

# anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

*"A friend is studying the precise disease that Jane Austen died of so young and he thinks it might have been a kind of mad cow disease."*

Elsbeth Huxley interviewed in the London Evening Standard

## **THE POOR COWS ARE THE VICTIMS ... THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM IS MAD!**

**W**e will neither attempt to compete with the reams of newsprint nor the full-colour rows of beef carcasses to which the media have subjected their readers (just as a week or two before they all, including the so-called serious press, were smothering them with the gory details of the massacre of the beautiful innocents of Dunblane).

What emerges from their treatment of the BSE/CJD crisis – which incidentally has only become a 'national disaster' because the veterinary 'experts' in the European Union voted fourteen to one to ban all beef cattle exports worldwide from Britain (yes, the one opposition vote was that of the British veterinary expert) – is bad for the beef industry, but, overnight, good news for the broiler chicken tycoons and the sheep and pig barons.

This writer knows as little about BSE/CJD as any of the mass media

hacks or the politicians, including the Minister of Agriculture Mr Hogg. When some sections of the media invariably put the blame on the minister, one should realise that ministers are not appointed for their experience in a particular subject. Government is another kind of civil service and ministers are on the ladder to promotions, finally to that of Prime Minister. Think of all the politicians who have been, in the mad cow era, Agriculture Ministers.

**T**he *Guardian* (23rd March) in a devastating condemnation of the way the newly-elected Thatcher government ignored the warnings on cattle feed in 1980, draws attention to the "report of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution published in 1979 and unearthed yesterday by the journal *Science in Parliament*". The report warns that:

"The major problem encountered in this recycling process [involving animal waste] is the risk of transmitting disease-bearing pathogens to stock and thence to humans."

According to the *Guardian*:

"Yet within less than a year, according to internal Ministry of Agriculture consultation papers from 1980, the government was urging that hygiene rules governing the feeding of animal protein to cattle should be subject to a deregulation drive."

And in the opinion of ministers it would be better for the industry to:

"... determine how best to produce a high quality product, and that the role of the government should be restricted to prescribing a standard for the product and to enforcing observance of that standard."

And the *Guardian* points out that:

"As a result the earlier licence conditions were not imposed and the more self-regulatory regime permitted. Three cabinet ministers signed the Diseases of Animals (Protein Processing) Order of 1981 which set out the rules allowing waste animal parts to be fed to cattle. They were Peter Walker, then minister of agriculture, George Younger, the Scottish secretary, and Nicholas Edwards, the Welsh secretary."

There was Peter Walker, notorious as a partner in the Slater-Walker set-up. His partner ended up in jail. He didn't, and if we are not mistaken he became the minister for Wales. What did he know about agriculture? And what about the vocal Minister of Education Mrs Sheppard who before that was Minister of Agriculture!

**S**eeing scapegoats is the easy and obvious way out – not only ministers and their advisers but also a token number of geriatric cows will be burned at the stake to reassure the public that something is being done. But not one voice has been raised in the media against the system that controls every aspect of our daily lives in war or peace: CAPITALISM!

The media are part and parcel of the capitalist system (isn't it a 'millionaire press'?) and, however much the 'liberal' press exposes corruption and 'fat cats' helping themselves to bonuses, share options and the like, what they never criticise is the capitalist

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## **At last they agree with Freedom ... JOBLESS FIGURES ARE A 'FIDDLE ON A GRAND SCALE'**

**F**reedom readers know that every time the government produces more figures to show that unemployment is going down we blow a raspberry and, in spite of the last official statistics showing a small increase in unemployment, we were not convinced.

At last the House of Commons Employment Committee, in a majority report, more or less agree with Freedom's approach (not in so many words) in rejecting the official figures. Its labour chairman summed it up, as we have maintained in Freedom time and again: "The figures are fiddled not because they are in themselves inaccurate but because you fiddle figures by selecting which ones to produce".

**T**he report rightly attempts to estimate not just who is drawing the dole but how many potential wage/salary earners are wanting, needing, paid employment. And the government's monthly statistics

which have created the impression that the unemployment situation has been improving over the years (apart from last month) has been finally exploded:

"Numerous administrative changes in unemployment benefit meant the public had lost confidence in the claimant count as a measure of unemployment, he said.

The report goes further, arguing that neither the headline claimant count nor the alternative Labour Force Survey measure included all the people who wanted full-time jobs and could not find them. The committee therefore recommended publication of a range of other unemployment figures – which could include discouraged workers or part-timers who would prefer full-time work. The widest of these would take the unemployment total to 4.8 million."

So at Freedom when we have been maintaining that the official unemployment figures of two and a quarter million were phoney and more like four million, this has been proved to be an underestimate.

**THE POOR COWS ARE THE VICTIMS ...  
THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM IS MAD!**

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system which is their bread and butter. Can you imagine even the 'wet' *Guardian* publishing anarchist articles exposing *capitalism* as the source of corruption at all levels, dishonesty and muggings and petty crime?

How better to illustrate our contention than to quote from, of all sources, the *Sunday Express* (24th March) which devotes two pages to expose "Corrupt farmers flout law on BSE". We can only briefly summarise this exposure. For instance, farmer Stephen Thompson:

"... has made thousands at his farm in Gargrave, North Yorkshire, buying up herds of infected animals and cashing in on government pay-outs. Under the BSE Compensation Order, he can claim up to £800 for a slaughtered cow that may have been bought at auction for £400.

Three months ago Thompson and his son John were fined £150 each with £156 costs for trying to sell a calf whose mother had BSE."

But according to the *Sunday Express*, the:

"... biggest court case so far is of farmer David King caught systematically falsifying documents for 'at risk' animals to make them appear BSE-free.

Last November King, 42, from Exminster, Devon, was fined £30,000 and ordered to pay

£18,500 costs at Exeter Crown Court for falsifying the certificates of sixty cows."

And as we write, it is reported that:

"Trading standards officers in Somerset and Essex are currently probing allegations of farmers falsifying records. Officers in Devon will be in court this week prosecuting a farmer who will appear before magistrates charged on 34 counts of making false declarations that cattle he was sending for slaughter were BSE-free.

Tampering with an animal's ear-tag is a favourite fiddle of crooked farmers. This can hide its true identity to give the impression it is 'clean' when in fact it could be suffering from BSE. In some cases a healthy cow's ear-tag has been used up to ten times to disguise the origin of a potentially sick beast. In other cases farmers have photocopied certificates for re-use with several different animals."

In the same *Sunday Express* is a double-page exposure (surely involuntary) of the capitalist system, by another ex-minister (of health) Edwina Currie, sacked (as some recall) because she exposed the salmonella outbreak in the caged hens and broiler chickens. We quote her because we could not put the argument more convincingly. After all, she's still a Tory MP!

"Laws passed in the 1970s enabled MAFF inspectors to prosecute anyone responsible for giving contaminated foodstuffs to chickens, cattle or any other livestock.

When I was Health Minister between 1986 and 1988 I asked MAFF what they were doing about this and discovered they were carrying out inspections. And something like 30% of samples were contaminated.

But I was horrified to learn that they did absolutely nothing about it. The foodstuffs were not destroyed and there was not a single prosecution.

In 1988 Ministers banned certain products like bonemeal, but MAFF told the feed mills they could finish off existing stock - and they had a hell of a lot of it. It was scandalous.

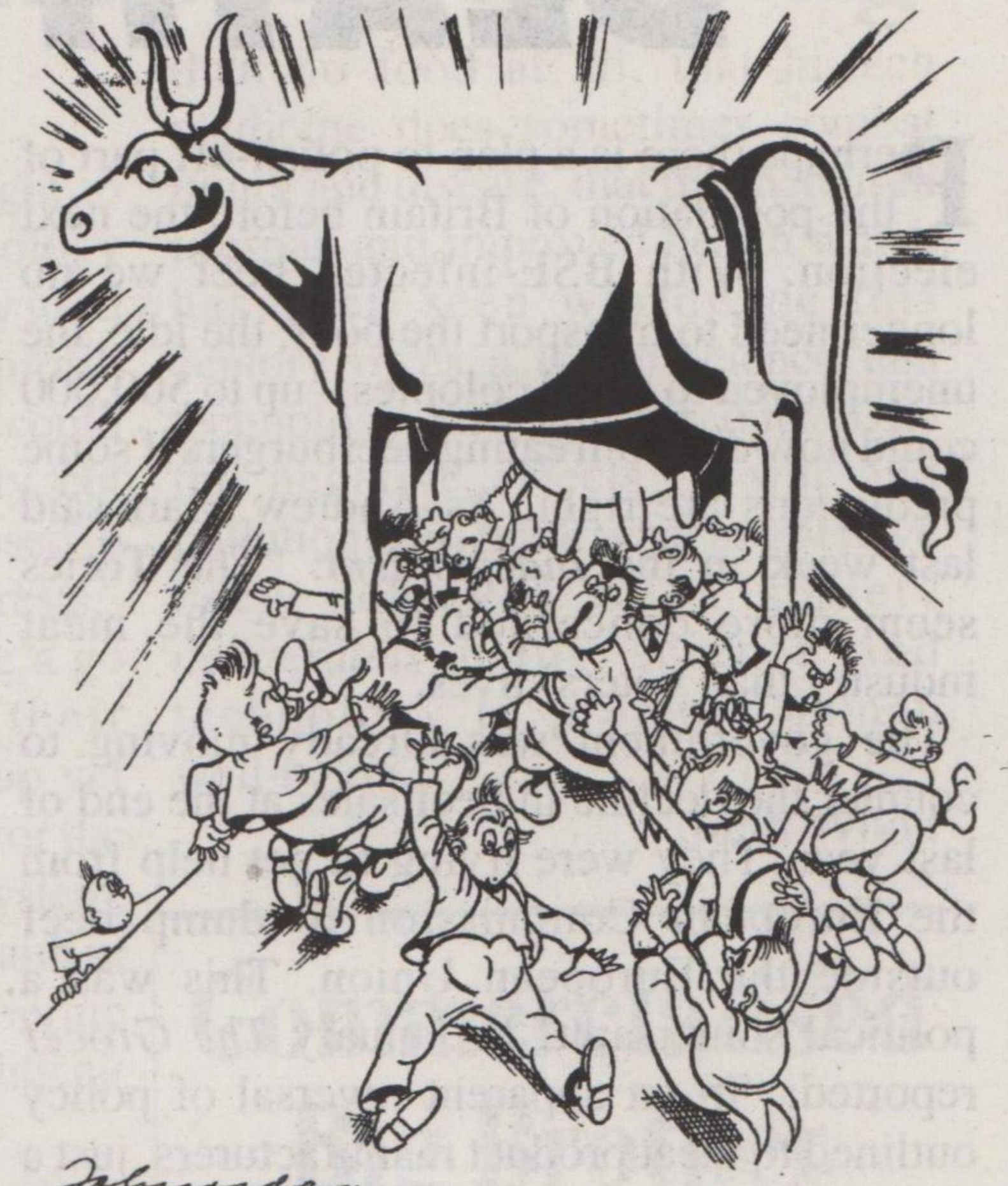
MAFF officials just would not listen. They were very hostile to any changes.

