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FIFTY PENCE

**"Sir Humphrey:
'Open government is a
contradiction. You can
be open, or you can
have a government,
but not both'."**

Anthony Jay in *Yes Minister*

THE ONLY LANGUAGE GOVERNMENTS UNDERSTAND

There is nothing like a bit of 'rough stuff' to concentrate the minds of politicians. In South Africa apartheid would still be dominating but for the campaign of 'violence' by the ANC and its supporters. In Palestine the Israeli Likud would still be lording it over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank as well as the Golan Heights and other occupied territories but for the 'violent' response of the Intifada. Who doubts, other than the politicians (officially) and sections of the media, that the Friday evening bomb in the Isle of Dogs has 'concentrated' political minds in Dublin and London, at least to appear to be tackling the 'Irish Question' after the seventeen months 'ceasefire' by the IRA which produced nothing.

Indeed it would appear from the media reports that each time some small positive move was made the British government managed to introduce a

new problem or move which either upset the Unionists or the Republicans and so we went back to square one. The other consideration that influenced Mr Major's government is that their voting majority in Parliament is so reduced that were the Protestant Unionist and what-have-you Northern Irish Parties to vote against the Tories it might result in an early general election, which all the 'experts' are convinced the Tories would lose.

We haven't just discovered all this. In 1993, when IRA violence was in full swing, the opening paragraphs of *Freedom's* editorial 'Hypocrisy Rules in Northern Ireland' (13th November 1993) read:

"The latest horror stories from Northern Ireland can only be matched by the hypocrisy of the politicians and most of the media. Suddenly government, media and

apparently the public are all seeking a solution to 'the Irish problem'.

But the government will have no truck with the 'terrorists' in spite of the fact that they are only now showing themselves concerned about the 'problem' because of the 'terrorists'! Government is violence. Without its police and military might and its prisons it cannot impose its laws, good or bad, which in the main protect the economic interests and privileges of a minority."

And we went on to argue that: "It is hypocrisy when Major declares that he will not speak with the 'terrorists'." *That was in 1993.* Now in February 1996 Major and his opposite number in the Irish Republic are saying, in the same breath, that they will have nothing to do with Adams and the IRA but are now both in a mood to compromise as to the next step to 'peace'! Would they both have been in such a 'cooperative' mood if the Friday bomb hadn't shaken them out of their complacency and assumption that so long as they appeared to be 'talking' the ceasefire, even though the 'terrorists' on both sides showed no intention of handing in their weapons, would continue indefinitely?

MICHAEL HOWARD SEEKS CUT IN PRISON POPULATION

By the end of February there will be more than 53,000 people imprisoned in British jails. More than ever before in history, and a bigger proportion of the population than in any other European country.

Much of the recent increase may be attributed to Home Secretary Michael Howard. He has issued guidance to magistrates, and appeals to judges, to impose more and longer prison sentences, to make less use of alternatives like community service orders, and to remand more suspects in custody and fewer on bail. He has used his powers as Home Secretary to delay releases. His slogan 'Prison Works' certainly works in pleasing his power base, the most vindictive of grassroots Conservative Party workers. But whether prison works in the sense of deterring crime is open to doubt.

Later this year, he has announced, he will issue a White Paper (statement of proposed legislation) for minimum sentences on repeat burglars and drug dealers, and mandatory life sentences for repeat rapists. 'Two strikes and you're out' (adapted from the American

'three strikes and you're out', a rule transferred to penal policy from baseball) is another slogan to please his unpleasant supporters. The effect will be to add another 10,000 to 20,000 to the prison population.

His Criminal Justice Act is not yet fully operational, but the eventual effect of that too will be to increase the number of prisoners. Amid all the prison overcrowding and overstretching of resources, Mr Howard has acceded to Treasury demands to cut the prisons budget by some ten per cent. To reduce the number of warders would probably increase the number of escapes, so prison governors are reducing the numbers of staff concerned with rehabilitation, like probation officers and educators. More prisoners will be banged up in their cells for more hours, yet Mr Howard speaks of depriving them of comforts like miniature television sets. He pleases his supporters by saying that "prisons should be fair but hard," meaning they should be awful places. But the lowest crime

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This writer thinks this is the case for there can never be a solution to the Northern Ireland question until the British withdraw *totally* from Northern Ireland, starting with the military presence (still some 20,000 troops armed to the teeth) and then do what Tony Blair is proposing for the hereditary lords: send the Unionist and SDLP members back to Northern Ireland to face their constituents.

And to emphasise that this anarchist solution is concerned with the real victims - the majority of the one and a half million people in Northern Ireland - we suggested that the British government should offer £100,000 to help these Northern Ireland families who felt they were more British (more so than the British, perhaps?) than Irish to settle in the country they really loved - no problems of passports either. The American interest in the Irish question is quite understandable in the Presidential election year when

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THE ONLY LANGUAGE GOVERNMENTS UNDERSTAND

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one is told that no less than forty million (yes, million!) Americans boast of their Irish origins.

The letters page of the *Guardian* on the Monday after the bomb includes such 'common sense' proposals as this one from a London reader: "We owe the bigots of Northern Ireland nothing and it's time we got rid of this expensive colony, just like we've got rid of dozens of others in the past thirty years."

We agree about the bigots and about the expensive colony *et alia*, but why did we (the British, not the anarchists) have them in the first place? To exploit them as sources of raw materials and, in the case of Ireland (going back three hundred years), for military reasons against the French and Spaniards in the distant past and in this century in the two world wars.

The British are no longer interested in Northern Ireland, which is costing the taxpayers in this country hundreds of millions of pounds each year which are not benefiting the poor of Northern Ireland. Even the European Union is coughing up more millions, which again could be directed not to the struggle but to the welfare of the ordinary people there.

There is no solution to the Northern Ireland problem. *Northern Ireland is part of the island of Ireland* - it was artificially separated by the British who at that time were not the third-rate power they are today but the world power which coloured a third of the world map with the pink of colonial and commonwealth power, and surely the only practical alternative is to declare that the six counties of Northern Ireland be a separate state (an Andorra or a Monaco) offering to all its present inhabitants the opportunity to move to the Irish Republic or the British mainland with £100,000 to settle in and declare that the six counties thereafter to be neither Protestant or Catholic, neither Irish nor British, just the first free territory with neither poor nor rich. A territory where mutual aid and the brotherly love which religions propose but do not practice will come into its own.

Could not Northern Ireland, liberated from the politicians and the capitalists (the Americans exploit their Irishness to see if they can make a buck with cheap labour) and the bible-punchers, be left with good people neither wishing to be exploited nor to exploit? It would be a big step towards a society of equals without the sameness of a mass production society.

MICHAEL HOWARD SEEKS CUT IN PRISON POPULATION

(continued from page 1)

rates occur in countries with humane penal systems.

He further pleases his supporters by promising that at some time in the future he will introduce legislation to abolish parole and automatic remission of sentences.

For more than a century, one third of every prison sentence has been remitted 'for good behaviour'. Judges and magistrates increase nominal sentences by fifty per cent to take account of this. The object is to enable visiting magistrates to impose extra prison sentences ('loss of remission') for breaches of prison rules.

For a shorter time, a prisoner who has served at least one third of the nominal sentence (one half of the actual sentence) may be released by decision of a Parole Board, and stay at large as long as he or she stays in contact with a probation officer and commits no further offences. The object of this is to give prisoners a chance to rehabilitate themselves under supervision.

Tories of the vindictive persuasion have often in the past complained about prisoners being 'let out early', and provoked laughter for their ignorance of how the system works. Now Mr Howard is pleasing them by promising them what, in their ignorance, they demand. We hope he has no intention of keeping his promise, but if he did keep it, that would increase the prison population by a further 22,000 at least.

Recently the *Sun*, the *News of the World*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*, the reading matter of Mr Howard's supporters, have all carried sob stories (copied from the *Guardian*) of mothers sent to prison because they are too poor to pay their television licences. One might expect the vindictive response that if they cannot afford television they should manage without it, but the newspapers do not advocate this because their proprietors are involved in broadcasting.

So now Mr Howard can please his power base by a measure which will actually reduce the prison population, issuing guidance to magistrates that they should discontinue the ancient custom of sending fine defaulters to prison. The Magistrates Association sharply responds that such decisions are for magistrates and not the Home Secretary, but magistrates have followed Mr Howard's guidance in other matters.

In 1994, the last year for which statistics have been issued, the number of fine defaulters imprisoned was 22,500, of whom 285 were women with televisions but without licences. The usual sentence for a fine defaulter is seven days, the average eight days, so the daily number of fine defaulters in prison is five hundred.

Of course we welcome any reduction in the prison population, but a reduction of five hundred is negligible compared with the increases arising from Mr Howard's other gimmicks.

HOPE THROUGH A 'MURKY CRYSTAL BALL'

In the wake of the extensive press coverage surrounding the explosion at Canary Wharf, the arrival of the Scott Report has been something of a damp squib. The Scott Enquiry publicity had few accompanying images of devastation to remind us of the effects that British-made weapons are having around the world.

There was however some pertinent television programming on the day surrounding the publication of the Scott Report, which went some way to illuminating the state of affairs. The drama documentary about the Matrix Churchill affair, scheduled for the evening prior to the publication was postponed with no explanation, almost as though it could still have time to influence the contents of the report. As if by way of compensation, the scheduled episode of *Yes, Minister* that evening was switched at the last minute with an hilariously appropriate one dealing with civil servants, moral vacuums, armaments with British labels and government cover-ups. In this episode the underlying joke is based on the remark, "If you continue like this, Bernard, you'll become a complete moral vacuum" being used as a compliment and a state of being to aspire to. There is also the insistence that independent enquiries are to be avoided as potential 'cans of worms'. Civil servants are portrayed as having no interest in the end product of their work, but only in the mechanics of the organising, whether they're shuffling vaccines or instruments of war it's all the same to them.

On a much more serious note was the interview by Andrew Marr with Noam Chomsky. Though it deserved a prime-time television slot, it was hidden away at 11.15pm on BBC2, but perhaps we should be grateful that this was not also postponed because of its revelations. For those familiar with Chomsky's prolific analysis of the machinations of world power holders, this programme had little new to say, but what was revealing was the utter disbelief with which Andrew Marr, the interviewer, digested the news that governments - yes, even in America and Britain - suppress information from the public and the press collude in these deceptions almost as a courtesy. It was almost possible to feel sympathy for this *Independent* journalist as his insistence that he worked for a free press and had access to all information began to lose momentum and the wool fell strand by strand from his eyes.

Whilst MPs and journalists were still ploughing through the Scott Report, there was a meeting at the Conway Hall where the Ploughshares Women showed two videos. One was of the group's direct action against British Aerospace headquarters where they dyed the water in the ornamental fountains a deep red and daubed 'fountains of blood' on the entrance walls. The second video showed the Ploughshares Women declaring their philosophies, the facts about Indonesia and East Timor, and there followed an often amusing account of their recent protest against

Hawks which resulted in them being charged with burglary and criminal damage.

In the midst of this sick society which has made cowards and cynics of most of us, it was uplifting and humbling to see these people driven by moral outrage to have the moral and physical courage to put their own liberty at risk for the greater good.

As the dirty realities, covert activities and pathetic incompetences crawl out from under the stone of the Scott enquiry, we hope they will continue to eat away at the government's credibility and convince more people of the truth of the old maxim: Whenever a politician speaks we must ask ourselves 'Why is this bastard lying to me?'

