

## Vulnerable Children

British newspapers carried an intriguing report on how to motivate children on 13th July. The *Guardian* headlined the story "Make your kids do well – don't tell they're clever", while the *Telegraph* preferred "Praise may be bad for gifted pupils".

Doctors Carol Dweck and Claudia Mueller of Columbia University in New York State gave 412 ten-year-old children a task in which they performed well. The researchers then divided the children and treated them differently. Some of the children were told, 'Wow you got eight right, that's a really good score, you must be really smart at this'. The rest were told, 'Wow, that's a really good score, you must have worked really hard.'

Then the two groups of children were given a choice between two new tasks: something new, important and difficult – which they might get wrong – or a problem where they were sure to do

well. Dr Dweck reported: "Of the intelligence-praised kids, the majority wanted to do something they were sure to do well, and keep on looking smart. Of the effort-praised kids, 90% wanted the challenging task where they could learn something". 'Intelligence-praised' children were less persistent after a failure, showed less enjoyment, and performed less well than the 'effort-praised' students. They also tended to believe that intelligence was a fixed trait, whereas the 'effort-praised' believed that ability could be improved by working hard.

Dweck and Mueller suggest that putting students on a pedestal for academic excellence can increase the chances of them dropping out, by making them too sensitive to their own performance and seeing any setback as a defeat. The *Guardian* drew the conclusion that there was "a surprising way to make children perform better at school – don't tell them

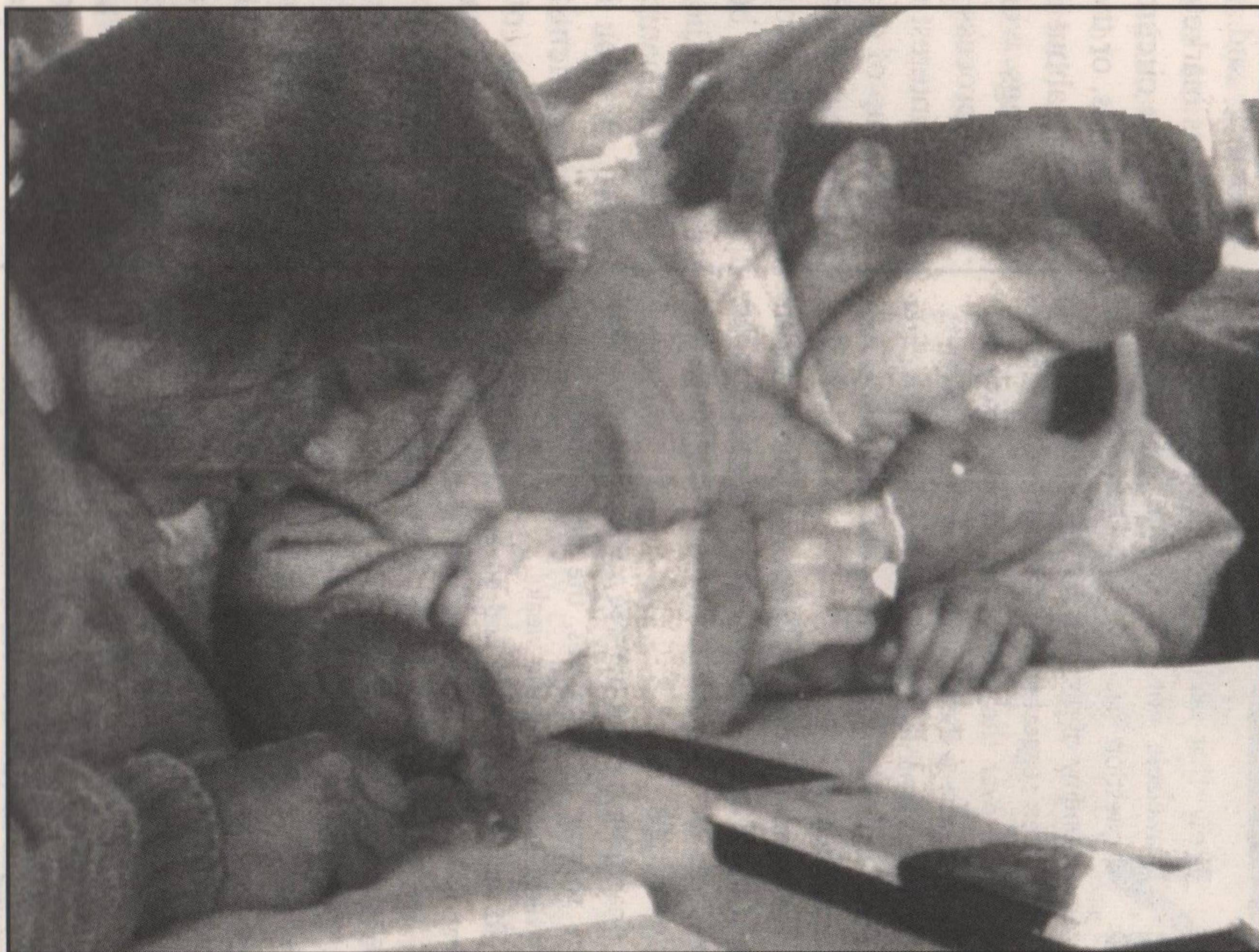
they are clever ... congratulate them on working hard".

The real significance of the research for anyone interested in real education, however, lay in a sentence buried at the end of the *Guardian's* report: "the studies also confirm the fragility of self-esteem, in that it can be boosted, and knocked down so easily, in one afternoon". The research is actually an indictment of conventional authoritarian schooling. That schools (in Britain as well as the USA) can produce children with such a fragile sense of self, so utterly dependent on the praise or criticism of adult authorities, is a marker of profound educational failure.

If the focus of education is an externally-directed attempt to 'motivate' children, to discover exactly which kind of praise is most effective in making them do what adults consider to be important, this fundamentally devalues children, and undermines their personalities. True self-esteem comes from self-rule.

It may be worth pointing out, in this fiftieth anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, that Article 26 (2) of the Declaration states that "Education shall be directed to *the full development of the human personality* and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace." It is a measure of our low level of civilization that these words seem today to be the products of wild-eyed idealism, when in fact they do not begin to indicate what will be needed if our children are to grow up strong and free, and not vulnerable and broken.

Milan Rai



# anarchist fortnightly

# Freedom

Vol. 59 No. 15

1st August 1998

50p

Tameside, Greater Manchester, and Ealing, West London, and beyond ...

## Where the poor go to die

Think of something like an ante-chamber to the tomb, a waiting-room for death, and you will have a clue to what it must be like in some of our old folks homes in this country. The tragedy of the Tameside Care Group and their attempts to cut costs by sacking staff is becoming clearer with every passing day. Last month it was reported that another Labour council at Ealing, West London, was using bullying tactics to move elderly residents at Cecil Court, run by Cecil Housing Trust, to replace them with homeless folk and the disabled and claim a £1.2 million government grant.

The Labour Council in Ealing, where seventy pensioners are being shifted out, claims their needs are not a priority. As a consequence Sophie Goodchild of the *Independent on Sunday* writes: "Age Concern is drawing up emergency guidelines on how the managers of old people's homes should treat frail and elderly tenants traumatised by home closures".

The inmates in the residential home and the sheltered accommodation are accusing the council, and its landlords Cecil Housing Trust, of treating them 'like dirt' and with heavy-handedness forcing them to move to new homes miles away from friends and family at short notice. The problem is that funding is available for the disabled and the homeless, but not for the old.

Mrs Baxendale, whose mother-in-law was in the home, says of the council and the Trust: "They have behaved with utter irresponsibility and have been callous. They just wanted to grab the money ... as long as the council could get their hands on this property to reduce their own housing lists, they didn't care about the old people involved".

The chief executive of Central Cecil Housing Trust, Geoff Brighton, said: "It was a difficult and extremely distressing process, but there will always be some customers who will complain".

Derek Pattison, President of Tameside Trades' Council, has talked of old people today being shoved around like sacks of potatoes - "like commodities", he said. This view seemed to be supported by Hazel O'Neil, a sacked care worker, who told us that teenagers in Tameside homes are going round demanding to know of the old inmates why they have put so many objections in the Complaints Book.

### The human 'conveyor belt'

At the recent public hearing into conditions in Tameside Care Homes after scab agency staff moved in, we heard of beds not changed for three weeks. We heard of doctors not being informed when a patient with a heart condition became ill. We heard of the property and clothing of the inmates going missing and of drying machines bursting into flames because they had not been cleaned for ages.

Because of the shortage of staff caused by the sackings, the elderly residents are bedded down early before the night shift goes one. One striker has claimed that the elderly are being asked to stay in bed until 10.30 or 11.00



in the morning, so they miss breakfast and some miss their medication (see *Socialist Voice*, May 1998). The television is left on from 7am until bedtime to distract the inmates.

One carer was stopped by the management from entering a home to celebrate the 90th birthday of her friend. The sacked carers can't go into the Tameside homes to visit their friends. One old lady, a resident in a home, told last week's public hearing that "the management won't let the sacked carers into the homes, because they would come back and tell the horror stories of what is going on".

Other inmates are reporting that they are retreating into their own rooms to avoid the bedlam and chaos outside in the living rooms. Management is even preventing the inmates from waving to the sacked care workers on picket by closing the curtains in some cases. Staff shortages and cuts have been making life for old people in these old folk's homes unbearable for a long time. Lillian Luckham, a sacked care worker, described her work in the *Socialist Voice*: "We started work at 8am and breakfast was at 9am. During that summer [1989] many people had breakfast at lunchtime or did without. People were put on the toilet and I'm ashamed to say often left there for hours because it was easier than toileting them on a regular basis".

