

# FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

Vol. 58 No. 6

22nd March 1997

50p

## 'ANARCHY' IN ALBANIA

The media keep telling us that Albania is 'sinking into anarchy'. If it is really anarchy – absence of government and people getting together in mutual aid and voluntary co-operation – then 'sinking' is the wrong word. 'Emerging' would be better.

The difficulty is that the term 'anarchy' is used by the media to mean not anarchy but rule by two competing governments. Rival generals lay claim to a state and none is able to obtain ascendancy over the others, so their rival gangs set up rival regimes with overlapping territories, fighting when they encounter each other, but mostly terrorising, looting, conscripting and otherwise governing.

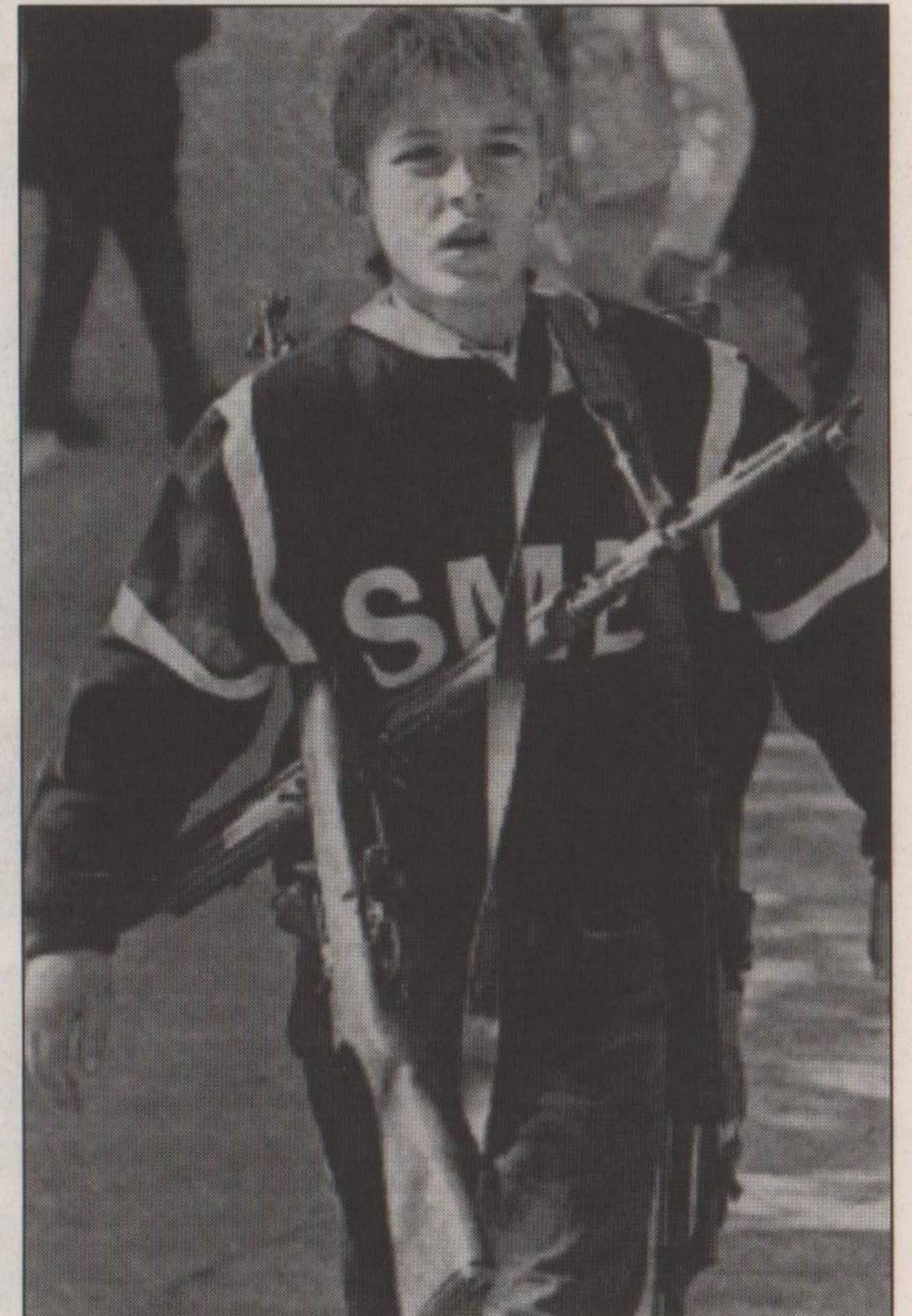
Rule by competing gangs has been labelled 'anarchy' in Somalia, Liberia, Afghanistan and elsewhere. For ordinary people trying to get on with their lives in peace, a settled despotism is to be preferred.

In Albania, although it has lost its grip on the people, the central government is holding and the rivals for power are competing at that level rather than with guns on the streets. There is also the possibility of power centres coming up from the streets,

gangs of former criminals oppressing their neighbours. But the ubiquity of small arms, combined with the scarcity of heavy armour, seems to prevent anyone from seizing power over many people.

The Hoxha government, a vicious dictatorship moderated by clownish inefficiency, was imposed on Albania by the Soviet Union and maintained by China when the Soviet Union withdrew support. Its various patron states would not supply it with big weapons, but several times supplied its entire conscript army with rifles of more recent design. There are twice as many rifles in Albania as there are men, women and children. Most of the rifles are now in the hands of ordinary people, and there seems to be plenty of ammunition. It is difficult to be the government of someone as well armed as you are.

Although there was universal conscription under Hoxha, the conscripts do not appear to have undergone rifle training since many adults appear not to know how to use the guns they have acquired. Live ammunition is fired straight up into the air in celebration, and bullets fall



A young looter

from the sky reaching the ground at almost the same velocity with which they left the gun. There are many accidental injuries but, as we have seen from television, the injured are rushed to hospital and the hospitals are working.

The people of Albania have not taken to the streets in revolutionary fervour, but in anger at being impoverished by swindlers with government support. There is no chance of compensation, since most of the swindled money – half the gross national product, by some calculations – has left the country. But the likelihood is that the president will resign, that some glib talker will take over and make promises, and that the people will allow themselves to be disarmed. Rifles are, after all, unpleasant and dangerous.

Albanians now living have been oppressed and impoverished by totalitarianism, swindled and impoverished by capitalism, and sustained by themselves and their neighbours in conditions of mob rule. They know from experience that bosses are unpleasant and unnecessary. Whatever happens now, they have advanced, at least a little, towards anarchy.

## SHERRY WORKERS' DISPUTE

Four hundred workers employed by Pedro Domeque, the sherry manufacturers, are locked out in a bitter dispute against arbitrary sackings.

When twelve workers were sacked as part of a cost-cutting exercise, ignoring an agreement that the three vineyard workers' unions (CCOO, CGT and UGT) had won after a three-month strike in 1991, workers built barricades of burning tyres outside the Jerez de la Frontera bottling plant, whilst two hundred vineyard workers blocked the main motorway into Jerez.

The ensuing battle with the police led to the lock-out of 100 workers quickly affecting 300 others.

The anarcho-syndicalist CGT, which has 11% of the sherry workers as members and which is the second largest union in Domeque, is leading the actions of the works committee

which is for once completely united.

One of the sherry workers, Antonio, told *Freedom*: "This is a very important dispute for us and we have the support of all working people in Jerez. The manager of the bottling plant, Angel Contreras, is behind this problem. Only workers over 60 can be made redundant."

Hull Trades Council is currently making links with workers in Pedro Domeque's British parent multinational Allied Domeque. To gain greater solidarity anarchists in Glasgow and trade unionists in Hull plan demonstrations outside Victoria Wine Cellar outlets.

For more information: Guy Cheverton on 01432-898775. Letters of support to CGT Sindicato de la Vid (vineyard), Plaza del Arenas 20-22, 1° Planta, 11402 Jerez de la Frontera, Spain.

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## THE CAMERAS ARE COMING! BURNLEY AND BURY DOLES GATECRASHED

In the last week of February, when Project Work was extended to 29 extra towns in the UK, two doles were raided and one agency for Project Work was overrun by gatecrashing objectors in the North West. This was the latest in a rash of actions against the Job Seeker's Act and Project Work, which have spread round North Manchester over the last year.

In the last issue of *Freedom* we reported on the hysterical behaviour of the manageress at Burnley Job Centre. Derek Pattison, who had come up from Cheshire to help set-up an anti-JSA group, told the *Burnley Express*: "I always thought Lancashire people were renowned for their friendliness". He expressed surprise at the antics of Mrs Duffy, the dole manageress, who he thought could be a candidate for an 'Anger Management' course, and at the reception committee for half a dozen police officers.

Inspector Colin Barton, for the police, said: "No offences took place and the protesters appeared to be very organised".

Later Mr Pattison told a meeting at The Swan: "The Job Seeker's Act is yet another step on the road to creating a conscript labour force in Britain".

Fresh from wrestling with the demonstrators, Mrs Denise Duffy claimed that since the JSA was introduced last October there had been only one case in Burnley when a claimant's JSA was stopped.

This is being disputed by welfare rights officers in Burnley, who insist they know of seven cases of sanctions being imposed on claimants, and this is probably the tip of the iceberg.

### TETHERED IN THE CHAIN GANG

The invasion of Bury dole on 27th February was met by an arm-waving senior manager called 'Norma'. The protest against Project Work or forced labour was reinforced by a contingent of activists garbed in convict uniforms.

Chained together by a goat-tether, the activists addressed the staff and claimants for the best part of an hour. They were told that we, the organised unemployed, would support resistance to Project Work.

Josh Walsh, organiser at Bury Unemployed Centre, insists that "the scheme should be called slave labour rather than Project Work". The conscripts – the long-term jobless – who



Convict chain-gang

will be forced onto the scheme will get £10 plus benefits. Bury and Bolton doles hope to have 1,500 places on offer soon.

But Pete Collinge warned any local employers that if they took part in Project Work they could expect protests outside their premises. Mr Collinge, president of Bury and District TUC, claimed the scheme "undermines people already in work by undercutting their terms, and it stops people getting real jobs if firms take on Project Workers instead of employing directly".

