

The Fijian election

IN MAINLAND Britain people vote on 'ideological' lines. There are identifiable communities but votes are split within them. It has never been true, for instance, that the poor vote was solid labour or the rich solid conservative.

Northern Ireland is different. Most voters vote on communal lines, and as long as there was partially devolved government in the Stormont Parliament, the majority community ran things without taking much notice of what the minority wanted. It might seem that in any communally divided country, if the minority is to stay in power, they need a constitution where only the minority can vote, as in South Africa.

Government, however, is not like that. Imagine a country with adult suffrage on the British model, where voting is on communal lines, and where the wealthy and the army are of the minority community. Who would form the government after an election in such a country? It's obvious, isn't it?

Fiji is as divided as any country except South Africa. The small community of European descent have foreign passports. Those with Fijian passports state their nationality, actually on their passports, as either 'Fijian' or 'Fijian Indian'. The Fijians are descended from those who discovered the islands (according to archeological evidence) about 1000 BC, the Fijian Indians from indentured

labourers (approximately, people who sold themselves into slavery), imported by British conquerors to work the sugar plantations in the nineteenth century. Neither community can claim to have been there first; all who live there now were born there; all who came there from elsewhere, whether in 1000 BC or 1900 BC, are dead.

The Fijian Indians now outnumber the Fijians three to two, and cannot lose any election run on communal lines with adult suffrage. However the British, before they made the country independent with a British-style constitution, passed a law that Fijian Indians could not own land. They also recruited an army, which the Fijian Indians refused to join unless they were paid the same as white soldiers at the same rank, and which therefore consists of the less scrupulous Fijians. There was an election, the Fijian Indians were elected with an overwhelming majority, and the Fijians took power.

The British-appointed Governor-General made a show of refusing to recognise the military junta. He would, wouldn't he? But as the wealthy landowner and veteran advocate of Fijian supremacy, he will no doubt agree to a revised democratic constitution, in which the Fijians cannot lose but the Fijian Indians have a voice. The object of electoral democracy, after all, is to keep the rich in power and the poor happy.

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FREEDOM

ANARCHIST MAGAZINE

ELECTION ISSUE

50p

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A somewhat cynical proverb current among the Rumanian peasants, who say that 'only fools exult when government's change'. London Times (19 Nov 1928)

When change of rulers happens to a state 'tis but a change of name for the poor. Phaedrus: Fables (c. 25 BC)

I entered parliament with what I thought to be the lowest possible opinion of the average member. I came out with one still lower. John Stuart Mill

Government is not reason, it is not eloquence — it is force. George Washington

Politicians do not serve ideals; they make use of ideals. A.J.P. Taylor

Between the government which does evil and the people who accept it there is a certain shameful solidarity. Victor Hugo

A statesman is an easy man, He tells his lies by rote. A journalist makes up his lies, And takes you by the throat. So stay at home and drink your beer, And let the neighbours vote. W.B. Yeats

Those who choose the lesser evil forget quickly they chose evil. Hannah Arendt

ELECTION GUIDE

In any election a great number of phrases which sound completely meaningless are employed by the candidates and by the press. Freedom, in the interests of clarity, does its best to translate.

1. The Conservatives

They say:

- 'The economy is in fine shape'
- 'We have faith in Britain'
- 'We are opposed to state control'
- 'We believe in free enterprise'
- 'A property owning democracy'
- 'We believe in freedom of choice'
- 'Caring begins in the community'
- 'We've become the natural Party of Government'

2. Labour

They say:

- 'We care about women's rights'
- 'We'll put more bobbies on the beat'
- 'I'm committed to a multi-racial society'
- 'We'll cut unemployment to one million'
- 'We'll scrap nuclear weapons in stages'
- 'We've a comprehensive new plan'

3. The Alliance

They say:

- 'We're united and confident'
- 'Breaking the mould of British politics'
- A responsible and sensible programme'
- 'We believe in taking the middle road'

4. The Professional Commentators

They say:

- 'Kinnock has been showing his authority'
- 'Thatcher leads a united Party'
- 'Owen is a figure of stature'
- 'This campaign is really hotting up'
- 'Let's take a look at the opinion polls'

5. The Anarchists

We say:

- 'You can't trust any of them'

It means:

- The economy is in a mess
- They've sent their money abroad
- Except on education, local government
- I'm buying two lots in this one
- A longer waiting list
- They are going to make cuts
- They are closing another hospital
- I went to Eton and Oxford before I became a merchant banker

It means:

- At election time
- Don't walk home after 1:00am
- I've got a house in Hampstead
- They raised it to one million
- They introduced nuclear weapons
- A wages freeze

It means:

- What'll we do if we win?
- Back to the 1960s
- They can't make their minds up
- It's difficult to know what to think

It means:

- He's thrown away half his support
- They'll chop her as soon as it's over
- He's just like me!
- We're all bored stiff with it
- I can't think of a thing to say

It means:

- Exactly what it says

NEVER TRUST A POLITICIAN — YOU KNOW IT MAKES SENSE



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## London Anarchist Forum

Every Friday at 8 pm during college term time. (The centre is an AE college; the meetings are public.) On alternate Fridays the discussion is led by an invited speaker.

29 May : Tony Gibson on Social Class and anarchism.

12 June: Donald Rooum on Self-sacrifice versus Benevolence.

Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Square, WC1 (nearest tube station Holborn)

### Join the Group

Feminist/Socialist/Radical/ Anarchist? Want to have fun without losing your anarchist ideals? Join the London D.I.Y. alternative to the stereotyped social club scene.

The Group, c/o Tony Baker, 4 Park View Collins Road, Highbury, London N5 2UB Tel. 359 5969.

### Anarchist Picnic

Sunday 7 June 1987 on Parliament Hill on Hampstead Heath. Ah, and bring kids and kites. n.b. organised by no-one.

## Congratulations Frank

BELATEDLY, we send congratulations and best wishes to our old friend and comrade F.A. Ridley on his 90th birthday.

When Freedom Press was attacked by the State in 1945, a few socialists sprang to our defence. Frank Ridley, a life-long anti-militarist and libertarian socialist, was among them and was prepared to stand on public platforms and say so. He was a member of the Independent Labour Party, which still existed in those days, and as well as exposing capitalism in socialist terms, concentrated also on attacking the Catholic Church as a reactionary force in society. Among his many books and pamphlets, *The Jesuits* is an outstanding work of research into reactionary religion.

Indeed, religion in general came under his hammer and he was very active in the National Secular Society, being for many years editor of *The Freethinker*.

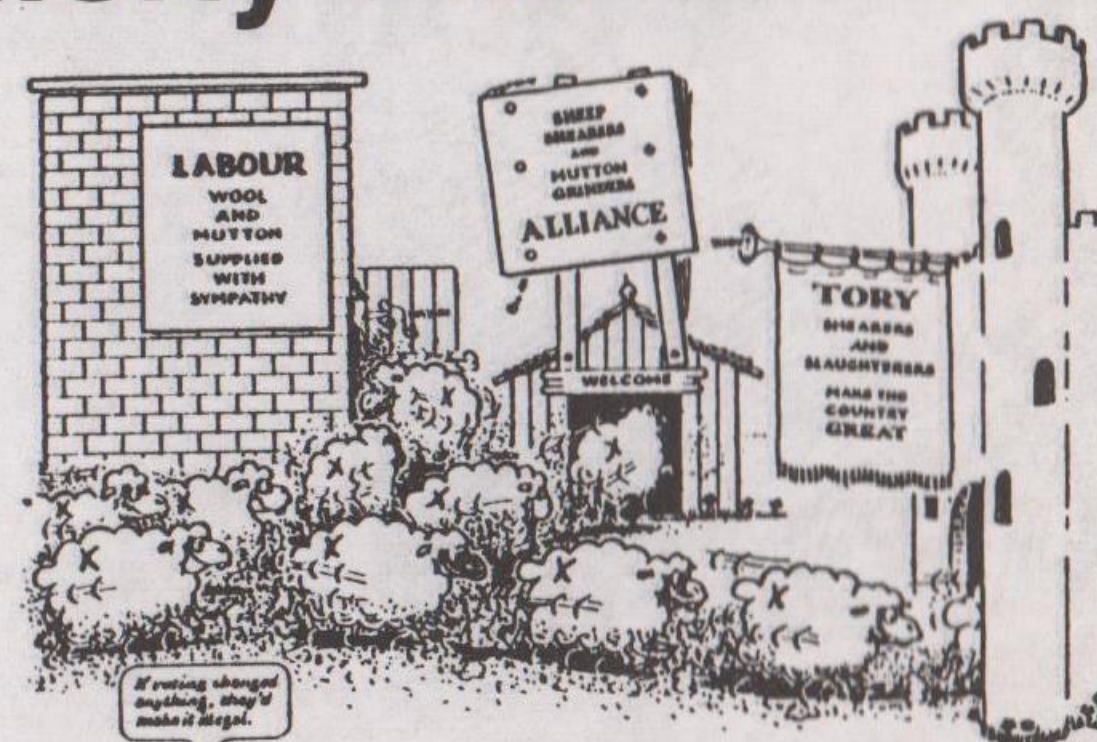
A celebratory party was held on Frank's behalf at the Conway Hall at the end of February. The hall was packed and on the platform was the veteran ILPer and anti-militarist Fenner Brockway (now 98!), who was also a sponsor of the Freedom Press Defence Committee.

Frank Ridley was always prepared to speak at anarchist meetings. He recognised a common cause because he never betrayed any parliamentary ambitions. Many happy returns, Frank!

## Anti-election publicity material

WITH this *Freedom* comes a free copy of our small anti-election poster, featuring the cartoon from *Wildcat Anarchist Comics* of sheep charging into political shearing pens and slaughter houses. Further copies are available to callers at Freedom Bookshop price 3p each or by post from 'Freedom AE poster' at this address, ten for 40p or fifty for £1.50, including second-class postage. We do not object to photocopying, substituting your name and address for ours, or ripping off the drawing or the typesetting for use in your own publication.

*Spectacular Times* has produced four black and white posters (see illustration), each size 305mm x 430mm/12in x 17in, a 'Don't Vote' gummed sticker size 52mm x 148mm, and a four page A5 leaflet including a window sticker. Order from *Spectacular Times*, Box 99 Acorn Bookshop, 17 Chatham Street, Reading RG1 7JF. (Freedom Bookshop does not



have stocks; if you send your order to us we will just send it on to ST causing further delay.) Prices: posters 10p each, stickers £1.50 per 100, leaflets £4.00 per 100, plus p&p 10%, minimum 13p for orders under £5; cheques and postal orders payable to 'Spectacular Times'.

For a thorough account of the case against voting, we recommend Vernon Richards *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy*, Freedom Press £1.50.

Small 'sheep' poster (sample enclosed) 3p each from Freedom. Large posters as shown below 10p each, order direct from *Spectacular Times*.

### GENERAL ELECTIONS

Here is your lifetime's supply of democracy.

