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FIFTY PENCE

"There is only one class in the community that thinks more about money than the rich, and that is the poor."

Oscar Wilde

NAZI GOLD: YOU CAN'T EAT IT

The chief use of gold these days is to hoard it. Gold by the ton is mined in South Africa and exported to the USA, where it is reburied. In the Soviet Union gold was mined by slave labour in Eastern Asia for reburial in Russia. During the Spanish civil war gold looted by Spanish conquistadors from the Americas was used to buy arms from the Soviet Union and added to the Russian hoard. Part of the Russian hoard has lately been moved to the United States hoard, so it may be said that the Americas are getting their gold back.

Gold held in underground stores at Fort Knox, Kentucky, is said to be worth more than \$100 billion. But the price of gold depends on its scarcity, so if the Fort Knox deposit came on the market it would be worth a lot less.

Of course gold has other uses, notably in jewellery and dentistry, but hoarding is favourite. It appears the Nazis took golden coins, jewellery and tooth fillings from Jews and

melted them down into ingots, which they deposited in Swiss banks.

Official documents, released by the British Foreign Office on 10th September, estimate the total of Nazi gold deposited in Swiss banks at £4.6 billion (\$7 billion) by today's prices, an estimate based on flimsy evidence and probably quite wrong. The Swiss banks also hold an unknown quantity of gold and other valuables deposited by Jews in numbered accounts, the numbers of which are not known to the heirs of the depositors.

There is an interesting precedent for a bank alleged to be hoarding masses of gold which did not in fact exist: the 'Romanov Gold', supposedly deposited by the Russian royal family in Barings Bank, London. Lenin demanded it back, as did Stalin during the war when the Soviet Union was Britain's ally, but Barings refused to give it up on the ground that it was the personal property of the Romanov family. When it seemed that DNA testing might prove Anna Anastasia to have been one of the Romanovs after all, allowing her heirs and assignees to claim their fortune, Barings came clean and announced that the Romanov gold did not exist. Barings had used the myth of its existence to increase its standing in dealing with other banks.

Nazi gold in Swiss banks could possibly be another myth with a similar function. Parts of the British press, however, used the doubtful story to castigate Johnny Foreigner, in the shape of the ruthless Gnomes of Zurich. They more or less ignored the established fact of Nazi gold hoarded for fifty years by the Bank of England.

In 1947 the Swiss banks made over Nazi gold worth £56 million (£678 million, or one billion dollars by today's prices) to the Tripartite Gold Commission, i.e. the governments of the United States, Britain and France, which took on the job of returning the gold to its rightful owners. The Bank of England took £40 million (and Fort Knox £16 million) for safe-keeping, and has so far returned none of it.

According to the Foreign Office, the hoard in the Bank of England "has been apportioned for some time" and will be distributed eventually, to various governments.

Albania is a special case. £12 million (at 1947 prices) is known to have been looted by the Nazis from the Albanian state treasury, and there is no dispute that this Albanian gold is now among the hoard in the Bank of England. The British government refuses to let the Albanian government have it back until Albania pays reparation for two British warships sunk by Albanian mines in 1947. The warships are priced at £1.5 million (1947 prices).

So at today's prices, if Albania pays £18 million (\$27 million) it will be paid £145 million (\$217 million) in gold. The trouble appears to be that Albania, the poorest country in Europe, cannot find the odd £18 million. Now that Albania is no longer considered an enemy country, perhaps Britain will hand over £189 million and hang on to the rest instead of insisting that Albania pay first.

The remaining gold cannot be returned to those from whom it was stolen, or their descendants, because they are too numerous and obscure. It will be distributed to governments in proportion as their subjects were robbed. The principal beneficiaries will probably be the governments of

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NAZI GOLD: YOU CAN'T EAT IT

(continued from page 1)

Holland, Belgium and Hungary. No doubt they, and Albania, will just put the gold in holes in the ground and leave it there.

THE CRUEL FARCE OF CAPITALISM

Real wealth consists of things people can eat, wear, work with, sit on, communicate with, play with, laugh at or otherwise make real use of. Golf is real wealth when it is used for the preservation of delicate objects, preparation of biological material for electron microscopes, tooth fillings and ornamentation. When it is simply hoarded, as a supposed depository of wealth, it damages real wealth.

All the person-hours, the suffering, the lives lost to mine gold are totally wasted, in terms of real wealth, if the gold is then to be as passive as it was before it was dug up.

For centuries precious metals were used as standards of wealth. The earliest known example of writing, a pictograph from ancient Mesopotamia, shows the value of a set quantity of silver relative to sheep, grain and manufactured goods, not for the purpose of trade but for the guidance of payers and collectors of taxes in kind. Gold replaced silver as the standard in the seventh century BC, when a technique was invented for refining gold from electrum.

Money, units of wealth used to simplify barter, can be made of anything recognised as money. Small models or printed pictures of barter goods – cowrie shells, pig's tusks, brass rods and cigarettes – have all been used at

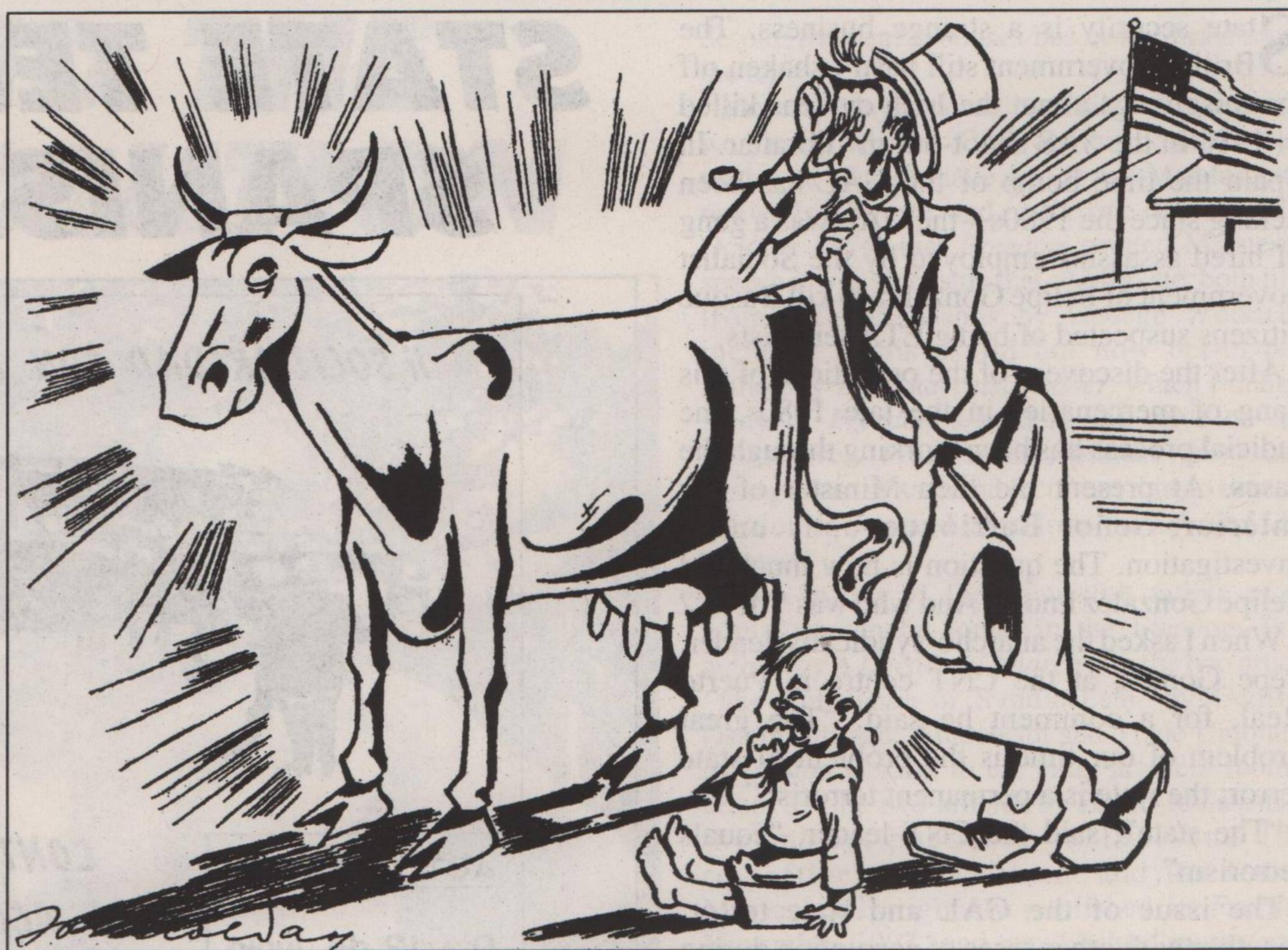
some time or place. But in Europe the earliest coinage was of precious metal and coinage has often been confused with standards.

Earlier this century attempts were made to get out of trade depressions by putting the coinage 'back' on the gold standard, that is declaring a set quantity of gold to be worth a set amount of money, and allowing only so much money to circulate as would buy the gold in the government treasury. The effect was to make the depression worse. The great American orator William Jennings Bryan toured the States speaking against the gold standard using the slogan "Will you crucify mankind on a cross of gold?" but in fact he was equally misguided. He advocated putting the currency 'back' on the silver standard.

These days money is not tied to the gold which lies in the vaults, but the situation is not much better. 95% of world trade, not in number of deals done but in amounts of money exchanged, has nothing to do with the supply of goods and services but is entirely to do with money, buying and selling different currencies, buying and selling of gambles on future prices, deals in complex derivatives of share deals. In the words of Nick Leeson, who bankrupted Barings Bank by dealing in derivatives, "not real money".

The trouble is that although the 95% 'not real money' market has no effect on the real market when it goes well, when it goes badly the real market is wrecked and the poor suffer.

The barter system, by which goods are exchanged for goods of equal value, ensured



I CAN'T EAT GOLD!

Drawing by John Olday from *The March to Death*, a book of anti-war cartoons published by Freedom Press (£3.00).

that when goods were scarce the wealthy did not lose their wealth. Money arose as a way of simplifying barter.

