

FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

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There could be more than enough for everybody ...

BUT NOT UNDER THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM

It is possibly true that in the first half of the century 'Tradition' played a dominating role in the western world: socially, sexually, class wise, and not least politically, even on the left.

So far as the anarchists are concerned, we had our gurus from Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin through to Kropotkin, not to mention a host of French, Spanish, German, Russian, Dutch and Italian comrades who made their names internationally one way or another.

But we are now living in a world not dominated by tradition nor, politically, by such personalities, but by capitalist technology (which is very profitable money-wise) and global capitalism which has adopted the nineteenth century workers' slogan slightly adapted to 'capitalists of the world unite'!

The anarchists alone, on the left, go on pointing out that the capitalist system far from being competitive is monopolistic and every day in the financial pages one reads of take-overs and amalgamations galore. As we go on saying, capitalist enterprises only compete either to take over or to join forces with their potential competitors. And needless to say when this happens a few jobs at the top are lost, but with a very handsome golden handshake. When workers lose their jobs as a result of amalgamations they may get something for the years they have worked for the firm, but it's peanuts compared with what the top boys have negotiated for themselves at the expense of hundreds or even thousands of jobs at the production level.

And what surely everybody should know by now is that global capitalism means that you invest in the countries where labour is cheapest, even if the labour force are children, as we know all too well. The media have actually pointed this out. What does the praying Prime Minister and his so-called New Socialist govern-

ment and overwhelming majority do to stop this slave trade? Nothing. Why? Because this government is with-it and accepts global capitalism.

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But of course we old fashioned socialists and anarchists still have nothing to say in favour of the capitalist system. It is rotten to the core, as we see daily, all the sleaze, not just of the Hamiltons *et alia* but in general. Capitalism by definition invites corruption. The very idea that you only 'produce' to make a money profit.

But what about human actions, starting with the expectant mother? All those years ahead of giving, but in return hopefully love and the same care for that mother in old age? This is not capitalism, this is the generous human exchange of love and humanity that makes life worthwhile and exciting and poetic.

Anarchists don't mind being accused of not being 'with-it' in this age of the Internet and all the other machines that dehumanise relations. We are not opposed to technology. We are opposed to capitalism, which not only exploits our fellow beings for profit, but to the technology which is geared to making more profits for the Gates *et alia*, at the expense of more and more people being put out of work.

Far from living in the past and all that crap, we attack the capitalist system because so many of us are obliged, in order to live, to take on jobs which are of *no value whatsoever to the community*. That's another definition of the capitalist system: jobs that are of no bloody social value but pay you a living.

But when are the underprivileged going to realise that they spend most of the best years of their lives doing jobs they hate in order to get the money they cannot do without just to live from day to day?

If anarchists are being charged with living in the past when they go on maintaining that we all have only one life and that we should be enjoying it with love, leisure and all the amenities that are now available for everybody, then surely it's the politicians - who are saying that we can't afford a good education, a good health service, good housing, you name them - who are living in the past.

Anarchists are not only advocating a world society of the future where there need be neither first worlds nor third worlds, but are calling on you and me to realise that the future will be disastrous if we don't decide that *we*, the ordinary people, the majority world-wide, realise that the future depends on us and on our having the courage to fight and to determine the kind of life that we want *now*. And no governments will provide. Which is why we go on being anarchists and do not rely on governments.

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Freedom

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CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN ANDALUCIA & LANCASHIRE

We don't need to read Spengler's *Decline of the West* or the current study of the Chief Inspector of Prisons into young offenders to know that there is public order trouble in our towns and cities and that the modern institutions are failing to tackle the problem. The evidence is before us on every street corner, in every suburban street and in every city centre.

In the last issue of *Freedom* we reported neighbours on one estate in Rochdale, Lancashire, threatened by "roaming gangs damaging property and persecuting pensioners". A local housing official claimed the 'local bobby' had not reported any trouble. Yet nationally, we are told in *The Independent* (20th November), that: "Up to eight jails for criminals aged 15 to 17 are to be established as part of a new approach to dealing with juvenile offenders". That sounds a bit like an old approach.

But let's consider the Castleton estate in Rochdale referred to. Two years ago I saw a pensioner harassed by kids who climbed on his roof – he ended up chastising them. Later a group of the kid's older relatives drove round to the pensioner's council house, smashed the glass on his front door, dragged him out and beat him up. The local police were impotent, but the matter was settled by the sons of the pensioner, who persuaded his assailants to leave Castleton.

Over a number of years a local thief by the nickname of 'Blacky' (no reflection on race, as he is white) tormented the working class families of our urban village. Terraced houses and council flats were robbed left, right and centre. House dogs were kicked and poisoned during the break-ins. Eventually the good people of Castleton became fed up and a group of lads went to Blacky's flat and beat him up. Blacky has since left town.

This kind of rough justice is what is known as the vendetta, and is still used in parts of southern Europe. Years ago, I think the social critic Colin Ward suggested that anarchists could do well to look at the history of the vigilante committees in the USA, and more recently, in a radio phone-in, he has criticised the police for discouraging citizen participation in the discouragement of crime.

Certainly in some areas the situation is very bad, because a council workman told me the other week that on some council estates in Rochdale, like Grieve, the thieves are breaking into rows of houses at a time. The police performance is generally recognised as pathetic, and some claim they have given up on break-ins.

THE LAW: 'PROTECTOR OF VESTED INTEREST'

As I write this I am dimly aware that the family of Lesley Molseed are considering a private prosecution against the man they believe murdered their daughter 22 years ago. This case was another ghastly example of the incompetence of the local police in Rochdale,



'Martin, stand in the corner and be ashamed of yourself'

(by Martin Kippenberger)

which led to an innocent man – Stefan Kisco – going to jail for many years.

Does this mean that despite New Labour and all its pretensions proffered by the eager Mr Jack Straw, Home Secretary, the modern institutions – including the law – are in terminal decline? Lewis Mumford in his book *The Condition of Man*, asserted: "Civilisations do not die of old age; they die of the complications of old age".

Our fine English novelist Charles Dickens, who a recent critic has dubbed "a law breaker", long ago detected a degenerative aspect to English law. Una Pope-Hennessy wrote about Dickens's view of the law as expressed in the novel *Bleak House*: "The fly-wheel of the story of *Bleak House* is the Court of Chancery; all cogs move in connection with it. Principal and lesser persons alike are all drawn insensibly into the machinery and are one by one lethally by the monster operating as Justice and Equity. The villain of the piece is the Law, protector of the Vested Interest. The Lord Chancellor and his Court represent the apparatus of evil."

At that time Lord Denman, Chief Justice of England, who disapproved of *Bleak House* because of its anti-legal theme, attacked it on a minor point. But the book-buying public still bought about twice as many copies of it as *David Copperfield*.

But what do Dickens and Una Pope-Hennessy mean when they say the law protects vested interest? Surely we are told the law protects the weak against the strong and powerful! It doesn't often seem to work that way. Take the story of Stephen Binns, told in the last issue of *Freedom*. He took in the dogs of his dying friend, creating a public nuisance to his nearest neighbours, and the local authority came down on him like a ton of bricks and threatened to evict him from his council flat. This threat has now been shelved owing to the

pressure of public opinion in Castleton.

Now consider a licensed and legalised public nuisance in nearby Heywood. Nearly two years ago the planning authorities of Rochdale Metropolitan Council approved a landfill operation proposed by Park Pit Landfill. This was widely opposed by the people of Heywood and their Gort Action Group because it would result in a massive nuisance to the local community. The council and their planners assured everyone it would be properly monitored and the company, a branch of the controversial Casey Group, would be forced to stick to the rules and considerations.

Pull the other one! It's got bells on! The Casey company and Park Pit Landfill have had a free run and Rochdale council and their planners are in the company's pocket. Far from forcing the Landfill company to keep to the conditions, the planners now claim they haven't the manpower to check up on the nuisance caused. *Private Eye* (August 1997) claims that the Casey Group has been giving "corporate hospitality" to councillors in Oldham, next door.

It seems like today a man like Stephen Binns who inadvertently creates a nuisance out of a spirit of altruism and kindness is to be treated more roughly than a company like the Casey Group which ransacks green areas and annoys residents and communities in the pursuit of commercial gain.

ANARCHISTS AGAINST ANARCHY

The anarchist position must be, I suggest, to look for justice within the community.

Commenting on the Andalucian anarchist influence in Spain, Julian A. Pitt-Rivers, the anthropologist, asserts "its insistence upon justice and order in the organisation of social relations, its refusal at the same time to tolerate any authority not vested in the community ..."

The nearest thing to this which is being consciously developed by the unemployed activists in Groundswell is the 'Three Strikes and You're Out' tactic. The 'Three Strikes' tactic involves identifying abusive and bossy officers in the Employment and Benefit Agencies who bully clients. For this anti-social behaviour they are likely to be photographed and their portraits blown-up and distributed on posters around their community.

The jobless Groundswell militants in their relation to the community are the Anglo-Saxon equivalents of the Andalucian *los obreros concientes* or *hijos del pueblo* (sons of the people). Their use of scorn, mockery and humiliation against those who breach the principles of human decency in a community is an example of how anarchists can use moral force to alter conduct for the better.

