

The Evitable Crisis of Capitalism

It was not that long ago that commentators were confidently predicting, and activists in popular movements were presuming, that the coming century was the age of the tiger economies of the Pacific Rim. Hence Tony Blair's attempt to associate himself with the Singapore model, for example. Over the last year, of course, we have seen the spread of the mysterious 'Asian flu', which has laid low East Asian economies (and which brought down President Suharto of Indonesia in the process). The economic and financial disarray in Asia was greeted in the West with a certain amount of relief, and a distinct complacency concerning the more 'mature' economies of Western Europe and North America.

The Russian crisis has changed all that.

Russia is a very small component of the world trade or financial systems, but the government's moratorium on foreign debt repayments by banks, instituted on 17th August, the massive devaluation of the rouble, Yeltsin's sacking of the Kiriyenko government, and finally the refusal of the Duma (twice) to confirm a new administration led by pro-Western 'reformer' Viktor Chernomyrdin, have triggered massive dislocations on world financial markets.

On 1st September, the day after Chernomyrdin was turned down by parliament the first time, a front-page headline in the *Daily Telegraph* warned "Market fall brings fears of 1929-style recession". Christine Callies, of Credit Suisse First Boston, was quoted as saying: "We are already in the so-called capitulation stage, the point where people are really throwing in the towel". Richard Hoey, director of the Dreyfus Corporation, said: "What has changed is the expecta-

tion of the world economy". The expectation was growing that the world economy was going into a downturn, and that the stock market falls could well feed into and compound this recession.

Commentary on the crisis has stayed within predictable boundaries. Hamish McRae, in the *Independent*, writes "The market's not finished yet" (3rd September), an ambiguous title for an article which argues that "for the foreseeable future", we should expect the "onward march" of "market capitalism". The present turmoil does not spell the end of the "market revolution", but was merely "a pause, a natural and inevitable pause, in the advance of the market" - McRae declares that "in fact we are still in the very early stages of that advance."

For McRae, the present 'pause' is merely a natural period of reaction to the

triumph of 'market capitalism': "It had to come. For the last fifteen years, the rolling revolution of market capitalism has swept across the globe. Now - quite suddenly - we are seeing the reaction."

The *Independent's* editorial on the crisis (28th August) suggests that "the apparent failure of Russia's seven-year experiment in Chicago-school capitalism calls into question the *laissez-faire* route" from agrarian poverty to free-market prosperity. The 'Chicago School' being a school of thought within mainstream economics famous for being committed to the deregulation and internationalisation of capitalist economies, and famous for the application of their ideas in Chile.

Embedded in this commentary are a number of powerful, unstated, assumptions. One is that the 'market revolution' of the last fifteen years has been devoted to strengthening free markets. McRae writes that for years the news supported the advance of the market - "a privatisation here, a Marxist government being overthrown there" - but in fact the news within the Western-dominated world has not been of a simple 'market revolution', but of the systematic undermining of free markets.

Just to take one example, protectionism. US Secretary of State James Baker, speaking to a business audience, "proudly proclaimed that Mr Ronald Reagan had 'granted more import relief to US industry than any of his predecessors in more than half a century'", noted international economist Fred Bergsten in 1993 (in fact 'free marketer' Reagan imposed more protectionist measures than all post-war administrations combined). Bergsten, writing in the *Financial Times*, remarked



Drawing by Clifford Harper

(continued on page 4)

anarchist fortnightly Freedom

Vol. 59 No. 18

19th September 1998

50p

Manchester United deal ...

Murdoch's pocketing the ball

Critics of Rupert Murdoch's deal to buy Manchester United for £625 million risk being dubbed hopelessly emotional romantics. To consider what is going on here one has to rummage through the press from back-pages to business pages and thence to front leaders and editorial comment. From celebration in the Murdoch press and media to a boycott of Manchester United called in the *Daily Mirror*.

Last week the *Sunday Telegraph*, who broke the story, claimed the deal gave Murdoch a television soccer stranglehold. A day later the *Independent* argued that "Blair must stop Murdoch taking over our national sport".

The *Manchester Evening News*, reflecting the spirit of our age, ran a headline screaming "The Battle for Gold Trafford". Mr Murdoch is a kind of Henry Ford of our time and is one of the most powerful and rich men on Earth. His company News International owns the *Times*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Sun* and the *News of the World* in this country, and his company News Corporation owns about 780 different businesses around the world. These include newspapers, books, magazines, films and television, an airline, a sheep farm and US basketball and baseball teams.

The full assets of the News Corporation are over £14 billion. Rupert Murdoch's personal fortune is reckoned to be £3.9 billion. In an editorial last week the *Manchester Evening News* claimed: "Sport, particularly big-time sport, has been the battering-ram which Mr Murdoch has used spectacularly successfully to turn his satellite television broadcasting company BSkyB into a hugely profitable enterprise".

Manchester United is probably the world's best known football club. If you go to a pueblo in Andalusia and tell someone you're from Manchester the immediate response will be 'Manchester United'. That's been the case since the 1960s at least. 'Manchester United' is synonymous with the image of Manchester.

The English way of life

Writing his essay *The English People* in 1943, George Orwell said: "Professional footballers, boxers, jockeys and even cricketers enjoy a popularity that no scientist or artist could hope to rival". He claims too that "the English were the inventors of several of the world's most popular games, and have spread them more widely than any other product of their culture".

'Football' has been one of our most successful exports, which Orwell insists as a word "is mispronounced by scores of millions who have never heard of Shakespeare or the Magna Carta".

It is now being packaged, branded and commercialised as a piece of exploitative entertainment in a way which would have been inconceivable some time ago. Murdoch wants to grab control of the exclusive television rights to the top games in Europe which, the editor of the *Independent* argues, "is almost as much a natural monopoly as a network of gas pipelines".

Last week Tommy Docherty, a former manager of Manchester United, said of Murdoch: "He's not really been involved in football, I doubt very much if he even knows where Old Trafford is. Not being a football man, he will not understand the true feelings of football people."

The directors of Manchester United stand to make £106 million from the Murdoch deal. Chief Executive Martin Edwards should net more than £87.5 million.

whack for kids for the football shirts. It's about upsetting our English way of life and the way we see things.

Destroying a way of looking

No doubt technology is having a hand in this. Sky has done much to titillate the armchair fan with clever coverage of camera angles and tricky replay techniques giving the viewer sights not there for most in the stadium. According to Adam Szreter in the *Independent*, "the effervescent former Scotland international Andy Gray has become a cult figure through his operation of video replay machines that allow him, as the main studio analyst, to dissect the game and develop points in a way that was not possible before".

But Mr Szreter also reports that "many fans are unhappy about the constant re-scheduling of games to suit the demands of live television, with matches on Monday and Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons and even Saturday mornings". Sky money is causing splits in the game between richer and poorer clubs, and between players.

Something big is happening here for our society as well as for sport. Murdoch himself calls it the 'battering ram' of sport. When Murdoch bought the Rugby League he turned it from a winter sport into a summer game.

A worried Brendan Batson of the Professional Footballers Association said: "We can't turn the clock back, but tradition is a very important part of our national game and traditional thinking is that games are played on a Saturday afternoon at three o'clock". Murdoch is slaying the dictum that 'wise counsel' takes into consideration the past, which furnishes precedents, the present, which poses problem in hand, and the future, which harbours the consequences.

Murdoch and Sky is stamping on our culture. The *Times* (Murdoch-owned) suggests this when it ran the headline "Man United sale 'is the start of a whole new era'" and dismissed the fans' objections as coming "in a moment of irrational panic caused by fear of change".

It is as if there are two sets of people here who don't have the same sense of humour. They do not react properly to each other because they are both playing different games – one is called 'big business' and the other is called 'football'. One person kicks the ball to the other and instead of kicking it back the other picks it up and puts it in his pocket.

Murdoch is doing something which comes close to what Ludwig Wittgenstein claimed the Nazis may have done in Germany. Wittgenstein said that "if it is true that humour was stamped out in Nazi Germany this would mean not just that people were not in good spirits but that the Nazis had been successful in destroying a whole way of life, a way of looking at the world and the set of reactions and customs that go with it. (It would mean that the Nazis had, so to speak, pocketed the ball)."

It's a gloomy thought that Rupert Murdoch's media looks set to rape the minds of so many of our countrymen in the near future.

Keeping the ball in play

George Orwell was hopeless at football and didn't like it, preferring cricket, and considering soccer to be a kind of organised violence. He thought organised games like football were most likely to flourish in urban communities "where the average human being lives a sedentary or at least confined life". Big-scale sport was for him, in 1945, another effect of the causes that have produced nationalism: "war without guns".

