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FIFTY PENCE

"Poverty will
always exist!
Yes, so long as
property does."

P-J. Proudhon

MAJOR BEGS THE QUESTION OF HOMELESSNESS

For Mr Major the homeless living in the streets and doorways of our cities are 'offensive' and quite unnecessary. His vitriolic attack on the youngsters among the 'beggars' is understandable. After all it was he, when Social Securities Minister, who deprived the 16-17 year old unemployed school leavers of any social security payments unless they took part in some kind of training scheme - which anyway could not absorb all the school leavers and doesn't provide jobs for most at the end of the 'training'. Not because they don't want to work (okay, some *don't* but the majority *do*) but for the simple fact that the jobs *are not there*. And only an idiot cannot see that the more technology is directed towards dispensing with human labour unemployment must inevitably continue to rise.

China calls Clinton bluff

BUSINESS IS BUSINESS

In spite of all the evidence to show that Beijing's record on human rights leaves much to be desired, and in spite of pressures from human rights activists, President Clinton decided to renew its most favoured nation status trading privileges with the US and no longer link them with the human rights issue.

The Chinese virtually told Mr Clinton to mind his own business and threatened to pass on future commercial aircraft orders to the Airbus Consortium and not to Boeing who value business more than human rights. After all, China has been Boeing's biggest customer over the past two years.

And another consideration. The US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown was pointing out that "China is going to be spending US\$600 billion on infrastructure projects between now and the year 2000. We'd like American companies to participate." We bet you would! Long live hypocrisy!

The official figures have shown a monthly decrease, but as everybody by now must know, the government's statistics refer only to those in receipt of the dole. Those wage slaves who have been unemployed for more than a year no longer exist, even as a statistic!

With the Labour Party's Mr Brown declaring that if returned to power then full employment will be their first priority, we wonder how they intend to achieve these ends (apart from declaring war) unless they are prepared to reduce the working week to 30 hours, ban all overtime and provide material incentives for parents to spend more time with their young children.

Major and his gang who reject the European Union's Social Chapter, which puts a limit of 48 hours on the working week (and he accuses the European 'socialists' of wanting to reduce it to 35 hours), are also proposing to remove the long-term unemployed from the dole after six months and that all receiving benefit be directed to jobs for their dole and a bit more - an obvious incentive to employers to sack full-time employees and take on part-timers for whom no national insurance, holiday and other charges apply.

To return to Major's 'offensive' beggars who among other things are discouraging tourists and shoppers from coming and spending their money buying useless souvenirs and being ripped off anyway, and not by the beggars. In *The Independent on Sunday* (29th May) one learns that:

"One in four single homeless people has served in the forces and a high proportion of them are sleeping rough, according to a study published this week [commissioned by Crisis]."

The Crisis report's director forecasts that the number of ex-soldiers on the streets will grow as the government implements the 17,000 redundancies started in 1992 as part of its 'defence cuts'.

The Crisis report, *Falling Out*, uses data from a national study of the single homeless *actually commissioned by the Department of the Environment last year*.

"It concludes that ex-service people are more disadvantaged than other homeless people. Most of those interviewed stayed less than a year in their first accommodation after leaving the forces. More than one-third have never had a settled home after leaving.

About 70% said they had physical or mental health problems. A quarter suffered from depression or stress-related illnesses while a quarter also reported an alcohol-related condition. More than 40% had been in prison and 23% in a psychiatric unit.

Even when periods of homelessness occurred some time after they left the forces, those interviewed often traced back their unsettled lifestyle to the 'culture shock' of leaving. A significant proportion had care backgrounds or unsettled childhoods before joining up and had no family to return to."

So much for the 'land fit for heroes' myth!

All commentators, other than the government's paid parrots, have no doubt that homelessness is an artificial creation thanks to a whole series of policies which have resulted in a shortage of housing, chief amongst them the selling off of rented housing which has not been replaced by rented accommodation which
(continued on page 2)

BT PROFITS SOAR AND ANOTHER 15,000 FOR THE SACK

British Telecom announced record pre-tax profits of £2,760 million for the year to the end of March and said it would be making a £750 million provision for redundancy payments to 15,000 employees who would be getting the sack this year.

The company chairman Sir Iain Vallance had his £465,000 p.a. salary boosted by a £185,000 'performance-related bonus' and will not be getting the sack.

Mark you, even the top boys are vulnerable these days. For instance, the Britton Group is taking over NMC for £121 million which means that Norman Gordon, chief executive of NMC, will be redundant, but his pay-off is £2,200,000 which should keep the wolf from the door.

The art market is proof, if needed, that there is plenty of cash around but in the wrong hands. Recently at the Serpentine Gallery a dead sheep preserved in a glass tank of formaldehyde was sold for £25,000. A poster 'Keep London Going' by Man Ray for London Transport was auctioned at Christie's last month for £26,000. A Matisse cut-out (when he could no longer paint he cut out shapes from coloured paper and glued them into semi-abstract designs) was auctioned at Sotheby's for a record £9,300,000 last November. The London National Gallery paid £3,570,000 for a painting by the French painter David. The last complete copy of William Blake's *Jerusalem* in private hands was sold at Christie's for £617,500 to "an anonymous telephone bidder"! And so on and so on. But that's not all.

Ridiculous things such as Charlie Chaplin's trademark bowler hat and cane were sold for £55,000 to "an anonymous British collector". The former newspaper owner Eddie Shah secured a "1930 4.5 litre supercharged 'Blower' Bentley" at a Sotheby auction of 'classic cars' for a mere £386,500. And at another Christie's auction, this time of motor car number plates, one "anonymous British buyer" paid a record £203,500 for a plate with simply KINGS on it! The same buyer paid £13,200 for LI ONS and £12,100 for 1 XXX. There were other lunatics with more money than they knew what to do with at the sale. The named developer of Pine Ridge Gold Centre in Camberley paid £52,800 for a plate with 1 TEE (golfers will appreciate the man's taste).

The *Sunday Times* provides an annual supplement on the seriously richer. To be included you must be worth at least £20 million. Perhaps what is most revealing of the

So long as there are the poor, the sick, the disabled, the homeless and the unemployed in a society where a growing minority can flaunt their wealth while governments cut back on benefits, the social services, housing and education, we anarchists say it's ...

THE RICH WHO ARE 'OFFENSIVE'



1994 list is that whereas in 1989 they "struggled to find 200 names to fill it ..."

"Today we can - and do name - 500 people we estimate to be worth £20 million or more: and there are many hundreds clustered just below that level ready to move up in the years ahead."

Not only does the survey find more seriously richer in the years of recession and unemployment for the rest of the community, but that:

"Those at the top have become considerably richer too: five years ago the top 200 were worth £38 billion between them. Today the top 200 - not the same 200 who were on the list in 1989 - are worth 36% more, or £54.3 billion. So much for the recession."

There are among the 500 names 65 described simply as landowners who between them own nearly two million acres, that is the equivalent of a strip of Britain 50 miles wide from Brighton in the south to Aberdeen in Scotland! They include fourteen dukes, six viscounts, nine marquises, fifteen earls, eight lords and four titled owners. A few of these worthies own less than 10,000 acres but others such as the Duke of Buccleugh lord it over 275,000 acres, Lord Lovat a more modest 100,000 acres, as with the Duke of Northumberland worth 90,000 acres. In Scotland Captain Alwyn Farquharson heads the clan bearing his name and sits on 300,000 "not very fertile" Highland acres. Still, a pad of 470 square miles to play the bagpipes or dance a reel in is not too bad.

Apart from these landowners a large number

of the seriously richer include the odd farm, the second or third home here and abroad among their hard-earned fortunes. Take for instance the case of Mr Alan Clark, known more for his Don Juanesque escapades than that he is worth £25 million towards which he has contributed very little. The family wealth originated in the textile trade but was transformed into an arts fortune by his father. When he died all that Alan Clark had to do to pay the death duty was to sell a Turner for £7.4 million. And it left him with a large collection in his Kent Castle, a 27,000 acre Sunderland estate, farms in Wiltshire and Dorset, as well as a Swiss house and oil interests. Poor man, how can he afford to burn the candle at both ends!

When Major says it would cost £145 million to keep the school-leavers off the streets surely our 500 seriously richer who are worth at least £65,000 million between them quite apart from loose cash in the bank (officially) and in off-shore tax-free havens (unofficially) could manage to put together the £145 million to help Mr Major clean up our streets? After all, only last month we were able to witness on television the opening night at the new Glyndebourne Opera House with Sir George Christie (himself a millionaire, thanks to dad, but not in the seriously richer category yet) thanking the invited audience who had generously donated the £33 million that the new opera house had cost. Make no mistake, there's plenty of money around. The problem is that it is in too few hands and no government

has either the will or the power to dispossess the rich. At most there could be a redistribution of wealth by taxation. In the last fifteen years of Tory government there is no escaping the fact, as Jean Corston the Labour MP for Bristol East, was able to ascertain from the government's own statistics, that:

"... the poorest 10% of families with children are £9 a week worse off than they were fifteen years ago - while the top 10% are £250 a week better off."

One of Major's arguments is that the 16-17 year old school leavers should go on living with their parents - again showing a complete ignorance of the real life problems of the poor and the unemployed families, which the rich don't experience since they get rid of their children by sending them to £12,000 a year boarding schools.

