

anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

**"There is no way of
keeping profits up
but by keeping
wages down"**

David Ricardo
On Protection of Agriculture

CIRCUS GALORE 1996 ... BUT WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE BREAD?

Juvenal, ages ago, declared that the Roman people "*Limits its anxious longings to two things only – bread and the games of the circus*".

As we write, the day before the mighty confrontation between England and Germany (that is on the football field!) nothing much has changed so far as the so-called 'masses' in the 'prosperous' West are concerned. For anarchists this is a sobering thought – as propagandists.

But as anarchists who seek to make something more than 'bread and circuses' out of their own lives, physical and mental anarchism (and socialism) make an enormous contribution.

But apart from the declared 'individualists' (anarchist 'hermits'?) most anarchists are propagandists, communicators because they want to live in a world of harmony not conflict.

Today we live in a world of conflict: the Third World is at war (civil war);

the Western world, in particular Europe, has decided that war is too expensive, and as we pointed out in *Freedom* (22nd June) there are no more colonies or expansionism to fight over.

The latest 'war' is 'to balance the books' to qualify for the single currency and all the other appendages of the Maastricht Treaty by the year dot. And to achieve this end all the European Union countries are savaging what is left of the welfare state, that creation of the guilty capitalist system which for its survival had sacrificed not only the six million lives in the holocaust but the other fifty million victims of the Second World War to end all wars (1939-1945).

The circus, thanks to Murdoch and television and a media – including the broadsheets, the so-called 'serious press' – has for the past weeks dominated at the expense of all the

cuts in public services and entitlements for the unemployed and the sick. While the government is investing further billions of pounds in the war industry – not to make war but to keep factories open and maintain jobs, yet they haven't the resources to provide the extra £6 billion that the British Medical Association at their annual meeting said their industry needs in order to keep a sick society (including themselves) going until the next 'crisis'.

As we repeat in almost every issue of *Freedom*, the capitalist system is only concerned with profit. Anarchists are concerned with every individual realising his or her potential, and in the process contributing and receiving to that end. The capitalist system – which would founder without the capitalist media in which one has to include not only the disgusting tabloids but also *The Guardian* and *The Independent* on the so-called Liberal Left – has enemies within its own ranks. In a sense European capitalism has abandoned Europe for the Far East. Again, to repeat ourselves *ad nauseam*, Western
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REFLECTIONS ON THE IRISH 'PROBLEM'

One does not have to be a supporter of the IRA to point out that the last two bombings were against *property*. The police were given due warning. Apparently a section of the public in the Manchester bombing area refused to take the warnings seriously!

As to whether a renewed IRA bombing campaign will do anything to solve the Irish problem surely cannot be answered until one answers the question: *What is the Irish question?*

The answer for ordinary people – not politicians – is that Northern Ireland is certainly more part of the *island of Ireland* than it is of the other island of England, Wales and Scotland! Furthermore, knowing some of the history of that island one can only conclude that it must eventually, Northern Ireland and the much larger portion, become one.

Anarchists have no preferences for the IRA or the Labour SLNR, even less for the ghastly Protestant politicians. Who we are glad to see are now fighting among themselves.

But there is only one solution to the Northern Ireland problem. The British must get out – incidentally, a little historic fact forgotten by public and politicians alike is that the British military (20,000) were sent into the province *by the Labour government* (in 1969) to deal with the *Protestant violence against the Catholics!* No British government now wants to remain in Northern Ireland because it's costing the British taxpayer hundreds of millions a year.

At the time the *Freedom* 'solution' was to suggest offering £100,000 to all the so-called Protestant families who couldn't dream of living in a 'united' Ireland to establish themselves on our island, and to the Catholics another £100,000 to emigrate to the island of their dreams. And Northern Ireland could become an 'Andorra' of the Irish Sea for the imaginative, with no religion, with no national obligations or passwords!

But so far nobody has accepted the *Freedom* solution! Eventually they will be obliged to do so ... or else!

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and much more ...

CIRCUS GALORE 1996 ...

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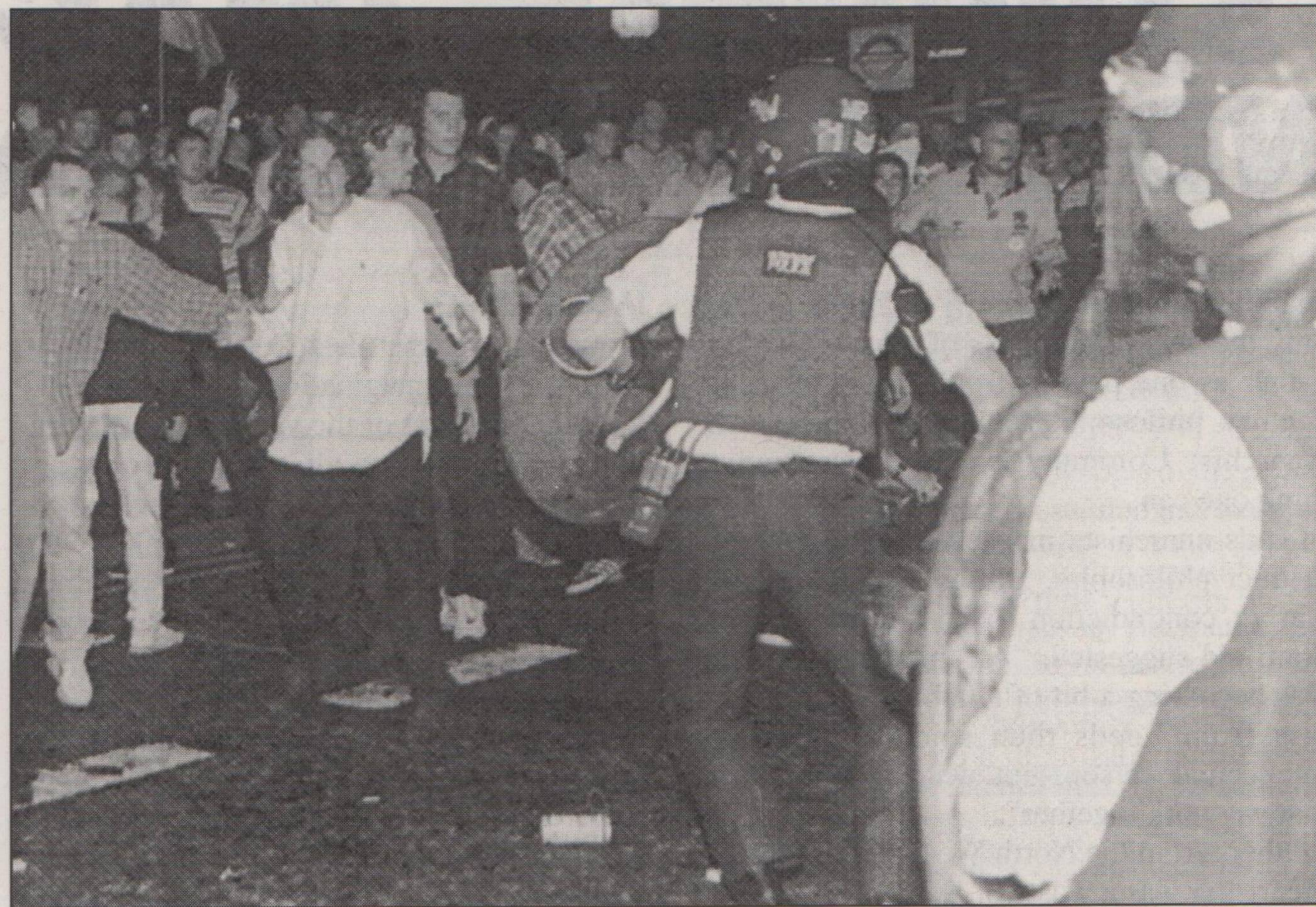
capitalism has directed its capital to the cheap labour of the Far East. If the politicians, Labour and Tory, were concerned with jobs in this country, the Tories could have done it long ago (they've been in office seventeen years!) and the Labour lot have not even 'threatened' to do it: that is, exclude products from cheap labour in the Far East and halt the transfer of capital to the cheap-labour world.

Forbid the thought that *Freedom* is giving advice to our capitalist enemies. What we are illustrating is that if the Major government, or the Labour lot, are concerned with the unemployment figures (in spite of the monthly phoney optimistic statistics) there is only one outcome, and it is the shorter working week, but not imposing a more intensive shorter working week. If the victims of the 'new look' working week don't resist, then surely they deserve what they get!

Come on! This is the moment to resist. All the gadgets are there to make the material life accessible for everybody, and at the same time enjoy the leisure that technology offers.

Capitalism will tell you that it can't afford these 'luxuries'. Tell capitalism that it is the exploited who would produce the luxuries for the rich and other parasites!

POLICE MAKING THEMSELVES NECESSARY?



As most readers in England will know, the England football team lost a game against Germany on Wednesday 26th June. There was

no crowd trouble at all at the ground, but late in the evening after the pubs closed there were confrontations between police and 'hooligans' in various places, including the traditional assembly place of Trafalgar Square in London.

The riots and the trite comments from politicians were thoroughly reported in the national press, mostly on Friday 28th June because most incidents happened after midnight on Wednesday, after Thursday morning's papers had gone to press. We will not repeat the whole story here, but it is worth quoting a few paragraphs from the earliest press reports by Nick Pryer and Patrick Sawyer in the London Evening Standard of Thursday, because they call attention to an aspect of the affair which some fuller reports have missed.

"More reinforcements moved to seal off Charing Cross Road, Whitehall and St Martin's Lane. The fans were penned into Trafalgar Square with nothing much to throw. Curiously, the police chose to execute a pincer movement which cleared the fans from the square but squeezed them like toothpaste from a tube down Northumberland Avenue. Frightened and panicking, they became a mob smashing everything before them.

Whatever any fan might say, the police did not start the trouble. It was not the police who kicked and jumped on cars, turning them over and setting some alight. It was not the police who systematically smashed shop windows.

The police were not even heavy-handed, although it is hard to escape the feeling that officers, safe in their helmets, shields and padding, relish a good ruck ...

Police rejected accusations that they incited the trouble, although innocent people were trapped in their charges and injured fans were left untreated as officers battled to restore order.

Simon Harris, 30, a surgeon at St George's Hospital in Tooting, accused police of inciting violence and doing nothing to help casualties.

He said: 'This lad had collapsed. I was appalled by one police officer who, while I was helping the lad, told me to get moving. The only trouble was when one bloke ran at them with his shirt off and

started shouting at them, then they charged. The whole thing escalated from that.'

Brentford plumber Alex Hay, 25, said: 'The police steamed in and truncheoned me on the back, I asked what it was all about and they whacked me on the head.'

