

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

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FIFTY PENCE

"The interest of
landlords is always
opposed to the interest
of every other class in
the community."

David Ricardo

MAD COWS IN A MAD WORLD!

We don't imagine diplomatic relations will be severed with Germany as a result of its determination to halt all imports of British beef because of fears that *bovine spongiform encephalopathy* (BSE), which now affects half of Britain's dairy herds and 13% of the beef herds, may be responsible for the mysterious Creutzfeldt Jakob's Disease which the Germans say is the human form of BSE. The Brits

naturally deny this, and the Agricultural Minister Gillian Shephard - who knows as much about the subject as this writer - simply answered "allegations about mad cow disease in British herds with complaints about the handling of a swine fever epidemic in Lower Saxony" (*Guardian*, 26th April), presumably on the grounds that two wrongs make a right!

British hypocrisy was further

revealed for all to see when Mrs Shephard triumphantly pointed out that:

"... the Germans seem to remain isolated from the rest of Europe on this issue. The position is eleven to one."

Conveniently forgetting that when PM Major succeeded in making Britain the odd man out over the Social Chapter it was hailed by the Tory neanderthal men as being a great victory - one against eleven!

'IS YOUR JOURNEY NECESSARY?'

I

This was a wartime slogan to save the meagre stocks of petrol. Today no such suggestion comes from officialdom and industry in spite of the fact that everybody recognises that the roads are blocked with private cars and lorries, much of it traffic that could be transferred to public transport on road and rail to everyone's benefit, not least the growingly asthmatic public. But business is business. After all no less than 60% of new car sales valued at £17 billion per annum, are for *company cars*. Everyone knows that 'company cars' cover a multitude of tax rackets for company and employee (though Chancellor Clarke is wanting his share of it, thus making it less attractive, apparently). But even so, how many millions of miles a year these salesmen are covering just to flog their merchandise, all of which in the non-capitalist society would be unnecessary and we would still be able to have those goods which we need for the good life.

II

The financiers are talking of a 'son of Concorde' so successful is the present ageing fleet of fourteen aircraft. According to British Airways, which operates half the fleet, about one in five of the passengers on the 10.30am service from London to New York will be tucked up in bed at home

by the end of the day". For important businessmen, for whom time is money, is it not worth paying the price to speed across the Atlantic at 1,350 mph and get there, because of the five hour time difference, more than an hour before they left London! And the price they pay is a mere £5,030 return fare! Would it not have been cheaper and quicker to do that business by phone?

III

And what about those people who are crossing the Channel to Calais with their cars or vans, or with just a trolley, and returning by the next boat laden with cans of beer, cartons of wine, packs of cigarettes, simply because the VAT on these items in Calais is about half that in Dover!

Needless to say our businessmen have no intention of being left out of this racket. Tescos have already set up a superstore in Calais and Sainsburys are following suit.

And in no time, according to *The Independent* (18th May), the "crime gangs branch out into sales of bootleg beer". Apparently some "twelve constantly changing couriers are making two or three trips a day across the English Channel". Profits on each run, which is the difference between French and British prices and duty, "can amount to £500 per van. Therefore, an operation in full swing can net up to £18,000 a day".

When will man learn that time is not money. Time is life and living!

Let's forget about Mrs Shephard and her non-sequiturs and instead try to see what is at the root of the BSE epidemic. It all starts with the compounders - one should perhaps say that it started with factory farming when the animals were enclosed for most of their lives and fed from hay, silage and the stuff provided by the multinational compounders. This was made profitable at the time because of the
(continued on page 2)

SELLING THE 'FAMILY SILVER' OR JUST GIVING IT AWAY?

The Labour opposition, from new figures obtained through parliamentary written answers, has asked the Commons public accounts select committee to investigate their claim that more than £600 million has already been spent in ending British Rail's control of the network. The breakdown shows £303 million spent on redundancies and early retirements, £146 million on reorganisation at British Rail, £52 million on setting up the new track authority Railtrack and the Office of Passenger Franchising and, last but by no means least, £48 million on lawyers and consultants!

And all they have done is to change signs in the stations which said 'British Rail' to 'Railtrack' and got rid of more experienced railwaymen and appointed well paid quangos who know nothing about running the railways.

MAD COWS IN A MAD WORLD!

(continued from page 1)

huge subsidies paid by the EEC for cereals production, for chopping down hedges and converting small pastures into prairies. That has now come full circle and millions of tons of cereals are rotting in intervention while millions of Africans are starving.

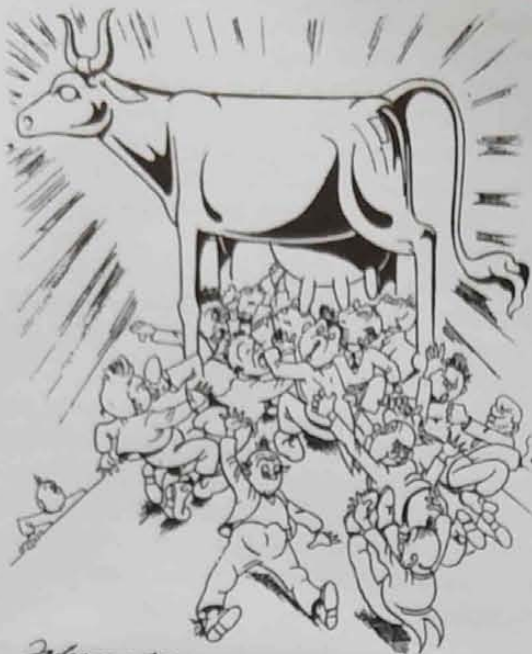
The compounders are the principal villains in this 'whodunit' for they, until the ban in 1989, had been including in cattle feed sheep's offal infected with scrapie, a deadly brain disease known for at least two hundred years. According to a writer in *The Guardian* (29th April) the Ministry of Agriculture:

"... also accepts there's a possibility that BSE has no direct link with scrapie but might be caused by cows being constantly re-fed their own infected brains" (our italics).

In the words of Colin Spencer in *The Guardian*:

"So much we think we know about BSE is mere supposition. How can any statements be made with certainty when we have not yet identified the BSE agent? Nor do we know the route by which infection takes place - though ingestion might seem the obvious way."

What is clear is that while neither the 'agent' nor 'the route' by which infection takes place may be known for certain, what we do know is that the first case of BSE was detected in 1985 and "after much lobbying from scientists, the government banned human consumption of beef offal" five years later, during which, in Colin Spencer's words, "the offal was entering the human food chain" via



John Olday

SOLD FOR THE GREEDY

'GOLD FOR THE GREEDY'

Cartoon by John Olday first published in *The March to Death* (Freedom Press, 1943)

"cheap meat products such as pies, sausages, gravies and potted pastes". He pertinently challenges the know-alls with the following facts:

"BSE has now leapt the species barrier fifteen times since 1986, even infecting the domestic cat - fifty have died so far - as well as exotic ruminants such as eland and gemsbok, and even one puma and a cheetah. It is thought that they were infected by being fed contaminated bovine material."

And the question he poses is: "If fifteen other species of mammal can be infected by what they eat, what makes us so special?" A definite answer has yet to be given, for CJD has an incubation period of twelve to thirty years. What surely is beyond doubt is that the capitalist profit motive applies to factory farming at the expense of the quality of the products, quite apart from the adverse effects on the environment.

Colin Spencer draws attention to the way factory farming "drives livestock at a gruelling pace" and it is no wonder "that their metabolism breaks down and they need to be slaughtered at an early age". The chemicals lobby have been pressing for the introduction in this country of hormones to increase milk production per cow, thus maximising profits per cow but at the expense of the cow's health and possibly that of the consumer too.

So far in this country 120,000 cattle with BSE have been destroyed and farmers compensated with taxpayers' money. More than 650 cattle a week are still being destroyed in spite of the government's assurances that the epidemic is in retreat.

BSE is unknown outside this country -

Was it 'carelessness'?

Three Scottish businessmen have become millionaires overnight because of government 'carelessness'.

In August 1990 they led a management buy-out team which paid £265,000 for Citylink, a state-owned Glasgow coach operator. Less than three years later, in May 1993, they sold it to National Express for £5.1 million!

The Independent's Westminster correspondent (6th May) explains how it all worked out.

"At that time, the firm was part of the Scottish Bus Group, the Government's Scottish bus network, which was due to be privatised.

