

FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

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50p

MORALITY AND THE MEDIA

Wherever you turn in the media it seems impossible to avoid being confronted by someone or other banging on about morality. And you can be certain that somewhere in their prescriptions for 'What needs to be done' about crime, poverty, the alienation of youth, you will find an invocation of the concept of community.

The community is seen as "a moral entity that polices the character, allegiances and aspirations of each of its members ... [through] a combination of stern parent, vicar and policeman" (Alan Ryan in *Prospect*, December 1996). The explicit purpose of the Moral Law it embodies is to instil into its members the virtues - thrift, self-control and trust, for instance - which the market system requires in order to operate efficiently but doesn't itself develop. Although this is recognised by some commentators, they fail to see that the reciprocity and responsibility required by the capitalist economic system is not only not developed by that system but that in its blind pursuit of its central purpose - the accumulation of profit - it liquidates those very qualities by intervening in all areas of our lives. This means that the market and community, as the two principal regulating institutions of capitalist society, are not in harmony but are in a state of opposition.

This isn't acknowledged by the mainstream media for the simple reason that capitalism itself just isn't up for discussion. According to newspaper leader writers, the only alternative to our current economic system is state socialism, embodied in bureaucratic nationalisation. The fact that this was unsuccessful, as was communism in Russia and Eastern Europe, is presented as proof that, to quote a recent *Observer* leader column, the discussion of our common future must now be concerned only with what "type" of capitalism it is "we want to develop".

Leaving aside the laughable idea that 'we' - meaning 'the people who live in this country' as opposed to politicians, economists and various experts - actually have any effective say in the way capitalism is to develop, the result of its being out of bounds for real fundamental criticism means that politicians need something else to blame for society's problems. And unsurprisingly the blame lies with us.

Those who presume to know treat the greedy and acquisitive creature shaped by the imperatives of the market as embodying an example of a human nature which is fixed,

supposedly want) must 'demand' responsibility and the acceptance of duty in return for our 'giving' people opportunities. What is needed in order to solve the problems of social dislocation is, in this view, more authority, more legally enforceable rules and laws and more moral policing by the community.

It is these voices which shout loudest - they are, after all, accustomed to giving orders - and receive most attention by the media. On the other hand, no serious attention is given to the idea that, perhaps, the opposite of such a policy might be true: that if we loosen the rigid constraints of rules and regulations, then a certain unrealised potential for co-operative action based on trust, compassion and responsibility, which everyone whatever their ideology seems to want, might be able to express itself.

It isn't that we are 'naturally' selfish, acquisitive and competitive, requiring a rigid, prescriptive moral code to hold our baseness in check, but that such characteristics, whatever their biological foundation, are encouraged and developed by the economic and social context in which we have no option but to pursue our lives. Given another context - in which how we are supposed to approach our working life and how we are expected to act in our social and personal life are not in such fundamental opposition - we could see co-operative

activity flourish. The existence of much evidence demonstrating that such mutuality can make its way through now, in this society, with all the mutilations inflicted on it by the market system, shows that the kind of social organisation anarchists have long been advocating is not utopian. It doesn't depend upon a different type of human being. The potential for it already lies latent waiting to be released.

DH

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"... did you hear about the voters who thought we were working for them?"

unchangeable and universal. Capitalism, whatever its faults, is thus seen as the optimum force of economic organisation. Capitalism responds to and harnesses the basic instincts of human nature, so, if things go awry with society, it can't be the fault of the system but must be that of the sinful individuals who make it up. Tony Blair says 'we' (conveniently identifying government policy with what The British People

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Freedom

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MODERN-DAY MOTHER HUBBARD SACKED

HOW THE RICH SUFFER

'She had so many children she didn't know what to do!' After her sacking (er, suspension and resignation) from Morgan Grenfell Asset Management last month, Ms Horlick, lynch-pin fund manager of the company, gave an interview wearing a crucifix in which she spoke of having to feed a four-month old baby between visits to reassure pension funds. She had been suspended for allegedly trying to poach staff of Morgan Grenfell for ABN Amro, the Dutch bank.

At the time of her departure, Nicola Horlick was reported to be on £1 million a year. Her husband is something in the City. Something well paid, no doubt. Nicola was a bit of a boss and had thirty fund managers under her, who she told the *Financial Times* 'loved' her and wanted her to have more authority.

She was, it seems, good at being a bit of a boss. But her talent as a boss was not matched by her management of investment funds. "As an investment talent she is nothing exceptional" one former colleague told the *Financial Times*.

One sometimes wonders why these people get paid so much. Those who believe in the 'efficient market mechanism' have argued that a chimp randomly throwing darts at a board full of stocks and shares could pick out a fund portfolio equally profitable as some of these fund managers. Today lack of confidence in these fund managers is such that some funds simply track the *FT* Index.

THE QUEEN'S YACHT

The thing about the Windsors is that lately they have been getting a reputation as a tight-arsed family. I don't think the British people have really forgiven them for their reluctance to put their hands in their pockets after the Windsor Palace fire.

The English, particularly the English working classes, don't like anyone who is too mean. Too mean to pay when it's their round. And I think there is a perception around that the Windsors are a stingy lot.

MOTHS IN THE WARDROBE

From the private diaries of Alan Clark: "Thursday 24th December 1987. Christmas Eve. I've got £700,000 in my Abbey National Crazy-High-Interest account. But what's the use? Ash, ash, all is ash. Lay not up for thyself treasures on earth. The cars are all getting streaked and rust-spotted, the books foxed, the furniture duty. The window panes, all 52,000 of them, are revolting, so greasily blotched. Translucent only. And there is moth everywhere. My grandfather's great Rothschild coat, bought at Wien in 1906, is terminally degraded ... The whole thing is out of control. And why? I know why. Because I'm not rich enough to have servants" (Mrs Thatcher's Minister).

WHAT THE POOR HAVE TO PUT UP WITH

JOBLESS DON'T TAKE THEM OFF

It has been confirmed that unemployed people will no longer be expected to accept jobs as strip-tease artists in strip-joints as part of their requirements for 'actively seeking work'.

In future, doles will have to look at job vacancies they are offering more carefully to see they are not becoming recruiting agents or pimps for prostitution rings.

BECOME A BINGO CALLER

"There's nothing wrong with being a bingo caller" exclaimed the Claimant Adviser at Bury Job Centre, on being told it was the only unskilled vacancy on offer. He went on to warn the young man before him: "If it was suspected that you were not looking for work, your claim would go to the adjudication officer".

"But there are no jobs for me" opined the claimant.

"Just a minute, I'll just check what we have got for you on the computer".

Seconds turned into minutes as the fingers worked frantically but the screen remained blank and the colour on the functionary's neck spread to his face. "Er, I can't seem to get into the system at the moment, go and have a look downstairs to see if you can find anything on the boards".

There are probably more conversations carried on like this in Job Centres than there are bingo numbers called in the whole of Britain's bingo halls.

ROADSIDE BENEFIT SPIES

Benefit Agency fraud officers are interrogating people stopped by the police in routine roadside checks. According to *The*

Observer, drivers and passengers say they have been upset by these investigators, who are taking part in the government's Spend and Save campaign to cut social security fraud.

Benefit officers joined police last year as they checked 10,000 cars for roadworthiness and other offences. After the police had finished, they handed over to benefit spies who cross-questioned the occupants about the benefits they were claiming.

The Agency claims 'Operation Tinstar' saved £800,000 in one day, 14th November. The Social Security Minister Olive Heald

"Of what use is
freedom of thought if it
will not produce
freedom of action?"

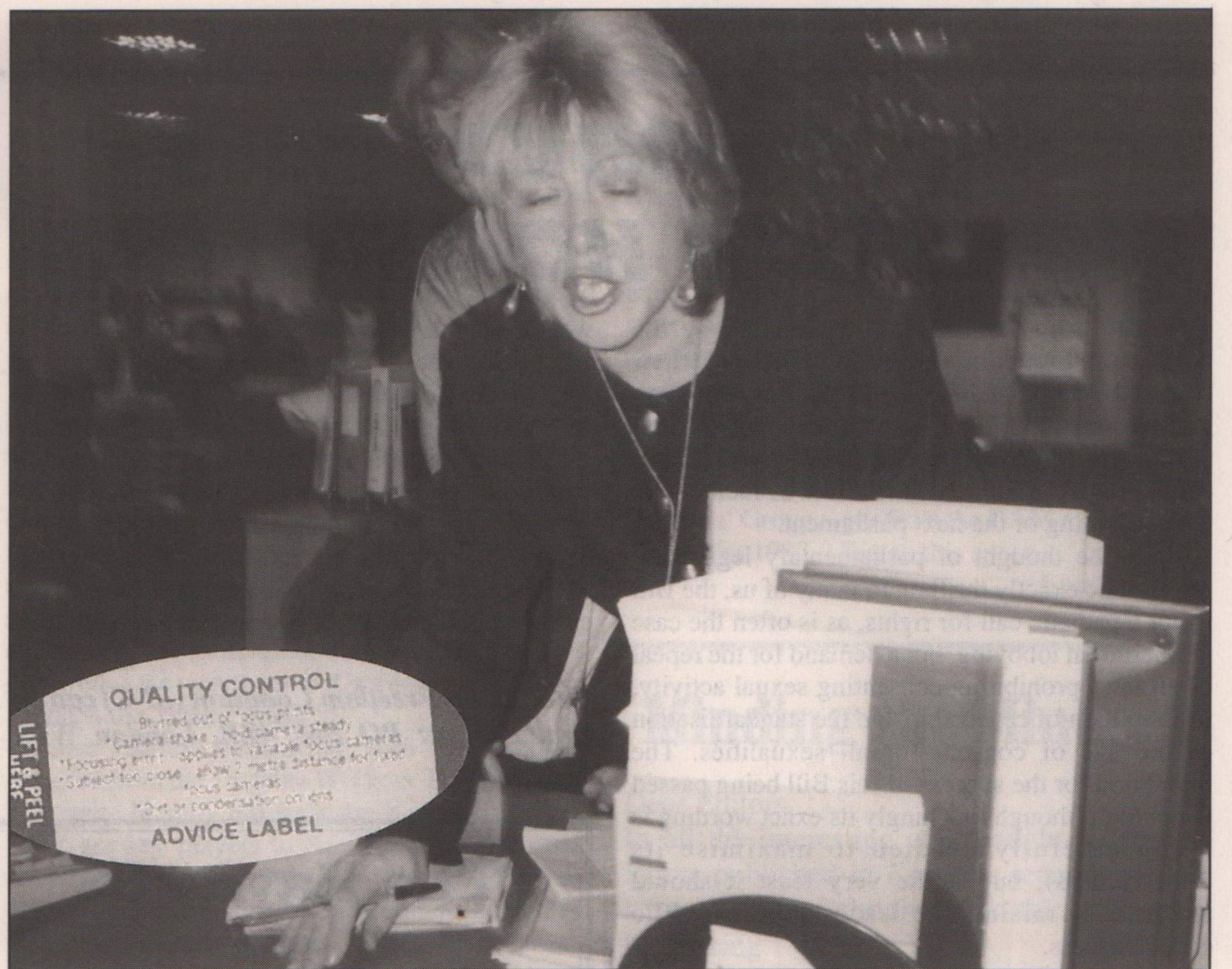
Jonathan Swift

explained: "Fraud investigators identify themselves to any driver and passenger to whom they wish to speak. Drivers and passengers are informed that they are under no obligation to answer any questions and that they are not being detained."

Kevin Coyne, chairman of the TUC Unemployed Centre, fears that claimants found outside their home areas may be accused of being 'unavailable for work'. This would limit freedom of movement by the unemployed.

Unemployed Worker

PHOTO PANDEMONIUM BURNLEY'S BLOODSTAINED BENEFIT BUREAU



Dole manageress shows her teeth

A leaflet with the above gory heading is being prepared for distribution at Burnley dole later this month. It follows a case, last year, when a young man hung himself after being taken off benefits. An appeal is also pending of an anarchist who was taken off benefits for two weeks last November.