We cannot resist referring to a recent court case where the rich reveal themselves in their true colours. David Cocks, a millionaire QC seduced Miss Hammerton who had joined his London chambers as his pupil aged 22 in 1973. A year-long affair and innocent Felicity was with child. He did the honourable thing moneyside, but didn't bother to see his son for the first fourteen years of his life. He is now 18 and more than ever dependent on mummy, and she is demanding more for her boy. In fact she is wanting an extra £17,342 a year. After all, his private education at a London crammer costs £11,500 a year! Mr Cocks has offered to pay the college fees and £10,000 towards his son's "general care" but disputes "the extent of extra tuition and expensive private psychological counselling he needs".

It's not that Mr Cocks can't afford an extra £17,000. After all, he makes £500,000 as a QC and of course he owns a 50 acre farm in Devon in addition to his £400,000 London house. We are not told anything about the pictures, the cash in the bank, etc.

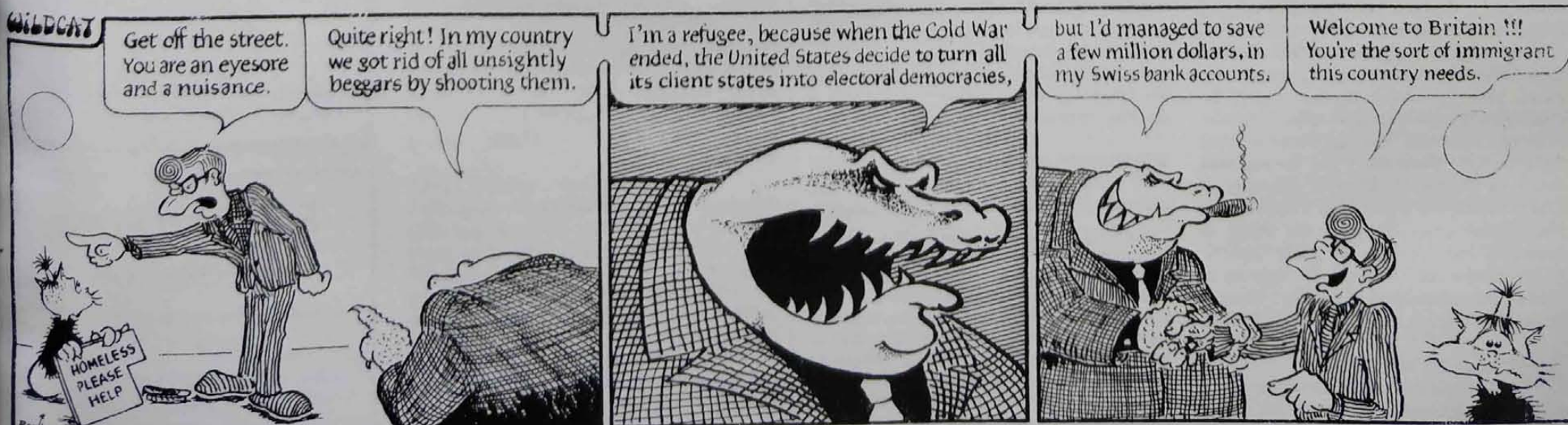
Aren't these really offensive, despicable creatures with all their wealth, status, the lot?

MAJOR BEGS THE QUESTION OF HOMELESSNESS

(continued from page 1)

could have easily have been provided by local councils with the proceeds from those sales and which at the same time would relieve some of the serious unemployment in the building trade. But the government has prevented local councils from using capital derived from council house sales for new building. As it is, they have also prevented some 250,000 empty properties from being repaired and made habitable with these funds. But like the fox and the sour grapes, they are also making life difficult for the squatters who have in many cases improved the derelict properties they have 'occupied'. Likewise with the New Age Travellers - seizing and confiscating in some cases their mobile homes.

Major and the Portillos, Lilleys, Howards et alia, are the spokesmen for the rich and 'successful' moneyside - a class or caste which we anarchists consider offensive and which no society professing to be democratic should tolerate any longer.



Raven 25
on
Religion

Free thinker Christmas Number

MOSES GETTING A BACK VIEW

And it shall come to pass that I will put thee on a ship of the rock, and I shall take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts. - Exodus 17:11

96 pages £3.00 (post free anywhere)

Top level blacklegs in BBC journalists strike

In the recent 24-hour strike by BBC journalists and technicians, which was a 90% walk-out, pickets failed however to persuade leading television newscasters Anna Ford, Michael Buerk and Ed Stourton to join. Among leading journalists who helped to present the news were John Simpson, Robin Oakley, Stephen Sackur, Fergal Keane and Ken Cargill.

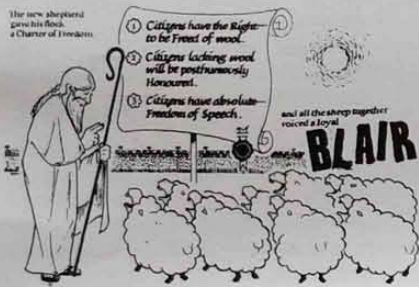
Veteran BBC newsman Charles Wheeler contributed a telling rebuke to the blacklegs (*The Guardian* letters, 26th May) when he wrote:

"I was saddened to see how many of the BBC's senior journalists crossed the picket line on Tuesday. Admittedly this is not 'their' strike - the highly paid and famous have no reason to feel threatened by innovations like performance-related pay and the devolution of decisions about

conditions of service. But I would ask them to think back to the days when their professional lives were more of a struggle and consider where they would have stood on these issues when they were in their twenties and thirties.

One of the reasons why I have stayed with the BBC for nearly 50 years is that I have always felt I could argue with - and even make an enemy of - by immediate boss, without risking my career. One could always move to another programme or department. In these days of tight markets and short-term contracts that's a great deal more difficult. The trouble with performance-related pay is that it tends to reward obedience, discourage non-conformism, and to put too much power into the hands of programme editors and middle managers. The fact is that thousands of BBC people do feel threatened by the latest reforms; I admire their courage in trying to stick up for themselves."

Through the anarchist press



Lotteries are about as interesting as religion for vacant minds and if the Italian method is going to be copied the numbers will be picked out of a revolving drum by young people especially chosen for their angelic looks. That the recipients of this windfall will come off a list of trusted government toadies is saying nothing new, for the winners of the premium bonds of the 'You've never had it so good' society are evenly distributed among the favoured sons and daughters of SAS, MI5 and the rest.

Grief is a comparatively new word - even if it sounds English like grave, gravitas and the rest, conceals its ruling class Latin origin - whereas sorrow is as old as tears, grief has its political uses. The nation mourns its greatest son (nobody gave him a second thought while he was alive). Another nation (a republic no less) mourns the demise of its first lady queen (nobody remembers a single thing about her). The ex-prime minister (well, almost) contemplates living in a cardboard box on the Strand and grieves at the unsightly prospect. The future contender with the unfortunate name of Blair remembers a once ambitious novelist who rejected the same and chose Orwell as his pen-name. Bad name for a politician and a godsend to lampoonists (remember the brilliant Room cartoon?) the shepherd and his flock, the faithful sheep blairing obediently.

Uppermost in everybody's mind is the coming festival season. Festival guides have replaced passports in their importance, and quite rightly for knowing where the thing is at is more important than how to get in. There is always a gap in the fence. But because of the unwelcome attention of thugs (i.e. agents of government) what was openly advertised in the past is now given by word of mouth and at the shortest of notice. It is estimated that over a million people attended these festivals last year - a population on the move. There are now gatherings all over the country and these camps have really caught on in Russia, Spain and Slovenia. Those were the days, though, when there was an anarchist camp in Cornwall. Even if ideological differences between the French and Manchester comrades over the siting of lavatories have lost us the local farmers' goodwill. We had the best chef reduced to tears by the introduction of the rota system as he stood by waiting for his turn to stir the pot.

Note that the arming of the police in London was mooted by the tourist board to "reassure continental visitors". The taking of a million pounds for one year residences is part of a deal with the Mafia.

Another joke is, in the worst possible taste, the Bill now nodded through the sleeping Commons nicknamed the 'Injustice Bill'. This is about the worst piece of legal rubbish that has ever been perpetrated and will be given the same treatment by the enraged populace as the poll tax. One thing it shows is that the executive have run out of legal prose stylists, unable to cope with the imprecision Major delights in. That this last piece of legislation by a discredited bunch of crooks will never be put into effect is little consolation for those who will be subjected to random violence given the rubber stamp of the law. How anybody can define music (prosecutable) as a succession of "repetitive beats" is beyond comprehension. Another bit of the Bill is the most ridiculous thing since Lex invented the law. That is what is called the ex parte injunction (i.e. to make accusations about you without you being present or informed) and turf you out of your home within 24 hours on a bad-wishers' say-so, rubber-stamped by some hiring judge after payment of the appropriate fee. You cannot legislate against homelessness, but this Bill actively encourages private violence to be used by people who do not even have the remotest interest in the property involved. And how can you legislate against repetitive beats? And how can you legislate against three village philosophers walking along the road? All I can say is the sooner we shall have anarchy the better.

Whoever wrote the following is a far better writer than anybody the executive can produce on their pea processors: "Anarchism is a definite intellectual current of social thought whose adherents advocate the abolition of economic monopolies and of all political and coercive institutions within society. In place of the capitalist economic order, anarchists would have a free association of all productive forces based upon cooperative labour, which would have for its sole purpose the satisfying of necessary requirements of every member of society."

Legislate against that Major Major!
John Rety

McLibel case to start 27th June

The libel case brought against our comrades Dave Morris and Helen Steel by the McDonald's fast food chain is set for hearing at the High Court, beginning 27th June. It is expected to last three or four months, with a break for August.