SPY IN THE TILL

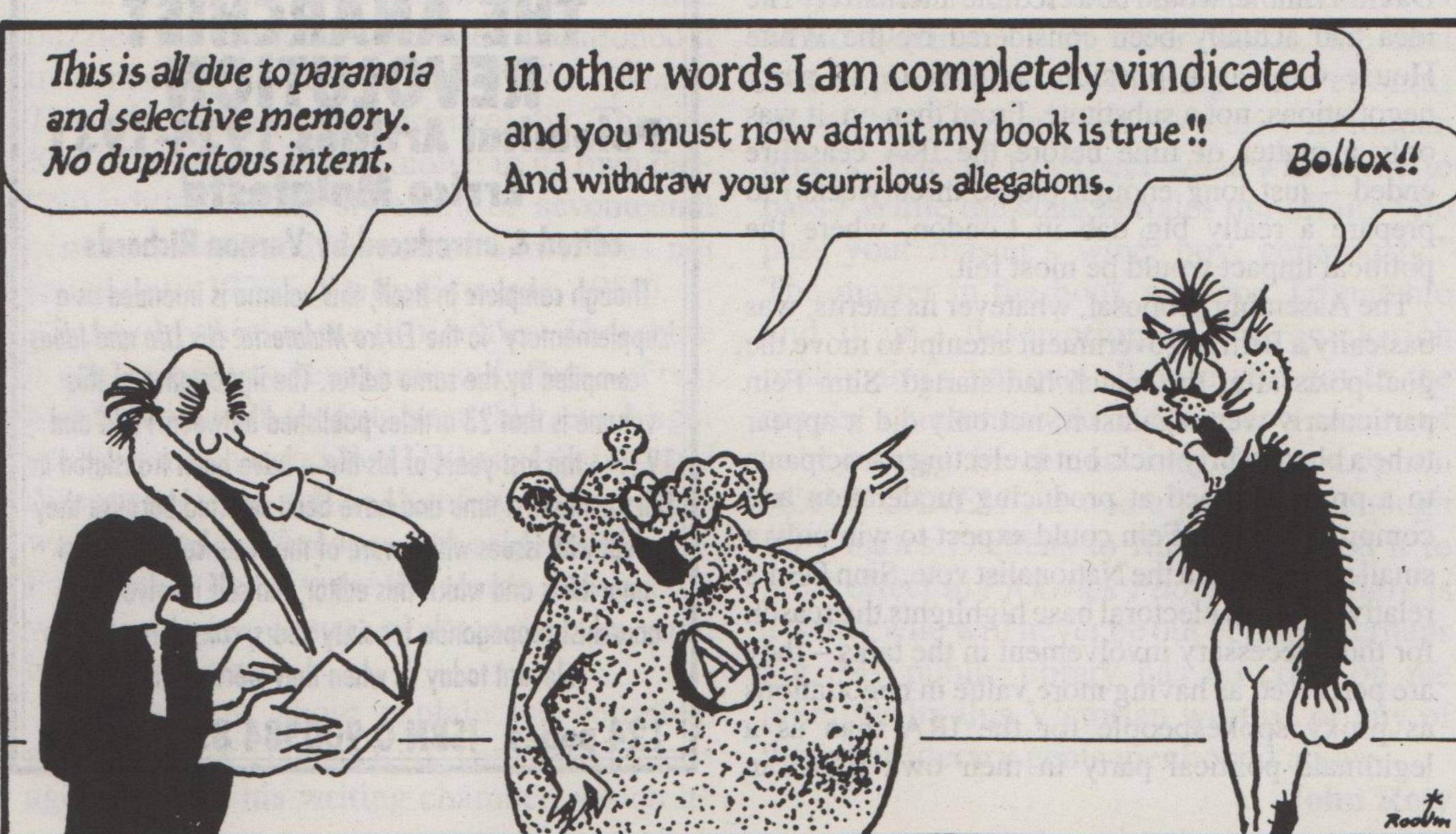
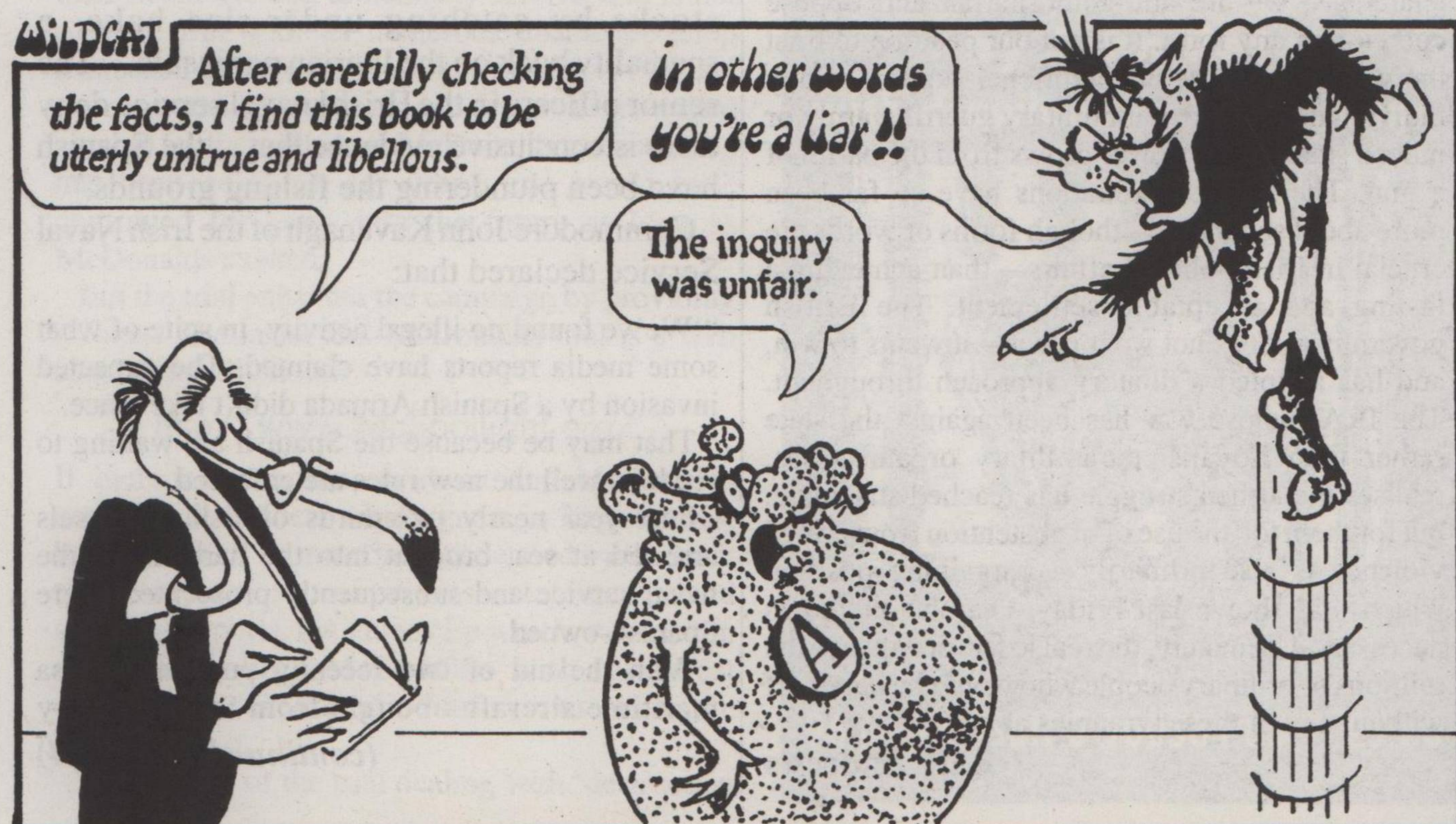
When supermarket chains first began listing written descriptions on customer receipts of each item purchased, friends and I used them to do mock character readings of each other's priorities. Were we obsessed by food, alcohol, healthy eating, cleaning materials, did we give our pets a varied diet? These till receipts helped the stores with their stock control.

Now they have gone one step further by introducing loyalty cards - plastic cards which the customers present at the till to accumulate points which, in accordance with the amount spent, are then converted into money or gifts. This 'something for nothing' ploy is designed to encourage customers to remain loyal to a particular supermarket so they can build up their points more quickly.

There is more to this offer than meets the eye. Not only does it attract spending but it gives a wealth of detailed information about individual customers matched to their name, age and address. Many personal habits are recorded, such as how much alcohol do they buy, are they vegetarian, do they use condoms and if so how many, do meat-eaters buy eco-products?

The supermarkets are quick to assure us that this data will not stray beyond their central computer and claim that the information will help them to provide a better service. If trends here follow those in America, the result of these cards will be that the individual stores will favour the buying habits of the top 20% of purchasers and therefore any discounts will be aimed at the products bought by the better off. The bottom 20% will pay more as they are not such valuable customers. The high street is already beginning to see a split between the 'Waitrose, Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury' upmarket customers and the 'Somerville, Kwiksave, Costcutter' poorer ones.

Over ten million people regularly use these loyalty cards and for many it is the only plastic card they will ever have access to. When customers realise how valuable this data is to the stores perhaps they will demand a better return for their private information.



Scott and the IRA: ARMS SALES AND THE BOMB

Hypocrisy has got to be the prevailing ailment of English society. How those foreigners must hate us! The Canary Wharf bomb goes off, and within days we get Anglo-smug talking heads offering up platitudes on television – Mr Major, followed by Mr Blair, soon to be followed by Mr Ashdown, and so on – endless heads and seemingly endless platitudes.

The press rummages for reasons for the renewal of violence, and comes up with a few coherent ideas in acres of newsprint. A confident headline in the *Observer* – “Why the IRA went back to war” – adorned a story which described much but explained little.

Following the Mitchell Report on Northern Ireland, there was a welter of exchanges about elections by the Unionists and the British Government; about peace talks by the IRA; about proximity talks by the Irish Government; and now about a referendum by John Hume of the SDLP. Behind all this is the stumbling block of Section 1 of the Northern Ireland Constitution Act (1973): “... it is hereby affirmed that in no event will Northern Ireland ... cease to be part of ... the United Kingdom without the consent of the people of Northern Ireland voting in a poll held for the purpose of this section ...”

Today there is still a majority in Northern Ireland in favour of the union with Great Britain, and no amount of bombs or reports can magic that away.

AIDING THE ENEMY

Considering corruption in British public life, George Orwell in his essay the *Lion and the*

Unicorn says: “Nearly always it is more in the nature of self-deception, of the right hand not knowing what the left hand doeth.” At times the lack of awareness seems so blatant it’s hard to believe the right hand knows what the right hand doeth, as when John Major said it would turn his stomach to talk to the IRA while all the time negotiations went on apace.

We must marvel at the way these people deal with inconsistencies. They will go on condemning last week’s IRA bomb, while this week prevaricating on the regulation of arms supplies to Iraq. The Scott Report into the supply of arms to Iraq accuses government ministers of lying, but the government picks out bits of judgespeak, like ‘no duplicitous intent’, to allege that they have all been exonerated.

It’s a funny do this double-dealing lark, but no doubt the British politicians will keep a straight face. An editorial in the *Observer* spells out this art of the two-faced in British political life: “There were two policies operating in Whitehall. One was overt and strict; the other covert and lax. The Government’s double-standards encouraged Saddam to believe that he could help himself to Kuwait. Ministers, who had willingly acted as arms salesmen in the Middle East, found that our troops were facing British weapons in the Gulf.”