Last month, an out-of-town photographer was brought across the Pennines to take snapshots of the chief culprits involved in the benefit suspension. A claimant adviser was photographed as she interviewed a claimant. When the manageress, Mrs Duffy, came to protest and threaten to call the police, she was also snapped.

What then followed was a 'Tom and Jerry' episode in which the manageress began chasing

the cameraman towards the exit demanding to know his name. When he turned and asked who she was, she retorted "I'm the manager".

"Ah, so you're Mrs Duffy" exclaimed the photographer. Then when the camera came up again Madam Duffy became distraught. Scratching and grabbing, she tried to take away the camera. When she drew blood, the cameraman began worrying about BSE and 'Mad Cow Disease'.

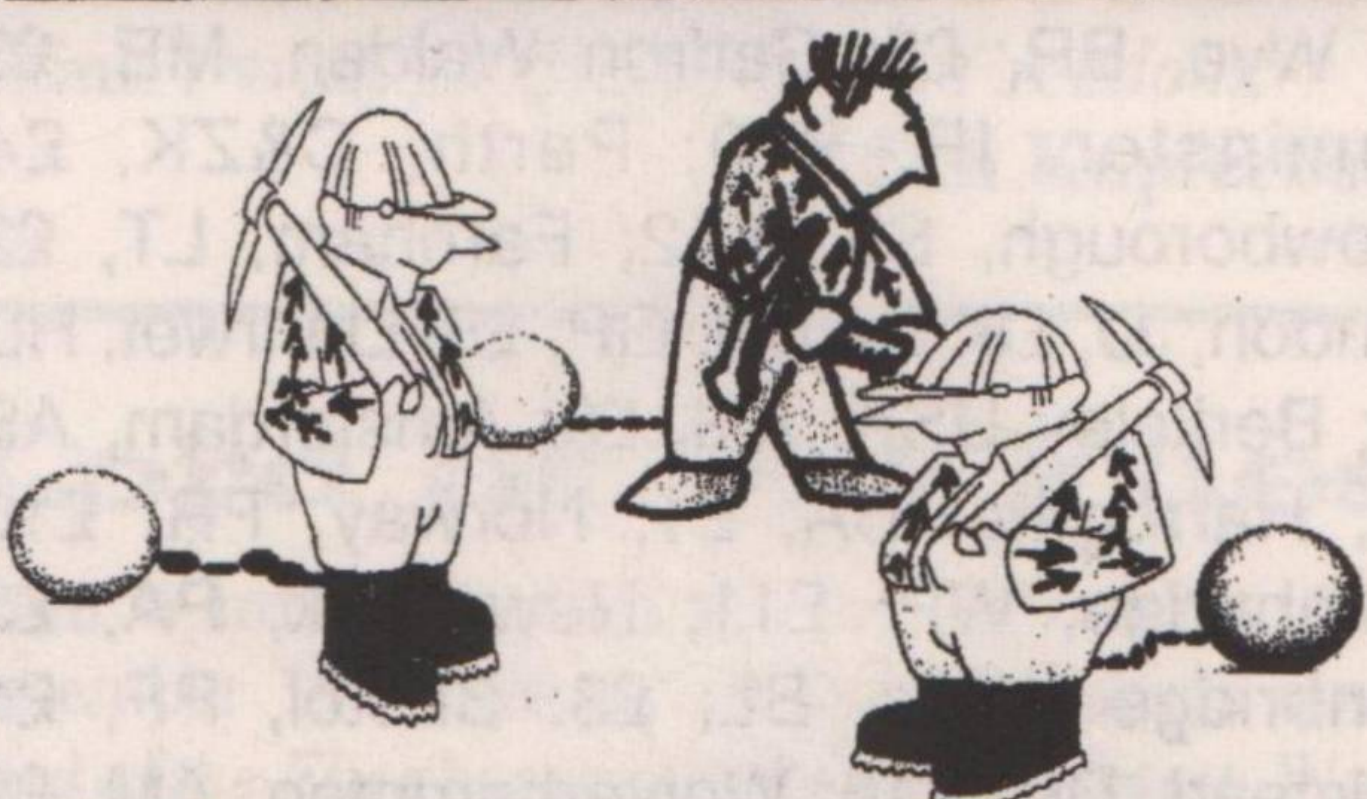
He pressed on regardless, following her into a private office when she took flight, cheerfully snapping away as he went.

Ten minutes later police were seen running towards Burnley Job Centre, following a frantic call from Madam Duffy.

Unemployed Activist

Say No To

STATE
SLAVERY!



Stuff compulsory Project Work!
Join the Fight Back!

To join the fight back against Project Work
and the J.S.A. contact Bolton Unemployed
Workers Advice Centre: 01204 396560

PROFIT AND LOSS

Entrepreneurs take risks, we are told, and the reward for that is profit. Those risks can of course be limited to the company, but 'the company' can be a difficult entity to pin down because, when it comes to paying debts, responsibility seems to lie anywhere than with the entrepreneurs. This is the genius behind the idea of limited liability. Bankruptcies are two-a-penny, and their knock-on effects trail misery for many, but they can also be a tidy little earner for some – and I don't mean the lawyers. This depends, however, on having a nice flexible work-force ill-equipped to protect their own interests. Some bosses take too big a risk with their workers, however, as in this recent example.

Seventy textile workers at Tudorgold Ltd, Sterling House, 67 Lawrence Road, Tottenham, London N15, started an occupation of their factory on 24th January in response to manager's failure to pay their wages for the past month – a total of about £40,000. The workers, of many nationalities but mostly Turks and Kurds speaking little or no English, have experienced more than they can take of being pushed around working up to an eighty-hour week for less than £2.50 per hour machining women's fashion jackets which retail at up to £200 in high street stores.

The workers declared they would remain in occupation of the factory until all the wages owed to them were paid in full. Tudorgold promptly declared itself bankrupt. In the seedy back-streets of sweatshop Britain, it pays to play it close to your chest. All the workers knew about Tudorgold is that the boss is George Hanna with two others known as Alan and Angelo, then there's Angelo's son, and Warren who may or may not own the machines operated by the workers. These people have been spinning a web of deceit – no-one knows who is responsible for what or where to find anyone. Angelo's son even blamed Hanna for making off with the company's bank balance, but Hanna, also known to be a director of McHanna Holdings

Ltd, made a reappearance and promised "I will make sure that you're paid" – a promise the workers managed to tape-record.

Meanwhile pressure is being exerted. When I visited the factory on Sunday 3rd February, Warren, a large, heavy man, was also visiting and complaining very forcefully that the workers were sabotaging the machines. This strongly suggests a pretext for some imminent legal action. Already writs have been threatened and it was expected that the bosses would try to exclude the workers from the workshops so the machines could be removed to a new location. A security firm has been hired by the bosses to 'keep an eye on things' even though the workers have made it clear that it is not in their interests to damage the machines from which they earn a living.

The workers have received messages of support from workers from Hillingdon Hospital, Liverpool Docks and the Magnet factory in Darlington. They are receiving the active support of the local textile branch of the TGWU which is run by immigrant textile workers. Support in the union is unlikely to go beyond branch level and any support from elsewhere would be welcomed.

An early victory with important implications was scored. When Kacy Ltd, the company for which Tudorgold was a sub-contractor, came to collect a finished order, the workers got them to pay £11,000 for it, thus cutting out the middle-men. It would probably only take a few days to work off what the workers are owed if they put the factory to their own use. Imagine what could happen if we could go beyond strikes and occupations and turn these productive facilities to social use. The role of bosses is certainly superfluous, since they don't have any risks to take.

For further information and messages of support contact: Tekin Kartal (secretary, NE London Textile Workers Branch, Transport & General Workers Union) at 8-10 Stamford Hill, London N16.

JL

SEX CARNIVAL SETS SIGHTS ON HOME OFFICE

Sunday 19th January saw the launch by the Sexual Freedom Coalition (SFC) of their National Petition and Sex Pride 97. This campaign is their most ambitious to date and centres on a petition, entitled 'Sex Please, We're British', calling for a Sexual Freedom Bill to be included in the first sitting of the next parliament.

While the thought of parliamentary legislation may not be exactly thrilling to many of us, the Bill is not a pathetic call for rights, as is often the case in libertarian lobbying, but a demand for the repeal of all laws prohibiting consenting sexual activity, the abolition of censorship and the standardisation of the age of consent for all sexualities. The likelihood for the success of this Bill being passed is not high (though touchingly its exact wording is being carefully debated to maximise its effectiveness), but at the very least it should succeed in raising the issues within public consciousness.

The petition is to be handed in to the new Home Secretary following a joint SFC and Sex Pride rally from Soho Square to the Home Office. Sex Pride is a sister organisation to the SFC and represents sex workers in their struggle for recognition and fight with the authorities.

The rally will take the form of a sex carnival, which amongst its many erotic attractions will include a brothel on a float, and will end with an exotic party at a nearby location for SFC members and their guests. The proposed date for the event is currently 28th June, supposing a May election.

It is hoped that it will be this campaign that gets the Coalition's name on the map and sets it on course for even greater projects. The possibility of international campaigns is currently being considered.

At the launch Tuppy Owens (a founder member), resplendent in the Phrygian cap of the libertarian revolutionary, declared the SFC to be "a secret international conspiracy to sexually liberate the

world, whether it wanted it or not".

In reality the SFC is a pan-political campaign co-ordinator, dependent on the will of its members for its direction. At present several of these are active anarchists (though not nearly enough) and its current internal debates will shape its future form. Whether they remain a radically oriented group or decline into just another reformist pressure group will depend on these debates and the success of the current campaign.

Prometheus Rex

The Sexual Freedom Coalition (SFC) can be contacted at: PO Box 42B, London W1A 4ZB.

NORTHERN IRELAND:

SOUND BITES FROM A WAR/PEACE PROCESS

It happened to be in Ballymena and suggested to the people I was working with that we go to the church in Harryville to offer solidarity to the people being threatened by the loyalists. The irony of it was that the four of us who went were all atheists, but we stood inside the railings of the church with a bunch of Quakers and were thanked and acknowledged by people going into the service. Across the road about two hundred cops with thirty Land Rovers kept a crowd of fifty or so loyalists at bay. They were quiet for the most part, as if the twenty-week old stand-off had arrived at some kind of ritual stasis. Apparently attempts to negotiate with the loyalists have floundered because they are a 'leaderless group', a collection of people who gather on Saturday nights to protest and have a bit of a laugh. There is a grim irony in this for anarchists.

Perhaps I should offer some street theatre as a contribution to breaking the deadlock. Art and imaginative creativity must be in the anarchist's kit-bag in the face of social

injustice. And perhaps they offer a meaningful alternative to violence? Some friends and I have a piece on the Bloody Sunday theme for this year. It involves presenting the words Justice/Truth and Secrets/Lives in a form of argument theatre in the centre of Derry. Most of the talk here has been about the possibility of a new inquiry, with new evidence and new allegations flying about. The former Bishop of Derry, famous for the bloodied white handkerchief image of him helping carry one of the wounded on the day, has supported that call. Some Labour MPs have indicated they would support it. Would it make any difference?

We're getting CCTV on our streets here soon. Belfast already has it, we're next. Local Chamber of Commerce types are all for it. There is apparently considerable public support, if a radio phone-in is anything to go by, as there have been numerous late-night beatings on the streets. The very things the cameras most definitely don't deal with.

Dave Duggan

PHOTO PANDEMONIUM: 2

OUR FRIENDS UP NORTH

Edinburgh claimant activists are at present trying to snap the notorious Claimant Adviser Alistair Mathieson. Mr Mathieson is a restart interviewer at Tophichen Street Unemployment Benefit Office. He has long been known for his threats to take claimants off benefits.

When they issued their first warning against Mr Mathieson last year, Edinburgh claimant activists described the encounter. "Six of us strode through the staff section of the open plan office towards Mathieson's desk, where he was grilling another claimant. The Great Harasser went ballistic. Jumping up, he dramatically pointed and shouted 'Don't move! Stop right there!' When we explained our mission, Mathieson waved his hands wildly, yelling 'Call the police!' At this point the manager turned up. This was fortunate, as we had a warning letter for him too (our policy is that managers must be held responsible for harassment by their staff). Mr Thomson, the manager, fumed and raged, threatening that if we returned to deliver another warning letter he would punish claimants by stopping people signing on" (source: *Subversion* No. 19).

