

FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

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OUT OF ALBANIA LAND IN FEAR FOR ITSELF

This month, at a time when most of the world's media has pulled out of southern Albania, *Freedom* has sent a correspondent to the rebel town of Saranda to assess the situation on the ground.

To enter Albania in the south from Greece, as I did at the Kakavia Bridge, is to wend one's way through a forest of guns and automatic weapons. Can't be done by an outsider? Well, perhaps not. Not without a gun of your own, or better still a guide with a gun.

As luck has it, there are guns for hire in Albania for the innocent abroad. They crowd around at the frontier offering their taxis to take whoever to wherever, but preferably Saranda. And they are all armed to the teeth. Some even add a certain legitimacy to the transaction by supplying a receipt for their services. Mine says:

'Republika e Shqipërisë - Ministria e
Transporteve'

Kakavi [to] Saranda

Saranda [to] Kakavi

[Fare] Gjithseji 18,000 Dracmas [£42]

The journey takes just over one hour, and mine was punctuated by a halt at an armed road-block outside Saranda, and several discharges along the way



into the mountainside from the driver's Kalashnikov. These were probably signals to warn in our approach at critical points of the journey. My driver said: "Bang, bang; good, good!"

Here is a land - the poorest in Europe - where fear grips everyone. But by the time I realised my full predicament, I was in the back seat of the taxi and it was too late to panic.

I can't say I wasn't warned. The Albanian Consul in Ioanina, Greece, had told me it was impossibly dangerous to visit southern Albania with its weak police force and citizen committees. But he would say that, as a government functionary. He showed all the signs of fear I later saw in Albania itself, especially among the middle classes (a fuller report in *Freedom's* interview with the Albanian Consul in next issue).

The villages between Kakavia and Saranda show a few signs of life, but are mostly desolate. There are goats and sheep in the fields, and even the odd cow. Some peasants are working the land, some are clearly trying to keep going.

But the Albanian customs post at Kakavia is an empty burnt-out ruin. I didn't see anyone in uniform during my stay in Albania. The roadside is littered with wrecked vehicles.

A few towns along the way have bars functioning with men sitting at tables outside watching as we pass. At one point a man thumbs a lift, but my driver snubs him. There are two of us in the car besides my guide. The Albanian in the front passenger seat holds the automatic weapon resting on the dashboard.

Above the dashboard dangle three icons. I stare at them from time to time during our deadly drive: a rabbit's foot, a religious item and a triangular flag with German colours and a BMW logo. The more practical would want to put their faith in the object I first



mistook for a gear-stick which turned out to be an automatic weapon. After I got my breath back I muttered "I hope you know how to use it". But before we got to the road-block at Saranda the gun was hidden away.

At the checkpoint a dozen armed men and lads checked the boot. I wound the window down and an older man asked "Who's this?" My driver says "An Englishman."

This seemed to satisfy them, but one of the young lads with a fresh complexion and cheerful disposition asked me if I had a cine camera. I said "No", knowing that a Japanese journalist had had his camera stolen in the nearby town of Gjirokaster. We shake hands through the open window as the group wave us on and the car continues towards Saranda.

The next day Greek television gives details of a European Aid Protection Force to go into Albania. Its critics call it 'Club Med Army' as it involves Italy, France, Spain and Greece. One of its jobs may be to 'explore other possibilities' for assistance, including monitoring the collection of weapons looted from armouries.

In the next *Freedom* we will report 'Welcome to Saranda' with interviews with some of its citizens and an analysis of how the power of guns, money and ideas influence events there.

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SWEET FACES OF DOLE ENFORCEMENT

Last month's Welfare State Network Conference in Manchester was dominated by a debate over 'Three Strikes'.

We have all been struck by the passion with which the Groundswell 'Three Strikes' strategy against dole bullies has been attacked by some. The top brass in the Employment Service have called it fit to burst. *The Sunday Post*, a top selling paper in Scotland, has been criticised. Union bosses such as Barry Reamsbottom in the civil servant's union the CPSA are trying to discipline an organiser, Lee Rock, for his association with Groundswell. Tony Gallagher of the PTC union has appealed for police protection in the Job Centres.

None of this is surprising, but even many of the militants on the left have been critical. 'Three Strikes' is a weapon in which jobless activists photograph and expose dole bullies. Some say this action drives a wedge between the staff and the claimants, and management exploit this division.

But there was never much solidarity between claimants and staff. As someone said, they think we are 'workshy scum'. Union membership is patchy throughout the country. Many union members are, in any case, scared stiff of management.

Job Centre staff are press-ganged into chasing targets to put people off benefits. They are tempted by incentive bonuses. At Burnley we have seen claimants sanctioned for trifling reasons.

The bosses of the Employment Service play up the threat of 'Three Strikes' to squeeze more funds out of the government for security and staff safety. The unions love it, because they can use it to make a cheap fuss which gives the appearance of doing something to protect their members.

DISARM THE ENFORCERS!

Many on the English left have been brought up in a statist tradition. While giving lip-service to direct action, these people still wag their tails to politicians and functionaries in office. Thus they will call for lobbies and petitions to get laws changed and minor celebrities influenced.

This is the top-down approach to politics. Wave a wand! Change a government! Get some politician elected! They put all the emphasis on the executive because they themselves worship power. The enforcer – the hit-man or woman – is often disregarded.

The anarchists, and Groundswell, are concerned about the executive and its relation with the agency of enforcement. Tolstoy says: "It is this relationship between commander and commanded which constitutes the essence of the concept called power".

The statist will us to change the government. The anarchists and Groundswell respond, here and now, by cracking down on the enforcers – the Job Centre managers, the Claimant Advisers, the Benefit Advisers – who are daily doing the government's dirty work.

Leo Tolstoy claims that "restoring the essential condition of connection between those who command and those who execute, we have seen that by the very nature of the case those who command take the smallest part in the action itself, and that their activity is



Two of Mrs Duffy's girls (Claimant Advisers) at Burnley's Bloodstained Bureau.

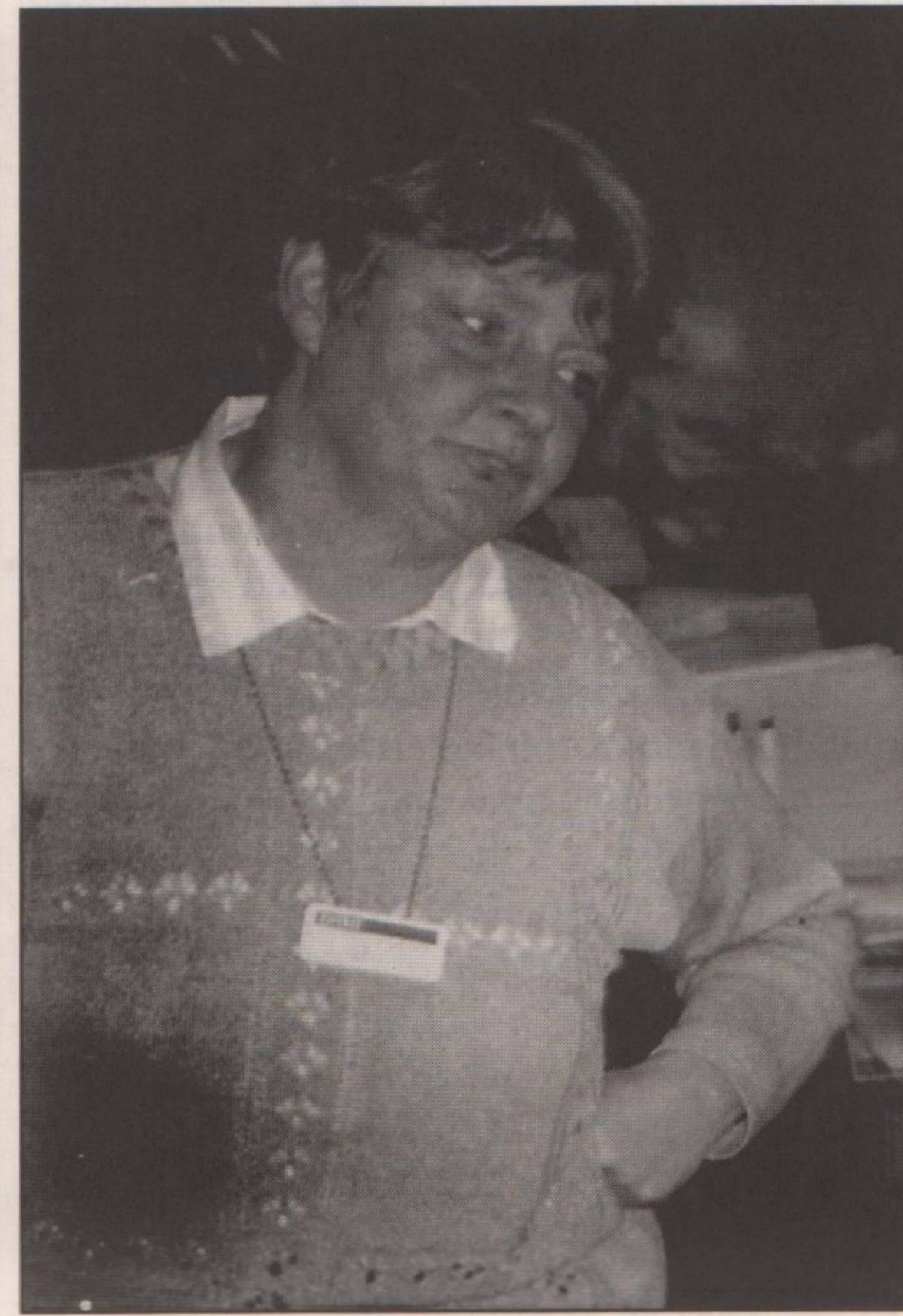
exclusively directed to commanding".

Undermine the enforcers through the moral force of 'Three Strikes' and the chain of command collapses.

