



THE CUNNINGHAM AMENDMENT

JOURNAL OF THE EAST PENNINE ANARCHISPS.

DEDICATED TO REVOLUTIONARY ACTS OF JOY AND
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DOWN BY STERILE BUREAUCRACIES

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ANARCHIST VOICES MAGAZINE

The opinions expressed in articles featured in Anarchist Voices magazine are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of the editor. The editor welcomes the submission of articles for publication in Anarchist Voices but cannot guarantee that they will be published. Articles can be submitted typed on paper, on disc, or via email to lloegrambyth@tiscali.co.uk.

EDITORIAL

As I sit down to gather the articles and images together for this edition of Anarchist Voices I am thankful that the latest avalanche of state propaganda is drawing to a close. Images of Royal Weddings and Olympics have drowned out other concerns and voices from public awareness for too long. Not that the mass media ever follows any agenda other than that of the interests of power and wealth; the interests of governments and corporate capitalists of this world.

It is mainly through the internet and through the pages of small, alternative publications such as Peace News, The Land, Positive News and other similar 'samizdat' publications that one detects any news of Anarchist, Green, and other local projects which enhance and celebrate life rather than encourage over consumption and the worship of celebrity and power.

Here in Derbyshire the website of the movement 'Radical Routes' recently announced the start of a new housing co-op. How many other such initiatives are going on in communities across the British Isles, Europe and the world? There must be thousands of such positive initiatives but they are invisible to the majority of people.

There is a well known quote, that the 'revolution won't be on the television' and it is likely to be true, but at least in the developed world it is possible to use modern communications technology to create your own TV Channel. Groups such as Undercurrents TV have done just that. Recently in Wales *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* started their own weekly 2 hour TV broadcast with *Sianel62*. This is more a TV station for a movement and community than an attempt to imitate mass media, and one to be applauded and perhaps copied by Anarchists.

There is still intense debate on how Anarchists should move forward. It is true that many have been sidetracked (as argued by Chris Draper in his excellent article in this edition 'Don't Vote for Christmas') into automatically supporting the protests against Conservative/ LibDem government cuts to welfare state services.

One response when faced with cuts is to step up and create an alternative, to form a group, raise funds and create a service, and the voluntary / third sector has been doing this for over a hundred and fifty years, but these are not organisations run on co-operative or anarchist principles. Anarchists themselves need to be proactive in starting alternative projects to the services provided by state and capitalism, and not just reacting to cuts in the current provision. Groups such as *Radical Routes* offer a very much needed example and are creating the nucleus of housing and worker co-ops that can be pointed to as an alternative. But such examples are a tiny minority within society and the example needs to be spread beyond the narrow confines of anarchists and sympathisers to the wider public and to develop a momentum whereby all services and organisation of all areas of productive activity can be assumed by local community and co-operative groups.

There was an example of one more positive response to cuts in Derby in 2010. BBC Radio Derby decided to cut the weekly folk music programme 'Folk Waves'. After the inevitable and unsuccessful campaign to stop the BBC cutting the programme, a number of individuals and the former presenters got together and are now producing a regular online version of the programme. Of course such groups are not a complete answer to cuts in services. There are indeed examples of housing co-ops, and worker co-ops providing valuable services and of self employed people pursuing positive projects. But how many co-ops are there working in areas where the work is more difficult and less attractive? For example are there any co-ops providing personal care to people with difficult to meet needs, including challenging behaviour and

incontinence? Many of the organisations currently doing such work have some 'religious' motivation behind them. Anarchist alternatives need to be able to meet all social needs in society if we are to be taken seriously.

Jonathan Simcock



Don't Vote for Christmas!

Question: How many anarchists does it take to change a light bulb?

Answer: None, because they claim it's the State's responsibility until after the revolution!

An absurd joke perhaps but it's a bizarre reality when all across England anarchists are taking to the streets to oppose government cutbacks!

Anarchism is defined by a core belief that government in any form is the enemy of the people, a veiled conspiracy of powerful interests operating to exploit and control. In response to Jefferson's observation that "the best government is that which governs least" Thoreau joyfully asserted, "That government is best which governs not at all!"

Sexism, racism, capitalism, communism and a hundred and one other forms of authoritarian control are also to be avoided but in modern times the most pervasive, powerful form of authority is undoubtedly government embodied by the State. The modern State claims an absolute monopoly on the right to imprison its own citizens and unleash violence and terror against anyone outside its borders it deems a threat. As Herbert Spencer noted, "Government is begotten of aggression, by aggression".

Not Waving but Drowning

From the killing of innocent bystander Ian Tomlinson to the mass slaughter of civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan and the water-boarding of Muslims around the world, we are all complicit. It

is all done in our name whether we like it or not. Socialists recognise the State's similarity to Frankenstein's monster but think they can replace Doctor F. and retrain his monster to be kind and caring. Anarchists know the State can never be reformed, at best it promotes passivity, engendering in its citizens unending demands for "something to be done". In responding the State reaches ever wider and deeper into the lives and consciousness of its citizens.

Oscar Wilde realised that all forms of authority are degrading, "It degrades those who exercise it and degrades those over whom it is exercised." Unlike socialist contemporaries, such as Shaw and the Fabians, he opposed all forms of government, claiming, "there is no necessity to separate the monarch from the mob; all authority is equally bad". Democracy is no more than "the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people". In bribing people to conform, authority ultimately produces "a very gross kind of overfed barbarism".

The Road to Zimbabwe

There's a scene in *Monty Python's* film "The Holy Grail" when, as the royal entourage are passing through a primitive village in some distant part of the realm, a peasant points out the king to his friend. "How do you know he's the king?" asks his mate, "Cos he's the only one who hasn't got shit all over him" was the reasoned response. Whilst medieval peasants had slight acquaintance with the centralised State nowadays we can't avoid it.

In the Victorian era, as Oscar Wilde became increasingly aware of the pervasive and pernicious influence of the State (that was to ultimately destroy him) it then consumed just 7% of Britain's annual income (GDP). When, less than a century later, the Sex Pistols prescribed Anarchy for the UK, the State was gorging itself on 52% of Britain's GDP.

Government currently spends around 47% of GDP and even if Cameron's "vicious" programme of cuts continues until 2017 UK State spending will then dip just below 40% of GDP (it was 38.1% in 1964-5). That still seems a hugely inflated State spend to me. What figure would satisfy those ardent defenders of State spending, perhaps Cuba's 78.1%, or maybe Zimbabwe's 97.8%?

Everyone a Poison Drinker

Part of Wilde's revolt against the Fabians was provoked by their soulless devotion to dry statistics so I'll chuck in a more everyday illustration of the problem.

A few years ago an acquaintance was

complaining at length about the then ruling Labour government. When I suggested she at least had the consolation that she hadn't voted for them (knowing she was a dyed-in-the-wool Tory from a long-standing Tory family) I was stunned to learn that she had in fact voted Labour at the previous election. Her justification was that her job was one of those imaginatively titled non-jobs in local government created by Tony Blair's administration so she felt she owed him a favour!

With government disbursing half society's income the State's power of patronage is immense. Besides those directly dependant on the State for an income or dole there are millions more reliant on contractual relationships with the State for the provision of goods and services. "I call it the State where everyone, good or bad, is a poison-drinker" said Nietzsche, "the State where universal slow suicide is called - life".

Wilde About Cuts

For twenty two years I taught little children in Britain's schools. With an income financed by the State I was predictably accused by fellow anarchists of being a soft cop for the system but I felt confident I was helping kids create their own personalities unconstrained by a National Curriculum or Ofsted thought-police. When the State imposed those innovations I sought pastures new despite suffering an enormous loss in income. I don't accuse everyone who takes State money of being a stooge for the system but it's difficult not to be corrupted; that's surely what makes *The Guardian* such a smug, unreadable rag incapable of questioning an over-weening State.

