

anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

"There is no art which one government sooner learns of another than that of draining money from the pockets of the people."

Adam Smith (1723-1790)
in *The Wealth of Nations*

SHOULD MPs GET BIGGER SALARIES?

Just before Christmas is a good time for casual workers. As sales increase, extra staff are needed to get extra goods into shops. A press release from the Low Pay Unit describes how it works.

Sainsbury's, the grocery chain, hired a transport company called XL Logistics to deliver goods to their stores for two weeks in December. XL Logistics hired the manpower from an agency called ASC Staffing Ltd., and ASC Staffing hired a Rochdale man "who does not wish to be named" as a night-turn lorry loader at £3.60 an hour. He worked 47 hours in five nights, then took a night off to go to a party. He claims he told ASC Staffing about the long-standing engagement, but evidently they did not record it. They activated Clause 8 of their contract, which reads:

"Should you fail to turn up for any assignment without giving reasonable notice ... your remuneration will be reduced to £1 per day for any work carried out previously and not yet paid, irrespective of hours worked", and paid him £5 for 47 hours.

Information about ASC Staffing arrived too late for the Low Pay Unit's Scrooge at Christmas Award. That was shared between a Lancashire firm called Starlite Garments and a private residential home in Corby.

Starlite Garments hired two women to make children's clothes, and paid them £25 each for a 42½ hour week. Challenged by the Low Pay Unit, Starlite Garments said their standard pay for a 42½ hour week was £57 but the two women did not work fast enough. £57 for a 42½ hour week works out at £1.34 an hour.

The residential home in Corby hired a care assistant, with a letter of engagement which read: "I would like you to work as follows: Monday to Sunday inclusive 5pm to 9am. Salary will be paid monthly in arrears at the rate of £150 per week." No suggestion there of a pay cut for not working fast enough. The care assistant was due her £1.34 an hour provided she worked at all, but she had a few days off sick in the Christmas period and was paid nothing whatever for those few days.

The Low Pay Unit says that "since the abolition of Britain's minimum wage system in 1993, competition for the Award has become intense". No doubt it will become even more intense in 1996 when unemployment benefit is replaced by the Job Seeker's Allowance, meaning that any unemployed person who declines a job, however bad the pay and conditions, will have all benefits cut off.

This is what the Tories mean by their 'rolling back the state', weakening, not the state's traditional function of oppression (they have vastly increased the proportion of people in prison), but its more recent function of protecting the weak. Some might say this is good for anarchism because it stops people misunderstanding the true nature of the state. But between misunderstanding and suffering, misunderstanding is surely the lesser evil.

It is impossible to work out the hourly rate for Members of Parliament. We are told they do a great many hours, but their contract of employment does not actually require them to do anything. We can, however, make some comparison between what MPs get and what most people get, by converting their annual emoluments into weekly rates.

An MP is paid £653.24 a week salary, plus £804.93 a week secretarial allowance which may properly be paid to spouses and relatives for occasional work. MPs who live out of London are paid an extra £211 a week for London lodgings (you can get a nice flat for £150 a week), and those who live in London get £24.70 a week

SUSPENDED ANIMATION

The term 'in loco parentis' took on an added meaning this week when the London Infertility Clinic revealed that it has 180 unclaimed frozen embryos in its own laboratories and that there are some 3,000 more country-wide. Legally the foetuses belong to their 'parents' but in most cases these people are untraceable and this has left the clinic with a major dilemma now that the embryos are approaching their five-year expiry date. As a spokesperson for the clinic said, it is unclear where the clinic would stand in terms of litigation proceedings if parents came to claim their embryos after they had been disposed of. The government watchdog body The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, obtains 70% of its income from the fees it charges for licensing experiments on human embryos. Not the best arrangement for guaranteeing impartiality and conscientious ethical practice. Fertility, like many services, has become a major lucrative industry and open to abusive and profiteering. Ethical consideration apart, the medical implications of using long-frozen embryos are equally disquieting as there seems to

be no agreement among clinicians. Some are fearful that children beginning development as a frozen embryo could face health problems in later life.

The responsibility for the solution to this problem lies with John Horam, the government health minister, and one likely option is to delay the decision by extending the 'lives' of these embryos for a further five years to allow the parents more time to claim their abandoned embryos from their foster technicians. Some people are seriously suggesting that there should be provision written into any future legislation for other people to adopt these 'orphan embryos'.

Thus the expectations and inequalities of the world widen. In some countries parents' primary hope is still for the survival of their actual living children beyond five years, whilst in prosperous countries some people want the luxury of storing future children (and even parts of their own bodies) for future incarnation. It is very difficult to see how anyone can argue that a foetus deserves the same rights as a living child but the Right to Life Campaign

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SHOULD MPs GET BIGGER SALARIES?

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London weighting. With the addition of generous travel allowances, prerequisites such as consultancies and plenty of time for freelance work, MPs do very well indeed.

So of course they are demanding a substantial rise.

On 30th January a motion was proposed in Parliament, signed by 230 MPs of various parties, that the Nolan Committee should consider MPs salaries. The Committee, chaired by Lord Nolan a retired judge, is currently studying Parliamentary 'sleaze' such as taking fees for lobbying ministers or asking parliamentary questions on behalf of commercial interests.

A criterion advanced for deciding public service pay is whether the pay is sufficient to recruit and retain appropriately qualified people. There is a shortage of nurses (current average about £250 a week) and school-teachers (£380), so maybe their salaries should be increased.

On the other hand, there is no shortage of qualified people wanting to become MPs so Nolan might reasonably decide MP's salaries should come down in real terms (not that he would be likely to do so because, being a judge, he probably thinks of £653.24 a week as peanuts).

The parliamentary motion, however, includes a woffly preamble to the effect that average incomes – but not MPs salaries – have risen by 80% over the past thirty years. In fact, thirty years ago MPs were paid £1,750, the equivalent of about £18,000 (£345 a week) today, and they had to pay their secretaries out of their salaries. The following day various Tory MPs were proclaiming (while MPs is other parties rapidly disassociated themselves) that MPs salaries should be doubled.

George Walden MP, making the point that he will retire at the next election and so will not benefit from any vast rise, wrote in the London *Evening Standard*: "To say 'there will always be plenty of volunteers for the job' is to talk gibberish. The point is not to get someone to do it, but to get the best qualified people. To say that 'anyone can live on £34,000' is equally bone-headed; the whole point is not to get *anyone*."

Right, George, we don't want *anyone* to be in a position to rubber-stamp every government decision on our behalf. In fact, we don't want *anyone* to exercise any kind of coercive authority. But if we must have MPs we would on the whole prefer people of high intelligence and moral integrity. In our experience, the rich and greedy are not exceptionally endowed with these qualities.

SUSPENDED ANIMATION

(continued from page 1)

continue to make extravagant claims that rights of the foetus and child are one and the same. This bizarre situation regarding the frozen embryos will give the abortion debate a new dimension. Any decision to dispose of these abandoned embryos is bound to result in protests and candle-lit vigils outside the fertility clinic by the Pro-Life lobby. Some may even offer their own womb to house these foetuses. For most women the choice to have an abortion has never been an easy one and more and more considerations present themselves in the light of increasing scientific knowledge. The rights of the child are taking precedence over the rights of the mother amidst hysterical claims that abortion is "uglier than war or mass brutality" (Chair of the Irish Pro-Life group) and "women have literally been handed the right to slaughter their own children".

Another mother-child issue which was equally disturbing this week was the BBC television *Under the Sun* programme 'Painted Babies'. The film follows two four-year-old girl as they are preened, painted and paraded around the pageant competitions in the southern states of America by their obsessive and ambitious mothers and grandmothers. One child resembled a mixture of a Barbie doll and Lady Penelope and her expressions ranged from fixed-grin dead-eyed smiles to sullen scowls. This thoroughly distasteful display of little girls acting as sexy, provocative women made compulsive viewing and could result in many dissertations

on the psychological states of their mothers. They seemed genuinely unaware of the long-term sexual and social implications of inflicting these activities on their children. All their leisure time is dedicated to attending and rehearsing for these competitions and the mothers have found fulfilling and often lucrative careers for themselves. It's all good wholesome fun, they say. One mother did make this remark, however, on the costumes of her child's major rival: "Look at those cut-outs down the legs", she said, "the judges won't like that. It looks like something out of a nudie bar." If only it had been just the costume. The whole routine was reminiscent of 'nudie bars' complete with bored dancers and – albeit unaware – pimps.

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'CHEATING' FISHERMEN? NO, NOT THE SPANIARDS THIS TIME!

Unreported in the national press were the cases of two West Mercia fishermen who were caught and fined for breaking EC fishing quota regulations.

However the *East Anglian Daily Times* (23rd January) features the news item with a double four-column headline "Fisherman is fined 'staggering' £25,000". And nowhere in the report is it suggested that he deserved it! On the contrary, the opening paragraph declares: "The fishing industry was angered further yesterday" in spite of the fact that both defendants "admitted over-fishing". The main culprit, a Mr Mole, who has a 56-foot trawler (surely not an open inshore boat by any stretch of the imagination) was charged by the Department of Agriculture with 28 offences between April and November 1994 of over-fishing sole worth £43,000 and thirty times over his legal quota!