National Express is believed to have been

interested in buying Citylink but the government was loath to upset local feelings by selling to a 'sassenach' company. Competition from National Express had also pushed Citylink into losses - hence the low price. To help the business on its way, the government even injected £1.5 million in taxpayers' money to wipe away its debts.

Within a year the company was showing healthy profits of £427,000. Two years later, the three sold out for £5.1 million in cash, making their fortunes and also earning an £800,000 pay day for 33 shareholder employees. 'The boys did well', an executive at 3i, their corporate finance adviser, said.

Brian Wilson, Labour [spokesman on Transport] ... sees it differently, declaring the sale was 'a public scandal'.

In a report published yesterday, the Commons Public Accounts Committee shared his concern."

Another Scottish scandal - or 'carelessness' - but this time it was the government that was accused of 'legalised robbery' by MPs in an all-Party Report (published by HMSO) which revealed that:

"... the Treasury had made a £150 million windfall profit from workers' pensions out of the sale of the Scottish Bus Group.

The windfall was worth £60 million more than the Treasury received for all ten Scottish bus companies - some of which were sold as unprofitable concerns but were later resold at handsome profits to make 'overnight millionaires' of the original purchasers."

Brian Wilson (*Guardian*, 6th May) condemned the report's findings, saying that they amounted to "legalised theft, a scandal and a disgrace" and summed up the situation in no uncertain, unparliamentary, terms:

"Overnight millionaires have been created solely through the cheap disposal of public assets while Scottish Transport Group pensioners have been ripped off by £150 million, which has gone straight to the Treasury."

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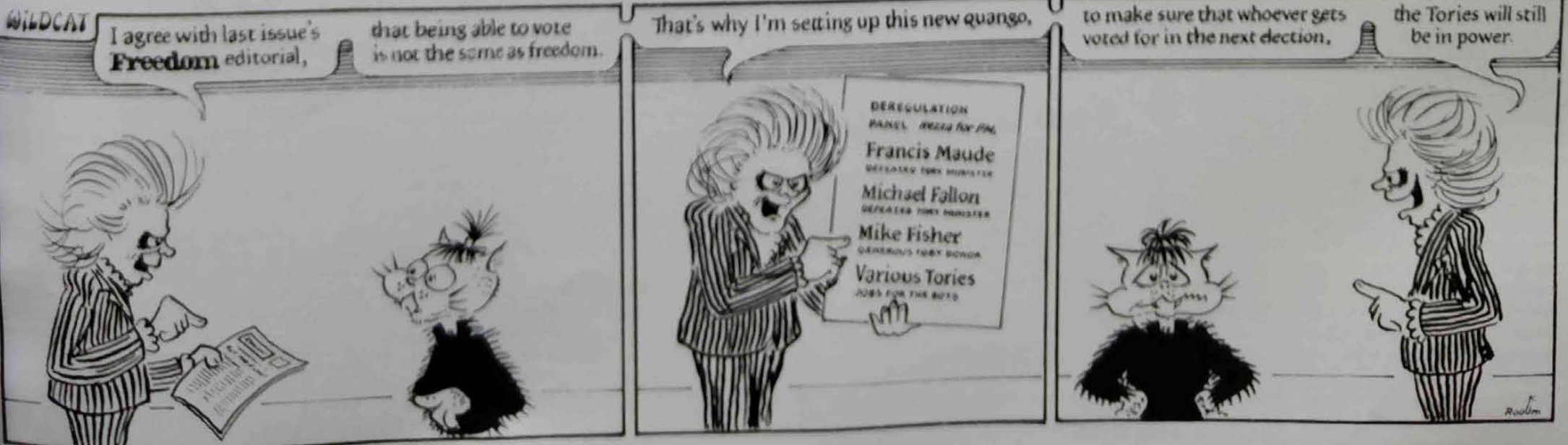
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Subversion

Members of Subversion attended the recent anarchist conferences at Derby and Leicester and considered supporting the *East Midlands Anarchist Bulletin*.

Why did we do this if, as we stated at Derby, we are not anarchists? Because we are revolutionary communists and we know we have a lot in common with class struggle anarchist-communists. We have for some time had a good relationship with the Anarchist Communist Federation and have co-operated at various times on specific projects with members of Class War and individual anarchists.

Unfortunately both conferences and the *Bulletin* have been dominated by 'anarchists' who are not communists and in fact support capitalist reform as the way forward. They are part of the 'capitalism is okay if it's small scale, more democratic, more community based' brigade. They are less interested in escalating the class struggle than in building schemes for a peaceful accommodation with both capitalism and its state!

High on the agenda of these people are such as co-operation with the local state on 'energy efficiency' schemes and the national state on its 'urban forests' scheme, support for

'workers co-ops' and skills exchange schemes (LETS), proposals for better local administration and so on ... Whatever marginal value some of these things might have for some people, none of them either separately or together pose any serious challenge to capitalism and the capitalist state.

To the extent that any of the participants do try to orientate themselves towards the class struggle, this amounts to little more than tail-ending leftist and trade union campaigns - such as anti-fascism.

The fiasco of the last conference should make people think again about the worth of this initiative. All 'anarchists' as a whole have in common is opposition to government (though some are clearly willing to compromise even on this). That is not sufficient for working together.

We have decided we would be wasting our time and yours by participating any further in this initiative. Hopefully class struggle anarchist communists will take the same view and look to other forms to promote co-operation.

Yours for communism,

Subversion

Subverting ourselves?

I received the above document as a contribution to the *East Midlands Anarchist Bulletin* and I have forwarded it to comrades in Leicester who are producing the next, fourth, issue. However, I think it appropriate to answer the points made in Subversion's letter in this journal because *Freedom* has, in the past, advertised events organised by Subversion, and because Subversion calls into question much of what contemporary anarchists believe and do. Like many anarchists I am prepared to work with non-anarchists, and indeed believe it essential to do so since, even in a free society, self-professed anarchists are likely to be a minority. Nevertheless, to work on a practical basis assumes that there will be some shared principles, or a common aim. It is clear that Subversion have a narrow view of what comprises 'revolutionary' activity. They say they have much in common with "class struggle anarchist communists" both individuals and organisations, but they do not say what.

Subversion attack the usefulness of Anarchist Conferences organised recently in Derby and Leicester largely because these were discussing practical alternatives and strategies, which comrades present are working on or are interested in. Subversion do not deem such activities 'revolutionary' and appear to resent comrades who were not prepared to accept, uncritically or without discussion, the views of Subversion members.

There were two Subversion supporters/members at the Derby conference and one at the Leicester conference. The anarchist comrades present had differing interests and opinions, which is normal at anarchist conferences, but I, and I presume most of the anarchists present, strongly dispute their allegation that we support "capitalist reform as the best way forward". The sort of changes I have advocated, for example in an article published by *Freedom* on economics (24th July 1993), are hardly likely to be granted willingly by those who currently hold political and economic power. I quote "...one possible vision of an anarchist economy is a 'mixed economy'. This might comprise the following: worker collectives / co-operatives, with the members owning and operating these enterprises. These might take over and operate most large-scale enterprises in the current productive and service sectors." But actually reading what people have said, and intelligently considering it, is not apparently Subversion's style. They set up straw men to knock them down.

If anarchism is to gain wider public acceptance practical examples are needed now, despite Subversion's objections, and these will take many and varying kinds according to peoples' interests and opportunities. Many comrades seek to live their lives as anarchistically as possible now. Hence anarchists are not merely active in printing papers, pamphlets and books, but participate in worker co-ops, housing co-ops, squats, travelling, festivals, music, allotments, labour issues, Green issues, etc. These have more than a "marginal value ... for some people". They point to the practical forms, which anarchists and other people acting freely, would develop in a free society. What do Subversion propose? Other than "escalating the class struggle", they do not say in the above letter. Some sort of instant revolution? A real threat to capitalism and the state is built, and the range of activities they attack is part of the way forward for many anarchists, who believe that taken together such activities do comprise a 'serious challenge' to capitalism and the capitalist state. If this were not so, the Tory government would not be seeking to criminalise these lifestyles and methods of dissent with the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill which is now progressing through Parliament. The Spanish comrades who achieved so much by way of example in 1936-39 did not sit around waiting for a revolution, they helped to create one by the alternative ideas they spread and the preparations they made. Above all they were practical in action and adapted to circumstances when they had to. For example, they found it necessary to re-invent money and banks within the collective economy they created, in order to facilitate exchange and distribution.