XXXXXX  
XXXXXX

Don't run off with the pencil.

DON'T VOTE ONLY BY ORGANISING TOGETHER, WITHOUT LEADERS OR BODIES, CAN WE BUILD THE WORLD WE REALLY WANT.

If voting could really change anything....

....they would make it illegal

DON'T VOTE ONLY BY ORGANISING TOGETHER, WITHOUT LEADERS OR BODIES, CAN WE BUILD THE WORLD WE REALLY WANT.

If Thatcher, Kinnoch, Owen, or Steel is the answer....

....then it must have been a bloody silly question.

DON'T VOTE ONLY BY ORGANISING TOGETHER, WITHOUT LEADERS OR BODIES, CAN WE BUILD THE WORLD WE REALLY WANT.

## Racists at Notting Hill

THE annual Notting Hill Carnival is said to be the largest Caribbean festival in the world, outside of the Caribbean. The organisers are of West Indian origin, mostly Jamaican, but there is no ethnic bar to enjoying the event. For three days in summer black and white people rub shoulders with each other; literally, because there are hundreds of thousands in a small area, and in some places it is impossible to move without pushing against one's neighbours.

The police are much in evidence, dancing with plump black ladies for the benefit of press photographers, and giving away sticky-back badges that say 'Mets are marvellous'. They are there, they will tell you if you ask, to deal with emergencies like lost children.

It was not always so. Notting Hill was one of the first districts colonised by West Indians after WW2. In those days there was no bar on the immigration of British citizens (who included everyone in the Empire and Commonwealth), but colour bars in employment and housing were legal and overt. Employment was not a great problem in that time of labour shortage; indeed, many immigrants had got their jobs from recruiting offices maintained by such employers as London Transport in the West Indies. But it was quite common for accommodation advertisements to stipulate 'no coloured'; so although many would have preferred closer integration into British society, they found themselves living in exiled West Indian 'ghettos' like Notting Hill.

The earliest public gatherings in Notting Hill were not manifestations of Caribbean culture but 'Keep Britain White' marches, well protected by the police, not so much against the immigrants as against 'Keep Britain Free' counter demonstrations. One man had up for carrying an offensive weapon, to wit a dog whip, told the magistrates 'You

ought to see what the fascists have, big coshes.' But although the magistrates as individuals could see photographs of armed racist processions in the newspapers, they did not have the opportunity to deal with them as magistrates, because the police for some reason only arrested counter-demonstrators.

On the other hand, when the Notting Hill Carnival started, the police were quite prepared to arrest peaceful paraders in fancy dress and drivers of decorated vehicles, for obstructing the traffic. The first Carnival ended in violent confrontation between police and locals.

This did the police image no good. Continuing public xenophobia had resulted in Callaghan's immigration act, but energetic campaigning against unfair discrimination (anarchists such as Tony Gibson struck me as most vociferous, but the campaigners came from all parties except fascists) had resulted in laws against colour bars and a general feeling that the police should not be prejudiced. Orders came from the top to treat the Carnival crowd as a Good Thing, like the crowd at a Royal Visit. Those arrested these days are mostly pickpockets.

Orders from the top, however, do not suddenly change private convictions. There is widely believed to be an unofficial racist police gang at Notting Hill Police Station, calling themselves 'The Black Watch' (because they watch the blacks, ho-ho). During the past two years, ten young black men prosecuted for possession of cannabis by Notting Hill police have been acquitted. Crown Court juries accepting the defence that the pot was planted. Three of them said in evidence they were beaten up. The number of successful prosecutions using planted evidence is unknown.

There is now an 'independent' Police Complaints Authority, which gets police

from other areas to investigate complaints. But access to the PCA is through the police station against whose officers one is complaining, and in Notting Hill it is said (by the respected Mangrove Community Association) that anyone who complains gets picked on.

According to the *London Daily News*, however, a complaint was made by a solicitor's clerk who happened to see an 'unprovoked attack' on a handcuffed man in Notting Hill nick at 1am on 6 February (he told the desk sergeant and sent a note to Scotland Yard). And on 7 May another complaint came in from the local MP.

An inhabitant of Westbourne Park Road, awakened by a commotion in the street, looked out of the window and saw several bobbies administering a good kicking to someone. This presented a problem. Calling the police would mean the word of the witness (probably black — the reports do not say) against that of several policemen, who are always considered more credible than civilians. The victim, presumably a villain of some sort, might consider it prudent to keep mum or even side with the police witnesses. The solution (the witness being a member of the Conservative Association) was to get the Member of Parliament, Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, out of bed. Later Sir Brandon visited the victim, one Michael Campbell, in the hospital where he was suffering from a broken cheek bone and injuries to the spine.

The PCA's usual practice is to investigate single complaints against single officers. However they are now investigating 17 complaints against some 20 officers at Notting Hill. The Chief Inspector at Notting Hill told the *News*, 'It is possible some incidents have not been handled as sensitively as possible, but there are two sides to every story'. In the matter of Michael Campbell's alleged kicking, 'nothing was done incorrectly', as is proved by the fact that Campbell has not laid a formal complaint.

Plod





# Who leads the Red Front?

ANARCHISTS — rightly — have no time for elections, seeing them as no more than a changing of the guard, one set of rulers replacing another. As the old saying goes, if voting could change the system, it'd be illegal.

However, I think we would do well to keep an eye on the coming election, as it could well have serious effects on the whole of the British left, for the following reason: the Labour Party is not only going to lose, it's going to lose heavily, and may well be replaced by the Alliance as the official Opposition. I'm not saying this because of recent opinion polls, or ephemeral rows like those over black sections, Militant or the 'Loony Left'. The Labour decline has been evident for many years. As long ago as October 30, 1981, the *New Statesman's* resident psephologist Peter Kellner wrote a two-page article outlining this decline, showing that the Labour vote had consistently fallen from its high point of 40.8% of the total electorate (including non-voters) at the 1951 election (which, ironically, was won by the Tories), reaching its low point of 28.7% in 1979, and that 'Labour came to power in 1964 and 1974 more by default than design: in both years it actually secured a smaller share of votes from the electorate than in the previous election'. This was written *before* the Falklands war, and *before* the 1982 constituency boundary changes which enormously benefitted the Tories by splitting the Labour vote in the declining inner cities. (Kellner wrote a follow-up article on October 29, 1982, called 'Can Labour Win the Next Election?', which was considerably gloomier.)

As things now stand, Labour would need to win 117 seats for an overall majority, or around 90 seats to be the

largest party; in truth, they've a fart's chance in a hurricane of doing this. In fact, they were lucky to come second in 1983, being saved by the vagaries of the electoral system, even though the Alliance polled as many votes.

Now, I'm not interested in the causes of this decline, except to say that it's structural, and Kinnocratic-Neo-Sensibilism won't make the slightest bit of difference. My point is this: if Labour get trashed — as seems likely — into third place, *then it will spell the end of the Labour Party, and the end of parliamentary socialism.* The Party will splinter into a score of squabbling, ineffectual fragments.

*This is important.* In the past, if you'd just become politicised and wanted to fight for socialism, then the obvious thing to do was to join Labour, even if you disagreed with their policies, because it seemed the only avenue of practical change. After all, what alternatives were there? Quasi-religious Trotskyist sects? Right-on communes? And, with no disrespect to comrades, anarchism was hardly a practical alternative, due to our small numbers and little influence. (Having said that, it was my year as a Labour activist that turned me into an anarchist.) But now, if Labour can never again gain power, then socialists and radicals will have to work outside Parliament: socialism will return to the streets and the people, where it belongs. Revolution becomes a viable proposition.

However, I'm not alone in predicting this. The Trotskyist sects, for all their stupidity, are smart enough to see the possibilities too. Prime amongst them is the Revolutionary Communist Party, a tightly-disciplined vanguard party, whose members make Jehovah's Witnesses look like boy scouts in terms of dedication and

organisation. The centre spread of the RCP paper, *The Next Step* (April 24, 1987), is wholly devoted to calling on people to join The Red Front, 'a bloc of left-wing individuals and organisations that challenges all parties which defend the British Establishment before, during and after the election.' No prizes for guessing who'll lead this 'Red Front'.

So what, you might ask. Why should I give a shit about yet another arrogant Communist sect? *Because* their level of organisation is far above that of the SWP, WRP, NCP or any of the rest, and *because* they are preparing *now* to take over the extra-parliamentary left once the Labour Party is crushed; and no anarchist should need reminding of what happens when Communists hi-jack a movement. (Think of Russia 1917, Spain 1936, Paris 1968.) Don't write the RCP off as useless fanatics — they're not. Neither are they any allies of anarchists, or of any other revolutionaries: they are the British version of the Bolsheviks, and we know what happened to *their* allies once Lenin got his greasy mitts on the levers of power. The RCP need to be challenged *now*.

Hopefully, I'm not being pessimistic. The ensuing death of Labour presents great opportunities for anarchy, for ordinary people to take power themselves and dispense with bosses of all complexions. There will no longer be a Labour establishment to syphon off their protest, socialism will no longer be part of the Spectacle of Parliament, and *real* change will be a possibility, even if it doesn't lead directly to anarchy. All I ask of those reading this is: watch out! Don't let the Trotskyist bosses take us over, or we'll all be in the shit.

Fred Miller

## Election fever

NOW that the election campaign is under way we can expect politicians of all shades to indulge in exaggerated claims, but do we really have to put up with anarchists allowing themselves to get similarly carried away in their anti-election campaign? The May issue of *Freedom* contained statements from two contributors which struck me as distinctly questionable.

Firstly, I don't believe that the proportion of people who vote can be used as a crude guide to the level of popular discontent as Gareth Hardy appears to argue. There can be a whole series of reasons why people don't vote, one of which might be that they are so sure that the government is doing a good job and is going to be re-elected that they don't need to leave the comfort of their front room to go out and vote for it. If we make wild claims about a long term trend towards lower voting turn-outs then where does that leave us when the vote goes up, as I expect it to do at the next election? Better to frankly admit that the overwhelming majority of people in the UK will readily agree with us if we claim that politicians are not to be trusted but will still vote for the politician who they mistrust the least because there are not at the moment many practical alternatives.

I therefore don't believe that 'every vote in a government election is a vote to be governed', as Bertand and Egghead claim. This assumes that every vote is a positive act of support for the system, which is not always the case. When people vote against a particular set of politicians they have no intention of allowing their vote to be treated as a form of carte blanche approval for the party they vote for, and if we accepted this logic we would have to pack up political activity between elections because we believed that the government had been granted the right to govern.

Far from being a clear indication of support for the principle of government, voting behaviour is a complex subject and I can think of a whole number of circumstances in which a libertarian socialist or an anarchist might be tempted to vote. Thus a lot of people, myself included, voted Labour in 1974 because we judged that a victory for the Conservatives would have meant a defeat for the miners and we wanted the miners to win. It should also not be forgotten that the vast majority of the members of the CNT in Spain voted in the election which preceded the Spanish Civil War judging that the election of a right wing government would have produced a certain bloodbath whilst the election of a Republican government would create at least the possibility of revolution. I don't think

they were wrong. If a candidate for the Monster Raving Loony Party stood in your constituency then a vote for it could hardly be taken as an expression of deep support for the way things are and a sincere anarchist might decide that a vote for it might prove a more effective vehicle for registering their cynicism about the intentions of politicians than an anonymous refusal to vote.

