

Sex, politics and ordinary language

After reading the Clinton tapes this week we must wonder if it will ever be possible in political life to render to words their everyday uses. President Clinton skilfully constructed discrete definitions for 'sexual relations' and 'sexual intercourse'.

Certain activities under the President's definition may be included in the category 'sexual relationship', but others, such as 'oral sex', are in the President's view to be excluded.

Mr Sol Wisenberg, I think, was asking the following: "As I understand your testimony, Mr President, touching somebody's breast with intent to arouse or gratify sexual desire of any person, is covered. Kissing the breast is covered. Touching the genitalia is covered, correct? ... [But] oral sex, in your view, is not covered, correct?"

Clinton: "If performed on the deponent."

Mr Wisenberg: "Is not covered, correct?"

Clinton: "That's my reading of this ..."

Later, in a reply to Mr Wisenberg, Clinton retorted: "Now, Mr Wisenberg, I told you in response to a grand jury's question – you asked me did I believe that oral sex performed on the person who was being deposed was covered by that definition. And I said 'No'. I don't believe it's covered by the definition."

No wonder Suzanne Moore claims that Mr Clinton "has been guilty of turning Monica into little more than a dehumanised receptacle".

What Clinton did admit is that he engaged "in conduct that was wrong" but that "these encounters did not consist of sexual intercourse" or "constitute sexual relations". "Inappropriate intimate contact" and "inappropriate sexual banter" in telephone conversations was how the President classified his goings-on with Monica.

US feminists divided

The feminists in the USA seem to be divided over the Clinton carryings-on. Suzanne Moore argues that "politically they see a President who, if not particularly good for women, has not been bad for them". She also claims that "they rightly fear the real right-wing revolution that will occur if the Republicans take control of the White House as well as Congress".

Apart from Andrea Dworkin and the radical feminists, most of the mainstream feminists seem happy to turn a blind eye to what might, in other circumstances, be seen as a man exploiting a woman at work. Ms Moore calls it "abusing office furniture".

Ms Moore is convinced that Monica was used by, what she calls, the most powerful man in the world. Virginia Ironside in *The Independent* insists the woman 'made all the running', begging Clinton endlessly "to have full intercourse with her".

Ms Ironside writes: "to his credit, he refused", and she gives him further brownie points because "he only came in her mouth twice during their liaison".

Why did the President restrain himself in this way? After all, Ms Ironside claims, "their sexual experiences together were never anything more than heavy petting". Never, she insists, 'the full monty'.

It is as if, after his experience with Gennifer Flowers, he deliberately

confined himself to this kind of constricted oral adventure. In the Clinton tapes he responded: "I had to acknowledge, because of this definition [of sexual relations] that under this definition I had actually had sexual relations with Gennifer Flowers, a person who has spread all kinds of ridiculous, dishonest, exaggerated stories about me for money".

Sex relations for 'ordinary Americans'

What constitutes a sexual relationship? Is sexual intercourse a necessary condition of a sexual relationship? Clinton seems to think so.

To the question "So your definition of sexual relationship is intercourse only, is that correct?" Clinton replied "No, not necessarily intercourse only, but it would include intercourse. I believe that the common understanding of the term, if you say two people are having a sexual relationship, most people believe that includes intercourse".

That is the definition Mr Clinton believes that "most ordinary Americans would give it".

To the question "What else would sexual relationship include besides intercourse?" President Clinton answered: "Well ... let me answer what I said before. I think most people, when they use that term, include sexual relationships and what other, whatever, other sexual contact is involved in a particular relationship. But they think it includes intercourse as well ... I would have thought that's what nearly everyone thought it meant".

So there you have it. You can't have a sexual relationship without intercourse. Blow jobs which service someone like the President while he's answering the telephone don't count.

Mack the Knife

**Anarchist
Bookfair
full programme
inside
(see page 2)**

Freedom

anarchist fortnightly

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50p

As the Prime Minister Tony Blair explains ...

'We can't alter the market'

Tony Blair commiserated with sacked constituents recently, blaming their plight on global over-production of semi-conductors. "We can't alter the market", he explained. Paul Foot remarked in the *Guardian* on the similarity between this phrase and Margaret Thatcher's "You can't buck the market". Foot continued: "In those five words, Blair dispensed with 100 years of social democracy, whose central proposition was that Labour governments, in the interests of the people who elect them, can and should buck the market. State health, state education, state pensions are all examples of altering/bucking the market. No pure market system worth its salt would contemplate any of them."

As Foot no doubt knows, a 'pure market system' would in fact collapse very very quickly. An unrestrained mass of competing human atoms and commercial engines motivated primarily by greed and directing resources into whatever activities brought the most profit in the short term, would soon dissipate the basis for social life and bring about economic collapse. Without the constraints of law and contract, imposed by the state, even the most elementary economic and financial transactions would be difficult in a Hobbesian form of capitalism.

Which, by the way, is one of the reasons why capitalism for some considerable time now has accepted the need for state

intervention. Business needs a nanny state to nurse business interests (while applying stern discipline to less powerful sectors of the economy). On the other hand, however, the forms of state intervention cited by Foot have only been permitted because business elites have been forced, by the power of popular struggle, to concede these inroads on their prerogatives. In the absence of a similar struggle, these modest, but important, gains will be wiped out without any corresponding benefit elsewhere in society.

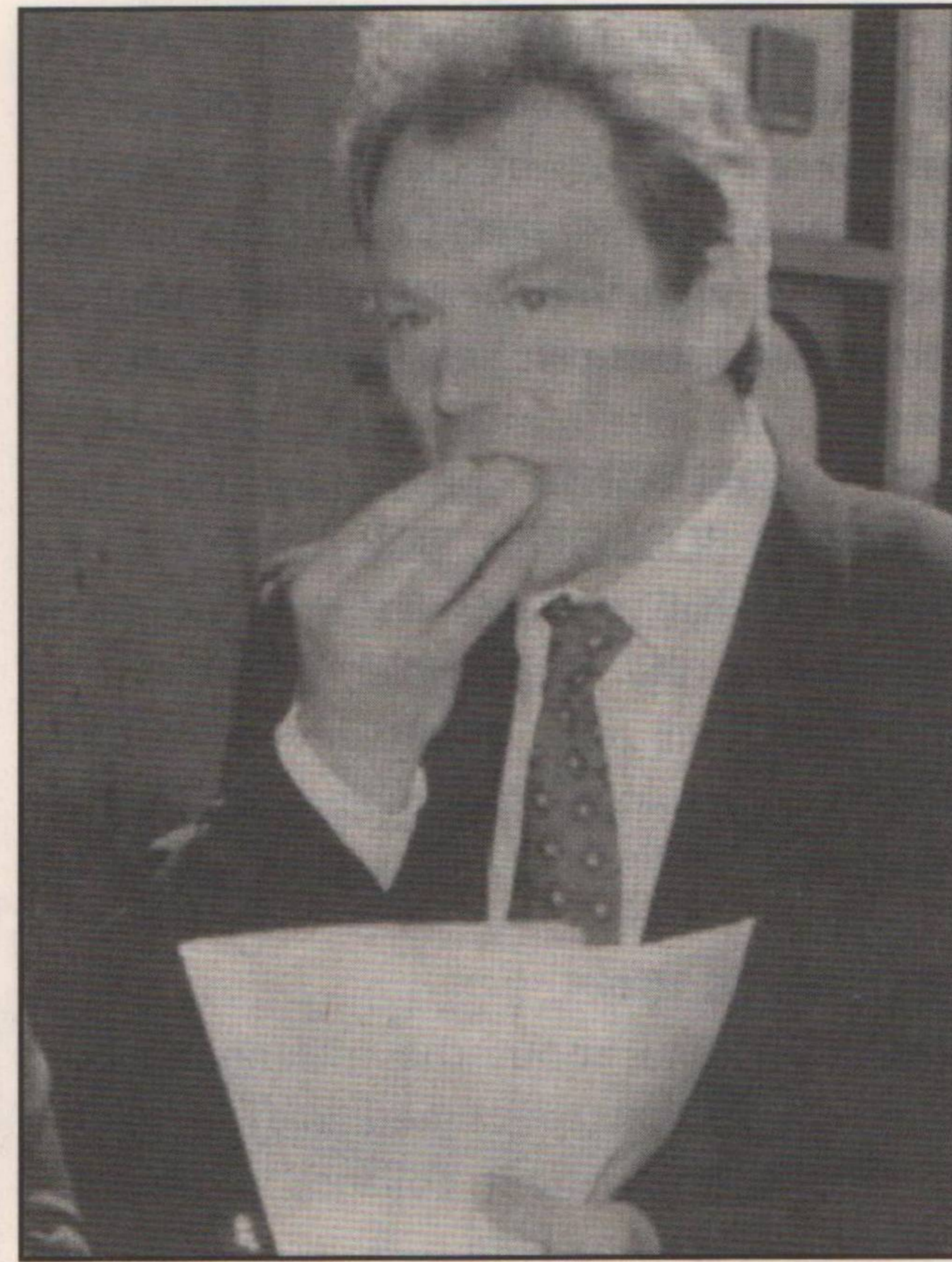
One problem with Blair's embrace of 'the market', though this may, of course, only be a presentational issue, is that 'the market' has not been well-behaved recently. For a clear and important discussion of one important case, we refer to an article in *Z* magazine (July/August 1998) by James Crotty and Gary Dymksi entitled 'The Korean struggle: aftermath of the IMF takeover'. The two authors spent two weeks in Korea in March this year, and discussed the reasons for South Korea's recent troubles with "an unusually broad array of Koreans from diverse social positions - top managers and officials in banking and industry, important government officials, leaders of the more militant of the two Korean labour federations, students and academics."

