

## Dole queue crackdown: rhetoric or real?

Last week Peter Kilfoyle, the MP for Liverpool Walton and former defence minister who recently resigned, accused the government of adopting the attitude of a 'colonial raj' to the jobless in the northern depressed areas like Merseyside. "My constituents" he said, "often feel that they are being chastised for being unemployed".

Mr Kilfoyle complained that the government was training people for non-existent jobs through its New Deal. He was speaking on the last day of the budget debate, and accused the government of being "stridently moralising" towards the worst off in society. He claimed the government must sort out the regional disparities, insisting that many areas had chronic unemployment so that people could not find jobs.

Predictably Mr Kilfoyle said the government was right to crack down on fraud. "Yet" he added, "certainly there are many who fear that there is a mind-set within government which calvinistically associates poverty and deprivation with blaming the victim".

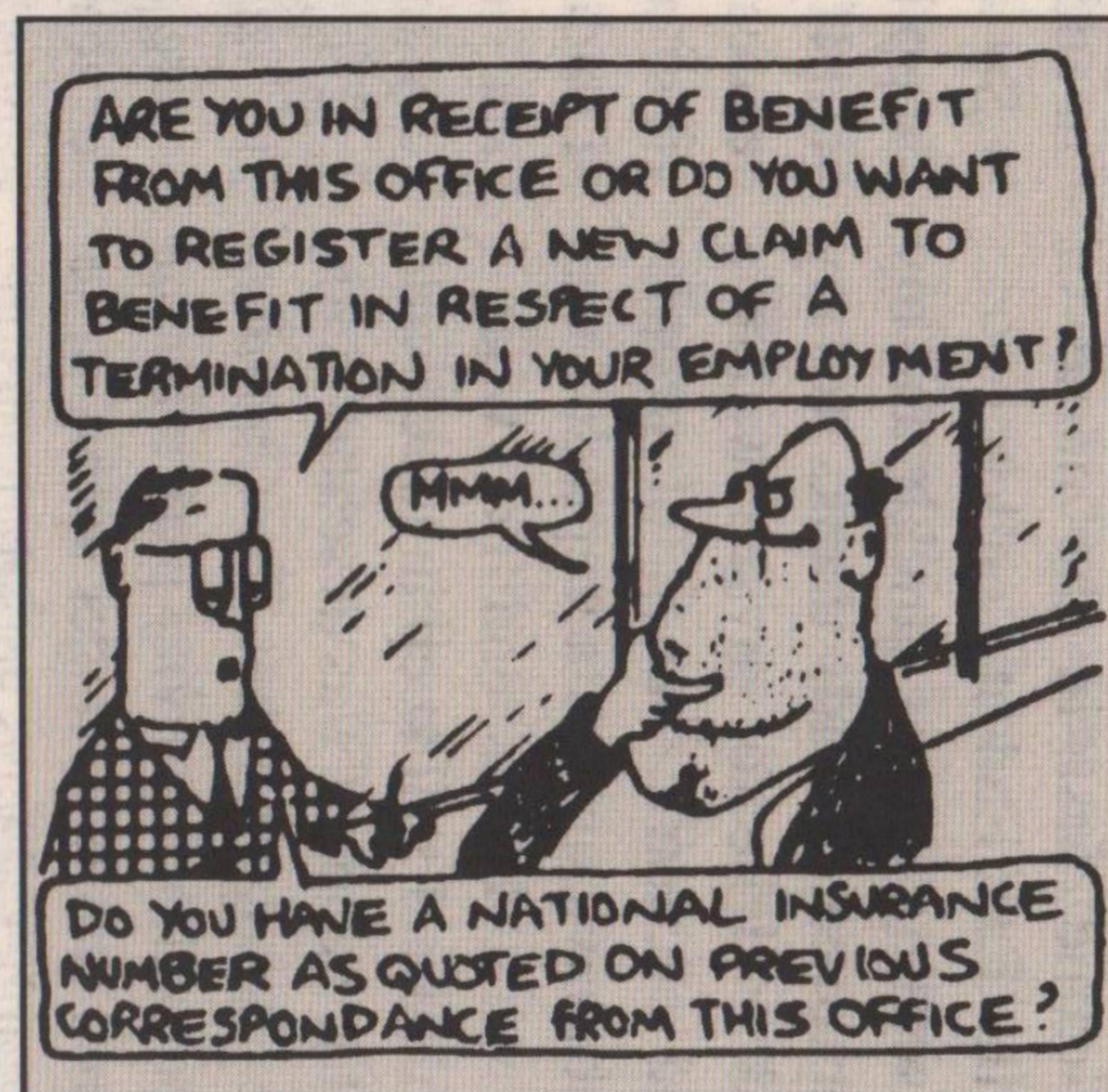
This kind of talk coming from a Labour politician is an attempt to recapture the so-called 'Labour heartlands' in time for the next election. The question is does this kind of heartfelt stuff from old Labour, or even the 'strident moralising' from the government ministers, amount to much?

### Political postures

The threats of Gordon Brown to introduce daily signing for some claimants (suspected of moonlighting in the black economy) were pure political rhetoric. Between the kind of bleeding heart Labourism of Mr Kilfoyle MP and the 'strident moralising' of New Labour ministers, like Gordon Brown, what we have is political postures in a pre-election period.

Politics tends to have a regional tinge. Mr Kilfoyle MP has to appeal to the constituents of Liverpool, Walton. Mr Brown and New Labour want to stir the inmates of so-called Middle England.

Both approaches should probably be viewed as electioneering or political rhetoric aimed at different constituencies – one in the deprived north, the so-called Labour heartlands, and the other in the south and the home counties. Experience



would suggest that neither style of rhetoric should be taken too seriously.

It has become evident that, despite all their huffing and puffing, the Tory government's Job Seeker's Allowance was not nearly as threatening as it was cracked up to be by Tory ministers. Similar conclusions can be drawn from New Labour's New Deal, etc.

### Making life in the slums more miserable

Despite this lack of real impact the huffing and puffing of the politicians continues. Ministers continually come up with schemes to hit at those in the dole queue. It makes good tabloid headlines, like *The Sun* which recently screamed "Fleeced: the scandal of Britain's scroungers and dole cheats". Some of the individual unemployed in parts of the country may suffer as a

consequence of all this.

Last November Gordon Brown announced an investigation into welfare fraud under the bright barrister and New Labour peer Lord Grabiner.

This seems to have been New Labour's response to the Tories' 'Common Sense Revolution' designed, writes Nick Cohen, to make life in the slums "more miserable still". The idea is that the black economy must be restricted by forcing the jobless to sign on every day.

Lord Grabiner of Aldwych claimed that a survey by the Benefit Office estimated that 120,000 were working while claiming benefit. In his report the good Lord Grabiner says that those suspected of fraud should report regularly to benefit offices. According to David Blunkett, this would cost up to £400 million a year and require 25,000 extra staff to man it.

In the last lot of scare stories in 1997, the DSS regularly claimed that one in eight disabled people was on the fiddle. Then a Benefit Integrity Project was set up to panic the disabled by ordering them to submit to new medical examinations. Nick Cohen writes that "at the end of a year of prying, not one scrounger had been uncovered".

Of course Lord Grabiner himself is not on the breadline. He makes £200 more in an hour than the minimum wage comes to in a month. Anthony Grabiner, ennobled by New Labour, gets £800 an hour (excluding extras).

The most wicked thing about the Grabiner report is that it proposes that *suspected* claimants should suffer signing on a more regular basis. This is not to be innocent until proven guilty. New Labour's approach does not seem to be based on the notion of the presumption of innocence. Claimants need only be *suspected* of fraud.

Albert Shore

# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

Vol. 61 No. 7

8th April 2000

50p

The internationalisation of capital requires an equivalent internationalisation of labour, so why ...

## Battling for Britain?

According to Roy Hattersley, Labour's March 2000 budget was built on "principles which I feared the government had abandoned". For Peter Jay also "the Labour government had started to behave like a Labour government". It's tempting simply to retort that for every one of its days in office cuddling up to capital, demonising refugees, scapegoating teachers and nurses, this government has behaved exactly like a Labour government. What Hattersley wants to believe, though, is that the social democratic daydream is somehow beginning to become concrete. Gordon Brown's budget suggests the opposite is true.

The economic policies conducted by Western European governments in all their guises in the last twenty years have been based around the abandonment of the post-war Keynesian settlement with organised labour – a settlement capital had decided it could no longer afford. De-industrialisation was combined with changes in taxation to transfer wealth back to the rich from the poor. By 1991 52% of the tax cuts implemented in the UK since 1979 have gone to the top 10% of income earners. Measured after housing costs, the incomes of the poorest tenth in 1991-92 were 17% lower in real terms than in 1979. Margaret Thatcher described Nigel Lawson's 1988 budget, which cut the highest rate of income tax from 60% to 40%, as "the epitaph for socialism". In reducing the highest rate of income tax, Lawson gave a total of £2 billion in tax cuts to the top 5% of wage earners. You might presume that if New Labour was in any way committed to its declared goal of eliminating child poverty, it might begin the task by seeking to reverse some of the give-aways for the rich introduced previously. Instead it has continued the process of redistribution to the rich with, in this budget, a cut in basic rate income tax (a move which always benefits most those who are taxed the most) and a further reduction in corporation tax, such that businesses will now pay just 10% on the first £10,000 of profits. Corporation tax in 1979 stood at 52%. It now stands at 30%, "the lowest rate in the history of British corporation tax, the lowest rate of any major country in Europe, and the lowest rate of any major industrialised country anywhere, including Japan and the United States" as Gordon Brown observed. The supposed anti-poverty strategy has amounted to establishing a minimum income level for the working poor (which, in the absence of a trade union wage militancy, acts as a drag on wage levels generally) combined with coercive moves to get the youngest claimants off the dole and into low-paid work. Cash injections for the NHS and education? The money pledged to the NHS doesn't even match the European average for health spending as a proportion of GDP and, tied as it is to proposals for 'privatising' NHS management (and with the Private Finance Initiative still in place),

amounts to yet another step down the road of privatisation by stealth.

New Labour's response to BMW's off-loading of Rover to the venture capitalists of Alchemy Partners confirms that, contra Hattersley, there's nothing at all new under the Blairite sun. BMW's decision is likely to cost at least 6,000 jobs at Longbridge and upwards of 20,000 across the West Midlands as a whole. Ford, meanwhile, is hinting at 1,500 job losses at its Dagenham plant. New Labour has made it clear that, beyond shedding a few crocodile tears, it has no plans to intervene. The *Financial Times* on 20th March 2000 declared that Britain was now "a good place for foreign companies to invest". The de-territorialisation of capital was a response to trade union militancy in the 1960s and 1970s. De-industrialisation in the West was combined with a strategy of location wherever labour costs were cheapest. The nationalisation of British Leyland in the '70s was part of a strategy aimed at taming trade union militancy in the car plants. An effective and feared shop stewards movement was conned into a collaborative process in the name of 'British industry', which promptly sold its workers down the river by flogging off the Leyland plants to British Aerospace, who in turn pocketed £800 million for the sale of Rover to BMW. Some people, it seems, have learned nothing from all this. Ken Jackson of the AEEU and Bill Morris of the TGWU have called for a boycott of BMW cars and begged Tony Blair to 'battle for Britain'. Blair intends to do no such thing. As Larry Elliot has noted, "looking at what the government does rather than what it says, the strategy seems to be to try to skip an industrial generation. Deep down, ministers see no long-term future for industries where Britain has been struggling to keep up over the past three or four decades and would rather devote resources to boosting the sunrise industries of the third industrial revolution" (*The Guardian*, 27th March 2000).

Capital's response to its shopfloor battles of the '70s has been to seek to roam the world. As George Monbiot put it: "the corporations have, so far, succeeded in globalising everything except their obligations. Their rights have been harmonised while their responsibilities have been shed" (*The Guardian*, 23rd March 2000). Blair and Brown have a clear, and often declared, agenda to facilitate the mobility of capital. Against this, the solution cannot be for working class militancy to be reduced to calls to 'battle for Britain'. The internationalisation of capital requires an equivalent internationalisation of labour. The best allies in the battle against job losses in the West Midlands are car workers in Germany. This was obvious years ago; the bitter legacy of social democracy remains the extent to which it fostered a belief within the trade union movement that British bosses and

'British' labour had some common ground. All the evidence, even in the 1970s, was to the contrary. In the mid '70s Ford told the Heath government that unless Britain's 'industrial relations' improved they would relocate to Spain. Construction of a stamping and assembly plant was begun in Valencia. Between 1973 and 1974 Spanish workers engaged in a campaign of mini-strikes, slow-downs and sit-ins. Sabotage shut down the Leyland plant in Pamplona and the Renault plant at Valladolid. *Automotive News* reported in 1975 that Ford was having second thoughts about Spain.