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No Hawks to Indonesia

Two peace activists from the London-based group ARROW (Active Resistance to the Roots of War) have had a High Court injunction issued against them by Britain's largest arms company, British Aerospace. The activists, Milan Rai and Chris Cole, are both forbidden from trespassing on British Aerospace (BAe) property or from instructing or encouraging others to trespass on the company's property.

Both Rai and Cole have been arrested at BAe property protesting against BAe's deal to supply 24 Hawk aircraft to the Indonesian armed forces.

Some eighty pages of evidence detailing the activity against the deal was presented to the court to gain the injunction, including photographs of Rai allegedly protesting at BAe's Stevenage site and a statement from a BAe security officer who attended a talk given by Cole at Manchester Town Hall.

Several groups campaigning against the sale of British Aerospace Hawk aircraft to Indonesia are holding an action against the deal at the beginning of July.

Over the weekend of 8th to 10th July we will walk from BAe's headquarters in Farnborough to central London (contact Andrea for details on 071-275 9150).

On Monday 11th July we will gather at BAe's London offices (Buckingham Gate, just off Victoria Street, SW1) at 11am for speakers and a short vigil. At noon we will walk to the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall, where military officials organise weapons exports, to protest against the deal. For those wishing to take part in civil disobedience there will be a die-in. We will also decorate the fence surrounding the MoD with symbols of hope and peace for the people of East Timor - please bring something along.

There will be a training day for this action on 2nd July at 162 Holloway Road, London N7.

No Hawks to Indonesia
c/o NVRN, 162 Holloway Road, London N7

London Anarchist Forum 1994-1995

As will be seen elsewhere, the London Anarchist Forum is now continuing until the end of July and after a month's vacation is recommencing on Friday 3rd September. Since we are no longer at the Mary Ward Centre but have been made very welcome at the Conway Hall we are no longer tied to college terms.

Although we did announce we would decide our next session's programme at a meeting on 8th July, since we had to plan for July, we decided to go right ahead and set up the programme for the coming session as soon as possible.

A number of potential speakers were suggested by the regular attenders and are being approached and a number of regulars, seven so far, have already offered to perform either on specific dates or as infills to the programme.

There are vacancies but if anyone wishes to give a talk or lead a discussion do not leave it until too late but contact me in writing as soon as possible giving name, title of talk and some alternative dates, as experience of last year indicates the year's programme now fills up with great rapidity. We are getting popular.

Our general discussions are still popular but such is the demand for talk-time we are proposing to follow a pattern of two talks followed by one general discussion, although some anomalies may creep in.

For the first half of last year we ran the, partly successful, programme of having a specific introductory meeting in anarchism followed by a general discussion on the broad theme. Although the introductory talks were popular few people who came to the talks came to the following general discussion, apart from the hard core of regulars, and many came to the general discussions without having attended the talks which sometimes led to a

lack of continuity and a degree of incoherence.

I gave a talk on 'Anarchism and Love' which took some weeks to prepare, aimed at a specifically female audience which included only one woman who has not been since. The following discussion on 'Anarchism and Sexuality' was packed by gay men who had a different agenda. We are foregoing this introductory approach for this session and making no link between talks and following general discussions.

Some non-attenders within the movement have suggested they might come if the Forum was held on a different evening or earlier. All the regular attenders prefer a Friday evening and feel little sympathy for changing the day for non-attenders who may, in any case, not turn up whatever the idea's merit. If the non-attenders came regularly they might get a more receptive hearing. Many regular attenders live in the suburbs or come from outside London and would not be able to attend an earlier meeting; a minority even indicated a wish for a later start.

Our twice-yearly picnics have been pleasant and relaxing and efforts were made to hold these in places where we would not be hassled, but attendance has been rather poor. We had intended that we followed the practice of picnics of the '70s or earlier for we believe personal contact is of crucial importance in such a small movement as our own.

After all if someone phoned you up and said 'I have an idea for this action, what do you think, will you support it?' if we had met socially a few times and felt relaxed with them one might just feel a greater sense of social solidarity.

If people do not attend the picnics we may have to drop the idea or perhaps plan something I have suggested on a previous occasion, an anarchist motoring club meeting in places in the far blue yonder easy of access to people from many areas, possibly eventually camping or maybe also making these less public. After all there is not much point in advertising public activities if the public do not come when we can pick up a phone and say to a friendship group 'How about Lulworth Cove next weekend?' Easier to organise.

Anyway, we are open for business. If you have a talk you want to give or feel a topic should be discussed please contact. If you feel shy of meeting do not let that stop you attending. We all started somewhere and I remember my first public meeting where I stood up sweating, my legs shaking like jelly, and read my question from a piece of paper. I've never looked back. We encourage participants to join in, even saying 'How about those who have not spoken?' or 'What about a comment from the women who have not spoken?' and even 'Shut up Peter and let someone else speak!'

Again we need more women attenders. Curiously most women attenders are international, not British. They tell me we are a group where they feel relaxed and do not feel hassled. They also appear less fraught than British women, more open and have less of this political correctness nonsense. Britain does appear rather backward here.

Next year's programme already looks exciting.

"As your ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange and ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures." - Emperor Ch'ien Lung (1793)

A couple of hundred years ago Ch'ien Lung's allusions to the self-reliance of the Chinese people were more bravado in the face of European traders than revelatory of his true thoughts on the matter. However, they are still of interest because of, on the one hand, their underlying truth and, paradoxically, on the other their underlying falsity.

If it takes a bit of imagination to get your mind around the size of China territorially and in population terms, another staggering statistic is that in China 25% of the world's population is sustained by less than 7% of the planet's arable land. If that sends you to thoughts of *Fields, Factories and Workshops* and Kropotkin's insistence on self-reliant societies based on intensive labour, you wouldn't be the only one. Colin Ward in his edited version of the classic calls the Chinese communes - of the Maoist dynasty which ended nearly twenty years ago - "the nearest thing to Kropotkin's industrial villages". This critical support needs some qualification - some of the communes would have been

- HEALTH & SAFETY - HUMAN RIGHTS - HEALTH & SAFETY - HEALTH & SAFETY - HUMAN RIGHTS-

1991 14,686 killed in industrial accidents. Fourteen miners died for every million tons of coal.

1992 China accounts for 63% of world executions. 60% rise in deaths from industrial accidents. More than 1,000 factory fires in Guangdong. Five big air accidents. 5,000 killed in traffic accidents.

1993 September 570 sentenced to death. 373 actual executions. On 18th September thirteen were executed in Nanjing. On 25th September 32 were executed in Chongqing. The "gunfire of justice was heard across the province" (*Human Daily*).

October *People's Daily* complains that more importance is attached to production than safety.

November Year on year figures show 16% increase in actual executions. 140 executions on 25th November. Fire in Shenzhen Special Economic Zone kills 81 women workers and injures forty. Most of the dead migrant workers from rural areas locked in to prevent theft and unauthorised work breaks.

December Accident in South Chinese foreign owned textile factory employing cheap labour kills sixty. 585 injured and six killed in oilfield blow-out.

1994 Asia Watch reports 1,700 political prisoners in China.

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- PART TWO -

Focus on ... China

pretty big villages, the production teams which were also more free of political control might come closer - but his prophetic aside that the problem with China was "... the knowledge that some great shift in policy might put into reverse the trends which, at a distance, we admire" is more pertinent even if the shift came from directions less foreseeable at the time - as we saw in part one of this 'Focus on China', Ch'ien Lung's rejection of things foreign has come a little unstuck in the 1990s.

These recent developments, however, are not typical of Chinese history. We asked at the end of part one what anarchists could find of interest here. The answer is considerable. Indeed, as Peter Marshall has pointed out recently in *Demanding the Impossible*, Chinese history (we will come more up-to-date shortly) has been one of self-governing communities where even the Confucians with their centralist - and incidentally anti-commercialist - tendencies failed to make the state a reality in the daily lives of the vast population.