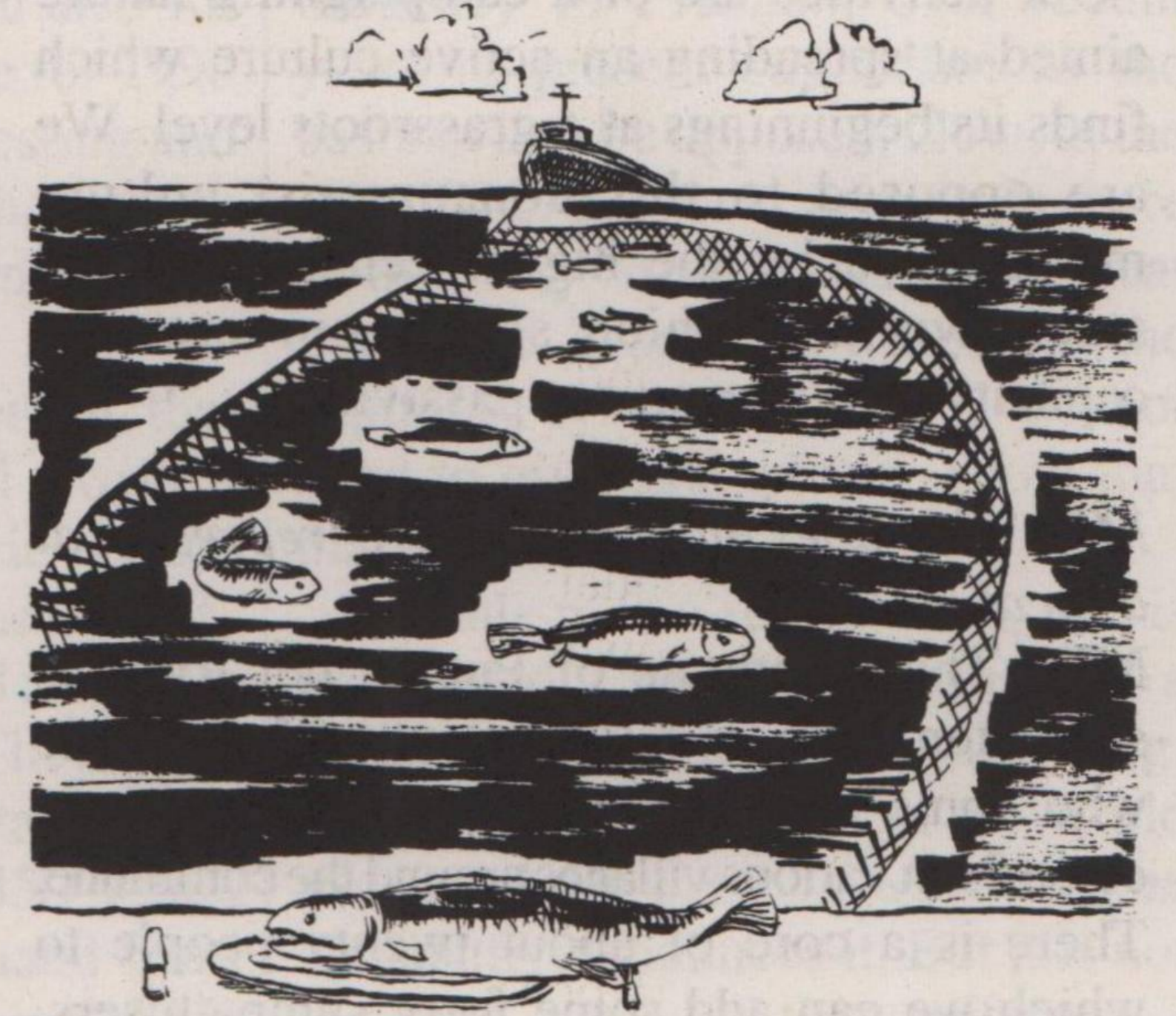
Mr Mole's comment at the £25,000 fine plus £400 costs was: "probably twice as much as I expected". In other words, Mr Mole far from being a struggling inshore fisherman is one of the big boys with the big trawlers who are virtually 'hoovering' the inshore seabed where in the past local fishermen were able to make a living (and even make a few quid extra providing a day's fishing with rod-and-line for Londoners, including this writer).

Small (by the newspaper's photo) Mr Mole with the big boat expressing his disbelief: "I can't believe it" in spite of the fact that he was quite prepared, as quoted above, to pay £12,500 for having over-fished some £30,000 worth of sole! After the verdict Mr Mole concluded: "They are putting the fishermen out of business. There is no other way of looking at it". Nonsense, it is the greedy Moles who are not only over-fishing the inshore fishing grounds but eventually the oceans as well.*

Anarchists are not opposed to efficient industry, agriculture and fishing. *What we are attacking and denouncing is capitalism as applied to services or material production of our needs for profit.* Inevitably it corrupts. And there is no way of 'controlling' or 'regulating' the producers. A few Moles get caught (incidentally what did fisherman Mole do in 1995? After all, his recent trial was about 28 offences in 1994!) but why assume that in a capitalist world the 'regulators' are saints? Yes, some are, but every week yet another 'scandal' of somebody 'entrusted' with our 'welfare' has been caught up in some racket – and it's worldwide.

But still with capitalism, if we were to compare anarchism with capitalism it would be between 'God and the Devil' (we say this with a smile, especially since there are apparently more 'anarchist-capitalists' in the United States than the old fashioned anarchists such

* Since we don't want to repeat the arguments used in *Freedom* (13th January) on the fish crisis, we refer readers to that issue.

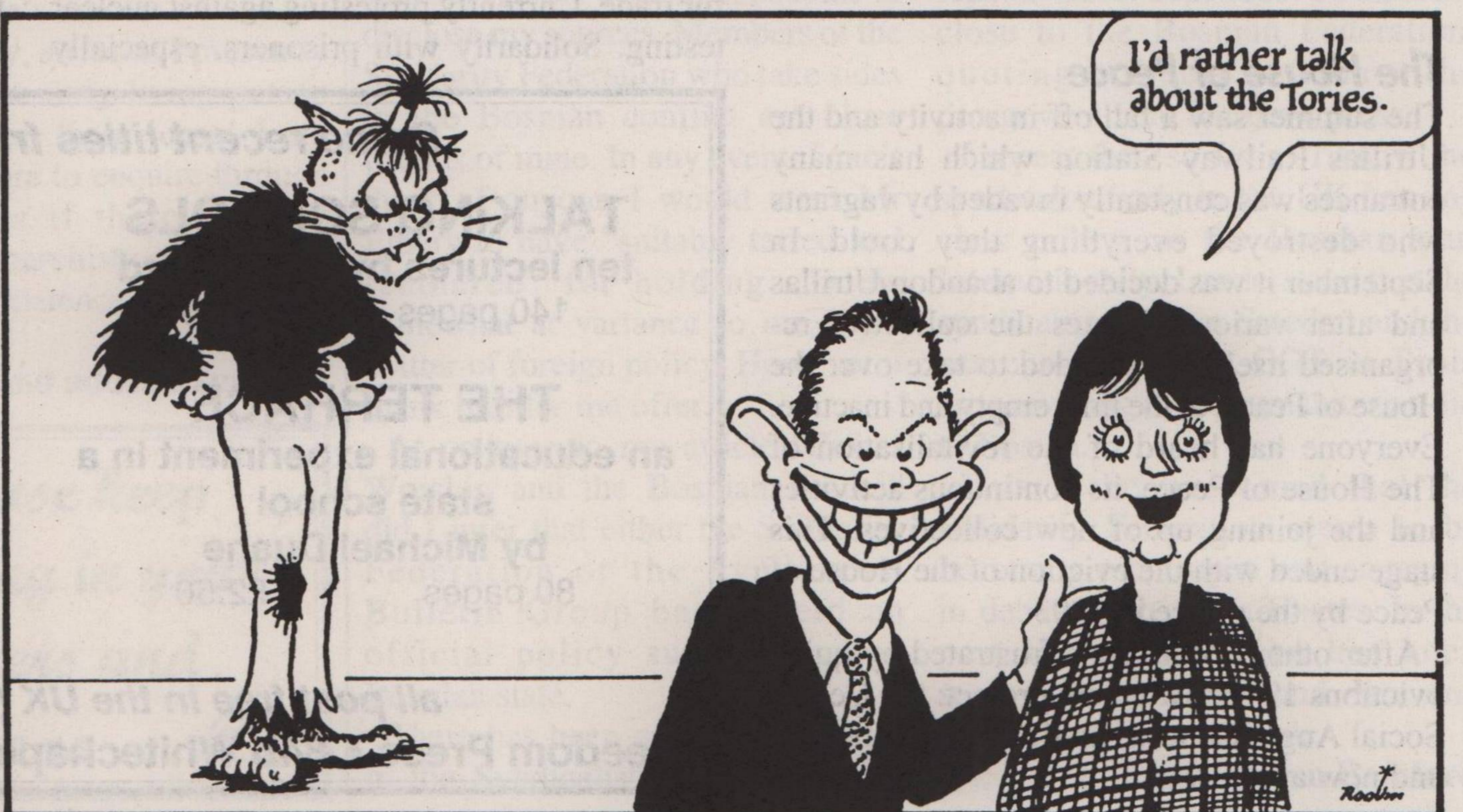


This illustration by Emily Johns is taken from the book *Through the Anarchist Press* by John Rety (Freedom Press, £3.60 post free inland)

as this writer). Two owners of a 100-ton Plymouth registered trawler, the *Pescado*, allowed a six-strong novice crew to take their boat from Falmouth. It capsized thirteen miles off Dodman Point, Cornwall, and the crew "were all left to sink or swim" and they all sank. They were only twelve minutes flying time from rescue helicopter services, yet according to *The Independent* (17th January): "One of the *Pescado*'s radios was broken and was not connected to the power supply. A short-wave radio was on board but no one was a qualified operator."

Apart from these considerations, the 35-year-old boat had been sent to sea, according to the prosecution, "without safety authorisation, following a refit 'from barely more than being fit for scrap'. Some of the crew would have survived if the required safety equipment had been on board, it was claimed".

We have only quoted one item from this ghastly example of capitalism in tooth-and-claw. Surely what some will call anarchist 'inefficiency' is better described as capitalist 'efficiency' – greed. The outcome of this trial is still not known, but when will the victims of the capitalist system realise that they are being used for the profit of a privileged minority and will be discarded as soon as they are no longer considered to be profitable. This approach no longer applies only to the so-called 'unskilled' producers of our daily needs. It's catching up with the 'skilled' paper-producers from commuter land and they are having to learn what has hit them! Hopefully they will at last realise that capitalism is *classless* in the sense that it's concerned with profit, and if a machine can dispense with ten workers or pen-pushers then so be it. You have been warned!



ML: Can you tell us what an 'ateneo libre' is exactly?

MR: It's a centre for diffusing the anarchist ideal and anarcho-culture. We aim to involve all local people in an active manner – both in their working and in their daily lives in order to become a springboard for individual and collective emancipation.

Our activities are of a campaigning nature aimed at spreading an active culture which finds its beginnings at a grassroots level. We are opposed to this consumerist culture manipulated by the higher echelons of the state pyramid which stifles our creative capacity by ensuring our passivity.