It is true, of course, that persons who set fire to cars or heave bottles through shop windows are responsible for what they do. But it is also true that the police panicked the crowd. Contrast police behaviour on that occasion with police behaviour on New Year's Eve, when the drunken roisters in Trafalgar Square were allowed to stay there. Police in 'plant-pot' helmets, not riot gear, discreetly arrested the most disorderly, not stampeding the mob but containing it.

London Police know how to keep things peaceful, but sometimes act in a way which encourages rioting. The famous Trafalgar Square Poll Tax riot began with a peaceful sit-down protest at the end of Downing Street, where the police, instead of shepherding the rest of the procession past, blocked off Whitehall and weighed into the sitters with riot batons.

Police gave permission for a march past the British National Party's bookshop in Welling, but then stopped the front of the march as people continued to march in from behind, causing congestion and giving those marchers who wanted to make trouble their chance to make some. Last year's riot in Brixton following a death in police custody started when riot police charged an angry, but not yet violent, demonstration outside Brixton police station.

In the 1960s a Committee of 100 anti-nuclear weapons demonstration in Trafalgar Square turned nasty when the police shift changed at midnight. One Superintendent told reporters: "As far as I'm concerned they can stay there all night", and within half an hour another Superintendent ordered the square cleared.

Nobody says that crowd control is a simple job, or that all police are equally good at it. Riot-provoking tactics may be the result of a perception, right or wrong, that things are getting out of control anyway. But there are those who allege that riots are sometimes planned by senior police officers.

These days every kind of public expenditure is under attack. Even the police have to provide evidence that they are worth the money. To make sure of funds to maintain public order, it is useful for public order to collapse occasionally.

MISPERCEPTIONS OF AIDS AND HIV?

Contradictory messages about AIDS and HIV infection continue to confuse the public. This week *The Daily Mail* and *The Sunday Times* are claiming that £1.5 billion of government funding was wasted on a public information campaign about AIDS because it was aimed at the whole population rather than concentrated on high-risk groups. The accusation is that the government was trying to be politically correct, especially towards homosexual men - if this was so, the good intention failed dismally as AIDS was and is seen very much as a 'gay' disease.

New evidence 'exclusively revealed' in *The Big Issue* suggests that in fact thousands of people given positive HIV results could have been wrongly diagnosed. The claim is that tests for HIV are flawed and therefore can produce inaccurate results. Consequences of these 'false positives' are many. They leave wrongly diagnosed people to face years of anxiety, depression and in some cases unnecessary medical treatment. They also find their access to jobs and insurance is severely curtailed. A recently published paper *Is a Positive Western Blot (AIDS Test) Proof of HIV Infection?* has apparently called into question the whole process of HIV testing, though the Australian biophysicists who produced the paper believe their research has been ignored. They say it is impossible to say if a positive antibody test proves HIV infection. "This proof can only be obtained by comparing test results with HIV isolation. However, since no one has yet isolated HIV, this comparison cannot be done." The confusion caused by these fragmented items of news surrounding AIDS and HIV makes it

impossible to form a comprehensive opinion on the real dangers. Part of the plot of *EastEnders* this week illustrated the panic felt by people who are confused by mixed messages. The issue was, could a baby have contracted meningitis from a childminder whose husband is HIV positive? Hardly, and the television doctor quashed the mother's fears in a clear way, but it won't hurt to address these issues once again on a programme that is watched by so many millions.

Far in excess of deaths from AIDS are deaths on the road, according to the World Health Organisation. Lethal road collisions are one of the main causes of death worldwide, in the same league as the major epidemics of malaria, tuberculosis and cholera. Road accidents are the leading cause of death among young adults.

A third of all those killed on Britain's roads are pedestrians and a million people have died on the roads in Europe over the last twenty years. The most thought-provoking statistic on road accidents is that in Britain two-thirds of all accidental deaths among school-age children happen on the roads.

Yet car use is on the increase and next week an estimated 24,000 learners will take their driving tests. One small consolation is that the tests are now more demanding and might improve standards.

As usual, the authorities are looking at the 'sexy', i.e. media-worthy, problem which currently presents relatively little threat. Simultaneously, they ignore a larger and less dramatic one which, if investigated, may lead to job losses and other politically unacceptable effects.

A NOTE ON THE OLYMPIC GAMES

We thank those readers who have written to us recently on the subject of sport and politics. Our international section has received some major articles on this year's Olympic Games and we intend to publish a special feature nearer the event.



FIFTH CONFERENCE OF THE NORTHERN ANARCHIST NETWORK – Sheffield 15-16th June

THEORY, STRUGGLE, IMAGINATION AND THE MOVEMENT

DAY ONE

Issues of theory, propaganda, organisation and the Job Seekers Allowance dominated the agenda of last month's Northern Anarchist Network conference in Sheffield. Up to fifty attended, with representatives from Leeds, Sheffield, Rotherham, Huddersfield, Hebden Bridge, Tyneside, Nottingham, Manchester and district, the Solidarity Federation, the Anarchist Communist Federation, Subversion and the East Pennine Anarchists. Hull and Liverpool were not represented.

THEORISING

A member of Manchester Subversion addressed the conference on the topic of 'Beyond Anarchism and Marxism'. He claimed that both marxism and anarchism were nineteenth century philosophies, and that their idealisation of 'democracy' is a fundamental flaw. While they have a dim view of parliamentary democracy, there is an enthusiasm for 'workers democracy' or 'social democracy'. Subversion argued that we should reject not just capitalist democracy or socialist democracy, but also 'workers democracy'.

Subversion argued that there are 57 varieties of anarchism as well as of marxism, and claimed that in general both accept certain bottom-line ideas such as the following:

1. Anarchists mostly accept Marx's idea of economic exploitation of the working class.
2. Both traditions tend to reject reformism.
3. Both approaches recognise the revolutionary potential of the working class.
4. Both stands criticise elitism.
5. Both, in principle, oppose sexism, racism and religion.

Subversion itself rejected parliament as a means of change. Trade unions are dismissed as an agent of social change, because they are integrated into capitalism – the unions are submerged in a sea of reformism.

At the conference this approach brought Subversion into conflict with the syndicalist Solidarity Federation, and some anarchists. A spokesman for SF/IWA said: "Subversion lacks an analysis of power, and hierarchies in society". This syndicalist then suggested an ecological account of how mankind is pillaging the world for profit, which he admitted some would find at odds with the commonly expected syndicalist stand. But, he then added, there is more to anarcho-syndicalism than the shopfloor and the place of work.

Some of the Leeds anarchists complained about this temptation to 'mix and match' ideas. These objected most to Subversion's 'picking and mixing' in a fancy free way with

anarchism and marxism, "claiming to take only the best of both sets of ideas". Can one gather as one pleases from these nineteenth century philosophies? Subversion and the Anarchist Communists present seemed to think one can.

Leeds anarchists insisted anarchism was a distinct philosophy, and even that marxism was in contradiction to it. Somebody from Sheffield suggested: "All this Grand Theory was becoming a bit of a hobby for some". A lass from Leeds then said: "I'm not an intellectual person, but what's important is that we work together".

Others from the North West thought all this theorising was a waste of time.

STRUGGLING

The Job Seekers Allowance and the struggles against it featured next. All the groups reported on their activities against the JSA. The Manchester Solidarity Federation says it is now involved in the campaign and intends to leaflet and give advice to claimants in South Manchester. Tameside is backing the central Manchester campaign against the JSA pilot scheme at the Cheetham Hill Job Centre. Sheffield is leafletting their dole office, and has just organised the recent Groundswell Conference.

In Newcastle, the Tyneside anarchists have been active in an incident in which the employment service are claiming a Job Centre manager was kidnapped. Nottingham anarchists are trying to leaflet every claimant in town. They are in contact with the staff unions, but the management of the Job Centre are trying to put a gag on it. Leeds reported a strong anarchist contingent in their campaign.

The chairperson raised the Groundswell policy of 'Three Strikes and You're Out' against those staff who are harassing claimants (see leading article in *Freedom*, 8th June 1996). She said that some saw this policy as conflicting with our attempts to get solidarity from the staff unions in the Job Centres in our campaign against the implementation of the Job Seekers Allowance.

A spokesperson from Tameside said: "Staff who play fair with claimants have nothing to fear from the 'Three Strikes and You're Out' policy". Most counter staff will not be involved in pushing claimants around, it was argued. The representative then spelt out the situation: "Claimant advisers or benefit advisers who bully the jobless could face claimant retaliation, which may result in some form of humiliation under the 'Three Strikes and You're Out' procedure".

The conference calls for full anarchist support for the next Cheetham Hill picket in Manchester on Wednesday 10th July at 1pm.

IMAGINING

A member of the East Pennine Anarchists gave a talk on 'Imagination and Propaganda'. It was an account of the value of novelty and imagination over abstract theory and repetition in action.

One could be forgiven for thinking this performance was a disruption experiment inflicted by an anarchist jester on some very serious-minded 'class struggle anarchists'. This act, in which balloons were released on the conference floor, was in clear breach of all normal rules and procedures at class struggle conferences. How would the audience respond?

The fact is that no serious-minded person wants to be regarded as unimaginative, so that despite the disorderly behaviour of the East Pennine Anarchist (is there any such group?) all the class strugglers could do was to nod sagely and make sense of what was going on. Hence order was restored by analytically comparing the speaker's 'disruption strategy' to the art and practices of the Surrealists.

Of course it was all rather daring, and a bit of bare-faced cheek, but it only goes to show that everyone, even a room full of hardened anarchists, will try to restore order by making sense of the situation when confronted by an unusual episode.

DAY TWO

The last session of the first day posed the question 'What is the Northern Anarchist Network?' Questions of security, publicity and membership arose. *Freedom* was criticised for publishing the whereabouts of the Sheffield conference, apparently contrary to a decision of the previous conference in Manchester in March. It is unclear to me whether concern centred on danger to the building and occupants, or the danger of infiltration. The former might appear overstated, given the flag fluttering proudly over the Red and Black Centre. To resolve the latter concern, it was agreed that the existence of NAN should continue to be publicised with the box number of the secretariat so that new potential participants who make contact can be put in touch with local groups.

