

anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

"To argue against any breach of liberty from the ill use that may be made of it, is to argue against liberty itself, since all is capable of being abused"
Lord Lyttleton

PRISONS: OILY GITs IN CONFLICT

Prisons are detestable institutions. In restricting the scope of individuals, they go directly against the very purpose of society. The aim of all penal reform is, or ought to be, the total abolition of prisons. The only possible justification for them is that they are a regrettable contingent necessity.

This was the view of Stanley Glassey, a Conservative parliamentary candidate in 1945 who advocated that when a judge passed a prison sentence he should apologise to the prisoner. Anyone who had put such a view at this year's Conservative Party Conference would no doubt have been booted off the platform. For all the talk of individual freedom, rolling back the state, and saving taxpayers' money, modern Tories appear to want the prison population increased and the prisons made even nastier.

There was some mention of cutting down the amount of crime in this country. Had that been a serious concern, the Home Secretary might have improved his political standing by visiting a country with a low crime rate and appearing to try to find out

how it was achieved. But the concern was not serious. Mr Howard improved his political standing, at least among the appalling delegates to the Conservative Party Conference, by visiting a country with a very high crime rate and an amazing number of prisoners.

During the past three years Britain has forged ahead of Turkey to become the incarceration champion of Europe. But the eyes of Michael Howard and his admirers are on the world championship, and the United States ('leader of the free world') manages to imprison five times as many persons per head of the population as Britain.

So Mr Howard went to America to find out how they do it and came back to wow the delegates with talk of 'boot camps', 'three strikes and you're out' and 'if you can't do the time, don't do the crime'. The Lord Chief Justice pointed out that what deters criminals is not the severity of punishment but the certainty of capture. The secretary of the prison governors pointed out that prisoners with nothing to lose are practically uncontrollable. All irrelevant. What

pleased the delegates, and what the Tories hope will get them votes, is not deterrence or control, but simple vindictiveness.

Then after his triumph in Blackpool Mr Howard came back to London to find the disastrous Learmont Report.

After a breakout at Whitemoor Prison in 1994 it was found that prison officers were used by prisoners as errand boys, and there was a quantity of explosive in a hut in the prison yard. After a breakout at Parkhurst in 1995, the prisoners were not missed for half a day, and could have taken the Isle of Wight ferry to the mainland if they had known security was so lax. Mr Howard already had reports from Judge Tumin, the inspector of prisons, and others but commissioned another report from General Sir John Learmont. Perhaps he thought a General would be less critical than some other advisors, but the General said forthrightly that Whitemoor and Parkhurst were not all that exceptional. Prisons in general were badly run and insecure.

These, said Mr Howard, were operational matters. His remit as Home Secretary was simply to decide policy (which would not take much effort, as the only possible policy for prisons is to keep the inmates in).

Home Secretaries were directly responsible for prisons until 1992 when Kenneth Baker, as Home Secretary, invented the Prisons Agency to take responsibility for operational matters, while the Home Secretary dealt with policy. That is to say, the Director of the Prisons Agency would be paid to take the blame for anything that went wrong, while the Home Secretary took the credit for any success.

The job of making the appointment fell to the next Home Secretary, who was Kenneth Clarke. True to his belief that a man who can organise himself a fortune can organise anything, Mr Clarke appointed Derek Lewis, a man with no experience of prisons or the Civil Service who had made a fortune with a scheme for buying up old television series and renting them back to the broadcasters.

As Prisons Director, he continued to take an interest in the media. The upper-class crook Darius Guppy, for

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DUBIOUS INTENTIONS

Condom share prices, pregnancies and abortion rates are likely to rise once again as a result of the warnings about seven brands of contraceptive pills.

The government has been widely criticised for the way it relayed this important health information that women on seven named brands of the pill were twice as likely as other brands to cause deep vein thrombosis.

The warning was released to the press before the report findings reached general practitioners, resulting in much anxiety and confusion among the 1.5 million women concerned.

Trust in government principle is so fragile that health service officials have accused health ministers of raising the alert to save £25 million on these more expensive pills.

But women will not give up their compromised sexual freedom that easily. Even women who are insisting on condom use to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases

rely on the pill as well to prevent conception if barrier methods fail for practical reasons.

The questions to ask, suggested by researcher John Guillebaud:

1. How strong is the evidence?
2. How serious is the condition being caused?
3. How great is the risk (30 in 10,000 in this case)?
4. How many women would have developed the condition anyway?

All medication has the risk of side effects. It is possible to make a rational decision about public health policy based on statistical odds but often figures are presented in a meaningless way for the individual. Whilst we are anxious to retain control over our bodies and our reproductive rights in a climate where fertility matters have become public property - better public, however, than private and ill-informed and full of hearsay and superstition as it once was.

CUTTING DOWN ON RENTED HOUSING PROVISION

True to their promise the government, egged on by Peter Lilley, is about to clamp down on housing benefit rates and change the rules about who is now eligible to claim.

These measures will save the social security coffers £400 million per year and cause poorer tenants and local government housing officers inestimable anxiety and stress.

The implications of the new restricted housing benefit will be particularly stringent for tenants in privately rented housing in more expensive areas. After January new tenants will be expected to make up the difference between housing benefit provision and the actual rent, or otherwise to move to a cheaper area. There will be a greater demand for private rented housing as the government wants homeless families to be housed by the private sector. Council housing stock diminishes daily, partly because of the selling-off of council housing stock and partly because of the failure of government to provide adequate funding for new council house building. It will further diminish as plans for the privatisation of council estates continue.

It is estimated that in London almost a third of privately rented homes are unfit to live in. Housing benefit will be limited to a local average and tenants will have to make up any shortfall themselves – not easy if you are drawing only £45 per week (single person) or

£77 for a single parent. At present the full housing benefit allowance for a single person in the London Borough of Camden is £140 per week, which sounds generous unless you know that this represents a usual cost for a studio or small one-bedroom flat in what continues to be the place to be seen.

The long-term outcome of these mean-minded proposals could be that existing tenants in sought-after areas with high rents could be asked to move to flats in less salubrious areas creating even more ghettoised inner cities.

A new Housing Bill will make it a condition of future grants to social landlords that they commit themselves to making new homes available for sale to tenants on request. Formerly housing associations preferred to offer tenants grants of up to £16,000 to help them buy in the private sector and thereby vacate affordable rented housing to those who need it. We can only hope that people have learnt from the situation of many former council tenants seduced by the Tory promise of the joys of home ownership. Many are caught in the net of negative equity now that

the public at large begins to realise the implications of buying ex-council stock. Opting out of renting from the council often means opting into the hidden burdens of service charges, repairs, maintenance and decoration costs which have left some leaseholders with bills of many thousands of pounds.

Meanwhile Londoners look on as the former County Hall is converted into flats and sold off to people, many of whom are buying them for their children studying in London. One can foresee maps and A-Zs of London with whole areas shaded in as no-go run-down areas. The new draconian measures gives the old *Guardian* column 'On Housing Benefit Hill' a very pertinent ring. The government is obviously intent on retaining Britain's worldwide lead as the country whose gap between rich and poor has widened most consistently since 1980.

So how can we change the colour of the light? Those of us directly affected could join tenants' associations, attend meetings, speak out, encourage those who are less confident to protest, help people to see the wood among the trees before we find ourselves banished to run-down areas where we'll be lucky to find any trees.

As people at the bottom of the heap prepare for yet more mire to land on their heads, we learn that a certain peer of the realm continues to enjoy the perks of his pinnacle position. Like many people he found long queues at Waterloo Station ticket offices. He boarded the train without a ticket. He was charged a penalty fare. He refused to pay. A brief telephone call to the managing director and lo and behold he was let off "to save him embarrassment". This as a man who paid himself more than £656,000 from his shipping company last year. Fortunately these details were not covered up but leaked to Labour's transport spokesman who gleefully poured them over many front pages. Further proof if anyone needs it that money talks and money plus social standing gives orders.

PRISONS: OILY GITS IN CONFLICT

(continued from page 1)

instance, was about to be transferred from a 'dispersal' prison to a softer 'resettlement' prison when an order came from on high delaying his transfer. Guppy appealed to the Prisons Ombudsman, who reported that the delay was entirely due to an article in the *Sun*. And there was an interesting amendment to prison rules:

NOTICE TO INMATES 46/95

Correspondence and use of card phones (amendments to standing orders 5B and 5G). **Contact with the media** (any person or place associated with broadcasting or publication). This change applies to all inmates. It is now an offence under Prison Rules for any prisoner to contact the media by using a cardphone or telephone provided for their use. Any inmate wishing to speak to the media must apply, in writing, to the Governor to use an official telephone. Circumstances where this would be allowed would be wholly exceptional and extremely rare.

Written correspondence is still allowed subject to the provision of Standing Order 5B, in particular paragraph 34(9)."

When the security shambles at Parkhurst came to light Mr Howard announced that the Director of Prisons had decided the Governor of Parkhurst should go "today". In the light of the Learmont Report Mr Howard called for Derek Lewis's resignation and, when he declined to go voluntarily, sacked him.

Mr Lewis promptly circulated the media with copies of a letter to Mr Howard saying that Mr Howard, far from laying down policy and letting the Prisons Agency get on with it, had constantly interfered in operational matters. Among a lot of other instances, he had insisted the Governor of Parkhurst should be sacked, then

added the word "today" when he made the announcement.

Labour called for a debate, but the Labour speaker was the shadow Home Secretary Jack Straw, who was not feeling well that day and was confused by the barrage of heckling Tory MPs. It was foregone that Howard would win the vote, but he won the debate as well when Straw denied the existence of some document or other and Howard threw said document across the table.

One Tory interrupted to ask whether Mr Straw would have sacked Mr Lewis. As the political columnist Simon Hoggart wrote, Mr Straw could have answered no because he would never have appointed Mr Lewis in the first place. But Mr Straw had put himself in the position of defending Mr Lewis, presumably on the principle that 'my ene ny's enemy is my friend', and made a complete hash of it.

It would have been nice to see Mr Howard routed, not because he interfered in operational matters (if he did and whatever it means) but because he is vindictive and xenophobic and an oily git. But that is no reason for siding with any other oily git.

Mr Lewis has so far drawn two years' salary (2 x £125,000 = £250,000) plus one year's performance bonus (£35,000). He waived his performance bonus for 1994 in view of the Whitemoor fiasco. He has now applied for one year's salary in lieu of notice, plus this year's performance bonus on the grounds that, even including the Parkhurst escape, the annual escape tally has gone down 54%.

The anarchist policy for prisons is to tear them down.

CALL FOR THE RELEASE OF MORDECHAI VANUNU THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT REMAINS SILENT

In the last few days two important initiatives supporting the release of Mordechai Vanunu and the peace process in the Middle East have failed to receive backing from John Major's government.

It was from London that Mordechai was enticed in September 1986, and it was here that the plan to kidnap him was carried out. And yet, since then the British government

has remained silent on this issue and regrettably, once again, has failed to support the humanitarian calls for the release of Mordechai Vanunu.