HOW POWER EVOLVES

It is the Marxist's failure to grasp this practical reality of the nature of power which makes the English left such a futile entity. Their very ideological sophistication leaves them grappling with abstract ghosts of power, while the shopfloor worker, mercifully ignorant of the dialectic, often has a clearer understanding of power relationships and how to fight them than the political leftie.

Of course it is not just the English left which has no proper concept of power relationships.



The Italian writer Ignazio Silone in 1938 illustrated the fundamental flaws of the left in Italy and Germany which helped the rise of Fascism and Nazism: "Special laws were passed by parliaments in which democrats, socialists and communists constituted the great majority. The laws provided for disarmament, the prohibition of private military formations, special punishments for those who fomented hatred among the citizens. But you mustn't forget one detail, which is that the enforcement of the laws, decrees and special ordinances was entrusted to a police force, an army and a magistrature which were already largely fascist. So that, in practice, the laws designed to combat the fascists were in the best of cases a dead letter;



photo: Emily Johns

Demonstration outside Holloway Prison, London, in support of Róisín McAliskey (see page 2)

"What is clear in the programmes of both parties is that the people will still have no voice in their affairs."

from *Freedom* editorial, 1964

but more often they were applied against the anti-fascists."

Remembering this, and looking at the Job Seeker's Act, we see a government commanding obedience to the Act, Employment Service bosses enforcing the Act and claimant victims enduring the consequences of the Act.

Government, bosses, claimant victims, all these elements in the equation have tactics, strategies and their own agendas. The government wants to cut costs and get the dole figures down, the bosses want to capture state funding and extend their own powers, as do the civil service unions, while the claimants have their own individual strategies for survival.

GROUNDSWELL: BIRTH OF A SOCIAL MOVEMENT?

Enter Groundswell, the Libertarian Left and the Welfare State Network into the equation. The Welfare State Network, in its aim to revive the Welfare State, targets the government – change the commanders is their line. Groundswell and the libertarians focus on the enforcers, who are administering the Act, with 'Three Strikes', Job Centre occupations and 'Sanction Busting' tactics. This is survival through collective action at the dole face.

To counter this threat from and the libertarians, last year the Employment Service (in memos leaked to *Freedom* and Groundswell) began to urge its staff to get the police involved. In cases of protests at Job Centres, or 'Three Strikes', they told their workers to complain to the police and try to get them to prosecute the activists. This seems to have some union approval.

As yet the police have not entered the equation. Their role has been limited to public order and there have been few arrests. Clearly the police are not eager to become an arm of Job Centre enforcement. They too have their own agenda and their own image to uphold. Memories of the poll tax and arresting old people for arrears are still fresh. With a government on its last legs, the prospect of rounding-up poor and jobless claimants will not appeal.

Up to now there have been some limited and local attacks on the Job Seeker's Act and Project Work in England and Scotland. The indications are that the Employment Service is worried. Can Groundswell and the anarchists accelerate the attacks on enforcement of the Act?

This paper is doing its best to encourage resistance, as are others such as *Counter Information* in Scotland and *Subversion* in Manchester.

Groundswell claims sixty member groups. Any serious social movement must now be looking at how to step-up the pressure on the enforcers. To cripple the system requires significant disruption at the point of enforcement of the JSA. Our observations suggest that small groups of determined claimant activists can create havoc in the system. The next few months will show if Groundswell is capable of mobilising forays into Job Centres and Benefit Offices on a

RICH AND POOR



The profession of writing is akin to the raising of spirits. This ambiguous phrase was uttered by K.A. Fischer in 1889 and in a sense I am raising him from his own obscurity. Words have this tendency to multiply. Words beget each other and there is little likelihood of a shortage of them.

Marie Antoinette perhaps used the wrong phrase – had she said 'Let them eat words, preferably their own words' she would have been more to the point.

Ver errum eine tungu, said our forebears, and added though one or two be much changed. Certainly we are still of one tongue and it never stops rattling. They were wise, the old ones, or some of them. One of the few fragments of ancient writing which survives hints at great caution in the use of words.

They had one or two words, just as an average child of two years of age. They also had a secret for carving notes, the runes, of which hardly any specimens of literature survive. More like a puzzle, for each tribe had put different meanings to similar markings.

Many of these marks still survive. Those who are about to vote (X is the mark of the illiterate) perhaps should be told that the sign of X betokened a gift, and now so many kisses, xxx, except in Murdochland whose people never learnt to use a single word properly.

The Nuclear Disarmament slogan is also an old rune. Sometimes you can still see it chalked on a gate. It is a sign used by travellers, such as 'avoid this farm for various reasons, no good will come out of knocking on their door'.

Drawings, such as the ones drawn especially by Emily to grace this column, never can be just words. Who is poor and who is rich, these beautiful drawings will remain enigmatic. There is a defiance in the poor and cunning in the rich.

But without the words to explain it, thoughts cannot be formulated. When Arkady, aged two and a bit, says 'John Ball' the child is not referring to the well-known teacher and agitator, he merely says he wants John either to give or take the ball.

So all those ancients who spoke in one-word or two-word sentences were at least careful and precise with both meaning and words.

Hungry? Eat! is probably more to the point than filling in a long form of means test to qualify for the dole.

Mind you, when I said that words have a tendency to multiply you may also notice that words used by the controllers shift the meanings of words to mean what they want them to mean. Also an utterance by any one of the controllers will be broadcast and printed and put through the electronic wonder machines, every word repeated a million times.

But that was the subject of my last book, *Through the Anarchist Press*, which is kept as a secret from readers of such papers I do not read and like an oasis in a desert is hidden from thirsty travellers.

But what am I saying. In a newly-published book *The Glass Mountain* (Sinclair-Stevenson) by the poet and novelist Martina Evans, there is an epigraph (at the beginning of her tale of the punk who can't spit and doesn't understand anarchy) from the aforementioned *Through the Anarchist Press* on page 21, under the letter H exemplifying the word ANARCHY. It is a bit like taking a communal bath, or better still being tickled with a feather. All those lovely punks wanting to know what anarchy was. A stark choice between somebody in the groove or being a middle class eedjit.

John Retz

Alister Cooke, the veteran broadcaster, recently remarked that the outcome of the O.J. Simpson civil case was a great relief – in that the equivalent of a 'guilty' verdict had not been accompanied by any civil unrest by African Americans. Cooke harked back to the LA riots of 1992 and warned that further punitive action against Simpson risked sparking racial conflict once again. Five years on, it seems appropriate to reflect on the LA riots and particularly on the causes of the uprising. The story centres, of course, on Rodney King.

Rodney King, an unemployed construction worker, had been drinking with friends and was driving home in the early hours of 3rd March 1991 in his Hyundai car. Police claimed that they gave chase to the car because it was travelling at 110 to 115 mph. The manufacturers later testified that the model in question was incapable of this speed. Eyewitnesses reported that it had been moving at about 60 mph. When King finally stopped his car, he was confronted by officers of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) as well as officers from other forces. King was ordered to lie down on the ground. According to the police, he refused to do this, though he went down on his hands and knees. Eyewitnesses said that he did lie down on his stomach. Sergeant Stacy Koon of the LAPD fired a dart from a Taser electric stun-gun into King's body. The dart remained connected to the gun by a wire, and transmitted an electric shock of 50,000 volts, which is generally regarded as having the 'stopping power' of a small handgun. Koon then fired a second Taser dart carrying the same charge. According to Melanie Singer of the California Highway Patrol (CHP) – who had first given chase to King – Lawrence Powell of the LAPD then ran up to King and began striking him "in the head and neck area" with a baton.

It is at this point that Holliday steps out onto his balcony with his new video camera. King is still on the ground. Powell strikes King on the head, and King goes down. Powell hits King on the head several more times with the baton. After a pause, King rises to his knees and Powell and another LAPD officer continue the beating with what they described as 'power strokes'. Because King continues trying to get up, Sergeant Koon orders the men to hit King's joints: his wrists, elbows, knees and ankles. Fifty-six baton blows and six kicks are recorded in the two minutes of the video. In an 'enhanced audio' version of the video made by a local television station, an officer is heard shouting "nigger, hands behind your back – your back".

King was finally taken to hospital. He received twenty stitches, including five on the inside of his mouth, and was then transferred to the jail ward at a local medical centre. Medical records indicate that King had a broken cheekbone and a broken right ankle. Later King sued the City of Los Angeles for eleven skull fractures, permanent brain damage, broken bones and teeth (fillings were knocked from his teeth by the violence of the attack) and kidney damage. His eye socket was fractured.

While in hospital, King was charged with evading arrest. He was held for four days, and then released after the prosecution decided

In Support of Róisín

Our picture on page 1 shows a demonstration by ARROW (Active Resistance to the Roots of War) outside Holloway Prison, London, in support of Róisín McAliskey.

Róisín, who is the daughter of Bernadette McAliskey (née Devlin) is pregnant and being held on suspicion of participation in an IRA bombing in Germany.

Gareth Peirce, her lawyer, says the 'evidence' is so flimsy it will not stand up in court. ARROW were demanding Róisín's release on both legal and humanitarian grounds – she looks like she'll have her baby in Holloway if she isn't released soon.

— ABOVE THE PARAPETS — THE CRUCIFIXION OF RODNEY KING

that there was insufficient evidence against him.

The police officers who had attacked him lied about King's behaviour during the arrest in their reports, and misrepresented his injuries: "Several facial cuts due to contact with asphalt. Of a minor nature. A split inner lip. Suspect oblivious to pain."

28th February 1991: President Bush calls a halt to the Gulf War. The outside world has seen almost no violence in the course of the war due to military censorship and media self-censorship.

3rd March 1991: Twenty-seven police officers surround African-American motorist Rodney King in the middle of the night; four of them beat him. The event is caught on video by George Holliday, a white middle class man who lives nearby. The video is seen around the world. More violence is seen in the course of two minutes of video than has been seen throughout the entire Gulf War.

29th April 1992: Four police officers acquitted of beating King. Los Angeles erupts in riots. 58 die; nearly 4,000 buildings are burned to the ground.

