

# FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

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50p

The media are wallowing in the latest scandals, but ...

## ONLY THE ANARCHISTS BLAME CAPITALISM

The ignominious collapse of the Jonathan Aitken libel case has proved a field day for the media, and especially, and understandably, for the *Guardian* (which was the defendant) and which with victory gave the whole front page with full-size colour portrait of a serious-looking Aitken and a banner headline "He lied and lied and lied" (21st June), yet not content with that they filled pages 2 to 5 with all the background and dirt they had accumulated. What conclusions did they draw from all this filth? Apart from the now established fact that Aitken was lying about who paid the hotel bill in Paris, that he probably did act as a pimp for his Arab paymasters, etc., not even a whisper that, until he came unstuck, he had for years been a paragon of the capitalist system, a Minister of Defence and still much admired apparently by a whole number of "prominent politicians".

The *Guardian* lists them with their photographs, and they range from Alan Clark, who describes him as "my old friend and stand-by for many a dirty trick", to Paul Johnson, the once-upon-a-time editor of the *New Statesman* and now "a right-wing columnist in the *Spectator*", who "has persistently defended Jonathan Aitken" (we ask: can you trust journalists?).

But the Aitken scandal is a flea-bite, not only in this country but in the world at large where *corruption at top level is endemic*. Take the business tycoons involved in take-overs or amalgamations: some of them will get the chop *but* with a very nice golden handshake (more than most of us have earned by hard work in a lifetime). Why in such a world, the capitalist world, shouldn't the underprivileged also cheat if they can to get a few more pounds on the side? We make no distinctions between the political parties, whatever they

declare in their manifestos. They are all committed to the capitalist system and to telling us how to run our lives, because they know better. And so long as the underprivileged (who include most of the people who produce our food and most of our services) accept this situation, nothing will change except for the worse.

We can hear the hecklers telling us that we have been saying this for a long time. Quite right. And we will go on saying the same thing so long as the real producers of wealth (not the manipulators of stocks and shares and currencies, and office bureaucrats) realise the power that is in their hands and no longer accept that the only escape from 'capitalist slavery' is to win a million pounds on the lottery. The lottery is the capitalists' ploy for underdogs to become millionaires overnight without a struggle. Well, we now have apparently 330,000

millionaires in this country, and every week a few are added to the list. But our advice is not to rely on the money lottery. Life is a lottery, but each one of us can make it an exciting and satisfying experience, not with more and more money but with human relationships, mutual aid, 'love without impediments' and a fighting spirit against privilege and injustice.

Anarchists, and many *real* socialists, realise that we are facing an *entrenched capitalist system* which no government anyway can dislodge, but we can start by knowing what we want to make of our lives and then seeking among our neighbours and friends those who sympathise and are also seeking a similar way of life. We know this is already happening. We just want to suggest it for those who have not yet opted out, not from the capitalist *system* but from the capitalist *mentality*.



drawing by Arthur Moyse

new from Freedom Press

### The Tradition of Workers' Control by Geoffrey Ostergaard

Workers' control of industry, a phrase coined by the Guild Socialists, recalls the libertarian aspirations of the first rebels against the slavery inherent in the capitalist mode of production. As Geoffrey Ostergaard shows, libertarian socialism is not dead. There are workers in Britain who own and control their workplaces, and although this movement of workers' control in industry is not large, it is flourishing.

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# anarchist fortnightly

# Freedom

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— SCENES FROM LONDON AND BURY —

## FAT CATS AND DOLE ADDICTS



— EUROTOP —

## FEELING OUR OWN STRENGTH

It took me nearly two weeks to 'come down' from the EuroTop, the Euro rally of 14th June held in Amsterdam to protest against the bosses' Europe of money and social exclusion.

In this country we anarcho-syndicalists always feel horribly isolated, lost in a sea of Trots, Labourites and the apathetic. It is easy to lose sight of the fact that in European terms Britain is the odd-man-out, that in Italy, France, Sweden, Spain, etc., we are the majority section of the revolutionary left. This was confirmed in Dam Square on 14th June.



The Spanish CGT were easily the largest single section at this huge rally (35,000 or 50,000 depending on who you believe). A thousand red and black banners with the CGT acronym now as familiar as the old CNT. Several hundred trendy CNT members with their wildcat-emblazoned red and black flags also formed a large section, while our tiny band from Hull Trades Council marched with our (and the Liverpool dockers) good friends the SAC of Sweden. With the exception of a small group, FAU of Germany, who marched alongside us, the AIT, now very much a minority sector of anarcho-syndicalism, were noticeable by their absence. Twenty members of the Italian Syndicalist Union were arrested when their train entered Amsterdam station and sent back to Rome. After the demo Amsterdam became an armed camp, rotten with police who attended the information centre for the EuroTop only to be covered with paint and empty cans. Six SAC members were arrested on the Sunday. They were later repatriated by Dutch military aircraft with an admission of their wrongful arrest and financial compensation.

The press of course (where they reported the demo at all) exaggerated and fabricated with gusto. The *Observer* spoke of a "vomit against the EU", an attempt by anarchists to burn down Europe's railway station on this day and a plot to paint the Rijksmuseum pink!

The demonstration proved how strong we are, and friendships were cemented in the bars and restaurants, and some brilliant parties.

The 14th June was uplifting and emotional. The task now is for the European anarcho-syndicalist movement to work and fight together in all of its everyday struggles. Hopefully, watch this space.

Guy Cheverton

Last week while forty senior executives were being entertained to breakfast by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, a dozen unemployed militants and Groundswell anarchists were being filmed by the BBC2 *Business Breakfast* programme at Bury Unemployed Centre. Both of these groups of citizens were discussing the same issue – the government's proposed 'Welfare to Work' scheme.

The Downing Street breakfast meeting was full of the great and the good: Sir Peter Davis, the Prudential's chief executive who leads the government's 'Welfare to Work' taskforce; Mr Castell of Amersham International, Mr Leighton of Asda; Lord Blyth of Boots; Mr Ellwood from Lloyds; Dr Walter Hasselkus of the Rover Group; Mr Leahy from Tesco. At the Bury meeting on Titebarn Street there was not a suit in sight, only a room full of dole queue addicts.

The *Financial Times* journalist Robert Taylor claims: "More than 900,000 men and women in the UK have been unemployed for more than six months; of these, about a fifth are under 25".

The government plan is for a mix of training and work placements aimed at making the long-term jobless employable. In the first year, beginning next year, the aim is to get six-month placements for 250,000 young folk.

Big business at the Downing Street meeting was supportive, but gave no firm commitment. However, George Bull of Grand Metropolitan was loud in his backing, pointing out the various young employee schemes his company is already involved in. Grand Metropolitan is a notorious employer of cheap labour, and was targeted by Groundswell activists earlier this year for its involvement in the Project Work forced

labour schemes of the Tory government. In the company of these gentlemen, and enjoying his breakfast, sat Mr John Monks of the Trades Union Congress.

On Titebarn Street, Bury, where a plastic pot-full of a brew of Yorkshire tea was passed around the table and poured into half-pint beakers, the unemployed workers were not so thrilled. Mostly they moaned at the prospect of yet another new experiment about to be imposed on them by the new government. But some called for a campaign to expose bosses involved in cheap forced labour. Others claimed that these projects will force down wages on those already in work.

The editor of the *Financial Times* worries if the government, by "rushing to get the new deals running nationwide by next April ... is being too ambitious". There is doubt if these types of job subsidies offer long-term benefits. According to *Working Brief*, the journal of independent analysis of employment issues: "The available data on people leaving compulsory 're-motivation' programmes show that very few got a job as a result, and that they are mainly used as a punitive measure against claimants who refuse to take up a place on a government scheme when they attend their Restart interview".

The chances are that the government's 'new deal' will be used by some civil servants to bully claimants as well. The figures for Job Plan Workshops and Restart courses suggest only 4% get a job as a result, and nearly three-quarters of all positive outcomes are of people agreeing to go on yet another government scheme.

As the syndicalist Derek Pattison says: "It's not 'Welfare to Work' but 'Welfare to Welfare'."

Trade Unionist



## — ABOVE THE PARAPETS — BEHIND EVERY SCANDAL ... A COVER-UP

At the time of writing, the media is in an orgy of self-congratulation over the collapse of Jonathan Aitken's libel case against the *Guardian* and Granada Television. No doubt the latter are to be congratulated on standing by their stories. The way in which the case has been reported, however, does more to conceal state crimes than to expose them.

