

# FREEDOM

anarchist fortnightly

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50p

The Budget – so while the rich stay rich it's ...

## Crumbs for the Poor

No one at *Freedom* can be expected to unravel the details of the Budget and offer detailed conclusions, but the very fact is that, as we write, the FTSE share index had reached a record level. The *Independent's* headline "Chaos as FTSE soars past 6,000 to push top UK companies' value above £1 trillion" and the *Guardian* report that "Dealers dazed by new high" convinces us that Gordon Brown has offered a few crumbs to the poor, the single mothers, half a billion (not a trillion) to the NHS and a quarter of a billion (still not a trillion) for the schools – otherwise it's a budget for the rich, the semi-rich and big business.

The Labour Party never thought in terms of abolishing the capitalist system – perish the thought – but they always professed that their objective was to transfer some (not all) of the excessive wealth of the top 10% to the 20% of us down at not quite the bottom of the pile. By 1979, when Thatcher took over, the top tax on incomes was 80% and capital could not be exported without permission. Overnight the tax was halved to 40% and export capital released, and both have remained so ever since including under the present Labour government. Even the export capital has not been reversed by Blair's government.

We need hardly say that we would not wish to advise the government on how to operate the capitalist system. After all, anarchists wish to abolish it. What we *are* saying, however, since anarchists are also members of this society, with a voice, is that the one party that professes to speak for and defend the underprivileged has done nothing to transfer to the poor any of the unearned,



inherited, cheated, sleazed wealth of the top 10%.

Theoretically the moment the Labour lot came into office, if they really meant business (and it would have been a difficult business with the City mafia *et alia* in charge), they would have stopped overnight the export of capital. And whatever the civil servants and their lickspittles advised, they should have brought in a Budget returning the 40% for the top crooks to 80% overnight. And a new law to deal with all the offshore rackets in which their paymaster general (and boss of the *New Statesman*) is involved.

Short of abolishing capitalism, we anarchists know only too well that however anarchistically we live and enjoy our own personal lives (and this is very important), we live in a capitalist world and have a role in reducing its power. After all, without workers (and we are

all workers, whether in factories, on the land or losing our eyesight glued to the computer screen) what could, let alone would, the bosses be able to do?

Within capitalism there could be a fairer society. The Blair government has shown that they are not prepared to risk the next general election. After all, political parties still need votes, and Blair's lot are depending on the 'middle class' vote, assuming that they have that of the 'working class', the unemployed and the rest of us.

But the anarchists say our *non-votes* don't matter in the political game, but what does the voting game matter in contributing to changing our society? We had eighteen years of the Tories. We have now had nearly a year of New Labour and a Budget for Easter. Nothing changes – yes, sure, a few coppers, but nothing will in fact change until we the people no longer expect the politicians to do what we want for us. We the people must assume our responsibility as citizens, producers and not least parents of the new generation.

If the Labour government really intended to transfer the wealth of the top 30% to the bottom 30%, they can only do this in the capitalist economy by taxing the rich and giving it to the poor. The machinery is there, but they won't. Why? Because at the next election they would lose.

So, in brief, this is the argument for anarchism and against capitalism. Capitalism is the unfair, privileged society. The political parties simply reflect that unfair society. Only anarchism struggles for a society of equals who at the same time are individuals, free citizens among free citizens.



# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

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It's unbelievable, uneatable and unspeakable ... yes, it's

## New Labour's Welfare Reform

Frank Field has all the charisma of a grey mullet! Most English people won't buy it, they much prefer mackerel. Last week Frank Field, Minister for Welfare Reform, produced his green paper 'A New Contract for Welfare'. It came over like a wet mullet – grey, ungainly and seemingly inedible.

It shows all the signs of being a cobbled together specimen. The bones and spine doctored by Gordon Brown and the Treasury, with an eye on cost cutting, the miserable flesh spun round it by the Department of Social Security by Frank Field and Harriet Harman.

The editor of the *Independent* declared: "The lion of welfare reform roared and brought forth a quango". The only hard proposal Frank Field made last week was for the setting up of a Disability Rights Commission. The standard answer of English governments – a commission to calm the disabled, who before Christmas

took to the streets and demonstrated after leaks about benefit cuts.

### PUNCH-DRUNK WELFARE

The politics is punch-drunk in the realm of welfare. Money was to be taken away from lone parents last year and then, in part, restored in the budget last month after opposition in the country.

On housing benefit Mr Field pointed out that "almost a billion pounds is lost in frauds with fraudsters having a 99% chance of getting off scot free". But about the same amount, if not more, goes unclaimed by deserving claimants.

The *Independent* editorial states: "Mr Field mentioned the tripling of numbers claiming Incapacity Benefit since 1979. Kick their crutches away! But then he mentioned the 50% of those entitled to Disability Living Allowance who do not claim it. Give their crutches back!"

The signs are that the government had its

fingers burnt before Christmas over the leaks on cuts in benefits to lone parents and the disabled. Now they are proceeding cautiously saying, as Mr Field does, "only the fraudsters have something to fear".

A recent report for Groundswell from the Nottingham Anti-JSA group suggests the Job Seeker's Act is also stagnating. The Nottingham Anti-JSA Group suggests that: "The JSA is in place but, in the main, it is not being implemented ... The only difference between pre-JSA and post-JSA signing seems to be keeping a written record of one's job search endeavours, and even this is widely flouted. The Groundswell movement can take some satisfaction from the failure to consummate the JSA in as much as external pressures have encouraged Employment Service management not to execute the JSA rigidly."

New Labour may have a hidden agenda for welfare which it dare not reveal. Last week's green paper showed that it is still playing its

cards close to its chest. It long ago learned the lesson that it is best in politics not to give away too much policy detail too soon, or to get carried away with one's own rhetoric.

### KEEPING AN EYE ON THE POOR

In his 'The Will to Win' speech at Southwark last June, Tony Blair proclaimed: "This will be the Welfare to Work government". 'W-to-W', as it is sometimes called, was supposed to be the New Labour flagship – and behind Blair was to be the Rasputin figure of Frank Field, the Minister for Welfare Reform.

Mr Field, in an article in the Institute of Economic Affairs publication *From Welfare to Work: Lessons from America*, called 'Re-inventing Welfare' claims to be impressed by the experiments in Workfare in the USA. He says that "successful schemes, especially in Wisconsin and California, make it clear that a caseworker-driven approach, combining 'help and hassle', requires talented, well-resourced, committed front-line workers who are 'suffused with the work mission'."

He is obviously hooked onto the US system, and he wants to give power to a dole police. He writes: "I believe the vast majority of benefit officers in this country are caseworkers-in-waiting. They simply need the tools. A caseworker-style approach also meshes with the need to combat fraud in the system – front-line staff are best placed to know the scams and the guilty parties, and thereby prevent fraud from entering the system."

From April 1998 all 18-24 year olds who have been jobless and on benefit for more than six months will be required to choose between a variety of temporary training-related employment programme options or the option of full-time education or training. The implication is that henceforth the young jobless will have to work for their Giro.

The idea that you can't have too much monitoring and spying on clients because 'it reminds them that you care and that you're watching' is the kind of thing Frank Field seems to back. But Dee Cook, in an essay *From Welfare to Work – and back again?*, writes: "The image of Foucault's carceral network and the disciplinary power of perpetual surveillance all spring from these quotations!" (see Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*).

It seems that all workfare schemes demand compliance and are backed by sanctions, despite Frank Field's soft voice. Dee Cook claims that "welfare punishment in the community extends to the 'case-management' of the lives of the poor" as often "the poor find themselves under perpetual surveillance and also liable to financial penalties for rule-breaking".

One suspects that the government is after a 'quick fix' to cut the jobless register, but a present is *too frightened to say so*.

Albert Shore

## Spanish trade unionists close shareholders' meeting



Spanish riot police escorting a vehicle leaving the shareholders' meeting.

photo Pedro Carrero

At a time when speculation is growing on the UK Stock Market about British Telecom jumping into bed with some other transatlantic company, a couple of weeks ago the Spanish company Telefónica had its shareholders' general meeting in Madrid closed down after ten minutes by trade union activists. The anarcho-syndicalist CGT and other unions, like the UGT, situated inside and outside the shareholders' meeting sabotaged the president of Telefónica, Juan Villalonga, when he tried to open the meeting. *El Mundo* described the day – the 17th March 1998 – as a day "Juan Villalonga will not forget".

At midday several hundred workers

employed by Telefónica, who had concealed themselves inside the meeting hall as bona fide shareholders, jumped up and threw stink-bombs at the officials. Señor Villalonga was not able to read his opening speech which he had come to deliver to the gathering. All he managed to get out were six paragraphs extolling "the dedication and daily manfulness" of the more than ninety thousand employees of the company. As he left Señor Villalonga paused to say: "They are a minority. Their jobs are guaranteed".

The anarcho-syndicalist union the CGT, the UGT and the UTS had called a strike (which got 50% support) and demonstrations across all of Spain to protest against Telefónica's

announcement to segregate the company into five independent divisions. The communist CCOO union federation didn't back the strike because they claim jobs are not at risk.

The newspaper *El Mundo* claims the general meeting "was the shortest in the history of Telefónica". The president is not the type to lose his smile, but he had to raise his voice to a scream to succeed in getting his audience to approve his proposals. One proposal included entry of Bert Roberts, president of MCI and Miguel Horta of Portugal Telecom onto the executive council of Telefónica. Up to last autumn MCI was involved in negotiations to merge with British Telecom.