When goods are plentiful, the barter system and the money system are useless. The most useful system of distribution at such times is sometimes called the 'gift economy', the production of goods not to make profits but to fulfil needs.

Technological advances have now made it possible for the necessities of life, and many

other goods, to be plentiful. But it takes time for habit to catch up with technology. People cling to the money system, and in time of potential plenty the only way to make this work is to create shortages artificially. Advertising is one way to create shortages, but more effective is the deliberate waste of productive energy, making and using armaments, destroying goods in war or creating totally useless objects like caverns full of gold bars.

Earlier this year a friend of ours, who is researching a book on the Malayan emergency (1948-50), interviewed a couple of ex-soldiers who had served in that campaign with the Special Air Services regiment (SAS). About three weeks later he was astonished to receive a call from a senior officer at the Ministry of Defence who had already obtained details of his activities. When our friend told us about this we started to think about the 'secret state' and how it touches all our lives, mostly without our being aware of it.

In Britain the three main arms of this bureaucracy within a bureaucracy are MI5 (counter-espionage, i.e. spy catching), MI6 (the secret intelligence service – our spies overseas) and the Special Branch.

How many people, otherwise quite well informed, have to stop and think what 'MI' signifies – Military Intelligence. Also the existence of departments labelled 5 and 6 means that there are or have been others labelled 1 to 4. Where are these and what do they do?

The Special Branch as the political arm of Scotland Yard has more visibility, but taken in isolation the words 'Special Branch' are without meaning (the French equivalent is the equally mysterious 'Second Bureau'). Originally formed in the 1880s as the Special Irish Branch to combat an outburst of Fenian activity, its offices were almost immediately

NEARLY SECRET STATE

demolished by a large bomb planted by those they were supposed to entrap. Such is the cyclical nature of the historical process that today the Branch's main task is to fight the IRA.

In a 'free' society like present-day Britain such organisations keep a relatively low profile and tend to have names that belie their true nature, while paradoxically in totalitarian ones like Nazi Germany and the USSR these secret police are accurately labelled. Gestapo is an abbreviation some harassed clerk formulated to fit onto a rubber stamp – the full title is Die Geheime Staatspolizei, or Secret State Police. Similarly in post-revolutionary Russia the equivalent was the Cheka, which is an acronym (in Cyrillic script) of 'The Extraordinary Committee for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage' – you can't say fairer than that.

This divergence of nomenclature seems to symbolise the difference between the Iron Heel in Germany and Russia in the past and the Rubber Heel of repressive tolerance in Britain today. The Americans do it differently again. Until quite recently the entry for their Embassy in the London telephone directory included a number for 'Secret Service', but

alas no longer – perhaps the Freedom of Information Act has been repealed.

Of late there has been a great deal of chatter about the liberating effects of the Internet, operating as it apparently does outside the jurisdiction of governments. But as Ken Livingstone memorably said (of the vote): "If it changed anything they wouldn't let people have it". The moment the Internet is seen as a real threat to the powers-that-be, they will undoubtedly impose sanctions on the use of PCs by the individual. Perhaps by 'persuading' the manufacturers to limit the capacity of their products.

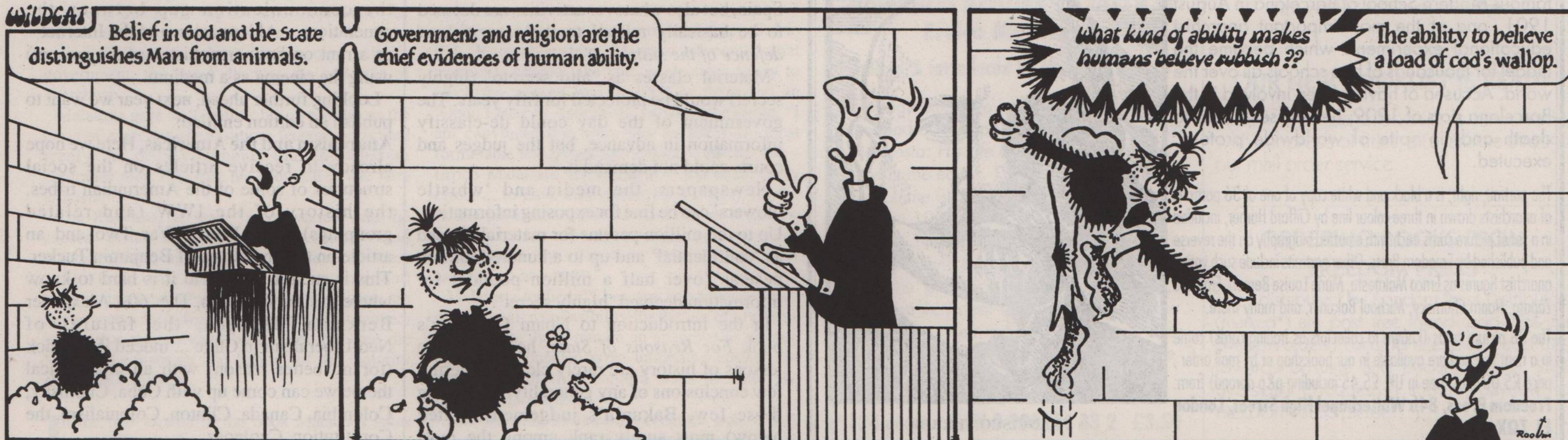
Like God, advanced technology seems to be on the side of the big battalions. During the age of print a reasonably skilled dissident could build and operate his own printing press in the teeth of oppression, but his modern equivalent would be hard pressed to make and maintain his own computer.

What is to be done? It is a truism worth repeating that without secrecy the secret state is powerless. Anyone who keeps their eyes open will sooner or later stumble on the imprint of the rubber heel. When this happens one should 'track the beast to its lair'.

Until recently the SS was known to be housed in a tall office block near Lambeth North tube station. The casual passer-by could establish without difficulty on which floors individual departments were situated. This was done by scanning the day's headlines to establish where the latest international crisis was taking place and then strolling past Century House to see on which floor they were burning the midnight oil. It's a pity this can't be done with the fortress they now occupy on Vauxhall Bridge Road. This is so constructed that, from the south at least, it is almost impossible to confirm how many floors there are.

The other weapon we have is ridicule. Until the mid-1950s the CIA was known as the Counter Intelligence Corps, but everybody said its abbreviation, CIC, stood for 'Christ I'm Confused' and this was a subsidiary reason for the change. Perhaps readers could come up with something of the same order for the SIS (Secret Intelligence Service).

Long-term viewers of *The X Files* on television will have noticed how the series has developed from single episodes about flying saucers, werewolves and other strange happenings into a series of programmes about the workings of the secret state. In exposing a secret consortium behind the FBI is the series reflecting a shift in public taste, feeding on public paranoia or telling it like it is?



STATE TERRORISM SPANISH STYLE

State security is a strange business. The British government still hasn't shaken off the misgivings about the Irish citizens killed in 1988 in the SAS shoot-out in Gibraltar. In Spain the time bomb of the GAL has been ticking since the 1980s – the GAL was a gang of hired assassins employed by the Socialist government of Felipe Gonzalez to kill Basque citizens suspected of being ETA terrorists.

After the discovery of the operations of this gang of mercenaries in the late 1980s, the judicial process has been working through the cases. At present the then Minister of the Interior, Señor Barrionuevo, is under investigation. The question is how much did Felipe Gonzalez know? And who was 'Mr X'?

When I asked the anarcho-syndicalist leader, Pepe Gomez, at the CNT centre in Puerto Real, for a comment he said: "The great problem of our time is the problem of state terror; the state is a permanent terrorist."

"The state", said the CNT leader, "equals terrorism".

The issue of the GAL and state terror, together with other cases of corruption during the period of the Socialist (PSOE) government, is a running sore in Spain today.

MURDER AND DECEPTION

Perhaps it is not surprising then, at least for anarchists, that the new government of José María Aznar – the conservative regime of Partido Popular – should last month declare the proposed new 'Ley de Secretos' (secrets law), and decide to withhold eighteen secret documents of the CESID (Spanish secret services) from the judges investigating the GAL criminals on the ground of "reasons of the security of the State".

"Where is the 'security of the state' in all these issues?" asks the Spanish daily *El Mundo*. "Not" says an editorial, "in the contents of these documents, the best part of which have been published in *El Mundo* and which were fully authenticated". *El Mundo* presses the point: "Is the state more secure because it can't present the documents dealing with the proof over the death of Lucia Urigoitia?" And adds: "What kind of state is it that gains in security from impeding the clarification of the case of a bus conductor in San Sebastian, who was mistaken as a member of ETA, and was tortured to death?"

The anarcho-syndicalist CNT militant Pepe Gomez expects the state, all states, to behave like a terrorist. *El Mundo*'s editor pretends to believe that the state could behave decently, or at least better.

El Mundo declared on 3rd August: "Yesterday Aznar crossed the Rubicon of ethics". And concludes: "He has made the first big deception of his term of office".


A deception which involves creating difficulties for the prosecution of those employed by the previous socialist administration to "kidnap, torture and assassinate".

FRANCISCO FERRER Y GUARDIA Born 10th January 1859 in Alella, Spain, died 13th October 1909 in Montjuich, Spain. The son of well-to-do farmers and devout Catholics, Ferrer became as a young man a republican he took part in an uprising (1886) and had to go into exile in Paris. In the 1890s he and his wife separated and he went with two of his children to Australia. Back in Spain, and by now an anarchist, he opened his famous Modern School at Barcelona in August 1901, one of the most important anarchist educational experiments which became the model for thousands of free schools all over the world. Accused of having been involved in the Barcelona riots of 1909, he was sentenced to death and, in spite of worldwide protests, executed.

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

The 36 picture cards (known to collectors as trading cards) come in a neat box and are available in our bookshop or by mail order, price £5.00 (post free in UK, £5.45 including p&p abroad) from: **Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX**

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Solidarity with the Puerto Real workers and sectors in struggle against police violence – workers' direct action

Taken from *Anarcho-syndicalism in Puerto Real: from shipyard resistance to direct democracy and community control* (Solidarity Federation publication, £1.00 plus postage from Freedom Press Bookshop).