Marshall sees links between anarchism and Chinese Taoism and he writes of the traditional concepts of *Ta-t'ung* - an Eden of social equality - and *Ching-t'ien* - a system of communal land tenure and a more real concept, probably practised sporadically during the first millennium. Indeed it is to the traditions of Chinese society that we must look for its strength in the modern era. Although this might be said to have begun in the authoritarian Maoist era one should emphasise two factors at play here. Firstly, the extent to which this progress was based on the foundations of traditional society and secondly the degree to which it was independent of government. Frank Leeming, who has produced one of the most recent comprehensive studies of the China away from the urban centres which now command the West's attention (*Rural China*, Longman, 1985), says:

"Chinese agriculture after 1949, and up to the present, has had much to learn from Western agricultural science about tactics, but in terms of basic strategy, in the maintenance of very dense populations, traditional farming in China had little or nothing to learn from the West ...

Farm expansion in China under the People's Government has depended above all on intensification, and present signs are that it will continue to do so. Intensification in this sense is increase in production per unit area. It has been achieved by the people directly, rather than by the government." (emphasis added)

This may already seem somewhat dated, but in rural China little has changed. Information about contemporary agricultural techniques in China is like reading a Lawrence Hills book on organic gardening: the pig returns all household waste to the land, the Chinese were the first to develop biological pest control, green manuring is still around after three thousand years, intercropping is still a widely used technique, according to official statistics 500,000 biogas (methane gas for cooking) were constructed each year throughout the

1980s ... the list could go on.

With growing industrialisation and burgeoning populations on the seaboard (see part one) the rural Chinese are being forced to turn to artificial fertiliser and chemical pesticides in what can be seen as a desperate attempt to come to terms with the ever increasing strains on their traditional way of life. The World Bank in a secret report said that some thirty million have been evicted from their homes in the past four decades to make room for road, railway and reservoir projects¹ and there's more to come.

We have in this 'Focus on China' painted picture of two Chinas, a picture which is repeated in so many countries throughout the world. If you're now expecting us to trumpet the eventual triumph of the forces of liberation then ... tough. Instead we'll leave you with these thoughts from Paul Theroux:

"When countries modernise these days they become Americanised, and often lose their cultural identity. China is exceptional. The more China develops, the more it seems to be turning back into the old China, just as regional and unequal and busily self-sufficient and hard to read as ancient *Chung Guo* ..."

1. *The Guardian*, 18th March 1994.

2. *The Observer*, 10th October 1993.

TIBET

As the Dalai Lama reconsiders his failed policy of non-violent protest the Chinese are offering a wage increase of 30% to Chinese citizens willing to set up camp in Lhasa. In a couple of years they should outnumber the indigenous population, given that in this region the Chinese authorities have relaxed their strict policy of one child per couple and are encouraging Chinese settlers in Tibet to go for two. Why? Cultural genocide is the answer. If you can't shoot 'em, swamp 'em. Chinese supermarkets, fast food emporiums - yak burgers are all the rage - and brothels are threatening the more traditional Tibetan way of life and upsetting those ageing hippie travellers still looking for the roots of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

Symbolically the residence of the last prime minister, a symbol of independence, has given way to a new shopping centre - a mausoleum where rents are too high for the locals to consider. Barley, the traditional foodstuff, is out and wheat is in even though it is virtually impossible to grow on the Tibetan plateau at 4,000 feet. No matter. We'll ship it in is the answer, bringing with it a three-month waiting list for Corn Flakes (we're not joking). Uranium deposits fuelling the Chinese military machine (200,000 troops in the area according to Western intelligence sources) should prove a threat to the West but at the end of the day we're talking jobs and what is more important than that? Human lives? Don't make me laugh.

Inside India

As the fiftieth anniversary of the Bretton Woods Conference which agreed on the establishment of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) draws near, an Asian coalition of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) has emerged to fight the twin problems of debt and structural adjustment. Its activities are to be co-ordinated from India.

This new network, known as Asian Solidarity Against Debt and Recolonisation, comprises NGOs from the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Japan and Hong Kong. It arose as a result of an initiative by the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) of the Philippines which convened a consultation in Manila in late 1993 for this purpose.

The consultation received reports from the participants on "the state of debt" situation in their respective countries. These reports confirmed that although the spotlight had in recent years been focused almost exclusively on the Philippines, it was not the only country mired in debt.

To take an example: while the total external debt of the Philippines in 1991 stood at US \$32 billion, Indonesia's total external debt in the same year was more than US \$73 billion, while that of India was more than US \$71 billion. More importantly, according to Asian Development Bank estimates, India's foreign debt will reach US \$82 billion this year while that of Indonesia will hit 90 billion.

The reports from NGOs from the other Asian countries revealed the same tale of growing indebtedness. In fact it was the awareness that most of the Asian countries faced a common problem that had prompted the FDC to convene the consultation. More importantly, it was the growing realisation that the fight against debt restructuring could not be confined to the national plane that had brought the NGOs from the various countries together.

The consensus of opinion that emerged from the consultation was that the question of structural adjustment had to be viewed holistically. Thus, whilst affirming their position to the "anti-people structural

adjustment programmes of the World Bank and the IMF" the participants in their final press statement declared that they viewed the debt problem as a product of the "economic, political, moral and cultural domination of the Third World by the G7 industrialised countries".

This holistic perception of the debt problem has also led participants to declare that "the struggle for debt reduction and cancellation should be consciously linked to other fundamental and economic and development issues such as transnational capital, liberalisation, globalisation of capital and extravagant and wasteful over-consumption of the North".

With this perspective in view, the coalition of NGOs has set out as its objective a number of aims. The main aim is the cancellation of all the external debts of the developing countries.

However, as its immediate aim, the coalition has targeted for cancellation the species of loans known as 'fraudulent loans', that is loans whose legitimacy is questionable because they were obtained by fraudulent means such as over-pricing and corruption. A classic example of this is the case of the Bataan nuclear plant loan to the Philippines in which the supplier, the US firm Westinghouse, had obtained the contract for the construction of a nuclear plant through the payment of bribes to the Marcos regime, with the project financier (the US Export-Import Bank) being privy to the fact that it had been overpriced.

But in consonance with its holistic view of the debt problem, the coalition has set itself a broader aim beyond the cancellation of debts. This aim is for compensation from the North for the economic, ecological and human damage caused to the South over the past five centuries.

Viewed from this perspective the fight is not merely one of persuading the North to forgive the debts of the South, but of compelling the North to settle the much larger debt it has incurred by virtue of its domination, control and exploitation of the South.

John Shotton

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Who is stealing water?

In the 1970s I worked for a voluntary organisation, the TCPA, which among its many activities, paid a Planning Aid Officer, Rob Cowan, to help local citizens' groups through the incomprehensible and convoluted planning system when facing developers who could always hire a barrage of expertise. One day, when he was out on a case, a delegation of gypsies called for advice on how to enforce on the London Borough of Tower Hamlets the statutory requirement of the Caravan Sites Act of 1968, that they should make sites available for travellers with a water supply and sanitation, and an enabling grant from central government to pay for it.

One clause in the giant ragbag of legislation in the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill, now in its last stages in Parliament, repeals this requirement and has gone through the legislative process unamended. The Spring 1994 issue of the magazine *Squall* comments that this particular clause (which, of course, accompanies criminal sanctions against travellers, squatters and protesters) "has no place in Criminal Justice legislation. No one at the Home Office will explain why legislation unconcerned with crime is being tagged onto a Criminal Justice Bill, and dealt with only by the Home Office."

The gypsy delegation I met in those days explained that they were camped on derelict land at Bromley-by-Bow, employed in laying tarmac — that modern travellers' trade which has replaced traditional gypsy occupations for which there is no longer a market — and were endlessly harassed by the police.

On the other side of the River Lea, in the borough of Newham, a site had been provided but Tower Hamlets steadfastly refused. How could the law be enforced? I had to explain, sadly, that there had been no case in which central government had obliged a local authority to fulfil this obligation, even though government money would defray the cost.

One member of the group, with the same surname as me, told me of the continual police threats he had received. Gypsies use milk churns for transporting water. "We're going to charge you with stealing that churn," said the Sergeant. "But look at it," said Mr Ward, "That's a French milk churn. Read the printing on it."

"All right," said the policeman, "but you can't deny that you've stolen the water inside."

