COMING BACK CAP’N BOB ... ALL IS FORGIVEN!
GOVERNMENT TO PLUNDER PENSION FUNDS?

Since the government has not denied press reports of its intentions to transfer to the Treasury large sums from the pension funds of British Rail and eventually from the equally prosperous ones of the Post Office and other publicly-owned services, one assumes that this has not been excluded as a ‘solution’ to the £50,000 million deficit which is anticipated in this year’s budget.

What the government says it would do is to honour the pensions of all anticipated in this year’s budget.

The USA is the biggest debtor nation of the world have no such problems. The USA is the biggest debtor nation in the world. It also has the greatest number of millionaires as well as thirty million people living below the poverty line (the soup kitchen candidates - you can’t let them starve, can you?) No capitalist government can risk having an ‘underclass’ (as they call it) of many millions just allowed to starve.

The obvious and important advantages of the NHS were that for the doctors, the ever increasing ‘crime’ rate indicates they are supplementing ‘social security’ as best they can. And so as unemployment increases, and especially among the young, all the government talk about training, etc., to deal with it is just an excuse.

The latest figures show that 10% of the 120,000 successful graduates who emerged last year are still without a job. Are they not qualified?

Until and unless the government is prepared to reduce the working week, and to increase taxation for those

Neither Nationalisation Nor Privatisation!

It would seem that as the Tory majority in Parliament gets less and less so the extremists of the right - the Lillies, Portillos and Howards, aided and abetted by the Adam Smith ideologues - become ever more strident in their determination to privatise not only the railways but the post office, prisons, health, education, pensions, in a word to demolish what is left of our much-vaulted welfare state.

Anarchists will not, as a result, fight to the death to defend either nationalisation nor the welfare state. To start with the latter. William Beveridge’s project was well-meaning for somebody who believed in the capitalist system and its future and to this end sought the reduce the blatant social and economic injustices which might threaten it.

The fact that this country was emerging from six years of war and austerity (from which only Yankee capitalism benefited), with a Labour government overwhelmingly elected in 1945, the introduction of the National Health Service, and a National Insurance Scheme followed on 5th July 1948 without much opposition, apart from the doctors. The obvious and important advantages of the NHS were that for...
Neither Nationalisation Nor Privatisation!

(continued from page 1)

the first time a free medical service was available to the families of employed persons.

Freedom's editorial comment (12th June 1948) by John Hewetson, himself a GP at the time in poverty-stricken Southwark, was on the one hand to criticise a system which was "yet another step... along the road that ties the population to the state by making it dependent on a state operated scheme for an essential social service", and he also referred to the way the individual's dependence on the state as provider of all services was crucial to the stability of totalitarian regimes. But, on the other hand, he added:

"The fact that the alternative, under capitalism, is destitution and the sharper anomalies of poverty, does not make the Liberal-Socialistic alternative a sound proposition.

The only rational insurance against the evils of poverty and industrialism and old age under the wages system is the abolition of poverty by machines in the hope that it will increase their profits. The banks have suffered as a result, with borrowers unable to repay interest on mortgages or loans, let alone on capital. And now the banks are also selling staff in their thousands (National Westminster, 4,000 to go this year) as they too replace the consumerist salary-slaves with more 'efficient' obedient machines, and more customers are lost for the consumerist economy!

In the past the general solution to the vicious circle of capitalist slumps was broken by wars, but in fact never solved. Today, full-scale wars are, in our opinion, out of the question. In the first place they are too costly, not so much in lives (no shortage of labour in the world!) as in the damage to property. And secondly, the world today is in the hands of the multinationals and they seem to flourish irrespective of crises of 'confidence', though they are obviously interested in a flourishing consumerist society.

Therein lies the dilemma of capitalism.


South Place

Government to Plunder Pension Funds?

(continued from page 1)

earning more than £20,000 a year and upping the taxation for the millionaires from 40% to 80% as it was before 1979, as well as applying to themselves the rule they demand from the poor of 'living within their means' (which in government terms means importing no more than one export), they will only try to balance the books by cutting down on all essentials: health, education, pensions, public transport and other services which will not hit their rich friends but will, as usual, clobber the poor.

The kinds of solutions which the government is exploring would seem to be directed to adding to the unemployment problems. According to the media they are toying with the idea of actually increasing the retirement age for women from 60 to 67 and for men from 65 to 67. These financial idiots talk of saving £2500 million a year, but have they taken into account the number of potential workers who will be prevented from getting a job as a result, and who will be on the dole?

The leisure society anarchists adumbrate is not that of the tourist brochures advertising of beautiful bodies roasting under an ever-blue sky on the beaches of Florida or the Bahamas, but of a society where we all contribute to producing the basic necessities of life as quickly and as pleasantly as technology can help us to do. Thereafter our time is ours to do, or not to do, with it as we wish. But the government is proposing to oblige the unemployed to spend a number of hours a week on work unpaid - sweeping streets, running errands for housebound folk and the like - to justify their drawing a derisory payment, in spite of the fact that technology, plus the capitalist philosophy of production for profit only and the fact that the land of this island is in the hands of a tiny minority, has deprived them of making a living to actually keep alive.

As we write, thousands of jobs are about to be scrapped, and even the optimists who say the 'economy' is recovering nevertheless admit that it will be at the expense of jobs. So where are these unpaid jobs Major is talking about to give the unemployed a sense of achievement and 'dignity' as they draw the dole?

Major, far from being the new ami du peuple, is as sinister a figure as his equally 'humble' predecessor. What he is doing is quite clear to us. He is using a tactic which the British have used for centuries in Europe: that of divide and rule. But he is using it for domestic consumption: of setting the employed against the dole-social-security-'scrounging' unemployed.

To resist this vicious campaign is as important in the long term as the demonstrations against pit closures. It is time that we had massive demonstrations by the unemployed in all the major cities of Britain. But demonstrations of the employed and the unemployed. We are all in the same boat so far as the capitalist system is concerned.

Moncure Conway, was also a prominent speaker and writer. In 1888 it became an
As to nationalisation, the anarchist government made it clear that the outside - accountants, businessmen, of the welfare state, the foregoing the start and we are on record in opposing position was abundantly clear right from railways were expected to pay their way for instance, the Attlee Labour the community and the railway workers, from it being a joint enterprise between opposition to the state - government statement of the anarchists' fundamental trade union geriatrics were included on on the spot they brought in people from it with productive capacity (and massive debts to the money lenders) far exceeding (puts free inland).

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But the government is proposing to

South Place
Ethical Society

The South Place Ethical Society, which is the oldest freethought organisation in Britain (and indeed the world), celebrates it bicentenary in 1993.

The Society began in February 1793, as a Christian congregation in a chapel in Parliament Court, East London. As first it followed Universalism (the doctrine that everyone shall be saved and no one shall stay in Hell for ever) and then Unitarianism (the doctrine that God is one and that Jesus was not divine), but it later moved through Theism towards Humanism. Its third minister, W.J. Fox, was a leading speaker and writer who became a Liberal MP.

In 1824 the Society moved to a new chapel in South Place, Moorgate, where it stayed for a century. In 1835 it became an independent society. Its next great minister, Moncure Conway, was also a prominent speaker and writer. In 1888 it became an Ethical Society, which it has remained ever since. After 1897, it had no more ministers, but relied instead on a panel of appointed lecturers, as well as expert speakers from outside. Meanwhile South Place became well known as a meeting place for all sorts of radical organisations. There have been Sunday evening concerts since 1887, and a regular magazine since 1895. The Society moved in 1929 to Conway Hall, Holborn, where it has been ever since. Conway Hall is the physical centre of the British Humanist movement, and is also a well known meeting place in central London.

A programme of special events has been arranged to mark the bicentenary. There are frequent lectures on Thursday evenings throughout the year at which distinguished speakers from all walks of life will discuss various aspects of ethics and liberty today, and there are other day and weekend events.

Further information from Nina Kharie (Secretary) or Nicolas Walter (Honorary Representative), Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4LQ.