# Food for Thought ... and Action!

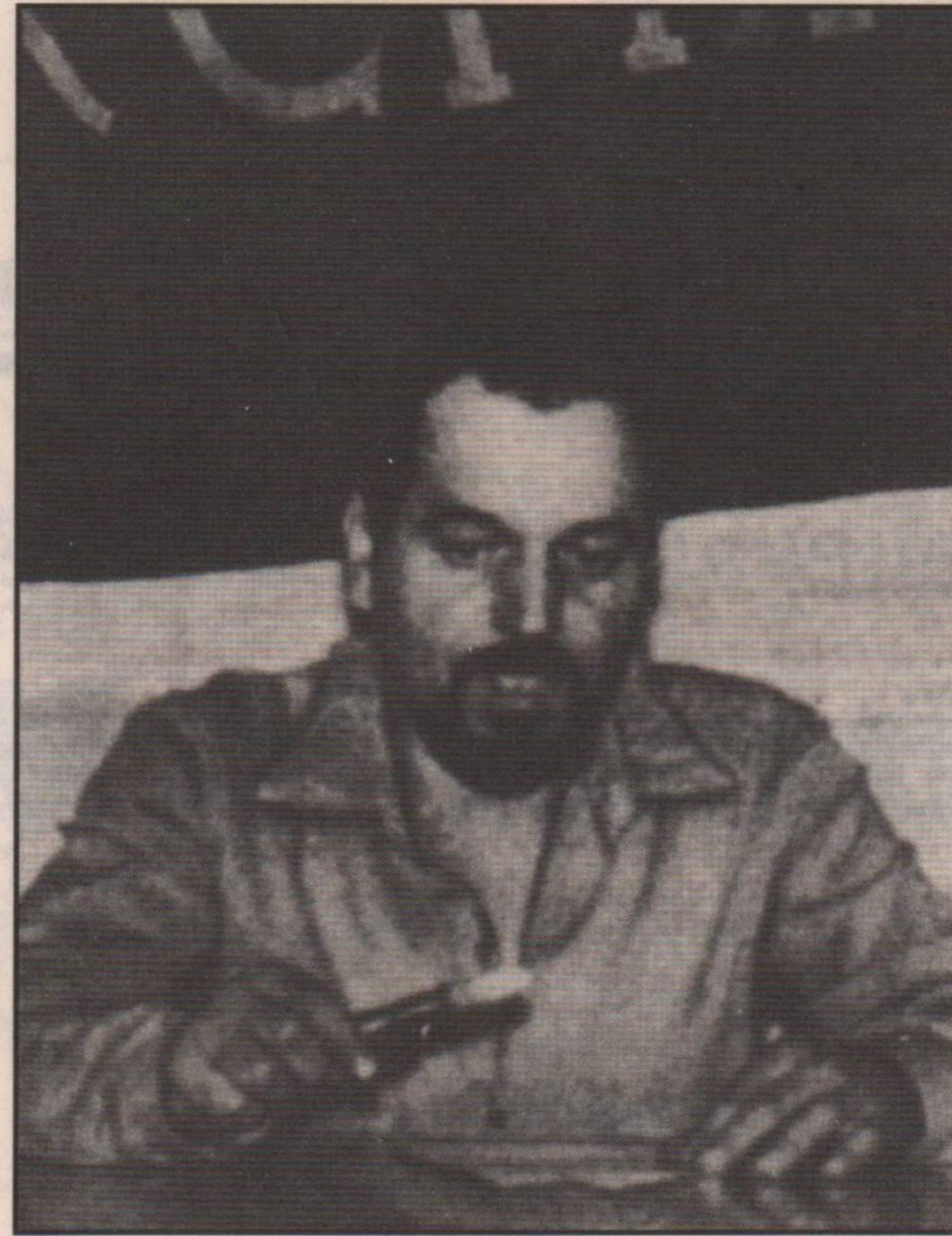
## Resurrection reading for the Easter break

**After the Revolution: economic reconstruction in Spain today\*** by Diego Abad de Santillan, Jura Media. A facsimile of the original edition, reprinted for the sixtieth anniversary of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 – the 'today' of the subtitle. The three sections of the book are comprised of 'A General Survey' which catalogues the problems of existing economics and production methods, 'The New Structure' outlining how the purpose and organisation of work would change after the social revolution, and 'The Revolution of Liberty' wherein he describes anarchism and the state and why a revolution is necessary. De Santillan, of course, was one of the anarcho-syndicalist CNT-FAI leaders who took ministerial posts with the Catalan regional government (others even joined the national government), decisions which sparked fierce disagreements within the anarchist movement which continue today, and the last chapter is in part a self-justification (the opposing view comes through forcefully in Richards' *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution*). However, de Santillan was at least honest in his disagreements with the movement over prisoners, pointing out that those who opposed prisons when they were in them were now jailing and even shooting nationalist prisoners. He states his opposition to prisons but admits that he would rather jail opponents than have to continue shooting them – which he also admits to. "I would condemn a man who has committed a fault against society to make good the damages ... does he do so by being jailed or executed? Would it not be preferable to sentence him to a definite work? Replanting forests, building roads, public works ... rebuilding the towns destroyed by war? What revolution have we made in the penal

code? We may have changed the judges and the jailers but the mechanism of justice is the same." Limited stock, 128 pages, £5.50.

**The Friends of Durruti Group: 1937-1939\*** by Agustin Guillamón, AK Press. The Spanish Revolution from the streetfighters' and their supporters' point of view. It is evident that a lot of work has gone into this and the information, some of it new and based on interviews with participants and archival material, has been researched in some detail, with the aim not just of dispelling the myths and distortions that have grown up around the group – fuelled by all shades of opinion – but of providing English language readers with "the most comprehensive and thorough explanation and account of the history and ideas of that group". What you think of the Friends depends, like so much else in the revolution and civil war, on the angle you're coming from. The CNT disowned them and tried more than once to expel them – for one thing because they were thought too close to the Trotskyists and proposed setting up a revolutionary Junta. But the Friends claimed that it was really due to their persistent denunciation of the CNT for collaborating with the government. Their relationship with the Trots and others and their opposition to collaboration and the militarisation of the militias are among the questions examined here, in what is an important addition to a growing body of work on the group. 114 pages, £7.95.

**Diggers and Dreamers: the guide to communal living 1998-99**, D&D Publications. In what is described as "the last one before the millennium", Colin Ward reviews the impact of



The anarchist Giuseppe Pinelli

a hundred years of communal living on the landscape, including Whiteway Colony and other self-housing options. Nicola Graydon chronicles the brilliant 'Pure Genius' derelict land occupation in Wandsworth organised by The Land is Ours group to show how low-impact homes, self-grown food and community are of infinitely more value than Guinness's plans for yet another hypermarket. "For a moment it seemed a perfect illustration of true anarchy in action". Zoe Sewell discusses the attitudes of communards across the country to internet and e-mail technology. The many other worthwhile articles include pages on 'How to do it' and of course the vast directory of communities and networks both at home and abroad. An attractive and well-designed book illustrated throughout. 226 pages, £9.50.

**Here and Now no. 18**, Here and Now Collective. After a long gap the H&N is back on the streets peddling its unique mix of articles and graphics lambasting professionalism and the obsession for 'managing' everything that moves, and quite a lot that doesn't. The growing unaccountable power of the 'caring' professions and their seemingly addictive need to interfere in ever more areas of personal life is smart-bombed in this issue with a lucid and thoughtful attack on the therapy business (a useful counterweight to the essays on psychoanalysis and psychotherapy in *The Raven*?) and false memory syndrome, and an alarming transcript of a real social workers case-study meeting about two young lovers with learning difficulties (for a practical guide on how to outwit professionals, see *Strip the Experts*?). These are neatly supplemented by a series of cleverly doctored adverts on 'zero tolerance' which are guaranteed to upset somebody. A piercing excoriation of Blairism – well deserving reproduction in full were it not for space limitations – forms the editorial piece 'Emote Control', which reinforces the attack on 'zero tolerance'. The letters pages carry outraged replies to last issue's light-hearted dissection of some of the anarchist movement's in-fighting – from some of its targets, as if in evidence of their humour by-pass operations. Its 48 pages contain much else that is stimulating and challenging, including an essay on, oh no, the management of death. A4, £2.00.

**Direct Action no. 6**, Solidarity Federation. Just landed on our doormat is the latest issue on the theme of managing consent, encompassing voting (or not), profit and ballooning management in the NHS, bosses and how to treat difficult ones, the aggressive imposition of international (American) quality standard QS

9000 on workers worldwide, welfare reform in the US, and an interview with Chumbawamba's Alice Nutter. The production is smooth, glossy and smart almost to the point of being over-designed, and many of the articles read as if they've been written by the same person. Are we beginning to see the triumph of style over content here? That would be a pity – the message must come before the medium. 36 A4 pages, £1.50 each.

**Libertarian Labor Review no. 22**, LLR Collective. The latest issue of this recent addition to the wide range of periodicals stocked by Freedom Press sports part two of Miko Hargis's notes on anarchism in America, an enlightening and entertaining trawl through the movement (in North America) in the decades since World War Two. This part covers organisational attempts from the 1970s onwards and illustrates just how difficult it is to establish and maintain national organisations which actually reflect the diverse views within them. Two lengthy articles on anarcho-syndicalism cover the historical background and development of the Swedish SAC, described as "the second largest syndicalist movement today, with about ten thousand members", and the question of whether anarcho-syndicalism has now passed its peak. The Second Encuentro Against Neo-Liberalism and for Humanity held in Spain is covered in some depth, following the success of the first one called by the Zapatistas and held in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1996. The protests against the EU Summit in Amsterdam last summer are amusingly described, and on an extremely serious note there is an article raising the possibility that last year's mass arrests of anarchists across Italy following a bomb attack in Milan may herald a re-run of the 'Strategy of Tension' perpetrated against anarchists in the 1970s and '80s. This notorious conspiracy included members of the secret Masonic Lodge known as P2 (connected with the Vatican), groups from the extreme right, various state agencies and politicians, and members of Greece's military Junta, and involved bomb attacks on public places. Once again the anarchists were chosen as the scapegoats, and during the witch-hunt that followed a Milan comrade named Pinelli managed to fall to his death from the fourth floor of a police station by miraculously escaping the clutches of all five officers in the room and carelessly leaving behind a shoe in the hands of one of them. These events were immortalised in Dario Fo's hilarious stage farce *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, but it was only much later that the connection between the conspirators was revealed as a secret organisation within NATO named Operation Gladio, set up after World War Two to prevent the far left ever coming to power anywhere in Western Europe, which it seemed about to do in Italy (a good account of much of this can be found in Christie's *Stefano Delle Chiaie*). LLR's account of the current witch-hunt lists the names of many of those arrested, some of whom have already been sentenced to long stretches in prison. More international news and a number of interesting book reviews complete the contents. 46 A4 pages, £2.50.

KM

1. *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution\** by Vernon Richards, Freedom Press (260 pages, £4.00).
2. *The Raven no. 35\** (Freedom Press, 96 pages, £3.00).
3. *Strip the Experts\** by Brian Martin (Freedom Press, 70 pages, £1.95).
4. *Stefano Delle Chiaie: portrait of a 'black terrorist'* by Stuart Christie (Refract Publications, 182 pages, £4.95).

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## Anarchy in the Media

Two more examples of the media treatment of anarchism have appeared since our last report (7th March), one in the gutter press and one in the posh press, neatly illustrating the contrasting ways in which it is distorted.

