

FREEDOM

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Plus ça change ... it's all back in the news!

EUROFIGHTERS, EDUCATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

In the last few months we have welcomed a number of new readers, and at the Bookfair last month sales of *Freedom* were brisk.

This note is to 'plug' the *Freedom* issue of 21st June¹ which contained no less than three main articles which are back in the news with a vengeance. Our editorial article was headed "Blair orders 232 Eurofighters for £14 billion" and we asked "Where's the enemy?" And on the same page another article asked "and where's the enemy for Trident?"

On page 4 we headed a long article "Work, education, schooling ... let's give them another look". The whole of the next page was taken up by Colin Ward's 'Anarchist Notebook' on the topic of the advocates of laziness which was pointing out that the editor of *Why Work?*² and Bertrand Russell, whose essay 'In Praise of Idleness' is included, were two notorious workaholics – but only for what they *wanted* to do after earning enough to live on.

The reason we recommend that issue and remind our regulars of its contents is that those three topics are now front page 'news'.

Item 1: Not only are the New Labour lot clobbered with the Eurofighter which, by the time it actually goes into production, will cost an extra £10 billion, but will also be 'out of date' by twenty years or so compared with what the Americans will be able to produce to wipe us all out once and for all. But then the Americans haven't even started producing the prototype for their ultimate weapon of 'democracy'.

Item 2: The government is just as involved as its predecessors in assuming that reading and writing and fitting in to 'jobs' is what education is all about. As we pointed out in that 21st June issue of *Freedom*, we must *learn* to distinguish between *schooling* and *education*. Significantly

they have shown that they haven't by threatening Summerhill School (founded in 1921 by A.S. Neill) for not being 'up to the mark' on English and maths. We won't comment here, since elsewhere in this issue we have a feature on Summerhill.

**Special feature on
the threat to
Summerhill School
- see page 5**

Item 3: In spite of the fact that this country's monthly statistics appear to show that Britain had the lowest unemployment figures in Western Europe, the fact are quite different and the government obviously knows that their minions are simply publishing the figures of the unemployed *receiving the dole*. The long-term unemployed have to look for charity elsewhere and are not included, nor are unemployed school-leavers and even unemployed graduates. All the arguments that the school-leavers, etc., have no skills is an excuse for saying that as more technology (Mr Gates and Co) takes over there are automatically fewer jobs even if you do have the skills. And of course the New Labour lot still agree with their Tory predecessors that Britain will not accept a 48-hour working week. Other countries are having to accept that 35 hours should be the maximum.

So all the government's proposals to spend a few million to train youngsters to do odd jobs – like street-cleaning, for instance? (no offence is meant: street-cleaning is more important socially than the Stock Exchange) – will do nothing until we the people realise that we have only one life and what it important is to enjoy it, not in all the superficial gadgets from mobile telephones to the

Internet, which seem to have become the alternatives to real relations between people as people with something valuable to say to each other and not to sell to each other.

State education is being geared to produce not human beings – after all, none of us chose to be born into this world – but an employable workforce which will keep the rich rich and the poor poor, but not starving, and even not having to spoil the view for tourists by sleeping in the doorways of the capital cities.

Anarchists are not 'the advocates of laziness'. Not believing in miracles, we obviously believe in producing all our needs to maintain a healthy existence for all, and surely the richness of anarchist literature shows, as many hundreds of visitors to the Freedom Press four-table stall at last month's Anarchist Bookfair will have realised, we are also believers in feeding the mind and the imagination.

Since most anarchists only believe in one life, it's not only exciting in what we do when we stop working for a living (even one that we may enjoy and are privileged to be able to determine) and start asking ourselves 'What is my life about?' Perhaps this reflection is that of an old person – and you are right. But beware, it happens to all of us in the end. So make sure you enjoy life before age tries to remind you that you've seen all this before, and it's then that depression sets in and there's only one solution.

So make sure you don't wait to 'enjoy' life after seventy, or even sixty-five. Enjoy it when you are young, even relatively young.

Libertarian

1. Copies of the 21st June issue of *Freedom* are still available. Send us two 26p stamps for your copy.

2. *Why Work? Arguments for the Leisure Society*, third reprint, 210 pages, £4.95 (post free inland, 15% overseas).

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

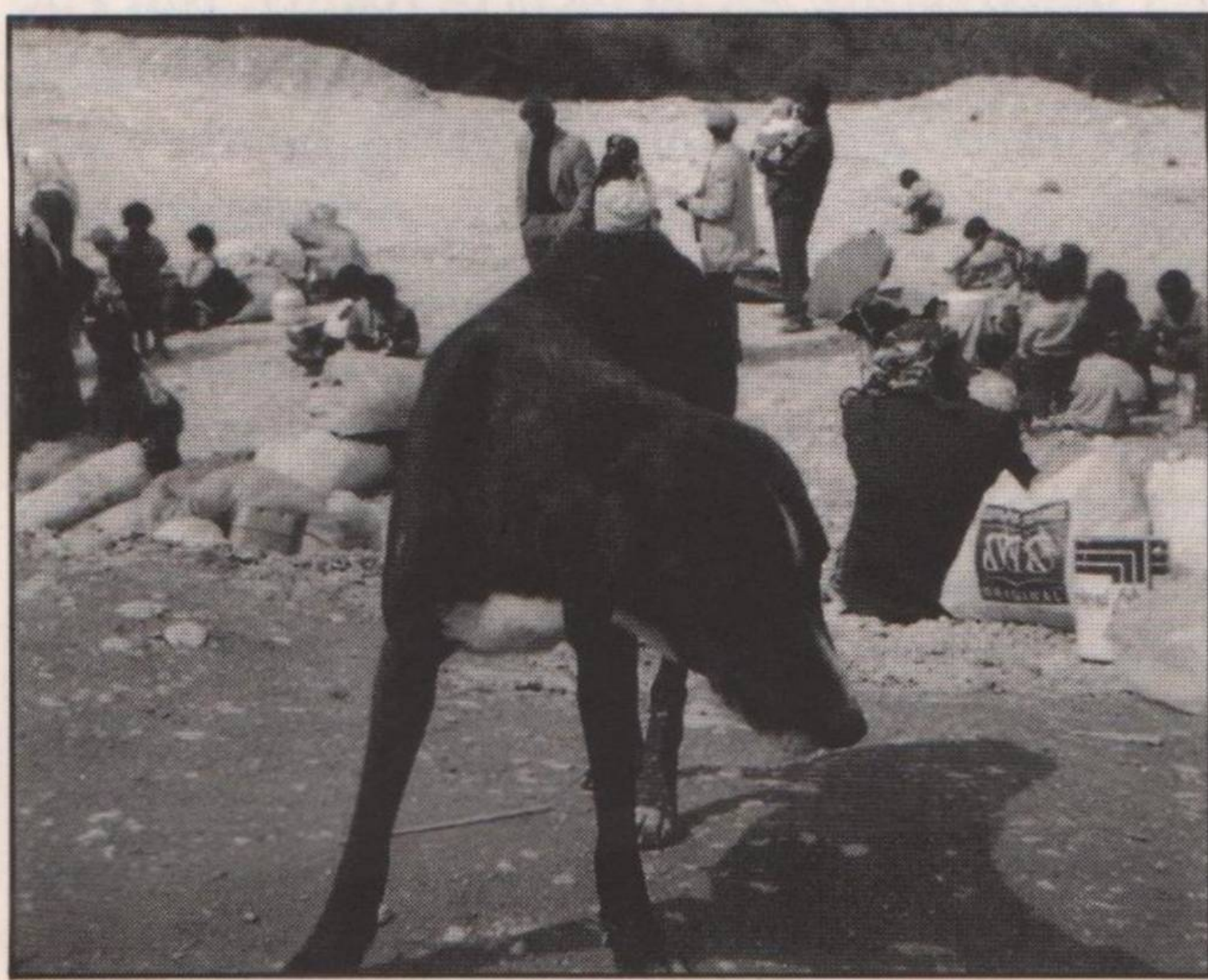
Vol. 58 No. 22

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Rochdale and Leeds

BUT WHO IS DOG'S BEST FRIEND?



'Le Chien Albania' (the Albanian dog),
with apologies to Luis Buñuel and the
surrealists.

As I look out across what passes for a village green in the front of the house, I can see that one of the few remaining joys left for the unemployed, perhaps disabled, working man is taking the dog for a walk. "These dogs keep me going" one jobless man told me the other day. But what happens when the local authority, under New Labour with its new broom, tries to take the man's dogs away?

This is what happened to Steve Binns when he took in the two dogs of a dying friend earlier this year. The council is saying he must get rid of the dogs or face eviction from his council flat. Steve already had two dogs of his own.

Mrs Dixon, a district housing manager in Rochdale, told me that "four dogs is too many for a small flat". She said there is no blanket ban on pets in Rochdale, but the council hasn't offered Mr Binns another bigger house in Castleton village where he lives. Ann Marie Danson, an assistant manager of housing, said: "This housing of a single man in a high demand area would not be a good use of resources".

Clearly the single man – even when, like Mr Binns, he is disabled and suffering from osteo-arthritis – is not flavour of the month under New Labour. A leaflet now circulating in the Castleton area claims: "The council's crackpot policy of housing allocation is threatening the stability of the community, creating disruption and imbalance ... and failing to create a diverse and harmonious environment". The leaflet adds: "Our area is becoming a ghetto of the single mother".

Ms Danson tells me there have been no reports of public order problems on the estate. She has not heard of any, and the 'local bobby' has not reported any trouble. But she has heard complaints of noise and barking dogs from Mr Binns's nearest neighbours. Other neighbours report roaming gangs damaging property and persecuting pensioners.

Councils are forever getting bees in their bonnet – just like governments. They are continually going over the top about some 'one-eyed' idea or another. It happens in education, in housing policy, in the current

drugs 'war' and in the 'New Deal' and 'Welfare to Work'.

