

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

Vol. 56 No. 15

5th August 1995

FIFTY PENCE

"Politics is the diversion of trivial men who, when they succeed at it, become important in the eyes of more trivial men."

George Jean Nathan

REFLECTIONS ON A TOPIC OF THE DAY

LOCO-MEN TAKEN FOR A RIDE?

As we write (25th July) the 24-hour strike of loco drivers of the ASLEF union due to take place on 27th July has been called off, in order to allow the union to ballot its members once again to see whether the 'new deal' meets with their approval. We hope the members who take the trouble to express their views will defeat the new proposals with the contempt they deserve.

British Rail top management, as mouthpiece of the government (after all, the new boss appointed just recently to oversee the fragmentation of the rail network and to resist any huge wage demands exceeding the 3% limit imposed on all workers in the public sector) has made it abundantly clear that there can be no discussion about that magic 3%.

There's no doubt about it: the state (that is, *the government*) - which always reminds us that it has no means of its own other than what it collects from us in direct and indirect taxes - in clobbering workers in the public sector wanting more money always appeals to the middle class white-collar salary slaves who are led to believe they are the only section of the community paying taxes and that they are acting in the best interests of the community as a whole. In fact every budget since 1979, when Thatcher launched her programme for a 'property-owning democracy', has *openly benefited the middle class employees and the rich*.

But to return to the loco men's struggle with the British Rail bosses. We should perhaps in the first place mention that for us as anarchists ASLEF is a minority elitist union (at one time the 'F' referred to the firemen on the steam trains, and they have disappeared) which quite rightly realised that it could paralyse the rail network in spite of the fact that the old National Union of Railwaymen (the NUR) was an industrial union seeking to represent *all* who contributed their bit as workers in making the rail system work day in and day out. The present RMT (which now includes the NUR and the marine workers) has loco men among its members and since the other ballot, of RMT members, was against striking all the rail

infrastructure was operating on the ASLEF strike days but only some 800 trains operated out of the normal 16,000 and the taxpayers contributed some £10 million each time to satisfy the government's (and their management lickspittles) dogmatic insistence on the 3% ceiling!

Now, why was 27th July stoppage (and another £10 million for you and me to find!) called off pending a ballot?

The answer is not all that clear. Union bosses and rail bosses are

politicians and naturally both have declared that the new proposal is a victory! The ASLEF boss says that by agreeing not only to the 3% increase but also to reducing the standard working week from 39 to 37 hours without a reduction in the pay-packet, this virtually represents a 5% increase. One important item he conveniently overlooks is that this 'bonanza' will not be implemented this week or the week after *but by May 1997!* And the second item which, thanks to the television news, it was possible for this writer to see and hear

(continued on page 2)

THE POLITICAL PARTY RACKET BLAIR LEAVES NO MISUNDERSTANDINGS

We welcome the fact that Tony Blair has made it abundantly clear that if anybody thought the Labour Party stood for the basic rights of the working man/woman in a capitalist society, or *in extremis* for socialism, their illusions have been shattered with a vengeance both by his acceptance to lecture in Australia at a Murdoch Conference but, in our opinion much more significantly, his 'hard-hitting' speech recently to the annual Conference of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU).

Some background information is relevant. The TGWU is one of the most powerful unions (in numbers and contributions to the Labour Party's coffers). Recently the general secretariat came up for election and Bill Morris was faced by an official who is the husband of Harriet Harman, Tony Blair's Shadow Employment Secretary! Anyway, Morris won.

Tribune, the independent Labour weekly linked long ago to Aneurin Bevan and Michael Foot, is the only so-called Labour journal that we see (we gather that Labour Party members get some sort of a news bulletin). But as far as we can ascertain, there is no other national mouthpiece for the party. Yet the *Tribune* - the last time we saw circulation figures they were a

miserable 7,000 - is more than just critical of the Blair blah. Has this anything to do with the fact that the *Tribune* offices are in the TGWU offices and/or that the TGWU some months ago injected another £20,000 into the *Tribune's* funds? Perish the thought! The fact remains that at the TGWU Congress Blair told them "in the most hard-hitting speech to a union conference since he became Labour leader that it could no longer 'have an arm-lock' on Labour" (*Independent*, 11th July). According to the Labour editor of that daily "Surprisingly" he was "listened to appreciatively by the 700 delegates" and given a "standing ovation for a speech which none of his predecessors would have dared deliver".

This writer witnessed the performance on television news and all that one can say is that it is time that all the genuine socialists who still thought that the Labour Party could be brought round to uncompromising *socialist demands* should forthwith resign and join the anarchists in the wilderness! It's not just the Conservative Party which is breaking up. Obviously *worldwide* governments are corrupt. Why not assume that *power* corrupts everybody - anarchists included, as when they went into the power business in Spain in 1936?

SYMBOLS OF THE CAPITALIST CRISIS MERGERS AND TAKEOVERS

We never hesitate to point out that in the capitalist world takeovers and mergers are a sign of crisis in capitalism. After all, if capitalism is the symbol of the free market and competition, then every time a capitalist giant – like Wellcome recently – is swallowed up by a rival – Glaxo – this is bad news for capitalism (quite apart from the hundreds of thousands of jobs that are dumped on the labour scrap-heap) which nevertheless goes on declaring that capitalist prosperity depends on competition and the free market.

Anarchists, alone, have been pointing out and demonstrating with glaring examples that capitalism is essentially *monopolistic* and in our time with the multinationals and transnationals there is no such thing as the *free market*. And surely we don't have to labour the point. It is even being recognised by the economists who obviously inspire the editorials of the 'serious' press. There was the *Guardian* editorial (25th July) with 'COSTING MERGER MANIA' followed by a subhead: "something for everyone – except the economy". They point out that "nearly all of

the academic evidence suggests that very few mergers do any good for the long-term efficiency of the company – as opposed to the short-term financial benefits of shareholders" and go on getting more surprised that all these rackets (the *Guardian* would not dare to use such a term!) lead nowhere, if one is talking about the real *prosperity* of the community. But mergers and takeovers are not concerned with such 'bolshie' ideas! In the big business world any buyer is welcome if he produces the cash which you as a shareholder thought was worth more than you expected it would fetch. You don't have to forget about the job losses that mergers inevitably create – probably you have never thought about the jobs anyway: only about the dividends!

From the anarchist point of view one capitalist is just as much our enemy as another. However our liberal *confreeres* on the *Guardian* are concerned with the role of international finance showing increased interest in our affairs. We don't know why because capital is now international anyway,

and no government is either able or willing to interfere. If it wanted to it could quite easily. The Russians did it for more than seventy years quite effectively simply by making their currency non-convertible in the world money markets. Thus they were able to control inflation internally and determine the exchange value of the rouble internationally.

These are facts which in stating them we hope no one will accuse us of supporting the Leninist-Stalinist dictatorships of which the

anarchists were among the first victims. But for those of our readers who share the capitalists' assessment of the Soviet system, it would help to admit that their economic system was certainly more *just* than what most Russians are now experiencing under the free market. Of course it was an authoritarian system, but is it so different now? And are more or fewer people living under difficult conditions now than then?

What's your poison?

The reports of two surveys appeared last week. One tackled the link between alcohol use and criminal activity while the other, 'Drug Futures', assessed the percentage of young people in a northern city who had tried illicit drugs of some sort. Because of its illegal connotations, it was the findings of the drug abuse report which hit the headlines, news features and discussion programmes.

The human need to alter states of consciousness has persisted through history and although the choice of drug has varied over the centuries and from culture to culture, no amount of legislation, education or

draconian methods of punishment are likely to eradicate it. Government campaigns warning of the consequences of drug abuse are largely ineffectual precisely because they rarely tell the truth. Many readers will remember the anti-drug posters in the early '80s which showed anaemic, apathetic, emaciated teenagers almost at death's door because of heroin abuse. Young people then and now are much more aware of the realities of everyday drug use. Drugs make you feel good, they needn't lead to 'hard' drug use, they can be used at weekends only and many are cheaper than alcohol in terms of long-lasting effect.

Some people will become dependent on drugs, just as some will become alcoholics or habitual smokers. The report on alcohol and crime underlines the links between alcohol use and violence, stating that in 70% of murders the killer and/or victim had been drinking. A high proportion of reformed drug addicts look to legal and easily available alcohol as a substitute, only to find it more detrimental to health than their chosen drug had been.

Despite the alarming headlines, the drugs most used by young people are cannabis and ecstasy. They take one to 'mellow out' and the other to help them party all night. Neither results in violent behaviour – on the contrary, users say the effects are happiness and love for humanity. Simulated love perhaps, but many say that life should always be like this, with or without drugs.

Drugs, like alcohol, cut across class boundaries – except of course when it comes to treatment time. When brought to law or when in need of rehabilitation, the children of better-off parents will have access to superior help and more leniency in the courts.

A debate on cannabis was triggered last week by Labour MP Paul Flynn who urged the government to allow cannabis to be prescribed therapeutically to ease the effects of chemotherapy and the symptoms of those with AIDS, glaucoma and multiple sclerosis. There is much anecdotal evidence among those with these illnesses that cannabis gives considerable relief. A form of cannabis was prescribed, dissolved in alcohol, as a painkiller as recently as 1971. It was then banned after becoming associated with drug abuse.

If new medical trials were undertaken and proved positive, at least parents may then be assured that there is no sinister danger in store for their pot-smoking children.

LOCO MEN TAKEN FOR A RIDE?

(continued from page 1)
the British Rail spokesman *actually say that 'obviously' the reduction of two hours in the working week for the loco drivers would be compensated by greater 'productivity'*

Yet two seriously (by media standards nowadays) papers have interpreted the hiatus in quite different ways. *The Independent* (25th July) in a short single column sums up the situation *as we think it is:*

"Management has agreed that the working week should be reduced from 39 to 37 hours by May 1997 provided the union can reach agreement with 22 train operating companies, some of which will then be in the private sector. The reduction in working time will be part of productivity deals and Paul Watkinson, BR personnel director, pointed out that the union would have to make concessions.

Compared with the signal workers' dispute last year, train drivers' leaders have secured far less and the union is by no means assured of a decisive endorsement of the proposal."

On the other hand *The Guardian's* two reporters described the offer not as "effectively challenging the government's public sector pay ceiling" but suggesting that:

"the deal is likely to increase driver numbers and boost earnings by 5% over the next two years."

This issue of *Freedom* will not appear until after the ballot. We hope the loco drivers who vote will have turned down the bosses' offer. Again according to *The Independent* Lew Adams, general secretary of ASLEF, said that "the union would not be recommending the offer" even though "the reduction in working

time was worth between 5 and 6% on pay". Whereas on the same day *The Guardian's* correspondents quote Lew Adams as saying that the 37 hour week was "an achievement" and that "executive members described it as a breakthrough"! They also quote Mr Adams as saying that the union would be aiming for a 'clear salary' of £21,500 in the restructuring negotiations with the train operators, adding "if the board had made this offer three weeks ago, we would not have been in this dispute". But as far as we can penetrate the fog, the train operators have not offered the drivers £21,500 p.a.

