

# FREEEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

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50p

## PRIVATISATION TO GO UNDERGROUND

**A**part from the government's spokesmen, who declare that privatisation of the railways has been such a success that they are now proposing to privatise the London Underground system as a vote-winner for the coming general elections, all the evidence is that the sell-off of the railways has resulted not only in creating a large number of millionaires but also a deterioration in safety and services.

Surely the media have already given enough publicity about the 'great gravy train'. "Off the rails? The new private railway is proving unexpectedly profitable. The City got its sums wrong and the government sold an asset far too cheaply" (*Sunday Times*, 23rd February). "Rolling stock company directors defend £42 million profit on initial collective outlay of £290,000 – rail sale windfall" (*Guardian*, 20th February). "Short trip on the gravy train nets profit of £12 million" (*Independent*, 20th February), etc., etc. One can be fairly certain therefore that any sell-off of the London Underground railway to private enterprise will result in similar sell-offs within the first year and more millionaires as a result. And in the case of this asset, it includes not just what is underground but all the valuable (rent-wise) commercial property at street level which goes with it.

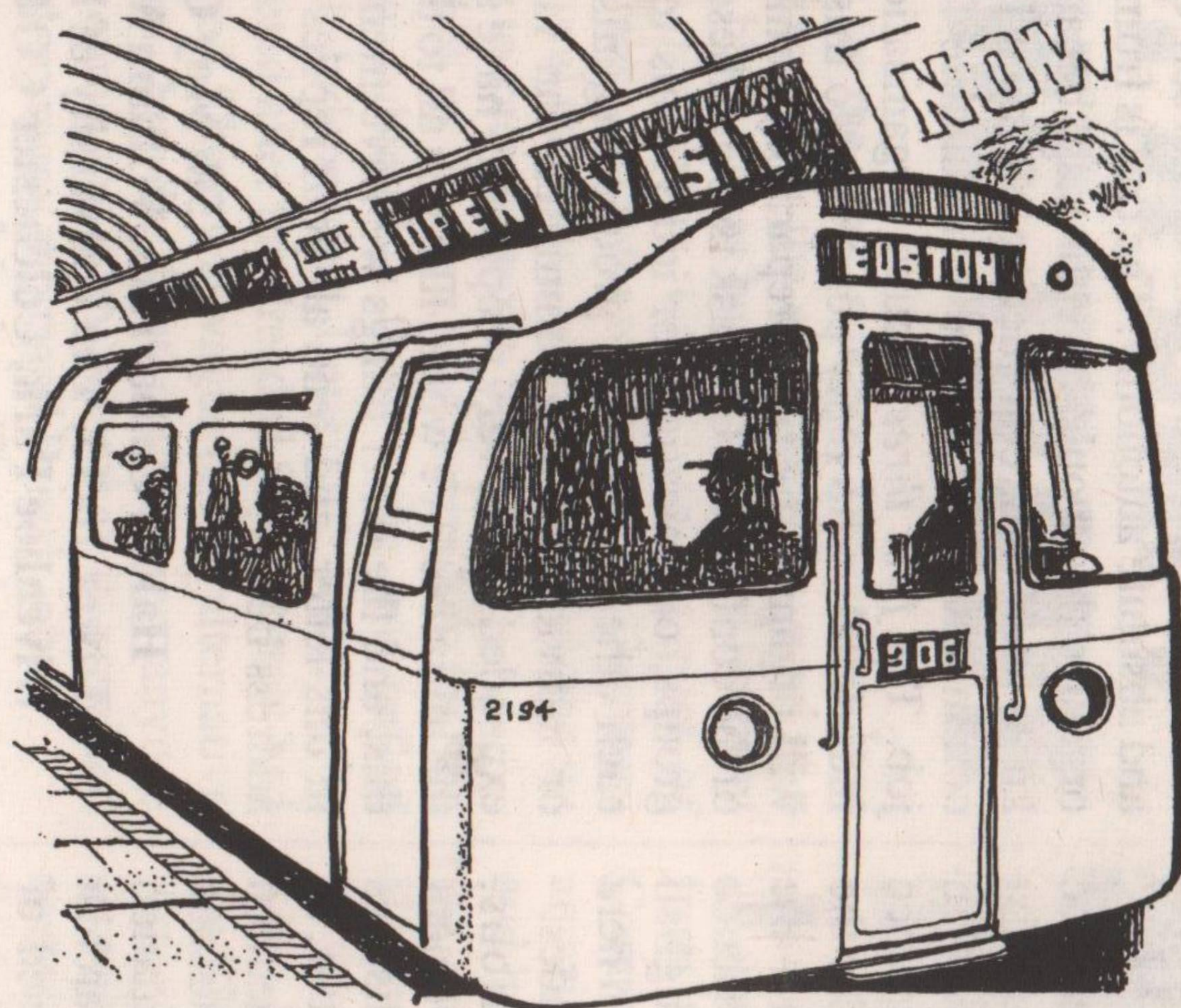
**W**hile anarchists are surely not expected to choose between state and private capitalist enterprise, there surely can be no doubt that a unified non-profit transport service is more efficient, cost-wise, and so far as services and safety are involved, than a whole number of competing and uncoordinated services concerned primarily with profit and *only* with service when it is profitable. We have already seen how hundreds of train services have been cancelled because of 'a shortage of drivers'. Why the shortage? Because the new bosses have encouraged redundancies ostensibly for the employees benefit,

but in fact to save money.

Daily one reads of delays of an hour or more on one-hour journeys. Many of these delays could be avoided if there were the staff to deal promptly with the emergencies as they arise. And maintenance of the track and of rolling stock is surely paramount for an efficient and safe rail transport system. Today quite clearly this is not the case. On one journey from Colchester to London in the past three weeks, this writer experienced four hold-ups: 1) Only half the train arrived at Colchester; 2) delays at Chelmsford because a tree had been blown onto the track; 3) the train in front had developed a fault; and 4) near Romford they discovered a broken rail. Eventually we were diverted to the suburban tracks and arrived at Liverpool Street 45 minutes late on an hour's journey.

It is significant that the new bosses have a printed claims form for delays, but they have made their own rules that they will give compensation only if their train is *over* an hour late. *That's service* in this age of flights to the moon, cloned sheep and the Internet.

**I**n this writer's opinion the public services such as the railways (until



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the past ten years when the government was intent on getting rid of them and neglected them), the postal service, water, electricity and gas have been reasonably efficient thanks to a *loyal, conscientious working personnel* – loyal because they took pride in the services they were providing to the public. After all, they were also part of that public. Today that has been driven out by privatisation, or by the feeling that one didn't count any more.

Perhaps this writer should take responsibility for the foregoing and mention that as a railway engineer responsible for the construction of some eighty miles of track in Cambridge, March, Reading, Oxford, Shrewsbury ... even in Smithfields ... many years ago (of course) he realised that those best able to run the railways were the railway *workers* and not the office.

Today the bosses hope to run the railways on the cheap by computers and cut out the humans who know best. Not surprisingly, when the computer fails on the signalling or the points everything comes to a standstill. In the old days, there were signal boxes and in fog or snow this could not happen because somebody was available even to flag the trains.

**Libertarian**



# anarchist fortnightly

# Freedom

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## SHORT CHANGING THE PUBLIC

**"The only way to defend freedom is to assert it."**

**A.J.P. Taylor**

### HOW THE RICH SUFFER

Last month a number of new millionaires were wounded by derision in the press. Andrew J. Jukes, managing director of Eversholt Leasings – which rents trains to private companies – could pocket more than £16 million from shares bought cheap for £110,000 a year ago. The firm, called a ROSCO (rolling stock leasing company) was sold off by the government last year at a bargain knock-down price.

The sellout, in which Eversholt Leasings is being bought by the HSBC banking colossus, will net the four directors £50 million almost overnight. With this kind of jackpot, some are wondering if the public has been short-changed by the privatisation. This was a 15,000% profit margin.

### WHERE IS THE 'DEMAND'?

From *Mrs Thatcher's Minister: the private diaries of Alan Clarke*: Albany, Wednesday 11th April 1984.

"There was a demo by the unemployed. Uglyish mood, they created to 'rock the car' (the one thing of which civil servants are absolutely terrified). Police useless, as always, like Hindus defending a trainload of Muslims. One puzzled constable, a 'trainee' and a po-faced young WPC.

'I must speak to them'.

'No, no, minister, please don't try. Minister, you must not get out of the car. Please minister'.

Wretched people, they were angry, but taken aback by my actually dismounting to listen. Some SWP [Socialist Worker's Party] jobs tried to get a chant going, but the others really wanted to air their grievances. One man, quite articulate, looked dreadfully thin and ill. He had a nice brindled greyhound on a leash, but it looked miserable too.

Gravely I listened. At intervals I asked them questions. I told them that if there was no 'demand' no one could afford to pay them to make things. They quietened down. But that's a glib point really. It's foul, such a waste.

Uncomfortable, I thought what Soames [N. Soames, MP for Crawley since 1983] and I can spend between us on a single meal at Wiltons."

### CURSE OF THE POWER CULT

The headlines following the death of Deng Xiaoping showed all the signs of power worship. "The last red titan dies" (*The Independent*); in *The Express* it was "The Last Tyrant" and in *The Telegraph* "The Last Emperor".

'Titan', 'tyrant' or 'emperor'? A titan seems to be "somebody notable for outstanding achievement", while emperor – perhaps reflecting *The Telegraph's* own past imperial predilection – is a "supreme ruler". *The Express* in declaring him the last tyrant seems to be somewhat optimistic, for "Do not tyrants ... think men were born for slaves to kings?" (Gay).

Alan Clarke is very well off, and consequently doesn't need a job. This makes him more honest and straightforward than most politicians.

An anarchist might glibly ask what 'demand' is there for politicians or government ministers, who we often pay to make things up? To which Mr Clarke might answer that the 'demand' is demonstrated by bodies such as the SWP, who spend their time urging folk to go trudging after ministers of the crown in order to petition them and incite the public to vote.

