

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

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FIFTY PENCE

"WAGE LABOUR, n.
The process by which
those who work
enrich those who
don't."

Chaz Bufe in *The
American Heretics Diary*

"The world owes everyone a living" - official

"NOT BLOODY LIKELY"

say the politicians, the bosses and the rich

In a recent lecture in London Noam Chomsky reminded his audience of some of the rights written into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. For example, Article 25 states that:

"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to secure that in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood."

SUPPORT THE SIGNALMEN

The signalmen's 24-hour strike was, some say, provoked by the government in that a compromise offer by Railtrack of 5.7% plus the annual 2.5% given to all railway employees was without explanation withdrawn at the last minute, thus making the strike inevitable.

The signalmen's grievances go back several years, so much so that the basic pay for a "station platform employee" at £154.30 a week is "£7.70 more than a bottom grade signalman". And in fact in this year's pay round for all grades, signal staff's pay had been "ring-fenced for special treatment". The government strenuously denied blocking the extra pay rise for the signalmen so as to use the occasion of the strike for Major to accuse the Labour leaders of conniving at the stoppage, etc. ... and the damage to the economy ... the usual party political diatribe.

From a purely financial angle it is said that British Rail will have lost £10 million in revenue from the 24-hour stoppage. Yet if they had paid the 4,000 signalmen *even* the 1% they were demanding it would have still cost only an extra £3½ million in a whole year! Who said the British were a nation of shopkeepers? A shopkeeper would have known better than to cut his nose to spite his face! And at the time of writing another ...

Chomsky produced devastating figures for the richest country in the world - the United States. In his view the US has the "worst record on poverty in the industrialised world. Tens of millions of people are hungry every night, including millions of children who are suffering from third world levels of disease and malnutrition".

So it does not need much imagination to appreciate what is happening in the third world countries, perhaps freed from old fashioned colonialism but, thanks to GATT, well and truly colonised by the 'almighty dollar'. Chomsky quoted a UNESCO estimate that "about 500,000 children die every year as a result of the debt management burden alone". As for chronic poverty, the World Health Organisation estimates that eleven million children die every year "from easily treatable diseases".

Article 23 of that same Universal Declaration underlines that "everyone has the right to work" and not only that but "to just and favourable conditions of work". The European Union's Social Chapter, which makes some attempt in that direction, has been accepted by eleven of the twelve member states. The odd-man-out is Major's Britain and he never ceases to boast of his 'success' in opting out!

Article 23 adds another universal right: "to protection against unemployment with remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, supplemented if necessary by other means of social protection".

Oh yes! Noble sentiments and the best of intentions by a bunch of politicians and do-gooders as the world was emerging from seven years of bloody warfare (launched by the Japanese attack on China and ending - pro tem - with the final coup against Japanese imperialism).

Of that ghastly war we are constantly reminded of the holocaust and now, in the 50th anniversary of the Normandy invasion, governments are commemorating the tens of thousands of young conscripts who met their end in the first days. But

that bloody war ended the lives of possibly fifty million civilians and soldiers and flattened the infrastructure of most of Europe, the Soviet Union and the Far East.

No wonder in 1948 amidst the ruins the capitalist world could see a prosperous future ahead. Especially the USA, which was unscathed and only joined the European massacre when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. There was Bill Clinton, actor, hand on heart surrounded by the neat crosses and the flags, and more or less implying that the war had been 'won' on the beaches of Normandy by the yanks. The war was won by *capitalism* and paid for by some fifty million victims on both sides.

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CAPITALIST BADGES OF SLAVERY

Perhaps only second to advertising cars and their social status impact are the *mobile phones*. Not a day passes without advertisements making it clear that you are 'somebody' if you can flaunt your mobile phone either in the train or in the pub - and especially if you are

(continued on page 2)



Hay-on-Wye in Powys is a sleepy old market town which was given a new industry by a picturesque old rogue (sorry, we meant entrepreneurial hero) who turned the place into a centre for the second-hand book trade. From the old cinema to the old fire station, every available building is stuffed with old books, and the initiative has attracted other booksellers to open up in the shops in between.

Inevitably Hay-on-Wye became a venue for literary festivals, and this year the seventh Hay Festival, sponsored by local traders and *The Independent*, had a strong poetry bias with some thirty professional poets present ranging from R.S. Thomas through Brian Patten to Benjamin Zephaniah.

Included was a four-session poetry *squantum* (North American Indian for a pleasure party) during which nine other prominent poets composed a commissioned work, discussing their progress in stages with each other and with their audience who were invited to join in with their own poems on the given theme – a fascinating experience.

When the subject was announced, the assembled poets groaned, for the title was to be 'Freedom'. Everyone objected that grand abstract themes like that just encourage pompous pontification (this confirms the long experience of the editors of *Freedom*, who sensibly refrain from publishing verse).

But one member of the audience was a veteran reader of this journal, Brian Richardson. For him the word wasn't at all abstract. It meant the paper he has read and sometimes written for for forty or more years. And the challenge brought to his mind a salutary lesson taught to him by his son Ben many years ago when Ben was aged three.

So he occupied the waiting time in composing an evocation of this one particular concrete experience concerned with *Freedom*. The poets re-assembled with their contributions, and the organisers didn't encourage their audience to come up and read their own poetical offerings, knowing what bad poetry we can all produce if pressed.

But Brian boldly insisted on mounting the stage. What he said was this:

FREEDOM IN TATTERS

Freedom is the anarchist fortnightly.
Anarchism is applied altruism.
It means exercising freedom with responsibility.

My son has an anarchist upbringing.
Instead of fairy stories, I read to him from my paper.

At three, he is strong on freedom.
He grapples with responsibility.
His favourite phrase, brushing aside proffered help,
is 'do it self'

He has, as they say, a mind of his own.
When I left the house this morning, we were in
contention.

I expect I had lapsed into the parental authoritarianism
I grew up with and cannot quite cast off.
He won't tolerate it.
I'll make it up to him when I get home.

What does the man mean –
applied altruism?
Why couldn't he give me a bit of his time
to play in the sand pit after breakfast?

Freedom with responsibility?
Can't he respect my judgement
that the sand's not too wet?

I'll give him *Freedom*,
I'll give him direct action!
See, he's left it on the stool
beside the lavatory, as usual.
How easily it tears!

Now, to spread it round on the floor
so he can only see the fragment
with the headline.

I wish I could read.
I hope it says
FREEDOM IN TATTERS.

To Brian's surprise and gratification, everyone

responded with delight. He had illuminated an aspect of everybody's experience. But not only that. People crowded round him afterwards and asked questions like 'Does *Freedom* still exist?' and 'Where can I buy a copy nowadays?' or 'I used to read *Freedom* in the '50s, '60s or '70s, and had no idea it as still around'.

So, along with the son who once taught his father an important lesson by tearing up the paper, *Freedom*, the journal that never publishes poetry, was one of the accidental pleasures of the Hay Festival for 1994.

Raven 25 on Religion



96 pages £3.00 (post free anywhere)

Through the Anarchist Press

Got our work cut out, haven't we comrades? From 'water for sale' to preservation of an English language, to test tube babies (not in its meaning). No doubt anarchists out there have already considered the implications of out-of-body fertilisation, the joke is that thereby the human being is made redundant within foreseeable generations.

Energy is what all life-forms produce, by themselves and in co-operation with others from the simplest to the grandest. The trouble with Newtonian postulates of matter being inanimate is that it is a clever way round to produce working equations, but missing the main point of all, that all energy systems are 'alive' and there is no point in quibbling about which is doing what. As they used to say in the scientific circles I used to move around in, we are all in the same soup.

Numbers are instructive. When two-thirds of the population have better things to do than putting idle crosses on ballot papers, it means people are beginning to see through the charade of politics.

Elections come and go, but the government will hang on until the last trickle of the North Sea Oil. Another sure sign of a debased currency is the size, frequency and quality of postage stamps.

Theatre, in all its aspects, was taught to me to no avail, for the theatre never employed me. Three plays of mine received three different treatments. My first was produced by my young friends and was interesting to do. The second was never produced, even a copy is no longer in existence. The third had two excellent readings and stopped there and then some five years ago. People are still interested but are deterred because it needs a cast of thousands. Most fringe theatres cannot cope with more than four actors, although Sean O'Casey's *Red Roses for Me* had a large cast in their admirable recent revival at the Unity Theatre.