Joseph Rotblatt, the winner of this year's Nobel Peace Prize, in a dramatic response to an interview in the Israeli evening paper *Yediot Aharonot*, was quoted in bold headlines as saying "Free Vanunu". He went on to declare that, in furtherance of the peace process, "the Middle East, including Israel, should be cleared of all nuclear weapons".

It was for acting on this issue in 1986 – telling the world of Israel's secret nuclear stockpile – that Mordechai was kidnapped by Mossad agents and then sentenced in a closed court to eighteen years imprisonment.

Mordechai's brothers Asher, Danny and Meir, wrote to Joseph Rotblatt to congratulate him on receiving the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize.

In an independent but similar action the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that it was now time to release Mordechai Vanunu. "We would be immensely delighted if the Israeli government would give amnesty to the imprisoned nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu. If it happens, it would be a valuable contribution to the peace process" said the Deputy Foreign Minister, Jan Egeland.

For further information:
Rami Heilbronn 0171-286 3210
Ernest Rodker 0181-672 9698 or 0171-378 9324

Campaign to Free Vanunu
89 Borough High Street, London SE1 1NL
Tel: 0171-378 9324

VANUNU BENEFIT

Sunday 19th November
7.30 - 10.30pm

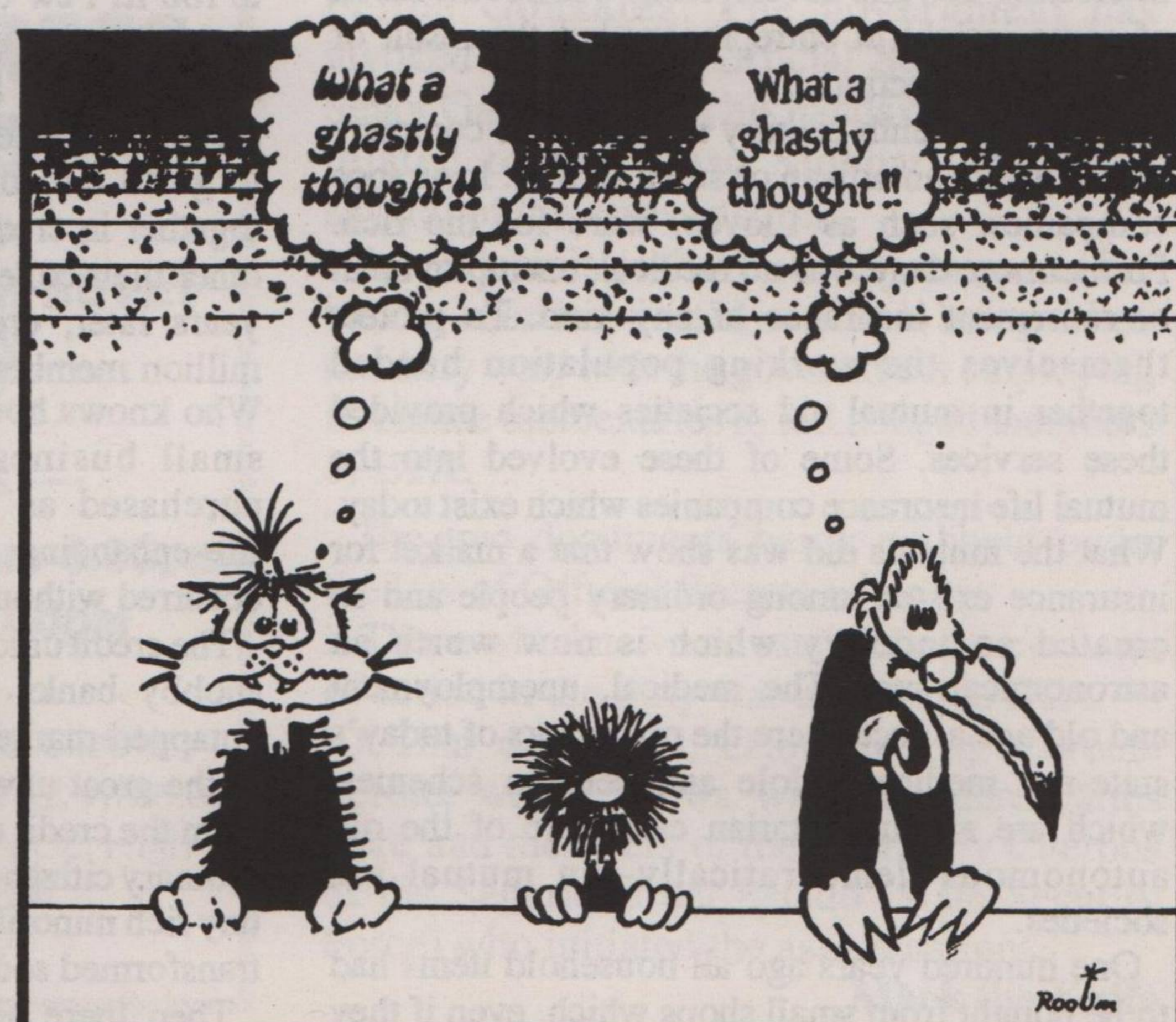
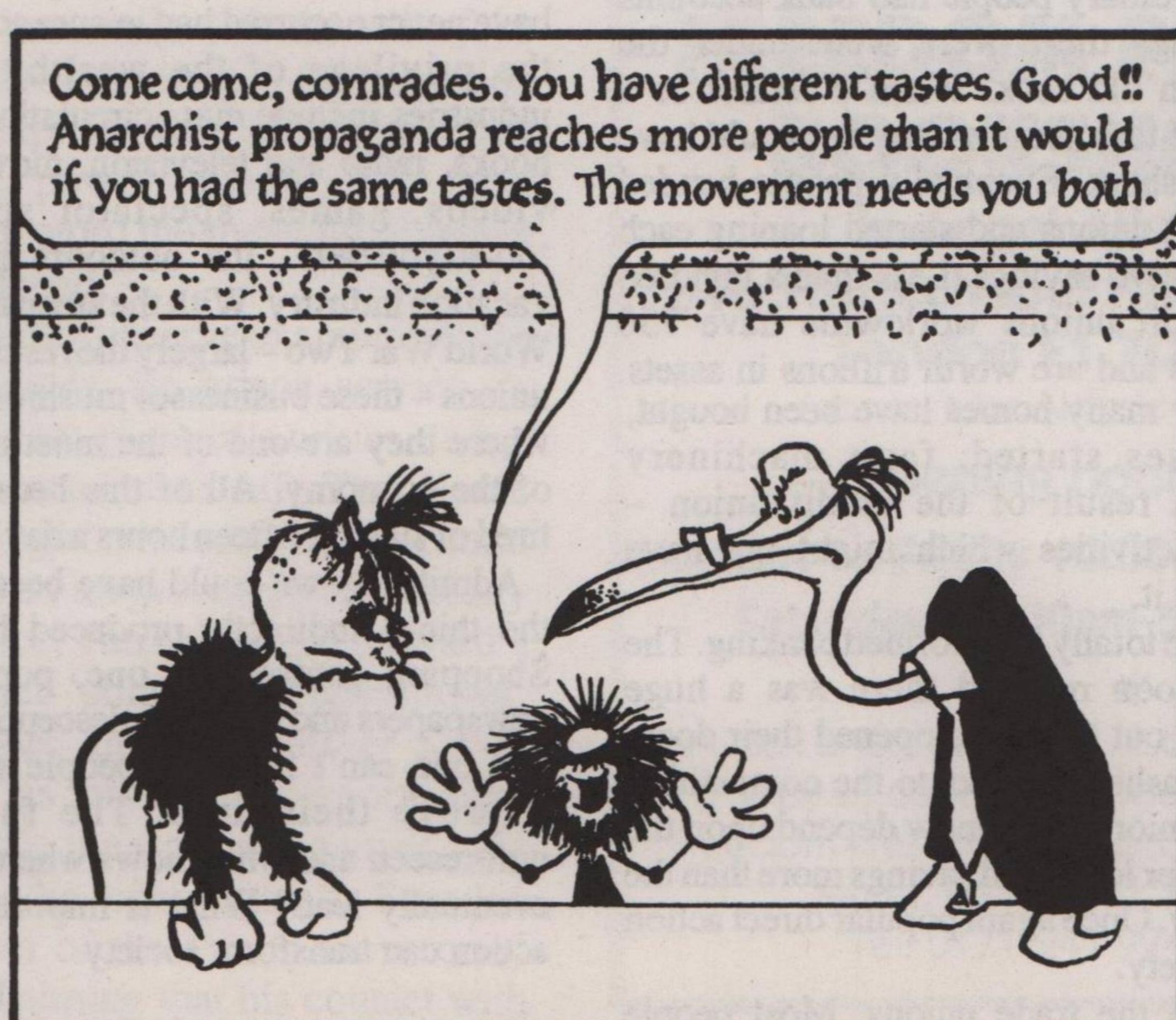
Camden Centre
Camden Town Hall, Euston Road,
London WC1H 9JE
(Bidborough Street)

An evening of readings, music and comedy ... with Helen Bamber, Wissam Boustamy, Arnold Brown, Julie Christie, Nick Laird-Clowes, Bruce Kent, Christopher Logue, Michael Mansfield, Sean Randle Quartet, Mike Rosen, Alexel Sayle, Arthur Smith, Mark Steel, Susannah York, Asher Vanunu, Velvet Fist Choir and other guests.

Tickets £6 (\$4 concessions)

Please order as soon as possible from the Campaign office. Food and drink will be available at the venue. It is hoped to have stalls and visuals.

Campaign to Free Vanunu
89 Borough High Street, London SE1 1NL
Tel/Fax: 0171-378 9324



Co-operatives are more important in Quebec than probably any other place in the world. Consider that out of a population of about six and a half million, 5,960,000 are members of a co-operative. No other voluntary institution in society has that level of participation.

The jewel in the co-op crown is the federation Caisse Populaire Desjardins. This credit union is the financial backer of the entire movement and co-operation really didn't become successful before the Caisse came on the scene. One hundred years ago, no bank would lend money to a worker or a peasant. Usury from loan sharks was the only source of credit and people found themselves enslaved in an endless cycle of debt. It is impossible to judge the positive impact that this institution has had upon the lives of ordinary Quebecers. Let's just say a lot fewer workers would own their own homes without a loan from their local *caisse*. Nor would many other forms of co-operative exist without these financial resources.

Begun in 1900 with a handful of poor villagers and \$20.00 in deposits, it now has 5.4 million members in 1,500 local *caisses* united in fourteen regional federations. Total assets stand at \$77 billion, making it larger than any of the banks operating in Quebec. The Caisse Populaire, with 40,000 employees, is also the largest 'private' employer and is the sole financial institution in 675 communities. As such, its role in the preservation of village and rural life is crucial.