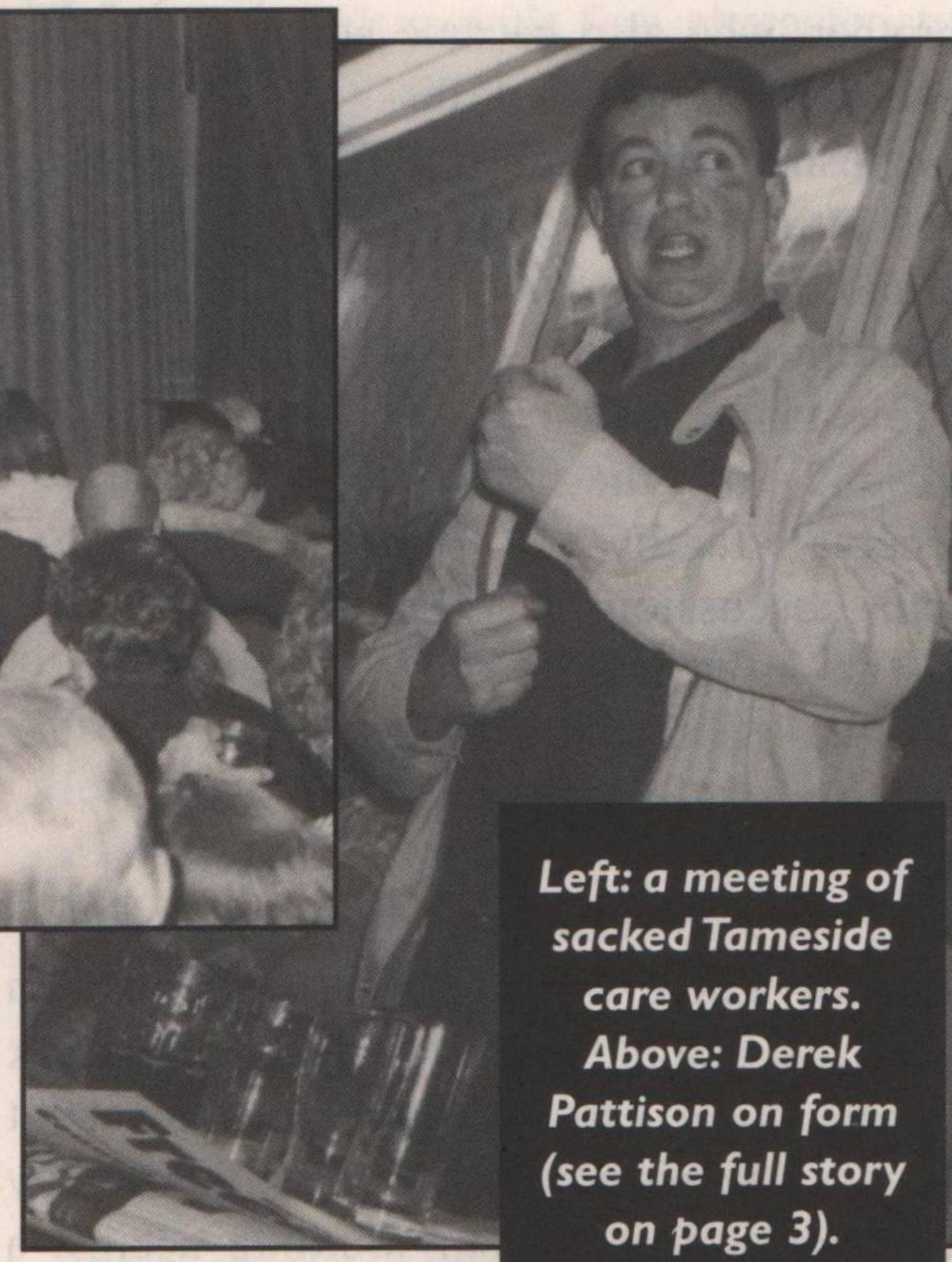
Later she asks in despair: "Where was the care? It was like a conveyor belt - people were got up, fed, watered and put back to bed".

Years ago Malcolm Muggeridge warned us that one day we would come to treat people like factory-farmed battery chickens - it seems that we have been practising it on old people for a long time.

### The lonely death

Who in their right mind would go into one of our old people's homes cheerfully and of their own free will?

It was the kind of thing that George Orwell had in mind in his essay *How the Poor Die*: "... every institution will always bear upon it some lingering memory of its past ... and it is difficult to enter a workhouse without being reminded of *Oliver Twist*. Hospitals began as a kind of casual ward for lepers and the like to die in, and they continued as places where medical students learned their art on the bodies of the poor ... I would be far from complaining about the treatment I have received in any English hospital, but I



Left: a meeting of sacked Tameside care workers. Above: Derek Pattison on form (see the full story on page 3).

do know that it is a sound instinct that warns people to keep out of hospitals if possible, and especially out of public wards."

At last week's public hearing in Stalybridge Labour Club, John, a hospital worker from Stockport, warned of illegal practices in the Tameside Care Group homes. He claimed that oxygen was being self-administered and there was self-medication by senile inmates.

Orwell writes: "Whatever the legal position may be, it is unquestionable that you have far less control over your own treatment, far less certainty that frivolous experiments will not be tried on you, when it is a case of 'accept

the discipline or get out'."

Lillian Luckham relates: "... an elderly gentleman I had become fond of was obviously dying and he did not want to be left alone. I agreed to stay with him and sat talking to him about our mutual interest (Manchester City Football Club). Very near the end of his life my manager came in and ordered me to go to the dining room and help out. I explained the situation, but she insisted I leave the room ... I refused. About five minutes later the gentleman passed away."

Lillian got threatened with the sack for that act of kindness. She says "life is cheap when it comes to caring". No wonder she is now warning: "Don't grow old, because you are no longer of any value to society".

Orwell saw it happen: "This business of people just dying like animals, for instance, with nobody standing by, nobody interested, the death not ever noticed till the morning - this happened more than once". This was in 1929 in a hospital in a poor district of Paris. When he wrote about it in 1946 Orwell though in England things were getting better than that.

In Tameside, and possibly in Ealing, we seem to be going back to an earlier and more brutal era. Clearly it's better to die in your own bed rather than these dreary homes, on what Lillian Luckham calls the 'conveyor belt'. But that's what most of us have got to look forward to in twenty, thirty, forty years hence.

Albert Shore



## NET WATCH



### Boycott call for Chess Olympiad

Kirsan Ilyumzhino, president of Kalmykia, is also president of the World Chess Federation. The accusation is that he is a megalomaniac who is diverting the country's slender resources to create a *City for Chess* for the forthcoming Olympiad. The British Chess Federation is nevertheless intent on sending a team, because of the billions poured into the coffers of chess by Ilyumzhino. Any opposition in Kalmykia has been silenced even to the extent of murders of opponents. The latest person to fall victim is newspaper editor Larisa Yudina, who was stabbed to death on 7th June and her body was next day found in a pond. She had been an outspoken critic of Ilyumzhino and at the time of her death she was investigating allegations of financial impropriety relating to a state-owned company. Ilyumzhino banned a demonstration in protest at the murder. Yudina was not the unlucky victim of a mugging. It is documented that she had received a phone call from a man who offered to give her proof that the money had been embezzled by the state company she was investigating. She got into a car to meet him, was driven away and never seen alive again. This same Ilyumzhino, an admirer of Saddam Hussein, is also a contender for the presidency of Russia in the year 2000.

### The saga of the Good Ship Neptune Jade

Neptune Jade with scab-manned cargo from England was boycotted in Oakland, Australia, and had to sail for Vancouver without any of its cargo or the crew allowed on shore. This was in solidarity with the Liverpool dockers' strike. The ship then sailed for Vancouver where it received the same treatment. Then it was directed to Japan where two ports refused it service. Finally the news is that now it has reached Taiwan where it was sold, renamed and its scab crew dismissed (see page 6 for full story).

### Food not Bombs

The US police continue the harassment of the food distributors to the needy in San Francisco with over sixty arrests on 14th July (see page 6 for full story).

### Moscow Protest Camp

A protest camp by workers to demand payment of unpaid wages has been set up in Moscow outside the White House. Two of the tents are by Anarchist Workers, according to a short communiqué received on 22nd July on a-infos.

(compiled by John Rety)

The French publication *Itinéraire* is a remarkable periodical which is described as a "libertarian biographical internationalist review", is produced by a small multi-national team associated with the French Fédération Anarchiste and led by Didier Roy in Paris, and which during the past eleven years has provided a series of a dozen well-edited, well-written, well-illustrated, well-produced, large-format, low-priced introductions to a group of anarchist and other socialist figures, including Proudhon, Kropotkin and Malatesta. The latest double issue (14/15) covers one of the nicest of all anarchists, Elisée Reclus (1830-1905), together with his elder brother Elie and other relations and also some of his colleagues, all of whom were involved in the French anarchist movement over a period of nearly a century.

The Reclus brothers, like Kropotkin, were unusual among anarchist leaders in being distinguished people quite independent of their political activity. The Reclus family were Huguenots (Calvinist Protestants) in south-western France, and the Reclus parents were a pastor and a teacher in a Huguenot community. Elie and Elisée studied theology until they lost first interest and then faith in the subject. Elie turned to social science and became a pioneering ethnologist, and Elisée turned to geography and became one of the leading geographers of the late nineteenth century, especially as the author of the *Nouvelle géographie universelle*, published in twenty volumes from 1876 to 1894, and *L'Homme et la terre*, published in six volumes from 1905 to 1908.

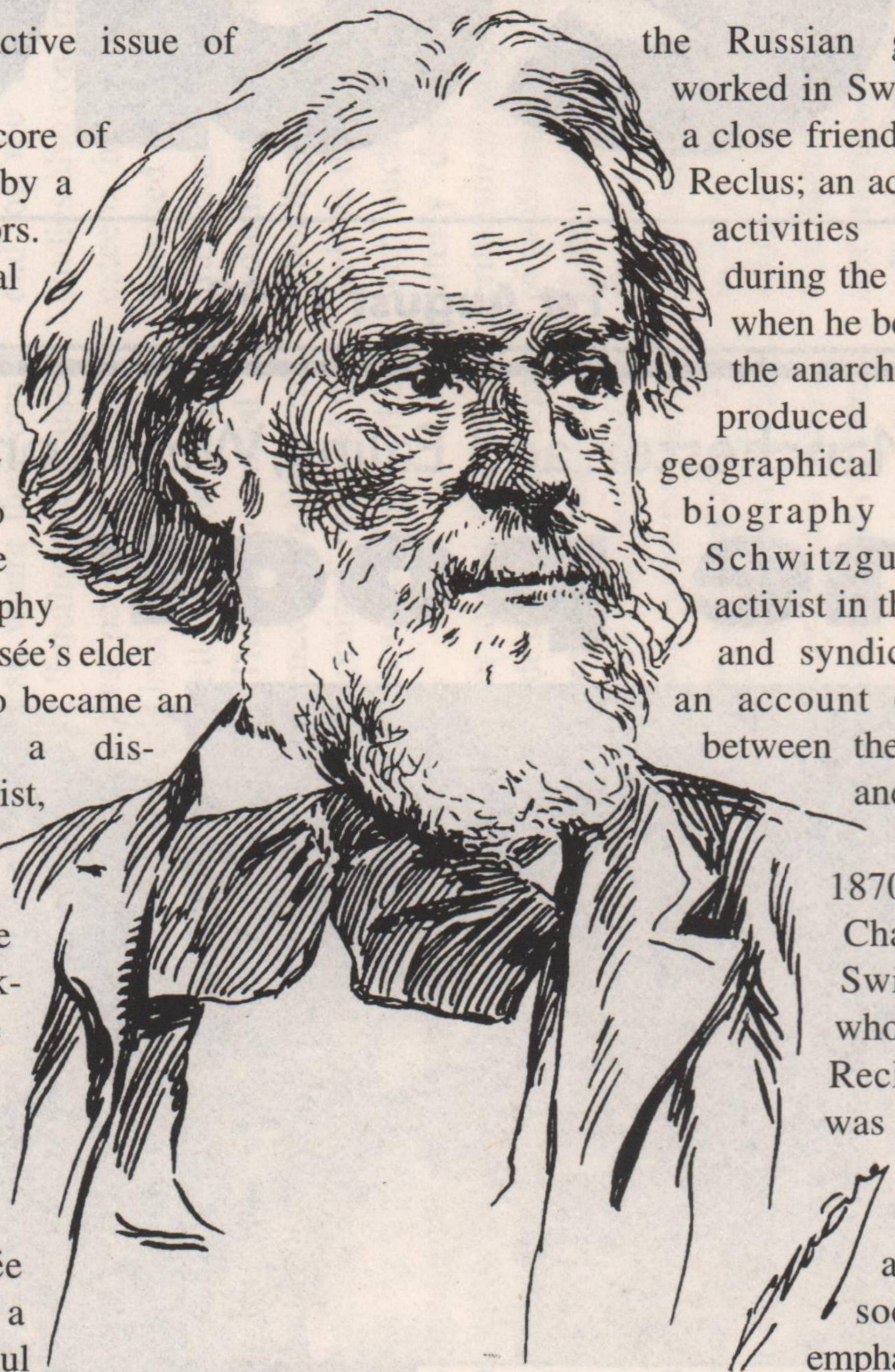
In politics they followed a common path to the left. They became republicans, and went into exile when Louis Napoléon seized power in 1851. After returning to France they both married and lived together in Paris. (Elisée became a freemason, though he was never active.) They were involved in several cooperative ventures inspired by the socialist ideas of Charles Fourier, but in 1864 they joined the new International Working Men's Association and they were also uncomfortably associated with Michael Bakunin. They and their younger brother Paul took part in the Paris Commune in 1871, narrowly escaped death, and went into exile again. In Switzerland Elisée began his geographical masterpiece and also joined the libertarian Jura Federation. In 1876 he spoke at Bakunin's funeral, and in 1877 he made friends with Kropotkin. He took an important though generally reticent part in the anarchist movement, never writing more than articles or pamphlets (several of which were first published in or later translated into English). He always enjoyed widespread respect, not only on the left but in the intellectual establishment. He returned to France, but in 1894 made his last move to Belgium, where he died in 1905.

