and historical background to the music. With recordings of this vintage, of course you have to make allowances for poor sound quality in one or two places, but just turn up the volume, and use a filter if you've got one, and it won't spoil your enjoyment. Switch off the telly and switch on to some dirty blues. Running time 50 mins approx., £6.50.

In Brief

Pod #2. Fat artistically presented magazine on DIY culture, non-violent direct action, the Criminal Justice Act and the Claremont Road Anti-M11 community. 60 pages, illustrated, £2.00.

Chomsky's Politics by Milan Rai, Verso. Sympathetic but probing critique of Chomsky's writings by former researcher of his. Includes a concise biography plus notes, index and bibliography, 225 pages, £10.95.

The Skeptic 9/3. Fighting Creation 'Science'; the psychoanalysis of books; catalogue of daft gadgets and a lot more. 28 pages, £1.85.

Voice of Fire: communiqués and interviews from the Zapatista National Liberation Army edited by Ben Clarke and Clifton Ross, New Earth Publications, illustrated, 127 pages, £8.95.

Shadows of Tender Fury: the letters and communiqués of Subcomandante Marcos and the Zapatista Army of National Liberation, Monthly Review Press, 272 pages, £11.95.

KM

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London Anarchist Forum

Meets Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. Admission is free but a collection is made to cover the cost of the room.

- 1995 PROGRAMME -

- 20th October General Discussion
- 27th October 'Sex Maniacs Charity Ball' (video)
- 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
- 22nd - 29th December no meetings

Anyone interested in giving a talk or leading a discussion, please contact either Dave Dane or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (telephone number 0181-847 0203, not too early in the day please) giving subject and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate. A collection is made to pay for the £15 cost of the room. Donations are accepted from those who cannot attend regularly but wish to see the continuation of these meetings.

Peter Neville / Dave Dane
London Anarchist Forum

FREEDOM fortnightly

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Anarchist Quarterly number 30

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