

FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

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Blair orders 232 Eurofighters for £14 billion ... but **WHERE'S THE ENEMY?**

It's not the first time that we have used this headline in *Freedom*. After all, the so-called 'Cold War' was yet another excuse to bolster the war industry in the United States and in Europe, in spite of the fact that it must have been obvious to the experts, as it was to politically conscious laymen, that not only did Soviet Russia have no intentions of waging war against the West but, equally obvious, if they had they just hadn't the capacity, apart from the disaffection that was destroying the armed forces at all levels.

A couple of weeks ago Tony Blair, the blue-eyed boy of the European Union, announced to his German opposite number that the Eurofighter plane was essential to European defence and that Herr Kohl should recognise this and cough up his share of the multi-million pound cost of the enterprise. One of his arguments was that a *quarter of a million jobs* would be lost in Europe, including some 40,000 in this country (later reports talked of 16,000 here - what does it matter anyway?).

The question we ask is where is the enemy? And there will be no answer unless our experts are now wanting to suggest that it is China and the Far East in general who are proposing to gang-up against the West. To such a question the answer surely is to what advantage? Not only have the Western European powers virtually no raw materials worth talking about (Sierra Leone has more gems, literally, to offer) and what would be the point of occupying the West when they have more willing labour at cut prices than the West. No, there are *commercial* reasons for this country to remain one of the major exporting arms industries, and though we would utterly disagree with Polly Toynbee's otherwise excellent debunking of the Eurofighter racket when she says that there are "reasonable arguments in favour of our high defence status" (in the *Independent*, 9th June), she presents the facts which are purely political (we must be

a world power) and economic (the Eurofighter is a £30 billion enterprise and, as Blair pointed out to his German colleagues, involves more than 250,000 jobs throughout Europe). And we say *so what?*

And we ask what will those jobs produce at a cost of £32 billion among the four countries (Spain, Germany, Italy, Britain) for the countries involved. Yes, a few hundred Eurofighters at £60 million each. For what? Jobs? Oh yes! Tony Blair told his German counterpart that some quarter of a million jobs in Europe depended on the project going through. This innocent, who also asks 'where is the enemy?', would also suggest that it would be cheaper to send all the workers home on full pay than for them to produce the aeroplanes and then man them, etc.

Polly Toynbee's article received a reply

from the new Defence Minister George Robertson explaining in a letter to the *Independent* "why Britain needs the Eurofighter".

On the one hand he defends the acquisition of these planes on the ground that we are living in "an uncertain world" and on the other that our "defence forces" were needed both in Bosnia and in the Gulf. Defending *which* interests, one would ask the Minister? And while he denied at the beginning of his letter that this was a "job creation scheme" in the last paragraph he writes: "It is of course true that Eurofighter will sustain many thousands of jobs and is crucial to the future of the UK and European aerospace industry. It is, however, being bought in order to provide the Royal Air Force with the equipment it needs to carry out the operational tasks required of it." But where's the enemy?

... AND WHERE'S THE ENEMY FOR TRIDENT?

George Robertson, Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence, contends that air superiority had been essential to victory in the Gulf and in Bosnia. 'We' need a superior war aircraft ready for if and when an enemy appears. But can Mr Robertson argue on similar grounds that 'we' need a nuclear submarine?

The Tory government decided to spend billions on building Trident submarines and kitting them out with American weaponry to make Britain an up-to-date 'independent' nuclear power, and (surprise, surprise) the Labour government has decided to continue to go on with it. And what's the excuse? Jobs, of course.

Barrow in Furness, it is said, has no jobs except the building of Trident submarines, and would be reduced to penury if the Trident scheme was abandoned. This is nonsense. For the sake of argument, let us assume that capitalism is only possible economic system, and the provision of jobs the only way to get resources to the people

of Barrow. Barrow lies in an area of great natural beauty and, for the millions spent on Trident, could be transformed into a major tourist resort using the ship-building skills of the local workers. The money and skills wasted on Eurofighters could similarly be spent on useful things like housing and the public transport infrastructure. Jobs is an excuse, like the Soviet threat was an excuse, for governments to amass weapons.

The real reason why they do it, anarchists might suggest, is simply to be able to brag about how powerful they are. British politicians could boast, if they so wished, that despite Britain's censorship laws and enormous prison population, its absence of peacetime conscription makes it freer than other states in the EU. They choose instead to boast that British weapons expenditure is very high, relative to gross national product: "Britain punches above its weight".

Politicians are mad - and it's not the first time we've pointed that out either.

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SHOWING SOON AT THE MANCHESTER MADHOUSE ...

ANIMAL FARM REVISITED



Down at the dole-house ... or is it a cattle market?

Madder than the McDonalds case, corny as a 'Carry On' film, grimmer than a goat-burger, the dole-house Doris drama on platform 5 of Manchester's Victoria Station threatens to take the town by storm if it comes before the Manchester magistrates in Crown Square next month. It's already the talk of Bootle Street police station where piss-taking is the name of the game. Even Group Four are rubbing their hands at the predicament some Mancunian police got into when they auditioned for this show.

What happened on Platform 5 on 22nd May? Is this another 'Mad Cow' type crisis for Britain's farmers? What consequences does this case have for the future of Britain's growing tribe of goat-herders? Are the railways properly equipped under privatisation for the ruralisation of the urban areas? Is this a matter for the railway franchising officer?

CORRALLED ON THE DOLE

Because of the laws of *sub judice* and a risk of spoiling the suspense of the show, we won't be commenting or revealing any details. Let it be sufficient to say that Manchester in the month of May had its share of goats. They seem to have been more prevalent than March hares up there.

People in Job Centres seem to have been terrorised by herds of goats roaming round the dole queues. Manchester's *Metro News* reported a brown billy goat let loose in the Cornwall Street dole office in Manchester's Openshaw. The report goes on that: "A goat brought chaos to the dole queues during an unemployment protest in Openshaw. Staff and claimants ... took cover as a large brown billy was released ... he roamed free for fifteen minutes as demonstrators on a march from Jarrow and Preston to Amsterdam made speeches through a megaphone".

A spokesman for the Employment Service said: "It was good natured and peaceful, but there was concern that people could have been injured. There's no telling what a goat can do."

Similar reports were received about disorderly goings-on in which humans seem to have been led and exhorted by a herd of goats all round the north west of England. In Bury, Oldham, Ashton, Royton, Oxford Road and Piccadilly in central Manchester, there were sightings of goats shepherding humans in formation around the streets. Job Centres and Employment Service property seem to have become the prime targets of these unruly groups.

The goats, it appears, are incensed at the 'cattle market' nature of the dole queue these

days under the Job Seeker's Act, Project Work and the promised Labour government scheme Welfare to Work. They can't stand the sight of human beings allowing themselves to be corralled in these Job Centres and forced to sell their labour to cowboy companies at humiliating rates of pay.

This explains all these goats taking charge of units, targeting dole queues and being at the head of all the raids. It is even rumoured that they feel so sorry for the humans that they have been instrumental in setting up a 'Humanity Liberation Front'. *Freedom* has even seen a photograph of a meeting presided over by a goat at Manchester Town Hall, at which humans were in attendance.

BEWARE OF GOATS AND GOVERNMENTS

For any right-thinking person this development is ominous, if not sinister. How can we have government policy determined by a herd of goats? It is improper that goats should seek to intervene in the affairs of man. Remember what happened in *Animal Farm* when this kind of thing started up. Goats are no more reliable than pigs in these matters. If goats get a grip on the human mind there is no telling what might happen. It may cause an ethnic, nay species, identity crisis in the human race. Man might just come to think he is an animal and better off ruled by goats than governments.

We can't be reassured about the fortitude and stability of the human race by an incident involving a herd of goats on Manchester's Victoria Station last month. In the fracas on platform 5, and on board the Bolton train, between an Irishman, an Englishman, three goats, two policemen from 'A' Division of Manchester's Metropolitan Force and a coterie of railway functionaries, an old man was arrested and charged with police assault and common law breach of the peace. The man, who was bearded and bedraggled, looked as if he could be on a pension.

It seems he boarded the train at Victoria in the company of three goats and an Irishman. A passer-by saw him talking to one of the goats so there was definitely guilt by association. He addressed the goat as Doris, and the party, including the Irishman, ensconced themselves in the middle of the train.

"Remember what happened in *Animal Farm* when this kind of thing started up. Goats are no more reliable than pigs in these matters. If goats get a grip on the human mind there is no telling what might happen."

According to Manchester's *Metro News* "he was challenged by railway staff for breaching a by-law prohibiting the carriage of livestock on trains. He allegedly became violent when British Transport Police tried to intervene."

Later the goats were rounded-up by the RSPCA and dispatched to a farm at Gee Cross where they enjoyed the company of other goats before being freed the next day without any charges being laid against them.

Now the gross inequity of this situation is obvious. The old man is arrested and charged while the goats, the main culprits, are allowed to go scot free. As they marched off the RSPCA man said the goats were humming a tune:

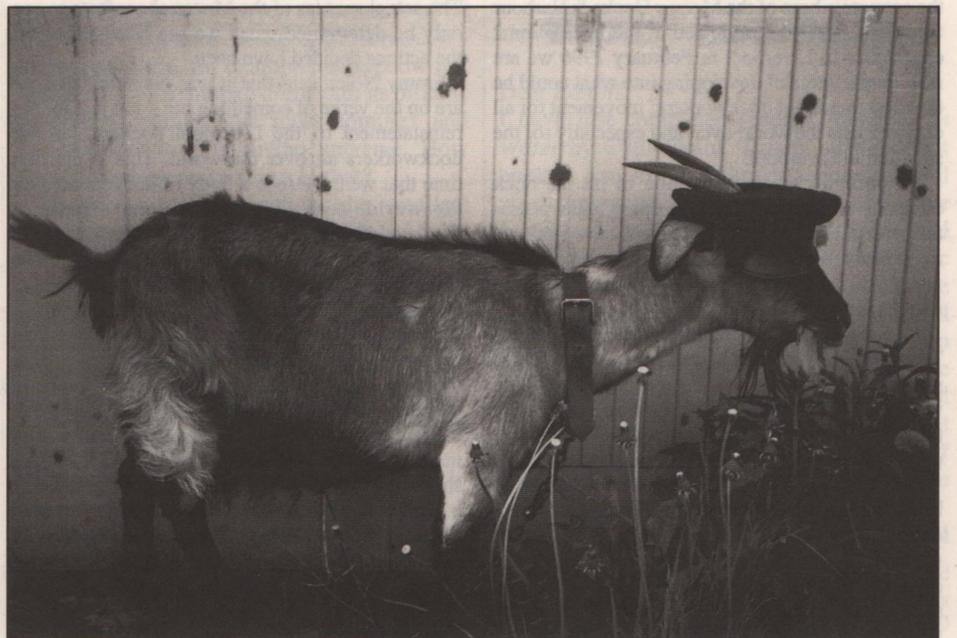
"Beast of England, beasts of Ireland,
Beasts of every land and clime ...
Bright will shine the fields of England,
Purer shall its water be,
Sweeter yet shall blow its breezes
On the day that sets us free."