To recap: Jonathan Aitken, millionaire businessman and MP, was minister for defence procurement when, in September 1993, he stayed at the Ritz in Paris and met some Arab business associates for purposes still unknown. When questioned about this stay, and about the fact that his hotel bill had been paid by one of these associates (in contravention of ministerial rules), Aitken lied to the *Guardian*, and to the then Prime Minister. Aitken resigned from his post in order to sue the *Guardian* and Granada Television for making allegations about this stay (among other things). When he repeated (and expanded) his lies — on oath — in the High Court in London, he was found out, and on 20th June 1997 was forced to withdraw his case, and had to promise to pay 80% of all the legal costs (nearly £2 million).

The case is being hailed as a victory for the press in its role of fearless watchdog, wielding the 'simple sword of truth' (which Aitken had claimed to possess) against the establishment. The truth is rather that the case demonstrates the way in which the press serves power.

In his front-page editorial on the affair, the *Guardian's* editor, Alan Rusbridger, compares Aitken to President Nixon, and quotes passages from a book which Aitken in fact wrote about Nixon. The lesson Aitken did not learn, says Rusbridger, is "beware the cover-up". The parallel between the Aitken affair and Watergate is much more apt than Rusbridger seems to realise. In the Watergate affair, Nixon was brought down for covering up his role in the attempted burglary (for reasons never satisfactorily explained) of the Democratic Party headquarters. His real crimes — for example, the illegal bombing of Cambodia, and the FBI COINTELPRO campaign of violence, break-ins and other forms of harassment against US dissidents — did not enter the Watergate hearings.

In the present case, Aitken has been brought

down for covering up a meeting (for purposes which remain obscure) with Arab business associates. His activities as a minister in supporting the Al-Yamamah arms deal with Saudi Arabia (which his Paris meeting may or may not have been connected with), and arms sales to other Middle Eastern nations, have not entered the debate except obliquely.

Originally, the *Guardian* and Granada alleged, among other things, that Aitken had been involved with a Lebanese arms dealer involved in an arms contract between a British firm and the Lebanese government, and that he had become involved in illegal arms sales. This allegation was dropped during the trial.

The significant thing, however, is not whether one particular politician became involved in a deal that broke British arms trade regulations. The significant thing is that the British government regularly and systematically sells arms to human rights violators if these repressive regimes respect the rights of foreign investors, permit Western economic penetration, or otherwise adopt a service role in the international economy — serving Western economic or political interests. Similarly, whether or not a particular minister was 'dependent' on the Saudi establishment is rather less important than the question of whether the entire British government, the British arms industry, and perhaps even the British economy, are rather too dependent upon repressive and undemocratic Saudi Arabia.

What is important is not the honesty or probity of a particular individual, but the regular and systematic behaviour of British governments, serving British business interests, despite the cost in death and suffering. By ignoring this larger agenda, and by reinforcing the assumption that most ministers, "like most MPs, are honest men and women, doing an arduous and not particularly well paid job" (former editor of the *Guardian*, Peter Preston, commenting on the outcome of the trial), the media supports state propaganda, rather than challenging it.

A useful rule of thumb is that whenever the media become outraged over some political scandal, it is effectively covering up the issues of real significance.

Milan Rai

## 'SOCIALIST WORKER': INTERCOURSE WITH MUMMIFIED MODERNISM

The Socialist Workers Party provides the nation's youth with seemingly safe sex with mummified modernism. At an early age it initiates callow teenagers and wayward students into intercourse with the most distinguished institutions of our country: the apparatus of trade union bureaucracy, as a placard-waving lobby on the fringes of the Parliamentary Labour Party, as promoters of student protests against Royal yachts and the Duke of Edinburgh.

The Socialist Workers Party is a modern machine for rendering the radical impotent. It calls itself "the socialist alternative".

Where has it been in the campaign against the Job Seeker's Act? "The hated Job Seeker's Allowance" as it reported in *Socialist Worker* at the end of May. Where has it been in the battle against Project Work?

It's been urging civil servants and the like to pass motions and move resolutions to call "on Labour to scrap it ... scrap the JSA ... scrap Project Work". This is the politics of parrots. Safe slogans for silly 'socialists'.

### SWP SNUBS JOBLESS

In the summer of 1979 a Mr Steve Jeffreys wrote hopefully in *International Socialist* (journal of socialist theory of the Socialist Workers Party): "As British trade unionism strikes into the 1980s, our task is to make it a political alternative for tens of thousands of workers". Today we are told that trade union membership is down 1.7 million since 1989, and that trade unions need to recruit 500,000 members if they are to stop a long-term decline in membership before the millennium.

An introduction to a book of essays just out at Freedom Press\* condemns the anarchist movement in 1970 for failing to adjust their activities from direct action in the Peace Movement to trade union militancy and industrial action. That was an historic mistake by the anarchists then, and the aloofness of the Socialist Workers Party to the jobless campaigns against the JSA and the Reclaim the Streets struggles is a strategic misjudgement now.

The Party is engaged in a dialogue of the dead at union conferences, and inside institutions which today seem superficial to the real lives of people. What they see as politics with

a big 'P' is irrelevant to most of our everyday lives. It belongs to the modernist politics of yesterday, not to the post-modern era.

Hence the *Socialist Worker* paper worries about the attitude of the CPSA civil service union to the new Labour government. And the paper reports: "Delegates rightly condemned the three-strikes policy as driving a wedge between civil servants and claimants". In this they merely echoed the National Executive which attacked Groundswell, the anti-JSA network, for advocating "a 'three strikes and you're out' policy of threatening staff considered to be using the JSA harshly".

### MODERNISM AND THE FANTASY OF POWER

From virile beginnings in the late 1960s, when the International Socialists (later the SWP) broke into industrial and trade union politics during the Roberts-Arundel dispute at Stockport, the SWP is now little more than a soirée for mis-spent youth. It belongs to the age of the billiard hall, to the institutions of power worship, to the cretinous student committees, to locking horns with a brainless bureaucracy in the unions.

This is all a long way from the shopfloor, the dole queue and the supermarket, which most of us experience every day. It is flirting with the fantasy of power which leads them to say that civil servants "have been forced to administer vicious attacks on workers like the Job Seeker's Allowance" (*Socialist Worker*, 31st May).

The report adds: "Suspicion about the intentions of Labour ... were expressed throughout the conference [CPSA conference]. Many were worried that more attacks on the jobless are in the pipe-line."

Now this is a thoroughly modernist way of looking at things: men as chattels of an institution, civil servants as mere ciphers carrying out the will of governments. Clearly the Socialist Workers Party is morally and philosophically feeble in the context of post-modern society.

Arturo Ui

\* *The Tradition of Workers' Control*, selected writings by Geoffrey Ostergaard (Freedom Press, £6.95).

## ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

**OUR POPULAR SUNDAYS HAVE AN ORGASM** Needless to say, the *News of the World* had to have an 'exclusive' even if all the others had it, and it was plastered all over the front page. "Aitken's romps with Miss Whiplash ... had kinky games ... just a year after he married". Inside that family Sunday was a two-page spread "Four in a bed, whips and an orgy in a gothic mill". And on finances we learned that "fraud of the manor; common sell titles that don't exist". So, crooks galore.

But the *Sunday Mirror*, another so-called family paper, beats all records with a two-page disclosure by the lover of Edwina Currie's (the ex-MP) daughter Debbie with the headline "My six times a night sex with Debbie Currie on Edwina's bed". I won't try to excite you with the details. I am not easily shocked, nor opposed to beautiful pornography, but what is so disgusting is that this man actually describes his sexual affairs with this woman, who also allows a photograph of herself in a bikini while clasping her uncovered breasts, because they have received a very big cheque.

And the Sunday tabloid *The People* has a four-page supplement about people's 'fantasies'. The photos are more titillating than the text, but again one cannot but feel that sex is just another feature, like gardening and

holidays abroad. But these three rags sell every week more than nine million copies. And imagine how many of the family kids and granddads will be absorbing this utter rubbish. It's not good pornography and in many respects it's anti-lovemaking.

### GOOD NEWS FOR THE TOP REDUNDANTS

The outgoing chief executive of British Energy will (according to the *Guardian*, 21st June) "pick up nearly £900,000 in pay, perks, pension contributions and severance" for (and this is even more interesting) "fifteen months work at the privatised nuclear power company". I won't go into details, but another two directors got a massive "one-off bonus" for apparently undergoing the "considerable pressures" of privatisation.

The list is unending, but one worth quoting is that of "former BR managers to share in £40 million sale bonanza" (*Independent*, 20th June): "Another round of windfall profits for former British Rail managers emerged yesterday when Jarvis, the Essex construction group, moved to take control of a privatised track renewals company for £50 million, netting more than £40 million for directors and venture capital backers.

