

## Frank Field forced out

“You’ll have to get more people” insisted Frank Field, “if you are going to beat us!” That was last May, when Frank Field lectured anarchists and jobless activists from Groundswell on the steps of Manchester Cathedral where they had come to heckle him.

At the end of July Mr Field resigned his job as Minister for Welfare Reform, claiming his work had come to nothing because of departmental disputes between himself and the friend of the Chancellor of the Exchequer Harriet Harman. So much for his brave talk at Manchester Cathedral. In the House of Commons last month pundits reported that he was shaking with emotion when he denounced his critics.

He opined to the *Sunday People*: “In the end I ceased to put projects forward because nothing would ever happen”.

Poor Mr Field, it seems he was not really taken seriously by his colleagues – any more than by his critics in Groundswell, among the jobless anarchists and on the left. It seems like he was ignored by his boss the mousy Ms Harman in the office, and we know he was tormented beyond endurance by anarchists, left-wingers on Birkenhead Trades Council and jobless activists from as far afield as Bury, Tameside and Manchester.

They abused him and paraded goats in his surgery. They mocked him and asked him awkward questions. So that whenever he saw a band of protesters approaching, he would get the smell of goat dung in his nostrils.

### Welfare reform in ruins

During one of the several demonstrations in his constituency last September Alec McFadden, Secretary of Wirral TUC, declared: “Frank Field has never had a

proper job and yet he seems happy that the unemployed should be forced into low paid and unskilled labour”.

On that occasion Mr Field urged the police to remove the protesters from his surgery. But that only resulted in to ejection of a goat who was tethered outside on the railings.

Frank Field was wrong to imply that size was important in this context. Political action is not like some sexual fantasy – bigger is not necessarily better. A bed bug may be small, but I wouldn’t want to share a bed or spend a night with one. Throughout the country the Groundswell movement has organised many actions which have not been large when compared with, say, the large demos of the peace movement in the 1960s, but have been very painful for a some of those involved.

In the fifteen months of Mr Field’s career as Minister it has been a case of death by a thousand cuts. Harriet Harman,



Frank Field confronted by a demonstrator in his Birkenhead constituency last September

former Secretary of State for Social Security, suffered a similar fate and was helped on her way by her own ineptitude and her cack-handed performance on lone parent benefits and with the disabled.

### Britain’s cheap welfare system

Have the jobless anarchists been fair to Frank Field?

In 1978 he was, claims Don Pedelty in *The Rape of Socialism*, “one of the then doughtiest champions of the poor”, and Mr Field then wrote: “If, in the foreseeable future, the economy fails to grow at a greater rate, Labour will be forced to choose between ditching its role as the reforming party or breaking the post-war political consensus ...” Or as he later declared: “The promise to the ‘haves’ was that injustice could be painlessly removed ... economic growth would guarantee that real income of the ‘haves’ rose while only part of the largesse was transferred to the ‘have nots’.” Last week in *The Observer* Will Hutton wrote of Mr Field: “He favours universal benefits and little or no means-testing. As he told the House of Commons in his resignation speech, he strongly favours the redistribution of income.” Mr Hutton claims Frank Field is to the left of Blair, and that Blair is essentially a conservative on ‘welfare reform’, at least based on his rhetoric.

From here, with the sacking of Ms Harman and the resignation of Field, it looks as though welfare reform, as some grand flagship of New Labour, is in ruins. Even a serious commentator like Will Hutton is confused by the signals. But it appears that behind the sound-bites and spin-doctoring style lies a cloud of ambiguity.

For a politician like Blair, as with Mussolini, this is superb politics because

(continued on page 3)



# anarchist fortnightly

# Freedom

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Labour's continued road expansion schemes and the refusal to return public transport to the public sphere in a surrender to big business, not a transport policy but a ...

## Gravy-train to Nowhere

The Secretary of State for Transport (and almost everything else) John Prescott's loudly-trumpeted transport 'policy statements', two in the last month, are in danger of appearing more frequently than buses and trains in rural areas. But the exaggerated claims and carefully worded press releases cannot disguise the fact that he has done little to alleviate the travelling public's discomfort in the short term, and the bare minimum (like cancelling or postponing new roads which the Treasury couldn't afford anyway) for the long term. The much vaunted road-pricing idea will provide plenty of (taxpayers') money to the IT companies supplying it, but will not even start to be ready until 2007, and the new powers proposed for local authorities to ban cars from town centres will in many cases not be used for fear of damaging local business interests (theirs or their friends).

The fact remains that 36 new road schemes are to go ahead – despite the environmental damage they cause and the massive waste of public money involved in generating yet more traffic and pollution – the worst of which, the widening to ten or even twelve lanes of part of the M25 near Heathrow airport is not merely a flat contradiction of all Labour said in opposition, but is a quite blatant signal to the airport and aviation authorities and the airlines that they intend to allow the proposed Terminal 5 to go ahead at Heathrow, thereby pre-empting the public enquiry result and pissing in the faces of all those campaigning against further unnecessary congestion, pollution and noise, both in the skies over London and around the airport, all for the sake of even larger planes to take the well-heeled on their business and holiday trips. Heathrow is already, absurdly and disproportionately, the busiest airport in the world: London is already served by five airports, but now they're talking about converting RAF Northolt into a sixth, and Prescott hasn't even had the guts to make the airlines pay VAT on their fuel like everyone else.

The roads in our cities are at a virtual standstill during rush hours, and even outside these times in London the smallest incident in the wrong place, whether roadworks, an accident or a badly-parked vehicle, is enough to provoke gridlock. Cyclists can already cross London quicker than either cars or public transport, both of which are now slower than in 1912. So isn't Prescott's other announcement – to inject private finance into London's tube system in return for a fifteen-year semi-privatisation – to be welcomed?

It was certainly welcomed by a breathless press, which described it variously as "pulling rabbits out of a hat", "clever" and "neat political footwork". More tellingly, it was also welcomed by construction companies like Railtrack and Tarmac who are keen to get on the gravy train, and by financial advisers in the City who, it is reported, could

walk off with £100 million in fees – that's £400,000 per mile of underground track, or enough to pay for 25 new Jubilee Line trains.

According to the government's own figures rail privatisation, the most expensive privatisation ever, cost the taxpayer £1,400 million, £680 million of which went on bankers, lawyers, analysts and advisers alone. A rational person might expect this to result in what the then Tory government predicted: cheaper, safer, more frequent and more efficient services on clean, modern trains, employing more and better-trained workers. Some hope. Instead we have the exact opposite. For what your average rational person often fails to take into account is the unjust and absurdly irrational economic system which is daily imposed upon us: capitalism. This, you will remember, is the spiffing wheeze by which the vast majority are conned into paying huge sums of money to the government for what are ostensibly public services, only to find that it has handed them over to its friends in business, which enriches a tiny minority of individuals, a system Noam Chomsky has aptly described as 'socialism

for the rich', where you privatise all the profits but socialist all the costs.

At least one City firm of accountants has predicted that London Underground fares will have to rise by at least 50% in order to repay the private contractors' share – plus profits – of the £7,000 million that Prescott is hoping for. In the quite likely event that the travelling public refuse to swallow that, it will be taken from your pocket anyway via national or council taxes.

The London Underground is the oldest such system in the world, and it shows. London Transport said a long time ago that £1,000 million was needed *immediately* just to clear the backlog of essential repairs and maintenance, and to bring the network into the twentieth century, never mind the twenty-first. Yet it will still be another two years before they get that first billion. It is not uncommon for tourists on the tube, enquiring as to the whereabouts of the London Transport Museum, to be told "You're in it!" The entire system is so dilapidated that it has indeed become a working (just) museum.

In addition to the daily catalogue of broken down escalators, lifts, signals, points and

trains, the new signalling system (designed by private contractors) on the Central Line has failed repeatedly, the state-of-the-art signals on the Jubilee Line extension can't be made to work at all, and now, just to increase the element of farce, the brand new Jubilee Line trains don't fit the tracks, which are having to be ground down to take them. From 'the wrong kind of snow' to the wrong kind of trains! This is even better than the 1970s television sit-com *On the Buses*. Still, at least as far as overcrowding is concerned, tube designers have found a simple answer: take the seats out. They are already working on a design to make the journey to work in the wonderful new millennium even more uncomfortable, increasing the rush hour maximum by nearly 50% from 1,564 cattle – sorry, people – per train to 2,273 by removing some of the seats.

The fact that Labour in government is proving itself as much in thrall to capital – road and vehicle builders, freight hauliers, the big airlines and transport 'entrepreneurs', not to mention its mates in the City – as the Tories are may surprise those who voted Labour with such conviction or desperation fifteen months ago, but it does not surprise us, despite Labour's macho noises in opposition about bringing public transport back into public ownership: its failure to tackle the deregulation of the buses gives the lie to that. Standards of bus and coach maintenance have fallen to such an extent that the police now carry out random mass checks in an attempt to prevent further horrific motorway crashes. Scores of coaches were recently taken out of service on the spot, so bad were their defects.

Meanwhile, wages and conditions for bus workers across the country continue to deteriorate. Under the semi-privatised London Buses not only are drivers in some garages being allowed to work fourteen days without a rest day, with the connivance of their union, but staff are leaving at such a rate that inspectors and even garage managers are having to drive buses regularly just to keep a minimum service on the road.