The conclusion? "In contrast to the near universal opinion expressed in the Western press, most Koreans correctly understand that their crisis was not caused by too much government regulation, but by too little. It was excessive liberalisation, not the traditional East Asia model, that failed."

Following the 'traditional East Asia model' the South Korean government provided temporary import protection for domestic markets introducing new products or technologies - protecting infant industries from outside competition at a critical point in their development - and focussed the development of high technology production capabilities on a small number of diversified companies termed 'chaebols'. The state also coordinated chaebol investment decisions, allocated credit toward priority industries and technologies, and tightly regulated the movement of money across the border. "At the same time, the government selectively opened markets to import competition and imposed export performance criteria in return for government aid to insure that key industries achieved world-class efficiency."

The result? "Over the past 35 years [the economy] achieved an average annual rate of growth of both real per-person national income and real wages of about 7% while maintaining full employment and a relatively equal income distribution." In other words, you can buck the market.

According to the Koreans consulted by Crotty and Dymksi, the recent crisis has its roots in a decision taken by leading Korean chaebol conglomerates in the early 1990s to try to become serious rivals to Western and



Japanese transnationals. This required massive investment in Korea and elsewhere. This, in turn, required massive loans. The chaebols succeeding in persuading the government to deregulate domestic financial markets to prepare the way for these loans, and to enter the OECD to gain assured access to foreign markets. The price of entry to the OECD was accelerated deregulation of cross-border capital flows and domestic financial markets. Korea's interest rates being higher than global rates, when the financial barriers came down, short-term money flooded in from outside. Newly licensed (and unregulated) merchant banks

borrowed from outside and re-lent the money to the chaebols. Total foreign bank loans doubled from 1994 to 1997 to about \$120 billion, "an astounding 60% of which had to be repaid within one year".

"The stage was now set for the outbreak of a financial crisis," Crotty and Dymksi remark. A risky long-term capital boom had been financed with short-term loans, a large part of which were in foreign currency. If chaebols experienced profitability problems and/or disappointing export earnings, interest payments would have to be delayed, foreign loans might have to be defaulted on, there might be a run on the Korean currency (the won), a collapse of the Korean stock market and a mass refusal by foreign banks to roll their loans over. In other words, the government, persuaded by business elites, permitted 'the market' control over a crucial sector of the national economy, and the result was the disaster we now refer to as 'Asian contagion'.

In response to now-global 'contagion', Tony Blair has proposed the creation of a new world financial order. In his speech to the New York Stock Exchange on 22nd September, Blair said: "This is not a matter of a few technical changes. We should not be afraid to think radically and fundamentally." Too true. We should not be afraid to alter the market, to buck the market, to democratise the market, to unmask the market. We should not be afraid to destroy those financial, economic and industrial empires whose activities are cloaked by the euphemism, 'the market'.

Come one, come all!

By the time you read this there will be a mere two weeks, or less, before the seventeenth grand annual Anarchist Bookfair (see details elsewhere in this issue). As usual the Freedom Press drones will be there, complete with their magnificent bookstall stacked to the gunwhales with printed thoughts of all shades, from the sublime to the ridiculous, the profound to the facetious, the scholarly to the scurrilous. The entire range of Freedom Press titles will be on display, along with those of the many other publishers we stock or distribute, including many that have been mentioned in *Freedom* over the year, and some that have not - not to mention the numerous cut-price bargains, some of which will only be available on the day.

If you've never been before come and gawk in amazement at the sheer number of other misfits and oddballs, cranks and loonies who rejoice in the name 'anarchist', and come and say hello to the Freedom Press volunteers. If you have been before and you don't do anything else this year in the movement, at least get yourself down to Central London and soak up the unique atmosphere of thousands of like-minded people desperately seeking something to read. And don't forget the poor stallholders, many of whom haven't been bought a drink since ... last year's Bookfair.

Tearaway parents

What makes children into 'trouble-makers'? New research supports traditional libertarian thinking, and scuttles the idea that disruptive children come only from 'problem families' with 'disadvantaged' backgrounds.

Dr Claire Hughes of the Institute of Psychiatry compared forty disruptive youngsters with a control group of forty 'well-adjusted' children at the ages of four and then again at six. The disruptive ones, who were videoed bullying, abusing, and attacking their peers when playing together, were less likely to be able to sit still and concentrate, found it harder to read, had fewer friends, and (at age six) generally enjoyed school less than those with no behavioural problems.

"Dr Hughes said the key factor in determining whether a child grew up as a tearaway was the level of parental criticism they suffered as a toddler" (*Sunday Telegraph*, 13th September 1998). This was independent of whether their mothers (or fathers, presumably) stayed at home to care for them, and independent of family income.

"The danger is that children see their parents as role models and copy their behaviour. So if a parent is impatient, negative

or critical, the child often becomes pushy, nasty or aggressive towards their peers and difficult to manage. With such children, there is a lot of rule-breaking, teasing, nastiness and even hitting their friends. These things are all consistent with how their parents are behaving with them."

The golden rule of parenting, it appears, is 'Do as I do, not as I say'.

How does this finding support libertarian thought? Strict control of children, backed up by anger and criticism, produces 'bad behaviour', not sweetness and light.

But it would be wrong to accept the framework within which these findings are presented. What is entirely missing from this analysis is any attempt to understand how it feels to be a criticised child. There is no sense of how damaged a child must be for her to strike out against her peers. The focus of the research is on the external disruption caused by the child, and not on the internal damage which has been caused to her by her parents' anger.

'Troublemaking' children are merely passing on the trouble that has been made by their tearaway parents.

Milan Rai

PROGRAMME FOR THE SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR

17th October 1998 from 10am until 11pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (nearest tube Holborn)

MAIN HALL

Books, new and secondhand, in print and hard to find, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, tracts and rants, poetry, T-shirts, videos, tapes, CDs, comic books, posters, postcards, theory, history, fantasy, polemics, fiction, art and lots more besides. Everything today's and tomorrow's anarchist could possibly desire.

Come meet the thirty-plus anarchist groups and publishers whose stalls fill the main hall. Discover all you want to know about the various groups, their publications, their proclivities (and even their politics). And if it's all too much, you can buy food, beer, tea, coffee, juice and then relax in the balcony and watch the spectacle below. From 10am to 7pm.

SMALL HALL

REVOLUTIONARY SEXUALITY

Including Kellan Farshea, Tuppy Owens and the Sex Workers' Show and Tell. One of the big hits of last year's bookfair, back by popular demand. What can top last year? 11.30am to 1pm

MA'AM

MOVEMENT AGAINST THE MONARCHY
The Monarchy, the very pinnacle of the Establishment. Its time has run out. Ian Bone and Martin Wright have spent the past year preparing for a popular assault on the palace gates. 1pm to 2pm

FERMIN ROCKER

In conversation with Anthony Rudolf, Fermin Rocker, son of the anarchist Rudolf Rocker, movingly recalls the spirit of the East End

anarchist and Jewish movements of the early 1900s. This coincides with the recent publication of his memoir *The East End Years*. 2pm to 3pm

THE ITALIAN JOB

In 1994, six anarchists were convicted of armed robbery in Italy. A wave of activity followed their imprisonment and this led to a massive round-up of anarchists. Currently, sixty people are on trial. One of the six, Jean Weir, will describe the situation and how British comrades can help. 3pm to 4pm

RIDING THE WIND

A NEW PHILOSOPHY FOR A NEW ERA
Peter Marshall, author of the major work, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*, will talk about his philosophy, 'liberation ecology', the subject of his new book. 4pm to 5pm

THE END IS NIGH

Heard the one about the millennium bug? Stand-up anarchist comedian Tony Allen predicts the imminent collapse of western civilisation. 4pm to 5pm

GANDALF

THE GREEN ANARCHIST/ALF TRIALS
Three activists convicted of conspiracy on the basis of their publishing had their convictions quashed on 23rd July – on a technicality. Two activists still face the same farce. 6pm to 7pm

CLUB ROOM

ANARCHISM AND RELIGION

AN IMPOSSIBLE COMBINATION?
Dutch anarchist Bas Moreel leads a discussion on the often-unrecognised connec-

tions between anarchism and some varieties of religious thought and practice, looking closely at the example of the anarchist Catholic Workers' movement. 11.30am to 12.30pm

CLIFFORD HARPER

ANARCHIST AND ARTIST

From his early years in the shanty towns of Rio, via time in Hollywood as Clint Eastwood's body double, to his work today with the Anarchist Bookfair, the artist will talk about his graphic work, accompanied by a slide show. 12.45pm to 1.45pm

MALATESTA IN LONDON

1900-1914: THE ERA OF SYNDICALISM
Carl Levey will discuss this period of the renowned anarchist militant's life. Hosted by the Anarchist Research Group. 2pm to 4pm

BRADFORD MAY '98

NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR THE LIBERTARIAN LEFT

In the Spring, 256 people met to share perspectives, air differences and look at directions for the future. A discussion, led by the Mayday organisers, about where we go to next. 4pm to 5pm

NEXT STOP GLASGOW?