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The government's attempts to return Britain to the Victorian age have reached their culmination with Major's call to bring in 'workfare' (the modern equivalent of the workhouse) where as there the 'indigent' are forced to work for a pittance for the inadequate poor relief they receive.

Once more by creating a new labour force on starvation wages it will be possible to economise yet further on the properly paid jobs that need to be done at public expense. (Though it is unlikely that the unemployed so forced to work will be given the office of the Chancellor or the Exchequer, however certain it is that they could all do the work better than the present incumbent.)

This is designed to forces wages yet further down and - if workfare goes through - it will undoubtedly be successful. It will mean that at a time when there is a slump because there is too little money paid to workers and that this means too little in circulation there will be yet less money in circulation. So the slump will get sharply worse.

Laurens Otter
effective operation of the network to those on the spot they brought in people from outside - accountants, businessmen, anything but railwaymen! Just a few trade union geriatrics were included on the board (an alternative to sending them to the House of Lords!)

Since we are also utterly opposed to all the Tory governments privatisations and to its threatened assault on every aspect of the welfare state, the foregoing statement of the anarchists' fundamental opposition to the state - government power - is essential to avoid misunderstandings with what follows.

Capitalism, as we never tire of repeating, is condemned to bankruptcy by the greed and blindness of its exponents. Every businessman will tell you that one must expand - 'to stand still is to be overwhelmed by the competition'. No wonder they have landed themselves with productive capacity (and massive debts to the money lenders) far exceeding demand. Their only solution, then, is cut-throat competition followed either by takeover bids or bankruptcy for the weakest. In the process more wage slaves are thrown out of work, out of the

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Back to the workhouse

... and they'll double the numbers of the unemployed.

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Laurens Otter
You don’t make peace by going to war

The French Anarchist Federation (FAF) calls on the French people to oppose military intervention in the former state of Yugoslavia and to implement immediately proposals which would improve, far more than military action, the dramatic situation now faced by the Yugoslav peoples who have suffered the horrors of war for too long.

Why?
The FAF is opposed to militarism in all its shades and all armies, be they Serbian, Croatian, French, United Nations or humanitarian, for, at the end of the day, it is always the people who end up in the firing range.

Since the beginning of the conflict the FAF has consistently denounced the war, the rapes, the camps and the ethnic cleansing policies, irrespective of which side is responsible. However, there is no case for international intervention which would be incapable of stopping these horrors (which are part and parcel of all wars). On the contrary, it would, without doubt, provoke an escalation of the conflict throughout the Balkans.

The real objective of such an intervention is, in fact, to stabilise the status quo, to put in place the frontiers of the new states within the framework of the ‘New’ World Order, on the backs of the people in the region. Once the carving up of the former Yugoslavia has been achieved by the Western governments and the new local dictators, the people will once again find themselves forgotten. The new states will be able, once again, to put into effect their will once again find themselves forgotten. The new governments and the new local dictators, the people would be incapable of stopping these horrors. It would be a case of international intervention in the form of military occupation. The FAF calls on all those men who are opposed to the war (whatever their uniform) to desert.

The FAF demands:
- that the Western governments welcome without any restriction those who are fleeing the area as political refugees;
- that the setting up of medical centres specifically for women who have been the victims of rape;
- that aid for the pacifist and feminist organisations to be provided for by current military expenditure;
- that the immediate stoppage of the international arms trade.

Proposals to reverse the war process

There is no magic solution to the immediate problems faced by the Yugoslav people, although some would have us believe the contrary.

You don’t make peace by going to war. There exists in the former Yugoslavia a considerable number of people who reject the Serbian or Croatian ultra-nationalist logic – these men and women are organising passive resistance to the red and brown fascists. They must be given the means to develop a movement which will impose peace from the inside.

The central snag in the Yugoslav state was the dominance of the Serbs over the Croats. The flaw in the idea of an independent Croatia is the dominance of Croats over Serbs. During the forty years of ‘peace’ between the ethnic groups under communist rule, Tito did a juggling act within the administration giving Serbs dominant charge of the Croat state and party bureaucracy, but limiting the central power of the Serbian authorities in Belgrade. Thus under Tito the regional centres of government in Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia enjoyed a lot of independence from Serbia’s Belgrade.

Misha Glenny has described the delicate system of balance between nationalities under Tito as “a highly sophisticated game of divide and rule”.

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- that medical centres are set up for women who have been the victims of rape;
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- that the immediate stoppage of the international arms trade.

Krajina trouble spot

The crisis now unfolding in the Balkans stems in part from President Tudman’s decision, after Croatia became independent, to start sacking the Serbs, who had got their jobs under Tito, in the administration of the Croatian state. Large numbers of Serbs were made redundant in Croatia; these naturally thought they had gained their posts on merit and not nationality. This policy encouraged the fear of persecution among Serbs throughout Croatia, especially when they found out that their jobs were being taken by Croats.

The urban Serbs who lost their jobs were naturally upset, but when the Croatian government started getting rid of rural Serbs in the Serb-dominated Croat police force the spark of Serb nationalism caught light in Krajina (the Serb-dominated region of Croatia where clashes are now again taking place). This led to Croatia losing a third of its land to the new self-styled Serbian republic of Krajina in the war which followed from the policy pursued by the Tudman government in the summer of 1990.

This would perhaps not be so serious if it were not for the fact that Krajina virtually cuts Croatia in two – dividing the Croatian capital of Zagreb from the former tourist traps of the Dalmatian coast – a situation which is strangling the Croatian economy. This explains the current attacks by Croatian forces on Krajina and in the region of the Maslenica bridge.

This dispute, more even than the Bosnian war, has been called “the most powerful engine of fratricidal strife” by Mr Glenny in his book The Fall of Yugoslavia. The difference between the Serbs and Croats is not so much one of language as of religion –
proposing humanitarian intervention. Allowed the arms trafficking who are now
States will be able, once again, to put into effect their
governments and the new local dictators, the people
(which are part and parcel of all wars). On the
would be incapable of stopping these horrors
irrespective of which side is responsible. However,
firing range.

——

a result of the Berlin Rising, the events in
wrote half a dozen articles in this journal


economy.


collection of radical internal criticism of the
Freedom Press in 1944, was a pioneering

Western observers who weren't dazzled by
Russian tragedy and the observations of those
— material aid for the pacifist and feminist
— that the Western governments welcome without
any restriction those who are fleeing the area as
political refugees; political refugees;

— immediate return to barracks of the 10,000
French soldiers in action throughout the world.

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oppressors, who got all the goodies, the
dachas, cars, apartments and tradeable wealth,
among good in the new entrepreneurial
society, yesterday's apparatchik is today's
market success.

We shouldn't be surprised that the
re-emerging anarchist movement in Russia
is divided into a whole range of tendencies,
described in the 'Letter from Russia' recently
described in the 'Letter from Russia' recently
in this journal. The author, Arcadi Rysakov,
makes an observation supported by many
other observers. He says that:

"Russia is chewing again the western model of statism,
internalized by all its people, modeled on the Russian
Bolshevik state, with its centralized planning, its
mediated mass culture, its state-owned industries, its
monopoly on information, its state-controlled media, its
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planning resulted in a jungle of self-sufficient
and competing ministries, duplicating each
other, transporting commodities thousands
of unnecessary miles, producing obsolete and
unwanted products. Even in the Kardar
region that followed the suppression of the
Hungarian Revolution, the wily economists
tried to introduce an economic model of a
market economy as the best guide to industrial
production.

I tried to explain the dilemma 20 years ago
in my book Anarchy in Action, seeking to be
honest about the paradox that:

"You might even say that the only thing that makes life
livable in the capitalist world is the unacknowledged
non-capitalist element within it, and the only thing that
makes survival possible in the communist world is the
acknowledged capitalist element in it. This is why a
controlled market is a left-wing demand in capitalist
society — along with state control, while a free market is a
left wing demand in a communist society — along with
workers' control."

