

Peace deal: will Milosevic have room to wriggle?

Last week the Serb parliament voted for 'peace' by 168 to 82. In Cologne, where European leaders are holding a summit, there were hugs and kisses for Europe's envoy Martti Ahtisaari from German leaders on his return from Belgrade and obvious relief in Germany and elsewhere in Europe that peace is in sight, but obviously less elation in the faces of Bill Clinton and Tony Blair on the day these events unfolded.

The contrasting responses between the Anglo-Saxon powers and those of others in Europe to the acceptance by Belgrade of the peace deal illustrated the divisions which always existed in NATO.

Their worry is how much will the peace agreement give 'wriggle room' to the great tactician Slobodan Milosevic?

The indications are that there will be plenty of room for manoeuvre

for Milosevic in the deal. Relations between the occupying NATO and Russian forces is bound to be difficult and open to abuse. Equally, relations between military and civilian authorities will be complicated.

Under the deal, in theory, Belgrade's guerrilla enemies the Kosovo Liberation

Army (KLA) will, says Robert Fisk, "face emasculation". An independent Kosovo will be resisted by NATO, and the KLA 'demilitarised'. Will the KLA go along with this even in the short term?

In the new deal Milosevic has got rid of a key part of the Paris peace agreement: a referendum on the future of the province in three years' time, that may have let the Kosovo Albanians demand independence.

There is plenty of scope here for Milosevic to wriggle

and past experience shows that given room to wriggle then he will wriggle.

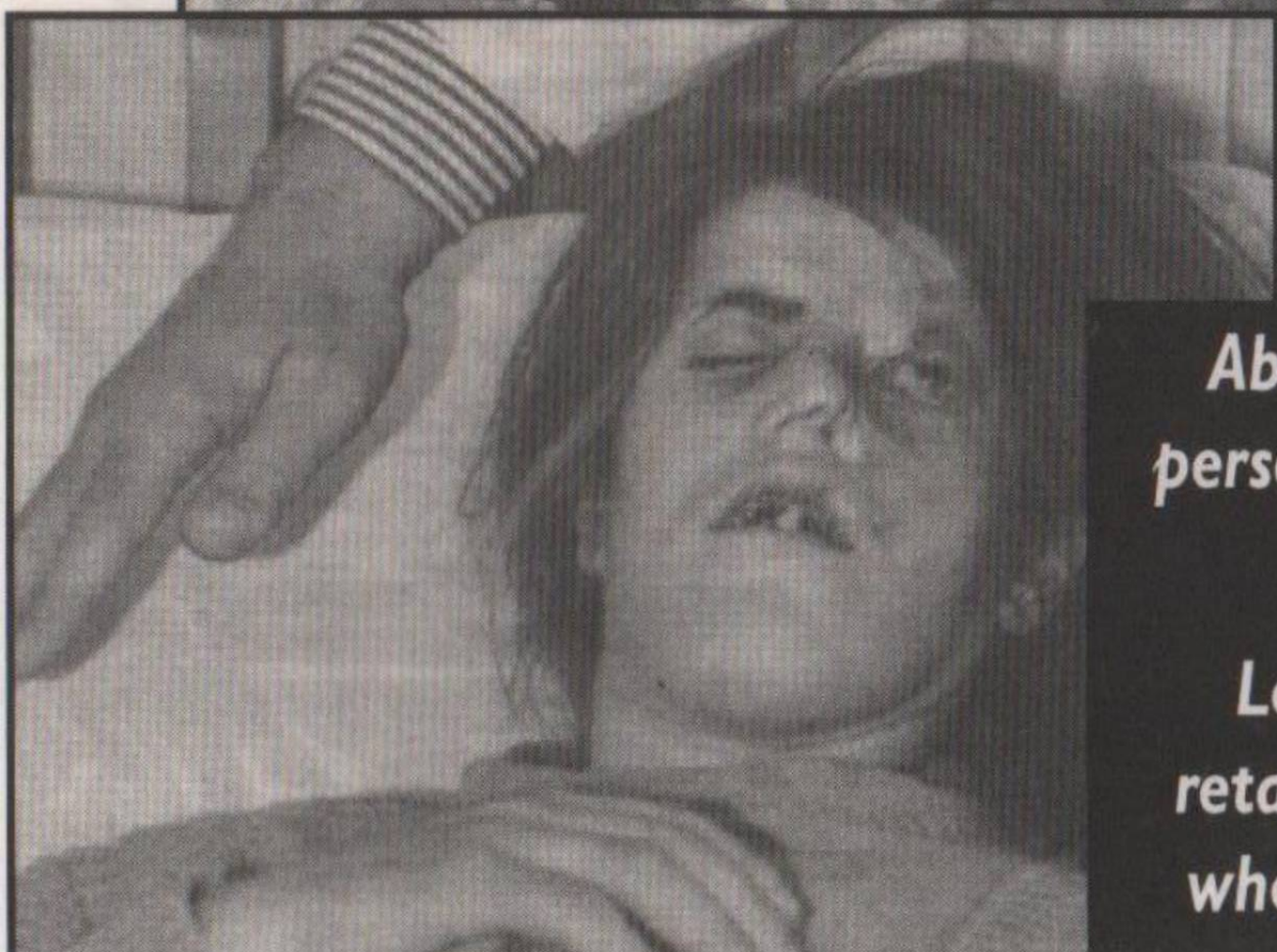
In his book *The Fall of Yugoslavia: the Third Balkan War* (1992), Misha Glenny claims: "The drive towards war in Yugoslavia could not have been as dynamic as it was had it not been for the extraordinary personality of Slobodan Milosevic, the most paradoxical of dictators". Mr Glenny describes him as "a man without passion, without any real nationalist motivation (although on the surface he appears to wallow in it), and he is a man who has never shown any affection or regard for the masses upon whom he depends for support".

And now, after 72 days of a war which Milosevic helped to provoke, there are 1,500 more corpses to add to the recent history of violence which has turned the Balkans from a dozy tourist trap into what Glenny says was "the pathologically unstable region that it was for the first half of the twentieth century".

BB



Above: the carbonised body of a person found near a bombed bus at Luzane (inset).



Left: Nurie Elshani, a mentally retarded Kosovar Albanian woman who has been disfigured by Serbs.

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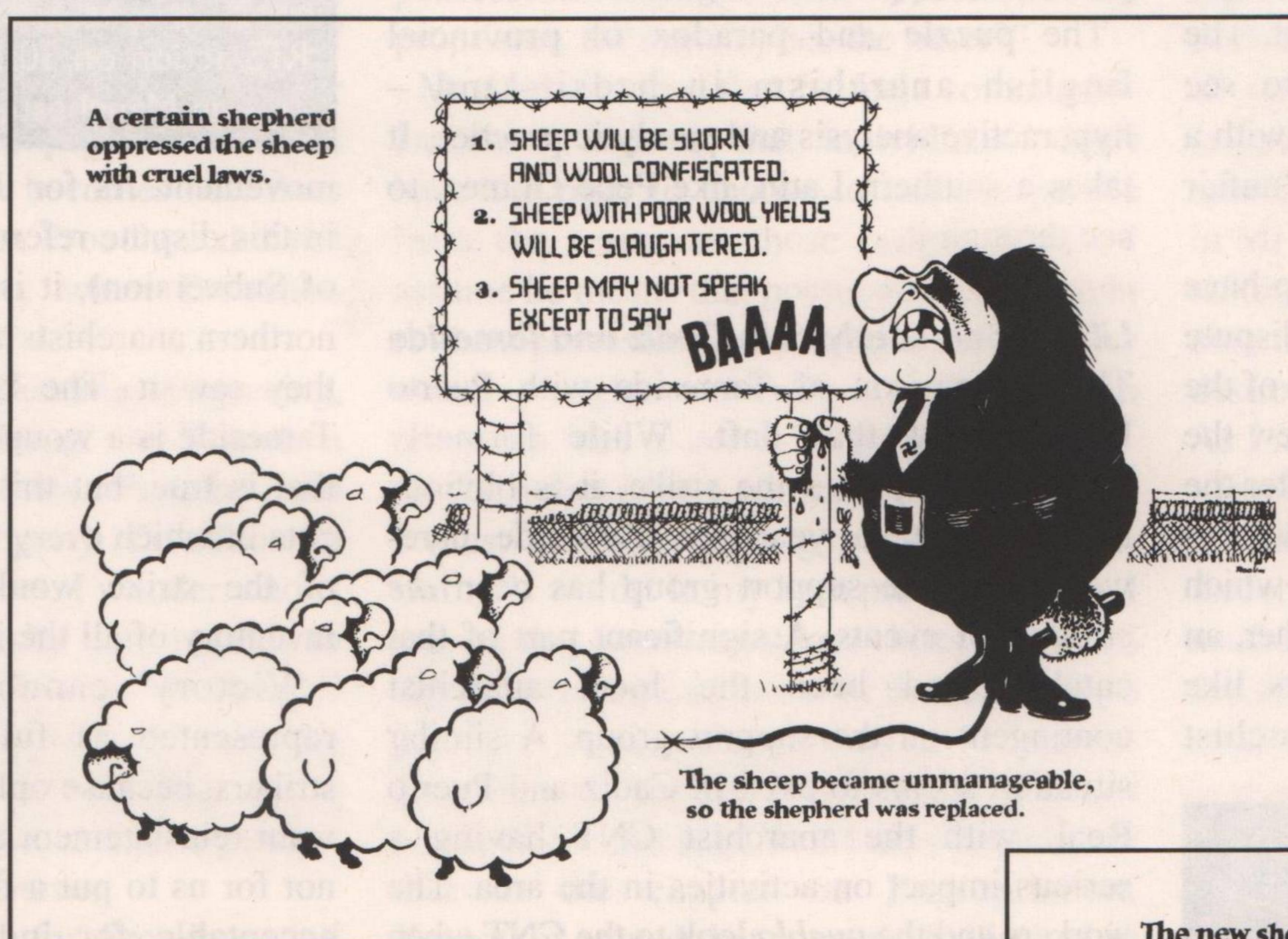
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL

An Immense Cemetery?