A SECOND NATIONAL CONFERENCE
Following on from the Bradford conference, Glasgow anarchists propose hosting a second conference in their home city. 5pm to 6pm

ANARCHIST INFORMATION NETWORK

AIN LONDON CONFERENCE

A London meeting for non-aligned anarchists of the recently-formed network. All are welcome. 6pm to 8pm

BERTRAND RUSSELL ROOM

CRÈCHE

Fun for your kids and a break for you – and it's free as well. The Anarchist Bookfair's crèche is run by professional workers from I-SIS. 11.30am to 5pm

NORTH ROOM

REPRESSION & ANARCHIST RESISTANCE IN EUROPE

Discussion led by the Anarchist Communist Federation. 12 noon to 1pm

SMASH HITS

Editorial meeting for one of the movement's newest magazines. 1pm to 2pm

ANARCHIST NIHILISM

THE WAY FORWARD

Meeting and discussion. 2pm to 3pm

JOHN MOORE

This popular and passionate writer whose poetic prose evinces a deeply-felt concern for the fate of our planet will be reading from his work. 3pm to 4pm

MARK BARNESLEY

SUPPORT GROUP

Discussion on this case. 4pm to 5pm

ZAPATISTA SOLIDARITY

Activists discuss promoting solidarity with the Zapatista communities. Session hosted by Zapatista Action Project (ZAP) & Zapatista Challenge Network. 5pm to 6pm

NORTH TOWER ROOM

MEETING OVERFLOW

When a meeting is popular, but time runs out, this room is available for use throughout the day.

BAR & FOOD

AVAILABLE FROM 12 NOON

Beer, tea, coffee and soft drinks available in the Bar (access via the foyer). Vegetarian and vegan food supplied by Veggies Co-op in the hallway throughout the day. Nearby are good pubs and decent eating places open throughout the day.

SATURDAY NIGHT PARTY

A party is planned in Brixton at the 121 Bookshop, 121 Railton Road, London SE24. Details on the day.

FOR BOOKFAIR INFORMATION:

Anarchist Bookfair, 84b Whitechapel High Street, E1 7QX

Tel: 0181-533 6936

e-mail: m.peacock@unl.ac.uk

http://freespace.virgin.net/anarchist.bookfair

Freedom Press Bookshop

(in Angel Alley)

84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

— opening hours —

Monday to Friday 10.30am - 6pm

Saturday 11am - 5pm



Books can be ordered from the above address.

A booklist is available on request.

— ORDERING DETAILS —

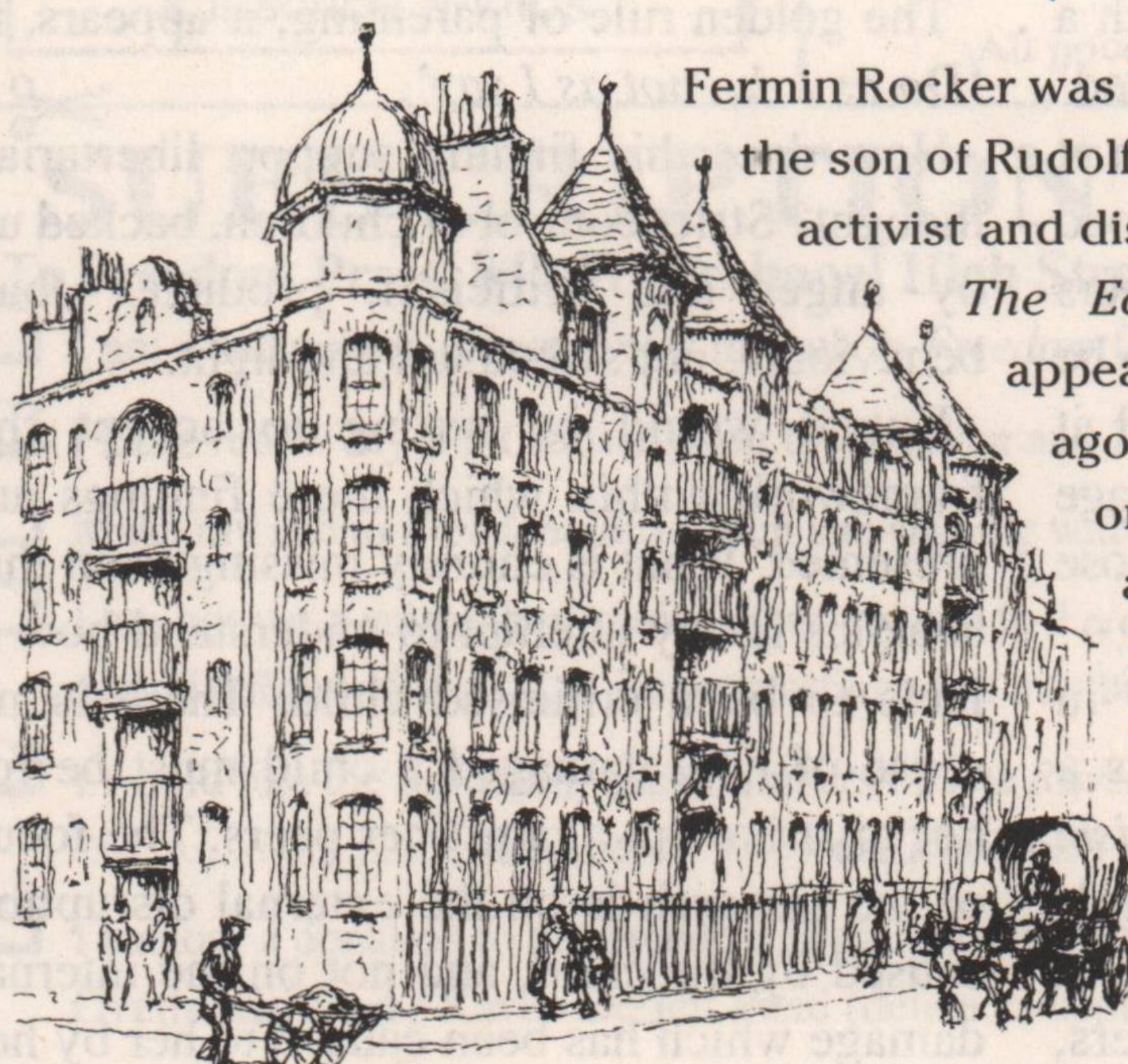
Titles distributed by Freedom Press (marked*) are post-free inland (add 15% postage and packing to overseas orders). For other titles add 10% towards p&p inland, 20% overseas.

Cheques/PO in sterling made out to 'FREEDOM PRESS'

Fermin Rocker

The East End Years A Stepney Childhood

with drawings by the author



Fermin Rocker was born in the East End of London in 1907, the son of Rudolf Rocker the famous anarchist theorist, activist and disciple of Kropotkin.

The East End Years: A Stepney Childhood appeared in German translation a few years ago. This is its first publication in the original English. In exploring his origins as an artist, Fermin Rocker conjures a moving and colourful picture of his remarkable father, anarchism and of the Jewish East End. Rocker's story reminds us that the visionary topography of his paintings has its roots in a lost world.

192 pages

ISBN 0 900384 92 1

£7.95

Freedom Press

84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

In the Tameside care workers dispute, Thornley is on ... Dukinfield's ducking stool

The solicitor Jack Thornley must have thought he'd landed on a ducking stool when he addressed last month's public hearing in Dukinfield into the consequences of the Tameside care dispute. Up to a hundred baying women – care workers and relatives of inmates in the old people's homes – confronted Mr Thornley in a Workingmen's Club, as he tried to explain his position as a trustee/director of the Tameside Care Group (TCG) board which sacked the care workers.

As Jack Thornley unfolded his explanation for the chaotic debacle which hit the Tameside Care Group, which manages twelve old people's homes in this part of Greater Manchester, he didn't try to cover up the obvious management incompetence. It became clear that there was a conflict between Mr Thornley and Alan Firth, the managing director, over how much profits had been made in the last financial year. Was it £750,000 net, claimed by Mr Firth in the *Ashton Reporter*, or was it the £150,000 insisted upon by Jack Thornley?