I think I was right. This explains why
anarchists who never had a good word to say
for the post-war Labour government's

We saw neat, well-spaced farmhouses, peasants
preparing fodder with their mowers for their cows and
working the fields with their tractors. Vats of fresh milk
were left under awnings by the side of the road to be
picked up by special trucks and taken to the dairy. We
often heard people in Estonia say that they work harder
and better, and therefore they live better. That, of course,
is only a small part of the truth, the superficial
explanation. The deeper reason is that the steamroller of
socialism passed over their land later in a watered-down,
rather slipshod fashion; it had far less time to do its
destructive work. In the 'old' republics that have been part
of the USSR from the very beginning, peasants have been
declassed to a far greater degree — in some instances they
were physically eliminated — and society is more
conspicuously divided into separate castes, including a
party bureaucracy, essentially parasitic in nature. It's no
accident that leasehold, cooperative and, especially,
private forms of economic activity are developing slowly
in those regions, hindered almost openly by local party
and state organs.

Sakharov thought that the Baltic republics set
an example for the whole Soviet Union with
their popular movements "for a genuine, not
a fictitious, perestroika and a radical
resolution of nationality problems through
economic autonomy". This veteran dissident
proposing humanitarian intervention.

In the "socialist market economy" of the 1950s, the so-called "malenkovtsy" tried to introduce an economic model that was considered "objectively reactionary" by Western observers who weren't dazzled by the official left in the West. This model was seen as "unnecessary miles, producing obsolete and unwanted products." Even in the Kardar regime that followed the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, the wily economists tried to introduce an economic model of a market economy as the best guide to industrial production.

I tried to explain the dilemma 20 years ago in my book *Anarchy in Action*, seeking to be honest about the paradox that:

"You might even say that the only thing that makes life liveable in the capitalist world is the unacknowledged non-capitalist element within it, and the only thing that makes survival possible in the communist world is the unacknowledged capitalist element in it. This is why a controlled market is a left-wing demand in capitalist society — along with state control, while a free market is a left-wing demand in a communist society — along with workers' control."

I think I was right. This explains why anarchists who never had a good word to say for the post-war Labour government's nationalisation of everything, now feel obliged to defend these industries against the privatisers, or why some American anarchists believed that the Clinton regime might rescue the everyday people's ire in relation to the present government and strengthening the anti-state spirits of Russians now. However, the social dependence of out people, cultivated over the last seventy years, is still very strong, and many people in our country wait and hope for the return of an authoritarian regime. This has to be seen against the fact that for generations every Russian has got used to living in the capitalist world is the unacknowledged non-capitalist element within it, and the only thing that makes survival possible in the communist world is the unacknowledged capitalist element in it. This is why a controlled market is a left-wing demand in capitalist society — along with state control, while a free market is a left-wing demand in a communist society — along with workers' control."

This is only a small part of the truth, the superficial explanation. The deeper reason is that the steamroller of socialism passed over their land without a sign post, rather slipshod fashion: it had far less time to do its destructive work. In the "old" republics that have been part of the USSR from the very beginning, peasants have been debased to a far greater degree — in some instances they were physically eliminated — and society is more conspicuously divided into separate castes, including a party bureaucracy, essentially parasitic in nature. It's no accident that leasehold, cooperative and, especially, private forms of economic activity are developing slowly in those regions, hindered almost entirely by local party and state organs." Sakharov thought that the Baltic republics set an example for the whole Soviet Union with their popular movements "for a genuine, not a fictitious, perestroika and a radical resolution of nationality problems through economic autonomy". This veteran dissident was one of those who saw new hope in the breakdown of the empire and, let's face it, in the economy of the local market.

Colin Ward

Powerless Politicians and the Peasants

(continued from page 3)

Serbian Greek Orthodox and Croatian Roman Catholic. Thus religion seems to give the ethnic communities, or 'ethnie', their distinct identities in former Yugoslavia, so much so that the 'Muslims' of Bosnia have chosen to adopt the name 'Muslim', preferring this identity to the name of their province, even though many of them no longer adhere to the beliefs or practices of Islam.

Failure of nationalism

In a way the Balkan wars show both a failure of nationalism and an inability of the urban political bosses to understand the outlook of the peasants. The theory of nationalism — that the nation can command the loyalty of all its citizens over and above their religious, class or ethnic identities — is being put to the test there. In Zagreb, the Tudman government thought they could mould and placate the Serb peasants of Krajina as easily as they had the urban Serbs. Yet today these countrieside Serbs control vast areas around Krajina, as well as other regions such as Kordun, Banija and Slavonija. Mr Glenny says: “The economic horizons of the rural Serbs are limited, but the early post-feudal concepts of political power quite as much as, say, Tolstoy's novel War and Peace.

How I wish the anarchists were wrong! If only the gentlemen sitting in Geneva could solve the Balkan conflicts! Yet daily events demonstrate that Lord Owen, Mr Vance, Mr Milosevic, President Tudman, Radovan Karadzic, and the Muslim leaders, are all but powerless to halt the course of the war, even if they wanted to.

Appropriate Technology Business

Opportunity for Anarchists, or How I Lost My Economic Innocence

Until recently I travelled wearing the smug expression of one who feels he is not made their contributions to profits, taxes and Customs Duty!

GAS, GAS, GAS!

After 25 years of negotiations, the Chemical Warfare Convention was signed in Paris last month (Nature, 14th January 1993). But if you think you can sleep a little easier, think again. The convention does not enter into force until 1995, and its various organs, including the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the technical secretariat, do not yet exist. With an eye to their own self-interest, the various governments have devised a flawed inspection systems that means that true 'any time, any where' inspection is out; i.e. they only reveal what they want to, when they want to. The US successfully argued for inspectors to have to wait up to five days before entering a suspicious site. Does this ring any bells? The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which supposedly enforces the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, has had access to challenge inspection for twenty years, but, like a faithful pooch of the powers that be, has only bared its teeth at Iraq when egged on by the Western allies. The final sick irony is that those same countries were quite happy to sit back and count the money coming in from exports of nuclear technology in the '80s.

Of course, the Iraqi elite know a thing or two about chemical weapons. They wiped out Kurdish villages in 1988 with mustard gas (and possibly the nerve gases Tabun and Sarin). From a recent report (New Scientist, 23rd January 1993) no traces of the gas remain in the soil of Halabja from those horrific attacks. For the farmers this is good news; no more worry about poisoned crops. However, had the chemical had access to challenge inspection for twenty years, but, like a faithful pooch of the powers that be, has only bared its teeth at Iraq when egged on by the Western allies. The final sick irony is that those same countries were quite happy to sit back and count the money coming in from exports of nuclear technology in the '80s.

Of course, the Iraqi elite know a thing or two about chemical weapons. They wiped out Kurdish villages in 1988 with mustard gas (and possibly the nerve gases Tabun and Sarin). From a recent report (New Scientist, 23rd January 1993) no traces of the gas remain in the soil of Halabja from those horrific attacks. For the farmers this is good news; no more worry about poisoned crops. However, had the chemical remained detectable, it might have been some small deterrent against another despot gassing forgotten dissenting minorities, if he knew the proof would sit there forever in the soil.

W ith the coming of a chemical weapons treaty, the chemical companies are starting to get uppity. These companies are worried by such vital issues as having to make new record keeping arrangements, or the possibility of their competitors learning their secrets. Profits before people again. In 1925 the American Chemical Society passed a resolution opposing ratifications of the Geneva Protocol banning the use of chemical weapons, and endorsing the use of chemicals in war. This was not reversed until 1970! What changes there have been in the chemical industry's attitudes have largely come about through the desire to present a better image to the public, rather than any sense of moral responsibility. The nightmare visions of napalm and Agent Orange in Vietnam that appeared on America's television sets brought it all this: damaged eyes and airways, skin cancer, leukaemia, sexual problems and psychological disorders. As JFK said: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what can you do for your country".

