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FIFTY PENCE

"Only by making the ruling few uneasy can the oppressed many obtain relief."

Jeremy Bentham
(1748-1832)

"Is the Labour Party dying?" asks Tony Benn IT'S BEEN DEAD FOR YEARS, TONY!

In a *cri de coeur* in 'The Tony Benn Column' (*Tribune*, 8th April), he asks why "in the face of all the evidence" - that is of a government distrusted by the public and a party in disarray, not to mention the Labour Party's "massive lead in the opinion polls" - should anyone be suggesting that the Labour Party is in "terminal decline"? Yet according to Benn, the fact is that many long-time supporters are suggesting just that and he feels that "we have to take it seriously".

Though the Labour front bench "is

always in the news" the situation of the national membership and the constituencies is "alarming". In spite of expensive recruiting campaigns, membership has decreased, the young are not interested and "many of those who are still in the party are retired, on benefit or have joined at a concessionary rate". Shame on them! Anarchists have been telling socialists and other well-meaning reformers for a century or more that unless we get rid of capitalism, socialism hasn't got a chance in hell of succeeding via the ballot box.

The typical social-democratic argument was used more than a hundred years ago by Bernard Shaw when he declared that a House of Commons

"... consisting of 660 gentlemen and 10 workmen will order the soldier to take money from the people for the landlords. A House of Commons consisting of 660 workmen and 10 gentlemen will probably, unless the 660 are fools, order the soldier to take money from the landlords for the people. With that hint I leave the matter in the full conviction that the state, in spite of the anarchists, will continue to be used against the people by the classes until it is used by the people against the classes with equal ability and equal resolution."

Well, with a few exceptions - such as the 'Beast of Bolsover' Denis Skinner - the House of Commons is a kind of Job centre for would-be ministers who then go on to get much more profitable consultancies, directorships in industry or some tempting quangos which the government can offer to its yes-men. Bernard Shaw's dream of 660 'workmen' ordering the soldiers to expropriate the landlords is the kind of wishful thinking and foolishness of the intellectuals who in a way are as vain as the politicians who imagine that the power is with them and not the multinationals, the banks, the pensions funds, the building societies, the insurance companies and the rest of the capitalist mafia.

(continued on page 2)

NO RED LETTER DAY FOR 1,000 DUREX WORKERS

London International Group (LIG) which is engaged in more than one activity, as is the case with all multinationals, is best known as the manufacturer of Durex condoms (this writer's generation knew them as *french letters* just as our less romantic French contemporaries referred to them as *capotes anglaises*).

Business has been sluggish in photographic processing, and their three cough mixture brands which are made in Dundee have developed financial hiccups and are being taken over by an American drugs company. And they are looking for buyers for other Dundee products: Wrights soap, Eucryl toothpowder and the rest. The french letters are doing alright but if only those greedy workers who are demanding a living wage were to agree to being paid less, all would be well in the condom garden. Instead, reluctantly we are sure, LIG have decided to transfer their production to where labour costs much less. It would be poetic justice if french letters were produced in France and the *capotes anglaises* in England. No such luck. In future Durex condoms will be produced in Spain and Italy, surgical and household gloves in the Far East. Some 1,000 workers in Chingford, Llanelli and Dundee are to receive

their P45 and a modest handshake (redundancy payment).

Commenting on this latest development Will Hutton, Economics Editor, writes (*Guardian*, 20th April):

"What is driving this process is the interaction of two huge forces - the demand of the increasingly powerful markets and free trade. LIG has to meet the astonishing expectations of British institutional shareholders for financial returns."

Thus underlining what we repeat *ad nauseum* (some say) in *Freedom*: that governments are the pawns of the banks, the institutions and the multinationals.

A change of Prime Minister, or indeed of government, will get us nowhere. They are excuses for people to do nothing except to put a cross on a piece of paper every four or five years.

French students in their two major demonstrations on the streets of France recently succeeded in obliging the right-wing Balladure government to make a quick U-turn on two major issues affecting them and young workers.

Everybody is agreed that the future so far as jobs are concerned is bleak, especially for the young, qualified or unskilled, and unless the young show some militancy the government will

do nothing. Not only is capital free to be exported to the countries with low wages (or subsidised wages as we suspect is the case in Italy and Spain for the benefit of foreign entrepreneurs like LIG) but they seem to be determined to raise women's retiring age from 60 to 65 instead of doing the obvious thing, if they were concerned with the unemployment problem, of reducing the retirement age of men from 65 to 60.

So our message to the young is: the future is yours if you are prepared to get off your backsides and challenge the government - all governments!

"Is the Labour Party dying?" asks Tony Benn IT'S BEEN DEAD FOR YEARS, TONY!

(continued from page 1)

As we never tire of repeating: there is only one potential force to resist this mafia and to change society in the interests of all, and it is that of those who under capitalism depend on someone to provide them with the jobs that produce the means to pay to have a roof over the heads, food in the larder, heat in the winter and all the other essentials for a normal material existence. We are the overwhelming majority, and under capitalism - apart from those at the top who, when they are fired, their golden handshake can be more than some of us earn in a lifetime of work for a boss - the rest, the majority, can be hired and fired, and perhaps a 'thank you' will be included.

Tony Benn is aware of all this. He points out that for the Labour Party "socialism has been explicitly repudiated" but also that "capitalism is hardly ever mentioned" and that

"... the only political choice seems to be between two management teams, both committed to the management of the status quo."

We also agree with him when he declares that "all progress starts from below. We

must do it ourselves and not rely on the image-makers, the spin-doctors and the pollsters ..." We have omitted the last five words of that peroration - "to take us to power" - with which we disagree fundamentally since it's not 'people's power' that he's talking about but the party political racket. "If we can get things moving at the grass roots," says Tony Benn, "the leadership might even start demanding the same things itself" and in his opinion "we would be trampled down by the rush of people wanting to join the party". To hell with the party, which the moment it is in office (not in power - we have already listed those who are in power in a capitalist society, not just here but in every country) has to play the game by the established conventions. Agreed, a Labour government would have the power to increase taxation at top level (like the Tories in 1992, they are not proposing to increase any taxes!), they might spend less on 'defence' and a bit more on the health service and so on. But basically, with or without Tony Benn as a minister, their purpose is to operate the capitalist system and balance the books. And this, as we have seen and experienced, is that somehow the rich get richer and the poor poorer! Can anarchists and those of us

who have nothing in common with the political parties (and according to some polls only 11% of the population have a good word for politicians) but who are wanting to live in a better world do something outside the parties?

In 1956, when the Labour Party were in the early years of another thirteen-year period out of office, a *Freedom* editorial attacking a Labour Party pamphlet, ostensibly about 'Personal Freedom' but "in fact seeking to adjust the individual to an acceptance of the state as the spear-head of freedom by the trick of offering him means for disputing the legality of the actions of the executive", had this to say about the alternatives to the state and government:

"If socialists and anarchists not only desire the free society but are also prepared to work for its attainment there are certain steps to be taken which, to our minds, cannot be by-passed even by the most impatient among us. The first is to influence and inspire our fellow-beings with a spirit of freedom (no mean task when one considers that, in fact, the whole Labour movement is vitiated by authoritarian ideas).

* *Freedom*, 28th July 1956, and included in *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy* (Freedom Press, 142 pages, £2 post free).

Until the idea of freedom is felt strongly enough by a large minority it will be impossible to put into effect the second step, which must consist of creating our own organisations of self-help, our own local health services, our own schools, our own producers and customers cooperatives. That is, instead of, as the Labour Party proposes, strengthening the state by ever-extending its functions, we must withdraw initiative from the state and take it ourselves as responsible individuals and as members of communities with common needs and common problems.

We do not suggest that as a result of such steps the state will 'wither away'; on the contrary it will probably use every means, foul or fair, to retain its power. What is certain, however, is that if and when the clash comes, it will not be because of a purely negative 'discontent', which in the past has always resulted in a change of masters, but will truly represent a struggle between two diametrically opposed ways of life: the one based on freedom and voluntary cooperation, the other on authority, privilege and class distinctions.

But without individual effort, the willingness to accept the consequences of one's ideas wherever they lead, there can be no change. There is nothing inevitable about history. To coin the Labour Party's aphorism quoted earlier: Man makes history and not history Man! It is not enough to possess the idea, the seed of freedom. One must also sow it to repeat the harvest."

What say you?

Belgium

The visit to our country of Pope John -Paul II next May will not be greeted unanimously - far from it. The influence of the Pope on opinions and social practices seems extremely dangerous to some, in particular the ideas and slogans he wheels out on matters sexual and contraceptive (total condemnation of the latter, despite the AIDS epidemic).

That is why voices in opposition, individuals and associations have united into the Group for People's Autonomy.

For the occasion of the papal visit four associations, members of the Group (*Alternative Libertaire*, Act Up-Brussels, the Cercle du Libre Examen [Brussels] and the Association for Art and Free Expression of Toulouse) have published and circulated to several thousand people a humorous poster calling for an effective fight against AIDS. The poster carried a picture of John-Paul II kissing the ground and with the caption 'Use a condom not a skull-cap to fight AIDS' (only slightly more funny in French) and the addresses of the signatories.

Last January, it would seem that the poster was stuck up inside as well as outside the premises of the nunciatory in Woluwe-Saint-Pierre. It would have to be said that Monsieur Boccardi, first secretary to the nuncio, didn't see the joke and made a complaint against the editor responsible, Roger Noël - alias Babar - for 'symbolic defamation of a head of state'.

Babar had a hearing on Tuesday 14th March

at a cop shop in Brussels. We await to see if the complaint will be upheld.

Alternative Libertaire, Act Up-Brussels, the Cercle du Libre Examen (Brussels), the Association for Art and Free Expression of Toulouse, from *Le Monde Libertaire*, 30th March 1994

Alternative Libertaire

Babar, mentioned in the above article, has helped in the creation of *Alternative Libertaire*, a journal of debate and conviction since the '70s. The paper aims to bring together all those proposing an analysis of the new social questions within a Belgian framework where the anarchist movement was poorly represented and organised. Since its beginnings the paper has provided a unifying focus point for the anarchist movement. In 1977 Babar was at the head of an initiative made by the Belgian Free Radio movement which culminated in the setting up of Radio Air Libre in Brussels which started clandestine broadcasts in 1978.