Orwell, writing about corporation housing in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, noted that although the buildings were fine "there is something ruthless and soulless about the whole business". Then drawing attention to the restrictions, he wrote: "You are not allowed to keep your house and garden as you want them – in some estates there is even a regulation that every garden must have the same kind of hedge. You are not allowed to keep poultry or pigeons ... the corporation suppresses them as a matter of course".

Today the councils, under New Labour, seem to be suppressing the single unemployed man with pets as rigorously as they did the pigeons in Orwell's day.

SALVATION UNDER NEW LABOUR?

Who is dog's best friend? Not the bosses of the housing departments up and down this land. Nor Jim Dobbin, New Labour's MP for Rochdale, because he has not contacted the housing department on Mr Binns' behalf as he promised.

Who is the underdog's best friend? Not New Labour, who are still enforcing the Job Seeker's Act and Project Work, and look like dragooning the under-25s in a half-baked scheme called Welfare to Work. As for the disabled, a 47 year old man from Leeds is on hunger strike against the government implementation of Incapacity Benefit and the 'All Work Test'. Keith Rushworth is an ME sufferer who is being regularly tested for eligibility. The WSN paper *Action* reports that since the eligibility tests were introduced in 1995 "thousands of disabled people have had their benefits withdrawn". It seems, according to John Battle MP, that Benefit Agency doctors are on *performance related pay*.

The Job Seeker's Act, Project Work, Welfare to Work, the New Deal, the Incapacity Act, the All Work Test (a bonus system for doctors getting folk off benefits) – is this the grim face of New Labour? Ought we to be surprised?

Ought we to be surprised that Keith Rushworth is starving himself to death in his campaign against the All Work Test which Labour pretended to oppose when in the Opposition, or that Steve Binns is lost in New Labour's housing policy and near to breakdown?

Commenting on the rise of the manufacturing bosses in the nineteenth century, the gloomy realist writer George Gissing claimed "it [is] difficult to understand why the successful iron-founder should be a more sympathetic figure than the honest-hearted baronet. The one represents a coming triumph; the other, a sinking cause; but, in the meantime, it remains very doubtful whether the triumphant order will achieve

more for the interests of humanity than that which has received its death-blow".

Now that we live in a world of mediocre politicians and petty functionaries, doesn't it remain doubtful if one 'new' bunch of tiresome toss-pots can do more for humanity than the ones that preceded them? Does anyone really believe, even now as English humanity lies prostrate on Tony Blair's honeymoon bed, that New Labour offers them any sort of salvation?

THE UNDERDOG IN A SKEW-WHIFF COMMUNITY

Anarchists ought to worry about recent trends. While few would admit today to trusting a politician, there is a certain nastiness in the air. The venom which came to the surface among the local Dover politicians and publicans when it was invaded by Slovak gypsies last month, like the bitterness of the Greek authorities (reported in *Freedom* in April) in rounding-up the Albanian gypsies and evicting them in army wagons back to Albania.

Certain people are in danger under our present western system. The poor, the underdogs, the gypsies, the jobless – perhaps as many as 30% of the population of Europe are being left behind and scorned.

We anarchists know full well, as Herbert Spencer sweetly said, "there is no political alchemy by which you can get golden conduct out of leaden instincts". Today the political classes are awash with leaden instincts. Even our great English novelist of the common people, Charles Dickens, declared in a letter in 1855 that representative government is a failure in England owing to the national vice of 'flunkysm'. In 1939 George Orwell said the "common man is still living in the mental world of Dickens". That is the feeling that one should be "on the side of the under-dog" as shown in popular culture "in

folk stories and comic songs, in dream-figures like Mickey Mouse and Popeye the Sailor (both ... variants of Jack the Giant-Killer) ... in the impulse that makes a jury award excessive damages when a rich man's car runs over a poor man".

Today, what Dickens called the 'flunkeys' are still in situ together with the functionaries Dickens mocked in the 'Circumlocution Office' (Rochdale's housing department is evidence of that). What has changed is that the popular heroes and heroines are no longer Charlie Chaplin or Mickey Mouse, but more like Bluto or Goliath.

We must fear that the common spirit, even in England, is about to sell out to the bully. As George Gissing says, the best advice for all of us is Dickens's advice: "Never be mean, never be false, never be cruel".

What governments, even local governments, do is try to force people into moulds – the housing policy in Rochdale, the All Work Test in Leeds. The All Work Test is like trying to press-gang the disabled into fighting the Napoleonic Wars. The Rochdale housing policy in discriminating in favour of one group – the single mother – creates a lop-sided and skew-whiff community.

Albert Shore



Doomed dogs? Stephen Binns with Boss, Benji, Eric and Jazz.

Rich and Poor



There is no doubt that politics have changed in the past few years. This is entirely due to the anarchist upsurge both locally and internationally in every aspect of individual and communal contact and organisation.

Readers of this paper may have seen indications of this upsurge, but I doubt that many people appreciate the extent and quality of change which is taking place.

In my opinion, just to annotate or briefly comment on all aspect of agitation, ideas, improvements and achievements (for all human life is our concern) we would need a staff of thousands and even then we would not be able to cope with the flood of information which is reaching us. To talk about this in old fashioned journalistic terms, we would need the mal-used facilities of Reuters – building, equipment, staff and untold numbers of radio and telephone lines. Anybody who knows how the establishment media works must realise that to get any information which is reliable from those quarters needs the patience of Job, who must also be good at solving riddles.

One of the best sources of information that I can also recommend to readers is to get involved with what it called a-infos, which are astoundingly illuminating and efficient. You will find the address on the back page of *Freedom*. The International News page of *Freedom* has been consistently printing information which is not only news but is practically unavailable anywhere else in these newspaper-reading isles.

To deal with the doubting Thomases first. You who are avid readers of *The Guardian* and the rest, have you heard of the following very important news items which came on a-infos in the short space of 31st October to 4th November 1997?

Resistance to the MAI. Comrades in Canada are trying to 'instruct the government from signing on to the Multinational Agreement in Investments'. *The coup of all coups*. "The final blow in a most profound development in history is looming: the conquering of the world in the interest of the few without military force but rather with economic control".

Letter from Italian comrades (presumably smuggled out of jail) stating their views in no uncertain manner. "It certainly is not our intention to waste time trying to explain to judges and cops what anarchism means to us. ORA (or any other name the prosecutors decide to give us from time to time) ... let's not waste time, this group does not exist".

A convoy carrying Trident nuclear weapons was stopped twice by protesters in Scotland on 2nd November. As they passed through the village of Rhu on the shores of Gareloch they were brought to a standstill by eight protesters who appeared from a graveyard. Very appropriate. Hardly front-page news for such lame ducks as *The Guardian* or the *Cannabis Peddler*.

And this is the good news: if all goes well a party will be held for millions of anarchists all over the world. An incredible suggestion but it might work if we can agree on time and then wherever you are celebrate a-infos with your friends and community. Theoretically we could do a (contact) session that coincides with the time, but the point would be to have an international party when we all stop what we are doing and celebrate our labour and accomplishments. ("What do people think about this?" to which the answers came thick and fast: "If the whole project would not be that virtual I'd like to have a celebration now. Just meeting, talking about this and that, listening to music, drinking a glass of beer perhaps ... hic ...") All those different time zones. But if the party started to suit comrades in Australia or wherever at an unearthly hour, but say it lasted all day, this would be a party that could never end. I'd like to be invited – would be honoured to be invited – wouldn't you?

John Rety

Mucky Realism and Post-Modern Anarchism

Dear Editor,

Amongst the many things which are notable about the British 'left' one would have to include its sectarianism and its capacity for fractiousness, which very often inclines towards self-destruction. This is no less the case with what we might term the British anarchist movement, by which I include anarchists, anarcho-syndicalists and anarcho-communists. Far too often we see anarchists embroiled in petty squabbles at the expense of real political activity, and some groups appear to be so reclusive and inactive that they have almost degenerated into mutual appreciation societies or social clubs.

The letter from Hull Syndicalists (*Freedom*, 18th October 1997) which calls for the establishment of a national organisation to co-ordinate anarchist activity in Britain, is a welcome initiative in my view. Like our comrades in Hull, I would also like to see an anarchist organisation in this country which could be recognised as a coherent political force and, as such, was not afraid to get involved with other people's struggles and at the same time propagate anarchist/syndicalist ideas. Similarly many of us who are active and who have links with the anarchist movement are acutely aware of the extent to which many people in this country (especially young people) have become disaffected with mainstream British party politics as well as the authoritarianism of many groups on the 'left', and now see anarchism and direct action as more socially relevant as a means towards self-empowerment and direct democracy.

I shall be attending the founding conference in Bradford next March because, like Hull Syndicalists, I also want to see a credible anarchist/syndicalist organisation built in this country. I feel that it would be another missed opportunity if those of us within the British anarchist movement did not grasp the nettle and take advantage of what appears to be a resurgence of interest in this country at the moment of anarchist/syndicalist thoughts and ideas, particularly amongst the young.

D. Pattison

please keep sending in
your letters and
donations ...

Letter to Brian Bamford:

Oh Brian, really. I have always counted myself as one of your loyal fans and have long recognised your writings as the closest *Freedom* ever gets to proper journalism. But I have to take issue with your promotion of 'mucky realism' and the hagiographic depiction of *Freedom*.

To dismiss the competition as dreamy sleepwalkers locked into stereotypical categories is a wearying and cheap intellectual ploy more reminiscent of football phone-ins with their ya-boo rantings that strive only to rubbish the efforts of others. Such dialogue leaves any debate with a stark either/or choice rather than the more demanding post-modern both/and approach.

Maybe this is okay if it is meant to be read as tabloid provocation – though I can't see it going anywhere except entrenchment, surrender or apathy. But you don't stop there. You commit yourself to the most dangerous of statements by claiming you have a hold on reality itself and to know where the real solutions are to be found. History has long recorded the tragic results of similar claims. I really can't square how your more usual post-modern slant on everyday anarchism comes together on this?

