

# anarchist fortnightly **Freedom**

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FIFTY PENCE

*"It is in the best interests of capital that it should be allowed to exploit, corrupt, deprave, pollute, poison, defraud and cheat as much as possible"*

Jeremy Hardy

## **WHY ALL THE FUSS? AFTER ALL ... WAS THE LABOUR PARTY EVER SOCIALIST?**

The millionaire press could not miss an opportunity to try and create confusion in the Labour Party ranks with the publication last month by Murdoch's *Sunday Times* of an article by Kim Howells, Labour MP and Shadow Trade and Industry spokesman, with the title "Just don't call me a socialist". Mr Howells quotes Roy Hattersley when he addressed a meeting at an Oxford college which included "half of Labour's front bench" and asked his audience:

"Why are any of you interested in winning power if you do not have as your fundamental message the advocacy of socialism and the redistribution of income from the rich to the rest of society?"

He reports that "for a few long moments there was absolute silence". Then a few "chirped up 'we want to win because we want to govern the country better'". And Mr Howells "could not think of a more valid reason for winning power". And what he had been listening to was a

"born-again Roy Hattersley". And of course he is right about Hattersley, who when in government was as reactionary as Mr Howells is while still in the Shadow Cabinet. But Roy is retiring from the political jungle to concentrate on his very successful and remunerative career as a journalist, which he has been cultivating these past few years while still an MP.

But to return to the title of this article. When indeed has the Labour Party been socialist? There is much talk about the creation of the Welfare State by Attlee's government in 1945, but no mention that the massive victory (in terms of Labour seats in the Commons) was not the result of their socialist programme but of six years of bloody war, austerity and rationing. And *en passant* one should not forget Beveridge, a decent old liberal academic, if and when credits are distributed for the 'Welfare State'. *But nothing to do with socialism.*

And for their pains the Labour lot were voted out in 1951 after one term and were in the political wilderness for the next thirteen years. Back in office in 1964 with a very small majority, massively re-elected in 1966, but in opposition again in 1970 until 1974 when, thanks to Heath's confrontation with the militant miners that misfired, they were back in office until 1979 when the Iron Lady stormed onto the stage and the Labour Party has been in opposition ever since.

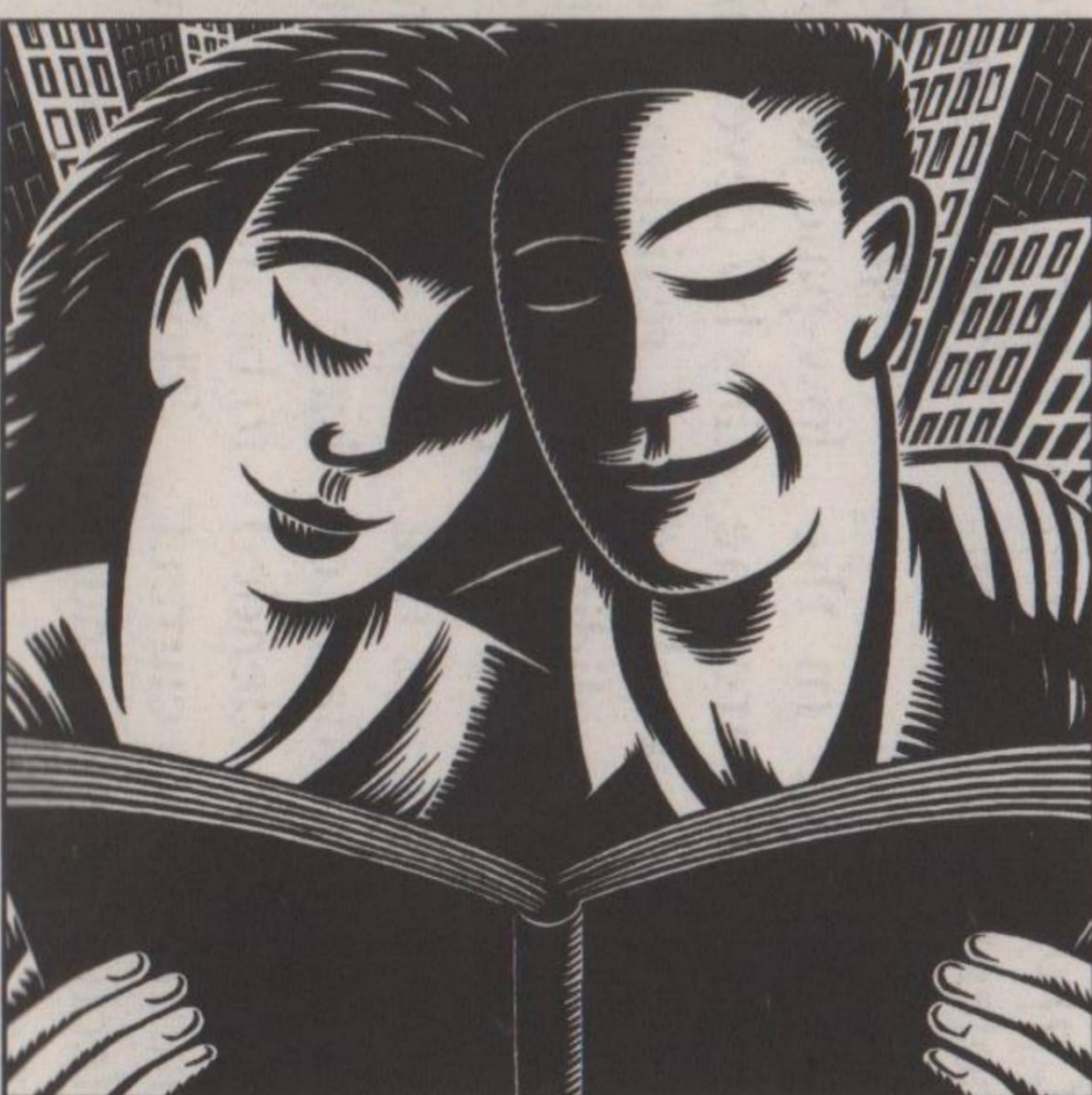
What surely is significant in the foregoing mini-history of the Labour Party in office is that they have never survived more than one term, whereas the Tories have had their thirteen 'wasted years' (1951-1964) in office and now another eighteen (1979-1997) very profitable years for the rich.

In this writer's opinion there is a very obvious reason. On the three post-war occasions that the Labour Party have been in office their role has been to sort out the financial crisis left to them by the Tories. At the end

of World War Two this country was devastated (after all, for the first time in the history of European wars it wasn't Big Bertha of World War One but nightly bombing raids which damaged and destroyed millions of houses, factories, services, etc.) and all this had to be re-instated. So the austerity of the war years was followed by years of reconstruction, and it had to include rationing even after the war. All carried out by the Labour government. So in 1951 a 'grateful' electorate brought back war-monger Churchill, and as a result of the war there was full employment and so for the next few years the Tory lot couldn't go wrong. But by the end of the Tories' 'thirteen wasted years' in office the economy was once again in trouble, and the electorate brought back the Labour lot to sort out the financial chaos once again - but only just, so much so that Harold Wilson called an election two years later and received more than a 'working majority'. And by having sorted it all out *for capitalism* the electorate chucked them out in 1970. Heath and co. managed to upset not only the balance of payments but the miners as well, and so the last Labour government in living memory came into office in 1974 and once again sorted out the problems of capitalism at the expense of the poor who, in 1979, voted for Thatcher.

*(continued on page 2)*

### **FIFTEENTH ANNUAL ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR**



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**WAS THE LABOUR PARTY EVER SOCIALIST?**

(continued from page 1)

In 1997 once again the voting punters will be given their quinquennial opportunity to put an X on a ballot paper. The media experts are more or less saying that Blair and New Labour will be the next defenders of the monarchy, the established church and the capitalist system. Anarchists couldn't care less who defends these symbols of privilege, ignorance and injustice.

For libertarian socialists, just as for anarchists, there can be no compromise with the capitalist system. Of course we have to live in the society into which we have been born, and in order to survive we may have to work for a boss, pay rent to a landlord and shop at the supermarket. We must never give up opposing authority and the capitalist system, but at the same time seek alternatives which involve community spirit, mutual aid for the young and the old.

This is what real socialism is all about. No wonder the Labour Party politicians as well as the trade union bosses never attack the capitalist system. Indeed the Labour Party MPs with a few exceptions have accepted the 26% salary increase (on a basic salary of £33,000) and trade union bosses, including Arthur Scargill, are in the £50,000 a year league.

There will only be changes in society when pressure by the people in an overwhelming majority forces governments to accept their

demands. We are, alas, more than aware that we are far from being in a situation whereby this can be brought about, but let us start with ourselves individually. Make sure that you know what you believe in and want, and try to live up to it in your daily lives and in our contacts with others. Not only will you find that you are respected, but also that you are actually an influence to others seeking a philosophy of life.

The Labour Party – new or old fashioned, socialist or non-socialist – is just another bunch of politicians with well-paid jobs wanting to run our lives for us. Anarchists demand the right of everybody to run their own lives. But unlike all the political parties, we don't say we can run your life for you better than you can yourself. What we do say is that the capitalist system will only be destroyed when its victims – most of humanity – join forces to rid themselves of the monster.

So the social revolution begins with each one of us when we say 'I know what I want from life, and it's not a boss ordering me about for a lifetime'!

The Labour Party offers you no more than the Tory or Liberal parties. They offer to run your life for you in return for that degrading 'quinquennial cross'. Resist them! Be yourself: a socialist or an anarchist means just that!

**THE HOMELESS YOUNG IN OUR MIDST**

According to *The Guardian* ('Jobs and Money Section', 21st September) "Benefits cuts will mean more young homeless forced onto the streets" quoting the predictions of the housing charities.

The figures, based on an enquiry commissioned by eleven established charities, found that one in twenty people aged 16 to 26 in Britain's cities is homeless.

One in ten is either homeless or in imminent need of housing. And, according to Rachel Baird, "housing benefit cuts starting [in October] are expected to make the problem worse".

*The Independent* (17th September) features "Girls in despair swell rising young homeless". Rebecca Fowler quotes from the report by the eleven charities which declares that the number of young homeless people in

Britain has risen to a despairing 250,000 with a "marked increase in teenage girls leaving home with nowhere to go".