The going rate?

"What's the going rate for a managing director who doesn't know what profit his company has made" asked someone. But Mr Firth's ignorance of the profit and loss account has not led to him getting a pay cut threatened or acted upon. He is still on a comfortable stipend and living it up well in Huddersfield with his wife, kids and garden gnomes.

The reason for this is that although the company came to disaster because of the bosses' laxity, when it comes to making cuts the care workers had to be the first to suffer. Mr Thornley and the Tameside Care Group board's reasoning for this was that the people actually doing the work in the homes were on more than the going rate and their pay could be cut. While 'ignorance is bliss' Mr Firth could carry on drawing his dough unmolested.

No wonder the president of the Tameside Trades Council called upon Mr Thornley to do penance and seek atonement for his sins. The whole performance of Mr Thornley was that of a nineteenth century utilitarian nincompoop waving facts and figures before a board of starving children. Charles Dickens could have had a beano here, for here was Mr Gradgrind and Scrooge rolled into one person – that of Jack Thornley the solicitor from Stalybridge.

Mr Thornley didn't blink when someone told of one jacket potato for dinner in one home, and corned beef five days a week in another, not to mention the drunken cook now performing in one home who in a stupor didn't do the tea recently.

Mr Thornley freely admitted there had been deterioration in the homes since the sackings had taken place in March.

No confidence vote!

In a vote of 'no confidence' in the management of the Tameside Care Group, the public hearing called upon the trustee board to reinstate the care workers or resign. But Mr Thornley said he couldn't resign because he was brought up in Stalybridge with his sister to believe that once you have made a decision you stick by it through thick and thin.

It is as if the commandant of a death camp in Nazi Germany, having just turned the gas on in the gas chambers, should suddenly be struck by a pang of conscience. In response

to the question "Why didn't you turn off the gas?" he may perhaps retort: 'I was brought up in Prussia, and when a Prussian makes a decision he sticks to it!'

That kind of reply brought forth the resolution that the meeting in Dukinfield call on the Transport & General Workers' Union to stop using Jack Thornley Solicitors to do union business.

Mr Thornley was aghast when this was passed, and again when a girl got up and said that Jack Thornley had been encouraged to attend and address the hearing after an

occupation of one of his offices in Manchester (see the report in the last issue of *Freedom*).

Finally Mr Thornley was not going to attend the public hearing in Dukinfield as he claimed there had been a mix-up over the dates agreed during the occupation. Jack Thornley underwent an overnight conversion when I rang him the night before the hearing reminding him of our agreement and telling him that, as a freelance journalist, I had made contemporaneous notes of our deal that he attend.

Albert Shore

COPY DEADLINE

The next issue of
**Freedom will be dated
17th October, and the
last day for copy
intended for this issue
will be first post on
Thursday 8th October**

Now ready: the Raven 38 on 1968

After long delays due to various technical problems, *The Raven* number 38 has appeared at last.

This issue is an exciting historical edition on the theme of 1968, which was the year of the failed revolution in Paris, and the revolutionary responses to the American war in Vietnam.

Articles include new accounts by Sebastian Hayes and Dermot Sreenan about what it was like in Paris at the time, and a reprint of a piece in *Anarchy*, 1968, by the then notorious revolutionary Daniel Cohn-Bendit.

The Raven number 38 costs £3 (post free to anywhere) for 96 pages.

Currently we are collecting material for three future numbers of *The Raven*, on the themes of anthropology and sociology, censorship and control, and genetics and evolution, to be produced in the order in which they become ready.

As usual with *The Raven*, the themes may be interpreted very broadly, so long as the general trend is anarchistic and articles worth reading. Submissions are invited.

We hope if possible to produce two more editions this year.

John Aitkenhead

Dear *Freedom*,

I am not a declared anarchist but I have subscribed to *Freedom* since it was *War Commentary* and I've had no reason to doubt the worth of the subscription till the issue of 5th September. Is it the practice of the editor to allow someone who is obviously not familiar with the person or his work to write an obituary of him? I was quite appalled not only at the inadequacy of the obituary by Donald Room on my husband but by the number of inaccuracies it contained. There have been so many up to date good obituaries of John Aitkenhead in more conventional newspapers that it is a great pity such a discreditable one should appear in the organ of the anarchists.

I think it's important to list the inaccuracies: At no time did the council meeting vote on the issues of compulsory bedtimes or lessons. The bedtimes were decided by the staff and these were told straightforwardly to the children from the beginning. We tried the non-compulsory attendance at classes, following Neill's ideas, but came to the conclusion that the children who needed more to be in the social groups that did go to classes were the ones suffering so we changed that but at no time were lessons compulsory in the sense they are compulsory in the state schools. To suggest that the staff

'manipulated' children to vote for what the staff wanted is not only inaccurate but insulting to the ideas behind the school.

It is only laughable to say it was a school for 'rich' kids. I would have thought the anarchist Donald Room would have been aware of how many rich people support unorthodox ideas. For the best part of the school we took kids for what the parents could afford.

Kilquhanity was never a community in the orthodox meaning of that term. We never held goods in common. We all worked for our keep for the first year, pocket money the next which was then increased as the school could afford it.

Cigarettes were never a communal resource on which people drew as needed and in my memory there were always as many non-smokers as smokers among the staff and certainly in the later years, to try to discourage kids from starting or continuing smoking, staff were not allowed to smoke in the staffroom or main house or classrooms.

Morag Aitkenhead

Donald Room writes: I thank Morag Aitkenhead for the corrections and apologise for the inaccuracies. I admire the work of the Aitkenheads, and the last thing I intended was to cause offence.



Two new titles from Freedom Press

We have decided to announce details of our two forthcoming titles in advance of their publication date. We think that both of them, in their very different ways, will have a wide popular appeal outside the anarchist milieu. The official publication date is Thursday 15th October. Those attending the Anarchist Bookfair on 17th October will see these two new books prominently displayed on our stall, but *Freedom* subscribers who order either or both of these titles in advance of publication (payment with order) can ensure their copies despatched by return post as soon as they are available from the printers (post free in the UK, elsewhere add 15% towards postage and packing).

Information Liberation by Brian Martin

Power tends to corrupt, and information power is no exception. *Information Liberation*

analyses the corruptions of power in a range of crucial current areas in the information society, including mass media, intellectual property, surveillance, bureaucracies, defamation and research.

Reform solutions seldom get to the root of information problems. *Information Liberation* examines radical alternatives that undermine the power of vested interests. Alternatives include replacing mass media with network media, abolishing intellectual property, and replacing social institutions that create a demand for surveillance. The book canvasses various strategies for moving towards these alternatives, focussing on grassroots action.

Information Liberation is provocative. Most readers will find something to disagree with. That's all part of the process. Everyone needs to be involved in discussing information policies and practices, rather than leaving the issues to experts and vested interests.

Brian Martin lives in Wollongong, Australia. He trained and worked as an applied mathematician before switching to social science. He has been active for many years in the radical science, environmental and peace movements and is the author of numerous works in many fields.

192 pages ISBN 0 900384 93 X £7.95

George Orwell at Home (and among the Anarchists)

George Orwell was one of the most important British socialist writers of the twentieth century. His satires *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* have been read by millions of people all over the world. He fought in the Spanish Civil War, sympathised with the Spanish anarchists and had several friends among the British anarchists.

In 1946 his friend Vernon Richards took a remarkable collection of photographs showing Orwell at home, in unexpectedly informal surroundings, on his own or with his adopted son. For nearly half a century pictures from this collection have been used to illustrate countless articles and books.

Here for the first time is the full collection, accompanied by a series of essays on Orwell



Photograph by Vernon Richards

from an anarchist perspective, written by Vernon Richards and by Colin Ward with a long account by Nicolas Walter of Orwell's ambiguous relations with anarchism and the anarchists, taking into account the material published this year in *The Complete Works of George Orwell*.

75 pages, A4 ISBN 0 900384 94 8 £6.95

Rich and Poor



Photograph by Ben O'Hall

A group of protesters swarm over an armoured personnel carrier at Castle Road roundabout in Salisbury. They daubed paint on the sides and tried to remove the soldier's helmets.

In this electronic age news travels like the old fox-trot. Slow, quick-quick, slow. It happened in Salisbury at summer solstice and was duly report in *Freedom* ('Rich and Poor', 4th July 1998), if nowhere else of substance. News is repetition – you hear it one place, you see it in another and is repeated *ad nauseum* until the slowest and the dimmest is fully apprised, until the entire nation knows. It does put everybody off their dinner. Have you heard the news today, my boy?

And tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow. It is their news and they dish it out and even you, comrade, are hooked on it. And if there is a hitch in the arrangements there is always the dear old editors' club, we don't need censorship here as long as we've got the good old 'D-notice' system. D for don't print, that is. We have old boys and old girls in key positions and don't you worry, they won't be stupid enough to print anything that makes sense.