And to quote the other side, BR's personnel spokesman Paul Watkinson said that 3% was inviolable, he had given a 'commitment' on hours. Note: not 'concession'. And can you imagine the grimace on his face when he added:

"They [ASLEF] seem to think they have got something out of the negotiations, which is wonderful. As far as I am concerned, I am very satisfied with the package."

The Guardian reporters admit that the:

"impact of the two-hour cut in hours is difficult to estimate because of the complications over rostering and overtime, but it could create several hundred jobs."

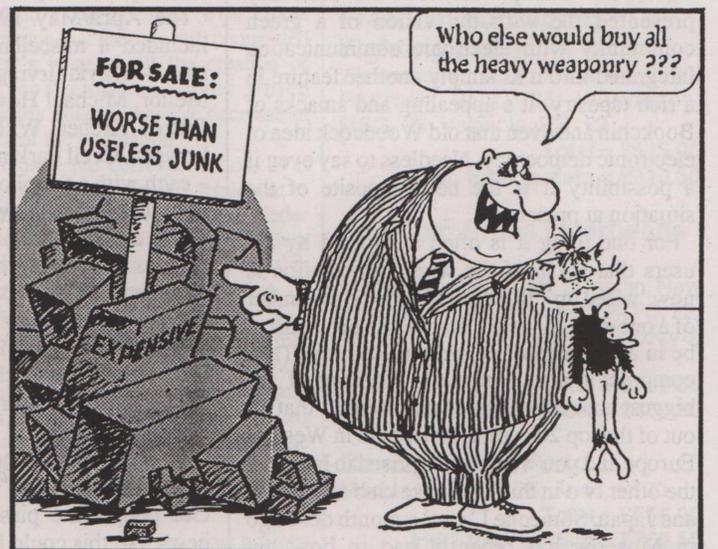
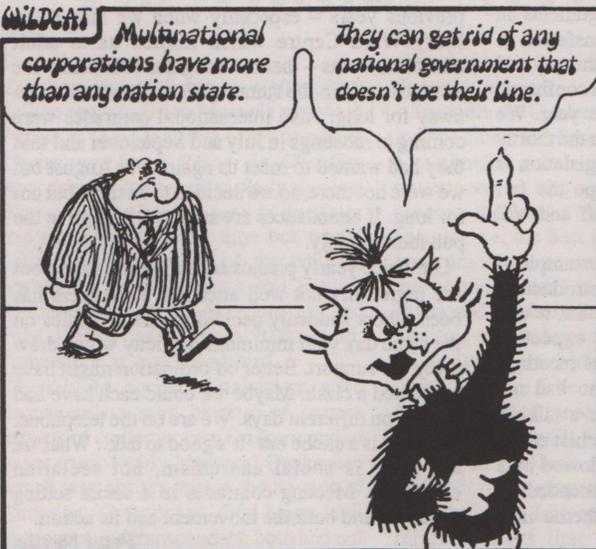
Perhaps! Obviously we are in favour of reducing the hours of work and concentrating on producing all the basic needs for a civilised existence for everybody, not just the well endowed.

But this is not the government's policy. Their only concern is to make savings at the expense of the poor for the benefit of the well-off and the rich. It's not just the anarchists saying this. It is being recognised daily, everywhere in the 'prosperous' western world. All the

well-meaning economists, politicians, philosophers, academics, sociologists – you name them – are more and more pointing out that there is not much justice and even less equality (not only between the sexes) in a world with all the technology to provide well-being (that is the real basic needs – forget about the 'wants' the advertising industry seeks to hook you on). But it is only the anarchists who draw the conclusions from all these well-meaning experts (of both sexes): namely that by definition capitalism cannot but produce the economic chaos that is destroying society. In case we should be told that it's only the third world that is tearing itself apart, we would not only refer our critics to *colonial* history in which the leading members of the EU were dominant but also not to forget the bloodbath over the centuries among those now 'civilised' EU members!

We have wandered a long way from the loco men, we know, but the problems of the loco men are not just a question of money or even hours. The fundamental question of human society today, more than ever before, is one of material inequality and injustice. There is no longer any excuse on the grounds of shortages of qualified specialists – teachers, doctors, scientists – too many of the latter! – or expertise to ensure that all mankind at the end of the twentieth century *could and should* enjoy the basic necessities of life. The obstacle to such a situation is the basic one of our society and is that *profit* – money profit, power – is the determining factor for whatever is considered *worthwhile*.

It's not just the anarchists saying this. But they are the only section of the thinking community who declare without hesitation that mankind's enemy is CAPITALISM!



ANARCHY IN ACTION?

— NUMBER 3 —

Confessions of an Internet User

I seem to remember back to occasions when if I was ill and off work I used to sometimes catch a little known about programme after the lunchtime news called *Neighbours*. Well many moons later history has told its story and now the pavement outside the front door is full of girls who respond to parent's calls of Kylie. Soap operas are part of fashions and we know seize people's imaginations and soon become an integral aspect of their lives even if only from the point of view of conversation fillers.

Now I've got rid of the television and therefore am now something of an outsider in a country where a recent snippet in the *Financial Times* told us that 98% say that television viewing is their favourite pastime. So I can't join in the chit chat about *Eastenders*, *Coronation Street* or indeed other famous soaps like the FA Cup, the Conservative leadership campaign or the current hit parade. Soaps, to my way of thinking, are stories of virtual communities which in some way mirror reality but are essentially different to it.

They do however not function in a complete vacuum and do interact with the overall society that spawns them – perhaps affecting your choice as to what name to give your child perhaps determining when (not if) we shall join the ERM (another soap in its own right).

I expect you can see where this is all leading. Having shot the television and got myself 'net access' (I use inverted commas to represent a shudder at the awfulness of the language) have I simply latched on to a new soap? I've actually struggled with this question now for a little while but I think I've now arrived at a sort of conclusion although well aware of a whole queue of question marks which still attend it. My answer? No.

The Internet has a lot in common with soaps. It is a whole host of little sub-plots and each days episode brings its little twists and turns in the story. Just yesterday, for example, I received an invitation to attend a punk/anarchist event on a Greek island this summer, a request for French and Spanish versions of the recent interview with Noam Chomsky that *Freedom* carried, three or four news reports about industrial struggles in various parts of the world, some advice on html programming - I could go on but I'll stop there. Also, although I don't think I'll rename the cat telnet, the net has certainly become a feature of my day to day life.

There is however a big difference which is I think crucial. I can't affect the outcome of the Liverpool versus Arsenal match, nor have I any choice or say in who runs the country nor whether we enter the ERM or not. The job of the mainstream soaps – let's start calling it the spectacle – is to anaesthetise me, even lead me to believe that I am a part of it and play a significant role. I don't and I don't want to. But with the net there is some interaction. I get html advice because I ask for it. I get an invite to Greece because I've developed a contact with someone etc. In turn I can pass on information to those who want it – the Freedom Press bookshop list for example (and I've done a lot of that).

But I don't want to give the impression I'm bowled over by it all. I'm not, and certainly far less than some I've 'met' (yes I do use that word). For example someone the other day presented me with the vision of a green community with electronic communication integrated into it as simply another feature in a rich tapestry. It's appealing and smacks of Bookchin and even that old Woodcock idea of electronic democracy. Needless to say even if a possibility it is the near opposite of the situation at present.

For one thing it is often trumpeted by net users that 0.1% of the world's population is now 'wired up'. Big deal. Nice to be a member of a one-in-a-thousand elite. Even nicer still to be in an industrialised western country. Take computer home ownership. Looking at the biggest concentrations of this we find that 18 out of the top 20 countries here are in Western Europe and you won't be surprised to hear that the other two in this exclusive club are the US and Japan. Someone I 'met' a month or so ago in Moscow has recently had to bow out

because of cost and apparently in black Africa you can count the number of users on half a dozen hands because it costs a US dollar to send a page of text there – a day's wage to send a brief message. Even in the number one slot (The Netherlands) only one in four have this kind of access and slot number 20 (Greece) is about 1 in 20. This hides, of course, the most common means of access – commercial or educational establishments – which clearly disenfranchises the unemployed, self-employed etc. Now I'm simplifying a hotly disputed issue and presenting only one side but there are lots out there prancing about as though it's party time under the capitalist system and they are wrong.

All such arguments are however in a way beside the point. Agriculture is run on capitalist lines but no one suggests we shall stop eating come the great day and its becoming steadily more apparent that electronic communication is part of any future. The question is its role and here we are surely talking about enabling people.

I introduced the idea of the spectacle a while back. Now the one thing I perhaps understand less than the mountains of computer terminology that surround me are the ideas of Guy Debord, who I find even more obscure than some of John Rety's denser ramblings, but I think I get by in all three areas (and enjoy them too) and the thing about the spectacle is that it's for the observer rather than the actor. We have them on the net. We call them lurkers. It's been estimated that more than 90% in most areas of the net (a wild generalisation but hinting at some truth) just sit there in front of their screens and observe without participating (the same of course could be said about *Freedom's* readership). Well fair enough if they come to the anarchist corners of the net then at least they'll be reading Kropotkin rather than buying the latest Mr Blobby clone. But it is a worry.

I suggested to someone on the net I met (actually in a telephone call) that, for one nightmarish moment, he imagine himself prime minister of a Western 'industrialised' country twenty years hence with economic

chaos all around him. There are rumblings amongst the intellectual community. People are calling for anarchy, the end of government. What to do? Fortunately your home secretary comes up with a brilliant wheeze. Give them the Internet. Happily these intellectuals will be able to exchange their deepest pontifications on the economic mess safely in front of their screens and off the street. They will blow it up in their own minds to a major force of social liberation and capitalism will be able to go to bed every night with little more than a hot cocoa in the way of a sedative.

Yeah I do feel that way but I also feel the home secretary may be making a bit of a boo boo if he introduces it too early and without thinking through the safety checks should things not go as planned. What I mean is this. Firstly we are not in a revolutionary situation. We are instead struggling to bring new ideas to people and in this respect the Internet is very useful if you use it properly. The time may come to press the off button and get out on the streets but it's not here yet. Secondly I think it's now well known that this technology was developed by the US military. Worrying. But perhaps it's not so well understood what they were trying to achieve. They wanted a system of control which had no centralised power that could be taken out by a nuclear strike. Any point in the network could pick up the baton if required. Now I don't know enough about the technology and I don't want to

underestimate the opposition but I think if our imaginary PM wants to pull in the reins on this one he'll be back to the ice-packs and pouring the cocoa down the drain. I mustn't push that one. I don't know enough about this.

Finally (in this unplanned ramble) the obvious. Technology depends on the people that use it. Now I'll mention no names but about a month ago I wanted to do a net interview with a bunch of anarchist cyber-surfers for inclusion with this article. Five weeks later in this world of instantaneous communication we've not got past the first question and I felt that a hundred or so words didn't make an interview. Well no criticism we are all busy ... we are all human.

In contrast though a few examples to set you thinking. Many readers will remember the case of Chico Mendez, the Brazilian trade unionist murdered by landowners in Xapuri, Brazil, in December 1988. That night telephones and faxes were out of action (presumably sabotage). The news was still got out to Rio and the rest of the world the next morning by the Internet via a community group called Alternex. Again on 3rd October 1993 three Russian syndicalists opposing the take over of the television buildings were arrested and mistreated in police custody. Nobody was informed until another syndicalist (unconnected but in the same prison) was released and brought the news out with him. It was passed on over the Internet. Shortly the phone at the police station began ringing and it didn't stop. A few hours later the syndicalists were released. Chiapas is another example and these examples are growing in number.

