

## The death of politics?

Tessa Jowell, New Labour's health minister, is to set up a scheme to give cooking lessons to the poor. "Initially the aim is to teach basic kitchen skills to adults or children on the most run down estates, but any lessons on improving the nutritional content of meals could be extended to the wider community" (*Guardian*, 12th May 1999).

Demos, the centre left policy think tank, has published a report, *The Real Deal*, which concludes that young people already at the margins of society are further disadvantaged by a system in which they are stereotyped and ignored by politicians prevented by poverty from progressing in education, and exploited by employers. David Blunkett, the education secretary, has announced a new benefit rule change under which young people who turn down three consecutive offers of jobs or training will lose their benefits for 26 weeks.

Jeremy Corbyn MP has split from his

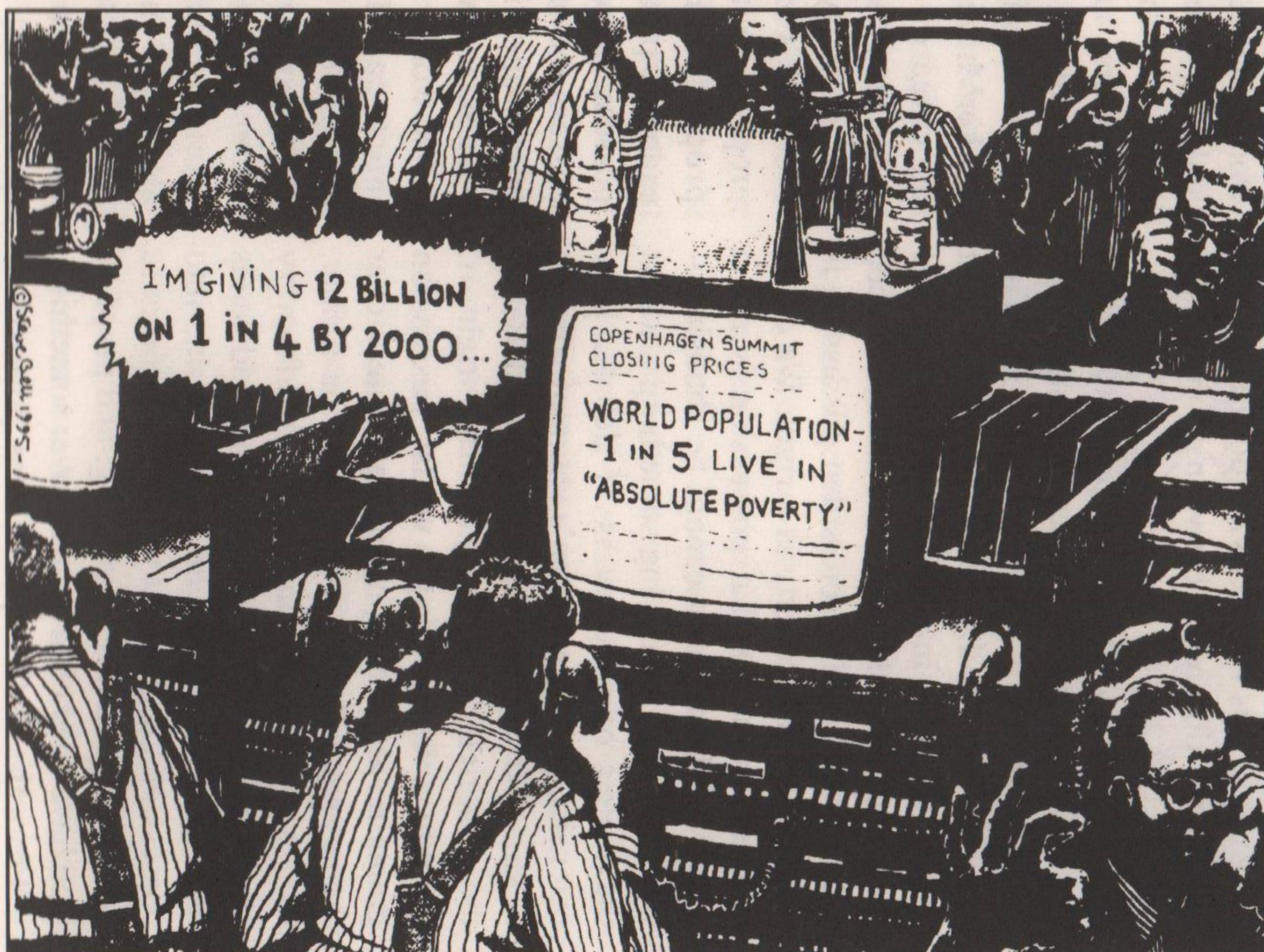
wife because she believed it was in the best interests of their son that he attend a grammar school rather than a local comprehensive. In the ensuing debate, the opinion of most *Guardian* readers was that middle class kids should stay within the state system to act as positive role models for working class children.

Three news items from the last fortnight. All share a common theme – the belief that working class people have no interests, needs or opinions which require either public representation or political respect. For the media, as for the politicians whose mendacity they gloss, the working class exist either as victims now, or scroungers. Thus poverty becomes not an issue of social policy but a question of poor self management. The poor have poor diets not because they are poor and hence cannot afford regular access to good food but because they didn't pay attention in home economics at school and hence can't cook properly. The poor have poor diets

because they're too stupid to cook like Gordon Ramsey! Equally, it's not the education system which fails working class kids, it's the kids who let the schools down – the solution then becomes not the redistribution of wealth, from rich to poor, from private to public, but, much cheaper, a spot of mentoring from a few nice middle class children to keep the rabble in line. As one dissenting *Guardian* reader put it: "As a working class Islington parent with a daughter at a local school, I am disgusted at all the bigoted generalities ... So it is rubbing shoulders with 'our better offs', rather than addressing the huge social inequality in this borough that is the key to improving exam results then? If the same thing were said about an ethnic minority there would be an uproar" (A. Taylor, *Guardian*, 15th May 1999).

In a sense, the transformation of the working class into a minority is precisely what's happened. 'Class' as a universalising factor has been fragmented – twenty years of working class defeats have reduced the notion of class identity to one more minority bidding at the trough. As Decca Aitkenhead has put it: "We balkanise the condition of poverty into minority issues – young people's poverty, black people's poverty, old people's poverty and so on. Issues we used to understand in the broad framework of politics – and to some extent class – now become parcelled into lifestyle packages." The result is, for most working class people, a feeling that politics has nothing to do with them. Politics, in any sense which requires working class people to act as self-perceived subjects, with interests and objectives separate to the agenda of capital, is a dead issue. Clearly, this suits our New Labour 'betters' just fine. The

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# anarchist fortnightly

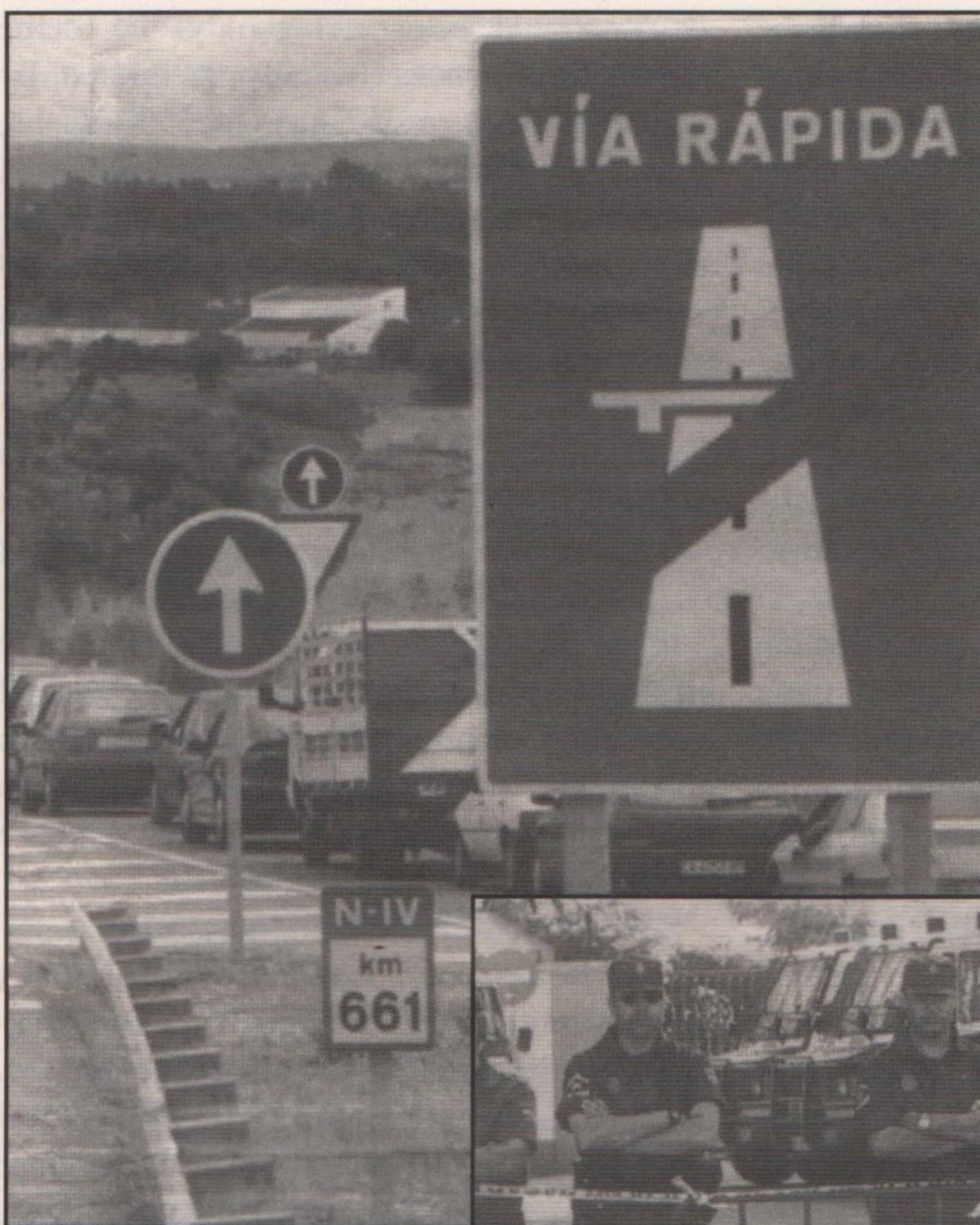
# Freedom

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50p

## Anarchists gee-up Cádiz conflict



Above: Chaos on the roads around Cádiz.  
Right: The protesting workers in Cádiz.

