

FREEEDOM

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50p

Machiavellian calculations

NATO's war against Serbia will, we are told, herald a new era of 'humanitarian intervention'. Mistakes were made, but, for all that, with New Labour's George Robertson at the helm, the precision bombing, the aerial supremacy – all will be employed for the greater good of mankind.

None of this, of course, squares with the facts. President Clinton announced NATO's determination to commence bombing on 19th March. Air raids, though, did not commence until 24th March, allowing Milosevic five days to set in motion the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo. If the intention of NATO's

campaign was to aid the Kosovar Albanians then allowing Serbian paramilitaries to rampage through the province as the OSCE pulled out makes no sense. If, however, the campaign had some other purpose, then the welfare of the Kosovans was of little relevance. Kosovo is now a state where any notion of 'civil society' has been replaced by teams of UN administrators. Kosovan demands for self-determination were denied first by Serbia, and with the Peace Accords NATO has secured the suspension of democracy with the support of the KLA. Of course, if the point of intervention was not to save the Kosovans but, in fact, to suppress them, then NATO operations have been entirely successful. By 1998 the KLA's guerilla operations had begun to impact on the stability of the region. NATO intervention has secured a large chunk of the Balkans for US and European capital, the mass exodus of the Kosovan people facilitated the securing of the region by denying cover to the KLA campaign while K-FOR moved into place. The choices for the Balkan states have been made clear – either acquiesce to the determination of economic policy by the EEC, IMF and the World Bank (Croatia and Slovenia), or endure the neo-colonial status dealt out to Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo.

Writing as the NATO bombs began to fall, Peter Gowan observed that "a NATO 'victory' in this war could promote the Clinton administration's central objective in waging the war: the winning over of Western Europe's political systems to US leadership of the
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EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR



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Silly season, smart suits and the antiquarians

Last week the crime correspondent of *The Independent* ran a story which claimed that "a man in a suit ... called the shots in the City riot". Jason Bennetto, covering crime for *The Independent*, writes of the 18th June Carnival Against Capitalism that "throughout the disorder several activists are seen in suits as an apparent disguise".

This startling revelation has been uncovered by a team of sixty detectives from the City of London and Metropolitan police forces, who have been compiling evidence against the demonstrators. Critical to this is five thousand hours of film from cameras recording the demonstration.

Mr Bennetto's report says: "Special Branch intelligence claims to have uncovered a carefully orchestrated plan of attack for the riots in June [J18] which caused more than £1 million of damage to Europe's financial centre". He adds that the London riots "were paid for through a central fund using money obtained from suing the police, detectives believe".

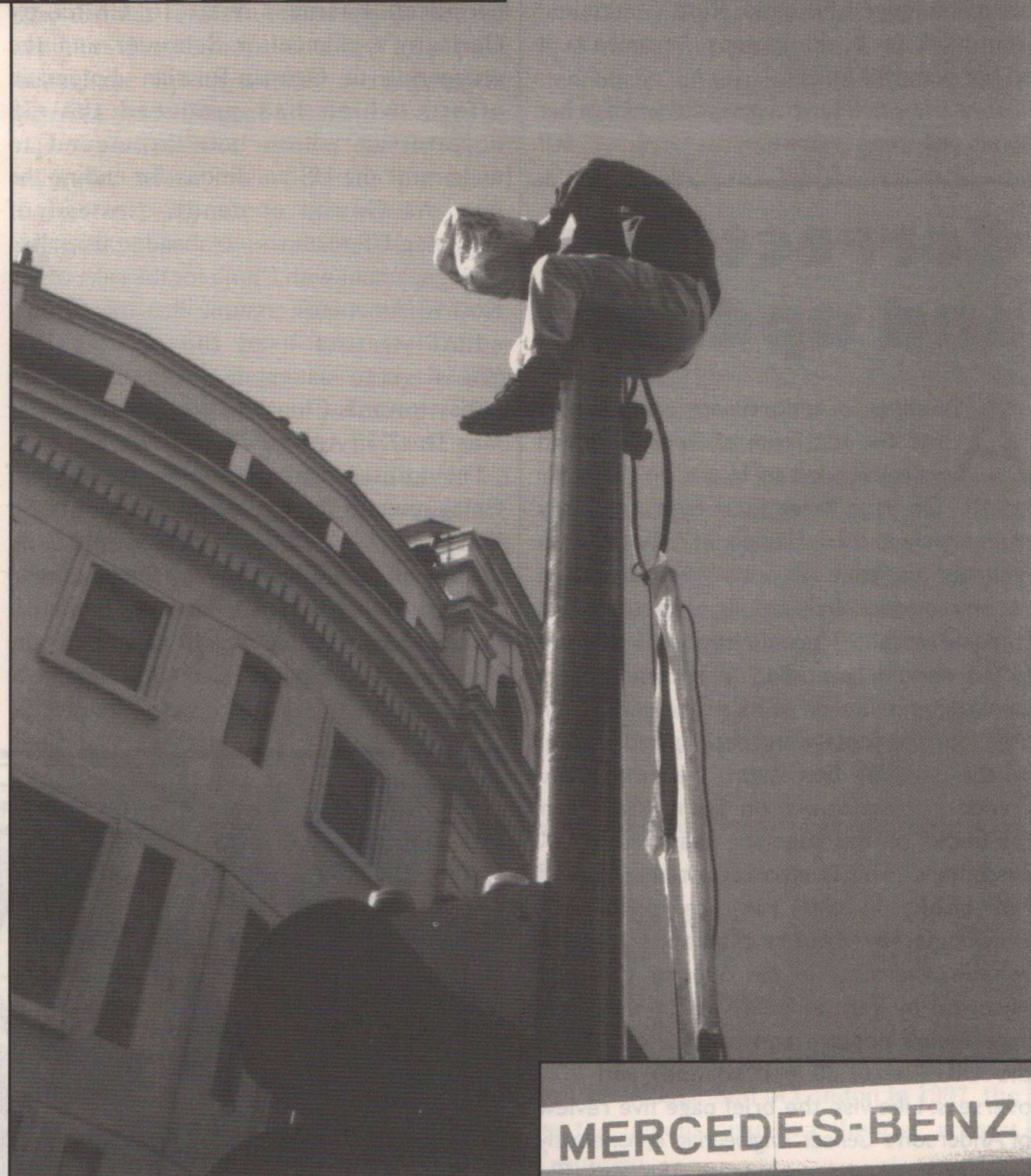
Perry Nove, City of London Commissioner, has said of the riots: "They reveal a level of sophistication and planning not seen before". Detective Chief Inspector Sharp claims that "there were people orchestrating violence from a distance. There were a number of people dressed in suits with mobile phones, but they were not City workers, they were organisers. There was one person organising things while standing behind the police lines".

Given that the police seemed to have been taken by surprise on 18th June and repeatedly failed to answer calls from distraught dealers at the London International Futures Exchange (LIFFE), one must wonder at the quality of the current police intelligence. A recent independent police report into police handling of the riots has criticised the City of London force for "indecisive action, poor judgement and inadequate communication". Indeed the London police were seemingly left with so much egg on their faces that it must now be tempting for them to invent a tribe of agents masquerading as City gents directing the operation of the Carnival Against Global Capitalism and feed it to the crime correspondents of the press during the so-called 'silly season'.

On 9th August *The Independent* ran the tale on its front page with a headline repeating a police claim that a "mystery millionaire helped fund London riot". Later the same week other newspapers took up the story.



Images from the Carnival Against Capitalism on 18th June.



Rioting in a 'rotten borough'

The Independent's crime correspondent did, in the interests of balance, reproduce a short statement from Reclaim the Streets, a group which called for the Carnival Against Capitalism, which declared that "the 'violence' on the day was ... a spontaneous eruption of dissatisfaction and anger at the ravages of capitalism".

The issue of what was 'spontaneous' and what was 'organised' in the protest is a difficult one. The columnist Nick Cohen in *The Observer*, who wrote a sympathetic article just after the riots, suggested that it was not a

mindless outburst but that some of the targets – like the Reed Agency – were just the kind of New Labour hangers-on that any self-respecting radical should be having a go at. The Reed Agency has been heavily involved in New Labour's 'New Deal' designed to

of action against Reed.

Mr Cohen's column presented the City of London as a 'rotten borough' par excellence, with the bankers, accountants and dealers who work there having more votes and more power than the people who actually live there.

Antiquarian left versus libertarian left

There is a danger in all this of promoting inconclusive demonstrations – the kind of thing that Ignazio Silone referred to in the 1930s in Italy and Germany when he warned of "the soapbox revolutionaries with their noisy and inconclusive rallies" that "endangered nothing but the streetlights and occasionally the bones of some policeman".

The 18th June Carnival Against Capitalism seemed to fall into this category less than most mainstream demos on the left these days, which often seem like demonstrations of political impotence. The 18th June action shook up the authorities in a way no other demo has since the poll tax protests. This has generally been admitted in the press and by the police.