The delegation left with nothing more tangible than the promise of some publicity in the journals read by councillors and local government officers, which they got, but that particular anecdote stays in my mind simply because, like anyone else with a home and an

"He was on his way to swim in a movie executive's private pool in the plush part of Beverly Hills. Paul had turned off the freeway now, and as he drew nearer to his goal the houses grew larger, the lawns wider and greener, and the underground sprinklers rose into higher fountains, as if heralding his coming. In Los Angeles water equalled money. He had noticed this before, driving past the dry, barren yards of the slums near the Nutting Corporation, and down in Venice Beach, where the taps in the kitchen often gave only a brownish, brackish trickle, and no one could afford to water anything larger than a potted plant." — Alison Lurie, *The Nowhere City*, 1965

income, I have always seen water as a natural right for every human. Like anyone exposed to school history I knew of the nineteenth century struggle by sanitation reformers to ensure (in opposition to the prevailing free market economies) that water was available to all, regardless of ability to pay for it. Fear of cholera, typhoid fever and dysentery enforced this imperative.

People relied on springs, rivers, rainwater butts and wells, for a supply of water, clean or deadly, until the industrial revolution and the huge expansion of the urban population enforced the need for large-scale water engineering, and for someone to pay for it. A new book by Nigel Morgan, *Deadly Dwellings: the shocking story of housing and public health in a Lancashire cotton town* (Preston, Mullion Books, 1993) describes the crisis of public health and infantile mortality experienced in that town, and gives evidence of the new crime of water stealing revealed in the *Preston Guardian* in 1844. One report headed 'Caution to Water Stealers' says that:

"Yesterday, Elizabeth Stubbs appeared before the magistrates at the Town Hall, charged with taking water from one of the taps supplied by the Preston Waterworks Company, she not having made any contract with the said company to do so. The case being fully proved against her, she was ordered to pay a small penalty and costs."

Another letter to the editor, signed by "One Who Wants the Water Tax Taken Off" explains that:

"I had on occasion to go down to a court where there are a number of cottages, but all without any supply of water. 'How do you get water?' said I to a widow, being in one of the houses. 'We steal it', was her reply. 'We get it from ----, and we run as far as we can for fear of being seen'."

Another argument thought I in favour of cheap water. Cottages paying 1s 3d per week rent would not mind paying a 1d per week for water; but can such be expected to afford 12s a year?"

The argument continued all through that century and was enshrined in the Public Health Acts which declared that a house without an adequate supply of clean water was "unfit for human habitation" while the country was covered by a network of water undertakings, some municipally owned, and some private companies with statutory limitations on charges and profits. Most households paid for their water through a small addition to their local rates or rents. The suppliers' real income was generated by large-scale industrial users.

Disconnections for non-payment were unheard of, and in any case were, and are, illegal in Scotland and Northern Ireland. I pointed out in this journal (20th March 1993) that by the end of the nineteenth century Kropotkin cited "water supplied to private dwellings, with a growing tendency towards disregarding the exact amount of it used by the individual" as an example of what he saw as the growing general belief in the principle of free access.

I was drawing attention to the efforts of Helen Jackson MP to draw attention to the enormous increase in the number of households who, since the water supply industry was 'deregulated' in 1989, had had their water supply cut off for non-payment of bills. This reached 21,000 in 1992. Helen Jackson attempted to introduce a parliamentary bill to bring the English and Welsh situations in line with that of Scotland. It was 'talked out' but gave rise to media publicity on this issue. The water companies were said to have been chastened.

A year later another MP, Stan Orme, found an opportunity to introduce another Water (Domestic Disconnections) Bill, which was again deliberately 'talked out' by government supporters. Unlike last year's Bill it received no publicity. The occasion was not even reported by *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Independent* or *The Guardian*. I had to

spend £7.50 on that day's *Hansard* just to read the 19 columns of what was said.

At the time of Helen Jackson's campaign much use was made of a report from John Middleton, director of public health for the Sandwell Health Authority in the West Midlands, who, absolutely rightly, had argued in January 1993 that we had witnessed a collapse of public morality since those campaigns of 150 years ago. He observed that the Victorians recognised "the need to provide safe, wholesome water supplies for everybody, rich or poor. Water disconnection is something we should not tolerate in a civilised society". In the previous year in his area, 1,400 households had their water supply cut off and "over this period cases of hepatitis and dysentery rose tenfold".

His views were the subject of specious argument in the parliamentary discussion of Stan Orme's Bill this year. It centred around the distinction between 'can't pay' and 'won't pay'. One of the Conservative members, bent on 'talking out' the Bill, explained that he had sought from the library staff of the House of Commons a briefing on the Sandwell study. He reported that:

"They said that in their study they found a strong correlation between the postcodes of homes which had been disconnected and the postcodes of people who had been infected with dysentery or hepatitis. However, they said that this correlation does not necessarily mean there was a direct link between the two issues, but that it could just reflect the poverty in the areas covered by the postcodes."

Simple people like you and me will see this evidence as an absolute confirmation that we are in fact talking about 'can't pay' rather than the strange category of 'won't pay' households.

It is not just a domestic issue. Los Angeles, described at the head of this column, illustrates dramatically the difference between households who could afford to pay for water and to use it prodigally, and those who cannot. The same contrast is overwhelming in parts of the world in the news today. Compare the green luxury of the white suburbs of South African towns and the parched brown environment of the black townships. Or compare the scientific horticulture of food export production in Israel with the aridity of Palestinian subsistence agriculture.

Access to affordable water is a major determinant of the arrogance of the rich and the despair of the poor all over the globe. The more you examine it, the more you see how far we have gone backwards since Kropotkin's optimistic assumptions.

Colin Ward

Psychopath

Under the present capitalist system there are three main classifications of crime:

- 1) Crimes against the state.
- 2) Crimes against property.
- 3) Crimes against the individual.

It is generally held by anarchists that with the bringing about of a more just and equitable society that these first two categories of crime would cease to exist, their cause having been removed from society.

But what of the third category? In a free and just society where people do not have to ruthlessly compete with one another in order to survive, a society where men and women are not subjected to daily stress and insecurity, a society where the principles of mutual aid and respect for the sovereignty of the individual is the norm. In such a society most of the crimes against the individual would disappear.

But not all. We would be deluding ourselves to think that human beings with all their complex motivations, emotional reactions, in a highly complex and changing environment and relationships were suddenly going to turn into paragons of virtue.

Anger and frustrations would occur, and probably at times boil over, and it would be understandably human. But this is not where the danger lies. The danger to the individual in society is the existence of what psychiatrists have deemed 'the psychopath' for these are the personification of the

foulest values of capitalism.

What is a psychopath? Firstly we must draw attention to the way the term is used under capitalism. It has been used as a convenient classification of individuals who do not conform to the standards of capitalist society.

This does not necessarily mean that all such individuals are aggressive anti-social menaces to their fellows, but it does mean that the term 'psychopath' has been expediently used by the courts and others to classify and vilify those who would not touch their forelock and bend the knee. Even anarchists deeply committed to the cause of humanity have been labelled psychopaths.

But what of the real psychopaths? Psychiatrists have written that the psychopathic personality is a term used in an unsatisfactory way. It is sometimes applied to any severe type of personality disorder and the terms immature psychopath, hysterical psychopath, paranoid psychopath, etc., are used in this way.

The Mental Health Act of 1959 defined psychopathic disorder as a persistent disorder or disability of the mind (whether or not including a subnormal level of intelligence) which results in abnormally aggressive or seriously irresponsible conduct on the part of the patient and requires or is susceptible to medical treatment.

This definition is totally wrong. It suggests that a) there is an underlying definite disorder of the mind, an illness, which there isn't;

b) that there exists some form of medical treatment that can cure this, which again there isn't.

The term psychotic personality is more commonly used in Britain to describe people who have severe and persistent disorders of social conduct of an anti-social nature. Many such persons are abnormally aggressive and liable to outbursts of great violence. They have no social conscience, are incapable of empathy or consideration for others, have no feelings of guilt concerning their actions towards others, and are motivated solely by self-interest and their own egotism. To them other people are there to be used and abused.

Therefore it will be seen that such personality types fit in well with capitalism, which can provide them with many roles where their anti-social behaviour can be put to use, e.g. their aggression may find expression in an authoritarian role such as the police or the army. Their dominating and exploitative side may take them into politics or commerce where they can ruthlessly lord it over the ordinary workers subject to them.

The pyramidal hierarchy of capitalism provides them with the opportunity to vent their evil ways on an ever greater number of the people the higher they climb. They are manipulative liars who will curry favour with those higher up the social scale if they think it will further their interest, and complementary to this those privileged few at the top see the value to them in having such ruthless thugs and liars as hirelings to them.

