

Oh what a lovely wage system

Anarchists do not advocate a welfare state. Nor did we campaign for a state imposed minimum wage. Ideally we would not approve of local authority controlled old people's homes.

But our principled stand on these institutions does not render us dumb, or mean that we should cease to comment on their management, administration or pretensions. Nor do we feel that the alternative across the Atlantic is on balance more civilised – a system in which accident patients are asked if they are covered for an anaesthetic before they have an operation does not strike us as more appealing. Cheap labour and sweat-shops do not appeal to us more than the minimum wage. A system of 'granny dumping' – in which senile old people are left stranded by their families in some states of the USA so that they are picked up by the authorities as unidentified persons – ought to appal us all.

Often the examples and horror stories coming out of the United States seem to put a more powerful case for the welfare state than the welfare state network's supporters ever could.

Rate for the job?

Though anarchists do not support the imposition of a minimum wage, because it takes the responsibility for wages away from the trade unions and places it in the hands of the state, this does not stop us from commenting on inequalities in the wage system. This month *Labour Research* analysed the hourly

earnings of a few of the CBI's leading figures. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) is the body representing company and employer association members in the UK.

Labour Research then contrasted the hourly rates of the CBI bosses with the minimum wages they were arguing about for their workers. The contrast was stark. It found some CBI leaders are getting an hourly rate "worth almost 130 times the minimum wage which will apply to Britain's lowest-paid workers".

Labour Research claims it is "now impossible to gauge the earnings of directors in private companies". But of those members of the CBI president's committee and council members who work for publicly-quoted companies it has been possible to work out the hourly pay of the president and 37 members of the 60-strong president's committee, as well as 27 members of the CBI council. The hourly rate was calculated using the annual pay and benefits figure given in the company's annual report. It was assumed that the director worked a five-day week and 12-hour day to give a 60-hour week. Pension contributions and profits from share option schemes were not included. On this calculation the highest paid

member of the CBI at an hourly rate was the new president Sir Clive Thompson who, as chief executive of the pest control group Rentokil Initial, got £1,455,000 last year. Which gives him an hourly rate of £446.34, or 129 times the minimum wage which *Labour Research* declares "the CBI says is at 'the higher end' of what is acceptable to business".

The top five top paid bosses on the president's committee are:

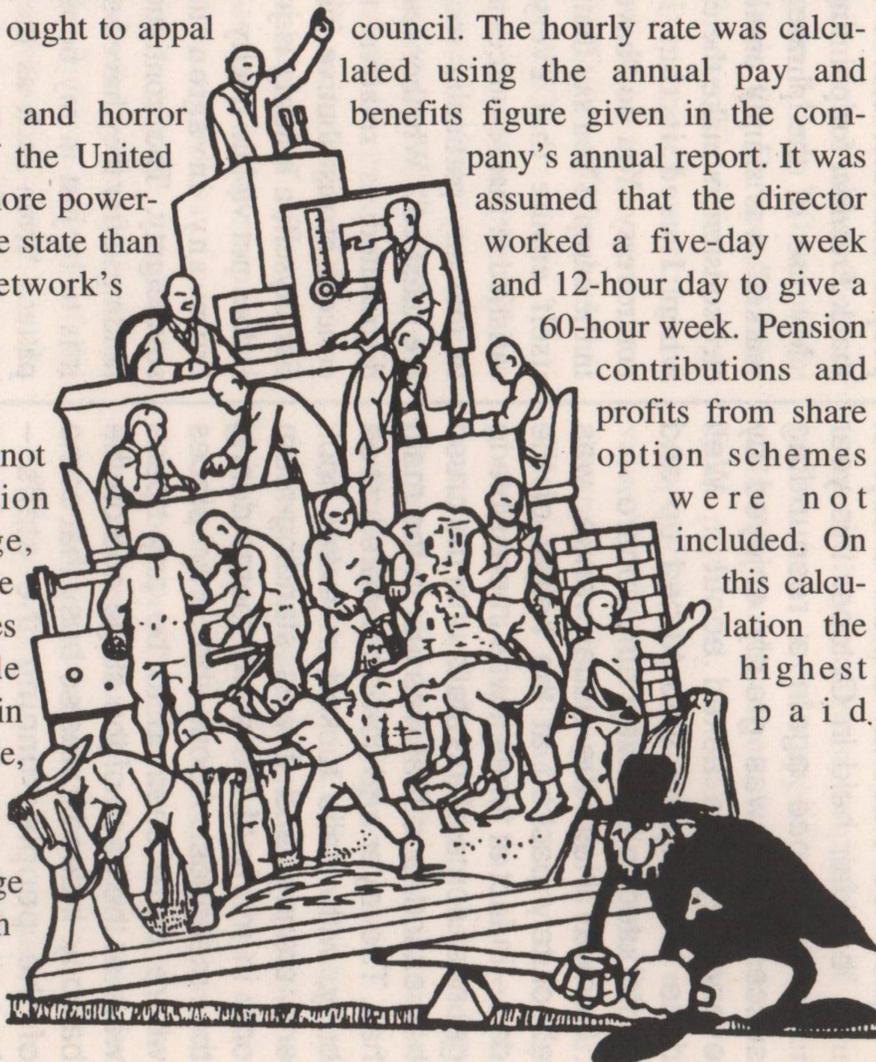
- Sir Peter Bonfield, British Telecom's chief executive, who gets £352 an hour.
- Sir John Browne, chief executive of British Petroleum, on £300 an hour.
- Niall Fitzgerald, chair of food multinational Unilever, taking home £299 an hour.
- Lord Simpson, managing director of GEC, who gets £289 an hour.
- Lord Blyth of Boots, who gets a £279 hourly rate.

In Sir Clive Thompson's case *Labour Research* calculates he gets £7.44 a minute, double the hourly minimum wage.

Drudgery and inequality

Why do we need this kind of inequality in wages? Why are there so many 'greedy bastards' about, to use the term of the TUC president John Edmonds? Why has it been necessary to introduce a minimum wage at the end of the twentieth century? Why is drudgery in work on the increase seemingly everywhere?

Labour Research claims the CBI bosses "think they are worth a lot more" than those who do the drudgery for a minimum wage of £3.60 an hour. But there is no reason to believe that the psychological condition of greed and snobbery which infects these fat cats is not curable. The sad problem today is that people would be rather seen as a 'greedy bastard' than be like King Lear, a 'mad bastard', giving their wealth and power away. **Mack the Knife**



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50p

How Clinton and Blair provoked Saddam



Authorisation for the use of force was granted to US (and perhaps to British) forces *twice* during the last few days. On Saturday 14th November, cruise missiles were reportedly within hours, if not minutes, of being launched when Iraq suddenly promised to resume cooperation with UN weapons inspectors. At that point, Clinton did not *cancel* the order to fire, he merely re-scheduled them for 24 hours later.

Washington and London then tried to rebuild support for the strikes by imposing their own interpretations of the Iraqi letter of compliance, and its accompanying 'annex'. It was claimed that the annex to the Iraqi letter contained unacceptable conditions which made the whole offer of compliance 'unacceptable'. If this claim had been widely accepted, and domestic and international opinion had been neutralised, the air strikes would have been launched as planned.

One major problem for the US and Britain was that UN officials authoritatively stated that the Iraqi letter and annex did *not* contain any conditions: the Secretary-General's special envoy in Baghdad, Prakash Shah, said that Iraq had agreed to resume cooperation with UNSCOM "without conditions"; UN spokesperson Fred Eckhard said that the annex to the Iraqi letter "does not constitute conditionality"; and Kofi Annan himself stated that the annex "was for our consideration and there were no conditions". (When asked whether the letter met UN requirements, the Secretary-General said, "Yes, in my judgement it does".) Reading the texts of the letter and annex (available on the Web), it is impossible to find any hint of a link between the offer to resume cooperation with UNSCOM, on the one hand, and the adoption by the Security

Council of the proposals made in the annex, on the other.

For these reasons, among others, the US lost the propaganda war to 're-interpret' the Iraqi annex, and was forced to cancel the air strikes Clinton had postponed, prompting "anger in US at Iraq's narrow escape", to quote a headline in the *Independent*.

A much more important propaganda battle however, has been won, regarding the origins of the crisis. The standard, almost unvoiced, presumption is that Iraq's ban on UNSCOM inspections was an inexplicable act of defiance of the UN. The truth is that Britain and the US must take a large share of responsibility for the crisis.

To understand what happened, we must go back to UN Security Council Resolution 687, which re-imposed the sanctions after the Gulf War of 1991. Paragraph 22 states unequivocally that when Iraq's disarmament of its nuclear, chemical, biological and long-range missile programmes had been verified by the IAEA and UNSCOM, the ban on oil exports from Iraq would be lifted. No other conditions were attached.

