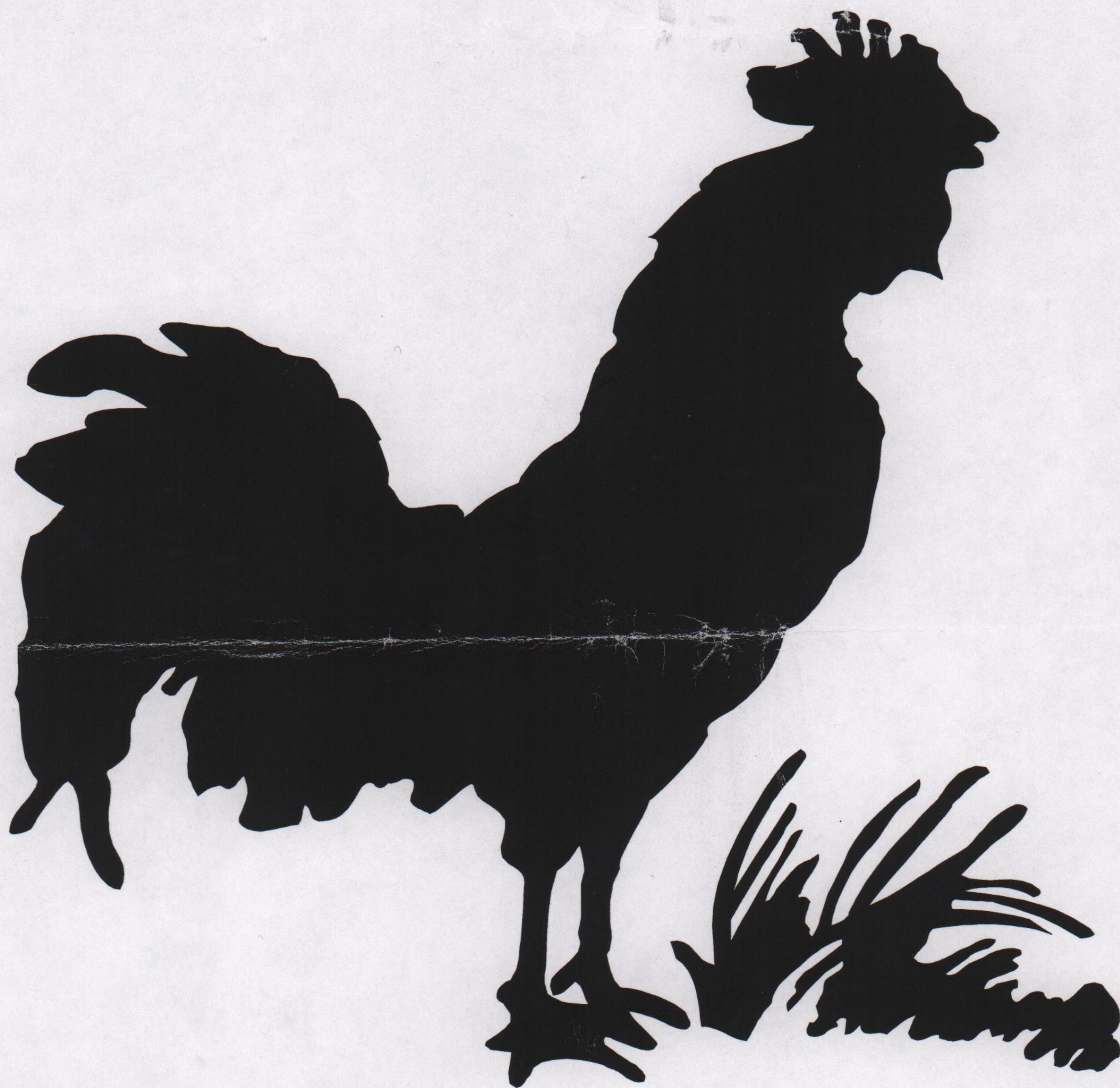


NAN Newsletter

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Cock O' the North

FOR

Authentic Northern Anarchism.

Editorial:

INAUTHENTIC ANARCHISM -

The Cuckolding of *Freedom Press*.

"Libel, libel, libel - I've been libelled" chorused a member of the *Freedom Group*.

Is this the language of an anarchist or an impostor?

It sounds more like Kenneth Williams in '*Carry-on Caesar*': 'Infamy! Infamy! Somebody's got it in for me!'