ML: What does the 'ateneo libre' represent at a local level?

MR: The commune of Puebla del Rio has some ten thousand inhabitants. The people who come together and make up the centre come from various villages around the commune. There is a core of about twenty people to which we can add some forty sympathisers. We aim for maximum involvement of all members in a non-authoritarian manner by means of the General Assembly. Our lack of financial reserves is made up for by the social dynamism of individuals and their imagination.

At the heart of the Ateneo Libre, in addition to those involved there are other groups – Juventud Libertaria and also the CNT. The more campaigning activities are led by Juventud Libertaria. The Ateneo Libre puts a lot of emphasis on cultural activity but there is no de facto split between members of the various structures.

ML: In which areas are you most active?

MR: Above all in a local secondary school where we have led debates on subjects such as drug legalisation and total draft resistance. In addition we have initiated various actions with

A NARCHY IN ACTION?

— NUMBER 7 —

The Spanish Libertarian Movement: the 'Ateneo Libre' in Puebla del Rio – a springboard for individual and collective emancipation

the students. Let me give you some examples.

In the immediate surroundings of the school there was a municipal, waste output which was producing pollution of an industrial nature (incineration of plastics, chemical products, etc.). During one General Assembly with the students in attendance we demanded that the mayor should come and answer for the resultant state of affairs. Following demonstrations, the mayor appeared on site, did a *mea culpa* and announced the shut-down of the waste disposal site. He pretended that he had not had enough time over a period of eight years in office to deal with the problem. On our side we went further by denouncing the way he used the occasion for electoral advancement – eight years wait was replaced by two days which produced a solution.

Still within the school, on the occasion of its 25th anniversary, we intervened alongside the students during the official celebrations, which were attended by local dignitaries and administrators, in order to protest against the razzmatazz and financial waste of the

ceremony. In addition, shortly earlier one student initiative set itself the aim of animating their 'workplace' by means of improvised street theatre – this had been banned by the schools administration.

Finally, another initiative was concerned with protesting against the degradation and unhealthiness of the establishment by means of a series of graffiti sessions proclaiming the theme: 'School=Cemetery=Death Factory'. This was sufficient enough to push the management into a series of renovating works. For the students this proved more effective than sending a delegation to the administration block.

ML: Which activities have been developed within the Ateneo Libre?

MR: Well, over the last six years we have seen:

- A music workshop which saw alternative rock groups come together along with rehearsals by the group La Banda del L'Higo Chumbo.

- Organisation of 'Libertarian Days'. We put together an exhibition of libertarian posters and stickers on the theme 'Democratic Transition'; a series of conferences and debates on ecology, the journal *CNT*, the collectives of 1936; a photo exhibition on the mobilisation of the ship-building yards of Puerto Real in 1987; police repression and the ways in which workers struggle; video debates about the film *Raining Stones* by Ken Loach and the Collectives (a BBC programme).

- a photography workshop
- a debating club which dealt with, for example, 'Women and Work', 'Anti-Election Activity', 'Positive Abstention'.
- a radio broadcast: *Barataria*, a cultural libertarian programme on Monday evenings from 7:00 till 10:00.
- publication of a journal: *El Libertario Andaluz*, three times a year with 200 copies. Finally, the Ateneo is a forum for the development of libertarian theory.

ML: What of the future?

MR: Lots. Setting up a cultural exhibition workshop, the publication of brochures on anarchism, a libertarian day at the Faculty of History in Seville this spring...

ML: And your hopes?

MR: To continue to keep up our dynamism to work for and seek the support of the people and indeed their participation by means of cultural activities in this process of emancipation.

This interview was translated from *Le Monde Libertaire* by our international editor. Any information from readers about similar enterprises is also welcome and should be sent to us at Freedom Press.

Foundation

El Ateneo Libertario was founded on the 9th February 1991 with a squat at the former railway station at Utrillas. The collectives which participated were Equipi (A), CUAL, Anarchist Students and non-aligned individuals. At the time we were fully occupied with demonstrations against the Gulf War and we had just seen judgements against four students on campus and at Ibercaja in December 1988.

After having restored the enormous building we had occupied we started to put together various activities: talks, an atheist demo, a stall on March 5th, debates (autonomy, sexism and anti-militarism), concerts and propaganda. Then there was the logo of AL made up with the black star (used by autonomists and anarchists), a broken arrow (used by the squatters) and a stork, due to the fact that a tower behind the Utrillas station was the home to you would find the last of the storks in Zaragoza. As the months passed the Ateneo Libertario moved on from being simply a physical space to being a collective proper. It took part in numerous campaigns: *insumision*, draft resistance, demos against the Immigration Law along with the Immigrants Defence Committee of Aragon. From one of the meetings attended by many groups in the Spanish State came the seed of what was to become *insumision total*.

The House of Peace

The summer saw a fall off in activity and the Utrillas Railway Station which has many entrances was constantly invaded by vagrants who destroyed everything they could. In September it was decided to abandon Utrillas and after various debates the collective reorganised itself and decided to take over the House of Peace, at the time empty and inactive. Everyone has heard of the revitalisation of The House of Peace, its continuous activities and the joining up of new collectives. This stage ended with the eviction of the House of Peace by the police in 1993.

After other occupations frustrated by quick evictions 1991 saw a new project: the Centro Social Angel Chueca, firstly at Pza Roboleria and now at el Coso.

The Ateneo Libertario In Utrillas

Activities

The Ateneo's activities have been many and varied. Exhibition and debate concerning the various consequences linked to the funereal celebrations of 1992 (Olympics, 500th anniversary, EXPO and Actanica). An anti-militarist group at the ateneo was at the centre of the *insumision* campaign, participating in state level meetings in Valencia of groups in favour of total *insumision*, some months later CAMPI-Aragon was formed. Other groups which came out of the meetings at Ateneo Libertario were Mala Raza (alternative distribution, October 92), Ruda (feminism, January 93).

There is also international solidarity: exhibition relating to the indigenous people of Ecuador, a talk about the Sahara, workshops on Palestine in association with the International Solidarity Committee (also attended by a member invited from the FDLP), presentation of the book *Zapata Vive*. We also participated in the Platform for Help for Chiapas. Active participation in the anti 500th centenary events of 1991 and 1992. Ecology: participation in the campaign against the Sompport tunnel, action and propaganda relating to animal liberation and against the fur trade. Currently protesting against nuclear testing. Solidarity with prisoners, especially

the libertarian worker Pablo Serrano and the sending of materials to many prisoners (*insumisos*, political, social). Throughout this year we have been active in the campaign to liberate the Afro-American libertarian political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. We have supported workers struggles by participating in strikes and demos. Most recently we have been supporting actions of the CNT, CUT, TIB y CATA.

We have also participated in squatters meetings at a state level. We have been invited to take part in various libertarian conferences (Madrid, Salamanca, Granada). At an international level we have attended the international meetings of Class War (London October 1991, the Congress of the IWW/AIT (Colonia, April 1992) and international camps organised by the Young Revolutionaries (4th International).

In collaboration with the CNT and Libertarian Youth we organised a two week meeting in February 1994 of libertarian workshops which were well attended.

Anti-fascism

We began discussions on this topic years ago when other groups were ignoring the problem and labelling us as alarmist. On 20th November 1992 we fought off an attack by fascists on the House of Peace and in 1993 we began to go out onto the street to demonstrate

against fascism. The Ateneo Libertario participated extensively in the setting up of the PAZ (Anti-fascist Platform of Zaragoza) and has attended meetings of anti-fascist groups at state level.

Counter-information

And of course we cannot overlook the publication of our journal *El Acratador* which this month completes its sixth year and the weekly broadcast of two radio *ACratadores* on Radio La Granja and Radio Topo. There is an exchange of material, information and publications with about 300 collectives within the Spanish state, Europe and America. We are also using e-mail and the Internet to receive and send counter-information and currently we have a server for *El Acratador*.

Who are we?

El Ateneo Libertario is a group of people who work in different fields from a libertarian perspective functioning according to autonomist and collective principles. We are a global organisation, we deal with every kind of issue and we are ready to work with any organisation in struggles which call capitalism into question and which functions in an open and collective manner. Our notion of libertarianism does not presuppose a fortress mentality rather we are fully open to the rich and varied currents of anarchist, autonomist, collective and anti-authoritarian thought. Recently we have concentrated our efforts on working with and strengthening various collective struggles even at the expense of our activities as a collective.

Today, with new people coming into the group, we have restructured the group and without forgetting those movements we are involved in via other collectives we are seeking to re-launch Ateneo Libertario as a group with our own activities.

If you feel you identify with us, if you would like to help us in any way, if you wish to debate, struggle arm in arm with us we are open to your collaboration. Make contact with us and join the Resistance. Organise and fight back.

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ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

A NEW DO-IT-YOURSELF? The long-coming next issue of *The Raven* will include at least two contributions on LETS. Meanwhile, in *The Independent* of 18th January, "The rise of do-it-yourself democracy" by Andrew Marr is about a new movement, the Citizens Organising Foundation, with, according to the writer, "about 60,000 people involved so far, from inner city areas of Merseyside, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Bristol, north east wales, Sheffield and East London".

According to Andrew Marr, "they are overwhelmingly working class, have very little or past involvement in party politics and are strikingly idealistic".

Freedom Press is in East London, but we had not heard of the Citizens Organising Foundation. We hope to learn more for a later issue. In the meantime more information can be obtained from The Citizens Organising Foundation at 535 Manhattan Buildings, London E3 2UP.

DOWN WITH THE TECHNOLOGISTS

Obviously human curiosity has provided us with all kinds of material advantages in a way, even at the expense of human relations. Today progress is entirely determined by a technology which is intended to replace the average human brain, and obviously for profit. Surely anarchists cannot be criticised when they attack a *Guardian* headline which reads "Apple cuts 1,300 jobs in battle to survive computer war". That war is not *my* war. When will enough victims of the capitalist system realise that all the latest gimmicks of technology will be out of date within months. This is why IBM were in trouble in the capitalist markets recently and now it's the turn of Apple. But for goodness sake, when will you and me, the 'worms' decide to turn against the capitalist mafia?