A Russian company, Chetek, is planning to destroy some of the Soviets' vast stockpile of chemical weapons using redundant nuclear weapons at the Novaya Zemlya nuclear test site in the Russian Arctic (New Scientist, 16th January 1993). Sounds like a good move? Basically, no. It is known that radioactivity has leaked out from previous underground tests there, and Norwegian research has revealed rockslides and large surface depressions. It is claimed that underground explosions are safe because the surrounding rock is melted, cooling to form a glassy sphere that seals in the radioactive debris. However, the Norwegian researchers point out that the rock cracks as it cools and the caverns collapse. The heat from the bomb can melt the permafrost, releasing water that flushes the radioactive elements straight into the ground water. Lovely!

Failure of nationalism

In a way the Balkan wars show both a failure of nationalism and an inability of the urban political bosses to understand the outlook of the peasants. The theory of nationalism — that the nation can command the loyalty of all its citizens over and above their religious, class or ethnic identities — is being put to the test there. In Zagreb, the Tudman government thought they could mould and placate the Serb peasants of Krajina as easily as they had the urban Serbs. Yet today these countryside Serbs control vast areas around Krajina, as well as other regions such as Kordun, Banija and Slavonija. Mr Glenny says: “The economic horizons of the rural Serbs are limited, but the early post-feudal concepts of political power quite as much as, say, Tolstoy's novel War and Peace.

How I wish the anarchists were wrong! If only the gentlemen sitting in Geneva could solve the Balkan conflicts! Yet daily events demonstrate that Lord Owen, Mr Vance, Mr Milosevic, President Tudman, Radovan Karadzic, and the Muslim leaders, are all but powerless to halt the course of the war, even if they wanted to.
Dees of one who feels he is not on the journey and in touch with the environment. In peasantry of Krajina as easily as they had the citizens over and above their religious, class economic horizons of the rural Serbs are thought they could mould and placate the Serb there. In Zagreb, the Tudman government the nation can command the loyalty of all its political bosses to understand the outlook of nationalism and an inability of the urban Serbs to built they'll go on for a long time without reaching the front line, all the uncontrollable elements on the ground merely show us the fraudulent and impotent nature of political power quite as much as, say, Tolstoy's novel War and Peace.

How I wish the anarchists were wrong! If only the gentlemen sitting in Geneva could solve the Balkan conflicts! Yet daily events demonstrate that Lord Owen, Mr Vance, Mr Milošević, President Tudman, Radovan Karadžić, and the Muslim leaders, are all but limited, but the early post-feudal concepts of land and home are central to their thinking and sense of security.

Every broken peace agreement, every order until recently I travelled wearing the smug expression of one who feels he is not adding to pollution, one who puts very little into the hands of capitalists, one who pays no road tax, in fact one who feels he genuinely contributes to the health, well-being and sustainability of human life on this planet. That's right, I cycled.

Bicycles can be made in Kropokinesque workshops rather than dark satanic factories. The pollution caused by their manufacture is the only threat they pose to the planet. Once built they'll go on for a long time without demanding vast input of spares. They are simple enough to maintain and repair without having recourse to members of a specialist elite. The only fuel requirement is for the rider - a bit less per mile than you need for walking - and you can produce some of that for yourself. The rider is responsible for the journey and in touch with the environment. In all ways an anarchist vehicle. No wonder I felt virtuous! Slipping past the snarled-up, resource-demanding, pollution-spewing, taxed traffic, I wore a superior grin.

...That'd really fuck the big bugger's

Update on the Gosh! case

(See Freedom 14th November 1992)

Customs and Excise have returned most of the comics they took from the Gosh! shop, and informed the proprietors' solicitor that they are dropping the proposed prosecution. The stuff they have retained is underground tests there, and Norwegian research has revealed rockslides and large surface depressions. It is claimed that underground explosions are safe because the surrounding rock is melted, cooling to form a glassy sphere that seals in the radioactive debris. However, the Norwegian researchers point out that the rock cracks as it cools and the caverns collapse. The heat from the bomb can melt the permafrost, releasing water that flushes the radioactive elements straight into the ground water. Lovely!

With the coming of a chemical weapons treaty, the chemical companies are starting to get uppity. These companies are worried by such vital issues as having to make new record keeping arrangements, or the possibility of their competitors learning their secrets. Profits before people again. In 1925 the American Chemical Society passed a resolution opposing ratifications of the Geneva Protocol banning the use of chemical weapons, and endorsing the use of chemicals in war. This was reversed until 1970! What changes there have been in the chemical industry's attitudes have largely come about through the desire to present a better image to the public, rather than any sense of moral responsibility. The nightmare visions of napalm and Agent Orange in Vietnam that appeared on America's television sets brought home some of the reality behind a seemingly innocuous industry. And then there was Bhopal. How long must we endure greed-driven death-centred industry that lays waste to us and our environment? Return the factories to the communities, and let the people speak with their hands.

Patrick Nicholson
How I Lost My Economic Innocence

Until recently I travelled wearing the smug expression of one who feels he is not adding to pollution, one who puts very little into the hands of capitalists, one who pays no road tax, in fact one who feels he genuinely contributes to the health, well-being and sustainability of human life on this planet. That’s right, I cycled.

Bicycles can be made in Kropokinesque workshops rather than dark satanic factories. The pollution caused by their manufacture is the only threat they pose to the planet. Once built they’ll go on for a long time without demanding vast input of spares. They are simple enough to maintain and repair without having recourse to members of a specialist elite. The only fuel requirement is for the rider—a bit less per mile than you need for walking—and you can produce some of that for yourself. The rider is responsible for the journey and in touch with the environment. In all ways an anarchist vehicle. No wonder I felt virtuous! Slipping past the snarled-up, resource-demanding, pollution-spewing, taxed traffic, I wore a superior grin.

Pride comes before a fall. A one-ton, thirty-mile-an-hour weapon, operated by a tax-paying, resource-consuming, non-anarchist, shot out of a side road and inflicted severe-distortion upon my treasured prized that. The other place was a clone of the first shop, and informed the proprietors’ solicitor. (Give a kid a wheel in the correct size from a dusty shelf. They had changed threads on wheel spindles too, the ones on my old wheel probably wouldn’t fit. Then he made what sounded like a good idea: “Course,” he said, “if anyone wants to screw the bastards up they’d start stockpiling loads of spares to fit old bikes, then people wouldn’t need to keep changing ... That’d really fuck the big bugger’s schemes. There’s a gap in the market, some anarchist ought to get in there.”)

Shops can be made in Kropokinesque workshops rather than dark satanic factories. The pollution caused by their manufacture is the only threat they pose to the planet. Once built they’ll go on for a long time without demanding vast input of spares. They are simple enough to maintain and repair without having recourse to members of a specialist elite. The only fuel requirement is for the rider—a bit less per mile than you need for walking—and you can produce some of that for yourself. The rider is responsible for the journey and in touch with the environment. In all ways an anarchist vehicle. No wonder I felt virtuous! Slipping past the snarled-up, resource-demanding, pollution-spewing, taxed traffic, I wore a superior grin.

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It sounded like a good idea at first, but after considering I didn’t think so. Bikes sound like a good idea too, but our adversaries are clever enough to turn our best intentions to their advantage. Many ordinary people like the sound of a greener world, so there’s a gap in the market for some entrepreneur to use wood-pulp and sell you books on how to be a green consumer. Fighting capitalism by becoming a capitalist, like destroying a financial government to become an MP, or fighting a trained army on its own terms and ground of its own choosing won’t work. You’ll become a small part of it by doing so, and small parts either get more efficient at their task or get crushed. It increased my awareness that any choice we seem to offered was an illusion. The clever bastards have got consumerism all tied up, and on their own terms too. I still ride my bike, but without the superior expression. Oh, and he was right about the wheel nuts.

Mountain bike the shops have trouble selling it. There’ll be a new type along soon to take their place, he warned me as he handed over a wheel in the correct size from a dusty shelf. Better take some wheel nuts too. Why? Well they change threads on wheel spindles too, the ones on my old wheel probably wouldn’t fit.