The co-operative sector of next greatest importance economically is agriculture. Farm co-operatives were first formed in the nineteenth century but did not become a permanent fixture upon the rural scene until after World War One. Farmers found themselves strangled by the middlemen, both were buying supplies and equipment and then selling their produce. The only way to overcome this sort of parasitism was to band together in supply and marketing co-operatives. Today, more than 60% of all producers (38,000 farmers) belong to these

A NARCHY IN ACTION?

— NUMBER 5 —

The Quebec Co-operative Movement

organisations and they do \$4 billion in business each year.

Some co-ops provide goods and services for farms such as petroleum, machinery and seed. Other co-ops own dairies and processing plants, many of which are the largest in their field. These include cheese, yoghurt, fruit juice and milk processing. The agricultural co-operatives are, according to *Le Devoir's* special supplement on co-operatives, "the principle source of prosperity in their regions".

Co-ops play an important part in the life of native and Inuit communities. Prior to their development, native people were dependent upon the Hudson Bay Company for goods and marketing of their furs and other products. This meant a net outflow of wealth which they could not afford. Starting in 1958, co-ops were set up to overcome this problem and now there exist sixteen native-owned and controlled co-operative associations doing \$31 million in business annually. More than 5,000 families are members of these organisations.

The student Co-op Movement was founded in 1983 as a means to provide cheaper books, stationary and computers for college students. This group also includes bookstores, services and student cafeterias. Each year these co-ops have a turnover of \$50 million and membership now stands at 540,000 students. Largely run by volunteers, this movement has

the added advantage of being a kind of school for co-operators.

Worker co-ops have been in Quebec since 1946, yet the movement really only got off the ground in the 1980s. At present there are 170 worker co-ops with 7,260 members doing \$255 million in business. Most of these are concentrated in the forest industry which includes saw mills, pulpwood cutting, tree planting and an enormous nursery for spruce and pine trees. Self-managed co-ops also exist in printing, manufacturing, taxi driving and greenhousing. There is an impact beyond the membership for "worker co-ops have permitted villages to survive", according to *Le Devoir*.

Housing co-operatives began to be constructed in the 1970s as a means to provide inexpensive, yet self-governed, apartments as an alternative to state-owned social housing. The social breakdown and anomie found in housing projects does not occur here. People take pride in their co-ops and, when they function properly, become schools for grassroots democracy. There now exist in Quebec 1100 housing with about 60,000 residents. This movement also puts about \$112 million into the economy every year.

Last but not least are the insurance co-ops, of which there are two. These organisations are the direct descendants of the mutual aid societies created by farmers and artisans more than 150 years ago. Today, they have 300,000

members and are worth over one billion dollars and still maintain the 'one member, one vote criteria'.

Taken together, the 3,300 co-operatives did \$11.6 billion of business in 1990, or roughly 8% of the Quebec GNP. This may not seem like much, but some other figures will put the co-operative share in a different perspective. Eight percent is more than three times the percentage of military expenditure in Canada. It is also more than three times the size of the Canadian income generated from investment and trade with the Third World. 8% is also greater than the proportion of the American GNP spent upon the military at the height of the Cold War. (And we all know how important the 'military-industrial complex' once was to the economy in the USA). Hence co-operation as an economic factor in Quebec society cannot be lightly brushed aside.

All very well, you might say, but what has this to do with anarchism? Certainly few, if any, co-ops would consider themselves anarchist. However, the principles by which they function are libertarian ones. And even if they have 'become conservative' or seem at first no different from any other institution, these principles are the reason behind their continuing success and popularity. Due to competition from the co-operatives, capitalist enterprises have been forced to give a similar level of prices and services. Hence, any strictly economic advantage of co-operation is no longer quite as important as it once was. Yet these institutions continue to grow in membership. The reason for this must lie in the way that co-operatives are organised, the methods that capitalism cannot adopt without losing much of its capitalist nature.

Quebec co-op principles could have come straight from Proudhon. One principle is mutual aid (the very basis and *raison d'être* of the movement). Also of great importance is the notion of one member-one vote which is in opposition to the capitalist concept of power based on the number of shares held. Then there are the concepts of local control, federalism and self-management (the latter in the case of worker co-ops). The different co-ops and *caisses* are proud of their autonomy and wish to keep it. While certain things might be better accomplished in a centralised fashion, unity is brought about through the federalist principle and not a top-down hierarchy as in the case of a typical business corporation.

Solidarity and the preservation of community are also important aspects of the Quebec movement, for in many places co-ops were set up precisely to maintain the rural way of life against the onslaught of urbanism and capitalism. Nor is this solidarity restricted to Quebec. Desjardins, as one example, has helped establish effective credit unions in other provinces such as Ontario, New Brunswick and Manitoba. They have also aided the development of credit unions in Mexico, Russia and West Africa.

There is also the fact that co-ops are so common, so taken for granted, and indeed so mainstream, that makes them such good propaganda for anarchism. If mutual aid was confined to half a dozen anarchists working on some grossly undercapitalised enterprise in a dingy room, few people will ever become interested in anarchism. And if these 'mainstream' co-operatives, operating on good libertarian principles function as well as they do, why can't these ideas be extended to society as a whole? If an important sector of the economy is co-operative, why not all the economy? If mutual aid is so successful, why can't mutualism replace statism? If co-ops preserve community, isn't this an answer to social breakdown and the destructiveness of the Trans National Corporation? If local control and federalism work well for credit unions why not with local government? If workers co-ops function efficiently under self-management, surely other industries could be run in this manner. These are the sort of questions that can be asked in response to a successful co-operative movement, such as the one in Quebec.

Direct Action and Consumerism

Newspapers originally had very small circulations. *The Times* in the eighteenth century printed no more than a few thousand copies. They were also expensive and furthermore their contents had little appeal to artisans and labourers. The first large circulation papers were those of the working class Chartist Movement, such as the *North Star* which sold by the tens of thousands. After the demise of Chartism, the first modern mass circulation journal was published, *Reynolds Weekly*, which through its radical political stance maintained its lower class appeal. The 'press barons' of the late nineteenth century dropped the radicalism and published dailies with immense circulations devoted to sport and sensationalism.

Newspapers are the first mass consumer good, the first product produced not just for mere subsistence such as food or clothing, or as luxuries for the wealthy, but specially for the ordinary bloke. It is interesting that this development was not the result of some insightful entrepreneur but the result of popular direct action.

In the nineteenth century no insurance company would insure an artisan or small farmer. Insurance companies, such as Lloyds, were for the rich. Furthermore there was no medical, unemployment or retirement insurance of any kind. To protect themselves the working population banded together in mutual aid societies which provided these services. Some of these evolved into the mutual life insurance companies which exist today. What the mutuals did was show that a market for insurance existed among ordinary people and so created an industry which is now worth an astronomical sum. The medical, unemployment and old age aspects were the precursors of today's state-run medicare, dole and pension schemes, which are an authoritarian caricature of the old autonomous democratically-run mutual aid societies.

One hundred years ago all household items had to be bought from small shops which, even if they

didn't deliberately gouge you, were expensive due to inefficiency. Workers and farmers formed co-ops to cut out the middle-man and reduce prices. Out of necessity they put the various functions - meat and fish marketing, vegetables and fruit, canned and dry goods, soaps and cleaners, etc. - under the same roof. Co-ops produced the first supermarket. They also found it cheaper to federate the various co-ops and create centralised bulk buying. Later they went into producing their own products. Co-ops were the ancestor of the supermarket chain and 'house brands'. Smart entrepreneurs could see a future in such practices. In Canada the first supermarket chain was developed by a former co-op store manager. Popular direct action completely transformed the buying and selling of products.

At the turn of the century no bank would lend a worker money. Banks were for the rich, and if a poor person entered one they were probably there to rob it! Few ordinary people had bank accounts and what savings there were went under the mattress or in an old sock. When a farmer or a carpenter wanted to borrow money he would have to go to a loan shark. Eventually people banded together in credit unions and started loaning each other their collective savings. Less than a hundred years later, credit unions worldwide have 750 million members and are worth trillions in assets. Who knows how many homes have been bought, small businesses started, farm machinery purchased as a result of the credit union - life-enhancing activities which might not have occurred without it.

The credit union totally transformed banking. The snobby banks soon realised there was a huge untapped market out there and opened their doors to the great unwashed. Thanks to the competition from the credit union, banks now depend upon the ordinary citizen for loans and savings more than the tiny rich minority. Once again popular direct action transformed society.

Then there are the trade unions. Most people

believe they were important in driving up wages. Until the mass industries were organised in the 1930s, union influence upon wages is debatable. Real wages rose from the 1850s to World War One, a time when unions were weak, and the rise is more of a side effect of industrialisation. What unions did change was the length of the working day and working conditions. Once one group of workers won the eight-hour day, it encouraged others to do the same. And so there was a continuous pressure for improvement. So too with cruel practices such as the company store and the wretched conditions in logging and mining camps.

Few employers were aware that better wages and conditions made good economic sense. One of the few to do so was Henry Ford, but he was motivated as much by his sympathy for the Populist Movement as by enlightened self-interest. Generally speaking, the economic elite had to be dragged by the hair to the point of reforming.

These improvements had the effect of civilising working people, reducing the amount of drinking and brutality and creating a better educated population. They began to use their increased leisure time in new ways - in hobbies, sport, reading and education. This in turn gave rise to a host of new industries, developments which would have never occurred had leisure activities remained the privilege of the wealthy handful. Such industries include mass circulation magazines and books, radio and television, movies, records and videos, games, spectator sports, hobbies, 'do-it-yourself', the outdoors industry and the vacation industry. With the steep rise in wages after World War Two - largely the result of the industrial unions - these businesses mushroomed to the point where they are one of the most important aspects of the economy. All of this because people were tired of slaving fifteen hours a day for chicken-feed.

Admittedly we could have been spared some of the things indirectly produced by these actions. Shopping centres are one, pop music, tabloid newspapers and bored adolescents are some others. But one can't fault the people who struggled to improve their lives. The future is always unforeseen and who knows where an action might eventually lead? What is important is that direct action can transform society.

Larry Gambone

ANARCHIST NOTES IN BRIEF

MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL Anarchists are always quoting this truism from Timothy (that's somewhere in the Bible). It was the Iron Lady Thatcher at a televised meeting I watched and before she was elevated to the unelected, who thought that it made a great difference to point out that Timothy had prefaced my quote with *love* – that is *love of money is the root of all evil*.

Obviously the poorer you are the more you 'love' any money that comes your way. We are born in a world where money determines for millions whether their immediate future is life or death. But what about the love of money among those who have it in abundance or aspire to enjoy it.

THE LOVE OF MONEY Robert Maxwell is in the news as his son Kevin, hoping to save his own skin at the Old Bailey, has been giving first-hand testimony about dad. If ever there was somebody who 'loved' money it was Bob Maxwell. The more he accumulated the more he wanted. Imagine, he gambled £1 billion on the money markets (incidentally how can one describe the daily performance of the money market in London alone amounting to some £400 billion a day other than a 'love of money'?) and according to his son netted £7 million on the gamble!