At least my Tory friend admitted she had been captivated by state sponsorship; most socialists and shamefully even anarchists in England have now lived so long in the chicken coup they no longer realise they might still be able to fly if they just flapped their wings a bit. Their sole response to government cuts is opposition. As E H Carr observed, "It is significant that nationalisation of thought has proceeded everywhere *pari passu* with the nationalisation of industry".

As an anarchist I want to see the State shrink away to nothing and voluntary associations expand. Logically this can only be achieved by cutting away State functions so why on earth are anarchists competing with socialists to more energetically oppose cuts. I say keep on cutting back government until there's none left. Yet other anarchists prefer to ignore or abuse me for speaking out. As Oscar Wilde might have observed, "calling for cuts is the anarchism that dare not speak its name".

"Free Yourself from Mental Slavery"

Paraphrasing Marcus Garvey, Bob Marley famously urged us to free ourselves from mental slavery. It's time anarchists got to grips with government cuts and stopped jumping on socialist bandwagons (after all the British working class jumped off long ago). If the State stops funding a particular service, capitalism is not the only alternative. Anarchists should regard State cuts as an opportunity and respond creatively with ideas for voluntary, collective solutions; not mindlessly parrot socialist anti-cuts slogans.

First consider what existed before the State took over. From the pioneering decentralised "Peckham Health Scheme" (rejected by a post-war Labour government who preferred the top-down National Illness model) to the once ubiquitous local play groups (destroyed by the bureaucratic interventions of successive governments who regulated them out of existence). Syndicalist alternatives were similarly proposed and rejected before several industries were nationalised into ossified inefficiency. At every level there are always other ways of doing things but State intervention inevitably imposes conformity and destroys initiative and imagination.

I applaud David Cameron when he identifies *society* as distinct from the *state* and he's also on the right lines when he observes that our overgrown state crowds out community initiatives and should be drastically cut back. Of course his socialist critics are also correct in claiming Cameron wants to open up new profit-making areas to capitalism, but the latter point does not negate the former.

Anarchist Disciples of St Augustine

Determined to end up alongside the angels Saint Augustine prayed for God's assistance, but as he was also a bit of a hedonist he was reluctant to deprive himself of worldly pleasures, so famously asked God to "make me holy but not just yet". It's an approach adopted by anarchists who demand the abolition of the State but oppose cuts.

It's utterly ridiculous and outrageously inconsistent for anarchists to campaign to maintain the myriad tentacles of our overgrown and invasive State. Even turkeys at least have the good sense not to vote for Christmas.

Chris Draper



Strange Days

Almost every page within any book on political history - and most books on history are usually such - illustrates rampant immoral State activity usually associated with exploiting and killing people. Throughout such books politics is shown time and time again to be a perverse activity gearing people to gratuitously oppose, violently if necessary, other people. Contrary to Thomas Hobbes who thought that the State could be socially useful in deterring criminal violence, history shows that it is the State above all else that fosters disharmony, ill feeling, hatred and resentment which culminates, ultimately but inevitably, in a war of all against all.

Current events lend further support for this view. The economic crisis of the past five or six years has offered State subjects worldwide an opportunity to witness at first-hand the abject failure of their own invasive institutions to, firstly, see the economic tsunami coming, and secondly, once the problem was apparent, to act successfully to rectify the problem. And in witnessing our 'representatives' rushing in undignified fashion from one meeting to the next - blaming all but themselves for the current malaise and attempting to justify the laying of their hands on ever more of their citizens' present and future property in order to pay for their outrageous profligacy - an opportunity appeared to be presenting itself. In full view, for vast swathes of numerous disparate populations to observe, was the obvious inadequacy of our pre-eminent, supposedly social, institution, the State. The inequity, the corruption, the double dealing, the inefficiency, the dishonesty, the duplicity, the truly colossal waste - all have been displayed 'in spades' for all to see. Just how many I wondered, might have looked, pondered, and considered that the time for alternative thinking

had finally arrived?

Yet, despite the economic carnage, and despite our living in an era in which the State has forcibly entered itself into nearly every aspect of our daily lives, to be opposed to party political democracy and more, to advocate the complete removal of the State from civil society, is to walk a still sparsely populated path. At the height of the widespread 'Occupy' protests surrounding the on-going financial crisis, it was depressing to note that the overwhelming bulk of those who participated in the protests were in fact present to demand still more State interference within their particular society, and not less. Here in the UK, the tawdry revelations of the parliamentary expenses scandal were quickly forgotten as 'Occupy' protesters demanded increased regulation to control those financiers perceived to be responsible for the crisis, more 'law' to penalise those deemed guilty of excess, and of course, more money - and lots of it, to support and increase the myriad State 'welfare' programmes dear to hearts of most (apparently) of the protestors. To my mind at least the underlying message of 'Occupy' was loud and clear. "More State, more State, more State".

Similarly in respect of my own 'hobby horse' - monetary reform - the vast bulk of the (worldwide) campaign groups established to promote the desperately needed change to utterly corrupt political money systems, operate on the basis of wanting the introduction of what is known as "sovereign money". That is, they seek the establishment of new national monetary monopolies, but this time controlled directly by politicians and bureaucrats rather than by the bankers. Such proposals surely fly in the face of all reason. Have they not understood that the State is in place to rule and not serve? That it is a vested interest masquerading as moral principle? That the history of nations is but the history of the struggle of politicians, their sponsors and other assorted minorities for the maintenance and extension of 'benefits' obtained from the vast majority by the organised exploitation of all the aspects of exchange? To this menace, these groups would happily hand full and complete management of the most powerful of all the weapons of societal control. Seemingly, the idea just cannot register for this majority of apparently well-intentioned campaigners that the only way to get away from a bad monetary system is to actually abandon it entirely rather than just change the management of an existing (and likewise State created) monopoly.

The painful reality is that the ruling elites have nothing whatever to fear from the present

economic crisis. However apparently perverse, the vast majority of people today may complain and protest a good deal, but most still hold to the idea that the State must in some way be fundamentally good. Politics, it seems, is akin to an opiate, and once hooked it's the devil's own job to wean the user off the drug. Indeed, with most protestors actually out to strengthen the grip of the State over civil society, the elites will likely emerge from the current travails better placed than ever before. Accordingly, rather than the turmoil offering hope as imaged above, there actually appears to be little for the supporters of a society based on voluntary co-operation to look forward to in the near term.

What it will take to burst the bubble of widespread deference to State authority I do not know. One thing appears sure however; with "tradition" evidently a very powerful factor in influencing our outlook, the continuing inevitability of State failure appears unlikely to do the trick.

Peter Wraith



The End of 'Normality'

We live in a time when normality has been cancelled. What we grew up with we treated as normality. Most assume that it will last all of their lives. Those who have studied history know that things in human life do change. On reflection they also realise that when things do change it can happen relatively quickly, but never before have so many things changed at the same time.

Today one sign of rapid change is the number of minority journals, including possibly the over a century old Anarchist stalwart *Freedom*, which have dumped print and gone electronic. Apart from this trend, Anarchists must realise that the whole political, social and economic stage on which they play their parts has changed. In effect most of our normality has changed.

We are now offered a global stage, where transnational ubiquitous unavoidable elements

affect us all. At the same time on a local level, we find British Conservatives taking the first steps towards some of our traditional convictions. I do not intend to detail the former, I shall just mention them, to show where I am coming from – and possibly encourage others along the antithesis of their paths. The new backdrop to the stage for all life is concern for the environment. We excavate the planet, we cause the extinction of one hundred and fifty-plus species a day, we centrally heat the globe, we fire up its tectonic plates. How long before the Earth twins up with Mars?