This month the shipyards in the bay of Cádiz are again in conflict. I attended a planning meeting on Thursday 6th May at the Puerto Real branch of the anarchist CNT on Calle San

Francisco. There were fears that the future of shipbuilding in Cádiz city and the neighbour town of Puerto Real would be threatened with job cut-backs, short time and redundancies. The meeting I was at in Puerto Real aimed to put an anarchist answer to this social and industrial threat to the Bay of Cádiz.

The CNT (National Confederation of Labour) in Cádiz city, Cádiz province and the whole of Andalucía has an historic tradition going back at least a hundred years. In the pueblos of western Andalucía, Cádiz, Málaga and Sevilla the anarchists were easily the strongest political force up to the Franco victory in the Spanish Civil War. The customs of Spanish anarchism still infect strikes and social struggles in the south of Spain, even when the majority unions still call themselves 'socialists' or 'communist' as the UGT and CCOO do. At the meeting I was at earlier this month several anarchist CNT responses to the threats of the employers were worked out, and plans were put in force for twice weekly mass meetings of all the workers to be held on Wednesdays and

Fridays. CNT proposals would be put to these mass meetings.

### Bay of Cádiz chaos

Pepe Gomez, a leader of the Puerto Real CNT, who has not been able to get a job in the Puerto Real yard since he came back from Nicaragua in the early 1990s, now works in the nearby town of Santa Maria in another yard. His involvement in Puerto Real industrial disputes in the 1980s is well known.

Pepe told the meeting that the anarchist answer to the

until 7 in the afternoon vehicle circulation was almost impossible and tail-backs of 25 kilometres were formed. The cause of the chaos was the cutting of the road by the shipyards at Puerto Real up to the Carranza bridge."

Cádiz city is vulnerable to this type of action because it is built on a 'peninsula island' connected by a bridge from Puerto Real (the N-433) and a road along a narrow causeway from the towns of San Fernando and Chiclana de la Frontera. With the bridge cut at Puerto Real all traffic from the the Andalusian capital of Sevilla, in the north, was forced onto the causeway at Chiclana and San Fernando, which couldn't handle the increase.

### Putting anarchism to the public

In Puerto Real itself, Fernando Rufo in *Diario de Cádiz* wrote: "The barricades return to the shipyards after four years". 2,700 workers came out in protest. Some car tyres were burnt on the barricades at the Carranza bridge. In the morning before putting up the barricades the operatives held a mass meeting in the offices of the company.

Pepe Gomez told me after the CNT meeting in Puerto Real, that though most of the shipyard workers were in the UGT or the CCOO, at the mass

meetings they usually accepted the proposals put forward by the anarchist CNT. Workers join the socialist and communist unions to get legal protection and insurance benefits, but look to the anarchists and the CNT when a crisis occurs.

In Spain, and some other parts of southern Europe, the labour organisations are more open and community orientated. Mass meetings of workers, such as at Puerto Real, are often held in squares in the centre of town. With the local public involved – *el pueblo* – the anarchist position can be put forcefully just as the *hijos del pueblo* (sons of the people) did in the old days.

Pepe Gomez told me that it had been decided to hold mass meetings every Wednesday and Friday in Puerto Real until further notice. On Wednesday 12th May the Minister of Industry Josep Piqué came to Cádiz following the wave of protests in Cádiz caused by the actions of the previous Friday which brought chaos to the city. Alas, Señor Piqué was not able to drive into the city (Cádiz has no airport) because again the workers at two shipyards in the Bay of Cádiz

had again cut off traffic over Carranza bridge and in the Avenida de Cádiz in the centre. The Minister of Industry and Government spokesman had to be brought into Cádiz for discussions with the workers' representatives by police helicopter from Jerez airport over the workers' barricades.

The director for work and Industry of the Junta de Andalucía (Junta de Andalucía is the regional government), Guillermo Gutierrez, who had no use of an helicopter was least lucky and found himself blocked in traffic at Puerto Real and finally had to retrace his steps to Sevilla.

After the meetings with the Minister of Industry, Señor Piqué, the shipyard workers claimed they were 'moderately optimistic'. Josep Piqué reassured the workers that there would be no closures and discounted the prospect of redundancies.

Clearly the Minister's intervention was an attempt to cool the situation and calm the workers in the face of recurring chaos in the Bay of Cádiz.

### Lessons of Puerto Real

Privately Pepe Gomez expressed his concern that some anarcho-syndicalists in northern Europe are obsessed with analysis, when social practice was so simple. He said: "Many of these people are so militantly anarchist in theory, yet in practice they are reformists".

He could have been describing much of the English anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movement as I know them.

The case of Puerto Real shows that a libertarian and anarchist agenda can be put to people in struggle. It just requires nous and some street credibility, which a lot of English libertarians seem to lack. Gerry from Liverpool ACF remarked to me recently about the minimalist involvement of some northern anarchists in the Tameside careworkers' dispute. Tameside has become like a Lancastrian Puerto Real, with local anarchists deeply entrenched in the activities of the campaigns, providing help and initiatives.

While regionally, apart from Manchester Earth First!, the libertarian left has operated an arms-length policy recently towards the Tameside dispute. Too many anarchists want to 'stay out of harm's way', to use an American expression. Otherwise there would be more Puerto Reals and more Tamesides. If our movement is not to become a home for misanthropes and social cripples this must change. A detailed history of the Puerto Real conflict appeared in *The Raven* No. 36, together with interviews with Pepe Gomez. The Solidarity Federation produced a pamphlet, *Anarcho-Syndicalism in Puerto Real*, some years ago.

BB

# I walked out of an anarchist meeting ...

At a recent meeting of the London Anarchist Forum I was shocked to hear some credence given to the idea that anarchism could encompass the coercion of individuals. While no consensus was displayed on this outrageously authoritarian idea, it seemed to be agreed to by a large percentage of those present. Certainly no serious attempt to refute it was made by the few voices of dissent. Normally I would have dismissed this as another manifestation of the idiosyncratic and confused ramblings that sometimes emerge at this venue. However this is not the first time I have come across such crypto-fascist undercurrents within anarchist debates, both here and abroad. I do not know how the issue was resolved at the LAF as I left half way through in search of an anarchist meeting.

I think it is time that this issue is settled once and for all. I find it bizarre that a basic tenet of anarchism should have to be reaffirmed in this way, but it appears it has to be.

At no time, for any reason, can an individual be coerced within an anarchist framework. The only exception to this being cases of extreme, anti-social activity, and even here this must be the last resort. What value can the term 'voluntary communism' have if coercion exists as a possibility when people do not make the 'right choice'. If this is the mentality of anarchists it is no wonder the public at large do not trust us.

I am not arguing for 'anarchist purism' or some mindless allegiance to an ideology, or even to principle. That is, I would not universally apply it outside an anarchist framework. Authoritarians, like fascists, must always be forcefully opposed, whether they be of the right or left (and even of the anarchist movement it now appears). It is an argument based on what is necessary to make

anarchism a possibility.

The underlying proposal at the LAF was that those who did not contribute to a community (or any cooperative venture), in a way which endangered its survival, should be forcibly excluded from it. In other words a partial return to pre-communist mutualism. However the debate was confused by a vagueness over whether the issue was one of anarchist behaviour in reformist projects, within the existing system, or behaviour within socialist communities within any future anarchist system. There is a different solution for each of these, but the basic problem is the same.

While very few of us would oppose the necessary coercion of the extreme social offender (serial killers, rapists, etc.) the response to the lesser offender is problematic. There is no question of any executive action being taken against such people by anarchists, and organised community action would merely be another form of executive state. Two responses are usually made at this point, both are inadequate. One is that some cultural pressure is brought to bear on offenders, they are stigmatised or 'sent to Coventry'. Apart from being the most inhuman thing we could possibly do to someone (at least concentration camps imply human interaction) this would be extremely dangerous for anarchism. Given that it would be driven by majority opinion, are we naive enough to think that such opinion would ever be free of prejudice and made by an enlightened body respectful of minorities and eccentric individuals. The model of the primitive community is sometimes invoked here and terms like 'defuse sanction' used. But sanction is still sanction and the more defuse it is the more ignorant it will be. In reality not all non-hierarchical communities generally applied

this rule however, and those that did were not in anyway free communities, despite claims to the contrary by some anarcho-primitivists.

The other response is something along the lines of 'people (or at least anarchists) are sensible (or ethical) enough to coerce when there is no other option, in order to protect others, and not to coerce at other times'. But the strongest argument we have against the state is that this very idea is impossible. If these virtuous people exist let's put them in government permanently. Unfortunately they don't, we are all fallible, prejudiced beings and further corruptible by power. Moreover, our specific sense of justice is nothing more than our socially conditioned prejudice.