What is interesting, and alarming, in the report is that the backgrounds of the homeless young people is "very diverse", and on the practical side the inquiry panel maintained that it would be:

"considerably cheaper for the government and taxpayers to tackle homelessness with improved benefits payments rather than bear the cost of thousands of young people having nowhere to live.

The report said there would be a saving of £2,400 for every homeless person. While the taxpayer foots a £1,700 bill over two years for a young person on benefit, that rises to £4,100 for provisions for homeless people who cannot get benefits and are dependent on extra back-up, and fall into crime and ill health."

And to think that the government in election year is trying to con the electorate that the young have never had it so good. After all that is what Charles Hendry, vice-chairman of the Conservative Party, told them (*Guardian*, 26th August). To quote the MP for High Peak verbatim: "There has never been a better time to be a young person than in the Britain of 1996". So now you know!

If our leading article has been of interest you will find the idea developed at length in *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy* (142 pages, £2.00, from Freedom Press) a collection of *Freedom* editorials published in the 1950s and '60s when, as now, the Tories were in power and the Labour Party 'socialists' in opposition.

**MAJOR IS (HALF) RIGHT**

John Major is right, or at least half right. At the annual *Spectator*/Allied Dunbar lecture this year, the Prime Minister began by pointing out that: "All around the world, people ask the fundamental question – how much government do we want and what kind?" He answered decisively that "the case for small government is as much a moral as an economic one". "Smaller government fits with a belief in individual freedom and choice – still one of the basic divides in British politics." He suggested that there was a "distinctive Conservative agenda with a common theme: choice and freedom, for everyone". With these words, Major appeared to be placing himself in the centre of a strong conservative tradition which can trace its roots back to the classical liberalism of the Enlightenment era. Classical liberals held that governments governed best which governed the least. The State was an enemy of liberty, and should be constrained as much as possible. It used humans to serve its own ends without considering their individual purposes. It compelled, where the proper conditions for human development required free choice. These ideas continue to hold a strong appeal across the ages, and no doubt this is why Major, like Thatcher before him, has been advised to pose as a libertarian.

But it is only a pose. Major reveals his real agenda, perhaps unwittingly, in a little noticed section of his speech, where he suggests that: "Power, choice and responsibility should, wherever possible, be left with individuals and their families, with entrepreneurs and

businesses." The fact is that 'entrepreneurs and businesses' now hold an enormous amount of power in society. Major corporations dominate our lives and constrain the choices available to us. They channel our wants and desires with an enormous advertising industry that dominates the visual life of our cities and which permeates our culture.

For Major to devolve power, choice and responsibility to those who own and manage the businesses that dominate British society is not to reduce the burden of government but to transfer power from the State to the Corporation. This does nothing to increase the 'power, choice and responsibility' of families and individuals, or indeed of communities and workforces. It merely removes the meagre accountability that the people of this country had managed to impose on government through centuries of struggle.

In another passage, Major alleges that: "Underlying socialism, democratic socialism – or even social democracy – is a set of instincts that favours state control. The mindset of socialists and social democrats is to trust governments more than individuals..." This is a bit rich, coming from the head of a government which has curtailed freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of labour rights and civil liberties, which has intruded into the nation's bedrooms in a quite unprecedented fashion, which has destroyed local democracy and relegated power to unaccountable quangos, and which is now introducing an identity card

for the first time in nearly fifty years – hardly the hallmark of a true libertarian.

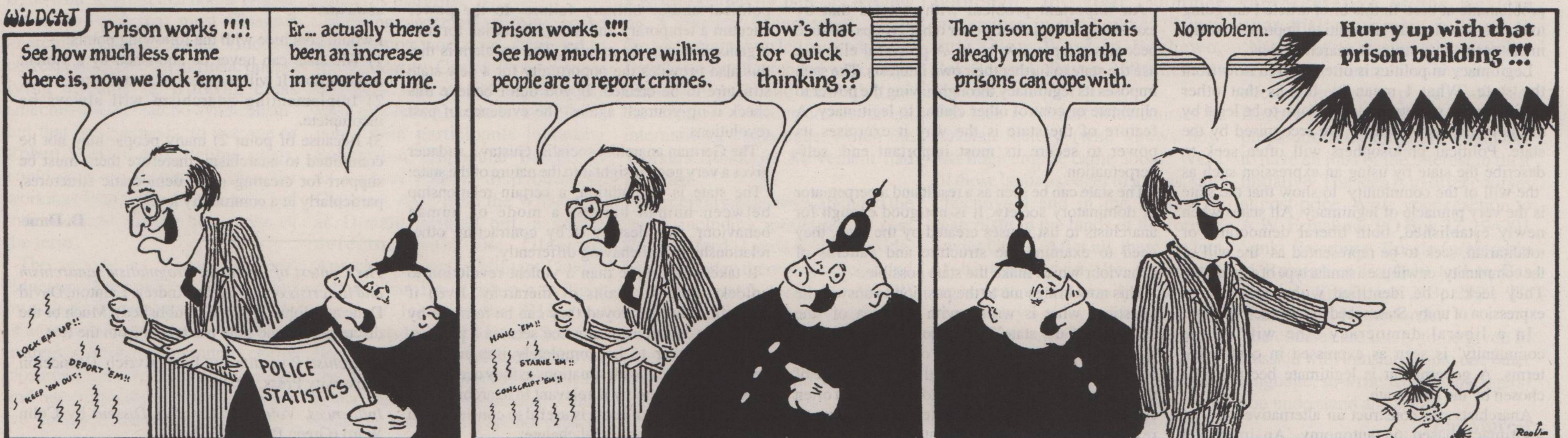
However hypocritical his remark may be, Major is right to identify a strong statist strain in much of the socialist tradition, a strain one can detect in the Fabians as much as among the various descendants of the Bolsheviks. But it would be unfair to tar all socialists with the same brush (and we should remember that even Bakunin called himself a 'revolutionary socialist'). Here in Britain there have been many anti-statist and libertarian socialists. One strand in that tradition is represented by the Guild Socialists 'lead' by G.D.H. Cole. One publication from that school, *The Meaning of National Guilds* (published in 1920), opens with the following passage:

"The fundamental basis of the revolutionary case against Capitalism is not that it makes the few rich and the many poor – though this is true; not that it creates social conditions which are a disgrace and an amazement in a civilized community – though this also is true; not that it brutalises the rich by luxury, stifles beauty, and frustrates the hope of craftsmanship for the worker – though, indeed, it does all these things; but that it denies and degrades the character of man by the operation of a wage-system which makes the worker of no more account than a machine to be exploited or a tool to be bought and sold. The seed of all our glaring social failure and distress today lies not in any imagined 'problem' of poverty, nor in any inevitable 'stage' of economic development, but in a vile conception of human relationship that has entered into and now dominates all our social life and has invested it with its character of injustice and insecurity. This spiritual failure to which we have come finds its concrete expression in the wage-system. Its assumptions and even its ideals (if we can call them so) have won so great a victory over the minds and wills of every section of our

countrymen [and women] that its creed is the creed of England today. Few challenge it; few have the spirit even to desire an alternative, far less to struggle for one. That men should be forced by the menace of starvation to accept a price for the labour which is all they have to sell, to subdue all their purposes and all their gifts to the purpose of others (and that purpose profit), to lay claim to no right of control over the conditions of their working lives, nor any power of government over those who direct them in the workshop, to be divorced from responsibility and all the attributes of free status, to have upheld before them no standard but that of gain, no incentive but the bribe (often fallacious) of higher wages – this pathetic distortion of human fellowship, this vile and perilous imprisonment of the human spirit, is actually accepted as natural, and even providential, by nearly all those who triumph by means of it, and by the vast majority, indeed, of its victims."

This kind of powerlessness, of choicelessness, and of enforced irresponsibility, will not be overcome by lowering public debt or tax or reducing the proportion of national income devoted to government spending – the 'solutions' Major offers us in his speech, which are merely methods of crushing the poor. These problems will not be solved either by the nebulous anti-union 'stake-holding' offered by New Labour. 'Smaller government' does not mean transferring powers from the State to firms, but from both firms and the State to workers and communities.

Major is right to call for smaller government. But he lies when he says that he is offering it. His 'moral' vision of the future will not lead to 'choice and freedom, for everyone'. It will lead merely to greater choice and freedom for those who hold power.



## ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

**SLAVE LABOUR UNDER OUR NOSES** In the third world child labour is commonplace. After all, the kids help to keep the family alive. But when it happens in the 'prosperous' West in our midst – what then? Victoria Clark reporting in *The Guardian* (17th September) of six schoolgirls aged between 10 and 13 who were employed packing Indian spices by a UK registered company. Needless to say, not only were their employers exploiting minors but they were getting away with paying them with boxes of chocolates or with up to £20 a week during the school holidays. What adds to the disturbing aspect of this exploitation of children is that the Indian parents "believed Mrs Barot [a director of the company] was teaching their daughters Indian dance". It was only when "her daughters brought factory overalls caked in curry powder home to be washed" that the penny dropped. All this happened in Corby, Northamptonshire.

### BOMB OR NEGLIGENCE IN TWA DISASTER

The 'experts' have been vying between bomb or accident for the TWA plane that crashed off the USA coast shortly after take-off. The official wish was that it should have been a terrorist bomb and not poor maintenance or an old machine. But the fact is that the plane had just come from Paris to Miami and within the space of three hours was to take off for Paris. No wonder that officialdom wanted it to be a bomb. And the media played up to that version. A *Guardian* double-line headline (24th August) reads "Strongest evidence yet of bomb on TWA flight" on the grounds that "investigators examining the wreckage" have "found traces of a chemical used in explosions on a seat from the passenger cabin". But a month later *The Independent's* New York correspondent reports that more 'experts' investigating the crash are "diverting their attention away from theories that sabotage might have doomed the plane and are concentrating again on the possibility of mechanical failure" (my italics). Without being an 'expert' I have always opted for mechanical failure, not only on the obvious facts given at the time but also because from the operator's point of view the bomb was preferable to poor maintenance and cutting corners. All a question of money!

### THERE'S ALWAYS MONEY FOR 'DEFENCE'

but not for the nurses, farmworkers and the undeserving unskilled dogs-bodies! There's a

government which can't afford to pay the nurses what they can afford to pay policemen, but is quite happy to announce, via that Defence Secretary creep Michael Portillo, acceptance of a £40 billion Eurofighter project. Not millions but billions – a thousand million! And yet a fortnight ago it was reported that a newly-built children's hospital would not be opening because there were no funds to run it.