To promote *Freedom* (sexy? faster on its feet than any other publication?) with the power to render the same reality further reduces the trustworthiness of your argument. The very fact that I have to address this letter to you rather than attempt to access *Freedom*'s letter columns speaks volumes against your portrayal of the paper as a 'racy' and 'radical' publication (I have tried eleven times in six years to get *Freedom* to publish material). I count myself as a veteran anarchist. I've made lots of cock-ups, have spent too many hours shouting the odds in back-room pubs, I lost a whole career from running a trades council on a syndicalist ticket and I can still dream of cities built by sunsets and canals that don't go anywhere. But I can't claim if any of these ventures, mucky or not, was the real or the truth. Further, if I ever find a comprehensive blueprint that tells me how to forecast and guarantee everything I've tried to strive for, then rest assured I will let you know.

Peter

And a reply:

I am a post-modernist out of convenience rather than conviction. Clearly my old friend Mr Peter Good is more dedicated to the doctrine. As a tool for tackling the analysis of contemporary society the post-modern

conception seems to have some uses to the anarchist in explaining things like the decline of Marxism, the place of anarcho-syndicalism in modern society, the relationship between the anarchist peasant of the Sierras and the anarcho-syndicalist urban CNT branches in the cities in Andalucia (see *The Raven* No. 36, edited by Harold Sculthorpe), and the distinction between the German workers and the Spaniards in their resistance to fascism in Europe.

Mr Good seems to cling to post-modernism as if it were some sort of new faith. I just use post-modernism as I would use a pistol drill instead of a brace and bit. Tomorrow I may have to cast aside the pistol drill if I find something better to do the job.

I reject the idea of turning the tool of post-modernism into a fetish, because it seems to propose that there are no social facts and this is implied in Mr Good's letter where he says he can't claim anything he does is 'real' or 'the truth'. This could lead to a silly solipsist position, to the idea that we exist in a world of private languages, and ultimately to Lady Thatcher's proposition that there is no such thing as society.

I don't have a blueprint, comprehensive or otherwise. I don't even have a surefire method for discovering social facts or reality. But I do accept that there is a reality and social facts. Social facts may be hard to grasp, but they still exist. And if we accept the impossibility of a private language then, Raymond Plant says, this "means that we cannot identify our experience except through concepts which are part of a common stock of experience". In this context Mr Good's intellectual wonderings hint at an idea of an unencumbered self which is incoherent and can't serve as a basis of social commitment and shared political judgements of the kind coming from the Bury school of what I called 'Mucky Realists'.

Mr Good must tell us if he thinks the experience of the dole queue claimants and shopfloor workers are not real, but merely mental states.

Brian Bamford

Oligarchy

Dear *Freedom*,

Larry Gambone (*Freedom*, 18th October) asks if anyone knows of cases where oligarchy has not arisen, as an answer to Roberto Michels (not Michel as Gambone has written). In *People Without Government*, and also in the section of it reproduced in *Culture and Anarchism*, I discussed this issue and among other things pointed to two cases where oligarchy did not arise. The first was that of the International Typographers Union. Seymour Lipset and his colleagues investigated this union and found conditions which might preclude a bureaucratic and authoritarian development. "Interestingly enough they entail little an anarchist theoretician might not have told him: small units, a variety of autonomous local voluntary associations, several interest groups none of which can control or monopolise power, no great differences in socio-economic status and a general state of economic security for all, an educated population and one which shows a high degree of participation in communal affairs, a high sense of solidarity, and leaders who are not given much salary or status difference ... I would also suspect that a conscious will of the membership to preserve a free society is no small factor in this process" (*People Without Government*, pages 146-147). The second example in which oligarchy did not arise, it seems to me, was in the Industrial Workers of the World and for reasons similar to those Lipset found for the typographers.

However, the prevailing direction of organisations seems to accord with the 'iron law of oligarchy'. (Reference: *Union Democracy*, Seymour Lipset, Martin Trow and James Coleman, Doubleday, 1956)

Harold Barclay

An Alarming Alchemy

Dear *Freedom*,

Mack the Knife's article on economics ('An Alarming Alchemy in Modern Government', *Freedom*, 1st November) was very good as far as it went, but it awarded the subject too much dignity in trying to describe it as a 'social science'.

The Stock Exchange has already been described as "the world's biggest gambling casino" and more than one economist has stated that "everyone who buys or sells a share is placing a wager on the future performance of a company".

All gambling is an attempt to predict which number in a series of random numbers will come up next, whether the number of a horse, dog, racing car, athlete or in the national lottery.

Every gambler tries to come up with a system to find a way of calculating the next number to come up, whether by studying the form of horses or by looking for patterns in occurring numbers.

Consequently every racetrack is frequented by bookmakers who take bets, and by touts and tipsters who claim to be able to predict winners or who offer their 'foolproof' systems for sale to whichever mug they can bamboozle.

Does this not therefore mean that in the biggest casino in the world, the Stock Exchange, the stockbrokers are the bookmakers and the economists and economic theorists are the touts and tipsters? This would mean that, far from being a science, or even a social science, economics is no more than a collection of competing gambling systems.

Admittedly when it comes to touts and tipsters Prince Monolulu, with his colourful ethnic clothing and feathered head-dress and raucous cry of "I gotta horse! I gotta horse!", was a lot more entertaining and did a lot less damage than those humourless unsmiling grey men Hayek, Friedman and Alan Walters!

Keith Ackermann

Liverpool Dockers vote to continue the fight

After more than two years locked out, and despite real financial difficulties, the four hundred Liverpool dockers have voted overwhelmingly in a secret postal ballot to reject the company's 'final offer' of £28,000 each if they walked away from the fight to get their jobs back.

The ballot was forced on them by the bureaucrats of the T&G, who are constantly looking for a way to get them out of the dispute, but it blew up in their faces, even though they excluded the eighty men whose dispute with Torside was the spark which

started the lock-out. If these eighty men were included the result was a staggering 293 to 97 against taking the money.

The dockers are obviously made up over this result as it gives a definite message to everyone that their fight is not about selfish gain but to keep good quality jobs on Merseyside ... bearing in mind that many of the scabs now working in the port have got zero-hour contracts and receive only a quarter of the £10 an hour that it used to cost the company to hire workers.

Despite the blusterings of the MDHC, the

international dockers' strike action in support of the Liverpool men has cost the company millions. Since the last global strike day on 8th September, dockers in the USA, Canada, Australia and Portugal have continued to boycott shipping lines using a container ship connected with scab company ACL. It has become a sort of modern Flying Dutchman. From Europe it sailed to Oakland, USA, where it was met with a picket; the same happened in Vancouver where longshoremen wouldn't touch its cargo. The cursed ship could have been flying the historical yellow flag signifying cholera on board, such was the reaction it gained wherever it berthed.

In Yokohama, Japan, dockers unloaded the wrong cargo, the one originally destined for Oakland, leaving it on the quayside. Finally, in Kobe, Japan's militant dockers again stuck two fingers up to the MDHC, refusing to unload the Neptune Jade. The last to be heard of the Neptune Jade was that she was bound for union-free Hong Kong, where she would be sold and renamed.

This solidarity, and the thousands of pounds donated by dockers around the globe, is inspiring but it isn't winning the dispute. Dockers we spoke to on a factory tour of Hull last week were of the opinion that other port employers, and most importantly the government, are bank-rolling the MDHC –

— COPY DEADLINE —

The next issue of Freedom will be dated 29th November, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 20th November

GROUNDSWELL CONFERENCE

Sheffield, 1st November 1997

At the recent Groundswell conference in Sheffield attended by groups from Edinburgh, Manchester, Bury, Tameside, Sheffield, Nottingham, London and Brighton, new strategies were proposed to combat the Labour government's New Deal and Welfare to Work schemes. Also at the conference was Lee Rock, a victimised CPSA union member. It will be remembered that Mr Rock survived a witch-hunt by the CPSA chief executive and Blairite Mr Barry Reamsbottom. Mr Rock attended with the hope of forging better understanding between Employment Service staff and Groundswell.

As it happened, an opportunity was missed by Groundswell when it was deemed that Mr Rock's attendance was inflaming a situation that existed between the Nottingham campaign against the JSA and the CPSA union members at the Castle Boulevard dole office in Nottingham. This situation had arisen when members of the Nottingham campaign had been arrested by the police on the prompting of CPSA officials with an alleged involvement of Nottingham Trades Council. What Mr Rock's involvement in all of this is I fail to see since he resides in London, but because members of Groundswell felt compromised by Mr Rock's attendance, Mr Rock left after giving an opening speech.

On Labour's New Deal for the unemployed of ages 18-24 due to be piloted in January 1998, there was discussion about the proposed four options. These options, which are in effect compulsory on pain of losing benefit, are:

1. Subsidised employment.
2. Full-time education.
3. Work in the voluntary sector.
4. Work with an environmental task force.

It was noted that if the New Deal is so good why does it need to be made compulsory. In effect, since the New Deal is a bum deal for the unemployed there needs to be a fifth option: that is the option not to take any of the other four options.

Information had been received from sources in the Employment Service about Welfare to Work and the delivery through partnership in London and the South East. This is an information pack detailing Labour's New Deal team and all the organisations and companies queuing up for a slice of the action. Some large companies are involved and it was decided to target one of these, such as Tesco the well known supermarket, in the near future.

It was felt that many of the companies involved in the New Deal will use the 'cream' of the unemployed – those who are the best educated, most skilled, but mainly those with the correct attitude – as part of the on-going recruitment policy. After all, the employer has much to gain from a £60 a week subsidy plus a £750 grant to provide some training. As can be seen from the TECs, voluntary organisation and private companies who attended the recent training and employment network conference hosted by MP Andrew Smith at Sachas Hotel in Manchester, they are all clamouring to do

lucrative business with Labour.

It is obvious that for the companies who use Labour's New Deal it will mean a reduction of wages and conditions for present employees, who risk the prospect of being out-bid for their job by a New Deal recruit. In fact any employer using the New Deal need only pay £60 a week, which is the level of the subsidy itself, to the recruit. This is quite alarming and will mean the unemployed working for £1.50 an hour. This fact will be used by Groundswell to drive home the fact that Labour's New Deal is a bum deal for the unemployed and employed alike.

