

# anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

*"The only limit to the oppression of government is the power with which the people show themselves capable of opposing it."*

**Errico Malatesta**

## **SCARGILL SEES THE RED LIGHT ... TOO LATE!**

**A**rthur Scargill – still the National Union of Mineworkers' president though that once great industry that, prior to privatisation, employed more than 170,000 workers is now reduced to a handful of pits employing some 10,000 – has resigned from the Labour Party and launched his very own Socialist Labour Party.

Anarchists have no objection to 'parties'. After all, in his early writings Malatesta would refer to the 'anarchist party' meaning, to quote the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, "a number of persons united in maintaining a cause, policy, opinion". The anarchists substituted 'movement' for 'party' when the popular definition of party was of a political organisation seeking power to govern – in other words, imposing its ideas and programme on everybody. Party

is not the only term that anarchists had to abandon or qualify – such as with 'socialist' and 'communist' – when they were captured by authoritarian politicians and were imposed either by violence or by an electoral system – by which, as the advocates of proportional representation in this country are always pointing out, the seventeen years of Tory government in this country has been maintained on a minority vote. If one adds the 20% of the electorate who don't vote (and alas not many of them are activist anarchists!) then so-called democratic government is a sham even in the numbers game. If one also examines the definition 'government by the people, of the people for the people' then surely one realises that the 'prosperous' western world (compared with the other four

billion humans struggling to scratch a living from the soil or the sea or to satisfy the repressed lusts of western 'tourists') is much more concerned with the salary/wage-packet lottery than with *democracy!*

**W**e return to Arthur Scargill, but will not join the chorus of the so-called left-wing Labour MPs who have attacked him (for obvious reasons, surely?) nor share the *Guardian's* disgusting editorial ('Scargill's End, Blair's Triumph: Labour is glad to see him go', 15th January), but how can we not point out that Scargill's new party is not a Malatesta-style 'party' but yet again one that will be *seeking the power to govern*. Some weeks ago when the idea was first given publicity, Mr Scargill declared that the new party would put up 500 candidates at the next general election, so there is no question that the Socialist Labour Party is anything other than a political party seeking power (or *office* since, as we keep saying in *Freedom*, the real power is in the hands of international finance).

If Arthur Scargill could be described as a political innocent we could give him quite a lot of advice about the politicians, the union bosses *et alia*, but he is a seasoned politician whose CV may well surprise some readers. The media treat him as an old man, yet he is of 1938 vintage. He was a miner at 18 and at the age of 35 (in 1973) he became area president of the Yorkshire NUM. But before that, between 1955 and 1962, he was a member of the Young Communists League. He left them to join the Cooperative Party and only in 1966 did he join the Labour Party. And in 1996 he leaves the Labour Party and launches the Socialist Labour Party. All his criticisms of Blair and the New Labour Party ('We're Moving Home', *Guardian*, 15th January) are more than justified.

What we find incredible from someone who has been absorbed in the political racket for nearly forty years is to discover *now* that in fact the Labour Party has never been socialist! It is worth recording the great man's confession in full for posterity:

## **THATCHER IS ALL FOR THE STATE**

**A**n anarchist might have said the following: "The very existence of the state, with its huge capacity for evil, is a potential threat to all the moral, cultural, social and economic benefits of freedom". In fact the person who said it was Margaret Thatcher, the person who did more than any other to centralise power in this country since the introduction of electoral democracy.

It is a quotation from her speech of 11th January 1996, intended to restore the Conservative Party to the right-wing authoritarianism which is her own political creed.

When she became Prime Minister in 1979, one of her first acts was to increase the numbers of police and raise their salaries. She also increased the salaries of top managers in the Civil Service, the 'Whitehall mandarins'.

Her idea of 'rolling back the state' was to decrease spending on caring for the unfortunate, a function which the state has taken over only recently. Those concerned with running the state as such, and maintaining its power, were actually augmented.

She declared herself against 'quangos', or quasi-non-governmental organisations, which are committees appointed by government to oversee this or that and then left to get on with it. She actually got rid of some quangos, mostly wages councils and regulatory bodies appointed to moderate the excesses of capitalism. Others, like water boards, ceased to be quangos when they were translated into private companies.

But with her ministers she set up many more quangos than she abolished, and her quangos were things like development councils intended to take power away from elected local authorities and put it in the hands of placemen appointed by the central state.

In her speech she praised the Home Secretary Michael Howard, who has overseen the incarceration of more British residents than ever before. To put individuals in prison is surely the archetype of the state coming down on individuals. And Howard concentrates power in the hands of the state by ignoring the judges, who are supposed to be a separate power.

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## SCARGILL SEES THE RED LIGHT ... TOO LATE!

(continued from page 1)

"However, the changes to Labour's constitution incorporated in the new rule book adopted at the 1995 Labour Party conference went far beyond ditching Clause 4. New Labour's constitution has not only abandoned socialism but embraced capitalism and the free market. In other words, Labour ceased any pretence of being a socialist party.

Many on the left argue that it was never socialist, that it was at best social-democratic and that people like me were deluding ourselves into thinking we could campaign for socialism effectively within it. I now accept that argument, and believe that New Labour can no longer be a 'home' to socialists."

It has certainly taken him a long time to see the red light, but is it too late for Scargill (not because of his age - he's 'politically' quite young) to learn that the capitalist system will not be destroyed by a change of government? The capitalist system is entrenched worldwide.

It will *only* be destroyed and replaced by a system of justice and equality, freedom and leisure when the victims of capitalism realise that the initiative must come from them, yes, at a price perhaps, but never from the politicians, whether they are crooks (and you will have noticed that most of the leading politicians worldwide are either in prison or on corruption charges - Lady Thatcher has not been tempted because one learns that in the USA and elsewhere her Thatcher Foundation earns her £50,000 an hour for spouting out her venom) or well-meaning - the fact remains that the capitalist world is its own worst enemy: greed, too many at the pig-troughs. In the past the 'regulators' were two world wars. The next 'regulator' may not be a third world war between the European nations but perhaps between the emergent aggressive capitalist Far East and the decadent *laissez faire* too-prosperous (for some) West.

Arthur Scargill's new-look Labour Party hasn't even discovered the real problem: *world capitalism*, the multinationals, the transnationals and the pension funds that switch to wherever there is more money to be made, even if it means thousands of redundancies at home.

Only the anarchists denounce the capitalist system, call on the workers (yes, white-collar as well - you are also exploited, comrades!) to take a stand against *the capitalist system*, not just against the government. After all, Blair's propaganda is to show that he is *more capitalist than the Tories!*

One simple thought in conclusion. Can you imagine the majority of the privileged in our society (and today in this country they are a majority) giving up their privileges so that the 'underclass' (the unemployed, the old living on state pensions, the disabled, the single mothers, you name them) who have no other means will be given more by a Labour government?

Arthur Scargill, from his recent discoveries about the Labour Party, is obviously not a

reader of *Freedom*. We shall send him this issue, as well as a copy of the Freedom Press title *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy\**, a collection of editorials from *Freedom* (1951-1964). If only he *had* been a reader of *Freedom* at the time, he would never have joined the Labour Party in 1966 and would now in 1996 not have to make the humiliating admission that the Labour Party was not socialist after all!

\* *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy*, 142 pages, ISBN 0 900384 16 6, £2.00. (Note for purchasers: in many copies the plastic binding is collapsing, but all the pages are there.)

## THATCHER IS ALL FOR THE STATE

(continued from page 1)

Thatcher spoke of cutting taxes but never made any real attempt to cut taxes, though she did succeed in shifting the tax burden from the rich to the poor. Among top Tory politicians, the obvious tax cutter is Kenneth Clarke. He proved his genuine tax cutting credentials when he was Home Secretary and actually told the police to manage on less money. But Clarke is a 'one-nation Tory' or, in Thatcher-speak a 'wet' and 'not one of us'.

She railed in her speech against the idea of the British state giving up part of its power to Europe, or part of its central power to a subsidiary state in Scotland. All Thatcher's

activities and precepts have been, and are, to increase the power of the state.

We have always known that when somebody offers freedom one should ask 'freedom from what?' Now we know also that once someone says the state is evil, one should ask 'what do you consider evil?'

When Thatcher speaks of "the state, with its huge capacity for evil" she is not referring to its capacity to oppress, impoverish, conscript and destroy. She is referring to its capacity to bridle capitalism, because in her view unbridled capitalism is good. She is referring to its capacity to defend the poor against the rich, because in her view the poor should get off their backsides and set about becoming rich instead of asking to be defended.

## TABLETS OF STONE

The conference on Spiritual and Moral Education tried to reach consensus last week on the moral guidance that schools should offer their pupils.

Nick Tate, the government's chief curriculum adviser, suggests that some new 'commandments' should be devised to teach children wrong from right. The murder of the London headteacher Philip Lawrence has brought with it fears that certain sections of the present generation are becoming uncontrollable.

The decline in religious observation goes hand in hand, it seems, with a decline in moral consideration - and the falling rolls in the Girl Guides, Boy Scouts and Brownies is obviously a clear indication of the end of civilisation as we know it.

The suggestion that schools have no expectations of good behaviour from their students is not true. Most schools have behaviour policies and demand punctuality, politeness and regular attendance. As children spend only about a fifth of their lives at school it is unrealistic to expect that the influence there will be lasting, unless of course the intention is to return to a culture of fear.

A timely re-publication of *Hooligans and Rebels*, first published in 1981, reminds us of aspects of working class resistance to the alien standards imposed by the middle classes between 1889 and 1939. These standards included obedience to authority, moral conformity and gender stereotype. Stephen Humphries traces working class resistance to bourgeois influence from the school strikes of 1889 and 1911, through vandalism, truancy and general 'larking about', to the street gangs of 1938. Then as now there was much public talk of degeneracy, brutalisation, delinquency and 'moral rotteness'. Much of the book takes the form of people's own words collected by oral history groups in Essex, Manchester and Bristol.

Why is it that people's opinions, especially those of the 'underclass' or 'sub-cultures', are only sought fifty years on when their grievances have turned to bitterness? Dr Tate

believes that schools are one of the few organisations attempting to "shore up the moral fabric of our society" but this is useless unless young people observe 'grown ups' acting in responsible ways.

Should the state involve itself in social engineering? Of course not. The decline in respect for the church, the monarchy and the political system is causing a moral panic and as we come up to the general election much effort will be made to court the votes of 18-25 year olds who are turning their backs on the Parliamentary system. But young people are not easily fooled and, whilst you can drag them to the ballot box, you can't make them vote.

We hope the words of Ivan Illich are no longer as true today as they were in 1970: "When values have been institutionalised in planned and engineered processes, members of modern society believe that the good life consists in having institutions which define the values that both they and their society believe they need".\*

\* *Deschooling Society* by Ivan Illich (Open Forum, £6.95) available from Freedom Press Bookshop.

out now from Freedom Press

**THE ANARCHIST REVOLUTION**  
**Polemical Articles 1924-1931**  
**Errico Malatesta**

edited & introduced by Vernon Richards

Though complete in itself, this volume is intended as a 'supplementary' to the *Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas* compiled by the same editor. The importance of this volume is that 23 articles published between 1924 and 1931 - the last years of his life - have been translated in full for the first time and have been selected because they deal with issues which were of much concern amongst anarchists and which this editor, himself involved with anarchist propaganda for sixty years, considers to be as relevant today as when they were written.