Reclus was also unusual among anarchists for having a consistently positive view of humanity, a completely delightful character, a wide circle of friends and colleagues in many countries, and a rich family life (the first two of his wives died in childbirth, but he enjoyed happy relations with his many relations, children and grandchildren). The Reclus family was indeed a remarkable phenomenon, there are several notes on other members, and it is noted that the women, though less well known than the men, included several successful teachers and writers. Elisée Reclus, its most famous member, was probably the best-liked figure in anarchist history, seems to have had no enemies, and was generally regarded as a secular saint who served "neither god nor master" and enjoyed a long and good life. The pleasures involved in writing and reading about such a person make this a

## Elisée Reclus

particularly attractive issue of *Itinéraire*.

It contains a score of separate articles by a dozen contributors. After an editorial introduction, there is a detailed chronology of the Reclus family from 1824 to 1905. Then come in turn: a biography of Elie Reclus, Elisée's elder brother, who also became an anarchist and a distinguished scientist, as a leading ethnologist; a description of the Protestant background of the Reclus family and discussion of its influence on the political beliefs of Elisée and Elie; a biography of Paul Reclus, Elie's son, who also became an anarchist and did much to preserve the work of his uncle and father; a polemic about Reclus's relationship with scientific ecology and political ecologism, warning against a facile identification of the former with the latter (especially arguing against John Clark's book on Reclus); an account of Reclus's work as a writer, emphasising his poetic style; a biography of Jacques Reclus, Paul's son, who worked as a teacher and writer in China; an account of Reclus's work as an educationist, emphasising his libertarian principles; a biography of Léon Metchnikoff,



the Russian geographer who worked in Switzerland and was a close friend and colleague of Reclus; an account of Reclus's activities in Switzerland during the 1870s and 1880s, when he became involved in the anarchist movement and produced the bulk of his geographical masterpiece; a biography of Adhémar Schwitzguébel, a leading activist in the Swiss anarchist and syndicalist movement; an account of the relations between the Reclus brothers and Bakunin during the 1860s and 1870s; a biography of Charles Perron, the Swiss cartographer who drew maps for Reclus's books and was briefly involved with the anarchist movement; an account of Reclus's social philosophy, emphasising its positive and optimistic features; a biography of Pierre Martin, a French anarchist who took leading parts in the Lyon trial of 1883 and the Vienne May Day riot of 1890 and ended his life campaigning against the First World War; an account of Reclus's geographical work; an account of Reclus's activity in Belgium, where he lived from 1894; a biography of Nadar (Gaspard Tournachon), the French photographer who produced many famous pictures of leading figures in late nineteenth century France, including several anarchists. And the issue ends with a detailed bibliography of Reclus's publications and a



striking family tree of the Reclus tribe.

The various contributions are written by real experts, several of whom have produced substantial books on their respective subjects. The whole is illustrated by a remarkable collection of pictures, including many from family collections never shown before, and fills 112 large-format pages. There seem to be very few errors.

Altogether this is an extraordinary tribute to an extraordinary man, well up to the standard of the series and well worth studying with care. After doing so, one wants hardly to read any of the new books on him but rather to read some of the old books and pamphlets by him, both of which categories are advertised in it. **NW**

*Itinéraire* may normally be obtained on subscription, which is the best way of supporting its work, but single copies are available (issue 14/15 costs 70 francs). Anyone who is interested should obtain this issue without delay: half of the previous issues have already gone out of print, though copies are still available of those on Proudhon, Flores Magón, Poulaille, Goldman, Varlin, and Voline. Information from and orders to: *Itinéraire*, 1 bis rue Emilie, 77500 Chelles, France.

## The Cowardice of the Peace Movement

Most of us feel that only in the depths of patriotic paranoia are pacifists considered cowards, and many anarchists might well feel admiration for, say, the Ploughshares movement and find the account *Bomber Grounded, Runway Closed* (Rose Hill Books, 1994) written by one of its most inspired activists, Ciaran O'Reilly, a record that they could envy. This movement, now thirty years old, is the direct action movement within pacifism. Its principal spokesperson is Friar Dan Berrigan, a Jesuit priest, and it draws its name from the biblical swords into ploughshares text found in both Micah and Isaiah. It has made sixty or so attacks on military hardware at a cost to the war machine of millions of dollars and many years of penal servitude for the participants. There have also been, of course, many other actions against militarism not involving damage to equipment (trespassing, obstruction, etc.) which have resulted in considerable judicial revenge. To call such courageous activists cowards is absurd and insulting; a better term might be misguided, which sounds patronising and my hunch is they would rather be insulted than patronised. Also there is often a cosiness and shallow complacency in the peace movement which only an insult can penetrate – anarchists, fortunately, are far too quarrelsome for such folksiness to develop.

The peace movement cowardice consists in its refusal to see that it needs to destroy Christianity if it is to overcome war. It attacks the state unceasingly but lacks the courage to attack that which legitimises the state, the

very concept of power itself, God. They attack the symptom but not the cause, lack the bottle to go after The Big One. The movement is in large measure a Christian creation and draws much strength and legitimacy from the Christian faith, but if it is to liberate humanity from war it needs to destroy its creator. It must bite – with fatal effect – the hand that feeds it. (This is no news to anarchists – they have long agreed with Bakunin's *God and the State* that only if God dies can humanity live, and if God exists it is necessary to abolish him, in that eerily prescient book that saw so clearly the dangers of scientific socialism.)

What Bakunin did not see was that the destruction of Christianity must be the work of Christians themselves. It parallels Marx's comment about the liberation of the working class. (Of course encouragement from outside the church would be very welcome!) Christian pacifists worship power, domination, they uphold on Sundays what they attempt to destroy on weekdays, they support with one hand what they put down with the other. Were they to worship love or freedom we might join them. The last anarchist to worship love was Paul Pawlowski in the '60s, but I'm sure our forebears in the French revolution joined in the worship of the Goddess of Reason seated on the high altar in Notre Dame. But Christians have given worship such a bad name that we won't touch it any more. Christian pacifism is an oxymoron, God is no pacifist, but the ultimate weapon, these deluded pacifists think they have something greater than any

H-bomb on their side. Christians must first disarm themselves before preaching to others – it's unilateral spiritual disarmament, Ban the Biggest Bomb of all.

Love backed by force renders love a mockery, sullen acquiescence is the only realistic response to God's power. He legitimises all tyrannies, sanctifies all domination, renders all ethics and morality meaningless, obey or else. If God exists there is no hope for humanity, we are doomed to remain children forever, never to grow up to act responsibly or be autonomous but remain frustrated and unfulfilled. Drumacore says it all.

How might Christians, like Samson, bring down this oppressive structure about their ears and by their spiritual death, free our culture from the tyranny of God? A crucial insight is given by Erich Fromm in his essay *The Dogma of Christ* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963) which says in effect that to love Jesus is to hate God. Mere denial of God's existence has had no effect, he needs to be obliterated, blotted out, extinguished, by the wholly human figure of the carpenter, recognise no other god. Christianity would then become the JC fan club, the Jesus Christ Appreciation Society, a humanism devoting itself wholly to human liberation. The carpenter's hammer, so beloved of Ploughshares activists, could then be restored to its proper place as an ideological weapon. While denying him any supernatural status we can see in his vision of peace on earth all that we desire.

Peter Lumsden

# The English: a politically unpolitical people

Tameside in Greater Manchester is a microcosm of England's parish pump politics. Last week a packed public hearing into the local Labour council's part in mismanaging homes for the old run by Tameside Care Group, and in the sacking of two hundred care workers, showed what really moves ordinary English people.

This public hearing displayed the political passion of the English people as being for the most part unpolitical – the 'Politics of the Unpolitical' as Herbert Read once called it. Unpolitical politics is against party positions and about life.

Of course, there were politicians at the hearing – party politicians – saying join the labour Party and help us to win out over Tony Blair and New Labour. There were those who exhorted us to move this motion, pass this resolution, raise this amendment. Immediately the room blossomed in a thousand yawns.

Then there were those who called on us to bring on the walking, talking professional politicians. Dennis Skinner, Arthur Scargill and a host of minor celebrities. There were the messages from the distinguished personalities like Wedgwood Benn and others who couldn't quite make the hearing. A repeat of the yawning blooms.

Councillor Terry Kenyon, the nearest thing to a professional politician at the hearing and a defector from the Local Labour Party, denounced this name dropping. He said it was easy for these people to send their messages of support on pieces of paper. Councillor Kenyon called for a boycott of the old people's homes run by Tameside Care Group. But even he couldn't resist urging the meeting to "shift the toe-rags who are keeping Oldham [the Labour leader of Tameside Council] in power".

Party politics is a very addictive drug so that even a disillusioned Labour Party politician like Councillor Kenyon can't kick the habit.

### 'Dirty bed sheets'

The concerns of the vast majority at the hearing were much more real and deeper than what passes for "the parliamentary soap opera", as the humourist Miles Kington called it recently. Their worry had little to do with 'shifting toe-rags', 'playing politics', 'constituency party antics', 'electioneering', and 'appointing political pals', but had everything to do with everyday life as most of us know it.

True Brian Hargreaves, whose mother died last year in Yew Tree old folks home, was upset about the people in Tameside Care Group "who are washing their hands a lot better than Pontius Pilate ever did". And others, like Hazel O'Neil – a sacked care worker – argued "Tameside Council and the TCG are out for profits, not care".

