

# FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

Vol. 58 No. 15

2nd August 1997

50p

## Devolution for Wales – Devolution for Scotland ... **WHAT ABOUT LEAVING IRELAND TO THE IRISH?**

**N**ew Labour has called a conference on the future of Northern Ireland for September, and the IRA has called a 'ceasefire', but no handing over their arms. Have you ever heard of an 'army' which has not been defeated handing over its arms before knowing what the peace terms affecting it will be? And as we have repeatedly pointed out in *Freedom*, governments only respect force, or the threat of force. Why, after all, does this country waste some £22 billion on so-called defence?

The problem of Northern Ireland is no difference from that of Palestine and before that Algeria. The French learned their lesson when a mighty military force could not dominate a people with, at most, machine guns and finally left when de Gaulle uttered the famous concluding remark: *j'ai compris!* (in vulgar terms: 'I've got the message!').

Unfortunately neither the Israeli, nor apparently the British, have yet realised that there is no solution to the Palestinian and Northern Irish problems so long as the invaders, the colonialists, seek solutions which in fact retain the *status quo* while making minor concessions to the under-privileged 'natives' of those territories.

The Israelis show no signs of ever getting out of the West Bank. Indeed they have gone on expropriating land from the Arabs in order to build yet more Israeli settlements – an open confrontation to the majority Arab population.

Northern Ireland is quite a different problem in that it has a long history going back some three hundred years when Protestants were brought in from Scotland in an attempt to curb the unruly Catholic natives. The other difference is that, unlike the Israeli masters, British governments would like to be shot of this unruly patch of the so-called United Kingdom. After

all, Northern Ireland costs the British taxpayer no less than £3 billion a year (according to Roy Greenslade in *The Guardian* magazine, 23rd July), and for what returns? An occasional bombing by the IRA to remind whichever government is in office to do something.

It was a Labour government which, when in office some 26 years ago sent the troops to Northern Ireland (where they have remained ever since) in order to *protect the Catholic minority* who were being persecuted by the Protestants, as well as being discriminated against in the labour market. And, where sectarian murders are concerned, the Protestant paramilitary have killed more Catholics than the IRA has killed Protestants.

Obviously there can be no solution to Northern Ireland so long as it remains part of the United Kingdom, and so long as the military remain there. It's no use saying this is a

simplistic solution. What is simplistic is to imagine that the two militant factions of Catholics and Protestants will find a solution so long as the former look upon the British as invaders and the latter, who declare themselves to be more English than the English, depend on the continued presence of the occupying army and government to enjoy privileges both socially and in the labour market.

But as we have been pointing out in *Freedom*, the Catholic minority, which has a higher birth-rate, is rapidly moving towards a majority status. Roy Greenslade confirms this view with figures:

"... evinced from educational statistics: there are 93,537 Catholic pupils being taught in Northern Ireland's primary schools at present compared to 80,434 Protestants, and 10,667 designated as Others (other Christian, non-Christian, people of no religion and those who keep it

*(continued on page 2)*



drawing by Arthur Moysé

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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# Freedom

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## Dragooning the dole queue in Bury and beyond

# ZOO-KEEPING AND GRAND DELUSIONS

A week ago last Monday New Labour's 'Welfare to Work' / 'New Deal' project was kicked-off amid much ado. All over the country presentations were proffered by Labour MPs and officials to that part of local society who hide their ambitions behind a cloak of well advertised public spirited preoccupations.

There were policemen and social workers, councillors and counsellors, entrepreneurs and tossers from the Training and Enterprise Council, visionaries from the 'career' sector and 'do gooders' from the voluntary sector, probation service people and the dole staff. It was all buzz-words and busy-bodies.

While the Tories were happy to sanction those of us who backslide on benefits, New Labour wants to regulate us and monitor our behaviour. Detailed compulsion is what is on the government 'New Deal' menu. To do this they need a 'vehicle' or a 'consortia' at local level to deliver the goods. The Employment Service will be the lead body giving direction and steering operations, but local government and other agents of enforcement are being enlisted here.

The idea is to set up an army of zoo-keepers to cage and control a quarter of a million unemployed 18-24 year olds under the coming 'New Deal'. This 'New Deal' package has four treadmills:

- voluntary sector placement;
- environmental task forces;
- training and education;
- employment (wage subsidy).

We must wait to see how all this is applied, but we can be sure there will be more jobs and more funding for the meddling professions, and those who seek to set themselves up as the zoo-keepers of these young people. The government has set aside £3 billion for this 'Welfare to Work' programme.

### VIRTUAL VAMPIRES

The literature handed out says a key issue is "quality - no revolving door", and at an introductory meeting last week Mr Lewis, MP for Bury, said that New Labour is not into massaging the unemployment statistics. But these may prove to be grand delusions, for previous government schemes have usually been pretty hopeless and have only served to make the jobless figures look better.

Gordon Brown has told top businessmen that they will only get one shot at this scheme to make it a success, after which if things go wrong "cynicism will start to set in". It's a kind of confidence trick in which all parties must participate in the grand delusion. It is all well financed with money from the 'windfall tax', funds released from local authority capital previously frozen in housing account receipts, single regeneration budget and European funding.

Someone from the Bury Unemployed Association asked about the attempt to get teenage mums out to work under the New Deal. He asked if the MPs were troubled by the findings of a survey of the flop of the similar US scheme 'New Chance'. Christian Tyler in *The Financial Times* (19th July) claims that a study of the US scheme shows "the teenagers who signed up have proved no more likely to get a job or avoid a further pregnancy despite the \$9,000 a head that was spent on training and counselling them".

Mr Lewis MP said he was not troubled by the flop of the US scheme, because he wanted to be positive not negative. These New Labour MPs have all the skills of the salesman, but they fly from the facts like vampires from garlic.

All of these people suffer from the tyranny of positive thinking. The last thing they want to fact is facts. Indeed, they are anxious to dismiss the truth as a form of negative thinking. They are the new undead - virtual vampires of late modern society - who fear the light of truth

### VEGETARIANS DON'T EAT MEAT PIES

The jobless activists from Bury also questioned the fitfulness of the Employment Service, who will be interviewing about 500,000 eligible for 'Welfare to Work'. Alan Sinclair, chief executive of the independent Wise Group, said of the state employment service that "they are seen as the policemen of

the benefit system. Are vegetarians going to start buying pies from the butchers?"

The dole representatives claimed they were going to work at their image and try to create a new culture in the dole queue. But it was pointed out to them that they had made 12,000 suffer the sanctions of reduced benefits in the first three months of this year under the JSA. Those present promised to improve.

Yet Mr Sinclair and others argue that the state bureaucracy was too prone to lose sight of the problem. According to him, "bureaucrats go on about unit costs and standardising

the programme: that becomes more important than the reason for the programme". Sinclair is not keen on the government plan to cut dole benefits to 'refuseniks'.

He says "they are people who feel they have been punished enough already by unemployment".

It is doubtful if the dole bureaucrats in the Employment Service will be able to change their nature as dole bullies in the time available before the implementation of the 'Welfare to Work' / 'New Deal' plan.

Mack the Knife

## FAT CATS GET FATTER, PRIVATISED OR NATIONALISED

Directors of Yorkshire Water can now claim, in addition to their six-figure salaries, share bonuses worth 40% of basic pay. The remuneration committee writes in the annual report of the need to "attract, retain and motivate" the right people.

To do what? Nobody can manage without water, and Yorkshire Water has a monopoly, so water will not take much selling. One might imagine them increasing sales of water by encouraging people to take more baths and use more lawn sprinklers, but they have no extra water to sell. During 1995 and 1996 they imposed hose-pipe bans to conserve what water they had.

Nor can it be said the directors have been working hard to improve supplies. The reason for the shortage was that about a third of the water collected was being lost through leaky pipes, as the company had not spent enough on maintenance.

Not spending on maintenance, and reducing the wages bill by drastic staff reductions, has resulted in increased profits for shareholders, and presumably the remuneration committee would argue that the company should "attract, retain and motivate" people who make profits. The real reason may be that all members of remuneration committees are themselves directors of other companies and therefore want to push up directors' emoluments in general.

### THE PERCENTAGE SWINDLE

Part of the problem may be privatisation, but it cannot be argued that corporate greed is limited to privatised industries. The London underground railway system, nationalised by a Tory government in 1936, remains nationalised, but look at what is happening there.

Station staff have been offered a rise of 2.7% for the coming year. *Freedom* has often drawn attention to the 'percentage swindle': 2.7% all round would mean that a station cleaner on

£10,000 a year would get an extra £270, while a director on £200,000 would get an extra £5,400. But 2.7% all round is *not* what is on offer.

Staff are offered 2.7%. Senior managers will get performance related rises between 3% and 8% (so haven't the staff been performing too?). Directors, who already get more than £150,000 each in salaries and bonuses, are to get a 7.2% rise on the salary and a 13.6% rise on the bonus.

As we go to press the staff trade union, the RMT, is conducting a secret ballot of their members on whether or not to accept the 2.7% offer, recommending that it should be rejected. If it is rejected, the union executive will decide whether to have another secret ballot about industrial action. If the vote for industrial action is yes, then after the statutory six-week cooling-off period the staff might stop work, and the *Daily Mail* and others will shriek about London being held to ransom.

