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FIFTY PENCE

"If the misery of our poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin."

Charles Darwin
in *Voyage of the Beagle*

THE FISH 'CRISIS': DON'T BLAME THE FISH ... NOR THE SPANIARDS!

Nearly a year ago Canadian gun-boats were seizing Spanish trawlers and their crews even though they were fishing outside the 200-mile exclusion zone imposed by the Canadians. Needless to say, the representatives of the British fishing industry, and interests, were waving the Canadian flag and were up in arms at the EU's ruling that as from January of this year some forty Spanish and Portuguese boats would be allowed to fish in the so-called 'Irish Box'. Meanwhile the EU ministers have agreed on fishing quotas for 1996.

Needless to say the headlines, especially of newspapers such as the *East Anglian Daily Times* (which has a large circulation in the coastal towns of East Anglia and one imagines that in the North and in Cornwall it is likewise), are denouncing the Spaniards, the government and are crying their eyes out about the poor hard-working

fishermen being driven out of a livelihood by 'Brussels' and 'the Spaniards'.

What utter nonsense! Let's deal with the Spanish 'invasion' first. The Irish Box, so-called, is an area of 92,000 square miles. As we pointed out in *Freedom* (11th February 1995):

"It is ironical that British fishing interests declare this section, which is on the Atlantic side of the Republic of Ireland, is *their exclusive 'territory'*, the more so when the EU agreement excludes Spanish boats from the Irish Sea and Bristol Channel which also bounds Ireland on one side! So what about the poor Irish fishermen? Where do they have a look in?"

The second 'complaint' about the Spaniards is that they have a large number of trawlers registered in England. Again the conditions imposed on such arrangements is that 75% of the crew must be English. It is true that the catch can be 'exported' to a Spanish port, and this is another source of grievance for the

anti-Spanish lobby (which is also the anti-European lobby). These same people welcome foreign investment in the car industry, for instance, and don't object to the fact that the profits from this are exported!

Finally, the Spanish fishing industry has been subjected to quotas and to decommissioning of a percentage of its fishing fleet, just as all the other EU nations with a fishing industry.

If one believes the British fishing spokespersons and the interested media, there is a conspiracy in Brussels against the British. That too is nonsense! The quotas for British fishermen in 'key North Sea, western waters and English Channel fishing grounds in 1996' compared with 1995 is almost generous. A lot of fuss has been made in the media about sole and plaice, the quotas for which have decreased from a total of 31,500 to 23,000 tons. But cod, haddock and hake quotas have increased. The herring and mackerel quotas have decreased from 335,000 to 246,000 tons, but all in all even the Brussels bureaucrats are allowing our 'desperate' fishermen to sweep up (they no longer fish the sea) just under *half a million tons of fish for free*. For unlike even the factory farmers, they simply 'harvest' the oceans and by their greed are responsible for the depletion of fish stocks, aided and encouraged by governments - after all, at one time they were given subsidies to have larger boats and introduce more sophisticated technologies to increase their catches! Now the government has a £53 million fund for fishermen to *decommission* their boats (that is to take them out of service)! And what has the government - which observes the rules as none of those 'foreigners' do - done in this connection? We quote Geoffrey Gibbs in the *Guardian* (20th November):

"Recent European figures show there is still some way to go. While the European Union as a whole had met its 1996 tonnage reduction targets as early as the end of last

WEAPONS, CAPITALISM AND THE SCOURGE OF JOBS FOR ALL

The British government intends to deport Professor Mohammed al Masari, the campaigner for 'fundamental rights' in Saudi Arabia. Not to Saudi Arabia, where he would certainly be killed for his opposition to the cruel dictatorship, but to Dominica in the Lesser Antilles, an isolated island about half the area of the Isle of Man, much of it uninhabitable because of volcanoes.

According to government sources, the purpose is to curb Masari's propaganda campaign, and the reason is that the British armaments firms Vickers and British Aerospace have lobbied for the move, fearing that the dictatorship might decide to purchase elsewhere the vast quantities of tanks, guns, bombs, military aircraft and other such nastiness which it now buys from

Britain. The jargon term for defending British death dealers is 'preserving British jobs'.

British Independent Deterrent is a euphemism for the Trident submarine fleet, capable of delivering twice the entire explosive force of World War Two, plus nuclear fall-out. As we have remarked before in these columns, it is neither British nor independent and unlikely to deter anybody from anything.

In 1993 the job of supporting and maintaining the Trident force was put out to competitive tender between the dockyard at Rosyth, owned by the Navy, and the dockyard at Devonport, which had been a Navy establishment but was sold to a private firm Devonport Management Limited (DML).

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WEAPONS, CAPITALISM AND THE SCOURGE OF JOBS FOR ALL

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DML's quote was £236 million and Rosyth's £300 million, so DML got the job. Since then DML had been acquired by an American armaments firm, Brown & Root, and has announced that it will be charging £330 million for the work, 40% more than it quoted in 1993 and £30 million more than the Rosyth quote.

The MP for Devonport, James Davidson, has publicly worried that Brown & Root might sell its controlling interest to a hostile country. There is also the possibility that the USA itself might turn hostile, but this is never mentioned.

It is reported that, in view of the DML price hike, Ministry of Defence officials were for abandoning privatisation and taking the job back to their own plant at Rosyth, but that War Minister Michael Portillo insisted it should stay with DML.

Whether it is done by direct labour or commissioned from foreign private capitalists, why should a government committed to tax cuts be wasting so much tax money on something so dangerous and utterly useless? The answer is obvious: 'preserving British jobs'.

The Labour Party has 'full employment' as an ultimate aim for when economic conditions permit. Arthur Scargill's splinter group, the Socialist Labour Party, has full employment as an immediate objective. 'One nation' Tories no longer dare speak of the desirability of a pool of unemployment. 'Preservation of jobs' must be embraced by all serious politicians, because most voters have been brainwashed by capitalism into thinking jobs are what they want.

Full employment means all who are not wealthy having the opportunity to do something, when they would rather be doing something else, in return for an adequate standard of living.

In Germany the statutory working week is 48 hours, but most people work 30 hours or less, whereas in France the statutory working week is 29 hours, but most people work more than 48 hours. This is not because the French are keener on work than the Germans, but because German hourly wage rates are higher. Workers do not want jobs as such. They want the livelihood which jobs provide.

In the developed world there is no longer an absolute scarcity of resources. Scarcity, which is necessary to trade, is maintained artificially by advertising, by the waste of resources on weapons and other rubbish, and by actual destruction. In the absence of real scarcity there are other ways than jobs of providing everybody with a livelihood. One suggestion is the 'social wage' scheme, where everybody is paid enough to live on whether they work or not and (in most models) those who choose to work get extra.

The aim of socialism is 'from each according to ability, to each according to need'. In the anarchist version of socialism, where there would be no ruling body to assess the abilities

and needs of individuals, each person would decide for themselves what to give and what to take.

We accept that people are habituated to the system they know, so very big changes in social behaviour are not feasible overnight. But anarchy (in the anarchist sense) may well be feasible within the wide repertoire of human social behaviour, and in any case is surely worth aiming for.

To embrace full employment as an ultimate aim is to yield before the capitalist system. And the capitalist system, with its talk of 'preserving jobs', is responsible for taxing resources to produce the means of megadeath.

Emma Goldman in London 71 years ago as seen by the Manchester Guardian

With *Freedom* advertising elsewhere an 'Emma Goldman Benefit' by Turkish anarchists for a Turkish edition of her memoirs, we reproduce the *Guardian's* 'Past Notes' feature on an interesting report of 13th November 1924 of Emma Goldman in London:

"Emma Goldman, expelled five years ago from the United States as a dangerous person, expelled since then from Russia, Germany and Sweden for the same reason, was the guest of honour tonight at a dinner party given in London by a large and enthusiastic body of Anarchists. Yet none of those Anarchists I spoke to knew exactly how the dinner came to be arranged or who was giving it. I wanted to know who was or who were my hosts, but all I could discover was that Anarchists' dinners are neither given nor arranged - they just happen.

Some hundred Anarchists had been expected; over two hundred came. Princess Kropotkin and her daughter arrived three-quarters of an hour late. There were many Anarchists, men and women, of many nationalities present. One man wore a red tie, Goldman wore a blue shawl.

Colonel Wedgwood presided. Mr Bertrand Russell and Miss Rebecca West made speeches. Those who had heard of Miss Goldman, of the persecution and imprisonment she has borne for her Anarchist faith, without knowing anything more precise, must have been profoundly impressed tonight by her magnificent oratory and idealism.

'Idealists', she said, 'are incurable dreamers. I, myself, have one illusion left - that England has retained some of her traditional liberties, among them the right, the sacred right of political asylum for political refugees.' Even though the war had played havoc with liberty in every country, she still believed in English liberty. At any rate she was going to test it. If she was allowed to stay in this country she was going to study English men and women and to preach the truth about Russia, about 'the suppressed masses of Russia who have been silenced as they never were under the Tsar'.

Was it a sense of tactics that made Miss Goldman begin her Anarchist campaign here by exposing Bolshevism? It was, at any rate, remarkable that she did not in tonight's first public speech definitely say that all government is evil."

Perhaps a copy should be sent to the two Michaels: Howard and Portillo!