**... OR IS THERE?** Don't ask me to explain the next item, which is that the Transport and General Workers Union – which sponsors Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, Labour's numbers one and two (and to think that they are proposing to give the brush-off to the hand that politically has been feeding them!) – voted at the TUC conference last month for an £18.2 billion a year cut in Britain's defence budget. So far from Britain 'ruling the waves' and the Falkland Islands, the defence budget would be down to £3 to £4 billion – just enough surely to keep the top brass able to entertain their foreign counterparts and top up their pensions. Thousands of jobs in the so-called 'defence industry' would go, but then why not teach the skilled makers of those useless weapons how to build houses or train them to help out the overworked hospital staff? However, far from welcoming the TGWU proposal, Labour's defence spokesman David Clarke was, according to *The Guardian*, 'furious'. Bill Morris, the TGWU General Secretary, was described as being 'embarrassed' by the proposal, the details of which, under conference rules, he had to convey to the minister Mr Portillo.

### THERE'S ALWAYS MORE MONEY FOR 'DEFENCE'

Another £3.5 billion is being wasted with government approval for the Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft from British Aerospace and other useless military bits and pieces, but the headlines declare MoD securing 5,000 jobs with £3.5 billion orders. So what? I repeat in other words: what is the use of producing goods which nobody will enjoy? People want houses, not missiles or bombers. We need all kinds of services for the young and the old, for the sick and the disabled. And we need more leisure to live in communities. And we can only do this when we start living in the leisure society. That society, in this age of technology, is just waiting to be enjoyed by everybody, young and old.

Libertarian

## INTERNET BUREAUCRACY AND EMPIRE

The origins of technology and media are intertwined with the origins of state and empire. The military machine of history is responsible for the development of technological civilisation as we know it. As new media continue to transform the global arena, it is no surprise to find the reins of these media in the hands of the war lords who run the empire.

The Internet domain registration monopoly (internic.net) is owned and controlled by the military-industrial-biological complex. For once it's as if the double-speak vanishes and the truth is as open as a web page. Now Internet domain registration will begin to be priced according to user-fees starting at \$50 annually. One source, one collector of a huge amount of fees. One databank with all Internet registration.

Scientific Applications International Corp. is the name of the company. They have over 20,000 employees and 450 locations around the world, reported \$1.9 billion in gross revenues in 1994. Over 90% of its income was generated by government contracts – more than half of that from defence, intelligence, and federal law enforcement contracts. They are a large military technology corporation. Some of the projects that are listed in the corporate report include:

- National Security: "Our advanced technology for the Army Global Command and Control System will allow quick response deployment and tracking of troops in simulated or actual events."

- Information Management: "SAIC is supporting Department of Defence's renovation of the 52-year-old Pentagon, one of the largest buildings in the world and workplace for nearly 25,000 people. Under US Army direction, our staff are creating an evolving building-wide 'enterprise network' of shared communications and computing services. We are designing the network to operate more efficiently than today's disparate systems, yet require less human and fiscal resources to operate and maintain."

- Military Technology: "Our contribution to the US Navy/Defence Nuclear Agency Electro-Thermal Chemical Gun illustrates this new focus." *Wait a minute, read that sentence again ...* Military Technology: "Our contribution to the US Navy/Defence Nuclear Agency Electro-Thermal Chemical Gun illustrates this new focus." *What is this?!*

- Law Enforcement: "A new SAIC system will give federal, state and local law enforcement agencies fast, on-line access to criminal histories."

- Environment: "SAIC supports the decontamination and decommissioning of defence plants and military facilities."

In 1990 SAIC was indicted by the Justice Department on 10 felony counts for fraud in its management of a Superfund toxic cleanup site. (SAIC pleaded guilty.) In 1993 the Justice Department sued SAIC, accusing it of civil fraud on an F15 fighter contract. In May 1995, the same month SAIC purchased NSI, the company settled a suit that charged it had lied about security system tests it conducted for a Treasury Department currency plant in Fort Worth, TX. (The company paid the government \$125,000 to cover the cost of the investigation as part of that settlement.)

SAIC with the purchase of NSI, which owns internic.net, now controls all Internet domain registration. A monopoly that now wants to charge \$50 annually for every domain name. Turn the funnels of money on. On the Internet, internic.net is the 'central' (catch that one), registration point for the Internet. Operated in conjunction with AT&T, internic.net is the biggest reference source on the net. Every time you send an e-mail with an address like 'lglobal.com', that name is referenced to internic.net and converted to an IP address such as 210.50.120.2 which denotes network topography. So again the military controls the maps and the bureaucracy.

As an expression of global empire, SAIC is as naked as an oligarchy can be. Their board of directors, 23 white men, one white woman, and one perhaps southern European woman. Two generals, one admiral, and a vice-chairman of Bank of America.

SAIC's board members include Admiral Bobby Inman, former NSA head and deputy director of the CIA; Melvin Laird, Nixon's defense secretary; and retired General Max Thurman, commander of the Panama Invasion. Recently departed board members include Robert Gates, former CIA director; William Perry, current Secretary of Defense; and John Deutch, the current CIA director. Current SAIC government contracts include re-engineering information systems at the Pentagon, automation of the FBI's computerised fingerprint identification system, and building a national criminal history information system.

Jesse Hirsh

## AUTONOMY AND THE STATE

A good definition of the state is a set of social institutions based on a monopoly within a territory over what is claimed to be the legitimate use of force. The state is a symbol of strength and domination which is capable of mobilising individual psychologies in its support. An allegiance to the state takes place. In international relations the individual tends to identify with the state. This provides support for militarism and wars.

It is well known that anarchists are opposed to the existence of the state. Indeed many anarchists talk about the 'abolition of the state'. Over the years I have come to see much of this talk as highly problematic at best. In this brief article I am going to try to develop an alternative approach to the mainstream class struggle anarchist view.

Legitimacy in politics is often seen to flow from the state. What I mean by this is that other institutions in society can only claim to be legal by virtue of the fact that they are recognised by the state. Political philosophers will often seek to describe the state by using an expression such as 'the will of the community' to show that the state is the very pinnacle of legitimacy. All states when newly established, both liberal democratic or totalitarian, seek to be represented as 'the will of the community' or will use a similar type of expression. They seek to be identified with some sort of expression of unity. States need this for their stability.

In a liberal democracy 'the will of the community' is seen as expressed in contractual terms. A government is legitimate because it is chosen by the electorate.

Anarchists can construct an alternative view of legitimacy based on autonomy. An important

feature of autonomy is the exercise of choice. It is then possible to construct a view of legitimacy and political power flowing from individual decisions, derived from autonomy, not granted as a 'right' by the state. This view of legitimacy coming from autonomy conflicts with the position of the state which is based on hierarchy and domination.

An important problem with state is that by exercising its legitimacy over other groups the state becomes a repressive body. A powerful elite can use the state to further their own interests. The state imposes its legitimacy through having the power to eliminate or control other claims to legitimacy. A feature of the state is the way it exercises its power to secure its most important end: self-perpetuation.

The state can be seen as a result and a perpetuator of dominatory society. It is not good enough for anarchists to list abuses created by the state, they need to examine the structure and patterns of behaviour which make the state possible.

This now brings me to the position to answer the question, what is wrong with the idea of 'the abolition of the state'? The abolition of the state does not imply the abolition of other forms of domination. This helps explain the reappearance of the state and even the reversion to tyranny that often follows revolutions. An alternative view of revolutions is to see them as state forming events.

The idea of the abolition of the state most often put forward implies an insurrectionary model of revolution where the state is abolished through a popular uprising. No revolution has occurred like this or is very likely to occur in the future. States can collapse through failing to sustain enough legitimacy because of, for example, economic, political and/or military failure. In the power vacuum a temporary and more libertarian form of organisation may be created. The problem is that this also provides the opportunity for a new state structure to be created. If you don't believe this check it up yourself against the evidence of past revolutions.

The German anarchist socialist Gustav Landauer gives a very good insight into the nature of the state: "The state is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour. We destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently."

It takes a lot more than a violent revolution to unlock complex chains of hierarchy. Even if institutions are destroyed they can be re-made by new elites. Anarchism must be seen as a process, probably never to be completely implemented, dealing in context with situations as they occur. The question of autonomy is relevant to anarchism and this Paul Goodman quote is useful to consider with regard to libertarian social change:

"For me, the chief principle of anarchism is not freedom but autonomy, the ability to initiate a task and do it one's own way ... The weakness of 'my' anarchism is that the lust for freedom is a powerful motive for political change, whereas autonomy is not. Autonomous people protect themselves stubbornly but by less strenuous means, including plenty of passive resistance. They do their own thing anyway. The pathos of oppressed people, however, is that if they break free they don't know what to do. Not having been autonomous they don't know what it's like, and before they learn they have new managers who are not in a hurry to abdicate."

I would conclude with the following points:

- 1) The state can never be abolished by a violent insurrection. It will reappear in some form.
- 2) Implementing anarchism will always be incomplete.
- 3) Because of point 2) many people may not be committed to anarchism, therefore there must be support for creating more democratic structures, particularly at a community level.

D. Dane

*The Context of Freedom: pragmatism, anarchism and the crisis on the left* by Andrew Lainton, David Dane and John Griffin (unpublished). Much of the discussion on the state is adapted from the text.

*Anarchist Portraits* by Paul Avrich (Princeton University Press, 1988).

*Influences, Voices of Creative Dissent* by Colin Ward (Green Books, 1991).

## ANARCHISTS ARRESTED IN ITALY

On the morning of 17th September, 1996, around three hundred members of the Carabinieri special squads carried out raids and arrests of anarchist groups across Italy.

This act of repression is part of a campaign orchestrated by the Roman judge Antonio Marini and the prosecutors Ionta and Vigna, a campaign which seeks to prove the existence of a mythical subversive anarchist paramilitary organisation. The first wave of raids occurred in February 1995, but at that time the authorities found neither weapons nor bankrolls nor hideouts nor documents concerning the 'gang', which lacked indeed even a name.

The actions of Tuesday 17th September were carried out by masked and armed Carabinieri. The results were very serious: 29 anarchists and dozens of people that have been officially informed to be under investigation. Some of the accused were arrested and immediately taken to the Rebibbia prison to await judge Marini's pleasure; others are currently in hiding. It is still not known exactly how many or who has been arrested - the latter have denied the right to see anyone, and have not even been able to talk to their own lawyers.