Once the stocks were used to expose anti-social behaviour. Today it is the wielders of power who, through the 'Three Strikes' and the camera, can be placed in the stocks by the 'sons and daughters of the people' – *los obreros concientes*. Social misbehaviour must be combated by social exclusion and scorn.

Let anarchists be against the anarchy of modern life.

Albert Shore

Three years for Green Anarchist editors

The first 'Gandalf' trial ended on 13th November, when three editors of *Green Anarchist* – Steve Booth, Noel Molland and Saxon Wood – were found guilty of conspiring to incite criminal damage and each sentenced to three years imprisonment. The fourth defendant, Simon Russell editor of the *Animal Liberation Front* newsletter, was acquitted.

While anarchists are utterly opposed to prisons, we understand the argument that in present-day society some dangerous people have to be put out of circulation for the public good. This argument, however, does not apply to this case in which well-meaning, likeable people have been convicted of nothing more than publishing words.

By comparison with similar cases the sentence seems unusually harsh. In early 1945, when civil liberties were curtailed for the war, three editors of *War Commentary*

were convicted of conspiring to incite members of His Majesty's Forces to disaffection, and the sentence was 'only' nine months. It is pure coincidence, of course, that the judge in the 'Gandalf' case, Judge Selwood, is the only civilian judge with a military rank, Major-General Selwood. Appeals have been launched against both verdict and sentence.

Two other 'Gandalf' defendants, Paul Rogers of *Green Anarchist* and Robin Webb of the *Animal Liberation Front*, are still awaiting trial.

DR

Stop Press: Steve and Saxon have written to us from prison. They say they have been well treated so far, but find the routine boring. They would welcome letters. Steve Booth (CK 4323) and Saxon Burchnell-Wood (CK 4322) are both at HMP Winchester, Romsey Road, Winchester SO22 5DF.

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Rich and Poor



The town of Dover has recently got into the news because a number of Romany families arrived there from the former Czechoslovakia. They are refugees from the persecutions in both those countries and arrived here in the mistaken belief that they would find shelter here from the persecution.

The truth is that they are now under virtual house arrest, women and children, in inadequate hostel accommodation, and many of the men are in Rochester Prison without charges and without explanation.

The establishment press have done their scurrilous best to create an atmosphere of xenophobia in this charming watering place 66 miles from London, but only 21 miles from Calais.

There was a guard of police which physically prevented me from entering a hostel full of Romany children and women. In conversations with inhabitants of Dover, it seemed to me that there was less xenophobia but a growing amount of sympathy for these unfortunate families. Groups have been picketing Rochester prison and a newspaper shop had a collecting box "for toys and books for the Romany children".

Nevertheless, there was great criticism of Kent County Council for its attitude towards the homeless in general and against the government of 'New' Labour which has provided not even a single soup kitchen to meet the emergency.

Many of you who read the scurrilous press will have been informed of a demonstration organised by the 'National Affront' purely to cash in on the free publicity they knew the right-wing press and radio were going to allot them. The whole demonstration reflects the manipulative nature of British politics. Just in case readers of *Freedom* need convincing, here are the facts.

The police forbade the Romany families to leave their 'homes' on 15th November at the time of the demonstration. The number of police who emerged from their vehicles amounted to over three hundred, heavily clad in regulation yellow protective clothing. Another fifty riot police were in their black outfits. The whole thing was supported by helicopters and sea-launches and two teams of surveillance cameramen.

The police's job was the shepherd the 32 National Front groupies on the sea front for about 75 yards. These worthies emerged from a coach carrying union jacks on poles and were looking very bewildered indeed. Many of them were octogenarians and none of them looked quite sure as to why they were there at all, and what was the purpose of their visit. The coach which disgorged them was, in fact, hired in *Newbury near Reading in Berkshire!* The Anti-Nazi League and the police battled on and the procession crept along the sea front at a snail's pace until the police called it a day and ordered the National Groupies back on to their coach. I am still wondering who these people were. With the Anti-Nazi League (numbering just over

There are some questions, including those about great imponderables like the meaning of life, which are only answered by not raising them. I have a friend who has never learned this and, when I meet him, he looks into my eyes to demand: 'Why are we here?' or some such enquiry to which I have no useful response.

In 1994 he was walking along the north side of Piccadilly in London when he bumped in Isaiah Berlin (who died on 5th November at the age of 88). Instead of raising a tangible topic, his question to the big thinker was "Could it have been otherwise?" Berlin leaned on his umbrella and thought. Then he answered "Yes".

Most of us would read this answer as a simple affirmation of the important truth of Berlin's great lecture of 1954 on *Historical Inevitability*, but this mutual friend persisted and asked if he gave this answer with joy or despair. The old man paused and thought again, and answered "Neither. With resignation."

I have a different temperament and would not have plagued the old philosopher with such basic questions, though maybe with more trivial ones about Proudhon, Bakunin or Alexander Herzen, a character much loved by both Berlin and me. I reckon that Herzen's essay *From the Other Shore*, for which Berlin provided an introduction (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1956), is one of the great political statements of the nineteenth century. And I was certainly thrilled by Berlin's great lectures on Russian thinkers which were mostly repeated on Radio 3 in the early 1950s.

In the 1960s, when I was editing *Anarchy* and hoped for an issue on the Greeks, I was at a lecture of his which referred to Zeno of Kitium, so I asked him to provide an article on Zeno for the issue of *Anarchy* that was eventually called "The Greeks had a word for it" (No. 45 for November 1964). When I reminded him of his willingness to contribute he replied that he had every sympathy with the periodical I was editing but had a prior obligation to Yale University for a book called *Three Turning Points in the History of Social Theory* in which the talk I attended was (he

a hundred) this consideration mattered not, for they kept up a continuous stream of abuse.

But then, comrades, why was there no opportunity to ascertain credentials. What if some opportunist right-wing publicist thought a good old xenophobic demonstration would put them in the limelight as defenders of the faith — but every idea needs a banner-carrying human to make it look credible. What if an old people's home in Newbury were emptied of its members with the promise of a good and free outing to the seaside to see the white cliffs of Dover ...

As these misguided people were shepherded back into their clapped-out non-roadworthy vehicle, oh Arthur, what did they do? They lifted their lame hands and waved goodbye every Union Jack of them.

And for the other lot, the police stalwarts then chased the Anti-Nazi League about the streets of Dover until their benzedrine wore off.

The man from Czech television confirmed to me that the persecution of the Romanies is rising to pre-war proportions. He told me that his dispatch will be censored and anyway the police have prevented him from interviewing the Romany families.

The coaches hired by the trade union Unison then took the Anti-Nazi League home and Dover's market square was left to the seagulls to ponder over the events of the day. These humans are crazy, they seemed to shriek!

John Retey

GOODBYE TO BERLIN

said) to appear. He added: "Of course, if you could wait a year or two I could promise to produce the article on Zeno which really would, I think, most probably harmonise with the rest of the issue, for I have doctrines on that subject. If, however, your 'Greek' number is scheduled for a fairly early date, then alas! I am very sorry, I should like to oblige."

Naturally the issue appeared without him, but this was no dismissal of an anarchist journal. He treated all publishers like that, and this is why other people have had to edit his essays and lectures. One of his obituarists remarked on his endless kindness and the way he "radiated generosity". He was unwilling to turn down an anarchist editor, or anyone else. But at the same time he admitted that his approach to writing was that of a taxi. He would only stop when hailed by some client in the street, but who might not be going in the same direction.

Berlin was, whatever he examined, a truly original scholar. The first book he wrote, for example, was *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment* for the modest and useful little series the Home University Library. It could have been the usual machine-made account of Marx, but Berlin made it a truly penetrating story. When K.J. Kenafick came to write his edition of Bakunin's *Marxism, Freedom and the State* (Freedom Press, 1950) he added an appendix as a device for reprinting some of Bakunin's writings which he had not come across elsewhere, but which he had found in the Berlin book on Marx. Many years later, of course, we all have access to these passages, but Berlin was excavating them before anyone else was interested.

This was not because of specific anarchist sympathies, but because of a more general libertarianism which had made Berlin incapable of describing a tyranny as anything other than a tyranny. At the end of the century it may seem incredible but, in the days when the university world he inhabited was dominated by Marxist academics, his rejection of all their theories of history was enjoyable. Berlin always seemed more radical

than he actually was because of his absolute rejection of all the excuses for totalitarianism that came trundling out from the Marxist historians.

Was it he, or someone else, who used to tell my favourite Polish joke? It was about this young man who met the priest or the rabbi and said: "Tell me, is it possible to have socialism in one country?" The priest or rabbi stroked his beard and said, "Well, yes it is, provided you live in another one".

But most of all I associate Berlin with the effort to persuade people to learn not from the apostles of Marxism but from the gentle and subtle Herzen, with his magnificent rejection of historical determinism:

"If progress is the end, for whom are we working? Who is this Moloch who, as the toilers approach him, instead of rewarding them, only recedes, and as a consolation to the exhausted, doomed multitudes crying 'We, who are about to die, salute thee', can only give back the mocking answer that after their death all will be beautiful on earth."