In 1996 Tony Blair told an audience of would-be constitutional reformers that freedom of information was "absolutely fundamental to how we see politics developing in this country over the next few years". The culture of official secrecy, he declared, had led voters to distrust politicians and encouraged a climate of 'disaffection'. Official secrecy, for Blair, "was fifty years behind the times". It

ensured incompetence went unpunished. Under New Labour, politics would be allowed to "catch up with the aspirations of the people by delivering not just more open but more effective and efficient government for the future". Like all policy commitments from New Labour, this one was dead as soon as uttered. In the same month, Peter Mandelson (who, as we now know, had a vested interest in quashing any notion of increased public scrutiny of political affairs, but at this point was still sitting pretty in the Notting Hill home bought with Geoffrey Robinson's £373,000 - history here repeating itself as farce, with Mandelson the New Labour prostitute to Robinson's Jeffrey Archer) told the Campaign for Freedom of Information that any bill addressing such matters might "have to wait". What was necessary, he said, presumably with tongue in cheek, was not a legislative act, but a culture where politicians behaved with 'honesty and openness'.

By the time David Clark, the minister burdened with the sorry task of producing the White Paper no-one really wanted, had delivered his first draft, the intervention of Jack Straw had ensured that the activities of the security services, police, prisons, Department for Social Security, Immigration and privatised utilities were beyond its ambit. Clark's reward for delivering a White Paper which would at least begin the work needed to deliver on Blair's promise to "change the relationship in politics today"? He was sacked in a Cabinet reshuffle, and responsibility for freedom of information was given to Jack Straw. In 1995 Straw had told *Tribune*: "Labour wants to see far greater openness in government. That is why we will introduce a Freedom of Information Act to give clear rights of access to information collected by public authorities. The balance of presumption must be reversed so that in most cases information will be made public unless there is a good case for secrecy". Cause, then, for confidence in Straw's reforming instincts? In opposition Straw was also opposed to the abolition of



trial by jury for offences triable either way. He declared such a notion "unfair and short sighted". So concerned was Straw to act in office with the 'honesty' to which Peter Mandelson referred that 18,000 defendants are about to lose their right to elect for trial by a jury of their peers. In opposition Straw denounced Michael Howard's witch-hunting of refugees as 'obscene'. Now he's steering through Parliament an asylum bill which makes it almost impossible for asylum seekers to see Britain as a place of refuge from persecution under the terms of the 1951 UN

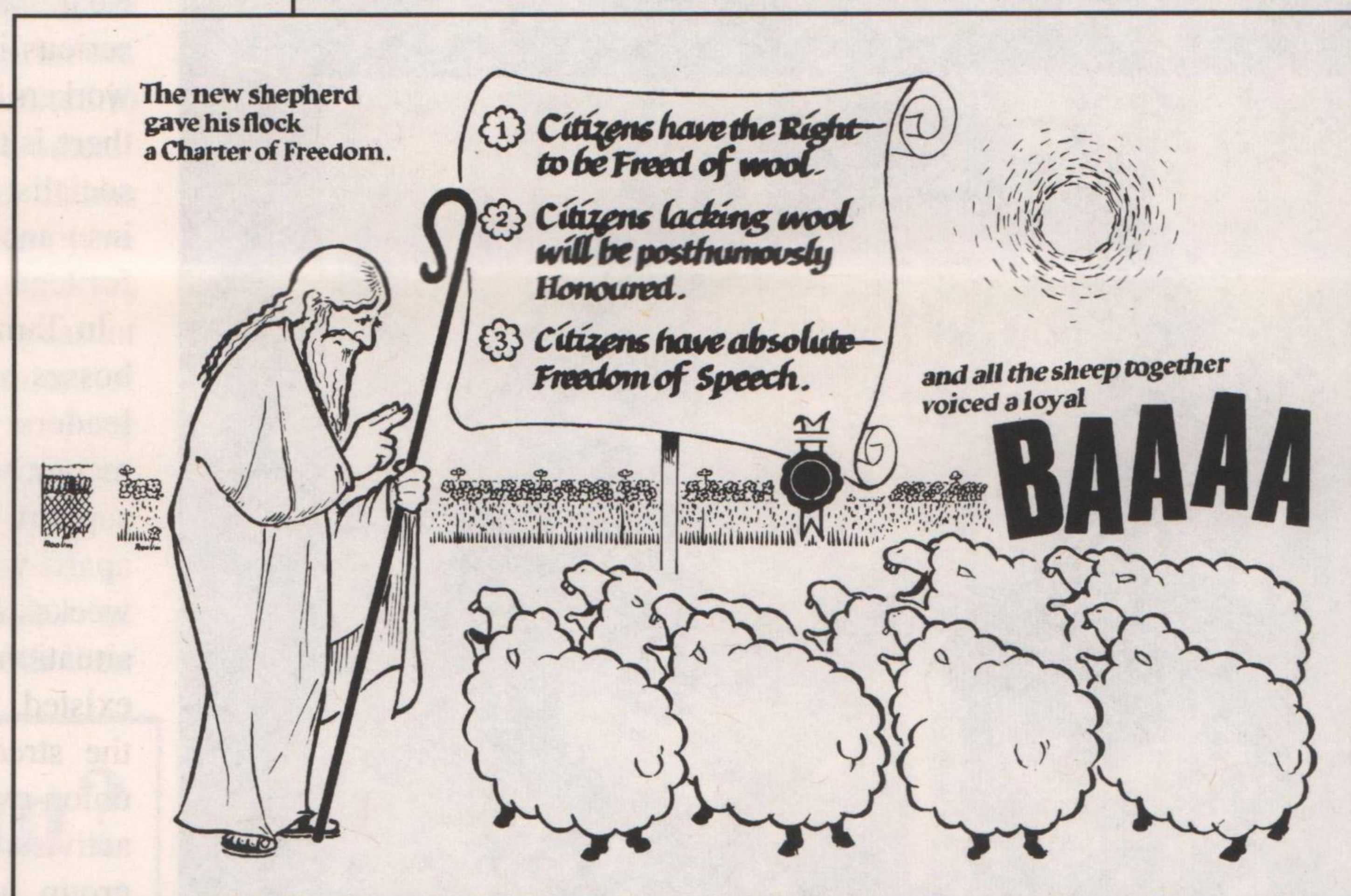
Convention on the Status of Refugees. The fate of the Freedom of Information Bill? You must have guessed by now.

On 24th May the Freedom of Information Bill was finally published. As Hugo Young commented: "Introducing the Bill in the Commons, Jack Straw duly proposed himself as the agent of pragmatic enlightenment. In truth he's the instrument of darkness" (*The Guardian*, 25th May 1999). The Bill ignores the recommendation of the Macpherson Report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence, which called for the substantial disclosure of information on police investigations - restricting disclosure to basic information, such as the number of officers working on the case. The 'right to know' embodied in the Bill is fettered by 21 exemptions where the public will not be allowed information that could 'prejudice' government unless the body concerned decides to release such information under discretionary powers. The 21 exemptions include national security, all the work done by MI5 and MI6 and GCHQ, defence, policy advice, communications with the royal family, relations between parliaments and assemblies, police and customs investigations, the economy. The Home Secretary has the power to increase the number of exemptions (just in case there's something he forgot to exclude this time round). In the original White Paper, the

exemptions related to information that could cause "substantial harm" to the government, not mere 'prejudice' as here. Under Clark, there were seven exemptions, Straw, so far, has added a further fourteen. In effect the Bill will allow you to find out how many officers are working on a police investigation, why your child was refused a school place, and why you've waited so long for a minor operation. The Bill that, according to Tony Blair, would "signal a new relationship between government and people" is arguably more

Dr Charles Woolfson, a senior lecturer at Glasgow University and three other reputable researchers. They 'were becoming persistent in their enquiries to HSE' a leaked memo said. 'We wish to monitor those who appear to have an interest in HSE activities and who may be looking to exploit replies received in ways unfavourable to HSE'. Woolfson's crime was to attempt to examine the failure of the executive to investigate the burns, poisonings and amputations suffered by North Sea riggers. In a Kafkaesque flourish, the HSE concluded without irony that 'any contact with these people should be reported to the Open Government Unit'. Open government is now an instrument of covert surveillance."

(Without the tenacity and integrity of that small number of journalists like Cohen, so many of the deceits of New Labour would go entirely unreported, with the government doing its job of restricting our freedoms, and the press doing its job of setting up celebrity



restrictive than the existing code on access to government information introduced by John Major in 1994. In truth, then, the Bill may well accurately embody this new relationship, demonstrating as it does the policy impact of the switch from a weak right wing anti-working-class government, to a right wing anti-working-class government with an unchallengeable majority. As Hugo Young observed: "Given the appetite of New Labour for control even before it reached power, perhaps the surprise should be that it dabbled in the White Paper freedoms for so long".

In his insightful essay collection *Cruel Britannia* (Verve 1999), *Observer* journalist Nick Cohen details how the "full subtlety of the simple harm (prejudice) test is being revealed daily".

"The Labour backbencher Ann Clwyd asked Barbara Roche which companies in the arms industry had breached government guidelines on trading with dictatorships. British companies had been caught flogging electronic batons to Saudi Arabian torturers. Everyone who watched the activities of weapons manufacturers suspected the two guilty firms were on the tip of a large iceberg. The Industry minister replied that if the government named names 'it would harm the competitive position of the companies concerned'. Earlier this year the Health and Safety Executive warned its employees about

scandals to make us look the other way.)

Proudhon once observed that "to be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated, closed in, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, evaluated, censored, commanded; all by creatures that have neither the right, nor wisdom, nor virtue". Under New Labour, the tyranny of government becomes ever more transparent, and the anarchist argument for direct democracy carries ever greater weight. The legislative armoury Straw and Blair have assembled, however, makes clear another truth, clear to them if not to enough of us. Such tyranny will not be swayed by argument alone. New Labour is set to do away with even those freedoms recently secure under bourgeois democracy (right to political organisation is threatened by the Prevention of Terrorism Act reforms, right to jury trial is menaced as we go to press). We need to organise a determined resistance to this agenda in all its forms.