The charges are very serious and range from subversive association to robbery, the manufacture of weapons and homicide. In practice this means accusing the anarchist movement of all the unsolved crimes of recent years, without any proof being offered. An indication of the climate of persecution surrounding the arrests is the judge's statement that "I want to arrest a gang of terrorists before I retire".

Another very disturbing matter is the press release issued by the Carabinieri, which talks of a non-existent subversive organisation structured on two levels: the first, hidden and illegal, is said to be protected by a more visible 'second level', ideal for "camouflaging itself in the social milieu and interacting with other subversive cells in a dangerous, criminal brotherhood". It's clear that this notion of a 'second level' is intended to strike at all those situations of widespread sociality and solidarity (like El Paso in Turin and other occupied places throughout Italy) which have furnished and will continue to furnish support to all those who will not submit to the repressive apparatuses of the State. The theorem of the 'second level' is the mechanism through which a very violent attack could be carried out against many situations of the movement in the near future.

out now from Freedom Press

### THE ANARCHIST REVOLUTION

Polemical Articles 1924-1931  
Errico Malatesta

edited & introduced by Vernon Richards

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

124 pages ISBN 0 900384 83 2 £3.50

## LETTER FROM HUNGARY Európába

I'd like to let you know some news about the anarchist movement in Hungary.

1. Thank you for the copies of *Freedom*. Translations were distributed to most of the anarchist groups in Hungary.

2. On 9th August, the anniversary of the Hiroshima bomb, there was a two-part commemoration, a noisy demonstration and a silent remembrance service, in Budapest. Anarchists were among the organisers and distributed hundreds of information sheets about anarchism. The next day all the newspapers carried positive articles about the anarchists.

3. In the second half of August was a musical/cultural event, 'Student Island 96', the biggest event of its kind in Eastern Europe, in a camp supplied by the army. Some anarchists got free tickets because we were working with the greens, and we had a very big tent. On the second night there was a big storm, so that next morning a couple of army officers came to check to tents. Our tent would have to be replaced, but when the army officers saw the anti-militarist posters and information sheets they decided to leave us with the damaged tent. Fortunately the weather was good for the rest of the week.

4. At Student Island we handed out more than two thousand leaflets advertising our new venture, 'Alternative Education about Anarchism by Post'. This is a series of papers for which subscribers pay postage, but are otherwise free.

5. The Pope visited Hungary on 6th and 7th September, at a cost of more than 900,000,000 forints (£37,500,000). All the state television and radio stations were happy and satisfied, but there is also a citizen's broadcasting group and on the 8th September I made a twenty-minute programme on the theme of anti-clericalism. There were some good responses from listeners.

6. 1996 is the 1,100th anniversary of the Magyar conquest of Hungary, and on 20th September, the day of Saint István (St Stephen), the first Hungarian king, there was an official celebration. There was also a fascist demonstration in the centre of Budapest. We put up hundreds of posters against both the fascists and the millicentennial. The anti-fascist poster shows the two leaders of the fascist party with the caption 'Into Europe, with them?'.

Marci



## Ezekkel?

A rendszerváltás után ránszabadult vadkapitalizmus áldozatainak az az Magyarországán élők túlnyomó többségének, a nyugodt erőnek - napról napra romlik a megélhetési lehetősége. Bár a mindenkori kormányok nem ismerik el: az ország mély gazdasági válságban van! Ilyenkor jelenik meg (sokszor volt már rá példa), a kirekesztő, demagóg csöcselék, akik minden probléma okát egy vagy több kisebbség jelenlétében látják. Érveket féligazságokkal és hazugságokkal támasztják alá. Mielőtt vakon hinnél nekik, arra kérünk, gondolkozz! Vajon tényleg az a néhány színesbőrű veszi el a munkát a magyarok elől? Vajon tényleg nemzetidegen a cigányság, akikkel együtt élünk már több száz éve? Vajon a gazdasági válságot tényleg az zsidók okozták?

NEM!!!

Ezeket a hazugságokat az értelmetlen, vak gyűlölet szülte. A gyűlölet (előbb vagy utóbb) bukásra van ítélve. Arra kérünk, mondj NEMet a nacionalizmusra, a fasizmusra. Gondolkozz és rájössz, hogy az egyetlen megoldás a tolerancia! És ha tenni is akarsz, akkor össze kell fogjunk.

Köszönjük, hogy elolvastad

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## CANADA REPORT

During June and July Canadians were amused by the conflict between Ottawa and Washington over trade with Cuba. Surely this must be some kind of a record for hypocrisy. First off, Jesse Helms is all for boycotting Cuba, but was against similar actions against South African apartheid. Canada was more than happy to boycott the Boers but balks at doing the same to Latin America's last dictator. The US government wants to force Castro pack his bags but is more than willing to trade with China, infamous for its Tibetan genocide and Indonesia with its slaughter of Papuans and Indonesians.

It was a hot summer for youth-police relations. Several riots and numerous minor altercations involving punks and cops ensued. As well, the language and Quebec nationalist issues bubbled away all summer long. Anarchists can be forgiven for seeing this as a non-issue designed to keep working people divided so the elite can do what it wants with us.

10th June: The populist Reform Party finished its convention today. Party leadership was able to beat back 'extremist elements' and delegates representing Quebec and minorities were given much display. Reform endorsed the 'flat tax', repeal of gun control and a reaffirmation of their belief in individual rights. Radical decentralisation is on the agenda. Reformers would strip the Feds of most of their powers leaving them with defence, foreign trade and regulation of inter-provincial trade. Support was also given to partition of Quebec should any area wish to remain in Canada after independence. Anti-native sentiment, or at best some very misguided thinking, seems behind a statement in favour of 'eventually abolishing' special provisions made for native people, since many of these provisions were made by treaty and are considered virtually sacred by Native Americans.

24th June: Some two thousand people did \$600,000 damages to the legislative buildings and surrounding businesses in Quebec City. Seventy were arrested. Three or four people managed to get inside the legislature and start a fire. That the seat of the provincial government was attacked is an indication of how people feel about government and politicians. The crowd, though mainly young, also included older persons. The League Antifasciste Mondiale blamed anarchists for the riot. Copies of *Demainarchie*, a magazine produced by young anarchists, were displayed by the police at their press conference.

The same night a riot occurred in the city of Trois Rivieres where five hundred young people fought the police and burned automobiles.

26th June: Police in Charlottetown, province of Prince Edward Island, safely explode a bomb found in a propane refinery. A neo-nazi group called 'Loki' has claimed responsibility. The same group is believed to have exploded a small bomb in front of the Provincial Legislature last year.

27th June: Police arrested a member of the *Demainarchie* collective in Quebec and seized his computer and literature. Two days later a Montreal anarchist had his home raided and his computer and literature taken.

4th July: The *Demainarchie* Collective denounced the League Antifasciste Mondiale for causing the arrest of anarchists and police theft of property. Accusing anarchists of starting the riot is an example of 'organised lies' which seek to criminalise the movement.

12th July: Old age pensioners occupied the Quebec Health Minister's office and refused to leave. The protest was against the elderly being forced to pay a share of drug costs under the new

changes to health care. Demonstrations continued for three weeks on this issue.

30th July: Punk protest ended in seventy arrests. Young anarchists involved in support of protest.

1st August: A threatened boycott of department stores which do not display signs in English was successful. The stores went bilingual. About half the population of Montreal is anglophone, yet xenophobic Quebec nationalists forced the Quebec government to forbid English on signs. The government threatens to re-introduce the Language Police - an organisation which checked to see that all signs were in French.

6th August: A major flood which killed seven people and did five hundred million dollars damage in the Saguenay region of Quebec has local residents asking questions. Floods occurred only on streams that had been dammed or diverted. Natural water courses were not affected. Although the Quebec PM said the flood was 'an act of God', most people don't believe him. The general feeling is that corporate and governmental thirst for profits was the real cause.

12th August: Dairy farmers in British Columbia are fighting the corrupt Marketing Board system. Twenty three of them have banded together to take on the state by selling milk without a licence. The government forces farmers to buy a quota, costing up to a million dollars or more, which allows them to produce only a set amount of milk. This system gouges the consumer and limits farming to the very richest farmers.

4th September: The CSN and FTQ trade union federations asked the Quebec government to not re-introduce the Language Police. Polls show most Quebecers think Montreal a bilingual city and see nothing wrong with that. An overwhelming majority think unemployment and the closing of hospitals more important issues than language policies.

Larry Gambone

## — ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

## AFFAIRS OF THE HEART

I'm an automatic audience for television programmes on the human sciences, just so long as their findings suit my ideological preconceptions. My trouble was that when I started watching Channel 4's *Equinox* feature on 'The Great Leveller', directed by Paul Sen on 15th September, I didn't realise how interesting it was going to be. So I rely on the press summaries to provide the initial argument:

"Why do some people live longer than others? Research is forcing scientists to consider factors other than smoking, diet, wealth and exercise in estimating a person's probable life expectancy. The worlds of the civil servant and Kenya's olive baboon appear to have nothing in common. But a long-term study of the health and lifestyle of Whitehall civil servants and research into baboons in the Serengeti reveal that, in both cases, the lower an individual's hierarchical position, the greater the risk of serious heart disease and the shorter the lifespan. High rank carries with it the privilege of control, freedom from censure and powers of delegation whereas the stress that features in the lives of society's subordinates siphons off energy vital to powering the body's natural functions."

That was the point being made. What I saw on television was an epidemiologist, Richard Wilkinson, who had studied the miles of health files and fridges full of blood samples from civil servants over a long period which showed the incidence of heart disease. Then we met an old retired civil servant, hale and hearty and drawing a big pension in his 80s, and a former civil servant in the lower ranks who had his first heart attack at 43. As he got indignant about the way he was pushed around by his superiors and blamed for *their* errors, I was afraid that he would have another heart attack in front of the camera.

It was Dr Wilkinson who read in one of the trade journals about the Californian long-term study of the baboons in Kenya and realised that the findings from their blood and arteries was virtually identical. We switched to a scientist in California who described the different life expectancy of dominant and subordinate baboons. Another monkey-watcher added a key finding: those low-status monkeys who were lonely isolates suffered most. Those who, despite their inferior position in the pecking order, engaged to the full in social activities like mutual grooming, non-mating intercourse with the other sex and

playing with infants, had far better life chances.

