

# INRIEDDOM

anarchist fortnightly

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50p

## CAN CAPITALISM EVER BE ETHICAL?

The *Guardian's* Higher Education Supplement (30th September) publishes an extraordinary article which made this writer wonder whether he had drunk too much! The title is 'Rise of Ethics Man' and is an interview with one who is described as "the first professor of business morals". (Before going any further, of course there are honest businessmen who certainly don't need a "professor of business morals" to make them 'honest'.)

But what we are concerned with here are the future tycoons of management who are passing through the London Business School's MBA course (Masters of Business Administration) and, according to the article:

"No graduate leaving the country's premier training institution for making money can now claim to be unfamiliar with the notion of the moral deal because they will have thrashed out the big knotty issues in class with Mahoney. Is bribery ever okay? When are weapons sales justified? Should you ever use child labour?"

Obviously the Business School is not concerned with the small business man/woman. If anything they would probably suggest to their students that to get established they should take over competitors, including small businesses.

But no, the real joke is that the new professor of business morals (and this



writer is splitting his sides as he writes!) is one Father Jack Mahoney who the *Guardian* (not this writer) describes as "a Roman Catholic priest from that most practical and dogged order of moral enquirers, the Jesuits".

Dear comrades, can you imagine the business world going 'ethical' and employing a Jesuit priest? After all, haven't we adopted *jesuitical* in vulgar language to mean somebody who wants the best of both worlds. And indeed Professor Mahoney does just this. Not only has he been financed by Dixons (the electrical firm) but he seems to enjoy:

"a room in a Jesuit house. 'At heart I think I'm an entrepreneur and something of an opportunist - I think Jesuits tend to be almost by profession', he chuckles, as he explains his career switch from moral theology, which he had taught for more than twenty years, to business ethics, a subject he has pioneered in Britain since stumbling across it in the United States ten years ago."

This man is yet another impostor, a con-man using his dog-collar to exploit the capitalist system, giving it, as it

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### SOLUTION TO POLLUTION

The French have introduced a solution making it impossible (theoretically) for half of the private motor cars to enter Paris and poison the citizens, and to this end *travel on public transport is for free*. What a good idea, and surely an equally good idea for the New Labour lot.

were, a moral validity. This man is exploiting his religious background in order to justify the unequal, unfair capitalist society. At one stage the priest decided he should explore "the theology of wealth creation" and discovered that:

"Nobody, apart from Mrs Thatcher, seemed interested in the creation of wealth. It was a neglected field. It is now coming back in the Church of England and in the Roman Catholic Church."

The traditional Christian view has been of wealth and associated concepts as sources of sin. 'I don't have a great deal of patience with clichés about materialism, consumerism and self-interest. I happen to think that, used properly, there are respectable preoccupations'."

So there is it. The new spokesperson for capitalism is a Jesuit priest.

At least this writer has always thought that the Jesuits were more *jesuitical* than all the other holy folk, and you know what that means. If not, let us quote from our modest dictionary: "a person given to subtle and equivocating arguments". Surely in this context not a bad definition.

# Freedom

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## MR BLAIR ... HITLER'S HEIR?

What I can't stand about Adolf Hitler is his haircut. He combs it with his parting on the girl's side. Now I know this must be a sexist prejudice, but I can't help the way I was brought up.

On the BBC2 schools programme *History File* it was a source of some annoyance that, earlier this month, I had to watch Hitler's head bobbing up and down as he got stuck into digging an autobahn in the 1930s as part of the Nazi publicity for the Arbeitsdienst. The Arbeitsdienst was the compulsory labour service brought in under the Nazi's law for national labour service passed in June 1935. This law made labour service "obligatory for all young Germans" aged between 18 and 25.

This labour service runs for six months to a year, and usually starts in the nineteenth year of age. Every young German had to have a labour service discharge card showing completion of labour service before he or she was thirty years old.

The German labour service scheme was designed to give the young political training in national citizenship. It was made compulsory in 1935 under the Nazis, but a voluntary programme, the Bund Artem, had been in existence under their predecessors since 1922. The Bund Artem was organised by sending German youth out into the harvest fields to provide free labour to displace foreign (mostly Polish) seasonal labour which was taking millions of marks out of the country every year in wages. The Nazi labour scheme had three main duties:

- To supply universal vocational training.
- To promote universal defence duty.
- To teach all the duty of work.

Robert A. Brady, in his book *The Spirit and Structure of German Fascism*, writes: "The boys are put to work draining swamps, building irrigation ditches, constructing roads and working in the forest in order to cultivate and make more fruitful the land, that Germany may be increasingly independent of foreign food markets." It was reckoned that this scheme could take one and a half million out of unemployment.

The similarity between the Nazi labour scheme and New Labour's 'welfare to work' will not be lost on the reader.

### NEW LABOUR AND SOCIETY'S OUTCASTS

Doctor Goebbels talked of "today's spring" in the new Germany. Mr Blair talks of a new age for Britain in seeking to build a "model twenty-first century nation". Robert Peston in the *Financial Times* argues: "Mr Blair ... was like a lay-preacher, a man obsessed with the concept of duty, urging his congregation to seek redemption through shifting millions of people off welfare and into work".

This year's Labour Party Conference shows how the rhetoric has change since the 1980s. The Prime Minister's catch-phrase today is "compassion with a hard edge", which Robert Peston claims to mean "a review of whether long-term sickness and disability benefits should be cut to the value of the Jobseeker's Allowance, to root out those not really incapacitated".

Now contrast this with Mr Neil Kinnock's first keynote address as leader of the Labour Party to Conference in 1983. Mr Kinnock said: "Last week ... the prime minister [Mrs

Thatcher] had this to say on the Welfare State. It might, she said, end up not succouring but suffocating. And then she said energy is sapped, initiative is stifled, enterprise is destroyed. I ask, are not our senior citizens in Britain being suffocated by a pension from November of £34.05 a week? Are the seven million of our countrymen and women in poverty being suffocated by their supplementary benefits? Are their unemployed contemporaries being suffocated by the £17 a week, soon to be cut according to government? I say these people are suffocated by care. They are being smothered by neglect, by the contempt of a cruel government."

Mr Blair has brought New Labour away from this sentimental slush centred on the bottom third of the working population. His ideas are much grander. He wants to win Britain more prominence in world affairs and reclaim for Britain its 'destiny' to lead in Europe.

Of course, you will always get some moaners. Over fifty social scientists complained this month that "impoverished benefit claimants are not the best recruits for 'welfare to work' programmes". They added in a letter to the *Financial Times* that: "Peter Mandelson, minister without portfolio ... indicated that the question of the adequacy of benefit levels was on the agenda only for those incapable of paid work and, even for them, would have to wait; the wider issue of redistribution appeared to be ruled out altogether".

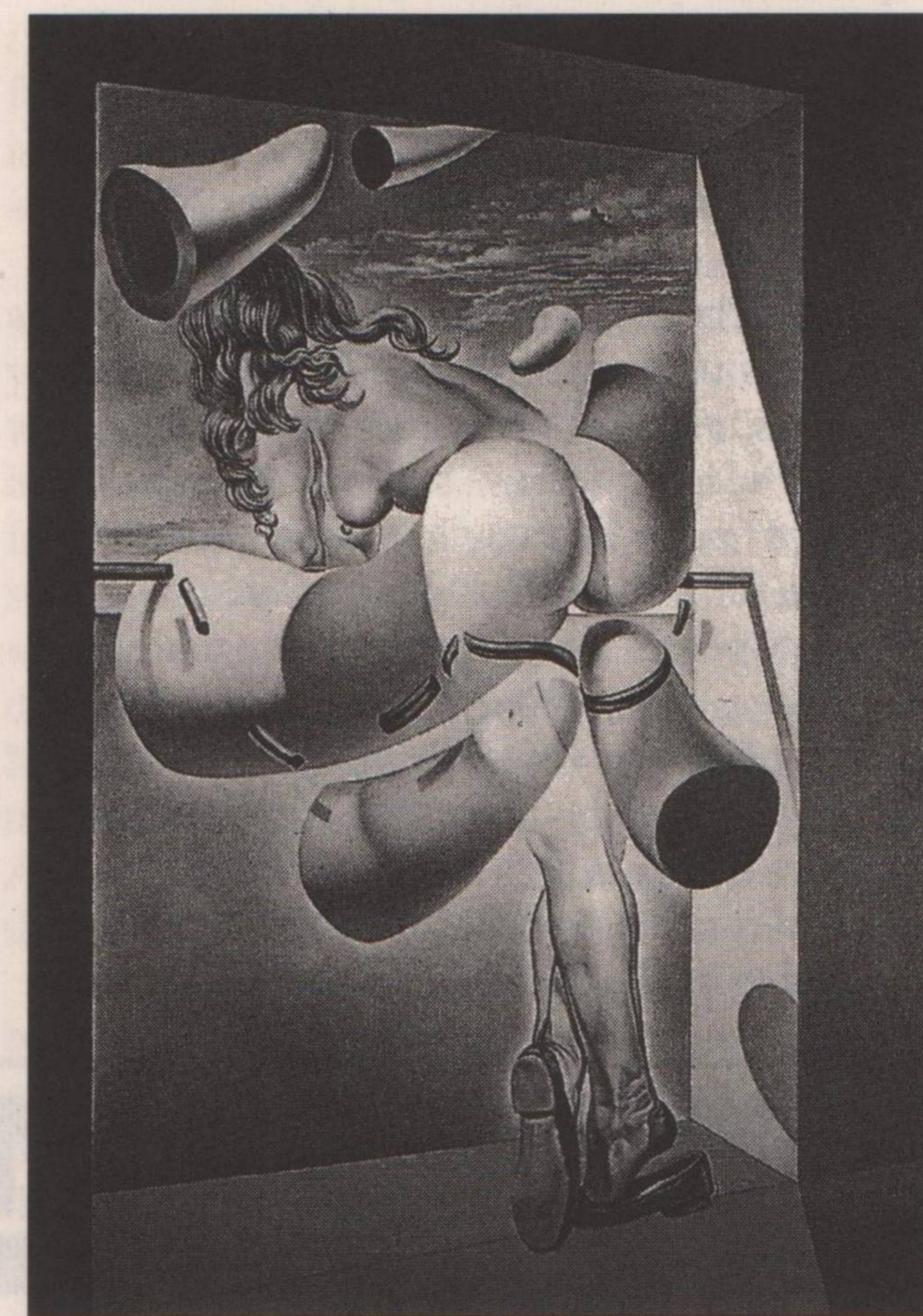
These sociologists claimed this was fighting poverty with one hand tied behind the back.