POLITICAL COVER-UP

The government of Aznar in refusing to de-classify the official secrets of the Spanish secret services – the CESID – over the so-called 'dirty war' against the ETA (the Basque terrorist group), has said it doesn't want to persecute the previous Gonzalez 'socialist' government. My bartender tells me: "It's as if they're all in some political club for their own protection".

Felipe Gonzalez, who some suspect is 'Mr X' behind the 'dirty war' of the GAL gang's actions against the ETA, can still be called to be interrogated by the Spanish Supreme Court.

But the Aznar government's decision to refuse to give documentary evidence to the GAL judges creates what the journalist Joaquin Estevan calls "an inequality under the law and on immunity of power". This whole

exercise Señor Estevan describes as: "An institutional convenience to make it impossible to investigate the terrorism of the state."

Of course, anarchists will appreciate that the GAL gang of state-financed mercenaries, recruited for the socialist (PSOE) government in Portugal and elsewhere, was not such a novel invention in Spain. Spain has a history of 'pistoleros' employed by the authorities. I understand that the Franco regime and the conservative governments, after the transition, all employed similar terrorist gangs. Some of those implicated in those earlier adventures may be close to the current conservative administration.

'FOR REASONS OF STATE'

If the Spanish government is coy over disclosing the GAL papers, the new proposed 'Ley de Secretos Oficiales' ensures that exposure of state terrorism will be that much more difficult in future.

The organic law regulating official secrets will replace Franco's law of official secrets of 1968 (revised in 1978). Materials which can be classified as 'secretos oficiales' include issues relating to the military defence of Spain, but also whatever activities are deemed to be basically related to the *security and defence of the state*.

Material classes as 'alto secreto' (highly secret) would be protected for fifty years. The government of the day could de-classify information in advance, but the judges and courts could not demand it.

Newspapers, the media and 'whistle blowers' can be fine for exposing information. Up to ten million pesetas for material classed as 'confidential' and up to a hundred million pesetas (over half a million pounds) for information deemed 'highly secret'.

In the introduction to Noam Chomsky's book *For Reasons of State*, he says: "The lessons of history are rarely clear and permit few conclusions of any generality, but among those few, Bakunin's judgements (cited below) must surely rank among the most

firm."

And the Bakunin judgement to which Chomsky refers declares: "The state is the organised authority, domination and power of the possessing classes over the masses ... The most flagrant, the most cynical and the most complete negation of humanity ... this flagrant negation of humanity which constitutes the very essence of the state is, from the standpoint of the state, its supreme duty and its greatest virtue ... thus to offend, to oppress, to despoil, to plunder, to assassinate or enslave one's fellow man is ordinarily regarded as a crime. In public life, on the other hand, from the standpoint of patriotism, when these things are done for the greater glory of the state, for the preservation or extension of its powers, it is all transformed into duty and virtue ... This explains why the entire history of ancient and modern states is merely a series of revolting crimes."

Of course, the representatives of government are supremely hypocritical about these endeavours. Earlier this month the vice president of Spain, Francisco Alvarez Casco, claimed the 'Ley de Secretos Oficiales' had a progressive character, and that its object is to "consolidate the link between public and individual liberties". And now following the row since its publication, the 'Secrets Law' may be revised.

The Spanish president Aznar insists his Partido Popular had nothing to do with the GAL escapade. That may be, but his 'Ley de Secretos' doesn't guarantee there won't be future ventures of this nature. Indeed, it makes it harder for anybody to uncover further state crimes of this nature.

It is hard not to agree with Pepe Gomez that "the state is terrorism", or to conclude with Michael Bakunin that "there is no horror, no cruelty, sacrilege or perjury, no imposture, no infamous transaction, no cynical robbery, no bold plunder or shabby betrayal that has not been or is not daily being perpetrated by the representatives of the states under no other pretext that those elastic words, so convenient yet so terrible: 'for reasons of state'."

BB (in Spain)

THE RAVEN: FUTURE PLANS

It has always been Freedom Press's policy to draw much of its energy and dynamism from its readership. It might help therefore to draw your attention to some of our future plans for *The Raven*. Number 32 on Communication and number 33 on Anarchy and Art have both been published recently. We have now started work on further editions including a follow up to number 32: **Communication and Language**. Whereas the first part looked, almost exclusively, at radio and the internet this edition already leans more towards languages. One outstanding non-appearance is television as a media and we would very much welcome an article relating to this subject. There are more omissions: language in a social context (sexism, racism and other hidden/overt agendas), semiotics or how about an article on the communication gap between the generations – Aldermaston and the Internet – or a rant on how anarchists are (or are not) using the cinema as a medium.

Looking further ahead, next year we want to publish an edition entitled:

Anarchism and the Americas. Here we hope already to receive articles on the social structures of some of the Amerindian tribes, the history of the IWW (and related groupings) since World War Two and an article on the anarchism of Benjamin Tucker. This is such a wide field it is hard to know where to start: Emerson, The '60s, Alexander Berkman, Thoreau, the failures of Neo-Liberalism in Chile ... indeed if we stick (for no better reason) with an alphabetical theme we can come up with Cuba, Chomsky, Colombia, Canada, Clinton, Colonialism, the Constitution, Czolgosz ...

AUSTRALIA WE DO WANT WORK

In a society that judges and values individuals according to the work they do, people classed as unemployed get a rough time of it. Government policy, carried out by bureaucracies such as the DEET (Department of Employment and Training) and the CES (Commonwealth Employment Service) which claim to be helping the unemployed, has been instead to harass, degrade and humiliate. Presumably to make those without work take any job they can find, however unsuitable and low-paid, out of sheer desperation. We are told that there are jobs to be found 'out there' if only we have the motivation, the 'right' attitude and the 'right' clothes, the 'right' qualifications, etc., to find and obtain them.

The truth is that there aren't enough jobs for all of us. The number of job vacancies, even including the so-called hidden jobs not advertised, is always a fraction of the number of people chasing them. It's a kind of Orwellian doublethink. Does anyone seriously believe that the government would continue to dole out to the unemployed money that it has gone to so much trouble to collect if there were jobs for all? Yet many people continue to believe this cruel lie, which adds to the social pressure on and condemnation of the unemployed. Where's the logic in forcing people to compete against each other for a limited number of positions? It has been claimed that it is an unstated government policy to force some people to suicide as a cynical way of getting the unemployment figures down. This might come as a shock to some in the community, but not to many of the unemployed, especially the long-term unemployed people. Continued lack of success in the highly competitive job market can make people discouraged, demoralised and severely depressed. One long-term unemployed man in Ludmilla (a suburb of Darwin, which is the capital city of Australia's Northern Territory) committed suicide in 1993 by pouring flammable liquid over himself and setting fire to it. He often complained about the hypocritical attitudes of the society we live in: "They tell you to go out and look for work, but when you do there's none there" he used to say.

Whatever some people might say, the unemployed do want work. We want to earn our living and make a contribution to society. It is government policy which prevents us from doing so. The Australian government could do a lot more for the unemployed if they truly wanted to. What about shortening the working week to, say, 32 or 30 hours to share the work around more fairly? What about socially responsible work creation schemes involving, for instance, rehabilitation and improvement of the environment? Or a programme to build housing for people on low incomes? Around Australia there is a severe shortage of low-rent public housing, so some unemployed people are having to pay as much as \$120 a week just for somewhere to live.

The problem is that the government is unlikely to take up these initiatives. Basically because it doesn't care that much about the unemployed. A large pool of unemployed can work to the advantage of government and business interests. The threat of replacement by unemployed people desperate for work can be used as a bargaining tool against workers' hard-won rates and working conditions, in the ceaseless quest for higher business profits. Therefore it's in workers' interests to work together with the unemployed. Especially since the new Liberal government seems set on putting the boot into us even more than the Labour government.

Shell 63 Unemployed Working Collective
Australia



Kurdistan is a land where Kurdish people live in an organised feudal and capitalist system, where working people, especially women and children, are suffering from poverty, ill treatment and oppression by the authorities, which are represented by Kurdish parties – Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) – and PKK of Northern Kurdistan, who do as much for the freedom of Kurdistan as Yasser Arafat (the 'hero of the national liberation' for the past two decades) does for the freedom of poor Palestinian people!

After the Iraqi authorities were forced to leave the south of Kurdistan in March 1991, by the sheer force of uprising by soldiers and poor people of the south of Iraq and Kurdistan, for that short period the poor people in their unity against government felt their strength and showed themselves and the world how people can run their own lives.

To strangle the uprising as quickly as possible,

Iraqi government thugs, with the help of the allied troops in the area, united in a holy alliance against the revolt to bring back law and order to the south of Iraq and massacre unarmed people, as happened to our comrades in the Paris Commune at the hands of the French government and Bismark's troops 125 years ago.

Then in Kurdistan parties (PUK and KDP) in the name of a free Kurdistan, and supported by landowners, merchants and a large number of shop owners who control the movement in the market, established themselves as the new bosses of Kurdistan, crushing with an iron fist any discontent or challenge to their power and their property, like any other authority in the world.

Of course this doesn't surprise us as anarchists. Clearly we see that classes mean clashes, that any government means violence, murder and robbery against the poor working people of this rotten world. This usually surprises leftists in Kurdistan and other places. For example, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Britain seek power in the name of the working class. But the Bolshevik regime governed Russia and the Ukraine in the name of the working class, and started to shoot the spirit of revolution as soon as they became the new bosses of Russia. The slaughter of thousands of sailors of Kronstadt by the Red Army on the orders of Lenin and Trotsky in March 1921 is a vivid reminder to us of what the Leninist and Stalinist ideology means in practice.

The leftists (some of them fools and others confused by their leaders) have minds so saturated with crappy Leninist ideology that usually they criticise and blame governments for not doing good for the workers. But a dog

cannot talk and sing, but only bark like a dog, and it is not in the nature of the state to be other than oppressive.