I don't think this is small beer nor do I think capitalism will be overthrown by Internet users. The rules haven't changed it's just there is a new factor to consider. I hope I've managed to give something approaching a balanced view. Many readers will probably want to read more about what anarchists in particular are up to but I'll leave that to another time.

N. Birrell

London Anarchist Forum: another successful year

We have just finished drawing up the first term's meetings for autumn 1995 with one vacancy. There are several invitations still out but when you get journals such as *Time Out*, from whom we get half our newcomers, phoning up and asking for our future programme it does indicate both a degree of success and an acknowledgement of public interest in anarchism.

Mind you (shock, horror) the Friday 14th July meeting was a bit of a fiasco where we had a double booking. We originally invited the Gay and Lesbian Freedom Group offering them some possible dates but, having had no reply, went on to arrange other meetings and were shocked to find them ensconced before we arrived. They had decided when they were coming. They just had not told us and none of them noticed another subject publicly announced in the press. After some argy bargy our arranged speaker settled it by agreeing that we should let the gays and lesbians have the floor. Michael Murray's talk on 'Arguments in Favour of Governments' has been transferred to 24th November and we hope to invite the gay and lesbian people to another meeting with a confirmed date and specific publicity later in the year. We would also like them to come and talk on the thorny subject of 'Child Sex'. The present legislation is ridiculous, like most laws. I only hope the fair number of newcomers were not put off and will come again.

We did discuss whether to follow our example of two years ago and have a series of introductory talks followed by general discussions, but it was less effective in structure than we expected. Different people turned up at different meetings with those at discussion meetings who had not attended the original talk, for instance a talk on anarchism and love, talking about anarchist ethics and male-female relationships, was followed by a general meeting on sexuality mainly attended by male gays who wanted to take the theme in a different direction.

We could have had an initial series of integrated topics without general discussions – like a short course – but most comrades said they would find this rather boring. This is the problem in groups such as ours, in that most regular attenders are well-read on anarchism and have been in the movement for many years and so want to build on and broaden existing knowledge, not just keep going back to first principles on the assumption that the odd uninformed newcomer might appear. It depends on whether you consider anarchism is a millennial theory or a process. Some people in the movement wish to discuss platformist topics, others the practicalities of libertarian action. In general most attending the London Anarchist Forum adhere to the latter view, as do most newcomers, except possibly the odd ex-Marxists, but few of these come again.

This year we are trying a new experiment in continuing over the summer. We have noted in previous years – especially when we met at the Mary Ward Centre which limited us to adult education terms – that most regular attenders were at a loose end in the summer. Few can afford to go away for long. Also international comrades were coming to meetings in July and September and said they had wanted to meet us again over August but we were not there, so we decided to be there but not for long. If attendances are small we will go to the pub more rapidly.

Our twice yearly picnics are still going strong but are regrettably not well attended. A problem has been others suddenly deciding to have picnics on the same day with minimum publicity which drew away the support. Better co-ordination might have prevented a clash. Maybe we could each have had picnics on different days. We are on the telephone. I know it is a cliché but 'It's good to talk'. What we are after is social anarchism, not sectarian anarchism. Meeting comrades in a social setting could expand both the movement and its action.

Peter Neville

Issue of Class War banned to prisoners

We are pleased to note that our contemporary, the bi-monthly *Class War*, follows the example of *Freedom* in giving free subscriptions to prisoners who ask for them.

The April/May 1995 issue of *Class War* included a miscellaneous list of prominent men – David Irving, Judge Pickles, David Mellor, Michael Howard, Michael Heseltine, Jeffrey Archer, William Waldegrave, Nigel Lawson, Cecil Parkinson and Jonathan Aitken – each with a telephone number or an address or both. Michael Howard got a death threat by phone and the *Daily Express* ran a story on it.

Class War has recently learned that a prisoner in The Mount, Hemel Hempstead, did not get his copy of the April/May issue, but was notified that it: "Contains confidential information. As such we are instructed that under standing order 58 34 (B) it will not be issued to prisoners."

Dave Clark of the Class War Prisoners Branch comments: "They'd better watch out. Our people are pissed off inside already – news like this could blow the lid off."

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Government's educational smokescreen

of local authorities. Schools have been offered inducement to 'opt out' of local council control. Some have done so for a variety of motives. For example, a very well-known school, Bridgewater Hall at Milton Keynes, opted out in order to remain a comprehensive school rather than follow the selective secondary education policy of Buckinghamshire County Council.

School governors are responsible for the school's annual budget, which they do not themselves control, and for months past they have been faced with the dilemma that as a result of Treasury policy the money available next year will not meet the biggest item of a school budget: the salaries of teachers. In the hope of some governmental change of heart they have put off final decisions until the last possible moment, but in July were obliged to tell some teachers that they were to be made redundant, or in plain English, sacked.

Some adopted a policy of 'last in, first out'. Some observed that the most expensive teachers were the most experienced. Some decided that it was easiest to get rid of part-timers. Others felt that it was simplest to sack a full-timer and then take him or her on again on a cheap and insecure part-time basis.

A few felt that they should present their dilemma to parents and invite them to pay in to a special fund to pay the salary of a particular teacher. Others felt that this approach was a betrayal of the whole principle of a national education system.

The month of July saw a vast series of little local dramas of this kind. But how much of this dramatic story got into the papers, radio or television? The answer is 'very little', and unless you happen to be a current parent of schoolchildren you will have heard little about this issue.

The reason why it has never hit the headlines is because there has been a steady stream of policy statements and ideas, guaranteed to set us all arguing in the Conservative, Liberal, Labour and anarchist press. They are a highly successful diversion from the ordinary humdrum and sordid facts of school life.

First of all, Whitehall's public relations machine announced its voucher scheme for nursery education, calculated to leave all us grandparents with a warm glow over the toddlers. The notion of education vouchers is a favourite of the right-wing think-tanks, but could have implications for the libertarian left. But before it had been absorbed there came a much more newsworthy pronouncement: the Prime Minister's personal concern for compulsory competitive sport in schools, and his intention to start a Sports Academy. He disregarded a whole lot of issues. The first, obviously, was that of the opinions of the pupils themselves. The second was the fact that local education authorities have been obliged for years to sell off under-used playing fields, with government prompting. The third is that teachers have been moving out in droves from extra-curricular sport since whatever mishap occurs, whether to pupils or to the minibus, they are held responsible. Obviously the final one is the fact that daily revelations indicate that the real world of top class sport is full of fraud, foul play and capitalist racketeering.

But the role of government media manipulation came in the very last week of the school term on three successive days. It began with the publicity given to the remarks of Dr Nick Tate, chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, advocating that schools should teach a British cultural identity, emphasising English

members "are now involved in all the direction [sic] action groups". In other words, all the hundreds of activities, occupations, almost the entirety of the marching season, is the doing of this grouping who model themselves on the Wehrmacht (is Chris Busby serious?). Further on in the article he also claims that the "state ought to be proud of all these doings". Citizen-consumer, you have a part to play!

John Rety

language and history, Christianity and the classical heritage. Next day came the plan of Gillian Shephard, Education and Employment Secretary, to send unmotivated fourteen year olds out to work. And, as though that was not enough to set all our tongues wagging, on the very next day Sir Ron Dearing, Mrs Shephard's senior curriculum adviser, unveiled his proposals for the reform of 'A' Levels and to introduce a new qualification covering the content of the first year of an 'A' Level.

All these stories successfully concealed what was really happening behind the scenes in schools that week, and they are all very old indeed. Dr Tate's assumptions were part of my own education in the 1930s and that of most readers in subsequent decades, and we have all spent a lifetime outgrowing them.

Sir Ron Dearing's proposals were around over twenty years ago. I myself, unwisely, was a member of one of the innumerable subject committees devising curricula for a one-year and a two-year sixth form. They were called N and F and my committee met at what was then called Trent Polytechnic. I can date the year precisely because once, when I was staggering back to the station with a ton of paper through pedestrianised central Nottingham along with the artist Bill Culbert, we saw a newspaper poster announcing that Harold Wilson had resigned.

As for Mrs Shephard and her assumption that the good old world of work still exists: well, she is just an incurable romantic. Every school I know has had its 'work experience' placements for many years. All our children experienced them. But our local school had to try harder and harder to find them, as one local business after another closes down. It is well over twenty years since a Yorkshire head-teacher, Arthur Young, explained to me why work experience has never really got off the ground: "I have always thought that the schemes proposed were phoney, the most important aspect of work experience being neglected completely - the wage at the end of the week." (Any reader seeking a serious discussion of the issues involved should read the chapter called 'Filling the Shelves in the Supermarket' in my book *The Child in the City*.)

But the Secretary of State wasn't seeking serious discussion. She was involved in a media manipulation exercise to conceal from the public, and from school pupils, our real schooling dilemmas, and the people at the top all know this perfectly well.

Colin Ward

Bribes in the Name of Business!

Opel, which is the German arm of General Motors (nowadays the public doesn't know who owns the industries that have been household names), is the umpteenth large enterprise under investigation! We are reaching the point where only the homeless kipping in a doorway in the big cities have yet to be prosecuted!

Apparently up to two hundred suppliers are reportedly under investigation for offering bribes (the *Independent*, 1st July). What surprises this writer is the implication that all of a sudden suppliers have started offering bribes in order to get orders! As agent/engineer on railway contracts years and years ago, this writer was bombarded by suppliers all offering bribes in return for orders for their bricks, their steel, their cement, etc.

Obviously the scale of the 'problem' is different, but the 'principle' is still the same. Under capitalism you either are a monopolist with no competition and you don't need to offer 'incentives' (bribes). If you are one of many in the market-place you get the orders not just on quality and price but on the back-handers!

Most anarchists tend to become parents sooner or later, and to send their children to a local primary and subsequently secondary school, which they have paid for through central and local taxation. They know that they *could* educate their children at home or that they *could* send them to a residential school if they could afford the fees, but, apart from other issues, they may feel that it is part of the process of growing up to be exposed to the same experiences as everyone else.

Sometimes they may actually choose to become 'governors' of the school, hoping to exert some influence. Conservative government policy since 1979 has been to devolve power onto school governors, simply as part of its war on the power and influence

Through the Anarchist Press

Now that we are in the midst of cumbersome changes it may be important to examine their effect on the citizen. What better excuse for this model being than when this citizen-client, citizen-customer, ah citizen-consumer, receives his quarterly bill for electricity. Those blessed moments of opening up the envelope, looking at the magic numbers - present 04155, previous 05111 can't be right, how could the citizen have un-used electricity and be charged for 100 units used anyway, converted into pence units. Such are the real joys of life.

Each year the company sends its bills, slightly ever-so unobtrusively altering the terms of supply and charge scales. The model citizen ponders at the collection of bills. Has anything changed in ten years? Not with the citizen's mode of life. The citizen turns on/off the lights with the same regularity as any other anarchist, but unit for unit the payment demand is more. A hundred units (what's that to the national grid?) cost a mere £5.60 in 1985, in 1995 it now costs £8.45. Brilliant, but that's not all.