From 5th July to 25th October 1982, Babar was in Jaruzelski's Polish jails for having smuggled in radio transmitters for the opposition movement. He was only freed thanks to a solidarity campaign in Belgium and elsewhere.

Bertrand Dekoninck, in *Le Monde Libertaire*, 30th March 1994

Note for Mrs Widdecombe Even the Catholic hierarchy disagrees with you!

In a footnote ('Brainwashing the Public' *Freedom*, 16th April) we quoted the Under-Secretary for State Ann Widdecombe, a recent convert to the Catholic Church, as saying that the Archbishop of Canterbury's statistics were wrong when he said that the rich were getting richer at the expense of the poor, and that she was "grateful" she was "in Westminster Cathedral hearing the Easter message instead of at Canterbury hearing a party political broadcast."

Well, in case Mrs Widdecombe missed it, *A Time for Justice*, a report published on 14th April and compiled by the Catholic bishops' social welfare committee, challenges the government's criminal justice policy, laying the blame for rising crime on unemployment, homelessness and the widening gap between rich and poor.

Not that that will make much impression on the Tory fat-heads. There was Mrs Widdecombe's boss Employment Secretary David Hunt declaring last month that "the bulk of the thieving today, of course, has nothing to do with poverty. It is the result of wickedness and greed."

And these are our wise men who will lead us back to prosperity and even to a classless Britain!

But one last bit of bad news for our Catholic convert is a quote by the Pope himself which we have been storing for such an occasion.

The *Guardian's* summary of "a rare interview" published on 2nd November 1993 was him making some interesting comments both on capitalism and communism.

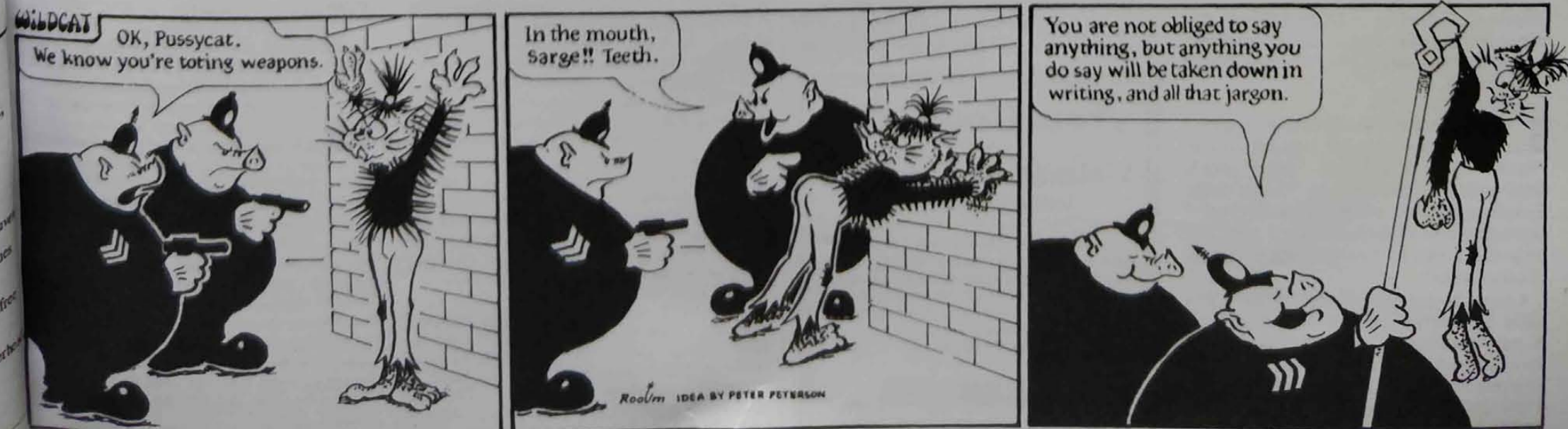
"In a strongly stated set of views which, coming from anyone else, might be styled as those of a man playing devil's advocate, the Pope insists that the legitimate fight against 'the unjust, totalitarian system which defined itself as socialist or communist' should not mean throwing out those 'seeds of truth' in socialism.

"The proponents of capitalism in its extreme forms tend to overlook the good things achieved by communism: the efforts to overcome unemployment, the concern for the poor ... In communism there was a concern for the community, whereas capitalism is rather individualistic', although citizens under communism paid a very high price in the form of degradation of many other areas of their lives.

"The transition from one system to the other is very difficult. Its costs are also very high: a rise in unemployment, poverty and human misery."

At the root of many of the serious social and human problems besetting Europe and the world today, the Pope says, 'are the distorted manifestations of capitalism'.

Very interesting, and it could even be convincing if and when the Churches of Rome and Canterbury start practising what they preach by a redistribution of their wealth in favour of the poor. The Pope's declared "sympathy with the third world" isn't enough - cough up, Papa, and Canter!



— ALGERIA —

Same boss, same struggle

Algeria no longer seems to be hitting the headlines with a string of communiqués listing the assassinations of militant syndicalists, intellectuals and ordinary and anonymous people who made the mistake of letting be known their desire to live and dress outside the boundaries of religious dogma.

A certain fatalism lies behind the bloody stories in most press commentaries.

This brings us back to the basic stereotypical image, which has always been presented, of an uncultured and ignorant people who are incapable of adapting to the modern world. This devaluing and criminal representation had fed racism and justified colonialisation and 'French' exploitation.

After each report of a fresh assassination, it is not rare to hear this sort of comment: They got what they deserved, these Arabs. They wanted independence! Look what they do with it. Things were better as they were!

There is a certain triumphalism when they speak of the political stalemate and the social and economic misery which affects the vast majority of Algerians. This voyeurism hides a desire for revenge and ignores the French state's responsibility for the genesis of the current situation: 150 years of colonialism can't be rubbed out in a day.

The Socialist Party calls for a memorial to those 32,000 Frenchmen who died during the Algerian war as though they have no shame, no unease faced with the million Algerian deaths which are France's responsibility.

A whole generation of youth was decapitated, all of which weighs heavily when there is a need to reorganise an anaemic country which the former colonist was trying to strangle economically. Since then normal commercial relations have been resumed in the interests, of course, of the respective middle classes. But there is no doubt that French capital has always known how to use its weight to influence the Algerian economy. For example, by imposing re-negotiated gas

prices and capitalising on the urgent financial needs of the Algerian state.

And then there is always the problem of an immigrant workforce, the object of blackmail from one quarter or another. It's a question of there being colossal sums at stake simply because of salary transfer. Today France still intervenes to help determine the level of IMF loans in order to influence the decision as to when the funds should be released and in order to determine under what conditions and with what levels of redundancies and which economic policies will be financed by this money. Of course all this is done discreetly and only in the company of reliable people.

All the same, we must ask ourselves what the aims of the state and the French managerial class are in all of this. This group of Frenchmen who govern us, have they any interest in seeing Algeria get out of the social stagnation or have they more to gain by seeing the whole population trying to survive under martial law imposed by the military under the pretext of getting rid of the fundamentalists? I don't want to expose too much Machiavellianism, but 27 million people are currently crushed and neutralised by the implosion of their own society ... all in accordance with the workings of capitalism. Whilst people struggle among themselves it's business as usual.

If the FIS and its most fundamentalist militants have managed to carry out high profile operations it is because they have managed to catalyse social discontent and denounce the incapacity of the bureaucratic FLN.

But without financial support from Saudi Arabia and Iran could they have laid on the

food and health provision or the Islamic education?

Today it is the same sources that are funding the network of armed groups. Why? Who gains? Could this happen without at least the neutrality of the American and French states? Is the issue inseparable from the heightened efforts to normalise economic and diplomatic relations with the Iranian and Iraqi states? Surely not.

There is also, without a shadow of a doubt, a desire to 'manage' the moderate faction of the FIS in order to constitute at the end of the day a political compromise between the military and religious groups in order to run Algeria and assure the continuity of French influence in this part of the world.

And it is not just by chance that even here in France Pasqua is making such strenuous efforts to canalise and favour the emergence of a French Islam with an Islamic University and support to set up French Imams.

On the left nobody has anything further to

say in so far as the muslim religion allows for the control of a part of the youth in the suburbs. Better that than riots.

In Vénissieux (a suburb of Lyon) the communist local authority is congratulating itself on seeing young muslims joining Islamic associations and returning the police cars and other objects stolen the previous night by other young people. Where will such collaboration lead us?

For sure the Algerians are in a cul-de-sac and no one can tell them how to get out. For sure, we are also in a political impasse, and nobody can say how things will turn out. It's easy to make such a statement. We must continue to realise that it is the same capitalist logic which leads to the same situations and no one can convince us that they are different or in our interest simply because the opposition is not being slaughtered on the streets of Paris.

Let us be clear that the same rumblings are being heard here as well as over there. Will we be able to state and define the convergence of interest which unite the exploited everywhere in order to breach the arrogance of the police and the ministers of all religions?

Bernard, from *Le Monde Libertaire*, 30th March 1994

Selling anarchism

I am quoting from a lecture by J.K. Galbraith - presumably the one referred to in a recent *Freedom* editorial. "Once, all economic and social thought turned on a bilateral economic and social structure. There were capital and labour, the capitalist and the worker. There were also a landed and a peasant population ... Capital and labour, capital versus labour; this was the basic dialectic ... This is no longer the case in the advanced industrial countries. The great political dichotomy, the capitalist and the working masses, has retreated into the shadows ... Reference to the class struggle has a markedly antique sound ... There is [an] ... absolute, inescapable requirement that everyone in the good, even decent society has a basic source of income. And if this is not available from the market system, as it is now called, it must come from the state. *Nothing, let us not forget, sets a stronger limit on the liberty of a citizen than a total absence of money*" (my italics).