In the course of recent negotiations over a 'comprehensive review' of the sanctions, Iraq asked the Security Council for a clarification of the terms of reference of this 'comprehensive

review'. On 30th October, the Security Council replied, with a letter which did *not* re-affirm explicitly the provisions of paragraph 22 of UNSCR 687. In other words, the letter from the Security Council could be interpreted – and was interpreted by the Iraqis – as indicating new and further conditions would have to be satisfied before the oil embargo could be lifted. The Iraqi decision to restrict UNSCOM was made the next day.

The only adequate reporting of this issue in the British mass media appeared in the *Economist* and the *Financial Times*. The

Financial Times pointed out that the US had "rejected proposals by Russia, France and China that would have clearly committed the security council to a lifting of the oil embargo if Iraq complied with requirements to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction" (*Financial Times*, 2nd November). "The US refused explicitly to commit the council to a lifting of the oil embargo imposed on Iraq even if Baghdad met requirements to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction ... The US said such a move would have prejudged the outcome of the review, but Iraq saw it as confirmation that Washington would maintain the embargo as long as Mr Saddam remained in power" (*Financial Times*, 9th November). "Mr Saddam's decision to cripple UNSCOM was triggered by the US refusal explicitly to commit itself to lifting the oil embargo if Iraq complied with disarmament requirements – as

stipulated by" Article 22 of UN Security Council Resolution 687 (*Financial Times*, 12th November). The *Economist* (7th November) reported the facts, and added: "Iraq interpreted this [refusal to re-affirm paragraph 22] as confirmation of its long-held – and plausible – belief that, even if it did come clean on all its weapons, no American administration would lift the oil embargo so long as Mr Hussein remained in power" (emphasis added).

Tony Blair said in the lead-up to the attempted bombing: "We have bent over backwards to try to accommodate any reasonable demands". In the real world, the crucial and provocative Security Council 'clarification' was drafted by his government. If Blair really had been interested in a peaceful resolution to the inspection crisis, he could have reversed course, and urged the Security Council to state explicitly that paragraph 22 of UNSCR 687 still holds. He could have supported the UN resolution, and opened up some light at the end of the tunnel. Instead, Blair 'bent over backwards' to defeat this reasonable demand.

The truth about the origins of the present crisis has been effectively buried, and will never be officially acknowledged. Yet the suppression of the British and US role in provoking the present crisis has been a vital part of the build-up to a war which very nearly plunged the people of Iraq into the abyss, and which could have had considerable implications throughout the region. Unfortunately, as I write, "this thing is not over" (Tony Blair). The inspection crisis continues on a hair trigger, and the humanitarian crisis caused by the comprehensive economic sanctions continues to destroy Iraq's people. The resolution of the latter crisis, and the prevention of another war, are matters for us all.

Milan Rai



Northern Anarchist Network

The NAN conference in Liverpool recently brought together 25 activists from various national federations (ACE, ABC, SF, SA), two national networks (Groundswell and Earth First), delegates from several groups in the north, and various individuals. It was pleasing to welcome comrades from Lancaster Anarchist Group, while Sheffield were sadly absent. Guests at the conference were two delegates from the Tameside Careworkers to talk about their strike, and someone to tell us about the state attacks on anarchists in Italy that have been underway for the last four years.

The NAN is not a talking shop, but a network of individuals and groups willing to work together on a number of issues. Impetus for useful work can come from such conferences but it is hardly to be expected that much will come from the centre – the focus for action has to be local. Nevertheless the conference resolved to have people at the nurses and careworkers demonstration in Manchester on 14th November and afterwards to carry out an action to publicise and protest against the threatened execution of Mumir Abu Jamal.

The conference was very enthusiastic about the proposed 18th June 1999 'Stop Global Capitalism' event which is a development of the Reclaim the Streets phenomenon. We need to get opposition to capitalism back on the agenda, and that means publicising this event locally and getting the widest possible support for it. It cannot remain the preserve of those involved in direct action, but needs to emulate and build on the Reclaim the Future march in London last year. It is, however, not a march in essence (though probably a march and rally will take place) but intended to be a direct sabotage of capital, if only for a day. Such a spectacular event would not be detrimental to the everyday effort that goes into resisting capitalism, but would on the contrary work as a spur to our efforts, and what better time than when issues of globalisation are so much in the public eye through MAI, the collapse of economies and the coming recession, and the crippling debt of poorer countries. To ensure success, it is vital that people join in the discussion on how to make it happen which will take place through publications, meetings and the internet.

Navel-gazing was down to a minimum at this NAN, and it is to be hoped that the renewed sense of purpose will attract more participants. The next conference will be in March in Manchester and the exact date will be advertised in publications. People wishing to attend can contact the secretariat and will be put in touch with local groups.

JL

Join the 18th June e-mail discussion at J18discussion@gn.apc.org or phone RTS on 0171-281 4621. The NAN secretariat is at PO Box 127, Oldham OL4 3FE.

MAI: The Frankenstein Strategy

The MAI is not dead, after all. As noted in my last column, the locus of negotiation has shifted to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the British government is actively pursuing the re-negotiation of an MAI-type treaty. On 26th November, Britain will re-launch negotiations by inviting trade unions and development agencies, as well as the CBI, to help thrash out a fresh agenda. Ministers have apparently decided that the best way forward is to include labour standards and environmental concerns from the outset. Ministers involved include Brian Wilson, trade minister, Michael Reacher, environment minister, and George Foulkes, minister for international development.

Wilson said recently: "One of the lessons which has been learnt [from the MAI debacle] is the need to set clear objectives. Equally important, all discussions should be conducted as openly as possible, with all interested parties invited to put forward their views at every stage of the process". This is rather reminiscent of the Strategic Defence Review process, whereby the Ministry of Defence hosted discussions with a wide range of bodies, including CND, while ignoring analyses and concerns which fell outside a very narrow band of pre-selected opinion.

In the case of the Strategic Defence Review, the illusion of involvement did nothing to dampen CND's fierce criticism of the resulting document, and the Department of Trade and Industry should have no higher hopes for their own strategy of seduction.

What is amusing is the reiterated statement that "there was no future in trying to adapt the MAI agenda to accommodate the many concerns it attracted", and that "it is better to start again with a clean sheet of paper". According to Martin Khor of the Third World Network, the European Union paper *A Level Playing Field for Foreign Investment* (1995) proposed working on simultaneously an MAI-style agreement within both the OECD (an effort which has now failed) and the WTO.

"The main features (including the right to establishment, national treatment, banning of performance requirements, right of entry and exit of funds, etc) are similar to what emerged in the OECD-MAI", according to Khor.

The 'right to establishment' refers to the 'right' of transnationals to set up shop in any sector, in any country, regardless of controls countries might wish to impose, for example to stop their countries becoming toxic waste dumps, or to maintain local control of the health sector. Governments would not be allowed to screen firms, or even non-commercial societies, wishing to enter the economy, or to "place limits on the degree of their participation in the national economy and society" (Khor). 'National treatment' means that foreign corporations must not be treated any more harshly than local firms, so that policies which favour local businesses, farmers, or even consumers (in house and land purchases and ownership, for example) would be prohibited.

The ban on 'performance requirements' means that governments are forbidden to impose conditions on either foreign or local companies. They are not allowed to require firms to buy a certain proportion of their inputs from local suppliers, to transfer technology to the country concerned, to hire local personnel, or relate the value of a company's imports or local sales to its export value. As Khor explained in *Third World Resurgence* at the beginning of last year: "Many items on this list are seen by governments (especially in developing countries) as social obligations that foreign corporations should meet as a contribution to the host country's development goals."

The rights of entry and exit, mean that, on the one hand, capital (including speculative 'hot money') must be allowed to enter economies freely and immediately; and, on the other, profits must be allowed to flow freely and immediately out of the countries where they were earned.

All these principles are likely to have been already inscribed on the 'blank sheet' with which Britain wants to start negotiations in the WTO. Dismembered parts of the MAI are, we can safely presume, about to be mixed up and sewn together again in the shape of a 'Multilateral Investment Agreement' (MIA), a Frankenstein's monster which could have a devastating effect on the environment, on workers' rights, and on Third World development.

Milan Rai

Official secrets and the attempted assassination of Gadafy

The Case of David Shayler

The British government has colluded with one or two attempts to kill Colonel Muammar Gadafy of Libya. One of them is well known and denied by nobody. In the early 1990s, the Thatcher government gave the go-ahead for the United States to use British airports to bomb Tripoli. The open intention was to kill Gadafy. The mission failed in its objective but succeeded in killing a load of Libyans including one of Gadafy's sons, aged two. The cost of the operation was estimated at five million dollars.