Jarvis is paying £50 million for Fastline, formed from a management buy-out from British Rail of Eastern Track Renewals, responsible for replacing

tracks on the east coast mainline from London to Edinburgh. If the deal goes through ten managers will share in cash and paper profits of £11.5 million." Every day there is similar news of those exploiting what is, or should be, public ownership, and making fortunes. And we the public, the suckers, say nothing. We deserve our fate.

### WORKERS' CHOICE ACCORDING TO 'DECADENT ACTION'

In *Freedom* (letters, 21st June) I am attacked for considering that "a mere personnel manager" who could spend £100 a month on a new jacket and skirt was a bit much, but apparently I was accused of "inverted snobbery" and of the "dismissal of the desire to consume" as "one of the blind spots of the anarchist movement that Decadent Action set out to address".

Obviously just as we now have *New Labour* one must expect to have *New Anarchism*. Because if *consumerism* is the new look anarchism (just when the capitalists are realising that the whole environment is being poisoned and that something must be done *even in the capitalist world* or else) we have the *New Anarchists* — Decadent Action — telling me that my comment was an "anti-consumer rant". All I am concerned with is

that everybody should have the necessities of life and abolish the privileged class. And somebody "who can afford to spend £100 a month on a new jacket and skirt" is one of the privileged class. Decadent Action don't seem to think so — which probably explains why they call themselves Decadent.

Libertarian

## FORCED LABOUR TARTED-UP

Before next week's budget, it seems the new government is trying to tart-up Project Work. Hence the rumours of its pending demise may be premature. Last week Andrew Smith, the Employment Minister, declared: "Enhancing the help given by Project Work pilots is an integral part of the government's drive to tackle long-term unemployment". To the 'cheap-jack' scheme of the previous government, the new administration intends to offer the cosmetic of 'basic skills', which means "making available basic skills training as a standard feature". Basic skills covers the literacy, numeracy and help with English as a second language, which a person may need to apply for jobs.

Unemployed Worker

# McLIBEL TRIAL ENDS

The McLibel trial ended on 19th June, when the judge read out a summary of his findings. Not the best time for us, as the *Freedom* edition dated 21st June was already in the post on its way to subscribers. Not the best time, either, for the conventional news media. The judgement was reported in the evening papers and broadcasts of 19th June and the morning papers of 20th June. But McLibel has since been squeezed out of the media by the Jonathan Aitken case.

In four years the trial took up 314 days, making it more than three times as long as the next longest libel trial (102 days) and the longest trial ever in an English court (next longest, a criminal trial lasting 292 days). It involved 20,000 pages of court transcripts and 40,000 pages of related documents.

Mr Justice Bell's summary of his 400-page judgement was 45 pages long, but we think the main points are as follows:

- McDonalds are "culpably responsible" for cruelty to broiler and battery chickens.
- McDonalds "exploit children, by using them as more susceptible subjects for advertising, to pressurise their parents into going to McDonalds".
- McDonalds wages are low, and this depresses wages in other catering firms, but it is not true that working conditions are bad or that McDonalds exploits the disadvantaged.
- The expansion of beef cattle production contributes to rainforest destruction in Costa Rica, Guatemala and Brazil, but there is no proof that McDonalds is to blame.
- Some McDonalds advertisements pretend to nutritional benefits which the food does not match, but the food does not cause disease if included in a wider diet.
- The amount of recycled paper used by McDonalds is "small but significant" – more than the alleged "tiny per cent".
- McDonalds has not caused starvation by evicting farmers.
- McDonalds food is not poisonous.
- Bottom line: the defendants owe McDonalds £60,000.

*Freedom* carried regular reports of the McLibel trial until December 1996, when the court hearings finished. Since then a book on the case has been published\* in hardback at £15.99. We did not report this, although it is a good book, because we anticipate it will soon appear in paperback with a summary of the judgement included.

The case began in 1986 with the publication of the *McDonalds Factsheet* by our anarchist comrades London Greenpeace. A good question might be, why pick on McDonalds rather than arms dealers or financiers? And the answer would be that McDonalds picked themselves.

London Greenpeace were involved in propaganda and demonstrations against all sorts of arms dealers and financial institutions (for instance, the 'Stop the City' demonstrations of the 1970s), but big firms generally ignore puny antagonists. McDonalds is exceptional in that it habitually uses the law to stifle criticism of any kind.

In 1989 and 1990, regular participants in London Greenpeace open meetings included no less than seven private investigators hired by McDonalds to ascertain the names and addresses of other participants with a view to issuing writs. One 'McSpy' was suspected of being a police officer checking on radical activity (which worried nobody since they were doing nothing secret).

Writs were served on five people in September 1990. Sympathetic legal advice was to get out of the case, and three of the defendants did so by agreeing to have apologies read out in court, which was what McDonalds intended.

Helen Steel refused to apologise. Dave Morris, who had dropped out of London Greenpeace, joined Helen in her refusal. McDonalds's bluff was called. Their lawyers messed about for four years of pre-trial hearings, putting legal and procedural impediments in the way of the defendants trying to make them drop the case.

Liberty (the National Council for Civil Liberties), with barristers working for no fee, went to the European Court in 1992 to argue unsuccessfully that Helen and Dave should get legal aid, and to the House of Lords in 1994 to appeal unsuccessfully against the decision that the case be heard without a jury. Otherwise Helen and Dave were without legal assistance.

McDonalds employed Richard Rampton QC (believed to charge £2,000 a day), junior barrister Tim Atkinson (probably £1,000 a day), a firm of solicitors (quite a lot), and agreed at the beginning of the trial to pay court costs (more than £1,000 a day) win or lose. Total direct cost of the trial to them is, at a conservative estimate, £10 million.

In indirect costs, the trial seems to be doing more harm to McDonalds's profits than the leaflets which occasioned the trial could have ever done. They find it necessary to issue press advertisements and tray liners (sheets of paper between the tray and the food in their shops) protesting that they are not damaging the rain forest and they are doing the best they can about the litter problem.

There is a World Wide Web site exchanging information about anti-McDonalds activities, and a 'Week of Global Action Against McDonalds' on 11th to 18th October 1997, much of the energy for which would have gone into other projects were it not for the trial. Will McDonalds now reconsider its policy of issuing writs like confetti? No indication of this so far.

Information from **McLibel Support Campaign, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX**. Tel or Fax on 0171-713 1269. Web site on <http://www.McSpotlight.org/>

\* John Vidal, *McLibel: a burger culture on trial*, Macmillan, £15.99.

# Sexual Freedom Parade



have a field day with headlines such as 'Dirty rain mac brigade', so because of my paranoia I got wet. Unfortunately for me, I didn't know you could get such attractive macs nowadays. I saw a blonde lady in a sexy, shiny orange mac and a glamorous guy in a gorgeous, glossy, pillar-box red mac, and they managed to look lovely despite of the rain.

The parade passed through Soho, along Whitehall and to the Home Office, where Tuppy Owens handed in the petition. More speeches were made, much cheering and waving of banners, etc., and off to the picnic around the corner in St James's Park, where we were given details of the party planned for that night.

Many thanks are due to Tuppy Owens and the other hard-working people who contributed to the whole occasion. It's thanks to people like Tuppy that we can look forward to the day when people can enjoy themselves without guilt or fear, self-consciousness or – more to the point at the present time – the possibility of prosecution. Thank you Tuppy, Lady Anna and all participants in the Sexual Freedom and Prostitution Pride Parade for being brave enough to stand up and be counted, and for bringing a ray of sunshine to this year's rainy Midsummer's Day.

On Saturday 21st June I attended the joint Sexual Freedom and Prostitution Pride parade. We congregated in Soho Square, London, as a broad cross-section of the population coming together for the serious purposes of marching for sexual freedom and prostitution pride, handing in a petition in support of the proposed Sexual Freedom Bill, picnicking in St James's Park and partying all night, the latter by kind courtesy of Lady Anna.