It would be unreasonable for anarchists to expect Galbraith to provide us with our arguments - and he doesn't. But I feel rather drawn to what he has to say. And it rings a bell with the way I feel when - issue after issue - I read the words 'class' and 'capitalism' in *Freedom*. These terms have really lost their explanatory power, or they have become diluted among a host of other powerful forces. I do not imagine that every reader of *Freedom* will concur, but I expect there will be some who do. It seems to me that anarchists might be divided into two camps: a faithful band of revolutionaries and, quoting a recent article from memory, 'a bunch of wishy-washy New Age liberals'. I imagine also that there would be many who would prefer to place themselves somewhere in between. If I were forced to choose between one extreme and the other, I suppose I would have to opt for the latter. This might account for my feelings about outworn left-wing rhetoric.

Galbraith was speaking about 'advanced industrial economies' particularly. I am living in China, and it does not seem unreasonable to extend what he says geographically a little. Here, incidentally, *revolutionary* connotes *conservative*. If the same applied in the West - and perhaps it should, after all revolutionaries have got themselves a fairly long respectable history now - I wonder how many anarchists would hasten apply the term to themselves. China, like most places in the world, has a mixed economy - the market, government and intervention (including state or statutory provision that compares favourably, but not spectacularly so, with elsewhere) and an alternative economy. In order to avoid the claim that in purely economic terms China is much the same as almost anywhere else on the globe, and to preserve the old rhetoric, China is currently said to be experiencing not capitalism (like the West) but 'market socialism'.

It is not only economies that are mixed (and complex). So are most issues and people and their motives. The world is not like some cheap Western movie peopled entirely by goodies and baddies, where all is comfortably right and wrong. There are good things about the different economic systems as well as bad. The move towards a market

economy in China has meant that shops are now stocked with the kinds of things that people actually want (which is not to say, of course, that most people can afford them). State intervention means, for example, that everybody in the north of China has their home heated virtually for free during the winter. The alternative economy is basically good: the little things done for one another that bond people together (despite the notorious system of *guanxi*).

Ultimately I see no great problem here. We can comfortably shed our over-simplistic or nineteenth century description of the present-day state of affairs without losing our vision of what a better world would be like.

My second series of quotes is somewhat more problematic. I do not think that most anarchists would be very happy with the idea that money might be the fundamental - or at least initial - answer to things or that it should be so closely equated with freedom. 'Does money make you free?' seems like the topic of a somewhat dull school debate. There is rather too much to be said on either side. But for most people in the world, particularly those living on the other side of the fence that divides the rich and the poor, the question is simply a silly rhetorical one.

Galbraith advocates a more equitable distribution of income within the advanced industrial countries. I was told recently that this would work out at something like £30,000-£40,000 pa for every working person in Britain. Good, eh? It seems to me that, morally speaking, this would be only marginally more justifiable than the chaos at present. If in Britain we receive one-tenth of this amount we will not succeed in persuading most people on this globe that we are really hard up. If the sub-text of our propaganda is that the British worker would economically benefit from what we as anarchists propose, then we are more fraudulent than self-avowed capitalists. Unless anarchists in Britain are to advocate continuing to close our national borders and going on exploiting the third world, as always, then we cannot sell anarchism as enlightened self-interest to those who are disenchanted with their current standard of living.

If (by chance) you have agreed with me so far what we are left with may be hard to sell then. And we can no longer seriously imagine anything like a state of anarchy being brought about by a period of wifit revolution. How long can we wait, and realistically can we hope for old orders to be abolished in order that our dreams can be achieved? But we do not have to throw aside our idealism: we side ourselves for the time being with reformism in the advance of liberty, understanding and fairness. And in economic terms, at any rate, the idea of *freedom* does seem to have some close connection with that of *choice*. If money does offer the optimum amount of choice to everyone then perhaps the answer is not to do away with it but to think in terms of viable and preferable alternatives. So at the same time let us celebrate and encourage those who find their own alternative ways of avoiding the miseries of the capitalist system.

— JAPAN —

Final trial date for Omori

The Japanese Supreme Court has ordered that all oral court proceedings in the case of Kauhisa Omori be completed by 6th June 1994. The anarchist Omori has been in custody, under sentence of death, for more than fifteen years. He is accused of a bombing in Hokkaido in 1976, a crime of which he has consistently maintained his innocence. The Supreme Court is the final court of appeal.

The Omori Defence Group met in Tokyo on 9th September last year to plan actions at the Supreme Court this June. London demonstrations in support of Omori have in the past been organised by our comrades of the Anarchist Black Cross, and *Freedom* will of course publish any announcements received of new demonstrations. Meanwhile, it is worth writing letters to the Japanese Embassy in London, the Minister of Justice in Japan and the media anywhere. The chance of having any effect is remote, but if we do nothing the chance of having an effect is nil.

Among states which retain the death penalty, Japan is practically unique in keeping people under death sentences for decades before killing them.

Latest manifestation of racism in Japan is a campaign against Iranians. The 'Rockabilly Rock'n'Rollers', young people who gather in hundreds in Yoyogi Park, Tokyo, on Sundays to dance in clothes copied from American 1950s jitterbug costumes, last year had a chant: 'Troublemaking Iranians must go home'.

A group from the civil liberties group Inoken went to Yoyogi Park to remonstrate on Sunday 1st August, and were confronted by riot police, there 'to prevent civil confrontation'. Two of them were arrested. Later that day the Inoken office was raided, and an Iranian who happened to be there was

apprehended and deported as an illegal resident.

On 23rd September a sweep by riot police in Tokyo netted 87 Iranians. 65 were deported as illegal residents and 22 were charged with felonies, mostly drug dealing and possession of forged telephone cards.

The first nuclear weapon ever used against people fell on Hiroshima on 6th August 1945, killing 113,000 with the blast and many more from radiation sickness. The state maintains a museum of the event in Hiroshima, but the annual commemoration there is now organised by a group of pacifists and anarchists calling themselves 'the anti-war, anti-state meeting executive committee'. This year's rally is planned to take place as usual, and next year, at the fiftieth anniversary, it is hoped that the anti-war, anti-state demonstration will be exceptional.

All the above information from *Warrior*, no. 5, published by ARP, PO Box 57, Sakyo, Kyoto 606, Japan

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FOCUS ON ... PALESTINE/ISRAEL

For Palestinians living in the occupied territories the economic facts of life are hard to say the least. The two decades of occupation have seen Palestinian enterprise systematically discouraged and nearly all factors in the formal economy militate against them.

Most Palestinians hold any savings they have in Jordanian dinars which have devalued by about 50% over the years since the beginning of the Intifada in '87. Also during the '80s the shekel was devalued and Israeli inflation rates hit 445%. The sealing off of the area by Israel on 30th March last year put at least 100,000 out of work and indeed those who had jobs were paid less than Israelis although they paid a higher proportion in taxes.

It should not come as a surprise given this background that last September some welcomed the possibility of limited autonomy as a possible beginning of a way out of their problems. However as progress has stalled and time has passed the reality of no change has become apparent. Apart from the establishment of a PLO office and a few raised flags in Jericho there has been little sign of change. Indeed the PLO have made little effort to show themselves and explain the negotiations to the people who will be most affected by them – perhaps because they are floundering. One move was made however. Five PLO volunteers were given uniforms and sent out on traffic control in Jericho but the Israelis arrested them.

More seriously perhaps, only a handful of the 9,000 to 12,000 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons, often without trial, have been released, military activity has been stepped up rather than down and taxes are continuing to be collected, indeed perhaps faster than before so that Israel can get her pound of flesh before things begin to change, if indeed they ever do.

One man who seems unperturbed is Yasser Arafat. "The Palestinian state is soon within our grasp" he was saying at the beginning of September '93. It is still illusory but one gets the feeling of a kind of royal 'we' speaking from this man who seems more concerned with personal ambitions than the plight of the people he claims to represent. His main success so far since the 'famous handshake' has been to alienate those who have always been involved in the struggle at a grassroots level and who don't like the off-hand manner with which they are being treated.

No doubt some form of autonomy will eventually emerge and we will return to the subject when it does.

The kibbutzim

However, the hopes of the Palestinian people are surely better placed in their own hands than in those of would-be leaders, and the same must be said for the Israelis themselves. Social non-statist forms of organisation are not new to this part of the world. The kibbutzim, for example, held out some hope when the pioneers set out. As Colin Ward pointed out in his updated version of Kropotkin's classic *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow*, "... many of them are very much older than the state, and many of their pioneers were opposed to a State of Israel, and in fact urged their Arab neighbours to set up similar collectives. It is well over fifty years since Martin Buber warned his fellow Zionists that if the Jews in Palestine did not live with the Arabs as well as next to them,

The programme for 'Anarchy in the UK' stands at eight large pages and is growing rapidly. One of the spectacles offered is "a major effort to levitate the House of Commons by internationally experienced levitators" (information from PO Box 1096, Bristol, BS99).

August last year marked the seventieth anniversary of the murder of another Japanese anarchist, Osugi Sakae, by the military police. An exhibition in his memory was organised by Tokyo anarchists.

they would find themselves living in enmity to them."

Of course history has now told its story and apart from the sectarianism with which they are associated the kibbutzim nowadays present a mixed picture to say the least.

126,000 Israelis (3% of the population) still live in communal settlements in 270 kibbutzim. They still operate on direct democratic lines and have always been a source of interest to anarchists, but they have changed much recently, particularly in the 1980s.

In the beginning (though sectarian) they were semi-communist with the means of production collectively owned and work shared on the principle of each according to ability, etc. Nowadays basic agriculture provides only a third of the income and many members are affluent, earning in the Israeli economy and, working as professionals, earning twelve times their fellow kibbutzniks although contributing their income to the collective and getting back the same as anyone else. Work and community have been separated in order to survive. Collective child rearing has been abandoned by all but two kibbutzim and the age has been raised for when they should leave their parents from, early to mid-teens to go live in 'youth houses'. One kibbutz, Afikim, now runs its industry on capitalist lines with boards of directors and outside experts. They have tapped into the Chinese market producing auxiliary motors for bicycles. At another, Ein Zivan, pay differentials have been introduced after much argument and in future people will be paid according to the market value of their work. This happened after about half the kibbutzniks left and it was felt that reform was necessary. The communal dining room was shut, collective expenditure slashed and more choice left to the individual.¹

This has come about largely because of the influence of those kibbutzniks who no longer believe in the movement. In a report last year the *New Internationalist* (no. 246) tells us that twenty kibbutz have become limited companies, partnerships with private capital have been formed and in placed management rotation has been abolished. In the Ein Zivan kibbutz the biggest taboo has been broken. A member there is quoted as saying: "We decided that if the kibbutz was going to earn money everybody had to work and that he or she could keep what they earned as an incentive". Attempts to bring them into line have so far failed and the whole movement is under threat.