The real problem is more than the appropriate response to offenders. It is one of what comprises an offender. We would agree that a serial killer or terrorist should be coerced, at least temporarily, but what about the one-off mass murderer, how can we be sure it is one-off? Then, what about someone who kills twice, or once, or just seriously injures someone? Where is the cut-off point between serious harm and 'acceptable' harm? What constitutes harm? Is publishing a controversial book harmful? Or promoting a contrary opinion? More relevant to our contentious example, does harm have to be active or can it be passive? Is non-contribution harmful?

As soon as we allow one case of coercion we are standing at the top of a very slippery slope. And unlike most slippery slope arguments there are no discontinuities to counter it (i.e. no stage is clearly different from the next). Now within this context can we make a believable claim to be supporting 'voluntary socialism'. For many the existing liberal securities of a limited freedom might seem safer (or perhaps the equally conservative notion of dropping out into some alternative lifestyle, accommodated with the current system).

A common way out of this problem is to talk about the plurality of communal arrangements and mobility (sometimes non-consensual) between them as an alternative to coercion. There is no doubt much value in this, but it shouldn't be used as an excuse for exclusion. Enforced mobility is not an easy option, for either party, and is only meaningful if a real alternative exists. Even 'voluntary' mobility can easily become a disguised form of coercion. These measures, which might be dubbed 'the Balkan option', would be hard to tell apart from the 'non-coercive offers' conservative liberals claim are made to the unemployed by exploitative employers.

The other manifestation of this problem, in existing alternatives to the established order, rather than future 'utopias', demonstrates the same problem. If we are to give birth to anarchism in the future we need to conceive it today. We must start to live it in the here and now, as this is what will shape the future and demonstrate what we can expect. As declared above, this does not necessarily mean extending our love of freedom to authoritarians and fascists (certain conditions need to be met to facilitate an anarchist society), nor should we enslave ourselves to our principles in other ways. But it does mean affirming our principles as genuinely as possible in our current situation. Naturally this means that these alternatives will fail, as any non-exploitative option inevitably does under capitalism, fish always drown out of water. But we should not let our frustrations and anger lead us to irreversibly adopt authoritarian methods of stabilising these projects. Reformism will always fail, any



useful attempt at alternatives is largely experimental and educational, true propaganda by deed. The end of one alternative serves to free resources for another. Failures, of otherwise successful projects, should be demonstrated as occurring only due to the external influences (usually facilitated by naturally self-interested, anarchic individuals), thus successfully vilifying the system even further. Those that are still functional at the right moment may serve as the necessary stable bridges to change, but they will not cause that change. Any positive social project that does not serve this role should not be supported by anarchists (we cannot afford to squander our resources on someone else's liberal cause, no matter how many might 'benefit' from it in the short term).

It is imperative that we are extremely hesitant to entertain any idea of social coercion if anarchism is to be realisable, both in terms of the necessary conditions for its existence and in terms of presenting our case to the wider world.

Some forms of coercion, or sanction, may indeed be necessary on some occasions, but if we want to preserve anarchism these occasions should be only reluctantly acknowledged, and then be questions of individual conscience in particular situations, rather than any general anarchist policy. Moreover, this acknowledgement is more likely, realistically, to be one of acquiescence, and our real role in any future anarchy might be protecting anarchism from the reactionary 'fascism' of a communal herd.

The counter-argument of the pragmatic 'realist' to all of this might be that only certain forms of social arrangement are viable. And so, some effective system of minimum coercion is necessary to prevent disruption of the possibility of sustaining an anarchist community in the first place. But who is qualified to say what is and is not viable. Only living the possibilities may achieve this. Even if a communal system is obviously seen to be failing due to the non-contribution of certain members, how can coercion be justified? The very reason an anarchist community exists is to sustain the equal freedom of all its members (not a majority). As Bakunin observed, the loss of freedom of one member of a community is a loss of all our freedoms. If a community cannot sustain itself without coercion, it is not a viable anarchist community and so should not survive. If no form of community will support such a 'utopian' scheme then damn all communities. Survival alone is no reason to exist. This may sound like an unreasonable demand for perfection to some, but as soon as we admit we are not seeking perfection we lower our standards and undermine the possibility of anything even near perfection. As the saying goes 'we must demand the absurd to achieve the impossible'. Ironically I first heard this slogan in the mouths of those at the LAF so keen to sanction coercive practices.

Steve Ash

## Quick Political Scholastic Aptitude Test (QPSAT)

This test consists of one (1) multiple-choice question (so you better get it right!)

Here's a list of the countries that the U.S. has bombed since the end of World War II, compiled by historian William Blum:

China 1945-46  
 Korea 1950-53  
 China 1950-53  
 Guatemala 1954  
 Indonesia 1958  
 Cuba 1959-60  
 Guatemala 1960  
 Congo 1964  
 Peru 1965  
 Laos 1964-73  
 Vietnam 1961-73  
 Cambodia 1969-70  
 Guatemala 1967-69  
 Grenada 1983  
 Libya 1986  
 El Salvador 1980s  
 Nicaragua 1980s  
 Panama 1989  
 Iraq 1991-99  
 Sudan 1998  
 Afghanistan 1998  
 Yugoslavia 1999



In how many of these instances did a democratic government, respectful of human rights, occur as a direct result? Choose one of the following:

- (a) 0
- (b) zero
- (c) none
- (d) not a one
- (e) a whole number between -1 and +1

(continued from page 8)

ideological drive which began with Thatcher and continues under Blair has been, in part, an attack upon class as a universalising political factor. As Zygmunt Bauman observes in his book *In Search of Politics*: "We move today ... towards privatisation of the means to assure/insure/guarantee individual liberty – and if this is a therapy for present ills, it is such a treatment which is bound to produce iatrogenic diseases of most sinister and atrocious kinds (mass poverty, social redundancy and ambient fear being most prominent among them). To make the present plight and the prospect of its repair more complex yet, we live also through a period of the privatisation of utopia and the models of the good ... The art of reforging private troubles into public issues is in danger of falling into disuse and being forgotten; private troubles tend to be defined in a way that renders exceedingly difficult their 'agglomeration' and thus their condensation into a political force" (Zygmunt Bauman, *In Search of Politics*, Polity Press, 1999).

Making private troubles into public issues used to be part of the anarchist agenda, in the days when anarchism was seen as a movement of collective empowerment rather than sub-Nietzschean self-aggrandisement. We have, though, too many of us, embraced the privatisation of political life through refusing to seek to generalise from single issue campaigns and reducing the scope of anarchist politics to a question of lifestyle choice. We need to recover the sense of the necessity of collective activity as the means to liberty which was embodied so clearly in the writings of Bakunin and Rocker. For Bakunin, "man does not become man, nor does he achieve awareness or realisation of his humanity other than in society and in collective movement of the whole society ... man in isolation can have no awareness of his liberty. Being free for man means being acknowledged, considered and treated as such by another man, and by all the men around him. Liberty is therefore a feature not of isolation, but of interaction, not of exclusion but rather of connection." It is not, though, simply that, as a movement, we have been dragged along with the individualising tides of the last twenty years. In doing so, we have abandoned also the working class itself. Anarchism now exists within a 'temporary, autonomous' cul de sac. Our politics are conducted at festivals, in cafes, 'free spaces' and info shops. All well and good. Our terrain though, if we are to matter, has to be the estate, the football ground, the shopping precinct, the DSS/Job Centre, the housing office, the jails – the arenas where our brutalisation as a class actually takes place. 'Reforging private troubles as public issues' has to mean recovering working class identity as a class for – itself, reclaiming our belief in the working class as political subject – the idea, simply, that we have the political and economic power, as a class, to control our lives and build a new society based upon "collective or social property organised from below upward by way of free association" (Bakunin). It's either that or collude with the political death of the working class – resigning ourselves to our allotted roles as cheap labour, social parasites or the 'victims' of our own stupidity.

At a time when working class self-organisation barely exists, such a task may seem beyond our means. We should take heart, then, from the words of dear old Baroness Thatcher herself: "Class is a communist concept ... The more you talk about class – or even about 'classlessness', the more you fix the idea in peoples' minds."

Nick S.

## David Blunkett's version of 'three strikes and you're out' under the 'New Deal'

Since Labour came to power there seems to have been a falling off of opposition to government plans for a bullying programme of welfare reform. While the Tories were in power the libertarian network Groundswell and Labour leftist 'Defend the Welfare State' organisation were vigorously active against the Job Seeker's Allowance and other elements of the Tory welfare plans which conflicted with civil liberties. Today there is less activity against Labour's New Deal.

Last week there was parliamentary resistance to Labour's Welfare Reform and Pensions Bill, but not much activity on the

streets. Some 65 Labour back-benchers voted against cuts in disability benefits.

David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, came up with a scheme to take benefits off jobless under-25s who refuse to work or train under the New Deal. Using the language of Groundswell, Mr Blunkett coined a 'three strikes and you're out' plan to toughen sanctions against the jobless young who refuse to take a job or training place under the government's flagship New Deal programme.

Under the Blunkett plan the under-25s will have benefits stopped for six months, rather than the present four weeks.

## Cádiz conflict discussion

The situation in Cádiz and Puerto Real was discussed briefly before the Support Group meeting for the Tameside careworkers (see Cádiz conflict report on page 1). There was some excitement among the careworkers when Derek Pattison, President of Tameside Trades Council, explained the nature and causes of the dispute.

One careworker said "it is a pity we are not up to doing something like that". Though there was general agreement that militancy on Tameside had increased as a result of the careworker's dispute and the Support Group's activities.