What was apparent at the Groundswell conference was the continuity of the struggle against the JSA, Project Work, the New Deal and Welfare to Work despite a Labour government having been elected. This is in sharp contrast to the TUC's position of compromise to the Labour Party and the New Deal. Only recently the TUC had approached their network of trades councils to help set up steering groups committed to delivering the New Deal. The TUC, having served time on the touchline during the Conservative government, are just itching to be given any influence in the field of play with Labour.

This correspondent believes that Groundswell remains the authentic voice of resistance to the anti-working class legislation of the Labour government.

Jim Evans

TRAINING AND ENTERPRISE FRAUD

Amid allegations of widespread fraud among training companies working for the TECs (Training and Enterprise Councils) across the country the government is moving to close down a TEC at the centre of a £1 million fraud inquiry. Investigators have pin-pointed twenty cases of alleged fraud involving TECs.

This follows suggestions made in Freedom last month that there has been an air of laxity in the approach of poverty professionals and training providers as well as TECs to the acquiring of funding from the government.

Some of the alleged companies have been paid to teach non-existent trainees, and others are said to be applying for funds for training the jobless when the people are already in work. Already the Central England TEC, situated in Redditch, faces closure. Others may follow.

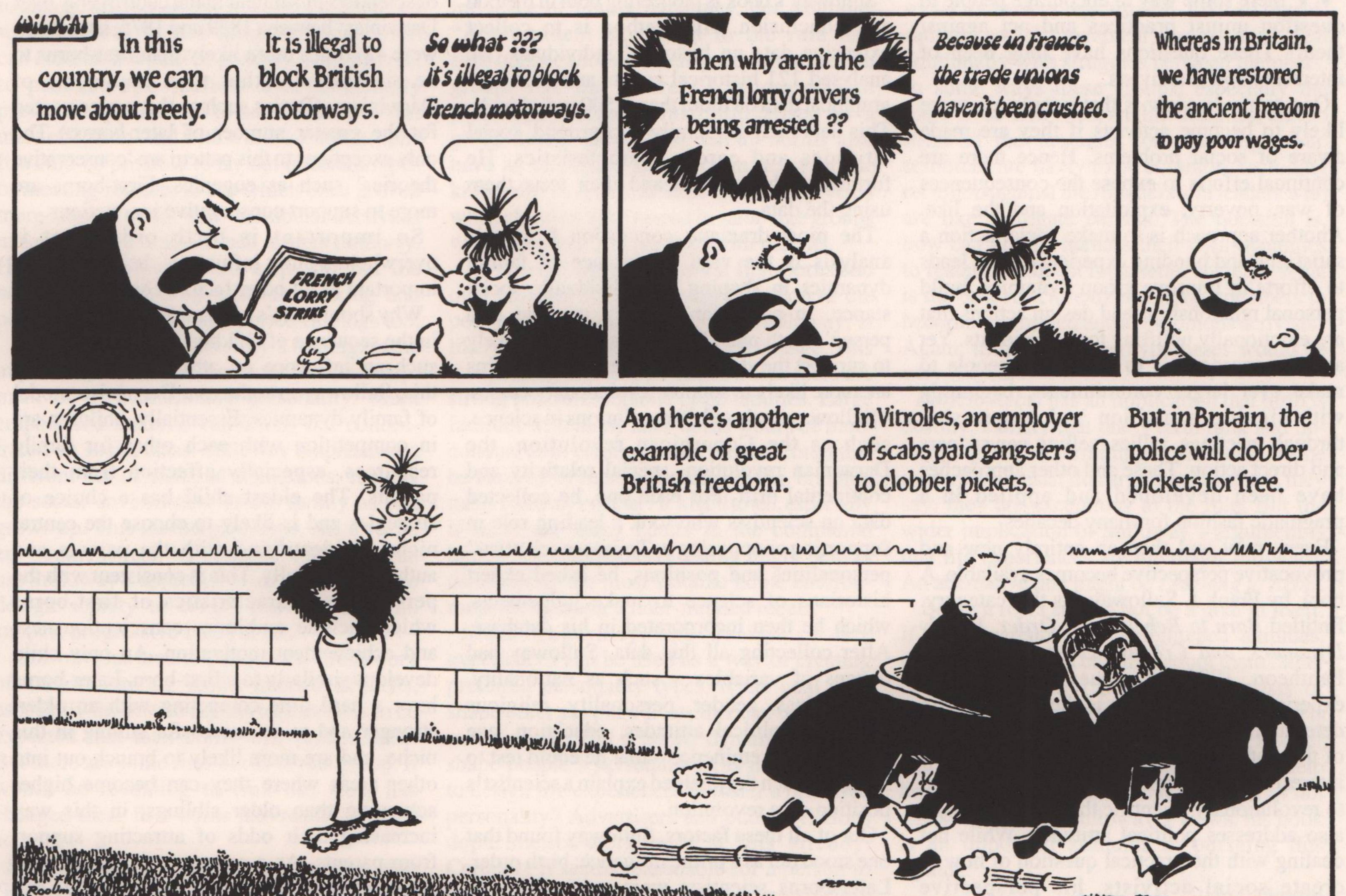
More than £500 million of public money for

training schemes passes through the TECs each year. The Tories set up the TECs in the early 1990s as private-sector-led bodies. Some are affiliated to private-sector-based Chambers of Commerce.

Some who know them see them as sharks who will be leading the bids and tenders to get public money out of the new Labour Welfare to Work and New Deal programmes. Since the South Thames TEC went into receivership three years ago, the fraud claims which came to light last month are the biggest embarrassment for the TECs.

Journalists at The Financial Times warned: "The 79 TECs in England and Wales have been promised a 'crucial role' in the government's £3.5 billion welfare to work plans offering unemployed 18-24 year olds a job, voluntary work or training – but it is unclear what the role will be".

Hijacking the £3.5 billion could be one objective. Unemployed Worker



— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

ALGERIA AND THE LEGACY OF CAMUS



One of the penalties of being old is that you are obliged to remember people and events that have dropped out of common knowledge. The excellent Ipswich Film Theatre was showing a new print of Gillo Pontocorvo's 1965 film *The Battle of Algiers*, and my partner was obliged to see it again since members of the next generation of our family demanded from her some explanation of the struggle for independence in Algeria.

On the very next Saturday, 11th October, BBC2's *Bookmark* programme devoted ninety minutes to the life and loves of Albert Camus, the French-Algerian writer who is also the subject of a new biography, *Albert Camus: A Life* by Olivier Todd (Chatto, £20). Both occasions led me to my old press cuttings from this journal to discover that in *Freedom* for 16th January 1960 I wrote not only the front-page report "Tortured men and starving children of Algeria" but also on an inside page an appreciation of Camus who died that month.

Decades later I find the first of these reports appalling to read, precisely because 35 years after the French government conceded Algerian independence in 1962, the international pages of the press has reports like that of David Hirst in *The Guardian* of 18th October 1997, writing from the Mitidja Plain under the "cloudless North African sky" but now known as the "triangle of death". He explained that:

"It is here, on the outskirts of the capital, that the most extreme and barbarous of Algeria's insurgents, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), are most strongly entrenched. Here, almost daily, they axe and burn to death men, women and children, making what one of their commanders reportedly described as 'offerings to God'."

Now, all these years since Camus died in a road accident at the age of 46, there are anarchists whose first response to his name is that he was one of those *pièdes noirs* opponents of Algerian independence. There are immense ironies about this. One is that Camus was reared in poverty. His father, who he never knew, was a farm labourer killed in the first months of the First World War. His mother was an illiterate and deaf Spanish immigrant who slaved as a cleaner to keep her precious son at school. Another is that Camus was a campaigner for the social and political

equality of the Arab population in his journalism for *Alger Républicain* before his critics had discovered where Algeria was. (He had joined the French Communist Party in 1935 but was expelled as a 'Trotskyite agitator' in 1937 because of his support for the radical Muslim nationalist Messali Hadj.)

By 1939 he was editing an Algerian newspaper which was first censored and then banned, and Camus, already plagued by tuberculosis, was obliged to leave for metropolitan France. Then, after the collapse of 1940, he went back to North Africa, returning in 1942 to participate in, and later edit, the clandestine paper *Combat*, which became an important left-wing journal after the war.

His series of articles *Neither Victims nor Executioners* appeared there in November 1946, and I remember being thrilled by it when Dwight Macdonald translated it in the July-August 1947 issue of *Politics*. This (even though it reads in a rather dated and opaque way in the 1990s) was a repudiation of the

Cold War and a refusal to take sides. It alienated him from the French communists like Sartre, who had concluded that it was okay to ignore Stalin's slave state since, in a metaphysical way, the world's communist parties then represented the future.

Camus went on to write his most celebrated book *The Plague* in 1947 and his most anarchic book *The Rebel* in 1951. There he claimed that all modern revolutions have simply enlarged the power of the state, and from this he moved on to the themes of his last gloomy novel *The Fall* in 1956. In the 1950s Camus was drawn ever closer to the struggling journals of the anarchists.

I don't know how Olivier Todd describes this period, but the earlier biographer, Herbert Lottman, comments on the association between Camus and Pierre Monatte, who published *Revolution Proletarienne*, and with Giovanna Berneri of *Volontà*, Jean Paul Samson who published *Témoins*, Maurice Joyeux of *Le Libérateur* and *Le Monde Libérateur*, and with the Spanish exiles who produced *Solidaridad Obrera* until, according to Lottman, "the paper was eventually banned by the de Gaulle government to avoid giving offence to General Franco". In his political isolation he had recourse to "the men and women of political movements with which he could still sympathise, those of the far-out left, who on their own chosen terrain were often as lonely as he was".

The new biography was discussed very interestingly by R.W. Johnson in the *London Review of Books* (16th October 1997). Johnson comes from South Africa, where he is now director of the Helen Suzman Foundation in Johannesburg. He reckons that it was "almost lucky" that Camus was killed in a car crash, because he could not have borne the mass killing that accompanied the end of the Algerian war, nor the subsequent history.