On 17th March the London *Evening Standard* published a very unfavourable article by Charles Skelton headlined "Anarchy for Beginners" and consisting mainly of a series of sneers at a few sections of the anarchist movement. *Freedom* was lucky enough not to be mentioned, and the Freedom Bookshop was mentioned only as the place where the author got hold of a copy of the revived *Class War* magazine, described as "unbridled rubbish", and found out about current anarchist meetings. He wasn't allowed to attend a meeting of the Anarchist Communist Federation, being excluded as a representative of the "capitalist press", though he was able to interview one of its representatives. He did attend a meeting of the London Anarchist Forum, chaired apparently by "the head anarchist", and played his part as a representative of the capitalist press by caricaturing it with much malice but little wit.

On 21st March the weekly *Spectator* published an apparently favourable but actually ambiguous article by A.N. Wilson headlined "A better ism for our time" and consisting of a series of assertions rather than arguments in favour of some kind of anarchism. "It is, I think, to the anarchists, and not to the Liberals or the Conservatives that we should be looking for guidance at the present time". He meant not mainstream anarchists, whether of the past or of the present, but marginal figures such as Tolstoy or Thoreau. Neither did he mean any kind of involvement in any kind of movement. "The only sensible course is to cultivate our gardens and

withhold support from any political group or any political thought whatsoever. In short, to be sort of anarchists".

What sort of anarchists? We must go further than the "libertarians of the Right" and "the true libertarian must have the courage to embrace anarchism *tout court*". There followed a very short course on anarchism, comprising opposition to politicians, police, army, and laws against private behaviour, denial of both the existence of class and the need for a state, and support for European against national government and "a true free-for-all". He suggested that "there are more libertarians around than one might think", but his only suggestion for common action was: "Let us both obstruct busybodydom wherever we find it, and do nothing, so much as by one vote, to encourage the perpetuation of politics".

A decade ago Wilson wrote a good biography of Tolstoy and also edited a collection of his religious writings, *The Lion and the Honeycomb*. He described Tolstoy's idiosyncratic anarchism in the former as "complete nonsense" and in the latter as "the least acceptable aspect" of his thought and "the silliest" of his teachings. A few years later he abandoned Christianity and adopted a very destructive version of atheism. Now he has also abandoned politics and adopted a very destructive version of anarchism. In both ways he has merely become a 'refusenik', as he once described Tolstoy, rejecting conventional beliefs and behaviour without providing any kind of constructive alternative.

Wilson presents the negative side of anarchism, as caricatured by Skelton. The positive side, which is just as important, seldom appears in the media, because it is also much more difficult.

NW



# NAN Conference

The Northern Anarchist Network Conference in Bury in March was attended by anarchists from Manchester Subversion, Oldham Anarchist Group, Hebden Bridge, Liverpool ACF, Leeds, Eccles, Manchester Anti-JSA, Rochdale, and Manchester Solidarity Federation. Apologies and reports came from Hull Syndicalists and Lancaster Anarchists.

Green issues, Groundswell and the JSA, Magnet and the Liverpool dockers, the Gandalf Six and *Green Anarchist*, the Iraq situation and Kosovo all figured in the discussions. Manchester Solidarity Federation agreed to produce research and do a report on the Balkan situation. Leeds anarchists accepted the job of considering action in the event of further threatened bombing of Iraq.

Oldham anarchists were involved in a campaign to protect Beal Valley from the developers – the Casey Group. Rochdale was involved in a campaign against Casey at nearby Hyewood, where it was operating a lucrative land-fill deal.

Manchester Anti-JSA and Bury Unemployed Workers' Association are supporting Tameside Unemployed Workers' Alliance at Stockport where there was a demo at an appeal tribunal last month about the withdrawal of benefits from one of their members who had disputed the Job Seekers Agreement.

## SPAIN, LIVERPOOL AND LEEDS

Hull Syndicalists sent a report about a French strike involving the cleaners on the Paris Metro, some of whom are members of the anarcho-syndicalist CNT. As a consequence of a decision at the last NAN conference in Bradford, the Barcelona CGT (anarcho-syndicalist) had occupied an agent office of the Magnet Company in solidarity with the sacked Magnet workers. Hull syndicalists had also attended the Liverpool dockers' meeting which brought down the curtain of the dispute with thanks from Jimmy Noland to the anarchists among others.

In Hebden Bridge anarchists have been active organising the launch conference of the Syndicalist Alliance. The group has been acting secretariat and meeting centre for the organising body.

Liverpool ACF has been in on the support campaign for the victimised workers from Magnet. They have been in touch with the *Green Anarchist* prisoners at Lancaster jail. At Birkenhead they have protested with other group against Frank Field, Minister for Welfare Reform, about his backing for the Welfare to Work and New Deal programme.

Leeds anarchists have been working with Anarchist Black Cross, the ACF and Reclaim the Streets. They had a group project of involving itself in the local area, and links with a local resistance network. There had been work with Green Action and campaigns on behalf of the sacked Magnet workers. As part of the anti-war offensive the group had "Chumba'd Derek Fatchet", a foreign office minister and Leeds MP, during the Iraq crisis last month. There had been some involvement in the recent student demos and

## Green Anarchist prisoners released

Saxon Burchnall-Wood, Noel Molland and Steve Booth were all released from prison on 27th March, on bail pending an appeal hearing. They will be addressing a meeting at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, on 13th April 1998.

contact with local campaigners on behalf of the disabled.

Manchester Solidarity Federation reported that it had "done quite a number of things on Magnet" and that their "Direct Action is the only paper on the libertarian left under workers' control. What else have we done? Well, we've done a few things with Earth First!, a lot of the anarchist movement is like dinosaurs. We are doing some education – I don't mean anarchist education, but teaching people reading, writing and arithmetic."

## DEAD DUCK DISPUTES

Discussion took place about how to mobilise opinion about the jailed *Green Anarchist* editor and others in the 'Gandalf Six' arrested for "conspiracy to incite criminal damage". Some local Trades Councils have expressed an interest in supporting those jailed but are requesting further information, and tell the prisoners that NAN was doing what it could to gear-up support.

The speaker from Manchester Solidarity Federation raised the question of Iraq and Kosovo. It was thought that some research should be done and the facts established. Some questioning of Manchester Solidarity Federation commitment was expressed. It was implied that Manchester SF had a 'Greta Garbo' ("I want to be alone") approach to libertarian politics. This caused a furious response. The man from Solidarity declared he could not work with 'sectarians', or with Groundswell because it has 'sectarians' from *Freedom*, or the Manchester Anti-JSA Group because one, possibly two, of its members are 'sectarians' from *Freedom*, but he said he could work with some people but didn't specify who or how many.

Mike from Subversion gave an account of the ending of the Merseyside dockers' dispute. There are still many outstanding snags, particularly over pensions and pension payments. There were in the end twelve stewards left on the shop stewards' committee and he questioned whether it could have fought better. Although the influence of the anarchists was seen to be important, it was recognised that anarchist

action had been limited by the need to maintain unity, especially at the beginning of the dispute. Ideas to occupy the docks had been put on hold because of this need to retain unity.

Mike suggested that there was a danger that libertarians may look around for the next strike to back. He thought that only the Magnet dispute had some go in it now, but we must not go looking for some hole-in-the-corner dispute to support.

It was asked: "Does this mean that syndicalism has been going down ever since

the miners' strike?"

Mike was cautious, but clearly not optimistic. It was pointed out by others that, unlike anarchism, syndicalism, particularly anarcho-syndicalism, has little or no place in the ordinary language of English people. The Solidarity Federation speaker insisted that anarcho-syndicalism was alive and well, even though the word has no currency in the language of ordinary English people.

The next Northern Anarchist Network (NAN) conference will be in July.

BB

## GLOBAL STREET PARTY! Saturday 16th May 1998

Since its first politicised reappearance in London in 1995, the street party has been erupting across the world with its collision of love and rage, carnival and revolution, politics and party. From Leeds to Sydney, Amsterdam to Edinburgh, Berlin to Tel Aviv, thousands of people have banished the car, danced defiantly, transformed private space and created their own local festivals of resistance.

### GLOBAL STREET PARTY

There is now growing energy for the idea of a 'transnational' day of street parties, with different groups across the world holding events simultaneously. 1998 will be a busy year for world leaders and corporate vampires in their ceaseless drive for profit. So let's make it a year they'll never forget: already there is interest from groups in Sweden, the UK, France, Canada, Finland, the USA, Germany, Croatia, the Netherlands, Australia the list is growing every day.

### GLOBAL CAPITALISM

This date coincides with the 1998 G8 meeting in Birmingham (UK), where world leaders of the eight largest economies meet to make decisions about the future of the planet and its peoples. They will then all fly to Geneva to celebrate the 50th anniversary of GATT. There they will sign more agreements which enable them to wrench

ever more power and control away from local communities and siphon it into the self-appointed dictatorship that is the World Trade Organisation.

### GLOBAL RESISTANCE

People everywhere are rebelling against these global forces, and mid-May will see countless world-wide protests. As part of this, a 'transnational' Street Party has the potential to be a defining moment of resistance. Imagine the kick of taking back your street in the knowledge that all over the world similar acts of defiance are taking place – imagine a web of resurgence/defiance reaching across the world on 16th May and beyond.

### GLOBAL CAPITALISM: GLOBAL RESISTANCE!

Let us know what you think – the more groups that get involved the greater the momentum will be. Time is short, so please try to respond to this idea as soon as possible. We can act as a contact point for the moment and bounce ideas back to those who register their interest.