Management were put out by the invasion of

Bury dole. Norma Hart, after much futile finger-wagging, ran to ring the police chased by a cameraman. "I've got a demonstration in my Job Centre, and I feel threatened", she said. But the Bury police never came – not before we left, about a quarter of an hour later. As we left, Norma Hart ran after us demanding our names.

### CAMERA-SHY BOSSES

Next the campaigners went to Rathbones, the training and employment agency believed to be co-ordinating the Project Work providers

in Bury. There they briefly occupied the office.

Once inside they took on the manager, 'Jim', who claimed that his company hadn't got the contract for Project Work. He was surprised then by the cameraman, who had been hiding in the toilets when they came out and started photographing him.

After an altercation with the demonstrators he retreated to his private office, followed by the cameras, and began ringing his head office.

One speaker bawled: "Do yourself a favour and steer clear of Project Work". Then he crooned "or we'll be back every day".

All these bosses – Duffy, Hart and 'Jim' from Rathbones – are all concerned about the activists' use of cameras. Tony Gallagher of the PTC, the civil servant manager's union, seems to want the police to frisk claimants for cameras as they enter their dole. The Olympus Trip seems to be causing as much consternation in some trade union and management circles as did the Manchester Bomb.

They don't like the cameras or the tape recorders to be focused on the functionary, the bureaucrat or the boss, but these are the same people who welcome the 'Eye in the Sky' cameras which are pointing at the general public.

The same newspapers which were reporting on the protest demos of the jobless were announcing that "an extra 25 crime-busting ... cameras will be installed in Burnley – ensuring the town the biggest network in the north of England". The cameras will give CCTV coverage of 66 businesses, including the Inland Revenue, the DSS and Job Centre.

Mack the Knife

## OBSCENE POSTERS CONDEMNED BY ANARCHISTS

Posters advocating paedophilia and displaying the legend "Give us your children, what we don't fuck, we eat" appeared in Laura Place, Aberystwyth, on the morning of Monday 3rd March. Police took possession of twelve of them, and it is believed others were torn up by offended passers-by.

The posters displayed the circled-A of anarchism, together with the name and telephone number of the local anti-abortion group, Aber Life.

*The Cambrian News, Merionethshire Standard and Welsh Gazette*, reporting the 'uproar' on its front page, quoted Bob Mander of Aberystwyth's anarchist group as saying: "We condemn these obscene and perverse posters. We do not condone psychopathic anti-social behaviour", and the chairman of Aber Life as saying much the same.

This could be a sinister move against the anarchists on the eve of the anti-election campaign, or perhaps more likely somebody's drunken Sunday evening attempt at a joke. Either way, we join Bob Mander in the condemnation.

### Uproar over obscene posters

OBSCENE and perverse posters plastered on walls in Laura Place, Aberystwyth, have been denounced by two local groups whose logos were displayed on the material.

Aberystwyth police are investigating the source of the degrading posters, after receiving complaints.

**Aberystwyth:  
a modern Athens?  
see page 5**

## BIG 'UNS AND WHOPPERS

There was some worry for Martin Sorrell last week, that he wouldn't achieve Britain's biggest executive pay package when shares in his company ducked after bad end-of-year results. Shares in WPP, the advertising and PR group, fell by 14p.

But at least one City editor expects he will still squeeze a maximum payout of over £30 million, sold to shareholders as near impossible a year and a half ago.

## THE GENERAL EJECTION: publicists fight while politicians are gagged

There has never been an election as quiet as this one. It is not a question of apathy. Gone are the days of Attlee and Churchill, Wilson and MacMillan, Kinnock and Thatcher. The time of the Great Debate.

It is Saatchi & Saatchi versus whoever is doing Labour's poster campaign. Saatchi have pushed into power three Tory victors. Had the monsterising poster been allowed to stay on the walls, the final result would have been different.

As it is, this is a shameful contest. Two advertising agencies battle it out not out of political conviction but as a paid job.

All we know is that the posters may have been designed by people who have gone through the art schools – a breeding ground for subversives, please notice the irony.

An alteration hardly noticeable to untrained eyes and the work of the anarchist Munsch topples the rulers. All politicians are cardboard cut-outs anyway.

John Rety

# WITCH-HUNTING IN SCARGILL'S SLP

A recent casualty of the ongoing purge against dissident left-wingers within Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party (SLP) is the well-known North West political activist John Pearson. A member of the SLP since January 1996, Mr Pearson has been told by the General Secretary of the SLP, Arthur Scargill, that his activities are "not compatible with the constitution of the party" and therefore his application for membership of the SLP is ineligible.

Mr Pearson joins the growing list of SLP members who have been expelled from the party since its official launch in May 1996. Expulsion from the SLP, as with the case of Mr Pearson, often begins when a party member is denounced for being a member or supporter of another political organisation which is specifically banned by the SLP's draft constitution. Indeed, a climate of fear appears to reign within the SLP as members denounce other members for being 'entryists' from other political sects and are then ignominiously expelled from the party.

In June 1996 a Manchester SLP member, Steve Smethurst, was expelled from the party after he was denounced by another SLP member, Phil Griffin, for producing an inappropriate leaflet which was condemned as ultra-leftist. He was subsequently told at a Manchester branch AGM by the chairman, Phil Griffin, that he had never been a member of the SLP. Mr Griffin is currently the North West representative on the SLP's National Executive Committee (NEC).

A member of the East London branch of the SLP, Bob Davis, was also expelled from the party during the summer of 1996. He was told by the then general secretary, Pat Sikorski, that his membership of the SLP was invalid because he refused to accept or abide by the constitution of the SLP. Other East London branch members include Carolyn Sikorski and Bob Crow, who at the time of Mr Davis's expulsion were members of the general purposes committee of the NEC.

One SLP member, Stan Keable, who was chosen by the Brent East CSLP to fight against Ken Livingstone in the constituency of Brent East, found himself rubbed out of the SLP when Arthur Scargill issued a press release in February stating that Mr Keable was not a member of the SLP and that the party would not be challenging Ken Livingstone at the next general election.

Amidst allegations of witch-hunts, where SLP members denounce other party members for heresy against a background of collective hysteria, membership of Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party is beginning to resemble something out of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. In Mr Pearson's case, where he was denounced by the chairman of the Stockport branch of the SLP Royston Bull, the similarities

with witch-hunts in seventeenth century Salem, Massachusetts, are deeply worrying.

Like many people who have been expelled from the SLP, Mr Pearson was denounced as an active member and supporter of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), which he emphatically denies. Curiously, although the SLP's draft constitution bans SLP members from belonging to or supporting another political organisation, a number of factions do appear to operate openly within the SLP. Two of these factions are the Stalinist Society and the Fourth International Supporters Caucus (FISC). Many SLP members allege that these groups effectively police the SLP and are responsible for the witch-hunts in the party.

Mr Bull and his cronies within the Stockport branch of the SLP are former members of the International Leninist Workers Party, which split from the Workers Revolutionary Party in the early 1980s. They now organise around a weekly publication entitled the *Economic and Philosophical Science Review*, which is edited by Royston Bull from his Stockport home. Despite its pretentious title, this rag is little more than a rant on paper. For instance, in issue no. 881 three political opponents in Manchester are denounced as "CPGB stooges

and fucking jerks", with a threat that they will be named if they cause trouble. In issue no. 880 the MEP Michael Hindley is called a "pompous twat" and in issue no. 854 an article which was written by Eammon McAnn, the chairman of Derry Trades Council in the publication the *Weekly Worker*, is described as a "giant subjective wank by a posturing left nincompoop". Like the Stalinist Society and the FISC group, Mr Bull's group also appear to have been given 'approved status' by the SLP leadership and are now effectively running the Stockport SLP branch.

Since the SLP's official inception in March 1996, a number of members have had their membership 'voided' on the pretext of belonging to or being supporters of another political organisation. What many of these people have in common with Mr Pearson from Stockport is that they have been denied natural justice such as the right of appeal, the right to a defence and the right to know what they have been charged with.

This basic denial of natural justice within the SLP's draft constitution seems all the more strange when one considers that it was drafted with the help of John Hendy QC and Michael Mansfield QC. Similarly, it is also strange how a man like Arthur Scargill, who not so long ago denounced witch-hunts in the Labour Party, now leads a party which also stands accused of the same thing. As Lord Acton observed many years ago: "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

Joe McCarthy

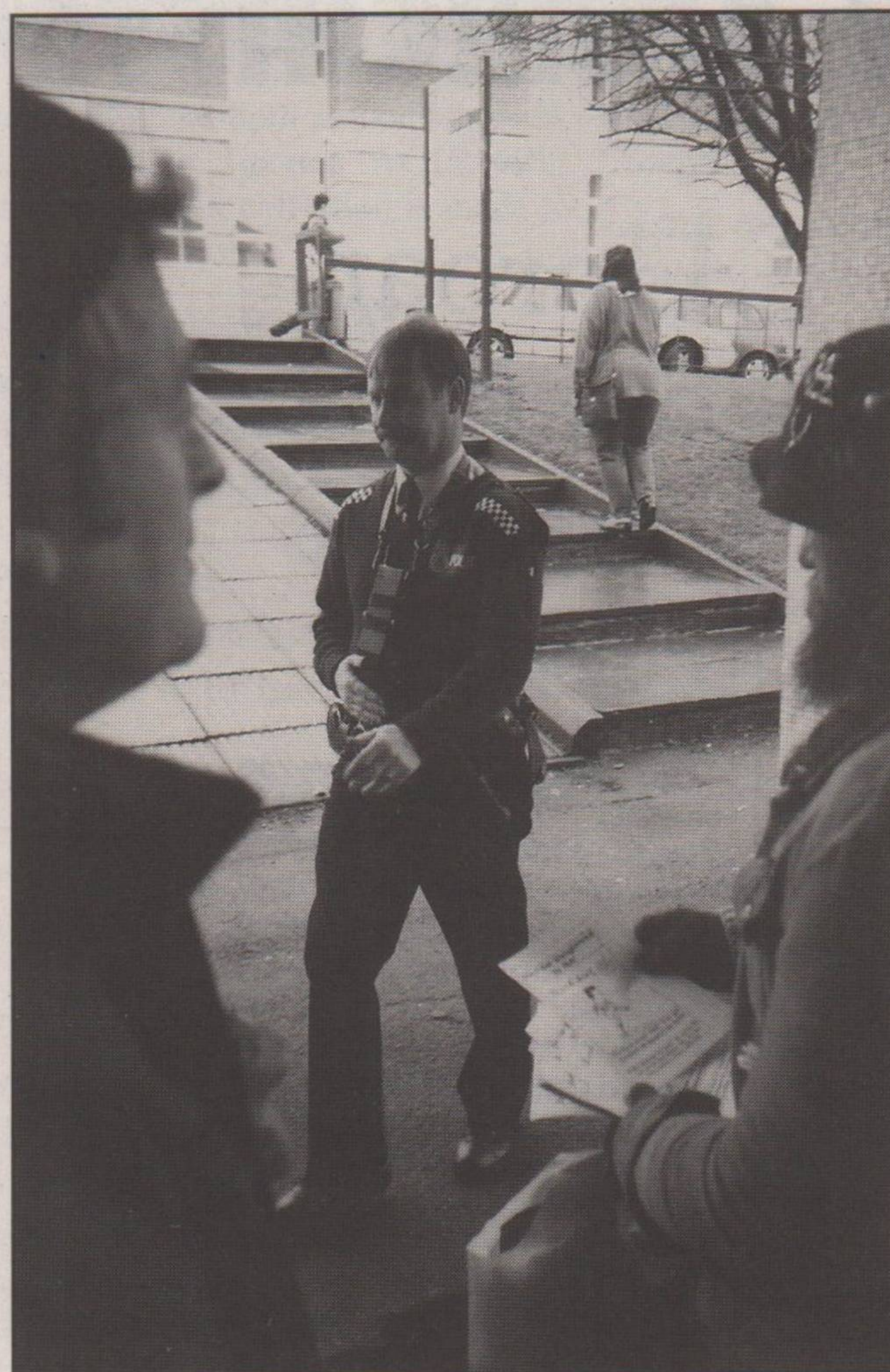
## PHOTO FEATURE DOLE DEMOS IN BURNLEY AND BURY