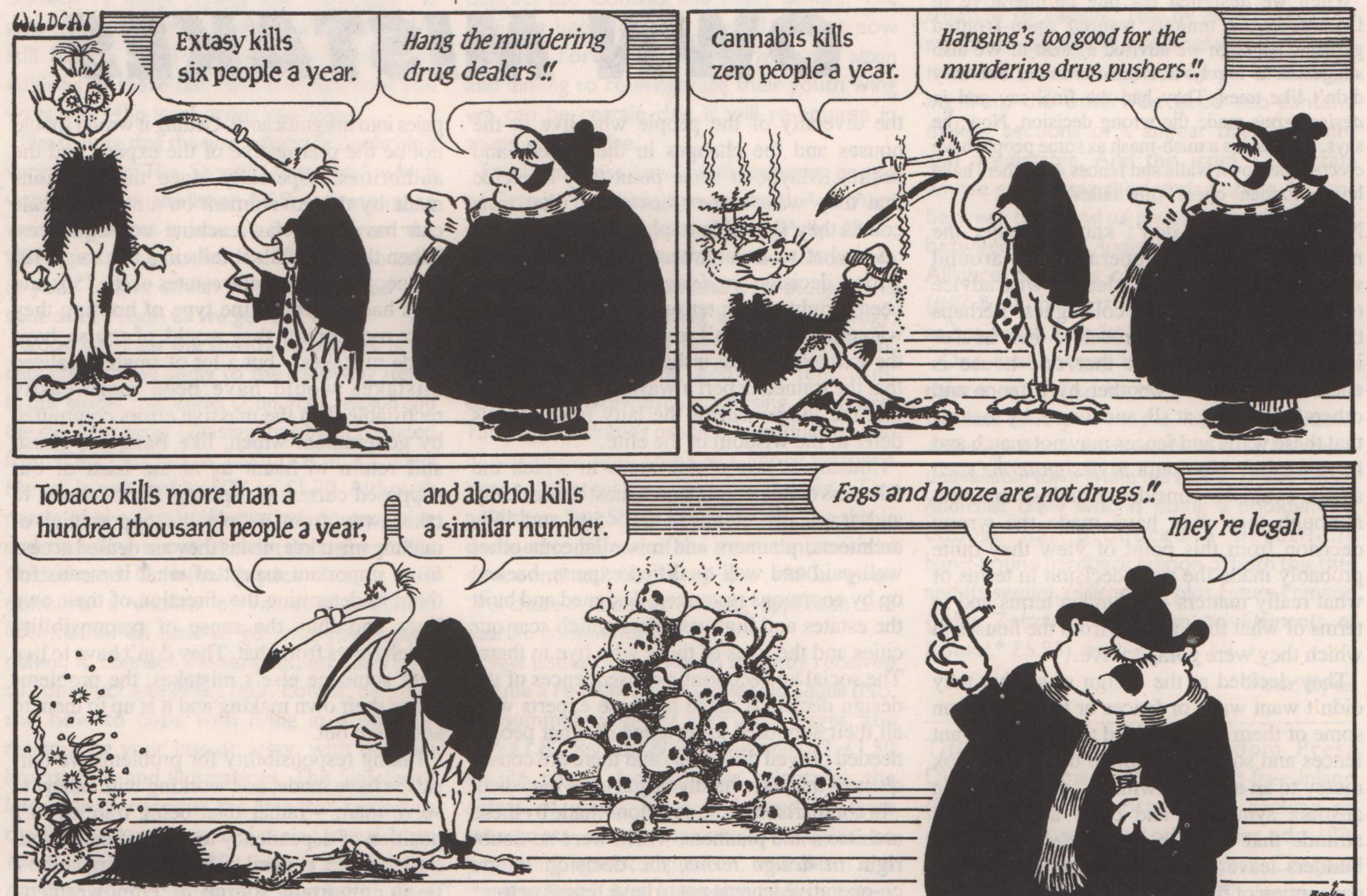
As we greeted old friends, made new ones, unfurled banners and admired some of the wonderful costumes being worn, speeches were made in Soho Square – none of which I could hear, unfortunately. However, as the parade moved off I spied a comrade whom I've not seen for a while and he was able to tell me that one of the speakers had announced that for three days prior to the parade Mrs Mary Whitehouse had been conducting rain-dances. Well, Mary, you certainly made the rain fall, I'll vouch for that, but you couldn't stop the parade.

Anyone who saw the flyer advertising the parade will tell you that it said "Dress wild". My response to that (being self-conscious as the result of a strict upbringing) was 'But this is England' so I didn't. I paid for my reticence, however, when a young man who was marching beside me at one point enquired as to why there were so many people dressed in black as it made it look like we were at a funeral. Also I had been too embarrassed to wear a mac because I thought the press would

The Sexual Freedom Bill will enable consenting adults in the UK freedom of expression regarding sexual and religious matters, in line with the other member states of the European Union. For more information on the Sexual Freedom Coalition, their paper *Consensual Adults* and social and campaigning activities, please contact: Sexual Freedom Coalition, PO Box 4ZB, London W1A 4ZB.

Joy Wood

The next issue of *Freedom* will be dated 19th July, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be Thursday 10th July 1997



— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

## THE BASQUE CHILDREN'S TALE

In April those who remember such things were celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the bombing of Guernica, one of the defenceless towns of the Basque provinces isolated in the Spanish Civil War from the rest of anti-fascist Spain, and selected for saturation bombing by the German Condor Legion.

At the time Franco explained that the destruction of Guernica was the work of 'Red hordes' and Asturian dynamiters, and when in 1970 Pierre Broué and Emile Témime published their book on *The Revolution and the Civil War in Spain*, they observed that: "This observation still holds good today in Spain". Spanish history has had to be rewritten since the death of Franco.

The same authors remark that "Nowadays, after Rotterdam and Coventry, after the

destruction of Warsaw and the atom bomb at Hiroshima, people are almost surprised by the importance attached to this attack". But as the British politician Anthony Eden remarked much later, Guernica was "the first blitz of the Second World War".

The next target was Bilbao, crowded with refugees and starved of food. Parents, who might be Catholic and conservative seekers of

Basque autonomy, or socialists, communists or anarchists, desperately sought to get their children away, just for three months, thinking that by then the war would be over one way or another. Some of them were sent to Britain, to the strong disapproval of the British government.

In May some people celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of their arrival here. Since the twentieth century has been the century of the refugee in most parts of the world, the experience of 'the Basque children' as they are called to this day, even though they are in their seventies, makes a significant story. This is told in a recent book, *Only for Three Months: the Basque Children in Exile* (£6.95 from Mousehold Press, Constitution Opening, Norwich NR3 4BD). The author, Adrian Bell, has diligently explored the documentation in the Public Record Office and the papers left by the secretary of the Basque Children's Committee (BCC), but most importantly has sought out and gathered the recollections of dozens of survivors.

About 20,000 children were evacuated from the port of Bilbao in May 1937, mostly to France, but with others dispatched from Belgium, Switzerland, the Soviet Union and Mexico. Four thousand were packed into an old cruise liner, the *Habana*, and landed at Southampton where volunteers hastily set up a makeshift camp.

The British government did not want them and would do nothing to support or assist them. The prime minister, Stanley Baldwin, said that "the climate here will not suit them" and even the secretary of the Save the Children Fund told the Foreign Office that the National Joint Committee for Spanish Relief was motivated by political partisanship not by humanitarian sympathy. He actually said that he "would sooner see them die in their own land than rot slowly in exile where they deteriorate physically, morally and mentally". The subsequent experience of the children, despite

some very hard times, proved him wrong.

Bilbao fell to Franco's troops from fascist Italy in August 1937. Parents wrote to their children warning them that they should not try to return. Even when the letters reached England they were sometimes withheld from the children. Some children ran away to avoid repatriation to the decades of retribution that Franco applied to the Basques.

By 1951 about 270 were still living in Britain. Those who returned to Spain after 1975 found, of course, that while to the British they were still Spanish, to the Basques they were foreigners.

The children encountered the best and the worst of British attitudes. Who would have expected that the Quaker shoemakers of Street in Somerset, Clark's Shoes, would set aside a mansion reserved for the sons and daughters of anarchists? Adult intellectual refugees, with problems of their own, did their best to help the BBC find training and work for the children as they left school.

One was the famous theatre director Pepe Estruch, producing their performances at the Hogar Español in Inverness Terrace in London. Another was Luis Portillo who, when the voluntarily-run 'colonies' for the children finally closed, found himself peeling potatoes in a café. Yet another was the Catalan lecturer Dr Margarita Camps, who mastered the mysteries of the English education system for her charges.

The Basque children themselves are eloquent. One, Marina, who is one of a pair of sisters my family has known for fifty years, looks back and remarks: "We never earned a lot, but it didn't matter. Life was rich, nevertheless, and we were aware of that - that it was a good life". Another, Mario, explains that: "Our needs have been met by a lot of work, very little money and a lot of ingenuity". And Herminio adds: "I feel that adversity can bring out the best in individuals, provided it isn't so great that it completely crushes. I think this is why so many of us feel, in a sense, fulfilled".

Needless to say, since Adrian Bell wrote his book he has, because of it, encountered both here and in Spain a further range of septuagenarians who were evacuated from Bilbao in 1937. The marvellously related story of the ones he interviewed for this book is a testament of human adaptability and solidarity.