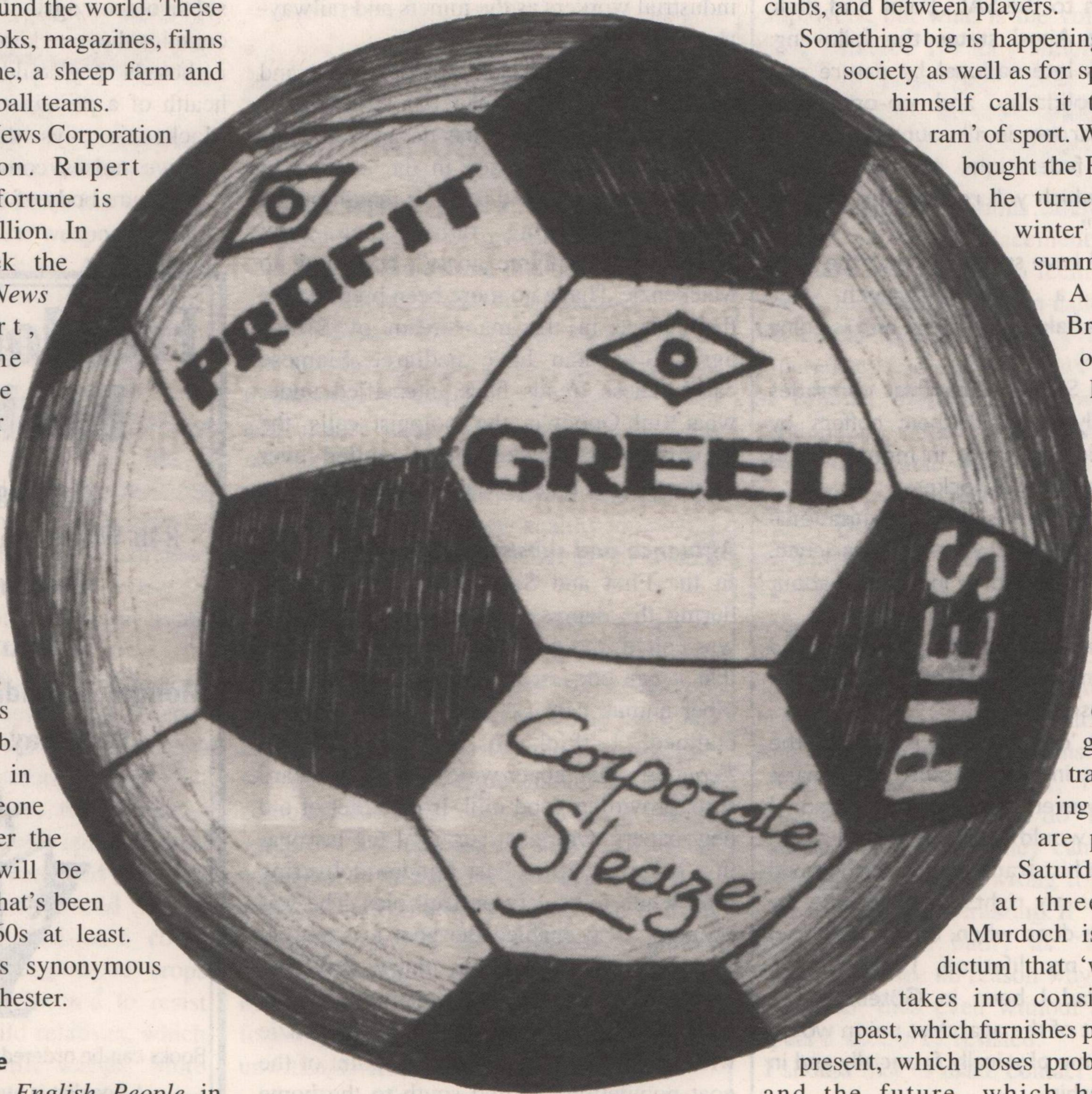
When I was a lad I knew spectators at international football matches who weren't obsessively nationalistic, and went to a game and would choose to support whichever was the smallest side. That would seem to be to be an essentially English and anarchist characteristic.

That is why someone like Norman Tebbit, who says that the test of 'Englishness' is to patriotically support England in sporting competitions, shows himself not to be a proper Englishman. Englishmen and anarchists should instinctively back the weaker side.

We are witnessing a time when sport of all kinds is ceasing to have anything to do with 'fair play' and have reached a point where many of those organising sport seem to think of it as primarily big business. Unless public opinion can be mobilised it seems that it will be too late to stop them pocketing the ball. Anarchists and true Englishmen must do what they can to keep the ball in play.

BB

The illustration for this article is taken from a special feature on commercialism in football by Mark Lynas in *Corporate Watch* (issue no. 7, priced at £3 for 40 pages, available from Freedom Press Bookshop).



The untethered goat: Emblem of Anarchy

David Mackenzie writes in his book *Goat Husbandry*: "When man began his farming operations in the dawn of history, the goat was the kingpin of the pastoral life, making possible the conquest of desert and mountain and the occupation of the fertile land that lay beyond". But the goat, that Mr Mackenzie claims was "forever the friend of the pioneer and the last survivor ... was never well loved by arable farmers on fertile land". Then when, he explains, "agriculture produces crops that man, cow and sheep can consume with more profit the goat retreats to the mountain tops and the wilderness, rejected and despised - hated too, as the emblem of anarchy."

In the early nineteenth century Thomas Bewick, in his *History of Quadrupeds* writing at a time when the common goat was still common in Britain, says: "The goat is much more hardy than the sheep, and is in every respect more fitted to a life of liberty". He adds: "It is not easily confined to a flock, but chooses its own pasture, straying wherever its appetite or inclination leads".

Like the human anarchist, it is a foe of modern trends in so far as it is, as Mackenzie says, "expensive with labour". Modern methods of employment seem designed to do away with labour.

Yet Mr Bewick insists: "The milk of the goats is sweet, nourishing and medicinal, and is found highly beneficial in consumptive cases: it is not so apt to curdle on the stomach

as that of the cow. From the shrubs and heath on which it feeds, the milk of the goat acquires a flavour and wilderness of taste very different from that of the sheep or cow."

The goat in England

George Orwell kept goats and he wrote to Jack Common from Morocco in 1939, where he was convalescing, that the mating of Muriel the goat was long overdue - "a most unedifying spectacle - if you happen to watch it". Later a goat named Muriel figured as a sympathetic character in Orwell's book *Animal Farm*. As Mr Mackenzie writes: "A goat, however 'modern' and 'dairy-bred', is a goat, a member of the species familiarised in nursery picture books and biblical illustrations, target of laughter and abuse for countless centuries, Crusoe's salvation and mankind's first foster mother, the common goat". Evidence of goat use is found in early Stone Age deposits of the Swiss lake settlements, but Mackenzie claims that "throughout history large-scale goat-keeping retreats before the advance of agriculture".

In Great Britain until the end of the eighteenth century goats were the usual

source of milk supply for cottagers, and were to be found on every common in England. Then the industrial revolution and the enclosure movement hit the common land, where the peasants of England grazed their cattle, ponies, sheep and goats, replacing them with the plough and crops. The practice of tethering goats had to be adopted to protect the land of the rich farmers.

David Mackenzie argues: "We may be sure that then, as now, the most enthusiastic goat-keepers were the most awkward individualists in the area, and their goats the *casus belli* with their farmer neighbours". Then pointedly Mackenzie adds: "Where the enclosure movement took on its more dramatic forms, the goats were the spearhead of the underground resistance movement of the cottagers".

From the back end of the nineteenth century up to 1940, the main goat-keeping area was the North of England - Lancashire, Yorkshire, Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland and bits of Wales. A geographical and economic zone comprising moorland and what Mackenzie calls "poverty-stricken industrial populations". He says that "goats distributed their services almost equally between rural cottagers and such ill-paid industrial workers as the miners and railwaymen were then".

The allotment, the paddock, the garden and the backyard, rather than the farmyard, is where the English goat has developed. Thus the goat has little place in the context of British agriculture and today is tending to be bred for showing rather than milk production. "Pedigree goats", according to Mackenzie, "have no more been bred to take their place in the mainstream of British agriculture than have pedigree Siamese cats". These trends have intensified under what Ruth Goodwin, the zoologist, calls "the legislative straitjacket being pulled ever tighter around today's Euro-goat-keeper"

Affluence and subsistence farming

In the First and Second World Wars and during the depression the goat in England was called into service. The goat's virtue is that it can convert to milk herbage that no other animal can use, and William Cobbett claimed, I think in his book *Village Economy*, that goats were useful on board ship, providing good milk from a diet of old newspapers. One goat survived the last war in a baker's yard in East London delivering milk while fed solely on fruit pies. The war economy also enabled the goat to supply a 'legal black market' in dairy produce: unsubsidised, goat's milk, cream and cheese were all free of price controls. Mackenzie writes that at this time the focal point of the goat population "shifted south to the home counties and the heart of the national black market".