### WHAT THE POOR HAVE TO PUT UP WITH

#### PROJECT WORK PUNISHES THE POOR

Last week there were rumours that the Tory Party might propose that Project Work (work for dole) become compulsory for all long-term unemployed. This could go in the Party's election manifesto.

## PROJECT WORK: MESMERISED BY MISINFORMATION



Dole-house doyens damn Project Work in Bolton

Is Project Work up and running? Who are the 'providers'? Which agencies are dirtying their fingers in the forced labour racket?

In the first week of Project Work in Bury it was suggested that one agency, previously involved, may have pulled out of the scheme. The Rathbone Company, an employment and trainee agency, claimed they no longer had the contract for Project Work. Two weeks ago it was revealed by the Bury Job Centre that Rathbone had the contract. Rathbone had already put out feelers to the voluntary sector locally, and been turned down by the mainstream voluntary bodies.

Then, last week, everybody started changing their story. Someone called 'Julie' in charge of the Project Work scheme in Bury claimed the Job Centre was still putting the work out to tender. Then 'Job Centre Julie' and the management at Bury dole started giving enquirers the run-around, advising them to ring other offices in Preston and elsewhere.

When the press made an approach, 'Job Centre Julie' and other Project Work staff had become unavailable and busy doing interviews. When we did get through, the manageress chanted at us from a prepared script in which she directed us to the COI (Central Office of Information).

Mary (I don't know) Maiden is the public voice of the COI, which does a public relations job for the Employment Service in the North West. It's a kind of rest home for professional liars and economists in the truth. He who ends up here with COI is a desperate man in search of facts.

There's more joy in listening to Gillian Shepherd on the *World at One* or banging your head against the wall than in talking to Mary (I don't know) Maiden. Explain the confusing signals and misinformation coming out of Job Centres and chirpy Mary will tell you: "I'll have to check up on that Mr Journalist". But she adds: "I think all the providers are in place".

Then when you get back to her it's back to the prepared script: "Interviews will take place over the next thirteen weeks; in the next thirteen weeks the work experience scheme will be in place".

I asked: "Is Rathbone's acting for you or not?" to which Mary Maiden replied: "I can't comment on that."

Three days later both the Rathbone Agency and the Bury Job Centre were occupied by an angry army of claimants demanding an end to Project Work.

**Bury Black Pudding**

**Full coverage of the invasions in the next issue**

Project Work (forced labour), as practised in Hull and Kent, has not got people jobs but has got folk off the unemployed register. Of the six thousand who went on the schemes only seven hundred got proper jobs.

The scheme is being extended to 29 more towns across Britain as I write. No wonder crime is on the increase – half of the unemployed in this country can't get benefits.

#### 'BRIGHT AND BUBBLY PERSON REQUIRED ...'

A 'bright and bubbly' person was in demand last week at Oldham Job Centre. Someone was required to "run errands and perform filing and administrative duties at a busy employment agency". This office assistant would have to have "basic typing skills and excellent spelling abilities".

The position will be permanent and the pay will be £60 a week.

Ah yes, and the company expect you to have a "pleasant telephone manner". They don't want much.

Be 'bright and bubbly' from 9am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, and all for sixty quid.

#### PROCESSED PEAS FOR PRISONERS

In modern Britain soon the jobless won't be able to go to jail to get fed!

Sandra Paul, the former model and wife of the Home Secretary Michael Howard, tried to get her husband to cut the quality of food served to Britain's 50,000 prisoners. Ms Paul, four-times-married, considered the suggested code of prison standards put to her husband to be "too generous".

The Home Secretary's favourite feast is oysters, carrot and orange soup, duck à l'orange, creme brûlée, all to be washed down, she told *Healthy Eating* magazine, with a good red wine.

According to Nick Flynn, deputy director of the Prison Reform Trust, a typical prisoner's diet – which Ms Paul thought 'too generous' – would include processed chips and peas, low-grade meat pie (Mad Cow's disease?), sponge pudding, tea.

And I thought I was being put on when I had to drink Lambrusco (Light) at an anarchist soirée last weekend.

#### OUR OUTLOOK ON EMPTY STOMACH

A sufferer from the Alzheimer's Disease Society suggests that dementia sufferers may be starving to death in NHS hospitals and care homes, under-fed by staff who can't cope with the condition.

There have been complaints from people who have had to watch relatives waste away because they can't feed themselves. People go hungry because they can't open cling-film wrappers or are too slow to eat up their food.

When I protested some years ago about a resident in an old folks home who, because of a stroke, couldn't eat her food quickly enough, a nurse told me "Well, she'll eat it if you feed her".

How many more will die of slow starvation and pneumonia brought on by malnutrition before somebody does something. Arturo Ui



# ARMAMENTS: A DAFT AND GRUESOME TRADE

Ever since the overthrow of America's ally, the Shah of Iran, the governments of the United States and Iran have regarded each other as enemies. America has strict rules against trade with Iran.

During the Bosnian civil war Iran supplied President Izetbegovic of Bosnia with armaments and a few volunteer fighters. The Central Intelligence Agency now reports that Izetbegovic is 'on the payroll' of the Iranian government. The chief of Iranian internal security is helping Bosnia to set up a similar secret police force. Yet the United States will go ahead with giving Izetbegovic a hundred million dollars with which to buy American arms.

Indisputable video evidence has been produced that British-made water cannons are used against peaceful demonstrators in Indonesia, and the British government affects to be shocked at a military dictatorship making full use of the equipment supplied.

Yes, it's crazy. But it is quite consistent with the craziness of the capitalist system of distribution, where goods and services are produced to make profits rather than to fulfil needs, and the respectable way to get one's needs met is either to make a profit or to have a job.

Trade may have arisen in a time of natural scarcity, as a means of making sure that those who had something kept the value of what they had. It is inappropriate for conditions of natural plenty, which is what human ingenuity has created now. But human conservatism prevents us updating our methods. We stick to trade, and trade depends on scarcity, so scarcity has to be created artificially.

The obvious way to create scarcity is to increase demand by advertising, and advertising has grown into a major industry since plenty became technically feasible. Advertising is the most humane way to create shortages.

A less humane way is to create food 'mountains' then to dump and waste the food because there is no market for it, even though people are dying for want of it and the means of taking it to them are available. The best capitalism can do to prevent unwanted accumulations is the 'set-aside' scheme, whereby governments raise taxes to pay farmers *not* to produce food.

But the daftest and most gruesome way to sustain trade is to prepare for war. Governments raise taxes to pay for the production and distribution of things, which at best remain unused until they become obsolete and at worst produce devastation. This results in profits for the factory owners and dealers, and jobs for workers who can then be taxed to pay for more such things.

From the late 1940s until the early 1990s the world armaments trade was justified by the Cold War between the victorious allies of World War Two. Now that the Cold War is over governments are desperately casting about for alternative enemies, or other excuses to keep the armaments trade going.

The United States government declares various other governments, such as Iran and Cuba, to be potential enemies against whom defensive armaments are prepared, just in case. The main objection to these countries, mentioned in American propaganda, is that they are undemocratic. But at the same time America sells arms to the world's most abominable dictatorships. During the Cold War American-supported dictatorships were described as 'the free world', the criterion of freedom being openness to trade with American capitalists.

The British government is in a bigger dilemma than the American. Manufacturing industry depends on capital for loans from financial institutions and during the 1980s these financial institutions, with encouragement from the Thatcher government, withdrew funds from manufacturing industry

except for the arms industry. The sudden loss of an excuse for the arms industry came as a severe blow. It has been alleged that hostility to the European Union, on the part of politicians who refer to France and Germany as 'natural enemies', is a ploy to create a new enemy to keep the arms trade going.

Be that as it may, the upgrading of the nuclear submarine fleet – the mis-called 'British Independent Deterrent' – had to be completed after the dreaded Soviet threat had collapsed. There was vague talk of alternative enemies, but the best justification anyone could come up with was that it provided 'so-and-so many thousand British jobs'.

The cat is out of the bag. The real reason for the armaments trade is to keep trade going.

Richer countries have overseas aid funds, making grants to poorer countries, ostensibly to provide the necessities of life for their poor inhabitants. Some of it is so used, but quite a lot of it is diverted to buy armaments to keep the inhabitants of poor countries under control and their rulers rich. The total given in aid is in fact less than the total amount paid by poor countries to rich countries in the form of interest on loans, largely to buy armaments.

Early this year it was shown that a grant of aid money to finance a dam in Thailand was part of a contract for the purchase by Thailand of British-made weaponry. The opposition in Parliament was suitably scandalised. Lately, however, an aid grant from Britain for the training of Indonesian police has been quite openly linked to the purchase of arms by the Indonesian dictatorship, and the official opposition has been strangely quiet.

The argument about so-and-so many thousands of British jobs being lost if the arms trade goes carries some weight with the voters, especially those employed in the armaments industry. But so do the counter-arguments that arms are a waste of money and that Britain ought not to support overseas dictatorships. Military spending has declined and is likely to decline further.

If wealth were distributed rationally the wealth diverted from armaments could be spent on useful goods, or to give people more leisure time without losing anything. Unfortunately, wealth is distributed by the system of trade, profits and jobs. A decline in the production of useless and dangerous things is likely to cause a decline in the production of useful things too, and unemployment with poverty.

We would all be much better off in a society where work was done to fulfil needs, in what some people call a gift economy. By the system of honour and ethics appropriate to capitalism, people do not work except to earn a living. But systems of honour and ethics evolve to meet the needs of society, and a gift economy would have a different system.

## NORTHERN IRELAND:

### SOUND BITES FROM A WAR/PEACE PROCESS

John Hume, my local MP, has just been awarded another award and this time it's from the Publicity Club of Ireland – their Communications Award. He has garnered an amazing collection of awards over the years and has a massive international reputation as the man who brokered the peace process. However, like that process, he is said not to be in very good health, though he looked fine when I saw him at a discussion event to mark the 25th anniversary of Bloody Sunday. I'm afraid his communication skills weren't up to scratch that night and he almost lost the rag completely over the issue of an SDLP/Sinn Féin electoral pact. Even though he was barracked a bit from the hall, he still secures massive respect and support in Derry. He is the classic example of the admired community activist who has stepped out of that community but who still has strong links there.