A don't vote campaign is a tactic, not a principle, and it is important that we don't confuse the two. The important thing about libertarian principles is that we don't spread illusions about politicians and that we argue that life can be organised on the basis of liberty, equality and co-operation. I would therefore argue that we should concentrate our propaganda efforts on conducting an even handed expose of the various parties and to putting forward alternatives (e.g. the ideas in Colin Ward's *When We Build Again*). People will have quite enough empty sloganising to put up with in the next few weeks and it would help if we tried to restrain any temptations to join in.

Andy Brown

For those of us convinced that the General Election is the most 'unlucky dip' of all: the candidate heading the ballot form always gets 3% of his votes simply because those filling it out on Election Day can't be bothered to read any further down it.

As refusing to register to vote is an illegal act, refusing to do so must be an act of civil disobedience. If one has already registered by accident or design, consider burning your ballot in front of the local press — this should discourage others and give you the chance to put your point over. If you *must* vote, make sure when you stuff your ballot form into the box *on fire*: if even one ballot box is tampered with, the whole vote in that constituency has to be taken again...

It seems that the Tory Cabinet and the Parliamentary Accounts Committee is at it again: after a successful campaign three years ago stopped plans to deploy the neutron bomb in Europe, they have now produced the W-82 tactical neutron warhead in secret. It, the Lance neutron warhead and two new 'sister' shells will be deployed in 1989 within 50 kilometres of the East German border. NATO will face a 'use them or lose them' dilemma in the first few hours of WW3.

## Non-voters and polls

### Non-voters and opinion polls

IN THE 1950s, a few anarchists supplemented their incomes by doing interviews for polling organisations. The instructions were more or less impossible to carry out, such as interviewing twenty people at random in the income proportions of the population as a whole, one rich enough to employ a live-in chauffeur, two rich enough to employ charladies (or whatever the figures were) and so on. Payment was very poor. Fortunately there were no checks. Anyone could fake the interviews with the assistance of their friends, and send off the fiction for statistical analysis to five decimal places.

Questionnaires about toothpaste included 'water only' among the answers to 'What did you clean your teeth with this morning?'; this was to dissuade people from stating any old brand to avoid the embarrassment of saying they had not cleaned their teeth. Questionnaires about voting included 'How did you vote last time or were you prevented?' presumably to save people the embarrassment of saying they were too lazy to go to the polling station. The idea that anyone might refuse to vote, as distinct from neglecting to vote, had just not occurred to the drafter. In answer to the standard 'If there was a general election tomorrow how would you vote?' the nearest answer to 'I wouldn't vote' was 'don't know'.

Pollsters have learned something in the past 30 years. The interviewers are no longer given the responsibility of getting social classes in the correct proportions, and political questionnaires include a 'won't vote' option. *New Society*, the pollsters' trade paper, even included on 15 May 1987 an article by an anarchist, Colin Ward, setting out 'The case against encouraging them'.

Since the purpose of pre-election polls is to predict the winner, declared non-voters are ordinarily ignored in the reports. Where they are included they are generally about four per cent of those questioned, representing more than one and a half million people. Not all of them are conscientious non-voters. They include the indifferent, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and those who expect to be in hospital on polling day. But the number of people disaffected from the business of each of us voting for one of them must be quite high. One objective of the anti-voting campaign is to invite such people into the anarchist movement, where they may make an active contribution to a classless society, rather than isolate themselves in passive disaffection.

FRE

## IN BRIEF

The Chief Rabbi is to be awarded a degree by the Archbishop of Canterbury as recognition of his work for Jewish-Christian understanding. I treat Jews and Christians with equal 'understanding', but they don't give me a degree.

Amongst the useful work of the Chief Rabbi is a special dispensation to allow orthodox Jews to use the telephone on the sabbath, following a spate of burglaries on Friday nights.

This is welcomed by the local Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators, which is not very reassuring. A Home Office report has found more crime in watched areas in London, compared with control areas without schemes.

As if all this election nonsense wasn't enough, a group of demented loonies called the Children's Legal Group is campaigning to lower the voting age to sixteen.

The West German government continues to try to count its citizens. The last attempt at a census in 1983 had to be abandoned when it was ruled illegal on data protection grounds. Information from the new one will lack credibility as at least 10% (government estimate) or perhaps 30% (opinion poll) will either boycott it or give false information. They are also having problems finding enough upright citizens to do the actual counting. They have fallen back on using army conscripts.

A man who threw a dead body out of a window in Hamburg was arrested on suspicion of murder. It turned out that the victim had died of cancer. 'Throwing a dead body out of the window is not a criminal offence', according to a police spokesman. How about littering?

A Kenyan tried to crucify himself last Good Friday to give thanks to God (presumably in person). He has been found not guilty of attempted suicide.

The Cardinal of Naples has pronounced the congealed blood of the city's patron saint as liquified. This is taken as a sign that the martyr will continue to protect the city.



# The case against voting

This article is reprinted from New Society 15 May 1987.

NO POLITICIAN of any colour likes a non-voter. Last week Labour MP Tony Banks introduced a bill in an almost empty House of Commons seeking to make voting compulsory. His fellow members had voted with their feet out of the chamber, but he wanted to fine those of us who fail to vote, unless, like absentees from school, we could produce 'a legitimate reason'.

Yet the non-voters are among the largest of the political groups. Tony Banks reckons that they form 24 per cent of the electorate and he claims that 'those ten million or so who failed to vote in 1983 have a great deal to answer for to those who did'. His assumption is that all those non-voters would have made their cross for candidates of whom he approves.

But the abstainers, like the other parties, are a broad church, embracing the sick, the indifferent and the idle, those who have something more pressing to do on a Thursday, as well as the hilarious prohibited categories like peers, the insane and Anglican clergymen. Among them, too, is the unknown quantity of conscientious non-voters. To join this hidden party, as the South African elections reminded us, you have to be eligible to vote.

Our own history has examples of the manipulations with which governments ensure that citizens can't win. Having abolished an Irish Parliament the government made sure that the majority of the Irish were ineligible to elect MPs to Westminster, and after the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Act, ensured that this majority still couldn't vote by raising the property qualification from ownership of land worth 40 shillings a year to a figure of ten pounds a year. When the franchise was eventually extended, was the best strategy for Home Rulers to boycott the polling booth, or to vote for Nationalist candidates pledged not to take their seats, since in any case they could not swear the oath of allegiance to the British sovereign, or should they get into Westminster and there create havoc?

The same tactical dilemmas divide Nationalist politicians in Northern Ireland to this day, and in many other countries have beset every movement for national autonomy. The issue for such movements in considering whether to take part in or to boycott elections is not the effectiveness of parliamentary government, but the usefulness of either course in strategies for obtaining a parliament of one's own.

One advocate of seeking the voters' mandate for not taking one's seat was the late Guy Aldred who stood many times

over 40 years as an anti-parliamentary socialist candidate in Glasgow, believing that this was useful propaganda. He convinced few of the conscientious non-voters that this was true, and came bottom of the poll every time, except on the occasion when he stood as a World Government candidate and came second to bottom. Other believers in a protest vote argue that the right tactic is to attend the poll and put slogans instead of crosses on the ballot paper, so that it is registered as a spoilt rather than an uncast vote.

But it is the anarchists who, for well over a century, have been the most consistent advocates of conscientiously staying away from the poll. Since anarchism implies an aspiration for a decentralised non-governmental society, it makes no sense from an anarchist point of view to elect representatives to form a central government. If you want no government, what is the point of listening to the promises of a better government? As Thoreau put it: 'Cast your whole vote, not a strip of paper merely, but your whole influence. A minority is powerless while it conforms to the majority; it is not even a minority then; but it is irresistible when it clogs by its whole weight.'

The various streams of 19th century anarchist thought were united together in their opposition to participation in elections. Most of them shared with the early Marxists the view that the State was simply the executive committee of the ruling classes.

Political democracy, they declared, was just a facade concealing the real effective power of the owners of capital and land. If the workers withdrew their labour power the capitalist class would be impotent and its State would fall to pieces. For the anarcho-syndicalists, every industrial dispute was to be fought through to the bitter end with no compromise. The culminating general strike would make the ruling class powerless and the people would take over through their own forms of industrial organisation, providing goods and services under workers' control. Parliamentary elections were not merely irrelevant, they were a ruling-class conspiracy to divert workers' attention from the real struggle.

Anarchist-communists of the school of Kropotkin linked industrial autonomy and local autonomy. The means of sustenance and livelihood would be in the hands of the local commune on the principle 'to each according to his needs, from each according to his ability'. This conception of the way society should organise itself through federations of autonomous self-organising groups drew upon innumerable antecedents older than

the nation state: the medieval city with its guilds and confraternities, the Russian *mir* and *artel*, the American town meeting of the 18th century. It exemplifies

Kropotkin's concept of mutual aid as the mainspring of human society, and like Swiss federalism it implies no parish pump isolation. From the anarchist-communist standpoint, general elections to a central parliament are a form of social suicide since they imply the surrender of local autonomy and local revenue-gathering to central government which throughout history has shown itself to be the destroyer, not the upholder, of communal decision-making.

Finally, there is individualist anarchism, proclaiming that it is absurd for individual people to surrender their right to run their own lives to an outside body. Objectors see this as absurd selfishness and maintain that government is necessary to restrain our anti-social natures. Anarchists of all varieties respond with William Morris's warning that no man is good enough to be another man's master.

Did anarchist abstentionism ever, in the slightest degree, affect the course of events? There was one occasion when it was tested simply because it was one of the rare times and places when anarchism really influenced a mass movement. And the irony was that the effectiveness of abstentionism was demonstrated only when it was abandoned.

In Spain, in the 1930s, there were two huge trade union federations. On one side was the socialist UGT and on the other the syndicalist CNT, strongly influenced by the anarchist federation FAI. The membership of both these bodies was vast. (By the time they agreed on joint action each could claim, according to whose estimates you read, between a million and 1½ million members.) After the dictator Primo de Rivera resigned in 1930, his supporter the King abdicated in 1931, but the new socialist-republican government continued the repression of the revolutionary left. In the elections of 1933 the CNT used the slogan *Frente a las urnas, la revolucion social* (the alternative to the polling booth is the social revolution). The triumph of the right was attributed to the mass abstention of the workers, and the usual sporadic confrontations followed.