But of course these are not the psychopaths which are screamed about by the media or of which

Hitchcock would make a movie. No the only ones the media is concerned with are the ones who by their behaviour disrupt the smooth daily running of capitalist society, the murdered, rapists and those thieves who are not 'authorised' thieves.

Because of their contempt for the well being of others and egocentric outlook, psychopaths are sexist and racist. Therefore they readily fit into fascist and fascist movements, which again provide them with a vent for their hate and aggression.

So we see that within capitalist society psychopathy is encouraged and can find many outlets, but capitalism alone does not explain the origin of such types. Before we can attempt to find an answer we must first seek out the cause. We have to investigate when did the personality first become warped?

Psycho-analysis makes claim to explain, whilst not accepting all Freud's abstractions and metaphysics, nevertheless credit must go to him for drawing attention to the influence of the inter-family relationships on personality development in the infant and the way these relationships imprint and influence social behaviour and relationships in later life.

Obviously, to the infant mind the immediate environment is its world, and at its earliest stages of development the child cannot differentiate between itself and 'out there'. Later the child becomes aware of this 'mother' thing, which to the child is a source of sensations, something that is soft and warm

— SPAIN —

Gonzalez & Co: 'Time Gentlemen Please'

Luis Roldán, former boss of the Spanish paramilitary Civil Guard, has run off while under investigation for embezzling public funds and accepting back-handers from building contractors after giving out contracts to build Civil Guard barracks at inflated prices. Mr Roldán is accused of snatching £2 million of public money, including expenses and pay-offs set aside for informants and special operations, and £300,000 put aside for orphans of Civil Guard officers killed by the Basque Nationalist separatists in the ETA.

The parliamentary commission investigating how during his years in office as the first civilian head of the Guardia Civil Mr Roldán acquired a wealth of £2.5 million on a salary of £36,000 a year, was told by a business associate of his how he picked up suitcases stuffed full with cash amounting to £300,000 from Luis Roldán's headquarters. Before his spectacular success under the socialist regime led by Felipe Gonzalez, Señor Roldán, it seems, had a job as a timekeeper.

I'm not quite sure what kind of task a timekeeper might perform. Possibly something to do with piece-work or progress chasing in industry, or making sure the workforce clock-on properly and are not clocking each other on. One particular class of timekeeper I came across in the first job I ever had in industry was concerned with timing workers using the toilet. He was a cripple called Peter who cleaned the toilets and made sure we didn't take more than the regulatory seven minutes to have a shit.

All this timekeeping and time management one might have thought would be out of

character for most Spaniards. But perhaps Luis Roldán, former timekeeper, was brought into the top job in the Guardia Civil as part of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez's new broom approach to gee-up the Spaniards. The Spanish socialist regime tried to get rid of the siesta and other Spanish customs. Spanish workers are constantly being told to pull their socks up and be more disciplined, just as British workers were urged to give up their tea breaks. Once upon a time our politicians encouraged us all to be more like the German workers, now they seem to want us all to copy the natives of Singapore and live and work on a bowl of rice.

'Slush fund' and 'fall guys'

If Gonzalez brought in Señor Roldán and others as whiz-kid managers to sharpen-up Spanish public life, he must have had a bit of a disappointment. Recent issues of *Interviú* have carried photos of the missing Civil Guard chief in his underpants surrounded by women in knickers and nothing else, on the table is a heap of white powder. *Interviú* claims the photos were taken during Mr Roldán's period in office. The magazine asserts: "While the Guardia Civil didn't have petrol for its own vehicles, its chief enjoyed the good life". How

Gonzalez must regret appointing Roldán, and perhaps now I'll stop secreting my copy of *Interviú* inside the pages of *El País*.

Gonzalez can't be happy that Roldán has been threatening to take a few more to the cells with him in this top drawer corruption scandal. "I won't be the only one to go to prison!" boasted Roldán, and he earlier told the parliamentary commission that he had "plenty of garbage at home". Because he has dirt on people high up in the Spanish establishment some have suggested that the government did a deal with him allowing him to escape the country providing he kept quiet about what he knew.

This view is now being discounted as Roldán is in contact with *El Mundo*, newspaper of radical politics which some anarchists now regard as the best in Spain. The paper claimed, in a detailed report, that Gonzalez approved a hundred million peseta (£500,000) government 'slush fund' to investigate and discredit a potential political opponent. Mr Roldán claimed he had carried out the assignment, on instructions from Narcis Serra the deputy Prime Minister, and he had hired the US investigators Kroll Associates (this company is believed to have investigated Ferdinand Marcos). The investigation was

kept secret from the Interior Ministry and the intelligence services, and copies were sent to Mr Serra and Mr Gonzalez.

Both Gonzalez and Serra have denied the claim by Roldán, and they are refusing to resign saying: "... resignation would generate a climate of instability". But the Spanish press is alive with daily developments in the scandals besetting the socialist regime. Commenting on what he calls the 'domino effect' - the resignations of ministers struck down by the scandals - Javier Pradera says: "the socialist government seems hypnotised by the obscene cases of corruption." Luis Roldán is not the only case of corruption to bother the Spanish government. Mariano Rubio, former Governor of the Bank of Spain, is under investigation by the Spanish parliament's Economics Committee for alleged unethical conduct and possible illegal enrichment while in office. It is claimed he used insider information to buy shares in the banking sector while Governor of the Bank of Spain. *El Mundo* has published details of a secret account held by the ex-governor to cover up his stock market investment gains. He has also been a bit lapse about paying his income tax, but that is not unusual. The former Agricultural Minister Vicente Albero has just resigned having evaded what he called an 'insignificant' amount of tax, said to be £100,000.

Some are saying that Roldán and Rubio are merely 'fall guys' for a system shot-through with bribes, tax evasion, illegal commissions and influence peddling (cronyism). The

(continued on page 7)

The Green Revolution

The world is in a sorry mess. Political repression and corruption is rife everywhere. Governments nowadays so blatantly support capitalist interests - the rich, the landed aristocracy, the multinationals and corporate interests generally - that one is flabbergasted that there are still liberal scholars around who enthuse about the state. Bolstered by such a repressive institution, it is hardly surprising that the capitalist economic system is wreaking havoc everywhere. It has become a potential threat to the life-support systems of this earth, and thus to human survival itself. As we look around the world we are thus struck by two things.

One is the increasing degradation of the natural environment through the eradication of forests, depletion of soil fertility and its loss through erosion, increasing trends towards desertification in savannah regions and widespread pollution. The other is the rural poverty, the malnutrition and the famine conditions that exist in many parts of what is now called the 'south'.

There has been some debate as to whether the ecological crisis is as tragic or as serious as the radical ecologists make out. But nobody has disputed the reality of the economic crisis. It is generally accepted that poverty and malnutrition is widespread and that around 20% of the world's population are not able to satisfy their basic subsistence needs. The ecological and economic crises are, of course, intrinsically linked and have long been recognised by United Nations agencies. The Brandt Report (1980) dealt with the problem of 'survival' and the economic issues, while the Brundtland Report (1987) dealt with the environmental deterioration. The latter report came up with the concept of 'sustainable development', the assumption being that economic growth (i.e. capitalism) and ecological security are perfectly compatible. Critiques of both these reports abound.

When the economic and political mandarins look at the issue of rural poverty and malnutrition they tend to see this problem as having two underlying causes: One is the contention that the world is overpopulated. There are, they state, too many people and there is thus not enough food to go round. The second is that rural people have inefficient and unsophisticated agricultural practices - they lack fertilisers and agricultural know-how - and thus do not produce enough food. Nigel Dudley, in the book *Land is Life* (1992), notes that this constitutes a kind of equation

OVERPOPULATION + POOR AGRICULTURE = FAMINE

The answer to the problem is, it seems, population control and economic development through the promotion of large-scale capitalist agriculture. This simplistic solution not only blames the victims but suggests a solution that in reality is a part of the problem - namely intensive agriculture.

There is no evidence to suggest that overpopulation is the reason why people have insufficient food. In fact the FAO has

estimated that the world produces enough grain to give everyone about 3600 calories a day, more than enough to keep us healthy. What is amiss is the maldistribution of food resources, through social and economic factors, as Susan George (1976) long ago explained. Nor are supposed 'poor' agricultural techniques responsible for the rural poverty or famine. Throughout history, or at least since the neolithic revolution, people have practised a form of sustainable organic farming that has, under normal conditions, generally provided them with their basic food requirements. Even hunter-gatherers rarely experience food shortages.