Some Spanish boats at La Escala (Costa Brava)

THE FISH 'CRISIS'

(continued from page 1)

year, Holland, Belgium, Ireland and the UK were lagging behind.

In Britain's case, according to the commission's figures up to the end of 1994, a further 17% tonnage cut was required in the two-year period to the end of 1996. *The latest decommissioning round achieved a reduction of only 2.5%* (our italics).

The British, reluctantly, are decommissioning. According to the Ministry, some 101 boats from English ports, 42 from Scotland, thirteen from Northern Ireland and eight from Wales, are on their way out.

But if we may be allowed to repeat ourselves (after all, what is propaganda - even anarchist propaganda - if not repetition until accepted) we wrote in the final paragraph of the 'Stinking Fish Galore' editorial (*Freedom*, 25th March 1995):

"There is no way of reconciling capitalism with conservation. Get rid of the profit motive, get rid of private ownership of ocean-going trawlers, encourage the small in-shore fishermen."

The in-shore fishermen are disappearing just as in horticulture the small market gardener is losing out to the supermarket-dominated suppliers.

According to statistics the in-shore fishermen are responsible for only 3% of fish catches in this country, and they are the people who need to be protected and encouraged. They are not depleting the fish stocks and yet they are being included in the fish quotas by the EU. Surely even the bureaucrats in Brussels - who are obviously concerned with the reports by scientists and others concerned with fish stocks - should exempt from the quotas the in-shore fishermen with open boats of ten or less metres, and control all other boats both as to distance from the shore and size of net and the nets themselves.

The *East Anglian Daily Times* - which is apparently so up in arms on behalf of the fishermen that they produced a feature, 'Laws are Crippling This Ancient Skill' (14th December 1995) - didn't send their reporter

in one of the in-shore open boats but in a trawler, and pictured Skipper Woods in the wheelhouse! How do they fish?

"By about 7.30am we had reached the area where Ralph and the crew were hoping to haul in some herring. In my naivety I assumed you'd drop some nets and pull in loads of fish. Not so.

Everybody began carefully watching a piece of hi-tech kit called a fish-finder which tells the crew where the large shoals of fish are. After carefully scouring the area for about an hour the coloured screen was illuminated with dozens of little dots indicating a large number of fish.

Soon the task of putting out the huge drift nets was under way. With Ralph at the helm, Darren and Nick fed fifteen 100ft by 20ft nets, which are joined together, out of the rear of the boat. We travelled 500 metres before all the nets were out and then, you've guessed it, started all over again putting a second set out."

That having been done the 'skipper' and crew of two (including a 16 year old):

"relaxed: we'd found what seemed to be a good fishing area and all we had to do was wait for thousands of herring to swim into the nets and be caught."

And in due course the nets were hauled in (with equipment, of course) and sorted out, etc. One and a quarter tons of herrings were the harvest, and considered by the skipper as a modest return cashwise.

It is estimated that worldwide there are three million fishing boats sweeping the oceans of the world not just for fish but for profit - why would they otherwise in a capitalist world?

Anarchists, at least this writer for one, are not fish 'liberators'. What we are concerned with is that the food in the oceans is just as important to mankind as the soil on which we grow the food that sustains the livelihoods of the billions of humans (and our animals friends!) on this planet.

For this reason we are as opposed to the private ownership of the oceans as we of the land. Both belong to the people and should be protected and nurtured on our behalf. In this context the fish are the victims of the money-greedy fishing interests worldwide.



Knockabout Censorship Case

The London publisher and distributor, Knockabout Comics, have applied for judicial review of a decision by HM Customs and Excise to seize and destroy copies of one of their publications, *My Troubles with Women* by Robert Crumb. The first stage in the process will take place at Uxbridge magistrates court on 29th and 30th January 1996.

Robert Crumb was important among the American 'underground comics' artists of the 1960s when he created, among other characters, Fritz the Cat and Mr Natural. In the 1980s Knockabout imported *Weirdo Comics* and other publications including Crumb's work. Aware that some of Crumb's panels might be deemed 'indecent', they imported single copies of each issue and obtained written assurances from HM Customs that

they were acceptable, before importing the bulk of their stock.

Later, they compiled a book of Crumb's work from these imports, which they published under their own imprint with the title *My Troubles with Women*. This is a book published in London, of which every single item had previously been passed by Customs.

At the beginning of 1995 a film about the life and work of Robert Crumb was released in British cinemas, broadcast and sold as a video. Naturally Knockabout wanted to sell their Crumb book at the time of this event. They had sold out, but their American distributor, Rip Off Press of San Francisco, still had stock so they asked Rip Off Press to send them back.

They were seized by Customs at Heathrow Airport under Section 42 of the Customs Consolidation Act of 1876 (CCA), which

enables any Customs Officer to seize any publication which he or she considers 'indecent or obscene' regardless of whether it was earlier certified acceptable for import, regardless of whether it was published in Britain or elsewhere, and in practice (although they are notionally required to consider it) regardless of whether it could be seized under the Obscene Publications Act of 1959 (OPA).

The CCA brought together various Orders in Council and other bits of legislation designed to prevent the import of plant pests and pathogens. It is the statute which prohibits the import of, for instance, potato plants from countries infested by the Colorado beetle. In the censorious ambience of 1876, Section 42 appears to have been added as an afterthought, with no consideration of its consequences.

In 1993 Gosh Comics, a retailer, was raided

by twelve Customs Officers who stayed for eight hours searching the stock for offences, using an alphabetic checklist which began with 'erection' and ended with 'urination'. Among the work seized and later burned was *Peter Pan*, an irreverent re-telling of the Peter Pan story published in London.*

That case never came to court (the proprietor agreed that the stock could be destroyed if the prosecution was dropped). But had it done so HM Customs could have argued that the Act says that if illegally imported matter is stored together with home-grown produce the whole lot is liable to confiscation. No exemption is made for matter prohibited under Section 42.

We sympathise with those who say censorship is censorship, and it does not matter whether stuff is censored under the OPA, the Common Law which the OPA replaced, or the CCA which the drafters of the OPA seem to have overlooked. But we think there is an important distinction to be made between laws whose effect is predictable and laws which are purely arbitrary.

Nobody would attempt to confiscate *My Troubles with Women* under the OPA. If the publisher took the case to court, the authorities would have to convince a jury that the book has 'a tendency to corrupt and deprave', which would be impossible. A wealth of case law, beginning with *Lady Chatterley's Lover* case, has established that artistic merit is a defence under the Act and, whether you like Crumb's work or not, there would be no problem establishing that it has artistic merit. It is not pornography. Customs objects to only three panels out of 760.

On the other hand, *My Trouble with Women* can be confiscated under the CCA on the whim of a single prude, subject only to the confirmation of a magistrate who in practice must rely on the Customs Officer's evidence.

The *My Trouble with Women* case is the most high profile of many cases brought against imported comics under Section 42 of the CCA. A group of interested people is now being assembled to oppose this vicious and ridiculous law. Contact **Comics Defence Committee, c/o Comics Creators Guild, 7 Dilke Street, London SW3 4JE**. Please send an SAE and allow a month for reply.

* *Peter Pan* by Max, 64 pages A4, full colour adult comic, £4.95. If ordering by post from Freedom Press please add p&p (50p UK, £1 elsewhere).

RAIL STRIKES AGAINST SYNDICALIST SACKINGS

The second one-day strike to get a former anarcho-syndicalist shop steward and three colleagues reinstated at Manchester's Piccadilly Station took place last week. The action hit thousands of commuters on lines in the Manchester area.

In 1992 Tony Crowther – a member of the Solidarity Federation (British section of the International Workers' Association), an anarcho-syndicalist body – and three other railway stewards were sacked on the spot. As guards, they had been on the platform to get backing for strike action from their mates. Last year an Industrial Tribunal found that the stewards had been unfairly dismissed, but stopped short of finding they had been 'dismissed for trade union activities'. A more serious decision in legal terms!

In any event, the RMT union held a ballot on the reinstatement of the stewards. Surprisingly, such a long time after the sackings, the railway workers voted six-to-one in favour to support the sacked stewards.

But even now the bosses – North West Regional Rail and Inter City West Coast – are refusing to discuss the reinstatement of the men with their union. Nor will they respond to the accusations of pickets and the union that threats are being issued that strikers will be transferred to less well-paid routes and trains.

Jimmy Knapp, the RMT secretary, in a letter to the strikers asked them to ignore the management threats, saying that "the way to deal with these bullying tactics is to continue to stand together". The union is now considering pulling out other depots and spreading the strike.

Last week's strike closed at least four stations and reduced services on several lines. Manchester's Piccadilly Station staff have had a militant reputation in the past. Which is probably why the bosses there were willing to risk the accusation of 'victimising' the four rail stewards. The Solidarity Federation has a self-organising transport section, which is active on the railways and publishes a bulletin.

None of this will be much help to the sacked men, who will need wider backing if they are to force to rail bosses to back down. Unfortunately sacked individuals, even stewards, don't usually get shopfloor support in this country. That's the history of victimisation – English style! Given this, it is surprising that three and a half years after the sackings the stewards still have the massive endorsement of their former workmates. They will need it, and more besides, if they are to win.