As Bertrand Russell put it: "Work is of two kinds: first, altering the position of matter relative to other matter; second, telling people to do so. The first is unpleasant and ill-paid; the second is pleasant and highly paid."

When Russell wrote that, and until about seventy years ago, those who told others to move things were paid about twenty times as much as those who moved things, and were still nowhere near rich. Labour shortages during the Second World War and after reduced the differentials between rich and poor, but the Thatcherites set about systematically restoring the old injustice, and the present lot of bosses are continuing the Thatcherite programme.

Managing the underground is a highly responsible job. Nobody says it isn't. The work of platform staff is also highly responsible, and somewhat more arduous. It is difficult to argue that either is worth more than the other. That differentials increase from year to year is a blatant and gross injustice. But that's how capitalism is.



ARTHUR MOYSES

"Four pennies on a bottle of wine. I tell you, these bastards are ruining the country."

## — ABOVE THE PARAPETS —

# IRISH PEACE TACTICS

A fortnight is a long time in politics. Like everyone else (including the Prime Minister, according to reports), I had no idea a fortnight ago that we were on the brink of another IRA ceasefire. The analysis I put forward in my last column was that while obstacles to Sinn Fein participation in peace negotiations were being removed, the content of those talks was being foreclosed. I pointed out that even if the present republican leadership accepted entry to talks in these circumstances (as they have now done), and even if they accepted a reformed Northern Ireland statelet as the outcome of the talks (as they might well do), their commitment to 'exclusively peaceful means' did not guarantee that no other grouping would not take up the armed struggle. Something to bear in mind.

The resumption of the ceasefire on 20th July seems to mean that the republican leadership believe that they can come out of the talks process with substantial political gains, despite the Unionist majority at the talks table, despite the Unionist cast of New Labour, and despite the Unionist majority in Northern Ireland (which will ratify the outcome of the talks in a referendum, according to present arrangements). This is a political gamble of the highest order.

It is correct, as Unionists point out, to describe the ceasefire as a 'tactic'. It is bizarre, however, to criticise it for being so. The whole point of the peace process is to move to a position where only peaceful 'tactics' are employed. Much is being made of Sean O'Callaghan's analysis that the ceasefire is a tactic, a temporary expedient, to bolster Sinn Fein and establish it as the pre-eminent nationalist party in the North, overtaking the SDLP (O'Callaghan being a former IRA commander now turned informer). If the argument is that having established this position of political supremacy the IRA will simply return to violence, whatever the political situation, there is an interesting hidden assumption which deserves to be exposed.

Sinn Fein has benefited from the peace process so far, despite the breakdown of the 1994 ceasefire, as we can see from the elections this year, which yielded two seats at

Westminster and a seat in the Dail in Dublin. But this success has *only* been possible because the IRA was not generally blamed by Nationalists for the breakdown of the ceasefire. Responsibility was generally felt to lie with the British government for squandering the opportunity for peace, as polls indicate. The present ceasefire could only be a successful 'tactic' in the O'Callaghan sense if the IRA could be certain that a future return to violence would be seen the same way by Nationalist voters. For the 'tactic' argument to work, that is, the IRA would need to be sure that the British government and/or the Unionists were going to sabotage the peace process again.

In other words, those who condemn the ceasefire as a 'tactic' (in the O'Callaghan sense are actually assuming that Unionism *will* sabotage the peace process again. They are condemning the republicans for the crime of demonstrating Unionism's unwillingness to make peace.

What definitely *is* a tactic is the Unionist hard line on the 'de-commissioning' of paramilitary weapons. As every serious person knows, this is an issue of purely symbolic importance. Every so often you can even find acknowledgement of this in the mass media. The crucial point is made succinctly in Eamonn Mallie and David McKittrick's *The Fight for Peace: The Secret Story behind the Irish Peace Process* (Heinemann), which is essential reading: "The practical point, put forward by the security forces on the ground, was that since so much of the IRA's armoury was home-made and improvised, not even a complete handover of all weapons would guarantee that the organisation could not wage another violent campaign". Even the dreaded Semtex is used mainly as a primer for home-made explosives made largely of agricultural fertiliser. De-commissioning weapons looks like surrender. That is why the IRA won't do it, and that is why Unionists insist that they *must* do it.

The bottom line is that Unionists are afraid of negotiations, and de-commissioning is a useful way of trying to avoid them. Unionists fear Sinn Fein far more than they do the IRA.

Milan Rai

# HIGHER EDUCATION

## Labour's onslaught on free learning

The ditching of universal free higher education is yet another assault on those from low income families by the business-driven Labour government.

Labour plans announced on 23rd July, which followed the publication of Sir Ron Dearing's report on higher education, include the abolition of the student maintenance grant and require student contribution of up to £1,000 per year towards the cost of their tuition. Dearing also advocated the introduction of tuition fees for full-time undergraduates, but he condemned Labour's shoddy proposals as failing to meet any of his objectives and taking away subsidies from the poorest families.

Education Secretary David Blunkett told the House of Commons that "our preferred solution secures equity, access, quality and accountability ... it's good for business and it's good for Britain". However, a Barclays student survey published on 12th July indicates that the abolition of free education will be a huge blow to poorer families.

Although undergraduates from families earning less than £16,000 a year will be exempt from the tuition fee, there is every indication that poor students will suffer the cost of Labour's onslaught on free learning.

Barclays states that "as debt levels continue to rise students are increasingly relying on their parents to fund them through college". 73% of students receive money from their parents and 86% will face considerable debt — the average at time of graduation is £6,000.

According to *The Guardian* on 24th July, students from poorer backgrounds will face an increase in debt from an average of £7,000 to a staggering £12,000 due to the abolition of the maintenance grant, while students from wealthier backgrounds are likely to remain on average £5,000 in debt after their degrees due to the financial support from their affluent parents. *The Guardian* stated that "Mr Blunkett's plan may raise £1.7 billion compared with Sir Ron's £1.1 billion, but most of the extra will come from poorer students whom the reforms are meant to lure into university".

This extension of elitism in Britain's education system will push the UK towards a

US-style of university education where the poor have no hope of advancing themselves educationally and which confines them to educationally deprived ghettos.

As student debt has grown, so has student apathy. These further financial chains on students' minds can only deny poorer students the chance to understand and try to change the world and will create an increasingly passive and intellectually impotent graduate workforce.

Stephen Dorrell, Tory education spokesman, called Labour's proposals an "opportunistic smash-and-grab raid on the budget of low income families" and added that they gave "extra state-guaranteed loans for well-off young people from Islington and a kick in the teeth for the low-income families in Sheffield". However, it was the right-wing mad monk of monetarism Sir Keith Joseph who, in 1984, advocated a policy to close Blunkett's when he was Education Secretary. The Tories' opportunistic concern with poverty is a cynical strategy to build up support after Labour's smash-and-grab raid on their votes during May's general election. Such paternalistic feelings were not evident when the Tories introduced means testing of maintenance grants and loans, which plunged students into a debt crisis.

The issue of student impoverishment is likely to vanish from the headlines as the media concern themselves with the affairs of assassinated fashion designers and Tony Blair continues to stamp on the remnants of Labour's dying left-wing statist.

Opposition from the National Union of Students is likely to be lukewarm now it has been transformed into a training ground for Blair's henchmen. Douglas Trainer, NUS president, condemned the introduction of tuition fees in a brief press release sent quietly to the country's news desks. Nevertheless, he and his cohorts in the right-wing 'New Solutions' campaign advocate the jettisoning of grants in favour of loans and there are no plans to launch a serious campaign against the Labour leadership.

Responding to the Dearing Inquiry's report, David Triesman, general secretary of the Association of University Teachers, backed down from his union's advocacy of full state support for tuition fees and maintenance grants through general taxation. He said: "We now accept that some form of mix of income contingent fee and maintenance loans appears inevitable". He added that business should be involved in the funding of higher education: "We would like to see the employers of graduates making a greater contribution to the cost of higher education".

The drive to include more capitalist investment in university education raises the prospect of further intrusion of multi-national corporations and the involvement of the arms trade in funding scientific research. The upshot will be a financial assault on research into the causes of poverty and disease — the results of the capitalist system.

As anarchists, we should not condone the meritocratic idea that equality of opportunity can be achieved through hard work. But higher education can improve the quality of political discourse providing there is access for all people from all backgrounds. When more fields of research are put directly into the hands of the private sector and when access is restricted to an elite, higher education's sole function will be to be another tool for the capitalist system of domination. The remaining vestiges of free thinking and openness on campus will be forsaken for private profit. Once again, Labour have shown themselves to be a regressive capitalist force which has no interest in the plight of its victims.

Daniel Brett

## WHAT ABOUT LEAVING IRELAND TO THE IRISH?

(continuation)

to themselves). Even adding these others to the Protestant total leaves Catholics predominant."

Be that as it may, if the government is seeking a real solution to the Irish problem which former British governments created, the first essential decision should be that the British army must get out, and the sooner the better. And the second, surely, is that the government should declare Northern Ireland an independent territory (after all, they have moved out of Hong Kong without much fuss).