Update on the Gosh! Case

(See Freedom 14th November 1992)

Customs and Excise have returned most of the comics they took from the Gosh! shop, and informed the proprietors’ solicitor that they are dropping the proposed prosecution. The stuff they have retained is subject to seizure. not prosecution, and Gosh! is not contesting it since the defence is powerless in a seizure case. Interestingly, two of the titled now returned to Gosh! were seized and destroyed on a previous occasion. It seems that not even Customs themselves have a clear idea of what constitutes indecent material.

One of the titles seized is Peter Pank, legally published in this country but held, under the peculiar provisions of the Customs Consolidation Act 1876, to have been contaminated by being put in the same crate as some American comics. Peter Pank, a delightfully drawn comic variant of the Peter Pan story, replaces lost boys by punks, Indians by hippies, mermaids by nymphomaniacs and pirates by 'pirate teddy-boys', but leaves the Darling family and Fairy Tinkerbell more or less as the original. It is sold at Freedom Press Bookshop, price £4.95 (when ordering by post please add 50p inland, 99p overseas).
Beyond Sexuality

Beyond Sexuality: feminism, men's liberation, gender and power, sexuality, class, economics by ANSLIM
Phoenix Press, 115 pages, paperback, £4.50 (post free inland)

This is one of the most thought-provoking books I have seen for some time, but unfortunately it is as challenging to review as it was to read.

Like the curate's egg, Beyond Sexuality is good in parts. Indeed some parts, like the all-too-brief comparative anthropology of pages 86-87, are downright excellent. Elsewhere the book is less well written, although still interesting. It also suffers, as would be expected with eight authors sharing a similar political outlook, from occasional repetitiveness.

ANSLIM, I learned from another publication's pamphlet catalogue, is the ANarchist Sexual Liberation Movement. Beyond Sexuality was written and put together by eight anonymous men and women. They also include material — authors identified by gender and region of domicile — from Internet, an international e-mail computer network based in North America, accessible through universities and large corporations (in the US a few collectives provide access to PC owners).

Although collectively produced, Beyond Sexuality is a jumble of short pieces by individual writers. Lack of author identification, even by initials, is a serious shortcoming. The sharing of personal experiences and anecdotes alongside passages of researched text encourages interest in trying to identify the authors by style and outlook rather than in content. Unlike a series of papers each from a single pen, Beyond Sexuality also tends to be bitty and lacks progressive development, hindering the flow of argument from one essay to the next.

Beyond Sexuality is rightly mostly concerned with interpersonal relationships rather than their wider context, and here the book is at its strongest. All in all, despite many shortcomings in presentation, Beyond Sexuality is an essay that would be expected with eight authors sharing a similar political outlook, from occasional repetitiveness.

The Raven anarcho quarterly no. 20

Peter Kropotkin: 150th Anniversary

Peter Kropotkin is the best known anarchist to the reading public through his books such as Fields, Factories and Workshops and Mutual Aid and his moving autobiography Memoirs of a Revolutionary; within the anarchist movement he is known not only as one of the founders of Freedom and the Freedom Press, but as the most important party to a serious split in the anarchist movement internationally when, in 1914, he forgot his anarchism and his internationalism so far as to advocate support for the allies in the Great War.

Opposition to Kropotkin at that time was articulated by the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta. In recent years the view of Malatesta as the essentially modern anarchist has been championed by his English translator Vernon Richards. Bakunin and Kropotkin, for all that they were motivated by a passionate sense of the injustices of capitalist society and prepared to forego the privileges of their class, "remained aristocrats to the end". It is this characteristic that Richards attributed Kropotkin's tendency to oversimplify problems, and to what Colin Ward here calls his "unjustifiable optimism".

Colin Ward's lecture on 'Kropotkin's Federalism' given at the University of Durham last year, led this reviewer to turn to the reading public through his books such as Fields, Factories and Workshops and Mutual Aid and his moving autobiography Memoirs of a Revolutionary; within the anarchist movement he is known not only as one of the founders of Freedom and the Freedom Press, but as the most important party to a serious split in the anarchist movement internationally when, in 1914, he forgot his anarchism and his internationalism so far as to advocate support for the allies in the Great War.

Max Nettlau, the great anarchist historian, provides one of the earliest critical assessments of Kropotkin from one who knew him, never reprinted since it appeared as an obituary in Freedom in 1921 — and the magazine concludes with three of the most critical articles written by Errico Malatesta at the time of Kropotkin's defection. Nettlau claimed that Malatesta had been reluctant to join issue with Kropotkin because of "the immediate menace of the German invasion" — a position that he shared with his editor, Peter Kropotkin.

The Raven - 20
Peter Kropotkin: 150th Anniversary
Freedom Press, 96 pages, £3.00 post free anywhere

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Colin Ward's lecture on 'Kropotkin's Federalism' given at the University of Durham last year, led this reviewer to turn again to Ward's articles on 'The Anarchist Sociole of Federalism' buried away in two issues of Freedom last year (27th June and 11th July 1992) where he writes of the "handful of dissenting voices urging a different style of Federalism" in the context of nineteenth century nationalism, and their relevance today - I hope that Ward will now go on to give us a detailed study on this urgent topic.

To convey an impression of Kropotkin's life in 96 pages is no easy task but has been accomplished well, so that the result will interest those who know next to nothing of Kropotkin as well as those who have long been acquainted with his work. There is an eloquent biographical introduction by Herbert Read which has been out of print for fifty years. There is a review of the first English translation of Words of a Rebel (Paroles d'un Révolté) published last year. Laszlo Sekelj compares Kropotkin's and Bakunin's theories of revolution, and philosopher George Crowder* demonstrates that the basic premises of Kropotkin and his contemporaries would "receive little support from most modern social and political theorists".

Max Nettlau, the great anarchist historian, provides one of the earliest critical assessments of Kropotkin from one who knew him, never reprinted since it appeared as an obituary in Freedom in 1921 - and the magazine concludes with three of the most critical articles written by Errico Malatesta at the time of Kropotkin's defection. Nettlau claimed that Malatesta had been reluctant to join issue with Kropotkin because of "the position Kropotkin had established in the public mind". Today we are happy to subject our ideas to the most rigorous criticism - the difference between Kropotkin's generation and ours.

Charles Crute

* See the letter "The state of anarchy" on page 8.

In Mother Jones (December 1980) there is a strident attack on European culture by the American Indian Russell Means. A culture lauding individualism and the technical fix inevitably props up a social fabric based on counterfeit

Anarchism -
In Mother Jones (December 1980) there is a strident attack on European culture by the American Indian Russell Means. A culture lauding individualism and the technical fix inevitably propels up a social fabric based on counterfeit relations, a society in which people don’t relate too well to each other, to their glittering artefacts or to the natural world. Means took the attack even closer to home. He bundled together all the isms as different verses of the same old European tune. He implicated anarchism.

He went on:

"the great men of science and philosophy picked up where existence and converted it to a code, an abstraction. They made it inevitable props up a social fabric based on counterfeit not great.

There's a view of our literary culture from a man who champions the oral world.

Can anarchism be any more than a by-product of the excesses of European culture? I hope so, but the portends are down discouraging paths. Among refugees from and sufferers of the state’s institutions, 'freedom from' out-performs their condition in terms of being unemployable, further explorations of the meaning of freedom too often take us down discouraging paths. Among refugees from and sufferers of the state’s institutions, ‘freedom from’ out-performs freedom to'. The simple fact is that people who think they are anarchist sympathisers are much less likely to associate the word with 'organisation' than those who use the word anarchism to denote its absence.

Unless we make anarchism synonymous with practice, the ways we do things together without government and as a doctrine ordering human exchange, then Russell Means’ demeaning treatment sticks.

O of course, we are weak on organisation because in our thinking both the word and the act are equated with organisations, technologies of the social like government, the social 'sciences' and bureaucracy with their emphases on hierarchies, pyramids, external and central control, systems of information, rigid divisions of labour and fixed ways of thinking.