They were not the least interested in public health and felt their task was to look after the farming industry. They did a better job than the National Union of Farmers.

MAFF were like the worst type of trade union officials. They defended bad practices. I still feel very angry at the way they behaved."

And later in her article she concludes, rightly in our opinion, that "the BSE problem is very similar to salmonella and eggs. It all stems from giving the animals contaminated feed". But she adds that salmonella is a short-term sickness. Not so if BSE takes over. "If you eat infected meat you won't be sick six hours later, or maybe not even six years later". Quite so.

But Mrs Currie blames everybody but never the *capitalist system*. Has she asked herself whether the *profit motive*, which is at the root of capitalism, is not also the reason for her government's indifference to the alarm signals? Or the reluctance of the farming industry not only to learn obvious lessons but, as is now emerging when a few examples of cheating actually reach the courts, that in a capitalist society corruption is rife. Anarchists are not surprised. After all, they have been denouncing capitalism, with the 'old' socialists, for more than a century.



**'GOLD FOR THE GREEDY'**

Cartoon by John Olday from *The March to Death*, a book of anti-war drawings first published in 1943 and reprinted last year (Freedom Press, 84 pages, £3.00). At the same time as he was producing cartoons for *War Commentary* and *The March to Death*, John Olday was working on his story *The Blue Cow and her fantastic exploits*, the drawings and text for which, thought to have been lost, were recently rediscovered, and printed for the first time this year (see page 6).

Of course there are still honest farmers, as there are still honest citizens in this capitalist jungle. But we are more than ever convinced anarchists because we neither trust the politicians nor the 'experts' who are prepared to give 'scientific' approval for their political/economic ambitions, more often than not at the expense of the commonweal.

**THE ANARCHIST APPROACH**

Freedom has not just seen the 'Mad Cow' red light. In a page-one editorial on 'Mad Cows in a Mad World' almost two years ago (28th May 1994) we concluded as follows:

"No number of inspectors and vets visiting farms and abattoirs will stop the poisoning of the food chain as long as the profit motive, private property in the land (and farming enterprises are becoming ever larger) and subsidies paid on a headage basis (encouraging over-stocking for obvious reasons) continue unchecked.

Far from idealising mankind, anarchists are only too aware of man's frailty. Given the opportunity to cheat for profit few people seem able to resist - and the more they have the more they want. For this reason we are utterly opposed to the capitalist system, private property and the money system as a means for the exploitation of man by man. We believe in everybody having equal access to the necessities for a decent healthy life through use of the land, housing, industry and all the infrastructure needed for a civilised existence. In other words, *use versus ownership* as at present.

Then there will be no incentive to cheat, to engage in factory farming or the production of shoddy goods with built-in obsolescence. We are uninterested in capitalist *demand* but for the satisfaction of human *needs*, and for a society which gives priority to the needs of the sick and the handicapped.

Those Mad Cows are the victims of a world gone mad in its lust for profit at any price."

**DANGER OF NUCLEAR MELTDOWN AT HEYSHAM**

A full-scale safety investigation is under way at Heysham 2 nuclear power station. It was revealed on 19th March that on 29th January a fuel rod jammed in the reactor core during refuelling. Apparently, the casing at the top of a fuel channel had been distorted by the heat, as the station was being run at almost maximum capacity in an attempt to make the station break even, ready for privatisation.

Of course there are plenty of safety devices, and the plant automatically shut down as soon as the fuel rod stuck, but this did not make the plant safe. The uranium fuel rods, seventy feet long and weighing seventy tons, are moved by hoists attached to their tops. Jamming, causing a sudden jerk in the movement, could cause the rod to break and the lower bit fall to the bottom of the reactor. The chance of this happening was minute to infinitesimal, but not negligible because had it happened there would have been an uncontrollable meltdown.

'Meltdown' is when a mass of molten material becomes so hot that it melts through the floor of the reactor. It happened at Chernobyl in 1986, where fortunately the reactor was protected by a mass of sand which fell through the floor of the reactor with the fuel and fused with it to make radioactive glass. This will remain lethally radioactive for

the next 100,000 years and is already crumbling to radioactive dust, but will not sink any further (information from the BBC *Horizon* show, 25th March).

Meltdown was a real fear at the earlier Three Mile Island accident in America. There, meltdown is known as 'China syndrome' after an old (mistaken) idea that a straight line drawn from America through the centre of the earth would emerge in China. In Heysham it would be more appropriate to call it the 'Antipodes Island syndrome'.

The nuclear power industry used to publish estimates that the chance of a reactor accident was about once every 100,000 years, but according to the trade periodical *Nuclear Energy* in 1993, experience has shown the probability to be nearer once per 1,000 years. Worldwide there are about four hundred reactors in operation, so we expect one accident somewhere in the world every two and a half years. In any other industry, one accident per plant per thousand years would be an admirable standard of safety. In the nuclear power industry, where every accident is a potential disaster, it is appalling.

Forty years ago it looked as if nuclear power might be very cheap. One kilogram of uranium generates as much power as three million tons

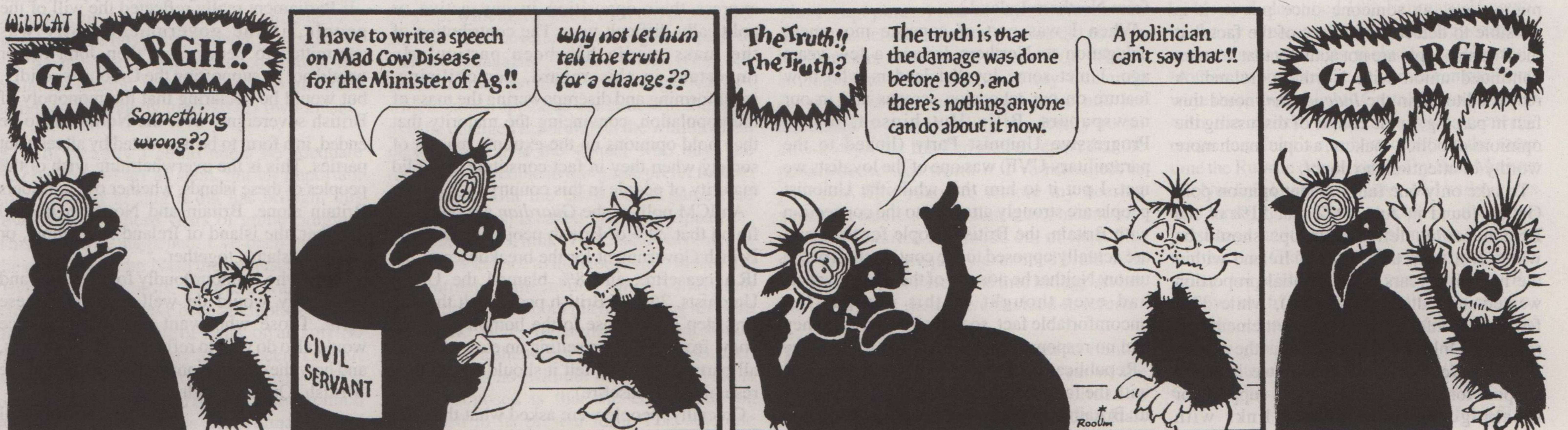
of coal. Our editorial writer worked for a manufacturer of gas appliances, which felt it necessary to develop a contingency plan for converting all the products to electricity. It turned out, however, that the process, the fuel and the waste products are all so dangerous that it is inevitably expensive.

Because there are so many safer alternatives (see 'Alternatives to Nuclear Power' elsewhere in this issue), continued government support calls for explanation.

Nuclear power plants have to be big so their control has to be centralised, and because they are dangerous they need powerful security services. Centralisation and authoritarianism may be the hidden agenda, but does not seem likely to be a conscious motive as democratic governments do not think of themselves as wanting to be despots.

More likely is that some by-products of nuclear power can be used in nuclear weapons. Even democratic governments want 'independent deterrents'.

But an even more likely guess is that the commitment was made when nuclear power looked like a good idea, and is maintained by a combination of inertia, cock-up and pressure from people who earn their livings and reputations in the industry.



# DEATH BY BEEFBURGER

Perhaps there is a plan to polish-off part of the population of Britain before the next election. With BSE-infected beef we no longer need to transport the poor, the idle, the unemployed to penal colonies – up to 500,000 could now die from eating beefburgers if some predictions are right. As Andrew Marr said last week in the *Independent*: “The Tories seem more concerned to save the meat industry than voters’ lives.”

The government was already moving to counter the decline in beef sales at the end of last year. They were trying to get help from the European Commission to dump beef outside the European Union. This was a political somersault! In January *The Grocer* reported: “In an apparent reversal of policy outlined to meat product manufacturers, just a few weeks ago by food minister Angela Browning, Whitehall officials seem to be looking for bigger ‘dumping’ payments on trade with third world countries as a way of taking beef off the UK market to relieve price pressure caused by the latest BSE scare.”

This policy turn-about had been brought about by rumours in London of near-panic among officials as market research statistics showed consumer purchases of beef had dropped 25% in the run-up to Christmas, which usually shows a seasonal sales peak. It seems that BSE and the meat market has had more devastating consequences for the burger bars and McDonalds than the anarchist and vegetarian campaigns against such dives. For months, overtime has been cut at some branches of McDonalds, and there have been some lay-offs. In one case I know, a local McDonalds manager has sought advice about avoiding having his house repossessed.

Some diversification to chicken-burgers, vegetable-burgers and even ostrich meat has been in progress in most burger bars, but we should not be surprised that McDonalds has banned British beef in the last couple of weeks. As I write this, I see my newspaper carries an advert proclaiming: “Big Macs are back at McDonalds today” owing to “new supplies of non-British beef”.

With McDonalds importing non-British beef

and the European Commission imposing a worldwide ban on the export of British beef – despite protestations from the British government – the rest of the world should be relatively safe from British beef. It now looks like there will be selective slaughtering of the older dairy cows to reassure the public, or at least to try to reassure them. The use of spent dairy cows in meat pies and sausages is thought to be a particularly bad practice.

It is comic irony to see a government, a British government which is normally opposed to hand-outs from the EU to the peasants of Europe, now demanding compensation for its own farmers to slaughter cattle which have been contaminated by our own intensive farming methods. Whether it be to get European support for dumping beef on the foreigners or help with compensation for slaughter, this government is not slow to hold its hand out.

## CHEAP FOOD – THE BRITISH DISEASE

When asked last week by the *Independent* reporters, neither the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) could answer the two critical questions concerning BSE. The *Independent* reported: “Asked yesterday whether a single mouthful of infected beef could be enough to pass on the disease, or whether the effects were cumulative, both departments said they did not know – though MAFF said that a single gram of infected food was sufficient in cows”. The *Independent* pressed on: “Asked when the public could be sure that any risk of an epidemic of CJD (Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease) caught by BSE-infected food was over, the answer was also that they did not know”.

No wonder the multiple grocery trade is adjusting its stocking programme with poultry promotions, and some multiples, according to *The Grocer*, have ordered 25% more bacon. Still Britain, together with the US government, is trying to promote the use of hormones in beef production. As ever, the UK government is sheltering behind science, saying: “... natural hormones, if used correctly, present no human health risk”.