Now I have actually met anarchists, as well as Marxists, who cherished this kind of faith and it has continually seemed to me that Herzen's next sentences applied with particular relevance to them:

"Do you truly wish to condemn all human beings alive today to the sad role of caryatids supporting the floor for others some day to dance on ... or of wretched galley slaves, up to their knees in mud, dragging a large barge filled with some mysterious treasure and the humble words 'Progress in the Future' inscribed on its bows? An end that is infinitely remote is not an end, but a trap; an end must be nearer — it ought to be, at the very least, the labourer's wage, or pleasure in the work done. Each age, each generation, each life had and has its own fullness ..."

And Berlin reminded his listeners that "in particular, like the anarchist Max Stirner, Herzen saw danger in the great magnificent abstractions the mere sound of which precipitated men into violent and meaningless slaughter". Well, that's the history of the twentieth century.

Colin Ward

ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

CHURCH MERGERS GALORE Who dares to say this column is not up to the moment with the news that matters. The latest churchy news is unbelievable: namely that, to quote the *Independent on Sunday* (19th October), "every day another church is closed". That's good news, comrades. Let me give you the bad news in the same article, namely, to quote the Archbishop of Canterbury, "there are still 16,000 parish churches in England where the praises of God are sung". So don't let us imagine that we are beating the religious mumbo-jumbo. At 365 churches going out of business annually, it will take another forty years for there not to be another practising church. But it won't happen that way. All depends on you and me and what we believe in. The churches may well go on opening their doors, but we won't be filling the pews.

WHAT DO YOU SPEND ON CLOTHES? Obviously women spend more than men — or do they? I wouldn't know, but to read that Brits (no question of sex) spend £350 a year on clothes (which is less than our European friends who apparently spend more than £500) leaves me breathless and even depressed. I ask myself how can we hope to improve our society, our world, if the average citizen spends that amount just on clothes? Or am I living in another world?

OF COURSE I AM! Being neither on the Internet nor on a mobile phone, which these days take over whole pages of advertising in

the broadsheet dailies to convince one that one is nobody without them, I was amused and encouraged in my resistance to both when I read in one of those broadsheets that scientist Dr Andrew Prentice of Medical Research reckons "that carrying a mobile phone robbed the user of ten miles a year worth of exercise". He bases his view on the fact that bad diet (another modern take-away time-saver) "cannot explain the huge increase in the number of people who have become grossly overweight".

As one who lives and works in the backwoods, I could not help noting this phenomenon with a number of my old comrades when I attended the very stimulating Anarchist Bookfair last month. However, I didn't notice that they had mobile phones hanging round their necks.

As to the Internet, we have an example of addiction from Florida where a woman has lost custody of her children "after a judge had ruled that she was addicted to the Internet". Apparently, to quote the *Guardian* (24th October), "Internet addiction syndrome was identified by psychologists about two years ago". The witness testified that after the couple separated she moved the computer into her bedroom, put and lock on the door and began spending most of her time on-line.

Poor woman, you might well say, but I, for instance, stopped using the typewriter at least two years ago. My modest handwritten words are magically transformed by Jayne into what you have just been reading.

Libertarian

— Opencast Coal Mining — Profits before People

Before the general election the Labour Party promised to deal with opencasting, saying they would "implement a presumption against opencast mining and give greater emphasis to environmental protection". A consultation process has been going on since July and has, after consulting H.J. Banks, RJB Mining and all the other opencast owners, produced a consultation paper abandoning this "presumption against opencasting". Local community campaigns were not consulted.

At daybreak on Friday 31st October the Doe Hill House opencast coal mine at Tibshelf in Derbyshire was occupied by a coalition of environmental and industrial activists.

A police enquiry into offences against property is underway as a result of the action, so in order not to prejudice this in any way the reader will understand the need to be circumspect. About three hundred activists took part in the well prepared event. Although the police had had months to prepare themselves, they failed to turn up, and, inconceivably, some damage got done to plant, presumably by people who had nothing to do with the demonstration. The mine being put out of action, the obviously innocent mass of activists proceeded to the main entrance for a mass picket. Meanwhile, alerted by their

security, the company sent to assess the damage and estimates throughout the day ranged between £10-100,000. The site is expected to be out of commission for at least a week.

At the picket a mass meeting was held. Some then went to leaflet neighbouring villages, others to visit the Midland area office of the company H.J. Banks and Co in Chesterfield, whilst the remainder stayed on the picket. Leafleters in the village reported a good response from the locals, with the majority of people aware of the damage caused by opencast. Indeed a recent campaign by locals has thwarted Banks's application to extend the mine, although another company is said to be doing exploratory drilling in the neighbouring region of Newton.

Meanwhile 42 people had entered the offices of H.J. Banks in Chesterfield and requested that the company send a fax to the Department of the Environment, addressed to Mr Meacher, warning that "further protest is inevitable if the gathering anger of the communities is not heard. You will have to bear the responsibility for the consequences of your actions". Local 'nice' coppers kept negotiations going until the nasty heavy squad arrived and arrested everyone on suspicion of burglary. It was immediately clear however

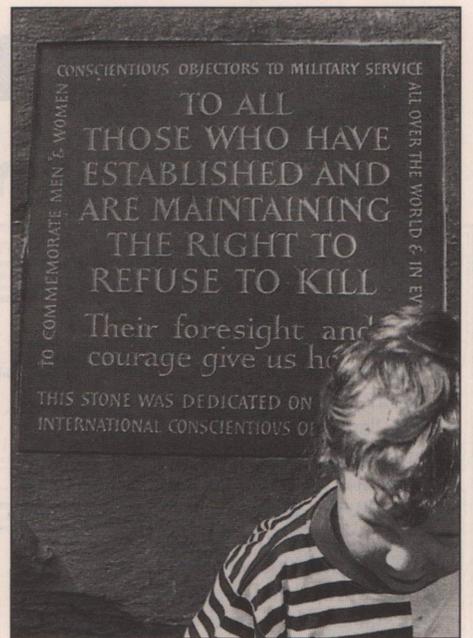
that this was done under powers granted to the police by themselves through the 'Police Ways and Means Act'. There was no reason to suspect any burglary at the premises but they wanted to purge the shame of their earlier failure. As far as I can gather, the investigation went on until noon the next day, by which time all the budding burglars had been given police bail to return to the station in January. This will give the police the opportunity to seek evidence into the damage at the site. It is difficult to see how they will achieve this without the aid of conspiracy laws. All the evidence points however to a spontaneous demonstration of anger by a small number of people ...

And how can we blame them? Who are the criminals? Doe Hill House covers an area of 150 football pitches, in a hole one football pitch deep. This massive concern provides employment for just twenty people, in an area where in the '60s six local mines would employ a thousand men apiece. Silverhill, the last mine in the area closed five years ago. Not one man was reemployed at Doe Hill House when it opened two years ago. The drive for profit destroys communities and land and exposes people to the hazards linked with dust pollution such as asthma and other lung diseases. Opencast mining makes massive profits for the owners at the expense of local people and the environment.

It is therefore surprising that, given the immense vulnerability of these sites, more acts of sabotage are not carried out, under cover of darkness with a few conspirators who would find it easy to get away.

The action at Doe Hill House was very well organised in all respects except one. It was envisaged that arrests would only be made for aggravated trespass. It is essential to differentiate daylight mass actions of occupation, and the types of activity appropriate to them, from other more clandestine actions. Mix the two unilaterally and you leave a lot of people feeling vulnerable and give the police the opportunity they need. Organisers need to make it clear what the boundaries of their action are.

Contact: No Opencast, 190 Shepherds Bush Road, London W6 7NL. Tel: 0171-603 1831 Fax: 0171-610 4431



Remember them!

On 15th May 1994 a commemorative stone was unveiled in Tavistock Square by Michael Tippett, as you may remember, and dedicated to all conscientious objectors.

Eleven years earlier I had put the idea of having such a commemoration, with either stone or plaque, to the GLC (I was then a member of the ILEA). They had put it to the Greater London Regional Labour Party. It was eventually agreed, but the GLC was shortly abolished and the LRB could find, apparently, no trace of such an agreement. However, finally and eventually, it was, of course, the PPU which took up the proposal.

At that time, when the stone was erected, I wondered whether it would be useful to arrange a meeting to consider the possibility of having some kind of annual event around the stone. Individuals from relevant and like-minded organisations could be invited. If such an event were considered feasible, by that meeting, then a possible format might include music, news from organisations involved, dancing, prose/poetry reading, a minute's silence, or alternatively something quite different.

Perhaps you could pass the suggestion of a meeting on to any acquaintances/ friends you may have in other organisations, and do give them my name and telephone number.

Edna Mathieson

17 Setchell Way, Willow Walk, London SE1 5XR. Tel: 0171-237 3731

Thank You Comrades and Friends

You, our comrades and readers, know that Freedom Press is not a commercial outfit. We would have long ago given up if we expected to make money out of *Freedom* or *The Raven* and, as everybody remarks, Freedom Press publications are so cheap compared to the equivalent commercially produced left-wing publications – but then we don't pay our writers, and our printers, Aldgate Press, are more than reasonable: they are generous.

Apart from those perennial Friends of Freedom Press, we have in the last few years benefited from a number of legacies which have made it possible to bring out *Freedom* fortnightly (instead of monthly) and to reach the 36th issue of *The Raven*, neither of which cover the cost of production and distribution. Freedom Press publications now has some sixty titles in print (and for all of which we have paid our dear printers and the binders, unlike many other left-wing publishers we know of).