King's brother Paul went to the police the day after the beating to register a complaint. The sergeant on duty refused to fill out a complaint form. George Holliday, the video enthusiast, also called the Foothill police station that Monday. Again, no complaint form was filled out by the police officer on duty. None of the twenty-seven police officers who witnessed the King beating reported any police misbehaviour. Much later, an 'Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department' was appointed to investigate the LAPD. It concluded:

"Our Commission owes its existence to the George Holliday videotape. Whether there even would have been a Los Angeles Police Department investigation without the video is doubtful, since the efforts of King's brother, Paul, to file a complaint was frustrated, and the report of the involved officers was falsified. Even if there had been an investigation, our case-by-case review of the handling of over 700 complaints indicates that without the Holliday videotape, the complaint might have been adjudged to be 'not sustained', because the officers' version conflicted with the account by King and his two passengers, who typically would have been viewed as not 'independent'."

Without the video evidence, the King case would have joined scores of other cases of 'alleged police brutality'.

The Commission's report into the LAPD is significant not for its recommendations, which were virtually irrelevant to the problems it uncovered, but for the evidence that it compiled.

In June 1992, Amnesty International issued a report on 'Torture, ill-treatment and excessive force by police in Los Angeles California' which found that

"... there have been a disturbing number of cases in recent years in which law enforcement officials in Los Angeles have resorted to excessive force, sometimes amounting to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The use of excessive force has included physical brutality and use of lethal force including firearms, in violation of international standards. Police dogs also appear to have been used to inflict unwarranted injury on suspects, particularly in black or latino neighbourhoods. In many cases officers appear to have acted with impunity or received only minor disciplinary sanctions."

The Amnesty investigation examined only cases where civil damages had been paid out to alleged victims of police abuse – a small fraction of the allegations of police brutality

against the LAPD and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD). Two examples:

Luis Milton Murrales, a latino man, was a passenger in a car chased by the police (for a traffic violation). He fled from the car after it collided with a police vehicle, and was found by three LAPD officers. 28 officers were involved in the incident: Murrales was kicked and beaten with batons on the face and body. Murrales sued the City of Los Angeles. An ophthalmologist secured by the City confirmed that Murrales "had experienced severe eye injury which has left him legally blind in the eye". An out of court settlement of \$177,500 was made.

Hong Pyo Lee, a 21 year old Korean, was shot dead by four LASD deputies in March 1988. Lee, who was unarmed, had failed to stop his car after almost colliding with a Sheriff's vehicle, and was pursued. Lee had nine bullets fired into his back and into the back of his neck. The deputies claimed that they fired in self-defence as Lee reversed towards them at high speed. However, Lee's car was found in first gear, not reverse. A Long Beach officer who observed the shooting testified that Lee's car did not move before he was shot – it moved forward slowly afterwards. He also stated that he turned to his partner after the shooting and said, "We just observed the sheriffs execute somebody". Two years later the county paid Lee's parents \$1 million in an out-of-court settlement. No police officer was ever disciplined, nor was any criminal prosecution ever brought.

Cases can be multiplied. Some of them did not result in civil damages being paid out, and therefore were not examined by Amnesty. One very important case took place in January 1979 when two LAPD officers shot dead Eulia Love, an African-American woman, using twelve bullets against the unarmed woman. The head of the LAPD determined that the shooting had conformed to LAPD policy, and therefore no disciplinary action should be taken. After a public outcry, the Police Commission conducted an independent investigation which found that the shooting did not comply with policy. However, as the Chief of Police had already decided that no disciplinary action should be taken, it would violate the officers' right to due process to take any action.

All of this history needs to be taken into account when considering the explosion of anger that greeted the acquittal of Sergeant Koon and the other three officers. The King case was, as most Angelenos knew, merely the tip of the iceberg, but with the video evidence they expected justice for once. The dashing of that expectation was the immediate spark for the riots. US riots have been investigated in detail over the years, and study after study has found that they are very often started by police brutality. People can adapt themselves to an appalling level of poverty and misery without rioting. Police repression, however, can ignite the tinderbox. In 1992, the tinderbox turned out to be a large part of Los Angeles. Despite that stark warning, the social conditions and the police criminality that caused the riots continue to exist in many American cities.

Milan Rai

Next week: The relevance of Rodney King to Black Britain today

FREEDOM

The next issue of Freedom will be in two weeks time on Saturday 26th April. Last date for copy is first post on Thursday 17th April.

EDINBURGH: BENEFIT BOSSES TAKE COVER, STAFF GET LIFE INSURANCE!

Edinburgh claimants hit out last months at claimant adviser Alistair 'bully boy' Mathieson by snapping him at his desk in the Torphichen benefit office. In a press statement the protesters say he ran from his office in a bid to escape them.

They complained of the continued 'harassment' of dole claimants by Mr Mathieson. It seems that they have adopted the policy of photographing 'dole bullies' in situ, inside their doles, since Burnley Benefit Action and Bury unemployed adopted the idea in February.

The Edinburgh group intend to publicise the photograph as part of their 'Three Strikes' strategy, which they invented. Mr Mathieson, who has been warned twice of his abuse of power, now faces widespread publicity throughout the city with a mug-shot and a list of his crimes.

On 14th March, the day after the 'paparazzi protest', *The Scotsman* announced: "Yesterday's protest came as the first six-month benefit sanctions were being applied under the new scheme, and there were fears that it could be the first of many protests".

Michael McCann, Scottish officer for the Civil & Public Services Association, declared:

RIGHTS? WHAT HYPOCRISY!

In January the High Court gave a shock judgement in the 'Stonehenge Two' case. This referred to the arrests at the tenth anniversary of the Battle of the Beanfield demo at the stones in June '95. It was an appeal by the police against the quashing by the Crown Court of their original convictions for 'traspasory assembly' under the CJA (Section 14, PoA). The case was not about what happened on the day; everyone agreed the small gathering by the roadside was peaceful, non-obstructive and not a nuisance.

The judges resorted to the basic assumption under our (non-existent) constitution that the state can attack its subject not just when they break the law, but when they actually do anything they cannot actually prove they have an absolute right to do. We have very few such rights, one of which is to 'pass and repass' on a public highway (but not in Wiltshire). Anything else we do there, however harmless (such as chatting to a friend by the roadside) is not permitted, and only seems to be because the state 'tolerates it'.

Therefore, the judges said, any demonstration or gathering not approved of by the authorities is trespassing on any road it is on or beside. So, their argument goes, when a Section 14 order is in force, any and every group (of twenty or more) on a road is a 'traspasory assembly' unless it is just 'passing or repassing' in the ordinary way.

Meanwhile, C.H. Tung, new leader-to-be of Hong Kong, announced that there would be some reduction of human rights when the Chinese take over in July. A statement that he would require protesters to obtain police permission before taking to the streets (i.e. enact Section 12 of our Public Order Act) provoked outraged protests from the UK and USA. The present governor of the colony, Chris (Poll Tax) Patten, warned that this threatened basic freedoms and would unsettle the community. "People crushed by law have no hope. If laws are their enemies, they will be enemies of the law" he said, quoting Edmund Burke.

(extracted from *Stonehenge Campaign*, free newsletter, Spring '97)

"All our worst fears are now coming to pass". Mr McCann, whose union has six thousand members working in doles and Benefit Offices, added: "If somebody gets seriously hurt, or worse still, killed, I don't want to have to be the one who says 'I told you so' - but all it takes is somebody losing their rag, picking something up and hitting them over the head."

Last year there was a strike of union members in Benefit Agency offices. *The Scotsman* claims: "The strike came in the wake of a rise in violent offences, including an incident in which a man ran into a job centre in Leith wielding an axe."

Groundswell and the Edinburgh claimants have always insisted that theirs is a moral and civilising campaign to induce decency on both sides of the dole counter. In this sense 'Three Strikes' is designed to concentrate minds all round and channel the frustrations of the poor in an orderly way.

We are the safety valve. We are the hand, as the Edinburgh claimants put it, reaching over the desk divide.

We have nothing to lose, and the dole counter staff don't have much to lose because, as the Edinburgh claimants point out, "management forecasts suggest Employment Service staffing levels will be reduced from 46,000 to 22,000 in 1996-97". Both Job Centre and Benefit Agency staff are threatened with mass redundancies (up to 30% in some areas).

No wonder Mr McCann is gloomy about developments. Speaking for his members he says: "If the government is not prepared to put in a fairer benefits regime then they have got to protect people administering the system. At the moment they are doing neither."

A spokesperson for the Benefits Agency maintained: "We take the health and safety of both Employment Service and Benefit Agency staff very seriously and will continue to monitor the situation". The lady, who didn't give her name for reasons of her own health and safety, said a safety audit had been carried out and that "screens [bandit] had been found to be 'inappropriate', although some offices had employed security guards".

That's what they call being brave at somebody else's expense.

Mack the Knife

NORTHERN IRELAND

SOUND BITES FROM A WAR/PEACE PROCESS

The election campaign is in full swing here with lively and irrelevant debates going on apace. The most wondrous occurrence was the name-calling by David Trimble referring to other "loudmouthed politicians" and then furiously denying that he was alluding to his marching soul-mate and confirmed political enemy, the Reverend Ian Paisley, the man who has made political loud-mouthing all his own here for almost thirty years. Trimble denied it, but the point was made and the battle-lines for Unionist votes have been very clearly laid out.

As an aside, I shared a platform recently with Big Ian's daughter, Rhonda Paisley, in a discussion about films, including one of my own. She has sought to distance herself from her father over the years, after a brief flirtation with politics which saw her holding the unenviable position of the spokesperson for women in her father's party. I think she quite quickly realised what a thankless job that would be and concentrated on her own visual arts work.

More electioneering action occurred when Róisín McAliskey announced she would run

for the seat in mid-Ulster, the seat her mother, then known as Bernadette Devlin, won famously all those years ago. Ms McAliskey's decision started a flurry of activity and negotiations with Sinn Féin and the SDLP to avoid further splits in the nationalist vote in the constituency. Ms McAliskey then withdrew.