The result was that Ministers were ready to let (but, they insist, did not ‘conspire’ to let) three businessmen from Matrix Churchill go to jail rather than admit they had altered their

own stated ban on arms-related exports. Matrix Churchill closed and 700 workers lost their jobs. Parliament was misled, and the Customs & Excise authorities, and the courts.

The Scott Report is the culmination of an inquiry set up by John Major to look into arms sales to Iraq after the collapse of the trial of the directors of Matrix Churchill in 1992.

ESTABLISHMENT FALL OUT?

The wider consequences have been curious. Distinguished former Foreign Ministers, like Howe and Hurd, tried to rubbish the Scott Report in advance of its publication. The Conservative Party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, called on voters to voice their dissatisfaction with judges more loudly. Sir Richard Scott hardly qualifies as a loony-lefty judge: in 1984 he upheld an injunction preventing mass picketing by striking miners.

Somehow, as the barrister Anthony Scrivener QC has observed, the judiciary and Tory Party, the party of the establishment, have ‘become disengaged’. Some, like the Tory Sir Ivan Lawrence, seem to be warning about the rule of the judges. Perhaps they are casting a worried eye to Europe, particularly Italy and Spain, where former Ministers are enjoying provisional liberty between appearances in court before the judges.

Truly the right hand doesn’t know what the left hand doeth, or vice versa for that matter.

Brian Bamford

RE-ESTABLISH THE CEASEFIRE

It is a basic tenet of anarchism that people are happiest when they live as autonomously as they can, free from coercion, fear and intimidation. The anarchist movement has always argued for a society based on peaceful cooperation between responsible individuals. So when antagonistic factions more noted for hostility and opposing attitudes call a halt to violence and start talking about peace, it should be something to be welcomed. Even if an armistice appears to be only a tactical posture, at least while it lasts we can feel encouraged and hope for something lasting to evolve. Talks to bring about a lasting peace in Northern Ireland are therefore an interesting move forward.

The bomb in East London’s Docklands area on Friday 9th February was an unpleasant but hardly unexpected reminder by the secessionist Irish Republican Army of the alternative to peace and discussion. After a seventeen month ceasefire during painfully slow progress in talks, it was obvious that the ‘peace process’ was stalling. It was never easy. Unionists refused to talk with Sinn Fein, the British government refused to talk until the other armed bodies called a ceasefire, Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries agreed that it as not appropriate to disarm prior to an acceptable settlement being reached, and finally – on 24th January – Tory PM John Major rejected outright the Report of the International Body on arms decommissioning under former US Senator George Mitchell. This set out six principled commitments and a series of steps for arms decommissioning to proceed alongside ongoing peace talks. Major merely used the Report’s 56th paragraph to suggest that pre-negotiation elections to an Assembly, as proposed by Progressive Unionist Party leader David Trimble, would be a credible alternative. The idea had actually been considered by the White House only as a possible adjunct to all-party negotiations, not a substitute. From then on, it was only a matter of time before the IRA ceasefire ended – just long enough (some three weeks) to prepare a really big dab in London, where the political impact would be most felt.

The Assembly proposal, whatever its merits, was basically a British government attempt to move the goal-posts after the match had started. Sinn Fein particularly were against it; not only did it appear to be a blatant dirty trick, but in electing participants to a process aimed at producing moderation and compromise Sinn Fein could expect to win only a small share of even the Nationalist vote. Sinn Fein’s relatively small electoral base highlights the reason for their necessary involvement in the talks – they are perceived as having more value in negotiations as proxy spokespeople for the IRA than as a legitimate political party in their own right; an

uncomfortable dichotomy but the logical outcome of Sinn Fein’s Danny Morrison’s famous dictum that the Republican movement should fight with a ballot box in one hand and an Armalite in the other.

The London bombing, although undoubtedly embarrassing to Sinn Fein, was essentially a direct challenge to Major to drop demands for an elected Assembly and resume serious talks. It has left him in an even less tenable position than the hapless Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams, who although supposedly speaking on their authority clearly cannot control nor condemn the IRA’s Army Council. It is even more unfortunate from the aspect of conducting negotiations that having felt it safe to ignore the ‘Unionist veto’ whilst officially retaining support for the majority population in Northern Ireland, Major’s corrupt and failing government has become increasingly dependent on Unionist support. The overall Tory majority in the House of Commons is tiny. This embattled government, with huge internal divisions and deeply unpopular with voters, is in no position to do anything that might alienate Unionist support at Westminster. Whether this is sufficient to maintain the Loyalist paramilitaries’ ceasefires remains to be seen.

Despite the reinforcement of the ‘Ring of Plastic’ around the City and the traffic cones outside police stations, it is unlikely that the Docklands explosion heralds the start of a sustained IRA campaign in England, and even less likely that bombings would recommence in Northern Ireland. Its purpose was obviously to spur the parties involved into rethinking their positions. So far it seems to have worked. The British, Irish and US governments –

not to mention John Hume of the Social Democratic and Labour Party – have been running around like headless chickens ever since, trying to get the peace process back on the road. It is now clear that no further preconditions can be put on the IRA if the Republican movement is to be represented at the negotiating table. The denial – widely believed – by Gerry Adams of prior knowledge of the London bomb has supposedly weakened the argument for including Sinn Fein in peace talks; but logically there is no other option. The British government cannot treat openly with the IRA any more than with the various Loyalist paramilitary groups, yet their involvement in the process is vital. The knee-jerk reaction of the British government was to refuse to deal further with Sinn Fein representatives, but with the pressure now on to re-establish the IRA ceasefire as quickly as possible, with the minimum loss of face for all concerned, talks must eventually resume. Peace is made between enemies, not between friends.

If nothing else is learnt from Friday’s bomb in which two innocent people died and several others were injured, it is the futility of violent confrontation as a way of solving anything. Yet it would be too subtle to expect either the IRA or the Loyalist paramilitaries to view a temporary cessation of armed actions as anything other than a pragmatic option for bringing pressure to bear on the enemy. There is no reason either to expect the British government to regard peace as an end in itself – that is not the way governments behave either, and Westminster (as the old slogan put it) is the political wing of the British Army.

Sadly, recent events will only increase fear and misery for the vast majority of ordinary, unarmed people in Britain and Ireland for whom peace and freedom are real aims, not bargaining counters, and more important than the manoeuvrings and shenanigans of a discredited government. As anarchists, we are anti-authoritarian and oppose coercion in any form. It is not our position to trust the word of or give unconditional support to any individual or group, paramilitary guerrilla army or indeed state whose power grows from the barrel of a gun. The recent negotiations have so far been more about semantics – though forms of words are crucial in Irish political affairs – than achieving a lasting and acceptable settlement. The British government does not want peace – it wants to win, and has adopted a dilatory approach throughout. The IRA, whose war has been against the state rather than Loyalist paramilitary organisations, realises the armed struggle has reached stalemate, but for them too the use of or abstention from armed violence is shown primarily a bargaining position which – as shown last Friday – can be altered as necessary. Ultimately, the real losers are always the millions of ordinary people who would be better off without any of these tyrannies at all.

Katy Andrews

ANARCHIST NOTES IN BRIEF

POSTSCRIPT ON ‘THE GREEDY FISHERMEN’

It is quite extraordinary that there are so-called responsible representatives of the community who can go on defending what is in fact the over-fishing – the depletion of the fishing stocks – with nationalist arguments. One Euro MP Anne McIntosh (presumably an MEP for the East Anglian area) called on the government to change the way in which fishermen are punished for breaching quotas. She particularly wants to see the maximum fine for each offence cut from £50,000, for she says “fines like these are putting fishermen out of business and giving them criminal records”. I don’t know who this woman is, but who in his or her right mind could possibly vote for somebody who has such arguments? “We must attempt to reach a sensible balance between upholding the law in conserving our fish stocks for future generations and penalising our own producers.” She wants the best of all worlds. As *Freedom* was pointing out in the last issue (‘Cheating Fishermen’) the Big Boys with the large trawlers will cheat because they know that most of the time they won’t be caught. The one who was caught for 28 offences which he had admitted was quite prepared to pay £12,500! He was only shocked because he was fined £25,000.

THE REAL VICTIMS IN THE FISHING WAR

are the open-boat inshore fishermen who are being included in the quotas imposed by the European Union. The *East Anglian Daily Times* (13th January) has a whole page featuring the views of the Fisheries Minister and those of an inshore fisherman and of a local MP. From my point of view, in any country the inshore fishermen (and I am not talking about the large trawlers but of the open seven-metre boats) should not only be given exclusive fishing rights within, say, five miles but should be excluded from quotas. And I am sure these fishermen would be quite prepared to remain within those limits. On the other hand, ocean-going trawlers should be excluded from inshore fishing, and subjected to quotas.

According to an Aldeburgh fisherman (*East Anglian Daily Times*, 13th January) “when we are forced to stay on shore we can see French and other European boats fishing in our waters, so where is the conservation in that.”

IT’S ALWAYS THE FOREIGNER – OR IS IT?

Freedom referred to the ‘Cheating Fishermen’ on our shores (10th February). The *Guardian* (10th February) had a feature with a photograph of the “Irish gunboat which keeps fishing pirates at bay”. In connection with what *Freedom* has published about the fishing industry and the vociferous attacks against the Spaniards and other ‘foreigners’ by the British fishing industry, and in particular of the ‘invasion’ of the Irish Box by the Spaniards, this reportage is full of detailed facts which don’t make the Spaniards to be the rule-breakers denounced by the British fishermen. To quote the *Guardian* (10th February): “Irish fishermen ... accuse the Spanish of cheating and of endangering future stocks by catching under-size hake, a speciality back on the Iberian peninsula ... The senior officers in the [Irish] naval service deny there is conclusive evidence that ... the Spanish have been plundering the fishing grounds.”

Commodore John Kavanagh of the Irish Naval Service declared that:

“We’ve found no illegal activity, in spite of what some media reports have claimed. The expected invasion by a Spanish Armada didn’t take place.”

That may be because the Spanish are waiting to see how well the new rules are enforced.

Last year nearly two-thirds of fishing vessels arrested at sea, brought into the harbour by the naval service and subsequently prosecuted, were Spanish-owned.

With the aid of two recently purchased Casa maritime aircraft – bought from Spain – every

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THE ANARCHIST REVOLUTION Polemical Articles 1924-1931 Errico Malatesta

edited & introduced by Vernon Richards

Though complete in itself, this volume is intended as a ‘supplementary’ to the *Errico Malatesta: His Life and Ideas* compiled by the same editor. The importance of this volume is that 23 articles published between 1924 and 1931 – the last years of his life – have been translated in full for the first time and have been selected because they deal with issues which were of much concern amongst anarchists and which this editor, himself involved with anarchist propaganda for sixty years, considers to be as relevant today as when they were written.

124 pages ISBN 0 900384 83 2 £3.50

NORTHERN IRELAND: THE MEANING OF DOCKLANDS

Amid all the frantic speculation about the Irish peace process, there are some certainties. The IRA ceasefire has been broken. Thus far, the loyalist ceasefires have not been broken. Thus far, there has been only one explosion. It also seems true to say that since the Docklands bombing there has been renewed impetus towards all-party negotiations.

On such slender threads are now hanging our hopes for peace in these islands.

