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FIFTY PENCE

"You are not guilty  
because you are  
ignorant but you are  
guilty when you resign  
yourselves to  
ignorance."  
Giuseppe Mazzini  
(1805-1872)

# THE LASER GUN

## - made in Britain?

Apart from the *Sunday Times* report (quoted in *Freedom*, 'No More Hiroshimas (perhaps)', 22nd January) the media have shown very little interest in the warnings and pleadings of the International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC) to have the laser gun banned. The public, it would seem, is much more interested in the excavations and exhumations at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester.

Be that as it may, we are more interested in the potential of the laser gun, more horrific, more cold-blooded and sick than the actions of the 'mass' murderers in Gloucester or in Hebron, because it is the dream-child of our society's respected scientists, technologists, industrialists.

The *Guardian* (19th February) reports from Geneva some of the ICRC's warnings: "portable laser guns

which could cause instant incurable blindness are being manufactured and could soon proliferate through the world's trouble spots".

"Laser weapons are silent; their beams are totally invisible and their effects instantaneous, making it impossible for human targets to defend themselves."

It would appear that military laboratories in the US, Russia, Britain and France have been working on 'blindness' weapons for some years, not only to counteract their effect on their own equipment but also for 'offensive use'.

According to the *Guardian's* report, the Red Cross appeal made at the end of last month (we have seen no reports of government reactions) was probably prompted by the fact that the US "may begin manufacturing laser guns, mounted on an M-16 rifle,

this year. Such a weapon could easily be copied for production elsewhere".

We are constantly, and rightly, reminded - now with a film - of the 'Holocaust', the example *par excellence* of man's inhumanity to man, but there is very little interest, let alone indignation, shown in the West for the two atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki or the block bombing of the civilian population (by conventional bombs) of Dresden and Hamburg. (Indeed the Brits recently  
*(continued on page 2)*

## The Paper-Wealth- Producers are now Ahead

According to a report issued by the Corporation of London in conjunction with the London Business School, the City's financial services industry accounts for more than a quarter of UK gross domestic product (GDP). And this, according to Professor Richard Brealey of the LBS, was larger than manufacturing in revenue terms.

So what do those 120,000 busy bees employed in the City's square mile 'produce' which is so profitable?

Shipbuilding - no, *shipbroking commissions*; international insurance 'earns' about £1.8 billion a year and as much from Forex (foreign exchange) trading; and the Stock Exchange's international trading system is "the other main success story".

That's very good news! But can we live on all the output of paper produced in that vital 'square mile' which obviously makes a few people very rich though we are sure they don't eat any of that paper. They too rely on the *real producers of wealth*: the under-paid farmworkers to start with, and all those engaged in providing the services we all need for a civilised existence. When will they realise that they are the real producers of wealth and decide to do something about the 'redistribution of wealth'?

## NEW DEAL FOR PART-TIME WORKERS? NOT WITHOUT WORKERS' MILITANCY!

The Neanderthal members of the Tory Party are up in arms at two judicial rulings: one gives part-time workers the same rights as their full-time fellow wage slaves; the second limits the maximum number of working hours to 48 in the week. The first ukase came from the Law Lords by a four to one majority; the second was a Brussels directive from the European Union.

The notorious Tory MP William (Bill to his friends) Cash who always appears on 'Newsnight', let the cat out of the bag when, as to be expected, he denounced both decisions (so for old Bill not only is Brussels out of order but even his own Law Lords) and his reasons are the usual ones - which certainly meet with the approval of most of Major's cabinet: namely that employment of labour must be

and hire as he pleases the part-time workers, and no holiday pay or redundancy, no insurance and no minimum rate of pay. And for the full-time workers: if the bosses have got to pay insurance and holiday pay, make 'em work more than 48 hours a week and employ fewer workers, which means less of the silly frills like holiday pay, sick pay and National Insurance.

There was old Bill-the-Neanderthal-man explaining that if Britain was to survive we must be able to *compete* with the developing Far East and this means wages must also *compete*.

This will prove somewhat difficult, we imagine, since the wages in some of these countries are about \$2 a day - not £2 and not per hour!

No possible *free market* capitalist solution exists so long as there is  
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**THE LASER GUN - made in Britain?**

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erected a status to 'Bomber' Harris's memory.)

It would seem that the brainwashed public cannot see that the scientific killing of man by man is just as heinous and sick as the Holocaust and the various Cromwell Streets, Hebrons, Wacos, et alia. Until society will condemn, banish those scientists and technologists who are prepared to engage in the development of even more ghastly weapons of destruction, as *enemies of mankind*, it will go on and the merchants of death will go on profiting from it.

All these new weapons are, after all, good for business. Ministers who have been appearing before the Scott Inquiry into the supplying of military weapons and equipment to Iraq right up to their invasion of Kuwait emphasised that an important consideration was the number of jobs dependent on this dirty arms business. No such consideration, however, for the 100,000 and more miners who have lost their jobs as a result of the privatisation of the electricity industry.

That we are living in a sick society is surely demonstrated by the public's acceptance as normal the 'Research and Development' into ever-more lethal weapons of destruction. Typical are the comments of the editor of *Jane's International Defence Review* who, according to the *Guardian*, "has been

following the technology's development" (that is of the portable laser gun). He thinks the ICRC is right to raise the issue of legal control (note: not of abolition) "because if this form of weaponry gets out of control it could introduce a new and unnecessarily harmful form of warfare" (our italics).

Presumably for Rupert Pengelley, "some weapons are more unnecessarily harmful than others" - surely we are living in a worldwide madhouse!

And last but not least, the Ministry of Defence when approached said it was aware of the ICRC's concern but would give no information on its own research and the Royal Navy's programme.

For those readers who have forgotten what the laser gun's function is, we quote again from the *Sunday Times* feature of 9th January: **The purpose of the laser gun is "to blind enemy troops by burning out their eyes"**.

And in our 22nd January editorial comment we maintained that all involved in the research and development of the laser gun should be named and denounced as *Enemies of the People!*

When will the tabloids, those self-declared *amis du peuple*, give less space for their ghoulish fascination with Cromwell Street and make their readers aware of what some scientists and technologists are cooking up for the future victims of war?

**NEW DEAL FOR PART-TIME WORKERS? NOT WITHOUT WORKERS' MILITANCY!**

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a vast difference in the standards of living between East and West, as at present. Even within the 'prosperous' West, where all the former Central European countries are wanting to join the European 'club'. Germany's neighbour Czechoslovakia is a case in point. An industrialised country, but the workers' wages (according to a news item on BBC World Radio) are a sixteenth of what a German worker gets in the same job.

The 'free market' is a fiction of the capitalist fundamentalist sect. The fact is it doesn't work. After all, is not the USA threatening sanctions against Japan unless they open their markets to reduce the export-import imbalance?

But the other basic fact is that the latest Bruling from the Law Lords and Brussels will not work so long as there are four million unemployed, most of them desperately looking for a job, and trades unions which are impotent so long as they cannot, or refuse to, see that work-sharing, the shorter working week and solidarity with the unemployed (who should be encouraged to join: after all, they are - because they are desperate to

get work, any work, even at slave labour pay - potential scabs) are the only practical demands, coupled with direct action, that can even justify their continued existence.

The unions know full well that the employers will get round the Law Lords' ukase about part-time workers' rights simply by sacking them shortly before they have worked two years (when their equal rights with full-time workers operate). And as for the 48-hour week, that surely can be fiddled by a bit of skilful book-keeping!

As we write, young working women who become pregnant are now legally entitled to all kinds of benefits at the employer's expense. Needless to say, when top CBI spokesmen were interviewed on television's 'Newsnight', as to be expected they were not alarmed. All they said was that they would obviously employ fewer *young married women!*

When will the workers of the world realise that no legislation, no articles in *Freedom*, will change the *status quo* until there is a massive revolt worldwide by all who are dependent on an employer for the basic needs for their survival?

**Storm in a Teacup**

**'THE RIGHT TO LIE'**

Apart from George Washington, who can declare hand-on-heart that he/she never lied - without lying?

Anyway some thinkers, such as the Sturmerites, declare that we should have 'the courage of a lie'. And indeed we can imagine all sorts of situations where, certainly this writer, would lie not only in his own interest but especially if it concerned a friend in need.

But what the media and opposition politicians are getting all excited about, and are now gunning for Mr Waldegrave, has nothing to do with 'the courage of a lie' but with their own particular interests and vanities. Obviously the Labour opposition are depending on the Tory government's 'scandals' and corruption and inefficiency to win the local and European elections; the media to give themselves the illusion or reality of being the king-makers (one has only to see Andrew Neil of the *Sunday Times* on television to realise what puffed-up egos these media people nurture).

Just consider for one moment: if, as Mr Waldegrave was pointing out, in politics almost everything was open and above-board, then why have very expensive secret services in all countries not only spying on each other but within their own countries?

We know beforehand that we shall be accused of being simplistic (including professed anarchist readers like Eric Bosworth - *Freedom* letters, 5th March) when we declare that capitalist society thrives on lying about everything. Alright, not about *everything!* But is it not obvious that a society that encourages tooth-and-claw competition at ground level (cartels and take-overs, at top level) that maintains (not by accident nor bad luck) four million unemployed to add to the 'competition' at ground level, cannot be a truthful, honest society because it is a society *at war with itself*.

Truthfulness can only flourish in a *united* society no less than in a *united* family. And there can be no unity without equality. In the family it is by the parents replacing Victorian 'punishment' by openness, understanding and explanation. In society there is no solution so long as *competition* and *inequality* divide the people into the haves and the have-nots, a subject we shall return to.

One other thought on the subject. Whole industries and professions in a capitalist system depend on lying and conning. The vast advertising industry is largely a con. But where would the law industry be if there was no reason to speak anything but the truth?