The case concerns a leaflet first issued in the early 1980s by London Greenpeace, an anarchist group whose name pre-dates that of Greenpeace International, by which McDonald's say it has been "greatly damaged in trading reputation, goodwill and credit and brought into public scandal, odium and contempt". Quite an achievement for a leaflet, but the trial is likely to do McDonald's more harm, in that regard, than the leaflet could.

Whatever the outcome, McDonald's will lose. They have no chance of recovering any award or any of the vast sums they have spent, are spending and will spend on lawyers, because Helen and Dave are both on income support. And however the judge decides, the facts and allegations will receive publicity which McDonald's will not welcome.

What McDonald's would have preferred would have been to stop the leaflet and get the matter shut up. They originally sued five members of London Greenpeace (the group as such, not being a legal entity, cannot be sued) and dropped the case against three in return for

apologies in court. Then they seem to have done everything possible within the law to get the case delayed and messed about, in the hope, it may be presumed, of wearing Dave and Helen down. But without success.

Helen and Dave are conducting their own defence, as legal aid is not yet available in libel cases. But they have some assistance from unexpected sources. McDonald's have argued successfully that the case should be decided by a judge, as the details are too technical for a jury. Dave and Helen resisted this at the Appeal Court and the House of Lords, where Patrick Milmo QC argued the case for a jury without fee.

Jeremy Corbyn MP has put their allegations in an Early Day Motion at the House of Commons, which may be reprinted without getting done for libel oneself. Linda McCartney, the vegetarian food processor, has given £1,000 towards their expenses (they need money to pay the travelling expenses of seventy witnesses, many from abroad).

The McLibel Support Campaign calls for a day of action, leafletting McDonald's stores on 25th June, and for a picket outside the High Court in the Strand from 9.30am to 11am.

Further information from **McLibel Support Campaign, c/o London Greenpeace, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX. Telephone: 071-837 7557.**

Humanist Centre opened

The opening of a new Humanist Centre is an exciting advance for British Humanism. A single site for all the national Humanist organisations in this country has for the first time been established in central London. The shared headquarters of the British Humanist Association (BHA), the Nationalist Secular Society (NSS), the Rationalist Press Association (RPA) and the South Place Ethical Society (SPES) is now at Bradlaugh House, 47 Theobald's Road, London WC1. This is next to Conway Hall, and the two buildings will together provide offices and meeting rooms for the whole Humanist movement. The national Humanist organisations have different origins and different emphases, but they cooperate closely for the common cause of advancing a positive alternative to supernatural religion, and this task will be made much easier in one building.

The SPES began in 1793 as a Nonconformist chapel in East London, was an independent organisation in South Place, Moorgate, for more than a century, became an Ethical Society in 1888, and has been based at Conway Hall since 1929. The NSS was founded by Charles Bradlaugh in 1866, and has ever since been the most militant organisation in the Humanist movement. The RPA was founded by C.A. Watts in 1899, and has ever since been the main publishing organisation in the Humanist movement. The BHA was formed in 1963, deriving from the Ethical Union which began in 1896 and is the largest organisation of the Humanist movement.

The new Humanist Centre will be formally opened at midday on Tuesday 21st June 1994, which is the Summer Solstice and also International Humanist Day. The main speakers will be Sir Hermann Bondi and Michael Foot, and representatives of the various Humanist organisations will be present. There will be an informal social beginning at 6.30 that evening for members and sympathisers (admission free by ticket available in advance).

Humanist Centre, Bradlaugh House, 47 Theobald's Road, London WC1X 8SP

NEW FROM FREEDOM PRESS Health Service Wildcat

As it says on the front cover, "this book is dedicated to the daft doctrine that people, trained in making profits can run a better health service than people trained in caring for the sick". It is the fourth book of Donald Room's 'Wildcat' cartoons to be published by Freedom Press, but the first in which Donald has worked with a collaborator.

Most of the hilarious scripts are by a well-known writer, not an anarchist, who works for the National Health Service. It is not a joke but a real fact, that the writer's new conditions of service include the threat of dismissal for "causing the management to lose confidence in you as an employee". So the writer has prudently elected to use a pen-name for this book, Victoria N. Furrumy. When 'she' retires from the NHS, people may be startled to learn 'her' true identity.

Meanwhile the book is as thought-provoking and laughter-inducing as the other 'Wildcat' books, and none the less so for being on a single topic.



48 pages ISBN 900384 73 5 £1.95

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Focus on ... Italy

With this issue we shift our 'Focus' to Europe and the 'changes' which are being reported in Italy. What follows is a statement released recently by the Commission for International Relations of the Italian Anarchist Federation ...

Today Italian political institutions swirl around the emerging concept of 'movvo' or 'newness'. In reality, behind the smokescreen of propaganda, we find a process which aims at replacing a political class not up to the demands of the Europe of the coming millennium.

The political changes which are emerging from this period are, in Italy, symptomatic of a crisis at the heart of the ruling class which has been knocked off course by a concomitant series of circumstances: the impossibility of continuing to hold power against a background of corruption and public debt, the emergence of new groupings capable of bringing together the various dissatisfied groupings, the non-existence of a new generation which would have rubber-stamped the formal substitution of the old political class which has now been left behind, the new international situation following the fall of the Berlin Wall which has brought to the fore once again the strategic importance of Italy for its American ally.

These changes came rapidly to a head after the legislative elections of 1992 followed by the administrative elections of '93 which saw, in practical terms, the elimination of the old forces of political government, forced into a rapid change of physiognomy, name and politics and the ditching of the former political elite in order to render themselves more politically acceptable to the electorate on the 27th March.

The most obvious phenomenon of this change, from a political point of view, was the notable emergence of the Lega Nord (Northern League) as a federal expression of various regional leagues (Lombardy, Venice,

Piedmont, etc.) which obtained a high degree of success by leaning on existing discontent born of the conflict with central power coming from Rome and expressing itself in the slogan 'Roma ladrona, la lega non perdona' ('the league will not forgive the Roman thief' - a bit more catchy in the original Italian you will agree: translator).

The League's political programme brings forth new elements compared with past political programmes which have always had a centralist approach to state power. Firstly, state organisation on a federal basis is proposed leaving the northern regions with power over the central and southern regions, the old power bases of the ruling political bureaucracy.

The strength of the League is essentially grounded on the lower-middle and middle classes of the north who want to escape heavy taxation - due essentially to the national debt - and the movement of public expenditure towards southern regions which do not and cannot enjoy, for historical, political and geographic reasons, the developmental advantages of the north.

To the benefit of this breakthrough by the Northern League, brought about at the expense of the principal historic parties, there appeared a process of clarification and denunciation at the initiative of a group of Milanese magistrates who led, for a year and a half, a campaign against the old political class, abandoned by its US ally which had hitherto upheld it as an anti-communist/soviet umbrella.

Those most representative of this group (Craxi, Andreotti, Forlani, De Michelis, Gava, etc.) were completely eliminated from the political scene and killed off by corruption scandals, acts of theft and criminal activities (Mafia, Camorra, etc.) - such accusations had been set forth for years by anarchists and other elements of the radical left with no effect.

The fate of the Communist Party was a little different. It stormily split into two groupings, the one moderate (Democratic Left) taking the majority and keeping to the opportunism of the past, the other radical-stalinist (Party of Communist Refoundation) a minority representing the internal stalinists of the former party which drew to itself other marxist groupings including the trotskysts. These parties survived the judicial onslaught despite their having compromised themselves with local power in the 'red' areas and despite their important participation with central power during the period of 'historic compromise' of Eurocommunism when it defended the state from attacks by the revolutionary left. A

position that could not have lasted without the advantages of financial irregularities. Today these parties present themselves as a barrier against the defeatism of the League and it is not by chance that they enjoy a high degree of support from the bosses' class in the industrial groupings and elements within progressive catholicism.

About two months ago a new grouping appeared, Forza Italia, led by Silvio Berlusconi, a member of the masonic group known for its mafia intrigues and for its call for a reorganisation of the state along authoritarian lines.

Berlusconi (one of the richest men in Italy) was successful thanks to the support of the old political class (notably Craxi, former leader of the socialists) who allowed him an open field in editing television broadcasts (he owns three television stations, a newspaper, various periodicals, financial companies and other economic interests).

This new force puts itself forward as a bridge between the League and the Fascist Party (the MSI now the National Alliance) in the south

in order to create a right wing alternative of a Peronist style to the left coalition of progressive alliance (Social Democrats, Greens, various Catholic groups, Socialists) and in the centre the residue of the former political establishment: the Christian Democrats including the new Popular Party and the Italian Pact.

Given its need for experienced politicians, the Forza Italia has not hesitated to seek allies from the old political scene such as Casini, Mastella, Piro - leaders who had seen better days or less scrupulous opportunists like the radical Pannella.

In reality all the political programmes are very similar with regard to the economic situation: whereas the left and the centre insist on maintaining a minimum of social ownership and the right represents the law of the market and economic liberalism as the solution to all evils, the League represents the real populism that could throw a spanner in the works. One must remember that the last government, that of the former governor of the Bank of Italy, Ciampi, in his attack on workers in both the private and public sectors had the support of the PDS, the League, the centre, the socialists (with Berlusconi's support).

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— SPAIN —

Repression Follows Strike Action in Grenada, Southern Spain

Nine members of the Spanish CNT-AIT have been charged with various offences after their participation in the general strike of 27th January. Having avoided various suspended prison sentences, called for by the government, three of them were still kept in prison for 23 hours after having been arrested during the strike.