Attention now turned to content, and this morning's roast, the Manchester group Subversion, was reheated for a second serving. Some of Leeds Anarchists expressed the view that any group who did not call themselves anarchists should play no part in NAN. However, a motion of exclusion was not tabled. The same arguments were then repeated several times in contributions from both sides. Leeds: *we should be proud of the anarchist movement, be clear what it means and proclaim it.* Subversion: *we should not be seduced by emotive terms; actions speak louder than words; anarchists have made lots of mistakes and these need to be recognised in order to progress.* Leeds: *Subversion are guilty of writing, referring to and defending articles abusive to anarchists.* Subversion: *no matter who wrote what, take away the emotive language and you are left with concrete criticisms which must be addressed; it is this issue of language, the attachment to particular words, that stunts revolutionary development.*

Perhaps there were too few contributions from 'bystanders'. A radio listener would have wondered why the accused bothered to stay, but to the observer it was clearer that the prevailing attitude was one of tolerance. Acrimony and histrionics are demagogic devices and should not deter anarchists from being reasonable and truthful. An anarchist by any other name would smell as ... well, the same.

But the issue is not to be taken lightly. If someone sees fit to stifle debate through the technique of the louder voice, and censor written documents by ripping them up, there would appear to be a need to acquaint oneself with the heresy, if only to be on one's guard against it.

So what do you stand for, 'Subversion'? "WE believe that all left wing groups, whether Stalinist or Trotskyist (or Maoist or Anarchist or whatever they call themselves) are merely radical capitalist organisations who, if they ever came to power, would erect new state capitalist dictatorships in the name of the very working class they would proceed to crush".* Thanks for that advice, but how are we to avoid this grisly fate? "[The] task [of revolutionaries] is to argue their case with the rest of their fellow workers as equals".* This sounds to me suspiciously like anarchism, apart from, er ... the use of the word 'anarchist'. We as anarchists will just have to get used to people misconstruing 'our' word.

What NAN is, and more broadly speaking what anarchism is, became more apparent on the second day. A productive session on sharing ideas was held. Newcastle Anarchists reported how a Mayday occupation of a Job Centre and a press release against the JSA had led them to them being invited to talk about anarchism for ten minutes on BBC Radio Newcastle. The existence of community radio, pirate radio and short-term licences to broadcast might be exploited for propaganda. The anarchist Radio Libertaire broadcasts in Paris. Another mass medium to make more use of is the Internet – Dublin anarchists have three Web pages. Generally the need to exploit the public disillusionment with politicians, to name names, and to link actions to specific symbolic occasions were mentioned.

Next on the agenda was the forthcoming general election, whose last date can be spring 1997 but it might be any time. Various approaches to the problem were discussed before it was agreed to involve NAN in an anti-election campaign. It was decided to approach the Anti-Election Alliance to discuss the possibilities for a joint campaign.

A newcomer to anarchism would now have received the best possible introduction to it, as the forces of chaos set to clean up the yard behind the Red and Black Centre. Work became play and the odd crack about barricades was made.

The last event of this conference was a thought-provoking talk on the Free Women of the Spanish Revolution and their belated and limited success in winning equality and freedom from anarchist men. The discussion following this was disappointingly superficial and didn't lead to a greater understanding of patriarchy, a subject which this conference should have prioritised if decisions of the previous conference are anything to go by. Attendance at this talk was twenty, divided equally between the sexes, which does not reflect the participation of women in the movement as a whole. The last two conferences failed to deal with this and the next one ought to.

Finally, thanks are due to the organisers of a very enjoyable event, Sheffield Anarchists, who provided ample food and drink and entertainment from the '1926 Committee' and a Solidarity Federation duo in the plush surroundings of their Red and Black Centre, incorporating kitchen, embryonic library and creche, and a clean and tidy back yard. They have a good relationship with their landlord and local bourgeois have been heard to comment 'Sheffield Anarchists, bless 'em!'

Reports by BB and JL

* From Subversion's text *The Revolutionary Alternative to Left-Wing Politics*.

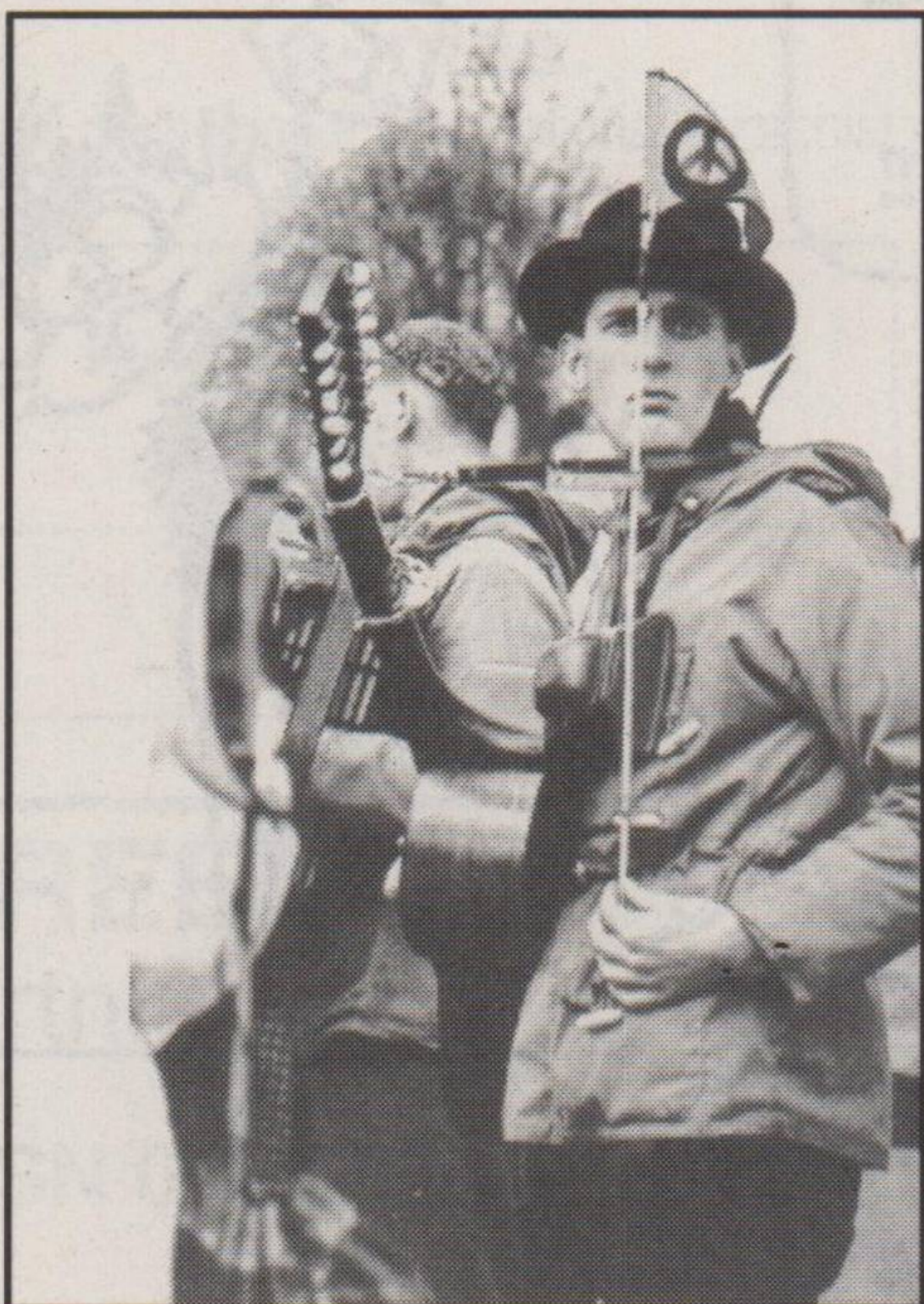
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JOB SEEKERS ACT AND ASYLUM BILL – THE NEW POOR LAWS

DRACONIAN LAWS DELIVER DESTITUTION

The mask of civilisation and welfare is falling off the faces of our political rulers! When confronted with last month's Court of Appeal decision that it was 'inhuman' to starve out foreign asylum-seekers by withdrawing welfare benefits, Mr Peter Lilley, for the government, said it was right to treat everybody the same. Quite right, Mr Lilley! From October onwards, when the Job Seekers Act is implemented, native-born English men and women will, in the same honoured tradition now being applied to starve out foreigners, be starved back to work or forced through withdrawal of benefits into the nearest low-paid job.

Lord Justice Simon Brown, in the Appeal Court, could not believe that the British Parliament at the head of a 'civilised nation' could possibly intend that refugees should be left 'destitute'. But he was wrong. Days later the British Parliament reaffirmed its commitment to inhumanity.

Thus the 200-year-old Poor Law ruling that declared "poor foreigners" were entitled to relief "to save them from starving" was overturned, pending confirmation in the House of Lords. *The Observer*, in an editorial, has warned:

"The drive towards impoverishing some of the most pitiable people in Britain was proceeding without hindrance until the Court of Appeal declared it illegal last week and said that 'no civilised nation can tolerate' the poverty Mr Lilley wanted to create."

Events since that editorial was written suggest that this government is well armed in its war with the poor and pitiable. Up to now we have only had a glimpse of what will happen when the boot-goes-in with the full-blown Job Seekers Act in October.

SOLIDARITY WITH JOB CENTRE STAFF

This month the federation of unemployed groups around Groundswell is mounting a national campaign against the imposition of the Job Seekers Act, and promoting its 'Three Strikes and You're Out' policy against Job Centre bullies.

Some object to the 'Three Strikes and You're Out' policy because they want to get employment service staff on our side. There may be solidarity between staff and jobless activists in some areas like Brighton, but in other places such as Nottingham and Cheetham Hill the staff have been silenced and are too frightened to talk to Groundswell.

An anarcho-syndicalist from Ashton warned the Northern Anarchist Network in Sheffield: "Don't be banking too much on the support of

unions like the CPSA – the leadership is very right-wing – and remember the employment service staff have been getting incentive bonuses from the government for chucking people off benefits."

Last winter there were strikes at some Job Centres because the government delayed payment of these despicable bonuses. We don't doubt that many of the staff are unhappy about what is going on. The body of evidence coming to *Freedom* from Job Centres and Groundswell groups is that most employment service workers object to the JSA.

But the reaction on the ground has been to strengthen security. Security firms have been taken on at Job Centres. Fraud squads are being let loose on claimants. The benefit advisers are striking in some areas to get 'Bandit Screens' installed in Benefit Offices for their own protection against claimants.

Claimants will not feel comfortable knowing that the person interviewing them at the Job Centre is getting paid an incentive bonus based on reducing the number of people signing on.

Jennifer Wall, deputy manager of Cheetham Hill Benefit Office, responding to a claim that a former manager, Joan Bainbridge, had boasted that she got more claimants off benefits than any other manager in the North West, said: "No executive manager could make that claim – executive managers don't take people off benefits". But if the managers are not to blame for taking claimants off benefits, who is to blame? Who will be to blame after October? The benefit advisers? The girl on the desk who signs me on? Any old pen-pusher in the office?