When John Cage said he was an anarchist, same as you or I, when turning on/off lights, he was not joking. Nevertheless you also have to pay, model citizen, a standing charge. This last phrase means that you pay for hiring their electric meter, which is really an electric motor which turns a rotating disc and the pointers on the dials. Looking at the bill the citizen will also notice that the hiring charge has also gone up in ten years from £7.78 to £13.06. For added amusement there is a new charge compared with 1985: now the citizen will also have to fork out for the greatest insult, a government tax at 8%. All in all the humble citizen within a lapse of ten years is charged double for the same service.

Problems abound. Electricity, like protein, cannot be 'stored' so there is great wastage. Raw materials are burnt uselessly. Because of the nature and the demands of the grid system, large power stations and a network of power lines, with a general insistence of light at all hours of the day and night, have created an economic monster.

Originally electricity was produced when it was needed locally and for local needs. Factories farms and homes generated their own electricity. There was no other cost except maintenance and of installation. Now the model citizen is supplied by a monopoly and pays for units expressed in pence multiplied by kilowatt hours of energy consumed.

Looking ahead to an anarchist society, those who want electricity (candle flame is better for the eyes) will have to pedal for it. The same for the nuclear lobby, for the nuclear industry is really a by-product of electricity generation.

Inhabitants of Mururoa, an island 700 miles south-east of Tahiti and about 400 miles south of the Pitcairn Islands, are also anarchists when they turn on/off their lights. Perhaps a general switch off is needed to stop the tests.

There is now a period of advance, similar to the surge of two centuries ago when Herman Melville was able to write in his *Billy Budd*: "During those years not the wisest could have foreseen that the outcome of [resistance] would result in a political advance along nearly the whole line". There has been, of course, a certain amount of liberation even if the atrocities continue at the expense of the weakest populations. There is no justification whatsoever for the tests, except a word which is usually trotted out in so-called diplomacy.

It is a long time since the word 'constitutional' has been used for anything else except for jogging. But it is the "constitutional right" of the country pleased to be called France to once more "menace the colourful beauty of Polynesia by the dark cloud of radio-active contamination".

Colony of frogs were found recently by two boys walking by the river. It was a curious find, for most of the frogs had five legs. Guess which industry's waste was pumped into the river which caused this mutation?

Slowly opposition emerges. But it was curious to read in the current *Ethical Record* (always full of interest) a reprint of a talk previously given to the Ethical Society by Chris Busby about the activities of the Green Committee of 100. In the article he makes the astonishing claim that this committee, of whose existence the population is scarcely aware, has effectively initiated and with its members have taken part in *all* the major environmental protect actions and that their

out now

Raven 29

on

World War Two

Section 1: includes selections from anarchist publications of the time

Section 2: contains some personal war recollections from Colin Ward, Philip Sansom, Arthur Moyses, Peter Cadogan, John Hewetson, Derrick A. Pike & Vernon Richards

Section 3: the horrors of war including Ravensburg, Auschwitz, Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagasaki

Section 4: some conclusions

100 pages £3.00 (post free)

Freedom Press

84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

The Bounce

On the Tip of Your Tongue: your memory in later life

by Dr H.B. Gibson

Third Age Press, 150 pages, £7.00

In Hammersmith bus garage there was a bus conductor who was known affectionately by his fellow workers as 'Double-Decker Bounce' because of his high forehead. He was sacked by London Transport in that in the same working day, at London Bridge Station, he beat up a bus passenger and a bus inspector, demonstrating, one presumes, that the physical appearance of a high IQ does not always run tandem with a passive nature. It is this assumption, that a high intelligence pre-supposes a rational mind, and Dr H.B. Gibson's claim that "the popular belief that the memory inevitably declines quite drastically with ageing has been reinforced by earlier researches of psychologists which were faulty in many ways, and confused physical decline with mental decline", which causes me to doubt the boys in the bus garage, the psychologists and the good doctor. I do believe, with common observation, that the brain/mind does age with the body and the illusion that the brain is still active lies in the fact that the brain, unlike the ageing rest of the body, is not called upon to exert any physical stress, but that lump of meat floating within the skull is still ageing.

In the 1920s in America behavioural psychologists' "study of human actions by analysis into stimulus and response" ruled their roost until, in the 1950s, the boys with the couch and the cheque-books took over and it was left to the Russian state, having decreed by a 100% vote by democratic centralisation that god and the psychologist's couch were no more than propaganda by counter-revolutionists, to proclaim behaviourism as an orthodox tool of the state medical practice in that it conformed to Soviet Communist ideology and Ivan Pavlov, to the joy of the card-carrying West, demonstrated behaviourism by ringing bells for salivating

dogs – feed them once to the bell and they will turn out every time to the chimes of 'Bells Across the Meadow'. Yet for all the evils committed in its theories, I hold that behaviourism is correct in that we are no more than creatures of outside stimulants and that someone thousand miles from me or five thousand years ago is my clone and what we have in common is not the complexities of our brains but its unfortunate limitations.

Dr Gibson claims to "explore memory's history ... and deals sternly with Freud" and has a raft of learned publications to back his claim, plus the fact that he has been an "expert witness in criminal and civil court cases" (for the prosecution or the defence?) but I found much of his book facile and shallow and I accept that it could have been written to my level. But I have a vested interest in the subject of old age and the brain in that I am 81 years of age, have a bad heart, have gout in the hands, am incontinent, deaf, on the fringe of early senility and mix with loose companions. Also my grandmother went to prison for unsuccessfully trying to murder my grandfather, my ghastly aunt ended up with me trying to subdue her as she rolled screaming and naked on the floor at two in the morning, my sad uncle spent his life in

Books reviewed in Freedom can be obtained from

**FREEDOM PRESS
BOOKSHOP**

84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

— OPEN —

Monday to Friday 10.30am - 6.00pm
Saturday 11.00am - 5.00pm

Hanwell Lunatic Asylum and my cousin died drooling, but unfortunately I did not find Dr Gibson's book (£7.00) much help in these memories of things past.

What I must cross swords with the good doctor about is his dismissal of 'repression' in that there are incidents and events in our life that the mind completely suppresses and it's still "a subject of contention among psychologists". More than fifty years ago two of us were in a makeshift military guardroom under armed guard for a military crime for which over three hundred British soldiers had faced a drum-head courts martial and a firing squad during the First World War. There are miracles in that we escaped the minimum twenty-year military prison sentence and in the vicarious excitement of the European invasion the whole of those 24 hours was wiped from my mind. Half a century later I sat watching a television programme of the First World War and of over three hundred British soldiers who were executed by firing squads for offences similar to ours, and in those moments after half a century everything flooded back into mind, yea even to the words that the raging guard commander screamed at us, and I sat sick to my stomach as those 24 hours came back into the 'repressed' memory. Freud stated the obvious and he was right. I hold that psychoanalysis is no more than a self-deluding moneyed con game on a level with fairground fortune telling or the 'Agony Aunt' column in the national press and with their tea leaves, crystal balls or sweaty palms is the framed coloured certificate on the wall next to the photograph of the bearded Freud.

A philosopher posed the question that if one took a grain of sand that is a solid that can be measured and weighed and cut it in half and weighed and measured the half and again divided it as a solid and, ignoring the atomic structure and again and again halved the solid

and weighed and measured it, then as a solid it must continue to be divided as a solid and to be weighed and measured literally to infinity. And thousands of years ago men sat in the dark night and knew that all around them was infinity, but with well-honed telescopes men rejected that quest for understanding, but when the first man stepped on to the moon our universe again became no more than a mass of drifting dust in an infinity of time and space, and the human mind cannot conceive it for this is not the grandeur but its sad limitations.

I was born into an age where I have witnessed science fantasies become scientific social realities, yours for the purchase in the market-place, and I hold that the practice of medicine is still in its primitive stage walking the wards with its knuckles dragging along the floor. All advances, for good or ill, are the product of a technological society leap-frogging into a future that we dare not document, while the medical man is still cutting and carving and pushing in coloured pills into his inert slab of human flesh. To transplant a failing human heart with a pig's heart is a product of technology, not medical science, and I do not protest it for this I know, that in the matter of memory what must happen is that the memory bank will, nay must, be isolated and that it will be possible to transplant the memory bank of an old man into that of a young man. In 1641 Descartes wrote in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* "I am not merely lodged with my body, like a sailor in a ship, but am very closely united and, as it were, intermingled with it" and he also stated "I think, therefore I am" and this I hold, that if man can think it then man will create it and at some time somewhere there is an unfortunate pig that will suffer the first memory bank transplant.

Fall out of bed and in that one instant of waking the brain that, like the rest of the body, is a disciplined thing will produce a rational explanation such as a dream of falling over a cliff, for this is the mind's limitation just as within the mind one image is super-imposed

Food for Thought ... and Action!

Recent arrivals at the Freedom Press bookshop.

La Société du Spectacle (video) by Guy Debord, Simar Films and Canal +, 1973, VHS format, running time approximately three hours, in French. For all those who've read the book and got the t-shirt but haven't yet seen the film, or those who couldn't understand the book and hope to get more out of the film, perhaps. Whatever the case, your command of French will need to be average to very good, depending on how often you're prepared to rewind the tape in order to understand it. This, the first of three films on the tape, runs for 89 minutes and voices Debord's familiar concerns: society, alienation, image and reality, commodity, capitalism, repression and domination, using subtitles, music and Debord's own rather dull voice over clips of films, newsreels, documentaries and still photographs of fashion shows, wars, production lines, riots, demonstrations, politicians and union bureaucrats, rock concerts, pollution, traffic and a lot else. And more bare breasts than you can shake a stick at, for some reason. The second film is *Réfutation de tous les jugements, tant élogieux qu'hostiles qui ont été jusqu'ici portés sur le film 'La Société du Spectacle'* (Refutation of all judgements, whether for or against, passed to date on the film 'Society of the Spectacle') – 21 minutes, 1975 – a euphemistic title for a stinging attack on his critics: film-makers, the left, the right, the avant-garde and anyone else who dared to voice an opinion. The last film is *Guy Debord: son art et son temps* (his art and times) – 60 minutes, 1994. Here he denounces, against newsreel and documentary footage of man-made human tragedies and environmental disasters, some of the worst maladies of the twentieth century, which it was his opinion had produced nothing positive. By now he was very ill with an alcohol-related disease and one gets a strong sense of his depression and, with hindsight, of the probable point of departure on the road to his tragic suicide shortly after completing this film. Dig out your 'O' Level French, and £19.95. (N.B. If you have little French and/or little money *Society of the Spectacle* and

other films, Rebel Press, 1992, contains the text of the first two films on this video and three others, in English, for £5.50.)