Yet he finds that Camus remains a contemporary figure, while Sartre and the other French intellectuals of those days do not:

"In my own corner of Africa in the early '60s I was part of a communist group which dreamed of armed guerrilla action to avenge the Sharpeville massacre. We were children of the '50s and Camus was one of our icons. Although we read *The Rebel* and *L'Etranger*, we were more gripped by the fact that, at the other end of the continent, a similar revolt against white minority rule was taking place but at a stage far more advanced than our own.

We supported the FLN unconditionally – taking its socialism seriously and disregarding its authoritarianism when we should have done the opposite. I could say now that we were simply unaware of the brutal measures it took to enforce its hegemony but, had we known, we would certainly have rationalised them as necessary. We were, however, bitterly aware of the measures taken against the FLN ..."

He goes on to explain that he now sees Camus as more right than wrong:

"His cause was never that of the racist *pièdes noirs* – he had campaigned all his life for universal suffrage and Arab emancipation. That blending of peoples and civilisations on the North African littoral was, despite the cruelties and deformations of colonialism, a precious thing and the victory of the FLN destroyed it utterly. The messianic promises of socialism, revolutionary democracy and all the rest were simply false. Women were forced back into the veil; there was corruption, authoritarianism, social regression and, for thirty years, no free elections were held. The present civil war – the aftermath – has already cost at least sixty thousand lives."

Indeed, I find that in 1960 my obituary of Camus in *Freedom* quoted from his *Chronique Algérienne* of 1958 where he observed that:

"When violence reacts to violence with a frenzy which exacerbates and makes impossible the simple language of reason, the role of the intellectual cannot be to excuse from afar one of the violences and to condemn the other. This has the double effect of working the condemned violence up to a fury, and encouraging to further violence the violence which has been exonerated."

The meaning is clear, despite my clumsy translation, and subsequent history around the world has shown him to be correct.

Colin Ward

CREATING REBELS

What makes people become rebels? Is there some way to encourage people to question unjust practices and act against them? These questions have long been of interest to social activists.

One common view is that people are more likely to become activists if they are made aware of social problems. Hence there are continual efforts to expose the consequences of war, poverty, exploitation and the like. Another approach is to make social action a satisfying and bonding experience. This leads to efforts to improve group dynamics, build personal relationships and design actions that are emotionally uplifting for participants. Yet another approach is to encourage people to make ever larger commitments, beginning with signing a petition and progressing through meetings, rallies, selling newspapers and direct action. These and other approaches have been developed and applied in a pragmatic fashion for many decades.

Every now and then an entirely new and provocative perspective becomes available. A book by Frank J. Sulloway fits this category. Entitled *Born to Rebel: Birth Order, Family Dynamics, and Creative Lives* (New York: Pantheon, 1996), it argues that a child's experience in the family is the key factor in determining whether he or she is a supporter of the status quo or a rebel. Sulloway's main interest is in explaining support or opposition to revolutionary scientific theories, though he also addresses political attitudes. While not dealing with the practical question of how to create social activists, his perspective

provides some important lessons.

Sulloway's book is pioneering both in method and conclusion. His method is to collect extensive data on historical individuals. He analysed 121 historical events and used biographical data on more than 6,500 individuals. This data includes family background, social attitudes and career characteristics. He formulates hypotheses and then tests them using the data.

The most dramatic conclusion from this analysis is the vital importance of family dynamics in shaping an individual's social stance. In particular, the key variable is a person's birth rank. First-borns are more likely to support the status quo, whereas later-borns are more likely to support revolutionary causes.

Sulloway analysed 28 revolutions in science, such as the Copernican revolution, the Darwinian revolution, special relativity and continental drift. For each one, he collected data on scientists who took a leading role in supporting or opposing it. To assess scientists' personalities and positions, he asked expert historians of science to make judgements, which he then incorporated in his database. After collecting all this data, Sulloway had dozens of variables – such as nationality, social class, gender, personality, religious attitudes, political attitudes, education, age and scientific eminence – that he could test to see how much they helped explain a scientist's position on a revolution.

Out of all these factors, Sulloway found that one stood out as a prime influence: birth order. Later-borns scientists were more likely to

support revolutions in science. For example, of scientists prominent in the controversy over Darwinism between 1859 and 1875, later-borns were 4.6 times more likely than first-borns to be supporters rather than opponents of Darwinism. (Ratios such as this are corrected for the greater number of later-borns.) The only exceptions to this pattern are 'conservative theories' such as eugenics. First-borns are more to support conservative innovations.

So important is birth order that it overwhelms other influences, being twice as important as all other factors combined.

Why should one's birth rank – one's position in the sequence of children in a family – have such an influence on attitudes? To explain this, Sulloway introduces a Darwinian model of family dynamics. Essentially, children are in competition with each other for family resources, especially affection from their parents. The eldest child has a choice of strategies and is likely to choose the central niche of identifying with the parents and authority generally. This is consistent with the personality characteristics of first-borns which include ambition, conscientiousness and achievement motivation. An only child develops similarly to a first-born. Later-borns have a hard time competing with an older, stronger and more successful sibling in this niche, and are more likely to branch out into other areas where they can become higher achieving than older siblings, in this way increasing their odds of attracting support from parents. As a consequence, later-borns are more likely to question the status quo and

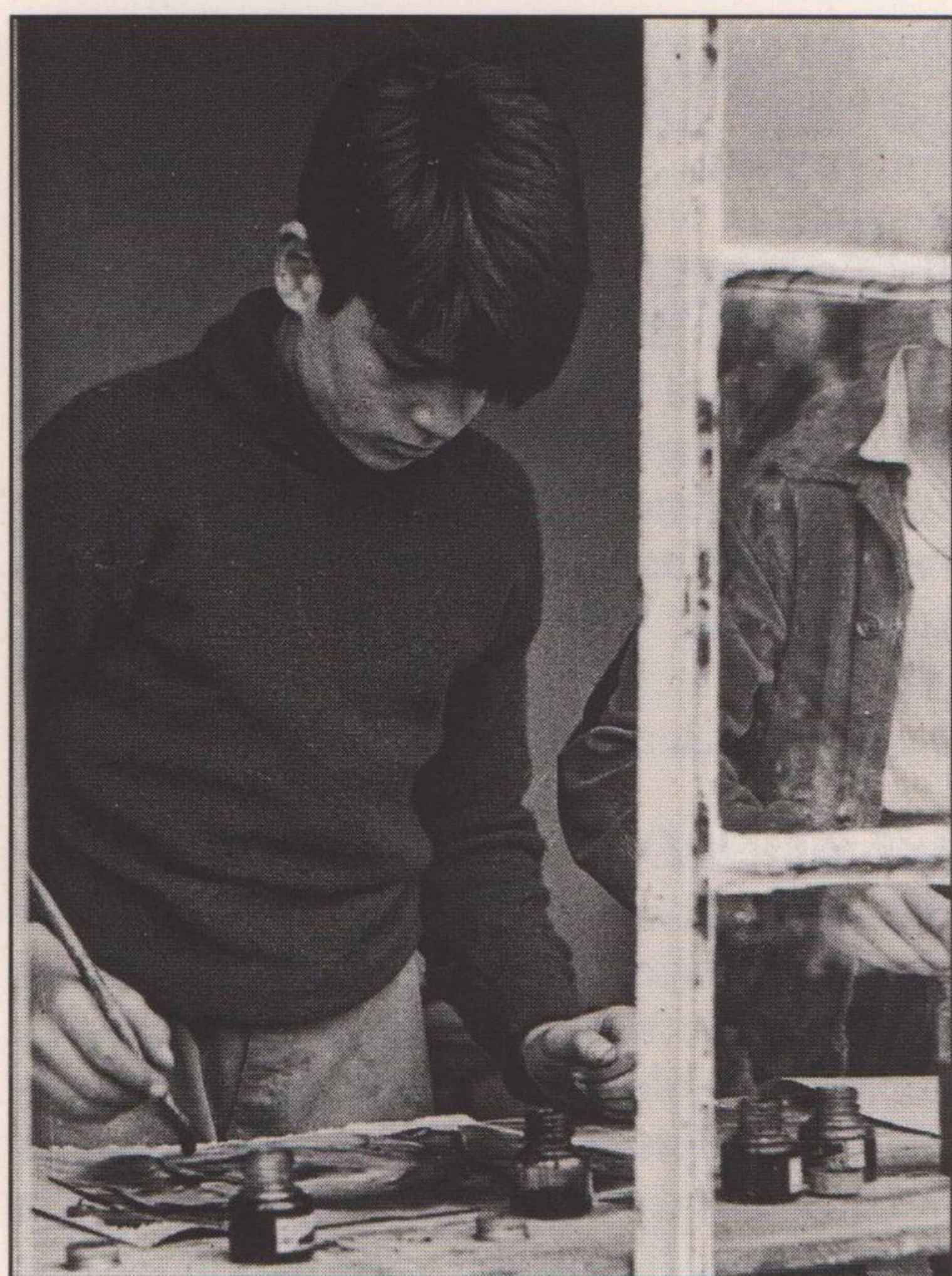
to develop a 'revolutionary personality'.

Other factors also enter into the picture. High conflict with parents increases the odds of rebellion. But these other factors must be considered in relation to birth order. Conflict with parents is more influential in changing first-borns (towards greater rebellion) than in changing later-borns. Other factors that are important are the total number of children, gender, age gaps, age when a parent is lost, social class and temperament. Each of these needs to be understood in a picture of a struggle within the family for resources.