He didn't join my mates and me when nine of us re-enacted the end of the fatal march of 25 years ago with a moving mime from the

point where that march was stopped to the Guildhall, the section it never made. We were ghosts on the streets remembering the last march for civil rights.

We have had too many marches here, of course, and the North Report into how they might be dealt with has been shelved by Patrick Mayhew, which probably means it will sink under the tide of the forthcoming election. A new overt tactic of the government has emerged in the past few weeks with ministers openly implying that we will be punished if we don't sort ourselves out. The talk from English ministers and civil servants at Stormont, the sat of colonial power in Belfast, is of 'an elephant at the door who cannot be ignored', meaning that public funds for education, health, etc., will be diverted to cover increased security costs. So we are being prepared for the loss of 550 teaching jobs. And more. When will the elephant wallahs realise it's they who've got us into the state we're in?

Dave Duggan

## ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

**UNTO THOSE WHO HAVE ...** With the death of Pamela Harriman, Churchill's awful son Randolph's ex-wife and mother of the present Tory MP Winston, he inherits a second fortune without moving a finger to earn it. The first came from old blood-and-tears Churchill's archives worth a few million pounds, and now a few more million from mum's estate. No question about it ... *MORE SHALL BE GIVEN!* Gad sir! They are the backbone of the nation and they should have the means to keep the country in the forefront of the nations of the world, don't you think?!

**WATER PROPAGANDA** The privatised water operators are advertising daily on Radio Classic FM inviting one to get their brochure telling us consumers what they are doing for us, in the process of ploughing two-thirds of their profits into providing us with better water and better services. All I ask for is better *pressure* with my Anglian water service (incidentally, while assuring us that they are spending millions of pounds improving our services while also sacking three hundred workers) because I can't get the required pressure (which I could in the non-privatised past) to operate the loo and the hot water system at the same time. So what?

**A 'SICK SOCIETY' NEEDS MORE HOSPITAL BEDS** and not fewer, which is the case today. According to the *Guardian's* social services

correspondent (20th February): "Hospital waiting lists have hit a record high ahead of the general election after health managers were told to let non-urgent patients queue longer in order to ensure treatment of emergency cases. Quarterly figures released yesterday show that almost 1.1 million people in England were waiting for in-patient treatment at the end of December, a rise of 3.2%. Numbers waiting more than a year soared by 46% to 6,900, of whom 123 had been waiting for more than eighteen months, in breach of the Patient's Charter."

Needless to say Gerald Malone, the health minister, said the figures showed the NHS had "maintained gains made in recent years for non-urgent admissions ... a tremendous achievement because the focus has now moved on to improving priority services, particularly emergency and mental illness services."

Since, in the capitalist world, everything is a question of money, can one ask where is the *enemy* to justify spending £23 billion a year on so-called defence when even £3 billion of those wasted billions could reverse the ghastly situation in the hospitals?

Let me quote again from the *Guardian* report: "A spokeswoman for the Scottish Office, which publishes waiting list figures only annually, said pressures were less severe north of the border. At the end of December, 272 patients had been queuing for more than a year. The full list was below 49,000, compared with more than 50,000 in December 1995."

An improvement when just in Scotland 272 people had been waiting for more than a year? They are *human beings needing treatment to improve their health and are still waiting a year later*. What kind of society are we living in?

**GENETIC TOMATOES, CLONED SHEEP AND HUMANS** What next? Scottish scientists have produced the first cloned sheep. I confess to not understanding how the magic works and delighted that I shall be out of the way when and if it is applied to humans, because I understand that human beings will be produced in the future without sexual intercourse. Science gone mad? Perhaps the scientists ought to be housed in safe places for their own well-being!

There is a serious aspect to what science and scientists let loose may achieve. Now they are engaged on animals, as they have been for years on cereals, vegetables, fruit, etc. And what next?

Libertarian

### The Raven 33

on

### Anarchism and the Arts

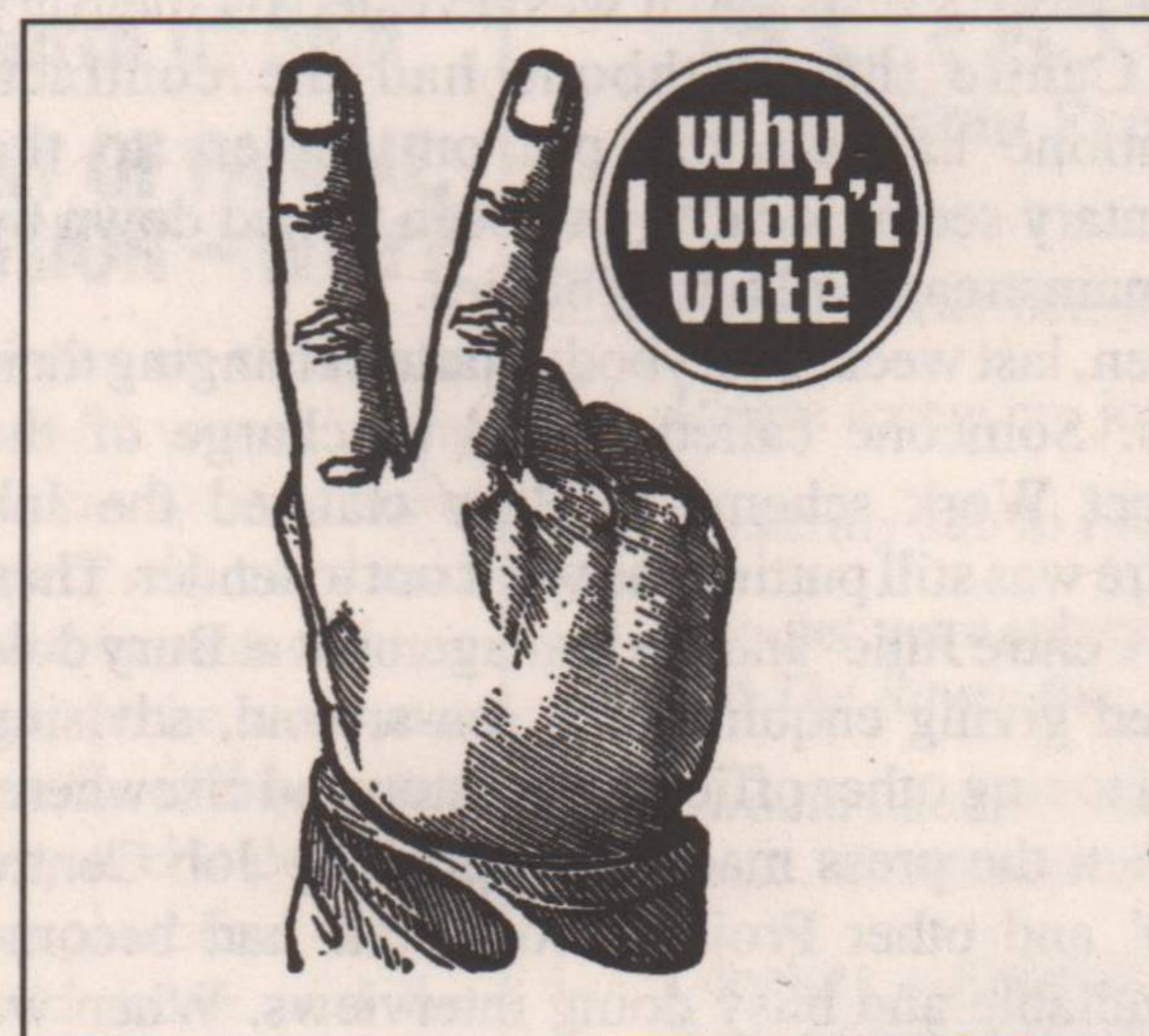
this edition of our quarterly anarchist journal includes

'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 —

BURNLEY'S BLOODSTAINED  
BENEFITS BUREAU

## HANGED MAN TAKEN OFF BENEFITS

Last February, a young man from Burnley hung himself after his benefits were stopped. He had no income, and in despair had turned to some local loan sharks. This was alleged by his sister in the East Lancashire Coroner's Court last March (see *Burnley Express*, 15th March 1996).

## BURNLEY CLAIMANT GIVEN THE CHOP

In November, Reg Hall was taken off benefits for two weeks when he mislaid his Job Search form.

The Burnley Job Centre manageress, Mrs D.A. Duffy, told him: "As you did not take sufficient and appropriate steps to find work the adjudication officer has decided that you were not actively seeking work".

Mr Hall, who is still suffering a loss of interest support on his mortgage, claims "apparent 'failure' to secure a position is due to the state of the labour market and not any lack of active steps on my part".

DOLE MANAGERESS  
STEALS 'FREEDOM'

In blatant disregard of all recommended procedures of the Employment Service, dole manageress 'Toughie Duffy' laid into an unemployed activist during a protest against the JSA and benefit suspensions at Burnley last week. The incident, in which Mrs Duffy clinched with a protester, occurred after disagreements on where leaflets could be distributed.

Later police told demonstrators that the management disliked the contents of the leaflet and a story in *Freedom* about Burnley dole. No comment was made about the photo of Madam Duffy in a pouting pose (see *Freedom*, 22nd February). Reports suggest that when she was shown her photo in *Freedom* her face became contorted.

It was shortly after seeing her likeness in *Freedom* that Madam Duffy seemed to go demented, snatching at the cameras, and when she upset a pile of papers in her struggle she scrambled on the floor in a determined effort to snaffle the anarchist press.

Claimants gathered round as though they were at a 'Punch and Judy' show. There was a hum of excitement, such as one more usually finds in a French or Spanish crowd when some odd incident occurs.

It was all too much for Madam Duffy. In a wild movement she hit the panic button and the dole lit up like Blackpool Ballroom. With lights flashing and alarms playing, the protesters withdrew.