English people should not allow their love of animals to cloud their judgement in this case. Will we ever learn? Goats are no more to be trusted than governments.

Mack the Knife



Manchester Town Hall: 'Dole-house Doris' chairs a meeting.



Who kicked the copper?

Taxi drivers are an unpredictable bunch. They love to talk but you've always got to get as far as the first hurdle before you can discover if they are going to come out with something vaguely anti-authoritarian or if they are going to give you a quick potted lecture on which ethnic group should be sent back where. By the time the hurdle arrives retreat is too late.

But I tend to dive in blindly and so when I had to get a taxi to the port on the way to France for the 54th Congress of the Federation of French-speaking anarchists I went for the 100m sprint:

"What do you think of Tony Blair then?" I asked.

He was taken aback at first but didn't let me down: "Not a lot. But mind you I don't think much of the rest of them."

I told him how I had decided to buy my first ever lottery ticket on May 1st rather than vote because by voting you were certain to lose and by buying a lottery ticket you had a better chance of winning. He laughed, "I've won about 65 times", he said. Yes, hard to believe, but he confirmed I had heard correctly and told me of how he hoped to one day scoop a biggie and head off for New Zealand and, quite honestly, I don't think he is so untypical: a mistrust of politicians, wanting an escape route etc. Anarchists have always dreamed of organising these ordinary kind of folk.

Yet there is a problem with organisations. At best they court the dangers of petrification and at worst run the risk of drifting towards avant-gardism. I've written about the first in relation to Spain and the CNT (*The Raven*, No. 23 'On Spain') and the need to recognise new prisons for what they are and to adapt the logistics of escape accordingly.

But I've also looked for those structures which confront these problems and a few years ago I held up (on these pages) the example of the French Anarchist Federation as food for thought for a made in Britain model. As I recall there was some enthusiasm for the idea with people I spoke to at the London bookfair in 1994 but although more than a couple of folk reading these paragraphs put time and effort into the idea it was, perhaps unfortunately, 'match abandoned' soon after.

RENNES

So we were pleased when the FAF invited Freedom Press to their congress in Rennes this

A Personal Report from the 54th Congress of the FAF

year. Ours was simply observer status and a chance to see at first hand what is happening in France and to learn from their organisational practices.

I was told, before I got to Rennes, by a comrade who was unable to attend the congress that I should look forward to *du sport* – a euphemism for lively argument. Indeed, as to be expected, the debate was passionate at times, but really the feeling was one of a happy family – much in contrast to the position of their cross-channel cousins. In France the biggest clash is between those of a communist and those of a syndicalist persuasion whereas here perhaps this is our nearest meeting point. Why should this be?

Leaving aside the UK question the FAF has its *points de base* and they are, it is hoped, wide enough to welcome most of their fellow anarchists. They include a commitment to revolutionary class struggle which limits things to those who identify with a more modernist approach but there is a stated commitment to be open to communists, syndicalists and individualists. To what extent members accept the basic principles in their entirety cannot of course be ascertained but the intention is there.

The basic unit – although not referred to as such – is the affinity group and I would myself point to this as more likely to indicate the reason for the relaxed atmosphere the members enjoy. The groups take a name to suggest affiliation (Makhno, Kropotkin) or give us the geography (Cherbourg, Paris 18ieme) and in this way members can survive as individuals within a self-supporting structure whilst at the same time feel affiliated to the larger national structure without feeling a sense of loss of identity.

It goes further than this though. As good ex-students of the *bac* they've been force-fed a school diet of philosophy whose basis is founded on the dialectic form of argumentation. This is seemingly so embedded in their sub-conscious that they feel their search for the synthesis is an expression of free will. It isn't but it doesn't matter because the intentions are honourable. The FAF doesn't

vote. No delegate to the congress applauds or boos an argument. Closer they seem to the Amerindians with their pipes of peace and mutual respect. A thesis makes its appearance. Its antithesis is generated and then some poor sod is sent to the keyboard to synthesise while the rest adjourn for that sacred institution: *le déjeuner*.

HOME AND AWAY

However, there seems to be little in the way of dispute. I was unable to attend all the debates but a few caught my interest, not least that on 'abstentionism' because apart from political time zones we are in the same boat as our cousins on this one.

There is a dimension to the abstentionist issue in France that doesn't raise its head so clearly here. This is the presence of the National Front in the political arena and the notion that abstaining lets them in the back door. Léon Blum's popular front of the 1930s or our own Anti-Nazi League of the 1970s come to mind. But the FAF is clear. As anarchists we need to restate our position and try to set the agenda more ourselves – not just to abstain on one particular day but to abstain every day.

If this was a domestic issue which needed airing then attention was also given to the international dimension too. In a debate on the development of the state and capitalism the congress revealed its sensitivity to the importance of those institutions like the IMF and the WTO whose decisions more and more, directly or indirectly, shape the environment in which we all must live. This was not the international debate proper which unfortunately I was unable to attend but it did show that the FAF like other organisations around the world is evolving. A small (perhaps) but symptomatic point. No longer is it the French Anarchist Federation but rather it is the French-speaking Anarchist Federation – the French having federated with the Belgians. Although they can't be accused of a past insularity certainly there is an outward attitude afloat. I was able to speak to

representatives about what the future might hold. Manuel, who did a good imitation of a French horse racing commentator, has been working hard and thinking ahead. The FAF is the current secretariat of the IFA which is in turn comprised of six sister Federations around the world (the FAF, Iberia, Italy, Bulgaria, Argentina and most recently Germany) and there has been interest expressed from groups in Poland and the UK.

The last meeting of the IFA was half a dozen years ago in Valencia, Spain. The next will be in Lyon, France this November. I was pleased to hear that a largish number of non-member groups are to be invited as observers – Freedom Press included. This may be the start of the evolution of a more informal way of organising internationally. The French are also learning that such meetings to discuss policy and so forth are less and less needed these days given that forums exist on the internet where members from some 35 to 40 countries are in contact with each other all the time and there is no need for the huge expense involved in getting a few dozen individuals together from half a dozen countries every five or so years. This doesn't mean that such meetings are unimportant as they give people a chance to meet with those they have been communicating with – in some cases for many years – by other means. Let's just hope Lyon's bars will provide a place where some social cement can be laid.

With the conference over it was time to head back for Cherbourg but there was a problem. My friends who had brought me down in their car no longer had a car due to mechanical difficulties. This was bad news. The good news was that they had an insurance policy which would pay the rather large taxi bill which would be submitted at the end of our journey to Cherbourg. The taxi arrived outside the building with the red and black banners. National Front posters were around other parts of the town. We climbed into the car wondering who we would be travelling with. "You been at the conference then?" asked the driver.

"Um ... er ... yeah."

"My dad fought with you lot in the Spanish Civil War."

We had a pleasant trip back to Cherbourg but I still wonder how we can establish a better rapport with taxi drivers.

Neil Birrell

— MONTREAL CONFERENCE —

LIVERPOOL DOCKERS GO INTERNATIONAL

The agenda of last week's dockers' conference in Montreal quite rightly in the main was taken up with the Liverpool struggle, with a clear view of all delegates in attendance that on-going international activity would have to be put in place as soon as possible to ensure the Liverpool dockers are reinstated.

What we started in Liverpool 21 months ago, when we decided to go international and undermine the economic base of the Mersey Docks & Harbour Company, and what followed in the international conference in Liverpool in February 1996 we are now on the verge of developing into what could be the most important dockworkers' movement for all dockworkers the world over, and especially for the situation in Liverpool.

For once we are in a position to hit the dock company so we don't want the union to cut across this with a shoddy deal to sabotage the international movement. We don't want a shoddy compromise which will not see Liverpool dockers reinstated into all areas of the port.

It is the belief of the three delegates (Terry Teague, Jim Nolan and Mike Carden) that there is now a real rank-and-file movement in place which will challenge the policies of the ship-owners and the port employers: privatisation, casualisation and deregulation.

Based on what we saw and heard last week, it will be a movement prepared to take industrial action to defend all dockworkers currently under attack whether they be in Liverpool, Santos, Amsterdam or Australia. All these dockworkers find themselves under industrial and political attacks similar to the one faced by the Liverpool dockworkers 21 months ago. The strong view of the majority of delegates was that the international dockworkers'

movement is clearly a movement for the future, and they want to make sure that the Liverpool dockworkers are part of that future.

The view was expressed that if the Liverpool dispute is lost then the whole international initiative will be lost. However, the Liverpool delegates did not take this view – they said that whatever happened to the Liverpool dispute, the international movement was something new and would develop. The actual success of the Montreal conference can only be determined when we see how successful the actions decided have been.