It's curious to note the extent to which a government committed to the mobility of capital churns out reams of narrow nationalist propaganda for its British audience. We are told we are being swamped by refugees (even

though a recent UN report estimates that low birth rates in the UK means that the ratio of workers to pensioners necessary to fund pension benefits could only be maintained by raising immigration from 73,000 per year to 88,000) and Blair has begun a campaign to "reclaim Britishness for Labour". 'Britishness' is a value Labour seeks to reserve for the poor, internationalism is the domain of the rich.

The best option open to the Longbridge workers would be to seize the plant, along with all other Rover property, on the basis that Alchemy can't asset strip what they can't possess. Fundamentally, though, if trade unionists want to resist New Labour's designs, we have to dump 'Britishness' not reclaim it.

Nick S.

## Summerhill victory

Summerhill School won a victory at the Royal Courts of Justice in London last month, when Education Secretary David Blunkett formally accepted the right of pupils to opt out of lessons, in a decision which could have implications for other independent schools.

As we explained in our last issue ('Summerhill on trial'), an OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) report could have led to the closure of the famous free school, founded by A.S. Neill in 1921.

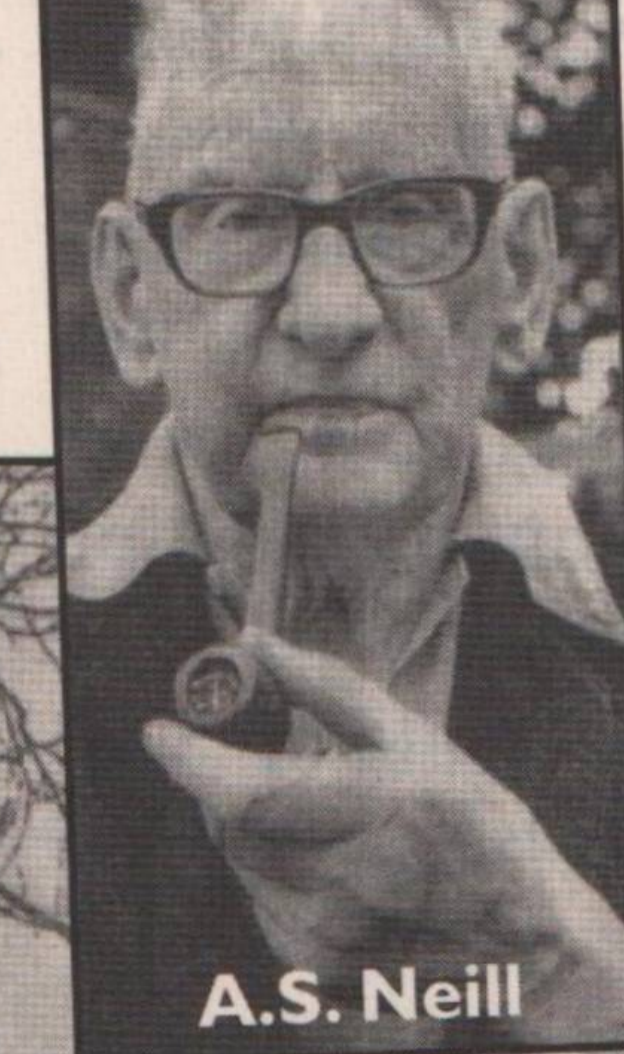
The case was given extensive and largely sympathetic coverage by the British press, and after the victory on Thursday 23rd March many papers showed the school's owner, Zoe Readhead, pictured with jubilant pupils.

However, the Department of Education has subsequently put out a press release alleging that Summerhill had compromised and would 'encourage' pupils to attend lessons.

Since the notion that children should not have to attend lessons was central to Neill's philosophy of education, his daughter Mrs

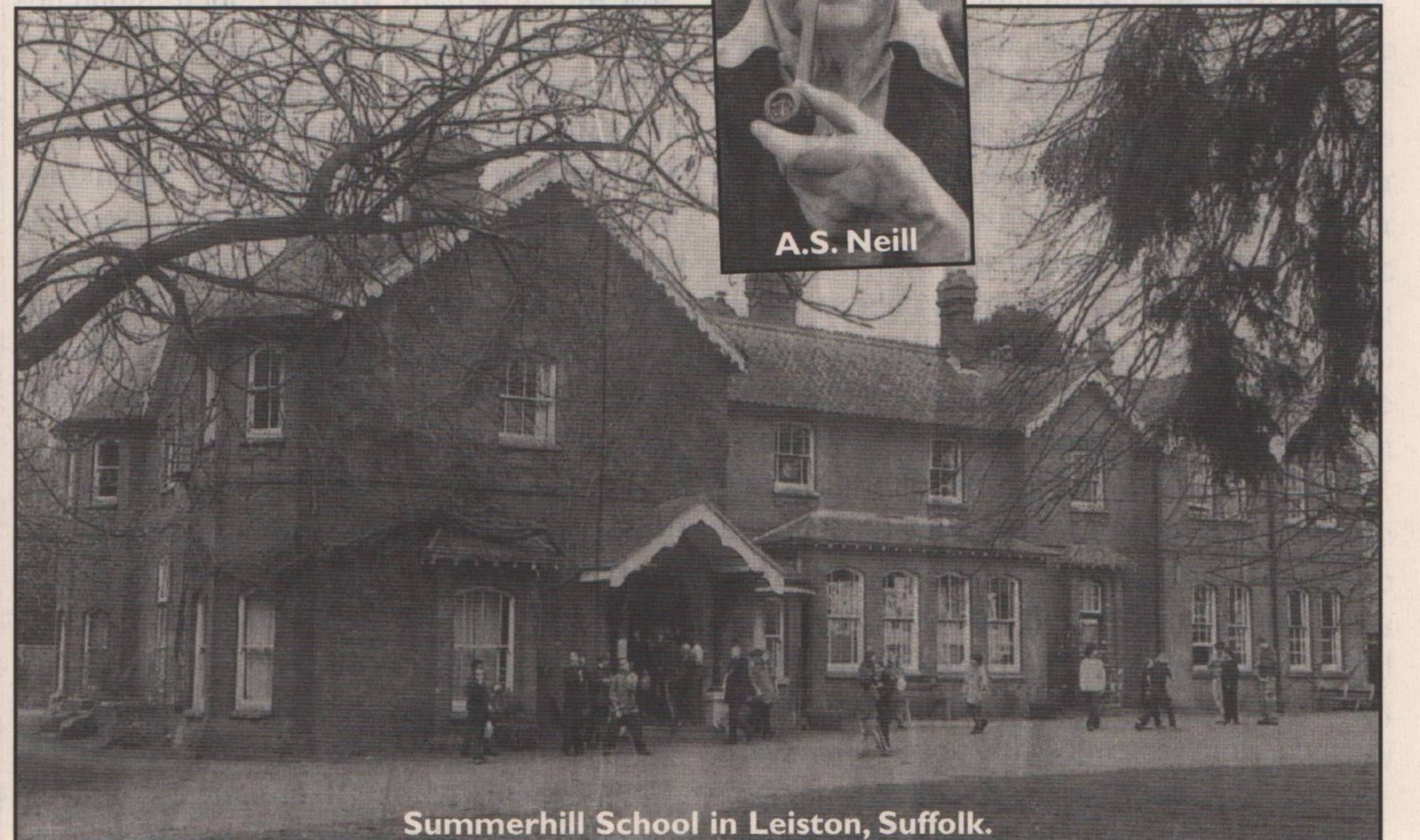


Zoe Readhead celebrates the victory of Summerhill School with pupils outside the law courts on 23rd March



A.S. Neill

Readhead and the school have been very upset and are disputing the government statement.



Summerhill School in Leiston, Suffolk.

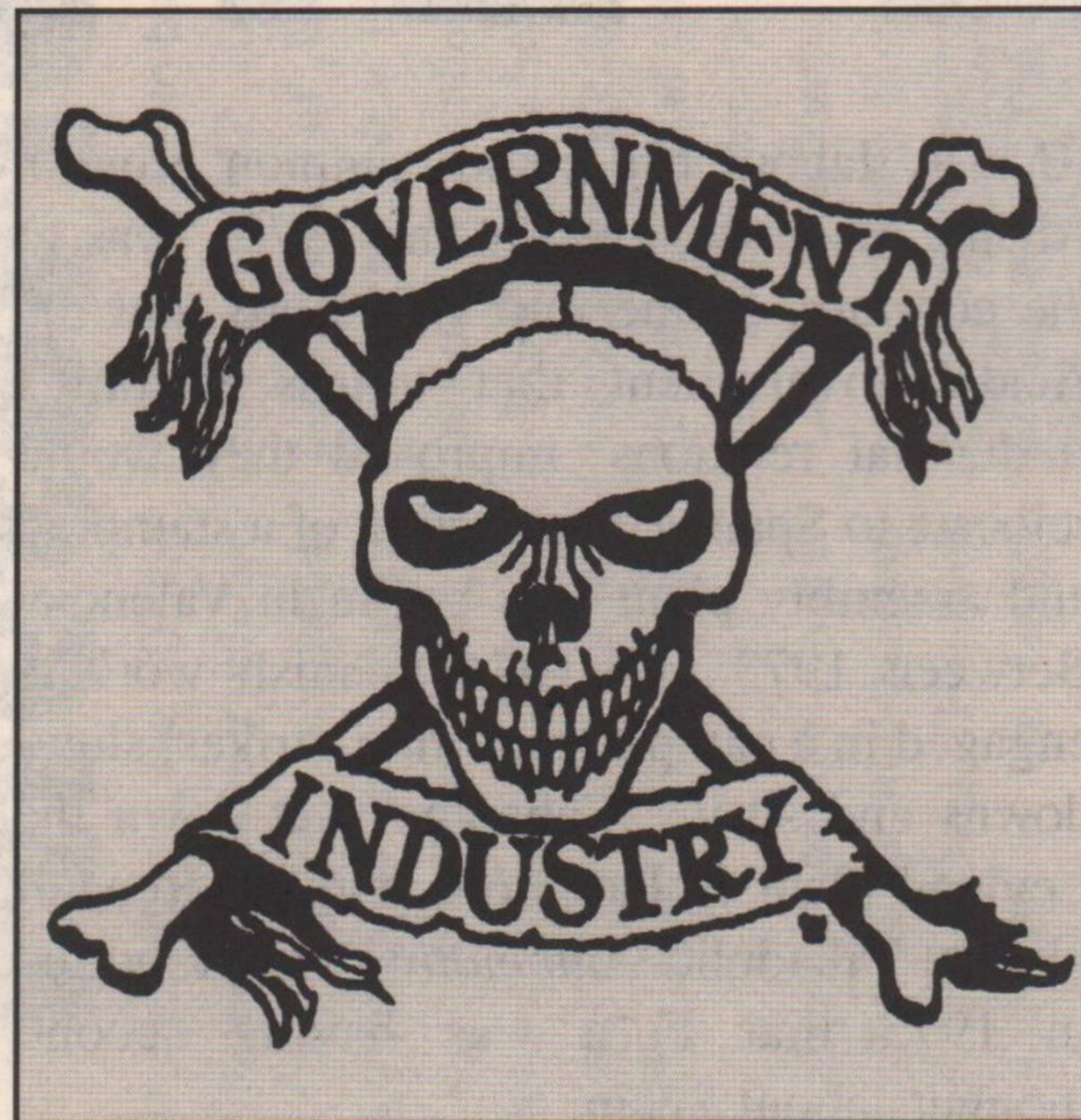
# Liberal pipe dreams

When Anthony Giddens launched his *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Polity, 1998), he was described variously as 'Tony Blair's guru' and 'the organic intellectual of Blairism' and his attempts to reformulate the social democratic agenda were claimed as having 'made a strong impact on the evolution of New Labour'. We should, then, perhaps see the publication of two further books by Giddens (*The Third Way and Its Critics*, published by Polity, 2000, and *On the Edge*, co-authored by Will Hutton and Manuel Castells among others, published by Jonathon Cape, 2000) as an attempt to recover intellectual ground abandoned in the disarray of the Blairite project's confrontation with its own limits – the Livingstone/Dobson fiasco and the attempts to gerrymander devolution in Scotland and Wales and the slow but certain collapse of the working class Labour vote. We can take heart therefore that little in the intellectual Disneyland of the Third Way, as a theoretical project, has changed. Giddens declared in 1998 that "there are no alternatives to capitalism" and that, in consequences "the arguments that remain concern how far, and in what ways, capitalism should be governed and regulated". Two years on, we find Will Hutton noting "the sense that change is all-encompassing and carries a new inevitability; its momentum is a superior power to any other, even that of the state" and Giddens somewhat breathlessly observing that "with the demise of communism, there is no longer any rival to capitalism as a mode of economic development". At this point we should note that Giddens' project, whatever its merits, is a serious attempt to come to terms with the political consequences of what he describes as "the arrival of the 'weightless economy' ... increasingly globalised. The new knowledge economy almost certainly operates according to different principles from the industrial economy that preceded it. For the moment, financial markets make up its leading edge. Financial markets today are stunning in their scope, their instantaneous nature and their enormous turnover" (*On the Edge*, page 1).