The relative post-war affluence following rationing changed things. Cow's milk being de-rationed and cow's cream legally on sale, goat's milk sales ceased to be profitable. Thence much goat's milk went in the feed buckets of pigs, calves, chickens, mink,

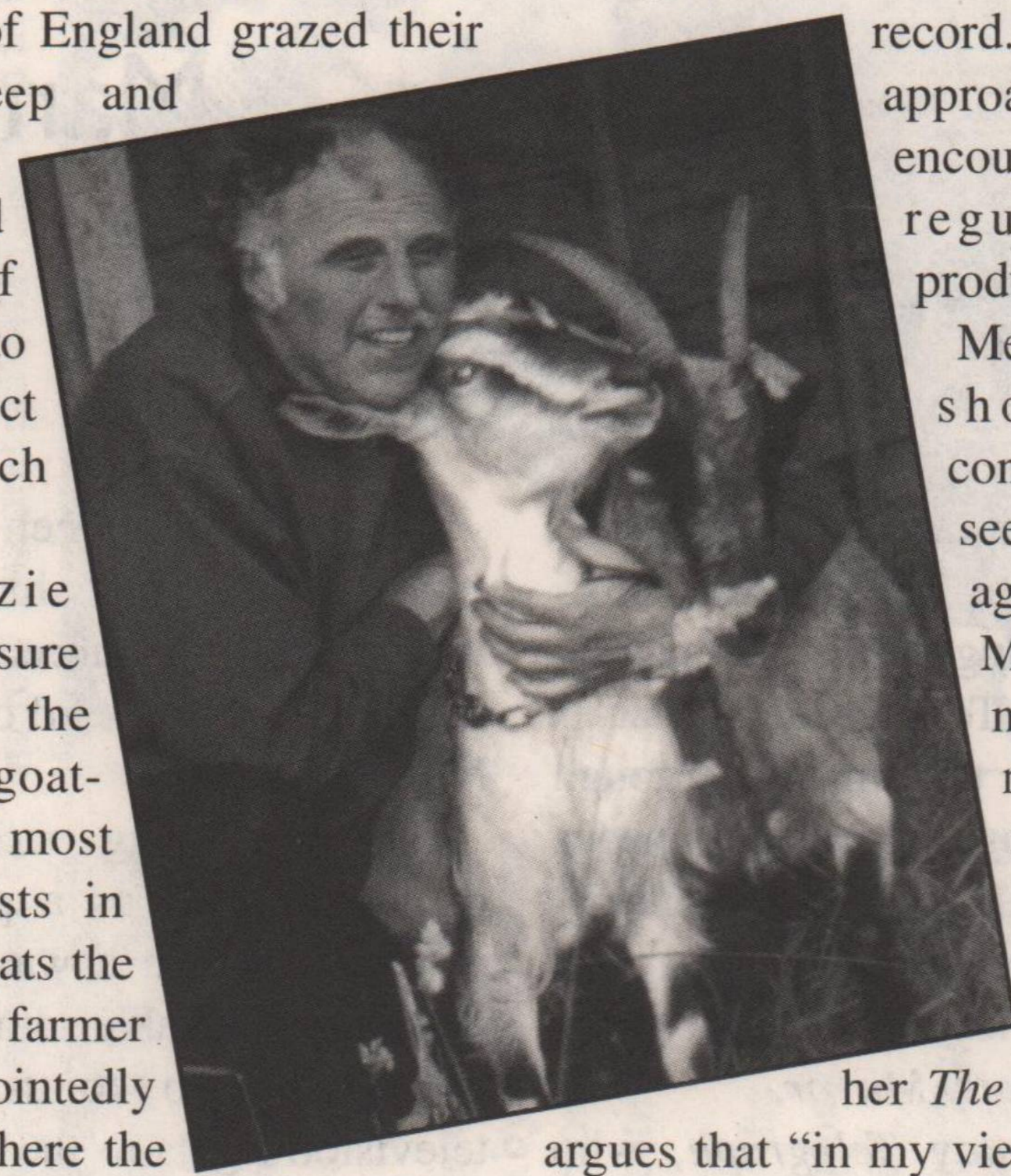
silver fox, pedigree cats and puppies. The profit in such goat-keeping came from sales of pedigree goats to other breeders; a high milk yield was worth less than a good show record. This is a middle-class approach to goat-keeping, encouraged by new hygiene regulations on dairy produce.

Meat from goat and kid should be another consideration, but there seems to be a prejudice against it in England. Mackenzie claims the meat of adult goats is not good, but this is not supported by some distinguished cookery writers.

Francis Bissell in her *The Real Meat Cookbook* argues that "in my view [it is] an altogether superior meat". Far better than kid, which is the dish she orders whenever she goes to Lisbon. She insists: "I urge you not to be put off by received wisdom. This is a delicious meat and the basis for many exciting dishes". She'd researched a range of cookbooks on goat recipes from the Roman Apicius to the modern Italian cooks. Similarly Ken Hom writing in *The Taste of China* of a banquet Kunming says he feasted on a 54-course dinner "with goat appearing in one form or another in almost every dish".

It seems that the goat is by nature, as Mackenzie says, "the symbol and mascot of subsistence agriculture". In developing counties they are kept mostly for meat and it is thought they could contribute to improved health of a protein-starved community, and Mackenzie says there have been some positive noises coming from the Food & Agriculture body of the UN recently.

Brian Bamford



Rich and Poor

Travel broadens the mind. My recent visit to Göteborg enabled me to attend a working meeting of the Sveriges Arbetures Centralorganisation. The SAC is a trade union in an English sense, but boy what a difference of approach. Which English trade union would start off with the following preamble defining its aims of existence: "...is a syndicalist (revolutionary syndicalist) workers movement whose goal is the realisation of libertarian socialism in which the means of production are the property of all, and are administered by the workers, thereby creating the conditions for the classless society". None to my knowledge.

That there is a need today, not to mention yesterday, for such an anarchist trade union in this country and that it would become the strongest working people's union within a very short period of time is, to me, beyond dispute.

At the meeting which I was allowed to attend, and even invited to address, a number of issues of great importance were discussed cheerfully and taking everybody's opinion into account, arriving at a decision on each item before proceeding to the next. Many thanks to the comrades in Göteborg for this invaluable experience.

I'm not talking about the usual groupings in this country where hard-working comrades have been unable to set up anything more than a 'talking shop' of a utopian nature.

Readers of my *Through the Anarchist Press* may remember that on my visit to Spain, where I also had the privilege and pleasure of discussing anarcho-syndicalism, I did not feel that the Spanish anarchist workers' organisation was a suitable model for this country, although I had nothing but admiration for their open organisational methods with offices and shops in all the main towns of Spain in the most important locations, just like Freedom Press Bookshop with its black-and-red board in Whitechapel High Street. People in the international anarchist movement realise the importance

of this courageous newspaper, *Freedom*, which has battled on since 1886 without, alas, the support of a local anarchist movement as it exists in other countries.

But to return to the SAC. Point 8 of their 'Principles and Aims' states the following: "Syndicalism is international by nature and strives for solidarity and co-operation among wage-earners in all countries. Its aim is to create federations of independent communities which will replace the present national states".

On my visit I have suggested that the SAC should open a London branch. This suggestion was 'taken on board' and is going to be discussed.

After all, the Swedish anarchist comrades have practically emptied their coffers by donating untold thousands in money to aid the striking Merseyside dockers.

What we need here is their organisational skill based on a hundred years of experience. There is no need to worry in advance about their own historical compromise.

The anarchist movement here should concentrate on both 'wage-earners' and the 'unwaged' masses.

I realise that 'organisation' is one of the taboo subjects in the anarchist dictionary. Personally, however, as a working person I know that I would have benefited from joining an anarchist trade union which would have fought for my rights, or even paid my unemployment dues when, on at least two occasions in my lifetime, I was made 'redundant'. Had I been in Göteborg the industrial might of the anarchist union would have stood by me physically, financially and in good comradeship.

Here then is a test for the movement. Let it be the biggest discussion point of the forthcoming Anarchist Bookfair, the setting up at last of a proper, responsible anarchist trade union so that no working person is left to their own meagre resources when the bosses turn the screw.

John Rety

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'

Manchester stand-off makes ... Tameside Trustees come clean

In what could have become an indefinite occupation of Manchester solicitor's office last month, a mystery Manchester group extracted a promise from one of the Tameside Trustees/Directors Mr Jack Thornley to come to the Public Hearing and explain his involvement in the sacking of 240 care workers. This was the deal struck between myself and Mr Thornley in the afternoon of Wednesday 19th August, following what has become known as the 'Manchester stand-off'

The Manchester stand-off started at midday when a dozen demonstrators ran into the Deansgate offices of Jack Thornley Solicitors. Leaflets were distributed to staff. Disputes broke out with some of the partners of the firm and the protesters who unveiled a banner claiming 'Jack Thornley Sacks Workers'.

The activists, who were protesting about the sacking of 240 care workers of Tameside Care Group in North East Greater Manchester, asked to speak to Mr Thornley either in person or on the phone to discuss his part in the sackings. At first this was refused by a Mr Dunn, who appeared to be the man in charge, and the police were called.

'Boycott Jack Thornley'

Then began the long stand-off with some protesters penetrating the offices in the bowels of the Victorian building. Their leaflets declared: "Jack Thornley is a trustee of the Trust which controls Tameside Care, which runs old people's homes in Tameside on behalf of the Council. They sacked 240 care workers when they went on strike against a pay-cut."

The group, which calls itself the 'Manchester supporters of the striking Tameside Care workers', called on people to boycott Jack Thornley's firm of solicitors until either he resigns from the Trust or the workers are reinstated "on terms acceptable to them".

Mr Thornley is only one Trustee /Director of Tameside Care Group. The others include Andrew Bennett, left-wing Labour MP; Roy Oldham, Labour Leader on the Tameside Council; Mike Custance, NUT official and member of the Christian 'Churches Together' Council.

This was not the first action against Mr Thornley and his businesses. An action was taken when demonstrators assembled outside his Manchester office over a month ago. Also last month a picket was mounted at his Ashton office when about forty of the care workers surrounded his business. The staff stayed inside and the doors had to be closed until the police came. Everyone had a late lunch that day.

But the 'Manchester stand-off' was the first time a long-term stay-in action has been tried. The 'stand-off' means no-one will leave until a satisfactory result is obtained. The police, who arrived about three-quarters of an hour after the start of the action, refused to make any arrests because there was no 'breach of the peace'.