It is denied that there was another attempt in 1996, made by Libyans with British support, using a bomb placed under Gadafy's car. This also, it is alleged, killed several Libyans other than Gadafy. The cost (if it occurred at all) was only £100,000. Robin Cook, the current British Foreign Secretary, says he has examined the papers and the story of this second attempted assassination is "pure fantasy".

Official responses to the two bomb

stories appear to indicate that a car bomb would be unacceptable, while responsibility for an aerial bomb doing more collateral damage, killing more bystanders, and costing much more taxpayer's money, can be admitted without shame. There seems to be no logic in this ethical distinction, but it is not unusual.

The car bomb story is put about by two former British secret agents, David Shayler, late of MI5, and Richard Tomlinson, late of MI6. British government response is two-fold: first, to say that the story is fiction; second, to charge the former spooks with giving away government secrets, contrary to the Official Secrets Act 1989, which imposes a lifelong duty of secrecy.

Both Tomlinson and Shayler were arrested in France at the request of the British government, which wanted them extradited. Shayler was released on 19th November, after being imprisoned in France, awaiting extradition proceedings, since 1st August. It is a fair paraphrase of the French judicial rulings, that those who flee to escape the Official Secrets Act are not fugitives from justice, but political refugees.

Tomlinson and Shayler also tell of attempts on the life of President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia. Worse, they tell of bungling incompetence and right-wing paranoia in the 'security' services. They say that MI5 knew about the IRA bomb in Bishopsgate in 1993, and the bombing of the Israeli embassy in 1994, before they happened, but never got round to passing the information on. They confirm the stories in Peter Wright's *Spycatcher*, the book which gave rise to the Official Secrets Act, of right-wing loonies in

the 'security' service, burgling and bugging at great expense to keep tabs on such insurrectionaries as Jack Straw, Harriet Harman, Peter Mandelson, jazz impresario Ronnie Scott, and rock musician John Lennon.

Neither man seems attractive. Shayler apparently was not interested in civil liberties, so much as offended by the MI5 bureaucracy which inhibited his spying on Libyan diplomats. Nor does France seem excessively free. Until very recently, it had military conscription. But it seems the French courts have made a contribution to British freedom of speech.

Muammar Gadafy resigned from the presidency of Libya some years ago, having granted the population one of the world's most democratic Constitutions. Government proposals are submitted to a multiplicity of local assemblies, each of which takes a vote, and the majority of local decisions becomes government policy. Gadafy himself has no official position, but is ready to give advice if it is asked.

Of course, everyone inside and outside Libya knows that it would be very dangerous not to ask his advice, or to go against it. The constitution is super-democratic, but the reality is a military dictatorship, by one who likes to draft constitutions.

Britain, by contrast, has all the trappings of a medieval monarchy but is quite permissive, to the extent of permitting anarchist periodicals and others to write against the monarchy, the elected government, the supernational capitalists and whoever else is in power. However, it is not as permissive as some like to think.

DR

INFORMATION
LIBERATION

Brian Martin



FREEDOM PRESS

Information Liberation: challenging the corruptions of information power

by Brian Martin

Information can be a source of power and, as a consequence, be corrupting. This has ramifications through a number of areas. There is a need for a radical critique that is accessible and oriented to action. Several topical areas are addressed, including mass media, intellectual property, surveillance and defamation. For each topic, a critique of problems is given, examples provided and options for action canvassed. Not every topic relevant to information power is addressed – that would be an enormous task – but rather a range of significant and representative topics. This book will fill a major gap in a very popular field.

Freedom Press

192 pages

£7.95

The Liberty of Southwark

On 31st October the London Borough of Southwark became the location for a unique event in annals of libertarian art. This was the performance of *The Hallowe'en of Cross Bones Yard* by the radical poet and playwright John Constable. Former work by this artist has included an adaptation of John Windham's *The Kraken Awakes*, for the BBC; his Edinburgh Festival hit *I was an Alien Sex God* and several community based projects such as *The Brentwood Explosion* (with a cast of 500) and *The Becoming of the Rain gods to Garbage Gardens* for The Land is Ours occupation in Wandsworth. More recently he has been working with the Sexual Freedom Coalition and on the Southwark Mysteries Project. It was within the latter that the Cross Bones event was held. The theme of the work was the honouring of the Winchester Geese (prostitutes) of Twelfth Century Southwark. The story behind this is a fascinating one. The Liberty, as it was known at the time, was almost an autonomous zone outside the laws of the City, regulated only by the ordinances of Henry II, granting liberty and protection to all citizens of the borough, including gamblers, whores, actors and other rogues, and enforced by a citizen militia (of course this fell far short of the ideal of anarchy, but it could be said to have been the nearest thing to it possible in the twelfth century). Due to this Southwark gained a reputation as the Outlaw Borough, a place of licence, where those on the run from the authorities, bandits, heretics and rebels could live in the relative security of the Ward Without. This lasted until 1327 when it was incorporated into the jurisdiction of the City of London (which immediately applied its draconian laws on crime, gambling and prostitution). Following this seven prisons had to be built in the borough. However the reputation of the Ward Without still lives on even today. Central to this outlaw subculture were the Geese. According to some, the craft of prostitution in the borough dated back to Roman times when a Temple of Isis was built near the military fort guarding the approach to London Bridge. Sacred 'temple prostitutes' were often associated with this site and would have had eager clientele amongst the legionaries. Constable's story has this tradition surviving as a secret cult right into medieval times. Whatever the truth the Liberty was not a utopia, it was rife with poverty, disease and corruption. A haven for the outcasts of the City for both good and ill. Perhaps one of the most corrupt being the Bishop of Winchester who gave the Geese license to ply their trade and acted as a kind of grand pimp, while at the same time

condemning them as sinners and only allowing their burial on unconsecrated ground in the Magdelene crossroads burial site, known locally as Cross Bones Yard (where Irish labourers, who drained the marshes in the expansion of Southwark, were also deposited). The result of which has been their exclusion from history and recently their accidental exhumation at the site of the Jubilee Line extension. According to one official source this exhumation was performed with care (a skull from the site is on display in the London Museum), but from another anonymous source closer to the events, heavy-handed methods and a mechanical digger was used, with many of the remains ending on a tip.

The Cross Bones event consisted of a play, in the Southwark Playhouse, recounting this story centred around Constable's Southwark Mysteries poem cycle. It ended with a candle and lantern-lit procession to the Cross Bones graveyard, now a LT building site, where a performance of Street Theatre was held and a poetic salutation made to those buried there. It ended with the placing of candles at the site in remembrance. The play itself was well staged, though giving a convincing impression of spontaneity and wildness drawing from a range of eclectic sources. It evoked a deep ambience that gave an extra dimension to Constable's inspirational poetry, a creative blend of Blakean verse and traditional rhyme, that still resonates with modern life. Constable regards his poetry as mediated to him via his muse and so defers its interpretation to his audience, but for me much of it had a definite anarchistic character, and a verse which attacked the 'pox-ridden majesty' (which the poet claims can be read either literally, as a curse on the syphilitic Henry VIII who closed down the brothels, or a general attack on the monarchy and the established social order) brought to mind the MA'M march that had occurred earlier that day. However Constable rejects the associations of anarchism and sees himself merely as a 'free spirit', though he has confessed to reading *Freedom* in his youth (maybe with some influence on him). The play had a fashionable post-modern structure of fragmented scenes (most written

by the playwright, others classical) that were strung together by the poem cycle and Constable's informal, mediating monologues that related each act both to history and our current social and political situation. The performers were perfect for their parts and the voice of the singer Francine Luce was as unearthly as billed. Most significant of all was the presence of Janet de Ligt, a real whore, as Goose-of-Honour. The latter recounted her life as a sex worker in a way that gave grounding to the whole performance. For me this was an important feature of the event, it was not an arty-farty combination of poetry, post-modern theatre and new age spirituality but was firmly enmeshed in the realities of life. It was an attempt to fuse art and life in a way that sought to liberate us from the oppressions of a sick society. This was enhanced by the participatory nature of the final section. Due to bad weather this had to be cut short, but despite this and the haphazard nature of the procession, it ended in a memorable scene with the gates of the site glowing from the lights of the candles that now covered it. A suitable scene for the eve of Samhain, the ancient Celtic festival of the returning dead.

The Southwark Mysteries idea is described as a large-scale community arts project, themed around liberty and licence, the sacred and the profane and time and place. It intends to enable the people of Southwark to create their own visions of the past, present and future of their borough, and to begin to heal the social and psychological rifts generated by our society. It aims to culminate in the year 2000. More information on the project (and John Constable's work) is available from The Southwark Mysteries, 22 Trinity Church Square, London, SE1 4HY.