And then there are other lovers of money on the worldwide scale, like Soros and the Sheiks, but recently we have had cases of minor 'lovers' of the lolly. There was the case of Christopher Brown, 46, general manager of the charity East London Group Training who was paid £500 a week and had a company car. Love of money and 'a life of luxury' meant that £500 a week was not enough and he helped himself to £70,000 from the funds. Then what about the lawyer Graham Ford, 52, who admitted to ten charges of theft from clients' funds to the tune of £5 million (see the *Independent*, 13th October). But this is chicken feed compared with what goes on in the multi-millionaire class. There's tennis star Steffi Graf's father kicking his heels in prison while German authorities investigate a possible £4 million tax fraud. Graf is said to be worth £48 million. What other reason other than that money is a drug, an 'evil', to risk being jailed to avoid paying a mere £4 million when you've got £48 million?

ARGUMENTS FOR THE SOCIAL CHAPTER

The prospective parliamentary candidate for Pudsey, Peter Bone, told the Tories at Blackpool that he paid trainees in his travel firm about £1 an hour and while rejecting union criticism declared he had found "backing from his staff" – that is *two* young women he had taken on as trainees!

Another slave-driver David Nash, 55, a senior director of Grand Metropolitan with responsibility for Burger King the hamburger chain, responsible for workers being paid *less* than £1 an hour, is himself being paid off. But with £790,000 compensation payment plus an annual bonus of £100,000.

JOHN MAJOR NOW 'AMI DU RICHE'

There was John Major on the last day of the Tories' Blackpool circus wiping away an imaginary tear as he described the failure of his dad's garden gnomes business, our classless Prime Minister, the Tory 'ami du peuple'. And then a bit later he was not only talking about the Tories being a Party that reduced taxes so that 'the people' could dispose of their money as they wished – fine! – but then he went on to 'pledge' to cut and then abolish capital gains tax and inheritance tax. As the *Guardian* (14th October) points out, only 25,000 are expected to pay inheritance tax this year and only 85,000 capital gains tax. And between these two privileged minorities a further £2.4 billion will remain in their bank balances. So much for our 'classless' Prime Minister who hounds the beggars and the fiddlers!

NOW 'GOD' IS ON INTERNET! According to the *East Anglian Daily Times* (23rd October) the assistant curate of Trimley near Felixstowe has linked his churches to the Internet. Proud Rev Leonard Payne declared "We are up there ... We have stolen a march. There are only half a dozen dioceses in the country on".

Being ignorant of the potential of Internet and knowing even less about 'God', can any expert on either explain to me whether it will be possible to communicate with the 'Almighty' via the Internet?

MORE PI IN THE SKY! Those of us who went to school when the twelve-times-tables were printed on the back of our exercise books and calculators were the abacus, a news item I heard on the radio but have not seen in the newspapers is that somewhere – it must be in the USA – that ever-recurring decimal point so far as pi is concerned is still engaging the super computers and the time of their operators, which is in my opinion a costly waste of time, but this is typical of our age of machine worshippers. Archimedes had worked it out for all practical purposes. Nevertheless, in the age of the computer by the mid twentieth century it had been calculated to 100,000 decimal places. Now it has been worked out to several million decimal places. So what? They're all mad!

Libertarian

UNEMPLOYMENT DOWN, OFFICIAL – LONG TERM UNEMPLOYMENT UP, OFFICIAL

The latest official figures show a drop of 27,000 in the claimant total so the official figure of 2,265,000 cannot be described, as does the economics editor of the *Independent*, as "the jobless count", nor as a Union-Jack-waving hack in the *Sunday Telegraph* (22nd October) concludes in a four-column "three cheers for us in the jobless stakes" that:

"Beating the German rate of unemployment is fine and dandy. But there are still more than two million people here *looking for work*" (our italics).

First of all each county has its own way of fiddling the statistics to show that business is looking up. Secondly the last sentence is not true. The *Sunday Telegraph* hack has got it all wrong. There are more than two million people on the dole. As to how many "are looking for work" it's probably nearer four million as the government well knows. For instance, the 16-year-old school leavers who haven't yet had a job but are not entitled to the dole – and there are thousands of 16-18 year olds living either on their parents or expropriating. There are also thousands of people made redundant in their forties and fifties with no hope of getting a job in spite of applying for jobs. Don't believe the Lillies and other smarmy ministers about the workshy. The only workshy are the 'Eartha Kitt type' wives of old millionaires whose main occupation is to 'organise' the domestic staff.

The vast majority of the long-term unemployed (officially one and a quarter million) are desperately looking for work, not to mention all the others.

The *Guardian* (13th October) reported that Ford's Bridgend factory received *eight thousand* applications for just 25 jobs! A spokesman for Ford said:

"We've been swamped with applications. Letters from all over south Wales have arrived and a mass of applications forms awaits processing."

The job seekers are prepared to travel. One application came from Haverfordwest in Dyfed, about 80 miles from the mid-Glamorgan factory."

As we will never tire of repeating: there is no possibility of full employment. Indeed without being able to compete with best-selling economists like Will Hutton, whose articles become ever more obtuse and no longer tackle the basic problems of capitalism, we are prepared to stick out our necks and suggest that unemployment – that is people who are seeking work because they need the money to survive in a capitalist system – will increase dramatically in the next decade UNLESS ...

The Labour lot, who are proposing to bring about full employment if they take over, are not committed to abolishing the capitalist system. On the contrary their leader has been wining and dining with the top industrialists and Britain's media baron (Murdoch) in order to reassure the former that their positions are secure in the best of all capitalist worlds and for the latter (who is after all the inheritor with the black SUN of the Labour Party's *Daily Herald* of yesteryear) free rein in return for a kind word at the hustings!

Again we cannot but repeat ourselves because it is so obvious that all the takeovers, the amalgamations are all concerned to increase profits at the expense of jobs. Forget (for a moment) the 'fat-cats' who get fatter with share options and/or golden handshakes.

There is no escaping the fact that 'new technology'; is playing havoc not only with the blue-collar workers but now with a vengeance on so-called 'middle England', on those who thought their nine-to-five five-day-week jobs with promotions, etc., were there for life! *That employee utopia for the 'respectable' middle classes is over for ever.*

There are solutions to mass unemployment in the capitalist system. The simplest is to introduce *work sharing*. And this obviously would affect 'middle England's' overpaid paper producers and their living standards (one car, one continental holiday instead of two per annum, and perhaps one member of the family to look after the kids!).

The so-called free market simply means that not only the pension funds, where returns are profitable, but also the industrial set-ups invest worldwide where labour is cheapest – which is the Far East. If Labour wants the manufacturing sector to regain some of its potential it must *control the movement of capital*. So far it has not, and we suspect it won't. It is scared to upset the money markets.

Yet if they want to 'balance the books' they must ensure that the balance of trade is not in the red, as it is month after month, and this will not be possible so long as capital invests in the cheapest labour markets.

everywhere that McDonalds has been vindicated. The defendants and their friends are asking supporters to prepare now for a response in the form of a massive leafletting campaign of the unoffending *What's Wrong with McDonalds?* leaflet so that customers may judge for themselves.

McLibel Support Campaign
c/o 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX

McLibel lawyers insisting on letter of the law

We reported in a previous issue that the McDonalds fast food corporation had stopped supplying court transcripts to the defendants in the McLibel trial, after more than a year of supplying them free. The reason given was that the transcripts were being used as publicity material by the McLibel Support Campaign and others. There is no way the defendants, who are destitute, can buy their own transcripts at £360 a day, but difficulties for the defence were presented as incidental to the aim of stopping the publicity.

Another recent change, however, is detrimental to the defence and quite unconnected with publicity. The plaintiff has a legal right to insist that all evidence in chief is in the form of written statements. That is, the witnesses testimony is read from a paper

supplied to the other side in advance, and the witness cannot say anything new in the witness box except in answer to cross-questioning.

In the McLibel case, where the plaintiffs can pay for many lawyers and the defendants are penurious amateurs, plaintiff's witness statements are exhaustively prepared but defendant's witness statements tend to be half-baked. For a year, defence witnesses would say more than they had written and nobody bothered. Now the plaintiff's barristers are insisting that witnesses stick to the text.

We do not know why. It may be that McDonalds have instructed their lawyers to save costs by speeding up what remains of the trial. But the lawyers' behaviour is at least consistent with anticipating they will lose and getting peevish about it.

Recent witnesses have included Michael Mehigan, who actually owns all the McDonalds stores in Ireland and has recognised unions since being forced to do so by a seven-month strike in 1979. Prominent union activists did not get their jobs back and in 1985 two of them successfully claimed unfair dismissal because of union activity. Terry Pattinson, a journalist, testified that British McDonalds chiefs told him they would never negotiate with a union.

The evidence of Iain Whittle, formerly a 'crew member' at a McDonalds in Sutton, was reported in the *London Evening Standard* of 18th October. He testified that strict adherence to company hygiene rules was impossible because of understaffing. "Managers would compete to see who could run the lowest-staffed shift".

We are told that all the statements in the widely distributed leaflet *What's Wrong with McDonalds?* have been verified in the course of the trial. The problem is that the libel case is not about the leaflet but about another document, the *McDonalds Factsheet*, published in 1989. It seems likely that when the trial ends next spring the judge will find that one or more statements in the *Factsheet* are libellous and McDonalds' magnificent publicity machine will then plant the story

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

On the rough side of Oxford

This is the time of year when I make my annual visit to CENDEP, which stands for Centre for Development and Emergency Planning, at the place I think of as Oxford Poly but now have to call Oxford Brookes University. The course is run by Nabeel Hamdi, whose book *Housing Without Houses: Participation, Flexibility, Enablement* has just made a welcome reappearance in paperback (Intermediate Technology Publications, £12.95), and I always feel that I have much more to learn from course members than I have to give them, since they come from Africa, Latin America, the Indian subcontinent and South East Asia, with, to me, absorbing experience of the problems and opportunities of the unofficial self-built and squatter settlements that surround every 'third world' city.

But my task is usually to give an account of the lessons to be learned from a hundred years of housing policy in Britain. It's a dispiriting job because course members can't get used to the idea of a country where land ownership and official regulation are so buttoned-up that poor people can do nothing to house themselves or find a precarious source of income, but apply for official benefits which end up in the hands of landlords, private or public. They don't understand the ideological mind-set of a country where, as Simon Fairlie puts it in the current issue of *Squall* (autumn '95, no. 11, and subtitled 'Necessity Breeds Ingenuity'):

"It is the planning system, rather than ownership, that is now the main way in which ordinary people are prevented from 'reclaiming the land'."

So last year I varied my theme and explored instead the historical aspect of squatter housing in Britain: all those settlements which people tell us began on 'wastes' or common land, with the universal folklore that if you put up a house between sundown and sunrise (or vice-versa) you could not be evicted. No

general history exists of these places, although my ambition is to write one, sooner or later, but there are a variety of little local histories that uncover the squatter origins of a number of such unofficial communities in Britain. Their evolution and their reliance on an informal economy closely parallel experience of the hinterland of 'third world' cities today. See, for example, Jorge Hardoy and David Satterthwaite's *Squatter Citizen* (Earthscan, 1989). In a well-known phrase, they were slums of hope rather than slums of despair.