Bakunin described bourgeois democracy as an "immense cemetery where all the real aspirations and living forces of a country generously and blissfully allow themselves to be buried in the name of that abstraction". Tony Blair's "change in the relationship of politics today" means only that more get buried, at a quicker pace.

Nick S.

Bedsit beasts and provincial anarchism

The Northern Anarchist Network met last month at the Yellow Brick Café in Manchester. It was a smaller conference than usual, numbering about fourteen participants, almost all from Manchester and Liverpool. As a consequence it was decided that future conferences will receive full publicity through the anarchist media and elsewhere.

The agenda covered the Tameside careworkers' dispute, the June 18th action in London, the Cadiz / Puerto Real conflict and its consequences, the New Labour Welfare Reform Bill and our response to it, the war in Kosovo and Serbia, report on a Manchester Reclaim the Streets demo, and the organisation and publicity of the Northern Anarchist Network.

Anarchist contribution on Tameside

Derek Pattison, the president of Tameside Trades Council, gave an update on the Tameside dispute. He explained that the union UNISON was holding a ballot on an offer put up by the Tameside Care Group of statutory redundancy plus 60%. He said he expected the majority to be in favour of

acceptance. Out of roughly two hundred women who first struck, over half have now got jobs – leaving ninety still on strike. The union ballot would include those in work as well as those still on strike.

The 25 strikers who were members of the GMB union had already accepted the TCG offer. UNISON represented 185 of the strikers.

It was pointed out to the northern anarchists that it was expected that some of the careworkers would not accept the bosses' offer regardless of the outcome of the ballot. The local anarchists had already been to see solicitors with one of the careworkers with a view to continuing the action for 'unfair dismissal' at the Industrial Tribunal.

The regional northern anarchists who have only had limited contact with the dispute then tended to show their lack of grasp of the nature of the conflict. One said he knew the careworkers would be defeated and, after the Liverpool dockers' dispute, he didn't want to get too worked up supporting a strike which he foresaw as doomed all along. Another, an ACF member, claimed the careworkers, like the dockers, didn't have an anarchist

leadership and so the local anarchist activists on Tameside were bound to flounder and fail to keep the campaign on a libertarian footing.

All this came to a head more vividly when BB described the CNT participation in the conflict of the shipyard workers in Puerto Real and Cadiz. It was drummed home on those present that Puerto Real was a Spanish Tameside and that comments by Pepe Gomez about northern European libertarians being hyperactive theorists and paralytic performers applied to English anarchists.

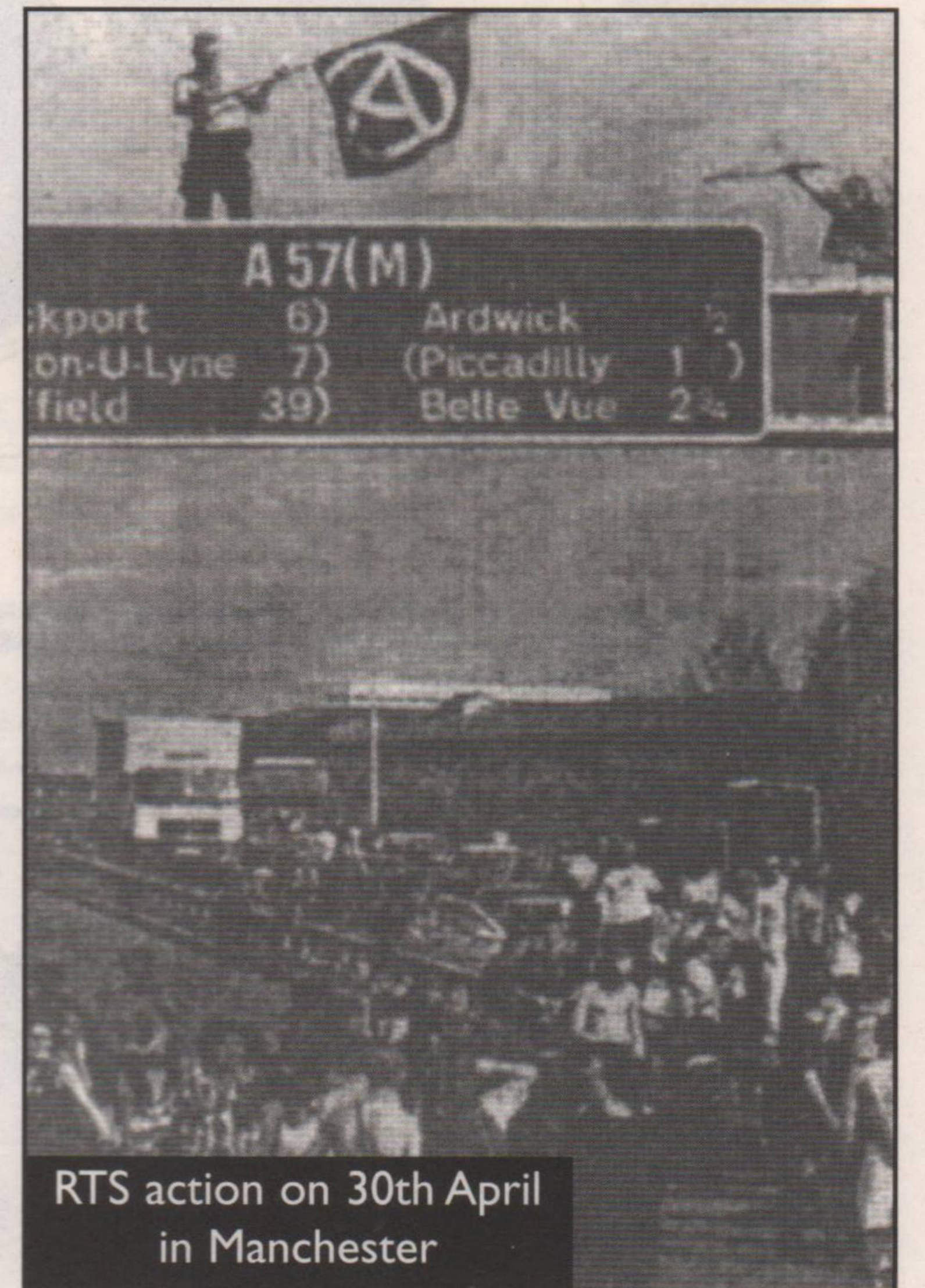
The puzzle and paradox of provincial English anarchism in bedsit-land – hyperactive analysis and paralytic practice. It takes a southern Latin, like Pepe Gomez, to see through it.

Libertarian catalysts in Cadiz and Tameside

The comparison of Tameside with Puerto Real is not that daft. While formerly UNISON may lead the strike, it is obvious that for over a year the Tameside careworkers' strike support group has been the catalyst of events. A significant part of that catalyst had been the local anarchist contingent on the support group. A similar situation seems to exist in Cadiz and Puerto Real, with the anarchist CNT having a serious impact on activities in the area. The workers and the *pueblo* look to the CNT when there is trouble in the town or shipyards. The socialist and communist unions are seen like insurance societies which people merely join for legal protection.

In Tameside UNISON and the local union bosses have been little more than figurehead leaders in this dispute. It is generally recognised that without the help of the strike support group the strike would have fallen apart within a couple of months, if not weeks. In Spain in 1936 they called this situation 'dual power' – the government existed, but the real force was elsewhere in the streets and factories. In Tameside the union exists, but the impetus lies among the activists and foot-soldiers on the support group and on the strike committee. The anarchist contribution to this impetus and to the catalyst has been significant.

That is why a forthcoming history and interpretation of this dispute by anarchists like Derek Pattison is so vital to our



RTS action on 30th April in Manchester

movement. As for the 'victory' and 'defeat' in this dispute referred to by Mike (formerly of Subversion), it is doubtful if the regional northern anarchists would know a 'victory' if they saw it. The Labour establishment on Tameside is a wounded beast. It is not dead, that is true, but this is a war of a thousand cuts in which every blow counts. An account of the strike would have to give a full inventory of all the injuries inflicted.

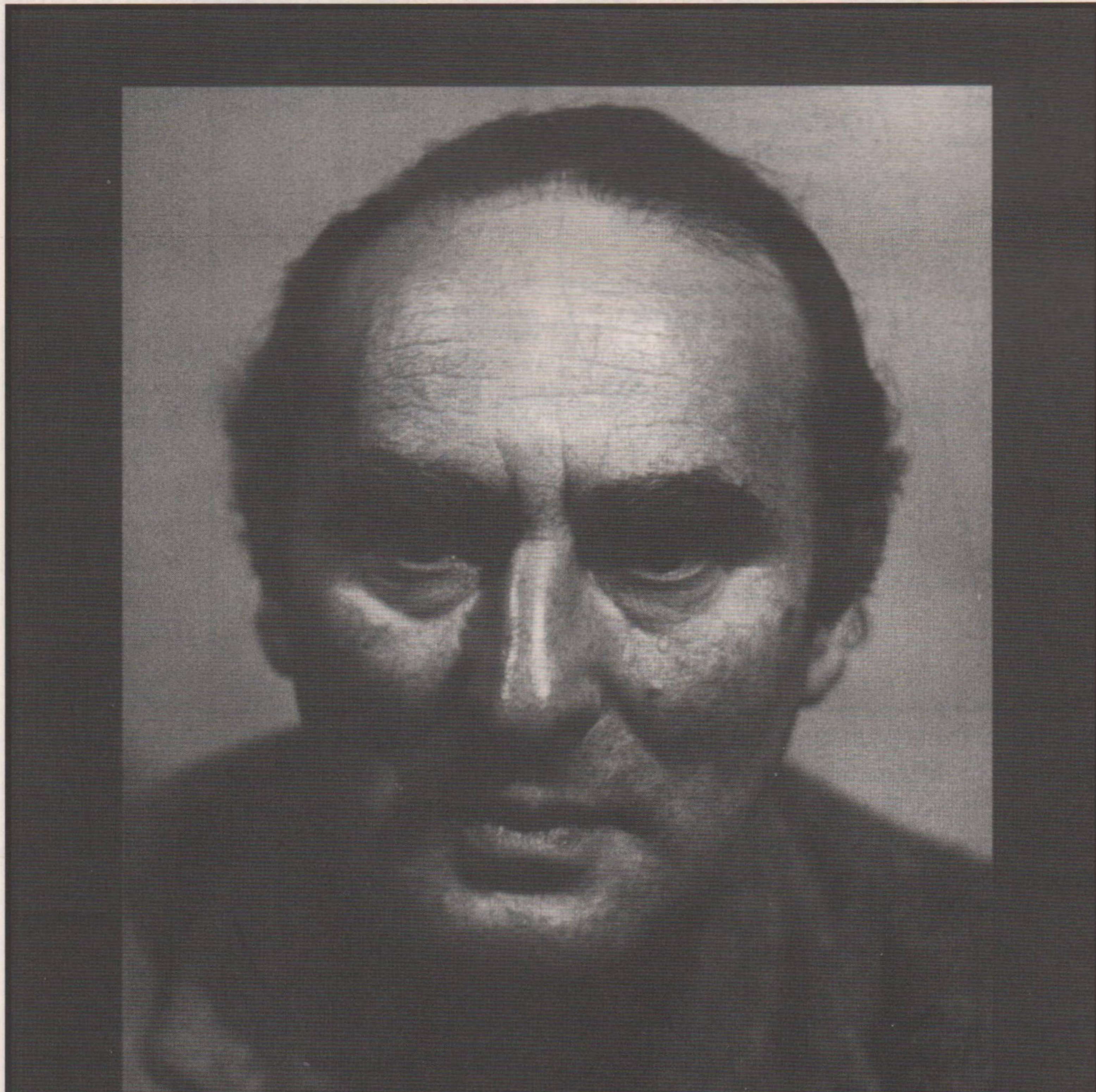
'Victory' cannot in this dispute be represented as full reinstatement of the strikers, because only five of the 210 strikers want reinstatement and they have got it. It is not for us to put a figure on what should be acceptable for individual strikers. Gerry (Liverpool ACF) claimed the Tameside anarchists were not linking means to ends. This could have been a reference to the involvement of the local anarchists in backing careworker candidates in the local elections in May. All six careworker candidates beat the Liberal Democrats. Two of them beat the People's Alliance and one came second to Labour in a four-horse race.