Interesting to read through anarchist papers left in old drawers. 'Wildcat's' editorial front page of its number 1 issue twenty years ago (1974) could be reprinted today without altering one word. The bit that starts: 'The British Army's occupation of Northern Ireland is a failure. It always was. The decision – by a Labour government – to send the troops in was an admission of failure in the first place ... For a fraction of what it costs British taxpayers to keep the soldiers where they are – miserable, hated and getting killed – the original demands for houses, jobs, an end to electoral gerrymandering, could have been met. But governments will always seek to save face rather than save people ... The alternative is more killing'.

Capitalism is playing havoc with the simplest and most trusted services. That hospitals now exist to make money out of patients and not to cure them is now well known and there are tales too horrendous to mention. But what about the postal service? Once the post office is completely privatised, letters will have to be collected from the sorting offices. Perhaps we will have to telephone and ask 'any letters for me today?' The electronic answer will be swift: 'letters for you are awaiting collection at the sorting offices of Edinburgh, Newcastle, Fooyey and Lisbon'. Just saddle up your horse and off you go. Far-fetched? An acquaintance in India waiting for his post was finally persuaded to break into the district office and liberate the mail addressed to him and his friends!

Since I've stopped reading other than anarchist newspapers I entirely rely on *Freedom* for international coverage. The problem of translation (and they are excellent) is not only the language but the political slang that goes with it. The larger the anarchist movement the simpler the language becomes. We tend to understate things. News from abroad shows a great renewal of activity, but our comrades abroad know of the significance of the proposed October events in this locality? It must be important if the London Anarchist Forum cannot have an evening in its stead. But as for the international news, can we have more of what is referred to as the 'Anarchist UPRISING in Mexico' which was evidently planned for ten years, but less of the communiques which sound as if they emanated from Radio Albania at its most glutinous era, as if they were written by comrades whose teeth were chattering in by their erstwhile masters.

Food for Thought ... and Action

More goodies from the Freedom Press Bookshop.

Open Fire: the Open Magazine Pamphlet Series anthology, #1, edited by Greg Ruggiodo and Stuart Sabulka, published by The New Press. This anthology, with an introduction by the radical American historian Howard Zinn, contains classic essays such as Noam Chomsky's 'Media Control', Howard Zinn's 'Columbus, the Indians and Human Progress' and Mike Davies's 'Los Angeles Was Just the Beginning', originally published in the Open Magazine Pamphlet series. Divided into five parts titled, respectively, 'The New World Order' (a series of essays written at the time of the Gulf War); 'Silence = Death: the body as battleground' (essays dealing with the politics of the body, abortion rights, AIDS, etc.); 'Greening America' (ecology issues); 'A Thousand Points of Light: race, repression and resistance' and 'Media Control' by Chomsky. Most of the material reprinted in this book is obviously concerned with political and social issues in the USA, but many of the essays are first rate and of universal interest. Much cheaper than buying the individual pamphlets. 299 pages, £9.95.

Gene to Croatan: origins of North American dropout culture* edited by Ron Sakolsky and James Koehline, published by Autonomedia/AK Press. A huge collection of essays on a 'hidden' aspect of North American history, the title is inspired by the inhabitants of the 'lost' colony of Roanoke, set up by Sir Walter Raleigh and friends in the sixteenth century, who 'went native', disappearing without a trace, leaving only the word CROATAN (the name of a local tribe of friendly Indians) carved on a tree. 'America' was founded as a land of drop-outs. Almost at once it began to produce its own crop of dissidents – visionaries, utopians, Maroons (escaped slaves), white and black 'Indians', sailors and buccaneers, tax rebels, angry women, crank reformers, 'tri-racial isolate' communities – all or the run from Babylon, from control. Their self-liberation was carried out under

the sign of Wild(er)ness and its guardians, the 'natives'. Having disappeared from 'history' they have ever since been ignored by the consensus and its guardians the academics. This book aims to redress the balance and would be an ideal companion to Howard Zinn's excellent *A Peoples History of the United States* (available from Freedom Press Bookshop at £16.99, plus 10% postage) or Frederick Turner's *Beyond Geography*. 382 pages, illustrated, £8.95.

The Philosophy of Punk: more than noise! by Craig O'Hara, self-published (USA 1994). An interesting history of the punk movement in North America, written by a participant, not an outside observer. Of particular interest is the section (a large part of the book) where the author shows the influence of anarchist and left-wing ideas on many punk bands, and the opposition of these bands and their followers, to the growing skinhead movement in North America, which has generally come, more and more, under the sway of race-hate ideology and all that goes with it. Essential for anyone interested in youth cults, punk or the subversive potential of popular culture (if any). 100 pages, illustrated, £4.95.

Pit Sense versus The State: a history of militant miners in the Doncaster area* by David John Douglas, published by Phoenix Press. 'This book is first of all about militant working class activity, showing just what ordinary people can do when they put their minds to it. It centres on the miners' strike of 1984-85 but includes material from both before and after the battle ...' An insiders account of working class struggles, the author, an NUM delegate and contributor to the paper *Class War*, has to be at the centre of a fair bit of controversy over the past year or two concerning the role of trade unions. Anyone interested in the background to this should see the exchange that took place in the ACF's magazine *Organise!* (issue no. 29, January '93), the *Wildcat* pamphlet, *Outside and Against the Unions* (a critique of D. Douglass's

views) and the pamphlet *Goodbye to the Unions* published by Advocom / Exchange et Mouvement. 112 pages, £4.50.

Workers Solidarity, WSM, quarterly, no. 42. Now in a new A3 newspaper format, this issue carries articles on 'Ireland Neither Orange nor Green', 'Bosnia, Rwanda and UN Intervention', 'Parents, Puritans and Poverty', and the opposition to the new water rates in Ireland. The previous issue has pieces on republicans, peace and anarchism, the Air France workers' strike, attacks on travelling people, the housing crisis, and more. 12/20 pages, 75p.

Battle of Trafalgar VHS video (certificate 15). Despite TV Cooperative. An account of the anti-poll tax demonstration on 31st March 1990, one that is radically different from that presented by television news. Eyewitnesses tell their stories against a backdrop of video footage showing the day's events as they unfolded. Demonstrators' testimonies raise some uncomfortable questions. Questions about public order policing, the independence and accountability of the media, and the right to demonstrate. There's some excellent footage of the police riot and the responses of the crowd. If you were there at this traditional British method of protest and resistance against an arbitrary authority that's not listening, this video will serve as a memento for life. If you weren't, er ... put this in your video machine and make believe you were! Running time 52 minutes, £10.00.

Notes: Demanding the Impossible is now back in print at the new price of £10.99. *Breaking Free* has been reprinted, new price is £3.95. *Semiotexte SF** is also back in print at £8.95.

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Science News

Telling the truth could cost a million dollars, if it happens to upset Monsanto, the giant chemical multi-national, especially when it is backed by the US government. The victims are two smallish American dairies who are being sued for labelling their milk BST-free. Monsanto make the genetically engineered hormone bovine somatotrophin (BST), which when injected into cows increases their milk production by up to 20%. This is one of the first commercial uses of a genetically engineered food product and profits depend on it not being rejected by the consumer. However such cows are much more prone to the udder infection mastitis, which is treated with antibiotics, which then appear in the milk and could eventually contribute to the production of antibiotic resistant bacteria. There may be other as yet unknown effects from drinking such milk.

Consumer groups in the US have failed in their attempts to get milk produced by BST-treated cows labelled so that people could choose, instead the US government Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has decided that milk from the two sources is indistinguishable and to label milk produced by old fashioned cows as BST-free would be making a misleading health claim by implying that milk made without the hormone is healthier than milk produced with it. Nobody is asking the cows. It is of course pure coincidence that three of the FDA officials have had previous links with Monsanto. Ironically, American farmers are already producing too much milk and the US government has to buy up billions of pounds of surplus each year under their farm price support system.