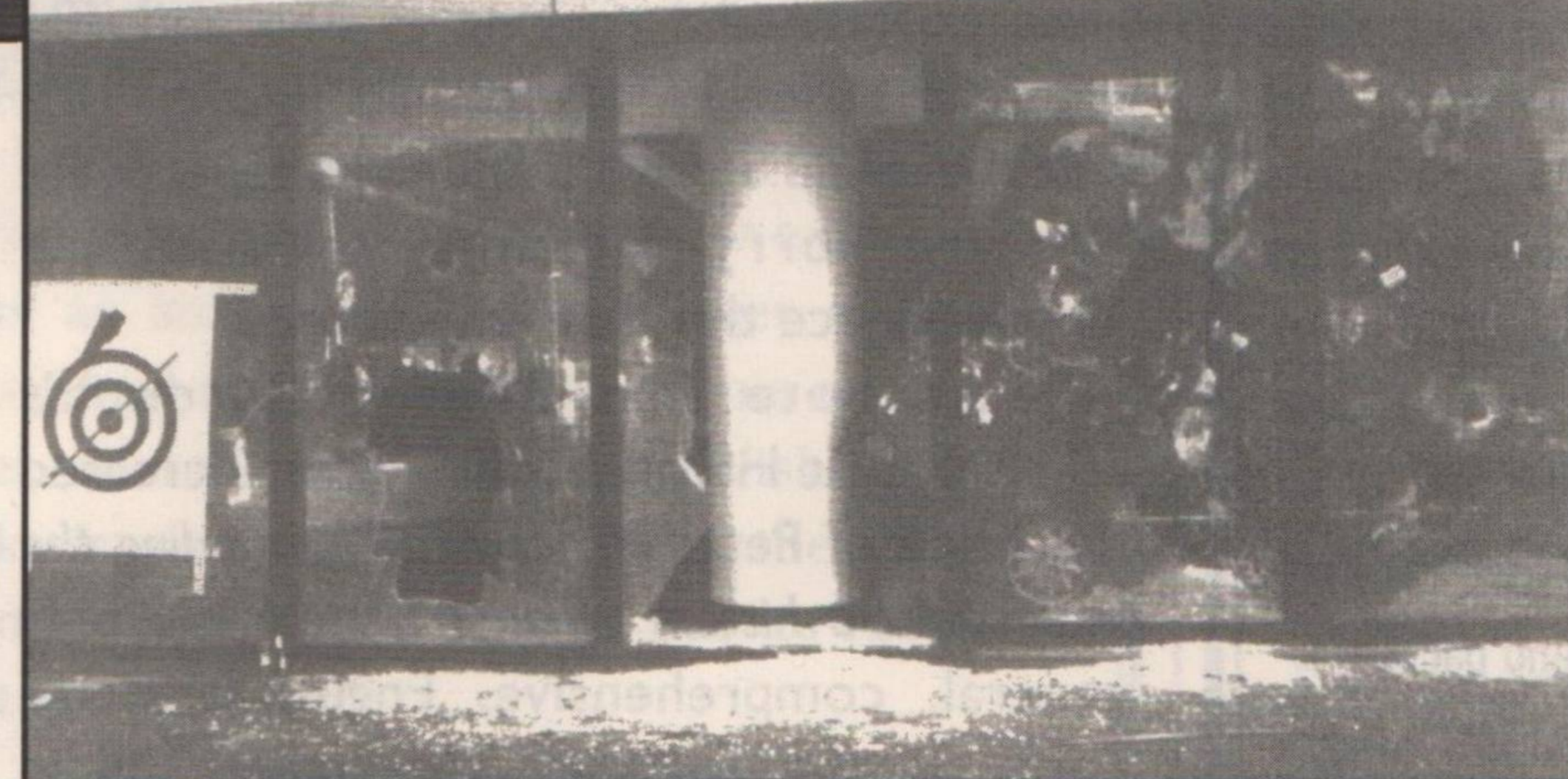
And yet the left generally, the antiquarian left, tended not to participate in the action and has since tried to ignore its consequences both for the authorities and for themselves. The problem of the antiquarian left in Britain, from the Socialist Workers Party through the communists and trotskysts to the Labour Party, is that they are overly formalistic, legalistic and conservative. They are like records with the needles stuck in a Cold War and Welfare State mentality.

These antiquarian elements have stood still while history and society is moving on and are in danger of being trampled. This happened before in the 1920s and 1930s when the socialists found themselves unable to counter the fascists in Italy and the Nazis in Germany. In 1939 Silone wrote: "The socialists were incapable of understanding the efficiency of fascist propaganda, because their doctrine had been formulated by Marx and Engels in the last century and hadn't progressed since then". He added that "Marx couldn't foresee the discoveries of modern psychology, nor the forms and political consequences of today's mass civilisation".

The antiquarian Marxist left and their hangers-on do not seem capable of grasping recent social developments in the way that sections of the libertarian left around movements like the Carnival Against Capitalism seem to have done.

Arturo Ui

MERCEDES-BENZ



force young people into cheap labour jobs. It has previously been a target of jobless activists up and down the country and Groundswell once had a day

photos by Jayne

— OBITUARY —

Veronica Keenan



Veronica Keenan at a Freedom editorial meeting on 8th May 1983.

Veronica Keenan has died suddenly from a brain haemorrhage, at the age of 46.

Veronica joined the *Freedom* group in the late 1970's. She had moved to London from the North East to work as a primary school teacher. She still had links with traces of her Roman Catholic upbringing. She then took up with the right sort of bad company.

Veronica was not short of opinions. However, despite having considerable literacy skills, she wrote little for the newspaper, her metier was verbal. She will be remembered by anybody who crossed her.

Veronica became a core member of the *Freedom* editorial group of the time. She

inherited the antique machine and stock of cards for subscribers, diligently churning out the labels for dispatch, all now computerised.

Veronica, above, sounds stodgy. You didn't know her. She and I co-hosted a number of parties that, to use a cliché, 'if you remember, you weren't there'.

Veronica kept up her involvement during the unfortunate divisions in the *Freedom* group in the mid 1980s, still cranking on the label machine. She then kept some distance. She had her much longed-for child, Ruth. She retired from work for health reasons. Veronica kept up her personal links.

Some of us will have a personal wake in her local pub next week. DP

(continued from page 8)

new, aggressive NATO. After all, the political elites of all the main parties of Western Europe now find themselves justifying, day-in and day-out, the vital necessity and enormous human value of the new NATO: Western Europe is being won to the idea that attacking damaged sovereign states is legitimate; shattering their military forces, infrastructures and economies is permissible; ignoring the UN charter and the checks built into the UN Security Council structure is unavoidable; marginalising and excluding a currently weak Russia is necessary ... And we Europeans could never have achieved all these things without the generous leadership of the United States" ('NATO's Balkan Tragedy' in *New Left Review*, no. 234, 1999).

Gowan has been, consistently, one of the most trenchant and prescient observers of the American government and business elites' attempts to entrench the United States as the "power that will control the major economic and political outcomes across the globe in the twenty first century". His new work, *The Global Gamble* (Verve, 1999), is a comprehensive indictment of the US post-Cold War global project. Recently, Gowan has speculated that the 'accidental' bombing of the Chinese embassy may have been entirely in line with US war aims. The embassy (at which US military attaches in Belgrade had dined in the recent past) was targeted by a plane on a special mission from the United States. The fall-out from the bombing included the cancellation of a proposed business visit to China by Germany's chancellor Schroder and the scuppering of German-Russian diplomatic efforts which had produced the G8 declaration which had threatened to undermine the US conditions for ending the war. As Gowan contends, "instead of assuming US readiness to abandon its policy of engagement with China for the sake of the Kosovo Albanians, assume that the Clinton administration used the war against Yugoslavia to inaugurate a new phase of its policy towards China" ('Whose Stupid War Was This?' in *Against The Current*, no. 81).

The military and economic strength of China remains the foreign policy priority for Washington. A 1995 Pentagon planning document details the benefits of appearing to potential enemies as 'out of control', irrational and vindictive. In this light, the bombing appears a somewhat unlikely 'accident'.

The US has, since 1991, used the unfolding Yugoslav crisis as a means of permanently disrupting Western European politics. Its agenda has been simply to ensure that Western Europe remained firmly subordinated to the NATO alliance under US leadership. In 1992-93 when the UN was trying to broker the Vance-Owen deal for a ten-province structure, reconstituting Bosnia as a demilitarised multi-ethnic state, the Clinton team pushed the Bosnian Muslims to hold out, even as the Serbs, with bloody efficiency, gained further territorial advantage. In his erudite, elegantly written autobiography, *Unvanquished* (I.B. Tauris, 1999) former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali provides some insight into the unseemly wranglings which took place: "An explanation was provided by a current Washington joke: 'What's worse than the Bosnians saying no? The Bosnians saying yes', because that would require the United States to put American soldiers on the ground to implement the agreement. Clinton had constructed a double bind for himself. On the one hand, he would block efforts to reach a peace agreement because such an agreement would mean sending American troops to Bosnia to implement it. On the other hand, he would reject proposals to pull the United Nations out of its impossible Bosnian situation because such an emergency evacuation – a 'Dunkirk' as some termed it – would require American troops to make it succeed". Boutros-Ghali notes "To the world outside the United States, the Clinton administration's approach made sense only as the product of some obscure Machiavellian calculation". The US's main aim was to frustrate EC and German positions at the UN – the appalling conflict which engulfed Bosnia was entirely the result of the US strategy of using Yugoslav developments to further US aims in Europe. The consequences? "First, the biggest nation in the Yugoslav arena, the Serbs, had their national rights trampled underfoot by the Western powers. This meant that they would rally to Milosevic's Serbian government as their protector ... The second consequence was that Yugoslavia's fourth biggest nation, the Kosovo and Macedonia Albanians, with their own aspirations to freedom and unity, were also left in the hands of a Serb nation enraged by Western disregard for their rights, in a Serb state with over 600,000 Serb refugees, ethnically cleansed by action under NATO leadership in the last stages of the