And what of our fantastic network of canals falling into disrepair again and threatened with privatisation? The entire 2,000-mile system, ideal for carrying freight, could be renovated for just a fraction of the cost of a few miles of motorway.

The practical solution to transport is the anarchist solution: a *free* comprehensive system controlled by the workers and the communities it serves.

One final point for people in rural areas such as parts of East Anglia, Wales and the West Country: you may be puzzled by certain words in this article such as 'bus', 'train', etc. Don't worry about it, they are only technical terms and you're never likely to actually come across one. Your parents might be able to explain them to you.



On the buses: public transport is already an example of life mimicking art



— VISIBLE HANDS —

# The Water Chain

Economics is not simply concerned with financial transactions or with assigning monetary values ('shadow prices') to everything under the sun. Economics is also concerned with non-monetary and absolute values. One of these values is a sense of meaning.

Basic human needs are few. In the last week, spent with fifty children and fifteen adults in Derbyshire's Shining Cliff Woods, I have been reminded forcefully of some of these basic needs. Indeed, one of the main purposes of 'Flysheets', the camping organisation, is to bring young people into close proximity with nature and with their own needs. Water, food, and shelter are all 'provided' in some sense. 'Water' is collected from a spring half way down the hill. 'Food' is brought in by the volunteer caterer. 'Shelter' consists of some tents.

Another basic need is the disposal of waste. Unwanted food is dumped in a pit. Other rubbish is bagged and taken to the nearest town. There is also a latrine, a narrow trench with hessian 'walls'. As for fuel, there is plenty of dead wood in the vicinity.

Water, food, shelter, latrine, fuel. These essential elements underpin the fulfilment of two other basic human needs, needs which are intertwined: taking one's place in society, and finding fulfilling work to do. For some, fulfilling work is playing football. For others it is looking after those younger than yourself. Or building a sweat lodge. Or climbing improbably high in a tree. Things that are done with others, achievements shared with

one's peers.

All major activities are shared, either extensively, involving all campers at the same time, or by rotation, involving only a small group at a time. Cooking is done in small groups, with duties rotating so that every child and adult on camp helps to produce three meals during the week. The cooking group ('clan') is made up of adults and children of varying ages, who chop wood, tend fires, provide hand-washing and dish-washing water, cook and serve food, mix and pour drinks, wash up cooking utensils and pots and pans, and throw away discarded food.

Fuel is collected in an extensive way, with all camp members picking up and carrying back firewood every morning (according to their ability (and inclination)). Water is also brought in extensively every morning, passed up a long, quarter-mile human chain. (The water chain is the first activity of the day after breakfast and the camp meeting.)

What is the point of describing this small libertarian camp in this column? I was struck by something in the *Daily Telegraph* recently (1st June) in which it was proposed that "Progress consists of abandoning self-sufficiency and delegating tasks to specialists". Matt Ridley argued that the story "of progress and economic growth" has been the story of "a progressively more detailed division of labour among specialists". Inevitably, Ridley invokes "Adam Smith's famous example of the pin-maker, who with his machines can make far more pins in a day than all his customers put together could make if they

had to make their own pins at home".

In fact, Adam Smith condemned the human consequences of 'the division of labour': "The understandings of the greater part of men [and women] are necessarily formed by their ordinary employments", and therefore "the man [or woman] whose life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects too are, perhaps, always the same, or very nearly the same, has no occasion to exert his [or her] understanding ... and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to be." This appalling result ought to be avoided – by government action, Smith believed. In other words, Smith did not identify 'progress' with the "progressively more detailed division of labour among specialists" or with 'economic growth', as Ridley does.

Overcoming the division of labour and reclaiming a measure of self-sufficiency (in selected areas) is, I believe, a basic human desire, evidence that diversity of activity is necessary for individual development. A measure of self-sufficiency and 'disintermediation', as the economists' jargon has it, nurtures confidence, satisfaction, inventiveness, and, in certain circumstances, co-operation. These intangible human qualities ought to be a central concern in the shaping of economic activity. The creation of a maze of intermediaries between resources and their uses, on the other hand, is profoundly alienating – and anti-democratic.

On a Flysheets camp, resource use makes sense, the economy makes sense. You need

water; carry it up to the camp. You need fuel; find it and drag it or carry it back to the fireplace. You need to shit; bury it. You need shelter; put up and maintain a tent. You need food; cook it and clean up afterwards. Things which are easier to do with other people. Life means work – shared work – not because it is good for you, or because it trains you for the future, or because it is educational, but because survival requires cooperation and effort.

Flysheets has no official ideology. It is fiercely practical. But as an intentionally poor community, it helps adults and children alike to realise the connection between needs, desires, and resources. Every one of us, all around the world, needs water, needs food, need shelter, and needs to deal with their own wastes. In urban Western societies, the chain of responsibility linking needs, resources, and consumption, is generally obscure and disguised. It would be an invaluable economic lesson if we all had to actively join the great water chains which we are part of, and had to put effort, and not simply money, into the production/consumption of the things we take for granted. It would also be an invaluable lesson in democracy.

Observing the efforts of younger and older water carriers for three quarters of an hour every day, I concluded that, contrary to Ridley, "the tendency to specialise and delegate" is not "the greatest human invention of all", but "the tendency to co-operate for the common good, with good humour and willingness." I also concluded that the greatest gift of the camp was the gift of meaning. The essentials of life and their fulfilment made sense to everyone, and making sense out of life is also a fundamental need.

Milan Rai

When Cornelius Castoriadis died, at the end of 1997, he received long and serious obituaries in his adopted France, just as his books had received long and serious reviews there, and he was acknowledged as a major figure of the left-wing intelligentsia. In Britain, it may be assumed, few people had even heard of him; but some attempts were made to introduce him to a wider English-speaking public, if only posthumously, through obituaries in a few papers (*The Times* and *Guardian*) and also reviews in a few others (*Times Literary Supplement*, *London Review of Books*, *New Statesman*). An obituary appeared in *Freedom* (7th February), and now here is a review.

Castoriadis was a prolific writer for more than half a century, from the time he went to France from Greece in 1945. While he remained stateless he wrote under a series of pseudonyms in periodicals – especially in *Socialisme ou barbarie* throughout its existence from 1949 to 1965 – but

## Cornelius Castoriadis

after he obtained French citizenship in 1970 he produced a score of important books under his own name, first reprints of those earlier writings, and then collections of later writings. Some of his most important political writings had been published in English versions by the old Solidarity group, and later several of these and later writings were also published in English translations.

From the 1980s there have been American editions, either translations of individual books or new anthologies, and some of these are available in paperback. The most ambitious is the three-volume collection of *Political and Social Writings* (Minnesota, £15.99 each) – Volume 1 (1988), 'From the Critique of Bureaucracy to the Positive Content of Socialism', 1946-1955; Volume 2 (1988), 'From the Workers' Struggle Against Bureaucracy to Revolution in the Age of Modern Capitalism', 1955-1960; Volume 3 (1993), 'Recommencing the Revolution: From Socialism to the Autonomous Society', 1961-1979. These cover much the same ground as the cheap paperback collections published in France during 1973-1979, and contain all the important writings – mostly first published in *Socialisme ou barbarie* and including those published by Solidarity – which trace his passage from Trotskyism through Marxism and socialism towards his eventual libertarian system.

*The Imaginary Institution of Society* (1987, MIT/Polity, £14.99) is a translation of *L'Institution imaginaire de la société* (1975), which contains other writings dating from 1964 to 1975 and traces his passage onwards into psychoanalysis and linguistics. During the last twenty years of his life he produced a series of five books with the general title *Les Carrefours du labyrinthe* (1978-1997), which collected his current writings and trace his passage onwards into mathematics, ancient history and pure philosophy. Only parts of these have appeared in English – *Crossroads in the Labyrinth* (1984) is a translation of the first volume; *World in*

*Fragments* (1997, Stanford/Cambridge, £14.95) contains translations of items from the other four volumes. Meanwhile *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy* (1991) contains translations of other writings dating from 1986 to 1991. Finally there is *The Castoriadis Reader* (1997, Blackwell, £17.50) in the impressive 'Blackwell Readers' series, a big British anthology covering the whole range of his work from 1949 to 1996.

This work falls into three stages – or rather, states – as he wrote by turn in the persona of politician, psychologist, or philosopher. For ordinary readers, Castoriadis seemed to emerge from obscurity into clarity and return to obscurity again. The writings of his early period (roughly the 1940s and 1950s) are so dominated by Marxist terminology as to alienate non-Marxists, and those of his late period (roughly the 1980s and 1990s) are so dominated by esoteric terminology as to alienate non-academics, whereas those of his middle period (roughly the 1960s and 1970s) are more likely to appeal to a wider audience. *The Political and Social Writings* provide the most accessible if excessive introduction to the best of him, and *The Castoriadis Reader* provides the most convenient and comprehensive perspective of all his work.