There is a big push on to get the vote out there in order to oust the sitting MP, the Reverend William McCrea of the DUP, famous for his country gospel recordings and his dalliance with loyalist militant Billy Wright, now doing a stretch for violent crime.

There was a sectarian killing in West Belfast that highlighted the loyalist practice of saying their ceasefire is still intact, even as incidents occur, on a 'no claim, no blame' basis. And nobody seems to give a damn. The callous disregard for the life of the citizen in the state is shocking.

As is the news that Tesco's have bought out the biggest supermarket chain here. Profits before food yet again.

Dave Duggan

BURNLEY: HOW MANY GIROS STOPPED?

Nobody knows how many folk have had their giros stopped in Burnley, or at least they're not telling us.

As reported in *Freedom* and the *Burnley Express* last month, the Employment Service claimed only one person in Burnley had been forced off benefit since the Job Seeker's Act came in last October. This was wrong! This was untrue!

This was a 'misunderstanding'! The Manchester office of the COI (Central Office of Information) has been a source of some concern to journalists for some time. The office dishes out information to the press for the Employment Service and other government bodies. Some of us see it as an agency for purveying inaccuracies to the public.

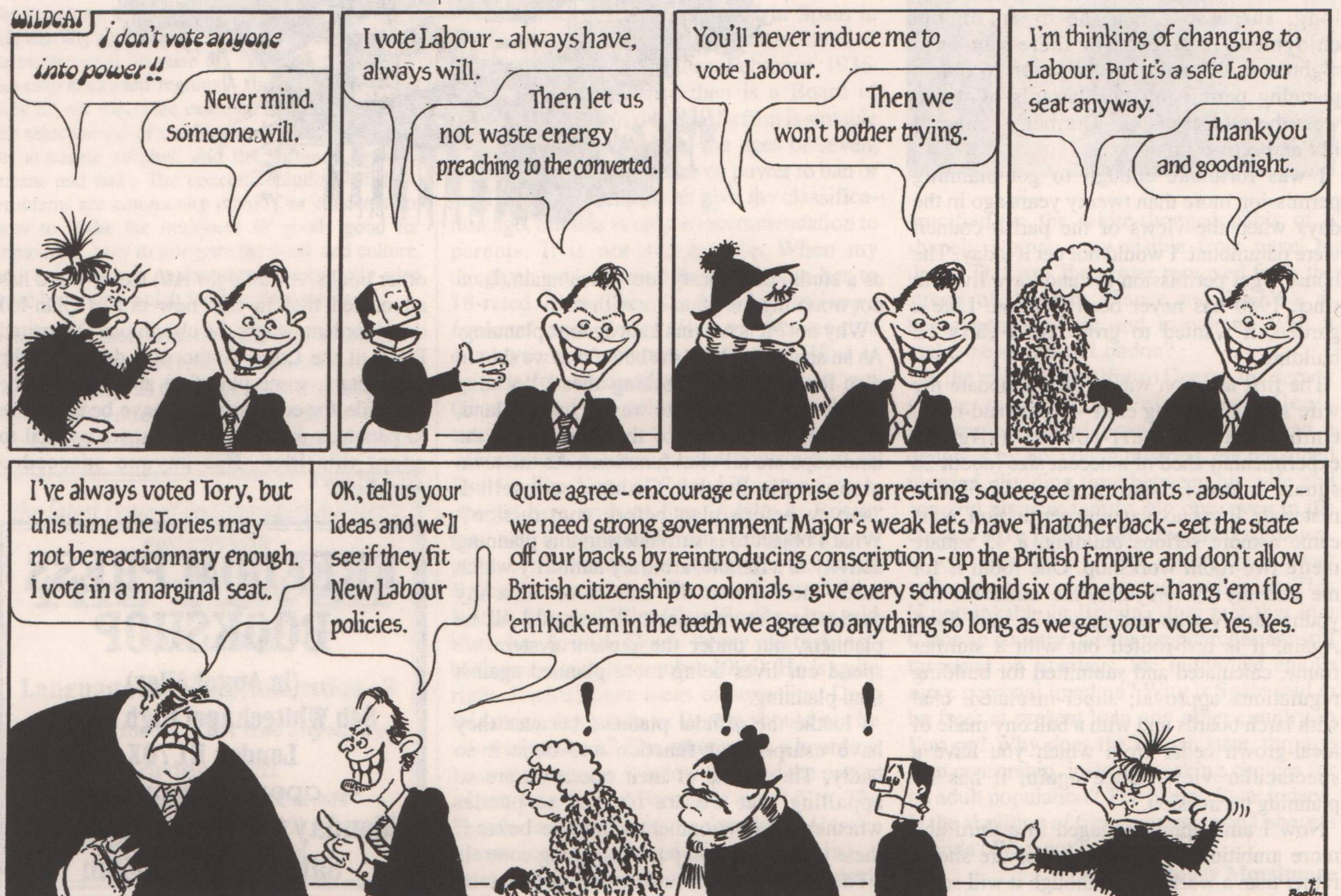
This image is not helped by the muddle over how many in Burnley have had their giros taken off them. First we were told there was only one, a local anarchist which we all knew about. Now we are told there is more than one,

but no exact number can be given.

Of course the credibility of the Central Office of Information is not improved because the admission to the untrue statement came after it had been challenged by the Welfare Rights team in the Burnley and Pendle area. In a letter to the *Burnley Express* Richard Roxburgh for the local Welfare Rights Team said: "Since the JSA was introduced with its stricter rules and harsh benefit sanctions, we feel that it is unhelpful in the extreme for the Employment Service to underestimate these figures, thus disguising the very real hardships and difficulties which are undoubtedly being experienced by a significant number of claimants under this new regime."

The problem for the Welfare Rights people and anti-JSA groups like Burnley Benefit Action is that we know of a number of cases of sanctioning claimants but we suspect these are just the tip of the iceberg.

Unemployed Worker



Reflected in Water: a Crisis of Social Responsibility

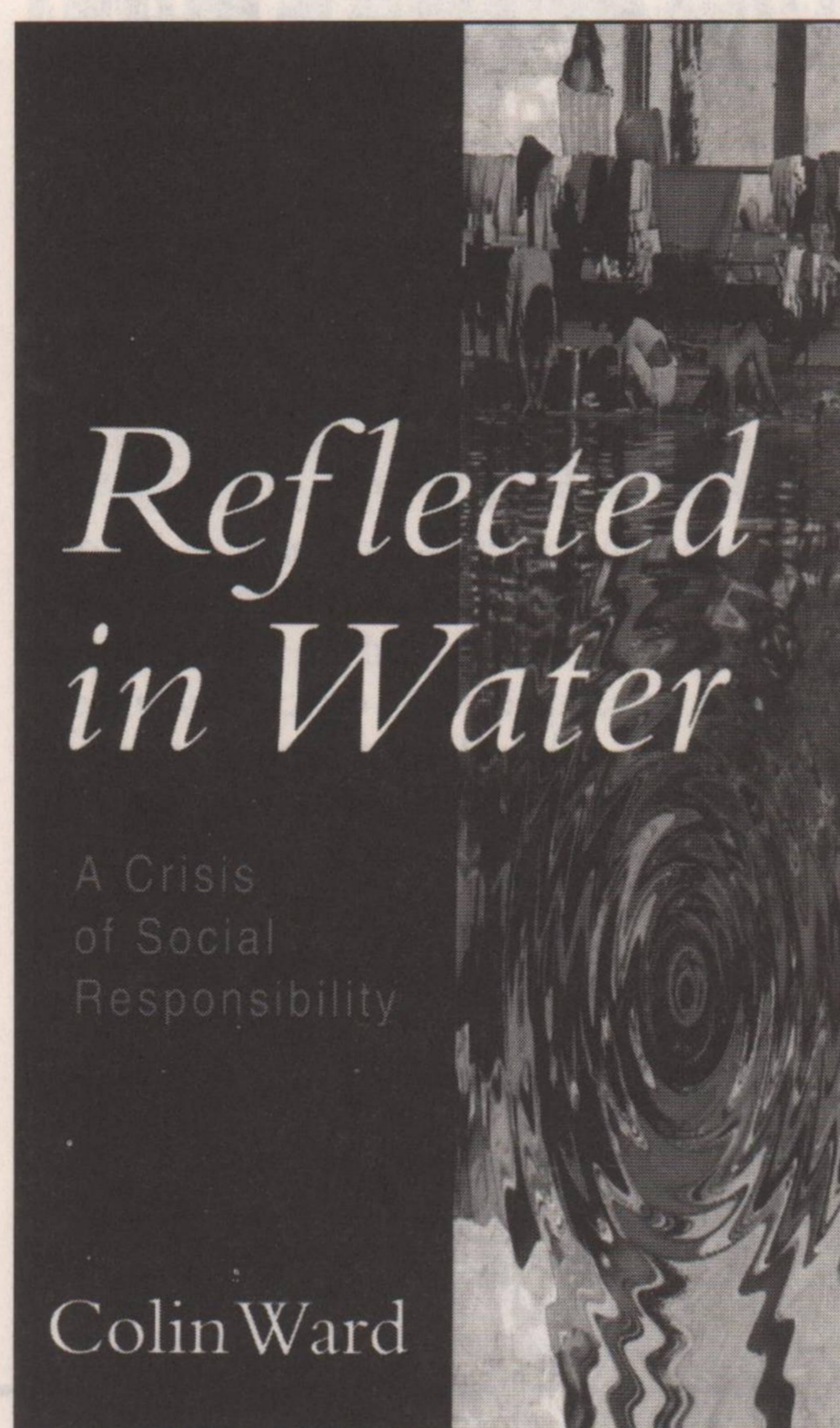
by Colin Ward

published by Cassell, x + 147 pages, paperback, £12.99 (plus £1.30 p&p in UK, £2.60 overseas by mail order from Freedom Press)

Although regular readers of Colin Ward's 'Anarchist Notebook' will have been well aware over the last three or four years that he was writing a book on water, at first sight such a topic – on a planetary scale at least – seems an unlikely one for him. *Reflected in Water* appears in Cassell's 'Global Issues' series and, while short, packs into twelve punchy chapters a great range of contemporary problems, from pollution to privatisation in Britain to dams, the role of women as water carriers, and political conflicts over water in the poor countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia. He reveals himself, however, as a 'water-watcher' of long-standing, quoting from a report he published in *Freedom* back in 1955 of the discussion on the Volta River Project, in the then Gold Coast, at an international conference organised by members of the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction.