Mack the Knife



ANARCHIST NOTES IN BRIEF

BEEFING ABOUT BEEF The main concern in the media is about the decrease in beef consumption rather than the link between BSE (Mad Cow disease) and the human so-called equivalent. So many products have some connection with cattle – you name them – that even the most eminent of our 'experts' haven't really an answer. None of them, however, links BSE to the capitalist system of profit first and foremost, in spite of the fact that obviously BSE is the result of cattle feeds which have included sheep offal (and probably even dead sheep) to save money.

But why just pick on beef? Factory chickens and salmonella, fruit and vegetables covered in harmful sprays, and what about the fish contaminated by the polluted rivers and the dumping over the years of radioactive debris in the sea? A million tons of war left-overs dumped somewhere in the fishing waters – why worry, some will say. After all, we are polluted at birth.

FREEDOM IS RIGHT ABOUT FERRIES

Apparently (according to the *Independent* of 30th November 1995) in spite of opposition by world shipping to "tough new safety standards on roll-on roll-off ferries" Britain is proposing to introduce "stronger stability regulations" thanks to agreement reached with France and other Western countries. No details were given but the fact remains that the design of these vessels makes them unstable, not only if high seas flood the car deck but because, in ordinary language, they are 'top heavy' in high seas. Naval architects (in spite of the fact that other naval architects originally designed them) now admit this, and say that they should be provided with *bolsters* on the sides of the vessels to cope with stability from

cross winds and seas. Rest assured that the recommendations will not be accepted. Only if the travelling public boycott these ferries will they consider doing anything.

ITALIANS WORSE THAN MICHAEL HOWARD

When you think of the millions of Italians who have emigrated not only to the New World but the Old World as well, how else but indignant can one be by the reported plans of the Italian government to apply emergency legislation to keep out, and even to expel, ethnic minorities seeking a better, more economically prosperous existence in the Italian peninsula?

STOP FEEDING THE DRUGS GANGSTERS

No statistics are available to confirm my theory that the drugs industry and rackets, and the counter-rackets, are probably the largest world industry which flourishes because it is illegal worldwide! To legalise the illegal drugs and put them on a par with tobacco and alcohol may, in the first reactions, result in more consumption but should have an immediate effect on crime at all levels.

But at the same time, as old Malatesta advocated more than seventy years ago, *launch a campaign about the dangers of drugs*. At least such measures would tend to eliminate the drug barons (and all the murders currently reported) and if anarchists could reach more young people to make them realise that capitalism is another drug which benefits a few and which we must eliminate to enjoy the fruits of human labour and culture, then perhaps the young would not feel the need to be *boosted* by drugs. Surely being young is an incentive in itself? Don't wait to get old, I say!

Libertarian

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Axel Hoch

Axel Hoch died on 3rd January, aged 69. Born a Jew in Germany, he was sent to Britain in 1938, and learned in 1945 that his parents had died in the death camps. He was a witty frequenter of the Malatesta Club in the 1950s, and later ran the anarchist platform at Hyde Park Speakers' Corner.

LABOUR BACKPEDALLING TO POWER

The year ended with a kind of backpedalling book synopsis from Mr Peter Mandelson, Labour MP, and the closest crony of Tony Blair. Mandelson, the principal developer of designer-style 'New Labour', has come out with a clutch of policy proposals for a forthcoming Labour regime.

An ambitious collection from a more than usually ambitious politician, the list includes:

- 'Workfare schemes' to mobilise single mothers and those idle on the dole.
- 'No strike deals' to curb industrial action among public sector workers.
- Abolition of child benefit.
- Special courts to deal with anti-social conduct.
- All schools to be free of local authority control.
- Major emphasis on private pensions.
- Coalition with the Liberal Democrats.

A recent commentator on Radio 4 has declared that on his 'objective assessment' of the current Labour Party policies, in so far as these exist in any detail, the Party's programme would have the effect of demolishing the welfare state more rapidly than anything the Tories have on offer. His argument being that it is easier for a 'nominally left-wing party' to bring in a right-wing agenda.

Many anarchists will find a refreshing honesty in New Labour's approach. When in 1929 the second Labour government was elected the Prime Minister's first public announcement on taking over office was: "We intend to do some thinking". Later the Right Honourable Mr Ramsay MacDonald sternly added: "There must be no monkeying". As

usual, as Malcolm Muggeridge noted later, there was little thinking and much monkeying.

A kind of monkeying pragmatism was a major feature of the Wilson and Callaghan governments. At least with Blair and Mandelson we know – and more importantly most radical socialists ought to grasp – there will be much monkeying to come.

PUTTING LABOUR IN

Mr Mandelson has spoken and described his scheme: "Its harsh focus is political power – its potential and its limits". No muttering about the 'new Jerusalem'. Now there must only be talk of tax cuts. We won't notice much difference when the next Labour government comes into office. We never did, but now at least we won't be bombarded with all the embroidered rhetoric about crusades and the 'white heat of the technological revolution'.

No one any longer has any excuse for vain expectations from the Labour government, and yet in the company of left-wing hangers-on of the Labour Party one can still hear them scratching around for an excuse to vote Labour. When the socialist scriptwriter Jim Allen* declared recently before a packed audience in the Cornhouse Cinema at Manchester that he would not vote, he only received sparse applause.

However candid Blair, Mandelson and the rest of the Labour leadership are about abandoning socialism and disassociating themselves from the working masses, the constipated chattering classes will still look for a pretext to vote for them. Middle class people on the left, who have been taught civics at school, cannot bring themselves to abstain. Nor can those sectarian shite-hawks on the Marxist left give up their faith in deliverance through the Labour Party. An editorial in *Worker's*

* Jim Allen is Ken Loach's collaborator on the film *Land and Freedom* about the Spanish Civil War.

Liberty last month declared fiercely: "Right now, the will of the organised labour movement is concentrated on one thing only: getting the Tories out and putting Labour in."

A character in a Sean O'Casey play asks: "Is that as far as you've got?" Sean Matgamna, editor of *Worker's Liberty*, evidently thinks electing a Labour government is the best we and the great British public can do.

English working people never had this irresistible addiction to the vote, or this fetish for installing Labour governments. The teacher's urging of us to vote always went in one working-class ear and out of the other. But some sectarians and political prattlers will vote for owt, just so long as it goes under a Labour Party label.

As Mr Matgamna admits in his editorial: "On not one thing are the Labour leaders pledged to thoroughly undo and reverse the victories which Thatcher's government won for the rich over ... the poor". Some would say that a Labour government will advance the Tory agenda apace.

However bad or reactionary the Labour leadership is, it seems that such is the desire for self-deception on the British left that there will still be those that would urge us to vote Labour.

DISCARDED MASK OF SOCIALISM

The horse these people are backing is called 'unfulfilled expectations' – first they will urge people to vote Labour and expect the moon, and then, when a Labour government inevitably disappoints this imbecilic electorate, those who today foment the franchise hope that tomorrow in the ensuing gloom under Labour the public will revolt. This is a theory of the blind leading the blind to enlightenment. If it's not the ideology of the idiot, it's the politics of the pervert.

What you see is what you get! That's the message of Blair, Mandelson and the rest of the Labour leadership today. And if you vote

for them you get what you deserve. It can't be more clear than that.

In a sense nothing has changed. As the columnist Andrew Marr argues: "Old Labour's language was grossly overblown compared to its real intentions. It talked about the martyred dead and the new Jerusalem, but it gave us the compromises and managerialism of the '70s."

Now 'New Labour' has thrown away the mask of socialism through which socialism became something spoken, not done – all the pretence is gone. If Arthur Scargill does not get his new party show on the road then many socialists, like Jim Allen, will not vote at the next election.

All along anarchists have been against the folly of vain expectations at election time. But what must be worse than Blair and Mandelson, with their tax cuts and plans for dealing with anti-social conduct, are the chisellers and political perverts who call themselves Marxists and promote a party – the 'New Labour Party' – which declares itself committed to capitalism.

But how are we to get the power without votes? asks someone.

One hundred and thirty years ago George Eliot gave an anarchist answer through her hero, Felix Holt, who answers: "I'll tell you what's the greatest power under heaven, and that's public opinion – the ruling belief in society about what is right and what is wrong, what is honourable and what is shameful."

Anarchists want to transform and mobilise public opinion, not just get people to change their vote or mobilise the canvassing. Like Felix Holt, we are also radical and "want to go to some roots a good deal lower down than the franchise". We can't settle for the shallow politics of electioneering and ballots. To make a simpering face on the hustings! To tell professional lies for profit! To nod and wink at cronyism and corruption! And all this for such a slim stipend, or perhaps no stipend at all.

— OBITUARY — Derrick A. Pike 1916-1995

Derrick Pike died on 18th December. He was in hospital, but with a condition not considered life-threatening. His death was unexpected.

It has been said of Derrick that if there were medals for war resistance, he would deserve the VC. Trained as a chemical engineer, at the outbreak of World War Two he was in a reserved occupation (exempt from military conscription) and might have looked forward to a cushy war. He reasoned, however, that in time of war all technological development, whether overtly connected with war or not, would be part of the war effort. Rather than take part, he left his job and was imprisoned as a conscientious objector.