There is always news from abroad, atrocities, earthquakes, famines venereal diseases, queens in bikinis, take two pills' and a daily newspaper and a daily news bulletin. The formula that never fails. What does it matter that a few fringe papers hold on to the truth. Who reads them? A few geriatric anarchists, who takes notice of them? And if locally it cannot be kept out of the local papers, that's tough luck. Such papers are so dreary anyway, people will soon forget. Alas, we do not have the resources of a good totalitarian system. Of course we despise their politics, but we do have grudging

admiration for their methods.

But it did happen, comrades, and we did report it in *Freedom* and now a kind person furnished us with a cutting from the local paper and here you can see it in a London paper for the first time, the news that they tried to keep from you, your ever-loving editors of the national papers.

But do you remember those photographs which came in from Prague, Budapest or Moscow, the people in triumph sitting on top at last of their oppressors' tanks. That was good news, big news plastered all over the front pages, it happened abroad, perfectly alright for our readers to see.

But here in the heart of our own domain? The people stopping the peaceful progress of our own dear armoured carriers, it is in thoroughly bad taste, that is what it is.

Mind you, clever of the subeditor to call the people "a swarm of protesters" – a good phrase that, very useful.

But reckon with this, comrade, you are part of a very large movement, and when that movement wants to stop anything it can do so.

Perhaps by looking at this photograph, it will bring some optimism into your household.

And remember you are not the only anarchist in this country, far from it. But if you could show this photograph around and tell whoever that it took place in Salisbury last summer solstice on a Reclaim the Streets march, 'fancy that', they might say 'it's news to me'.

John Rety

Bookshop Jottings

new and recent arrivals in Angel Alley

Simon Fairlie, renowned as an occupant – and tireless defender against the Department of the Environment – of the self-built 'Tinker's Bubble' experimental Somerset settlement, has written *Low Impact Development: planning and people in a sustainable countryside* (Jon Carpenter Publishing, 160 pages, £10.00). Produced in association with The Land is Ours movement, it is both a grassroots examination of Britain's draconian and elitist planning system and a practical guide for those who want to live or work on the land in low impact buildings. An attractive book with numerous photographs and illustrations.

Total Liberty: a journal of non-aligned anarchism, no. 3, contains a couple of thoughtful articles by the Boston Anarchist Drinking Brigade which indicate that they do more than just drink, and one by Larry Gambone entitled 'What is Anarchism?' All this and more for £1.00. *Animal: 'the magazine whose content is better than its layout'* (true) is also up to issue no. 3, and carries reports on crime and criminality, the Countryside Alliance, and the confrontation at Hillgrove Farm (which breeds cats for vivisection) between police and animal activists, all for £1.20.

Always in need of attention by the anarchist movement is the media. Three new titles in this area have appeared recently, from differing viewpoints. *The Global Media: the new missionaries of corporate capitalism* by Edward Herman and Robert McCheney (Cassell, 262 pages, £14.99) investigates the political and economic aspects of the increasing concentration and centralisation of the world's media and telecommunications systems in ever-fewer private hands, and the implications for public service broadcasting of the proliferating advertisement-based stations and programming. With chapter notes and index. Eric Lee's *The Labour Movement and the Internet: the new internationalism* (Pluto Press, 212 pages, £14.99) is the first guide to this new medium written specifically for trade unionists worldwide, tracing its

development and showing its benefits for the large and growing number of workers' organisations using it, many of whose sites are listed. Includes an index and bibliography. *Cybercultures: culture and politics on the information superhighway* is edited by Ziauddin Sardar and Jerome Ravetz, and published by Pluto Press at £10.99 for 162 pages with index. It offers a critical perspective on the cultural and political dimensions of the colonisation of cyberspace, from a variety of contributors.

A useful debate on 'The IWW Today', an article on the phenomenon of mass unemployment in the globalised economy and a report on the Lyon Congress of the IFA are among the usual well-considered offerings in *Libertarian Labor Review*, no. 23 (50 pages for £2.50). Kevin Doyle contributes a very good piece on the role of the media, 'Anyone for a Brain Wash?' to *Workers Solidarity* no. 54, where there is also coverage of the Dublin bricklayers and their successful strike, the general strike in Denmark, the theft by the National Irish Bank of money from customers' accounts, and more, in 12 very large pages for 75p. The Bradford Mayday Conference, mental health and social control, and unemployment struggles in France and Germany are just some of the topics covered in *Organise!* no. 49 (20 pages, £1.00).

Recently reprinted by Black Rose Books is Peter Newell's *Zapata of Mexico* (£10.99, 176 pages) which attempts to show what the anarchist Emiliano Zapata and his comrades achieved from 1910 to 1920. It is attractively designed with plenty of photographs and illustrations. *Noam Chomsky: a life of dissent* by Robert Barsky is a fascinating biography of the libertarian philosopher, linguist and activist who has been called "the most important intellectual alive". It covers his family and upbringing, his political and intellectual development and his many works in the fields of politics, linguistics and cognitive psychology. MIT Press, 246 pages, including index, for £10.95.

'Four Eyes'

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Gardener's Delight

Twelve years ago two friends from Bristol, Jeff Bishop and Paul Hoggett produced a little book which I described as a manual on the anarchy of everyday life. It was called *Organising Around Enthusiasms: Mutual Aid in Leisure* (Comedia, 1986) and examined how people organise their joint activities in their spare time. The further the authors delved into the subject the more they felt that they had stumbled "into an area of social life which was massive in its proportions, rich in detail and of fascinating complexity, but almost completely overlooked".

At the time, David Crouch and I were writing our book about one of those spare time activities, *The Allotment*, and seizing the chance when in Hull, I took a bus to Cottingham, a village on the north-western fringe of the city, to talk to Michael Hyde, who for years had written a monthly allotment column in *The Guardian* (a newspaper that had a rather different character in those days). It had the same infectious delight in the ordinary.

I learned that he was born in 1908 in an Oxfordshire village, where his father was 'in service' and that his family moved to Yorkshire after the First World War. He had been a 'scholarship boy' at Malton Grammar School in the 1920s, had become a teacher and had observed intensive horticulture in northern Italy during the war. He picked up some journalistic skills and when he and his wife retired to Cottingham in 1968, sheer good luck landed him with his *Guardian* column in the year before the appearance of the important Thorpe Report on the future of allotments. He related plot-holding to garden history and folklore and his regular readers were always eager to learn about his subsequent partnership with a neighbouring plot-holder Nelson, who was growing too old to manage a full-size plot for himself.

Because we were writing about the *culture* of the allotment, rather than passing on hints on vegetable-growing, David Crouch and I



Down on the plot, Martin Stott found these children sampling the Gardener's Delight tomatoes.

were delighted by his column and tried hard to persuade Faber, who published our book and once had a big reputation for horticultural literature, to collect together Michael Hyde's articles. We failed, but David Crouch persisted and together with Martin Stott, has edited a selection of them, published by Five Leaves Publications of Nottingham, who had re-issued our own book in paperback.

The result is an altogether delightful book, *City Fields, Country Gardens* which gathers together 66 of Michael's columns, and uses many of Martin Stott's allotment photographs, while the editors' introduction brings the story up to date in terms of the current state of the allotment movement and the threat to urban allotment sites from the government statement that 60% of the 4.4

million new houses said to be needed by the year 2016 should be built on so-called 'brownfield' sites in urban areas. They stress that allotment gardens provide democratic and cheap access to food growing, and remind us that "allotment food is not sprayed for appearance. As well as being safer, tastier and cheaper, allotment food looks like real food with knobby bits and irregular shapes. Allotment food avoids the 'food miles', which may bring asparagus from Peru or mangetout from Zimbabwe, but at an environmental cost – not least in the fuel used to get the goods to your supermarket."

Michael Hyde's column lasted 25 years and the last item collected here was written when he, at 85 felt obliged to give up his plot. Today he is aged 90. Certain themes recur all through this collection. One is Harry

Thorpe's report which urged that allotment sites should evolve into the 'leisure gardens' familiar in continental Europe. Another is the importance of the organic movement in horticulture, which has grown greatly in influence since Hyde began to write about it. He writes with a kind of amused tolerance of the animals and birds who occupy the site and take their tithe of his crops. He positively welcomes the presence of children on the plot, hoping to entice them into gardening, and he is learned about the gardeners of the past, especially John Loudon, and Jane, his wife and amanuensis.

Loudon is currently in the news of the allotment world. A feature article in *The Times* (29th August) cites his description of the Guinea Gardens in Birmingham: "The gardens belong to persons living in towns but which are detached from their houses. The detached town gardens are situated in suburbs, generally collected together, and separated by hedges. There are upwards of two thousand such gardens in the neighbourhood of Birmingham."

Clive Fewins explains that by the 1960s the number had dwindled to two hundred, while today there are just eighty on a eleven-acre site, and that when the lease comes up for renewal in 2002, there will be a hard struggle to retain the land for allotments. You look down on these 150-year-old secret gardens, with their tall hedges, from the train between Five Lays and University stations, at Edgbaston, looking westwards.