Many see all this as proof of the failure of the kibbutz movement. Perhaps their biggest failing was to borrow money from the government, thus linking themselves into the statist system. When interest rates started to approach 90% it's not surprising they started to buckle. As the *New Internationalist* says, it is ironic that now as the economic picture is improving few face financial ruin. Industrial plants are more successful in those kibbutzim which have held on to their principles because, for example, hired labour brings attendant costs. "Kibbutz factories out-performed their non-kibbutz Israeli competitors even during the economic stagnation of the 1980s."

Grassroots organisation in the occupied territories

There are also interesting forms of social organisation in the occupied territories. An interesting report in *The Guardian* (16th May 1993) tells us that here, where there is no state to develop essential services, this work is done by grassroots NGOs. Centralised bodies are evolving but aid workers fear this could upset the Palestinian tradition of self-help. The

1. Information from *The Guardian*, 13th February 1993.

grassroots movement began in the late '70s as Palestinians returned from a foreign education and decided there was no point in sitting around waiting for the PLO.

The first groups started small, the article tells us. In '81 a small group of doctors began driving around the West Bank trying to identify local needs. The medical relief committees which sprang from these humble beginnings have evolved into a mass movement crucial for the provision of health care.

Today all pre-school education is provided by NGOs who have also pioneered economic planning and export development. In the words of the reporter: "They have done the work a state would normally do, but from the bottom up". Encouraging.

The NGOs also play a crucial role when it comes to foreign aid. In the absence of centralised institutions big donors like the EU and the UN Development Programme channel aid directly to them. Other donors, like

The next FOCUS ON ... will be on China. Later in the year we will be covering the arms trade, various countries in South East Asia and we will re-focus on some areas we have already covered. Further plans will be announced. Contributions and help welcome. We would like to thank the encouraging number who have offered help with translating. You should all have been contacted by now.

— PALESTINE —

Liberate the people not the land

In the Israeli-occupied territories, the land is being prepared for the new leaders by recruiting from among the Palestinian population 20,000 future police officers destined to maintain order, the existing one of course.

So the hospitals which were converted into prisons remain prisons, the fields which were mined to repress even the slightest form of economic autonomy stay mined and the laws which forbid tree plantation,¹ the gathering of herbs and fishing in the Gaza remain in force. The segregation for water usage has not been abolished: £200 is given a year to a Palestinian whilst an Israeli enjoys ten times as much, in a region where water is a crucial resource for agriculture. Just this measure is enough to economically squash the Palestinians. The frequent closure of universities forces young students abroad to finish their studies under better conditions, without the chance of returning home (the frontiers are exit only for Palestinians).

This barrage of laws is more effective than any form of violence to assure the domination of the people. Moreover, this institutionalised violence has the advantage for the dominant class of leaving no images for the cameras. However, one cannot forget that the Palestinian middle classes come out better off; the system allows them their slice of the action by providing a compliant labour force. Unemployment helps them when the 'labour market' is dependent on the laws of supply and demand. Only this class can hope to send their children abroad to study and hope to see them return to share in their privileges (the return of

1. An ancient Turkish law allows the state to seize land with no trees growing on it; all that is needed is for the plantations to be cut down, for the Palestinians to be expelled and their land nationalised.

European states, can give bilateral aid only to other states so they have to use NGOs in their own countries to channel it to this area. The foreign NGOs then work with the Palestinians. This system has distinct advantages. "NGOs often do creative work that wouldn't otherwise be done", says Sally Ramsden of the world university service, a British charity supporting education projects in the area. She points out that governments are nervous about anything which is experimental, preferring to import tried and tested methods which may be inappropriate when in their new setting. NGOs work on the ground with people who know what will work.

Many NGOs are small scale, but commitment mounts up. According to Fritz Froehlich, an Austrian who coordinated work by European NGOs in Jerusalem, \$30 million in project finance was provided in 1991-92 by European NGOs (nothing compared with the aid that goes to Israel – European governments are targeting such things as water and sewerage projects which should be Israeli responsibility and the occupying force thus indirectly gets more aid).

As the 'peace process' develops more governments are looking for opportunities to give more direct aid, but the worry is that the grassroots approach could get squeezed out. This fear is compounded by donors' attempts to create centralised institutions. European NGOs are now encouraged to channel funds to the Council for Higher Education in Ramallah, while the UK government sends projects to the HQ of the Palestinian peace process team for ratification. "Palestinians and foreign NGOs are now caught in an excruciating moral dilemma", says Peter Coleridge, who runs Oxfam's Middle East programme. "This was possibly the most

(continued on page 5)

the diaspora is subject to future negotiations).²

In Jericho, the price of land has doubled, profits are juicy; they no doubt finance a few wizards preaching correct conduct who will promise the population, in exchange for its submission and its conformity to the imposed laws of religion, a social promotion in the after-life, thus assuring the continuation of the hierarchical structure to those who fear rebellion – an old recipe but still effective.

The land is being freed whereas it should be the people who benefit. The colour of the flag may well have changed, the life of the Palestinians will stay the same as long as there are leaders and led.

At the end of the line, the respect of states for other states and not for the people has unfortunately incited those without a state to seek protection behind what other states consider indispensable for the right to live, that is to say frontiers, flags, armies and leaders. Those whose histories have not provided them with these trappings will see themselves massacred by imperialists of every nationality, for the simple desire for land of which the autochthons were simply the users. The Indians of North and South America, the Cherokees, the Armenians, the Jews and the Kurds have been some of the victims. By inventing property the state invented theft and excluded those who did not conform to the ruling ideology. For the state property was always of more value than people.

Only federal and egalitarian relationships where individuals will no longer compete, but will be both autonomous and complementary, can guarantee a viable future for all and put an end to the social Darwinianism communally called 'liberalism'.

Le Monde Libertaire, 24th November 1993

2. If The Palestinians make up only 3% of the Arab population, Palestinians with diplomas represent 10% of Arabs with diplomas.

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Speculating on city futures

The Italian equivalent of *The Raven* is a fat quarterly, *Volontà*, which similarly tries to concentrate on a particular topic in each issue. In several numbers over the past few years it has attempted to trace an anarchist strand in theories about urban settlements, for example in 1986 on 'Reconsidering the City' and in 1989 on 'The Concept of Dwelling'. Now its editors are pushing out towards that minority of us who actually think about these matters a request for anarchist opinions on 'The Future of the City'.

I don't really know how to respond. The whole field of speculation on this kind of subject is confused by the difference between what we would like to happen in the twenty-first century, and what is really likely to happen, as well as by our indulgence in scientific or technological romanticism.

How tedious we find those old fantasies about whole cities contained in mile-high skyscrapers, or the vision lampooned by Paul and Percy Goodman in the 1947 book *Communitas*, of a City of Efficient Consumption, enveloped by a vast plastic dome. Today's version of the 'technological fix', as the sociologist R.E. Pahl calls it, is that of the vision of everyone staying at home in instant communication with the whole world, thus eliminating the need for the journey to work, shopping, schooling or entertainment. Nobody mentions the army of troglodytes producing and distributing the necessities of life, let alone maintaining the infrastructure of the information society.

The truth is that, in the absence of popular movements for change, the city of tomorrow is likely to witness a continuance of the trends we have seen all through the twentieth century. The most obvious of these trends is that of dispersal. Today the old discussion of urban concentration *versus* suburban or rural dispersal, has been raised again in terms of theories about patterns of 'sustainable' development. This argument tends to be purely aesthetic or else reveals the snobbery and prejudice of the participants. It ignores the economics of the city and the influence of speculation in site values.

But it also ignores the fact that this century has made us all part of a urban society,

wherever we live, as a result of telecommunications, the ubiquity of electric power, the redistribution of industry and the internal combustion engine. As Pahl, again, remarks: "In a sociological context the terms rural and urban are more remarkable for their ability to confuse than for their power to illuminate".

In the case of the big cities of Britain and the United States, it is important to remember that the giant city was an invention of the last century in the wake of the industrial revolution. Vast numbers of people converged on the new industrial cities, escaping from rural poverty to become the industrial working class. They lived in conditions of appalling overcrowding while the fear of epidemic diseases obliged the city authorities to grasp the huge sanitary tasks that the concentration of population brought.

The situation was like that of the cities of Latin America in the second half of the present century, with the significant difference that in Britain industrialisation preceded urbanisation, while there the process happened in reverse.

In considering the future of the British and North American city it is important to remember that, far from being the city's golden age, the city of the year 1900, to which some people look back with a misplaced nostalgia, was a temporary aberration of the historic city. A century earlier, Birmingham was a city of gardens. Ebenezer Howard, the inventor of the garden city idea, had listened to the debates on the appalling problems of the Victorian city and absorbed the dreams of utopian thinkers and the opinions of his contemporaries like Peter Kropotkin and Patrick Geddes. He remarked in 1904 that:

"While the age we live in is the age of the great closely compacted, overcrowded city, there are already signs, for those who can read them, of a coming change so great and so momentous that the twentieth century will be known as the period of the great exodus."

He was right, of course. The populations of British and American cities have been declining all through this century. Howard

produced his garden city proposals as an alternative to endless suburbs, optimistically believing that removing the pressure of population would force down the price of land and buildings in the cities so as to allow redevelopment on a human scale. This, of course, did not happen. Property owners and financial speculators benefited from the failure of the legislators to find a means of recouping for the community, the increase in land values that the existence of that community has generated.