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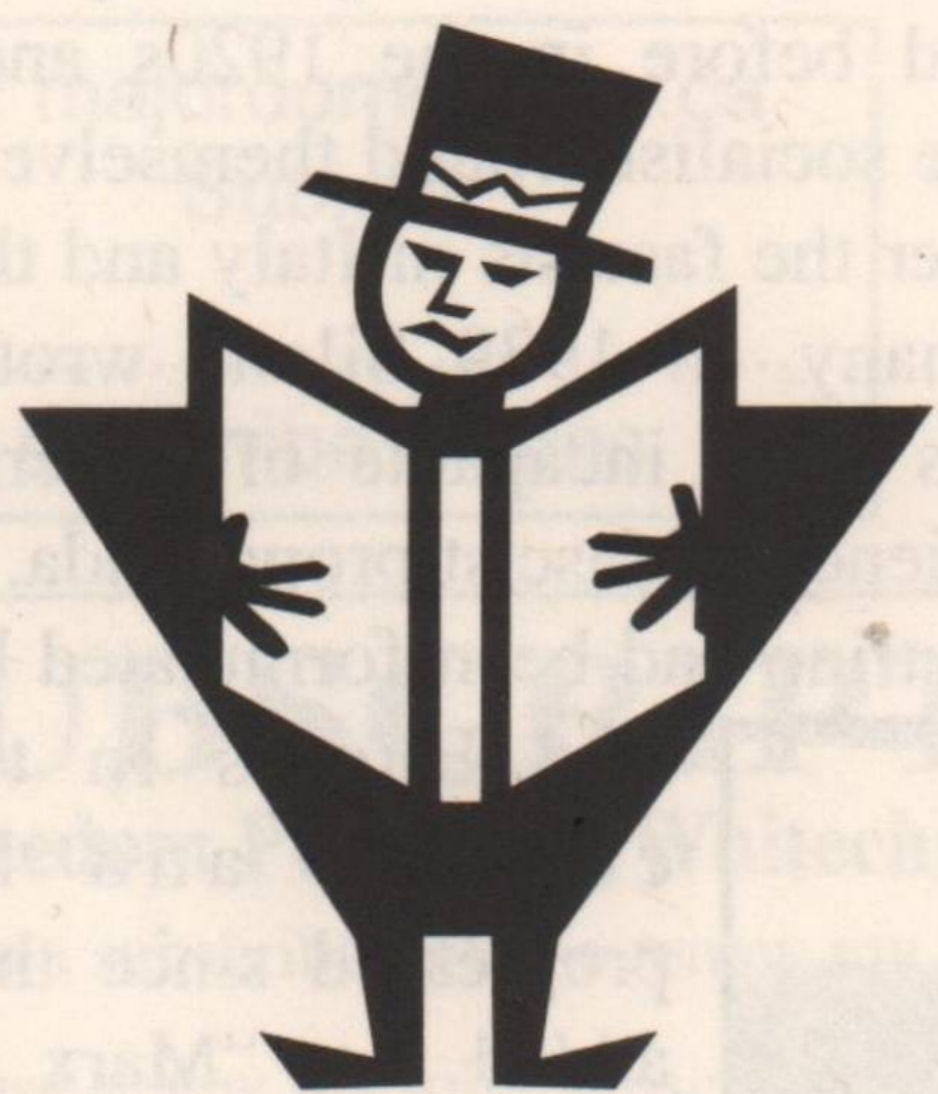
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Corrections and updates

A number of unfortunate errors crept into the last issue of *Freedom*, which we've decided to blame on the solar eclipse. On page three Four Eyes' summary of an article in *Black Flag* no. 217 about *Green Anarchist* magazine described the piece as "a recommended, painstaking repetition of [Green Anarchist's] 'primitivism' ..." when in fact it should have read "a recommended, painstaking refutation of its 'primitivism'". On page four the postage and packing information in the vertical box listing recommended Freedom Press books on Spain states that "all books on this page are post-free to UK customers". This is incorrect. It should read "all books in this box are post-free". Unfortunately Robert Alexander's two-volume *Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War* reviewed by Vernon Richards on the same page incurs postage and packing of 10% in the UK (i.e. £1.70 per volume) and 20% overseas. Likewise the brief page five review of Anderson's *Genetic Engineering* erroneously gives postage and packing as 35p and 70p whereas, as every schoolchild knows, 10% and 20% of £3.95 is 40p and 80p respectively. We are sorry for any confusion or inconvenience this may have caused.

Please note that Rupert Murdoch's lickspittles at Harper Collins have increased the price of Peter Marshall's *Demanding the Impossible: a history of anarchism* – the only general, comprehensive, English-language book on the anarchist movement still in print – to £14.99, effective immediately (postage and packing £1.50 UK, £3 overseas). Send your opinion on a postcard to the Dirty Digger himself, not to us

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(continued from page 2)

Bosnian war" (Gowan, 'The NATO Powers and the Balkan Tragedy' in *New Left Review* no. 234).

Boutros-Ghali's autobiography details the disillusioning of a man who saw himself as "of the third world ... but also pro-West". Boutros-Ghali believed in the mission of the United Nations to "achieve what humanity has sought since civilisation began: a means for all people to reason together, to search for common ways to maintain security, and to act together to deliver mercy, defend freedom and pursue justice and progress for a better life ahead". He still holds out the hope of a UN as "the main voice of the weakest and least regarded peoples", but *Unvanquished* reveals repeatedly why this hope is so often abandoned. Boutros-Ghali remarks of US Secretary of State Madeline Albright: "She seemed to assume that her mere assertion of a US policy should be sufficient to achieve the support of all other nations". The US defied the entire Security Council to veto Boutros-Ghali's election to a second term as UN Secretary General. *Unvanquished* indicts the US for undermining UN initiatives whenever they failed to coincide with US interests - thus UN peace-keeping was supported by the US only as a means of 'sub-contracting' American foreign policy. He details at length the Clinton administration's duplicity over Somalia, and quotes, with obvious distaste "Secretary of State [Warren] Christopher's [1993] speech [which] called multilateralism a means, not an end, and warranted only when it served the central purpose of American foreign policy. If the United States displayed a willingness to act alone, Christopher said, that fact itself would 'generate effective multilateral responsibility'."

Boutros-Ghali's account of US-UN relations is unflinching; as he recounts the debacles of Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda and Haiti he holds on to his faith that the UN should "look out for those marginalised because of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, health, poverty" but recognises a greater truth; that the UN will only fulfil such role as "the United States allows it to do so".

On taking up office, Boutros-Ghali recounts an old Egyptian joke from World War Two: "A British soldier in Alexandria says to his commanding officer, 'Sir, I saw two wogs walking along the beach'. The officer replies 'That was King Farouk and his security guard'. The soldier corrects himself: 'Sir, I saw King Farouk walking with another wog'. I had made my 'wog' comment with a smile". By the end, Boutros-Ghali's smile has gone.

With Kosovo now in effect a NATO protectorate, the US having proved it could circumvent the UN and still force the UN to stay on side, the focus of the game has shifted. North Korea's desperate sabre-rattling, and China's verbal battles with Taiwan are being used as justification for joint US/Japan development of a theatre missile defence system, as the US seeks to drive a wedge between China and Europe. Remembering the ruins of the Chinese embassy, we should beware the US's attempts at developing a strategy of tension in the Pacific.

The duplicity practised in the wars of position between European and US capital left thousands dead in the Balkans. The pursuit of justice and progress so dear to Boutros-Ghali has been sacrificed to US-European hegemony. As he puts it, "I recalled what a Hindu scholar once said to me: there is no difference between diplomacy and deception".

Nick S.

After an eighteen year stand-off by squatters ...

121 Centre closed

In a dawn raid on Thursday 12th August six bailiffs, assisted by a specialist armed police force, stormed the 121 Centre in Brixton's Railton Road shortly after 6.30am and removed the seven remaining illegal occupants.

The 121 Centre has been a successful advice centre, café, party venue and printing office for a number of years.

Lambeth Council has previously attempted to evict the occupants of the 121 Centre on a number of occasions. At the last attempt police were met by nearly seventy protesters who blocked the road and set up barricades inside the building. But this time the council had prepared themselves for a fight, with more than 150 police officers standing by.

Lambeth Council leader Jim Dickson, who was once the victim of an office raid when thirty protesters from the 121 Centre stormed his council room, said "We are systematically clearing up the borough and dealing with the legacy of the past. Our action today sends out a very clear message to the squatters - the council will keep taking action over squatted property until there is none left".

An extremely efficient campaign had been organised by occupants of the 121 Centre from the inside of the three-storey building, with the use of a website and newsletter circulated among supporters. An emergency siren and internal defences were also used.