He described himself as an anarcho-pacifist, but his opinions did not really differ from mainstream anarchism. He maintained that anarchists should not fight on behalf of governments, but that it was proper to resist attackers at the personal level. His opposition to violent revolution was pragmatic rather than principled, arguing that anarchist revolution could only succeed if nearly everyone agreed with its aims, in which case violence would be unnecessary.

Recognising that his opinions differed little from those of orthodox anarchism, Derrick advocated that orthodox anarchists should call themselves anarcho-pacifists, on the ground that 'anarchism' is associated with violence in the minds of the ill-informed.

In recent years, more or less confined to one room by arthritis, he took the opportunity to expound his ideas in five closely-argued books: *Anarcho-pacifism questions and answers*, *Thoughts of an anarcho-pacifist*, *Creating peaceful people*, *The nature of the state* and *How to create the free society*.

The last named of these books, written in the form of a dialogue (with a cover illustration by the late Ernie Crosswell) appeared in November, too late to appear in the latest Freedom Press Bookshop list. He telephoned Freedom Press, sounding in excellent health and spirits, on 15th December.

We shall miss him

Social Welfare: a Libertarian Socialist View

The recent series on BBC2 called 'Forbidden Britain' revealed that little has changed in the social policies of government towards the people that it governs. The series covered a number of issues in depth, from unemployment to child abuse. Watching most of the series and reading follow-up articles in the *New Statesman* reinforced the message that our social structure has changed little, despite the technological advances and more sophisticated means of surveillance. Effectively the rich and powerful maintain the power and the poor remain powerless.

The basis of social policy through welfare is to maintain this balance and ensure the capitalist system remains intact. The purpose here is to demonstrate that this occurs, despite the colour of the party in power. However I also want to demonstrate that there is a marked difference between the state-run welfare networks and the networks established by the people themselves. Kropotkin has illustrated, in his book *Mutual Aid*, that the human race is far more cooperative than we give ourselves credit for. For example, in the early days of social provision there was a clear division between that provided by the state and the self-help organisations that the working class established for themselves.

Those early state-provided services were authoritarian and institution based systems, whereas the groups organised by the people themselves were given labels such as Friendly Societies, Sick Clubs, etc., with each members contributing as much or as little as they could afford and receiving support without discrimination. However, as services became more professional and successive 'socialist' governments appeared, the state provision began to supersede the people's alternatives. The argument is that these socialist governments followed this path in order to minimise the adverse effects of capitalism. When non-socialist governments took over, with other thinking behind their policies, the system of

welfare did not recede but was seen as essential to ensure a fit and healthy population in readiness for war or to do the bidding of the government of the day, as such welfare was seen as a useful means of social control. This is still apparent, despite the government's keenness to roll back the influence of the state. However, large corporate bodies, such as multinational companies and insurance companies, have a strong influence on governments and their policies and large profit-making organisations were interested in making even bigger profits, thus in the last fifteen years we have seen a philosophy of playing to the rich and powerful and rejection of the poor and needy, but at the same time ensuring that any person or group of persons capable of organising for themselves would be severely dealt with. (For instance, a group of individuals in Luton established an organisation to conduct raves. Rather than hold on to the profits from these popular entertainments, they ploughed the money back into the local community by establishing housing cooperatives and self-help groups. Initially the police supported them, but with pressure from the council and the local MP the police were encouraged to harass the group and, through a series of raids, attempted to break the organisation. However the group was resilient enough to stay together and an uneasy peace was forged.) The increase in benefit fraud investigations gives the message that while receiving miserable benefit on offer from the state, any step outside of the rigid benefit laws will bring down the full weight of the law. The recent rise of fraud cases brought to court and the tough-line speeches from successive ministers is evidence of this line of thought.

Part of the difficulty regarding social welfare provision is money and its distribution among the various bodies. Principally the money does not go to front-line operations but to management of the structure. For instance, Colin Ward quoting a ten-year-old statistic suggests that recruitment of

staff in the NHS were administrative staff. The figures he uses illustrate that there was only 21% unemployment of nursing and medical staff, 2% domestic staff out of a total of 65%. Certainly in recent times the Health Service has continued with this trend. Coupled with the deployment of money into defence and military needs, one can see that governments give only token interest to the general welfare of the people. John Pilger provides us with figures on expenditure on the Trident missile programme. This costs us approximately £10.5 billion – in his view money ill spent. He provides an alternative list of where this money could be spent. It includes £3.8 billion to housing, £2.4 billion to the transport system, £1.5 billion to education, £7 billion to the NHS and £3 billion for research and development.

The continuing whittling away of the social welfare system will be hard to recover, should we wish to attempt to do that. As a libertarian socialist, I have little trust in centrally organised services which impose stringent rules in the name of control. Nevertheless I recognise that without this statutory support many people will be worse off than if they were not available. Capitalism is not about social welfare and support for humanist reasons, it is there to maintain the shackles and make profits for the minority in power. Those who are involved in offering support for the victim of capitalism must strive to hold on to the little we have left. We must encourage the natural mutual support and aid that is within the human race. Already we are seeing the rise of schemes like the Local Exchange and Trading (LETS), credit unions, self-build and cooperatives. We need to encourage schemes such as these rather than attempt to silence them, essentially to provide people with the chance to take control of their lives, improve community support and encourage hope for the future. We are a long way from a utopia dreamed of by the early anarchist theorists, but before it is too late we must give consideration to the three main principles that I believe make up anarchism: Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood (or should that now be humanity/solidarity).

Chris Platts

A further fuck up, mein führer

Sir Oswald Mosley, the black-uniformed 'leader' of his wandering army of buy-your-own-uniform blackshirts, developed the unfortunate habit of beginning his every major speech by ranting in his monotone that "There comes that moment in history ..." and, with the exception of Emma Nicholson lifting up her skirts and taking a runner into the hills and the arms and mouth of Paddy Ashdown, 1995 was not it. When the history of our times are written, 1995 must indeed be the Year of the Mouse but for the exception of one man who chose to break out of the ring of steel of the art establishment and cry that the adoration of the Philistines and the Bleeding Hearts for the life and works of the late Emil Nolde was mis-begotten or canting rubbish. The Whitechapel Art Gallery - 38 second's slow walk from the Freedom Bookshop - is to be congratulated on mounting what is a major art exhibition, if not for artistic reasons, for in this season of pantomime it is the garishly over-painted Dame who fills the seats. It has been left to Waldemar Januszczak, art critic of the *Sunday Times*, to stumble onto the stage to cry out in agony, enough, enough, for "the fact that Emil Nolde was a bad painter is, surely, good news. Indeed, I found it truly heartening to see from close up just how awful his work could be." One of the reasons for Waldemar's raging writing is that Emil was, and produced, 'Nazi artist, nasty art' and in his lifetime passed from an adolescent romantic to a rather ghastly right-wing Nazi-style shit who fawned and crawled to the German Nazi government when the concentration camps were beginning to fill. It is good to be told that Emil was a failed artist and to know that there are two of us haunting the visual arts, but Walter of the *Sunday Times* is wrong, as so many others are, over one's way of life or one's ideology with one's performance in the world of creative arts.

Oscar, as always, was right in that there is no morality in art and though Emil was one whom one would avoid in the White Hart II pub, it would not be because of his garish daubs on display within the Whitechapel Art Gallery, and all honour to those who mounted this exhibition. Now that the politically

devastated have had their fill of feeding off the political corpse of the late Emil, one should judge the work on display for its true worth, and I find it so bad. Wall after wall, the crudity of the figures splashed on in primary colours are no more, in most cases, than thick rough outlines filled in with raw colours and the paintings of 'masks' no more than a gimmick that becomes a cliché. The 'water colours' which, by its nature, should be light-coloured tints, become pastels (poster colours) but then that is not Emil's fault for he was at 'liberty' to use any methods that pleased him. Others must explain it away. The cry must come down from the restaurant avant the gallery 'but what of Munch, Gauguin, Ensor or Van



'Seascape' after Emile Nolde

Gogh who were equally free with the large brushes and the paint pots of primary colours?' and with a lordly wave of the right hand I would accept them as minor painters in the long history of the years. With but the exception of Ensor, whose crude slap-dashery must be equated with the sad valueless works of Emil Nolde now on display until 25th February within the Whitechapel Art Gallery. Here was a sad man who crawled to kiss the arses of the German Nazi top brass as a fervent right-wing nationalist who - having written "My whole attitude is one of love for Germany, for the German people and its ideas, Heil Hitler" - found himself lumped in by the Nazi 'art' establishment that he had so long supported as one of the 'Degenerate Artist' in the Nazi huge 'art' exhibition of "lower breeds within the law". But again judge Nolde's apart from the sad sick man and I would hold that it is crude and valueless. So be it. It is understandable that in youth one should see all morality in simple terms of ultimate good or evil. To believe that there was once a world guided by that simple morality and within that world knights in silver armour clinked swords and snapped their visors up and down as they sat around round tables quaffing mead from Golden Grails and swore holy oaths to the King, the Lord, the Leader for Honour and Loyalty without question, without question the first order of the day plus the untainted bloodline. And many a child in many a slum room or nursery has dreamed of that time, but it becomes an evil dream when it becomes the centre-piece of a political manifesto.