One problem is that most of these books have been presented by David Ames Curtis, an American academic who is a totally dedicated impresario but not an entirely satisfactory editor or translator. (The leading figure in Solidarity, to whom the *Reader* is dedicated by way of his pseudonym 'Maurice Brinton', did better with the old versions of 'Paul Cardan', which were often improvements on the originals.) Curtis has done an enormous amount of impressive work, supplying useful introductions and bibliographies as well as producing actual translations, but the combination of translatorial jargon and editorial schematism often seems to be in danger of burying the essential Castoriadis.

What is his essence? He reinterpreted Marx to

argue that the essential division in modern society is a matter not of property or production but of power, between order-givers and order-takers. He transcended Marx in arguing that this system is maintained by the emergence of ruling bureaucracies and that the solution is not a violent revolution or any kind of dictatorship, or perhaps even socialism at all. He emphasised the importance of individuality and imagination, of creativity and culture. He valued not so much liberty or equality as autonomy (self-direction) and autogestion (self-management), private as well as public. And he looked forward to the development of genuinely free individuals in a genuinely free society. At the same time he looked backward to the thoughts and deeds of ancient Greece and inward at the nature of the human individual and outward at the principles of human society – like, as it happens, his near contemporary libertarian Murray Bookchin who, as it happens, is the subject of *The Murray Bookchin Reader* (Cassell, £14.99).

When so many people pay superficial tribute to false prophets, how much better it would be to pay serious attention to this true thinker. Above all, perhaps, he recognised that the socialist project takes on a new meaning in a secular age. If nothing is safe or sacred, if there is nothing after death and nothing above humanity, if we are alone in time and space, it is up to us ourselves to make the best of our own lives, alone and together, here and now. He was in a way his own worst enemy; he is never easy and often very difficult, and he was too clever for his own good and for his readers' comfort, but he is always rewarding and sometimes inspiring. Yet what would such a person, so much aware of mortality, have thought of the fact that he is getting such attention only after his death, or, so much attached to the printed and spoken word, have thought that the quickest and simplest access to his work is now through the Internet?

NW

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# Sexual Freedom Parade

Saturday 25th July saw the return of the Sexual Freedom Parade to the streets of London. This annual event, organised by the Sexual Freedom Coalition, is now in its third year and this time was larger than ever, with nearly one thousand people marching from Soho Square to Hyde Park. This fruitful alliance between libertarian activists and the sexually depraved gathered at our traditional meeting place in Soho Square, only this time to find Soho Gardens locked and barred to us by Westminster Council, forcing us to gather in the surrounding streets blocking traffic and causing much annoyance to the Police. The given reason for this by a council spokesperson was a fear of littering. The parade got under way around 3pm, led as usual by the irrepressible Tuppy Owens, possibly the horniest woman on Earth, and an entourage including the alternative Miss World, Diamond Lil, a performance artist famed for her ugly cunt show and Mother Molesta, of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, who was most vocal in 'her' holy chants, including 'free the fuck' and appeals for the decriminalisation of prostitution. Amongst other marchers were Rachel, a recently televised prostitute; Frankie and Tania, the talented sex performers and the stunning sex worker, Jahnet De Light with her jazz musician partner, as well as several well known faces from the anarchist movement. We were asked by the stewards to avoid indecency, a request that was unfortunately adhered to, and to walk in an orderly fashion, 'four abreast', a request which I'm glad to say was mostly ignored, usually with the cry 'for whose breast?'. The Parade was a lively and noisy one but lacked some of the enlivening debauchery of the earlier marches. As we reached Hyde Park we were told by the organisers that we could not enter the park as planned and had to gather at the gate. Despite initial agreements by the Park Authorities for us to gather at the bandstand and hold a picnic in a nearby leafy glade, subsequent communications had informed us of ridiculous conditions, including obtaining third party insurance, which made things impossible for us. Despite this wrecking tactic we carried on by ending the official march at the gate and, with the police obligingly withdrawing, discarded our banners and entered the park as private individuals. Subsequently meeting up at the leafy glade we held a 'spontaneous and completely unplanned' picnic. Unfortunately, or perhaps serendipitously, the resulting chaos led many people to become lost, and under the catalysis of over eager photographers small pervy picnics sprang up all over the park, allegedly including one makeshift S/M picnic.

A welcome development was that this year the events were not restricted to the Parade and spanned the whole weekend. Commencing on Friday with a packed screening of award winning porn movies, both traditional and experimental, at the Lux Cinema and concluding on Sunday with a Sex Symposium at Conway Hall. This last event was a much needed look at the issues surrounding sexual freedom in Britain and included speakers from a wide range of backgrounds.

Fortunately the event was not just a series of boring speeches but included challenging stances and live performance as well. Performance which ranged from the inspiring poetry of the playwright John Constable to a striptease by the extraordinary Suzanne Birkett (with the impromptu assistance of Owl the dog, who leapt from the audience to show her appreciation). The former of these performers, with poetry reminiscent of the libertarian verse of William Blake, gave a



rousing invocation of twelfth century Southwark, which existing outside the legal boundaries of the City of London, was almost a medieval autonomous zone, made famous by Henry II's ordinance granting liberty to prostitutes. Prostitutes who although having the Bishop for a pimp were buried on unconsecrated ground. Constable will be reading his complete poem cycle at Southwark Cathedral in November and paying homage to the 'geese' of old Southwark in 'Cross Bones', to be performed at their burial ground on Halloween (details from Southwark Festival later in the year). The two performers are now planning to combine their talents in a new production, possibly including a version of Oscar Wilde's infamous drama *Salome*.

At the end of the symposium the attendees were invited to form small discussion groups to set the agenda for the next year of SFC activity. The themes chosen were: 'Gay and Gender Issues', 'S/M', 'Sex Workers', 'Sex Performance Art' and 'Censorship of Sex, Drugs and Rock 'n' Roll' (the decriminalisation of drugs and opposition to the CJA are also on the SFC's agenda). The latter of these was a lively debate and it was agreed that these issues should form a central plank of the SFC's agenda.

It was also acknowledged that the Coalition needs to push the envelope on censorship, particularly in the area of the graphic and performing arts.

The meeting was a great success and despite the non attendance of invited guests such as the MPs Michael Alun, Chris Smith and Simon Hughes and the Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police's Clubs and Vice unit, who made various 'excuses', progress was made in bringing people together and focusing them on the difficult task of liberating this country from the virulent prudery that engulfs us.

Prometheus Rex

## — Quick Bookshop Notes — New Stock in Angel Alley

**Corporate Watch** No. 7. Keeping an eye on what the capitalists are doing to us and our planet, 40 pages, £3.00.

**Community Anarchy and Liberty** by Michael Taylor, usual price £13.95, limited offer at £5 post-free. Scholarly work which doesn't duck the issue of social order in an anarchist society. 184 pages.

**Libertarian Labor Review** No. 23. Including crisis of work or crisis of capitalism?, the tragedy of the markets, the IWW, Swedish syndicalism. £2.50.

**McLibel: burger culture on trial** by John Vidal, now in paperback at £5.99 for 354 pages.

**Lobster** No. 35. Including New Labour and the spooks, an eyewitness to the Iranian coup, D909 and Thatcher's friends, Web survey update, operation Black Dog. £2.50.

**Direct Action** No. 7. Including nation states, the Irish peace process, EMU. £1.50.

**Copse: a cartoon book of tree protesting** by Kate Evans with introduction by George Monbiot. Reams of superb cartoons and photographs accompanying the powerful and inspiring text in this huge book which covers most of the anti-road actions you've ever heard of. Plus a beginner's guide, contacts, history and resources. Beautifully designed and amazingly cheap at £9.50 for 208 pages.

**Leaving the 20th Century: the incomplete work of the Situationist International**, translated and edited by Christopher Gray, Rebel Press. This is the stuff of legends, out of print for many years, during which time we've been asked for it hundreds of times. A brilliant quote on nearly every page, and profusely illustrated with photos, cartoons and graffiti. Preface by Richard Parry and a cover design by Clifford Harper to die for. Another outsize book, and 136 pages for a mere £9.90.

KM

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it means he can face more than one way at once. When no one is certain what position you hold it makes it very difficult to mount an attack on a policy which varies with the wind.