Unemployed Activist

DONATIONS

January 1997

FREEDOM FORTNIGHTLY FIGHTING FUND

London, AM, £6; Glasgow, JMcG, £2; London, JPJ, £30; Keighley, RG, £3; London, NW, £3; Pinner, LOM, £2; Tunbridge Wells, JEG, £2; Belper, JS, £1; Sheffield, JC, £10; Melrose, NA, £3; Saffron Walden, ME, £2; Walsall, PO, £3; Basildon, AJ, £1; Upminster, IP, £10; Perth, C&ZK, £4; Farnham, LT, £2; Tewksbury, PS, £15; Morecambe, RAD, £6; London, JJ, £8; Cardiff, GP, £5; Liverpool, RE, £10; Harrogate, JA, £1; Oslo, RM, £30; Llanwct, HD, £2; Massachusetts USA, NC, £8; Cambridge, AM, £2; Harrogate, BA, £1; Hove, WG, £2; Hogsthorpe, GS, £6; New York, PA, £5; Tunbridge Wells, BL, £3; Wolverhampton, JL, £2; London, AC, £10; Bristol, PF, £1; St Cloud USA, MGA, £10; Polstead, DP, £10; Birmingham, PG, £2; Troy, New York, DW, £8; Solihull, RK, £1; Leatherhead, JCO'C, £3; Beckenham, DP, £20.

Total = £245.00

FREEDOM PRESS OVERHEADS FUND

Keighley, RG, £3; Pinner, LOM, £2; Sacramento, DK, £8; Poole, JAP, £4; Sheffield, JC, £10; Melrose, NA, £3; Hay on Wye, BR, £9; Saffron Walden, ME, £5; Cheadle, CJ, £16; Basildon, AJ, £1; Upminster, IP, £10; Keighley, DG, £9; Perth, C&ZK, £4; Farnham, LT, £2; London, MB, £6; Cambridge USA, JK, £8; Plymouth USA, JWB, £8; Llanwct, HP, £2; Wolverhampton, JL, £2; London, DR, £37; Harrogate, BA, £1; Newport, NHF, £10; London, AC, £10; London, SM, £1; Manchester, AD, £10; Polstead, DP, £6; Troy, New York, DW, £10.

Total = £196.00

RAVEN DEFICIT FUND

Keighley, RG, £3; London, NW, £3; Pinner, LOM, £2; County Douglas, MA, £16; Beckenham, DP, £10; Sheffield, JC, £10; Hay on Wye, BR, £9; Saffron Walden, ME, £3; Upminster, IP, £10; Perth, C&ZK, £4; Crowborough, SR, £12; Farnham, LT, £2; London, JJ, £8; Cardiff, GP, £5; Llanwct, HD, £2; Berkeley USA, AG, £8; Amsterdam, AS, £4; Harrogate, BA, £1; Norway, FR, £10; Cambridge, WP, £11; New York, PA, £3; Tunbridge Wells, BL, £3; Bristol, PF, £1; Polstead, DP, £10; Wolverhampton, AM, £3; Troy, New York, DW, £8.

Total = £163.00

Several other donations received before the end of January will be included in our February list

The Raven 33

on

Anarchism and the Arts

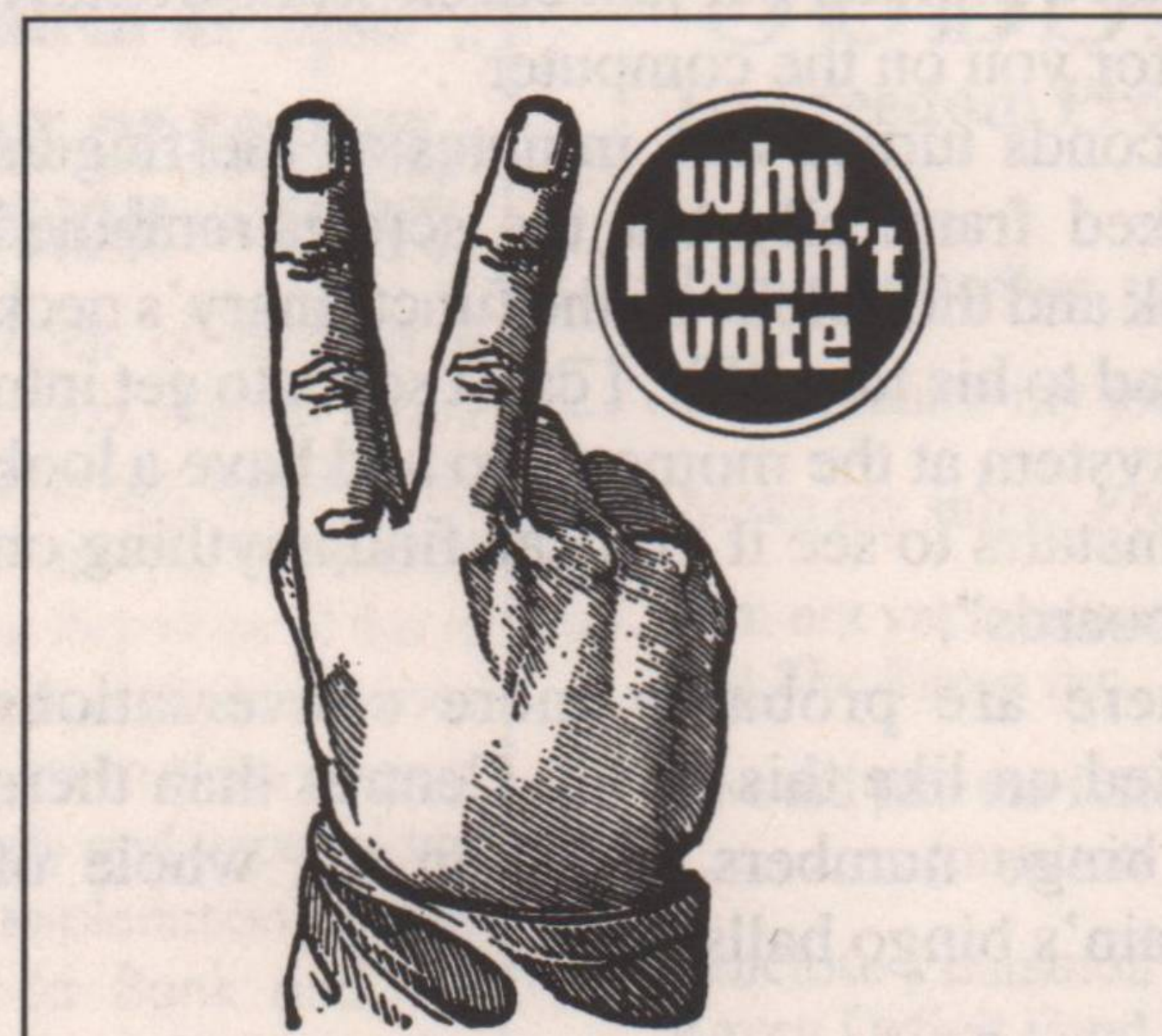
this edition of our quarterly anarchist journal includes

'Rendering Reality on Film' in which Brian Bamford discusses the politics of the makers of the film 'Land and Freedom'. Also included are interviews with the writer Jim Allen and director Ken Loach, revealing the difference between the film they wanted to make and the film that they could afford to make.

The Raven 14

on

Voting



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— NEGOTIATING THE DOLE QUEUE —

GROUNDSWELL CONFERENCE: HARINGEY**BURGER KING BLACKBALLED**

At this, perhaps the biggest Groundswell Conference, war was declared by jobless claimants on Burger King and its parent company Grand Metropolitan Trust. This company is the only national body as yet identified as being implicated in the slave labour trade – Project Work – in Hull and Kent.

Burger King has been involved in some scandalous work practices and cheap labour scams like time-limited contracts. Grand Met is a multinational which owns J&B Scotch, Smirnoff, Pilsbury Cookies, Häagen Dazs, Cinzano, Baileys, Malibu, as well as hotels and the burger chain.

Grand Met has long been known for its activities in so-called training for the unemployed, and Restart courses.

The Groundswell Conference decided on a local day of action against Project Work on 27th February, the coming launch date for the extension of Project Work to 29 towns throughout Britain.

After Easter Groundswell plans a national campaign against Grand Met and Burger King as Project Work providers.

THE RELUCTANT 'VOLUNTEERS'

About half the proposed Project Work towns will start their schemes this month. The other half will kick-off in May, declared Oxford Groundswell (see list).

Apart from Grand Met, Edinburgh Claimant's Group claimed the other culprits in the Project Work provider racket include: Instant Muscle, The Training Network, Career Ahead, and East Yorkshire County Council who have been paying the jobless £10 plus benefits to paint the railings on the seafront at an East Coast seaside resort (see address list).

In New York, where these types of schemes have been introduced already, subway workers were sacked and replaced by dole conscripts. This has happened here with young workers on YTS.

The Edinburgh Claimants argues: "Project Work is to be forced on everyone unemployed for over two years. All such claimants will be made to do thirteen weeks compulsory work for benefits plus £10. Unemployed people who refuse to attend or leave early will lose benefit."

The Project Work pilot schemes in Medway, Kent, and on Humberside have met with mass opposition. The local councils and most charities have boycotted the scheme. Karen Spooner, chair of Humberside Voluntary Sector Alliance, says: "We didn't think it was appropriate to offer placements, particularly in care work, to people who were compelled to be there under threat of losing their benefit". Similar noises are coming from the Voluntary Sector in Scotland.

LOOMING THREAT

Some sixteen groups from across the country turned up for the conference. The London Dockers Support Group sent a speaker and the conference was addressed by a group of London textile workers in Tottenham who are occupying their factory.

The 'Three Strikes' strategy was discussed, together with 'Sanctions Busting' and the

attitude of the civil service unions. Nationally it was claimed union resistance had been poor. The members of the civil service unions were implementing both the Job Seeker's Act and Project Work. Some union bosses seemed to be threatening unemployed activists.

The leaks from rank and file dole workers about Employment Service conduct on JSA and Project Work to Groundswell and the anarchist press was welcomed.

Edinburgh reported that they were issuing a 'third strike' exposing a claimant adviser in their area.

Oxford claimed they had reversed fifteen cases of claimants being sanctioned.

There was discussion of Fraud Squads, Housing Benefit, cuts in mother's benefits, and an alternative election show, but the dominating theme of the proceedings was the looming threat of the introduction of Project Work.

Unemployed Worker

SOME PROJECT WORK PROVIDERS

Grand Metropolitan Trust (Burger King)
Project Work Team, 193b Parrock Street, Gravesend, Kent DA12 1EX

Grand Metropolitan Trust
Project Work Team, Unit L3, Knights Park Industrial Estate, Knights Road, Strood, Kent ME2 2LT

The Training Network
Project Work Team, 13 New Road, Rochester, Kent

Career Ahead
Project Work Team, 1st Floor, 5a New Road Avenue, Chatham, Kent

PROJECT WORK PILOT SCHEMES**Pilots starting on 27th February 1997****Basic model**

Existing two pilots in Hull and Medway & Maidstone to be extended for another year, and new pilots in Bath, Bristol, Derby, Dudley & Sandwell, North East London, Nottingham, Weston-Super-Mare.

Workstart excluded

Bolton & Bury, Lanarkshire, Merthyr & Rhymney, Neath & Port Talbot, Preston, Swansea.

Workstart replaced by Jobmatch

East London, Wigan & St Helens

Pilots starting in April 1997**Increased literacy and numeracy help**

Bradford, Dundee, Huddersfield, Norwich, Stoke.

Increased private sector involvement

Edinburgh, Hertford & Harlow, Peterborough, Portsmouth.

Jobsearch element of only four weeks

Dunfermline, Grimsby, Leicester.