None-the-less as editor of the '*Cock*', I agreed to publish a letter from this member of the *Freedom Collective* rejecting his portrayal in the last issue of the '*Cock*', and to reassure readers that he was not acting in a hostile way to the integrity of northern anarchism and that we had, as he says, "got our wires crossed". At the time of writing no such letter has been received.

Meanwhile, another two members of the *Freedom Collective* have flown the nest, amid stories of office bullying, tampering with a computer and manipulation. "I was pushed! I didn't jump!" said one of those deposed.

Freedom is the most senior publication in the British anarchist movement. It has long been respected abroad as an important voice of British anarchism. How can it retain this respect, if the present editorial incumbent says he wants the paper to appeal to people who read *Loaded Magazine*?

One worries if the paper can survive the present editorial shenanigans with sales of 600 and falling. Some of us declared our own discontents at the *NAN Liverpool Conference* in March this year.

Freedom today, lacks even a rudimentary grasp of the subtleties of anarchist argument and analysis. It is as if a clodhopper with size 14s bluchers has chosen to join in our anarchist dance without knowing the steps. First he engages us in a Viennese Waltz crushing toes at every step, then to show he's more than a little trendy he will break out in a Latin tango or a Fandango.

Is it inexperience, incompetence, or down right bad taste?

What is being visited upon us?

Some say read the Police Gazette to understand anarchism. The police claim to nick criminals and anarchists by spotting their dirty shoes. Look at the clodhopper's huge boots and you'll see your own face reflected there-in.

Where did the clodhopper come from?

He was at one time General Secretary of the *Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB)*, the party in which one has to sit a test to join. Then one day he woke up and declared himself to be an anarchist and moved from the Midlands to London. Once there he cultivated a Cartoonist from *Freedom Press*, whom he encountered at a meeting.

Exchanging Marx for Stirner he quickly taught himself cookbook anarchism. Stirnerism, like Marxism, lends itself to recipe know-how.

Then being a dab hand on a lap-top he quickly seduced the rest of the *Freedom Group*. Alas, his skills on the lap-top are not matched by his intellect, which is, if anything, somewhere between pedestrian, gauche and moronic. Sources that were close to him claim what he knows about anarchism could fill the back of an envelope.

But let's examine some of the editorial utterances.

In the summer of 2001, at the height of the race riots in the North of England, a front-page leader declared: "Fascism not welcome here". This November, on the threshold of a national fire strike, *Freedom's* front page ran as follows: "Give 'em the money".

This represents the '*Open Sesame!*' approach to politics. A make-believe journalism by a flea that thinks its an elephant. Does the writer really believe that fascism will go away or that the bosses will pay the money just because *Freedom* says it should?

Does he really think that the firefighters will take *Freedom's* manifesto for 'modernising the fire service' seriously?

If so, then we are in the realm of schoolyard politics, with a teacher who acts as if *Freedom's* readers are pupils in his classroom.

In October, we were told: "The rich grow richer, more and more of the rest of us grow *hungry*..." In August, we learned: "The thunder of war will get louder as summer turns to autumn". And in September, that: "American policy on Iraq is in disarray" and "Any fire strike would be a serious blow to New Labour".

Words used like this lose their meaning. Far from being '*in disarray*' the US war policy seems to be on track and the fire strike looks like a gift to the Government. We're are being set-up for a war, just as the fire workers were set-up for a strike.

Now we learn: "Since September 11th, the securitisation (sic) of the British state – the gradual turning of this island into one big prison camp – has carried on apace." Or even: "The people of Argentina will soon have had a year to experiment with ways of living outside the capitalist economy."

God Save us from this kind of immature hyperbole. Anybody who thinks Britain today resembles a 'prison camp' hasn't experienced a prison yet, even if they have been to a Boy Scout's Camp. And if Argentina is outside the capitalist system, well so is playing 'swop' in the schoolyard.

Enough of this 'anarchism for infants'!

Members of our affinity group issued a *Special Report* on the problems facing *Freedom Press* at the Liverpool Conference of the NAN in March. We were urged to give the current editor more time. We have given him as long as we dare.

In English literature the 'Cuckold' may be a figure of fun. In Spanish society it is a serious term of abuse. As long term supporters of *Freedom*, it bothers us that the paper is being stuffed silly by the back-end of a pantomime horse.