The topic was that on the very day that the bomb exploded in London, on Friday 9th February, Sinn Fein was making measurable progress in its efforts to be accepted as a legitimate part of the political process. On that day, for example, Mitchel McLaughlin, a leading Sinn Fein strategist, took part in an unprecedented face-to-face television debate with Ken Maginnis of the Official Unionist Party. The programme was never aired because of the bombing.

Why then did the IRA choose this moment to explode their first bomb in seventeen months?

There are a number of factors. At the root of them all is the fact that there has been no real progress towards all-party talks during these last seventeen months. This basic fact has led many in the republican movement to question the validity of the 'unarmed strategy' championed by Gerry Adams.

One aspect of this discontent has been the beginnings of a splintering of the IRA. It has been reported that some members of the IRA in Monaghan had defected to a rival grouping known as 'Republican Sinn Fein', an outfit which has been unremittingly hostile to Sinn Fein's peace strategy. It has also been suggested that IRA Volunteers in West Belfast were defecting to the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), which has never formally signed up to the ceasefire, but which has in practice observed it. Loyalists have even claimed that this recruiting success by the INLA led the IRA recently to assassinate Gino Gallagher, the leader of the INLA, a charge which the IRA has vehemently denied.

There have also been reports of hints from IRA commanders in South Armagh and Tyrone, before Christmas, that they might break away from the IRA command structure if the leadership did not respond to their concerns about the peace process. With hindsight, it may even be possible that the recent killings of drug dealers in Northern Ireland were also expressions of manoeuvring within the IRA. For its part, the RUC believes that elements of the IRA carried out the shooting attack on the house of an RUC reserve officer in County Tyrone recently, indicating growing restlessness among the rank and file.

All in all, it seems very likely that the IRA was, in the last few weeks, beginning to break up. If this is the case, this must have been a major factor in the decision of the IRA Army Council to authorise the Docklands bomb.

I would like to pose a question which may seem unacceptable to even raise, and which no doubt would not be well-received by those

who suffered in the Docklands, or by the friends and family of those who died.

Nevertheless, I think it is important to consider whether it is better for the people of Ireland, north and south, and for the people of Britain, to have a centrally-controlled and united IRA organisation which has established connections into the political process, or whether we would suffer more, and whether peace would be further away if there were now several competing republican factions prosecuting their own private wars (and engaged in fratricidal struggles which would claim as their first victims those republican leaders most involved in the peace process).

Clearly, the best situation would be if there were no IRA, and there were no community support for the IRA in the North of Ireland, but the only way to achieve this seems to be to remove the injustices that create community support for the Provisionals. There is no other way forward.

Returning to the Docklands bomb itself, the final catalyst for IRA violence seems to have been the Government's response to the Mitchell Report on 24th January, which most observers appear to see as the decisive event leading to the bomb. An IRA source was quoted after the bombing as saying that John Major's elections proposal was the 'final straw' for the rank and file of the republican movement. Before that, they had had to endure months of delay, first over the 'permanency' of the ceasefire, and then over the 'decommissioning' of IRA weapons before negotiations – that is to say, a symbolic surrender.

The impasse over this last question was supposed to be broken by the introduction of an international dimension (effectively the United States) in the shape of Senator George Mitchell and his three-person 'International Body', charged by John Major and John Bruton, the Irish Taoiseach, with resolving the issue of paramilitary arms.

Mitchell reported on 22nd January 1996 that prior decommissioning was a non-starter. He proposed that the confidence which might have been created by a token surrender of weapons could instead be created by the adoption by all parties of six basic principles. In my next article I hope to deal in detail with these principles and to point out their strengths and weaknesses, but for now it is sufficient to note that they contained serious difficulties for republicans, and indeed for other parties in the North.

According to Eamonn McCann, the former civil rights activist and current trade unionist, the republican leadership would have found it very difficult to sell the Mitchell package to the rank and file, but they would probably have succeeded in this task – if they had been given the opportunity.

full, not just because all the propaganda about the Spaniards sweeping up the small hake, but because it is a condemnation of the capitalist system. The fishermen are both the victims but by their mentality the supporters of the capitalist system – for profit at any price – and so far as the fishing industry is concerned, the price is the fish stocks. Farmers feed (even is it's with chemical fertilisers) the land, sow and again feed their crops for better or for worse. Fishermen give nothing to the ocean. They simply exploit the bonanza and have no thought for the generations that will follow. Apart from the inshore open-boat fishermen – who are being driven out – the rest, the trawler ocean-going fishermen, are the enemy of the people. The quotas may be unfair to some (and we know that they are for the open-boat inshore fishermen) but have no sympathy for the trawler owners who are doing to the oceans what the prairie farmers are doing to the land.

Libertarian

They were not given that opportunity.

John Major blew the Mitchell principles out of the water almost before they were launched. The *Guardian* commented the day after his keynote speech, "Mr Major's counter-move boldly ignored the six principles". Major announced on 24th January that there were only two ways forward: prior decommissioning or elections to a new body in Northern Ireland. There was no mention of the Mitchell principles.

This hard-line Unionist position was made even more offensive to Nationalists by virtue of the fact that Major had not consulted the Irish Government beforehand. Furthermore, and even more depressing, implicit in Major's acceptance of the Unionist election plan was his acceptance of the Unionist timetable, of holding the elections in April or May – months after date agreed by Dublin and London for all-party talks to begin.

It seems that with his speech on 24th January, Major tipped the balance within the IRA in favour of a resumption of war. This seems to be accepted even by some sections of the Tory party. After the bombing, an unnamed minister was quoted as saying, "This will upset Major, personally, and, in Westminster and abroad, it may undermine his reputation and appeal as a statesman. People may conclude that, perhaps, this was not a great way to respond to Mitchell".

An anonymous, but 'staunchly pro-Unionist' Tory MP conceded to the *Financial Times* that "we should not have made prior decommissioning of weapons such a bald precondition ... we gained little by boxing Adams so firmly into a corner." Then Peter Temple-Morris, Tory MP for Leominster and a leader of the 'left-wing' Macleod Group of Tory MPs, said on *Newsnight* after the bombing, "The cause of the failure is undoubtedly the delay. We had terrorists coming down from the hills, saying, 'We do not surrender', but saying 'Talk to us, we will not shoot you'. That was the essence of the whole thing. We had therefore implicitly ... to talk to them."

Joe Hendron, SDLP MP for West Belfast, spoke for many when he said, "Whatever has happened in terms of the IRA activity, the IRA must take the blame. But having said that, what has the British government done in the last seventeen months? It has been pussyfooting around." The Government, said Hendron, did not have clean hands.

The effect of the bombing was to force Major to reverse course. His statement to the House of Commons on 12th February was, as the *Daily Telegraph* put it, "in marked contrast" to his statement on 24th January.

On 24th January, Major had put forward a stark choice: elections or decommissioning. On 12th February, the Prime Minister stated that, "Our minds are not closed"; "There is more than one option that lies before us at the moment and we are examining those options." It is possible that if Major had shown a similarly 'open' mind on 24th January, two men would still be alive today.

We are some way away from a formal restoration of the IRA ceasefire. Some concrete guarantees will be needed from Britain before the dissidents in the IRA will permit the Army Council to return to an 'unarmed strategy'. And, worryingly, the decommissioning issue has not gone away. Unionists are, so far as I can see, merely biding their time. But for the moment, barring any further explosions, and providing that the loyalist paramilitaries maintain their ceasefire, the peace process may have more life in it than for some months.

Did Inam Bashir and John Jefferies die in vain? No one can say for sure. But it may well be that the deaths of these two men, and the suffering of so many more people in the Docklands, may yet play some part in moving us all towards all-party talks, just as the deaths of two boys in Warrington, only a few years ago, played some part in the evolution of the peace process.

They should not have died.

The hard fact remains that the only way to make sure there are no more deaths is to press all parties to compromise their demands, and to be willing to negotiate a new future of Ireland, north and south. Not talking costs lives.

Once we get to all-party talks, we will see how far republicans have gone in their thinking, and what proposals they are going to table concerning 'interim arrangements' in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland. We will also see whether there is similar flexibility and willingness to compromise in the Unionist camp.

For the moment, the pressing issue is to see a speedy start to negotiations, and a willingness on all sides to reach agreement. In this process, British public opinion has an important role to play.

Milan Rai

Next issue: Milan Rai examines 'decommissioning', the government's election proposals, and the Mitchell Report, in greater detail.

THE TROUBLES ARE BACK

The politicians of Belfast, Dublin, Washington and London have missed out on the new political language we need if we are to put the Troubles behind us. The media have done little better. It reads something like this:

a) The inter-communal conflict is such that it will never be resolved without the aid of an effective external catalyst. President Clinton has tried and failed. This leaves only the EU, and they have funkied it for 27 years. Their help is now imperative.

b) The way to resolve the North/South conflict in Northern Ireland is to subsume it in a new constitutional settlement for the British Isles as a whole – also needful for Scotland and Wales. A Britannic Confederation will mean no dominion of Northern Ireland by London or Dublin. Nothing less will do. The problem will not be 'solved', it needs to be removed.

c) The other crucial step concerns troops. The British government should promise now that when a new constitutional settlement has been agreed and implemented, all British troops will be withdrawn from Northern Ireland.

d) The failure of politicians of all parties in Northern Ireland means that the next move will turn on the emergence of a new widely-based inter-communal movement demanding peace and seeing to it directly, i.e. taking matters out of the hands of all political parties. Otherwise the killing and destruction will continue indefinitely.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

An immediate requirement is the formation, all over the UK, of small groups of Northern Ireland specialists (or people who, by dint of hard work, make themselves into specialists) who take upon themselves the task of changing British public opinion in directions in line with the above. Will those interested contact me? At best we now face two to three years of grim deadly struggle. The quicker and the better we are on to it, the shorter and the less will be the period of suffering. If we fail this time the killing and destruction will be without term.

Peter Cadogan
secretary of The Northern Ireland Project
The Gandhi Foundation, 3 Hinchinbrook
House, Greville Road, London NW6 5UP

ANARCHIST NOTES IN BRIEF

(continued from page 3)

vessel plying vast areas of sea can be logged, photographed and verified via a computer link at the fleet's Haulbowline base, though the Irish authorities admit that these state-of-the-art facilities cannot prevent fishing vessels from netting illegally.

"Most times boats are entitled to be where they are fishing, so it does require boardings to discover technical infringements", said Commodore Kavanagh. "Despite what is said about the Spanish, we have never discovered large quantities of undersize fish on a trawler".

He believes the Spanish receive so much criticism simply because their fleet is so large. Fourteen Irish vessels were also detained last year.

"Fishermen are the last great hunter-gatherers in western Europe", said another officer on the Eithne. "They don't like being tied down by bureaucratic regulations. The Spanish have been fishing these waters since the sixteenth century."

This excellent reportage is worth quoting in

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

DISOBEDIENCE (AT A SAFE DISTANCE)

I spent a weekend with the biggest bedroom I have ever slept in. A portrait on the wall said it had been that of Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, the last of a long line of dependents of the royal family, including the Duke of Cumberland, known in Scotland as the Butcher of Culloden. They had lived there since Charles II took it over from the original builder, one of Cromwell's republican army, Captain John Byfield, who picked up 700 acres of Windsor Great Park as a result of his services to Cromwell.

Today it is an academic conference centre, and I was there to present the anarchist case in a meeting of students and teachers on the topic of Political Disobedience, but our welcoming address on the history of the house showed how useful it has always been to select the winning side. Like the elite of the Soviet Communist Party, hangers-on were rewarded with *dachas*.