Jobsearch element of only eight weeks

Brighton, South Tyneside.

NORTH WEST NEWS

After the Groundswell Conference declaration of war on Project Work, two Job Centres in the north west of England were invaded by protesters.

Last week nearly twenty campaigners against the government 'work for your dole' scheme moved into Bolton Job Centre. A meeting was then held with claimants and the manager was interviewed. Later the police were called in by the management, claiming that the protest was causing distress to members of staff.

Bolton is one of the 29 towns chosen for Project Work by the government. Neighbouring Bury is also down for Project Work, and further action is planned there on 27th February, the launch day for the new scheme.

These protests are being covered in the local press: *The Bolton Evening News* and *The Bury Times*.

On Thursday 6th February there was an occupation at Salford Job Centre. In the same week two pickets were mounted by Oldham and Manchester Anti-JSA groups at Oldham Central Job Centre and Openshaw dole.

Last week two leaflettings took place at Ashton dole and Shaw Job Centre. At Oldham the Benefit Agency and Child Support Agency staff have voted to go on a work-to-rule this week over the over-work and chaos caused by government cuts and fresh legislation like the Job Seekers Act. John Brooks, secretary of the Oldham branch of the PTC (the Public Service Tax and Commercial Union) said staff could not cope with the extra workload and added that the government's attempts to privatise the benefit service meant that the government is trying to make a profit out of the poor. *The Oldham Chronicle* has been interviewing local unemployed activists about these developments.

A day of action is proposed for Burnley at the end of this month. The focus of activity in the north west, having last year been aimed at Cheetham Hill Job Centre, looks to be shifting to the Project Work towns of Bolton and Bury, where the possibilities of mounting Job Centre invasions and direct action on a large scale seems imminent.

Bury Black Pudding

The following are Anti-JSA groups we know of in London:

North London, c/o PO Box 2474, London N8 Tel: 0181-802 9804 (also for general information about starting your own group)

East London Against the JSA, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

Hackney Against the JSA, c/o Colin Roach Centre, 56 Clarence Road, London E5

Hounslow Claimants Action, PO Box 87, Hampton, Middlesex, TW13 3TF

Newham & District Claimants Union, Durning Hall, Earlham Grove, Forest Gate, London E7

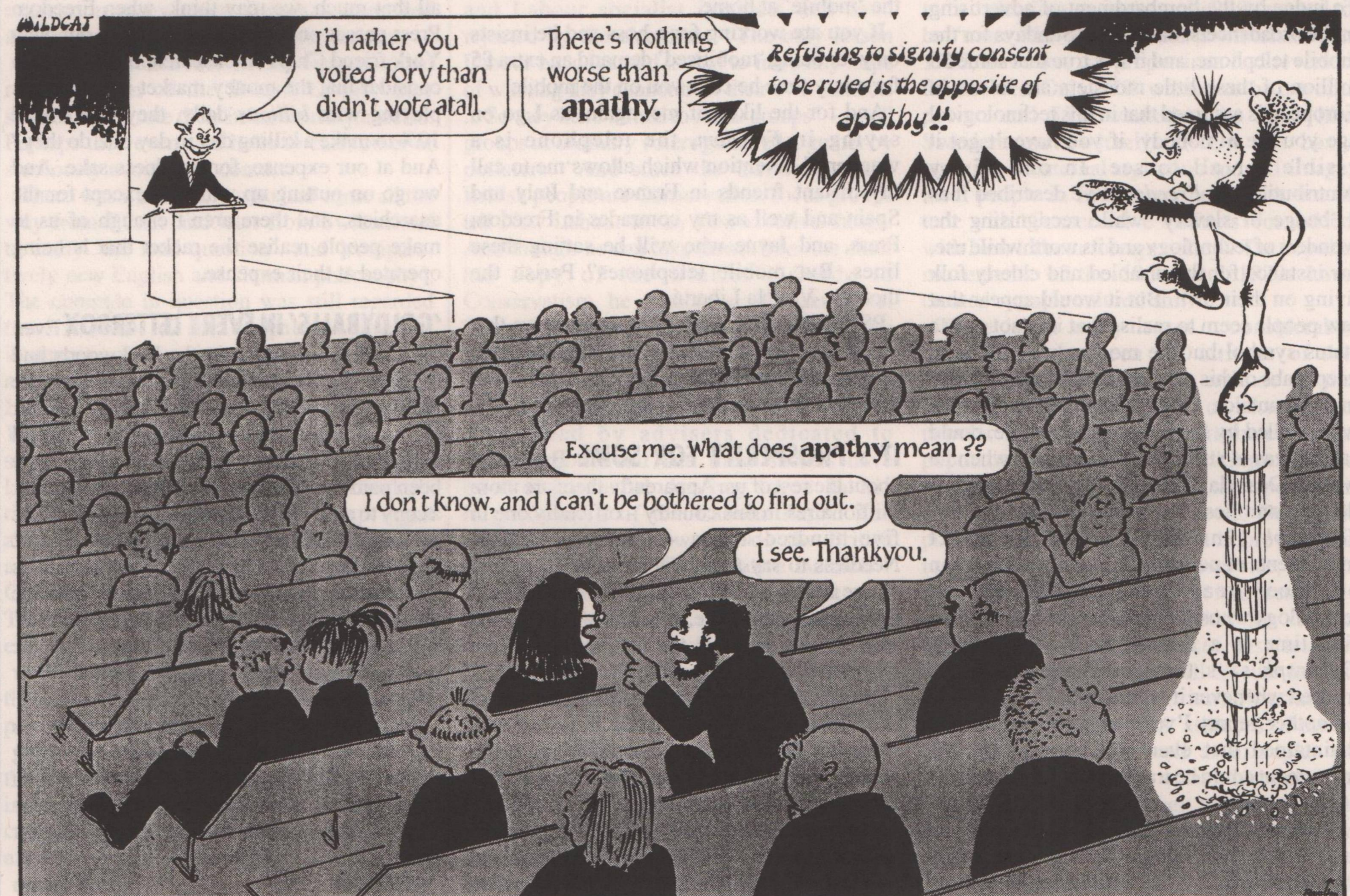
South London, Box JSA, 121 Raiton Road, London SE24 0LR

Southwark Claimants Action, c/o SHIP, 612 Old Kent Road, London SE15 1JB

Merton Unemployed Centre, Wimbledon Methodist Church, London SW19 1SP

London Against the JSA, PO Box 3140, London E17 5LJ

Groundswell is a UK-wide network of independent claimant and campaigning groups against the JSA and Project Work. For more details about groups outside London contact them at Oxford Claimants Action Group, c/o OUWCU, East Oxford Community Centre, Princess Street, Oxford OX4 1HU.



— OBITUARY —

Wally Whyton



The Vipers at the 21s, Soho, London, 1956. From left to right: John Pilgrim (washboard), Johnny Booker (guitar), Tony Tolhurst (bass), Wally Whyton (guitar), Jean Van den Bosch (guitar).

The singer and broadcaster Wally Whyton who died 22nd January 1997 played at the last of the Anarchist Balls at Fulham Town Hall. He had replaced Long John Baldry in the Thameside Four, then featuring the late Redd Sullivan and the multi-octaved Marian Gray. Philip Sansom and myself, pursuing the anarchist principle of getting one's friends to work for nothing, brought in the Thamesiders as a support act for the Mick Mulligan Band.

However his contribution to an anarchist society was rather more subtle than a freebie gig at Fulham Town Hall. As one of the Vipers Skiffle Group he was part of that extraordinary mid '50s breakthrough that made music an everyday activity for ordinary people. It is difficult to appreciate in today's musically crowded culture the extent to which southern Britain at least was musically barren. 'Popular music' had no demotic base. It was something provided by a class of professional musicians and the idea of music as a practice, as something people did for themselves, was almost entirely absent.

So Wally Whyton and the Vipers were the wellspring of a stream that fed into both the folk revival and the whole rock 'n' roll / blues take-over of the '60s. It seems an exaggeration to say that Wally Whyton changed the course of British popular music yet there is a sense in which it was true. The Beatles and the Rolling Stones, Martin Carthy of Steeleye Span and Dave Swarbrick of Fairport Convention, Davy Graham, Dannie Thompson and Dave Green have all spoken of the impact the Vipers had on them as teenagers. So have Hank Marvin, Bruce Welch and Jet Harris who eventually joined The Vipers mark three before going on to become The Shadows.

Although the '21s' was the place where the Vipers achieved their brief fame they originated in a free floating group of instrumentalists who came together in the Bread Basket Coffee House in Cleveland Street, North London. It was here that Lonnie Donegan, already a name, heard Wally perform the Vipers big number, *Don't You Rock Me Daddy O*, and went off and recorded it himself.

Wally's laconic sense of humour enabled him to overcome this sort of thing with equanimity. In those pre-animal rights days the Vipers travelled with a set of 'exotic animals' (and yes we are ashamed of it now) including two monkeys named Elvis and 'Iggins. One night at a party I had 'Iggins on

my shoulder and was being pestered by Donegan to "Gi'us a go of yer monkey". Finally Donegan took the animal on his shoulder. 'Iggins promptly lifted Lonnie's lapel, shat enthusiastically, patted the lapel back in place and departed, leaving Donegan incandescent.

"Well" said Wally reasonably, "it was something many of us had wanted to do for a long time."

In fact he already had. It was Whyton who wrote the withering Donegan spoof *Putting on the Smile* for Peter Seller's 'Songs for Swinging Sellers' album. Cautiously though he'd used the family name, Behan, as a credit to avoid any direct confrontations.

In the Vipers days Wally Whyton was not particularly politically active although he was always ready to give his time to events like the Sharpeville benefit concert we put on at Saint

Pancras Town Hall, which also featured poet Pete Brown, later to become Cream's lyric writer. He'd always had a horror of racism which had been fed by listening to the tales of Big Bill Broonzy, Brownie McGhee, and Jack Dupree in my Waterloo flat. It was the unnecessary uprooting of some oak trees near his home that led to the writing of *Leave them a Flower*, now something of an anthem for conservationists – it was heard at Newbury for example. In the album of that name he wrote a number of songs that took an overt political stance. He made his views on black oppression clear with the still moving *Selma, Alabama*, on growing social and economic inequality with *The Rich and the Poor*, and on political activism with *The Auction*.

Like many things in his life he fell into broadcasting more or less by accident and was highly popular on television in spite of odd

letters from viewers, which he treasured, saying his puppet character Ollie Beak was a Communist. However he was a natural for radio and a brilliant interviewer with a rare natural talent for making his subject feel liked. His radio shows included *Country Meets Folk* where he managed to get away with a massively popular competition for conservation songs. There were two hundred entries in one week for this contest. It is a measure of the growing intolerance of dissent in our society that such politically pregnant material would be quite unlikely today. He presented a number of shows and had a highly regarded spot on the World Service but it was *Country Club* for which he was best known. He presented this show for twenty years until one of the BBC's inexplicable reorganisations made it impossible for him to continue.

He was always interested in the whole range of music and in those days when folkies and lovers of New Orleans music were not supposed to like bebop I have happy memories of his mock surreptitious arrivals at Pearman Street, clutching records of Charlie Parker, Basie, Clifford Brown and Ornette Coleman.

It was this catholicity of taste that made him one of the great interviewers of the post '50s BBC, although it seems doubtful whether the Beeb realised just how good he was. Musicians did though and the late Brownie McGhee (who once stunned the youthful Whyton's father by drinking the family's medicinal whisky in two swigs) always made a point of recording Whyton's shows when he was in Britain. Black blues singers don't often admire white presenters, but Brownie was genuinely impressed by Whyton's ease and professionalism.

His wife Mary (they met at the '21s' forty years ago) says that after the recent CD reissue of the Vipers recordings he had been looking forward to reuniting with his earliest musical companions at the 100 Club's fortieth anniversary skiffle party in March. As the tributes come in from Nashville stars it is a measure of Wally's diffidence that he always stayed in contact with his old friends and colleagues.

Wally Whyton, singer/guitarist and broadcaster, born London 23rd September 1929, married (one son, two daughters), died 22nd January 1997.