Conservatives typically operate by extending our beliefs. Destructive States are fulfilling their role by destroying the lives of countless individuals as we would anticipate. The core of our economic apple is proving itself to be rotten, as we have long known. Printing money is like trying to stick paper plasters over self-inflicted, but not yet fatal, wounds. British coalition government, drawn from white wealth and privileged special education, has *de facto* handed over power to a civil service dictatorship. Government has also demonstrated its institutional kinship by shovelling tons of the people's money into the banks in acts of high intensity life saving. (That must make our coal miners feel sick). As we are the fourth largest arms manufacturer in the world today, I suppose it makes sense that the government continually tests and demonstrates their products around the world. This may be a practical analysis, but I believe the reasoning goes a lot deeper. We are excessively armed and aggressive because a corner of our leaders' minds still nurtures the concepts of "Great" and "Empire". Another mental corner may carry an insurance policy. They believe, if it comes to it, that weapons in the hands of our worshipped armed forces will protect 'them' against 'us'. Oh dear. Are nuclear submarines any use against terrorists or us?

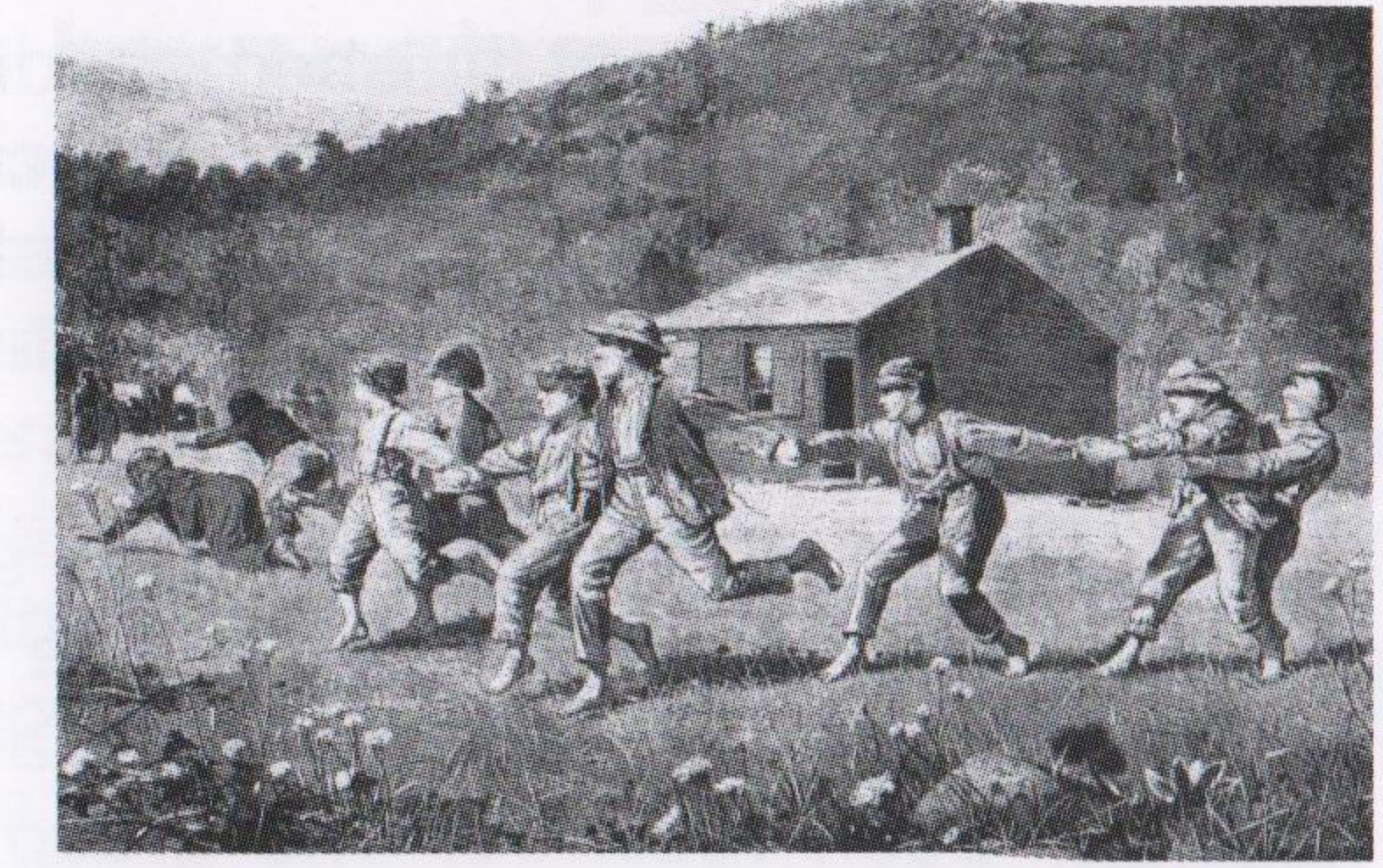
A major lack of 'normality' is in employment of the young. In many industrialised countries the youth unemployment is over or heading for 25+%. Here we hit a big paradox. In a world running on traded shareholder capitalism, co-operatives are being proposed! On page 3 of the *Financial Times* from 23 August, farmers and producer groups are recommended this option. True, the third article on the page, concerning hospital funding, did not go this far. However, co-operative advantages were expounded at least five times in paragraph-long detail. It is probably too little and far too late. And of course if you believe leopards can't change their spots, they could be setting up co-operatives, not to solve problems, but as fall guys

for their failures. I suspect we should watch what happens in Spain, despite their example of the Mondragon complex. I fear the youth unemployment situation is more likely to be solved by the abnormal rattle of (British made?) machine guns. If Syria can do it, why not others?

Whatever Anarchists think about the rapidly shifting world situation, there is one factor which is constant. While we have always opposed the imposed authority of the state, as the state gets more entangled with other mutually supportive institutions, we have to go deeper. Imposed authority of all forms is based on power. Although all seasoned Anarchists know what Lord Acton's famous axiom said about power, few know what power itself is. Dictionaries define at length what various sorts can be used for, how it may be stored, et cetera et cetera. The sort of personal power with which we are familiar is only described in a secondary way. Most strange. In this sense power is the self produced, most addictive, drug acting on the human mind. True, not a lot of people know that, but it is the gold centre of the target on which all Anarchists should focus – no matter how the world changes.

Traditionally, when ending an article like this, one tries to get back to roughly where one started. One change I hope we will not confront is this journal going electronic. Paper is available in many more places, and it is easier to leave laying about for others to find, and there are many who love to feel, smell, and see the art of its layout. For me this paper product is part of the long slow burning fuse of Anarchy which should not be put out.

Colin Johnson



Anarchy at the End of the Lane

Anarchist Voices has long sung the praises of practical projects, especially those where people put anarchist principles into practise in their everyday lives. In April 2012 a group of people moved into a small property in the Derwent Valley just beyond the outskirts of Belper. The project, which goes under the name of *Wild Peak* is a housing co-op and also a member co-op of *Radical Routes*. At present Wild Peak is home to 8 adults and two children. Two of the adult members, Nick and Kate, welcomed me to their home and over a cup of coffee we discussed the current progress of the co-op. Wild Peak as a name was adopted initially when the group had been hoping to establish their co-op further north in the Peak District proper, but practical considerations such as access to transport and to larger population centres such as Derby and Nottingham led the group to Lawn Cottage near Belper. A convenient bicycle ride from Belper, the railway station and bus routes on the A6 it fitted their needs, especially as many of the members share an eco and green orientated version of anarchism and now have access to a rural located housing co-op with 69 acres of land to develop their projects.