It is the escapist literature that has shaped the lives of millions from 'Bulldog Drummond' to James Bond 007, murder with a moral opt-out clause via Hollywood and the plastic swords wherein white armour is good and black armour is evil and if one was physically deformed then one is either a fool, a clown or a villain. The English Pre-Raphaelite painters

of 1848 believed it and churned out their academic painting of dim-faced broads at windows and knights in armour and they sold to the hard-faced money-men of the period. In the end what every society is demanding is that every ugly duckling must become a swan or become oven-fodder, political gas or Chinese take-away. Two paintings are of interest to me in Nolde's exhibition, and one is his 'Wildly Dancing Children' painted in 1909 and his seascape. The first, a crude abstract, and the second a good heavy-breathing suggestion of the North Sea. But rest in peace, Emil, with crazy Hitler in your heavens and ask of each other: 'Where did we go wrong, where did we go wrong?' In an age and an hour when the carcasses of dead animals are displayed within major art galleries, one can be amused and murmur 'But it is not art'. Should they be exhibited, one is asked, in the White Hart II, and the answer is yes if it is deemed the art fashion of the mode and the hour, but in that long history of creative arts it is no more than freak-show fairground giggles for the punters. In the matter of the Tate Gallery's pickled dead cow, one can but offer them the pickled remains of Saartje Baartman, a South African Hottentot taken to Paris as a sideshow freak. Drink and prostitution killed her and the remains of her dead body are now stored in the basement of the Musée de l'Homme. Descendants of the time-warp South African Hottentots are now demanding, rightly, the return of Saartje's pickled remains. This obviously concerns us as art lovers as in the matter of Joseph Garner, a 37 year old citizen of the US of A state of Indianapolis who stabbed his pa with a knife he had given his ol' dad for Christmas and then trepanned his ol' dad. Joe then proceeded to eat his father's brain. There are those who will maintain that Joe's dining skull-wise was no more than a gourmet lunch four-star Cordon Bleu style, but in this year of grace 1996 with the dead cow on display within the Tate Gallery, Saartje's pickled remains in the basement of the Paris Musée l'Homme and Joe dining off his dad's brain, we must surely question 'is it art?'

Arthur Moyses

Some of the more recent developments in the study of our ancient ancestors have possible implications for libertarian thought and theory, particularly those concerning the evolution of stable cooperative groups and of sex roles.

It seems that there is agreement that Lower Pleistocene hominids (that is, human-like creatures living between 1,800,000 and 700,000 years ago and classed as *homo erectus* and *homo ergaster*) were most likely scavengers who occasionally managed to kill small game and collected fruit, tubers and nuts. They were more herbivorous than modern humans. It is further generally agreed that they lacked any 'home base' but wandered from place to place eating and sleeping wherever they happened to be. Several researchers doubt there was anything much like family life and probably only limited association between adult males and females. Under such circumstances there would be only minimal opportunity for cooperative enterprises and the development of any stable communal life. At the same time we should note that these people shared a stone tool-making technology of some complexity and one which had to be learned, so that there had to be sufficient contact between fathers and sons to continue the passing of the tool tradition from one generation to the next. (We assume that this would have been a male activity since it is so among all known more contemporary people.)

After 700,000 years ago more cultural complexity arose. There was greater emphasis on hunting with indications of cooperative hunting activity and more permanent settlement patterns. Unfortunately for the vegetarians, the development of sophisticated hunting tactics is central to the evolution of group cooperation and, thence, to stable communities. Herbivorous mammals do not

OUR ANCIENT ANCESTORS: undermining the myths

need to cooperate to acquire food. Any cooperation among them is limited to such things as mutual grooming or the atypical and not very common practice of group cooperation for mutual protection as occurs among musk oxen. Many carnivores, on the other hand, are noted for their cooperative hunting techniques. Note the wolf, wild dog, hyena or lion.

It is believed that the provisioning of meat by males would establish more permanent bonds between males and females. Females would not have been very active game hunters. Not only are female activities curtailed by childcare responsibilities, but recent evidence suggests that prolonged vigorous physical exertion in women inhibits fertility and, thus, it is argued those societies which curtailed such activity would produce more offspring and have a higher survival rate.

During this time, incidentally, *homo erectus* and *homo ergaster* continued to prevail. It is noted, therefore, that there is no one-to-one

correlation between hominid biological evolution and major cultural changes. That is, there is no reason to believe that significant cultural changes in hominid history are to be associated with the appearance of new hominid species. This problem arises again in connection with the major transition to the Upper Palaeolithic (beginning 40-50,000 years ago). It was once commonly held that this time also marked the appearance of modern humans, *homo sapiens*, when it is now clear that this species had been around for several thousand years before that.

In an article 'Hominids, Humans and Hunter Gatherers: An Evolutionary Perspective',* R. Foley has argued that Late Pleistocene humans (125,000-10,000 years ago) were characterised by considerable robustness. They were

* In *Hunters and Gatherers: History, Evolution and Social Change* edited by T. Ingold, D. Riche and J. Woodburn (Oxford, 1988).

HAROLD BARCLAY

has written

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larger than modern humans and also exhibited greater sexual dimorphism. This means males did most of the work, especially since they were hunters of very large mammals by the use of spear and clubs alone. Women remained around the home hearth. That men should be the primary food producers contrasts with the social patterns which existed at the end of the Pleistocene, as it does also with the earliest horticulturalists and contemporary foraging societies. Why this change occurred is probably due to the decline in large game at the end of the Pleistocene, forcing a greater reliance on gathering plant food. In conjunction with this, bodily size and sexual dimorphism were reduced. Females also came to produce half or more of the food supply and, thus, the sexes became more equal. Foley's observation of greater sexual dimorphism in late Pleistocene times leading to a much greater contribution by males to the group larder is based on the assumption that these people were heavily dependent on meat. If his proposition is true, and it is debatable, it would suggest that male dominance is characteristic of human populations over an extremely long archaic period and in more recent 'civilised' times, while in between (from 10,000-6,000 years ago) there was a time when sexual equality was more likely.

This view of human history clearly conflicts with the widespread notion of hunter-gatherers as a static, unchanging type of life in which women were always the chief providers and in which approximate equality existed between the sexes. Certainly it calls attention to the problems in using contemporary foragers as examples of Palaeolithic hunters. It clearly undermines feminist claims about the feminine nature of ancient societies and about the myth of some original matrilineal-matriarchal society.

Harold Barclay

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —
A CHILD'S PLACE

A century ago Peter Kropotkin was writing for the monthly magazine *The Nineteenth Century* the series of articles that became his book *Mutual Aid*. In his concluding chapters on 'Mutual Aid Amongst Ourselves' he included an account of the behaviour he observed among slum children in the streets of Victorian London:

"As soon as a mite bends inquisitively over the opening of a drain, 'Don't stop there' another mite shouts out, 'fever sits in the hole!' Don't climb over that wall, the train will kill you if you tumble down! Don't come near the ditch! Don't eat those berries — poison! You will die! Such are the first teachings imparted to the urchin when he joins his mates outdoors. How many of the children whose playgrounds are the pavement around 'model workers' dwellings', or the quays and bridges of the canals, would be crushed to death by the carts or drowned in the muddy waters were it not for that sort of mutual support. And when a fair Jack has made a slip into the unprotected ditch at the back of the milkman's yard, or a cherry-cheeked Lizzie has, after all, tumbled into the canal, the young brood raises such cries that all the neighbourhood is on the alert and rushes to the rescue."

To our late twentieth century ears this sounds cloyingly sentimental, like those expensive reproductions of nineteenth century Christmas cards we are clearing out this weekend.

Haven't we all heard that in the Victorian working-class family Dad was a brutal drunkard belting Mum and the kids every Saturday night, while the little savages had to be civilised forcibly by the impact of the Education Act of 1870?

The standard view of the period from the standpoint of the superior classes is not contradicted but simply undermined by a remarkable new book that I was sent for review by another journal. This is Anna Davin's *Growing Up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870-1914* (Rivers Oram Press, £19.95). She draws upon a rich variety of evidence: official reports, local papers, impressionistic literature, legal records, school log-books and particularly the oral testimony gathered in the 1960s and 1970s. We are reminded that it was the middle and upper classes who invented the notion of childhood as an age of innocence and dependency. The affluent applied physical punishment to their children, the poor needed their contribution to the precarious economy of the family.

Anna Davin's composite picture of the lives of poor children certainly supports that of Kropotkin. She provides heart-breaking detail of the results of poverty, but stresses mutual aid as the automatic response to deprivation.

She cites a report on the Poor Law Administration in 1873 which observed that "what amounts to interchange of charitable assistance among the poor in London is not uncommon ... they assist each other to an extent which is little understood, and for

which they receive little credit. It is scarcely possible to conceive a form of charity which combines so completely its highest reciprocal benefits, with the absence of the mischief so frequently incident to almsgiving." And Anna Davin provides, with a wealth of detail, a Kropotkinian comment on this observation:

"Just as responsibility for children spilled out beyond the family and house, so other aspects of domestic life involved frequent or occasional mutual help which continually blurred the distinctions between immediate family, non-resident relations and friends or neighbours ... This kind of help was not almsgiving and could be accepted without shame, because it was part of a network of reciprocal favours, given and received among people who were aware that on another occasion positions might be reversed. But the reciprocity was generalised: time and labour were not carefully accounted. You helped (if you could) because it was the right thing to do, and in the hope that support would be forthcoming whenever you in turn might need it."