Jimmy Nolan said that it was his belief that we are on the verge of something big – not just for the reinstatement of the Liverpool dockers, but for dockworkers all over the world. This is the first time that we have seen a body of dockers all over the world, both ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) and non-ITF, for a common goal. The actual organisation of the conference was marvellous. This was due to the work of Michel Murray and the longshoremen of Montreal. (There was simultaneous translation, and the whole of the proceedings were recorded on big-screen. There was a back-up team. Copies of the resolutions in different languages almost as soon as they were carried, and they were sent out on the e-mail within minutes.) We owe Michel Murray and the longshoremen of Montreal a special debt of gratitude.

Almost the entire conference was given over to the Liverpool dockers. The attendance was 54 delegates from five continents, 17 countries and 27 ports. Old stalwarts from the first conference, like Ole Muller, Pat Riley and Bjorn Borg, were there. They never flinched from the decisions of that first conference in February 1996. Jim Donovan from Australia was not able to be present because of a

prior engagement, but he sent a strong message. Apart from the Liverpool delegates – shop stewards, the other delegations were leaders of big unions the ILA and ILWU, Montreal (and they all had a clear mandate that they could commit themselves to resolutions, especially in support of Liverpool) – the French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese delegates caucused to see how best they could affect the Liverpool trade in Europe. The general secretary of the National Council of Portworkers Unions of Japan was there (35 ports); Marvin Mfundisi, vice president of the TGWU South Africa (in charge of dockworkers); Vladimir Vasiliev, president of the All Russian Dockworkers' Union representing 23 ports in Russia and the Baltic; from Spain was the general secretary of the federation of all the dockers' unions, Julian Garcia Gonzalez, representing 32 ports; for the first time the Dutch dockworkers were represented from the powerful FNV union in Amsterdam. The Dutch dockers are struggling against deregulation and privatisation in their ports – the employers want to shed 200 jobs and make 300 dockers casual.

The debate covered all aspects of dock work, especially the problems of privatisation, casualisation and deregulation, but Liverpool was the main issue and central to the whole conference. On the second day the three delegates from Liverpool were able to give a full oral presentation of the history and the up-to-date situation, making the point also that it was not just from the three that were present but all those who had taken part in the movement to build this international initiative. They had now become friends with many dockers all over the world. We especially spoke of the power of the Ken Loach film *The Flickering Flame*.

Julian Garcia Gonzalez spoke of the history of the

international movement. He had studied the way things were going in the world. There are five or six major shipping consortiums and they dictate to governments what policies they want to operate in the ports. He said that there was a socialist government in Spain and, up to its election, it had strong links with the dockers' unions and others, but it cannot decide its own policy in the ports as that is determined by the shipping consortiums. The Liverpool delegation explained that in the 21 months there had been many highs and lows, including the death of the second picket in the last week. The hardship fund is at its lowest level ever, but it is the desire of all dockworkers and their families and supporters to continue to fight for reinstatement and achieve a just settlement.

The role of the ITF was discussed. They had refused to attend the conference. They still consider the conference represented a counter-organisation to the ITF itself. The debate was along the lines that the ITF can say what they like but, even leaving the Liverpool situation aside, they have done nothing for dockworkers. The Flag of Conscience campaign for seafarers is good, but they have done nothing similar for the dockers. If they had agreed to work with and co-ordinate on behalf of the Liverpool dockworkers, then there would not have been the need to set up the present international movement.

A small committee was elected to meet the ITF in Miami on 9-10th June. The delegation is Jim Nolan and Terry Teague from Liverpool, Michel Murray from Montreal, Jim Donovan (or a representative from New Zealand if he cannot go) from Oceania, Yoshi Kakamura from Japan, Norman Parks from the US and Marvin Mfundisi from Africa.

It was decided that the next conference will be in Liverpool, because the delegates were strongly of the opinion that it will be a celebration of our reinstatements and a signal to start the fight-back the world over.

information from Hull Syndicalists

IS THERE A POST-MODERN SYNDICALISM?

Mack the Knife sees the beginning of a post-modern anarcho-syndicalism in struggles like the anti-JSA campaigns and the recent Liverpool dockers' uprising ('Viva La Papparazzi Man', 24th May). He sees these as a shifting "of social activity away from mass man and mass action toward more innovative and imaginative radical direct action". I think he is on to something. His examples may be just one aspect of a broader phenomenon of which we may now only be seeing the first glimpses.

As only one example, there is the situation of the self-employed worker. This group is the fastest growing sector of the workforce and some economists estimate that in five or six years it will account for 20% of the Canadian working population, a figure greater than the manufacturing sector. These workers are unorganised and, as contract-workers, are very vulnerable. Recently the trade union centres in Quebec launched a campaign to organise them, but the old-style union is not attractive to these people. Interestingly enough, the unions seem to realise this, but how successful they will be in their endeavour is uncertain. The autonomous workers want support, but they do not want bureaucracy and union bosses. The unions will have to radically change to hold these workers, or else new organisational forms will arise.

An anti-political tendency is developing among union members. Workers are still loyal to their unions, but they have no use for the labour parties that the union bureaucrats support. We may see an increasing move to separate unions from politics and political parties.

The old mass unions, particularly government employees during the past 25 years, have tended to treat other workers with contempt. The general attitude has been 'grab what you can for membership and to hell with everyone else'. This has created much bitterness among the non-unionised and, surprisingly enough, many rank and file union members. This attitude has done more to undermine sympathy for trade unions than possibly anything else, and has helped give rise to the Tory-voting union member. We may see a re-emphasis on solidarity as workers begin to see the importance of giving consideration to the rest of the working community, both in terms of their job actions and in the area of general policies such as work-sharing and the environment.

As the crisis of state capitalism deepens, fewer and fewer workers put any faith in the welfare state. A return to mutual aid may be in the offing. This will be of greatest importance to the self-employed worker. Mutual aid may become the single most important aspect of unionism, as it was at the turn of the century.

Finally, there are new areas of struggle. The 'social contract' of the 1940s limited trade unions to the areas of wages and working conditions. This may well change. We are already seeing some evidence of this, as with the recent General Motors strike which challenged the company's investment policies, the Fonds de Solidarité which buys into new industry, and the recent union-supported attack upon the way the banks are organised.

Larry Gambone

The next issue of Freedom will be dated 5th July, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be Thursday 26th June 1997

EAST TIMOR PROTESTS

British Aerospace outwitted

There have been two recent actions in London against the Indonesian occupation of East Timor and for a ban on arms exports to Indonesia. In the second of these actions, several people banned from trespassing on BAe property managed to do so without incurring punishment by the High Court.

On Thursday 29th May, four East Timorese refugees now resident in Ireland, Portugal and Britain chained themselves to the railings in front of the Indonesian Embassy to protest at the continued occupation of East Timor. In the course of the last 27 years, over 200,000 East Timorese have died as a result of the occupation. Torture and killing continue to take place on a daily basis. Election day in East Timor was marked by protests and attacks by the resistance, leaving over a dozen Timorese and two Indonesian soldiers dead.

At the Indonesian Embassy protest in central London, the four Timorese were arrested but released without charge. Another Timorese refugee was charged with affray and assault after an altercation with an Indonesian security guard. Angie Zelter, one of the four Ploughshares women who were found not guilty after hammering on a Hawk aircraft last year, was arrested for handing papers to one of the chained men. She was released after signing a caution (which goes on your criminal record).

On Monday 2nd June, British Aerospace (BAe) distributed £57 million of dividends to its shareholders. At 2pm, an eleven-strong group of protestors calling themselves 'Against the Dividends of Death' entered a BAe subsidiary in the City of London and staged a four-hour office occupation to protest at the export of BAe Hawk warplanes to Indonesia for possible use in East Timor. 'International Project Management', the company occupied, is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BAe which sells integrated 'packages' of military equipment, training, buildings, and so on, to countries around the world.

Files consulted during the occupation included BAe's 'ethical code of conduct', a document which has been denied to shareholder critics of the company. While pledging to uphold the 'highest ethical standards', the document also promises to respect the culture and traditions of the countries with which it deals, which presumably is code for bribery, nepotism and other allegedly 'Third World' cultural practices.

Mr Davidge, head of BAe security, drove at high speed from BAe's headquarters in Farnborough, Hampshire, to meet the protesters. After serving them coffee, Davidge informed the group that they would soon be forced to leave. After a brief discussion amongst themselves, the protesters decided to do so voluntarily and left the building around 6pm. There were no arrests.

Five of the group involved in the office occupation have in the past been served with injunctions by BAe, banning them from trespassing on BAe property or inciting others to do so, or, in some cases, interfering with the passage of people and traffic in and out of BAe

property. Of the three people who have so far broken their injunctions to take part in protests against the Hawk deal, Chris Cole has received a six month prison sentence, and Stephen Hancock and Ciaran O'Reilly have received suspended sentences.

Unfortunately for BAe, the list of 'BAe properties' attached to the injunction is not comprehensive, and did not include 'International Project Management', so that the five injunctees cannot be punished for 'breaking their injunctions', despite the fact that they clearly trespassed on BAe property. It is rumoured that other non-listed properties have been identified.

£25,000 TO THE LIVERPOOL DOCKERS

The central organisation of Sweden's workers, SAC, has decided to send 250,000 sv.crowns (£25,000) to the fighting dockers in Liverpool.

The decision was made by the SAC's central committee when it became known that a number of families risk eviction from their homes. The proposal to send money was made by Botkyrka and Skärholmens local federations of the SAC.

"This is a good initiative", says Sharokh Razavi from the Liverpool Dockers Support Committee. "I hope that more unions join up. The dockers need our support. The anti-union policy implemented in England is on its way here. A victory for the Liverpool dockers is a victory for all organised workers in Europe."

The Liverpool dockers have previously received support from both the SAC syndicalists and Swedish harbour workers' union. "We shall inform the LO [socialdemocrat] of our decision", says Jan Berglund, the SAC's general secretary. "Hopefully the socialdemocratic LO will show their solidarity and support for their union brothers in England."