The use of hormones, and the feeding of concentrates containing sheep-meat and cow-meat to cows in the 1980s, is a feature of the British obsession with intensive farming. The British public has gone for cheap food at all costs. In the end it has given us mediocre food and possibly dangerous food products based on processing and the cheap fix. If the English were not also snobs, using olive oil and sun-dried tomatoes as status symbols, the position would be even worse and we would have an even drearier diet.

Many historians now trace the English attitude to food as fuel, rather than an aspect of the good living, as something which stems from the Enclosure Acts and the pushing of the farm labour off the land and into the cities in the eighteenth century. In the unenclosed village the normal labourer did not depend just on wages as his livelihood was made up from various sources, according to the Hammonds in *The Village Labourer 1760-1832*: “His firing he took from the waste, he had a cow or a pig wandering on the common pasture, perhaps he raised a little crop on a strip in the common fields”. Up to the Enclosure Act, the poor were not cut off from the source of their well-being.

After the Enclosure Act we had a mass dependency working class living in the towns and cities. Food began to be processed, because it had to travel further. Until now we have the absurdity of parsnips flown from Australia in mid-summer. Are there no limits to this scientific industrialisation of food production and distribution?

## REACTION TO MASS PRODUCED FOOD

Perhaps there are signs of a reaction setting in which will reassure most anarchists concerned about food production. Some of the multiples are reported to be analysing consumer reaction and thinking of promoting lamb as a ‘natural product’. One meat marketing manager told *The Grocer*: “Lamb is perceived by consumers as an organic product, unlike beef or pork”. This is not quite

true as some producers still try high-intensity rearing and finishing systems, a bit like those used in the pig industry. *The Grocer* says many of these have lost money.

If the multiples, mainly the supermarkets, feel there is a demand for quality this may force a sea-change on the meat producers and the animal feed industry. Certainly British beef is now going to have as much credibility as Austrian wine, which suffered when it was found to be using antifreeze in the wine – it has taken the Austrian wine industry more than a decade to recover from that set-back.

The problem lies deep in the English attitude to food. Geoffrey Cannon, who wrote *The Politics of Food*, says the BSE fiasco is the worst result of the ‘cheaper is best’ food policy. He adds: “We have been brought up not to value food but to think of it as fuel. This is not true of continental Europe, where people talk more about food, spend longer choosing it, preparing it, and make more of an occasion of eating it.”

If anarchists must have a policy for food, I would suggest it should be along the lines outlined by Pierre Koffmann in the prologue of *Memories of Gascony*. In that book he promoted what he called ‘cuisine de terroir’, the country cooking followed by generations of peasants in the many regions of France. This cooking he opposed to the ‘grande cuisine’ or court cooking. Cuisine de terroir as an ongoing tradition he describes thus: “Here the ideals of the eighteenth century ‘innovators’ were in fact practised unthinkingly and quite naturally, since the peasants were obliged to use whatever ingredients came immediately to hand and their food and its flavour was therefore always fresh and unspoiled.”

Like cuisine de terroir in France, anarchists in England should develop a local and regional cuisine which confronts the mass cuisine which the supermarkets and food industry would feed us with.

The collapse of the beef market shows that public attitudes can change the culture of English cuisine; all of us on the libertarian left can contribute to this, if only by adjusting our own daily diet to pursue local uncontaminated sources of fresh food.

Brian Bamford

The Northern Ireland conflict is one of the most-studied wars ever conducted. Academics and journalists and freelance researchers of all descriptions have been coming to this corner of the island of Ireland for over twenty years, digging through the same literature, interviewing the same figures. A mountainous literature has been thrown up by the war, much of it devoted to the analysis of republicanism. Curiously, given that the goal of republicanism is Irish unity, much less attention is paid to the state south of the border, and in particular to opinion in the Republic. Even more curiously, given that the goal of unionism is continued union with Britain, and taking into account the not inconsiderable fact that the dominant power in the North is Britain itself, there is very little study of either the British state in relation to Ireland or to British opinion regarding the six counties of Northern Ireland.

If one reads the national newspapers very carefully, with a sufficiently powerful microscope, as someone once put it, it is possible to detect faint traces of the fact that the British people are not actually that keen on continued union with Northern Ireland. A recent editorial in the *Independent* noted this fact in passing, in the course of discussing the opinions of policy-makers, a topic much more worthy of attention, no doubt.

To take only one fairly recent opinion poll, Gallup found in July 1992 that 51% of the British people felt that troops should be withdrawn from the North of Ireland within the next five years (a substantial proportion wanted immediate withdrawal), while 37% felt they should remain until a settlement was reached. Only 6% believed that the troops should never be withdrawn. If we interpret support for troop withdrawal as support for breaking the constitutional links with

## NORTHERN IRELAND British indifference and the ‘Irish’ Question

Northern Ireland, this points to a distinct lack of enthusiasm for continued union.

And in fact this is a fairly standard finding throughout the past twenty years. The proportion of people supporting troop withdrawal has varied over the years from 59% in 1971, to 64% in 1975, to 50% in 1980, to 53% in 1984, to 40% in 1987, to 59% in 1990. Other investigations have found that the majority of British people support either Irish unity or independence for Northern Ireland. In either event, a termination of the link between Britain and Northern Ireland.

(In passing, I should just note that the official title of this country is the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Meaning that Britain is officially a different territory from Northern Ireland.)

When I was part of a peace movement delegation to Northern Ireland a few years ago, I met some loyalist leaders who now feature on our television screens and in our newspapers. Billy Hutchinson, of the Progressive Unionist Party (linked to the paramilitary UVF) was one of the loyalists we met. I put it to him that while the Unionist people are strongly attached to the connection with Britain, the British people for their part are actually opposed to the continuation of the union. Neither he nor any of the other loyalists had ever thought of this obvious but uncomfortable fact, so far as I could see. They had no response.

Republicans have started to come to terms with the fact that Unionists really are attached to Britain, and that this allegiance will not

simply evaporate once Britain announces its intention to withdraw from Ireland. In fact a large part of the Sinn Fein peace strategy since 1987 has been based on this recognition. One can fault the current stance of the republican movement towards the Unionist community, but it is undeniably true that republicans have come a great deal closer to reality than loyalists. Loyalists and unionists spend a great deal of their time distrusting the British government. They spend very little time thinking about the attitudes of the British people.

Though there is a sort of realism to this bunker mentality. The British people, while opposed to the union with Northern Ireland, have shown few signs of being willing to express their opposition in any active or politically difficult way. The contribution of the mass media has been particularly important in this regard, demobilising, misinforming and disempowering the mass of the population, convincing the majority that they hold opinions on the extreme margin of society when they in fact constitute the solid majority of people in this country.

An ICM poll for the *Guardian* a month ago found that 20% of British people blamed the British Government for the breakdown of the IRA ceasefire, and 8% blamed the Ulster Unionists. 26% of British people felt that the first step in response to the bombing should come from Major, in setting an early date for all-party talks (38% felt it should be the IRA resuming its ceasefire).

Crucially, people were asked what they felt

should happen to Northern Ireland eventually. 17% felt it should remain part of the UK. 14% felt it should be reunited with southern Ireland. 18% wanted the six counties linked to both the Republic and Britain. 32% of those polled in Britain opted for independence for the North.

One way of summing these findings up would be that 64% of those polled wanted to see an end to the monopoly of British sovereignty in Northern Ireland, a full or partial withdrawal of British rule. Two thirds of the British people want a re-negotiation or abrogation of the Government of Ireland Act. The British people just do not see the people of Northern Ireland, unionist or nationalist, as their kith and kin.

If Parliament really reflected the will of the people, if the government really was committed to democracy, then John Major would not be supporting the Unionists solidly, but would be declaring that the monopoly of British sovereignty over the North was to be ended, in a form to be negotiated by all relevant parties. This is the overwhelming wish of the peoples of these islands, whether one considers Britain alone, Britain and Northern Ireland together, the island of Ireland as a whole, or all these islands together.

Those who clamour loudly for elections and democracy would do well to ponder these facts. Those who want peace and justice would also do well to reflect on these findings, and how they could contribute to an end to the ‘British’ Question in Ireland.

Milan Rai

## NOT WITH A BANG – BUT A WHIMPER

This last fortnight has finally made clear that what Professor Anthony Birch once called representative and responsible government, always a dubious proposition, no longer exists and the public seem unbothered by the derelictions of public office. The BSE/CJD crisis, a direct result of Government lies, evasions, corner cutting and buck passing has produced no street demonstrations, no demand for the resignation of the government, or even of the ministers responsible. People have stopped eating meat. And even larger numbers have stopped eating beef. That, at the moment of writing is all. Not very long ago a crisis of this magnitude would have filled Trafalgar Square and the streets surrounding. Even fixed bayonets outside Downing Street would have occasioned little surprise. At least something on the scale of the Suez or poll tax demonstrations would have been expected.

Perhaps seventeen years of carefully orchestrated lies have produced this muted and supine response. Perhaps the casualisation of jobs has created the sort of general insecurity that means people dare not object to anything. Perhaps the population has been affected by the post modernist despair of the intellectuals and cannot conceive of political improvement. There are certainly no signs of any mass movement to anarchism. Perhaps they are simply numb, like me, at the collapse of the world they knew.

It is quite clear that the government, and the radical Conservatism Margaret Thatcher initiated, is responsible. John Major's attempts to shelter behind (and implicitly blame) scientists is risible. A government that rejected its own Royal Commission's advice, ridiculed Professor Lacey and marginalised and eventually sacked Harash Narang is hardly in a position to claim that it listened to scientists. It certainly cherry picked those whose advice it did hear. At the same time it ignored, mocked and (if some of the respectable broadsheets are to be believed) terrorised scientists who dissented. The list is alarming.

**Harash Narang** a microbiologist, argued that BSE was present in DNA and could spread to every part of an animal. Sufficiently eminent to be invited to work with a Nobel prize winning team in the US, the Public Health

Service Laboratory refused to allow him leave. Later he was refused research funding. He secured private finance and although the MAFF confirmed his tests worked he was sacked when he demanded random tests on abattoirs which would have revealed the true extent of BSE infection in cattle. He has claimed physical intimidation and burglary aimed at his research papers.

**Stephen Dealler** a consultant microbiologist at Burnley Hospital produced evidence that all beef eating involved serious risk. The government's placemen on SEAC brushed his findings aside. He states that during the four years between the first appearance of the disease and the first feeble and ineffective measures to prevent infected meat from entering the food chain *the whole meat eating population was liable to infection.*

**Robert Perry** a neuropathologist specialising in Alzheimer's disease produced evidence of BSE transmission to humans. The Public Health Laboratory described him as having dangerous views. His findings and evidence were suppressed.

**Sir Richard Southwood** Professor of Zoology at Oxford had been on the 1979 Royal Commission that had warned about the recycling of animal protein into cattle feed. He continued to warn about the dangers of the process and was ignored. The feeding of mammalian meat and bone meal to all farm animals was ended only three weeks ago.