We are weak on organisation too because in spite of our protests we are still on the breast of the abstract parent and depend overly on relationships with other people that are imposed by the system. Our employment, for example, provides us with a ready-made framework, a set of contracts - colleagues, bosses, subordinates, customers, suppliers and even extra-employment 'friends' that encourages us to take the relational for granted. Such a disposition is not found among those who survive self-employment. In Mrs Thatcher’s enterprise culture financial debt euphemistically described as credit was the way to salvation. Those who didn’t end up in hell preferred to build on social debt and the credits run up by giving others a helping hand.

We are weak on organisation too because we won’t acknowledge our difficulties with the unknown and the unknowable and so refuse to explore the part that myths and rituals can play in helping us handle the mysteries of life.

I suspect we don’t get on with it because the need is not yet recognised to be great enough and being products ourselves of that abstract parent, the system, we prefer to let the old thing die quietly. It’s all very English. The trouble is deteriorating organisations, unlike rotting vegetation and flesh, don’t do much good in the passing. However, I do notice that this recession has alerted many previously self-satisfied people of their dependencies and vulnerabilities as consumers and employees. As the fable goes... when the lion becomes old and decrepit enough and all the other animals are strengthened by his weaknesses, even the donkey will kick him. The space and time freed by shirking authority will not remain vacuous for long. There is a chance that the new set of authorities to replace the old.

Denis Pym
Looking at the Land — 
a further view

I loved the vision glimpsed by J. Simcock (Freedom, 23rd January 1993) of the British countryside re-populated by people with their understanding of it enhanced by the insights of John Seymour (The Countryside Explained), W.G. Hoskins (The Making of the English Landscape) and R.W. Brunskill (Traditional Buildings of Britain).

I endorse his choice wholeheartedly and would like to develop his theme further. I recommend two or three more books that go beyond understanding the landscape, its history and its buildings, to helping us devise the right way to reshape our environment now. It so happens that they are by Scotsmen teaching and practising mainly in North America.

One is the former Glaswegian Ian McHarg who has distilled his immense experience into a book of less than 200 pages entitled Design with Nature (Doubleday & Co Inc., New York). The publisher observes in the jacket note "McHarg, an outspoken critic of the machine-dominated, dehumanised, explosion-threatened world that is even now disintegrating and disappearing before our eyes. In presenting us with a vision of organic exuberance and human delight, which ecology and ecological design promise to open up for us, McHarg revives the hope for a better world."

Another imaginative thinker who would have us create an anarchistic built environment is Christopher Alexander. His works are available here. One carries the subtitle "A Pattern Language", and he invites us to employ a patterns language whenever we aspire to build in the timeless way. "You can use it to work with your neighbours, to improve your town and neighbourhood. You can use it to design a house, for yourself, with your family ...

If you find these two books together a wise investment (they cost as much as a meal for four in a decent restaurant, but many of us can't afford to eat out often either), they too should be demanded from your local library.

When you evaluate your landscape in the way J. Simcock describes his, you will want to create a built environment for yourself in it that enhances, not harms it. These books will help you know how to do it.

Brian Richardson

Christopher Alexander's two books The Timeless Way of Building (£32) and A Pattern Language (£40) published by Oxford University Press can be ordered via Freedom Press Bookshop, payment in advance.

Publishers Doubleday tell us that McHarg's Design with Nature is out of print.

Food for Thought ... and Action

Recent additions to the bookshop stock.

Architecture edited by Hrazian Zeitlian, Semiotext(e). Those who can remember the '70s underground press such as It and Oz will instantly recognise the style of this latest offering from the Semiotext(e) series. Experimental/theoretical architects and designers, and writers were asked to submit work for it. In themselves the designs are fine, syndicalist pamphlet. The cumbersome title is in fact much better expressed in the original French title From the Wildcat Strike to Overall Self-Management. 47 pages, £2.00.

Lobster 24. Amid the upsurge of fascism across Europe, Lobster quietly continues to keep tabs on British fascism. This issue contains lots more information on the 1974-1992 period (continued from previous issue) and an
The Naturalists look very like anarchists to me. McHarg uses these self-enforcing laws to help him answer the question: ‘Can we not arrange the changes in the world in such a way that it is easier for nature to work?’ The Naturalists, like the anarchists, are thoroughly human.
A holistic imaginative thinker who would have us create an anarchistic built environment is Christopher Alexander. His works are available here. One carries the magical title *The Timeless Way of Building*, which immediately stirs the feelings of anyone who has longed to build with the sureness of taste, judgement and good sense that seemed to come naturally to our ancestors. The other carries the title *A Pattern Language* that deserves a little explanation for its significance to become clear but flows on directly from the first book. In the first Alexander reminds us that there is one timeless way of building. It is thousands of years old, and the same today as it always has been. He surely touches a chord in all of us when he remarks: “Whoever you are, you may have the dream of one day building a most beautiful house for your family, a garden, a fountain, a fish pond, a big room with soft light, flowers outside and the smell of new grass”.

He is not referring to an idle dream but to the deep longing that gives birth to our will to build, and he shows us all a way, the ‘timeless way’, that is accessible to anyone to fulfill it. “It is so powerful and fundamental that with its help you can make any building in the world as beautiful as any place you have ever seen”, he makes explicit a definable sequence of activities which will generate a building that is alive. “The power to make buildings beautiful lies in each of us already”.

The difficulty for many of us is that, although ‘we know what we like’, we have not much exercised our minds as to why we like it. We may respond with pleasure to a beautiful Cotswold village street or a great timber-framed barn or a tile-hung cottage, but we cannot put our finger on what quality it is that moves us. Alexander says: “It is easy to understand why people believe so firmly that there is no single, solid basis for the difference between good building and bad. It happens because the single central quality that makes the difference cannot be named.” He devotes himself to *The Timeless Way of Building* to identifying that nameless quality, and at the end we realise that we knew all along what it offering from the Semiotext(e) series. Experimental/theoretical architects and designers, and writers, were asked to submit work for it. In themselves the designs are fine, but even if the text were more accessible, the problem lies in the way the two have been combined to produce a result which is, at times, simply unreadable. The introduction — itself almost illegible — includes this: “A new relationship between design and design theory is suggested here ... to hypostatize [?] their separate condition, but to engage together [?] and cross over writing and design. The architecture doesn’t simply render the reading of theoretical writing difficult. The writing doesn’t simply get in front of the architecture as a screen/frontispiece. Instead, the architecture decompensates the writing. The writing diffractions and semiotics the architecture...[The book] doesn’t relocate architecture elsewhere than in the action of construction but respects architecture’s contaminating auto-virulence. It is not a book, a fatal object. But in fact a frontal and alatey dispersal and proliferation of theory in architecture and the architecture of this theory.” Etc., etc. It gets worse, but I won’t tire you. My theory is that three types of people might be interested in a book like this: very dedicated students of architecture, masochists and people who are thoroughly human.

The Naturalists look very like anarchists to me!
McHarg uses these self-enforcing laws to help him answer the question: ‘Can we not create, from a beautiful natural landscape, an environment inhabited by man in which natural beauty is retained, man housed in community?’ His approach is to draw up physiographic principles for both the conservation and the development of a region. These are based on an assessment of its development needs, its historic character and its natural features — i.e. topography and subsurface geology, surface and groundwater patterns, flood plains, soils (with particular reference to their degree of permeability), steep slopes, forests and woodlands.

For instance, in a beautiful area of North America not unlike the English countryside - the Valleys of Baltimore — which is under pressure to accommodate much population growth, he had made plans which the local community has adopted in order to prevent...
Carmageddon in Brighton

was scheduled to last all day but fizzled out after
only half an hour due to direct action by local
shopkeepers and the intervention of the police. The
shopkeepers nearly came to blows with protesters
in what was becoming a farcical situation. They
were attempting to drag away diversion signs with
protesters still clinging to them, harangued
protesters and tore down the banner. And they
called the police, who warned protesters that it was
an offence to obstruct the highway. The anti-car
coalition was reduced to handing out rather poor
leaflets at the side of the road.