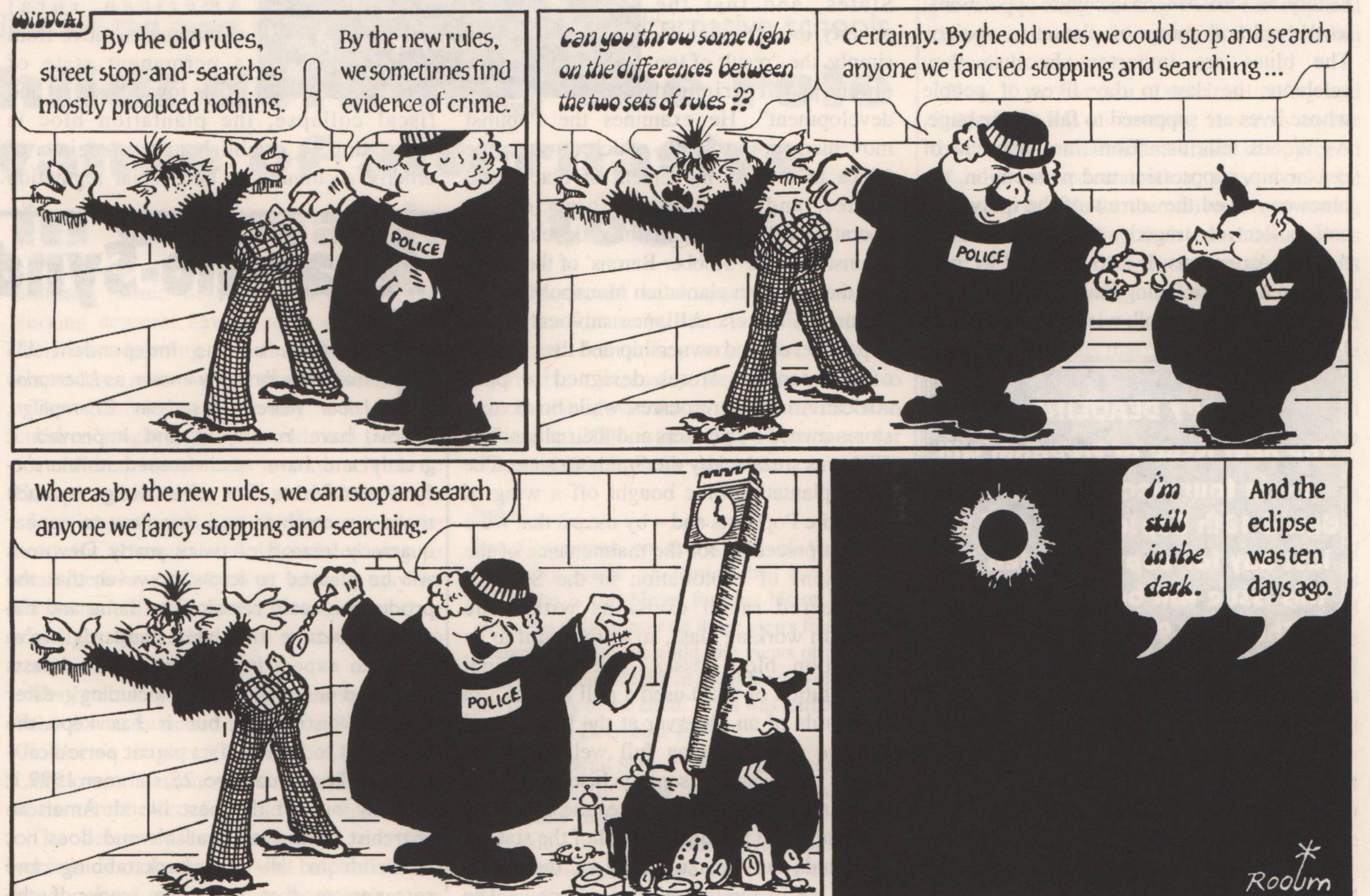
Chief Inspector Martin Bagg said that when the bailiffs, with the specialist unit, entered the building through windows on the upper floors on 12th August, they met with no resistance. A Lambeth

Scenes from the eviction at the 121 Centre in Brixton, London, on 12th August



One of the squatters, Tom, said that residents had become disillusioned with efforts to keep the centre open since the police attempted their last eviction in February. "It was so aggressive and people just kind of gave up. But they won't be able to secure the building and people will try and enter it again". Describing Thursday's raid, Tom said: "They forced us out of the building. There seemed to be two groups and the first one came through the windows on the second floor. They did not even let us put our shoes on".

The building will be sold at auction.

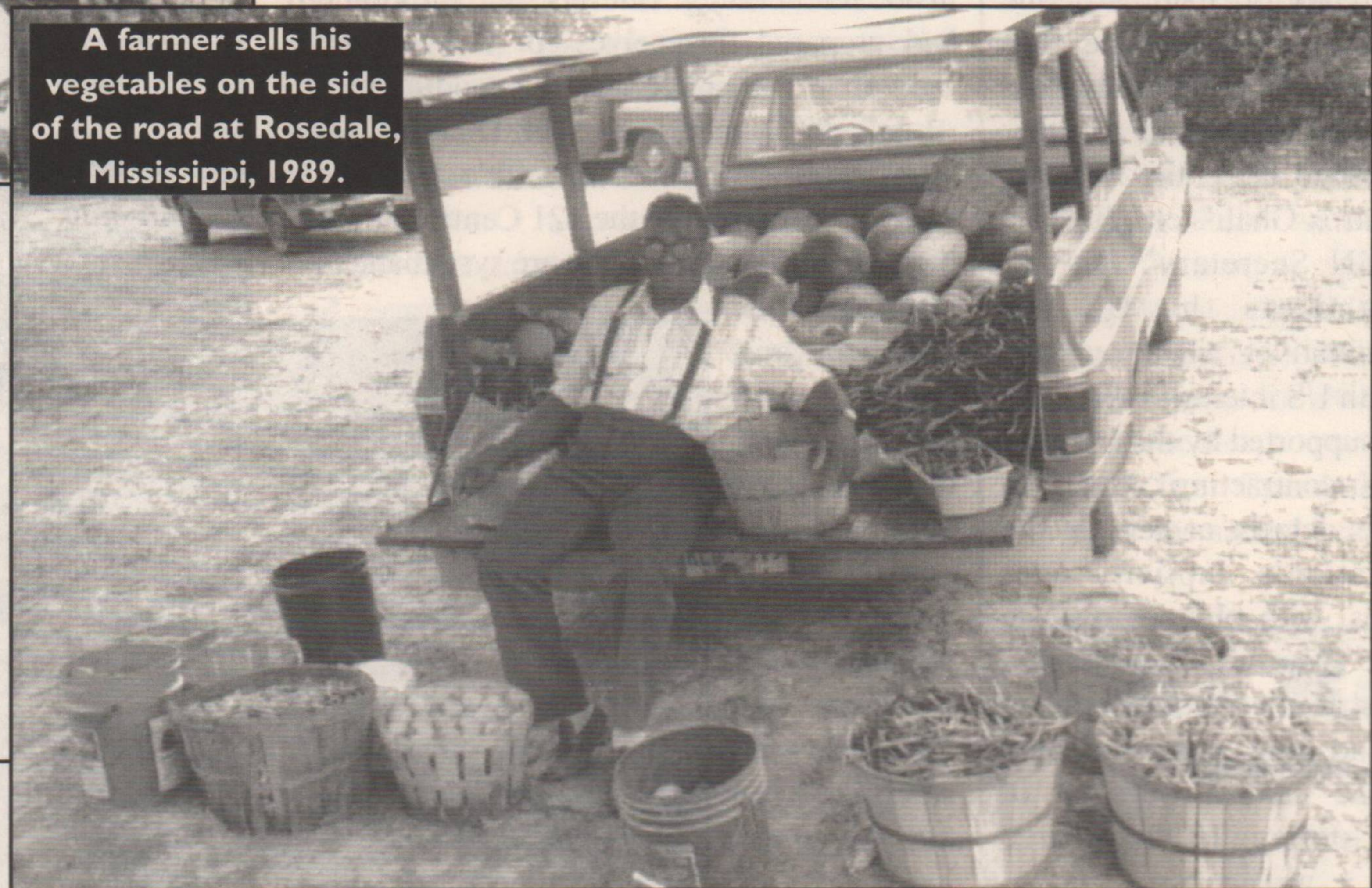


Development Arrested

Picking cotton for \$1 a day in a field near Cleveland, Mississippi, in 1949.



A farmer sells his vegetables on the side of the road at Rosedale, Mississippi, 1989.



Development Arrested
by Clyde Woods
published by Verso

Clyde Wood's book presents a history of working class struggle in the Mississippi Delta, of the development of "Black working class consciousness, pride and resiliency" in the face of the consistent marshalling of oppression by the region's plantation-based ruling class. What makes *Development Arrested* significant, though, is not simply its representation of ordinary people making their own history in defiance of the plantation bloc, but the respect Woods displays to the forging of Afro-American working class culture in the region – the establishment of a 'blues perspective' as a distinct voice for the Delta poor. "The blues perspective emerged among the two generations that witnessed the overthrow of slavery, ten years of freedom, the overthrow of Reconstruction and the beginning of ninety five years of what has been called the 'Second Slavery', namely disenfranchisement, debt peonage, Jim Crow, and legally sanctioned official and private terrorism". Woods is concerned throughout to show how forms of resistance were established and how the blues developed as a distinct perspective, a critical commentary upon the unfolding of history, an Afro-American culture oppositional to the cultural forms of plantation society. The blues are important because they celebrate the day to day lives of people whose lives are supposed to fall off the page. As Woods tells us: "Born in a new era of censorship, suppression and persecution, the blues conveyed the sorrow of the individual and collective tragedy that had befallen African Americans. It also operated to instil pride in a people facing daily denigration, as well as channelling folk wisdom, descriptions

of life and labour, travelogues, hoodoo, and critiques of individuals and institutions ... The men and women who performed the blues were sociologists, reporters, counsellors, advocates, preservers of language and customs, and summoners of life, love, laughter and much, much more."