Giddens isn't attempting to gloss over the New Labour project, to provide ideological cover for a clearly reactionary government. Rather, the blindness that inflicts his work is one that has rendered sightless the left as a whole. It is not simply that his prescriptions are timid, or that they fail to address all of the issues thrown up by globalisation (although such criticisms are true in and of themselves). More fundamentally, what's wrong with Giddens' dream of a Third Way is precisely that it attempts to reformulate the social democratic project at a time when the notion of social democracy has been abandoned by capital in any meaningful sense. It seeks to offer liberal counsel to a government premised on anti-working class reaction. What is true for Giddens is true as much for the Tribune left and the Trotskyists, all united in the search for the Holy Grail of 'Real Labour'; a Labour which never constitutes itself as Real but exists only and ever as myth. Whether it be Giddens' half-baked Keynesianism or the Bennite fantasies of Mark Seddon; neither bears any resemblance to the actual agenda of Blair and his coven. Thus, on one level, the prescriptions Giddens draws up are irrelevant; the only agency he sees for their implementation is a government determined to work to an agenda which is concerned not at all, except rhetorically, with the issues of 'inequality' and 'exclusion' which trouble him and to

which he seeks to respond.

The sheer pointlessness of such a 'renewal of social democracy' is easy enough to demonstrate. Giddens has called for a "deepening of democracy in response to the cynicism with which most people now respond to parliamentary politics. Far from concerning themselves with such a 'deepening', New Labour have moved to gut any effective content from the proposed Freedom of Information Bill and have set out to seek to criminalise any political action which does not conform to their agenda, through the extension of the Prevention of



Terrorism Act. Giddens tells us that "a democratic order, as well as an effective market economy, depends upon a flourishing civil society". It would be logical then to conclude that if New Labour seeks, as it so clearly does, to neutralise civil society, its commitment to a 'democratic order' must be open to question.

Giddens tells us that "The third way ... seeks to foster a diversified society based upon egalitarian principles ... the old 'project of exclusion' which drove social democracy – admitting the working class to full social, political and economic citizenship – has lapsed. Social democrats today need to combat newer forms of exclusion ... 5% or so of the population risks becoming detached from the wider society – some, such as those imprisoned in decaying tower blocks, are casualties of the welfare state." Gordon Brown, clearly unconvinced by the word from Houghton Street, has meanwhile launched a government-wide crackdown on the 'hidden economy' (people who can't afford to survive on benefits, and so earn an extra few quid through working cash-in-hand) which will lead to the introduction of a 'two strikes and you're out policy' which will allow for the complete withdrawal of all benefits from claimants caught working on the side twice. The minimum wage has become a maximum for most workers, a means of holding down wages and reducing benefit levels by driving the poor off the dole and into low-paid work. Giddens contends that "inequality can no longer, if it ever could, be countered only by income transfers from the more to the less affluent". Under the Conservatives, the higher rate of income tax for the rich was reduced from 60% to 40%, the basic rate was reduced as a further gift to the wealthy. By 1991, 52% of the tax cuts implemented since 1979 had gone to the top 10% of income earners, while the incomes of the poorest 10% were 17% lower than in 1979. Under Blair, the policy of redistribution of wealth from poor to rich has continued. It should be apparent that a government which speaks of 'ending exclusion' while refusing to reverse any of the policies which led to such a marked increase in inequality is spinning a lie. Under New Labour, while Blair lunches with the corporate elite the future for the poor can be

predicted from the fact that Britain is now the fastest growing private prison market in the world. Giddens frets that "at the top, an equivalent proportion, consisting mostly of affluent managers and professionals, may threaten to opt out of the wider society into 'ghettos of the privileged'. Surrounded by such 'independent minds' as Lord Sainsbury, courted by Rupert Murdoch, encouraging McDonalds to become partners in education action zones, and committed to the backdoor dismantling of the NHS through private finance initiatives, New Labour's concern is solely to maintain government itself as a 'ghetto of the privileged'."

Giddens tells us we should take globalisation seriously. "Third way social democrats should look to transform existing global institutions and support the creation of new ones. The left in the past has always been internationalist ... Today, ironically, the old left has become isolationist, sometimes opposing almost every aspect of the global economy". New Labour's 'internationalism' though manifests itself in a different way. Tony Blair is more than happy to enjoy a night at the opera with Vladimir Putin; with sickening irony attending the opening night of Prokofiev's *War and Peace* at the Marlinsky, while Russian troops rape and murder on Putin's orders in Chechnya. But then, Putin is someone else we can do business with – like Yeltsin, like Milosevic. And after all, 'Chechnya isn't Kosovo'. Interestingly, strategic interests in Kosovo itself appear not to stretch as far as securing the right of the Albanian majority to return to their homes in Mitrovice. But then, Mitrovice is the only part of the country the West is really interested in – mineral-rich and near the Serbian border. In Mitrovice, what the West desires in Kosovo as a whole is made clear; a power vacuum, filled not by Albanians or Serbs, but preserved by NATO, not in the interests of the democratic rights of the Kosovar Albanians, but to suit Western capital. As for that shining example of 'internationalism', New Labour's concern for human rights in Indonesia – Blair has told Indonesia's President Abdurrahman Wahid that Britain is pledged to support Indonesia's territorial integrity; thus allowing the Indonesian armed forces to butcher with impunity supporters of the independence movement in Aceh. 'Internationalism', contra Giddens, is not the same as uncritical support for global capital. While capital seeks to dissociate itself from ties of space and time, roaming the world to find new labour to exploit, New Labour has committed itself to the scapegoating of its victims – the political and economic refugees whose lives are destroyed by the rapacity of those who see the world as plunder. Jack Straw's logic is simple – if we can foster the war of the poor against the poor, they'll be too caught up in internecine hatreds to ever declare war on the rich. So much then for the internationalism of the Third Way.

Giddens' politics make no sense. At their core is the notion of the 'logic of 1989 and after'; the belief that with the collapse of Stalinism politics has somehow moved 'beyond left and right'. We are left, then, with the pursuit of a 'radical centre'. All of this would make at least some sense if Giddens had ever had any faith in the Stalinist societies as a progressive alternative to capitalism. There is no evidence that he did so. Indeed, in earlier writings, such as *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (1971), he appears to have shared Max Weber's view of post-Soviet society as "a military dictatorship, not simply that of

generals, but of corporals". Quite why the collapse of a system of state capitalism that had overseen the suppression of the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, and then gone on to crush the Czech and Polish revolts so casually, should lead to a conviction that there is no longer any possibility of a politics of the left – an anti-capitalist politics – is never properly explained.

Giddens thinks that capitalism is the only game in town. The idea that it might be possible to provide an immanent critique of capitalism, based upon an analysis of the effects of the social relations of capitalism – alienation, social antagonism, the creation of a politically dispossessed working class majority, and from that to posit that both the social forces and material bases exist to construct an alternative, appears to have escaped him. Working class political autonomy died, apparently, with a system which was predicated precisely upon the suppression of such militancy and autonomy. In believing, as a result, that we have only the radical centre as the playground of our desires, Giddens, like all social democrats, including his left critics, tries to deny the basic contradiction of bourgeois democracy; that it purports to adhere to the notion of 'government through discussion', but only as an ideological gloss over the fundamental inequality upon which it is founded. The essence of politics under capital is struggle; but the antagonisms which underwrite that struggle are denied by those who gain the most. It is worth noting that conservative thinkers generally recognise (and formulate a politics on the basis of) the fundamental inequalities inherent to capitalism in a way their social democratic 'critics' never do. The German right wing jurist Carl Schmitt noted that the political "can be understood only in the context of the ever-present possibility of the friend-enemy grouping" – that the basis of politics is not agreement, but antagonism between parties with opposing interests. "In the domain of the political, people do not face each other as abstractions but as politically interested and politically determined persons, as citizens, governors or governed, politically allied or opponents – in any case, therefore, in political categories. In the sphere of the political, one cannot abstract out what is political, leaving only universal human equality" (*The Challenge of Carl Schmitt*, 1999, Verso, page 41).

Contrary to what Giddens might contend (and in this he has – however much they'd seek to deny it considerable common ground with the Tribunes – in that all would argue that the antagonisms upon which bourgeois democracy is founded can be managed away by government) it is not possible to transcend the left-right divide (if by that divide we mean those who gain from and those who suffer as a result of inequality and exclusion – those who own the means of production and those who labour) without overcoming the divide in practice – the antagonism can only be 'transcended' by the victory of one contending force over the other.

Because he can't grasp this, Giddens cannot properly understand the changes in the form of exploitation under capitalism – the globalisation of the 'weightless economy'. Giddens describes himself as a 'Gee-whizzer': 'Gee-whiz' types "are so impressed with all the changes happening today, especially those to do with technology, that they see a world breaking quite radically with the past" (*On the Edge*, page 3). As Cornelius Castoriadis once remarked: "Birds sing innocently anew every morning – but they are birds, and they sing the same song". The problem with the fetishisation of the 'weightless economy' is, simply, that it

(continued on page 8)

Further to the report in the last issue of *Freedom*, more on the careworkers' dispute ...

## Tameside Eighteen versus Tameside Care Group

**W**hat follows is one of the closing addresses to the Manchester Industrial Tribunal on behalf of the sacked careworkers – eighteen of whom took their case for unfair dismissal to the tribunal in February. This speech was drafted by Derek Pattison, the libertarian leader of Tameside Trades Council, and delivered by Mrs Phylis Biddle on 24th February.

Over five days we have listened to evidence on behalf of the applicants and respondents.

In view of the applicants we would submit that the essential issues in dispute as regards the applicants claim for unfair dismissal have been as follows:

1. Was there a genuine and sound need for the changes to terms and conditions?
2. Did the company act reasonably in seeking to meet any such needs by the issue of notices of dismissal with such severe cuts in wages?
3. Did the company consult properly with the trade unions and, more importantly, individuals both before and subsequent to the issues of notices of dismissal?

Both the respondents and applicants in this case have referred to the historical problems which have beset Tameside Care group since its inception in 1990, when it was known as Tameside Enterprises Limited (TEL).

In his own evidence at the tribunal Alan Firth [TCG managing director] referred to the cuts in pay and conditions which were made in 1993 as a result of financial mismanagement. Indeed, many of the applicants who gave evidence have referred to previous cuts in pay and conditions whilst employed by this company.

In addition there were cuts in maternity and sick pay in 1996 and by the autumn of 1997 many employees within the company had not had a pay rise for five years.

In the view of many of the applicants, cuts in pay and conditions had become habitual within this company and the situation was made all the more acute as a result of guarantees which many staff had previously been given by the Local Authority in 1990 – when transferring their employment to TEL – which purported to guarantee their nationally agreed rates of pay and conditions into the future. These guarantees had been set out in a letter dated 14th December 1990 from the then Director of Social Services.