In London, all through the post-war years, inner city manual or 'blue-collar' jobs have been destroyed because the site that a firm occupied became more valuable than the firm's output. The process of taking over and eliminating firms is known as asset-stripping. In the London context it was recorded by Peter Ambrose and Bob Colnutt in their book *The Property Machine* (Penguin, 1975). We have witnessed the same process repeated by the government's London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC). In 1988 the House of Commons all-party Select Committee on Employment found that the LDDC had, through its land development activities, destroyed thousands of existing manual workers' jobs. A similar American story is revealed in a recent study by Robert Fitch, *The Assassination of New York* (Verso, 1993).

It shows how the financial and real estate élites have pushed up property values in New York City twentyfold by squeezing out small industry and the people employed in it from low-rent living and working space, killing off the garment trade and similar close-to-the-market industries so that the new managerial and financial class could work in gleaming offices or enjoy chic 'loft-living' in those solid old warehouses, just like the new Docklands entrepreneurs.

As for the old heavy industry cities, the collapse of the steel industry in Sheffield or Pittsburgh, or the shipbuilding industry of Newcastle or Camden, New Jersey, have led to a new permanently unemployed class of depressed and demoralised people. The new high-tech industries settle far from the old cities in places better suited to spreading, single-storey factories, with good access to road networks, and access to a non-unionised labour force.

Nineteenth century anarchists as well as socialists of most varieties hoped that the urban proletariat would expropriate the expropriators and take over the cities, in the revolutionary situation they confidently expected. By the end of the twentieth century that hope has evaporated and the urban population consists of the affluent and sophisticated, insulating themselves from reality, and the poor living in crumbling public housing and stigmatised by politicians as an 'underclass', as well as immigrant populations struggling to gain a foothold in the service economy.

This is where the parallel with the cities of the poor world becomes more evident. Dr Janice Pearlman, from the Mega-cities Project of New York University, stresses that "every first-world city has within it a third-world city of malnutrition, infant mortality, homelessness and unemployment. And conversely, every third-world city has within it a first-world city of high tech, high fashion and high finance."

And one of the many ironies of this parallel is that, expecting nothing from their rulers, the poor of the third-world cities developed an informal economy, just to stay alive, which is far more significant than the official economy. An economist, Hernando de Soto from a body

called the Institute for Liberty and Democracy, studied its achievements in market trading, manufacture, housing and transportation in his book *The Invisible Revolution in the Third World* (London, I.B. Tauris, 1989). Introducing this book, Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa who, in his dabbings in politics is far from an anarchist standpoint, comments that:

"The informal economy is the people's spontaneous and creative response to the state's incapacity to satisfy the basic needs of the impoverished masses. It is, of course, paradoxical that this study, carried out by an institute that defends economic freedom, constitutes an indictment of the third world state unrivalled in its severity and force, while at the same time it reduces most radical or Marxist critiques of underdevelopment to mere rhetorical posturing. When legality is a privilege available only to those with political and economic power, those excluded — the poor — have no alternative but illegality."

Vargas Llosa, correctly in my view, describes the informal economy as "a parallel and in many ways more authentic, hardworking and creative society than the one that hypocritically calls itself legitimate". But inevitably the only aspects that we learn about in the media are the fringe areas of drug trafficking, prostitution or robbery and violence.

So how am I to respond to the request for speculations on the future of cities? It seems to me almost frivolous to consider the future physical form of the built environment, and far more important to consider the means of livelihood of those city populations who have been by-passed by the entrepreneurial society that the economist J.K. Galbraith calls "the culture of contentment".

Politicians of all parties ignore the real city issues, because they, like us, are bewildered by the collapse of earlier assumptions about city life. But it might be that there are germs of community self-organisation visible in the contemporary city that could be harbingers of an anarchist approach to the cities of the next century. I'll return to this theme.

Colin Ward

ISRAEL

(continued from page 4)

impressive grassroots upsurge in the world. Do you now become a bureaucratic state just like any other, or do you remain a network of NGOs?"

The usual groups like the World Bank of course will probably prove to be the decision-makers here. Indeed as the 'peace process' got under way it proposed a £2,850 million programme of emergency aid for the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Its package would run for eight to ten years to assist the Palestinian 'authorities' to set up administrative agencies, schools and public services such as water, electricity and transport.

Bank officials said the plan was designed to meet basic needs among the nearly two million Palestinians in the territories. Money would not be given to projects with political overtones such as self-defence.

The US has already contacted Saudi Arabia and other Arab governments to raise funds for joint administration by Israeli and Palestinian authorities. No figures yet but the EU looks set to contribute towards the US-backed \$300 million first-stage international fund.²

Anarchic forms of organisation have a deep history in this part of the world, going back to ancient times. The World Bank and the forces of global capitalism will not extinguish them; in this part of the world at least they have the experience of success when they turn to non-statist forms of organisation, and nothing succeeds like success.

2. *The Guardian*, 2nd September 1993.

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The following article is an interview with three young girls — Mirna, Delma and Carmen — who are living on the streets in the Mercado Oriental (Eastern Market) in Managua, the capital city of Nicaragua. All three have become glue-sniffers, one way to blur and minimise the atrocities they have to confront daily. La Esperanza (Hope) is a group of individuals working with the street kids.

DP: Tell me a little about your home situation.

Mirna: I haven't been home in five years. I first left when I was turning eleven. Now I'm sixteen. I don't visit my house.

DP: Why, what was going on in your house?

Mirna: I have problems because I have a brother who is a policeman. He takes care of the food. He says I'm a vaga because I live on the streets, so rather than be humiliated there I prefer to live in the streets. When I arrive my mother treats me very well. She hugs me, she touches me, thinking that it's an illusion that she's seeing me after so many years of not seeing me. She kisses me and she sends me to buy sodas and makes me food. But since my brother is the one who puts the food on the table, he arrives and he treats me like this: 'So, she's arrived, the bitch of a huelepega'. And this is what I don't like. He says 'You're not the daughter of my mother. You were given to her'. And this hurts me. Maybe he could say this between he and I, but he says it in front of the whole world. So, I tell him 'You're putting me down ... [she starts to cry] ... it's better I go to the market'. I prefer to deal with the people in the streets. The other day he said to me 'What did you come here for? You're going to corrupt my other brothers and sisters. You're a plague. How come you're not fucking in the market?' Maybe he thinks it's his uniform that matters most, but I'm not interested. The other day I nearly killed him in the street.

I've had lots of trouble with people in the streets. Sometimes they say 'These bitches can work and instead they're just here on the streets sniffing glue. Aren't they ashamed?' They don't know the situations that we have in our homes. I'm not going

Lou's loo

All art is decorative and no more than the product of a secure leisure which made Roger Fry the painter and critic (1866-1934) declaim that all art should be functional, a view that was taken up by the German Bauhaus school of dead wood carved into the grim for the sake of and the Marxist critics that art should no longer be an isolated pleasure answerable only to its creator but a revolutionary contribution to the canteen cutlery to deaden the pangs of bureaucratic hunger. Anarchism by its meaning is an individual thing that loses its intent once one seeks or coerces others to conform to a particular social style. One can answer questions or dispute but never by philosophical or social blackmail, no matter how passive the approach or heady the cup of coffee, unwillingly pressure others to conform to your implied demands.

The happytime gimmick of 'conceptual art' was and is based on the surrealist basic of placing two unrelated objects in a common frame or area and as their alien impact deadens within the mind of the spectator you have produced 'a work of art'. Academic in its production by the surrealists and parasitical crude by the 'conceptualists' they are in the end things of passing merit and the amusement of an idle day. Yet out of all the mish-mash and the mouthy hogwash of the time there remains overblown public works of art that become part of the folk culture of a society. We no longer know or care why they came into being but it would pain us to see them go for they no longer have any social, religious or political effect, they are part of our landscape of the mind. The Albert Memorial in Hyde Park, the Pyramids, the SPGB, Ma Thatcher and Tony Benn and Ol' Ken, Porter beer and the Manchester Ship Canal. To destroy them is nostalgic vandalism akin to that of the destruction of the NHS. Yet among all this furniture of the romantic mind there is one major work of functional art that refuses to conform in that it is a thing of awesome beauty that even in this hour continues to fulfil its ordained purpose. It is the loo, or the 'piss-hole' as the drinking supporters of the bar

choose to refer to it. In the basement of the Princess Louise waterhole in High Holborn, WC1, there is a magnificent lavatory that has once again been revealed and re-evaluated by the sad-eyed Lady Lucinda Lampton, the 'Lucy tearfully' wife of Sir Peregrine Worsthorpe. She weeps because she said a 'thing' about the government minister John Patten to 'a friend' that ended up in the gossip column of our national press - but what are friends for? What is important, however, is that Lucy rediscovered this magnificent lavatory within the Princess Louise beer-house and gave the news to the world via the television screen. It is a magnificent work of bad taste compound of brightly decorated tiles, curves and columns and its greatest glory is that it is still, Marxist Fry, functional. There within this juvenile erotic fantasy of oriental harem decoration, solid citizens and young men with cut-away jackets stand silent within the urinating stalls with heads bowed as they strain their greens and pay homage to a functional art that has transcended vulgarity and bad taste, yea, even to the female section, for there within their private apartment of walls of soft undecorated pink tiles the 'lady drinkers' can sit as they give their all in their own pink cocoon. The bar may be crowded, the prices high and the company fighting to be served at the bar student yuppie, but when we list those things that in our participation in any global war we deem worthy of fighting and maybe dying for, the magnificent lavatory within the basement of the Holborn Princess Louise beer house must be high on that list.