This is clearly a poisonous brew that the government has concocted in the Job Seekers Act, and one which is not helpful to the employment service staff, their safety, their unions or the vast majority of claimants.

LABOUR POLICY TO KEEP JSA

The Labour Party in its recent welfare manifesto, Welfare to Work, has promised only to review, not abolish, the Job Seekers Allowance. They seem to be waiting to see if the government scheme works well enough for Labour to take it over. It seems like new Labour wants the Tories to do the dirty work for them, but as usual their scheme is not clear. Child Poverty Action suggests it will give more power to the officials over the claimants.

Of course being on unemployment and drawing benefits is not an ideal state of affairs!

As Sir Richard Rogers, the architect, said recently: "Why pay people to hang around all day watching television when they could be

setting up social enterprises that would ultimately pay back to the community ... above the initial capital outlay."

Sir Richard expands on this: "As people began to work in creative ways we would see a gradual decline not only in crime – and so less need in the way of security and fewer prisons – but also of poor health. Active and engaged citizens are far less likely to be ill than those pushed to the margin of civic society. So, we'd save money on policing and health care that could then be assigned to new forms of employment."

Of course, there is nothing wrong with Sir Richard's proposals in principle. He is a friend of Tony Blair and new Labour, and one wonders if he could be a Minister of Culture under a Labour administration. There was nothing intrinsically wrong with the idea of the Tory MP who earlier suggested the unemployed should rent allotments to grow their own food, but between these idealistic conceptions and the unemployed lies a monstrous bureaucratic machine of the employment service.

To the employment service the allotment, like many other activities of the jobless, threatens the principle of 'availability to work' and 'actively seeking work'. One can imagine the question 'Have you or have you ever had an allotment?' being used to disqualify claimants from receiving benefits.

Sir Richard Rogers says: "Children are growing up now who are likely never to have a full-time job". He recommends "sustainable cities" and "new forms of community employment" using "active citizens to renew run-down housing estates and urban parks, to run community services, to create their own art, music and meeting places".

How will this be administered? Who will run it – the employment service? The existing system of bullying bureaucrats, benefits advisers and fraud squads surely cannot gain the confidence of jobless claimants to build the Richard Rogers utopia. Indeed, reports from Edinburgh and Cheetham Hill Job Centres (see *Freedom*, 8th June 1996) suggest we are moving rapidly towards Orwell's 1984 rather than anything Sir Richard can come up with.

Behind the Job Centre 'Houses of Horror' with their security officers, bandit screens, video cameras, fraud squads, JSA implementation officers and work directives, await a hungry army of unscrupulous employers with their sweat-shops and low-paid jobs. How can anything good come out of all this?

Mack the Knife

GROUNDSWELL GOES FOR GROWTH

This month Groundswell, a national network of unemployed groups, is stepping up its campaign against the Job Seekers Act and promoting its policy of 'Three Strikes and You're Out' against bureaucratic dole centre bullies.

On 17th July Job Centres will be picketed by jobless groups in towns and cities throughout the country. The aim will be to publicise Groundswell and its 'Three Strikes' policy.

This action is part of a Groundswell conference decision to mobilise the dole queues in the run-up to the implementation of the Job Seekers Act in October. Many anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists and libertarian groups support this campaign. Apart from the libertarian left, there has been some limited mobilisation in the trade unions and the TUC.

There is an unwritten rule in anarchist and libertarian circles: 'You always back your mates when they are in the shit'. It's like the syndicalist rule 'You never cross a picket line'.

Support Groundswell's local campaign in your area on 17th July.

Mack the Knife

GROUNDSWELL UK-WIDE CONTACTS

AUTONOMOUS CENTRE OF EDINBURGH, c/o Peace & Justice Centre, St Johns Church, Princes Street, Edinburgh EH2.

BAD ATTITUDE, 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London SE24 0LR.

BRADFORD 1 in 12 CLUB, 21-23 Albion Street, Bradford BD1 2LI.

BRIGHTON CLAIMANTS ACTION GROUP, c/o Brighton Unemployed Centre, Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton BN2 2GY.

BRISTOL CLAIMANTS, Box 51, Greenleaf Bookshop, 82 Colston Street, Bristol BS1 5BB.

CLAIMANTS ACTION GROUP, c/o OUWCU, East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street, Oxford OX4 1HU.

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SOUTH LONDON JSA, Box JSA, 121 Railton Road, Brixton, London SE24 0LR.

TAMESIDE UNEMPLOYED WORKERS ALLIANCE, 115a Chester Avenue, Dukinfield, Tameside SK16 5BW.

TYNESIDE ANARCHIST GROUP, PO Box ITA, Fenham, Newcastle NE99 1TA.

TAMESIDE, GREATER MANCHESTER

"PAY UP, ROY, OLD BOY"

Tameside's Unemployed Workers' Alliance has turned itself into dole queue debt collectors trying to get a Centre for the local unemployed. For years the Alliance has been attempting to get their Town Council to spend £30,000 raised to set-up an unemployed centre.

Recently members of the group threatened to take legal action against the Labour council, which they saw as dragging its feet on the issue, but ultimately it was agreed to refer the matter to the Ombudsman. They saw Mr Roy Oldham, the leader of the council, as evasive. Last year, he told a member of the Alliance that the matter of the £30,000 was 'defunct' and that he should "pray for a Labour government".

It now seems that Mr Oldham was jumping the gun when he made this statement in a letter last year. Mr Oldham has just told *Freedom*

LOCAL REPORTS ON THE UNEMPLOYED

that the matter will go through Council next month, and the money (now some £50,000 including interest gained over the years) will be diverted to the Council's training budget.

Tameside is a virtual one-party state now, and with seventeen years in power as the old time party boss, Roy Oldham can guarantee that funds originally aimed at setting-up a centre for the jobless will go into some scheme the council can control. With all the yes-men on the council, it seems, the Tameside Unemployed Workers Alliance is the only serious opposition in town.

BURY, GREATER MANCHESTER

BURY UNEMPLOYED

Last month an unemployed centre was set up in Bury. This is backed by the TUC and the local Labour council. At the meeting to open

the centre, about 20-odd attended to hear Andy Robertson, an unemployed worker from Tyneside, tell us about unemployment, the Job Seekers Allowance and Groundswell.

Andy told us that Groundswell was a mainly anarchist unemployed organisation, and had a policy of 'Three Strikes and You're Out'. He said that he was not against the policy, which aims to counteract harassment by Job Centre staff, and that he recognised that some areas, like Edinburgh, were being targeted by vicious fraud squad activities. He did say that we wanted to win the staff unions and their members on to our side, and the Groundswell 'Three Strikes' policy might frighten some staff off.

The trouble with staff unions, like the CPSA, is that they are led by the kind of civil servants who are the spiritual offspring of the characters lampooned in books by Charles Dickens.

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

TOO MUCH TO READ ABOUT CITIES

Back in 1976 the United Nations convened a world conference called 'Habitat' in Vancouver, and invited along the people called NGOs. This is the jargon for non-governmental organisations, ranging from big voluntary bodies like Oxfam or the Intermediate Technology Development Group, to local community groups agitating over issues like housing, sanitation, health services and education.

Those who could afford the fare agreed that Vancouver was a great city, and attempted to make an impact on governmental and inter-governmental thinking. The NGOs formed a Habitat International Coalition and met again in 1987, first in Limuru, Kenya, in April, and then in Berlin in an International Workshop on a Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000.

They similarly tried to make an impression on the 1992 inter-governmental Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, which committed governments to 'Agenda 21' of guidelines for 'sustainable development', which is the justification used today by environmental groups of every kind when opposing government policies and calling for the implementation of Agenda 21 policies by local government in Britain and elsewhere.

The United Nations, despite its depleted budget, convened another meeting called Habitat II, held at Istanbul in June. Apart from all those governmental delegations, it included members of Habitat International Coalition, the informal alliance of three hundred non-governmental organisations and community groups from eighty countries.

Hence the various news stories about the projections that between 1990 and 2025 the number of people who live in urban areas is expected to double to more than five billion people. Readers yawn, because even if they find this interesting they hear no news of programmes to redistribute land or to ensure that the people whose labour feeds the world have a decent life themselves. Poor people's wish to gain a toe-hold on city life is a rational decision, and while they have few illusions about getting rich, they believe that their children will have better access to health care and education.

Readers are right to assume that nothing will happen as a result of Habitat II, but at the same



At the water pump, Blantyre in Malawi (photo: Pat Crooke)

time the network of activists from unofficial bodies will have reinforced their belief in local community organisation and direct action. I have always maintained that they are preaching an anarchist message, promulgated for many years by people like John Turner. For me, by far the most interesting of the press reports on Habitat II was the item in *The Guardian* for 12th June 1996 called 'Poor People Power' by David Satterthwaite. He is an immensely-informed man with a nicely equivocal position between the official UN standpoint and the world of the unofficial opposition.

He was the co-author, with the late Jorge Hardoy, of the excellent book *Squatter Citizen: Life in the Urban Third World* (Earthscan, 1989) and is director of the human settlements programme at the International

Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and is the editor of the UN official report for Habitat II, published this month by Oxford University Press. His contribution to *The Guardian* begins with an absolute challenge to official thinking:

"In most cities in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the two most important investments in cities are ignored by governments and aid agencies. The first investment is from low-income households, which are building or extending their own homes and creating their own livelihoods. The second is the result of community and voluntary sector initiatives to provide or maintain water supplies, sanitation, garbage collection, schools, health centres and other essentials.

Low-income households have organised the building of between one-third and two-thirds of the housing stock in most such cities, usually in illegal settlements, since legal land plots are too

expensive. Most buildings contravene official building codes, so governments generally consider them as having no value and do not include them in official statistics on housing units completed. Although the amount that each household invests may be modest, the total comes to far more than the amount invested by city authorities."

Needless to say, "official policy is often to designate their homes as 'slums' and neglect or bulldoze them". His account of the unofficial cities of Latin America, Africa and Asia has important conclusions:

"This need to support the people who build cities 'from the bottom up' is not new. It was much discussed at the first Habitat conference in 1976 and has been promoted by John F.C. Turner for thirty years. The need to make city authorities more democratic and more supportive of the initiatives of their own citizens is also not new; this was being stressed by Jorge Hardoy twenty years ago.

But the recommendations to governments from Habitat II are less about enabling households and communities and more about enabling the market. Even worse, all such discussion is squeezed out by speeches about exploding city populations, when the evidence suggests that most cities in the south are not growing rapidly: this emphasis implies that the poor cause city problems, not the inadequate and inappropriate policies of governments and aid agencies.

It's ironic that it is only the investments and ingenuity of the poor which have prevented urban conditions from being much worse."