I mentioned that the very fact that the actual postal address of Oxford Brookes University is Gipsy Lane, Headington, indicates that its site was a Gipsy encampment and that only a mile up the road was Headington Quarry, one of the few squatter settlements in Britain whose history was recorded from survivors before it disappeared in the usual suburban expansion. The historian Raphael Samuel had been in time to record the memories of local people before they had died and before the anarchic economy and settlement pattern had been expunged from the landscape. His work is set down in his essay "'Quarry Roughs': life and labour in Headington Quarry 1860-1920" in R. Samuel (editor) *Village Life and Labour* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

So of course, for this month, Nabeel Hamdi asked me to explore with course members the story of Headington Quarry concluding with a walk-around on the site. This led me to re-examine Samuel's evidence and his material in Oxford County Record Office, and to prepare for a trip to see if the place itself has anything to reveal. I know, for example, that Bill Fishman takes visitors around Whitechapel in East London and reveals the anarchist history encapsulated in buildings that aren't there any more, ending up in the Freedom Bookshop.

Why couldn't I do the same for Headington

Quarry? So I had to study the current town map and saw that various old stone quarries are now encompassed by sites like Quarry Fields Recreation Ground and that family named I had picked up in Raphael's history are recorded street names. For example, when I was a child in the 1930s if you looked up the Columbia record catalogue under Folk Music you would find 78rpm discs of Will Kimber playing his concertina. I should rejoice that the street map records that there's a William Kimber Crescent.

And if you chance to be an enthusiast for morris dancing, you'll be interested to learn that it was from Kimber's family that the tradition was rebuilt.

Raphael Samuel explains that:

"It is perhaps this self-sufficiency which explains — or helps to explain — Quarry's survival as a morris dancing village, certainly the feature for which it is best known, for it was here in 1899 that the English morris was rediscovered by Cecil Sharp. When Quarry people went dancing it was to the tunes of a local fiddler or accordionist — many of them, it seems, learnt from the local gypsies who 'had lots of old tunes' (the leading fiddler of the 1870s, Sampson Smith, was a local gypsy, and he also danced on the local morris side). Quarry was a very musical village, but the music was its own: there were no brass bands."

This particular snippet of local history is important for me as a watcher of the big place that music had in people's lives, but also because it reveals how the allegedly hallowed traditions of English rural life were kept up in 'open' villages, open to settlement and squatting, rather than in 'close' villages, dominated by land-owners and the established church. Raphael Samuel gave a careful link between oral recollections and archives which reveals a community of squatters working in the quarries and the small brickworks that provided the building materials for nineteenth century Oxford, and which took in its washing. Most cities in Victorian Britain had these service settlements beyond their fringe, like, say, Notting Dale servicing Notting Hill and Kensington in London or, as Samuel points out, Kensal New Town ('Soapsuds Island') for the fashionable districts of Bayswater and Belgravia, as "a chief recipient for the weekly washings of the rich".

Through the

Spunk is a curious word to have been chosen by an anarchist news agency. It certainly is not the kind of news agency stone-age journalists are used to. A news agency used to supply news. This one asks for it. But I am grateful for the information as to how they chose the name. Evidently the heroine of a Swedish novel, one Pippa Longstocking (author Astrid Lindgren), went round to shops of all descriptions asking if they had any spunk for sale. I suppose it is a good enough reason for our anarchist comrades in Australia to choose that label. I looked at their bulletin and, although information is supposed to fly about in seconds, it was exactly a month old.

Undeterred I typed the word 'anarchy' and lo and behold there were about five hundred different communications from letters beginning "I just woke up and thought..." and "could anybody tell me what happened to..." and "in my opinion..." and "something ought to be done about..." to the more sinister propositions (and pages of it) of some kind of assassination lottery ("How would you like to be a winner?"). But why criticise a busy hive of all those sweet bees making honey?

This is precisely the function of the 'cities of the poor' in the southern hemisphere today, but Headington Quarry was favoured as a nursery for both building materials and building techniques. It had both stone and clay, and the markets from the city's demands, and these, with the equivocal legal ownership of land, led to housebuilding and the sharing-out of constructional skills. At the same time it enabled an endless series of poaching, rabbit-snaring, pig-rearing and cow-keeping activities. Every family had an allotment garden and used an incredible series of gathering techniques to exchange within the community or to sell to the farmers or the city.

The importance of the vast variety of activities was that, however poor, Quarry people stayed alive outside the official system of poor relief. Raphael Samuel records that:

"The notion of common rights was built into the cottager's economy, and so too was that of personal independence: it was possible to make 'a bit of a living' even when wage-paid labour gave out, and even when there was no money, to keep the table supplied with food, and have enough fuel to feed the fire. Perhaps it is this which helps to explain why Quarry, though 'rough' by the standards of more regulated communities, seems to have escaped the kind of destitution so familiar in the late Victorian countryside and so rampant in the towns. Subsistence never gave out, however severe the season, nor was charity ever called upon to take its place — there was little available save that which the working population of the village provided for themselves."

And he points out that in neither the official census returns nor in the recollections he gathered from old villagers "in all the hardships which they speak about" is any mention made "of those two great standbys of the out-of-work elsewhere: the workhouse and parish relief".

It's an interesting thought, and the fact that it suits the ideology of our current rulers is beside the point. For the place whose history Samuel was gathering was a village which had arisen singularly free of landlords:

"For centuries it had enjoyed what was virtually an extra-parochial existence, a kind of anarchy, in which the villagers were responsible to nobody but themselves."

I doubt if I have the nerve to guide the members of that worldwide group around the current inheritance of that self-built self-employed economy. And I would certainly hesitate before knocking on people's doors to ask if they know of its origins. But it's a reminder that self-organising societies are recent history in the evolution of our rich cities, just as they are in the current exploration of the cities of the poor.

Colin Ward

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Colin Ward's books tend to be about the popular or unofficial ways in which people use their environment and reshape it to meet their own needs. Due to the unfortunate demise of Bedford Square Press, Freedom Press is now the lucky recipient of all remaining copies of three of his titles, which we are now offering at greatly reduced prices. They are admirable books of high quality production and of great interest to both the general reader and the specialist. All three are post-free to individual customers inland (please add 15% of original price towards postage and packing overseas) and are also available to bookshops and stalls at trade discount.

THE CHILD IN THE CITY

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"The Child in the City tears down the walls and brilliantly highlights a culture which extends from Battersea to Bangladesh; the only true international culture, which in our search for 'knowledge' we largely ignore. Ward has produced a book which should go into every school, college and home, and also into every factory and office." — *Times Educational Supplement*

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Colin Ward's book became a classic for the 1980s. This new edition includes 'An Afterword in 1990' which brings this stimulating and penetrating work right up to date and introduces the author's insights and observations to a new generation of readers.

THE CHILD IN THE COUNTRY

with Foreword by Richard Mabey

208 pages with notes and index
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"Ward skilfully and sympathetically questions the assumptions of grown-ups of all kinds about the experience of growing up in rural Britain ... demolishing two cherished myths, about childhood and about rural innocence, before settling down to provide a balanced survey of rural life and rural institutions from the standpoint of the needs of the countryside's younger inhabitants." — Howard Newby in *New Statesman and Society*

The Child in the Country penetrates beyond the popular romantic ideal of country childhood and vividly documents the realities facing children in a rural area. Such controversial and topical issues as the decline of public transport, the closure of village shops and schools, the lack of access to fields, woods and streams, and the influx of affluent newcomers are acutely analysed in relation to the country child. A final section reminds us that most children in the world are poor country dwellers, describes the plight of teenagers trapped in villages, and discusses the different styles of rural deprivation.

WELCOME, THINNER CITY:

urban survival in the 1990s
122 pages with notes and index
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In *Welcome, Thinner City*, the author challenges our preconceptions about the historical past and about the state of our cities today. He shows, with a host of examples from several countries, that poor city dwellers can rehouse themselves given the access to credit that the affluent take for granted. The experience of Italian cities is used to show the potential of a high-technology, small-workshop urban economy.

While rooted thoroughly in the present, the book looks forward to the low-density, thinner and greener city of the twenty-first century. It is, in the author's own words, a book that "supports no party and no programme and is addressed to citizens of all parties and none, since an understanding of the issues involved in the crisis of the cities is a pre-requisite of citizenship".

Anarchist Press

Remarkable how quickly all this has come about and how efficient the system is. Don't make the mistake of thinking the whole thing is going to go away. We are on our way comrades, it may be baby talk at the moment or baby's first steps, don't despise it because it is new technology, but people are *talking* across continents. Even *Freedom* is there, this newspaper that is, a page of it all to itself, a sample issue of only about ten months old and a click on the underlined word and you can read Tony Gibson's deathless prose on prisons. Click on that and you are back in jail, sorry. There is also a remarkably up-to-date version of a drawing by our very own Arthur Moyses, well a little bit cleaner as befits the electronic screen, but Arthur won't mind and it's all in a good cause. The page is accessed with <http://global.com/TAO/Freedom> on World Wide Web.

Fortunately, time being indivisible, what wasn't there yesterday may well be there today. Elites will talk to elites, that cannot be helped. But the principle is the most important. What they can do, we can do. And better. But bear this in mind, *whoever* uses the system, we are against secrecy, reveal all. Let the people know. And do not destroy what we already have just for the sake of this new toy, for otherwise the burning down of the library in Alexandria was nothing to the disaster that will ensue if we chuck the printed word. Click on to any of the subjects and you can see how ill-written most of the stuff is. Bigotism has not died out when electronics were invented.

Ironic that the most important item of news which I found, dated 24th October, was from an outfit called DTP (Deep Throat Press). Ironic because they describe themselves as such and therefore, *corrupt ergo sum*. I thought their communication was pure fiction. The well-written dialogue (you wanna job as a critic?) was no less than Front Page News or should have been on that date. The importance of it is that even if it was an inspired guess, it means that somebody has read the last issue of *Freedom* and reactivated an old secret recorder in the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park and eavesdropped on our chums Bill and Boris having their secret little talk. Not a word about Caspian oil, though. On that they could not deliver, despite good old John Major's efforts. The carve-up, according to Deep Throat, was about Bosnia. The conversation which is authenticated by today's news (a week later) is that the US and Russia have made a military pact over Bosnia. So here is an extract:
 Bill: We have to agree to put our troops into Bosnia for the good of mankind.
 Boris: Four or five divisions?
 Bill: Under NATO command.
 Boris: My hands are tied. It would be easier to call it, as in the Second World War, Grand American European Command under commander Lebed, hero of Afghanistan. [laughter].
 You can check out the rest of the story on www.omegacom.com/pub1.html. True or not, we have a lot of friends out there.

No fear, in the old days it was them, our rulers, who invented surveillance. Their days of terror are coming to an end. What surveys us also surveys them. And they have nowhere to hide. It is despicable what they do and the misery they cause, from Mururoa to Bosnia. But it is all being revealed. Not a year or a decade later, but the very day, the very moment they meet in the secretest of their hide-outs.