London Reclaim The Streets

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PO Box 9656, London, N4 4JY, England

e-mail: rts@gn.apc.org

<http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/rts.html>

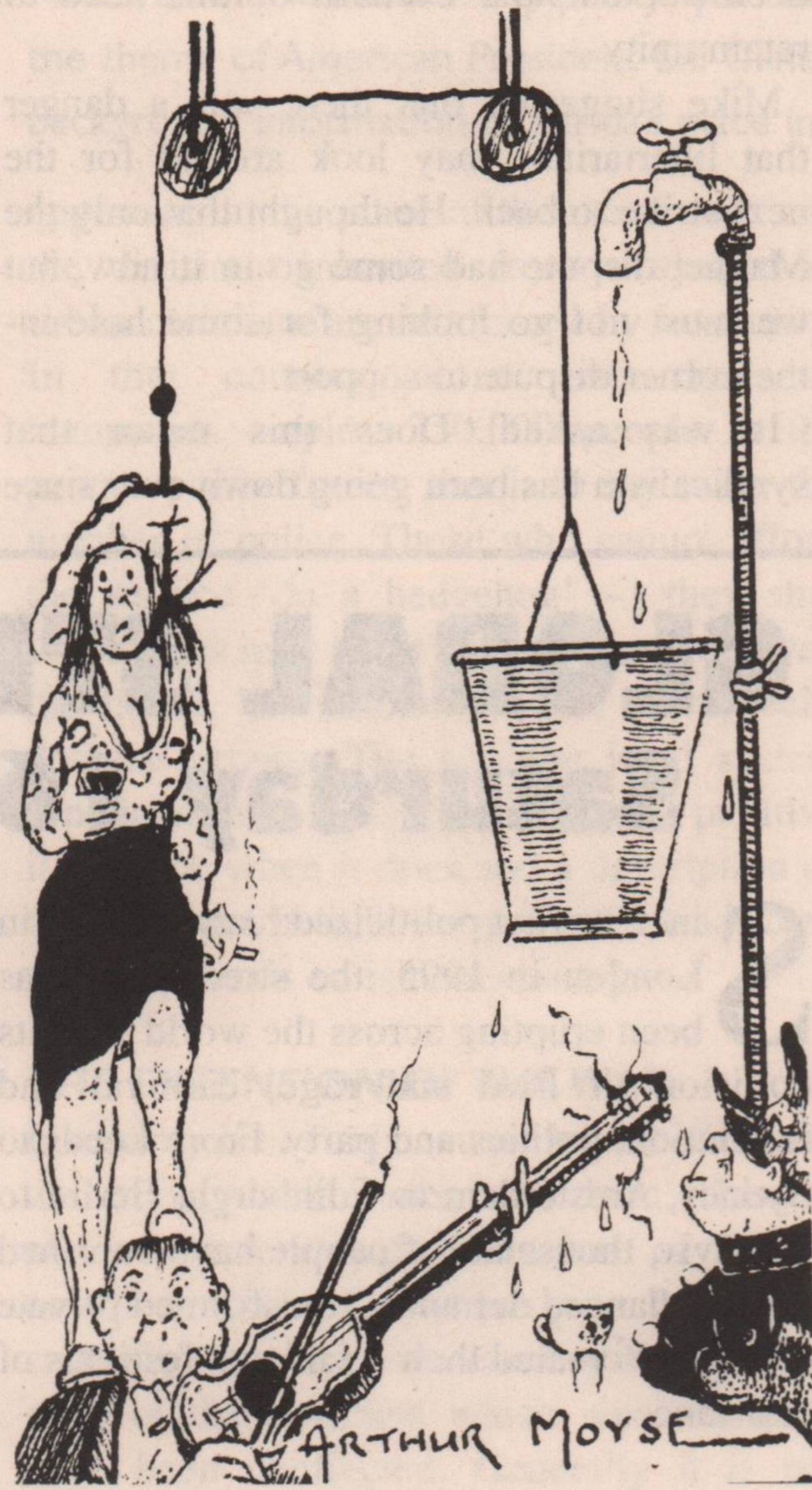




There is always the sanctimonious academic crawling with state-blessed degrees who, tall, slim and grey-haired, will always win maternal support and admiration by declining with a shy smile and a spreading of the pinkies that he is 'hopeless' when faced with the most simple of material technical problems. Give me a nail and a hammer and frankly I am 'hopeless' and half that middle aged female audience want to suckle that shyly smiling mouth. It is pure bullshit par nothing. We have moved into an age when technology is moving faster than the supermarket checkout cash register can keep up with the 'new fantastic breakthrough' of the hour, and it will not change for it is no longer the mad scientists who dominate our societies but the technicians. Everything that we eat or handle is basic in that it comes from the earth and is no more than a change in format. I will argue that the only major technical breakthrough in my ageing life was the ballpoint pen for, although I love television, the microwave cooker and the fridge and having lived through two world wars, two world revolutions and the death of the small traders, I am still of that world of the 1930s in that I stand literally at the same bus stop, live in the same tatty two rooms, walk through the same street market, watch the factory assembly-lines in the news programmes, sit in the same queue waiting in the clinic and see the 'sons of the late Oswald' parading through the East End street in their old-time Nazi formations but with no black shirts just face-hiding balaclavas, yea, yea even through the same fascist-haunted streets of the thirties. Have I gained from the technical improvements in my lower class lift? The answer must be yes with the 'free' bus pass and the good old mind-destroying television.

Kevin Warwick has written another definitive 'frightener' (*March of the Machines*, published by Century Books Ltd., £19.99) on 'why the new race of robots will rule the world' and with a list of academic degrees and honours that could have sunk the Titanic before the ice souffle had been served. In 1929 I sat beside the assembly line in that non-union factory eating my midday meal of a sliced hard-boiled egg sandwich and reading in a 1929 newspaper that in less than ten years time machines would take over and all manual work would be done by robots and in God's holy name what would we do with all that work-free time.

Seventy years or so later, the same level of unemployment, my same two rooms, the



same East End, the same fascists, the same street market and the same Labour Party with promises that in the quest for power they know they cannot keep, but I have the television and the ballpoint pen as my gift to the grave.

I accuse no one, I condemn no one, for, like you most gentle of all readers, I know the answers to our social problems and I understand why they will not be put into practice except if it provides a tool for power or economic greed for the minority who shape our lives.

Warwick's book, as all of this type of book, makes interesting reading and, given the time, I must read it, but for me it belongs to the Holy Grail, the Lost City of Atlantis and all those alien creatures from outer space. Always the desire to create the thinking machine, be it the missing link, the Golem, Frankenstein's pathetic monster, King Kong or the maid-size rubber doll sleeping partner from the porn shop, that desire to create and to dominate. Our destiny lies not only in the study of the future but in our past and to remember that the great complex creations of the day are no more than the technicians' logical continuation of the skilled and obvious using of a handful of wire or a fistful

# Screw You

of clay, and its results should not generate fear for the future but a mild and curious acceptance of the obvious. More than seventy years ago I stood in the Christmas fun fair within London's huge Olympia and, for a price, those who could afford it would face a huge face painted on a sheet of cardboard and ask a crude wire-mesh speaker their question to which a voice 'out of space' would answer. It was a good gag, but an old gag, for the Vestal Virgins in ancient Rome worked the same gimmick without a wire-mesh speaker and the girls were working their con long after the Chinese were shooting crude rockets into the air as pre-spacecraft, jet fighter planes and Concorde for those with the death wish.

But while the Town and his future-fearing frau go seeking salvation from the church and the state, a small group of the finest minds in Whitechapel High Street sat around a beer-puddled table in the Blue Anchor pub listening to a forty year old conceptual sculptor telling us of his plan for his next horror comic, but in the human flesh, in the human flesh. His aged mother, who is a revisionist post-cubist painter minus gallery space, will soon pass on with one of the terminal diseases, and she has agreed to sign legal documents stating that her art creation death will take place and the full responsibility will be hers. We discussed the legality of it and the sculptor explained the creation of his great art work. His mother will stand on a high platform within one of the state's major art galleries with a rope noose around her neck. The end of the noose will be attached to a huge plastic bucket that will be slowly and by the hour filled with water. At a certain point in time the bucket will prove heavier than the noosed mother and she will swing into space to choke and die. During this period an eminent violinist will be playing Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 1 in F sharp minor. We discussed the legality of the art work and the sculptor brushed it aside for he considered the major problem was which gallery should mount this art work.

When he used a thousand frozen canaries to form a cross he was pestered by various bird protection bleeding hearts organisations and the tabloid press, who mocked him as 'Tweety Pie', but he rightly argues that with a dead woman "swinging in the wind" no tabloid gutter press would dare mock and his mother would have her place as an honoured footnote in the history of modern art with that of Hurst and maybe Kelly.

The ancient Romans did mass performance art and Christ did his one-man show on the cross, and for the thinking machine I will continue to argue than if the human does a stupid and irresponsible act the machine cannot do the same for to do it the machine must be programmed or developed to do it and then it is no longer a stupid and irresponsible act.

The Serpentine Gallery has re-opened to the roar of wealth and displays a collection of sealed tins containing human shit. Off Soho was a small shop that sold brass knuckle-dusters, knives and small sealed bottles of guaranteed bullshit plus female piss all safely sealed and guaranteed. They also sold small pieces of pyrite. For those buying the next round, pyrite is a yellow metal that looks like gold and is called 'fools gold' (see the film *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, 1948) and to fear the past, the present and the future is naught but worthless fool's gold.

Arthur Moyses

## Rich and Poor



The political upheavals which led to the collapse of the Soviet Union have caused an exodus from those territories. There used to be a phrase which described professionals leaving countries for commercial reasons. That is to say in the '50s the most highly paid people took employment in the United States, where the money was best. This was called the Brain Drain and this trend continues to this very day. We all have personal knowledge of people, respected in their trades, who have emigrated for economic reasons. Thus those most adaptable to the system are siphoned off to money-rich countries.

However, what has happened in the Soviet Union is much more serious. The exodus I have referred to can be noticed at all levels. A curious example of this is the world of chess, which was very generously supported by the Soviets as it was a game which went very well together with what they called 'scientific socialism'. It was a game which was taught in schools and chess books were printed in their millions, whereas in Western countries it still remains a minority game. If the Soviets were to have been judged on chess alone, they have of course succeeded tremendously. Not only have they produced a succession of world champions, from Botvinnik to Kasparov, but they have made it into a sport for the masses. A sideline of this was that instead of a million computers playing chess they wished to produce an equal number of human computers.

Since the collapse of their regime their chess players have emigrated all over the globe, with the result that such countries as Spain, the US and Germany now have the best chess players from the former Soviet Union, such as Korchnoi in Switzerland and Shirov the champion of Spain. Had they stayed at home they would starve, for they know only chess and it no longer pays.

Perhaps you are not in the mood to shed tears for exiled chess players, but this is what happened to most of their intellectuals and their artists. Whatever profession you may think of, even their criminal fraternity, are now on the move. The last mentioned have ousted local criminals in many countries including Hungary and Poland. Perhaps again you will not feel inclined to shed tears for the poor criminal, but I would like you to consider that in a capitalist economy it is a trade like any other.

A plague on both your houses, as the poet once said. These ruminations have been prompted by a chance visit to the Everyman cinema in Hampstead where there is a regular monthly film event\* put on by Russian emigrés, followed by an art exhibition by Russian artists now living in this country.

The film which was shown happened to have been made in 1970, a few years before the collapse of the system. The story of the film included a semi-documentary insight of what it must have been like to live in a Soviet provincial town. The censor may not have been all that powerful by then. Picture the scene, however. The man has deserted his wife and child. He is about to desert somebody else. He looks into the camera and says defiantly: "I am a good worker, everybody acknowledges that in my factory".