Mrs Duffy cowered with her deputy against the reception desk, trying to avoid being caught on camera. The demonstrators continued to call: "How many more folk are you going to chuck off benefits?" and "How many more suicides are there going to be in Burnley?"

About half a dozen police turned up minutes after the activists left the premises. The police tried to excuse the manager's behaviour, saying she is only 'human' and that people react differently under pressure.

One militant called the episode 'operation overkill'. The police did tell us they are fed up with being called out to trouble at Burnley dole.

A packed meeting at The Swan later in the day, covered by *The Burnley Express*, founded a benefit action group.

Unemployed Activist

## JOB SEEKER'S ACT CHAOS

Ms Ferguson from Kilmarnock was made redundant and got her last wage on 10th January. She was told she would have to wait at least two weeks at her JSA interview on 15th January.

She was refused a crisis loan, and later told that "there is a huge backlog of cases which will take at least three weeks to clear". When she made a claim for food and heating bills they said "we have been instructed not to make crisis payments when the crisis has arisen as a result of the JSA backlog".

## OTHER HORROR STORIES

A man from Wales died of heart failure last year after being told he was fit for work by a

DSS doctor. He had been off work, on the sick, for three years with heart problems. Death occurred shortly after the DSS sent him back to work.

Late last year a middle-aged Yorkshire woman was sent by the dole for a job at an escort agency. To reach their targets and get their bonuses, dole staff had to push people into dodgy jobs like this. Now government ministers have had to withdraw certain sleazy job vacancies in massage parlours and strip-joints which may serve as a cover for prostitution rings.

If you feel harassed on the dole and need help, please contact:

Burnley Benefit Action on 01282 705771, or write to 65 Piccadilly Road, Burnley, Lancashire BB11 4PU

## BOSSES SNUB UNION

Employment Service management have been refusing to meet with regional secretaries of the CPSA (the Civil Service union). In a letter last January to branch secretaries, Richard Halfpenny declared management has refused "to discuss issues, particularly staffing problems, which have arisen in [the] Employment Service post-JSA 'A' Day".

There seems to be serious disquiet in the Employment Service about conditions in the Job Centres since the Job Seeker's Act was brought in fully last October.

## UNION DISCIPLINES MILITANT

On 28th February the CPSA union ordered Lee Rock, a London militant, to a disciplinary hearing. The union's general secretary Barry Reamsbottom told him: "The National Executive Council was absolutely astounded to see the name of a prominent activist such as yourself wishing to be closely identified with and giving support to Groundswell."

Mr Rock, according to Groundswell, is under attack for his stand that claimants and dole workers should unite against the Job Seeker's

Act. He put his name to an article entitled 'National Union Refuses to Back ES Fight', and he urged that "we must continue to campaign, alongside unemployed groups such as Groundswell, against the JSA".

The union bosses claim "it is well documented that the tactics employed by Groundswell include harassment and intimidation of Employment Service and Benefit Agency workers ... employed to work on JSA".

Groundswell disputes this in an open letter to Mr Reamsbottom. The group says "we think your members have been subjected to enough negative propaganda concerning the Groundswell network and that it is your actions, not those of Groundswell or Mr Rock, which are against the direct interests of your members".

Mr Rock is reminded of CPSA Rule 2.1(a) in the general secretary's stiff letter. This rule declares the aim of the association to be to "protect the promote the interests of its members".

I would have thought few union hacks would be safe if that rule were applied universally.

Mack the Knife

## GET IT ON TAPE

The Civil Service union – the CPSA – is worried about claimants who insist on using tape recorders to tape interviews with staff at Job Centres. The union felt this was being done "at the prompting of the Groundswell campaign".

The union has told management: "Given previous threats and attempts at intimidation by people claiming to be part of the anti-JSA and/or Groundswell campaigns, our members were concerned about what use these tape recordings would be put to and whether management could force them to take part in ES interviews which were being tape recorded by the claimant."

Management suggested that Claimant Advisers should consult their Business Manager if a jobseeker insists on using a tape, but most time "the Business Manager should not refuse the request". It was thought that "the recording of interviews should not cause any undue concern".

The Claimant Adviser can't be forced to do a recorded interview. If it upsets them, the Business Manager or another Adviser could stand in.

The Employment Service claimed it would not be cost effective for all offices to have their own recording gear, as the union is suggesting.

Management then made the obvious point: "a jobseeker who was intent on recording an interview, especially if it was for some other purpose than their own use, would probably arrange to tape the interview using concealed equipment without the adviser's knowledge".

It seems that cameras and tape recorders are causing major disruption in the Employment Service.

Freedom Reporter

PUNCH-DRUNK IN  
THE DOLE HOUSE

After a record rise in the number of assaults on Job Centre staff in the early 1990s, last month it was reported that since the full introduction of the Job Seeker's Act last October attacks on staff have risen by 31%.





## — ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

**BY-PASSING PARTIES**

We are in the season when specimen anarchists are asked to explain to the media their attitude of non-participation in the electoral process. Answers are becoming easier partly because the Labour Party has decided that the only path to office is by the wholesale adoption of Conservative policies, but also because we have today a wider range of non-parliamentary politics than for most of the century.

To an extent, local campaigning has outflanked politics. This was made clear by John Vidal, the *Guardian's* environmental correspondent in a feature in that paper's Weekend supplement for 22nd February 1997, where protesters remark to him: "Politicians urge us to encourage communities, self-help and environmental protection. Well, here it is really happening."

The same point is tellingly made by George Monbiot of the campaign *The Land is Ours*. He also writes for the *Guardian*, but was given much more space to develop the theme of 'The Great Parliamentary By-pass' in *The Times Literary Supplement* for 21st February 1997. He too starts from road protest campaigns and notices how they draw in people who are very far from the dreadlocked crusties featured in press reports.

Since neither he nor his editor will object, I will quote at length from his observations: "No description of this movement is less accurate than the one most frequently used:

single-issue politics. Around the camp fires at Newbury, discussions range from transport policy to the detention of immigrants, through alternative currencies, press ownership, genetic engineering, structural adjustment in the Third World, housing policy and the judiciary."

He goes on to explain that "like increasing numbers of young people, many of the protesters feel that mainstream politics has left them in the cold. They see the concerns of Westminster as wholly apart from their own, and believe that none of the political parties either understands or cares for the fate of those who have been gradually excluded from work, benefits, representation and physical space."

And he adds that despite various "millennialist fantasies" crackling around the camp fires, "out of their wishful thinking, credulity and indiscipline is emerging not, as one might have expected, an acute form of the moral relativism infecting so many young people in Britain, but a system of thought which, as it sheds its excesses, is gradually accreting into a new and workable politics."

Monbiot suggests that "the movement's emphasis on local empowerment, the

sustainable use of resources and human rights would resonate immediately with South African parliamentarians, Brazilian peasants or the farmers of Karnataka, less so among state socialists or traditional anarchists". And he adds that "new analysis – of Britain as a Third World nation – has been added to a long tradition of subversion".

Now obviously I don't know which particular traditional anarchist Monbiot knows. The most traditional anarchist I know, who has a lifetime link with this journal, has been growing and selling organic vegetables from a small-holding for the last 28 years, and other traditional anarchists have an equally long commitment to a series of environmental causes close to the heart of current and voluble campaigners like George Monbiot.

He notes how in the wake of the campaign over Twyford Down "road-protest camps soon sprung up at Pollock Park in Glasgow, in the Stanworth Valley near Preston, at Solsbury Hill near Bath, and along the route of the proposed M11 extension in East London. As they spread, non-violent direct action tactics seeped into other environmental campaigns. Protesters occupied timber yards

and docks importing Brazilian mahogany. Bicycle and pedestrian blockades began in cities all over the country. Campaigners picketed McDonald's and delivered sacks of litter dropped by its customers back to the stores. The movement was reviled by the government and the tabloids, and became a magnet for the young, the disaffected and the dispossessed."

For people sceptical about their impact, he concludes that "one result is a series of peculiarly vicious new laws – the Criminal Justice Act, the Security Services Act and the Police Bill – sections of which, scarcely challenged by the Opposition, appear to single out the non-violent direct action movement."

From a traditional anarchist point of view, the flurry of legislation is an indication that the new style of campaigning is actually reaching its targets.

But in the language of party politics, every activist in any of the alleged 'single-issue' campaigns that actually engage people's enthusiasm will notice a singular unanimity among the politicians. They want to lure you away from the campaign that involves you into a support for a vague and consensual approach to politics in general, so long as they, rather than you, are the people choosing the agenda. And, of course, so long as you provide them with a vote. The by-passing of the political machine is already with us.

Colin Ward

## — ABOVE THE PARAPETS —

**MIS-TRIAL OF THE MEDIA**

It often happens that public debate of an issue takes place on false premises – both sides of the discussion share false assumptions and therefore argue about the wrong things. If these false assumptions are not made explicit, as is generally the case, they become implanted in the public mind as 'common sense'. In the recent Stephen Lawrence case there was an interesting example of this, in relation to freedom of expression.

Stephen Lawrence, a young Black man living in London, was killed by white racists. A prosecution of several white youths never went to full trial, and a civil case brought against them by Stephen's parents also ran up against obstacles. Following the inquest verdict that Stephen had been "unlawfully killed in an unprovoked racist attack by five white youths" (a verdict that went beyond the remit of the jury), the *Daily Mail* printed the names and photographs of the five white youths who continue to be suspected of the crime despite being acquitted by the criminal justice system. The *Mail* branded them 'murderers'. The *Mail* in turn was accused of conducting 'trial by media'.

The newspaper's crime, it is said, is to have challenged illegitimately the verdict of a properly-constituted court, and to have used its power as a major media corporation against a few rather poor and powerless individuals. Those who defend the *Mail* argue that these were exceptional circumstances, and that it is open to the five accused youths to defend their good names by taking out libel actions against the *Mail* (at which they would have to break their silence and actually mount a defence against the charge of murder, which they have not done so far).