Accused of violent activities and violations of public order, the anarcho-syndicalists included the editor of the publication CNT, José Luis Garcia Rua, and an English comrade whose expulsion was narrowly avoided.

The regional federation of the CNT has organised a solidarity campaign.

Basque Country

Yet another person has been charged and imprisoned in the French part of the Basque country - the seventieth. Karim Chakroun was arrested, brought to court and sent down on 7th March this year, having fallen foul of the laws relating to irregular residence and criminal association relating to terrorist activities.

This latest arrest reveals the willingness of the state to keep up the pressure on those who have shown solidarity with political prisoners not recognised as such by the state. Today the Mitterand/Pasqua system has the Basques in their sights in the same way as they had the Kurds not so long ago.

Criminalise and terrorise are the objectives of the judge who was decorated by the Spanish government for his contribution to the anti-terrorist struggle. Now, we're not idiots. There is no documentary evidence. The arrestees are not the 'bloodthirsty terrorists' portrayed by those in power. To the great regret of the legal system those in the dock are simply Basque militants who, since their right to asylum were taken away, sought to go underground rather than risk prison and torture on post-Franco Spain, and the irony is that the locals freely gave their support. There will be more Karims! It was the same in May '93 when twenty locals were accused of drinking coffee with or lending a bicycle to these terrible members of ETA.

Since Karim's arrest a support group has been set up which has issued a press

communiqué, the essence of which is as follows:

So long as the national Basque liberation movement is met with torture and oppression as a response to its demands its militants are forced into exile ... This latest arrest reveals that despite their desire to criminalise opposition the French and Spanish states will not succeed in breaking the solidarity that exists between the people and active individuals ... The number of arrests demonstrates the political dimension of the affair. Taking account of all these aspects, we reaffirm our solidarity with Karim and with all those in the same position ... and call for immediate action.

Contact CSNIDA 17, rue Paul-Bellamy, 44000 Nantes
from *Le Monde Libertaire*, 27th April 1994

Extremadura: call for international solidarity

After a series of actions taken by peasant groups in Extremadura there were a number of arrests. Most of these were at a demonstration, but one comrade was arrested at his home two days after the event ... maybe because he was an anarchist?

The legal process is moving along and most of those arrested have been freed, apart from two, one of whom is our comrade José Paredes.

Now his lawyer is asking for money to continue working on his case and his trial is imminent. We believe that those charged will be sentenced for their opposition to the agricultural policies of the local government.

This is why the collective Paideia and Los Adelfas are calling for solidarity from anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists to help defray the costs of the legal expenses and so that our comrade should not have to pay the personal cost of a prison sentence.

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from *Le Monde Libertaire*, 27th April 1994

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The 21st Congress of the Italian Anarchist Federation

The 21st Congress of the FAI took place in the historic town of Milan. A congress which has survived - not by chance - whilst the political situation of the Italian state is more than ever at an historic turning point, with the return of a more muscular right supported by the local middle classes fired up with an anti-Mediterranean racism and a weakened left today reunited with its extreme incapable of maintaining the popular support on which its influence was based. From all of this we can conclude that only anarchists have social propositions which can hope to bring about a revolutionary change in society.

It is in these conditions and after exhaustive analysis that our comrades discussed the social investments which anarchists - federated or otherwise - need to make (the congress was open to all groups who wish to work with the federation). Thus the question of the communes which the Italian Anarchist Movement commonly refer to as 'libertarian

municipalism' was discussed at length as it is a question of choosing strategies with goals chosen by anarchists which can complement those which have been adopted by comrades working in syndicalist terrains. With regard to the world of work, it was correctly re-stated that the struggles must be pursued outside of the establishment union framework, as has always been the case in Italy in particular in the grassroots on the shopfloor.

Finally it was re-stated that since anarchists have no country there is a need for global organisation and development; as a consequence, urgent calls were made for the strengthening of the International Relations Committee of the FAI and support for the activities of the IFA (International Anarchist Federation).

Secretariat of the International Section of the FAI

reproduced from *Le Monde Libertaire*, 18th May 1994

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Those Talking Co-op Blues

As it is a century and a half since a small group of workers started the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, the first viable co-operative society, I was asked by the journal *Co-op Commonwealth* to contribute to a symposium responding to the question 'Should we be celebrating 150 years of Rochdale co-operation or are the ideals of the co-operative movement no longer relevant?'

I don't know how other readers would respond to such a question. Personally while I don't follow co-op politics and have never exercised my vote in the succession of retail co-op societies to which I have belonged, I'm aware of belonging to a co-op family and can rattle off my grandmother's co-op number as well as my mother's. My mother-in-law was a feminist heroine of the Women's Co-operative Guild. We get our groceries every Friday from the local co-op, and when I examine my wardrobe I find that everything that doesn't come from the charity shop is either from Ipswich Co-op or Marks & Spencers. (When these multiple retailers embarked on their big post-war expansion years ago, they searched the country for the brightest managers of co-op stores and offered to double their wages. This offended the lay management committees of the retail societies who clung, not to equality but to an acceptable differential, and consequently forfeited a lot of marketing expertise.)

Perhaps it is the inevitable collision between market wisdom and co-op ideals that makes me one of the indifferent majority of co-op members when it comes to the political side of the movement. Certainly I have been repelled in the London Co-operative Society's past, by noting how the faction of the former Communist Party adopted the technique of prolonging meetings until ordinary citizens had gone home in order to pass the votes and resolutions important to them.

But how was I to respond to the *Co-op Commonwealth* request? I'm unwilling to write off the co-op past, so I couldn't ignore the anniversary. I was in the familiar situation of anarchists faced with a forum not of their choosing. What I actually said was:

"Whether as producers or consumers, we have tried out capitalism for 200 years, we have experimented with co-operation for 150 years, and we have experienced nationalisation through 50 years of centralised public corporations in Britain, and of course 75 years in the former Soviet Union. What can we conclude after all this history? Today we see capital roving the entire globe in search of new sources of poverty-stricken unorganised labour to exploit, in exactly the same way that it seeks cheaper sources of raw materials and unregulated sources of dumping-grounds for industrial wastes. Similarly we see the absolute failure of

bureaucratic management and control of production and distribution. Consequently the one remaining hope is worker-controlled and consumer-controlled management of production and distribution. Knowing all about the failures and disappointments of the past, we have in every generation to re-invent the Rochdale principles. This applies equally to producer co-ops, housing co-ops and food co-ops. We have to broaden our vision to embrace them all."

I don't know how other anarchists would have responded. My last two sentences were an obvious reference to the fact that whenever a group of people have sought to set up a workers' co-op, a housing co-op or (saddest of all) a food co-op, they have been kept at arm's length by the official co-op movement and have had to re-discover the Rochdale principles on their own as though history had never existed.

However, having voiced an opinion I was sought after to contribute to a co-op supplement to the *New Statesman* expanding on this point of view. So I dutifully responded, trying to stress the dilemmas faced by believers in local co-operative democracy and those who are dismayed by the declining share in the retail market of the retail co-op movement.

To be specific: in 1900 1³/₄ million members in 1,400 local societies were involved in 7% of retail trade in Britain. By 1960, 12 million members in 950 local societies amounted to 11% of retail trade. Today about 8 million members in about 50 societies still have a remarkable share, but 40% of retail co-op sales are handled by the two wholesale co-op bodies, the Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) and Co-operative Retail Services (CRS), trading directly with the public.

Both these bodies have effectively by-passed the tedium of local control, not because they don't believe in democracy but because they are in competition with the other multiple retailers, Sainsbury, Marks & Spencer, Tesco, Safeway and Asda, and are desperately striving to defend their share of the trade. When the army of retail analysts decided that the future lay with car-driving shoppers and predicted that the future lay with out-of-town hypermarkets, local co-ops declined to pursue this trend. Like some other

multiple retailers sticking to the High Street, they lost custom, just as they did to rock-bottom limited-range outlets like Kwik Save, Aldi and Netto. So the two wholesale societies opened up under a variety of names, so that you have to look hard to perceive that you are trading with the Co-op.

The co-operative movement has a complex structure, carried over as a legacy from the past. There are the retail societies, ever diminishing through amalgamations (the latest of which was that of my local society, the Ipswich, with the Norwich). There is the CWS, the manufacturing and buying body, theoretically owned by the retail bodies, and the CRS, a non-local body whose speciality is in saving failing societies from insolvency. For example, Clive Woodcock reported in *The Guardian* eight years ago that:

"The old London Co-op went in strongly for political activism and democratic theory and ended up in financial disaster, the rescue of which caused even CRS to stagger under the weight."

Negotiations went on for decades for a merger between the CWS and CRS and were resumed in May this year. There are other federal bodies, the Co-operative Union and the annual Co-operative Congress, which is not the 'Co-op Parliament' as it is often called, since individual co-ops are autonomous. And of course, there has been since 1917 a Co-operative Party. Many years ago, Geoffrey Ostergaard stressed in *Freedom* that this body's then secretary, Jack Bailey, was perhaps "the most vigorous exponent of the view that socialism is not to be equated with statism" and that his writings were "impregnated with libertarian sentiments".