AND DOWN WITH THE SCIENTISTS MAFIA

To think that a nuclear scientist who contributed to the development of the nuclear bomb, as is the case of Rotblat, gets the Nobel Peace Prize – another case of 'poacher turned gamekeeper' surely. Apparently one has to excuse these 'superior minds' when they have a brain-storm and realise that they were for years contributing to discovering how to destroy the human race. And society gives them the highest award: the Nobel Peace Prize. They are the enemies of society. Of course scientists have made life materially richer but today what can scientists contribute to our well-being? Surely their 'discoveries' contribute more to our problems than to our well-being?

BLACK HUMOUR WITH A VENGEANCE

The GP who certified a woman as being dead, who was found to be alive by the undertaker as he noticed a varicose vein beating when he was putting her into the plastic bag; the doctor who told the undertaker that he was too busy to certify a body, but arranged to certify the body in a car park near his surgery – both stories have hit the headlines. More and more are the people (doctors, nurses, ambulance personnel) are being overworked as government funds are taken away in order to announce, for the next elections, that taxes will be reduced ... for the rich! Where are the protesters? Surely these are the protests most of us should be making, even more so than the hundred or so Newbury tree protesters, worthwhile as they certainly are.

Libertarian

NORTHERN IRELAND: OFFERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The attitude of the British Government towards the Irish peace process is reminiscent of the old cartoon depicting a red-faced Colonel Blimp-figure who leans forward in his leather-bound armchair in his gentleman's club, exclaiming, 'Force! It's the only language I understand!'

It seems that republicans are to be found muttering such things in the North of Ireland. 'As long as we were blowing up London, there was movement; since the ceasefire, nothing has happened. The British only understand the language of violence.'

However much one might wish it to be otherwise, it is nonetheless true that the British Government's attitude to the peace process has been grudging and half-hearted, marked by token gestures rather than the kind of generosity which could have really consolidated the ceasefires. Earlier promises of 'generosity' and 'imagination' have not been fulfilled.

One indicator is the fact that British emergency legislation - including the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Powers Act - continues in force, despite the fact that there is no longer any 'emergency' to deal with. Irish political prisoners in British custody have also seen little change in their treatment, apart from a minor increase in remission rates. In contrast, the Irish Government has removed its emergency legislation from the statute book and released a considerable number of republican prisoners.

In judging the progress of the 'peace process', it is important to understand how we got to the present pass.

The peace process is to a large extent the result of an interaction between changes in the attitude of the British Government on the one hand, and changes in the policy of republicans on the other.

The British Government signalled its change of direction in November 1990, in a speech by the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke. Brooke said, among other things, that "If the threat were no longer there, then the military support would no longer be necessary and Northern Ireland could have a police force with no need of Army support or, indeed, for its own formidable arsenal of weapons". In other words, an IRA ceasefire would lead to a withdrawal of troops to barracks and a disarming of the RUC. A promise which has since been spectacularly broken.

The most memorable sentence in Brooke's speech was the statement that "The British Government has no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland: our role is to help, enable and encourage". After some examination (and secret discussion with the Government) this contention was accepted by the republicans. It was possible, the IRA concluded, that the British might declare its desire to withdraw from Ireland, and help to persuade Unionists of the need to negotiate a new future for the Six Counties of Northern Ireland.



Photograph: Paul Aston

WOMEN DISARMING FOR LIFE AND JUSTICE

Early on 29th January Andrea Needham, Jo Wilson and Lotta Kronlid carried out a DIY disarmament action at British Aerospace's Factory at Warton in Lancashire. They entered the aircraft hanger where the completed Hawk fighters are kept prior to delivery. One of the batch of 24 Hawks that are due to be sent to Indonesia this year, for use against the population of East Timor, was displaying its Indonesian flag and serial number, a convenient ladder stood against it and the cockpit was open. The three women began the conversion of these swords into ploughshares by beating with hammers upon all the weapons systems in the cockpit, upon the radar transparent nosecone and the bomb pylons. They dressed the war plane with banners and symbols of life and scattering grain across the aircrafts controls they named

the action Seeds of Hope Ploughshares. They have interrupted the continual flow of weapons from Britain to a war that has destroyed a third of the population of East Timor since 1975. After two and a half hours the women phoned the press agency from the hangar and asked them to inform BAe of the disarmament. They have been charged with burglary and criminal damage, and on being offered bail by the Court they eagerly accepted saying they were very busy since there is a lot more disarmament to do. They are being held at Lytham St. Annes police station still. A fourth member of the group, Angie Zelter, is to complete her part of the action in a few days time, by hammering on another Hawk. The support group can be contacted on 0171 249 6949.

Emily Johns

Brooke's speech held out the prospect of Sinn Fein being involved in negotiations after an IRA ceasefire. This ceasefire was the only pre-condition mentioned in Brooke's speech, and there was no hint that further pre-conditions would be imposed.

These three elements had a considerable influence on republican thinking, as far as we can tell. Each of them represented significant movement by the British Government, or would have if they had truly been implemented and carried through. They were not implemented. Despite this lack of real movement, the IRA declared its ceasefire, followed shortly after by the loyalist ceasefire. If the republicans were hoping that the British Government was going to make good the promises made by Brooke, they were sadly mistaken.

We should remember that the Brooke initiative did lead to considerable changes in republican strategy. The 1992 Sinn Fein document *Towards a Lasting Peace* did not demand British withdrawal from Ireland; it demanded that Britain "join the ranks of the persuaders" in trying to "obtain the consent of a majority of people in the North to the constitutional, political and financial arrangements needed for a United Ireland".

In August 1993, in Bodinstown, Martin McGuinness (an Sinn Fein hardliner) signalled a further change of policy. He spoke for the first time of the possibility of "interim arrangements" in Northern Ireland. In other words, the IRA might end the war without British withdrawal, leaving Sinn Fein to fight a political struggle within a reformed Northern Ireland state, on condition that this reformed statelet was seen as a stage on the road to the re-unification of Ireland.

Following the Hume-Adams initiative in 1993, it seems clear that the British Government had an unprecedented opportunity to end the war, without formally withdrawing from Ireland or admitting defeat. The terms offered (which remain secret) seem to have involved the government accepting the right of the Irish people as a whole (in other words, including Unionists) to determine their future, while leaving it to the Irish to agree among themselves as to how they were to exercise that right.

These changing and often ambiguous developments in British and republican thinking are the real stuff of the peace process, and they indicate something of what lies behind the arcane struggles over 'de-commissioning' and 'clarification'. For a variety of reasons the British Government has gone back on its tentative moves towards evenhandedness, and has chosen the dangers of delay and evasion rather than the dangers of negotiation and progress towards peace.

The fact is that the republican leadership has shifted its position dramatically towards the middle ground. There has been no corresponding move from Unionists or loyalists (though the small loyalist parties have displayed imagination lacking in the established parties).

There has also been a lack of movement on the part of the British Government, despite indications over the past few years that movement might take place. The result of Government inaction and Unionist intransigence is that the greatest opportunity to make peace in Ireland for 25 years is being frittered away.

If there are not soon all-party and round-table talks, we should expect a return to extremism on the part of republicans. In my view, a return to war before the end of the year cannot be ruled out.

Whether the war resumes depends to a large extent on the British Government. The behaviour of the Government depends to a slight extent on the attitudes and behaviour of the British public. We many not have a great deal of influence, but it would be criminal not to use what little influence we have to nudge the Government towards a more generous attitude.

Milan Rai

Next issue: Milan Rai examines the 'de-commissioning' issue and the elections proposed by the government.

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

THE MORRIS GOSSIP COLUMN



Publishers, desperate to get the press to pay attention to their books, sometimes have launch parties to lure the literary editors with wine and sandwiches to meet bashful authors and mention their books. It has seldom happened to me, but on the last occasion Charlie came along and made a sharp observation. He said, "I've always noted at parties like this that while people are talking to you their eyes are always wandering to see who else is there".

This applied to me, absolutely, when I went on 24th January to the reception held by the William Morris Society to launch the William Morris Centenary Year at The Mall Galleries, London SW1. It was combined with a private view of a new exhibition called 'A Vision in Action - William Morris and the Crafts Today', and I was drinking wine provided by the publishers Faber & Faber, in gratitude no doubt for the fact that their 1994 book by Fiona MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for our Time*, had sold so well that they have brought it out as a paperback.

Well, I was listening to her but, as Charlie predicted, my eyes were wandering to see if there was anyone I knew amongst all these distinguished people. In amongst 'the world and his wife', as Arthur Moyle usually categorises people at exhibitions, I actually spotted a long-term *Freedom* person, Pete Turner, accompanied by a nice Irishwoman from Hammersmith Trades Council.

She told me later that she had spied John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, the least Morris-minded of all the people there, and had consequently urged him to re-read *News from Nowhere* to learn Morris's views on the appropriate future use of the parliament buildings in Westminster. But in spite of the Gummer factor in this year's celebrations, there is an incredible range of Morris meetings all through this year (for details send a few stamps to the William Morris Society, Kelmscott House, 26 Upper Mall, London W6 9TA).

Modesty prevents me from telling you that I'm involved in the conference on 21st to 23rd

June at the Victoria and Albert Museum on 'William Morris Reviewed'. But there is also a vast exhibition there from 9th May to 1st September celebrating his life and work, and I gleaned from Peter Turner news of some events in which he and Hammersmith Trades Council are involved. For example, on Saturday 4th May at the Irish Centre, Hammersmith, London W6, there's a meeting about 'William Morris's Politics'. Speakers include Barbara Castle and Stan Newins, but don't be too dismayed - there will be others.

Staying with the political Morris, there will be a key event on Saturday 7th September called 'Morris Spoke Here!' Pete tells me that this will be a Hammersmith Trades Council march from Weltje Road to Beadon Road and to Hammersmith Bridge, with street corner readings from Morris.

I certainly think that we anarchists should

exploit the centenary this year. The standard response of socialists of all persuasions to the evocation of Morris as craftsman, designer and reformer of everything from typography to architecture is to say 'Yes, but ...'