Now to the main point. The state educational system, here and everywhere else, has taken over the teaching of art. With Eisenstein and Malevich as their ideal, the Soviet art education produced as good a work as the Slade and better. The system made them and the system spewed them out. It is not a question of being an élite as in the West. Just as the chess players came off the assembly line, so did the painters and artists.

Judging by the one afternoon showing of their work at the Everyman, their work was uniformly precise. They have learned to paint better than their Western counterparts and, like the chess players they, will come to the fore every one of them. But Natasha Arendt's 'Bitter Fruits of Exile', painted on china plates, summed up their plight best of all.

John Rety

\*The next one is on Sunday 5th April at 1.30pm: The Commissar will be shown at the Everyman Cinema, Heath Street, Hampstead, London NW3.

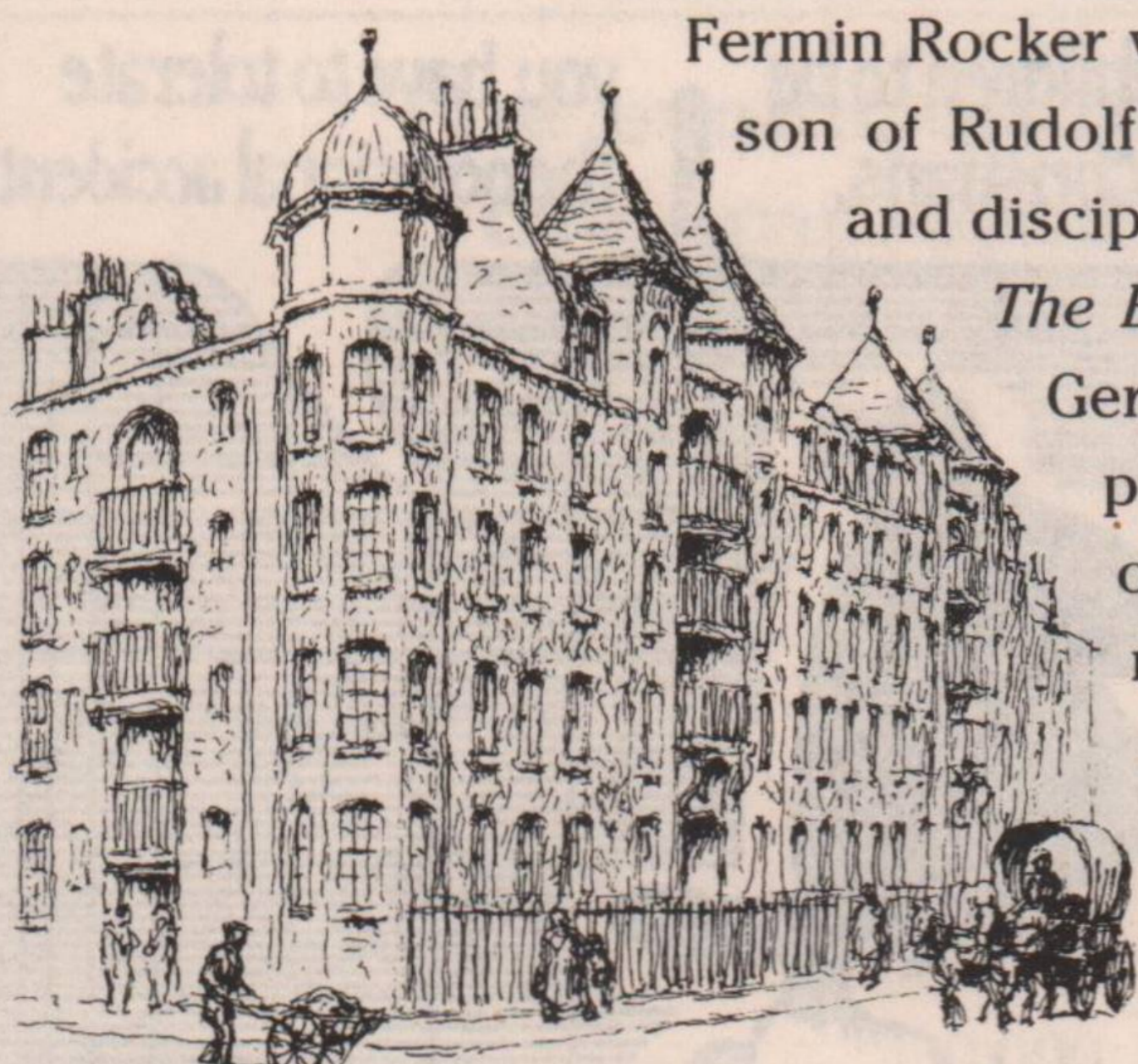
Fermin Rocker

## The East End Years A Stepney Childhood

with drawings by the author

Fermin Rocker was born in the East End of London in 1907, the son of Rudolf Rocker the famous anarchist theorist, activist and disciple of Kropotkin.

*The East End Years: A Stepney Childhood* appeared in German translation a few years ago. This is its first publication in the original English. In exploring his origins as an artist, Fermin Rocker conjures a moving and colourful picture of his remarkable father, anarchism and of the Jewish East End. Rocker's story reminds us that the visionary topography of his paintings has its roots in a lost world.



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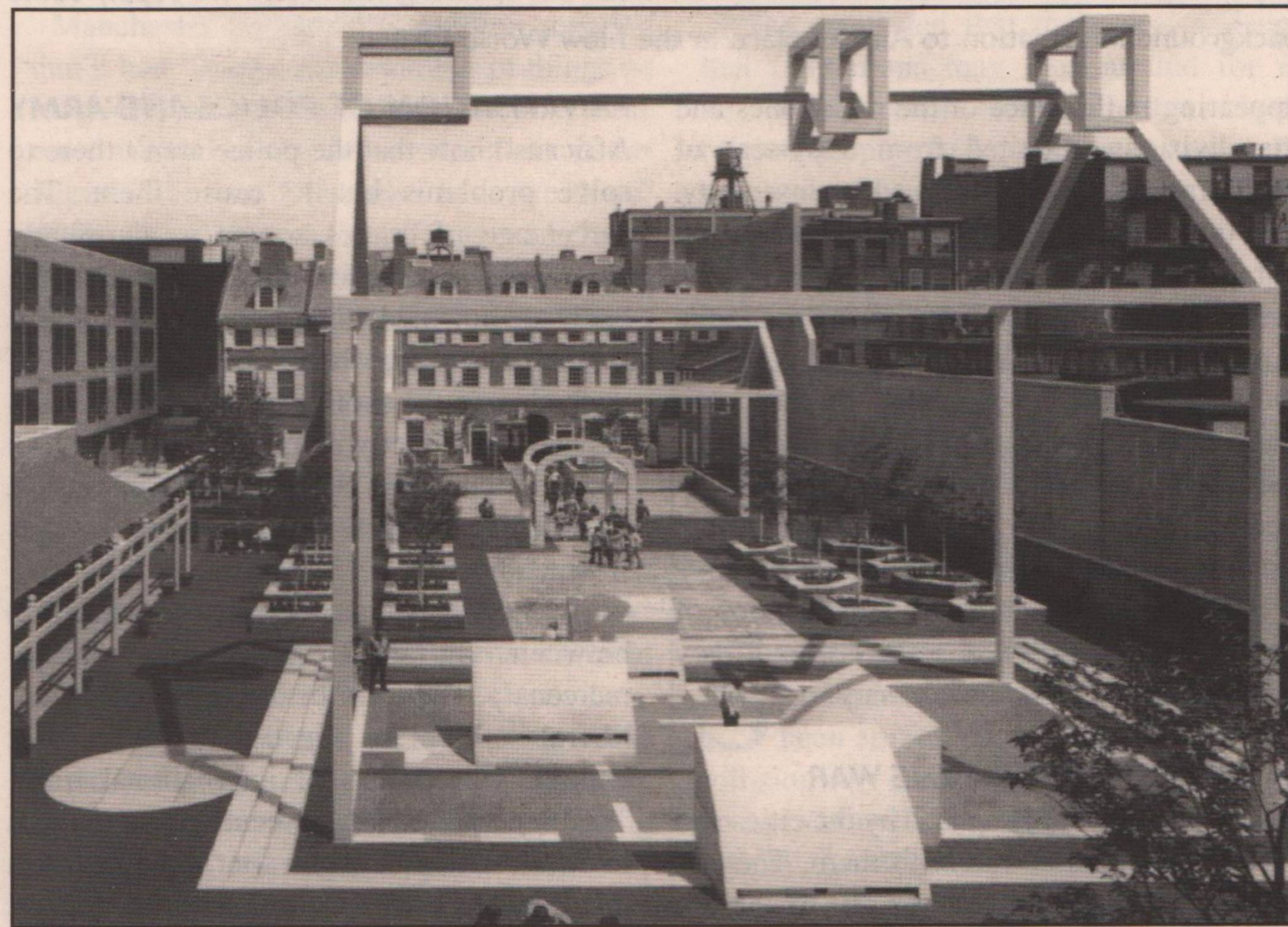
— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

# NON-PLAN RECOLLECTED

There was a journal from the 1960s that plenty of us remember with affection. *New Society* lasted into the mid-1980s when it was absorbed into the *New Statesman*, which has now dropped all memory of it. I remember Colin MacInnes calling round with the dummy pre-publication issue, urging me to put in a classified ad for *Anarchy*, which I did. And the first editor of *New Society* came to the Anarchist Ball at Fulham Town Hall on 20th October 1961, which celebrated the 75th birthday of *Freedom*. The influence didn't last because he later became a Conservative MP and for a while was actually a minister in the first Thatcher government.

His successor was a more interesting character, Paul Barker, and it was he who initiated the most famous special issue that journal had. It was called 'Plan/Non-Plan: An Experiment in Freedom' and it featured in the issue for 20th March 1969, and was written by Rayner Banham, Paul Barker, Peter Hall and Cedric Price.

Twenty-nine years later, at the Victoria and Albert Museum on 13th March, Paul Barker delivered the tenth Reyner Memorial Lecture. He explained that *New Society* in his view "tried to see the world as it was, rather than as it ought to be", and how that famous article was born from a conversation between him and the geographer Peter Hall in a pub in



Theobald's Road, the Yorkshire Grey.

Discussing the world as it was, they reached the significant question: "Could things be any worse if there were no planners

at all?" Hall himself later became the author of a book called *Great Planning Disasters* and the pair of them set about seizing two other iconoclasts to help them. One was Cedric Price, author of many architectural fantasies from the group called Archigram and the other was the iconoclastic art historian and lover of Los Angeles, Rayner Banham. (I remember that when the rebuilt Coventry Cathedral opened its doors in the early 1960s, Banham reviewed it in *New Society* as a "ring-a-ding God-box".)