Then came another chance to vote in the February elections of 1936. Very quietly, the CNT leadership tacitly abandoned the position it had held since 1911, that elections were a fraud and that workers and peasants should seize the factories and the land to produce for all. They and their members voted for the Popular Front (a kind of joint Alliance and Labour tactical voting). Our most revered chronicler of the events of 1936, Gerald Brenan in his *Spanish Labyrinth*, explained that the electoral victory of the

Popular Front 'can to a great extent be put down to the anarchist vote'. And certainly a deal behind the scenes ensured that many thousands of political prisoners would be released. Brenan says that 'in many places the prisons had already been opened without the local authorities daring to oppose it'.

But the triumph of electoral common sense over the convictions of a lifetime had many consequences in Spain that no one had anticipated. The Spanish workers were ready to take on the political right, but the politicians of the left were not. The army was poised to seize power, but the government was not willing to resist. In his book *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*, Vernon Richards raised a forbidden question: did the CNT leadership take into account that by ensuring the electoral victory of the left it was also ensuring that the generals of the right would stage a military *putsch* which the respectable left politicians would not restrain? 'On the other hand a victory of the right, which was almost certain if the CNT abstained, would mean the end of the military conspiracy and the coming to power of a reactionary but ineffectual government which, like its predecessors, would hold out for not more than a year or two. There is no real evidence to show that there was any significant development of a fascist movement in Spain along the lines of the regimes in Italy and Germany.'

In fact, Spain had three different Popular Front governments on 18 and 19 July 1936, each of which was anxious to cave in to the insurgent generals. It was only the popular rising (on traditional

anarchist lines) and the seizure by workers and peasants, not just of arms and military installations, but of land, factories and railways, that ensured that there was any resistance at all to the generals. These are ordinary facts, totally contrary to what Orwell used to call the *News Chronicle* / *New Statesman* version of what happened in Spain. The Spanish revolution of 1936 was forced upon the working class by the election of the Popular Front and its capitulation to the insurgent generals. It was subsequently eliminated in the name of national unity in combating the right, which by then had won international backing. Having participated in the elections the next step was participation in government by the CNT/FAI leadership. This led to the permanent destruction of their own movement and the suppression of the popular revolution, and was followed by 40 years of fascist dictatorship.

And all this because of the decision to abandon the tradition of non-voting. If history has any lessons for the conscientious abstentionists it is that every time they get lured out of their self-imposed political isolation into participation in the electoral lottery, they make fools of themselves.

We might object that there is no parallel between Spain in 1936 and Britain in 1987. But isn't it interesting that the same politics-fixated people who peddle horror tales about the power over government of various non-elected bodies, whether it is the secret services, the military chiefs of staff or the Association of Chief Police Officers, urge us to

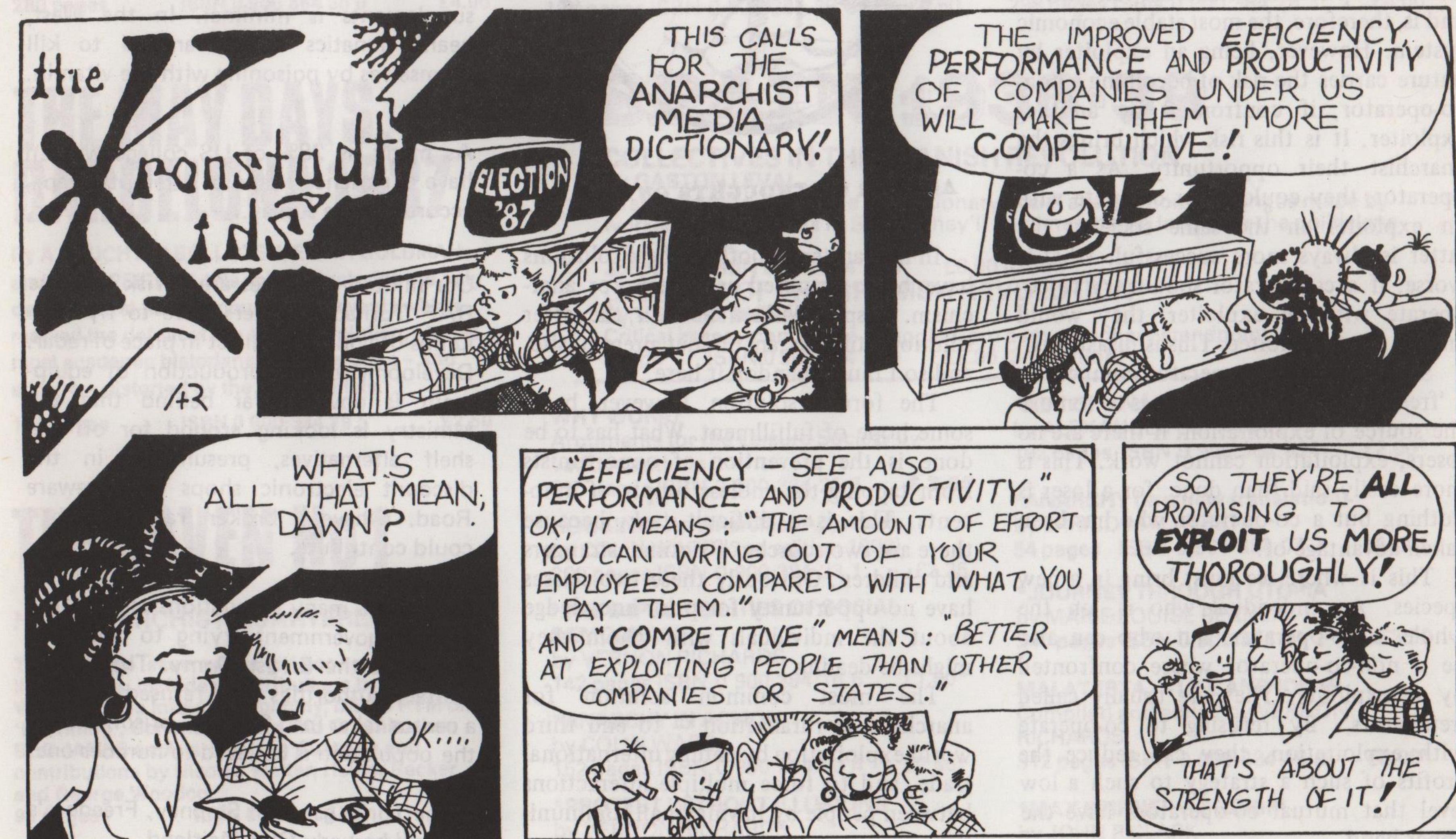
abandon any notion of principles or policies, and vote strategically?

Form an effective Popular Front, they imply, and cast a tactical vote for whoever the market researchers tell us is likeliest to unseat the Conservative candidate. At the same time they revel in the allegations that recent governments have been under suspicion from the State's own secret services because Harold Wilson was thought to be a Moscow agent, and that the service chiefs were planning a takeover of power should anyone to the left of Wilson take office.

Seasoned non-voters take a different and longer-term view of history. They know that the similarities between the present government and both its predecessors and successors far outweigh the differences. They realise the truth of Kropotkin's observation, 75 years ago, that 'The state organisation, having been the force to which the minorities resorted for establishing and organising their power over the masses, cannot be the force which will serve to destroy these privileges.' In urging the need for more popular, more decentralised, forms of social administration, he stressed that we will be compelled to find new forms of self-organisation for the social functions that the state fulfills through the bureaucracy, and that 'as long as this is not done, nothing will be done.'

The non-voters will watch cynically as the politicians' lies and promises mount and the government good-news machine rolls into action, quietly repeating the anarchist slogan: 'If voting changed anything they'd make it illegal.'

Colin Ward





# Economic Retaliators

THE basis of an anarchic economic system is mutual co-operation. Alternative systems must employ either exploitative co-operation or non-co-operation.

This is explained as follows: where two or more individuals (or groups) wish to perform some economic task they can either:

1. Work together, to the equal benefit of both; or
2. Work together, to unequal benefit; or
3. Not work together.

A successful economic system is one which, by applying one of these alternatives, produces the greatest benefit for the individual. It cannot be argued that society can benefit from the self-sacrifice of an individual's interests because such a society would be vulnerable to invasion by a non-altruist. (Which is not to imply that an individual strategy cannot include self-sacrifice, so long as the risk of doing is less than the risk inherent in a different strategy.)

So what are the rewards from the three types of interaction? They depend on the specific circumstances, of course, but a useful scale of rewards in ordinary situations is as follows:

<i>individual's role</i>	<i>individual's returns</i>
exploiter	excellent
co-operator	good
non-co-operator	poor
exploitee	minimal

This table shows that to be an exploiter is the best option an individual can take — and is, therefore, the most stable economic system. However, being an exploiter by nature carries the risk of becoming a non-co-operator, if confronted by another exploiter. It is this risk which brings the anarchist their opportunity. As a co-operator, they could never compete with an exploiter in the same society: the latter is always more successful. What is worse, if a co-operator should try to co-operate with an exploiter, they would end up as an exploitee. This is disastrous.

So how can a co-operator compete in a 'free market'? The solution is to remove the source of exploitation: if there are no losers, exploitation cannot work. This is more easily said than done, for a loser is nothing but a co-operator who has been taken advantage of!

This is where we must bring in a new species. An individual who is, on the whole, a co-operator, but who can also be a non-co-operator where confronted by an exploiter. They are usually called 'retaliators'. By refusing to co-operate with exploitation, they can reduce the profits of such a strategy to such a low level that mutual co-operators have the upper hand.

All this is old theory. The catch is, how do you successfully play this schizophrenic game? How can you tell — in advance — who is a co-operator and who is not?

One way is to interact with the same individual repeatedly. Those who co-operate mutually will continue to do so to their own advantage; those who do not will have to settle for the lesser rewards of non-co-operation. No-one will be able to successfully exploit others, unless there is a supply of permanent losers.

The only other way is if everyone is highly intelligent. In theory, if two individuals are equally intelligent, both will choose the same strategy. If they are sufficiently intelligent, then, they will see that their best option is to co-operate with each other, as both cannot be exploiters.



**AUTHOR OF THOUGHTS ON MAN.**

In human terms both of these solutions have been proposed as a basis for anarchism. Despite William Godwin, the latter solution still has an un-met prerequisite, and so I must abandon it here.

The former solution, however, bears some hope of fulfillment. What has to be done is the prevention of opportunists from tapping the endless supply of innocents. This is a difficult task, because there are two sources of victims: strangers and children. Obviously these two classes have no opportunity for prior knowledge about the individuals with whom they might be dealing.

The most common solution for anarchists is ruralisation — to end third world exploitation by ending international trade, and to force multiple interactions between people by having small communities.

This goes some of the way towards a solution, but not all. There is still the problem of the vulnerability of children, and there is still the opportunity to re-establish trade. Such a system is inherently unstable.

A more complete alternative strategy is increased longevity. The longer a person lives, the more likely it is that they will be dealing with another person more than once. In this way they will be building up knowledge of who is, and who is not, trustworthy.

Such people will not be exploited, twice, while they may co-operate many times — to their great advantage. In addition, a long-lived community will have a lower proportion of young people.