The co-op is approached down a long rural lane which changes to a rough farm track after half a mile of its 1 mile length. The valley floor at this point is quite flat, hosts a conservation area and bird reserve and being next to the river Derwent is prone to occasional flooding.

Sitting in the longue area of the property Nick described the work which the group had completed since April. The property already shows the extent of their labours with freshly plastered and painted walls, and a number of ponds and pieces of 'landscaping' outside. Within there is a new electric wiring arrangement with wiring, plugs and sockets set high in the walls to avoid any future problems with flooding.



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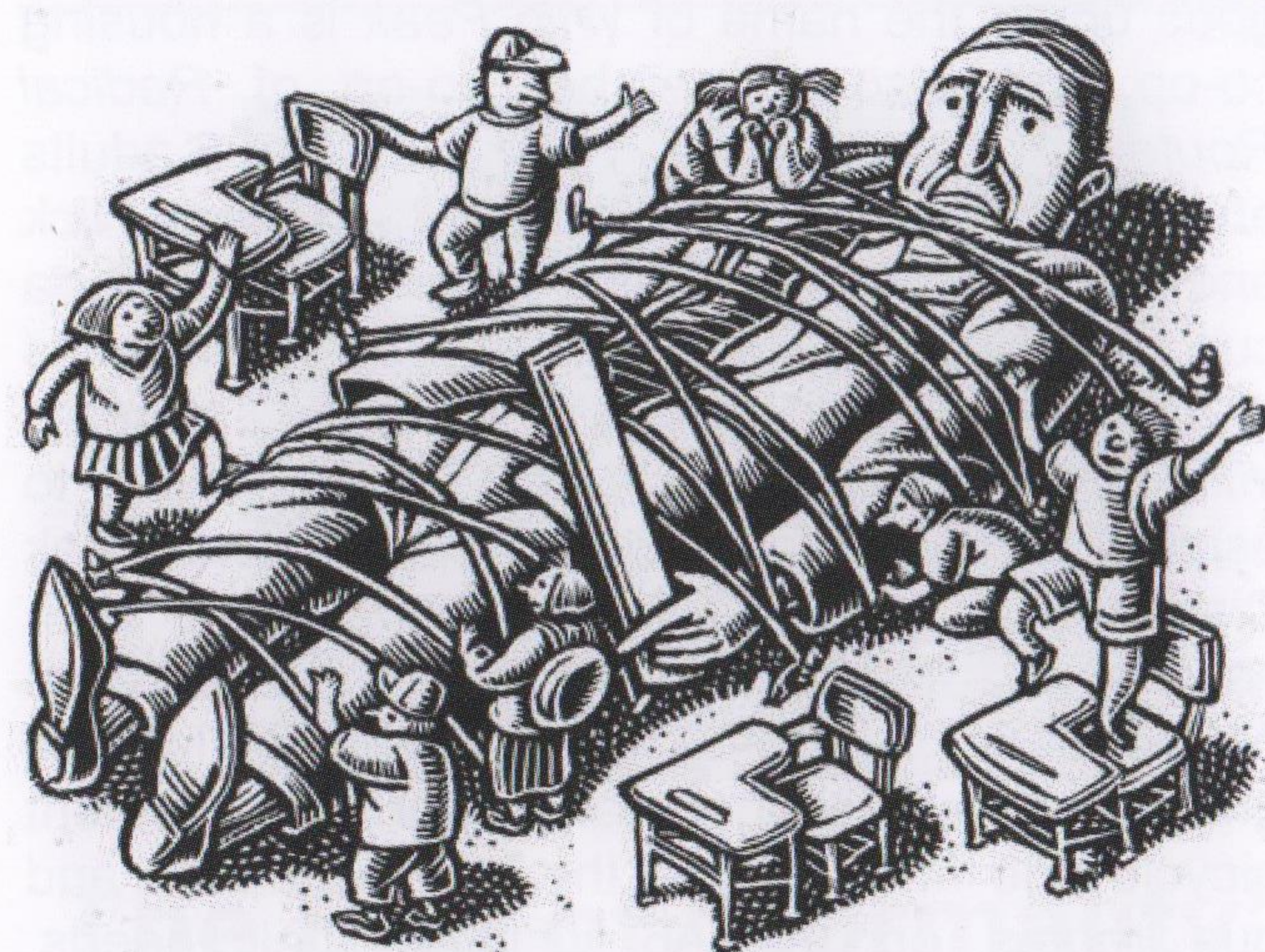
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The building itself is not yet finished and there are a good number of accommodation facilities outside including campervans, a yurt and cabins to provide sleeping and living space while the work progresses.

Nick explained that while there had been some initial disagreements with the local wildlife trust who are tenants of 39 of the farms' 69 acres, these had now been resolved. The group has given the trust an extended lease of 60 years on the land comprising the conservation area. The group have good links with a number of housing and worker co-ops including *Radical Routes* and have received practical help from members of other co-ops. Wild Peak's constitution includes a commitment to the principles of mutual aid, voluntary co-operation and non-hierarchy; Wild Peak members also put an emphasis on love, life and happiness. The co-op is envisaged as a home to people working on environment sector projects but also has a commitment to involvement in the wider community.



Wild Peak's current plans for the use of 30 of their site's 69 acres includes grazing for rescued horses and ponies, some vegetable production for their own needs and also some areas of coppice. Their future plans also include hosting vegan fund raising dinners, walks and a tree planting project. The co-op welcomes visiting helpers, and has bunk house accommodation for these. Such visits can be set up via the contact details for Wild Peak which can be accessed on the *Radical Routes* webpage. Like other *Radical Routes* members they are committed to working towards social change and justice. Their aim is 'jobs without bosses and homes without landlords'. Wild Peak is registered as an Industrial and Provident Society.