124 pages ISBN 0 900384 83 2 £3.50

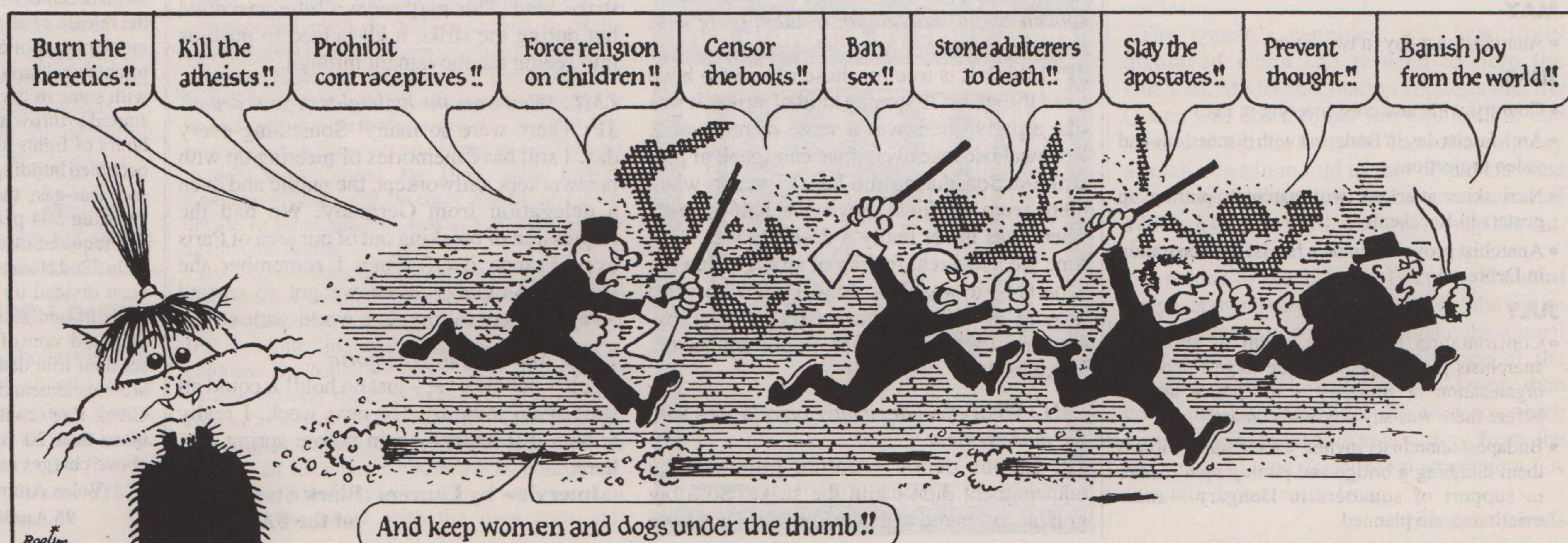
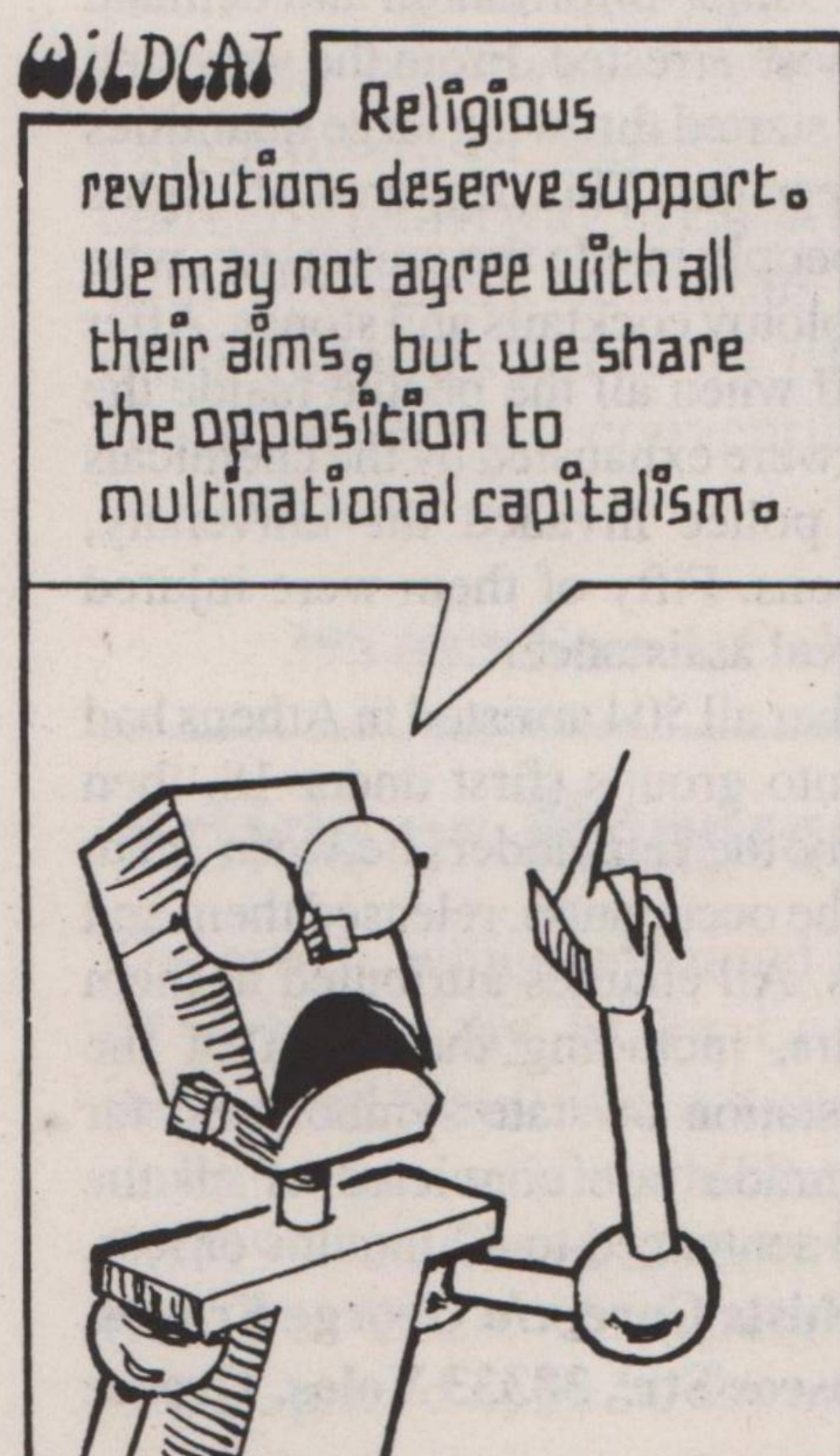
There is one point, however, on which anarchists can agree with Thatcher. When she said in her 11th January speech "I have never minimised the importance of society, only contested the assumption that society means the state rather than other people", this clarified her famous remark of some years ago, "There is no such thing as society". Anarchists had made exactly the same remark years before she did (we can give a precise source if sufficiently provoked). And it seems she meant precisely what anarchists mean, not that society does not exist, but society is not a *thing*.

"There is no such thing as society" is an instance of the rule formulated by the linguistic philosopher Joseph Priestley, "Not every substantive denotes a substance". Priestley's example was the word 'tennis'. Assemble the things necessary for tennis: players, racquets, a court, a net and a ball, then in order to have tennis there is no need to add anything else. Tennis occurs when the assembled things relate to each other in a particular way. Tennis is not a thing, although the word 'tennis' behaves grammatically like a word denoting a thing.

'Stomach' is a word denoting a thing. 'Digestion' is a word like 'tennis'. A class of ten-year-olds might enjoy themselves making a list.

The point made by anarchists, and it seems Thatcher agrees, is that 'society' is a word like 'tennis'. Using the unthinking assumption that society is a thing (the reification of society), politicians may exhort us to do things 'for the benefit of society' which are not for the benefit of any individual, or to help 'the people' without helping any person. Stalin's USSR enslaved the workers yet convinced benevolent-minded communists throughout the world that it was working for the emancipation of the working class, and did so largely by means of reification of the term 'working class'.

One reason Thatcher does so much harm is that she is a patriot, which is to say she reifies terms like 'Britain'. She may be right about 'society', but in sum she is no more an individualist than she is pleasant or kindly.



And keep women and dogs under the thumb!!



## NEWS FROM RUSSIA

The latest stage in the attack by the ruling class on the rights and achievements of the workers is coming to a close. In Russia the preliminary sharing out of state property between bureaucratic and bourgeois cliques is nearly complete and there is now a bitter struggle beginning for them to grab what they can. In Belorussia and in the Ukraine the privatisation process is in full swing. By transforming the exploitative forms of state capitalism into private state capitalism the ruling classes are seeking to throw the weight of the crisis onto the shoulders of the workers. Theirs is a violently anti-social political stance: raising or 'liberalising' prices, restricting rises in wages, cutting back on welfare payments, the complete commercialisation of public services, job suppression and more discrimination against women. Worker related organisations have been deprived of whatever remains of their rights; an administrative dictatorship over production has become total. The impoverishment of the workers has reached levels without precedence. The rise in shop prices outstrips several times over any rises in average salaries, under-consumption and malnutrition have become the norm. In all the states which were members of the 'former union' there is a concentration of power in the hands of a small minority, at the head of which can be found the despotic presidents. The militarisation of society makes rapid progress and nationalism is getting into a rhythm. Civil rights, already under threat, and freedom have been restricted. There are more and more cases of repression directed against non-conformists including anarchists, ecologists and other independent groupings.

However, the deteriorating situation for the workers is not accompanied by an increase in revolutionary positions being adopted nor by

## HUNGARY

We don't often get much information from Hungary. This has in fact only just reached us but although a little old we still think it is of interest.

### HAPPENINGS IN HUNGARY, 1995 SO FAR ...

#### JANUARY

- An anarchist group forms in Debrecen
- RAI starts a correspondence course about anarchism

#### FEBRUARY

- Anarchist groups form in Győr, Mezokovesd and Budapest
- The Debrecen anarchists participate on the local greens' demonstration
- Continuous anarchist propaganda in Budapest

#### MARCH

- Two eco-demonstrations in Budapest, with anarchists taking part
- New anarchist group in Dunaujvaros
- Co-operative propaganda in Budapest against neo-Nazis

#### APRIL

- Anarchist actions in many cities
- Group forms in Kecskemet
- Rappers and anarchists in Budapest continue strong anti-racist propaganda
- The anarchist movement begins to take two directions, an anarcho-communist, class-war direction emerges

#### MAY

- Anarchist mayday in two cities

#### JUNE

- Country-wide anarchist meeting in Pecs
- Anti-fascist day in Budapest with discussions and video projections
- Nazi skins attacked two anarchists putting up posters in Kecskemet
- Anarchist provocation on a fascist demonstration in Debrecen

#### JULY

- Confrontation between a group of about 80 anarchists plus rappers and the largest neo-nazi organisation in Budapest – the police arrived before there was any physical contact
- Budapest anarchists invited the media to witness them climbing a bridge and putting up a banner in support of squatters in Hungary – mass evictions were planned

the radicalisation of demonstrations for their rights. The majority of workers remain passive and express their discontent by refusing to participate in electoral buffoonery. The social movements of 1988-1990, with their potential for self-organisation and self-management, have dissolved and many of their leaders have joined the system. Strike action essentially adopts a purely defensive character, and very often the strikes are of a very moderate nature, isolating groups from one another, and under the control of old and new bureaucratic unions, whose propaganda speaks of a 'social partnership', which undermines the demands of the workers and, in the end, conclude agreements behind their backs. It is not rare for the administration of a company, in collusion with the unions, to use workers' struggles to put pressure on those in power with their own interests in mind.

The very low level of worker activity can be explained by a prolonged absence of long term self-organisational practice, systematically suppressed during the Stalinist period. A passive

despair predominates, that is a paternalistic belief that a change of leadership will automatically solve all pressing problems. All this brings easy prey to the political opposition parties who, once in power, continue with exactly the same offensive policies directed at the workers. Electoral campaigns serve to distract the workers' attention from the direct struggle for their essential interests, strikes and protestations, and instead to put their destiny in the hands of a new clique of demagogues.

The spreading of egotism and the splits among the workers by attempts at corrupting those who are in those sectors of the economy which are of strategic importance or in private firms, is one of authority's favourite methods of preventing a social explosion.

The road to social self-organisation and revolution will be a hard one. Today this is the only way to end the sufferings of the workers. It is only by hard-nosed struggle – stubborn and daily – of the exploited in every sphere where they come up against the domination

## WE HAVEN'T STOPPED THE MOVEMENT ... WE'VE SUSPENDED IT

*Le Monde Libertaire* (11th January 1996) met up with JP – anarchist and unionist. Three weeks of strike action – along with hundreds of thousands of fellow workers – a head full of words, images and hopes. Here are the words of a striker ...

**LML:** Would you introduce yourself?

**JP:** I've been working with the Parisian bus service for some twenty years. I'm a militant anarchist.

**LML:** Are you a union member?

**JP:** I'm with the CGT. I'm also a shop steward.

**LML:** Can you tell us about the experience of this movement as lived by your colleagues? By yourself? How it affected relationships between people?

**JP:** Let's take the specific example of my depot, which is at the Porte de Clignancourt. We had no sense of history here – there wasn't any. With this conflict we now have a sense of the past. For the people who work here that is important. There has been a corporate rupture; now there's a feeling of belonging to a particular class – whether we are talking about bus drivers, workers in the manufacturing industries, rail and postal workers and the teachers who came to visit us. We feel ourselves to be part of one world, one struggle. This is a new feeling because up until now we have had the feeling of belonging to a corporation within the transport service where a bus driver's only contact with a fellow worker was at the petrol station – and even then you felt separate. Again a bus driver was in a different world to an underground driver. Within the company everywhere there were fractions. And all these fractions broke down. This must have been the case in other workplaces.