Bury dole demo chain-gang



Bury dole boss calls the police. "I'm threatened" she says.



Burnley police called in by Mrs Duffy

## NAN CONFERENCE

On 8th-9th March anarchists in Liverpool hosted a weekend conference of the Northern Anarchist Network. Fewer groups than usual attended, and this was blamed on communication hiccups and the fact that individual groups are very busy at the moment. As usual, discussions were stimulating and informative and justified the need for such networking to lead to greater understanding and to help co-ordinate the revolutionary struggle. Here are some items from the agenda: group reports, the anti-JSA campaign, the anti-election alliance, gender imbalance in anarchism, self-defence, the Manchester Runway campaign.

On JSA, focus is shifting to Project Work, the work for benefits scam. Organisations expecting to profit from this kind of exploitation will be targeted. On 2nd April there is a national day of action against 'providers', and names such as Grand Metropolitan (Burger King, etc.) and Oxfam were mentioned.

On the anti-election front, Leeds Anarchists in conjunction with Leeds Class War are distributing three thousand copies of their hard-hitting paper the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. There will be five days of Anarchy in Bradford from 1st May, being organised by the 1 in 12 Club. All agreed on the need to propagate anarchist ideas amongst activists in the ecology and animal rights movements: anarchists should assist in such campaigns as, for example, the Manchester Runway.

Other events coming up: anarchists and ex-Black Panther Lorenzo Komboa Ervin is coming to the UK in May and needs places to speak, food, lodgings and help with travelling. Contact the IWW in Swindon on 01793 411980. On 22nd March in Liverpool there will be a march for the dockers assembling at Myrtle Parade at 12.30. Then on 12th April the venue is London for the March for Social Justice, again in aid of the dockers. On 14th June the European March Against Unemployment is in Amsterdam to coincide with the European leaders' summit, and many

syndicalists and anarchists are travelling there to make their voices heard (see last issue of *Freedom*, page 7).

Talking about making our voices heard, when was the last time that anarchists spoke on the same platform as parliamentarians? We need the chance to get our views over. This was the subject of a lively session at the conference. It is intended to ask the dockers to give us room on their platform on 22nd March when MPs Benn and Corbyn are due to address the rally in Liverpool. The dockers know that their dispute goes beyond the issue of jobs, to the basic question of how we organise our lives. They know we can do without bosses. So help us get the message across!

The next NAN Conference will be on Sunday 8th June at the Red & Black Centre in Sheffield. On the Saturday there is a day school organised by the Manchester group Subversion and the Anarchist Communist Federation. Items for the NAN Conference agenda to: Sheffield Anarchists Group, PO Box 446, Sheffield S1 1NY.

JL

### 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.

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#### FREEDOM

The next issue of Freedom will be in three weeks time on Saturday 12th April. Last date for copy is first post on Thursday 3rd April.

## LIVERPOOL LOCK-OUT AND EVERYDAY REALITY

A huge meeting of over 150 packed Manchester Town Hall last week to discuss the Liverpool lock-out of up to 500 dockers, and the lack of media coverage.

Speakers included Ken Loach, director of *Land and Freedom* and last December's film on the dockers' dispute; Bill Hunter, working class historian; a dockers' leader and a woman from Women on the Waterfront.

There was a call for a co-ordination of struggles both industrial and social, like the Reclaim the Streets and the anti-JSA campaign. Ken Loach spoke against sectarianism on the left. But the main point of his speech was of the top-heavy content of mainstream media coverage. Forever obsessed with life at Westminster and in the City of London, forever focused upon the witterings of the 'great and the good', and utterly divorced from the everyday existences of most of us at work and in the dole queue.

It is as if there are two rival realities. One

documented meticulously in the media, covering the ups and downs of power politics, the other concerned with the seen but unnoticed, and mostly unreported, ordinariness of everyday survival in English society today.

Bill Hunter claimed that New Labour would come to power in a couple of months in a society full of sceptical, angry and disgruntled people. There could be little expectation of social harmony in this.

At the end of the meeting there was a contribution from a Groundswell speaker who informed the meeting about the CPSA victimisation of Lee Rock for daring to call for unity between claimants and dole staff.

Ken Loach received a copy of *The Raven* with a critique of his film *Land and Freedom*. Jim Allen, the film's screenwriter, has already said of this critique: "Though I disagree with some of the politics expressed, that critique 'Rendering Reality on Film' is excellent".

Freedom Reporter

## BILLY MORRIS: WIMP

Bill Morris, the general secretary of the Transport & General Workers' Union, delivered a whining address to his members this month in *T&G Record* about his union's stand on the Liverpool lock-out of up to 500 dockers. Last year journalist John Pilger in *The Guardian* challenged "the timidity of the union barons".

He is clearly wounded by Mr Pilger's claim that there is an "unspoken sweetheart agreement" between the T&G union and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. Bill Morris insists he is working tirelessly in his member's interests.

Mr Morris says "of the 1,000 T&G members employed by the Merseyside Docks and Harbour Company, 328 were dismissed; 80 others were employed by a separate company, Torside". Er, does this mean the 600-odd still on the company payroll are something we used to call scabs? Is the union trying to use these scabs as an excuse for not supporting the victimised men and their families?

Morris refused to be interviewed by Pilger. He refers to his offer, through the union's press officer, for Pilger to "submit written questions". Can anybody answer a straight question these days? Why does he need time to think?

Bill Morris claims his reluctance to be interviewed by the left-wing journalist is "more than justified by the anti-T&G bile which suffuses from his article". He suggests that unscripted answers, in which the slow-witted Morris may have been tripped up, could have been 'twisted' to fit Pilger's own "pre-determined thesis".

The general secretary denies the allegation put by Pilger that he called on the dockers' leader to abandon their struggle. He is outraged by Pilger's assertion that "for much of its history the TGWU ... has served the aims of the British establishment". He says that the Mersey Port Shop Stewards argument "that there is no difference between the positions of the employer and the T&G in the Liverpool docks" is a counsel of despair.

This all adds up to a spineless piece of writing by a trade union boss of one of Britain's biggest unions. No wonder the continentals call us a nation of wimps. Mr Morris moans on about not being able to do anything because of the "anti-union legislation passed over the last seventeen years, a fact many of the T&G's critics simply ignore". The union boss writes: "Our survival owes nothing to the advice of John Pilger and his like".

He points out that Pilger's "ultra-left politics so often end up in the same place as the policies of the right - attacking the organisations of the labour movement".

Mr Morris concludes that "the T&G leadership has discharged its obligation to the union as a whole, in protecting our assets from

sequestration".

In the end the union bosses want to maintain their own way of life and protect their own salaries in the union organisation.

Trade Unionist

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### SOUND BITES FROM A WAR/PEACE PROCESS

The very food we eat has gone foul on us with the recent announcement of fowl pest disease hitting the poultry industry here. Hundreds of thousands of chickens and hens have been exterminated and many more have been vaccinated as the disease sweeps the flocks.

We haven't gotten over the BSE crisis yet, though moves by Big Ian and Big John, our two MEPs, seem to have secured a form of special status for Northern Ireland within the UK, as far as beef is concerned anyway.

Unionists will have to be wary of setting precedents with this. It appears that the collapse of economic and trading borders will mean that more and more foul pestilences will come our way. I heard a farmer explain that most of the stuff he feeds his flock comes in from the USA, and we all know how serious that can be.

Funnily enough the BSE crisis may be about to wind up here, as just recently the Garda checkpoints on the border near my home have been removed. No longer will people enjoy the fun of being waved through by Gardaí looking for cows hidden in trucks and lorries and be able to lean out of the car window and go 'moo!' at the defenders of the state.

Another industry in crisis is the fishing industry, but this time the cause could definitely be said to be natural. Severe storms in the month of February have kept fleets in harbour and stocks for processing plants have gone down. A factory owner in Greencastle, the biggest fishing port near me, said that he might have to start importing fish to meet the demands of his export business. And they say anarchists are crazy!

Of real concern to us is the impact on jobs and the fact that hundreds of workers along the west and north coast of Ireland may be laid off.

That well-known foul pest Sir Patrick Mayhew got himself into a bit of a jam by saying that an apology to the families of the Bloody Sunday victims would not be appropriate, but the main political activity here has tended to be pre-election squaring off, with John Hume clearing the decks on his party's relationship with Sinn Féin. Then Bertie Ahern, who may be the next Taoiseach, rounded on the IRA calling for a ceasefire and Gerry Adams had a big piece in *The Irish Times* laying out the possibilities for that. Are there moves behind the scenes, we ask ourselves?