So I, of course, was wondering whether those low-status civil servants who played an active part in their unions and other social relations did better in terms of life expectancy than the ones who just fumed about victimisation and took it out on the wife and kids back home. I was waiting for evidence not from the public services but from the cut-throat world of competitive industry. Decades ago I was impressed by Seymour Melman's study of the making of the Ferguson tractor under licence in Detroit and in Coventry (his findings are retailed in my book *Anarchy in Action*, pages 100-102). Melman contrasted the 'predatory competition' that characterised the managerial decision-making system, with the 'mutuality' which was the feature of the workers' decision-making system in the gang system of collective working.

By this stage I wanted to switch off the television and dial Mr Wilkinson for a prediction of the proneness of heart disease of managers and workers. But by this time we were watching both high-status monkeys and low-status monkeys faced, alone, by unfamiliar surroundings including, of course, the cameraman. Top monkeys were curious, but unafraid. They had the self-confidence of people born to rule. Bottom monkeys were full of insecurity and anxiety. Once more I thought of the findings of industrial psychologists about self-confidence depending upon the 'span of autonomy' in work, and the conclusion that the self-employed, continually making new decisions for themselves, are happier and live longer.

At this point I was dragged back to the screen because Wilkinson had moved on to yet another proposition even more sympathetic to me. "Wealth does not determine health. What *does* is the gap between the rich and poor. The larger the gap, the sicker the society."

This is enormously relevant to Britain, since as a matter of deliberate government policy that gap has widened here increasingly since

1979. But the programme chose to focus attention on the countries of the former Soviet empire. Until German unification the former East Germans were much healthier than the affluent West Germans. And we were transported to Hungary and the failed revolution of 1956 crushed by Soviet tanks, but where the transition to a market economy happened earlier than elsewhere in the Soviet bloc. A man who spent years in jail for his part in the revolution explained touchingly that when he came out he was in a different country. His old friends who used to discuss social issues and aspirations were now talking about big cars and big incomes. Longevity has decreased and sickness rates have increased ever since Hungary started down that path.

But before we could absorb this finding we had moved to Roseto, a small town in Pennsylvania, and a banquet of young-looking old people eating fatty foods not recommended by dieticians. They were known to be a community very free from that American preoccupation, heart disease. We learned that they were the descendants of poor rural Italian immigrants of a century ago, who had been at the bottom of the pile of immigrant communities and were employed in the slate quarries. So they found a patch of land, produced their own food and built their own houses and, of course, a Catholic church. Every kind of mutual aid organisation and social group emerged, and a big brass band. We were shown a characteristic generation gap: the mother cooking an Italian meal and the guitar-playing son impatient to get away from a place where everyone is into your affairs. He yearns to be in an anonymous city which has the standard American life expectancy.

I, of course, thought of an important study of the successes and failures of regional government in Italy, published by Princeton University in 1993 and discussed in this column for 19th November 1993 (Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: civic traditions in modern Italy*). He was examining the survival in regions like Emilia-Romagna of

"overlapping networks of social solidarity, peopled by citizens with an unusually well developed public spirit — a web of civic communities". This was just what those poor but literally good-hearted people brought to Roseto, Pennsylvania.

Well, I learn from an article in the August-September 1996 issue of *Prospect* (Nicholas Lemann, 'Anti-Social Capital') that Putnam's book made him an academic celebrity in the US, together with his article 'Bowling Alone' which claimed that "the vibrancy of American civil society has notably declined in the past several decades". So he got invited to advise Bill Clinton at Camp David.

I'd see this as the kiss of death for a bright guy with good ideas, as it means that his potentially useful generalisations will get absorbed into electoral rhetoric and dumped once the election is over.

However, Lemann makes some shrewd criticisms of the Putnam ideology. He points out that among the big-timers who have absorbed the message, involvement is delegated to "hired hands, from nannies to therapists, who bear more of the civic virtue load than is typical", and he quotes Putnam as saying that "classic liberal policy is designed to enhance the opportunities of individuals, but if social capital is important this emphasis is partially misplaced. Instead we must focus on allowing space for religious groups and choral societies that may seem to have little to do with politics or economics."

Lemann comments that "instead, the overwhelming social and moral problem is the disastrous conditions of poor neighbourhood, almost all of which are in the big cities. The model of a healthy country but with needy ghettos would suggest a programme much closer to the 'liberal social policy' from which Putnam wants us to depart ... The difficulty with such a programme is that it is politically inconvenient."

We do indeed badly need a politically inconvenient form of civic consciousness, demanding social justice as well as brass bands.

All the same, it's nice to reflect that those people who are so much involved in mankind, as John Donne put it, that they haven't time to fret about their health, are the people least likely to die prematurely from heart disease. It's all the others we have to worry over.

Colin Ward

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT ...

Recent arrivals at the Freedom Press bookshop.

**Comrade and Lover:** Rosa Luxemburg's letters to Leo Jogiches\* edited and translated by Elzbieta Ettlinger (Pluto Press). This is a fine book illuminating the life of a remarkable woman through over a hundred of the thousand letters she wrote to Jogiches over the years. The editor rightly concentrates on those dealing with her personal relationship in order to show her as what she was above all: a human being who cared passionately about other human beings, especially the downtrodden and the weak. Luxemburg wrote prolifically, and more in a conversational than a

written style, so her letters illustrate perfectly the nature and course of her relationship with Jogiches, but also the extent of her commitment to the revolution and socialism, laying bare her aspirations, frustrations, joy, anger, fear and despair, as well as the frenetic and tireless activities with the many people and organisations she worked with. But despite her commitment to revolutionary activity — which comes across well in the letters — she refused to deny herself the pursuit of happiness as Jogiches did, and repeatedly chides him for it. We also learn an astonishing amount about both partners, even though circumstances obliged them to live apart for many years. A splendid introduction is complemented by an

epilogue recounting the background to their murder in Berlin in 1919, an appendix, an index and a few photographs. 206 pages, originally £7.95, now £3.95.

**Solidarity Forever — the IWW:** an oral history of the Wobblies edited by Stewart Bird, Dan Georgakas and Deborah Shaffer (Lawrence & Wishart). In the mid-1970s Bird and Shaffer made a documentary film *The Wobblies*, comprising interviews with IWW activists from the glory years, who described what it had been like to be a Wobbly. The book expands on the oral histories from the film, includes others not in the film plus a lot more historical and statistical detail, and a wealth of illustrations and photographs. "Wobblies were the most radical trade unionists in US history. Founded at the beginning of the century, the IWW's aim was 'one big union' to champion the rights of all workers — black and white, native born and immigrant, women and men. Victims of the most savage domestic repression ever unleashed by the US government, the Wobblies became famous for their commitment to direct action and industrial sabotage, and for their rich musical culture. These collected interviews tell the Wobblies' story in the words of ordinary members — migrant farm workers and lumberjacks, women textile workers, miners and factory hands, dockers and seafarers. With the photographs and the cartoons they combine to present a history that is

both political and cultural, personal and humorous." Not only that, but the cover was designed by one Clifford Harper! This must be one of the bargains of the year, reduced from the published price of £9.95 to a mere £2.99 plus £1 postage for 247 pages.

**The Struggle Against the State and other essays\*** by Nestor Makhno, edited by Alexandre Skirida (AK Press). What more pleasant pastime can you think of — after years of armed revolution, living rough and fighting Bolsheviks and White Russians alike, and then being forced to flee to Paris — than sitting down and writing occasional essays (probably lolling on the banks of the Seine with a bottle of vodka) whilst nursing one's wounds, poor health and other after effects of war and prison? Nestor Makhno may well have found it boring, of course, after all the adrenalin-charged excitement of the past, but it would be nice to think that he enjoyed at least some of the time he spent writing these essays, mainly for fellow exiles, which range from the theoretical and analytical to challenges thrown out to his enemies, to robust defences of his actions in the Ukraine and rebuttals of accusations of anti-semitism. Translated from French (but there's no indication of by whom) they cover such topics as 'Soviet' Power — Its Present and Its Future; Great October in the Ukraine; In Memory of the Kronstadt Revolt; Open Letter to the Spanish Anarchists; The Makhnovshchina and

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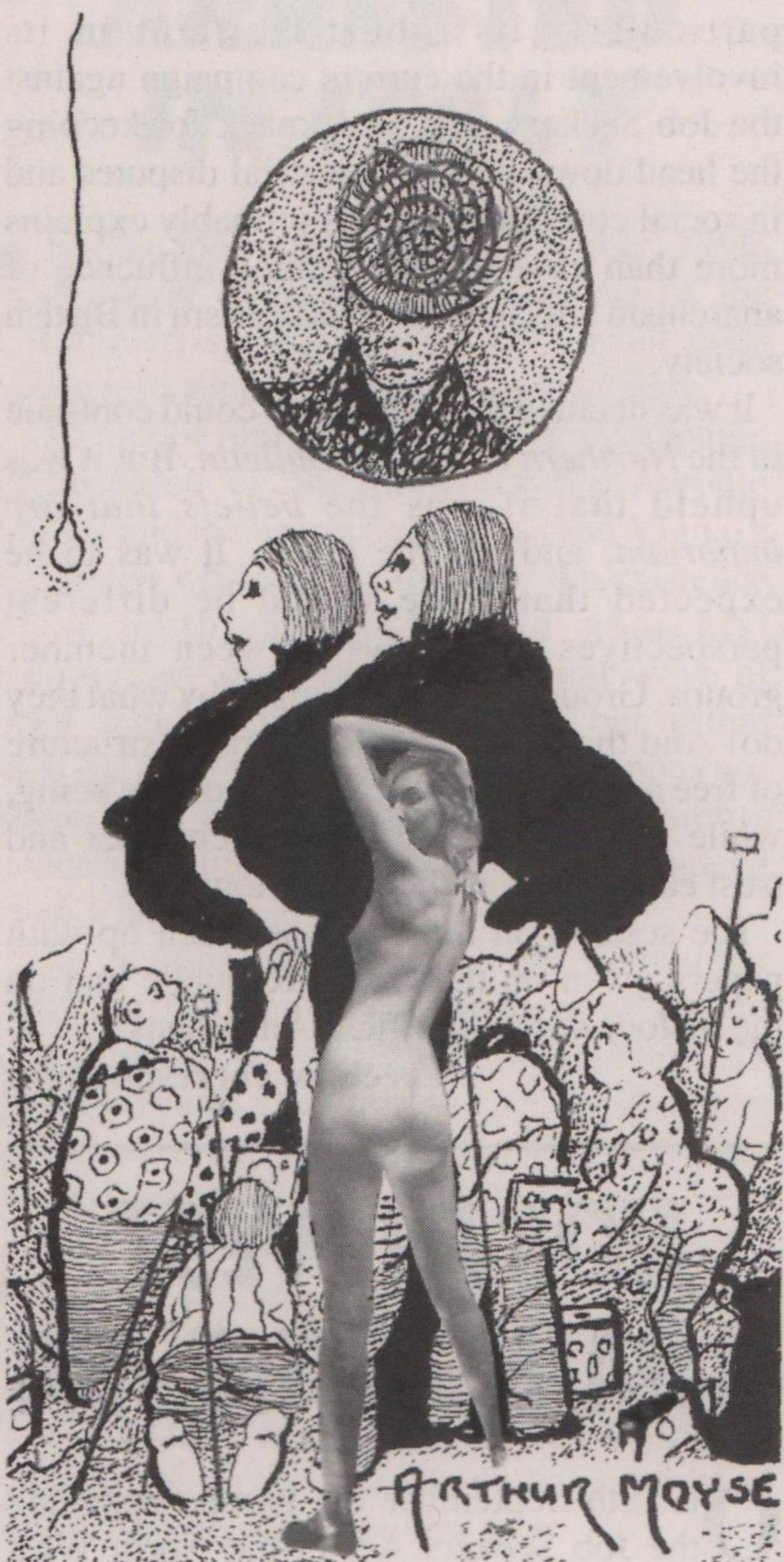
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# DISGUSTED OF POTTERS BAR