### CATCHWORDS COME TO POWER

The rise of Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany was a natural consequence of the failure of the Socialist, Communist and Democratic parties in those countries to meet the needs and expectations of working people. In Spain this was not the case, because it required a military seizure of power.

Look at it logically. The defeat of the anarchists and their unions in the CNT in Spain took a Fascist military operation of international proportions. The triumph of the Right in Germany and Italy over their massive state socialist parties was pulled off by well-organised gangs of thugs backed by sympathetic police forces. In March 1922, the March of the Fascist Legions on Rome had only to contend with bad weather. When Hitler came to power, in 1933, the Nazi Party got 43.8% of the vote, but the communist press reported it as a great step forward to the final victory of the proletariat. The former communist Ignazio Silone writes: "If you think back to the policy of the Comintern [Communist International] in Germany up to 1933, you can't avoid the conclusion that it constituted a precious and indispensable aid to Hitler's victory".

The success of Thatcher, and more recently Blair, has been dependent upon the poor performance and vision of the trade union movement and the banality of the British left in general. The defeat of the unions in Britain



and the marginalising of the workers' movement was achieved by a well-trained police force assisted by the more or less universal legalistic mentality of the British people during the miners' strike.

### 'TOUGH CHOICES'

Blair will try to keep the labour movement under control, but Andrew Marr, editor of the *Independent*, warns that "at the point when 'tough choices' become tougher on lives for people who are already barely coping, then this government will begin to experience at least some of the populist anger" which hit the first and second Thatcher administrations.

But I don't want to dwell on the potential pitfalls. Tony Blair has come to power at a good moment. After the death of Diana Princess of Wales he had a 93% approval rating. Matthew Parrish in *The Times* has likened him to Mussolini. Certainly he, and his little helpers, raised the recent conference above the debate and bickering of politics in a way the continental fascists formerly did. Mr Blair must try to place himself beyond open discussion, and so far he has succeeded.

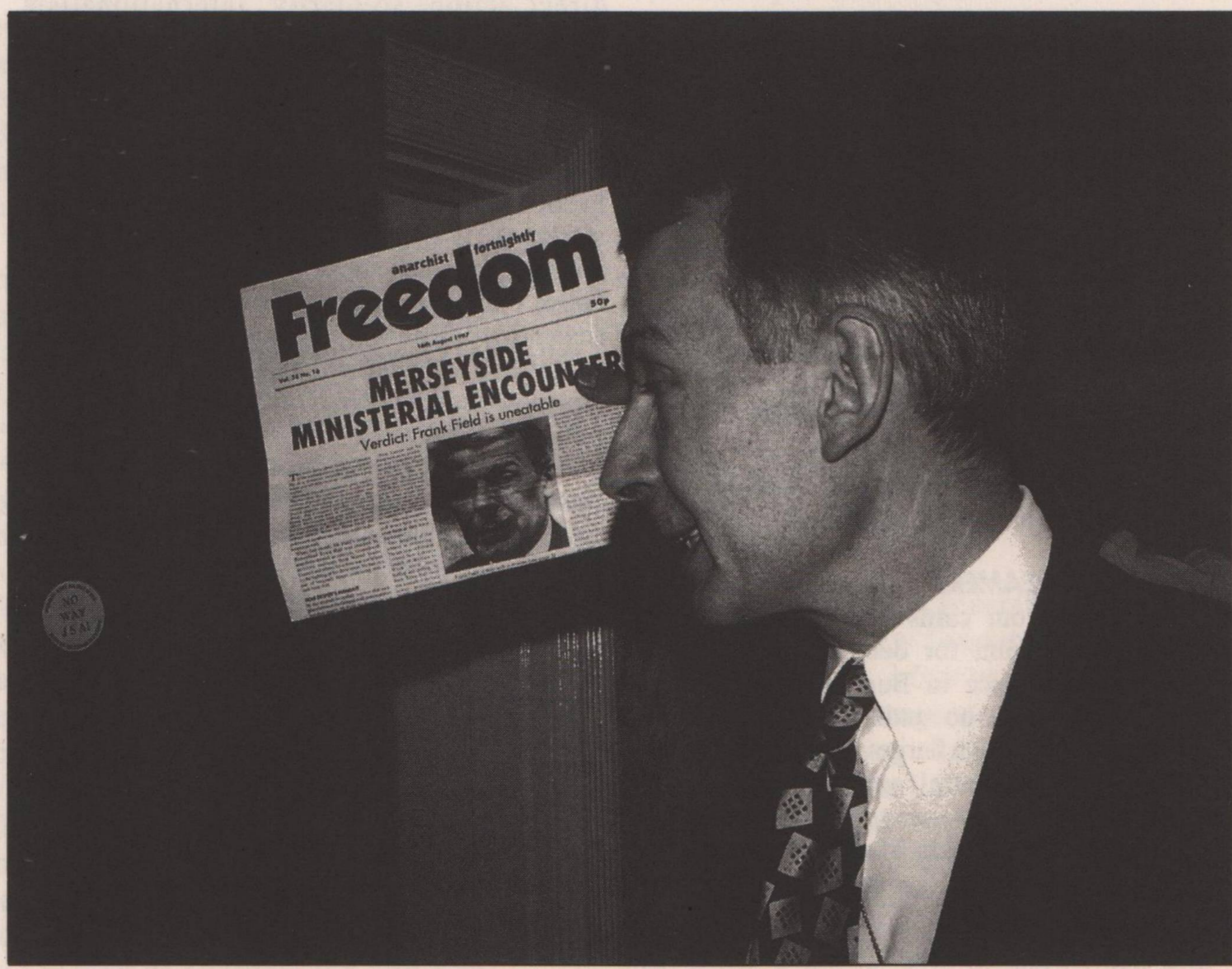
Mr Blair has a fine turn of phrase and rhetorical style, just so long as he doesn't let his words run away with him and lead him into the traps of vanity and consistency. Consistency can be fatal in power politics. "Compassion with a hard edge" is as good as anything Hitler or Mussolini could have come up with. Mussolini used "We are against irresponsibility, we are for the respect for values". Words like 'values' and 'compassion' sound good but don't commit one to anything.

Blair calls for creating "the model twenty-first century nation"; Mussolini writes of the "classic renewal of life". Blair talks of "modernisation"; Mussolini refers to the "contemporary spirit". Blair beckons us to reclaim our "destiny"; Mussolini appeals for "the moral renovation of the nation's life".

Platitudes, pleonasm, clichés, sound-bites, as hackneyed formulas are piled on to form a platform for the New Labour Party. "Zero tolerance for criminals"; "work is the best welfare"; "education, education, education" chanted endlessly. Today's New Labour is a body too fine to be raped by anything so rude as a serious idea. It is like Salvador Dalí's portrait of *A Young Virgin Auto-Sodomised by Her Own Chastity*. In short, it's full of shit!

Arturo Ui

## ANATOMY OF A COLD FISH



Frank Field caught recently at Birkenhead - see report on page 3

# DOCKS DISPUTE: A SEA CHANGE?

Change was in the air recently when the dockers marked two years of defiance. The *Liverpool Echo* (early edition, Saturday 27th September) had even previewed the event, the police were confined to showing only their smiling face, and the five thousand marchers were applauded by onlookers. Was there just a hint of recognition on the faces of the grid-locked travellers this time? If so, last year's unprecedented alliance of Reclaim the Future and the dockers, when the docks were occupied and stopped, should get a lot of the credit. This year the mainstay unions were well represented, thanks to local solidarity (unofficial). The march was friendly and uneventful, the best moment being when the large and noisy contingent of Turkish workers staged an arrival from a side-street. The rally outside St George's Hall began with music and plugs for that indispensable fashion accessory, the dockers T-shirt. Then the business of trade unionists began. In my experience, anarchists rarely hang around long into such rallies – the script is familiar and the audience respond dutifully – but some interesting if contradictory points were made by several speakers.

One, surprised by the large unionist turn-out, rejoiced that "the dinosaurs were back", while

another called for the resignation of union bosses who are apparently not *earning* their £100,000 salaries. "Who was to lead the working class?" asked another rhetorically; themselves, the answer – inside the unions and under effective leadership.

Anarchists know that effective leadership does not need giant salaries. Leaders with such salaries are *bosses* not workers, and are not to be trusted. With such leaders the dinosaurs will lumber into the capitalistic future dragging us all to extinction. For the dockers, however, the imperative is to win reinstatement, and if they do it will count as the greatest working class victory in decades. One way to achieve this is to get the whole union movement on their side, make the dispute official and have a united movement exert its dinosaur-like weight, as in the '70s. How likely this scenario is is anybody's guess, but we would do well to remember the government's 14% holding in the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board (MDHB) and the rumour that they continue to bank-roll the company despite the change of party in power. As insurance, the dockers continue their pursuit of international solidarity with the world's dockers, combined with unofficial

support at home. If they can extend the boycott of the MDHB and the blacking of ships and companies that use that port and exert enough financial pain to force a climb-down, the TGWU leadership will be left with egg on its face. But that for them would be better than upsetting 'Tory' Blair.

For anarchists the most desirable outcome would be for the dockers to win *without* official recognition from the unions. If such recognition comes it would be merely an endorsement of the *de facto* support amongst workers, and as such could be rejected. The dockers, unofficial, militant and committed, making their own decisions democratically in weekly mass meetings and with world-wide contacts, are an alternative model for today's increasingly casualised and globalised labour market. Surely their militancy and experience should lead them to reject rotten and undemocratic union structures.

After the rally I asked Keiran Casey – the international secretary of the 12,000-strong Swedish Workers' Central (SAC), the established anarcho-syndicalist union who have provided the Liverpool dockers with vital funds – why he didn't accept an invitation from the dockers to address the rally. His reason was that they didn't want to 'do a Militant' and force themselves onto the platform and that the dockers needed to set their own agenda. Some time ago at a Northern Anarchist Network conference in Liverpool, in exuberance at the September '96 events and the contribution of the anarcho types, we had discussed asking for a platform at the next

dockers' rally to put our anarchist viewpoint. We even spent a morning writing the speech. It transpired that we were too late in getting permission from the dockers. Perhaps we are not used to such a profile, and it might be that we just didn't have the courage of our convictions. Anyway, the idea never reached fruition. Yet here was a tailor-made opportunity for a respected anarcho-syndicalist union to publicly advocate a form of organisation – syndicalism – exemplified by a group of people successfully organising along those lines without small-brained and vulnerable leadership, in front of a rally too ready to praise the return of extinct forms. Judging by the dockers' charter, the dockers are not anarchists, but so what? If they win, and stick to and extend their organisation, it would signal the demise of the dinosaurs and inaugurate a sea change.