The Liverpool dockers are organised in the TGWU, the British LO. "The attacks on workers and their organisations is becoming commonplace in Europe", says Kieran Casey, the SAC's international secretary. "In England we can now see the pattern since the start of the Liverpool conflict, Magnet factory workers, Hillingdon, and more. In Belgium the Renault move has openly flaunted present day legislation and in Sweden the Eriksson and SAAB-Aero move of profitable production has devastated communities. Behind the slogans of flexibility and competition is the face of raw capitalism devoid of any social responsibility. The uncontrolled globalisation of the economy and the moves toward a European

monetary union are leading to nothing less than a capitalist dictatorship. It is in this perspective that support for the Liverpool dockers is necessary. They are on the front-line in the struggle between the haves and the have-nots, between those who make decisions which affect others' lives and those who have no say whatsoever."

The Liverpool dockers' fighting spirit, solidarity and show of mutual aid is an inspiration to all workers in the struggle against injustice and the whims of the bosses. In all our meetings with our Liverpool comrades we are struck by their honesty and integrity. They have maintained their dignity and have won the respect of groups - and unified previously disparate groups - such as environmental activists, the unemployed and wage-earners in the fight against the barbarism of capitalism.

The SAC are negotiating a campaign called 'One Hour for Liverpool'. The goal is that each member should donate £5 in support. We hope to broaden the appeal to encompass all trade unions and political organisation. The SAC hereby appeals to all friends to raise the issue of the Liverpool conflict and to give moral support and financial aid to the dockers, to organise protests and blockades against the harbour company and those who use the harbour facilities and to protest against the British government and its institutions.

Contact the dockers at: Port Shop Stewards Committee, Transport House, Islington, L3 8EQ, Liverpool, England.

Contact the SAC at: SAC-Syndikalisterna, Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation, Box 6507, 113 83, Stockholm, Sweden.

information from Kieran Casey
International Secretary of the SAC



— ABOVE THE PARAPETS —

NEW LABOUR DID NOT WIN

The willed ignorance of the media and of the political elite is creating a mythology around the British election result. The election is being interpreted as a mandate for New Labour, and as a retrospective justification for the sacrifices made by the Party at the behest of its Leader. It was neither.

The only mainstream commentary on the election worth reading appeared in the *Financial Times* (3rd May). Samuel Brittan, an independent minded economist and general commentator commented that Labour "would almost certainly have been on course for victory" even if the process of policy reform "had gone no further than Neil Kinnock was able to take it". "Indeed, Labour would quite likely have won with a younger version of Michael Foot – if the image merchants could have persuaded him to jettison his duffle coat and stick". The reason? Because "the British public remains hopelessly collectivist in its attitudes".

Brittan observes that most polls concentrate on the performance of the parties rather than their policies. For evidence on attitudes to the latter, the *Financial Times* columnist turns to last year's edition of the British Social Attitudes Survey. This found that most people say they want more spending on health, education and social benefits even if it means they have to pay more tax. Over 60% favoured 'tax and spend'; only 5% favoured reduction of taxes.

A large proportion of people in Britain believed that 'government should redistribute income from the better-off to the less well-off': 43% of those in the South of England, 48% of those in Wales and the Midlands, 51% of those in London, 60% of those in Scotland, and 61% of those in the North. Most people believed 'ordinary people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth': 59% in the South, rising to 70% in Scotland. Unemployment

should be given a higher priority than inflation, according to 65% in the South, rising to 77% in Scotland.

An emphatic majority believed that 'big business benefits owners at the expense of workers': 56% in the South, rising to 66% in Scotland. Brittan comments, "I am afraid this represents something much more hostile than a call for tighter antimonopoly laws". If New Labour has made "even a fraction of the changes in attitude that Tony Blair has promised ... UK capitalism" will, according to Brittan, "be far more unconstrained than the electorate really desires". All in all, "it is partly a matter of luck for those of us who believe competitive capitalism is the least bad economic system that Labour elected a leader who partially shares this belief and yet has managed to maintain control of his party". Lucky for some.

Brittan's analysis was confirmed by the results of the BBC exit poll, broadcast the day after the election, which showed that 72% of those who voted wanted the government to put a penny on the rate of income tax to pay for better education, and 58% wanted the government to redistribute income from the rich to the poor (only 15% opposed this policy). 74% were against further privatisation. David Dumbleby, hosting the BBC election special, commented that these poll results showed

"huge majorities against the things the Tories were standing for". It could equally be said that these were huge majorities against the things that New Labour was standing for: no income tax rises, no redistribution of income or wealth, an open mind on privatisation.

The real meaning of the election is summed up in the subtitle to Brittan's article in the *Financial Times*: "Labour could have won the election on a much more anti-capitalist platform". It is vitally important that this message reaches as many people as possible. New Labour did not win the election because of the 'modernisation' of the Party; it won the election *in spite of* the modernisation of the party.

The election result is not yet more confirmation that the British people are opposed to justice and equality and freedom. It is yet more confirmation that the present parliamentary system is not democratic: it does not express the needs and opinions of the people of this country.

Those of us who believe in the redistribution of wealth and in some form of democratic control of business are not on the margins of society: we are the majority. One of the functions of the mass media is to distract us from this truth and to persuade us of our own weakness. We can refuse to be so indoctrinated, and we must.

Milan Rai

individuals to shape their lives according to their own lights. Artists, politicians, academics and others whose work is personally fulfilling often fill their time with it. No doubt this is true of the Blairs, Browns and Blunketts of this world. But what is so good about a life chock-full of typing, housework, selling hamburgers?"

Professor White is a practical adviser when he points out, as do the anarchists, that in the capitalist world "technological changes mean that there is less paid work to go around". And again we have been pointing out for a very long time that there is only one solution in a rational society: work-sharing, or a shorter working week.

In Professor White's words: "Does the government want to spread what there is more evenly so that for each of us the role of work in our lives need not be so dominant?" And once again he comes to the anarchist conclusion (unwittingly, perhaps, but explained in great detail in the introduction to the popular Freedom Press volume *Why Work?*²) that:

"Ethical challenges to the work society apart, technological changes mean there is less paid work to go around. Does the government want to spread what there is more evenly so that for each of us the role of work in our lives need no longer be so dominant? If so, our ultra-diligent schools, which keep pupils' and teachers' noses so close to their grindstones, may be equipping their charges for a world fast vanishing."

And Professor White asks how might they change? He has three suggestions. The new curriculum in the year 2000:

"... provides the opportunity to shift from productivist to post-productivist objectives. It could concentrate on preparing pupils for a self-directed life of varied activities in which different forms of work ... paid and unpaid, find their place along with non-work activities in more sensible combinations than in our present work-driven picture of human fulfilment."

The second suggestion is that the long school day "which mirrors the long adult day" could be "chopped in two" and make the other half into an alternative to "kids' clubs and summer schools in school time" rather than just at out of school times.

The third suggestion argues that we should remember that schools are for learning and not for working:

"Children can keep their heads down throughout a lesson and learn nothing. Conversely, not all learning depends on work, with its logical requirement of some end-product: think of what we have all learned from such non-productive activities as reading novels or conversation. Schools could deliberately encourage non-work forms of learning – like reading books for pleasure and not always with a test or critical essay in mind."

As we implied earlier, what education you get depends on your parents (or for the rich who have no time for their children, from the tutors and the boarding school). Schooling, in this writer's opinion, is valuable in so far as it succeeds in providing one with the the 'Three Rs' and, equally important, inevitably mixing with one's fellows, the rough and the gentle. The dangers of teaching at home *exclusively* is that the child is sheltered from the rough and tumble which is life. Nevertheless one cannot but admire those mums who not only want their kids but also think they are the best educators for their offspring.

Surely these mums are practical anarchists. We salute them!

WORK, EDUCATION, SCHOOLING ... LET'S GIVE THEM ANOTHER LOOK

Surprise, surprise, the *Sunday Times* (8th June) published a half-page feature article by Edward Welsh on the sensational news that "parents move to teaching at home" (the other half-page being an advert encouraging us all to drink Laphroaig – presumably some kind of whisky). Certainly this writer was inebriated by the first item.

According to the article, home teaching has doubled over the last five years "and now involves 20,000 children". Also that "increasing numbers of parents are banding together to form mini-schools". But also – and this explains why we expressed surprise at such a feature in the *Sunday Times* – that "employers set to provide specialist teachers instead of company cars" and "firms to establish company schools for offspring of employees".

On the other hand Edward Welsh does give examples of a former teacher, Mary Ann Rose, who has educated her five children at home for the past three years:

"Every day the children work on five academic tasks, including the basics of English and mathematics, as well as Latin and computer skills. She plans to buy an empty school building nearby where she and other parents with children educated at home will study."

And the photograph of mum and the kids at their work table is confirmation of the success of her decision.

The sinister aspect of the new look approach to teaching at home is surely contained in the opening paragraphs:

"Parents will turn their backs on schools in the next two decades and begin educating their children at home using tutors and technology paid for as perks by their companies."

The vision of a future in which computers are used by parents to work from home and by their children to tap into educational programmes has been produced by David Hargreaves, professor of education at Cambridge University and a former chief inspector of schools in London. (our italics)

Obviously the *Sunday Times* is not talking about the children of the factory workers or the farm workers who won't be able to do their jobs from home using a computer. So their kids will have to go to school for their 'education' unless their mums don't feel that they need to supplement the family income by taking on a job, and are also confident that they can educate their children at home.

One of the interesting observations in the article under review is that one of the parents' "belief in the benefits of home schooling is backed by academic studies in America".

"Children educated at home have been shown to be two or three years ahead of their peers who learn in traditional classrooms."

The studies also showed that the home-taught children had better social skills and were more mature."

Again one must recognise that these children are, in the main, from highly educated, even privileged parents. We are not deriding their home schooling. On the contrary, what we are saying is that such possibilities, both *financial* and *professional*, are not available to millions of parents and for that reason we join those who demand that no expense should be spared in providing the best education for *all* kids.