The non-planners suggested a series of non-plan zones where planning controls were relaxed. They included Lawrence Country, stretching from Nottingham to South Yorkshire, Constable Country from Harlow to Royston and Saffron Walden, and Montague Country in Hampshire, with an extra non-plan slice in the Lake District. To my mind the important thing was not the details the authors suggested, partly to annoy the preservation lobby, but the concept. The important thing for me was to establish with public opinion not just the *concept* of a right of rural settlement for the poor.

The non-plan concept inspired my advocacy of a do-it-yourself new town in the 1970s in a repeated and much-reprinted lecture that (unusually) actually inspired activity. By the 1980s there were several attempts to develop alternative DIY settlements on land acquired by the New Town Development Corporations. The Greentown proposals at Milton Keynes failed, and the Lightmoor project at Telford ended with fourteen homes, not four hundred. The difficulty that killed these efforts after endless labour by the people involved was the absence of a resolve to adopt a non-plan policy. As Don Ritson of Milton Keynes Development Corporation explained to me in 1978, "We can't get planning permission, even in outline, without a clear statement of what is going to happen on the site, but if we specify what is to happen we are limiting in advance the aspirations of the people who we expect to settle there. And the whole idea is to give them freedom of choice."

Today the non-plan concept is further from acceptance than ever. In the climate of the turn of the century, the massed ranks of Nimbyism would march on London to object if the idea were to gain a public hearing. But a more recent propagandist, Simon Fairlie, whose book *Low Impact Development* I described in this column on 7th September 1996, has very persuasively advocated changes in the planning system that would have the positive effects of the non-plan recommendations (opportunity for the poor) rather than the negative ones (opportunity for capitalistic exploiters and the rich).

For me, and for people who wanted just to make room for freedom of experiment in housing and planning, the importance of flying the non-plan kite was the attempt to make room for DIY alternatives to the rival orthodoxies of the bureaucracy and the speculative development industry. The attempt wasn't successful, but the fact that we were discussing it at the Victoria and Albert Museum almost thirty years later indicates what a rare challenge it was.

Colin Ward

— VISIBLE HANDS —

## Not thinking the unthinkable

Economics textbooks go in and out of fashion. When I was an economics undergraduate, the textbook of the day was Richard G. Lipsey's *An Introduction to Positive Economics*. As in any work of propaganda (textbooks fall into this category almost by definition), the fundamental brainwashing operations are carried out tacitly and without attention being drawn to them. In Lipsey's case, the propaganda is particularly striking because he opens by claiming that the "first major theme of this book is how one can go about being intelligently and constructively critical of the existing body of economic theory". His title, *Positive Economics* indicates the importance he places on objectivity: "Positive statements are about what is, was or will be; they assert alleged facts about the universe in which we live. Normative statements are about what ought to be. They depend on our judgements about what is good or bad, and they are thus inextricably bound up with our philosophical, cultural and religious positions." He sets himself the task, then, of analysing economic phenomena without allowing his analysis to be coloured by political ideology.

What follows is a minor monument to the insidious effects of political ideology on economic analysis. One crucial example is the distinction between 'free-market economies' and 'centrally-controlled economies'. In free-market economies "most production is in the market sector, and these markets are relatively free from control by the central authorities". In 'command economies', on the other hand, "all the decisions about the allocation of resources are taken by the central authorities".

By defining 'the central authorities' as governmental only, Lipsey disguises the fact that corporate central authorities wield enormous power in modern economies, so that, for example, over a third of so-called 'international' trade is, in fact, 'intra-firm'

trade, moving inside a transnational corporation from one subsidiary to another.

There is a more fundamental omission. Lipsey's spectrum omits other dimensions of power. Imagine a textbook of political theory that said: "The political orders of all countries contain feudal and slave sectors. A FEUDAL SOCIETY is one in which decisions are taken mainly by feudal lords. A SLAVE SOCIETY is one in which decisions are taken by slave-owners. Neither the completely feudal society nor the completely slave society has ever existed. In practice, all societies are MIXED SOCIETIES in the sense that some decisions are taken by slave-owners, and some by feudal lords. The emphasis varies, however". In other words, all societies are governed — must be governed — by totalitarian political relationships. Democratic politics are off the agenda.

Exactly so with Lipsey and his colleagues. In both the capitalist firm (in the 'free market') and the collectivist state (in the 'command economy'), power relations go in one direction — top down. We could therefore classify economies according to how democratic they are, how much control working people are able to exercise over their workplaces, investment decisions, and so on.

The passage I made up on 'feudalism versus slavery' is in fact a slightly edited excerpt from Lipsey's book, with 'politics' substituted for 'economics', 'feudalism' for 'the firm', and 'slavery' for the totalitarian state. The substitution indicates that democratic economic forms are also off the agenda for mainstream economists. Lipsey does not argue that industrial democracy ought to be rejected because it is inefficient, or because it is unfeasible, given the uncontrollable selfish impulses of human nature. He just does not notice that such a possibility exists. The concept of democracy in the workplace is simply unimaginable. Unthinkable.

Milan Rai

## ANARCHIST COMMENTS IN BRIEF

### BRAVE NEW WORLD MARK II

Aldous Huxley, way back in 1932, warned of the dangers of moral chaos in a scientific age by depicting a society of human robots for whom happiness is synonymous with subordination in deadly earnest.

Are we about to have a new Brave New World with the latest proposal by a Labour MP advocating that by the millennium every household in this country should be provided by the government with a computer!

Derek Wyatt, the MP involved, thought that by 2002 the computer should be installed in no less than 23 million households in this country. Apart from the cost of about £2.3 billion (compared with the half a billion pounds that the government can afford to reduce the waiting lists for NHS patients) what would be the purpose of yet another technological gimmick for most of us (but profitable for the manufacturers)? Obviously profit for some who can persuade enough suckers that they can't get by without it.

Some time ago I stopped using my Olivetti typewriter because I found I could think faster than I could type. I have since found that I can think faster than I can write!

### SAINT DIANA IS GOOD BUSINESS FOR BROTHER

Not surprisingly Earl Spencer has decided to sell his house in Cape Town and, after having paid a couple of million pounds to his divorced wife, is returning to Althorp where his darling sister is buried and pilgrims are expected for years to come. But thinking in practical terms the Earl realises that his place is near his beloved sister ... and all that land around for development! Sure enough, according to the *Sunday Times* of 1st February: "Spencer clinches £50 million housing deal near Diana grave". The Earl Spencer has agreed to sell 400 acres ... to a property consortium. Even if the deal doesn't go through, what does it say for the Earl who was so passionate in his speech in the Abbey? Poor Diana.

### ONLY ONE WAY FOR THE RAILWAYS

And that is that they should be operated by the railways workers and not by speculators out to make a fortune at the expense of services and safety. Suddenly it would appear to the government that privatisation was a mistake. How naive can you get!

Libertarian



# AFRICA FOCUS

Black Africa, this continent which, according to René Daumont in the 1970s, "got off to a bad start", seems also to be enjoying a bad 'finish'. No longer do euphemisms like 'developing countries' or 'democratic transition' fool us. Rather it is becoming more and more obvious that Africa is enmeshed in a predatory economy between trans-national overseas operators and local tyrants.

This context applies from Angola to Liberia and from the two Congos to The Sudan and, although it may look like a return to the 'primitive' or the 'wild', Africa is, on the contrary, a very modern phenomenon.

It is symptomatic of the unequal way in which Africa has been inserted in global space, and in particular it cannot be understood away from the global context with its out-of-control economic and financial liberalisation. More concretely we are witnessing generalised state crime (and more general political crime) with the privatisation of all aspects of African society – the economy, of course, but also the police and customs officers, the army and also territory (both above and below ground).

## GENERALISED INSECURITY

Africa has undergone an urban explosion over the last fifty years without precedent. The population growth, linked to the rural exodus towards the artificial paradises which the cities in these poor countries turn out to be, has produced veritable urban monsters with their shanty towns which are uncontrollable from the point of view of both growth and management. Metropolises such as Lagos in Nigeria or Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of Congo (ex-Zaire) are among the most dangerous places in the world. Such is the case in most of the cities of the continent.

But if insecurity is generalised its aspect changes with location. The affluent shut themselves away in areas with overkill in the form of private security who are more like mercenaries than store detectives. In South Africa, for example, class ghettos are

Africa, as the scene of many proxy-wars between the super-powers during the Cold War, is the theme of American President Bill Clinton's current speaking tour. Here we supply some background information to Africa's place in the New World Order.

appearing in the place of the racial ones and the divisions inherited from a system of urban racialism are reinforced by insecurity. In that country alone two thousand companies employ 250,000 people in the private police forces, that is to say twice the number of police. Those who cannot afford the service 'do a hedgehog' — they shut themselves in at night and, at whatever level, the house, the road, the zone, set up self-defence groups. The less the legal system functions the more spectacular and punitive it must be when it does and a description of the fate that befalls the petty criminal they get their hands on is unnecessary.

## THE EXTENSION OF THE WAR

Insecurity is not only caused by the cities and the crime which comes with them. There is also a generalised extension of armed conflict, not only where war has been endemic for dozens of years but also in those parts of the continent which, up until now, have been unaffected. Generally it is not wars between different states, but just as bloody all the same. The extent of killing carried out around the Great Lakes, and also in Somalia, Brazzaville, Bangui or Kigali, is also without precedent. One can explain it as arms proliferation and the efficient trade thereof in the conflict zones, but also, and this is more serious, as a real change in cultural attitudes towards violence in those societies affected. We might recall those images of children in Liberia bringing terror with their AK47 and we would do well to ponder the words sung by young recruits to the SPLA in Southern Sudan.