JL

## — 21st CENTURY NOTES —

# Unilinear and Molar

Presenting Noam Chomsky's ideas to an academic audience is a curious experience. Telling a group of intellectuals that Chomsky regards the intelligentsia as the victims of "institutionalised stupidity", with "the least understanding of what is going on in the world", is somewhat peculiar. Doing so in India, in Delhi's Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, provokes some interesting reactions. The main reaction articulated (though not necessarily the response of the majority) is an attempt to construct a withering critique of Chomsky's political thought. Eschewing engagement with the substance of Chomsky's analyses of US foreign policy and the mass media, a prominent Indian psychologist remarks merely that Chomsky tends to 'confirm' Indian suspicions regarding the United States, before warning that Chomsky's political ideas constitute an even greater danger to the oppressed peoples of the world than the US establishment as a whole. Why? Because he "prioritises truth in a unilinear and molar fashion", with no recognition of the 'plurality of truths' in the world, and the fact that each culture has its own 'concept of truth'.

My attempts to discover what 'unilinear' and 'molar' mean meet with no success. On the latter issue of 'plurality', some clarity is gained when it is explained that Chomsky has been 'insensitive' to the voices of the oppressed and has ignored their own understanding of the oppression they are subjected to. I suggest in response that Chomsky would be the first to admit that he has constructed a critique of US foreign policy rather than a complete history of each region or country in which US foreign policy has worked itself out, and that he has rarely if ever attempted to depict or analyse in any depth the resistance to that policy by the peoples of those regions or countries.

Furthermore, Chomsky has steadfastly refused to 'speak for the oppressed' by putting words into their mouths. During the Vietnam War, Chomsky did not make any claims about what the Vietnamese people wanted; he restricted himself to pointing out that the US assault on Vietnam, and its attempt to dictate the course of Vietnamese development by force, was immoral and illegal, and ought to

be terminated. When the Nicaraguan electorate voted the FSLN out of power in 1990, Western pundits confidently claimed to know *why* the Sandinistas had been rejected. Chomsky, on the other hand, made no claims as to "what the Nicaraguan people thought" – he pointed out that there was no serious evidence on which to base an opinion. Instead he concerned himself with the fact that the elections could not have been "free and fair" – as was generally claimed in the US – because they were conducted against the backdrop of a devastating embargo and terrorist war which Washington threatened to continue if the FSLN were returned to power.

I suggested in Delhi that rather than being 'insensitive', such restraint was rather 'sensitive' to the (unknown) sentiments and attitudes of 'the oppressed'. After my talk, an Indian woman told me that what had impressed her most about Chomsky at his recent lectures in India was precisely his refusal to extend his analysis to India, despite being invited to do so. She was sick of Westerners and others with little knowledge of India – including quite a few educated Indians – pontificating about India's problems and their solutions. For her, Chomsky's silence on this point was more valuable than his words on other subjects.

The prominent Indian psychologist who led the attack on Chomsky had suggested that Chomsky claimed to know what was good for others, and to know "what is truth" (two quite separate claims, though he failed to distinguish between them). In view of Chomsky's actual behaviour over the years – in Delhi, for example – it seems reasonable to speculate on possible irrational factors.

In his own field of linguistics, the overwhelming experience of encountering the power and range of Chomsky's intellectual abilities has reportedly led a number of scholars to attempt to 'out-Chomsky' Chomsky for purely competitive reasons. It has been suggested that for such people, it has been difficult to accept the existence of someone so intellectually superior. It seems that in politics, also, there are those who are attempting to 'out-Chomsky' Chomsky, with, perhaps, as little success.

Milan Rai

## ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM: TIME FOR A NATIONAL ORGANISATION

On 20th September northern anarcho-syndicalists met, along with Charles Crute of *Freedom*, at Bury Unemployed Centre to discuss the continuing input of activists around the Liverpool dockers' dispute, and Groundswell, into the paper. Also discussed was a proposal from Hull Syndicalists, Mick Parkin, etc., for the creation of a national anarcho-syndicalist propaganda organisation.

We in Hull feel that existing class-struggle anarchist organisations are, for a variety of reasons, not fulfilling their obligation to spread libertarian syndicalist ideas and practice in the working class.

The Solidarity Federation (SF), which we in Hull briefly rejoined, seems to prioritise the closed world of its internal *Bulletin*, for which the French CNT is the real bona fide heir to the AIT's holy mantle. No SF members at the second anniversary rally of the Liverpool dockers, no activity against the JSA – we know there are SF comrades that *do* picket Magnet showrooms and collect for the dockers, but we know they are the exception to the rule.

SF, like the British IWW, also embrace dual unionism, which in this country means that small political groups believe they can overturn 150 years of practice. *Our* syndicalist tradition of working inside union branches, trades councils, strike and claimants' support groups, and defending organisations the working class has created for itself.

Or their brand of nostalgia, re-creating the Spanish CNT in Manchester or the American IWW in Edinburgh – pipe dreams! We as federalists (not nationalists) know you can't do that in this country. Sure, if the Liverpool dockers or a *significant* group broke away from the miserable, corrupt TUC unions we would be there in a flash, but until then...

### DOERS NOT DREAMERS

It's time to put our cards on the table. Using *Freedom* as a forum for debate, the anarcho-syndicalist conference in Bury wants *Freedom* readers (and those who until recently wouldn't touch this journal with a barge-pole) to debate our proposal for a national anarcho-syndicalist organisation as the first step towards a **founding conference in Bradford in March of next year.**

What we want is an organisation of doers not dreamers: Sheffield or Glasgow 1998, not Barcelona 1936 or Chicago 1905. We want a national organisation to co-ordinate activity, not as a forum for internal disagreement.

- That all members are active in strike support work, whether as local groups, in dispute support groups or union bodies.

- That all are active in their opposition to the JSA, Workfare and the rest of the Labour Party onslaught on the poor or militant.

- That any syndicalist/anarcho-syndicalist alliance (we won't quibble over names) seeks to exclude only those who are members of political parties, or who openly advocate electoralism or the dead-end of forming fantasy anarcho-syndicalist unions.

We want an organisation that has a minimum of bureaucracy: a correspondence secretary, a treasurer and an international secretary. A syndicalist alliance would regard itself as part of that often cantankerous entity the international libertarian family, from the CGT/SAC/CNT/ARCA to the AIT, certainly giving solidarity but *never* intervening in the internal anarcho-syndicalist organisations.

For us anarcho-syndicalism is a simple ideology: direct action, solidarity, internationalism, democracy and revolutionism, and all that only relevant if given flesh and bones by practice.

This June seven of us from Hull stood in Dam Square, Amsterdam, for the Eurotop amongst thousands of Spanish CGT, hundreds of ARCA and French CNT comrades and dozens of SAC members. It's time we in Britain realised our potential and did our duty for anarchism. Britain doesn't always have to be the lame duck of anarcho-syndicalism: London, Leeds, Lancaster, Glasgow, Hull, Sheffield, many comrades in small groups or as individuals could be more effective if we all got together.

Between now and March we have a mountain to climb: rejecting the current parody of anarcho-syndicalism familiar to those in the libertarian left, with its authoritarianism and lack of contact with reality (which of course is a delight to Marxists, giving them a clear field in social and industrial struggles) and planting the seeds for a new start for our ideas and practice.

Stagnation and a quiet life, or the birth of something both beautiful and bold. Over to you, comrade.

Hull Syndicalists

Correspondence about the proposed founding conference of the proposed national anarcho-syndicalist organisation should be addressed to the acting secretary: Harold Sculthorpe, Spring Bank, off Midgehole Road, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 7AA.

### — COPY DEADLINE —

The next issue of  
*Freedom* will be dated  
1st November, and the  
last day for copy  
intended for this issue  
will be first post on  
Thursday 23rd October

# MANCHESTER AND MERSEYSIDE POLITICIANS ON VERGE OF NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

The mousy Secretary of State for Social Security, Harriet Harman, has fallen out with her deputy Frank Field, Minister for Welfare Reform. She wants to get on and produce quick results through the New Deal to force young people and single mothers into government schemes, while Frank has a longer-term strategy.

Ms Harman, some claim, is envious that Mr Field gets on better with the civil servants at the Department of Social Security. He speaks their language and the press seem to take him more seriously. According to *Private Eye*, she has taken to telling off the media hacks who find Frank – recently likened in *Freedom* to a grey mullet – more colourful and interesting copy.

There is even a rumour that Mr Field may be due for the boot. It is said he has been halted from publishing a Green Paper on welfare reform by Ms Harman. She is very pally with the Chancellor Gordon Brown, and with few ideas of her own can be counted on to be more compliant than Frank.

## WORK FOR WELFARE

Harriet Harman was overjoyed when the Chancellor appointed Martin Taylor, chief executive of Barclay's Bank, to head a government task force to "modernise the tax and benefits system". She crooned: "We want to tear down the barriers that keep people

trapped on benefit" with Martin Taylor's help.

As she set about sorting out 170 lone mothers last July, she droned: "Work is the best form of welfare for people of working age". But back at Barclays 21,000 workers have lost their jobs in the last ten years under Mr Taylor's 'modernising' ministrations.