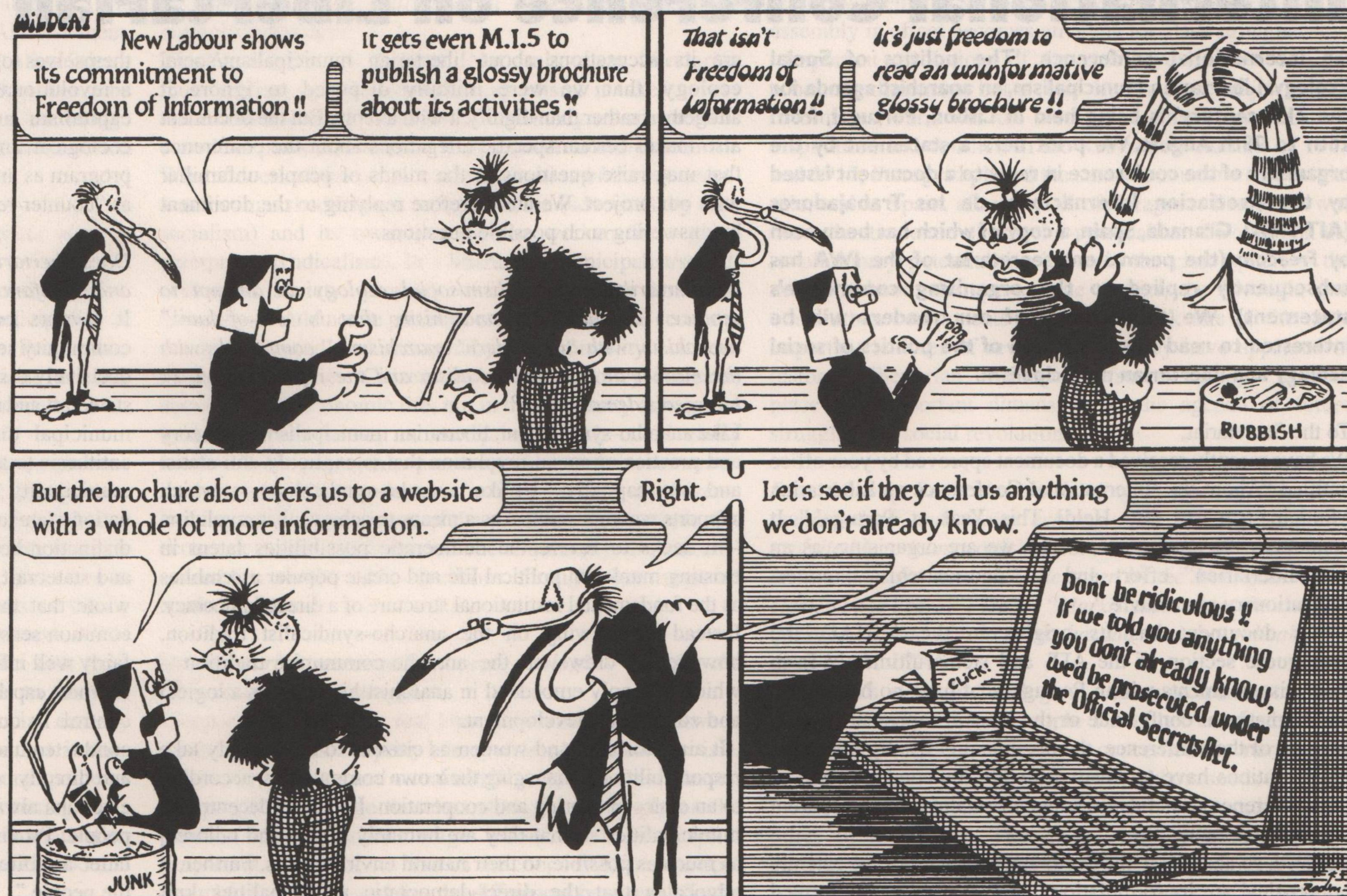
Mr Hutton says: "Britain has a cheap welfare system with astonishingly mean benefit rates ... the real crisis is poverty. To live on benefit may be a lifestyle choice for a minority, but it is unimaginably tough - to survive a week on British benefit rates is to live on a diet that will necessarily shorten your life expectancy and weaken your health."

No big change is now expected in the system of welfare, especially with Field on the back benches. Hutton claims: "Gordon Brown and the Treasury will not pay the costs from moving from one system to another, or accept the end result of more redistribution of income".

While all the palaver over welfare reform now looks like a load of wind and piss, the emphasis of New Labour is going to be on cost cutting. This makes Will Hutton pessimistic and he argues: "The fragmentation of British society will continue, the process of opting out and partial privatisation of the welfare system will accelerate".

Frank Field is not one of Blair's Babes, but he is prone to pout. As I write he is like a woman scorned - noisy and a nuisance to the Chancellor. It will take an anarchist pundit on welfare reform like Colin Ward to crack the riddle of Mr Field - they both seem to have similar ideas about mutuality, friendly societies and the virtues of the system which preceded the post-war welfare state.

BB





# Salami where she danced

Oscar's last stands, like gun-fight at the OK Corral, have long become a cottage industry, but sift the corn how thou will only the chaff remains for we know every Oscarian quip and the timing and the thud of every blank cartridge as it sprays dust into the body of the ham under contract. If one has any sensitivity and love of the written word or admiration of mummies and the director's craft as they strut into the dusty O of the OK Corral, or the dictionary of quotations, then a round of applause and a glass of sweet red wine and a messy night in bed with 'Bosie', or with the living dead another cup of coffee and a renewed contract.

Oscar has long been held as the martyred queen, the genius who was hated by those who paid to smile at his one-liners, the rouged clown who trod their turf when the curtain came down, for Oscar loved the high life and the low life and the dialectic is that play both ends against the middle and one ends as guest on a small island in the Mediterranean with the small company of the boys or the coterie of the silver-haired dead-wood penning their poisoned memoirs in silver prose between soft limp covers with a small circulation or or the slammer.

Death and the rhyming couplet belong, as they should, to youth but as incontinence takes over one's life one accepts that what one loved to whisper in the dark doorway into the scented hollow of the unreceptive female's ear is as hollow as Yorrick's skull. Yet like peeing into a neighbour's letter-box, it is a moment in one's youth that we should all go through, though not to love for Oscar does not belong to talk of bloody wars and political problems being solved by the acceptable death of the lumpen proletariat, the fascist rich and the abolition of censorship, except all and every right-wing publication, and then because one is young the horny excitement of one's personal firing squad but only for those on that ever-mounting receiving end, those who do not or forgot to conform. Oscar did not belong to that period but only for clever pre-ITV one-liners, for though they raised the fans to hide the smile they will never see a corpse in a

gutter, just a shielded world with Oscar's small wit to wound but never to hurt.

One assumed that Oscar's cottage industry had been exhausted, but to the credit of Philip Hoare he has dug up Oscar's scented corpse for another bow. One must be grateful for this book\* for it fills in many blanks concerning the period and the society of the day leading into the First World War. They were the *nouveau riche* of the industrial revolution and there was more loot for their broods to garner from War Number One and they were honest on one thing only: their vulgarity. One word dominated that period that lay like a dry scab on that class that had



easy money and no knowledge of what to do with it and all they asked for was to be amused, but church and state still constrained any excesses and the word for the day was decadence but never degenerate.

But the hour and the day produced the man, and that man was the thin-faced madcap monocled Noel Billing. Billing was one of those loose cannons that infest every social grouping and he moved through the drear society of his day making it his association with it that much dirtier. As in these years of grace he went in and out of Parliament, he formed companies and political groups with half-crazed right-wing programmes and he always found money and support from men and women in high office within the state. The chances are that within the society of the nineteen-hundreds he would have been forgotten as just another crazy fruitcake, but Billing found two things to put him in the spotlight: one was the Mccarthy cry of 'I have a list of names' that he flaunted and refused to reveal, for Mac was a Johnny-come-lately for Billing, in January of 1918 in his subsidised paper *The Imperialist*, claimed that he had a list of 47,000 men and women ranging up or down from the Royal Household, newspaper owners, Cabinet Ministers even down to the lower strata of poets, all united as enemies of Britain by their degenerate web of toe-touching sexual pleasures, and all in the diary of a certain German Prince from reports compiled by the German Secret Service. And like McCarthy's stage act, it worked, though in 1918 Beaverbrook the newspaper owner turned rabbit and withdrew his support for Billing's maniac paper. But filth sticks for there are many who wanted it to.

Billing's moment of triumph was the private presentation of Oscar's trivial play *Salome* with the American actress Maud Allan shimmying with John the Baptist's detached head as beef on the bone. In print Billing stated that this audience were those of the 47,000 and he called it the Cult of the Clitoris (small erectile part of female genitals or the dumb penis). It was as an MP that Billing demanded that enemy aliens should be the last to use air-raid shelters in war time, to carry public marking on their dress and as a happy afterthought that in war poison gas should continue to be used though it was held that the German military wanted to end its use by all warring factions.

And Maud Allan and others sued for libel, to the delight of Billing. The great comedy act moved to Bow Street Magistrates Court and high society moved with them, and on the public seats. The show was worth the black market prices for tickets for it included everything from Krafft-Ebing and the *Psychopathia Sexualis* to the wit and wisdom of the trial judge, the first Baron Charles Darling. Maud Allan had her own private world of sorrow for her brother, in the USA, had been executed concerning the murder of two unfortunate young girls in the year of our Lord 1895. But with claims of psychomania sexualis to spice up the trial plus the temper of the time Billing had to win the case, and he did. It was at this point in time that degeneration began to supplant the umbrella word decadent for one could wear a green carnation, wave a hip and be decadent but degenerate is sex, sodomy and murder most foul.

During 1914 to 1919 the military had a minimum sentence of ten years for sodomy with 270 rank and file and 22 officers being court martialled, so methinks Oscar that thou protested too much with two years in the slammer but from the court to the Café Royal was but a short hansom cab ride and a rich and fluid society still not ready to come to terms with its new name, for one can do no more than quote Barbara Cartland Dame of the British Empire, who has written more books than you have had hot dinners, that when Lord and Lady Louis Mountbatten, Lady Furness dripping with pearls and His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales entered the Embassy Club "a revolutionary innovation had been introduced at the Embassy Club" to the gasps of whispered 'disgrace' from the ladies in that Mr Simpson was wearing the newly-invented dinner jacket with shiny buttons and, as with Rome, so empires crumble.