Dave Duggan

## MR REAMSBOTTOM'S RANT

To ream is to enlarge or widen a hole. The hole created by the CPSA national executive led by general secretary Barry Reamsbottom has been getting bigger since we reported on their attempt to victimise London organiser Lee Rock in the last issue of *Freedom*. Mr Rock had called on Employment Service staff to get together with claimants in the fight against the Job Seeker's Act. The CPSA union top brass took exception to this, and summoned Mr Rock to explain himself.

Mr Rock is not an anarchist, but a socialist who is determined to do the right thing. He is a supporter of Groundswell, which contains many anarchists. This organisation is a network which claims a membership of over sixty independent groups of unemployed and claimants and others seeking to oppose the JSA.

In an open letter to Barry Reamsbottom, Groundswell states: "It [Groundswell] is not

an organisation with a fixed national policy, since each group retains its own autonomy. The main activities of the groups have been, and remain, alerting claimants and workers to the nature of the JSA, encouraging them to resist it and supporting them when they do so. To this end groups have always sought to build links with Employment Service and Benefit Agency workers and have supported them in recent disputes."

It is Lee Rock's association with Groundswell which has got him into trouble with his union. Groundswell, commenting on Mr Rock, says "in our experience he is a dedicated union organiser who sets an example for others in the work he has done to resist the JSA and protect your members' jobs".

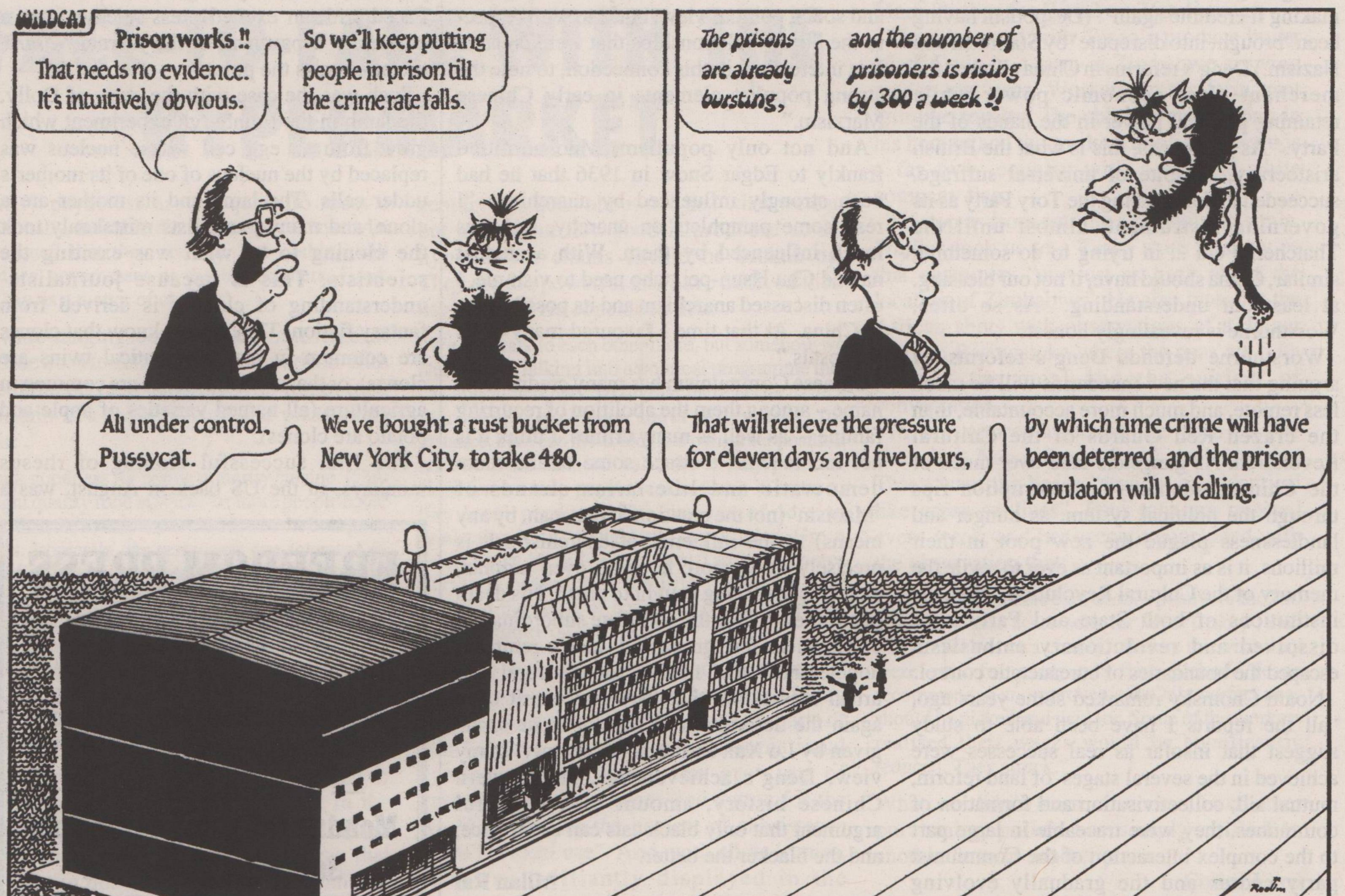
Last week the North West CPSA was addressed by two Groundswell members on this and other issues. As I write, the North West region

is preparing a motion condemning the national executive on this matter.

Groups in the North West Against the JSA are sending letters of support to Lee Rock, and writing to the general secretary. The Northern Anarchist Network conference, meeting this month, is giving moral support and is writing to Lee. The case will be raised at the Welfare State Network Conference in Manchester on 15th March, where there will be CPSA members present. Both the anarchists and Groundswell groups are committed to press to issues.

In the North East Guy Cheverton tells me the regional CPSA has been contacted and Hull Trades Council has written to Mr Reamsbottom denouncing the national executive's attitude to Lee Rock. An open letter circulated in London and the regions by Groundswell has been sent to Barry Reamsbottom this week.

Industrial Correspondent



Unless I am mistaken, children under ten years of age are the most law-abiding citizens in this country. Compared to the other age groups that is. Even those over 80, for the aged have alas become quite adept at malpractice and there is such a thing as a hardened criminal.

The system we live in excels at producing criminals. It is, after all, a criminal system. Except at time of war, and especially not in defeat, for the laws of booty, arson and peremptory justice sweep aside the tortuously erected civil codes.

It has been said by 'wise' people just recently that children under the age of 11 should be made accountable for their actions.

Pity you could not fine each infant under two years old for shitting their pants. So much for the law.

Perhaps there are methods of assessing the age of criminality. There must be somebody around who can tell me otherwise where one can get a certificate in criminality. Most educational courses now extend from the cradle to the grave with the final certificate on the grave-stone. Lucky for some.

It was that very foolish king Joseph II exactly two centuries ago who first thought of criminalising the whole population from birth.

This impostor and mass murderer, whose reign in Austro-Hungary is still unequalled for its systematic central brutality,

## — RICH AND POOR — CHILDREN AND THE 'LAW'

«Wir Joseph der Zweite, etc.

«Zur Vermeidung aller Unordnungen, die bei einer Klasse Menschen im politischen, oder gerichtlichen Verfahren, und in ihrem Privatleben entstehen müssen, wenn die Familien keinen bestimmten Geschlechtsnamen, und die einzelnen Personen keinen sonst bekannten Vornamen haben, wird für gesammte Erbländer allgemein verordnet.»

§. 1.

«Die Judenschaft in allen Provinzen zu verhalten, dass ein jeder Hausvater für seine Familie, der Vormund für seine Waisen, und eine jede ledige, weder in der väterlichen Gewalt, noch unter einer Vormundschaft, oder Kuratel stehende Mannsperson vom 1-ten Jänner 1788 einen bestimmten Geschlechtsnamen führen, das weibliche Geschlecht im ledigen Stande, den Geschlechtsnamen ihres Vaters, verheirathet ienen ihres Mannes annehmen, jede einzelne

This was issued on 23rd July 1787 by the zealous monarch otherwise known as József Császár II or, to give him his full title, Sacratissima Caes. et. Reg. Apost. Mja. Dom. Dom.

had decreed that everybody should have a birth certificate.

Most of the children at that time had only pet names like Bibi and Bobi and Bubi, the refined were sometimes called Baby. Many of them

were called Booby, and as for Bobby nobody liked to call their offspring Bobby for obvious reasons.

Not only did this emperor criminalise the children, he decreed that all immigrants should have to Germanise their name within six months of local time otherwise the elders would be fined fifty florins a head (the one on the top of their necks) or eight days of forced labour

He who said that all children are anarchists did not help matters, for in many countries this has led to the extermination of the entire population. Catch them while they are young, the Jesuits used to say.

## — ABOVE THE PARAPETS — BLACK CATS

Deng Xiao Ping, who followed Mao's line from very early on (he voted for Mao to lead the CCP Politbureau in 1935), became one of the victims of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, castigated as a 'capitalist roader'. After the fall of the Gang of Four, Deng achieved supreme power, and did indeed lead China down the capitalist road. A famous saying was that it did not matter whether the cat was black or white "so long as it caught mice" — it did not matter whether one used communist methods or capitalist methods, if they achieved national goals.

Peregrine Worsthorne, reacted to Deng's death in the *Spectator*: "What a blessing it would be if, in the 21st century, China emerged as a civilised despotism, thereby making it credible again". (Despotism having been 'brought into disrepute' by Stalinism and Nazism.) Deng's reforms in China allowed the merchant class economic power while retaining political power in the hands of the Party. "As it happens, this is what the British aristocracy, in spite of universal suffrage, succeeded in doing, using the Tory Party as its governing instrument, almost until the Thatcherite era ... in trying to do something similar, China should have, if not our blessing, at least our understanding." As so often, Worsthorne is revealingly honest.

Worsthorne defends Deng's reforms by arguing that the new mandarins will be much less remote, and much more accountable, than the crazed Red Guards of the Cultural Revolution. As gangsters take over much of the Chinese economy; as corruption rips through the political system; as hunger and landlessness plague the new poor in their millions, it is as important as ever to revile the memory of the Cultural Revolution, when the institutions of both State and Party were dissolved and revolutionary enthusiasm escaped the boundaries of bureaucratic control.