Do you suspect that having thanked you all so profusely we will now bring out the

'begging bowl'? No. But as a number of you realise, a £14 *Freedom* subscription for 24 issues includes 24 x 20p in postage, or nearly £5, and we have been warned that postage is about to go up. As you all know, the unemployed among our readers can have *Freedom* for a mere £10 a year post free, so it's the 'prosperous' among us who must dig a little deeper into their pockets to make all this go on working, because we can assure you we are not proposing to call upon the government to sponsor Freedom Press as a good cause.

Again, our warm thanks to all of you who support our work and welcome to our new supporters who will help to make this a record year, not only of donations (which are always more than welcome) but of new readers to anarchist literature.

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Total = £57.50

1997 total to date = £819.87

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London SW16, SD, £5; Faversham, DJ, £1; Ashford, MJ, £6; Heidelberg, RS, £2.50; Fareham, JB, £1.50; Dalry, FEG, £1; Oxford, JB, £6; Abingdon, MB, £17; Glasgow, TK, £2; Wolverhampton, JL, £5; Beckenham, DP, £30.

Total = £77.00

1997 total to date = £776.80

Raven Deficit Fund

Faversham, DJ, £1; Glasgow, BB, £1; Abingdon, MB, £17; Glasgow, TK, £1; Beckenham, DP, £30.

Total = £51.00

1997 total to date = £473.00



African Anarchism

African Anarchism: the history of a movement

by Sam Mbah and I.E. Igariwey

published by See Sharp Press, 120 pages, £6.95 (post free inland, please add 15% p&p for overseas orders from Freedom Press)

This short book represents an exploratory journey into hitherto uncharted territory. Its underlying thesis, outlined on the first page, is that "anarchism as a social philosophy, theory of social organisation and social movement is remote to Africa – indeed almost unknown". But "anarchism as a way of life is not at all new to Africa". In other words, what may be termed 'unconscious anarchism' is deeply embedded in some aspects of traditional tribal life and their revival could provide the basis for the development of a just and egalitarian society.

The first quarter of the book is given over to a general description of anarchism and its role in history, and it is not until Chapter Three that we actually arrive in Africa. Here the authors look at anarchistic precedents and hypothesise that, to a lesser or greater extent, most African societies originally contained strong 'anarchistic elements' and that these

traditional values were buried, but not destroyed, by the onset of colonialism and capitalism. They also examine various aspects of African socialism with particular emphasis on Nyere's 'Ujamaa' policy which casts the village in the role of "incubator of the future". A brief reference is also made to nascent anarchist groups in South Africa, Nigeria and elsewhere.

In Chapter Four, Mbah and Igariwey argue that the development of socialism in Africa was a direct response to the imposition of capitalist modes by the colonising powers. Indeed, there were trade unions in Nigeria as early as 1897, even before the "scramble for Africa" had run its course, and their counterparts were to play a decisive part in the struggle for change in South Africa two generations later.

Chapter Five seeks to tease out the reasons why socialism has, to date, been a failure in Africa. As well as looking at Nigeria, the main example they draw on is again the 'Ujamaa' experiment in Tanzania. Both appear to have collapsed because their respective governments regarded the peasants (perhaps 90% of the population) as the *problem* rather than the solution to low agricultural productivity. On a

pan-continental basis, one-party ideologies, corruption, social instability and exploitation by foreigners prevent the development of socialism.

The following chapter embodies a list of factors militating against the development of anarchism: educational and legal systems inherited from the colonialists, military intervention in politics, ethnic issues and religious and cultural mores.

In their conclusion (Chapter Seven) the authors clearly recognise that "the prospects for anarchism in the African continent ... are inextricably tied to the future of anarchism worldwide". They also note that individual economies find themselves in a parlous condition, because the nation state has failed there, as it has elsewhere, adding that there are specifically African problems in relation of the concept of self-determination. However, they continue to remain optimistic because, generally speaking, the continent "lacks a strong capitalist foundation, well developed class formations and a stable entrenched state system". For Mbah and Igariwey the way forward is clear, given the pronounced anarchist tendencies of some traditional societies.

This book represents a lucid exposition of a complex and little-known subject. It is well laid out with copious footnotes and a comprehensive bibliography and index. A map might have been useful, given western ignorance of African geography – how many of you can visualise the location of the countries listed on page 104: Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and so on?

The authors argue that a return to the original form of African communalism represents a

solution to current difficulties. However, they appear to think that this was an almost universal social phenomenon, while it seems to me that this was definitely not the case.

On page 34 they comment on "the palpable absence of hieratic structure, government apparatuses and the commodification of labour". But many, perhaps most, African societies were ruled by paramount chiefs (i.e. kings) and furthermore a number of what were effectively nation states, such as Songhia and Dahomey, existed long before the arrival of the Europeans. Also you don't need the commodification of labour if you can draw on a large pool of slaves and oppressed women. If they were communalistic and egalitarian, why did most African societies dovetail so well with colonialism? In Anglophone Africa at least, the policy of indirect rule meant that the hegemony of the chiefs continued seamlessly as before through the medium of the 'native authority', a kind of omnipotent county council.

The authors have also underplayed the role of tribalism, which is probably still the dominant socio-political force in Africa rather than the externally-imposed nation state, and even more of a barrier to the establishment of communities founded on anarchist principles.

These criticisms aside, *African Anarchism* fills a gap in the literature and provides a hopeful alternative view for those who, like the present writer, have been increasingly distressed by recent historic trends in Africa.

Adrian Walker

— 21st CENTURY NOTES —

The Long Noses

In the West, it is not uncommon to refer to different classes in terms of their caste differences. In Nepal, the division between social classes is to a very large extent based on caste. The elite are the Bahun priestly caste who aided the Malla kings of Gorkha in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in stabilising the new empire of Gorkha (which forms the basis of modern Nepal) by imposing Hinduism throughout the newly conquered territories and displacing local cultures. Hence the division today between the Bahun (and Chettri) tribes, who are of Aryan descent and 'long-noses', and the indigenous Tibeto-Burman hill peoples of Nepal, who are 'short-noses'.

Religion and culture have to a very large extent been monopolised by the long-noses, and it is only since the mini-revolution of the 1950s that education for the masses has even been contemplated, and it is only since the democratic revolution of 1990 that the many tribal languages of Nepal have received any recognition at all within the political, communication and education systems.

Today the predominance of the Bahuns and Chettris is bitterly resented by the growing number of educated and well-to-do hill peoples (who have benefited from their service in British and other foreign armies). The response of the latter has included a rejection of Hinduism and a return to paganism/shamanism, and a celebration of the pre-Malla kingdoms. My own people, the Rais, are increasingly turning in such a direction. The tension over this social gap is a matter of public debate and discussion (unlike the social gap between the very lowest castes/untouchables and the higher echelons, or between the slave classes and the land-owning classes).

Despite such debate, traditional attitudes persist. On learning that I had written a book on Noam Chomsky and, after leafing through the book, a prominent Nepali academic (a Bahun, of course) could not stop himself exclaiming in surprise: "A Rai boy could write such a book!" The analogy is not exact, but one might imagine a white Oxford don remarking, 'A Black boy could write such a book!'

Addressing the 'Intellectuals' Council' of Nepal on the subject of Chomsky's political ideas, I was struck again by the delicious contradiction of lecturing the intellectual class on the corruption and 'institutionalised stupidity' of the educated classes. As in India, the audience shied away from this element in Chomsky's social commentary in their response, preferring to remain at the level of international affairs. Several speakers emphasised the importance of Chomsky's critique of the Western mass media, pointing out that even in the Third World, Western media outlets have enormous influence, particularly through satellite television (one can see satellite dishes throughout Kathmandu Valley and across the country). However, speakers often used Chomsky's critique of the Western mass media and of US foreign policy to promote their own political agendas. One focused on the recent visit of the Chinese president to the USA, and the attention given by CNN to a Black demonstrator with a placard comparing Jiang Zemin with Adolf Hitler.

China is one of the biggest aid donors to Nepal (which it borders), and is widely regarded as Nepal's best friend: criticism of China by the West was not well-received by those in the Intellectuals' Council, so far as I could see.

(As an aside, I should point out that if Chomsky were trying to establish a point about this coverage by CNN, he would compare it with the treatment of a similar media event – protests against a visit by President Suharto of Indonesia, for example. One cannot establish media bias without such a comparison.)

I found it interesting that there was a great deal of interest in Chomsky's work at the Intellectuals' Council. It is by no means obvious that Nepali intellectuals should find commentary on US foreign policy and the Western mass media of immediate concern to them. The degree of excitement over his analysis is perhaps a measure of the power of Western states in Third World affairs, and the deep penetration of Western culture and media manipulation even in areas such as Nepal.

Incidentally, everyone in the audience at the Intellectuals' Council had a long nose.

Milan Rai

BLACK MARKS

The Meltzer Press, which was formed after the death and from the estate of Albert Meltzer, has been publishing a series of rather expensive so-called limited editions in spiral-bound A4 format of books about the Spanish anarchist movement, including Stuart Christie's *We, the Anarchists!*, "a Study of the Iberian Anarchist Federation" (£12.95 for 106 pages), and the first English translation by Paul Sharkey of the first volume of Jose Peirats' standard history of *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution* (£27 for 200 pages). It has now also published *The Albert Memorial: The Anarchist Life and Times of Albert Meltzer*, consisting of a 24-page illustrated A4 pamphlet, costing £5, and containing the predictable hagiography of the saintly subject along with the predictable anathema of demonic dissenters.