The Cádiz conflict and the anarchist CNT's participation was brought up at the Bury Unemployed Workers' Association on 18th May as an item on the agenda. It was considered that British trade unions are not of the mind-set that could handle the Cádiz type action. Since Thatcher wiped the floor with the British unions it was thought that the unions here were not capable of much action at all. It was also pointed out that the geography of Cádiz, a virtual island, assisted the shipyard workers' action.

## A successful benefit held for Czech anarchist

A benefit held in London at the Arsenal Tavern in Finsbury Park raised £300 for the defence costs of Czech anarchist Michal Patera. The benefit – which included a disco and some acoustic musicians plus the North London Anarcho-Syndicalist Choir (!) – was jointly organised by the Anarchist Communist Federation (London) and the Solidarity Federation (London). Class War Federation comrades also helped in distributing flyers for the event, especially at the May Day march on the same day.

Michal Patera, thanks to the international displays of anarchist solidarity (pickets, demos, letters, donations, benefits) is now out on bail.

Another Czech anarchist has been freed from prison on parole. Vaglav Jez served two years in prison after being sentenced in July 1997 after defending himself against Czech nazis in a similar case to that of Patera.

Anarchists in Germany have raised £1,500 towards comrade Patera's costs. Keep up the good work!

## May Day demo, London

About 1,500 people demonstrated in London for 1st May, starting off at Clerkenwell Green and ending at Trafalgar Square.

In the main dominated by Scargill's latest union campaign, and by the massed ranks of home-grown and Kurdish/Turkish Stalinists, there was an anarchist input with the Anarchist Communist Federation comrades distributing large quantities of the 'May Day' special ACF news-sheet *Resistance* as well as flyers for the Michal Patera benefit that evening.

ACF and the Solidarity Federation comrades marched together, and there were about ten people behind the Class War banner.

Two small demonstrations of gays and lesbians joined the rally at Trafalgar Square protesting about the Soho bombing, to be followed by a much larger demonstration marching up from Brixton, also protesting against the bombings.

All of this on a day when two hundred people took part (at the same time as these demos) in a Reclaim the Streets action on the London Underground, and thousands turned out for the Legalise Cannabis demo and rally in South London.

— COPY DEADLINE —

The next issue of Freedom will be dated 12th June, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 3rd June.

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If possible contributions should be typed using double-spacing between lines, or can be sent as text files on disc (with a print-out please).



# Freedom Press Bookshop Readers' Round-up

“War is the health of the state” runs Randolph Bourne’s well-known aphorism, and boy is that true now. The timely re-publication of his essay *The State*\* (£2.20) by See Sharp Press’s indefatigable Chaz Bufe (along with four other long-out-of-print pamphlets) will bring Bourne’s perceptive World War One diagnosis of ‘the disease of the modern spirit’ to a new audience now that Europe is again plunged into war.

His broadsides against capitalism and the state, and against the liberals of America’s *The Nation* and *New Republic* journals which supported the ruling class then, are no less applicable to Britain’s *Guardian*-reading luvvies and liberals today, as they jostle for position around ‘Tony’ and ‘Robin’ for photo-calls and sound-bites. Opinion polls appear to show that Blair’s popularity has never been higher, yet even Murdoch’s sycophantic *Sun*, on hearing that actors like Roger Moore had flown out to talk to Kosovan refugees, couldn’t resist asking “Why? Haven’t these people suffered enough?”

Bourne recognised that “we cannot crusade against war without crusading implicitly

against the state”. In the section on War and the Herd, he shows how people jettison individual responsibility in time of war and how even opponents of the government line up almost unanimously behind it, and in *The Psychology of the State* he notes that some sections of every society, such as “the Ulsterites [Loyalists] of Great Britain” are “more loyal than the King, more patriotic than the government”. No change there then – except that the King now wears a dress.

As Michael Grieg points out in his introduction to the 1947 reprint, although Bourne died before he could fully develop the constructive side of his argument “he ended by rejecting the state entirely as a lever of social progress” and “implicit in all of his writings of this later period is the philosophy of anarchism, the development of a decentralised cooperative society where man’s personal responsibility can flower. It is the practical alternative to statism shown by the anarchists of Spain ... in their cooperative communities during the Libertarian Revolution of 1936. We must seek that alternative everywhere before the state hurls us into complete destruction.”

The radical author John Dos Passos notes in his foreword that Bourne was a hunchback, yet this affected neither the unerring accuracy of his attacks on the state nor his personal happiness, despite being in constant pain all his life. 42 pages of what you might call a classic case of a pain in the back (his condition) being easier to bear than a pain in the arse (the state).

From the horrors of war to *Horrors of the Inquisition*\* (£2.50) by Joseph McCabe,



America’s foremost atheist agitator, which has been out of print for half a century and is now re-issued in facsimile form, much enlarged to improve readability. Forget the comical images of Monty Python’s memorable ‘Spanish Inquisition’ television sketch, or Hammer Horror film scenes of people being tortured on the rack or burned at the stake. The reality was naked state terrorism, the state in question being the Vatican. (McCabe is at pains to be scrupulously fair, always taking the lowest estimate of dead or tortured, for instance, and basing his material only on the Catholic sources of the time rather than their opponents’. This he uses to great effect against the later Catholic apologists who, embarrassed by their predecessors’ zeal, have attempted to cover up, gloss over or otherwise minimise the true extent of the barbarities. And he makes it clear that even the details he gives in these 44 pages are but the tip of the iceberg: “The total number of Manicheans, Arians, Priscillianists, Paulicians, Bogomils, Cathari, Waldensians, Albigensians, Witches, Lollards, Hussites, Jews and Protestants killed because of their rebellion against Rome clearly runs into many millions”. And he points out that had these dissenters had the same freedom in the twelfth to fifteenth centuries that we enjoy today, the Catholic church would now be no more than a tiny sect and Europe and its culture would be very different.

The fun-loving Christian who laid the foundations for the Inquisition rejoiced in the title of Pope *Innocent III* and he, like other Popes, was motivated not merely by heresy but by loot, for the church found it very profitable to confiscate the property of heretics. Initially Rome relied on the secular authorities to do its dirty work, but since they themselves were often members of heretic sects this proved less than effective and after 1224, with the setting up of the official Inquisition, the job was entrusted to “the tender mercies of the Dominican and Franciscan friars, who took to it like bloodhounds to a scent. Among the wits of the time the Dominicans were known as the *Domini Canes*, ‘the hounds of the Lord’, a very neat Latin pun on their name”. Apart from being extremely well informed, McCabe himself has a nice line in dry wit which runs throughout this work, which is easy to read and hard to put down.

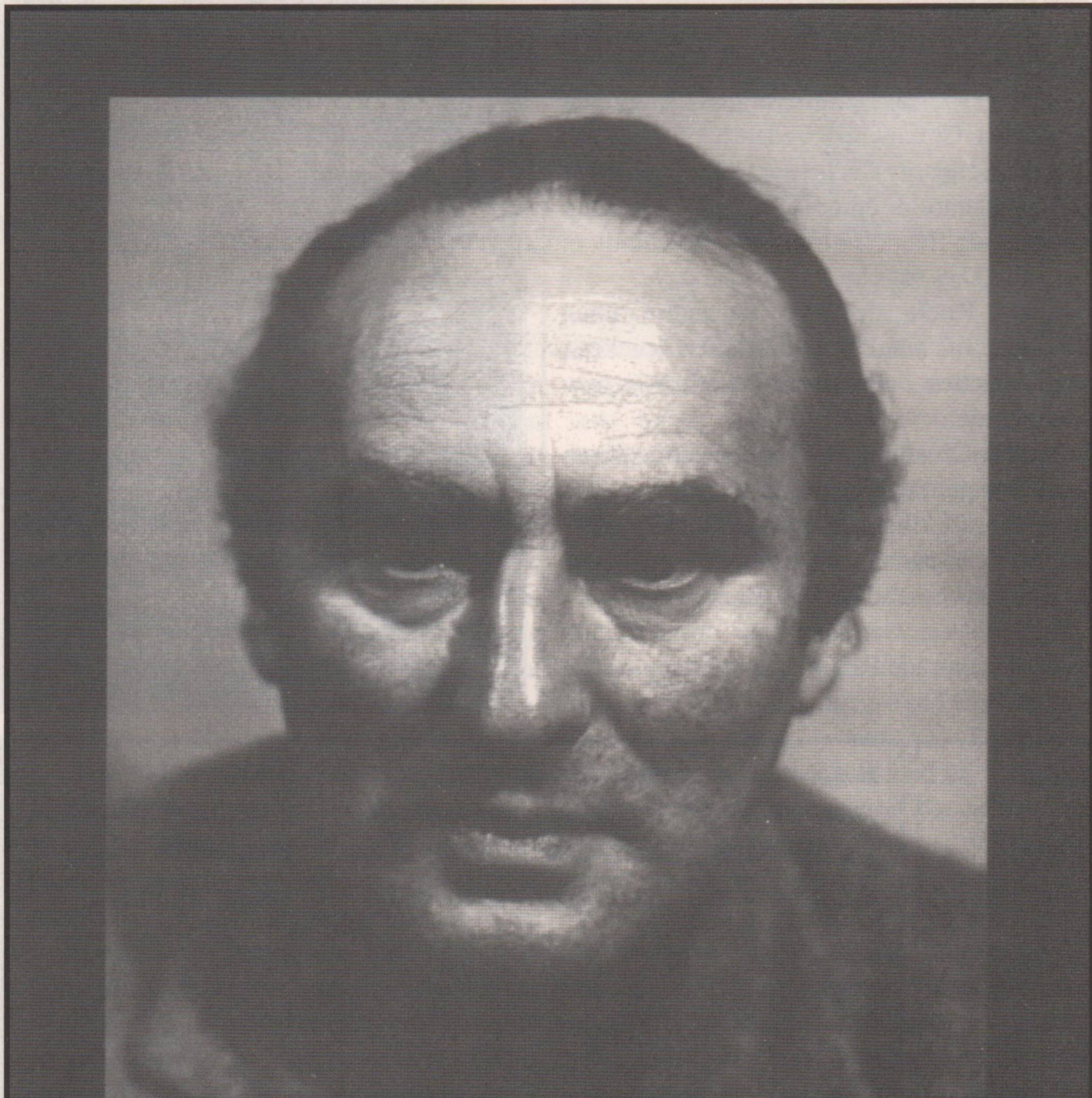
Another of McCabe’s pamphlets (same length and price and same length of time but