Colin Ward



### HOMAGE TO THE SPANISH EXILES: Voices from the Spanish Civil War by Nancy Macdonald

By the end of the Spanish Civil War in March 1939 there were over 500,000 refugees from Spain registered in France. This book is dedicated to those exiles who, in the words of the author, are "the real heroes and heroines of modern times". Nancy Macdonald founded Spanish Refugee Aid to help the 10,000 Spaniards who, after fourteen years of exile and eight years of war, were desperately needy. This is their story ...

358 pages hardback. Original (1987) price £22.50, now available at £7.50 (post free in UK, elsewhere add 15%) from

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In a recent edition of *The Big Issue* David Ainsley, an architect, was quoted as saying that "tenant participation is not a panacea". He went on:

"When we designed for one co-operative in Liverpool the tenants wanted open-fronted gardens, although we advised against it. We also suggested a lovely tree-lined avenue, but they didn't like trees. They had the final say and *in design terms* made the wrong decision. Now, he says, the place is a mish-mash as some people have erected their own walls and fences and others have left the gardens open." (my italics)

Now obviously I don't know whether the members of this co-operative sit around wishing that they had heeded the wise advice of Mr Ainsley and his colleagues. Perhaps they do feel that the approach to their houses is blighted by the fact that one house is enclosed by a wall, another by a fence and others by nothing at all, and worse, by the fact that these walls and fences may not match and be makeshift. No doubt *in design terms* such a mix could be considered undesirable, but although they may have made the wrong decision from this point of view they quite probably made the right decision in terms of what really matters - in human terms and in terms of what they wanted from the houses in which they were going to live.

They decided at the design stage that they didn't want walls or fences or trees. Later on some of them have decided that they do want fences and so have put them up. It may look messy to an architect with an eye schooled in abstract symmetry and order and with the attitude that a house is complete when the builders leave - each aspect defined by the conception of the architect - but it does reflect

the diversity of the people who live in the houses and the changes in their needs and desires. Maybe at some point they'll decide that they want some trees and if that time comes they'll be able to plant some.

So what to an architect may have been a wrong decision *in design terms* could have been a right one in terms of what the tenants wanted. But that isn't really the point. Behind the architect's words is the arrogant assumption that the trained expert always knows best, and that the judgement of the laity must always defer to the wisdom of the elite.

Housing is one of the areas in which the falseness of this assumption is most dramatically and tragically clear. In the '50s and '60s architects, planners and miscellaneous other well-paid and well-qualified experts, backed up by enormous resources, designed and built the estates and high-rise flats which scar our cities and the lives of those who live in them. The social and economic consequences of the design decisions made by these experts with all their supposed knowledge of what people needed proved disastrous and there are consequences that have hardly begun to be remedied.

In comparison to the decisions made by these architects and planners, which were no doubt right *in design terms*, the decision of the co-operative tenants not to have fences or trees

pales into insignificance. Getting it wrong should not be the prerogative of the experts and the authorities, especially since the decisions made by the government on a national scale can have such far-reaching consequences. When the state fails it fails in a big way. Had the people put onto the estates of the '50s and '60s had control of the type of housing they were moving into they would, of course, have made mistakes - but a lot of small, localised mistakes would have been more easily rectifiable than the massive errors committed by government which, like Banquo's ghost, still return to haunt us at the feast of our supposed current prosperity. Furthermore, to take away from people the opportunity of making mistakes means they are denied access to an important aspect of what it means for them to determine the direction of their own lives and thus the sense of responsibility which flows from that. They don't have to live with someone else's mistakes, the problems are of their own making and it is up to them to sort them out.

Taking responsibility for problems we ourselves have made, and working with others to solve them - rather than being trapped in a position of dependency to an inefficient landlord, private, council or housing association - is an important source of empowerment.

— ARCHITECTURE —

## MAKING OUR OWN MISTAKES



Drawing by John Olday taken from the cover of *The Rape of Socialism* by Donovan Pedelty (Prometheus Press, £13.50 paperback). please add 10% inland or 20% overseas for p&p if ordering from FP Bookshop.

However difficult things might be, we are in control and not someone else.

The opportunity to make mistakes, to learn from them and to do things differently because of them in all areas of our lives, is surely one of the essential first steps on the path towards any meaningful form of autonomy, and thus to maturity and freedom.

Duncan Hunt

**Culture and Anarchism**

by Harold Barclay  
Freedom Press, 168 pages, £6.95

In this relatively brief, albeit densely packed, collection of essays and book reviews, Harold Barclay offers his opinions on what constitutes a free and humane society. He does this by drawing on the theoretical background provided by anthropology, a field in which he is an acknowledged expert. In his introduction he confesses that his perspective is a narrow one, his first obligation being to his fellow humans, so that he does not address ecological and other broad-based issues. He also argues that the evolutionary process does not necessarily have any progressive direction nor does it contain any ethical component. However, he does stress the importance of ethical behaviour by humans, some sort of mutual aid being essential to counteract our inherent aggression.

The opening section of the book, 'Culture: An Anthropological and Anarchist Perspective', consists of six chapters. In the first of these Barclay examines various definitions of 'culture' and makes it plain that he believes that culture stems from learning through interaction with others. In the two chapters which follow he suggests that, despite their innate conservatism, people are immensely adaptable and that while almost all hunter-gatherer societies are anarchic and egalitarian it is by no means proven that the state inevitably stultifies culture. Barclay continues with a review of *Society Against the State* expressing grave doubts regarding this work's central thesis, which is that the tribal

# Culture and Anarchism

chief is the servant rather than the master of his people. He follows up with a savage attack on John Zerzan who, in his *Critique of Agriculture*, appears to be advocating a global return to hunting and gathering – this in a world already containing six billion human beings! This section ends in a counterblast to Dudley Young's *Origin of the Sacred*, in which Barclay castigates the author for advancing the theory that because the genetic make-up of chimpanzees is almost identical to ours, then early human society would perforce be very similar to theirs. Barclay sees this as part of a thinly disguised attempt to justify the transfer of dominance hierarchies from the primate to the human world.

In section two, entitled 'Utopian and Social Movements', Barclay postulates that the early European settlement of the western hemisphere constituted, at least in part, a search for paradise on earth, backing up this idea with studies of utopian communities in North America from 1780 to 1970. He also investigates a Quaker community in British Columbia, concluding that the survival of such communities depends on flexibility, pragmatism and the maintenance of some links with past cultural traditions. In this section of the book he also reviews *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics and Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*, which he characterises as "an important summation" and "readable vignettes" respectively.

In the third and final part, 'Anarchist Theory', Barclay describes the struggle of the

nineteenth century American theorist Josiah Warren to formulate a unified theory of a free society. In his opinion, Warren's efforts were largely unavailing, because of the difficulty of maintaining order without the use of force, a problem encountered by other contemporary thinkers. Barclay also presents a critique of 'Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the Rise of French Socialism' in which he gives vent to his doubts regarding Proudhon's notion that 'progress' is an automatic process, while expressing his admiration for the general originality of his thought. This part of the book also contains a review of conference papers on 'Law and Anarchism' which Barclay thinks tend to stray from the essential notion that the state is unnecessary and undesirable, and it ends with a short piece called 'Anarchism and Cities' – Barclay's ideal metropolis consisting of "a fine mesh of counterbalancing segments".

The main attribute of this book is that it provides a wide-ranging and lucidly argued compilation of anarchist ideas for those with a fair knowledge of the subject, offering many examples of the complex relationship between culture and politics, without condemning the reader to wade through an entire book on each of them. However, because it is such a variegated collection and because it spans a couple of decades, it might have been improved by the presence of a 'conclusion' to tie in any loose ends. Also, only two of the fourteen items it contains have not previously

appeared elsewhere, so the author may sometimes be in danger of covering old ground.

These small criticisms aside, *Culture and Anarchism* is an interesting read and the messages it bears are positive ones: human beings *do* have some control over their destinies, mutual aid is the basis of a good society and the struggle to attain this must continue, whatever the odds.

Adrian Walker



This picture is taken from the cover of *The Raven* anarchist quarterly No. 18 on 'Anthropology, Anarchism and Africa', and includes 'Anthropology and Anarchism' by Harold Barclay, plus articles by Colin Ward, Peter Gibson and Angus Calder (96 pages, £3 post free anywhere).