**A 'revolution' is not necessarily a 'social revolution'**

The suffering which capitalism inflicts upon humanity in its ruthless scramble for profit and power ultimately culminates in a surge of revolutionary fervour, the evil must be destroyed. This has happened time and again throughout the world, tragically not ushering in a new libertarian society but only a change of masters.

Why should this be so? The reason lies in the fact that every revolution hitherto has been a negative revolution; by that we mean it has been a revolution against something, not a positive revolution for something. These revolutions have taken place at times when people were reacting against tyranny but had not yet acquired the mass understanding necessary to ensure that the system they had overthrown was not to be supplanted by an even worse tyranny.

The institutions though which the power of the old ruling class was exercised were retained by the revolutionary forces and become the institutions though which a new power elite was able to impose its will on society.

Not only were old institutions of authority retained but even more fundamental old social values and relationships were retained, hierarchy and bureaucracy remained as acceptable forms of procedure, rank and status still permeated society negating any equalitarian relationships.

Furthermore, often as a result of the violent struggle which had overthrown the old

regime, because of its very militaristic nature and what such militarism entails, leaders were thrown into prominence and having had by virtue of the struggle control of the decision making they were now loath to relinquish such power.

It was Domela Nieuwenhuis who pointed out that 'a people in uniform is its own worst tyrant', and by this he meant that the very nature of a militaristic struggle subjugates a people. And when we consider the technology of militarism - satellite communication systems, highly sophisticated weaponry operated by highly skilled personnel, possibly operating from areas outside the country, together with the logistic problems involved - then the absurdity of this violent method of struggle becomes apparent.

This said, nevertheless capitalism has to be destroyed, but this is not merely a matter of seizure of the means of production or the overthrow of the state. The ideological basis upon which capitalism rests must itself first be destroyed, ideas such as the legitimacy of power, leadership, privilege, exploitation, status, sexism, racism, and all the other values and prejudices upon which present society is based.

Unless such ideological changes take place then no social revolution can occur, a revolution resulting in a change of master may well occur but this would not be an anarchist revolution.

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# Inside India

Although one can report from India the development of popular resistance to the new colonialism it is easy to lose sight of the horrendous inequalities that exist in this society as a result of the rule, since independence, of what can only be called a neo-colonial elite. The field of education is a case in point and the deep-rooted inequalities that afflict the Indian education system today are probably more pronounced in relation to girls and women than they are to any other grouping in society. The evidence is staggering and a massive indictment of governmental policy over the last 45 years.

Nationwide, female literacy stands at around 39% but the illiteracy rate is as high as 90% amongst women from scheduled castes and tribes. Further there are enormous regional disparities. For example, illiteracy in Kerala is as low as 34% in some areas, but in Rajasthan and Bihar the rate peaks at 95%. Statistics relating to school enrolment and school attendance are equally disturbing. While about 42% of boys in the age group of 6-14 years at an all-India level are not attending schools on any kind of regular basis, almost 62% of the girls in the same age group do not go to schools or attend any centre in the non-formal sector. This gender disparity is further accentuated if one views the rural population separately. About 47% of the rural boys in this age group do not attend school, but the figure for girls not attending is 70%.

If we then look at higher education, that bastion of privilege for the top 10% in Indian society, the picture is equally bleak. The representation of women in higher education is as low as 31%. Further, data reveals that of all women enrolled in higher education, 55% are in arts courses and only 20% in science courses. Women also tend to join lower professional courses and only 6% of students enrolled for engineering courses are women.

How does one explain this picture of inequality? Research available on the education of women in India points to a multiplicity of socio-cultural and economic factors that stand at the heart of India's

prejudicial, patriarchal society. The prevailing cultural norms of gender behaviour and the perceived 'domestic' and 'reproductive' roles of women tend to detrimentally affect the education of girls. Negative attitudes to girls' schooling, to maintaining them in school should they ever start, to their mobility especially after puberty, all reflect dominant patriarchal values and attitudes that keep girls and women in their place. This gender prejudice has a direct bearing on many aspects of the educational system. These include inadequate facilities for girls' education at different stages, unequal access to 'non-traditional' courses, gender stereotypes in both the 'official' and 'hidden' curriculum, negative attitudes of teachers and administrators and poor representation of women in positions of authority and power in the educational sphere.

It really is about time that something was done to change this situation. The argument for priority to be given to developing an equal education for girls and women is a demand for social justice. In this sense it is also part of the demand for a more egalitarian system in general, but given the extreme prejudice that girls and women suffer there is a case for special attention to gender issues. Before we consider what those are it is worth stating the case for girls' and women's education.

First and foremost every girl and woman in this society has a right to access to educational facilities that will foster personal reflection, growth and development. Secondly, education should enable girls and women to gain a greater social understanding, an awareness of the roots of their position in society. Thirdly, education should provide girls and women with access to important sources of information, particularly in the field of personal and social health. Fourthly,

education should enhance opportunity in every sphere of public and private life.

How then can one provide such an education? In the first instance the education of the girl child and the woman, young and old, has to be viewed within the larger context of development. Educational policy must address the structures and attitudes that have prevented women's equality until now, and have perpetuated and strengthened patriarchal values and institutions that subordinate women. Similarly policy should reflect a commitment to see education promote a new sense of equality in the division of roles, rights and responsibilities between men and women in every sphere.

There are, however, specific areas of concern which demand attention and action in order to address gender inequality in education. Firstly, the availability of facilities for schooling within easy reach of girls is crucial for access to and retention of girls in school. At present 46% of the habitations representing about one-fifth of the country's rural population do not have a primary school or any centre for education. Although 95% of the rural population, according to official figures, are served by a primary school either within or up to a walking distance of one kilometre, this should not give rise to any complacency as far as girls' education is concerned for it is necessary to recognise that the involvement of girls in sibling care and domestic chores and other socio-cultural constraints make even one kilometre beyond walking distance for them. The need is for schools and facilities in all centres of habitation.

Secondly, the education of girls is in a very real sense linked to the availability of water, fuel, fodder and childcare facilities to individual families. As much as 29% of the entire time of a young girl in a rural area is

spent in the collection of fuel and 20% in fetching water. Thus the release of girls for schooling requires an improvement in the access of households to water, fuel and fodder. In rural areas especially, efforts in the direction of social forestry, drinking water supply and greening of village common lands should be viewed not merely as eliminating drudgery from women's lives but as necessary inputs to improve girls' access to and retention in schools.

Thirdly, easy access to organised childcare is crucial if families, especially among the under-privileged, are expected to relieve girls of this responsibility in the family and spare them for schooling and education. Without providing full-fledged daycare services, particularly for the 0-3 age group, no school educational programme can hope to become accessible to girls in the 6-14 age group.

Fourthly, we need to address the whole issue of what actually goes on in schools and centres. Generally the need is for institutions to become more 'girl-friendly'. One can apply this argument to all spheres of girls' and women's education. There needs to be an increase in the visibility of women and projection of a positive image of the role of women in history, their contribution to society in general and the Indian context in particular. So too for an undifferentiated curriculum for girls and boys. Outmoded traditions and myths that hinder positive development of women and their role in national life should be objectively discussed in the classroom. Similarly the portrayal of women in Indian epics and mythology needs critical examination.

To set about some of these issues would only be a beginning, but it is a beginning that is long overdue. The crucial question, of course, is whether or not the battalions of men who wield power in the educational world are prepared to at some point implement a series of developments and changes that will ultimately change the balance of power between them and women more generally.

John Shotton

## A 'revolution' is not necessarily a 'social revolution'

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It may well be a long drawn out educational process. The building of the functional framework of the new society within the shell of the old, whilst constantly resisting further erosions of liberty of the destruction of the welfare services may be the only sure way forward.

But we must not confuse the day-to-day struggle against capitalism as being the social revolution, this can only truly occur when the understanding of the people is such that they can not only effect it, but ensure its establishment by their practice and relationships towards each other.

As Alexander Berkman wrote in his book *the ABC of Anarchism*:

"The desperation of the masses, and their hatred for those responsible for their misery, and the determination of the lords of life to hold on to their privileges and rule combine to produce popular uprisings and rebellions.

But blind rebellion without definite object and purpose is not revolution. Revolution [meaning social revolution] is rebellion become conscious of its aims. Revolution is social when it strives for fundamental change."

*If the revolution hasn't first occurred in the mind, then social revolution cannot occur in the social body.*

It is far too dangerous a gamble to say that the revolutionary situation will politicise the people as they go along, such a fundamental change in society cannot be left to chance events. Those who advocate a violent upheaval of present society must question

themselves as to what they are advocating, and take into account its possible consequences, whether or not the desired end can be attained or whether the very method they advocate precludes this.

BM

— GERMANY —

## Death of RAF Militant

We will one day learn the truth with regard to the events surrounding the death of the RAF militant Wolfgang Grams (aged 40) who died on 27th June 1993 on a railway platform in Bad Kleinen in the former East Germany.

Early in the afternoon on that Saturday, 56 public order agents infiltrated the area in order to arrest the aforementioned and his companion, Birgit Hogefeld (aged 36), who like him had been in hiding since 1984. Klaus Stein Metz had been infiltrated into the autonomous movement in 1984 by the 'Protectors of the Constitution' (Verfassungsschutz) and who had made contact at the beginning of 1992 with the leaders of the RAF and had put his underlings on the trail of the fugitives. In a well documented work, *RAF - Terrorismus in Deutschland*, Butz Peters calls the actions of the various police units 'disastrous'. The word 'breakdown' occurs most often in the media. Various errors in procedure (lack of coordination, malfunctioning walkie talkies) are the hallmark of the operation conducted by the Federal Crime Officers (BKA) and the frontier protection group GSG-9, whose commissioner Michael Newzrella (aged 25), who was not wearing a bullet-proof vest, was killed in the exchange with Grams. His superiors accepted no responsibility! Rudolf Seiters, the Home Secretary, applauded this "important breakthrough in the fight against terrorism".