But what brought the gasps of horror were the descriptions of the dirt, the filth, the 'ants in the biscuits', the stolen property, the articles of clothing going missing from inmates of the homes, the bullying of those who complain, the unchanged bed sheets, and all those cold dinners for the residents.

For the normal English person it is the way we live that matters, not party politics. Compared to lying on filthy unchanged bed sheets for weeks on end, gaining party political advantage seems like so much trivia.

Decent customs and practices, and shaping a form of life for honest people goes much deeper than party politics ever can. The scandal of the TCG and the sacked care workers should tell us that.

### All politicians unfit to rule

According to Miles Kington writing in the *Independent*: "Party politics was perfectly summed up long ago by H.L. Mencken when he said that democracy was a system in which both sides tried to convince the electorate that the other side was unfit to rule the country – and both sides were commonly right".

Derek Pattison, president of the local Trades Council who clearly has little time for party politics, told us that "increasingly people were being looked at as commodities", and he could see a bleak future for the elderly in which they were treated as sub-human. "Higher profits in old folks homes" he insisted, "can only be got by driving down wages or reducing staff ratios".

"The strike was engineered by the Council and TCG bosses" claimed Linda Lynn, the senior steward of the care workers. She argued it was a set-up by the authorities to cut wages down to the level of the minimum wage being introduced by the government. Thus the so-called 'minimum wage' becomes the 'living wage' in the eyes of the bosses.

Showing himself to be on cynical form, Mr Pattison waved a copy of the *Ashton Reporter* from 1993 in which Council boss Roy Oldham and the Labour Council had guaranteed when the private 'arms-length' company that the care workers could have their jobs back with the local authority if things didn't work out. That was Roy Oldham and the Labour Council's pledge then, and he is not honouring it now.

Yet today Councillor Oldham is still making pledges: "I stand by my pledges" he told the *Ashton Reporter* last month. Not surprisingly nobody is snapping his hand off this time.

No wonder too that the turn-out at the last local elections in Tameside was tiny, indeed there was a poster put out on behalf of the care workers calling for people not to vote in last May's local elections.

Of course there are people trying to do a damage limitation exercise on behalf of the Labour Party, and some were at the hearing and some are on the Strike Support Group.

But such views at the 'public hearing' were received scornfully. Tony Crowther, a member of the RMT, and others said: "the Labour Party is not part of the solution, it is part of the problem".

No doubt he and many present would also agree with Miles Kington when he writes: "an opposition is only a government which has yet had a chance to discredit itself".

Certainly the electric atmosphere of this public hearing was charged-up by the ordinary residents, relatives and carers who gave us their straightforward stories. No professional political figure could have matched this.

Unpolitical politician

— COPY DEADLINE —  
The next issue of Freedom will be dated 15th August, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 6th August.

## Northern News

### Trustee declines to resign

Andrew Bennett, Labour MP for Dukinfield and Hyde and a trustee of Tameside Care Group, was recently cornered at his surgery on 3rd July by members of the Tameside care workers support group.

Mr Bennett was asked a number of questions in relation to his involvement in the current dispute. On being asked whether he would resign as a trustee he replied that he felt it would be pointless since somebody worse than himself might be appointed. He also stated that the carers currently involved in the dispute would not have been so badly paid in relation to the private care sector if they had accepted the £2 an hour pay cut and not got themselves sacked. He was also asked how a so-called not-for-profit company had made £750,000 profit last year and given its directors pay rises.

Mr Bennett said there was little he could do since the dispute was between Tameside Care Group and the trade union UNISON, whose members had been sacked.

It does appear to this observer that Mr Bennett is powerless to interfere in the exploitation of old people and their carers. Perhaps as a trustee Mr Bennett is not consulted on the use of expensive scab

labour (with taxi fares thrown in) to break the strike. Perhaps Mr Bennett knew nothing of the promises given to honour rationally agreed pay rates when the Tameside Care group was privatised from the council in 1990.

I felt my audience with Mr Bennett was a waste of time since New Labour sold out all its principles to get elected. They represent no one except their own career ambitions.

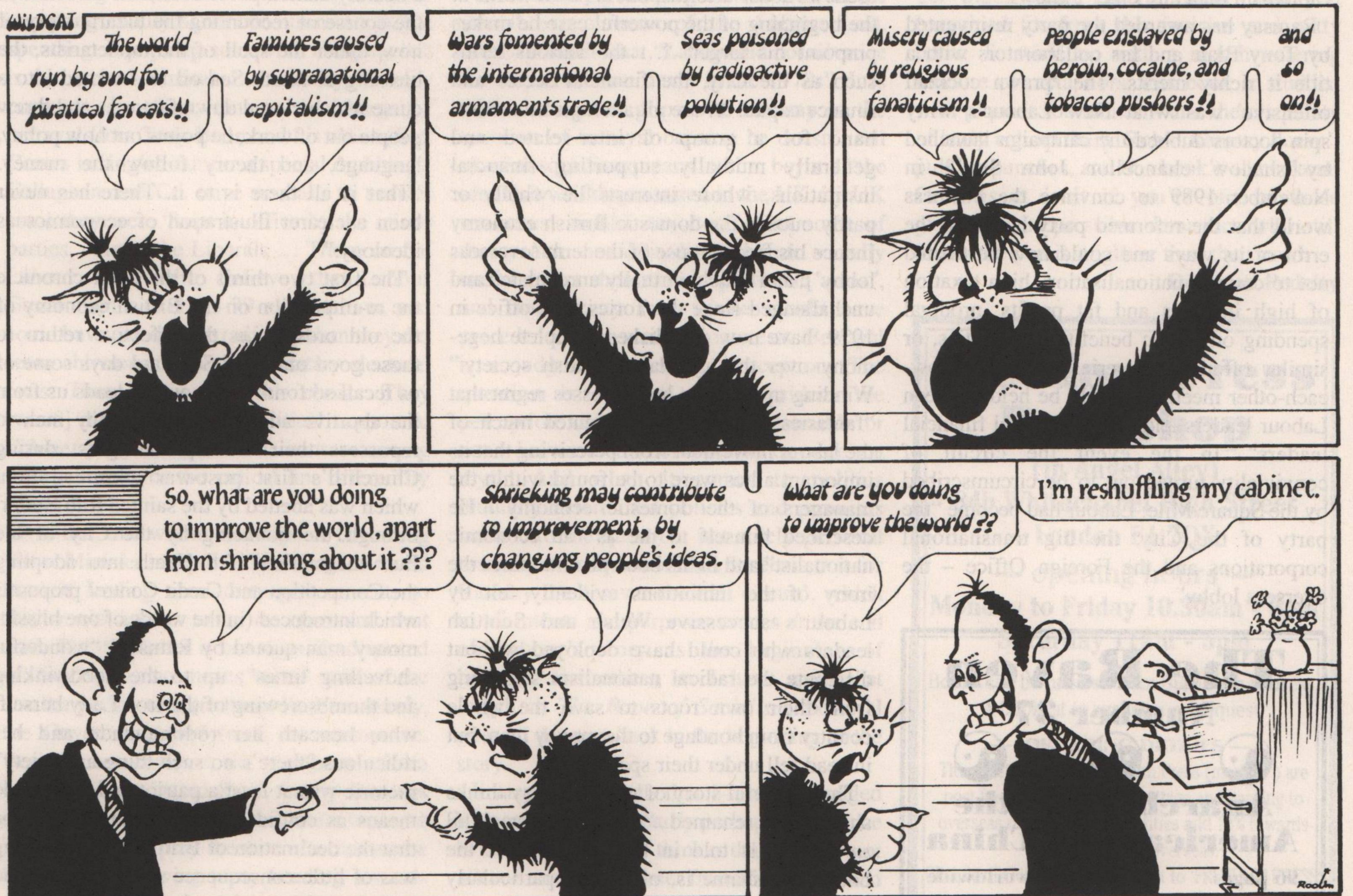
### New Deal equals Bum Deal

In July this year the New Deal for those aged 25 and over came into effect. This is a compulsory scheme for those called upon to participate. Non-participation means loss of the Job Seekers' Allowance entitlement. To mark this date there was a demonstration outside the Moss Side Job Centre in Manchester on 9th July organised by the Manchester Anti-JSA group.

Groups affiliated to the North West Against the JSA and members of Earth First! turned up to hand out leaflets and unfurl banners stating that New Labour equals slave labour. Extra security had been drafted in by the Job centre, obviously envisaging an occupation.

In the event the demo was good natured and lasted a couple of hours.

Jim Evans



— VISIBLE HANDS —

## Brown's Millennial Surprise

Gordon Brown's statement of economic policy on 14th July was a budget for the next three years, in the run-up to the next election. Hugo Young of the *Guardian* interpreted the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) as "proclaim[ing] the continuing existence of a project that might be called, after all, social democratic: a belief in the public good attainable by public means, without any more nonsense about the minimal state or flirtations with private health provision". Brown's plans – "a prudent mixture of caution and ambition" – "speak for a world which, in the basic services that citizens depend on, insists there is still such a thing as society", according to Young. Labour left-winger Brian Sedgmore told the Chancellor the CSR had given him "the first whiff of the Socialist Millennium". "As a paid-up member of the awkward squad, can I say, 'You're a star,'" said the MP for Hackney South and Shoreditch. Leaving aside the issue of whether or not Brown's plans are feasible, and the conjuring tricks achieved by Treasury accountants, let us consider whether the plans are indeed 'social democratic' or even 'Socialist'.

One of the characteristics of the CSR is the spread of means-testing. £2.5 billion of extra cash will supposedly guarantee a 'minimum income' for 'poor pensioners' (together with other measures such as the abolition of charges for eye tests). At the other end of the age range, there is to be a pilot scheme to trail the replacement of child benefit for 16 to 18 year-olds with a means-tested grant tied to staying on at school.

Gordon Brown said: "At the heart of our review has been a determination that we fulfil our duty to the oldest members of our society". Barbara Castle, Labour Baroness, condemned

the government's pension initiative: "Instead of higher pensions as of right, fulfilling the manifesto pledge that all pensioners should get a fair share of rising prosperity, the government offers the poorest pensioners a modest increase in means-tested income support [£4.25 per week for single pensioners and £7.25 for couples], disguised as a minimum income guarantee."

Another feature of the CSR plans is privatisation. There will be £11 billion worth of 'asset sales' over the next three years. The Ministry of Defence will sell off buildings in London and elsewhere, 49% of the Commonwealth Development Corporation is to be sold off, as is half of air traffic control. Taxpayer subsidy is also to be withdrawn from the London Underground from April 2000.

It is also clear that the CSR plans are predicated on a continuing squeeze on public sector pay. The Chancellor said, "we must ensure that public sector pay settlements are fair and affordable and do not put at risk our targets for public service improvement in each of the next three years for which we have budgeted". Therefore the independent pay review bodies were to be told, said Brown, to take into account departmental spending limits, the government's inflation target of 2.5%, and "the need to achieve the government's targets for output and efficiency". John Edmonds of the GMB general union accused the government of

trying to build better services "on the sands of low morale and low pay". He pointed out, accurately, that New Labour was "effectively asking low-paid workers in the public sector to pay for its election pledges", something Edmonds rightly condemned as 'unjust and unfair'. David Hart of the National Association of Head Teachers described the new 'responsibilities' of the pay review bodies as "a public sector pay policy by any definition".