Despite the fact that this letter made guarantees to transferring employees that their nationally agreed wages and conditions would be 'guaranteed into the future' and that the homes and employees would return to the Local Authority if the new company failed, it was nevertheless claimed by Alan Faith that these guarantees were limited to twelve months. In the view of the applicants, this assertion is quite preposterous and unsustainable.

Although the respondents have dismissed the letter detailing guarantees as a 'red herring', the applicants would submit that in the light of such guarantees and the history of previous cuts in wages and conditions, the respondents acted unreasonably in making the wage cuts when they did and through the means of notices of dismissal.

In his evidence Alan Firth referred to the difficulties which the respondents faced during 1997. The tribunal were told by Alan Firth that he had received on October 1997 a letter from C. Mckinless giving details of cuts in fees. The tribunal were also told of the deficit in the sub-fund pension scheme which the company were operating. The tribunal were also told of the cut in the section 64 grant which had been payable by the West Pennine Area Health Authority.

The respondents claim that by December 1997 they were faced with serious financial problems as a result of this 'triple whammy', which had somehow coalesced in or around December 1997. And yet, with the exception of the grant cut which the respondents were informed about in early December 1997, the fee cuts and pension problem had been known of for some time.

It is clear from the correspondence that the respondents had been aware since March 1997 that Tameside Council were intending to cut the level of fees it paid to elderly people's homes in Tameside. Similarly, the respondents had been aware of the pension problem since the middle of 1996. Although Alan Firth stated in his evidence that he was not aware of the figures involved until much later, he was clearly aware of a potential 'double whammy'.

In his evidence to the tribunal Alan Firth stated that he had instigated the initial contact with ACAS in November 1997, having taken legal advice. Moreover, although ACAS had made a number of suggestions, such as setting up a joint working party with the trade unions to discuss the problem with a view to minimising the effect on the company and workforce, he stated in his evidence that he had chosen to take the traditional industrial relations route. He also stated that there had been informal discussions with trade union representatives such as Mr D. Boyle of the BMB and Mrs L. Richards of UNISON.

In her evidence Lesley Richards [UNISON] stated that she was not aware of any discussion having taken place with the respondents about the fee cuts and grant cut until the meeting on 31st December 1997. She did acknowledge being aware of the pension problem. Moreover, she told the tribunal that UNISON had submitted a pay claim to the company in August 1997 and that she had assumed that the board meeting that she had been invited to at the end of December had been convened to discuss the pay claim.

In the view of the applicants, whilst it is clear that Alan Firth did not speak to Lesley Richards about the cut in fees and the cut in grant prior to the board meeting on 31st December, it is nevertheless clear that Alan Firth did do a

number of things after being informed of the fee cuts in October 1997.

Whilst not wishing to set up a 'joint working party' with the trade unions to discuss the problem of the pension issue and the issue of the fee cut, Mr Firth wrote a business evaluation document which he intended to discuss with the trustees of the Tameside Community Care Trust at their meeting on 12th December 1997. Second, Alan Firth commissioned a comparability study to look at pay and conditions for careworkers in the private sector in Tameside vis-à-vis those employed by Tameside Care Group.

Suffice it to say that this report among other things concluded that many of the care workers, and in particular the so-called 'protected employees', were receiving pay and conditions above the market rates for care work in the Tameside area. Indeed, the respondents had always been of the view that the 'protected

employees' were overpaid, as is evidenced by the board resolution and other documentary evidence, such as letters from the Bank of Scotland and the respondents business evaluation document.

In her evidence Lesley Richards stated that at the board meeting held on 31st December the trade union representatives were given twenty minutes to consider a 40-page document and were then told they had 28 days to respond. In reality, if one excludes bank holidays and weekends, it is a lot less than 28 days. Mrs Richards stated in her evidence that she had not been in a position to respond to the company because she was organising meetings in order to consult with UNISON members, who in any event had made it clear that they did not wish to agree to further pay cuts.

At the end of January the respondents issued 90-day notices to the applicants that new contracts would be issued on 1st May 1997.

## Mobile Phones and the New Egotism

**U**sers of public transport will be familiar with the sinking feeling experienced as a shrill snippet of music announces that one of their fellow passengers has an incoming call on their mobile phone. They will also be accustomed to the sense of relief they feel when the stressful experience of listening to one half of a phone conversation has ended and they can resume their train of thought.

It is salutary that so many people seem to be using alternatives to the private car for their journeys. The car has many antisocial implications in its domination of space and its impact on air quality and noise levels. One of its attractions is the privacy it affords the driver, and it may not be long before public transport users yearn for that sense of mental space which is so frequently invaded by the enforced consumption of information about the lives of mobile phone users.

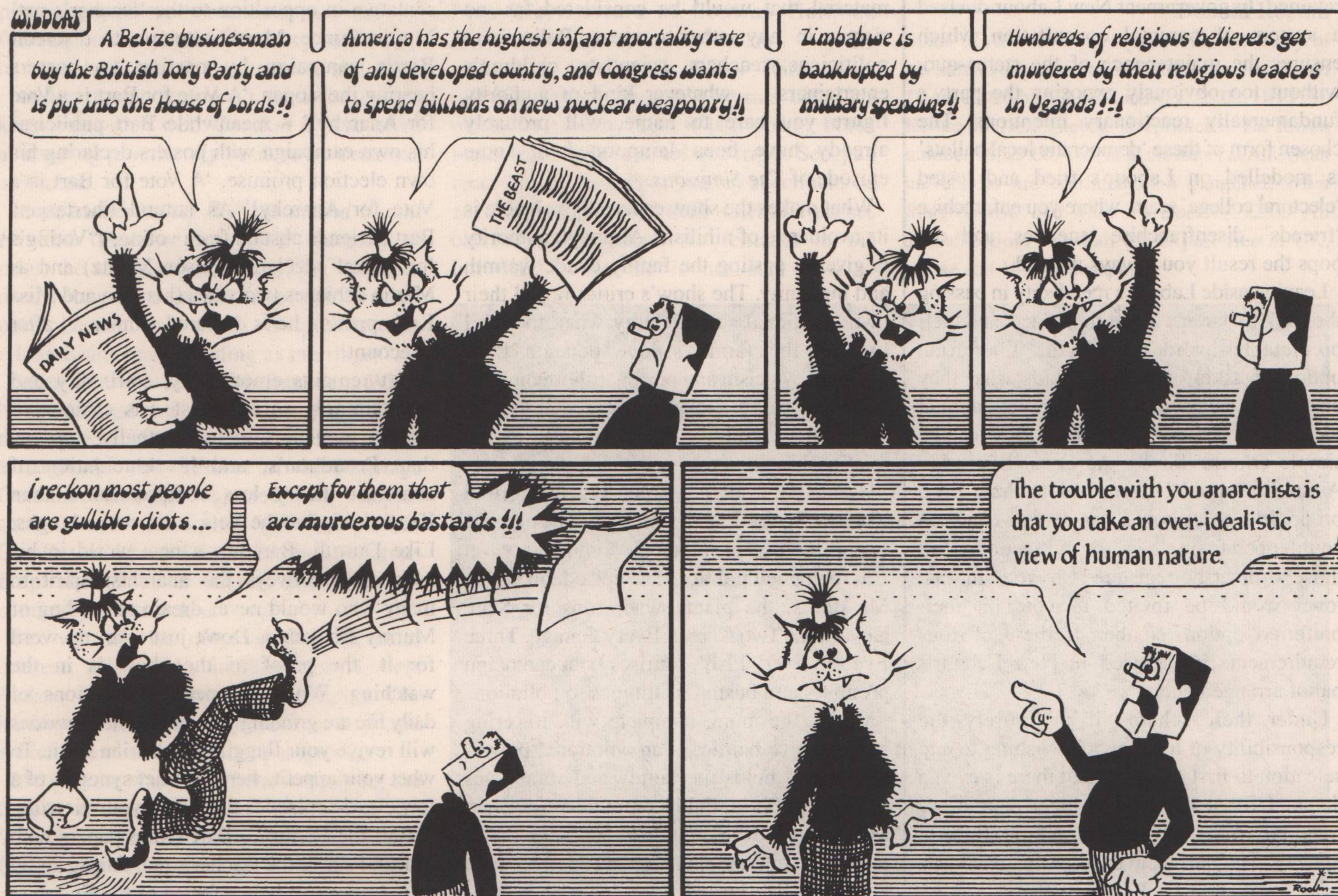
This bombardment of strangers' eardrums is usually felt, at least by this listener, as a gesture of disrespect, although this is of little importance to supporters of the mobile phone industry. I have heard people express

hostility toward any attempt to curb usage with the argument: 'everyone else has them, so why shouldn't I?' Advertisements celebrate the freedom to be in touch, not just with other people, but with the most ubiquitous fashion accessory of our time.

The ability to communicate while not at home can be of great importance for workers in the construction industry and people whose services may be needed urgently at any time. Yet there seems little to gain in these respects which could not be achieved by more public telephones or pagers. The mobile phone phenomenon has been a triumph of private over public ownership, i.e. consumerism.

Since the rights of people who do not wish to inhale smoke are now becoming sacrosanct in the communal environment, why is it that we never see a sign in a bus, train or restaurant saying 'This area is reserved for non-mobile phone users'? Maybe the two modes of thinking could be allied in our quest for a stress-free environment.

Ben Ward



# “Watch My Lips - No Selection!”



Mater informs Arthur that he has passed for the Grammar School

“Watch my lips - No selection! There will be no selection by either examination or selection under the next Labour Government,” announced David Blunkett to the 1995 Party Conference. This unequivocal promise persuaded the gullible that New Labour had real commitment to educational equality. Following the recent outcome of the ballot to preserve 11+ selection in Ripon, Blunkett informed astonished journalists that the abolition of Britain’s remaining 164 grammar schools is not on New Labour’s agenda. His 1995 promise had been ‘a joke’!

Blunkett’s promise was a lie. His lame attempt to pass it off as a joke was a damned lie and his parental ballot on selection was an act of deception. New Labour’s plan has always been to push Thatcher’s competition-led educational agenda further than her own government had managed. Blunkett’s radical rhetoric fooled Labour’s left-wing whilst the solidly reactionary substance of Labour’s actual educational policies continues to please *Daily Mail* readers and ‘our friends in the City’.

Astute observers realised that Blunkett’s ‘No Selection!’ declaration was not repeated in the party’s general election manifesto, which merely promised to consult local parents on whether selection should be retained. In government New Labour devised a system of parental consultation which ensures the maintenance of the status-quo, without too obviously exposing the party’s fundamentally reactionary intentions. The chosen form of these ‘democratic local ballots’ is modelled on Labour’s tried and tested ‘electoral college’ scam, where you enfranchise ‘friends’, disenfranchise ‘enemies’ and out pops the result you always wanted.

Leaving aside Labour’s mendacity in passing the buck to parents in the first place, and their predictable avoidance of the libertarian option of asking the school kids what they want, any fair ballot to ascertain parental views on selection would need to meet two simple criteria. Firstly the Local Education Authority would be required to draw up a proposed plan of how a non-selective system could operate in their town. Secondly, all those ordinarily registered to vote in that town would be invited to vote on their preferred option. Neither of these obvious requirements is included in New Labour’s ballot arrangements.

Under their scheme it is entirely the responsibility of local people wishing to end selection to first establish that there is even a demand for a ballot. Ten local people are required to write to the Electoral Reform Society to request them to collect parental lists from local schools. Based on these lists the

Electoral Reform Society then calculate how many signatures are required to trigger a local ballot. Ripon parents were required to collect 587 signatures but in Kent, where there are 33 grammar schools and the whole area is selective, campaigners will need 45,959 signatures before a ballot will even be considered.

If parents do manage to trigger a ballot then

the campaign begins in earnest and the peculiar character of the electoral constituencies devised by Labour becomes apparent. Their cunningly restricted franchise produces a voter-register packed with parents sympathetic to elitism. Only those parents whose children attend a ‘feeder’ school that has supplied at least five entrants to the local grammar school in the previous three years, are allowed to vote. At Ripon this procedure gave a quarter of the electoral votes to parents who had opted out of the state system and sent their children to one of three independent preparatory schools. A similar proportion of votes was granted to people who didn’t live in Ripon but sent their children to qualifying primary schools, whilst many local parents whose children attended less academically successful primaries were consequently disenfranchised. As if that wasn’t biased enough, the well-funded, pro-selection lobby could afford to engage a professional PR company to promote their campaign, which included sending every local parent a video extolling the virtues of the grammar school system.