This brings us to asking what is the difference between *schooling* and *education*. And we cannot do better than quote from a fascinating article by Zeb Korycinska in one of the two issues of *The Raven*¹ on education. She discovered by practice, before the *Sunday Times*, about 'Education versus Schooling and the Case for Home Learning'. We quote with complete agreement:

"In order to examine the differences between 'education' and 'schooling', it would be as well to define what is meant by each. The great traditions of education emphasised the development of the individual. Through learning, the scholar hoped to become equipped with a well-rounded philosophy with which to face the world and her/his place in it.

Schooling, on the other hand, has always had a much more limited meaning, more akin to training. After all, you can school horses, dogs and circus animals – there is not necessarily much development taking place, but rather shaping of behaviour.

It is a measure of how well the school system has become integrated with society that the terms 'education' and 'schooling' are commonly seen to be synonymous. And yet elementary education was made compulsory just over 100 years ago. Secondary education became compulsory in 1902.

It is the distinction between education and schooling which allows home-learning to continue in Britain: the Education Act states that parents are responsible for their children's education 'either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'. (The self-help group of people whose children are learning from home is called, appropriately, Education Otherwise.)

Obviously plenty of learning was going on before 1880: for the rich there were tutors and private schools; for the not so rich, cheaper private schools, church schools, governesses; but for the vast majority of people, they learned by doing, with perhaps a little rote-learning got from a dame school, by working alongside their parents or relatives."

Confirmation of her observations comes, again surprisingly, in the *Guardian* supplement (10th June) in an excellent article with the provocative title 'Work Ethic Won't Work' by John White, Professor of the Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education, who asks:

"What are we to make of the flood of initiatives last week on welfare-to-work, the targeting of unemployed lone parents, after-school homework clubs, summer schools and the possibility of work experience for disaffected 14 to 16 year olds?"

There are pragmatic reasons, often cogent, for each of these suggestions. There need be no ideology behind them to do with the centrality of hard work in a fulfilled human life, which lies at the heart of the traditional work ethic ... Let's hope there's not. Why should a good life be built mainly around work? A liberal society values the power of

1. *The Raven* No. 10 includes 'Education versus Schooling and the Case for Home Learning' by Zeb Korycinska; 'The Authoritarian Tradition in Education' by John Shotton; 'Four Easy Pieces and One Hard One' by Colin Ward; 'Intellectuals and the Industrialisation of Education' by John R. Doherty. *The Raven* No. 16 includes 'The Seeds of its Own Destruction, or Education in Capitalist Britain' by Michael Duane; 'Sexual Freedom at All Ages' by Tony Gibson; 'Delinquency' by Alex Comfort; 'The Axe, the Chainsaw and Education' by Denis Pym. Each issue is 96 pages and costs £3 (post free worldwide) from Freedom Press.

2. *Why Work? Arguments for the Leisure Society*, 210 pages, £4.50 (post free in UK, add 15% elsewhere).

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

THE ADVOCATES OF LAZINESS

I was interviewing a retired coal-miner at Peterlee in the north east of England, and he told me of his lifetime of representation of the union in a series of pits, his support for the local cooperative society and its educational activities, and his pleasure in growing leeks on his allotment garden. I knew he was a reader because on both sides of his fireplace was a library of familiar books in series like the Thinker's Library, Everyman's Library, Pelican Books and the Left Book Club. So I asked him which book had influenced him most.

The old miner's reply was: "You're too young to know about it" (I was in fact over 60), "but the best book I ever read was called *The Right to be Lazy* by Paul Lafargue. It influenced me more than any other book that came my way. Thirty years ago I lent it to somebody and never got it back. But if you come across a copy, I'll be happy to buy it."

Now I was obliged to this man for the evidence that I would use in a book and in the back of my mind was the thought that I actually owned a reprint of his long-lost book. When I got home, I found that little book, published (I think) by the Charles H. Kerr Company in Chicago, so I hastened to post it to my informant at Peterlee.

Then I reflected on the irony of this encounter. I had bought that book (by Karl Marx's Cuban son-in-law) but had been so lazy that I never made any time for reading it. On the other hand, my new friend in Peterlee, who had been involved in hard manual work from the age of 12 to that of 65, cherished it as a handbook to his ideal society.

Paradoxes of this kind enable us to evolve a theory of the attractions of not working. Those people who write in praise of laziness are invariably very hard-working people who are psychologically incapable of being lazy. Take, for example, Bertrand Russell. His contribution to the literature of laziness is a well-known essay 'In Praise of Idleness'. Russell was an intensely hard-working man all though his long life. By the 1930s his sexual adventures had brought a variety of claims on his income, so he profited from his immense specialist reputation by writing a series of popular essays, collected in money-earning books, notable for their wit, irony and lucidity of style. His celebration of idleness belongs to this phase of his endless bibliography, which is a testimony to a lifetime of work.

Or, closer to our anarchist hearts, there is Vernon Richards who, whether he wanted to be or not, is the *éminence grise* of anarchist publishing in England, and has filled this role for an incredible sixty years. His big triumph was the Freedom Press book he edited in 1983 called *Why Work? Arguments for the Leisure Society*. And on the inside of the cover he reproduced a very well-known work of the Welsh 'tramp' poet W.H. Davies, beginning with the lines:

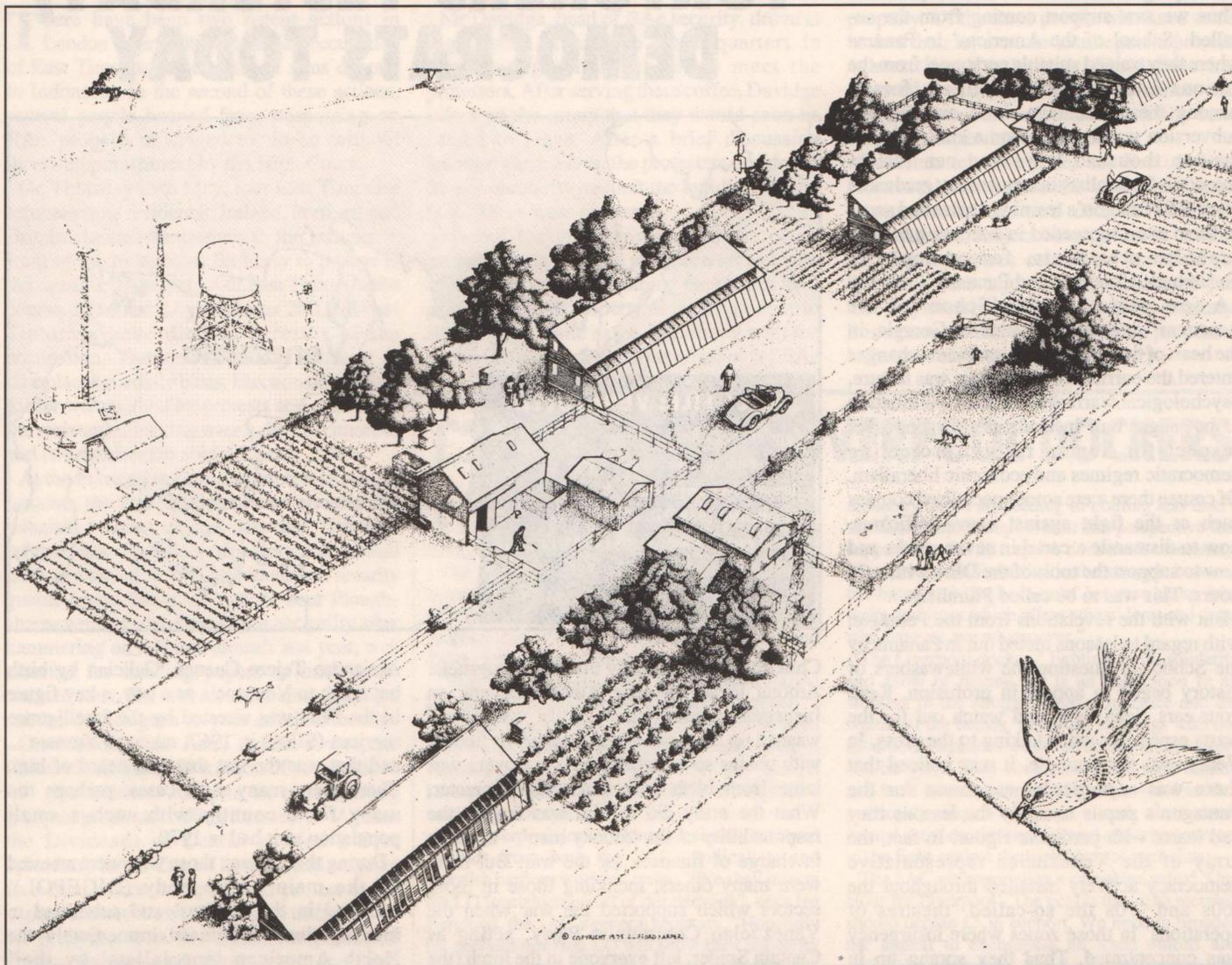
"What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?"

Now the least likely person I have ever met to indulge the inclination to stand and stare is that particular anarchist editor, Vernon Richards. To my own knowledge he has spent a lifetime picking up an income in the formal and informal economies in an incredible range of occupations: railway engineering, photography, travel couriering and vegetable growing, while devoting his real attention to the needs of anarchist writing, editing and publishing, as well as the hard labour of dealing with the accounts.

I wonder how these hard-working people like Russell or Richards have the effrontery to lecture the rest of us on the virtues of idleness!

There must be a corollary to my theory that only the hard-working sing the praise of idleness, and this is that only the idle celebrate work. We have plenty of evidence for such a proposition.

This observation is epitomised in the play *Man and Superman* by George Bernard Shaw, who was yet another endlessly busy man who sang the praise of laziness. One of his characters, Octavius Robinson, influenced by the writings of John Ruskin, declares that "I believe intensely in the dignity of labour". To which his chauffeur, Henry Straker, who is working



AUTONOMOUS HOUSING ESTATE: one of six pictures by Clifford Harper included in 'Why Work?' (Freedom Press, £4.50)

with a spanner underneath the car, responds, "That's because you never done any".