As well as analysing revolutions in science, Sulloway investigated the Protestant Reformation, the French Revolution and other political revolutions. For example, he analysed the percentage of first-borns in the legislature in different French political parties during the revolutionary period 1789-1794. This was high among the staunch royalists who had supported the monarchy. It was lowest among the parties devoted to liberal principles. But it was also high among the revolutionaries who launched the Reign of Terror. Sulloway says that "First-borns sought to prove their revolutionary loyalties by their predilection for violence, not by their devotion to liberalism" (page 313). A significant point is that social class explains almost nothing about the position of leading political figures during the French Revolution, whereas birth order explains quite a lot. The Revolution was struggle of brother against brother, with many siblings lined up on opposite sides of the chamber.

Born to Rebel is a frontal challenge to Marxist theories of revolution, arguing that social class is of trivial significance compared to birth order in predicting who will rebel. It also challenges Freudian analysis in arguing

DEFEND SUMMERHILL



Summerhill, the Leiston progressive school founded by A.S. Neill in 1921, is being threatened by the Labour government's Minister for Education because Blunkett's blind inspectors cannot see that education is something more than achieving standards in mathematics and English and all about learning something about 'life' and what that's all about.

The *Independent* (27th October) features it with a headline "Progressive school faces closure after inspection", while the *Guardian* (28th October) devotes the whole of the review to an excellent piece by Linda Grant with the sub-head "the school inspectors are barking up the wrong tree: Summerhill is in a class of its own". And the main heading, "A lesson lost in the woods", referring to the fact that the kids at Summerhill are free to wander off in the woods on a nice day instead of attending class. Surely this is education for life.

This writer could not resist calling Neill's daughter Zoe Readhead on the telephone to congratulate her for having pledged to shut the school herself rather than compromise her father's vision of a 'free school' whose liberal ethos has inspired and infuriated educationalists in equal measure.

She has been given six months in which to "convince officials from the Department for

Education and Employment" that her pupils will conform to *their* standards.

Why shouldn't parents in a so-called democracy choose the kind of education their children should have? After all, the rich can choose from Eton to Harrow, and the Prime Minister can send his kids to a Catholic school. So why shouldn't so-called 'cranky' parents send their children to the schools *they* prefer?

One cannot help adding quite a footnote. After all, *Freedom* has been involved for a long time with Summerhill. At the end of the last war (1939-45) one of the editors, the late lamented Marie Louise Berneri,* when her companion was in prison for disaffection, in order to earn some money started taking photographs for a French journalist and one of her assignments was Summerhill. She had many meetings with A.S. Neill which impressed her, but even more so were the kids who were so uninhibited. In this feature we are



reproducing three photos: two of the young artist (is he still alive and painting?) and a reproduction of the painting.

The caption on one of the photos says that at Summerhill (and I translate) "drawing and painting play a large role in the free education of these children".

I think I know the boy's name, but he must

now be a seventy year old and might perhaps not wish me to print it. **VR**

* Marie Louise Berneri (1918-1949), daughter of Giovanna and Camillo Berneri, was an editor of *War Commentary* and *Freedom* from 1937 to 1949, and author of *Journey through Utopia* and *Neither East nor West*.

that sex is much less significant than birth order in shaping personality.

There are many objections that can be raised on first hearing of Sulloway's arguments. For example, perhaps the conservatism of first-borns was due to the practice of primogeniture, in which the family inheritance went to the first-born son. Sulloway considered this and tested it, finding it not to be a major factor in the propensity to rebel. He has looked at many details and complicating factors, such as the removal of a child from a family. He finds that a later-born who is removed and reared by a relative as a first-born behaves like a typical first-born. The key is functional birth order rather than biological birth order, because that is what affects the struggle for family resources. Sulloway's book is the product of 25 years of work and is an impressive piece of scholarship. As well, it is engagingly written.

He notes that while his findings are predictors of behaviour only in a statistical sense, they are remarkably robust, applying over twenty different countries in his sample and over a period of nearly five centuries. Few historical generalisations have a similar power.

Even without passing judgement about the validity of Sulloway's analysis, it is still possible to draw some insights concerning the task of promoting progressive social change. Perhaps the most significant point is the importance of hypothesis testing. Sulloway is an historian who subscribes to the traditional scientific approach of formulating hypotheses and then using data to test them. For example, one of his hypotheses is that "radical change is more acceptable to young people". He tested it using his data and found it confirmed.

Social movements are not noted for their commitment to hypothesis testing. They are

more likely to proceed on the basis of the good judgement of experienced activists. This may work, but how do we really know?

Sulloway's task in *Born to Rebel* is to help explain the dynamics of scientific and other revolutions. The task of social movements is to change society, so the hypotheses proposed would need to involve variables that activists can control. It would be possible, for example, to produce two leaflets with differently presented appeals and to see which one was more effective – and with which sorts of people. It would be possible to try out different types of meeting formats to see which ones proved more attractive to new members. Activists make judgements about such matters routinely. Hypothesis testing could help sort out the helpful insights from wishful thinking and perhaps reveal some unexpected findings too.

A key lesson from Sulloway's findings is the importance of material conditions in the development of a revolutionary personality. Marx emphasised material conditions but concentrated on social class. Sulloway emphasises a different set of material conditions, namely the social environment of the family as one grows up. This should give hope, since social environments can be changed. Activists can use Sulloway's approach to investigate how to design society to create more rebels who support progressive innovations.

One obvious area to study is the life history of activists. Among 'tender-minded' activists, especially those who reject violence, it is to be expected that later-borns will predominate. But there are some first-borns in this group. It would be revealing to find out what has changed these first-borns into tender-minded activists.

Sulloway gives a few hints. He notes that Galileo was a first-born and hence not likely

to be a revolutionary scientist. Galileo was an exception to the rule because he was the son of a radical: "His father taught him to question authority and to do so, moreover, by experimental means" (page 204).

Group norms can also prevail over the influence of family dynamics. For example: "A prominent exception to the rule that first-borns endorse violent methods is seen in groups like the Quakers – whose pacifist philosophy became institutionalised as a group norm" (page 538). Group norms also have an enormous influence in many of the kibbutzim in Israel, at least in the early years when children were reared in same-age groups with relatively little contact with parents.

As families become smaller, first-borns and only children become a larger fraction of the population, which, according to Sulloway, is likely to be a force against radical change. This is especially the case in China where there are strong pressures against large families. Large families with many later-borns would be more conducive to creating more rebels. Could this be fostered by more communal living, bringing many children together? It's hard to tell, especially if there are many adults in the communal home. Some hypothesis testing might help in determining the most suitable home environment for creating tender-minded rebels.

More generally, the design of life experiences can be used as a way of creating preferred personality types. If the goal is to shape other people's lives, this can be seen as manipulative. But if family dynamics already shape people's personalities, is it so horrible to design life experiences to foster a preferred personality? Advertisers and public relations departments work hard at this already. Certainly it seems reasonable for a person to think about their own preferred personality

and to choose life experiences to foster it. For example, Sulloway finds that extensive travel is correlated with revolutionary personality, so undertaking travel is a way to transform one's own attitudes.

Closer to home is the environment of the social movement organisation. Like all organisations, social movement groups must deal continually with struggles between members. In some ways these groups, especially the more close-knit ones, are like families, and so some of the strategies for obtaining group resources are likely to be common, including rebellion against the founders and leaders who are like surrogate parents. The question is, how can groups harness their own dynamics to foster their quest for a better society? What is the best structure to encourage members to become committed and autonomous activists? Again, testing of some hypotheses would be very helpful.

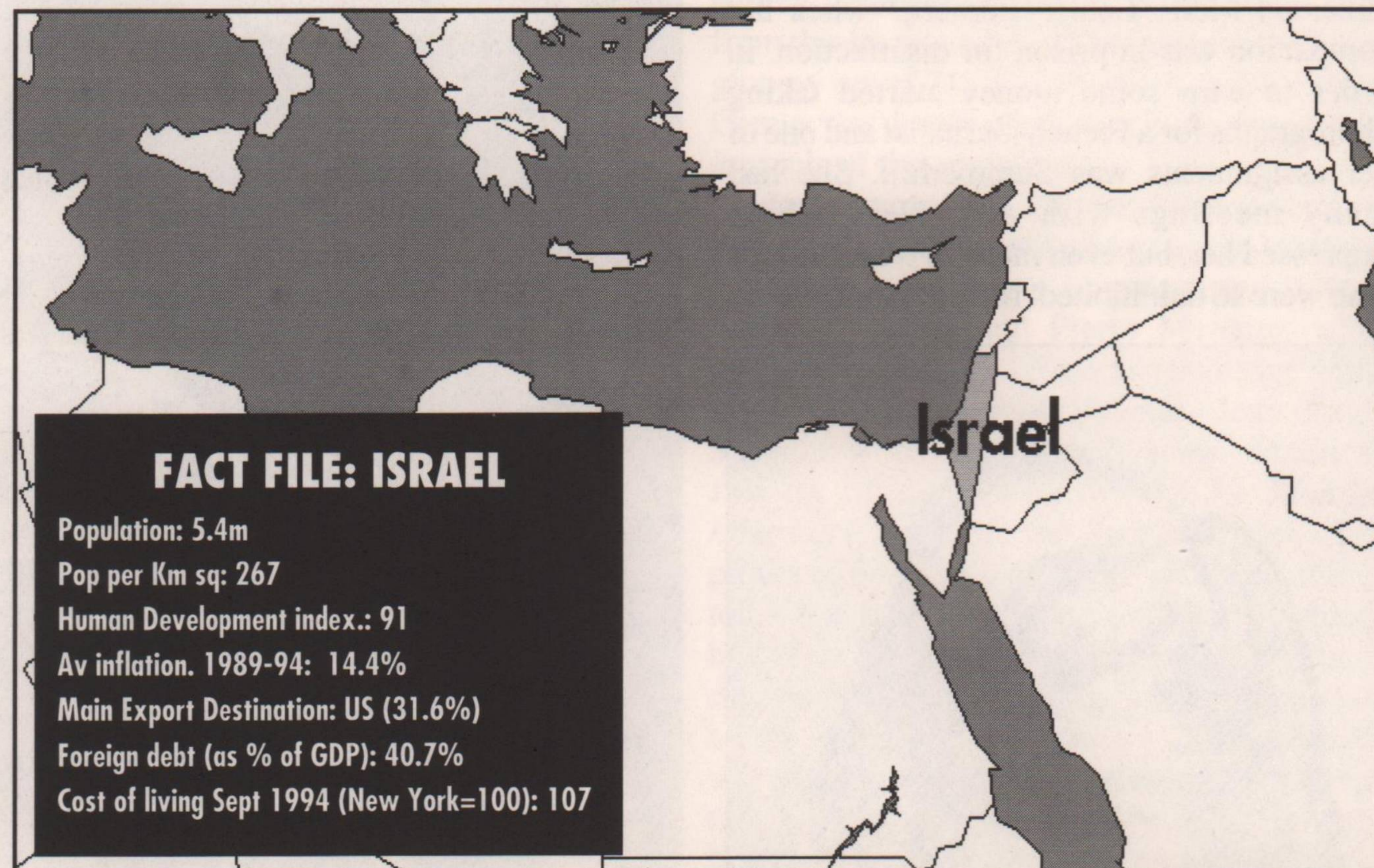
Born to Rebel has an implication that birth is destiny, namely that one's birth rank and upbringing are determining influences. Some readers will resist this argument because, they say, they are exceptions to the rule. But the wider implication of Sulloway's argument is that life experiences are the major influence. An alternative title might be *Learning to Rebel*.