An 'Appreciation' by Phil Ruff merely expands what he has written before, without any serious attempt to check Meltzer's unsupported claims and with the solemn assurance that Meltzer's autobiography, *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels*, "frequently plays down his real contribution to anarchist resistance activities". There are a few other interesting passages. We are told that at the end of the Second World War "the police closed down *War Commentary* and arrested its editors", although *War Commentary* (like *Freedom* in the First World War) survived the imprisonment of its editors without missing a single issue. We are told that after the war "an influx of middle-class intellectuals and pacifists grouped around *Freedom* was casting its baleful influence far and wide", with a later reference to the quietism of *Freedom*, without any evidence. We are told with evident approval that "liars and liberals" was "a term coined by Albert for the *Freedom* editors". We are told that Leah Feldman had "a sentimental attachment to *Freedom* (which she never read)", again without any evidence.

We are told that "his association with comrades who were active in armed struggle groups during the 1970s has often resulted in Albert being cast in the role of an anarchist 'Godfather' figure (usually benevolent, sometimes sinister), which continued after his death"; a footnote refers to an hostile article about the Murrays in the *Irish Times* in 1976, and also to the obituary of Meltzer in *The Independent* in 1996. The latter claimed that he was "involved in the turn towards urban guerrilla methods which appealed to frustrated revolutionaries and

culminated in this country in the Angry Brigade in the 1970s"; this statement, which was immediately challenged by a lawyer's threatening letter, could hardly be doubted by anyone who read or heard what Meltzer was writing and saying at the time. It was expressed more explicitly in Alice Nutter's favourable obituary on the Internet: "In the '70s Albert had links with the Angry Brigade" (<http://burn.ucsd.edu/albert2.htm>); this isn't mentioned, although we are told that he was "eager to explore the possibilities of the Internet".

Phil Ruff's appreciation is followed by Stuart Christie's obituary (versions of which appeared in the *Guardian*, *Times* and *Daily Telegraph*), Stuart Christie's tribute at the funeral, and a couple of tributes from Spanish anarchists. Then comes a Postscript by 'Acrata', attacking Vernon Richards's article 'Instead of an Obituary' in *Freedom* and Richard Boston's article about the anarchist movement in the *Guardian Weekly* a year ago, and finally a tribute by Meltzer's friend Simon McKeown. There are also an advertisement for the Kate Sharpley Library and an announcement for the Meltzer Press. The verdict on all this material is that you don't need to be a liberal to be a liar.

Meanwhile *Black Flag* has also been revived following Meltzer's death and has produced several issues containing some interesting material, including general attacks on *Freedom* and particular attacks on individuals connected with it. Number 210, which appeared at the beginning of the year, was a good example. It opened with an Editorial repeating the ritual sneers at "the Liars and Liberals of Angel Alley" (i.e. *Freedom*), and included Peter Kropotkin's article 'Syndicalism and Anarchism'. According to the editorial introduction this was, "as far as we know, the first English translation of this article, based on the German reprint published in June 1977 by *Die Anarchistische Vereinigung Norddeutschland* (Anarchist Union of North Germany) which was a direct reprint of the article from *Der Syndicalist* (Berlin) in 1908, originally from *Les Temps Nouveaux*". The German translation was actually first published in 1921, and the article was originally published in 1912, not in French but in English – in *Freedom*! Oh, dear.

NW

Publications of the Meltzer Press may be obtained from PO Box 35, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 2UX.

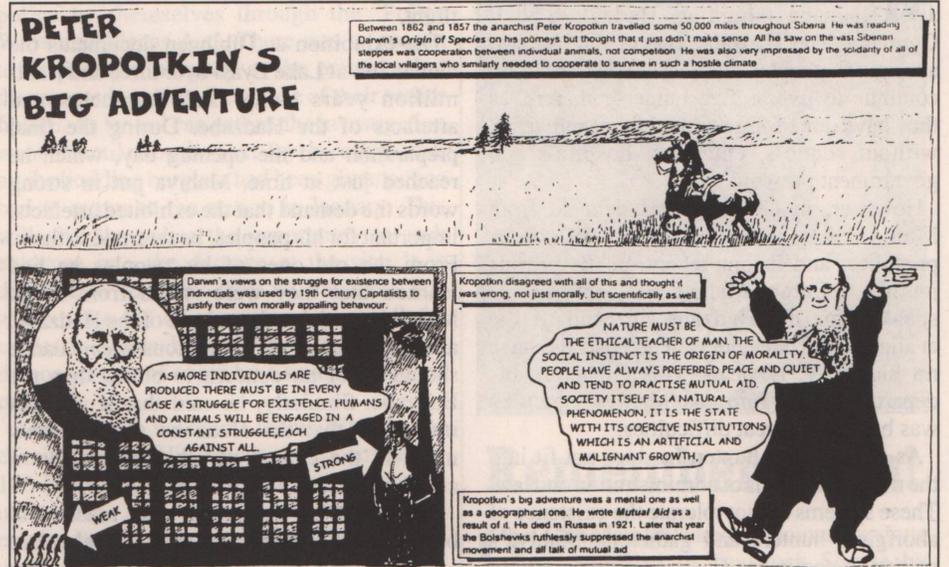
FOOD FOR THOUGHT ... AND ACTION!

LITERATURE TO SMASH OPEN YOUR PIGGY BANK FOR

Bakunin and the Italians by T.R. Ravindranathan, McGill-Queen's University Press. Covering the period 1864 to 1877 for the most part, this fascinating book sheds an almost unique light on this period of Bakunin's life and activities and so constitutes in part a biography and in part a history of the Italian anarchist movement. Bakunin played a major part in introducing socialist and anarchist ideas into the country, where they were virtually unknown prior to unification in 1860 due to a preoccupation with nationalism and republicanism as personified by Garibaldi and Mazzini. But the hold on the public imagination by these two was gradually neutralised by Bakunin's masterly tactics. His pre-anarchist activities and expulsions from country after country, his fixation with plots and secret societies, and his involvement with the First International, including a wealth of material on his disputes with the Marxist faction are all examined carefully, as are his relationships with Mazzini, Garibaldi, Cafiero and others. The author also analyses the effects of the Paris Commune on the Italian political climate, and on the Bakuninist-inspired insurrections of 1874-77, some of which Bakunin, Malatesta and Cafiero took part in. Several such incidents were ridiculous from the outset, quickly degenerated into chaos, then collapsed into total farce worthy of a Dario Fo play. After the failure of one of them Bakunin was discovered about to commit suicide, and so hilarious were some of these armed adventures that, but for the sources cited in the footnotes, one would think they'd been invented. As the author points out, Bakuninism may have failed in Italy in the long term but it triumphed over Mazzini's bourgeois republicanism, succeeded brilliantly in out-manoeuvring the Marxists and was the first socialist movement there to awaken people to the nature of the state and the need to oppose it. An easy, very informative read and highly entertaining, with an index, extensive bibliography and copious notes. We have a limited quantity of this useful book at a price which suggests they've fallen off the back of a lorry. When they've gone, this 332-page hardback title, if still available, will revert to its original £40 price, but for now it's only £7.99.

From Urbanisation to Cities: toward a new politics of citizenship (revised edition) by Murray Bookchin, Cassel Global Issues series. Following on from his earlier *The Limits of the City*, Bookchin here elaborates on his theme of the loss of control over our lives in our immediate environment and on the importance of reclaiming the running of our cities, villages and neighbourhoods by confederations of face-to-face assemblies of local people in a new 'politics of citizenship'. Not as part of the state structure but against it. In this emphasis on the vital role of democratic control of human settlements by their inhabitants, he follows in a long line of anarchists and libertarians – be they geographers, architects, sociologists, town planners, ecologists or just plain residents – from Elisée Reclus and Kropotkin through Ebenezer Howard, Peter Hall and Jane Jacobs, to our own Colin Ward. Tracing the evolution of the city from its earliest forms to the present, he shows how 'citizenship' has become meaningless without democratic control, and how urbanisation has become the antithesis of the original urban freedoms because politics is now seen as the exclusive domain of a privileged élite rather than the right of all inhabitants of the polis or city. Back to the land? Sure, and back to the town too, in its original democratic form. The prologue explains that the book's previous title was *Urbanisation Without Cities* and before that *The Rise of Urbanisation and Decline of Citizenship*. The current edition has many alterations and much wholly new material. The chapter 'The New Municipal Agenda', on both Britain and Europe as well as the United States, he brings up to date by including an historical overview of local democracy in Britain, the Tory government's privatisation of many local council functions, the explosion of quangos and the increasing disillusionment with political parties and the state, both here and in the US. Two new appendices have been added, and there is an economical footnotes section and an index. A limited quantity of this important title must have fallen off the same lorry that was carrying the account of Bakunin's bottom-pinching period, and while stocks last they are a mere £3.99 for your 280 pages, after which they will revert to £16.99 (calculate postage and packing on original prices).