Noam Chomsky remarked some years ago, "all the reports I have been able to study suggest that insofar as real successes were achieved in the several stages of land reform, mutual aid, collectivisation and formation of communes, they were traceable in large part to the complex interaction of the Communist party cadres and the gradually evolving

peasant associations, a relation which seems to stray far from the Leninist model ..." Chomsky refers admiringly to William Hinton's 'magnificent study' *Fanshen* "unparalleled, to my knowledge, as an analysis of a moment of profound revolutionary change". He comments, 'What seems to me to particularly striking in [Hinton's] account of the early stages of revolution in one Chinese village is not only the extent to which party cadres submitted themselves to popular control, but also, and more significant, the ways in which exercise of control over steps of the revolutionary process was a factor in developing the consciousness and insight of those who took part in the revolution, not only from a political and social point of view, but also with respect to the human relationships that were created. It is interesting, in this connection, to note the strong populist elements in early Chinese Marxism.'

And not only populism. Mao admitted frankly to Edgar Snow in 1936 that he had been strongly influenced by anarchism: "I read some pamphlets on anarchy, and was much influenced by them. With a student named Chu Hsun-pei, who used to visit me, I often discussed anarchism and its possibilities in China. At that time I favoured many of its proposals."

Chinese Communism has many credits to its name — among them the abolition of recurring famine — as well as many crimes. I think it is not too fanciful to trace some of the more democratic and libertarian strands of 'Maoism' (not the creation of one man, by any means) to the influence of anarchism. It is precisely these more hopeful, even utopian, elements that Deng sought to crush. His death opens the way for the complete subordination of China to foreign capital, and a return to hopelessness and misery for the rural and urban masses, so that they may merit once again the description "a dish of loose sand" given by Lu Xun earlier in the century. In my view, Deng's achievements, and modern Chinese history, amount to a powerful argument that only black cats can catch mice, and the blacker the better.

Milan Rai

Education only delays matters, and anyway most people never stop learning. Like if one door shuts, the other door shuts also.

Try to see the world through the eyes of an average child, not in the war zone but in the peace zone. For the little bit of human crawling among the grass to decommission mines left there by playful octogenarians is one way of getting rid of unwanted children. Losing the odd leg or arm, there is always the kind of agency worker to put down the child's name, age and town of birth before as much as to be fitted with artificial limbs. Oh, the wonders of science.

It is not funny. Joseph II and his cronies saw to that. Just imagine how pleased the children must have been to know that for the rest of their lives they would have an existence in a file where all was recorded, all the little misdemeanours.

The rules surrounding children's treatment by the law have led many people studying it to the brink of depression or worse. There is now a rule of putting paper-bags over the heads of arrested children with slits for eyes so that the pity of looking at their bewildered faces should not upset arresting officers.

Resolve yourself comrades, for the worst is to come. The Law and Order Party has never been so strong. Children as such have no rights and the judges, by definition, are the master criminals and their legal crimes against humanity are unequalled, even those in the armaments trade come a close second.

So as you enter your second childhood, muse over your life of well-spent crime. If it wasn't for that baby in your mother's arms (good thing she was allowed to have them) you would never have become a danger to society and thrown to the wolves (specially bred at secret laboratories under the law courts in the Strand).

John Rety

## — SCIENCE NOTES — THE TRUTH ABOUT CLONING, AND DOLLY THE LAMB

Newspapers and broadcasting organisations commonly employ journalists who know about politics, international affairs, fashion and sport. Outside of the science press, however, few journalists know anything at all about science. Faced with an excited press release from a university department or the journal *Nature*, the often miss the point.

Such was the case with the story of Dolly, the lamb in the Edinburgh experiment which grew from an egg cell whose nucleus was replaced by the nucleus of one of its mother's udder cells. The lamb and its mother are a clone, and many journalists mistakenly took the cloning to be what was exciting the scientists. This is because journalists' understanding of cloning is derived from fantasy fiction. They do not know that clones are common in nature (identical twins are clones), or that artificial clones are common in agriculture (all named varieties of apple and potato are clones).

The first successful cloning of rhesus monkeys, in the US back in August, was a

partially successful attempt to produce octuplets from a single embryo. Dividing embryos, in imitation of the way twins happen in nature, is the usual way of cloning animals. Journalists are fascinated by the idea of a person being perpetuated, as in the film about neo-Nazis cloning Hitler, but the cloned epsilon workers of Huxley's *Brave New World* are closer to what happens in real life.

The Dolly experiment, although it involved a clone incidentally, makes a more important contribution than that, to our understanding of life.

In a multi-celled organism the nucleus of each cell carries the genes for all the cells. For instance, a light-sensitive cell in a sheep's eye carries not only the genes for responding to light but also the genes for varying in length like a muscle cell, secreting hydrochloric acid like a stomach cell, and every other kind of cell function. Yet only the genes for sensing light are 'switched on'.

We now know how genes are transmitted and translated, but how genes are activated is still a mystery. What the Edinburgh scientists did after hundreds of attempts was to replace the nucleus of an egg cell with the nucleus of a fully functional milk-secreting cell. Something in the cell, but clearly not in the nucleus, switched the milk genes off and induced the nucleus to develop a whole new animal.

We still do not know how genes are activated, but now we know where to look. The achievement is comparable to the 1930s demonstration that genes are carried by DNA and not by protein, which laid the ground for the 1950s elucidation of how genes are transmitted.

Andrea Kinty

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# ANARCHISM AND THE CITY TRADITION

Anarchist blueprints and utopias should be accompanied by a written health warning: namely that the utopian vision so described is that of the author or authors alone and is descriptive of their own opinions and no one else's. To do otherwise is to ignore the anarchist tradition of personal freedom and spontaneity.

Primitivist anarchists, such as represented by *Green Anarchist* in this country, have made some disturbing statements, such as *Green Anarchist's* cry for the 'destruction of civilisation' and their assertion that anarchism can't work in cities.

Most of us accept that contemporary vast urban sprawls and metropolises are not examples of decentralised anarchist communities. However, much of the argument resulting from the primitivist's position centres around the definition of what constitutes a 'civilisation' and a 'city'. These concepts can still carry a vision of a human-scaled, decentralised, essentially anarchist society and, despite modern problems arising from scale, industrial pollution, etc., are too useful to be quite so easily jettisoned.

In the Greek city states of the classical Hellenic period cities were far smaller than is the case today. Aristotle, writing in *The Politics*, stated:

"In order to give decisions on matters of justice and for the purpose of distributing offices ... it is necessary that the citizens should know each other and know what kind of people they are." (Aristotle, *The Politics*, Penguin Classics Edition, page 266)

This implies a very small population. Another tradition from the Hellenic era stated a city should be no larger than would allow a man crying for help at the city centre to be heard at the city's outer boundary. Again this implies a very small size and population compared to modern cities. While such examples of small-scale cities were marred by slavery, unequal sexual, social and political rights, aspects of Athenian direct democracy have been quoted by well-known anarchist writers such as Murray Bookchin in support of anarchist political theory:

"The rotation of civic, vocational and professional responsibilities would stimulate the senses in the being of the individual, creating and rounding out new dimensions in self-development. In a complete society we could hope to create complete men; in a rounded society, rounded men. In the western world, the Athenians, for all their shortcomings and limitations, were the first to give us a notion of this completeness." (Murray Bookchin, *Post Scarcity Anarchism*, page 81)



Aberystwyth: compared to an ancient Greek city state

The above quotation from Bookchin in particular points up the Greek tradition of seeking to create a rounded human personality. Bookchin further pointed out that involvement in the civic tradition of self-government of that city-based society was regarded as being part of the personal educative process.

The creation of individually self-confident, socially and civically involved citizens in a mixed and open society is surely part of the anarchist project today. We are not some latter-day anarchist version of Pol Pot attempting to empty the cities of the developed world in the authoritarian pursuit of our utopian blueprint. To quote David Bouchier writing in *Social Anarchism*:

"The modern world will not go away, and cannot be by-passed by making solar heaters out of old oil drums. Radicals need to take control of modernity, not lapse into a nostalgic lyricism for the world we have lost." (David Bouchier, 'Hard Questions for Citizen Radicals', in *Social Anarchism* no. 15, 1990)

Despite the limitations we need to remember the positive aspects of the human-scaled Greek city state tradition. Such cities had schools of

philosophy as well as market places, they had libraries and theatres as well as temples, they had, in the more democratic examples, popular assemblies where the citizens meet to legislate and decide issues of state themselves. Even with modern communications and information technology, such face-to-face communication with our fellow humans is most effective in an urban setting and on a personal basis.

J. Lionel Madden, the librarian at the National Library of Wales, writing about modern Aberystwyth, compares it to an ancient Greek city state (J. Lionel Madden, *Old Town Aberystwyth*, fourth edition). In some respects this is accurate. Aberystwyth, a town on the coast of Mid-Wales with a population of only 12,000 people, boasts a university college, two theatres, a national library, a cinema, a public library, five bookshops, an arts complex, among other facilities. It does not currently have the political independence and self-government that Greek city states enjoyed, nor yet does it meet its needs for energy, food and materials from its own local resources, but it does point

to the sort of community we could develop and adjust so that it would not only have a richer, more free, more equal social and community life but would also be, in the modern eco-speak, 'sustainable'. Anarchists and green activists would like to see many more changes and social innovations to such a place before they would be satisfied, but Aberystwyth and places of a similar size are real communities which exist now. They are not some utopian dream.

Rather than destroying our cities or waiting in vain for some unlikely apocalypse to remove the state and capitalism at a stroke, a more positive project is to build the social and community innovations which may lead to a more libertarian society now.

Colin Ward's book *Welcome Thinner City* (Bedford Square Press) looks at the decentralising and greening of the cities as a way forward. A regular contributor to anarchist journals since the 1940s, Ward writes in the tradition of Kropotkin, William Morris and Patrick Geddes the town planner. Ward looks to directly democratic traditions in diverse social phenomena and movements such as the medieval guilds, Swiss cantonal political organisation, the garden city movement of Victorian and Edwardian England, the guild socialist movement, among others, as providing possible solutions to modern urban and rural problems. Ward's well-known book *Anarchy in Action* (Freedom Press) points up possibilities for anarchist innovations and approaches to the full range of modern concerns: housing, work and employment, community life, transport, federalism, welfare, decentralisation and more.