Michael Hyde has other heroes who sought to show that access to land has to be continually defended. One of his columns is devoted to Gerard Winstanley and the Diggers, and another to the poet John Clare. For defenders of the right of access to land, as well as to armchair gardeners, this little book is a delight.

Colin Ward

(Michael Hyde's *City Fields, Country Gardens* costs £7.99 post free from Five Leaves, PO Box 81, Nottingham NG5 4ER)

Murray Bookchin replies to a critic

The Murray Bookchin Reader, edited by Janet Biehl (published by Cassell) is available from the Freedom Press Bookshop at £15.99 (plus postage).

Esteemed comrades,

It is always comforting to know that someone – like Steve Ash in 'Murray Bookchin: A square peg in a round hole' (*Freedom*, 5th September) – resolutely stands guard at the gates of anarchist purity. I had always assumed that anarchists qualify for their noble label because they oppose the State in any form and generally propose some sort of collectivist and egalitarian society as an alternative to capitalism, class exploitation, and hierarchical domination. Beyond this simple definition, I had thought, a wide spectrum of differences, like that which exists in the case of socialism, also exists in the case of anarchism, ranging from Proudhonian mutualism to Kropotkinist communism.

Apparently I've been naive, and over the past few years, I've had cause to wonder whether many Anglo-American anarchists still accept this simple definition. Certain parts of the anarchist tradition are now held in deep suspicion. I myself – because of my beliefs in a coherent libertarian communist program, an organised movement, and an insurgent libertarian revolution – have been sharply denounced as an 'anarcho-Bolshevik' and, perhaps worse, as one who holds views "reminiscent of Bakunin's extravagant predictions of rapid social transformation as the people's nature is transformed ... through the alchemy of revolution". So charged John Clark in a draft of one of his critiques of me. In a later version of 'Municipal Dreams' he refined his complaint about Bakunin and myself thus: "Bakuninism (or anarcho-Leninism) ... has been a continuing undercurrent in [Bookchin's] thought". In some anarchist circles, it seems, Bakunin too is now beyond the pale.

Similarly, Kingsley Widmer has denounced me in *Social*

Anarchism (no. 24) for standing in "lonely splendour" on the "ghostly shoulders of Bakunin, Kropotkin, and their descendants in such as the Spanish anarchists of more than two generations ago," and for being the pitiful heir of a "narrow and thin libertarianism of a different time and place and conditions." His characterisation, in common with Clark's, is particularly opposed to my insurgent revolutionary views, which I gather are now also regarded as either passé or somehow Marxist.

Steve Ash, in the same vein, takes note that I "was originally a Marxist (and quite a Stalinistic one according to some critics), and though [I] later mellowed and became an anarchist, [I] retain a kind of Marxoid determinism that undermines [my] claim to be a libertarian." Indeed, I was a member of Communist children's and youth organisations between 1930 and 1937 – although after the initiation of the Popular Front strategy in 1935, it was most often as a dissident. After the May 1937 events in Barcelona, my association with these organisations became purely formal, and I was expelled two years later. I am not in the least ashamed of this supposedly disastrous past and have never attempted to hide it.

Mr Ash's casual remark, however, that as a Marxist I was "quite Stalinistic ... according to some critics" is really a low blow. Which critics? What gossip mill, periodical, or letter produced this innuendo? It deserves substantiation, and in a conventional bourgeois opinion piece, it might even have received it. Similarly, I am twice labelled 'patriarchal' – in passing, with not even the hint of corroboration, and contrary to my many statements in support of the liberation of women. Can we not have higher ethical standards than this?

By the way, in the early 1960s, when I became involved in left-libertarian activities, New York had no visible anarchist movement that I could have 'joined', apart from the old Libertarian League (not to be confused with the Libertarian

Book Club forum), which was composed largely of septuagenarians and soon dissolved. The anarchist groups in which I participated were often ones that I had initiated myself, together with younger people from the New Left and the counterculture, some of whom had to be persuaded by me even to accept the name 'anarchist' at all.

Since my supposed residual Marxism vexes Mr Ash so intensely, I should note that I always took Marxism to be an economic theory of historical development based on class conflict, which sees productive forces as decisive in determining social evolution. If I still believed this simplistic theory, I assure Mr Ash that I would openly proclaim myself a Marxist today. But in fact, I do not accept Marx's economic theory of historical development. Nor do I believe that all of social change is guided by class struggle – although class struggle is extremely important in motivating social development.

What seems to trouble Ash the most is my statement that people must be "free to fulfil their potential as *members of society*" – which contradicts his own view that 'anarchism as a whole' emphasises 'self-determinism'. Does he mean to suggest that material conditions, cultural traditions, environmental factors, prevailing subjectivistic biases, and other such factors do not play major roles in defining our 'selves', our choices, and the actions we take? Such a view would be as simple-minded as the vulgar Marxist view that socialism is 'inevitable' because of 'inexorable laws' of history. Indeed, the entire Enlightenment tradition understood that the individual is formed in great part by the social environment. Nor is the notion alien to anarchism itself: if it were, we would have to exclude as an anarchist Kropotkin, who wrote that "in free surroundings based upon Equality, man might with full confidence let himself be guided by his own reason (which, of course, by necessity, would bear the stamp of his social surroundings), and he might also attain the full development of his individuality; while the 'individualism' considered now by middle-class intellectuals

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Crisis of Financial Capitalism: after Russia, whose turn next?

Whilst everyone, and in particular the experts at the IMF and their feudal court of liberal economists, is spouting forth about global happiness and the triumph of capitalism, everything possible is done to hide the human misery and the chaotic situation the world economy finds itself in.

However, the prognosis for international capitalism is not so good. The industrial countries cannot maintain their levels of growth except at the expense of more unemployment and social instability which takes us back forty years for some of the population (no social protection, redundancies with no comeback, less working hours with commensurate loss of income). Meanwhile the poorer countries, or the people who live in them, are becoming poorer in relative terms. In point of fact the wealth gap between, say, the US and Africa has grown of the last thirty years, a fact which flies in the face of received wisdom. Emerging countries like Brazil, Mexico, South Korea and Indonesia – magnets for foreign investment and areas of growth (between 5 and 10% per annum) – have seen in succession crashes on the stock exchanges and financial havoc. It happened in Mexico in 1994, Korea in 1997 and Indonesia in 1998. Now it is Russia's turn. This is the stability and balance put forward by the exponents of liberal utopianism, a recurring crisis which rides on the backs of the people.

It is, moreover, worthwhile taking a look at how the media only now speak of the

Russian crisis. The Russian people have not, in point of fact, had to wait for July '98 to discover exploitation, misery and the liberal morgue. The media actually do not speak of crisis unless it is the interests of capitalists which are at stake. And it's the same with the current period of growth in France which is the growth in profit of that clique whilst the workers see no improvement.

From the capitalist mirage ...

If there is one country where one can really talk about a liberal utopia it is, indeed, Russia. As the Wall began to fall in 1989 it was clear to one and all (or nearly one and all) that capitalism would come to the rescue. The complete and universal capitalist victory was at hand. Poor countries were emerging from under-development, the rich countries were in the middle of one of those periods of growth which follows unavoidably the last period of crisis whilst presaging the next one. The so-called communist countries were going to enjoy the magic potion in a similar way. Certainly there would be some sacrifices to be made, such as the level of debate with the people, but there were no doubts. The reality has, however, proved to be a bit short on the fulfilled promises since the end of state capitalism was to give rise to a radiant future. Russia has known only falling output and inflation. Life expectancy has fallen from 63 to 59 since 1990 – the only country where this is the case. The magic potion has turned toxic. Policies implemented seek only to make those sectors

profitable where this is a possibility. These sectors are so lucrative that Russia has succeeded in pulling the wool over are so lucrative that the world's eyes by attracting investment and, more importantly, help from the west. Whilst the people were bled dry and went without their salaries all that was needed was the expectation of gain to be undermined for all the investors to start getting cold feet which increased the anxiety of other investors who also got cold feet which increased ...

That is how we arrived at a situation where the stock exchange lost 60% in a week and the rouble halved in value. That is how the power of Mammon and a small clique of international investors can bring a country to its knees in a week. It was, in large part, the collapse in prices for raw materials like oil and nickel which dashed any confidence the investors had in this economy.

... to the El Dorado of the liberal utopia

It is clear that the capitalists must have decided that they could drain no more out of the Russian people. Russia, even if it failed to provide us with a communist experiment, succeeded in building a real model of pure capitalism in seven years. A country where capitalists cannot pay their employees, don't pay taxes, where there is next to no legislation to control their excesses, where the health system has been dismantled. That is Russia: the El Dorado of the Liberal Utopia. But seven years later the nightmare has arrived. From being the second world

economic power it has been transformed into a country with a Third World hue, a banana republic. Because it is indeed the loss of wealth which some had accumulated so quickly at the expense of the poverty of the masses which signals the disintegration we are witnessing. The mafia is no more and no less than those who live and speculate on the back of the people ... no political responsibility or collective decisions: leave the market and those who are profiting from it to their own devices. And then when the reforms were not being enacted quickly enough the financial markets decided to move on. Once again economic cynicism is the flavour of the day and happily replaces the politics.