That is why we say that it is a big and unforgivable lie to tell the world through their massive media that a majority of Kurdish people are suffering because all they lack is a powerful Kurdish state. The truth is that the poor population of Kurdistan are suffering, like the working class population of the rest of the world, from the brutal forces of the capitalist system and their own authorities.

Our task as anarchists is to tell workers, teachers and students in Kurdistan on farms, in schools and at workplaces not to be fooled into struggling for a change of bosses from Turkish to Kurdish, from Persian to Kurdish or from Arabic to Kurdish. They should understand and take lessons from their own and working class history that the solution is a communist-anarchist revolution, which is an enormous and bloody task, the preparation for which must be organised and linked on an international scale otherwise we will waste our energy.

Light the flame of revolt and illuminate the consciousness of Turkish, Persian and Arab workers, students and soldiers to end the power of the warmongers, the power of poverty and the power of money.

Your mission is to destroy authority forever, not to create a new one in the name of Kurdistan. Kurdistan and the rest of the world could be a garden for life without states.

Long live Kurdish language and music. Long live the spirit of communist-anarchist revolution in the Middle East and the rest of the world. Our aim is to wipe out religion, state, racism and money.

Kurdish Anarchists

GUATEMALAN UPDATE

"Guatemala-Stadt (rtr). The German pharmaceutical company Bayer withdrew a controversial ad slogan in Guatemala. On Wednesday the general manager of Bayer de Guatemala expressed his regret and spoke of a terrible mistake. Bayer had advertised an insecticide spray using the slogan: 'Sudden Death is a German Speciality', a play on the 'Golden Goal' of the German football team against the Czech Republic. According to the general manager, a young employee of an advertising firm was responsible for the slogan. Bayer belonged at one time to the IG Farben consortium, which produced the Zyklon-B gas used to murder Jews." (Der Tagespiegel, 16th August 1996)

For 33 years Guatemala has lived a diet of military regimes and 'death squads' (made up of soldiers and members of the police force acting on the orders of their superiors). They razed 450 villages to the ground and executed 125,000 citizens; the total number of 'disappearances' came to 40,000 – the same as for the rest of Latin America. The victims were unionists, farmers, grassroots religious activists, journalists, teachers, lawyers, students, high school kids: anyone suspected of 'subversion'. The misery and persecution has forced a million into exile. The ruling classes moved further down the road of militarisation in all sectors and parked thousands of peasants in *fincas* where they were forced to cultivate new varieties of vegetable, such as broccoli, destined for the export market.

In 1991 Harvard University magazine published the enlightening words of the ex-defence minister General Hector Gramajo. "From now on we will use violence in a more intelligent way. We no longer need to suppress everyone to accomplish our aim".

During the administration of Ramiro de Lon Carpio (5th June 1993 to 13th January 1996) the Mutual Aid Group (GAM) recorded 6,363 violations of the Human Rights agreement. 2,324 of these were politically motivated, 360 were extra judicial murder, 218 were kidnappings.

On 5th October 1995, 26 *fatassins* invaded the village of Xman (in the province of Alta Vera Paz) and killed eleven villagers one of whom was a boy aged eight. In January the supreme court decided that the trial of those who committed these atrocities should be held in front of a civil tribunal in Cobn. In Guatemala this precedent indicates a matter involving the military. Will those others – who are also guilty of unspeakable acts – also appear in court? In particular those implicated in the kidnapping and murder of union delegates during the period when Alvaro Arzu Irigoyen was in power (1986-1990).

The first negotiations between the National Revolutionary Union of Guatemala (UNRG), which declared an unlimited cease-fire on 20th March 1996, and the government broke down over the refusal of the latter to face up to radical land reform. Amongst its list of demands the political wing of the UNRG has laid out propositions with regard to sharing out the funds needed to ensure a lasting peace. They insist on a significant cash injection for the health and education sectors going hand in hand with a significant reduction in military spending. For Tania Palencia, one of those who produced the document, "the structural problems arise from these two facts: 85% of Guatemalans live in extreme poverty and that economic development comes about exclusively according to the demands of neo-liberalism... the state limiting itself to protecting the market".

Despite the signing (31st March 1995) of an "Agreement regarding the identity and rights of indigenous people" the Indian majority continue to suffer from various forms of discrimination. Mayans from various groupings along with the *métis* who belong to the lowest social rungs have participated in the National Co-ordination of Peasant and Indigenous people (CONIC) which was founded "shortly before the events surrounding the 500th anniversary of pillage and repression". CONIC mobilises in favour of the rights and self-determination of minorities. 2.5% of big landowners – whites – own 70% of arable surfaces. In the provinces of Huehuetenango, Retalhuleu, Alta Verapaz, Izabal, El Péten and Quiché there are 3.8 million hectares of available agricultural land. One plot of 7 hectares would provide for each of the 470,000 families who need to make their living this way. In his acceptance speech of 14th January 1996 the extreme conservative Alvaro Arzu Irigoyen – who had been elected the previous Sunday – under the banner of the Party of National Progress (PAN) promised to restrict the advantages enjoyed by certain groupings and to fight against poverty. The PAN has an absolute majority in the congress (43 out of 80 seats). The Democratic Front for a New Guatemala got 7.7% of the vote on 12th November 1995. Rosalina Tuyuc from the National Co-ordination of Guatemalan Widows CONAVIGUA (with 10,000 members) and Nineth Montenegro from the Mutual Aid group are two of the six deputies which the FDNG – founded in July 1995 – chose to be sent to the National Assembly where they try to influence the debate as the only alternative opposition. Along with a few others they are trying to free up funds for health, housing, improved conditions for the worst off and get accepted new labour legislation.

René Hamm
22nd May 1996

RUDOLF BAHRO: GREEN

In 1952, aged seventeen, Rudolf Bahro joined the East German Communist Party. Quickly becoming a leading party intellectual, he was angered and disturbed by the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. He thus came to write his famous critique of Soviet communism, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*. It was published in 1977 in West Germany. Bahro was soon arrested for 'publishing state secrets' and sentenced to eight years in prison. However, in October 1979, under a general amnesty, he was released – and he moved to West Germany. He was warmly welcomed into the Die Grunen, the West German green party, then in the process of formation. He quickly became the leader of the 'fundamentalist' wing of the party (the 'fundis'). At that period he was described as "a charming combination of insight, originality and innocence, seeming rather like a middle-aged bespectacled schoolboy with soft spoken, almost impish ways about him" (Spretnak and Capra, 1985, page 25). He was also dubbed a 'visionary green theorist'. But Bahro quickly became estranged from Die Grunen and in June 1985 he resigned from the party on the grounds that it had become too closely identified with the industrial system, and its political administration. Bahro sought a more gentle and non-violent way.

Yet from his earliest writings one detects the direction in which his politics were moving; not towards anarchism but towards new-age spiritualism. What we need, he wrote, is a renewal of the "gnostic tradition", for he always felt himself drawn towards such thinkers as Joachim di Fiore, Meister Eckhart and Pascal. Their mystical vision, he wrote, are focused towards "freedom of the spirit". Social emancipation, for Bahro, thus implies mysticism and meditation. To this end he spent a month sitting at the feet of the now-discredited guru Baghwan Shree Rajneesh, declaring in 1983 that Rajneeshpuram in Oregon was the "most important place on earth".

In the bookshops now is an abridged version of his *Logic der Rettung* (the logic of salvation, first published in 1987). It is titled *Avoiding Social and Ecological Disaster* (Bath, Gateway Books, 1994) and it makes interesting and rather disturbing reading. It presents a gnostic, apocalyptic vision, for Bahro is a self-declared religious fundamentalist. "God alone is", he tells us, "and outside God is nothing" (page 16).

A New Social Order is then proclaimed, to be initiated by the ecological/peace movement – the 'ecopax foundation' he calls it. But this new order has nothing to do with economics *per se*, with the creation of an ecological society, but rather involves a spiritual renaissance. An apocalypse is envisaged, brought about by a worldwide 'invisible church', a 'communion of saints' dedicated to establishing the 'kingdom of God' on earth. This is done through mysticism, meditation and the 'logic of salvation'. Meditation, tantric rituals and Jungian therapy – to promote psychic 'individuation' – essentially forms the 'axis' of the salvation movement. The most important thing, he writes, is to locate the places at which "a reconstruction of God can take place". We need to free ourselves from the 'old culture' by an "appeal to the godhead" (page 304).

In true gnostic fashion Bahro writes of two forces in the world, one of evil, the other for good, the logic of exterminism and the logic of salvation. Exterminism is rooted in human nature: salvation implies a spiritual transformation through an appeal to the godhead.

Exterminism, a term he adopts from E.P. Thompson, is taken to mean the last stage of human civilisation, the era of the megamachine. The megamachine refers not simply to modern technology, but to the whole industrial system. The megamachine, as a 'diagonal of destruction', includes both Soviet communism and liberal capitalism, for both embrace

the factory system and modern industry. Following the simplistic analysis of Johan Galtung, Japanese-style capitalism is left out of his account (see diagram).