Being a rebel should not be a goal in itself. If one's parents have enlightened attitudes, then it is better that children adopt them rather than rebelling and becoming terrorists or obedient functionaries. The wider challenge is to develop better insights into creating a better world and the sort of people who will help bring it about and maintain it. Whether or not one subscribes to Sulloway's views, his book is an important stimulus in pursuing this agenda.

Brian Martin

ISRAEL: BAD POLITICS

On 30th July 1997 a bomb, in the market at Mahane Yehonda in Jerusalem, killed sixteen. Relations between the Israelis and Palestinians, already strained, were once again replaced on the ground by hard lines and, as is always the case, the negotiations, which were in any case frozen, found themselves tied to the question of dealing with terrorism which, in turn, justifies itself in relation to the stalemate in the negotiations.



Finally, after Rabin's assassination the US administration supported Perez against Netanyahu.

The Israeli Right – secular and religious – rejects the Oslo accords and the principle of 'Land for Peace'. Netanyahu's government simply want to liquidate the whole 'peace process'. The treaty, which sanctions the splitting up of Palestine, is a terrible act of treachery: it was this very idea which pushed Yigal Amir to assassinate Rabin. The documents signed in Oslo are worth nothing in the eyes of many Israeli nationalists. Talk of respecting the accords or international law has, consequently, no meaning for them and this feeling was instigated by Netanyahu who was elected on a platform of non-recognition of Palestinian rights. The elections have revealed that a good half of Israeli voters are opposed to the 'peace process' and approve the Prime Minister's hard-line and the

inevitable, permanent confrontation with the Palestinians.

AN ULTRA-LIBERAL POLICY

Netanyahu's political reference points are not limited to Zionist revisionism, they are equally inspired by the dominant Reagan type liberalism which aims for the privatisation of practically all national resources, the liquidation of all social protection and the integration of the country into the American dream. Netanyahu has close links with the far right of the US Republican party, in particular with Jack Kemp, the Republican vice presidential candidate. His election campaign received financial support from Canadian and American businessmen who were not all Jewish: the Canadian Conrad Black, for example, is the owner of *The Daily Telegraph* in London and also *The Jerusalem Post*, whose ex-chief editor, David Bar-Ilan, is one of Netanyahu's three closest advisers, "this creates an unprecedented situation in Israel: for the first time, the government is under the direct control of foreign or multi-national business concerns, not those of the local army elite ... as has been the case up to now" (*Israel et Palestine political report no. 197-198*)

Among those businessmen who are close to Netanyahu one can also list the American Jewish millionaire from Miami and financier of Likud, Irving Moskowitz, who gave generous support to Netanyahu's election campaign as well as that of Jerusalem's mayor, Ehud Olmert, a Likud member. Moskowitz is a keen supporter of colonisation. He is one of the main financial backers for Ateret Cohanim, a group of religious settlers whose objective is to reduce as much as possible any Arab presence and who is buying up Arab housing in East Jerusalem. He helped finance the tunnel by the mosques in Jerusalem.

Henceforth, the links between Israel and the US are no longer just the concern of the US administration but also certain capital interest groups whose aims may compete with Washington's foreign policy: those who may wish to buy up in the private sector that Netanyahu is putting up for tender, electricity, telecommunications (Bezek), already half privatised, air transport (Elal), etc. American capital may well support a candidate other

than the one with Washington's blessing. This has indeed a precedent. Thus, in June 1996, Netanyahu, who was counting on a Republican win in the elections, gave a very abrupt reception to Warren Christopher when he visited Israel. The attitude of the Israeli premier could be explained in the context of the up-coming elections which left Clinton in a thoughtful mood and careful not to confront Jewish voters. Incidentally, Clinton's pussy-footing was useless as, once elected, Netanyahu, in a US visit, gave his support to the Republican candidate

THE STOCK EXCHANGE GOES DOWN

Whilst American capital gave its support to Netanyahu's candidature, Israeli business circles in the main supported Shimon Perez during the elections. One advertisement supporting Perez and signed by the big names of Israeli industry appeared in two dailies. On the other side Netanyahu's attempts to woo the business community were lamentable.

The reason for all this was that when labour was in power, that is more or less since the beginning of the 'peace process', Israel enjoyed a veritable economic boom due mainly to the lifting of the Arab boycott. Markets which had up until then been closed – China, India – opened up. The Tel-Aviv stock exchange began to pull in foreign investment, encouraged by peace and a cheap, well-qualified labour force. Firms of US and British stockbrokers bought up more than \$600m of Israeli shares in 1995, a symptom of financial stability.

Growth was at 6% per annum between 1992 and 1996 and growth in exports was at 11%. The drop in military expenditure, following the peace negotiations, was from 30% of the budget in 1982 to 7% in 1995 which also contributed to the expansion of the Israeli economy. The whole country's infrastructure was transformed with road building and improvements in the telephone network.

Into all this walks a man who wishes to follow a policy of systematic tension with the Palestinians and who inspires concern in the ranks of the army itself along with concern among the Arab states, and the general reprobation of industrial giants including those of the American ally. The Palestinians threaten to pick up their arms once more. In September 1996 Egypt threatened to cancel the third Israeli-Arab economic conference set for November in Cairo. International donors, concerned at the turn in events, got cold feet. Finally, even within his own parliamentary majority, voices were raised reproaching Netanyahu because the price paid for abandoning the peace process was too heavy. The stock exchange collapsed and foreign investment vanished...

THE PALESTINIANS HAVE NO MORE TO OFFER

The Palestinians have recognised Israeli sovereignty over some three quarters of Palestine, accepted the presence of some 300,000 Jewish settlers on the remaining quarter (including East Jerusalem) and allowed Israel to extend her commercial relations with the Arab market. The Palestinians have nothing more to offer, Arafat has handed it all over with nothing in exchange apart from a feeling of growing humiliation.

Shamir declared openly, after having left power, that he would have participated in the Madrid negotiations with the firm intention of making them last ten years while he installed settlers in the occupied territories. When the labourites followed him Rabin and Perez declared they would not implement a policy of colonisation but still they installed 50,000 settlers in the occupied territories – a quarter of the total – and they gave them more money than the right had done during an equivalent period in power.

So while Palestinian leaders were continuing negotiations hoping to obtain some kind of state, Israeli power continued to control the territories, install settlers, destroy or seize Palestinian houses ... unfortunately, bomb attacks look set to continue.

RAINFOREST ACTIVISTS ARRESTED IN 'DIE-IN'

Nine EarthCulture activists were arrested while demanding an end to rainforest destruction and deaths on Friday 17th October 1997 when they staged a 'die-in' in front of the entrance of the International Home Furnishings Centre building on Commerce Street in High Point, NC, during the 70,000 person High Point International Furniture Market. Two of the activists held a nine-foot by twelve-foot banner while the others were 'killed' by a grim reaper symbolising loggers cutting rainforests at any cost. All nine were charged with second degree trespassing.

On the previous day, a fifteen-foot chair was erected and splattered with blood. A banner hung atop the chair which read, 'Buying Rainforest Woods Kills Native Peoples'. About thirty protesters carried signs, chanted, and acted out a skit with blood splattered furniture dealers and slain trees. Simultaneously, a 'U-Haul' truck covered with banners drove all through the market centre.

EarthCulture, along with members of the newly-formed Rainforest Woods Coalition have called a complete boycott on all rainforest wood products which do not bear an independent 'well-managed' label, causing little environmental or social impact. Some common rainforest woods include: mahogany, teak, lauan, redwood, western red cedar, rosewood, ebony, ramin, greenheart, and ipe.

"Indigenous peoples all over the world are being displaced, tortured, and even murdered for woods like mahogany, teak, and lauan," said EarthCulture's Kevin Henderson. "We will continue to do what it takes to protect those whose homes and very lives are threatened for furniture."

These demonstrations were part of the 25 protests EarthCulture is leading all over the East Coast this month.

EarthCulture
(Contact Brendan Gannon, Outreach Coordinator: 910-854-2957)

We three, the Town and his puzzled frau, gripped hands and swore an oath solemn that we would never enter the Whitechapel Art Gallery again – but lovable old fools that we are, head high, made our second pilgrimage into the David Alfaro Siqueiros exhibition of greater and smaller paintings and drawings in the cause of the permanent Mexican revolution's sound of strumming stringed instruments and a single wailing trumpet off-stage. There are moods and movements that are fashionable to bandwagon on and, slap my wrist if I offend, but I have always felt that Siqueiros was one of those lesser-talented artists who charges to the sound of the drums, for there was the excitement and the cheering. It was a period when if one was not carrying the flag for the left then no exciting people would turn up at

E = M bloodied C²

the wine party but, while in this year of grace Old Labour licks its sorry wounds and New Labour bows the knee to the chattering corpse of Ma Thatcher, we must accept that history and the creative arts found its mouthpiece among the artists, the writers and the intellectuals of the 1930s and we, the labouring class, the peasantry, the great unwashed, the many-headed, call us what the leader-writers will, marched, worked, supported, opposed, ate, shit and died as revolution after revolution swept by and never cake on our table. So too with Siqueiros, military attaché in Europe 1919-22, and why

not, champagne for the minister. It was an exciting life for Siqueiros and others with talent to offer for the cause and a comedy-style failed attempt to murder Trotsky to hymn to the salons and I am jealous. Yes.