TCG: 'worst decision I made'

The stalemate continued until around two o'clock with the negotiations in apparent deadlock: the staff refusing to contact Jack Thornley and the demonstrators declining to leave the premises until they had talked to him. As time passed lunch-boxes were opened and sandwiches munched as the campaigners relaxed for a long wait.

Suddenly a member of staff appeared to say

that Mr Thornley had been contacted and was willing to speak to one of the activists on the telephone. A meeting was held and I was nominated to negotiate with Jack Thornley. Saddled with the job of demanding that Mr Thornley resign as a Trustee/Director, I went to see what he had to say. Though I warmed to Mr Thornley's Northern accent, I was puzzled by what he had to say:

"Who do you work for, Mr Shore?"

"We're just here to protest about the sacking of these Tameside care workers, Mr Thornley!"

"Who do you work for, Mr Shore?"

"Like I said, we're just protesting about the sackings!"

I then asked him if he would be willing to speak at the Public Hearing in Dukinfield on 11th September in the Workingmen's Club. He agreed and said he would answer any questions providing he got a written invite, and the protest group occupying the Manchester firm of solicitors left the premises. I said I couldn't speak for the Tameside Strike Support Group, but I put his offer to the occupiers of the Manchester office.

Mr Thornley stayed on the line while the occupying group had a meeting on the premises. It was accepted that we would leave providing Mr Thornley would give a full account of himself and that of the Trust at the Hearing on the 11th September. Mr Thornley was told we would review the situation after the Public Hearing, in the light of what he said then and other factors.

But Mr Thornley did volunteer that "becoming involved in Tameside Care Group is the worst decision I ever made!"

Albert Shore

Stop Press ...

Jack Thornley now says he will not be attending the public hearing of the care workers, relatives and residents on 11th September, owing to what he claims is a mix-up over the date.

Northern News

Care workers cause indigestion

Roy Oldham, Labour leader of Tameside Council, claimed last month that he was put under 'extreme harassment' when over thirty people carrying UNISON placards interrupted a private lunch engagement, to demonstrate and verbally abuse him. This happened when the care workers spotted Mr Oldham, his wife and another councillor trying to snatch a quick bite in one of Ashton's local wine lodges. The women, it seems, couldn't resist nipping-in and joining the Council boss.

According to the story in the *Ashton Reporter*, it seems the encounter developed into a shouting match between the councillor and the women. Mr Oldham and his wife were so put out they had in the end to leave the restaurant. It didn't end there because the women trailed him to the Town Hall steps where more exchanges took place.

Mr Oldham claimed: "The council has made strenuous efforts to resolve this dispute in the proper manner". Rose Young for the sacked care workers said: "We did this because we all think that as leader of the council, Roy Oldham should have done a lot more for us, especially since he has a share in the company".

Mr Oldham was indignant: "This kind of behaviour, which appears to be backed by UNISON, does not extend their cause".

It seems that these women are making Mr Oldham's life a misery. The people responsible for the original pay cuts and sackings probably never dreamt the care workers would go to these lengths.

Demos and pickets in Ashton and Hyde

Hardly a day goes by on Tameside, Greater Manchester, but there is some new demo, picket or stunt on behalf of the sacked care workers. Last month in the school holidays the kids got involved. There was a festival and a trip to Alfabet Soup.

At the Hyde Headquarters of the Tameside Care Group washing lines went up with the

— COPY DEADLINE —
The next issue of Freedom will be dated 3rd October, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 24th September

overalls hung out to dry with the names of the owners and their lengths of service to the company. Hundreds of years had been put in by the lasses when totalled up.

Vehicles and scabs were turned away, but one scab drove at the picket line dangerously and one of the pickets was injured when a scab swung at her. Photos were taken of some of the scabs, and the police were called by the company.

Nobbling Noel

It has been known for a long time that the knives are out for Noel Pine on Tameside Town Council. Noel Pine is secretary of the local branch of UNISON and responsible for for Tameside's sacked care workers. The local Labour Party establishment blame him for the dispute.

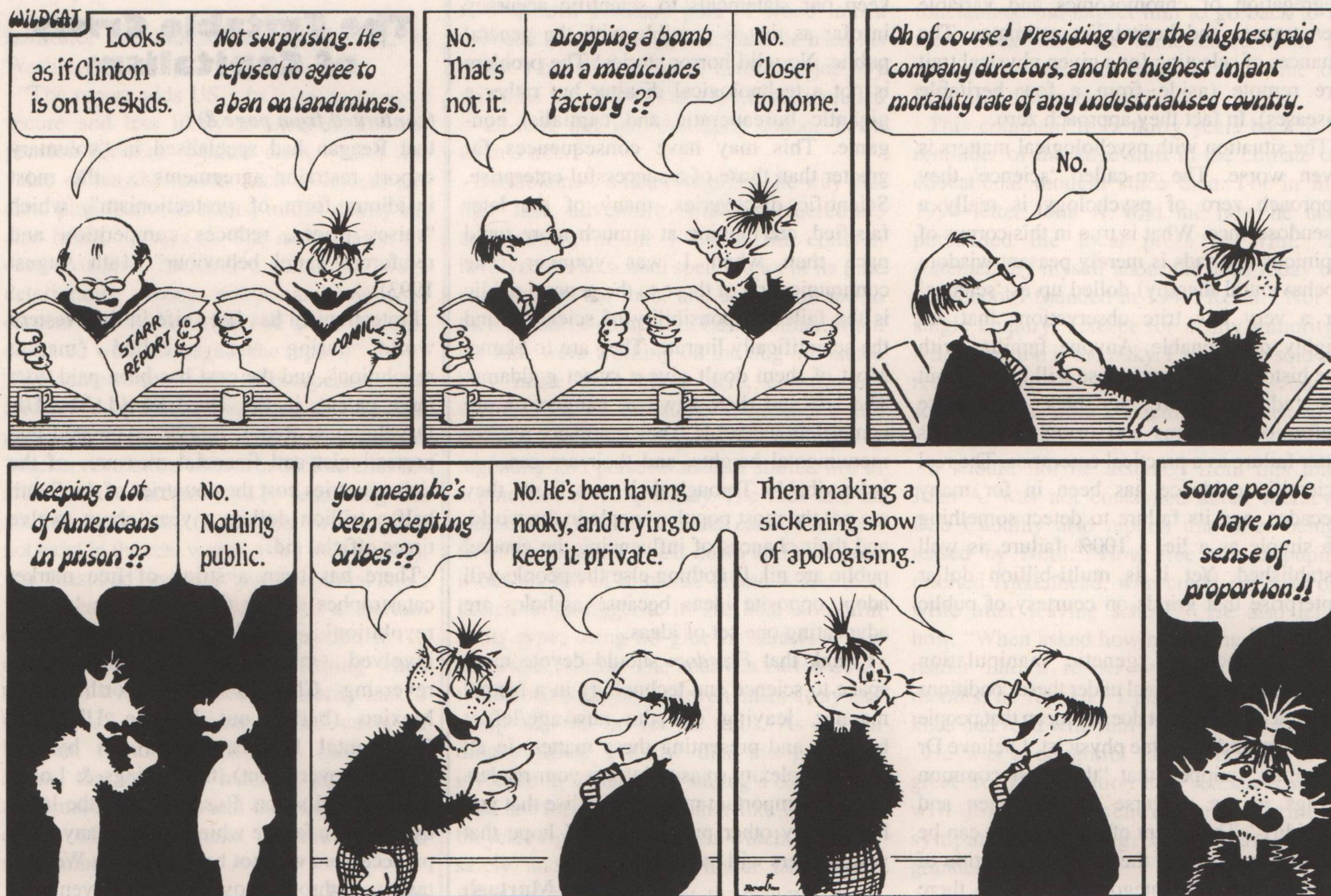
Mr Pine is not a paid full-time official of the union, and he is employed as a social worker by the Tameside Council. Consequently Roy Oldham, leader of the local Labour Group on the Council, has described Noel as an unprofessional union official.

The unfortunate Mr Pine seems to get kicked about from pillar to post. His radical critics seem to suggest he is frightened of his own shadow, and Mr Oldham and the Labour Party bosses class him as amateur.

Stringer

Acknowledgement

Freedom would like to thank Gerry and the Liverpool ACF for their efforts to obtain the photograph of Frank Field which appeared on the front page of 15th August issue.



Wednesday 9th September 1998, after a busy day at the office, I went to the Green Man public house in Stratford, East London, full of curiosity to see the 'Show and Tell' event organised by Tuppy Owens. Dr Owens is the founder of the Sexual Freedom Coalition, which works to change the archaic English sex laws and to promote a healthy and satisfying sex life for all. A recent national newspaper headline described Dr Owens as a "52 year old porn star". Well, if they were correct about her age, then Tuppy is living proof that a regular and fulfilling sex life is highly beneficial. I've seen Tuppy several times over the last fifteen months. She always looks lovely and, that evening of the 'Show and Tell', to illustrate her talk she was wearing the same suit which she had worn in the '70s in one of her two films. That suit still fits her perfectly.

The 'Show and Tell' was presented by female sex workers who wished to tell about their working lives in their own words, as they are fed up with the negative stereotypes of them portrayed in the media, namely as man-hating victims who lead dangerous and sordid lives, were sexually abused as children and, of course, must be thick and

Let's talk about sex

cannot get any other kind of job.