We can all think of real-life examples of the same syndrome. Worst of all are those busy moralists whose output depended on a hidden retinue of wives and domestic servants. They tend to be the ones who deplore our twentieth century reliance on vacuum cleaners, washing machines, refrigerators and infra-red ovens: all those inventions that are known, with good reason, as labour-saving devices.

And the distinction between brain work and manual work reminds us of the view of the economist John Kenneth Galbraith, reared as a hard-worked farm boy in Canada and the American Middle-West. He observed that the policies of the Reagan government in the US and the Thatcher government in Britain, and their successors, as well as other governments throughout the world, were constructed on a theory of work. This claims that the rich would be induced to work harder if they were paid more and taxed less, while the poor would be encouraged to work harder if they were paid less and taxed more.

In fact, all though history, when the affluent have felt affronted by the spectacle of beggars in the street, they have mollified their conscience over the unequal distribution of the world's wealth by spreading the folklore of the old man dressed in rags holding out his hand for alms who is secretly a millionaire and has bags of gold buried under the floor of his miserable hovel.

And in every country which has instituted payments to those citizens with no work and no income, there has been an endless preoccupation with the 'undeserving poor' and the 'scrounger' who is too lazy to work. At the International Institute of Social History a hard-working scholar can trace the whole miserable history of the English Poor Law over four hundred years. It is a story of endless cruelty and persecution of those who could find no work and were consequently obliged to starve unless rescued by a diet of bread and water, and of hard labour on tasks with no utility. The

issue dominates the politics of welfare in Britain and the United States, with high-minded talk of 'workfare' rather than 'welfare'.

Three very hard-working English writers accepted the right to be lazy. William Morris, in his lecture *Useful Work versus Useless Toil* in 1884, attacked as "hypocritical and false" the "semi-theological dogma that all labour, under any circumstances, is a blessing to the labourer", and he returned to the theme in his utopian romance *News from Nowhere*, which included space for "the Obstinate Refusers", concluding that in a world which provided everyone with the means of living "after a little, people would rather be anxious to seek work than to avoid it; that out working hours would be rather merry parties ... than the grumpy weariness it mostly is now".

We have seen how the never-idle Bertrand Russell praised idleness. Earlier he wrote his *Roads to Freedom* in a hurry while waiting to be imprisoned for his opposition to the First World War. He argued for the principle of "the vagabond's wage" which would be "sufficient for existence - but not for luxury", payable to everyone, regardless of the availability of work or of that individual's willingness to work.

A third eminent defender of the right to be lazy was Sir William Beveridge. He was an elderly Liberal economist and statistician who when a young government servant had been the architect of the British introduction of old-age pensions in 1908 and health and unemployment insurance in 1911. In the Second World War, after revelations of the poverty and misery that were the fate of millions in the inter-war years, the need to promise a better future impelled the British government to call him from retirement to produce its *Report on Social Insurance and Allied Services* in 1942. So enormous was the public interest in a better future that on the day it was published long queues of would-be purchasers formed outside the government publishing department (His Majesty's Stationery Office). The Beveridge Report was supported by all political parties and its recommendations were implemented

by the post-war Labour government. The conscientious Beveridge was concerned with providing a basis in compulsory insurance for all the proposed benefits, but he realised that there were people like Russell's vagabond who would never qualify for subsistence payments to avoid starvation. So he argued, in paragraph 371, to recognise the right to be lazy by suggesting that there should be adequate national assistance payments to "men disqualified for unconditional unemployment benefit through refusal of suitable employment".

His recommendations were universally praised, except in the anarchist press where the headline of the Freedom Press journal *War Commentary* was "Scavengers of Misery: our view of the Beveridge Report". But in fact the whole history of social welfare in post-war Britain has been a retreat, under both Labour and Conservative governments, from the principles enshrined in that report. Both politicians and the press in Britain, and in most other countries, have concentrated their attention on the 'undeserving poor' as they were known in the nineteenth century. The inevitable result is declining standards of health, nutrition and comfort for the old, the young and the unemployed. Blaming the victim has become a universal policy in government.

Today nobody defends the right to be lazy, and nobody defends the right to work either. And it is evident that those countries where governments have most wholeheartedly embraced the ideology of the free market are the countries where the essential work in maintaining the fabric and infrastructure of society is most neglected. This is not for lack of people to undertake the essential work to keep society functioning - there are vast numbers of people in enforced idleness whose greatest desire is for work and the income and social prestige it brings.

Colin Ward

(This is a contribution to a book of tributes to the Dutch anarchist Rudolf de Jong, published last month by the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam. The book celebrates his 33 years of work for that organisation.)

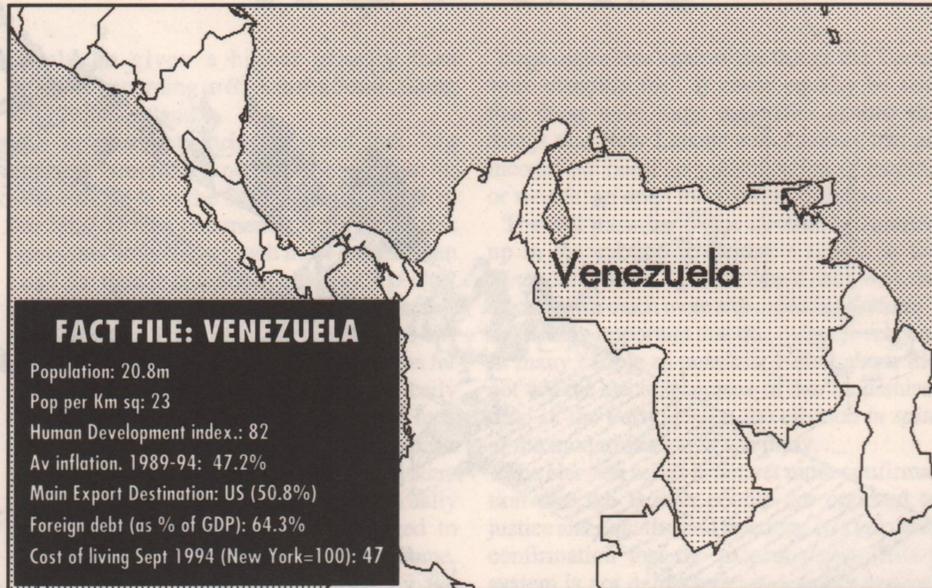
VENEZUELA: TORTURERS YESTERDAY, DEMOCRATS TODAY

The concerns of the Pentagon change with the times. During the 1970s 'Pentagonism' (the name we give to the doctrine of hemispheric security, managed by the USA) concentrated on fighting those guerrillas who were trying to emulate the Cuban experience. Thus we saw support coming from the so-called 'School of the Americas' in Panama where they trained suitable personnel from the various Latin American military forces. Among these teachings stood out counter-subversion warfare based on a knowledge of the ten thousand ways you can torture someone. Specialists in torture they graduated from the Pentagon's learning centre and some of them even succeeded in becoming banana republic presidents, for example in Guatemala, Honduras and Panama.

A few years ago the 'School of the Americas' moved to the state of Georgia, in the heart of the USA proper, and some changes entered the curriculum: no longer was torture, psychological warfare and enemy elimination to be taught but, instead, its very opposite: respect for human rights, protecting democratic regimes and economic liberalism. Of course there were some specialised courses such as the fight against narco-traffickers, how to dismantle a cartel in seven weeks and how to support the tools of the DEA within 24 hours. This was to be called Pluralism.

But with the revelations from the Pentagon with regard to lessons meted out in Panama by the School in question the whitewashers of history began to appear in profusion. Keep your ears clean, boy, and watch out for the warts especially when talking to the press. In Venezuela, for example, it was noticed that there was a particular eagerness for the Pentagon's pupils to apply the lessons they had learnt with particular rigour. In fact, the army of the Venezuelan representative democracy actively installed throughout the '60s and '70s the so-called 'theatres of operations' in those zones where insurgency was concentrated. Thus they sprang up in Yumare, Monagas and Falcon. Today these 'theatres' are being set up in the border region with Colombia, in order to fight those guerrillas in the neighbouring Republic. In these installations, like concentration camps under military control, not only are insurgents detained but also peasant folk and their leaders who are not controlled by the *Federación Campesina* – a bureaucratic union type body controlled by *Acción Democrática*, the political party of the ruling class.

Today we are beginning to learn the real number of those who disappeared or were tortured and didn't live to tell the tale. Before the disappearances in Argentina, Uruguay and



Chile there were already many in Venezuela. Among these was one Alberto Lovera, an insurgent leader whose body was found washed up on the beach at Lecheri as tied up with chains so he would drown. Lovera was lame from birth with a friendly character. What the army did to him was largely the responsibility of the 'money man' – the man in charge of finances for the war. But there were many others, including those in those sectors which supported the war when the Venezuelan Communist Party, acting as Captain Spider, left everyone in the lurch (the policy of the VCP was by then named 'democratic peace' and was adopted by a Central Committee plenum that took place in Falcon in 1965, as the political police had the big party chiefs under arrest and had forced them to abandon the armed struggle to save their necks, primarily, and because it was obvious that the large majority of armed actions were being betrayed at the highest levels of the politburo and among the informants the finger was pointed at Pedro Ortega Diaz, labour lawyer who today presides over what remains of the 'glorious marxist-leninist party').

Some of these groupings came together in the National Liberation Front (FLN).

Alejandro Tejero Cuenca, Galician by birth but taken to Venezuela as a boy, a key figure in the FLN was arrested by the Intelligence services (SIFA) in 1967, taken to Yumare ... and that was the last that was heard of him. There were many such cases, perhaps too many for a country with such a small population as it had in 1970.