My real interest was in hearing first-hand interpretations of the collapse of the Soviet empire. After all, as a Bulgarian speaker remarked, "What was surprising was the *means* by which the East European regimes were defeated: by mass civil disobedience".

Certainly, in spite of the industry of Sovietology in the West, nobody in or out of Russia predicted the collapse of the regime. The one exception was the Russian dissident A. Amalrik who, in 1970, wrote a samizdat essay *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?* He didn't live to enjoy his reputation as a prophet. After five years in prison he was allowed to come West, but was killed in a car crash in Spain, probably the result of normal road hazards rather than the long arm of the KGB.

Amalrik observed that the rulers of the post-Stalin years had continued to live upon the capital accumulated by the fear of arbitrary arrest in the Stalin years. This automatic conformity was illustrated by one of those Russian jokes. Ivan is asked 'Is it true that you don't have views of your own?' to which he replies 'Well yes I do, but I don't agree with them.'

The man who told us this story was talking about the phenomenon that some people call 'the rebirth of conscience' in the Soviet Union after 1953, notwithstanding the Brezhnev period. One factor was the family where grandparents, with long memories, are usually the people who rear Russian children. Another was that, by contrast with 'the great lie' of public life, the family needed honesty, integrity and purpose to survive. The deficiencies of housing policy and the sharing of apartments meant that every city flat was shared by people with personal tales to tell, and this included the millions of people

released from labour camps in the Krushchev years after Stalin's death. Everybody knew the truth about the ways in which the regime maintained its power.

Every concession was seen as a chink in the armour of the state, and some people continually pushed the door further, sometimes to have it brutally slammed. In 1968, when Soviet tanks moved into Czechoslovakia to crush the 'Prague Spring', exactly seven people publicly protested in Moscow (they included Pavel Litvinov, grandson of the Bolshevik foreign minister). As Amalrik said, "in an unfree country they behaved like free men."

In the late 1950s I covered a lot of space in this journal trying to interpret the material produced by western Sovietologists on the emerging opposition in Yugoslavia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union itself, and the intriguing combination of workers' control and a 'socialist market economy' that the left opposition seemed to be demanding (*Freedom*, 18th July, 1st August, 8th August, 15th August, 23rd August and 29th August 1959). My conclusion in the last of these articles was that: "Our efforts to sift through the conflicting accounts of the movement for workers' councils in the Communist world and to find whether, in any loosening of the regimes, there is a place for workers' control, have not been very conclusive. It is ironical to be forced to the conclusion that, in a Communist society a 'free market' economy is the most progressive alternative to the present economic regime, and more so, to find that it is the most feasible step towards workers' control. Whatever the Soviet citizen's aspirations as a producer, as a consumer he wants a system that delivers the goods."

How does this muted conclusion stand up after 37 years? This was the question I addressed to an East European speaker. He said that up to about 1970 the dominant current of opposition to the regimes was that of 'revisionists' appealing not to society at large but to thoughtful people within the parties. By the 1970s these revisionist trends were largely discredited, primarily because

nothing had happened, and the notion of 'civil society' took over.

He added that by the 1980s the monopoly of power in the hands of the Communist Party machine had become a political disaster, while economically the historical gap with the West had not been filled. In both spheres the regimes were perceived to have been a failure. Consequently the hard-won revolutions of 1989 were, in fact, in favour of what were perceived as Western values rather than for a step forward from Communist realities towards some future society.

I, of course, expostulated, "But this was at the very time when Western leaders of the Reagan/Thatcher style were specifically abandoning the concept of 'civil society' in favour of the worship of crude market forces." Perfectly true, was the reply, "but you can't imagine how bad things were". In previous phases of the East European and Russian regimes there was some kind of 'social contract'. People were offered a slow rise in living standards in exchange for political acquiescence. Modern mass-communications made everyone aware of the gap between Eastern and Western Europe. And not only this, Gorbachev had made it clear that, unlike Brezhnev, he was not going to use Russian might to preserve the East European regimes, while the local party bosses had no idea how to respond when faced with mass opposition. This was clearest in Poland, with the importance of Solidarity as the prime example of a popular autonomous mass movement.

Marxist-Leninist dogma glorified 'the masses' and this made Communist rulers quite vulnerable to real mass opposition. Consequently the leadership had a bewildered and passive stance, as can be seen in television film of the party bosses in Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, unwilling to use force but knowing that the people were appealing over their heads to Gorbachev, who had made it clear that Soviet tanks were no longer to be used to prop them up.

These factors combined to make civil disobedience effective. The elite had ceased to believe in the legitimacy of its own power, but as for the movement itself, "it knew what it rejected but did not know what it aimed for,"

while civil disobedience "dug its own grave by preparing the way for the new regimes".

Before I could absorb my impressions we had moved on to China, which had a four thousand year history of the alternation of obedience and rebellion: a series of dynasties punctuated by peasant revolts each occasioned by disasters like flood and famine. There has always been a tendency to distrust ordinary political bargaining, and the most recent example of this was the massacre in Beijing in 1989 which happened that way, I was told, because the authorities, like the Russian army in Prague in 1968, had no answer short of tanks, while the student leadership wanted a direct confrontation simply "to increase awareness".

Was awareness increased? Our Chinese speaker stressed that China has "nourished an honourable but marginal tradition of disobedience," and confirmed that the veteran anarchist Pa Chin was arrested then for expressing sympathy with the demonstrators in Tiananmen Square, but that he survives as a moral influence, now in his nineties.

I couldn't place her own sympathies from her presentation of Chinese history, but I had no doubt about the ideology of our final lecturer, who was a contributor to David Goodway's volume *For Anarchism* (Routledge, 1989). He provided an eloquent justification for civil disobedience in terms of the philosophical concepts of authors the students knew about, like Ronald Dworkin and John Rawls. He applied his argument, not only to the way that popular resentment and demonstration killed off the Poll Tax in the 1980s but to current environmental issues in Britain where the techniques of civil disobedience are being played out in front of our eyes. He concluded that, in terms of our duty to future generations who can hardly be expected to play a part in the alleged democratic process, it was not merely commendable but an actual civic duty to practice disobedience.

What I learned talking to students on the way back to London was that, by carefully relating his argument to the literature they encounter on their course, he had provided the most effective links with Thoreau's famous essay of 1849 *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*. From the backwoods of New England, Thoreau profoundly influenced not only Tolstoy and Gandhi and Martin Luther King, but was the unacknowledged animator who led the organisers of a course on government to spend a weekend arguing about the consequences of rejecting it.

Colin Ward

Regardless of the rights and wrongs of the NUM strike decision, the tactics, the politics of its leaders or the outcome, the 1984-85 miners' strike has gone down in history as one of the bravest and most momentous confrontations ever between British workers and the combined forces of the state and the bosses. For this reason, and for the lessons learnt during the struggle, we should not forget it. To jog your memory Freedom Press Distributors have stocks of several of the best books written about various aspects of the events. While other outlets are selling them at full price we are offering them for sale at half-price including postage,* as listed below. If you order the whole set you can claim an extra discount.

Strike Breaking is Essex: the policing of Wivenhoe and the Essex ports during the miners' strike* by Moira Abdel-Rahim, Canary Press. The state's campaign of violence against picketing miners and their supporters in Essex received sparse coverage as Essex has no pits, but strikers were keen to stop the government circumventing the strike by importing foreign coal through ports like Brightlingsea. Anyone on or remotely near a picket line, or who looked like a possible supporter, was treated to a demonstration of the state with its gloves off and harassed, intimidated, assaulted and arrested with increasing violence. In addition finger-printing, photographing and phone-tapping were routine, and arbitrary road-blocks began to appear everywhere, the most notorious being at Dartford Tunnel to stop Kent

YOU MUST REMEMBER THIS ... OR,

flying pickets using Essex as a short-cut around London en route to help their Midlands colleagues. Many people found all this hard to believe, but a wealth of detail compiled from interviews, research and the author's own picket-line experience confirms it. Now, these tactics are commonplace. A section on the costs of the police operation sheds light on an obscure legal provision called, ironically, 'mutual aid' whereby local forces cooperated with each other and the National Reporting Centre in London. Whether or not they had read Kropotkin, they certainly knew that anarchists have no monopoly on mutual aid. The appendices contain a chronology of events, coal import figures, police numbers, lists of charges and convictions, and the role of Essex University. One wonders how many of the people now protesting against live animal exports at Brightlingsea were on the miners' picket-lines. 121 pages, originally £2.50, now £1.25.

Across Frontiers: international support for the miners' strike 1984-85* by Jonathan Saunders, Canary Press. A much more positive application of mutual aid, this account of the innumerable acts of global solidarity with the British miners is all the more remarkable for the fact that these acts, large and small, passed practically unnoticed by the traditional left which, for all its dogmatic rhetoric, seemed not to believe in the international working class solidarity it so frequently proclaimed in its own sectarian publications. In fact this solidarity

was one of the main reasons the strike was able to go on as long as it did and greatly boosted the amount of aid that miners' support groups in Britain were able to provide. The scale of aid arriving from abroad varied from country to country according to numerous factors such as the strength of historical or cultural links with Britain, the relative affluence of its workers and local industrial and political considerations. From generous cash donations and huge containers full of food and clothes from Western Europe to the seemingly trivial yet touching gestures of generosity like the parcel of walnuts sent to Sheffield miners from their Indian counterparts who could afford nothing more in their conditions of desperate poverty. Beginning with a trickle, aid began to flood in, and continued until well after the end of the strike in the form of foreign holidays offered to miners' wives and children. This is a moving and inspiring tale with, in addition, an astonishing amount of information on the history of working class movements in many of these countries, e.g. the excellent analysis of American society and its class system, and the living conditions of South African miners. Notes, sources and an index are complemented by tables detailing UK imports of coal and oil during the period, with dates and countries of origin. A buoyant and highly readable book with photographs, originally £6.95, now £3.50.

Shifting Horizons* by Lynn Beaton, Canary Press. Two Nottinghamshire miners' wives describe here

in their own words the indispensable role of women in the miners' strike. They chart a political journey through Thatcher's Britain of two women among thousands more fighting for their communities and their dignity. Despite their upbringing in a pit village, they soon found that their history had ill-prepared them for the struggle which events forced upon them. Gradually finding a new awareness and identity, they also took on new roles as organisers and activists. Surrounded by police and scab, the women realised that there would be no strike pay to support the strikers and their families, so they set up support groups to raise funds and provide food and clothing, while the men looked after the children and did the housework — another steep learning curve! At times painful and frightening, this book is also touching and funny. An encouraging story of strength, courage and learning. 265 pages, originally £5.65, now £2.85.

Let Them Eat Coal: the political use of Social Security during the miners' strike* by Lesley Sutcliffe and Brian Hill, Canary Press. This book explains the political and legislative background to the Thatcher government's policies on welfare benefits. It centres upon the treatment meted out to striking miners in 1984-85 by the DHSS. Written by two welfare rights workers, it uses information from other such workers throughout the country, along with first-hand accounts and interviews with striking miners and their families. The way the benefits system is

Queue for the Titanic

We are the human race and since recorded time began it has been our destiny and our lot to stand in queues.