Newspaper headlines confuse and mislead, not least when science is the topic, and the copy that follows is hardly more helpful. Regrettably, only by going to the specialist journals and applying a hefty dose of common sense can one hope to arrive at any understanding of the significance of contemporary scientific developments. Two examples will suffice.

"Scientists discover gay gene" was the headline, followed by the announcement that a region near the tip of the X chromosome, the one that determines gender, probably contained a gene for homosexuality. But what was the evidence? Thirty-three of forty pairs of openly gay brothers studied had inherited the same version of this region of the chromosome when only twenty (half) would be expected to by chance. But this means of course that seven did not. Another study has shown that the chances of the identical twin of a gay man being gay is only 50% despite, presumably, a large measure of shared culture and experience. But no studies have been published on the inheritance of this section of chromosome in heterosexual men or even in closet gays. One is reminded of a study some years ago, that also hit the headlines, which found an association between violent behaviour and the possession of an extra Y (male) chromosome. The conclusion was discounted when it was realised that the study

had been limited to a group of men in an American gaol.

Even the geneticists who published the later study considered that identifying the actual gene and producing a prenatal test for it could be twenty years away and that it would not mean that a man carrying the gene would be gay and even that it would be immoral to use such a test. To say that genes play some role in determining homosexuality is to state the obvious, as we are all the product of our genes, culture, experience and chance, but beware those who would claim to be able to separate and quantitate the contribution each makes to what we are as individuals.

Some misguided gays welcomed the news thinking that biology was validating their sexual leanings, others more wisely saw such a test as a threat. In the US, government grants are readily available to geneticists willing to search for genes for alcoholism, violence,

homelessness etc and of course for homosexuality, soon to be joined perhaps by unemployment and dissent. Eugenics is an ugly word now coming back into fashion; scientists and especially geneticists need to be more careful about how they present their findings and we need to be more sceptical about how we interpret them.

My second example, more silly than serious, is a report based on a study of Southern Californians three years ago that on average left-handed people die nine years earlier than the right-handed, at 66 instead of 75. Among those who died young there were more left-handers than among those who died older. Most scientists were sceptical but several subsequent studies, including one based on 3,000 first class cricketers from 1864 onwards, also found a difference in the average age of death, although much smaller, 1.7 years in the case of the cricketers.

It took a statistician to detect and rectify the mistake finding that the discrepancy was largely due to ignoring the cricketers who were still alive. However a little common sense would make one suspicious of the conclusion. The older the age group the fewer the left-handers, but not because they had died younger but because the older they were the more likely it was that they would have had their left-handedness suppressed in childhood.

Incidentally, these studies did show that left-handers suffer more serious and fatal accidents. As an example of this we were told that left handed cricketers who were likely to have been involved in either of the two world wars were 86% more likely to have been killed, a strange definition of accidental death perhaps. However in a world where industrial and home tools and machinery are designed for the right-handed, common sense suggests that the left-handed are more likely to be accident prone.

HS

The rise of disease in a profit-obsessed society

The clearest guide to the effects of living conditions on organisms is patterns of disease. When any living creature is deprived of something it needs - whether it be nutrients, protection from environmental stress, or appropriate relations with others of its kind, its health suffers.

But this view of health is alien to those who hold power. They - like most people - equate health care with facilities for treating disease, and imagine that the continuing decline in nutritional status of an increasing proportion of the British population is irrelevant to the current resurgence of infectious disease.

Recent scares have brought renewed fears that drug-resistant disease is outstripping our ability to develop antibiotics. This situation was entirely predictable - indeed, Colin Johnson and I predicted it in *Cured to Death*, published twelve years ago. What was also entirely predictable is the rise of infections like tuberculosis, diseases that are theoretically treatable but which will rapidly become uncontrollable if the dominant institutions of our culture continue on their present course.

A hundred years ago, the majority of the adult population died prematurely from tuberculosis. Today, most people in developed countries have virtually forgotten the spectre of tuberculosis; they imagine that antibiotics and vaccination have effectively eradicated it. But tuberculosis is coming back.

In the small village of Tanygrisiau, just around the hill from Blaenau Ffestiniog in Snowdonia, ten children at the local primary school are known to suffer from tuberculosis. Reporting the outbreak, the local papers were concerned to stress that nobody should worry: the children are being treated, the infection is

under control. No one asked why it was that the children (and possibly others - the results of the tests are not due until late June) were so vulnerable that they contracted tuberculosis through brief contacts with the school dinner lady (whose disease had been mis-diagnosed as asthma). No one asked why she became so infectious, so quickly, that at least 15% of the pupils developed the disease. And no one has attempted to explain why other people in the village are assumed to be safe from infection.

The reality is that Tanygrisiau is a very poor community. Unemployment affects almost every family; the children are thin and pale despite their bracing country life and the fresh mountain air. To the observant visitor it is obvious that the children are malnourished. They live mainly on crisps, chips and biscuits; even their free school dinners are over-processed and nutritionally poor. The school authorities - like the children's struggling mothers - buy the cheapest filler they can get.

Most are not so deprived that they are actually hungry, but immunity from disease requires a higher level of nourishment than this. The immune system needs adequate input of essential minerals and vitamins to function effectively. Poor families simply do not get enough of these essential nutrients. Cheap food - the government's barrier against the social unrest that overt starvation would create - satisfies hunger without meeting the body's more subtle needs.

Infectious diseases retreated from the affluent world when improved social conditions and better diet created enhanced immunity in the population as a whole. Vaccination and antibiotics had a negligible effect; fatal diseases like tuberculosis were in

decline well before specific medical measures were developed. Their current return - to places as diverse as New York City and Tanygrisiau - reflects the damage done by those who have worked for a return to Victorian values. Along with the values of that grim period, we are beginning to see the inevitable disease.

Newspapers reflect public horror of the changes that are in progress. Disease is in the news, with the terrifying spectre of flesh-eating bacteria to haunt media watchers. But always, the pundits look to medicine to solve the problem, not at the fundamental causes that allow it to emerge.

The underlying problem is that the rich and powerful make more money by creating conditions that favour disease than by reversing the trend. Just as the money-grabbing Victorian bosses created hideous sickness machines in their factories where half-starved people were worked to death, our institutions, obsessed with productivity and profits, have created a sickness culture that dominates society.

Consider agriculture. The only type of farming which is consistent with health - human health, animal health and the health of the land - is organic. Organic methods produce food that is nutrient-rich, and therefore capable of supporting a healthy immune system.

But organic farming is dying in Britain because it does not fit in with the dominant values of our culture. It is a method of low inputs and low productivity which does not work on a large scale. It is constrained by the forces and cycles of nature, so it does not promise year-round consistency of supply. It

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Read, Morris, and making the best of it

I have been reading, with great interest, the new collection of Herbert Read's anarchist writings. There's a lot in it that I had never come across before, like the two items on land use — a remarkable review from *Spain and the World* in 1938 or Orwin's book on *The Open Fields*, then just published and now a classic, and some further reflections on the use of land from *War Commentary* in 1940. If we took our anarchism seriously, there would be enough in this book to keep us arguing for a year. I reached the conclusion that Read was like many of us, given to romantic anarchist rhetoric when talking of things in general but very imaginative and constructive when discussing something in particular.

Most of all, I was absorbed by David Goodway's introduction, tracing a variety of Read's preoccupations all through his life and noting changes in his views. For example, a big slice of Read's reputation is neither anarchist nor literary, but related to his book of 1934 on industrial design, *Art and Industry*. There he seemed to be shaking free from the arts and crafts legacy and asserting a machine-age aesthetic, but as Goodway notes, ten years later we find him "standing more or less foursquare alongside his great predecessors — Ruskin, Morris, Gill — and stressing the fundamental, liberatory importance of the arts and crafts in any free society". And by twenty years later, as Misha Black, a designer who had been inspired by *Art and Industry*, complained: "He had completely changed his attitude". I felt the urge to look beyond this to some of the dilemmas of the craft ideology.

A few years ago a graphic designer told me about a project of his. For some reason — a book or an exhibition — three-dimensional copies were to be made of items of furniture which appear in celebrated paintings. If I understood him correctly, they were also to be made in perspective so that the table-tops were trapezoidal and the chair joints were at eccentric angles. I asked how the makers felt at being involved in such a curious enterprise. "They loved it," he replied. "Released from the professional burden of being craftsmen, they could take on a job of work."