During those years, those who were arrested by the main police body (DIGEPOL), confined in the 'tigrillos' and submitted to interrogation, recognised immediately the North American 'specialists' by their 'spanglish'. Guillermo Garci'a Ponce, one of those who sent young men to war whilst he stayed in the comfort of his home because of his position of 'leader', has said recently that there were not only North American torturers but also French who had specialised in such practices during the Algerian civil war. The interest shown by the 'School of the Americas' in Venezuela is based primarily in the strategic importance of this country for Yankee geopolitics. Venezuela is the world's third biggest oil producer and in the case of some kinds of hydrocarbon it is the biggest. With the new policy of 'opening up the oil industry' which began in January 1996 came also the politics of concessions, by means of which North American, European and Japanese capital will control the development of the Venezuelan hydrocarbon industry.

Venezuela's damnation is its oil. From a

society of shopkeepers and peasants, which it was in 1914, it has become a country of sprawling cities where lawyers and parasites build its institutions. Lawyers invented the politics of pragmatics, including two or three democratic versions and building institutions based on oil revenues rather than the labour of the people. The parasites, trading throughout the country, were the real power behind the throne. The lawyers invented 'nationalisation' of the oil industry and now call for denationalisation. The management of the company *Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA)* is a real clan within the ruling class, in reality, next to the parasites who control the presidential throne. Frequently the management of PDVSA hands out prospective studies to reputable gringo and European firms. Currently a study of the country's environment for the next twenty years has been handed to some New York futurologists with Japanese backing. The School in question has ensured that Venezuela should follow a path of strong government if they really want to cut off at the root the various political and social groupings who would oppose the oil business. Nostalgic for the dictatorships, the managers of PDVSA feel uncomfortable when national sectors ask for explanations.

Yesterdays torturers plead their lifelong democratic sensibilities and they stuff their faces whilst telling us of popular sovereignty expressed through the ballot box. Mere words. In reality this country is still ruled by those same interests and by the heirs of those very classes who brought about independence and who carried on with the exploiting and oppressive model of Spanish colonialism and who today are denationalising the oil industry. How little things have changed.

26 BLACKBIRDS

On 20th April 1997 at a meeting in Duluth, Minnesota, sponsored by three separate libertarian groups, Séamas Cain spoke of the life and writings of Laurens Otter, the British anarcho-syndicalist. Cain described his encounters with Laurens Otter since 1965. Animated discussion continued for seven hours! Copies of Otter's pamphlet *Serious Politics Begins with the Bomb* were distributed to people attending this meeting.

On 24th April 1997 in Hopkins, Minnesota, three hundred protesters gathered before the factory of the Alliant Techsystems, the largest producer of land-mines in America. Eighty-five people were arrested for trespass and civil disobedience as they blocked the doors of this factory. Alliant Techsystems also manufactures the solid-fuel rocker for the Trident 2 intercontinental ballistic missile, tank ammunition, anti-tank mines, etc. Marv Davidov, an anarchist, Char Madigan, a Christian anarchist, and the poet Robert Bly spoke to an assembly of the protesters. The *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, the largest daily newspaper in the state of Minnesota, quoted Marv Davidov as describing the parent company of Alliant Techsystems as "liars, killers and thieves". The *Star Tribune* commented that Davidov "was known in past years for his over-the-top style".

On May Day 1997 in Duluth, Minnesota, a hundred protesters gathered in opposition to the worsening effects for workers in the continuation of the global restructuring of the economy. May Day protests in Duluth were initiated in 1994 by Jack Rosenquist, a Duluth anarcho-syndicalist, as much a critique of the American left as a critique of capitalism. Séamas Cain encouraged the protesters to originality for a syndicalist future. "Revolution will be creative or it will not be at all!"

On 11th May 1997 in the middle of the Chequamegon National Forest in northern Wisconsin, a hundred and thirty protesters gathered in opposition to ELF. ELF (Extremely Low Frequency) is the signalling device for the Trident submarines. High voltage electricity is forced into the Laurentian rock-shield underlying the eastern end of Lake Superior. This rock-shield itself – the most stable geological formation in North America – becomes the signalling radio for the Trident submarines at the bottom of the ocean. Twenty people were charged with trespass and civil disobedience. Ida Cunningham, an anarchist, was arrested and jailed for 'non-cooperation' with the police.

Members of 26 Blackbirds, the syndicalist federation of Minnesota, participated in these events.

26 Blackbirds

WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

It's not a form of statism. Anarchists don't want to impose their value system on anyone else.

It's not terrorism. The agent of the government – the policeman who uses force, including armed force, to scare people into obedience – is the terrorist. Governments threaten to punish any man or woman who defies state power, and therefore the state really amounts to an institution of terror.

Anarchism never relies on fear to accomplish anything because a person who is afraid is not free. Here's what anarchists believe:

- Government is an unnecessary evil. Human beings, when accustomed to taking responsibility for their own behaviour, can cooperate on a basis of mutual trust and helpfulness.
- No true reform is possible which leaves government intact. Appeals to a government for a redress of grievances, even when acted upon, only serve to increase the supposed legitimacy of the government's acts, and therefore add to its amassed power. Government will be abolished when its subjects cease to grant it legitimacy. Government cannot exist without the tacit consent of the populace. This consent is maintained by keeping people in ignorance of their real power. Voting is not an expression of power, but an admission of powerlessness, since it cannot do otherwise than reaffirm the government's supposed legitimacy.
- Every person must have the right to make all decisions about his or her own life. All moralistic meddling in the private affairs of freely acting

persons is unjustified. Behaviour which does not affect uninvolved persons is nobody's business but the participants'.

- All governments survive on theft and extortion, called taxation. All governments force their decrees on the people and command obedience under threat of punishment.
- The principal outrages of history have been committed by governments, while every advancement of human thought, every betterment of the human condition, has come about through the practices of voluntary cooperation and individual initiative. The principle of government, which is force, is opposed to the free exercise of our ability to think, act and cooperate.
- Whenever government is established it causes more harm than it forestalls, under the guise of protecting populaces from crime and violence. Governments not only do not eradicate random, individual crime, but they institutionalise such crimes as censorship and war.
- All governments enlarge upon and extend their own powers; under government the rights of individuals constantly diminish.
- Anarchism is in favour of a free society organised along lines of mutual aid and voluntary cooperation.

from a pamphlet published by
 East Midlands Anarchists
 Box EMAB, 88 Abbey Street, Derby

New from Freedom Press

CULTURE AND ANARCHISM

by

Harold Barclay

In some cultures, people are aware of few alternatives, but those alternatives are open to all. In others there is a wide range of choices, but the range is not available to everybody. The question, which type of culture gives more freedom to its inhabitants, causes thought about what we mean by freedom. This book provokes thought throughout, citing actual examples from the author's encyclopaedic knowledge of different cultures.

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Rich and Poor

The recent inconclusive correspondence in *Freedom* about the use of pseudonyms nevertheless points to the difficulties of anarchist correspondence and the corresponding difficulties of anarchist organisation and the spreading of anarchist ideas. Letters to the editors tend to be pithy and uncompromising. Added to that, due to the scarcity of groups, individual anarchists hardly ever meet.

This was not so in the '60s at the time when *Freedom* was a weekly and was sold extensively in the parks and outside factory gates and was also available in public libraries. There was no attempt at hiding our identities.

I have in front of me the issue of 24th June 1967. On page 2 of the weekly there are four columns of detailed and accurate addresses of groups and meetings under the banner heading of 'The Anarchist Federation of Britain'. Tactfully the first announcement goes as follows: "As there is no national secretariat for enquiries and for speakers, etc., please contact local groups". Today there is a dearth of groups within a two-hundred mile radius of London.

Back then the list included over fifty groups from Altrincham to Trowbridge. The groups were listed according to locality and a typical announcement said: "Liverpool Anarchist Propaganda Group, Gerry Bree [address] ... meetings weekly. *Freedom* sales. Pier Head, Saturdays, Sunday evenings". I can assure you there was such a person as Gerry Bree, and I can attest to at least one vast evening meeting by the Lever building where I had the privilege to be a guest speaker. But to continue. Every one of those groups was bona fide. Perhaps not all of them would have wished to put their name forward, but there was always somebody who did not give a toss.

I still respect every one of those names, from Donald and Irene Rooum to the late lamented Andrew Dewar of the Kilburn Anarchist Group.

The whole thing had its ridiculous side. That good comrade and marvellous writer Jack Robinson once wryly complained that an eminent conspiracy theorist accused him of using a pseudonym. In that issue alone, no less than six named individuals have put in announcements for proposed groups in their vicinity. In London alone there were regular and crowded meetings at the Lamb & Flag and literature sellers at Speakers' Corner.

A column also listed the addresses of Anarchist Federations abroad from Australia to North Eastern Minnesota. Just in case you would think not using pseudonyms was our particular inbred lack of caution, the comrades abroad have also come up with a name to write to.

This is the reason, comrades, that the anarchist movement flourished in those days at a time when there was an upsurge of interest in anarchist ideas. If anything there is today an even greater population moving towards the idea of anarchism. We must put our stall out. There is no other way. Please note, however, the name below is a pseudonym. **John Rety**

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But does not nature abhor anarchism?

Dear *Freedom*,

Ewtor, (letters, 24th May) I can't imagine anyone seriously proposing ending "injustice and misery" via a four thousand million person holocaust, so I assume it's just an attempt at a macabre joke at our expense and won't discuss it any further.

You can make anarchism, or any other viewpoint for that matter, look absurd by turning it into an absolute. That anarchism is utopian is a common fallacy. Anarchism is not a *thing* but a *process*, a process to minimise social coercion and maximise voluntary relationships. We anarchists are happy if we can encourage the growth of liberty, or even just keep the oppressive forces from increasing their hold on us. Maybe some day we will reach a pure anarchist society, but we don't spend our time worrying about whether it will happen or not.

The argument that people are naturally rotters, therefore a hierarchy is needed to keep everyone in line and thus anarchism is unworkable, can be stood on its head. If humanity is innately irrational (and I believe, to a large degree, it is) the very last thing you want is to empower a handful of these creatures to boss the rest of us. This only compounds the problems generated by the power-seekers, virtually offering them a red carpet. Through decentralisation, local autonomy and direct democracy, you limit the damage the power-seekers can do to, at most, the community where he or she lives. (Imagine if Hitler, Stalin or Mao could have risen no higher than a recallable delegate to a county council.) Since relations would be on a face-to-face basis, people could have a better chance of dealing with this problem than they do at present with distant bureaucracies.