Jonathan Simcock

Just Eighteen Months to Change the World

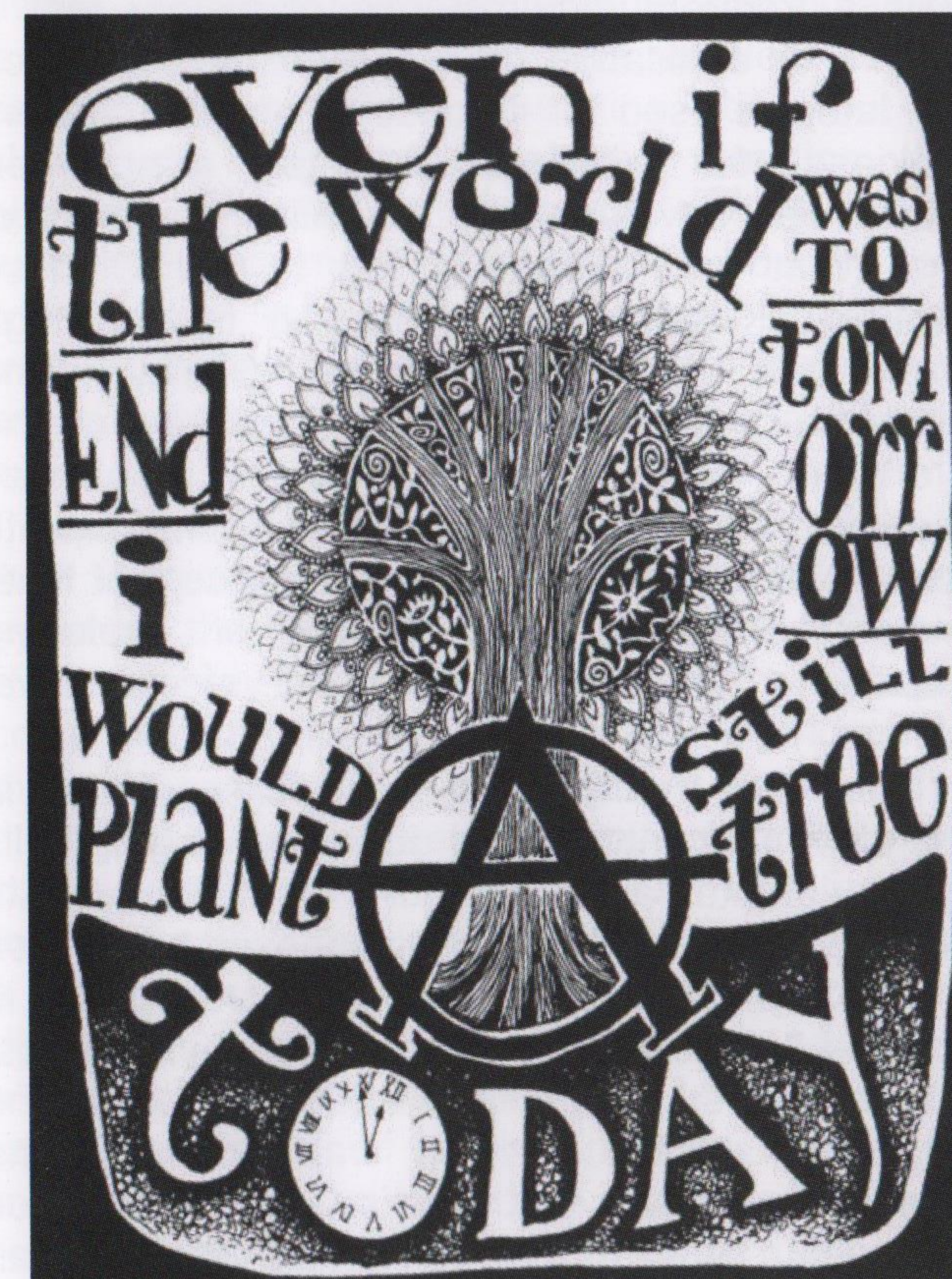
Many of our worst nightmares from the 1980s have now been realised. What we did not foresee, in all its awfulness, is the radical way that people don't matter. People didn't matter back then, of course, in the way that public opinion was ignored by politicians. Today they matter even less, in that 'communities' are even weaker, more local, limited, fragmented and atomised, yet the political system itself is even more rigid and global. The media is even more venial and lying.

In the various stupidities – the stupidity of consumerism, the stupidity of the credit boom, the stupidity of ever-rising house prices and the inevitable bust; among all of these and many more, society shows no capacity to learn. It is said that the public memory only goes back eighteen months, and this is believable. As I write this the BBC laments the twentieth anniversary of 'Black Wednesday', the day Britain was kicked out of the European 'Exchange Rate Mechanism' – fore-runner to the Euro. About eighteen minutes before this, despite the evident ruination of economies through membership of the Euro, that same BBC was giving positive publicity to Jose Manuel Barosso's demands for greater European Federalism.

One of the greatest of stupidities is globalisation. The rot has got so far that we import concrete blocks from China, while we close factories which could make those things here. And then we wonder why so many people are unemployed, and politicians wish to cut back benefits to the people thrown on the scrap-heap by their policies. It's cheaper to employ people in the Far East and Asia, and these do not have employment rights or tiresome health and safety regulations to diminish the profits. The human cost of globalisation was demonstrated this week when a sweatshop garment factory burned down in Karachi, and over 290 people were killed. It seems doubtful indeed that the various high street stores buying garments from this company will be named.

This week, we have seen much anguish because papers relating to the Hillsborough football disaster were released. Prepare to be shocked: the police falsified evidence. People asked how could this happen? Several government whitewash exercises were held over the years, and now prosecutions are called for.

Will these go the same way as the prosecution of the policeman for the killing of the G-20 newspaper vendor? Back in 1999, a lawyer submitted a detailed line by line analysis of the evidence given about Hillsborough, and how it had been tampered with. The DPP ignored this. Situation normal, then, as now.



In places like Russia and the third world, corrupt and repressive regimes seem even more ingrained. The liberal media hailed the so-called 'Arab Spring' as the rise of a new democracy across North Africa, but it just seems to have led to more of the same only worse. An armed mob in Benghazi killed the American ambassador because of a film criticising Mohammed. British and German embassies were attacked in the Sudan, and protests spread over many countries. It looks like a replay of the Danish Mohammed cartoons. Even in the so-called 'liberal' west, an honest discussion of Islam cannot take place.

Perhaps some of the worst manifestations of mass-manipulation are the use of 'Big Data' - Wikipedia and Facebook. 'Big Data' is the Orwellian collection of information about consumer habits, credit ratings and such. It is used to target advertising. Facebook is a similar trend; it seems that so much of many peoples' lives is taken up with and defined by this. Perhaps it is a kind of 'Mass Observation' for the Twenty First Century, but it is also trivial and superficial in the sense that perhaps only a handful of people might see your comments and news, and each item is quickly pushed down to

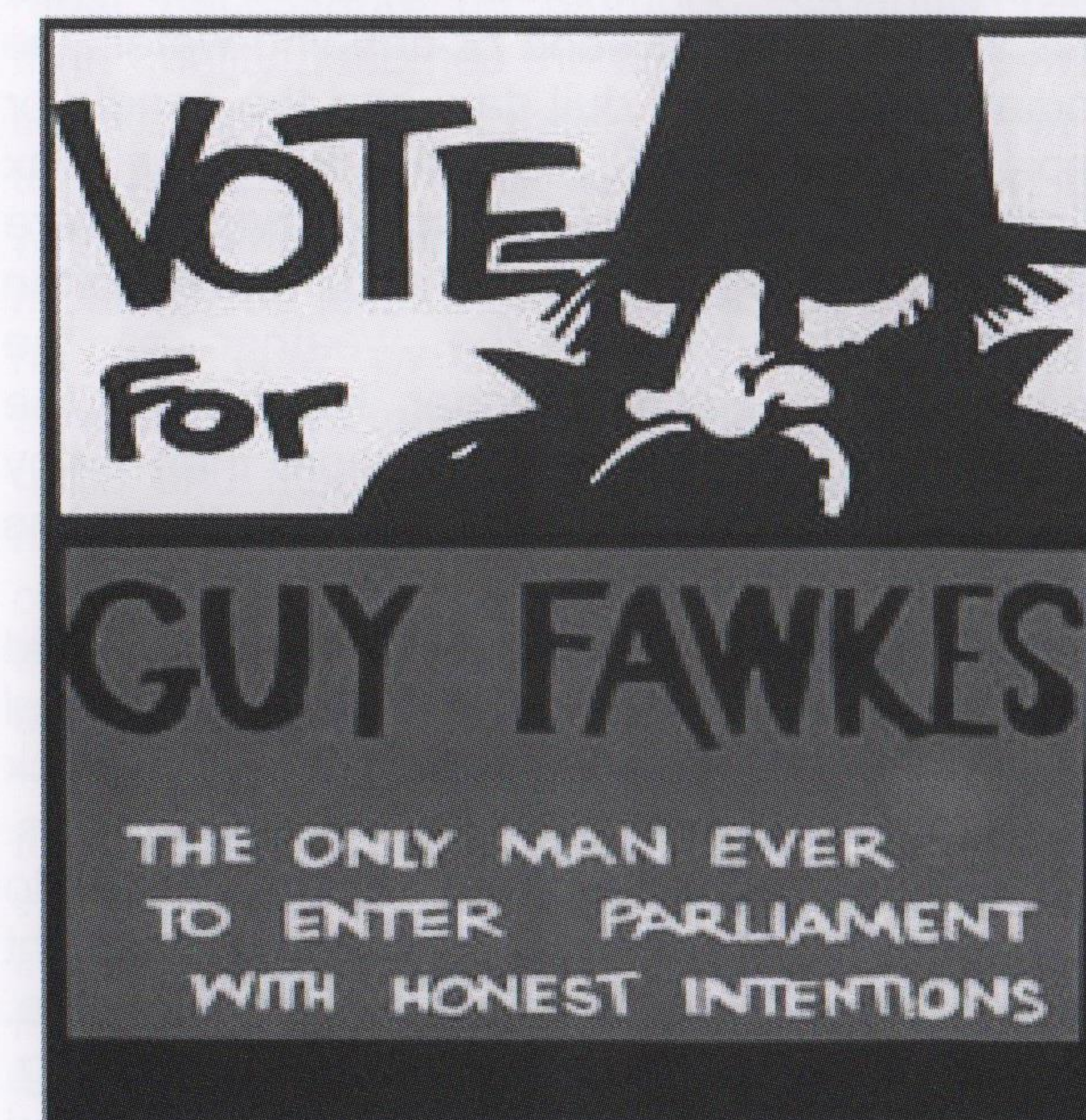
the oblivion beyond the bottom of the screen. The illusion of participation is there, but not the reality. Similarly with Wikipedia, we find the danger of pseudo-knowledge – distortion, half truths and generalisations, become established as fact. Perhaps if the information is more than eighteen months old, it doesn't matter anyway.