But for myself I shall curdle up in bed with my whisky and the twenty volumes of the complete works of George Orwell. Dear George, the Princess Di of liberal conservatism, and to dream of Maud and Oscar coming into their garden.

Arthur Moysé

\**Wilde's Last Stand* by Philip Hoare (published by Duckworth, £16.95).

## International Conference on Libertarian Municipalism

An international conference, 'The politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism, an anarchist agenda for the 21st century' is being held in Lisbon, Portugal, from 26th to 28th August. We print here a statement by the organisers of the conference in reply to a document issued by the *Asociacion Internacional de los Trabajadores (AIT/IWA)*, Granada, Spain, a copy of which has been seen by *Freedom* (the permanent secretariat of the IWA has subsequently replied to the organising committee's statement). We think many of our readers will be interested to read this exposition of the politics of social ecology and libertarian municipalism.

To the Secretariat,

We have recently received a document approved by your office entitled "About the 'International Conference on Libertarian Municipalism,' to [Be Held] This Year at Portugal." It denounces the conference, which we are organising, as an "anti-libertarian" effort and a "'neo-anarchist' counter-revolutionary manoeuvre."

This document has its origins in the ASUAL, the Portuguese section of the AIT, and stems ultimately from local disagreements within Portugal that have no bearing on an international conference or the ideas it represents. As an account of the conference, the document is wholly false, and its allegations have no basis in reality. Its condemnation of the conference rests on sheer misinformation, in an apparent attempt to defame.

Indeed, so absurd are the document's allegations, so patently nonsensical are its formulations, and so wholly uninformed

are its accusations about libertarian municipalism/social ecology, that we were initially disposed to ignore it altogether, rather than dignify it with a reply. But the document also makes certain specific allegations about the conference that may raise questions in the minds of people unfamiliar with our project. We are therefore replying to the document by answering such possible questions.

*Is libertarian municipalism/social ecology an attempt to replace "revolutionary anarchism, that is 'out-of-date'" anarchism, with "a 'modern' anarchism ... compatible with the market or liberal capitalism and the representative or bourgeois democracy"?*

Like anarcho-syndicalism, libertarian municipalism is a theory and practice of social revolution that is explicitly anti-statist and anti-capitalist. Unlike anarcho-syndicalism – which supports workers' control as a means to achieve that revolution – it seeks to revive the democratic possibilities latent in existing municipal political life and create popular assemblies as the fundamental institutional structure of a direct democracy. Instead of drawing on the anarcho-syndicalist tradition, however, it draws on the anarcho-communist tradition – which is deeply embedded in anarchist history – as a logical and continuous development.

It aims for men and women as citizens to collectively take responsibility for managing their own communities, according to an ethics of sharing and cooperation. It aims to decentralise municipalities so that they are humanly scaled and tailored, as much as possible, to their natural environments. Further, it advocates that the direct-democratic municipalities knit

themselves together into confederations that would constitute a revolutionary dual power and ultimately challenge both capitalism and the nation-state, leading to a rational, ecological anarchist society. For the AIT to describe this program as an "apologia of the capitalist economy" let alone as "counter-revolutionary" is quite simply bizarre.

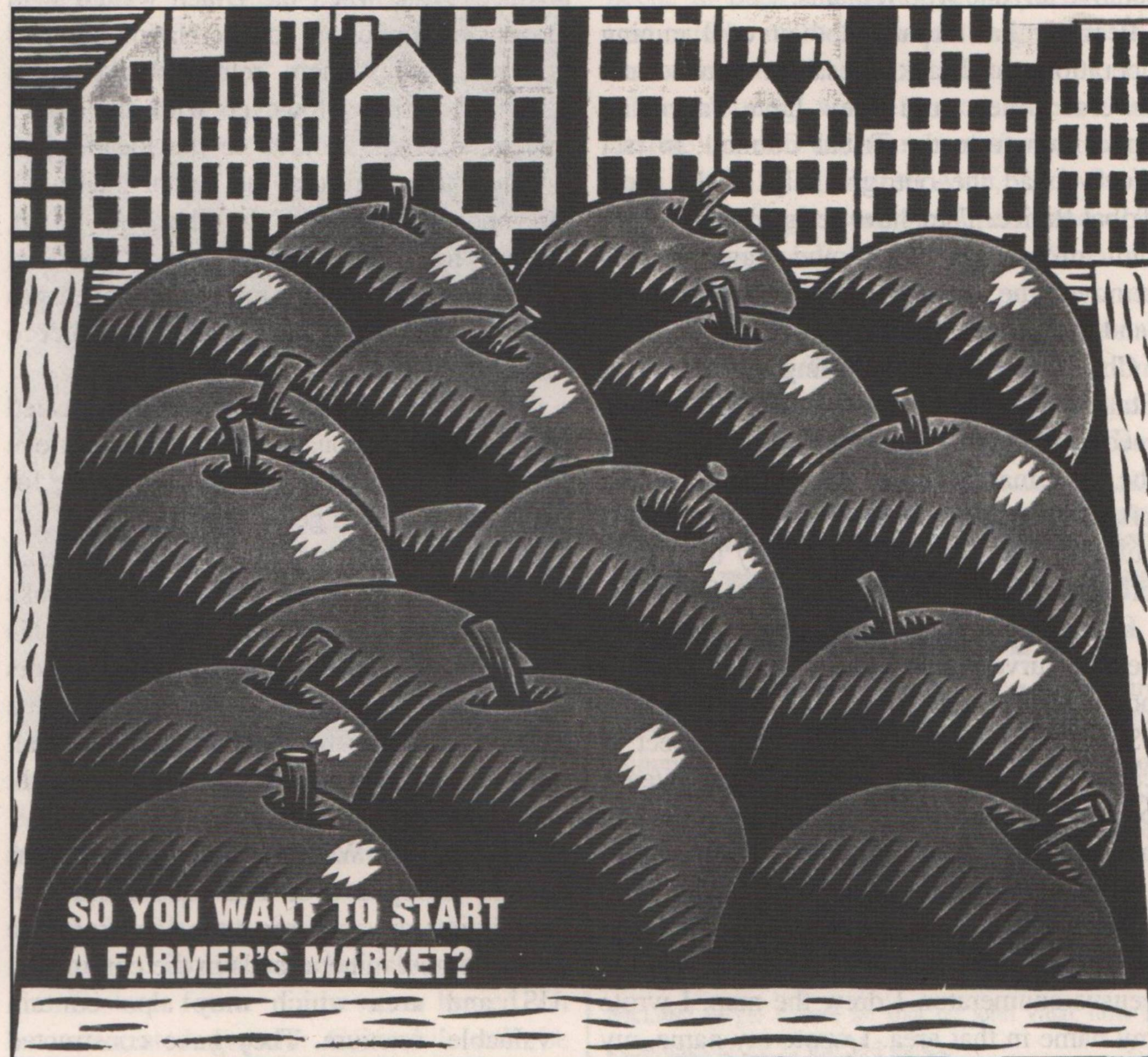
*Does libertarian municipalism/social ecology favour politics and therefore the State?*

It favours politics in the sense of direct democracy – community self-management through citizens' assemblies. It decisively distinguishes politics in this sense, however, from statecraft and representative 'democracy'. Moreover, it regards municipal direct democracy as potentially the political antithesis to statecraft and parliamentarism, inasmuch as the municipality has historically existed in tension with the nation-state and potentially could do so once again. The distinction between municipality and state, between politics and statecraft, was understood by Bakunin in 1870, when he wrote that the people generally "have a healthy, practical common sense when it comes to communal affairs. They are fairly well informed and know how to select from their midst the most capable officials. Under such circumstances, effective control is quite possible, because the public business is conducted under the watchful eyes of the citizens and vitally and directly concerns their daily lives. This is why municipal elections always best reflect the real attitude and will of the people. Provincial and county governments, even when the latter are directly elected, are already less representative of the people."



— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

# Just-in-time



Cover design by Clifford Harper for *Town & Country Planning* magazine

Henry Ford's ideal car factory had iron ore coming in at one end and finished cars rolling off the assembly line at the other. Car makers long ago abandoned this aim and were content to buy in the endless list of components from innumerable sub-contractors, feeling secure in the fact that they had a six-month supply in store. But now a new ideology has taken over and is the current orthodoxy of management and the business schools.

Called 'just-in-time', it argues that capital tied up in stock and in warehouses is not earning its keep, and that ordering should be done at the last minute, transferring these overheads to sub-contractors and suppliers (who would tumble over themselves to be obliging because they depended on these orders from the big guys and wouldn't want them to transfer their patronage to rival suppliers).

What set me thinking about this ideology was an item on Radio 4 on 21st July 1998 which explained that Tesco, the retail hyper-market operators, follow the 'just-in-time' ideology and get last-minute weather reports before ordering lettuce and other salad crops.

The producer of those lettuces, already following minutely detailed prescriptions as to the size and characteristics of acceptable items and already cleaning and packing them individually, Tesco-style, now ran the risk of last-minute cancellation, and dare not object since he/she depended totally on Tesco patronage.