Means-testing, privatisation, low pay – and the maintenance of low taxes for the rich – these are not policies commonly associated with socialism or even social democracy. Why then the excitement from the Labour backbenches? Because Brown has promised massive spending on health and education. The National Health Service is to receive an extra £21 billion over the next three years: a real-terms increase of 5.7% next year, 4.5% the year after, and an average of 4.7% from then on. It is generally agreed that a real increase of 3% is needed simply to keep up with growing demands for care and the cost of new technology and drugs. Education is to get an extra £19 billion over three years, with real increases of 5.1% a year until the next election. The Welfare State is apparently receiving a major boost. Thus the references to social democracy and even socialism.

The main reason these increases look so impressive is because Brown has, as promised, stuck to Tory spending plans for the first two

years of government (plans which the Conservatives never expected to keep to). The starting point of these apparently astonishing increases is therefore very low.

Larry Elliot pointed out in the *Guardian* that even with the massive cash injection announced by Brown, the proportion of national income spent on education will rise from 4.6% in Blunkett's first year to 5% of GDP. "In the last year of Jim Callaghan's government, 5.4% of national income was devoted to education". Conservative spokesperson on education David Willetts said: "All the Government is doing after five years is bringing education spending as a proportion of national wealth back to where it was when they started". The figure at the end of John Major's period in office was 4.9% (it fell under Blunkett). At the beginning of Major's reign in 1992/93, education took 5.3% of national wealth.

Blair identified "education, education, education" as the priority for New Labour. It is difficult to see how increasing the share of national income spent on education to something short of the proportion John Major presided over in 1992 qualifies as social democracy. Paying more for education through privatisation proceeds and public borrowing rather than increased taxation also seems rather less than socialistic. What is critical, of course, is how the money is to be spent, not merely the aggregate totals (Colin Ward, for example, has posed provocative questions concerning the desirability of the 'poor school'). It seems clear however that Brown's budget promises little more than a more efficient and meritocratic capitalism, rather than any serious modification of the relations of power between classes.

Milan Rai

### Prawn Cocktail Party: the hidden power behind New Labour

by Robin Ramsay

published by Vision Press, 182 pages, £9.99

By anarchist standards, Robin Ramsay is not particularly radical. He is a member of the Labour Party – and has been for the past fifteen years. Yet he has written a book which in one sense at least is a more radical critique of modern British capitalism than any other I know.

Ramsay has awarded the party re-invented by Tony Blair and his collaborators with a title it richly merits. The 'prawn cocktail offensive' was what New Labour's witty spin doctors dubbed the campaign launched by shadow chancellor John Smith in November 1989 to convince the business world that the reformed party had seen the error of its ways and could now be trusted not to commit nationalisation, high taxation of high incomes and fat profits, prodigal spending on public benefits or facilities, or similar offences. A series of get-to-know-each-other meetings would be held between Labour leaders and "industrial and financial leaders". In the event the circuit of conviviality turned out to be circumscribed by the Square Mile: Labour had become "the party of the City, the big transnational corporations and the Foreign Office – the overseas lobby".

## A CLEAR CASE OF

This circumscription of government hospitality is of central significance to Ramsay's thesis because his book is not an attack on capitalism per se but on the stranglehold which bankers, financiers, speculators, and other parasites – let us call them simply the money men – exercise on Britain's economy. Robin is a gentleman and eschews abusive terms, but his own words at the beginning of the powerful case he makes pinpoint his target: "... the various terms such as the City, the financial sector and finance capital ... are all attempts at a shorthand for a group of inter-related and generally mutually supporting financial institutions, whose interests lie wholly or partly outside the domestic British economy [hence his frequent use of the term 'overseas lobby']; and which, virtually unregulated and unchallenged since the Tories took office in 1979, have now established complete hegemony over the agenda of British society." Winding up his case he expresses regret that "fantasies of socialism prevented much of the labour movement from perceiving that its important allies were to be found within the managers of the domestic economy". He described himself to me as "an economic nationalist" and in his book he underlines the irony of the inhibitions evidently felt by Labour's successive Welsh and Scottish leaders who could have deployed without disrepute the radical nationalism stemming from their own roots to save the whole country from bondage to the money men, but instead fell under their spell.

The shameful story of what Ramsay thinks should be renamed "the prawn cocktail surrender" is told in the last third of the book. The shame is, of course, particularly Labour's, since however much its rivals were

taken in (and they were: Ramsay refers more than once, with, as is his wont, telling supporting evidence, to the economic illiteracy of most of our politicians – and yes, that does include 'Iron Chancellor' Brown, notably over the ERM debacle), they have after all always subscribed to the doctrine that capitalism is good for you. Ramsay has a healthy contempt for economic theories. In the course of recounting the bizarre story of how, under the spell of the monetarists, the blessing of North Sea oil was turned into a curse which closed down factories and threw people out of work, he points out how policy, language, and theory follow the money. "That is all there is to it. There has never been a clearer illustration of economics as ideology."

The first two thirds of the book chronicle the re-imposition on the British economy of the old order, i.e. the effective return to those good old Gold Standard days some of us recall so fondly. The author leads us from the abortive attempt of the money men to repossess their old rip-off rights, during Churchill's first post-war administration, which was abetted by the sainted Rab Butler; through the bouncing by the City of the Euro-mesmerised Ted Heath into adopting the Competition and Credit Control proposals which introduced (in the words of one blissful money man quoted by Ramsay) "wonderful shovelling times"; up to the hoodwinking and thumbscrewing of the Iron Lady herself, who, beneath her rodomontade and her ridiculous "there's no such thing as society" rhetoric was at least a patriot and was by no means as confident as she pretended to be that the decimation of British manufacturing was of little consequence since we now had such fine 'financial products' to export.

Editor since 1983 of the investigative journal *Lobster* and co-author with Stephen Dorril of *Smear! Wilson and the Secret State* (1991), Ramsay specialises in the study of parapolitics ("covert influences on politics" as he defined it for me), and two of his most fascinating chapters, plus many other passages, are devoted to the almost wholly successful efforts of US government agencies (from the most seemingly ingenuous to the most ruthlessly subversive, including of course the CIA), abetted by some of our own State and State-sponsored institutions – Treasury, Foreign Office, MI5, Anglo-American societies and the like – to ensure that American business continued to enjoy rich pickings from overseas markets.

In this enterprise, the Cold War was a godsend. Disinformation – as well as stark truth – regarding 'the Communist threat', planted in the media or manufactured by it, assisted Yankee economic imperialists in raping the noble name of socialism. Through American tutelage and 'in God we trust' dollars former radical critics of capitalism were reduced in droves into licking the hand that paid them but struck the rest of us. That's a story that cries out for a whole book, but a little of it is told here. Some of the cast must have been made of base metal from the start, "fit for stratagems and spoils". Ramsay recounts how such creepy-crawly specimens defecting to the SDP did their damndest to destroy their old party by supporting Michael Foot in the leadership election instead of their more obvious choice of Denis Healey; then how others from Labour's far right voted for the manifesto dubbed by Gerald Kaufman "the longest suicide note in history" to ensure Labour's defeat in the 1983 general election.

### The Raven Number 37



### Anarchism in the Americas and China

96 pages £3 post free worldwide

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

# Thinking Small

James C. Scott is a professor of Political Science and Anthropology at Yale University and is the author of books with intriguing titles: *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* is one, and another is called *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. I have had the chance to read another, just published: *Seeing Like a State* (Yale University Press, 455pages, £25.00).

His argument is that large-scale central planning is a recipe for disaster on a grand scale, and it is relevant to the debate on 'civil society' that I tried to introduce into this column in *Freedom* for 4th July 1998.

He declares that "The Great Leap Forward in China, collectivisation in Russia, and compulsory villagisation in Tanzania, Mozambique, and Ethiopia are among the great human tragedies of the twentieth century, in terms of both lives lost and lives irretrievably disrupted. At a less dramatic but far more common level, the history of Third World development is littered with the debris of huge agricultural schemes and new cities (think of Brasilia or Chandigarh) that have failed their residents."

Scott examines the conditions that make possible these disasters of central planning, the most significant of which is the machinery of state, coupled with "a prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist these plans". But, very interestingly his criticism of the state is not that of market ideologists like Hayek or Milton Friedman, but, he claims, is a "debt to anarchist writers (Kropotkin, Bakunin, Malatesta, Proudhon) who consistently emphasise the role of mutuality as opposed to imperative, hierarchical coordination in the creation of social order."

Predictably he is critical of the authoritarian assumptions of CIAM, and of Le Corbusier and his disciples, and he rejoices in the fact that 75% of the population of Brasilia live in the self-build squatter settlements on the fringe, and that similarly Chandigarh is turned into a functioning city by the unplanned settlements on the periphery. Needless to say, he values the insights of Jane Jacobs in her *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, and thinks that they carry echoes of Proudhon and Kropotkin which she must have picked up, he reckons, from the works of Paul Goodman.

Much of the book is concerned with the big and disastrous plans from the Soviet Union and its satellites, which he realises can be seen "from the post-1989 perspective of capitalist triumphalism, like a kind of quaint archaeology". Not so, he argues, because scientific farming, industrial agriculture and capitalist markets operate in much the same way, with the difference that capitalism requires profits. If you were able to trace back the contents of the global cornucopia of your local supermarket to its origins among displaced peasants, you would feel what has been lost.

Discussing the general ruin that followed the ruling elite's attempt to rationalise food production in Ethiopia, Scott explains that: "What these planners carried in their mind's eye was a certain aesthetic, what one might call a visual codification of modern rural production and community life. Like a religious faith, this visual codification was almost impervious to criticism or disconfirm-

ing evidence. The belief in large farms, monocropping, 'proper' villages, tractor-ploughed fields, and collective or communal farming was an aesthetic conviction undergirded by a conviction that this was the way in which the world was headed ..."

Readers a long way from either Addis Ababa or Moscow will recognise how many of these assumptions were shared by the Ministry of Agriculture in Britain and backed by subsidies. They will also note how the belief in 'proper' villages, as opposed to sporadic settlements remains an article of faith in every British planning authority as well as in the Planning Policy Guidance Notes issued by the Department of the Environment. Authoritarian utopianism begins at home.

The author confesses that one of the case-studies he had intended to include but omitted to keep the book a reasonable length was that of the Tennessee Valley Authority, which he calls "the United States' high-modernist experiment and the grand-daddy of all regional development projects." This omission is a great pity since TVA illustrates the dilemmas that big plans present for completely non-authoritarian people who believe in the rationality of regional planning. Introduced as the showcase of Roosevelt's New Deal, TVA was intended to regenerate the poorest region of the US. This network of dams was planned to end disastrous flooding and soil erosion, to provide cheap power for industry and agriculture.