The Habitat II meeting issued an anodyne closing declaration, but the Intermediate Technology Development Group issued an alternative response from the spokesperson of the South African Homeless People's Federation:

"I was warned, but never ever thought, the gap between the rich and the poor was so wide. The gap between the NGOs and government was also so wide. How much of this information will reach the homeless? Only God knows. Why is it so hard to give me my housing rights? Only they know."

This is why people respond with a yawn to the endless documentation of city problems. Poor people throughout the poor world have solutions of their own, but official solutions, instead of aiding the growth of self-help and mutual aid, seek international funding for programmes which by-pass the poor.

Colin Ward

Tom Paine was one of the greatest political thinkers Britain has produced. He was one of the most important radical pamphleteers writing at the end of the eighteenth century, and his pamphlets *Common Sense* and *Rights of Man* had a profound and lasting influence. He was a propagandist for, and actively involved in, revolution in three countries: the United States, Britain and France. Because of his radical views he became the 'greatest exile' ever to leave these shores, and even today his name evokes revulsion in conservative circles. His biographer David Powell records that in 1982, in response to a television programme on Paine, the *Daily Telegraph* still sought to deride and belittle him, describing Paine as "the kind of philosopher whose natural forum was the pub". Many have seen Paine as one of the founders of anarchism. Gwyn Williams, for example, remarked that the book *Rights of Man* was "practically anarchist". As a result of this, as Nicolas Walter has written, Paine has generally been ignored by historians of political thought. De Tocqueville and Herzen are lauded by liberal scholars, but Paine is hardly given a mention in most academic texts. Witness Robert Dahl's recent much-acclaimed book on democracy. Apart from a small group of enthusiasts who have kept his memory green, Paine has been, as Powell poignantly puts it, "little more than a disturbing footnote to English history". Peter Marshall, in his lucid history of anarchism, gives Paine a more considered attention, describing Paine as a radical liberal who had developed liberal theory to "the threshold of anarchism".

The year 1994 marked the two hundredth anniversary of the publication of Paine's *The Age of Reason*. This remarkable book was written and published in two parts. The first part Paine gave to a friend shortly before he was arrested by Robespierre and his Jacobin associates in December 1793. Paine spent almost a year in prison, suffering from fever and ulcers and not knowing from day to day whether it would be his last. Paine had no doubt that Robespierre wanted his execution, as Paine had pleaded for the life of Louis XVI. Not that Paine had much sympathy for such "crowned ruffians". But though stridently anti-monarchist, Paine was, given his Quaker origins, equally opposed to the barbarity of the death penalty. Part one of *The Age of Reason* was published in England in 1794, while he was still in prison. The second part

he wrote while recuperating from his prison ordeal, which almost cost him his life.

This book, a "passionate testament to deism" as Powell rightly describes it, is one of the most important and influential treatises on religion ever published. Paine's radicalism and his revolutionary views hardly made him popular with the British establishment. He was charged with sedition and Pitt had tried to suppress the publication of the *Rights of Man* by bribing the publisher. But the publication of *The Age of Reason* caused an even greater furore, and Paine had to face a barrage of insult and vituperation, both in Britain and in the United States. He was described as a "lying, drunken, brutal infidel" and a "demi-human archbeast". The attacks on him were both theological and personal, and Paine was seen by many of his contemporaries as evil personified. In 1797 Thomas Williams was brought before an English court and charged with publishing blasphemy – *The Age of Reason* – and convicted, he was imprisoned for a year. Two decades later, as Nicolas Walter records in his short history of blasphemy, Richard Carlile was also prosecuted for publishing Paine's writings on religion – and for blasphemy was imprisoned for several years. Even a century later Theodore Roosevelt, the ardent imperialist who became an American president, was still describing Paine as that "filthy little atheist". As A.J. Ayer remarked, Roosevelt was wrong on all counts, particularly with Paine being an atheist. For the book offers a passionate advocacy of deism.

The book does not present an original thesis, for a rationalist approach to religion was suggested by many Enlightenment thinkers – Franklin, Voltaire, Jefferson and Spinoza, although Spinoza's mystical rationalism was more pantheist than deist. Deism even has echoes in the Koran where it is written that the heavens and earth, the alternation of night and day, the rain that nourishes the earth and all the creatures of the earth are but 'signs' to those who use their reason (13:2-5, 45:3-6). But Paine's motivation for writing the text was not philosophical, but more personal: to publish his own thoughts upon religion.

TOM PAINE - THE MAN

In an early essay the founder of the Western Buddhist Order, Sangharakshita (Dennis Lingwood), suggested that there were fundamentally two contrasting kinds of religion. The distinction revolved around the problem as to whether religion is a "revelation of truth to man, or a discovery of truth by man". We have thus *religion-as-revelation*, reflected in the Judeo-Christian tradition and Islam, which holds that salvation or human emancipation is ultimately dependent on the other, on God or an authoritative source. Such a religion places a fundamental emphasis on faith in God, faith in a prophet, faith in the holy scriptures, faith in the church or priest. Hideous fanaticism and ferocious persecution inevitably arise, according to Sangharakshita, from this kind of religion. *Religion-as-discovery*, on the other hand, holds essentially that religion is a manifestation of the human spirit and that humans are able to discover the way to truth by themselves by means of their own unaided efforts. The religious founders, as in Buddhism and Taoism, simply describe or suggest the way. "They demand not blind faith but clear-sighted understanding, they appeal not to some infallible authority but to reason and experience" (Sangharakshita, page 150).

This kind of distinction Tom Paine made two hundred years ago in drawing a contrast between the Christian system of faith – this impious thing called "revealed religion" – and deism, the "true theology" that is based on reason and discovery.

Paine's *The Age of Reason* is one long indictment of Christianity, and of all religions of revelation. Long before Marx, he was suggesting that religious institutions were no other than human inventions "set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolise power and profit" (page 400). Although Paine acknowledged the moral character of Jesus and his historicity, both parts of *The Age of Reason* present a radical critique of the Bible as the revealed word of God. In fact, he felt that the Christian church had set up a system of religion – one of pomp and revenue – that was in direct contradiction to the character of the person whose name it bears. The anarchist Tolstoy was to argue the same thesis a century later.

ECOLOGY AND ANARCHISM

Ecology and Anarchism

by Brian Morris

published by Images, hardback, £14.95

Brian Morris is well known for his articles in anarchist, humanist and ecological papers, and this is a 200-page collection of 23 of them published between 1978 and 1995. Such writing seldom survives the passage from periodical to book publication, but it is a common pattern in libertarian literature, and Morris comes through the test better than most.

There are ecological articles – critiques of anti-scientific and quasi-religious tendencies in the ecological movement exemplified by Theodore Roszak, Henryk Skolimowski and Jon Wynne-Tyson, of both mechanistic and magical conceptions of nature, and of Deep Ecology, a discussion of Murray Bookchin's Social Ecology, and an account of the destruction of forests and of tribal peoples in India.

There are historical articles – a bicentennial account of libertarian movements in the French Revolution (damaged by the facts that the Sans-Culottes and Enragés were egalitarian rather than libertarian and that William Godwin was not certainly representative of “the ideals of the French Revolution” and was not certainly an anarchist), and a critique of Bolshevism (with special reference to Rosa Luxemburg and Victor Serge).

There are biographical articles, most emphasising the anarchism of his subjects (unconvincingly for Lao-ze, Thomas Spence and Tolstoy, convincingly for Ricardo Flores Magón, Aurobindo Ghose and Noam Chomsky), others being less tendentious and more interesting (Baden-Powell, Gandhi and Erich Fromm).

There are political articles – critiques of John Clark's critique of Marxism, of Anthony Giddens's conservative socialism, and of Ayn Rand's reactionary individualism (is it fair to

say that her mentor Nietzsche is “fundamentally elitist and reactionary”?).

In a short introduction, Morris explains that he supports “three inter-linked theoretical perspectives and social movements – radical humanism, social ecology, and socialist anarchism”. He does so with an impressive combination of conviction and energy which distinguishes his contributions to the libertarian press. His articles are always well-informed and good-tempered, though they are often rather repetitive and pedestrian. They would have benefited from more sub-editing when they were first published, and better proof-reading now that they are re-published, but the book is generally readable and informative and is certainly a good bargain. It raises the question of how much other good material is buried in libertarian periodicals and could be disinterred with advantage.

NW

REINVENTING ANARCHY

Reinventing Anarchy, Again*

edited by Howard J. Ehrlich

published by AK Press, paperback, £13.95

The original edition of the paperback anthology *Reinventing Anarchy* was prepared by four members of the Great Atlantic Radio Conspiracy in the United States, ambitiously subtitled ‘What Are Anarchists Thinking These Days?’ and published by Routledge in Great Britain in 1979. It circulated widely (though the claim that it sold 20,000 copies seems unlikely), led to the foundation of the quarterly magazine *Social Anarchism* in 1980, and went out of print in 1982. One of the original editors, who is still the editor of *Social Anarchism*, has now prepared a revised edition which is published by the libertarian AK Press.