Aware of the mistakes made by civil servants in his department he resigned on 4th July. Helmut

Kohl replaced him with Manfred Kanther (further to the right). A few days later the Federal Public Prosecutor Alexander von Stahl was thanked and pensioned off early. In total nine state servants hung up their boots. However involuntarily, the RAF achieved more in Bad Kleinen than in 23 years of armed struggle!

This episode, as annoying as bloody, highlights the contradictions at the heart of the government and the authorities. Klaus Kinkel, at the time Justice Minister (now Home Secretary), had surprised the political Landerneue with his initiative of 5th January 1992, "the state must be prepared for reconciliation ... The anticipated liberation of former terrorists is possible". In a letter to Agence France Presse (13th April 1992) the leaders of the RAF announced their renunciation "of aggression against people in the political and economic sphere". The intentions of the liberals led to minimum effect, amongst those prisoners who benefited from the new attitude were only two

'heads', Gunter Sonnenberg and Bernhard Rossner, who were suffering from physical or psychological problems. The German state retained its inflexible position vis-a-vis its most bitter former political opponents, giving little faith to its relative declarations of a "refusal to escalate a confrontation" (Irmgard Moller imprisoned since July 1972) or the "renunciation of armed struggle" (Karl-Heinz Dellwo, on behalf of some of his imprisoned comrades). The commando Katharina Hammer-Schmidt broke ranks on the night of 26th/27th March 1993 by blowing up a recently completed building with an explosive charge of 200 kgs. (a high-tec high security prison five days before its official opening). Nobody was injured, but damage ran to 100 million deutschmarks!

The demands of eighteen hardliners who had regrouped in order to discuss their position on violence became bogged down due to entrenched positions. In addition, the various views at the heart of the former Baader group set out their differences with various communiques. "The urban guerrillas consider themselves capable of anything" wrote Oliver Tolmein (Woz, 21st January 1994). The writer who claimed in the *Hamburg Konkret* (August 1993) that the GSG-9 was a 'death squad' continued "the dogmatism which informs the activities of the RAF is not a totality, in contrast to what a general historic revisionism aims for ... The RAF have assassinated about 25 people and lost some 15 members since its formation in May 1970. It can count on about 250 members.

On 13th January 1994 the trial concerning the events in Bad Kleinen exonerated the two 'Rambos' of the GSG-9 incriminated by witnesses like the newspaper-seller Joanna Baron, who swears that Wolfgang Grams was shot at close range whilst collapsed on the railway track. In the absence of fingerprints, removed carefully (under whose orders?) by investigators, reports have reached a verdict of 'suicide'. We have already read and heard such allegations sixteen years ago.

Rene Hamer

in *Le Monde Libertaire*, 24th February 1994

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Writing an obituary on Federica Montseny seems rather like justifying the knighthood of Sir Herbert Read. No wonder nobody at Freedom Press fancied the job. Considering the life of the daughter of a family of Catalan anarchists who joined the Republican government and became Minister of Health presents as tough as task as explaining how an anarchist art critic from Yorkshire could accept a title.

Some anarchists seek to pass off Federica's participation in the government of Largo Caballero in November 1936 as a folly forced upon her by the circumstances of the civil war, just as some seek to explain, or rather excuse, Herbert Read's ennoblement by claiming he was pushed into it by his domineering younger wife (a point recently made in a review by Anthony Burgess).

How does one sum up the life of a woman such as Federica Montseny without being either complacent and seeking refuge in expedient justification for shelving basic anarchist ideals, or joining the vindictive camp that claims the Spanish anarchists who collaborated in the Republican government were traitors?

### Anarchist stateswoman?

No consideration of Federica can avoid her part in the involvement of the anarchists in the Spanish Republican government. Feminists may argue that, as the first woman to enter a ministry in a Spanish government, her elevation represented some sort of advance for Spanish women. No anarchist can accept that this represents any kind of advance. We lose no sleep over the lack of female representation in parliament. A government minister is an authoritarian representative of the state — neither the sex, the gender, the race, the colour, the religion, the politics or the ideals of the esteemed minister makes any difference to this.

Her decision, and that of the other three ministers, not only was a basic rejection of the tenets of anarchism but in violation of democratic principles in that it had been taken without consulting the rank and file of the CNT (anarcho-syndicalist trade union).

However, according to Severino Campos, then Secretary of the Committee of Anarchist Groups of Catalonia who was at the meeting of the CNT-FAI which decided on the entry of the CNT into the government, Federica Montseny at first vigorously opposed her own appointment as one of the four ministers, but finally yielded to pressure. The other three anarchist appointees were not at the meeting.

At a meeting of the CNT, after she had ceased to belong to the cabinet, she declared: "What inhibitions, what doubts, what anguish I had personally to overcome in order to accept that post! For others it could have meant their goal ... but for me it implied a break with my life's work, with my whole past linked to the ideals of my parents. It meant a tremendous effort, an effort made at the cost of many tears. But I accepted the post ... on condition that I always remained faithful to the ideals of my parents and of my whole life. And that is how I entered the government."

Years after the war she admitted that she personally "never had any illusions" as to the possibility of achieving anything in the government. "At the time" she said at a later date, "we only saw the reality of the situation created for us: the Communists in the government and ourselves outside, the manifold possibilities, and all our conquests endangered." Their knowledge of how the Communists had operated in other situations earlier in the century made the anarchists fear being sidelined.

Other reasons were given for the entry of the CNT into the government: to prevent an attack on the conquests of workers and peasants, to stop the war from being conducted in a sectarian manner and the army being used as the instrument of a single party, of avoiding the danger of dictatorship, of cutting out totalitarian tendencies in the Spanish Republic's economic and social life.

It could be claimed that the anarchists in

# Federica Montseny: a life of necessary folly?

government did slow down (but not stop) the drift to dictatorship and one party rule on the Republican side. The membership of the CNT within the cabinet of Largo Caballero gave the government credibility and status, which it did not otherwise have. Montseny admitted: "I knew, we all knew, that in spite of the fact that the government was not at that time a real government, that power was in the street, in the hands of the combatants and producers, [government] power would once again be co-ordinated and consolidated and, what is worse, with our complicity and our help, and that it would ruin many of us morally."

The anarchists, in joining the Government, had lost their moral standing. Their pragmatic approach also failed in May 1937 when the Communist Minister of Agriculture in the cabinet, calling for the outlawing of the POUM (Leftist workers' organisation) and the arrest of its members. Largo Caballero replied that, as a militant of workers' organisations long persecuted by reactionaries, he refused to dissolve any workers' organisation whatsoever. On that occasion Federica Montseny and the other CNT ministers backed him. But the two Communists left the cabinet room and when the Republican ministers and some Socialists did not back Caballero, he resigned.

It seems that a deal had been done between the Communist Ministers and the right-wing Socialist Ministers, led by Indalecio Prieto, to get rid of Largo Caballero as premier. And, with the collapse of the Caballero government, Federica Montseny left office and the CNT experiment in government was undermined.

### Communist manipulation

The communist approach, on the face of it, was aimed at influencing international opinion and seducing the great powers of Britain and France into supporting the Spanish Republican government. The Soviet diplomatic representatives, Federica claimed, held frequent conversations with the CNT-FAI leaders. She said: "The advice they gave us was always the same: it was necessary to establish in Spain a 'controlled democracy' [dictatorship]; it was not advisable to create the impression abroad that a profound revolution was being carried out; we should avoid awakening the suspicion of the democratic powers."

Federica insisted that the behaviour of the Russians was always very courteous. "I never heard them utter a threatening word ... When I went to Geneva in January and February of 1937 to attend the Congress of Hygiene, Rosenberg [the Soviet ambassador] urged me to go to Russia, saying 'Comrade Stalin would be very happy to meet you. Go there, Federica! You will be received like a little queen.'" She said the Russians never made her a concrete offer that would have forced her to break with them.

The Russians were very subtle in offering their seductive inducements. But Federica had her head screwed on as well. She suggested, in a letter, that her "blood froze" in her veins when on various occasions "Rosenberg suggested that I send my daughter Valencia to live with his wife and children in a villa they occupied on the outskirts". This instinctive emotion, expressed in a letter, endears her to me more than anything.

Of course, to this day there is considerable criticism in anarchist circles about her decision to collaborate in the government, and that of the other anarchists. Vernon Richards, in his book *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* (1972), even casts doubt on the sincerity of her later recantation. Others, like Pierre Broué and Emile Témime, as dissident Marxists sympathetic to the POUM, have claimed: "The anarchist ministers became true



ministers ... anarchist officers and policemen now talked more like officers and policemen than anarchists ..."

It is argued, in their defence, that during the May Day rising in Barcelona the anarchist ministers did their best to stop the Communists and Republicans in the cabinet from moving the National Assault Guards against the workers of the CNT and UGT occupying the telephone exchange. They were out-voted. But Montseny and Caballero wrung a concession that the measures would not be put into effect until the CNT and UGT leaders had had a chance to negotiate a peaceful settlement. Vernon Richards claims "that the action of the workers in raising the barricades in Barcelona in May 1937 was a last desperate attempt to save the revolution from strangle-hold by the Jacobins and the reactionary politicians who had insinuated themselves once more into positions of power. Barcelona in May 1937 was to the Spanish Revolution what Kronstadt sixteen years earlier had been to the Russian Revolution."

Juan Lopez, the CNT Minister of Commerce, had insisted that the anarchists who entered the Caballero government had accepted the communist slogan of the 'democratic republic' "in order to produce an impression beyond the frontiers, but never to strangle the legitimate conquests of the working class". But what part were these leading anarchists playing in the workers' constructive efforts? Gaston Leval (quoted in Richards) says outstanding militants such as Federica Montseny "played no part in the work of the collectives. From the beginning

they were absorbed in official posts which they accepted in spite of their traditional repugnance for government functions". But despite all their political string-pulling it is doubtful if it was much use: in June 1937 the CNT and UGT demanded that the collective farms be legalised, but the Communist Minister of Agriculture, Vincente Uribe, who stayed in charge until the end of the conflict, never granted permanent legal status to the collectives.