John Pilgrim

Anarchist Comments in Brief

TAGGING-ON TO THE 'BADGE OF SLAVERY'

To judge by the bombardment of advertising in the broadsheets, dailies and Sundays for the mobile telephone, and if it is true that some 35 million of these little monsters are in use in Europe, it is assumed that in this technological age you are a 'nobody' if you haven't got it visible for all to see. In one of my contributions to *Freedom* I've described it as a 'badge of slavery' while recognising the wonders of technology and its worthwhile use, for instance for the disabled and elderly folk living on their own. But it would appear that few people seem to realise that it is not only a status symbol but the modern way the boss keeps tabs on his employees who are engaged in work outside. Up to recently the employee, when called by his boss on the mobile, could say he was at such and such a place when he wasn't. Dear slaves, technology can now even detect your lies! According to *The Sunday Telegraph* (2nd February) "the exact movements of people with mobile phones can be traced years later employing new technology whose results are to be used for the first time in a murder trial". *The Sunday Telegraph* says that the "handset can be tracked whenever it is turned on".

Another report I've seen went further and maintained that even when turned off the instrument could be tracked to within fifty feet at any moment.

So if your marriage is on the rocks and you are looking for evidence for a divorce suit – and needless to say, this is advice to both sexes

– make sure you take the 'condoms' and leave the 'mobile' at home.

If you are working for a boss and he insists on your being 'mobilised' demand an extra £5 for every time he calls you on the mobile.

And for the likes of me, again, as I go on saying in *Freedom*, the telephone is a wonderful invention which allows me to call my distant friends in France and Italy and Spain and well as my comrades in Freedom Press, and Jayne who will be setting these lines. But mobile telephones? Perish the thought. Vive la Liberté.

PS: In case you missed the latest news that the government approves of the bugging of the premises of people the police don't like – will Freedom Press come into this category?

IT'S PROSPERITY FOR SOME But what about the rest of us. Apparently there are more millionaires in this country – officially one in five hundred adults – than ever before. Needless to say they haven't done it by jobs where brawn as well as brains is needed, but by sleaze, inheritance, the lottery (now twice a week with possibly ten new millionaires a week) and all the City rackets in full swing.

Why has the pound sterling 'surged' when at the same time one is told both by *The Guardian* (31st January) that the "surge in the pound puts a damper on growth" and *The Independent* (31st January) that British industry cannot cope with a strong pound.

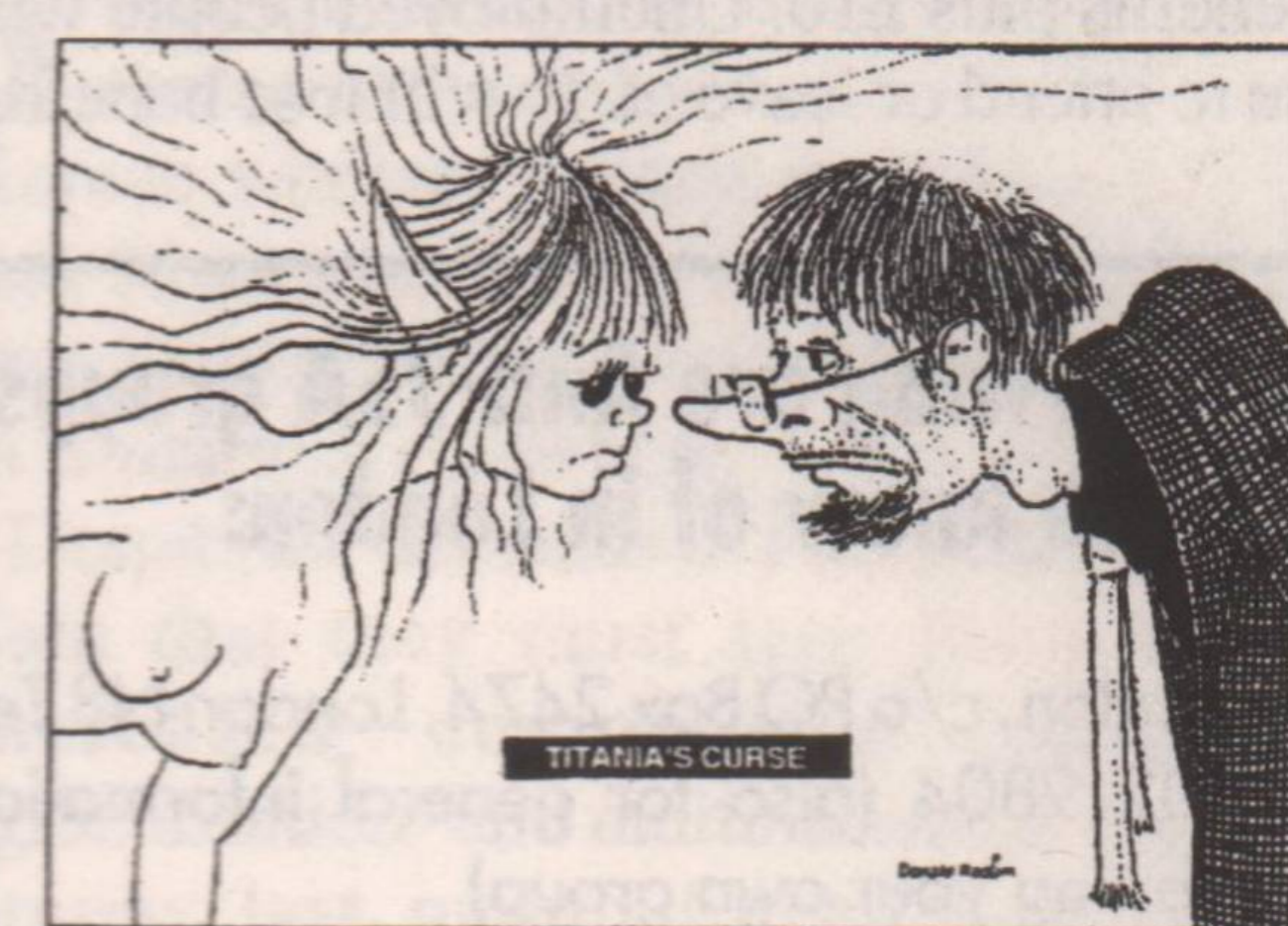
But this naive anarchist asks who made the pound sterling in the matter of a week to be

worth nine cents more – that is 10% up. Not all that much, we may think, when Freedom Press passes on our dollar cheques to our New York friend Chips Booksearch, but when you consider that the money market in London is playing with billions daily, they don't need 10% to make a killing day in day out, do they? And at our expense, for goodness sake. And we go on putting up with it – except for the anarchists, and there aren't enough of us to make people realise the racket that is being operated at their expense.

'GOLDBALLS' IN EVERY LETTERBOX Even the likes of me living in the backwoods had delivered by the postman their 'News from the Referendum Party', an eight-page colour tabloid. If you didn't get one then you should complain to the post office, since they have been paid by Sir James Goldsmith "to deliver a copy to every household in the country". The printing bill, if I've understood rightly, was £2 million (but a mere bagatelle since Sir James intends to spend some £20 million to persuade the nation to put a tick against 'YES' or 'NO' when the British electorate are given the quinquennial opportunity to select their prospective rulers.

Apart from the fact that the mail delivery was later than usual (junk mail delays the morning delivery anyway), I learned that the postmen were paid an extra one penny plus for the service. And what did Goldyballs pay the post office?

Libertarian



TITANIA'S CURSE by Donald Room

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

ITALY AND THE SOCIAL ECONOMY

Readers of this column will have guessed that I have been working against the clock preparing lecture texts for advance translation into Italian, and then off-loading them onto *Freedom*. My excuse is that eight lectures in ten days in five different cities, all on different topics and only one under directly anarchist auspices, was a triumph of organisation by other people through the endless mutual aid networks that keep that country functioning.

For me, the most enjoyable of these meetings was the one held in the basement of the Utopia Bookshop in Milan. This is partly because the room was packed out, and included people I first met 45 years ago, and partly because we were celebrating an endlessly interesting American anarchist, Paul Goodman, who had, so to speak, dared to push forward the frontiers of propaganda. The Milan anarchist publishers *Elèuthera* had put me on the platform together with the translator Guido Lagomarsino and the editor Pietro Adamo, to talk about their collection of Goodman's writings *Individuo e Comunità*.

Its closest English language equivalent is Taylor Stoehr's *Decentralising Power: Paul Goodman's Social Criticism* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1994). I felt very close to the audience when I read out (closely followed by Guido) a passage from the very last of Goodman's articles, published in the American press after his death in 1972, many years before the collapse of the Soviet empire. Goodman remarked that:

"For me, the chief principle of anarchism is not freedom but autonomy, the ability to initiate a task

and do it one's own way ... The weakness of 'my' anarchism is that the lust for freedom is a powerful motive for political change, whereas autonomy is not. Autonomous people protect themselves stubbornly but by less strenuous means, including plenty of passive resistance. They do their own thing anyway. The pathos of oppressed people, however, is that, if they break free, they don't know what to do. Not having been autonomous, they don't know what it's like and, before they learn, they have new managers who are not in a hurry to abdicate ..."

To me, as well as to that gathering in the bookshop basement, this was an encapsulation of the lessons of twentieth century revolutions, and the same kind of issues arose at another of those meetings, set up at the town hall in Mestre by the Commune of Venice with the deputy mayor, a Green politician, Gianfranco Bettin, in the chair. He has a new book just out called *Nemmeno Il Destino* with which I would probably not be sympathetic, but it's unusual to meet a Green city mayor.

The other speakers were Piero Brunello, a historian from the University of Venice, and Luca Casarini from the 'Pedro' social centre (it had been explained to me earlier in Rome

and Naples that these *centri sociale* were mostly legalised squats providing social facilities to serve the needs of the young – I was taken to one in the hinterland of Milan providing for educational needs, and to one in Naples with sporting and musical opportunities).

The unlikely topic of this meeting was the publication of a third Italian reprint of my book *Anarchy in Action*, under the title *La Pratica della Libertà*. I, of course, was delighted, but also embarrassed. If I had known it would be so durable I might have written a more long-lasting text in 1973, or at least a less Anglo-centric one. However, Luca Casarini assured us that my text was rather ahead of its time. But Piero Brunello argued that my use of Martin Buber's polarisation of society and the state and his suggestion that there is an inverse relationship between the two, was an over-simplification. He urged a more complicated formulation of the connection between society and the state reached by one of his colleagues, Giovanni Levi (nephew of Carlo Levi who wrote *Christ Stopped at Eboli*). I lost touch with the argument, but in any case am satisfied with the Landauer-Buber formula that I elaborate upon in my book.

However, at least on the platform in the town hall, we had an entertaining time making rule-of-thumb judgements about various European countries. He thought that in Britain society was strong and the state weak, that in Germany the state was strong and society weak, and that Italy, on the other hand, had both a weak state and a weak society. I argued that his stereotype of Britain was out of date, because of the immense strengthening of the power of central government which para-

doxically coincided with the Thatcher rhetoric about "rolling back the frontiers of the state".

I was also bold enough to disagree about Italy. We all pick up stereotypes and mine of Italy is certainly that the machinery of central government is not only hopelessly corrupt but also grotesquely bureaucratic, and that consequently a vast range of social and local networks keep society going.

I touched upon this in several of my Italian lectures (see this column for 25th January and 8th February 1997) but found no one anxious to comment on the particular Italian virtues which enchant outsiders.