Terry Kenyon, leader of Tameside People's Alliance, told the *Manchester Evening News* that "he was disappointed with the result and blamed the strikers' party, Defend Public Services, for splitting the vote with their six candidates".

Problems of provincial anarchism

The argument over opposition to the New Labour government's welfare reform plans was similarly divided. The quarrel revolved around the need to continue mobilisation

(continued on page 3)



A part-time Photographers Portrait Gallery

VERNON RICHARDS

Freedom Press is proud to publish another book of fine photographs by Vernon Richards, following *A Weekend Photographer's Notebook* and *George Orwell at Home*. This volume is of portraits of 31 men (a volume of women and children is to follow), mostly taken in the 1950s and 1960s. A few are famous (Michael Foot, Bertrand Russell, Kenneth Kaunda), many more are anarchists, and there are some artists, writers and musicians. The portrait chosen for the front cover (above) is of Jankel Adler, the Polish anarchist artist who died in 1949. The commentary is a very personal account of how Vernon Richards remembers his sitters, a chronicle of his life, the times in which he lived and his deep involvement in the anarchist movement.

Freedom Press 88 pages A4 £6.95

US and China

May 1999 – the United States has just discovered that for the past thirty years China has been stealing United States nuclear arms secrets. The reason for this 'discovery' is that when the Balkan crises is over and Iraq is in a condition of stalemate, the States must find another 'crisis'; because it is essential that it keeps a huge Army off the dole. A military Force, and all the attendant artefacts of uniforms, and other equipment from boot polish to toothpaste and all the arms manufacture that goes with it will be necessary if a financial catastrophe is to be avoided.

The unemployment figure would be colossal. This has been the US problem since the end of the war which left it with a huge unemployed force in uniform. This was countered by fomenting wars in Korea, Vietnam, and Iraq, and the providential Cold War. Now another exploit is essential. Maybe

a revival of Communism in Russia, but as that is problematical it is well to build up an opposition to China. One that will not result in brave American boys being killed – that would arouse Mom Power: the American Moms would not take the slaughter of their lovely lads lightly and opposition politicians would take advantage of that noble sentiment. It must be a Cold War requiring the display of massive American military power (to keep people off the dole) but nobody will be killed on the American side. It is in preparation for this that the Chinese are being accused of being in possession of United States nuclear secrets. For the setting up of another Cold War, which keeps Wall Street and the Pentagon happy.

Every century of human history is fraught with the criminality of those in power. The twentieth is outstanding because of the potential global destruction of that power.

J.T. Caldwell

(continued from page 2)

against Labour's New Deal.

Pattison and others insisted that there was still a need for a libertarian opposition. Mike L. claimed the Manchester Groundswell group had become defunct, failing to draw in claimants.

Others argued that with the Bury Unemployed Workers' Association still active, and the history of successful campaigns at Cheetham Hill Job Centre and against Frank Field in Birkenhead, it was vital to keep the struggle against the New Deal on the agenda. It was insisted that the Manchester Activist Network, on which many libertarians and libertarian groups are involved, could take on the responsibilities of resistance to the New Deal.

A feature of provincial anarchism seems to be that the grassroots anarchists who live in these northern towns take a jaundiced view of the kind of 'beasts in bedsit-land' who live in the city centres. The grassroots anarchists who are attached long-term to local communities, treasure tenacity, stamina and sustained effort in their campaigns. The so-called 'beasts of bedsit-land' are more trendy and inclined to set up small groups (and dissolve groups just as quickly).

A successful action by these anarchist 'bedsit beasts' took place on 30th April in Manchester. On that day a small Reclaim the Streets demo was converted by clumsy police action into a minor riot in the city centre. Over-reaction by the police brought a thousand onto Oxford Road, Princess Parkway and the motorway.

Kosovo discussion

The discussion over Kosovo was no less controversial. The Tameside libertarians emphasised and denounced the role of Milosevic and the ethnic cleansing. Derek Pattison argued that too many on the left only want to stop the bombing by NATO and are seemingly indifferent to the ethnic cleansing by the Serbs.

The vast majority at the conference argued for a libertarian campaign to stop the bombing, though Ron (Solidarity Federation) suggested we should start challenging the proposals for a ground war.

Ron also pointed to the policy drunkenness of sections of the left. He claimed that Workers' Power has originally sided with the Serbs, but more recently had been calling for the arming of the Kosova Libertarian Army (KLA).

It was pointed out that libertarian intellectuals, like Noam Chomsky, had been ambiguous in some of the more recent comments on the conflict, and that John Pilger had reported the situation inaccurately.

Some argued that the causes of the conflict lay in the history of events after the ending of the Cold War. The withdrawal of US funds caused an economic crisis in Yugoslavia in the 1980s which then led to the social breakdown and collapse of the Yugoslav Federation with the richer states - Slovenia and Croatia - going for independence. The ultimate results: war in Bosnia, ethnic cleansing and political purges.

This 'economic determinist' view was not accepted by the representative of the Solidarity Federation, the Tameside libertarians and some others. While going along with some of the structural arguments which explain the economic crisis, they claimed it doesn't explain the power worship and the ethnic cleansing. Where is the causal connection?

It was decided that the next conference of the Northern Anarchist Network be held in Yorkshire in early autumn. The northern anarchists will participate in a separate libertarian action on 18th June in central London.

BB

Tameside careworkers ballot

The sacked careworkers voted by 83 to 62 to take the bosses offer and settle their fourteen-month old strike.

UNISON balloted 185 of the sacked workers. Forty did not vote and another

25 strikers were in the GMB union.

UNISON made no recommendation to accept or reject the employers' £400,000 offer. It was hoped that the offer would overcome the need for the Industrial Tribunal hearing fixed to start next week.

Last week, however, a large number of striking careworkers indicated their intention to take their cases forward. A firm of solicitors, Christians of London, have been contacted.

On 1st June the chairman of the Industrial Tribunal adjourned the hearing for four weeks to give the careworkers 'a fighting chance'. There will be a delay while the new solicitors await the transfer of legal documents from Thomsons, the UNISON solicitors.

Tameside Housing

A new campaign spearheaded by the Tameside Trades Council and UNISON's local branch to stop the sell-off of council houses by the Labour Council is to kick-off on 1st July at the Enville Club on Oldham Road, Ashton-under-Lyne, at 7.30pm.

A draft leaflet entitled *The Big Switch or the Big Con?* has come through to *Freedom*. The leaflet states that "Tameside Council wants to sell off all its 17,500 council houses to a private housing company".

On Tameside it's been shown that 'You can't trust a Trust!' The basket-case Tameside Enterprises Ltd (TEL) is evidence of that. How can one expect the Tame Valley Housing Trust to be any better?

The leaflet declares: "Like Tameside Enterprises Ltd. (TEL) which the council set up in 1990, the new housing company is yet another arms-length trust".

One of the Tameside libertarians told *Freedom* that they believe there are alternatives to the selling-off of council housing. He said: "We intend to launch a broad campaign to oppose the sell-off". The public are invited to the campaign meeting to ignite resistance to the Labour council sell-off plans.

If a sell-off goes through, the council stands to make £85 million. The Labour Council at Tameside has set aside £5 million to pay public relations consultants to push the scheme.

Crippled by the DSS

Vicky Kelly of Rochdale, who is suffering from fibro myalgia, was last month railroaded into taking a job on an assembly line. A letter from the DSS declared that she was fit for work and, according to the *Rochdale Observer*, "would no longer be paid incapacity benefit".

Two days after starting her new job she was on her back, and her mother says: "When the doctor saw the state she was in he went ballistic and asked why on earth she'd gone back to work".

About two months ago Vicky had a medical fixed up for her by the DSS. On 4th May she got a letter telling her she was fit to work. She signed on for the dole, but got a job before the claim went through.

Now her mum says: "If I could get to see the DSS adjudicators who made the decision that Vicky was fit for work, I would do time for what they've done to my daughter". She added: "I telephoned and asked if they were medically qualified and

— COPY DEADLINE —

The next issue of Freedom will be dated 26th June, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 17th June.