One final thing: *absolute* equality has never been considered a necessary precondition for anarchy. People differ in physical strength, intelligence, artistic ability, etc., and there is no denying it. Anarchists only say that the lack of these qualities should not condemn a person

to second class status or a life of poverty and misery.

Larry Gambone

Dear Editors,

Ewtor (*Freedom*, 24th May) offers up a definition of 'human nature' based upon some popular notion of Darwinian 'evolution' without taking into account the effects of environment on that nature. It is possible to make any animal vicious or fearful and sometimes obedient, and it is possible to make a tree grow crooked or stunted. I'm convinced that humans do have a nature, but we won't find out very clearly what it is by attempting to see behaviour from a great distance away in Albania or Bosnia and only selectively from the outside as a mass and then deducing 'human nature' from that behaviour without taking environment into account. The stories of non-assertion, non-violence, non-obedience and mutual aid are as numerous as those of the submission and violence and obedience which Ewtor takes as evidence of human nature. Ewtor writes: "... if there is always some naturally dominant person ... determined to express himself ... is not centralised, hierarchical power either in action or in the making? And does it not mean that there is a natural impediment [against the decentralisation which anarchists advocate]? At the very least it means that to set up an anarchist state [sic] we would have to go against human nature, which is to say animal nature ... of evolution itself."

In the last paragraph of the letter Ewtor proposes to solve the human dilemma by methods so awful that they must be some sort of Swiftian irony: "the decimation of the human population" in order to make workers more valuable to those who employ them. Given its tone, perhaps even the request for more convincing argument in the first sentence of the letter is more a rhetorical ploy than a genuine request. But just in case it is a genuine request, I wish to make some suggestions for reading.

The first step (perhaps already taken) would be to read the article on Kropotkin and mutual aid on pages 4 and 5 of the same issue of *Freedom*, then follow up with a study of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*. Next I would suggest Alex Comfort's *Authority and Delinquency* for further discussion of 'human nature' or his essays in *Writings Against Power and Death*, edited by David Goodway, especially the essay 'The Individual and World Peace'. And Ewtor might follow up the quotation from Ignazio Silone in the essay on the 'Paparazzi Man' (in that same issue of *Freedom*) by reading David F. Noble's *Progress Without People* (Between the Lines, Toronto, Ontario, Canada) for discussion of the need for and signs of modern versions of General Ludd and Captain Swing. If Ewtor is willing to carry on, I would be glad to send a copy of my own as yet unpublished essay 'Anarchism at the Roots: Some Social-Pschoanalytical Explorations' in which I argue with some evidence that anarchism's roots are inherent in 'human nature' [to be published in the next issue of *The Raven* - Editors]. And given time, it might be possible to work up to Godwin's *Political Justice* and the work of some of the other older anarchists.

Godwin wrote that "the obvious use of the faculty of speech is to inform and not to mislead" (*Political Justice*, Penguin, page 217). But I think there is a greater problem than rhetorical distortions and half or non-truths still among us. For some people information and argument (knowledge and ideas) which clearly exists because it is in print is not only ignored but also assumed to be non-existent. Therefore I propose less arrogance and at least a little humility in the pursuit of knowledge and information. Anarchism may be a difficult philosophy for some people to understand. It is certainly impossible to understand if a writer either resolutely doesn't want to know or doesn't bother to find out. Such is the stuff of which political discourse is made.

John R. Doheny

please keep sending in
your letters and
donations ...

Workers' Choice

Dear *Freedom*,

We noted with some bemusement your anti-consumer rant in 'Anarchist Comments in Brief' in the 7th June issue.

This inverted snobbery and dismissal of the desire to consume is one of the blind spots of the anarchist movement that Decadent Action set out to address. The comments refer to a "mere personnel manager" who is able to spend £100 or thereabouts on clothing each month, and say how outrageous this is, as is the fact that she disposes of outfits over two years old.

Well, fashion may not have (sadly) reached the anarchist movement, nor it seems has the reality of the cost of clothing. £100 a month is not a huge amount to spend on clothes, look in the high street. A £100 skirt and jacket sound like pretty cheap garments to me. But after all, we are known for being fairly choosy in our selection of outfits.

The average working class person would not be expressing such outrage, but merely wishing that they could do the same, or even expressing indifference as they do exactly that. They may not be buying Versace - but Nike, Adidas, even D&G or Ralph Lauren are found in the wardrobe of many a brickie or office slave.

Given the choice of army surplus trousers with charity shop shoes and Calvin Klein jeans with Patrick Cox shoes and which do you think the average worker will choose? Which do you think they should choose?

Decadent Action

Making Sense of Life

Dear Editors,

Your editorial 'What about minimum wages for the rich?' (7th June) dwells as per usual on the evils of capitalism and the need for a better world. Then it says: "Anarchism really tries to make sense of that curious phenomenon called life which we had no say in at the beginning but must be in control till the end".

Surely you would accept that we are only human beings not gods. Yet a human being is as much a part of life as an animal or a plant. How then can we control life? How can a part control the whole? Or even make sense of it? We can't even make sense of ourselves. We know very little, for example, about how our brains work. The human brain with its billions of cells is perhaps the most complex and curious phenomenon in the universe. How does anarchism make sense of that?

All human actions without the smallest exception are part of life. Capitalism, then, is part of life at the present time. So is war, so is terrorism, so is ethnic cleansing, so are all the horrors that are currently going on. And nobody controls a thing. Powerful people who push others around may think they are in control, but everything they do is part of one vast movement of life which they don't understand and over which they have no control whatever.

Therefore is anarchy - a state of affairs in which nobody rules or controls - is what we want, we have it now. We've always had it. The only trouble is that we don't realise it. We think we are the controllers. There lies the root of the human arrogance that gives rise to capitalist exploitation and all the other evils. Idealists and activists may hate to hear this,

but anarchism to me means just realising that we are all part of life: that our entire culture is based on a falsehood, on the illusion that we are separate from life and able to control it. Only such a realisation can end our traditional collective madness and thereby lead to a better world.

Francis Ellingham

Bouquet for Colin

Dear Editors,

I have just completed reading *Reflected in Water* by Colin Ward. This is an important book on issues of great importance which will affect everyone sooner or later whether we like it or not. This splendid book is divided into twelve chapters each on a different topic written in an engaging style with considerable clarity. Colin Ward explains how the social necessity of water has been transformed into a private commodity. It now raises the question, why save water when it is treated like any other commodity in the supermarket with the fat cat water chiefs creaming off profits? This is the fundamental flaw in the market economy approach.

Graham Hall

[Colin Ward's *Reflected in Water: a crisis of social responsibility*, is available from the Freedom Press Bookshop at £12.99 (postage £1.30 in UK, £2.60 elsewhere). A review by David Goodway appeared in the 12th April issue of *Freedom* - Editors]

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Tel: 0161-628 6182 for further details

MANCHESTER ANTI-JSA GROUP

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ACF

DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Discussion meetings open to the public are convened by the London group of the Anarchist Communist Federation on the first Thursday of every month. They usually start at 8pm at the Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont Street, London WC1 (nearest tube Russell Square). Disabled access. Free entrance.

Thursday 3rd July at 7.30pm

THE JAPANESE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT

Guest speaker John Crump. With slides.

Further information from

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

PLYMOUTH, SOUTH DEVON, EAST CORNWALL

Is there anybody around here interested in forming a Freedom Readers' Group?
Phone Andy on 01752-257178

Manchester Solidarity Federation

public meetings first Tuesday of the month at 8pm

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(off Wilmslow Road, opposite Owens Park)

For further details contact:
PO Box 29 SWPDO, Manchester M15 5HW

Dales Red Rambles

A series of guided circular walks in the Yorkshire Dales and surrounding area for Socialists, Libertarians, Greens and Anarchists. Walks are between 5 and 8 miles long. All walks are on a Sunday unless otherwise stated. On all walks bring walking boots, waterproofs, food and drink.

22nd June - Upper Wharfedale: Buckden to Yockenthwaite. Meet in main car park at Buckden at 11am.

Telephone for further details
01756-799002

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.

- 1997 PROGRAMME -

20th June General discussion

27th June Our Right to Decide (speaker Lucy Cartwright, National Abortion Campaign)

4th July Politics: What Now? (symposium)

11th July General discussion

18th July The Enlightenment (speaker Peter Lumsden)

25th July General discussion

1st August Social Class: Description of Reality or Ideology? (speaker Peter Neville)

8th August General discussion

15th August Anarchism and Nietzsche (speaker Steve Ash)

22nd August General discussion

29th August Anarchism and Science (symposium)

5th September General discussion

Anyone interested in giving a talk or leading a discussion, please contact Carol Saunders or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (telephone number 0181-847 0203 subject to caller display and an answerphone - which means if you withhold your telephone number you will be ignored or disconnected), giving subject and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate.

Peter Neville / Carol Saunders
London Anarchist Forum

Red Rambles

A programme of free guided walks in Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire for Socialists, Libertarians, Greens and Anarchists. All walks are on a Sunday unless otherwise stated. All walkers are reminded to wear boots and suitable clothing and to bring food and drink. Walks are 5 to 8 miles in length.

July 5th: Crich and environs. Meet 1pm at Market Place, Crich, Derbyshire. Circular walk above Derwent Valley.

August 3rd: Lead Mines and Common Pastures. Meet 1pm at The Miners Arms Pub, Carsington, Derbyshire. Red Rambles Fifth Anniversary. Circular walk around Carsington and Brassington.

September 7th: Loughborough countryside. Meet 1pm at the Forest Gate Pub, Forest Road, Loughborough. Circular walk in fields and woodland.

Telephone for further details
01773-827513

LIBERTARIANS OF SOUTHAMPTON: UNITE

Looking for fellow anarchists to set up a group in the Southampton area. Please contact Tom on 01703-337050

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