At the outset Colin states that his purpose is "to give a short and simple account of the immense social issues raised locally and globally by our universal need for water, and of the various water crises now facing the world", and in this he seems (certainly to a non-specialist) admirably successful; but his 'message', as he puts it towards the end, is typically Wardian: "If human communities actually achieved control of their own supply and manipulation of water, they would manage fairly and responsibly, recognising the needs of all, as well as those of their fellow users of the same resource".

Is this not an improbable, hopelessly optimistic conclusion, especially given that he cites approvingly the opinion of the previous Secretary-General of the United Nations and

REFLECTED IN WATER

of the Vice-President of the World Bank that the wars of the twenty-first century will be over water rather than oil? By 2025 the volume of water available to each person in Africa and the Middle East will have fallen by 80% in a single lifetime.

What, in contrast, Colin is able to demonstrate persuasively, drawing on examples from Spain, Bali and Nepal, is that traditionally in economies dependent on irrigation the cultivators developed collective systems for the allocation of water that

operated as effectively in time of drought as in times of plenty. The Tribunal de las Aguas, the water tribunal of Valencia, is said to have existed continuously since its creation by the Moors in 960AD.

Furthermore, although 40% of the world's population now depends on water from a neighbouring country and over two hundred large rivers are shared by two or more nations, it does not appear that water has been a major cause of war in the past. On the contrary Jean Robert, a Swiss architect who, inspired by the work of Ivan Illich and John Turner, has worked in Mexico for twenty years and is the author of the suggestively titled *Water is a Commons*, believes: "Throughout history water has been a motor of peace rather than of war. Since time immemorial people riparian of the same watercourse have learned to make peace by concluding agreements about the use of their shared water."

'A motor of peace' ... *Reflected in Water* is framed by the parallels between water and the ideas of Richard Titmuss in *The Gift Relationship* about blood. Both water and blood are essential for human existence; both are too precious to be treated as a mere commodity; both (in the case of blood through donation) bind the lives of the rich and poor.

Colin identifies the factors that have destabilised historical agreement concerning the division of water and its collective control, leading to impending crisis, as several-fold – and all are only too familiar to anarchists. There is the modern competitive nation-state with its breaking-up of the natural region of a river, its tributaries and their watersheds into rival political units. A major example is the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Barak river system, home to almost a tenth of the global population, but now spread across China (Tibet), Nepal,

Bhutan, India and Bangladesh. There is the enormous scale of twentieth century engineering projects, above all dams, with their diversion of waters and massive human disruption. There are the ravaging demands of capitalist consumerism satisfied, through the greed of local elites, by irrigated crops for export and golf courses for tourists, and lawns and swimming pools for themselves, in regions where water is scarce – and the poor then go short.

Colin stresses: "People are ill-served by governments, and governments are ill-served by the consultants and contractors they commission". What are required instead are small projects controlled by the communities they are to serve. The closing words of the book are therefore: "A variety of human societies around the world have evolved sophisticated systems of water distribution which combine water conservation with an automatic respect for fairness and reciprocity. We are faced not with a technical problem, but with a crisis of social responsibility."

It is good to see another work of Colin's appearing under the imprint of a commercial publisher, for that means that his ideas – anarchist ideas – should reach a new and wider readership; and Cassell are to be congratulated on having contracted him to write it.

On the other hand, their editorial board have recently rejected a proposal for a collection of essays in his honour intended as a political intervention and with such starry contributors as Richard Mabey and George Monbiot. Their reasons? The multi-author volume would not sell as well as a single-author book; it was not sufficiently focused for (bizarrely) 'an academic market'; and it would not succeed in America.

The rapid, disastrous decay of public life in this country is further revealed by these sad comments. Where would Colin Ward as a writer, and we as anarchists, be without Freedom Press?

David Goodway

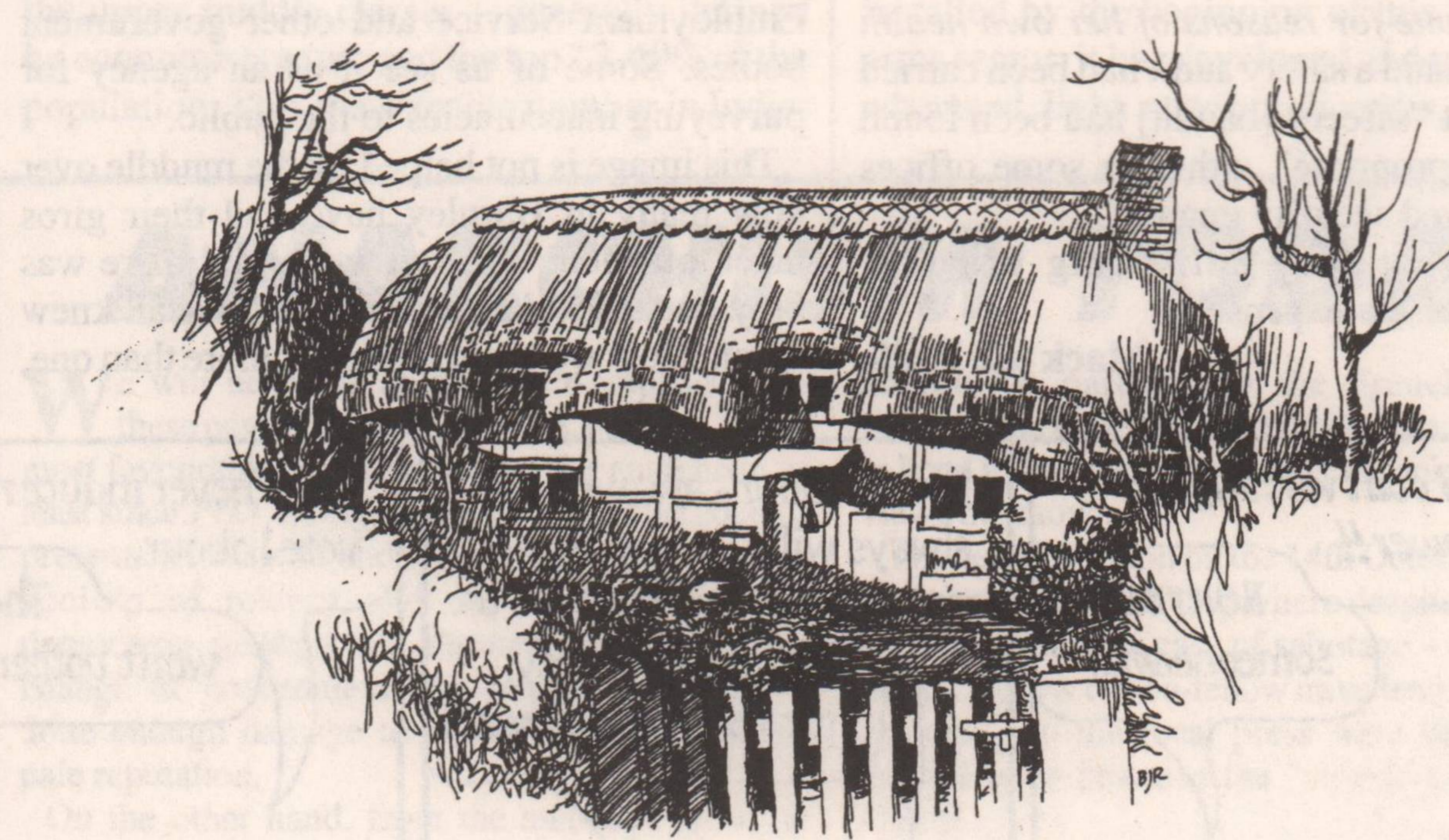
ARCHITECTURE – LOOPHOLES IN THE LAW

The architect and theorist Christopher Alexander says in his book *The Timeless Way of Building*, "whoever you are, you may have a dream of one day building a most beautiful home for your family, a garden, a fountain, a fish pond, a big room with soft light, flowers outside and the smell of new grass." He claims that everyone has the power in them to do it. I agree, and would add that the work of the self-builder, though hard and long, surpasses even the dream in the enjoyment it gives. But there can be a nightmare element: the obligation to obtain planning permission, the hazards of which were the subject of John Dormor's comment in *Perspectives* this year.

I was fortunate enough to get planning permission more than twenty years ago in the days when the views of the parish council were paramount. I would not get it today. The house I got permission for and have lived in since 1980 has never been finished. Like a garden, it wanted to grow. So I carry on building.

The first addition was to accommodate my wife's paper-making craft – a post-and-beam timber-framed, turf-roofed (slightly experimental) shed of a decent size (about 28 square metres), costing about £2,500 in materials. It has no planning permission. Next came a more serious building, a 45 square metre two-room workshop. One room is for me and my motorcycles, the other for my young family who had moved in next door. Again, it is turf-roofed but with a sturdier frame, calculated and submitted for building regulations approval; super-insulated, clad with larch boards and with a balcony made of local-grown cedar from which you have a spectacular view. Once again, it has no planning permission.

Now I am happily engaged in a third and more ambitious building – a 'leisure shop', rather than a workshop, although it will serve



as a studio and library too. Once again, I am not troubling the planners with it.

Why not? It is not that I am against planning. As an anarchist I hold the belief that we should plan for ourselves. Thinking ahead, deciding on the most appropriate way to use the land, assessing the impact of the building on the landscape are all vital functions. As the town planner Sir Patrick Geddes counselled, "survey before plan before construction". What I object to is surrendering this planning activity to a remote, arbitrary authority which cares more about the rule book than my particular circumstances. We should all be planners, but under the present system we spend our lives being more planned against than planning.