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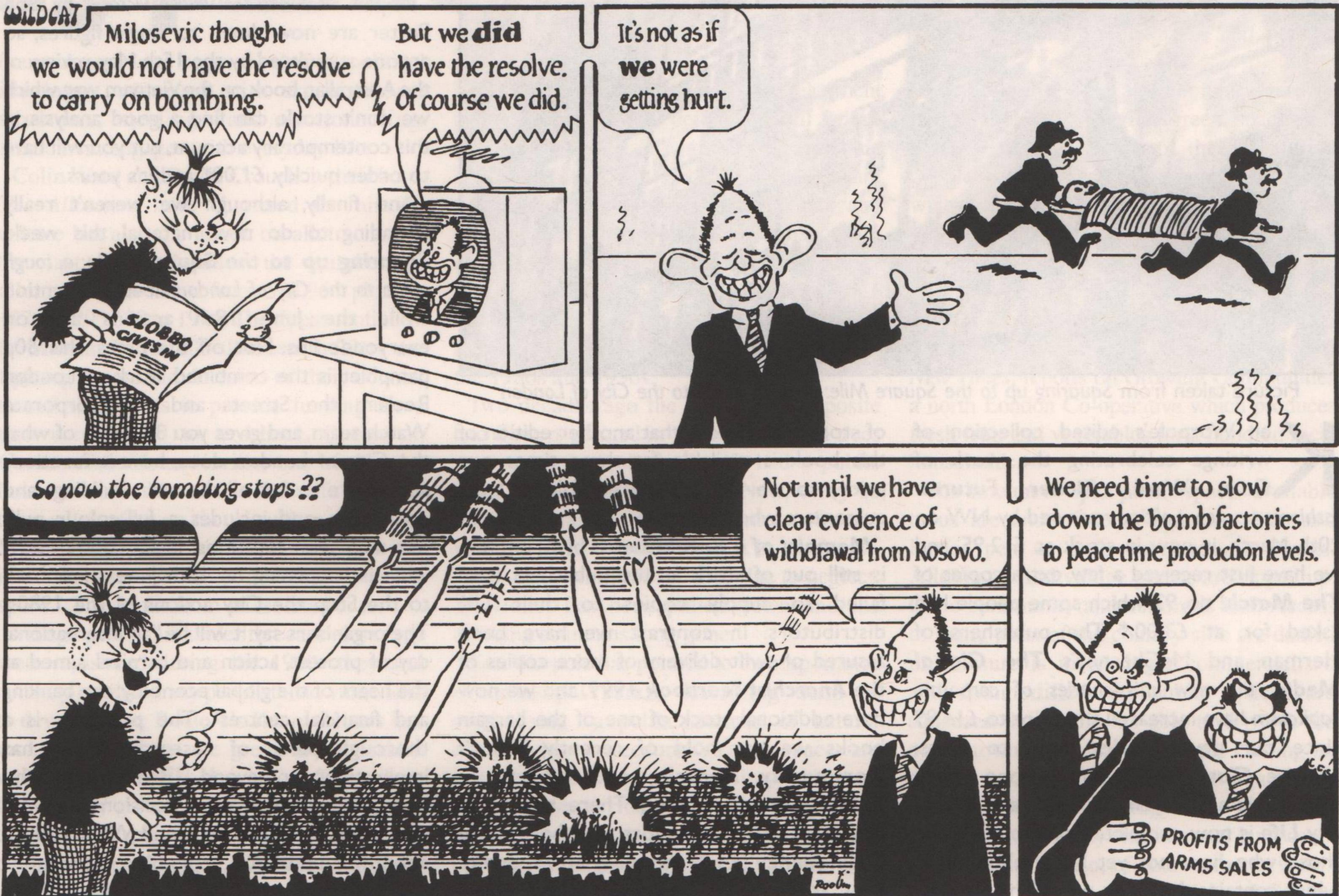
If possible contributions should be typed using double-spacing between lines, or can be sent as text files on disc (with a print-out please).

was told no, they are 'ordinary' people who read the notes and make their own conclusions".

Concerned at the bullying attitude of the DSS Mrs Kelly feels her daughter may have to face even worse treatment as the agency try to push Vicky into a job. Legal advice is being taken by the family.

A Benefit Agency spokesman told the *Rochdale Observer* that "at some stage after claiming incapacity benefit, all claimants have to fill in a form about their ability to perform job-related tasks. It is then decided whether the claimant needs a medical, by a benefits agency doctor, and all the evidence is then passed on to the adjudicator. Claimants have the right to appeal, and can also make a fresh claim if their condition is different or the original condition has deteriorated, in which case it would be viewed as a new period of incapacity".

Come back Groundswell, all is forgiven! Bring back the 'Three Strikes'!



Seeing Like a State

by James C. Scott

published by Yale University Press (1998)
£10.95

This book represents anthropology at its best. It is singularly free of the obscurantist jargon and the pretentious word-play that nowadays masquerades as scholarship. This book in contrast is substantive, it attempts to understand a real world outside of 'texts' and 'discourses', and it makes easy and compelling reading. Scott has already written some splendid studies of Southeastern Asian peasantry and their forms of resistance; this book, though more comparative in approach, is similar in style – radical, theoretically sophisticated, rich in empirical detail and *readable*. Its central insights are also inspired by anarchism. Although Scott is a liberal scholar and not an anarchist, he nevertheless acknowledges his debt to anarchist writers like Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta and Proudhon. These were people, he writes, who consistently emphasised the role of mutuality in human life – as opposed to imperative hierarchical co-ordination in the creation of social order. In fact, Scott's book is a development and an exploration of Bakunin's thesis that rule by savants and by the "worshippers of science" would probably only end in tyranny, and that "the domination of life by science can have no other result

Utopian Visions

than the brutalisation of mankind" (Dolgoff's *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 1973, page 327).

Scott's book is sub-titled *How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*, and it critically examines some of the tragedies and problematic schemes of the twentieth century – the Bolshevik revolutionary party and the Soviet collectivisation of agriculture; the high-modernist city as envisioned by architectural 'despots' like Le Corbusier; scientific forestry; the compulsory 'villagisation' campaign in Tanzania during the 1970s; and the myopic vision of modern industrial agriculture with its mechanisation and monocropping. All such schemes are examples of state-initiated social engineering. They combine, Scott suggests, an aspiration to the administrative ordering of nature and society (which emphasises rational planning, control, mapping, bureaucratic uniformity) with what he describes as authoritarian 'high modernism'. As an ideology, 'high modernism' entails a faith and a self-confidence in science and technology as the essential means of improving human life, by both controlling nature and expanding production. The book is, then, about a utopian vision, shared by Saint-Simon, Le Corbusier, Frederick Taylor, Lenin and Nyerere, and numerous other advocates of scientific management. This vision holds that the rational ordering of all aspects of social life –

the application of science to social problems – backed by the powers of the state, is the way to improve the conditions of human life. But state-enforced social engineering Scott contends (and graphically illustrates in this book) rather than leading to increased human well-being has had the opposite effect: it has led to some of the great tragedies of the twentieth century. The combination of scientism, a vision of a rational order to be imposed on society and nature, and the advocacy of state power has, Scott argues, been disastrous – and its consequences have ranged from development fiascos to the deaths of millions of people through famine or social disruption.

Scott, however, makes it clear that his study is not a plea for free-market capitalism, still less does he pay homage to 'capitalist triumphalism', for Scott argues that global capitalism with its associated markets, industrial agriculture and scientific forestry is just as much an agent of uniformity, regimentation and bureaucratic homogeneity as the state. He does imply however that where the utopian vision of 'high modernism' goes wrong "is when it is held by ruling elites with no commitment to democracy or civil rights and who are therefore likely to use unbridled state power for its achievement" (page 89). But he fails to emphasise the important fact that the

democratic state is equally enamoured with 'high modernism'. It thus has an unholy alliance with capitalism, supporting industrial agriculture, scientific forestry, and the 'scientific management' (by 'lines') of all areas of social life – community, health, education, welfare. The modern democratic state, as both Foucault and Habermas have explored, has 'colonised' or 'penetrated' the social life-world to a degree that was unthinkable in the days of the 'absolutist' monarchs. Indeed, Scott stresses that the practice and logic of the Soviet collectivisation of agriculture was *akin* to the faith that was expressed by social engineers and agricultural planners throughout the capitalist world.

"The modernist confidence in huge scale, centralisation of production, standardised mass commodities and mechanisation was so hegemonic in the leading sector of industry" that it became an article of faith both in the Soviet Union and in the United States (page 197). Industrial farming is described by Scott as a "Soviet-American fetish". In a chapter on 'Taming Nature' Scott gives a very good critique of state-sponsored 'high modernist' agriculture under liberal (i.e. democratic) capitalism, geared as it is to "production and profit". He explores in detail its ecological and social costs, as the emphasis is put, in its myopic vision, on monocropping, mechanisation, genetic uniformity and the intensive use of fertilisers and pesticides.

In the final section of the book Scott gives a good account of practical knowledge (what the Greeks called *metis*), the informal, situated and local knowledge that forms the basis of practical skills and commonsense understandings. Such knowledge, and other kinds of informal processes and activities, always underwrite more complex, formal knowledge, appropriately described as 'disciplines'. But unlike trendy post-modernists Scott does not repudiate science or formal knowledge (any more than did Bakunin and Kropotkin). What he stridently critiques is the *combination* of the imperial pretensions of formal knowledge (rational planning, mapping, science) and authoritarian (state) social engineering. What is needed, he concludes, is more respect for practical knowledge and commonsense understandings, an active collaboration between the two 'dialects' of knowledge, and, following the perspectives of Albert Howard (an early advocate of organic farming), Albert Hirschman and Peter Kropotkin, a little more reverence for life and a little less strait-jacketing of the future.