The first presentation was from a stripper. She reminded me of the character in the song sung by Rita Hayworth about "the broad with the broad, broad mind", i.e. the former stripper who used to think about Schopenhauer whilst she was stripping. I say this not because the presenter was serious, but because she was obviously well educated, bright, sassy and attractive. 'Show and Tell' was what it implied – she stripped right down from her flamboyant red evening gown and evening gloves in an upbeat, sexy way, and then told us about her life at work and also about her previous occupations, all of which she had left because she disliked the office politics. She finds stripping to be much more flexible work, so to speak.

The second stripper was glamorous and lovely. Her performance left me spellbound. Afterwards she told us about her work history and also informed us of how, in other countries, the laws on sex are more modern than in England. In Australia, for example, prostitution is legal. Yes, *legal*. In Oz what is



illegal in respect to sex work is assault on a sex worker, having sex without using condoms, and agreeing what services will be provided but then taking more than agreed or taking back the fee after the service has been received. The audience seemed surprised that in Australia the sex laws work *for* the sex workers, rather than as in this country where, as I see it, the sex laws work in the favour of extortionists, blackmailers and other undesirable. The stripper joked that so many politicians were caught enjoying the services of prostitutes that, in the end, they just *had* to legalise it ... or was she joking?

All the presentations from female sex workers – there were five in all – were highly informative, educational, sexy and fun. The women themselves, although involved in different aspects of sex work and being of varying opinions and a range of individual personalities and different body types, share the following traits: they were all highly articulate, bright, vivacious, witty and sexy. Mention was made of current husbands and partners and of the generally courteous and friendly treatment the women receive from male clients/audiences, and of previous occupations such as teaching, of private businesses owned or business management experience, and of training undergone such as computer programming skills. It soon became clear that these women were very far from the usual media stereotypes of men-hating victims who were unemployable in

any other field.

During the course of the evening questions were invited from the audience. A prostitute asked about security and explained that the reason this subject interested her was because she had undergone a serious assault upon her by a client and now suffered a disability as a consequence. One of the presenters, in her response, said that whilst she in no way wished to diminish the horror and seriousness of the attack and subsequent injury suffered, there were other professions, such as nursing, where the risk of assault upon workers during the course of their work was recognised, but no one suggested that the work should therefore be left undone. On the contrary, provision was made to compensate assaulted workers for such injuries. The answer, again, was to legalise prostitution. Under the present law in England any girl wishing to work from home may not work together with another girl for fear of being charged with running a brothel, or with her husband or partner near to hand for fear of him being charged as her pimp. If prostitution were legalised women could club together as not only is there safety in numbers but also they could then afford to purchase or rent properties in safer locations and to hire receptionists and pay for security. This would minimise any potential risk of them suffering violence or theft and furthermore they would have redress under the law.

Also during question time someone wondered aloud what happens when a client turns up for the first time, so the presenter called for a volunteer from the audience and together they acted out the scene. Another person requested a demonstration of how a dominatrix operates, so other volunteers were found from the audience – some more keen than others in this instance.

I have not enough space here to list the other entertainments on offer that evening which included two short plays in one of which a sixth female sex worker proved her versatility and talent by taking the starring role. If you want to join in the fun, be informed about any forthcoming SFC events or obtain copies of their journal *Consenting Adults*, offer your fund-raising skills, or sign the petition to change the English sex laws, contact the Sexual Freedom Coalition, PO Box 4ZB, London W1A 4ZB.

Joy Wood

Genes and Freedom

Even for physical traits, aside from sex selection and a few other single locus (multiple allele) characteristics the situation is incredibly complex. The problem is not so much lack of knowledge, though this is present in the majority of cases but the complexity of gene interactions in multi-locus systems. This complexity is far beyond the 'three body problem' in physics, which presently has no exact solution. A multi-body problem in physics is well beyond present mechanics, and physics has far more exact mathematical tools than biology. Multi-body problems are beyond even the most sophisticated mathematical tools available, and their solution puts them well into the ball-park of at least both complexity and chaos and possibly the realm of the insoluble. The situation with biological traits is even more dramatic. Almost every physical trait is very complex, involving multiple loci, multiple alleles, independent segregation of chromosomes and variable penetrances and heritability estimates. The chances of selecting for a given physical trait are remote (aside from a few heritable diseases). In fact they approach zero.

The situation with psychological matters is even worse. The so-called 'science' they approach zero of psychology is really a pseudoscience. What is true in this corpus of opinions and fads is merely peasant wisdom (behavioural therapy) dolled up as 'science' or a very few trite observations that are highly questionable. Anyone familiar with the history of this enterprise will know about its faddish nature, its lack of precise definition of terms and categories and its utter failure as a practical enterprise. The real scientific evidence has been in for many decades, and its failure to detect something so simple as a lie, a 100% failure, is well established. Yet it is multi-billion dollar enterprise that grinds on courtesy of public gullibility.

The chances of genetic manipulation producing anything real under these conditions are exactly zero. That doesn't mean that people won't try and fail. One physicist, I believe Dr Feinman, quipped that "the most common things in the universe are hydrogen and stupidity". The extent of the stupidity can be gauged by a look at the 'self-help' section of bookstores. This category is right up there

with cookbooks, and pop-psychology is even worse in its fluffiness, crookedness and potential for harm than 'real' psychology. Should genetic manipulation become a fad, however, it is certain, given the level of scientific illiteracy in the population, that this will become a major trend. It will fail massively, but the failure will never be noticed. Witness the centuries of belief in psychology. Those who fear a 'brave new world' can rest easy, but the consequences of this mass belief will not be entirely benign, and it should be opposed.

The proper tactics for anarchists would be lobbying of the general public. The legislation will follow as a consequence. This way we keep our hands clean. We will be joined by allies that we almost certainly but they are valuable (e.g. the Catholic Church) and we shouldn't let ideological purity stand in the way of cooperation. Just don't go to an ideological bed with them. Also we should keep our statements to scientific accuracy insofar as this is possible with the general public. No wild horror stories! The problem is not a technological disaster but rather a gigantic bureaucratic and capitalist con-game. This may have consequences far greater than those of a successful enterprise. Scientific discoveries, many of the later falsified, are moving at a much more rapid pace than when I was younger. The communication of these to the general public is the failed responsibility of scientists and the scientifically literate. They are to blame. Most of them don't give a sweet goddamn. The left and their new-age hangers-on are completely incapable. Their ignorance reaches monumental heights, and their arrogance is indescribable. Through their own faults they are not the most popular people in the world, and their chances of influencing the general public are nil. If nothing else the people will adopt opposite ideas because assholes are advocating one set of ideas.

I think that *Freedom* should devote more space to science and technology in a factual manner, leaving out the new-age/leftist bullshit, and presenting these matters in all their complexity so as to inform your readers of a very important manner. I realise that you have many other priorities, but I hope that your readers will respond.

Pat Murtagh

The Evitable Crisis of Capitalism

(continued from page 8)

that Reagan had specialised in "voluntary export restraint agreements ... the most insidious form of protectionism", which "raises prices, reduces competition and reinforces cartel behaviour" (18th August 1993).

Protectionism has been rife in the Western world during the so-called 'market revolution', and the cost has been paid, to a large extent, in the Third World. The UN Development Report in 1992 estimated that protectionist and financial measures of the rich countries cost the countries of the South half a trillion dollars a year, about twelve times official aid.

There has been a string of free market catastrophes during the era of the 'market revolution' – Chile (where the rescue involved massive state intervention, reversing Chicago School orthodoxy), Mexico (bailed out by the US), the Continental Illinois (bailed out by the Federal government), the Savings & Loans disaster, and so on. Russia is only the latest example – a failure which unlike many of its predecessors will not be paid for by Western taxpayers through government intervention.

There is a more fundamental element of propaganda in the coverage of the current crisis. It is notable that concern about Russia has only really sprung up now when the effects of Russia's economic troubles may be about to affect Western economies. The failure of the market in Russia is defined as the failure of the Russian economy to play its part in supporting the world economy dominated by Western interests. The failure of the market is not defined as the failure of Western-imposed shock therapy to meet the needs of the Russian people, a 'free market' catastrophe that has been going on for a lot longer than the present debt moratorium.

By August 1993, the number of Russians who believed that their lives would be better under capitalism than under communism had already dropped from 24% to 18%, according to the *New York Times* (20th August). The 'reform' process – a structural adjustment programme in all but name – had wiped out life savings, reduced real earnings by over 80%, increased consumer prices a hundredfold in a year, and reduced production by over 40%. Canadian economist Michel Chossudovsky remarks that "while narrowly promoting the interests of Russia's merchants and business tycoons, the 'economic medicine' kills the patient, it destroys the national economy and pushes

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Liberty, Equality and Inefficiency

I learn from *The Guardian* that this title was the founding motto of Kilquhanity School, because the founder John Aitkenhead believed that efficient revolutions always ended up killing people. He died on 21st July, aged 88, and was the subject of a very interesting obituary in that journal for 12th August, the writer of which was Bob Cuddihy who explained how he had been a beneficiary of the focal point of that school, the weekly council meeting: "For more than fifty years, everyone – cooks, farm-hands, teachers and pupils – attended. The chair was taken by a pupil, who might be as young as ten. John A, as he was universally known, had only one vote, and even his wife and children would sometimes vote against him. At one such meeting, it was decided I should edit the school magazine – despite John's vehement objections."