Give credit where credit is due. The international section of *Freedom* will, sooner or later, pave the way for the newest of all communication methods. And it was all started by Kropotkin in 1886. Just click on the name, underlined.

John Rety

The purpose of Noam Chomsky's politics is to change the policies of the United States government, and his way of doing this is to show how it secures the acquiescence of public opinion to its policies. It does this through its relationship to the media which, unlike other totalitarian states, it does not control, but so powerful is their common ideology that the US is able to be the most oppressive government in the world and yet have none of the restrictions on freedom of speech that are typical of other forms of totalitarianism.

A new book* by Milan Rai, formerly Chomsky's research assistant, shows that the assumptions governing Chomsky's opposition seem to be the same as those of *Freedom*, i.e. rationalist and secularist, and so this book should be popular amongst the readership. They are well expressed by the title of its review in *Peace News*: "Not converting but informing". Chomsky works tirelessly to expose those crimes which the US media conceals or minimises, the assumption being that once these are fully exposed to public view then public opinion will force a change of policy. This outlook has a venerable history, going back to Socrates who held that ignorance is the cause of evil. Chomsky demonstrates the success of this strategy with regard to Central America and Vietnam, but valuable as this approach is to blunting the claws of capitalism, I feel it cannot kill the beast.

Now the policies of the US are driven by market forces, and the global economy, the New World Order has been able to be established because there is now an unprecedented consensus that market forces are the only viable basis for society. The losers in this system, which are the vast majority of the world population, seek to limit their economic and cultural impoverishment by resorting to fundamentalism, ethnicity and racism. Serb fights Croat, Hindi fights Muslim, Tamil fights Singhalese, in a desperate but futile attempt to create a community where market forces are restrained and a sense of identity, roots and tradition are maintained. The film *We Once Were Warriors* illustrates this point. It is this situation that calls for us to recognise the limitations of the approach we have inherited from the Enlightenment; this was to appeal to all humanity over the heads of their 'local habitation and a name' with the voice of reason; this approach held that there was a

* *Chomsky's Politics* by Milan Rai, published by Verso, £10.95 (when ordering by post from Freedom Press please add 55p in the UK, £1.10 elsewhere, towards postage and packing).

The Limitations of the Enlightenment

direct route to the human heart and mind by-passing culture and religion; once all humanity had grasped the scientific method and the knowledge that it gave them, then human unity would arise naturally and inevitably. Marxism has been the most effective exponent of this method and we see where that had led us! A more positive approach is open to us if we are prepared to pay the price.

I am an anarchist because only anarchism can deliver on the biblical promise of peace on earth, but this latest study of the world's leading anarchist offers us little hope. Chomsky's genius, integrity and industry are undisputed, so it is with some trepidation that I offer an alternative strategy. Mainstream 'orthodox' anarchism is secular and rationalist, tracing its roots to the Enlightenment and the scientific world view, and thus finds justifications for its values in nature and reason. As Chomsky puts it (quoted by Rai on page 102), "any social or political theory, whether conservative, reformist or revolutionary, is based on some implicit concept of human nature, a biological given. Thus if we are opposed to slavery it is because we think that in some sense these institutions are an infringement on essential human nature."

But unfortunately the modern world which we wish to overthrow traces its values to the same source; one of its most interesting characteristics is an overwhelming belief in God (some 60% in England and 90% in the USA) combined with a minuscule church-going - some 5% here and 20% in the USA. It has followed the Enlightenment insight that God is not to be found in religion but in nature, and justifies the capitalist world order as being based on evolution and the survival of the fittest. Thus the global economy is faithful to the Divine Plan, and market forces owe their legitimacy to theism. While most anarchists are atheists this provides further evidence for the necessity of atheism.

While Chomsky is undoubtedly an atheist, his idea of "essential nature" in the above quotation is in danger of taking the place of god as a basis for norms or values. It can be seen as reworking of Rousseau's famous aphorism: "Man [sic] is born free but found everywhere in chains". We should be free because it is our nature to be free. The trouble with this argument is that we risk being dictated by nature, it dethrones human will

and desire. If it is not my nature to be free - but I want to be - then I will change my nature. Nature is a 'spook' as Stirner would say. Similarly with regard to reason, I feel Stirner would have agreed with Hume that "reason is and ought to be the slave of the passions". Reason can only be used to further our desires, not to justify them. There was an amusing incident during the French Revolution when a young lady was enthroned as the Goddess of Reason on the high altar in Notre Dame, a piece of street theatre of which we situationists might have approved, but I bet Stirner would have sneered that they were simply replacing one 'spook' by another.

Similarly when Socrates and Protagoras were debating whether God or man (sic) was the measure of all things one might imagine Stirner interrupting with 'I am the measure of all things!' The reaction of those two worthies would have been most interesting!

I feel it is necessary to affirm the primacy, indeterminacy and arbitrariness of human choice. Even if it could be demonstrated conclusively that a free society is both unnatural and irrational, we should still pursue it by all effective means, simply because that is what we want.

Perhaps the most chilling indictment of nature comes from the pen of the Greek historian Thucydides in what is known as the *Melian Dialogue*. The Athenians are about to invade Melos and have called on them to surrender. When the Melians say this is unjust, the Athenians reply "We know of the Gods only by repute, but of men by clear evidence that by a necessity of nature when ever they have power they will rule. This law was made not by us, and we are not the first who have acted upon it. We did but inherit it and shall bequeath it to all time; we obey it in the knowledge that you and all mankind with our strength would act like us."

The historian Beauford Parkes comments that the *Melian Dialogue* "provided a convincing demonstration of the inadequacy of rationalism alone as a guide to human life" (in *Gods and Men*, page 219).

Chapter 7 of Milan Rai's book is entitled 'Strategies' and one would expect to find here an analysis of the defeats suffered by US capitalism and what we could learn from them. In fact we find an analysis of only one, Vietnam, which is strange for most of us would consider the civil rights movement and the revolution in Iran defeats of equal significance. My feeling is that these were not included because they were religiously motivated, "irrational" in Chomsky's view, and he says (page 210) "there are no arguments I know of for irrationality". One feels that the appeal to pragmatism has some force, i.e. that strategies based on 'irrationality' sometimes work.

An -admittedly trivial - example from the history of mathematics might provide a parallel. Early on mathematicians had problems dealing with the square root of minus one - a mathematical 'irrationality' because the product of any two numbers has to be positive. Nowadays I understand (I am no mathematician) techniques have evolved to handle this number and it causes no problems. It is worth remembering just how effective the 'non-rational' tradition has been: Tolstoy, although having little understanding of the modern world, achieved more in the field of human rights than his secular contemporaries, and the largest and most effective anarchist group in the world today is the *Catholic Worker*. None of this requires us to waste a moment on the historical and scientific claims for the Bible, but it does enable us to appropriate this central icon of Western culture and without it we cannot "return to earth the treasure wasted on heaven".

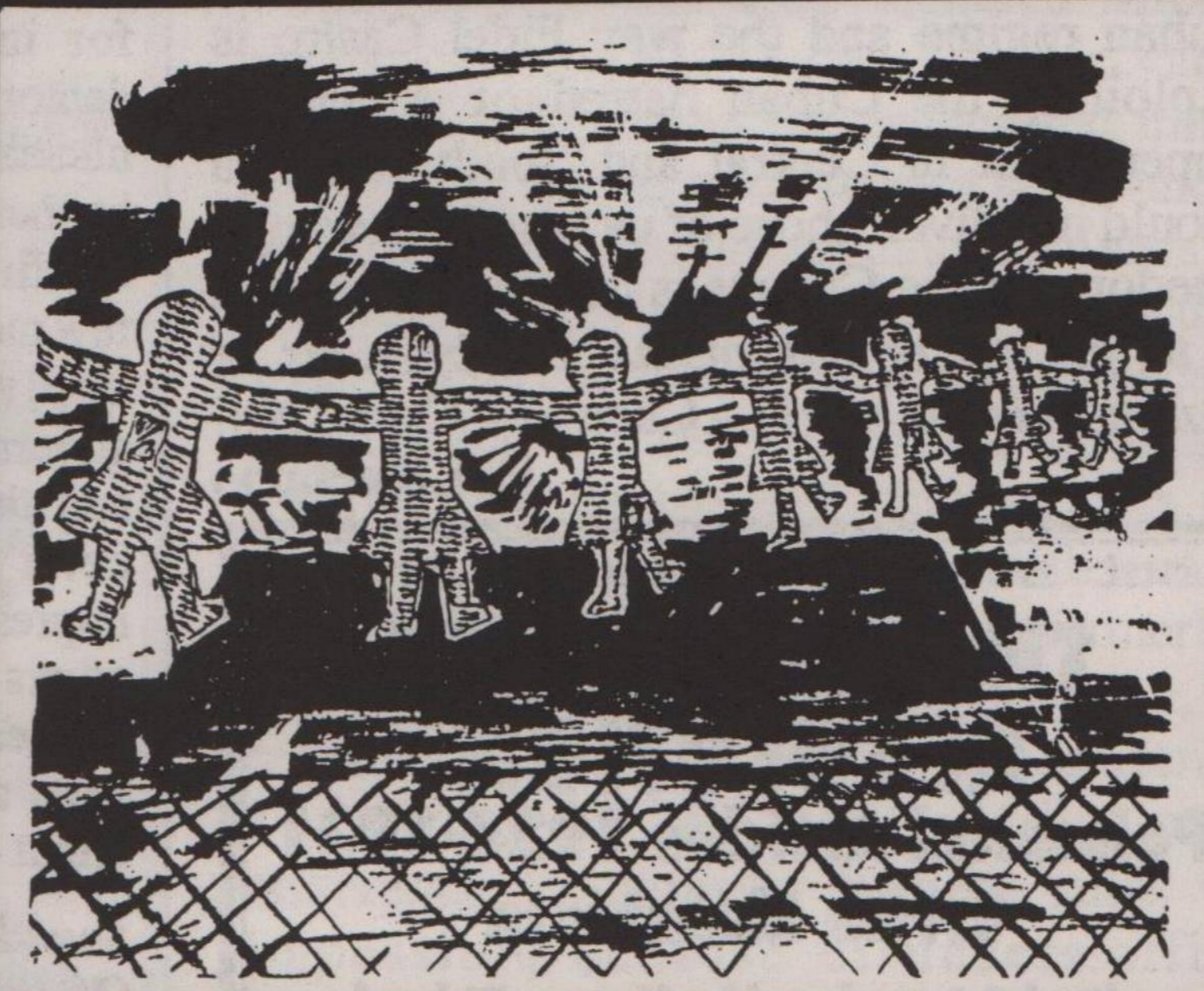
Peter Lumsden

new from Freedom Press

Through the Anarchist Press

- a column in Freedom

by John Rety with drawings by Emily Johns



This column was born on a Scottish island and was devised around the notion of only taking note of what is written in the anarchist press while ignoring the outpourings of the tabloid mush - hence the title. Readers can also have fun seeking out the 'hidden' words in the text.