The message was spread through inspiring wartime books full of dazzling photographs, like Julian Huxley's *TVA: Adventure in Planning*, from the Architectural Press. In the end, TVA power produced the atomic bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, while as Peter Ball puts it, "community development, health and educational services got a minuscule sliver of the total budget."

But the reputation of TVA gave the seal of approval to vast exercises in water engineering all around the globe, backed by the World Bank with what Scott calls its "techno-economic vision". World-ranging engineering firms benefit, but the approach to water as a community resource, based on local water-gathering, and local conversion of wastes, has had to be rediscovered many decades later, both by local protest bodies and by international propagandists like the Intermediate Technology Development Group. He does provide a few, mostly self-evident, rules for avoiding catastrophe. The current grandiose rhetoric of politicians all over the globe suggests that they still need continual repetition.

The first is *Take small steps*. Given that we are all ignorant, prefer to take a small step, stand back and then plan the next. The second is *Favour reversibility*, just because "irreversible interventions have irreversible consequences." The third is *Plan on surprises*. Choose plans that design for flexibility, to accommodate change. And the final one is *Plan on human inventiveness*. This means that we should assume that everyone involved in the project, now or in the future, will grow the experience and insight to improve the plan.

It is good advice, born out of disaster.

Colin Ward

# ECONOMICS AS IDEOLOGY

In the introduction to his chronicle of how "one section of society, chiefly concerned with moving money, has cheated the other sections" in "one of the greatest scams ever pulled" Ramsay coins a striking dictum concerning the manipulation of minds in capitalist representative democracies like our own or America's: "You can see where the power lies in a society by what is excluded from the political agenda". Even supposedly radical media tend to recognise what is off limits and dance to this tune. A footnote three pages from the end of this book tells how *Tribune* spiked a review of a book exposing Britain's military-industrial complex, which Ramsay had submitted a couple of months after unions represented in the arms industry had bought a full-page advertisement in the paper to defend their jobs. "These two events are, of course, not connected", Ramsay very reasonably reassures us. When Paul Anderson reviewed *Prawn Cocktail Party* for *Tribune* recently he used up almost half his space in speculating whether (a) Ramsay had been joking, (b) *Tribune's* advertising manager had been joking when he advised him not to "slag off Ramsay's book" since the publisher would be placing an ad in the quarter page below the review. The rest of Anderson's review was devoted to damning the book with faint praise - "not implausible" but pushes his thesis "rather farther than the evidence will take it", and the like. Well Ramsay writes sparingly, deals in chapter and verse, and is surprisingly wary of conspiracy theories. I have no doubt that if the economics of book publishing encouraged him to do so he could produce at least twice as much evidence to support his thesis.

On one major matter which, while it has no more than an oblique relevance to his thesis,

cannot be avoided in any serious consideration of the history of parliamentary democracy in Britain (to mention no other country) in this century, I must take issue with the author. The 'betrayal myth' (as he bluntly calls it) is raised by him in the context of the Callaghan Governments struggle to obtain help from the IMF in sustaining the value of sterling without accepting unduly harsh conditions on public spending. It pops up somewhat abruptly and is despatched somewhat summarily. Ramsay contends, in effect, that to the charge of betrayal from Tony Benn and his allies (Ken Coates is singled out for a special drubbing), Callaghan and Co. have no case to answer since they were "kept in office by the minor parties, chiefly the Liberals ... Those on the Labour Left who believe the Labour Governments of 1974-79 should have and could have acted more radically than they did seem oblivious to these elementary electoral facts. There really was little choice. They [who?] did not have the political support in Cabinet [why not?], in Parliament, or among the electorate for the radical line offered by the left."

It is true that within two days of becoming Prime Minister in April 1976 Callaghan found himself leading a minority government, so this would appear to be an open and shut case. But the matter is not so easily disposed of. Since it by no means suited most of the smaller parties to go to the polls prematurely, the Government had room for manoeuvre. Besides, according to the testimony of the Liberal leader, David Steel, Sunny Jim was not entirely displeased by his situation as he was minded "to play the next election as the leader of a left-wing party heading towards the centre". More fundamentally, in matters

not dependent on passing legislation through the House, particularly their pig-headedness over the 5% pay norm, Callaghan and his principal lieutenant, Denis Healey, as near as dammit declared war on the trade union wing of their own movement, and Labour hopes were blown away in 'the Winter of Discontent'.

Immediately preceding his remarks on the unreal expectations of the Labour Left, Ramsay admits that "Labour did not advance the socialist cause much in the 1970s". It is difficult to get to grips with Ramsay on the question of betrayal because he doesn't tell us what socialism means to him, beyond "the idea that wealth generated in the UK, by UK resources, should stay here", that some of that wealth should be directed "into socially useful rather than merely profitable areas", and that society as a whole should have precedence over sectional interests. Betrayal is a judgment based on perception. The question is whether one considers the perception and the judgment reasonable or not - i.e. some kind of a reality or merely a myth. And when it comes to politics mutually determined policies and promises come into the question, not solely personal assessments of possibilities. It seems that for Ramsay the 'prawn cocktail circuit', which to all intents and purposes comes at the end of Labour's story, is the beginning of betrayal. For others, as I have argued at length in *The Rape of Socialism*, betrayal goes all the way back to the beginning of the story.

It may be, though, that I have misjudged Ramsay's position, partly perhaps because he is such a disciplined thinker that he does not allow himself to wander from his theme. And don't underestimate the importance of what

he has to say. If his thesis were to make headway in the noddles of those in the higher echelons of the Labour Party, major sections of the CBI would surely be pleased, and the rest of us should give thanks for small mercies. This is political economy in the full sense. If, like me, you read theses on economics as a duty, not for pleasure, you'll get much more entertainment than you bargained for from this incisive and witty book. To wind up with a mouth-watering mixture of metaphors: this book is studded with piquant soundbites - and there's plenty of body behind them. Robin Ramsay doesn't pull his punches, and this book's a knockout. Or it is at least if you're one of those gloriously irrepressible romantics who still thinks the pen is mightier than the sword.

Donovan Pedeltly

## Freedom Press Bookshop

(in Angel Alley)

84b Whitechapel High Street  
London E1 7QX

— opening hours —

Monday to Friday 10.30am - 6pm  
Saturday 11am - 5pm

Books can be ordered from the above address.  
A booklist is available on request.

— ORDERING DETAILS —

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

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

## State atrocity in Jerusalem

Yesterday (22nd July) was a day I won't ever forget. Neither will Salim and Arabiyeh Shawareh or their six children. We had planned a joint Israeli-Palestinian protest against home demolitions (of houses which people have built over twenty years ago on land that nobody wanted, but without planning permission). The idea was to set up a tent near a demolition, a tent that would serve several purposes: protest, solidarity, documentation, and compassionate listening to the family members. We planned to move this tent from site to site wherever the Israeli army put in its bulldozers.

Our bus from Jerusalem held activists from several peace movements – Bat Shalom, Rabbis for Human Rights, Gush Shalom and Peace Now. We are all partners in a coalition called the Israeli Committee against Home Demolitions, and our demonstration was held jointly with Palestinian Land Defence General Committee. We were determined not to be separated from the Palestinians so as to stop the army to be more brutal to them if the soldiers managed to separate us.

As it happened we managed to arrive on a site in Anata, on the edge of Jerusalem, where a demolition was about to take place. This little town is composed entirely of Palestinian refugees who once lived in Old Jerusalem and fled the violence in 1967. They thought they had found refuge in Anata.

After driving through the narrow unpaved streets of Anata we finally located the area and the bus parked as close as possible. There we saw from the hill a beautiful home set into the pastoral valley with one of its walls already crumpled into rubble by a roaring

bulldozer, a family and neighbours sobbing nearby and a unit of Israeli soldiers preventing anyone approaching the scene.

The scene was dreadful. We went down the hill in our small group until the soldiers blocked our progress with their guns and bodies. We were shown an order that this was



Picture by Emily Johns (whose illustrations also appear in John Rety's *Through the Anarchist Press* published by Freedom Press at £3.60)

a closed 'military zone'. So there we stood on the hillside and watched with an unbearable sense of helplessness as the 'civil' administration's bulldozer took the house apart wall by wall.

He drove through the front garden with a profusion of flowers and a lemon tree and slammed the front door as if he were God Almighty. Backing away he slammed again until the entire front was shattered and dangling from metal rods. Then he came from every side, slamming and crashing his shovel against the walls. Finally he lifted the roof, barely suspended, and sent it crashing down below. When that was done, he went around the back of the house and crashed through all the fruit trees, including a small olive stand. He saw a water tank on a platform and knocked that over, the tank tumbling down and a cascade of water drenching the trees now uprooted and broken. He saw two more tanks nearby and knocked over those as well. I have never seen anyone in the Middle East deliberately waste so much water. Then he noticed a shack in the corner of the yard and he churned over to that, his cleated treads grinding and squealing over the rubble he had to climb over. The shack was an easy swipe for his shovel, and we were surprised to see two doves fly out, one white and one black, frightened out of their wits. They flapped their wings briefly and landed not far from their former home.

By then I had managed to move down past the soldiers and was with the family outside their shattered home. One woman was sobbing and I put my arms around her. When I began to cry too, she put her arms around me. A weeping girl joined us and we both encircled her with our arms.

There was also a lot of violence. Arabiyeh, the mother of the family, was taken to hospital.

She had been struck by the soldiers when she tried to prevent them from destroying her home. By then there was nothing to do but sift through the rubble. I picked through the rocks and talked to Jeff Halper who is organising the programme to 'adopt' Palestinian families whose homes are slated for demolition. For in this house alone there are now six children without any of their belongings, toys, books, diapers, bottles or a place to lay their heads. Instead, they remain with the trauma of the state bulldozer turning their home and security into a bottomless pit of hatred for this occupation and the people who carry it out. Some of us picked olive branches from the yards as we walked back to the buses. Most of the branches were crushed by the treads of power run amok.

Then I noticed the scenery around us. On a nearby mountain – not a distant one, mind you – were the classrooms and amphitheatre of the Mount Scopus campus of Hebrew University. Had they looked out of their classroom windows, the students studying ethics and justice could have a clear view of the scene of brute governmental power and the trampling of this family's lives.

Well, it is almost over, this long, sad story, but it must not end here. We shall be going back next Friday to begin rebuilding this very home. This is a new chapter of non-violent resistance that has begun only a few weeks ago and is gaining momentum. Together with the local population we shall rebuild whatever the army demolished, we shall rebuild again.

As one of the neighbours said: "We'll see who lasts longer". Please, please, please use your power to get this to stop. Tell everybody you know that this atrocity must stop. That is all. Thank you for listening.

Gila Svirsky

IN DEFENCE OF THE NEPTUNE JADE PICKETERS

## Defend labour's right to picket! Defend free speech!

A battle is looming on Oakland's waterfront that may become a defining moment for labour in the global economy. The Pacific Maritime Association, which represents international ship-owners and stevedore companies, is suing individuals and organisations for picketing a container ship, the Neptune Jade, with scab cargo from England. For four days last September, longshore workers refused to cross the picket line. This exemplary action was part of an international solidarity campaign with five hundred Liverpool dockers who'd been fired in 1995, the last port to survive then-British Prime Minister Thatcher's 1989 union-bashing axe.