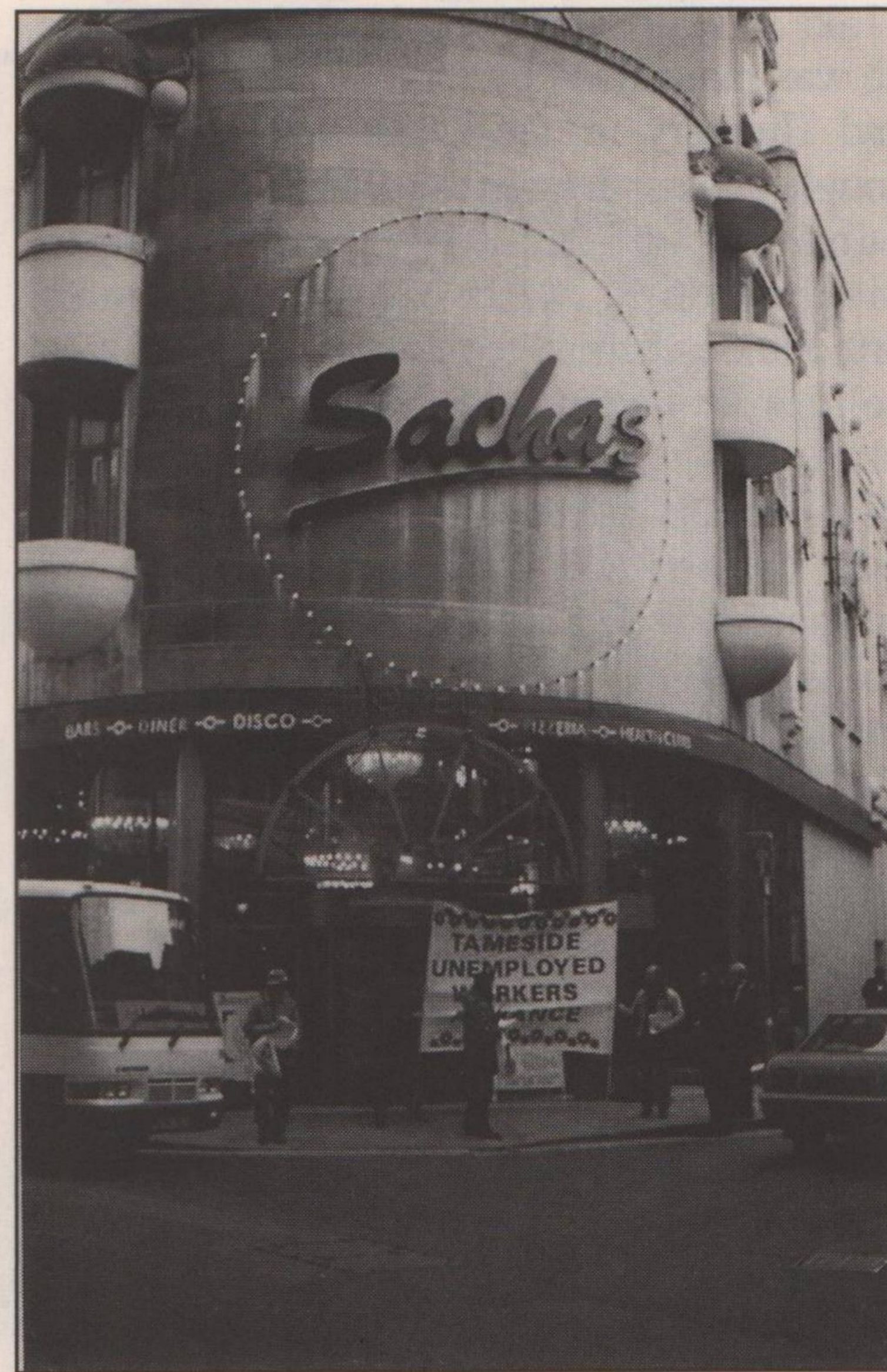
None of this bodes well for Mr Field. With Harman and Brown forming an operatic claque for Martin Taylor, even with the Barclays workers voting for strike action, they may succeed in outflanking Field and his friends in the Department of Social Security.

## 'HARSHEST BENEFIT REGIME'

Mr Taylor is on £820,000 a year salary with an extra £116,000 in share options. Reports from Milwaukee in the USA (where Welfare to Work has already been introduced) suggest that those claimants left in the care of Field, Harman and Taylor will not do so well.

In May the *International Herald Tribune* recorded that Toni Rogers "landed in the state work program, quarrelled with her boss and lost her benefits and her apartment". Ms Rogers said of her gaffer, "she tried to talk to me like I was a dog or something". Angela Engel found herself working for her benefits after being "bounced between work and benefits". She said: "That's what they're pressuring you to do – take anything just to stay out of the system".

Last November Harriet Harman wrote to the Labour MP for Burnley, Peter Pike, saying: "Tory Britain now has the harshest unemployment benefit regime in Europe". She claimed "Labour opposed this unfair legislation [the JSA] during the passage of the Bill". But the JSA is still on the statute book under the Labour regime, as is Project Work.



government's Welfare to Work plans were there to protest against New Labour's 'New Deal' scheme for under-25 year olds who will be forced into forthcoming programmes administered by voluntary organisations and local authorities.

The Minister, who calls himself the 'Minister of Enjoyment', was at Sacha's Hotel to perform as a key speaker at the Training and Employment Network Conference on the theme of 'Let's Get Working'. He was welcomed by Paul Convery of the Employment Unit.

Earlier Mr Convery had told the Groundswell pickets that he was more hopeful of New Labour's plans than he had been of the Tory ideas. "At least New Labour is putting its money where its mouth is, while the Tories were just offering a cheap-jack plan to get people off the unemployment register" Mr Convery claimed.

Inside the conference Paul Convery was less optimistic. He pointed out that there were more civil servants inside than pickets outside, but said that during the conference he had got the impression that the civil servants were less than sincere. He was worried that Mr Smith

and the civil servants would not deliver the support and funding that had been billed.

In an article in *Working Brief* Mr Convery showed that he was anxious, as Groundswell is, about the benefit sanctions threatened by the government for refuseniks who fail to follow a Jobseekers' Direction or snub an offer of a place on a job seeking course, etc. Convery argues that benefit can be cut off for four weeks "with payment of special hardship of lower-rate JSA in only the most limited of personal circumstances".

Meanwhile, outside the pickets were chanting 'New Labour is Forced Labour' and some of the conference participants who voiced their agreement outside were suddenly struck dumb once they got inside. Either they were overcome with Mr Smith's cheerful charisma or started to cast a greedy eye over the prospect of extra funds.

## MERSEYSIDE

### 'THE BEAST OF BIRKENHEAD'

Frank Field looks more miserable than ever these days. His constituency surgeries at Birkenhead Town Hall are forever being cluttered up with all sorts of riff-raff these days.

As Minister for Welfare Reform, he seems to become the target of the most disgruntled bunch of PANSIES (Political Activists Not Seeking Employment Satisfactorily) in the North of England.

News reports on North West ITV News and the *Liverpool Echo* speak of goats being detained but not charged, finger-waving convict-clad claimants remonstrating with Mr Field, and camera-flashing paparazzi staging stunts.

Mr Field, bless him, has complained to the police about the lack of protection he is getting, but apart from detaining a goat called Edna who had to join in the fun, the police claim they can do no more for him. The Minister is a bit of a cold fish who gets out of his depth when confronted by the raucous rabble who object to his plans for tackling claimants.

New Labour is rather prim and finds the kind of propaganda by farce approach of political groups like Groundswell or North West Against the JSA runs against the decorous style of the Party's public relations techniques. The police have said that beasts like Edna ought not to be brought to see Mr Field, who himself deserves the title 'The Beast of Birkenhead'.

## HOW DO JUDGES THINK?

Quite recently a mother who smothered her fourteen-month old severely handicapped daughter was freed after having been given an eighteen-month jail sentence suspended for two years. In another court a pregnant teenager was jailed for five months for having stolen four shirts from Marks & Spencer. Not only did the judge agree to let her out on appeal, but also added to her sentence that her child would be taken away from her as soon as it was born. He added his bit when he declared: "We accept that the immediate loss after the birth will be a real punishment". But, said the beak, "you deserve a real punishment to try and break once and for all this habit of stealing other people's property". So Judge Gabriel Hulton *steals* this young woman's unborn child to teach her a lesson! Do two wrongs make a right under the law? For goodness sake, is that judge a human being?

Libertarian

## MANCHESTER

### JOBLESS JOSTLE MINISTER

Andrew Smith, Minister for Employment, clashed with claimants as he ran up against a Groundswell gauntlet outside Sacha's Hotel on Tib Street, Manchester, last month. Members of Manchester, Tameside and Bury unemployed groups opposing the Labour

## DONATIONS

### July to September 1997

#### Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund

Isle of Wight, HW, £3; London NW1, AC, £20; London WC1, BW, £5; Chester, GSG, £6; Newport, NHF, £6; Berlin, MM, £1; London E11, LTR, £2; Llantrisant, IAM, £6.37; Wolverhampton, JL, £2; Bristol, PF, £6; London W11, PL, £20; Sheffield, DB, £2.

Total = £79.37  
1997 total to date = £762.37

#### Freedom Press Overheads Fund

Isle of Wight, HW, £3; Kilchaon, GS, £45.45; Bradford, BG, £5; Wolverhampton, AM, £5; Dover, PGC, £1; Cambridge, ACW, £10; London NW1, AC, £20; Macclesfield, LF, £6; Wrexham, SR, £1.25; Skipton, JP, £3.10; Gloucester, TA, £10; London E11, LTR, £1; Liskeard, TC, £5; Wolverhampton, JL, £2; Burton-on-Trent, PM, £1; Sheffield, DB, £2; London W11, PL, £20.

Total = £140.80  
1997 total to date = £699.80

#### Raven Deficit Fund

London NW1, AC, £20; Kyoto, ML, £6; London E11, LTR, £2; Wolverhampton, JL, £4; Sheffield, DB, £2; London W11, PL, £20.

Total = £54.00  
1997 total to date = £422.00



## Rich and Poor



Here we are again in the conference season. The devoted party members spend a delightful week in the choicest places on Britain's seashore and dutifully raise their arms to be searched for concealed weapons. What a price to pay to be a devoted socialist. To be in the same company as all those famous men and women. All they have to do is to go through the tunnel and avert their eyes from the graffiti on the wall and from the sight of cadavers with outstretched hands. What mocking words: 'any change please'. Funny word, change – don't like it at all. Sends shivers down one's spine. Get Prescott's Euphemism Unit to look into it.

It is remarkable nevertheless how quickly the party faithful swallow the bitter pills for their own good. Who better to rule over but a comatose population. A population where not only the patients are safely under heavy dosage but the hypnotists themselves have also nodded off. The old phrase *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* need not be translated for such an erudite readership as ours, but isn't it time for the anarchist movement to claim Juvenal and all his satirical works? This column has taken note, if others didn't, of all his wise sayings. Just listen to this, Arthur: *Tenet insanabile multos scribendi cacothetes et aegro in corde senescit.* Watch out against that incurable itch for writing, old mates.

Shamelessly we hold on to our principles and quote establishment writers when it suits our book. One such is Gibbon, whose *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is still compulsory reading – that is if I could gather all five volumes under the same roof. I thought of Gibbon recently in connection with recent remarks of historians of the Cambridge School that 'Lost Causes' can be safely overlooked in the re-telling of histories. Those who dissent (and are defeated) do not as much as deserve a footnote. But didn't Gibbon exclaim somewhere: "History is little more than the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind".

The programme of the Anarchist Bookfair is a real penny university this year and I shall be attending as many talks as possible in between looking at the bookstalls. Alas, writing this column has given me no time to put together another volume since *Through the Anarchist Press*, but I promise to get my head down to do something next year so as not to retard the course of the anarchist revolution.

Obviously I will come fully prepared to enjoy myself in the company of many thousands of comrades who are expected at this annual gathering. But I do hope that somebody will have the sense of collecting together the text of talks for a future issue of *The Raven*, if only to show the world and his frau what it is to be alive and awake in the last stages of the anarchist preparations towards the perpetual festive season.