On the first charge, the *Mail* is quite obviously guilty. What is not so obvious, however, is why this is such a terrible crime. Why should a newspaper, or an individual, be bound to accept every decision of every court? Why should we not have the freedom to say that someone found guilty is in fact innocent, or vice versa? Within days of the *Mail's* front page story, the Bridgewater Three were released after eighteen years in prison for a murder they did not commit. I do not see why those who have said for eighteen years, 'these men are innocent' – rightly as it turns out – are any less guilty of 'contempt of court' than the *Mail* in the Lawrence case.

Where the supporters of the Bridgewater Four (one of whom died in prison) differ from the *Mail* is in their power and influence, and again, on the second charge against the newspaper it is obviously true that the *Mail's* ability to influence the opinions of millions of people cannot be matched by these five white men – under present laws. However, this is not an argument for censoring the press, it is an argument for forcing the mass media to grant access to the general population. Specifically, this case shows the need for a Right of Reply enshrined in law. If such a Right had been available at the time of the inquest verdict, the five men could have been granted near-equal space on the front page of the *Mail* to answer the criticisms made of them. Counter-speech not censorship.

Those who defend the *Mail* have, for their part, suggested that the proper way to equal the power of the *Mail* is through the libel laws (though it is conceded reluctantly that this is an instrument that favours the rich over the poor). In some ways this is one of the most worrying implications of the affair: the fact that a large section of 'liberal opinion' has come to support the libel laws so strongly. For anyone with any real liberal (or libertarian) values, the libel laws are an intolerable affront to freedom of speech. Even if there was equal access to the libel courts for rich and poor, there is no justification for granting the State the power to punish and restrict freedom of expression. The fact that this power is – tacitly – accepted as legitimate by both the critics and the supporters of the *Daily Mail* is deeply worrying.

Milan Rai

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## — RICH AND POOR —

**MAY DAY IS WORKERS' DAY**

Nevertheless it is written: who cannot rule the self, can neither rule surroundings, it is written that physical work will not bring happiness unless it is supported by the word of the mind. Where chaos is tolerated in the individual, an association of people cannot survive. How can an association defend itself against other associations assailing it with intellect and work." This from a writer who flourished in the first half of the last century. That, of course, pre-supposes that associations are merely based on assailment, to coin a word. Surely associations are better natured than that, or could be. Otherwise it is a clone eat clone world, to coin a phrase on top of that.

Nevertheless the good and great Samuel Johnson has put the above sentiments in his usual nutshell. He had Boswell to write down every word. Said he, quoting an unknown Greek philosopher, "Those who have friends, have no friend".

They were a thoroughly cynical lot, except for the excellent Mrs Knowles, who could have told them that mother comes first and in the singular. All associations are voluntary, as long as we disregard the first instance.

This is an era like any other. The desire to understand the human condition is less evident than ever before. The amount of knowledge that is now part of life's curriculum is beyond calculation. Although philosophically nothing has been added to the basic questions worrying the ancients. That is, after one modification after another. This column will never weary of telling you how difficult it is to form an opinion about what went on before Garden of Eden, Inc., took control over the seeds.

Study the past, it is the key for present and future. Of course, there is very little evidence about the past. It is not just the systematic destruction that took place by all the nations of the civilised world without exception, but also the extirpation of almost every tribe of the 'anarchist' pre-historical era. There is no remaining evidence whatsoever except in scratches which nobody can decipher. Even the word 'pre-history' is a word first used by Walker in 1851.

But that the assailment culture is both artificial and highly complicated and has an only numerical regard for the individual,

whether it is Horatio on the bridge, or the next Horatio on another bridge, is, to it, of total indifference. Whereas whatever memories still exist of the charming age of anarchism makes me wonder why it has not become the dominant mode of philosophy.

My thoughts on this subject have been reinforced lately upon visiting the 'Nomads' exhibition at the Horniman Museum, with its echoes alas of the Wandsworth village which was recently razed to the ground. A marvellous exhibition which I would urge you to visit, and it is free.

But for me the greatest pleasure of that afternoon was my introduction to the work of Kitty Lake shown in the cafeteria in five lovingly arranged glass cases by the artist Sally Hampson. Kitty Lake was an anthropologist who never published her work on her visit to the Rishmoo pacific island, but she wrote in a letter in 1928: "there was no formalised religion in Rishmoo. *There had never been a war* [my italics]. Whatever they knew was not written down or talked about, which was amazing, they certainly had an amazing philosophy of life. Stories were told through weaving which the children instinctively depicted through the rhythm of found objects and colours. They celebrated life to the full and if anything believed in the rhythm and energy of life and through this it was eternal. It was a dream-like place, a utopia, a feeling of total peace. It's the very rare dreams you have where you glimpse something, you are filled with joy, you wake up, you can't get back there, you don't know where it was to go back to ..."

She also tells the story of a "flight of migrating moths [which] always arrived when the fishing festival was in full swing. Nobody knew if it was the moths who knew the fishing festival was on or the Rishmoo knew when the moths would arrive." Which you and I occasionally making wine must have wondered, do we Rishmoos know when to make wine or does the vinegar fly know when to arrive?

By the way, does anybody know when the general ejection is going to take place? I wonder if anybody out there still remembers May Day.

John Rety



Oh dem ol' Swinging Sixties when mild middle-class lunacy, flower power, thumbing one's nose at the state and that happytime weekend wander to Ban the Bomb Aldermaston, where among the greenery and the closed lavatories of the petrol garages on line of route one could stare aghast as some unfortunate was grabbed by the police to be thrown into your friendly police van for, literally, the crime of chanting RSG, but it was good to be young and morally right as one braved the shouted abuse of the full-bosomed better classes lining the Bayswater Road. It is good to admit, with a deprecating little smile, that one took part in these minor historical events, yet in the main these moral challenges to the state came from the young lions of the middle class, most of whom could afford the time away from the rent money to enjoy the masochistic luxury of a short prison sentence. Honesty dictates that the physical battle that found its Waterloo in the battle of Cable Street was fought by the labouring class, for in that pitched minor war of Cable Street the European concentration camps were public news and the stench of death was beginning to seep into the east ends of Britain's large cities and, deny me if you will, but I will hold that there comes that moment when one must stand.

But for we the pre-television intelligentsia the water hole was the Institute of Contemporary Art in Mayfair's Dover Street in those days before the cash-card students moved into the parade-ground-style audience seatings. The large house of interweaving rooms and wandering stairways was the place to drink, dance and brawl wherein one pioneered the new, mocked the old and danced the drinking and brawling Saturday night jig. It was here that the spin doctors of the arts leaned on the small bar, stood on the small platform and talked into the late night, and when tempers were lost took their brawling onto the front pages of the national press.

There the great names of the media intelligentsia squirmed and queened it among we the shoulder-rubbing groupings from Sylvester to Banham to the Smithsons, to the greater and the lesser, to the great forgotten to the unremembered, but we applauded and argued before the sad stare of the John Major lookalike Sir Herbert Read, the anarchist art writer and poet. Star of the building trade was

# 'LET HIM THAT IS WITHOUT SIN ...'



PENIS ERECTUS

Reyner Banham who bestrode the small platform within the ICA as an old testament prophet howling the glories of the fashionable trivia of the hour from the New Brutalism to the glassy skyscrapers. Published in one

volume by the University of California Press at £32 are most of Banham's essays that were published in *Architectural Review* and I know that if I had read any of them I would find them sad reading. The New Brutalism, with its ghastly echoes of pre-Hitler Berlin, stone-slabbed and dark, damp, dank streets now with the glass towers wait, like the National Theatre, as time-expired date-stamped tombstones to be demolished, and another knighted architect to design another atrocity on the back of the cheque. From 1955 to 1988 Banham penned his praise or condemnation of the eyesore trivia of that age, but history has pointed the finger every time a working class tower block has to be demolished or a justifiable scream is raised for the Hayward, the National Theatre or, yea, even the National Gallery extension to become dust once again in the eyes of we the beholder. At this moment in time the aged popstar of New Brutalism is strutting the boards of the Royal Academy to the admiration of his staff flexing their muscles every time the pass a model of Denys Lasdun's life works, for though this disciple of the 1919 Bauhaus school of strength without joy heaped stone upon stone, it offered neither beauty nor strength, just an air of muscle-bound ugliness that, at the Bauhaus passing in 1933, gave the German people a Hitler-wide landscape bin-bag of pseudo Greek, Roman and Disney.

With Banham one can, one believes, applaud the honest and cheerful vulgarity of so much minor American buildings for in their friendly honesty they are, like raunchy seaside postcards, accepted by their own standards as but to amuse, and come the next site for a new hamburger café they will be bulldozed down without a speech, but the afflictions heaped upon us we have over the long years had to live with.

Denys Lasdun, this is your life and drop your bricks gently on my dreams. Colin Ward is a very gentle person and one respects whatever

he has to say or to write, and in his *Talking to Architects* he has published the lectures that he has given to "architects and town planners" over the past twenty years. Twenty years in rooms of deadpan faces is worth a round of applause.

I have always felt, wrongly, that Ward belongs to the school of Mr Pickwick and William Morris. Kindly paternalistic advice and the goose at Christmas will solve most of the problems for we the great unwashed, but it was never so. Ward writes that "where dwellers are in control, their homes are better and cheaper than those built by government programmes" but tell that to over 50,000,000 'dwellers' who have to be housed on a small overcrowded island for Ward talks of the 'anarchist house' and place a noun before a house for a particular social group and that is the time to run screaming up the wall. I simply accept that if something is good enough for the rich then it is good enough for the poor and, as a non-elected speaker on behalf of the millions, we do not want to 'own' a bloody building but to have what is most important, security of tenure, a simple fact that the economically well-breached never seem to understand. There is nothing wrong with high-rise flats (ask the millionaires in Park Lane) but what the crying need is, and is always missing in relating to we the labouring class, is the humanising of our living lives. More space within the high-rise, each floor painted a changing pastel colour, doors on every floor a different colour, flower boxes at each door as part of the maintenance, and each floor given a name, so that each floor becomes a social street. And good security. All foolish, comrade, but true. Too many kindly comrades, secure within their own social circle, see the housing of the pictorial working class as a Trollopian beautiful almshouse with the vicar's daughters visiting with the fruit basket and no stinking incontinence, but I rent two drear rooms from a private landlord and we are the millions, and no cheerful chatty lectures, no matter what the subject, ever solve a problem. Maybe one day, who knows, I will see Vladimir Tatlin's 1927 Monument to the Third International - that great skyscraper that was designed (Moscow) and never built - arise in the City of London. Maybe ...