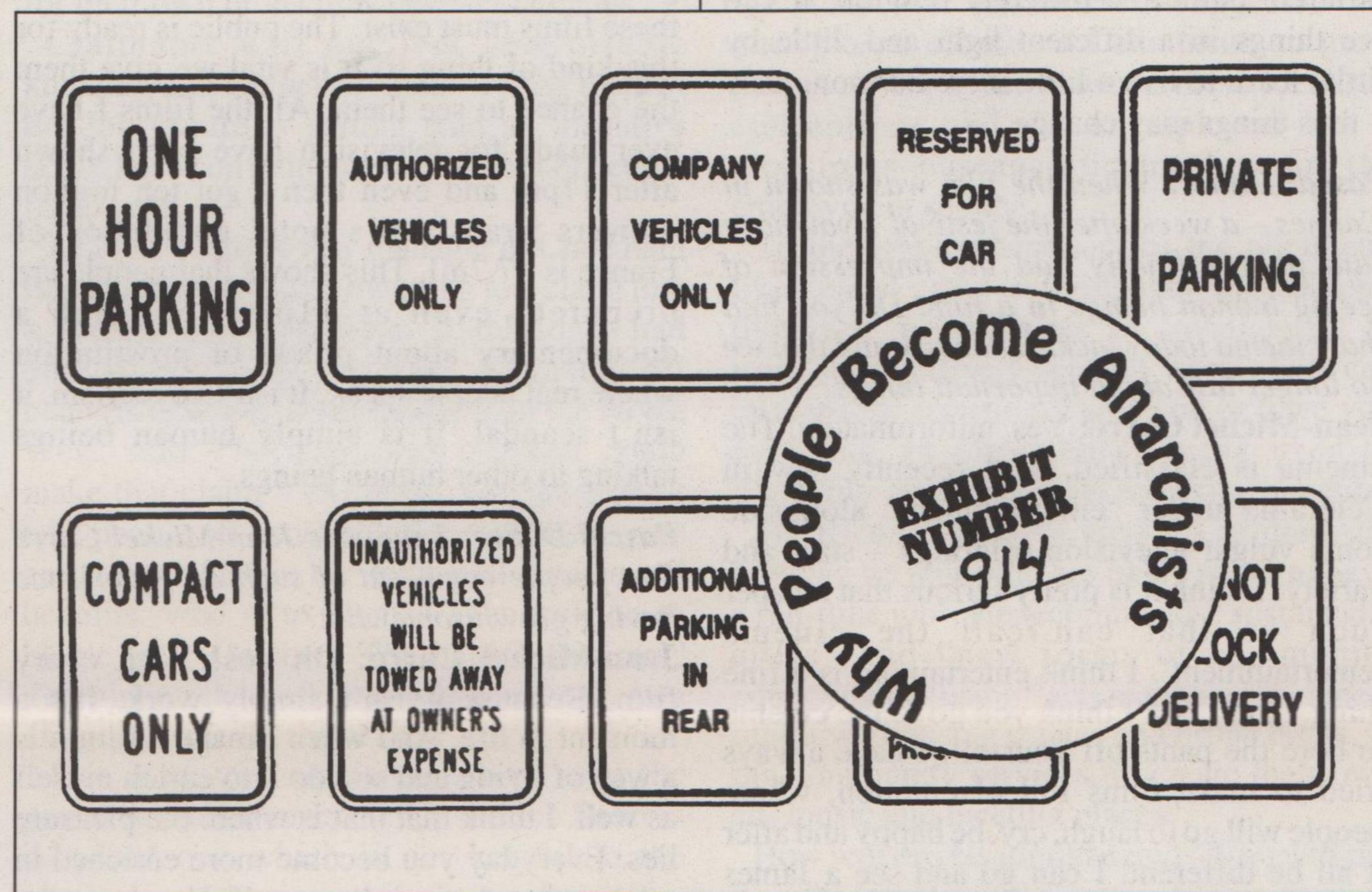
The general pattern of the book is almost unchanged. It is a collection of 35 (rather than 37) items, again almost entirely from North America, divided into eight (rather than seven) sections – introductory, state and organisation,

society, feminism, work, culture, self, tactics – filling 395 (rather than 379) pages. But the actual content of the book is drastically altered. More than half the old material has been replaced by new material; most of the editors' original contributions have remained, but out have gone introductory texts by Fred Woodworth and Nicolas Walter, classics from the Situationist International, polemics by Judith Malina, documents from the American student movement, critiques of Marxism, and much more, and in have come Murray Bookchin on anarchism, John Clark on the world crisis, Kirkpatrick Sale on the state, Colin Ward on the informal economy, Brian Martin on democracy, Tom Knoche on organising, Caroline Estes on consensus, and much more again.

As before, the quality of material is very variable. Most of the added items are better than most of the deleted items, but several are worse and some much worse, and many that are left could well have been deleted too; the note on the black flag is particularly weak. Half the section on work and all the section on culture amount to little more than grotesque caricatures of anarchism, the graphics and poems are mostly trivial, the efforts at humour are mostly feeble, the editor's own contributions are frequently self-indulgent, and the whole book is pervaded by an absurd air of self-congratulation. But this is all too typical of anarchist publications nowadays.

Nevertheless, there is plenty of good stuff in the book which is worth reading or re-reading. Anyone who enjoyed *Reinventing Anarchy* will want *Reinventing Anarchy, Again*, and so will anyone who is interested in a convenient compendium of the sort of ideas currently held in the mainly American and mainly academic milieu of left-wing libertarianism described as Social Anarchism. The editor admits that “while we may not be adrift intellectually, we are certainly more of a drift than a social movement”, but he argues that the work represented in this book will help to build “a new anarchist movement”. We shall see,

MH



One of the many illustrations from *Reinventing Anarchy, Again*, reviewed above

OF REASON

The Bible itself Paine described as “a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalise mankind” (page 411). He detailed: the contradictions in the Biblical accounts of various events like the resurrection, the catalogue of obscenities, cruelties and barbarities executed in the name of God by various Hebrew prophets and rulers, and the similarities to be found between many Christian theories and ancient mythology. Towards the prophet Moses, Paine was particularly hostile. Moses, Paine argued, was one of the most detestable villains in history, committing unexampled atrocities in ordering the slaughter of young boys and mothers, and debauchery with the young women of Midian – all at God's command (Numbers 31:2-18). A.J. Ayer has noted that there might be a streak of anti-semitism in Paine's denunciation of the ancient Jewish prophets as a lot of “ruffians and cut-throats”, but it is well to remember that the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment tended to be much more tolerant towards the Jews than did the Catholic religion, and that the main thrust of Paine's critique was aimed at Christianity as a religion of revelation. As he wrote: “The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties and the greatest miseries that have afflicted the human race have had their origin in this thing called revelation or revealed religion” (Foner, page 596). And he goes on: “Of all the systems of religion that ever were invented, there is none more derogatory to the Almighty, more unedifying to man, more repugnant to reason and more contradictory in itself than this thing called Christianity ... As an engine of power, it serves the purposes of despotism” (Foner, page 600).

Paine, of course, totally refuted the idea that God communicated anything to humans through revelation – whether in the form of words or visions. He thus rejected not only the many “wild and whimsical systems of faith” but was highly sceptical of all miracles, mysteries and prophecies. There is no need for any form of revelation, he argued, for God reveals ‘himself’ in the creation, and a sense of morality exists in every person's conscience.

Paine thus came to identify religion, or true theology, with the mechanistic philosophy of the Enlightenment – and this religion he called pantheism or deism. God is thus revealed in the created world. As he put it, “the creation is the only true and real word of God” and the “gift of reason” is the choicest of God's gifts to humans. Thus only by the exercise of reason can humans, according to Paine, discover God, and the system of principles that underlies ‘his’ creation can only be discovered through science. Thus Paine's deism can be summed up in the words: “That which is now called natural philosophy, embracing the whole circle of science ... is the study of the works of God, and of the power and wisdom of God in His works and is the true theology” (page 424).

The only religion that approached that of the deist – whose religion consists in contemplating the power and benign nature of the deity in the creation – Paine thought was that professed by the Quakers, Paine himself coming from a Quaker background. But had the Quakers been consulted at the creation, he cheekily reflected, what a silent and drab-coloured world it would have been – not a flower would have blossomed, nor any bird sing!

Although, like both Spinoza and Kant, Paine had a mechanistic conception of the world – he described God as the “great mechanic of creation” – he nevertheless stressed a closeness and a reverential attitude towards the natural world. The “Bible of creation”, he wrote, is a text “for devotion as for philosophy – for gratitude as for human improvement”. Unlike many Enlightenment thinkers, Paine did not stress a radical opposition between humans and nature, and it is rather ironic that it was a religious thinker like Pascal who advocated an unreasoning faith in God, who preached a profound pessimism about the human condition and who found the world bleak and empty – “bereft of divinity” as Karen Armstrong puts it.

It is important to realise therefore that for Paine religion and science were not incompatible: what was incompatible was the Christian system of faith and reason. Mystery, he felt, was antagonistic to truth, miracles befuddled the senses and prophecy and revelation are fraudulent – only through reason and experience could humans discover God and understand the world. He bewailed the fact that there was precious little in the Bible about the creation – it was a text, he thought, that

appealed to the isolated monk in his gloomy cell, not the person breathing the open air of creation. My own mind, he wrote, is my church and every person, in essence, his own teacher.

But faith and intolerance, as Paine was aware, were not confined to religion and he reflected on the fact that the Jacobin revolutionaries had imbibed the ‘intolerant spirit’ of the Inquisition, simply replacing the stake with the guillotine. A recent manifestation of this Jacobin attitude, it is worth noting, is the Shining Path guerrilla movement in Peru. This movement has made a religion of Marxism, and sees itself as the sole repository of truth – as revealed by Marx, Lenin and Mao. As the self-conceived ‘fourth sword’ of Marxism, this fundamentalist sectarian group proclaiming to represent the interests of the people has sought, like Robespierre, to use revolutionary violence to create a new social order.

Paine, the man of reason, eschewed such violence and had a very different vision of liberty.

Brian Morris

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INTERVIEW WITH JEAN-MICHEL CARRÉ

The cinematic work of Jean-Michel Carré is challenging – films of a profoundly human nature which tell of the lives of those who are so often marginalised by ‘normal’ society. Criminals, prostitutes and crazies are the actors in the films of this director, who uses his camera to testify, denounce and share emotions. He now has five full-length feature films under his belt and a dozen television films. Here he discusses his ideas on the cinema in the light of his new film *Visiblement je vous aime*.

Pascal Didier: Jean-Michel Carré, how did you get together with Claude Sigala and how did the idea for the film come about?

Jean-Michel Carré: That is a bit of an old story. Actually it was he who called me first to suggest the idea. He was always working on the problem of ‘creation’, creativity as therapy with regards to the young and even in so far as he had doubts he wanted a director to come along and make a film about Coral [translators note: secure centre for deviant youth]. And it’s true that when I discovered the place it grabbed me so hard that I was immediately filled with enthusiasm to make a film. From the outset we had a clear idea of the kind of film we wanted to make. We knew that it wouldn’t be a film about Coral but that it was a fictional film that would introduce the problems of delinquency and madness which would reflect somewhat this constant need to mix together delinquency, autism and psychotic disorders and also to provide evidence to show the differences between people. We very quickly therefore decided to make a story and not a documentary simply to involve these young people more closely in their image.

Pascal Didier: Exactly. Sigala plays Sigala and the inhabitants of Coral are in a way acting out their own madness. This was something new for you, something a little *angoissant* to work with?

Jean-Michel Carré: No it wasn’t *angoissant*. On the contrary it was a challenge. I can only make films by taking risks because I think that that is the only way to be creative and that’s when things start to get interesting. At the same time we are talking about calculated risks – at least as far as the people involved are concerned. It was a big risk for me as a director. For them it was the chance to take part in an act of creation. It could all have gone wrong. That was my problem. They got from it what they got. That said, you mentioned Claude who played himself but an actress played his wife and some of the young people you see in the film are actors. Because, apart from Denis Lavant nobody knew who were the real actors and who weren’t – so much the better. Because that shows that the young people were on a level with the actors. That is what was extraordinary for them. It has been

a great success to be able to show how they could do a real job even if the shoot only lasted seven weeks. They have always been told they were incapable of work but here they were able to show themselves not only capable of work but of pretty complicated work at that. I consider that a victory. And now there is the film and its public and that in turn may lead people to change a little, to understand and to see things differently. And to see this difference is not only to do with delinquents, autistics and psychotics; it is also to look at the homeless, people of a different race, a different culture, a different religion. It’s to see things in a different light and, little by little, learn to live a little more harmoniously – thus things may change.