Not one container was handled in Oakland! The Neptune Jade then sailed to Vancouver, Canada, where pickets and longshoremen gave her the same 'solidarity' treatment. The shipowner then sought a port in the Pacific to unload the cargo. Attempts were made to discharge the containers in two ports in Japan, Kobe and Yokohama. But the Japanese dockworkers, strong supporters of the Liverpool dockers' struggle, stood fast. Finally, this 'Flying Dutchman' was sent to Taiwan where the ship was sold, renamed, and its cargo discharged.

On 26th February the Liverpool Dockers' Defence Committee and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union organised a rally in front of PMA headquarters in downtown Oakland. The 700-strong union protesters then marched to the courthouse to demand the charges be dropped against all the defendants.

The judge has already dismissed cases

against some of the defendants, citing their right to free speech. However, Robert Irminger, picket captain, is still facing a vindictive PMA lawsuit. The PMA has threatened to file suits against others whose names they have. To bolster their discovery claims against Irminger, where they demand the names of other pickets as well as all union and political affiliations, they subpoenaed documents from the ILWU relating to the picket. The ILWU refused to look for them, so the bosses then filed a motion to compel. They are trying to force the union to turn over whatever documents they may have. The hearing will be 22nd July at the US Post Office and Court in Oakland. Irminger has until mid-August to respond to the latest discovery. A hearing on this is likely later this summer or early fall.

This defence case poses such critical issues for the survival of the labour movement in a global economy that we have been able to enlist the support from the broadest sections of organised labour – from Dolores Huerta of the Farmworkers to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney to maritime unions around the world.

Statements of support can be sent to the Committee by e-mail c/o Robert Irminger at <bobirm@labornet.org>.

See [www.labornet.org/workers/jade](http://www.labornet.org/workers/jade) for further information about the Neptune Jade struggle. The Neptune Jade Defence Committee can be reached at Neptune Jade Defence Committee, PO Box 2574, Oakland, California 94614. Telephone +(510) 594-4303.

## 28 Food Not Bombs activists arrested at protest against human rights violations in USA

On Bastille Day, 14th July 1998, 28 FNB (Food Not Bombs) and homeless activists were arrested in San Francisco's United Nations Plaza during a non-violent, direct-action demonstration that sought to reclaim public space and parks which are increasingly being made inaccessible to homeless people.

Speakers from FNB groups in Chicago and the California communities of Riverside, San Jose, San Francisco and Whittier addressed the approximately 150 bystanders and demonstrators that had assembled in the United Nations Plaza for the noon-time event. FNB served a free vegetarian meal to the public while the speakers explained how Corporate sponsored 'Business Improvement Districts', gentrification, urban 'renewal' projects and government directed police actions and law enforcement campaigns against homeless people's public sleeping, camping and begging, are becoming a war against the poor and homeless. A speaker from FIAN also explained how the elimination of the USA's Federal Welfare programs, being done under the guise of 'Welfare Reform' was not only intensifying the war on the poor, but was also a clear violation of international human rights treaties such as the United Nations' UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and the ICESCR (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights). FNB is presently working with FIAN on an Economic Human Rights Campaign to persuade the US Senate to ratify the ICESCR. The start of the Economic Human Rights Campaign has been timed to coincide with this year's fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the UDHR. The speaker from SFLR discussed how the US Federal government's continuing prosecution and persecution of unlicensed, micro-powered, pirate radio stations is censoring independent and alternative journalists.

The closing speakers then addressed the most physically immediate and visible issue of the San Francisco City Government's systematic privatisation of public spaces and redesigning of public parks to make them inaccessible and inhospitable to homeless people. Almost a year earlier, San Francisco DPW (Department

of Public Works) workers had placed metal barricades along the periphery of all of the small parks and grassy embankments in the United Nations Plaza. The barricades were placed under the initial pretext of protecting newly planted grass and trees, but have since been left in place to deny homeless people easy access to the park. Similar DPW programs of 'park renovation' have occurred in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park and in Union Square. DPW workers have fenced-off large portions of parks that were the homeless peoples' homes and have reconstructed park benches so that it is impossible to recline or sleep on them. The final speakers urged the people present at the demonstration to take action to reclaim public space, and within a few minutes, energetic groups of activists quickly proceeded to dismantle the DPW fencing along the grassy embankment at the United Nations Plaza BART subway station entrance. Demonstrators then walked onto the grass to play, picnic, sing and chat political slogans. About a dozen exuberant demonstrators crossed over to the other side of the United Nations Plaza and proceeded to liberate another fenced-off grassy area. At this point, there was a massive and violent police response to what was a peaceful, direct-action, civil-disobedience demonstration.

A total of forty police vans and cars drove into and surrounded the UN Plaza area. Approximately seventy to eighty San Francisco City Police and US Federal Police, many of them in riot gear, arrived to arrest the demonstrators. Many demonstrators sustained injuries during the violent arrests.

A total of 28 FNB and homeless activists were taken into police custody within ninety minutes of the arrival of the police. Even before all of the arrests were completed, DPW workers were brought in to reposition the DPW barricades and secure all of the grassy areas in UN Plaza. The protesters were charged with failure to leave the scene of a riot and with resisting a police officer. Most of the protesters were released within nine hours of their arrest and are scheduled to appear in San Francisco Municipal Court on 31st August 1998.

Food Not Bombs – San Francisco  
Webpage: <http://webcom.com/peace>

**Rich and Poor**



**N**ow that electronic communications are available not just to the select few the question has arisen: is the state still the foremost enemy of progress between peoples?

It has been suggested that transnational companies have taken over the role of the state in many poor countries, where they have become the exchequer.

In other countries, civilian rule has given over to the military or have become, in the old fashioned phrase, bandit country.

The situation, however, is not new. The barbarians have always been at the gate. It is suggested that they are now in complete control. This is dangerous, ignorant talk.

Anarchism is about the free associations of peoples, the sharing of resources, the impossibility of the privileged exploiting the weak.

To many people state and government means just that. But the state, even in countries as rich as those in the West, guarantees no more than a minimal defence against exploitation.

The poor are not on the scrapheap, for scrapheaps do not look seemly. They can live out their useless lives in some broken-down tenement and live out their lives in ignorance. But there is no early morning knock on the door, unless of course people wish to better themselves. In that case, like the eco-villagers of Wandsworth, they will be evicted by the bailiffs and the riot police and their homes will be razed to the ground.

That is if you step out of line and if there are not enough of you to defend your basic rights. Government no longer has an easy way to push people about where people are organised. When the multitude acts together the police are powerless.

But in order to confront the multinationals we first have to get rid of government and its laws. These are the laws which make everything abhorrent legal. These are laws that act to destabilise the population.

The food may be poison, but it is legal – the state makes it legal. The people live in cardboard boxes, but it is legal – the state makes it legal. Children are crammed into classrooms forty at a time, but it is legal – the state makes it legal. Hospitals are overflowing with patients in wheelchairs in corridors. The place may stink, but it is legal – the state makes it legal.

It is wrong to say the state is not the enemy, multinationals and transnationals hide behind the state's power.

The population must understand that it is no longer a possibility to tolerate the news that is coming in through the electronic media. Without the minority of protesters who have been a thorn in the flesh of authority, whether at Faslane or at the M11, we would all by now be living in the worst totalitarian countries.

This paper should be in the hands of all who care for international liberty. In this issue we are printing stories, not through Reuters, not through Associated Press, not through censors' hand-outs, but through our own correspondents from all over the world, eyewitness accounts of state atrocities from all over the globe. Australia, Israel, Russia, Mexico, the stories are pouring in. You will not find them in the establishment press. Our website has been seized in Italy. Only the *Washington Post* (5th July) broke the silence over it. But 118 people locked into a room that should accommodate no more than four is not considered, an outrage. Only in *Freedom* in this country can you read about it.

The state is our enemy. Once we have made an anarchist society here, it will have no frontiers. The task of liberation of the people is not difficult, but without an anarchist movement it is impossible.

This century has been a wasted opportunity politically. Our political 'allies' have put their faith in the state and a hundred years of tyranny ensued as the result.

This time, all other movements have capitulated. Only the anarchist stands now against tyranny. Workers of the world, you must take control of your own lives, learn and learn and learn. Do not delegate your own authority.

John Rety

**Genes and Freedom**

Dear Editors,

The recent articles in *Freedom* concerning genetically modified plants miss the main problem with genetic modification. They were about things that have gone through the cultural process. Science has discovered the possibility, and proved its feasibility, the technology has been set-up and the product patented, and millions invested and the products marketed.

In these circumstances, whatever the rights or wrongs, or the dangers, it is too late to do anything about it. Experience shows that the only things which can halt or reverse the cultural process are, fear at the top, a lack of general interest or profit, or an unacceptably large heap of dead or disabled at the bottom.

If we are worried about genetic manipulation, we have to get ahead of the game. Then it may just be possible to exert some influence on the likely outcomes.

Genetic manipulation is likely to receive more attention in the future in the light of present scientific possibilities. It is the implications of these, specifically when applied to humans, which I think we should be considering.

The future we confront in terms of reproductive technology is one where prospective parents may have their individual genetic library available, say, in the form of a compact disc, and their child's characteristics, positive or negative, may be selected, and the genes tailored to suit. It is what, or whom, they are tailored to suit that we should be worried about.

Since, as Plato observed, humanity "always leaves later generations behind to preserve its unity and identity for all time", the possibility of seeking near absolute continuity of identity (cloning by the back door) through your children could become a reality. Further, the direction of your children's possible abilities, the fulfilment of parental desires through their children, a frequent factor in ambitious nurture, could be reinforced by future genetic/reproductive technology.

Of course, this would only apply to those who could afford it, or to those who were willing to dedicate their children to the particular needs of the state or other institution.

The PR under which such developments will be sold is that of the elimination of genetic disease. Now whilst the possibility of eliminating genetic diseases may be welcomed, the possibility of genetic determinism in future progeny cannot be considered desirable. Should one become a lumberjack, or a librarian, through chance or direction, through your own inclination or that imposed by others? Should one be male or female, bearing in mind the present bias in some parts of the world against females, by chance or direction? And to what degree does a genetically directed person become a true individual in their own right?

It could be argued that such possibilities in genetics could end the concept of humanity as a natural species as it has been so far

considered. Not only are the processes likely to be controlled by institutional bodies, such that tailored life characteristics become a matter of financial licensing, but the end product, the particular set of personal characteristics, could be directed primarily to fulfil institutional needs and functions. What has been thought of as a welfare state in the past could become a genetically directed state, with the *de facto* end of essential human freedom for those born within such circumstances.

As children frequently object to such parentally imposed factors as the names they are given, to discover yourself as a totally directed organism with few characteristics that are truly your own, those things naturally resulting from a random blending of parental genes, may be the source of fundamental rejection, not only of parents but of imposed self. Although it may be entirely possible to programme self-acceptance in and the possibility of rejection out, would not an essential part of what it is to be human also lost?