Manufacturing Consent: the political economy of the mass media by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, Vintage. Probably still the definitive book on how the rich and powerful, who own and control the means of production and largely determine, slant, distort and even invent the news, the better to manufacture people's 'consent' to their rulers, this has now (belatedly) been issued in a British edition. This has three obvious advantages: that it is much more easily obtainable, is cheaper and is a handier size. A fourth less obvious advantage for the American multinational publishing cartel Random House is to distance itself even further from an embarrassing, subversive title, a move it started when it dumped the US publisher Pantheon from its distribution list, having first failed to pressurise Pantheon's editor to drop the title. The disadvantages are that this re-issue is a page for page reproduction of the 1988 Pantheon edition – there are no revisions or additions; it has a reduced though perfectly readable typeface, is on cheaper paper and has a garishly-coloured cover. But for an almost surgical dissection of the US media industry, and how it does what it does, there is no better book whichever edition you choose. For the first edition you get a larger, handsomer, better quality book for £13.95 (we still have the odd copy); the same 412 pages in the new edition is only £8.99. There are, as is usual with these two authors, scores of pages of notes, a good index, ten tables of statistics and three appendices. Should keep you going through the summer.

Festival Eye summer 1995. Whatever the weather, you know it's summer when *Festival Eye* appears. The indispensable guide to festivals, actions, camps and events in the UK, Ireland and Europe through until the end of October, plus a couple of hundred contacts nationwide making up the Free Information Network, and dozens of others

involved in anti-CJA activities, alternative centres and Free Stonehenge groups. Because of recently invented offences in the Criminal Justice Act – such as 'aggravated trespass' – festivals and other celebrations are increasingly taking place as part of land rights, travellers, anti-roads and anti-CJA actions, helping to build more contacts and cooperation between the various groups. As the state turns up the heat on the logarithmic increase in ungovernable young people taking to direct action and resistance, fun and games and music become indispensable. Some of these actions are reported in this issue, including the recent road-blocking street party in Camden Town, north London. 24 pages. A4, £1.50.

Drunken Boat No. 2,* Left Bank Books/Autonopedia. On the themes of 'Art, Rebellion, Anarchy' this book differs from its predecessor – a giant format floppy magazine – in being a standard-sized, chunky paperback. But what it lacks in size it more than makes up for in content and design. With over thirty contributions on a wide variety of topics, many of them substantial essays, and scores of photographs, striking collages and delightful illustrations, this is a feast for sore eyes and hungry minds. It re-establishes the link between anarchism and aesthetics – also the subject of the first article by editor Max Blechman – which was once common-place. As George Woodcock puts it in a piece about *Drunken Boat* No. 1: "In the last forty years or so one can think of few periods in the history of anarchist thinking in which there has been so little of the fertile contrast between the imaginative and the polemical that marked the early development of anarchist ideas ..." Here there is Richard Sonn on Culture and Anarchy, Richard Porton on Jean Vigo's Anarchy, Judith Malina on Revolutionary Theatre, Hakim Bey on B. Traven, Ferlinghetti on the Triumph of the Post-Modern, Dachine Rainer on Holley Cantine, Diane Di Prima, Gary Snyder, Rose-Carol Long on Kandinsky's Art of the Future, Woodcock on Herbert Read, Paul Avrich on Conrad's Anarchist Professor, Alex Trotter on Decadence, and much

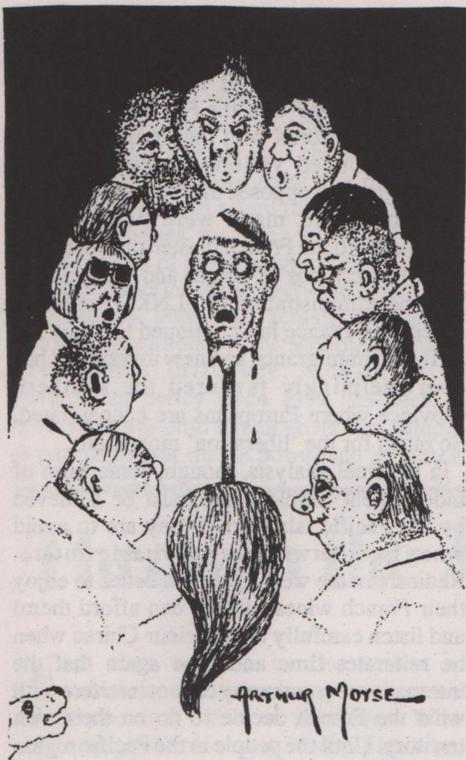
much more. In his otherwise slightly disappointing and unworthy *Skoal to Drunken Boat* where he praises his own achievements while griping about Freedom Press (but which is mercifully relegated to the end of the book), George Woodcock does at least say "Nowhere for many years, until the appearance of *Drunken Boat*, has there been a journal of any significance combining the values of avant-garde art with those of militant anarchism ..." The book's beautiful cover is designed by Eric Drooker, creator of the amazing *Flood!* and well-known contributor to many anarchist publications. In the front of the book is a drawing of the *Drunken Boat* itself, originally done to illustrate B. Traven's book *The Death Ship*. One final quote from the Living Theatre's Judith Malina on this excellent project: "At last it sails; *Drunken Boat* floats anarchy into the open seas of art and literature towards the triumph of the idea!" 288 pages, £7.95.

Sacco and Vanzetti: the anarchist background by Paul Avrich, Princeton University Press. Written by the leading American anarchist historian, this is the definitive examination of the most famous and controversial case in American legal history. The trial and sentencing to death of these two Italian immigrants for murder divided the nation in the 1920s, and rallied millions to their defence worldwide. Only ever published in hardback, the current retail price is £21.50, so those who haven't got a copy or would like another one to give as a present will be pleased to learn that the canny wheelers and dealers at Freedom Press Distribution have managed to acquire a limited number for the unbelievably low price of £5.65. Besides the footnotes, bibliography and index, there are twelve pages of photographs, 265 pages in all, and a handsome price tag for a very handsome book.

KM

Titles distributed by Freedom Press Distributors (marked*) are post free inland (add 15% for overseas orders). For other titles please add 10% towards postage and packing inland, 20% overseas. Cheques in sterling payable to FREEDOM PRESS please.

EDUCATION FOR A CHANGE



upon the original image like a copying machine until the distorted image becomes the remembered reality. Always man's desire to transplant age to youth and always the artist has called the question, be it Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* of 1931, Wegener's 1920 *Golem*, Wiene's 1919 *Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, Fritz Lang's 1926 *Metropolis* or Mamoulian's filming of Stevenson's *Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in 1931, and their mistake was always to transplant a brain within another body and the brain in isolation cannot communicate and it is the isolation of the memory bank and its transplantation into an alien brain that is someone's future. For Dr H.B. Gibson and Rufus Segar, this book is worthy of our and your attention, but I wonder what has become of 'Double-Decker Bonce'?

Arthur Moyses

Criminal Lunacy Exposed

We have just witnessed an act of criminal lunacy which must be without parallel in recorded history. A city of 300,000 people has been suddenly and deliberately obliterated and its inhabitants murdered by the English and American governments. It is difficult to express in coherent language the contempt and shame which we feel. That this thing should be done in our name makes us feel physically bespattered with the filth of it. Even a public slowly and deliberately accustomed by propaganda to acquiesce to irresponsible murder is stricken by it. We have dissented and protested in the past, but the time for dissent and protest is over. The men who did this are criminal lunatics. Unless this final atrocity is irrevocably and unquestionably brought home to them by public opinion, we have no claim to be human beings, we have no right to condemn any excess of the past or the future, we do not deserve any vestige of freedom.

No alliance of nations fostering such pretensions has ever covered itself with such utter disgrace. The sickening cant about indiscriminate bombardment, the lies about liberty and justice, have appeared for what they are – the restoration of moral order for what it is, a death's head. This action is not to be judged by men – men will be judged by it, as they were judged by the atrocities of Dachau: the only question that will be asked is "Did you resist it to your utmost?" One need only consider how last Monday's announcement would have affected the nation if it had been made in 1937 to realise how profoundly our responsibility has degenerated, and how much of the practice of fascism has been sold to us since then. An

Talking Schools
by Colin Ward
Freedom Press, £5.00

The Terrace
by Michael Duane
Freedom Press, £2.50

Involvement as he has been for so many years "in the education industry" as he puts it in the foreword to *Talking Schools*, it comes as no surprise that Colin Ward has managed in one short and easy-to-read volume to highlight the essentials of libertarian thought and practice concerning schooling and education more widely, provide vivid illustrations of the effects of the important state legislation in Britain on education since 1945 and pose a serious challenge to contemporary educational orthodoxy.

Talking Schools consists of ten lectures, some up-dated, given by the author over the last twenty years, mostly to teachers and others involved or interested in working with children. He opens up with 'The Anarchists and Schools' which for me has to be the finest short synopsis of libertarian educational ideas in print. Would that this piece alone could find its way into the corridors of the new Department of Education and Employment. I'm sure even Gillian Shephard could manage to understand it. Thereafter Ward considers environmental education, how to address issues of inequality inside state schools, the schooling of urban children, art education, the relationship of environment to learning; concluding with comments on two critical areas in the libertarian educational project, resourcefulness and empowerment.

One is struck by the simplicity and logic of Ward's comments and arguments. He reminds us of one of the principles of true teaching: namely that nothing can be taught, that teachers are not, or at least should not be, instructors or task setters, but helpers and guides. Similarly he implies that the idea of hammering any child into a shape desired by parent, teacher or state administrator is barbarous and ignorant and doomed to failure. What Ward essentially argues for is a principle that is at the heart of the libertarian tradition: namely that any learning works from the near to the far. The starting point has to be a learner's heredity, surroundings and experience, the soil from which sustenance is drawn, the air breathed, the sights, sounds and habits to which we are all accustomed.

It is these ideas which provide a counterweight to the centralising and prescriptive tenets of the educational administrators of the state since 1870, if not before. Indeed I assume this is what Ward

endless iteration of enemy brutality has been used to acclimatise us to crimes which have now reached the magnitude of this massacre.

The only remedy which is possible to us, if we are to remain human beings and not be lepers in the eyes of every decent person and every period of history, is the condign punishment of the men who are responsible. Not one political leader who has tolerated this filthy thing or the indiscriminate bombardment of Germany which preceded it should be permitted to escape the consequence of what he has done. Apart from the fantastic irresponsibility of scientists who are prepared to put such a weapon into the hands of our present rulers, the responsibility for seeing that no political or military figure associated with this action shall be permitted to remain rests upon us. It is high time that we tried our own war criminals, or history will rightly and justly try and condemn us to permanent hatred and contempt.

Alex Comfort
War Commentary, 25th August 1945
(reprinted in *Against Power and Death*,
Freedom Press, 168 pages, £5.00)

means when he writes in the foreword to Duane's book:

"The publicly-funded school system in Britain has, since 1980, been subjected to a counter-revolution, even though the revolution that is being suppressed never happened." (my italics)

Indeed *Talking Schools* is a timely publication, coming as it does when the ever-continuing 'great debate' on education enters a new phase, with issues of national identity and little Englandism on the one hand and the role of schooling in combating crime and drug use on the other, are being pushed to the fore. What we can expect, of course, is another round of meaningless legislation that will exacerbate inequality and diminish personal autonomy. What we can hope for is that some real talking about schools continues. Thankfully Ward has made yet another massive contribution to that process.

Unlike Ward's book which is essentially an overview of ideas, policies and trends in schooling, Michael Duane's *The Terrace* tries to find a methodology to assess the effectiveness of a 'school' experiment within the state system but one which sought to draw on the experience of a well-established fee-paying progressive school.