And this writer's plan, again repeating what we have already written in *Freedom*, is that the less than two million inhabitants of Northern Ireland who feel so English (like the Reverend Ian Paisley, for instance) should be offered £100,000 per family to come to the mainland, especially to Scotland to the land of their ancestors (after all they don't need a passport or visas) and the Catholic Republicans longing to return to the land dominated by the priests should also be given £100,000 to emigrate. And those who are left, we should give them a tit-bit of encouragement for their independence. The danger is that they might become another Lichenstein or Andorra and be invaded by the banks and patriotic millionaires seeking tax-free havens!

But *Freedom's* solution to the Northern Ireland dilemma is not so far-fetched as cynical readers may imagine.

Roy Greenslade, who is considered more of the real world than this anarchist writer, quotes the deliberations at a conference he attended earlier this year and was told by a "retired admiral" that:

"... the highest echelons of the armed services knew that garrisoning Northern Ireland was not a long-term option. So, he had the perfect answer: build a massive new town outside Glasgow for all those Protestants who wanted to leave once the troops had gone."

We are concerned that the *majority* of people

in Northern Ireland want to live together. It's the *fundamentalists* on both sides who keep alive religious differences (think of that loving young couple in Northern Ireland the other day happy to be in bed together, and she was shot because her young lover was a Protestant). Surely as well as trying to destroy capitalism *we anarchists should be equally militant to destroy the superstitions and dogmatism of religion*. They have done as much damage to human lives as the military and the exploiting employers in the third world.

## THROUGH THE ANARCHIST PRESS

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# 'NO BOARDROOM BLOODSUCKER'

Get away with you! Never in this world! In no way whatsoever can Mr Peter White, group chief executive of Alliance & Leicester plc, be described as a boardroom bloodsucker. This was confirmed in a letter to all staff from Greg Lang, in charge of corporate affairs at the newly privatised company.

Some vicious tongues had put it about that Mr White had been rewarded for his part in the conversion of the Alliance & Leicester to a bank from a building society, with share options "worth up to £1.4 million". Mr Lang tells us that the "share option package is *not a gift*" but is "an *incentive*" for Mr White to perform well and increase the company share price.

Also this was not just a perk for Mr Peter White. A hundred and twenty senior managers and directors were treated to a similar rake-off.

The £81,000 given to Mr White to flit to a new house was part of "a relocation package" for staff at the Hove office. We are assured by Mr Lang that Peter White "received exactly the same terms as all other staff".

A pension fix-up for Mr White of £186,000 is explained thus: "Directors' pensions are part of a remuneration package, which is very much in step with industry norms in the financial services sector".

A bit of black propaganda about the senior managers increasing "their own bonuses by

285% between 1993 and 1995" is easily explained away. Mr Lang announces that "bonuses paid to senior managers, directors – or any other member of staff – relate to performance. In any business, those people whose decisions and actions directly improve the financial performance of the business tend to be rewarded accordingly. Alliance & Leicester plc is no exception."

## FOUL ACCUSATIONS

It is clear that there is trouble stirring among the lower ranks of the staff at Alliance & Leicester. An ungrateful petition has been circulated. A union has been formed.

To reach what management calls "an amicable negotiated settlement" in the pay talks with the unions, Mr Lang makes it clear that some of the foul accusations that have been going around must be stamped upon.

Greg Lang says the petition "may have led to some confusion over the relative levels of remuneration and reward enjoyed by senior managers". The corporate affairs department felt it necessary to clarify the points "to prevent any misunderstandings which might adversely effect the negotiation process". Dead right!

It is obvious that Mr White and the others will only get their share option treat in three

years time "if certain stringent performance targets are met". What are these performance targets?

Down-sizing! Sackings! And job cuts, to keep the shareholders happy and the share price and dividends soaring.

As I write, staff at Alliance & Leicester are being shown the door. Hours are being cut and flexibility increased, as people are being buggered about from pillar to post.

## BIG HEART

Three years to go to his big share option treat and already Mr White has rolled his sleeves up to meet the "stringent performance targets" and hit the jackpot.

Low grade staff are moaning on about poor pay, and a cut of the group's success "rather

than reserving the rewards for the senior strata of management". These same complainants insist that in the last year they have helped increase operating profits by 10% to £359 million and raised general reserves by 10%.

Do they not realise that Mr White has a big heart? In June he wrote to all the staff thanking them "on behalf of the directors for the contribution [they] have made, and are continuing to make" to the success of the business. He said that "in times of great change and working as we all are under pressure, we can sometimes forget that we are all members – and most of us shareholders – of a very successful business".

The only complaint he seems to have in his letter is that fewer people left the company last year. He says he had to keep some staff on to cope with the "conversion and flotation issues". Now that has been done he can get down to the big clear-out.

With all this kindness and altruism about at Alliance & Leicester, I can't understand why the Nationwide members and staff didn't vote for privatised plc status last week.

Redundant Worker

## ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

**MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING!** We live in a strange world don't we, when the models (and what beauties they are!) are crying their eyes out over the murder of the fashion king Versace who was much more interested in boys and men than in those beauties? And there was the billionaire Goldsmith (didn't *Private Eye* call him Goldyballs?) who bought his women. No problem, but the obituaries declare that he really wanted to be a politician of some standing (after he spent £20 million on the Referendum Party at the last elections) but, apart from the column inches in the media, they wrote him off as just somebody who had the knack of making lots of money and nothing else.

But these are the people who *have* power. There was lovely Naomi crying her eyes out, but surely the average person must realise that what one admires on the catwalk is not the dress but the beautiful creature wearing the rubbish.

**PAYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH GOD** I always understood that 'God' was always listening to their prayers – probably on the Internet now – but apparently it's not so. My local *East Anglian Daily Times* (30th June) reports one worshipper has "accused middle class families of letting the church down" and

maintains that far from putting a coin in the tray when it comes round, they need to contribute no less than "£20 a week, every week" to keep the parsons alive.

**WHAT VALUE REFERENDA** As *Freedom* has pointed out over the years: in an anarchist society the referendum would probably be a very useful way of taking decisions at local level, but capitalist society is one of inequalities, class and privilege, so how can a referendum on a 'yes' or 'no' vote mean anything even to a majority? Even within the establishment there are those who oppose, for instance, the government's referendum on the proposed Welsh Assembly. One of their own MPs, Llew Smith, maintains that the referendum should not be just 'yes' or 'no' but should include an alternative. So be it. Without going into the problems of Welsh Nationalism again, I repeat that in a divided society such as we all live in – in a capitalist society – referenda are of no use. They can only be useful and to be encouraged in a society of equals. We certainly haven't got one, and the referendum is therefore an excuse for governments to pass legislation on more often than not a minority vote.

Libertarian

## BOLTON BUREAU HIJACKED!

Q-Mat, a company deeply involved in the government's Project Work forced labour schemes, had its-Bolton branch taken over by activists from the North West Against the JSA last week. That happened when Alec McFadden and Dole House Doris led the raid on the Acresfield House headquarters of Q-Mat, in Crompton Place.

This attack had been planned at a meeting of the North West Against the JSA, and was approved by groups and unemployed centres from Burnley, Bolton, Bury, Ashton, Stockport, Marple, Rochdale, Manchester, Salford and Blackburn.

Q-Mat is training and press-ganging people onto Project Work. It was involved in the same racket in Hull, our contacts there tell us. It is getting well paid by the state for its services in slave-trading.

The facts were put to the inmates by Mr McFadden and Dole House Doris. Some of the inmates were angry that they'd been lied to by Q-Mat representatives. The swindle was fully exposed in debate between the activists and the inmates, while the staff of Q-Mat ran around frantic.

Security was called, but were merely told to join us the take their hats off as the office was hot. The *Bolton Evening News* photographer came in and snapped the activists dressed in their chain-gang uniforms. The cameraman was particularly taken by Doris and her daughter Edna. Readers will know by now that Doris is a big brown nanny goat.

Both these goats have been involved in previous actions and there are cases pending in the Manchester courts in the autumn about the extent of their antics in the politics of the North West. On this occasion they took to expressing their disgust by pissing and shitting all over the Q-Mat carpets.