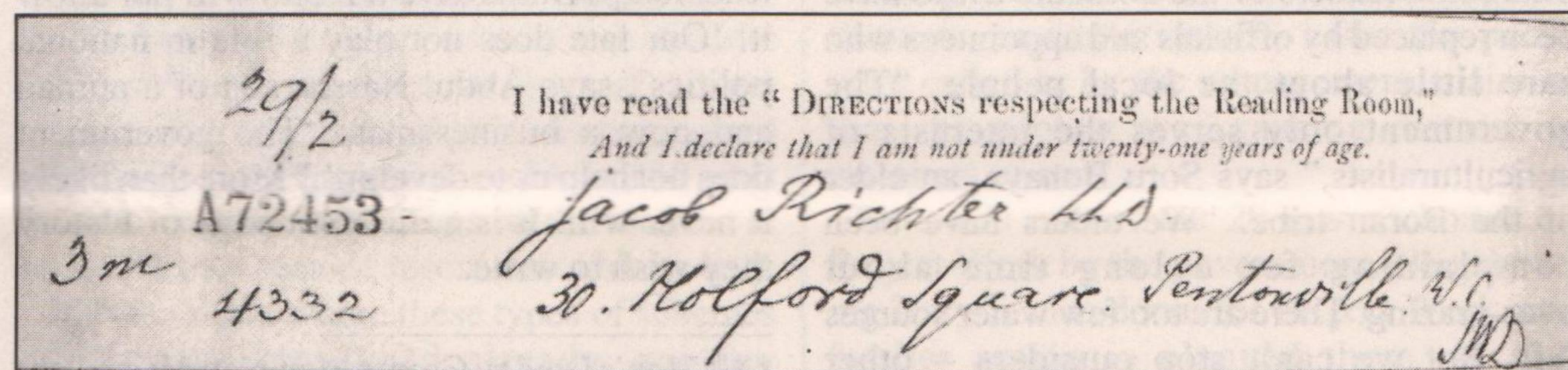
There is, however, a great deal of discussion of *the social economy*, which is seen as responsible for a continually re-assessed sector of the Italian job market. The phrase seems to be used to cover not only social service budgets of local authorities but also the budget of semi-official and unofficial activities, producer and consumer co-ops, and perhaps depending on the social or business status of enterprises. I always find it hard to determine whether this or that tiny family enterprise belonging to a series of co-ops for book-keeping, marketing or insurance, is part of the free market or the social economy.

I find Italy to be a network rather than a nation, and visiting five big cities in a week I find each to be a different country, often with different characteristic political attitudes. The distinction between the market economy and the social economy is continually blurred once you get beyond the handful of famous firms with household names, and the ways in which everyone else keeps going. The greater part of the national income is generated not by Fiat or Benetton, but by the vast number of tiny enterprises using very sophisticated equipment on a small scale.

At the same time, among fellow anarchists who loyally came to meetings, I heard the same doubts as to the lack of success of traditional themes of anarchist propaganda in contemporary Europe.

Colin Ward

RICH AND POOR



There is no point in looking into the past unless an opinion can be formed about it. The problem about history is that historical records get destroyed. We still don't know how much damage to our understanding has been caused by the burning of the library at Alexandria. Every epoch seems to disappear in the burning of one library or another. Political systems tend to destroy all evidence of other systems gone beforehand. What remains is, in many instances, guess-work.

The anarchist movement's history, even that of the recent century and a half, is probably better documented than could be expected from its years of agitational turbulence.

There are certainly gaps in our knowledge and, reading old material at the British Library, even a desultory researcher will come up against imponderables.

It is probably well known to anarchists that Peter Kropotkin supported the First World War, hoping for a social revolution to rise from its aftermath, but I did not know of the existence of a pamphlet published by Kropotkin in 1914, a few days before the outbreak of the great war, arguing eloquently for international working class solidarity and against the war.

What made him change his mind can only be conjecture, but the three main anarchist propagandists – Errico Malatesta, Peter Kropotkin and Rudolf Rocker – by that time had the ground cut from under them by the German Social Democratic Party's support of the Kaiser's war aims and the effective break of the Socialist International. As such both Malatesta and Kropotkin lived here in relative safety, for Russia and Italy were on the 'same side' as this country, but Rudolf Rocker was interned all through the duration of the war as coming from Germany and regarded as being an enemy alien even though he was an anarchist opposed to all wars.

The years prior to the First World War must

have been the highest point in the history of the anarchist movement with reports of public meetings attended by thousands of people.

The distinction between different sections of the movement were not then as strongly defined as they are today, but anarchists were distinguished by their insistence that the parliamentary road is the wrong one and working people should build and rely entirely on their own solidarity and organisation. To use the old expression, many had to sleep in the same bed and there was little time for introductions.

Under the same roof in the elegant round reading room of the British Library they studied and wrote their inflammatory articles. Perhaps they even said hello to each other or studiously avoided all contact.

There was a man there who had come all the way from Russia and later from Switzerland to study 'the land question' and 'comparatively new English and German philosophy'. The comrade in question was still regarded then as one of the brighter anarchist luminaries. I have just come across a very attractive pamphlet published by the British Library's central archives secretariat entitled *Vladimir Oulianoff*, which details with scrupulous accuracy the attempts by one V.I. Lenin under a pseudonym to secure a reader's ticket. He was successful in his attempt to get a card as Jacob Richter, LLD, in 1902, and on a subsequent visit in 1908 as Vladimir Oulianoff. Such subterfuge just to throw the Tsarist police off his tracks. But the record exists, for which one ought to be grateful.

As to what went on, what conversations these revolutionaries might have had, remains pure conjecture.

Kropotkin and Lenin could have met under the great dome, soon to be lost to readers more is the pity, or just brushed past each other carrying vast tomes to the collection point well after the second bell sounded.

John Rety

— ABOVE THE PARAPETS —

ANARCHIST INSTINCTS

Michael Portillo recently told the Thatcherite Conservative 'Way Forward' group that Tony Blair was the slave of "focus groups and spin doctors". "Leadership is a question of instinct", said Portillo, and Labour socialist instincts had been rejected by the electorate. "The only lesson Labour have learned is that to have any hope of winning they cannot trust their own instincts ... So they have turned to focus groups" – small groups of ordinary voters gathered together by pollsters. "And since the instincts of the British people are Conservative, focus groups tell New Labour to say Conservative things. And though he can take down from the shelf his copy of the Bluffer's Guide to Conservatism, he cannot be a Conservative. Second rate Conservative rhetoric is no substitute for Conservative belief."

There is no doubt that Blair does make use of public opinion polls and is heavily influenced by advisers dedicated to 'presentation', and that these factors have been a powerful driving force in his re-positioning of the Labour Party. The question remains, however: do the British people *really* have 'Conservative instincts'? The evidence which is available – and it must be treated with caution, no doubt – suggests that the picture is much more mixed than Portillo suggests; than Blair appears to believe; and than many in 'radical circles' seem to accept.

Let us take one of the fundamental issues of national identity, a matter of concern to Portillo in his role as Defence Secretary: whether the British people still long for an imperial role. This supposed longing was the basis recently for Portillo's party conference

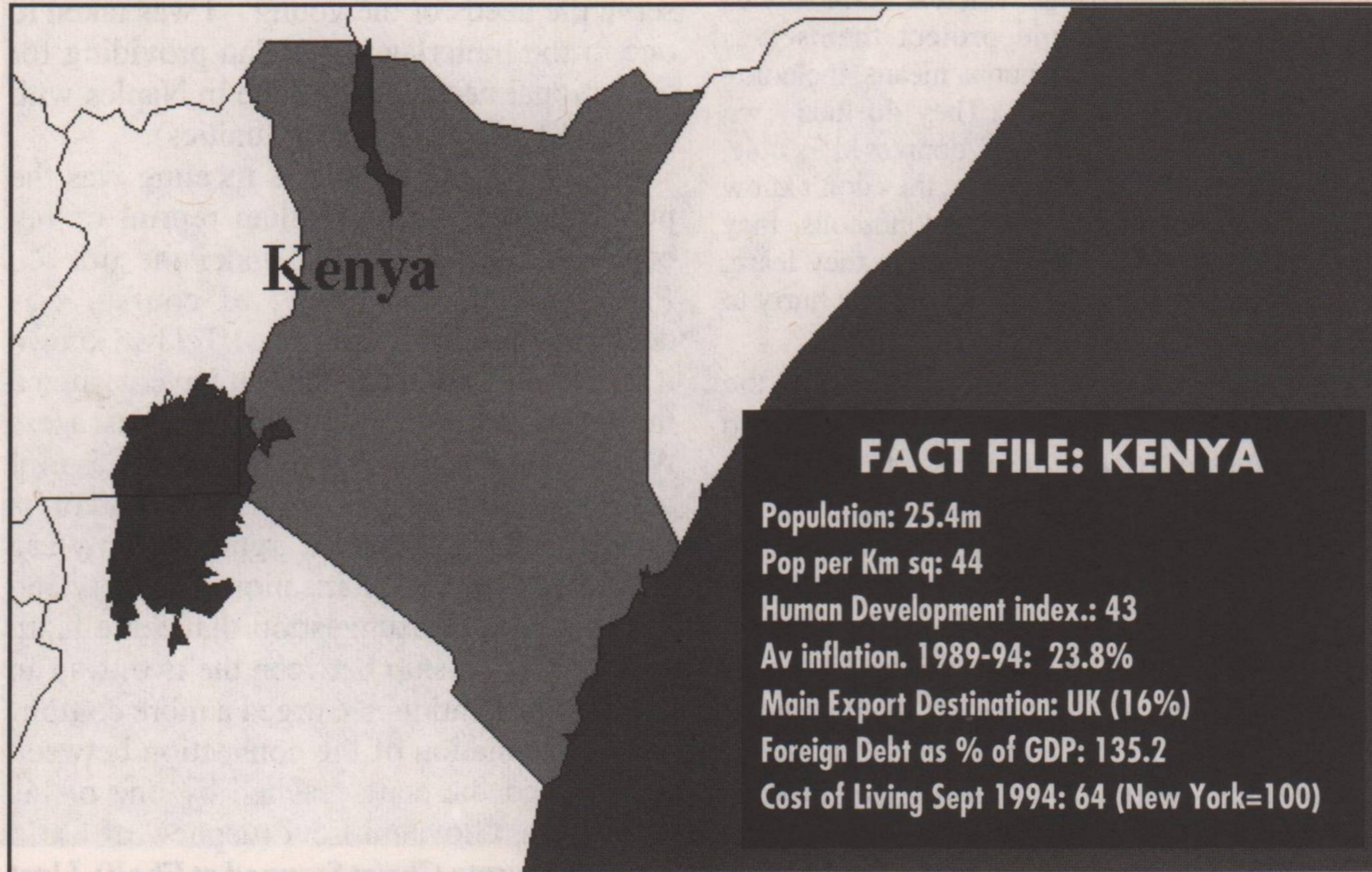
speech. No doubt there is a section of the population which responds warmly to such overtures, but the general picture is quite different (and much more hopeful). In 1965, 55% of people asked by Gallup wanted Britain to be 'a leading power' – only 26% wanted to be 'more like Sweden and Switzerland'. In 1985, however, the proportions had reversed themselves. Only 37% wanted to be a world power, and 55% wanted to be more like Sweden and Switzerland! On this basic question of national aspiration and self-image, most people in Britain are now quite out of tune with 'Conservative instincts' (or indeed with New Labour foreign policy). The popular movements of the 1960s and 1970s have created a major cultural shift.

There is on many issues a considerable discrepancy between the attitude of the general population and the attitude of the political and cultural elite – or between the popular view and the view attributed to the population. One of the most striking examples is the question of taxes. Poll after poll after poll finds support for the Liberal Democrat policy of raising taxes to fund improvements in education (and in the health service, though this is not LD policy). And yet it is presumed, often tacitly, that raising taxes for such a purpose is a vote loser (see last issue's column). Future columns will discuss further examples of the egalitarian, libertarian, sometimes even anarchist, attitudes of much of the population (as well as examples of 'Conservative instincts', where they exist). It is vital that those who seek to influence the public understand what the public actually thinks.

Milan Rai

FOCUS ON ... KENYA

Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya are experiencing the consequences of drought once again. In the North East of Kenya very little rain has fallen for some two years now. For the country's 3.5m nomadic pastoralists drought is simply another factor in their way of life. The problem is land.