For some cold winter months the Town has been awash with mini culture as the Town and his ticket-carrying frau queue to view the artistic debris within the Tate and Hayward galleries. The Tate has collected a mass of minor works that Picasso produced to pass away the aged and pleasant hours in the sun, and they are in the main the valueless doodlings of an elderly genius who no longer

geniuses but if they are not taken seriously they will pass a pleasant hour for a price, for a price. For myself I am a devotee of the painter Salvador Dali for I hold that come the passing of our time his religious paintings are among the few works that will survive as works of art. A brilliant imagination, wonderful draftsman and as a painter a craftsman extraordinaire. His contribution to the European surrealist movement was always naughty but nice and it pandered to the pseudo-intellectual posturing of most of the surrealist supporters. Yet I hold that the Hayward Gallery has ill served Dali with its



exhibition of his early works labelled 'Dali: The Early Years', for Dali in the beginning churned out painterly crap and unless exhibited with his major works it ill becomes Dali's reputation among the new breed of catalogue-viewing young lions. Picasso is for the historical museums as the window of his time, but Dali is for the praying peasants and those who flee the Church of England for Polish Rome. Yet among all this noisome rabble one star is born, one star is risen, and that is Donald McGill. A brilliant painter, draftsman and a master of tonal colourings. A wit and a gentle humorist, he gave and continues to give pleasure to millions, for McGill was the master of the comic seaside postcard. One doubts within the broad mass of the anarchist movement if but a tiny heretical minority would be seen buying a 'dirty' Donald McGill postcard, but they sold and continued to be sold by the millions. The work of a master artist who gave pleasure to millions and was derided and held in contempt by that social strata whose opinions are those that have been rubber-stamped by the state, their associates and their sterile readings. The Town and his arthritic frau, as they join me in the long queue within our betrayed Post Office to renew our OAP 'free' bus pass and collect our old age pension, will honour Donald McGill for the state has ordained that four of his 'dirty' seaside comic paintings will illustrate a set of British stamps. They will carry the head of Queen Elizabeth II but will surrender to the fear of our time in that Donald McGill's humorous naughty captions have been censored. This day it is to be announced in Parliament that sellers of certain videos to certain age groups (below) will face jail terms and queue-wise we may give a patronising smile to Donald McGill's art but know we are safe for they have been censored.

And so, comrades, to praise or to weep to the Princess Louise, to buy the beer and then to stand in homage 'giving it back to the publican' as, with head erect, we honour the voice of the people via the 'dirty postcard' minus the caption, your Majesty.

Arthur Moyses

La Esperanza

to say that every day my mother eats chicken or meat, there are days when she doesn't sell a single cent. So to be honest, there were times when my mother didn't have anything to eat and my aunt would give us a little food, but my mother would not eat. And this affected me, that she would not eat so that we would be able to. So, I would rather leave and be far away so as not to see her suffer. But I made it worse by leaving for the streets. I should have been with her at home taking care of the kids. To be sincere with you, sometimes I steal things from my mother so as to sell them in the market. My mother used to have a stand selling new clothes in the El Oriental until she cried and left for Costa Rica.

DP: And was she aware that you were stealing from her?

Mirna: Yes. She got tired and moved to Costa Rica where she lives now with my three younger brothers. Don't think that if our mothers don't look after us it's because they don't really care for us. Really they suffer too much. Pedro [one of the workers in La Esperanza] knows my mother. She's fat, but it's because she worries about me. She doesn't know if I'm in jail, if I'm in hospital, if I'm dead, if I eat, if I dress myself, or not.

With regards to when we are [in the market] people think that because we are 'vagando' that we sell our bodies. But it's not that way. We sniff glue, that's true, and I won't say just glue - we've used cocaine, marijuana, we've drunk alcohol, we've used pills, we've caused fights because there are men who are very abusive, who try to touch one's breasts. Sometimes the police also arrive and they examine us. If they catch us they take the glue away and they take us to the station where they want to touch us.

DP: And does this happen much with the police?

Mirna: Yes, a lot, very often, and not only with us. They've raped many young girls here in the market. And we defend the guys. We, the girls, don't have

much to lose because it's more prohibited for them to hit us. Not with the boys though. They shave their heads, they hit them with their clubs, they shoot bullets at them. But us, no, they only hit us with their nightsticks. So, because it was too violent there we came to live with Don Felipe. He has been very caring. It's not everyone who'll give you a place to sleep, to wash, to eat. Don Felipe, on the other hand, is calm, he never touches us. When we come from the market at night because the authorities hit us so much and tell us 'get out of here' and call us whores, etc., etc. Then when we come back there's a bunch of men who hang out on the corner, who smoke marijuana and are always really stoned. When they see us all made up with make-up they say 'There go the huelepegas, let's grab them'. So he goes out and takes care of us.

Delma: He's like a father.

Mirna: When Delma was pregnant, she already lost her child, Don Jose used to hit her. I didn't like it.

Delma: I didn't let him, I was going to kill him with an axe.

Mirna: When I arrived, I told him don't be thankful, do it for the child, don't do it for her. Because I got involved, he hit me in the face with a stick and it was bruised. All the guys noticed so they stoned his house. We can fight amongst ourselves, but if someone else does it the guys don't like it.

Delma: There are also older men who live in the market who rape little boys and girls. One time I was in the dining room and a man grabbed me and said 'If you don't go upstairs and let me do what I want, I'm going to stab you and you won't be able to come back to the market'. But I said 'No, I've got crabs, I've got gonorrhoea, I'm sick'. So he said 'Show me, show me', so I started to cry and he kicked me and I ran. Two years ago I lost my child

after five months. I was kicked three times in the stomach and they burst my waters. I was between life and death.

DP: Who did this?

Delma: A man who tried to take me by force. Because I didn't let him touch my tits he hit me three times. I was unconscious.

Mirna: We also have friends who are merchants in the market who give us food and clothing and we sweep for them and look after the stand. But the police come and say 'They're allies of the huelepegas'. And so the people stop helping us because they don't want trouble from the police. Look how they got me! [pointing to a large scar on her thigh]

DP: What did they cut you with there?

Mirna: A vago cut me with a knife.

DP: And this one here?

Mirna: A bullet when I was a kid. I didn't even feel it. And I have a stabbing back here [pointing to her back]. Look, this one another huelepega did [there are three scars about four inches long and two inches wide each].

DP: And did you go to the hospital?

Mirna: No, I cured it myself with soap.

DP: Tell me something, does the glue help with the pain?

Mirna: Look, I've got five years behind me of using glue. I didn't know what it was. But when you first sniff, it makes you crazy.

DP: Crazy in what way?

Mirna: Crazy in the sense that you lose the memory. But if you don't know how to control it you can remain crazy. If you rely on the glue then, yes, you can end up with mental illness. But if I sniff glue, put it away for a while, eat, talk with my friends, joke, then I don't give it as much importance. But if it gets me like it did three years ago, when it made me sick, then I have to look at what I'm doing and see that all I've got is drugs. But we, los vagos, I'm not going to say we're just glue-sniffers. As I say, I've never gone to bed with a man for glue and my compañeras can attest to that. I like to be involved with men that I care for, I don't like to be with men who don't suit me. Do you understand? Another thing, I like alcohol, I like marijuana, I like cocaine, if it's possible I like dancing. I like dancing a lot. I also like guys. But if I liked you I wouldn't tell you. I'd wait until you told me or said we were friends. I won't say her, not her, nor point out who, but we see that in the market there are those who'll sell their bodies for a bottle of glue. Maybe they sell their bodies for a meal, for food, and maybe God doesn't punish one for that. But there are some who sell their bodies for a bottle of glue, that doesn't have any

(continued on page 7)

Raven 24

on

Science - 1

96 pages £3.00 (post free anywhere)

Freedom readers are no doubt aware of the controversy raging over the logging of the first growth forests in British Columbia. Greenpeace has done a good job in focusing European attention on this matter, however, as an expatriate British Columbian, I have a few thoughts on the conflict. The media tend to characterise the situation as a dispute between the loggers and the environmental protesters with the NDP (Social Democratic) government in the middle, pleasing neither party. As with all simplifications there is a certain amount of truth to this characterisation, but reality, as usual, is more complex.

At one level the dispute reflects a split within the working population. There is the old working class rooted in resource-based industries such as fishing, mining and smelting, logging, saw-milling, pulp and paper. All of these industries are in decline, if not in profitability then at least in numbers of workers employed. The old working class feels threatened by what they consider 'environmentalist extremism', seeing it as just one more means to drive them on to welfare in the city. The new working class of white collar public employees, service and officer workers (often university educated) now form

Loggers versus Tree Huggers

the majority of the population and the industries which require these employees are expanding. It is from this sector of the working class that the environmentalists find their base and membership. They are, according to a logger addressing a demonstration of 25,000 opposing the new environmental legislation, a "bunch of cappuccino-sucking, condo-dwelling, granola-eating city slickers".

The old working class feel betrayed by the NDP which was once 'their party' and has now been taken over by this new breed. As a consequence the blue-collar trade unionists are flocking to the populist Reform Party. One should not draw the conclusion that loggers or Reformers are exactly anti-environment. The Woodworkers Union has, in fact, pushed for environmentally sound practices in logging. Resource workers as people who live and work within environmentally-threatening situations are often in a better position to understand these problems than a city-dwelling bank clerk.

I too am divided on the issue - growing up with loggers and saw-mill workers, being able to fell a tree correctly before learning to ride a

bicycle, working fifteen years as a blue-collar worker and yet, on the other hand, having a degree in sociology and supporting the green movement from the very beginning (I also like cappuccino, eat granola and live in a condo). Let's just say that in my head I'm an environmentalist, but my heart's with the loggers.

No, you can't blame either the loggers or the tree-huggers, the ultimate roots of the problem lie elsewhere. Most obvious culprits are the big timber companies who systematically stripped the forests for more than sixty years without replanting or engaging in even the most basic environmental protection. These companies are, no doubt, rubbing their hands with glee at the conflict between their employees and the environmentalists. The less obvious, but most guilty culprit, however, is the state. Since the turn of the century the various provincial governments allowed the forestry companies a free hand, had intelligent legislation been introduced gradually from the beginning the present measures would not have been deemed necessary.

The way the state has doled out its forestry

lands has been an open invitation to abuse. Forests are leased or granted to companies on the basis of a low fee charged on the estimated amount of timber present. It is therefore in the interests of the company to log the forest off as quickly as possible. The company does not actually own the land and therefore has no interest in preserving it or in developing it in any way. The state of Washington, immediately south of British Columbia, has tended to sell its forests with the result that they are much better managed. What we have had in British Columbia is a kind of 'socialism for the rich' with the state giving trees to the timber barons and leaving the working class taxpayer with the ruins.

The present government has not helped either. Attempting to stand above the conflict and come up with 'balanced legislation' has not and cannot work. The people themselves have to make these decisions. Rather than government autocratically telling loggers and greens what they must do (and in the end pleasing neither) far better to have the loggers union meet with the community groups and environmental organisations, in association with some qualified mediators, and attempt to thrash out a common policy.