Hope is sometimes fixed on transient schemes – the high speed railway link between London and Birmingham, or the Olympics. Peak Oil chokes off economic recovery. Periodic denials of *peak oil* or of global warming increasingly ring hollow and generally precede the next economic downturn figures or bout of extreme weather. It's all advertising really.

We might say that the answer to all this lies in 'people power' or a deepening of democracy through such things as devolution. So far as I can see, there isn't any coherent plan to deliver this, and it could be said that where devolution takes place the regional parliaments and other institutions simply mirror the wider governments, with all their faults. How is globalisation to be addressed? All those complicated proportional representation systems which were discussed back in the 1980s really only deliver further alienation and social paralysis.

One of the buzz words is 'sustainability'. Globalisation and rendering superficial of the public sphere is unsustainable, but it is difficult to see how it will either collapse or be transformed into something better, more fit to meet peoples' needs. Most of the channels and processes which might be used to improve matters are drawn into it and implicated. Is truth possible?

Stephen Booth
15th September 2012





THE TYRANNY OF THE CLOCK

In no characteristic is existing society in the West so sharply distinguished from the earlier societies, whether of Europe or the East, than in its conception of time. To the ancient Chinese or Greek, to the Arab herdsman or Mexican peon of today, time is represented in the cyclic processes of nature, the alternation of day and night, the passage from season to season. The nomads and farmers measured and still measure their day from sunrise to sunset, and their year in terms of the seedtime and harvest, of the falling leaf and the ice thawing on the lakes and rivers. The farmer worked according to the elements, the craftsman for so long as he felt it necessary to perfect his product. Time was seen in a process of natural change, and men were not concerned in its exact measurement. For this reason civilisations highly developed in other respects had the most primitive means of measuring time, the hour glass with its trickling sand or dripping water, the sundial, useless on a dull day, and the candle or lamp whose unburnt remnant of oil or wax indicated the hours. All these devices were approximate and inexact, and were often rendered unreliable by the weather or the personal laziness of the tender. Nowhere in the ancient or medieval world were more than a tiny minority of men concerned with time in the terms of mathematical exactitude.

Modern, Western man, however lives in a world which runs according to the mechanical and mathematical symbols of clock time. The clock dictates his movements and inhibits his actions. The clock turns time from a process of nature into a commodity that can be measured and bought and sold like soap or sultanas. And because, without some means of exact time keeping, industrial capitalism could never have developed

and could not continue to exploit the workers, the clock represents an element of mechanical tyranny in the lives of modern men more potent than any individual exploiter or any other machine. It is valuable to trace the historical process by which the clock influenced the social development of modern European civilisation.

It is a frequent circumstance of history that a culture or civilisation develops the device which will later be used for its destruction. The ancient Chinese, for example, invented gunpowder, which was developed by the military experts of the West and eventually led to the Chinese civilisation itself being destroyed by the high explosives of modern warfare. Similarly, the supreme achievement of the ingenuity of the craftsmen in the medieval cities of Europe was the invention of the mechanical clock, which, with its revolutionary alteration of the concept of time, materially assisted the growth of exploiting capitalism and the destruction of medieval culture.

There is a tradition that the clock appeared in the eleventh century, as a device for ringing bells at regular intervals in the monasteries which, with the regimented life they imposed on their inmates, were the closest social approximation in the middle ages to the factory of today. The first authenticated clock, however, appeared in the thirteenth century, and it was not until the fourteenth century that clocks became common ornaments of the public buildings in the German cities.

These early clocks, operated by weights, were not particularly accurate, and it was not until the sixteenth century that any great reliability was obtained. In England, for instance the clock at Hampton Court, made in 1540, is said to have been the first accurate clock in the country. And even the accuracy of the sixteenth century clocks are relative, for they were only equipped with hour hands. The idea of measuring time in minutes and seconds had been thought out by the early mathematicians as far back as the fourteenth century, but it was not until the invention of the pendulum in 1657 that sufficient accuracy was attained to permit the addition of a minute hand, and the second hand did not appear until the eighteenth century. These two centuries, it should be observed, were those in which capitalism grew to such an extent that it was able to take advantage of the industrial revolution in technique in order to establish its domination over society.

The clock, as Lewis Mumford has pointed out, represents the key machine of the machine age, both for its influence on technology and its influence on the habits of men. Technically, the clock was the first really automatic machine that

attained any importance in the life of men. Previous to its invention, the common machines were of such a nature that their operation depended on some external and unreliable force, such as human or animal muscles, water or wind. It is true that the Greeks had invented a number of primitive automatic machines, but these were used, like Hero's steam engine, for obtaining 'supernatural' effects in the temples or for amusing the tyrants of Levantine cities. But the clock was the first automatic machine that attained a public importance and a social function. Clock-making became the industry from which men learnt the elements of machine making and gained the technical skill that was to produce the complicated machinery of the industrial revolution.

Socially the clock had a more radical influence than any other machine, in that it was the means by which the regularisation and regimentation of life necessary for an exploiting system of industry could best be attained. The clock provided the means by which time - a category so elusive that no philosophy has yet determined its nature - could be measured concretely in more tangible forms of space provided by the circumference of a clock dial. Time as duration became disregarded, and men began to talk and think always of 'lengths' of time, just as if they were talking of lengths of calico. And time, being now measurable in mathematical symbols, became regarded as a commodity that could be bought and sold in the same way as any other commodity.

The new capitalists, in particular, became rabidly time-conscious. Time, here symbolising the labour of workers, was regarded by them almost as if it were the chief raw material of industry. 'Time is money' became one of the key slogans of capitalist ideology, and the timekeeper was the most significant of the new types of official introduced by the capitalist dispensation.

In the early factories the employers went so far as to manipulate their clocks or sound their factory whistles at the wrong times in order to defraud their workers a little of this valuable new commodity. Later such practices became less frequent, but the influence of the clock imposed a regularity on the lives of the majority of men which had previously been known only in the monastery. Men actually became like clocks, acting with a repetitive regularity which had no resemblance to the rhythmic life of a natural being. They became, as the Victorian phrase put it, 'as regular as clockwork'. Only in the country districts where the natural lives of animals and plants and the elements still dominated life, did any large proportion of the population fail to succumb to the deadly tick of monotony.