When the government raised the school leaving age from 15 to 16 in 1972/3 (ROSLA) it caused a huge controversy and indeed it is not a simple issue. Despite the hostility of many children and young people to compulsory state schooling, there is an argument that such a move was born of egalitarian notions, something which is clear from the motives behind the government's apparent desire to now take 'certain' 15-year-olds out of full-time schooling. Shephard's intentions in this sphere are really quite transparent, in that the desire to provide employment experience for non-existent employment for certain young people is clearly yet another assault on the principle of comprehensive schooling, a principle that I believe is still worth fighting for.

However, one thing that ROSLA did also lead to was a whole load of soul-searching and experimentation among educators. One such experiment was the Terrace, set up by Northcliffe Comprehensive School in the mining town of Conisbrough, South Yorkshire. In many ways the Terrace was the brainchild of Royston Lambert, head at Dartington Hall from 1969 to 1973. He wanted to make the resources at Dartington available to a broader community. As he remarked:

"Frankly, I was not prepared to become head of a school solely for the education of the rich."

Lambert wanted an exchange between Dartington and an ordinary secondary school, and to provide a base for an alternative school for those in the 14-16 age range who had little or no time for traditional schooling. Thus began a joint venture between Dartington, the West Riding Education Department (headed at the time by Alec Clegg, a Chief Education Officer committed to the cause of working-class children – dare one ever hope that we will see his ilk again?) and Northcliffe Community High School.

Sadly the Terrace only had a short life. The 1974 re-organisation of local government put an end to the West Riding Education Authority, Clegg retired and Dartington retreated into isolation after Lambert left. What Duane demonstrates, though, in his book is that radical alternatives in schooling are not the preserve of a social elite and that working-class children too appreciate autonomy, self-direction and self-regulation. What is also clear is that there is a strong relationship between productive work and enlightened culture, for this was an essential ingredient of the Terrace. As schools stagger into the next century, blamed on the one hand for most social evils and dictated to on the other by people who have rarely passed through their doors, Duane's observations could prove extremely valuable.

John Shotton

all available now from Freedom Press

THE TERRACE AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIMENT IN A STATE SCHOOL Michael Duane

In 1972/73 the school leaving age was raised to 16, which dismayed 15 year olds of all abilities and was a focus for heart-searching and experiment among educators. The Terrace was an experiment set up to provide non-school education for 15 year olds to whom school had become meaningless.

80 pages ISBN 0 900384 78 6 £2.50

TALKING SCHOOLS Colin Ward

This book gathers together ten lectures given by the anarchist author and journalist Colin Ward in Britain and the United States at teachers' conferences, meetings of educational progressive groups, and all those occasions when schooling is on the agenda. The audiences have included teachers, architects and administrators, social workers and people concerned with child welfare and children's play.

142 pages ISBN 0 900384 81 6 £5.00



THE MARCH TO DEATH anti-war cartoons by John Olday first published in 1943

with an introduction by Donald Room

84 pages ISBN 0 900384 80 8 £3.00

FREEDOM PRESS
84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

FOCUS ON ... THE PACIFIC

The 'international community' has gone into a frenzy of anti-French xenophobia recently over Monsieur Chirac's decision to go ahead with eight more nuclear tests at Mururoa atoll. But behind the noise is a big stink of hypocrisy ...

Monsieur Chirac is the new bogeyman of the international community, we are told. The papers are full every day of the international condemnations which are coming from the EU, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. French wine is being poured down the drains outside hotels and the London *Guardian* is running the usual French hate articles (15th July 1995). Indeed no less than the Japanese finance minister is leading the way, calling for petitions, demonstrations and campaigns as "great things to do" and heroically calling on us to "grandly get on board a ship and stand in the way. As a politician, I promise to take the lead". Very kind of him of course, and I'm sure there will be tea and biscuits, but Mr Takemura has missed the point. They all have. Even those liberal heart-throbs Greenpeace are happily jumping on the anti-French one-big-issue bandwagon. The real issue is the economic and military reality of the Pacific region or, dare I say it, colonialism.

France used to carry out her nuclear tests in the Sahara until those naughty Algerians welsed on her. It was then that she diverted her attentions down to Tahiti. But the region is not just a nuclear playground. Susanna Ounei, an activist in the Kanaky independence movement (New Caledonia), says: "I am a little surprised that everyone is so shocked about the French government's decision to resume nuclear tests at Mururoa atoll in Tahiti. Pacific islanders know there is nothing new about French agencies doing whatever they want, whenever they want. We never asked the French to colonise our countries. We never asked them to set up their nuclear testing facilities. The main issue for the people of the French colonies of the Pacific remains independence".* Perhaps not surprisingly also is the fact that the French state is not too keen on the idea of independence for its colonies in the region, knowing that for the islands in the region to develop any degree of autonomy would be the one sure way of ensuring the French state can't do an Algerian and welsh in turn on any climb-down Chancellor Kohl may extract from them on this issue. The French state recognises the importance of keeping the locals in check by

* Much of the information for this article comes from *Green Left Weekly*, No. 188, contactable in the USA tel 212-979 0471, or nyt@blythe.org.

The view from Australia Protests in the Pacific

As the French government attempts to carry out nuclear tests at Mururoa atoll, French Polynesians are becoming sick and tired of being taken for granted by the French state. In a show of strength thousands of Tahitians converged on the port of Papette as the Rainbow Warrior attempted to dock at Papette. They not only marched but they set up road-blocks in an attempt to get the French government to call a referendum on whether the Pacific should be used as a French nuclear testing site.

The French government was surprised by the extent of the protest and flew in riot troops from Noumea to be used as front-line troops if Tahitians refused to dampen their protests. As the road-blocks around Papette continued to function, the French government contemplated using its riot troops to maintain its control in Tahiti. People all across the Pacific and even in France do not want the French government to renew nuclear testing. The extent of local protest has not only caught the French government off guard, it has also caught the Australian and New Zealand governments off guard.

It's time Australian re-evaluated their role in the world's uranium mining industry. It's all very well to voice concern against nuclear testing in the Pacific, it's another thing to halt the export of uranium overseas. It's time the struggle was widened and the Australian government was forced to stop mining and exporting uranium. Unless we can do that (and people can force the government to stop exports) we will continue to be faced with situations where tin-pot nation states will continue to produce and test weapons of mass destruction.

Anarchist Age Weekly Review, No. 156, PO Box 20, Parkville, VIC 3052, Australia

means of terror if necessary. When, in May 1985, a small demonstration against the visit of a French nuclear submarine in the region went ahead in Noumea, the French military murdered in cold blood an eighteen year old protester.

The Australian connection

The French capitalists know which side their bread is buttered. The New Caledonia area is the second largest exporter of nickel in the world, with about 33% of known reserves (the sea may contain up to three times the mineral wealth which has been found on land), not to mention chrome and cobalt which are both important for military purposes. And when France wants uranium it's Australia who obliges. As Ounei puts it: "Australia is yelling in front of everybody that the French nuclear tests must stop, but behind the scenes they are reinforcing the position of France by selling them uranium. They are the best ally of and the warranty for France, as the tests that will poison the whole Pacific begin in Tahiti".

Australian military officers also recently attended French military exercises in the region as 'observers' in a 'regional conflict scenario'. She may now be shedding crocodile tears over Monsieur Chirac's decision but she's at one with him on the independence issue, as shown by her track record in Bougainville and her opposition to any form of autonomy for the people of East Timor.

Australia with US backing - another major player in the region - takes on the burden of pursuing 'western interests' in the region both by hosting US military bases and by her military alliance with the US through the ANZUS Treaty. The US is of course an old hand in things military. Here she maintains a dangerous chemical weapons incinerator on Johnston atoll in defiance of Pacific opinion. US nuclear-powered and armed warships cruise the Pacific. Monsieur Chirac has played into her hands on this issue, as a short article in *The Age* recently reveals, saying that the US military are considering the resumption of nuclear testing in the light of Monsieur Chirac's move. It was explained by an official that they have to make sure that they "will work properly on the day" - so forget about deterrence and put it in your diary.

Even when Australia pushed for what was laughingly called the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty in 1985 she didn't try to stop nuclear ship visits, the presence of US bases in the region or her uranium exports. However, even this weak brew could not be stomachied by the UK, US and France, who declined to give their autographs.

The old American disorder has arrived

Of course the military set-up complements the economic exploitation of the region. The region systematically has its economies prised open to the usual stories of the 'free' trade and privatisation rather than dealing with the needs of the people. Here the Australian government proudly boasts that Australian companies have "enormous influence on the economies of the Pacific" - which is shorthand for the fact that she exports five times more, mainly manufactured and processed foodstuffs, to the region than she imports, primarily minerals and raw materials.

The French also are in on the game with 7,000,000 square kilometres of the Pacific inside her exclusive economic zones. Here there are huge investments in the mining and tourist industries. France has flooded its Pacific possessions with migrants from

France to outnumber the local inhabitants. This policy has been most thorough in Kanaky (New Caledonia) where the proportion of indigenous people in the island's population has declined from, 52% in 1951 to 44% today. In Tahiti 30,000 Europeans hold down the best-paying jobs, while the more than 70,000 Maohi people are unemployed or hold the lowest-paying unskilled jobs. In Tahiti and Kanaky there is an apartheid-like gulf between the rich and the poor.

The liberators sell out

It's not an unfamiliar story, of course. Moves by the local peoples to try to achieve some degree of autonomy have largely failed due to the fact that they went down the wrong route on this issue. In Kanaky the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) in the

1980s proved about as useful to the people as its name suggests it would. After a particularly unpleasant massacre of Kanaks by French troops in the late '80s, the FLNKS signed the Matignon Accords with the French in 1988, which included various empty promises. Although some opposed the move from within the movement, many were happy to be co-opted into the French master-plan in return for a few crumbs of power and were drawn into the administration of FLNKS-run areas. Since then France has continued to allow the arrival of immigrants, and new investment has overwhelmingly favoured the southern province where Europeans are concentrated. So much for the 'liberation' movement.

In the final analysis, though, some form of independent development must be achieved by the Pacific islanders if they are to avoid what is otherwise an inevitable future. Radicals in the west would do better to enjoy their French wines (if they can afford them) and listen carefully to Monsieur Chirac when he reiterates time and time again that the international community cannot interfere with what the French decide to do on their own territory. Until the people in the Pacific region manage to start setting up the structures which may lead to some measure of independent development they will not shake off the colonial yoke. However, the future looks bleak for them to say the least.

STOP THE MURDER OF AN INNOCENT MAN!

On 2nd June 1995, Pennsylvania Governor Thomas Ridge signed a death warrant ordering that radical black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal be executed on August 17th at 10:00 pm.

A leader of the Black Panthers in his teens and later a supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE group, Mumia Abu-Jamal's hard-hitting exposes of racism and police brutality in Philadelphia throughout the 1970s earned him the respect of the African-American community and the hatred of the police. In 1982, he was framed and sentenced to death for shooting a police officer.