Raven's new issue I am awaiting anxiously, for I'm hoping that an article of mine about Guinness's criminal destruction of the Wandsworth eco-village will appear in it. I have not drunk a drop of their filthy stuff ever since, or even sat at the same table with anybody who did so. But then we all have our failings, quoth the raven nevermore.

Years go by so quickly, yet art never ages. On my recent visit to Cornwall I met up with the painter Maurice Sumray. He is now 77, and what a painter still. Anarchist? I should think so. There was never an artist who was not an anarchist. There is a definition for you, like it or lump it. His retrospective is at the Falmouth Art Gallery from 25th October to 22nd November. Love and anarchy – see you at the Fair.

John Rety

George Clark, who died in September at the age of 71, played important parts in two sections of the radical left. Unfortunately, although he was an inspiring leader, he was an impossible follower and an irritating colleague, he caused trouble in almost every organisation he joined, and he remained a mystery from beginning to end.

Like so many other people of his generation, he was radicalised by the twin crises of Suez and Hungary in 1956. He first appeared a couple of years later in the old New Left, when hundreds of mainly young people, disenchanted with old revolutionary orthodoxies, turned to new forms of left-wing politics free from party loyalty or sectarian ideology. In 1957 the *Universities & Left Review* was started, and in 1958 the ULR club was formed with regular meetings and permanent premises in London. The Partisan coffee-house in Soho became the focus for all sorts of left-wing discussion and activity, and George Clark was involved in both.

He then shifted to the growing unilateralist movement, when thousands of mainly young people, disgusted by the Great Powers' reliance on the hydrogen bomb in the Cold War, turned to new forms of protest to persuade at least the British government to get rid of it. He was attracted by the biggest organisation, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which was founded at the beginning of 1958 (and which he later claimed he had helped to form); he became secretary of its London Region in 1959. Now he found his true vocation as an efficient organiser of some of the most effective demonstrations against the Bomb, and he became a familiar figure as a marshal on the great Aldermaston marches, striding up and down our ranks in his duffel-coat with his loud voice and commanding manner. In 1960, however, there were growing rumours of scandal, both financial and sexual, and he suffered a break-down and went into hospital.

He then shifted to the Committee of 100, which was founded at the end of 1960 to organise mass non-violent civil disobedience against nuclear weapons (and which again he later claimed he had helped to form); in 1961 he was the chief marshal of its increasingly successful sit-down demonstrations. But while he became more prominent, he also became more unpopular. He acquired growing power as national convenor but also aroused growing distrust, and more and more of us turned against him. This led to bitter struggles during 1962. He unsuccessfully opposed the division of the Committee into regional Committees, and he then unsuccessfully applied to become secretary first of the National and then of the London Committee of 100; on both occasions he was the best-qualified but the least-trusted candidate. He even unsuccessfully attempted to organise a take-over of the Committee of 100 movement through some of the celebrities who supported it.

Faced with firm resistance and failing to get his own way, he shifted again and successfully started a new venture of his own, though it was actually financed by Howard Cheney (a rich farmer who supported the peace movement). This was the Campaign Caravan, in which he led a small group of mainly young people who toured the whole country during 1962 in an old bus to preach the message of nuclear disarmament. Through this modern revival of ancient revivalism he probably spoke directly to more individuals than any other member of the movement. In 1963, after the tour, the organisation became Caravan Workshops and acted for a time as an independent element in the movement. At the same time he returned to CND and even became its field secretary, but he soon fell out with his colleagues again, and in 1964 he finally left the movement in which he had played a leading part for five years.

During this period he was imprisoned several times; he lacked consistency, but never courage. First, in 1961, he served two months for organising the biggest Committee of 100 sit-down in Trafalgar Square. Second, also in 1961, he was sentenced to nine months for organising a sit-down at the American Embassy; this turned out to be fortunate rather

— OBITUARY —

# GEORGE CLARK

(1926-1997)



Bertrand Russell addresses the crowd at Trafalgar Square on 18th February 1961. George Clark is the second head from the left. The photograph is taken from the Freedom Press volume *Protest Without Illusions* (£3.00) which includes two *Freedom* editorials referring to George Clark's imprisonment.

than unfortunate, because it saved him from being included with the other Committee of 100 leaders who were arrested under the Official Secrets Act and eventually imprisoned for eighteen months. Third, in 1963, he was sentenced to eighteen months himself for organising a march against the Greek Royal Visit; the judge made the remarkable comment that he was "the most dangerous man in Britain". The last two sentences were widely criticised and both convictions were eventually quashed; he was notable both for his bad luck in being sent to prison for organising activity which incurred a maximum fine of only £2, and for his good luck in winning appeals. He was unperturbed by these misadventures, and I remember being astonished by his composure when I visited him in Wormwood Scrubs in 1963; I also remember him telling me then about the widespread police corruption which was about to be exposed when Detective Sergeant Challenor was caught by Donald Room planting bricks on innocent demonstrators.

On leaving the movement, he spent some time out, working on Howard Cheney's farm in England and visiting radical civil rights movement in the United States. At the same time, he had his notoriously dreadful teeth replaced with a gleaming set of dentures. His final action in the cause of peace was a public fast in Parliament Square against the Vietnam War in 1965, which only made him look ridiculous.

He then reverted to his beginnings, and returned to local community work in the London slums. He helped to develop community workshops and neighbourhood councils, to form pressure groups and organising committees, and to inspire research into and activity against urban deprivation. He founded the Notting Hill Housing Service and the City Poverty Committee, and helped to run the Association for Neighbourhood Councils and the Kensal Green Cobden Club. He tried to analyse the incidence of poverty all over England and to involve ordinary people in doing something about it. He repeatedly made trouble not only for the authorities but also for his colleagues in several parts of London and in many other places in the country. He probably did more good than harm in drawing attention to the continuing issue of persistent poverty in a rich society, though he never challenged the social and economic structures which maintained this situation.

During this period he more or less disappeared from public view, though he was elected as an independent borough councillor

in Kensington in 1978; but he didn't relapse into complete silence. In 1963 he had written a more than usually fugitive pamphlet about the nuclear disarmament movement, with the unfortunate title *Second Wind*. But in 1972 he provided an interesting contribution to an otherwise rather uninteresting book of essays on *Direct Action and Democratic Politics*, giving an autobiographical account of his political career; and in 1978 he provided a valuable contribution to the oral testimonies of participants collected by Richard Taylor for his conscientious histories of the nuclear disarmament movement, *The Protest Makers* (1980) and *Against the Bomb* (1995).

According to his own account, he moved from parliamentary to extra-parliamentary socialism and from nuclear to pure pacifism; according to the actual record, he was always a straight populist with no ideological or institutional baggage, other than devotion to the good old cause of giving power to the powerless; according to persistent rumour, he was just as much devoted to the bad old cause of exploiting rich and vulnerable people for his own ends.

But he was always a mystery. Where did he come from, and where did he go? He seemed to have no background or hinterland, no family or friends, no qualification or occupation, no culture or belief, no property or income, no loyalty or intimacy, no private life or personal passions. He attended the Cambridge College of Technology and later obtained a sociology diploma from Goldsmiths College, but he was always a doer rather than a thinker, a speaker rather than a writer. He was briefly married – his wife, Mary Grigg, later wrote the authoritative account of the Challenor affair – but this seemed an anomaly. Many people knew him, but few people knew him well; I never felt I really knew him during the short time I knew him, and I never learnt much more afterwards. Yet this obscure person played important parts in significant episodes in the recent history of our country. His main interests really seemed to be smoking and drinking, and they did for him in the end.

The comedy is finished; but parts of it were excellent. It is symptomatic of our time that the obituaries in the *Guardian*, which should have done him justice, were both inaccurate and incomplete, and that those in the *Times* and the *Independent* were less sympathetic but more true.

NW

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —  
**MORE ABOUT  
 RE-SETTLING THE LAND**  
 PART 1

In the nineteenth century what was called The Land Question, referring to the de-population of the countryside and the elimination of a British peasantry through the effect of the Enclosure Acts and the amalgamation of land holdings, was endlessly raised in British politics. The importance of the movement called The Land is Ours is precisely that it is "a land rights campaign for Britain" aiming to get access to the land back onto the political and social agenda in the twenty-first century.

It has endless aspects. One is that of allotment gardens, whose history has been told in a book by David Crouch and myself. Another is that of winning the *Freedom to Roam* discussed by Harold Sculthorpe in his book of that name. And yet another is the history of what we call the 'plotlands' and self-build housing, about which I have written endlessly. Still another is that of what are seen as utopian communities re-settling the land. Those from the last century are described in a long-out-of-print book by Dennis Hardy, *Alternative Communities in Nineteenth Century England* (Longman, 1979). If you take the trouble to put your name down for it at your public library, the library will eventually get it for you. It was all those failed communities which led directly to twentieth century government programmes of land settlement, finally abandoned in the 1980s.

Books are important, and the 1890s saw a whole series of books from different standpoints tackling the land question. The first was *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890) by William Booth of the Salvation Army. The second was very different – William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) about the post-industrial Britain of the twenty-first century. The third was Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England* (1893), the fourth was Leo Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1894), the fifth was Ebenezer Howard's *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898) and the last was Peter Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1899).

They led to endless experiments in places where land was cheap. Among those inspired by Tolstoy, a sole survivor celebrates its centenary in 1998. This is Whiteway in Gloucestershire where the original settlers ceremonially burned the title deeds to the land to ensure it was common to all. Inevitably this was challenged in the courts many decades later and, to the delight of most, the Chief Land Registry Tribunal ruled in 1955 that the colonists as a whole were the licensees of their land, and their monthly meeting held regularly since the formation of the colony the licensor.

Whiteway survived through the tacit abandonment of the founders' faith in communal living and in all these 'land colonies' there were inevitable disagreements between rival versions of the 'good life'. The Clousden Hill Free Communist and



Tolstoyan land colonists at the turn of the century

Co-operative Colony was established on a twenty-acre farm north of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1895. Its story was told by Nigel Todd in his book *Roses and Revolutionaries* (London: People's Publications, 1986). The founder was a tailor, Frank Kapper, and this was a time when there was intense interest in the North East in communal intensive horticulture. Kropotkin's articles and his then-untranslated book *La Conquête du Pain*, as Nigel Todd explains:

"... drew attention to the potential of applying artificial heating systems, greenhouses (or 'glass culture') and new fertilisers, to land cultivation. *Freedom* serialised an English translation, *The Conquest of Bread*, in 1893-94, and coincidentally the issue of re-organising agriculture within a democratic framework was raised in the North East by the Co-operative Movement. In May 1894 the annual 'parliament' of the retail and producer co-operatives – the Co-operative Congress – met at Sunderland, and on the agenda was a special paper dealing with 'Co-operative Agriculture'. This attracted the attention of anarchists who tended to have a soft spot for the co-operatives, seeing them as in essence voluntary, open associations of consumers and producers, successfully eliminating the private profit motive but hamstrung by bureaucratic leadership."