### Slippery slope

Federica Montseny must have felt herself to be on a very slippery slope. When she joined the Government her father, Juan Montseny (Federico Urales), warned her that this meant 'the liquidation of anarchism'. Her participation in the negotiations in Barcelona in the May Day rising helped to confuse and disarm the workers and undermined anarchism. Though she did claim that she believed the rising was provoked by the Communists in the PSUC (United Socialist Party of Catalonia).

The CNT Ministers, including Federica, felt themselves caught up in a trap when shortly after their names appeared in the *Gaceta de Madrid*, Largo Caballero raised the idea of transferring the seat of government from Madrid to Valencia. Caballero expected the enemy to seize the capital within days. The CNT Ministers, having just joined the Government, felt they had been taken in.

According to Indalecio Prieto, the right-wing Socialist Minister, the proposal that the Government leave Madrid provoked a rumpus with the anarchists. He wrote: "Believing that they had been made ministers solely in order to implicate them in this grave decision, they refused to approve it. After considerable discussion they suggested that we should all leave except the four [anarchist ministers] who would remain in Madrid. I joined in the debate, vigorously opposing that formula. 'Either we all leave' I said, 'or no one leaves. It would be unacceptable if some were to be branded as cowards and others hailed as heroes. Either we are all cowards or all heroes.'" The CNT Ministers, after discussing the proposal among themselves, backed down and approved the move to Valencia.

This seems to have been the first compromise of many for the CNT Ministers. But later when it came to defending the POUM from persecution of the Communists and the Negrin Government, Federica supported the arrested POUM members. During the trials of the POUM leaders in 1938, on charges of espionage and treason, she testified in their favour. After the arrest and disappearance of Andres Nin, a POUM leader who had reportedly been handed over to the communist police, Federica Montseny was the first to ask 'What have you done with Nin?'

It is curious that though she started writing as a young girl for the anarchist journal *La Revista Blanca*, she could not join the CNT because she was not employed by a boss. At the start of the Republic in the early 1930s she was active in the CNT, though still not a member. Only later, on the formation of a union for intellectuals and liberal professions, she became a member. After the Civil War she went to France where she was imprisoned by the German puppet government and narrowly avoided being extradited to fascist Spain. In exile, she became publisher of the weekly CNT in Toulouse.

She remained influential in the Spanish exile movement and held many positions in the exile organisation. Last week I asked some Spanish anarchists who happened to be staying with me what they thought of her and if they considered her a renegade. As they are active in the current anarcho-syndicalist movement, they said they thought she had the mentality of the 'pequeno bourgeois' owing to her background. But they claimed that she was a decent person and anarchist who unfortunately, unlike *La Pasionaria*, had not been very active in Spanish politics since the death of Franco.

Brian Bamford

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## — PUB TALK —

an occasional look at some of the institutions dominating our lives

## Number 1: TNCs

TNCs? isn't that the active ingredient in cannabis or something?

Wish it was. No. Transnational Corporations. Sometimes called multinationals. But there is a difference. TNCs operate in at least two countries by definition whilst conventionally multinationals operate in at least six. Go for TNC because some pretty big fish get through the definitional net otherwise, particularly new ones who confine their operations to a handful of countries in the first place and who can still see phenomenal rates of growth in the early stages.

So where do they come from?

America mostly.

UK?

Oh yes. The biggest here is Unilever.

Thought they were Dutch.

Yes Anglo-Dutch. But these TNCs are only national concerns in an almost incidental way. Globalisation is the word. In many cases they're bigger than countries – economically speaking that is. For example ...

So they're not trading companies like the old East India Company and what have you?

Well there are overlaps and the East India Company is in some ways a precursor of the TNC, but it was only interested in trade not production.

Oh come off it! Decimation of the Indian textile industry, military conquest, etceteraaaah. Don't tell me it was just 'trade'. You start to sound like Bill Clinton.

Okay, it's a grey line. But TNCs cover all aspects of the production process. Trade is almost incidental. In fact most world trade is intrafirm.

Intra what?

Shoving different parts of a final product all over the place until they all come together for

assembly. A Ford Escort is actually made in fifteen countries if you look at where all the different parts come from.

Sounds like a bloody expensive way to produce things if you ask me.

Depends what you mean by expensive. Environmentally it's a disaster. But this is the big change which lets TNCs operate. They took off in the '60s when the jet airliner hit the scene, another difference between them and the East India Company you were on about. Used to take bloody ages to get to India from here and now you can get from New York to Tokyo in the same time it takes to get to Philadelphia. And communications. Satellite systems. Signals go thousands of miles into space and thousands of miles down again. Doesn't matter if you're calling your next door neighbour or China. And once they're up there the more you use the cheaper the unit cost. Mitsubishi has cable communication network lines 450,000 kms. long – more than the distance from the earth to the moon.

Mindboggling. Where d'ya find that out then?

Global Shift by a chap called Peter Dicken. Good book. Loads of statistics if you like that sort of thing, but well structured and easy to read.

So what's the matter with these TNCs then?

Everything that ever was wrong with capitalism. But now things are global they're better at exploiting. For example, they just love Chinese working people cos they only cost £20 a week. Look at what it says here in *The Economist*\* about Hong Kong investment in the place: "... wage rates at home are rising, property prices are almost as high as Tokyo's and inflation is nudging into double figures. No longer can Hong Kong's entrepreneurs make their millions from sweatshops in

\* *The Economist*, 8th December 1990.

Kowloon; instead they must look to poorer parts in Asia". Mexicans too. And if the workers give 'em any hassle they just shift elsewhere to where they're a little more 'reasonable'.

So Third World exploitation, that's what you're talking about?

Yeeees. But us too. Look at how Hoover relocated from France to Scotland last year. In fact, most people don't realise it but by far the biggest chunk of TNC investment is in the developed world.

Oh yeah? And for how long?

Fair point.

Look, I can see what you're saying but all this is just standard Marxism. What's anarchism got to say about all this?

Well there is overlap between us and the left. There always is when it's economic talk. For example, the 'structure-agency' dichotomy.

The WHAT?

Anarchists and Marxists would tend to point out the similarities between the TNCs and how they operate in the 'structure' of capitalism. 'Agency' theorists tend to be more firm-specific, pointing out national and cultural factors which influence TNCs.

I would have thought anarchists would have gone for a bit of both.

You've got a point. In fact I think there's an even bigger difference between us and the Marxist left. Take John Smith for example ...

Hardly a Marxist.

Well how about Lang and Hines the authors of *The New Protectionism*, that book *Freedom's* been going on about.

They're not Marxists either.

Well who is these days, Deng bloody Xioping?

Fidel Castro?

Not for much longer. But okay, non-anarchist radicals then. I was saying, John Smith ...

Ha, ha ha.

... and others. Hang on. He reckons we should combine the IMF and the World Bank. We must have a chat about *them* sometime, not get rid of them, and Lang and Hines, who see themselves as radical, say "current political structures will probably require considerable change ..." [my emphasis]. Very radical that one. Even Susan George, who's generally well clued up, doesn't think the IMF are as bad as she first thought if you read her book *A Fate Worse than Debt*. Don't get me wrong. Apart from Smithy we've a lot in common with these people, but as Chomsky said ...

Who?

Noam Chomsky. American geezer. Look, just shut up a moment, you asked a question and I'm trying to answer it. Chomsky says "We now have an international economy and we're moving towards an international state – 'creating', to quote the business press, 'a new imperial age with a *de facto* world government'." We don't need to go over all the arguments here. We want to abolish governments, not reform them.

So this Chomsky guy's your new god is he?

No, but he's worth reading.

Last question. How are we going to get rid of them?

You taking the piss? Listen, a bunch of Nepalese workers have just taken on Union Carbine and won. Zapatistas in Mexico. French transport workers. Syndicalism and anarchism in general aren't dead. You win some battles, you lose others, but you've got to keep trying. We've got to keep arguing our corner and try to build social forms of organisation that build self-reliance and autonomy to offer an alternative to the madness. In the meantime, it's your round.

## OUR 'GOOD NEWS' COLUMN Cheers!

What happened to the Good News column? Can it be that nothing good is happening? If this is regrettably a plausible reason in the public sphere, it certainly is not in the private – and anarchists live in both and observe the same values in both. Many of our actions straddle both spheres. We want to have the freedom to control our own lives, and that includes enjoying ourselves.

I don't think I am the only person, anarchist or otherwise, (what is the correct term for one of our brothers or sisters still under the thrall of authority?) who gets enjoyment out of a glass of beer. It quenches the thirst, gives nourishment and above all lifts the spirits – particularly promoting that great anarchist value, conviviality.

What is the best glass of beer? You are ahead of me – if you are used to hearing me go on about the best sort of house being the one you built yourself you will hardly be surprised that I claim the best beer is *homebrew*. It's good for you and bad for the state.

The good news is that it is both easy and cheap to make. Why contribute so much money to the capitalist giant brewers – aren't the Guinness family some of the wealthiest people around? Why pay huge customs duty to the thoroughly hateful state when you can, by putting yourself out ever so slightly, make this excellent stout at a fraction of the cost?

**Equipment needed:** A Burco electric washboiler (from jumble sale, car boot or even rubbish skip, they are well out of fashion for clothes laundry). If you can't find one you could use large pans on any hot plate. A thermometer. A five-gallon brewing vessel. A muslin straining bag; a linen cloth to cover the vessel to let vapours out while stopping flies dropping in. Some strong bottles. (Now that quart flagons have become unusual, the best source is Grolsch bottles with their porcelain rubber-sealed washers that are secured with a strong wire clip, they are surely worth more than their transient – though pleasant enough – contents.) A polythene tube for siphoning.