Yes, Morris was a socialist too. We won't be allowed to forget this either in 1996, surrounded by the ruins of Marxist totalitarianism and Fabian social democracy. The best guide to Morris's socialism and its relevance isn't the 800 pages of E.P. Thompson's *William Morris: Romantic or Revolutionary*, but the modest yet far more comprehensive book by his namesake Paul Thompson, *The Work of William Morris*. He argues (and his book first appeared in 1967, long before the advent of the new sanctification of the market) that Morris's socialism revealed a world view of extraordinary richness which again and again

foreshadows our own preoccupations: "the destruction by the international economy, not just of ancient cultures but of the natural resources and ecology of the earth itself: the crippling of local independence by spreading centralisation and bureaucracy, the stifling of the natural creativity and zest for learning of children by institutionalised schooling; the cramming of work people into barrack-like housing ..."

For him too, "Morris stands alone among major socialist thinkers in being as consistently concerned with housework and the home as with work in the factory". And both Thompsons put paid to the notion, which we will hear again this year, that Morris was hostile to machinery as such. He welcomed machine technology as a means of avoiding back-breaking labour and repetitive monotony. What he opposed was its inevitable use to deprive people of a livelihood, to "increase the precariousness of life among the workers and to intensify the labour of those who serve the machines".

I'm quoting from his lecture on 'Useful Work versus Useless Toil', printed by Freedom Press in 1896, and available from the same long-lasting publishers in the symposium *Why Work?* (Freedom Press, £4.50). Victims of the chronic insecurity imposed by the ideology of a flexible labour force will recognise how right Morris was.

Late in life Morris remarked to Edward Carpenter that "I have spent, I know, a vast amount of time designing furniture and wallpapers, carpets and curtains; but after all I am inclined to think that sort of thing is mostly rubbish, and I would prefer for my part to live with the plainest whitewashed walls and wooden chairs and tables".

So don't be overwhelmed by the Morris exhibitions this year and all those gorgeous products looted from the descendants of his customers. Remember that his underlying aim was to release the creativity of everyone's everyday life. If this has slipped off the political agenda, it is our fault, not his.

Colin Ward

Food for Thought ... and Action!

Recent arrivals at Freedom Press Bookshop.

Lobster 30, edited by Robin Ramsay, biannual. Just as the Gulf War was intended to ensure that Iraq did not gain control over oil prices, so the 1953 *coup d'état* in Iran saw to it that Mussadeq's nationalist government was denied the chance of grabbing the oil-fields - from the Anglo-Iranian oil company which ran the economy single-handedly, by virtue of the fact that it owned and controlled Iran's main source of income - and nationalising them. In that case it was the AIOC, now BP's, majority shareholders the British government, along with MI6 and the CIA who installed the Shah's brutal dictatorship. Later, in the Reagan era, their compliant puppet having been ejected from the stage of history by an even more oppressive régime, Oliver North and other senior Reagan officials were back at their dirty tricks in Iran trying covertly to obtain the release of the Western hostages by supplying their kidnapers with arms - as you would, to a ruthless bunch of Islamic terrorists whom you've just portrayed as the number one threat to Western democracy. The people they dealt with, and paid off with millions of dollars, included drug traffickers, arms dealers, international swindlers and money-launderers; in short, people almost as unsavoury as North and his own team, which included several state terrorists (Contra vintage), drug traffickers, arms dealers, the BCCI, airline bombing suspects and, don't laugh, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) who, under the Shah, had been responsible for training SAVAK, the dreaded secret police. Both these episodes in Iran are admirably covered in detail by Mark Curtis and Jonathan Marshall respectively. Also of note are pieces on psychic research by the Pentagon and the frightening development of behaviour modification using electro-magnetic radiation, both by Armen Vitorian who has written on related themes in *Open Eye*; Larry O'Hara considers the relationship - if any - between C18 and MI5; and there are several short interesting snippets as well. 42 A4 pages, £2.50.

Cranked Up Really High by Stewart Home, Codex. Described as "an inside account of punk rock" this work attempts to define it according to genre theory. Home criticises both the 'popular' and 'academic' accounts of punk rock churned out by the mainstream publishing industry, and points out that far from arising out of 'avant-garde' art movements punk took its inspiration from the street. There is a chapter on American punk, one on Oi!, another on the related skinhead band Screwdriver and one on the Riot Grrrl phenomenon of women reasserting themselves within punk rock. There's much other stuff here which is useful and informative, but whether it is "the only work on punk rock that is worth reading" or "the best theoretical account of the phenomenon to date", as Home modestly declares in his postscript, is for you to decide. 124 pages, £5.95.

Passion Brigade Newsletter no. 11, winter '95, Lesbian and Gay Freedom Movement, quarterly. Formerly the *LGFM Newsletter*, its name change is designed, they say, to reflect the diversity of the group's sexuality, not just the lesbian and gay aspect: "We remain very much a group committed to the fight for sexual liberation of all consensual sex, sexualities and forms of sexual expression. We are still anarchist, we don't want rights, we want liberation". This issue sports a critique of the Gay Pride march and festival, discussions of promiscuity and prostitution, several book reviews and letters. But why, they ask, are LGFM banned from meeting at the 121 Centre in South London? 20 A4 pages, 40p.

The Relevance of Anarchism to Modern Society* by Sam Dolgoff, Pirate Press. This is a reprint of the 1977 original and reaffirms the author's belief that as time goes by developments in many areas of society make anarchism more relevant and imperative than ever. He contradicts those whose concept of resistance is to cop out into anti-social individualism, escapism, bohemianism or 'Nechayevism' - the romantic glorification of conspiracy, ruthlessness and amoral violence. He

condemns writers such as Woodcock and Joll for effectively writing-off the anarchist movement and concentrating on its negative aspects, pointing out that the increasing complexity of society is making anarchism more, not less, relevant to modern life. He shows how industry would be better organised anarchistically and how technological developments such as cybernetics and automation, allowing industry to be scaled-down to manageable human proportions, are fully compatible with anarchism. There are an unusually large number of typographical/proof-reading errors in the text, which seems to have been hastily copied from the original and re-set, but don't let that put you off this worthwhile little pamphlet. 16 A5 pages, £1.00.

Squall no. 11, autumn '95, Squall. This large, bulky, invaluable magazine is difficult to over-praise. In lineage it is probably heir to the throne vacated by *IT*, that noble underground newspaper of the 1960s and '70s, though with even better standards of writing and design and much better production. In content there's little of concern to today's alternative movements and subcultures that's not covered: even the news 'shorts' take up twelve pages before you get anywhere near the big meaty stories. A further twelve pages is taken up by 'McMammon Special' examining every conceivable aspect of McDonalds and their attempts to suppress free speech, including previous legal gagging actions, a chronology of the ongoing trial and an interview with the McLibel Two. Elsewhere we find the battle against the Newbury by-pass, and other new roads; excellent accounts of the appalling laziness and corruption of the national press and media, and of the burgeoning alternatives; news of the rapid spreading of two 'people before traffic' phenomena, Critical Mass where up to a thousand cyclists pedal slowly en masse at the height of the rush hour causing the mother of all traffic jams around city centres from Bristol to Norwich, London to Glasgow, Leeds, Birmingham, Cardiff and all points in between, and Reclaim the Streets

where people simply block off the streets to traffic and have a party with the aid of scaffolding tripods, wrecked cars and even armoured personnel carriers as barricades. This has thrown the local great car economy into even more chaos than usual in Reading, Blackburn, Brighton, Wales and all over London, to name but a few targets. A number of articles cover aspects of the Reclaim the Land movement, in particular the planning laws and how they are more of an obstacle to access to land than ownership, and the struggles of various groups to use land and buildings in an environmentally low-impact way in the face of outdated planning regulations, the best known of which is the remarkable Exodus Collective in Luton whose three-year struggle was recently shown on television. (On the subject of access to and control of the land, highly recommended are the Freedom Press titles *Freedom to Roam** by Harold Sculthorpe at £3.50, and *The Raven** number 17 and number 30 at £3.00 each.) Incidentally, did you know that anyone can apply for planning permission for any site for any purpose once notice has been served on the owner? Think about it, the possibilities are endless - as Michael Heseltine discovered at 5am one quiet Sunday morning last summer, when he awoke to find scores of disgruntled ex-miners, eco-activists, hunt saboteurs, trade unionists and squatters from all over the country digging up his perfect lawn! All in accordance with a previously notified planning application, of course. They simply decided to pre-empt the - unlikely - planing consent, that's all. The turf was then formed into a huge 'NO OPENCAST!' slogan for poor old Hezza. Literally days of encouraging reading here, 87 A3 pages for £1.50.

KM

Titles distributed by Freedom Press Distributors (marked*) are post free inland (add 15% for overseas orders). For other titles please add 10% towards postage and packing inland, 20% overseas. Cheques in sterling payable to FREEDOM PRESS.

It is indeed fortuitous that Vincent Garcia-Marquez's biography of Massine (Nick Hem, £25) should hit the shelves at the same time that the Barbican Arts centre are mounting their exhibition of the life and times of Serge Diaghilev, circus master of the Ballets Russes.

I use the word fortuitous than for no other reason than the pleasure of typing the word, but the Barbican and Garcia-Marquez can both be praised for giving flesh to the word 'who' for in spite of, or because of, past reputations ballet is not a dying art form but a dead art form more literary than physical. Like bullfighting it is a thing for the aficionados to remember and recall and breathe out with the wine for it is a world of gossip, myth and legend, impotent rages and the tossing of the head. In that world of hard work and low pay the ballet produced its stereotypes of the gay sulking male dancer; the haughty ballerina; the machiavellian impresario forever seeking money and a quick cuddle behind the backcloth, sex immaterial; the brooding choreographer and all those tiny little ballet chorus girls in their tutus meat game for the rich ballet seat-warmers. True or false, this was the literary image. And give me a brush or a few crayons and I'll paint it, smiled Degas. I have never aspired to be a ballet dancer, unlike an aesthetic hard-faced minority of the hard left, for it is thought that leaping into the air for the *pas de chat* when one has to make each foot in turn touch the opposite knee while still in the air and then by mis-chance alighting stagewise in an unrehearsed prat-fall kills the romance of the footlights. That and standing at the theatre bar during the interval still wearing one's tutu I would find a trifle shame-making.