This winter's events were part of the Southwark Festival and ended with a climactic performance of the apocalyptic poem cycle in Southwark Cathedral, originally the Church of Mary Magdelene Overie. While still entertaining, this was, predictably, a somewhat tamer event. Though it was memorable for the inclusion of highlights such as the Southwark College Rappers (performing what may be the first 'hardcore' rap in an English cathedral) and

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The next issue of Freedom will be dated 12th December, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 3rd December

the surreal spectacle of Constable's invocations of 'paganism' and harlotry being given voice by the cathedral's choir. Alarming this event was nearly scuppered by a well known Sunday tabloid's ludicrous charge that Constable had a hidden pagan agenda to subvert Christianity! Constable is in fact a man of an eclectic spirituality. Towards the end of the event while contemplating the Christian view that Southwark's prostitutes should seek forgiveness from the Church, he wondered if it were not equally valid that the Church should seek forgiveness from a delegation of whores.

Prometheus Rex

Gandalf trial latest

As we reported on 31st October, the second 'Gandalf' trial was scheduled for Portsmouth crown court on 2nd November. The trial, of Robin Webb of Animal Liberation Front and Paul N. Rogers of *Green Anarchist*, was adjourned until 9th November, when it was adjourned again until 23rd November (after we went to press).

The prosecution told the judge that they are seeking a legal means whereby those who have already been acquitted of conspiracy, at the first trial and in the Appeal Court, can nevertheless be cited as co-conspirators with the defendants in the second trial. Hampshire Council Tax payers are asking Hampshire police and the CPS to drop the case and stop wasting taxpayers' money.

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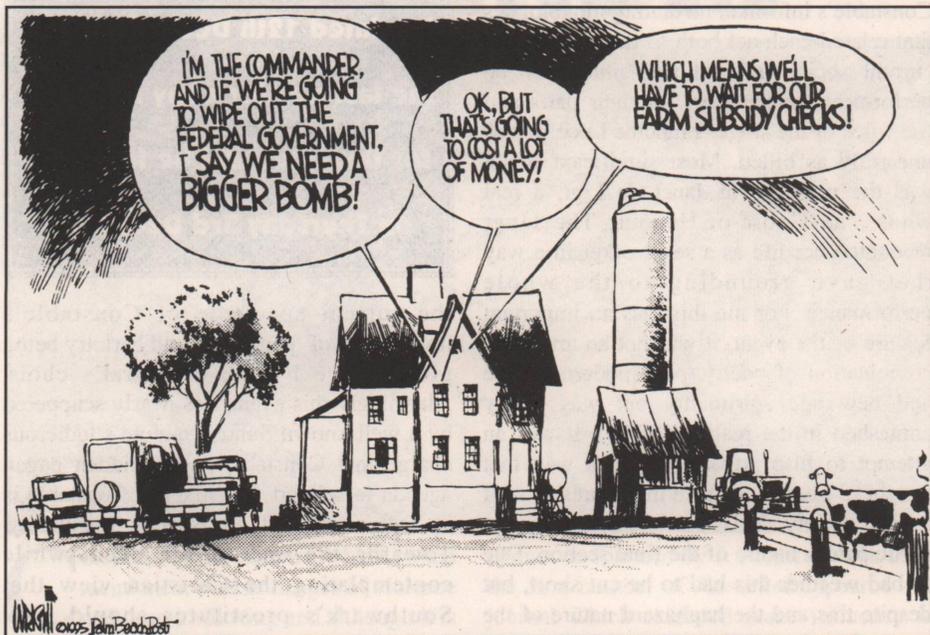
Sorry about the empty envelopes ...

In the confusion of despatching the last issue of *Freedom*, some envelopes were put in the post empty. Humble apologies to all. If you received an empty envelope and have not yet let us know, please do so urgently. We are anxious to correct our mistake.



Food for Thought ... and Action!

Recent additions to the Freedom Bookshop stock



The rural militia hits a snag (cartoon taken from *Rural Radicals*)

Prawn Cocktail Party: the hidden power behind New Labour by Robin Ramsay, Vision paperbacks. To read this book, even for those of us who have a fair idea of the nature of the devious inner workings of political parties, is to upturn the stone from beneath which the loathsome hideous creature crawls, vile and slimy in aspect. It is to lift the lid of the cesspit and be hit by the putrefying stench of power politics. Ramsay, editor of the investigative magazine *Lobster*, describes the Labour Party's 'hands off' economic policies adopted to suit the City and the multinationals; its adoption of Thatcherism – or 'Tory Lite' as he calls it; and most importantly the penetration by, influencing of, funding and even setting-up of numerous chunks of both the Labour Party and the wider labour movement by the CIA and MI5, either directly or indirectly, from the Second World War to the present day. Never mind that Ramsay sympathises with Labour's left-wing and has been a party member since 1983; membership would have been indispensable for access to much of this material. What is

important is the thoroughgoing detail he produces which shows – intentionally or not – just how completely compromised the Labour Party is by its true sponsors. With bibliography and index, 182 pages, £9.99.

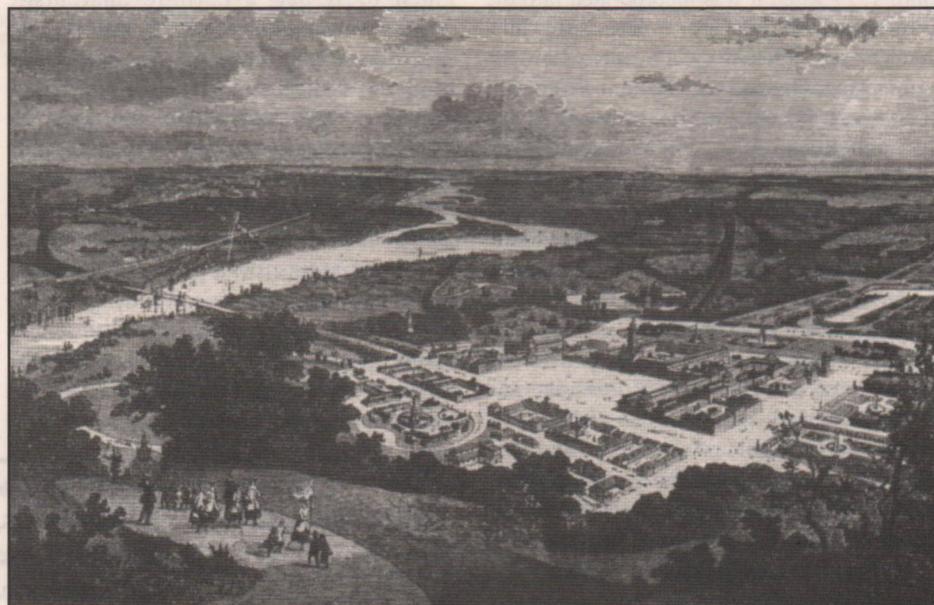
The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth Century America* by Carl Guarneri, Cornell University Press. An impressive in-depth study of one of the most successful and widespread pre-Marxian utopian socialist movements, its transplantation from Europe to the United States, and its aim of leading that country's highly competitive society to a communal alternative by "peaceful revolution both conservative and radical". Guarneri traces the movement from its roots in the religious, social and economic upheavals of the 1830s, through its bold communal experiments based on Charles Fourier's 'phalansteries' – the co-operative communal villages which he saw as the basic socio-economic units for the new society – to its gradual decline after the American Civil War. *En route* he examines the Fourierists' relationship to the Abolitionists, slavery, capitalism (they were also against wage-slavery), the Civil War itself, organised labour, free love (surprisingly, homosexuality and even incest were practiced in some phalanxes), and anarchists like Josiah Warren. The book is large and attractive, copiously annotated, has a thorough index, an appendix packed with statistical tables for each community (size, location, numbers, members' ages, occupations, etc.), and an exhaustive bibliography. 525 pages, illustrated. Normally £19.90 but now just £9.95 from us while stocks last.

East End Jewish Radicals, 1875-1914 by William Fishman, Duckworth. As a classic in its field, this book is rarely off our list. When it goes out of print we are constantly asked for it, but each reprint seems to be accompanied by a hefty price increase. The current publisher's price is £16.99, but we have been lucky enough to get our hands on a few copies for £7.99. There are numerous mentions of Rudolf Rocker, Kropotkin and Malatesta along with scores of other revolutionaries, and there is a useful overlap with our new book by Fermin Rocker (Rudolf's son) *The East End Years*, which should interest anyone who has got a copy or is thinking of getting one. Professor Fishman's book is nicely illustrated, and one of the appendices reproduces a typical bourgeois press caricature of anarchists (just

to show that things don't change much) the *Evening Standard* of 1894, running to six pages! There is also an index and bibliography in the book's 336 pages. If you're coming to the shop in person for a copy and Bill happens to be here on one of his regular visits, he would be happy to sign it for you. We haven't got many copies, so if you've been teetering on the edge of buying one – jump now!