**LML:** In a previous edition of *LML* we've spoken about individuals re-identifying with the proletariat ...

**JP:** I think it is true for those of us who have lived the strike. A strange kind of strike. It was like a party, there was a sense of renewal ... Renewal because even if we can speak of past strike action during the last 15 years, when there were conflicts they were half-hearted. There was never really a desire to win. This time we had a real feeling of struggle, having a party – it wasn't a drag. Folk who were around at 3.00am were tired but happy. Coming together was as important as the strike itself.

**LML:** What effect did it have on relations with the management?

**JP:** In our depot – unlike others – the management didn't join the strike. So a big gulf has appeared and they know it. They have

to tread real careful when they want to ask a favour now. We used to say that when in struggle we were as one, that we were strong. Whatever management said meant fuck all to us. Whatever they say today means fuck all and if they try to shit on us we are well able to return the compliment. Perhaps it won't last but right now they are having a bad time of it.

**LML:** If relations evolved positively can the same be said for racist and sexist attitudes?

**JP:** Well to be honest my working environment is pretty sexist and racist. It's a male atmosphere – there are few women drivers – traditionally a man's job. And when it comes to racism there's one union – quite influential, an independent group – which has links to the Front National and which gives legitimacy to that kind of talk. Having said that the conflict allowed us to call on our brothers and sisters when there were problems of a racist or sexist nature. In the context of struggle and solidarity everyone was able to discuss, analyse, try to understand why it is stupid to look on a female, West Indian or North African worker as inferior. There's always a problem here but now we can discuss it.

**LML:** The media are full of the idea of a 'proxy strike'. Were you aware of this? Did you feel that folk were pinning their hopes on you?

**JP:** Absolutely. When we were on picket duty at the depot people told us not to give in. There were gestures of solidarity ... people came in the morning with breakfast or money for the strike fund. This may seem a little anecdotal but during the strike it all helped to push us into seeing the movement through.

**LML:** What were the highlights at your depot?

**JP:** There were so many! Something every day. I still have memories of meeting up with postworkers, railworkers, the public and even a delegation from Germany. We had the impression of breaking out of our area of Paris even France itself. Then I remember the General Assembly when we got so carried away we were calling for a world-wide strike.

**LML:** And after the Euphoria ...

**JP:** It's not over yet – just on hold! It could all start again tomorrow or next week. I really reckon it'll happen again before spring gets here.

Interview by Laurent (Black Star Group of the FAF, Ivory)

and oppression of the state and capital, a class struggle independent of statist bodies, political parties and bureaucratic unions which will help them form the structures of social self-management and the aspiration to a new life of freedom.

Under these conditions of violent offensive coming from the exploiters, it is extremely important to protect the daily socio-economic interests of the workers. It is evident that the corrupt conciliators of the bureaucratic unions do not wish to put forward elementary salary demands, nor fight against redundancies. Only the revolutionary unions of workers can carry out this task.

What is needed today is the creation, in Eastern Europe and Northern Asia, of syndicalist organisations who can forge a link between the daily economic struggle and the preparation for and realisation of a universal social revolution. Of course, the simultaneous setting up of such unions is impossible. That is why we favour more flexible autonomous initiatives from the workers. Such initiatives could have complete organisational independence or could form anarcho-syndicalist factions within other syndicalist unions or strike committees. We are for the creation of networks in active sectors, consisting of various local syndicalist initiatives or alternatively non-participation.

Today's fundamental demands are: full indexation of salaries and welfare payments backdated to 1st April 1991 (that is to say when prices began to rise); payment of wages on time; reduction in direct taxation; job preservation and an end to deteriorating working circumstances; the re-establishment of collective workers rights dating back to the period 1987-1990; the absolute right to strike.

It is vital that we play an active role in all work related struggles, by taking part in debates and defending these demands and by contributing to the radicalisation of these struggles and doing this exclusively by means of direct action.

from *Action Directe* no. 5, October 1995  
Translated from the Russian by Relations  
Internationales de la Fédération  
Anarchiste Française

## GREECE

Further to our brief report (*Freedom*, 16th December 1995) about the unprecedented events that took place last November in Athens and Thessalonika.

On Tuesday 14th November in Thessalonika anarchists organised a demo demanding the liberation of all the arrested social fighters. They were immediately attacked by the police. Four comrades were arrested and five injured. After this, the anarchists occupied a university building demanding the release of all four arrested. The next day attempts were made to demonstrate through the streets of the city, but again they were attacked by the police. The four arrested were immediately tried and sentenced to two and a half and three and a half year imprisonment. Immediately after their conviction they started a hunger strike. On 14th December 1995 the four arrested were finally released!

On Wednesday 17th November – the 22nd anniversary of the National Technical University of Athens' revolt against the military junta regime – anarchists occupied the same university building to create a centre of counter-information and demand the release of all those arrested. From the very first moment the police started throwing large quantities of chemicals and tear-gas. This triggered off fights with some of the people inside the university, who started to throw molotov cocktails and stones. After hours of fights and when all the people inside the occupied building were exhausted by the chemicals and tear-gas, the police invaded the university, arresting 504 persons. Fifty of them were injured and required medical assistance.

On 22nd November all 504 arrested in Athens had been divided up into groups (first under-18, then students and finally the remainder, between them the 'hard' core of the occupants), released them and set their trial dates. All charges attributed to them are misdemeanours, including the arson of the Greek flag (contestation of state symbol). So far more than 20 comrades are convicted of all the above charges and sentenced to 42 months or less.

Volos Anarchists Core, c/o George Fragos,  
96 Analipseos Str., 38333 Volos, Greece



## LADY LENDS LEG-UP TO LABOUR

Lady Thatcher's recent Keith Joseph speech was a study in political back-stabbing. In it she wounded John Major's government by setting a couple of sweet sentences afloat in a sea of platitudes.

Mr Major's 'One Nation Tories' are, in her view, 'No Nation Tories', and his government has let down the middle (and aspiring middle) classes by increasing taxes on them.

Watching her performance and calculated delivery, one can only assume she knew what she was about: to undermine the government of the day. Her lines were stiff, stilted and devoid of passion. There was an air of low cunning about the whole episode.

This can only mean that Thatcher sees Thatcherism as safe in Mr Blair's hands – or safer than it would be with John Major and the Tory left. Mr Blair is the best bet to take a version of Thatcherism forward towards the next century. Consider his article in the *Telegraph* 'How I Will Follow Her' and his promise not to dismantle her work.

### Labour's Thatcherites

Others have noticed that 'New Labour' is another version of Thatcherism. The columnist Andrew Neil says: "Much of what New Labour stands for has been inspired by Thatcherite thinking". Later on Mr Neil warns us: "Sometimes Mr Blair indicates he might try to out-Thatcher Thatcher: he is keen for the root-and-branch reform of welfare ... something the lady never even attempted".

The Thatcherites will not be too disappointed by a Tory defeat at the next general election. Major, Heseltine, Clarke and the Tory left will take the rap in the event of a

defeat. This should, it is reasoned, lead to a revival of the Tory right.

If Blair is a new Thatcherite, as some are suggesting, then Thatcherism could go further under New Labour. But if a newly-elected Labour government falls apart then an incoming Tory government would, some reckon, be of the Thatcherite right.

As with the Trotskyites described in the last issue of *Freedom* (see 'Labour Backpedalling to Power') this is the thinking of the political pervert. To get a Labour government elected so that a right-wing leadership may be resurrected in the Tory Party is perverse. And yet it has probably more going for it than the Trotskyite idea of getting Labour elected so as to educate the workers through disillusionment and unfulfilled expectations.

Some socialists suggest that there will be a great debate if Labour wins power. That Prescott and Cook and Blunkett are simply buttoning-up until the party is in office. But if there is no real debate in opposition now, what hope is there that these people will stand up to Blair and the spin-doctors once they have taken on the awesome responsibilities of office?

Past experience tends to suggest that government and ministers fresh to office are primarily concerned with retaining power and are not interested in the finer points of theory.

Clearly anyone who votes Labour expecting socialism wants their heads seeing to!

### Scargill's 'revolutionary syndicalism'?

Anarchists usually make a point of boycotting national elections on principle. However, the new Socialist Labour Party now being touted by Arthur Scargill of the National Union of Mineworkers may provide a tempting novelty for some libertarians. Some syndicalists in the Syndicalist Bulletin Group are rumoured to be interested. Several independent anarchists and syndicalists are members of Trades Councils which may get involved in the SLP project.

One of the prime movers of the new party appears to be someone with a lifetime involvement on the fringes of the anarcho-syndicalist movement. Dave Douglass, of the NUM Hatfield Main colliery in Yorkshire, was a member of the old Syndicalist Workers' Federation in the 1960s, and has long written extensively on trade union topics for anarcho-syndicalist publications. Last week he was reported as preparing a proposal for the Yorkshire Area Council of the NUM. His proposal states: "The Labour Party no longer represents the working class in general or the miners in particular". An attempt to disaffiliate the NUM from the Labour Party.

An editorial in the *Guardian* last week referred to the future possibility of mobilising 'the undoubtedly red-green stratum in British politics'. But concluded: "Mr Scargill's *revolutionary syndicalism* is untypical, especially of the post-1968 left".

## ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

**'ANARCHISTS' IN THE HEADLINES** The use of the term 'anarchist' or 'anarchic' has been in the headlines of my broadsheets, but not in our context – not surprisingly. For instance, the Palestinian politician Hanan Ashrawdi's 'walkabout' on her electoral campaign in East Jerusalem is referred to in the *Guardian* as her "anarchic walkabout". And then there was another *Guardian* report from Hamburg of "anarchist" squatters win the right to a mortgage". This particular reference to 'anarchists' is of interest. We have readers in Hamburg. Can they give us any more information?

Even the *Guardian* report is an encouraging one of direct action winning in the long-run – after more than fourteen years.

"For more than fourteen years this block has been at the centre of a dispute featuring police assaults, firebombings, flaming barricades and street battles. Finally, it appears to be over.

"We won", one of the 120 squatters, Rainer, said. "We struggled for years, and now we've reached our goal".

### NOW IT'S GOING TO BE HELL ONLY ON EARTH!

According to the Church of England's Doctrine Commission the traditional doctrines of hell-fire and eternal torment are "appalling theologies which made God into a sadistic monster and left searing psychological scars on many". However, any *Freedom* reader who may feel relieved by this assurance (note: by only *one* of the mumbo-jumbo churches) may be as confused as I was by the following in the *Independent's* report (11th January) that:

"The commission's latest report, *The Mystery of Salvation*, maintains that hell must exist: 'The reality of hell ... is the ultimate affirmation of human freedom' the report says. But it adds that hell may prove empty. 'Annihilation might be a truer picture of damnation than any of the traditional images of the hell of eternal torment ... Hell is not eternal torment, but it is the final and irrevocable choosing of that which is opposed to God ... whether there be any who do so choose, only God knows'.

The report rejects literal understandings of the Second Coming expressed in such biblical passages as: 'He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him' and 'This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven'. The

passages, it says, 'are not intended to provide literal depictions of the event, as though Jesus were a space traveller returning to earth. They refer, in the far more profound language of biblical imagery, to the manifestation in this world of that which is already true of Jesus Christ in heaven'."

Not being an expert, I dismiss it all. But it's up to you, dear reader. If you like the idea of Jesus being a 'space traveller returning to earth' – we all have fantasies, that's up to you. However, I won't reveal mine, which are much more down to earth!

### THE EARTH IS OURS

There was a fascinating feature article in the *Guardian* by George Monbiot with the provocative title 'You don't give us the earth, we'll take it', which is full of ideas dear to anarchists. He starts with the impossible task of the Newbury protesters, but what interests me as a backwood oldie, out of touch, is that he sees the young single-issue protesters as being *more politically aware than some of us realised*. The writer points out that many of the young never got onto the electoral register because they would have been clawed into the late poll tax. However, though the poll tax has been abolished, the government and opposition are concerned at the number of young people who are still *not* on the register.

But George Monbiot points out:

"Like increasing numbers of young people, many of the protesters feel that mainstream politics have left them in the cold. They see the concerns of Westminster as wholly apart from their own, and believe that none of the political parties either understands or cares for the fate of those who have been gradually excluded from work, benefits, representation and physical space. Young people and politics mix well, but in Britain they have tended to keep away from each other. The poll tax knocked many off the electoral register; bafflement and cynicism have kept them away.