Charles Eliot, who was Kenya's first colonial governor, is quoted by George Mombiot* as having written in 1904, that in his mind there could, "be no doubt that the Maasai and many other tribes must go under. It is a prospect which I view with equanimity and a clear conscience". As Mombiot went on to point out it was not the people themselves he wished to destroy but rather their tribal structures and traditions which keep them uncivilised. Money had to be made and for this to happen the market economy had to be imposed. Settlers were to grow crops which would be sold in order to make the economy economically viable.

Indeed today tea and coffee account for nearly 50% of Kenyan exports with the UK being the number one customer. Other, more exotic, crops are harvested by businessmen – often related to powerful politicians – who use the scarce resource that is water on their ostrich and flower farms. More revenue comes of course from the tourists who flock to the parks from which the nomads have been banned.

Africa's problems are often seen in the West in terms of too little water, too many cows and too many people. We'll take them in in reverse order. Of the forty most densely populated countries in the world only two (Rwanda and Burundi) are in Africa. Yet Africa goes hungry and the overcrowded West feeds and drinks her tea. Kenya's population density is 44 per square kilometre compared with, say, the UK which has 238 per square kilometre. Both figures hide regional differences within the borders. In Kenya 75% of the population is crowded into 10% of the overall territory – a figure largely reflecting urbanisation and giving over 400 per square kilometre in places.

And they can't all live on tea. Which brings us to livestock. That there is too much in the area as the economists say is to see the region through neo-liberal spectacles. As the drought extends cattle prices (exchange value) are falling, according to *The Economist* (18th January 1997), pointing out along the way how the government has been slow to acknowledge the problem having now asked

the United Nations World Food Programme to feed some 500,000 people. We have already shown in a recent focus how such policies have exacerbated this same problem in neighbouring Somalia. If Western agribusiness is to be given a new dumping ground the mid-term future may be bleaker than it currently is. (see *Freedom* 19th October 1996).

To those nomads in the area who remain the exchange value of the cattle is not as important as its use value. That is to say as food. They have, as we say, experience of dealing with drought and do so by keeping large herds in order to compensate for the losses they are bound to bear. Their dream is a world without borders where they can roam in freedom. For

them the reality is not too little water, too many people and too many cows instead it's too little land, too many guns and too many hostile governments.

For example the Randille would head for the slopes of Mount Marsabit when the plains went dry. These areas, however, are now reserved for the tourists and wild life. The traditional leaders of the nomadic tribes have been replaced by officials and appointees who care little about the local people. "The government only serves the interests of agriculturalists," says Soru Bonaya, an elder of the Boran tribe. "We elders have been complaining for a long time about over-grazing. There are too few water sources left. But we can't stop outsiders – other

nomadic tribes – coming in to graze their cattle. The government has taken away our authority to solve problems with them. It's the district commissioner that decides who can graze where, and he's influenced by political and tribal interests".

As they find themselves trapped in this way violence is often close at hand and so are weapons from over the border and into Somalia. Aggression between Somalis and Samburu and Turkana tribesmen in which the national army has been involved has recently broken out. Troublesome nomads are hunted down by helicopter. Retaliation followed last December when one of these helicopters was shot down. The reaction was swift with dozens of the alleged offenders killed.

Mombiot explains the background to some of this in his book. While staying with the Takanna he spoke with one of the tribal elders about the tribal confrontations with the Toposa. The elder replied, "In the old days those people had honour. They would fight us in daylight, with spears, and they came only to steal our cattle. No women were killed, no children were killed. If they killed men they speared them honourably in battle. When we raided the Toposa, we did the same".

But times had changed and now the Toposa have been armed by the Sudanese in a governmental hope that by doing this the Toposa would help them fight their enemy the SPLA (Sudanese People's Liberation Army). Instead they turned their guns on their rival tribe.

The Economist article concludes: "This vision of nomads economically productive while living harmoniously alongside wild animals in open lands could be realisable if roads and a slaughterhouse were built, and nomadic tribes allowed to develop their own leadership. But Kenya's rulers will not allow it. 'Our fate does not play a role in national politics', says Abdul Nassir, son of a nomad and now a businessman. 'The government does not help us to develop'." More than likely it never will. It is a different page of history they wish to write.

* *No Man's Land* by George Mombiot (Macmillan)

Dockers' Day of Action: First Report 23rd January 1997

The international day of action dawned in Liverpool as a group of sixteen sacked dockers and their supporters passed through port security and occupied three cranes at the grain terminal, halting unloading of the 'Lake Erie'.

At one point a few scabs entered the crane to confiscate property, but their invasion fizzled out and as of Monday night the dockers intended to stay up for 24 hours.

Down on the ground a mass picket of dockers and Women of the Waterfront gathered at 6am, cheering the occupation and chanting at the scabs. No container vessels were in port. The picket included a delegations from the victorious occupation of Scottish engineering factory Glacier RPB, where 103 workers had been sacked in November and won reinstatement earlier this month, and the Darlington kitchen equipment firm Magnet, where TGWU workers remain sacked after beginning an official pay strike last year.

During the morning faxes arriving at the stewards office were delivered to the picket line. A torrent of solidarity messages, letters to Mersey Docks or British Embassies and Consulates, and press reports had flooded in. Now dockers crowded round to hear the news.

At the Danish port of Aarhus, a mass meeting on Monday morning voted 53:21 in a secret ballot for a 24 hour sympathy strike plus £3,500 sterling donation to Liverpool.

Lloyd's List New York correspondent quoted a statement by members of the International Longshoremen's Association in New Jersey, Baltimore, and Hampton Roads who "intend to honour the request for a

boycott" of vessels still calling in Liverpool, describing the action as "a fitting tribute to Martin Luther King" whose birthday is celebrated on 20th January.

ILA official spokesman Jim McNamara told Lloyd's List he believed the boycott would be observed at all ILA ports on the east and Gulf coasts.

- The Canadian port of St John, New Brunswick, shut down from 8am to 7pm Monday and will send \$5,000 to Liverpool.
- Longshoremen, checkers and railway workers in the Port of Montreal held their first ever joint meeting on Sunday 19th January, bringing together SCFP Local 375 and ILA Local 1675 along with the Syndicat des Debardeurs. Liverpool steward Mike Carden addressed the meeting in French by telephone.
- Belgian dockers, fresh from last week's boycott of the 'Atlantic Compass', were heading off to demonstrate at the British Embassy in Brussels and preparing further industrial action later this week. They were overwhelmed by the scale of international support.
- In Sweden, with the Hamnarbetarforbundet due to hit all ACL and CAST container traffic on Tuesday, the syndicalist SAC union in Malmo demonstrated at the ACL offices in Stockholm on Monday.
- The 'Swiss Revolutionary Reconstruction' occupied the headquarters of the Rhine Shipping Company in solidarity with the dockers and Women of the Waterfront, in

Basle on Monday. Other messages of support and protest letters to Mersey Docks or the British Government turned up.

OTHER GROUPS SUPPORTING THE DOCKERS

- Hava-Is, the civil aviation sector union in Turkey
- ZCTU, the Zimbabwean Congress of Trade Unions
- CNT Transport in Brazil
- OTV, the transport and public service union in Germany
- Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, the Federation of Hong Kong Transport Worker Organisations, the Asian Domestic Workers Union, the Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee
- Union des Syndicats du Canton de Geneve in Switzerland
- Zenkoku Kowan, the National Council of Dockworkers Unions in Japan
- National Federation of Sales
- Representatives Unions in Bombay
- SEV-VPT Public Transport Conductors in Lausanne
- Solidarnost in Kaliningrad, Russia and many other political and human rights organisations and individuals.

As yet, we await confirmation of other industrial actions expected to take place Monday. But CNN in San Francisco has just phoned LabourNet seeking Liverpool video footage for tonight's coverage of the ILWU longshoremen's solidarity stoppage, which took place as planned.

LabourNet report by Greg Dropkin
<http://www.labournet.org.uk>

ARM-TWISTING GOVERNMENTS

Twist the other one, it's got bells on! This seems to have been the response of the Korean workers to their government's claim that they must accept restraints on their trade union rights to compete with low-paid labour in China and elsewhere.

Despite the demands of President Kim Young Sam that they must face the realities of increased competition caused by 'globalisation' and multinationals, the Korean unions last month forced a government climb-down after a month of nation-wide strikes. The Korean government wanted to restrict workers from forming free trade unions and to make it easier for bosses to sack labour.

The Korean work-people wouldn't yield to all the government arm-twisting about how they suffer to compete in a global market place. If the Chinese will work long hours for a bowl of rice, then so should the Koreans.

This is a variation of the argument used years ago which ran: 'The West Germans will work long hours for low wages, the British must do likewise if they are going to compete'. It was a confidence trick then, as it is now.

Recently the economist Yvette Cooper pointed out on Radio 4 that governments today try to use the concept of 'globalisation' – the idea of multinationals chasing the cheapest labour around the world – to get their nation's labour to behave and accept a bad deal. She thought it was largely a deception which rulers always try on with their own people.

Thank goodness the Koreans didn't take too much notice of their rulers.

Labour correspondent

Recognising Patterns

Dear Editors,
Michael Duane's death, reported in *Freedom*, amid the current mania for standards and testing everybody for everything with paper and pencil instruments, reminds me of an experience relevant to both. The incident I will relate marked a turning point in my own thinking when I began to recognise that 'standards', when applied to people, are instruments of coercion and oppression. Against our better judgement, we tolerate these absurdities because they offer a secure refuge to human mediocrity and anxiety.

In 1962, as a newly-appointed assistant lecturer full of good professional intent, I found myself taking part in a testing programme at Risinghill school where Duane was headmaster. This was correctly described by Donald Room as a school which socially disadvantaged and less academic youngsters could enjoy. Some of Duane's colleagues didn't relish the way he ran the school, but that's another matter.

Among the battery of tests imposed on the 13-14 year olds was the Raven's Matrices. This is a non-verbal instrument not apparently depending on the respondent's level of literacy and numeracy. Hosts of people now in retirement would have completed this test of intelligence. I found many of the kids I was supervising finished the matrices well within the allotted twenty minutes: no doubt fudging, skipping and wrongly guessing the answers, I assured myself. I was wrong. Getting on for half of these 'dull' kids turned up higher scores on the old matrices than I could muster. Their speed of accurate completion suggested they were 'breaking the rules' in the way they solved the problems. The official way to complete each puzzle of the 'find the missing bit to fit the pattern' kind involved a step-by-step rational process of elimination. This method, contrary to Raven's claims, favoured the literates over their less literate brothers and sisters.

I have never put much store on the information such tests provide, but these

discrepant results got me observing with purpose. I was forced to conclude these 'backward' kids were using a smarter method of reasoning for the problem in hand based on a more holistic recognition of patterns. I'll bet Duane would have been chuffed to learn his school was full of geniuses, but I'll also bet he wasn't told because above all else tests must discriminate (against the less privileged). The matrices were dropped, without ceremony, from the battery of tests. It's no good discovering we're all intelligent. People might escape from their cultural prisons. From this incident I began to question my past in the professional's collusive conspiracy against people.

Denis Pym

Dear Friends,

A small correction to Donald Room's otherwise excellent obituary to that very fine man Michael Duane (*Freedom*, 8th February). It was I, not John Rety, who organised the meeting at the Lamb and Flag at which Michael Duane spoke, and which was broken up by, if I recall correctly, a group associated with the then functioning magazine *Heatwave*.

I have reason to remember. It was the only meeting of LAG 2 that I ever did organise, and it held the promise of being a very interesting one until broken up. Also the meeting took place after Michael Duane had left Risinghill. At the time he was already on the staff of Garnett College, which was where Donald Room first met him. But Donald is right - he never did hold it against us.

Jim Huggon

John Rety asks us to point out that he was organising the meetings at the Lamb and Flag at that time, but he agrees that it was Jim Huggon who arranged for Michael Duane to speak. He also comments that the people who broke up the meeting were Situationists, who were not particularly interested who the speaker was but merely wanted to obstruct constructive anarchist activities - Editors

Why I Won't Be Voting

Dear Editors,

The General Election the British House of Commons is at most four months away. Whenever it happens, I have no intention of going anywhere near a polling booth unless I happen to pass one on my way to the pub. The state is an anti-social institution whose sole reason for existing is to enable the moneyed and landed classes to oppress and exploit the rest of the population. By voting we simply confer legitimacy on this criminal organisation in return for sharing in the illusion that we have a say in how our lives are run.