Rural Radicals: righteous rage in the American grain* by Catherine McNicol Stock, Cornell University Press. They hate the US federal and state governments, especially the Department of Agriculture, big business, bankers, lawyers, the police, the CIA, the FBI, the courts and the United Nations. They are passionately attached to the land, demand the right to self-regulation, believe in small-scale agriculture and society, and have a strong sense of family and community solidarity. They love the wilderness and want to be left alone to pursue their rural occupations and activities, and they claim the right to defend this way of life against anybody, by force of arms if need be. Wow, you must be thinking, almost an anarchist society – fantastic! Well not quite, for that's about all they agree on, and while it is true that some of these isolated rural dwellers would fit in well with an anarchist community, many others decidedly would not. Some favour an egalitarian, pluralist, secular and co-operative way of life, and have formed associations to promote their ideas, like the

American Society of Equity, the Grangers, the Populist Movement, the Green Mountain Boys and the Non-partisan League. Others are, however, extreme individualists, survivalists, identity Christians, conspiracists, vigilantes, white supremacists, anti-semites, or outright fascists – or any combination of these. And that's not just the John Birch Society, Aryan Nations or the Klu Klux Klan. There are also the Defenders of the Christian Faith, Posse Comitatus, the Knights of Mary Phagan, the innocent-sounding Duck Club, the Regulators, the Covenant, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord, and many more. These want an authoritarian, hierarchical, elitist, religious and racist way of life. Both sets of rural dwellers have radical agendas, says Stock, and have often gone on the rampage, formed their own heavily armed militias to enforce their will, or been involved in shoot-outs and sieges with the authorities, but it's not a simple question of left versus right: there is a lot of ideological cross-over between these groups, and many hold sets of beliefs that flatly contradict each other – not that they ever seem to notice. Nor is all this a recent development – it goes back at least to Bacon's Rebellion of 1676, and is inextricably tied up with US history and culture and American frontier mentality. This is a timely and accessible study, throwing a fascinating light on a phenomenon which many outsiders, including American city dwellers, find totally incomprehensible, but which still throw up incidents like the sieges of Waco and Ruby Ridge, the Oklahoma City bomb and the Unabomber. Welcome to rural USA. 219 pages, illustrated hardback with notes, sources and index. Previously £17.95, now only £8.50 while stocks last. **KM**



General view of a Fourierist phalanstery (picture taken from *The Utopian Alternative*)

Update on Freedom Press reprinting programme

Back in May this year we announced a large programme of reprints of several of our books, three of which were still being worked on. Apart from improving the covers, there were a number of internal errors to be corrected. The finished products have now been delivered and are ready for your delectation, as follows:

• **Act for Yourself: collected articles 1886-1907*** by Peter Kropotkin, edited and introduced by Nicolas Walter and Heiner Becker, Freedom Press Centenary Series, with appendix and notes. The companion volume to *The Conquest of Bread** (compiled from articles written for the French anarchist press during the same period), *Act for Yourself* was intended for publication at the same time but for various reasons this did not happen

until a century later. 131 pages, £5.95.

• **The May Days: Barcelona 1937*** by Augustin Soucy, José Peirats, Burnett Bolloten and Emma Goldman, edited and with a preface and bibliographical epilogue by Vernon Richards, Freedom Press Centenary Series (supplement to Volume II, *Spain 1936-1939: social revolution to counter revolution**). Perhaps the best short work dealing in detail with the Stalinist's coup and their secret political prisons during the Spanish revolution. 127 pages, £5.95.

• **Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*** by José Peirats, with preface, notes and glossary. One of the rare classics in its subject, by a participant, with photographs and illustrations. 388 pages, £11.95.

KM

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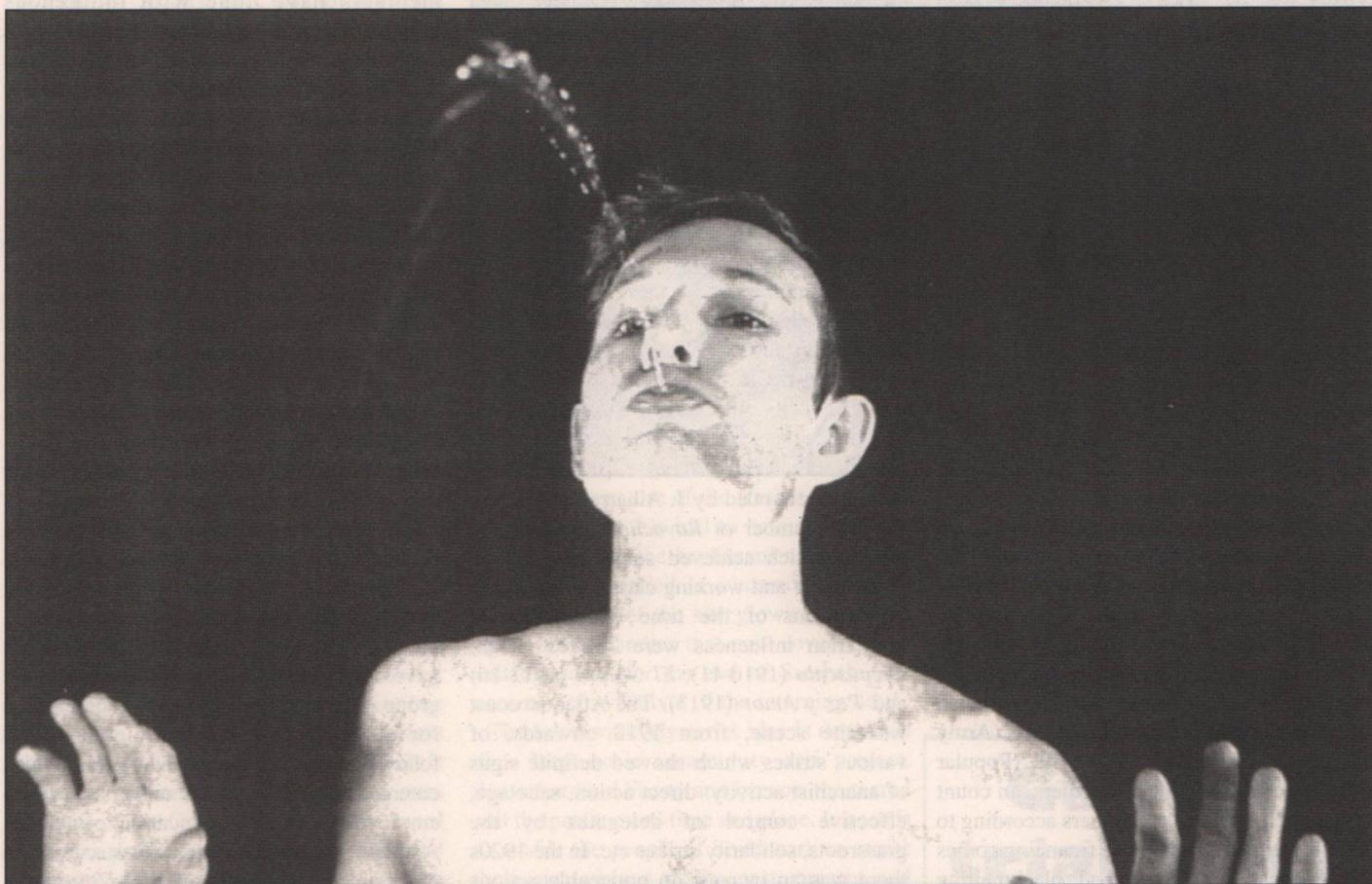
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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

The global parish pump



We are silly to use the words 'parish pump politics' to describe trivial local issues that don't really matter. For the parish pump which once stood in a prominent place in most villages and towns was a daily reminder of the fact that no human being could survive for more than a few days without water. It was a local and universal resource, not a commodity to be sold to the highest bidder.

In the nineteenth century the incredible mushroom growth of British towns and cities coincided with the spread of the economic doctrine that private, profit-seeking enterprise would solve all problems, while publicly run services were wasteful and wicked. The emerging private water companies supplied only that minority of households that could afford a piped water supply. The rest had to rely on increasingly polluted wells. But the children of the affluent, as well as those of the poor, added to the appalling death-rate from diseases like dysentery, typhoid fever and cholera.

The Public Health Act of 1875 ruled that a house without an adequate water supply was unfit for human habitation. Most private providers were bought by local authorities, with an obligation to supply every household. Some remained, as 'statutory undertakers', governed by the same rules and with a limit on dividends. Bill Luckin, the historian of the River Thames, remarks about the change in official attitudes that "whatever may have been their doubts about the explicitly political implications of municipalism, interventionism and collectivism, 'the salvation of the city' was nothing less than a binding moral duty."