In seeing food shortages as essentially a technical problem, the 'green revolution' was launched some three decades ago. In terms of raising per capita wheat and rice production this revolution has been hailed as a great success story, especially in Mexico and India. And there is no doubt that if you commandeer the best land and local water supplies, use high yielding varieties of rice and wheat, pour on the land expensive fertilisers and pesticides, use cheap labour and mechanise the production process, that you can get high crop yields. Per capita rice production in Asia is thus said to have been increased by 27%. But as Susan George discussed, the social and ecological costs of this revolution are enormous and on the whole it has done nothing to improve the average diet of people in the countries where it has made the most impact. In the Sudan it could be said to have caused the famines.

The problems associated with the green revolution are many and have been outlined cogently in recent years by both Nigel Dudley and Vandana Shiva. It has to be recognised at the outset that this revolution, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and World Bank, was not specifically aimed at improving the well-being of people in the 'third world' - though this was expressed in the rhetoric of the international agencies. What was involved was the maximising of the profits of rich farmers and agribusiness. Who really profited from the green revolution, Susan George asked. In all cases, she replied, it was the multinational corporations.

The first thing to be said is that the high yielding varieties of wheat and rice developed and promoted by the green revolution agronomists are not in themselves high yielding at all. For they only give high yields under certain conditions,

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Nigel Dudley et al *Land is Life: land reform and sustainable agriculture*, London, Intermediate Technology Group, 1992.

Susan George *How the Other Half Dies*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976.

Vandana Shiva *Staying Alive: women, ecology and development*, London, Zed Books, 1989.

i.e. if they are lavishly supplied with artificial fertilisers and pesticides and are given heavy inputs of irrigated water. All these inputs, of course, are expensive and only the richer farmers and the large estates run by multinational corporations can afford them. Thus small farmers, lacking capital or credit, are forced out of business and the good agricultural land becomes concentrated into fewer and fewer hands. As greater profits are obtained from growing cash crops for export - strenuously encouraged by the World Bank and FAO - there is a move away from growing local food crops to crops such as tea, coffee, tobacco and soya beans (mainly for animal feed). Monoculture takes over, poor peasant farmers and pastoralists are forced on to marginal land, and the use of agrochemicals increases, poisoning the landscape. It is estimated that around ten thousand people a year die of pesticide poisoning and many people suffer from it. In this process agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry are ecologically separated - whereas in organic farming they are intrinsically linked - and both genetic diversity and ecological diversity, reflected in a varied landscape to which there is open access, are severely reduced.

Nigel Dudley has summed up the results of the green revolution as follows: "an increase in concentration of land ownership; and a decrease in environmental stability and the sustainability of farming, through higher uses of agrochemicals, increased monocropping and the further displacement of poor farmers into marginal areas" (1989, page 8).

Vandana Shiva calls the green revolution in India "a recipe for desertification" (1989, page 143).

Thus the outcome of the green revolution has been an increase in social inequalities and landlessness among rural peasants, the increasing privatisation of land, a decrease in the food supply to the poorest people - those who go hungry - and high hidden costs in terms of human health and environmental degradation. In addition, development policies involving intensive chemically based agriculture run on capitalist lines has been largely responsible for the creation of a huge debt problem in the 'south' - on which Susan George has also written at length.

The main benefactors of the green revolution have been the multinational corporations and a few rich elites in the 'third world'. As rural peasants have resisted the privatisation of the common land and the social effects of the green revolution - which has particularly undermined the role of women - so the state has become more and more repressive, always supporting of course the large landowners and the interests of the multinational corporations. In India, Vandana Shiva suggests, the green revolution has become the breeding ground of civil unrest and violence.

As in Britain in the eighteenth century, the green revolution is leading to the destruction of peasant society and it is being replaced by large scale capitalist agriculture. The peasants, however, are not giving up their land without a struggle.

Anarchism and breaking free

Dear Freedom,
Science is the study of natural reality. Deny the validity of science and you deny reality. Unfortunately there are many associated with anarchism who seem only too ready to deny reality (e.g. Peter Neville, 14th May). He says (quoting Feyerabend, who I've never read so I can't comment on) that there is no such thing as an objective scientific method. If this is true how were aircraft, computers, comsats and other examples of modern technology created? Magic? Acts of God?

Modern science cannot be compared with the medieval church. Those advocating heretical ideas in a church dominated society were liable to be dragged off, tortured into recanting and then put to death. This does not happen to those putting forward unorthodox scientific theories. They are merely required to give evidence in the form of observations and experiments which can be repeated by others, before their theory is accepted as fact. No racks, thumbscrews or burning irons are involved.

This scientific method imposes no restriction on creativity, imagination, etc., in formulating original ideas, but it does offer a safeguard against accepting false ideas as reality - which people without a questioning, scientific outlook are all too prone to do, as is demonstrated by the dominance of religious and

authoritarian political ideas throughout history.

The relevance of this to anarchism is that if we want a society where we can give, as Peter Neville urges, "free expression of my will, untrammelled by rigidities, by orthodoxies, by political or moral correctness" we have to be careful not to add reality to the list of restraints to be abolished. Science is not a religion or an ideology, it is simply an intellectual method, a tool for understanding reality. Applied science - technology - is a tool for modifying reality and the only one that works. Faith and wishful thinking do not.

If those who oppose power, tyranny and privilege throw away this tool, if we leave it in the hands of capitalists and other thieves, slave-drivers and mass-murderers, we are doomed to defeat before we begin.

Finally a comment on Peter's complaint about the rejection of some of his writings by certain publications. I too have encountered this restriction on my freedom to have my thoughts distributed to the world. Peter's theory that in his case this is due to his offending certain dogmas and orthodoxies of the editors might also apply to me. However there is an alternative possibility, which is that

our writings are not considered good enough for publication. Far-fetched and incredible as this second theory is, it does give us the option of trying to improve the quality of our output. If Peter's theory is true, short of getting hold of a gun and making the offending editors an offer they can't refuse, I don't see what we can do about it. Becoming an editor of a periodical, even an anarchist one, does not impose an obligation to publish the ramblings of every idiot who sets pen to paper, though looking at some of the material that does get published maybe some editors need to be reminded of this!

J. Wood

Getting away with murder

Dear Readers' Letters,
I feel compelled to respond to the bewildering replies that have been written in reaction to my original letter in the 16th April issue.

I wonder why Derek and the Ex-Air Force Bomber seem to presume that somehow I am making light or excuses for murder by the state. Surely my comments about Indochina make my position very clear on that.

Secondly, why is it that Derek and the 'Bomber' do not seem to recognise that those who combat the tyranny of government should adhere to a higher moral standard? Those who seek to represent the people against the state must be seen to be of a higher moral standing.

The bombing of German cities at the end of World War Two is, I believe, a far more complex issue than most likewise situations. There is no easy conclusion to be made about that action. I am sickened by anyone who attempts to glorify or profit from that tragedy, such as the 'Bomber Harris' cult of nationalist personality. But I am not prepared to say that the German people should have been allowed to live through the war unscathed, after all the terror that their nation had inflicted upon the world. Their support for Hitler is undeniable, they never gave a damn for anyone else during their good times. Their tears only began to pour when their children had been killed by our bombs. Where were their tears before? That said, in all other situations I am totally opposed to the bombing of civilians. Certainly all such actions since World War Two have been not only without moral justification but clear cases of criminal genocide.

Howard Marks

Free at last?

Dear Editors,
Your editorial piece 'Free at Last?' (14th May) states "the fundamental lesson [the blacks] have learned is that sweet reason, the pacifist approach ... cuts no ice with the ruling class".

But, since anarchism rejects power politics and standing armies, reason, with or without sugar, along with refusal, would seem to be the only means available to us.

The lesson that needs to be learned is that in South Africa, in Rwanda and all over the world it is not just a case of black against white but, also, black against black and white against white.

A much more common, or fundamental, factor is the male versus woman/child conflict, which equates substantially to those who are willing to use armed violence versus those who are defenceless by circumstance or conviction.

In any case, it is not the rulers who shoot their subjects, they get other subject to do it.