I was discussing the implications of this with my neighbour, Alan, who grows superb vegetables on a domestic scale and puts his surpluses on the hedge for sale to passers-by. The other day it was bags of peas that he had picked half-an-hour earlier. He didn't know what price to put on them and looked in the greengrocers, the supermarket and the market place in our nearest town. No-one was selling fresh peas in season. If you want peas far cheaper and tastier than the frozen, dried or canned kinds, you must grow them yourself or have a neighbour like Alan or a source like a vegetable box scheme or a Farmer's Market on the American pattern. Or, of course, have an allotment, or a friend with an allotment.

For many years the central government urged local councils to raise money by selling

allotment sites they owned and, with an apparent decline in demand, there was little campaigning energy to point out that once an allotment site has gone it is lost for ever. In June the House of Commons Environment Select Committee issued a report, *The Future for Allotments*. It found that there are today 250,000 plot-holders in England and 13,000 people on waiting lists, with a very uneven demand around the country, and 43,000 vacant plots.

The Committee chairman said that: "Although many sites are nominally subject to protection in law, the patchy nature of local authority policy and the absence of credible checks on the sale of sites means they are being sold at an alarming rate. The trend is all the more disconcerting because there is

potential for a renaissance of demand." The committee saw evidence for this in the increased concern about healthy food.

David Crouch, my co-author of *The Allotment*, writing in *The Planner* for 25th June, declares that: "Over twenty years, local government and planning departments have all too often failed allotments. Their number has been halved by development in under thirty years. Paradoxically, the 43,000 vacant plots have nothing to do with lack of demand, but reflect the failure of many local councils to promote plots, poor maintenance and downright calculated neglect to precipitate vacancy in order to claim a change of use."

The other way of re-introducing cheap, fresh peas in their season, and other fruit and vegetables in theirs, is to introduce the

American concept of the Farmers' Market, where organic, small and part-time growers sell direct to their public once a week. In this column for 23rd July 1994 I mentioned the success of farmers' markets in the US. There are now 2,400 spread around the country where 20,000 small growers sell in a carnival atmosphere, and here on 21st February this year I described Patricia Tutt's welcome instigation of the first British farmers' market at Bath last September, which she assured me had become financially self-sustaining and had brought enquiries from over a hundred other towns.

Like everything else, to do it successfully isn't easy. The conditions have to be right and planning is complex. Harriet Festing writes in the July issue of *Town & Country Planning* that "establishing a farmers' market is not simply a matter of putting a few farmers in a town centre. US markets work because they are seen by everyone as something special." She is a research associate at Wye College in Kent and had the good luck to spend five years studying the American examples.

The whole experience and the prospects for this country are described in three books priced at £14.95 each or £30 for the three (including postage and packing). They are *Farmers' Markets: An American Success Story* by Harriet Festing, *Farmers' Markets: The UK potential* by Alan Chubb, and *Bath Farmers' Market: A Case Study* edited by Patricia Tutt and Deborah Morris. They are all published (as well as a fifteen-minute video at the same price on the US experience) by Eco-logic Books, 10-12 Picton Street, Bristol BS6 5QA.

Back on the theme of 'just-in-time', Hugh Raven told me earlier this year that 99% of supplies to superstores comes just-in-time from central distribution warehouses. "The effect has been a massive increase in the use of roads – both motorway and minor roads. The level of demand for food has remained static although the distance travelled by the supplier has increased by more than 50%." Meanwhile the distance travelled for shopping has increased by 60% between the mid-1970s and the 1990s. People are only just in time in starting the debate on alternatives.

Colin Ward

However clear this distinction was to Bakunin, it is regrettably absent from the thinking behind the AIT statement. In fact, the statement perpetuates the notion that all politics – even local direct democracy – is statecraft and therefore to be rejected. The authors of the document exhibit no knowledge whatever of libertarian municipalism's place in the tradition of the "federation of communes".

*Do libertarian municipalists / social ecologists support parliamentary elections?*

They categorically reject parliamentary elections as statist. They condemn all statements in support of participation in parliamentary elections and the centralised state. People who support participation in parliamentary elections are not knowingly being admitted to the Lisbon conference.

*Does the libertarian municipalism/social ecology conference support "libertarian participation in democratic elections that are political or syndical, parliamentary or local"?*

To reduce all these very different kinds of elections to a low common denominator as elections – and then reject them as such is absurd. Elections in bourgeois nation-states are hardly equitable with elections in trade unions – for example, in the CAT. Nor are parliamentary elections equitable with local elections in which libertarian candidates seek to foster a direct democracy. Libertarian municipalism/social ecology rejects participation in parliamentary elections, but it does support participation in elections at the local municipal level in this respect: It supports candidates who, running on a libertarian municipalist program, call for the democratisation of community politics and the creation of direct-democratic popular assemblies, among other demands.

*Is libertarian municipalism/social ecology an 'anarcho'-capitalist ideology?*

This accusation is farcical. Not only does libertarian municipalism oppose corporate capitalism, it takes a very critical view even of cooperatives when they are advanced as a mode of peaceful evolution from capitalism into anarchism. What it does call for is the "municipalisation of the economy" – as distinguished from its nationalisation (advocated by state socialism) and its ownership by the workers in a given enterprise (syndicalism). In a libertarian municipalist/social-ecological society, property – including both land and factories – would not be privately owned. Rather, the economy would be 'owned' and managed by the community's citizens in their assemblies. Citizens would make policy decisions about all local economic life, not in their capacity as workers in a particular factory or enterprise (which could easily render them parochial, pursuing the narrow economic interests of that enterprise) but in their capacity as citizens, looking out for the interests of the community as a whole. On economic issues that transcend one community, the citizens' assemblies would make decisions through their regional confederations.

*Do libertarian municipalists/social ecologists call for the abrogation of class struggle?*

Categorically not. Very real class differences exist between workers, peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie, manifesting in latent and actual conflicts between these classes. But people may wage the class struggle not simply on the production line, where wage labour confronts capital (important as that is), but also on the civic level, in municipal assemblies. In the assemblies the differences between different

classes will emerge and be contested in all their intensity. The assembly in effect becomes an arena for class struggle.

Important revolutions of the past have had not only an economic dimension but a civic one. In three major French revolutions, Paris was the locus of revolutionary initiative, inspiration, and conflict; in the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, Petrograd played the same honourable and crucial role; and in Spain, after the fall of Zaragoza, Barcelona was the authentic centre of anarcho-syndicalism. To overlook the revolutionary potentialities latent in the civic sphere – the neighbourhood, the quarter, the district, the borough, and other urban components – is to overlook one of the most important features of revolutions as they have appeared in history. Libertarian municipalism/social ecology tries to place this important dimension on the agenda of future struggles and social revolutions.

*Does Murray Bookchin, the leading theorist of liberation municipalism and social ecology, "set the deprived and exploited American people's direct action against an ecological and municipalist struggle undertaken by the American middle class, named liberal"? Do his "Marxist ideas about the syndical question ... lead him to think that the anarcho-syndicalism is dead in the USA"?*

Bookchin's ideas on "ecological and municipalist struggle" do not exclude working people but rather emphasise their potentiality to function as citizens concerned not merely with workplace issues but also with the neighbourhoods in which they live, with educational, ecological, health, aesthetic, and other urban issues. The class struggle occurs in the community, not only in the workplace. This dimension has

(continued on page 6)



# Dineh nation under siege

The Navajo People – one of the largest tribes in the Southwest – are forced to repair their houses only at night. It is illegal for them to maintain their traditional housing in the light of day in the United States of America.

The Bennet Freeze, passed in 1964, made new hogan construction or repair illegal at Black Mesa. The people that live there, the Dineh (the original name of the tribe we call Navajo) are today faced with a form of cultural genocide within the Dineh Reservation, 150 miles north of Flagstaff, Arizona.

This US law is one of the building blocks of the current relocation effort pursued by the government via the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Peabody Western Coal Company. This relocation and the ones before it have splintered the tribe, making traditions that have carried them thousands of years impossible to maintain. This war against Dineh culture is nothing less than the continuation of the western invasion that began with Columbus over 500 years ago.

This war is highly psychological, and of low-intensity. It depends on constant harassment: trips through the courts, various fines and fees, as well as outright arrests for 'trespassing' on their own land. The goal is the removal of the Dineh people from the area defined as their reservation, and the delivering of that land to Peabody, for their coal profits. And the deadline is fast approaching: the BIA has made 1st February

2000 the date by when they will forcibly remove anyone who remains.

Peabody has expanded their coal mining operations at Black Mesa on Dineh land several times, and they have faced no opposition from the Tribal Council; in fact they've had the outright help of the local Tribal Police. They have resisted attempts to indicate sacred areas, and have instead removed the top layers of a majority of the land they now control.

Chris Interpreter, speaking at Michigan State University's campus in February 1998, recounted various incidents of harassment by the local marshalls and rangers, and he told of his people's continuing experience of cultural genocide as practiced by the forces of law and order in this country today.

Listening to his scanner Chris regularly hears a surveillance team, watching him 24-hours a day, describing his every action: "Suspect is chopping wood ... suspect is carrying wood into hogan". This intense pressure is meant to keep him nervous. But he's not. He's pissed. And he's fighting back.