In the late 1940s the post-war Labour government, which took gas, electricity and hospitals out of local control, left water alone. It was a Conservative government which, in the Water Act of 1973, brought what was seen as a coherent approach to the inter-connections of water supply, river management and sewage disposal, by setting up regional water authorities

But in 1989, before the new authorities had worn out their first sets of office furniture, another Conservative government ignored history and sold the water supply industry to private speculators (at a net loss to the public purse of several billion pounds.)

Everyone is familiar with the consequences of privatisation, if only because domestic water bills in England and Wales have risen by an average of 39% in real terms, and since

the press continually reports huge profits, unsuccessful overseas investments and vast payments to directors and chief executives of the private water companies. It also reports on vital renewal of installations and repairs to leaks in company pipes which have not been undertaken.

Far worse is the fact that, for the first time in history, households have had their water cut off because of non-payment of bills (except in Scotland and Northern Ireland where this procedure is illegal). The Policy Studies Institute found that "during 1994 about two million households fell into arrears with their water bills and 12,500 ended up disconnected from the water supply".

But there is an even more serious consequence of turning water into a commercial product. Britain, a water-rich country, had sixteen dry months between May 1975 and August 1976. We were asked to save water and did so to a remarkable extent. There was intense co-operation between water authorities and from the users in reducing demand. There were no recriminations: simply a willingness to learn from the experience.

In the changed climate of 1995 we had another drought, and the public response was different. As my local paper put it: "Are we not entitled to expect that, as long as we pay our bills, we should be able to use just as much of the stuff as we like? And should it matter to the profit-centred water companies whether we choose to use it for watering our gardens or flushing the loo?" The social obligation to conserve water as a shared resource belonging to us all, has been lost. So too, was the engineering ideology that, at all costs, the public need must be served. As customers of Yorkshire Water learned in 1995, this imperative no longer applies, but neither does our duty to our neighbours queueing at the parish pump.

The consequences of the commodification of water are felt all over the globe. The more dictatorial a government, the more likely it is to build itself a permanent monument in vast dam-building projects for managing rivers, with the aid of the World Bank and designed by Western engineers, destroying the local

water economy and displacing not the wealthy but the poor. Dam-building, as at Pergau in Malaysia, becomes the trade-off for arms deals or for yet more indebtedness to investors in the rich world. Technological imperialism replaces the empire-building of the past.

Less sensational, but just as devastating, is the advice from inter-governmental agencies to the rich rulers of poor nations. They are told to produce for the overcrowded export market, so as to earn hard currency to pay their debts. All around the inhabited world, poor people in arid climates learned techniques like rainwater harvesting and methods of growing subsistence crops that can survive with very little water. But in sub-Saharan Africa, international trade advisers have urged the growing of groundnuts, haricot beans and even cotton for the world market, to the neglect of sorghum for local consumption.

Closer to home, Spain provides a salutary lesson. It has always been at the mercy of irregular rainfall and prolonged droughts. Parts of the country have networks of irrigation canals developed first in Roman and then in Moorish times. Water was rationed, with scrupulous fairness, by Communities of Water Users, among the growers, large and small, through whose land it flows. It was regulated by local Water Tribunals, of which the most famous, as a tourist attraction in Valencia, still meets every Thursday at noon outside one of the cathedral doors.

But modern Spain has a continuous water crisis, as growers have been encouraged by the logic of the market to diversify from drought-resistant crops like olives and figs to water-hungry ones like rice and strawberries for export to the loaded shelves of the rich world's hypermarket, together with carrots from Mexico and green beans flown in from Kenya. The last thing to occur to the consumer is the appropriateness of the product to the water-economy of the producers.

During the British water shortage of 1995 the supermarkets reassured their customers

that supplies of vegetables would be uninterrupted as all their subcontractors employed irrigation. This contrasts sharply with the approach of the traditional *comunidades de regantes* among the vegetable growers of Aragon which regulated the opening of sluice-gates for days and hours according to the water available and the crop. In times of extreme drought, the *sindaco* of each channel allotted water with a view to saving as much of the crop as possible, sometimes giving preference to those crops which were most demanding, sometimes denying irrigation to those which could resist water shortages longest, sometimes giving water to half a field.

Shortages and misfortunes were shared, just as they were when the parish pump ran dry. Everyone understands the concept of fair shares for all, only the world's affluent appreciate the logic of the market: that you are entitled to as much as you want of the world's precious water so long as you can pay for it.

A century ago it was regarded as a triumph of civilisation that every household was entitled to water, paid for by local taxation like roads, street lighting and libraries. Today, both government and the water companies favour the introduction of metering, which saves little and costs much. It harasses the poor while the affluent don't notice it.

Certainly we have to re-learn the habits of water conservation which were automatic for our ancestors, and with the unpredictable consequences of global warming in the next century, this is a lesson that has to be absorbed in Britain as much as in Latin America or Africa. Control of water has to be wrested back from the irresponsibility of the market and won by the reciprocity of the parish pump.

Water has to be rescued from the status of a commodity to that of a universal necessity, shared by all. Needless to say, this is not on the agenda of any party or politician.

Colin Ward

Colin Ward is the author of *Reflected in Water: A Crisis of Social Responsibility*, published by Cassell at £12.99.

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Anarchism in Colombia



Colombia is the country which, when mentioned, evokes images of violence and drug trafficking and although it is a lot more than this stereotype (despite its recent turbulent history) it shows little sign of change. There are some five military organisations operating here on a daily basis: in the guerrilla sphere there is the FARC (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces) the ELN (Army of National Liberation) and the EPL (Popular Liberation Army) which, together, can count on some 20,000 active members according to official estimates and whose financing comes from kidnapping, drugs and blackmailing large oil companies which have interests in the region. On the other side, the government, there is the Colombian National Army (which sees itself as incapable of dealing with 'subversion') and the ever more active paramilitary groups which, once having become independent of those who set them up (the Colombian government), operate in an autonomous fashion carrying out numerous and obscene massacres among the populations they suspect of having given any type of support to the guerrillas.

The government, for its part, follows its economic policies; these are liberal or (as is the case since the recent victory of the corrupt friend of Aznar, Andrés Pastrana) conservative as reflected by those who hold power, the result is always the same: neo-liberal policies which implement to the letter the 'recommendations' of the World Bank and the IMF and who carry out the anti-drug trafficking policies which must be certified annually for them to qualify for the gringo funds which go with them. As a consequence, the Indian lands are ruined without shame and the popular classes live in a continual state of crisis from which they can see no light at the end of any tunnel. Surprisingly, the Colombian people live in hope to the rhythms of 'vallenato' music and with a great passion for life getting by as best they can in such a tempestuous situation.

In these exuberant lands there existed at its time a solid libertarian presence which today, decades later, is trying to revive itself and its ideas are once again being given circulation by those who, in our times, bear witness to the past.

Anarchism in Colombia

The first proper references to libertarianism can be found in the middle of the last century with the arrival on the coast of the works of Proudhon. This was a time which also saw the arrival of the young Elisée Reclus with the intention of founding a colony which turned out to be unsuccessful. At the end of the nineteenth century the important craftworker strikes saw a libertarian presence and for a while they ran a self-managing

commune founded by J. Albarracín. In 1910 the first number of *Ravachol* appeared – a journal which achieved some influence in craftworker and working class circles. Other publications of the time which showed libertarian influences were *Trofeos* (1908) *Crepúsculo* (1910-11), *El Obrero* (1912-16) and *Paz y Amor* (1913). The Atlantic coast was the scene, from 1918 onwards, of various strikes which showed definite signs of anarchist activity: direct action, sabotage, effective control of delegates by the grassroots, solidarity strikes etc. In the 1920s there was an increase in noticeable actions occasioned by the arrival of many anarchist immigrants from Europe and which saw three important workers' congresses with a significant dose of libertarianism and the appearance of new groups such as Antorcha Libertaria (Bogota), Via Libre (Barranquilla), Grupo Libertario (Santa Marta) and the important Federacion Obrera del Litoral Atlantico (FOLA) which managed to bring together sixteen unions in the area. Among others there appeared journals like *La Voz Popular*, *La Antorcha*, *El Sindicalista*, *Pensamiento y Voluntad*, etc.