of print) which has, if anything, even more of his wit coursing through it is *Christianity and Slavery*\*. He starts with pagan slavery, i.e. that of the Greek and Roman empires, then examines the attitude of the gospels and other Christian texts towards slavery (no condemnation to be found anywhere by any Christian leader until the ninth century, when it had all but disappeared in Europe). Then there is a look at the Christian serf of the Dark Ages, followed by black slavery, an idea put forward by Bishop Bartolomé de las Casas and which was quietly approved by the Catholic hierarchy. Again McCabe bends over backwards to be fair quoting from sources, yet is quite merciless in his treatment of church dogma and Christian apologists – some of his put-downs are hilarious. But the jewel in the crown is the final chapter where he looks at the churches and the workers of the nineteenth century, equating working conditions to what later we came to call wage-slavery. Far from abolishing it, the church merely facilitated slavery’s change from one form to another, while giving consent and encouragement to it and actively profiting from it for many centuries.

The Marquis de Sade is the unlikely author of the fourth of these reprints, a 16-page bitterly humorous denunciation of Christianity called *Dialogue Between a Priest and a Dying Atheist*\*. This little cameo was found as an unpublished manuscript written in 1782 while he was still in prison. It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century, apparently, that an English edition was published, and that has been out of print for over fifty years. £1.60 for an entertaining piece of history, after which I almost felt more sorry for the priest than the dying man, except for the rather sweet *dénouement*, which I won’t spoil for you. Edited and with a foreword by Maurice Heine.

If I said to you that the next pamphlet was “an attempt to analyse the various mechanisms whereby modern society manipulates its slaves into accepting their slavery” using “the family ... and sexual repression as an important determinant of social conditioning resulting in the mass production of individuals perpetually craving authority and leadership and forever afraid of walking on their own or thinking for themselves”, you would of course know that I’m talking about Maurice Brinton’s *The Irrational in Politics: sexual repression and authoritarian conditioning*\*. This is the most attractive edition yet produced, comes complete with spine, laminated cover, preface, introduction, bibliography and even index. 60 pages, originally £5.00 but now only £2.50.

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

# Moving House



'Making our own media' picture taken from the *Squatters Handbook*

During the 1960s, when public authorities in British and American cities were demolishing habitable housing under the banner of 'comprehensive redevelopment' faster than they could replace it, an American psychiatrist, Marc Fried, wrote what became a famous essay, *Grieving for a lost home* about the sense of loss that some former residents felt, which included "a sense of helplessness" and "a tendency to idealise the lost place."

A decade later, a geographer, Edward Relph, linked this grieving with the feelings of the millions of what were known as 'displaced persons', uprooted by the Second World War. They experienced the same kind of upheaval, and we are reminded of the horrors of this experience in millions of lives today. Relph concluded that "a deep relationship with places is as necessary, and perhaps as unavoidable, as close relationships with people, without such relationships human existence, while possible, is bereft of much of its significance."

This was in his book *Place and Placelessness* (Pion, 1976), and that sentence is strikingly echoed in a slightly different context in a report, just published, from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It is by Keith Richardson and Peter Corbishley and is called *Frequent Moving: Looking for Love?* Their study was made in the West End of Newcastle, an area with high levels of unemployment and deprivation, as well as a high level of empty properties. Frequent movers were defined as those who had moved three times in the past year.

The researchers stressed that their work was exploratory, and not meant to suggest policies. "However, they suggest that a desire to find a stable relationship may underlie frequent moving and this desire may have its roots in early life. Because there is a housing surplus in the area studied, which means that people can move on relatively easily, any failure to form a stable satisfying adult relationship seems to lead to a pattern of frequent moving that is only broken if someone is found whom they can love and perhaps more importantly loves them."

These researchers are certainly not in the growing business of blaming the poor and jobless for being poor and jobless. They did find that "frequent movers had often been abandoned by one or both parents or were clearly unloved ... the strongest relations for

many seemed to be their attachment to a grandparent who they claimed had loved them and never let them down."

They appear to be grieving not for a lost home but for missing family relationships. For as a character in one of Ruth Rendell's novels reflects, "I know children always think of their parents' house as their home, even after many years away."

In the years when the building societies used to advertise with the slogan, 'Why rent a house when it's cheaper to rent the purchase money', there were solemn discussions of the relative merits of local authority tenancy and owner-occupation. It used to be said that the home-owners were made immobile by home ownership, but then research showed that the average owner-occupier moved far more frequently than the average tenant because of the dreadful bureaucracy of housing management.

Edward Relph recognised, of course, that moving house could be a liberation too. Most healthy adolescents can't wait to get away from that sanctified parental home, and as Relph observed, "the places to which we are most committed may be the very centres of our lives, but they may also be oppressive and imprisoning. There is a sheer drudgery of place, a sense of being tied inexorably to this place, of being bound by the established scenes and symbols and routines."

Our folklore tells us that when you are no longer young, moving house adds years to your life. But does this ambiguous prediction mean that you will die sooner, or later? I have just moved house for only the fourth time in my adult life, and I had assumed that the move of twenty years ago, and the move of fourteen years before that, would be the last. The latest really will be and has been the most agonising. Harriet has always observed that it

is sensible to spend the first half of our lives in accumulating possessions and the second half in disposing of them. My problem as a writer is that most of my possessions are paper of little value, except for me. Reducing it has been agonising, since we always throw away the wrong bits. The writer Frank Kermode put his pile of boxes of priceless paper out for the moving man, only to have it collected by the recycling man.

My formula for avoiding the futile trauma of grieving for a lost home has been to learn all about the new location so that in no time at all I 'know' more than the natives and acquire a superficial veneer of expertise. So I have been, in turn, an authority on suburban Essex, on Fulham, Wandsworth and the Wandle valley, as well as south Suffolk and north Essex. You can expect a new field of local wisdom any day now.

Colin Ward

## Can killing civilians be justified?

The errors committed by NATO in its bombing campaign go on. Today a hospital hit in Belgrade with three patients dead, claim the Serbs. Last weekend the village of Korisa flattened with 100 civilians dead, mostly ethnic Albanians. Before that the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade with four dead. On May Day a bus cremated in Luzane, north of Pristina, in Kosovo with forty dead. Not forgetting the train on the bridge in southern Serbia targeted twice.

On the day after the cluster bombing of Korisa NATO's Major General Walter Jertz declared to the press that "It was another effective day!" But from Jamie Shea, the civilian spokesman for NATO, there was no expression of compassion for the dead, only the promise of "a full and thorough investigation".

In Washington the Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon insisted that "Korisa will do nothing to deter the campaign - the campaign will continue with increasing force". He added: "We will continue our assault; the destruction will accelerate".

Mr Bacon admitted it had been 'an

accident' to hit the civilians during the hours of darkness, but claimed Milosevic had intentionally, not accidentally, turned Kosovo into a killing field.

Which is worse: a clumsy NATO or a cynical Milosevic?

### Limits to warfare

The case against bombing civilians was made in Miss Vera Brittain's pamphlet *Seed of Chaos* during the Second World War. In it she wrote that owing to the raids of the RAF "thousands of helpless people in German, Italian and German-occupied cities are being subjected to agonising forms of death and injury comparable to the worse tortures of the Middle Ages".

Miss Brittain's pamphlet was issued by the Bombing Restriction Committee, which backed the war but opposed the bombing of civilians. She wanted us to stick to 'legitimate' methods of war.

Commenting on the pamphlet in 1944 George Orwell argued that "all talk of 'limiting' or 'humanising' war is sheer humbug", adding that "there is something very distasteful in

accepting war as an instrument and at the same time wanting to dodge responsibility for its more obviously barbarous features".

Why is it worse to kill civilians than soldiers? Particularly when many of the young men seem to have been press-ganged into serving in the Serb army. Bomb victims tend to be old or middle aged, as Orwell shows. At the same time, 'normal' or 'legitimate' warfare slaughters healthy and brave young men, as the First World War showed.

A ground war in Kosovo now will mean that the slaughter of the young will start.

### "See noble nations murdered ... without an effort or a tear"

The problem of the Balkan war is that it is one-sided in that only NATO can bomb effectively. The enemy can't hit back. Hence the Serbs have taken it out on a weaker party - the Kosovar Albanians - who also can't hit back, terrorising and evicting them from their homes.

So here we have big bullies, little bullies and victims. War, we know, is of its nature barbarous - but ethnic cleansing is equally

barbarous. If we recognise that and our own savagery, at least we have a chance of bucking-up a bit.

It is not easy for anarchists to take any position on this conflict.

In 1864 John Ruskin delivered a lecture entitled *Of Kings' Treasuries* at Rusholme Town Hall, Manchester. He declared: "Alas! It is the narrowness, selfishness, minuteness, of your sensation that you have to deplore in England at this day ... while you look on and see noble nations murdered, man by man, without an effort or a tear".