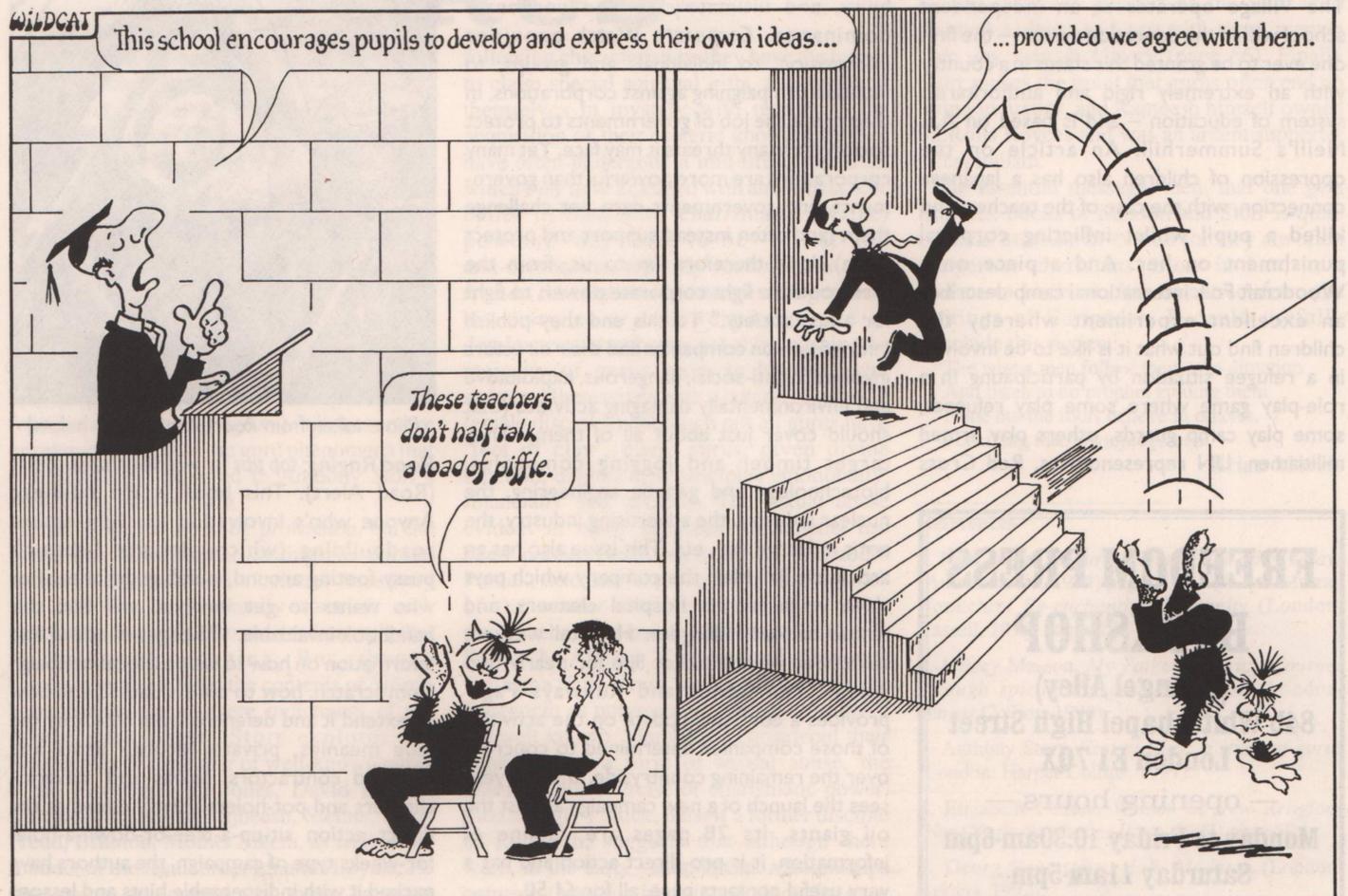
The seeking of alliances with goats is a natural step in view of the government's policy of treating labour and the dole queue as if it were a cattle market to be corralled and tethered.

The inmates split when a member of staff in desperation came in and said those who want to stay with the activists can do, but those who want to continue with the Project Work must come out to another room. He wouldn't say if those who stayed behind with us would lose

their benefits or not. Just over half left the room while the more angry stayed with us.

Later, after we left the building for publicity photographs with the press, the police came. The Bolton police threatened the goats for soiling the pavements in the Town Hall Square. At that moment we noticed the Irish Regiment were having a recruiting drive in the middle of the Square. Now the Irish Regiment have a mascot – an Irish Wolfhound, no less – and the dog spotted Doris and her daughter. A tug-of-war ensued as the soldiers of the Irish Regiment sought to control the Wolfhound while Doris and Edna led the remnants of the North West Against the JSA campaign past.

Arturo Ui



# NO BLUE PLAQUE FOR MAX

## A Short History of Anarchism

by Max Nettlau

Freedom Press, 1997, 406 pages, £9.95\*

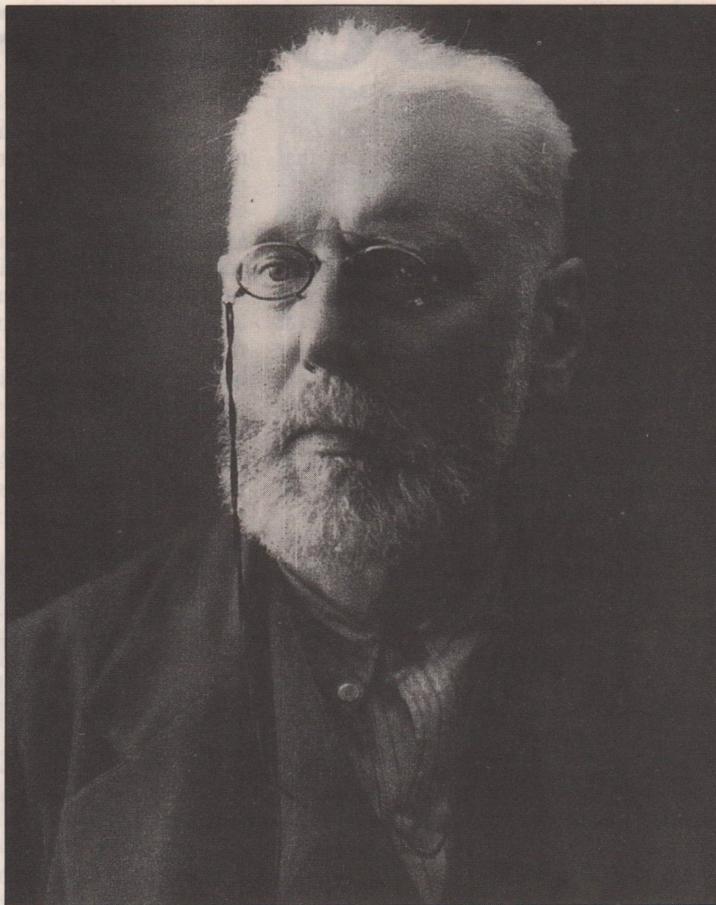
The author lays out his stall in the first sentence of the first chapter of this substantial historical work, when he says "the history of anarchist ideas is inseparable from the history of all progressive developments and aspirations towards liberty". And again, a little further down the same page, he puts forward the idea that "the concept of a life of freedom has been manifested in various ways in the personal and collective life of individuals and groups, beginning with the family. Without it a human community would no longer be possible". These sentences, taken together, provide a keynote for all that follows and, as one might expect, the theme of freedom is one to which Nettlau returns again and again.

Max Nettlau in his early years acquired an unenviable reputation as a bigoted anarchist communist, but subsequently transformed himself into "an open-minded anarchist without adjectives" and this new stance is the one reflected throughout his later work, including *A Short History of Anarchism*. Nonetheless, traces of his former suspiciousness surface from time to time, most notably when he appears to group together political forces as disparate as "Fascists and Bolsheviks ... the bourgeois and the Social Democrats working in full accord ... to inflict a catalogue of suffering". This reeks of what would now be called 'conspiracy theory' but he does go on to remark, quite correctly, "that the authoritarians of the entire world are one body and one soul". Nettlau cannot be regarded as a wide-eyed idealist as he clearly recognises the need to learn from history but is pessimistic

about the apparent reluctance or inability of most human beings to do so. He is also well aware that anarchists can alienate themselves from the masses because the latter are lazy and because to them militant activists, almost invariably, appear too extreme. By the same token he recognises the limited role of the historian who "can do little other than interpret the sources ... and try to bridge the gaps by careful hypothesis".

A point worth making is that Nettlau (on page 294) mentions the Soviet Republic's "Arctic Siberian points of deportation" – a clear reference to what were later revealed

as the Gulags. Bearing in mind that he was writing in the early 1930s when Stalin's Russia was, to all intents and purposes, hermetically sealed off from the outside world, this demonstrates what a well-informed and perceptive observer he could be.



Max Nettlau, 1865-1944

This book is a clear, indeed elegant, translation of a work originally published in Spanish more than sixty years ago. It provides a panoramic view of the development of anarchism from the earliest times until the 1930s and it still has much to say that is

relevant to the world of today. Nevertheless, it might have been helpful if the editor (laws of copyright permitting) could have brought the reader up to date by the addition of two or three chapters covering the rise of the dictators, the Second World War, the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet empire. Perhaps this additional section could also have explored the question as to whether the unforeseen and astonishingly rapid technological changes that have taken place in the years since Nettlau's death have consistently favoured the authorities or, as proponents of the Internet aver, resulted in a greater accretion of personal freedom.

All in all, this is a well laid out volume with an easy to read typeface and pleasingly wide margins. The index is comprehensive when it comes to individuals, but I feel one that also incorporated the main ideas outlined would have been helpful to the reader.

This work, coupled with the six decades or more that Nettlau spent in the service of the cause (mostly writing for or helping to produce *Freedom* itself) might have ensured his elevation to that pantheon of anarchist writers which includes, among others, Kropotkin, Malatesta and Proudhon, but he never seems to have made the leap out of the second division.

I note that he lived for some time off the Tottenham Court Road, but there appears to be no blue plaque to commemorate this. Perhaps a campaign for one could be mounted – he is surely entitled to this memorial in recognition of a talent which could produce such a compendious and accessible history of anarchism.

Let us end as we began, with a quotation from the author himself, which to my mind encapsulates his political and social philosophy: "All the good in the world has come, is now coming and will always come only *with liberty and from liberty*".

Adrian Walker

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT ... AND ACTION!