To demonstrate the political motivation behind his case, his supporters point out that there was neither physical evidence nor any credible witness linking him to the crime. As noted civil liberties attorney and leader of Mumia's legal team Leonard Weinglass pointed out at a June 3rd press conference: "Mumia Abu-Jamal never had a trial. Evidence was suppressed, witnesses were coerced, black jurors were purged." A motion for a stay of execution filed on June 5th documents nineteen constitutional violations during Mumia's 'trial' and presents new evidence based on eyewitnesses as well as a re-examination of medical and ballistics reports which tear apart the prosecution's bogus case.

The Judge Who Became Death Row's King: Philadelphia's Judge Sabo

In Philadelphia, a "trial depends literally on what judge the case is assigned to" admits Mayor and former District Attorney Ed Rendell. Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge Albert Sabo's record illustrates Rendell's point like no other. Called "his own jurisdiction" by one defense attorney, Sabo has sentenced more people to death (31 in total) than any other judge in the county.

For fourteen years, from 1978 until 1991, Sabo served on a select panel of judges hearing exclusively homicide cases. This Homicide Unit is unique to Philadelphia. In virtually every other jurisdiction, judges hear a random mix of cases. It is commonly held that hearing only murder cases can lead to a hardened and even brutal perspective.

Sabo is an icon of the 'hanging judge' and Philadelphia's wanton use of the death.

Nationwide, only Los Angeles and Houston have sentenced more people to death.

Sabo has heard fewer homicide cases than many of his colleagues and still ended up with far more death sentences. He has had more of his capital cases reversed on appeal than any other judge (11 in total). But in a system where the district attorney seeks the death penalty in well over half all homicide cases, the judge has served an important purpose: he efficiently dispensed of the grisliest and most controversial of cases which would have backed-up the dockets of his more evenhanded colleagues.

"A blind man can see that I didn't receive a fair trial, and now, to compound this outrage, I have been denied a fair PRCP hearing. As South Africa assigns the death penalty to the garbage can of history, Philadelphia whets its racist appetite as it bays for more black blood. In the most benighted sectors of South Africa, from the laagers of Afrikanerdom, to the drunken shebeens of the townships, all know that the Constitution protects the fundamental 'right to life'.

Here, in Philadelphia, the very place where the American Constitution was written, signed and published, the Constitution is no more than a passing thought; it is a minor hindrance, to be tolerated when able, and ignored when necessary, when the state's goals are death. What does it protect, save the interests of the established?"

Mumia Abu-Jamal, 19th July 1995

1st to 17th August: There is a 24hr non-stop picket/vigil outside the USA embassy in London organised by the 'Friends of MOVE'. For more information contact: 0181-519-9228

12th August: There is to be a demo in London organised by the Anarchist Black Cross. There might be an action in Bath that day also.

International Concerned Friends and Family of Mumia Abu-Jamal, PO Box 19709, Philadelphia PA 19143
telephone 215-476-8812

Prison Activist Resource Center, PO Box 3201, Berkeley CA 94703
telephone: 510-845-8813
fax: 510-845-8816
e-mail: parcer@igc.apc.org

In Defence of Literacy

Dear Editors,
I was much stimulated by Denis Pym's thoughtful reflections (22nd July) on my article, and on the role of the intellectual. I note that he would like my own experiences and opinions to be made more explicit. The truth is that I have never considered myself an intellectual, but here goes.

I had the good fortune – or misfortune (depending on how you look at it) – of failing my 11-plus. I was thus considered incapable of abstract thought. I was however introduced to the kind of practical skills that Denis clearly admires over literacy and was given a vocational education – of the sort that is now being re-introduced into schools. I therefore spent many hours as a young lad chiselling bits of wood, working on a lathe, constructing a one-valve radio set, doing sheet metalwork, bookbinding and making detailed drawings of bits of machinery. In my final year at school I spent half a day each week at what was called the 'forge'. We all pretended to be blacksmiths, messing about with bits of wrought iron and making endless brackets and poker. There was not much else we could make, as horses were on the way out. I was really good at the forge. Unlike my mates, I soon gleaned that you can do anything with iron if you get it hot enough – red hot that is. It was no good sticking your bit of metal at the edge of the coke, it had to go right into the middle of the furnace. This meant plunging your head and body deep into the sulphurous fumes. You've no idea what weird shapes went under the name of 'poker'. In retrospect, I have to admit that the only occupation in which I have ever displayed exceptional talent and skill was at the forge. Denis, I really should have become a blacksmith. Alas, I left school at fifteen barely literate and went to work in an iron foundry just like me Dad. He was less literate than I was and could barely read and write, so he spent his leisure hours drinking beer, playing dominoes, messing around with clock parts and talking to pigeons.

Now unlike Denis I'm quite keen on literacy because as a teenager I developed a real love of books and writing. The first article I ever wrote was on 'Bird Migration'. I've been writing ever since, on anything that strikes my fancy, simply out of pleasure. I long ago came to the conclusion that I could not be self-employed. No money, no entrepreneurial aspirations, no marketing skills, and, as said, no real talents – apart from bending iron. I certainly couldn't make a living from my allotment or my writing. My *Common Weeds of Malawi* was indeed a best-seller, but it earned me not a penny and nobody has approached me to make it into a film. Having in my time, and for varying intervals, been a foundry worker, a seaman, a docker, an ice cream seller, a clerk in a cement factory and a tea planter – as well as on the dole – I have never had a strong desire to become

a 'prisoner', as Denis describes it, in any of these 'employments' – so I became a teacher.

Now the 'dubious comfort' of 'state-funded employment' has its problems, its drawbacks, its contradictions and ambiguities. But in the present context what occupational niche hasn't? Most of the people I know who are self-employed are ardent supporters of capitalism.

Yes, it's true that US and Western governments don't normally act violently against radical intellectuals, but this is symptomatic of their contemporary power. When this power is threatened, or in contexts where corporate capitalism and the state has a limited hegemony, that state has generally harassed, imprisoned and murdered radical intellectuals – as the history of anarchism attests (witness Kropotkin, Ferrier, Magon). Leaving aside intellectuals like Said and Chomsky, the state still marginalises its critics or tries to assimilate them into the system by offering them rich rewards. So it is that many of my contemporaries who in the late '60s were strident Marxists or fiery anarchists now work for UNESCO, the World Bank, or act as consultants for multinational firms, or have become media figures who pronounce on the virtues of the market.

My article was simply a ramble, a critical review of some of the recent literature on the role of intellectuals. Its only aim was to stimulate thought, given the degree to which intellectuals in their various guises now dominate the cultural scene. I didn't present my own theory of the intellectual because I don't have one, other than the general feeling – applicable to teachers as well as the high-profile intellectuals – that intellectuals, to be true to their calling, should be critical of the powers that be and of established traditions and encourage others to do likewise. As Freud and Foucault put it with regard to their own writing, one should try to destroy prejudices and stimulate critical enquiry. Intellectuals by themselves, of course, don't necessarily change anything – though nobody can deny their enormous influence. And certainly there are plenty of self-ordained radicals around, particularly within the post-modernist fraternity, who loudly proclaim their radicalism while enjoying high status careers and lucrative salaries. Fundamental social change, however, will only come about through the struggles and initiatives of ordinary working people, and intellectuals can either hinder or they can participate and support these struggles, each in their own way.

Denis Pym's suggestion that literacy (writing) simply serves the 'centralist cause', i.e. it always supports corporate capitalism and the state, is simply mistaken. If he really believes this he should stop writing reviews and suggest the closing down of Freedom Press. Yet running through his interesting letter one detects the following dualistic schema:

cosmopolitan	local
abstract thought	relational thought
literacy	experience
intellect	practical skills
instrumental reason	art, music, drama
reason	wisdom
artificial	real
men	women

The state aligns – even equates – with the left side of this binary opposition, along with literacy, while anarchism is associated with the right side. But surely we need to go beyond these binary oppositions and embrace all aspects of human experience, abstract thought and practical skills, Aristotle's realism and Socrates' existentialism, the intellect and the imagination, thought and emotion, reason, to understand the world, and wisdom in our search for meaning, and literacy ... and all that is of value in oral traditions. The 'primitivism' that seems to underpin Denis's letter is one-sided. It reminds me of John Zerzan's writings – though he is even more extreme than Denis and sees language itself as a form of repression. I'm all for communication – kinetic, verbal and in the form of writing. Literacy? We need more of it not less.

Brian Morris

Dear Freedom,
'The Role of the Intellectual' by Brian Morris (*Freedom*, 24th June and 8th July 1995) was a most interesting and informative article. However, there are a couple of points I would like to add to this discussion. By their record, intellectuals are probably the last group on earth you should listen to for political advice. Much better to talk to the postman or your barber. Consider the great long list of apologists of tyrants and totalitarian ideologies one can draw up – Heidegger, Céline, Paul de Man and Pound the fascists, Sartre, Bernal, Joliet-Curé and Needham the Stalinists. And this is only off the top of my head.

Of all the intellectual crew, the 'committed' are probably the most dangerous because they are able to hide their dishonesty and power-lust behind a thick facade of self-righteous moralistic twaddle that does not hang so easily on the liberal apologist. The 'committed' will certainly 'expose ideology' – with the exception of their own ideology, which is the Truth and therefore sacrosanct.

Why is this so? Perhaps it has to do with the arrogance and elitism of intellectuals. They seem to suffer from the delusion that since they are brilliant in their speciality, they must be bright lights in all things – and especially politics. They are also far removed from the daily life of ordinary people and live entirely in a world of ideas. As a consequence, they are much more likely than working people to get caught up in utopian schemes and mistake their fantasies for reality.

Except for a tiny minority that have proven their worth over time, to hell with intellectuals. Give me a working class auto-didact any day!

Larry Gambone

Anarcho-Syndicalism

Dear Freedom,

D. Dane in a letter in the 29th April issue questions whether anarcho-syndicalism is still relevant to the modern world. Dane repeats some common misconceptions about what anarcho-syndicalists advocate: that anarcho-syndicalists want to organise everything on the factory model, that anarcho-syndicalists are at the same time exclusive and overly inclusive, and that anarcho-syndicalism is somehow synonymous with trade unionism. Dane also invokes the words of Malatesta to 'prove' that the anarcho-syndicalism has always been futile, as if Malatesta had the last word to say on the subject.

To begin, anarcho-syndicalists do not see the factory as the basis for organising the anarchist society of the future. We do see self-managed producer associations as the basis of organising the anarchist economy of the future, which is something different. Production is carried on in more places than factories, but even so it is only one aspect of social life. There will still be a need for communal and municipal organisations to deal with a wide range of issues, like the protection of the environment, the care of the young and aged, cultural and recreational activities, etc. Anarcho-syndicalist literature concentrates on industrial and labour problems, in the same way that anarcho-feminist literature concentrates on the problems of women, or anarcho-ecologist literature concentrates on environmental issues. It doesn't mean we find issues outside of industry to be unimportant.

Secondly, anarcho-syndicalists do not advocate the creation of 'anarchist only' labour unions. Instead we try to organise revolutionary labour unions. These are unions organised according to self-management principles, which have the ultimate goal of abolishing the wage system and the state. In the course of daily struggles, revolutionary unions attract workers who are not ideologically committed anarchists. There is nothing wrong with this, as long as these workers act as good unionists and continue to act in solidarity in struggles against the employers. The difference between revolutionary unions and trade unions is that, unlike trade unions, revolutionary unions do not promote class harmony within a welfare state, nor do they have a union bureaucracy tied to the existing system. Revolutionary unions, like the trade unions, seek immediate improvements in wages and working conditions, but by the means of worker-run organisation and direct action, not class collaboration. In short, anarcho-

syndicalism is nothing more than the practical application of anarchist principles to the labour movement.