Is the crafts industry a burden that lingers rather than liberates its adherents? I've met some who tend to apologise if they are discovered using power tools. It's a hangover from the revulsion felt by moralists like Ruskin and Morris towards capitalist industry. They had a series of moral or aesthetic imperatives to obey, as well as inheriting the Romantic conception of the inspired artist. There can scarcely be any crafts-people who have faithfully followed all these precepts and survived to make a living, and some of them seem arbitrary or irrational to many of us, but there must be few who have not felt a professional obligation to live up to at least two of the following assumptions. First there is the insistence that they should be both designer and maker: the work should be theirs from conception to conclusion. Secondly, it should be original, creative and non-repetitive. If every piece of work is not a one-off job, it must be condemned as 'soulless repetition'. Thirdly, since the crafts revival was a reaction against machine civilisation, machines should not be used. Fourthly, the crafts-person must be an independent worker, neither an employer nor an employee. Fifthly, they should not get involved in the sordidness of commercial transactions — peddling one's products or advertising them must be degrading.

Some great craftsmen, like Sidney Barnsley, followed all these rules. Many minor ones, trying to do so, lived a simple life in the country in a kind of holy poverty which was partly self-chosen but also reflected the economic climate. The crafts lifestyle was inevitably lampooned by social commentators from Max Beerbohm to Osbert Lancaster, or from H.G. Wells to Malcolm Muggeridge. But the fashionable revival of interest in Art Deco and Art Nouveau, and the recognition that both these decorative movements exemplified *tours de force* of craft skills, has led to a long



Herbert Read

overdue reassessment of the arts and crafts movement, reflected in an abundant and revealing new literature in the last decade.

A century or more after its inception we can recognise its strengths and weaknesses. This recognition is made sharper by the fact that the diatribes of Ruskin and Morris against the industrial economy were made at a time when Britain was the workshop of the world, while today we are witnesses of the collapse of British manufacturing industry. We can see too, that their sense of outrage at the situation of the wage-slave — long hours, low pay and bad working conditions — led them to exaggerate the extent to which skills had been destroyed by industrialism.

Industrial products, which they regarded as gimcrack or shoddy and which only a few years ago would have been regarded as Victorian junk whether furniture, architectural ironmongery, plumber's brassware or sanitaryware, now fetch high prices in the antique market and delight us for the quality of craftsmanship displayed. It's ironic but it's true. We can perceive that there were far more craft survivals than revivals and that even in the emergence of the artist craftsman, there were as many who owed their origins to the educational reforms that followed the 1851 exhibition as to the arts and crafts theorists, and for whom the precepts I have listed were meaningless.

The lady who told Morris "You know, I wouldn't mind a lad being a cabinet maker if only he made art furniture," would not have understood that vision of society that motivated generations of crafts-people who were determined to free themselves from everything she took for granted. And considering how hard it was, and is, to earn an income in the crafts, it is remarkable how any of their assumptions stay intact. There is, however, another aspiration, deeply felt, which people abandon last of all and which was often the yearning that drew them into craft occupations in the first place. Put negatively it is a loathing of the idea of 'going to work' as commuting breadwinners, separating life into two halves. Put positively,

it is the yearning for an integrated life of work and play, workshop and home. This hope for Eric Gill's 'cell of good living' was never more powerfully articulated than by Dave Simmonds, the furniture maker in Arnold Wesker's *I'm Talking About Jerusalem*:

"I know the city, Sarah. Believe me sweetheart! Since being demobbed I've worked in a factory turning out doors and window frames and I've seen men hating themselves while they were doing it. Morning after morning they've come in with cold hatred in their eyes, brutalised! All their humanity gone. These you call men? All their life they're going to drain their energy into something that will give them nothing in return ... That barn'll be my workshop. There I shall work and here, ten yards from me, where I can see and hear them, will be my family. And they will share in my work and I shall share in their lives. I don't want to be married to strangers. I've seen the city make strangers of husbands and wives, but not me, not me and my wife."

Morris himself, who through innumerable revaluations now emerges as the greatest of the great Victorians, broke all the rules that his disciples constructed, but the cornerstone of his belief, whether as craftsman or socialist, was in this integrated life. Paradoxically, his own home life with the enigmatic Jane could not have been particularly happy, but the striking thing about his socialism, which sets it apart from that of any political party, was its domesticity. "For a socialist," he declared, "a house, a knife, a cup, a steam engine, must be either a work or art or a denial of art."

Paul Thompson, in one of the best recent studies of Morris, stresses that socialism as an ideology was a product of the age of the factory and its primary focus was on factory work. "This is a major reason why socialism has always had a more direct appeal to men than to women ... But Morris stands alone among major socialist thinkers in being as consistently concerned with housework and the home as with work in the factory. The transformation of both factory and home was equally necessary for the future fulfilment of men and women. Morris wanted everyday life as a whole to become the basic form of creativity, of art."

It used to be fashionable to regard Morris as a well-intentioned but unworldly dreamer, or to point out that he had a private income from his father's investments ("The simple life, plus dividends" as George Orwell remarked). But that diminishing £900 a year must have been swallowed up by his subsidies to every kind of uneconomic venture, and it is likely that a more important source of income was his royalties as a poet. Even poetry paid in Victorian England, and it was as a poet that he was most highly regarded by his contemporaries.

His real good fortune was his endless energy and the fact that he was both a superb craftsman and a designer of genius. His fabric and wallpaper designs were, by their very nature, intended to be made by others, and he designed carpets for machine production. He had no objection to repetitive craft work, welcoming it in his own case as it freed his mind to work out literary composition: "If a man can't write an epic poem while weaving a tapestry there's not much in him!" His ultimate attitude to the machine was expressed in the hope that "those almost miraculous machines, which if orderly forethought had dealt with them might even now be speedily extinguishing all irksome and unintelligent labour, leaving us free to raise the standard of skill of hand and energy of mind in our workmen."

Morris was, of course, an employer of wage labour even though other members of the firm had to rescue him from his lack of business sense. Ian Bradley notes how he toyed with the

idea of involving his workers in a profit-sharing cooperative, but "decided against it on the grounds that profit-sharing merely turned the workers into small capitalists, and that the profits of Morris & Co. were anyway too small to be adequately shared around. He told Georgina Burne-Jones rather feebly: I am not a capitalist, I am a hanger-on of that class like all professional men."

Of his various inconsistencies the one that troubled him most was that he had to spend his time "ministering to the swinish luxury of the rich". But in fact, accustomed as we are to seeing expensive and elaborate Morris furniture in museums, it is always a surprise to see how cheap and simple much of Morris & Co.'s output was. Ford Madox Brown's bedroom suite in green-stained deal or the Sussex chairs which retailed at between 7s 6d and 12s 6d, and were good enough to furnish Morris's own library at Kelmscott, all seem to belong to a much later, or much earlier, period of craft history.

Morris himself faced all the ideological and aesthetic dilemmas of the practitioner of the crafts. "Everyone who has followed a craft for long," he observed a century ago, has formulated "a set of rules or maxims" and "cannot help following them himself, and insisting on them practically in dealing with his pupils or workmen if he is in any degree a master." But external circumstances, in particular the division of labour, "has turned some of us from being, as we should be, contented craftsmen into being discontented agitators."

Then, with a rare understanding that in his audience at the Trades' Guild in Birmingham there must have been many less well endowed with talent, versatility or just financial security than himself, he remarked: "Nevertheless, since even rebels desire to live, and since they must sometimes crave for rest and peace — nay, since they must, as it were, make for themselves strongholds from whence to carry on the strife — we ought not to be accused of inconsistency if tonight we consider how to make the best of it."

Making the best of it is the art that crafts-people know best, and of course they too have their share of the need to keep producing, just like Read as a writer. For the saddest thing about Goodway's introduction to his work is his reference to "the 'hack work' necessitated by the financial desperation of his final years". But would we say this if Read's trade had been pottery or chair-making?