One of the debaters at this Congress was a Londoner, John C. Kenworthy, who was

urging delegates to support "voluntary co-operation on the land" rather than farms that just chanced to be owned by retail co-operative societies. He set up a fringe meeting on this theme, where Frank Kapper met the provider of capital for the purchase of Clousden Hill. This was William Key, who had been a seaman for twelve years, a miner for eight and a publican and part-time insurance agent for another twelve, a background as improbable as that of Ebenezer Howard. Key and Kapper, anxious to do the right thing, wrote to Kropotkin (then living in Bromley, Kent, where English Heritage erected a Blue Plaque in 1989 to commemorate his residence) asking him to act as treasurer.

Kropotkin replied that "I am the least appropriate person, as I was never able to keep accounts of my own earnings and spendings". He did, however, offer valuable advice for this and other community ventures:

"Kropotkin warned about dangers posed to the venture by insufficient funds, influxes of too many newcomers at times of prosperity in the colony, any failure to appreciate the need for hard work, and frustration that might arise out of the limited social life in small colonies ... and he suggested that successful communities should be avoided in favour of combined efforts by independent families. Colonies should also reject internal authority structures."

He raised an issue of enormous relevance for community ventures: the situation of women. It was important, he reminded them:

"To do all possible for reducing household work to the lowest minimum ... In most communities this point was awfully neglected. The women and girls remained in the new society as they were in the old – slaves of the community. Arrangements to reduce as much as possible the amount of work which women spend in the rearing-up of children, as well as in household work, are in my opinion as essential to the success of the community as the proper arrangements of the fields, the greenhouses and the agricultural machinery. Even more. But while every community dreams of having the most perfect agricultural or industrial machinery, it seldom pays attention to the squandering of the forces of the house slave: the women." (Todd, 1986, page 19).

The Clousden Hill venture aroused enormous interest and a stream of visitors, and suffered an embarrassment of recruits, all of them anxious to change the rules – "day after day was spent in framing sets of rules" wrote one colonist. Nor did its eventual failure discourage other experiments. Each of those inspirational 'back to the land' books of the 1890s gave rise to a crop of horticultural

experiments. Blatchford's *Merrie England* induced a Manchester printer, Thomas Smith, to change his occupation and to move with his family to eleven acres of heavy clay at Mayland, near Althorne, and to advertise for fellow colonists. It took him a long time to succeed, and to learn from experience, as Jan Marsh explained in *Back to the Land* (Quartet, 1982):

"The most profitable produce at Mayland was tomatoes and other salad vegetables, and the earlier the crop the higher the price. Smith therefore steadily moved to cultivation under glass, producing strawberries, lettuce, tomatoes and even melons – all crops whose wholesale price was good even with small quantities. Gradually he acquired the knowledge and skill to make his holding into a thriving business. Later he published handbooks on intensive cultivation, although the picture they give of a scientifically managed market garden with intensive manuring, acres of cold frames, carefully regulated cloches and a large packing shed, is perhaps not the pastoral image Smith or others had before them when setting off back to the land."

Smith's rare success attracted the attention of an American philanthropist, Joseph Fels, founder of the Fels-Naptha Soap Company. George Lansbury, the Labour politician, had drawn him into collaboration with the Boards of Poor Law Guardians in London, under the provisions of the Unemployed Workmen's Act, which granted government money to various local unemployment committees to enable them to find work. With his aid, Lansbury set up 'labour colonies' at Hollesley Bay in Suffolk and at Laindon in Essex, where the work of two hundred men, Lansbury claimed, "turned what was a derelict land into orchards and gardens". He and Fels were preparing further schemes when a change of government early in 1906 brought a new president, John Burns, to the Local Government Board, who forbade the investment of public money in schemes for the resettlement of unemployed men on the land. Undeterred, Fels went ahead with the purchase of the 600-acre Nipsells Farm at Mayland, close to Thomas Smith's land, with the aim of providing "a long-term opportunity" rather than "short-term relief", with Smith as manager.

In 1912 a well-known advocate of small-holdings, F.E. Green, reported that this venture had not succeeded, "but then who could expect to find a French garden situated four and a half miles from a railway station a commercial success?" and he found that most of the smallholders were deeply in debt to Mr Fels. In *The Awakening of England* (1912) he described how:

"Many of these settlers came from Woolwich and other urban districts, and yet one cannot lay the blame altogether on the unfitness of the men. In my opinion, Mayland should never have been cut into five-acre fruit farms, but rather into thirty or forty-acre stock-raising holdings. A life which presents to the townsman six months of digging heavy, dirty land, unrelieved by any other winter occupation, is a sore test to the most ardent of earth lovers."

Green identified the difficulty that besets every small grower, whether individual or collective – that of effective marketing. He observed that:

"I was shown how the system of co-operative distribution in sending away the produce of all in bulk to market had been perfected, so I was told, 'up to the last button'; but what was the use of that when the produce was sent to Covent Garden on the chance of what it might fetch? ... In many instances produce hardly covered the cost of carriage ... Co-operation merely perfected the method for making the fortunes of Covent Garden salesmen. This might have been avoided had co-operative distributors come to the rescue of co-operative producers."

Ironically, it was the aftermath of the First World War that changed the aspiration for re-settling the land from an experiment conducted by Tolstoyans, anarchists, simple lifers and the Salvation Army, into a minor aspect of government policy.

Colin Ward

To be continued in the next issue of *Freedom*

**A DIFFERENT WORLD**

An Anglican vicar, one Reverend Robert McConachie, apparently "incensed by the theft of twelve figurines from his parish church", blames an "evil and perverted generation" and, according to *The Guardian's* religious affairs correspondent (10th September) "astonished his congregation by calling for the culprit's hand to be chopped off in punishment".

In spite of admitting that his "fire and brimstone oratory ... is not fashionable in the Church of England", nevertheless he says there are two "very good reasons" for amputation. They are "firstly the thief wouldn't be able to do it again, and secondly, as a church we must be concerned with turning people away from evil to the path of good".

The reverend gentleman also declared that there is a "very strong case" for castrating all rapists and for capital punishment. Will nobody chase him out of town?

Another 'Neanderthal Man', Lt-Col H.P. Trueman writing to *The Daily Telegraph* (12th September) about how to "curb the press from some of its exuberances" having in mind their treatment of the Diana saga, has no faith

in any government legislation being effective, and I couldn't agree more. Governments, Labour or otherwise, are powerless. They come and go and the capitalist media get stronger and stronger. So what does the Lieutenant-Colonel (retired, presumably) suggest? Quite simply "a 'people's court' could be established without any right to imprison or fine evil-doers. They could, however, offer instant justice in the form of public horse-whipping. There would be no appeal and the sentence could be carried out immediately."

And dear old 'Colonel Blimp' reminds us that "I have some experience of this form of punishment. Fifty years ago I belonged to the Sudan Defence Force where we flogged our naughty soldiers. I had no regrets at the time and my abiding memory is that no one ever came back for 'seconds'."

I hope that not only anarchists but other human beings will be outraged by the holy man's 'amputations' and the military man's 'flogging' proposals. We could boycott the capitalist press and help to create a radical (and even anarchist) press. **Libertarian**

Despite being in the main an urban country from a demographic viewpoint there is, in Brazil, a lot of sympathy for the MST. Lula, the former darling of the Workers Party, has yet, as I write, to throw in his hand or not in the coming Presidential race. He took defeat last time quite heavily and has worse chances of winning this time around. In one statement (*Folha de Sao Paulo*, 16th March 1997) he is reported to have said: "In reality the only realistic opposition to the current regime is the MST".

Recently a Brazilian soap opera has been doing a little social comment by focusing on the issue. April this year saw the biggest demonstration in the country to have taken place during the Cardoso regime, organised by the MST. These factors have encouraged the MST to press hard. They have rejected a formal offer for a joint committee with the government to discuss land reform and have preferred to keep to their tactics of direct action in the form of land seizures and the like.

These tactics are forcing the governments hand – a little. 100,000 families have been resettled. As we say – a little. The MST points out that there are 50 times that number in the queue and with growing unemployment in the cities there are signs of some kind of small urban exodus. As one Brazilian academic has put it: "the MST is the only valid response to the mass unemployment affecting Brazil. Its aim is to re-create a subsistence economy. How can one fail to realise that even this is better than urban marginalisation?"