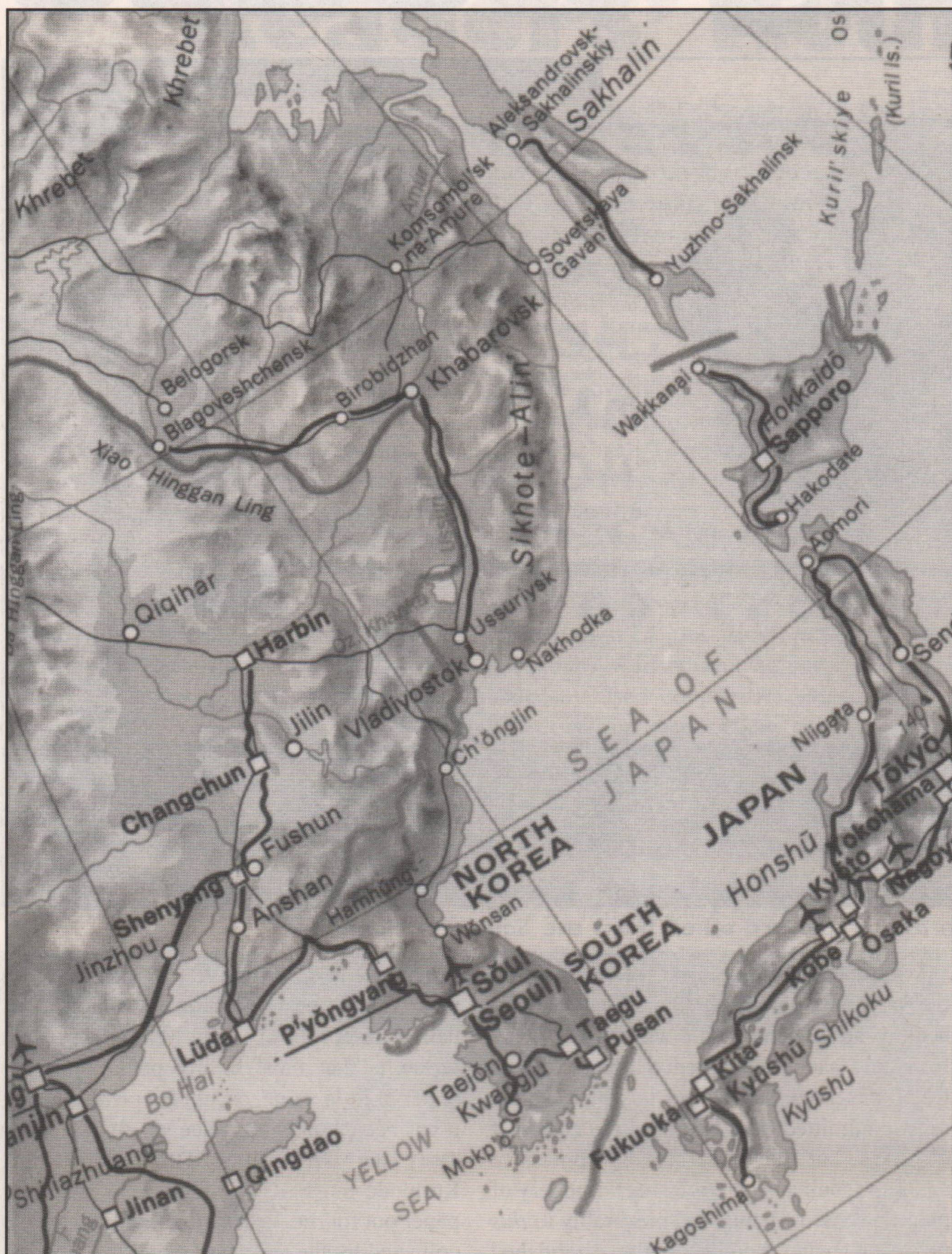
Ruskin was referring to the Polish insurrection, savagely put down by the Russians in the year of the lecture. At the time Ruskin considered the British government's inaction to be responsible for the carnage.

Last week the newspaper *Tageszeitung* explained the British government's support for a ground war: "Britain's hard line is part of a new 'ethical foreign policy' which dictates that moral interests take priority over strategy".

Well at least John Ruskin, if he were here, would be happy with New Labour's line on supporting the Kosovar Albanians.

Arturo Ui

# North Korea



Friday 5th March saw the publication in the French newspaper *Le Monde* of an interview with the Reverend Pomnyun about the famine in North Korea. The headline for the article announced the deaths of three million people in that country. The figures given in the body of the article by the Reverend Pomnyun gave figures confirming the deaths of 3.5 million since 1995. What are the North Koreans dying of? Hunger. And also of all the illnesses which are caused by the extreme weakening of the organism caused by hunger.

Why is famine affecting the country? Firstly, because its agricultural sector doesn't succeed in producing enough food to feed the twenty million population still living in North Korea. Also because the country has no more financial reserves and cannot therefore buy the food its people needs on the international markets. The conditions have thus come together for the feeding of the people of this country to now become the responsibility of international solidarity

organisations. However, the amounts which are being asked of the international community are less than what is needed and the amounts which are actually delivered are less than what is asked for. If people are dying today in North Korea it is because international aid is insufficient.

#### Catastrophic harvests

The year which has just passed – 1998 – is a fine example of what has happened. According to figures provided by the United Nations Food Organisation the harvest was 2.66 million tonnes of cereal. To assure minimal subsistence for the North Korean population four million tonnes are needed. WFP (the World Food Programme) – the UN agency which co-ordinates the provision of aid for North Korea – provided, according to its own figures a total of 393,000 tonnes of food aid from January to December 1998. Thus for the year in question North Koreans saw a shortfall of a million tonnes of cereal, that is to say a quarter of their minimal survival

requirements. These figures give rise to further questions. On the one hand the evaluation of the harvest carried out by the UNFO does not take into account the fact that the infrastructure in the country is in such a state that very often the grain goes rotten before it can be harvested or transported to its destination. This tends to aggravate significantly the real situation. On the other hand it is very hard to evaluate the individual efforts of the small scale farmers on which North Koreans depend. Finally all these figures have an unreal dimension given the extreme weakness of all the individuals involved. To produce, harvest and distribute calls for a supreme effort under such conditions.

One important aspect of this famine seem to be the extraordinary way in which it is equally spread. Of course the ruling classes manage to feed themselves well enough. We can also note that this also trickles down to a significant part of the population in the capital Pyongyang. But the most surprising aspect of this catastrophe is the way it hits all parts of the population in a fairly uniform manner, including the army, over the whole territory. The only exception to this rigorous equality, whose proof is given to us by those who get to the borders, is the sacrifice of the elderly who often give their ration to young people. This is why mortality has preponderantly hit older people. As for the rest whilst the international community is only concerned with getting aid to the under-sevens – also very hard hit – the community is hit by the famine in a very equitable way.

This concrete example of solidarity has managed to limit mortality to a great degree up until now. But if the situation were to continue for much longer we must expect the situation to deteriorate even more rapidly in so far as everyone will be weakened by lack of food. As the Reverend Pomnyun emphasises in his interview the weakest are already dead. We are now entering a new stage of the famine where the more resistant are becoming weaker across the board. If the terrible under-nourishment to which they have been subjected were to continue it is to be feared

that a second, stronger, wave of mortality may hit the country.

#### Rations are drying up

Also according to information provided by the international organisations, rations have fallen over the last few years from 700 grams to 500 grams to 300 grams and then to 100 grams last March. From March to August there will be no distribution of rations. Why? Why doesn't the international community fulfil its solidarity contract when just one country such as France had a surplus of more than two million tonnes last year?

The reasons for this ill will are many. Contrary to what is often said the problem is not one of aid distribution on the ground. The NGOs which are working on the ground in North Korea today bear witness to this. All the evidence suggests we are seeing a simultaneously growing interest in the conflict zone between North and South Korea. The US State Department makes no bones of the fact that it would be willing to lift all sanctions against North Korea if the latter were to accept demilitarisation – and even more if it were willing, like neighbouring China, to launch out on the path towards a market economy.

Curiously these questions, supposedly strategic, military and ideological have become very fashionable since North Koreans have begun to die of hunger. This little country, forgotten by everybody, was suddenly launched to planetary attention not as a nation whose population was in distress but rather a second Iraq, absolute evil.

If it is certain that a planned socialist economy has become bankrupt in North Korea; if it is obvious that the regime is one of the most Orwellian on the planet; if it is possible that this state should still have military pretensions despite the extreme weakness it has been brought to; if there is no doubt that individual liberty is less respected than in other more relaxed regimes this does in no way diminish the violence which today is being inflicted on the North Korean people and this violence is being inflicted by an international community which will not recognise a moral obligation to provide aid to a people in need.

*Le Monde Libertaire* (31st March 1999)

## Solidarity with Senegalese syndicalists

Six months imprisonment for 'attacking state security' for Mademda Sock and Samba Dieye. Three months in detention for 27 members of the United Workers Union of Electricity Workers (SUTELEC) and six others persecuted. In addition to this there have been scarcely veiled threats against the civil rights of unionists. The increasing repression of the government of Abdou Diouf in Senegal has shown him keen to carry on his attack on the constitutional rights to take strike action and demonstrate.

The 33 leaders of SUTELEC's national executive committee have been sacked for having organised a strike against overtime and having refused plans for work sharing. On 23rd January 1999, the day those imprisoned were released, the demonstration which was organised to welcome them was put down with tear-gas. Dame Diouf of the Further Education Union had his fingers broken and Aliou Ba, the foreign affairs secretary for SUTELEC, received a broken leg.