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A well for Los Arenalejos

Drought is causing a disaster in Andalucía. In the nearly eight years that we've been operating, never has our rural libertarian collective, Los Arenalejos (soon to be the Foundation for the Investigation and Development of Social Ecology) suffered such a disaster.

On top of the absence of rain, the volume of water in our irrigation ditch has gone down by two-thirds.

In spite of all our efforts to avoid evaporation with organic agricultural techniques, such as permaculture or mulch, many of the more than five hundred trees on the irrigated land are threatened with death from drought. On top of this, we are short of drinking water for ourselves.

Of course, we are putting a lot of effort into saving more water, using ecological techniques for recycling used water and using it again for irrigation. But all these measures are not enough.

Just one well, situated in the lowest part of the property, could save the plantations and at the same time give us enough indispensable drinking water.

But making a well means digging, building and installing a pump and pipes to take the water up to the reservoir. Work that we estimate will cost about 1,200,000 pesetas.

It's all very expensive. Too expensive ...

Being an autonomous collective, Los Arenalejos doesn't benefit from any subsidies.

Neither are we in the habit of putting our hands out and asking for charity.

We only call on your solidarity when the cost of a tool or some indispensable infrastructure exceeds our own capacity. That's how it was four years ago. We collected two million pesetas in subscriptions for the tractor that's still a great help to us.

So we're asking for help. Although it might be a little thing for you, for us it will mean a lot.

And while we're on the subject of water, isn't it the little streams that form the great rivers?

Los Arenalejos, 1st August, 1995

If you'd like to know more about us, write to us and we'll reply: Lista de Correos, 29567 Alozaina, Malaga, Spain

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Le Monde Libertaire/CNT September 1995

AN EXPERIMENT IN LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION

Even though now it's been around for nearly two years, the libertarian school Bonaventure d'Oléron had never really reached the communes of the Northern Alps and a fortiori nor did it reach Italy. So it seemed to us that with a libertarian group in Maurienne, whose activities stretched as far as Chambéry, a link to the FA (Anarchist Federation of France) and a co-organisational project with our comrades in Italy that this was an area that should be dealt with.

The rounds were done between the 5th and the 11th of March during which time we stopped off at the home of some organic farmers in Ain, were the guests of the FA group in Grenoble, and held public meetings in Milan, Pinerollo, Turin, Chambry and finally Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne. A heavy week for the two bonaventuriers, from whom we were able to verify the energy of the anarchist movement and the Italian revolutionaries who have, more quickly than here, seen the abandonment and indeed the defeat of a mass education system led and, up until recently, promoted by the state. In effect, the government and big industry foresee 'grave management difficulties' regarding the administration of certain social services - one being education - to justify their financial disengagement.

A first move will be to empower local authorities to forgo their legal obligation to provide a maternity education service - we won't have to wait long for this one. Large local companies, heavily in the red, will not hesitate to shut the school gates in order to relieve their budgets.

Within such a framework alternatives don't seem very possible. Only the Roman Catholic church has the means to take over 95% of these scholarly establishments, according to our comrades in Italy. And one can't deny that things have indeed worked out well for the bourgeoisie whose natural ally, in the homeland of Roman Catholicism (as indeed it is in France) is the state with its helping hand. This can be explained in several different ways but that of which we can be certain is that the states of Europe need a church that has never really lost its political footing and which, moreover, is willing to play the 'charitable role' of the state which today

simply has to play at social politics whilst, at the same time, preferring that this disregard for the conditions of the poor should not provoke their revolt.

The underlings therefore will get their diet of 'what they need' - an education of suppression and the necessities to survive - no more. Under such conditions it is tempting for the Italian anarchists to take advantage of this space and try out the idea of a libertarian school - self-management here and now, an education of revolt, for autonomy and individual harmony.

Well of course the argument was heated between those who argued that the state system offered the best chance of offering space for the development of a revolutionary libertarian education and those who thought it impossible for any state institution to be reformed and advantage gained from it.

The idea of the Bonaventure school came just in time to rescue the latter's cause and our

two bonaventuriers were well questioned about educational matters and also about the political experience they had had on the Ile d'Oléron and its region. In short we can say there's a lot of interest on the other side of the Alps and we hope to see one day (soon?) a libertarian education network which wouldn't be a mean achievement.

On this side of the mountains the debate was somewhat different (as are our situations) but we can say that the interest generated in the single concrete instance of libertarian education that we have was equal to the Italian experience. Considering together the twenty outsiders who came to the Chambry meeting (along with friends), when we hadn't been to the town for three years, with a dozen faces we came across in Sainte-Jeande-Maurienne and a few lively debates - and finding a general consensus view that social change is required one can say that these initiatives in Savoy were successful. And a success that was well covered by the local press. So we will continue, for sure, with this project and others now that we have proof that libertarian ideas and practices can be popular.

translated from *Le Monde Libertaire*

"GABI, WE'RE BURNING THE TOWN DOWN"

Interview with Gabriel Tetiarahi, co-ordinator of the NGO network, concerning recent troubles in Tahiti.

Who was demonstrating at the airport?

Young people. Most of them from poor quarters. Of course there were also anti-nuclear activists and syndicalists, but they wanted a non-violent protest.

But buildings were burnt down and shops ransacked? Some syndicalists may have had a part to play in all of that but very few. Most of those responsible came from those sectors of society who have suffered the most from the economic and social problems the island has suffered. Most were aged between 15 and 25, unemployed and with no useful skills. Such folk are uncontrollable.

What was the link with the nuclear tests?

Ecologists, syndicalists and militant Christians were deeply offended by Chirac's decision.

And Oscar Temaru's Independence Party?

I think Temaru was surprised by the direction that events took. The workers in the region who have been organised into unions and took part in the General strike Wednesday, didn't ask permission, they simply grabbed the big engines to block the airports runways.

Has Tahiti ever seen such scenes of civil war?

Of course, during the workers' struggles in 1987 at the harbour and in the town, there was even more destruction. But this time the events were strongly influenced by the frustration and anger of the young people. It seems that these people put everything together: protest against the nuclear tests, demands for independence and social problems. The demonstrations which were sparked off by the anti-nuclear protest, express the difficulties confronted by these people. But the people's anger, faced with this first test, comes from the fact that over the past few months, everything which they have heard was imply statements, either from the French government or Greenpeace. The social problems and the sufferings of the Polynesian people are never mentioned. The feeling of inferiority, the impression that they don't exist in the minds of others all this came out in a violent fashion. I noticed that the airport that the television crews were attacked and that journalists' cars were set alight - that's the reason, I'm sure of it.

Sounds like a criticism of Greenpeace?

Of course, Greenpeace brought the world's attention to Mururoa, on its own activities on Mururoa. "Blood will flow in the streets" a high ranking official from the evangelical church warned before the riot broke out. When a few militants from Hiti-Tau came to tell me "Gabi, we're burning the town down", I felt I had no right to stop them. The real violence has come from the French with their bombs. The Polynesians are simply reacting to the violence being inflicted upon them. We have already made so many non-violent demonstrations, signed so many petitions and written so many letters, but the Parisian governments - from De Gaulle to Chirac - have never heard us.

Can these events lead to Independence in Tahiti?

No. This explosion of violence was only partly linked to the independence movement. The latter like the anti-nuclear movement is taking advantage of the change in the wind because it feels it enjoys international support. But the emotions raised will quieten down. We must find a place for these young people in our society; that is what we must fight for. But this kind of protest could happen again if this feeling of frustration persists.

Interview by Nicola Liebert, Tageszeitung, 13th September 1995

TAHITI

The following is taken from information supplied by the French Counter-information Network.

"Following on from the setting up, in Papeete, of the Pacific Experimentation Centre, we have witnessed the disappearance of local self-sufficient agriculture and fishing whose rights have been sold to the Japanese factory boats. Since then we have seen the setting up of a two-tiered society. The majority of ethnic Polynesians have gained little from the bomb's economic fallout.

Unemployment and slums are the growing reality. Tourism has created few jobs. The independence folk want development aid to be diversified so that local people no longer depend on just one country and one political programme. No doubt the rioters in Papeete were manipulated. By misery ... Over there, like here, the military and the nuclear industry do little to prevent misery from spreading. On the contrary.

A Democratic Blank

Things nuclear and things democratic don't rhyme. The arrest of syndicalists in Papeete, the demonstrations banned in Paris, disinformation and lies consistently prove the point. From the Communists to the Gaullists they are all for things nuclear and hide behind the banner of the Electricity Suppliers and the Atomic Energy Industry. As has been said, they want to find out how stupid the French are by selling them empty arguments and all the repressive means along with the media are at their disposal. We are reminded of the French customs officers who were going to stop the fallout from Chernobyl.

At the same time Superphenix power station is going back online. At the same time we continue to send our waste to the Third World. At the same time Hiroshima's survivors are dying slowly from the effects of a bomb dropped 50 years ago.

Say no to Nukes!"

Fédération anarchiste Sections Contre l'Atome Liquidant le Pacifique (Scalp-Reflex)

CASTRO SI - FREEDOM NO!

According to the French daily *Le Monde* of the 11th October 1995, 300 pro-Castro artists have been refused by Carlos Marti Brenes, Cuban vice-minister of culture, exit visas to attend a Franco-Cuban festival, Les Allumées, in Nantes that was to be held from 16th to 19th October 1995.

The last minute change of heart by the Cuban authorities has forced the French organisers of this festival to cancel, at great cost to themselves and to the local authorities, this important cultural event that would have been attended by more than 100,000 people.

Fearing the political consequences of having Cuban-based artists mingling with other Cuban artists, intellectuals and dissidents living in exile in Mexico, France and Spain who had also been invited to participate in controversial debates about democracy in Cuba organised by the daily *Le Monde* and French television programmes *France-Culture* and *Telerama*, it seems that the Cuban authorities got the jitters and decided to retain on the island 300 'trusted' artists that had been officially vetoed by Castro's regime. Among the artists stranded in Cuba are the following bands and individual performers: Sierra Maestra, Septeto Nacional, Los Van Van, N.G. La Banda, Klimax, Paolito y Su Elite, Alfredo Rodriguez, Mercedita Valdez, Changuito, Jorge Luis Prats, Victor Varel, Company Segundo y Su Muchachos, Latin-Jazz Band, Santiago Alvarez and many others not named in this article.

Those in Britain inclined to support the political initiatives of the Cuba Solidarity campaign such as the Trafalgar Square Rally 'Hands Off Cuba', are well advised to think twice for the American boycott against the Cuban regime and the way Fidel Castro is exploiting the Cuban hatred of American imperialism in Central and South America should not divert those of us who believe that freedom for the Cubans is the main task, that is to get rid of one of the last bastions of Stalinism in the world - Cuba Si - Castro No! El Libertario

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Demagogues and Libertarianism

Dear Freedom,

Colin Ward is correct in condemning right-wing demagogues who have hijacked the good name of libertarian ('Libertarianism and the Great Hijack', 7th October 1995). He also made the observation that both Smith and Hayek have been distorted by their so-called followers and asks for an anarchist interpretation of these thinkers. The following is admittedly a superficial summary of free marketers, but hopefully it will show their distance from the 'dog-eat-dog' types.