Throughout the entire campaign New Labour said nothing, Blunkett’s lips remained sealed. By failing to even ask the LEA to draw up plans for a non-selective option Labour

allowed the grammar school supporters to claim that abolition would be a step into the unknown. It became inevitable that selection would be retained in Ripon and with these procedures it will prove extremely difficult to abolish selective grammar schools elsewhere. The role of the Labour government in engineering the survival of this obvious educational elitism shows how much Blair and Blunkett belong to those ‘dark forces of conservatism’ that they so strongly profess to challenge, and exposes the rhetoric of their commitment to ‘social inclusion’. The future of Britain’s grammar schools look secure under Labour and the anxieties of many thousands of young children awaiting the 11+ are set to continue. Seventy percent of those children will subsequently begin their secondary school careers as ‘failures’, and they might not see the funny side of David Blunkett’s little ‘joke’.

Fortunately the son of Labour’s deputy chief whip, Keith Bradley, will now be spared the indignity of mixing with such academic failures. Like many other New Labour offspring before him, he will be educated at a highly selective establishment. After spending just four days at his local comprehensive daddy has decided to move him to Manchester Grammar, one of the top five boys’ independent schools in England.

Christopher Draper

## ‘A Vote for Bart is a Vote for Anarchy!’

Bakunin isn’t on television much nowadays but Bart Simpson spreads the libertarian message every week on millions of televisions around the world. If you haven’t caught the show yet, tune in, for Bart is no Donald Duck and this certainly ain’t no Disney production. The show’s radical message wasn’t lost on President George Bush who, in 1990, famously expressed his wish for the American family to be, “more like the Waltons than the Simpsons!”

*The Simpsons* is apparently the everyday story of middle-American folk, but from beginning to end the show indulges in sweeping parody, sharp observation and blistering attacks on all forms of power and authority. The humour, popularity and cartoon format of the show enable it to get away with material that would be considered far too risqué in any other context. Policemen, politicians, teachers, scientists, children’s entertainers ... whatever kind of authority figure you care to name, will probably already have been lampooned in some episode of *The Simpsons*.

What makes the show especially valuable is its avoidance of nihilism. Although authority is given a pasting the family exude warmth and humanity. The show’s critics reveal their own emotional superficiality when they fail to spot the family’s love beneath their apparent cynicism and personal shortcomings. Far from being a dysfunctional family, the Simpsons exemplify open, honest, caring relationships.

Homer, the dad, works in Springfield Nuclear Power Plant, which provides lots of opportunities for pungent commentary on environmental politics. The episode in which Mr Burns, the plant owner runs for State Governor, ‘Two Cars in Every Garage, Three Eyes on Every Fish’, satirises both campaign promises and business attitudes to pollution.

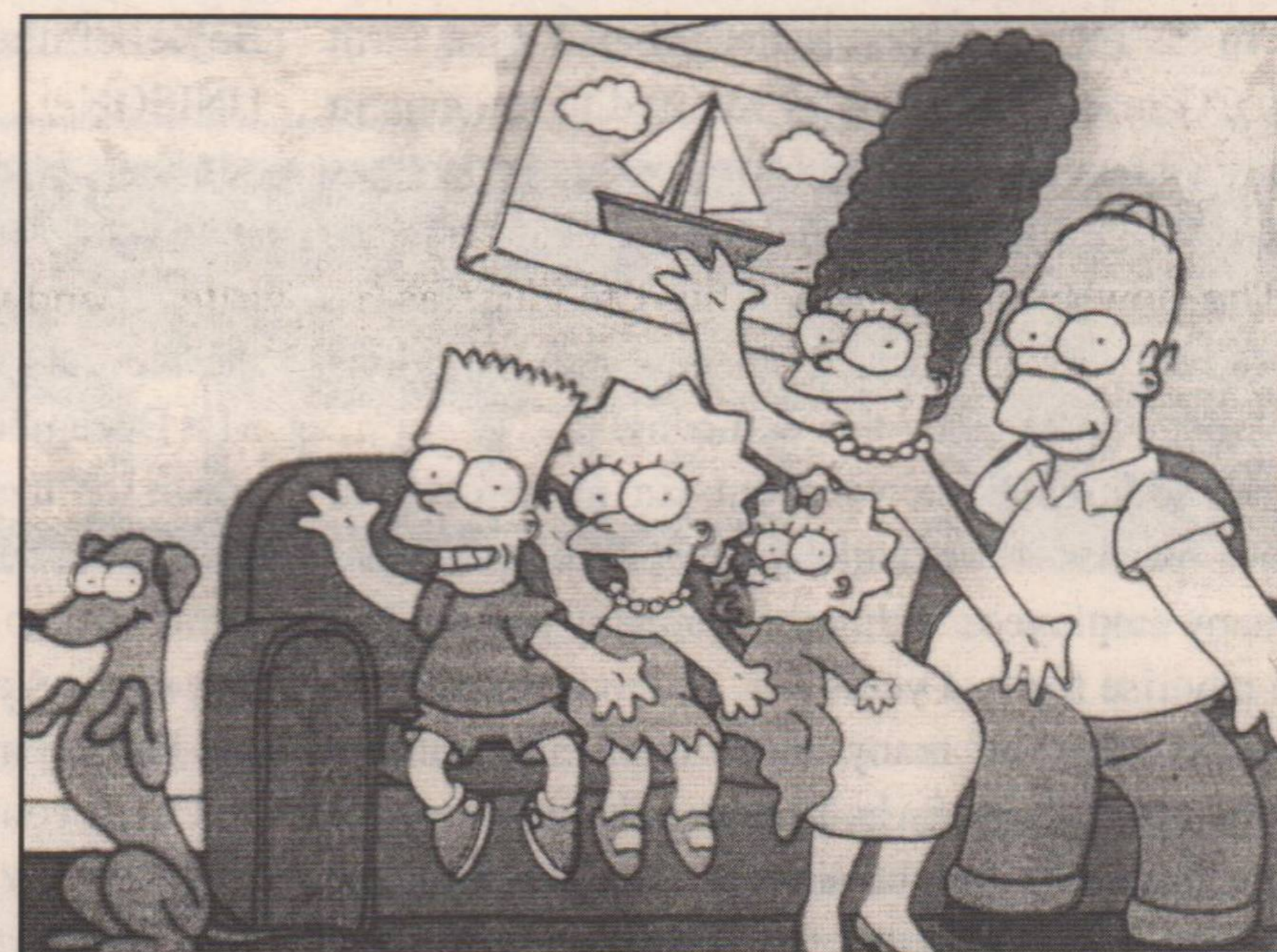
Marge, the mum, complete with towering blue beehive hairdo, is an emotional powerhouse who holds the family and sometimes the whole Springfield community together. Marge has loved and lost but appreciates Homer’s fundamental good nature, even though it lies buried deep below layers of

indolence, ignorance and poor personal hygiene.

Bart, Lisa and baby Maggie complete the family (not forgetting the dog, bizarrely known as Santa’s Little Helper) and take turns to exhibit their own peculiar repertoire of bizarre and endearing characteristics. In my favourite episode, ‘Lisa’s Substitute’, Lisa becomes inspired and then infatuated with her new supply teacher, who sweeps into the classroom in the guise of a cowboy from the early days of the Wild West. Meanwhile in the classroom above Bart declares himself a candidate for election as class representative in opposition to the ‘teacher’s pet’ Martin Prince. Martin attempts to discredit Bart’s campaign by pasting up posters bearing the slogan, ‘A Vote for Bart is a Vote for Anarchy!’ – meanwhile Bart publicises his own election promise, ‘A Vote for Bart is a Vote for Anarchy!’ As natural libertarians Bart’s friends abstain from voting, (“Voting’s for geeks!” declares Nelson Muntz) and as Martin achieves two votes (his own and Miss Krabappel’s), he is declared winner ... after a recount!

Bart remains emotionally, spiritually and entertainingly an anarchist. His critique of society may be less intellectually rigorous than Proudhon’s, and his elucidation of anarchist theory less comprehensive than Kropotkin’s but he gets a lot more laughs. Like Durruti, Bart has a new world in his heart, and conveys the anarchist spirit to many who would never dream of reading of Murray Bookchin. Don’t just take my word for it, the proof of the show is in the watching. When the petty oppressions of daily life are grinding you down, *The Simpsons* will revive your flagging libertarian spirit. To whet your appetite here’s a brief synopsis of a few classic episodes that await your viewing:

‘Bart the Genius’ – Bart swaps papers with Martin Prince, the teacher’s pet, during an IQ test. As a result he’s referred to the Enriched



Learning Centre for Gifted Children, where the kids have Brideshead Revisited and Anatoly Karpov lunchboxes. He enjoys the school’s laid-back liberal ethos until he’s asked to show evidence of his neglected genius ...

‘Lisa the Beauty Queen’ – When Lisa has a caricature sketched she is so shocked by its exaggerated features that she becomes convinced that she is ugly. To boost her confidence, Homer enters her for a local beauty competition, but how can Lisa compete with a Shirley Temple look-alike who has had eyelash implants in Paraguay? And will her social conscience allow her to compete in a contest that uses the slogan, GOD BLESS MUMMY AND DADDY AND LARAMIE CIGARETTES?

‘Homer’s Phobia’ – When Homer realises that Bart’s new friend John, a camp antique dealer, is gay he begins to fear for his son’s sexual orientation and sets out to ensure that his son is a ‘real’ man ...

Not to mention: ‘Boy Scoutz’n’Hood’, ‘Bart’s Dog Gets an F’, ‘Brother Can You Spare Two Dimes?’, and finally, filmed six years after President Bush made his infamous remark; in ‘Two Bad Neighbours’ who should move in next door to the Simpsons but George and Barbara Bush ...

Christopher Draper

(*The Simpsons* are currently at home on Mondays and Fridays at 6pm on BBC2, and every weekday on Sky 1)

# A Glasgow tale

**With Fate Conspire: Memoirs of a Glasgow seafarer and anarchist by John Taylor Caldwell** (Northern Herald Books, 240 pages, £8.95).

This is the second, concluding volume of the autobiography that began with its author's *Severely Dealt With: growing up in Belfast and Glasgow* (1994, still available from Northern Herald Books at £5.95). That book had an unforgettable description of a scene he witnessed as a child, when the house of a family belonging to the wrong religion was gutted and its belonging set on fire in the street. "I have not forgotten the cries, the tears, the abysmal helpless misery or the exultant cries of triumph celebrating a shameful deed."

When his father disappeared from home in Belfast in 1925, people blamed it on his drinking debts. But John knew that it was because the Old Man had taken up with Cissie, from the other side of the sectarian battleground, and feared the wrath of the righteous. A month later, 13-year-old John was told to join the Old Man in Glasgow and went on the old cattle-boat SS Magpie to the Broomielaw in the city where he has lived ever since.

He got a job as a page-boy at the Picture House in Sauchiehall Street, until at sixteen, although pathetically small for his age, he was too old for a boy's wage. His elder brother had become a bellboy on a trans-Atlantic liner, and he was expected to follow, even though at the medical examination the doctor said, "This boy should be going into a sanatorium, not going to sea".

The new book describes his life, first as a bellboy and then as a steward on liners and cruise ships, the brutality and meanness with which they were treated in the alleged golden age of ocean-going liners. He and his brother

dutifully reported back to their father when voyages ended. He would take all of their pathetic wages and then sell their possessions to pay for drink. Why did they put up with it? Because there was never enough money to pay for lodgings between trips. The Sailors' Home at 150 Broomielaw (long demolished, though I remember it from the Second World War) is one of the 42 evocative illustrations in this book). Shabbily comfortable, it was too expensive for young John.

Caldwell spent eleven years working below decks on the ships of the Anchor Line and meanwhile educating himself through the open-air socialist, rationalist and anarchist meetings, for which the city was famous, and by way of the public library, especially the great Mitchell Library.

As part of this educational process, he discovered Guy Aldred, his 'United Socialist Movement' and his journal *The Word*. John Caldwell is the author of a biography of Aldred *Come Dungeons Dark* (Luath Press, 1988).