BLUMENFELD

Nothing brings out the best in British conservatism, with a small Freudian 'c', like good honest to God filth made public as art for the stinking minority and this month we have had a feast, nay an orgy, of that which unites all races, all nations, all classes and the impossible, the British Labour Party.

I am not a prude, in that come the need, the time and the act I have been warned that I am as foul-mouthed as the best, but this I know, that the behaviour of the critics has left me aghast. I am not a particularly ghastly type but as I covered the eyes and the ears of the Town's struggling frau I believe that, for a week at least, civilisation as we know it is on the brink.

Within Durham Cathedral beneath the huge west window William Viola has projected a video of a man sinking and surfacing in a blue pool of water. In relation to stained glass the statement is 'why not' for it is no matter than the craftsman's ability to work and communicate in new material. The Messenger's offence, if offence it be, is that the rising and sinking man is full frontal and it is felt by the Church authorities, and probably justly so, that the sight of the blue-tinted dunking male's ding-a-ling might cause some members of the congregation to whoopsie into the collection box, so politics being the art of compromise a tasteful screen has been tastefully placed around the blue for a boy. Though dunked in a catholic font as a puling child and over the long tourist years gazed upwards within the cathedrals at all the great works of religious art, I believe in the puritan ethic in that if one believes then the church is a place of silence wherein to seek to communicate with that which one believes in and to purge one's soul, but blue boy and the pretty things will still be first priority within the ecclesiastical time-warp traps Ecce Homo. But now that an RC bishop has taken to the hills with the girl of his choice, blue boy must continue to float to a diminishing audience, so milk it, milk it, blue-tinted or nay.

Within one of London's great major art galleries they are displaying the photographic works of Robert Mapplethorpe, a sad American who died of AIDS-related sickness in 1989.

A sad exhibition of sad people in that Mapplethorpe's photographs are in the main given over to the painful pleasures of sado-masochistic fun and games. Many of the photographs have been around for some time under the heading of 'art for art's sake' but in the matter of their subjects they belong to the good ol' dirty postcard that some lucky owner might possess to secretly flash to envious fifteen year old friends in the factory lavatory, dream on, dream on. In the interest of our younger readers I will not name the major art gallery, so let them seek the yellowing tatty naughty Victoriana.

Brian Sewell, who is in danger of writing the entire *Evening Standard* newspaper, has written that "if we do not care for what we see we walk away from it, but no one ... may tell us that we may not see it: our minds must be our own". But though I endorse everything that Sewell writes about the evils of censorship, he is wrong in relation to the image on the mind, for if without warning we see a particular image it is then too late to censor it within the mind for it has been rubber-stamped into our conscience. But a few years ago at a Mapplethorpe exhibition – and I shall not name the gallery to protect our younger, etc. – was a photograph of one man inserting the length of his forearm into the anus of another man and that image has stayed in my mind these years indexed under 'Jeece Christ'.

The ol' perennial of what is filth, what is art has once again, like blue boy, resurfaced and the flower of this island's intelligence has been called into bat to pronounce. For myself, I enjoyed the former Indian Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits who will not accept the case that 'utterly repugnant' images were permissible in the name of art for, said the Chief Rabbi (ex), "anything that subverts the moral order is to be avoided. This is part of society's self-defence against demoralisation" and the Chief Rabbi (ex) is wrong, wrong, for if some others censor what one reads, listens to or views then therein lies a society's weakness and I give you Stalin, Hitler and the Catholic Church and those who shall be nameless. In the US of A in 1990 (and who were they at war with that year?) a Cincinnati museum mounted, again a Freudian slip, an exhibition of the photographs of Mapplethorpe as a touring exhibition and the unfortunate, or lucky, director was invited to the nearest slammer charged with obscenity. Mapplethorpe had died sixteen years after the American Supreme Court had ruled that "art and pornography are mutually exclusive because if it is art then it cannot be pornographic" which won the Lady Chatterly trial for the defendants. It is a sad defence for the battle for the liberty of the individual, but if you can afford the finest minds and the ol'

brilliant legal team then it will pay off, and pay is the Freudian slip. A drawn dog cannot bite, which on reflection might be a dubious witty remark, but Oscar was so right that "there is no morality in art, only good and bad work" for pornography or treason is that which offends those whose office controls our lives. I myself in the matter of 'cheese' am a black and grainy fundamentalist as opposed to Cecil's Daz-white on all occasions for Brandt's black and grainy photographs of drear evenings with rain upon cobblestones had more social comment than all the editorials in the *Statesman* while Cecil Beaton's whiter-than-white of the upper classes sitting on their arses on the broad sweep of the grand stairway leading up to the maids' rooms condemned the unfortunates of that society as surely as Brandt's ghost-ridden rain-swept cobblestones. Only Erwin Blumenfeld at the Barbican can claim that his living was greater than his photographic art for, born in 1897, he knew them all, all the great mini-heroes of the enjoyable cult of Dadism and German Expressionism until 1941, then to photograph the tiny world of fashions for the great unreadable American fashion magazines of the period so that whenever I go into the smiling friendly newsagent for my copy of *The Sun* and *The Telegraph* I know that all the mass ranks of magazines on the shelves echo Erwin Blumenfeld and his life – his associations were alas more worthwhile than his art. I now pause for a glass of St Michael Australian bottle-fermented sparkling ale knowing that if the entire reviewing corps condemn a novel as 'it's enough to know that xxx takes place in an oblong of private gardens in west London and is all about sex (foul), heterosexual sex (the penis size is a constant concern), risible sex, forced sex in groups, sex with animals, sex between animals and dead people, sex between aristocrats and maids, sex with a laugh and sex with the steel-capped boot in the face, sex until the xxx and bile rises' then that should guarantee it top, top, top of the month's bestseller list. I have deliberately omitted the name and the author in deference to ... etc., etc.

Arthur Moysé

## ... AND ACTION!

Anti-Semitism. This is an important addition to the sparse literature on the Russian Revolution and the Makhnovists from an anarchist standpoint available in English, so it is surprising to see no introduction nor even a preface to set it in context, even though the publishers have found space for ten pages of adverts for their other books. This would seem rather less cheeky if they weren't charging £7.95 for the other 114 pages, if they hadn't received contributions from several individuals and the Friends of AK Press, and if the typesetting and design hadn't been supplied free. However, the editor does at least add a detailed and very useful, if argumentative, bibliographical afterword and there is further information in the publisher's blurb on the back cover. Despite the reservations, still a very worthwhile book to have, especially if you've read or intend to read Arshinov's *History of the Makhnovist Movement\** (Freedom Press, £5.00) or Voline's *Unknown Revolution* (£11.99 plus postage and packing).

**In the Floating Army:** *F.C. Mills on itinerant life in California 1914\** by Gregory Woirol (University of Illinois Press). "Each box weighs 70lbs. From 500 to 700 are carried in a day. I worked at this till 9pm Friday night with two hours off for meals. By the time I finished my feet were blistered, my back aching and each of my thighs with a red hot sear across it where the edges of the box rubbed. I no longer

wonder why there are so many IWWs. Why are there not more anarchists?" F.C. Mills was a well-educated progressive who in 1914 took a short-term job with the California Commission on Immigration and Housing to investigate the reported appalling living and working conditions among the itinerant fruit-pickers, lumberjacks and road-builders, and their possible connections with the IWW and recent strikes and riots in the state. In the pre-World War One recession, large numbers of desperate men took to the road in search of employment. But the bosses, if they did take anyone on, rewarded them with squalid housing, inadequate rations and sewerage provision, insulting treatment on the job and the 'bum's rush' out of town as soon as the work ended. Woirol has used the reports Mills submitted and his personal diaries to paint a fascinating picture of the privations suffered by this 'floating army', and the measures they took to protest against the injustices meted out to them. For his investigations, which he began in a lighthearted mood, he dressed as a hobo, living and working with down-and-outs, Wobblies, tramps, pickpockets and conmen, sleeping in haystacks and ramshackle sheds and learning how to hop the freight cars. As the reality of his condition set in, however, the tone of his writing changed markedly and his social consciousness began to awaken. He met and talked to many IWW members and sympathisers and quickly lost any illusions he may

have had as to the seriousness of the situation: "I have seen, to a very limited degree, some of the workings of the inner circle, the brains of this great army, the organising force that is trying to tell this army of its strength, trying to teach them how to get their share of the goods of this world. And the message they bring, the message millions of men are listening to, is one of violence, bloodshed, 'Direct Action' they call it." Excellent complementary reading to *Solidarity Forever* (above). 168-page hardback with index and bibliography. Originally \$24.95, now only £5.99.

**Re-enchanted Humanity:** a defence of the human spirit against anti-humanism, misanthropy, mysticism and primitivism by Murray Bookchin (Cassell). Are human beings a cancer threatening the very existence of the biosphere, as many deep ecologists claim? Or is it our social and economic systems, controlled by elites, which are the real threat? Bookchin's latest major work is a serious, penetrating and highly-detailed dissection of the Malthusians, 'Gaians', technophobes and deep ecologists. Dense and provocative, it tears strips off the opposition. 273 pages with index, £14.99.