The possibility of personal genetic libraries also requires consideration of basic rights. How much of 'me' should parents, doctors, or others, such as future employers, choose? Does a not-yet-in-existence individual have a right, residual in the concept of an individual, to be a randomly composed person, within the limits and possibilities of its parents existing genes? Or must/should it be required, as a condition of birth, to accept a parental, social, or professional judgement on what those possibilities may be?

What of the unique, good or bad, potential of the individual? Theories of rights, as well of justice, would seem to indicate that genetic direction should be rejected. If it is, it may be considered that individuals not as yet conceived, 'proposed persons', can thus have rights – pre-conceptual rights.

The questions I believe we should be debating then, are these. Will genetic manipulation, the production of tailored persons by process of directed genetic determinism, mean the end of natural humanity? Does this matter? Does it matter that such process will be subject to institutional or state control? If it does matter, why?

As Mary Warnock indicated in an earlier context of reproductive technology, its possibilities may take many of our present ethical concepts, such as 'freedom' and 'rights' to their limits. Can we take them further, or have they reached their limits in the possibilities of present genetic science?

Colin Johnson

**NET WATCH**

**Colombian Coca**

According to information received (22nd June) the 'herbicide war' against coca plantations has intensified. The areas where coca is grown is in the hands of guerrillas. The authorities have in the past tried to destroy the crops by low flying aircraft spraying herbicides. This was risky because guerrillas have fired on aircraft. Now they are using high altitude planes dropping a new herbicide (tebuthiorin) pellets, once patented by Dow of 'agent orange' notoriety which was used in Vietnam and caused international protests. This time Dow have refused to supply their new herbicide to the Colombians, so the pellets are probably manufactured by government chemists. When this herbicide contaminates ground water it can cause serious illness. It is "especially dangerous where the terrain has slopes, where rainfall is significant, with desirable plants nearby and when application is made in rough weather".

**Mike Eldar arrested**

The well known author and journalist Mike Eldar was arrested 22nd July by Israeli police. His unique crime is to have "posted information, on the Internet". This was in connection with his latest book *Dakar* which deals with the 'disappearance' of an Israeli submarine in 1968 and to have contained a document relating to this. The short message from a Mike Dahan of the Hebrew University ends with the apt quote from Doctor Who in *Face of Evil*: "The very powerful and the very stupid have this in common. Instead of altering their views to fit the facts, they alter the facts to fit their views ... which can be very uncomfortable if you happen to be one of the facts that needs altering".

**Australian Vaccination Protest**

Since the Australian compulsory vaccination project this year, one hundred families are either grieving for their children or marching in protest because of deaths and injuries.

At a rally attended by five hundred people the aborigine speaker Burnum Burnum had restricted himself to a one sentence speech followed by ten minutes silence. He said: "There must be a correlation between the high rate of vaccination and infant mortality of the aborigine population".

**Basque paper and radio stopped**

The Spanish police have raided the premises of the Basque newspaper *Egin Daily* and Radio Egin Irratia. Workers are producing an emergency sheet and are asking for international support. Telephone +34 943 591280.

**Bradford report**

An Irish anarchist comrade has written a very interesting and well argued piece on her visit to the the recent Bradford anarchist get together. She has highlighted four issues that need to be taken on board "in order to rebuild anarchism".

- The Anarchist Movement – how do we go about creating one?
  - Confidence – how do we develop an ability?
  - Theory – what ones should we be looking at?
  - Organisation – simply, how?
- She was impressed by the dedication of many of those she met at the Bradford conference.

If you would like to read her full article she can be reached at aocarroll@tcd.ie


compiled by JR

**DONATIONS  
June 1998**

**Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund**  
Wolverhampton, JL, £2; Glasgow, JMcG, £2; Hadleigh, AH, £5; London, NC, £8; Beckenham, DP, £15; Eccles, MG, £3.  
**Total = £35.00**  
**1998 total to date = £578.00**

**Freedom Press Overheads Fund**  
Reading, AY, £3; London, KAS (per DR) £50; London, NC, £10; Swansea, LR, £1,000; Newport, NF, £20; Wolverhampton, JL, £2.  
**Total = £1,085.00**  
**1998 total to date = £1,507.00**

**Raven Deficit Fund**  
London, NC, £8; Swansea, LR, £20; Beckenham, DP, £15.  
**Total = £43.00**  
**1998 total to date = £415.00**

Please keep sending in your letters and donations ... 



**FREEDOM** fortnightly  
ISSN 0016 0504

Published by Freedom Press  
84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX  
Printed in Great Britain by Aldgate Press,  
London E1 7RQ

**Freedom on the  
World Wide Web**

http://www.tao.ca/~freedom  
e-mail Freedom Press at  
freedom@tao.ca

**a-infos**

daily multi-lingual international  
anarchist news service

To: majordomo@tao.ca  
Subject:

.....  
subscribe a-infos

Freedom and The Raven  
**SUBSCRIPTION  
RATES 1998**

	inland	outside Europe surface	outside Europe airmail	Europe (airmail only)
<b>Freedom (24 issues) half price for 12 issues</b>				
Claimants	10.00	-	-	-
Regular	14.00	22.00	34.00	24.00
Institutions	22.00	30.00	40.00	40.00

<b>The Raven (4 issues)</b>				
	inland	outside Europe surface	outside Europe airmail	Europe (airmail only)
Claimants	10.00	-	-	-
Regular	12.00	14.00	18.00	16.00
Institutions	18.00	22.00	27.00	27.00

<b>Join sub (24 x Freedom plus 4 x The Raven)</b>				
	inland	outside Europe surface	outside Europe airmail	Europe (airmail only)
Claimants	18.00	-	-	-
Regular	24.00	34.00	50.00	36.00

<b>Bundle subs for Freedom (12 issues)</b>				
	inland	abroad surface	abroad airmail	
2 copies x 12	12.00	13.00	22.00	
5 copies x 12	26.00	32.00	44.00	
10 copies x 12	50.00	60.00	84.00	

Other bundle sizes on application

Giro account number 58 294 6905

All prices are in £ sterling

**The Raven**  
anarchist quarterly

Number 37

**'Anarchism in the  
Americas and China'**

**Back issues still available:**

- 36 - Class Struggle and Social Protest
- 35 - Urban Environment / Psychoanalysis
- 34 - Communication (3) : Language
- 33 - The Arts
- 32 - Communication (2) : 'The Net'
- 31 - Economics and Federalism
- 30 - New Life to the Land?
- 29 - World War Two
- 28 - Noam Chomsky on Haiti
- 27 - Fundamentalism
- 26 - Science (2)
- 25 - Religion
- 24 - Science (1)
- 23 - Spain / Emma Goldman
- 22 - Crime
- 21 - Feminism
- 20 - Kropotkin's 150th Anniversary
- 19 - Sociology
- 18 - Anthropology
- 17 - Use of Land
- 16 - Education (2)
- 15 - Health
- 14 - Voting
- 13 - Anarchism in Eastern Europe
- 12 - Communication (1)
- 11 - Class
- 10 - Libertarian Education
- 9 - Bakunin and Nationalism
- 8 - Revolution
- 7 - Emma Goldman
- 6 - Tradition and Revolution
- 5 - Spies for Peace
- 4 - Computers and Anarchism
- 3 - Surrealism (part 2)
- 2 - Surrealism (part 1)
- 1 - The History of Freedom Press

**£3.00 each (post free worldwide)**

**FREEDOM PRESS**  
84b Whitechapel High Street  
London E1 7QX

**Meetings & Events**

**The London  
Anarchist Forum**

Meet Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall,  
25 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 —**

**31st July** Is Professionalism Dead? (speaker  
Peter Neville)

**7th August** General discussion

**14th August** Capitalism (speaker Matt Winfer)

**21st August** General discussion

**28th August** Symposium on Racism

**4th September** General discussion

Anyone interested in giving a talk or  
leading a discussion, please contact Carol  
Saunders or Peter Neville at the meetings  
(or Peter Neville at 4 Copper Beeches,  
Witham Road, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7  
4AW, or telephone 0181-847 0203 subject  
to caller display and answerphone so  
withheld numbers will be ignored or dis-  
connected) giving your subject and  
prospective dates and we will do our best to  
accommodate.

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

**Prisoner Justice Day  
Picket**

**Stop prison brutality!**

**Support prisoners fighting back!**

**Close down Holloway Prison!**

**meet at 12 noon on  
Saturday 8th August**

**outside HMP Holloway  
Parkhurst Road, London N7**  
(Tube: Caledonian Road, Buses: 17, 29, 91, 253, 259)

**London Anarchist Black Cross**  
121 Railton Road, London SE24 0LR  
tel: 0171-326 0353 (ansaphone)

**Red Rambles**

A programme of monthly guided walks in  
Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire for  
Socialists, Libertarians, Greens, Anarchists and  
others. All walkers are reminded to wear boots  
and suitable clothing and to bring food and  
drink. Walks are 5 to 8 miles in length.

**Sunday 23rd August**

Meet at 11am at Royal Oak public house car  
park, Wetton, Derbyshire, for 5 to 6 mile walk  
via Thors Cave and Wetton Hill.

**Sunday 20th September**

Meet at 11am outside Scarthin Books, the  
Promenade, Cromford, Derbyshire, for 5 to 6  
mile walk to Bole Hill.

**Telephone for further details  
01773 827513**

**Earth First!  
Summer Gathering**

**Wednesday 9th to Monday**

**14th September 1998**

**in Dorset**

**For details contact  
0113 262 9365**

**Defend the Czech Anarchists  
and Rainbowkeepers**

**Picket on 1st August at 11am**

**Embassy of the Czech Republic**

**25 Kensington Palace Gardens, London W8**

On 16th May a Global Street Party was held in Prague  
organised by the Czechoslovak Anarchist Federation and  
Rainbowkeepers (equivalent of Earth First! in Britain and the  
USA). This was one of many events held around the world  
which included events in Britain. Three thousand people  
attended the party in Prague. Following extremely brutal  
attacks by the police, 64 people were detained. During the  
police action bystanders not involved in the party were also  
beaten. 25 of those arrested were charged with criminal  
offences and ten of them were detained for fourteen days  
(one man is still in detention). During this detention the police  
administered savage beatings, not because of committing any  
crime but because of their political beliefs. Five non-Czech  
activists were deported. We are calling this picket to protest at  
the violent treatment of those taking part in the street party  
and to express our support for them.

*Picket called by Revolutionary Prisoners Solidarity and the ACF  
Page us at 01523 786692*

**SUBSCRIPTION FORM**

To Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

- I am a subscriber, please renew my sub to *Freedom* for ..... issues
- Please renew my joint subscription to *Freedom* and *The Raven*
- Make my sub to *Freedom* into a joint sub starting with number 37 of *The Raven*
- I am not yet a subscriber, please enter my sub to *Freedom* for ..... issues  
and *The Raven* for ..... issues starting with number 37
- I would like the following back numbers of *The Raven* at £3 per copy post free  
..... (numbers 1 to 36 are available)
- I enclose a donation to the Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund / Freedom Press  
Overheads Fund / Raven Deficit Fund (delete as applicable)

I enclose £ ..... payment

Name .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....