Larry Gambone

La Esperanza

(continued from page 6)

importance since one of the other compañeras could have given it. Some of the private security guards are really bad. They like to talk badly about us. Because all men, if you haven't noticed, like to talk about us, the women.

DP: And Carmen, how does the glue make you feel?

Carmen: It makes me dizzy for a little while. It's good to feel dizzy, hallucinate a little.

DP: You actually hallucinate? You see things?

Carmen: Yeah, you see things, little ants.

Mirna: [laughing] Little ants!

DP: Is it like that for you too?

Mirna: It dizzies you for the moment that you use it, but then the reaction leaves you. After fifteen minutes. As soon as you sniff it feels as though you're losing your mind. But if you stop sniffing then you feel normal, as though nothing.

DP: And then do you want to use again, to sniff again?

Mirna and Carmen: Yes. Then one looks for how to find more glue.

DP: And how do you get it?

Mirna: We ask for money, 'regalame un peso'. And we look for a bottle or maybe a half bottle.

DP: How much does a bottle cost?

Mirna: Three pesos.

Mirna: Yes. We don't say it's for glue. We ask, saying it's for food, a coffee, some bread.

DP: And where does this take place?

Mirna: In the Mercado Oriental.

DP: And what happens if you ask and people don't give you?

Mirna: We ask from the others, the other chavalos, and they give to us. You share it. When you have it you share it with those who don't have and when you don't have you can get it from those who do.

DP: And the boys who hang out with you who sniff the glue, how do they treat you?

Mirna: Like friends, as though we're brothers and sisters. If we see that someone arrives and is doing something to someone then we all arrive and get involved. If a man arrives and tries to do something to one of the girls then the boys get involved. Somos unidos [we're in it together].

DP: Many people think that glue makes those who use it violent. Is that true?

Mirna: Many people who don't use it, who aren't like us, think we are - how should I say it - think we're animals, think we're irrelevant to them as though they're disgusted by us.

DP: What do they say you do?

Mirna: That we're parasites on society, that we're shameful.

Carmen: They humiliate you for a little bit of food. That we're wounds or sores.

DP: And do they ever help you?

Mirna: No.

DP: And the men who work in the marketplace, how do they treat you?

Delma: Some give us advice. Some say other things - 'Let's fuck. I'll pay you'.

Mirna: Others not, though some who are friends look out for us, give us food, give us clothing. They advise us to give up the habit, that it doesn't give us anything but instead it destroys us. That's how it is when we're in the market, because we go there every day. We go to the Mercado Oriental which is where the majority of our group of girls goes.

I would like to have a child someday. It's nice to have a child. But we have a friend who abandoned her child and the love of her child. And the child can give her greater worth later on because she's growing older and the child's going upwards. So, what I ask from God is to have a child because I love children. When Carmen had a child I looked after her. Welfare took my child at two months, even though I didn't sniff glue. I've thought about it and maybe it was best because I might have sniffed glue again and left her unattended and the ants might have eaten her or she might have got sick and I wouldn't have been here to take care of her. So, I ask of God and the blood of Christ that if and when I'm given a child I give up this life. I want to enter a programme so that I can disappear from the market.

DP: When you think about leaving the market what kind of life do you imagine living?

Mirna: Look, when I think of leaving the streets, and I do - not that I would kick the habit from one day to the next, that would be a lie. But, if I get clean I won't abandon my friends - we've eaten together, we've slept together, we've been together when the police have beaten us, when men have tried to rape us, we've partied together, we've taken drugs together. I won't just leave them. Of course, if a man says to me 'Come on, love, let's live together, let's make a home' then I might say to my compañeras 'This is as far as it goes'. But if I get a job and they continue on the streets I wouldn't put them down. We love each other like sisters.

DP: You talked about not being able to quit from one day to the next. Why?

Mirna: It's not difficult. I've gone months sometimes without using. If a new girl arrived who's not part of the group I would warn her, 'Here you're going to suffer hunger. Check it out, sometimes in the market we don't eat anything because of our desire to sniff glue'. But I want to leave this life. When I stop and think about it, I have suffered so much, the beatings, the police - who sometimes offer 'I won't take you to jail if we make love', they touch our bodies, they say let's go to such and such a place and I'll give you money - men who want to take us by force, endure hunger, endure cold, endure humiliation. What haven't we had to endure in this market, I ask you? Blows,

stabblings, shaved heads. But since they arrived [talking about the workers from La Esperanza], since God came and said we're going to put these people here - they sometimes don't dress themselves, don't eat for us. Sometimes they don't eat all day because they spend all day talking with us, taking us to the hospital, talking with us, they have a psychologist working with us.

I spent a while working with APRODIN [another organisation working with at-risk youth], but they are liars. They want to make money off us. They come with television and film us so they can make money. I was in a project with APRODIN and we

went to Guatemala. In Guatemala they wanted to leave me there, discarded. But fortunately I met a Nicaraguan woman who helped me out. Coming back through El Salvador I wanted to kill myself. I wanted to get back to Managua so badly. I was going to drown myself. When I got back I told the teachers they were liars and then the sons of bitches called the police. I said I wasn't going to return to work with them and I'm not going to. Imagine, they put us on television and say 'the young glue-sniffers of the street, look at how they are' - in front of our families, friends, people we don't know. How embarrassing.

Through the anarchist press

Writing a column for *Freedom* since January of this year has been a stimulating experience which I would like to share with you in brief. The first thing to remark on is the exceptional quality of the proof-reading by the editors. It is this care which distinguishes *Freedom* and from this comes that feeling of overwhelming quality, despite or because of the poverty of its resources. Another gain has been that the assertion of my resolution not to read any other newspaper for a year as an experiment (*Freedom*, vol 55, no 1) except what is written in the anarchist press, has been rewarded with insights into subjects I have always been interested in but had scarce time to consider.

Whatever the other papers hide in the sewers of Wapping we have the best editorials, and what other paper has Colin Ward whose next instalment on wind power I awaited as eagerly as readers waited on the chapters of Charles Dickens - or was it Cervantes and the windmills?

Arthur Moysé is right to crow about the extra 25 pence on his OAP; he always has known what's what. Once at the Golden Convulvulus trial (hands up who remember) Arthur introduced me as his nephew, which was fair enough - I always thought of him as my uncle.

Now that our defensive columnists are rushing to get protection from the official word-board, a quote from *Vanity Fair* will not go amiss. Becky Sharp is leaving Miss Pinkerton's establishment:

"'Stop!' cried Miss Jemima rushing to the carriage with a parcel. '... Becky Sharp, here's a book for you that my sister - that is I - Johnson's Dictionary, you know; you mustn't leave us without that. Goodbye. Drive on, coachman...'

And the kind creature retreated into the garden, overcome with emotions.

But lo! and just as the coach drove off, Miss Sharp

put her pale face out of the window, and actually flung the book back into the garden."

Readers of nothing else but *Freedom* has certainly not improved my knowledge of megane news world politics. As a child I learnt the names of all countries and drew detailed maps of all continents. Today, many years later, I would need a refresher course. To keep up with the changes which daily take place would involve a very bright child's constant attention. Then there are the constant shufflings of the names in governments and in other executive organs which proliferate in this and in every other nation state from Gaul to France and back. Is there a child out there being taught the names of the rulers east and west of the Urals?

The following item is also literature of the 'I've also been there' variety:

"The basement was dark, lit by candles and oil lamps, the young man was scarce fourteen, he was in a shelter and was sheltered by the refugees forced to the depths of their basements of their houses while the town shuddered under the mortar barrage and was carpet-bombed by metal albatrosses and in the night there were unusual sights to see for those young eyes in the basement's closeness and now in its farness. Humanity was good, humanity was kind, said the persecuted. A rather ailing woman gave him shelter. She began to think of him as if he were her own son. The parting, after the troubles ceased, was brutal. He returned to his family despite the women's pathetic entreaties. 'Have I not been a good mother to you? Why leave me now when I love you so?' Nevertheless, he went. He gave her a good length of cloth looted from the stores as a parting present. He never saw her again. His mother was overjoyed by his return, but chided him for squandering the length of cloth which, she rights, should have been hers."

John Re...

Gender-benders . . .

Dear Editors,
Tony Gibson snuggles up to the strangest of bedfellows (*Freedom*, 2nd April). While lambasting the advocates of the 'politically correct' for promoting a form of linguistic fascism, he imposes his own authoritarian stamp on an 'acceptable' British language - as sanctioned by the 'authority' of his abridged copy of the Oxford dictionary.

My concern is not with the wider issue of political correction (better informed readers will be able to discuss this matter far more effectively than I can). Nor is it with the adolescent manner in which Gibson attempts to refute the objections of his critics (the use of petty obscenities and schoolyard slang not only devalues any discussion of a topic but it also demeans the person who employs it). Rather, I take objection to what Gibson uses as an example of political correction: the alleged substitution of the word 'sex' with the word 'gender'.

I am presently pursuing a course in population studies. As an integral part of my course I am often engaged in conversations where sexually explicit words are used repeatedly. Such discussions do not falter when they include the word 'sex'; inevitably they include a host of other words (such as penis, vagina, copulation, etc.) which are pertinent to my field of enquiry. My opposition to Gibson's conflation of the words 'sex' and 'gender' is therefore not based upon what he calls 'neo-Victorian prudery'. As for Alex Comfort, cited as

an example of the liberated intellectual, he did not entitle his book (*The Joy of Sex*) the *Joy of Gender* because the book did not concern the question of gender but rather physical acts of sex.