Colin Ward

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India looks set to become one of the new economic flavours of the year as foreign companies queue up looking for profitable investment opportunities in the region. Recently, making a comparison with China, trade minister Richard Needham summed up the attitude when he spoke of India's advantage in having "a stable democratic régime". 'Stability' is no new concept in the framework of 'liberal reform'. In the Indian context it brings to mind the occupation of Kashmir by the Indian army; the killings, detentions and human rights violations in Punjab and elsewhere; the tear gas attacks on farmers protesting against the GATT ... This serves to emphasise one aspect of the role of the state in what is being presented as a move towards an open and 'free' economy devoid of state interference. Nothing could be further from the truth and the importance attached to political infrastructure is betrayed by Needham's comments - stable democratic régimes, as the Newspeak would have them, are just the sort of régimes we like to do business with.

Foreign involvement

And of course the arms business will do as well as any other. Despite some prevarication, mainly due to attempts by other Europeans notably the French to fill a perceived gap in the market, it looks now as though India will go ahead with the purchase of 66 Hawk trainer aircraft from BAe for a cool \$2.5 billion. Given the easing of tension in the area one wonder why a 'stable' régime should want them ... until we recall how effective they have proved against domestic populations elsewhere in the region.

The TNC's are lining up, lured by a 'market' of 380 million (or at least the proportion thereof who can afford the high costs of participation) and of course the supply of cheap labour which always attends Asian projects.

Many other 'business opportunities' are there for the private sector after a budget in February extended the deregulation reforms which had started in '91 and also introduced a cut in customs duties opening up the country to foreign imports.

These budgetary factors simply highlight

Focus on ... India and South East Asia

In a recent 'Focus on ...' we looked at China and with this issue we continue looking at the integration of Asian countries into the new world economic order. Whilst variations reveal themselves, as we move from country to country a pattern emerges ... the state introducing policies of 'reform' which, with the help of international bodies, aim at setting up an economic structure serving trans-national and domestic corporate interest at the expense of the not-so-silent majority ...

another aspect of the role of the state in the free market. As far as managing economies are concerned, the present élite in India learnt a lot from their British predecessors - obsessed as it seemingly still is with colonial paraphernalia in, for example, the education system. But anyway, they've done their job.

The TNC's (trans-national corporations) are lining up, lured by a 'market' of 380 million (or at least the proportion thereof who can afford the high costs of participation) and of course the supply of cheap labour which always attends Asian projects. The Indian government is keen to bring in foreign capital to help finance, in particular, the electricity supply industry. A \$280 million power station - the first of its kind to be paid for by the private sector - is to go ahead with GVK Industries announcing the start of construction towards the middle of this year. The Asian Development Bank and International Finance Corporation - a venture-capital outfit and part of the World Bank which specialises in investments of this sort - is also involved. The power ministry has also received expressions of interest from a further 35 foreign companies who want in on the action.¹

The World Bank and the GATT

We should perhaps not be surprised, once the World Bank's name is mentioned, to realise that we are now talking of forced resettlement of rural populations in order that urban élites can be served. India is not new to the activities of the World Bank which put forward the \$450 million to pay for the Sardar Sarovar dam recently which went ahead despite local protest which claimed it was simply a project

1. *The Financial Times*, 30th March 1994.

which served rich farmers, business people and builders and would prove to be an ecological and economic disaster - not the first or last time the World Bank has had to face such criticism of its 'development' policies. Indeed, returning to the rural/urban split, the usual picture of a divided country is there to see for those who are willing to look.

The rural poor in India "are paying a price for the reforms but not yet seeing many of the benefits"

It is the high growth cities like Bombay where you will see the Mercedes, the designer clothes, etc. And the growth is linked to financial services, advertising and other business services. Just the sort of area of the economy, in fact, that the GATT was supposed to bring west whilst manufacturing industries took to the Special Economic Zones of the poorer countries. But when computer programmers in India get salaries of around £2,000 per annum we can start to understand why the banks are laying off staff here in the UK.

Meanwhile, according to last year's report on *Human Development* from the UNDP, the rural poor in India "are paying a price for reforms but not yet seeing many of the benefits". A third of the population are living in absolute poverty and the record in the child labour and literacy stakes are abysmal (see John Shotton's 'India India' in *Freedom*, 19th March 1994, for a deeper analysis).

How right the UNDP was in saying that the poor have not yet seen the benefits. How wrong they were in the implication that the benefits are on the way. The TNCs within the

framework of the GATT, and with the full support of the Indian state, have the economy sewn up even in the rural areas. Copyright on 'scientifically improved' seeds is now enshrined in international law, bringing with it a need for fertilisers sold by the same international corporations who, it has been calculated, stand to make some \$61 billion a year from the third world in this area alone.² The agreement will deny farmers the right to the traditional re-use of seed from their harvest and if they use seed of their own the onus will be on them to prove its purity. This is all a bit hard to swallow, given that the materials used by the companies in seed production have been derived from the traditional farmers who have cultivated them over countless generations.³

Resistance

This could prove the end of the line for small farmers ... but they are not going to take it lying down.

The fightback is being spearheaded by the ten million strong Karnataka Farmers Union. This grassroots organisation⁴ is run on anarchist lines. Much in the tradition of syndicalist organisations like the Spanish CNT, it is locally based with no centralised funding. It is non-sectarian and has managed to overcome Indian internal divisions as enshrined in the caste system. On Gandhi's birthday last year 500,000 assembled in Bangalore to hear speeches before taking direct action against the local offices of Cargill, the main TNC involved in the seed

Professor Najundaswami is convinced that India should have gone down the road of Gandhi's village-based development model

dispute in the region. Meanwhile the union is putting the principles of mutual aid into practice by setting up cooperatives to develop, store and exchange their own seeds.

Professor M.D. Najundaswami, a key figure in the union, claims traditional farming

(continued on page 7)

2. Noam Chomsky, *Year 501*, page 115.

3. *ibid*, page 116.

4. Information from *The Guardian*, 11th March 1994.

The Chipko Movement

Early in 1973 a group of villagers near Gopeshwar in the Garhwal region of Uttar Pradesh asked the Forest Department for permission to cut some ash trees in order to make some agricultural implements. To their astonishment they were refused permission. This decision incensed the local people. The Department had already allotted ash trees in the Mandal forest to a business corporation in far-off Allahabad, one that manufactured sporting goods.

For many generations the forest resources of the Himalayas had been open to commercial interests and timber, forest products like resin and raw materials had long been extracted from the forested regions. Since independence, however, this exploitation of the hill forests had intensified, for there was an essential continuity between the colonial and post-colonial forest policies. These policies had already undermined the autonomy and relative prosperity of the hill people and had led to the loss and degradation of large tracts of forest as well as giving rise to serious flooding and landslides in the Himalayan region. Only three years earlier - in 1970 - an unusually heavy monsoon had caused a devastating flood in the Alakananda valley. The village of Belakuchi, only 45km from Gopeshwar, had been swept away, six bridges, 10km of roads and over 600 houses destroyed, with considerable loss of livestock and human life. Over 500 acres of standing paddy crop had also been devastated. The villagers, who had borne the brunt of the hardship, were not slow to perceive the obvious links between the floods and landslides that were becoming increasingly common and the deforestation of the region through commercial logging.

The refusal of the Forest Department to grant the local people permission to cut the ash trees was the last straw.

Villagers decided to act against this blatant injustice. Their cause was taken up by a local cooperative society, the Dashauli Gram Swarajya Sangh, which was based on Gandhian principles. One of its leading activists was Chandi Prasad Bhatt. This 'self-help' society was established in 1964 and, like other Sarvodaya societies in the Himalayan region, had been inspired by two European devotees of Gandhi, Mirabehn (Madeleine Slade) and Saralabehn (Catherine Heilman). After independence, both these women had settled and established ashrams in the hills of Uttar Pradesh. In 1961 Saralabehn ('behn' means 'sister'), who had long been writing articles and books on ecological problems of the region, created the Uttarkhand Sarvodaya Mandal. It was to work for the 'uplift' of the local communities and to protect the Himalayan environment.

During the 1960s the Sarvodaya movement focused its activities on four major concerns - the organisation of local women, the struggle against the widespread distillation and sale of liquor, the fight for the forest rights of the local people, and the setting up of local forest-based small industries on Gandhian principles. An important figure in the early Sarvodaya campaigns was Sunderlal Bahuguna, who was a disciple of both Mirabehn and Saralabehn.