But the direct activists seem slowly to be leading themselves put of the wilderness of disenfranchisement. By working things out for themselves they have begun to engage with politics on the only terms they find acceptable – their own. There is a world apart from the town hall and the constituency association, so they have been able to step lightly over problems the rest of us would see as insuperable."

Again George Monbiot observes that "for many people, ill-served by this government,

the protesters' message is beginning to make more sense than the bulletins from Walworth Road [the Labour Party headquarters]".

And the following is, in my opinion, significant for anarchist activists:

"The movement has frequently been described as a flowering of single-issue politics, *but only by those who have had little contact with its participants*. Among those swaying in the tree-tops at Newbury, discussions range from transport policy to the detention of immigrants, through alternative currencies, press ownership, animal welfare, structural adjustment in the third world, land reform, air pollution, housing policy and the judiciary. Road-building is top of today's list, but when that battle is over many activists will move on to something quite different.

*Indeed, their range of interests often seems wider than those of our representatives*. People of broken families, broken communities, a broken society are, falteringly, idiosyncratically, beginning to make sense of the world once more, to put it back together in their heads. *The issues championed by these protesters have steadily migrated from the fringes of other people's concerns towards the centre*. Four years ago, when the first protesters arrived on Twyford Down, few people had paused to think twice about the roads programme. Within two years it had reached the front page of every national newspaper" (my italics).

What that writer has observed is that the best socio-political education comes from *participating in the day-to-day struggles against authority and privilege*. Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party, just formed, will be telling you to support it with funds and your quinquennial cross. Resist it! Read again what George Monbiot has told us about the protesters!

**BOYCOTT THE TABLOID EMPIRE** Since, apart from my dear comrade Arthur Moyse, I can't imagine any anarchist reading the Sunday tabloids, I feel it is an anarchist propaganda problem that probably more than a quarter of the British adult population read them (or at least see the headlines). Well, the front page of 14th January issues were as follows:

'Was the Queen Betrayed Too' – *Sunday Mirror*  
'Topless Diana in TV Shocker' – *People*  
'A Slur on the Queen' – *Mail on Sunday*  
'Queen's Torment over Margaret's Affairs' – *News of the World*

And some fifteen million people read this crap every week!

Get your friends and neighbours to read *Freedom!*

Libertarian

As I write, the Labour Party is preparing to flesh out its latest mumbo-jumbo about the 'stakeholder society'. But nothing excites so much as mumbo-jumbo in politics, and many both great and small have bene building sandcastles already. Monks and Edmonds of the trade union movement have pontificated; Will Hutton the journalist has been promoting his book on the topic; and all those academics, from David Marquand with his coming conference on stakeholder capitalism to Lord Dahrendorf at Oxford, have stuck their oars into the debate.

### Stakeholding: the new deceit

One commentator has said 'stakeholding' means 'the economics of social cohesion and the politics of social inclusion'. Why not the politics of cohesion and the economics of inclusion? Clearly it won't mean anything like workers' control or democracy in the workplace.

Industrial democracy is never seriously entertained. Rather it may mean limits on the institutional investment trusts, like pension funds, and more support for individual investors. Perhaps it may be made easier for workers to hold shares in their own companies. Wider share ownership seems like an extension of Thatcherism. This doesn't seem like much to write home about!

More worrying is the suggestion by some that 'growth and cohesion can only be achieved if an element of Asian authoritarianism is imported'. This is stakeholding with attitude, and would no doubt please Lady Thatcher.

Significantly Tony Blair made his speech on the stakeholder society in Singapore. As Ralf Dahrendorf comments: "It may be pleasing to the casual visitor [to Singapore] to see everyone cared for and housed (as well as prevented from chewing gum or throwing away cigarette ends) but one must wonder whether such results can be achieved without banning newspapers or putting opposition members of parliament (if any) in prison".

Listening to Gordon Brown's ideas on 'Workfare' or Jack Straw's views on crime and begging, one can hear the tones of the bully.

Raymond Plant, a left-of-centre politics professor, claims: "one of the central problems of modern politics ... is how can there be a clear political morality which will enable us to determine which sorts of human action ought to be subject to coercion and which should not, without this morality being based upon the convictions of just one particular group".

I can't see New Labour or the 'stakeholder society' resolving this problem of class values and social conflict in the community, but I'm sure the 'moral convictions' which will be imposed under New Labour will not be those of working people – rather it will be those of a managerial elite.

Brian Bamford

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on

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## — ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

**FIGHTING OVER WATER**

People in pubs and clubs enjoy quoting Mark Twain's remark that whisky is for drinking but water is for fighting over. This invariably provokes someone to tell the tale that is part of the folklore of the water supply industry: that of the vendetta between the water company and the brewery. The beer-makers were big industrial customers of the company which processed water from its reservoirs fed by the river and its upstream boreholes. But they discovered that modern drilling techniques and sophisticated geological surveys enabled them to bore deep under their site and win pure water of their own. The aggrieved supplier retaliated by boring deeper and draining the brewery source. The brewers responded with an even more ingenious offensive in the water war, followed by another counter-attack until, eventually, after huge expenditure by both parties, an agreement was reached.

The reason why people like to tell this tale is obvious. It provides a microcosm of far more dangerous disputes based on the exploitation of water. Yet Jean Robert argues that the sharing of water resources by mutual agreement between communities is a fact of history. He is a Swiss-born architect who worked at his profession for several years until he paused to reflect that his work was "dedicated to a large extent to the construction of banks". As a result of contact with Ivan Illich and John Turner, he moved to Cuernavaca in Mexico where for twenty years

his main practical interest has been in promoting, at grassroots level, safe non-waterborne systems of sewage disposal. His theoretical concern has been to discover the principles that should govern our use of water, balancing conservation with the need to guarantee access for the poor and vulnerable.

For him, as for regionalist thinkers like Reclus and Geddes, the valley of a river and its tributaries is the 'natural' unit for sharing out water. This view was upheld by the International Conference on Water and the Environment in 1992, which concluded that "the most appropriate entity [for water politics to be effective] is the river basin, including surface and groundwater".<sup>1</sup>

From this proposition Robert concludes that those courageous village communities objecting to the vast water engineering projects all over the poor world are evoking that natural right which he describes as the first golden rule of all water policy: "No new waterworks – or transportation, energy or other 'developments' for that matter – should ever be proposed if the affected community's right to say no to them has not been clearly recognised and if the non-realisation of the project is not publicly debated as a concrete option."<sup>2</sup>

He expresses it this way, because he is aware that the token consultation that is sometimes insisted on by funding bodies like the World Bank is a meaningless procedure if it is taken for granted that, having listened politely to the objectors, the developing agency is determined to go ahead anyway.

If this first golden rule were taken seriously, Jean Robert claims, the risks of war generated by disputes over water would not occur. He is aware that forty percent of the world's population depends on water from a neighbouring country, and "more than 200 large rivers are shared by two or more countries. One country's hydro-electric, irrigation and water supply projects may cut off a neighbour's water supply. But has water sharing been a major cause of war in past times? Upon careful investigation, the opposite might appear to be true". For he reaches the memorable conclusion that "throughout history, water has been a motor of peace rather than of war. Since time immemorial, people riparian of the same watercourse have learned to make peace by concluding arguments about the use of their shared water".<sup>3</sup>

In the modern world the existence of vast cities, the spread of irrigated agriculture and

the demand for hydro-electric power have complicated the principle of basin-consistency. We can see this in a densely-populated country like Britain with a long tradition of large-scale water management. Just as Liverpool draws water from Lake Vyrnwy in Wales, so Birmingham's water supply comes by gravity from five reservoirs draining seventy square miles (182 square kilometres) of rainy mountains above the Elan Valley in Powys. News of massive diversions upstream, however 'basin-consistent' they were, would bring consternation to Birmingham's water planners. We might be confident that discussion, reference to existing agreements and common sense would resolve the issue, settled amicably to the satisfaction of all parties.

But in many parts of the world large-scale water-manipulation worsens both internal and international tensions. Stephan Libiszewski, who studies the resolution of environmental conflicts at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, explains that international law "does not provide adequate means to regulate the competition between riparian states. Upstream states can refer to the doctrine of absolute national sovereignty, whereby a state has the exclusive right to use and dispose of the natural resources within its territory. Downstream states tend to emphasise another principle: the doctrine of absolute national integrity according to which

(continued on page 6)

**The Collected Novels and Memoirs of William Godwin**

general editor Mark Philp

Pickering & Chatto, 8 volumes, 1992, £395.00

**Political and Philosophical Writings of William Godwin**

general editor Mark Philp

Pickering & Chatto, 7 volumes, 1993, £395.00

There are no proper editions in English of any of the leading anarchist writers. (The nearest is the 'Collected Works of Peter Kropotkin' published by Black Rose in Canada, though most of its dozen volumes are simply reprints of old editions with lazy new introductions by George Woodcock, and much important material has been omitted.) And there has never been a proper edition of William Godwin, who was not only a leading precursor of anarchism but a leading man of letters two centuries ago. He left dozens of books and also masses of manuscripts which eventually came into the possession of the Abinger family and were subsequently put into the Bodleian Library, Oxford. However, the situation was transformed a few years ago by the appearance of these two sets in the 'Pickering Masters' series of ambitious editions of important British writers.

Godwin's autobiographical, fictional, political and philosophical writings are now available in fifteen handsome volumes, containing more than 4,500 pages and costing nearly £800. This edition is by no means complete – it omits most of Godwin's historical, economic, dramatic and critical writings, which would have doubled its size – but it is full enough for almost every likely need. Indeed in two ways it is too full – like all the 'Pickering Masters', these are available only as complete sets, so it isn't always possible to buy a single volume on its own; and it is over-edited, with far more critical apparatus than would be needed by anyone likely to use it.

Even so, this edition is a remarkable achievement. Mark Philp, the general editor, is the leading authority on Godwin and the author of one of the best books on him, *Godwin's Political Justice* (1986). The editorial teams include several other established scholars, including William St Clair, the author of the latest biography, *The Godwins and the Shelleys* (1989). And among the many advisers is Peter Marshall, the author of the previous biography, *William Godwin* (1984), and of several books on anarchism. With all this talent, it isn't surprising that the editorial work is mostly excellent – though it is

**GODWIN PRESERVED**

surprising that there are so many minor mistakes and misprints scattered through the volumes.

The general editorial policy has been to reset all the works from the best editions, together with significant variants from other editions, with the addition of long introductions and many footnotes, and a general introduction to each set. The particular policy with Godwin's best-known work, *Political Justice*, for example, has been to use the first edition of 1793, with variants from manuscripts and the second and third editions; this is the reverse of the policy of F.E.L. Priestley's Toronto University Press edition of 1946, which used the third edition of 1798, with variants from the first and second editions. On the one hand, the first edition established Godwin's reputation and is the most stimulating; on the other hand, the third edition was Godwin's final version and is the most convincing. Whichever argument is preferred, it is now possible to compare and contrast them in any order you wish. There is a similar treatment of Godwin's best-known novel, *Caleb Williams*, whose manuscript and five editions present even more complex problems.

Of the eight volumes of *The Collected Novels and Memoirs*, the last seven contain the whole of Godwin's fiction – the three early novels, and then *Caleb Williams* (first edition), *St Leon* (third edition), *Fleetwood* (second edition), *Mandeville*, *Cloudesley* and *Deloraine* – of which some are available in easily accessible editions but all are now put together for the first time. The first volume contains Godwin's well-known biographical writings on his first wife, Mary Wollstonecraft, and his son, William Godwin, and also some of his little-known autobiographical writings, most of which are now published for the first time from the manuscripts in the Abinger Collection. Most of the novels, whatever they may have seemed once, are pretty heavy going now, despite the best efforts of academic critics; but most of the memoirs are fascinating and well worth having.

Of the seven volumes of *Political and Philosophical Writings*, the first contains early journalism, the second contains later journalism, the third contains *Political Justice* (first edition), the fourth contains variants in *Political Justice* from the manuscripts and

other editions, the fifth contains educational and literary writings, the sixth contains general essays and the seventh contains religious writings (and a general index to the set). In the last, the anti-religious work which appeared posthumously as *Essays Never Before Published* (1873) is published in a better edition with its original title, *The Genius of Christianity Unveiled*. Again there is much material from the Abinger Collection which is published for the first time and is fascinating and well worth having. Many of Godwin's non-fictional writings are damaged by his ponderous style, but there is much interesting stuff in these volumes which puts his better-known works in their proper context. The one serious omission is Godwin's major refutation of Thomas Malthus, *Of Population* (1820), which could well have made an eighth volume.