The Lower Mississippi Delta region is the poorest and most heavily African American region in the United States. It is "a centre of tragedy and schism; of extreme levels of poverty and wealth; and of historic movements of repression and freedom". Contrary to arguments as to the region's 'backwardness', Woods contends that the super-exploitation of labour by the plantation class was central to the development of capitalism in the United States, and that the poverty in the region is, simply, the "result of too much profit oriented development". He examines the Populist movement in the South, which arose in the 1880s as a mass movement of blacks and whites, and championed forms of co-operatively based community development against both the 'Robber Barons' of the North and the Southern plantation monopolists. The Colored Farmers Alliance advocated the expansion of land ownership and the creation of co-operative stores designed to pool African American resources, while boycotting stores owned by planters and their allies. The CFA was smashed by the Southern state. The Delta plantation bloc bought off a wing of the white Populists and – by means that were to set a precedent for the maintenance of the conditions of exploitation in the South – engineered racial divisions within the southern working class, so as to wed it to its plantation bloc bosses. The Mississippi Constitution of 1890 used a poll tax "as", in the words of an observer at the time, "their *sin qua non*, knowing full well that as a means of Negro disenfranchisement it is worth all the rest ... It reduces the electorate and places the political control of the state in the hands not of a minority of the voters alone, but of the minority of whites ... The

poll tax gets rid of most of the Negro votes there, but it gets rid of a great many whites at the same time – in fact the majority of them."

Woods' book details the battles of the poor, black working class from this point on to establish their own interests against the plantation bloc's racist status quo. Martin Luther King once observed that Black Mississippians were dominated by "white power in its most brutal, cold blooded and vicious form". What makes *Development Arrested* so inspiring lies in part in its examination of the courage and resourcefulness deployed by African American workers in resisting the imposition

... secured, in part, by ethnic warfare". Any hope of opposing this agenda can only come through the continuation of the struggles Woods describes, "the development agenda of the Union Leagues, the Colored Farmers Alliance, the Progressive Farmers and Household Alliance, the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, Fannie Lou Hamer and the millions of souls whose lives and consciousness have been shaped by Southern trials and travails".

Development Arrested is a work of committed, genuinely radical scholarship. It is rare to encounter a work which celebrates the way in which working class culture supports and sustains both the survival and progress of working class communities. Too often middle class 'radicals' dismiss working class cultures as worthless, without admitting that their alienation from such cultures is a reflection of the alienation most working people feel when faced with the

of that brutality in every aspect of their daily lives.

As to today, Woods quotes Doris Barnette of the Alabama Department of Public Health as stating that the Mississippi Delta has become "a living corpse, a museum of medical and social horrors that attracts both missionaries and poverty professionals as tourists". He describes how "as many African American rural communities move from a permanent state of crisis towards social and fiscal collapse, the plantation bloc is attempting to establish a new regime of orderly accumulation and social regulation

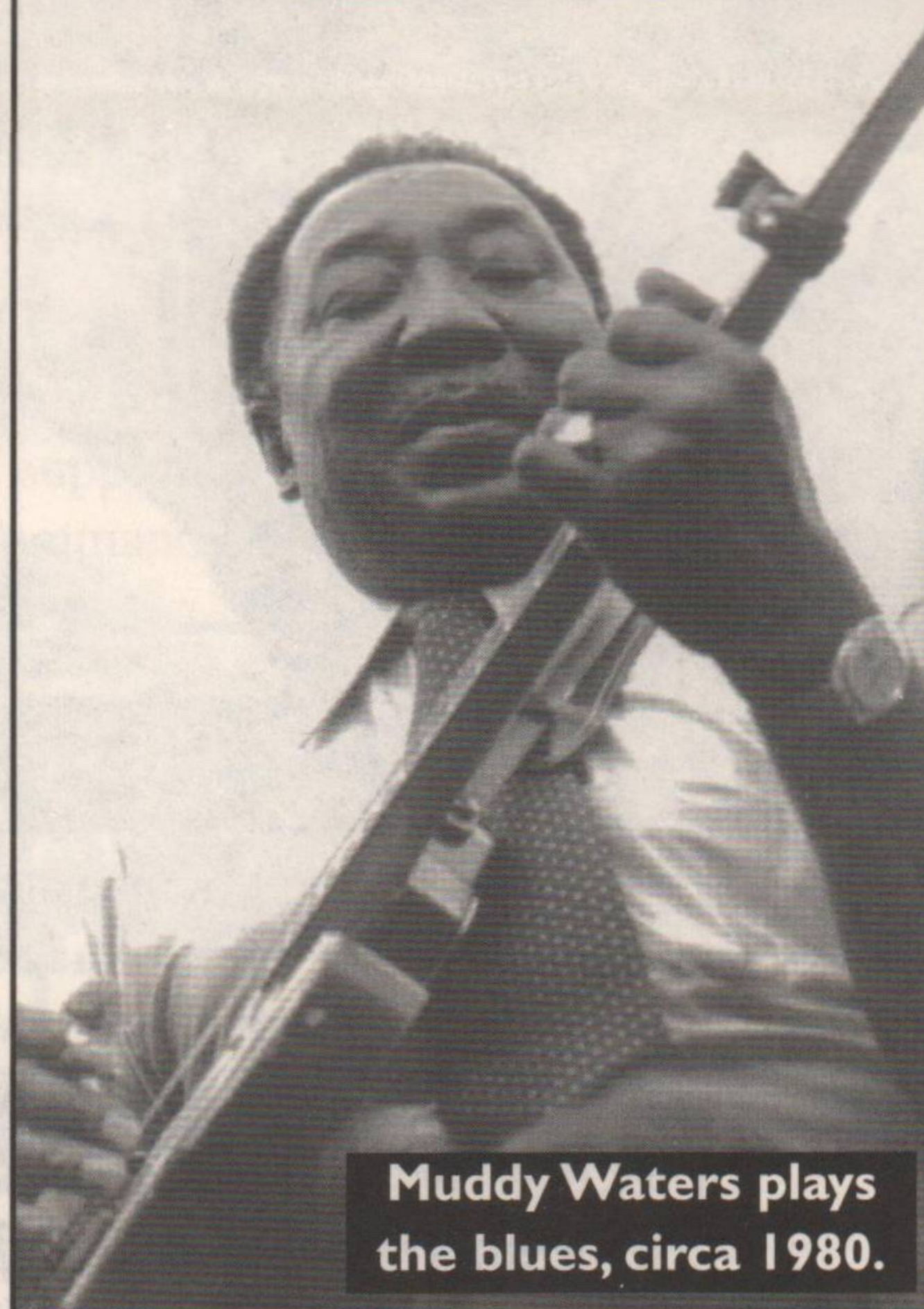
cultural apparatus of a society that denies them any place save as cheap labour. Woods refuses to play this game. As he says, "the civilising, even imperial thrust of certain middle class segments towards Black working class thoughts and practices is a problem that is more pressing than any other ... Not only is working class African American culture not broken or deviant, it is a powerful world culture held together, and expanded by repeated blues movements."

Creating our own history involves us in creating our own culture. Anyone who wishes, as Woods does, "to build a society where working class knowledge and participatory democracy are truly treasured" should read this book.

Nick S

A limited number of copies of *Development Arrested* can be obtained from Freedom Press at the reduced price of £10 per copy (plus p&p 10% UK, 20% elsewhere).

Muddy Waters plays the blues, circa 1980.



Anarcho-Syndicalist Review

The folks at the independent US magazine formerly known as *Libertarian Labor Review*, based in Champaign, Illinois, have revamped and improved it greatly and have re-christened it *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review*. The cover design is much more eye-catching, and it is now to appear quarterly instead of twice yearly. Devotees will be pleased to know, however, that the production team remains the same and the content retains the high standards we've come to expect from them. It now boasts improved design and layout, including greater use of illustrations, but it has kept the numerical sequence of its parent periodical – thus this first issue is no. 25, summer 1999. It is easily one of the best North American anarchist periodicals available and does not suffer from all the backstabbing and sectarianism that dominate many of the

others. The small price increase to £2.95 is amply justified. It continues in its previous format and runs to 34 pages.

Lack of time prevents a full exploration of this issue, but most important is the first instalment of a major interview with Noam Chomsky, where he is given the space to reply to his critics who saw his comments about the state in 1996 as a sell-out. Was there a genuine basis to those criticisms or were they merely ill-considered knee-jerk reactions? *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review* is one of the few publications that has bothered to ask Chomsky for clarification. The interview will be continued in the next issue, along with editorial and readers' responses. Numbers 23 and 24 of *Libertarian Labor Review* are still available from the bookshop at £2.50 each.

KM

— COPY DEADLINE —

The next issue of *Freedom* will be in four weeks. It will be dated 18th September, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 9th September.



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).

— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

Slippery schooling issues

Summerhill School at Leiston, Suffolk, has made the front page story in our regional daily paper, *The East Anglian Daily Times*, several times in the last month. It's the school started by A.S. Neill in 1921 and survives today with as principal his daughter Zoe Readhead, who was recently told by the government that the school must be closed unless it meets the standards required by the Education Act of 1996.