In an era which saw a lot of activism there were many protests and strikes. It is necessary to mention the name Raúl Eduardo Mahecha, a committed libertarian struggler who was behind quite a few of these struggles and who may be considered the most significant figure in the Colombian workers' movement. Other important figures would be Vargas Villa and the lesser known Juan de Dios Romero. Another chapter could be written about the "anarchist and adventurer" (his definition) Biófilo Panclasta, who saw the insides of prisons in numerous countries and about whose life and legend many pages could be written. Suffice it to say, as an anecdote, that the mothers of Pamplona, where Biófilo was born, persuaded their children to eat their food with the words 'If you don't eat your dinner I'll get Biófilo onto you'.

The strong decrease in influence of anarchist ideas suffered from in the '30s throughout the continent can also be seen in Colombia which suffered some decades of lethargy from which it has failed to awake until almost our own times.

The situation today

Making anarchist propaganda in today's divided Colombia (either guerrillas or governments) is not easy. Independent opposition is not looked on favourably and the kind of situation which confronts us leads one to think of the situation in the Basque Country. The war that the country has suffered for decades also affects anarchists who find it hard to continue on the margins of this environment. The most 'mature' solution to

this problem is the constitution of a small local branch of the AIT called Alas de Xué which as a group is trying to launch a debate and a libertarian praxis in relation to the traditional cultures of the indigenous local population. The work which various members have done with indigenous communities has made them knowledgeable about their communal practices and allows them to flourish as Flores Magón had already done in Mexico. A fair few forms taken from indigenous traditions come very near to anarchist practices (communal living, the concept of authority, mutual aid and reciprocity, etc.) and they compliment those libertarian ideas, let's use the word 'classic', which arrived from Europe. The very name of the collective reflects this: Alas is a particle which represents what is meant by freedom in western anarchism and Xué is a Muisca term which denotes 'earth', one of the deities of the Colombian people from the Andes.

Alas de Xué came into being towards the end of the eighties in the heat of the protests which confronted the celebrations of the fifth centenary and organised within the so called 'Campaign for self discovery of our America: five hundred years of indigenous, black, popular resistance' a movement to which we gave a libertarian face. In addition to this the group organised two significant conferences for students at a national level which followed a libertarian agenda and from which emerged a post-graduate university which employed libertarian education principles. Another project has been to rescue from oblivion the history of the Colombian libertarian movement (mainly as it was in the '20s) something which up until then had only been treated of in Marxist discourse with all the attendant problems you might expect. Out of all this salvaging effort came the book *Biófilo Panclasta, el eterno prisionero*. After making some international contacts the group affiliated to the AIT and has since carried out joint projects as, for example, the defence of Uwa territory from the oil companies. The political composition of the group (although always of a libertarian majority) has resulted in recent years in some members leaving to follow other routes seeing the group's activities as having decreased. With the intention of reviving the situation and generating some efficient co-ordination between the various groups in Colombia it was decided to organise last May a few days on the theme: May 1968-98 – the living spirit of anarchism. This was attended by anarchists from Bogota, Cali and Medellin and was also attended by libertarians from Europe and South America.

The workshops took place in some universities which had a high level of political awareness and where there is continuous political activity which is openly supportive of the guerrillas. This has meant that these places have drawn the attention of the paramilitary groups. The young anarchist Humberto Peña Taylor and numerous activists from human rights groups number among the victims of a number of paramilitary groups

who also threatened to attack the National University during the days of the libertarian workshops. There are libertarian sympathisers at the library for the law faculty at the National University (these people helped with organising the event) and there are individual instances of some or other group which is part of the more violent tendency as was the case with Anarquistas al Combate.

Another of the collectives which helped organise the event was Mujeres Libres, a group which is active in the anarcho-feminist movement. There are also anarchists active in the excellent theatre group La Libelula Dorada some of whose members came together the excellent libertarian publication *Biófilos*. In the town of Medellin there is the Colectivo Libertario Vargas Villa which is part of the music scene whilst in Cali there are sporadic campaigns such as that where a dog called Walter was presented as a candidate in elections with the aim of ridiculing them.

Other campaigns which have seen a libertarian input would include the Campaign for Conscientious Objection (a group in Bogota and Medellin) and the music scene in the hardcore-punk scene where a number of groups promote a libertarian debate which at times has a certain indefiniteness to it.

The Indian question

The various demands of the more than fifty indigenous groups which make up ONIC (Organización de Indígenas de Colombia) has received a fair amount of support from local anarchists in recent years. There are numerous cases of despoliation of Indian lands by international companies which, as is the case with the Spanish company Repsol, enjoy the benevolent attitude of the Colombian authorities. The situation in Uwa an Indian community from the North West is well known. A few years ago they threatened collective suicide (about 5,000 people) if the oil company Occidental Petroleum was allowed to use their lands for petrol exploration. To the Uwa the oil represents the blood of mother earth and its extraction would mean her death and also that of her people. The campaign has the support of the AIT and has succeeded in paralysing the exploitation although the situation remains unresolved. The Uwa case is only one of many. Colombian Indians are threatened in many ways and its various traditional organisms have suffered both at the hands of the government and the guerrillas in so far as both groups have an interest in controlling the resources held by the land and using them for their own respective interests.

In this 'Locombia' (mad Colombia) where at the end of the century we find five street kids killed daily; where electoral candidates from various regions have to ask permission from the guerrillas to conduct their campaigns; where drugs and politics go hand in hand, we also see the beginnings a new libertarian path.

Alas de Xué



The Raven

Number 38 on

1968

A special edition of *The Raven* on the remarkable events of the year 1968, including articles by Daniel Cohn-Bendit, Fredy Perlman, Karl Young, Sebastian Hayes, Philip Sansom, Nicolas Walter, and many more.

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A Busman's Holiday for Bookworms

The seventeenth annual anarchist bookfair held in October this year was once again a resounding success, and was greatly enjoyed by everyone we've asked about it. Well done to everyone who turned up and contributed to the lively atmosphere.

Conway Hall, the usual venue, was absolutely packed at the height of the day – in fact at times it was impossible to get near some of the stalls until the crush had eased, and that was just in the main hall. The foyer and corridors were just as busy, with stalls tucked in every nook and cranny, and it was standing-room only in many of the small rooms during the meetings. About the only places where there seemed to be any space were at the back of the stage and on the balcony. Indeed it was so busy that some of the people running the stalls – including Freedom Press – found it impossible to get away for more than a few minutes for a quick bite to eat, and never managed to see the various people we had arranged to meet. Apologies if that includes you, we'll make alternative arrangements.

It was really wonderful to see so many people at such an event, which seems to go from strength to strength. There was unfortunately one or two problems associated with such success, however – the main one being that the organisers, aware that the bookfair may be outgrowing its customary venue, have been looking around for larger premises, but have so far only found places that would charge at least double the rate of the Conway Hall. The obvious implication if these were taken up is that stall prices would have to go up, which would mean many of the smaller and less well-off publishers would cease to attend, resulting in a reduction in variety and interest. Various other ideas have been suggested to the organisers, including a two-day event to ease the pressure on Conway Hall and allow the stallholders themselves to get to some of the meetings, talks, films, etc., which for many of us is almost impossible at the moment. If you've got any ideas or offers of help (preferably practical) for the next bookfair, please contact The Anarchist Bookfair, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street.

A couple of things are worth noting on the down-side. A man described by some as a fascist or ex-fascist was apparently the subject of both a verbal and physical assault, although others said he had been buying feminist-type literature. We do not know the truth about the incident, so will not repeat the many rumours. Also the organisers were landed with a large clean-up bill after some possibly drunken people were allegedly involved in incidents concerning a fire extinguisher and urinating on the balcony during the evening's musical events. But by far the worst incident was the *unbelievably* late arrival of the food! This was apparently due to the catering group's van breaking down on the way from Nottingham! Only the excellent quality of their refreshments saved them from a public 'outing' as foodists. See you all again next year.

Bookworm

Let consumers make the choice

Dear Freedom,

I thank the editors for their support in my criticism of those that support or participate in the digging up of genetically modified crops. I also admit that it was an inaccurate assumption on my behalf to claim that these people call themselves anarchists, and I thank Freedom for pointing this out to me.

My use of the phrase "leave it to the market" was simply another way of saying 'let consumers make the choice', but I knew when I used it that it would arouse controversy. You do "have a free marketeer in the camp"! You say that "no market can of itself ensure that everyone's needs are satisfied or that resources are fairly allocated, or that any particular socially desired ends are satisfied". Whether resources are 'fairly' distributed is relative to the particular concept of distributive justice one upholds. For myself, a holding is just if the access to it does not violate liberty – which is freedom from any invasion upon individual sovereignty. The continued distribution of holdings after they have been appropriated, if it is to be just in my book, must follow the pattern 'from each as they choose, to each request as it is chosen'.