## Some recent arrivals in the Freedom Press Bookshop

**Lib Ed:** a magazine for the liberation of learning (No. 28). Always a welcome read, this mag has not been mentioned for some time in these columns. A fascinating article on the Japanese Children's Village of Kinokuni includes an interview with the founder, and explains what an achievement his project is. The Village operates as an independent school within the education system – the first one ever to be granted this status in a country with an extremely rigid and authoritarian system of education – and is based on A.S. Neill's Summerhill. An article on the oppression of children also has a Japanese connection, with the case of the teacher who killed a pupil whilst inflicting corporal punishment on her. And a piece on a Woodcraft Folk international camp describes an excellent experiment whereby the children find out what it is like to be involved in a refugee situation by participating in a role-play game where some play refugees, some play camp guards, others play armed militiamen, UN representatives, Red Cross

officials, and so on. Lots of other good stuff in its 16 pages for £1.00.

**Corporate Watch** (No. 4). A relative newcomer to the publishing field, this bi-monthly has undertaken an admirable and sorely-needed project, viz "to engender corporate responsibility, and ultimately to end corporate dominance. *Corporate Watch* provides information, to individuals and groups, to facilitate campaigning against corporations. In theory it is the job of governments to protect society from any threats it may face. Yet many corporations are more powerful than governments, and governments dare not challenge them (and often instead support and protect them). It is therefore up to us, from the grassroots, to fight corporate power, to fight for a just society." To this end they publish information on companies and their directors involved in anti-social, dangerous, exploitative and environmentally damaging activities (that should cover just about all of them). They target timber and logging companies, biotechnology and genetic engineering, the nuclear industry, the advertising industry, the arms industry, etc., etc. This issue also has an article on Pall Mall, the company which pays slave wages to its hospital cleaners, and whose sacked Hillingdon Hospital workers have been on the picket line for nearly two years. 'The Roads and Runways Page' provides a continual update on the activities of those companies determined to concrete over the remaining countryside, and this year sees the launch of a new campaign against the oil giants. Its 28 pages are amine of information, it is pro-direct action and has a very useful contacts page, all for £1.50.

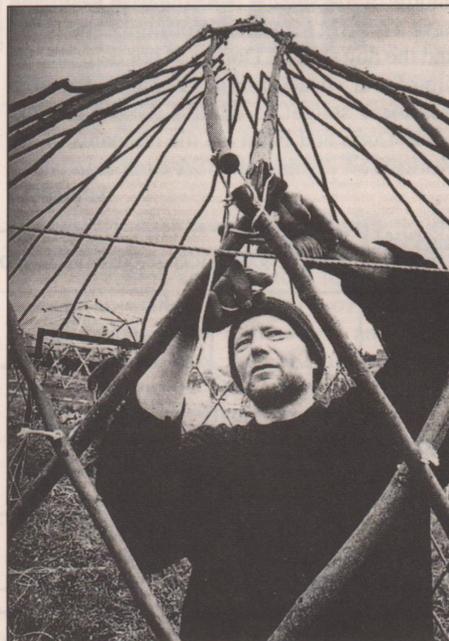


Photo taken from *Road Raging* (see below)

**Road Raging:** top tips for wrecking roadbuilding (Road Alert). This book is the business. Anyone who's involved in the fight against roadbuilding (which, despite Labour's pussy-footing around, is still going ahead) or who wants to get involved will find this handbook invaluable. 175 pages of advice and information on how to set up a local campaign from scratch, how to consolidate it, and how to extend it and defend it from attack by the blue meanies, private security firms and assorted contractors, bailiffs and maverick climbers and pot-holers. Firmly aimed at the direct action sit-up-a-tree-or-down-a-hole-for-weeks type of campaign, the authors have packed it with indispensable hints and lessons

from the Newbury by-pass and other actions, thus helping readers avoid the temptation to re-invent the wheel, so to speak. Every conceivable aspect is covered, including publicity and dealing with the media; knowing your enemy (a chapter that very sagely begins with 'politicians'); researching your site and building communications networks and support groups; the various tactics and techniques for occupying – and holding – your site; how to go on the offensive; what tools and equipment you'll need; security and morale issues; and your legal position in any one of dozens of circumstances. 30-odd pages of appendices cover everything from the knots, bends and hitches (nicely illustrated) you'll need to get up trees and keep yourself there; constructing a rope walkway; building a scaffolding tripod à la Reclaim the Streets; to specimen legal warnings to stick on your dwelling, and how to build a compost toilet or 'tree bog' – which provokes alarming visions of standing underneath one: 'Look out below'. There's also info on how to disrupt and sabotage contractors' equipment, make harnesses and slings and construct climber-proof platforms. Plus how to make lock-on points in earth, concrete, etc. Several pages of useful resources and contacts complete the job. Loads of diagrams and photographs make it easy to follow. Eat your heart out Swampy! £4.15.

KM

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —  
**A FISHERMAN'S STORY**

All through last year a *Freedom* writer discussed the protracted negotiations over fishing quotas in the European Union and summed them up in the first issue of this year (11th January), when the governmental arguments were settled, with the memorable conclusion that "up to now the usual British hypocrisy was that the foreigners were cheating and fishing in British waters and then selling the fish in Spain ... These patriots are the very people who have sold their quotas to the Spaniards and the Dutch".

He exempted from his strictures the people he called "the real fishermen with their open boats fishing offshore, and not hoovering the sea bottom".

I knew David Chapple (who died after a long illness in the summer) because he went to school in Penzance with my wife and when the children were young he would take them out in his seventeen-foot clinker-built boat the 'Tunny', PZ145. Once a year we would eat his mackerel. He was a handline fisherman at a cove called Penberth, and so were his father, grandfather and great-grandfather. So is his son Billy.

Their fortunes varied from year to year. The 1970s saw first a boom and then a slump in Cornish mackerel as large numbers of trawlers and purse-seiners moved into the south-west in search of new harvests following the cod war with Iceland and the herring ban in the North Sea. Stocks became so depleted that a 'mackerel box' was established around the coast designed to exclude the big fleets.

A seine, David explained to me in 1991, is like a huge curtain of net that, once a shoal is located by taking soundings, can encircle the whole area. When the curtain rings at the bottom are drawn together, the shoal is brought on board. If the fish are found to be immature and worthless, they are poured back, dead, into the sea. The imposition of the 'mackerel box' benefited the handliners who catch small quantities of mature fish in coastal waters.

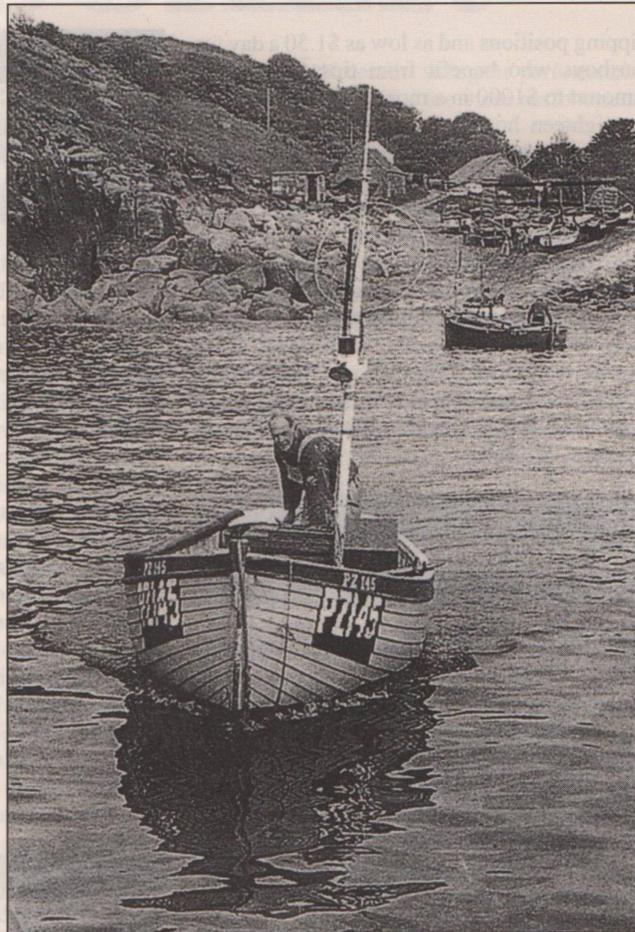
Handlining is, of course, seen by the big operators as 'stone-age' fishing. It consists simply of lowering lines with up to thirty hooks over the side of small open boats. But from a conservationist point of view, it is the most, not the least, efficient method, since it depends on locating small shoals of saleable fish rather than an indiscriminate scooping up of the whole population of a large area. And

as he put it to me, "who else can catch a hundred stone of mackerel on a gallon of fuel in a sixty year old boat?"

The 'Tunny' was built by George Peake in Newlyn in 1936 for David's father Joe Chapple, who was killed in an accident in the Second World War, and his son took over in 1947. When illness obliged him to stop fishing in 1994, he and his wife Jacqueline sought a new home for it, and finally gave it to the National Fishing Heritage Centre at Grimsby.

This might give the impression that David Chapple was a picturesque survivor of a bygone age, but he was in fact a thoroughly modern man keenly concerned with environmental issues, and when he died *The Cornishman* reported that "with few facilities at Penberth in his early days, he saw the need for fishermen to get together - forming a society for which he worked tirelessly as its secretary for 33 years".