### Ingredients:

Five gallons of water (tap water with a teaspoonful of salt or 'mild conditioner' will do, but pure well water would be better)  
Seven pounds of malt extract (Edme Superflavour is best quality, but a poor man's alternative is a 7lb tub of Meridien malt from any good wholefood shop)  
Two pounds of crushed crystal malt grain  
Half a pound of crushed black malt grain  
Half a pound of flaked maize  
Quarter of a pound of dried hops – preferably Northern Brewers, but Goldings will do  
A sachet of Edme brewing yeast

**Method:** Bring the water to 150° fahrenheit and 'mash' (technical term for converting the starches) the malts, etc., for a couple of hours at 150° exactly. Then add in the hops and boil together for half an hour. Strain through the muslin into a tub and allow to cool to blood heat. Add the powdered yeast. Ferment for five or six days. After the first day there will be a lot of foam which you skim off and discard. The tub is covered with the linen cloth. When the ferment has died down, siphon off into the bottles, adding one teaspoonful of granulated sugar to each one before fastening down. Leave for a fortnight and it is superb – it improves to a peak at six to twelve weeks and will keep at least a year. Label it with a memorable date – the repeal of the poll tax or whatever is happening. Cheers and good health.

## Food for Thought ... and Action!

Latest news from Freedom Press bookshop.

**Covert Action Quarterly** #47 (Winter '93-'94). The latest issue of this parapolitics magazine from the USA maintains the usual high standard. Included in this issue: 'Russia in the Winter of Democracy'; Brian Abass on the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant; 'The Federal Bureau of Intimidation' by Howard Zinn; William Blum's amusing 'Cold War Anti-Communism Redux'; 'Trilateral Spin on NAFTA', concerning the conspiratorial elite group of the Trilateral Commission and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); and an important article by Ward Churchill about the FBI's possible involvement in the bombing of Earth First! activist Judi Bari's car – and the subsequent attempt to frame Bari and a fellow activist up for illegal possession of explosives (i.e. that they were knowingly carrying a bomb in their car when it went off). A4 magazine, 67 pages, £4.50.

**Bypass: Cross Currents in Under-the-Counter Culture** #1. The first issue of this review magazine is very much influenced by the US review 'zine' *Factsheet 5*. The proliferation of self-published and 'underground' magazines over the past decade or so means that there is plenty of material (from the great and the good to the piss-poor and worse) for such a review magazine. Although containing far fewer reviews than its counterpart from the USA, this 'review and listings service for the self-published and small press zines, comics,

pamphlets, books ... connects you to a whole chunk of the independent, alternative and dissident 'underground', with short, intelligent reviews of all sorts of weird and wonderful stuff. Illustrated A4 magazine, 18 pages, £1.00.

JC

**Notes:** Apologies for the incorrect price of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, listed on our booklist at £12.99, it is in fact only £8.99. *The Spirit of Freedom*, *The Poll Tax Riot*, *Against Separatism* and *Yugoslavery* are now all out of print (see pamphlet section), as are the other two titles by Joe Peacock. But *Regulated to Death*, co-written with Joe Baker, is still available. *Digger Tracts*, edited by Hopton, is back in print at £3.00. Other price changes recently include: *Peace News* 80p; *How Children Fail* (Holt) £7.99; *East End Docklands* (Fishman) £8.99. We do not have the *Anarchist Yearbook 1994* (£1.50). *The Dispossessed* (Le Guin) is again out of print. We are hoping to bring out a new, greatly revised booklist sometime this spring, as changes are coming thick and fast. To avoid the possibility of long waits and/or disappointment, please do try to include alternatives when ordering by post.

KM

If ordering a single periodical add 24p postage inland, 35p overseas. If ordering with books add 10% towards postage and packing inland, 20% overseas. Cheques payable to FREEDOM PRESS please.

# Operation Roadblock: Wanstonia rising!

Work on the M11 link road began in September 1993. If it is built, the road will go through Wanstead, Leytonstone and Leyton. It would end at Hackney Wick, servicing the Blackwall Tunnel – and thus the routes to the Channel Tunnel. As well as trees and green areas, there are a large number of houses in its path, many of which are being squatted. The manifest contrast between people's immediate needs for housing and a pleasant environment and the needs of the state and European capital for a fast and efficient roads network has increasingly engaged people in an environmental campaign that is about much more than 'green issues'. By fighting back, people have revealed the grotesque interests behind the road and have become still more militant in their opposition to the insatiable demands of the roads empire, handmaiden of capital. They have increasingly come to recognise it for what it is: a blood-sucking vampire.

There have been plans to build a road linking the M11 with Hackney since as long ago as 1911. For a number of years, a relatively small number of locals produced newsletters, held meetings, attempted to lobby MPs and engaged in all the other ultimately futile methods to stop the road. The collective campaign began in earnest in September 1993 when the developers' bulldozers first appeared. Most of the people who were sitting in front of bulldozers, sitting in trees, occupying sites and locking themselves on to JCBs with bicycle D-locks in September and October comprised experienced eco-activists who had moved to the area a few weeks previously.

The Department of Transport bought all the houses in the way of the proposed road a long time ago and has been throwing people out of them for years. Once people are evicted, firms like Squibb & Davies are brought in to make the houses uninhabitable: toilets are blocked and smashed, floorboards removed, staircases demolished, doors and windows breeze-blocked, etc., to deter squatters. From the beginning of the campaign, then, the defence and restoration of these houses as dwelling places was important. The houses could be used not only as 'permanent' homes but also as bases for information and communication, meetings and coordination.

At first, although most local residents appear not to want the road, few were prepared to get directly involved in action against it. There seemed to be a feeling that, since the decision to build the road had gone ahead and since the bulldozers had already arrived, there was nothing they could do about it. Things began to change when the developers fenced off George Green, Wanstead, to begin work in that area.

## Saturday 6th November: continuing the peasants' revolt

While the houses were perceived as private, and not a community natural resource, the Green was recognised by locals as a common facility; its 300 year old chestnut tree was perceived as of historical, practical and symbolic value to the local children. A children's tree-dressing ceremony organised by eco-warriors and local campaigners attracted a large number of local families who were dismayed to find that the developers had fenced off the land with nine-foot high hoardings in order to dig up the earth and cut down the tree. The first few that climbed over the fence were restrained by the security men. But then the kids started climbing in. The security men and cops didn't know what to do. And pretty soon there was nothing they could do because they were outnumbered inside the site. People then took over the site. The kids often led the way in this; for example, they demanded that the security men release those eco-warriors they were holding.

Immediately after a mechanical digger was occupied and made to leave the site, people spontaneously made use of this opportunity and began undoing the digger's work by carrying the earth back to the roots of the trees! The digger had made an enormous pile of earth, perhaps hundreds of tons, but people made a line and used bags to carry it all back to where it belonged.

## De facto common land!

Still police and security men were doing nothing to hinder this action. Having seized the initiative, those involved quickly saw the need to act on their power and go further in reclaiming the land. So they pushed the fence down. Once the first bit went down, more people joined in. People acted fast and in unison, and eventually very little of the fence was left standing. The police intervened very late and by then most of the necessary work had been done. The 'site' had been transformed into de facto common land! By dismantling the fence the boundaries of the site had been destroyed. It couldn't operate as a site any more.

To date, this event has been the high point of the

campaign. Not only symbolically but also practically, it changed the shape and size of the struggle overnight. A tree-house was constantly occupied in the old chestnut tree which became a site for daily gatherings. The new people that were drawn in potentially provided the necessary numbers for further occupations of the land as well as other activities.

## 'Blue Tuesday' – 7th December

A month after the Green was reclaimed from the developers, hundreds of people stood vigil under the tree all night after hearing rumours that an attack on the old chestnut tree was imminent. Two hundred cops turned up at half past five in the morning (later followed by a couple of hundred more) and fought until the mid-afternoon to remove people from in and around the tree and to prevent them from hindering the actions of the sheriff's officers' cherry-pickers\* and the mechanical digger which eventually felled all the trees in the area.

A lot of the locals who had gathered under the tree didn't know what to expect and were disillusioned by the action of the police. Although far bloodier scenes than this have been witnessed in London in recent years, many of the locals perceived the police as 'excessively brutal'. Now the area is a pile of mud patrolled day and night by an army of security guards.

## The Battle of Wanstonia

After this happened, we knew it was only a matter

\* Sheriff's officers are no better than cops. They turn up to carry out eviction orders – on trees as well as houses! Since trees cannot be legally felled if there are people in them, sheriff's officers and developers have to use mobile cranes ('cherry-pickers') to get people out.

of time before they took the nearby houses. The houses were like an island in the middle of a desert of building sites, the last remaining stronghold and embodiment of the campaign of active resistance in Wanstead – the last area controlled by protesters in Wanstead on the route of the road. Since September, one of the houses – 8 Cambridge Park – had functioned as a campaign office and communal house, as well as a home to full-time protesters. By January, the Department of Transport, who leased this house and two others on the same block, settled financially with the lessee and the houses became squats. A number of court wrangles eventually failed and the occupants of 2, 8 and 10 Cambridge Park (declared the 'autonomous free area of Wanstonia' back in January) were given seven days to get out. The residents of numbers 2 and 10 had been living in the houses twelve and three years respectively.

There then followed a period of sustained barricading which got more intense as the seven-day deadline approached. Firstly, huge trenches were dug and walls of mud and rubble erected in the areas that we thought might be used to get cherry-pickers in. Second, we barricaded the houses themselves. Since these were such big houses with so many windows, and since people were using them to live in all the time, it was felt that not all the houses should be completely barricaded. Thus, levels of barricading varied. The biggest house had a specially barricaded room, whilst the smallest had all its stairs taken out, all its doors blocked, etc. Then we created a number of lock-on points. We used oil drums of concrete, chimneys on the roof and even a twin-tub washing machine to insert steel tubes for people to lock themselves on to.

We got a tip-off two days before the evictions and were able to mobilise about three hundred people

to occupy the houses for the night of 15th-16th February.