Ernie Crosswell

Guild Socialism Re-stated

Dear Freedom,
I have a few comments on the review of Paul Hirst's *Associative Democracy* (Freedom, 16th April 1994). Admittedly, Hirst's book seems to be a watered down version of guild socialism, but when checking my 1919 edition of Cole's *Guild Socialism* I fail to find any positive reference to the state, either in limited form or in partnership with the rest of society. Perhaps other guild socialists felt differently and maybe Cole changed his tune later on, but at that point he wanted to replace the state with what he called the 'National Commune' - a federation of local and regional communes and guilds.

If *Associative Democracy* was in reality a mere recapitulation of guild socialism, would that make its ideas wrong as Brian Morris seems to imply? Couldn't our critics say the same thing about us, that we are merely restating what Proudhon and Kropotkin said before?

Of course, we should criticise weak-tea

mutualism, but is complete rejection of the book the best that can be offered? How should we react to people who have come halfway in our direction? Considering just how statist and centralist the Labour Party has been, I think we should be overjoyed when an important spokesman endorses decentralism and mutualism, even if he links it to a minimal state. (Sort of like the Pope turning into an agnostic and then criticising him for not being a fully-fledged atheist.)

Back in the 1920s anarchists, syndicalists and guild socialists were like 'voices crying in the wilderness' since the dominant, in fact overwhelming tendency within society, was towards statism, centralism and nationalism. Today the situation is different, for the crisis of the state has made mutualism, decentralism and federalism the only means by which society can survive. Libertarian thinking can now have a real impact. Paul Hirst is groping towards libertarianism and hence, in spite of its many faults from an anarchist point of view, the book should be welcomed.

Larry Gambone

Homelessness and Mr Major

Dear Comrades,
John Major's witless remark that homeless people are homeless by their own choice is cruel and callous; typically Tory, and deserves more attention than *Freedom* gave it.

Even if John Major is telling the gospel truth, then it is a damning comment on the society that Ma Thatcher and himself created.

This technique is common to politicians when the chaos begins to bite. Quite simply put, Major has shifted the blame and failure of his doctrine back to the victims. It is yet another Tory simplistic solution to crimes both social and moral. Politicians, especially Tories, do not seek causes or solutions. They seek scapegoats and basic remedies. Capitalism is based on false doctrine and anybody stupid and greedy enough to uphold it will have little difficulty in thinking deeply about the problem. I doubt if they can even just imagine it.

Let me spell out for Major's benefit what homelessness means: rape, murder, starvation, malnutrition, police harassment, humiliation, scorn and deterioration of mind, body and soul. I refuse to believe that anybody in their

right mind would volunteer for such a doomed and fearful life. Certainly I do not believe that women do so.

There has always been a small minority of people who have opted out for life on the tramp. Never will I believe emotionally morally or intellectually that the army of homeless people chose all that.

The government could house the homeless tomorrow if it was prepared to think humanely and forget profit for once. There are thousands of flats and houses empty in London. There is plenty of cheap and willing labour rotting on the dole.

That, comrades, is common sense but it sounds like socialism. Besides, everyone housed is not good for the Tory idea of property.

Mary Quintana

Anarchosyndicalist Initiative

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Psychopath

(continued from page 5)
which can caress and rock it, can feed it and care for all its needs.

At about five months old the child is able to recognise its mother or mother substitute as a person, and as the child recognises the 'sameness' of this 'mother thing' so it begins to establish a relationship with her, and out of this relationship a need and desire to express itself arises. Now if at this stage this relationship is impaired for some reason, then the development of expression is correspondingly retarded. The learning process together with its sense of security and reality can become seriously affected, and if for some reason there is a permanent mother separation it may give rise to what is known as a marasmus syndrome showing marked withdrawal behaviour seriously damaging the developing personality.

During the first two years of life the child's ego is developing, and like a young sapling any scarring which occurs during its early growth grows with it, distorting its further development. The child's development may become fixated at this point.

Freud claims that the child has an ambivalence of feelings about the 'mother object'. She is both the source of the child's satisfaction but also at times the source of the child's frustration. It is upon these concepts that the basis of the child's 'super-ego' is built and develops.
Now according to Freudian theory, this super-ego

is the unconscious aspect of conscience. It is the inner inhibiting mechanism controlling the expression of the more primitive id urges that only know either gratification or frustration, pleasure or pain, and are totally irrational urges arising from our biological inheritance.

So it stands to reason that if the super-ego is inhibited in development, the conscience is correspondingly inhibited, and the result is that the ego or self is at the mercy of the most primitive urges coming from the id and constantly seeking their gratification irrespective of mores or moral codes of society or other people.

But ignoring the mumbo jumbo metaphysics of super-egos, egos and ids, Freud nevertheless gives a good account of how if for some reason the development of conscience is impaired so a warped personality development can occur, and that this may result in a psychopathic personality.

Obviously if this is so it is something that can occur under any system whether capitalist or anarchist. The only thing to be said in favour of anarchism as opposed to capitalism under those circumstances is that no hierarchical power structures would exist, and therefore the psychopath would not be able to get into a position whereby he or she could vent themselves upon thousands. They would be limited to their own individual potential.

Furthermore, living in a highly integrated and interdependent society such as anarcho-syndicalism would constantly bring their behaviour under the scrutiny of their fellow workers.

A question often put to anarchists is 'What would you do with the criminal?' And anarchists have said in reply 'Ask rather who is the real criminal,' but this is not to recognise that a 'crime' as such cannot be committed. We can agree with Malatesta's definition of a criminal act as being "one which infringes the rights of others to equality and freedom". True, but the fear that deters most people who ask this question from adopting the anarchist stance is the 'fear of invasion and violation of the individual', as for example a woman's fear of the rapist.

It is easy enough to point out who are the biggest criminals in present society, but once having got rid of these parasites we still are left with this problem of the psychopath.

Kropotkin stressed how the interdependency of communal life in an anarchist society would create a strong ethos of community identity amongst individuals, and that in proportion to how strong this is manifest. The commune would provide a focus for socialising consciences which can effect a high degree of passive control over conduct.

But even he recognised that a strategy of persuasion may not be effective and that a community may have to resort to ostracism, understood as banishing someone from a particular community for a period of time, but this itself would not be appropriate as a method of dealing with psychopathic behaviour as it would simply impose the problem on another community putting them at risk, which as anarchists we could not do.

Some have put forward the argument that if these people are incapable of normal social life and

constitute a constant threat to an anarchist community, then put them all together on an island provided with all the necessities that would enable them to work and live a separate existence, and thereby let their anti-social behaviour repercuss back upon them in the vain hope that the feedback in so doing would ultimately force them by necessity and their own actions to finding a social way of life. But such an action is reminiscent of the old regimes of asylums and prisons, and furthermore who would enforce such an act?

This said, what is to be done? Psychopaths are often highly intelligent, cunning, liars, manipulative. However, they don't learn from experience and make the necessary adjustments, and as has been proven under capitalism, neither do they respond to any form of punishment except to become more aggressive and anti-social.

If their warped developed occurred in their childhood, then by the time that they have grown to be a menace to others it is too late to do anything about it, and in any case punitive action of any kind is contrary not only to our anarchist principles but would create power structures which would destroy anarchism itself. Furthermore, who would make the classification of the psychopath.

This then is our dilemma for which we must collectively find an answer. It is an issue that cannot be fudged. We cannot excuse our lack of an answer by pointing to the psychopaths running society today whilst ignoring the possibility of the existence of psychopaths in a society tomorrow.



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

3rd September Introduction

10th September Ecology: Edward Wilson and Genetics (speaker Donald Room)

17th December Should Anarchists Take Part in Revolutionary Governments? (debate introduced by David Dane)

24th September General discussion

1st October The Catholic Worker (speaker Peter Lumsden)

8th October Vacant slot

15th October General discussion

22nd October No LAF meeting – Ten Day That Shook the World Conference (discussion at Conway Hall led by John Rety)

29th October to 26th November Vacant slots

3rd December Cartoons as Political Propaganda (speaker Donald Room)

10th and 17th December Vacant slots

24th December Christmas Party

8th January General discussion

15th January Employment, Unemployment, Further Education and the State (speaker Peter Neville)

22nd January Cities and Libertarian Social Movements (discussion led by Dave Dane)

29th January Vacant to the end of July

If anyone would like to give a talk or lead a discussion, overseas or out-of-town speakers 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 (telephone number 081-847 0203, not too early in the day please) giving subject and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate. These could be instead of a general discussion but the latter are not merely unfilled slots but popular occasions in their own right so we are unwilling to relinquish too many.

Peter Neville / Dave Dane
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