An economic debacle

With the case of Russia now we see the whole economic order stagger. Not that Russia is such a significant economy but the Asian crisis and the difficulties in the raw materials markets have shown capitalism incapable even if it wanted to provide the most basic, that is to say a dignified and decent life for one and all with social needs satisfied and an equal distribution of useful work. Most Asian countries are now beginning to implement anti-liberal policies in order to put the brakes on the disintegration of their economies. This is how it is in Malaysia which has just reintroduced currency controls, despite the protests of the IMF, because these are the cause of the economic debacle. What else could we call the rising unemployment (eight million in Indonesia, three million in Thailand, as many Koreans, and mass misery in Russia)? The IMF, by forcing so-called emerging countries to put into effect ultra-

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[is] the chief obstacle to this development" (in *Modern Science and Anarchism*, Chapter 10).

One of the most profound statements Marx ever made was that although men make history, they do not do so under conditions of their own choosing. Nor, in this vale of tears, does social change appear like a bolt out of the blue: it occurs under definite historical conditions that make it possible and sometimes even unavoidable. Certain necessary conditions must exist before it can occur, conditions that Marx considered overwhelmingly economic in nature. But without other sufficient conditions, such as cultural factors, traditions, belief systems, taboos, habits, and the like, social change will still not occur. Between these two kinds of conditions – the necessary and the sufficient – lie complex interactions that it is precisely the business of the social theorist to discover.

Moreover, influences often unconsciously guide even the spontaneous human behaviour that Mr Ash prizes. (Hence my own emphasis on *informed* spontaneity.) Painters, sitting before an empty canvas, may feel that they can depict anything; alas, they and the works they produce are often highly conditioned by the society in which they live. This basic Enlightenment insight is apparently disappearing in our shiny new post-modern world. But I find that anarchists who espouse 'spontaneity' are eventually obliged to fall back upon some notion of human nature that is a hand-me-down from instinct theory – be it an 'instinct' for sociability, cooperation, freedom, or even revolution. In more recent times we have even heard about a gene for mutual aid. Allow me to say that for all the talk about 'natural behaviour' and 'spontaneity', instinct theory (or sociobiology) is no less deterministic than the economic determinism imputed to Marx.

It is thus very difficult to accept the notion of a vague determining 'self' that exists apart from the society in which it was formed and that can choose what it wants apart from the many material and cultural factors that impinge on it, indeed help form it. Mr Ash may dismiss this view as 'sociocentric', yet I find his own views obscure: in one passage he asserts that "anarchism as a whole ... has always emphasised self-determinism," yet a few paragraphs later he affirms with equal assurance that "authentic anarchism is neither egocentric or sociocentric, but rather based on a free

interplay between the two". Mr Ash seems to have some difficulty making up his mind what 'genuine' anarchism 'as a whole' actually is.

His indecision, however, does not prevent him from intimating that certain views fall outside anarchism. He suggests that I joined the "anarchist movement mistaking [!] it for a radical form of anti-hierarchical communism." Can it be that Mr Ash has never heard of *comunismo libertario* or the tens of thousands of Spanish anarchists who raised the cry for it in the streets of Zaragoza, Barcelona, and Alcoy, among other Spanish cities and towns, as well as on the battlefronts of Aragon? If it is a mistake to believe that "anti-hierarchical communism" belongs to "genuine [!] anarchist ideas" then we have chosen to ignore a major chapter of anarchist history.

Citing a 1969 essay reprinted in *The Murray Bookchin Reader*, Mr Ash accuses me of making "the bizarre claim that anarchism differs from Marxism in the former's 'determination within the framework of forms created by the revolution'. While this may be true of some Marxist influenced anarchist cul-de-sacs," Ash says, "it has never been true of anarchism as a whole." If this cryptic phrase is meant to make me seem like some crude mechanistic 'determinist' (whatever that word means to Mr Ash), readers should consider the original context out of which he has lifted the phrase. This context reads: "In what ways, then, do anarcho-communist groups differ from the Bolshevik type of party? ... *Fundamentally they differ ... in their belief that genuine revolutionaries must function within the framework of the forms created by the revolution* [such as factory committees], not from the forms created by the [Bolshevik-type] party" (on page 148, not page 144). I thought that the refusal to function within a Bolshevik-type party – and the preference for forms created by the people themselves – has been fairly basic to anarchism since 1917, not a tangential point cherished by "some Marxist-influenced anarchist cul-de-sacs"!

As distasteful as I find the views and behaviour of many lifestyle anarchists, I have not accused them of falling outside 'anarchism as a whole' or outside 'genuine anarchism', as long as they share the simple definition of anarchism that the state must be abolished and society collectivised. I strongly disagree with the lifestyle anarchists' approach, and in view of the many assumptions that distinguish them from social

anarchists (of which I am one), I believe that we should function separately from each other. Mr Ash's dicta about "what has always been true of anarchism as a whole", however, smell of the very dogmatism that he imputes to me.

A few points in passing. First, it's unclear why Ash thinks libertarian municipalism is "entirely non-anarchist" – Kropotkin certainly foreshadowed something like it when he declared that "a new form of political organisation has to be worked out the moment that Socialist principles shall enter into our life. And it is self-evident that this new form will have to be *more popular, more decentralised, and nearer to the folk-mote self-government* than representative government can ever be" (*Modern Science and Anarchism*, Chapter 12). Or perhaps he agrees with Harold Barclay, who in the same issue of *Freedom* asserts that libertarian municipalists are "not anarchists" mainly because democracy is "a form of government". In which case, he would have to exclude the Spanish CNT of the 1930s whose congresses voted not by consensus but by a head count, in which the majority's view decided the policies of this anarcho-syndicalist union.

Secondly, Mr Ash says I 'promote' something called 'dialectical holism'. I have never used this silly phrase; indeed, the first time I ever even saw it was earlier this year, in John Clark's 'A Social Ecology' (published in the eco-socialist journal *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*). This article is, among other things, a critique of my own views and posits 'dialectical holism' in counterposition to my own 'dialectical naturalism'.

Finally, to Mr Ash's claim that I 'embarrassingly' have misread Fichte as the source of the notion that "humanity [is] nature becoming conscious," I would refer him to the following quotation: "In man, as her highest masterpiece, [Nature] turns inward, that she may perceive and contemplate herself. ... In short, Nature becomes in [man] conscious of herself as a whole." The source for this quote is *The Vocation of Man* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), pages 20, 21, and it was written by Johann Gottlieb Fichte in the year 1800. To be sure, I do not agree with Fichte that, in the present society, humanity is actually nature becoming self-conscious; I believe that unless we achieve a free and ecological society, we are only potentially so. Despite Fichte's idealistic spin, however, the meaning of his words is unmistakable. Anyway, thanks Mr Ash for the free scholarly advice.

Murray Bookchin

Zapata of Mexico

Dear *Freedom*,

At last, after fruitless efforts for almost twelve months, including writing to the publishers four times without reply (see my statement in *Freedom*, 21st March 1998), I have received a copy of my book, *Zapata of Mexico* – not from the publisher, but a British distributor, I should add.

Originally published in 1979 by Cienfuegos Press, the book has been published without my permission or knowledge by an outfit calling itself Black Rose Books. It has been reprinted, with a number of minor errors, from the original publication, but with no indication that it is, in fact, a reprint; no mention is made of Cienfuegos Press, although it has now been copyrighted by Black Rose Books. Despite all that has occurred in Mexico over the last twenty years, and particularly in the State of Chiapas over the last five years, I have therefore had no opportunity to add to the original work. All of which leaves a rather unpleasant taste in the mouth.

Despite what I have written about Black Rose Books (and what I have not put down in print would be unprintable!), my memories of Mexico all those years ago are far more pleasurable.

I spent more than five weeks in Mexico, first in Mexico City where I met Proudhon and Carman Carbo, who found me a reasonably-

priced hotel room while I was in Mexico City. Proudhon Carbo fought against Franco between 1936 and 1939, and then went to Mexico, where he edited the paper, *Tierra Y Libertad*. After a short stay in Mexico City, the Carbos took me to Cuernavaca, the Morelos state capital, where they introduced me to Mollie Steimer and Senya Fleshin. Mollie Steimer was born in Southern Russia in 1897, emigrated to the United States when she was fifteen, soon began reading libertarian literature and became an anarchist, opposed the First World War, was jailed, and, in November 1921, was deported back to Russia. She soon came into conflict with the Bolsheviks and, in 1922, was arrested and sentenced to two years' exile in Siberia. She went on hunger strike, was released and later put on a ship to Germany. After much wandering, Mollie Steimer ultimately settled in Mexico.