Anarchists can look to a range of options to help create an open, directly democratic and pluralistic society. Such initiatives include worker co-ops and housing co-ops, self-employment, workplace and community assemblies, credit unions, LETS schemes, local food production, local manufacturing production, promotion of public transport alternatives to the car. Such a society would include both urban and rural based settlements. The list is endless and limited only by our imaginations. The essential factor is that we do not have to destroy either our cities or civilisation to work towards anarchy, but we can begin working for its achievement now. The anarchist revolution is a process, not a historical event.

Jonathan Simcock

## — ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

# FACE-TO-FACE WITH THE HYPERMARKET

The name of Tim Lang is familiar because whenever a food topic hits the public consciousness through the media, he's in the thick of it. He doesn't think it a waste of time to write letters to the press or to seek out slots on Radio 4's excellent *Food Programme*. Behind all this, he is Professor of Food Policy at Thames Valley University and an activist of the Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Environment (SAFE) Alliance. He recently gave a Schumacher Lecture on 'The Challenge for Food Policy' which is printed in the current (March/April) issue of *Resurgence*.

Here he was obliged to cover a variety of topics to convince his audience that British food culture is mad. In the first place, he argued, that ours is a culture in which food is a major factor in the nation's top two causes of premature death, "yet the food industry spends an annual £600 million on advertisements which are overwhelmingly extolling the joys of sweet, fatty foods. The budget for advice on health education by the Health Education Authority, by contrast, is about £2 million a year".

Another of his themes was food poverty: "Here is one of the richest countries human history has ever seen and yet around a fifth of its citizens suffer problems of food poverty. I have recently spent two years sitting on a government working party on food poverty. We weren't allowed to call it food poverty. It was called Food and Low Income. We weren't allowed to talk about money, would you believe it? You might ask, why did I stay on?"

The reason was that for the last fifteen years there has been a ceaseless battle about whether social

security payments are adequate to meet a nutritionally desirable diet. I am one of those who has argued that they are not. But nothing will convince government or the big retailers. Food, they say, is a matter of choice."

His wide-ranging lecture found some items of good news. He felt that by comparison with his childhood (and certainly with mine) food in Britain is a more relaxed and pleasurable affair:

"Thank goodness for ethnic minority cuisine. It has brought quality food at prices far more people could afford than the haute cuisine tradition of the bourgeois houses. Ironically, the restaurant was invented by chefs displaced by the French Revolution who had nothing but their skills to trade. Hence the culture of pomp and luxury that still permeates eating out. Thank goodness, therefore, for the Italians, the Greeks, the Indians, the Chinese, the Thai, who have brought their foods to Britain. These are traditions which celebrate internal diversity, yet which share many common rules.

In his view the key issue is the separation of populations from access to land. But in the global economy this is linked with the globalisation of production. He argues that "the fight in this last quarter of the twentieth

century has been about not just what we eat, but also about how food is produced ... the hypermarket chains should be broken up. They are too powerful and have outlived their usefulness." He concluded that:

"We may talk to each other more, but somehow we have to turn talking into a political programme that has appeal and bite. To do that there needs to be a more frank exchange about differences, for instance, between the ecological consumer position and the more affluent, value-for-money position. How can we help people realise that it is better to buy local produce? The damage of foreign production is out of sight and out of mind. Green beans flown in mid-winter from Tanzania ignores starvation nearby. It is the Irish Famine all over again, in the name of consumer choice. And that doesn't feature on the label."

Looking at the same issue from the aspect of wise use of water resources, I point out in my book *Reflected in Water* that there are parts of sub-Saharan Africa where "international agencies have urged the growing of groundnuts, haricot beans and cotton for the world market, to the neglect of subsistence crops for local use". And, with all its ironies, this was brilliantly displayed in the

much-admired *Modern Times* documentary 'Mange-Tout', produced and directed by Mark Phillips for BBC2 on 26th February.

The film went with Tesco's produce buyer Mark Dady to a farm in Zimbabwe growing mange-tout peas. Workers on the farm treat him like royalty. The children sing a song in his honour and the workers think that Tesco is a far-away country with a red-and-white company flag.

To stop us from smiling a patronising smile, Phillips took us to a Tesco store to show us that customers "are just as hazy about the location of Zimbabwe". He also inter-cut the African shots with observations of a dinner party in Basingstoke where the peas are both part of the meal and the subject of conversation.

In her appreciation of the film in *The Guardian*, Nancy Banks-Smith explained that Tesco want the beans "straight and identical like green sardines". Four tons are rejected every week, and her account concluded with the observation that:

"Mange-tout pickers earn about a penny for the 150 gram pack that Tesco sells for 99p. 'Crikey', said Mark, 'We're not a charity'. Before this visit they were paid for every pea they picked. Tesco recommended an improvement. Only perfect peas should be picked and paid for. Some of the workers realised their wages would be significantly reduced. They struck."

What we didn't learn, of course, is whether purchasing policy has simply shifted to another farm in another place.

Colin Ward

# A LESSON FROM SOUTH KOREA

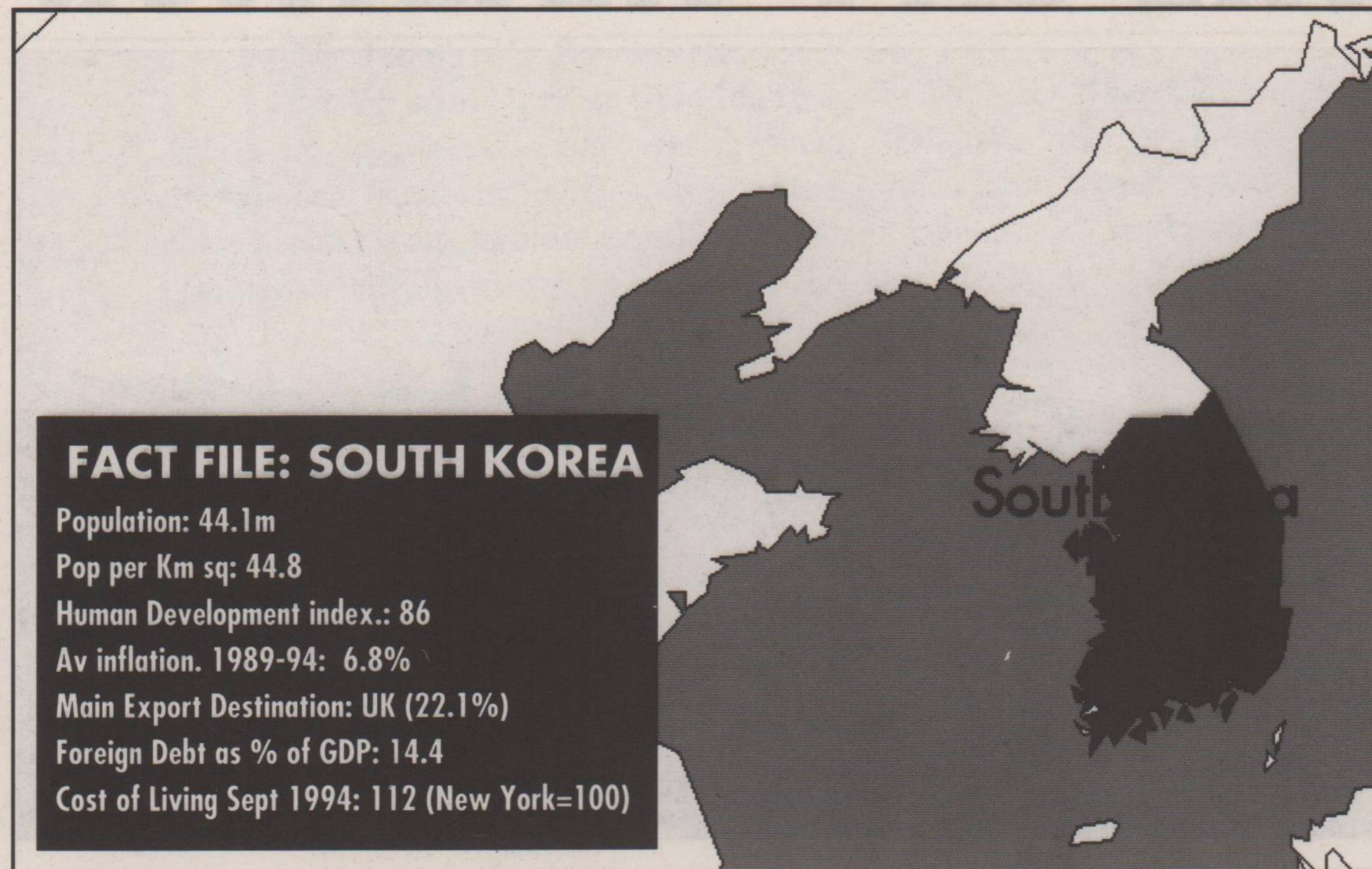
Over the last month the South Korean working class has been organising general strikes and huge demonstrations. We are seeing the most important labour protest to have occurred in an industrialised country since the beginning of the era of the 'free market'.

The cause of the mobilisations of the Korean trade unions lies in the 'liberal reforms' which the State has introduced and which aim for more 'flexible working', simple euphemisms for legislation which makes sacking workers, bringing in scabs, lowering wages, lengthening the working day and raising the number of temporary workers easier. All this means that the South Korean capitalist state has decided to introduce anti-union legislation similar to that introduced by Reagan, Bush and Clinton in the US and Gonzalez in Spain, ratified by Aznar. From there we arrive at the Korean situation.