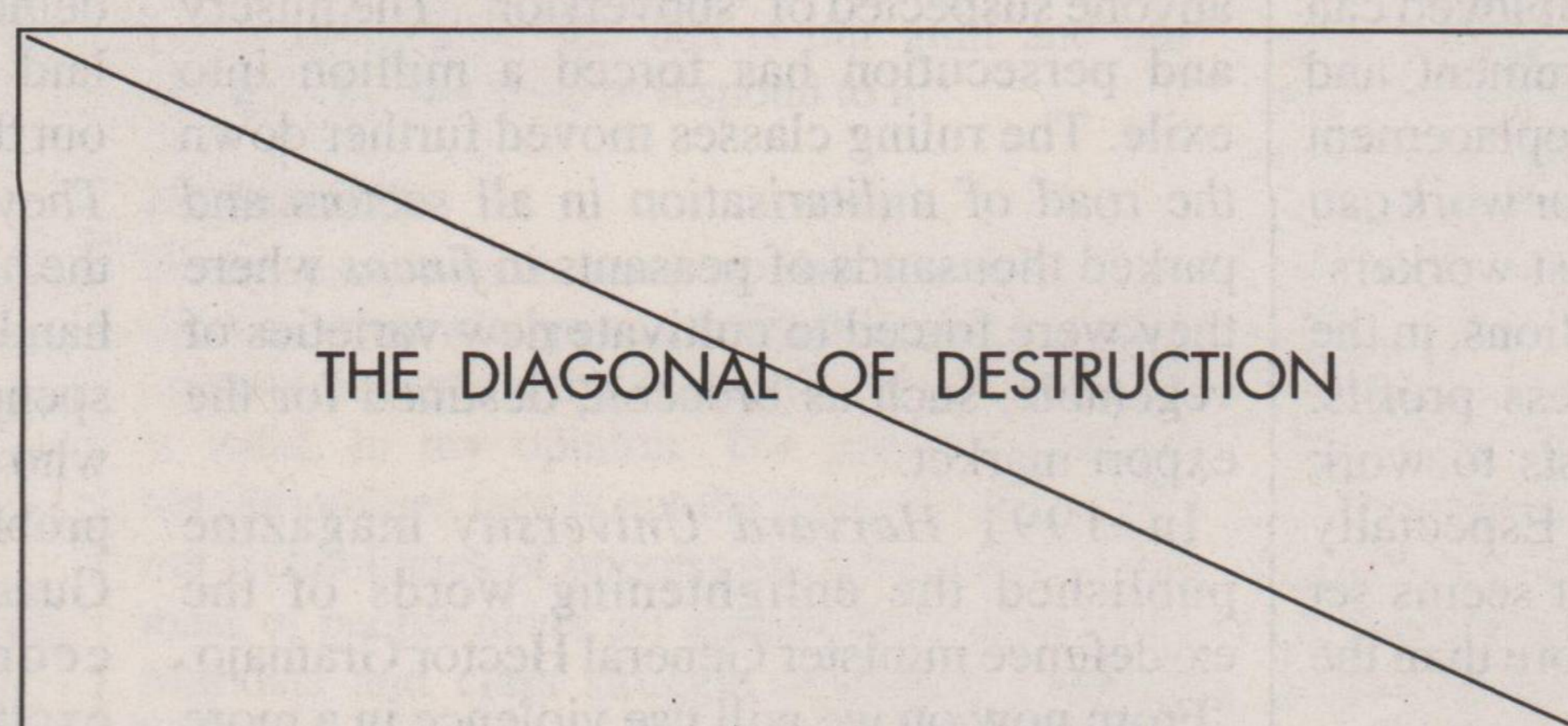
The 'logic of exterminism' is linked by Bahro in a causal chain to human nature, and is given a historical sequence as follows: Human nature → patriarchy → European cosmology → capitalism → the megamachine → exterminism ... the last stage of civilisation.

Human nature for Bahro, indeed life itself, is inherently exploitative and parasitic, and involves the drive for mastery and self-assertion. We are at heart, he tells us, "anxiety ridden" and as we are such weak animals, human consciousness (and culture) is seen by Bahro as a "compensatory power instrument" (page 137) entailing the subjugation of the earth and animals. Ken Wilber is Bahro's guide in such matters. The human condition is thus viewed in very Hobbesian fashion, and even self-identity (personality) and human thought is taken to be synonymous with aggression, murder, oppression and exploitation. It is the old doctrine of original sin, wrapped up in modern psychologistic jargon. Such a 'condition', of course, can only be overcome by spiritual salvation and recourse to the deity.

Inevitably such human proclivities for power, egoism and aggression give rise to patriarchy, and the masculine logic that steers us all towards death. Following the simplistic

RED
COMMUNISM
RUSSIA

GREEN
ANARCHISM
MAOISM
LOCAL



GOLD
CORPORATE CAPITALISM
JAPAN

BLUE
LIBERAL CAPITALISM
USA / WESTERN
EUROPE

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —
**STILL LOOKING FOR
 JOBS FOR THE YOUNG**

A year ago I went to the presentation of the first annual report of the Gateway project in the Borough Road in Southwark. This is a purpose-built housing and training centre for 116 short-term young people aged 18 to 25, developed by a complicated consortium of housing associations and charitable trusts.

The press were invited, as well as the representatives of government departments and big business, since the precarious finances of such ventures depend on creating a 'partnership' of public and private enterprise to keep afloat. And some of the young residents were there too, requested, no doubt, to mingle in their floppy clothes and trainers with the well-groomed men-in-suits.

The chairman proudly claimed that "The initiative's mission to break the 'no home, no job' downward spiral into which so many young people are drawn has been a resounding success, with more than 100 positive results for its 130 residents/trainees during the first year". And of course we were told about the 100th successful trainee, 24-year-old Jason who had drifted through a range of dead-end jobs and non-jobs since leaving school, and had landed a job with London Underground as a station assistant. Obliging he said: "Gateway has really helped me put my life into perspective. I've found a permanent job - something that I want to do and enjoy doing. I'm settled now and I'm looking for a flat of my own."

At this point the man sitting next to me, the social services correspondent of one of the daily papers, whispered "Well, if that's all they could do for him, he'd be better off without it". He could even have been right, in terms of what is known as the benefits trap, and I am sure that the Underground is no longer the organisation it once was. But Jason's job, that means a lot to him, is in one of the vital services that keeps the city functioning. I wonder if the same comment would be made if he had landed a job as a

trainee manager of a burger bar?

Since that encounter I have wandered round several similar enterprises linked by the Foyer Federation for Youth, and have concluded that people of older generations do not understand the desperation felt by the discarded young. And this applies too to those anarchists who think that a revolution will be made by the drop-outs who, as Sheila McKechnie put it, are treated "like so much litter on the streets".

In his lecture on 'Globalisation and its Discontents' (Radio 4, 30th May 1996) Paul Kennedy from Yale raised the question "Have the technical and political developments of the late twentieth century simply made the world safe for multinationals?" But he did not provide an answer. He simply pointed out that in the rich nations there are 250 million workers earning on average \$85 a day, while in the poor world there are 1.2 billion workers earning \$3 a day. And in an acid comment in the Chicago journal *The Baffler* on the new ideologies of management and their 'down-sizing' of the workforce, Bill Boisvert draws attention to a new book *Lean and Mean* by Bennett Harrison: "Even in the high-tech sectors, Workplace 2000 looks less like the 21st century than the 19th. As Bennett Harrison points out, the gleaming office parks of Silicon Valley rest on a foundation of Dickensian assembly plants, staffed by poverty-stricken immigrants working under unsafe conditions, for long hours and low pay.

And the trendy clothing boutiques that dazzle suburban mall-goers and business writers alike are mainly supplied by third world sweatshops where ten-year-olds work sixty hour weeks so that apparel manufacturers can 'make their companies fun again'."

I wrote in this column (4th May 1996) about the rejection of the world of work by the young homeless and jobless in the Domplatz in Cologne, where they beg from the tourists, and the conflicting views I heard from German anarchists about them. Were they rebels or rejects? When I asked a veteran Foyer manager in this country, I recorded his reply: "I take as my starting point the fact that the vast majority of young people, no matter how rebellious or no matter how absurd they might appear, inevitably both become responsible citizens, but also *aspire* to be responsible citizens. What young people mostly want is a job and they will go to any lengths to get a job. They will take on the most menial work, not because of its status but because being employed has."

This is as far from the stereotype of youth in revolt as it is from the ministerial assumption at Conservative Party conferences of a generation of scroungers.

I also pursued recently (3rd August 1996) the report by Clive Wilkinson called *The Drop Out Society: Young People on the Margin*, studying a sample of 250 young people living on peripheral housing estates in

Sunderland, from which he concluded that there may be as many as 100,000 young people who are not on the official registers and in fact are not part of the official society at all. Wilkinson had a telling conclusion: "One of the more interesting and revealing aspects is that when asked what they wanted for the future, these young people, almost without exception, stated that they wanted a job, a steady income, a home and a family, and a car. They want the ordinary things that you and I want. They are not out to wreck society. They want to be part of it. They want to have a place in it, a place of dignity, respect and reward."

And the tragedy is that no matter how well people like Jason are drilled in interview techniques and self-presentation, many of them are not going to find employment and will blame not the system but themselves. And some will undoubtedly extract a revenge from other ordinary citizens.

In the run-up to an election the politicians of all parties promise that they will do something about the situation of the unemployed young, but dare to suggest that this involves raising additional revenue. Even the European Commission in Brussels is urging the creation of jobs in the voluntary or 'socially useful' sector of the economy. John Palmer reported in *The Guardian* (27th July 1996) that "About three million people are already working in the voluntary or 'third sector' of the European economy in non-profit enterprises. These included some 300,000 cooperatives, mutual societies and other associations, as well as the caring services and work on the protection of the environment. The Association for Innovative Co-operation in Europe says that 13% of the net new jobs created in France, Germany and the United States between 1980 and 1990 were in the non-profit sector."

But what do we, as anarchists, offer as advice to the deeply discouraged but profoundly non-revolutionary young?

Colin Ward

VISIONARY OR ECO-FASCIST

analysis of Walter Schubart, women are identified with life while men through their inherent 'constitution' do not think about life at all but, driven by solitude and egoism, only want to murder and conquer nature. The ego is identified with the masculine gender, with logos (reason), and this in turn is identified with the bourgeois individual. Thus patriarchy gives rise to capitalism. Nowhere in this analysis does Bahro engage himself with anthropological or historical data, simply assuming a universal patriarchy and a universal state of aggression (see Howell and Willis, 1989, and Leacock, 1981, for a different perspective on these issues).

Prior to the rise of capitalism, however, comes European cosmology. This is the culture of the 'white man' - homo occidentalis - initiated by the Greeks and exemplified by the Germanic tribes whose psychological disposition, he tells us, is that of the nomad - militant, aggressive, conquering. The Greeks, the Romans, the Germanic people all had a 'cosmology' that involved the mastery of nature and competitive individualism - and this benefited capitalism.