Arthur Moyses

If indeed it has not occurred already, cloning of human beings will take place - so long as night follows day, and *vice versa*. Emergence of new forms of life and disappearance of existing (both plants and animals) has occurred since life has existed on Earth.

Two questions which come to mind however are: Would stocks of life forms such as those produced by cloning have occurred naturally without intervention by the species *Homo sapiens*? If not, are there some things which our species is capable of doing but which it should not do?

Were nature to have been allowed to continue to evolve at the comparatively gentle evolutionary pace which sustained it for millennia prior to and after the last asteroid or comet which it is believed may have been responsible for destroying the dinosaurs - would cloned life forms have occurred anyway?

Whether or not this would have occurred at the *vita andante* of evolution prior to the industrial revolution rather than at the *allegro accelerando* and exponential increase of interference by humans subsequently, clearly is a matter for speculation.

Doubtless experienced naturalists and biochemists, practitioners and theorists alike would be able to prepare apparently equally convincing arguments both to support and to contradict such a notion. Indeed the answer may lie somewhere within a paradox which it may be difficult to assimilate namely, 'Within the pretext that a cloning equivalent would have occurred naturally had man not done it first, it would not have occurred naturally'.

Whatever ... As it is almost inconceivable that an atom, hydrogen, or cobalt-bomb (or several in combination) will not be used again somewhere, sometime, so it may concentrate

## SOME THOUGHTS ON THURSDAY (27th February 1997)

the mind to consider that if to our already over populated species is to be added what most likely would grow into a multitude of human, computer-contrived clones of innumerable species, the current chaos of human affairs and their grotesquely centralised mismanagement will be hopelessly incompetent to cope with the consequences of such an innovation.

Of course, 'Dolly the Sheep' is a sufficiently benign, possibly humble and an apparently harmless image to launch at the public despite its *persona muta* of a species with which naturally we associate 'bleating flocks'.

The potential wolf concealed under this woolly integument however is a character whose true identity may better be understood by conceiving a gaggle of 'Major the Monkey's, a *metamorphosen* of 'Blair the Chameleon's or a *slithe* of 'Howard the Snake's perhaps ...?

Ergo it seems at least not unreasonable to regard the chaos being imposed by some of our species both against itself and the planet which it is destroying under the guise of improving them, added to what otherwise could be a redeeming chaos which is endemic in nature itself, as likely to be accelerating toward an untimely demise - or timely perhaps, depending on one's predilection.

Condemned for life to roll a rock up a Tartarian hillside, the principal minor relief available to Corinthian King Sisyphus was occasionally to roll it up the side of the hill opposite before seeing it once again roll down to the bottom of the valley common to both.

Unlike the hapless King, we run the risk of being condemned to the opprobrium of a continuum of disasters which already are destroying hills and valleys, and much else besides ...

Originating as a result of our relentless, reckless, unchecked intrusions, interference, and predations within and upon the biosphere and beyond, we are simply adding to the prospects already in train and in store for us by nature itself.

According to the understanding of some historians of the cosmos, an asteroid or comet of the size of that which it is believed may have wiped out the dinosaurs and other species at the time, was due to engage with planet Earth

some 100 million years ago.

Unfortunately that is not sufficiently long ago for us to take comfort in preterist (the belief that the prophecies of the Apocalypse are already fulfilled) optimism that perhaps it was the final such invasion. Apparently it was due as part of a cycle of such events which has occurred across aeons previously, including the incidence of such events over periods some 500 million years distant.

Indeed, the principal hope for accommodating a potential quantum-leap in the culture-reproductive technique known as cloning, is that freedom of control over each of our lives must be returned to or reclaimed by each and every one of us, as individuals in our own right.

True Anarchists are on the right lines. At least we should exercise the wit to put our own lives in order before we are wiped out either by those of our species who are playing dice with the universe - or by nature. **Lexicon B**

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The disintegration of the Soviet empire proved a messy affair with the leaders of the once Communist Party squabbling happily for power. The Chinese will not make the same mistake. Deng and his cronies were engineering a more managed entry into the Old American Disorder when he died and this is set to continue. A collective system of oppression has now been in place for some six years during which time Deng was kept on a virtual life support system until his death was felt a safe move. The economic reforms he started will proceed in a more disciplined, more monitored fashion than was the case in

the ex-USSR. The overall aim is a compact between the political and economic elites where each will cede a legalised sphere of influence to the other. The party will cease to be an ideological instrument of mobilisation, as it was under Mao, and instead will play an integrating function. The role of the market will be the usual one of expansion with rich

pickings for the expanding urban middle classes and crumbs for the rural rest. This is a scenario which can be compared with Mexico: an institutional party co-opting elites from the upper echelons of society and serving as an integrating institution rather than a force for change. In a word a state.

The West (turning a blind eye to the torture) hope this scenario will act itself out to the full and has no qualms about pressing the flesh with the Tiananmen butchers. *The Financial Times* sums up Western attitudes when it says that although China is "a corrupt despotism" we should still remember that "the west should focus its attention on sustaining market oriented reforms". Of course "the west cannot ignore gross violations of human rights in its relations with China, or any other country", it continues, ignoring the history of Western involvement in the region for the last four hundred years but, if we get our priorities right, "trade relations should focus on the policies that affect trade. If trade and economic issues move in the right direction, the policies will follow" it concludes optimistically.

We would be pushed to come up with a businessman who would be deterred by the events such as the Tiananmen Square massacre (which did not even deserve condemnation from the Japanese government) or the 10,000 executions that took place prior to that in the 1980s. The Chinese are of course a naughty bunch: massacring the innocent, locking them up, grabbing a reef, firing a missile near Taiwan, planning to subject Hong Kong to home rule but... well... this is business. The export salesmen insist that foreign policy considerations can be separated out. Deng knew better.

Of course Deng was Han Chinese (sons of the yellow emperor) along with 90% of his compatriots and this homogeneity is also pointed at as another differentiating factor when comparing with the ex-USSR. Still, however, in a country the size of China 10% is not a number to be sneezed at and there is

significant resistance to Han domination.

News is trickling out (again) of unrest in Xinjiang province to the west of the Middle Kingdom which, away from the core of political power, seems a small glimmer of hope in this morass of despair. Since 1962 when tens of thousands of Kazakhs fled the region for the Soviet Union barely a year has passed without reports of unrest in the region. Reports coming through over the last few weeks suggest violence is occurring on an increasing scale. Thousands of Uighurs – an ethnic group which outnumber the Han Chinese in the area by two to one – have been rioting in Yining near the border with Kazakhstan resulting in ten reported deaths. This has been blamed on Muslim influences (there are some twenty million Muslims in China many of them in this region). Locals paint a different picture claiming the riots were a response to executions in the province. The situation has proved serious enough for a curfew to be imposed and for the airport to be closed last month. Some 1,000 demonstrators have been arrested.

This all has a history which, in reality, goes back to 1995. Over these two years the Chinese authorities have 'dealt with' (read 'murdered') 'terrorists' who in turn have dealt with some half a dozen government officials. The main separatist group (based over the border) reckons some 7,000 have been arrested.

This oppression is typical of the regime. The other ruse (as has been used in Tibet) is to flood the area with Han immigrants. Locals resent the way the best jobs in the construction sites and the oil fields go to the newcomers and are outraged at the forced sterilisation of local women. Nor are they too pleased about having Deng's nuclear weapons test site at Lop Nor in the region.

No doubt Beijing can maintain control. The numbers of troops in Tibet give the place the air of an easily occupied country. And Xinjiang's garrison also is kept strong. It is easy to see why: two-fifths of China's potential oil reserves are here. For real pressure to be brought to bear in the region agitation nearer to the core of power is needed. Deng prepared for that before his death. His butchering cronies may be the new management but the song is still the same.

## Letter from Alphabet City



On the afternoon of Sunday 8th February a fire broke out in a flat on the second floor of a long-time squatted apartment at 537 East Fifth Street. This is in New York's East Village, only a hundred yards or so from Tompkins Square where the famous riots took place a few years back.

This is a vibrant area of musicians and creative types, where property prices have allowed for numerous bars, vegetarian cafés and the like to spring up without complete yuppiefication. This is an area where there are cheaper, if not cheap, apartments in buildings where landlords do the bare minimum in repairs. In the past, by nightfall the territory was no-go for many people.

Mayor Rude (sic) Guilliani has other plans for the area between avenues A and D which require clearing huge areas of land, some of which were once homes, some fine community gardens in a city with few parks. People could hang out there and local artists made amazing junk sculptures. Such things are being replaced with, you guessed it, unaffordable yuppie flats.

Back on East Fifth Street and the fire, where the squatters had evacuated the building safely and all but two unfortunate dogs were safe. The fire had started through bad electrical wiring and had spread through several flats, damaging about 20% of the building. The Fire Marshall on the scene, however, remarked that the building could be repaired in no time and the opinion was that no joist beams or brick supporting walls had suffered.

The silver lining contained a filthy cloud, however, as Mayor Guilliani (yes, the one Lou Reed sings about on his New York album) had to act quickly to stop any such repairs. After all, squatters are nothing if not resourceful an could have no doubt fixed the place themselves.

Representatives of the New York Building Department were sent along. They stayed for a few minutes, never entered the building, but felt confident that they could issue an order calling for the immediate demolition of the squatter homestead and, amazingly, the building next door for good measure.