The shopkeepers' argument was that the protest
was ruining their trade (on the last Saturday before
Christmas as well!) because it was preventing their
delivery vehicles coming through. On the face of it
this doesn't seem to be much of a problem; delivery
vehicles were not likely to be as numerous as those
other vehicles passing through who were the real
targets of the protest. And it makes you wonder how
other shop owners cope that exist in (official) pedestrian
precincts.

The anti-car coalition was the first to acknowledge that what is ultimately needed is a
decent system of public transport. A single action
like blocking off Sydney Street cannot in itself
bring about, of course, but at least it may make people aware of their own potential power in
determining what kind of environment they live in;
the compromises made by the local council to
appease both the road and shop lobby and those
who oppose cars seem ultimately to have pleased
no one.

However, in evaluating 'Carmageddon' I think it is
important to separate the action taken by the
anti-car coalition on this occasion from the actual
policies being advocated in the leaflets they were
handing out. A typical demand, for example, was
for a massive increase in road tax and for road tolls
to discourage private drivers. Clearly a problem
with this is that direct action is being used to
demand that the government act to make such direct
action unnecessary. And doesn't increasing road
taxes punish the poorer drivers (who may have no
access to decent public transport) more than the
rich? And isn't the idea of road tolls something like
a scheme one of the right-wing think tanks have
recently dreamed up? In summary, how can the
state and money be part of the solution if they are
inherently part of the problem?

How is it that the anti-car coalition, for all their
good ideas about direct action, should be so
confused? We might look no further for an answer
to this question than to the identity of the groups
making up the coalition. Perhaps the prime mover
in the coalition was the local Earth First! group.

Johnny Yen

THE FACTORY AND BEYOND

Balls to 'War Crimes', etc.

1940 he said: 'The fact is that there is something
deeperly appealing about him'.

In our anglo-saxon society, viewed before the
television from an easy chair, it is often easy to
forget the attraction of the personality of the
demagogues to their own people. It is too simple to
pass off the recent crop of nationalist chieftains in
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Perhaps Hitler was not such a bad bastard after
all! Could it be that, unlike Jesus Christ and
John Fitzgerald Kennedy, he just picked the wrong
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a unified Europe is closer to being fulfilled with
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This month, in a biography of Winston Churchill,
the historian John Charmley has argued that a deal
could have been done by Britain with Hitler in the
spring of 1941, and Germany could have been left to
wage war against Russia. Thus the two dictators,
Hitler and Stalin, could have been left to cut each
other's throats as John Moore-Brabazon, Minister
for Aircraft Production, said at the time.

Mr Charmley insists that Churchill was not a
national hero but a tyrannical 'living god' obsessed
with superman's 'British' values. The two
figures — we need to place ecological issues in the context
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figures.
Carmela had very definite ideas (which I shall return to below). The anti-car coalition had very definite ideas (which I shall return to below). Secondly, and perhaps surprisingly, several motorists who were intending to use the street were supportive of the action once they understood what it was all about. In fact most people in Brighton seem to agree that there is far too much traffic in the town (too many jams, too much pollution, too many accidents, etc.), but there is no consensus on what to do about it. The anti-car coalition had very definite ideas (which I shall return to below).

This innovative and well-supported direct action...
Carmela was four years old in 1936 in Andalucia. She remembers four "soldiers", very rude "they go into the house without asking", she is present and remembers with the child's vivid eye how the falangists seized the two breadwinners in the house, her father and her uncle, locked their wrists together and dragged them from the house. The ensuing events are even more dreadful. She never sees her father again. Nobody explains to her what happened to him, but she does recall how the family fortunes collapse, how her mother cannot cope without help, how the brave Spanish mother, went out to work while the children were left locked in. The little ones had hardly anything to eat and their mother cooked them stews late at night and became increasingly vindictive and mad. Carmela remembers her mother saying to the little children: "If only you were dead and all three of you in one coffin, that would be the best thing for you", she would say, but then overcome with remorse would hug them to her breast. The story is told in the style of half autobiography, half novel.

Carmela's story is told bravely, relying entirely on her fateful memory. She was too young to understand the historical forces behind her tragic events. This story, in all its incoherence, thus becomes universal and throws a light on the suffering of small children when the attack is indirectly on them. She is trying to piece together the evidence, and she is well into their teens when she is told for the first time the possible reason for her father's arrest. She is told that her father was a member of the anarcho-syndicalists who were all rounded up on the arrival of Franco's troops, taken to the cemetery and shot. The town was Piente-Giné and she names Berrinches and his blue-shirted squad which killed men in their thousands. This is a unique book, giving some of the missing background to the Spanish Revolution, from the bewildered child's point of view by a faithful eye-witness.

John Rety
The state of anarchy

Dear Editors,
Raven 20 presents a thoughtful paper by George Crowder, ‘Freedom and Order in Nineteenth Century Anarchism’. Accepting his argument and taking it a stage further, an intriguing prospect opens up.

Crowder distinguishes between two freedoms. On the one hand negative freedom, the irresponsible activity of the empirical subject. On the other, the positive freedom that comes with internationalisation of the moral law. He denies that anarchists hold abolition of the state to be sufficient in itself; they realise that an absence of external control can bring the results they seek only if complemented by individual self-control and the positive form of freedom.

Noting that the anarchists’ optimism about a stateless order rests on the belief that people naturally tend to behave in an ethical way (ethical naturalism), Crowder himself accepts moral self-direction as natural only in an Aristotelian sense, as an attribute less of actual than of ideal humanity. (This goes a long way towards making sense of observation; without it, restriction of a natural feature to a tiny minority remains inexplicable.) Bringing ideal humanity into the discussion he omits its counterpart, the ideal state. This seems hardly fair to the state, and it leaves some ragged ends.

The distinctive feature of the ideal state (which has never existed, any more than the ideal human being) lies in its correspondence with the subject; in Hegelian language, it reconciles the universal with the particular. Where the aims of the state, in every realised version, diverge from those of individual subjects, the end sought by the ideal state is identical with the end sought by the ideal individual; both seek to realise the moral law. This being so, it makes no difference whether we speak of the ideal anarchism as having eliminated the state or perfected it; the two conditions are one and the same.

Anarchism, however, does not come forward as a purely ideal movement envisaging a purely ideal humanity. It contemplates the persistence within anarchism of behaviour falling short of the ethical ideal, and assumes that the community will be able to control it; although without distinct coercive institutions, the anarchist community would yet have powers of coercion sufficient to maintain itself. It would enjoy an effective monopoly of force, and that is one mark of the state, the others being unity and legitimacy, which the anarchist community would also possess. An actual anarchy, in short, would display less a stateless condition than one with the state perfected to the last point before it disappeared into complete identification with a totality of ideal subjects.

George Crowder has cast his paper in terms of cases and grounds and arguments, of teleology and naturalism, of logic and reason, and extension of his theme has led to the unorthodox conclusion that anarchism seeks the perfect state. The logic leads to this point but the actual anarchist movement operates in a world which is far from being purely logical; we have to expect its future, like its past and its present, to be governed by influences other than the logic of its case. But that’s another story.  

George Walford

No Worker ‘Maniac’

Dear Freedom,
I’m sorry if Jake (Readers’ Letters, 9th January) thinks that I’m some kind of workerist, class war, ‘kill the rich’ maniac after reading my ‘Lower Class Bile’, because I’m not. My article was obviously an attempt at a largely rhetorical piece of writing, but, even so, Jake seems to have read into it much that wasn’t actually there.

Firstly, I didn’t say that I loved the working classes, I don’t see how you can love a class; I love individuals, not amorphous groups. Secondly, I don’t know how Jake found out my attitude to working people, but I certainly do not “treat all working people with apparent contempt”, as to do so would cut me off from my parents, those whom I work with, myself, and many of my friends. Finally, I did not say in my article that “it’s all the fault of the middle classes”. In fact I quite clearly put the blame on the system under which we all live (“...the same damn system...” “this system is not just the enemy of sanity, it’s the enemy of beauty, it’s the enemy of life...” “a fraction of the anger we need to end this appalling system and give us all peace, space and a better world”). And nowhere did I suggest that the way to that goal of a better world was by shooting people or blowing anything up. I’ll give Jake the benefit of the doubt and assume that he hasn’t read earlier issues of Freedom in January (thinks that I’m some kind of workerist, class war, ‘kill the rich’ maniac) and in February (thoughts he omits its counterpart, the ideal state. This seems hardly fair to the state, and it leaves some ragged ends.