In my small fashion have joined the endless calvaries of the queues. Unemployment queues, cinema queues, mass union meeting queues, supermarket check-out queues, army queues, bus queues, queues in small bleak rooms to listen to speakers sharing their confused thoughts with me, fish and chip queues. Queues in fairgrounds to pay to see the Two Headed Woman, the wrestling, to pay to crouch around a small table with half a dozen other paying customers to view the performing fleas, and to enter a French, and Italian, brothel to take part in 'the orgy'. All in all, over the years, I hold that only the fleas hooked on thin gold wire were genuine in terms of cash and time.

It is for this reason that from a vantage view of the Fourth Estate I wafted sympathy towards the Town and his bored frau as they patiently waited to join the ebb tide of the kulture-hungry flowing into the Tate Gallery to view the mass paintings of Paul Cézanne. Slice the salami where thou wilt, Cézanne, but it is not the most laughter-making show in town. If anyone is to be congratulated on the 'block-busting' Paul Cézanne show, it is not the late Cézanne but the Tate Gallery PR Department who hyped the show, for gatewise cashwise it has been a major success. Poor old wet and dead Robert Maxwell must be biting his sea-soaked nails at not getting into such a culturally respectable act, for it beats politics.

The Sunday Times critic who I love to quote, out of context, writes that Cézanne was "not awesome, not magnificent, not intellectually gigantic, nor in some Germanic way impossible pure" but "what an interesting painted he was". The same has been said about me in the White Hart pub (mark 2), but one can live it down. Cézanne has been claimed, along with a numbers of others, as the greatest painter of the twentieth century. But how many entertainers and politicians have been hoisted onto the bandwagon to be so hailed and then become dust among the common communal dust and the fault is not theirs, unless they believe the roaring of the bemused or sycophantic rat-pack.

Cézanne, for me, gives neither pleasure as a painter nor long-term interest as an artist, and the fault does not lie with him. He tore off and up many hundreds of his own paintings. If one paints for the sheer pleasure of painting and other find pleasure in the painter's efforts, then that is all that matters no matter how minor the results. If one grows the biggest cabbage in the street, then lean on the garden



Bath Night
Paul, Maggi and de Lord

wall and bow to the Town and his supermarket frau smiling by.

Cézanne was of the opinion that he painted for museums. No man should be called upon to judge himself, but in that he was right for the people who have made Cézanne's reputation are the writers, literary critics and pseudo intelligentsia who feed off the complex second-rate, and this they have done with Paul Cézanne the painter. Backgrounds of strong pallid colours with a middle distance pressing onto the foreground and all produced with slashes of raw primary colours as still life or landscape they have the same minor but

intellectual appeal as crude abstract paintings, just as with his still lifes each dab of raw bright paint is isolated with its explanatory thick black line, i.e. this is an apple. If you feel I fault the lad, then he claimed that his 1890-1900 paintings are "something solid, like the art of the museums" and the art of the museums is dead art and dead art is the art of the graveyard. But he painted as a valid need to express himself and that is all that matters.

One can do no more than follow the Town and his skullhappy frau to the wild wayward call of Maggi Hambling within the Marlborough Fine Art Gallery. The Marlborough Gallery, who control an empire of painted canvases that stretch from Bond Street way west beyond the American eastern seaboard, are playing host with the wine to Maggi's exhibited 'Sculptures in Bronze'. Maggi is a personality who can fight her own corner and whose steady stare can put the frighteners into sensitive gentle creatures such as myself. But her claim to the world's, and the Marlborough's, attention is as a portrait painter and for myself her raw brash loose portraits have me screaming like a gelded colt. She has not the power and appeal of an artist in the same mould as Jawlensky and one feels that her paintings are of someone desperate to communicate in paint but unable to do so. And if I wrong her, then let her cut my name off her Valentine card list.

But Maggi, never fearful to stumble, is holding a major exhibition within the wine-tasting Marlborough Gallery of her 'Sculptures in Bronze'. Since the death of Epstein and Moore there has only been one sculptor of note within these small islands, and that was the late Elizabeth Frink. One of her brilliant bronze horses can be seen opposite the Ritz Hotel, come the revolution, comrades! And every time one views it one knows that Marini, the accepted master, lacked the tautness and the talent of Elizabeth Frink's work. But Maggi has turned to Giacometti for light in the darkness. Giacometti, whose modelling of the human figures were as thin as reeds beside a silent pool, had the Town rolling in the aisles, and whose sole claim to fame now is that he was expelled from the Surrealist Group in 1934 as a 'reactionary'.

Maggi has used the *cire perdue* for casting her thin dribbling of cast bronze. And *cire perdue* is no more than the ancient 'lost wax' used in ancient civilisations for the casting of

intricate 'objects of desire'. The intricate object is modelled in wax and then sealed in a clay-type mould with two tiny blow-holes. The molten bronze is then poured into the mould through a 'runner' and the wax melts and we are left with an intricate bronze object. And never put the back of one's pale hand to the damp brown, mein militant comrades crying that 'this is bourgeois fart art', for it is PO acceptable in relation to ancient ethnic art but is used in 1996 as a normal industrial method for single intricate castings.

Maggi has scratched thin lines in the sand to pour in the hot wax for her castings and in the end they are no more than the cottage industry of every seaside shell or pretty pressed flowers making a happy-time pattern. The genuine pleasure of Maggi's dribbles is the lovely patina on the surface of the bronze. As a small child I worked in a backstreet two-man foundry worked by two sad sexual deviants, and as they cast the bronze I would scoop the molten bronze scum off the red hot stone casting pot. I still remember the pleasure of the beautiful colours upon the surfaces of the cooling bronze and the breaking of the sand castings to release the hot casting. Maggi Hambling and My Lord Leighton, 'This is This Was Your Life'.

Arthur Moyses

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THE GREAT COAL STRIKE REVISITED

used by government to discourage people from striking, or to force them back to work, is set out in chapter and verse showing both the legal procedures used and how the precise calculations are made. In particular the authors show exactly how the Cabinet used the system to starve striking miners and their families back to work, and break the union. 55 pages, originally £1.95, now 95p.

A Year of Our Lives: a colliery community in the great coal strike of 1984-85* compiled and narrated by David Douglass, Hoolligan Press. A spirited and uplifting collection of writings by twenty men and women from in and around the Doncaster coalfield who stood firm throughout the strike. Each is written from a personal point of view and covers everything from the strike committee and picketing incidents to the setting up and running of welfare organisations, women's support groups and soup kitchens. There are descriptions of the violent paramilitary 'police' invasions of the pit villages, of the solidarity from rail workers who donated all their allowance of redundant wooden sleepers - 278 tons - to the miners for fuel over the winter, and some moving tributes by many of the writers to other miners and supporters, some of whom died during or after the dispute. The articles on scab workers and how they were dealt with underlines the lies put out by the massive propaganda campaign run by the NCB and the press to get strikers to give up. Having been enticed back to the pits and

promised protection and a job for life, within a few months of the resumption of work most had either accepted early redundancy, transfer to non-NUM pits or had just left under pressure from the community. That there was a propaganda campaign - along with the M15 campaign - is now confirmed by Seumas Milne's research (see below), and that Scargill was right about the Coal Board's secret hit-list of pits to be shut down (which provoked the strike) was confirmed when Heseltine, as President of the Department of Trade and Industry, shut down the vast majority of coalmines in 1993. Over forty photographs and illustrations plus a few short poems accompanying the text. Unpaginated, originally £3.50, now £1.75.

A Turn of the Screw: the aftermath of the 1984-85 miners' strike* by Martin Walker, Canary Press. The year-long strike ended with 700 men sacked, over 60 in prison and those back at work harassed by management and a break-away union in some areas. This was part of a wave of repression that swept the coalfields. It was not as overt as it was during the strike; it was economic, cultural and legal repression - less easily identified than the violence handed out by the police on the picket lines. Miners responded with a series of short strikes in various pits in a rearguard action. This book describes the culture of repression, both at work and in the community, and the new consciousness which developed amongst those who were victims of state violence, sackings and imprisonment. The

recent news of endemic crime and social breakdown around Grimethorpe - where the coalfield, the only employer in the area, has been closed, leaving local people no other source of income than to strip piping and wiring from abandoned or repossessed miners' houses for scrap money which they spend on drugs - indicates that the repercussions are continuing. These accounts are told in the words of the miners, nicely set off with analyses and short pieces of fiction, and there are also some memorable quotes. 132 pages, originally £3.95, now £1.95.

The Enemy Within: the secret war against the miners by Seumas Milne, Pan Books, newly published in revised paperback edition with postscript. Remember Nicholas Ridley? He it was who drafted the contingency plans to take on the miners, in 1978. Ever since the strikes of 1972 and 1974 and the three-day week, the Conservative Party had been obsessed by the desire to crush the most powerful union in the country. When Thatcher came to power in 1979 they set about it with gusto. Their strategy to crush the miners was the real motivation behind the decisions to rapidly expand nuclear energy and buy the Pressurised Water Reactors, to break up and sell the electricity industry, the 'dash for gas' and the privatisation of the gas industry, the nuclear levy, the rapid introduction of dual oil-and-coal-burning capacity at power stations, and a lot more besides. All of which was justified in public by the supposed need to 'go with market

forces' or 'to introduce freedom and choice and break up the monopolies'. All this, plus the build-up of coal stocks, the denial of Social Security benefits to strikers and the creation of a large mobile police unit was designed to kill the Tory bogeyman, the NUM and Arthur Scargill in particular. They used not only M15 but the US National Security Agency, the CIA and GCHQ in the biggest counter-subversion operation ever mounted. In a smear campaign that carried through into the '90s, they used the Maxwell press and television programmes on which he had influence to invent stories discrediting the NUM leaders, stories which were repeated long after they were shown to be lies and which not only the public but some anarchists believed. As you read the immense amount of material in this book you feel your eyes growing wider and wider, so frightening and astonishing are the depths to which the government and its agencies sank to in pursuit of this vast operation, and others against 'domestic subversion'. Next time you're in the North Sea Fish restaurant near the old NUM headquarters in London, see if you can guess where the M15 bug was hidden, or in the County Hotel in Bloomsbury, Mick McGahey's usual lodgings. Many of the themes in the books above come together in this one and make a lot more sense, as you'll see if you read it in conjunction with any of them. 511 very useful pages, £5.99. **KM**

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NICARAGUA: STUDENTS IN STRUGGLE

Freedom recently interviewed a student in Nicaragua about their struggle for funding in education and the repression they have suffered at the hands of the state.

Freedom: Can you tell us briefly what the 6% campaign is all about?

Javier: A few months ago at a summit of Central American presidents it was stated that subsidising university education was a luxury that these countries could ill afford. The education ministry in Nicaragua says that priority must be given to primary education. I think the Nicaraguan government's policy here is clear enough and, for sure, very similar to that of many Central American governments and I think it is related to the question of the international division of labour. Education in Nicaragua is being focused on the primary levels, further education will become more technical as demanded by the Nicaraguan economic system and the prevailing policies of neo-liberal economics.

There is no lack of professionals only workers and technicians. A professional education will only be available to those who can afford it and this in turn will ensure that the intellectual elite will always come from the same families. Now according to the constitution the government has to give certain universities, mainly in the public sector, 6% of the republican budget. The government has not respected this and has cut the figure to 4.2%. The campaign for 6% has as its objective to force the government to guarantee that these universities will not have to charge for courses nor reduce grants.

Freedom: Given the situation what has been the reaction of the students?

Javier: Since the 18th October last year there have been many protest marches to put pressure on the government to pay what it owes in order to make up for previous years when it didn't pay the full 6% and then to ensure it pays up this year. Little by little largely because of disorganisation caused by the student leaders these marches lost their popularity.