The ballot box is often compared to the violent methods of the bullet and the bomb. This view is wrong. All government is aggressive violence because to govern is to impose one's will on a non-invasive individual. By voting, we are taking part in this violent activity. The American anarchist Benjamin Tucker correctly described the ballot as "neither more or less than paper representative of the bayonet, the billy and the bullet. It is a labour saving device for ascertaining on which side force lies and bowing to the inevitable. The voice of the majority saves bloodshed, but it is no less the arbitrament of force than is the decree of the most absolute of despots backed by the most powerful of armies."

It might be asked: what is the alternative? The alternative is for people to take control and responsibility for their own lives instead of letting themselves be ruled by government. In my own view, the way to establish this state of affairs to bring about economic freedom and I think the best way to do this is to abolish the monopoly of the right to issue money by getting involved in such endeavours as LETS, Labour Note systems and mutual banks and by asserting the natural right to take possession of unoccupied land.

It is quite evident that the establishment does not care who you vote for, just as long as you vote. The evidence of this is the general concern in the media about the growing

disillusionment and cynicism of young (and not so young) people with the parliamentary system. If you really want to make your vote count, stay at home.

Richard O'Callaghan

Dear *Freedom*,

Clearly not voting at the next General Election (*Freedom*, 25th January) is important, as is highlighting the reason why. The point remains whether it is better to stay at home, as you appear to be advocating, or to go and spoil the ballot paper. Millions of people do not vote, but as the *Observer* article you quote points out, nobody knows how many of these do it for positive reasons (i.e. that they have no faith in the present political system and politicians). For this reason I shall be registering my positive decision not to vote by spoiling my ballot paper. What do other readers think?

As an aside, I think that the cheapest way the AEA can get its message over is not to put adverts in local papers but to get local supporters to write letters explaining why they support the AEA. If my experience is anything to go by, most local papers print the majority of letters they receive.

Richard Griffin

We are sorry for any confusion between the Anti-Election Alliance and Freedom's anti-election campaign.

The Anti-Election Alliance is an independent coalition of groups opposed to the electoral process, which was formed to issue leaflets and posters against voting. They can be contacted at BM Box 357, London WC1N 3XX.

Freedom's plan is to encourage our readers to find new outlets in their areas for Freedom, and if possible a selection of Freedom Press books. We will back such initiatives by financing the local advertising. We have already had an encouraging response - Editors

Pull the other one ...

Dear Editors,

George Burroughs (11th January 1997) of the London group of the Class War Federation (CWF) may have plenty of experience of exaggerating facts to gullible bourgeois journalists, but he should not treat the readers of *Freedom* and comrades in the wider movement with the same contempt. Evidently all is not well with the CWF, which saddens me, but to come out with the outrageous statement that the CWF goes "from strength to strength" shows that he must still be on the Kensington 'Bash the Rich' march of May 1985, following the invisible hordes of punks with the streets echoing to the ghostly chants of 'we will be back'.

Rumours were certainly circulating at the November Anarchist Bookfair at Conway Hall, London, that the CWF was going to fold. The reality of that day did nothing to dissuade me nor does George Burroughs' letter, unfortunately. The CWF stall was reminiscent of a closing down sale: mountains of unsold papers and unused flyposters. Hardly evidence that the message was attracting growing numbers of militants to the cause. From memory, the CWF did not hold a public meeting at this event or join the successful London Anarchist Forum discussion on anarchism that same evening. What an excellent platform/environment to state the current situation and so stop the rumours.

In stark contrast the Anti-Election Alliance stall was buzzing in the presence of ex-CW brains and founder 'member' Ian Bone who, with others, is now running the Bristol People's Party. Although there is overlap with CWF members, does Bone's new initiative suggest that the CWF is a lost cause?

What of the CWF flyer that was in circulation in the late autumn 1996 stating "the Class War Federation is about to undergo major changes"? What were the circumstances which led to this vague statement and what of the subsequent major changes? It is no good Burroughs stating that "the Federation is undergoing a continuous review" without explanation, because it is this very cagey catch-all statement which fuels rumours instead of quelling them.

That *Freedom* sourced the story to the non-anarchist press, *Weekly Worker* (Socialist Labour Party organ?) just illustrates the CWF's dwindling cohesion. Is it just a coincidence that ex-Direct Action Movement (anarcho-syndicalists, now known as the Solidarity Federation) member Dave Douglass, based in Doncaster, who later joined the less ideologically coherent CWF in the early 1990s, has jumped ship once again and joined his union's boss Arthur Scargill in the Socialist Labour Party very early on, before the party's founding conference in May 1996?

For a matter of accuracy, *Class War's* magazine, the *Heavy Stuff* (No. 5½, a special edition in

response to the 1992 pit closure programme, which was incidentally written by Dave Douglass) has not been published since, to the best of my knowledge, late 1992. The last issue of the paper *Class War* (August/September 1996, No. 72) informed readers that "we won't be taking any new subscribers or bulk orders until we've sorted a few pressing matters out ..." (page 12).

Certainly the ex-masters of spin-doctoring are really getting themselves into a mess and the hole they are digging just seems to be getting deeper. *Class War* (April/May 1996, No. 71) has a brief comment on the newish (October 1995) Red Action front, the Independent Working Class Association (IWCA), stating that the CWF would give it critical support, despite having "grave suspicions concerning the motives of some of those parties involved ... we wait to see if it is a genuine initiative ... watch this space" (page 5).

Those readers unfamiliar with Red Action: expelled from the Socialist Workers' Party because they quite literally did fight the National Front in 1981, are key players in Anti-Fascist Action and uncritical supporters of the IRA. For those uneasy with Irish nationalism, their concerns will heighten with their statement of intent, 'We are Red Action', which informs readers "anarchism ... could never work" (*Red Action*, Spring 1996, No. 73, page 15).

In what could be the final ever issue of *Class War* (No. 72) the letters page has a letter from David Parker (Ramsgate, Kent) asking why the CWF is getting involved with a proto-left-wing party to the extent of putting the CWF name down as a supporter of the IWCA? Good question. The editors of *Class War* are strangely silent.

Published in May 1992 *Unfinished Business ... the politics of Class War* (CWF / AK Press) presented the most coherent set of ideas behind the CWF to date, reflecting how *Class War* (both the tabloid paper and the propaganda group) had matured into an organisation by 1986. So in their declaration the CWF stated that there was no point in opening dialogues with the left and the wider anarchist movement, but to get on with their own activities. "This, as it turned out, was the right decision ... this is still our strategy today [May 1992]" (*Unfinished Business*, 1992, pages

167-168). Parker had spotted the contradiction: "I thought one of your beliefs was that the left have failed ... in this country and should be avoid[ed] at all costs" (*Class War*, No. 72, page 11).

Is it also significant that it is comrade Burroughs, and not the CWF's national secretary, who tries to stop the obituary writer's pen? Nor was the opportunity to silence the 'rumour' that only Doncaster and London groups wish to continue, but only adds to the mystery.

The cupboard door is starting to close, George, will the CWF escape the fate of the Anarchist Workers' Group (split from the DAM in 1988-89)? *Class War* 1983-? Watch this space.

Lucy Parsons

Bouquets

Dear *Freedom*,

Thank you for the claimant's subscription rate. It is very much appreciated as one battles to exist on Income Support. Your coverage of the JSA helps enormously to keep abreast of, and challenge, this pernicious system.

FD

Dear *Freedom*,

I think. Therefore I'm still alive (I think) and I think I would still like to get *Freedom*.

Tuli Kupferberg

Lord of the Flies

Colin Ward's 'Flies Unbuttoned' (*Freedom*, 14th December 1996) about William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies* has aroused a lot of interest. Ward mentioned that in the '60s an issue of *Anarchy* (the *Freedom* Press magazine he edited at the time) was devoted to discussions of the book (it was actually No. 48 in February 1965). Several readers have asked for copies, but it has long been out of print. The possibility of a reprint will be considered.

Minding the Minders

Dear Editors,

In all the interesting and thought-provoking letters published in *Freedom* recently on the sexual abuse of children, two things seem to be missing.

One is recognition of the sad truth that we are very unlikely to get a change to a humane and rational approach to paedophilia until just about all the other ways in which the community thinks and lives are radically transformed too. So unfortunately the debate must for now remain theoretical.

The other thing missing is any attempt to answer the equally theoretical but surely important question I asked at the end of my original article (21st September 1996) and in my letter of 7th January: who in a free community decides who is to be restrained and how, and who appoints the restrainers? You yourselves (the editors of *Freedom*) have given the correspondence the title of 'Who Minds the Minders?', and so appear to be the only ones who recognise there is a problem.

Amorey Gethin

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OLDHAM ANTI-JSA

meet every fortnight at
Hark to Topper, Oldham, at 8.15pm
(next meeting 5th March)
Tel: 0161-628 6182 for further details

**MANCHESTER
ANTI-JSA GROUP**

meet every Wednesday fortnight at
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contact: Dept 99, 1 Newton Street,
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0161-338 8465

London Anarchist Forum

Meets Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall,
25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.
Admission is free but a collection is made to
cover the cost of the room.

- 1997 PROGRAMME -

- 28th February** General discussion
 - 7th March** Who to Vote For? (speaker Adrian Williams)
 - 14th March** General discussion
 - 21st March** Politics and the Ethical Void (Steve Booth will introduce his new pamphlet)
 - 28th March** General discussion
 - 4th April** Anarchism and History (speaker David Probart)
 - 11th April** General discussion
 - 18th April** What is to be done? (speaker Sebastian Hays)
 - 25th April** Towards a Stateless Economics: the Case Against Anarchist Communism (speaker Dave Dane)
 - 2nd May** Anarcho-Nihilism (speaker Steve Ash)
- Anyone interested in giving a talk or leading a discussion, please contact Carol Saunders or Peter Neville at the meetings, or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches, Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 4AW, giving subject and prospective dates and we will do our best to accommodate.

**Peter Neville / Carol Saunders
London Anarchist Forum**

Red Rambles

A programme of free guided walks in Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire for Socialists, Libertarians, Greens and Anarchists. All walks are on a Sunday unless otherwise stated. All walkers are reminded to wear boots and suitable clothing and to bring food and drink. Walks are 5 to 8 miles in length.

March 2nd: Walk leader Malcolm. Derwent valley, woods and pastures. Meet at 11am at Lea Mills car park, Lea Bridge (near Holloway), Derbyshire.

Telephone for further details
01773-827513

ACF

DISCUSSION MEETINGS

Discussion meetings open to the public are convened by the London group of the Anarchist Communist Federation on the first Thursday of every month. They start at 8.00pm at the Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont Street, London WC1 (nearest tube Russell Square). Disabled access. Free entrance.

Thursday 6th March at 8pm

**AFRICA: CONTINENT OF FAMINE,
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Africa has been the victim of dictatorial regimes, horrific famines and war in many areas, as well as dreadful poverty and horrific health conditions. We look at why this should be. Once again we argue that none of this is chance. It is a direct result of the disastrous consequences of the intervention of the western powers, first through slavery and imperialism, and then through the exploitation of the transnationals, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Add to this the connivance of local kings, capitalists and bureaucrats, and the murderous regimes supported by the Soviet Union - as in Ethiopia - and you have a recipe for disaster.

Further information from
ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

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A series of guided circular walks in the Yorkshire Dales and surrounding area for Socialists, Libertarians, Greens and Anarchists. Walks are between 5 and 8 miles long. All walks are on a Sunday unless otherwise stated.

23rd February - Airedale: Skipton to Embsay. Meet outside Skipton Castle at 10.45am.

23rd March - Airedale: Malham to Bordley. Meet in main car park at Malham at 10.45am.

On all walks bring walking boots, waterproofs, food and drink.

Telephone for further details
01756-799002

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Against the JSA
26th March**

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