Ostergaard was at that time involved in sociological research resulting in his book on *Power in Co-operatives*, and under the pseudonym Gaston Gerard, wrote what I have always seen as the most thorough anarchist analysis of the co-operative movement in seven issues of this journal. Readers with access to files or microfilms (or soon, no doubt, to CD-ROMs) should seek out his series of articles in May and June 1958 (volume 19, numbers 20 to 26) under the title 'Report on the Co-ops'.

His account of the document current at that

time (it was called the *Co-operative Independent Commission Report*) was full of pre-echoes of the debate happening today within the co-op movement. His conclusion was that:

"The co-ops find themselves faced with the old dilemmas. How many of one's principles should one be prepared to sacrifice in order to survive? Is it possible to survive at all without imitating the principles of one's opponents? And if one imitates them, what exactly has survived? If past history is any guide, the co-op movement generally chooses 'survival' rather than 'principles' — but usually only after a considerable time-lag. Its constitution based on 'open membership' provides the means by which the movement in the long run adapts itself to changing circumstances; in the world as it is, only a closed oligarchy can remain 'pure'."

For the co-op movement, however, it looks as though time is now running out. Without radical changes, this century may see the eclipse of the co-op movement as we know it today. With radical changes, such as are envisaged in the report, the co-op movement will survive but only in a very different form."

His words could have been written today, as the co-ops face yet more reports on how to retain their share of the consumer retailing market. At this year's celebratory Co-operative Congress there will be more agonised debates about streamlining the co-ops in the face of even more aggressive competition from the capitalist chain-stores and hypermarkets.

Co-op history is full of disappointments. One is the failure to expand the tiny enclave of worker-controlled productive co-ops. The new ones that spring up have to look elsewhere for advice and have to pick up the Rochdale principles from other bodies like the Industrial Common Ownership Movement. Another is that even though co-op housing was one of the original aims of the Pioneers,

(continued on page 8)

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The Ecological World View

In his book *Problems of Knowledge and Freedom* (1972) Noam Chomsky mentions a Japanese farmer who had on his wall a poster which read:

"Which road is the correct one, which is just? Is it the way of Confucius, of the Buddha, of Jesus Christ, Gandhi ... or is it the way of Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan, Hitler, Napoleon, President Johnson?"

Whenever ecological issues are discussed — by such worthy writers as Fritjof Capra, Carolyn Merchant, deep ecologists like Bill Devall, Peter Marshall, Vandana Shiva and Edward Goldsmith — we are invariably presented with this kind of dualistic vision of the world, one which suggests no alternatives.

You can either support Cartesian mechanistic philosophy, with its radical dualism of humans and nature, its reductionist science, its ethic of domination and power and its anthropocentric attitude to nature (and such a world view is often misleadingly equated with science or, even worse, with European culture generally).

Or you can support various religious traditions — falsely and misleadingly equated with ecological thought — which are alleged to be holistic and ecocentric. Under the label of 'ecological thought' or the 'organismic perspective' are thus placed a wide variety of religious traditions — Platonic philosophy, Buddhism, Sufism, Hinduism, the mystic philosophies of Plotinus, Aquinas and Eckhart, the religions

of clan-based societies, and esoteric Christianity — as well as anything that strikes the fancy of the New Age acolytes. But of course these various traditions are not ecological but spiritual: they are theocentric rather than ecocentric. 'Spiritual ecology' has always seemed to me a contradiction in terms, a bit like Christian anarchism.

In terms drawn from the Hindu context the choice we are therefore given is that between the Kshatriya, who expresses aggressive violence and political power, meat-eating, sexual assertiveness and an attitude of domination towards nature, and the Brahmin priest. Holding religious power, the Brahmin exemplifies non-violence, vegetarianism, ritual and sexual purity, and a sacramental view of nature, seeing its unity expressed through spirit or various deities.

What is completely overlooked in all these radical ecology texts are two things.

One is the organic tradition of clan-based and peasant societies, a tradition which is expressed in their herbalism, their biocentric attitude to nature and in their subsistence economies. This is an empirical tradition that is quite distinct from their religious culture. The latter culture only comes into play when the organic links between humans and the natural world have broken down — through inexplicable disease or natural calamities. Religion implies an institutionalised separation of people from their life-world, and posits a 'higher' order of reality (god, spirit, ideas, deities) that is

distinct from natural, organic processes. To conflate organic tradition (and the participatory and symbiotic relationship with nature that it implies) with religion is highly misleading, as it is to conflate life with spirit. The prayers, religious rites of tribal and peasant communities do express a religion of 'nature' but rather a reverence towards or communication with, the spirit world.

The whole idea of the 'sacred' means to be separated as John Zerzan has suggested, shamans and priests intimately linked with hierarchy and institutionalised power. But an attitude of domination over nature begins not in language, classificatory systems and agriculture, as Zerzan seems to argue, but with the rise of gender and class hierarchies and the state.

Of course, many religious figures throughout history expressed in their writings an ecological sensibility (essentially derived from the organic communities which gave them sustenance) as well as indicating an aesthetic appreciation of nature. And many early intellectual traditions such as Taoism and Samkhya philosophy, expressed an ecological ethos. Of this there is no doubt. But religion is distinct from people's everyday life-world.

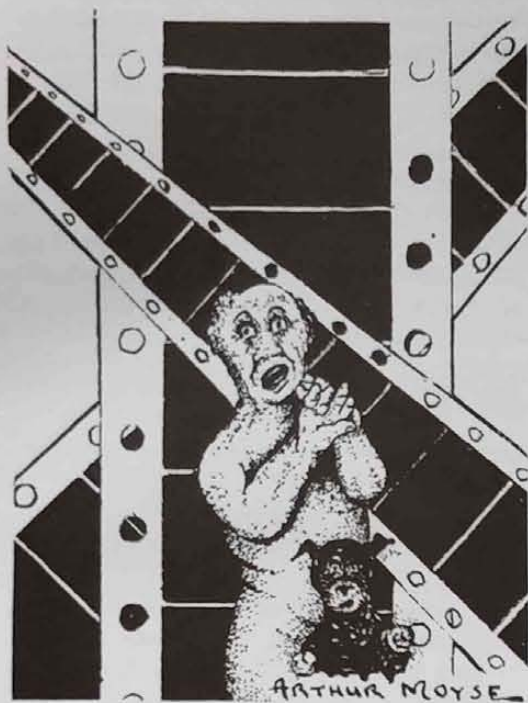
Secondly, radical ecologists like Capra, Merchant and others with their rather static conceptions of two modes of being seem to lack a real historical sense. They thus seem to down-play the fact that the Western philosophical tradition, as well as science, has changed tremendously over the last two centuries. For Merchant, European intellectual history seems to have stopped in 1750, enabling her to suggest that a 'new' ecological paradigm is now needed to

All those years ago when innocence was the political correctness of the day and our elder statesmen and women wore blue ribbons in their hats, their prams and their nursemaids, the annual Summer Exhibition within the Royal Academy was a thing to be taken seriously and then, as now, the revolutionary activists within and attached to the anarchist movement of their flirtation were of the penned and vocal opinion that 'art' was not a concern of the 'struggle' for the 'message' or my common labouring soul. It was all those long years ago that the Supreme Soviet of the Royal Academy discovered that some unfortunate dissident had painted his 'landscape' over a photograph of a landscape and expulsion and the public removal of the offending work was the order of the hour, in lieu of the pre-common market bullet in the back of the neck in the cellar. Fortunately those terrible days are temporarily gone and freedom has inevitably produced its licence and if you cannot paint then borrow a Polaroid camera and send in a photograph for instant Andy Warhol style instant fifteen minute glory, Alan Clark thou should be living at this hour. This year Guinnesses are staking the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition with five beautiful girls in close fitting black handing free filled glasses of Guinness to the members of the Fourth Estate who volunteered to make the supreme sacrifice. Not only does the free black gold raise the level of this year's exhibition, and the five maidens of the night, but also the 1,359 works hung out of the 13,000 submitted with the exception of but a few and as usual these were from the Old Gang led by Peter Blake. A gentle and a pleasant person, Blake's, to me, lack of talent and success always bemuses me. Maybe it's that hard graft and obvious lack of talent that, as in so many other fields of life, explains it or probably because as a natural genius I am just pig jealous of his crude painting of two maid servants holding a milk bottle each but with a large photograph of Marilyn Monroe forming the sad heart of the childish paintings. Photographs on canvas or hardboard can now take a place on any gallery's wall, and here within the Royal Academy Summer Art Exhibition, and to me it is not an art form but a parasitical growth in that those without talent can hang some unknown's photograph on a gallery wall, place a human turd on a pedestal or declaim someone else's political manifesto and step forward out of the shallows and take a bow for sinking down to the intellectual level of swine that dine on trash culture. Our lads and lasses will demand to know what has that to do mit the 'message' and I neither know nor care.