At first this new attitude to time, this new regularity of life, was imposed by the clock-owning masters on the unwilling poor. The factory slave reacted in his spare time by living with a chaotic irregularity which characterised the gin-sodden slums of early nineteenth century industrialism. Men fled to the timeless world of drink or Methodist inspiration. But gradually the idea of regularity spread downwards among the workers. Nineteenth century religion and morality played their part by proclaiming the sin of 'wasting time'. The introduction of mass-produced watches and clocks in the 1850's spread time-consciousness among those who had previously merely reacted to the stimulus of the knocker-up or the factory whistle. In the church and in the school, in the office and the workshop, punctuality was held up as the greatest of the virtues.

Out of this slavish dependence on mechanical time which spread insidiously into every class in the nineteenth century there grew up the demoralising regimentation of life which characterises factory work today. The man who fails to conform faces social disapproval and economic ruin. If he is late at the factory the worker will lose his job or even, at the present day [1944 - while wartime regulations were in force], find himself in prison. Hurried meals, the regular morning and evening scramble for trains or buses, the strain of having to work to time schedules, all contribute to digestive and nervous disorders, to ruin health and shorten life.

Nor does the financial imposition of regularity tend, in the long run, to greater efficiency. Indeed, the quality of the product is usually much poorer, because the employer, regarding time as a commodity which he has to pay for, forces the operative to maintain such a speed that his work must necessarily be skimped. Quantity rather than quality becomes the criterion, the enjoyment is taken out of work itself, and the worker in his turn becomes a 'clock-watcher', concerned only when he will be able to escape to the scanty and monotonous leisure of industrial society, in which he 'kills time' by cramming in as much time-scheduled and mechanised enjoyment of cinema, radio and newspapers as his wage packet and his tiredness allow. Only if he is willing to accept of the hazards of living by his faith or his wits can the man without money avoid living as a slave to the clock.

The problem of the clock is, in general, similar to that of the machine. Mechanical time is valuable as a means of co-ordination of activities in a highly developed society, just as the machine is valuable as a means of reducing unnecessary labour to the minimum. Both are valuable for the contribution they make to the smooth running of

society, and should be used insofar as they assist men to co-operate efficiently and to eliminate monotonous toil and social confusion. But neither should be allowed to dominate men's lives as they do today.

Now the movement of the clock sets the tempo of men's lives - they become the servant of the concept of time which they themselves have made, and are held in fear, like Frankenstein by his own monster. In a sane and free society such an arbitrary domination of man's functions by either clock or machine would obviously be out of the question. The domination of man by the creation of man is even more ridiculous than the domination of man by man. Mechanical time would be relegated to its true function of a means of reference and co-ordination, and men would return again to a balance view of life no longer dominated by the worship of the clock. Complete liberty implies freedom from the tyranny of abstractions as well as from the rule of men.

George Woodcock

First published in *War Commentary - For Anarchism* mid-March 1944.



Jamie Bevan: Prison for the Language

On the 6th of March 2011, Jamie Bevan and another member of Cymdeithas yr Iaith (The Welsh Language Society) broke into MP Jonathan Evans' office in Cardiff and sprayed anti-cuts slogans on the wall as well as causing damage within.

This direct action was in protest against how the Welsh language channel S4C is funded. Historically hundreds of people were fined and imprisoned during the 70's and 80's in the campaign to establish S4C. It was a symbol of the Welsh language having a place in the modern world.

Since its establishment in the 80's the nature of capitalism has meant that the many small production companies that contributed to programs for S4C have gradually disappeared

and now only a few big companies provide programs for S4C. These companies for the most part had become insular in nature. This new class of Welsh speaking middle class were seen to be on the gravy train and profiteering from the Welsh language, for which many people have, and still are, fighting and sacrificing to preserve. This made the campaign to stop the cuts to S4C's funding even more complicated.

Although S4C is not run how we as anarchists see fit, with its hierarchical structure and 'big-business' attitude towards the public service of creating TV programs, it still is the only Welsh language channel in the world, and if the Welsh language is to survive the present system that is killing it, everything should be available to ordinary people through the medium of Welsh.

The coalition government attacked the Welsh language with its austerity measures. The funding for S4C was cut by 40%. It has also lost all editorial independence that it once had to the BBC which now directly funds it from the TV license fee.

Since Jamie's arrest for the direct action, he was initially imprisoned for a week in August 2011. After he was released bailiffs came to his house to try to repossess his belongings since he continued to refuse to pay the court ordered fine in protest. He was then sent to prison again a year later in August 2012 for 35 days. Because Cymdeithas' campaign against the government's plans for S4C had come to an end, the second time Jamie was sent to prison the emphasis of the campaign was on how the judicial system had not provided him with his human and legal right (according to the 1993 language act) to have all documents supplied to him in Welsh.

He was quoted as saying that the prison guards had sworn and threatened him during his time in prison and said that he would 'eat shit' if he did not comply and fill the forms in English.

I think it is essential that we as anarchists support the Welsh language movement in the face of globalization, the result of this capitalist system. Compare the influence the English speaking world has over people's lives compared with their local culture, language and identity, especially in 'stateless nations' like Wales. How can Welsh language media for example compete with Hollywood, Murdoch and Sky? If it is not possible for Welsh speakers to live their day to day lives where Welsh is a 'normal' language; where TV, films, services are available easily and without fuss, then what hope does the language have in the future?

Some of you may ask why should we be concerned for the preservation of small languages like Welsh? Don't language barriers

and national identities divide us when we should be united against the ruling classes? I believe that if we are not concerned with preserving minority languages then we are allowing the ruling classes to turn us all into the same thing. We see this is exactly what they want because it is easier to sell us all their products if we are all the same. Ignoring people's language rights will lead to a world where we all speak the same language, go to the same restaurant (McDonalds!), and everywhere in the world will be an intolerant monoculture. In short it will lead to a sort of mental dictatorship of one culture, one language and one way of seeing the world.

Only 9% of the population of Wales speak Welsh every day although more than double that number of people are able to speak it. It is not enough that children now learn Welsh at school if they live in a world where English is shoved down their throat daily. This is why we need to fight like Jamie and members of Cymdeithas yr Iaith for everything in Welsh, from TV to the right to use your language in prison!

Heledd Melangell

*Biographical note: Heledd Melangell lives in Wales and is an Anarchist and Welsh language activist. She is the author of a lively Welsh language Anarcho-feminist blog called **Cael y system allan o'm system** (trans *Get your system out of my system*). And also edits an Anarcho-feminist fanzine 'Ffwff'.*

A Simple Analysis of Capitalism

(or how the 'run away horse of capitalism' affects the common man).

The eighteenth century saw the start of the industrial Britain with the coking of coal for iron smelting and the mechanisation of spinning and weaving, the processes being chiefly in cotton. The rotary action and accurate boring of metal meant town growth following steam replacing water driven productive plant.

Canalisation helped town growth and the rural population entered factory employment. 'Fair trade' was advanced by Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations which by the 1840s was almost Laissez Faire. Railways arose as the product of industrial advance and town growth followed. Steam driven shipping became ascendant with the invention of the steam turbine. The cost of growth was

excessive working hours and slum conditions. The Factories and Mines Act helped ease conditions for women and children. Urban life expectancy rose from 30 years in early Victorian times to 50 by the close of the nineteenth century.

Agriculture suffered with imports of grain from America in the 1870's and frozen meat in the 1880's. The 'Great Depression' ended the nineteenth century with profits falling due to other European nations' industrial products seeking the same markets. Nonetheless the Imperial markets held up.

A structural depression clearly followed the great war, though the war had masked an earlier appearance. Cotton, coal and iron production was not offset by consumer goods and services in planes, cars and gas / electrical power usage. A national strike showed the despair of the 1920's.

International depression between 1929 and 1935 was due to the USA not following the gold standard rules, further exacerbated by many nations joining the club. Re-armament and the second world war meant employment but ultimately state bankruptcy.