Certain locals I spoke to felt little sympathy with the squatters, seeing them as people who encouraged troublesome junkies to the area and understanding them to be the rebellious sons and daughters of the rich who probably had more money than they had themselves. Strangely many of these people pay large rents to slum landlords or have plugs that get noticeably warm when too many things are plugged in.

Who knows how long it will take before all of these people are priced out of their beloved Manhattan Island altogether? As a visitor it already seems that there is a noticeable drift of the impecunious towards Brooklyn anyway.

Steev Burgess

## — OBITUARY —

### Georgi Grigoriev (Balkanski)

The veteran Bulgarian anarchist Georgi Grigoriev has died at the age of 90 in Sofia. He began to call himself an anarchist from the age of 14, and a year later joined the Anarchist Communist Federation of Bulgaria (FACB) which had been founded in 1919.

Emerging from semi-clandestinity, the anarchist movement began to develop among both urban and rural workers and among both youth and intellectuals. The first conference of the FACB unified the anarchist-inspired revolutionary movement and gave it a powerful impetus. From an insignificant movement of small groups and closed circles, the FACB began to develop into a mass movement. The four regional unions of the FACB arranged regular educational speaking tours and propaganda meetings in all cities and villages. The FACB itself was secret and restricted to militants. Governmental repression began to hit the movement under the rule of President Stambolijski, whose police began to arrest anarchist militants, shoot them in the back of the head and then announce that they had been killed trying to escape. This was just a prelude to far worse political violence. Fascists organising inside the army were preparing a *coup d'état* and in their secret League of Regular Army Officers plotted to liquidate the anarchist movement as a preliminary move before the coup.

On 26th March 1923, the army attacked an anarchist meeting in the town of Yambol. Heavy fighting broke out, and the town was shelled with heavy artillery by the military. In the aftermath 27 anarchists were shot by the army. Three months later, on 9th June, the coup took place and Stambolijski was murdered by the fascists. The anarchists tried to resist, and at Kilifarevo rose in insurrection. The Communist Party refused to join in armed struggle against the fascists and left the

anarchists to their fate. Later, on orders from Moscow, the communists rose in their turn. The uprising failed, even though the anarchists had again taken to arms. The aftermath in the following weeks and months was horrendous, with 35,000 murdered by the fascists.

Georgi himself narrowly escaped a murder bid by a royalist gang in 1925 and was forced to take refuge in Czechoslovakia. Returning to Bulgaria for a while, he then became an agronomics student in France. Here he joined a large number of Bulgarian anarchists who had fled through Yugoslavia and Austria. Most of the group settled in Toulouse and this 35-strong group, of which Georgi was a member, under the name of Hadjiev, in conjunction with comrades in Paris and Beziers carried out an important work of political elaboration and the drafting of a programme for the FACB. They also set up an aid committee for anarchist prisoners in Bulgaria.

Returning to Bulgaria after an amnesty in 1930, Grigoriev and the others set up a secret group in Sofia. The work of agitation culminated in the clandestine national conference of the FACB in 1932, held in the forest in a bend of the river near Lovech. The protection of the conference was assured by a group under the supervision of electro-engineer Boris Yanev, who from the boughs of a huge tree was in communication with sentries posted all around. The ninety delegates themselves had arrived at Lovech as delegates to a teetotallers conference, which had allowed them a 50% reduction in travel costs! Grigoriev himself chaired the conference. The conference was a major step in the reconstitution of the FACB, confirmed in another secret conference held in the mountains in September 1933. But in 1934 the repression increased again and the military

re-established its grip. Once more Grigoriev fled to France.

On the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War the Bulgarian anarchist movement, both in exile and underground in Bulgaria, gave their support to the Spanish anarchist movement. Thirty militants managed to defy the pact of non-intervention and entered Spain either by boat or over the Pyrenees. Grigoriev himself was present as delegate of the FACB at the joint conference of the anarcho-syndicalist union the CNT and the anarchist specific organisation the FAI, in November 1936.

Returning on visits to Bulgaria in 1938 and 1939, Grigoriev was arrested, spending time in prison and then concentration camp until liberation on 19th September 1944. The FACB began to reorganise, but there was only a year's grace before the communists clamped down on them. A thousand militants were put in concentration camps, some for many years. Grigoriev evaded capture, fleeing to France once more. Here, under the pseudonym of Balkanski, he took an active part in the exile organisation of the Bulgarian Anarchist Union as well as participating in anarchist activities in France. He brought out two books in French, *History of the Bulgarian Anarchist Movement in Bulgaria and National Liberation and Social Revolution*, a fascinating account of the anarchist-inspired insurrection in Macedonia in 1903 when the uprising against the Turks sought to go beyond 'nationalism' to the establishment of anarchist communism. He also undertook a key role in the establishment of the International of Anarchist Federations which reunited the French, the Spanish and the Bulgarians, among others.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Grigoriev returned to Bulgaria where he was reunited with his family that he had not seen for forty years. He took an active part in the resurgence of the Bulgarian movement and, above all, in the founding of the Bulgarian Anarchist Federation.

Georgi Grigoriev, anarchist, born 1906, died 12th October 1996 at Sofia.

Nick Heath



## Call for an Anarchist Conference

Dear *Freedom*,

We, Turkish and Kurdish anarchists who live in Britain, would first like to express very briefly some of the weaknesses, such as lack of co-ordination, communication and solidarity, that we see in the British anarchist movement which either we are a part of or trying to take part in. Then we will put forward our suggestions and opinions, again very briefly.

We think that the British anarchist movement is at the moment in a situation in which it is disorganised and atomised, and it has no aims nation-wide. And, except for the Anarchist Bookfair which is organised every year and gradually becoming monotonous, we do not see each other, we do not communally inform each other, let alone direct our forces toward mutual aims. We know that there are some friends out there who try to do this. However, we also know that this is not enough. Everything goes on by itself. We are lost in the labyrinths the capitalist system has consciously and purposely created. British anarchists have come near to the point at which they exist without sufficient communication and willpower, while they continually oppose the extreme centralism of Marxists. We all know that the elections are coming. Is it not necessary for British anarchists to agree on a policy in order to act nation-wide against such a nation-wide event? But we do nothing. We seem to be quite comfortable in our little caves.

The lack of communication and solidarity among the anarchists affect most of us, that is anarchists who come from other parts of the

world. Although we try hard to become involved as much as we can in the anarchist movement, we have not been too successful in integrating into it. We already experience among our own society – which is under the hegemony of Marxism and Liberalism – the inevitable alienation. What a bitter experience this is. 'Exile life is as grey as English weather'. Anyway, it is not our intention here to moan but to persuade you, our comrades.

We invite all groups, organisations, initiatives, individuals, etc., in the movement to organise an anarchist conference to discuss thoroughly what has been said in this letter, as well as other points which we could not mention here, in order to arrive at certain conclusions and, most importantly, to create an information centre and even organise and form an anarchist confederation which would be composed of local as well as national anarchist groups and

organisations and which would be dependent on such groups and organisations self-control and absolute autonomy. The call is from us, to organise this would be your task, because we know well that, considering our own lack of communication, we are not suitable for the job. The first three groups, organisations or individuals who reply positively to this letter will organise the first preparatory committee of the conference. Our task is to get these three groups, organisations or individuals to meet each other. With other groups, organisations or individuals, this committee can later be expanded by the very people who have started the initiative. We would like you all to discuss this, and the other things we have mentioned in this letter, and send all your replies to the address below.

5th May Group  
Hakan Calbayram, William Morris  
Tower 10/13, The University of Essex,  
Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ.  
e-mail: hcalba@essex.ac.uk.

## Jones from Wales

Dear Editors,

Sam Mainwaring, the Neath anarchist, told me "some of my boys went to Spain as well". His friends would not have been welcome in the Communist organised International Brigade, but may have gone into it as the easiest way to join the fight against fascism.

A recent article in the *Western Mail* says diaries of James Allbrighton, now in the Marx Memorial Library, refer to Sidney Lloyd Jones,

"Jones from Wales", killed in action at Chapineria on 14th October 1936. I wonder if Sidney Lloyd Jones, the mystery soldier, was one of Sam's boys. There could be other independent Welshmen who died in Spain, some ambushed or frozen while trying to cross the Pyrenees.

I was eight or nine when Sam talked to me. There was no reason for Sam to lie to a child, so is there any reader anywhere who can throw more light on this? Sam said 'boys', so more than one must have gone.

Ilyan ab Alun  
137 Priory Street, Camarthen, SA31 1LR

## Right to Reply

Dear Comrades,

What is it about me that causes certain idiot sections of the anarchist left and press to write utter shite about who I am, what I do, etc? I've just got over the slander in *Wildcat* and *Organise* and God knows where else, now I find another slander in the pages of *Freedom*.

That you can print a letter, an obviously anonymous letter, slugging off a national group is one thing, that unsubstantiated political slander can just sail through into publications speaks volumes for your political integrity.

Lucy Parsons, who seems to know well enough that I was a Syndicalist Workers Federation (not DAM) member, and that I joined the CWF, but where 'she' gets the 'fact' that I "jumped ship once again and joined his union boss Arthur Scargill in the Socialist Labour Party very early on, before the party's founding conference in May '96" is an utter invention without the slightest substance. I have not been, am not now nor will I ever be a member of the bloody SLP. The political disagreements between myself and Comrade Scargill are at times furious and have been for some time. The only good thing about the slander is that he is at least as outraged by the accusation as I am.

Save some dignity and give this letter at least as much prominence as you did the mud-slinger.

Revolutionary Greetings,

David Douglass

Since Franco's death congresses of the SCNT/CGT have always been times of stress and tension. Will our volatile Spanish comrades split? Will the sickening spiral in membership experienced from 1979-84 begin again or will the slow (very slow) but steady growth enjoyed by the re-united CNT (now CGT) continue as it has done since the mid '80s? Despite the fears of my anarcho-syndicalist friends from Malaga, this was a congress that everyone from pragmatic syndicalists to anarcho-syndicalists wanted to succeed.