"They told me that according to the 1990 census that no one was on this land. I told them that I did the HPL census. I was the census enumerator. I drew the map, I wrote my name in that area. I wrote my name, my brother's name, and my nephew's. They didn't say anything."

"They're trying to come up with different kinds of excuses. There are only three of us that are still there. Everybody else was relocated."

He has been arrested for "trespassing" on his uncle's land while informing the Hopi Rangers that they could not take the family's livestock. But which were seized anyway. Such is daily life in the middle of the largest forced relocation on Indian people in the twentieth century.

"For a country whose founding documents speak of 'We the People'," explained Chris, "for a nation dedicated to 'democracy'; if these values can be so easily avoided as they are on the Dineh People, then this is not your country anymore. This country has been taken out of your hands. And it's a dangerous

job to educate the public [about this]."

Since 1986, when the Dineh waited with dozens of supporters for the National Guard to move against them, relocation has taken different forms. However with the BIA's recent offer of \$50,000 to the local Tribal Council to ensure that the last of the Dineh are moved elsewhere by the year 2000, efforts have been stepped up. 'Financial runoff' from Peabody's mines also appears to finance the Hopi Tribal Council's budget to the tune of 65%.

Over 10,000 Dineh have been relocated since 1974, yet thousands still refuse to move from the land that has been their home for well over eighteen generations.

Chris and his uncle Lawrence Altsisi continue to resist these efforts. Altsisi speaks of Rangers rounding up sheep when his brother was in for lunch. The Rangers demanded a permit, and declared the one Lawrence had to be expired. They took all thirty sheep, and it cost US \$465 per night each to retrieve them.

The Peabody Western Coal Company has already stripped over 103 square miles of land in attempts to extract the coal from one of the largest mineral beds in the continental US, and area which may also contain 'valuable' uranium. They have constructed an illegal 275 mile spring-water fed slurry pipeline that carries raw coal ores to their processing plants in Nevada – and drains 1.4 million gallons a year from the local water table, the same water table that fills the wells on Dineh land.

The Tools of the Relocation include:

- The Bennet Freeze (1964), a US court ordered 'ban' on housing construction of houses on the land in which the Dineh currently live.
- The Relocation Act, Public Law 93-531. Permitted coerced relocation of over 12,000 Dineh and 100 Hopi.
- The Navaho-Hopi Land Dispute Settlement, Public Law 104-301 (1996). Fabricated a land dispute and sanctioned the forced evictions of another 3,000 Dineh.

• Constant surveillance and harassment by Tribal Police, including impoundment of animals and vehicles and exorbitant retrieval fees.

• The Accommodation Agreement, a statement deadlined 1st April 1997 giving the Dineh two options: agree to remain on three acres with one cow, one sheep, one goat for 75 years, not to be passed to their children; or, face removal by BIA paramilitary police and US Marshalls. Many did not sign and police continue to attempt to get more signatures.

The situation on the land is very tense and has been deteriorating for some time now, and support is needed at many levels but particularly demonstrations in your local area in support of the Dineh.

Land supporters are needed to stay with the families resisting, helping them tend the livestock and act as human right observers. The presence of these observers greatly lessens the harassment the Dineh face. Observers should be prepared to stay for at least a month, and bring notepads and any film or recording equipment. Communications gear, goods and supplies, and researchers are also needed.

In November there will be a Thanksgiving Caravan leaving from Boulder, Colorado and carrying food & supplies out to the Dineh on the land. If you want to get involved, contact the Big Mountain Hotline in Minneapolis at (+1) 612-3652-5964.

The Dineh and supporters are working to have as many people as possible on the land on or before May 1999. Forced relocations at that time are very much a possibility and the need for observers and a network of resistance is necessary.

If you can help further or want more information, contact:

Twin Cities Dineh Defense Alliance, PO Box 583082, Minneapolis, MN, 55458-3082 USA.

Dineh hotline: (612) 362-5964

Sovereign Dineh Nation/Dineh Alliance, PO Box 2889, Window Rock, AZ, 86515 USA. Tel: (505) 371-5551.

<http://www.primenet.com/~sdn>

Peter Rashid A.

## The Raven

Number 37



### Anarchism in the Americas and China

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(continued from page 5)

been insufficiently emphasised in both the anarcho-syndicalist and Marxist movements.

Like Bakunin, Bookchin is influenced by Marxist ideas, principally on economics, and he has also tried to advance dialectical philosophy along ecological lines. But to label Bookchin, the author of *Listen, Marxist!*, a Marxist, is absurd. If he believes that anarcho-syndicalism is "dead in the USA," he has reason to do so. Although he regards anarcho-syndicalism as the best-organised form of anarchism to have appeared historically, he believes that its problems today are enormous, including the co-optation of the proletariat and its steady reduction to a small fraction of the population, the diminution of traditional class consciousness, and the probability that a great deal of work that was formerly performed by the proletariat will in the future be performed by machines.

In the United States the communalist tradition is much stronger, as in the assemblies of the New England town meeting. For this reason leading anarchist theorists in the United States have given greater importance to libertarian communalism as a basis for an anarcho-communist perspective and movement than to anarcho-syndicalism.

What is the purpose of the Lisbon conference?

Far from "creating specialists in social alienation" and "apologists of the capitalist economy," as the AIT alleges, the purpose of the conference is to advance the anti-statist, anti-capitalist politics of libertarian municipalism.

Who has been invited to participate in the conference?

People "interested to discuss and advance the politics of social ecology: libertarian municipalism" are welcome to participate

in the conference. Contrary to the AIT statement, no one involved with the conference is an 'anarcho'-capitalist. If any 'anarcho'-capitalists support the conference, they have misunderstood its intentions. No members of 'Os Verdes' have been invited to take part in the conference. No supporters of the Gulf War are involved in the conference. Neither the civil government of Lisbon, nor the Culture State Secretary, nor the "ex-Security Secretary, Alberta Costa," nor the "Trotskyist PSR leader, Francisco Louca" have been invited to participate in the conference. The AIT statement's allegations that these people are involved in the conference are wholly untrue.

The AIT statement says that "executive members of City Councils and political leaders" have been invited to participate. The only shred of truth here is that a Portuguese municipal official has been invited to give an informational talk on "the municipality and the Portuguese constitution." As it happens, Portugal is – politically, if not economically – one of the most decentralised countries in Europe. We find that information on this situation is very relevant for building a revolutionary municipal movement there and elsewhere.

Is the conference "sponsored by two Portuguese Democratic State institutions: Superior Institute of Economy and Management and Superior Institute of Enterprise and Work Sciences"? It is true that these two institutions are among the conference sponsors. They are academic institutions that routinely assist in financing conferences, providing assistance with translating expenses, publishing, and other logistical necessities. They have absolutely no say in the content of the libertarian municipalism/social ecology conference or its proceedings.

Was Portugal chosen as the site for the conference because "the libertarian movement is very weak in this country"?

No. The 'International Call' for the conference states very clearly that Portugal was chosen because: "the libertarian municipalist dimension of contemporary anarchism and the social ecology of Murray Bookchin have been extensively propagated in Lisbon among some Portuguese comrades." Moreover, "given the heritage of the libertarian and communal aspects of the Portuguese revolution of 1974 ... the Portuguese have shown themselves consistently interested in the renewal of anarchism" along these lines.

Are "defenders of the social revolution, international, egalitarian and libertarian" excluded from the conference?

Far from being excluded, they are welcome, insofar as they support or sympathise with libertarian municipalism/social ecology as an approach for achieving that revolution. By calling other anarchist approaches an "attack on the libertarian struggle," the AIT appears to identify anarcho-syndicalism alone with revolutionary struggle. But anarcho-syndicalism has no monopoly on social revolution. The anarcho-communism from which libertarian municipalism/social ecology emerges as a logical and continuous development is no less part of the anarchist tradition than anarcho-syndicalism. Nor do we wish to postpone the realisation of 'comunismo libertario'; rather, we seek its implementation in a useful and coherent manner, taking the social revolution beyond the workplace.

We note that the CNT newspaper published the entire 'International Call' unedited and without comment. We respect the anarcho-syndicalists of yesterday and today, and we work alongside them on the road to an ecological and anarchist society.

The International Organising Committees (Montreal-Vermont and Lisbon)



**Rich and Poor**



**M**errily we roll along, then one day a glimpse in the mirror gives us a jolt. That face looks familiar, we say, to our present image. But you used to have such black hair, the man says, and you had such brave bright eyes. Here is a group photo, what comrades you had. Whatever happened to them? No use worrying about the past, it will never come back, and if it did you wouldn't recognise it. Just follow Cocteau's advice: never look in mirrors.

**E**ven though this is the century of the film and everyone who was anyone was in some kind of a film, or at least bought the sixpenny ticket, and has seen his betters and elders make a fool of themselves on the silvery screen. And now, as the tailors used to cut a new garment out of an old one, they can make a new print out of an old forgotten masterpiece. You have seen the film before. Only fifty-odd years have passed and you can see it again, good as new. It meant something to you then. Does it mean anything to you now? Or is it just a bit *passé*?