My own impressions of Aldred (and the fact that I admired those Glasgow anarchists that he disliked) lead me to agree with Nicolas Walter's comments' in *The Raven* number 1 that besides his enormous energy Aldred had "a complete lack of any sense of humour or proportion and an extraordinary combination of self-confidence and self-conceit, which ... made him quarrel with almost all the many people he worked with ..."

There were three exceptions to this. Jenny Patrick, Ethel MacDonald and John Taylor Caldwell were devoted to Aldred, doing all the donkey work so that he could write and write ... and write. (The book concludes with a bibliography of the publications of the Strickland Press 1939 to 1968). After Aldred's death in 1963 John Caldwell went on producing the publications as the readership

evaporated and with no income, the scrap men had to take away both the press and the remaining pamphlets.

The publishers rightly claim that this book provides evidence of an anarchist tradition in

Glasgow that would be otherwise forgotten. Personally I rejoice that Caldwell who has had nothing all his life and asked for so little, is more comfortable in old age than ever before.

Colin Ward



The author John Taylor Caldwell (right) with Guy Aldred and a young neighbour outside the Strickland Press on George Street, Glasgow, in July 1958.

Alex Comfort died on 26 March, aged 80, in the nursing home where he had lived for some years, following a series of strokes.

He is best known for his *Joy of Sex* (1972) which, with its sequels *More Joy of Sex* and

the rest, sold in millions and made him very rich, at some expense to his reputation. When Freedom Press published a collection of his anarchist writings in 1994, at least one comrade objected on the basis that anarchism was not to be equated with promiscuity.

But *Joy of Sex* does not advocate promiscuity. It recommends some activities for early in a relationship, as they help lovers to learn each other's preferences, and other activities to be postponed until the couple know each other well. Comfort is accused of advocating promiscuity because he treats sex as a game.

In an earlier work, *Barbarism and Sexual Freedom* (Freedom Press 1948, long out of print), he advocates 'marriage', by which he means long-term cohabitation with or without a licence, and writes of "promiscuous relationships masquerading as marriages".

Some were shocked by his frankness. When he remarked on television that some marriages benefit from "an adulterous prop", a magistrate and member of the Marriage Guidance Council objected that couples should have no secrets from each other. Comfort said he did not think the adulterous prop should be a secret, and she was comically gobsmacked.

Sex was not his only, or even his chief interest. His works include *The Anxiety Makers* (on the history of medicine), *The Biology of Senescence*, novels, poetry, and anarchist and anti-militarist pamphlets.

In 1949, he was a biochemist studying the colour of snail shells, and spoke on 'Anarchism' in the Reith Lectures, on the BBC Third Programme. In 1950; he was a prison psychiatrist, and lectured on

# Alex Comfort

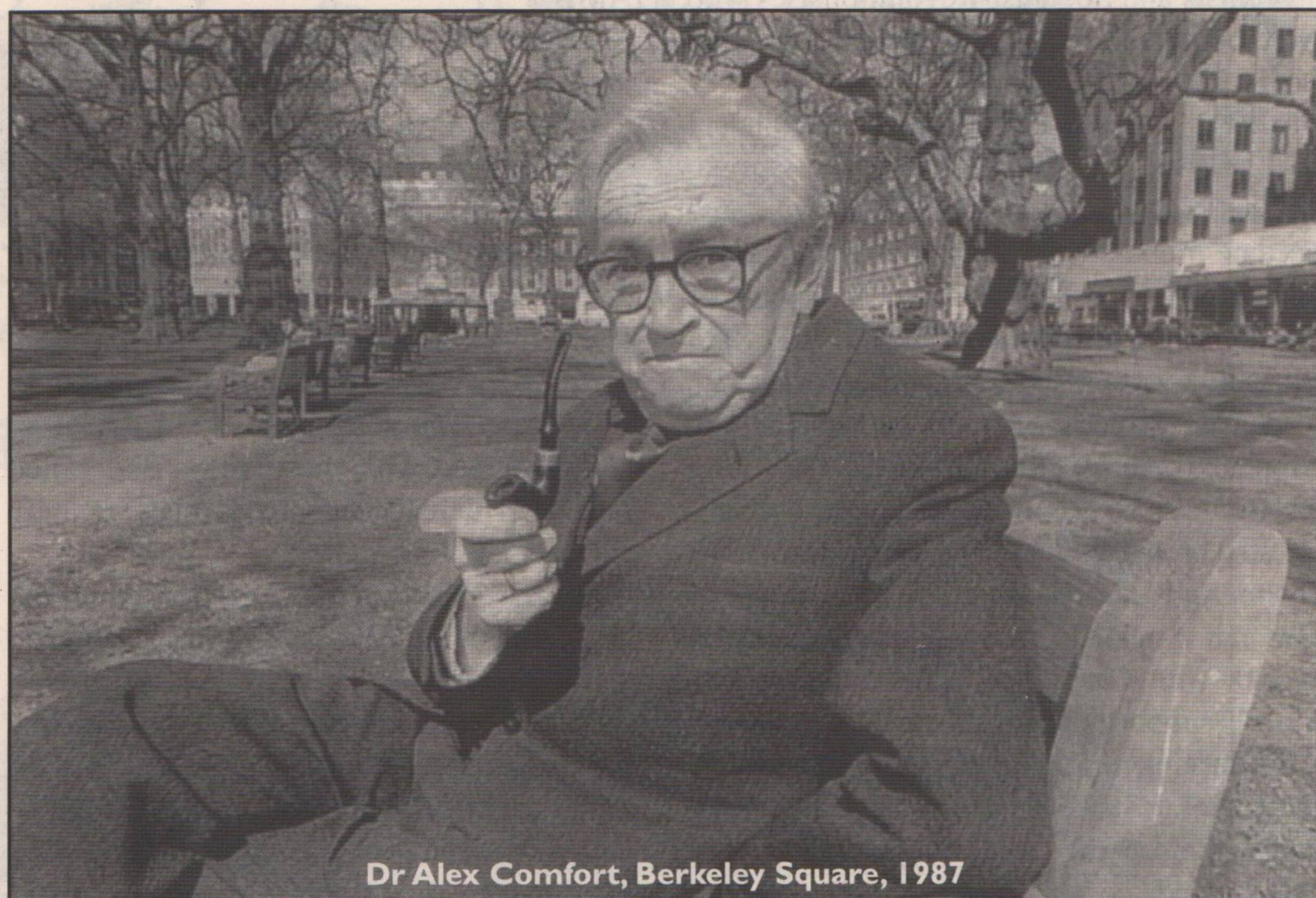
'Delinquency' to the Anarchist Summer School. In the 1960s, he was imprisoned for one month as a member of the Committee of 100. In 1990, he gave the annual Conway Memorial Lecture at Conway Hall, on 'Science, Religion, and Scientism'.

His first book, *The Silver River*, was published when he was 17 years old. One obituarist assumes that it is a poetry book, but in fact it is an account of a trip to Senegal, recording all the natural history specimens he encountered, with all their scientific names carefully ascertained. He remarks in the introduction that he is not sure how to

address an adult audience. The combination of originality, love of life, careful study, and diffidence, was characteristic of his whole life.

Donald Room

Some of Alex Comfort's pamphlets and many of his articles are reprinted in *Writings on Power and Death* edited by David Goodway, £5.00. His 1950 lecture on 'Delinquency' is reprinted in *The Raven* number 16, £3.00. Two of his lectures at American universities are reprinted in a pamphlet, *What Rough Beast? and What is a Doctor?*, £2.00. All available from Freedom Press, post free in UK, please add 15% elsewhere.



Dr Alex Comfort, Berkeley Square, 1987

## Freedom Press Bookshop

(in Angel Alley)

84b Whitechapel High Street

London E1 7QX

— opening hours —

Monday to Friday 10.30am - 6pm

Saturday 11am - 5pm



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

— ORDERING DETAILS —

Titles distributed by Freedom Press (marked\*) are post-free inland (add 15% postage and packing to overseas orders). For other titles add 10% towards p&p inland, 20% overseas.

Cheques/PO in sterling made out to 'FREEDOM PRESS'

# The militarisation of Russian society



Vladimir Putin with his wife Lyudmila, pictured in Moscow after voting in the recent presidential election

Since Yeltsin came to power, the Russian economic and social landscape has changed profoundly. The Russian state, caught between bureaucracy and privatisation has not been slow to give birth to a politico-industrial Mafia and to bury itself into a deep economic malaise: 40% of the population live under the poverty level.

We are not going to go over the ten year history of Russian economic chaos but instead we are trying to understand the context in which Putin has come to power and the reasons that lie behind the sharp militarisation of civil society.

The current Russian president, who will no doubt be president after the coming elections, is charged with the task of re-establishing some kind of order in the country. It is his responsibility to regain the confidence of the people. At the domestic level he can rely on the support of the regions which is where his personal roots are to be found and also the middle classes who are ready to support further reforms aimed at bringing back order and social peace as long as they don't intrude on certain gains.

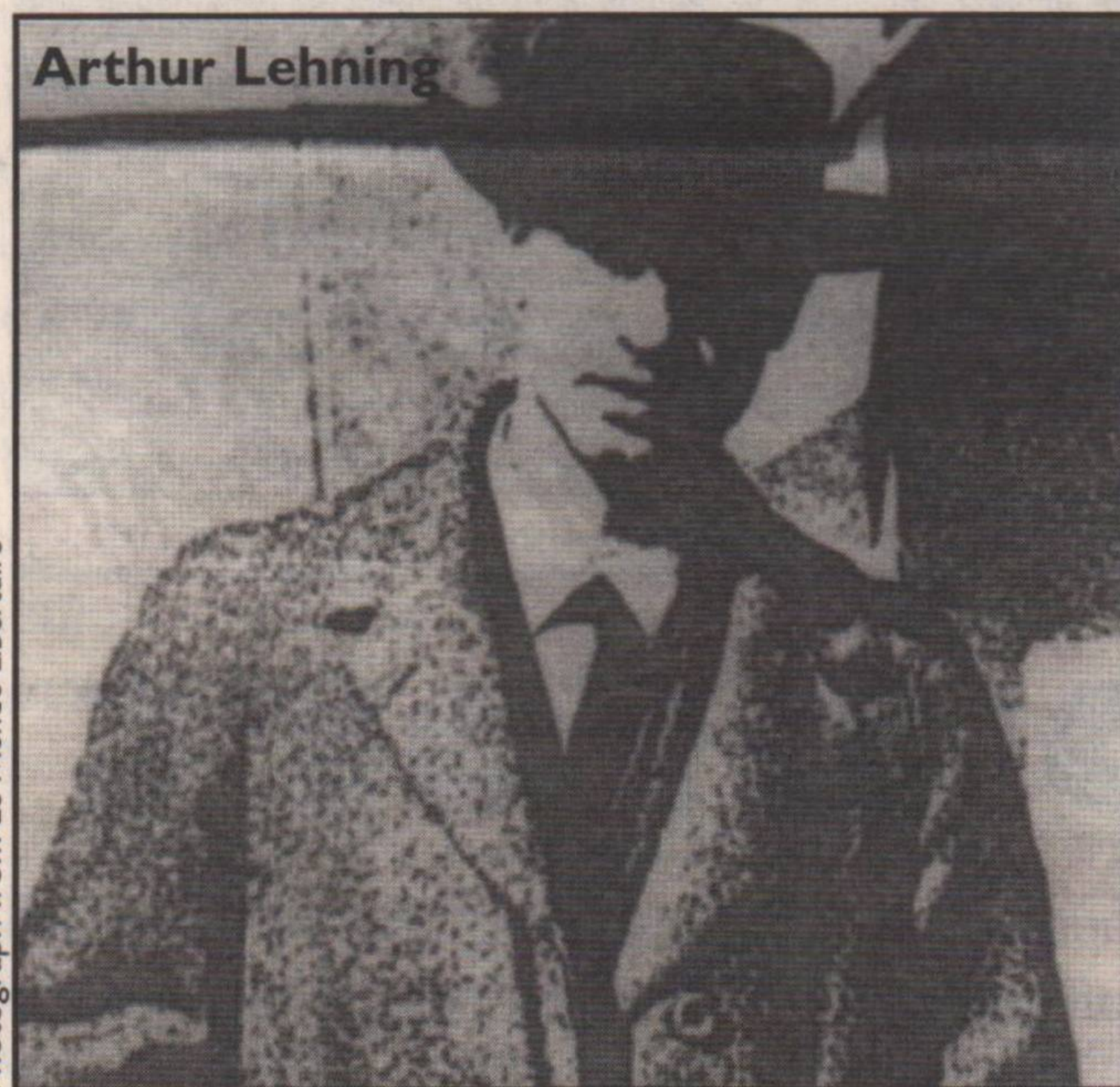
The war in Chechnya has provided an excellent opportunity to steel a hungry population against the enemy from within who comes from the Caucasus and is, of

course, a dangerous Islamic. Many young, unemployed men have signed up and set off for Chechnya. This assures them food and shelter and a certain social recognition associated with the values of virility which are associated with the army. These contract soldiers fit in better than their conscripted counterparts to the military structure, since the instances of disobeying a superior (refusing to fire on civilians) are, above all, the prerogative of the latter.