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96 pages ISBN 0 900384 82 4 £3.50

# NORTHERN ANARCHIST NETWORK CONFERENCE SHEFFIELD SIGNALS SOCIAL STRUGGLE

Last month's Sheffield conference of the Northern Anarchist Network declared itself for social action and against smelly sectarianism.

Libertarian leftist groups from Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Huddersfield and Nottingham were present, as were anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist federations such as the Sheffield and Manchester Solidarity Federations, the Anarchist Communist Federation and a party of Spanish anarchists from the Iberian Federation of Young Libertarians (FIJL) in Alicante.

The essential message of this conference is that members should be judged by what they do and what they stand for, and not the labels they adopt.

## SLAY THE JSA

A report was given by those taking part in the Shepherds Bush protest against the JSA on 7th September, called by London Against the JSA. Several hundred had taken part, including a contingent from the dole workers' unions. Members from Militant present attacked Groundswell and the anarchists for their support of the 'Three Strikes and You're Out' strategy. "This practice", Militant argued, "intimidates dole workers". Some of the dole workers there, however, voiced their support for 'Three Strikes'.

It was pointed out by the dole workers that the targets set by the government for getting claimants off benefits were not being met. Their new computer system was unworkable and the postal strike was delaying the implementation of the Job Seekers Allowance. The dole unions say the introduction of the JSA will be slower than anticipated and that it will not be in full force in October.

Some discussion took place on the proposed strike at Benefit Offices over the demand for 'Bandit Screens' due to take place on 23rd September.

It was suggested that the aim was to get 13% off benefits in the next year through the new JSA regime.

It was proposed that the anarchist answer to the government 'Cheat Lines' should be a 'Blab on a Bully Line' to help claimants expose dole bullies who are recklessly forcing people off benefits. It was said that it would be more useful to establish local helplines to claimants to inform on dole bullies.

It was pointed out that the next Groundswell conference will be held on 26th October. Information about this can be obtained from the Oxford branch (ask for the Claimants Group) on 01865 723750.

There was some talk about if it was the incentive bonus or fear of losing their jobs which was turning dole workers into bullies. Is it the carrot or is it the stick? Does fear motivate wickedness or is it greed? Surely it doesn't matter! There will be blood on their hands and suicides in the streets as a consequence of a system which urges dole office functionaries to push people off benefits.

It was reported that the nerve centre controlling the implementation of the JSA was based in Sheffield. Probably at Block A in Porterbrook House, Sheffield.

## SOCIAL STRUGGLE IN LIVERPOOL

The conference decided to back the three-day 'Reclaim the Future' campaign in support of the Liverpool dockers. This takes place on the weekend of 28th September.

The event is designed to unite dissent, as well as show solidarity with the five hundred dockers sacked by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company a year ago.

Since then the workers have fought back by sending delegations to international ports, and for the last year successful boycotts have been established stopping ships from using Liverpool Docks. Their action is working outside the limits of the union at a grassroots level. To highlight their struggle the dockers have organised a march and rally as a big 'thank you' to Liverpool for their support.

There is an attempt to draw on the recent successes of Criminal Justice Act demos, the RTS actions and Newbury and Shoreham protests, etc., by bodies including the Advance Party, Freedom Network, Reclaim the Streets, etc. Out of this will be a weekend of carnival and action.

The conference was told that the dockers are interested in joining the anti-JSA campaign.

## MAKING NOT VOTING RELEVANT

The conference received reports of anti-election workshops in Sheffield and Glasgow. Anti-election stickers, we were told, will be launched at the Anarchist Bookfair in London on 19th October.

Some wondered if a 'Don't Vote' campaign is necessary, as people in increasing numbers are not voting anyway. Others argued that such a campaign should focus on a positive rather than a negative plan of action.

It was suggested that we try to link our opposition to the election gloss with our own actions, particularly our Anti-JSA Campaign.

## 'WHO ARE THE WANKERS?'

Leeds Anarchist Group argues for a tighter organisation of the NAN (Northern Anarchist Network), with more class struggle commitment. The case was put for clearer definitions and participation in class action and struggle.

Behind this lay the belief in a firmer anarchist identity. Followed possibly by a membership structure, and some minimal aims and standards.

Others, like Nottingham, put the case for continued 'Free Association' of groups in the NAN.

There was some suggestion that Subversion was not kosher in anarchist terms. This brought forth the protest that what we want is a practical test, not an ideological test of anarchist authenticity: "Who are the wankers? I'll tell you who! The wankers are those who don't turn up on picket lines at Job Centres and Benefit Offices. Those who don't oppose the JSA. The wankers are those who didn't turn up at Cheetham Hill. These are practical tests. And on every one of them Subversion passes with flying colours."

This spokesman claimed, as an anarcho-syndicalist, that he didn't like to admit it but: "Without Subversion - and their efforts - there would be no campaign at Cheetham Hill. No Manchester campaign against the Job Seekers Act. Without Subversion - and their efforts - there would have been no raid on Ontario House. No Manchester campaign against the JIMs. Thanks to Subversion we've got 'Three Strikes' in Manchester and a mass picket at the end of the month at Cheetham Hill."

This brought a curious contribution from the Manchester Solidarity Federation: "NAN must be a political organisation - I don't want it to become a 'clique' for whatever campaign is on the stage."

Of course the Manchester Solidarity Federation has been distinguished for its monastic

approach to both industrial and social struggle. One couldn't help but notice its lack of interest in the outside world, particularly its robust restraint in its involvement in the current campaign against the Job Seekers Act. This knack for keeping the head down during industrial disputes and in social conflict situations probably explains more than anything the limited influence of anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism in British society.

It was decided that the debate could continue in the *Northern Anarchist Bulletin*. But it was upheld that it was the *beliefs that are important*, and *not* the labels. It was to be expected that there would be different perspectives and views between member groups. Groups should be judged by what they do! And that NAN should return its structure of free association. At least for the time being, while members get to know each other and trust each other, as they work together.

The session on Sunday was taken up with papers given on the Czech Republic and on the history of the Sheffield Anarchists.

Freedom correspondent

## NORTH WEST AGAINST THE JSA

On 19th September the groups opposing the Job Seekers Act in the North West assembled to found a co-ordinated body 'North West Against the JSA'. This organisation plans to bring together all opponents of the Act within the region.

After 7th October, when the Employment Service starts to enforce the Act, the North West Against the JSA aim to step-up the campaign. To open up the action there will be a mass picket at Cheetham Hill Job Centre on 27th September. This will be backed by a contingent from the People's March for Jobs as well as the usual Groundswell groups and anarchists.

## PEOPLE'S MARCH

The People's March passes through Manchester on the weekend beginning 27th September. As well as Cheetham Hill, there will be actions at Tameside and in Central Manchester.

For 7th October, as part of the nationwide Groundswell action against the introduction of the JSA, the North West region decided to demonstrate at their local Job Centres at 11am. In the afternoon a co-ordinated action will take place at Cheetham Hill at around 2pm.

It was also decided that the Bury Unemployed Workers Association establish a bank of telephone numbers for coordination of anti-JSA work in the area. That in future the region set up teams of 'Flying Pickets' to target Job Centres and Benefit Offices which have a poor record in the treatment of claimants.

## DOLE BULLY HOTLINE

The groups present at this regional co-ordinating conference of the North West Against the JSA included: Tameside, Bury, Manchester, Rochdale and Huddersfield.

Tameside has already set up its own 'Dole Bully' Hotline (0161-338 8465). As part of the 'Three Strikes and You're Out' strategy, being operated by Groundswell groups nationwide, the Tameside Unemployed Workers Alliance has laid on the Hotline for claimants who feel they are not being treated courteously by their dole officials. The Tameside leaflet says: "If you've been bullied then let us know immediately".

It was decided that the region ought to set up Hotlines - 'Blab on a Bully' Hotlines - to cover the whole North West area.

The next assembly of the North West Against the JSA will be held at Bury Unemployed Centre, 12 Tithebarn Street (just off the Rock), Bury, at 12 noon on Wednesday 23rd October.

Unemployed Activist

## SAFETY REGULATIONS: DO THEY DO ANY GOOD?

Everything about motorised transport is covered by regulations, from the length of a lorry-driver's teabreak to the testing of the brakes on a bus. I'm not convinced that they do much good; many of them are self-defeating.

I first encountered the work of Professor John Adams of the University College of London when he appeared on a talk show soon after it became compulsory for drivers and front-seat passengers to wear safety-belts. He was talking about the idea that everybody has their own *Risk Thermostat* (I think he had invented the phrase himself).

An electric thermostat switches on the heater when it's a few degrees colder than the ideal temperature, and doesn't switch off again until it's a few degrees hotter than the ideal, so it keeps things just around the average. Professor Adams's theory is that everybody's risk thermostat is pre-set at some level of dangerousness where you feel comfortable. If you're doing something scary for a while, your automatic reaction is to sit at home for a time until you feel like taking chances again. To over-simplify: if you've an office job, you'll feel like going sky-diving at the weekend. If you're a commando or a matador, your idea of a break will be to sit by the fireside.

How does this apply to car driving? The risk thermostat works on a small scale, from minute to minute, not just on the big scale from worktime to playtime. When you're cruising along and everything is fine and predictable and safe, you automatically relax, daydream a bit, and give less than 100% of your attention to the road. Then something happens, maybe somebody in front brakes a

bit more suddenly than you'd expected ... that alerts you, you slow down a bit for the next few miles and concentrate more. Gradually you relax again until the next surprise brings your full attention back to the job of driving. So your standard of preparedness for an emergency varies from minute to minute as you're driving, around the 'average' level of risk that you're comfortable with.

The snag with safety rules is that they can't change the setting of any person's risk thermostat. If something changes to make you feel safer and more relaxed, then you will automatically compensate for it by concentrating less and going a couple of m.p.h. faster. So the overall level of risk (to yourself) stays about the same whatever else changes. I've seen myself doing it. When I had the old car that was coming up to its MOT I drove at a 'reasonable' speed, but when I had to hire a brand new transit van to do a moving job, I found myself battering along the motorway at a reckless speed. I had unconsciously compensated for the perfect brakes and wide straight roads.