*Even for your mum – a bullet  
Even for your dad – a bullet  
Your rifle is your food  
Your rifle is your woman.*

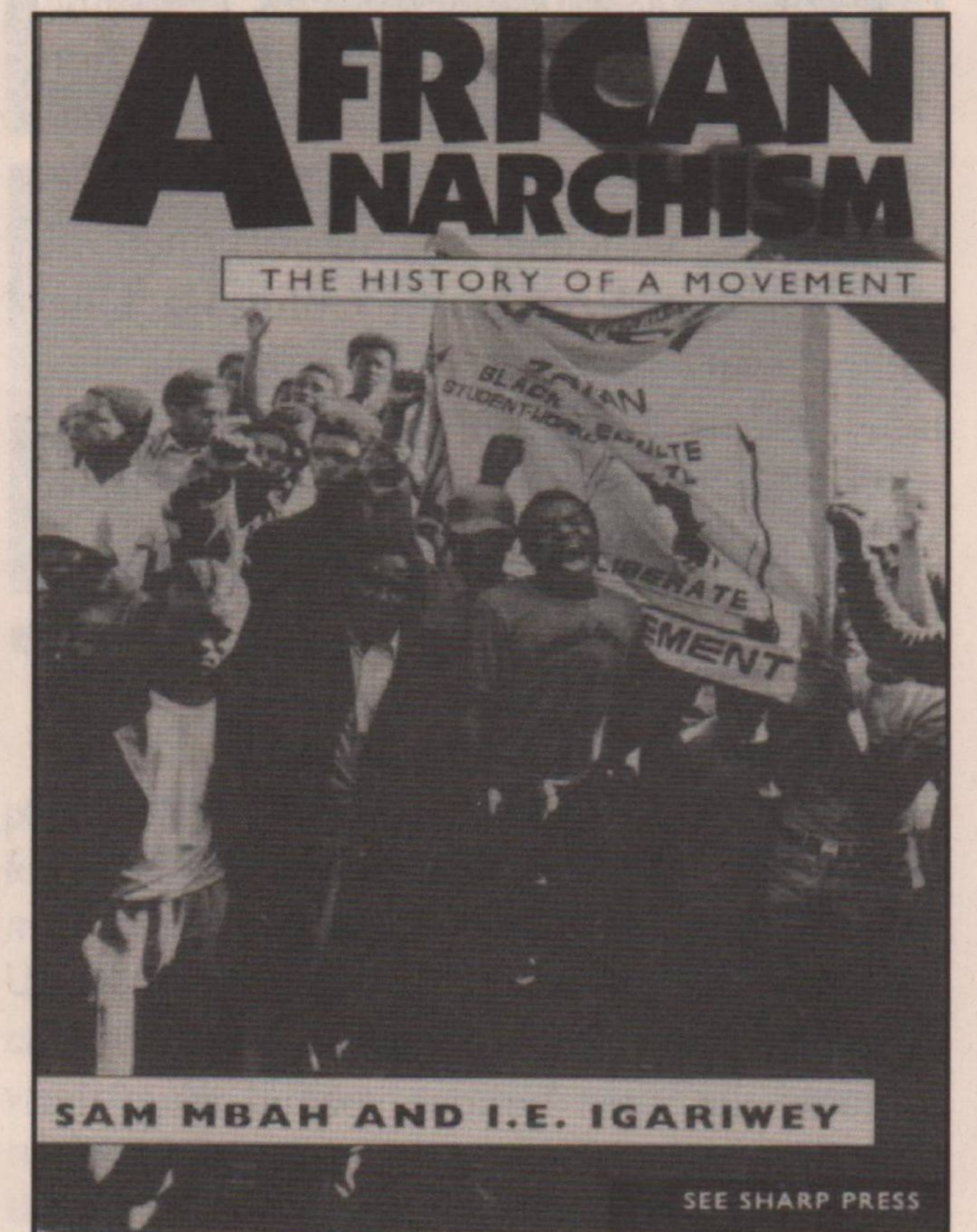
## PRIVATISATION OF POLICE AND ARMY

Africans know that the police aren't there to solve problems but to cause them. The percentage of crimes solved is alarmingly close to zero and those civil servants (often badly or not paid) that make up the police force have long been in the habit of pocketing on the spot fines they collect when they are not directly involved in extortion. In fact police and customs officers most commonly function as private enterprises whose only concern is profit.

Private police forces make no distinction between vigilantes, the copper or the mercenary. They are the armoury of the neo-liberal enterprise, ready to defend at gunpoint the values of international trade. The biggest company, Executive Outcome, is in South Africa. It looks after the affluent in that country (and also in Angola and Sierra Leone) in order to defend with its mercenaries the interests of the biggest diamond company in the world (De Beers). Its employees are recruited from the former 'South African Special Forces' dismissed at the end of the apartheid era and who moved happily from fighting communists to defending mining companies.

## THE STATE'S TRADITIONAL FUNCTIONS

For thirty years Africa has known food crises, population problems and the trauma of joining the global economy. Societies have been de-stabilised but, far from the immobility they are sometimes accused of, they are adapting and the state is leading the way. The African states have lost much of their role as the managers of society and have, along with the private companies, become agents of globalisation. The world system is undergoing a dual process of



The above book is available from Freedom Press, £6.95 (post free inland, add 15% for overseas orders)

globalisation of economies and territories which the African states participate in and which leads to trans-national relationships between companies.

The example of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), of which there are thirty in Africa, is revelatory of this process. The aim is to attract overseas investment. Today Africa only gets 5% of the world's budget in this field. The strategy is to set up enclaves, isolated from the outside, set up as autonomous zones with suprateritorial statutes and private management. Employees are poorly paid (thirty to forty pence an hour). There is no social protection. There are no trade union or social rights. The 'welcoming' state goes into partnership with the multinational which manages the area along with other enterprises.

Obviously the system leads states into activities which would be considered criminal in the west but which are becoming more generalised world wide. Thus, for example, Africa is becoming more important for the drugs trade. The Nigerian networks are a case in point and control some 35-40% of the American heroin market, with the blessing of the Nigerian state.

## PRIVATISATION OF ADMINISTRATION

What has allowed for this growth in illegal activity and also the imposition of market reforms by a state with no or little legality is the existence of a delinquent administration. The state actively participates in the informal economy, above all where it touches on international trade. This doesn't mean that the African state and its administration are weak and powerless but rather that they have submerged themselves in those social realities where we are not used to looking for them: smuggling, the black market etc. The role of the state in this grey area does not limit itself to imports and exports but also affects all state activity from taxation to managing the banking system.

Administrative procedures are only one form of public management; old school ties and networks (economic, political, religious, etc.) are more efficient. The administration today is simply a company within another company with its only aim being self-perpetuation and self-aggrandisement. Finally business is not so bad for affluent Africa – paramilitary rule is in place and the élites are getting rich. But this prosperity fits in so well to the New World Order that the threat of a return to old colonial ways is well on the cards and may foreshadow the darker days to come.

This article first appeared in *Le Monde Libertaire*

## DIRECT ACTION AGAINST THE DOLE

Continuing with the struggle of earlier years, the Conferacion General de Trabajo is immersed in the campaign of 'direct action against the dole' by demanding a cut in the hours of the working week and a basic income for the jobless without limitations.

The government, bosses and institutional unions are having the same old discourse over the necessity to create the economic conditions to generate employment and combat the rising numbers in the dole queue. It is the old story introduced by

Gonzalez in 1982, with the promise of 800,000 jobs, or the false accounting of the employment ministry calculated for the 1997 working year. It is the same with the demands of the CCOO (communist trade union federation) and UGT (socialist union federation) for the creation of one and a half million jobs in the next four years. This is the song of the European Union plans for the next four years, but without doubt *the economic growth is actually destroying more jobs than it is generating* and it is an unsustainable situation.

Apart from the 1970s, this production of economic growth has not created jobs in recent times. From 1979 to 1993 the rate of economic growth of national productivity of the developed countries was 2.5% annually, meanwhile the average rate of unemployment tripled from 3% to 10%.

This situation is dictated by economic globalisation, the introduction of new technology with the exclusive aim of increasing productivity and the re-location of companies. The necessity for labour is about to decline during the next few years – this is the road of no return!

The need for employees is going to diminish in future as their work becomes more like merchandise: precarious and dehumanised.

Faced with this situation the CGT (anarcho-syndicalist confederation of labour) fights for the redistribution of work and wealth, for the reduction in the working day and increase in the basic wage, for universal public services. We fight for a just and equal society. The struggle which we are inviting people to join is one in which we want to apply maximum social pressure in order to cause a shift in political economics to society's most disadvantaged.

This is a translation of an article taken from the March 1998 issue of *Rojo y Negro*, monthly paper of the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist trade union federation CGT (General Confederation of Labour).

### The evolution of the active population, the employed and the unemployed in Spain 1964-1997

	1964	1976	1985	1997
Population 'Activa'	11,682,300	13,357,700	13,345,500	16,071,400
Employed population	11,452,300	12,653,500	10,420,000	12,706,400
Jobless	230,000	704,200	2,934,000	3,364,900
Total population	30,636,000	36,155,000	38,586,000	40,460,000



# Sanctions are a Crime

Dear *Freedom*,

Jon Roe opens his letter on Iraq (*Freedom*, 21st March) by pointing out, correctly, that lifting economic sanctions from Iraq will benefit the people only "if that government so wishes". He closes his letter by ridiculing "those who allow the Iraqi government to pose as the guardian of 'its' people", indicating that he himself does not believe that the Iraqi government does wish the lifting of sanctions to benefit the people of Iraq.

If I interpret him correctly, Roe supports the continuation of sanctions for the purpose of achieving the disarmament of Iraq. 567,000 children had died as a result of economic sanctions by December 1995, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. It is clear that they continue to die in their thousands every month from hunger and disease. The question confronting Westerners is whether it is morally justifiable, and legally sustainable, to kill half a million children to achieve particular political and military objectives. In my view, to pose the question is to answer it. Jon Roe does not confront this central issue.

The question of whether or not the Iraqi government is "the guardian of its people" is quite irrelevant to the question of whether or not the UN sanctions regime is supportable. As it happens, Iraq's national health service used to be the envy of the Middle East, and the government has always made the meeting of basic needs a priority. No doubt this is an important part of securing its political base.

The directors of the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organisation in Iraq told me in mid-February that there was no evidence of diversion of medicines or food by the regime. Holdbrook Arthur of the WFP commended the equity and efficiency of the Iraqi food distribution system (which the government subsidises).

One fact Jon Roe does not seem to have taken into account is that what people in Iraq need desperately right now is medicines, a functioning power generation system, clean drinking water, sewage and sanitation facilities up and running, and enough food to eat. The only way they can get these things is through government provision. And the only way the government can get these things is with hard currency, by selling oil.

Roe casts doubt on the notion that the Iraqi government is too poor to import medicines because it has begun construction of what he describes as "the largest mosque in the world". But he does not seem to realize that the government obtains concrete, and other basic construction materials, without vital hard currency, from within Iraq and from Jordan (under a special UN-approved barter arrangement). The money spent constructing mosques and palaces is not money that could have been spent on medicines, because medicines can only be bought with *foreign currency*. Just as spare parts for water purification plants or electrical generators can only be bought with foreign currency.