We don't know which is worse the painful platitudes of which we complained last year, or the awful arguments we are now being subjected to. If anything the platitudes are more profound! *Freedom's* editor asks us: "Is my syntax really so strangled?" Ask them who have had their copy mangled by a sub-editor, who'll never be an anarchist as long as he's got a hole in his arse.

We are finding this all too much to stomach. British anarchism deserves better than this. The *Freedom Press Collective* ought to be old enough to know better than to unload this infantile drivel upon the movement.

Mack the knife.

NAN'S AUTUMN MANCHESTER CONFERENCE:

Northern Sovereignty over Southern Subservience

All regions and affiliated tendencies reaffirmed the Northern Anarchist Network (NAN) as a basis for the work of libertarians across the North of England. The conference saw in the absence of other regional networks, no sign of any possible National Confederation of Anarchists being founded in the near future, and some felt that it was neither practical nor desirable.

It was felt that throughout its existence the NAN had formed a "womb" for much creative activity (see 'History of Northern Anarchism' in the last *Cock O' the North*). But it was argued that the existing national 'ideological' organisations (Anarchist Fed., Sol. Fed. and Class war) were necessary to give permanence and consistency during periods of inactivity.

There was some discussion about previous anarchist federations in the 1940s and 60s, and mixed views as to their effectiveness in this country.

The consensus was that we should continue with the current set up and not seek to develop a national anarchist confederation.

Anarchist Youth

Lucas gave an account of the new organisation *Anarchist Youth*, which has a branch in Manchester.

This grouping has anarchist and environmental interests. In this area it has developed out of the Riotous Assembly and meets regularly in Manchester at the Retro Bar, near UMIST for talks, literature, videos etc. (contact: mancanarchistyouth@yahoo.com).

Debate on the war plans of the western governments

Barry opened the discussion with an analysis of the war strategy of the western governments.

It was accepted that the US was determined to go to war with Iraq and that there would be a war this winter. Some had argued that how the **NAN** reacted to this threat, would be a further test of its capacity to function.

An e-mail and phone tree was set up so that the **NAN** can respond quickly on a regional basis when required to do so.

Corporate Killing

Derek described the events surrounding the Simon Jones case and workplace Corporate Manslaughter.

It was announced that Tameside TUC was consulting with several local MPs about the Government's plans for introducing legislation on corporate killing. It was pointed out that there had been a local death and that the government was clearly dragging its feet so as not to offend the business lobby.

The conference was told that a group called the *Manchester Campaign against Corporate Killing* was to be launched. This body would demonstrate outside the CBI Conference on the 24th, November in Manchester.

CBI: Corporate Killers

On Sunday, November 24th, there was several hundred demonstrating outside the CBI Conference at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall. Most were there to protest against the anticipated war with Iraq. There were a smattering of protesters leafleting about corporate killers who get away with murder because of the difficulty of enforcing laws to protect people killed at work, like the anarcho-syndicalist Simon Jones who was beheaded by machinery on his first day on a job.

About 200 leaflets were put out by the Manchester Campaign against Corporate Killing.

About a dozen people associated to the **NAN** were present. Many more young libertarians linked to environmental bodies were also demonstrating on the day.

Northern Voices

Where has all the oxygen gone?
 Why is there no oxygen on the British left?
 The mouldering corpses of the Marxist parties,
 The dead ideas of the British left have taken all the air away.
Now Northern Anarchism must manufacture its own oxygen
Through its own Northern Voices.

It is being proposed that the North publishes its own Voices of the North.

Review:

Challenging Chomsky

'*LANGUAGE, Mind and Society*', subtitled "*The Alternative Raven*", this publication was necessitated by *Freedom Press*'s refusal to publish essays critical of Noam Chomsky's linguistics in a projected issue of *The Raven* on the celebrated academic.

'*LANGUAGE...*' includes the offending article plus several others on the same theme. As well, you will find a section called '*Chomsky's Correspondence*' where he seems to be trying to prevent the publication of these critical essays.

For those of us who know nothing of linguistics, the debates can be a little obscure. However, this should not prevent anyone from supporting and reading this publication.

It will be of particular interest to those of us tired of the uncritical adulation of Chomsky in the so-called Anarchist movement. Available from 46, Kingsland Rd, Rochdale, Lancs. OL11 3HQ.
Price £3 (post free)

Reviewed by L. Gambone.
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