Brian Morris

Bits and Pieces

The latest news on publications from the Freedom Press bookshopPicture taken from *Squaring up to the Square Mile: a rough guide to the City of London*

Ken Worpole's edited collection of writings celebrating the work of Colin Ward, *Richer Futures: fashioning a new politics*, reviewed by NW on 20th March, is now in stock at £12.95, and we have just received a few extra copies of *The Match!* no. 92 which some people had asked for, at £3.00.* The publishers of Herman and McChesney's *The Global Media: the new missionaries of corporate capitalism* have increased the price to £14.99 since our new booklist went to press; likewise *Class War* has now gone up to £1.00. Volume I of Emma Goldman's *Living My Life* is now completely sold out, but for those who have not yet bought Volume II, which contains the index, we still have plenty

of stock. Please note that another edition of this book is available (at three times our price) so we can still obtain Volume I for customers who require it.

Memoirs of a Revolutionist by Kropotkin is still out of stock as the publishers have failed to supply copies to their UK distributors. In contrast we have been assured of swift delivery of more copies of the *Anarchist Yearbook 1999*, and we now have additional stock of one of the bargain books we got hold of recently, Taylor's *Community, Anarchy and Liberty* at £5.00* (normally £13.99). There are still a few copies left of Comfort's *Authority and Delinquency* (£3.99, normally £8.95) and of *Ray Walker*, the book of the late local

artist's murals and paintings (£1.50, normally £5.95).

The pamphlet written by Jose Peirats as a supplement to his *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution* and called, unsurprisingly, *Appendix to Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*, is now in stock in limited quantities at £1.95.* It can also be found, in a rather better translation, under the title 'Spanish Anarchism in Exile' in *The Raven* no. 23, along with much other material on Spain under Franco and after, at the slightly higher price of £3.00.*

Copies of *Vietnam: whose victory?* by Bob Potter are now down to single figures, so anyone stimulated by the 15th May review of the Australian book on the Vietnam war, which we don't stock, can find a good analysis in this contemporary account, but you will have to order quickly. £1.00* and it's yours.

And finally, although we weren't really intending to do new material this week, *Squaring up to the Square Mile: a rough guide to the City of London* needs a mention while the June 18th actions are on everyone's lips. Hot off the press, this 50p pamphlet is the combined work of London Reclaim the Streets and the Corporate Watch team, and gives you 32 pages of what the City of London does, how it functions and where to find all the main buildings and companies, and includes a full-colour pull-out map with locations. If you don't know what is happening on 18th June, think back to the Stop the City actions of the 1980s. The organisers say it will be "an international day of protest, action and carnival aimed at the heart of the global economy: the banking and financial centres". The pamphlet is a thorough piece of research which has implications far beyond J18, explaining who makes the global financial decisions and why, and where they can be found. What you do about it is up to you.

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Dwindling Cities

The press and the pressure groups are adept at turning research findings into panics and crises about which we are all expected to have opinions. We saw this last year when people concerned with killing creatures for sport were able to rally huge demonstrations in defence of 'the countryside' against ignorant town-dwellers who misunderstood its ancient traditions, and wanted to punish it with a tidal wave of bricks and concrete.

This year's crisis is about a parallel perception. Those urban citizens are leaving empty cities behind them, and all that expensive urban infrastructure is going to waste. The basis for the press reports is a piece of housing research by Anne Power and Katharine Mumford, *The slow death of great cities? Urban abandonment or urban renaissance*, published for Rowntree by York Publishing at £16.95. They summarise their findings thus: "Good quality, modernised homes are being abandoned in some inner city neighbourhoods. House prices have fallen, in some cases to zero, and some blocks and streets are being demolished, including new housing. Demolition of empty properties has not generally stemmed the tide of abandonment. Whole areas have virtually no demand for housing."

They studied Manchester and Newcastle, which have lost a fifth of their population since 1961. "Depopulation has paralleled severe job losses, mainly in manufacturing. Job losses have hit low-skilled men particularly harshly. Long-term unemployment in inner cities is chronic ... Low-cost owner-occupation outside the city is often a more attractive and cheaper option for those in work. Low demand has generated falling school rolls, loss of confidence in the area, a vacuum in social control, anti-social behaviour and intense fear of crime."

All this is well-known to people outside the south-east of England, but in a grossly centralised society where all assumptions are based on the London area, it is valuable to have the facts spelled out. It is important to take a secular view of cities, of the kind Lewis Mumford, and much more recently, Peter Hall, sought to develop. British cities



were the product of the industrial revolution and expanded like mushrooms. Asa Briggs noted how "in 1837 England and Wales boasted only five provincial cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants: by 1891 there were twenty-three and they housed nearly a third of the nation".

Anne Power and Katharine Mumford note that Britain's major cities have been losing population since the turn of the century. This was, of course, from a situation of grotesque overcrowding, and a century ago, moralists and social critics were distressed by the depopulation of rural England and calling for decentralisation. Two of these critics were so acute and inventive that their books remain significant a century later, as much for their prescience in noting trends that were to accompany new technologies as for their hopes that have not yet been fulfilled. They were of course Ebenezer Howard with his *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* and Peter Kropotkin with his *Fields, Factories and*

Workshops.

Howard believed that once the inner city had been 'demagnetised' by the breaking of the landlord's monopoly site values, and once large numbers of people had been convinced that "they can better their condition in every way by migrating elsewhere" the bubble of the monopoly value of inner city land would burst, enabling humane low-density redevelopment. He thought that this urban revolution would be effected "not at the expense of the ratepayers, but almost entirely at the expense of the landlord class". But it hasn't happened like that.

Kropotkin saw a global decentralisation of both industry and agriculture, which has happened, but expected production to be for an infinite series of local markets. But it hasn't happened like that either, since all are producing for a global market.

The whole tragedy of urban change in the post-war years is that its burden has had to be borne by that section of the population least

able to resist it. Perhaps this was tolerable in the years of relatively full employment. In today's climate of large-scale unemployment it is a wonder that the situation is not even worse that Anne Power's report describes. In terms of housing, Frederic Osborn wrote as long ago as 1945 that "in a few years the multi-storey technique will prove unpopular and will peter out. Damage will have been done to society by the trial, but probably all I can do is to hasten the date of disillusion. If I have underestimated the complacency of the urban masses, the damage may amount to a disaster". Nearly thirty years later, in 1974 he wrote: "I would now predict that the latest fashion for low-rise high-density housing will not allow big cities to recover and retain a balanced population. They can do this only if they rebuild large areas with good family houses in garden surroundings".

This is one of the lessons of the places where nobody with freedom of choice willingly lives. **Colin Ward**

Defending public spaces

Every town, village and city has public spaces. Places where any one and every one can go to play, read, think, eat, sleep, whatever. I am lucky. I live opposite a park. Up the road from me is one of the town's three allotment sites. A two mile walk from my house through the Kent countryside and I can sit on a village green by the edge of a pond. On my train journey into London and work each day, as well as passing scores of allotment sites which ribbon alongside the track, I also pass by a city farm and garden. The landscape is full of public spaces.

Public spaces have a culture of their own. Next time you are in a park on a summer's afternoon notice how many people are there, their different ages and backgrounds, notice the diversity of the things they are doing — some walking dogs, others playing football, families having a picnic, children riding bikes. Notice how well and easily it all fits together. Also notice that although there are rules governing most public spaces, in most people are actually left to get on and do what they want, and it works. It works without any organised authority. Public spaces are living and everyday examples of self-regulation and organisation.

Anarchists should not only actively use public spaces but also, where necessary, defend

them. Anarchism is not a rarefied political ideology, concerned with organisational structures, meetings, and electioneering. Anarchism engages with everyday life.

Colin Ward and David Crouch in their book *The Allotment* have chartered the history, culture but also the attack on allotments. In the last three decades the number of allotments has fallen from 532,964 plots in 1970 to 295,630 in 1996. The threat continues. In Midenhall Suffolk allotment holders are fighting a possible decision of their council to sell their plots to provide funding for a new access road to a school. Quoted in *Garden News* Joan Neville, one of the plot holders, said "it's such a beautiful site. If these allotments go then I will move out of Midenhall. There are so few open spaces it is important that we keep a centre of green space." This is far from an isolated case.

Village greens are under threat. Unless they were registered during the 1960s they are, contrary to what many people think, vulnerable to development. Radio 4's *You and Yours* last month reported on one green in Lancashire which was sold off to developers. The village lost its only green space, a place where their children could play safely and which the whole community could enjoy. Children carried on playing rugby as the bulldozers moved in to

start building houses.

Parks are also under threat from development as the recent battle to defend Crystal Palace from the building of a multi-screen cinema and car parks illustrated. Urban parks are vital resources for those without cars and without access to good public transport. In crowded towns and cities they provide one of the few green spaces available to the community. Many have suffered badly as a result of local authority budget cuts during the 1980s and 1990s.

Two decades ago the park I live opposite had flowers planted in it. Its shrubs and trees were expertly looked after. It had a public toilet. It had drinking water. Now, every so often, its grass is mowed by tractor. Once a year the hedge around it is cut by chainsaw. Many of the shrubs have died due to neglect. The toilet has been pulled down and the drinking fountains long gone.

Ken Worpole has pointed to the importance of municipal parks, describing them as symbolising "a public domain of natural rights and civic freedoms". Public spaces are one of the few aspects of society which are generally impervious to market forces. You cannot charge entrance to a park. There are few opportunities to sell much in them.

After years of neglect there are some signs

that the corner may be being turned for municipal parks. In March the government announced a £125 million package to increase the number of parks and playing fields.

There are 400 official community gardens in Britain. They provide green spaces for 300,000 people — some of the 9.5 million people without access to a garden. Labour wishes to build 60% of new houses on 'brown' field sites, threatening not only community gardens but also allotments. Many community gardens produce affordable organic food for their local community. Nicola Baird, writing in the current issue of *New Times*, reports on Growing Communities a north London Co-operative which produces fresh fruit and vegetables for a hundred local households.

The amount of open public spaces available to us are under intense pressure. Cars and lorries pen us onto pavements in towns. Allotments and village greens are ripped up. Civic community and culture is lost. Access to many parts of the country side are denied us. Leisure is increasingly commercialised and commodified. As public spaces are squeezed those who are able to drive to the out of town multi screen cinema. Getting an allotment, being involved in a city garden or farm or just simply going to the local park preserves community freedom and landscape. Such activity is also, of course, fun as well!