Godwin's Political Justice* by Mark Philp, Cornell University Press. William Godwin's 1793 masterpiece, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, usually known simply as *Political Justice*, created a stir and found a large receptive audience when first published, and is so good that it is still around two centuries later (although the Penguin edition is currently out of print here). Philp's book examines the work in scholarly detail, even comparing Godwin's three different editions and, as NW found when reviewing it, is very impressive: "Political Justice presents its readers with several well-known problems – there are significant and often drastic variations between its three early editions (1793, 1796 and 1798); the author's meanings and motives at various times and in various contexts are often ambiguous or even contradictory; the real place of the book in the history of political thought is uncertain; and so on. Philp approaches these problems through a close comparison of the texts of the three editions of *Political Justice*, but also of Godwin's manuscript diaries and other notes, and he brings in Godwin's background



picture taken from the *Anarcho-Surrealist Calendar 1998* (see below)

and influences, his other relevant writings, his personal experiences and the political circles he moved in (one special feature is a very detailed analysis of his meetings with his political associates). Philp emphasises – and perhaps over-emphasises – Godwin's place in the world of 'Rational Dissent' (the progressive Nonconformist counter-culture of eighteenth century England), and by contrast under-emphasises Godwin's debt to the 'Philosophes' (the freethinking intellectuals of eighteenth century France); if this is a fault, it is a refreshing one, since it redresses the old imbalance the other way, and rightly reminds us of where Godwin came from, even if it wrongly argues that he stayed there – remaining some kind of Christian even when he has explicitly rejected Christianity. Philp questions the accepted view that *Political Justice* derived directly from the debate over the French Revolution, and he stresses Godwin's non-revolutionary tendencies. He questions the traditional view that *Political Justice* is an incoherent book, and he stresses that Godwin's philosophical position was perfectionist rather than utilitarian. He argues that Godwin's views were more widely shared than is generally recognised, referring to his part in the civil liberties struggle of the 1790s (though he considers that Godwin was less important in this context than is often claimed) and the

political elements of his novels. Philp argues that Godwin's revisions to *Political Justice* represented neither a timid retreat from extremism into moderation nor a fussy wish to tie up loose ends, but rather a pragmatic attempt to adapt his proposals to the changing political situation, as the revolutionary movement and the radical intelligentsia both declined. He also argues that Godwin's belief in the possibility of a society without government was a rational position to hold in his social circle two centuries ago (he makes no comparison – or contrast – with the present!), and he incidentally attacks both the old liberal and the new Marxist sneers at Godwin and his circle. The lasting impression given by the whole work is that it is a convincing attempt to raise the status and stature of Godwin and also an entertaining and challenging book to read – helped by having notes on the page rather than at the end of the book." Hardback, 278 pages, publisher's price £30, our price only £8.95.

Alternative Press Review: your guide beyond the mainstream spring/summer '97 (but published very late due to the bankruptcy of one of their main distributors), CAL Press. Articles on investigative journalism, contemporary urban theory and the increasingly visible bisexual community, amongst others. Plus many pages on alternative magazines and books, letters and more. 68 pages, £3.

Class War no. 74. Although they are continuing the numerical sequence and the look – more or less – this is the new *Class War* dancing on the grave of the old, so to speak. But have they lost their bottle already? The picture of Diana's mangled car – caption: "Dead as a Dodi" – is on the back page, hidden away. And on the front page? The Spice Girls. Do me a favour. 10 A3 pages, 70p.

And not forgetting the **Anarcho-Surrealist Calendar 1998***, a splendid illustrated one to hang on your wall and remind you of that revolution you were going to make ... one day. It disappeared like hot-cakes at the bookfair. Complete with quiz questions for each month. A4 landscape, £4. **KM**

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Adrian Mitchell

To celebrate his 65th birthday, two books of his poems have been published:

HEART ON THE LEFT Poems 1953-1984

is a handsomely produced paperback with illustrations by Ralph Steadman (Bloodaxe Books, 320 pages, £9.95)

BALLOON LAGOON and the Magic Islands of Poetry

is a collection of poems for children, in a large format, lavishly illustrated by Tony Ross (Orchard Books, 110 pages, £9.99)

Richard Boston

STARKNESS AT NOON

Those of our readers who remember Richard Boston's feature 'Anarchy Among the Anarchists' that appeared in the *Guardian Weekend* magazine a year ago, may like to know that it is now available in permanent form in a new collection of his essays to be published on 4th December by Five Leaves Publications (218 pages, £7.99). A review will appear in the next issue of *Freedom*.

We shall be pleased to take orders for these titles. Please add 10% p&p inland, 20% overseas.

Why Work? Arguments for the Leisure Society

has just been reprinted for the fourth time. It contains classic essays by Bertrand Russell, William Morris and Peter Kropotkin, contemporary articles by George Woodcock, Dennis Pym, John Hewetson, Tony Gibson and many more, plus six double-page drawings by Clifford Harper, edited by Vernon Richards with an eighteen page introduction and fifteen articles on 'Production for Use versus Production for Profit'.

210 pages ISBN 0 900384 25 5 £4.95*

Freedom Press
84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1

HOW A HUNTER-GATHERER FROM THE HADZABE PEOPLES MET CONTEMPT AND PREJUDICE IN EUROPE

Mahiya is the first spokesman for the Hadzabe (singular: Hadza) to visit Germany. The Hadzabe, one of the last two aboriginal peoples in East Africa, want to continue to live as free hunter-gatherers, as they have done for a hundred thousand years, without schools, churches, hospitals and government pressure.

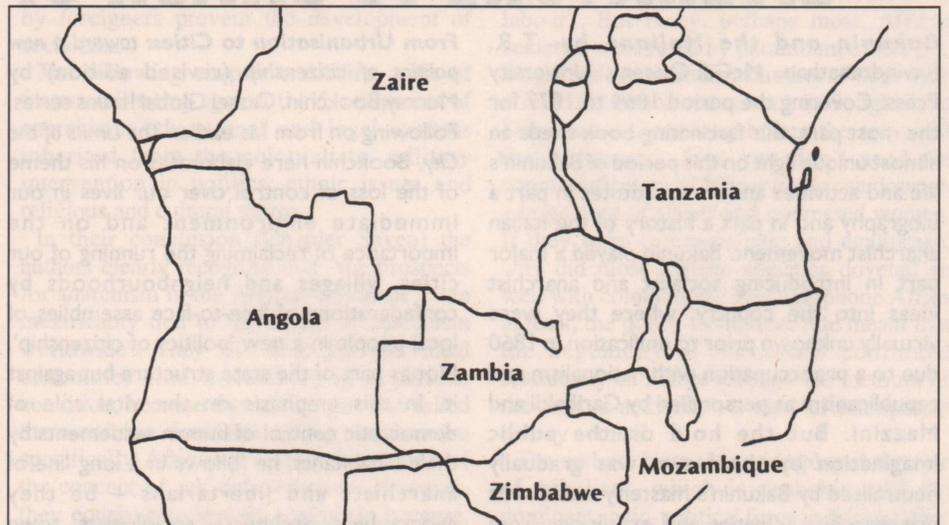
However, in Germany this demand from Mahiya was repeatedly met with fear, prejudice, and incomprehension. Before his journey to Europe Mahiya was confirmed as speaker for the Hadzabe by each of the available Hadzabe elders. The Hadzabe have no hierarchy, no leaders. Even before his departure from Tanzania Mahiya's journey was beset with great difficulties.

As a traditional hunter, he does not fit into the modern systems of administration and law. These systems do not tolerate the existence of aboriginal hunters and gatherers. Mahiya's motive in coming to Europe was precisely to protest against their situation, against the oppression which is driving his peoples to the edge of extinction. Mahiya's passport was received only after weeks of considerable effort and expense. To get the passport a pre-paid airline ticket had to be shown. This was not available in Tanzania to someone without a valid passport. Only in Kenya could a ticket be obtained and then only from one airline company. A German visa was the next hurdle. Although four invitations were presented – from the United Nations Working Group for Indigenous Peoples in Geneva, from the London School of Economics, from the University of Tübingen, and from the Friends of Peoples Close to Nature – Mr Gruber in the German Embassy in Dar es Salaam insisted on Mahiya's presence. He demanded bona-fides, and that the illiterate Mahiya be brought from the bush to his office. In the time remaining for the flight this was impossible. A car was sent from Hamburg to Frankfurt to collect Mahiya at the airport. He did not arrive on the scheduled flight. His appearance at the opening of an exhibition in Tübingen on the Hadzabe appeared unlikely.

Two days later however he arrived on another flight.

The exhibition at Tübingen documents the human life at Lake Eyasi over three and a half million years using skull fragments and artefacts of the Hadzabe. During the final preparation and the opening day, which he reached just in time, Mahiya put in strong words the demand that the exhibited artefacts, important for his peoples, be returned to them. From the old ones of his peoples he had learned that they were stolen from them. Mahiya stated that the culture of the Hadzabe, and in particular the mysterious *epeme* dance should be of no concern to others than the Hadzabe. Similarly, he said that it was not important that the Hadzabe should know much of the culture of other people, or of civilised society.