Capitalism, the market economy, is not for Bahro an order of society but a 'power principle' which dominates varying forms of society, and has done so ever since the invention of money. Capitalism is, therefore, not seen as a modern phenomenon and it should not be defined simply in terms of the appropriation of surplus labour. In essence, for Bahro, capitalism is a form of power involving production for the market and the generation of profits through capital. The dynamics of capitalism itself then give rise to the 'megamachine' - the industrial system, the 'pentagon of power', with its self-destructive logic of exterminism. His critique of contemporary industrialism is largely derived from Lewis Mumford.

But his response to the contemporary ecological crisis and to the 'megamachine' is very different from that of Mumford. It entails not social reconstruction but the logic of salvation - mysticism and meditation. The path to salvation involves the individual in a spiritual transformation, Bahro following the rather simplistic and etiolated account of human history as the unfolding - in stages - of human consciousness (archaic, magical, mythical, mental, and the now-emerging 'integral' form of consciousness) as presented by the Swiss mystic Jean Gebser.

It is only when we examine the politics which Bahro advocates to accompany the individual meditation - the "path of intensive self-knowledge" (page 160) - that we come to realise that his politics are fundamentally authoritarian and a far cry from the Green corner of anarchism. Conflating power as creative potential and agency with the coercive power of authority, he tells us that any criticism of authority - the state - is an "adolescent posture" (page 344). Advocating new age spiritualism Bahro is also opposed to "half-baked atheism" and in responding to the song of early revolutionaries "*No higher being will save us / No god, no caesar, no tribune / To redeem ourselves from misery / Is something which only we can do*" Bahro writes: "In view of the ecological crisis we need to take back into ourselves all these symbolic forces. We need to internalise the sovereignty which confronts us in these symbolic figures. Then the symbols themselves - god, caesar, tribune, master - can be helpful personal forces" (page 70).

But he not only asks us to accept and internalise coercive power, Bahro pleads also of the need to 'redeem' Hitler (page 248). So what exactly does Bahro advocate? A spiritual-fundamentalist order founded on state power, a 'world government' that is essentially theocratic with a monarch or president, and an "ecological council". Emerging from the "invisible church" this spiritual elect, we're told, will make "the voice of divinity audible" (page 342). People should withdraw from the market economy, Bahro suggests, and build up a "local private economy" centred on satisfying basic needs. This will end the dominance of the economy over society. In its place would be the restoration of the "aristocratic principle", a "planned economy" and the establishment of a theocratic government under the "spiritual authority" of the "invisible church". The totalitarian implications of such a "salvation government" which is to implement the "voice of divinity" is too ghastly to behold. At least the Papacy and the theocratic state of the Ayatollah are visible and can be challenged.

Bahro's spiritual ecology, however, makes sense if it is situated in a long tradition of German eco-fascism. This tradition is admirably outlined and critiqued in a recent booklet by Biehl and Staudenmaier (1995). Both these writers describe the attempt, by fascist ideologists and neo-fascist political groups, to harness ecology in the service of social

reaction and racial nationalism, and note that this has deep roots in German history. They explore the fact that within the Nazi Party there was an influential 'green wing' whose environmentalism entailed a "volatile admixture of primeval Teutonic nature-mysticism, pseudo-scientific ecology, irrationalist anti-humanism and a mythology of racial salvation through a return to land" (Staudenmaier, 1995, page 14). Its prominent themes were an organicist holism, a denigration of humanity and an agrarian romanticism. The green wing of the Nazi Party included such figures as Walther Darre, Rudolf Hess and Heinrich Himmler - all central figures in the party - as well as the philosopher Martin Heidegger.

Now although Bahro seems to distance himself from the 'Browns' - the national socialists - he does seem to see fascism and the 'Greens' as the two poles of the 'one movement', and seems to applaud the fascist critique of Enlightenment reason and their hostility to science, democracy, urban life and socialism. In her important critique of Bahro's spiritual ecology, Janet Biehl highlights the fact that with Bahro the ecological crisis can only be resolved through authoritarian means, that he continually affirms the Nazi Volkisch ethos, that he embraces authoritarian theological concepts with his notion of "salvation government" as well as pleading for a "Green Adolf" - an eco-spiritualist führer (leader). All this suggests a close affinity between Bahro's politics and the mystical nationalism of the neo-fascist groups in Germany. The 'salvation' of nature and humanity, for Rudolf Bahro, thus entails, Biehl concludes, the virtual embrace of eco-fascism.

Brian Morris

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The government wants to reassure workers in Job Centres and Benefit Offices of their safety when confronted by disgruntled claimants after the introduction of the Job Seekers Allowance next month. Staff unions representing anxious Employment Service and Benefit Agency employees are being bamboozled by the managers into a sense of false security.

Government Risk Assessors have vouched for the peril-free working environments of Job Centres. Though no one is quite sure how secure the staff are once they leave the premises, and there have already been reports of people being followed home after work in London.

The Employment Service admits: "There have been a small number of incidents and the Employment Service takes any risk seriously."

An Employment Service notice, issued in Sheffield, says: "We are setting up a helpline in every region to answer questions on any of the issues ... District Managers will issue the telephone number shortly. The helpline staff will be available to discuss issues and offer guidance."

Bluster, all bureaucratic bluster by the bosses of the Employment Service. As for the Risk Assessors, I wouldn't pay them in washers!

THE STAFF ARE SITTING DUCKS!

No one who has taken part in any of the occupations of Job Centres or Benefit Agency property can be impressed by the level of security. Still less do we believe that the government can guarantee staff safety. Seen from the dole queue side of the Job Centre desk, the staff are sitting ducks.

Last month the security guard at Manchester's Cheetham Hill Job Centre, when asked by the anti-JSA pickets if he was on his own, answered: "No, there's only me, and the police on duty today". Hoarse laughter from the Groundswell pickets.

MORE NEWS FROM THE ANTI-JSA CAMPAIGN

OUR RAID ON ONTARIO HOUSE

And well might they laugh. It takes the Manchester police a good half hour to get to those Job Centre pickets, on past experience. The pickets know they can take over these offices when they want to. The security officers have admitted that there is nothing they can do to stop it.

Since April, there have been umpteen occupations of Cheetham Hill Job Centre by protesters against the implementation of the Job Seekers Act. After the first occupation the manager, Geoffrey Davis, has taken to hiding in his office every time the demonstrators turn up.

But Groundswell demonstrators are no threat to front-line staff, who are only doing their jobs. Groundswell describes itself as a national network of activists against the Job Seekers Act. The Groundswell actions may be seen as tests of office security by staff and their unions.

None of the Job Centres, Benefit Offices or Employment Services Offices which we in the north west have invaded have really passed the Groundswell safety test.

THE SECURITY SHAM

Of course security is never what it's cracked up to be. The bandit screens were smashed at the Cheetham Hill Benefit Office by an unhappy claimant who tore up a chair from its floor fixing and plunged it through the protective screen.

But at least one would have thought that Ontario House, nerve-centre of the Employment Service in the north west, would

be well protected. Nothing of the sort! It was a push-over!

When Groundswell placed Ontario House in Salford under siege in July as part of their protest against the JSA Implementation Manager Jim Raftery, who is housed there, the security staff were thrown into disarray. As the dozen protesters trooped into the reception like 'Reservoir Dogs' both the guards on duty ran to defend the same stairway, leaving the other stairs open to intrusion.

It didn't take a Fred Astaire to dance up the first flight, while the security men were left watching. In the rumpus the Employment Service staff joined in. People were sent flying and a protester came bouncing down the dancers.

Meanwhile a security door opened and a secretary sauntered through, and another activist breached security by holding the door open and entering the 'secure' area. Another tussle broke out in the corridor.

A pile of mail arrived and was accepted by a protester who strolled off with it. More overwrought behaviour by the security staff, as there was when a protester started ringing the press on the security phone.

The protesters had decided, in advance, only to occupy the reception area. The doors to the ground floor offices were coded security doors, but we got through them. Upstairs entrance would have been easier because these doors are not secure.

No one can be inspired by the level of security at the Job Centres, the Benefit Offices or Ontario House. The Groundswell demonstrators are almost pacifists, yet they run rings around the office security staff. The danger to staff will come from more dangerous freelance operatives, who may appear once the Job Seekers Act gets into its stride.

Mack the Knife

COAST TO COAST MARCH TO DEFEND THE WELFARE STATE

Supporters of the Welfare State Network are marching from Hull to Blackpool (see back page for Coast to Coast contact numbers).

Many of those involved in the Campaign Against the JSA will be supporting the march, and in Manchester on Saturday 28th September marchers will assemble at 10.45 at the Arches for a rally in Piccadilly Gardens at 11.30am (contact Alex Love on 0161-766 5267)

The marchers will arrive in Blackpool on Tuesday 1st October and assemble at noon in New Bonny Street (opposite Central Pier) for a march to the Winter Gardens to lobby the Labour Party Conference (and a social in the evening).

WHERE WE ARE MARCHING:

Hull	24th Sept	Pre-March Rally
Goole	25th Sept	Midday Rally
Doncaster	25th Sept	TUC public event evening
Barnsley	26th Sept	TUC public meeting evening
Huddersfield	27th Sept	Demo midday
Tameside	27th Sept	TUC evening meeting
Manchester	28th Sept	March against JSA
Bury	29th Sept	TUC music festival
Bolton	29th Sept	TUC evening meeting
Preston	30th Sept	TUC evening meeting
Blackpool	1st Oct	Lobby Labour Conference

REFUSAL

The title is ambiguous. Refuse could be the verb – to refuse something, to reject it. Rejection as a method of going along. Refuse could be a noun, as in waste. An attitude towards the state, that it is a heap of garbage.

A criticism made against *Freedom* magazine is that too many of the articles look back to the 1950s, '60s or '70s. Few writers look forwards. Well, it's not enough to carp on about things without doing something positive about it, so this is my article about the anarchism of the future – the anarchism of refusal.

A comment often made about anarchists in general is that we are too busy slugging each other off to get on with the revolution. It's a fair comment. We should channel our energy into pushing forwards our positive alternative. Let's do this.