Dane argues that the globalisation of industry makes anarcho-syndicalism less relevant when in fact the opposite is true. The ability of capitalists to move their operations from one country to another has indeed undermined the traditional trade unions. This makes anarcho-syndicalism more relevant since unions which ignore the needs of workers in other countries and look for government protection, only play into the hands of the capitalists. The large corporations no longer need the welfare state since they no longer produce solely for a domestic market. Instead the employers simply move from one country to another in search of the cheapest labour, and sell their products to the global middle classes. National governments, whether of the left or right, have succumbed to pressure by the corporations to help lower protections for their workers or risk capital flight from their countries. The only union successes the past few years have been where the trade unions have adopted anarcho-syndicalist tactics, direct action instead of relying on government mediation, and international boycotts against the worst employers.

Unfortunately until workers dump the trade union bureaucracies off their backs and organise worker-run unions, these successes will remain sporadic.

Finally it is time that someone put Malatesta's comments in their proper perspective. Malatesta was an insurrectionist anarchist who felt that any organisation which sought immediate improvements in the masses' condition short of overthrowing the capitalist system was suspect. What is true of the labour movement is just as much true of the ecology movement, community movement, feminist movement, pacifist movement or any other movement. Any time anarchists choose to pursue short-term gains, they will attract reformists and opportunists into their ranks. On the other hand, if anarchists don't seek immediate improvements in people's lives, the only people we will attract are ideological zealots and cranks. The problem is how to struggle for these immediate demands and not get absorbed into the system we fight against. Malatesta and the insurrectionist wing of the anarchists did not have the answer to this problem, which explains why they were eclipsed by the anarcho-syndicalists. Perhaps new varieties of anarchism will eventually arise with a better answer than anarcho-syndicalism. In the meantime, all anarchists should at least seriously consider revolutionary unionism as one possible approach and learn what it has to offer.

Jeff Stein
Illinois, USA

Green Anarchist

In our issue of *Freedom* dated 10th June 1995 we published a letter signed 'Luther Blissett' which claimed that the magazine *Green Anarchist* had published "a series of lies" about the Neoist Alliance, and included the statement: "Our problem with *Green Anarchist* is that they are still committed to Hunt's ideas about the creation of small communities, ideas which necessarily entail a massive decrease in the size of the population."

We closed the correspondence, as it was becoming increasingly irrelevant to our readership, but have received a letter from *Green Anarchist* in which they write: "Decentralisation doesn't 'involve a massive decrease in the size of population'."

Freedom has no dispute with either *Green Anarchist* or the Neoist Alliance. We have no reason to suppose that any of our correspondents have published 'lies' and regret any implication to the contrary.

This correspondence is now finally closed.

Freedom editors

please keep sending in
your letters and
donations . . .

DONATIONS

1st July - 27th July

Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund

Wolverhampton, JL, £4; Anon, £500; Portrush, RO'C, £5; Warrington, MSG, £3; Valencia, PD, £3.

Total = £515.00

1995 total to date = £919.50

Freedom Press Overheads Fund

Morecombe, RAD, £5; Dunedin, New Zealand, HF, £6; Portrush, RO'C, £2; Wolverhampton, JL, £4; Tokyo, MCT, £90.

Total = £107.00

1995 total to date = £469.50

Raven Deficit Fund

Macclesfield, LF, £6; Anon, £500.

Total = £506.00

1995 total to date = £760.50

The Gospel According to Fluffy

Dear Freedom,

Thank you for publishing my letter of 8th July in reply to Brian Morris's review in *Freedom* 13th May 1995 of my pamphlet *Christianarchy: a Primer in Christian Anarchism*. I don't want to play polemical ping-pong and have to seek to justify or explain myself all the time but would value one more crack of the whip in answering Brian Morris's and Francis Ellingham's letters in *Freedom* on 22nd July 1995 – as William Blake said: "opposition is true friendship".

Firstly to equate Quakerism with immanentism may be true of certain aspects of contemporary Quakerism, but is not true of early historical Quakerism which was always within the bounds of Christian 'Orthodoxy', God being both immanent and transcendent, both and not

either/or as is the case with classical theism or atheism.

Secondly the Quaker vision of the state may be closer to Minarchy – the belief in a minimalist government, i.e. the best government is the government which governs the least – than a fully blown anarchy, i.e. the best government is the government that governs not at all. I guess this is the context in which Berdyaev envisioned the state, minimalist, libertarian, awaiting eschatological transformation.

Thirdly Brian Morris keeps name-dropping Dave Icke into his writing all that time so that I wonder if he is maybe a secret fan after all! For me personally I am not in the least interested in self-deification or supermarket instant gurus, be it the pope, Icke or anyone from the religious cults that exploit people's

insecurity, fears and vulnerabilities, to the political cults like the SWP, RCP, etc. (the zealots of today?).

May we beg to differ? In Mark's Gospel it says: "whoever wants to be the first must be last of all and servant of all" (Mark, chapter 9, verse 35). This is the biblical doctrine of authority. Service to others, mutual aid as anarchists call it, the power of powerlessness.

In answer to Francis Ellingham, I thank him for writing a letter from his heart rather than the head. He writes "Love is God". I would say where Love is there is God also, and as Augustine said: "Love God and do what you will" (one of his more enlightened remarks).

Wayne John

[This correspondence is now closed – Editors]

London Anarchist Forum

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

- 1995 PROGRAMME -

- 11th August General Discussion
- 18th August General Discussion
- 25th August General Discussion
- 1st September What Anarchists Believe in (speaker Donald Room)
- 8th September General Discussion
- 15th September Marxism and Anarchism (speaker Dave Dane)
- 22nd September General Discussion
- 29th September Towards an Integrated Transport System (speaker Peter Neville)
- 6th October General Discussion
- 13th October Libertarian versus Sectarian Anarchism (speaker Peter Cadogan)
- 20th October General Discussion
- 27th October vacant slot
- 3rd November General Discussion
- 10th November Anarchism and Material Culture (speaker Kevin Littlewood)
- 17th November Discussion Group
- 24th November Arguments in Favour of Governments (discussion led by Michael Murray)
- 1st December topic to be announced (speaker Don Howard)
- 8th December General Discussion
- 15th December Christmas Party
- 22nd - 29th December no meetings

FREEDOM fortnightly

ISSN 0016 0504

Published by Freedom Press
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX
Printed by Aldgate Press, London E1

BEACH PARTY CORNWALL

Every year, on 6th August, for the past ten years a group of anarchists and other interested parties have held a beach party at Sennen, which is one mile from Lands End in West Cornwall, Britain.

This is to both remember the appalling nuclear bombing of Hiroshima on 6th August 1945, and to celebrate the fact that we are still alive - in spite of the race towards armageddon.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and we want this to be a 'happenick' to remember.

Bring food, drink, musical instruments, poetry, prose, and come and remember and celebrate with us. Also bring old tins of household paints and brushes to paint a new banner to replace the old one that is falling apart after its use at so many anti-nuclear events.

If the weather is utterly appalling then the 'happenick' will be on Nagasaki day on 9th August.

So, don't forget - commemorate Hiroshima day on Sunday 6th August on Sennen Beach, West Cornwall, Britain.

If you need any further information or have any ideas you want to contribute, telephone Pete le Mare on 01736 787056.

ANARCHIST DISCUSSION FORUM & EAST MIDLANDS ANARCHISTS

— ONE DAY CONFERENCE —

Saturday 9th September 1995
11.00am - 6.00pm

'Is an Autonomous Community Possible'

Derby Rainbow Centre
88 Abbey Street, Derby

For further details call
01773 827513

The Raven

Anarchist Quarterly number 29 on 'World War Two' out now

Back issues still available:

- 28 - Noam Chomsky on Haiti
- 27 - Fundamentalism
- 26 - Science (2)
- 25 - Religion
- 24 - Science (1)
- 23 - Spain / Emma Goldman
- 22 - Crime
- 21 - Feminism
- 20 - Kropotkin's 150th Anniversary
- 19 - Sociology
- 18 - Anthropology
- 17 - Use of Land
- 16 - Education (2)
- 15 - Health
- 14 - Voting
- 13 - Anarchism in Eastern Europe
- 12 - Communication
- 11 - Class
- 10 - Libertarian Education
- 9 - Bakunin and Nationalism
- 8 - Revolution
- 7 - Emma Goldman
- 6 - Tradition and Revolution
- 5 - Spies for Peace
- 4 - Computers and Anarchism
- 3 - Surrealism (part 2)
- 2 - Surrealism (part 1)
- 1 - History of Freedom Press

£3.00 each (post-free anywhere)
from

FREEDOM PRESS
84b Whitechapel High Street
London E1 7QX

Red Rambles

A programme of free guided walks in the White Peak for Greens, Socialists, Libertarians and Anarchists.

Sunday 12th August: Wirksworth to Alport Heights. Meet 11.00am at Wirksworth Market Place, Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Length 7-8 miles.

Telephone for further details
01773-827513

Dales Red Rambles

A new series of free guided walks in the Yorkshire Dales for Anarchists, Greens, Socialists and Libertarians.

Sunday 20th August: Upper Wharfedale. Buckden to Yockenthwaite. Meet Buckden car park at 10.45am. Length 6 miles.

Telephone for further details
01756-799002



FREEDOM AND THE RAVEN SUBSCRIPTION RATES 1995

	inland	outside Europe surface	outside Europe airmail	Europe (airmail only)
Freedom (24 issues) half price for 12 issues				
Claimants	10.00	-	-	-
Regular	14.00	22.00	34.00	24.00
Institutions	22.00	30.00	40.00	40.00

The Raven (4 issues)

Claimants	10.00	-	-	-
Regular	12.00	14.00	18.00	16.00
Institutions	18.00	22.00	27.00	27.00

Joint sub (24 x Freedom & 4 x The Raven)

Claimants	18.00	-	-	-
Regular	24.00	34.00	50.00	36.00

Bundle subs for Freedom (12 issues)

	inland	abroad surface	abroad airmail
2 copies x 12	12.00	13.00	22.00
5 copies x 12	26.00	32.00	44.00
10 copies x 12	50.00	60.00	84.00

Other bundle sizes on application

Giro account number 58 294 6905

All prices in £ sterling

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

To Freedom Press in Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street,
London E1 7QX

- I am a subscriber, please renew my sub to *Freedom* for issues
- Please renew my joint subscription to *Freedom* and *The Raven*
- Make my sub to *Freedom* into a joint sub starting with number 29 of *The Raven*
- I am not yet a subscriber, please enter my sub to *Freedom* for issues and *The Raven* for issues starting with number 29
- I would like the following back numbers of *The Raven* at £3 per copy post free (numbers 1 to 28 are available)
- I enclose a donation to Freedom Fortnightly Fighting / Freedom Press Overheads / Raven Deficit Fund (delete as applicable)

I enclose £..... payment

Name

Address

.....Postcode