When school pupils demonstrated in London last month, support came from the local MP John Gummer, an unloved minister in recent Conservative governments, who talked to the Labour government's Education Secretary David Blunkett, about the issues involved. The issue for Gummer was that "although the style of education offered at Summerhill school is not one I would choose for my own children, parents should have the right to opt for it". Zoe Readhead remarked that "this is a school that has been inspected every year since 1990 and we are feeling battered and bruised".

Indeed the creeping totalitarianism of the management of education has made the issue not one of freedom in education, but of freedom to follow a different pattern from the utilitarian vision of Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) and what the *Times Educational Supplement* calls "the fearsome figure of Chief Inspector Chris Woodhead". Our own pursuit of a particular vision of education becomes subordinate to our need to oppose current trends.

A neighbour told me recently that at her daughter's primary school in Ipswich, the need to introduce more maths teaching time had resulted in the abandonment of the weekly swimming lesson at the public baths. As she put it, "I would prefer her to be a better swimmer than a better mathematician".

Meanwhile a researcher into anarchist theories of education writes to me to complain that "they're a slippery bunch, these anarchists" because she finds a whole series of anarchist theories, which, however, share some common features. She lists these as:



THE pupils of Suffolk's famous Summerhill School have taken the fight to save their school to the streets of London. Joined by parents and staff, about 100 campaigners marched on Downing Street yesterday in a bid to save the closure-threatened Leiston institution. Education Secretary David Blunkett says Summerhill is failing pupils - with its freedom-of-choice principles allowing them to skip lessons and make up school rules. But supporters say the democratic ideals of freedom of choice and expression which the school symbolises must be preserved. Full story and pictures - Pages 6 & 7

From the front page of the *East Anglian Daily Times*, Thursday 15th July 1999.

1. The absence of coercion from the educational process;
2. Belief in the child's 'natural' motivation to learn and insistence on a pedagogy which draws on this;
3. Concern about the child's capacity to resist an ideology imposed by the school;
4. Education of the 'whole child'.

And she raises with me a specific question "in a pluralistic society, if one takes seriously the idea of letting people run their own lives, what would be the anarchist response to communities/people choosing, for example, to educate their children in an oppressive/religious/fundamentalist/totalitarian manner ... or, at the other end of the spectrum, if such autonomously-run communities were to naturally choose and develop a system

resembling something like a parliamentary democracy, would this be objectionable from an anarchist perspective?"

The first of these questions is a live issue here and now. Whether we want to or not, and whether or not we use it, we all pay through taxation for the school system. The rich also pay for expensive private schools. In the absence of an anarchist revolution many of us would like to see the freedom of choice for all approached by some other countries. Fiona Carnie in her excellent chapter on 'Education on a human scale' in the book *Richer Futures* (edited by Ken Worpole, Earthscan, 1999), describes how in the Netherlands a variety of schools are financed on the same basis as state schools "with the effect that 70% of children attend what are known as 'private' schools, but

which are in fact publicly funded". She explains that "in Denmark any group of twelve parents wishing to set up a school will receive 85% of the necessary funds from the state". And she turns to the theme raised by my correspondent: "The question of whether faith schools should receive state funding is a major issue in the debate about diversity. In January 1998 two Muslim schools became part of the English state system amidst much media coverage and public discussion. As a human rights issue, the decision to publicly fund these schools is long overdue. In a system which finances Protestant, Catholic and some Jewish schools, it is essential that Muslim schools are funded too, if there is sufficient parental demand, as a matter of justice. Either we should have no state funded religious schools at all (as in France) or give the same rights to different groups of parents, as long as they fulfil the required criteria for state funding which these Muslim schools have done ..."

Now if we lived in a stateless society and funded schools differently, it seems to me that, however much anarchists disapproved of religious indoctrination, they would be laying up trouble for themselves in preventing parents from putting their educational ideas into effect. Fiona Carnie argues that schools associated with religious faiths will continue to exist whether or not they receive state funding, and adds that "it is surely preferable from the children's standpoint that they are part of the system rather than outside it and are thus subject to inspection and required to meet certain standards".

This is where anarchists would part company with her. In the age of control-obsessed governments like that of Thatcher/Major and that of Blair, school inspectors have changed like everything else. Neill used to have friendly arguments with the Inspectorate and would publish the HMI reports in his books about the school. But as his daughter found, you can't have a discussion with the hard men of Ofsted.

What can we say as anarchists, except that in an anarchist society school inspection would be undertaken by children for the Consumers' Association?

Colin Ward

The World came to Summerhill – for the most important conference for alternative schools

The Free Child: defining the role and relevance of alternative schools in education today

Teachers, students and principals came from all over the world to attend the international conference on alternative schools at Summerhill from 23rd to 26th July. Headteachers came from Japan, Bethlehem (Hope Flowers School), Canada (Free School) and New Zealand (Tamariki). Staff and students represented schools from Greece, Israel (Haddera), France, Poland and America. Other people attending came from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain and Costa Rica. Many of these schools are democratic. Organisations represented include the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools, the Alternative Education Resource Organisation, and Education Otherwise.

This was the most important and largest international meeting of representatives of alternative education in Britain. Delegates shared their experiences of their relationships with state school systems and governments. All the schools are based on the principle that

children should be free from authority in varying degrees, having some control over their own learning and that they have an empowered voice within their communities.

The conference had key debates on children's rights, mental health and freedom for children, democracy in state schools in Europe, children's views of democratic education, education of the future, and the need for alternative models of learning. It examined how alternative schools may be threatened, like Summerhill, and how they can fight back and positively contribute to state education.

The International Conference at Summerhill School was launched by the Director of the Children's Rights Office (UN), Gerison Lansdown. Gerison sees Summerhill as one of the torchbearers for children's rights.

The delegates ran workshops on their schools. Four documents will be published: a handbook of guidelines on how alternative

schools should be inspected; a book of resources for use by state schools exploring ideas of democracy and education; an alternative *Citizenship Report* to submit to the British government for its curriculum review in 2000; statements of support for Summerhill's fight for survival.

Notes:

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12, states: "1. Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child." This was ratified by the UK on 16th December 1991.

The Summerhill School General Policy Statement states: "5. To allow children to live in a community that supports them and that they are responsible for, in which they have the freedom to be themselves, and have the power to change community life, through the democratic process."

— COLOMBIA —

May Day in Medellin, 1999

What follows is a first-hand report by a libertarian from Medellin of this year's May Day march and rally in Medellin, Colombia. Local press reports noted that the march has followed a similar pattern for the last five years, stating that it was 'infiltrated' by 'rebellious young people' and that this time round 'the intense heat and length of the speeches at the start caused bad feeling among some demonstrators', resulting in 'unknown persons' disconnecting the sound system of the speakers and thus sabotaging the final rally. The CAP mentioned in the report are a relatively new and independent urban militia group operating in the city who profess a marxist-leninist ideology and sympathy for the national guerrilla movement (FARC/ELN) while remaining outside their structures. They grew out of the generalised militias movement of the '80s in poor neighbourhoods, which span off in different directions in the '90s.

Jake Lagnado



It was all supposed to start at 8.30am, but when we arrived we could already feel a heavy atmosphere building up because of the speechmaking by local union bureaucrats

which held up the start of the march for at least an hour. In any case there was a real air of combativity: the young supporters of the CAP (People's Armed Commandos) were

there all masked up, which gave the march a wonderful whiff of insurrection about it. Apart from that propaganda from many different groups was in circulation, including a leaflet celebrating another anniversary of an urban militia training school in one of the city's high up neighbourhoods.

From the start the police weren't feeling too friendly, and the CAP gave them what they wanted – a chorus of small incendiary devices which began to upset them. Further along upon passing the main police station the bombardment intensified complete with stones as well. The atmosphere was really charged because a few blocks back the police had cordoned off a major department store as if it belonged to them, and thus laid bare their contradictions. Someone then had the brilliant idea not to throw stones at the police and incendiary devices at the buildings, but incendiary devices at the buildings and stones at the windows of all the business premises. Clashes between the demonstrators and police became more frequent as the march continued, with police baton attacks showering down.

The atmosphere of the last few days had fired people up, because parliament was about to approve the so-called 'National Development Plan', which proposes amongst other things to make the state universities financially self-sufficient. In other words the government intends to withdraw its subsidy from the state universities through what it calls a 'fiscal austerity plan' aimed at reducing state expenditure. The funny thing is they don't try and reduce state expenditure by cutting back on the political tourist trips made by the President and his henchmen, but by charging the workers themselves the cost of the economic chaos which capital itself

has created.

The clashes reached their climax at Berrio Park, where the march was supposed to end, with endless baton attacks (of which I had a taste), petards being thrown and happy tunes being sung to the police – 'The police are also exploited / that's why they march alongside us!', 'murderers!', 'Only son of a bitches become policemen!', 'slaves!', etc.

Basically there was a festive atmosphere which ended with who knows how many injured, disappeared or even dead demonstrators. And now calm has returned: the *autodefensas* (name which the paramilitaries call themselves) groups kidnap, disappear and kill people, the guerrillas kidnap, make propaganda and strengthen their authoritarian military structure, the army is upset – more than half of its top brass resigned in solidarity with the Minister of Defence and then went back to work in exchange for who knows what perks, the president keeps travelling and has just come back from Canada, etc. Welcome to the country of the sacred heart of Jesus.