The problem with many radical groups (ourselves included) is that they trivialise the situation. The CCTVs are everywhere now, computerised black-lists, the systems of authoritarian control are all in place. More and more totalitarian, with the empty pseudo-conflicts between Blair and Major as a pastiche of democracy reduced to a sound byte. It is easy to refuse this.

REVOLUTION

The need for radical change has never been clearer. Now I openly talk about revolution because I am not in the business of trying to reform society, to make this or that cosmetic change, to tokenistically tinker on the margins. If you want to do that, join the Labour Party. I talk of revolution because I don't see any point in pretending it is going to be easy. Why work to leave things just the same? Start by refusing.

Too many people in the past have sought radical changes, only to be fobbed off with something superficial. Many people, even in the present, regard the radical enterprise as a species of negotiation with 'the powers that be'. Thus a strike negotiates with employers for higher wages or better working conditions. Negotiation recognises the legitimacy of authority and merely pleads for an amelioration. We need to refuse this dead end.

As I argue in my booklet *Politics and the Ethical Void*, negotiation is useless because there is nobody there to negotiate with. To think of the state as a

conscious entity is a false perception – I term this error the 'organic fallacy'. Negotiationists fail to understand the nature of the system; that it is impersonal, like a machine. We need to radically re-think our methods.

All of us have been nowhere near emphatic enough in our refusal of the system. Even in the present, this is changing, and in the near future this repudiation will become the dominant attitude towards the state. When I talk about revolution (as distinct from negotiation) I have in mind a process of physically stopping the system, of preventing the state. If we think of the negotiation tactic as indirect action (we plead with the state to itself alter a policy), direct action cuts out the politician or bureaucratic middleman and stops the whole matter in its tracks. Militant poll tax non-payers, for example, abolished the tax on day one by shredding the bills and refusing to pay it. We need to follow this pattern and enhance it.

THINKING THE IMPOSSIBLE

Sometimes I find myself struck by doubt – the terrible thought that we radicals might not be doing any good, or even that we could be doing harm. At *Green Anarchist* we sometimes get letters from people whose minds have obviously been seriously damaged by society. When we look around we can easily see why – so much so that after the Bulger case and other similar events, an American sociologist even described society as 'toxic'. We need to refuse this 'toxic' society.

The revolutionary movement falls in place inside that same world of despair, and sometimes can be affected by it. Late last year (1995) an article in

GREEN ANARCHIST CHARGED

The four 'alleged editors' of our contemporary *Green Anarchist*, Paul Rogers, Steve Booth, John and Saxon, together with two members of the Animal Liberation Front, Robin Webb and Simon Russell, have been charged with conspiracy to incite criminal damage.

The committal hearing is scheduled to start on 9th December 1996 at Portsmouth magistrates court.

Further information from the **Gandalf Six Defence Campaign, BM 1715, London WC1N 3XX.**

Contraflow questioned the whole validity of revolutionary politics. Where are we going? What have we achieved? When I find myself questioning radicalism, I set this alongside the idea of doing nothing. Think about the road protests – Twyford, M11, Cueden. What about the Ploughshares or the McLibel cases? This encourages me.

We can contrast these radical things with the mainstream. They have their 'P-reg' cars, mortgages, Gold Blend coffee and all the rest of that. They have the shallow, unchallenging culture of Anita Brookner novels and Jane Austen on television. Just imagine it – this kind of living death with latex plastic politicians like Tony Blair mouthing anodyne sound-bytes, going off into the future forever. The toxic society. Even to act against this and fail is better than to go along with it or sit there doing nothing. This is the validity of revolutionary politics.

EXISTENTIAL BASIS

We have to take note of the *existential* basis of radicalism. My motives in opposing the system are essentially selfish in that it is the harm 'The Machine' does to me, existentially, which drives me, not some abstract and distant notion of 'class consciousness'. Selfishness, however, has its limitations. In sensing this alienation all around me, this terrible sense of meaninglessness to be found in the mainstream, I find that I have a wish for other people to break free too. If it were just about myself the whole thing would be so simple. Sometimes we forget, there is a *corporate* sense to the revolutionary enterprise, a collective dimension present.

Even the free individual, the one who has escaped, has some sort of obligation to those still trapped. Where revolutionary movements fail, we betray the others, and this is our guilt and *our* problem and we need to respond to it.

PASSIVITY

Where people have acted against oppression, we need to acknowledge and celebrate this. Anything you can do against the mailed fist, however small, is valid, in my opinion. The greatest problem revolutionaries face is not the state, not the police, nor technologies of oppression, but *passivity*. The mass of people never act against their oppressors. Marxists and class struggle anarchists continue believing that one day all the *Sun* readers, lottery ticket buyers and *Coronation Street* watchers will come together into one revolutionary entity and

overthrow the system. I do not believe this will ever happen.

As it says in *Green Anarchist*, "You can't fight mass with mass". Instead of a single, homogeneous proletariat, what we will find is a multitude of small activist groups working for specific, concrete and realisable goals. This is more personal, it directly addresses our existential need to work against this system, whereas appeals to an abstract and distant notion of 'class consciousness' can never do this.

When we pitch the revolutionary problem within a false or inappropriate framework, our answers will be skewed, our methods inappropriate. Yet radicals insist on applying the class paradigm. After straining to raise the 'class consciousness' of the apathetic masses, these activists usually 'burn-out'. It would have been better if they directly addressed their own concerns by working towards realisable and comprehensible goals.

MOVE OR STAGNATE

There must be something wrong with groups who experience high membership turnover. If the group is not making progress, people drop out (like the author of that *Contraflow* article). The revolutionary movement of the future will be closer, more involved with the person. Unlike the SWP, we are not in the business of using people. It is necessary that we care about each other. Results bring involvement, and meaningful activity brings people closer together.

REFUSERS

To bring all this together? I don't know what name to give these revolutionaries of the future, so I shall call them 'Refusers'. Put simply, 'Refusers' refuse that toxic society. Road protesters, the Dongas Tribe and Travellers are all examples of this trend, but it needs to go further. 'Refusers' decline to be poisoned by society, and so they refuse the car, mortgage, Gold Blend, the Merchant-Ivory adaptation of E.M. Forster. How do I see the future? After the JSA, Workfare and all the coming repression, 'Refusers' will live outside the collapsing welfare system. The state will have no hold over them because the 'Refusers' have nothing and cannot be coerced, nor can they be bought off. Just think how the possibilities will open up before them. Only by living completely outside the system can the people of the future be free. If this is the future, the death of authority, how can we be anything other than optimistic?

Steve Booth

MALATESTA AND THE ANARCHIST REVOLUTION

Errico Malatesta (1853-1932) has been described as "the most 'complete' anarchist propagandist" and "the clearest anarchist thinker". His pamphlet *Anarchy* was published in Italian in 1891, translated into English and serialised in *Freedom* from September 1891 to June 1892, and has been almost continuously in print. The 'new translation' of 1974 has just been reprinted for the fifth time and some ten thousand copies sold of what is still the best, and best written, short outline of the ideals Freedom Press stands for.

In 1965 Vernon Richards edited *Malatesta: His Life and Ideas*, a volume of over three hundred pages consisting of a selection of Malatesta's journalism, translated from journals such as *Pensiero e Volontà* and *Umanità Nova* and arranged under topics such as 'Anarchists Schools of Thought', 'Ends and Means' and 'Production and Distribution', to which the editor added a lengthy 'biographical sketch', an assessment of Malatesta's relevance today, and appendices to explain the conflict between Kropotkin and Malatesta in 1914.

Just under a year ago, Freedom Press published a further collection of Malatesta's writings, *The Anarchist Revolution: polemical articles 1924-1931*, edited and introduced by Vernon Richards, and although this book has been reviewed in these columns (2nd December 1995) I would like to return to some of the perennial topics it raises.

The publishing history of this volume is rather curious, since it appeared just in time to be displayed at last year's Anarchist Bookfair, and the first response was a letter in *Freedom* (18th November 1995) from Nick Heath of the Anarchist Communist Federation. Heath referred to just one section of the book, in which Malatesta argues with Nestor Makhno about the document known today as *The Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists*. Heath complained, "It's a shame you didn't translate Arshinov's letter to Malatesta on the subject, which is very lucid". Well, it is a test of the interest of this book that it had this reader, as well as Nick Heath, wishing that the book were longer than it is, and of its topicality that it provoked such a response before the book had even been reviewed. (Incidentally, the editor told me that had he known of Arshinov's reply, he would have included it.)

The *Organisational Platform* had been published in Paris in 1926 by a group of exiled Russians, including Nestor Makhno, the hero of the Ukraine, and his biographer Peter Arshinov, whose *History of the Makhnovist Movement* is also published by Freedom Press (I found it difficult to reconcile the image of Makhno in uniform on the cover of this book, and reproduced in *The Anarchist Revolution*, with the picture of the frail, tubercular little man published recently in Paul Avrich's *Anarchist Portraits*.)