This edition is a really formidable project which demands a great deal from its readers. There are other ways to read Godwin. It is possible to consult the original editions in the few libraries which have them. It is possible to get the rather unsatisfactory paperback editions of some of the major books (the Penguin *Political Justice* of 1976 was a particular disgrace), or Peter Marshall's Freedom Press anthology of *The Anarchist Writings of William Godwin* (1986). It is possible to find secondhand copies of some older facsimile editions, such as Priestley's *Political Justice* or the Augustus Kelley reprints of other books. It is also possible to get hold of newer facsimile editions. Woodstock Books in Banbury produces a series called 'Revolution and Romanticism 1789-1854', consisting of more than a hundred facsimile reprints edited by Jonathan Wordsworth with authoritative but unobtrusive introductions, and including most of the leading writers of that stirring time as they would have appeared to their first readers; some have appeared in secondhand bookshops, and a few are in paperback. The authors include Godwin's first wife Mary Wollstonecraft, their daughter Mary Shelley, their son-in-law P.B. Shelley, and Godwin himself – a small volume containing the original edition of *Memoirs of the Author of the Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1990), and two large quarto volumes containing the original edition of *Political Justice* (1992); the latter offers a very enjoyable – but, at £150, a very expensive – way to read one of the texts which laid the foundation of the anarchist ideology.

Despite all the difficulties and all the expense, Godwin is still worth reading.

NW

**WILLIAM GODWIN** Born 3rd March 1756, Wisbech, England, died 7th April 1836, London, England. After a theological training and a few years as a dissenting Minister (1778-82) he became a professional writer for the rest of his life. The reactions to the French Revolution caused him to write *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), the first full exposition of anarchist doctrine which deeply influenced



WILLIAM GODWIN

many contemporaries, including his son-in-law Shelley. Equally of interest are *Things As They Are*; or *The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (a novel, 1794) and *The Enquirer* (1797).

"Above all we should not forget that government is an evil, a usurpation upon the private judgement and individual conscience of mankind."

The portrait, right, is a black and white copy of one of 36 portraits of anarchists drawn in three-colour line by Clifford Harper, included in a set of picture cards each with a potted biography on the reverse and published by Freedom Press. Other portraits include such varied anarchist figures as Errico Malatesta, Marie Louise Berneri, Emiliano Zapata, Noam Chomsky, Nestor Makhno, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Michael Bakunin, Colin Ward and many more.

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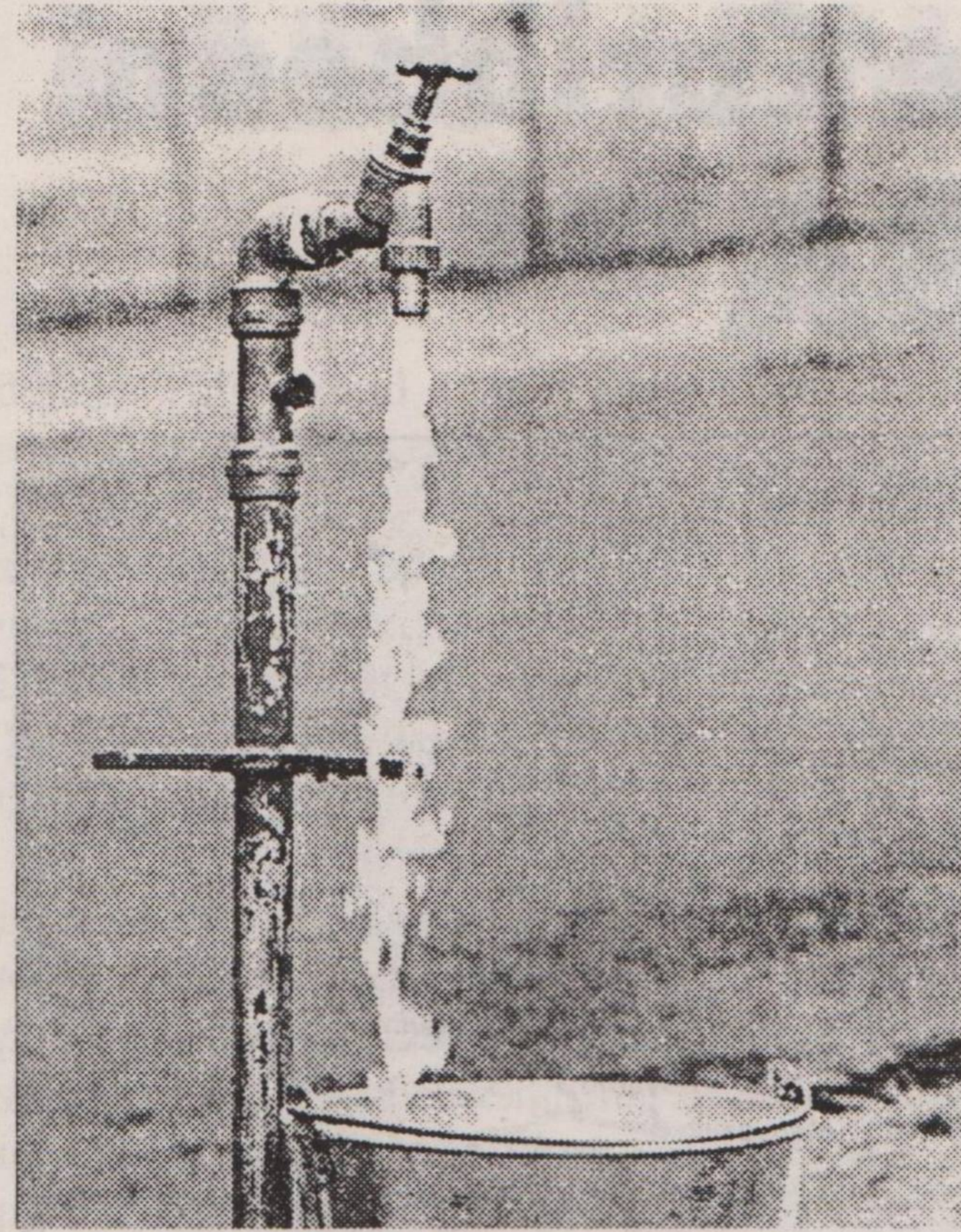
## FIGHTING OVER WATER

(continued from page 5)

lower riparians are entitled to unaltered water volume and quality. Given these contrasting doctrines and modern abilities to dam and divert rivers, international conflicts over the sharing of trans-boundary water resources are almost inevitable.<sup>4</sup>

The question that arises for him, is the same one that occurs to Jean Robert: why do states in arid regions fail to cooperate in water management and development when cooperation would appear to be in their mutual interest? He cites the various drafts known as the Helsinki Rules, which try to establish the criterion of 'equity', but concludes that water disputes will not be solved "until the overwhelming political and territorial conflicts have been settled".<sup>5</sup> Large-scale engineering projects and their funding depend on engineering concepts of 'efficiency' and of the anticipated 'yield'. They inevitably minimise what are seen as the losses in efficiency that result from exploiting less than the maximum capacity and of respecting the needs of other water users.

This can be seen all over the Middle East. Countries downstream in the Euphrates-Tigris basin, like Syria and Iraq, feel threatened by the impact of the vast Ataturk Dam which intermittently cuts off the flow of the Euphrates, while "one of the reasons why the Turks are attacking the Kurdish rebels is that water resources in the Kurdish area are important for Turkey".<sup>6</sup> One result of the Egyptian government's Aswan High Dam is that the Nile basin includes eight other African countries, especially its immediate upstream neighbours. Robin Clarke noted the significance of the fact that Israel's water-transfer agreement with Egypt "offered



Israel 400 million cubic metres per year of fresh water in exchange for a Palestinian solution".<sup>7</sup> On that occasion President Sadat remarked that "the only issue that could lead Egypt to war is water" but his warning was addressed to Ethiopia.<sup>8</sup>

Some water-watchers feel that they have waited a lifetime for the concept of equity and of water as a common good to re-emerge in the Middle East. Forty years ago I attended an international conference in London on Regional Planning Development. It was privately organised by members of a defunct organisation, the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction, and for unfathomable reasons was smeared by the British government as a 'Communist front'. The assistant general manager of TVA read his paper and withdrew on instructions from the US embassy. The Colonial Office speaker's paper on the Volta River Project, in

what was then the Gold Coast and is now Ghana, was read for him as he had been told to keep away. I reported the discussion of his paper, and am struck by the later relevance of the comments made at the time. The criticisms made, when the dam was still a dream of the British and Canadian aluminium companies and the British and Gold Coast governments, have been amply justified by subsequent history.

"Mr A.L. Bryden, a lawyer, spoke of the difference between our own law of land tenure and African tribal law which did not recognise the existence of land as a commodity but recognised the right to the use of the earth and that which it produces; it belonged to the community. Mr de Schlippe, an authority on tropical agriculture, declared that no attempt had been made to solve the problems of the remaining rural population, nor was there any effort to make way for the growth of 'a natural spontaneous organisation to sort out these problems'. Dr Otto Koenigsberger agreed with him on the new social problems created by 'an island of very high technological development'. Mr T. Baloch, the economist, said that 'It is appalling how the financial and economic aspects are being treated just as a matter of high-powered book-keeping'. And why, he asked, was the control of the proposed aluminium firm which so vitally affected the welfare of the people, to be left in the hands of the aluminium companies who were not providing a large share of the capital and might use the Volta simply as a buffer plant to be switched on or off with every change in market conditions?"<sup>9</sup>

Long after Ghanaian independence, the hidden costs of the dam were discovered. As Fred Pearce puts it, the waters of the Volta had been sold very cheaply, and "they had spread disease across the countryside, brought chaos to stretches of the coastline and drowned the homes and farms of 80,000 people".<sup>10</sup>

On the walls at that same conference in 1955 the Tennessee Valley Authority displayed the plan it had prepared at the request of the

United Nations, called *The Unified Development of the Water Resources of the Jordan Valley Region*. After the partition of Palestine and the subsequent fighting the UN Palestine Conciliation Commission sought this 1953 plan for the area. The TVA team did not visit Palestine at all but relied on engineer's reports:

"In March 1954 the Arab Plan for *The Development of the Water Resources of the Jordan Valley* was issued. It was the first all-Arab scheme for regional water development and it recognised Israel's right, for the first time, to a share of the Jordan water. Meanwhile Israel submitted the so-called Cotton Plan made by an American, Mr J.S. Cotton; this plan also provided for sharing the Jordan water. By the spring of 1955 the problem of competitive claims on Jordan water had been simplified by a detailed engineering survey made jointly by M. Baker of Rochester and the Haza Company of Chicago with approval of the Jordan government and at the request of the US Foreign Operations in Jordan. The upshot of this study showed that considerably less water would be required per acre than had previously been supposed ... Differences between the Arabs and Israelis were considerably narrowed. Both sides were agreed on the necessity for a joint scheme and on the utilisation of Lake Tiberias as a main reservoir, and to some form of international supervision."<sup>11</sup>

The most disheartening thing about this account of a plethora of engineering plans is the forty years of conflict since it was written. Attempts to divert the sources of the Jordan in South Lebanon and the Golan Heights provoked the Israeli-Arab war of 1967, and although a working peace has been achieved with neighbouring states in the Jordan Valley, agreement over fair access to water for the Palestinians on the West Bank who, since the occupation began in 1967 have been barred from digging new wells or renovating old ones. In 1955, commenting on current water negotiations, *The Economist* reported that:

"Each year Israel pumps 600 million cubic metres of water (over 30 per cent of its supply) from aquifers that lie, partly or wholly, under the West Bank. Of this, 115 million cubic metres is allocated to the West Bank's 1.4 million Palestinians and 30 million to the 130,000 Jewish settlers there. The rest goes to Israel, servicing Jerusalem and greater Tel Aviv."<sup>12</sup>

In the early decades of this century, long before the foundations of a state of Israel, pioneer settlers won the affection of Arab neighbours by sharing what were then new techniques of water gathering with them. It was as long ago as 1920 that the philosopher Martin Buber warned that if the incomers did not live *with* the existing population as well as *next* to them, they would find themselves living in enmity towards them.

Colin Ward

### — OBITUARY —

## Axel Ney Hoch

As *Freedom* reported in our last issue, Axel Ney Hoch died on 3rd January aged 69.

Like many others who have come to this country to escape persecution in the countries of their birth, it was only among the anarchists that he found some semblance of sympathy and acceptance of friendship and support. (Left-wing Jews from South Africa who, faced with the nationalism of the whites in the 1950s decided to take up British nationality, found the same reaction here: a libertarian attitude missing among the Trotskyists of Cape Town.)