Eventually an agreement was reached to bring the whole exhibition to Hadzabeland, or to make some financial compensation. One part of the exhibition devoted to the German colonialists including a photo of gang leader Lettow von Vorbeck and a reference to the fact that the Hadzabe were once seen as subjects of the German Government was greeted by Mahiya with a disparaging smile. Mahiya then came to Lauenburg, where he was visited by Dr Selmecki, a representative of the Society for Threatened Peoples in Göttingen. The visitor wished to speak with Mahiya as the basis for an article in the magazine *Pogrom*. Mahiya's previously expressed wish for a fee for this was rejected. Mahiya accused his visitor of being nothing other than a business man, and the visitor, angry, departed. An earlier article in the magazine, by the English anthropologist Woodburn had created difficulties for the Hadza. On a visit by Mahiya to England, Woodburn, hoping to please him, took him to a zoo, and showed him elephants and rhinoceroses. The ancestral lands of the Hadzabe, where once elephants and rhinos were numerous, have been stripped of their wildlife by trophy hunters. There are no rhinos left in the Hadzabeland. For Mahiya, the elephants and rhinos in an English zoo were evidence of



theft. He demanded their immediate repatriation to his tribal land. Woodburn, a former big-game hunter, was speechless.

Mahiya had been invited to attend this year's session of the Working Group for Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations in Geneva. His attendance showed a deep gap between the one hand the hundreds of established delegates of 'indigenous' peoples and human rights organisations and on the other hand Mahiya, the only genuine illiterate hunter-gatherer present. Mahiya, whose words represent the feelings of a large part, if not the majority, of tribal peoples, was met by most of the delegates not only with a lack of understanding, but with contempt and open hatred. In particular the Pygmies and Bushmen (the Hadzabe belong in a wider sense to the Bushmen) already well manipulated by white-dominated schools, churches and human rights organisations had evil and derogatory words for the uneducated and wild Mahiya. He countered that, although his people had also been made poor, they were at least still free and independent, thanks to their strict denial of western influence, and that the Hadzabe were still able to enjoy life with dignity.

Mahiya was also repeatedly criticised and attacked by NGO (Non-Governmental Organisations) representatives. It was irresponsible, they said, not to send Hadza children to school. How should they feed themselves without education? One cannot turn back the wheel of history. The time of the hunters and gatherers is past. Mahiya told them that the Hadzabe have lived freely as hunters and gatherers since ancient times, and that they will continue to do so. He said that the Hadzabe were glad and ready to show how life with nature is still possible, without schools, churches, hospitals and the oppression of government.

Mahiya returned gladly to the land of his people, happy to leave a Europe which he found filled with people with pathological ideas, where there is no natural and unencumbered sexual behaviour, where there is no place left to hunt with bow and arrow, where old people are cast out, where there is often less room for children than for dogs, where almost every step is hindered by regulation, and where the purpose of life is to earn money.

Hartmut Heller

Friends of Peoples Close to Nature

CANADA UPDATE

OPPOSITION GROWS

Throughout the spring and summer there was growing opposition to the cut-backs in health care and education undertaken by the Ontario and Quebec governments. The Ontario Conservatives' popularity went into free-fall, especially after its ill-advised policy of amalgamating all the local governments in the Toronto area into one vast mega-city. Anti-tory sentiment culminated in a strike by schoolteachers

THEIR MONEY AND OURS

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) reforms undertaken this year are beginning to have an effect. Previously the CPP didn't invest the pension money but loaned it to the provinces. This has changed: the CPP is now an investment fund. Modelling itself on Quebec's \$60 billion Caisse de Depot pension fund, the new CPP now has \$40 billion in assets. This will grow to \$200 billion in the next dozen years, making it the *single largest investor* in Canada. Every employee (except in Quebec) pays into the CPP, thus making the workforce a *non-voting shareholder* in the economy.

- **14th April:** Ballard Bus, a small Vancouver manufacturer, has perfected a non-polluting motor which is being tested in a full-size city bus. The engine is a hydrogen fuel cell which generates electricity. The only by-product is pure water. Daimler-Benz recently bought 20% of Ballard, and claimed the fuel cell as the motive power of the future.
- Count one for spontaneous civil disobedience. The recently enacted tough anti-smoking by-law in Toronto has been modified by the city council.

The reason? Nobody obeyed the old law and enforcement became impossible.

- **15th April:** Canada, to its everlasting shame, voted against the UN resolution condemning Communist China for its violations of human and democratic rights.
- **21st May:** Most charges were dropped against the native people arrested last year at the Gunderson Lake armed stand-off. This is proof that the RCMP over-reacted, say the defendant's lawyers. In spite of this success, 'Wolverine', one of the leaders of the group, could still face a long prison term on charges of 'mischief'.
- **30th June:** In order to counter the fiscal crisis of the state – reaching massive proportions in Quebec – the Party Quebecois government decided to cut the payroll through early retirement. This is paid in part by pension fund surplus. Expecting 15,000 retirees, the state was inundated by 35,000 workers who obviously have something better to do with their lives.
- **2nd July:** Loggers blockaded Greenpeace ships in Vancouver harbour in a protest against what they claim is the organisation's hostility to forestry workers. The blockade ended several days later when the ship managed to break through the line of small boats. This is part of a growing trend by rural workers to use direct action tactics against environmentalists, who they claim are 'urban middle class people who know nothing about rural life and care nothing about workers'.
- **19th August:** The Ontario government introduced legislation to restrict the right to strike

in the public sector. Unions threatened counter-measures, up to and including a general strike.

- Workers at McDonalds in St Hubert, south of Montreal, are organising a union. For such a small group, they are getting a surprising amount of support. The Federation du Travailleurs du Quebec (FTQ) appealed internationally for support. Both the Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the French CFTD will be brought into the struggle against McDonalds.
- **17th September:** Lynn Harichy, multiple sclerosis sufferer and mother of two, was arrested for her one-person act of civil disobedience to change the marijuana laws. Harichy stood on the steps of the London Ontario police station and was about to light up a joint when arrested. A crowd of people showed support for her. The legalisation movement is gaining ground nationally, as people from widely different political viewpoints come out against prohibition. The latest of these is *Alberta Report*, a magazine noted for its 'ultra-conservative' views.
- Midwifery will be allowed in the Province of Nova Scotia, one of the last provinces to ban the practice. Many years ago the powerful doctors lobby (the medical mafia) forced government to make the practice illegal. After a long struggle by women's groups and alternative medical practitioners, these restrictive laws were overturned.
- **21st September:** About five thousand *practical* nurses, led by their union, marched in Quebec City against the government's proposal to abolish their occupation. To formally abolish a profession would be a first in Canadian history. This outrageous and authoritarian proposal was undoubtedly made at the behest of the *registered* nurses union (which hates the practical nurses) and must mark a new low in corporatist

selfishness. However, the practical nurses were backed by the teachers union, the CSN and FTQ trade union federations in a militant display of worker solidarity.

- **23rd September:** The Quebec health minister backed down in the face of the massive support given to the practical nurses. Their profession will not be abolished.
- **16th October:** Two inventors from rural Quebec, Marc Campagna and Richard Colt, appear to have perfected a device which allows gasoline engines to run without polluting. A Japanese company tested the device on a Toyota in a closed garage for 45 minutes. No emissions.
- **21st October:** Dr Guylaine Lanctot has been barred for life from practising medicine by the Quebec College of Physicians. Her crime? Writing and distributing a book, *The Medical Mafia*, which attacks the medical establishment, disputes the current theories on the causes of AIDS and criticises the practice of vaccination. Anyone wanting her book (cost: \$20 Canadian) or wishing to express support write to Box 113, Coaticook, QC, J1A 2S9, Canada.
- **24th October:** A farmer in Smith Falls, Ontario, had his 220-acre farm stolen from him by the government after he pleaded guilty to growing marijuana. His was the first case under the new repressive confiscatory law, modelled on the one in the United States, which allows state thugs like the BATF (of Waco and Ruby Ridge infamy) to steal at will.
- **28th October:** 126,000 Ontario teachers struck against the government's education reforms. These plans, instead of returning control of education over to parents and community, centralises everything in the hands of the provincial government.

Creating Rebels

Dear Freedom,

Not having read *Born to Rebel*, the book reviewed at length in the last issue of *Freedom* by Brian Martin, I hesitate to comment on its argument – that one is predisposed to be an intellectual, scientific and/or political rebel if one is not the eldest sibling in a family.

It seems a rather shallow study, despite the breadth of data apparently considered. What strikes me as more interesting is Martin's response to the book. He writes: "Activists can use Sulloway's approach to investigate how to design society to create more rebels who support progressive innovations". Whether or not Sulloway's analysis and methods are of any use to anarchists and other grassroots activists, I think it is odd to think in terms of 'creating rebels' (the title of Martin's piece).

Rebellion *per se* is neither good nor bad, something that Martin only belatedly points out in his final paragraph. What is needed is not "more rebels", but more people who are capable of determining when things need to be changed, and with the commitment to make change happen. It is a matter of creating more honesty, more integrity, and more decency,

rather than of creating more 'rebelliousness'.

The rebel who smokes in smoke-free zones, who plays their music loud in the middle of the night, who randomly vandalises the possessions of the rich and powerful, is not advancing social progress. Scientific, artistic, social and political progress is not made by people who challenge convention for the sake of it, but by people who have values and principles and ideals which are being infringed or suppressed, and who try put into practice what they believe and argue and act for what they think is right. I think Martin's very interesting discussion would have been much more valuable if he had begun with the observation with which he ended: "Being a rebel should not be a goal in itself".