The aim of all this repression is to see through the electricity privatisation programme after that of water, public transport and

telecommunications and before that of the railways, SONACOS (oil) and land.

The French government has made it a condition of a loan of twelve billion French francs to the Senegalese state that the Senegalese Electricity Company be privatised. The company Bouygues, which has already bought into many national companies in several African countries, has gone into partnership with the Canadian group Hydroquebec and Bolore in order to buy at knock down prices the distribution wing of the Senegalese public electricity company. The selling off of national companies which is now under way was prepared for by the structural adjustment policies which were dictated by the IMF and the World Bank and the devaluation of the Central African Franc.

This struggle of SUTELEC is the first big class struggle on the African continent against the privatisation of the public sector. It is also a preventative struggle against the dismantling of public services whose contours is being drawn up by the MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investments)

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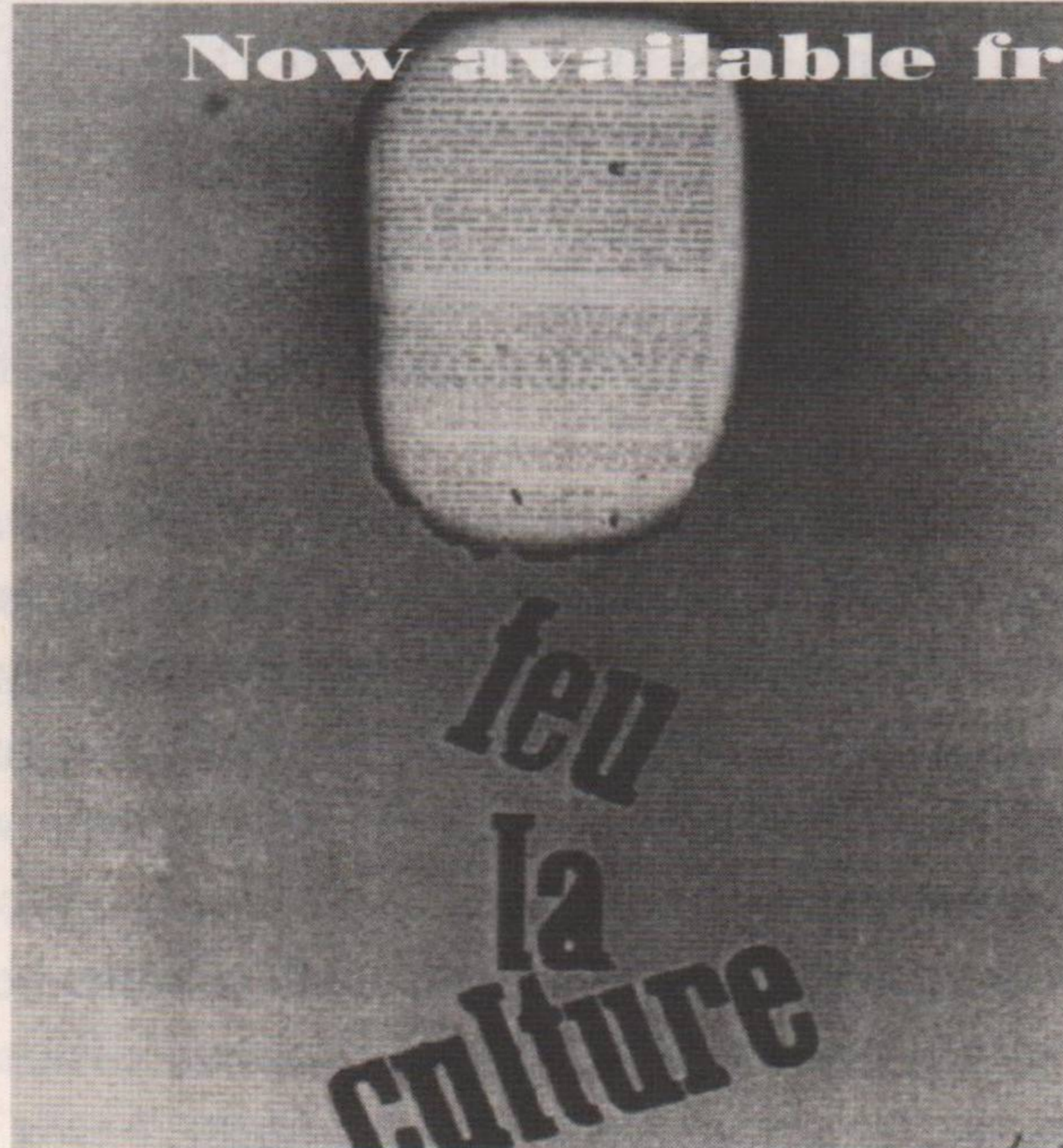
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Number 38 on

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# Anarchism and Communism

Dear Freedom,

Iain McKay tells me that he explained, in his initial reply to me, that "we must take into account the difference between property and possession". Over and over he invokes the name of Proudhon, claiming that Proudhon's views support the claims that he is making. Let's see if this is true. What does Proudhon say on the difference between property and possession?

Proudhon says that under property we can distinguish between possession and naked property (*What is Property?* page 36). This seems to indicate that possession still, at least in his eyes, falls into the general category of property. The difference, he claims, between property and possession is that possession is a fact whereas property is a right. We could suppose from this that possession is not a matter of debate as it cannot be abolished – we are always occupying something – whilst the matter of property is of debate. How extensive should a person's claim of what he or she owns be? What are society's duties to the proprietor? Property is "the right of domain over a thing" whilst possession grants no right of domain, no mastery over the resources held. "The tenant, the farmer, the shareholder, and the usufructary possessors; the owner who rents and lends for use and the heir who waits to come into possession are proprietors". Possession is to be in occupation of something, and property is to have an exclusive claim over something.

"From the distinction between possessions and property arise two sorts of rights: the right in a thing (*jus in re*) is the right by which I may reclaim the property which I have acquired, in whatever hands I find it, and the right to a thing (*jus ad rem*) which gives me a claim to become a proprietor. Thus the right of marriage partners over each other's person is a *jus in re*; that of two betrothed is only *jus ad rem*. In the first, possession and property are united, the second includes only naked property. As a labourer I have a right to the possession of the products of my nature and of my own industry, but as a proletarian I enjoy none of


them; and so by virtue of the *jus ad rem* I demand admittance to the *jus in re*."

In other words, as a worker he has a claim to become the proprietor of the products of nature and his own labour (*jus ad rem*) and this claim gives him title to the right to reclaim whatever property he has acquired from whatever hands he finds it in (*jus in re*), and thus to exclude others from it. What is more, in the *jus in re* "property and possession are united" so the right he is claiming as a worker is *not* that property should be abolished. On the contrary, all workers have a claim to become proprietors by virtue of the *jus ad rem*, which should grant them the right to exclude others from the property that they have acquired. Proudhon's ideal is obviously not to replace property with possessions but to unify property and possession. Consider an example pertinent to this debate: Workers possess factories but don't own them. They possess the capitalist's property and because of the capitalist's right to *jus in re* to reclaim what he owns and thereby hold mastery over it, the workers are subservient to his will and must pay tribute. However, such an arrangement denies the workers admittance to the *jus in re*, which is implied by their *jus ad rem*. The solution then is workers' control. Workers remain possession of the factory yet also hold mastery of it. For workers to control a factory, no external agent ought to have a claim over it, therefore the arrangement is exemplary of the right of domain – naked property. Yet this property is the right only of those who possess. Hence Proudhon didn't want to abolish property but

but to unify it with possession. In a society where only possession existed, who would be the proprietor, for one implies the other? Take an anarchist commune. If the workers only possessed the factories in the commune then the factory itself must belong to the commune in precisely the same way that the factory possessed by the workers is owned by the capitalist. Either the capitalist has a right to reclaim his property from the workers, or the workers from him, and either the commune has the right to reclaim its property from the workers or the workers from it. Whatever way, the fact remains the same: property still exists and the capitalist variety will only be abolished where possessors become proprietors, not when property is socialised by the community and only possessed by individuals because that would be identical to capitalism.

Now Mr McKay cannot accuse me of not paying attention to his whole argument, because his whole argument rests on the assumption that he is arguing the same point at Proudhon did in 1840. The fact, as we have seen, is that Proudhon and McKay are in disagreement, which means that his whole argument is without premise.

The "second logical failing" which I pointed out was, in clearer words, this: With the right to privately own property I can choose to grant others free access to it as they need and share it with them *if I want*. Thus a communist arrangement can come about voluntarily regardless of the fact that people can own property, but only if I am morally able to choose not share it, for otherwise there would be nothing voluntary about the arrangement. I feel that communists start from the premise that individuals, 1) don't have the right to decide by themselves, to the

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exclusion of the rest of society, how resources should be allocated, and 2) that they don't have the right to choose to exclude people from the resources those people need. This is in direct contradiction to the factor I believe that the concept of voluntary communism depends on so, unless people are willing to accept that I do have a right not to allow people access to resources and the goods and services that they may need, communism will never be voluntary. I still feel that McKay hasn't answered this point. I eagerly await McKay's solution to this problem (at least, that's how he should see it – I don't). One last word, though: Before he invokes the claim that the Spanish 'anarchists' allowed smallholders to maintain private ownership of the land they used and occupied, he should consult Bryan Caplan's page on the subject at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/economic/bcaplan/spain.htm> for *An Historical, Economic and Philosophical Analysis of Spanish Anarchism*. And if anybody, should be interested in reading my more comprehensive rights-based critique of non-market socialism, please feel free to write to me at 31 Hatfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9AF.