With respect to the dispute in the Mandal forest, the villagers and the Swarajya Sangh were at first unsure of a possible course of action. Then Chandi Prasad Bhatt hit upon the idea of embracing the trees. Thus the Chipko movement was born, the term loosely translated being Hindi for 'hug'. The movement soon spread to other areas, always adopting as a strategy the Gandhian philosophy of non-violent direct action - what Gandhi called Satyagraha, the force of truth (Sat =

truth, agraha = firmness). In 1974 massive demonstrations were organised to protect the Reni forests from the timber contractors. As local men and the Swarajya Sangh activists had been deviously lured away elsewhere by government officials - so that the contractors' axemen could move unchallenged into the forests - it was largely left to the women to defend the trees. This they did under the leadership of Gaura Devi.

Throughout the next five years in different parts of Uttar Pradesh village communities protected and occupied local forests, defending them from commercial exploitation. They faced harassment from local police who were moved in to protect the contractor's interests. Many Chipko supporters were imprisoned. Women were centrally involved in these struggles, while Sunderlal Bahuguna went on his famous treks though the Himalayas spreading the Chipko message. Eventually, after a meeting with Bahuguna the Indian prime minister, Indira Gandhi, recommended a fifteen year ban on commercial forestry in the Uttar Pradesh forests.

The Chipko movement has usually been interpreted in terms of contemporary debates relating to feminism, Gandhian philosophy and environmentalism. It did of course embrace all these three movements, but it is highly misleading to see the Chipko movement solely in terms of current concerns.

Some have seen the Chipko movement as being primarily a women's movement. This has been especially stressed by Vandana Shiva. What seems to have troubled Shiva, rightly, is that all the media coverage on Chipko was focused largely on such leading male activists as Bahuguna and Bhatt. Consequently the women's contribution to the Chipko movement has been neglected or remained invisible. Shiva sometimes goes to the other extreme and ignores men completely. In her important study *Staying Alive* she not only

(continued on page 8)

Australia / Papua New Guinea

The end of May saw an important anniversary for the publishers of the Victoria, Australia, based *Anarchist Age Weekly Review*. We bring you one article from this issue ...

This issue marks the 100th issue of the *Anarchist Age Weekly Review*. Over the past two years the Libertarian Workers for a Self-Managed Society have written over 400,000 words, drawn over 90 original cartoons in 100 issues that have covered over 500 topics.

Fly River communities fight corporate gangsters

As traditional owners from the Fly River region of Papua New Guinea seek damages against BHP in Victoria's courts for the tremendous damage caused to the Fly River system, Prime Minister Wingti has come to Melbourne for a meeting with the true rulers of his country - the corporate kings of the resource industry - together with their man in Canberra (who needs the Melbourne Club?) Paul Keating.

The inability of the locals of the Fly River system to appreciate the value of BHP's water additives is just another example of the strong community opposition which has been growing in many parts of Papua New Guinea to the devastating and unfruitful (at least to the communities) activities of mining corporations.

Over the years the Papua New Guinea resource industry has provided an élite group of Australian-based corporations and multinational subsidiaries - and their major shareholders - with a bountiful source of income. The Papua New Guinea state, meanwhile, has been totally dependent on raw materials to maintain buoyancy in the world economic system into which it has been drafted. Increasingly, mining royalties have made up the major part of these export earnings, and because of the capital intensive nature of the mining industry, its viability on a large scale has been dependent on investment and control by large multinational corporations.

With the interests of the state being one thing and the interests of individuals and communities being another, the Ok Tedi dispute is just the latest in a series of instances in which communities have rebelled against state/corporation mining projects,

The rise of disease

(continued from page 4)

is labour intensive; human effort cannot be replaced by chemicals.

If health were a criterion by which methods of production were judged, if health were valued sufficiently for health-promoting methods to attract support, then organic farmers would be thriving. The reality is that most are going out of business. It doesn't matter, apparently, that animals on organic farms don't develop BSE, that organic farms don't pollute the food chain and the water table with poisons, that a sustainable balance is maintained between life-forms and the land. Organic methods provide no profits for powerful multinational drug and chemical companies and the small scale of organic farming doesn't suit the interests of the supermarkets or the pension funds.

While medicine - which is consistently profitable - is seen as the answer to disease, the interests of multinational business will remain paramount. Treating diseases, themselves symptoms of social failure, consumes resources without creating health. Creating health through social action dramatically reduces disease. But there is no career, no profit and no predictable dividends for shareholders in health.

We are beginning to see the results of the dominant philosophy. Incurable virus infections are spreading as never before, setting the stage for an uncontrollable upsurge of bacterial disease. As poverty and malnutrition increase, declining immunity is creating the conditions for new types of plague.

The signs are all around us now.

Arabella Melville

and endeavoured to resume control over their own land and economic base. Other disputes have occurred over (amongst others) the Panguna mine, the Mount Kare mine and the Porgera gold mine.

As Papua New Guinea communities endeavour to escape the corporate/state/IMF 'development' trap, the leaders of the mining industry are becoming increasingly concerned about their profits and have warned Papua New Guinea politicians that the dissidence of Papua New Guinea communities is causing an 'uncertain' investment climate. Dependent on the investment of these corporations for the success of Papua New Guinea within the context of its role as a vassal state, Wingti is under pressure to create an investment environment of 'certainty' and has thus come out to reassure the corporations that he will do all he can to prevent the Fly River communities from being appropriately compensated for the loss of their economic base. Hungry for the Australian corporations to repatriate their profits and add them to the highly dubious state of the 'trickle-down', Keating is sure to support the 'certainty' option.

The massive influence which transnational corporations exert over states, especially in developing countries, is something for which they are notorious. The openness, however, with which Wingti has been promising to look after the interests of BHP above those of his supposed

constituents, is a surprisingly frank admittance of who really holds the reins.

What is now of concern is the means by which this élite group of gangsters intends to ensure that there are 'no more Bougainvilles'. Wingti has called for the corporations to each contribute to an ominously-named 'fighting fund' apparently in the context of the current Ok Tedi dispute. But is it realistic to expect that such a fund would be restricted, especially in the future, to \$10,000-a-day lawyers or are there other options?

'Certainty' has been traditionally referred to by people like Nixon and Reagan as 'stability' and is the sort of thing they carried out in South American republics in the name of 'democracy'. Currently, however, the Australian Federal government is one of the most enthusiastic proponents of this concept. Even our very own Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Gareth Evans, is known to warm to the idea after a few glasses of champagne 30,000 feet above the Timor Sea.

The worn-out rhetoric of 'progress' and 'development' and 'economic growth' is certain to re-emerge as these corporate gangsters and their parliamentary lackeys attempt to legitimise their contemptible actions and lack of morality. It is a chance for those who see through the rhetoric to vent their disgust, to demand that the corporations be held responsible for their actions and that no resources be sent overseas to create investment environments of 'certainty'.

Joel Spring of Libertarian Workers for a Self-Managed Society

Inside India

In the post Cold War world when it comes to nuclear proliferation the finger of the north is often pointed at the south. I find it increasingly hard to bear the superior morality that seeps out of the Pentagon or Whitehall or wherever regarding nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. Suddenly the main agents of nuclear proliferation since 1945 are the lambs who are concerned about the fact that their actions in commercialising the process are proving dangerous. Of course there could be a nuclear war between India and Pakistan, but where does culpability for this possibility reside? Firmly with the charlatans who gave them the incentive to 'go nuclear' and made it worth their while.

Of course governments in the south have proved receptive to nuclear commercialism, but to now label the south as an irresponsible nuclear owner only exacerbates the prejudices that are generally held in the north concerning the south. Furthermore, such labelling ignores the strong anti-nuclear lobbies that exist across the south.

Earlier this year delegates from eight countries from the Asian region gathered in Japan for a 'No Nukes Asia Forum'. They reviewed the situation in their respective countries and pledged themselves to strengthen citizens' solidarity. I want to try and summarise their review for *Freedom* readers.

Korea: The Korean delegates maintained that while the threat to Korea of nuclear weapons had declined with the end of the Cold War the threat of the peaceful use of nuclear energy was ironically on the increase.