Poor families were both more close-knit and looser, on a continuum of 'respectable' and 'rough'. Wages were insecure, wives and

mothers had an endless round of feeding the family, laundering, nursing, stitching and cleaning. Children were baby-minders from about the age of five, endlessly running errands for a ha'p'orth of tea, bacon rinds or onions. They seized upon every kind of paid work and although there were different gender expectations, boys did needlework and had a nursing role for younger children. Davin includes accounts of 'tomboys' who were proud to transcend the sexual divisions of work and play.

Children weren't beaten and, as Edith Hogg put it in 1898, were "pleased and proud to be in a position of partial independence". They lived in a world of automatic mutual aid:

"Neighbours helped one another in an intricate weave of reciprocal favours. The friendliness of working-class children was remarked on as evidence that the poor use their children well and that this treatment is extended to the children of others, for experience had taught them to anticipate kindness at the hands of all they met."

There is an interesting contrast between the confidence of poor kids a century ago with today's continual warnings that they should

beware of older children, let alone adults. The difference is a matter of social cohesiveness as opposed to atomised individualism.

Into that world where children might eat in one house and sleep in another in a bug-laden bed shared by others, came the Education Act, redefining childhood as a state of dependency, safeguarded from adult concerns but needing a sense of national identity. As Israel Zangwill remarked in 1892, they came "from the reeking courts and alleys, from the garrets and the cellars, all hastening at the inexorable clang of the big school-bell to be ground in the same great, blind, governmental machine".

Anna Davin comments that "robustly self-sufficient children not used to unquestioning obedience did not always accept school discipline easily". And she explains that 'real life' for poor children "was not the future but the present. Work and responsibility were not the separate province of adults but co-existed with growth, with play and with school." A century after the impact of the school system we are still plagued by the assumptions of the shapers of compulsory schooling and the tragedy of the rejection of the education machine by the young.

It is important to reflect on the differences between today and the climate evoked by this remarkable book. Poor families in those days were corralled in the territory of the private landlord and frequently flitted from one street to another. Today they are concentrated in council housing, where by now 70% of tenants are obliged, for lack of work, to be dependent on minimal state benefits and are seen as a drag on the economy rather than as a wasted human resource. Their children attend schools which other parents avoid, and which are starved of resources.

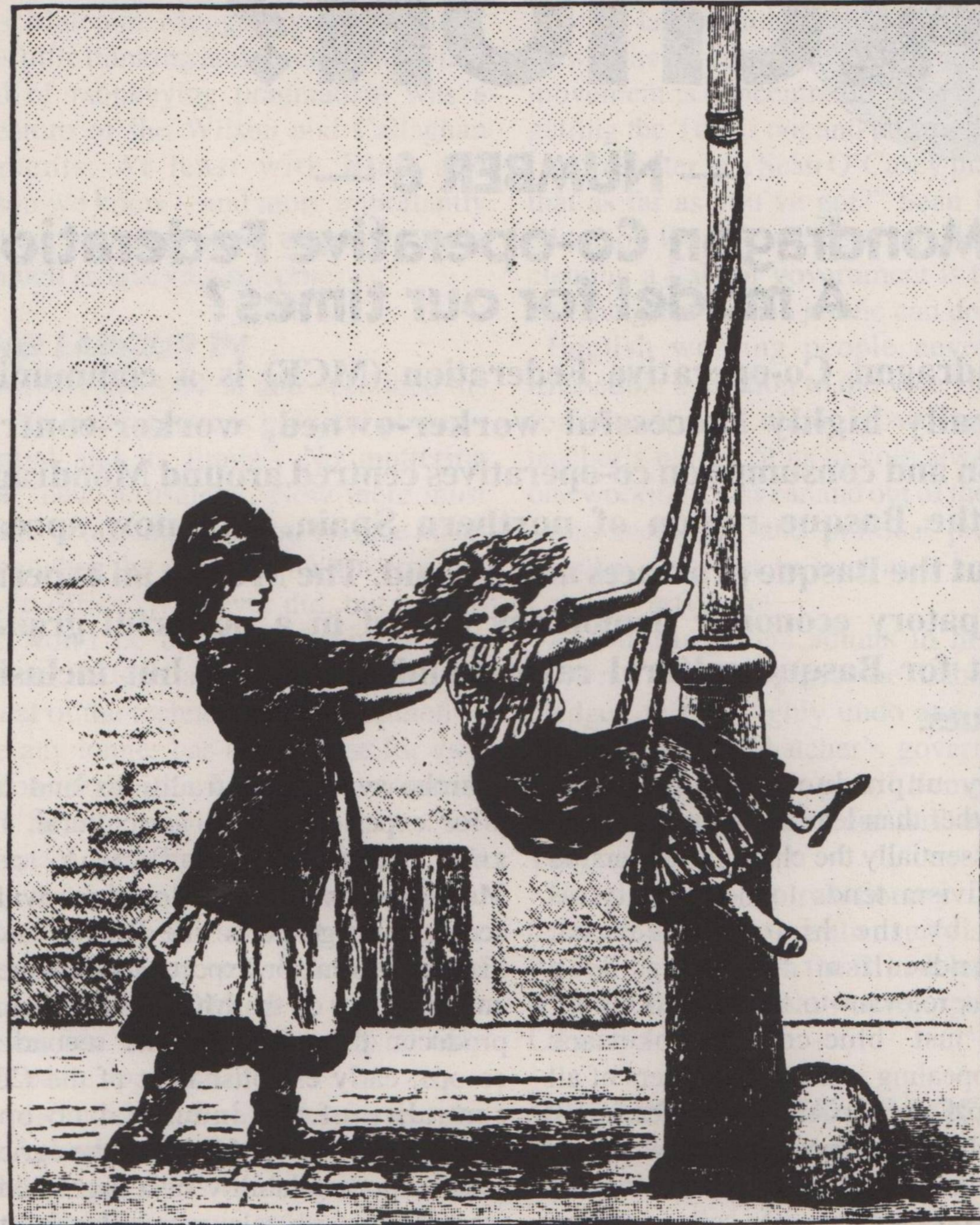
But every estate, often terrorised by its young, has a handful of activists trying to rebuild those once-automatic bonds of self-help and mutual aid. When, last year, the Gulbenkian Foundation commissioned a group of people — chaired by Sir William Utting the former chief inspector of social services — to report on *Children and Violence* (1995) the media focused its attention on two pages discussing whether or not children should be smacked.

I came across no comments in the press on the other three hundred pages, nor on the commission's finding that:

"Economic and environmental deprivation are powerful stress factors which make it difficult to be an effective parent: in the UK there has been a massive increase in the numbers and proportion of children living in poverty ... Levels of violence tend to be highest in countries with the sharpest inequalities."

There are tragic differences between the world Kropotkin observed and the world we live in today.

Colin Ward



The gloomy timeless days between Boxing Day and early January (where some of us hide, cocooned against the real world) almost force us to take stock of our lives and shake them into some sort of perspective. "I like days like these, Nanny" my granddaughter said solemnly. "No one tells us what to do and we don't tell anyone what to do — that's what life is all about." "You must be a natural anarchist" I said. "No I'm not, I'm just Rosie." A four-year old already resisting labels and gleaming the truth.

I was talking to a friend on Boxing Day who said that people tend to like him despite his anarchist ideals rather than because of them, seeing his life-long belief almost as an eccentricity, and I know exactly what he meant. I recently met up with some old school friends I hadn't seen for thirty years. We related our potted life histories to each other and, when it was my turn, knowing looks glimmered around the table. "Trust you to become an anarchist" one said, "you were always a bit of a rebel." There were shrieks of laughter as they all remembered how I was the only sixth former not to be made a prefect, and that was that. They allowed me this vagary of character, smiled fondly at me but wanted no

Days Like These

details of this shady anarchism. Had I become a Buddhist, a nun or a Jehovah's Witness they would have been overcome with curiosity and I can only surmise that this is because such callings involve a belief in beings other than human ones. As anarchism involves a confidence in the ultimate goodness of the human spirit, there's nothing transcendental or supernatural here to catch the imagination, no escape from the human condition.

Perhaps this is the real reason why Radio 4 won't include humanists and atheists on their 'Thought for the Day' slot.

As I watched the wondrously sensitive film by Louis Malle, *Milou en Mai*, I was reminded of T.S. Eliot's line "Humankind cannot bear very much reality". I wondered whether in fact the converse was more likely, that humankind can cope with almost anything if they have occasional glimpses of paradise, of utopia, of hope. In *Milou en Mai* a group of family and friends gather at a

country house outside Paris to attend a funeral. Malle explores issues around death, loss, memory, rivalry and inheritance against a backdrop of events in Paris during the 1968 strikes. Actual radio broadcasts of the action on the streets of Paris reminded us how extensive, exciting and full of hope it all was and how different in ethos from the very recent Paris strikes.

In one scene the funeral party, none of whom had any particular solidarity with the strikers, fantasise about how wonderful living in an anarchist society might be. Free love, free schools, free food, free will. They go back to their regular lives refreshed by this interlude of hope.