Axel's history was, however, more horrific than that. His mother was Jewish and his father German – which is not in itself horrific, except that when the Nazis came to power his mother was swiftly carried off to a concentration camp, to Auschwitz no less, while his father was not shot by the Gestapo until 1942. Axel himself escaped being sent to a concentration camp by the 'simple' means of jumping off the train meant to take him away and, by some means or another (never made clear, I must admit – but then what do I know?) finding his way to Britain. In the course of many conversations with him I never found out exactly how this was achieved, but achieved it was – and his reception by the schoolboys and girls within which he found himself was not exactly as sweet as he might have anticipated. A foreigner was a foreigner in wartime ... and even after ...

Frankly I cannot remember exactly when it was that Axel began to relate with the London Anarchist Group – and when I say 'relate' that was, in itself, a distant term. He clearly did not want to 'belong'. He came to our meetings, but always with an 'outsider' covering. I will remember a meeting at our Malatesta Club discussion meeting on something or other where the discussion was dragging, when Axel emerged from the back of the room, approached little Jack Robinson in the front

row and declaimed, in the thickest Viennese accent you ever heard: "Do you remember Vienna?" shaking him by the hand vigorously. We all curled up with, of course, the exception of Jack Robinson himself. But the spirit of the meeting was saved.

As far as most of us were concerned, Axel was a peripheral figure – though always welcome – but with a shadowy background. Yes, his family life was shadowy. His employment was always uncertain – as a truck driver or whatever job he could find at a relatively low level – and of course whenever he was pulled up for a traffic offence, the foreign-sounding name on his driving licence always drew some stupid remarks from the police. Nevertheless, he survived and, inspired I hope by his contact with the London anarchists, he finally made his mark on London society as a speaker at Hyde Park.

He set up his own platform at the Park in about 1963, just as the London Anarchist Group was beginning to run down its own dominating scene there. He was invited to join the anarchist group, but chose instead to follow his own bent.

Axel was a strong speaker with a wicked sense of humour and, untrammelled by anything approaching a 'party line', free to roam through his own cynical interpretation of whatever was happening in the world outside.

He kept his platform going for several years but then, inevitably, tired of it. He kept in touch with me over the years by telephone. Last year a new and – dare I say, a despairing note came into his voice around about last August.

He was a stubborn patient. Called into hospital, he would get himself released – thankfully with faithful friends who would look after him. He was always a believer in 'alternative medicines' but, unluckily, they didn't work. He died of a disease of the pancreas – not a cancer, as suspected.

Philip Sansom

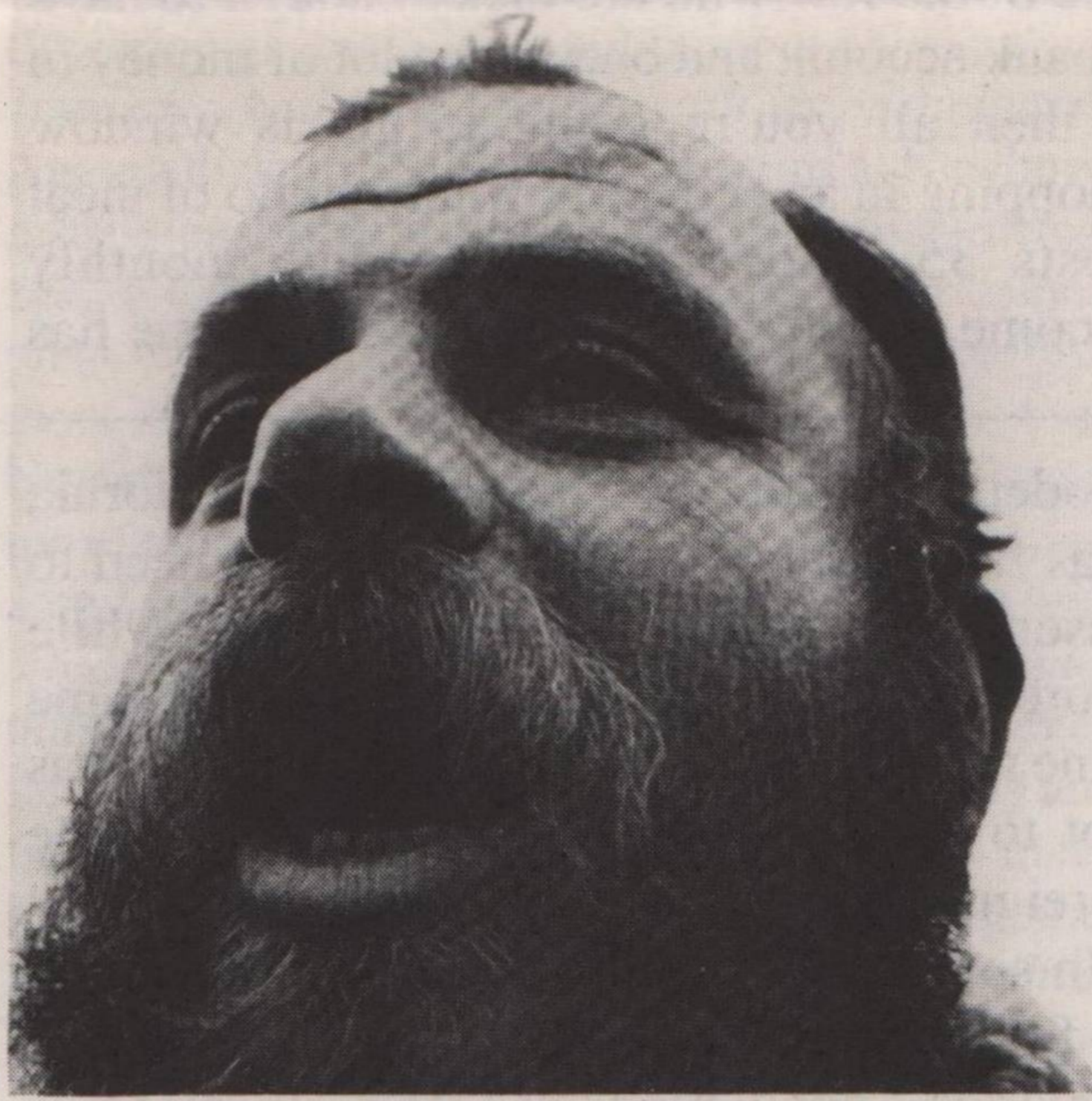


Illustration from *The Speakers* by Heathcote Williams, who also wrote a play of the same name which was presented as 'theatre in the round' at the Conway Hall with Axel Ney Hoch playing himself.

Axel Ney Hoch was a very good speaker, drawing big crowds, and he had a great rapport with his audience. He had no party line and was conversant with anarchism. There was usually great merriment and ripples of laughter around his platform. You can sometimes tell by the way people look at the speaker as to how they regard him – to follow Axel you could feel he had left you a friendly crowd, smiling and their eyes glowing.

Axel has a chapter to himself in a book by Heathcote Williams, *The Speakers* (1964), an impressionistic account of Speaker's Corner as it was then. It is a very confused bit of writing, but it has a few direct quotes. Axel's ideas on vegetarianism are, however, very original and his debate with a butcher as they solemnly debate the pros and cons is comic writing at its best. Axel was good at coining the apt phrase. As quoted by Williams: "The solution to cancer is to cut it out. The solution to tyranny is to oppose it. Sitting down, lying down, fighting, standing, running, jumping ... by all means ... for the State torments you ... by all means". And a rather poetic one: "All sorrow, friends, all sorrow is linked".

John Rety

1. International Conference on Water and the Environment, *The Dublin Statement* (Dublin, 31st January 1992).

2. Jean Robert, *Water is a Commons* (Mexico D.F., Habitat International Coalition, 1994).

3. *ibid.*

4. Stephan Libiszewski, 'Water, Water, Everywhere ...' in *The Ecologist* (vol. 24, no. 5, September/October 1994).

5. He was discussing Nurit Kliot, *Water Resources and Conflict in the Middle East* (London, Routledge, 1994); John Bulloch and Adel Darwish, *Water wars: Coming Conflicts in the Middle East* (London, Gollancz, 1993); and Miriam R. Lowi, *Water and Power: The Politics of a Scarce Resource in the Jordan River Basin* (Cambridge University Press, 1993).

6. Torvild Aakvaag, 'Can the Needs of Society and the Environment be Reconciled?' in *RSA Journal* (vol. CXLIII, no. 5464, November 1995).

7. Robin Clarke, *Water: The International Crisis* (Earthscan, 1991).

8. Jean Robert, *op cit.*

9. Colin Ward, 'The Conference on Regional Planning' in *Freedom* (8th October 1955).

10. Fred Pearce, *The Dammed* (London, The Bodley Head, 1992).

11. W.E.R. Gurney, 'JVA – A Jordan Valley Authority' in *Doorway to the 20th Century* (vol. 2, no. 3, March 1956).

12. 'Whose Water?' in *The Economist* (5th August 1995).

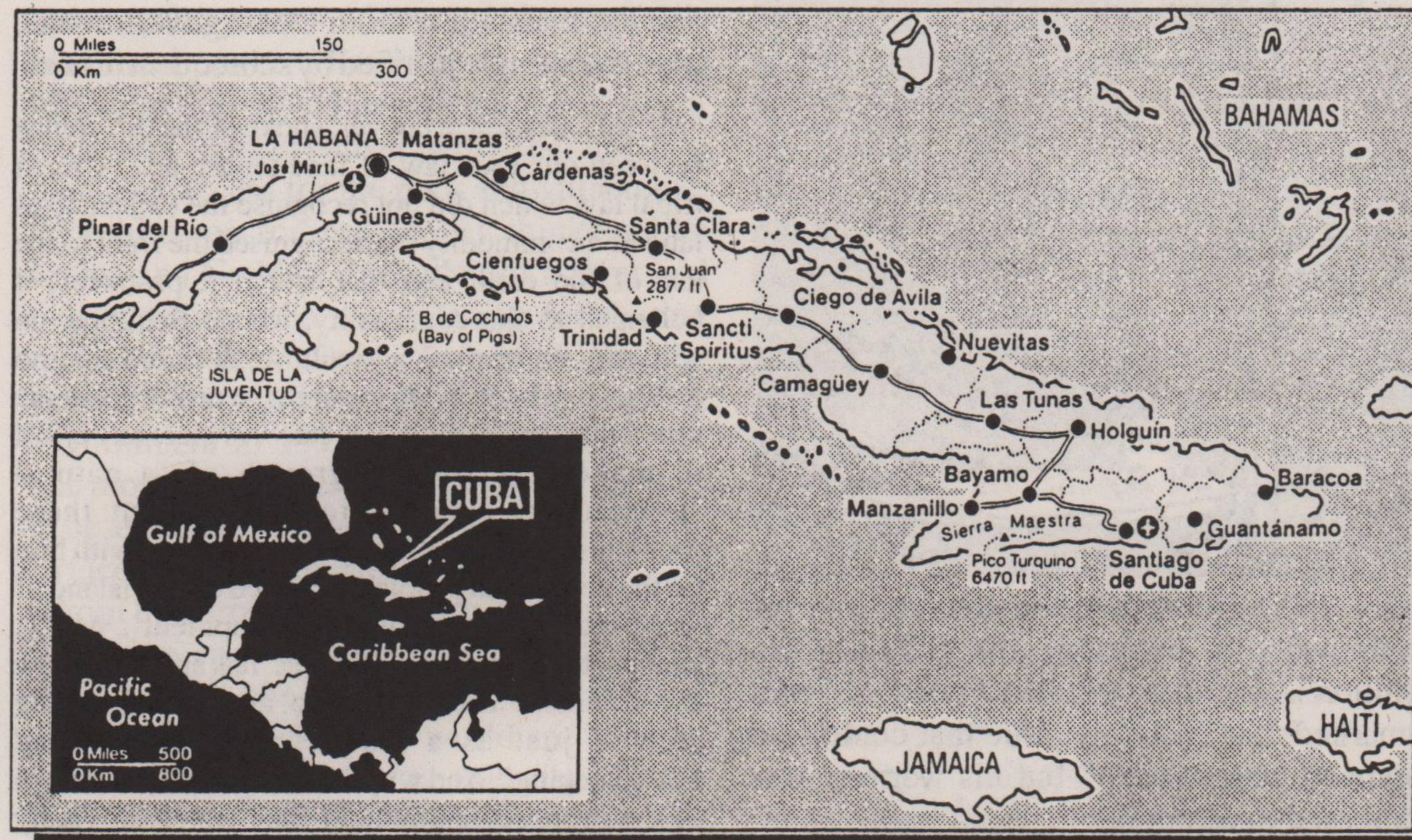


# Sunset for the Caribbean CUBA

Apparently the first time Fidel Castro came to New York to speak to the UN he delivered a mind-numbing four-and-a-half-hour speech about the evils of imperialism. The last time around they cut him down to five minutes. One of the few lessons the UN seems to have learnt in fifty years is that you don't listen to Fidel Castro. But Fidel had words for other ears in New York, where he was the guest of Mr David Rockefeller himself. Indeed, the US big boys are showing an interest in Cuba. And Fidel is returning the compliment. Last October he entertained some fifty representatives of companies like General Motors, Hyatt Hotels, Sears and Harley Davidson in Havana. We've come a few years from *Cuba Si, Yanqui No*. Now it seems like the new refrain is its inversion. Castro has seen the American light.