The post war period saw rapid rebuilding and nationalisations though rationing continued. The 40's and 50's period saw the 'cradle to grave' drive, encapsulated by the NHS. Trade imbalances lead to devaluations but J M Keynes theory was applied in part in a state intervention effort to prevent slumps. Recessions still arose with OPEC's Oil Price Hike in 1973 along with the failure of the European rate mechanism in the 1980's. In the 1980's Monetarism replaced Keynes' ideas.

Karl Marx was vindicated: the collapse, world wide, of banking finance and the contraction to reduce indebtedness has produced a backlash against the continuance of monetarism. The cost of this failure of capitalism falls on almost all. The wealthy, however, escape by moving capital and seeking low tax havens, while quantitative easing protects both gilts and share asset prices. The Scots seeking independence or greater financial independence from the UK regional organisation has already been mooted in the Labour Party. I would suggest that our interests would best be served by pressing for full control of local needs by districts, eliminating the county tier. Districts already collect the rates and that very efficiently, so add VAT, National Insurance and PAYE. Allocation to central government could be negotiated from strength. Districts at this time provide all county and police cash needs. At present national cuts hurt locally, grant reductions and saving demands take no account of local need. Areas heavily reliant on state

service delivery suffer.

Should districts be given (or take) these powers they could broker deals on gas and electricity supplies to lower the cost to domestic and industrial users. Local demographic figures would help assessment of provision, while training would be relegated to neighbourhood factory and service providers.

These changes would empower individuals and service delivery would be scrutinised more closely. Furthermore those empowered would live nearby and be approachable.

John R Atherton

Biographical note: John R Atherton is a long standing subscriber to Anarchist Voices from Newport, South Wales.

AN ANARCHIST CREDO

Anarchism is not terrorism or violence and Anarchists do not support, aid or sympathise with terrorists or so-called liberation movements.

Anarchism does not mean irresponsibility, parasitism, criminality, nihilism or immoralism, but entails the highest level of ethics and personal responsibility.

Anarchism does not mean hostility toward organisation. Anarchists only desire that all organisations be voluntary and that a peaceful social order will exist only when this is so.

Anarchists are resolute anti-statists and do not defend either "limited states" or "welfare states".

Anarchists are opposed to all coercion.

Poverty, bigotry, sexism and environmental degradation cannot be successfully overcome through the State. Anarchists are therefore opposed to taxation, censorship, so-called affirmative action and government regulation.

Anarchists do not need scapegoats. Poverty and environmental destruction are not ultimately caused by transnationals, IMF, the USA, the "developed world", imperialism, technology or any other devil figure, but are rooted in the power to coerce. Only the abolition of coercion will overcome these problems.

Anarchism does not posit any particular economic system but only desires that the economy be non-coercive and composed of voluntary organisations.

Anarchists are not utopians or sectarians, but are sympathetic to any effort to decrease statism.

Whiteways Colony

In the summer of 1998 in the small Cotswold settlement of Whiteway a unique centenary was celebrated. As the crowd of intrigued onlookers followed the colony historian on a guided tour of the 40 acre site, behind the veneer of late 20th century life, the ghosts of anarchists past could be sensed hiding in old sheds and quiet corners of this mature anarchist arcadia.

Long gone are the wide open fields of the Dry Ground and the Wet Ground, replaced by a patchwork of gardens and allotments set amongst a canopy of mature trees. Long gone are the heady days of Tolstoyan anarchism when all talk was of building a community free from restraint and injustice where everyone would share work, love and comradeship. Long gone also is the spartan simple life where the *'Most ideally minded they wouldn't use any money, just living from earth product, for instance for want of matches, they had to save time and light getting up therefore very early in the morning when the sun rises, and went to bed at sunset time. Lit the fire primitively helping themselves with two bricks and so we never had bread, and used to eat raw wheat in the hollow of the hand. No salt, no sugar, nothing of this kind...'* Carmen Maurice C1914

In a hundred years the colony has seen its share of comings and goings. Not just people; the early settlers, immigrant anarchists, Spanish refugees & wartime COs, but with each decade the particular ideas and fads of the era; the no money period, vegetarianism, rational dress, naturism, free-love unions. Some of the 'fads' have endured mainly because the outside world has caught up with Whiteway and what once seemed extreme now passes without mention. Many of the early buildings have gone, the huts put up when 'individual living' started; William Sinclair's hand-made brick & thatch hut. Some of the original timber clapboard houses have been extended and converted beyond recognition. Today houses have all the conveniences of modern living; piped water having arrived in 1949 and electricity in time for Christmas 1954. On one level life at Whiteway seems little different today from that of other surrounding villages. But a rich vein of anarchism runs below the surface of modern day life. Present day colonists are aware of the stories and myths of the early days. The symbolic burning of the deeds spiked on the end of a pitchfork, the land tribunal case that upheld the principle of

communal ownership of the land and the endless rumours of the 'nudist colony'. Anarchy is implicit in the jigsaw layout of the plots, the endlessly twisting and winding lanes that make no concession to the age of the car and in the patchwork of house styles; from modern brickbuilt bungalows to others still recognisably early 20th century DIY style. The governance of the community as a whole is still carried out through the general meeting, which oversees the communal facilities; the lanes and paths, the colony hall, the playing fields & swimming pool. And on our centenary-guided tour at least one house was proudly flying a black flag.

Two books have been written chronicling Whiteways history. A Colony in the Cotswolds in the 1930's by Nellie Shaw, one of the original colonists and more recently an account by Joy Thacker a local woman who moved to the colony in the 1960's. In a century of colony life Whitewayans, it would seem, have been through the whole panoply of community activity practised or dreamt of by communards before or since. As well as their smallholding and self-build activities there was: Protheroe's Bakery, the Cotswold Co-operative Handicraft Guild, Whiteway Modern School, the Co-operative Gardening Group, the Whiteway Youth Club and the Whiteway Wanderers football team. On top of that, various individual ventures: Lillian Woolf's wholefood shop, the temporary home for *Freedom Press*, numerous small businesses, craftworkers and artists.

The pattern of social life over its lifetime, from intense communality through to increasing individuality, could lead to the conclusion that Whiteway had failed the aspirations of its original settlers. It would be difficult for a penniless anarchist to find a way to join Whiteway today. But the sheer tenacity of the ideas that have underpinned its entire existence, and have arguably been responsible for its longevity, are an inspiration to all would-be utopians everywhere. Today the Colony Hall has a new roof and coat of paint, 'Protheroe's' bakery has reopened and MI5 have just opened their files on the colony!

Home Office sought to wipe out 'beastly' commune!

Home Office officials tried to shut down a prototype "free love" hippy commune in the 1920s, according to official papers released yesterday. Files from the 1920's released to the Public Record Office showed that officials regarded the Whiteways Colony in Gloucestershire as a security risk. The commune had been created in the Cotswold Hills near Stroud around the turn of the century, attracting

an assortment of socialists, pacifists, "free thinkers and refugees." *"Manners had they none and their customs are beastly,"* wrote an official in 1925. Police paid a husband and wife £400 to infiltrate the commune in the hope of finding evidence of their unspeakable activities. The couple emerged claiming that *"promiscuous fornication"* was indeed a feature of life in the colony, but they were unable to produce proof. The Home Office could not even work up popular agitation against the commune, as local residents viewed members as cranks rather than as objects of fear.

'All this just goes to prove that having once lived here, those who find it suits them are reluctant to live anywhere else, and those who have left feel drawn to return when they can.'

Joy Thacker, colony historian, 1993

Reproduced from website *Utopia Britannica* and first printed in the Morning Star, March 12 1999

The full story of Whiteway is told in: *Whiteway Colony: The Social History of a Tolstoyan Community* by Joy Thacker. Self Published. Whiteway.1993. Available from the Author: Fairhaven, Whiteway, Gloucestershire.

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