On a more mundane note, the current lottery fever that is supposed to be infecting the country has involved an outbreak of flights of fancy in many millions of people. There have been countless television shows, news items and newspaper articles devoted to

discussion about the morality of a jackpot prize in excess of £35 million. Churchmen are out in force condemning such 'obscene' and 'vulgar' amounts of prize money and claiming that no amount of money can make a person happy. The music hall answer to the second claim is surely 'Then at least I can be miserable in comfort'. And as for the 'obscenity' of large amounts of money, it is odd how no mention is made of the morality of many multi-millionaires who have accumulated their wealth by using the labour of others or by inheriting family wealth. It's all very much the luck of the draw it seems.

What this lottery mania does show (and takings have increased by 70% this week) is that hope for many people can only be imagined in terms of money, of getting away from it all — and who can blame them? The lottery quote of the week goes to Shelley, and was included in John Mullan's article in the *Guardian*. Writing in 1819, Shelley wrote of Regency "Tumults — lotteries — rage — London — delusion — gin — suicide — and methodism." We could add in ecstasy, raves, beggars and santimoniousness, and claim that — days like these are here again.

Silvia Edwards

A NARCHY IN ACTION?

— NUMBER 6 —

The Mondragon Co-operative Federation: A model for our times?

The Mondragon Co-operative Federation (MCF) is a community of economically highly successful worker-owned, worker-controlled production and consumption co-operatives centred around Mondragon, a town in the Basque region of northern Spain, and now spreading throughout the Basque provinces and beyond. The MCF is an experiment in participatory economic democracy rooted in a powerful grassroots movement for Basque cultural revival and autonomy, but inclusive of non-Basques.

temporarily unproductive community members, rather than leaving them to depend on what is essentially the charity of others, as pure collectivism tends to do. Finally, as evidenced by the historical record, anarcho-syndicalism has long been recognised as relevant to their needs by far more than 'just' blue-collar smokestack operators, appealing instead to workers of all kinds: to sailors, dockers, miners, lumberjacks, bakers, cobblers, barbers, needleworkers, educators, postal workers, flight attendants and computer operators, to white-collar providers of numerous other goods and services, and to collectivism, with its retention of millions of landless peasants.

In addition to all these options and variants in anarchist economics, there are disagreements within the various camps about how to get from here to there. Anarchists have long argued over whether, as one collectivist, Proudhon, believed, it is possible to evolve gradually and peacefully towards one or the other system, or whether, as another collectivist, Bakunin, asserted, what they aspire to can only be achieved by revolution and expropriation of the existing means of production, forcibly if necessary. Not surprisingly, therefore, anarchists' attitudes towards Mondragon vary, too, ranging from enthusiastic (e.g. Benello, 1986/1992) to dismissive (e.g. Chomsky, 1994). What follows is based on my reading of English, and some Spanish, literature on the MCF, coupled with a week-long visit to Arrasate (the Basque name for Mondragon) in June, 1994, with fellow Wobbly, Charlene 'Charlie' Sato (we visited as individuals, not as representatives of any organisation). Our stay in Arrasate included an intensive series of pre-arranged interviews, informal group discussions, and site visits, as well as enjoyable and equally informative evenings spent socialising with co-op members over bottles of the MCF's excellent Rioja wines.

A MODEL FOR OUR TIMES?

The generalisability of the Mondragon model may be considered in at least two ways: in terms of its practical viability and its ideological acceptability. Much has been written about the former, with some debate about the relative contributions to the MCF's economic success of the following factors, and various combinations thereof: Basque nationalism; co-operative values; a strong sense of (Basque or any other) ethnic, linguistic and cultural identity among the participants; the foresight and leadership of Father Arizmendiarieta; the compatibility of MCF values with Basque traditions, such as co-operative farming practices and the relatively equitable land distribution among Basque families compared, for instance, with the hacienda system of southern Spain; the rapid expansion of the Spanish economy after the Civil War, with a heavy demand for household goods and other early MCF products; the political and economic history of Spain, with its strong anarchist and

anarcho-syndicalist traditions and lengthy prior experience with agricultural, fishing, and industrial production co-ops; Mondragon's strategic location, with easy access to large ports like Bilbao, and short distances to major export markets; the scope and diversity of the MCF's high technology products; the use of crucial second degree co-ops; early establishment of the CLP; the centrality of the industrial co-ops; the relatively low cost of land for the agricultural sector; the availability of a highly educated work force with relevant skills; and the felt need to look to a self-help model, given the Basque people's long history of state oppression.

Also widely considered crucial is the MCF co-ops' internal worker-member economic structure. My own view is that perhaps all, of the above factors were differentially important at various times in the MCF's history, it is in their internal structure and functioning that the co-ops' main ingredient for success lies – and in this domain, too, that they come closest to anarchist principles and values. I believe that (a) the motivation and commitment needed to buy or work one's way into a co-op; (b) the initial extra capitalisation provided by retention of a portion of members' income in their internal capital accounts; (c) the equality and mutual respect produced by the one person, one share, one

vote, system; and (d) the stability and freedom from external control guaranteed by the impossibility of members selling shares to each other or to outsiders, have made for a system of worker ownership and (with some dilution in the interests of operational size and efficiency) worker control. The pride and security this brings the MCF members, the feeling of control over their own lives, the visible economic success of their efforts, the decent standard of living they have achieved for themselves and their families, and the positive impact all this has on the communities to which they return after work each day, have had a liberating effect on the workers of Mondragon, just as anarchist theory would predict.

If this analysis is accurate, or even close to it, variants of the model adapted for local conditions must be of interest to like-minded individuals or whole communities elsewhere. In fact, co-ops on something like the Mondragon model are already operating in several countries, including Germany and the USA. Many writers have discussed the MCF or similar projects positively, and several have provided practical information on how to go about setting up new co-ops.

Whether worker or union-owned and/or controlled, and no doubt accompanied by militant union organising in existing workplaces, it is clear that something like Mondragon-style co-op federations, and federations of federations, are urgently needed in many countries today. Quite apart from the human misery and environmental devastation it causes, capitalism simply does not work even judged by its own execrable standards. The desperate plight of growing millions of unemployed and never-to-be-employed workers in the inner city ruins of so many 'advanced' industrialised countries attests to this. So does the poverty, disease and starvation that is the lot of millions of capitalism's third world victims. These people are viewed by 'their' governments merely as the inevitable statistical fall-out from multinational corporate 'restructuring' and increased 'efficiency'. Politicians, states and the capitalist system have nothing to offer them. Radical industrial unions, like the CNT, the SAC and the IWW have something. Ultimately, however, their future lies in their own hands, just as it did the oppressed citizens of the small town of Arrasate some fifty years ago.

Mike Long

GREECE

The Institute for Social Studies has been founded by a group of comrades who – on the basis of their belief that no theory and no critical thought can function as a substitute for revolutionary practice and urged by their vision for an autonomous society which, through the dissolution of exploitation, hierarchy and domination of any kind (institutionalised or not) and through its self-organisation, will fulfil the human's potentiality for creative social symbiosis – are making one more effort to open a dialogue on today's condition and the perspectives for social liberation.

Social liberation that will emerge as the most advanced level of development of a subversive movement which – free from determinism or any kind of messianic expectations and free from the castrating intervention of 'enlightened vanguards' – develops its self-consciousness and fosters its self-organisation in every aspect of every day's encounter with the dominating, the exploiters and the authoritarians.

We believe that it is imperative for all individuals or collectives who seek in a similar way revolutionary outlets – while denying to submit to the brutality of the capitalist restructuring of capital and the state – to meet each other, to exchange their experiences and concerns, to secure a way for a steady contact.

Therefore we decided to take on the responsibility of proposing the hosting an international meeting in Greece during 1996.

The participants of this preparatory meeting need only to pay the fares to and from Athens. Once the participants arrive in Athens, the Institute will take on all the details (transportation inside Greece,

accommodation, entertainment) as well as the running of the preparatory meeting centre.

The best time for the preparatory meeting to be carried out is considered to be the first fortnight of March 1996, springtime in Greece, and the best place is the spa of Edipos (150km from Athens).

The participants should arrive in Athens one day before the date of the beginning of the preparatory meeting. The first meeting will be held at the offices of the Institute in Athens, from where all comrades will be transported to Edipos at our expense. The proceedings of the meeting are expected to last for three days and, apart from the debates, the schedule includes special excursions and contacts with the local community.

Please send us some details (addresses, telephone numbers) on how the comrades of the Institute can have personal contact with you during the course of a tour by two or three of our comrades in Europe, which will take place in early February 1996.

The Institute, standing on the clearly revolutionary and anti-authoritarian character of the meeting and without any intention to forestall the agenda of the preparatory meeting (March 1996), simply suggests the following subjects to be discussed:

1. The character of our era.
2. Possibilities and perspectives of the social revolution.
3. Necessity and possibilities of international coordination and cooperation aiming at the creation of an International Revolutionary Anti-Authoritarian Federation.

For our part we shall do our best to organise the hospitality and the proceedings of the preparatory meeting, which will show whether it is feasible or not to proceed to a wider and successful meeting.

Our address is: Kostas Sirinidis, Institute of Social Studies, 5 Sultani Street, GR-106 82, Greece (Hellas). Tel: 01 671 8689 or 01 680 6247.