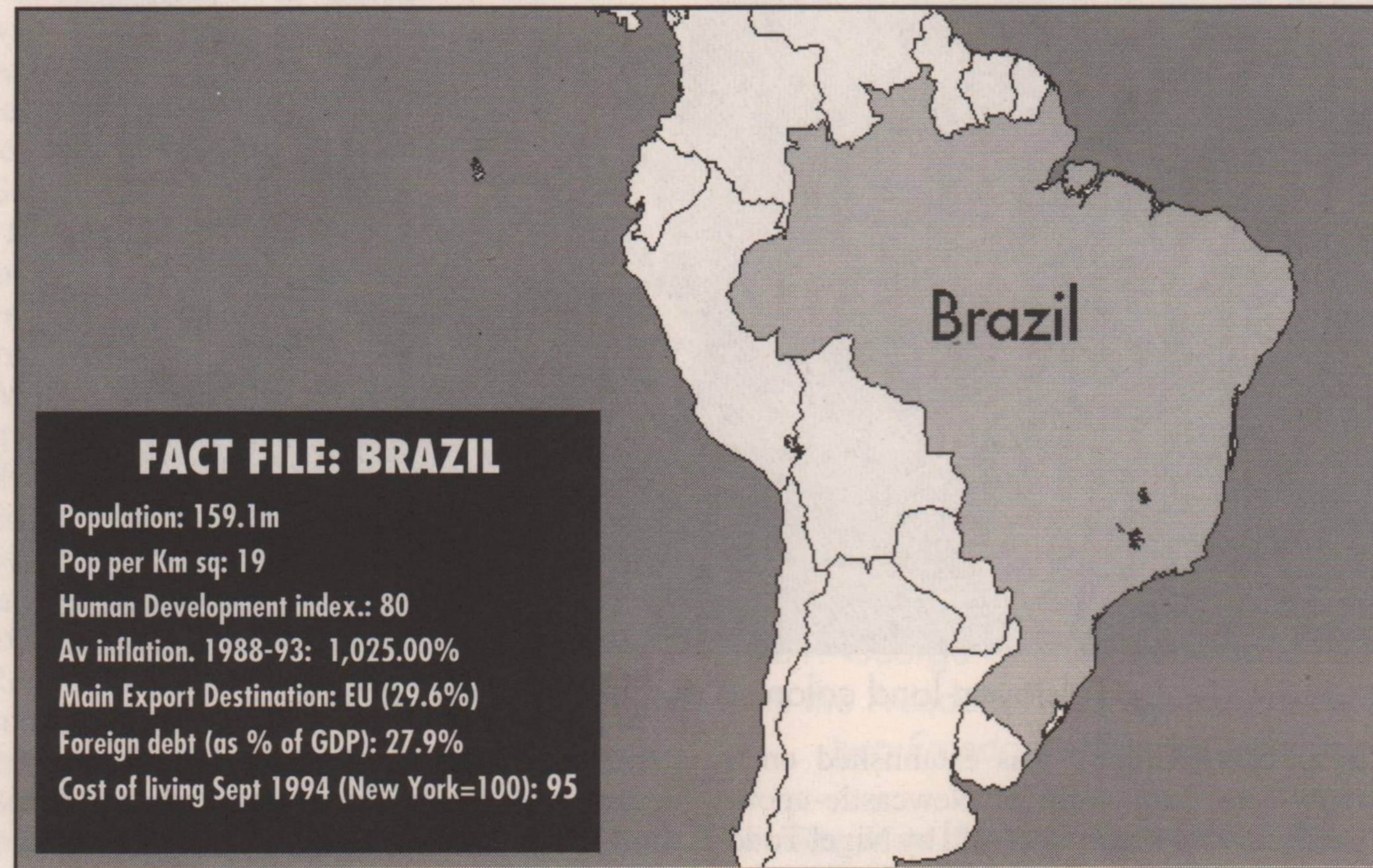
Seemingly there is room for all. Brazil has cultivable land the size of India. Last year's food harvest was enough to feed 300 million in a country whose population is almost half that number. Small farmers provide for over 50% of what is consumed at home. It all sounds too good to be true.

#### THERE'S AN AWFUL LOTTA COFFEE IN BRAZIL

Unfortunately, when you take into account that Brazil is one of the world's biggest food exporters (there is an awful lotta coffee providing an awful lot of exchange value) and that subsidies tend to go to the landowners of the latifundias in the south where 150 million hectares (apparently the size of France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and Austria put together ... just thought you might like to know that) lie unproductive, you might start to see why 32 million go hungry and the government paid \$3 million to import use value food to the country last year. It all makes alarming sense,

## FOCUS ON ... BRAZIL

Itapentimiga, which lies 105 miles south-west of Sao Paulo, still has 180 families occupying land there. There were 600 but the military police saw to that. The Movement for the Landless (MST) had some 54 members killed last year – nineteen of them at the massacre at El Dorado de Caracas. Those responsible for the latter, some 155 police officers, have yet to be brought to 'justice' but things have moved quicker for Jose Rainha, a leader of the MST, who was recently given 26 years for murdering a landowner despite the fact that he was at the other end of what is a very big country when the murder took place. So why do 180 families still stick it out?



#### FACT FILE: BRAZIL

Population: 159.1m  
Pop per Km sq: 19  
Human Development index.: 80  
Av inflation, 1988-93: 1,025.00%  
Main Export Destination: EU (29.6%)  
Foreign debt (as % of GDP): 27.9%  
Cost of living Sept 1994 (New York=100): 95

when you think about it, to move in the direction the MST are suggesting and clearly that is how a lot of Brazilians see things. But not all. The MST and its demands for radical land reform is a sharp thorn in the side of President Cardoso whose political fortunes are so dependent on the landowners in parliament.

Over last fifteen years 1,654 people have been killed whereas only two people have been brought to 'justice' (and even these were pistoleiros – the security people for the landowners). In one famous case the judge ruled in favour of the landowners' 'right to defend their land'. Clearly the rule of law is to be selectively applied. Those who own the land and society need have no fear of it but the people should learn to love the boot in their face.

There seems however little sign of their willingness to do so. The MST still has the bit between its teeth. Now it is turning to other areas upon which perhaps to build a wider social movement. One member, Pedro Stédilé, says: "land reform should not be seen as simply addressing the problem of the landless but rather that of society as a whole. However, on the other hand, land reform will only be made possible if it is seen as part of a wider political approach towards the national economy based on another development model. The landless do not, on their own, have the strength to see such a project through. They need other groups to join their mobilisation. This is what we mean when we say land reform is the concern of every citizen".

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH FOR ISAAC VELAZCO!

At the request of the Peruvian government, German authorities are seeking to ban all public political statements by Isaac Velazco, European spokesperson for the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), who lives in Hamburg. Less than a year after Peru's civilian dictator Fujimori visited Germany with a Peruvian trade delegation for meetings with Germany's political and economic elite (following up on German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel's earlier visit to Peru), the German Foreign Ministry now feels that Mr Velazco's freedom of speech presents a "considerable danger to the foreign political interests of the Federation Republic of Germany". On the orders of Interior Minister Manfred Kanther, officials in the city state of Hamburg are taking legal steps under Germany's so-called Foreigner Law to take away Mr Velazco's political rights and freedom of speech.

#### A DEATHLY SILENCE IN PERU

On 23rd April 1997, when Peruvian television all day long broadcast images of President Fujimori walking past the bullet-ridden bodies of the guerrillas who were executed in the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima, a clear signal was sent to all opposition forces: Resistance to the civil dictatorship will be crushed by all means. The storming of the ambassador's residence by Peruvian special forces, which Latin American human rights groups have described as a planned massacre carried out on the orders of 'take no

prisoners!', was a sign to Peru's trading partners. Last October, during a visit to Hamburg, Fujimori stated that: "We will welcome investors with open arms. Terror, poverty, social riots – those are things of the past". Now it has been proven that the Fujimori regime will seek to keep things as silent as a cemetery in Peru, a climate which international investors approve of. The stock market in Lima soared at the news.

#### LIFE IN A GOLD MINE

The international media have been astounded by the economic developments which have taken place while Fujimori has been in office: "A regular gold mine!", commented the *New York Times*. "An economic miracle!", wrote the *Wall Street Journal*. But what lies behind this? When Fujimori became President of the Andean state in 1990, he introduced a neo-liberal economic model which has since become known as 'Fujimori-Shock'. An extensive privatisation scheme was launched, and the opening up of the domestic market was one way to draw in foreign capital. The price of these policies was paid by the broad masses of the population, who were driven into poverty. The number of people living below the poverty level has doubled since 1991 to more than 13 million (in a country of just 22 million people).

Politically, these neo-liberal economic changes were accompanied by increased political repression against trade unions, democratic organisations, progressive students, women's

groups, and, last but not least, alleged supporters of armed organisations such as the MRTA and the Shining Path / Communist Party of Peru. The more than 5,000 political prisoners (including 450 from the MRTA) were subjected to policies of destruction. They have been forced to endure torture, hunger, isolation, and a complete loss of human rights. Fujimori said that he would let them "rot in their tombs". Many representatives of legal political organisations were thrown into prison as well after Fujimori dissolved Peru's Congress in 1992 and wrote a new Constitution.

#### WORLD POLICEMAN IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

It's not for nothing that Germany's Foreign Ministry sees "considerable danger to the foreign political interests of the Federation Republic of Germany with respect to bilateral relations with Peru and Japan". During his visit last October, Fujimori pledged to support Germany in its effort to gain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Immigration officials cited "possible damage to German-Peruvian relations" in denying entry into Germany to the mother of one of the MRTA members murdered during the storming of the ambassador's residence. She was due to speak on the events in Peru.

This is yet another example of Germany actively intervening in struggles in the Third World, in this case banning the expression of the point of view of one of the parties to the conflict – this adds a new dimension to the suppression of criticisms of conditions in the Third World. Germany has a bad tradition of banning foreign organisations and criminalising their activities. But before, like with the banning of the PKK, political action was banned by the authorities, but now the state is seeking to outlaw merely public speaking about events taking

## BERLIN SQUATS ARE EVICTED

On 29th July 1997 three squats in East Berlin were evicted during a massive police operation. The three houses, all of which had been squatted for seven years, were 80 Rigaerstrasse and 28 Scharnweberstrasse in Friedrichshain, and 88 Pfarrstrasse in Lichtenberg. Around five hundred riot cops took part in the evictions, which began at 6:30 in the morning when the squatters were all still asleep. Some SEK special police units with machine guns were dropped by helicopter onto the roofs of the houses. You would have thought the squats were home to Red Army Fraction (RAF) or something! Most of the squatters were released from custody after their identities were checked, but five people were detained, three because they weren't privileged enough to carry German passports. The houses were all sealed up shortly after the evictions to prevent renewed squatting attempts.

The Friedrichshain district was under virtual martial law following the evictions with cops on every corner. A few small road blockades were organised in protest during the afternoon. In the evening, around three hundred people marched from Frankfurter Tor to Pfarrstrasse. There, the cops provoked people and several people were arrested during clashes. During the night, two other empty houses in the city were squatted. One house in Kreuzigerstrasse was occupied, but immediately evicted by a riot police water cannon. Rocks and mollies were tossed at the cops during this clash. And 71 Kastanienallee was briefly re-squatted, but this house was also quickly evicted.

The three houses evicted on 29th July were just about the last ones left in Berlin. Those that are left you can count on one hand. It's about time we started to change this, otherwise squats are gonna become part of history. People need to stop hiding in their shadows and complaining about how there are no new perspectives. There won't be any unless we make them ourselves!

Arm The Spirit (translated from <http://www.hou.net/hmob/>)

place in one's homeland. The basis for this ban which is being sought is Germany's so-called 'Foreigner Law' ('Auslaenderrecht'), a racist special piece of legislation which bans things such as political activity to certain people just because they are not Germans according to the Constitution. This law, which was tightened only weeks ago, is increasingly becoming part of everyday German policy: control over and harassment of an entire population group, who are collectively viewed as dangerous, while at the same time maintaining good foreign relations.

We believe that the German authorities will try to push through this ban on political activity by Isaac Velazco, in so far as they are able to. That's why it's very important that we work to stop this!

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## The law of maximum shittiness

Dear Freedom,

Adrian Walker has asked us if we can find some "unified field theory of maximum shittiness" to explain the decline that mutual aid societies tend to undergo. It's a damn good question and I wish I could help him in that regard, but it seems to me the roots of the problem are too complex to reduce to one encompassing theory. Each case of decline (or presumed decline) has to be examined in its own right. Let's consider a number of common themes.