Then, in December, people started to realise the urgency of the problem and the rectors along with all the affected universities pledged their support. There was a non-violent demonstration on the 13th December 1995 which was attended by students, professors and other university staff. This was the day of the massacre.

Freedom: Can you give us details of what happened on the 13th December? How much coverage was given in the press and on the television?

Javier: The march went to the National Assembly and during the morning the marchers were surrounded by anti-riot police. Some of the university students brought eggs to throw at the police.

When the group I was with arrived at the Assembly already there were many students

there and to the East side of the Assembly one could see scuffles with the police. One minute after we had arrived the atmosphere was tense. Students began to throw eggs and at that same moment from another side of the Assembly students began to throw stones and small rocks. Immediately the police responded with tear gas.

There is a community which lives in extreme poverty a few metres from the Assembly hall and these people were the most affected. We students ran across this quarter fleeing the gas and people were coming out of their homes to get their children and, by bad luck, the wind was blowing towards this community (to the West). Then these people began supplying the students with stones so that they could defend themselves.

Those students in the other sector were less affected by the gas and were also defending themselves with stones. There were many stones and some cops were injured too. All the students began making their way to this sector and after a little we heard gunfire. 'They are firing in the air! They are firing in the air!' some students shouted trying to calm others down. We all hoped it was true but shortly afterwards we saw the first person who was wounded. We started to fall back - some of us were running and the police came after us for almost half a kilometre. They carried on firing and after half a kilometre they killed a student: Porfirio Ramos.

Some hours later in the afternoon we got back to the university after having to go a long way round because of the police presence.

The radio reported the events and there were some television reports that day. The next day it was headline news in some newspapers.

Porfirio Ramos died that day and Jeronimo Urbina died a few days later in hospital. Bismark Santana lost a leg and more than sixty wounded are still recovering.

Fernando Caldera; Pedro Aguilar; and Manuel Lezama, General Director of the National Police; Chief of the Managua Police Department and Chief of the illegal Antiriot Unit respectively did nothing to prevent the massacre and claim they had no responsibility for what happened.

Freedom: What was the students' reaction to all of this? Has the campaign been scared off?

Javier: There have been many marches and ecumenical activities. There have also been delegations to other areas of the country and visits to the poorer people living in the East and West of Managua. The last march went once again to the National Assembly and one local newspaper calculated that there were 20,000 students.

Also 'brigades' have formed like the muralists which is a group of people who are making

banners and graffiti for the marches and the streets in general. Also there is a media 'brigade' which has taken on the job of dealing with the media. There are other groups who have come together spontaneously to keep up the pressure for the 6%.

Freedom: Tell us some more about these groups?

Javier: They are co-ordinated between all the universities and even if the official structures are always hierarchical there are of course other forms of organisation. I can speak mainly of those structures that can be found at the UCA (Universidad Centroamericana) where I am a student. Here there is a 'brigade' which was originally called the 'shock' brigade which tried to gain control of the student body. Not all but certainly many of them tried to abuse their power or tried to manipulate students which is always the case when such structures spring up. The merit of these organisations was their spontaneous appearance during the campaign but the students have also organised themselves in semi-official ways with more horizontal relationships which evade the 'shock' brigades' control. It is strange but one of the last decisions of the 'shock' brigade was an exam boycott whereas the majority of the students wanted to sit them. People looked for other forms of protest, organised in small groups and sat their exams.

Freedom: What has been the role of TELCOR (the telecommunications company) in all of this? Is it true that the employees have supported the students? Can you give us details and tell us about the company's reaction?

Javier: The workers at TELCOR were on strike a few months ago as a protest against the privatisation of this company. During this period it was said that there would be 1,700 redundancies. One group of students 'took' TELCOR because they thought this a good way of showing solidarity with the workers and a way of putting pressure on the government. There was no damage and the interviews with the employees demonstrated their solidarity with the students.

Freedom: How do you think the campaign will now develop? Will the student struggle continue through the election period in Nicaragua?

Javier: There are many rumours relating to the forthcoming visit of the Pope. It is thought there might be a deal with the government so that the campaign can be put on ice and not prejudice the visit. I can't say for sure that the students will go as far as the election period but I do feel it will go on for a while. I think that if the campaign continues that far it must retain its independence and not allow a political party to hijack the 6% banner in its own interests. I'm trying to say that it will perhaps be hard for the students to keep control of the campaign without it coming under the control of interested parties.

CANADA UPDATE: WINTER 1995-96

Ethnic restaurants and English language bookshops have been vandalised in Montreal throughout the months of November and December in a xenophobic reaction to the referendum loss. However, this was the work of only a tiny faction and is not indicative of general sentiment. Anti-francophone graffiti is also appearing. Ballot-box fraud was discovered in several communities populated largely by immigrants. Thousands of 'No' votes were disqualified at the behest of government-appointed polling workers. The Quebec government whitewashed the issue.

14th November: Thousands of mink were released from a mink farm in Langley, British Columbia. Many of the animals face starvation or death on the roads. This action is believed to be the work of animal rights extremists.

18th November: Polls taken by the magazine *Actualiti* show that only 4% of Quebecois have any faith in politicians and only 14% in trade union leaders.

22nd November: The federal government passed its anti-gun legislation. Now it will be necessary to register firearms with the State. A first step in disarming the people, many fear. Resistance is expected to the implementation of this act, most particularly by farmers and native people.

24th November: A strike by hospital laundry workers in Calgary galvanised opposition to contracting-out policies enacted by the government. Health workers threatened a general strike over the issue and the government backed down.

Thousands marched against cuts to subsidised day-care in Ontario. Opponents claim the cuts will force them to quit work and go on welfare.

The Quebec government endorsed a \$180,000,000 cut in welfare spending, which hits people hard in 'back to work' programmes - a dis-incentive to work.

27th November: Cree leaders asked the Canadian government to ban the leg-hold trap. They want to encourage a more humane form of trapping and upset European animal rights activists demands to prohibit the importation of Canadian fur. Such a prohibition would create much hardship among native people and destroy one of the few remaining aspects of their traditional way of life.

1st December: A former FLQ member has organised the Movement for the National Liberation of Quebec (MNLQ). Unlike the old FLQ, this new formation is proto-fascist. It wants a moratorium on immigration, abolition of English language schools and struggle against Quebec's 'internal enemies'. The previous day, the right wing nationalist Pierre Bourgault denounced Jews, Greek and Italian immigrants as the 'real racists'

for opposing Quebec's independence.

6th December: The Ligue Antifasciste Mondial has publicly denounced the MNLQ for its threats against minorities. Pierre Valieres, a former leader of the FLQ noted for his book *White Niggers of America*, also called them 'racist and xenophobic'.

8th December: There is a growing grassroots movement in Montreal and western Quebec to consider secession should Quebec province declare independence. Two proposals have been put forward. One is that Montreal become a city-state and an eleventh province of Canada. Another is that the western part of Quebec, and the native territories of the north, all of which voted against the independence of Quebec in the October referendum, should become a separate province called either 'West Quebec' or 'Hochelaga'. This way, those Quebecois who want an independent state could have one, and those who wish to remain in Canada could also do so.

10th December: Unionised workers in London, Ontario, declared a one-day general strike against the Ontario governments cut-backs. The strike was only partially successful but several thousand supporters marched through the streets.

The Ontario Tories' proposed Bill 26 is making mockery of their claims to be populists. The Bill, reminiscent of Margaret Thatcher's lust for centralisation, would concentrate a vast amount of political power in the cabinet, enabling them to over-ride municipal governments and renege on contracts.

28th December: A recent poll shows most Canadians approve of cutting the cost and size of government but most are opposed to further cuts in health and education. 80% feel the rich have not sacrificed and 61% believe the poor have sacrificed too much in the deficit cutting process.

19th January: Opposition is building to changes in unemployment insurance. A united front of unions and popular groups organised in Quebec and mass demonstrations have taken place in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

20th January: A meeting of 1,200 people at McGill University, Montreal, discussed the separation of West Quebec from Quebec should independence be declared.

22nd January: A 'Constituent Assembly' was held in Vancouver and other similar meetings have occurred in the rest of the country. These meetings propose the creation of citizens assemblies to create a 'People's Constitution'. They want to take the issue of Quebec separation and the constitutional debate away from the politicians and have these issues settled by 'face to face' meetings of the people.

Larry Gambone

ANTARCTIC ISLANDS: GREENHOUSE KILLING FIELD!

Macquarie and Heard islands are two of the six tiny islands that act as breeding grounds for seals, penguins and sea birds in the Antarctic. Over the past few years disturbing evidence has been gathered by the International Scientific community that seal, bird and penguin populations are decreasing by between five to ten percent per year. Increasing numbers of dead seals, penguins and sea birds litter the shores of these islands.

Intensive scientific investigations have pinpointed starvation as the main cause of the decline. The environment around these islands is a very delicate balancing act and since 1912 the temperature on Macquarie island has increased from 4.5 to 5.4 degrees. Although a one degree rise in temperature may not seem much, the delicate ecosystem that surrounds these rocky outcrops is being dramatically altered by this small rise in temperature.

The changes on these rocky Antarctic outcrops are an indication that the greenhouse effect is no longer in doubt. The mass starvation and death that is occurring on these islands is a foretaste of what will happen in the rest of the world, unless governments and people are willing to learn the lessons of the greenhouse effect. Small changes in temperature can have profound changes on the environment. Heard, Macquarie and the rest of

these rocky outcrops are an indicator that large scale global changes will occur unless people are willing to make profound changes in their lifestyle economic and political systems.

A global economy that's based on continued expansion, consumption for consumption sake and profit irrespective of the social and human costs can only add to the impending disaster that faces the globe. Greenhouse is inherently tied in with globalisation and the destruction of local production and local self-sufficiency efforts. Cities need a never-ending supply of food and water. Once this stream is reduced or cut off mass starvation and social upheaval will result.

The plummeting of the bird, seal and penguin populations in the Antarctic is an important indicator that the world's population will be subjected to violent and cataclysmic changes unless we as a species are willing to radically alter our current life and our economic and political systems. An anarchist economic system that is based on the satisfaction of human need, not continued growth and profit is one of the few economic and social systems that may be able to halt the spectre of greenhouse in the world community.

taken from *The Anarchist Age Weekly Review* no. 183, and this article also appeared on a-infos

Northern Ireland – can the IRA bring peace?

Dear *Freedom*,
I read the first instalment of Milan Rai's article some hours before the IRA declared their ceasefire at an end, murdered a pair of inoffensive news-vendors and injured a hundred bystanders. Even as I read the piece, I thought it over-estimated the peaceableness of the IRA.

As Milan tells us, the Sinn Fein document *Towards a Lasting Peace* demands that the British government should work "to obtain the consent of a majority of people in the North to ... a United Ireland", and Martin McGuinness spoke of 'interim arrangements' towards re-unification (italics added by me). The IRA was never committed to peace as such. The commitment was always and only to the unification of Ireland. The ceasefire was a tactic by which, it was hoped, progress towards Irish unity might be achieved. The IRA needed to retain its armoury, in case the ceasefire tactic failed.