John was born at Knightswood, Glasgow, in 1910, the son of a ship's carpenter, became an M A and MEd from Glasgow University and as a young teacher in Ayrshire schools, was increasingly repelled both by the Scottish education system and its reliance on corporal punishment. Twenty years earlier another young Scottish teacher had the same experience, wrote about it prolifically and eventually started Summerhill, the most celebrated of 'progressive' schools. This was A.S. Neill, and John resolved to start a school together with his wife, Morag, even though Neill (according to Bob Cuddihy) had warned him "that a progressive boarding school in Scotland would not work."

He was both a Scottish nationalist and a pacifist and was faced by five tribunals as a conscientious objector during the second world war. In September 1940, they opened the school at Kilquhanity House in Galloway in south-west Scotland, accepting children aged from 5 to 16 years. It lasted long into the post-war world, hovering, according to Bob Cuddihy, on the edge of bankruptcy until 1997: "Ultimately, it was the school inspectors that did for Kilquhanity. New safety standards could not be afforded, and even if they could have been, such changes would have destroyed Aitkenhead's objectives, hemming in the pupils' freedom".

John A. had been a reader of *Freedom* since the *War Commentary* days, and was a keen reader of *Anarchy* in the 1960s. I last heard



John Aitkenhead in the grounds of Kilquhanity School in Galloway, Scotland, which he founded in 1940.

from him in August 1994 when he wrote (to praise this column!) and to add that *The Raven* "always interest my wife Morag and myself". But unlike A.S. Neill, who was such a prolific writer and propagandist, he was a reluctant writer. He promised, but never got round to writing, a contribution to *Anarchy*, and I had to rely on an account (by another great Scottish educator, Bob MacKenzie (*Anarchy* 82, December 1967) of the threat to the school by the inspectors since the premises were 'sub-standard', even though they never threatened MacKenzie's own

worn-out publicly-funded school. However, *Anarchy* 92 (October 1968) had what I saw as an excellent account by Michael Bartholemew of a visit to Kilquhanity.

He related some of the stories that Bob Cuddihy tells of the sheer perseverance at a particular self-determined task that John A. sought to draw out of pupils. As Cuddihy explains it: "He was a wonderfully practical teacher. Once when he decided his class would make a new mast for the school's sailing dinghy, he turned the exercise into a geometry lesson. Chalk in hand, he used the classroom floor as a blackboard to illustrate how to turn a square pole of wood into a rounded mast. Having done that, he used his father's bevelled plane to finish the job. By this time the school had a fleet that included a 25-foot dug-out outrigger canoe, hewn from a tree."

Bartholemew's tale brings out the way that this last adventure was an incredible achievement in the lives of the children involved: "The school spends a lot of its time camping by the loch, and John took me to their favourite camp-site. Last summer, when the kids were working on the dug-out canoe they made their home here, constructing shelters out of dry-stone foundations and bracken roofs. The dug-out is a triumph of ingenuity and perseverance. It started life as a pine tree at Kilquhanity. The kids and an enthusiastic teacher (the idea came, I believe, from the teacher), cut it down and hollowed it out – a job of immense labour – and then lashed an outrigger to it. The boat is faithful to its type, using no glue or screws – just poles and lashing. The boat was carted down to the loch some six or seven miles away and camp was set up for its trials. As a keen dinghy sailor I know that the problems involved in making and sailing a boat of this type are formidable – rather like building a bicycle, right from scratch which performs safely and efficiently without handlebars. After much trial and error, the boat was made

to sail adequately and seems to me a measure of the capabilities of kids given the environment of a place like Kilquhanity. It took immense physical labour initially and great tenacity when the scheme looked like failing. The scheme scotches any notion that free kids haven't any staying power, and who would doubt the educational value of learning geography, history, woodwork, sailing theory and plain hard graft all at first-hand? Many would, of course, as schemes like this cut right across conventional timetables. You can't expect to drag a kid from his canoe, give him a week's unrelated timetabling and expect him to go back to it next week with the same enthusiasm. It requires an absolute faith in the value of kids' self-determination."

This comment from thirty years back is a reminder of the huge shift in the climate of educational thought since then. For in his 1994 letter John A. told me how he had persuaded the local press to print, "a statement by myself about the aims today of the school I founded in 1940. Result? Not a single enquiry! Except for a tiny minority, real education is too risky. Parents are sold as realistic (for the big world after school) schools with 'core curriculum' and exams, exams, exams."

It should not be assumed from this that John A. was not concerned about literacy. Bob Cuddihy also reports that after being teased by Neill: "How free was a pupil, retorted Aitkenhead, who could not read or write after leaving school?" He also tells how, "When asked how he had made a non-reader into a reader within a few short months, he replied: 'I just took him on my knee and read with him'."

He was a delightful radical teacher in a great Scottish tradition and veteran readers will join me in sending our warmest sympathy to Morag, the children and grandchildren.

Colin Ward

the system of State enterprises into bankruptcy". Noam Chomsky adds that the process also "blocks a transition towards 'national capitalism'", which is unacceptable to the masters of the world economy (*World Orders, Old and New*).

Attention is being focussed not on the plight of the people, but on the state of the 'economy'. The distinction between these entities is brought home by two recent articles which appeared in the *Financial Times* on the same day (7th September), on successive pages. Page 3: "Greenspan warns on US prosperity". The Chair of the US Federal Reserve warns: "It is just not credible that the US can remain an oasis of prosperity unaffected by a world that is experiencing greatly increased stress". Page 4: "Wages of US workers start to bounce back". "After seven years of US economic recovery, the real wages of American workers have begun to improve, with a 2.6% annual rise since 1996 as a result of tight labour markets, low inflation and an increase in the minimum wage. But most workers' real wages are still not back to the levels of ten years ago. Nor have the living standards of most working families fully recovered from the early 1990s recession [according to] the biennial study of working America published yesterday by the Economic Policy

Institute, the independent think-tank, in Washington DC."

"The report adds US jobs have grown less secure and less likely to offer health and pension benefits. 'Middle class wealth (the value of tangible assets such as houses and cars, plus financial assets, minus debts) has also fallen', it says ... The main reason for current income trends is a continuing wage deterioration among middle- and low-wage earners and white-collar and some college-educated workers, argues the report."

Welcome to the 'oasis of prosperity', now threatened by Asian contagion and Russian panic. Welcome to the class realities of the 'market revolution'. Hamish McRae ends his article on the current crisis by remarking that market capitalism (something which does not exist in the real world, as he well knows), is a "least bad" system, "not an optimal one": "It takes a certain maturity, a certain common sense, to accept imperfection: not to call for governments to 'do something' when things go wrong." A certain maturity lacked by the US government in the cases of Mexico, Continental Illinois, Savings & Loans, the aerospace industry, the NAFTA agreement, the MAI, and innumerable other cases of government intervention to undermine the market.

Milan Rai

SOUTH AFRICA

Whither the Alliance?**The political scene: the landscape changes**

Next year the ANC heads into an election. It faces an array of small parties whose support in terms of numbers is politically insignificant. Therefore it is assured of an electoral victory. The only unknown is the size of this victory. It has no opposition parties to its left. All left entities in South Africa of any political significance are in an alliance with the ANC. The PAC and AZAPO which are black nationalist parties committed to a nationalist form of socialism, are politically minuscule. The main national trade union federation, COSATU, sits with the ANC, as does the South African Communist Party (SACP), which is the 'think-tank' of the state-socialist left.

The other parties to the right of the ANC are limited to provincial ethnic fiefdoms, the IFP in Kwazulu-Natal, the UDM to the Eastern Cape and Northwest Province; or to the small population of white people. The chief "thatcherite" party is the DP which has always been supported by the English-speaking white, intensely anglophile, conglomerates of white capital. This support is shifting to the ANC, because that is where the power now is, and because of the ANC's stance, as detailed below. The UDM is led by a former homeland dictator, who switched to the ANC, and has since defected to form the UDM with Roelf Meyer, a former senior politician under the old regime.

The party of the former regime, the National Party, is slowly withering away to nothing. The same applies to the former Afrikaner right wing parties. These are not insignificant, they are non-entities on the political landscape.

The economic landscape: more of the same plus globalisation

The South African economy was hammered recently by the flight from emerging markets by international capital. South East Asia's debacle affected South Africa severely. Her currency dropped by one-third from R4.95 to the US Dollar to R6.61 to the US Dollar. This is coupled with the fact that the unemployment rate set officially at 36% is rising as time marches on. Tens of thousands are being laid off as South Africa comes under the lash of global markets. Growth has been sluggish at between one and two per cent per annum for the last ten years. Under the previous regime in the late '80s it was even negative! South Africa needs a growth rate of 6% to succeed. Commodity prices have dropped forcing 'rationalisation' in South Africa's mining sector, the biggest employer in the

country together with agriculture.

The ANC has adopted a programme called GEAR which is a neo-liberal macro-economic programme. This is the core of its financial and monetary policy. Interest rates are now well over 20% per annum, and a tight hold is kept on money supply.