Since 1989 the majority section of the CNT has had (much to their chagrin) to go under the initials CGT as the CNT-AIT were granted sole use of the holy initials by the Spanish state in the shape of the supreme court. The latter is now down to some three to five thousand members and are still battling for the return of the millions of pesetas due the initials in union patrimony. The Spanish state has surrendered some of the money and property, but my guess is that in 25 years time the CNT will still be campaigning for the return of the property than the two-million member CNT held in 1936.

What of the CGT, the ordinary working anarcho-syndicalists who made up the bulk of the work-place union sections of the CNT before the ruptures of 1979 and 1984? The CGT, Spain's third union force, has 35,000 members, that's 10,000 more than the Madrid-based Confederal Committee realised it had until recently when it issued a snazzy new membership card which all the members wanted thereby betraying the fact that the local federations had been 'underestimating' their membership so as to avoid paying part of the dues to Madrid. The CGT is organised throughout Spain, though a third of its membership is in Catalonia. Its largest unions are in the public sector, banking, metal and rail industries. Its monthly newspaper *Rojoy Negro* (Red and Black) shows a union in the thick of economic and social struggle. In December it called an important rail strike on its own and convoked a demonstration against the Europe of Maastricht and unemployment which attracted 10,000 people in Madrid.

Recently many members and organised currents of CCOO (workers' commissions), the Communist union, have come over to the CGT, attracted by the latter's radicalism and democratic practice. One of the two

## XIII CONGRESS OF THE SPANISH CGT

Madrid, 1st and 2nd February: 'Tact and Consolidation'

contentious questions treated in the congress was that of those down-playing anarcho-syndicalism to gain more and more members and those that favour slow and steady growth combined with more libertarian education of new members. This debate is likely to continue to run.

The congress began with the lights dimming and images of 1936 and modern CGT demos and picket lines being beamed onto the conference platform while the 392 delegates representing 182 of the CGT's unions sang the anarchist 'hymn' *A Las Barricadas* whilst giving the two-handed CNT clenched-fist salute. With this the congress began.

### THE LIVERPOOL DOCKERS & THE CONGRESS

As international secretary of the Hull Trades Council, my time was taken up with arrangements for the two Liverpool dockers who were guests of the CGT in Madrid.

They had just come from Barcelona where they had met with CGT and Coordinadora dockers and CGT rail-workers. They had addressed dawn assemblies of dockers in Barcelona and Tarragona. At the congress they had a very fruitful meeting with Eladio Villanueva, the 29 year old secretary of the CGT's federal rail workers union. Eladio's nickname is the rapper of the station – 'I love Massive Attack' – and rapping is his extra confederal hobby. It was agreed that the CGT rail-workers would back containers being moved by rail from Bilbao to Barcelona, a pledge also undertaken by the observer from LAB, the Basque nationalist union, who have rail-workers at the other end of the line.

On the second day of congress Terry Sothers, the dockers shop steward, addressed the hall telling the story of the sixteen month dock dispute. A collection made in the hall raised £800, some delegates giving 5,000 peseta rates (£25). After the congress the dockers went on to Valencia as guests of the CGT who are the largest dockers' union there. They gained more promises of financial and industrial support, and flew for Manchester

well pleased with the Spanish visit, which was organised by Hull Trades Council and Mick Parkin and paid for by union comrades in Hull and syndicalists nationally.

### INTERNATIONAL

Hull Trades Council and the Liverpool dockers were not the only organisations invited from outside the CGT. From Spain came the SOC, the Andalucian land workers' union, who have been edging towards unification with the CGT for the last seven years. Also present were LAB, the Basque nationalist union, an independent union and a local union from Huelca, the Sindicato Unico.

From Sweden came the 10,500-member syndicalist union SAC. From Italy came the 25,000-member ARCA with its observers. This is a co-ordinating body for the Confederazione Italiana di Base (UNICOBAS), national workers confederation, Sindicato di Base and USI, the Italian syndicalist union, all of whom were present.

From France were the French CNT represented by Paco Muñoz who was recently

expelled from the AIT. It can now work with the majority sector of anarcho-syndicalism, and it has 4,000 members while the sector which the Spanish CNT recognises has 120 affiliates. Also from France were SUD (Solidarity, Unity, Democracy), rail and post unions, a product of rank and file anger with the leadership of the Socialist CGPT which led to the birth of this new federation, and also that last bastion of syndicalism in the CGT of France, the proof-readers' union.

Most of the Saturday was taken up by a parallel international meeting which discussed the question of co-ordination between rank and file unions and the European march against unemployment in Amsterdam on 14th June to coincide with the European leaders summit. The delegates wanted to vocalise this demonstration and will form a large syndicalist bloc with the Dutch OUB at its head.

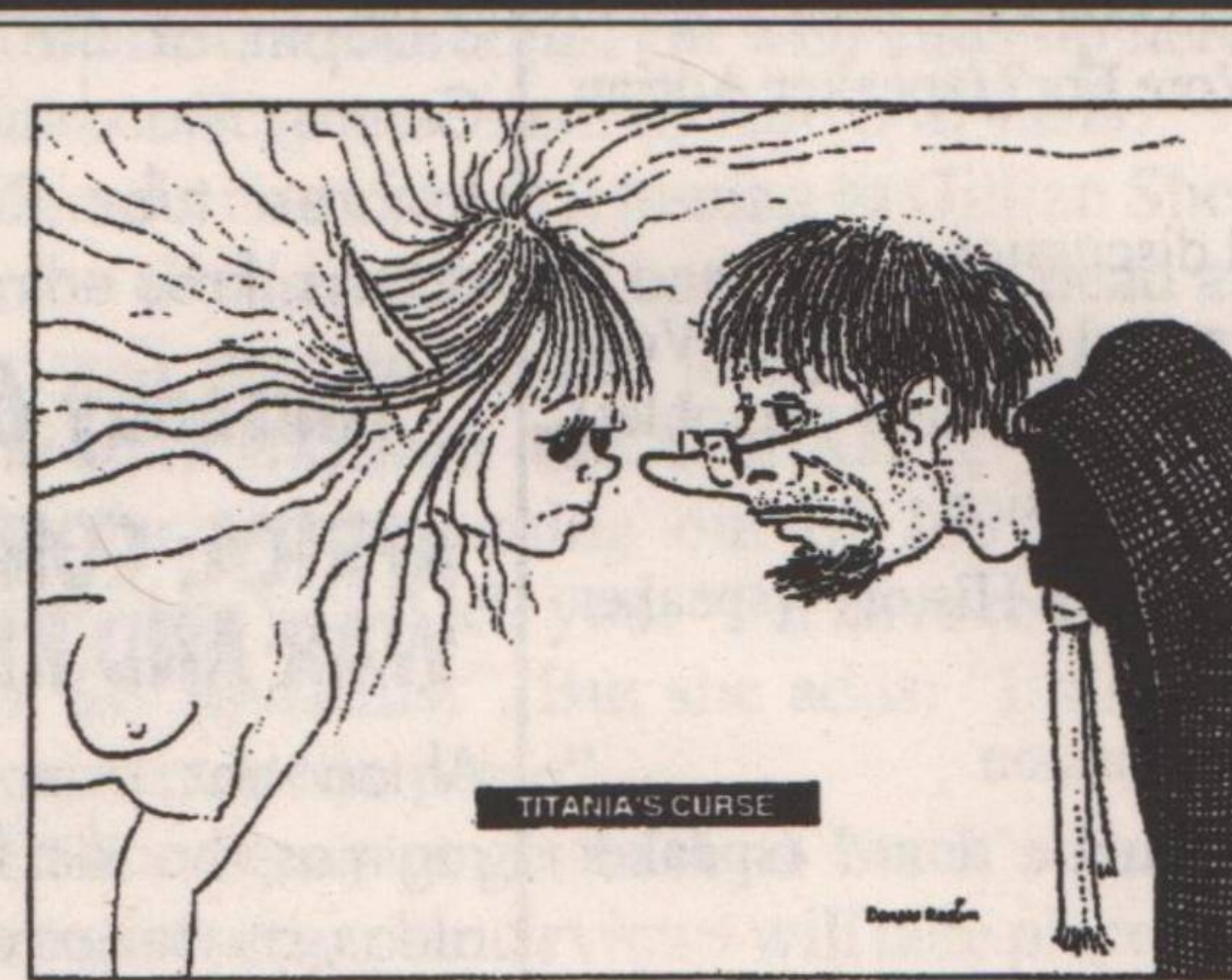
With regards to co-ordination, a manifesto was drawn up by all the unions present, including the Liverpool dockers, to be brought back for discussion in the constituent unions. What people felt they needed was a network, but formally constituted rather than some new bureaucratic 'international'. The CGT will improve its international communications by constituting an international committee, a task being co-ordinated by Chris Robinson and Paco Marcellan of the education union.

Our first practical test of international solidarity is what support we actually raise for the Juvel bakery workers of the SAC in Stockholm.

What impressed me with this congress was the seriousness of comrades willing to work until 11.30pm. It was not just the red and black heraldry, the 'Circle A' badges and anarchist literature which put beyond question the CGT's libertarian credentials, it was the whole culture of the congress: no suits and mobile telephones, just ordinary men and women ready to chip in with their own opinions. It was their congress. From Progresso, a veteran of '36, to Eladio the 'rapper' railwayman, the dozens of delegates I chatted with all came across as sincere, warm and committed anarcho-syndicalists.

The workers CNT of the '30s is alive and well and kicking in the battles of the '90s: that union is the CGT.

Guy Cheverton



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Meets Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall,  
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**- 1997 PROGRAMME -**

**7th March** Who to Vote For? (speaker Adrian  
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**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)

**9th May** General discussion

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  
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Telephone for further details  
**01773-827513**

**ACF**

**DISCUSSION MEETINGS**

Discussion meetings open to the public are  
convened by the London group of the  
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first Thursday of every month. They start at  
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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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Meet in main car park at Malham at 10.45am.

**20th April - Bishopdale:** West Burton to  
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and drink.*

Telephone for further details  
**01756-799002**

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