In the first place it is worthwhile emphasising the militancy of the South Korean workers which gives the lie to the image which exists in the West of the Asian worker who is seen as docile and submissive that is to say a racist image of the 'productive ant'. Any student of South Korea who is even moderately informed will know of the history of struggle that has unfolded over the last fifty years within the South Korean syndicalist movement. Between 1945 and 1950, the peasantry/workers set up thousands of revolutionary councils which were destroyed by the intervention of the US during the Korean war (1950-53) and 10,000 unionists were imprisoned or sent to concentration camps all in the name of the free world. During the '60s and '70s the revolts and protests of students set the scene for a new working class movement which extended to the capital cities of the most important provinces in the country. This militancy ended with the famous massacre of Kwangjo where 3,000 workers and students died in 1980. State repression against the workers gave strength to one of the hardest labour regimes in the world: a 60-hour working week, salaries which barely reached minimum levels, state controlled unions etc. Labour exploitation became one of the foundation stones of what came to be known as the South Korean 'economic miracle', with an increase of 20% in exports and GDP growth of between 10 and 15%. The other side of the Asian dragon's 'success' was labour exploitation.

Shamefully, some left wing economists, critical of 'free market capitalism', considered Asian 'state' capitalism a valid alternative, emphasising the growth in economic production and assuming that the 'collaboration' between capital and the working class was a 'social pact'... South Korean workers have now destroyed the myth of a 'social pact' and the most radical sections have openly rejected both 'liberal' capitalism and state capitalism.

The second lesson we can draw from the South Korean strikes is that the vast majority of the middle classes identify with this struggle. More than 75% of the inhabitants of



Seoul, the capital, support the strikers' demands and the vast majority support the call for a general strike. Bank employees, professionals and even the workers on the stock exchange, in their suits and ties, have joined in the street protests. In contrast to the Spanish situation, where the leaders of the CCOO and the UGT organised a ritual day of strike action before accepting Gonzalez's labour reforms thus demoralising the youth, in South Korea, and thanks to continual mass action, the union is enjoying the support of large numbers of young workers who are not affiliated and also workers in the public sector.

South Korean syndicalists are different to their Spanish and American counterparts in so

far as they are independent of any political party, especially those bourgeois parties of government and parliament. At first, the most radical unions led the organisation of protest action whilst the more moderate elements kept to the background. However, once the protest had spread the factory workers forced the more moderate unions to back the struggle. Once again the contrast with Spain is evident because here the union leader Antonio Gutierrez did the opposite because of pressure from the pro government union the UGT. Again unlike the Spaniards the South Koreans did not sign a 'Moncloa Pact'. The radical Federation of Korean Unions which has about 500,000 members is still an illegal

organisation despite enjoying the support of a growing number of workers and its ability to face up to the state. In South Korea the class struggle is an integral part of the democratic transition which is aiming to achieve social guarantees, job security, fair salaries and a recognition of workers rights in the work place which, until now, resemble military barracks. With this action the workers have shaken the cement of the most powerful economic conglomerates of the country: the management of Hyundai, the main car manufacturer has closed its factories indefinitely.

The general strike does not only affect the workers but has implications for democracy in general. Labour reform was passed by a parliament under governmental control at a secret session at 5am with the opposition excluded and all done by state decree. The strike is just as much against the legislation as against the authoritarianism of the methods used. However, in Spain the union leaders continued to maintain a close link to the regime of Gonzalez despite his arbitrary use of power and state decrees..

The process of democratisation in South Korea provoked the recent death sentence for the ex-dictator General Chun Doo Hwan by a Supreme Tribunal – a decision which met with approval from the unions and the public in general. In contrast with Spain military impunity is no part of the transition to democracy. The Korean labour revolution is a part of this transition, even though the victory of the workers is not assured, and the unions are making it clear that free market capitalism is neither inevitable nor the only possibility. With its heroic words and actions they are demonstrating that working class struggle is not only possible but it can count on the support of more and more people... For unionists and intellectuals in Spain and the US now is the time to follow the Asian example. Not its model of economic exploitation but rather its example of working class struggle.

Extract taken from CNT, February 1997

## COMMUNICATIONS PACT TO FAVOUR GROWING GIANTS

The world's telephone companies have been in a lively mating dance for several years, pairing off and swapping partners at a brisk pace. But the industry tango is about to become a tarantella.

Negotiators at the World Trade Organisation in Geneva signed a landmark agreement earlier this year that should throw open vast new telephone markets to competition and foreign investment. The pact promises to uncork a flood of deals, as telephone companies scramble to find partners and build alliances across borders.

More than sixty countries signed the pact, which is intended to topple state monopolies and open the \$600 billion global industry to freewheeling competition. Victory, the experts say, will not go to lone entrepreneurs but to those companies with the most powerful friends.

"People aren't going to want to be left behind," said Gerald H. Taylor, the chief executive of the MCI Communications Corporation, which is in the process of completing a \$22 billion merger with British Telecommunications. "You're going to see a lot more movement into partnerships and joint ventures".

Mr Taylor believes that the merged MCI and British Telecommunications will be a blueprint for the kind of phone company able to capitalise on these newly liberalised markets. The combined company will have 43 million customers in 72 countries, as well as ventures with carriers in another fifteen countries.

More important, the merged company will own a long distance network and switching operations on both sides of the Atlantic, enabling it to offer big corporate clients end-to-end service over its own wires. That is the Holy Grail for any telephone company with global ambitions. "To own and control

customers, you've got to own the assets," said Tom L. Elliott, the managing partner of the communications practice at Arthur Andersen. "You want to be in a position to serve a customer under your brand name wherever they are on the globe".

The World Trade Organisation agreement makes such a global strategy possible by raising the level of investment that foreign carriers can have in local companies. In the case of the US, a foreign carrier could own 100% of an American telephone company as long as the native country of that carrier offered reciprocal access to its industry.

Other countries, like Canada and Japan, have left some limits in place, though Canada and Japan relaxed their policies under pressure from the US.

For big carriers like AT&T, MCI and BT, foreign ownership matters a lot more than whether overseas calls will be cheaper for tourists or exchange students. That is because the carriers are focused on the top 5,000 corporate customers – companies like IBM, Merrill Lynch and Sony, which generate a cumulative \$90 billion a year in telecommunications revenue.

To offer such customers end-to-end service, the phone companies are stitching together a bewildering array of partnerships. In addition to the BT-MCI merger, the Sprint Corporation has an alliance with France Telecom and Deutsche Telekom, called Global One. The French and German companies each own 10% of Sprint.

AT&T has a European alliance, Unisource, which is in turn part of a global federation, World Partners.

And the industry is rife with rumours of more deals. Cable & Wireless, another British carrier, recently broke off an alliance with two

German utility companies, Veba AG and RWE AG. That leaves the company in search of a new partner, and it is said to be in talks with both Sprint and AT&T. With its 58% stake in Hong Kong Telecom, Cable and Wireless would give either company a valuable beachhead in Asia.

Europe has become a virtual bazaar for telephone deals, because the European Union has decreed that all of its domestic markets will be opened to competition by 1st January 1998.

In Germany, no fewer than three alliances are taking on the state-controlled monopoly, Deutsche Telekom. In addition to Veba and RWE, AT&T has an alliance with Mannesmann AG, an industrial conglomerate that plans to lay wire along railroad tracks. Meanwhile, British Telecom is in a partnership with yet another industrial conglomerate, Viag AG.

In France, BT is forming an alliance with Compagnie Generale des Eaux, France's national water company, to compete with France Telecom. The plan is to build second phone network, using Generale des Eaux's sprawling rights of way. BT may be the industry's most prolific deal maker, with ties in Spain, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

For all the horse-trading in Europe, the WTO agreement could have greater impact in Latin America and Asia. That is because markets there have been even more tightly shuttered, and because many of the governments in those regions are hungry for foreign investment.

In Mexico, for example, MCI has a joint venture with a Mexican bank, Grupo Financiero Banamex-Accivel, to build the country's first competitive telephone company. MCI now owns 45% of the venture, which is called Avantel. But under the world trade pact Mexico will permit foreign carriers to acquire as much as 49% of a local company, MCI, is open to raising its stake in Avantel.

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# FREEDOM BOOKSHOP READERS' ROUND-UP

By way of light relief, this week we've got three very different comic strip books on the shelves. First up is a curate's egg of a production, 92 A4 pages bound in a full-colour card cover and produced in Slovenia. It comprises strips in Serbo-Croat from all over ex-Yugoslavia which are translated into English in an accompanying 8-page insert, and strips from western Europe and America which are in English. Sounds a bit complicated, but you soon get the hang of it. It's called *Stripburger No. 7* and there is quite some talent here for a very modest £2.50. They provide information about each of the artists and describe what the magazine is all about. They also give an e-mail address. *The Slab Selection* is described as "an anthology of comic strips by cutting edge artists from all over the world" and is issued by Slab-o-Concrete Publications, the people behind the reviews magazine *Bypass*. It is both smaller and more expensive than *Stripburger* because the quality is that much higher, with a glossy cover and proper spine, and the drawings and storylines are excellent. Among the best are *The Party*, *Reefer Addicts*, the *Paranoia Paradise* series, *Professor Chomsky* and *Bright-Eyed Crazies*. An 88-page square thing for £4.50. The same group is also behind Donald Room's latest offering, one in the 'Missive Device' series of mini-comics that can be sent by post to a friend simply by sealing it and adding a stamp. Entitled *Titania's Curse*, it is a 20-page tale of the Sprite from his *Skeptic* strip, and costs £1. A rather charming A6 comic with a cover beautifully coloured by Peter Pavement.

Laughter is also touched upon in Red Lion Press's timely investigation of, and attack on, PC in Larry Gambone's *Laughter is Bourgeois: the roots of political correctness*.\* This 12-page, nicely-produced pamphlet shows not only how political correctness originated in the '70s rather than the '80s, as most people assume, but that the seeds of its uncomely birth were sown as far back as 1917 by the Bolsheviks with their insistence on rigid adherence to the party line and their demonisation of all dissent. This was later refined by Stalin in "a brutal art form", then taken up by Communist Parties elsewhere, whence it entered the New Left. Also covered, for a mere 80p, are PC and Social Change, Authoritarianism in the Workers' Movement, the Rape of Language, and Combating the PC Plague. Given the current climate amongst a minority of anarchists in Britain, it is worth quoting from this excellent pamphlet: "Movements grow and develop, adapt and change to new situations by free debate and exchange of opinions. If this does not occur ideological sclerosis results and the movement degenerates into a mess of tiny, irrelevant sects". Sectarians in the anarchist movement, please note.