Champagne, comrade? Genuine Marks & Spencers

On the few occasions that I visited the Sadlers Wells ballet rehearsal room, one merged into that long room of tall mirrors and bending and twisting forms, but reality, as in the factory, came when one stood in the queue at the tea counter amid the swarm of so-small *corps de ballet* holding their pennies for their tea, and the romance becomes hard brutal economic reality for here is the sacrifice – the dream and the baby fat sweat and for almost all of them no more than a few brief years for the favoured few.

Ballet by its very nature has always been a class thing in that it is a group performance within an enclosed space for a wealthy minority. Unlike all other arts, it died in the air after each performance and only word of mouth remained. The artist, the writer and the musical composer leaves behind him his seal on the culture of his age but for the Diaghilevs of that enclosed world nothing remains for memorabilia is there in memoriam so with the Town and his toe-tapping frau to the Barbican. Just as the artists of the Royal Academy will seek to trace their conservative daubs back to palaeolithic cave drawings, the musicians to 'dem drums, dem drums' and the writers to scratches on an ancient wall lost in an ancient desert, so the ballet academics seek to trace their lineage back to and beyond Greek tragedy 'please sway with the masks please'.



But always an audience of bums on seats. When an art, as in politics, becomes sterile it then accepts an authoritarian conformity dictated by those who can command the social or working lives of those who seek employment within that art. In 1635 L'Academie Française was granted letters patent and from compiling a dictionary they inevitably blossomed forth into the 1648 Academy of Painting that demanded that 'Art must serve the state and not the individual' and 'the judge of painting is not the artist, nor the public, but the infallible king' etc., etc. Change 'king' for 'Stalin' or 'Hitler' etc., etc., and in our generation, comrade, is it any different?

The common people, and I type as quote 'My God you were only a common bus conductor', quote 'Christ you're only a failed artist', have never objected to dancing in the mass but on the village green around the phallus symbols or the midnight knees-up among the graves behind the priest listening to Shakespeare's chimes at midnight, but hours of work are too long and pay too low to dissipate that small leisure time on an evening meant for a cultural hour. It was the labouring class within the raucous music halls who destroyed ballet as a working class entertainment by ridiculing it. Any two beer-bellied comedians in tutus could raise laughter by prancing around a stage, and the moment that Tchaikovsky's music for the Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy or the Dance of the Snowflakes rose from the pit then the audience knew they were in for the howl of the evening with the camping corps de ballet, therefore with years of public ridicule who could take ballet seriously as a form of mass entertainment for 'arise ye masses from your slumber' to the beer bar, to the bar. It is sad and wrong that any creative act should be destroyed by public ridicule and it is an act of sabotage common to all classes but for the labouring classes it is this belief that they are denied access to something they profess to despise: 'caviar, I wouldn't eat the muck, it's all bullshit'. We the labouring class are naturally conservative and have an inverted or overt snobbery in that the inverted snobs such as myself are forever boasting that they are of the unskilled cattle-boat commuting class while the overt 'superior' working class are desperate to be reclassified as lower middle class yet in the end and en masse we all end up in Marks & Spencers supermarket. Our unified conservatism is to despise as pretentious rubbish what is, for geographical and economic reasons, denied us. Ballet always relied on the spectacular and with the coming of the bang-bang blockbusting films its single-stage sets have little to offer a working class audience of long working hours and low wages for an evening 'at the ballet' can be deemed an evening of leisure wasted. Powell and Pressburger's 1948 film *Red Shoes* was a good and worthy attempt to make a ballet central to the film, but one feels that now in 1996 it would be television filling fodder. The Barbican exhibition of Diaghilev's life and times is not exciting but interesting even though it casts its net wide with over three hundred works from Russia and the West and, as ever parasitical, name a famous artist or musician and in their time they contributed in their fashion. Yet all is not lost for in 1958 Serge Lifar, a 58 year old ex-ballet dancer, and the Marquis of Cuevas, of a free-bus-pass 72 years and devotee of the ballet, fought a duel outside Paris and Cuevas drew blood from Serge's arm. The Marquis burst into tears and Serge held the weeping Marquis in his arms and love was all and they went home full of forgiveness, and while men continue to fight duels over the *pas de chat*, how and who, then Diaghilev lives.

Arthur Moyses

Raven on the Arts

A future issue of *The Raven*, perhaps number 32, will be on 'Anarchism and the Arts'. Already to hand or in preparation are two articles on the arts in general, one on the film *Land and Freedom*, one on the depiction of anarchists as martyrs, one on performance art, one on the anarchism of Emily Bronte, one on Mozart as a rebel and (if we can swing it) one on the work of Leo Baxendale (creator of the Bash Street Kids). If you have an article to contribute please write to 'Raven on the Arts'

UNCLE ALBERT

I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels
by Albert Meltzer

AK Press, paperback, £12.95 (post free in UK, add 15% elsewhere)

Albert Meltzer, who was born in 1920, has been involved in many anarchist organisations and activities since 1935. Twenty years ago he produced *The Anarchists in London 1935-1955*, a short 'personal memoir' with a foreword by Stuart Christie published by Cienfuegos Press. Last year he produced *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels*, subtitled 'Sixty Years of Commonplace Life and Anarchist Agitation', about four times as long, with a foreword by Stuart Christie and an introduction by Phil Ruff (but no explanation of the title).

The new book contains much interesting and entertaining material, but it is marred by high levels of factual inaccuracy and emotional instability, including several false and furious attacks on various individuals – especially anyone and anything to do with Freedom Press (with which he was himself associated before, during and after the Second World War). No one who has been involved in the anarchist movement during the past sixty years will be surprised or shocked by the result, but outsiders may well be misled. Nevertheless, the more personal narrative is instructive, if evasive, and the book succeeds in giving a convincing impression of a certain type of anarchist personality.

KIDS, SCHOOL AND EMPLOYMENT

Thank goodness we had a riposte from the plebs to the media's Harriet Harman saga. More than half the ten-year-olds in this 'advanced society' can't or won't pass elementary tests in numeracy and literacy. Everybody is keen to blame everybody else: parents who don't care, lefty education policies, poor schools, lousy teachers, inadequate facilities, sixteen years of Tory rule. Forget the lot. These kids are telling us something and it has to do with the relevance of compulsory schooling to a life we now offer them. It may also have something to do with the phoney choice, given to them a few years on, between non-existent and demeaning employment. For this dead-end is becoming the focus of all schooling from nursery to university.

Thinking people will know that since play, example and experience are more or less banned from school, learning about anything that matters can't possibly be the purpose of schooling. Of course instruction/curriculum based schooling is devoted to achieving social control; fashioning youth to be the happy eaters of institutional commodities; disabling

the person while kitting him out to serve the system. The re-emergence of illiteracy is indeed threatening to a social order which seeks control through never-ending breakthroughs in magical science and technology. The much-lauded information society conceals massive ignorance about living and declining life-coping skills among people in industrialised societies. Our public obsession with efficiency, higher standards of living and administrative expediency make scarcities of companionship, uncontaminated food, clean air and water, silence and good health. Why should any young person want to be a party to the pursuit of our mad obsessions, even the not-so-bright conforming offspring of the privileged?

Our 'dull' kids just tell us school, like employment, ain't working. Surely adults can acknowledge the time has come to take away from school its monopoly over learning and end the tyranny of universal employment. Both institutions are too much geared to the machines that serve the interests of state and capital. People deserve something better.

Denis Pym

THE RAVEN on education

Two issues of our 96-page quarterly journal *The Raven* have featured the topic of education.

No. 10 (1990) includes Colin Ward's 'Four Easy Pieces and One Hard One' and Michael Smithon 'Kropotkin and Technical Education'.

No. 16 (1991) includes Michael Duane on 'The Seeds of its Own Destruction, or Education in Capitalist Britain' and Alex Comfort's classic lecture on 'Delinquency'.

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Washington, 5th September (IPS) – Gold and copper mined by a US multinational from the island of New Guinea in the South Pacific is tainted with the blood of the indigenous Amungme peoples, many of whom have been tortured or murdered, says a new report.

The western half of the island, which was renamed Irian Jaya after it was invaded by Indonesia in 1967, is the site of the world's largest gold mine and the third largest copper mine, operated by Freeport McMoRan, a New Orleans-based company.

Last December the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) released a report compiled by H.F.M. Munninghof, the Catholic bishop of Jayapura in Irian Jaya, alleging that Freeport vehicles and offices were used by the Indonesian military to transport and torture tribal leaders, whom they accused of fomenting a rebellion against Indonesia.

This is the second report issued by ACFOA on Freeport this year. The first report, issued in April, alleges that the army opened fire on a group of Amungme people who were on their way to church last Christmas day. The new report contains more evidence of the events of the time as well as fresh allegations of killings this May.

Freeport officials in this country say that none of their officials were involved in the incident. They refused to comment on the allegations of torture by the Indonesian military.

"Freeport operates under its host government laws and respects the jurisdiction of the military, which is responsible for the safety and security of its people" a Freeport official said in a statement faxed to IPS.

The area around the Freeport mine have been heavily policed by the Indonesian military and

HUMAN RIGHTS - INDONESIA: US mining giant implicated in Indonesian atrocities

the company security forces ever since a Freeport copper slurry pipe was blown up in 1977 by a group called Organasi Papua Merdeka (OPM) – Papuan Independence Movement.

The Indonesian military allegedly retaliated by killing several thousand local people at the time to squash the resistance movement. Last year, however, the rebels renewed their protests in response to news that Freeport had signed an agreement to expand its search for gold and copper on the island.

On Christmas day last year people from three churches in the villages of Arwanop, Banti and Waa gathered in Waa village, to pray, after a major peaceful demonstration protesting the mine.

Yunus Omabak, a Amungme tribal chief from Waa, says he was summoned to a military post in Tembapapura, a major town in the area, the following day, together with three other elders from his tribe, to report on the religious service.

Omabak says he was put in a Freeport vehicle and taken to a Freeport 'security cell'. There the soldiers accused them of raising the OPM flag at the Christmas day protest and supplying the rebels with rice and cigarettes before torturing them.

"They hit me over the head with a big stone till blood streamed over my body. They put an iron bar in the hollow of my knees and forced me to squat and lean against a chest for hours. I was screaming in pain" he said in a

statement translated by ACFOA.