With the collar of one's dirty mac turned up,

Click a de click click

purely for affectation, one follows the Town and his giggling frau one second off Bond Street to the Anthony d'Offay Gallery for it is in this exciting yet unadvertising gallery that



exhibition after exhibition delivers that one has to visit. The concentration style ward with the piss in the centre of the bunks, the life-size figure of the old man jerking in and out fucking through the bung-hole of a huge man-size wine barrel. One may choose to reject the work, dislike it or curl the upper lip in distaste, but where other galleries who try this type of exhibition bow to the state and public acceptance, the d'Offay Gallery bares their breast for those who climb their steps. In the lower gallery there is a room full of the late Andy Warhol's fast-fading 'fifteen minutes of glory' hardly worth one's troubled time, but up the steps are the collected photographs of Sarah Lucas. Last year she and ol' Tracey did a six month stint in a derelict shop-front in the east end selling their art for the benefit of the culture-mad colonials exhibited in the Project Room at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in these United States of America. What Sarah and Tony are exhibiting 'up those little steps too' is a large over-tall man-size frame containing nine large panels to form a narrative of a nude man posing forward as he

plays peek-a-boo with his ding dong with a beer can, now you see it now you don't. An exhibition of minor importance you might scream to the intelligentsia of the Clutterbucks (née White Hart) and you are protestingly correct, but Sarah's art 'Got a Salmon On (Prawn)' lies in the gallery's manifesto and their's and the St James' Bible deserve to be quoted in their own right as art beyond content, Sarah Lucas, 'Got a Salmon On (Prawn)'. Sarah Lucas is telling a joke - a crude, vulgar joke. It's the one about the man who boasts that he has a salmon on (an erection) and it turns out to be nothing but a prawn. For her exhibition at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery, Sarah Lucas has installed a single new photographic work - a large nine-panel narrative of a naked man and his posing progression with a can of beer. There is a straightforward jeer at the machismo masking the inadequate here, but also a trace of the role reversal evident in her earlier self-portraits: photographs of herself in a greasy leather jacket, eating a banana; a cast of her genuinely hairy armpits; a pair of her own Doc Martens with razor blades set in the toecaps. In 'Got a Salmon On (Prawn)' Lucas's look at the male nude is essentially that of the voyeuristic male artist and the model's body, perfectly arranged within each frame, echoes the large soft female nudes of French classical painting. Sarah Lucas has attitude - aggressively stereotyping her subjects by gender, race and especially class, leaving little space for other interpretations. Like the cruelly accurate characterisation in Mike Leigh's film about contemporary British society, Sarah Lucas's unflinching illustrations of the categories in which we unhesitatingly place one another (hard nut, bitch, wanker, dyke, tart, fag, snob) and so familiar and so uncompromising. But slice the salmon where you will it ain't and its 'message' like Blake, Sarah and all the other camera clickers is but of the casual minute and the permanent printed explanation tacked onto it.

But in comedy lies tragedy for but thirty seconds stroll from the anarchist Freedom Bookshop is the Whitechapel Art Gallery and its open exhibition of local work. It is of a high standard and compares well or even better with much within the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, but within the Whitechapel exhibition is the worm within the rose and it is Jamie Wagg's photograph on view in the upper gallery. It is the supermarket

security camera photograph of a small child being led away. Enlarged and blurred and highly coloured, it has the appearance of a French Impressionist painting. Its *cri de coeur* is that it is a police released supermarket security photograph of a small child being led away by two other small children to be savagely murdered. Without that brutal fact, the photograph as a minor work of art is of small, nay no, worth and one must question who would enjoy and want it and why. What one does, and exhibits, is a purely personal matter but not, unwittingly, to supply material to those who find pleasure in the exploitation of human or animal. The murdered child's parents have protested their anger and Wagg has protested his regret and the Whitechapel Art Gallery word is that "the final decision lies with the organisers: it would be inappropriate for BT to act as censors". I cry no censorship and that is a noble gesture, but if one finds pleasure in the crude-photograph of a small child being led away to be murdered then why not accept the lesser complaint of the *Sun's* tabloid page three girls, all harmless naughty nudey nudey.

Arthur Moysé

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'dominant mechanistic paradigm'. This would imply, of course, that all the earlier religious traditions - which are supposedly ecological - are not really ecological at all?

No one will deny that reductionistic, mechanistic science is not dominant in contemporary culture. How could it be otherwise, serving as it does the needs of capitalism and the state. As Capra has perceptively written, it is pervasive in such disciplines as economics and psychology, and it underpins both biomedicine and agribusiness. But to imply that critiques of mechanistic science only emerged with eco-feminism and deep ecology indicates a woeful ignorance of the history of Western culture and philosophy. For modern (Cartesian, mechanistic) science has been under fire since the end of the eighteenth century. It was critiqued by Kant, by the romantics and by biologically-informed thinkers. Both Goethe and Hegel attempted to develop an alternative scientific outlook, and, conceptually, it was dealt a fatal blow by Darwin over a hundred years ago.

Coming either from the physical sciences - both Capra and Shiva were trained as nuclear physicists - or from academic philosophy, radical ecologists rarely mention Darwin. Yet it was Darwin who not only provided the basic ideas and concepts of ecological thought, but as Hans Jonas and Ernst Mayr long ago suggested, provided us with a new world view that completely undermined the pretensions of both religion and mechanistic science.

In introducing the idea that humans are not the special products of god's creation but evolved according to principles that operate throughout the living world: in stressing the intrinsic organic (not spiritual) links between humans and

nature; in undermining completely - long before quantum physics - the 'mechanistic world picture along with 'cosmic teleology' and 'essentialism'; in emphasising the crucial importance of openness, chance, probability and the individuality of all organisms in the evolutionary process; and in suggesting a way of understanding that was both naturalistic and historical (rather than static and spiritual) - in all these aspects Darwin initiated a new world view that spiritual ecologists still seem to yearn for.

John Seymour has just written a book arguing against what he calls the "ultimate heresy", namely the suggestion that humans are separate from nature. Seymour proclaims - as if it was some brand new idea - that this is not the case and that "we are a part of nature". Needless to say, although it purports to delineate the history of humankind's attitude to nature, the book makes no mention at all of Darwin.

An ecological attitude to nature has been around a long time. It is a naturalistic attitude to the world and views nature not as an organism (spiritual or otherwise), nor as a machine, nor as some female deity, but as a historical process. The world is thus seen as a natural process from which both life and

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consciousness (culture) have historically evolved, a world which can be lived and understood without recourse to a postulated god or spiritual agencies. The relationship between humans and nature is this neither one of spiritual unity nor one of radical opposition (humans being identified with spirit, nature with mechanism), but rather it is one that is organic and symbiotic.

This ecological world view has long been expressed by tribal and peasant communities in their organic traditions - traditions that are still sustained in those contemporary movements advocating organic farming and permaculture. It was equally expressed in the writings of many naturalists throughout the centuries, at least from the time of Aristotle and Theophrastus. Yet students of natural history hardly get a mention in Peter Marshall's *Nature's Web*, which although an excellent text is focused unduly on the philosophers such as Heidegger, many of whom even if they ventured out of their study probably wouldn't be able to recognise a woodpecker or distinguish a celandine from a buttercup! It was expressed also by such philosophers as Jan Smuts in his *Holism and Evolution* (1926) and by Whitehead in his philosophy of the 'organism'. But whereas Smuts was an avid botanist, Whitehead, like Plato, was fundamentally a mathematician and could never fully rid himself of the idea of a god who sustained the world. And finally, the ecological world view has been cogently expressed in the last two decades by Murray Bookchin, building on the insights offered by Hegelian philosophy, contemporary biology and writers in the anarchist tradition like Kropotkin and Mumford.

Brian Morris

There are in France stringent laws against the traffic in drugs and against those who take them. And as always happens, the scourge grows and spreads in spite, and perhaps because of, the laws. The same is happening in the rest of Europe and in America. Doctor Courtois Suffit of the French Academy of Medicine, who already last year [1921] had sounded the alarm against the dangers of cocaine, noting the failure of penal legislation, now demands ... new and more stringent laws.

It is the old mistake of legislators, in spite of experience invariably showing that laws, however barbarous they may be, have never served to suppress vice or to discourage delinquency. The more severe the penalties imposed on the consumers and traffickers of cocaine, the greater will be the attraction of forbidden fruits and the fascination of the risks incurred by the consumer, and the greater will

Malatesta on the drug problem

More than seventy years ago there was then too a 'drugs problem' and governments could only think in terms of more severe penalties to counteract it. Malatesta was saying then what at long last even those in authority are beginning to realise: that the big stick only drives the problem underground and the mafia get richer.

be the profits made by the speculators avid for money.

It is useless, therefore, to hope for anything from the law. We must suggest another solution. Make the use and sale of cocaine free [from restrictions] and open kiosks where it would be sold at cost price or even under cost. And then launch a great propaganda campaign to explain to the public, and let them see for

themselves, the evils of cocaine; no one would engage in counter-propaganda because nobody could exploit the misfortunes of cocaine addicts.

Certainly the harmful use of cocaine would not disappear completely, because the social causes which create the drive those poor devils to the use of drugs would still exist. But in any case the evil would decrease because nobody could make profits out of its sale, and nobody could speculate on the hunt for speculators. And for this reason our suggestion either will not be taken into account or it will be considered impractical and mad.

Yet intelligent and disinterested people might say to themselves: since the penal laws have proved to be impotent, would it not be a good thing, as an experiment, to try out the anarchist method?*

* From *Malatesta: His Life and Ideas*, Freedom Press, 309 pages, £5.00 (post free inland).

Inside India

The idea of development, especially in the preceding four decades, has been closely identified with those of progress, modernity and emancipation. For that reason it has successfully maintained an aura of indisputable inexorability normally associated with the law of falling objects. This view is misleading, development is more a label for plunder and violence.

Such an image of development sharply contradicts the benign association disseminated by development propaganda and related literature. Disillusionment with the development promise has though well and truly arrived in India and many other southern nations.

It is no longer possible to conceal the fact that development has often been nothing less than officially sponsored triage. This term was brought into circulation during the debate on the global resource crisis forecast by the *Limits to Growth* report of the club of Rome where western ecologists and doomsdayists argued that if indeed the resources of the world were limited then those who had access to them and were already well off should strengthen their privileged positions while societies already in ecologically impossible situations should be left to fend for themselves. If in the process they perished, so be it.