Senya Fleshin was born in 1894 in Kiev, Ukraine, emigrated to the United States, became an anarcho-syndicalist, and left America for Russia in 1917. He too was arrested, actually five times, by the Bolshevik *cheka* and, together with Mollie, was deported. He and Mollie Steimer were companions throughout their travels, until Mollie died in Cuernavaca in July, 1980. Fleshin died eleven months later.

After lunch with the Carbos, Mollie and Senya, Mollie found a cheap hotel for me in Cuernavaca. Whilst there, I visited Fernando Cortés' palace (now a museum). A few days' later, Proudhon and Carmen Carbo took me to Zapata's birthplace at San Miguel Anencuilco, and I saw the remains of the Zapata family's house. It had been hoped that I might meet Zapata's son, Nicolas, who was still alive and living in Anencuilco, but he was away at the time. I visited many other places in Morelos associated with Zapata and the *Zapatistas*, including a *fiesta* at Cuautla where Emiliano had 'won his spurs'. Later, I visited the *hacienda* of Chinameca where Zapata was murdered in 1919, and stood on the spot where he was said to have been gunned down. After, I went to the state of Guerrero, where the 'party of the poor' were still active, and, together with everyone in the bus between Acapulco and Morelos, was ordered out by a platoon of the Mexican Army looking for sympathisers of the 'party of the poor'. After spending a somewhat drunken twelve days in Acapulco, I returned to Mexico City, where I met the Carbos' daughter, Margaritta, who had written a paper on Emiliano Zapata and *Zapatismo*.

All in all a memorable expedition!

Peter E. Newell

Zapata of Mexico is now available from Freedom Press – for details see 'Bookshop Jottings' on page 4 of this issue. Despite any 'minor errors', we are of the opinion that this is the best short book on its subject.

Cowardice of the Peace Movement

Dear Comrades,

I have thought about Comrade Peter Lumsden's article, 'The Cowardice of the Peace Movement', (*Freedom*, 1st August 1998) for some time, and I feel that it is misguided in many aspects. First let me state my own premises. I am an atheist, and I am certainly not a pacifist. I do not feel, however, that Comrade Lumsden has proven his point that other forms of oppression depend upon religious belief. Perhaps he might care to elaborate on this. I also feel that other forms of religiosity, such as new age hogwash, mysticism and worship of a non-existent 'primitivist wisdom' (in our camp) or fundamentalist movements or the machinations of the Roman Catholic Church (in the other camp) are far more deserving of insult than the relatively benign – and tiny – groups of religious pacifists. I can envision situations where anarchists could easily make common cause with religious pacifists without being cutesy and liberal and smothering our differences with them just to be 'nice' or fashionably tolerant. In the above list I can see only a quality mysticism as being worthy of tolerance by real anarchists. The rest are destructive to either ourselves or to society at large. I can also envision situations where anarchists could easily cooperate with the 'half-assed Christian' majority who constitute a large segment of our society – a majority in most countries. Real political action rarely depends upon ideology, and it shouldn't wait until conversion to atheism.

I don't agree with the general drift of religious pacifist actions – bearing witness and taking punishment – because it violates the first rule of political action – 'get away with it'. I think it is generally useless and only occasionally productive, but the tactics of these people can be useful in limited situations. The same cannot be said for those who advocate 'armed struggle' (or bullshit a lot about it) as *their* matter of principle. Force should be used only when it is productive, not because of individual or group psychopathology. The false alternative is far more damaging to our movement and to society (though society absorbs it better than we do) than religious pacifism.

Anarchists should indeed promote atheism and a rational common-sense approach, but we should be a bit more selective in our targets and save the heavy artillery for the real problems.

Pat Murtagh

Anarchism & Primitivism

Dear *Freedom*,

I agree with Milan Rai (letter, 19th September) that a discussion of the benefits and risks of genetic engineering (GE) would be useful. This contribution concerns risks, imaginary and real.

Milan's argument, that nuclear weapons and genetic engineering are similar, resembles the argument that an elephant is like a bicycle because neither can climb a tree. Yes, in a capitalist society weapons (not only nuclear) and agricultural products (not only GE) are made for profit. But it is surely more significant that weapons are intended to destroy, while agricultural innovations are intended to be productive, and if they destroy it is by accident.

I suppose, up to a point, genetic engineering might be compared to nuclear power, which is intended to be beneficial, but has caused disasters at Kyshtym, Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. Disasters are also possible with GE, and of course it is right to anticipate such accidents and try to prevent them.

But the analogy should not be taken too far. Nuclear power is inherently dangerous, while most products of GE are as safe as products of selective breeding. Some people are scared by the GE tomatoes, purees and sauces of which are on sale in supermarkets, but their fear is quite misguided. If these tomatoes 'escape' to interbreed with other tomato varieties, the worst result will be offspring which ripen without going soft, like the parents.

I imagine people fainting with horror, or sneering with derision, at the temerity of this assertion. Some chap in a pub told me, arrogantly, that it would be a thousand years before the effect of GE tomatoes would be known. His friends asked if I had fallen silent because I was defeated by his scientific erudition. On the contrary, I had fallen silent because I decided his ignorance was impenetrable. The basic biochemistry of genetics has been understood, in general terms, for forty years. Of course we cannot know everything, but GE technology is

based in what little is already known.

The real danger of GE is that it may be applied with too little thought of the consequences. This has already happened in the 1980s, with enzyme washing powders. Genes coding for fat-digesting enzymes were inserted into bacteria, sold as household detergents, and had to be withdrawn from sale very quickly because they caused dermatitis ('biological detergents' are still on sale but no longer contain anything biological). Organisms not confined to fermenting tanks will be less easy to withdraw.

Milan quotes from the *Financial Times* about a scheme for protecting crop plants from viruses, using a gene which may spread to weeds and make them too healthy for us. Another dangerous proposal is to make crop plants immune to weedkiller, allowing growers to drench whole neighbourhoods in weedkiller, killing everything except the crops.

Effective opposition to the real dangers needs to be well-informed and selective. The current primitivist campaign is ill-informed and unselective – and counter-productive, because it will be seen as ignorant and superstitious.

For those who seek information, *The Thread of Life* by Susan Aldridge (CUP Canto, £8.95)* is easy to read but does not avoid the science. Tomato engineering is described on page 215.

Donald Room

* The book is not carried by Freedom Press Bookshop, but may be obtained on special order for £8.95 plus 90p postage and packing in the UK, £1.79 elsewhere, cash with order.


Libertarian Municipalism

Dear *Freedom*,

Harold Barclay is right. Libertarian municipalism is not anarchism. That said, his letter of 5th September points out a problem for anarchists. Pure anarchism is an ideal or social myth. Many people make the mistake of reifying anarchism into a thing, when in fact it is a *process*. Such a process will always differ from the ideal, being only a step in that direction. In order to have *any* practice, in order to move society closer to our goals, we must involve ourselves with people who accept only part of our message. Thus, we have anarchists working with mutualists, syndicalists, federalists and decentralists. These various movements are the process. All practice involves some sort of compromise with reality. Whatever we do always falls short of the ideal. We are, as Barclay somewhat overstates, forever threatened with "falling into the cesspools of violence and power". But that is life. Of course, we could initiate certain purist marxist sects and do nothing, but most of us would not find that very satisfying.

The rub comes when such movements are equated with anarchism *per se*, sowing confusion, watering down our message and creating conflict. Hence, the use of the term anarchism should be more or less restricted to the ideal and those movements which are part of the process should be called mutualist, decentralist, etc., according to the role they assume. But in being 'pure' anarchists, we must avoid sectarianism. We must never condemn these partial movements for not living up to an ideal they were not made to live up to. We should be pleased they exist, for they represent hope and the knowledge that at least some of our ideas have support. Hence, while agreeing that libertarian municipalism is not anarchism, I wish it all the success possible in its endeavour to decentralise power and allow people more of a say in the running of their affairs.

Larry Gambone

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(continued from page 6)

liberal policies has thrown them into the current crisis. But as is the case with all capitalist investment cynicism must play its role every now and age to purge the financial system. The latest fashionable prognosis coming from the investors is to say that Russia will be flourishing in a few years time and once again appealing to foreign investors. But given the current state of the world economy one ends up wondering where they will place their money ... if they don't go for domestic investment ... which explains why the American and European economies have enjoyed a period of growth.

Capitalism offers only poverty sandwiched between periods of growth. It's the weather forecast of human fortune. As sure as good weather follows bad so it is with capitalist economics with one important difference: capitalism isn't natural and people are beginning to get fed up with it.

translated from *Le Monde Libertaire*,
16th September 1998

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- 23rd October** General discussion
- 30th October** Does Professionalism Matter?
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- 6th November** General discussion
- 13th November** JC the Revolting Peasant:
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- 20th November** General discussion
- 27th November** What is an anarchist
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