SUHARTO THE BUTCHER GIVES HIS GUARANTEE

Last Thursday (7th December) 112 protesters scaled fences into the Russian and Dutch embassies in Jakarta to highlight the twentieth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Last week's occupation of the Dutch and Russian embassies was carried out by East Timorese as well as a significant number of representatives from Indonesian student and workers' groups. The protesters' minimal demands included calls for the release of all East Timorese prisoners, the immediate withdrawal of the Indonesian Military from East Timor and a call for holding of referendums that the East Timorese could determine their own future.

As the sit-in of the Dutch embassy entered the weekend the Suharto military regime sent in armed goons into the embassy to attack the peaceful protesters and the Dutch ambassador and members of his staff. The Indonesian Military dictatorship's open support of these armed thugs highlights the extent that the Indonesian authorities will stoop to destroy any opposition to their regime. In an attempt to repair the damage that the goons invasion of the embassy had caused, Alatas, the Indonesian foreign minister, promised that if

the protesters ended their sit-in they would be released after 'normal' questioning.

The protesters in the Russian embassy who ended their sit-in on Friday were taken to Jakarta's police headquarters for questioning. They were detained for over 24 hours and then released. The protesters in the Dutch embassy ended their sit-in on Sunday; as I write this article they are being questioned, finger printed, and photographed by the authorities. Anybody who thinks that the protesters will be released indefinitely does not understand how Suharto and his butchers work. Individual protesters will be singled out for prosecution, some will disappear, others will be beaten, lose their livelihood and be dispersed to other parts of Indonesia. Others will have their families, wives and children harassed. The Indonesian military's word is not worth a pinch of the proverbial. They have used and will continue to use all the means of their disposal to crush any opposition. You wouldn't expect less from a group that came to power by clambering over the bodies of 500,000 men, women and children who were slaughtered by the thugs that control the military today.

LAND: PAPUA NEW GUINEA & THE WORLD BANK'S STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAMME (SAP)

There is a quiet revolution spreading over Papua New Guinea. Three months ago the Papua New Guinea government mortgaged the country's soul and land to the World Bank. It's only in the past few weeks that the Papuan New Guinea people have realised that their future has been sold from underneath their very feet. In a cynical move the World Bank has bailed the Papua New Guinea government out of its present financial problems. The cost to service this little act of self interest will be enormous. Every person in Papua New Guinea will be paying for this loan for generations to come.

The World Bank has not only imposed its normal Structural Adjustment Programs of decreasing public expenditure on infrastructure, health and education services, it has also added a new sting to its little loan. It wants the Papua New Guinea government to open up its land and resources to foreign investors. It also wants to use the land as collateral for future business expansion. Unfortunately there is one catch for the World Bank. Ninety seven percent of land is owned by local community units (clans). The great majority of land is not owned by individuals, corporations or the State. Banks are very reluctant to use crown land as collateral for

loans, as they know that it would be almost impossible to confiscate this land, if ventures borrowers embark on are unsuccessful.

In an effort to downgrade community ownership and encourage individual, corporate or State control of land, the Papua New Guinea government has embarked on a program of registration of land and landowners. Land is integral to Papua New Guinea society. Loss of land is normally followed by social and cultural disintegration. Registration of land is a precursor to the negation of community ownership of land. The people of Papua New Guinea are becoming aware of what's happening. Over the past three months the whole length and breadth of the country has been racked by demonstrations against the governments attempts to force individual, corporate or State ownership of land on the people. As communities are fighting for their right to exist, the Papua New Guinea government will find it difficult if not impossible to meet the demands of the World Bank. As 'development' money is channelled into Papua New Guinea and as the World Bank waits for its windfall profits, more and more people in Papua New Guinea realise that they will lose what they have if they participate in the governments registration drive.

CHILD WARRIORS

Information released by the United Nations this week on the increasing number of children who are being used to fight regional conflicts across the globe, received scant attention from most media outlets. Over the past two decades over two million children have been killed in regional conflicts, over five million have suffered permanent physical disabilities and over one million have been orphaned. As the world approaches the 21st century child warriors have become an integral feature of wars in Liberia, Mozambique, Angola, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Somalia and Sri Lanka.

Girls as young as six are being used as 'comfort women' by guerrilla forces, while boys as young as six are being used to clear mines and conduct armed raids. The changing technology of war has made children a valuable asset in armed conflicts. Small children are

taught to assemble and use AK47's. They can go into places where adults could never go. Many of these child warriors are survivors of brutal raids that left their parents and relatives dead. They are seen as valuable pliable cannon fodder, are brutalised and used to fight other people's wars.

It's sickening to think that children are used in such a way, but they are used as cannon fodder and continue to be used as cannon fodder. Any society, group, or nation State that allows its children and the children of its enemies to be exterminated, and brutalised in the name of personal power, political ideology or religion is a society that is digging its own grave. The technological advances that have made children an invaluable asset in war reflect sadly on the social and moral bankruptcy of post modern society.

From *Anarchist Age Weekly Review* (17th December 1995)
PO Box 20, Parkville, Victoria, 3052 Australia

These articles recently appeared on a-infos@lglobal.com

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Total = £251.00
1995 total = £1,128.00

Note: as the Freedom Press office closed for the holidays on 22nd December, all donations received thereafter will be included in the 1996 accounts.

Freedom Press Bookshop READERS' ROUND-UP

We thought this little column might be useful as a way of catching up with the backlog of publications which have been thrown at us recently. Here are just some of them.

New from Pirate Press are two A5-sized pamphlets, both 16 pages long and £1 each. *Sabotage: the conscious withdrawal of the workers' industrial efficiency** by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn; this 1916 tract has since been withdrawn by the IWW. *Joe Hill: IWW Song-writer** by Dean Nolan and Fred Thompson, a short accessible biography of the renowned activist.

A case of good drawing being undermined by cheap reproduction, bad spelling and zero proof-reading is the pamphlet *Asterix and the Road Monster* (no publishing details given, but presumably done by the Earth Liberation Front) which is a spoof on the famous comics, but relocating the characters in time and place to modern Britain with Asterix, Obelisk and the others as defenders of a community threatened by road-mad Romans. The idea works well. 50 A5 pages at £1.20.

The Battle of Cable Street 1936 is a glossy, well-produced pamphlet compiled and edited by the Cable Street Group about one particular battle between fascism and anti-fascism at the time, in a road not far from Angel Alley. Apart from the battle there are short chapters on the far-right now, Jewish immigration, the Spanish Civil War, historical setting and so on. 32 pages with photographs, £2.99.

At a mere 24 A4 pages for £1.00, and still apparently unable to appear more than yearly, the latest *Black Flag* (No. 206) is at last in being. Among the contents are an interview with black American anarchist Lorenzo Komboa Ervin, an article on the Mumia Abu-Jamal death sentence and an excellent piece on pornography which effortlessly undermines the nonsense published in the recent *Green Anarchist*.

Of historical interest is the reprinting (as *The Sheffield Anarchist: Centenary Commemorative Publication**) of three issues of that paper from 1891 in one very large pamphlet. £1 for

14 pages by Pirate Press.

The Scottish Federation of Anarchists have brought out No. 3 of *Scottish Anarchist*, a 24-page A4 magazine, still £1. Contents include a four-page review of a mediocre film about a minor event in Anglo-Scottish history whose star is a mediocre actor from Australia via Hollywood, and a mere half-page review of the excellent *Land and Freedom* film about the Spanish Revolution, a very important event in European history with no Hollywood stars. Also pieces on McDonalds, anarcho-feminism, William Blake, pornography and more.

Among the latest batch of Zapatista books are *First World Ha Ha Ha!: the Zapatista Challenge* edited by Elaine Katzenberger (City Lights), which covers the background, context and impact of the movement in articles by a whole army of Mexican and US writers. Some good first-hand accounts of, for example, the fighting and the preparations for it, interspersed with more theoretical pieces and interviews. £10.95 gets you quite a few photographs with your 258 pages of text. Then there is *Zapatistas!: documents of the new Mexican revolution* from the Autonomedia stable who give you 350 pages, also with photographs, for a mere £8.95. Here the Zapatistas tell it as it is in interviews, manifestos and communiqués said to be the most comprehensive collection of EZLN documents in any language.

Both *The Skeptic* magazine and *Anarchist Portraits* by Paul Avrich have gone up in price, the former from £1.85 to £2.00 and the latter from £10.95 to £13.00, but both are well worth it. And the *Self-Build Book* by Jon Broome and Brian Richardson has been reprinted in a revised and updated edition, but still at the old price of £15.00!

'Four Eyes'

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London Anarchist Forum

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- 1996 PROGRAMME -

- 12th January General Discussion
- 19th January Some Further Comments on Chomsky (speaker Peter Lumsden)
- 26th January General Discussion
- 2nd February Anarchism and the Family (symposium)
- 9th February Sociobiology and 'Not In Our Genes' (speaker Donald Room)
- 16th February General Discussion
- 23rd February Anarchism and Social Class (speaker Peter Neville)
- 1st March General Discussion
- 8th March What Anarchists Do? (symposium)
- 15th March General Discussion
- 22nd March The Destructive Legacy of Hegel and his Successors on Libertarian Thought (speaker Dave Dane)
- 29th March General Discussion

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

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