The Bhopal gas tragedy is an apt instance of development as triage. In December 1984 a gas produced by modern technology escaped from the factory of a multinational corporation, invaded entire settlements, killed and maimed thousands, disrupted the lives of hundreds of thousands and caused incalculable violence to the environment. The aftermath of that disaster has been more painful for the victims who survived. They have become the living dead, adding to the numbers of hibakusha spawned by the modern age.

Of course the modern world has exorcised the ghost of the Bhopal disaster by reducing it to the status of a unique accident. Bhopals though occur every day. A recent survey of workers spraying pesticides and engaged in dusting operations in five districts of Gujarat revealed that none of the labourers was provided with masks to prevent the inhalation of toxic chemicals. Goggles to protect the eyes were also not available. Only 50% of the workers took the precaution of covering their nose and mouth with a cloth.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that there are 500,000 cases of pesticide poisoning every year in the south. Of these cases 5,000 are fatal. A study in Sri Lanka based on an examination of government hospital records from 1975 to 1980 showed that annually over the period an average of approximately 13,000 people were admitted for acute pesticide poisoning. Out of these about 1,000 died. Such statistics on

direct pesticide poisoning do not include still births, cancers, miscarriages and congenital deformities. Calestous Juma of the Environment Liaison Centre in Nairobi has suggested that the actual figure of pesticide poisoning cases worldwide is in all probability two million, of which 40,000 end as fatalities.

Human beings today allegedly possess a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but this charter is worthless compared to the fundamental rights that have been granted to modern technology. Even when it kills and maims the modern machine is not culpable, neither usually is its owner. Culpability is usually attributed to incompetent operators. The modern machine has its own rights which human beings have to take second place to.

What is noted here is true not only of the south but the north too. Wars against the production of hazardous goods were first waged in the north and they still continue. Remember Adolf Jan, president of Hoffman La Roche, who when asked about the suffering his company had caused in Seveso in July 1976 in a dioxin accident replied:

"Capitalism means progress, and progress can sometimes lead to inconvenience."

The Bhopal gas disaster was the climax of a hazardous system sponsored by a development paradigm that has been profoundly anti-people and anti-nature. The association of development with suffering, with increased threat to survival and with violence is not a surprising occurrence. It may be politically difficult for our ruling mobs with their twentieth century pretensions to practise open triage. The Europeans could eliminate the indigenous peoples of America or Australia because they were simultaneously able to provide themselves with unchallenged theories of extermination based on notions that these groups of human beings were not part of the human species but something lower in the scale of being.

Development therefore comes hand-in-hand with displacement. For, while it is possible to maintain large masses of people on a relatively less intensively-exploited resource base, simpler technology and a wider array of occupations and trades, this is not possible with the industrial project rooted in modern science.

For this reason the past three decades have seen development become war. Governments of the south have teamed up with international financial institutions to kill their own people, weapons purchased by governments supposedly to fight external enemies are used against their own people in development battles. In such a way has conflict emerged between industrialisation and subsistence. Shall we then call development itself into question?

John Shotton

Middle East

In April 1948 commandos from Begin's Irgoun organisation entered Deir Yassin, a village near Jerusalem. The Red Cross reported 250 men, women and children killed.

This was prior to independence on 14th May 1948 and the declaration of war by the Arab states the following day. Begin declared: "Not only was the massacre of Deir Yassin justified but without it there would have been no state of Israel".

More than forty years later in the occupied territories the same logic reigns between the settlers and the Palestinians. From the Hebron massacre to the six Palestinians killed by a special unit of the Israeli army in the refugee camp at Jabalia in the Gaza Strip, there is more to this than mere 'extremism'.

The Israeli government, by outlawing Zionist groups like Kach and Khana Hai, have managed to hide the nastier side of the problem, but haven't they themselves always collaborated with the settlers? Thus in January '92 Moshe Arens, Defence Minister, gave authorisation to civil guard units to patrol the perimeters of their settlements in a policing role. B'tselem, the human rights organisation, has registered from December '87 to December '93 thirty-nine cases of homicidal settlers. Three have appeared in court, the heaviest sentence being three years imprisonment. Israeli society is shocked at the Hebron massacre and stays silent about everyday events.

In order to absolve itself of international condemnation, the state has recourse to methods used elsewhere: the Governmental Commission of Enquiry. Thus the Israeli state will be hailed as having tried to confront reality, but will there really be an open debate concerning human rights in the occupied territories?

For Michael Warchanski, a journalist at the Centre for Alternative Information: "Even if the army, the security forces and the government are condemned by the evidence the condemnation will be stifled by international recognition of its autocratic capacity."

Meron Benvenisti, former mayor of Jerusalem, states: "The bias of the enquiry allows the government to mask the real problem. Peace will remain an impossibility for as long as the question of the settlers remains unresolved." At a time when negotiations have started again the government is hell-bent on acquiring maximum territorial control in areas outside that designated for autonomy ... thus some 46 square metres have been acquired since 1993 by the settlers.

For how long will these opposing camps co-exist in the occupied territories? As the 'peace process' continues the settlers accuse their government of treason. The settlers

Focus on ... Italy

(continued from page 4)

Beyond the propaganda the old formula *pillage public resources for private interest and pass private debt on to the State* is the tune being sung by most competitors for power.

The unions

During the election period, the biggest unions were in a hurry to sign agreements with the bosses which would freeze wages. This was the case in the biggest companies (Fiat, Olivetti, Montedison, Pirelli, etc.). Such agreements penalised workers and created a climate of confidence among the middle classes and the enlightened middle classes of the left, notably within the PDS.

A consequence was a drawing together of the establishment unions and these groupings, aided by the Cooperative League (of popular origin) which today represents a colossal economic body. This is seen as a good thing by those bosses who want a docile trade union but capable of controlling the class struggle. Never mind the workers ...

Other components of the world of work, small but grassroot (such as the USI, CUB, CIB, COBAS, SLA, etc.) express their opposition and continue to mobilise and build a veritable syndicalist alternative opposed to traditional unions like the CGIL, CISL and the UIL.

From this viewpoint we can discern the inability of the League to conquer one corner of the world of work. The League's union (SAL), created with this in mind, is of no significance.

Other elements of the right have ignored the problem. For example the Forza Italia have leant on traditional fascist unions like CISNAL who shows itself incapable of organising workers other than fascists.

This lack of a mass base may prove the Achilles' heel of the Right Alliance despite everything the left has done to hand it victory in a plate.

Subtitling needed

A Spanish comrade resident in London has several videos of a Spanish television documentary about the life of Federica Montseny. Has anyone access to the equipment and skill needed to subtitle the video in English. I so, please write to 'Subtitling' c/o Freedom, and we shall put you in touch.

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council announced on 5th December last a campaign of civil disobedience and setting up of armed militias. There have been water supplies being sabotaged, murders ... of which came to a climax with the Hebron massacre. The Israeli government has been forced by public opinion to react ... as has Hamas ...

The future will decide if the peace agreement between Arafat and Rabin will really profit Palestinians.

from *Le Monde Liberaire*, 20th April 1994

* Centre for Alternative Information, PO Box 31417, Jerusalem. Fax: 02 25 31 51

Anarchism and breaking free

Dear Freedom,
 I read *Freedom*, 28th May 1994 says "Science is the study of natural reality". This is incorrect. Science is the study of natural phenomena. Reality is any subjective interpretation of what is going on. He also confuses technology with science. Technology is the developed skill in manipulating the environment at any one time. Technology existed as soon as man used tools. Science is merely a modern method of interpretation.

Our interpretation of reality is through a number of paradigms or world views which in their broadest sense are religious, sciences, and so on, but in a narrower sense might become ideologies. Examples of paradigms which govern perceptions of reality are the Christian religion, or splitting it further Catholicism, Protestantism, etc. Other examples might be Alchemy, Western Science, Newtonian Physics, Feudalism, Capitalism, Marxism, Social Democracy and Anarchism.

Primitive peoples had a view of reality. They had a technology sufficient unto their needs including a method of conservation through totemism. But they did not have sciences.

Reality is related to cultural factors themselves influenced by climate and

topography and interaction between different peoples. The Australian Aborigines had no draught animals so never invented the wheel so could not have invented machines. In medieval society and later we had the alchemists, one, and only one, of whose interests was to turn metal into gold. Until recently, when scientists have laughed contemptuously at it, how could they think such a stupid thing? But the alchemists were right. You can turn base metal into gold by atomic bombardment. The alchemists' reality was correct in that way that they had not had the technology to achieve it. They also had no knowledge of the social sciences. The economics of the process makes the gold so costly to produce its production is pointless. The only ruler who made anything out of this was an Elector of Saxony who wanted money to buy china. He set his alchemists to the task and as a sideline they experimented with pottery and were successful. The Elector made a fortune by selling Meissen.

Science and technology interact but so does sociology, economics and so on. They have different paradigms, different views of reality, but the danger is when they become mutually exclusive. Now accepted as valid irrespective of whether true or false and not subject to examination and refutation, such as for instance one of my favourite examples - feminism.

Initially an exploration, examination and critique of the society, social reality, which then for some became a morality, then an ideology, for some almost a religion, not to be subject to critical examination. In this way there are one to ask to examine it, one might be attacked and pilloried as a heretic. One is not now flogged or burned at the stake but one finds if one submits to publication one has to walk across an invisible minefield with concealed trip-wires.