Adam Smith is lauded or condemned as the father of a kind of free market free-for-all. This is a gross misinterpretation of Smith who believed that the market was indeed limited - by the morals and ethics of the community. It has been forgotten by friend and foe alike that long before he was an economist, Smith was a moral philosopher, renowned for his 1759 study *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. The basis of his philosophy was sympathy - a feeling ultimately giving rise to justice and virtue, the latter described as concerned with the happiness of others.

Friedrich Hayek, contrary to what many might think, was not opposed to a social welfare system. He preferred that most of these services be run by voluntary non-government agencies, but also saw the need for certain state services for those incapable of mutual aid and self-help. Nor was he opposed to trade unions.

Wilhelm Ropke, the Swiss free-marketer, was very much in tune with Adam Smith. He believed the only way to offset the atomising propensities of the market was a very strong emphasis on certain non-market institutions. These were the family, the community, voluntary agencies and local governments. He also saw the need for some level of government social welfare and regulation to protect the needy. Ropke was well aware of the danger of big

business and the resulting proletarianisation, seeing capitalism as a perversion of the market system. He thought these problems could be overcome by making property ownership as widespread as possible and by decentralising government to stop the concentration of political and economic power.

Albert J. Nock was a follower of both Thomas Jefferson and Henry George. Nock believed that capitalism arose through the role of the state and the monopolisation of land. He proposed the abolition of the state, replacing it with self-governing communities. He also believed everyone should have property on an usufruct basis. An independent and self-governing people would have little need of social services, but those that were necessary would best be in the hands of voluntary groups.

What annoys Milton Friedman about the welfare system is that most of the money is wasted in the bureaucracy and little actually gets to the people who need it. Hence his concept of a negative income tax, which would target the poor and cut out the bureaucrats. In a similar vein is his concept of education vouchers, which would have the added advantage of empowering the parents. Like all of the thinkers listed above, Friedman prefers voluntary agencies for social welfare.

The late Murray Rothbard believed in the abolition of the state. In his writings he showed how grassroots and voluntary organisations were far superior to the state-directed in accomplishing their goals. He also exposed the state's role in the creation of poverty and a host of other social ills and how self-government would overcome most of these problems. Rothbard was no friend of big business and condemned the plutocrats as creatures of the state. Nor was the free market everything. To maintain a society it was necessary to have a strong ethical sense and such institutions as the family and community.

Gordon Tullock believes in a system of parallel local governments to handle many social services. Sort of a moderate panarchy, where various self-defined groups could tax their adherents to supply schooling or other activities. He also extols the voluntary non-governmental association, but also sees the need for certain services provided by higher levels of government.

Obviously the opinions of Thatcherites and other demagogues are a caricature of these thinkers.

Larry Gambone

How do we get there?

Dear Freedom,

I have been a subscriber to *Freedom* for many years and am more than sympathetic with many of the views expressed therein.

However, whilst the presented anarchist analysis of the continuing disasters that beset mankind prove to be all too true, I perceive a certain naive optimism as to how events can be steered towards the paradise that is anarchism.

Can 'man' focus upon anarchic paradise without a leader? Is an 'idea' a sufficient motivator for human change - especially when that 'idea' does not have an icon or a saviour? Theories do not seem to move people or reduce their prejudices.

It seems to me that there is a 'black hole' of uncertainty and fear deep in the back of people's minds. This results in a search for certainty in the form of a saviour or a leader.

Apart from 'technology' has the world really changed? Are we not all at sea and deeply confused?

Amity and fear seem to be in mortal combat.

I appreciate that this view is purely subjective but I would be grateful for a light at the end of my tunnel. Can anyone help?

Peter J. Whitfield

A solution to unemployment

Dear Freedom,

Your article 'No Capitalist Solution to Unemployment' (*Freedom*, 21st October) is fair comment, except for its failure to take into account in its predictions the obscene waste of materials and effort involved in capitalism's method of keeping the poor ground-down by work, while enriching the rich - something your other writer on the 'Labour Party' is aware of.

Your final sentence, however, must be challenged. The Green Party has policies which, if implemented, would develop "a humane and egalitarian economic system", to quote yourself, and could do this without the prior collapse of the economic system. Whether it can ever manage to get these policies applied is another matter, but the chance of this is at least as high as the chance of an anarchist society arising

from the ruins of "the collapse of capitalism". There are many anarchists working within the Green Party because they see its policies - in the development of which they have had / are having a strong influence - as the brightest hope of a transition toward an anarchist society.

High on the list of priority in these policies is that of basic incomes, which would allow workers an effective challenge to their bosses, or to quit their jobs and do more worthwhile things with a guaranteed, albeit minimal, economic security.

In combination with its other policies, this would end the squandering of resources "to create/preserve jobs" and, by rational use of materials and effort, provide adequately for all without any difficulty.

Brian Leslie

More on Baby Thomas

Dear Editors,

How right VR is in his 'More Thoughts on Baby Thomas' (*Freedom*, 7th October). Opponents of euthanasia and abortion follow two ideas that have probably contributed more to human misery than any others since the first priesthoods were established.

First, they wish to sacrifice the reality of each actual individual - which is the only human reality - to an abstraction. In this case the abstraction is 'the sanctity of life'. 'The sanctity of life' does not exist anywhere except in the heads of some people, but millions are made to suffer in its name.

And they are made to suffer because of the other idea, which is that 'society; or 'the church' or 'the state' has the right,

or the duty even, to tell other people what to do with their lives. How ironical that it is the opponents, not the supporters, of euthanasia and abortion who have something in common with the Nazis, who they constantly hold up as a warning as they try to scare us with talk of the 'slippery slope'.

Amorey Gethin

Anarchist Football

Dear Freedom,

My son picked up my copy of *Freedom*. "What, no sports section?" he quipped. "Write in and complain" I said. He saw little point so I'm doing it for him. So how about it, an anarchist football league: Green Anarchist Greats versus The Situationist Scramblers, the ACF Academicals versus the Stirnerite Sceptics. Fantasy league teams perhaps - alright, it was just a thought.

Silvia Edwards

Please keep sending in your letters and donations ...

BEYOND BEGGAR'S OPERA

"Jails run by courtesy of inmates"

Jails, like factories, are social systems. Last week one former prison governor said: "The prisons are run by courtesy of the prisoners". It was his response to the ranting of the inmates at the Tory Party Conference and the predicament of the Home Secretary over the sacking of Derek Lewis, former Director General of the Prison Service.

It should be clear by now that prison cell politics are trapped in a web of social conflict and power relationships at all levels. Aggravation at the top between the Home Secretary Mr Michael Howard and Elizabeth Symons, General Secretary of the Association of First Division Civil Servants, constant squabbles between the Governors and the Prison Officers' Association, mountains of reports and recommendations from the likes of Judge Steven Tumin and now Sir John Learmont, and under all this the prisoners themselves.

The Learmont Report into security in the prison service referred to lack of leadership and "lax and unprofessional" management at the top being compounded by "disastrous indecision and apathy" on the ground. One of his proposals was for an Alcatraz-style super-secure jail to be built for the country's 200 most dangerous inmates.

Given the spirited response from Mr Howard and the floor at the Tory Conference one wonders if one Alcatraz will suffice. Calls for 'life meaning life' and hard labour and tougher sentences are bound to take us back to Strangeways-style insurrections and the like.

Take away parole or the opportunity for earlier release, and the 'courtesy' which prisoners extend to prop-up the prison system will fall away. 'Lifers' and long-term inmates

will have nothing to lose and their conflict with the 'screws' will become increasingly bitter.

Who rules the nation's jails then? Well, in theory Mr Howard is responsible for policy, and formerly Mr Lewis was in charge of 'operational matters'. This is something to do with power over the prisons, but it is a division of labour and in practice has much to do with ducking blame in the series of power games being played out at all levels of the prison service hierarchy.

But what is this power? We can give examples of power being exercised, such as Michael Howard's sacking of Derek Lewis. But I doubt if we can give a definitive definition of the word 'power'.

Tolstoy suggested in the epilogue of *War and Peace* that attempts to define power are circular: "What is power? Power is the collective will of the people transferred to one person. Under what condition is the will of the people delegated to one person? On condition that that person expresses the will of the whole people. That is, power is power: in other words, power is a word the meaning of which we do not understand."

In the meantime we observe examples of the exercise of power in the prison service. In November one of Mr Howard's critics, Judge Tumin, will be pensioned off. The Home Secretary is forcing him to retire. Judge Tumin says Mr Howard no longer seems to want any independent advice. Tumin has said Howard's distinction between 'policy' and 'operational' decisions is bogus. In the *Observer* David Rose reports: "as prison governors edge nearer to mutiny ... the simmering crisis may soon burst into the open again". Brendan O'Friel, chairman of the Prison Governors' Association, is claiming that his contact with

prisoners, prison staff, governors and service headquarters suggests that the sacking episode had "traumatised the service".

As I write, a prisoner at Wakefield jail, one-legged Michael Sams, has just attempted to throttle Julia Flack, a probation officer and archdeacon's wife. But that is as nothing compared to the Parliamentary murder committed by the Home Secretary upon Jack Straw and the Labour Party in the debate over the Learmont Report.

Chirac's circumcision

Among the many problems of the French President Chirac is that one of the Algerian terrorist groups operating in Paris is demanding that the President convert to Islam. This puts me in mind of a similar suggestion made to Napoleon after his troops had conquered Egypt. It was pointed out by his hosts that it would be easier to rule the country if only his men would convert.

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The principal obstacles to the mass conversion were over the issues of circumcision and whether there would be a special dispensation to allow the French troops to go on drinking wine.

It was an incident which inspired Napoleon's famous speech to the Council of State: "By becoming a Catholic I ended the war in the Vendée; by becoming a Moslem, I established myself in Egypt; and by becoming an ultra montanist, I won over the priests in Italy. If I had ruled a nation of Jews I would rebuild the temple of Solomon."

A great actor, when he is acting, must never forget it is all a game. Political lying is a work of art! What's more, if Chirac doesn't convert I'll give up eating Golden Delicious.

State terrorism and state secrets

The judge Baltasar Garzon, investigating the Spanish Socialist Government's involvement in the 1980s in the murder of Basques suspected of membership of ETA, has run into some obstructions from the government of Felipe Gonzalez. The government has invoked the law of Official Secrets to stop Señor Garzon getting his hands on documents related to the 'Caso Monbar' involving several of the assassinations.

Several ministers have already resigned after having been implicated in what is being called the dirty war, with the government employing freelance mercenaries to kill alleged members of ETA.

The two documents being withheld under the law of Official Secrets relate to:

- i) Those who knew and established the criteria of action in the dirty war against the ETA.
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