Pascal Didier: When the film was shown in Cannes – a week after the festival – you have said people finally had the impression of seeing human beings in a film. Do you find that cinema today lacks humanity and that we no longer talk about important things?

Jean-Michel Carré: Yes, unfortunately. The cinema is classified, as I recently saw in *Télérama* under ‘entertainment’ alongside some vulgar television offerings – stars and variety. I think it is pretty serious that a paper such as that can call the cinema ‘entertainment’. I think entertaining is a fine thing. And I don’t think you go to the cinema to bore the pants off yourself. I have always tried to make films full of emotion, where people will go to laugh, cry, be happy and after it all be different. I can go and see a James Bond film if I’m tired because I like to clear my head out but cinema must be more than just this. Sometimes you can read something not too heavy ... for pleasure, but then again there are books, essays, thoughtful stuff ... and that too is very important. We need it all. But to put it simply, more and more, and this is abundantly clear in the case of French cinema, money comes first. We no longer make films; we produce consumer goods. We sell our product on television, in the cinemas and we make products supposedly for a mass audience, for the supermarkets and the super complexes. And we do it more and more quickly. In a few weeks the film must be successful at the box office and so we go for

the most facile, the most violent. And US films speak very much to that dominant climate because they have the means to do that kind of thing well. Whereas we don’t want the means to do that kind of thing and at the same time everything is done so that those films that go beyond pure ‘entertainment’ can’t exist. We have just entered the second century of the cinema which is a very youthful art and I think there is still much to be invented in the writing and execution of what a film can be. And we cinema people are there to fight our corner. I have no desire to make one more product. I want to make a work of art that can be universal. In twenty or thirty years time you will be able to watch it and still feel emotions. It will not be a kind of Kleenex you can use and throw away. This isn’t being pretentious. It’s simply the idea of throwing yourself into a film... and this film before it serves the viewer must have served those who made it.

Pascal Didier: If we look at the critics and if we look at the public reaction one might feel all this answers to a need?

Jean-Michel Carré: Yes I believe there is a real demand for this kind of cinema. Of course not as great as we might wish because more go to see *Show Girls* or *James Bond* but still these films must exist. The public is ready for this kind of thing so it is vital we give them the chance to see them. All the films I have ever made for television have been shown after 11pm and even then I got ten million viewers [translator’s note: population of France is 57.7m]. This shows that people are prepared, even at 11pm, to watch a documentary about prison or prostitution where real people speak. It isn’t voyeurism, it isn’t scandal, it is simply human beings talking to other human beings.

Pascal Didier: I suppose Jean-Michel Carré that people come out of such an experience having grown somewhat?

Jean-Michel Carré: Oh yes! With every film. Because it isn’t simply work. It’s a moment in life. And when I make a film it is a way of living and so I do it to enrich myself as well. I think that that is where the pleasure lies. Everyday you become more enriched in relation to others and yourself. You have the impression that you are giving people something. It is this exchange that makes you feel you have grown – stronger, more serene.

Pascal Didier: It is also a way to denounce, to testify?

Jean-Michel Carré: Yes, absolutely. I feel we must testify, we must denounce, we must give hope, we must arouse emotion. In a film as in life we must address every issue, all emotions, all feelings. We must titillate people’s neurones. We mustn’t die idiots. We must fight back because fighting back is fun and gratifying. There are passionate issues in life, above all living with people, living with others.
Dijon, 23rd January 1996

MEXICO

A five-day anarchist meeting took place in DF. In Oaxaca there was a Magonist festival and also there was a seven-day Libertarian festival in DF. All of them saw meetings, films and debates with good attendance. Amongst other things *La Patagonia Rebelde* was shown which was very well received by the Mexicans.

With regard to the Zapatistas there was open disgust at the decision to open up negotiations with the government. The latter has done its utmost to draw out the consultations and negotiations with the aim of demobilising the forces of the left and moving further, militarily, into Chiapas. Currently there is one soldier for every five inhabitants. Also there are infiltrations into social organisations and selective assassinations continue.

Two hundred peasants were murdered in 1995 by the government in Chiapas. Did you hear about the murder of seventeen peasants in Guerrero? Did you hear about how Cecelia Romero – a representative of the EZLN in the USA – was raped during a visit to Chiapas?

This aggression has also been targeted at those unions which are linked with the Zapatistas through shared demands and who are – for this reason – suppressed. The most significant example is that of SUTAU which is a drivers’ union. The government declared them bankrupt, put five of their leaders in jail, froze their assets and threw 12,000 workers onto the street. Today – nine months later – the struggle continues. They will not accept the liquidation proposals and are still resisting. In Oaxaca important events are happening which are of significance to us personally.

As is well known, Ricardo Flores Magon was born in Oaxaca. Well, last year, as a show of remembrance, two hundred peasants visited his grave in the city of DF. There we learnt that among them there was an anarchist called BM. He told us that among the peasants there was open sympathy for Magon’s ideas which were enshrined in the principles of the People’s United Front and UCIZONI. In this latter organisation there’s an anarchist comrade who has been working with them for seventeen years.

We are receiving reports of attacks on these populations. Last November one UCIZONI organiser was murdered, a council president was imprisoned and the people were surrounded by armed *caciques* who would not allow people in or out of the area. The list of aggressions and crimes is a long one.

(extract from a letter received by one of our editors 10th January 1996 sent from the Biblioteca Social Reconstruir)

CANADA

The Federal Fisheries Department has decided, in the guise of protecting the Pacific salmon, to destroy the small-scale fisheries. Fishermen will now require three licences instead of one, ranging in cost from \$70 to \$150,000. Only fish-packing companies and rich fishermen will be able to afford this, meaning the destruction of many small communities on the coast of British Columbia. Mass meetings were called in many villages. “We don’t want to go the way of the Newfoundlanders” claim the fishermen. They threatened to withhold their taxes and ignore the new laws, for as one man put it, “they can’t arrest all of us”. An unprecedented alliance of fishermen, native people and community groups has arisen. The alliance feels the fishing grounds should be taken away from the government and given to the communities.

The Québec government is attempting to impose a ‘Drug Insurance’ policy. This new tax will cost the average person about \$200 a year. This gift to the drug companies comes at a time when many Quebecois are beginning to

question traditional ‘pill-pushing’ medicine.

1st April 1: After a five-week long strike, 50,000 Ontario government functionaries voted to accept a new contract. The union leadership claimed victory, though terms were virtually the same as before the strike. 13,000 positions are to be abolished. Score a point for anarchism – even though the government was shut down, few people missed it.

10th April: Hundreds of workers blocked the highways north of Montréal after the Kenworth Truck plant announced its closing after an eight-month long strike. Some 900 will lose their jobs as the work will now be done in Mexico. Québec’s Labour’s *Fond de Solidarité* is trying to buy the factory to save the jobs.

12th April: The Québec government has seized the province’s sub-surface water rights under the guise of protecting water from pollution and over-use. There will be no compensation for this multi-billion dollar robbery, but well-owners will have ‘the right to use the water’. One wonders how long this ‘right’ will last as the state is now in a position to charge for the use of aquifers.

1st May: Two thousand people marched for Mayday in Montréal. This was much less than the trade union organisers had wished, having claimed that 10,000 would show up. Theme of the march was counteracting the reduction of the state. A separate march of ‘excluded workers’, many of ‘ethnic’ backgrounds, was held in one of the poorest neighbourhoods of the city. They demanded ‘Jobs not Welfare’ and an end to their exclusion from society and the workforce.

3rd May: Youth riot in Québec City put down with tear-gas. Much property damage as shops attacked. Many arrests and injuries.

16th May: A dispute has arisen between the CSN Trade Union and the Desjardins Co-operative. The CSN claims Desjardins is trying to fire its members in a hotel that it owns. Desjardins claims it does not own the hotel outright and that the vast majority of employees will maintain their jobs and previous salary levels. In its twenty years of service the hotel has lost some \$50 million.

29th May: In contradiction to the supposed right-wing wave sweeping across North America, British Columbia has returned the

NDP (Social Democratic) government to power. Many people feared cut-backs. The NDP’s majority is a slight three seat margin and due to the vagaries of the ‘first-past-the-post’ system the Liberal Party actually scored a higher percentage of the vote.

31st May: The Québec Government, in contradiction to its earlier rhetoric about decentralisation, is trying to force the merger of more than seven hundred small municipalities. They have until 1999 to do so or ‘face financial penalties’.

1st June: 2,500 Montréalers demonstrated against ballot box fraud during the independence referendum and the government’s subsequent whitewashing of the affair.

2nd June: Some 10,000 people demonstrated in front of the national assembly in Québec City. They were protesting the government’s inaction on pay equity for women and raising the minimum wage. A strike has been threatened if these conditions are not met. The previous day several thousand women circled the assembly building and spent the night camped out.

Larry Gambone

THROUGH THE ANARCHIST PRESS

RD LL BT T!

Ths wr the dys whn t ws pssbl t nvnt nw lnggs (Those were the days when it was possible to invent new languages). Or adopt old ones. Such as only writing down the consonants and leaving out the vowels. The difficulty can be apprehended when it is noticed that if only consonants are to be used, certain important words cannot be expressed. For vowels not only have a sound, they also have a meaning, and a single letter may also stand for a word (nd . snl ltr my stnd fr . wrd). Thus Egotists would lost their I, poets and lovers their O, dollar bankers their E (as in E pluribus unum) and motorists and politicians their U (as in U-turn).

Othrw th systm hs dvntgs. Shrtr txts, lss ffrt, mr spce. Th trbl cms wth rdng bck th txt, if you see what I mean.

It would certainly alter the look of *Freedom* if such a writing system was adopted. *FRDM NRCHST FRTNGHTLY*, it does not read well. But neither would *TH GRDN*, *TH TMS* or *DLY MRRR*. But shorter articles and less work fr th hrd prssd typstr. Imagine a memo from harassed subeditor: D'y mn hrd prssd r hlf pssd?

Our readership would certainly change (n f Jhn Plgrm's mdn nt wld fnd n grt mprvmt) for how could the populace be attracted to such a headline as in a recent *Freedom*: S MDDL NGGLND 'SNG TH LGHT' T LST?