It was in fact a co-operative of the twelve handliners at Penberth, of the two hundred scattered around Cornwall. The co-op owns the winch that pulls the boats ashore and the ice-box on the quay. Their catch is sorted, boxed and iced, and sent to market at Newlyn within hours. At the time of the last round of arguments on the incredible complexities of the quota system, the handliners were part of the 'sectoral quota' for the south-west. They appealed for exemption since their method of fishing could have no



David Chapple leaving Penberth Cove  
 (photo courtesy of *The Cornishman*)

adverse effect on mackerel stocks, while two encirclements by a seine-fisher in the spring could catch the entire quota.

David Chapple appealed to the European Commission on behalf of the South West Handline Fishermen's Association and was told that, recognising their uniqueness in the industry, the Commission has provided for exemption in EC Regulation 3094/86. It was the UK authorities who declined to see them

as a special case, and the then parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries said in the House of Commons that they could not be exempted.

Since the whole problem of the fishing industry is that of greedy and indiscriminate capitalist over-fishing it seemed to me then, as it does now, absurd that David, for whom the concept of sustainability was automatic, should be penalised by policies intended to conserve stocks. For local self-sufficiency was part of his view of life, and he was naturally a vegetable grower and an auxiliary coastguard.

The historian Paul Thompson conducted a large-scale survey of the fishing industry all around the British coasts (*Living the Fishing*, Routledge, 1983). Who would have guessed, he asked, that the modern trawler fleets of ports like Fleetwood, Hull and Aberdeen would end in bankruptcy and closure? He and his colleagues found the trawling industry characterised by long hours, low pay and "terrible violence both at work and in the home" resulting in the "destruction of the workforce and the demise of the industry itself". He contrasted this experience with that of the Shetland Islanders with their "striking technical inventiveness and adaptability" in adopting other ways of fishing.

Paul Thompson noted how economic theories of 'modernisation' contrast societies seen as "slumbering in traditional immobility and poverty" with developed societies "which have earned their present affluence through adaptability, acceptance of the logic of science, the cash nexus and individualism". So he used the Shetland example to show that there are other paths to prosperity, "in some cases based on the re-creation of more 'traditional' attitudes, such as work organisation round the family boat rather than wage labour".

When I told David Chapple about his comments he told me that the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, replying to his complaint, said that any increase in the quota for South West Handliners would have to be at the expense of other areas where local Fish Producers' Organisations had declined to accept a reduced quota. There was one exception, he said. The Shetland fishermen at the other extremity of the British Isles were willing to share their quota with Cornwall.

Colin Ward

I have never been very fond of gurus, whether of the religious or academic variety. A couple of decades ago one of my close friends - who was intelligent, perceptive and of the radical left - became completely besotted with Bhagwan Rajneesh. She urged me to let go of my egoic attachments and to seek enlightenment, to surrender myself to the guru. Alas, I never did. For myself, I was completely baffled as to why such a person could come to completely abandon her own critical faculties. At the present time, however, guru - or guru yoga - seem all the rage. In bookshops new age literature abounds, and books by spiritual gurus - Gurdjieff, Blavatsky, Steiner, Aleister Crowley, Rajneesh, Chogyam Trungpa - seem to be selling like hot cakes. Even in academia guru worship is now actively encouraged. Thus the nihilistic post-modernism of such figures as Heidegger, Derrida, Deleuze and Baudrillard is now fervently embraced by scores of admiring acolytes, and their obscurantist writings are treated as if they were sacred texts. Murray Bookchin and John Zerzan, whatever their other differences, are united in their trenchant criticisms of these philosophical gurus.<sup>1</sup>

But there are two very readable books now available that give a very different account of religious gurus from that normally encountered in the new age literature. The first is by Jeffrey Masson, a renegade psychotherapist. It is called *My Father's Guru*, and is a fascinating autobiographical account of Masson's childhood and adolescence.<sup>2</sup> The book carries the significant subtitle *a journey through spirituality and disillusion*. His father's guru was Paul Brunton, who was the

## BEWARE OF GURUS

author of many successful books on Indian mysticism such as *The Secret Path* (1935) and *The Quest for the Overself* (1938). Brunton lived as a member of Masson's family for long periods and the book is a sensitive and illuminating account of Masson's relationship with this guru - and his growing disillusionment with this friend of the family, for he slowly came to recognise that Brunton was a phoney and an intellectual charlatan. But, Masson writes, Brunton "did not have the usual faults of overweening arrogance, sexual predation, murderous activities, ruthless greed and insatiable appetite for luxury so often found among gurus" (page xv). It is these more unsavoury aspects of the guru phenomena that is interestingly explored in Anthony Storr's latest book *Feet of Clay*.<sup>3</sup>

Storr is a psychiatrist by profession, but the book, like Storr's other writings, is written with a compassion and a cultural sensitivity that one does not normally associate with psychiatry. And it is also written in a style that is lucid and engaging. But, though compassionate in tone, the contents of Storr's book constitutes a severe indictment of the whole guru scene. Storr explores the biographies of a number of well-known gurus - the Reverend Jim Jones, David Koresh, Gurdjieff, Bhagwan Rajneesh, Steiner, Jung, Freud, Brunton, Mother Meera, as well as the founder of the Jesuit order Ignatius Loyola. He thus comes to suggest that gurus have the

following characteristics: they have the hubris to claim special spiritual gifts, and surround themselves in mystery with respect to the acquisition of their esoteric knowledge; they have often undergone a mid-life crisis, from which they have emerged with an unshakeable belief in their own charismatic (divine) powers; they tend to be elitist and anti-democratic, and they seldom have close friends, the relationship between the guru and his disciples or followers being one of dominance and authority not of friendship (the majority of gurus seem to be men who surround themselves with a coterie of adoring female disciples); although not all gurus have 'feet of clay', many gurus, given divine sanction, exploit their disciples emotionally, financially and sexually. The sexual abuse evident in many religious movements has been perceptively explored by Elizabeth Puttick, who describes it as the "shadow side" of the master-disciple relationship.<sup>4</sup> The sexual behaviour and proclivities of Gurdjieff, Rajneesh, Aleister Crowley and Chogyam Trungpa (the four gurus discussed by Feuerstein as purveyors of "crazy wisdom"<sup>5</sup>) are well known. Many have considered their behaviour as a form of sexual abuse, the unscrupulous exercise of charismatic power. Interestingly Puttick, herself a former disciple of Rajneesh, suggests that although there were, in the early years, sexual relationships between Osho (on his return to India he gave

up being a god) and his female disciples, they were not regarded as exploitative or abusive. He was seen as celibate, or as having "transcended sex" (pages 63-64). Storr gives a very different portrait of the man who claimed to have had sex with more women than any man in history (page 56). Finally Storr makes the point that gurus often end up living in luxury, and Rajneesh himself owned 93 Rolls Royces and was an ardent supporter of capitalism.

The essential message, then, that one gets from the books of Masson and Storr is quite explicit: BEWARE OF GURUS for they are often dangerous charlatans. Storr in fact, as a preface to his book, has an extract from the writings of Euripedes. It could usefully conclude this review:

"The wisest men follow their own direction  
 And listen to no prophet guiding them.  
 None but the fools believe in oracles,  
 Forsaking their own judgement."

Brian Morris

### References

1. John Zerzan, *Future Primitive and other essays* (Autonomea, 1994) pages 101-134; and Murray Bookchin, *Re-enchanting Humanity* (London: Cassell, 1995) pages 172-204.
2. Jeffrey Masson, *My Father's Guru: a journey through spirituality and disillusion* (London: Harper Collins, 1993).
3. Anthony Storr, *Feet of Clay: a study of gurus* (London: Harper Collins, 1997).
4. Elizabeth Puttick, *Women in New Religions* (New York: St Martins Press, 1997) page 50.
5. Georg Feuerstein, *Holy Madness* (London: Arkana, 1992).

## US army attacked

The morale of our 37,000 GIs in Korea has been endangered by an ill-considered Defense Department decision. They are cutting our troops' beer rations! Said US Representative Herbert Bateman (Va -R), "I don't like to see our troops over there not able to buy American beer that's important to their morale". And how much beer per day do our troops need to keep up their morale? Try a case a day. Soldiers were previously allotted thirty cases each month of duty free beer at \$12 a case. Now they can only buy eight per month, or a measly eight bottles of Bud a day! The Beer Institute immediately recognised the injustice and pushed the US House into demanding the army justify the new policy and explain how it planned to make up for lost beer revenue. Thomas Doherty, spokesperson for Anheuser-Busch, warned the Pentagon's beer policy "subverts the exchange business to the whims or moral dictates of a local military authority". Besides the sanctity of the market issue, it's kind of scary to think our troops might be out defending us on anything less than a full case of beer in their guts. (*New York Times*, 5th July)

## Job opportunities on the loveboats

Have you ever dreamed of travelling around the world by working on one of the glamorous Carnival Cruise Line Ships? And making big money too? Well you might want to do a small reality check on the money side. Typical cruise liners are not registered out of US ports, but fly the flags of nations like Swaziland, so they are not covered by our minimum wage laws. Thus pay on Carnival ships can begin as low as \$1.55 an hour for those in non-