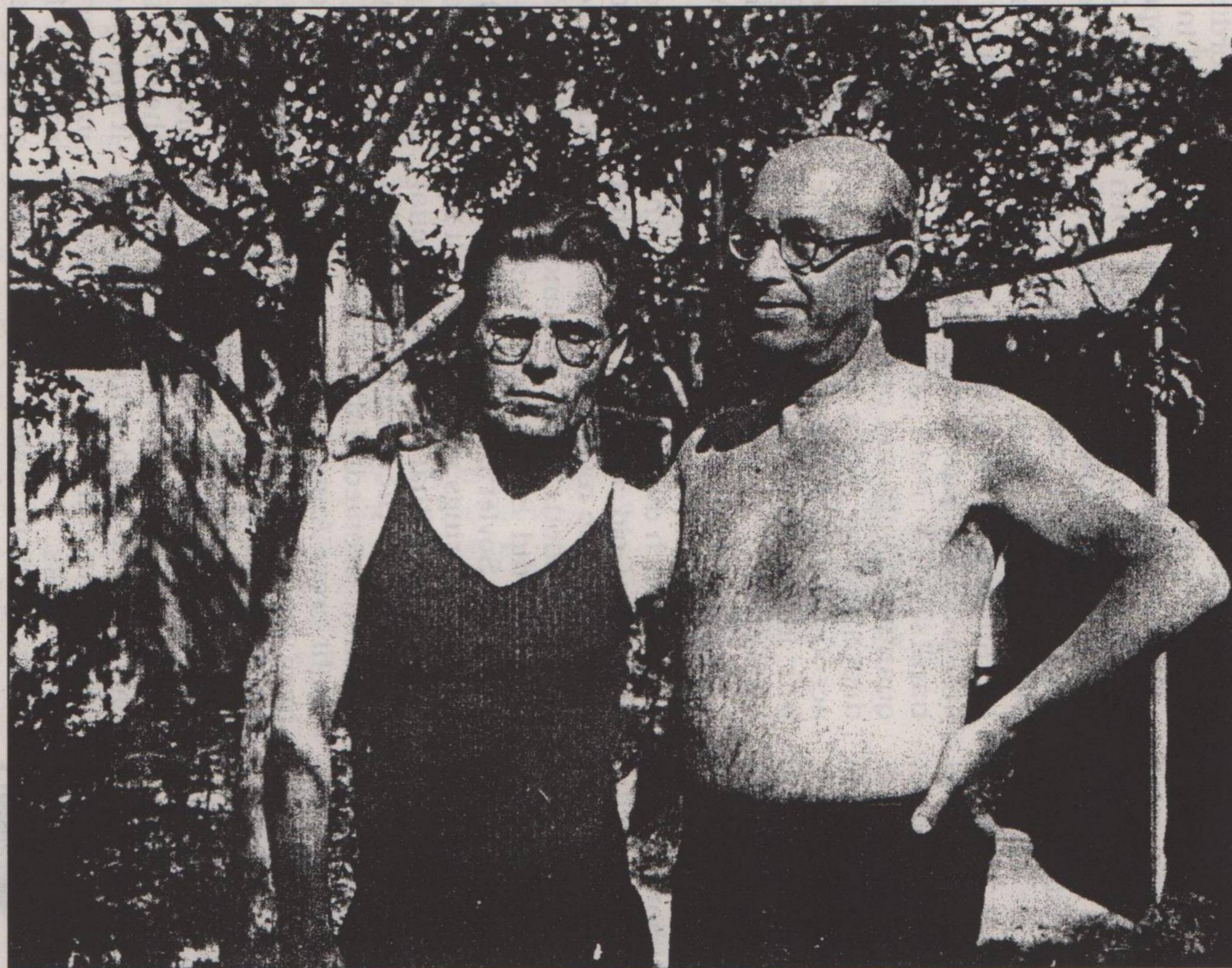
In 1927 Makhno, Arshinov, Ida Mett and others held a conference with a view to forming a General Union of Anarchists – and became known as the Platformists. Voline and the group connected with *Pensiero e Volontà*, including Fabbri, Berneri, Nettlau and Malatesta, attacked the idea of the Platform.

Malatesta praises the intentions of the platformists, but goes on to question what we mean by 'organisation'. Since not all anarchists would agree to be in a General Union, the organisers therefore talk of "sound elements", and would exclude certain tendencies. Therefore the Union would be of a certain fraction of anarchists – could such a union bring about the triumph of anarchism? Malatesta claims it could not, since in practice "the will of the union can only mean the will of the majority". Since anarchists do not accept majority government, the union disowns the principle of anarchism.

Malatesta goes on to outline his own views on the basis of anarchist organisation: federations united freely; he drily comments that the Russian comrades may find that his proposal is *not very efficient*.

The Russians, he says, "are obsessed with the success of the Bolsheviks in their country" and want something similar – a small cadre with leaders – but then what happened to socialism and communism would happen to anarchy. Leaders are never accountable for their actions. What matters is not that there should be leaders, but that the "sheep-like instincts and habits" of the majority should be overcome.

In the first section of the book Malatesta takes issue with two other noted anarchist theoreticians



Nestor Makhno and Alexander Berkman, Paris, around 1927.

of the day, Max Nettlau and Saverio Merlino, on the question of the place of communism and individualism in anarchism. Nettlau had claimed that two schools of anarchism, the communists and the individualists, (each claiming that their theory exclusively was correct) prevented the "great mass of the people" accepting anarchism.

Malatesta's theory is that such divisions or 'schools' have little to do with the question of popular acceptance, and that such disagreements are of interest only to that minority of politically conscious people who are already anarchists or potential anarchists. In his view, it is the general "material and moral condition of the mass of the workers that makes propaganda ineffective". But, he continues, "communists and individualists have often made the mistake of welcoming and recognising as comrades those who share with them only some common vocabulary, or external appearance". (Written in 1926, he was no doubt referring to those who went along with the Bolsheviks after the revolution in Russia.)

Against Merlino on the subject of anarchists accepting reforms, Malatesta uses the same argument: all anarchists agree on anti-parliamentarianism; the individualists are reacting against authoritarian communism; they *must* accept some form of voluntary communism, and in practice in a revolutionary situation reconciliation should rapidly come about. Malatesta makes clear, however, that he is a convinced anarchist communist.

I wonder how many people today know much about Saverio Merlino. Merlino (1856-1930) was a contemporary and close friend of Malatesta, and had as an advocate defended him after the insurrection at Ancona in 1898. He had a reputation in anarchist circles as an 'intellectual' perhaps next only to Kropotkin, and had been part of the circle around Charlotte Wilson which led to the founding of *Freedom* and the Freedom Press in 1886, but he later turned away from anarchism to parliamentarianism.

Whereas Malatesta always remained opposed to the electoral system, Merlino advocated that anarchists should take part in elections to try to reach the masses, and in 1900 he published an 'Open Letter to Anarchists' in which he wrote: "I am convinced that were you to select the most formidable and persecuted comrade among you – Errico Malatesta, for example – and make every effort ... to have him elected as a deputy [in the Italian parliament] that the government would be forced to lay down its arms against your propaganda by speech or writing, and your association as a party."

Malatesta replied: "I beg you to announce that I repudiate all responsibility for the use of my name by Merlino; that I remain an anarchist as always, and that I consider as an unmerited outrage the simple doubt that I could wish to enter the parliamentary arena."

The Merlino-Malatesta exchange was widely reported in the anarchist press, including *Freedom*

(July 1900), to which the editor of the day added the comment, for the benefit of his English readers, "Merlino's mistake is obvious even from his own point of view. No anarchist would ever be permitted to effectively present his ideas or defend his principles in any parliamentary assembly. Has not the fate of even State Socialists taught Merlino this? Has he forgotten Keir Hardie's experience in the English House of Commons? And does he not see that such a mild socialist as John Burns has to speak to the people in Battersea Park to tell them his real convictions? Those who believe as Merlino does must go his way and do their best, but they will never be anarchists."

A further section deals with syndicalism and the labour movement, Malatesta being careful to define his terms. He is not opposed to the labour movement, but he warns anarchists not to confuse syndicalism with the labour movement, and concludes that while anarchists should remain in the unions they should not identify themselves too closely with the syndicalists.

That this subject is still a hardy perennial is shown by, for example, a letter in *Freedom* from Laurens Otter (8th July 1995) before the publication of *The Anarchist Revolution*. Otter, who currently publishes his own *Syndicalist Bulletin*, wrote: "The fallacies in Malatesta's anti-syndicalist arguments were amply demonstrated at the time [i.e. the International Anarchist Congress held in Amsterdam in 1907] by Monatte; which is why, to my memory, for nearly half a century every few years *Freedom* reprints Malatesta's article, but

despite frequent promises has never dared reprint the reply."

Memory plays tricks on us all, but I can't help wondering whether Otter and his comrades have read even what Monatte said. It was Malatesta who replied to Monatte, and on the one occasion (25th October 1974) that *Freedom* printed Malatesta's speech it was alongside that of Monatte, both lifted from the translations by George Woodcock included in his useful but now out-of-print anthology *The Anarchist Reader*, which I imagine many of *Freedom*'s readers will have on their bookshelves. (*Freedom* has reprinted various other passages on the same subject from time to time, but quite other ones and taken from the *Life and Ideas* volume.)

As a matter of fact, a useful outline of the argument can be found in the Freedom Press anthology *A Decade of Anarchy*, in the two articles 'The Relevance of Syndicalism' by Geoffrey Ostergaard and 'Anarchism and Trade Unionism' by Gaston Gerard, in the latter article a footnote refers to "the two articles by Errico Malatesta on the subject published in 1907 and 1925 respectively: 'Anarchism and the Labour Movement', originally published in *Freedom*, November 1907, and republished in the same journal on 23rd February 1946; 'Syndicalism and Anarchism' published in *Pensiero e Volontà*, April-May 1925, and republished in *Freedom*, 11th October 1952."

I now find the latter article is available in *The Anarchist Revolution*, an interesting cross-reference which I haven't seen mentioned hitherto, while the former article is, I understand, to appear as an appendix to a volume of selections currently in preparation by Freedom Press.

If I have dealt with only a few of the topics covered by this book, it is because I have taken the editor's advice not to try to read the book in one session. "There is too much food for thought in the pages that follow" he writes, "to consume in one 'sitting' without having indigestion and failing to enjoy the meal".

When I first read *Malatesta: His Life and Ideas*, I found the editor's reflections the more interesting half of the book. In *The Anarchist Revolution* there is the minimum of editorial guidance, so that presumably the editor had little new to say. The occasional footnotes are helpful, but I would have liked a little more editorial guidance as to the circumstances in which the articles were written and the audience to whom they were addressed. But it should be stressed that the contents of the book are entirely different from that of *Life and Ideas*. Whereas the earlier volume contained articles written for the working man, this one, concerning "the practical problems facing anarchists when the tide is flowing against them", is an intellectual challenge.

I cannot read Italian, and I gather than these articles were professionally translated, and then worked over again by the editor. To judge from the English translations, Malatesta, while he never set himself up like Kropotkin to be a philosopher, was capable of dealing with the most profound questions in a profound manner, and beautifully expressed.

CC

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