Taiwan: Taiwan has six nuclear reactors generating 40% of the country's electricity output. At present the anti-nuclear movement is engaged in a major struggle against the government's plans for a fourth plant. People have been vigorously opposing nuclear power plants ever since the Chernobyl disaster, with mass demonstrations of six to twenty thousand. The Yami people of the Orchid Island where a waste dumping site was set up eleven years ago have also put up a tough and relentless fight against the facility.

The Philippines: The Philippines' sole nuclear power plant in Bataan was almost completed in 1985 but was mothballed by the Aquino government. The present Ramos government has proposed to convert it into a

non-nuclear plant. On the other hand, however, Ramos has proposed building new nuclear power plants elsewhere. The people of the Philippines having learned from their experience of stopping operations at the Bataan plant for twenty years remain committed to keeping the Philippines nuclear free.

Indonesia: The Indonesian government is currently planning to build a nuclear plant at the foot of Muria Mountain in Central Java, and has already begun to carry out infrastructure projects to accommodate it. Feasibility studies are also being carried out by the New Japan Engineering Consultant Inc., a subsidiary of Japan's Kansai Electric Company, suggesting the possibility that Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd will be nominated contractor for the plant. Indonesian anti-nuclear groups are calling for international solidarity in their efforts to stop the government's nuclear programme.

Thailand: Thailand has no nuclear power as yet. But the government has announced its hope of having six nuclear reactors on line between the years 2006 and 2014.

Malaysia: There was a rumour that a nuclear power plant was to be built in Malaysia, but the government has denied this. However, this has not stopped the emergence of a strong and determined anti-nuclear movement based around the Third World Network organisation in Penang.

India: India's nuclear programme began one year after independence and the country exploded its first atomic bomb in 1974. There are currently nine nuclear power plants in operation in the country. The Indian government spends half of its research and development budget on nuclear and allied research, but not without enormous opposition.

At the forum participants from the different regions discussed plans on how to formulate a network throughout Asia to exchange information. Also the No Nukes Asia Forum resolved to strengthen grassroots organisations to prevent nuclear weapons development, radioactive materials mining and other nuclear related activities in the Asian region, and to cooperate to phase out all nuclear power generation as soon as possible.

John Shotton

New Zealand

An anarchist planning meeting was held in Wellington, New Zealand, over 1st to 3rd April. The meeting was called to discuss what was happening around the country, what resources we have (or have access to) and to work out attitudes and approaches to such issues as the Treaty of Waitangi.

The meeting was advertised among the various anarchist groups and active individuals rather than being openly advertised like the larger Annual Conferences, as attempts to hold this sort of discussion at the Annual Conferences had not gone so well due to lack of time, etc. About 25-30 people from many parts of the country attended. Among the more concrete proposals to come out of the meeting was the need for a newsletter to keep people in regular contact, coming out about once a month, as previously most contact was between only a few groups. Publishing was also discussed, focusing on both books and magazines. *The State Adversary*, the general Anarchist Alliance magazine, has not appeared since April 1993. Plans are underway to revive *The State Adversary* as a quarterly magazine.

The Annual Conference this year had been tentatively planned for the Queen's birthday weekend in June, but this clashed with the National Peace Workshops (which will be including anarchist workshops). It was generally agreed that the Annual Conference be held over a long weekend at the same time each year, so it was decided that they will be held over the Easter-holiday period (five days) to allow maximum input without it being rushed. This will start with the Easter 1995 Conference and will include workshops, films, planning sessions and social activities. In the meantime, a small conference will be held in Nelson in October.

from *Rebel Worker*, May 1994

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Focus on ... India

(continued from page 6)

methods are more effective than those espoused by modern agri-business because they rely less on inputs and less on water. The traditional system also provides, free, its own organic manure and there is the advantage of food and fodder crops being able to share the same fields. Such traditional methods have broken records in the production of rice, sorghum, wheat and sugar. As we saw in China so we see repeated in India: traditional practices in the primary economic sector, such as food production, are superior to the advances of the scientific west. Professor Najundaswami is convinced that India should have gone down the road of Gandhi's village-based development model rather than Nehru's state-planned superstructure.

Now have the final stage of the process: the current craze for trade liberalisation and globalisation. This is not right for India: we have not solved the problems of our people. Najundaswami clearly identifies himself with that movement which bubbles up in different forms throughout Asia, and indeed throughout the world. Whether you call it *Sarvodaya* or *Ching-t'ien* or indeed Anarchism, perhaps it doesn't really matter. As long as people recognise authority for what it is and oppose it consistently, there is hope.

Anarchism and Breaking Free

Dear Freedom,

In reply to Peter Neville (*Freedom*, 11th June), reality is objective fact, not subjective interpretation. Before Copernicus and Galileo the subjective interpretation was that the sun revolves around the earth. This was a universal opinion held by all based on empirical observation. It was also wrong. The reality is that the earth orbits the sun and this was the case even when subjective perception was the opposite.

There is a distinction between science (the study of reality) and technology (the modification of reality) but they cannot be separated to the extent that Peter maintains. Theoretically it is possible to imagine a technology based on magic, witch-craft, religion, wishful thinking, fantasy or 'political correctness', but in actual, objective, historical practice only technology based on scientific knowledge acquired by scientific methods proves to be useful.

Conversely it is possible to imagine science proceeding on the basis of pure thought and observation, without the benefit of technological devices, but in practice it would not get very far. Copernicus's theory of the earth orbiting the sun was only finally established by Galileo using the technology of the telescope to make the necessary observations.

The medieval alchemists may have been right about the possibility of turning base metals to gold, but it took modern science to develop the technology to prove this. The strength of science lies in its ability to disprove its own false ideas.

I am not trying to suggest that the scientific method is some sort of Holy Grail capable of solving all problems. When we speak of science we should be careful about our definitions. The 'hard' sciences - physics, chemistry, biology - are in my view the only fully valid disciplines. There are dangers in giving certain pseudo-sciences the same kind of authority, especially economics.

Economics, whether marxist, classical, Keynesian, monetarist, etc., however much it may attempt to use scientific methods, is based on complete nonsense, i.e. the idea of equivalent exchange. That all goods and services can be reduced to monetary values. That there is a certain amount of chalk equivalent to a given quantity of cheese, or shit to sugar.

I cannot comment on the validity or otherwise of Velikovsky's theories or dowsing, but if, as Peter seems to imply, Velikovsky is right and dowsing is a real phenomenon they scarcely seem to justify his conclusion that orthodox science "is pretty silly and hardly a valid

view of reality". If these represent portions of reality that science is missing, there is every chance that this will be corrected in time. If not, it will not be the end of the world. On the other hand, the acceptance of the fantasies of religion, the nonsense of market economics, nationalism, racism, etc., by vast numbers of people continues to have catastrophic results.

Anarchism, to me, is the only political idea that offers any hope of a decent tolerable world, perhaps any world at all. It is an attempt to cure human society of the disease of authoritarianism. Religion, the state, property, capitalism can be regarded as symptoms. Prevention is better than cure and the encouragement of a questioning scientific outlook among ourselves and others is the best vaccine available.

J. Wood

Dear Freedom,

In February 1994 the philosopher Paul K. Feyerabend died. At first I was quite happy to see that *Freedom* (2nd April 1994) paid attention to his life and work, until I saw the initials of Nicolas Walter underneath it because Walter is, in my view, first of all an atheist freethinker with the nineteenth century's belief in reason and science, and only then an anarchist. This fact makes Walter, as far as I am concerned, not the most proper person to evaluate the work of Feyerabend.

And indeed, as a freethinker Walter turns out to be, at least to some extent, a scientific fundamentalist feeling very threatened by people who are highly critical about the 'untouchable' merits of science and reason. In Walter's view Feyerabend approached irrationalism and obscurantism, he even calls him 'perverse'!