It has, therefore, been shown that the longer you live, the more you should co-operate; and as co-operation can only truly be anarchic, an immortal can only be an anarchist. If you were to read in tomorrow's paper that you could now live forever, would you continue to go to work for a boss who would *also* live forever? I hope not.

**A.J. Lockton**

The number of births in Italy fell by an estimated 10% in February, reportedly because of fears about radioactive fallout from Chernobyl.

The number of children going blind due to vitamin A deficiency in Bangladesh is now 30,000 per year. Another 900,000 suffer partial night blindness. The cost of supplements is minimal. In the West, health fanatics have managed to kill themselves by poisoning with the vitamin.

As many as 28% of US college women have experienced rape or attempted rape, according to a survey.

Our military defences are at risk, as some RAF Tornado fighters have to fly with lumps of concrete ballast in place of radar. Development and production of equipment is now so far behind that the Ministry is looking around for off-the-shelf alternatives, presumably in the discount electronic shops in Edgeware Road. I have a broken radio which I could contribute.

Among the many tribulations of the West German government trying to count its citizens is the British Army. The British military authorities have refused to allow a census taker into Spandau prison, where the population is believed to number one.

If the Tories get in in Stepney, Freedom's MP will be Lady Olga Maitland.

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# Spain lets off steam

SPRING in Spain is a season for snails, strikes and religious processions. It seems that everyone and everything want to take advantage of the sunshine after the winter rain and cold. The snails traditionally end in the pan steamed to death in a piquant sauce, the Christians with luck reach heaven, and the workers, this year at least, will soon be sauteed in the frying pan of the municipal elections.

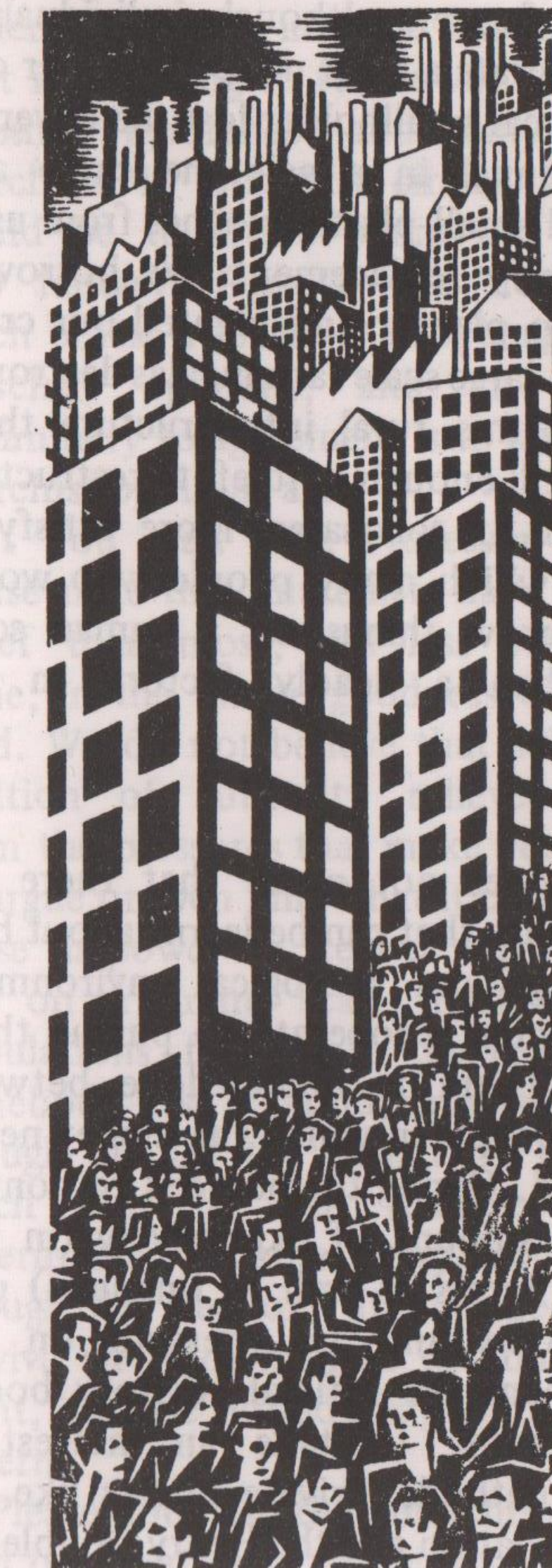
Much has been made of this year's wave of Spanish strikes in the British press, presumably because the Spanish Communist Party and its union, the CCOO, have been calling for a General Strike since January. But owing to the feeble and fragmented nature of trade unionism here, neither they nor any of the other trade union federations (the UGT, the two CNTs, the USO) can mount any decisive action throughout Spain. Consequently there has been nothing remotely resembling a General Strike in Spain this year.

What has occurred is that because of working class discontent at the Government attempt to freeze wage rises at a maximum of 5%, together with the pain many people are experiencing from the Gonzalez Government attempts to re-structure the economy, there has been an outburst of industrial action in many areas, much of it spontaneous and unorganised. Both the Communist CCOO and the Socialist UGT saw this coming, and the UGT broke off its pact and accord with the Government and was even at one stage threatening to withhold its support from the Socialist Party in the June Municipal Elections.

## Disruptive Drama

The Spanish strikes in the first three months of this year cost 70,000 million pesetas (£350 million), and this year more than 40 million working hours have been lost through strikes, almost double last years total for the whole year. Strikes have disrupted the aviation companies Iberia and Avianco, and mining; health; public transport; ports; the motor industry; and the building trade have all been hit. But though the conflict looks impressive there has been a certain theatrical air about it. The demonstrations have been noisy, even violent, but that is always the Spanish way — they even donate blood to a background of flamenco music and every bar down here has music or a television, which no-one watches, blaring away. I think the Spaniards call it *estilo* (style).

Behind much of the clamour lies a modest 2% difference between what the unions are demanding (7% rise in incomes) and the 5% the Government would like.



The Government is already bending, and the railway workers and the workers at Iberia have already settled. Other big employers have negotiated rises of 6.2%.

How much of a problem has this been for the Government of Felipe Gonzalez? It is a nuisance for any Socialist Government to have workers out on the streets of the capital shouting 'Felipe is more fascist than Franco', and flinging house bricks at the Ministry of Economics. Yet although the conflict has been widespread, and even radical in places like Reinosa in Cantabria and Puerto Real in Cadiz, it seems to have lacked stamina and offers no threat to the Spanish State.

Following what one English newspaper described as 'the worst day of industrial action for the Socialist Government', the shares on the Madrid Bolsa (stock market) showed an increase in what *El Pais* called a 'good day', while Wall Street and the London Stock Exchange suffered setbacks.

There has always been something slightly comic about this year's strikes. In April, *El Pais* published a calendar of industrial action for the Easter holidays forecasting the one-day token strikes in advance. It resembled the Saint's Days one sees picked out in red on Spanish calendars. Each day now as the Catholic Church wheels out its lifelike wooden Christ figures and statues of Virgins,

Saints and what have you, so the Communists parade their compliant comrades through the thoroughfares of the major cities. One day the railway workers will stop work for a few hours; or some tourist offices may have to close through industrial action; or perhaps the medical workers or slaughterhouse veterinary workers will down tools and join a demo.

Such token strikes for all their flair and showmanship lack the vital vitamin of spontaneity. They do not present the bosses and the State with an unpredictable confrontation and the outcome is always a foregone conclusion: the workers will return to work having let off steam. For this reason both radical Syndicalists and Anarchists have always criticised the 'token strike', especially when it takes the form of a political rally to project certain party politicians as in Spain. One of the Spaniards whom I represent at work told me the weakness of the Spanish trade unions had been brought about by the political personalities who dominate them.

## General Strike myth

The Spanish Communists, clearly recognising that a General Strike, as we understand it, is unlikely, if not impossible, in present day Spain, have been busily calling for a General Strike. Why? Spanish Communists are not naive politicians and their apparent excursion into radical politics has helped to loosen the links between the Socialist UGT and its collaboration with Government. If the Socialist union federation now withholds its support from Socialist candidates, in some areas like the Asturias, in the coming Municipal Elections it can only work to the advantage of the Communist-backed candidates.

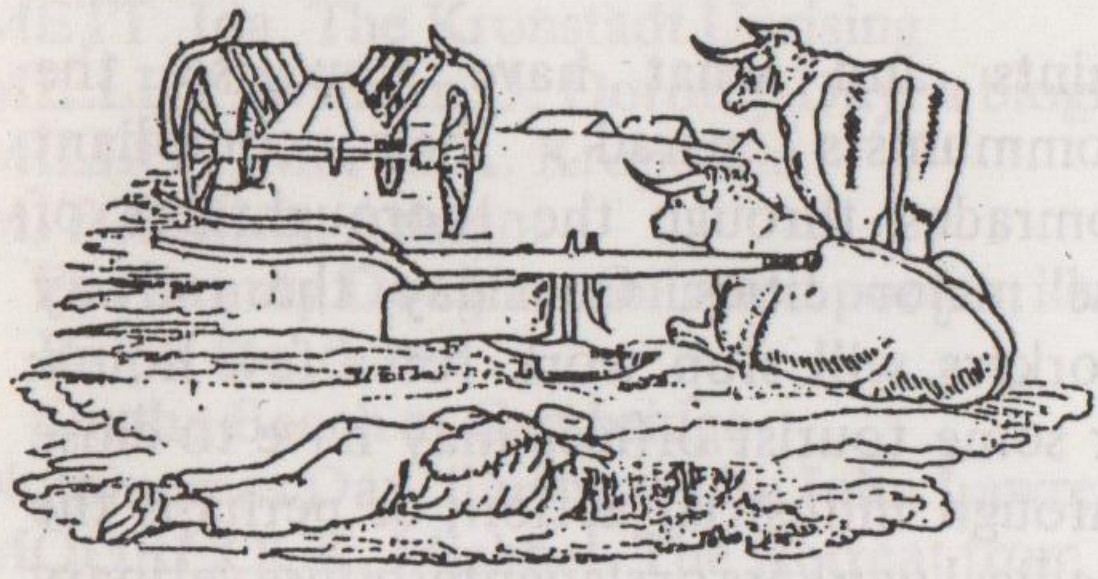
In Latin lands like Spain the meaning of General Strike has been loosened to mean something quite different from its original radical conception. Nowadays the Spanish Communists with their pretentious loose language can call a poorly supported one-day token stoppage in certain limited areas and industries a 'General Strike', which the British TUC would be hard put to describe as a 'Day of Action'.

At the time of writing it seems most of Spain's industrial troubles are about to be resolved well in time for the June Municipal Elections. Two pockets of radical resistance are likely to remain — the conflict at Reinosa and that at Puerto Real, where the CNT is involved. These and some of Spain's underlying problems will require more detailed treatment.

Brian Bamford  
Cadiz



## LAND NOTES



# Monkeying with money

WHEN the rain gives way to the sunshine and crops start to show some response to the care bestowed over the previous months, one wonders why humans cannot take care of the place they were set upon. In this Year of the Environment where agricultural practices are still very much at variance with environmental needs, although there is a slow realisation that change is necessary it by no means keeps pace with the urgency of the situation.