# AMERICAN NEWSPEAK

Hoarder at <http://www.scn.org/news/newspeak>, celebrating cutting edge advances in the Doublethink of the '90s, written by Wayne Grytting

tips positions and as low as \$1.50 a day for busboys who benefit from tips (which can amount to \$1000 in a month) for their sixteen to eighteen hour days. Most employees are college students from the third world attracted by what Cynthia Colanda, president of the International Council of Cruise Lines, says are "excellent job opportunities". "Within the maritime industry", she says, "we pay competitive prices". Most tourists enjoy their trips oblivious to the 'competitive' wages the help is receiving because, says travel agent Kevin Rodriguez, "they simply never think about" the condition of workers. "They're in a totally different world". Amen. (*Wall Street Journal*, 3rd July)

## NATO gains supporters

Executives in our defence industry have shown a sudden interest in civic participation. Leading management figures like Bruce Jackson, director of planning for Lockheed Martin, have been donating time to the US Committee to Expand NATO, working to help struggling East European nations get into the exclusive club. Recently, the Committee held a dinner for Senators and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to, in Mr Jackson's words, "make sure the Senate knew this is an important aspect of American security". Why this sudden surge of altruism? Well, it turns out there's a dull little clause in the NATO agreement that requires members to use only Western weapons and equipment. Re-arming Eastern bloc nations, with loans provided by US taxpayers, represents tens of billions of dollars for our struggling defence contractors, which of course is the "important aspect of America's security". (*New York Times*, 29th June)

## When helping the poor goes too far

It's always embarrassing when a preacher starts taking the Bible's injunctions to help the poor too seriously. In California's Orange County, the town of Buena Vista has had the uncomfortable task of dealing with a Fundamental Baptist minister, the Reverend Wiley Drake, who has opened his church parking lot to the homeless right in the middle of a middle class neighbourhood. Assistant city attorney Gregory Palmer was forced to draw up charges because "we have no other options". After scouring the statute books, the Reverend Drake and an elderly parishioner named Vondel Muman were charged with violating the city's anti-camping laws. The city charges that not only have the two dozen homeless men who regularly camp out at the First Southern Baptist Church been a source of criminal complaints, but their presence lowers property values. And that is very inconsiderate. (*AP*, 6th July)

## Dilbert gets promotion

Scott Adams' famous Dilbert character is going to be put to work helping to improve corporate relations with employees. The right to use the Dilbert image has been bought by Cohen and Gebler, a Boston corporate communication consulting firm. They plan to put Dilbert to work, says the *New York Times*, as "a tool for corporations that are looking for

ways to reach their employees". At Lockheed Martin, Dilbert will star in an interactive board game about ethics awareness, while at Xerox he will promote more employee initiative in problem solving. And if that is not enough, at Honda, Dilbert will spearhead a new quality program. Cartoonist Adams scoffs at notions that his new "management star" might be selling out, because he, Adams, is still being paid for his anti-management 'attitude'. (*New York Times*, 29th June)

**AMERICAN NEWSPEAK is now being produced for radio via KCMU in Seattle and is available for other radio stations. Yes, you could hear it in your own community if you are willing to kick ass at your local station. For info on audio tapes and our mailing list, contact [wgytt@blarg.net](mailto:wgytt@blarg.net)**

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# GARMENT PRODUCTION IN HAITIAN EXPORT PROCESSING ZONES

Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the western hemisphere. After decades of foreign intervention and political unrest a more democratic system was established in 1994. The primary aim of the government now in office is to build up the Haitian economy and to create employment. One way of achieving this is through attracting foreign investors.

USAID is the US government agency in charge of providing economic support to Haiti. It states, however, that USAID has no position on the violations of the Haitian minimum wage law. This comment came after several years in which USAID has actively pressured President Aristide not to increase the minimum wage. The main interest USAID proves to have is direct assistance to US businesses and thereby to keep its influence in Haiti.

Still, in 1995 the legal minimum wage was raised from 15 gourdes (\$1) a day to 36 gourdes (\$2.40) a day to make an end to the severest worker abuses. The law requires employers to ensure that piece-rate workers earn at least the minimum wage.

In practice more than half of the approximately fifty assembly plants producing in Haiti for the US market are paying less than the legal minimum wage. Even if a company does pay the minimum wage, workers earn \$14.40 a week, working eight hours a day, six days a week. A full-time minimum wage salary provides less than 60% of a family's basic needs. A wage of \$1 a day, common in apparel plants producing for US companies, provides less than 25% of a family's basic needs. In order to satisfy the minimum needs for food, shelter and education a family in Port-au-Prince must spend at the very least 363 gourdes (\$24.40) per week. Haitian factory owners claim that they can't afford to pay more than they do, and complain that higher wages will make them lose business to firms in other countries in the Caribbean. Meanwhile, wages in Haiti are the lowest in the wide region. Other grievances of workers in the apparel industry are threats if they try to organise and claim the right to collective bargaining, illegal firings, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, no access to potable water, not enough sanitary facilities, no adequate lighting and ventilation and the constant pressure to work at an enormous speed.

Some examples of companies producing for the US market are:

- Quality Garments SA
- SONAPI industrial parc, producers for K-mart in the USA (manager Raymond DuPou). In April 1996 the average worker earned about \$1.67 per day, 73 cents less than the required minimum wage. The company pays straight time on weekends

instead of the time-and-a-half as Haitian law requires.

- Seamfast Manufacturing produces for Ventura Ltd., products are sold at K-mart and JC Penny, and produces for Universal Manufacturing, subsidiary of Kingley Corporation, under Kelly Reed, and Kelly Reed Woman label, sold at K-mart. Wages are the lowest in Haiti. One woman with three years of experience reported to earn 87 cents for an eight-hour work day (manager Abraham Felix).
- Chancerelles SA, subsidiary from Fine Form, New York, producers for Elsie Undergarments of Haileah, Florida. Sold under Shuly's and Elsie labels at JC Penny and smaller retailers. John Whistler is US director of the plant. Workers say to earn an average of \$1.73 to \$1.80 a day. The supervisors, especially chief supervisor Franck Charles, verbally abuse the workers on a regular basis.
- Excel Apparel Exports, jointly owned and operated with the Kellwood Company, produces women's underwear for Hanes, a division of Sarah Lee corporation, and slips sold at Dillard Department store. Nightwear for movie stars, sold at Sears and Bradlees. Workers earn less than \$1.33. Since the passage of the new minimum wage law quotas have been increased with more than 100%.
- Alpha Sewing produces industrial gloves for Ansell Edmont of Coshocton, Ohio, owned by Ansell International of Lilburn, Georgia, in turn owned by Pacific Dunlop Ltd., Melbourne, Australia. Workers report skin

and respiratory problems because of non-protected workers with heavy chemicals. Workers work approximately 78 hours a week, 75% of the women do not earn the minimum wage. The company is owned by the Apaid family.

Despite these problems Batay Ouvriye ('workers struggle') tries to organise workers and supports the ones which already exists. Batay Ouvriye was formed in the early 1990s after the election of president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The three year military coup 1991-1994 seriously impeded the work. After the return of formal democracy in September 1994 Batay Ouvriye was able to increase its contact with assembly plant workers.

Many of the existing groups are peasant and landless labourers groups. It is much harder to organise factory workers in the free trade zones. Batay Ouvriye gives legal advice, support for organising and publicity purposes and it has co-ordinated protests in favour of a minimum wage increase and for the improvements to the country's labour code. Batay Ouvriye continues to circulate leaflets to workers outside factories in the industrial park. In co-operation with the National Labour Committee, Batay Ouvriye has been working on a grand Disney Campaign.

In order to gain influence Yannick Etienne seeks contact with unions, workers' organisations and women's organisations in other producer countries, especially where Disney items and Nike products are being produced.

Yannick Etienne Batay Ouvriye, PO Box 13326, Delmas, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, WI. Tel: 011-509-2-6719

You can also contact: Charles Arthur Haiti Support Group, Trinity Church, Hodford Road, London NW11 8NG. Tel/fax: 0181-201 9878. E-mail: [haitisupport@gn.apc.org](mailto:haitisupport@gn.apc.org)

The next issue of Freedom will be dated 16th August, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be Thursday 7th August

— OBITUARY —

# David Wieck

David Thoreau Wieck died on 1st July 1997 in a nursing home in New York State, after a long illness. He was born in 1921 and his father was an organiser of the mine-workers' union (in opposition to the union boss John L. Lewis, as well as to the 'company unions' which divided the coal miners). His mother was the first president of the Women's Auxiliary of the mine-workers, and I am told that David wrote a very touching memoir of her. His long-term companion was Diva Agostinelli, whose family was part of "an old fashioned Italian anarchist clan" from the Pennsylvania coal districts.

During the Second World War David was imprisoned for 34 months for refusing military service. For part of this time his cell-mate was Lowell Naeve who was attempting to write a prison diary for subsequent publication. Naeve found it hard to organise his impressions, and David was able to do this, so that when Naeve's book *A Field of Broken Stones* appeared from the Libertarian Press after the war, it was a collaborative task.

After his release from prison in 1946, David and Diva joined the group of New Yorkers who had started the journal *Why?* in 1943. Others included Audrey Goodfriend, David Koven, Jackson MacLow and Paul Goodman. As the original group dispersed, the magazine was renamed *Resistance* and edited mainly by him. In 1956, as the climate of the Cold War worsened, he joined with David Dellinger and others in starting the monthly *Liberation*, attempting to reach a wider audience.