One of the women attenders of the London Anarchist Forum said she recently had a research paper's publication held up because she had not entered the feminist register of the forum although she thought to do so was inappropriate. In other words she, a strong feminist, was disciplined by

another feminist adjudicator, to force her to slant her paper in a particular way. Another friend submitting an MA dissertation was rejected for a year because he had attempted to critically examine feminist aspects. This authoritarian aspect of feminism I find frightening. It does not do anything to improve the lot of women, in fact it has become a hindrance to women in a very guarded sense. But it gives enormous power to authoritarian individuals worthy of Holy Office.

Orthodox science on one particular time can be hijacked in similar ways. I have already mentioned Velikovsky in an early submission. Velikovsky submitted his work for scrutiny by other scientists using the specific criteria required by the ethos of orthodox science and had his work rejected unless because he was questioning the validity of the concept of gravitation central to orthodox science's existing paradigm.

Take downs. For centuries dowings methods have been used by technologists by mineralogists, by other engineers and so on. Yet orthodox science rejects dowings because they cannot prove its existence by using existing scientific methods and scientists are unwilling to admit their methods cannot cope with this phenomenon. It is not scientifically provable so cannot exist. But it still works. The scientist's notion of reality does not allow for the inclusion of what is seen as 'unscientific phenomena', so instead of saying 'This one has caught us out, let's make our methods more sophisticated' they reject dowings as unscientific and therefore untrue, i.e. it does not happen. In my book I make orthodox science wrong - pretty silly and hardly a valid view of reality. If you want to call dowings magic that's fair enough. Magic is phenomena unprovable by scientific analysis. It makes the technology the trains run on time. What is interesting is that technology is forced to use non-scientific phenomena to achieve results like finding water, pipes, electric cables, etc.

What has this got to do with anarchism? It makes my anarchism is a view of reality, it may differ from Stalinism, from Marxism, from the religious views of reality, but it is an equally valid view of reality. Can it work? How well do the

others work? A society that is suffering a world depression, has millions out of work who want to work, that has prisons full to choking point and cannot adequately distribute its economic and social resources, is that what is called anarchism? It might well be, there is no reason why it should not. But it will not work if linked to purely orthodox scientific reasoning. Like sociology, anarchism must develop its own rules of reality, use scientific methods where appropriate, use creative, unscientific methods where necessary, magic if you like. But let's keep anarchism pure. Avoid authoritarian inputs like censorship. I am willing to read a few marginal articles just in case they might advance my thinking and improve my action. Editorial censorship is bad editing. If the editors of *Freedom* say 'Neville's article is not good enough for publication' I am willing to read it even if it, but do not tell me I should not protest.

As to feminism. Let's not confuse a misguided chivalry with an equality imposed by powerful gatekeepers. Just as, as an anarchist, would reject sexism and chauvinism and male domination reject female chauvinism and female domination. Two wrongs do not make a right.

Peter Neville

Getting away with murder

Dear Editors,
 Howard Marks' "higher moral standard" leads him to the conclusion that "in all situations" the bombing of civilian populations is "ethically sound" - wrong - except in the case of the Allied bombing of German cities.

The only reasons he gives for this strange view are: (a) the bombing of German cities was "a far more complex situation, and less like a conventional war" and (b) the whole German population supported Hitler.

We are left to wonder why Howard's higher moral standards have favoured Japan and Iraq, to mention but two situations, and how Goebbels managed to train German babies to shout 'Heil Hitler'!

Royal Air Force Bomber

Money from the State

Dear Freedom,
 A comment on Derrick's 'Should we accept money from the state?' (14th May). Since the state makes up anywhere from 30% to 50% of a modern economy it is understandable that some libertarians will be employed by the government or in quasi-government jobs. If thrown out of work or physically or mentally handicapped it is often necessary to live on the dole. When we are too old for wage slavery there is the old age pension. These are examples of matters of personal survival, but to make some kind of 'principle' out of taking government money is a complete perversion of anarchism. With the exception of matters of personal survival we should have as little to do with the state as possible. Government grants, so freely used here in Canada to fund activist and cultural groups, have turned their members into the loudest apologists of statism. How can anyone take as seriously (if our attitude is 'Smash the state!') but please don't touch my welfare cheque?!

To say that we should accept the state's money because our taxes pay for it is a rationalisation. The state sells everything it touches and that includes us. Clear opposition to statism in all its guises is what distinguishes anarchism from leftism. Start freely taking the government's money piece by piece and we become indistinguishable from the Trots or social democrats.

Larry Gambone

Please
 keep sending
 in your
 letters and
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Correction

Dear Freedom,
 One hates to criticise an organisation which functions entirely with volunteers such as *Freedom*, but you could really do it with some better proof-reading. Errors were made in transmitting my article 'Let's stop screwing ourselves' (14th May) which completely changed its meaning. You have published... there is no real limit to how much their wages... can be beaten down'. In reality my article had the opposite, "there is a real limit to how much their wages... can be beaten down".

In reference to bureaucracy, I wrote "Our nomenklatura is far more vulnerable than its Stalinist variety". This came out as, "Our nomenklatura is far more vulnerable..." which turns the sentence into nonsense.

Larry Gambone

Talking Co-op Blues

(continued from page 5)
 It has had to be re-invented from scratch in the past two decades. Most ironical of all is the fact that from the '60s onwards, little local food co-ops have had to grow by trial and error in poor neighbourhoods with no help at all from the retail co-op movement.

I hear that a commemorative volume, *Co-op: the people's business*, is about to appear from Manchester University Press. It author is Johnston, who wrote the best of the books on housing co-ops (*Building Communities*, Routledge, 1988) and if it comes my way I'll discuss it.

Meanwhile, let's ponder a further comment of Geoffrey Ostergard's from 1988:

"Another reason why I find the anarchist neglect of co-operation odd is that ideologically anarchism and co-operation have a good deal in common. Both emphasise mutual aid on the basis of non-exploitative relations; both, in their different ways, insist upon self-help as opposed to political action; both understand the evils of competition and lead the virtues of co-operation. Both, in short, belong essentially to the libertarian wing of the wider 'socialist' movement, and talk about ideology, course, not practice. It may be that co-operative practice falls short - far short - of co-operative theory; but alas, does not the same apply to the anarchists? Co-operators, my cynical self tells me, have merely had more opportunities than anarchists to 'betray' their principles!"

Colin Ward

Anarchists and Mind Control

Business people, politicians and all those who would have us behave as they desire, know that they must first control our minds. Our thoughts direct our action. When we believe that it is right to do some, we do it.

Anarchists need to know what the mind is controlled so that they do not deceive themselves and so that they can spread their ideology. Fortunately, although the methods of thought control are many and sophisticated, it is only necessary to understand a few. It can also solve some of our problems. Unfortunately, it can also cause problems. It makes us unhappy when it cannot deal with past emotions, and it will mix our emotions and thoughts as thoroughly as flour mixing with an egg during the making of a cake. As a result, it cannot dissociate certain thoughts.

Those who would control our minds know that people have this weakness and they make use of it. Advertisers always place their product alongside something they know we like and may also want. An attractive young woman, for example, sits on the bonnet of a car as a motor show. Men think she is desirable and so they think about the car as desirable. Many products advertised on television are shown against beautiful scenery with delightful music in the background. People do not dissociate, and so because what they see and hear is good they think the product is good. It is comparatively harmless for advertisers to

control our minds, but it is far from harmless when the state does it. And state propaganda is getting at us all the time. The time magazines, dresses and uniforms that are present at a state ceremony look good so we think the state is good. The engineering achievements, like the Channel Tunnel, are good, so we think the Queen and the other dignitaries who are at the opening ceremony must be good.

The way to combat the control of the subconscious is to bring our thoughts to a conscious level. We must realise, for example, that a car or any other product must be judged on its merits. We must not think hunting is good just because the hunters with their red coats look good and the hunt is exciting. The hunters must be recognised for what they are: savages who get their kicks from chasing and torturing animals. Likewise, it is wrong to imagine that to be in the army is good just because the soldiers have fine uniforms and march with precision. We must remember that soldiers kill fellow human beings, often in the most horrible presence of politicians and others at some civil event makes them useful and good. Seeing the Queen at the Channel Tunnel opening, for example, should remind us of her utter uselessness. She could not repair or build a tunnel, and would not do it if she could so what the hell is she doing there?

Our subconscious can trick us in other ways. It tells us, wrongly, that if everyone is behaving in a certain way it must be right to do so. It appears to argue that the majority must know the behaviour to be right, and so we should behave in the same way. Advertisers well as that their product is selling, so we must buy it; politicians well as everyone is voting, so we must vote. And when a ruler dies, it

is said or implied that everyone thinks it sad because he or she was so valuable to the country. When John Smith (leader of the opposition) dies, the media spend a massive amount of time and space telling us about him and how wonderful he was. People must be told to make their own judgements about people and things, and anarchists must help them do it. Knowing what John Smith was and what he did, for example, they will then be glad to get him off their backs.

Anarchists should remember the effect of the subconscious on those they wish to convert. They must always behave well and be clean and tidy so that the public will have reason to associate them with anything that is not good. Anarchists should also be aware of the power of state propaganda and realise that if they are behaving in the same way as everyone else, they are probably doing something wrong.

Derrick

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- 8th July The Belief in Politics (speaker Eve Segur)
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- 10th September Misrepresentation and Sociobiology (speaker Donald Room)
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