The slogan for Britain is:

Money! Money! Money!

We can't get enuff of it!

It appears that 40% of the voting public are still into voting in the extreme examples of monetarist theories, in spite of clear evidence that monkeying with money achieves widespread pollution, a dangerously armed world, widespread starvation, and malnutrition. In fact atmospheric pollution is rapidly reaching the stages where irreversible changes will take place. The crass blabberings of politicians of all parties, the corruption of some of our legislators, the willingness to allow vast vested interests to continue practises (like lead in petrol) that have known detrimental effects on the living world, indicates how we still have much to do to drive the money lenders from our temple.

There was an interesting item the other day in the radio programme 'Farming Today', by an economics person who was saying how difficult it was to get many farmers interested in what is usually called business. They went on to say that it was necessary to understand a farmers' view of his life and work, which are still subject to the vagaries of weather, added to the political needs of those governing the country and the pressures of advertising and the market economy.

Small farmers although individualists also cooperate a great deal. The other day when a local smallholder lost the covering of his tunnel in a gale, he came and borrowed small plastic cloches from us as a temporary replacement. We borrowed his potato planter and planted our crop. Although large scale farming has destroyed much of this rural infrastructure there may be still enough of it left to restructure our rural life on safer, more satisfying lines, in which many people who would like to grow things on a human scale rather than a deadly factory in the country.

This does not mean that there are many things that can be learnt about how to manage our biological environment and we must cooperate to pursue these studies. There is much done between country people in which the money nexus is ignored. Owing to the need to control the vast amount of expensively (in real resource terms as well as financial) produced food and its pressure on the environment the official advisory bodies are beginning to take an interest in organic methods. Private bodies like the Soil Association and the Henry Doubleday Society have for a long time been doing this very necessary research on very meagre resources.

Congratulations on the production of the new anarchist quarterly *The Raven* and may it quoth evermore. Colin Ward's excellent article on the informal economy is especially to be commended. The peasant community has never been happy with governmental interference. One of the obstacles to the growth of rural independence has been the unrestricted growth of land values so that farming operations often fail to produce an income necessary to produce the rates of interest on excessive land prices demanded by the various moneylenders. The essential tool of the smallholder, the land, is well beyond the reach of those desirous of working the land.

Reading Edward Carpenter's *Life and Dreams* one notes that for some time he ran a smallholding and was very observant of country life and ways. 'Centuries of life under parson and landlord' he observes, 'have smothered initiatives'. He observes how in Sicily children were taught to lie to strangers as they were generally agents of the church, the chief landowner, or the government after more taxes.

Alan Albon

# Liars versus Anarchists



CURRENTLY touring art galleries is an exhibition called 'Looking into Paintings'. One of the exhibits, a painting by John Collier, depicts people round a table in a sleazy room with revolutionary cartoon posters on the walls. One of them is holding a spherical bomb, and all are contemplating it with different expressions. This is how the Exhibition Guide describes it:

The picture shows revolutionaries, anarchists, plotting an attack and reacting in different ways to what they are discussing. Certainly nothing to do with the Gospels. Yet the anarchists were high-minded, dedicated men and women. They believed in the inherent goodness of humankind so deeply that they persuaded themselves that the removal of all authority, of rulers of every sort, would remove also the pressures that made people steal and argue and even kill. They decided they would kill rulers for the sake of peace and love. They too had a faith, and John Collier, no anarchist himself, felt he could best suggest that by building religious picture-types into the painting.

The author of this passage, one Norbert Lynton, is a professor of art history, but can hardly be counted an academic. Any-one with academic pretensions, writing about a subject he does not know, takes

continued on opposite page

the trouble to find out about it. Lynton invents rubbish about anarchists and purveys it as information. Perhaps he fancies himself as one of those Renaissance historians of whom he says — 'unreliably of course — 'They did not have our passion for fact'.

The sad truth is that most visitors to the 'looking into Paintings' exhibition will believe Lynton's nonsense, for lack of better information from elsewhere. These are not apathetic ignoramuses but people who actually visit exhibitions in order to improve their knowledge. Yet very few have any knowledge of anarchism.

Anarchists who speak to adult education courses, debating societies, or other places where people go to seek knowledge, cannot but be aware of the common ignorance. 'In preparation for this meeting', people say, 'I looked up anarchism in the encyclopedia and most of the article was a list of those whom the anarchists have shot. Why didn't you mention that?' The ill-informed piece on anarchism in *Everyman's Encyclopedia* fits this description, and the anonymous author has the cheek to cite Woodcock's *Anarchism*, which s/he clearly has not read, as the only reference.

Some who attend meetings know of anarchism from fictitious sources like Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* where the old fellow with the black sombrero originated, or G.K. Chesterton's *The Man who was Thursday* where the only 'real anarchist' turns out to be Satan, or *The Boys Own Paper*. I even met one bemused

gentleman whose only knowledge of anarchism was from H. G. Wells's *The Anarchist*, a story about someone who swallows what he thinks is a culture of cholera and jumps into the Thames.

It is tempting to turn away from such abysmal ignorance and only discuss anarchism in anarchist circles. But that would be to retreat from the problem into fantasy. Society will not change much unless a lot more people agree with anarchist opinions, and an essential preliminary to agreement is to know what anarchist opinions are.

If you read this, Professor Lynton, please note that anarchists have no more belief than most, and less belief than some, in the innate goodness of humankind. We do not believe that achieving a position of authority relieves anyone from the pressures that make people steal or argue or even kill. What it does is allow those in power to steal or argue or even kill on a grand scale, robbing entire populations, fighting to the last drop of somebody else's blood, amassing bombs enough to kill the planet. It is not so much that we *can* manage without government, because everybody is good enough for freedom. If our species is to survive we *must* manage without government, because nobody is good enough to govern.

Please note also that anarchism has not died out, that most assassins and bombers are not of the anarchist persuasion, that most anarchists have opposed bombs and assassinations, and that the minority of anarchists who engaged in such activities

did so for propaganda purposes, not in the hope of killing off the ruling class.

There are many disagreements within the anarchist movement — class struggles versus personal autonomy, pacifism versus belting somebody, sloganising versus philosophising. But the important disagreement is between the tiny minority of anarchists and the vast majority who are stuck with the idea of government.

I do not advocate suppressing the internal disagreements. The first anarchist speaker I heard described himself as a Christian anarchist, and the very fact that he used the term told me there were non-Christian anarchists with whom I might feel happier. If each anarchist tendency speaks in its own fashion to its chosen audience, that is good for the progress of anarchism as a whole.

What is not good, is for anarchists to lose sight of the wider issue and waste energy on factional bickering. There were 'propaganda of the deed' anarchists who neglected the tyrants to assassinate anarchists who objected to 'propaganda of the deed'. More recently there have been supposedly anarchist pamphlets, produced at some trouble and expense, whose only purpose has been to slag off other anarchists with personal abuse and false accusations.

No anarchist would so damage the movement, unless they had retreated so far into the closed movement they had forgotten the world outside. Anarchists have a bad enough reputation as it is, thanks to the ill-informed utterances of 'experts' like Norbert Lynton.

DR





# Nuclear danger is Jargon

IT IS commonly assumed that a public ignorant of an issue is also one likely to ignore it. The nuclear industry has too often dismissed anti-nuclear protest as 'misinformed' and 'emotional' by abrogating the monopoly of scientific rationality to themselves. Understandably, anti-nuclear protesters are inclined to attempt to breach this monopoly, factually informing the public as widely as possible as to the technical and scientific points of their argument.

Whilst highly technical argument might raise anxieties of the odd scientist and politician and sway them away from their vested interests in the nuclear industry, I will argue below that it does not address the anxieties of the public in general and may actually serve to alleviate them.

Chairman of the UKAEA Arthur Marshall has repeatedly insisted that it is public ignorance of the facts of nuclear power rather than an awareness of them that motivates their hostility. It is worthwhile considering that organised opposition to nuclear power presaged the rise of opposition to nuclear weapons over the last decade, despite the fact that ignorance was then all the greater and ex-nuclear power workers and their political cronies had not yet 'leaked' with respect to the (dubious) integrity of the nuclear lobby and the facilities under their control. At Elstow, the campaign against low-level nuclear waste dumps focusing on a handful of experts gathering a highly technical case for presentation at a public inquiry that never happened was almost moribund by the start of 1985: only when a mass movement of the public equipped with only very basic and somewhat 'emotive' arguments prepared to take more direct action was formed in that year did central government consider backing down.

The obvious corollary of all this is that a better informed debate about the viability of nuclear power is actually counter-productive — it serves to allay public fears and damp down deeply-felt anxieties under a tide of cold technicalities. The root of these anxieties is perhaps revealed by the nuclear power lobby's insistence that their forte is 'atomic energy' rather than 'nuclear power'. The significance of this is three-fold:

- it demonstrates that they are packaging their case to avoid associations with the now well-established *nuclear power/weapons dyad* that raises the spectre of personal and global extinction to the public;
- it demonstrates that they are attempting to focus attention away from the nuclear/political *power dyad* that suggests a small, influential and

largely unaccountable cabal are exposing the public to danger in their interest but not that of the public;

- finally, pitching the debate in terms of 'atomic energy' suggests that the terms of the debate should be scientific and statistical considerations of future energy resources for all, an angle which both excludes members of the public that are not scientists and statisticians from the decision-making process whilst disguising what this means in terms of the two points above.

It is from the second point, the issue of power and accountability, that I see as both the root of public concern and also as the point where a specifically anarchist critique of nuclear power (as opposed to simply an anti-nuclear one cosmetically adapted to appeal to the anarchist movement) can be evolved.

Public ignorance is founded in a fear that the nuclear power lobby may be exposing them to a danger over which they have no control and too little understanding to check abuses of superior technical knowledge in the form of secrecy and cover-ups either through the deployment of appropriately rarified jargon or by inconspicuous silence.

Whilst the survivors of Hiroshima and the British and French nuclear tests in Australia and the Pacific demonstrate this may indeed be so, it is very important to note that this situation is not confined to the nuclear industry alone. Nuclear power is a useful symbol on which to hang wider anxieties about the powerlessness and ignorance of the individual in an increasingly centralised and technocratic society. As society becomes more complex, so the direct and interpersonal communication of earlier eras prior to the advent of mass communication systems breaks down and the use of secrecy and exclusive knowledge of technical information on which the society runs becomes the key in elite decision-making and the status that accompanies it. Thus, the position of the individual in contemporary society is akin to the man surrounded by, but ignorant of, fraternities of Freemasons who decide his fate. Our society, controlled by the 'freemasonry' of technocracy is 'a society with secrets' where we are excluded from decision-making and the intellectual and technical resources to enter such an 'exalted' sphere, and these decisions may profoundly affect our lives despite the fact we may not know they have been made and have no control over them.