What any artist does with his or her talents concerns only them, for any obligations on their part is a matter of conscience and if one drinks the president's piss or flaunts a golden key to the oh so private loo then one can always salve one's conscience by giving an extra fifty pence to Oxfam. For those wary of the rising cost of a pint of Guinness, study Rauschenberg, late of the Whitechapel Art Gallery, who has been described as the richest artist in the world with about £8,000,000 for a single painting, and this is a pot and brush man who has knocked off over 1,500 drawings, 500 printed editions, and on and on, and never makes a political statement over the funny farm output. But back to Siqueiros for a disappointing exhibition from a man whose heart was publicly in the right place. An over-large painting, enamel on burlap, of a woman *Proletarian Victim*, faceless with a hanging grey head in that the burlap sacking comes through the paint giving the large painting a genuine authority, while *Maria Descending the Stairs* with the lower legs out of proportion, though life-size, would not even have made the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, but the small painting using enamel on composition board, 1939, of a figure wearing a wooden pre-Colombian mask made the exhibition worthy of our attendance. One feels that with Siqueiros it is a minor talent that should have found its place within the surrealist movement with its adult erotic dreaming via the brush, for one felt, nay knows, that here is a sullen Chirico wherein creeping shadows and sexual themes vie with the social excuses for S&M. It is a brutal world when the unfortunate Japanese are told that their safe secure Van Gogh, one of a series of sunny *Sunflower* paintings, are deemed to be a £25,000,000 fake. This is money, comrade, and not the £150 pay that you take home each week minus television rental and transport fares to and from that £150 a week. And the question is, is it a fake and does it matter, and the sad and ancient answer is yes, for the original is a creative act and the copy the work of a craftsman. If you take a five year old child's happy coloured daub that, except to the parents, is of no value as a work of art and if you then hire a master copyist to make a meticulous copy indistinguishable from the small child's original painting, then you have a valuable work of craftsmanship. Van Gogh's £25,000,000 and the copy, creation and craft, two different cultures. I am of that age when the gilded charms and creatures of our grey youth can now be exposed in all their rusty frailties as the biographies roll off the literary assembly lines for hagiologies make dull reading and the unwrapped flaws and faults in 'those we have loved' printed without fear of libel is the ideal night light reading if one was of that age group so savagely exposed.

Dear ol' Lord Hume, the most gormless person ever to hold public office, allowing for the leader of Her Majesty's loyal Opposition, has among the few kind things said of him that he was a liar and Jenny Lee the relict of Nye Bevan is cast out of the role accorded to the great untouchables as with Lenin's old trouble and strife as a self-seeking scold accorded the office of The Arts as no more than a government hand-out. Only Nye still remains untouched by the pointing finger for, to his credit and common sense, he wine and dined to the best of his pocket and committed all his social gaffes in the full glare of the Tory press so who could expose the well-shod lad from Wales as long as he did his paid job. Only two flaws, Nye. To be kicked from behind by a member of the fashionable Tory club, making us ask 'Why were you there, Nye', and for his speech at the Labour conference defending Britain's claim to have and hold nuclear



"A trifle more blood on the 'kerchief, painter fellow."

weapons – "Would you let me go naked into the conference?", and the answer again, Nye, was and still is yes. Oh that desire to have one's own American paid for and triggered atom bomb, for we have Nye's inheritance the NHS and that own nuclear bomb that every terrorist clown now makes a claim to.

But among them all only Einstein ended with an Albert-styled funeral in that his brain was literally removed from within the skull and, as must happen within a free economy, ended up in the hands of a simple profit-making all-American citizen who in the economic lesson of Marx sliced the brain into small cubes and sold off the individual cubes to the ready market. There across the world Einstein's little squares of the brain that gave us E = MC² floats "lonely as a cloud" in its bottle of formaldehyde giving out with the occasional bubble of protest in some silent house beautiful or silent laboratory. The Royal Academy of Arts have exhibited a dead cow in a fish tank of formaldehyde to shock the unshockable, but no 'artist' has had the foresight to buy a slice of Einstein's brain to pull in the mob, for the Royal Academy may exhibit a dead cow as the sensation of the year but, come, come, 'my' supermarket exhibits and flogs kaput cow seven days a week and never once has been short-listed for the Turner Prize. Bubble on, Albert, your hour is past.

Arthur Moysé

— 21st CENTURY NOTES —

The City in the 21st Century

Imagine a capital city in the mid-21st century. Imagine a city centre with e-mail facilities on almost every street, shuttle mini-bus services to outlying areas that use electrically-powered vehicles, a city powered largely by renewable resources, where solar panels are a common sight on middle-class rooftops. Imagine a city where art is embedded in every city wall or placed in the middle of every street. Imagine a city where women are addressed as 'sister' and men as 'brother', and complete strangers pluck babies from their parents' arms to give them a cuddle before handing them back, a city where cars, motorbikes and buses travel at a sedate pace, steering around the dozens of animals that laze on the road – even on highways.

In other words, imagine Kathmandu.

Kathmandu is already in the mid-21st century. Here in Nepal it is 2054 BS (according to the calendar set by an ancient king). The mounting millenarian frenzy in the West is entirely irrelevant (and incomprehensible) to those in other cultures, whose times cycles remain out of sync with the Christian-dominated world. (There are several calendars in Nepal – we recently celebrated the beginning of the year 1118 according to another of these time systems.)

Kathmandu Valley is the most developed region of Nepal, the centre of financial and administrative life, and the target destination of most tourists visiting the country. In the centres of Patan and Kathmandu itself, there are hordes of signposts advertising international dialling facilities, and a growing number of Internet access points. In certain areas, there are e-mail facilities on every street – to serve the tourist trade. Meanwhile, most people in the hill areas have a substantial walk on their hands to get to a local (microwave-based) telephone.

As for the electrically-powered mini-buses, they do exist (called 'Sufa Tempas' – 'clean taxis') and are used primarily by Nepalis. They are few in number, however, and are vastly outnumbered by their far-from-clean sister and brother 'Tempas', and the taxi-cabs, buses, lorries and private cars which clog up the roads and pour out a stream of pollution which lies in the Valley like soup. Flying in or out of the Valley, you can see streamers of this smog blowing over the top of the range of hills that contain Kathmandu.

Kathmandu is known to be one of the most polluted cities in the world, despite its reliance on hydro-electricity and the still-untapped hydro potential in the hills around Kathmandu (the solar panels on city roofs are for heating water, not for generating electricity).

The art in Kathmandu's walls and streets is generally religious in nature – statuettes of gods and goddesses in roadside shrines. There are also older buildings with intricate woodwork doors and windows – these are neglected and are gradually being destroyed to make way for modern concrete eyesores. Despite the onward march of civilisation, there is still a great deal of beauty in the Valley's three cities, even outside the famous 'preserved' areas.

It is customary to relate to strangers as members of one's family – 'elder brother', 'elder sister'. The primacy of family relationships has its attractive aspects, but also generates nepotism and a crushing form of patriarchal domination.

A Westerner's first impression (and probably lasting impression) of Kathmandu's traffic is one of terrifying chaotic behaviour, with adults, children, cows, bicycles, motorbikes, buses, mini-buses, lorries and cars all weaving randomly across the road. However, there are remarkably few casualties (cows are completely immune, being holy to Hindus), a fact which can only be explained by the low speed of motor vehicles and the tolerance of all road users. There may be few rules, and much irrationality, but there is also a human touch to relationships between road users – in the city at least – which seems, to me at least, relatively civilised.

Gandhi famously answered, when asked what he thought of Western civilisation, "I think it would be a very good idea". Nepal is one of the ten poorest countries in the world, and certainly a 'third world' nation by anyone's definition, but there are curious anomalies and contradictions in its capital city. A visitor from London, like myself, can feel at times that Kathmandu is certainly fifty years in the future, both in the technological sophistication and the environmental degradation, the intimacy of human relations and the depth of oppression, in the extraordinary inequality between rich and poor. Kathmandu can appear as a projection into the future of both attractive and repellent tendencies in Western society, rather than, as is so often thought, a city and a valley mired in the Middle Ages.

Even in the year 2054 of the Christian era, I fear that London will not have works of art embedded in the city streets and walls.

Milan Rai

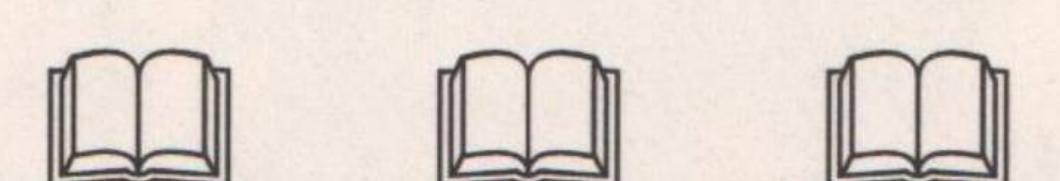
Note: This column was to have appeared in the last issue of *Freedom*, but could not be transmitted to London because of the lack of e-mail facilities in north-eastern India, which the author was visiting at the time.

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- 1997 PROGRAMME -

14th November Post-Modernism: A Personal
Perspective (speaker Steve Ash)

21st November General discussion

28th November Inside the 43 Group (speaker
is a member of the old 43 Group)

5th December General discussion

12th December Symposium on Technology

19th December Christmas Party and General
discussion

26th December NO MEETING

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
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Carol Saunders / Peter Neville

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