The composition was very mixed, as at all events on the campaign. Perhaps a third were visitors from out of town, another third were regular and irregular campaigners who have been involved for a while, and the rest were people living locally. We packed into the houses, and from about five or six in the morning we were on the roofs, in the trees and barricaded into rooms. At seven in the morning, bang on time, the cops turned up and sealed the whole area off. This action was a very shrewd move on their part, for it effectively prevented those people thrown out of the houses and those coming late to the struggle from rejoining it.

There were 700 cops, although most were not visible most of the time. The sheriff's bailiffs led the way, smashing down doors with sledgehammers. They and the cops would drag and carry people out of the houses once they got access.

Quite often the bailiffs had to use giant cherry-pickers to get anywhere near the rooms at the top. Then they would start attempting to drag people off roofs. In the attic room in which I was barricaded, they gave up trying to smash their way through our barricade in case it fell on them. So they virtually demolished the house next door and began attempting to whack holes through our wall and floor with a sledgehammer. They didn't give a toss that there were people inside. This kind of thing was quite common. A lot of people complained that the buildings were being demolished with JCBs when people were still on the roofs.

Some of the lock-ons were carted away from the buildings almost intact to save the bailiffs drilling and sawing them in the buildings. Others could not be removed in this way and much time was spent trying to get people out using special tools.

Despite using two giant cherry-pickers at once, it took the bailiffs until late afternoon to get everyone off the roofs. Then they had to get people out of the trees. This took till it was dark – gone six o'clock. Eleven hours we successfully resisted. And those of us thrown out and excluded by police cordons kept them busy with a number of attempts to break through their lines and sit in the road in front of their vehicles. We knew that if they really wanted to take the houses, they would bring enough cops, bailiffs and machinery and that the maximum we could hold out would be a day or two. In many cases, the only way they could get us out was to endanger our lives.

## Significance of the struggle

For those locals critical of the struggle the issue is one of 'outsiders' imposing themselves (and their 'hippie' lifestyles) on a respectable local community. This argument has been the main ideological weapon of those locals who want the road, including James Arbuthnot the absentee MP who lives in Kensington (an irony he appears not to notice). Involved locals recognise that the issue isn't where people come from but what they are prepared to do; they simply want as many people as possible to help them fight the road. Eco-warriors add that one more road encourages still more cars and ruins the quality of air for everyone and adds to the global environmental crises. But perhaps the central issue is that the outcome of the events in Wanstead/Leyton/Leytonstone have consequences far beyond East London. Any kind of victory for those acting against this road will both discourage the roads industry and encourage those involved in similar struggles in other parts of the country (just as Twyford and Oxleas Wood have inspired this struggle).

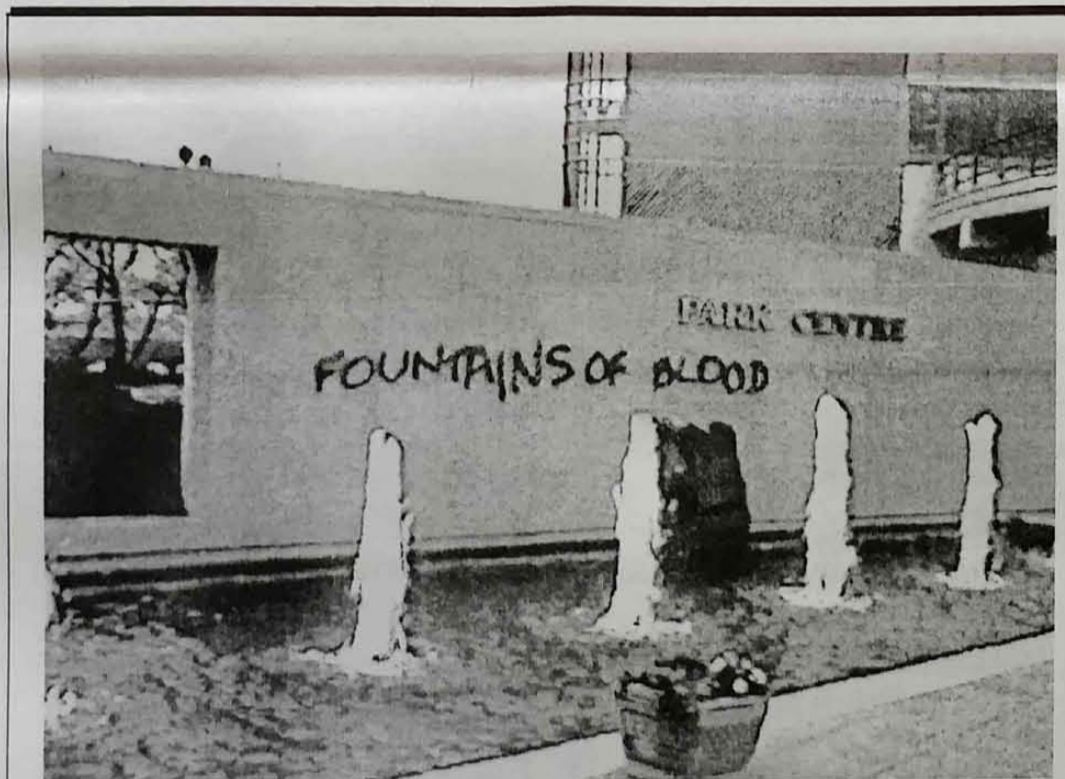
## The future: Operation Roadblock!

The campaign has recognised the necessity of stepping up a gear. For this reason, a 'national rota', dubbed Operation Roadblock, has been organised. It starts on Tuesday 15th March, so by the time you read this it may already have begun. But it is not too late to get involved. The idea is for a hundred people a day to turn up and carry out peaceful direct action for as long as is necessary! The more people, the more resistance, the more chance of stopping this road and others like it – and transforming our social relationships in the process! I therefore urge you to contact the campaign immediately and book yourself into Operation Roadblock.

Events in the campaign have been consistently characterised by an ethos of non-violence and good humour; civil disobedience has been the main tactic. When you turn up on the day, you will receive some training in non-violent methods and a legal briefing, so you will know what to expect. These events can be fun too!

Johnny Yen

Contact: The No M11 Link Campaign, Arch 211, Grove Green Road, London E11 4AS. Tel: 081-558 2638.



## Fountains of Blood

Two women were arrested for criminal damage at British Aerospace (BAe) headquarters at Farnborough, Hants., on 23rd February, after dyeing a fountain blood red to symbolise the effects of BAe weapons being used by the Indonesian military against the people of East Timor. Bloody footprints were stencilled on the ground around the fountain and a message painted on the wall behind: 'Fountains of Blood. BAe Hawks = East Timor deaths. No Hawks to Indonesia'.

Other members of the London-based direct action group ARROW (Active Resistance to the Roots of War), leafleted workers about the Hawk fighter aircraft deal and held a banner saying 'From BAe to East Timor: a trail of blood'.

BAe announced its annual results on the

same day as the action. Defence profits for the previous year amounted to £345 million. The previous day marked the first screening of John Pilger's harrowing documentary about Britain's complicity in the genocide in East Timor. Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975 with the support of Britain, the US and Australia, and has remained there ever since in defiance of ten UN resolutions calling on it to withdraw. In the last nineteen years 300,000 people, one third of the population, have been killed. Britain is Indonesia's largest weapons supplier and eyewitnesses have described being bombed by BAe Hawks from an earlier deal. BAe has signed a deal to supply Indonesia with 24 more Hawks worth £500 million and due for delivery in 1996.

The two women, Emily Johns and Andrea Needham, were held at Aldershot police station for nine hours and reported with a view to prosecution.

For more information on this action, the Hawk deal and East Timor, contact 081-347 9452 or 071-275 9150.

## — ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Tower block epitaphs  
and homelessness

There's a man, well-known to London readers, who for decades helped produce the modest journal *Solidarity* which was an attempt to build libertarian links between disillusioned Marxists and anarchists. Nowadays he has a whole series of more parochial concerns, one of which is the tower-block era in local authority housing.

He is interested in the links, as he puts it, "between authoritarian state socialism and the appalling disaster of municipal housing in the post-war decades". Like me, he frequently meets people who explain away the tower-block period as a capitalist plot by the purveyors of system-building, or the result of the corruption of local councillors by the big contractors, or else a consequence of a general shortage of money for investment in housing by central government.

Ken Weller insists that in fact this epoch was the result of a whole ideology (machines for living in, etc.) with deep roots in the decision-making classes, and can't be just dismissed as a capitalist plot. So whenever some British pioneer of modern architecture dies, Ken sends me the obituaries from the posh press, underlining the passages that show how out of touch these people were with the way ordinary families live.

I always relish these snippets, and it has always seemed to me that if public authorities ever consulted tenants or studied the way people really live, many of the more obvious housing disasters might have been avoided.

A blockbuster of a book has just appeared, copiously illustrated and full of detail. This is *Tower Block: modern public housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland* by Miles Glendenning and Stefan Muthesius (Yale University Press). It is just as well that it isn't quite the book that Ken Weller and I were waiting for as it costs £40. It concentrates on the administrative and contractual processes in local government.

We tend to ignore the fact that there are conflicting forces and a pecking order both in government ministries and in town halls. Dynamic city politicians with a mission to empty the slums within their own municipal boundaries, and able chief officers bent on cutting out red tape could negotiate vast programmes for redevelopment, and bulldoze even central government in ways inconceivable in today's ultra-centralised Britain.

In this connection it is worth mentioning that in the anarchist press outside Britain, there is a debate, instigated by Murray Bookchin, about 'anarcho-municipalism'. The book provides a wealth of empirical detail useful to both sides in this debate on the way local administration works in practice, rather than in theory.

Architects and planners, despite their professional pretensions, were often low in the hierarchy. London was an exception which provides a great deal of evidence to support Ken Weller's thesis. The LCC Architects' Department became an adventure playground of rival socialist design theories, and there was endless rivalry between County Hall and the London boroughs. Until reorganisation in 1964 the boroughs' housing ambitions were squashed by the county. With the coming of the GLC and its attenuated powers, the boroughs' own ambitions flourished. But the alleged economies of repetitive housing programmes never had a chance in London, as architects could never be restrained from design experimentation.