Richard Griffin

The libertarian ideal in Bolivia



Sad paradox that of Bolivia: to have as 'democratic' president the military man who in 1971 led a bloody coup d'état which established an infamous dictatorship plagued with political assassinations and disappearances. Hugo Banzer 'The General' would then be made, like so many preceding petty tyrants, to relinquish power forced by the actions of a people who years later returned him to the presidency by way of the ballot box. Close friend and protector of Klaus Barbie, the abominable nazi known as 'the butcher of Lyon', Banzer is also a notorious drug dealer, which doesn't prevent him from declaring war on the small-time coca farmers of the Chapare whose out-of-control competition he's bent on eradicating by faithfully following orders from the true power behind the scene – the USA, of course.

With this scenario, and after several decades with presidents of a similar ilk, who could be surprised that a country with twice the territory as the Spanish State and barely eight million inhabitants, can figure among the poorest nations in the continent in spite of its enormous natural resources. The twenty-first century will arrive in Bolivia the same way the twentieth leaves: with over half a million children doing all kinds of work, shoe shines, street peddlers, couriers ... a large work force whose menial wages has already become crucial to the diminishing family subsistence income; with a foreign debt of \$65 per person and with international financial assistance shamelessly divided among the authorities and the rich and powerful in front of the resigned eyes of the people (Transparencia Internacional classified Bolivia as the world's second in corruption in 1997, topped only by Nigeria).

Although no great resistance to the situation is apparent at the moment (with the exception of the Chapare peasants) this country has a rich tradition of social struggle as witnessed by many rebellions. Here, as in most of the continent, the anarchists played a crucial role.

A bit of history

The first references of truly libertarian character are the Union Obrera Primero de

Mayo (First of May Workers' Union) around 1906 at Tupiza. The Union published the journal *La Aurora Social* (Social Dawn). A while later *Verbo Rojo* (Red Verb), *El Proletariado* (The Proletariat) and *La Federacion* appear in Potosí, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, respectively. During the '20s workers' activism multiplies with constant libertarian participation in miners' and popular struggles which obtain notable successes in spite of ferocious repression. Groups active in La Paz at the time include Centro Cultural Obrero (Workers' Cultural Centre), Centro Obrero Libertario (Libertarian Workers' Centre), Grupo Libertario 'Redención' (Libertarian Group 'Redemption') and the group La Antorcha (The Torch) which had as its vocal La Tea (The Torch).

During this time the Federación Obrera Local (FOL – Local Workers' Federation) is reorganised. It would have a decisive influence in the movement's struggles. FOL published *La Humanidad* (Humanity) and was affiliated with ACAT (Asociación Continental Americana de Trabajadores – American Continental Association of Workers) which co-ordinated anarcho-syndicalists of different countries and today tries to revive itself. Other relevant groups of the time were Sembrando Ideas (Sowing Ideas) and Brazo y Cerebro (Arm and Brain) in La Paz, and Centro Obrero Internacional (International Workers Centre) in Oruro. To the south at Sucre, the Ferrer i Guardia School was established, and a little later the journal *Tierra y Libertad* (Land and Freedom) was published. In 1927 the Sindicato Femenino de Oficios Varios (Union of women from different trades) would become one of the most active groups within the FOL. "They were masses, they marched in front and us behind" commented years later comrade Lisandro Rodas about those courageous libertarian women who obtained important improvements in labour conditions for the 'endedoras capitalinas' and women in general thanks to their struggle. Women such as Catalina Mendoza, Petronila Infantes and Susana Rada among many are still remembered in the markets of La Paz. Another area of struggle to which anarchists

dedicated much effort was that of the peasants made up, then as now, of an indigenous majority. At the beginning of the thirties the FAD (Federación Agraria Departamental – Departmental Agrarian Federation) appears. Strongly influenced by anarchists, it quickly grew in the fields of Bolivia causing alarm among the landlords who reacted supported by the government and unleashed a savage repression which caused the federation to disappear. The so called Guerra del Chaco (The Chaco War) between Bolivia and its neighbour Paraguay seriously weakened the movement and despite the creation of new groups such as Ideario in Tupiza or the publications of FOL and La Voz del Canipo (The Voice of Canipo) it was unavoidable that many unions were forced to join the official COB (Confederación Obrera Boliviana – Bolivian Workers' Confederation) which spelled their death.

Modern Times

Between the '50s and the '80s a bunch of devoted militants continued acting within the COB giving its struggles a libertarian character and suffering terrible repression by the different dictatorships which coup after coup succeeded each other at the helm. In 1988 the magazine *El Gijó* is published in Cochabamba, analysing themes such as the Spanish Revolution and Bolivia's anarchist movement. During those years there is important activity recovering the history of the movement with the publication of several works by Silvia Rivera and Zulema Lehm. Later, in the early '90s the Grupo de Trabajo Sindical (GTS) undertook union work of libertarian orientation although they tell us it is inactive at present. Acción Subterránea (Julian Apaza Underground Action) appears around this time in the city of Cochabamba carrying on numerous activities and counting many anarchists among its members. Some of its constituents were later co-opted by the local trotskyists, with the collective suffering a change of ideology which makes it be thought of as sectarian by many. In 1995 the collective Utopía is born. It publishes the magazine *Después del Muro* (After the Wall) also in Cochabamba. In our days and always in that city *Alternativa* (Alternative), *Resistencia y Juventud* (Resistance and Youth) and *Revolución* are published. The latter is the voice of the young people from ASP (Asamblea por la Soberanía de los Pueblos – Assembly for the People's Sovereignty), an organisation created by the coca peasants of the Chapare for the defence of their rights. These young people, among the many anarchists, stage numerous activities against the state's repression. During a recent meeting they decided to split from the ASP to create an autonomous collective based on the so called communitarian socialism which has not a few parallels with anarchism. Another collective recently formed in Cochabamba is La Vecindad Punk-Core (The Neighbourhood Punk-Core), which promotes co-ordination among music bands with political lines, organising concerts, publishing fanzines and spreading protest ideology. They have a radio program at a local station. Among the most committed bands we note Radio Urbano (Urban Radio) and the already disappeared Lljatay Kjaparín (The Scream of the People in Quechua) which mixed popular Bolivian music with punk rhythms.

The only apparently active group in La Paz is Mujeres Creando (Women Creating). Their

work is mainly feminist and homosexual vindication with a libertarian angle. They publish *Mujer Pública* (Public Woman) and have their own café named Carcajada (Laughter) where they have many activities. Their dedication makes them well known occasionally enjoying the attention of the local press and television. In the Bolivian capital the band 3-18 is worthy of mention. At nearby El Alto there is the *Contraataque* (Counter attack) fanzine while to the south, at Tanja, the collective No Represor (No Repressor) is active with two publications; *Insumisión* and *Oveja Negra* (Black Sheep). We've been told that in the city of Sucre there is another collective whose name we don't know at this time.

To this modest libertarian representation we have to add that of the veteran fighters that live in the country and continue being faithful to their ideals: At Beni, in the midst of Amazonia we had the pleasure of visiting with comrade Antonio García Barón who has lived in this corner of the rain forest for over forty years. Antonio, barely 14, joined the Columna Durruti and after the defeat he fought the nazis in France, being captured and imprisoned in the extermination camp of Mauthausen where he spent five years. Cochabamba is the city chosen by another great fighter: Liber Forti. A known figure in Bolivia's worker movement where he was active, first in the FOL and later in the COB. He was a member of the collective Ideario and founding member of Nuevos Horizontes (New Horizons) one of the most prestigious theatre groups in the country and still active after fifty years. Both comrades are in excellent health and full of enthusiasm.

This Bolivia of clearly indigenous majority still has a long way to go to shake off the exploitation which some believe everlasting. Libertarian ideals found echo, whenever possible, in a community such as the Indians where a primitive socialism has been practised for centuries. Even so, the local libertarians have their work cut out for them in order for anarchism to recover the role it played yesterday in these lands.

CNT, April 1999

(A report on the situation in El Chapare will appear in the next issue of *Freedom*)

The Raven

Number 38
on
1968

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Anarchism and Communism

Dear *Freedom*,

Richard Garner claims (Letters page, 29th May 1999) that while I invoke the name of Proudhon, in fact "Proudhon and McKay are in disagreement, which means that his whole argument is without premise". Why is this? Because, after a lengthy quote from Proudhon (and lengthier discussion of that quote), Mr Garner asserts that "Proudhon didn't want to abolish property but to unify it with possession".

Now Mr Garner quotes page 36 of Proudhon's *What is Property?* in order to make his claim. Looking at said page we discover Proudhon stating quite clearly that "instead of inferring from this that property should be shared by all, I demand, as a measure of general security, its entire abolition". Now Mr Garner obviously read this page to extract his quote. The question now becomes how does he manage to assert that Proudhon did not aim to abolish property when Proudhon states the exact opposite?

So, rather than me and Proudhon disagreeing, it seems clear that Mr Garner and Proudhon are at odds. Mr Garner states Proudhon did not seek to abolish property. Proudhon in contrast, states that he does. I wonder who is the more accurate authority with regards to Proudhon's ideas, Proudhon or Mr Garner? Which means that the 'assumption' that I am "arguing the same point as Proudhon did in 1840" is a valid one and so my argument remains ignored by Mr Garner.

Mr Garner states that, for Proudhon "all workers have a claim to become proprietors". He also states that Proudhon's ideal is obviously not to replace property with possession but to unify property with possession". This is not Proudhon's position: "Every occupant is, then, necessarily a possessor or usufructuary, a condition that excludes proprietorship" (page 66). It is very clear from Proudhon's work that Mr Garner is misrepresenting his ideas, just as he misrepresented Kropotkin before Proudhon. However, even assuming that Mr Garner is

correct, I am confused by his comments. I argued that under anarchism private property is replaced by possession. Mr Garner states that instead it 'unifies' property and possession. Personally, I cannot see much difference. If we have a 'occupancy and use' regime then, obviously, the occupier controls what happens on the resources she uses. As she just has enough resources to work alone, she cannot hire (and so govern and exploit) wage labourers. Nor can she exclude others from resources she claims to own but does not use. Mr Garner's point, assuming he has one, is to make the splitting of hairs easier. As he himself states, in a society "where only possession existed, who would be the proprietor, for one implies the other?"