These reliable values on which the army depends are now seeping into society at large. Respect for hierarchy, the rejection of subversive ideas and clearly-defined roles giving one and all a clear identity: the importance of virility and masculine power, a subservient role for women who see themselves simply as an extension of the masculine role. The whole picture puts the pieces in place for the re-establishment of social stability. This is at the root of the social militarisation: reservists must undergo military training, military preparation is back on the school curriculum and the media glorify the 'great leaders' of the past such as the former KGB chief. In tandem with all this the army gets an injection of more cash.

By thus introducing the presence of the army into everyday life, the Russian state aims to put its hungry population on its feet and thus free its hands to undertake economic reforms. It uses pre-established networks which does nothing to reduce the potential danger. But such militarisation doesn't go by without a challenge as the people don't succumb so easily.

from *Le Monde Libertaire*, 8th March 2000



Arthur Lehning was born on 23rd October 1899 at Utrecht in Holland. He studied economic science at Rotterdam then at Berlin. From an early age he got to know the ideas of antimilitarism, anarchism and syndicalism. At the beginning of the '20s he first read a work by Bakunin. He met Rudolf Rocker in Berlin and got to know Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman who had come there from Russia. He joined the defence committee for the anarchists and Socialist-Revolutionaries who were being persecuted and imprisoned in the Soviet Union.

In 1922 he became the Berlin correspondent of the Anti-Militarist Anarchist Bureau (IAMB) founded in 1921 in the Hague, and became friends with Georg Friedrich Nicolai, antimilitarist, professor and head doctor of the Charity hospital in Berlin. In 1923 Mussolini was only just preparing for his rise to power, Hitler's Munich putsch had not happened and already Lehning was writing an article 'The Roots of German Fascism'. He also brought out his first pamphlet *Social-Democracy and the War*, a fierce critique of German Social-Democrat involvement in World War One, which he compared to Marx's support of the Franco-Prussian War.

He developed and supported the theory of the General Strike as a weapon to halt war, and advanced the need for the creation of factory and workplace committees to take

over production. He was convinced that an antimilitarist general strike in all countries involved in a war would unleash the social revolution. Whilst not a pacifist, his strong support of antimilitarism had strong connections with the Dutch Tolstoyanism and pacifist anarchism as most importantly represented by Bart de Ligt and Clara Meijer-Weichmann.

Lehning was also involved in organising activities for anarcho-syndicalism, joining the International Workers Association founded in 1922 which gathered the anarcho-syndicalist organisations at a world level. From 1927-1934 with Albert de Jong, Augustin Souchy and Helmut Rudiger he ran the press service of the International Anti-militarist Commission, a fusion between the IWA-AIT's antimilitarist committee and the IAMB.

The bulletin they produced contained information about antimilitarist struggles and was distributed to 800 papers and magazines. Fierce debates took place within the Commission over the means of defending the revolution. Lehning and de Jong rejected the idea of forming militias, counterposing the ideas of the strike, the boycott, non-payment of taxes, passive resistance and refusal to collaborate. The great majority of the IWA-AIT disagreed with these views and called for armed defence against fascism in Italy and Germany.

Between 1932 and 1935 he worked on the Secretariat of the IWA-AIT alongside Rocker, the Russian Alexander Schapiro and Augustin Souchy. He visited Spain where the anarchist movement was very strong, and it was to Madrid and then Barcelona that the secretariat was transferred, with the rise of Hitler and the destruction of the German workers'

movement. Lehning gave one more public meeting between the taking of power by the Nazis and the Reichstag fire, before fleeing to Holland.

Here he set up the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam which gathered together many archives from the workers' movement and the international anarchist movement. He had special responsibility for the south eastern Europe and anarchist collections.

Alongside his anarchist activity, Lehning was involved in cultural activity from 1923-1933. In Paris in 1924, he discovered the Cubists, the Constructivists, the Expressionists and the Futurists. Enthused by art and literature he set up an artistic review *i 10* between January 1927 and June 1929, influenced by and influencing the Bauhaus and De Stijl artistic currents. He was its sole editor. The review attracted an awesome range of collaborators, like the artists Mondrian, Lissitsky, Kandinsky, J.P. Oud, the founder of De Stijl, and Moholy-Nagy who wrote on film and photography. Edited in French, English, German and Dutch the magazine opened its pages to all the new artistic currents. Lehning believed that a total revolution in culture and everyday life was necessary to ensure a successful revolution. Dadaists like Arp and Schwitters wrote for it, as did Marxian philosophers like Ernst Bloch and Walter Benjamin, writers like Upton Sinclair, architects like Le Corbusier and Gerrit Tietveld, Helene Stocker, a champion of women's rights, and anarchists like Rocker, Netlau and de Ligt. The magazine was heavily involved in mobilising support for the condemned Italian-American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti.

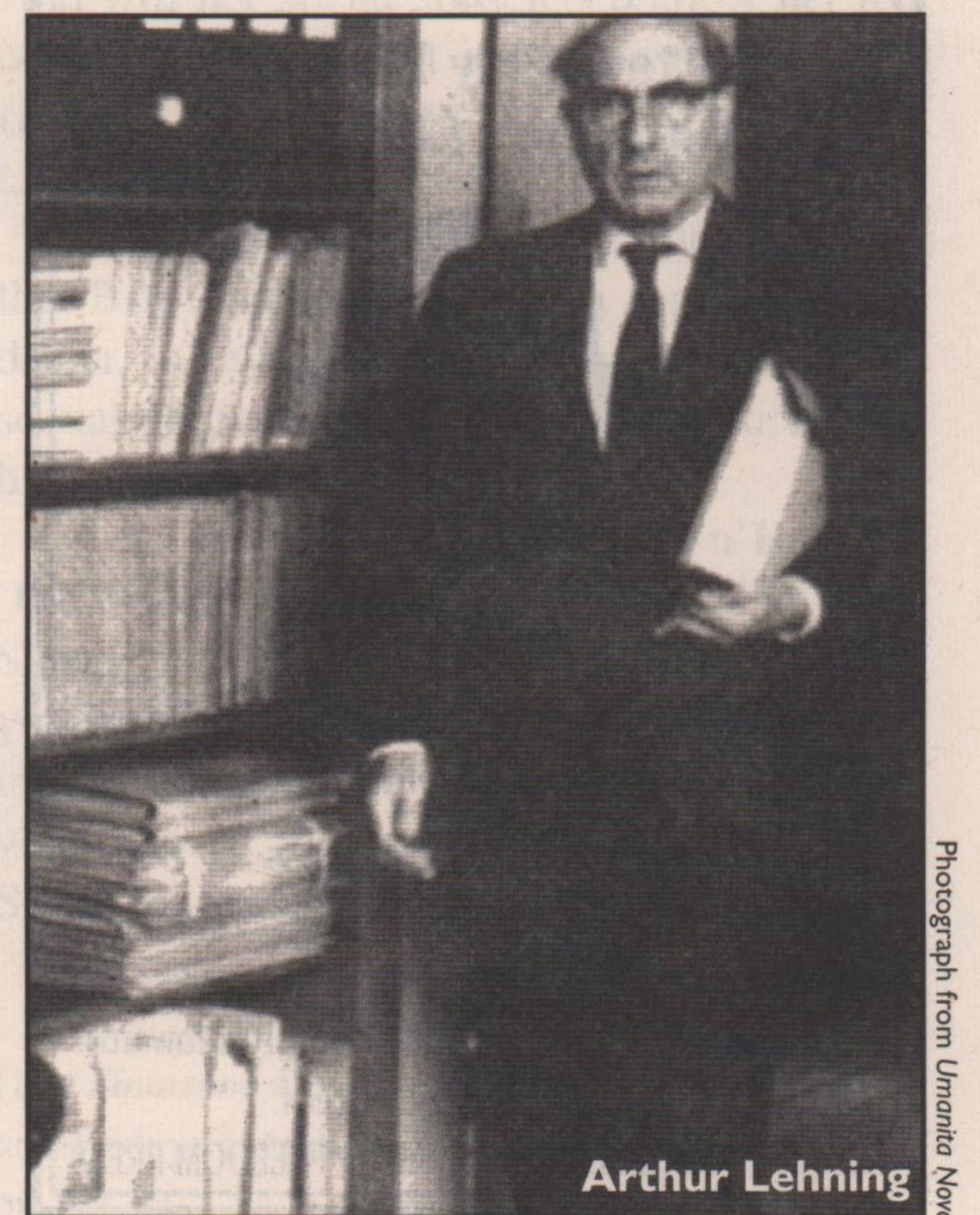
From April 1939, the International Institute

of Social History was forced to move, and Lehning worked for its Oxford branch to where the most sensitive files had been transferred after the Munich agreement.

In 1957 he returned to Germany. He continued to work for the Institute, editing the collected works of Bakunin, which were published in France in 1976 under the title *Archives Bakounine*. For the French publishing house Spartacus he wrote *Anarchisme et Marxisme dans le Revoution Russe* in 1971. He also brought out the book *Michel Bakounine et les autres* in 1976. Many of his major scholarly articles were collected together in the book *From Buonarroti to Bakunin* in 1970.

He survived the twentieth century by one day, dying on 1st January 2000 in Le Plessis, France.

Nick Heath



Arthur Lehning

# Schools that offer lifeline for children

Dear *Freedom*,

I just want to add my two pennies worth to the debate about education and the OFSTED report about Summerhill. As I have read in the press Summerhill in Suffolk has come in for a roasting from the OFSTED inspectors. As an 11-year-old dyslexic 25 years or so ago, I was fed up and at times suicidal. I was at a local state-run primary school, I would come home from school and tear the curtains down, throw tables and chairs around the house, hit my Mum and Dad, swear, and really be a very, very unpleasant person to be with.

At about this time, I remember sitting at the top of the stairs listening to a row between my parents; my mother saying there had to be something wrong, other than my father's conclusion that I was a delinquent child, which looking back I guess I was, but not without good reason.

I was very lucky that my parents had the money to arrange a private assessment at the Hospital for Nervous Diseases in London. After two days of tests, it was found that I had a then little-known condition that is now often recognised as dyslexia. I had an IQ higher than the average and was able to answer Piaget's questions beyond my developmental years should have allowed me.

I remember looking at posters at Russell Square tube and realising for the first time that there were words on the posters, but they did not mean a thing to me. I have read somewhere that if advertisers can catch children's attention for a product by the age of 5, then

that person will be a life long consumer of that product. I realise that did not exclude me from the ads on television, but I guess I could say I was lucky! I digress.

Back at home I now realise my parents had to find a school that would be able to cope with my behaviour and help my condition. That school came first in the name of Gatehouse in the East End of London.

I remember settling in very quickly and my behaviour improved. I had, thanks to my parents, found a niche for myself within a Bohemian and eccentric bunch of people. My eccentric behaviour was accepted; I was accepted for what I was and not what I thought I should be. I still keep in touch with one or two of the people I was at school with, I still have the photograph that *The Guardian* published of our school nativity play with the three wise men, I was one, finger up my nose. A good photographer always gets their picture!

I was once watching television and taking an interest in an old classmate. Later, the press were giving her a slating for the fact that she had come out and had moved in with her lesbian lover. I had almost brotherly feelings of protection towards her. How dare they I thought! Yes, Gatehouse was the making of me.

I left Gatehouse with a few swimming certificates – I was very good at collecting a brick from the bottom of a swimming pool while wearing a pair of pyjamas, a very useful life skill I am sure but I have yet to find a brick that is in need of rescuing, bringing to

the surface and living happily everafter, but I can always live in hope.