**M**ovies are not what they used to be. To start with no film maker nowadays would want to make a film for the select few, for those who appreciate art and literature. This is the era of the Philistine, when schools refuse the gift of classical books. Words, says the distinguished school librarian, people don't want to read words, do they?

**O**n the other hand there are still a few cinemas which show artistic films in very select neighbourhoods – usually near cemeteries so that the ghosts at least fill the cinemas, watching their long vanished images on the screen, as good as new if not better. Mind you, in London alone in the past year two of such cinemas – the famous Everyman in Hampstead and the Portobello Road Electric Cinema – have been closed for 're-decoration', which means they will never open again because some filthy speculator has put his dirty hands on the assets.

**R**e-issued recently is Jean Renoir's *La Grande Illusion*, which is certainly better than any other film being shown around the moment. It has pace, it has a story, it is cleverly photographed, it was done by a master cutter and no seams are showing. But has it aged? Is age the word? For none of those lovable buffoons are alive today. What you watch has entered a new dimension. You open the coffin lid and out walks Jean Gabin, just as he ever did, and there is the old enemy Erich von Stroheim, the once brave pilot whose old skin burnt off, but such is war and it has not stopped him being a gentleman. There are the old courtesies among old enemies. It was so important to keep up the pretence. War was only a temporary derangement. Once the Great War is over, Jean Gabin will return to his *fraulein* with the *blau augen* and the fugitive will reach Switzerland and safety. The frustrated German patrol has them in his rifle's range, but he is not allowed to shoot into neutral land.

**Y**et there was applause for the old film at the end, and tears in the eyes, for the sentiment was there, the propaganda for peace when all was going to be well. The great illusion of peace remains a real tear-jerker. All that brotherly love, all that cunning patriotic brotherhood which has moved no less a person than Winston Churchill to say we must have peace for another day and all government is lost, the people will turn to anarchy. It is embarrassing to see all those ghosts gallivanting about, and just as futile. All the new film-makers have sold out or have no talent. The old ones, like Jean Renoir, had talent and knew how to make a trite story sound and seem convincing. What we needed was a revolution. What these ghosts have given us is the big lie with a cast of thousands.

John Rety

**Reclaiming our Space**

Dear comrades,  
The article 'Reclaiming our space' (18th July 1998) expressed what a lot of people have been feeling over the last few years concerning the priorities, values and direction of the anarchist movement (I use that term without irony). This tendency, feeling or intuition was particularly crystallised in Prometheus Rex's sentence: "These events were in sharp contrast to the previous week's Social Justice demo, which by all accounts was a total washout and hopefully marks the end of moralistic, good cause politics and the start of genuinely revolutionary action."

The sharp (but false) contrast PR refers to is an academic opposition of on the one hand the working class initiatives generated from the Liverpool Dockworkers' lockout and the bohemian actions of RTS (Reclaim the Streets) on the other with PR pinning his/her rosette to the cause of the reclaimers. S/he goes further than this in wishing to bury the "very term 'social justice' [which] now evokes nothing but the nightmarish visions of Tony Blair's grinning face." Is that true, or is it the unthought out rhetoricism of someone with a very limited grasp of what "radicals like myself" are all about?

The RTS party involves the gathering of people together so as to celebrate and affirm positive things over and above the negative things which normally tend to dominate – the party lasts quite a long time (up to half a day), disrupts traffic, and involves quite a few people (eight thousand in London on PR's figures) – but the revelry does come to an end (like ordinary demonstrations) and the traffic moves again and the party-goers do go home PR's advocacy of RTS-style actions is based on an assertion that the greater the number of such actions the more powerful their effect and the more enduring will be their influence on society as a whole until a saturation point is reached and everyone succumbs to the exotic enticements of sound systems on the back of lorries. PR's perfect world (as representative of the party-goers'

vision) is modelled on something akin to Notting Hill carnival. Many sociologists and political radicals have advocated the carnival as revolutionary model, it is also true that orgies, pop festivals and blocking traffic (or any other form of non-traditional or extreme behaviour) are not necessarily anarchistic.

All political demonstrations disrupt traffic – the difference with the RTS tableaux is that they make this their only motive, or to put it another way, they ditch theory, or ideals in favour of a technical immediatism (we can stop traffic and this is how to do it systematically). RTS are very technically competent at what they do but that is not sufficient reason to uncritically side with them. The discipline of social revolutionaries demands that they do not uncritically affirm this or that protest movement, the values of which they only partially agree with, on the spur of the radical effectiveness of those actions but it is to participate critically in these phenomena with a proper regard to the possible weaknesses in such strategies: it is probable that RTS will become respectabilised into a yearly expression of staged communal locality (like Berlin's Love Parade). Indeed this process has already begun from within by the likes of PR: in emphasising the approval of 'local' people of 'all ages and races' who were happy to reoccupy their locality as a 'public' space PR has embraced liberal political apology – in other words, antagonism between social classes (the struggle for the world) is replaced by a potential people and their positive energy and the obstacles to their becoming a real people, namely machines (cars), bad laws and conventional behaviour (the radical liberal denounces 'zombification' – if only the people would 'wake up', it is all a matter of understanding).

The question begged by 'radicals like myself' is what else is here in the RTS vision? I am bored (in the city) with the staged spontaneities of the bohemian fringe, it is dada, it is the saboteurs, it is *ballet des rues*,

it is happenings, theatre of cruelty, free festivals. The problem is that many groups around this *Schnews*, RTS, *Squall* axis are content to drop politics as such, opting instead for a populist protest culture which in the end and no matter how it is dressed up, because it wants a non-alienating anti-theory populism (number of bodies being a greater priority than the quality of participation), is still only a lobbying of the powers that be, and reformist in character.

We should not be reduced to simple unthinking immediacy and delinquency because getting things done in local extreme circumstances is currently valued by a few latter day hippies above critical reflection (protest is becoming another variant of the 'No Fear' dangerous sports vogue). We are not relativists, we may not compromise touristically on this or that local tyranny or colourfully traditional exploitation (no religions, no lawyers, ministers, privileges, hierarchies or experts escape our denunciation) – we think that our values are universal and with this in mind we continue to act and think locally and globally to realise those values. The question is, how to bring the apparently abstract entity of social justice into the everyday.

Bud

**Genes and Freedom**

Dear Freedom,  
Colin Johnson's thought-provoking letter on genetic manipulation raises many issues of concern. However, it contains one premise which should be questioned sharply; the acceptance that it is 'too late' to do anything about the genetic engineering of foodstuffs and other plants. If it really were 'too late', Monsanto would not now be in the middle of a one million pound advertising campaign to undermine our perfectly reasonable suspicions of unpredictable genetic engineering. Legislation to prevent further releases of genetically-engineered organisms (perhaps for a set period of reflection and debate) is perfectly feasible, given the overwhelming public opposition to the steamroller tactics of the genetic engineering industry. All that is needed is effort and education, and stiff resistance to the notion of technological determinism.

Milan Rai

**The Rape of Socialism**

Dear Freedom,  
Neil Fisher (18th July) doubts whether "ploughing through" *The Rape of Socialism* would be worth his time and effort. Well ploughing – and sowing the seed – is what we anarchists are about, isn't it?

Of course it's a lamentable tale I have to tell – and there's no happy ending in sight, nor even the end of the tunnel. But it is, after all, the tale of our times – of the so-called 'century of the common man' – and surely we should know it well, both out of solidarity with all our fellow victims and in order to arm our arguments in fighting the war against capitalism and the State. However accurate Bakunin's predictions concerning the outcome of parliamentary 'socialism' may have been, in my view anarchists have a duty to know what actually happened. How else can we hope to persuade others to our way of thinking.

I sympathise with reluctance to immerse oneself in the turgid sound and fury of labour history, but then my claim is to have made it easy for fellow anarchists and more libertarian-minded socialists in general by doing a deal of spadework and offering them a digest. Moreover, whatever contrary impressions may have been given by my short fistful of reviewers, while I might write with sympathy of the struggle of the more genuine 'democratic socialists' – and even at times have stood shoulder to shoulder with them – I have never been anything but an

anarchist since becoming one nearly half a century ago.

Nor is my book most essentially about (to quote Brian Bamford's generous review) "the slow death of Labour England". Yes, it does say that even from their perspective the State socialists could have done a great deal more for the common people; but, much more fundamentally, the book is an attack on the illusion that capitalist 'democracy' of any kind could possibly emancipate, and Part One is mainly about the origins of this illusion in the extension of the suffrage during the nineteenth century. Furthermore, this story, and that of the labour movements' slithering into the dunghill of near-total capitulation to capitalism, are set in the framework of 'utopian' visions of how our century could have been quite different, with Henry George and Peter Kropotkin giving the lie to such 'realists' as the Fabian socialists.

Of course, no one is more biased in this matter than I am, but (to quote from the final paragraph of Bamford's review), this book "ought to be read ... by anarchists and serious left libertarian students of contemporary politics". It might be rather a long (though *not* laborious) read, but at *Freedom's* special price of £10 (plus £1 towards postage and packing) it really is remarkable value. Go on, Neil Fisher, treat yourself and be a happy ploughboy!

Donovan Pedelty

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#### — PROGRAMME 1998 —

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**21st August** General discussion

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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  
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