Mr Garner states that he feels communist-anarchists believe that individuals "don't have the right to choose to exclude people from the resources those people need". I assume he means that possessors have a right to their possessions rather than the property owners' right to exclude others from resources they claim to own but do not use. He feels that I have not answered this point. I must admit to feeling perplexed by Mr Garner's words. In my both previous letters I argued that communist-anarchists respected the rights of individuals who did not want to join the communist commune. I quoted Kropotkin to that effect (*Conquest of Bread* pages 95-96 and page 81). I also pointed out that in the chapter on Expropriation, Kropotkin argued that it would be limited to property which was used to exploit others' labour. I am surprised that Mr Garner claims I have not answered this point! Anyway, here is Kropotkin again. In *Act for Yourselves* Kropotkin explicitly states that a peasant "who is in possession of just the amount of land he can cultivate" would not be expropriated in an anarchist revolution. Similarly for the family "inhabiting a house which affords them just enough space ... considered necessary for that number of people" and the artisan "working with their

own tools or handloom" (pages 104-105). Perhaps Mr Garner, after my repeating these comments yet again, will now acknowledge I have answered this point.

While Mr Garner may "feel that communists start with the premise that individuals ... don't have the right to decide by themselves, to the exclusion of the rest of society, how resources should be allocated," communist-anarchists do not. As noted, if an individual does not want to join the communist commune then they do not have to. Mr Garner states that if the commune owns the factory then this is 'identical' to the capitalist owning it. If the possessors of the factories (the workers) desire to pool their resources and own them (and what they produce) as a commune, then is this "identical to capitalism"? Presumably if I and my partner decide to live together and share the produce of our labour freely between us, then we (together) act as capitalists in relation to ourselves as individuals? This shows the flaw in Mr Garner's argument. Given that we are talking about anarchist, and so *voluntary*, communism Mr Garner has just created and destroyed a straw man of his own creation. As I made clear in my previous letter.

Ironically enough, Proudhon starts from the 'premise' Mr Garner assigns to us communists. According to Proudhon, the "right of the usufructuary is such that he is responsible for the thing entrusted to him; he must use it in conformity with general utility ... the usufructuary is under the supervision of society and subject to the condition of labour and the law of equality" (page 66). This is because Proudhon believed that 'property in produce, even if this is allowed, does not mean property in the means of production ... [workers] are, if you like, proprietors of their products, but none proprietor of the means of production. The right to the produce is exclusively *jus in re*; the right to the means is common, *jus ad rem*" (page 86). And let us not forget that Proudhon, like Kropotkin, argued that "land cannot be appropriated" (chapter 3, part 1) – a fact Mr Garner has consistently avoided mentioning, never mind answering, all the through this argument. There is a reason for Proudhon's position, as will become clear.

Moving on, Mr Garner states that I should consult the right-'libertarian' Bryan Caplan's webpage on the Spanish Anarchists. I would suggest *he* consult my reply to Caplan's incredibly distorted account of the Spanish Revolution and the Spanish Anarchists (available at <http://flag.blackened.net/liberty/spainrebut.html>). Essentially Caplan repeats the Stalinist lies that the CNT forced peasants into the collectives in Aragon. My reply refutes his claims, as anarchists before me refuted the Stalinists.

However, Caplan's webpage does mention something relevant to this discussion. Caplan is an 'anarcho-capitalist' (i.e. an extreme *laissez-faire* capitalist who claims, incorrectly, to be an anarchist). In his essay he argues, like Mr Garner, that workers' control implies the market (he calls it capitalism). He also argues that in the market some win and some lose, the losers becoming unemployed. These unemployed workers, Caplan argues, then could sell their labour to the successful worker controlled factories. Of course, this re-introduces wage labour and so ends workers' control. Thus the market, instead of being the condition for workers' control, effectively ends it. Capitalism (wage slavery) replaces anarchism (liberty). Caplan considers this an inevitable result of private property. After all, according to Caplan, property owners have the right to 'exclude' others from their resources. This means that the owners can allow access to the resource to others as long as these others agree to the

conditions the owners put down beforehand (such as "allow me to govern you and take the product of your labour in return for a wage"). Mr Garner, in contrast to Caplan, states his vision is a market based socialism. Caplan states that he is a capitalist and, therefore, supports private property, inequality in resources (as generated by market exchanges), hierarchy in the workplace and bosses' control. Needless to say, Caplan's position excludes him from anarchism (although he tries to claim he is one). I would suggest that Caplan's position is more correct – a free market economy will degenerate into capitalism, end workers' control and ownership and so freedom (as Proudhon was aware and so he argued for agro-industrial federations and regulation of the market to protect mutualism). That is one of the reasons why most anarchists are communists. Another reason is the fact that, to quote Proudhon, "property is despotism" – namely the fact that property owners govern those who use that property. Obviously in a regime of possession this is not a problem. This is not the case under property. Hence Kropotkin's support for individuals to possess resources if they did not want to join the communist commune. Rather than being the contradiction Mr Garner claims it is, Kropotkin's position is consistent with anarchist theory – as I argued in all my previous letters. Unfortunately Mr Garner has yet again decided to ignore my argument and misrepresent Proudhon along with Kropotkin.

Iain McKay

'Don't Vote'

Dear *Freedom*,

It is a rare occasion that one would expect to find any anarchic proclamation from a *Toronto Globe and Mail* columnist, but on 27th May Karen Selick, a columnist, lawyer and writer from Belleville, Ontario, at least pondered an anarchist response to the Ontario provincial election. She finds the candidates and parties unacceptable. To deface the ballot with a written none of the above, she points out, is a waste since such a ballot is counted as spoiled and put among all the others from those too stupid to put their X in the right place.

To overcome this problem there is a None of the Above organisation in the US which so far has succeeded in getting the state of Nevada to adopt a category legitimising a vote for 'none of the above'.

Another possibility available in Ontario, which is not widely known, is to hand your ballot back to the returning officer and decline to vote. Your declining to vote is then made a part of the poll record.

In Canada putting up on one's front lawn signs supporting a candidate is a common practice. So Ms Selick writes: "I'm thinking of putting up my own lawn sign reading 'Don't Vote. It only encourages them'."

I'm curious where she got this slogan. Would it have been from *Freedom*?

Harold Barclay

[More than likely, now that more and more people are discovering our ideas from reading *Freedom* on the World Wide Web (see back page for details). For anyone who wants to follow up the interesting arguments outlined by Ms Selick we recommend issue number 14 of our journal *The Raven*, titled 'On Voting' (£3 for 96 pages, post-free worldwide).

Harold Barclay is the author of the *Freedom Press* title *Culture and Anarchism* (£6.95, post free inland, add 15% for overseas orders) – Editors.]

What does anarchism mean?

Dear *Freedom*,

I am writing the following as a response to the article ('I Walked Out of an Anarchist Meeting') by Steve Ash (*Freedom*, 29th May 1999). Firstly, may I begin by saying that I was not at the London Anarchist Forum meeting that he attended. However, it seems that Steve Ash is mistaken about a great many things, not least: 1. the meaning of the word 'anarchism'; 2. the consequences of that meaning; and 3. the implications of his own argument. As such, let me commence with a quotation from Ash's opening paragraph: "I was shocked to hear mild credence given to the idea that anarchism could encompass the coercion of individuals".

A little further on he adds: "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".

Apart from the totalitarian closure Ash seeks to force on this debate, (note my emphases), what Ash seems to be advocating is an anarchism that provides for the freedom of the individual to do as he or she pleases. Anarchism advocates nothing of the sort. Anarchism means lack or absence of government. Bakunin and those other intellectuals of the nineteenth century recognised as anarchists directed their activities and writings against a historically

and culturally specific apparatus: the nation-state. In other words, contemporary anarchism advocates the removal of the nation-state as an organising principle of social relations. Further, it also implies the desirable abolition of capitalism. The simultaneous emergence of capitalism and the nation-state was not an accident of history; they are mutually interdependent forms of social organisation.

In summary, then, anarchism implies doing away with the nation-state and capitalism, and the particular relations of power that these twin forms of social organisation codify. An anarchist community would mark not an absence of authority or power, but the establishment of social relations in which power was directed along new channels and in new directions, and towards different ends.

Finally, let me turn, once again to Ash's text. At the end of the piece, Ash argues that 'perfection' should be our goal. Perhaps Steve Ash should turn to his dictionary and examine this word. The notion of perfection – which implies, among other things, 'purity' and 'flawlessness' – suggests also *completion*. Steve Ash should meditate a while on just how dangerous this word – this thinking – is for theorising (and instigating) complex series of social relations. Anarchy is not an end or a death, is it, Steve?

Paul Tremlett

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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 —

- 11th June** General discussion
- 18th June** Cultural Anarchism (speaker
Diana Mavroleon)
- 25th June** General discussion
- 2nd July** Individualist Anarchism (speaker
Richard Garner)
- 9th July** General discussion
- 16th July** The Babymilk Scandal (speaker
Edmund McArthur)
- 23rd July** General discussion
- 30th July** Authority and Credentials
(speaker Adrian Williams)
- 6th August** General discussion

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
for London Anarchist Forum

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).

June 18th

For further info on J18

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

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

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 27th June

Borough on the Hill. Meet at the John Storer
House car park, Wards End, Loughborough, at
10am. Walk leader Ray.

Sunday 25th July

Derbyshire walk in Shining Cliff woods and
Alderwasley. Meet outside Hurt Arms,
Ambergate, Derbyshire at 11am. Walk
leader John.

Telephone Vivienne for more info:
01509 230131 or 01509 236028

**Meeting to set up a solidarity
group in Hackney**

Tuesday 15th June at 7.30pm

**The Halkevi Centre,
Stoke Newington Road**

*instead of relying on politicians, leaders and 'experts'
to do things for us, we need to use collective
direct action. Membership open to all
workers/unemployed/unwaged people who
live or work in Hackney*

**What on earth is
humanism?**



For a free information pack and book list
about humanism, or non-religious funerals,
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