Naturally the public are offered the illusion of participation: I assume that K McFaul's article *Nuclear Danger buried*

*under Jargon*, which started *Freedom's* nuclear power debate, was written in response to the rather predictable conclusion to the Sizewell B Inquiry — perhaps a case-study of the failure of a reliance on the power of facts alone to halt or reverse the development of nuclear power. As SCRAM's *Poison In Our Hills* (p69) notes, public inquiries no more affect decision-making over nuclear power than putting a tick in a box once every four years does to influence the running of the country, and serves the same function in diverting the public into an impotent waste of breath and energy:

What is objectionable is the use that is increasingly being made of public inquiries on major and controversial planning issues to fool the public into thinking that they have a real opportunity to influence the decision. By pretending that the purpose of public inquiries is to let the public participate in making policy, government ministers are trying to defuse politics by concealing where the real decisions are being made. The government has the best of both worlds: a public inquiry system that does not bind it, and a public that still believes that the inquiry system protects its interests.

That Sir Frank Leyfield should pronounce the PWR system safe short months after Chernobyl can undoubtedly be seen as an expose of this system at work by the anti-nuclear lobby — but surely a rather trite one, and bought at crippling expense, if that lesson is not addressed to the root causes of public anxiety mentioned above.

The lesson I regard as more important from the Sizewell B Inquiry in terms of directly addressing public anxieties and articulating them coherently was the probable murder of Hilda Murrell by the Special Branch as it illustrates not only the State's commitment to nuclear power but also establishes a graphic link with political power totally beyond public (or even Parliamentary) accountability also. Murrell's death was, in the words of George Bernard Shaw, 'the ultimate form of censorship' and penetrated the shadow-boxing around the possible construction of a mass of concrete and uranium to the real drama of State power underlying it. In General Elections, too, the intelligence community, civil service and the industrial, military and political lobby groups and think tanks that dictate policy remain largely unchanged whichever parties come and go in Parliament as a result of voting...

Not that spectacles such as public inquiries and elections should be wholly

# Violence but not against people

THERE are anarchists who prefer to believe that Anarcadia will emerge from the triumph of reason over the present social order; manipulated, as it is, by leaders supported by laws and peoples reluctant acceptance of constraining competitive systems.

dismissed: they provide (an admittedly misplaced) focus of dissent and provide arguments which, in basic form, can redirect public pressure into more effective grassroots action that dictates terms to the ruling elites rather than simply receiving them and playing within the rules of the power-game now existing. The SCRAM pamphlet (p69) notes:

With major planning decisions due to be taken soon on issues involving such extremes of government commitment and public feeling as nuclear power, public inquiries have a vital role to play in determining the health of political processes. But as long as the public inquiry system remains an instrument of government ministers' public relations, prospects for open government are bleak.

Once we go beyond the options offered us by the dominant bureaucracies and into the realm of choosing against them, it is also necessary to get beyond the politics of mere fear and ignorance as the motive force for such opposition. Calls for direct confrontation with the State are all very well but remain unattractive and utopian 'leaps of faith' for the majority of the public unless something more positive than 'whistling in the dark' about what happens next is clearly advocated.

I think useful short-term aims in this context would include the institution of a Freedom of Information Act and legislation to render all public officials associated with the decision-making processes more accountable to the public (undermining the secrecy and mystification that maintains their status) and consequently a greater stress on grassroots action and using this to target the (now-vulnerable) centres of decision-making before the facade of a public inquiry. This would certainly be a step in the right direction in making the State represent our interests rather than jealously guarding its own.

P N Rogers

Sources: Dan Plesche's *Preparing for the First Use of Nuclear Weapons in Europe: Creating a more useable nuclear force*; personal communication with Dr Paul Rogers and the UK Deputy Ambassador to Belgium, April 1987.

The inherent contradiction is in the need for mass support for anarchy from a population which is not able to appreciate the rationale of anarchism. Their 'reluctant acceptance of competitive systems' stemming from a lack of familiarity with true co-operative processes.

It is competition which requires laws. Co-operation is much more flexible and accepts that the inevitable conflicts that arise from equality must be confronted openly by all concerned and resolved, to a degree, by co-operative means. However the 'to a degree' is much more difficult to grasp than the win or lose philosophy of competition.

The apparent dichotomy between competition and co-operation is itself paradoxical because it is not really a dichotomy at all. Whereas the ever-optimistic anarchists will argue, correctly, that everybody has a latent potential, even desire, to co-operate; none of us can escape the competitive instincts which come with our inherited physical being. The co-operative model must embrace such instincts as well as our socially learned values. It must enable competitive processes to operate.

The principle of enabling, rather than reductionist head-to-head means of domination, identifies an essential understanding of how revolution will come about. Or that revolution cannot occur whilst a government can balance the fears of the population against their aspirations, first a repressive policy then a liberal policy. By carefully ensuring that people do not become familiar with co-operation the government can continue with its manipulations unchallenged by revolutionaries. If anarchists base their action on rational argument than they give the statutory powers the advantage because the incumbent power manipulates the only common rational argument — 'They are bigger than me'. Only the fanatic will take on an adversary in open battle in the knowledge that s/he cannot win.

The alternative to revolution by reason is for the anarchist to manipulate the situ-

ation in which the people erupt into unreasoning violence.

Such revolution is justified by its creators by the belief that the society emerging from the revolutionary fury will embody the spirit of the revolution. That co-operative rather than dominating processes will prevail, accountable administration rather than elitist bureaucracies. History shows that neither the French nor the Russian revolutions were able to establish open education or administration systems to replace those of the previous regimes.

The advanced political thought of Mao Tse Tung has been derided by the media and political leaders, even in China. He espoused the political philosophy of Conflict-Unity-Conflict (too much of either requiring a reaction). Similarly the socio-political philosophy of Machiavelli and the sociologist Gurvitch, stated that a static view of society was misleading, society is ever-changing. This contrasts with the religious and utopian teachings that all is known and it is merely necessary to pursue the right path, with faith. This recipe for non-revolution is helpful to government as it can be used to support their own plans for control rather than change.

Violent revolution is inevitable in the long term but can be prevented for some time by brutal and/or subtle control techniques. The promotion of competition alongside covert censorship is the most sophisticated practice, perfected by the English. But does violent revolution mean the inflicting of physical damage on people? Certainly such a nicety does not feature in the States reaction to any kind of opposition. A protest which deliberately organises to respect the person but not the property fares no better in front of the police or judiciary. In fact some kinds of offence against property is penalised more than offences against the person. Similarly when the police damage people there is as much penalty as when the prisoner or psychiatric patient is abused. Virtually none.

Anarchists must favour violent action as without it the State will hold most of the cards. But it can be argued that violence against people, any people, is fundamentally opposed to the paramount anarchist principle — respect for the person — and is thus an inadmissible strategy. Such a position is compatible with the inescapable requirement for mass support.

There must be a fundamental shift in the ability for mass participation in the organisation of society, as promoted by anarcho-communists. Avenues for this to be brought about already exist.

Michael Eames





## REVIEWS

### Mutual Aid : a factor of evolution

Peter Kropotkin  
Freedom Press £4.00

HUNDRED-year-old science books are of more use to historians of ideas than to modern scientists. Kropotkin's data on animal behaviour, diligently gathered from obscure scientific sources, may be updated and corrected by anyone who watches natural history programmes on television. Kropotkin's classification of civilisations (savage, barbarian, medieval, and modern), accepted by all the anthropologists of his time, is now universally rejected. Kropotkin's mutual aid thesis, controversial in his time, is now a part of accepted scientific wisdom.

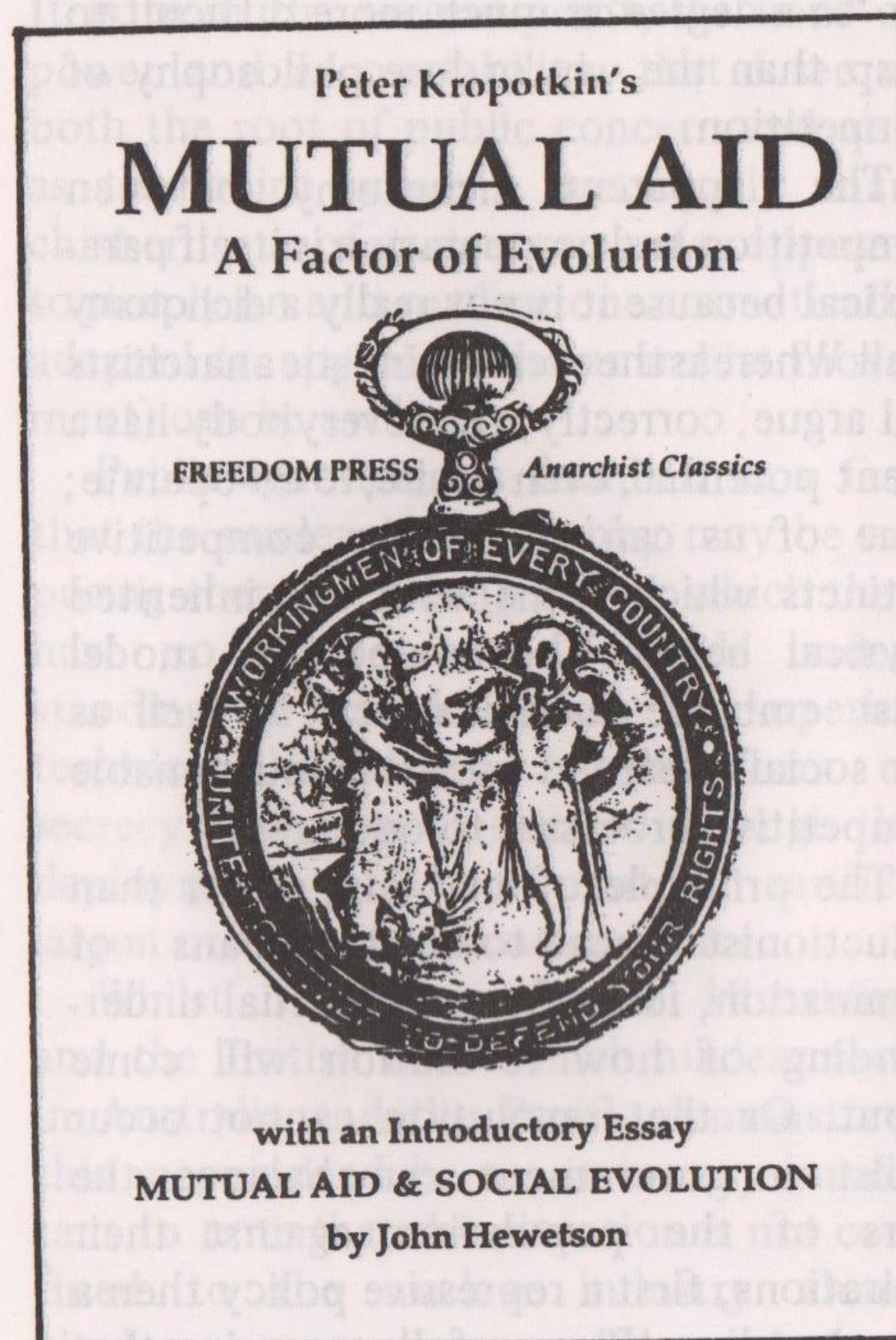
Nevertheless *Mutual Aid* is a useful reference book for today. It discusses the ideas about evolution and society current in its time, and anyone interested in such matters must be interested in the history of such ideas. To give one instance of the book's value for reference, the doctrine that rich, ruthless people are genetically healthier than poor suckers, 'Social Darwinism', is often attributed by Marxists to the philosopher Herbert Spencer, who coined the phrase 'survival of the fittest'. *Mutual Aid* (page 22) shows this attribution to be mistaken; Spencer in fact refuted this doctrine in an essay he published called 'Who are the fittest?' On the other hand, Marxist historians are confirmed in their assertion that Thomas Henry Huxley, chiefly remembered these days for his brilliant defence of evolution against Bishop Wilberforce, was one of those who in Kropotkin's words 'raised the "pitiless" struggle for personal advantages to the height of a biological principle'.