More eagerly awaited than the coming of the dawn after a sleepless night, or the exotic sweets after a flaming hot curry, our wonderful new booklist is now out and should have reached all *Freedom's* loyal subscribers with the last issue of the paper. Any who didn't get one should get in touch and we'll send one separately. (That small, but persistent bunch of unreconstructed intellectuals who subscribe only to *The Raven* will have to wait for theirs until No. 35 comes out in a few weeks time. That'll teach 'em.) Any casual readers who would like a booklist can get one by sending us an A5 or larger SAE.

You'll be pleased to note that as well as having some design improvements, the new list is entirely legible with no obvious clangers, and comes to you in glorious technicolour. Some slight changes have been made to the mail order and the postage and packing information boxes, so *do* read these before ordering. This instruction applies particularly to people ordering from abroad. Most of our customers are thoughtful and co-operative, but just occasionally someone will send payment in dollars or other foreign currencies. Please note that we are not yet formally part of either the USA or the European superstate, and as such their currencies are not legal tender in the UK. If you wish to avoid a £10 surcharge on your order and a long delay in receiving it, please make sure you read the instructions and send

## Freedom Press Bookshop READERS' ROUND UP

your payment in sterling. It's not we who want to make money out you, it's the banks who charge that much per transaction for foreign currencies.

A few points about the contents of the list: there are a good few new titles and some price rises, including for three Freedom Press titles. Kropotkin's *The State*\* is now in a new format and has gone up to £2.50, and *Why Work?*\* (edited by V. Richards) is being reprinted with a new cover and will be £4.95. Bookchin's *Deep Ecology and Anarchism*\* is also being reprinted and will be £2.95. We still have a small number of the previous editions of these last two in stock, so if you want one (45p less) order very soon.

Please note that the new edition of Bookchin's very popular *The Spanish Anarchists*\* which was included on the list on AK Press's assurance weeks ago that it was on its way from the USA, has still not arrived but feel free to send in your orders which will be recorded and sent out as soon as we get our copies.

Good news for the shallow of pocket: price reductions now apply to the following items in our stock. *The Scarlet Q: anarchy, religion and the cult of science*\* (Zeising) has been reduced from £6.25 to below half-price at £3. *Ideal Home*\* is reduced by 50% to £1.20. Although much of the legal information on squatting and travelling is out of date since the Public Order and Criminal Justice Act, it still contains a wealth of valuable practical information on how to get into your squat, defend it, connect the services, etc., and how to construct and erect tipis, domes, benders and how to cope with living in a boat or maintaining your bus or lorry, with detailed instructions and illustrations. *The Situationist International: review of the American section*\* is the first and only issue of their journal from 1969, reprinted in 1993, and is down from £3.50 to £2.50. Salusbury's *Thatcherism Goes*

to College: the Conservative assault on higher education,\* already reduced from the publishers price of £4.95 to £3.50, is now cut to a mere £2.50 – that's half the original price – to clear that dreadful woman's name from our shelves. This is a good exposé of the role of the far-right Federation of Conservative Students (FCS) and shows their connections with other delightful groups such as the BNP, the John Birch Society, Peace Through Nato (!), the sinister World Anti-Communist League, the Contras and many others. The FCS has been formally wound up, but now that the Tories are moving rightward again and aiming to re-invigorate their youth wing we can be certain that it will re-emerge in some other guise.

Freedom Press now has all remaining copies of Graham Purchase's recent book *Anarchism and Environmental Survival*\*, originally £8.95, now only £2.50, which looks at the relationship between contemporary anarchist thought and a wide range of pressing issues: technology, population concerns, bio-regionalism, conservation, social ecology, feminism, community, workplace organising, and more. 156 pages including preface, introduction and bibliography, with some of Clifford Harper's great illustrations on the cover. The publisher, See Sharp Press, warns that this is destined to be one of the most controversial environmental books of the 1990s, given "Purchase's uncompromising approach and acerbic comments".

New issues of periodicals recently received include a re-launch of the splendid *Squall* (No. 15, summer) with 60 very large pages, still only £1.80. *Red and Black Revolution* (#3, £1.50 for 36 pages) from Dublin celebrates the defeat of water rates in Ireland by mass grassroots action, has major articles on organising against capitalism, anarchism and the new South Africa, modern Irish socialism,

and trade unions and anarchism. Among the shorter pieces an extended review of a book on the Labour movement and the use of the Internet is a worthwhile read. The *Organise!* (spring '97, 20 pages, £1) issue has some interesting articles on Albania, the Balkans, and industry and ecology. Nicolas Walter, in the June edition of *The Freethinker* (£1) asks questions of the readers that were certainly never put to them by the politicians during the election. The Detroit anarcho-primitivist magazine *Fifth Estate* (summer '97, 32 pages, £1) laments the death of Earth First!'s Judi Bari, and has three good pieces on Russia by Henri Simon, Claudia (of *Little Tenement on the Volga* fame) and Allan Antliff – the latter on Russian artists of the anarchist revolution. Claudia's is on Russian women post-1991, and Simon's is on travels in Russia since the triumph of capital. The by now obligatory attack on Bookchin and Bookchinism (more than a dozen columns) is in danger of distracting from the otherwise good eco-content, making sections of it appear tired, petulant and predictable. And this from a magazine whose editors say they're glad of the Atlantic between them and us, given the feud in Britain between *Green Anarchist* and the Neoist Alliance! Speaking of which, *Green Anarchist* (#47 & 48) has just arrived, 32 pages for £1, as has *Jewish Socialist* (#37) at £1.50.

One final snippet regarding Colin Ward's reference to *TAZ* by Hakim Bey: when was the last time you read a hand-made book? Although the Autonomedia version has been unavailable for a while here, one of the *Green Anarchist* crew who is doing a bookbinding course has produced a beautifully hand-bound hardback edition of both this title and its sequel, *Millennium*, plus *Future Primitive* (John Zerzan's follow-up to *Elements of Refusal*\*, £5.95), each at £5.

Four Eyes

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**HOW IT ALL STARTED IN CANADA**

The idea of organising Ecotopias across Canada was born after young people from Latin America and Canada met in Spring 1996. The Latin American concept of ecologically sound activist camps for youth inspired Canadians to try the same experience in the North. 'What about having several small scale bio-regional camps rather than a single one?' they thought. In that way, people could network locally and make contacts that they would be able to use in their own region to work on local issues. And that's what is going to happen!

All the Ecotopias are going to be local and small scale experiences. Only around twenty people from the region will gather to each of them for ten intensive days or so. However, a First Nations youth gathering will be happening as well with native youth from across the country.

**WHAT IS AN ECOTOPIA LIKE IN THE COUNTRY OF MOOSE, GRIZZLYS AND MAPLE SYRUP?**

The basic features of an Ecotopia, from Europe to Latin America and Canada, are camp fires, songs and collective cooking. However, workshops on fund-raising, networking and project development will also be given by and for youth to benefit them and ultimately the organisations they represent.

But there's even more to the programme. In Quebec, the youth will also be learning about the environmental and economic benefit of vegetarianism and how to cook wholesome and delicious vegan and vegetarian dishes. Anybody out there who would be interested in receiving the recipe book?

On the other side of the country, on the Pacific coast, the programme includes partici-

# A NARCHY IN ACTION?

— NUMBER 11 —

## ECOTOPIAS SPREAD AROUND THE WORLD

**Ecotopias have been happening in different countries of Latin America and Europe for more than ten years, promoting environmental action, social justice awareness and sustainable ways of life among young activists. Canadians are now taking up the idea as well and organising a series of seven eco-camps across the country, to be held in June and July 1997.**

patory workshops on organic agriculture and the construction of a native plant garden and composters.

In the middle of Canada, in the Prairies, the youth will be part of a wide project to reduce to use of pesticides on lawns. Young people will go door to door to convince their neighbours that they don't need to pollute the streams, the air and the soil to have a nice garden. So what's *your* tip to have beautiful flowers and green grass?

On the Atlantic coast, the Ecotopia will be happening on an organic farm and the Ecotopians will help the farmer to grow plants,

compost, garden while learning about food security and health problems at the same time. In Ontario, the workshops will range from food security to bio-technology, endangered bird species and butterfly garden. I have never heard about butterfly gardens before, so I might go and spend a few days at this ecotopia! And in the north, where it is winter eight months per year, the Ecotopia will feature workshops on how to prepare salves, ointments and oils, to keep you healthy and comfy when it is cold outside.

Finally, the youth at the First Nations will learn about the protection, conservation and

knowledge of plants that are used in traditional medicines. Workshops include computer mapping systems, field work with a botanist, traditional teachings, training in survival skills with native elders, etc.

In short, Ecotopias will be a week of sustainable living experience, based on direct democracy, popular education techniques and consensus decision making processes, showing youth that alternatives to our destructive consumption and production patterns are possible. A series of community workshops to publicise and lay the ground to the Ecotopia are currently happening across the country.