Don Vito

The Raven Number 37



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— RUSSIA —

No mercy for anarchists in Krasnodar

On 20th July Pervomaysky district court in Krasnodar, South Russia, finally made a ruling concerning the case of anarchists arrested several months ago. The prison sentence for two of the anarchists was unexpectedly harsh, especially because one of them, a woman now eight months pregnant, is subject to amnesty which is valid until the end of the year.

By the end of the investigation (end of May) the situation for the three arrested people – Maria Randina, Larisa Schiptsova and Gennady Nepshikuyev – seemed to be improving. Charges against Maria Randina were dropped and she became a witness, not an accused, in this case. All of the three arrested were freed from prison until the court hearings. The investigators failed to present charges of establishing a criminal group and terrorism, it was obvious that the 'case' is likely to be ruined in court due to lack of evidence other than Nepshikuyev's statements. Larisa Schiptsova and Gennady Nepshikuyev were facing charges of possession and transportation of explosives, Schiptsova was also charged with possession of cannabis.

At the same time all pledges to free Schiptsova from FSB (ex-KGB) prison were ignored, in spite of the fact that she is now

eight months pregnant. Her lawyer, Stanislav Markelov, attracted too much interest from the FSB – he was illegally spied on (and tapes were incorporated into the materials of the investigation – rather normal violation of the law, by Russian standards). On 28th June he was also interrogated in Moscow by FSB officers concerning the bombing of FSB offices in April this year.

On 12th July the court hearings started in Krasnodar. The prosecutor asked for six years of imprisonment for Schiptsova and seven years for Nepshikuyev, but the lawyers of the accused were hoping to get a softer sentence and get amnesty for Larisa due to her pregnancy. The court failed to listen to all of the witnesses, while the main witness – Maria Randina – retracted her earlier testimonies and denied that it was Larisa who gave her the explosive device. The court took a break on 14th July only to hear Larisa's last statement and announce its verdict on 20th July. Pledges for amnesty were refused by the court, contrary to the regulations of the amnesty bill which is valid until December this year.

On 20th July the court announced its ruling – four years of imprisonment in a prison camp for Larisa Schiptsova and three years for Gennady Nepshikuyev, no amnesty or

postponement of the sentence is provided. Lawyers plan to make an appeal against the ruling of the court in the next few days, meanwhile a press conference is being organised.

The prison sentence for Schiptsova Nepshikuyev was announced the same day as the notorious Russian journalist Grigory Pasko was freed from KGB prison in Vladivostok. The two cases were very similar in some respects, namely the fact that the KGB was trying to charge the accused with serious crimes ('terrorism' in the case of the Krasnodar Three, and 'betrayal of the country' in case of Pasko for reporting information on nuclear waste in the Russian Pacific Navy), but failed to present these charges in court. Nevertheless, once captured and imprisoned, the accused didn't have much chance of being acquitted – KGB and the procurator's office never admit 'mistakes' and instead present weaker charges and a softer sentence. Pasko was charged with violations of his responsibilities, sentenced to three years, amnestied and freed. He also had the fortune of having public opinion on his side and extensive media coverage. The anarchists arrested in Krasnodar made it into newspapers and on television programmes to

a much lesser extent, and mainly at the time of the opening of the trial. Not a single nationwide paper reported the court ruling the next day after it was pronounced (21st July), and that means that the people campaigning on their behalf should put an extra effort into making the public know about the unjust prison sentence.

It is urgent that another wave of letters of protest floods into the offices of the bureaucrats and executioners. Please, send letters of protest to:

Krasnodar regional procurator, A.N. Shkrebets
Fax (7-8612) 68-30-95

Krasnodar governor, Nikolai I. Kondratenko
Fax (7-8612) 68-35-82, 68-45-38
Tel (7-8612) 62-57-16

Mail to: 350014, Russia, Krasnodar, ul.Krasnaya, d.35
E-mail: admkuban@m400.krasnodar.ru

You can also protest outside the Russian consulates in your own countries to let the official Russian authorities know that the prosecution of anarchists in Krasnodar will not go unnoticed.

Background information on the Krasnodar case in Russian, English and German available at www.ecoline.ru/actions/bomba/

The Moscow group for counter-action against political repression can be contacted at: koalabear@glasnet.ru

Some more thoughts on Spain

Dear Freedom,

I don't really want to write to *Freedom* on a military topic, but BB's article, 'Some afterthoughts on Jim Allen and Spain' raises points about the military side of the Spanish Civil War that could be expanded. Although BB reports Jim Allen, and, to a lesser extent, George Orwell, as talking about the defeat of anti-Franco forces in Catalonia, the inference is that the war as a whole was lost because the republicans just didn't have the equipment they needed. This view that the nationalists received more, and better, equipment from the Germans and the Italians, than the republicans received from the Soviet Union, is a widely held one, and is routinely trotted out by journalists and other commentators. The problem is that this belief is not really sustainable, and if we want to look for reasons why the republic lost the war we have to look elsewhere.

In terms of the quality of equipment available to the protagonists, the republic certainly had the advantage in terms of tanks, and, a decided edge in terms of aircraft for most of the war. The USSR sent two main types of tank to Spain – the BT-5 (and the later model BT-7), and the T26. Both these tank types were markedly superior to the German and Italian tanks available to the nationalists, and Soviet tanks dominated the battlefield throughout the war. The BT-5, for example, weighed 11.2 tons, had a top speed of 36mph, and was armed with a 45mm cannon and a machine gun. If you compare this to the best German tank available to the nationalists – the Panzer I – you can see that there was 'no contest'. The Panzer I weighed 5.5 tons, had a top speed of 22mph, and was armed with two machine guns, but no cannon. But even the Panzer I (which was never designed for combat) was a better bet than the next-to-useless Italian tankette, the CV3/35. This vehicle weighed 3.2 tons, had a top speed of 25mph, and two machine guns in a fixed superstructure. Neither the Panzer I nor the CV3/35 were able to stand up to the BT-5, BT-7, or the even more effective T26 (also equipped with a 45mm cannon and a machine gun). There was, in fact, no way that the nationalist tanks could take on the Soviet tanks. This was recognised by the nationalist army which offered cash bounties to their troops for capturing republican tanks.

In terms of numbers, Patrick Turnbull in his *The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (1978), points out that the USSR delivered 100 T26 tanks, 400 trucks, and 50 fighters to the

republic in October 1936, several weeks before the Condor Legion arrived in Spain. By the end of the war, the republic had received 900 Soviet tanks, while the nationalists had received only 120 Panzer Is, and around 150 CV3/35s, although the nationalists had managed to capture dozens of the much better BT and T26 tanks (overall figures from Hugh Thomas' *The Spanish Civil War*, third edition).

If we turn to aircraft, we find that the picture is more balanced, both in terms of numbers, and quality, but, once again, for large parts of the war the republic had the advantage, especially in terms of quality. Christopher Shores, in his military book, *Spanish Civil War Air Forces* (1977), gives the following breakdown of Italian and Soviet aircraft – operating with the nationalists were a total of 605 Italian aircraft, being 405 CR32 fighters, 99 modern SM79 bombers, 65 older SM81 bomber/transport aircraft, and 36 reconnaissance Ro37bis. Soviet aircraft supplied to the republic numbered 1,405 in total, being 550 Polikarpov I-15s and I-152s, 475 Polikarpov I-16s, 210 Tupolev SB-2 bombers, and 170 general purpose R-5 and R-Z aircraft. In addition, Hugh Thomas gives some 600 German aircraft for the nationalists, and 320 other aircraft, mostly French, for the republicans. The grand totals are, then, 1,205 Italian and German aircraft for the nationalists, and 1,725 Soviet, French, and a few British and American types for the republic. Furthermore, contrary to popular belief, the Soviet aircraft were generally superior to the German aircraft, and easily on a par with the Italian aircraft. The He.51, for example, which was Germany's standard fighter in 1936, was grossly outclassed by the Polikarpov I-15s and I-16s, so much so that the He.51s were relegated to ground attack. Similarly, the Tupolev bombers had a longer range than any bomber available to the nationalists, and were very fast, proving almost impossible to intercept. The nationalists did, however, have a good fighter in the CR32, which was a match for the Polikarpov biplanes, but not the Polikarpov I-16 monoplane fighter which was the most heavily armed fighter in the world at the time. Similarly, the arrival of relatively small numbers of Messerschmitt Bf 109Bs in July 1937 gave German pilots an edge over republican pilots flying I-16s, but not below 10,000ft.

In addition to the supplies the republic

received from the USSR, it is now clear that France was much more active in breaking the international embargo than previously thought. In Eugen Weber's *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* (1995), he refers to recent research in France which shows how Blum picked a customs official, Gaston Cusin, to "direct a large-scale smuggling operation that continued until the collapse of the Spanish Republic [... Cusin] had been an active syndicalist most of his life and could call on friends throughout the customs service as well as on the aid of other services – above all, the navy" (page 168). Weber goes on to outline the large scale of this sophisticated operation, which was carried out because of French national self-interest, the desire to test French military equipment, as well as sympathy with the republic. Interestingly, part of this smuggling operation was specifically designed to supply anarchists in Catalonia.