**Richard Lacey** Professor of Microbiology at Leeds, who has regularly argued that the wholesale slaughter of cattle was needed to protect public health, was marginalised by a combined 'mad professor' and 'loony leftie' campaign. He had been arguing that the government had chosen scientific advisers who were both carefully picked and subjected to manipulation and threats by civil servants.

**Mark Purdey** is an organic farmer concerned with the effects of organo-phosphorous pesticides used in cattle and in sheep dip. A self taught chemist, his results were sufficiently interesting to give him an invitation to lecture at the Edinburgh Science Festival. He has claimed shooting incidents

and being burned out. It was the local police who suggested he was being targeted for something. Needless to say, the MAFF have dismissed him as a nut.

This far from complete list illustrates how the Tories' attempts to shelter behind the scientists are breathtakingly dishonest. So is their estimate of the risk. Ian Stewart, Professor of Mathematics at Warwick, recently pointed out that the government's abuse of risk benefit analysis is particularly nasty. In the case of BSE one group, the consumer, takes the risk but the benefits go to another group, the Treasury, in the form of money saved. He went on:

"For BSE we do not possess the basic knowledge to catalogue infection routes or estimate probabilities. There has been time to acquire much of the necessary knowledge since the disease appeared but the government has studiously avoided commissioning the required research ... yet deep down many officials must have known that their risk estimates had no factual basis. Ministers invented policy on the hoof and then followed a highly selective procedure to come up with risk assessments that fitted the bill."

Other writers in this paper argue that capitalism itself is at fault. Undoubtedly it is but in a triumphally capitalist world that doesn't get us very far. The immediate cause in Britain was deregulation and the freeing up of so-called market forces. Margaret Thatcher threw out the Labour Party's 1978 proposals for regulating animal feed. The 1980 MAFF document which surfaced recently talked of the "wish of ministers that the industry should regulate itself." The result was chillingly summed up by Dr Anne Maddocks of SEAC. Dismissing projected tests on monkeys she said "There is no point in doing the primate experiment now. *We are the experiment.*"

So incidentally are the Americans. Former farmer Howard Lyman (a defence witness in the McLibel case) states that American farmers are feeding cow meat to cows with the result that *one hundred thousand apparently healthy US cows are dropping dead every year.* The absence of BSE is only apparent because cows in the US rarely reach their tenth year. British cows live to twenty years. This gives BSE, with an incubation period of ten years' time to appear.

Anarchists have always argued that the goal of capitalism is to produce profit. Goods are only an accidental by product. The result of this approach is now working itself out and threatening all of us except, in Natasha Walter's recent words, a raft of 'smug vegetarians'. If that group actually exist they too will be threatened by deregulation mania as pollution inspectors have drastically relaxed safety standards for toxic emissions. The safety standards for thallium have been raised by a factor of *forty thousand* and safety levels for arsenic and nickel have been similarly increased. Cement manufacturers can now burn poisonous chemical wastes as fuel in their kilns.

The Victorians and the Edwardians learned the hard way that market mechanisms, like any mechanisms, need regulating if regular disasters inherent in the nature of free market competition are to be avoided. Margaret Thatcher returned us to early Victorian standards without the Victorian desire to improve things. If we can't replace capitalism at the moment then we must try and limit the damage it can do. In the case of food that means tight regulation. It means encouraging organic farming. With only 0.3% of the UK farmed organically (as opposed to 12% in Austria) the bulk of grants and subsidies still favour intensive farming. This is something that can be altered. We have to create real countervailing power to a centralised and monopolistic food industry.

The problem has been developing for ten years. For many of us it may already be too late. One estimate suggests that up to ten thousand people are already infected. In one Pittsburgh hospital over 5% of a 54 patient sample were found to have CJD. If so the official incidence of one in a million people is nonsense. It should be one in a thousand. In Britain older people are rarely tested for CJD because Alzheimers is assumed and the incidence of CJD is alarmingly understated.

Watching a dying victim of CJD on television, T.S.Eliot's prophetic words surfaced:

"This is the way the world ends. Not with bang – but a whimper."

NB: In the present Doomsday situation can anyone, even a lawyer, still maintain that the McLibel Two committed a libel?

**John Pilgrim**

## SOME ALTERNATIVES TO NUCLEAR POWER

The industrial revolution of the last century was founded on coal. A lot of coal remains underground, but the mining industry in this country is mostly shut down by a government intent on wrecking the National Union of Mineworkers.

The chief loss is to ex-miners who have lost their livelihood. Under capitalism, unless one is rich the only way to have a reasonable livelihood is to have a job. So people are anxious to preserve jobs, even if they are pointless or positively harmful.

Abandoned pit villages, we are often reminded, were once very close communities. Local union branches were sometimes indistinguishable from chapel committees, and subsidised male voice choirs, brass bands, adult education courses and libraries. Miners were always eager to help fellow-miners who were in trouble underground, and when disaster struck the entire village would gather at the pit-head in mutual support. Very romantic.

We should remember that strong communal feeling generally results from communal experience of adversity. Some old inhabitants of London's East End are nostalgic for the blitz, when neighbours rallied to help neighbours injured or bereaved or dispossessed by bombs.

Coal mining is mostly a nasty job, anciently done by slaves and recently by wage-slaves, performed in conditions which are unpleasant, dirty and dangerous. Miners took pride in their communities, and their individual skills and strengths, but at the same time encouraged their sons to be educated for healthier work. They did not wish their jobs on those they loved.

'Where there's muck there's brass' was a popular saying when coal-based industry brought prosperity at the cost of severe air pollution. Skies in industrial towns were generally brighter on Sundays (a phenomenon which some attributed to the concentration of prayer) when the coal-burning factories were shut. Undertakers' men worked overtime when pea-soup fogs occurred in London as recently as 1962. Fine town halls and theatres were faced with marble, terracotta and honey-

coloured sandstone, and within a decade were uniformly black. As they were cleaned in the last thirty years, it was discovered that under the layers of soot the stones themselves were decayed by deposits of sulphur compounds from coal.

The other fossil fuels, petroleum and gas (but not orimulsion), are less obviously mucky than coal, but equally productive of nitrous oxide, sulphur compounds and, of course, carbon dioxide. A few years ago it was fashionable to worry about how soon the stocks of fossil fuel would run out. Now it is fashionable to worry about global warming and acid rain, and how long the world can afford to go on using fossil fuel.

When nuclear power was introduced, before its dangers were fully understood, it was welcomed because it seemed to promise that nobody would have to work in coal mines and the air could be clean.

Fossil fuels other than coal are likely to be exhausted in fifty years, at the present rate of consumption. According to NUM full-time officials, before they were defeated, this meant the coal mines should be kept going, even those which yielded the filthiest coal at the greatest expense in terms of man-hours per ton and miners' suffering.

According to the spokespeople of the nuclear power industry, it means more must be invested in nuclear power, even though accessible reserves of uranium are also likely to run out in fifty years. The technology of fusion – converting hydrogen to helium – will be completely different from the technology of fission – smashing uranium – but those who run the fission plants assume they will get to run the fusion plants as well. However, experiments in harnessing energy from fusion have been going on for fifty years and are still at the stage of pure science. It cannot be assumed that there will

be a viable fusion technology in another fifty years.

All the arguments between coal and nuclear fuel, however, ignore sources of energy which are unlikely to run out soon, such as sunlight and gravity.

Nuclear power stations currently provide 18% of electricity in Britain, but hydro-electric stations provide 20%. France gets 70% from nuclear power, but the cheapest electricity in France is generated by the tidal barrage built in 1967 at La Rance, and one-third of the electricity used in Paris comes from a geothermal plant.

Hot water for houses can be generated by cheapish sun-traps on roofs, consisting of glass frames, black surfaces and water. There are more than 200 houses in London which generate half their heat from such devices, and in sunnier places they can generate all the heat necessary.

Worldwide, about 50% of artificial heat is obtained by burning wood. If new wood grows in place of what is burned then, unlike the burning of fossil fuel, as much carbon dioxide and sulphur is absorbed as is generated. 15% of agricultural land in this country is 'set-aside', i.e. farmers are paid not to grow anything there. It is calculated that if all the set-aside land was used to grow poplar, cut down at three years for firewood, this would provide half the electricity now used in this country.

The fastest growing energy technology is wind generation. Wind machines have, of course, existed for millennia, but recent ones are new in that they use lift, like aircraft, while the old ones use drag. Electricity is now generated by wind power in every European nation except France – and Scotland has more wind than anywhere else in Europe.

In Britain, wind power is a by-product of nuclear power, or rather of public distrust in nuclear power. When the fossil fuel plants were privatised, the

Thatcher government went against its boasted free-market principles and imposed a levy on everybody's electricity bills to subsidise the extra cost of nuclear power. Because of public mistrust, however, this was wrapped up as a 'non-fossil fuel' levy. It has raised £3 billion, of which £2.25 billion has gone to nuclear power. This leaves an enormous £750 million for the development of alternatives.

Assessors, in practice from the nuclear power industry, rejected schemes for wave power as untenable. Tidal barrages and hydro-electric schemes require enormous capital and provoke genuine concerns about the environment. There are some small geothermal plants (one provides 10% of the power for Southampton hospital) but no new schemes were offered. That left wind.

A possible objection to wind is that electricity is often required in surges, for instance when a television broadcast ends and five million electric kettles are switched on at the same time. Wind machines cannot produce surges in response to demand, but only in response to the supply of wind. Nobody advocates, however, that wind turbines should be the *only* source of power.

Experimental wind turbine 'farms' were set up in Northern England and Wales, and are undeniably successful. The land they occupy is not covered, but available for use as sheep grazing or whatever. The professionals of the Ramblers Association objected to more being built, on the ground that they would ruin the beauty of hilltops, but the objection was withdrawn after protests from members. Polls have been taken of people who live within sight of wind farms, and the majority do not just tolerate them but actually think they improve the view (the experimental ones are not in areas of outstanding natural beauty).

The only substantial objection now comes from the Countryside Protection Society, a new foundation whose Secretary just happens to be the Public Relations Manager of Nuclear Electric / British Energy.

## — ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK — ENCOUNTERS IN GRENOBLE

It is certainly an indication of the changing audience for anarchist propaganda that the latest international anarchist gathering was set up by the Sociology Department of the Pierre Mendès France University at Grenoble in south-east France. It is one of several universities sharing the same campus outside the town, reached by an enviably cheap and frequent tramway whose quiet and comfortable vehicles should be envied by British cities.

The conference on *La Culture Libertaire* ran from 21st to 23rd March with over thirty sessions (some parallel) running from 9am to 7pm for three days. Admission was free to all and every session was packed with young and old, sitting in the aisles of the lecture theatre and often in an adjacent room with a television screen. As a non-polyglot, I skipped plenty of sessions, but each had audiences of between 100 and 150, and the problem was usually that of finding a seat and of sitting next to the right whispering translator among friends from Holland, Switzerland or France.