Richard Garner

## Mobilising against the war

Dear Freedom,

BB says that those who oppose the bombing "are a curious crew", that Noam Chomsky "seems to underestimate both Milosevic and Serbia's part in the conflict" and that Edward Said "shows he hasn't grasped what's going on". Nick S. says that "the contention put forward by John Pilger ... makes no sense at all".

Wake up Freedom – when we are being (metaphorically) bombarded every day in the mass media by justifications for the bombing of bridges, factories, housing estates, buses, trains, hospitals in Serbia, all with supposedly the most noble of humanitarian aims, why do you not clearly and unequivocally state your opposition to the bombing, instead of attacking those who, despite their 'mistaken' analyses (your view) are taking a clear position?

Here is a quotation for you to ponder: "War is the health the State. It automatically sets in motion throughout society those irresistible forces for uniformity, for passionate co-operation with the Government in coercing into obedience ... minority groups and individuals" (Randolph Bourne). Shouldn't we as anarchists take a clear stance against this state coercion?

Leslie Ray



Dear Freedom,

In his review of *Cultural Battles* (15th May) Adrian Walker points out that though the US was defeated militarily in Vietnam, the stimulus provided by the war to its defence industries ended up making it even richer than before. As far as I am aware, anarchists active in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Committee of 100 in the '50s and '60s were to point out that war

is the health of the state and capitalism. Mr Neville's apparently pathological hatred of anything to do with the Anarchist Communist Federation, and indeed of class struggle anarchism in general, leads him to make a cheap and unnecessary attack. Yes we are serious, we are seriously attempting to help build an anti war movement, to react to a serious situation, the Balkans war. As pointed out in Adrian Walker's review, capitalism and the state create war, and the only way it can be stopped is through mass action – desertion, anti-militarism, demonstrations, blockades against military manoeuvres (as in Greece at the moment), strikes and boycotts (as in Italy, ditto). Over a hundred people gathered behind the 'No War But the Class War' banner on the last anti-war demo, including people from the Anarchist Communist Federation, Class War Federation, and Solidarity Federation, with their own banners, flags and placards, as well as many unaligned anarchists and libertarians, and members of the left communist Communist Workers Organisation. Meetings of the 'No War But the Class War' committee take place every Wednesday (see back page of *Freedom*) attracting up to thirty people per week. These meetings discuss the implications of the war and practical activity against it. Fortunately, many anarchists and libertarians are genuinely interested in developing an internationalist position, against the NATO manoeuvres, and not taking sides with either the KLA or Milosevic. Don't be like Mr Neville, join the 'No War...' contingent on the next anti-war demo on 5th June starting at the Embankment, London.

Yours for anarchist communism.

Ron Allen

## The SPGB's alternative

Dear Freedom,

In his letter to *Freedom* published on 1st May, Richard Griffin reiterates his objection to "Left wing parties standing in elections". To illustrate the point Richard lists the usual *et al* bag of left wing reformists who are "about gaining power not challenging and dismantling it".

Unfortunately Richard's standard list of the usual suspects include, as ever, the SPGB [Socialist Party of Great Britain] who, by implication of inclusion "offer no alternative vision of how society could be run or organised".

The SPGB insists on a parliamentary road to their objectives and as a means they are "fighting on capitalism's own terrain". Richard's decision to include them in his list of parties that "will often be competing with each other and the Greens for votes" with the obvious suggestion that they are following their leftist agenda is wrong.

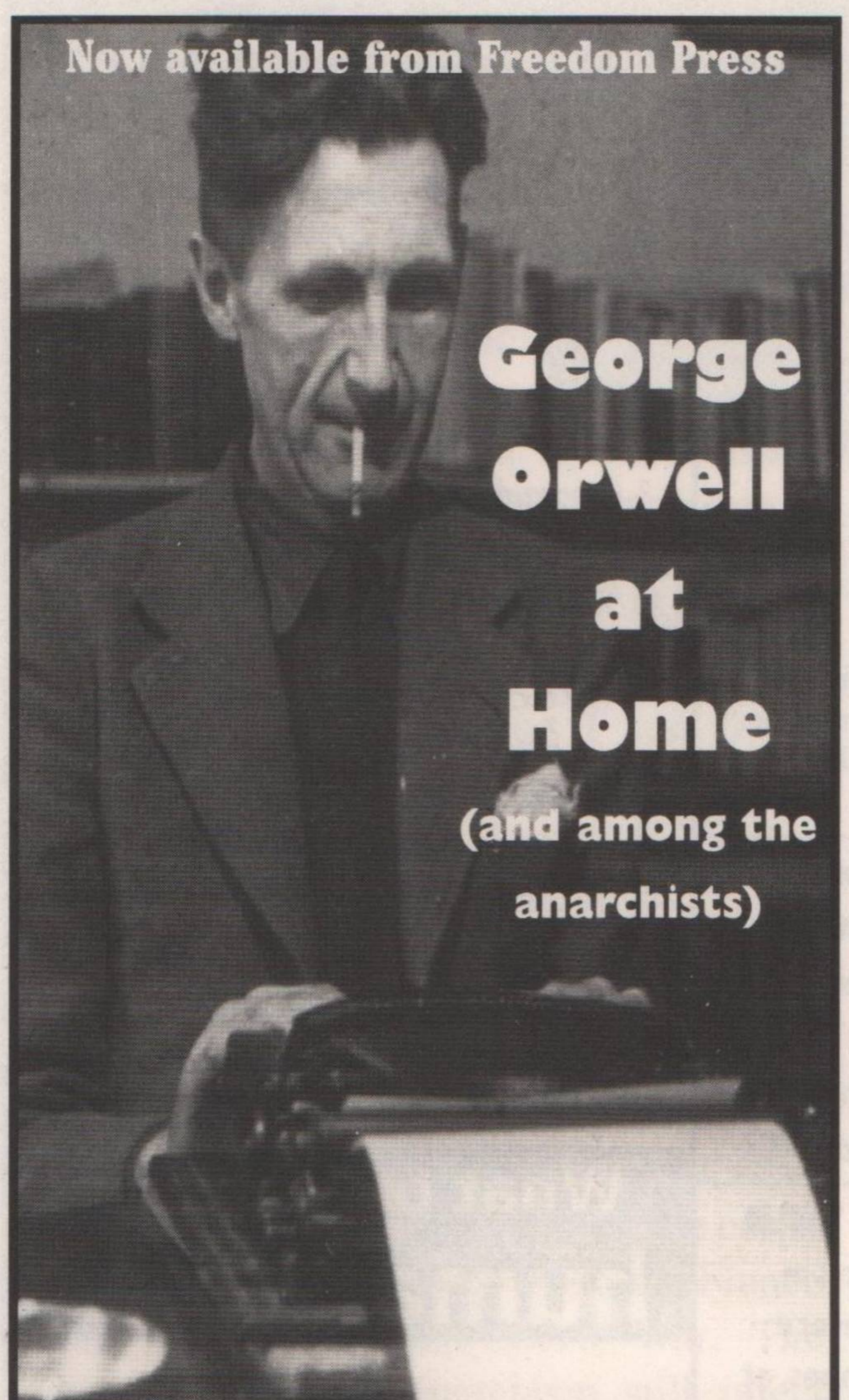
Tony Dobson

## Two Europes

Dear Freedom,

In 'Two Europes' (15th May) the sentence at paragraph 4, line 12, should have read "Radical ideology is portrayed as the property of the poor, and *anti-racism* as the preserve of the liberal *status quo*". The omission of 'anti' in the original defeats the article's central argument.

Nick S.



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**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 1999 —

**28th May** General discussion

**4th June** Revolution in Judea: The Work of  
Hyman Maccoby (speaker Peter Lumsden)

**11th June** General discussion

**18th June** Cultural Anarchism (speaker  
Diana Mavroleon)

**25th June** General discussion

**2nd July** Individualist Anarchism (speaker  
Richard Garner)

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

Meeting convened by the Anarchist Communist Federation (London)

**Twentieth Century Revolutions**

looking at revolutions in Russia, Germany, Hungary, Spain  
and Portugal and drawing lessons for the future.

**Thursday 10th June at 7.30pm**

**Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1**

**NO WAR BUT THE CLASS WAR**

discussion meetings on the war in  
Yugoslavia will be happening every  
**Wednesday while the war continues, at  
7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,  
London WC1 (nearest tube Holborn).**

**Two-day Socialist Conference organised  
by the Revolutionary Socialist Network  
to be held on**

**5-6th June 1999 in Bristol**

Fee £3 waged, £1.50 unwaged.

Booking: send name, address and payment  
(cheques payable to 'RSN') to I Blake Place,  
Bridgewater, Somerset TA6 5AU.

**Red Rambles**

A programme of guided walks for Libertarians,  
Socialists, Greens, Anarchists and others. Bring  
food, drink, suitable footwear and waterproof  
clothing. A rota of cars will be used - full cars  
will travel to walks.

**Sunday 30th May**

Mount St Bernards, Blackbrook. Meet at the  
John Storer House car park, Wards End,  
Loughborough, at 10am. Walk leader Ray.

**Telephone Vivienne for more info:  
01509 230131 or 01509 236028**

**June 18 Benefits**

**Thursday 27th May**

live gig with **P.A.I.N.**

& **Gertrude & Bon Bon Caotikal** & more

9pm to 2am • £3/£3.50

@ Arsenal Tavern, 175 Blackstock Road, London N4

**Wednesday 9th June**

Pre-J18 Party with **Earthtribe**

& **Maroon Town & House of Rhythm**

8pm to midnight • £5/£4

@ The Garage, 20-22 Highbury Corner, London N5

For further info on J18

<http://www.gn.apc.org/june18>

'June 18th', PO Box 9656, London N4 4JY

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