I loathe the official planners because they have usurped our function and done it so badly. The results of their operation are so appalling that we are obliged to ponder whether the environment would be better if there was no superimposed planning control.

The town planner and author (of, among

other books, *Arcadia for All*) Colin Ward has advocated that in this new era of plan-led development, where the ubiquitous Deposited Plans of the Local Authorities define all the parameters, some plan-free zones should be set aside for comparison. I have been unable to persuade my own local district council to adopt this idea. Has anyone succeeded anywhere?

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So how is it that in this apparently totally bleak landscape I have been able to assert my freedom to build? There is a tiny chink in the otherwise monolithic planning wall. It is an opportunity limited to a privileged few. A careful study of planning regulations reveals that, on a small scale, there already exists a Colin Ward-type free zone around many domestic premises which stand in a moderately generous curtilage. If you are the fortunate possessor of a dwelling that is not a listed building, not in a conservation area, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a National Park (and was not built with planning approval specifically withdrawing this provision), a certain degree of further development is permitted without notifying the authorities.

The details are spelt out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, 1995. Providing the purpose of the development is "incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling", is separated by more than five metres from it and is less than four metres high to the ridge of the roof, than as much as 50% of the curtilage can be developed without requiring a planning submission. Being the lucky possessor of an ample area has enabled me to take full responsibility for creating a range of substantial structures which I claim are as well planned and beautiful as anything I have seen coming through the regulated planning system.

Building with such untrammelled freedom is the most enjoyable work I have ever done. In William Morris's centenary year, I feel like a living part of his dream in *News from Nowhere* when he sees the whole countryside re-populated from the industrial towns, and made beautiful by people "who liked everything trim and clean and orderly and bright; as people always do when they have any sense of architectural power because they know what they want."

Brian Richardson

(reprinted by permission from *Perspectives* no. 9, December/January 1997)

INDIA AND THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

In January the IMF called on India to get rid of her remaining import restrictions and scale back her import tariffs which are among the highest in Asia. The WTO, speaking with the voice of India's main trading competitors, argued that these import controls were no longer needed as India's successful integration into the New Economic Order continues.

BASIC ANNUAL SALARY FOR ASIAN PROGRAMMERS IN US DOLLARS

India	3,084
China	4,627
Malaysia	10,179
Indonesia	12,111
Japan	27,541
South Korea	28,199
Hong Kong	30,755

manufacture more than 800 listed consumer items. Clearly their time has come and they must now move over and make room for big business who will be pampered in the usual ways. The New Economic Order demands that the economy be owned by the private sector but this is not the private sector of the small time farmer or artisan rather it is the multinationals who are destined to take control – sharing some of the pickings with a select local elite.

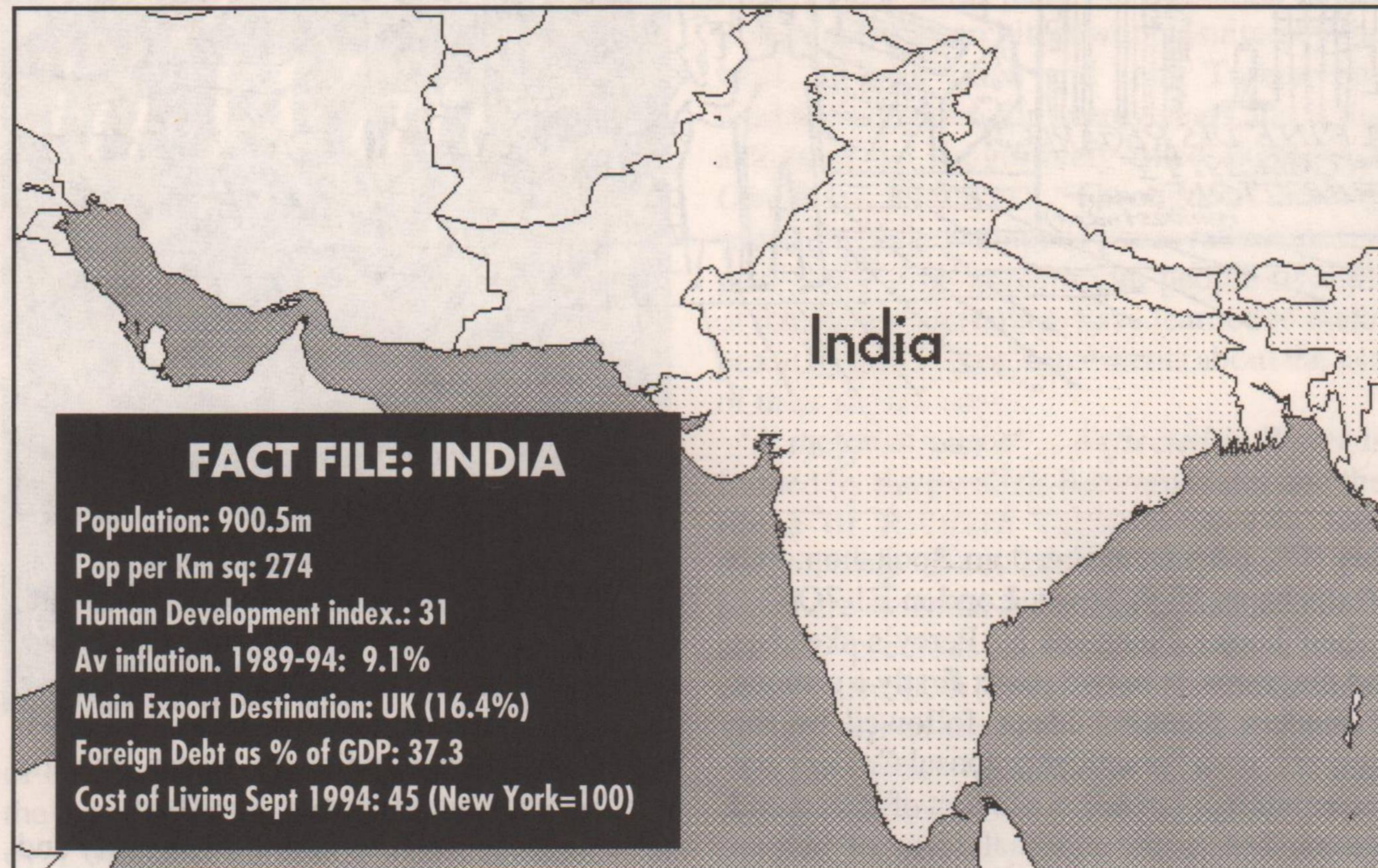
Public sector workers are of course also in the firing line. India has always had a privileged bureaucracy but as part of the plan to line the pockets of the foreign investors it is also to this sector that we are now looking to see savings made. 30% of public sector employees are to go over the next ten years with 350,000 posts to go immediately. Longer hours and shorter holidays will also be part of this new regime.

To head off possible confrontation wage increases will be given under a formula which will give the biggest rises to senior government officials. Even this, however, will only amount to a paltry salary compared to what a chief executive can get in the private sector.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Narayana Murthy, the director of Infosys, one of the biggest Indian IT companies, is one of these private sector beneficiaries and sees great benefits from integrating into the global system: "It would seem that the world belongs to those that get up early. In Bangalore we are on our feet and at work before you have even woken up", he says.

In scarcely three years India, a once poor agricultural and protectionist state has become a major competitor in the IT field. It has also seen the biggest export growth for the whole Indian economy: nearly 50% growth every



year for the last decade i.e. double the average growth for the world economy. Revenue for exports has increased eighty-fold and is expected to quadruple again in the next four years.

Part of the reason why India has been so successful in this field is because of the cheapness of the labour force (see table). But also, of course, simply the supply of technically minded folk is helpful. India has always had the edge on China to the North because of its well established domestic middle class which has come into its own since the 1980s. Company shares, bathroom tiles and designer clothes are popular among the upper middle classes – generally defined by economists as around the top 12-40% of the population. This is a sizeable number in India:

100-350 million, which is more than half the total population of the USA and nearly as big as the population of Japan.

It is worth noting here that India is as advanced technologically, if not more so, as many of its Asian neighbours. India has developed a surprising range of self-sufficiency in a number of arenas: it has parked in geostationary orbit an Indian-designed and manufactured satellite for weather forecasting, telecommunications, and television broadcasting, using its own launching rocket. Indian technology was also to provide some 50% of the eleven million telephone lines which were to have been installed by the beginning of this year. In the arms sector, it has developed and test flown an advanced light attack helicopter, and it has

ambitious programmes for battle tanks, missiles, nuclear submarines, and combat aircraft. While India has and will, of course continue to depend on foreign technological assistance and more importantly investment, all these projects demonstrate the depth of scientific and technical human resources available, all of which will no doubt contribute more and more as India's economy opens up. From the point of view of corporate business in the USA this means that the infrastructure (paid for by the Indian taxpayer) and an educated elite (cheaper than the home variety) makes India a good home for investment.

BANGALORE: AN ASIAN SILICON VALLEY?

5,000,000 live in Bangalore which includes an elite of 10% of India's technical engineers. Bangalore is home to three universities, fourteen engineering colleges and 47 technical schools. Every year 55,000 new engineers come onto the labour market and half of them find jobs in the offices and factories of the big TNCs like IBM, Digital, Hewlett Packard, Texas Instruments and Novell who have set up shop here. Why do they come to Bangalore? The answer is not hard to find and contains no surprises. The local authorities provide them with premises which have guaranteed water and electricity, computer and satellite links. In addition they enjoy customs benefits, a five year tax holiday and simplified export procedures. Can they repatriate profits? Of course.

For those who share the town with them life is different. Since the TNCs have arrived the public spending tap which has been so generously turned on for the big boys has been firmly turned off for the less important folk. Rubbish isn't collected, roads and pavements are in disrepair, hundreds of shanty towns burn down in the summer and are flooded when the rains come, the price of land has risen fivefold in as many years, traffic has reached saturation levels with attendant record pollution levels. Whilst electricity and water are guaranteed elsewhere the taxpayer has to put up with cuts so frequently that in their frustration they have taken to sabotaging the generators. The local authorities have been forced to meekly publish notices calling for 'calm, patience and co-operation', but we imagine that the new sleeker state will do the necessary if more than polite notices are required as India integrates herself further into the Old American Disorder.