Some of the beauty of the language consists of the mixture of consonants and vowels. Leaving out the vowels wld mk th lngg qt ntrctbl and some of this charm would disappear. CHRM is a formidable concept in itself and the modern poet John Heath-Stubbs says in his *Ninefold of Charm* that "from ancient Egypt and Babylonia to Anglo-Saxon Britain the charm has been one of the oldest and most persistent forms of poetry".

But so was Abracadabra. This was the word with 365 separate meanings, none of which survive except the word itself. Some say this was the word by which the ancient Assyrians denoted whatever their idea was of totality. It was a charm all right and it was recommended that the word be used as a powerful antidote against ague, flux and toothache.

The word was written on parchment and was suspended around the neck by a linen thread and looked like concrete poetry.

A B R A C A D A B R A
A B R A C A D A B R
A B R A C A D A B
A B R A C A D A
A B R A C A D
A B R A C A
A B R A C
A B R A
A B R
A B
B

Or in the new space-saving method the chrms wd rd:

B R C D B R
B R C D B
B R C D
B R C
B R
B

Which certainly is neater and more to the point. The system is open to misinterpretation. But if gobbledegook has to be written it saves time to write gbbldgk.

Please note the above article is nt a rpt nt a computer prnt t.

Jhn Rty

ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

POSTAL WORKERS' STRIKE Compared with most international services, we enjoy a very efficient service even in the backwoods. For those of us living in the backwoods, delivery of *Freedom* dispatched on Wednesday afternoon, second class postage, sometimes arrives on a Thursday, but invariably on Friday. I have a special soft spot for my postmen (the regular and the one who replaces him on sick days and holidays). Not only do they deliver the mail but they also collect mine, saving me a half-mile walk to the nearest letter-box risking life and limb against the lunatic drivers. To privatise the junk mail, as Deputy PM Michael Heseltine is reported (*Observer*, 23rd June) as having 'ordered' the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, to do, will mean that the first casualties in this ridiculous exercise will be the people like me in the backwoods.

If private enterprise is given the go-ahead for the junk mail, you can be sure that no junk mail will be delivered to the Orkneys and the Shetlands, but the real mail will still be delivered to them and to me ... at a price. But don't blame the Post Office!

HOW STUPID CAN YOU GET A GCSE pupil at a Suffolk school was barred from an exam paper after having failed to pass the school's dress code! According to the *East Anglian Daily Times* report, the 16 year old turned up wearing black jeans. With only an hour to go before the exam started, he was sent home to change into regulation bags, which he did, but when he returned suitably clad he was told that the exam had already started and he was "too late to enter the hall". He returned home and his indignant mother phoned the school to be

told that her son could sit the one and a half hour paper in the half hour left!

What about sending the bureaucrat to Coventry - trouserless!

MORE HEADS BURIED IN THE SAND Apparently the largest ostrich breeding organisation in Britain which collected millions of pounds from punters (investors!) had no farms of ostriches of its own and members of the public were paying more than £4 million a month for birds "which were either dead or didn't exist". And the money was being filtered off to 'shadowy offshore' companies and marketing groups unconnected with the business. Talk about ostriches burying their heads in the sand!

PROFIT MOTIVE DOMINATES The dentists in the NHS are only taking on new patients privately, but refusing to deal with children in spite of the fact that over the past five years dentists with the NHS have been overpaid by £16,000 on average, which they are being asked to refund. You bet!

WHY GET MARRIED? People still do in spite of a large proportion of marriages not lasting more than a few years. The children? Well the latest statistics appear to show that in 1995 one in three children were born to unmarried women. Surely if the main incentive for marriage is to ensure that the spoils (home, furniture, bank balances, etc.) are fairly shared out then surely the cheapest method would be to get a legal document to that effect. After all, when married people get divorced they still have to go to a lawyer and even to a court to ensure a fair distribution of the spoils! **Libertarian**

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London, AC, £5; Toronto, ND, £20; Beckenham, DP, £30; Skipton, JP, £10; Bristol, JN, £8.

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(Note: we regret that this item was inadvertently omitted from the donations list in our last issue).

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Spies give evidence as McLibel trial enters third year

In 1990 the London Greenpeace anarchist group had twelve regulars, of whom seven were private investigators hired by the McDonalds fast-food chain to discover the names and addresses of the other five. One meeting was attended by four people, of whom three were detectives.

These facts emerge from evidence given at the McDonalds libel trial during May and June. *The Independent* of 12th June carried an article about this entertaining aspect of the case.

McDonalds could not sue London Greenpeace because it is not a legal entity, so they engaged at least two detective agencies to discover the identities of the individuals involved. Four private eyes who infiltrated the group (if 'infiltrated' is the right word for a group with no formal membership, all of whose meetings are open) gave evidence for the plaintiffs during May. Subsequently Frances Tiller, who had worked with London Greenpeace at the time, told the defendants (and on 28th June the judge) that she, too, had been a private eye hired by McDonalds, and that the total number was not four but seven. The total number of writs served on authentic members was five.

Terry Carroll, head of security at McDonalds and a former Chief Superintendent of police, testified that he collected information not only from staff, private investigators and the now-defunct anti-trade union set-up the Economic League, but also from Special Branch. He told the court he had obtained the identities of demonstrators outside McDonalds' headquarters in 1989 from a Special Branch officer. A spokesman for Scotland Yard told *The Independent* that the police never give lists of names. But civilian spokespersons do not necessarily know all that goes on between retired Chief Supers and their former

colleagues.

People handing out leaflets outside McDonalds shops around the country were photographed and the photographs compared in the hope of identifying a 'hard-core' of distributors. In every case, however, the distributors turned out to be local people, neighbours of the particular shop.

To be plausible, the private detectives who joined London Greenpeace had to take part in the activities of the group, and some testified that they had distributed the allegedly libellous *McDonalds Factsheet*. The defendants argued that if the leaflet was distributed by McDonalds agents, McDonalds consented to its distribution, and the judge gave permission for this argument to be added to the defence case. They also wanted to claim McDonalds' consent on the ground that McDonalds had known about the leaflet for years before they tried to stop it (the first communication from McDonalds to London Greenpeace was the issue of the writs). But the judge rejected this point, saying that it did not arise from new evidence but could have been claimed at the start of the trial.

A more substantial change has been made to the plaintiff's case. The exact origin of the allegedly libellous leaflet is not known, so the original Statement of Claim was that Morris and Steel distributed the leaflet at such-and-such places on such-and-such dates. This has now been altered to the claim that, because the defendants were actively involved in London Greenpeace, they are responsible for production and distribution of the *McDonalds Factsheet* "wheresoever and whensoever" it happened. The judge ruled in favour of this change despite the defendants' objections, and the defenders have appealed. This is the sixth time during the trial that the defendants have applied to the Appeal Court

against a ruling. McDonalds' expensive legal team might well be astonished by the legal astuteness of two stony-broke anarchists.

In addition to witness expenses, and fees and salaries to private detectives and security people, 'McLibel' is costing McDonalds about £7,000 a day in court costs and lawyers' fees. Before the trial started McDonalds agreed to pay the court costs win or lose, since there is no prospect of the defendants paying. Dave Morris is a single parent subsisting on Income Support and Helen Steel earns her living as a part-time barmaid. They would not be worse off if they were declared bankrupt.

The case reached court (after years of preliminary hearings) on 28th June 1994. It is now in its third year, after more than 270 days of court time. The previous longest libel trial lasted less than a year, taking up 101 days of court time. One reason the present case is taking so long is that McDonalds claim every separate statement in the leaflet is libellous, including a raft of commonplace statements made by every vegan campaigner against every butcher.

Dave with his bull-at-a-gate manner, and Helen with her picky carefulness, clearly enjoy the case. Lawyers and court officials, whether they enjoy the case or not, enjoy handsome emoluments. So there is joy all round, especially during the entertaining spy stories.

The court is now, or soon will be, in summer recess for the third time since the case started. But it will resume in September at Court 35, Royal Courts of Justice, The Strand, London. Open from 10.30am most weekdays.

Further information can be obtained from the McLibel Support Campaign, c/o 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, telephone 0171-713 1269.

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

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NORTHERN ANARCHIST NETWORK SUPPORTED PICKET

MANCHESTER PICKET AGAINST THE JOB SEEKERS ALLOWANCE

1.30pm on 10th July

Cheetham Hill Job Centre
Crescent Road, Manchester

PUBLIC MEETING AGAINST THE JSA

with speakers from Groundswell supported by the Northern Anarchists and Manchester Anti-JSA Group to be held on

Wednesday 10th July at 7.45pm
in the Abraham Moss College, Crescent Road, Cheetham Hill, Manchester

NATIONAL GROUNDSWELL DAY OF ACTION

Wednesday 17th July 1996

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 July General discussion

19th July The Future of Anarchism and Libertarianism (speaker Peter Cadogan)

26th July General discussion

2nd August to 6th September Vacant as yet but filling up fast

13th September Peter Kropotkin: His Relevance for Today (speaker Dave Dane)

Anyone interested in giving a talk or leading a discussion, please contact Peter Neville at the meetings, or at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (tel: 0181-847 0203, not too early in the day please) giving subject and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate.

Peter Neville

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.

July 7th: Walk leader Jon. Hollinsclough and Chrome Hill. Meet at 11am by phone kiosk in Hollinsclough (map reference SK667065, Outdoor Leisure Map 24) for a 5 mile circular walk in Upper Dove Valley.

August 4th: Walk leader Ray. Lost Villages of Leicestershire. Meet 11.15am at centre of Peatling Magna village, Leicestershire (leave M1 at junction 21) for 6-7 mile circular walk.

September 1st: Walk leader Mike. Loughborough Countryside. Meet 11am at Forest Gate pub car park, Forest Road, Loughborough, for 5-6 mile circular walk.

October 6th: Walk leader George. Gorse Covert, Loughborough. Meet 11am at Gorse Covert Community Centre, Loughborough, for a 5-6 mile circular walk.

3rd November: Walk leader Malcolm. Whatstandwell Canal, Quarry and Woodland. Meet 11am at Whatstandwell railway station car park, Derbyshire, for 4-5 mile circular walk.

Telephone for further details
01773-827513

ANARCHIST RESEARCH GROUP

Saturday 13th July at 2pm

Anarchism in Contemporary American Fiction

speaker Leone Hankey

Saturday 19th October at 2pm

Anarchism and Anthropology

speaker Brian Morris

To be held at the Institute for Historical Research, Senate House, Malet Street, University of London, WC1

The newsletter of the Anarchist Research Group can be obtained from Karen Goaman, Department of Communications, London Guildhall University, Jewry Street, London EC3N 2EY. Please send an sae.

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