*Syndicalism in Myth and Reality*\* (£1) by the same author and from the same publisher, is described as a critique of academic myths about anarcho-syndicalism, and a first-time historical comparison and general compilation of membership statistics on the movement. It usefully outlines how and why the various movements in different countries have grown or declined – including the importance of sectarianism for the later – and points to possible strategies and new technological developments as potential means for a rebirth of anarcho-syndicalism world-wide. 16 informative pages, with tables.

A critique of the Unabomber and his manifesto occupies a large amount of space in the latest *Fifth Estate* No. 31/2 which, with its parallel discussion of Ted Kaczynski (is he / isn't he the Unabomber), clearly illustrates the dangers



In Barcelona, the stronghold of collectivisation, workers have taken over public transport and factories in the first days (from *Durruti: 1896-1936*)

of commenting on the cases of people awaiting judgement and retribution by the state, however grand the motives of the commentator, something which is possible in America because of the lack of *sub judice* rules which at least attempt to prevent prejudicial remarks about a defendant from influencing the jury. Even more space – six pages – is devoted to an attack on Murray Bookchin and his ideas by David Watson, in the form of wholesale extracts from his latest book *Beyond Bookchin*, followed closely by another slightly less personal critique of his 'life-style versus social anarchism' ideas. There is still room for actual news of the US scene, plus the usual reviews and letters. £1.50, with *Land and Freedom* discussion review.

The Basque country, Turkey, Israel and Palestine, Chechnya and Kosovo are the main components of news coverage in the new format *Peace News: for non-violent revolution* for March (£1 for 24 A4 pages), plus resistance to the new French Immigration Bill. Content is much improved of late, and it is also available on the Internet.

An amusing account of the recent debate at the Cambridge Union on the existence of God occupies centre place in the current *Freethinker* 117/3 (Barbara Smoker quite rightly claiming that the Tooth Fairy and Santa were both more credible than God). No. 2 contains an appeal for 'zero tolerance' for the New Samaritan, Tony Blair, and news of legal voluntary euthanasia in Northern Territory, Australia. £1 and 16 pages each.

1996 was an important year for fans of Buenaventura Durruti, the Spanish anarchist famous for his exploits in the revolution, for it was not only the centenary of his birth but the sixtieth anniversary of his death, and to mark the occasion no fewer than five publishers, including Freedom Press, have co-operated in the production of an extremely handsome limited edition hardback of 196 pages, in large format, celebrating his life and work. Although published in Europe last October, it has only now found its way across the Channel, but it was worth the wait. *Durruti: 1896-1936*\* is a quite lavish

production comprising nearly 200 photographs – many of which have never been published before – and an accompanying multi-lingual text in Spanish, English, German, Italian and French. The text consists of Durruti's life story, supplemented by quotes from friends and contemporaries such as Abel Paz, Ricardo Sanz, Orwell and Francisco Assaso. In addition there is much informative material with the photograph captions, which puts the pictures into context. Different phases of Durruti's life, and his death and its distasteful aftermath, are covered in *The Rebel*, *The Revolutionary*, *Libertarian Aragon*, and *Durruti Died Twice* – the last being an exposé of the way the Stalinists and Conservatives in the government, who throughout had done everything possible to thwart the anarchists and militarise units like the Durruti Column, lost no time after his death in manufacturing a cynical personality cult around his memory. Apart from a slight under-use of proof-reading (a problem seemingly common in anarchist publications these days) the main publishers, Active/Beastie, have turned out a valuable photographic history which, with its attractive collage dust-jacket on embossed/lustre paper will also make a fine coffee-table type present for friends of almost any nationality. The very modest price of £8.95 includes well over £2.50 in postage and packing costs.

The *1997 Anarchist Year Book*\* by Phoenix Press is out now and consists of a 24-page pamphlet with partial listings of UK anarchist publishers, periodicals, organisations and newly published titles. Partial, because you apparently have to pay to get listed: the 'pay and display' of the anarchist world, you might say. £1.50, and probably most useful to those new to the movement.

#### Four Eyes

Titles distributed by Freedom Press Distributors (marked\*) are post-free inland (please add 15% postage and packing to overseas orders). For other titles add 10% towards p&p inland, 20% overseas. Cheques in sterling to 'FREEDOM PRESS' please.

## PEOPLE POP AND POST-MODERNISM

When London's 100 Club put on an evening in March to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of skiffle's brief vogue, nobody was quite sure whether anybody would turn up. To our surprise it was a sell-out. Old jazzers like Bill Colyer and Ray Foxley rubbed shoulders with ageing rockers like Terry Dene and Bruce Welch. Folkies like Steve Benbow played beside skiffle's Chas McDevitt, rock's Wee Willie Harris, jazz's Beryl Bryden and swing's Jack Fallon. The audience was drawn from the entire age range of the population, and this 1958 manifestation of post-modernism in popular music appeared to be back in favour at last.

Skiffle restored the concept of people making music for themselves in a world where they were supposed to be passive consumers of a production line product (the nadir was probably *How Much is that Doggie in the Window?*). Yet paradoxically skiffle was a burst of musical eclecticism possible only in an age of mechanical reproduction. The skifflers, via records and tapes, took ideas and songs from America, from the West Indies, from Ireland, Scotland and Australia. Technical limitations, musical inexperience and cultural innocence created a number of streams which fed into the 1960s explosion of new ideas in popular music. Dave Swarbrick of Fairport Convention, Martin Carthy of Steeleye Span, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, the cream of the blues and folk booms of the

time, all had their roots in skiffle, and if an increasing myopic and intolerant audience came to reject those roots the musicians themselves did not.

One result was that the once necessary correctives of scholarship and specialisation began to produce the same stultifying effects as a similar purism did on the New Orleans jazz revival. The rather silly idea developed that 'Woke up this morning with an awful aching head' was necessarily a superior lyric to 'I'll take Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island too'. Marx's model of an economic base shaping cultural manifestations – still a highly fruitful idea – was applied in a spectacularly daft manner by A.L. Lloyd in *Folksong in England* with the result that a whole myth of 'fakesong' was accepted as a genuine musical process. (An essay title for music students? 'English folk song was invented by Karl Marx. Discuss.')

The result was that popular music became increasingly compartmentalised. Blues lovers (Colin and Harriet Ward aside, of course) eschewed folk clubs. Folkies winced at an over-reliance on electricity and retreated into unaccompanied songs about the adulteries of the medieval aristocracy. Or embraced voltage happily and became indistinguishable from rock bands. Jazz became so concerned with self-expression that non-cognoscenti found it unlistenable. The new category of 'pop' (as opposed to popular music) was

technology and hype dependent. The democratisation that skiffle had created was lost and the idea that people like to sing was buried.

But the wheel turns and the exultant enjoyment of that 100 Club audience roaring out choruses suggests that previously snotty blues and folk specialist audiences are beginning to see themselves as part of popular music again. People have rediscovered that they like to sing and are realising that skiffle gave them a better opportunity than they had had since the heyday of music hall. Those 'house full' signs at the 100 Club suggested that perhaps the alienation and the fragmentation are fading.

The success of Norm Waterson's eclectic solo album on Hannibal (HNCD 1393) with its mixture of pop tunes, hymns and folk songs was one indication. So perhaps is the posthumous album issued by the late Jo Ann Kelly (T&M 110). Here are country blues, jazz blues and spirituals. Billie Holiday's *God Bless the Child* and Larry Williams's *Boney Maroney*. Norma and Jo were always sceptical about any sort of unilinear folk tradition. They were right.

No doubt the music industry will try to extract the maximum mileage from this popular pressure, and will cheapen and devitalise it in the process. But meanwhile John Rety and myself had a great time.

John Pilgrim



**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
FOR ANARCHIST,  
ANARCHO-SYNDICALIST AND  
SYNDICALIST WOMEN**

*to be held in Stockholm, Sweden*

**1st - 5th August 1997**

Topics: Women's conditions and strategies,  
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For programme and registration form (which is  
to be returned by 31st March) contact:

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**FREEDOM  
fortnightly**

**ISSN 0016 0504**

Published by Freedom Press  
84b Whitechapel High Street  
London E1 7QX

Printed in Great Britain by Aldgate  
Press, London E1 7RQ

**OLDHAM ANTI-JSA**

meet every fortnight at  
Hark to Topper, Oldham, at 8.15pm  
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**MANCHESTER  
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**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 -**

**21st March** Politics and the Ethical Void  
(Steve Booth will introduce his new pamphlet)

**28th March** General discussion

**4th April** The Materialist Concept of History  
(speaker Peter Lumsden)

**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

**16th May** Anarchism: Theory, Methodology  
and Lifestyle (speaker Peter Neville)

**23rd 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  
accommodate.

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

**MAYDAY WEEKEND  
ANARCHIST CAMP**

Friday 2nd until Sunday 4th May  
Site near Ashbourne, Derbyshire  
Cost: £3 per night

(situated on bus route, lifts from Cromford  
railway station available by arrangement)

To book contact:

**Box EMAB, 88 Abbey Street, Derby**

**Red Rambles**

A programme of free guided walks in  
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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.

**April 6th:** Walk leader Ray. Charnwood  
Forest. Meet 11am at Flying Horse Pub,  
Field Head, Leicestershire (take A50 from  
Junction 22, M1).

**May 4th:** Walk leader Jonathan. May Day  
Camp walk. Meet 11am at roadside next to  
New House Farm, Kniveton, Derbyshire  
(off B5035 Ashbourne to Wirksworth) for  
circular walk via Bradbourne.

**Telephone for further details**  
**01773-827513**

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

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

**20th April - Bishopdale:** West Burton to  
Swinithwaite. Meet West Burton village school at  
11.00am.

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

**Telephone for further details**  
**01756-799002**

*The 500 sacked Liverpool Dockers and  
Women of the Waterfront invite all who  
oppose this government to*

**MARCH FOR  
SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**Saturday 12th April**

**Assemble 12 noon, Kennington Park**

*March, Dance and Drum to 10 Downing Street*

*Presentation of the 'People's Charter'*

*Carnival in Trafalgar Square with the Bateria Mandela*

*Those unable to make the full march may  
join at Lambeth Bridge, 1.30pm*

**Burnley Day of Action  
Against the JSA**

**26th March**

**Picket 12 noon at Burnley Job Centre**

**Meeting at 2.30pm at**

**The Swan, St James Street (off bottom of  
Manchester Road), Burnley town centre**  
**Speaker on welfare rights**

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