It was quite different in Scottish and provincial cities. City bosses could ride roughshod over tedious considerations of densities, daylighting and 'plot ratios', and cram towers in everywhere on pockets of land between the railway tracks and the gasworks, with negotiated rolling contracts with system-building contractors. Some of them, of course, were disgraced or jailed for cutting too many corners.

The authors are rightly withering about the subsequent urge to expunge the past by blowing up tower blocks, when the loans to build them won't be paid back until the next

century. One of them lives happily in Edinburgh's Martello Court, condemned as unfit in 1979, and not privatised. And they are right up to date, with a picture from September 1993 of the 'blow-down' of Sir Basil Spence's Gorbals blocks, where one spectator dies from 'blunt force trauma'.

All the same, I have serious reservations about the story as told. We learn little about damp penetration and exorbitant heating costs, and the opposition to town-cramming in favour of regional redevelopment is consistently denigrated and there is a similar blanket ridicule of later diagnosticians. They are wildly wrong in seeing Alison Ravetz's *Remaking Cities* (1980) as continuing "the grand old English architectural tradition of authoritarian rhetorical prescriptions", and Pearl Jephcott's *Homes in High Flats* (1971) as carrying forward an "anti-high-flat tradition".

In fact, the phrase that Jephcott continually heard from tenants was "I love my home" and she wrote with great sensitivity about the households who were suited to high flats and those who were not. Every week the subversive television comedy from Glasgow about Rab C. Nesbitt reminds us that some families do bear the mark of deprivation, and as Jephcott observed, "high flats are likely to include some such families; and it is asking a lot of them suddenly to show the self-restraint, social competence and rather nice habits needed for a satisfactory use of multi-storey housing".

If the standard of management and maintenance in local authority tower blocks had been of the quality taken for granted by the affluent, much misery would have been spared to tenants. The authors do not cite the testimony of a life-long socialist, Tony Judge, on his experience as Chair of the Housing Management Committee of the Greater London Council from 1974 to 1977. He says that "the impression, often confirmed as accurate on deeper examination, is of a vast bureaucracy concerned more with self-perpetuation than with either efficiency or humanity", and he bitterly criticises "the

insufferably paternalistic attitudes of councils and officials to their tenants".

There's another new housing book which I do recommend, which addresses the housing situation of today rather than of the '50s and '60s. It comes from a political party but, for a change, it's the Green Party, and its housing spokesman turns out to be someone else well known to veteran London readers of the anarchist press.

Government policy since 1979 has been to get local authorities out of housing, with rather different motives than those of the anarchists, through the 'Right to Buy' policy of persuading tenants to become owner-occupiers, while preventing the receipts from being re-invested in public housing, and by urging housing associations to take over the role of providers of 'social' housing, through the fiction that they are part of the private sector, even though they depend on the government's Housing Corporation. Council rents have risen astronomically as councils make tenants the scapegoats for their sharply reduced revenues, with the assumption that those who can't pay can apply for housing benefit. And even though councils have a statutory duty to house homeless families, whole categories of homeless people fall outside the legal definition. Hence today's dreadful crisis of homelessness.

Back in 1965 Ron Bailey was one of a handful of activists publicising conditions at the King Hill hostel in Kent, and after a long campaign the council had to change its policy. They moved on to a similar campaign in Essex and a battle with the GLC over conditions at Bromley-by-Bow. Then they shifted to the symbolic occupation of empty property and the settling of homeless families in 1968 at Ilford in unoccupied houses earmarked for demolition years later. The council responded by deliberately wrecking the interiors of empty houses, just to keep the squatters out. But squatting was here to stay.

For the cities were, and are, full of publicly-owned property and they were, and are, full of homeless people, including those encouraged by the government to buy but who, through unemployment, have been evicted. It is estimated that today there are 40,000 squatters and the current Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill is yet another attempt by government to shift squatting from the realm of civil law and to make it a criminal offence.

There is of course no concurrent policy of bringing empty property and empty sites into use for the homeless. In fact the Home Office consultation paper asserts that "squatters are generally there by their own choice, moved by no more than self-gratification or an unreadiness to respect other people's rights". This grotesque claim is enough reason for me to urge you to read Ron Bailey's new book *Homelessness: what can be done* (£7.99 plus £1 p&p from Jon Carpenter Publishing, PO Box 129, Oxford OX1 4PH, or from Freedom Press Bookshop).

It is the third of a series of Green Party Policy Pathways, and if you find that amusing then you can't have noticed the high-minded emptiness of the housing policies of the major opposition parties. For Bailey's sub-title is *an immediate programme of self-help and mutual aid*, and it is remarkable that no other political programme pays any attention to the ways in which people could help themselves if provided with support and enabling legislation instead of automatic hostility from the official system.

This is why his book is dedicated to the late Councillor Herbert Eames, who was Conservative Chair of the Housing

Committee in Lewisham, in admiration of "the astonishing courage and vision he showed by entering into the first legal agreement with squatters in 1969. As a result of his action, tens of thousands of homes that would otherwise have stayed empty have been brought back into use and hundreds of thousands of homeless people given new hope and dignity".

Since central government is so keen to condemn the level of vacant housing owned by local authorities, he produces figures to show that 1.9% of council houses are vacant, while 4.6% of privately owned houses, and 15% of houses owned by the Ministry of Defence.

He then provides a strategy for bringing defective property back into either permanent or short-life use, a scheme for reducing dependence on the horrifying expense of bed-and-breakfast family demoralisation, and a programme for forming self-build co-ops of homeless people on each area's listed vacant sites. These include the emergency units carefully devised and tested by the Architype Design Co-op. All these proposals are carefully costed, simply to prove that the charge on the public budget is less than the price of homelessness, let alone the misery.

To facilitate our change of heart, Bailey provides a draft Homeless Persons and Mutual Aid Bill, an updating of the Empty Property and Community Aid Bill devised by Shelter and actually introduced into Parliament in 1987 by a Conservative MP, Ken Hargreaves. His proposals are framed to win the widest possible support across the spectrum, and they carefully draw on the experience we already have of deprived and homeless people changing their miserable situation through self-help and mutual aid.

Anybody in this field can identify the series of obstacles in housing finance, planning and building legislation, as well as the key one of access to sites, that stand in the way of the hopeful. After 25 years of struggle, Ron Bailey isn't aiming at a national housing policy, merely at sensible interim strategies in which the housing and governmental establishment, right or left, can become supportive rather than punitive.

My own approach as an anarchist propagandist is not quite the same. I am concerned to stress the concept that the first principle of housing is dweller control, and consequently to stress the way that a few people manage to battle their way through the obstacle race and assert this principle, whether in squats, housing co-operatives or self-build groups. But I value Bailey's efforts to penetrate the deafening silence of both government and opposition, about the potential for helping, rather than hindering, people's aspirations to help themselves.

Colin Ward

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# Nonsense about Gender

Dear Freedom,  
With this week's paper I received a reminder that my subscription was due for renewal. Excellent foreign news, sound comment, useful info and contacts ... surely I couldn't miss an issue ... and then I came across Tony Gibson's article 'Nonsense about Gender' (*Freedom*, 5th March).

New language use can help challenge these relations (... or should Proudhon have stuck to the old 'common-sense' meaning of 'anarchy'?)

But apparently it is the case that the young and impressionable (who obviously can't think for themselves) are being subverted by a totalitarian conspiracy of foreign lesbian feminists! A sentiment that would not be out of place at a Tory Party conference. Obviously anything that claims to be 'politically correct' (even if it calls itself 'anarchy') is dangerously authoritarian - but it is simply not the case that the use of the word 'gender' and other linguistic challenges to authority emanate from sex-hating lesbian separatists, rather they arise from a broad spectrum of thought, by far most of which is anti-authoritarian.

Gibson's crass back-to-basics appeal deserves analysis. Now I would agree with him that language is indeed precious and that we should pay attention to its use. If we apply this attention to Gibson's article we find the following insights into his thinking: language is a 'commodity'; the only guarantee against linguistic anarchy is by appeal to an external authority (the OED); subjection to this authority guarantees 'freedom', revolt against it is illegitimate ('bastardised') and the rebels are a conspiracy of 'perverters of language'; these 'perverters' are also 'lesbians' (surprise, surprise) but they are also extollers of a 'new prudery' (perverts, lesbians and prudes! it sounds like a tabloid rogue's gallery); language is what distinguishes us from 'mere beasts' (despite all the evidence of animal communications) - therefore a hierarchical relation between humans and animals is 'natural' ('beasts' being worth intrinsically less than humans) and those humans that do not have language (such as the mentally handicapped) are themselves no more than animals (thus presumably of less value than other humans and therefore legitimately dominated). Interesting positions for an anarchist, especially one who pays such close attention to his language use that he is presumably fully aware that this is what he is saying.

The British education system has thankfully remained largely free of authoritarian PC, which has been a real problem in the US; it is not the case that such language originates in the media, as Gibson suggests. Elements within British education do however strive to offer some small resistance to power by teaching people that language and culture are not natural givens sanctified by God, State or Dictionary, but terrains open to the struggle for emancipation. I am sick and tired of seeing the largely non-existent spectre of PC being bandied about as an ideological label to abstractly denounce anything challenging to current power relations and I am disappointed to see a so-called anarchist engaging in such a reactionary gesture.

There is often discussion in *Freedom* about broadening the readership - you can rest assured that any thinking women, certainly feminists and lesbians (and Tony, the one is not necessarily the other) and many libertarians and greens besides would immediately be put off the paper and perhaps *anarchism* by this crass and reactionary article.