'Gender' is not used as a substitute for 'sex' but as an entirely separate sociological concept. Given Gibson's faith in the sanctity of dictionary definitions (should I assume that previous 'misleading' dictionary definitions of 'anarchism' were, in fact, accurate?), I refer to a definition of 'gender' provided by my Penguin dictionary: gender, "approximating to divisions of sex" (*Penguin English Dictionary*, 3rd edition [1979] compiled by G.N. Garmonsway, page 322). To approximate to something, however, is not to be synonymous with it. 'Sex' usually refers to either a functional distinction between men and women or to physical acts of sexual activity. 'Gender', on the other hand, a word which predates the rise of the purveyors of the 'politically correct' across the Atlantic, is a concept which is introduced to sociology undergraduates in their first year of study. While 'sex' may be said to refer to the biological differentiation of the sexes (men and women), 'gender' refers to the social differentiation between the sexes. Children within society are not reared in isolation from other individuals. Rather they are brought up in a social context. As such they are subject to the influence of other individuals (such as kinship group members) and social structures (such as the educational system and the mass media) within their culture. Some of these influences define the 'acceptable' or 'appropriate' forms of behaviour

within that society. This acceptable behaviour often constitutes different social roles which individuals are expected to perform. One such role division is gender-orientated, pertaining to that behaviour which is considered appropriate for men and that behaviour which is thought suitable for women (examples of such behaviour are too numerous to mention). In short, then, while 'sex' refers to a biological distinction between men and women, 'gender' refers to a socially constructed distinction between the sexes.

Tony Powell

Dear *Freedom*,

Whew - now the cat has really been put among the pigeons, and the fat in the fire! A very brief letter in *Freedom* (16th April) refers in terms of opprobrium to a part of the anatomy which some members of the community regard as an object of exquisite delight. Now there will be cancelled subscriptions, the paper refused by some bookshops, and similar manifestations of disapproval. But if, resorting to demotic English, I refer in my gentle way to the fact that there has been a fucking lot of nonsense appearing in the letters to the paper recently, I am not thereby decrying or insulting an activity that I have always approved and greatly enjoyed. Similarly, in referring to someone as a pompous prick, or a daft cunt, I insult neither manhood nor womanhood - I am merely using demotic English. And if the paper is to appeal to ordinary people (rather than to a prissy set of neo-Victorian prudes) then we have got to recognise the demotic language that ordinary people speak. I say long live free speech and the English language, and to hell with Newspeak!

Tony Gibson

Red Rambles in Derbyshire

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

— Spring 1994 —

Sunday 8th May: Cycle 'ramble' on the Tissington Trail. Meet 10am at Ashbourne end of the Tissington Trail. Cycles can be hired at this point.

— Summer 1994 —

Sunday 5th June: Circular walk around Upper Padley. Meet 11am for 11.15am start at Upper Padley railway station café (off B6521). Walk guide Malcolm Bennett. Length 5 miles approx.

Sunday 3rd July: Circular walk around Blackbrook Reservoir near junction 23 on M1. Meet at roadside near Mount Bernard Abbey at 11am for 11.15 start. Walk guide Mick Hamilton. Length 5 miles approx.

Sunday 7th August: Circular walk. Meet 11.30am for 11.45 start at centre of Great Longstone village, one mile north of Ashford in the Water. Walk guide Jon Simcock. Length 6-7 miles approx.

Sunday 4th September: Circular walk. Meet centre of Ible village, one mile north of the Via Gellia near Cromford, 11.30am for 11.45 start. Length 4-5 miles approx.

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Further details from Freedom Press:
International Section

Getting away with murder

Dear Comrades,
Howard's letter criticising my 'Getting Away with Murder' is proof of the extraordinary and lasting influence of state propaganda.

As a lifelong pacifist, I did not make excuses for the IRA. Equating the activities of the IRA with those of the airmen in World War Two does not mean they are good. On the contrary, as should have been obvious from my article, it means that both the airmen and the IRA are bad. The IRA may be a 'mafia' terror group killing for its own ends, but this is no different from governments who kill for themselves and the groups they represent. It is wrong for the IRA to kill, just as it is wrong for governments to kill.

Howard is incapable of grasping the point that to a victim the killer's motives

are immaterial, and that it is the deed that is relevant and so it should be described with only one verb. The morality of the killing is hidden from people by the use of different words to describe the behaviour and the high ideals are used to justify it. It is wrong for the IRA to kill people to further their cause; it is wrong for airmen to kill people to win a war; it is wrong for assassins to kill people to change their government; and it is wrong for men, women, children and babies to be killed without any reason.

With great impertinence, Howard says I should "understand the difference between Gaetano Bresci's heartfelt assassination of King Umberto and the cold blooded murder of those two young children by vile IRA scum". I first understood the difference between these kinds of killings, and what people think is the difference, when I was about twelve years old. Perhaps Howard has not yet reached that age.

Derrick

Science and Society

Dear Editors,
In his review (*Freedom*, 2nd April) of *Raven 24*, Science I, Harold Sculthorpe says that I recognise "that science and technology ruthlessly controlled by the powerful has made the world poorer".

What I actually wrote (pages 349-350) was "... the practical benefit of [science] making possible a secure and comfortable life (potentially for all) is too obvious to need stressing ... [In fact] the condition of the world's poor is getting worse ... Natural science and technology, controlled ruthlessly by the powerful, are as much part of the problem as of the solution."

I consider that the overall economic effect of science and technology, even under past and present political conditions, has been beneficial - so far. As for the future, it is very uncertain. Our

best course of action is to continue to respect and extend 'systematic and formulated knowledge', but to bring a global consciousness to its application and to political thinking in general.

Alan Cottey
Scientists for Global Responsibility

Dear Editors,

John Pilgrim tells Brian Bamford that if he "ever earned a living in the academic field" it was in teaching History of Science (letter, 16th April).

Science disciplines such as Maths, Physics and Chemistry are useful, and can properly be taught and examined. Not so with Sociology and Science History which, like Philosophy, are only useful, however vital, as discussion subjects.

Perhaps Brian has rejected, rather than 'disguised' his 'excellent degree' and PhD work for that reason?

Ernie Crosswell

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Lunatics take over the asylum

Dear Friend,

I am an inmate in a top security mental hospital. Recently a psychologist filed a report on me which said my political views were a symptom of "hostility to authority figures" which made it impossible to release me. Could you therefore stop sending me *Freedom* and *The Raven* as I am now anxious to stop being seen as an anarchist.

Yours faithfully,
[Name deleted as the letter was not
intended for publication]

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25th March - 20th April
1994

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Wolverhampton, JL, £2; Exmouth, ABH, £3; London, NB, £6; Wimbourne, DM, £6; Newport, NF, £6; Lancaster, JA, £3; Hamburg, PG, £4.

Total = £30.00
1994 total to date = £489.00

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Total = £58.00
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Raven Deficit Fund

New York, PA, £17; Lancaster, JA, £3.

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Angel Alley's 'Good News' column

This is not a reply to our two jaundiced correspondents, George Walford 'Demanding the Unfeasible' (19th March) and Derrick on 'Freedom's Future' (2nd April). We intend to, but meantime recommend that they raise their spirits by sampling BR's home brew (19th March) - or this writer's, come to that!

It is a year since the C18 attacks, break-ins and arson attempt on Freedom Press, presumably intended to put us out of action but which in fact produced quite the opposite effect. In the first place you our readers responded immediately with financial help. And our printers, Aldgate Press, also the 'victims' of the arson attack, managed to keep going - and that included printing *Freedom* on time!

As the saying goes, 'It's an ill wind ...' for in addition to your response two of our long-standing supporters, Art Bartell and Hans Deichmann, came up with generous contributions to further our work. But that was not the end. A solicitor's letter from the West Country informed us that a *Freedom* reader Fred Yates had included Freedom Press in his will. And a matter of a few weeks ago another solicitor's letter from up North informed us that they were writing on behalf of an anonymous well-wisher who wanted to contribute both to our premises damage fund and to Freedom Press's publishing activities.

To sum up. As mentioned in an early 'report' from Angel Alley, the outside of the premises is a fortress, all windows and doors protected by steel shutters. On the insistence of the fire authorities, all the doors in the building have had to be replaced with fireproof doors. We have also had to install smoke detectors and emergency lighting. Had we not carried out this work they could have closed us down! And to add to our financial burdens the central heating has had to be overhauled and, as most readers will know, just to call in the experts to have a look at the problem costs as much as an OAP is expected to live on for a week! Anyway, all the work is done and paid for, thanks to the solidarity of many readers and comrades and friends of Freedom Press.

And with the balance we are aiming to make this an exciting publishing year as well as being able to advertise both journals and our growing list of Freedom Press titles on what is for us an ambitious scale. We shall go into more detail since we are hoping to enlist you, our readers and comrades, in all these projects. You have been warned!

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London Anarchist Forum

Meets Fridays at about 8.00pm at
Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square,
London WC1R 4RL (note new
venue).

— SUMMER TERM 1994 —

- 6th May - Anarchism and Utopia (speaker: Jason Wilcox)
- 13th May - General discussion
- 20th May - Talk by a member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain (speaker: Sandy Easton)
- 27th May - General discussion
- 3rd June - The Co-op and its Place in Politics (speaker: Tim Pearce)
- 10th June - General discussion
- 17th June - History of Native Americans (speaker: Jim Baker of Boston BAD [Boston Anarchist Drinking Club])
- 24th June - Paganism, Feminism and Ecology (speaker: Daniel Cohen)
- 1st July - General discussion
- 8th July - Drawing up the 1994/95 programme
- Monday 29th August - Summer Picnic (venue to be decided)

If anyone would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, overseas or out-of-town speakers

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especially, please contact either Dave Dane or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (Tel: 081-847 0203), not too early in the day please, giving subject matter and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate. These could be sometimes instead of a general discussion but note that these are not merely unfilled slots but are popular occasions in their own right so we are unwilling to relinquish too many.

Note: as we are no longer meeting at the Mary Ward Centre we are no longer tied to term dates so the meetings may continue into the summer.

Peter Neville / Dave Dane
for London Anarchist Forum

May Day Picnic ☀ Sunday 1st May ☀

At 2.00pm in Chiswick Park in Chiswick House Grounds near junction of Great West Road (A4 leading to M4) and Chertsey Road (A316 leading to M3) close to North and South Circulars (car park off southern carriageway of Great West Road). LT Tube stations: Turnham Green, Chiswick Park and Gunnersbury (also North London Line) and Chiswick BR Station from Waterloo, Clapham Junction and Reading (via Witton). Good pubs in Chiswick and Strand-on-the-Green for early arrivals. Café and WC.

London Anarchist Forum

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at

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Sunday 1st May

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