**PARTNERSHIP WITH LATIN AMERICAN GROUPS**

A few people from Latin American youth environmental groups will be touring in Canada in June and July to go from one Ecotopia to another. AECO from Costa Rica, Provisión from Columbia and PEUMA from Argentina are some of them. This will give the opportunity for the youth to exchange experiences on the Ecotopias and plan for future partnerships. Partnerships is also the idea behind a thirteen-week work placement in Latin America for Canadian youth. We hope that a lot of inspiring projects will come out of these events!

If you have any questions on the Ecotopias please contact:

Canadian Environmental Network Youth Caucus at: youth@web.net  
Tel: (613) 728-9810, or Fax: (613) 728-2963

Youth Sustainability Project at: ain@tao.ca  
Tel: (613) 728-9292, or Fax: (613) 728-8758

Elisa Peters

A year ago, two East Timorese women, the first East Timorese women to do so, entered the Australian embassy in Jakarta, unsuccessfully seeking asylum in Australia.

When Odilia Victor and Maria Sarmiento sought refuge, a third woman who had been with them did not make it into the embassy. While in the embassy, the women issued a statement outlining the situation faced by women in East Timor, but this was not released to the public in Australia until the women had travelled to Portugal, where they now live.

In July 1996, Odilia was invited to speak in Japan by the Free East Timor Japan Coalition. Later in July, the coalition submitted a petition to the UN Decolonisation Committee in New York. This petition contained several testimonies of human rights abuses against women. One of these was made by Odilia Victor.

Odilia said that she fled East Timor fearing for her life. Her cousin had been arrested and tortured for two weeks, and Indonesian soldiers had told her cousin that they planned to capture and rape Odilia. In her statement issued at the time of her asylum, she stated that she was present at the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre. Following this, she joined the Popular Organisation of Timorese Women (OPMT) and raised funds for the resistance. Her testimony to the UN detailed blatant cases of sexual slavery, 'local wives' and 'comfort women'.

Her testimony also outlined the personal tragedy and abuses experienced by her sister, who had been forced to serve with three other Timorese women as a sex slave to Indonesian troops for about a year. They were kept at a house on Kakau Lidun Street in Dili, directly behind the headquarters of the riot police mobile brigades.

In 1977, she was forced to become the 'local wife' to an Indonesian Air Force officer named Agus Korék. After his six months of service were completed, he returned to his wife in Indonesia. Odilia's sister later bore him a child which he took no responsibility for.

Prior to the invasion, the sister had been married to a Timorese man, and was pregnant at the time of the invasion. He fled to the bush and she was left behind. Although he later

## THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN IN EAST TIMOR

returned from the bush, he and Odilia's sister never lived together again as a result of the alienation from the community often experienced by Timorese women who have been forced to become 'local wives' to Indonesians. Her sister's experience is not unique or even rare.

"Wives of guerrilla leaders left behind in villages are frequently forced to live with Indonesians ... rape in East Timor is a systematic tactic of the occupying forces. Sometimes rapes take place in front of husbands. In the case of Lucas Bayasa, the husband became mentally unstable after witnessing the rape of his wife by military, and the wife later gave birth to the child of the rapist."

The testimonies presented to the UN Decolonisation Committee in July contained several such incidents, in some cases identifying Indonesian battalions. "The case of 'Miss H.' detailed a similar experience, conceiving twice after being raped by two soldiers from battalion 511 ... Joana Soares of Luwa village, who was gang raped in the Onu Laran area, Burloli, then stabbed to death by soldiers of the 405th battalion after resisting being forced together with another young woman onto a soldiers' truck ... 'Miss C.' had been forced to serve as a sex slave to troops who came to her house since 1990. Soldiers told her if she refused, they will take it she is co-operating with Fretilin."

Since 1975, many human rights abuses have been reported. Methods of torture include (as well as rape) the administration of electric shocks, submersion in water tanks, and cigarette burns to various parts of the body, including the genitals.

In October, 1996, Monica Pereira, a Brazilian reporter who was in East Timor, was told that during the operation to capture Xanana Gusmao in 1992, one of the women detained was tortured with electric shocks and had a snake forced into her vagina.

**Popular Organisation Of Timorese Women (OPMT)**

Rosa Muki Bonaparte, who came to be affectionately known as 'the petite revolutionary' and 'Rosa Luxemburg', returned to East Timor from studies in Portugal in early 1975. Described as a person full of ideas, and partly because of her participation and contribution to the Decolonisation Commission in Dili in May 1975, she was made secretary of the OPMT (Popular Organisation of Timorese Women), which was formed on August 28, 1975.

The OPMT, together with the OPJT (Popular Youth Movement), worked alongside other organisations such as the International

Committee of the Red Cross and Australian Council for Overseas Aid to deal with crisis and impoverishment. The OPMT and OPJT were phenomenally successful in community development work.

Their major projects were aimed at working with displaced persons, placing orphans in the care of local families, establishing creches for homeless children, and establishing and maintaining literacy programs.

Although she survived the initial Indonesian invasion in December 1975, in January 1976, during an Indonesian paratrooper raid in the Dili suburb of Taibesbese, Rosa was one of many Timorese women being dragged by Indonesian soldiers to landing barges and warships. Her resistance to the soldiers was so fierce that they decided to shoot her on the wharf. Her body was thrown into the harbour.

Maria Gorete is considered by many to be symbolic of the struggle of Timorese women. Maria is remembered as intelligent, politically active, outspoken, and beautiful. At the time of the invasion, she was a 17-year-old student. She was imprisoned, repeatedly tortured and raped by Indonesian soldiers, and eventually agreed to become the property of an Indonesian officer in order to save her life.

During this time, she spied for the Timorese resistance, supplying information she received from drunken Indonesian soldiers. She was released from prison and then re-arrested as the Indonesians hoped that she would lead them to resistance fighters. Maria Gorete disappeared in 1979, and is believed to have been killed.

In October, a group of Timorese women from various parts of Melbourne trekked into the city, where they participated in the annual 'Reclaim the Night' rally to protest against violence towards women. The women marched with Australian women supporters under an East Timor banner. One Timorese woman said to me, with the assistance of an interpreter: "It is wonderful that all of us women can come together to protest against this terrible violence which is experienced by so many".

Alicia Cullen

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**Rich and Poor**



**B**y the time you read these words the weather will have changed. Now, when it is raining out of season, nobody knows quite how to deal with it. In the summer at these latitudes you would expect the sun to shine. A curious feeling this gives rise to, that neither memory of sunnier summers nor scientific predictions are much use viewed from the short years of a human span of life.

It was during my short visit to Spain in 1994 that, being an anarchist, wherever I went I felt at home. I was also thinking of Kropotkin in a vague way and came to the surprising conclusion at which I hinted several times – especially in *Freedom* – that weather being the most important consideration of all localities, the population (animal, vegetable and mineral) live their lives to conform with the climate around them. I felt at home in Spain because it felt to me an anarchist country from Santander to Seville.

Aldous Huxley in his *Brave New World* created a world in which the weather was abolished. The people were ruled by politics. The proles had their humanity and the Alpha people messed about with magic and so forth. I think Huxley, a brilliant writer, had to be wrong for his education was wrong. That he got double first unfortunately made him doubly wrong. Had he been an anarchist, and the Spanish upheavals of the '30s were in his active lifetime, he could have written his utopia on such lines as I have noticed in Kropotkin.

For at the moment, as the rain is pouring down, you may ask whether rain is the ultimate deterrent. There are more people and other animals trying to find shelter at this time, and it does not matter what title they may have given themselves. When the Rain Party is in power it is better for the people to take shelter.

It is amazing however that in this country, where once all conversation was about the weather and that kind of blather, it has lost its political significance and has been pushed to the sidelines. Perhaps football should be played all the year round and cricket only on television.

The fact that I share a shed with a spider perhaps entitles me to say that, not being fish, we both prefer to be in the dry. At this moment by being where we are determines our existence.

As the recent headline in *Freedom* said: "Beware of Goats and Governments". I can only add that at last the truth is dawning on the population that the climate which changes us is more important than the governments which have no permanence, legitimacy or even rhyme or reason.

As the poet A.C. Jacobs had written in his recently unearthed 'The Anarchists' from which I quote the first stanza:

"He saw the world was wrong:  
Power shaped in ignorant vessels,  
And he knew he had to break them  
For his own way to claim the sun."

The rest you can read in A.C. Jacobs's *Collected Poems and Selected Translations* (Menard Press, £13.99). Arthur died in 1994 and I hope that whenever *Visions of Poesy* is reprinted that room may be found in it for some of his poems.