Downstairs a variety of bookstalls peddled the impressive range of anarchist literature in French, German, Italian and Spanish. In sheer volume, the most remarkable of all was probably the *Atelier de Création Libertaire* (BP 1186, 69202, Lyon, Cedex 01, France, and the associated bookshop Librarie La Gryffe, 5 rue Sebastien Gryphe, 69007, Lyon, France). However, I also learned from *Alternative Libertaire* (BP 177, 75967, Paris, Cedex 20, France) that Jean Maitron's history of the French anarchist movement has recently been published in Arabic in Lebanon.

When we consider the failure of the international anarchist movement to penetrate beyond the European and North or South American world (apart from well-known incursions in China, Japan and Korea, as well as parallel trends in India), this is intriguing news. But why did it have to be history, rather than an application of anarchist ideas to the current ferment in what, to us, is the Middle East?

This question of contemporary relevance was one of the themes of several participants, and was phrased in various ways as the difference between the old and the new anarchism. It was tackled head-on by Rossella Di Leo from the Italian group who publish the monthly *Rivista A*, the quarterly *Volontà* and the *Elèuthera* series of books with authors ranging from Kurt Vonnegut to Marge Piercy

(Edizione Volontà, casella postale 10667, 20110, Milano, Italy). She urged us to avoid recriminations between different concepts of anarchism and to be conscious of current trends outside our private world. "Anarchism is not just a variant of industrial archaeology" she declared, and she talked about the links between anarchist thinking and the Green movement, the women's movement, current citizen direct action campaigns, and 'chaos theory' in geography and mathematics, as well as educational and biological theories about small self-governing cells as the foundation of social behaviour.

She was followed by Anna Niedzwiecka who circulated various anarchist journals from Poland, and stressed that the noteworthy fact about them was the youth of the participants. The only occasion when angry voices were heard from the audience was when Mimmo, a big bearded guy from Lyon, reported a comparison between the social characteristics of the anarchist movement in 1895 as reported at the time by Augustin Hamon in *Psychologie de l'anarchiste-socialiste* and in 1955 as discovered by his own research. His findings were much like those of two readership surveys conducted thirty years apart by *Freedom*, but he was accused of stealing anarchism from the industrial workers and handing it over to the graduate intelligentsia. I thought it a bit hard that he should be blamed for accurately reporting on social facts, but there wasn't any time to explore the thought that sometime in the next century a new anarchist movement might arise from the 'underclass' created by the collapse of industrial employment throughout the western world.

But there was a series of arguments worth pursuing further. For example, John Clark from Louisiana was talking about links between the ecological movement and libertarianism, an issue nicely explored in the Freedom Press pamphlet *Deep Ecology and Anarchism*, but when we took the bus to Chamrousse to have a meal out of doors with snow all around us, we fell to talking about Cajun music instead of the issues involved. Personal enthusiasms took over from ideology.

services, so the poor became still poorer and the victims of the old regime were also the victims of the new one too.

De Jong compared the Spanish revolution of 1936 which affected about ten million people at the most, with the events of 1989 which affected the three hundred million inhabitants of the Soviet Empire. Statistics apart, one of his important arguments was that if some selective virus killed off all the world's anarchists tomorrow, anarchism as an idea would survive and emerge in every kind of society.

The same kind of issue was raised by a variety of speakers: Alain Pessin, our host, Ronald Creagh from Montpellier and Peter Schrempf from Switzerland, who reminded us of the theme of 'Old and New Anarchism' had been the subject of an international meeting in 1974 when Luce Fabbrì called for a "soto voce anarchism" when it is likely to get a hearing, urged us to remember that it wasn't necessary to pose the one against the other. I seem to remember the same sentiments in 1984 at the Venice gathering, and I certainly believe that adherents of both old and new anarchism, if in fact they differ, should push their own approaches, not among each other but in the unfriendly world outside.

In fact, I heard of about half a dozen experiments in applied anarchism when I was in Grenoble. Jean-Manuel Traimond, who was kind enough to act as my translator, is the author of a book of stories from the 25-year-old squatter settlement in Christiania, Copenhagen (see also article on page 7). Other people talked about the school called Bonaventure on an island north of Bordeaux, and about the community called Los Arenalejos outside Malaga in southern Spain (see also article below). I learned how Peter Schrempf had organised a cooperative cleaning agency in Switzerland, by-passing the contractors, and I heard from Claire Auzias about a progressive school venture in Nantes (the Lycée Autogéré) organised within the official system by Gabriel Cohn-Bendit. Anarchism does slip in with a quiet but persistent voice.

That was the message I brought back from Grenoble.

Colin Ward

## LOS ARENALEJOS: BUILDING A FUTURE

We first came to this beautiful valley high in the Andalucian mountains in 1987 and since then we have steadily worked the land and completely restored the old olive pressing house where we now live. The fifteen hectare farm, situated on one side of the valley, contains about 1,500 olive trees and a further 500 fruit trees that are now beginning to provide wonderful organic produce. There is also a large garden and greenhouse supplying a wide variety of vegetables all year round.

Here we attempt to create a mini-world free from bosses, hierarchies and the major influences of the state, where each child and adult is able to live in freedom. Maintaining links with the libertarian and ecology movements, such as the CNT, is important to us and to this end we publish *La Hoja* (the page/leaf) in which we discuss themes that are important to collective living and that relate directly to our own experiences here over the years. When possible we travel to various groups to give talks, generally on the theme of 'Social Ecology'.

### DIRECT ACTION

So 'the plan' is to hold a summer camp from 1st August to 15th September 1996 at the farm. We are therefore inviting individuals connected with the libertarian movement from around the world to help in the next stage of our development. We urgently need to build carpentry and tool workshops, and construct

the first independent house which will be made from earth and stone designed to sit in the natural terrain of the mountain slopes.

Could people write to us as soon as possible (**Los Arenalejos, Lista de Correos, 29567, Alozaina, Malaga, Spain**) telling us a little about themselves and as to when they think they will be coming. We will write back with a full detailed information sheet and a description of the best way to get here.

Los Arenalejos

### Workers Solidarity Alliance - IWA 1996 Convention Notice

Greetings once again from all of us, members of the Workers Solidarity Alliance, US section of the International Workers Association.

Our thirteenth annual convention will be held this year in New York City on 31st May, 1st June and 2nd June 1996. We cordially invite observers from your union or organisation to join us here. The convention will be held at the address below.

All may be sure of a comradely welcome. Those planning to attend should give us timely notice so that we may send detailed information.

Workers Solidarity Alliance  
339 Lafayette Street, Room 202,  
New York, NY 10012

tel: (212) 979-8353, fax: (201) 667-9197

## On Gradualism

In the course of those polemics which arise among anarchists as to the best tactics for achieving, or approaching the creation of an anarchist society – and they are useful, and indeed necessary arguments when they reflect mutual tolerance and trust and avoid personal recriminations – it often happens that some reproach others with being *gradualists*, and the latter reject the term as if it were an insult.

Yet the fact is that, in the real sense of the word and given the logic of our principles, we are all gradualists. And all of us, in whatever different ways, have to be.

It is true that certain words, especially in politics, are continually changing their meaning and often assume one that is quite contrary to the original, logical and natural sense of the term.

Thus with the word *possibilist*. Is there anyone of sound mind who would seriously claim to want the impossible? Yet in France the term became the special label of a section of the Socialist Party who were followers of the former anarchist, Paul Brousse – and more willing than others to renounce socialism in pursuit of an impossible cooperation with bourgeois democracy.

Such too is the case with the word *opportunist*. Who actually wants to be an inopportunist, and as such renounce what opportunities arise? Yet in France the term *opportunist* ended up by being applied specifically to followers of Gambetta and is still used in the pejorative sense to mean a

person or party without ideas or principles and guided by base and short-term interests.

The same is true of the word *transformist*. Who would deny that everything in the world and in life evolves and changes? Who today is not a 'transformer'? Yet the word was used to describe the corrupt and short-term policies pioneered by the Italian Depretis.

It would be a good thing to put a brake on the habit of attributing to words a meaning that is different from their original sense and which gives rise to such confusion and misunderstanding. But how to do it is another matter, particularly when the change in meaning is a deliberate tactic on the part of politicians to disguise their iniquitous purposes behind fine words.

Maybe it is true, therefore, that the word *gradualist*, as applied to anarchists, could end up in fact describing those who use the excuse of doing things gradually, as and when they become possible, and in the last analysis doing nothing at all – either that or moving, if they move at all, in a contrary direction to anarchy. If this is the case the term has to be rejected. Yet the real sense of gradualism remains the same: everything in nature and in life changes by degrees, and this is no less true of anarchy. It can only come about little by little.

Errico Malatesta

Taken from *The Anarchist Revolution: polemical articles 1924-1931* by Errico Malatesta

# THE BLUE COW

The Blue Cow

by John Olday

Freedom Press, ISBN 0 900384 86 7, £3.50 (post-free inland, add 15% overseas)

By happy coincidence this week, as if to salvage the last remnants of the cow's gentle image, the new Freedom Press title *The Blue Cow* appears in print for the first time, although it was written over fifty years ago. Written in the style of a children's book but intended for 'dreamers' of all ages, this charming fairy story traces the adventures of a blue cow said to have appeared to the author in a series of dream sequences during those hazy half-waking half-sleeping twilight interludes when the mind plays tricks on us.

The innocent blue cow has many adventures and visits different lands of the imagination, such as 'the happy land of peace and fulfilled wishes' and the lonely bored world of the man in the moon (these are pre-moon landing days remember).

The blue cow's desire to experience life to the full and make some sense of the world gives John Olday the freedom to comment on the vagaries of various lifestyles and belief systems. Catholics, the military and trade unions all receive gentle mocking from John Olday's pen, as does the rigidity and conservatism

of human nature. He makes his observations with humour and understanding.

It is inevitable that, no matter how enlightened John Olday's view of the world and its potential for happiness, the attitudes of the 1940s will filter through into his work and a modern reviewer cannot fail to notice some anomalies which might offend present-day multi-cultural, non-sexist outlooks and sensibilities. The decade when this was written must be taken into account.

Above all it is the quality of the drawing that is so impressive. At a time when the illustrations in children's books tend towards the over-detailed, John Olday's simple monochrome line drawings with only the image of the cow shaded in blue makes a refreshing and striking change. The cow herself is particularly charming and the facial expressions are very amusing.

The drawings appeal to 3-4 year olds, although the text would need a little ad hoc editing for this age group. In terms of storyline it would probably appeal to 7-8 year olds who are constantly exposed to conflicting messages. Like most fairy stories, *The Blue Cow* has a happy ending. True love and a panacea for all those affected by it.

A delightful and uplifting book on all levels - a little bit of the fanciful does you good.

Silvia Edwards



It was a most delightful place. Animals of all kinds living without fear of one another, playing, dancing in joy and happiness.

Each one had had his wishes granted. You could see elephants and pigs with wings, fish swimming through the air, a tree that did not have to stand for ever on one spot but was able to move about and walk. There were mushrooms dancing about, and flowers flying, like butterflies, from place to place.

It was such a charming sight that the blue cow forgot her disappointment. "This really is heaven!" she said.

## — ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF — FREE-FOR-ALL BOOK INDUSTRY?

Until quite recently all publishers of books in this country observed a controlled retail price on their books. Freedom Press - though we want to be looked upon as *propagandists* and not as *publishers* as such - have always observed that rule. And in our case, and even of other small publishers of no interest to Freedom Press, it was in order to *protect the existence of the small bookseller against the supermarket predators*.

They got their way and so could market the best-sellers at discount prices and so deprive the small bookseller of the titles that helped to pay the rent and maintain a representative stock.

I warned in these columns that the result would be that the published price of books would inevitably be increased so that Smiths and Dillons could offer them at a *sensationally* reduced price.

Let me quote from the capitalist press. The *Guardian* (22nd March) states that:

"Prices of books expected to become best-sellers have been increased by a tenth this year to allow retailers to offer discounts without damaging publishing margins.

The substantial rises are a response to the collapse of the net book agreement last autumn, opening the way for price competition on books and hitting profit margins in the trade.

Bookwatch, the publishing research group, found in its latest survey that publishers have raised the prices of the top seventy hardbacks by an average

of 6.5%. The top ten have seen an even larger increase - between 8% and 10%."

So draw your own conclusions. Surely when the big boys say they are breaking down price controls on books what they are doing in fact is to corner the market for the best-selling tripe at the expense of the small bookseller who relies on selling the tripe to pay the rent and other overheads, and selling the non-tripe to make a living.

### FREEDOM OF THE PRESS?

The weekly *Tribune* has not only had an editorial 'Free Press at Bay' (15th March), but the Peter Hain column on the same subject as a result of W.H. Smith's decision to remove "between 300 and 400 small titles from its news shelves and replace them with a magazine-ordering service". *Tribune* is one of the victims. *Tribune* considers this as "a threat to press freedom". Of course it is, but who, other than perhaps Peter Hain MP, assumed that W.H. Smiths are in business to *protect press freedom!* They are in business to increase their profits. Labour Party politicians like Peter Hain should stop belly-aching about W.H. Smiths and spend more time asking themselves what the Labour Party is all about and what in fact it would or could do to upset the whole millionaire industry of communications and distribution. And I know the answer: nothing!

Libertarian

## — FREEDOM PRESS BOOKSHOP — READERS' ROUND-UP

The latest book from Working Press is *Writing on the Line: 20th century working class women writers* by Sarah Richardson, Merylyn Cherry, *et al*, about half of which is an annotated list of writers A-Z with brief biographical details and their works. The other half is pieces urging recognition of such women's writing, and a look at the way they covered the Miners' Strike. 148 pages, £8.95. *Workers Solidarity* #47 (spring) leads on the campaign against the water charges, the drugs debate, and the weakening of clerical power since the divorce ban was lifted. 75p for twelve A3 pages. Otto Ruhle, well known for his *The Struggle Against Fascism Begins with the Struggle Against Bolshevism*, also wrote *The Revolution is Not a Party Affair*,\* denouncing the German Communist Party and the various Social Democratic Parties and their policies around the First World War period. Eight A5 pages for 50p by Pirate Press.

The secular humanist monthly *The Freethinker* is still at it, and we have the last three issues January-March at £1.00 each for sixteen pages of anti-religious heaven. On the same note we also have Mark Holloway's *Heavens on Earth: utopian communities in America 1680-1880*, 246 pages of stimulating information from Dover Publications at £8.95, worth comparing with *Brotherly Tomorrows*\* (reviewed in *Freedom*, 21st October last). We still have a very few copies of *The Skeptic* (9/1) featuring 'Ritual Satanic Abuse: reality or illusions' and 'How Not to Win the Lottery', and just two copies of 9/2 on 'How to Become a Charlatan', and the enduring myth of the unicorn. Both are £1.85 for 28 A4 pages (subsequent issues are now £2.00).

*East Timor: genocide in paradise* is the latest handy little book from Odonian Press by Matthew Jardine, with an introduction by Noam Chomsky. In 96 pages it covers Portuguese rule, the independence struggle, the invasion by Indonesia, the Dili

massacre, US support for Indonesia, recent developments and more, all for £5.95.

The latest issue (41) of *Organise!* covers the new Socialist Labour Party, the autumn wave of strikes and protests in France, the second part of a series on art and anarchism, and a lot more. 60p for twenty A4 pages.

Now back in print is *Manifesto of Libertarian Communism* by George Fortenis in a smart new edition by ACE, and reported out of print is *Scottish Anarchist* #3 and *TV Times: a seven day guide to killing your TV* (most of which can be found in *Test Card F*).

The following titles, listed as (new) on the last pamphlet list, are at present out of stock or in extremely short supply due to circumstances beyond our control. We were assured by the publishers that they would be available for last summer and on that basis entered them on the list, but both they and we have been let down by another party arranging the printing. Grovelling apologies to anyone still waiting, we will of course supply you as soon as we get them: Alberola and Gransac, *Spain 1962*; Anarkovic, *Against the God Emperor*; Makhno, *My Visit to the Kremlin*; Meltzer, *First Flight*; Nicoll, *Life in English Prisons*; Por, *The Italian Glassblowers' Takeover of 1910*; Tellez, *The Unsung Struggle*; Tsebry, *Memories of a Makhnovist Partisan*; Yartchuk, *Kronstadt in the Russian Revolution*.

A new expanded booklist is in the making, we hear, and should be with us in the next several weeks. If writing for one, please specify a '1996 list'.

'Four Eyes'

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# A NARCHY IN ACTION?

— NUMBER 8 —

## Christiania

**Christiania is a kind of free town situated in front of the Royal Palace in Copenhagen, Denmark. It is big enough in size to be called a town – or at least a quarter – and it is certainly free in significant ways.**

At a collective level residents provide all their own services – from street cleaning and rubbish collection, to keeping out violence and the abuse of hard drugs. Residents have organised themselves into various councils: the Common Meeting (the ultimate ruling body), Treasurer Group, 'Busy-ness' Council, and a Cooperative Workers' Meeting. Decisions are by consensus, and all Christianites have access and the right to speak at all meetings. Most expenses are covered by the Collective Fund which gets its income from residential fees, from payments by workshops and businesses, and from various fund-raisers. However, the freedom of Christiania is more than just this shorthand. From the descriptions we find of social life in Christiania in a recent book by Jean Traimond\* we get a feel of the kind of existential freedom its inhabitants have. One can imagine living in a state of almost permanent angst amongst the characters whose pictures he paints. This is Traimond's style in the first part of the book – a series of portraits, some very brief. Here's the shortest, translated by the author:

"In one of the most famous photographs of Christianite life, Olaf rises naked and bearded from a bathtub steaming in the open air. Also renowned for his bouts of cruelty he freed swans from the frozen lake only in order to strangle them. He did not strangle the hens from his garden around the Gunpowder Tower – he shot them.

A great rider he was not above making a show of it: thus he took part in a general meeting seated on the velvet chairs of the Limelight Cinema... on horseback. Legend has it that it took five police cars to arrest him as, one night, he rode into Copenhagen without lights. For whenever a car tried to block his horse, he'd have the horse jump over the car. Viking to the bone, Olaf brewed his own mead although hallucinogenic drugs were part of the recipe. For a parade he once invited passers-by to get into his cart and partake of the local mead. So many fools fainted that witnesses have concurred in comparing his cart to those who, in former times, had theirs loaded with the corpses of those struck by the Plague."

One quickly finds oneself wondering if the whole thing is a surrealist scam or a cult sixties Kerouac style novel. There is another fine little thumbnail sketch of Jacob Olkusk who was the author's neighbour for three years but who he never met. Jacob's lorry served as a beer distribution service. He also had a bear:

"For a parade, Jacob set the steering wheel up at the back of his lorry so that the bear, seated up front, seemed to be in the driving seat. The police were not amused. The bear drank Jacob's beer to the great joy of the passers-by ..."

As the book continues some twenty individuals make their appearance. Slowly the writer, an anarchist, begins to drop social comments into the 'narrative'. His comments add to the feel of a topsy turvy world where

'normality' has disappeared. The lengthier extract we produce here considers directly the question of whether Christiania can be called anarchic. Interestingly Traimond seems to suggest that the experiment fails on the grounds of collective responsibility ... or perhaps he leaves the door open.

### TACKLING THE PROBLEM

Perhaps to help us to decide we can turn to some other evidence coming from an essay by Patralekha Chatterjee which suggests that it is exactly this collective responsibility which has for a long time been growing in Christiania. Some things have changed in Christiania. So much is for sure. Living outside the law now has some of its own rules, according to Lulla Forehammer, one of Christiania's inhabitants. She has been at the forefront of a fight against hard drugs and violence in Christiania. The days when anything was permissible are over. Today, heroin, cocaine and speed can't be bought in Christiania. Junkies protected by their big dogs are confined strictly to their own patch of land - Pusher Street – where they can sell only soft drugs. "That was the only way out. There is a boundary line. And if they are ever caught peddling drugs beyond the line, there is trouble," Forehammer says.

"In 1979, we started finding hard drugs inside Christiania. Things started getting out of hand. There were needles, syringes strewn around. Violence broke out. Burglaries took place. We realised we could not survive this way." She and other concerned women blockaded the building where the dope-peddlers lived. Hard drug addicts were forcibly sent off to rehabilitation clinics. A start had been made but ten years later, in 1989, the problem was returning and Forehammer and her band of women activists were once again holding meetings to save Christiania.

"The place was getting violent. The young hash-peddlers with leather boots, tattooed

forearms and shaven heads would stand near the main entrance, trying to intimidate people. Two persons were shot. Some of us felt we had had enough. If we let things continue, Christiania would be playing into the hands of its critics. And who knows, the government could close it down." In one late evening meeting, the women divided themselves into three groups and fanned out across the length and breadth of the area. Their aim – to build a wall to block the main entrance where the thugs walked around menacingly. "We worked day and night with cement, bricks and wood and soon we had erected a wall. There was a lot of resistance from the pushers. We also knew that with the main entrance blocked, they might move to other entry points facing the main road," Forehammer said. They decided that the best way to fight future drug sales was to confine the peddlers to one area and let them sell soft drugs like hashish. Pusher Street was born.

Life has returned to normal in Christiania, kept that way through frequent vigils, which Forehammer and other activists convene to ensure everything is in order. Again is it anarchy? As always in this column and here, like Traimond, we leave you to decide...

### EXTRACT ...

"Nowhere other as big as Christiania is freedom such a frightening concept.

And if it is revealing to know what a society is frightened of it is just as revealing to know what it is not frightened of. In the case of Christiania unemployment is a blessing, old-age a myth for which suicide brings down the demand, poverty a relief, anonymity impossible and solitude a choice.

The Paris commune only lasted a couple of months. Spanish and Ukrainian anarchists knew only war. There has never been any other great anarchist commune which has succeeded in establishing itself in the centre of a town, and in a single place for more than twenty years. No other attempt by anarchists has enjoyed such a benevolent attitude from the authorities. It is no crime to live in Christiania. No public service has

boycotted Christiania for very long. No political adversary has tried to use violence to destroy Christiania.

No political organisation has emerged or planted itself within Christiania with the aim of opposing the anarchic ideal. Although the number of drug traffickers, profiteers, opportunists and parasites may be high, and even if so very few inhabitants are members of anarchist organisations a clear majority amongst them share the anarchist analysis of the state, authority and work.