I had always wanted to be a photographer from a very early age and back in the late '70s and early '80s, with the printing skills I had taught myself in a very primitive dark-room at my parents house. I was able to walk in and out of jobs with great ease.

So now to the present day. I am very happily married. I have one O Level and a DipHE from another centre for radical education – North East London Poly, or as it's now called The University of East London. I work as a freelance photographer and am just embarking on a career as a drystone waller.

The point of all this is that I was very lucky to have two very supportive parents who were in the financial position to pay for my education. God knows how I would have ended up if I hadn't had their support – probably like so many dyslexics in prison. How do you occupy the lively minds of dyslexics, if you are unable to stimulate them through radical education?

The dyslexia movement in this country

does not help. If you ring up some of the charities, they want you to send a stamped addressed envelope. Very good, guys, but how do you do that if you are alone in the house and really cannot spell? You either get someone to ring again for you, or you give up. You are also so on your own once you become an adult. There is no help. It took me a lot of my own hard-earned cash to buy this computer so that I am able to write this article. If you saw the first draft you would not be able to read it. It was only with the help of Lucy, my wife, that it has been corrected so that other people can understand it.

I have to say, in conclusion that OFSTED should lay off Summerhill, and indeed all the other educational establishments that offer something away from the mainstream. If you wish to turn children into neurotic, conforming, uninquisitive, and unquestioning adults, and I suspect they do, then closing Summerhill, Gatehouse, and all the other schools that offer children a lifeline when there seems to be no light at the end of a very long and winding tunnel, seems to be a very sensible and intelligent thing to do.

I for one hope Summerhill lives a long and happy life well past my sell-by date!

John Arnison

# Anarchism moving onwards?

Dear *Freedom*,

A reply to Sam Morrow – I doubt very much that you will read the response to your letter, but I feel your criticisms deserve as thoughtful a reply as your letter was. You criticise, quite rightly, the problems that come when politics (not just anarchist politics) becomes a badge of identity and a self-exiled subculture rather than an attempt to become a constructive part of society. For many people, this has meant that being involved in the anarchist movement is about being 'cool' within a "select terrorist-like organisation full of underground bookshops and collective meals", as you say. For other kinds of subcultures, it has meant other kinds of fantasies perhaps.

Looking back, you now feel bitter about your involvement with the anarchist movement. But nevertheless you seem to recognise that you found something powerfully attractive about the movement that you now despise – "against my better judgement I continued to flirt with the anarchist scene". My guess is that part of this attraction was the comfort of having an all-embracing black-and-white view of the world, a sense of being part of a tightly-knit community, a sense of moral superiority to,

and unbridgeable cultural difference from, the general population. These are certainly some of the aspects of punk anarchism that attracted me in the heyday of Crass. A total rejection of things-as-they-are and a uniform and lifestyle separating oneself from people-as-they-are.

Unfortunately all retreat from society undermines any attempt to change society. Not that punk is the only kind of retreat practiced by people on the left, or that much of value has not been done by punk or by punks.

Nor is this kind of total rejection psychologically stable for many people. Your recognition that a Thatcherite banker could be more serious and thought out about life than a 'stop the city' protester is a case in point. I would see my own development as a person and an activist as being based on similar attempts to grapple with uncomfortable realities.

The difference between us is that I believe that to a very large extent 'the world' *does* want anarchism. People *do* want freedom. That is why advertisers spend billions of pounds trying to convince us that banks, gas companies, every transnational corporation under the sun, want to give *us* power/control/autonomy/independence/freedom.

Yes, anarchism as "a smug club for anarchists" deserves to fade away. No, not all anarchisms or anarchists are so closed off. The anarchists I have known have been bright sparks in all sorts of political and social movements and groups.

I sincerely hope you have, or you find, a kind of politics that enables you to make a contribution and to leave behind your bitter memories. I'm glad you didn't "throw the baby out with the bathwater" and I hope one day we will work side-by-side in making a better society.

Milan Rai

# D.H. Lawrence & his mother

Dear *Freedom*,

In spite of John Doheny's enthusiasm, I find it difficult to erect D.H. Lawrence as my guru of healthy sex, since he ran away all his life from his own homosexuality. The fact that he was also a closet fascist (see E.M. Forster and Bertrand Russell) and grotesquely authoritarian as husband and friend (and dog-owner) doesn't help either (see any autobiography). His late poem 'Genitans' – sorry, 'Gentians' – must reluctantly be considered purely unconscious in its porno homosexual imagery. He was

a fine one to talk about "the conscious understanding of the dark and deep unconscious passions"! Ask his mother about them.

Jonn Roe

Please keep sending in your letters and donations

(continued from page 2)

ignores what's really taking place – that while everything appears to have changed, nothing much really has. Digitalisation is, as Giddens notes, a technological 'quantum leap' – but so were steam and electricity, and, while these undoubtedly accelerated the productive capacity of capital they did not alter its essential relations nor, hence, its contradictions.

Capital's move towards an accelerated globalisation was the result of its clashes with labour in the post-1945 period. Capital moved to 'de-industrialise' itself – to break its dependence on organised skilled labour in the West, through 'despacialising' itself – turning productive capital into money capital which can roam the globe hunting for profit. The 'weightless economy' – the digitalisation of communication – is a result of capital's seizure of the possibilities offered by military communications technology to increase its opportunities for parasitism. The 'weightless economy' is a strategic manoeuvre on the part of capital; a response to the failure of the post-1945 attempt to "give a little to avoid losing the lot" which was Keynesianism. The problem for capital is that its transfer of exploitation to Indonesia, Taiwan and Korea has met with the same process of resistance by labour there. We're told that we live in a 'new age' of capital because Bill Gates, for instance, has amassed a \$55 billion fortune. That he did so, not from the wonders of microtechnology but from the fact that over a third of his workforce were 'temporary' goes without comment. The age of digital capital is built on the sweat of 17 year olds making CD-ROMs for IBM on the outskirts of

Manila.

Over \$1 trillion dollars is traded on the world's financial markets each day. The numbers are supposed to make you reel back in awe. The truth is that speculative capital is incredibly vulnerable, as the 1982 Mexican debt crisis, 1992s Black Wednesday, and the collapse of the Russian economy all went to show. Speculative capital is, as the economists Werner Bonefeld and John Holloway have noted "a gamble on the future, a bet which creates a fiction; the future exploitation of labour is treated as though it were present exploitation. If the capitalist succeeds in exploiting the workers sufficiently in the future, he wins his bet; if not, both he and the banker lose" (*Global Capital, National State and the Politics of Money* edited by W. Bonefeld and J. Holloway, Macmillan, 1996).

A spectre still haunts the dreams of capital. Whether it be the street battles in Seattle, the anti-sweatshop campaigns that have inspired a new generation of student activists in the US, Ogoni resistance to Shell in the Niger Delta or the rise of independent labour organisations like the Centre for Indonesian Labour Struggle or the National Garment Workers Union in Bangladesh, the global exploitation to which Giddens believes there is no alternative is contested everyday. But then, beyond the liberal pipe dreams, Giddens is a good Keynesian in the classic sense: "I can be influenced by what seems to me to be justice and good sense; but the class war will find me on the side of the educated bourgeoisie" ('Am I a Liberal?' by John Maynard Keynes in Vol IX, *Collected Writings*, Macmillan, 1972).

Nick S.

— COPY DEADLINE —

The next issue of *Freedom* will be dated 22nd April, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 13th April.

◆ ◆ ◆

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



**FREEDOM** fortnightly  
ISSN 0016 0504

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

**Freedom on the  
World Wide Web**

<http://www.tao.ca/~freedom>  
e-mail Freedom Press at  
[freedom@tao.ca](mailto:freedom@tao.ca)

**a-infos**

daily multi-lingual international  
anarchist news service

To: [majordomo@tao.ca](mailto:majordomo@tao.ca)  
Subject:

.....  
subscribe a-infos

Freedom and The Raven  
**SUBSCRIPTION  
RATES 2000**

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

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

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

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

Other bundle sizes on application

Giro account number 58 294 6905

All prices are in £ sterling

**The Raven**  
anarchist quarterly

Number 40

**Genetic Modification**

**Back issues still available:**

- 39 - Culture and Ideology
- 38 - 1968
- 37 - Anarchism in the Americas and China
- 36 - Class Struggle and Social Protest
- 35 - Urban Environment / Psychoanalysis
- 34 - Communication (3) : Language
- 33 - The Arts
- 32 - Communication (2) : 'The Net'
- 31 - Economics and Federalism
- 30 - New Life to the Land?
- 29 - World War Two
- 28 - Noam Chomsky on Haiti
- 27 - Fundamentalism
- 26 - Science (2)
- 25 - Religion
- 24 - Science (1)
- 23 - Spain / Emma Goldman
- 22 - Crime
- 21 - Feminism
- 20 - Kropotkin's 150th Anniversary
- 19 - Sociology
- 18 - Anthropology
- 17 - Use of Land
- 16 - Education (2)
- 15 - Health
- 14 - Voting
- 13 - Anarchism in Eastern Europe
- 12 - Communication (1)
- 11 - Class
- 10 - Libertarian Education
- 9 - Bakunin and Nationalism
- 8 - Revolution
- 7 - Emma Goldman
- 6 - Tradition and Revolution
- 5 - Spies for Peace
- 4 - Computers and Anarchism
- 3 - Surrealism (part 2)
- 2 - Surrealism (part 1)
- 1 - The History of Freedom Press

£3.00 each (post free worldwide)

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

**Meetings & Events**

**The London  
Anarchist Forum**

Meet Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL (nearest tube Holborn). Admission is free but a collection is made to cover the cost of the room.

— PROGRAMME 2000 —

**7th April** Chomsky's Anarchism: an illustrated discussion

**14th April** General discussion

**21st April** Bank holiday (no meeting)

**28th April** General discussion

**5th May** The Lessons of Mayday (discussion)

**12th May** General discussion

**19th May** Some Thoughts on Political Correctness (speaker Peter Neville)

**26th May** General discussion

**2nd June** Can Anarchism Transform Your Life? (symposium)

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

**Mayday 2000**

A festival of anarchist ideas and action from

**28th April to 1st May**

Mayday 2000 will be a four-day gathering of revolutionaries to be held across London.

We would like to hear from groups and individuals interested in joining us in co-ordinating the activities.

Mayday 2000, BM Mayday, London WC1N 3XX

[www.freespeech.org/mayday2k](http://www.freespeech.org/mayday2k)

[mayday2000-subscribe@egroups.com](mailto:mayday2000-subscribe@egroups.com)

**North West  
Unemployed Network**

regional meeting to be held on  
**Thursday 27th April at 1pm**  
at the Bury Unemployed Centre,  
12 Tithebarn Street (off The Rock),  
Bury, Lancashire

**Libertarian Socialist  
Discussion Group**

(forming now)

will meet on the second Wednesday of the month for action and discussion  
at 8pm in The Vine, Kennedy Street  
(off Fountain Street), near Manchester Town Hall

**Revolutionary  
Socialist Network**

Meeting to be held

**8th to 9th April in Exeter**

for booking form with details of programme, accommodation, etc.

Contact Tim Price at The Flat,  
17 St David's Hill, Exeter EX4 3RG  
tel: 01392 431352

Conference fee: £6 (£3 low paid/unwaged)

**What on earth is  
humanism?**



For a free information pack and book list about humanism, or non-religious funerals, weddings and baby namings, please contact:

**The British Humanist Association**  
47 Theobalds Road, London WC1X 8SP  
0171 430 0908 [www.humanism.org.uk](http://www.humanism.org.uk)

registered charity 285987

**SUBSCRIPTION FORM**

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

- I am a subscriber, please renew my sub to *Freedom* for ..... issues
- Please renew my joint subscription to *Freedom* and *The Raven*
- Make my sub to *Freedom* into a joint sub starting with number 40 of *The Raven*
- I am not yet a subscriber, please enter my sub to *Freedom* for ..... issues .. and *The Raven* for ..... issues starting with number 40
- I would like the following back numbers of *The Raven* at £3 per copy post free ..... (numbers 1 to 39 are available)
- I enclose a donation to the Freedom Fortnightly Fighting Fund / Freedom Press Overheads Fund / Raven Deficit Fund (delete as applicable)

I enclose £ ..... payment

Name .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....