The rain has now stopped. The Thinning Cloud Party has taken temporary power and many people are cautiously leaving their shelters.

**John Rety**

**Anarchism and the City Tradition**

Dear *Freedom*,  
Adam Green (letters, 7th June) thinks I am wrong in my partial definition of elitism. But what else can you call an ideology that dismisses the needs of everyone in the world except for the few hundred true believers? And doesn't every crackpot trot out the line 'Well, they laughed at Columbus and the Wright brothers' as though the unpopularity of his cause was proof of its truth? As I mentioned before, to avoid elitism an ideology or theory must have at least *some* relationship to the life of the average person. Is that so difficult to fathom? Yes, some anarchists are elitists, but this does not mean anarchism is, even though it is not exactly popular. Most people do not like government, most engage in some sort of mutual aid, many belong to co-ops, many volunteer their time, etc. The essential ideas of anarchism are not totally foreign to people the way 'abandoning civilisation' is. As for questioning me about 'civilisation': they (anti-civ types) are the ones to talk about civilisation versus some pristine feral fantasy, not me. They want to chuck out all human experience since the development of agriculture, the point which, in their tortured minds, marks the beginning of this 'wicked civilisation' they so eagerly want to destroy.

John Wood (letters, 7th June) shouldn't take my suggestion to buy out the capitalists too seriously. I wrote it to stimulate discussion and I am glad he has risen to the bait. He thinks only the well-paid minority of workers could engage in a buy-out plan. How does he get that idea from my article? Even low-paid workers contribute to pension funds and see one-third or more of their incomes disappear in taxes. If the investment fund was tax-deductible, they wouldn't feel the pinch of putting aside 10% of their income. He also seems to hate better-paid workers. Why? His hatred is abstract – directed against millions of people he doesn't know and who have never done anything to him. Who of us doesn't 'support capitalism' by working and consuming, if not investing?

Is he one of those people who 'loves the working class' yet hates real living and breathing workers? Does he really think we can bring about social change without them? Doesn't he realise how unhealthy it is to hate and how childish it is to need scapegoats?

As for his points about the inflation of share prices and the wealthy shifting their investment to the third world. Rapid inflation of stock prices would occur if the buy-out happened very rapidly – something unlikely. A more realistic time-frame might be 25-30 years (like a mortgage) in which case the stocks would not be so grossly over-valued. Yes, the rich would shift their investments elsewhere, causing the rapid industrialisation of the poorer countries – something few of their inhabitants would complain about.

Of course the idea of worker buy-outs is flawed. But then aren't the 'traditional' ideas of social revolution? At least once in a while we need to do a 'reality check'. What if 'workers capitalism' is the best we can get for now? Please do come up with something better than this and I'll be the first to approve. Let's start trying to come up with some new approaches (rooted in actual experience, of course). If we can't come up with something new, then we are left with clinging to the old dogmas or going 'permanent protest' – not a pleasant choice.

**Larry Gambone**

**The Circus is Over**

Dear Editors,  
I dare say it's true that some of your readers – inhibited by the view prevailing in *Freedom* circles that it is necessarily inimical to anarchist objectives to vote in parliamentary elections – are 'taciturnly astute' (i.e. say nothing) about this issue. But my letter (7th June) was appealing to the 'taciturnly astute' to speak up for realism.

**Don Pedelty**

**Telephone Banking?**

Dear *Freedom*,  
The other day I got a circular from a major high street bank offering me some very generous terms if I took out a mortgage with them. Not only would I get a special low rate of interest, but they would actually give me a cash gift towards the mortgage of up to £7,500. Funnily enough I used to work for that particular bank for a great many years – in fact I was foolish enough to think that I had a job for life there; well you *did* have a job for life

when I started with them – but then several years ago they made me redundant. And it was the way they did it that really upset me. They told me to go and see the personnel officer, and while I was waiting outside her office they emptied my desk without my knowledge. Then, when I went in, I was handed the contents of my desk in a black plastic bin-liner with my redundancy cheque, told I had three months to make alternative arrangements for my pension and mortgage or else I would lose the pension and my house would be repossessed, then I was escorted down the fire escape by two security guards. This is standard practice to prevent you from putting a virus on your computer terminal. I should count myself lucky I wasn't one of the ones whose 'swipe-card' was taken off the system while they were out at lunch so that they couldn't get back into the building!

As it happened, I did manage to get another firm to take my mortgage on, but I had to put all my redundancy money and all my savings into it. I did manage to get another job, but at only one-third of my old rate of pay, so I'm holding on to my flat by the skin of my teeth.

I telephoned the special 'direct line' number on the circular. I told the yuppie who answered the phone call all the above facts, adding that I thought it was the most fatuous offer I had ever received, that to send it to me after showing me the door so brusquely was adding insult to bloody injury, and given half the chance I would forcibly insert the circular in the man responsible's major orifice. Or rather I wasn't able to tell them all of that because they put the phone down on me, but I think I made myself clear.

**F. Harry Stowe**

**Twenty-First Century Anarchism**

Dear *Freedom*,  
It was with mixed feelings that we read NW's review of *Twenty-First Century Anarchism* in *Freedom* (7th June 1997). We would like to thank him for taking the trouble to review the book, and regret that he should have found it so disagreeable. The main purpose of such a book is to pose insightful questions and to provoke thought, argument and debate. NW's contribution is appreciated, and we hope that others will approach the book with a similarly forward-looking, open and critical mind. We would be pleased to receive any thoughts, complaints, compliments and criticisms from anyone who feels so moved.

**Jon Purkiss and James Bowen**

(Any correspondence to Jon Purkiss, c/o Department of Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University, Humanities Building, Rosamond Street West, Oxford Road, Manchester M15 6LL.)

**Friendly Societies**

Dear Editors;  
*Freedom* has often run letters and articles on the various component parts of the mutual sector (co-ops, friendly societies, building societies, etc.) to which I have often been tempted to add my own observations, but I cannot let Keith Ackermann's outrageous attack (*Freedom*, 7th June) on friendly societies pass without comment.

Firstly, I find it strange that he submitted the same letter to the *Morning Star*, which they published on 2nd June. Now is he a 'Mk. II Keith Flett' who writes (or rather faxes) to any paper that will tolerate him, or is there a more sinister aspect involved?

With the examples of Andrew Regan trying to buy out CWS, and the current attack on the Nationwide Building Society as the next target for de-mutualisation (which is the polite term for asset-stripping) before us, any attack on friendly societies looks very much like kite-flying for more of the same. Mr Ackermann may or may not be aware that the two largest friendly societies still existent were chosen as models for the setting up of the NHS in 1948. They were the Manchester Unity, Independent Order of Odd Fellows and the Ancient Order of Foresters and, despite the quaint terminology of their names, both they and many others still exist. Foreseeing the destruction of the welfare state which began under the Thatcher government, I joined the Manchester Unity three years ago and have found it to be a very worthy organisation. The irony of the situation is that both of the societies which I have named lost 80% of their membership overnight in 1948 as people were generally no longer prepared to pay in for benefits which were now provided 'free' by the state. The benefits are not all financial, however, as there is often a parallel social and charitable side to the activities, but it is not a condition of membership to take part in these.

Friendly societies share a common origin with trade unions and both were persecuted under the Combination Acts. 'Fat Cats' had no influence in those far-off days. In any mutual organisation they are a relatively recent phenomenon, attracted by the accumulation of assets that these bodies built up over their long history, and with no shares to trade on the Stock Exchange, they have bribed and bought their way in or been recruited at an exorbitant salary which recognises their allegedly necessary 'market expertise'. These individuals have only been able to subvert the mutuals from within because of the lack of interest of the bulk of the membership and their failure to use the democratic processes open to them.

We all surely agree that the state should provide the basics of life for the most unfortunate members of society but, until that happy day when money is abolished and all our needs are met from the common pool, it surely makes sense to club together with like-minded citizens to try to offset the misfortune which befalls most of us from time to time? Unlike many insurance policies, friendly society subscriptions have traditionally been modest, as any inquirer will surely discover. To claim that friendly societies in Victorian Britain were indifferent to the existence of workhouses is about as logical as saying that the proletariat was indifferent to colonial slavery. Without the existence of the mutuals everyone would have been worse off, but, without an influx of ordinary persons of goodwill, no mutual organisation will survive long into the next century. Is greed going to ultimately triumph? Are the people's assets going to be stolen? If you sit back and do nothing now, the answer is YES.

**Bill Brewer**

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



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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

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Further information from  
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Phone Andy on 01752-257178

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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 -

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

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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.

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