Huxley put his views in a magazine called *The Nineteenth Century*, in an article, 'The struggle for existence in human society'. Kropotkin replied in a whole series of articles for the same magazine, setting out the evidence against Huxley's opinion. That is to say he only puts one side of the debate. As he puts it in the introduction he added to his articles, when they were collected as a book in 1902, 'I should certainly be the last to underrate the part which the self-assertion of the individual has played in the evolution of mankind. However ...'

In the 1950s a publisher bound the Huxley article and the Kropotkin book in one volume. But whereas Huxley pontificates, offering no evidence other than his own prestige as Darwin's foremost advocate, Kropotkin amasses evidence in the style of Darwin himself. The effect of

the juxtaposition is not to balance the argument, but rather to set Huxley up as a straw man to be knocked down.

John Hewetson says in his introductory essay to this new Freedom Press edition, 'He never allowed his anarchism to lead him into making a partial selection from the facts for the sake of making out a "case"'. It would be more accurate to say he never misrepresented the facts he selected. Kropotkin's propaganda method was always to argue a case fairly, never to shout down his opponent. In *Mutual Aid* he argued the case so well that all who troubled to read it were convinced. DR



### ANARCHY A Graphic Guide

Clifford Harper  
Camden Press, 200 pages, £5.95

TEAR up your tired old copies of George Woodcock's *Anarchism* and feed it to your hamster! Then rush out and somehow get hold of this gorgeous book (not an easy task at £5.95).

The production quality of *Anarchy* is superb, doing justice to the brilliant design skills of Cliff Harper. It's an oversized paperback with lovely quality paper, Cliff's sharp woodcut style illustrations breaking the clear, unturgid text on virtually every one of the 200 odd pages. It even smells like a good book, fresh and inky!

The breadth of coverage is massive, from the Free Spirit and the Peasants Revolt in 1381 to the modern day, and this means that the description of events is brief and even the Spanish Civil War zooms by in just 4 pages. A S Neill, who's blatant homophobia went against the grain of his libertarian education stance, gets a whole page, yet Errico Malatesta doesn't get one mention. Otherwise, the book manages to take in every important

event and revolution that could be perceived as anarchist.

My main gripe is that it leaves out important sections of British history, Capt Swing and the Luddites in the 1830's, the Syndicalist Movement 1910-1914, the Angry Brigade of the 1970's. Apart from these, the anarchists in Britain seem to have done nothing much except fundraising and propaganda, draftdodging, backstabbing and bickering, but I would have thought these three groups could have been mentioned.

The much neglected International Situationists are given their due, and even Punk gets a valid mention. Feminism, pacifism and ecology cover the present day, though with no mention of the lack of revolutionary sentiments in these movements.

Overall, a superb, rather romantic overview/introduction to Anarchism in theory and practice. Very much overdue, though like any good thing, it's not quite perfect.

Dave  
Stratford-upon-Avon

### The Faction File

Pete Mastin  
Hooligan Press, £2.00

This is a collection of 34 strip cartoons originally published in *Black Flag* during 1984-5 when the author was a guest of Her Majesty, convicted of throwing a Mars Bar at a demonstration for the striking miners. The word FACTION which heads each page has the A in a circle, but the message of these robust, lively strips is something different from simple anarchism.

I describe one story to show the general tendency. Headed 'Book Burning', it involves the names of Paul Raymond, publisher of porno magazine *Men Only*, Kronstadt Comics, publishers and importers of comic books, and Gay's the Word, a bookshop dealing in homosexual pornography. As students of censorship will know, all three of these enterprises have in recent years been charged with obscenity or indecency, all have been acquitted, and all have suffered financially by the retention and confiscation of their stock.

In Mastin's strip, Knockabout and Gay's the Word have their stacks confiscated, and accidentally transposed with some girlie magazines acquired for police entertainment. Paul Raymond is tried, found guilty and hung (caption: 'The pig Raymond gets what's good for him'), while the police chief finds his men engaged in sodomy and one of them explains 'It's these books you sent us chief!! They started us thinking!'

Buy this book if that's the kind of thing that appeals to you. DR

The Raven  
Freedom Press, £2.50

CONGRATULATIONS. The bird has flown; let's hope it will quoth for evermore. This was a good first issue containing articles very appropriate for the modern world. I am glad the magazine, according to the editorial, does not intend to centre on history because what humanity intends to do now and in the very near future will have to be different to its historic past, and may affect the length of time this planet will remain habitable for us and our fellow inhabitants.

Colin Ward's article on Anarchism and the informal economy points out people feel inadequate to remove the various threats that hang over us and so get on with the business of surviving. The only way to banish the spectre of unemployment is to break free from the idea of employment. It might be said that the idea of so-called economic growth and the market economy is an anachronism circumscribed by the finite nature of the earth's environmental and physical resources. Ward observes William Morris contrasted 100 years ago the difference between useful work and useless toil. Today most people are engaged in useless toil, generally moving pieces of paper from the in tray to the out tray. To do this they travel in a vehicle so grossly overpowered that it goes from one kerbside to another fouling the air with various obnoxious gases. The Black Economy is a consequence of fiscal policy and I would say with Colin Ward that as the governments of the world spend most of it on their armed forces we have a moral duty to pay as little as possible. There is much good stuff in this article.

Another good article is Denis Pym's 'Informing, Communicating and Organisation'. In a world in which nearly every home has a television set and various video systems are widespread Denis analyses the nature of this burgeoning industry. He points out how our perception has been reduced to just two senses, sight and sound. Pym has observed that current information technology is a misnomer for devices which 'outform' and confirm rather than inform and surprise. It points out in the article that electronics are used to sustain the institutions of industrial society and to a lesser extent employment itself.

'Industrial man judges his food by sight; otherwise how do we explain our consumption of vast quantities of homogenous uniform and well packed junk foods: tasteless stuff devoid of many essential elements and vitamins locked out by nitrates that "nurtured" them and washed by numerous "protective" chemicals, every one discovered by the best chemists The Company could employ?'

His thesis is that the gains of the information society have been few and in effect sustain a society that gives people little opportunity to explore our non visual senses.

Vernon Richards writes on Bakunin and Malatesta, and Bob James on the Australian anarchist movement of the century 1886-1986.

Nicolas Walter gives a history of that eccentric figure Guy Aldred. My father used to take his paper *The Word* which was partly financed by the Marquis of Tavistock who became the Duke of Bedford. My father met Aldred during the First World War at Dyce Camp where that other eccentric character Bonar Thompson was also incarcerated with their fellow war resisters.

Unfortunately the first flight of *The Raven* is undated, for some reason.

Alan Albon

Note by sub-editor of *The Raven*: - The date was left out of the first issue of *The Raven* by mistake; it was published in May 1987.

### Without a Trace: a forensic manual for you and me

Moriarty  
Publishers given as 'HMSO', £2.00.

LAST time I was prosecuted, the police made a mistake in planting the evidence. I saw how I could be acquitted if I called a reputable forensic scientist for the defence. The problem was to find one. The Police Laboratories like to boast their independence and impartiality, but they only take cases from the police. When my solicitor inquired for access, he was told defence requests could only go through the prosecuting police officer!

There are non-police forensic scientists who work on claims for damages, breach of patent, and such. They will take criminal work if called upon, and may be paid out of legal aid. But there is no published list, and the only lawyers who know them offhand are specialists in commercial litigation. How much easier my defence would have been, if there were a well-researched little book telling defendants how to find a forensic scientist when they need one. But there was no such book then, and there is not one now.

*Without a Trace* assumes, like most police, that 'forensic' is only useful to the prosecution. It says nothing whatever to counter the right-wing superstition that all accused persons are guilty, but some get away with their crimes for lack of evidence. The police are treated as the enemy, but no explanation is given why they should be, and the implication is that 'people like us' are just villains. An illustration on the title page, of the strip cartoon character Anarchik displaying the A on his belly, identifies this as an 'an-

chist' work. What a gift to those who seek to misrepresent anarchism as mere delinquency.

A paranoid reviewer might suspect this work of being anti-anarchist propaganda, like the poison put out in the 1960s by 'Group 77' (a fascist front masquerading as libertarian). However, it is not unpleasant enough for that. I suspect it is the work of humorous comrades who think it will never be read outside the anarchist sub-culture. I hope they are right.

A survey of forensic science, perhaps gathered from one or more popular works like Cuthbert's *Science and the Detection of Crime*, is presented as a manual on how to commit crimes and avoid detection. Do not leave fingerprints; wear a tight hat so you cannot be traced by shed hair; dismantle any firearm, clean the parts thoroughly and discard in a deep lake; and so on.

The sound advice on how to behave when arrested or raided conforms broadly to the manuals put out by the National Council for Civil Liberties, except that here the arrested person is assumed to be always guilty. Some of the outrageous twaddle that gets on police computers is quoted, if I remember rightly, from Members of Parliament who were arguing that the Freedom of Information Act should be extended to include police records. There is an 'Interview with an ALF activist' which consists of a single question, 'How do you go about carrying out actions?' and a 4,500-word answer about finding soft targets and other techniques; possibly a remnant of a longer interview which also included some reason why the ALF carries out actions. There is some interesting information about police organisation and radio call signs, much of which may have come from police publicity material, some of which the police would presumably prefer not to be published, though I doubt if it is actually illegal to publish it.

The forensic science section on how the source of printed matter is detected, presented like all else from the point of view of an offender avoiding detection, ends with the statement:

To avoid the labour of these above precautions, we typeset, laid out and printed the book abroad, and it was distributed over one long weekend.

So if the police want to know the identity of the publisher and do not already know it, they will have to watch the shops where the book is openly for sale and follow whoever comes to collect the money, less retailer's discount. If they go to such trouble, however, it will be out of spite. The only law this book seems to break is a seventeenth-century statute requiring the printer's name and address to be given.

Plod