Milan Rai

please keep sending in
your letters and
donations ... 

Mucky Realism and Post-Modern Anarchism

Dear Freedom,

Concerning the status of post-modernity, firstly, what is, or was, modernity? At the end of the last century philosophers, sociologists, historians and economists together articulated, despite their diverse political interests, a common feeling of *loss*, expressed by Nietzsche as the death of God, by Durkheim as a crisis in social health, by Weber as disenchantment, and by Marx as a loss of what he called 'species-being'. Anarchism too is historically linked to this pervasive nihilism as a means to restore meaning to the world.

Capitalism was widely regarded as playing a crucial role in overturning one set of social relations and imposing another. As such, just as the 'spirit' of early capitalism was 'captured' within Fordist ideas of mass production and consumption for all, so the equally grand narratives of fascism and Stalinism provided mid-twentieth century Europe with concrete ways of acting towards specific goals. These 'narratives' permeated not just modes of economic organisation, but politics, architecture and art. Free education, the NHS, the high-rise blocks of the post-war housing boom – these were part of an evolutionary theory of civilisation and scientific advancement that assumed that history had a purpose that could provide meaning for human existence.

So what is post-modernity? Is it a 'reflection' of new modes of production (so-called 'flexible accumulation') or is it more complex than that? I would argue that post-modernism is simply the welcome recognition that the master narratives of modernity have failed. This does not mean that new ones must be developed, or old one resurrected. Neither does it mean that there is or there is not a 'real' world 'out there' to operate on. Rather, it is the recognition that the meanings different groups give to the world are diverse and often incommensurable, and that different meanings have the peculiar quality of operating on their object (the world) and changing it. In other words, although human beings from diverse

backgrounds can agree that there are trees, that the sun rises and sets, etc., the meanings they give to these phenomenon are different enough that the epistemological status of trees and suns may nevertheless become a source of argument.

Anarchism is surely to be suspicious of solutions and of truth wherever it or they are claimed, for such discourse are perpetually seeking to destroy difference and diversity. As such, anarchists should embrace post-modernity precisely because it offers no answers, and because of its pathological suspicion of power.

Paul Tremlett

Dear Freedom,

I read the dialogue (15th November) between Brian Bamford and Peter Good with interest. I have had the opportunity of meeting both men and have been impressed, both personally and intellectually, with them. There is nothing inherently wrong with either view. What is wrong is that any one 'grouping' or view is better than the other. That way leads only to hierarchy, control and, wait a minute, its 'meet-the-new-boss-same-as-the-old-boss' syndrome.

What we need to realise is that firstly we are all anarchists but, secondly, we follow different routes to anarchism. Like a maze, no one way is the correct one, only that it leads to the goal. Those who are interested in particular campaigns challenge government and capitalism, but others may seek to pursue their road through subtler, less overt, ways.

For example, the mentally disabled, the dementia-suffering elderly, are not able to organise themselves into pickets, campaign groups, etc., and yet many live in conditions which would easily be recognisable by those administering the workhouses of old. If anarchists who seek change in such areas do not indulge in in-your-face campaigns this does not mean their methods are wrong.

So can we please get away from this hair-shirt anarchism of Brian's 'dole queue claimants and shopfloor workers'. True, they feel the sharp end of capitalism, but so do many others in less obvious ways and to consider them to be the only 'real' casualties of an iniquitous system is to limit anarchism to an inverse elite.

Unfortunately the only real conclusion I can draw from Brian's view is that a person cannot be a 'real' anarchist if he or she is from the upper class, has a job, a middle-class lifestyle and a nice house in suburbia where none of the neighbours know of their political leanings. Or was Peter Kropotkin not streetwise enough?

Jean Pollard

[Certainly we would agree with the view of our correspondent that anyone can be an anarchist who challenges government and capitalism. Did Bamford imply otherwise? Incidentally, a maze has only one right road, the challenge being to find it. Peter Kropotkin was an anarchist and an aristocrat, but late in life he took a wrong turning and never found his way back. There's a moral there somewhere – Editors]

Docks dispute: a sea change?

Dear Editors,

To correct a serious mistake in your coverage of the Liverpool conflict (18th October 1997) regarding myself and the SAC, there never was an invitation from the dockers offering us the opportunity to address the rally. Neither did I solicit one (your reference to *Militant* is quite correct). If there was an invitation I would not have turned it down.

Naturally the syndicalist message is that we have no one to rely on but ourselves and what is needed for Liverpool is organised, co-ordinated, physical direct action. What is admirable is the dignity and mutual help that the dockers have maintained and developed. We recognise from our horizon that through simple union ethics of solidarity they have touched their own syndicalist roots. Of course,

only a very few of the dockers are syndicalists, or even aware of syndicalism as an ideology or method for change.

We did not turn down a golden opportunity nor manipulate in any way to force-feed our own particular convictions on the unsuspecting masses. I otherwise appreciate and agree with what you say, but the anecdote the piece is built around just ain't true.

The potential force for change, the symbolism of what we're up against and, hopefully, the catalyst to shake things up in England are all to be found in the Liverpool conflict. For far too long a cynical malaise paralysed the libertarian specialists of all shades. Are things moving? Do I detect a breath of fresh air?

Kieran Casey, SAC-Sweden

Can anarchists be ethical?

Dear Editors,

Can anarchists be ethical? Sure, why not? Everybody can be ethical, even capitalists, as the anonymous author of the lead article 'Can Capitalism ever be Ethical' in *Freedom* (18th October) confirmed, provided certain requirements are complied with.

Contrary to the Jesuit order, the anarchist movement admits new members very easily, automatically: you just have to declare yourself an anarchist. To become a Jesuit, however, you should have got a certain level of intellectual capacity and then devote an unusually big number of years to serious study, during which you have also to acquaint yourself with the actual opinions of your possible opponents so as not to make stupid mistakes. Perhaps that's one reason why Jesuits have such a bad reputation: they were too often cleverer and more educated than their interlocutors.

The article in *Freedom* (18th October) shows that anarchists can be very unethical indeed. The writer of that article speaks of a person whom, obviously, he has never met with or even seen, and of whom he knows only that he is a Jesuit. Perhaps he has never seen a single Jesuit at all – they are pretty rare, especially in a non-catholic country like Britain. Even I, a former Roman Catholic and candidate for the priesthood during ten years, who grew up in the overwhelmingly Roman Catholic south of The Netherlands, do not remember having seen any Jesuit in sixty years until I spent a few days in a Jesuit convent in Calcutta a few years ago. Our

Freedom writer bases his conclusions on what he has always *thought* (that "the Jesuits are more jesuitical than all the other holy folk, and you know what that means" and "If [you do] not [know that] let us quote from our modest dictionary" – which, apparently, is a dictionary of the kind that Karl Marx might have used in his battles with Mikhail Bakunin).

In our much decried bourgeois courts it's not enough to think something of somebody but you have to give specific proofs of a person's guilt before he can be declared guilty. In the people's court of our writer to think something is enough, however. Our writer may not have met with much of what he calls holy folk either. I can assure him that some such folk do very good things.

In spite of my conviction to be more knowledgeable about Jesuits than our writer (which doesn't mean much and, true, my knowledge amounts to very little) I felt compelled to buy a fat book, *Macht und Geheimnis der Jesuiten* (Power and Secrets of the Jesuits) by one René Fülöp-Miller. Apart from part of a chapter about their famous morals, I so far read also a page in which the author says that Voltaire and Diderot have received part of their education at a Jesuit school, which obviously hasn't obfuscated their minds very terribly. Neither of them seems to have regretted their jesuitic training, and Voltaire is said to have continued exchanging letters of friendship with one of his former Jesuit teachers during many years – also after he had coined his 'Ecrasez l'infâme!' (Shatter

the bastard!) against the Roman Catholic church. So I would actually recommend our *Freedom* writer attend a few lectures of that Jesuit ethics professor at the London Business School – if nothing else I'm sure it would help him to sharpen, feed and broaden his thinking and to become a useful fighter instead of a Don Quixote for the causes he likes to defend.

The generally serious *Frankfurter Rundschau* of 11th November 1997 (in the Roman Catholic areas of West Germany, in and around Cologne and the Dutch south, this is the opening of the carnival season so the information may not be serious) announces that an Italian Jesuit, Giovanni Magnani, historian at the papal Gregorian University, has found out, on the basis of newly discovered materials, that Jesus was not a poor revolutionary and son of a poor carpenter but of a well-to-do family. His adoptive father is said to have been a self-employed civil engineer, as was Jesus himself. According to the documentation found, Jesus was able to read and to write, spoke several languages and may even have been to the Greek theatre in his homeland. According to that Jesuit's book there is no basis left for the usual Christian praising of poverty, so that the fresh Jesuit ethics professor of the London Business School has proved again, as his Italian colleague and many other Jesuits, that their training often produces good examples of people who do not simply stick to old established truths (thoughts) but verify them again and again. *Se non è vero, c'è, nondimeno, un bellissimo modello.*

Bas Moreel

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5th December General discussion

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19th December Christmas Party and General
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26th December *NO MEETING*

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