Could nothing stop Christiania from being anything other than anarchy?

In other words, since no other human group has known such favourable conditions for the establishment of an anarchic society, Christiania constitutes an ideal laboratory to test as to whether people can build an anarchic society.

Unique it is. Ideal it isn't. Indeed the area in which Christiania seems most distant from the anarchist ideal, the economy, is also the area where it has the least trump cards to offer. It is the very generosity of the social security aid programme which makes up the greatest handicap for an anarchist economy: how does one cut oneself off from such an accommodating system?

The extraordinary Christianite blossoming of workshops, trade, small non-hierarchical enterprises is, in my view, an excellent thing. But it does not hide the fact that to a great extent Christiania lives on external income. Certainly, Christiania saves the authorities more money than they spend but we have no way of knowing what would happen if the lifeline was cut off.

The very presence of money also detracts from the anarchist nature of Christiania. To ignore it is to ignore the fact that one thousand people right in the middle of a Western city could not produce for themselves the food, medicines and energy that they consume. It is also to overlook the fact that the Christianites have tried as far as they possibly can to become if not autarchic then at least self managing. But it also hides the fact that apart from the pushers the money mentality doesn't exist, that numerous residents in Christiania could easily pursue more lucrative employment elsewhere, that any attempt at a system of free distribution comes up a cropper given the fact that Christiania finds itself at the heart of a community comprising 500,000 people.

But also the need for a completely anarchist economy is not widely felt. No Scandinavian is deprived of Social Security. The non-Scandinavians, scarcely a quarter of the population, all know how to earn a living. None of them would find themselves expelled if they couldn't afford Christiania's 'rent' and no Christianite restaurant refuses food to those who are really hungry. Sometimes they will only give a bowl of steaming rice but they give it all the same.

Drug related income?

Of course it's part of the scene since the one hundred and fifty pushers in Christiania eat, drink and dance in Christiania. (Christiania's original sin. There it is: despairing of ever being able to hold on to such a sizeable plot of land help was accepted from anyone who offered it even from those who, it was known from the beginning were, in varying degrees, criminal).

The pushers were accepted in Christiania for two fundamental reasons:

Firstly impotence. The pushers have arms. To kick them out would lead those involved to open themselves up to being shot at: nobody wanted to be a hero.

Secondly the almost unbelievable tolerance of the Danes: anyone who gets indignant at the fact that the Christianites didn't kick the pushers out should firstly reflect that the authorities didn't kick the Christianites out.

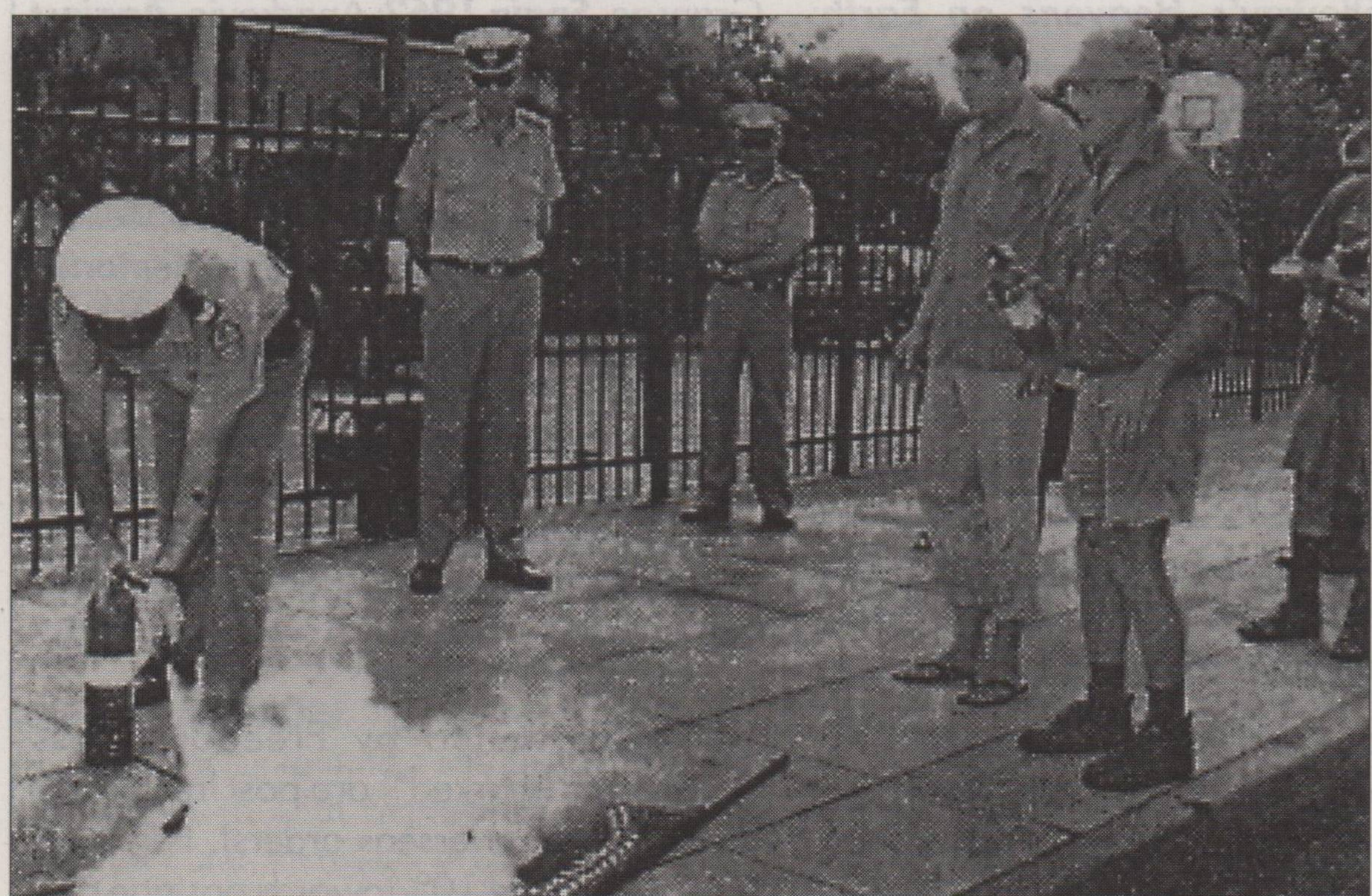
This response can also be given in large part to the second major objection to calling Christiania anarchist: the presence of violence and hierarchy, the violence of psychopaths like Profit-Knud who was able to go on the rampage for eight years and the hierarchy of the pushers.

Anarchist theory explains the existence of the police by the desire of the ruling classes to maintain their dominant position in society. This is correct. But it is necessary that faced with a brutal individual that the weaker individual be protected in some way. If such a defence is not the task of some professional body then it becomes the responsibility of every one, all the time. Despite clearly being aware of this need the Christianites have never accepted this responsibility except when pushed to the absolute limit and after years of abuse.

So is Christiania anarchist? This prudent author leaves the readers to decide for themselves."

\* *Récits de Christiania* by Jean-Manuel Traimond (Atelier de Création Libertaire, 1994).

## POLICE STAMP OUT PROTEST FLAG FIRE



A mock Indonesian military flag was burned in a small protest outside the Indonesian Consulate in Darwin yesterday morning.

Police had warned demonstrators they would be arrested if flags were set alight. But when protesters lit one corner of the flag, police stepped in with a fire extinguisher and doused the flames. No arrests were made.

Five people were summonsed after burning mock Indonesian military flags in December. The demonstration yesterday was over nine East Timorese who have been in the Australian Embassy in Jakarta seeking political asylum. Three of the asylum seekers have been admitted to hospital. One of them, Fidel Alves, 15, said from his private hospital bed in central Jakarta yesterday: "If we're not accepted by Australia we don't mind dying at the Australian Embassy".

He said the group of nine had not eaten for almost seven days, but embassy staff claim the group has been on a hunger strike for only four days.

The youths entered the embassy two weeks ago seeking political asylum. Canberra gave them the options of travelling to Portugal or applying for a visa in Australia.

The nine have identified themselves as Hermenegildo Lopes, Sejar Das Quintas, Florencio Amaral, Ana Paula Fonceka, Delta Alves, Aires Aparicio Guterres, Faustino Ximenes Martins, Amorin Vieira and Fidel Alves.

taken from *Northern Territory News*, Tuesday 20th February 1996, sent by Shell 63

## Should Anarchists Vote?

Dear *Freedom*,  
In January I wrote in a letter to *Freedom* asking whether or not anarchists should vote. Over the last three or so issues of *Freedom* since my letter was published, I have read with interest the replies and responses I've had to my question, and I'd like to thank those who wrote in to express their thoughts.

In the last *Freedom* Little Cog asked if my letter was a hoax or a piece of mischief-making? My letter and question were neither. My question was intended to find out what other anarchists thought on the issue of voting in the next general election given some of the political events that have unfolded since the last one. My own knowledge of anarchism is still limited. My ideas and ideals are, I believe, anarchist, yet my theory and knowledge of certain aspects of anarchism are still growing and I have many questions to ask, some simple, some not so simple. By asking questions, hopefully my own knowledge will grow and questions answered and maybe answer those of others who question anarchist thought and beliefs.

A lot of people I come into contact with are disillusioned with politicians, their antics, power games and broken or false promises. Yet still people vote for something they don't always necessarily believe in. As Little Cog stated, a lot is made of voting and there's something wrong with you if you don't. After all, people have sacrificed their lives to bring freedom and the right to vote. A popular line is that if the Nazis had won the Second World War you wouldn't have a choice whether to vote or not anyway!

True, a lot of people have died to bring 'freedom' (?) in wars and conflicts all over the world. How I'm supposed to feel about that, I don't know. A lot would say 'grateful'.

When I was younger I used to feel that by becoming involved in politics, i.e. the Labour Party / Militant, that together we could

really change the world, people's attitudes and have a sharing, caring society. More fool me on that one! As I've grown older I've realised that most people only care about themselves and their family and this is one of the reasons why people voted Tory – they actually believed that they would have more power and control over their lives to live and do as they pleased. That, through capitalism, they would have more money and freedom. In this case, more fool them.

I realise that in the upcoming general election the minority of anarchists here will not upset the result of the election but, as has been suggested in the letters page to my question, anarchists eligible to vote should, but spoil them, and also prepare an abstentionist campaign explaining why. Both these ideas seem very good ones to me.

My concerns for our freedom in general, our environment and so many other issues still concern me though. Only by becoming involved in various campaigns, both local and national, will we maybe achieve anything. Issues such as road development have brought together many people from different walks of life with varying political beliefs. Maybe the strength shown through fighting and working together has awakened some to the oppressive nature of government and those who implement it. We have to communicate more to bring forth our ideas and thoughts.

Too often, when I bring up anarchism in conversation, people think that we'll have murderers and criminals running around, total chaos, that such things as the NHS will cease, who will do the work, who will police us, who will do this or that? So many questions. Too many for me to answer alone. Yet it is instances like these that maybe anarchists need to address. Rather than hide away doing our own individual actions or living our lives free as from the state as possible, we need to show the public what anarchism means and diffuse the

illusions set against us. Methods of how? I have no real concrete answers for methods as yet, but maybe this is again something readers of *Freedom* may wish to comment on.