In the event, the ceasefire failed because of British intransigence over the 'decommissioning' of IRA weapons. But if the IRA had its way on that point, the ceasefire would no doubt have been ended over something else. It might have failed as a tactic, for instance, if the British had insisted on holding a referendum in the six counties only and not over

the whole island, because a majority in the six counties are hostile to Irish unity. Indeed, the suggestion of an election in the six counties may have influenced the precise timing of the explosion, though it must have been planned and prepared earlier. Any thwarting of progress towards their ultimate aim, in the opinion of IRA tacticians, would have given cause for the resumption of armed hostilities.

A referendum in the whole island would probably result in a vote for unification. The only consideration, which might have induced citizens of the Republic to vote against, was their ability to live, work and vote in Britain on the same terms as British citizens, which depended on the reluctance of the British establishment to admit that Ireland was no longer British. With the European Union, Irish citizens have that ability even if they count as foreigners, so the consideration no longer applies.

A referendum in the six counties only would almost certainly result in a vote to remain 'British'. It is often supposed that in elections those who vote Unionist are overwhelmingly Protestant, while Catholics vote Nationalist. In fact, however, the proportion of votes for Unionists is higher than the proportion of

Protestants, and for Nationalists lower than the proportion of Catholics. This could be because Catholics more often stay away from the polls, but it is also possible that many Catholics see advantages in being British, such as higher social security payments.

In any event the majority of the six counties' citizens are Protestants, and fearful of the Republic's institutions. The constitution which empowered the Roman Catholic hierarchy to veto Acts of Parliament has been formally repealed, but the church is still politically powerful. There is strict censorship of literature in public libraries. Village priests have the right to sack village schoolteachers. The sale of contraceptives was illegal until a few years ago, and advertising them for sale is still illegal. It is less than three months since divorce became possible. Yes, priestly hegemony in the 26 counties is breaking down, but it is quite understandable that fear persists in the six counties.

Catholic children in the north go to Catholic schools, leaving state schools to Protestants, so children do not have friends of the other religion and tribalism is perpetuated. The IRA have a romantic attachment to the old slogan 'Ireland divided can never be at peace'. The Protestant

paramilitaries are so attached to the old slogan 'Home rule is Rome rule' that Ireland united can never be at peace.

Lasting peace will come to Northern Ireland when people there think of themselves less as tribes and more as individuals. We should not deceive ourselves that the IRA, a fanatical military faction of one of the tribes, can provide an easier solution.

Donald Room

Should anarchists vote in General Election?

Dear *Freedom*,
In answer to the question posed in the past few issues, 'should anarchists vote?', I have no doubt in replying with a definite 'NO'. There can be no other answer. An elected alternative to the present government would be a great improvement, but only in the short term. As history repeatedly shows, once a new government has found its feet, rather than begin to hand out freedoms and new rights to the populace its sole occupation becomes the preservation of its self, despite any previously made promises. After all, what is democracy? On the one hand it is a self-imposed dictatorship efficient in its curtailment of rights, or on the other the employment of self-minded incompetent bureaucrats bent solely in the betterment of themselves. Neither worth your vote.

Come the election, then, I strongly suggest anarchists do not vote. But that does not mean sitting at home while your neighbours obligingly go to the polling station. You should join them and vote for 'None of the Above', yourself, Kropotkin, your dog, anyone except those listed. By creatively defacing your ballot paper at least they cannot accuse you of being apathetic. Who knows, there could be so many creative defacings that it proves very embarrassing to the candidates. So embarrassing that the credibility of their profession is undermined and the populace be encouraged to 'act for themselves'.

Vote, but vote NO.

Darren Ward

Individualist Anarchism

Dear *Freedom*,
With reference to the letter in 10th February 1996 edition of *Freedom*, headed 'Individualist Anarchism'. The writer is not the only individual anarchist alive, as I agree with much of the thinking of those mentioned. It just goes with the territory, at present, to think that way.

Even the founder of modern anarchy, Proudhon, coined the term 'the sovereignty of the individual'. This term first drew me to anarchy and I think it is what gives anarchy its unique significance.

For six years I have tried running a small farm on individual anarchist economics (i.e. sustainable self-sufficiency). While it is difficult when everyone else is using full-blooded capitalism, any failings were mine and I think the system would work. The part that did work was the concept of an acceptable quality of life for the animals and myself.

Sam Olive

McLibel case goes on to rainforest

It is dangerous to issue libel writs assuming they will not be contested, as David Ashby MP discovered in December.

The *Sunday Times* called Mr Ashby a homosexual (not that there is anything disreputable about being gay, but to be reputed gay when one isn't could damage one's personal life). It also called him a liar and a hypocrite. The article included a provably false statement that he went to Goa with a man friend, when in fact he went alone.

Newspapers which make false statements and are sued for libel are usually prepared to settle out of court with an apology and a promise not to repeat the libel. But when Mr Ashby sued, the *Sunday Times* unexpectedly defended the case and won, leaving Mr Ashby with the reputation of a homosexual, a liar, a hypocrite and a fool, and a bill for court costs which will probably make him bankrupt.

The situation for McDonalds is not quite as bad. The libel case they have brought against our comrades Dave Morris and Helen Steel will cost them three or four million pounds, but unlike Mr Ashby they can afford it. The damage to their reputation has plainly not halted the proliferation of McDonalds shops, and presumably not done noticeable harm to their prosperity. All the same, they must regret issuing libel writs against people prepared to defend their statements in court.

As a catering firm, McDonalds does less harm than financiers and armaments dealers, and is not so rich. But with its numerous distinctive shop fronts and directional signs, it is the most visible of transnational corporations and acts as a convenient symbol for them all. Anti-McDonalds campaigning has been going on for years, and would have continued for years into the future as long as McDonalds existed.

But the trial enhances the campaign by providing a focus. The latest anti-McDonalds tool is a web site, McSpotlight, at:

<http://www.McSpotlight.org/>

It includes information about anti-McDonalds activities from local campaigners in 26 countries, but the bulk of its material is generated by the trial: the complete set of witness statements and scientific reports, the video clip which was used in evidence linking McDonalds with rainforest destruction, RealAudio interviews with the McLibel Two.

The section of the trial dealing with 'destruction

of rainforests' was due to start on Thursday 22nd February.

McDonalds counsel, Richard Rampton QC, said on the first day of the trial that: "In Costa Rica, when the first McDonalds restaurant was opened in 1970, some of the land on which the beef was raised had been rainforest up to the 1960s," but denied that any meat raised on rainforest land had been exported to McDonalds in other countries.

However, the defendants showed in evidence a documentary film, *Jungleburger*, in which the Marketing Director of the firm which processes all McDonalds hamburgers in Costa Rica says: "We export meat to the US. 70% of the meat goes to ... restaurant chains like McDonalds."

Ray Cesca, Director of Global Purchasing for McDonalds Corporation, was due to be the first witness on 22nd February. It will be interesting to see how he dealt with the apparent contradiction.

Further information from the McLibel Support Campaign, c/o 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX.

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PAST AND FUTURE

Readers may have noticed that two of my dispatches within recent memory were dispatched from Spain. This was in connection with a visit to Madrid in order to collect the manuscripts of the poet A.C. Jacobs, who died there. Arthur Jacobs was known as a poet and translator who had published only two slim volumes, and it was presumed his output was small. Arthur seemed to have agreed with this assessment and even said in a letter that "all in all, he had written little and published less". This was ingenious. For in Madrid there were found several compositions which had not seen the light of day and were posted only to his top drawer.

On my return to London I continued the search for his poems and was allowed to look through his literary remains at his parents' home in Hendon. There was a lot of paper all jumbled together and it took over a year to sort it all out. It was a labour of love and was well worth the effort, for a great quantity of unpublished work was found. One such poem is entitled 'The Anarchist' which I am sure would have been included in *Visions of Poesy* had the editors had knowledge of it. This is a very early poem dating back to the '50s. One can safely assume that an important poem just stayed away from public view for about forty years. This is, of course, another subject which puzzled me for some time and I mentioned it in connection with the fate of *The Spanish Tragedy* (a mere coincidence) by Thomas Kyd. The play was not known in its own day. "No edition of the sixteenth or seventeenth century mentioned its author and it was not found until 1773" (Philip Edwards, 1959).

I can only hint at the difficulties. That there is a lapse of forty years here and a lapse of two hundred years there puts a terrible searchlight on the human condition. What is being said disappears from public attention and emerges with limited use because it is said out of time. For then all we have are the words. The person who wrote it no longer exists to defend, stand by and explain.

One can just about explain the complete annihilation of Thomas Kyd. The government's agents raided his writing chamber, which he

shared with Marlowe, and his work was confiscated. Perhaps his work is still in some recess of the Lord Chamberlain's tied up in a neat blue ribbon with a notice 'Not to be opened until Doomsday'. Perhaps not.

In the circumstances of our existence it is a miracle if any written communication may survive at all, and the manner of its survival is extremely curious. When the 'ancient' Greeks arrived in the peninsula some fifteen thousand years ago (Vikings?) they brought with them their sagas which were sung and recited and memorised. By the time of Homer, about ten thousand years ago, he was to mark "the culmination of a brilliant, if forgotten, epoch". Homer's sagas have survived, but former ones did not. The works of Horace disappeared for a thousand years and, although we feel most of his opus has been rescued from later texts, it is still argued over for precise meanings. But the funniest writer of that epoch, Petronius, was completely unknown until 1663 when his *Cena Trimalchionis* was discovered bound in together with poems of Catullus, Propertius and Tibullus. If this I deem an unsatisfactory state of affairs, I am prompted by the knowledge (or lack of it) that what was found was only a small portion of Petronius's production, for the inscription on the found text was as follows: "Petronii Arbitri Satyri Fragmenta – ex Libro Quinto Decimo et Sexto Decimo" – in other words, the first fourteen volumes are missing. As Petronius wrote, as if sensing this insecurity in human affairs: "Never to expect what will come to pass / While the state bangles our affairs / So pass your master's wine, boy, generously." The master in the book was one Trimalchio and it is a description of the quick-rich millionaire's banquet. Before you got to the master's presence you had to pass a picture of a large dog in chains with the inscription 'CAVE CANEM'. It was a joke good enough for Charles Dickens to filch, who used it to great effect in *Pickwick Papers*. Now there is a writer who will never be out of print. Perhaps not. My public library has no copy on the premises by this Victorian worthy, or any of the other literary gents mentioned above.

John Rety

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March 17th - Lower Wharfedale: Grassington to Kettlewell. Meet in Grassington Town Square at 10.45am. Length approx 7 miles.

Telephone for further details
01756-799002

CRITICAL MASS

New Visions of the Nuclear Legacy

An exhibition exploring the science and the history of nuclear weapons — a collaboration between physicists, artists, poets and peace activists.

9th to 31st March 1996

Sundays 12-5pm; Wednesdays 5-9pm; Thursdays 12-6pm
ring for opening times on other days

Torriano Meeting House

99 Torriano Avenue, London NW5

Further information:

01865 793820 or 0171-267 2751

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Vigil for peace in Ireland

organised by ARROW / Negotiate Now

Wednesday 28th February
5.30 - 6.30pm

Trafalgar Square, London

Northern Anarchist Network

Conference in Manchester

Saturday 9th March

10.30am - 6.00pm followed by social

Sunday 10th March

11.00am - 5.30pm

A weekend of discussion, education and social activity

Venue: The Annexe, rear of the Working Class Movement Library, 51 The Crescent, Salford

Anyone wanting accommodation must let us know in advance

No charge for admission but there will be a collection.

Manchester Class Struggle Group
Dept. 99, 1 Newton Street, Piccadilly,
Manchester M1 1HW

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