My personal experience with Dutch 'anti-Feyerabendist anarchists' is that it is very hard - if not impossible - to discuss issues like these with them. Rationalists happen to become very emotional at the very moment their rationality is only slightly questioned - as Feyerabend himself experienced and described in his excellent *Science in a Free Society*. I think such a discussion with Walter is indeed impossible. Of course it is hard to catch a philosophy in a few words, but our Walter did not even try it. His remark, for instance, that Feyerabend called himself an anarchist is very wrong. First, because I am not aware that Feyerabend ever called himself an anarchist - on the contrary, so far I have only heard him denying that he

is an anarchist in any political sense - and in the second place, when he called his philosophy of science 'anarchist' (in the subtitle of his book *Against Method* in 1975) he gave a very special technical meaning to the concept 'anarchist'.

I paid attention to Feyerabend myself recently in the Dutch anarcho-socialist magazine *De AS* (106). Herewith a copy.

Anyway, I would like to finish this letter with a strong recommendation to the readers of this magazine: do not believe Walter, do not believe me, but please do read, for instance, Feyerabend's last collection of essays *Farewell to Reason*.

Cees Bronsveld
Rotterdam

News from Angel Alley

As we have said on other occasions, no news is not necessarily bad news or that we have nothing to report. After all, *Freedom* does come out on time as always and we are slowly but surely catching up with *The Raven*. We are hoping that number 26, the second 'Science' number, will appear for the summer and work has already started on the second issue on 'Religion and Fundamentalism' for the autumn.

Getting Away with Murder

Dear Freedom,

I have to say that this conversation is getting very tired, and I mean tired ... that's tired! Firstly I find it rather strange that someone insists on signing his name 'Royal Air Force Bomber', maybe he could like to come out from behind his mask or maybe he is a fictional character.

To his letter of 11th June, I say that it is time for him to give me some credit and read what I have to say with a less obvious and surface view. However, I shall clarify certain points. Such as the fact that if he cares to read my previous letter he will see that I did describe the loss of innocent German life as a tragedy.

Furthermore, I did not dismiss the regime in Japan but I recognise the differences. One obvious difference is that the Japanese Empire, which terrorised Asia as the Nazis had Europe, was born out of an ancient religious culture in a society that had never known free thought and individualism. Germany, on the other hand, had been the heart of European political and philosophical debate, a society where there was freedom to some extent. Where people knew better than to sit back like cowards and allow a group of criminals to rise to power.

As far as Iraq is concerned, that is a regime that our own leaders sided with during the Iran/Iraq war and again a society in which mass submission is the norm. While Saddam himself is very secular, he is shrewd enough to use Islamic culture to keep his people in line - the word 'Islam' itself meaning 'to submit' or 'to be a slave', again a society where democratic values and free thought have never existed.

On the issue of Japan and the two

atomic bombs, even Eisenhower was against that action which Truman was very much responsible for. Contrary to popular belief, that action was not needed nor was it justified. The Japanese military were out of supplies and the civilian population was already dying from starvation. They were finished weeks before the Americans dropped the two bombs.

This particular conversation is now ended ... enough already!

Howard Marks

Money from the State

Dear Comrades,

Larry Gambone should read my article again so that he understands exactly what I said.

I said, if we have to work for the state to live, if we want to create our free society, then we must have the occupations I gave in the article. This is indisputable. If we have any other occupations, such as those associated with the civil service and the police, then we are not destroying the state but supporting it and perpetuating it.

I did not say we should take money from the state because we had paid taxes. All I said was that if you have to take money to live, then feel no shame because, since you have paid taxes, you are not receiving a gift. You are having back some of the money the state had taken from you.

Derrick A. Pike

Meanwhile both the *Comfort* and *Read* volumes are available - and all orders have now been dispatched. So any reader who had ordered either or both of these volumes when first announced and has not received their copy, please get in touch.

Donald Room's fourth 'Wildcat' volume which we were not expecting to publish until the autumn is now on sale. It is topical - the Health Service - and hard hitting. And 48 pages of drawings and text well printed on good paper for £1.95 (post free inland) is surely the bargain of the month!

As part from the regulars and one or two large individual donations, our funds have been in the doldrums these past few weeks, though our needs to keep both *Freedom* and *The Raven* afloat won't go away. And as we pointed out when Aldgate Press moved, we have a sizeable overheads bill to cover. Just the rates set us back £3,000 a year. So brothers/sisters if you can spare a dime don't forget our funds. Thanks.

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The Chipko Movement

(continued from page 6)

associates men with capitalism, colonial forestry and modern Cartesian science, she virtually equates them - which is highly misleading. But her central plea, namely the recognition that women are the 'real pillars' of the Chipko movement, is surely justified. Stressing the 'women's bid to save forest wealth' (which was the subtitle of an early booklet on the Chipko movement) cannot therefore be dismissed as 'romanticisation'. Women played - and are still playing - a central and crucial role in the movement, and the reason for this is self-evident. For women are the 'backbone' of hill society, based as this was on organic agriculture.

Unlike the social system of India's plains, most of the agrarian population of the Himalayas were owner-cultivators and there was an absence of sharp inequalities in land ownership. The village community has a sense of social solidarity and agriculture was largely focused around women. Although men ploughed the land, the women did most of the cultivating, weeding and harvesting of the crops, as well as looking after the domestic animals. They were also responsible for the household tasks and for the collection of fuel, fodder and water. Both fuel and fodder were gathered from the forest. There was thus an intimate and intrinsic link between the forest, agriculture and animal husbandry. In a sense, the forest augmented the nutritive value of the agricultural fields via the medium of livestock. Thus the

destruction and the restrictions on the use of the forest directly affected women. As Thomas Weber puts it: "sheer survival made women support the movement".

Equally the Chipko movement cannot be seen simply as an expression of Gandhian philosophy. Bandyopadhyay and Shiva (1987) write that: "The Chipko movement is historically, philosophically and organisationally an extension of traditional Gandhian satyagraha". Such a statement lacks any sense of history. Indeed, Shiva misleadingly tends to think that deforestation and the exploitation of forests in India begins only with the arrival of the British raj. But as I tried to show in my book *Forest Traders*, the exploitation and marketing of forest products in India - teak, bamboo, medicinal herbs, sandalwood, spices such as ginger, cardamom and tumeric, and ivory being the most important - go back many centuries and forest resources were always an important source of revenue for the early states. Although there was no private property, the forests always came under the jurisdiction of some local ruler or state.

This is illustrated by an early incident briefly mentioned by Shiva. In 1731 near Jodhpur in Rajasthan a group of peasant villagers resisted a detachment of men sent by the local

References

- R. Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: ecological change and peasant resistance in the Himalaya*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1991.
- V. Shiva and J. Bandyopadhyay 'Chipko: Rekindling India's Forest Culture' in *The Ecologist* 17, pages 26-34.

maharaja, or state ruler. The men came to cut down some Khejeri trees, as the king had decided to build a new palace. But these shade trees, which were drought resistant, were also important fodder trees for the local peasants. So they resisted the onslaught of the wood-cutters, one young woman, Amarita Devi, hugging one of the trees that was marked for felling. She was killed and her shrine is now an important place for religious pilgrimages. Shiva suggests that with this event begins the recorded history of the Chipko movement. But this was by no means the first time that peasant and tribal communities in India had resisted the intrusions of the state, and it is worth noting that of the 359 people killed in this particular affray, the majority were men. This of course took place some three centuries before Gandhi.

Thus to fully understand the Chipko movement one needs to put it in the same historical context as peasant movements throughout history who have long defended - on all continents - their traditional rights to the forest as against commercial and state interests. The Chipko movements, as Ramachandra Guha cogently outlines in his study *The Unquiet Woods*, is only the last in a long line of peasant movements who have defended their traditional forest rights and their subsistence economy against state encroachment. It was fundamentally a protest against state restrictions on peasant access to forest produce and reflected two very different attitudes to land - the one concerned with subsistence and ecological and social well being, the other with the utilisation of land for the generation of profits.

Brian Morris

London Anarchist Forum

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22nd July Marx the Forgotten Anarchist
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29th July General discussion

5th August Vacation

12th August Vacation

19th August Vacation

26th August Vacation

Monday 29th August *SUMMER PICNIC*
(venue Hadley Woods, details later)

3rd September Introduction

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Sociobiology (speaker Donald Room)

17th December Should Anarchists Take Part
in Revolutionary Governments? (debate
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24th September General discussion

1st October The Catholic Worker (speaker
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8th October Gustav Landauer: The Spirit of
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