Yours annoyed,

Dan Welch

Dear Comrades,  
I agree with Tony Gibson's article on Newspeak in *Freedom* (5th March). It is a pity that he did not enlarge on his subject. There is nothing evil or inadequate about the Oxford English Dictionary, but thinking makes it so. Such words as 'pregnancy', 'homosexual', 'sex', 'male', 'female', 'woman' and 'man', to name but a few, are perfectly sinless, and even 'sexual intercourse' is nothing but a plain description of an act of nature. It certainly appears that the soulless and

garbled life and language in Orwell's *1984* is in some way or another manifesting itself increasingly as time goes on, no matter what government is in power. *1984* is not a condemnation of paternalistic socialism, but of government outright.

Nothing is helped, and certainly not any reformist programme such as anarchism, by a thoroughly irresponsible and debased national press and media, which more than most things is responsible for apathy, depression, anxiety and sexual mania to name a few.

It was possible to have a quarter-hearted laugh over 'politically correct' unless you were the unfortunate to whom it was directed in all seriousness by someone in authority who should know better, but I would draw to your attention a far more sinister and dangerous Newspeak word, namely 'underclass'.

Underclass has nothing to do with that grand old OED word *déclassé* which means 'unclassifiable' or 'beyond class or classification'. I do not suggest that members of the *déclassé* past or present were entirely free of class prejudice or not conscious of our gripping class system, but it was and is still one large area in human affairs where people of character, ideals and natural intelligence could learn from and love each other.

Working class intellectuals flourished there as did aristocrats with more human sensibilities and social conscience than the rest of their breed. At all costs the *déclassé* must be kept going, and *Freedom* itself is part of it.

Underclass has the same connotations as 'underworld', meaning a criminal sub-stratum of society. It means anyone not up to government and socially approved standards of living or behaviour. We know only too well the candidates for this class that is rated even lower than the working class: unemployed, mentally or physically unfortunate people, homeless, *déclassé*, working class intellectuals, ex-prisoners, and I am sure that *Freedom's* readers can add to it. This sociological label is being seriously bandied about by radio hosts, professors and politicians. Nowhere do these people talk for themselves, and nowhere is there any through-going analysis of the evils of our society. We are 'liberal wimps', comrades, for preferring analysis to labels, giving voice to the voiceless and saying that crime is caused and to be cured the cause must go. One cause for sure is capitalism. Another cause is Newspeak.

I suggest *Freedom* should compile a dictionary of Newspeak, and circulate it around 'society' - whatever that may mean.

Mary Quintana

[Shouldn't it be *déclassée*? - Eds.]

## Social freedoms

Dear Freedom,  
George Walford (19th February) doesn't get the joke. My social freedom to organise and struggle against workfare does not interfere with the social freedom of the bosses to get work done cheaply and enjoy their dinners without choking. This is simply because the freedom of capitalists to exploit me is not a social freedom but an antisocial freedom.

The freedom of capital is a competitive atomised freedom that negates social cooperation and genuine community, so it is an antisocial freedom. But social freedoms, expressed in communal solidarity, interfere with antisocial freedoms while complementing each other. My social freedom to resist and undermine slave labour schemes encourages your social freedom to do the same.

Paul P.

Dear Freedom,

It seems that Tony has inadvertently found himself on the wrong side of the literary barricades, so to speak.

Although contesting the application of terms such as 'gender' must seem an academic irrelevance to many, as Tony observes, it is the defining of such words which can reinforce or challenge power relationships. However, I believe Tony is wrong in thinking anarchists and other freedom-loving folk should align themselves against those who he derides as "the extreme of the lesbian-feminist movement of America". Likewise, he is wrong to see this latter as creators of a suppressive 'Orwellian Newspeak' - indeed it is this group which are fighting for the liberation of sexuality from state dictated norms and definitions.

The attempt by (American) academics to liberate 'gender' from 'sex' is an important one, not only for feminists but for all who seek a more libertarian society. As Tony says, people have a sex - i.e. are biologically sexed, male or female - they are not however biologically/genetically gendered (i.e. masculine or feminine). Masculinity and femininity are words which traditionally are ascribed to males/females respectively, but need not necessarily be so. This is the important point: that which we call masculine or feminine is socially constructed and not determined by sex at all.

The implications of this are important and must be obvious. If gender is determined by sex, then ways of behaviour outside 'accepted' norms and stereotypes automatically must be 'deviant' - if however gender is not 'naturally' determined, then all gender identities and behaviour are liberated and equally valid. Thus, writers such as Albert Brok (quoted by Tony) and Joan Scott are not prudes attempting "to make gender refer to more than sex", but are attempting to show that gender is separate to sex. In this light the attempt to see this differentiation more widely acknowledged is in fact an action against 'Big Brother' rather than one for him.

As to the Oxford English Dictionary being "our only bastion against the various forms of Newspeak" - I think rather the OED's rigid definitions on what is and what is not only serve to give 'moral' authority to those who would impose their ideas of right and wrong upon those of us who wish to define our own lives.

Piers J. Hale

# Demanding the unfeasible

Dear Editors,  
In November last year *Freedom* started a Good News column, intended to present instances of positive, practical anarchism growing within authoritarian society. The instances given: homeless people getting together to build themselves houses; a doctor inducing the Illinois state authorities to use their coercive power upon employers, making them guard their workers' health; NHS practices in Sheffield stressing the connection between work and health (and using less authority than medics usually do); a government inspector deciding in favour of gypsies; a doctor in Spain performing abortions at the cost of repeated imprisonment.

These can all be accepted as positive contributions to human welfare, but not one of them has anything distinctively anarchist about it. Each of them falls within the range covered by the pro-state reformers.

Only one of them has led to conflict with the state, and even that would find official acceptance in some countries outside Spain; one calls for more active use of state power. Each of them takes place within the state, showing what can be accomplished in its presence. Rather than moving towards a stateless society these activities help the state overcome some of its problems, rendering it more acceptable.

This attempt by *Freedom* to establish a positive role for anarchism ends by confirming the contrary interpretation of the movement. When anarchism attempts positive, constructive action, it does no more than duplicate the work of the reformers. It performs its distinctive role in negative, critical activity, remorselessly bringing to light the failures and shortcomings of present society. The title of a recent history suggests that anarchism demands the impossible; that is not strictly so, for nothing is impossible. Anarchism makes its unique contribution to social development when it demands the unfeasible, for only in this way can the limits of the feasible be found. (In the issues of 22nd January, 5th and 19th of February, no Good News column appears; have the editors recognised the weakness of it?)

George Walford

## Burning question

Dear Freedom,  
Living abroad, I rely on my two subscriptions to *Freedom* and *The Guardian Weekly* for my news from home and elsewhere. Nevertheless, in both cases, I find that I more often than not skip the front pages - and I have found that my own preferences are shared by many. One section of *The Guardian* which I have found entertaining, and which has enjoyed a long run, is entitled 'Notes and Queries'. Readers ask and respond to questions (mainly of a frivolous nature). I wonder if *Freedom* might be prepared to start such a section. It might be pure entertainment value, of course. But, from my point of view, it might equally be devoted to questions of a more serious and truly problematic nature. I find that anarchists are sometimes reluctant to be self-critical when it comes to challenging their own beliefs and assumptions. Questions like 'Who will do the dirty work?' do get asked. For me at least this has never been a genuine stumbling-block. I am rather partial to a bit of dirt so long as I can see my way to some running water at the end of the day.

Anyhow, my own burning question is: 'Do readers know of any airline pilots who are also anarchists?' And if my own hunch is right - that there are, probably very few - does this indicate any fundamental flaw either with anarchist theory or in the personalities of those who choose such a vocation?

Tim Francis

## Laying Marx's Ghost

Dear Editors,  
Now is the time for laying ghosts.

Marx usually got it right when he rehashed classical scholarship and wrong when he ventured to be original. Thus he was wrong in his redefinition of the labour theory of value (in that he excluded the forces of nature), wrong about the class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat (because the record shows that it is class alliances that make history), and wrong in his inversion of Hegel's dialectics (so excluding the creative genius that defines the human psyche).

For my sins, many years ago, I read Volume III of *Capital* from cover to cover. I was then a devout Marxist. Volume III is about medieval economics and mercantilism. Marx came to the conclusion that feudal economies were all about 'small scale production'. How wrong can one get?

Up to the twelfth century the economies of Christendom were based on pre-monetary inter-relations of services - military, religious and labour. Money was only marginal.

The great change came in the twelfth century when money and the market suddenly went centre-stage because the monks of the Cistercian Order invented the huge sheep farm - flocks of up to 20,000 sheep in an abbey.

This extraordinary and unprecedented development led to a massive growth in

textiles, tailoring and trade that transformed Europe and laid the economic and social foundations of the modern state. Witness the Woolsack. The wool economy then lasted until it was superseded by the effect of steam power in the late eighteenth century.

The key feature of capitalism remains the dominion of the market serviced by money. Marx missed this. He never understood that it was based originally on large scale enterprise, not by capitalists but by collectives, i.e. monasteries. Individual monks owned nothing - they had taken vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

From this salient and long ignored background emerges the elementary truth that so long as we need money and the market we shall have to put up with capitalism of one kind or another. It is up to us to distinguish between its acceptable and unacceptable faces.

Even the very best cooperative enterprise remains the captive of money and the market and is thus part of capitalism.

When the law of scarcity is eclipsed by the law of surplus (a condition that is now well over the horizon) we shall be able to phase money out and proceed to a gift economy. This Marx never saw either.

In this post-Marxist era can we update ourselves?

Peter Cadogan



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6th May - Anarchism and Utopia (speaker:  
Jason Wilcox)

13th May - General discussion

20th May - Talk by a member of the Socialist  
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be confirmed)

27th May - General discussion

3rd June - The Co-op and its Place in Politics  
(speaker: Tim Pearce)

10th June - General discussion

17th June - History of Native Americans  
(speaker: Jim Baker of Boston BAD [Boston  
Anarchist Drinking Club])

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24th June - Paganism, Feminism and  
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