"Meanwhile my friend Octo was stabbed with a bayonet in his left shoulder and arm pit till he screamed out loudly. His hands were put on the cement and stamped on with boots and hit with gun butts. I thought he was dead" added Omabak.

The four elders were tortured for two weeks before being released on 10th January. The night before the tribal leaders were arrested a group of fifteen Dani tribespeople, some of whom were from Waa village, were taken on a Freeport bus number 44 and tortured.

"When we were detained there three Dani from Waa were tortured by being beaten with sticks on the neck from behind, left, right and from the front, till their necks were broken and they died" says one of the detainees who was released. The name of the detainee is not identified in the report.

"I walked home, and on the road I fell unconscious. When I came to, I was covered with flies which were attracted to my wounds and blood. I recovered and walked further till I fell again and became unconscious" says the detainee.

The torture and murder of indigenous villagers is allegedly still continuing. The ACFOA report says that on 31st May this year, the police surrounded a group of people praying in the forest after they had fled from the village of Hoesa after confrontations between OPM and the army.

"Without warning [the military] ... started shooting at the congregation while they prayed. The Reverend Martinus Kibak raised his hands to surrender, but Sergeant Marjaka did not care. He ordered the soldier closest to him, soldier second class Titus Kobogou, to

shoot the minister" an eyewitness recounted. "The bullet wounded the minister in the left part of his abdomen, and he died instantly. At the same time the patrol fired shots at the people [among them children] who were praying, killing 10 others" added the eyewitness.

The Indonesian government has responded to the two ACFOA reports by sending a team from the National Commission on Human Rights to the site to investigate. The commission, which was not taken seriously when the government set it up recently, was widely praised recently for a report published earlier this year that implicated the Indonesian military in several assassinations in East Timor.

Clementino dos Reis Amaral, a member of the commission, has already told the Indonesian press that he was convinced that the statements in the ACFOA were true but he said that nobody has confirmed the involvement of Freeport security.

Indonesian sources say that the local people believe there is little difference between the military and Freeport security. "The heavy military presence in and around Tembapapura is for the purpose of guarding Freeport operations. For local people there is little difference between Freeport security and the military" says the source.

Others point out that Freeport is also guilty of destroying vast areas of the local environment. "The dumping of tailings [mining waste] into the river has caused flooding, re-routing of the rivers, destruction of the sago forests and indigenous hunting grounds" charges Emmy Hafield of WALHI, an Indonesian environmental group in Jakarta.

WALHI recently sued the government alleging that it had failed to follow national environmental laws when it issued mining permits to Freeport.

In this country, Freeport has been listed by the US Environmental Protection Agency, for emitting the largest amount of toxic chemicals of any industry.

Pratap Chatterjee

THE EIGHTH CONGRESS OF THE BULGARIAN ANARCHIST FEDERATION

The eighth congress of the Bulgarian Anarchist Federation has taken place in Sofia, the capital. For two days – the 23rd and 24th September 1995 – in a large hall of the Alexandra-Stambolijski Farmers Union. The hall was packed. Most of those present were representing local organisations from towns and villages. There were also guests – anarchist sympathisers. Some of those invited were writers, journalists, members of the Farmers Union and social democrats. They had all spent long years with the anarchists in concentration camps under the yoke of the Bulgarian Communist Party. They came to salute the anarchists and their congress for whom they have respect because of their courageous behaviour in the Bulgarian gulag.

The most emotional part was when the writer Josif Petrov saluted the anarchists for their courage in the fight for justice and liberty. He dedicated a poem to them. This was recited by an artist and the meeting was enchanted.

In the afternoon only the delegates were in the hall. Constructive work began. Christo Boitchev, a member of the organisation in Plovdiv, read his report on the national and international state of affairs. He gave a profound and detailed report well backed up with statistical evidence concerning global developments and concluding that we are facing a deep crisis to West and East, North and South.

The social, material, economic and moral situation in Bulgaria is not only degrading – it is intolerable! Unemployment is making shocking progress. Retired people have been lunged into misery. The last rise in their pensions was a farce and an insult to humanities honour. Workers wages are low and are well short of inflation which goes ever upward – out of control and beyond reason. In one year the prices for bread, cheese, meat and oil have doubled where they have not tripled. Crime is now threatening so the citizen has been plunged into fear.

THE BAF PROPOSALS TO GET OUT OF THE CRISIS

- The dissolution of military forces.
- A declaration of true neutrality distanced from all military alliances.
- To create, within the country, an organisation for peace which aims to work with neighbouring people against war.

- Form groups in districts and communes under citizen control – the police, who in the majority have links to the criminal mafia, being incapable of getting rid of crime. These groups should stand up to the new mafia which has emerged from the Communist Party.
- At the same time a struggle against the new millionaires who are using the people's money which was stolen by the Communist party: to organise free co-ops in agriculture, industry and distribution.
- To organise a free commune outside the shadow of the state at the heart of which citizens may express their wishes and oversee the execution of projects decided upon by the General Assemblies.

Stoian Tzolav, who participated on the side of the Spanish anarchists in the revolution of 1936 and who spent any years in the fascist concentration camps of Bulgaria before being sentenced to death (later commuted to life imprisonment) by the Communist Party in 1949, gave a report on the international anarchist movement.

Christo Kolev, a member of the BAF secretariat and a member from Karlovo, gave a talk on the state of anarchism in Bulgaria.

The commission concerned with the finances of the Federation gave a very detailed report with full receipts for expenditure. The finances whilst not great are not hopeless.

The commission that is concerned with raising money to buy premises for the BAF announced that it had accrued about a million leva. The congress appointed five persons to deal with the purchase of a property.

The congress appointed a federal council as an editorial board for the BAF's journal, *Free Thought*. The council elected from within itself an overall editor.

The congress chose a federal council to deal with relations with both internal and external organisations.

Many problems await the Bulgarian anarchists. The situation within the country is disastrous. Young people flee from their responsibilities and are indifferent to the debate of ideas. However, the comrades are aware of the situation. They are dedicated to the organisation and the solidarity found in its heart. Both are worthy of success.

We will succeed. Onwards!

Translated from *Le Monde Libertaire*

THE INTERNATIONAL BODY PARTS TRADE

The development and export of transplantation technology from the West to the rest of the globe has spawned an international trade in body parts. Kidneys, livers, hearts, lungs and corneas have become commodities that are sold to the highest bidder. Transplantation centres have been developed in Western Europe as well as North and South America and in Asia. As transplantation technology is refined more and more people are able to cheat death temporarily by having diseased and non-functioning organs replaced.

In Australia organs are normally collected from trauma victims whose relatives have given permission to remove the person's organs. These organs are tissue matched and then sent to a transplantation unit that has a recipient with a similar tissue match. About three thousand people in Australia are on transplantation waiting lists waiting for a suitable organ. At present organs are distributed on the basis of tissue matching results. Normally a recipient is found in the city where the organs have been removed, occasionally organs are sent interstate for transplantation.

The situation in most of the world is determined by strictly commercial relationships. Only a relatively small number of people in Asia, the Middle East, North and South America, Russia and various parts of Europe have access to transplantation technology. These people have the necessary funds to buy the 'best' that Western medicine can provide. At any one time there are hundreds if not thousands of people waiting for transplantation surgery at various centres across the world. The only catch is that although they have the necessary money and access to the technology most of these centres have been starved of suitable healthy organs. Obviously a lack of suitable organs can eat into these transplantation centres profitability.

Over the past decade an international network that sources and provides the necessary body parts on demand has been developed. Body parts are sourced from three main centres. Executed prisoners in China, provide a large proportion of the body parts for the Asian and North and South

American body part market. Considering that China executes over 20,000 people per year (by a single gunshot to the back of the head – you don't want to devalue your product by damaging the valued organs do you?) and many are executed for minor economic offences and some for political crimes.

The European and the Middle East market is supplied by a never ending column of Indians and Pakistani urban ghetto dwellers. Agents for hospitals based in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia scour the slums looking for suitable 'donors' who are willing to sell a kidney. These poor ghetto dwellers are down to Riyadh have one kidney removed and are placed on a flight back to India or Pakistan within 48 hours. About 5% never make it back, they 'die' on the operating table and their bodies are gutted of all transplantable organs. If they have families they are given a few thousand dollars for the medical murder of their relatives.

The carnal houses of Riyadh and the killing fields of China are able to provide a significant proportion of the adult organs that are sold to transplantation centres across the globe. Unfortunately for the transplantation trade they have great difficulty in finding 'legal' avenues for the procurement of children's organs for transplantation. Transplantation of children's organs have provided an increasing, lucrative venture for many transplantation centres. This problem has been overcome via the central and South American connection. Children on the streets of Brazil, Mexico and other central and South American countries have become the new 'donors' in the world transplantation trade. Street children are kidnapped off the street or bought from orphanages, drugged, shipped to various donor centres to have their hearts, lungs, kidneys, livers removed for transplantation. These organs are tissue matched and then sold to transplantation centres in Europe, Asia, North and South America. Many if not most transplantation centres have their suspicions about the origins of these organs but they have decided to treat human organs as just

(continued on page 8)

The General Election: should anarchists vote?

Dear *Freedom*,
Stephen Hyland (letters, 27th January) must know that anarchists are a minority, such that whether they vote or not will make no difference to the overall result of a general election. The significant question is not whether we should vote, but whether at the coming general election we should forego our usual anti-election campaigns, and campaign instead for an anti-Tory victory.

The answer seems obvious. At election time, all the political parties make propaganda with the underlying assumption that freedom consists of the ability to state a preference for a boss. Anarchists take the opportunity of heightened interest in political and social questions to proclaim our vision of society free from bosses.

Political parties must conform to public attitudes in order to get votes. Anarchists seek to change public attitudes, and if anarchist propaganda has the effect of just slightly persuading people against inequality and authoritarianism, that will not be the present gang of Tories any good, will it?

But anarchist propaganda is more important than that. For one thing, it draws the attention of persons with anarchist inclinations to the fact that an anarchist movement exists.

For another, it really does influence public perceptions. Twenty years

ago there were university courses in government, in which anarchism was not even mentioned (though any study of the theory of government should logically begin with the question of whether government is useful). Now anarchism is part of the curriculum of A Level politics, and discussed in school textbooks. The change would not have happened if anarchists had hidden their anarchism and campaigned at election times for the lesser evil.