The RDP which is its social upliftment programme has largely been left on the back-burner, although to be fair, I have heard that South Africa has built more low-cost or free housing than any other country in so short a time. Now that an election is in the offing, the RDP is being dusted off to demonstrate 'delivery' by the government. The education policy of the government is a shambles, and I have heard from those involved with this area, that the anger in the townships is simmering to a dangerous boil over this.

Old Loyalties and New Constituencies

The ANC is the most powerful political party in South Africa. It is a 'broad church' holding within its ranks capitalists, africanists, workerists, state-socialists, traditionalists, social democrats, liberals and others. This was the 'national-democratic' front that confronted the old regime and moved into power in 1994.

The ANC had a long history of fraternal ties to the state socialist regimes of Cuba, the former USSR, and Former Soviet bloc states. Its intellectual engine was the SACP, its troops were the rank-and-file of the mass union movement, and to a lesser extent the civic's movement. Its armed struggle was never more than armed propaganda, and in my view, caused more harm than what good it achieved. The ANC won its political victory through economic coercion with sanctions and union mass direct action. This is critical to understand the bulk of my analysis. COSATU was always the political workshop of the ANC, and the ANC relied/relies on the grassroots canvassing of the union movement for its political votes. As a result, the ANC tended to be quite 'socialist' in its outlook and policies, until it became the government.

Hence the alliance. This echoes Gramsci's war of position. The state socialists saw the revolution as a two-stage process. First the national-democratic struggle to create an ANC state, and then a socialist transformation, with the leadership of the black working class as the vanguard. They realised they would need the ANC to complete the first stage. However, by now they are symbiotically entwined with the ANC and find it difficult

to persuade it to abandon GEAR.

At its national conference this year, the ANC confirmed that GEAR was the cornerstone of government policy. At the COSATU conference, Mandela re-iterated this fact, despite strong disagreement from the unions. At the SACP conference Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, the president-in-waiting, lashed the SACP and COSATU in a way that has South Africa's capitalist media gasping with delight. They stated that GEAR was non-negotiable. Black state socialists and black capitalists have crossed swords in the media.

South Africa as a nation finds itself at the mercy of international capital and globalisation. The ANC has also changed its constituency. It now represents, for the main part, the newly rising black comprador class of capitalists. Its central economic policy is neo-liberal. The fact is, that with a few minor exceptions, it now no longer represents the black working class or unemployed. It represents African capital, and capital in general, although it tends to take the side of African black capital against traditional white capital in any fight.

Despite this reality, the union bureaucracy in COSATU and the members of the SACP continue to defend the alliance, and stick to it more firmly, despite what has happened. With the ANC they have a direct line to government, and many appear convinced that they can convince the ANC to 'mend its ways'. It then becomes an open question whether the union federation or the SACP, themselves, still represent the interests of the working class.

The reality is that South Africa could never adopt any form of state socialism without getting crushed by world capital. The most South Africans could hope for is an advanced social democratic regime like Sweden's. But even this would be extraordinarily difficult in today's neo-liberal world order, an order

based on the economic equivalent of a drive-by shooting.

The ANC, its demi-gods like Winnie Mandela, and its officials enjoy the patronage of the state and capital. The new black capitalist class has the tightest ties with this political order, and is building itself as an Africanist capitalist class, and leaving behind the rest. Mbeki's personal staff is filled with members of this new class. Loyalty to the party, for many others, means never having to say you are sorry for looting the national and provincial coffers. The ANC regularly lets its corrupt and incompetent officials off the hook with a mild slap on the wrist called 're-deployment'. But disloyalty to the party is not tolerated, and the penalties include expulsion.

1998 and all that ...

South Africa has become a franchise of the New World Order. The population will stabilise at a capitalist and employed class of 30 to 40 % of the population, and the rest will largely be left to fend for themselves, as a mass of rural and newly-urbanised poor. The ANC seems to accept this, it and its allied elites are far too busy empire-building.

If there was a labour/unemployed party fighting next year's election, the ANC would have to accommodate some of their needs, as it would face a real threat to the loyalty of its old constituency. At the moment its old constituency does not have anyone else to vote for, which makes the SACP's and COSATU's decision to stay in the alliance even more 'interesting'. As things stand, the ANC can cater to its new capitalist class without any fear of any political consequences.

The transformation of South African society into African state capitalist proceeds apace, as the 'left' loses ground in the war of position.

Joel

**NET WATCH****Nike demo**

The anarchist percussion collective TCHKUNG has organised a successful demonstration outside a Nike store in Eugene Oregon. Crowds pulled down the chain-link perimeters before police in riot gear arrived. The demonstration was to draw attention to the serious injury of one of the protesters on 22nd July who stayed up in the large trees which Nike Properties ordered to cut down on their proposed site of the 6,000 square feet store complex.

Jabiluka Uranium Mine

118 people were arrested in a demonstration to delay the development of Jabiluka uranium mine, which is in Australia's tropical northern territory in a district of Kakadu National Park, a site listed by World Heritage. This is of course aborigine land.

The resisters were charged with *trespassing on land belonging to themselves*. The commercial company owning the mine is North Limited, an offshoot of Energy Resources Australia.

With no recognition of human rights, the combined police forces of Era behaved in a barbaric manner.

This included the cutting of water supplies in the tropical heat. When arrested they were 'stepping on people's heads'.

Documented injuries, including after the arrests: "packing many people into police vehicles and travelling at 80km an hour such that they should sustain head injuries from hitting the roof of the vehicles". Ripping

people out of lock-ons. Kicking people in the head was considered insignificant.

Once in custody protectors were placed in illegal conditions. For example, all 118 protesters were placed in a four-bed cell with one toilet, no facilities whatsoever and no medical attention.

As one police officer said: "this is the Northern Territory" (in other words no law but our law).

We are pleased to see that comrades of the Industrial Workers of the World have taken an active interest in this matter and we appeal to all anarchist groups all over the world to stop this atrocity. For further information see w.au.iww.org/australia.

Garbage in Space

We have just been informed that on 25th June "during routine maintenance operations, ground controllers lost contact with the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (Soho) spacecraft. The satellite automatically went into Emergency Reacquisition Mode (ESR). When this happens the satellite tries to align itself towards the sun by firing its altitude control thrusters under the guidance of an on-board sun sensor. Efforts to re-establish operations have not succeeded at the time of going to press, despite use of the full Nasa Deep Space Network." Sorry about the jargon, comrades, but this is how they write, our rulers and their stooges. As to how you control the ground, never mind the Sun, is a matter of some concern.

compiled by John Rety



Riot police lead away striking workers after raiding a Mando Machinery Corp factory in Korea on 4th September to end an eighteen-day labour dispute over lay-offs.

Paradoxes of Anarchism

Dear *Freedom*,

"How would some contributors to *Freedom* live if the state was abolished?" posits Anna Freeman (19th September). A lot less stressfully I should think! The state, unasked, unwelcome, *is* in all our lives; in my own case, being unemployed, to the extent that each fortnight the state returns to me money ('the minimum amount the law states you need to live on') it has taken from me through a multitude of taxations and mandatory insurance deductions during all of my working life, from age 15 to 50. Presently I am accepting some of this money back in the form of what the state refers to as a 'benefit' in order that I might continue to remain alive within this system imposed upon me (along with everyone else) by the state very much against my will. Despite the insinuations of Anna Freeman's remarks, the state 'cossets' an unemployed person's life no more than this, i.e. it refunds some of the money it has taken from people during the period they have worked, this 35 years as applicable to my own situation, embracing three redundancies along the way.

What this Labour government with their iniquitous 'New Deal' policy fails to understand, along with virtually every 'professional' politician and very likely Anna Freeman too, is that the overwhelming majority of unemployed people actually *do* want to contribute to society but in a way that we can perceive ourselves to be *useful*, via meaningful and worthwhile work rather than simply being *used* by exploiters to stack up profits. I despise the state, and equally detest all that it represents. By not working, my financial circumstances preclude me from participating in this society's ethos to any significant degree (in relation to *its* values). This is not always (ever!) easy but it does allow me the respect to regard myself to be in total opposition to this society, the state and everything it pompously purports to stand for. Until the state comes to appreciate me and my one life as a human being of reasonable intelligence, and not as fodder for the profit junkies, then I shall continue to be, for as long as I possibly can, an active work resister. Without guilt and wholly unapologetic.

Frank (Merseyside)

Anarchism & Primitivism

Dear *Freedom*,

Donald Room is right to point out (5th September) the dangers of what he calls 'primitivism', the tendency in modern thought to reject science and technology. However, I am unable to follow his logic in drawing a sharp distinction between the rejection of nuclear weapons and protest against genetic engineering. Both fission/fusion weapons and genetic engineering are based on technological advances, both are controlled by elites with little concern for the common good, and both are proliferating in an increasingly dangerous manner.

Donald suggests (correctly) that genetic engineering should not be "condemn[ed] out of hand", but does not follow his logic by also suggesting that nuclear weapons should not be condemned out of hand. Any rational person will examine the cases for and against the development, possession and deployment of these technologies – and examine also the uses to which the technologies are put.

The parallels between nuclear weapons and genetic engineering are many. Just like a nuclear explosion, the release of genetically modified (GM) organisms into the environment has effects which are not constrained by space or time. Both kinds of 'releases' have large-scale potential impacts on living beings, including human beings.