Given this, it is very difficult to say that the republic's defeat was essentially due to too few arms of poor standard. In fact, the reverse was true. Instead, we need to look to other, political, social, economic, and military factors, which may explain the defeat of the republicans. And as for the anarchists, well, Orwell, and Allen, may well have been right about their lack of equipment, as one would assume that most of the Soviet equipment would not have found its way to them, but the battle for Catalonia was only one part of the war, and perhaps not the most important part. Further, the republican offensive which became known as the Battle of the Ebro (July-November 1938) was, in part, designed to defend Catalonia. In that offensive, which led to a heavy defeat, the republicans put a well-equipped army of 120,000 men into the field, supported by eighty field artillery batteries and 120 aircraft. The fault there certainly did not lie in a lack of material. But defeat at the Ebro did leave Catalonia weak in the face of Franco's subsequent offensive with twenty divisions.

I'm sorry about the length and somewhat tedious detail of this letter, but I just couldn't stand another repetition of the 'they had better weapons' line. Oh, and one last thing (which is probably more relevant to our lives today), what the hell did BB mean when he described Allen's house as having "a reassuring man's touch about it" – do women make him anxious?

Steve Cullen

Lost in the supermarket

Dear Freedom,

There was a small but significant error in Nick S's excellent article in the last issue of *Freedom* ('Lost In The Supermarket', 7th August). Nick states that "pay settlements have consistently been below inflation rates". In fact for a number of years increases in both basic pay and earnings (which includes allowances and overtime) have been rising considerably above inflation. Pay settlement data takes a while to gather and so tends to be a few months out of date, but in May inflation rose by 1.3%, while earnings grew by 4% and basic pay by 3.5%, according to *Industrial Relations Services* and *Labour Research*. Of course, averages can and do hide big differences and say nothing about the absolute level of pay workers receive but generally workers are receiving increases in pay well above the rise in prices. Average earnings for men are now, for the first time ever, just above £20,000 a year according to the *New Earnings Survey* – women workers continue to be discriminated against in the labour market and earn 20% less than men on average.

Above inflation pay increases are likely to be one of the reasons why, as Nick correctly points out, strike levels are at their lowest level ever. Almost all industrial action is over pay. Increases in pay and low inflation reduces economic militancy for those in work. Once bosses try to squeeze pay rises or inflation increases – as it is predicted to next year – we could see an increase in labour militancy, although given the timidity of union leaders and Britain's restrictive employment laws I would not bank on it!

None of this distracts from the points Nick was making in his article. Indeed not only is the state in partnership with capital but so are the unions. TUC boss John Monks sees 'social partnership' as the way forward for British unionism. There is nothing new about such calls. It was tried in the sixties and early seventies. Then the unions learned the truth that the partnership would not be equal. While business profits were maintained wages through successive incomes policies were pinned back. Nothing has changed.

Richard Griffin

The meaning of anarchism

Dear Freedom,

Paul Tremlett (letters, 7th August) appears to miss the points made by Steve Ash, Colin Johnson and myself. Anarchism means opposition to all kinds of bosses and coercive relationships. A logical consequence is that we are aiming for a society free of bosses and coercive relationships, but the concept of a free society is a consequence of the opposition, not the other way round.

In practical terms, what we hope to achieve in the limited time available is a society somewhat freer than it would otherwise have been. There is no point, short of perfect freedom, where we will stop trying to make society more free. This is what is meant by perfect freedom being the aim.

It would be unrealistic to set ourselves the task of achieving perfection, in anything, by the end of this millennium, by the end of the next millennium but one, or with any other time limit. But without limit of time, the aim of perfection is appropriate.

Donald Room

Anarchist Cookbook

Dear Freedom,

An article in *The Observer* last week, 'Ten Key Things About Anarchy', contained several trivial errors and also a serious one. It is not true that the *Anarchist's Cookbook* is the "oldest and most famous" anarchist 'manual'. The *Anarchist Cookbook* by William Powell, which was published as late as 1971, has nothing to do with anarchism, apart from the melodramatic title and an eccentric 'prefatory note' by William Bergman which confuses anarchism with both Marxism and nihilism. It is a detailed guide to drugs, weapons, explosives, traps, sabotage and surveillance which was designed to exploit the fashion for political violence and which has always been repudiated by the actual anarchist movement.

Mary Lewis

Fermin Rocker

The East End Years

A Stepney Childhood

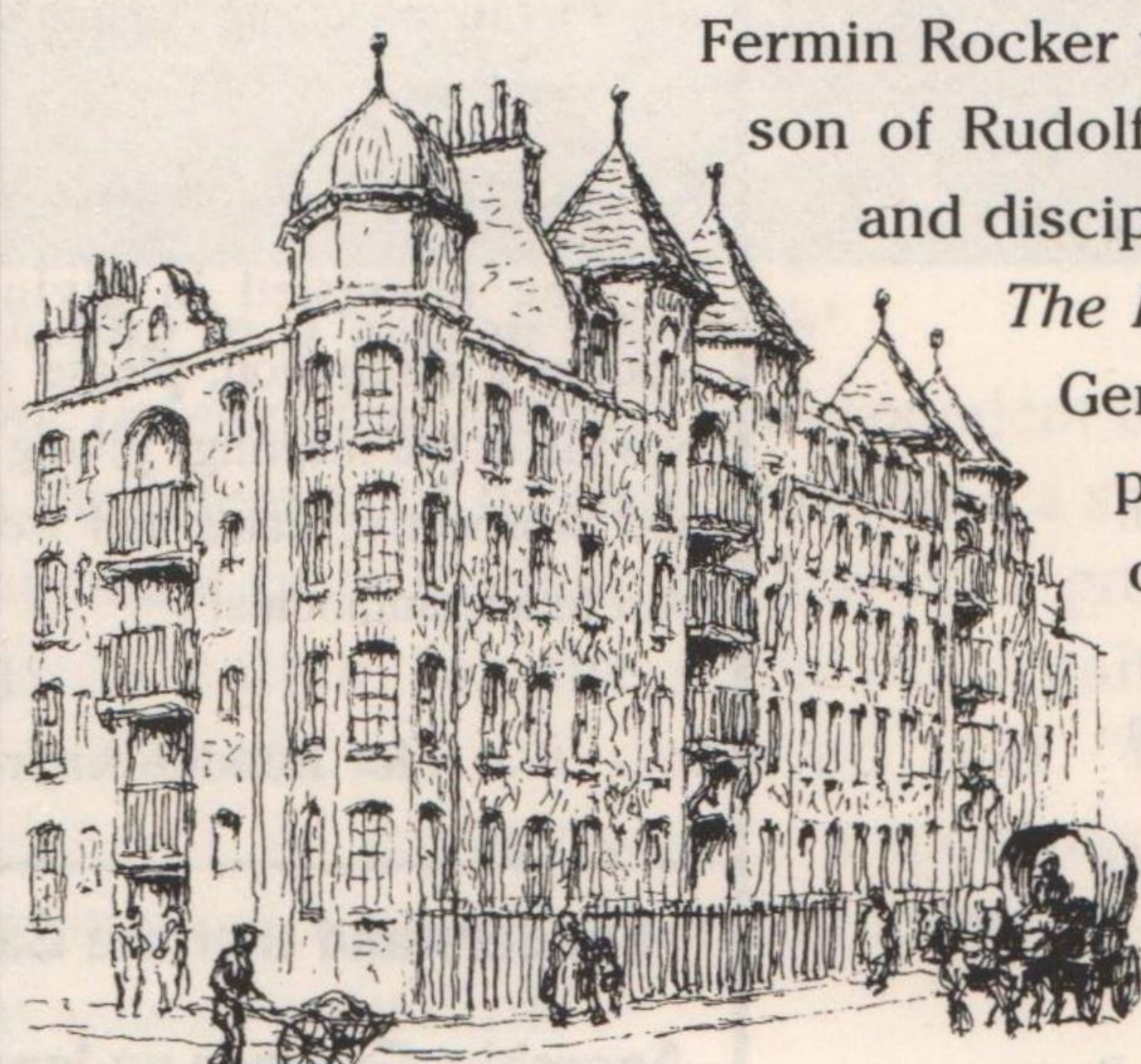
with drawings by the author

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

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

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— PROGRAMME 1999 —

- 20th August** General discussion
 - 27th August** Anarchism and Ethics
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 - 3rd September** General discussion
 - 10th September** The Nihilist Origins of
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Steve Ash)
 - 17th September** General discussion
 - 24th September** Class and Class Struggle:
A Critical Analysis (speaker Peter Neville)
 - 1st October** General discussion
 - 8th October** Getting Anarchist Ideas Over
(symposium)
 - 22nd October** 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

**I understand that the Cambridge
Anarchist Group is no longer active.**
If anybody in the area wishes to
make a connection, please contact me
(A. Stone) on Cambridge 328906.

Red Rambles

A programme of guided walks for Libertarians,
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food, drink, suitable footwear and waterproof
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will travel to walks.

Sunday 22nd August

Industrial West Leicestershire: Whitwick,
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Sunday 26th September

Rutland water. Meet at the John Storer House
car park, Wards End, Loughborough, at 10am.
Walk leader Ray.

Sunday 3 1st October

Vale of Belvoir. Meet at the John Storer House
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Walk leader Ray.

Sunday 28th November

Derbyshire walk to Alport Heights. Meet at
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leader John.

Sunday 19th December

Woodthorpe, Beacon Hill, Windmill Hill: Meet
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Telephone Vivienne for more info:
01509 230131 or 01509 236028

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47 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8SP
0171 430 0908 www.humanism.org.uk

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