A couple of months after the wearing of car seat-belts was made compulsory, it was widely publicised what a great success it was. 15% less car drivers and front-seat passengers had been killed. But Professor Adams had a shocking statistic: in the same period 15% more cyclists and pedestrians had been killed. The risk thermostat had worked: drivers felt a bit safer being securely strapped in and bombarded with propaganda about how safe they would be. So they relaxed that little bit more and drove that little bit faster.

Jake Williams

## Resisting the System

Dear *Freedom*,  
Steve Booth (21st September) is right to criticise "Marxists and class struggle anarchists" for their belief in something called the 'working class' which will overthrow the capitalist system. Where he goes wrong is in rejecting the whole idea of class analysis as a means of understanding society as it is and what possibilities exist for changing it.

By 'society' I mean the entire world. Modern capitalism is a truly global system. Even so we should remember, as Colin Ward's article in the same issue pointed out, that there is a rich world and a poor world. 250 million workers in the former earn an average \$85 a day while 1,250 million in the latter earn \$3. Forgetting this is what allows 'revolutionaries' in countries like the UK to delude themselves that the "Sun readers, lottery ticket buyers and *Coronation Street* watchers" are a potential revolutionary force.

Whatever may be true in the 'developing' world (where the traditional idea of the 'working class' may still have some validity) the majority in the developed world are middle class, which means that they have a material standard of living which could not be extended to the rest of humanity, given current and foreseeable technologies, under a more egalitarian economic system.

This is why it is a mistake for Steve Booth and others to regard this 'mainstream' of society as passive

media-brainwashed sheep. They don't act against their oppressors because, frankly, they are not really oppressed (not yet anyway).

In addition to this middle class there exists the ruling or owning class, which hardly needs discussion, and what is called the 'underclass', i.e. the long-term unemployed, low-paid, most pensioners, single parents, etc.

Capital's long-term strategy (and I'm not talking about 'the machine' as *Green Anarchist's* obscurantist demonology would have it, but the specific groups of thinking animals that control it) seems to be to reduce as much of the population in the 'developed' world as possible to the level of the poor, 'developing' regions. This is a tricky operation which they dare not attempt at one blow, so they have to pick off sub-groups in piecemeal fashion.

Right now, with the JSA, etc., the British state is picking on the unemployed, trying to force us into low-paid jobs. We can only combat this by developing a *mass* campaign of resistance of a kind that will persuade them that this exercise will cost more than it's worth. This is the only kind of 'negotiation' that will have any effect. Groundswell seem to be making a start at least.

This is not a matter of legitimising authority but of recognising the *practical necessity*, for the underclass, of resisting this attempt to reduce us to slavery or worse. Steve Booth seems to welcome the

coming collapse of the welfare state, dreaming of an army of 'refusers' living outside the system. Where? Antarctica? Sorry, Steve, but we can't 'refuse' to eat.

He is probably correct to say that anarchists spend too much time slugging each other off (though his comment about *Freedom* being stuck in the past is a bit rich coming from someone from *Green Anarchist*, which seems obsessed with the Stone Age). I think a lot of it stems from different utopian fantasies some people hold, ranging from anarchist-communist ideas of a hi-tech middle class consumer society extended to the whole of humanity to the primitivist dreams of *Green Anarchist* which seem to envision the whole world becoming a kind of giant safari park where middle class neurotics can soothe their alienated souls. The impoverished majority, presumably, having been consumed as cannon fodder in the final battle with the 'mega-machine'!

Okay, I'm probably exaggerating, but I think that anyone opposed to global capitalism, for whatever reason, needs to forget about anything like the above and join the real world. The truth is that it's hard to see how any kind of free society can replace capitalism in the next few decades. The only real course open to us is to take part in and encourage resistance to the system by sections of society that are at the sharp end. Any utopias are for unborn generations. We must try to survive as best we can and perhaps help to stave off the real dangers of war and eco-catastrophe in the meantime.

John Wood

## Celebration of Anarchism

Dear *Freedom*,  
*Freedom* has been improving its coverage of later, especially with the news reports covering the Job Seekers Allowance and the Groundswell initiative, and in the 7th September issue the Merseyside dockers struggle.

With this in mind, it was good that Donald Rooum gave an account of the 'Celebration of Anarchism 96' event in Glasgow on 24th August, known by the late Robert Lynn as the 'Summer School', an event I helped to organise.

However, a few of Donald's descriptions of the workshops were a bit misleading and I thought it best to give another version.

First of all, regarding the 'Egoism' workshop and the identification of Robert Lynn with the conscious egoist legacy. It is true that Robert made us aware that egoism wasn't a right-wing idea but that doesn't mean, since the '60s, that most Glasgow anarchists regarded Stirner's ideas as corresponding to "an intrinsic underlying attitude of working class anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism" but that the synthesis, to use one of Robert's terms and lifetime goals, could draw on a culture within the working class that gave rise to a rugged individualism (in the best sense of the term).

The session on 'Community and Education Struggles' was dominated by a discussion of the supporting role of anarchists as participants who lived in areas of school or community centre closures. However, it would be wrong, and not especially libertarian, to say we 'initiated' these occupations.

The 'Workplace Struggles' workshop revolved not around Glasgow docks (what docks?) but the Merseyside dockers' struggle and the postal workers' dispute, with Alan from the Edinburgh Postal Workers' Liaison Group participating.

The second workshop on 'Organisation' focused on the problems of a Scottish federation and some problems some anarchists in Glasgow had with this idea in 1994-95. We decided to improve our links with the Northern Anarchist Network and Irish anarchists and encourage 'national' federations (SF, CWF, ACF, etc.) to stay in touch. A meeting to re-start Scottish networking would tie in with future opposition to the JSA in Scotland. The first workshop at the main event, led by Martin of the Solidarity Federation, focused on effective networking, with Glasgow concerns marginal.

Running concurrently with the second organisation workshop, relocated to the Solidarity Centre in downtown Glasgow, was an alternative workshop entitled 'Anarchism and Marxism', with participants including Subversion, Unpopular Books, an ex-*Radical Chains* distributor in Glasgow, Alan from the WSM, and as Donald pointed out, a young defector from the Glasgow Anarchist Group to Militant Labour called Alan. He exists in a twilight zone of leaving the Glasgow Anarchists to join Militant / Scottish Socialist Alliance, but is only shown any friendship / toleration when he seeks out his ex-comrades. Other Glasgow comrades were not present

at this workshop, but it is important to point out that his defection (and one or two others separately over the past five years) points to the problems discussed by 'Black Sheep' in his article in *Scottish Anarchist 2*, and the prestige Tommy Sheridan has in working class communities and amongst socialists in the west of Scotland.

The 'Job Seekers Allowance' workshop, chaired by a Sheffield anarchist, focused on much more than the Manchester response to Groundswell, and also covered the contributions of a Class War member who worked in a benefit office who was opposed, like the rest of us, to the union's opposition to the JSA in terms of security screens for their members, and a leaflet from Workers Autonomy in London which directly challenged this union-led approach.

The sessions on 'Anti-Election Strategies', led by the Tyneside Anarchist Group, decided to exchange ideas on future campaigns with Tyneside to act as co-ordinators. There was also a workshop led by Iain of Glasgow on 'Computer Networking', while the extra workshop led by Andrew of Dublin was well attended with a talk, discussion pack and exhibition on the 'Chiapas' rebellion and the recent international conference, which the Workers Solidarity Movement had attended.

Over eighty anarchists attended the event, including minibuses or cars from Oxford, Leeds and Tyneside. On the Sunday there was a picnic and a football match (only two-sided!) involving thirty or so survivors who left another pub session a few hours later won over to the idea of 'Summer Schools' and determined to stay in touch.

Jim McFarlane

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

## Anarchist Summer University in a Kolkhoz

Dear *Freedom*,  
During a brainstorming session on the inexhaustible topic 'What to do?' in the Uchitelskaya (Teacher) Street in Peter (the name often given in Russia to the city of Sankt Peterburg, formerly Leningrad) the idea was launched to start summer universities in the kolkhoz 'Nowy Put' (New Way) in Bochewo, Boksitogorski Rayon, 160 miles east of Peter.

The idea is to start with courses in Russian history (who knows how that huge empire came about? Were all those lands as eager to join as, say, Chechnya?) and in the history of anarchism in the lands of the former Soviet Union. After all, there are lots of historians in the anarchist movement, it could easily set up, say, a temporary agency in historians and pass on the benefits to local groups. The kolkhoz 'Nowy Put' is an initiative of communist and still party activist Nikolay Wiktorowich Panteleyev, who runs there a farm

based on exchange and has deliberately sought contact with anarchists like Pyotr Raush of the Peter League of Anarchists (PLA) in the hope of finding people interested in joining his project.

Early in October Pyotr Raush and a representative of the western anarchist movement will go to 'Nowy Put' to discuss the possibility of such a summer university and decide whether the place is suitable. Before starting their concrete preparations the initiators would like to have an idea of the interest in their initiative. The idea is to offer courses at cost-price. Write your reaction to A.W. Ermakow, PO Box 32, 194291 Sankt Peterburg, Russia (preferably in Russian or English) and to Bas Moreel, Spuistraat 213, 2987 TL Ridderkerk, Netherlands.

The courses are likely to be given in Russian with translation into one other language, so write which language(s) you understand and speak.

Bas Moreel



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**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

# 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 -

**11th October** Conscious Egoism and Anarchism (speaker Donald Room)

**18th October** General discussion

**Saturday 19th October** (at the bookfair) early evening symposium: Phases of Anarchism

**25th October** Literary Anarchy: A Reading of Anarchist Short Fiction (by John Moore)

**1st November** Food Not Bombs (illustrated talk by Keith McHenry of San Francisco Food Not Bombs Group including a video)

**8th November** General discussion

Thereafter vacant slots are available, except on:

**20th December** Christmas Party

**31st January** Speakers from *Green Anarchist* talking about their court action and showing the video *Exit Stage Right*.

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 for London Anarchist Forum

# Dales Red Rambles

A series of free guided walks in the Yorkshire Dales for Anarchists, Greens, Socialists and Libertarians. All walks are on a Sunday unless otherwise stated.

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**17th November - Ribblesdale:** Attermire Scar and Caves. Meet at car park before Viaduct, Settle, at 10.45am. Length approx 7 miles.

On all walks bring walking boots, waterproofs, food and drink.

Telephone for further details  
01756-799002

# ANARCHIST RESEARCH GROUP

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speaker Brian Morris

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