We need to discuss and cooperate much more with each other to begin to achieve any kind of social change. Let's do so.

Stephen Hyland

Dear Editors,

If someone asks if it is worth anarchists voting it is not sufficient to give an answer only in terms of Labour/Lib Dem/SNP/SLP (Little Cog, *Freedom*, 9th March). It is up to everyone to make the decision for themselves when they see who is standing for election in whatever constituency they are registered in. There may be other options instead of the spoilt paper.

I don't intend to survey all options for the UK, but let us at least be aware of the SPGB which will probably have one campaign in England. They are as near to anarchists as a party can be. Also let us be aware of the Green Party which will probably have fifty to a hundred candidates across Great Britain. Their policies generally are not intended to help big business to make more profit and kick the workforce around.

The Green Party has policies of rotating the elected posts and making provision to recall elected representatives. Some anarchists might think that combination is worth voting for. (Bear in mind, however, that the German Greens went soft after getting some people elected and stopped rotating leaders' posts.) Green Party candidates will get a few hundred votes each and your one vote added to that is more significant than one added to the thousands of tens of thousands that the big party candidates expect to get.

So, readers should decide for themselves: to vote or not to vote or to put in a spoilt paper. Even if people are running a campaign against voting they can still go and

## Scientists and our well-being

Dear *Freedom*,

Libertarian (23rd March) is right to point out that science and technology in a capitalist world is primarily used for the purposes of power and profit. Techniques and devices which could have great value for humanity not only could be, but *are*, suppressed to protect established vested interests.

The reason I sometimes have a go at technophobes is that their approach seems to me to set up yet another scapegoat – science – for the shortcomings of the capitalist system, not because of some religious faith in the ability of science to liberate humanity regardless of the political/economic set-up.

Libertarian answers his own argument when he points out that decisions on the use of science (e.g. Hiroshima and Nagasaki) are taken by politicians, not scientists.

So why not put the blame where it belongs? Not just on individual politicians or specific decisions, but the social system that includes war, exploitation and ecological disaster as built-in features. Nuclear weapons are not the sort of thing that can be conjured up by a few scientists in a laboratory. They need large-scale industrial facilities. Would a free society with voluntary, worker-controlled industries have used the knowledge of atomic fission to produce bombs?

If science and technology is controlled by power and profit, the same is true of virtually every other human activity. For instance, to judge by the prices of their products, I would guess that many organic farmers are quite interested in making a few quid. Is this an argument for ceasing such activities until after the revolution? It seems to me that this is what some people would have scientists do, or if not it's hard to see what their real aim is in constantly carping against science. They try to paint a picture of the world in which all food is pure poison and hospitals are designed to kill off their patients. I would point out that contaminated food is better

than no food at all, that hi-tech medicine does sometimes combat injury and disease, that the increased lifespan and improved health which has been seen worldwide this century owes a lot to science and technology and this far outweighs the negative effects of war and pollution. Just think what might have been achieved by a society *deliberately* using science and technology to promote human well-being.

John Wood

## Commercialised Big Brother

Dear *Freedom*,

It transpires that we are the most security videoed nation in the world. A majority are maintained by private security firms operating on behalf of insurance companies.

The insurance companies, security firms and local governmental authorities sell the tapes to video manufacturers who make videos for sale to the general public, who in turn can view such delights as an old man being beaten up in a store robbery, drug dealers bashing each other with pipes, as well as women undressing in department stores and domestic squabbles.

The producers of these videos, to prevent invasion of privacy lawsuits, make the footage deliberately fuzzy to prevent identification.

So this Orwellian situation is exploited by business for gain. The law cannot protect us.

I gleaned all this from an article in the *International Herald Tribune* of 20th March 1996 by Fred Barbash of the *Washington Post* service.

Paul Rothwell-Hartmann

*please keep sending in  
your letters and  
donations ...*

## ZUGZWANG VARIATION

Good fortune once upon a time brought me into contact with a man called Freddie. He was either an anarchist or not, depending on your definition of anarchism. Probably the founder of the London Anarchist Forum, or not, depending on whose memory is to be trusted. He was also a musician to whom many people have dedicated their compositions. It was he who gave me a weather-beaten guitar which had two holes, a regulation one in the front and an irregular taped-over one in the back. In 1981 I bought a shiny thing and I have been pinging on it ever since – although for months in the busy year I never glanced at it. For what is more important, comrades, the social revolution or time out from all other activities for Johnny to make his own music.

Until recently I could make no adequate defence of art as such, but an important consideration to slug it out has brought this reward for all these years of guitar pinging. This is how it happened. I've been given by the composer John Nash the manuscript of his 'Evocation' (of birds, nature, a walk on the sandy banks) and have been attempting to play this for the past couple of years, on and off. So far so good. It was only at the recent concert presentation at Sutton House that I first heard the piece played as it should be, by Carlos Bonnell with great artistry. It was an illumination, and

to cut a long story short, it was like suddenly learning a new language after all that work.

In these days of doom and gloom, when nobody knows where their next prime minister will come from, those of you who have mastered the art of chess (has this word ever previously appeared in these pages?), my considered advice to you is to forget it. Let computers mess about – the game is finished. And it is no use for the escapist chess fanatics to point me towards new variants of the game on boards 9 x 9 or 59 x 36, with new pieces, with old pieces and the rest. This subversive grouping even publish their own magazine, *Variant Chess*, with such choice names as 'Head-wall-banger Chess', which should appeal to comrades for the rules may be changed according to the whims of the players, and it is the winner who buys the round. Most people in this game prefer to lose. And so on. But the latest board game (fad word: chequers) is called 'The Heir Apparent'. The Hastings Think Tank have invented a game in reference to the House of Windsor (by appointment to the media) which is played on a 9 x 9 board with both players having an extra piece, the Heir Apparent. The idea, which could have a shattering effect on the Monarch of Games, is not without its humour. What is being proposed is that the check-mate be abolished in its present form. For, say, one

player check-mates the opponent's king, the game is not over, as in ordinary computer-controlled chess, but the Heir Apparent takes over as the New King and either side may still win or lose the game as it continues.

The man told me it was so, and I told him it wasn't. Neither of us would budge. Red in the face, we repeated our versions. It was so. No it wasn't. At that moment Freddie came through the door, sussed out the situation with one glance and said "The usual?"

After so many years of twanging the thing, a modesty forbids me to mention (in Colin Ward's apt phrase) that my achievement was quite considerable. Some of you are old enough to remember the Second World War which, among other things, exposed my esteemed ear-drums to the most awful noise and re-circulated my outstanding musicality to an atonal torpidity. But I'm glad to report that the perseverance was worth it. I've managed, in just over fifty years, to restore my hearing which the careless explosions concomitant with war had distorted and made out of tune. Not only that but my equally esteemed brain cells for the most part have gone into hiding. At last the majority of them have decided to return.

Recent events, however, begin to remind me of 1962, which was the year of the Cuban missile crisis when the situation became so nerve-wrecking that it made at least

two people from the Committee of 100 to flee this country for the safety of – Ireland (which, having had no extravagant claims to rocket bases, was then regarded as a safe haven). When for two halcyon years I managed to refrain myself from reading other than anarchist newspapers, it was not out of a desire not to know what was happening but I just simply got tired of puzzling out distorted reportage in the bought-and-sold press. But it would be an assiduous reader of the press who could find any mention of the present Cuban crisis – read all about it. A friend living in Florida sent us a cutting from a newspaper there entitled 'A Kennedy-Castro talk touched by history', datelined 18th February, Havana, by Larry Rohter. American energy experts and environmentalists, including the Kennedy brothers, nephews of the late American president, were there to plead with Castro not to go ahead with the started work on a nuclear energy reactor on Cuba's southern coast. At the same time the Russian delegation, led by their Minister for Nuclear Disasters Viktor Mikhailov, was also arriving in Cuba to chivvy the same personage and to discuss plans for finishing the reactor. Our man in Florida says there is cause for anxiety (are you listening Pat Arrowsmith?) otherwise the Americans would not have sent the Kennedys and Skakel and the genial, chubby, Peter Ustinov look-alike Castro would not have jailed the Concilio Cubano, his entire coalition of opposition.

John Rety



## Against the JOB SEEKERS' ALLOWANCE

**Tuesday 9th April**

A march and demonstration in central London called by London Against the JSA

1.00pm at Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, Lambeth Road (nearest tube Lambeth North)

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## London Anarchist Forum

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

### - 1996 PROGRAMME -

**12th April** Through the Anarchist Press and/or The Internet (speaker John Rety)

**19th April** The Still Small Voice (speaker Chris Draper)

**26th April** General discussion

**3rd May** Anarchism as Social Policy (symposium)

**Monday 6th May** *May Day Picnic (perhaps in North East London for a change, say Hackney Downs, Epping Forest or the Lea Valley)*

**10th May** Anarchism and Sport (speaker Peter Neville)

**17th May** General discussion

**24th May** Sado-Masochism (speaker Nicki Wolf) *to be confirmed*

**31st May** General discussion

**7th June** The Difference Between Anarchism and Socialism (speaker Mark Osborne)

**14th June** General discussion

A collection is made to pay for the £15 cost of the room. Donations are accepted from those who cannot attend regularly but wish to see the continuation of these meetings.

Peter Neville / Dave Dane  
London Anarchist Forum

## Anarchist Communist Federation

The Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists. For contacts:

*Across Britain, London and surrounding region:* ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

*Scotland (for contacts in Aberdeen, Elgin and Glasgow):* PO Box 5754 (no other mention), Elgin, Scotland IV30 2ZD

*For Merseyside and region:* Merseyside ACF, PO Box 110, Liverpool L69 8DP

*For Brighton (and contacts in Bognor and Hastings):* Brighton ACF, c/o Unemployed Centre, Tilbury Place, East Sussex

## Red Rambles

A programme of free guided walks in the Midlands for Greens, Socialists, Libertarians and Anarchists. All walks are on a Sunday unless otherwise stated. Bring walking boots, waterproofs, food and drink.

**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.

Telephone for further details  
01773-827513

## Dales Red Rambles

A series of free guided walks in the Yorkshire Dales. All walks are on a Sunday unless otherwise stated. Bring walking boots, waterproofs, food and drink.

**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.

Telephone for further details  
01756-799002

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Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1  
(nearest tube Holborn)  
**ENTRANCE FREE**

To commemorate May Day and the 110th anniversary of the Haymarket incident which led to the state murder of Chicago anarchists. We celebrate working class resistance by taking a look at the Kronstadt uprising against the Bolsheviks (75th anniversary), the British General Strike (70th anniversary) and the Hungarian Revolution (40th anniversary). Not a nostalgic wallow in the past, as we intend to draw the lessons from the struggles. We intend to show that class struggle and revolution are not a thing of the past but very much on the agenda. We hope to get other revolutionary groups to sponsor this event and provide speakers. Watch out for further announcements.

Further information from ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

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