Perhaps the most important is Michel's 'iron law of oligarchy' which seems inevitable within any organisation larger than a handful of people. You can try to educate the membership and create a high level of consciousness, keep the organisation as open and democratic as possible, yet still the slide to oligarchy prevails. (Does anyone know of cases where this has not occurred? What is the anarchist response to Michel?)

A related problem is organiser burn-out. Collectives are started by hard-working idealists who become exhausted due to the burden of the work and the unending difficulties in making their ideal a reality. Such individuals are replaced by others more narrowly self-interested and those who are not as ideologically committed.

Then there are the changes that the population undergoes. People's needs change. A wealthier populace cannot be expected to frequent co-ops that look and act like relics from 1890. Credit unions and grocery co-ops are often criticised for seeming little different from banks and supermarkets, but if they weren't they wouldn't hold on to their membership. Examples of what I mean – in the old grocery co-ops members were more concerned about price, today they want quality and variety; credit unions used to emphasise the credit aspect whereas today a far wealthier working class also wants investments and retirement funds. If co-ops don't give these services, the capitalists certainly will and the co-ops suffer.

The very success of mutualism has been its undoing in terms of adherence to co-operative ideology. There are mutual insurance companies, agricultural co-ops and credit unions which are big league players in the economy (the world's credit unions have \$3 trillion in assets – three-quarters of the assets of the world's major corporations). They are almost large enough to take on the multi-nationals. For them, it's either compete head-on with the capitalists or be reduced to marginal status. In order to compete in the 'big leagues' they must adopt some of the capitalist means. Hence some large co-ops now float stock on the exchanges, since they find they don't have enough capital among the membership.

These tendencies are inevitable, I'm afraid – the first two under any social system, and the latter inevitable as long as the bulk of the economy is run on capitalist and not mutualist lines. This said, we should not despair, however. Anarchism is not utopian. Proudhon pointed out 150 years ago that the struggle against authority (in the guise of shittiness in this context) is eternal and the best we can do is minimising authoritarianism. The late George Walford claimed we get the system we deserve – as long as people are more or less satisfied with the status quo, things will remain the same – this could be said of our mutual aid societies. We can (and must) continue to struggle against the negative and oligarchical tendencies. Past events show us that as long as a level of membership democracy and local control exists, it is possible for the membership to re-assert itself and cast off its oligarchs and 'sell-outs'.

Larry Gambone

## Kibbutz movement not yet dead

Dear Freedom,

In your issue of 6th September 1997 an unsigned article entitled 'End of a Jewish Utopia' invokes "the media" to inform us that "the last of the kibbutz has given up. Apparently there were some 250 in the pioneering years". According to my most recent information, which admittedly is not exact and not absolutely up to date, there are still about 250 kibbutzim in Israel, with a total membership of about 100,000. That is, the absolute number of kibbutz members has remained approximately constant for almost half a century, but its percentage of the total population of Israel has declined – to less than 2%.

It is not clear to what 'media' the writer of the above article is referring, but if it is to the piece entitled 'The End of the Kibbutz Movement?' which appeared in *The Raven* number 30 (pages 149-151), the contents of that article hardly justify the *Freedom* writer's allegation that "the kibbutz has given up", nor the phrase "demise of the kibbutz movement" used in the Editor's Introduction to that issue of *The Raven*. The *Raven* article does point to the erosion, but certainly not the complete abandonment, of the original governing principles of the kibbutzim, e.g. the legitimating of hired labour, more personal as opposed to collective budgeting, less job rotation, relinquishment of separate children's creches, etc. All of these changes have occurred gradually, and some (e.g. the use of temporary, usually Arab, hired labour) started in the occasional kibbutz even before the Israeli state was created.

The *Freedom* writer's recollection that "the kibbutz movement was mixed Arab-Jewish" is pure fantasy on his part. It never was. This lack of ethnic diversity in voting membership (as opposed to guests) has always been a significant shortcoming of the kibbutz movement. To this deficiency was added after 1948 the further violation that many of the newly created kibbutzim were located on abandoned or destroyed Arab villages.

The *Freedom* writer is closer to the mark when he recalls that the kibbutz movement had "nothing to do with religion". The vast majority of kibbutzim were indeed quite secular and non-religious, though there were always a few religious kibbutzim. That is still largely true, though, as a result of the undue influence of the religious blocs in the governance of the state, the secular kibbutz members are subjected to religious rituals with respect to food preparation, marriage, burial, etc.

In summation, the kibbutz movement is gasping but not dead.

Norman Epstein  
Canada

Dear Editors,

*Freedom's* correspondent Meir Turiansky writing from Israel (4th October) would, in my opinion, have done better to have written more about the Kibbutz Samar than to criticise the 'End of a Jewish Utopia' piece in *Freedom* (6th September) and virtually ignore the

article in *The Raven* number 30, 'The End of the Kibbutz Movement?', which reprinted an important article from the Spring 1995 issue of the *Bulletin of the International Communal Studies Association* (published in Israel) by Amir Helman with the title 'Reforms and Changes in the Kibbutz' which confirmed *Freedom's* news item 'End of a Jewish Utopia'. In fact Meir Turiansky's article is a confirmation of the complete capitalisation, indeed degradation, of the kibbutzim following the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948. After all, some even became armed strongholds against the Arabs.

Meir Turiansky maintains that the *Freedom* article quotes "outdated sources from fifty years ago ... giving facts which are either wrong or distorted". I quoted from a meeting in London not fifty years ago (that's when the Israeli state was created and all the real trouble started) but sixty years ago when the Spanish workers were struggling to overthrow a dictatorial attempt by Franco aided by Mussolini and Hitler. The kibbutzim family I met then told me that they were living in an Arab-Jewish kibbutz, one of many others, and they were such beautiful people.

If Kibbutz Samar is in fact not only anarchist but the last of the kibbutz movement, then I must apologise because the article objected to by your correspondent quoted the press report that "the last of the kibbutz had given up". So there is still one, and more power to their elbows.

VR

## Are they playing at trains?

Dear Editors,

The letter from the the RMT signalworker (*Freedom*, 4th October) was interesting about Alan Walters and the Adam Smith Institute. Apart from that, it contained too much left-wing jargon and exaggerated what I said. I don't want to lower railway workers' wages in current society. I do want to keep a useful railway service running. It is apparent that some areas have been turned into middle class ghettos and even raising wages won't attract enough people to do shift work in some jobs in those areas. The latest example was the railway service. Previously it has affected the Post Office.

I don't want to see trains cancelled and passengers looking for road transport because no guard is available for a train. Alternatives should be considered while aiming to maintain safety standards. Ask the volunteer passengers to learn the guards' bit of the *Railway Rule Book* and see if they still want the job. A few might. They might be ex-railway workers!

I don't see this proposal as an example of de-skilling. The trend to cutting staff and getting more work out of the workers is more likely to involve multi-skilling (managers' current jargon). I think this is potentially more dangerous as people have to learn ever more operations that they do less frequently and forget more easily. That is the basis of the argument against part-time guards in terms of

safety. I don't want part-time signalworkers on the railways.

Having said all I can to suit the signalworker, I remain unrepentant. My idea of anarchism does not require people to confine themselves to the same full-time job with every penny argued about. If anyone wants to get support for a big rigid organisation and try to keep old methods going as they become obsolete they should look to a reformist party, not anarchists. In Great Britain that means the Labour Party or the pseudo-revolutionary far-left parties.

Adrian Williams

Dear Editors,

I could not agree more with the "RMT member and signalworker" in his letter to *Freedom*, 'Are they playing at trains?' (4th October), but surely he must have also seen my piece entitled 'For Goodness Sake! – Playing at Trains' (16th August). It's obvious that all trains should have a guard, but with more functions than sitting in the luggage van, which seems to be the case now under privatisation. *Freedom's* "RMT member and signalworker" is out of touch. The guards don't check passengers' tickets – another lot do occasionally, usually only on the Inter-City trains.

Libertarian

## In touch!

Dear Editors,

I've been out of touch with politics for a few years, but recently I've begun reading *Freedom* again and a lot of the articles in it are fascinating, especially those dealing with the practical heroic struggle of contemporary libertarians and anarchists whose self-sacrifice is inspiring. The current shift from one-issue politics to a general interest in philosophical anarchism of whatever kind is encouraging, and is symptomatic of my own experience with the standard leftist groups whose complacency and obsessive interest in self-publicity and pedantic division are turning off a large number of potential activists. Their thinkers, philosophers, leaders, are all dead and no one has stepped into the breach to fill the roles, so they have been left and accepted dead and irrelevant philosophy with which they have to work. The cries are the same that forced the Bakunin-led group to abandon the International, power-hunger and impractical demands without the support or individual strength and devotion to shake the current staid political system. There is more worth in one comrade disrupting the insidious workings of the JSA than in all the petty bickering of the 'fringe' left, whose radical nature died when the USSR was crushed and discredited. Thank you for non-propagandist reportage of the real issues.

Christi

## Tory Blair

Dear Comrades,

While agreeing with the general tenor of your lead article, 'The New Labour Warmongers' (4th October 1997), I fear you have failed to mention the most outrageous example of Tory Blair's sell-out to capitalism.

The fifth issue of the Labour Party's journal, *Progress*, has an elaborate six-page insert on military matters. The articles are written by George Robertson, Secretary of State for Defence, Dr John Reid, Minister for the Armed Forces, and John Spellar, Under-Secretary for Defence. The general drift of their arguments

is that there needs to be greater expenditure on weaponry. This is hardly surprising. The cost of this piece of Labour propaganda was paid for by twelve arms manufacturers. These include the likes of GEC-Marconi and Shorts, firms whose profits are likely to increase with military expenditure.

Yet Britain is confronted with a modern version of the guns or butter alternative. Either money can be spent on improving the inadequate educational system, the ramshackle health service, the pitiful old age pensions, or it can be spent on more missiles and nuclear weapons.

Tory Blair may not have so far discovered a potential enemy, but there remains no doubt which course of action he favours. The pamphlet

ends by lambasting the previous Conservative government for making unjustified cuts.

Raymond Challinor

PS: Incidentally, why does *Freedom* alter my contributions from Tory Blair to Tony Blair? The bugger is a Tory – he should be labelled as one.

[Our proof-reader has no sense of humour – Editors]

## ... and Diana?

Dear Freedom,

Diana? Now I know how a nation goes to war.

Andrew Harmer



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THE WORLD IN CRISIS AND THE  
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**24th October** Political Correctness (symposium)  
**31st October** Summerhill (speaker Kirsten Barton)  
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