The 4th September 1995 saw Cuba pass legislation which has been described as, 'the most liberal on the continent'. Cuba is following, is indeed following its own version of 'The China Syndrome'. It's the usual: companies are allowed to be owned up to 100% by foreign capital and Cuba's home version of the 'free economic zones' are on the way. The law particularly tries to entice capital from the diaspora (up until now not exactly Fidel's best friends) whilst still curbing participation from the folks back home. The whole adds up to a would-be new alliance between political power and economic wealth, i.e. a state.

So why is Fidel going West and what does it mean for 'Cuba'? Fidel, along with Tito and the rest, always liked to parade his neutrality, didn't he? But Fidel has never been a committed bachelor. He simply tied his standard to the losing party. Cuba's dependency on the former Soviet Union is legendary. Since the fall of the empire there has been an estimated drop of 85% in total external relations (including foreign aid). Cuba was highly dependent on the socialist block for petrol, industrial equipment, agricultural inputs like fertiliser and pesticides and indeed foodstuffs – possibly as much as 57% of total calories consumed. The reality was that Cuba was a puppet regime like no other, and now her seeming inability to stand



on her own two feet has led the Cuban *nomenklatura* to look elsewhere for support.

At first the effect of the collapse to the East and the embargo from the North was to force the introduction of rationing. Between 1989 and 1993 it was estimated that food intake in Cuba may have dropped by 30%, taking her out of the top five for average caloric and protein intake and into the bottom five.

Castro has, as we have seen, been freeing up the economy a little. Inequalities in Cuba are beginning to make themselves noticed. Within the banking system 3% of account holders have 85% of the deposits. Some hands have money in Cuba. In this atmosphere rationing has all but gone, but unless you're one of the few who are lucky enough to have a bank account and one with a lot of money in it then all you're going to get is window shopping in an economy where a kilo of meat costs 35 pesos and the average monthly income is 180 pesos. The Castro regime has

started to recognise the difficulties. For the first time they recognised the 'primary role played by alimentary deficiency and imbalance' in the neuropathy epidemic in 1993 which has led to an average birth weight of around 5 pounds (2.5 kilos). Yes indeed, Mr Castro has a problem.

Out of all of this two tendencies have appeared in Cuba to deal with the situation. The communist regime, ever looking to preserve its position, looks around for partners. The emerging middle class would seemingly be the only hope of trying to get access to the foreign capital necessary for participation in the international-exchange-value-trading-economy. Fortunately the new(ish) owners of society need Castro as well in order to provide a state machinery which will do the infrastructural work necessary to building an economy geared towards the export market.

But the irony is that up until now this has not

been the kind of expertise in which Cuba has supposedly excelled. What has happened to that third world model for education, health and a multi-racial society? Fidel has chosen to turn his back on the teachers, doctors and other would-be value traders. They are now going abroad and those who remain are having to suffer what in Cuba is now referred to as the 'pyramid economy'. It is indeed those inside the state welfare system (as employees) who have seen one of the biggest drops in living standards. Castro has found a new bride and has filed for a divorce.

## A NEW PARTNERSHIP?

The problem for Cuba always was the state. Bureaucracy and the prying eyes of the party stifled the inventiveness and common sense of the people. A state education system is, of course, no education system. A state science is no science. An element of the public must be present.

When Cuba lost the Soviet Union it was clear that with the embargo she would have to feed herself. As we have pointed out, as an economy so highly dependent on external trade Cuba was not facing an easy problem. It is a problem long ago faced by Kropotkin in many of his writings (amongst others *Fields, Factories and Workshops*). Kropotkin sought an autarchic solution based on the partnership between the brain and the hand and a small-scale enterprise based on intensive labour coupled with the knowledge of the learned farmer in food production. And he never looks to the state to provide the education and the science. He looks instead to the people.

Cuba is another region where there are faint signs of this alternative path being pursued, even if only at a lowly scale. Food First in America earlier this year released a paper about some developments in Cuban agriculture which shows some elements of an approach which could avoid some of the problems entailed by Cuba again going for an economy dependent on the ravages of external events. Mr Castro should look around him for other examples of countries which have tried to go along the 'free trade' route. Here we publish some edited extracts from this paper.

## ORGANIC FARMING IN CUBA

by Peter Rosset with Shea Cunningham

Amidst the suffering of the Cuban people there have been some remarkable innovations that have not been widely reported outside of Cuba. It is far too early to say whether these developments will be sufficient to help Cuba weather the present storm, but they do offer some hope in contrast to the generally bleak outlook. These changes run from the legalisation of small-scale private enterprise, to the privatisation of the state farm sector in the form of worker's cooperatives, both within the past six months. This Action Alert focuses on another recent development: the technological transformation of Cuban agriculture in response to a massive drop in pesticide and fertiliser imports. Cuba is presently in the third year of the largest conversion of any nation in history from conventional modern agriculture to large scale organic farming.

Cuban agriculture was based on large-scale, capital-intensive monoculture, more similar in many ways to the Central Valley of California than to the typical Latin American *minifundio* or small-scale farm. More than 90% of fertilisers and pesticides, or the ingredients to make them, were imported from abroad. This demonstrates the degree of dependency exhibited by this style of farming, and the vulnerability of the island's economy to international market forces. When trade relations with the socialist bloc collapsed in 1990, pesticide and fertiliser imports dropped by about 80% and the availability of petroleum for agriculture dropped by a half. Food imports also fell by more than a half. Suddenly an agricultural system almost as

modern and industrialised as that of California was faced with a dual challenge: the need to essentially double food production while more than halving imports – and at the same time maintaining export crop production so as not to further erode the country's desperate foreign exchange position.

In some ways Cuba was uniquely prepared to face this challenge. With only 2% of Latin America's population but 11% of its scientists and a well developed research infrastructure, the government was able to call for 'knowledge-intensive' technological innovation to substitute for the now unavailable inputs. Luckily an 'alternative agriculture' movement had taken hold among Cuban researchers as early as 1982, and many promising research results – which had previously remained relatively unused – were available for immediate and widespread implementation.

### THE CLASSICAL AND ALTERNATIVE MODELS

The Classical Model is based on extensive monoculture of foreign crop species, primarily for export. It is highly mechanised, and requires a continuous supply of imported technology and inputs. It promotes dependence on international markets and, through mechanisation, drives migration of people from rural areas to the city. Finally, it rapidly degrades the basis for continued productivity, through the erosion, compaction and salinisation of soils, and the development of pesticide resistance among insect pests and crop diseases.

The Alternative Model, on the other hand, seeks to promote ecologically sustainable production by replacing the dependence on heavy farm machinery and chemical inputs with animal traction, crop and pasture rotations, soil conservation, organic soil inputs, biological pest control, and what the Cubans call bio-fertilisers and bio-pesticides

– microbial pesticides and fertilisers that are non-toxic to humans. The Alternative Model requires the re-incorporation of rural populations into agriculture – through both their labour as well as their knowledge of traditional farming techniques and their active participation in the generation of new, more appropriate technologies. This model is designed to stem the rural-urban flood of migrants, and to provide food security for the nation's population. It is virtually identical to alternatives proposed in the US, Latin America, Europe and elsewhere – differing only in one key respect. While it represents a utopian vision for the rest of us, it is now government policy and agricultural practice in Cuba.

### A CUBAN NGO

A rare phenomenon in Cuba – a non-governmental organisation, or NGO, is playing a pivotal role in what might be called the institutionalisation of the alternative model. The Cuban Association for Organic Farming is composed of ecological agriculture activists ranging from university professors and students to mid-level government functionaries, farmers and farm managers. It is struggling on a shoestring budget to carry out an educational campaign on the virtues, and indeed the necessity, of the alternative model. Food First is working with the Association and with a Cuban university – the Advanced Institute for Agricultural Sciences of Havana (ISCAH) – on a project to document the transformation of agriculture, with particular emphasis on the evaluation of the efficacy of the new technologies, in terms of economic productivity as well as environmental and social indicators.

In its conversion from conventional agriculture to organic farming Cuba is undergoing large-scale conversion from conventional

agriculture to organic or semi-organic farming. Empirical evidence from the US and elsewhere demonstrates that it can take anywhere from three to five years from the initiation of the conversion process to achieve the levels of productivity that prevailed beforehand. That is because it takes time to restore lost soil fertility and to re-establish natural controls of insect and disease populations. Yet Cuba does not have three to five years – its population must be fed in the short term. Cuban scientists and planners are shortening this process by bringing sophisticated, 'cutting edge' bio-technology to bear on the development of new organic farming practices. This not the environmentally dangerous genetic engineering version of bio-technology that we see in US agriculture, but rather a locally controlled variety based on the mass production of naturally occurring organisms to be used as bio-pesticides and bio-fertilisers. Cuba is demystifying bio-technology for developing countries – showing that it does not have to rely on multi-million dollar infrastructure and super-specialised scientists, but rather can be grasped and put into production even on peasant cooperatives.

### MANAGEMENT OF PESTS

Among the alternative tactics being used to offer insect control, the most important are conventional biological control based on mass releases of parasitic and predatory insects, and the use of bio-pesticides. In the latter area, Cuba is substantially more advanced than other Latin American countries and compares favourably to the US. Cubans produce numerous formulations of bacterial and fungal diseases of insect pests which are applied to crops in lieu of chemical insecticides. A total of 218 artesanal bio-technology centres located on

(continued on page 8)



Scottish Anarchists and the 'National Question'

Dear Comrades,  
Reading the short review of *Scottish Anarchist* no. 3 in a recent issue of *Freedom* brought a smile to my face. It's funny what effect a few hundred miles can have! To lament the fact *Scottish Anarchist* gave four pages to *Braveheart* while only half a page to *Land and Freedom* staggers belief. To put it bluntly, only someone in England could write such a thing!

*Braveheart* is the biggest movie to hit Scotland for ages. It was still running in Glasgow months after it disappeared from sight in London. It is the one recent film that most of the adult population of Scotland would have seen. Far from being about a 'minor' event in history, the struggle of William Wallace laid the foundation for most of Scotland's history after that point, Bannockburn may not have happened and 'Britain' would not exist, only England. While many English people may think this is actually the case anyway, we in Scotland disagree.

Now, for an anarchist paper in Scotland to ignore the biggest 'political' movie event for decades for most Scots would have been a crime. For example, the Scottish National Party used *Braveheart* in their propaganda and it stirred nationalist feelings across the country. So, to give four pages to an anarchist analysis of the national question, using *Braveheart* as the focal point, seems reasonable (to say the least!).

The 'minor' film between *Land and Freedom* and *Braveheart* was

undoubtedly *Land and Freedom* (however unfortunate we anarchists may think this to be). I should point out that issues 1 and 2 of *Scottish Anarchist* contained articles on the Spanish Revolution. Important as it may be to analyse those events, current events are even more important for obvious reasons. So far from lamenting the fact that *Scottish Anarchist* decided to use *Braveheart* to analyse nationalism and how anarchists should approach the 'national question', I think *Freedom* should have recognised the importance of doing so.

Sadly, however, I feel that even English anarchists are not free from the implicit nationalism of the culture of their country. They often fail to recognise that anarchists in Scotland (and Wales for that matter) face different problems and challenges due to the fact that nationalism is an issue here as many Scots consider Scotland to be oppressed by a centralised imperialistic power. To ignore this, and the fact of imperialism, would be to ensure that anarchism will never be taken seriously as an alternative in Scotland. Ignoring Scottish nationalism will not make it go away. It has to be critiqued in order for people to move beyond nationalism into anarchism.

I suppose that this just indicates why anarchists in Scotland have organised themselves into the Scottish Federation of Anarchists.

We see that the different cultural and political differences that exist between Scotland and England mean

that we have to organise ourselves and develop tactics in the light of these differences – the 'national question' being just one.