Roe points out, again correctly, that "[t]he cruel reality of children starving is not

invented by UN sanctions", and that children are starving in Indonesia, Mexico, Africa, and Brazil. What he does not say is that child starvation in these countries/continents is not due to a single decision of the UN Security Council, a decision which could be reversed in minutes, leading to an almost instantaneous improvement in child mortality.

All the evidence suggests that if economic sanctions were lifted, there would be a deflation of the Iraqi economy, unemployment and poverty would be massively reduced, the national health service and other vital infrastructure elements would be restored to their pre-sanctions condition as soon as possible, and children would no longer be dying in their thousands every month.

I went to Iraq, breaking sanctions by taking medicines to sick children, not to further the Iraqi government's propaganda campaign, but because I could not sit by while children were dying because of my government's cruelty. Since my return to the UK, I have been arrested by Customs, and now am waiting to hear if I will be prosecuted for an offence whose maximum penalty is a five year prison sentence. By the time this is published, I will have informed the authorities that I intend to continue breaking sanctions, and have begun to raise funds to finance future delegations to Iraq, despite the threat of prosecution.

Sanctions against Iraq are a crime against humanity. We must all consider our responsibilities towards those who are dying.

Milan Rai

You can contact Milan Rai at 'Voices in the Wilderness UK', Stanhope House, 1 Hertford Road, London, England, N2 9BX.

— COPY DEADLINE —  
The next issue of *Freedom* will be dated 25th April, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 16th April.

## Chumbawamba?

Dear *Freedom*,

Recently a couple of articles have mentioned the pop band Chumbawamba. This group recently signed to the EMI record label, had a big hit with *Tubthumping* and were involved in a publicity stunt at the Brit Awards. They should not be confused with the anarchist group Chumbawamba who wrote lyrics such as "Working for record companies like EMI, making money for arms manufacture! ... the war machine's at number one. I'm only doing my job" and "I am not a popstar - I am part of the class war. You tell me, where does entertainment end and responsibility begin?"

I hope this clears up any confusion.

**Bullshit Noprinciples  
The League of Anarchists When We  
Feel Like It**

## An injury to one is an injury to all

Dear *Freedom*,

Guy Cheverton (*Freedom*, 21st February 1998) writes his short 'history lesson' to show "that small political groups do not form new unions" in order to argue that syndicalists should work within established unions to influence them. "Not once" he writes, "has a syndicalist union been founded through the efforts of handfuls of activists and syndicalist enthusiasts". While every time and situation has its own unique conditions and problems for which history is often irrelevant, if one intends to use history as a source for action, then it should be accurate since it will affect the action. In this case the evidence indicates that Cheverton is wrong about the IWW and it indicates that there might be a possibility for a different sort of action if the enthusiasts have the imagination, skill and energy for it. The unions which he locates at the 1905 founding meeting of the IWW, where their representatives joined with a collection of socialists, anarchists and other disaffected people, had all withdrawn by 1908. Bill Haywood had been fired from his post as secretary of the Western Federation of Miners. Though some anarchists were Wobblies, the IWW was never an anarchist organisation. They insisted they were a union, so even to call them syndicalist is a distraction.

After his trial for murder, Haywood went on an organising tour around the country. He and others - Carlo Tresca and Helen Gurley Flynn (she later

joined the Communist Party) among them - went to various strikes where they were invited to organise strike action. In effect at least a relatively small group did create the IWW, but the times were also ripe for it. The established unions were not recruiting (and did not want) immigrants, blacks, women, itinerant loggers and other groups. These were the people whom the IWW organised, and they were successful partly because they were vocally against craft unionism. They wanted all workers to be equal in wage and conditions, and they were against separate unions within an industry: an injury to one was an injury to all.

Once started, hundreds joined in the recruiting, speaking, writing songs, taking small or large disruptive action, going to jail, etc. They never succeeded in creating one big union, and that failure also had complex causes: the war, the government, big business and more conservative unions. Craftsmen (artisans) satisfied their own needs in separate unions and separate contracts within a single industry with the blessing of big business and government. Having accepted the bribes of easy credit and time payments after World War Two and joining the conspicuous consumer society, large sections of the working class became indistinguishable from the middle class in values, financial obligations and living conditions. Often their incomes were higher than many middle class clerks and other small-time professionals. Now, the way of life produced by all that is being destroyed; there are few full-time jobs for life, except perhaps among civil servants and big union officials.

Perhaps the times are ripe for revolt again and a new direction with legions of unorganised workers on short-term and part-time work ready for organisers and action. However, the conditions are also different from the last century and early years of this one. The social contact and consequent solidarity of self-help and mutual aid is missing. The working people no longer live together in the same area and they have more diversions which are solitary rather than in groups of neighbours and fellow workers.

This is where Brian Bamford comes in with his bizarre mission of verbal anarchist-bashing (in

anarchist publications, no less) and wasting time in chatter. For about two years Bamford has filled up more space in *Freedom* and *The Raven* than anyone else I can remember in more than 45 years of reading *Freedom* Press publications. It has been suggested that he writes even more over designations other than his real name. Colin Ward might have equalled him during the years of *Anarchy*, but Colin Ward has substance whereas Bamford does not. For no obvious reason Bamford spends most of his time attacking or scorning other anarchists who do not share his views as groups given sneeringly nasty names or as individual named people. To what end? Certainly not to promote solidarity. Surely by now it is time for Bamford (and his associates) to emulate Haywood and Eugene Debs and move on to the organising phases of their mission. They must have recruited all the anarchist readers their peculiar methods are going to get, and have certainly insulted and angered a great number whom they won't get.

I will pass over Bamford's mis-use of the last three or four pages of E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* except for a couple of comments, though I wonder if Thompson is the only Marxist whom Bamford wishes to exempt from his charge of bankruptcy. 'Inverted Masonry' is not Thompson's term. He quoted it but never used it himself. I know what Thompson means by 'popular culture' in the book and in the last part of the long chapter on 'Class Consciousness'. Briefly he refers to artisans whose positions and values - developed in a particular set of repressive circumstances gradually over a long period of time - constitute a distinct set of values different from and against middle class values. He believes they constituted a separate culture. What he has to say about unskilled labour can be found a few pages earlier (pages 895-900 in the 1968 Penguin edition). He discusses other groups in his and Yeo's *The Unknown Mayhew* and still others in *Customs in Common*.

However, I don't know what Bamford means when he speaks of 'popular culture' in the present. His association of his father's work-bench and *Hobbies* shows how far that 'popular culture' has fallen. I don't see any evidence of such attitudes described by Thompson in today's society, and what usually passes for popular

culture now is some sort of opiate of entertainment from the top down. I assume Bamford means to refer to a working class culture, but he doesn't tell us much about it, nor does he seem to believe in it since he sees most people in England as "poor stunted beings".

In *Freedom* of 7th March 1998, Bamford begins with the wish to "transform and co-ordinate popular culture at the point where it conflicts with management structures" and he ends with the wish to "seek an attunement with English popular culture". I take this to mean that he and others wish to lead the workers towards some anarchist position which involves effective action (though anarchism disappears from the name). Therefore popular culture only means the results of transformation and co-ordination by these leaders rather than an already existing body of values and wishes for the future. I have no quarrel with people who wish to engage in class struggle; I grew up in such circumstances, though Herbert Read's 'The Cult of Leadership' as well as my own brief experience in the Teamsters and longer time in the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks and Porters makes me deeply suspicious of the wish to lead. But Bamford's technique of demonising, scolding and bullying never works anywhere, and I hope he doesn't try it on real workers. Therefore I don't have much hope for his programme, but it would be exciting if someone or some group came up with ingenious and effective action.

John R. Doheny

## Cuban anarchism

Dear *Freedom*,

Does anyone know anything about Cuban anarchism? Since writing *Saint Che* I have received a request from the Czech comrades of *Solidarita* for more information on the role of anarchists in the Cuban revolution and their subsequent fate under the Castro-ite jackboot. Does anyone know where I can get material on this subject, other than Sam Dolgoff's book? I can read Spanish.

Larry Gambone  
Box 174, Montréal, QC, H3K 3B9,  
Canada

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## Meetings & Events

### The London Anarchist Forum

Meet Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall,  
Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL  
(nearest tube Holborn). Admission is free but  
a collection is made to cover the cost of the  
room.

#### — PROGRAMME 1998 —

**3rd April** 'In the Belly of the Beast:  
Anarchists and the Techno-Industrial State'  
(speaker Alfred Todd)

**10th April** General discussion

**17th April** The London Anarchist Forum  
meets the Haringey Solidarity Group

**24th April** General discussion

**1st May** Symposium on 'Anarchist  
Alternatives'

**8th May** General discussion

**15th May** 'May 68 in Paris by a Participant'  
(speaker Sebastian Hays)

**22nd May** General discussion

**29th May** Symposium on 'Anarchism and  
Science Fiction'

**5th June** General discussion

Anyone interested in giving a talk or leading  
a discussion, please contact Carol Saunders  
or Peter Neville at the meetings giving  
subject and prospective dates and we will do  
our best to accommodate. Donations are  
accepted from those who cannot attend  
regularly but wish to see the continuation of  
these meetings.

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

### OLDHAM ANARCHIST DISCUSSION GROUP

Wanted: anarchists, anarchist  
communists, libertarian communists to  
set up a discussion group in Oldham.

Write to: PO Box 127, Oldham OL4 3FE

### Red Rambles

A programme of monthly guided walks in  
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and drink. Walks are 5 to 8 miles in length.

#### Sunday 26th April Upper Lathkill Dale

Meet 12 noon at The Hobbit Pub (formerly  
The Bull's Head), Monyash, Derbyshire, for  
five-mile circular walk.

**Telephone for further details  
01773 827513**

### Third Anarchist Summer Camp in Berlin

**This year the Anarchist Summer Camp  
will be held in Berlin from Friday 31st  
July to Sunday 9th August 1998.**

This is a self-organised camp where we do  
the cooking and washing-up together as  
well as the dancing, singing, discussion,  
climbing, playing ... whatever you like.

In previous years (held in Hamburg)  
various study groups and also film sessions  
and presentations.

This year's camp site is situated in  
woodland on the outskirts of Berlin  
(a lake for bathing is not far away).  
Your share of costs should be between  
90DM and 140DM depending on personal  
means and income (meals are included).

#### For details, suggestions, enrolment:

Postal address: Jugendumweltladen, c/o  
Andreas, Jagowstraße 12, 10555 Berlin,  
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e-mail: acamp@jpberlin.de

**For enrolment we require the following details:**  
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