To take only one example, today's *Financial Times* (8th September) reports that "Weeds may acquire virus resistance from GM crops ... Experiments at the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology's Furzebrook research station suggests that virus resistance could spread more readily from genetically modified crops to weeds than researchers had realised ... The implication is that virus resistance could spread from genetically engineered crops [i.e. crops genetically engineered to resist viral diseases] to their wild relatives, which would become more prolific weeds. 'More research on this question is urgently needed to improve risk assessment for genetically modified crops', said Professor Gray, a member of the government's advisory committee on releases into the environment."

A full discussion of the known risks and alleged benefits of genetic engineering in the pages of *Freedom* would be very useful.

Milan Rai

Dear *Freedom*,

Yes, I couldn't agree more that the issue of genetic engineering needs careful thought and not Luddite reactionism as Donald Room pointed out in 'Anarchism and Primitivism'. As a Totnesian myself, I was firstly amazed (sic) that anyone should choose the epicentre of the alternative world, where even the peas in the refs' whistles have to be organically grown and where there are so many therapists that sickness is a thing of the past, as the locality for this agrarian experiment. (The saboteurs did succeed in hitting their target in the end, after the offending company had inexplicably broadcast to all and sundry that the first attempt had destroyed the wrong crop.) Technology began before the first stone tool. Can we really draw the line between facility and decadence? It's all so subjective.

I would prefer it if the focus was entirely on the attempt by certain business cartels to monopolise production and supply of food and impose total control, via governments serving the interests of the few, not the many, over what can be grown and eaten. Food fascism may soon prevent healthy food being grown – even genetically engineered healthy food.

The real problem is the spiral of competition in which even the ragged-trousered are caught up. Genetic engineering may or may not prove to be an insidious cancer, with the greatest dangers arising from the potential to create uncloned human zombies, but either way it is surely only a symptom of the underlying disease of capitalism. The BSE fiasco was another one. As any totally immersed Totnesian known, it's as much use trying to suppress symptoms as it is to cut off the head of the Hydra. Cure necessitates fundamental change. By focusing on symptoms it may well be that we unwittingly fiddle while Rome burns.

Tom Merrington (former therapist, present bicycle mechanic)

Please keep sending in your letters and donations...

Dear *Freedom*,

Anna Freeman (letters, 5th September) raises some interesting points. Yes, *Freedom* advocates anarchism and yes, anarchism advocates abolition of the state.

In fact, anarchism advocates abolishing not only states, but all sorts of governments and coercive institutions, including for instance employers and landlords. This point is important, because it distinguishes between anarchists and right-wing 'libertarians' who advocate abolishing the state but leaving capitalists in power.

Anarchists are extremists who will not be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. But we are not all-or-nothing absolutists. We demand the lot, but will grab whatever bits are available. This leads to some interesting paradoxes.

For instance, anarchists using a 'lesser evil' argument may encourage one set of bosses, the state, to curb the activities of another set of bosses, the employers, by enacting ten-hour day and minimum wage laws.

Complete freedom from bosses includes freedom from the money/wages/property system. Distribution of wealth should be by free access, regulated by custom and the social sense of consumers. Work should be done for rewards other than access to wealth. Prestige should be earned by means other than the accumulation of property.

Some contributions to *Freedom* delight in the fact that a lot of work is voluntary, even within capitalist society. Others delight in the fact that medical services, water supplies, libraries, museums and footpaths are currently free of access. Anarchists deplore proposals to introduce charges or other restrictions, even though we know that these free goods are paid for by the state and similar institutions, out of taxes and similar levies. Some things being free of access, like some work being voluntary, is a 'step in the direction' of the anarchist ideal.

Anarchists do not like dole offices, because what they dole out is access to poverty. But we are even less enamoured of threats to withdraw the dole from claimants who prefer not to take rotten jobs for poverty wages. This 'lesser evil' attitude underlies *Freedom's* campaigns against over-enthusiastic dole office clerks, and former dole minister Frank Field.

Not all articles in *Freedom* make the basic anarchist argument explicit. Some, read out of context, may appear to agree with state socialism. But it would be tedious to set out the whole anarchist position in every separate news item. The paper as a whole should convey the general attitude of anarchism, to readers who are not already familiar with it.

Donald Room

Labour's 'New Deal'

Dear *Freedom*,

Further to your article on Labour's 'New Deal' (5th September) I should like to draw attention to the fact that the government have persuaded organisations within the voluntary sector to cooperate with this outrage.

We all know the attraction to commercial employers, but what is the voluntary sector being offered? Do they simply see it as a source of extra help (most are short of volunteers) or is there something more sinister involved – are they getting payment as well?

One of the fair options offered under the 'New Deal' is a placement within the voluntary sector. I have a feeling that this is linked to training and so-called 'National Vocational Qualifications'. From my own experience I can testify that NVQs are a load of rubbish delivered by cowboy outfits ('training providers') with a placement at the end of the course. What is really disturbing about NVQs in general (not just in relation to 'New Deal') is that they are utterly meaningless and we have a situation where they are used as a substitute for proper training, so that vulnerable people are being placed in homes owned by cowboys and staffed by people whose only qualification is an NVQ in 'care work' or whatever. This is a scandal of criminal proportions.

Working as a volunteer, I know that voluntary organisations do not provide training and although they can offer useful experience it is quite wrong for placements to be represented as training. If 'New Deal' is administered as badly as 'Training for Work', and I see no reason why it should be any better, then even without the coercive aspect it should be resisted.

I should like to make contact with anyone (for practical reasons in the London area) who is interested in establishing a *non-sectarian* group to campaign against the involvement of voluntary sector organisations with 'New Deal'.

It may well be the case that those who have agreed to cooperate are simply naive, and that is certainly the case with the rank-and-file volunteers. For this reason a thoughtful

approach is needed; people need to be educated and persuaded, not harangued.

The aim would be to research the facts and publish information with a view to persuading volunteers to adopt a policy of no-cooperation. It would only require a small percentage to be persuaded to force most organisations to reverse their position.

I should also like to hear from anyone who can supply information about the involvement of the voluntary sector and anyone on (or who has been on) 'New Deal' in the voluntary or commercial sector.

Anyone interested in helping to make my idea a reality should contact me on 0171-487 3570 (daytime between 10am and 6pm only, not Sundays). If I am not there, please do not discuss this project with anyone else – a request to ring back will be acted upon within 24 hours.

Edmund McArthur

DONATIONS August 1998

Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund

London, PL, £10; Croydon, HT, £2; London, SB, £9; Freshwater, Isle of Wight, HW, £6; Bedlington, BH, £3; Liverpool, BE, £5; Doncaster, AC, £5; Wolverhampton, JL, £2; Edinburgh, DH, £5.

Total = £47
1998 total to date = £655

Freedom Press Overheads Fund

London, PL, £10; London, DR, £17; Newport, NF, £20; London, SB, £8; Glasgow, BB, £4; London, LTR, £5; Bristol, RHS, £3; Nottingham, TS, £6; Doncaster, AC, £5; Wolverhampton, JL, £2.

Total = £80
1998 total to date = £1,720

Raven Deficit Fund

London, PL, £10; London, SB, £9.

Total = £19
1998 total to date = £456

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)
Freedom (24 issues) half price for 12 issues				
Claimants	10.00	-	-	-
Regular	14.00	22.00	34.00	24.00
Institutions	22.00	30.00	40.00	40.00

The Raven (4 issues)

Claimants	10.00	-	-	-
Regular	12.00	14.00	18.00	16.00
Institutions	18.00	22.00	27.00	27.00

Join sub (24 x Freedom plus 4 x The Raven)

Claimants	18.00	-	-	-
Regular	24.00	34.00	50.00	36.00

Bundle subs for Freedom (12 issues)

	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 —

18th September General discussion

25th September Bookchin and the Lifestyle
Debate (speaker Steve Ash)

2nd October General discussion

9th October Abeona Housing Cooperative
(speaker Pete Freer)

Anyone interested in giving a talk or
leading a discussion, please contact Carol
Saunders or Peter Neville *at the meetings*
giving your subject and prospective dates
and we will do our best to accommodate.

Carol Saunders / Peter Neville

University of Warwick: open studies

**Demanding the Impossible?
A History of Anarchist Ideas
and Movements**

A ten-week course starting Wednesday 7th October,
from 7.30 to 9.30pm
with Matthew Thomas

In the popular imagination, in our everyday
language, anarchism is associated with destruction
as the bomb-throwing fanatic intent on bringing
down civilised society. It is the express aim of this
course to show that this is a false image and that
there is a profound anarchist tradition which
offers many ideas and values that are relevant to
contemporary problems and issues. The course is
therefore intended as a history of anarchist
thought and action. While it attempts to place
thinkers and ideas in their historical and social
context, the emphasis will be on the development
of anarchism as a rich and original body of ideas
and values.

For more information contact:
01203 523831

Open Studies
Department of Continuing Education
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL

**SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL
ANARCHIST
BOOKFAIR**



**SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER
from 10am onwards**

CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON WC1
(nearest tube Holborn)

for more information contact:
Anarchist Bookfair, c/o 84b Whitechapel High
Street, London E1 7QX
e-mail: m.peacock@unl.ac.uk
website:
<http://freespace.virgin.net/anarchist.bookfair>

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 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

A new play written and directed by
Brian Behan
The Tale of Two Todgers
at the Hackney Empire Studio from
9th to 27th September at 8pm
Box office: 0181-985 2424

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