Donald Room

Dear *Freedom*,

In answer to Stephen Hyland ('The General Election: should anarchists vote?', letter, 27th January 1996), I can understand his feelings about the Tories, but I should question his belief that it is they who are leading us to "a society based on greed and selfishness and ultimately self-destruction". Surely greed, selfishness and self-destruction are much older than the Tory Party; and considering the thousands of terrible wars that there have been throughout history one wonders when human society was based on anything else.

Surely it is not that political parties create societies based on selfishness, but that selfishness arises first and fragments society, spawning separate interest groups and the political parties that represent them.

If that is right, then if we are

seriously concerned about the whole world (not just the little group, class or nation to which we are supposed to belong), we shall see no point in entering the political arena and siding with one or other of the squabbling bands of politicians. Have politicians ever solved any basic human problems? Surely they are all very superficial people: they have never investigated the root cause of social fragmentation, which is the self, the ego.

What is the ego? In brief, I should say it's just our 'normal' everyday state of mind, with all its self-centred thoughts, emotions, anxieties, problems, etc., etc. There's nothing we can do to get out of it, because anything we do is still the action of the ego; but when that simple fact dawns on us it dissolves. Then there is a radically different state of mind, love, which is the answer to everything.

Francis Ellingham

Dear Comrades,

In the last issue of *Freedom* a reader asked "should we vote to get the Tories out?"

Well, at the last Labour Party Conference Tony Blair made the marvellous (but ridiculous) statement "The arms race is over!"

A day later he voted to retain Trident! What a tosser ...

T. Grantham

The Fish Crisis

Dear *Freedom*,

I congratulate *Freedom* for 'The Fish Crisis' (13th January) and previous articles on this subject. They are a welcome change from the usual hypocritical stuff one finds in the Canadian press. Thank you also for such an excellent first issue for 1996 - all the articles were interesting and it was a joy to read. All the best to *Freedom*, its staff and contributors for the new year.

I think it worth mentioning that before Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949 the majority of the population lived in small self-contained villages scattered along the coast (called 'outports'). They lived by fishing and growing potatoes and had done so for at least 350 years. The cod were caught by hand from row-boats or by long-lining from small sail or gas driven vessels. Such methods did not deplete the fish stocks and everyone got by.

After Newfoundland joined Canada the provincial government, with federal support, decided to destroy the outports. The people were forced to move into larger towns, a form of cultural genocide from which they have yet to recover. The previously independent fishermen had no choice but to work for the big fish plants or for the ocean-vacuuming draggers. Forty years later there are no fish and the once-proud Newfoundlander lives on the dole. Both fish and society destroyed by the state!

Larry Gambone

What makes anarchism so unique

Dear Editors,

There has been an increasing tendency in *Freedom* over recent years to present capitalism as the basic evil to be opposed. Now, in the issue of 27th January (page 2) there is the very strange statement that "only the anarchists denounce the capitalist system". Surely I do not need to give examples to show that that is quite untrue?

Capitalism is a foul system, and is undoubtedly the direct cause of a large part of human suffering, perhaps the larger part in the world today. And I am glad *Freedom* constantly denounces it. But it is not the root cause of that suffering. I always thought the essential insight that makes the anarchist view unique among all other views was seeing that the root cause is power - which most often means governments.

Capitalism cannot exist without the protection of the law. The law is imposed by governments and, in the end, backed by physical force.

I have to join Donald Room (letters, 16th December) in pointing out that *Freedom* sometimes gives new readers a false impression of what most anarchists think. Or am I wrong, about both what most anarchists used to think and what most anarchists think now?

Morey Gethin

Advertising Anarchism

Dear *Freedom*,

East Midlands Anarchists intend to place several advertisements extolling the ideas of anarchism in mainstream newspapers such as the *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Daily Mirror*, during the forthcoming general election campaign, be it in 1996 or 1997.

For further information contact East Midlands Anarchists, Box EMAB, 88 Abbey Street, Derby

THE INTERNATIONAL BODY PARTS TRADE

(continued from page 7)

another commodity and ask no questions about the origin of these organs.

The international organ trade exists and flourishes because everyone at each step of this sordid little trade refuses to ask any questions about the origin of the organs. The profits that are made in this business are extraordinary. The establishment of voluntary organ donation networks is the best way of limiting this trade. As the trade now stands only those people with money have access to the technology. Unless Australians are willing to fight to maintain the current universal health care system the time will arrive (as it has now arrived with elective surgery) when only those people with money will be able to benefit from transplantation technology. A number of private and public hospitals are already agitating that a fixed number of hospital beds need to be set aside for the international transplant market. Already these same arguments have seen places in our universities, schools and training colleges being set aside for fee paying overseas customers.

The same fate awaits Australia's universal health care system if we do not oppose efforts to turn Australia's public and private hospital system into an arm of the international body part trade.

taken from *The Anarchist Age Weekly Review* no. 183, and this article also appeared on a-infos

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Individualist anarchism

Dear Editors,

I have recently become inclined to believe in the social and economic doctrines of individualist anarchism. This is the political philosophy developed in nineteenth century America by Josiah Warren, William Greene, Joshua Ingills, Lysander Spooner and Benjamin Tucker. They sought a political order in which everyone is free to do what she likes as long as she does not encroach on someone else's freedom, and an economic order in which the producer would retain the whole of her product; titles to land and raw materials would be limited to occupancy and use and in which exchange would take place on a labour-cost basis, this latter being achieved through a free mutual banking system. The principle difference between this school of anarchism and the more well-known communist variety is the belief of the individualists in private property, defined as the possession of the products of one's labour.

Unfortunately, so far as I presently know, I am the only living person who believes in these ideas! I am writing therefore to enquire through your columns if there are any individualist anarchist organisations or papers in existence in Britain or Ireland.

Name and address supplied

please keep sending in your letters and donations . . .

The example of Mondragon

Dear *Freedom*,

Congratulations on the fine article (13th January) on the Mondragon Cooperative Federation. It was a timely reminder of how a positive attitude to mutual help can be successful despite the evils of capitalism.

Much is written in academic terms about cooperatives - they are the sightseeing route on capitalist management courses, but little is written about the everyday reality of cooperative start-ups. In this despair of capitalism, the example of Mondragon can serve as an inspiration to start cooperatives. Not the 'phoenix' cooperatives when workers desperately try to save their jobs by taking over a business, but by starting cooperatives from scratch.

I am sure that cooperatives and cooperative-type organisations do exist throughout Britain, but they are

given little publicity. What we do read about in the newspapers are the building societies which were set up as mutual aid organisations - to enable members to build their own homes - being besieged by 'financial looters' trying to open accounts to cash in when the societies change to banks. These societies have been hijacked by capitalists from their original aims of mutual aid when they were set up - in Victorian times. Note: this is a Victorian value *not* supported by Mrs Thatcher! Now you see the nakedness of capitalism's 'survival of the greediest'.

Mike Long's article is an excellent reminder of the value of mutual aid - something we should consider and encourage. I look forward to reading more articles by Mike Long.

Graham Hall

Syndicalists and the Bosnian War

Dear *Freedom*,

Roy Emery (in *Freedom*, 27th January) surely doesn't expect me to disclose my sources. Members of the Solidarity Federation who take sides in the Bosnian conflict are close friends of mine. In any event, I can't think of anyone I would want Mr Emery to have "suitably tarred and feathered" for holding a view somewhat at variance to me, on a matter of foreign policy. However, I thank him for the offer.

At no time in my article "Power Worship and the Bosnian Peace" did I infer that either the Solidarity Federation or the Syndicalist Bulletin Group had upheld an official policy supporting the Bosnian state.

There has been an internal debate in the Syndicalist Bulletin faction,

and there have been articles in the syndicalist press. Some of these reports have depended on sources close to the Bosnian Federation; quoting freely from the pro-government Sarajevo press.

I repeat that, so far as I know, no syndicalist body in the UK has any clear policy on the Bosnian war. Internationally, I understand that the syndicalist SAC in Sweden and the anarcho-syndicalist CGT in Spain are providing some humanitarian aid to Bosnia.

It is to be welcomed that the Solidarity Federation seems to be becoming more open and engaging in debate with non-affiliates. In the past the organisation has been somewhat exclusive, and dare one say narrow in its outlook.

Brian Bamford

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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.

Peter Neville / Dave Dane
London Anarchist Forum

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January 14th: Walk leader Jon. Meet 11am outside Blue Bell Inn, Farnah Green, Belper. Circular walk, length approx 3½ miles.

February 4th: Walk leader George. Meet 11am at Gorse Covert Community Centre, Gorse Covert, Loughborough, Leicestershire. Circular walk, length 6-8 miles.

March 3rd: Walk leader Marion. Meet at 11am at Carlton Leys car park, Chatsworth, for a walk in the vicinity of the estate.

April 7th: Walk leader Ray. Meet 11am at centre of Peatling Magna village, Leicestershire (leave M1 at junction 21). Circular walk, length 7 miles, including visit to lost medieval village site.

May 5th: Walk leader Mike. Meet 11am at Whatstandwell railway station car park, Whatstandwell, Derbyshire. Circular walk, length 5-6 miles.

June 9th: Walk leader Jon. Meet 11am at picnic site car park below Derwent Reservoir Dam (map reference SK173893), Derwent Valley, Derbyshire. Circular walk, length 8-9 miles over mountainous terrain.

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January 21st - Ribblesdale: Long Preston to Hellfield. Meet outside Maypole Inn, Long Preston at 11am. Approx 6 miles.

February 18th - Airedale: Carleton to Elsack. Meet outside Swann Inn at Carleton at 11am. Length approx 7 miles.

March 17th - Lower Wharfedale: Grassington to Kettlewell. Meet in Grassington Town Square at 10.45am. Length approx 7 miles.

April 21st - Bishopdale: West Burton to Swinithwaite. Meet West Burton village school at 11am. Length approx 6 miles.

May 19th - Airedale: Farnhill and Sutton Pinnacles. Meet outside Bay Horse Pub at Sutton (near Keighley) at 10.45am. Length approx 8 miles.

June 16th - Airedale: Skipton to Flasby. Meet outside Skipton Castle at 10.45am. Length approx 7 miles.

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