This theory of distributive justice does not only justify market transactions but also the free giving of resources to those that want them in some sort of a gift relationship. I think it is obvious that a market doesn't satisfy all needs but only needs relative to purchasing power. In light of this it is obvious that some of those who want to consume but have no sellable service to offer will have to rely on the *voluntary* generosity of others. But if this giving, which is ultimately the giving of the products of

labour, is not voluntary, then that labour is exploited, it is forced. Thus these people do not have an unconditional claim to what they need, but can only have a just claim to them if granted permission by the workers. Any other way will legitimise forced labour.

I do concede that a market – an exchange of services – cannot satisfy all needs and, for example, non-working children or disabled people (or any who choose not to work) will have to rely on the support of others – support which in anarchy, we will all agree, will be more free flowing and readily available. However I cannot see how an entire economy can operate in such a way. I find that voluntary arrangements as revealed by the likes of Colin Ward reveal the tendency that makes anarchy a possibility, but not communism. Perhaps the editors could explain to me how, having like myself rejected central planning as anarchist, we can avoid over-production or under-production without a price mechanism to reveal how much we can, and how much we need, to supply.

As for the claim that anarchist communism is the only political theory "to combine liberty of the individual with social co-operation". If the editors would be so good as to grant me some space in an upcoming edition of *The Raven* I shall reveal how I find that communism is always irreconcilable with liberty of the individual. I doubt I shall shake any convinced communist from their convictions, but debate can only ever strengthen our beliefs or replace them with a new and better truth, so it would be beneficial and of interest to us both. Until then I ask readers to wonder how anarchists, in the light of the "abolition of land

ownership, wages, and prices" can grant society the right to coerce any who attempt to occupy the land for personal use – just as the state allows landlords to coerce us for the same reasons – and to prevent workers from exchanging their labour amongst themselves. How can they still claim to defend free labour, workers' control and individual liberty if they do not allow these things?

Richard Garner

[For some time now our correspondent has been trailing his coat in anarchist circles in the evident hope of publicising his curious, though far from original, notions, and he has now succeeded in turning a discussion on genetic engineering into an entirely different – though we will admit a much more ultimately profound – argument, which he would no doubt wish to continue on his own terms.]

*We regret not having had the time in this issue to explain basic anarchist communist theory; right here and now we can only recommend he read Kropotkin's *Conquest of Bread*, or its British counterpart *Act for Yourselves*, which was first serialised in Freedom in 1886.*

But before the trotting out of all the old chestnuts about communist anarchists coercing the workers and denying individual liberty – and lest we sound facetious, we will admit that these arguments are certainly a matter for constant consideration – let us reveal that early next year we shall have ready for publication (finances permitting) the long-awaited volume one of the Freedom Press Centenary Series, in which we shall reprint exactly Richard Garner's arguments, together with our rebuttal, as they were presented to Freedom's first readers just over a hundred years ago – and much better written – Editors.]

Anarchists in Trade Unions

Dear Freedom,

JL's review of the launch of the Syndicalist Alliance (Freedom, 14th November) prompts me to write to test out the amount of interest there is in establishing a network of anarchists in traditional trade unions. The authoritarian left (such as the SWP and CPB) has long been organised in unions and have attempted to gain influence, (generally unsuccessfully), through groupings such as the Broad Left. As far as I know, (although I may be wrong), there has been no organisation for anarchists in trade unions.

While sharing the concerns and criticisms of syndicalists and other anarchists about the limitations of reformist trade unions the reality is, I suspect, that the majority of anarchists who work probably belong to one and may be active as shop stewards, health and safety representatives or in some other role. What ever we may want for the future we live in the here and now and some seven million people belong to trade unions. I would certainly like to know if there are any other anarchists in the union that I belong to (the T&G) and get in touch with them.

My initial thinking is that the network would be non aligned and would certainly not be an attempt to create a new trade union or a rival to syndicalist unions such as SolFed, but to act as a focus for anarchists in trade unions to share news, information and views, debate industrial relations issues, (for example what do we think of the National Minimum Wage, Labour's *Fairness At Work* legislation and the TUC's social partnership approach to collective bargaining?) and perhaps organise around common concerns to raise an anarchist perspective within

unions. The network could be open to any anarchist with an interest in trade unionism, (including unemployed workers), and the network should, of course, work along side existing groups such as the Syndicalist Alliance.

What I would like is for readers to respond to my suggestions through the letter's page of Freedom. Do you think such a network could be valuable? What should an Anarchist Trade Union Network do? What should the relationship between such a network and syndicalist unions be? Should anarchists, in principle, get involved in reformist organisations such as trade unions?

If there seems to be sufficient interest (I am also contacting the Anarchist Information Network) then I am willing to get things going – it's up to you!

Richard Griffin

[We too would like to have the opinions of any active trade unionists we may have among our readers, as to how their experiences at work relate to their political beliefs, whether as convinced anarchists or as part of that larger body of individuals who are socialists and sympathetic to some of the views we print in Freedom.]

Are there among our unknown readership those who feel that we do not give sufficient space to discussions of the kind of industrial relations issues mentioned by Richard Griffin, and are they diffident about telling us their opinions?

We can't guarantee to print each and every communication received, but we can certainly put anyone who so wishes in touch with our correspondent – Editors.]

Please keep
sending in your
letters and
donations ... 

Mary Canipa

Dear Freedom,

As someone who worked with Mary Canipa at Freedom Press right through the 1970s, may I say how saddened I was to hear the news of her death in the last issue of Freedom.

Freedom Press and the anarchist movement has rarely had a more dedicated and effective friend than Mary Canipa. She was truly an unsung heroine.

Jim Huggon

[Right up to the time of Mary's death we who worked in the Freedom Press office were constantly being asked for news of her, as for many of the people who had visited Angel Alley over the years Mary was the first, sometimes the only, individual they met. When we went to press with our last issue we had only just heard of Mary's death and we are hoping that other readers may like to add their memories to the brief notice penned by Colin Ward. Further details of Mary Canipa's life and work, and especially photographs, would be welcomed – Editors.]

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The Raven anarchist quarterly

Number 38

1968

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Meetings & Events

The London Anarchist Forum

Meet Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall,
25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL
(nearest tube Holborn). Admission is free
but a collection is made to cover the cost of
the room.

— PROGRAMME 1998-99 —

27th November Movement Against the
Monarchy (symposium led by supporters of
MA'M)

4th December General discussion on the
future programme

11th December Housing (speakers Ian
Dixon, Pete Freer and Mike Nolan)

18th December Christmas social

8th January General discussion

15th January What is an Anarchist
Movement? The *Problem* for Newcomers
(symposium)

22nd January General discussion

29th January Symposium on Behaviour in
Anarchist Meetings

5th February General discussion

12th February The Free Individual and
Sovereignty in a Just Society (speaker
Malcolm Hill)

Anyone interested in giving a talk or
leading a discussion, please contact Peter
Neville at the meetings giving your subject
and prospective dates and we will do our
best to accommodate. **Peter Neville**

Red Rambles

A programme of monthly guided walks in
Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire for
Socialists, Libertarians, Greens, Anarchists and
others. All walkers are reminded to wear boots
and suitable clothing and to bring food and
drink. Walks are 5 to 8 miles in length.

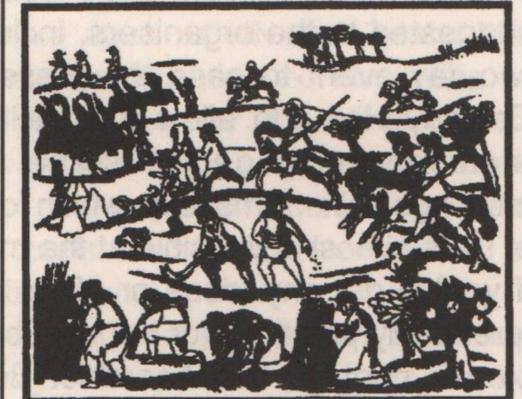
Sunday 27th December

Meet at 11am at Strutt Arms pub car park,
Milford, Derbyshire (A6 Derby to Belper road)
for 4 mile walk via the Chevin.

Telephone for further details
01773 827513

Diggers 350

In 1649, at the end of the English Civil
War, the Diggers asserted the right to
rent-free land for all. From 30th March to
10th April 1999 and into the new
millennium *The Land is Ours* will be
celebrating and reviving the Digger spirit.



Preparatory speaker/workshop meeting on:
Sunday 17th January 1999
from 12 noon until 5pm
at
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
London WC1

ANARCHIST COMMUNIST FEDERATION
A public meeting convened by the ACF

'ANARCHISM: THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE'

With the collapse of Stalinism and the
'new' Labour / Social Democrat
governments throughout Europe,
anarchism is increasingly seen as the only
genuine radical alternative.

Wednesday 25th November
at 7.30pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
London WC1

Disabled access • nearest tube Holborn

For more information contact:
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