*Freedom* is getting better and better. Keep up the good work – and hopefully, in the future, comrades will not think that the world revolves around London and England.

IM

Kropotkin's Ethics

Dear *Freedom*,  
On 6th February 1993 *Freedom* reported that a Russian-language reconstruction of Kropotkin's second volume of *Ethics* was ready for publication, but might not appear unless funding was forthcoming. Could anyone, through this column, provide an update on this matter?

David Hartley

A Written Reply

Dear *Freedom*,  
Albert Meltzer's autobiography *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels*, which has just been published by AK Press, contains several references to me, all of them inaccurate and some of them defamatory. Unlike him in similar circumstances, I have not asked a solicitor to threaten legal action against the book, but have written a reply which will be sent on request and on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

Nicolas Walter  
88 Islington High Street  
London N1 8EW

The General Election: should anarchists vote?

Dear *Freedom* and its readers,  
My letter is more of a question to those of you out there willing to answer me.

In the current political climate, it seems as though a general election is possibly not that too far away. My question is one of to vote or not to vote. Although this question has no doubt been argued many times over, is there not a case in voting in the next general election just on the pure basis of removing the Tories from government?

In the time that they have been in power they have destroyed so much – can we let them carry on governing Britain and let them have further

reign and possible further development of such issues as the road building programme or the Criminal Justice Act to name just two highly contentious issues?

Is it time to vote them out, even though it may go against anarchist thought to do so?

Or, do we not vote and, should the Tories win, let them lead us down the road further to a society based on greed and selfishness and ultimately self-destruction?

The alternative of who to vote for may not be agreeable either, but surely it's time for the Tories to go?

Yours questioningly,

Stephen Hyland

Power Worship and the 'Bosnian Peace'

Dear *Freedom*,  
I suppose we've all grown used to Brian Bamford's inanities over the years, but he should stop using the Stalinist tactic of guilt by association.

"In the Bosnian conflict some in the Solidarity Federation and the Syndicalist Bulletin faction in the UK have called for libertarian support for the Moslems or the Bosnian Federation against the Serbs" (in *Freedom*, 2nd December 1995).

This is the second time in the last year or so that Bamford has made this allegation without producing any evidence to support it. It really is time he put up or shut up. Support for the Bosnian state has at no time been

part of official DAM/Solidarity Federation policy since I've been involved. If Bamford can show otherwise, then let's see the evidence. If, on the other hand, he has heard the odd individual make such a statement then he is obliged to produce the culprit in order that he/she can be suitably tarred and feathered. The only reason Bamford can have for naming an organisation in this way is to imply that tacit support is being given to pro-state ideas by that organisation. In fact this is nothing more than a good old Stalinist slur.

Stick to fishing, Brian, you're probably better at it.

Roy Emery

ORGANIC FARMING IN CUBA

(continued from page 7)

agricultural cooperatives produce these products of cutting-edge technology for local use. They are typically produced by people in their twenties who were born on the cooperative and who have received some university-level training. While industrial production of these bio-pesticides will soon be under way for use in larger scale farming operations that produce for export, it remains most remarkable that the sons and daughters of *campesinos* can make the products of bio-technology in remote rural areas.

Furthermore, Cuban use of bio-fertilisers in commercial agriculture is unrivalled in the world, including not only standard *Rhizobium* inoculants for leguminous crops, but also free living bacteria that make atmospheric nitrogen available for other crops. Perhaps of greatest importance for other developing countries, Cubans are mass producing solubilising bacteria which make phosphorous, which in many tropical areas is bound to soil particles, available for uptake by crop plants.

It is unclear whether the widespread implementation of an alternative model of agricultural development will, in conjunction with other government policies, allow Cuba to emerge from the crisis wrought by the collapse of the socialist bloc. As agricultural scientists, environmentalists, and concerned citizens however, we can say that the experiment in agricultural alternatives currently underway in Cuba is unprecedented, with potentially enormous implications for other countries suffering from the declining sustainability of conventional agricultural production.

Food First  
398 60th Street, Oakland, CA 94618

Article on Mondragon Co-ops

The article which appeared in the last edition of *Freedom* by Mike Long should have mentioned that it is but a short extract from a much longer article which can be read in the first 1996 edition of *Libertarian Labor Review* (PO Box 2824, Champaign, Illinois 61825, USA), priced at \$3.50 for one issue.

The Gemstone File

The *Gemstone File* is a photocopied production of about 30 pages and Bruce Roberts is credited with the material. Unfortunately my copy misses the first page and this rather mysterious account, by this omission, has become even more mysterious. There is an uncredited editorial voice all through. It is a frightening document and I would dearly like to know how much truth is in all this. From what I can gather, Bruce Roberts was a crystallographer and journalist(?) and he worked with synthetic rubies for early laser beam research at Hughes Aircraft. There he found out about the Onassis-Hughes connection. When they stole his invention he decided to make public his findings. This was to become known as the Gemstone file.

The story starts with the millionaire Aristotle Onassis who, it is said here, made his money selling "Turkish tobacco" (opium), his business partners being Joseph Kennedy (JFK's father) and Eugene Meyer (who bought the influential *Washington Post* out of the proceeds). Howard Hughes enters the story – the document says that the Texan millionaire bought Richard Nixon with a non-repayable loan to Nixon's brother. Onassis, the document asserts, was the head of the Mafia and had Hughes kidnapped and "pumped full of heroin". In 1957 Joseph Kennedy introduced JFK and wife Jackie to Onassis and the outcome was that Mafia money and Mafia candidates swept into power in the US in 1958.

However, in 1959 Castro took over Cuba and thereby destroyed the Onassis gambling empire and scooped up eight million dollars in Mafia casino receipts. In 1959 there was the election battle between Kennedy and Nixon. The document asserts that either way Onassis was the winner for he had control over both candidates. In 1960 JFK gets elected and *reneges* on his promise to Onassis to deal with Castro. By 1961, after Joseph Kennedy's death, the brothers Bobby and John decide to rebel against Onassis's control and go against the Mafia.

By 1963 the Onassis-led Mafia arranged the JFK assassination and the document asserts that Lee Harvey Oswald was merely a stool pigeon and that JFK was killed in a triangulated attack by several gunmen. The pamphlet says: "After JFK's death, Onassis quickly established control over Lyndon Johnson through fear. On the trip back to Washington, Johnson was warned by radio, relayed from an air force base: 'There was no conspiracy. Get it, Lyndon?' Onassis filled all important government posts with his own men. All

government agencies became means to an end: to rifle the American treasury, steal as much as possible..."

In order to destroy the evidence there has been a systematic murder of all the witnesses of the JFK assassination. The pamphlet lists the names of over 100 people who died in mysterious circumstances.

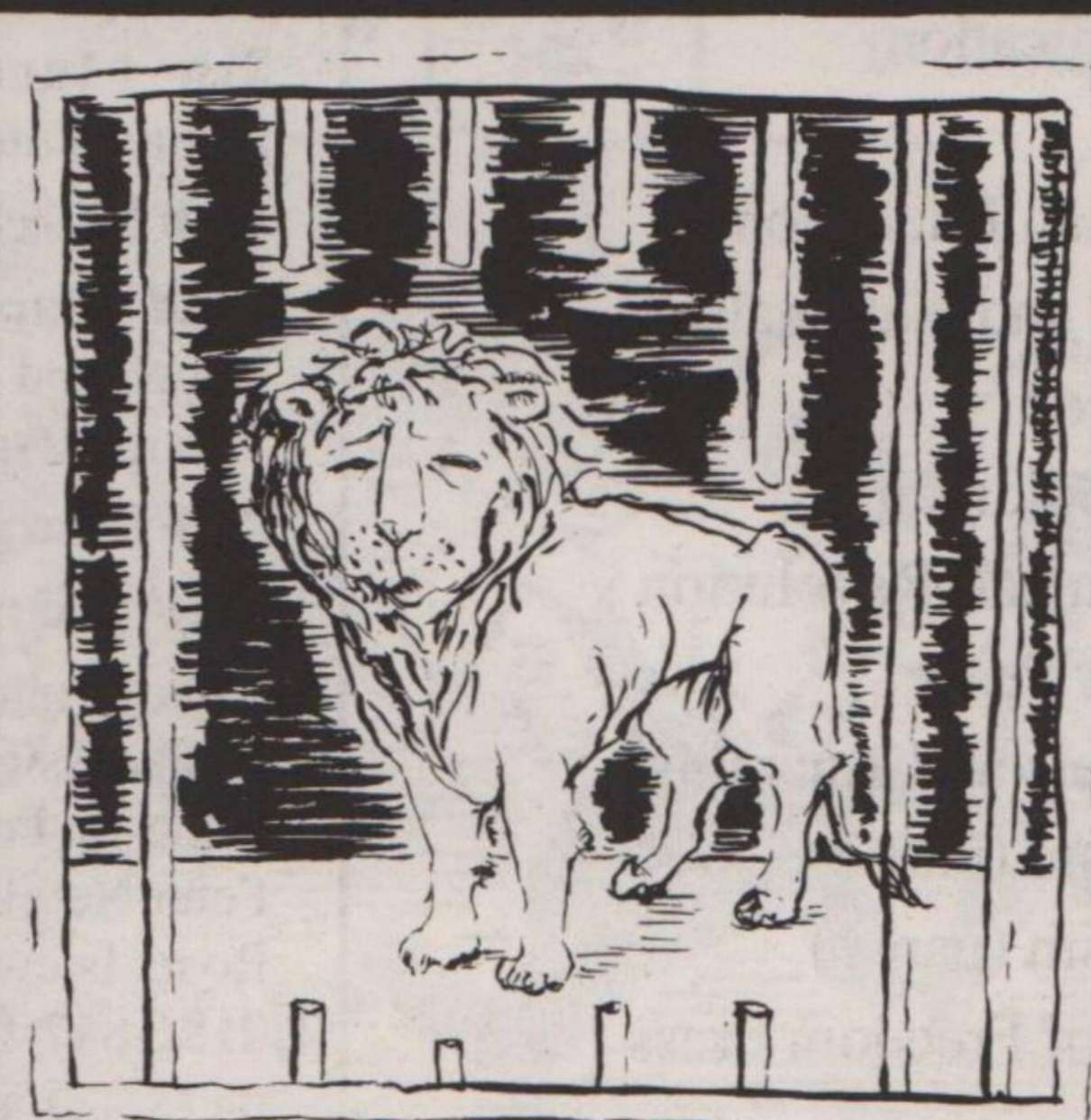
The pamphlet also rubs in the fact that Onassis married Jackie Kennedy in true Mafia style according to the dictum 'Kill the man who welsches on you and then marry the widow'.

It could be fiction, but then the Warren commission's report – which after all should be public knowledge now – is not available until the year 2029.

So this is government of the people, by the people and for the people, which shall not perish from the earth (Abraham Lincoln)? One nagging question, if this was true of Onassis: who is the present Onassis today?

A.N. Reader

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KEEPING ACCOUNT

It was a cruel but ridiculous coincidence that just as my daughter was listing her frugal weekly expenditure on a charitable trust application form, details of the Duchess of York's domestic budget appeared on the television screen. Both these single mothers are looking for funding – my daughter is trying to find £200 for course books and fares to college, the Duchess of York needs £3 million. The stern cold-hearted wording on the trust form made my daughter feel she might stand more chance going cap-in-hand to the Queen, despite her reduced circumstances, or to Coutts the bankers for tea and sympathy.

The royal family is providing us with a perfect example of life imitating art as they seem to be making every effort to emulate their *Spitting Image* characters, each member vying for centre stage in the royal soap. Coming soon apparently is the question 'who sired Prince Andrew?' The horsey verb in the question is a clue. Does anybody care? Advance sales of the Queen's new biography shows that many do. But such is the fickleness of the public that once they've devoured the messages they detest the messenger for shattering what few illusions remain. The biographer is being ostracised by publishing circles.

The Queen's canniness was beautifully displayed when she refused to help the Duchess. Media speculation suggests that the Queen was down to her last £60 million and needed to tighten her belt. The following day a small news item told us that taxpayers must foot a third of the bill for the renovation of Windsor Castle. Well, we have to help her out, don't we?

A reader in the London Evening Standard suggests that a possible solution for the future of the monarchy could be to make the annual appointment of a royal family one of the lottery prizes. "The revenue would more than cover the millions a year the monarchy now costs us and provide some variety from the stale stars of the current royal soap opera." A fairytale dream come true!

Silvia Edwards



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26th January General Discussion

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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

5th April no meeting (Bank Holiday)

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.

Peter Neville / Dave Dane

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