ANARCHISM TODAY

We will never be able to over-emphasise on these pages that today we live, perhaps, in the most favourable period in history for anarchism at least since 1917. Every day liberal capitalist society presents itself more and more in its true colours: a society of misery and exploitation; social-democracy presents no alternative other than a change of government, the Marxist states have done enough damage to ensure their beyond the pale reputation.

On the other hand, from the anarchist point of view, things are not so bad thanks. One might even say, without overdoing the self-satisfaction, that our image has improved noticeably. The collective efforts of political parties have, for some considerable time, succeeded in reducing us, in the popular imagination to bomb-throwers, crazies or petty bourgeois. It still works occasionally but less and less so. We have won respect and, dare we say, credibility because of what we have done by integrating ourselves within the social movement, in the struggle against the moral order and for the defence of individual and collective freedoms. When a workplace is on strike the presence of anarchists is felt, more and more, by the strikers because it is often a guarantee of determination in the struggle by the workers themselves with neither intermediaries or hijackers. As soon as a social movement of some one hundred or so people appear on the streets of Paris thousands of Parisians tune into Radio Libertaire to hear not politicians, not sociologists, not journalists, but the people involved in the movement who can express themselves on our airwaves without having to go through the information mill at the whim of the state or the admen. When, last autumn, the pope came to France to spin his reactionary doctrine, faced with apathy or the reactionary thinking of traditional secular organisations, the engine-type role of the

anarchists, particularly the French Anarchist Federation (FAF) allowed those who did not wish to bend to the yoke of clerical consensus to let their views be known.

The demonstration on the 14th October in Lorient was particularly striking where despite the absence – when it wasn't a case of sabotage – of almost all the left (fellow or non-fellow travellers) 3,000 people according to the local press were happy for the anarchists to organise the 'unwelcome' for John Paul II.

On an international level also the dynamic is noticeable. Anarchist organisations are now to be found on all five continents. Libertarian press titles can be counted in their hundreds throughout the world testifying to the richness and diversity of the movement. One can read – and use! – some of them (*The Anarchist Age* in Australia, *Freedom* in England and, as of this year, *Le Monde Libertaire*) on the Internet or Usenet.

In addition, electronic forums dedicated to debate or anarchist propaganda are expanding fast and will lead in a short space of time we feel to a multiplication of international contacts between anarchists, individuals and organisations. It is reasonable to see in these examples a beginning and an encouraging sign rather than an achievement. But the trend is apparent: anarchists are on track for getting their ideas across in social movements and in those areas where until recently they could not make their voice be heard.

Of course we are not starting from scratch. Anyone who asks us about the libertarian society as we conceive of it can be given the basic idea of how it would work: free association of individuals and groups on the basis of a reciprocal contract; federalism between these groups, self-management of the commune and that work which would still need doing, social equality. We can, even in the today's

society, find the seeds, routes (worthy of exploration with our eyes open) to show and demonstrate the feasibility of our goals: mutual societies, co-ops, even the association movement. We can still speak of the achievements of libertarian Spain. We can, why not, remember that a bookshop (Publico), a weekly (you are reading it) and a radio station (Radio Libertaire) have been functioning according to anarchist principles for decades with no serious interruption. We can also finally note that it is not our intention to present people with a blue print since the first task of a libertarian society will be to make it what the people want!

Current efforts to rebuild the political left around a few symbols (for example the republican front against the National Front or supporting the EZLN and the big media rout in Chiapas this summer) make a bad job of hiding the vacuum, an incredible lack of proposals other than slogans against neo-liberalism which don't take much effort to make up. We are not complaining! But we have a social project to get across and not simply a political shop-window to preserve and we cannot afford to waste such an opportunity to let it be known as it truly is. This demands debate, an exchange of ideas, putting things into perspective, using one of the great strengths of anarchism that is to say its diversity.

This will necessitate a certain individual and organisational maturity. Diversity can have its bad side which is the proliferation of rival factions. The recent split in the AIT which *Le Monde Libertaire* has reported should, along with other things, put us on our guard. Nothing would be more disastrous and nothing would please our enemies more and nothing would be worse publicity for an anarchism which is becoming more attractive than to see these vital debates degenerate into internal faction fighting. The federal and synthesising idea which is at the very base of the FAF should remind us of the need to stay above these dangers. Let's remember that we 'only' have to change society!

François Coquet

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Jones from Wales

Dear Editors,
I was interested to read the letter in the issue of *Freedom* of 8th March concerning Sidney Lloyd Jones from Wales.

Whilst I cannot confirm if S.L. Jones was an anarchist or a personal acquaintance of Sam Mainwaring, I do know that James Albrighton, aged 19 years, enrolled in the Republican Army in Spain on 2nd October 1936, and was joined two days later by David Mackenzie, a student from Edinburgh, along with Sydney Lloyd Jones from Wales and eight other British volunteers. Furthermore, all the volunteers, including S.L. Jones, enlisted in the MM (Muerte es Maestro) Centuria which was a Spanish unit which contained a few internationals from other countries.

It may be of interest to your Carmarthen correspondent to know that this information is to be found in a book by the British communist Bill Alexander, which is entitled *British Volunteers for Liberty: Spain 1936-39*. This book states that S.L. Jones, along with others, was killed on 14th October 1936 in action against the Moors and Foreign Legion troops outside Chapineria.

It does seem curious that, although the death of S.L. Jones is referred to in Bill Alexander's book, the name of S.L. Jones does not appear in Mr Alexander's 'Roll of Honour' on page 261, which lists 526 names of volunteers (in alphabetical order) who died in Spain between August 1936 and January 1939. As to whether the name of S.L. Jones was deliberately omitted (or overlooked) from Bill Alexander's 'Roll of Honour' for some particular reason, I cannot say, and only Bill Alexander can answer that question. However, if slight was intended then S.L. Jones may well have been one of Sam's boys.

Derek Pattison

DONATIONS

February-March 1997

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Bridge of Weir, RG, £4; Welwyn, SB, £4; Birmingham, SM, £6; Edinburgh, DJH, £1; Ilford, SG, £6; Northampton, CP, £6; Salisbury, RM, £9; Dundee, BD, £2; Aberdeen, WMR, £5; Glasgow, TK, £10; Wisbech, MC, £10; Stockport, CP, £6; Schwerin, PS & LMS, £5; Abingdon, MB, £28; Southsea, PFB, £2; Wolverhampton, JL, £10; Wrexham, SR, £6; Rugby, DR, £8; Wimborne, DM, £12; Uxbridge, DS, £6; Woking, BM, £2; Edinburgh, SC, £2.

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Total = £100.00
1997 total to date = £296.00

Raven Deficit Fund

Welwyn, SB, £4; Llariamon, RE, £6; Salisbury, RM, £9; Dundee, BD, £2; Wisbech, MC, £10; Milton Keynes, DB, £1; Abingdon, MB, £28; Southsea, PFB, £2; Woking, BM, £2; Edinburgh, SC, £2; Glasgow, JH, £6.

Total = £72.00
1997 total to date = £235.00

Anti-Election Fund

Cardiff, PP, £25; Liverpool, RE, £10; Basildon, AJ, £5; Newport, NF, £20; London SW16, SD, £5; Anon, £250; Glasgow, SU, £20; Kendal, JD, £5; Harrogate, BA, £7.

Total = £347.00
1997 total to date = £347.00

Further details of the Anti-Election Campaign will be in our next issue

'Obscene' Posters

Dear Editors,
A few points regarding your recent front-page article 'Obscene posters condemned by anarchists' (*Freedom*, 22nd March 1997) which referred to recent flyposting actions in Aberystwyth, and we feel missed the point somewhat.

Firstly, the posters you allege were "advocating paedophilia" were in actual fact produced by the gay anarchist group Homocult and sought to ridicule the right-wing's absurd assumption that gay men and women are all child molesters (a pernicious, prejudiced myth which, for example, fuelled much of the hysterical reporting over homosexual scout movement leaders recently).

Other posters were displayed in the English and Welsh languages and were based on designs by, amongst others, Class War and the Green Anarchists. Hardly, therefore, a "sinister move against anarchists on the eve of the anti-election campaign", as your article suggests, but a welcome challenge to the greyness of Parliamentary politics.

Exactly why Aberystwyth's 'official' anarchist group not only failed to understand the meaning of the posters but also formed an unpleasant alliance with religious zealots in condemning this perfectly justifiable direct action remains something of a mystery and may go some way to explaining why most anarchists in Aberystwyth are not interested in joining them.

Tom Anderson

Anarchism & Cities

Dear *Freedom*,
Jonathan Simcock's article in *Freedom* (22nd March) 'Anarchism and the City Tradition' is a useful retort to those who can only envisage a future anarchy devoid of cities. The country versus city argument has a long history, and the supporters of the virtues of country living over city existence have been found on both sides of the political spectrum (though distressingly often on the right). Cities do, however, possess virtues too, as we who choose to live in them recognise. Whether future anarchist cities would all need to be the same size as Aberystwyth is a moot point, although small-scale divisions within much larger cities, along with widespread evolution of anarchist ways of thinking, might be the answer. And, surprise, surprise, Jonathan Simcock can find my tentative proposals covering these very questions (and others) in my light-hearted utopia *The Last Capitalist: a dream of a new utopia* (prefaced by the necessary 'health warning') which is available for a trifling £3.50 for 96 pages, including illustrations, from Freedom Press - where else? (Advert over).

Steve Cullen

Direct Action and Democracy

Dear Editors,
Congratulation on another excellent *Freedom*. Fine polemics on a wide range of current issues - just what is needed to jolt us out of our complacency.