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Steve Cullen

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Steve Cullen

Feminism

Dear Editors,
I’m against a system without expecting the opposite of intuition and spirituality, as moral rather than scientific discipline based on feelings and convictions rather than on facts and reason. For myself, and I’m sure for many others, anarchism is a good idea, if not a necessity.

Mr Gibson also attacks those feminists who value intuition and the spiritual, but surely it is these facets that lie at the very heart of anarchism. For myself, and I’m sure for many others, anarchism is a moral rather than scientific discipline based on feelings and convictions rather than on facts and reason. For myself, and I’m sure for many others, anarchism is a good idea, if not a necessity.

Steve Cullen

Mark Stevens
Dear comrades,

I feel I must rise to the challenge set by Ann Sinclair in the last issue of Freedom (23rd January) and a number of Freedom’s correspondents, in the debate on sociology, are consistently missing the point. Sociology is a highly technical subject just like any other academic subject, physics for example. Consequently it uses technical language, words with special meaning within the discipline. Laypersons should not expect to immediately understand these terms. For instance, if someone started to talk about quasars or even the theory of relativity, I would be hard put to understand what they meant because I am not a physicist.

I agree that if Freedom is intended to be a propaganda paper for anarchism then it should use lucid and intelligible language but a language for the thinking person, the intelligent lay reader, not necessarily the Sun reader. However, if we are embarking on a more detailed discussion, and there is clearly room for this, then it is fair for serious writing to use the language appropriate to the subject.

Now I am a sociologist, or at least a Marx's theory of value

Dear Editors,

Ernie Crosswell (Freedom, 23rd January 1993) and a number of Freedom's correspondents, in the debate on sociology, are consistently missing the point. Sociology is a highly technical subject just like any other academic subject, physics for example. Consequently it uses technical language, words with special meaning within the discipline. Laypersons should not expect to immediately understand these terms. For instance, if someone started to talk about quasars or even the theory of relativity, I would be hard put to understand what they meant because I am not a physicist.

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More on Sociology

Dear Editors,

Steve Cullen

Feminism a Dogma?

Dear Editors,

Your letter writer, called Peter, promotes Emma Goldman as an example of fairness in the feminist debate (Freedom, 6th February 1993) Emma, in The Traffic in Women and other essays, has much to say about the subjugation of women (see your letter, our job is to convince people that this system is rotten and in humanity's name it shouldn't be kept going any longer. And that's what I was attempting to do in my little article.

Peter Neville

Help needed!

Dear Comrades,

Can you help us? We are running out of funds and need to raise some extra cash. Please consider a donation.

Mark Stevens

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Dear Editors,
Ernie Crosswell (Freedom, 23rd January 1993) and a number of Freedom's correspondents, in the debate on sociology, are consistently missing the point. Sociology is a highly technical subject just like any other academic subject, physics for example. Consequently it uses technical language which it seems to me is the only way to immediately understand these terms. For instance, if someone started to talk about quasars or even the theory of gravity, I would have to understand what they meant because I am not a physicist.

I agree that if Freedom is intended to be a propaganda paper for anarchism then it should use lucid and intelligible language but a language for the thinking person, the intelligent lay reader, not necessarily the Sun reader. However, if we are embarking on a more detailed discussion, and there is clearly room for this, then it is fair for serious writing to use the language appropriate to the subject.

Now I am a sociologist, or at least a sociology teacher. Unintuitively, eight months ago I had not heard of post-modernism. I read about like this. As I was interested in doing research (the Holy Grail so far as sociology teachers go) I was asking a colleague whether anyone at his university was interested in figurational sociology and he said no they were mainly into post-modernism. I asked around and none of my teaching colleagues had heard of post-modernism. I was a student at the university of a level syllabus. Fair enough.

We know now what it means and there are half a dozen books on post-modernism on my bookshelves. It is important to keep up to date. I bet Ernie had not heard of figurational sociology either. He might have done if my review article had appeared in The Raven sociology edition. It apparently arrived too late for inclusion. Perhaps a later Raven?

If intelligent laypersons wish to understand some of sociology's terminology it is accessible. I am sure Freedom Bookshop will order David and Julia Jary's Collins Dictionary of Sociology (Collins), then have a more informed discussion.

We could water down some of these terms but if we did our articles might be rather long and consequently not get printed, at least in Freedom or The Raven. Understanding the meaning of post-modernism might not help Ernie stop the war in Bosnia, but sociology is about understanding what's going on and long-term solutions not a magical instant reality. However, a sociological understanding might prevent other Bosnias elsewhere. Who's afraid of the big bad wolf, eh?

Peter Neville

---

**Feminism a Dogma?**

Dear Editors,
Your letter writer, called Peter, promotes Emma Goldman as an example of fairness in the feminist debate (Freedom, 6th February 1993). Emma, in The Traffic in Women and other essays, has much to say about the subjugation of women (i.e. "a mere appendix of man") but strangely concludes, in another essay, that "the greatest supporter and worshipper of war is woman". It would seem that she was an example of muddled thinking rather than fairness!

Peter himself writes: "Feminism's fault lies with its one-sided blame on men per se - it denies that men are also oppressed (on different levels than women) and can be oppressed by women as well". But he misses the point that on the higher levels it is almost exclusively men who oppress both men and women. It is most unfair to blame ideologies for our ills (cf. George Walford) when those ideologies are invented and enforced by men.

If I may turn to John Pilgrim's letter in the same issue. My letter in the January 23rd issue did not decry the study of human societies, I merely questioned the usefulness of the institutional, academic, disciplinary approach. As a sociologist myself, I would hardly do such a thing.

Ernie Crosswell

---

**Help needed!**

Dear Comrades,
An American researcher, who will be coming to England later this year, would be interested to receive information on the International Women's Suffrage Alliance. The specific area of research is the role of Jewish women in this organisation, and in particular the history of the Palestine Jewish Women's Equal Rights Association (Hitachudet Nashim Ivriot L'shivui Z'chuyot). Does anyone know anything about this? Many anarchist women were involved.

There does not seem to be very much written on this subject - any pamphlets or paraphernalia which could be viewed would be very welcome. Personal knowledge or oral history would be equally of great value.

If anyone has any information which could help in this research please contact Ms K. Abrams, c/o Ms K. Andrews, 79 Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17 6HF.

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

Sunday 7th March – Derbyshire ‘Edges’. Meet at 11am at the National Trust Car Park (next to Robin Hood pub on A619 Baslow to Chesterfield road). Length 8 miles.

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Sunday 6th June – Canal and Woodland walk. Meet at 1pm at High Peak Junction Car Park. Length 4 miles.

Telephone for further details: 0773-827513

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19th February – Open discussion
26th February – ‘Extremism and Moderation in Anarchist Thought’ (speaker Andrew Lainton)
5th March – Open discussion
12th March – ‘Sexual Harassment and Feminism’ (speaker Adrian Williams)
19th March – Open discussion
26th March – ‘Anarchism and the Labour Party’ (speaker Peter Neville)
23rd April – ‘Anarchism and the Collapse of the Cold War and the New World Order’ (speaker Dave Dave)
30th April – Open discussion
Monday 3rd May at 2pm – May Day Picnic in Osterley Park, Hounslow. Details later.

There are vacancies for speakers from 7th May to 2nd July

If anyone would like to give a talk or lead a discussion please make contact giving names, proposed subjects and a few alternative dates. These can be either speaker-led meetings or general discussions. Overseas or out-of-town speakers are particularly welcome. Friday is the only night available for the meetings at the centre is booked up for classes on other nights. Anyone interested should contact Dave Dave or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW (Tel: 081-847 0203). Not too early in the morning please.

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