He earned his living teaching philosophy and from 1960 onwards was a professor of philosophy at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, NY. David Wieck was a scrupulous and thoughtful writer who must have left behind a series of books he did not consider ready for publication. His brief reflections on 'The Habit of Direct Action' from *Anarchy* 13 (March 1962) have been endlessly reprinted in the anarchist press throughout the world.

Our sympathy goes out to Diva Agostinelli who, as David's condition worsened, had visited his bedside every day for the past year. CW

# The Gentle Anarchists

Dear Editors,

In your editorial 'Only the Anarchists Blame Capitalism' (5th July) you do indeed as usual blame capitalism, this time for "corruption at top level".

You then advise "the underprivileged" that since no government can dislodge the capitalist system they should "realise the power that is in their hands" and "make life an exciting and satisfying experience ... with human relationships, mutual aid, 'love without impediments' and a fighting spirit against privilege and injustice". This, you conclude, means opting out "not from the capitalist system but from the capitalist mentality".

So the real enemy, you seem to be saying, is the mentality rather than the system. The capitalist system will last as long as the capitalist mentality is prevalent, so let's target the mentality. Even within the system some of us can shake off the mentality and evolve better forms of human co-operation, and through our example and our campaigning we may encourage others to do likewise, thus gradually changing society.

Such a position may seem plausible, but to my mind your analysis doesn't go deep enough. You don't ask where the capitalist mentality came from in the first place, or why it is so prevalent and enduring. Surely it wasn't

instilled into human beings by some evil demon who keeps them enthralled in it. It was developed by human beings themselves, the vast majority of whom really believe in it and regard it as pure common sense.

Now if this mentality is in fact the root cause of corruption, poverty and all other social evils, then most human beings who persist in clinging to it in spite of these terrible consequences, must be either blind or confused. Human stupidity, then, must be the real enemy. What does anarchism propose to do about that? Just go on blaming capitalism?

Mainstream anarchism - like every other form of social idealism - seems to me to break down at this point. It simply doesn't address the fact that unless we human beings become more intelligent we shall never create a better society.

There is however another non-idealistic kind of anarchism which does address that fact. What it says, basically, is this. Everything in life, including our stupidity and its consequences, is part of a single unitary process or movement which nobody controls. Nobody, therefore, deserves blame or punishment, and no effort to do anything about human stupidity is called for. If life has made us stupid, life alone can make us intelligent: intelligence always operates unconsciously, without effort on our part. The very perception of this is the operation of intelligence.

This kind of anarchism is gentle and unassuming. It involves great compassion.

Francis Ellingham

## Peta Hewetson

Dear Editors,

My piece in *Freedom* about Peta has resulted in so many kind notes and letters and telephone calls, to which I'm doing my best to reply soon. All are unanimous in describing her not just as beautiful, even in old age, but as a gentle and thoughtful person with a young voice and a beautiful smile.

It has made me determined to produce the second volume of photographs - as mentioned in *A Weekend Photographer's Notebook* - which will include photographs of Marie Louise Berneri, my first companion, and Peta Hewetson. But I need some time to sort myself out.

Vernon Richards

# The Habit of Direct Action

All action, we can see upon reflection, realises some belief. Indirect action is often criticised on the ground that the means employed are unreliable; a strong point, but perhaps applied too sweepingly, and I think less fundamental than another. I want to distinguish (as direct action) that action which, in respect to a situation, realises the end desired, so far as this lies in one's power or the power of one's group; from action (indirect action) which realises an irrelevant or even contradictory end, presumably as a means to the 'good' end. The most significant - but not the only - distinction lies in the kind of fact thereby created for other persons. It is direct action, to present a person with the kind of attitude towards 'race' which one advocates; it is indirect action to rely on legal enforcement because in this is realised the concept that these people must obey the law simply because it is the law, and this may hopelessly obscure the aim.

Persons with no patience often make a bad distinction between 'talk' and 'action'. It can be seen that the important distinction is between talk that is mere moral assertion or propositional argument, and talk (in fact:

direct action) which conveys a feeling, an attitude relevant to the desired end.

To take a homely example. If the butcher weighs one's meat with his thumb on the scale, one may complain about it and tell him he is a bandit who robs the poor, and if he persists and one does nothing else, this is *mere talk*; one may call the Department of Weights and Measures, and this is *indirect action*; or one may, talk failing, insist on weighing one's own meat, bring along a scale to check the butcher's weight, take one's business somewhere else, help open a co-operative store, etc., and these are *direct actions*.

Proceeding with the belief that in every situation, every individual or group has the possibility of some direct action on some level of generality, we may discover much that has been unrecognised, and the importance of much that has been under-rated. So politicalised is our thinking, so focused to the motions of governmental institutions, that the effects of direct efforts to modify one's environment are unexplored.

The habit of direct action is, perhaps, identical with the habit of being a free man, prepared to live responsibly in a free society. Saying this, one recognises that just this moment, just this issue, is not likely to be the occasion when we all come of age. All true. The question is, when will we begin?

David Wieck

Taken from *A Decade of Anarchy 1961-70: selections from the monthly journal Anarchy* (283 pages, Freedom Press, £5\*).

please keep sending in your letters and donations ...

# Rich and Poor



One of my treasured possessions, now out of print, is a book printed by the workers of Briant Colour Printing, then at the Old Kent Road in London SE15, at the start of their occupation of the factory under workers' control in June 1972. On the faded back cover are the facsimile signatures of the FoCs of NATSOPA, RIRMA, NGA, SLADE & PW, SOGAT, the MoC of SOGAT and the deputy FoC of SLADE & PW, the first one named having been the chairman of BCP Joint Chapels and the last one the treasurer of BCP Joint Chapels. In other words, six Fathers of the Chapel and a Mother of the Chapel at the behest of their various trade unions representing the various interests of the workforce have come together to put their not easily got signatures to a joint venture.

For certainly this was a historic occasion. Twenty-five years later it is still too early to assess its true importance, for without doubt here was a heroic struggle for workers' rights and significantly for us as anarchists for the skilled (many skilled with many crafts) workforce through their struggle for both trade union rights and the dignity of labour have signalled that you cannot have socialism without anarchism first.

Everybody knows the Marxian apology that of course anarchism is the ideal political and economic system, but first they laboriously 'explain' the necessity for the various stages to come in between. This is of course putting everything on its head and makes no sense whatsoever. Had they said that first the whole population must be imprisoned for as lengthy a period as possible then set free at weekends, this would have made more sense from their point of view.

But here was the best equipped printing works with a skilled and literate workforce and strong trade unions protecting their rights and all aspects of health and safety, equitable wages and the rest, now threatened with the shutting down of their place of work.

The FoCs and the MoC of Briant Colour Printing, lifelong socialists and trade unionists every one of them, decided to ask John Lawrence, who had become by then a convinced anarchist, to publish this book as a sign of their determination to fight for workers' rights and mutual aid.

In one of the most important chapters of this small book the author writes: "In what does the slavery of our time consist? What are the forces that make some people the slaves of others? If we ask all the workers in Russia and in Europe and in America - alike in the factories and in the various situations in which they work for hire, in towns and villages - what has made them choose the position in which they are living, they will all reply that they have been brought to it; either because they had no land on which they could, and wished to, live and work, or that taxes, direct and indirect, were demanded of them which they could only pay by selling their labour and their liberty."

A quarter of a century has passed since that little book was published, whose author specified that it should remain "free of copyright".

Typographically and in its immaculate proof-reading and in its excellence of the photographic reproduction of the author on the hard-wearing cover, the book remains a document that practically speaks for itself, for the care and attention of the production by the workers with the proud and defiant announcement: "Printed in England by Briant Colour Printing Joint Chapels during their work-in, June 1972". The book of 64 pages, which was translated by Aylmer Maude from the Russian manuscript and with a cover price of 25p was *The Slavery of Our Times* by Leo Tolstoy.

As with planting, the few seeds that remain can produce a new crop. That is the lesson to be learnt from the brave attempt by the printworkers for workers' control twenty-five short years ago.

John Retey

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# Greeks and Albanians

Dear Freedom,

I want to thank you for sending me a copy of *Freedom* last month. I wanted to write back sooner but I had to leave Athens and get myself a summer job. Anyway, I did read the paper and found it really interesting and focused, especially on how you presented the facts about Albania. Of course now, with the elections and everything, things are becoming even more frustrating for these people, but still it's good to know that some people care. You see, living in Greece makes me far too sensitive about the situation in Albania. Most of the people in Greece are against the emigration movement and blame the Albanians for both unemployment and criminality. Things are getting really bad in the Balkans and what people do is fight one another, always leaving the rich and powerful to gain from their fights!

So, have a good life and keep on having faith in human freedom.

Georgia, Athens

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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 start at 8pm at the Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont Street, London WC1 (nearest tube Russell Square). Disabled access. Free entrance.

## Thursday 7th August at 8pm ANARCHIST COMMUNISM VERSUS ANARCHISMS

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Further information from  
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### – 1997 PROGRAMME –

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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

12th September What Now for Class War? (speakers from Class War)

19th September General discussion

26th September Anarchy on the Net (speaker Martin Peacock)

3rd October 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

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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.

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Telephone for further details  
01773-827513

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