Did any *Freedom* readers watch 'Heart of the Matter' on 23rd March which included a discussion on the place of direct action and civil disobedience in a democracy. George Monbiot, one of the peace campaigners who dealt hefty blows to the Hawk fighter trade to East Timor, and one of the road protesting contingent took the side of the little people trying to stand in the way of state and corporate 'crime'.

Their opposition, a right-wing columnist and Peter Bottomley, were farcical in their attempt to convince the viewing public that a cross in a box once every five years offers people a democracy. Funny old Peter thought that the suffragette movement's use of direct action and civil disobedience was okay because they were striving for the vote. His failure to see that most people are striving for higher values than his self-serving forum was touching, and perhaps somewhat ironic.

JD

Freedom's Example

Dear Editors,
I have, with my partner Mabel, spent an enjoyable week at the International Social History Library in Amsterdam. We have been going through documents in the Freedom Defence Committee archives. Though we are not anarchists, we would like to pay tribute to the hard work and dedication of the Committee. All victims of arbitrary state power could expect help.

The files contain information lost in the mists of time. The imprisonment of anti-fascist Spaniards by the Labour government. The massive riot of troops at Aldershot in 1946. The corkscrew 'justice' of court martials where prisoners, in the tradition of Henry VIII's star chamber, went through a judicial formality "to be tried and executed". All these injustices, and many more, need to be remembered by historians when writing about barbarism in Britain.

But there is more than this. We live in times when state repression is on the increase. It looks as if Michael Howard, born in Romania where he acquired his ideas of law and order either from King Carol or Nicolae Ceaucescu, is about to be replaced as home secretary. His successor is likely to be Jack Straw, the Labour Party's answer to Genghis Khan. In these circumstances, it seems to me there is a need to create again an organisation along the same lines of the Freedom Defence Committee. It needs to incorporate all, irrespective of their political views, who are prepared to defend our dwindling freedoms.

Raymond Challinor

Support the Juvel Bakers

Dear *Freedom*,
Juvel Bakery, one of the largest bakeries in Stockholm, implemented a new working even though 90% of the workforce opposed it. The new schedule includes long night shifts with serious physical stress and negative social consequences for the bakers, compulsory Saturday work and the dismissal of fifteen workers.

The Food Workers Union accepted the new schedule in spite of its members protests. The SAC (Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation - syndicalist), which represents 25% of the Juvel bakers, has rejected the new schedule. The SAC took industrial action and refused to work to the new schedule. As a result the SAC workers have now been locked out. The SAC are suing the bakery as the company gave no notice of the lock-out and ignored the SAC's legal right to take industrial action. The Food Workers Union has approved the use of strike-breakers and scabs.

The first preliminary industrial tribunal has been held and twelve of the sixteen workers have had to report back to work because of earlier agreement, three of the workers have been granted exemption from the agreements and the SAC are fighting to gain exemption for the others at the moment.

The next industrial tribunal is set for 22nd May. The SAC are putting pressure on the management and the reformist union. The SAC's hard line has led to three more bakers joining the dispute and spirits are very good. Militancy is increasing and the SAC are confident of a positive result. They are also hopeful that the current action will put them in a strong position for the next round of negotiations which are due next year.

Letters of support can be sent to: Juvelens Syndikalistsektion, c/o Stockholm LS, Bersendsgaten 10nb, 117 37 Stockholm, Sweden.

Guy Cheverton

please keep sending in your letters and donations . . .

Contributions invited for Ravens in preparation

Forthcoming numbers of *The Raven* may well include the following subjects:

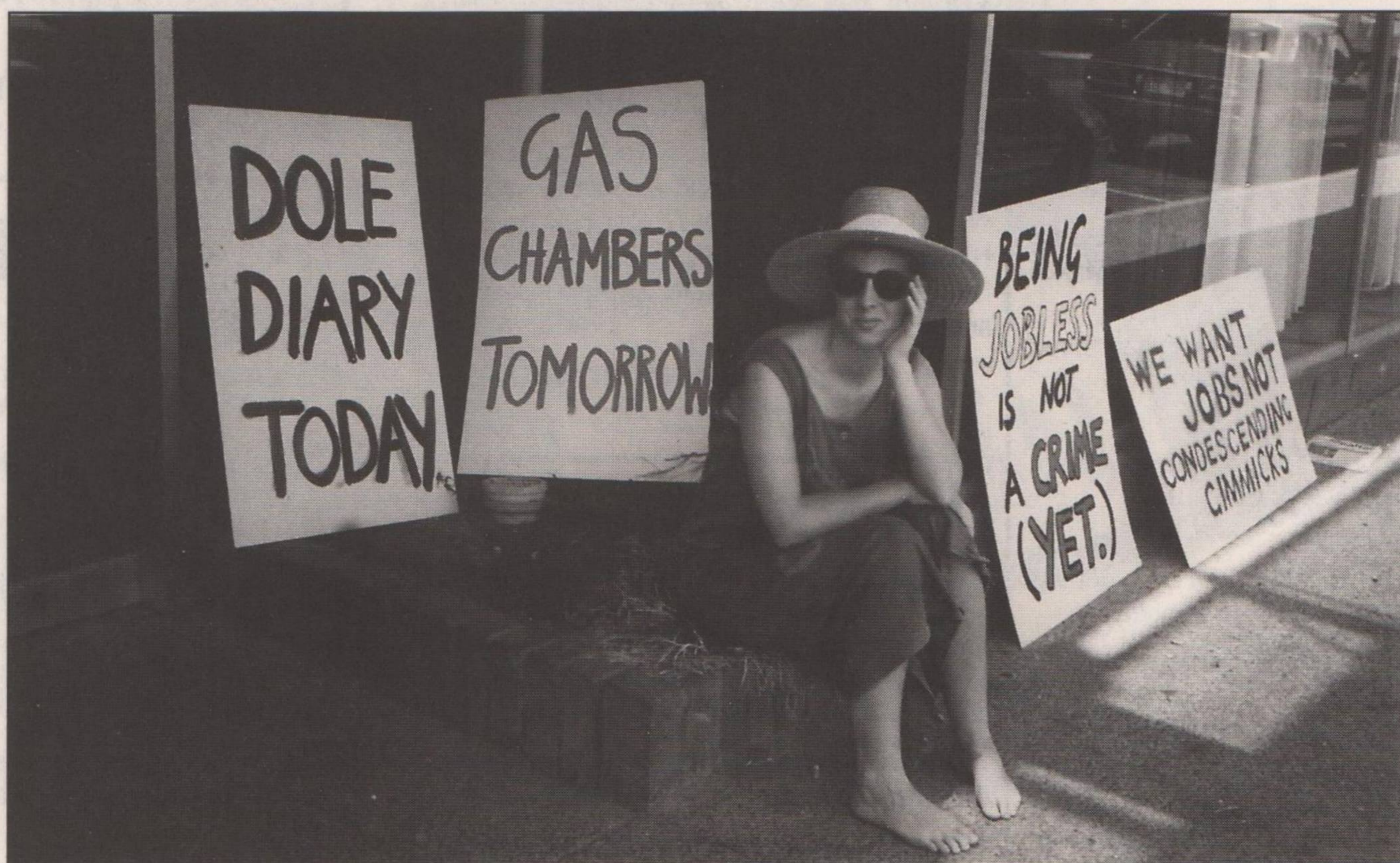
- 'Class Struggle Anarchism'
- 'Single-issue Campaigns'
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- 'Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy'
- 'The Built Environment'

This is not to say there will be five *Ravens*, one on each topic. There are more likely to be *Ravens* covering two or more topics. The order in which they are published will be the order in which they become ready for publication. Contributions are invited, on the five topics listed above or on any other topic. Obviously we cannot promise to publish everything, but as readers of *The Raven* know, the range of subjects and styles is wide.

How do we decide which topics to cover? Haphazardly. Articles submitted on spec may form the nucleus of an edition, or a comrade may decide it is useful to have an edition on a particular topic and start assembling material from scratch.

Please send a stamped, addressed envelope, or international reply-paid coupon, if you want your manuscript returned. Discs welcome, but please enclose a print-out for editorial consideration and remember to keep a back-up disc. And please be patient. Sometimes articles are accepted and then kept for years, literally, before they are published.

Raven Editors



The unemployed in Northern Territory, Australia, have to fill a 'Jobseeker Diary' to keep getting their Social Security allowance (reader's photograph)

**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,
libertarian activism, union activism

For programme and registration form (which is
to be returned by 31st March) contact:

SAC Women's Committee
Box 6507, S-113 83 Stockholm
Tel: +46 (8) 6733559
Fax: +46 (8) 6730345

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OLDHAM ANTI-JSA

meet every fortnight at
Hark to Topper, Oldham, at 8.15pm
Tel: 0161-628 6182 for further details

**MANCHESTER
ANTI-JSA GROUP**

meet every Wednesday fortnight at
The Vine, Kennedy Street, Manchester
contact: Dept 99, 1 Newton Street,
Manchester M1 1HW

**North West Anti-JSA
Dole Bully Hotline:
0161-338 8465**

London Anarchist Forum

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

- 1997 PROGRAMME -

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

30th May Theory: What For? (a debate
between John Griffin and Carol Saunders)

6th June Language and Power in Education
(speaker Mike Long)

13th June title to be announced (speaker John
Rety)

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

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

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.

June 1st: Walk leader Jonathan. The Roaches,
Staffordshire. Meet 11am at roadside entrance to
Windygates Farm. Take A53 from Leek to Upper
Hulme, turn off at Upper Hulme and follow signs to
Roaches. Mountainous walk through gritstone edges
and heather moorland.

**Telephone for further details
01773-827513**

Dales Red Rambles

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

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

18th May - Lower Airedale: Walk around Cowling.
Meet Cowling village centre at 10.45am.

*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*

**RECLAIM THE STREETS
TWO-DAY FESTIVAL OF
RESISTANCE**

starts Saturday 12th April

meet 12 noon at Kennington Park

To coincide with the March for Social Justice

**'Don't be a cog in the machine -
be a spanner in the works'**

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